בס"ד

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a

MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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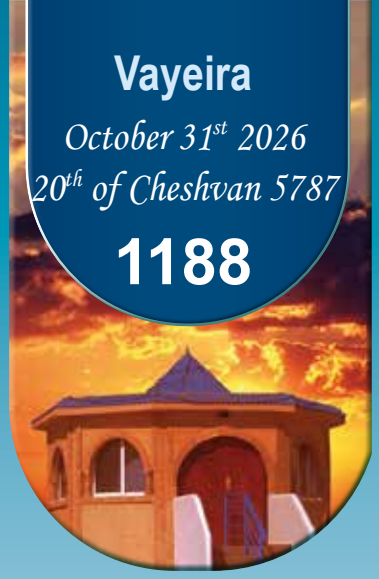

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

- 20 – Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi, one of the elderly Kabbalists of Yerushalayim
- 21 – Rabbi Aryeh Leib Binah, Rosh Yeshiva of 'Netiv Meir'
- 22 – Rabbi Amram ben Rabbi Massoud Anakaveh
- 23 – Rabbi Yosef Rafael Chazan, author of 'Chakrei Lev'
- 24 – Rabbi Avraham Azoulai, author of 'Chessed L'Avraham'
- 25 – Rabbi Mordechai Rokeach of Bilugrei
- 26 – Rabbi Eliyahu Abba Shaul
- 19 – Rabbi Sassi Me'atok Cohen

May You Mercifully Remember Today the Akeidah of Yitzchak

"Please take your son, your only one, whom you love" (Bereishit 22:2)

With the Akeidat Yitzchak, Avraham Avinu revealed the extent of his love for Hashem Yitbarach. Even though he could have turned to Hashem and asked, "Master of the World, You promised me, 'since through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours', so how can I offer him on the Altar?" However, Avraham did not ask questions and even arose early in the morning, hurrying to perform his Creator's will, as it says, "So Avraham woke up early in the morning". Yitzchak his son went together with him with the same purity of intentions and holy thoughts, as it says "and the two of them went together".

When Avraham took the knife to slaughter his son, even the Heavenly angels were moved and cried when they saw the extent of his self-sacrifice and the enormity of his love for Hashem Yitbarach, and how he performed His will with his entire heart, with joy and delight. Even when Hashem sent an angel who commanded him, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad", Avraham did not easily surrender and begged, "If I cannot slaughter him, at least allow me to make a small cut". But the angel replied, "nor do anything to him for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man".

This requires clarification. Was it only at that moment that it became clear to Hashem that Avraham Avinu a"h was "a G-d fearing man"? Were all the previous tests, with which he proved his great love for Hashem, not enough of a proof? If so, why only after the test of the Akeidah did Hashem say to him, "for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man"?

The Gemarah says (Berachot 61a), "When Rabbi Akiva was taken out to be killed, it was the exact time of reciting Kriyat Shema... They combed his flesh with iron combs while he accepted upon himself the yoke of Heaven. His students said to him, "Rabbeinu, to this extent?" He replied: All my days I was distressed over the verse, "You shall love Hashem...with all your soul", meaning even if He takes your soul. I said, when will I have a chance to fulfil this verse? And now that the opportunity has arrived, I should not fulfill it?! And he drew out his recital of the word 'echad' until his soul departed."

With siyata dishmaya I would like to explain the intention behind Rabbi Akiva's words. He wished to explain to his talmidim that although it is true that throughout his life he proclaimed with full conviction that he loves Hashem with all his heart and soul, and even publicly declared that he is prepared to sacrifice his life for the sake of fulfilling Hashem's commandments, however there was always the suspicion that maybe his intention was not one hundred percent sincere, and it could be that his words will not withstand the test of reality. If he would actually be faced with the challenge of sacrificing his life, he might not pass the test and then it would follow that all his declarations concerning his love for Hashem were only lip-service. This is what Rabbi Akiva was afraid of and this was his intention in saying, "All my days I was distressed...when will I have a chance to fulfil this verse". He wished to be put to the test so as to examine if true love for Hashem burns in his heart, or maybe it is only mere words.

When Rabbi Akiva was faced with the fact that he was rejoicing and delighting in sacrificing his soul for the sake of Hashem's honor, and indeed was courageously withstanding the test with a heart that was truly imbued with a burning love for Hashem, he then came to the realization that his ways were genuine. It was only at that moment that he was given the opportunity of coming face to face with the true extent of his love for Hashem Yitbarach.

So it was with Avraham Avinu. Although it is true that Avraham already passed many tests, these cannot be compared to the test of the Akeidah. It is unequivocally difficult to take one's son and slaughter him, all the more so when it is an only son who was born to his father at the age of one hundred and his mother at the age of ninety...

Throughout his life, Avraham Avinu searched for an opportunity to prove his great love for Hashem, just like Rabbi Akiva did many years later. And while it is true that Avraham Avinu would constantly publicize Hashem's Name to all mankind and his love for Hashem was deeply implanted in his heart, this nevertheless does not necessarily prove that he would be prepared to give up his heart and soul for His sake. Avraham Avinu was afraid that maybe he will not be able to muster up the courage to withstand this kind of test. Now Hashem was putting him to the test with an enormous challenge. Seeing that he was withstanding the test and performing Hashem's will with joy, despite the enormous difficulty, was a great source of joy for Avraham since it proved the extent of his love for Hashem. And this is why only now did Hashem say to him, "for now I know that you are a G-d fearing man". Now it was clear to all that Avraham was consumed with a burning love for Hashem and he is genuinely prepared to give up all that he has for the sake of fulfilling Hashem's command.

If Hashem testifies about Avraham that he is "G-d fearing", this amounts to a solemn promise that Avraham will always cleave to Hashem and fear of G-d will pervade him. This is the reason why Chazal said that Hashem created the world in Avraham's merit, as it says (Bereishit 2:4), "These are the products of the heaven and the earth when they were created". The word 'בהבראם', when they were created, can be rewritten to spell 'ב אברהם', with Avraham. Since Hashem saw the pure and lofty level that was an integral part of Avraham's entire life, He, therefore, created the world in his merit.

If we strengthen ourselves in the ways that our forefathers instilled in us, we are promised that love for Hashem will always be ingrained in our hearts and we will not reject the true path throughout our lives, Amen v'Amen.

Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Out of Habit

A notable Talmid Chacham with whom I have been acquainted with for a long time once came to me with a surprising request:

"Esteemed Rav, please help me strengthen my emunah in Hashem Yitbarach"...

I wondered what lay behind this and asked him, "You observe mitzvot and diligently study Torah, if so, where is the problem with your faith in Hashem?"

This was his reply: "Although it is true that I study Torah with diligence, and indeed until today I innocently thought that I do possess strong faith but to my dismay, I discovered that all my Torah study is only done as a conditioned routine and only because this is what I was trained to do from my youth. All those around me study Torah, so I too study Torah. But I do not possess the clear, inner feeling and knowledge that this is the correct path. And now that life's tribulations have begun to beset me, I, unfortunately, discovered that even my faith in Hashem is dubious and not compelling enough and this makes it hard for me to cope with my challenges."

I immediately got up and kissed him on his forehead for being so honest and courageously agreeing to expose to me the very fibers of his being and in appreciation of his strong desire to seek a cure and remedy for his ailment. Of course, I strengthened his faith and convinced him, illuminating for him the correct path in life...

Even though he was a learned Talmid Chacham, he did not realize that he had slipped off the path of life and even innocently thought that he was treading on the correct path that leads to spiritual ascent. It was only years later, to his astonishment, that he discovered that he was still far from the truth and faith in Hashem. This happened because he started out without a clear vision and simply did everything out of habit, as one who is accustomed to performing mitzvot.

The Haftarah

"One woman from among the wives of the prophets' disciples" (Melachim II, 4)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah tells us how Elisha the Navi blessed the Shunamit that she would have a child, and about the fulfillment of that promise when she gave birth to a son at the exact time that he prophesied. In the Parsha, the angels announced to Avraham that at this time next year a son will be born to him.

Guard Your Tongue

In Line with the Person's level

Some things are considered as lashon hara when said about a certain person, while considered as praise when said about someone else. For example, if one says about a businessman that he studies Torah for five hours a day, this is certainly a praiseworthy declaration. On the other hand, the same thing said about a Kollel avreich who is supposed to dedicate his entire day to toiling in Torah, has a negative connotation. Similarly, it is forbidden to say that someone donated a certain amount to charity if this is an acceptable sum only for someone who is struggling financially.

In certain situations, it is also forbidden to relate something even if it is clear that it is praise. For example, those who give much to charity, in the main do not wish for the matter to become public knowledge.

In Our Father's Path

Why Did Harav Chaim Kanievsky Cancel the Bein Hazmanim Excursion?

Maran Harav Shach zt"l, whose hilula falls this week, offers a wonderful explanation on a difficulty that Rashi discusses at the beginning of the Parsha (Bereishit 18:2). The verse says, "He lifted his eyes and saw: And behold! three men were standing over him. He saw, so he ran toward them". The obvious question is, why does the verse repeat the expression 'he saw'; isn't the second 'He saw' superfluous?

Maran Harav Shach explains that the Torah wishes to teach us that the mitzvah of tzedakah is not merely a matter of giving charity to a needy person who reaches out but also includes searching for those who require assistance. The first 'he saw' is understood in the literal sense, while the second 'He saw' implies 'He perceived'. To teach us that Avraham contemplated the matter and considered whether the guests who were approaching required hospitality and charity; he did not wait to see if they would knock on his door and ask for charity, but the moment he lifted his eyes 'and saw' three men, he immediately considered (the implication of the second 'he saw') whether they require food and drink and then immediately "He saw, so he ran toward them".

This serves as a lesson for us that if so much sensitivity is necessary when contemplating another's benefit, all the more so is great contemplation required so as not to inflict harm and pain on another. How much thought must one invest to take care that our actions do not cause harm to our fellow Jew. Even just being vigilant in some small way will already be beneficial for us and others as we go through life.

All who merited recognizing the greatness of Maran Harav Shach zt"l, can testify that he was a living example of this lesson that he taught. He showed extraordinary caution in taking someone else into consideration, whether it was a case of offering his assistance or being meticulous not to offend another.

Harav Avraham Tzvi Taub shlita, who had a close relationship with Maran Harav Shach zt"l, related that he is aware of the reason why Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita cancelled his regular bein hazmanim visit to the holy city of Tzefat.

Several years ago, just before the summer bein hazmanim, Harav Taub paid a visit to Maran Hagaon Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita and told him: "I once asked Maran Harav Shach, why do you never take a vacation during bein hazmanim, when you anyway don't have to give shiur in the yeshiva?"

Maran replied, "People are suffering from so many troubles. I sit in my house and sometimes people come to me to ask for help and advice. Some of them I can help, and many others I cannot help, but nevertheless, just the fact that they have where to pour out their hearts, comforts them and is of benefit to them. If I go away on vacation, people will come and won't find me at home, and they will be left to deal with their oppressive feelings on their own... How can I do this to them?"

When Maran Harav Chaim shlita heard this, he too declared, "If so, from now on we will no longer travel during bein hazmanim. We will stay here to help people bear their burdens when they come knocking on our door".

Pearls of the Parsha

A Natural Result or Self-perfection?

"Behold! Three men were standing over him" (Bereishit 18:2)

Rashi explains why three men came. "One to announce the news to Sarah, one to overturn Sodom, and one to heal Avraham". The Maharal in his sefer 'Gur Aryeh' questions why the angel who was sent to overturn Sodom had to pass through Avraham's home? His mission had no connection to Avraham?

In the sefer 'Chazon Yechezkel', Rabbi Yechezkel Abramski zt"l explains that that angel found it hard to carry out his mission of overturning the city. He claimed that the behavior of the Sodomites was a natural result of a person having an evil inclination, as the angels claimed before the creation of man: "What is frail man that You should remember him, and the son of mortal man that You should be mindful of him?"

So Hashem answered that angel: Come and I will show you my beloved Avraham and you will see to what extent a person is capable of elevating himself and overcoming his evil inclination!

This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse, "So the men got up from there, and gazed down toward Sodom". After seeing Avraham's merit, how he was able to overcome his inclination, they no longer hesitated to do justice with the people of Sodom.

The Picture Aroused Fear

"And he said, 'Hurry! Three se'ahs of meal, fine flour! Knead and make cakes!" (Bereishit 18:6)

In the Gemara (Baba Metzia 87a) Chazal expound, "It is written 'meal' and it is written 'fine flour', from here we learn that a woman is stingier with guests than a man". This assumes that Avraham repeated the word flour, the second time using a word meaning fine flour, implying that Avraham was insisting on fine flour whereas Sarah was prepared to use regular flour, (meal). This is how the Gemara learns that women are stingier with guests than men. However, there is an opinion contrary to this which says that Sarah was the one who took 'fine flour' which is a better quality flour than 'regular flour'.

The Holy Ba'al Shem Tov clarifies this with a mashal. A lion once called his cubs and told them: You should know my children, you are the most powerful creatures in the world and have nothing to be afraid of. All creatures are afraid of you.

One day the cubs went to tour the world and arrived at palace ruins, where they discovered many paintings. One of them depicted Shimshon the Mighty killing a lion and ripping it apart as one might rip a kid goat. In alarm, the lions ran back to their father and exclaimed: How could you say that we are the most powerful in the world? We saw a painting of a man ripping apart a lion.

The lion answered them: On the contrary, this picture is proof of the matter. If man ripping apart a lion was a natural phenomenon, the painting wouldn't be showcased. Only because it was a one-off act and not a regular occurrence, was it a reason to display this kind of picture.

This is the meaning of the above Chazal. The Torah is publicizing Sarah's generosity, for Avraham said take 'meal' while Sarah took 'fine flour'. This is proof that Sarah Imeinu was exceptional, for the natural way is for women to be stingier with their guests than men.

Taking Care with Mixing Foods

"He took cream and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed these before them; he stood over them beneath the tree and they ate" (Bereishit 18:8)

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel zya"a, in his sefer 'Ben Yehoyada' on masechet Yoma, explains the meaning of the verse, "He took cream and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed these before them; he stood over them". Since according to Jewish law one must not place meat and milk products on the same table, even though it is permissible to eat the milk products first and after rinsing and cleaning one's mouth, one may then eat meat, it is a decree in case one will come to eat from them both at the same time. However, if there is someone watching over the person, one does not suspect him. It follows that since Avraham put milk and meat before them, it was necessary to stand over them under the tree to guard them. This is the meaning of the Chazal, "Avraham Avinu a"h observed the mitzvah of not mixing foods (meat and milk)", meaning he resolved even a suspicion of mixing foods of opposite categories that have been placed on one table, by standing over the men (angels) to guard them.

Treasures

Based on the teachings of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Parents' Behavior Shapes their Children's Education

"For I have loved him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, doing charity and justice" (Bereishit 18:19)

Hashem Yitbarach, the One who knows thoughts and feelings, testified about Avraham Avinu a"h, "For I have loved him". And why do I love him? "Because he commands his children" to guard My ways and commandments. Hashem was saying, I know that Avraham will bequeath to his offspring his holiness, his Torah and his entire way in Avodat Hashem.

It is necessary to understand how it is possible to bequeath something spiritual to one's child. One can bequeath money, possessions and assets, but how can one bequeath faith in Hashem and love for mitzvah observance? At most, one can educate one's child and try and guide him in the correct path, but of course the matter is still dependent on the child himself, on whether he possesses the willingness to accept his father's direction. Fortunate is the person who merits children who are prepared to follow the correct path with which they were educated.

So, if Hashem testified that Avraham's offspring will go in his ways, this means that there is agreement from both sides, both from the father to bequeath all his Avodat Hashem to his children and from the children to accept his ways. It is worth contemplating how one merits this.

It seems to be that the most important requirement is 'personal example'. A basic foundation of education is the fact that parents, by their conduct, serve as personal examples for their children. The parents must be people who are consistent and controlled in their conduct and behavior. Their communication with others should be pleasant and gentle, and they must be honest in their dealings and faithful to their declarations, no should be no and yes, yes. They should be meticulous with observing minor mitzvot just as with major mitzvot, and their behavior even in private should be modest. Of course, they are also people who meticulously observe the laws of derech eretz as apply to eating, drinking and similar matters. Without a doubt, positive and dignified behavior on the part of the parents has a more decisive effect in forming the spiritual core of the child, than any other measures.

On the other hand, conduct that contradicts what the parents preach, is not only a negative example concerning all those matters where the parents are deficient but also confuses the child and teaches him that it is possible to preach while not observe and who can perceive the result of this poor-quality approach?

Avraham Avinu a"h and his righteous wife Sarah, were indeed a living mussar sefer for their son Yitzchak. From his earliest days, Yitzchak observed the ways of his holy parents who served as a personal example, and his soul longed to imitate them. Their holy conduct was etched in his tender soul and is what enabled him to elevate himself in holiness and purity.

IN HONOR OF THE HILULA OF THE FAMOUS TZADDIK, THE HOLY AND PIOUS MIRACLE WORKER OF DISTINGUISHED LINEAGE, THE ESTEEMED MARAN RABBEINU CHAIM PINTO ZYA"A

The Power of a Tzaddik on His Hilula

Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, shlita, often talks about the extraordinary powers granted to a tzaddik on the day of his hilula. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Raskin, zt"l, who served as a Rabbi in Morocco, would constantly emphasize this point when seeing the tremendous crowd gathered to pray at the grave of the tzaddik on the twenty-sixth of Elul each year.

On the hilula, one perceives the simple faith of all the participants. Educated, rich, and respectable people, whose lives are filled with materialism, attend the hilula. Yet, when they stand at the gravesite they become entirely spiritual. They are totally humbled when praying by the tomb and somehow turn into different people. This proves that they are truly worthy individuals.

When a person stands facing the tomb and sees the grave, he realizes the ultimate destiny of every person. Consequently, he lessens the importance he attaches to the physical and concentrates on the spiritual. Following the event, when the hilula is over and everyone returns home, he aspires to achieve greater levels of spirituality.

However, the Yetzer Hara quickly sets to work, trying to get him to forget all the spiritual achievements he attained at the hilula. It is man's task to defeat the Yetzer Hara, as it says, "When you will go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hand, and you will capture its captives." This indicates that one should try to capture the enemy before the enemy captures you. It is possible to defeat the Yetzer Hara only with Torah. The Yetzer Hara knows this and therefore constantly attempts to sway the person.

This is what is hinted in the words "And you will capture its captives." One must continue to battle the Yetzer Hara continuously, not only for a limited time. The Yetzer Hara knows that after a while the inspiration will wear off, and then the spiritual elevation will diminish. Then, at an opportune moment, the Yetzer Hara will strike. Therefore, one should always strive to achieve higher levels and reinforce the inspiration that one experiences at the hilula of the tzaddik.

One must maintain this lofty level attained by being spending time at the gravesite, particularly after several days of growing in Torah and mitzvot and hearing stories of tzaddikim. This holiness must become a permanent presence and we should constantly progress, as it says, "A fire, continually, shall remain aflame on the Altar; you shall not extinguish it."

However, this is very difficult. One needs much Divine assistance to succeed since otherwise, it is impossible to overcome the Yetzer Hara who attempts to trap a person in its snare. This is why it says, "And Hashem, your G-d, will deliver him into your hand," since only with Divine assistance can one retain his spiritual attainments and continue advancing spiritually.

Thank Only the Master of the World

Torah scholars in every generation, whose fear of Hashem is even greater than their wisdom and who are meticulous in performing His will, resemble Kohanim, who were the guardians of the Sanctuary. Since they are so beloved by Hashem, He protects them and shields them in every perilous situation. They can cancel harsh and terrible decrees that endanger Bnei Yisrael, as it says, "A tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills his wish."

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's door was open to everyone, without exception. During all hours of the day and night, people would come to his house pleading for assistance, requesting advice, blessings, and deliverance.

Many people would visit Rabbi Chaim's house so that he would pray for them and bless them. Those who merited salvation following his blessings returned to his house to thank him. But he would immediately set the record straight by stating simply, "Thank only the Master of the World."

Restoring Sensation

One night, when Rabbi Chaim Hakatan arrived at the Beit Hakeneset to recite the tikkun chatzot as usual, he stumbled over a man sitting on the steps of the entrance in the dark.

"What are you doing here at this hour?" Rabbi Chaim asked him.

"All my limbs are paralyzed!" the man answered. Tearfully, he pleaded before the tzaddik, "I came here especially for the Rav to notice me and take pity. I beg the honorable Rav to pray for me and beseech that in the merit of his holy forefathers, I should be healed from the terrible illness that has stricken me."

Rabbi Chaim helped him into a prone position, and while holding him, brought him into the Beit Hakeneset to join him in reciting the tikkun chatzot. Afterward, Rabbi Chaim called to a few of the congregants and asked them to take the paralyzed man to the old cemetery where his grandfather, the holy tzaddik and mekubal, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol, was buried.

When they came to the cemetery, Rabbi Chaim approached the grave of his holy grandfather and cried out, "Grandfather, Grandfather, pray to Hashem that He should have mercy upon this man. Neither I nor he will budge from this place until he is healed from his illness."

An unbelievable miracle occurred. The moment that Rabbi Chaim concluded his prayers, the paralyzed man began to experience sensation in all his limbs. A few minutes later, he was able to stand on his feet normally.

Eventually, the man married a righteous wife and they had many children. He made sure to relate to all his descendants the story of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan's greatness and the extraordinary merits of his holy grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol. (Heard from Rav Hillel Ben Chaim, who lives in Be'er Sheva and was the shamash of the Beit Hakeneset of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan.)

Running on Beer

Mr. Avraham Ali's son told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that once his father was traveling with Rabbi Chaim Hakatan on a bus. Suddenly, in the middle of the way, the engine stalled. After two hours of waiting, Rabbi Chaim asked, "Why are we standing still and not moving?"

"By mistake, the gas tank was filled with beer instead of fuel. That is why the engine is not functioning," the passengers explained.

Rabbi Chaim did not seem troubled by the turn of events. He handed his cane to Avraham Ali and told him, "Tap the engine with my cane, and everything will be in order."

Avraham fulfilled the tzaddik's request with unquestioning faith. He tapped the engine of the bus with Rabbi Chaim's cane and to the amazement of all the passengers, the engine immediately sputtered back to life.

The Chase

One of the members of the Ochana family hid a large sum of money in his car since it was illegal to possess large sums of money. He stashed the money under a layer of wax to hide it. His non-Jewish neighbors, who envied his business success, reported him to the government officials. Thus, one sunny day, the police stopped him and demanded that he open his car so that they could search it.

Mr. Ochana quickly grabbed the money and began to run. The police were at an advantage, chasing him with top of the line French cars that sped at 110 km/h, whereas, Mr. Ochana was fleeing on foot, weighed down with gold and silver coins. Nevertheless, he managed to escape and avoid being caught. The police officers were mystified by the fact that they had not succeeded in catching him.

The next day, when the police met him (of course, without the money on him), they asked him, "Tell us, how did you succeed in escaping us? Which Rabbi did you call on to assist you?"

"I prayed in the merit of Rabbi Chaim Pinto to be saved!" he answered simply. When the police heard this, they understood how he had managed to elude them. In the end, they dropped all charges against him.

What Does Your Husband Do?

The blessings of Rabbi Chaim Hakatan were renowned throughout Morocco. Amram Zenou's mother relates that her father worked as a fisherman for his livelihood. There was a period of time when he could not catch any fish and he had no income. In his intense grief, he fell ill.

Imbued with faith, his wife went to Rabbi Chaim to request his blessings for success in their livelihood. Rabbi Chaim asked her, "What does your husband do?" She answered, "He is a fisherman."

Rabbi Chaim blessed her that within the week, her husband would succeed in catching more fish than he had ever caught in his life. This is exactly what happened. Precisely in the place where he began to fish he managed to catch a large amount, while his fellow fishermen had no luck. In this way, he became considerably wealthy.

From the Straits I called and He Answered Me

The challenging period that we are currently facing in light of the coronavirus pandemic has shaken every single one us. The clear Divine Intervention has proved itself to all that the hand of G-d rules over mankind and has demonstrated the extent to which man can plan but the Hashem's counsel is what will prevail. We received a letter from a precious individual who merited coming closer to his Creator and feeling Hashem's closeness in these confusing times when financial security has been torn asunder and almost vanished. When he called out to Hashem from the straits, in the merit of the lofty tzaddikim, he merited experiencing salvation, as it says, "G-d answered me with expansiveness".

This is his story:

When we began observing a religious lifestyle in the merit of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Pinto, may Hashem bless him, every morning we would listen to his shiur by video, through which we strengthened our emunah. One story impressed us greatly. It is printed in the sefer 'Walking in Their Ways', and we will quote it here word for word. This is what the Rav shlita related:

When I was a young boy, my parents sent me to yeshiva in England to learn under the guidance of the esteemed Rabbi Chaim Shmuel Lopian, zt"l, Rabbi Shammai Zahn, zy"a, Rabbi Binyomin Zev Kaufman, shlita, and Rabbi Yisrael Melul, shlita.

In Elul 1966 I was about sixteen years old when a longing for my father and mother and homesickness for my family overwhelmed me. It had been six years since I last saw them.

Those were the years that Father, zy"a, was secluded in his house, by order of his father, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a. I found out that Father had suddenly ceased this

practice and traveled to the graves of the tzaddikim in Eretz Yisrael. On his way home to Morocco, he had scheduled a one-day stopover in France.

I decided to ask permission from the Rosh Yeshiva to travel to France and spend some time with my beloved father whom I sorely missed. There was only one hitch in this plan. My Moroccan passport would expire within the next few days. If I intended to travel to France, I would have to spend some time there, renewing my passport at the Moroccan embassy.

I spent a long time trying to reach a decision. Should I remain in the yeshiva and forego the opportunity of seeing my father in the near future? Or should I take the trip, and with it, the risk of spending an unforeseeable amount of time renewing my passport?

With the wisdom of hindsight, I now realize that it was the Satan who lured me to travel to France. The deep longing for my father, coupled with the excitement of a boat ride, a train ride, and a tour of France, were far more attractive than staying where I belonged, in the yeshiva. However, the Satan convinced me that I was fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring my father by taking the time to visit him. Who could know when the next opportunity would present itself?

Had I been more firmly anchored to my Torah studies, I could easily have overcome my inclination. Father had not asked me to come and see him. He certainly would have preferred that I remain in the safe walls of the yeshiva, and not waste time and money on this superfluous expedition. I was also faced by the issue of my passport. It would likely be a good few days until I was issued a new one, especially since I had to go through a lot of bureaucracy to obtain it.

The Roshei Yeshiva did not compel me to remain in the yeshiva, seeing my great homesickness. I did not hint about my passport. They allowed me to go. I packed nearly all of my clothes, proof that I did not expect to return too soon, and set on my way.

The trip to France passed pleasantly enough. Before I knew it, I was in my father's warm embrace. But we were together for only one day. That evening, he was scheduled to return to Morocco. In contrast, I decided to spend some time in France. I even considered staying there for the Yamim Nora'im using the opportunity for renewing my passport.

I was invited to the home of Rabbi David Busseau, shlita, son-in-law of the Baba Sali, zy"a, and a highly respected man of great kindness. He heard I was a grandson of Rabbi Chaim Pinto and happily allowed me to stay with his family during my stay in France.

Father had given me some money for my needs, but I foolishly squandered it all on nonsense. When I went to pick up my luggage, which was at the left-luggage in the train station, I suddenly realized that I had not one franc left to my name. It was the day before Rosh Hashanah and I was understandably nervous. Everything I needed for the upcoming holiday was packed in my suitcase which I had no way of redeeming. As I was too ashamed to ask my host for the money, I decided to turn to Hashem in prayer, asking that He allow me to find a fellow Jew to help me out of my predicament or maybe I would even find the money in the street. I took a walk down Rue des Rosiers in Paris which was a Jewish center in those days, and tried my luck.

It was Erev Rosh Hashanah and countless Jews were making their holiday purchases. I lifted my eyes heavenward and poured my heart out to Hashem once again, arousing the merit of my fathers so that I should feel no shame on the holiday.

It was then that feelings of regret began to settle in. I remembered the Yamim Nora'im in the yeshiva. They would be spent in prayer which touched the soul. Rabbi Shammai Zahn, especially, had everyone moved by his emotional Musaf prayer. Suddenly, the glimmer of Paris was dulled and I felt I wanted to be sheltered in the shadows of the yeshiva, if even for one hour. I knew I had no one to blame for my pathetic predicament but myself. A sense of remorse overtook me. What was I doing here altogether?

Suddenly, my host approached me. "David, did you get your luggage from the train station yet?" he asked.

"I'll take care of it," I quickly replied, "don't worry about it." I was too ashamed to let on that I had wasted all my money on frivolous articles. Afterwards, I felt terribly bad about my misdeeds but fortified myself with faith in Hashem. Although deep down I knew that only an open miracle could turn around my sorrowful fate for the good.

The streets began emptying and I prayed fervently for some direction. I spoke to Hashem from a broken heart and keenly felt the fulfillment of the verse (Tehillim 27:10), "Though my father and mother have forsaken me, Hashem will gather me in." My relatives were all abroad and I was but a sixteen-year-old in a foreign country needing help.

I decided to enter a clothing store and buy the clothes I needed for the holiday. I gathered what I needed: a suit, shirts, shoes, etc. The salesman was very eager to help me, seeing the large purchase I was about to make and he was happy that I did not argue over the prices. I put on a calm expression as though I had the money in my pocket. But in reality, I was broken in spirit and downhearted, knowing I had no way to pay for these things.

I made my way to the counter, quaking inside. The man added up the bill, which amounted to five hundred francs. I told him, "If it's okay with you, give me half an hour to bring you the money. Don't close the shop – I'll be back!" The man saw my sincerity and even said, "If you return earlier, I'll give you a reduction of fifty francs."

I left the store and immediately started begging Hashem to send me an angel of deliverance. I looked around; maybe I would find a familiar Jew who would gladly lend me the money. I looked down; maybe I would find money on the ground. But I couldn't find anything, aside from fallen leaves and litter.

Make A Miracle for Me

Half an hour was almost up and I was dreadfully tense. I turned to Hashem once again and said, "Ribbono Shel Olam, is it difficult for You to give me five hundred francs for expenses for Yom Tov, which You have given us? Am I asking to wear these clothes for personal enjoyment? I want them to honor Your holy days, Hashem, which we are commanded to honor and enjoy with nice clothes. I have sinned before You. Please forgive me, and I will never forget Your kindness. Make a miracle for me which I will never forget."

Suddenly, I heard someone calling, "David! David!" I looked around and found a short man wearing a green shirt and sporting a kippah. He gave me a big smile and said, "Aren't you David Pinto, son of the tzaddik, Rabbi Moshe Aharon?" I affirmed his assumption.

"What in the world are you doing here?" he asked.

"I came to France to visit my father, who passed through on his way home from Eretz Yisrael. I got stuck here since I have to renew my passport after the holidays."

"And where will you be spending Rosh Hashanah?" he continued.

I told him the name of my host in Paris.

He gave me a huge smile and confided, "Listen, I have an envelope with five hundred francs which your host lent me a number of years ago when I was in Eretz Yisrael. If it's not too hard for you, would you pass it on to him, with my warm regards?"

The man gave me the envelope with my host's name written on it, wished me a good new year, kissed me on the forehead, and was gone, without leaving his name or address. I was left very confused by what had just transpired. I had not asked a thing about this man, who came at just the right time to bring me the money I needed for my purchases.

I took a look at the envelope which contained my host's name and address and looked up to see the man, but he had gone as quickly as he had come. I glanced at my watch and saw that the half an hour had passed. I rushed back to the store with the envelope in hand. The man was about to close shop, but as he saw me he reopened the shop. I paid for my purchases and went toward my host's house in good spirits. The entire way, I murmured praises to Hashem for the great kindness He did with me.

Throughout the holiday, I did not breathe a word regarding my rendezvous with the green-shirted man. Only afterwards, when a messenger from Morocco came with money from my parents, did I place five hundred francs in the empty envelope. I brought it to my host and spilled out the entire story.

I begged his forgiveness for the delay in handing over the money and not giving it to him before the Chag, besides asking him to pardon me for using his money in this time of stress without his permission. When he heard my tale, he was visibly shaken and said, "I cannot take the money from you. I have never been in Eretz Yisrael and have never lent such a huge sum of money to anyone. This being so, the money is not mine."

However, I would not give in. "Look!" I said. "Your name and address are written on the envelope, therefore the money is yours. Moreover, the man I spoke to knows who you are."

My host took the envelope and entered his room, trembling in fear. A few moments later, he emerged. "I tried to recall when I could have lent someone this sum of money and I came to the conclusion that this could never have happened. Either your holy grandfather descended from the World of Truth to help you in your time of despair or it was Eliyahu Hanavi. In any event, I cannot take the money from you." He insisted on leaving the money with me.

Years later, when I told Father the whole story, he asked, "Where's the suit?"

"I outgrew it and got rid of it."

"What a shame!" Father said in anguish. "You should know that you got that suit directly from Heaven, sent by an angel on High!"

I Waited with Impatience for the Live Broadcast

This is the story that Moreinu Harav shlita related. And now we will tell you our personal tale that happened to us in light of the above story.

We live in Ra'anana and own a small Hi-tech company in town. When the 'corona crisis' began, our business too suffered like everyone else, but every month, with Hashem's help, we still had enough to cover our living expenses. However, we were very concerned about the month of the Chagim, when the expenses are immeasurable. According to our calculation, we were in need of 8,000 dollars to cover these expenses.

At the end of Elul, the hilula of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto took place in Morocco and like most of our congregation, we too prepared a festive meal and lit candles with our children to honor his memory. We felt such distress for what was facing us that my wife and I said to each other: 'Maybe we too should do as Rabbi David did before that Rosh Hashanah when he asked Rabbi Chaim to come to his aid. We too will pray to Hashem for salvation in the merit of the tzaddik and with Hashem's help we too will receive an envelope.' As we celebrated the hilula, we told our children the story that happened to Rabbi David in his youth in Paris, a story that helped reinforce our emunah.

After the festive meal, my wife and children went to sleep, while I waited with impatience for the live broadcast of the hilula from Essaouira in Morocco. Late at night, the broadcast began and it was a most moving occasion. I saw Rabbi David who was in Essaouira and also the gravesite of Rabbi Chaim. At that opportune moment, I prayed with all my strength and asked the tzaddik to come to our aid in our difficult financial situation.

In my prayer, I begged Hashem for salvation and added, "Rabbi Chaim, help us, for we now need your help more than ever. Send us someone who will lend us $8,000, or those that owe us money should pay their debts today." The hilula finished at one in the morning and I was extremely tired.

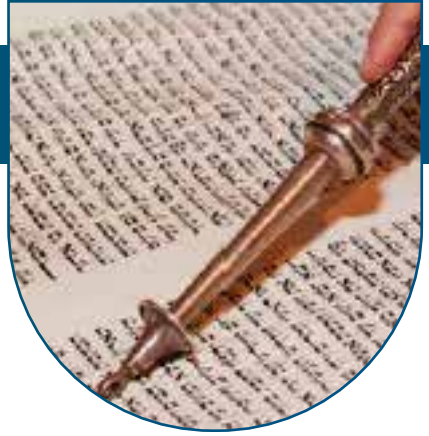
The next day we returned to routine, even though I did not receive the amount that I had hoped to get. I thought to myself: 'I am not worried; I know that Rabbi Chaim will perform a miracle for us.'

I Have a Surprise

At one in the afternoon, my wife called me and said: "I have a surprise!" I thought that she was going to say that our clients had finally paid us. But she related something else entirely, something unfathomable. She had called her previous bank in Europe, where she had an account five years ago before we made Aliyah. She wished to put forward a request for a credit card. However, knowing that the account had been dormant for five years, she did not have much hope that they would approve her request.

To her surprise, the customer service representative said to her, "Madam, you have 8,000 dollars in your account. What do you want to do with it?" My wife worked in an investment bank for fifteen years and knew exactly how much should be in that account, so she tried to clarify the matter and discovered that indeed this amount showed in her account. Unbelievable! She tried to uncover where the money had come from, but without success. No source was discovered.

When she called me with the news, I told her, "My dear wife, it is Rabbi Chaim! Last night at the hilula I asked him to help us obtain $8,000 and here it is, praised be Hashem!



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

For fourteen years Hagar was the wife of Avraham Avinu and even after she separated from him, she remained chaste and her deeds were as beautiful as incense. Eventually Avraham remarried her after she repented.

This gives rise to a difficult question: How do we understand that Hagar wandered and returned to the idolatry of her father's house, as Rashi deduces from the verse, "So Avraham awoke early in the morning, took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He placed them on her shoulder along with the boy and sent her off. She departed and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheva" (Bereishit 21:14). Rashi expounds on the words "She departed, and wandered": "She wandered back to the idolatry of her father's house".

Indeed, Harav Baruch Rosenblum eloquently explains according to the Rashbam, the reason why the water finished was that she wandered. Had she followed the straight path and not wandered, the water would not have finished. Avraham gave her exactly enough water for her needs... but since she wandered and the child was also sick, and a sick person requires more water, this resulted in the water finishing quicker.

The following story is recorded in the sefer of the Gaon Rabbi Shalom Schwadron:

Rabbi Mordechai Pegrimansky was an illui and one of the great Gaonim who lived before and during the Holocaust. He relates that one Friday he travelled by train in Lithuania and during the journey, he came across a religious Jew travelling in the same train, who was a shochet and mohel by profession.

The two began discussing Torah thoughts and did not realize that they had missed their stop. They were so immersed in their learning that they did not even hear when the name of their station was announced...

One hour passed, two hours passed and then came the announcement, "We have arrived at... station".

The Rav heard and cried in distress, "Oh no... we are two hours away from the station where we were supposed to get off... There is no way we will get home in time for Shabbat."

The shochet/mohel was terribly agitated. "Listen," he explained, "I haven't been home for a long time... I promised that I would return for Shabbat".

Rabbi Mordechai replied, "Sir, why are you so disturbed, Hashem wants us to be here for Shabbat!"

"Esteemed Rav", the shochet explained, "I want to tell you something. There are no Jews in this town at all!"

"And how do you know that there are no Jews here?"

"Because if Jews lived here, they would call me to slaughter for them."

With no other choice, they left the train station and asked one of the wagon drivers, "Maybe you can tell us if there are any Jews here?" "Yes, indeed", he replied. "There is one Jew who lives here. I will take you to him".

The wagon driver drove them to a house at the edge of the village. They alighted and sighed with relief as they walked up the path, baruch Hashem there was a mezuzah on the door.

They knocked on the door which was quickly opened by a visibly Jewish man...

Standing on his doorstep were two Jews, an unfamiliar Rav and the shochet. His face turned pale and he started breathing heavily. "Excuse me," he asked them, "Perhaps one of you is a mohel?"

"Indeed," answered Rabbi Mordechai, "My friend here is a mohel!"

The Jew was overcome with joy, "Blessed is Hashem..."

"What happened?" they asked.

"Last week" he began to explain, "I had a baby boy. We did not know when the brit milah would take place because the baby was not feeling well. Just today, the doctor told us that we can go ahead with the Brit... "Now you are telling me?" I exclaimed. "At twelve o'clock Friday afternoon? From where will I bring a mohel?"

I turned to Hashem and prayed, "Master of the world, You commanded me, 'On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised'. I want to perform this mitzvah, but I do not have a mohel. What should I do?!"

I cried, I prayed. And Hashem brought you here!"

Rabbi Mordechai turned to his fellow traveler and said, "Now do you understand why we came here?! We have here the father of an infant, I will be the sandak and you will serve as the mohel!"

While they were preparing themselves to perform the Brit, Rabbi Mordechai told the father: Now I understand a Rashi that always bothered me. On the verse (Bereishit 21:14), "She departed, and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheva" Rashi says that from here we learn that she wandered back to the idolatry of her father's house. How did Rashi know this? It is written that she wandered on the way, she mistakenly left the path, but why does this mean that she returned to her father's idol worship? Where is it written?

Rabbi Mordechai Pegrimansky went on to explain, "It is very simple. A Jew does not make a mistake! I was talking in learning with my fellow traveler and that is how, without intending to, I did not pay attention and missed my stop. It was not a mistake.

There is no such thing! With a Jew, Hashem guides every step of his way. And if the verse writes, "She departed, and wandered in the desert of Beer-sheva", it means that she wasn't a Jew, for had she been Jewish, this word wander would not appear. A Jew does not wander without a predetermined direction; a Jew is guided!"