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689

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlitia**
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l**, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta**



Maskil L'David

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

Light is Torah

"The Jews had light and joy, and gladness and honor" (Esther 8:16)

On Purim in 2009, we were fortunate to host in France the esteemed gaon, Rabbi Baruch Shimon Solomon, ztk"l, the Chief Rabbi of Petach Tikvah. There were few people then who recognized his outstanding greatness in Torah and exceptional conduct, whether in his many lectures that he delivered in halachah and aggadah, and also in his leadership. Not long after, we were informed about his passing. It is an irreparable loss.

A few days before his sudden passing, he sent me a spiritual "mishloach manot" which contained words of Torah – the words of the "Sefat Emet," zy"ta, regarding the gemara (Megillah 16b) "The Jews had light and joy" – Rabbi Yehudah said: "Light" means the Torah, and so it says, "For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light." The Sfat Emet asks – If so, it would seem that the Megillah should have stated: "The Jews had Torah;" so why does it state, "Light," which is interpreted to signify the Torah? He answers that it is because Bnei Yisrael merited seeing the light of the Torah. This is his commentary.

I would like to add to his sacred words that it is true that many people study Torah, but not all of them merit perceiving the light hidden in the Torah. While many sit and learn, it may be that it is done through coercion and lack of choice and not from their genuine desire to learn. They feel that the Torah is a heavy burden because they still did not merit perceiving the light and beauty inherent in it, and did not taste its sweetness. Only in the days of Mordechai and Esther, as a result of their overwhelming appreciation of the miracle done for them, love for Hashem and His Torah entered their heart. Only then they merited perceiving the dazzling light and the sweetness inherent in the Torah, and therefore the Megillah states "The Jews had light." They actually possessed the Torah already from the time they had received it on Mount Sinai, but only now they merited perceiving its light. In other words, they merited perceiving its beauty and glory because "Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

The Gemara states (Shabbat 88a): "And they stood under the mount... this teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask." Thus they accepted the Torah through coercion. Nonetheless, they re-accepted the Torah by choice in the days of Achashveirosh, as it states (Esther 9:27), "[The Jews] confirmed, and took upon themselves" – they confirmed what they had accepted long before. This proves that only now in the days of Achashveirosh Am Yisrael merited experiencing the sweetness and true light of the Torah, and only now they realized that the Torah and mitzvot are not a heavy burden, chalillah, but on the contrary, the eternal Torah of our people is a way of life, and anyone who parts from it, it is as if he is parting from life. I think that this is the

main lesson of the miracle which occurred during the days of Mordechai and Esther, since then they opened their eyes to perceive the dazzling light of the Torah.

However, we still need to clarify how it was possible that only in the days of Mordechai and Esther the Jews accepted the Torah willingly. After all, when the Jews witnessed Hashem's miracles during their Exodus from Egypt, and they saw His strong Hand and outstretched Arm at the Sea, and they merited building the Mishkan, and Hashem's Shechinah walked with them, why was this not enough to inspire them to receive the Torah willingly and with love?

I would like to explain, with siyata d'Shemaya, that only in the days of Mordechai and Esther they discovered the bitter truth that up until then they had only accepted the Torah through coercion... Many times a person prays fervently and he innocently assumes that he prayed exceedingly well from his heart and his prayer is welcomed and favorable to Hashem, bringing Him pleasure. However, some time later, after praying with even more concentration, a prayer that stems from love of Hashem, and he feels Hashem's closeness to him, only then he realizes that in retrospect, the prayers which he had considered welcomed and favorable, was not so at all. A person may remain deluded all his life thinking that had always served Hashem with joy and good-will and through love of Torah and mitzvot, however, in the End of Days his error will become clear to him, that his service of Hashem was not for the Sake of Heaven, but only lip-service. It may have been only in order to achieve greater respect, or for other personal gains.

This is what happened to Bnei Yisrael. True that on Mount Sinai Bnei Yisrael received the Torah and engaged in it and served Hashem, observing His mitzvot. They innocently assumed that they had done everything with utmost dedication and devotion. They mistakenly thought that their superficial service of Hashem was sufficient and they did not imagine that something more was necessary. However, in the days of Mordechai and Esther, after experiencing the incredible miracle done for them, their hearts opened, overflowing with love for Torah, and love for Hashem burned within them. They felt the delight and sweetness of the Torah, and at once they realized that they had only then begun to accept the Torah willingly, with all their heart. This realization swept over them when they saw the whole picture of the "turnabout," as it says, "It was reversed, the Jews should rule over their enemies." Subsequently, this is when they began to sense their error in assuming that had been serving Hashem up until then sincerely and perfectly. Only after the miracle of Purim they realized that their acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai was more like coercion compared to their wholehearted acceptance of the Torah in the days of Mordechai and Esther.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

13 – Rabbi Moshe Feinstein Author of
"Igrot Moshe"

14 – Rabbi Shem Tov ben Rabbi Yitzchak
ben Walid

15 – Rabbi Zvi Hirsh Kaidenover Author
of "Kav Hayashar"

16 – Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Alter The
Admor of Gur

17 – Rabbi Ezra Adas

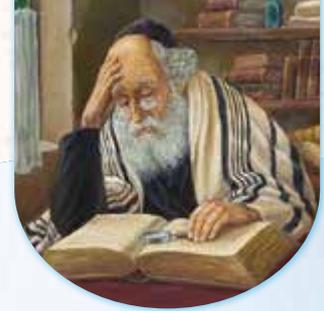
18 – Rabbi Alexander Ziskind Author of
"Yesod v'Shoresh Ha'avodah"

19 – Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld



Walking in their Ways

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



Words of Our Sages

Model Behavior

A handsome young man once came to me and said that he was asked to pose as a model. The first time I saw him, I was also struck by his good looks. At that time, I had put forth a prayer that his features should never be the cause of his downfall.

I was saddened at the prospect that he would pursue this type of career. I exhorted him to at least lay tefillin and observe certain other mitzvot, which would protect his neshamah.

One day, I got a phone call from him. "Honored Rav, I must have your advice," he began. "My father passed away, and his funeral is this afternoon. But I am scheduled to fly somewhere in order to sign a contract with a big company, to pose for them. This is an offer of a few million francs. But I don't know what to do. My father's funeral is exactly the same time as the flight."

"Do you know what the burial society will do today with your father?" I asked.

"They will bury him, obviously."

"Do you know what they bury? They bury a person's body. Do you resemble your father?"

He responded in the affirmative.

"If so, think a little about your end. Your body, too, will be buried underground, as we are told, 'You are dust, and to dust shall you return' (Bereishit 3:19). Still, you insist on

selling your body to a foreign firm. The Jewish nation does not subscribe to modeling. It is not fitting for a man or woman's body to be on public display. Moreover, how can you, in good conscience, take a flight to sell your body when you know that your father's body is being interred just then?"

The young man was surprised at the turn in the conversation. I continued, "I would like to express my condolences, and I sincerely hope you make the right choice."

A few days later, I met this young man in the Beit Hakeneset Buffault in Paris, when I delivered a sermon there. After my speech, this young man approached me. I noticed that he hadn't shaved, as is the custom among mourners. I asked what had happened in the end regarding his contract. He replied, "I came in order to rip it to pieces before the Rav." Before I could utter a word, he took out the contract and tore it to shreds.

"What made you change your mind and forego such a lucrative career?" I asked.

"My body is not for sale!" he declared determinedly.

I was extremely happy to hear this. "You acted properly," I told him. "One cannot observe Hashem's mitzvot while doing whatever he feels like. There are times when a person must decide which road he is taking, for better or for worse. I am glad you chose the right road, the one that leads to life."

Injections of Tehillim

"And Aaron will carry the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the Lord at all times" (Shemot 28:30)

Why did Aharon have to carry the names of the children of Israel over his heart at all times?

The Seforno explains: In order that he should pray for them to be judged favorably.

This implies that it is commendable for a person to share in the pain of his fellow and pray for them constantly. In order to pray properly for Bnei Yisrael, it was necessary to carry in his heart their plight and really feel their grief.

One of the students of the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva relates:

While studying in Yeshiva, one winter night at midnight, I woke suddenly to the sound of loud noise coming from the Beit Midrash of the Yeshiva. I got dressed and quickly went to the Beit Midrash and saw the Rosh Yeshiva, the gaon Rabbi Meir Shapiro, zt"l, pass before the Ark, reciting Tehillim tearfully, crying like a small child.

I tried to find out what happened, and I learned that the gaon was praying and pleading for one of his students who was diagnosed with a difficult illness a few days earlier. Then, that night, the well-known doctor was called and stated that in his opinion there was no hope for the student's recovery. I was distressed and shaken to the core by the terrible cries of the Rosh Yeshiva, and all the students cried along with him.

Two days later, we were informed, with siyata d'Shemaya, that the sick young man was out of danger, and the doctor who treated him (who was not religious) declared that he wished to do teshuvah. He was flabbergasted and could find no explanation for the miracle that happened to the patient. He was convinced that only the prayers of the Rosh Yeshiva and his students saved the student from death.

Another doctor then asked Rabbi Meir Shapiro, what are the secret injections that he gives his students, which cures them of their ailments. The Rosh Yeshiva answered simply, "Injections of Tehillim"...

The Haftarah



The haftarah of the week:

"And Shmuel said"

(Shmuel I, 15)

The connection to the parashah: On this Shabbat, which is Shabbat Zachor, we read the haftarah that mentions the issue of obliterating Amalek after they went to war against Bnei Yisrael in the time of King Shaul.



Chazak U'Baruch

Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

It is incumbent upon every Jew on earth to live his life with pure faith, with the realization that everything stems from Hashem and there is no other, because faith is the foundation that everything rests on, and it is not something that comes naturally, but one must constantly nurture his faith deep in his heart.

One of the ways to nurture faith and instill it in our children is by reinforcing acts of faith, such as reciting a hundred blessings every day, with the proper intention, and answering Amen after them. In truth, this is a halachic obligation in every Jewish home, as the Rema writes (Orach Chaim 124:7): "And he should teach his young children to answer Amen, because from the time that the child answers Amen, he acquires a portion in the World to Come."

In fact, by young children, every impression is engraved in their heart and leaves their mark for many years. If they get used to saying Amen, which verifies the absolute Kingship of Hashem constantly and permanently by answering Amen after every blessing, this impression leaves its mark and remains etched deep in their souls. Thus, part of the "Torat imecha- the instruction of your mother" is to instill in her children the tremendous importance of answering Amen.

This training must begin when the children are very small, as is implied by the words of the Rema that "from the time that the child answers Amen, he acquires a portion in the World to Come." This segulah primarily depends upon the mother, since she is the one who takes care of them when they are young, and in this way she plants within them the root of faith in their pure hearts. A father and mother who do this should be aware that have granted their children a wonderful gift for which the gates of Gan Eden are opened.

All Gates are Opened

In the booklet "Derashot Hitorrerut" (lectures of the Admor, zt"l "Yeshuot Moshe" of Vizhnitz) the author exhorts his followers to warn others to remain quiet during prayers, and to make sure that during the repetition of the Chazan silence prevails, and that they should listen when Kaddish is recited and have the children answer Amen after every blessing properly. These things are of supreme importance, but unfortunately many people neglect them.

I once told someone: You want to talk? No problem! After prayers sit with your friend and talk all you want about whatever you need, but why is it necessary to talk specifically in the middle of "Kaddish" and thereby miss answering Amen after the blessing?! Of course, after the prayers, he rushes home together with the other congregants, since he has important things to do... like make Kiddush... The most important thing is "Amen" and "Amen, y'hei shmay rabbah" – these are of supreme importance!

Regarding the awesome importance of answering Amen, let us heed the words of Rabbeinu the Maharsh" a (Shabbat 119b) that every tzaddik has in Gan Eden has a habitation as befits his honor, as Chazal say: "Not a single righteous man lacks a habitation as befits his honor." Anyone who answers Amen with all his might, all the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him. Thus Chazal say, "He who responds 'Amen' with all his might, has the gates of Gan Eden opened for him." "Gates" is in the plural form, in order to teach us that all the gates are opened for him.

Likewise it is stated in Tanna D'vei Eliyahu (Zuta 20), "The criminals among the Jews answer Amen from within Gehinnom; Hashem says to the angels: Who are these that answer Amen from within Gehinnom? They tell Him: Master of the World these are the criminals among the Jews who although they are suffering in Gehinnom, they gather their strength and say before You, Amen. And Hashem tells the Ministering Angels: Open the gates of Gan Eden for them so they should come and sing before me, as it says (Yeshayahu 26:2) "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps truth [shomer emunim] may enter in": read not "shomer emunim" but "she'omrim Amen" [that say, Amen].

Treasures

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



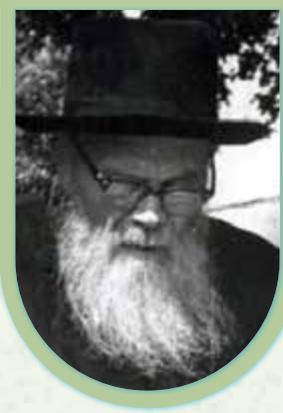
Garments of Torah

"And you shall speak to all the wise-hearted people whom I have invested with a spirit of wisdom, and they shall make the vestments of Aharon, to sanctify him to minister to Me"
(Shemot 28:3)

Hashem commanded Moshe to search for people invested with wisdom and appoint them to prepare the holy vestments of Aharon, the Kohen Gadol. Why did someone need to be wise in order to sew these clothes? Any professional tailor is capable of fashioning beautiful garments. There are many simple people who fashioned exceptional creations. Thus, we need to clarify what the significance is in Hashem's command to Moshe to search for wise-hearted people and appoint only them to prepare the holy vestments for the Kohen.

As an example of the exalted level which the clothing must attain, let us look at the Me'il that Aharon wore. It had bells at the bottom. As long as the nation heard their tinkling when Aharon was in the Kodesh Hakodashim, they knew he was faring well. As soon as it ceased, they began to worry and checked up on him. Apart from this task, the bells were there to remind the Kohen before Whom he was standing and serving in the Beit Hamikdash. The bells constantly rang in his ears, peeling away the layers of indifference and laxity. He was always enjoined to be meticulous in his work, and take care to do it properly.

The clothes of the Kohen Gadol were not merely physical garb. They were saturated with yirat Shamayim, which would become transferred to the wearer. This would help the Kohen reach great heights in Avodat Hashem and be meticulous in his Service in the Mikdash. He would constantly remember before Whom he stands. This is why only men of great wisdom and knowledge of Hashem were chosen for the job of sewing the garments. Their magnificent middot would be transferred to the clothes they made, weaving a level of loftiness in Avodat Hashem into the garments, so that no mishaps would occur through them, chalilah.



Your Eyes Shall Behold Your Teacher

Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian * "The Greatest Mussar Figure in our Generation"

One of his first students, who is now an elderly man, recounted that to this day the melody of his Rav's voice still echoes in his ears when he sings the verse, "By David, a michtam, when he fled from Saul in the cave" (Psalms 57:1). Verses such as these from the Book of Psalms, which Rabbi Eliyahu recited with sighs and tears, have accompanied him his entire life.

For various reasons, Rabbi Eliyahu left Kelm and went to live in England. He founded Etz Chaim yeshiva in London and there, as in Kelm, he never ceased his study of Mussar. He strived with all his might to educate a generation of youngsters in England according to his approach. Jews who came to the British capital would often visit the yeshiva, but when their feet crossed its threshold they forgot all the commotion that rang out from the great city, and instead felt that they were in Kelm. Also in London as in Kelm, Rabbi Eliyahu's home was open to all who wished to enter. The students of the yeshiva often ate at his table, to the extent that they stayed in the presence of their Rav's shadow for a large part of the day. Rabbi Eliyahu remained in England for 24 years, educating an amazing generation in Torah and Mussar.

Near the end of his life, Rabbi Eliyahu departed for Eretz Israel, where he spent the remainder of his days in the Knesset Chizkiyahu yeshiva in the rural city of Kfar Chassidim. There he accomplished amazing things, taking special care to get closer to those youngsters who were far from his path and approach. He devoted himself intensely to the Tzabarim, who spoke Hebrew and wore knitted kippot, and exerted a great influence on them through the purity of his mind and his method of Mussar. Many of these youngsters left their life of comfort in their parents' homes to follow their elderly Rav and warm themselves by the light of his Torah. The Tzabarim became attached to him with every fiber of their being and cherished him with all their heart and soul. Even near the end of his life, he was sensitive to every individual student, discerning what bothered each of them, recognizing which ones truly feared G-d, knowing which elevated themselves in the rungs of holiness, and worrying over each like he was his own son.

One story has it that a young student from a yeshiva in Jerusalem came to visit him in Kfar

Chassidim. After prayers he approached Rabbi Eliyahu and said "Shalom Aleichem," and in the ensuing conversation the young man explained to Rabbi Eliyahu that he had come from Jerusalem with the intention of staying until Thursday. On Friday morning as Rabbi Eliyahu went to pray, he saw that the young man was still at the yeshiva. He invited him to his home, and there he asked him what his intentions were with respect to Shabbat. The young man replied, "I made some friends here and found the atmosphere very enjoyable, so I've decided to stay until after Shabbat." Upon hearing this, Rabbi Eliyahu got up, went towards his closet, and took out a clean, white undershirt. He then said to him, "You didn't plan on staying for Shabbat, so you certainly didn't bring a change of clothes with you. Take this undershirt and some undergarments for Shabbat."

Another story has it that Rabbi Eliyahu once went to see the Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Zev of Brisk in Jerusalem. He sat down and gazed into the Brisker Rav's face, with the Brisker Rav looking at him as well, and they exchanged a few words. When Rabbi Eliyahu left, the Gaon of Brisk said to his sons and students, "Did you see him? That was Rabbi Israel Salanter's intention when he founded the Mussar movement."

When Rabbi Eliyahu traveled to the United States, all the yeshivot invited him to speak to their students. His words made a profound impression on them, for they emanated from a pure heart and thus entered into the hearts of his listeners. He was an amazing speaker who knew how to inspire his audiences.

Rabbi Eliyahu lived almost 100 years. Multitudes of Jews followed his funeral procession, and the greatest Roshei Yeshiva of Eretz Israel gave eulogies for him. His grave was dug at the summit of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. With the passing of Rabbi Eliyahu, a powerful figure disappeared from our ranks, a leftover from the Great Assembly and the last of his kind in our generation.

Rabbi Eliyahu left behind sons who became great in Torah, men who have served as Rosh Yeshiva in a variety of places. He saw his grandchildren and great grandchildren all walking in the ways of G-d, and in their lives they perpetuated his ways.

Three times a day we pray in the Shemoneh Esrei for G-d's mercy to be "upon the righteous, upon the pious, upon the elders of Your people, the House of Israel, and upon the remnant of their sages." Have you ever asked yourself just who are the "remnant of their sages"? These are the Sages – the Sages of the Torah – that G-d left from former generations in order to tell us of their predecessors, and to reflect the character of Torah greats of previous generations. One of these Sages, a man left over from the Great Assembly, was Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian. On Elul 20, 5370 (1970), at the age of nearly 100, he passed away in Eretz Israel at the approach of Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Eliyahu drank from the source of the "lions" of Mussar: Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer of St. Petersburg, Rabbi Simcha Zissel Ziv of Kelm, and Rabbi Naphtali Amsterdam, the main disciples of Rabbi Israel Salanter, the father of the Mussar movement.

Rabbi Eliyahu was born to Rabbi Yaakov in the city of Graibe (near Lomza) around the year 5632 (1872). He studied in the Lomza yeshiva, which was founded was Rabbi Eliezer Shulevitz, one of Rabbi Israel Salanter's young disciples.

Rabbi Eliyahu married the daughter of Rabbi Yitzchak David Weinmacher ("the winemaker"), a famous Tzaddik from Lomza. Under the influence of his father-in-law and Rabbi Eliezer Shulevitz, Rabbi Eliyahu left for Kelm, the residence of Rabbi Simcha Zissel, the man of Mussar who founded the great "Talmud Torah" from which the most renowned Mussar figures of the previous generations emerged. He stayed many years in Kelm and devoted himself to the Mussar of his great Rav, which he spread everywhere he went. At first this was in the small city of Kelm, then in England, and finally in Eretz Israel during the latter part of his life.

Rabbi Eliyahu founded a yeshiva in Kelm for the young, and there he educated many students in Torah and Mussar. Even until today, his remaining students evoke his name with great reverence.



Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

The following story was told by Rabbi Meir Pinto, zy" a:

One year there was a big shortage of fish. Since it is a custom to eat fish on Shabbat in accordance with Kabbalistic teaching, Rabbi Chaim Hagadol summoned a fisherman and requested, "Please go to the ocean and catch some fish."

"Rabbeinu! For so many weeks now there have been no fish in the sea."

Rabbi Chaim instructed him, "Go to the edge of the sea and every time you throw your net into the water, say 'Chaim,' and fish will emerge."

The fisherman did as the tzaddik instructed, and in a few moments he had amassed a large stock of high-quality fish with which to honor Shabbat Kodesh.

When people heard that the fisherman had a stock of fish, they flocked to him, begging him to sell them some. However, the fisherman refused to sell even one fish, insisting that the fish were not his, but belonged to Rabbi Chaim Pinto.

Rabbi Chaim Pinto took the whole stock and distributed the fish to all the people of the city, leaving only a small portion for himself.

When his friend, Rabbi David Chazan heard about the episode, he came to the Rav's house on Shabbat night and said, "Rabbi Chaim! I heard that you have Chaim (life) in your house."

"That is true," Rabbi Chaim replied. "I have Chaim in my house."

The two sat together by the Shabbat table, relishing the special dishes of fish. Thus, they were able to uphold this traditional custom, originating in Kabbalistic teaching.