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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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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" a



Maskil LéDavid

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

To devote oneself to the Torah: the true life

"You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd, your G-d, am holy" (Vayikra 19:2)

There are two definitions of kedushah. There is kedushah which refers to the attribute of abstinence, as in "Sanctify yourself through what is permissible to you," as the Ramban writes. Then there is kedushah which is distancing oneself from transgressions that the Torah prohibits. This too is considered kedushah, as Rashi writes (pasuk 2) "You shall be holy" – Separate yourself from incest and from transgression, for wherever you find a fence around incest you find (mention also of) holiness (kedushah)," and some examples are given.

This abstinence is expressed by separating oneself from the nations of the world, since the nations of the world are immoral and allow themselves to be immersed in adultery, in eating treifot and engaging in all lustful abominations, while we guard ourselves from all this, since we guard ourselves from all sin. We can interpret the words "Sanctify yourself through what is permissible to you" to mean that we should sanctify ourselves from anything that was permissible before the giving of the Torah, since then we were not commanded about incest, as we find that Yakov married two sisters, and the Tribes married their sisters, and Amram married Yocheved, who was his aunt, because it was not prohibited at that time. But now that we received the Torah and accepted the decrees of Hashem, we can sanctify ourselves by distancing ourselves from incest, and refrain from eating forbidden foods, as well as being meticulous with all other dictates of the Torah.

This is learned from the pesukim at the end of the parashah, in which it is stated: "I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine." It clarifies, what is the kedushah that Hashem sanctified us with? By being separated from the nations of the world. Rashi's comment on the pasuk is devastating, "If you are separated from them [through your observance of Torah], you will be Mine, but if not, you will belong to Nevuchadnezzar and his ilk."

So it was in all the generations. Whenever the Jews tried to get closer to the nations of the world, the Gentiles would persecute them more and more. Unfortunately, this is the situation today. Why is this so? Because there are those who want to mingle with the Gentiles, adopt their culture and befriend them. Also here in Eretz Yisrael, the Holy Land, the influence of the nations is felt. This is "Nevuchadnezzar." And who are his "ilk"? They are the oppressors of the Jews, who rise up against them in every generation for the same reason; because Jews draw close to and imitate the nations of the world. It is dreadful that Hashem referred to Nevuchadnezzar as "My servant," and sent him to destroy the Beit Hamikdash and the Jewish cities, but of course it was during the time when Am Yisrael distanced themselves from Hashem and they did not seek true closeness with Him.

There is another level of kedushah, which is to be separated from the nations for the sake of Heaven.

This is what Rashi continues to note from the words of Chazal: Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah says: How do we know that a person should not say, "I find pork disgusting," or "It is impossible for me to wear a mixture [of wool and linen]," but rather, one should say, "I indeed wish to, but what can I do-my Father in heaven has imposed these decrees upon me?" Because Scripture says here, "And I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine"-your very distinction from the other peoples must be for My Name, separating yourself from transgression and accepting upon yourself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In conclusion, there are three levels of kedushah. There is the level described by the words "You shall be holy," which is to be sanctified through that which is permitted to us, and this is the first level. The second level is "You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am the L-rd, your G-d and you shall observe My statutes and fulfill them. I am the L-rd, Who sanctifies you," which we achieve by fulfilling the laws of Hashem (accepting Hashem's laws without question), since then it follows that "I am the L-rd Who sanctifies you." The third level is "And you shall be holy to Me, for I, the L-rd, am holy, and I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine." This is achieved by separating ourselves from the nations for the sake of Heaven, and this is the ultimate kedushah. Chazal say that [the fulfillment of] one commandment brings along with it [an opportunity to fulfill] another commandment [i.e., one commandment leads to another]. So too, one level of kedushah leads to another level of kedushah. At first the Torah commands a person to achieve the first level of "You shall be holy," which implies that one should sanctify himself through that which is permissible to him in general matters such as refraining from conversing with a woman, or limiting how much food and wine he consumes.

Afterward, the Torah requires of man perfection in the service of Hashem, as it is stated "You shall observe My statutes and fulfill them" as well as, "If you follow My statutes" (Vayikra 26:3), which refers to the commandments and laws that are our guiding light whereby a person becomes closer to Hashem. Thereafter, the pasuk states, "And you shall be holy to Me," which implies that you will become connected to Hashem, and this is the essential difference between Jews and the other nations of the world. This is the greatest Kiddush Hashem, as we say in the Shabbat prayers, "May Israel, the sanctifiers of Your Name, rest on it," since Shabbat is the supreme loftiness of the Jewish people, and through Shabbat we sanctify Hashem's Name. The more we separate ourselves from the nations, the more we merit greater honor. But if we try to imitate their way of life, then their hatred towards us grows.

May it be His will that we merit drawing close to Hashem and rising to great heights of kedushah, as it is stated, "And you shall be holy to Me," Amen.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

13 - Rabbi Yakov Meir Shechter

14 - Rabbi Meir Ba'al Haness

15 - Rabbi David Yehodayoff

16 - Rabbi Yitzchak Chai Teib

17 - Rabbi Yakov Rosental

19 - Rabbi Ezra Attiya



Walking in their Ways

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

License to Observe a Miracle

One of my students, Mr. Roger Haziza, told me that for a very long time, he had an old car which was in dire need of an overhaul. He knew that if the police would stop him while driving this car, he could anticipate a hefty fine and even have his license revoked. From Heaven, he was spared this anguish, and he drove to his heart's content.

One evening, after a Torah lecture, Mr. Haziza drove me home in his jalopy. While continuing on to his own home, he was stopped for a police check. Finding a large amount of cash and gold in his car, they immediately took him to be a criminal of the underworld.

Mr. Haziza explained to them that the merchandise in his car was perfectly legal, for he deals with jewelry. But they ordered him to stop at the side of the road while they checked into the matter.

As they were investigating, a police officer asked Mr. Haziza, "Do you realize that it is dangerous to drive such a beat-up car?" Mr. Haziza lowered his eyes, while offering a prayer heavenward. "Ribbono shel Olam," he began, "I have just now returned from doing a mitzvah of chessed by driving Rabbi David Pinto, shlita. How can it be that I will lose out by doing this? Messengers of a mitzvah are saved from harm, on the way to the mitzvah and on the way back."

He found himself responding to the policeman, "Thank you for your warning about my car. You should know that with your words, you have saved my life, as well as the lives of others, who travel with me on a daily basis. Who knows what could have happened had you not warned me, and I would innocently continue driving this car? You may take my license, because that is what I deserve. In the future, I promise to be more careful."

The officer was embarrassed at this show of remorse. He told Mr. Haziza that he could go without a fine and with his license. But he must have his car fixed the next morning.

The Haftarah

"And the word of the L-rd came to me, saying, And you, son of man"

(Yechezkiel 22)

The connection to the parashah: The Navi cries over the sins of Bnei Yisrael, which is similar to the parashah in which Bnei Yisrael are warned not to commit the abominations like the other nations.

In the Ashkenazi communities, the haftarah is "**Behold, you are like the children of the Cushites to Me**" (Amos 9), where it tells about the Kingdom of Israel that they will be exiled because of the sins of the generation, which is similar to what is mentioned in the parashah, "And let the land not vomit you out for having defiled it."



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

For a constructive purpose

There is no difference in the prohibition of slander, whether he tells it to other people, his relative, his distant acquaintances, or his wife, unless it is for a constructive purpose, which one needs to know. For example, if his wife sells on credit to untrustworthy people, and it would be difficult to get her money back from them, so he can tell her about their derogatory nature and warn her not to sell to them on credit.



Words of our Sages

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the L-rd"

(Vayikra 19:18)

The Ba'al Shem Tov, zya"l, explains this according to what is stated in Tehillim (121:5): "The L-rd is your Guardian; the L-rd is your shadow; [He is] by your right hand." What does this imply? That Hashem is like the shadow of a person. Just as the shadow of a person reflects exactly what the person does, so too Hashem acts with a person as he acts with others. If he is benevolent and kind, even to those that are not deserving, Hashem will also bestow kindness upon him, even if he is not worthy of it.

This is also the meaning of the words in the pasuk above: "You shall love," because "as yourself – I am the L-rd." Just as you behave toward your fellow, even when he does not deserve it, I will also treat you...

In the sefer "Yesod Tzaddik," it is brought that once Rabbi Shlomke of Zhevil, zt"l, turned to his attendant the gaon Rabbi Eliyahu Roth, zt"l, and asked him the meaning of Rabbi Akiva's words (Torat Kohanim Parashat Kedoshim), "You shall love your neighbor as yourself; this is a fundamental principle of the Torah." If he states that this is a fundamental and important principle, then what is a minor and less important principle? Rabbi Eliyahu remained silent and waited to hear what his Rebbi would say.

The Rebbi went on to explain to him, and this is what he said:

For example, if you would hear that a well-known Etrog merchant earned a huge sum of money in the Etrog trade, then the minor principle is that you should not begrudge his profits, since "what is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor" (Shabbat 31a). However, the fundamental principle is that not only should you not begrudge his profits, but even rejoice over it, as if you yourself would have earned them. This is the fundamental principle of "You shall love your neighbor as yourself!"



Chazak U'Baruch

Guarding one's eyes

In order to understand the power of one non-kosher act of looking at a forbidden sight, we will recount the incredible story about the gaon Rabbi Shmuel Vosner, zt"l, author of "Shevet Levi," as written in the sefer "Barchi Nafshi."

A prominent Jew in America, whose son reached the age of Bar Mitzvah, wanted to give his child a big expensive gift in honor of his Bar Mitzvah and informed him that he would go to Eretz Yisrael to the Beit Midrash of Rabbi Vosner, and there the tzaddik would put on tefillin for him for the first time in his life.

The child was very excited over the "spiritual" gift he was granted, and prepared himself well for the flight to Eretz Yisrael. The father told his son that Rabbi Vosner requested of him that a few days before they planned to depart, he should call him again to make sure that everything was okay, so that he would not come in vain.

The father had already purchased the tickets, which cost him about \$2000.00. And then, about a week before the flight the father called Rabbi Vosner. To his astonishment, he heard the great tzaddik, author of "Shevet Levi," tell him: I decided that you should not come to Bnei Brak!"

"What happened all of a sudden?" the stunned father asked, "My son has been preparing for this already a long time!

The gaon Rabbi Vosner explained his decision: "It is true that there is something special about putting on tefillin for the first time, and it is preferable to do it with a Rabbi. But did you consider, dear father, how many forbidden sights your son may see on the long journey from America to Eretz Yisrael? Is the damage worth the gains?"

The dazed father tried to explain that the Bar Mitzvah boy would be very disappointed, but of course all the arguments did not help. "Nothing in the world is worth the damage that may occur to the child by seeing forbidden sights," the tzaddik ruled.

The father went on to ask: "And what will I do with the tickets I bought for \$2000.00?"

"Go and buy a beautiful frame," the Rabbi said, "and put the two tickets inside, and on the top of the frame print in large letters, 'We sacrificed these two tickets, which cost \$2000.00, so that our son would not see forbidden sights!'"

The gaon Rabbi Zilberstein, who told the story, continued with another account about "a response that we received from a mother that shocked us to the core." This mother was occupied with taking care of her nine children, bli ayin hara, of all ages, and she decided to travel with her husband, during the summer vacation, to Switzerland. It was not only for one day, or for two. "I feel that if I do not go to Switzerland for two whole weeks, I will not have a rest," she claimed.

"Let's not talk about the actual departure from Eretz Yisrael, which is an issue that we discussed on another occasion. But we asked the mother who would watch over her children during the time that she would be away, and warned her, "you are well aware of the tremendous spiritual dangers lurking in the streets." She replied readily:

"Hashem will watch over them..."

And because I could not believe my ears, I repeated my question. The mother answered that since she does not have any close family to help out, "We have no choice but to rely on Hashem, Who will protect our children while we are in Switzerland."

I must say that this shocked me terribly. How could a mother dare to utter such words?! Did Hashem entrust her with the children that He should watch over them? Where did she get this idea from to travel to Switzerland and leave her children alone without supervision?! Are there not enough cases in which children got ruined because of such stories, when parents left the children alone and went on vacation?"

The spiritual dangers are so rampant, and it is incumbent upon us to be vigilant and sometimes sacrifice tempting material pleasures for the purpose of guarding the sanctity and purity within the walls of our homes.

Treasures

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



The Yetzer Hara has no limits!

"Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd, your G-d, am holy" (Vayikra 19b)

"You shall be holy," Rashi explains: Separate yourself from incest and from transgression, for wherever you find a fence around incest you find (mention also of) holiness (kedushah)," The Midrash brings that this parashah was transmitted before the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael, because most central laws of the Torah are dependent upon it.

The extent of the power of the yetzer hara concerning adultery is illustrated in the following pasuk (Vayikra 21:14), "A widow, a divorcee, a desecrated woman, a harlot – he shall not marry these; only a virgin of his people shall he take as a wife." It is forbidden for a Kohen Gadol to marry a widow. The commentaries explain that the Torah feared perhaps the Kohen Gadol would set his eyes on a married woman, and when he would be in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he would pray to Hashem to have a wife like that woman he saw. If there was no woman just like her, what would be then? After all, the prayers of the Kohen Gadol are never in vain. So in order to fulfill his request, Hashem would kill the woman's husband so that the Kohen Gadol could marry his wife. Therefore, the Torah says that he is forbidden to marry a widow so that he should not covet her, since even if her husband would die, she would still be forbidden to him. Thus, the Kohen Gadol would never consider endangering the life of the woman or her husband and pray in the Holy of Holies that Hashem should provide him with a woman like the wife of that man, thus endangering the life of her husband so that she would become widowed and he could marry her.

This is absolutely frightening and the words talk for themselves.

Is it possible that at the height of the holiest day of Yom Kippur, inside the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place, the Kohen Gadol would stand and pray that he desires to marry a woman like the married woman whom he set his eyes upon?

And the answer is: yes. Because the yetzer hara for immorality knows no limits, and it has the power to influence even the greatest person and fuel his passion until he is corrupted, even within the Holy of Holies.

From this we see that no one can assert that he is so sanctified that he is protected from the wiles of the yetzer hara, because even if he would not sin actively, he could not escape entertaining immoral thoughts. If he will not guard himself properly, he will ultimately come to sinning, at least by thinking improper thoughts.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Thinking positive

“You shall judge your fellow with righteousness” (Vayikra 19:15)

It is told about Rabbi Zelme'le of Volozhin that once when he went to immerse himself in the Mikveh, he noticed that his shirt had disappeared. He put on his jacket without a shirt and went home.

His wife asked him: “Where is your shirt?”

He answered: “Apparently a poor man confused it with his shirt and took it by mistake...”

His wife persisted: “So why didn't you take his shirt?”

“Because he forgot to leave it for me.”

Men of Faith

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

Take the Soup Away

The amazing account of Rabbi Moshe Benisti, the principal of a school in Nice, France, that he had heard from his mother, Mrs. Chanina, tichyeh, which he told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu.

Once, the Rabbanit went to the butcher to buy meat, as usual, in order to prepare the meal for the night of Shabbat Kodesh. That day, the butcher deviated from his regular habit and gave her meat which was kosher but not chalak (glatt), as she generally bought each week.

The Rabbanit, who was not aware of the change, brought the meat home and prepared the soup and meatballs for the Rav as usual in honor of Shabbat, to revive the tzaddik's spirit after fasting the whole week. When the Rabbanit placed the plate of soup on the table, Rabbi Chaim suddenly called to her, “Take the soup away! It is prohibited to eat it; it contains worms...” The Rabbanit glanced at the soup and saw that it was clear, with no worms. She innocently assumed that the Rav did not like her soup and

just mentioned the worms as a joke. The Rabbanit went to the kitchen and brought her husband the second course, the meatballs.

The Rav again called out to her, declaring that there were worms crawling in his plate. “Do you want to feed me food that is prohibited? The Torah states that whoever eats worms transgresses five prohibitions. Why then did you serve me meatballs with live worms crawling in them?”

Rabbi Chaim took the whole pot of soup with the meatballs and threw it in the garbage. Consequently, after a week of fasting, he ate only bread and water for his meal, without tasting the meat at all.

Immediately upon the conclusion of Shabbat, the Rabbanit hurried to the butcher and inquired about the meat that she had bought from him. Where did it come from, and who was the shochet? The butcher explained that the shochet was a G-d fearing Jew;

however the meat that she had bought that week had not been chalak, as she usually bought. It was considered just kosher, since there was a question of sircha concerning the animal's lungs, which rendered it kosher, but not chalak.

Then, the Rabbanit understood that Hashem had prevented her husband from eating meat whose kashrut was questionable. This story illustrates the importance of Se-fardim adhering to the ruling of Maran Beit Yosef, zy”a, to only eat meat which is chalak.

Furthermore, we see that when a person guards himself from eating prohibited foods, Hashem protects him from stumbling unintentionally, as it says, “He guards the steps of his devout ones.”

Wise Advice

R' Yosef Asseraf told Moreinu v'Rabbeinu that he once traveled from the city of Aka to Mogador with eight camels laden with furs. As was his custom, he first went to visit Rabbi Chaim Hakatan in order to receive his blessings and guidance.

R' Yosef deliberated how he would be able to sell the merchandise which he had bought, since he had invested all his money in the furs, but there was no market for them.

The Rav advised him not to sell his merchandise immediately, but to rent a storage place for the furs. Only in another two months, should he begin to market his stock. Rabbi Chaim explained to the merchant that then the price of the fur would go up. If he would wait a while, he would be able to gain a larger profit.

R' Yosef Asseraf did as Rav Chaim instructed and consequently gained an enormous profit from the sale of his furs.

In addition, Rabbi Chaim also blessed him that he and his descendants should continue enjoying wealth, which should not cease for generations to come. This blessing was fulfilled, and until today, his sons and grandsons support many Torah institutions.