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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 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

## Virtues are acquired through hard work

**"You shall not curse the people because they are blessed"** (Bamidbar 22:12)

Chazal say that Bnei Yisrael never had such an enemy like Bilaam the rasha, who wanted to wipe out the Jews by cursing them and destroy them completely. But Hashem, through His great Mercy for us prevented him from his scheme, and Hashem placed so to speak, a muzzle over his mouth so that he should not be able to curse. When he realized that he could not curse them, he wanted to bless them, but Hashem told him that they did not need his blessings, "For they are blessed." As the saying goes, "We say to the wasp, 'Neither your honey, nor your sting'" (Rashi).

And of course, even when he wanted to bless them, he did not mean to bless, but in his mind he meant to curse, and all the blessings he uttered were nothing but a curse to Bnei Yisrael, so therefore Hashem shut his mouth.

From where did Bilaam's deep hatred for the Jewish people stem from? Why did Bilaam so despise the Jews to the extent that he wanted to annihilate them?

Chazal say (Avot 5:19) "Whoever has the following three traits is... among the disciples of the wicked Bilaam... an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and a greedy soul. The worst character trait of Bilaam, cited first, was his evil eye. His evil and begrudging eye was what caused his downfall. Whoever possesses this trait cannot bear seeing his fellow's success, and he cannot tolerate the achievements of other people. Likewise, Bilaam, who begrudged others, could not tolerate Bnei Yisrael's success, and his heart ached upon seeing Hashem accompanying the nation at every step and providing for all their needs with Divine supervision in a miraculous way. It was difficult for him to accept it and therefore he burned with viral hatred against the Jewish people and sought to destroy them.

So we may wonder; if Bilaam was so wicked, how did he attain the level of prophecy? The Torah states regarding him (Bamidbar 24:16), "[He] perceives the thoughts of the Most High." Chazal say (Sanhedrin 105b) He knew how to gauge the exact moment when the Holy One, blessed be He, is angry... he saw the future, and even achieved the level of Moshe Rabbeinu in prophecy.

If so, how could it be that Bilaam rose to such great levels when he possessed terrible character traits and harbored an abhorrent hatred for the Jews. He behaved in an exceedingly low manner; then how did Bilaam achieve the quality of prophecy?

The answer is simple and clear. Bilaam the rasha did not labor to attain this lofty quality. He received it as a gift without any efforts on his part. He never aspired to sanctify himself, and did not attempt to purify his thoughts in order to achieve lofty spiritual heights. On the contrary, he possessed evil character traits and was rebellious. He was led by his evil inclination to behave in an abominable fashion. Nevertheless,

Hashem granted him prophesy from his treasury as a gift for free and, raising him to lofty levels, so that the nations of the world should not be able to argue that they were deprived.

Rashi states the following (Bamidbar 22:5): If you will ask, "Why did Hashem rest His Shechinah on a wicked Gentile?" In order that the nations should not be able to argue saying, if we would have had prophets, we would have done teshuvah. Thus, Hashem granted them prophets, and [yet] they broke down the [moral] boundaries of the world."

Similarly, the Midrash states (Bamidbar Rabbah 20): See the difference between the prophets of the Jews and the prophets of the nations. The prophets of the Jews warn the Jews against sinning, while the prophet of the Gentiles broke all [moral] barriers to destroy mankind in the world. Since Bilaam did not labor to attain good character traits, he remained corrupt with evil traits.

In contrast between the profane and the sacred, Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, achieved the height of worthy character traits, since he labored and worked to attain them. He was from the disciples of Avraham Avinu, a"h, whose traits are virtuous and behaves honestly, as the Tanna states (Avot 5:19), "Those who have a good eye, a humble spirit, and a modest soul are among the disciples of our forefather Avraham." Moshe Rabbeinu sacrificed his life and worked on himself in order to attain these virtues.

From his youth, when he grew up as a prince in the palace of the wicked Pharaoh, Moshe did not conduct himself arrogantly. When he saw the suffering of his fellow brothers enslaved by Pharaoh, he removed his royal garments and pitched in to assist his people. He would comfort them and soothe them by saying, "Let me die instead of you." Thus Moshe instilled in his heart the trait of loving-kindness. Likewise, the trait of humbleness was his crowning quality, and he developed all good virtues, which became an integral part of his personality, because he labored to achieve them. It is in the merit of these lofty virtues that Moshe Rabbeinu achieved true fear of Heaven and an exceptional closeness to Hashem, more than any other human being.

Every person should know that if he only begins the task and tries to sanctify himself and purify his soul, his mind and thoughts, and he distances himself from immorality and corruption, then surely Hashem will assist him to ascend to great heights of sanctity and purity. The person only has to make the initial effort to advance, and choose to dedicate himself to really advance spiritually from fear of Heaven. Then he is assured that Hashem will help him and support him in his efforts, because one who chooses to become purified, is rewarded with Heavenly assistance.

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### Hillulah of Tzaddikim

17 - Rabbi Shimon Biton Av Beit Din of  
Marseilles, France

18 - The Maharal of Prague

19 - Rabbi Bentzion Aba Shaul Rosh  
Yeshiva of "Porat Yosef"

20 - Rabbi Chaim Shaul Karelitz

21 - Rabbi Rachamim Naouri Av Beit  
Din of Paris Author of "Chachmat  
Maoach"

23 - Rabbi Moshe Kordevero Author of  
"Tomer Devorah"



## 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

### Running Away from the Goal

I was once visiting Yerushalayim when a marathon was taking place. I noticed numerous people running on and on. I asked myself, "Where are they running? Doesn't the pasuk in Tehillim (122:2) state, 'Our feet stood firm within your gates, O Jerusalem'? In days bygone, the people would rush toward the Beit Hamikdash, where the Shechinah was housed. But now that we no longer have the Temple, korbanot, or the ner tamid, where is there to run in this city of ruins? Does a marathon add to the sanctity of the city, or merely emphasize its destruction?"

I spent a lot of time thinking about this, trying to understand the point of the marathon. I finally came to the conclusion that there was no point at all. It is only a method of heightening materialism.

Life without Torah is life without purpose. In my lifetime, I have met wealthy individuals who seemed to have satisfied all earthly lusts, but they lacked inner contentment and joie de vivre. From their well-appointed, luxurious offices, they conveyed lives of opulence and ease. But they were the number one clients of psychologists and mental health professionals.

One can attain inner fulfillment only after achieving an ideal. In the life of a Jew, only involvement in Torah and performance of mitzvot will bring him true satisfaction. A life of Torah is a life with a goal, the purpose for which man was placed on this earth.

### The thief who requested Divine Inspiration

Parashat Balak, unlike other parshiyot of the Torah, is not divided into chapters, to distinguish between one topic and another.

The Chafetz Chaim explains that although Bilaam was indeed a prophet and his prophecy was Divine Inspiration, he did not possess the qualities and lofty virtues as the prophets of Bnei Yisrael. The words of the prophecy did not affect him; he did not contemplate them, and did not learn anything from the prophecy. According to Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni), "there were breaks in chapters in order to give Moshe space to contemplate between one chapter and another." But the rasha Bilaam would relate his prophecy in one continuous flow of words without insight or understanding, and that is why the entire parashah is without any pause.

The maggid, Rabbi Yakov Galinsky, zt"l, related in the name of the Saba of Novardok, zt"l:

There was once a faithful shamash who cleaned the Beit Midrash late at night after midnight. Suddenly, he noticed that the local thief had quietly entered the Beit Haknesset. The thief did not notice him. The shamash crouched down under one of the tables to spy on him and catch him stealing red-handed once and for all.

Then the shamash saw the thief approach the Aron Hakodesh, kiss the cloak, and begin to cry!

The shamash did not understand what was happening here; what happened to the thief that caused him to stand before the Aron Hakodesh? Perhaps the thief had a sick child at home, or maybe something else happened?

The shamash waited patiently to hear what he would say; what requests he would make. Then he heard:

"Ribbono Shel Olam! Ribbono Shel Olam! Grant me Divine Inspiration!" More than that he could not hear...

After he left the Aron Hakodesh, the shamash could not contain himself any longer. He came out of his hiding place and ran over to him. He faced him in the dark and said: Reb Jew, no one is here now, only me and you. I heard that you prayed; please explain to me, what did you mean by your request? Tell me the truth, have you gone mad? Is Divine Inspiration what you are really lacking?... What happened to you, our friend the thief?...

The thief answered him: Can't you understand? You should know what a hard winter night is like. It is so hard to break into a closed home; I really sacrifice my life – and until I finally enter, from that moment the search for the owner's wallet is so difficult. I have to search every nook and cranny with such fear and tension. Very few people can relate to what I go through working under such stress and anxiety... If I would only have Divine Inspiration, I would know immediately where the safe is hidden and go straight there and spare myself all the stress I suffer...

The Saba of Novardok concludes:

This explains Bilaam the rasha. Although he was privileged to speak with Hashem and merited that Hashem put words in his mouth to relate prophecy, but what does he do with it? He curses. He tried to make money in all kinds of cunning ways. Instead of taking advantage of the prophecy he was receiving, he went and sold it for some trivial lentils, just like the thief who prayed to Hashem to grant him Divine Inspiration... and if he would receive Divine Inspiration – what would he do with it? Nonsense!

## The Haftarah

### "The remnant of Yaakov"

(Michah 5:6)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah discusses the kindness that Hashem dealt with His Nation in that He caused Bilaam to bless Am Yisrael. This is similar to the parashah, which relates how the two evil people, Balak the king of Moav, and Bilaam the rasha tried to curse Am Yisrael, but in the end they blessed them.



## Guard Your Tongue

### Praise which is detrimental

A person should beware of praising his fellow with praise that may be detrimental, such as a guest who goes out to the city street and publicizes how well the host treated him with delicacies and drinks and served him royally, since consequently delinquent street people will flock to his house and drain him of all his money. Regarding this, it is stated (Mishlei 27:14) "He who blesses his friend in a loud voice early every morning, it shall be considered a curse for him."



## Men of Faith

### Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, ztk"l

The tzaddik constantly anticipated the coming of Mashiach. In addition, he actively sought to hasten his coming. He would tell everyone who came to see him that he should wait for and anticipate with complete faith the coming of Mashiach, who will redeem us.

He explained his move to live in Eretz Yisrael in the following way: The main purpose of establishing the Jewish State was so that Torah would flourish within it preceding the redemption. He would always say, "Too bad that the State was not established by Mashiach, bringing the world to its perfection under the Kingship of Hashem, following the devastating Holocaust."

He also added, "We live in the State of Israel, but the true State will be established only when everyone will coronate Hashem as their King and will engage in Torah and mitzvot. Then, Mashiach will come and bring the world to perfection.

"Meanwhile, it is preferable to live in Eretz Yisrael as it says, 'I am an alien and a resident among you.' Those living in Eretz Yisrael possess an added merit over those outside it. People living in the Diaspora are in a darker exile, as opposed to those residing in Eretz Yisrael, who become imbued with its holiness. How fortunate are we, and how fortunate is our lot."

Rabbeinu added that his father would often repeat that if not for all the Torah learned in the yeshivot and kollelim in Eretz Yisrael, the State would not be able to exist. It is only the Torah that protects and rescues the Jewish people from all those who rise against them, especially in these days.

Only for the sake of Torah did Hashem grant Divine assistance for the establishment of the State. In fact, until today people come from all over the world to learn Torah in Eretz Yisrael and to settle on its holy soil. The State's existence is possible only through the mercy of Hashem, as it says, "The eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it [the Land], from the beginning of the year to the year's end."

Rabbi Moshe Aharon would always pray that Hashem would bring the leaders of the State to do teshuvah, since the redemption is so close, as it says, "He was standing behind our wall." He expressed, "If only everyone would advance a bit more in Torah, teshuvah, and good deeds, we would merit witnessing that which we so yearn to see."

When Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the tzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit"l expanded on the issue of the imminent geulah, he related pensively:

I remember that once my esteemed father, Rabbeinu Moshe Aharon Pinto, zya"l, called me and said: "Take a pen and paper and record the revelation that I am about to impart to you." Then father quoted to me the pasuk (Yeshayahu 52:7): Ma navu al heharim raglei mevaser tov mashmia yeshua omer l'Zion malach Elokayich – How beautiful are the feet of the herald on the mountains, announcing peace, heralding good tidings, announcing salvation, saying to Zion, "Your God has manifested His kingdom." He repeated this pasuk again and again. I was confused and asked father, zt"l, "What revelation do we see here?" And he answered me, "Look closely at the plain meaning of the pasuk. Is there not an amazing revelation here before your eyes?!"... When I answered again in the negative, father repeated and told me that I should write the pasuk again. So it was repeated a few times. I know for a fact that for years father would repeat this pasuk to anyone who came by his way, and his message was hidden and concealed from us. I could not get to the bottom of his deep thoughts.

Only after many years, Hashem opened my eyes, and I clearly understood his message. It seems to me, with siyata d'Shemaya, that my father intended to convey, "mevaser tov – announcing peace" (lit. good), is referring to the holy Torah, which is called "good," as it is stated, "For I gave you good teaching; forsake not My instruction." This implies that when Mashiach will arrive, and he will "announce peace" (lit. good), and we will hear and be taught Torah directly from him, and we will merit learning from him the Torah of truth in purity, it will be crystal clear, as if strained in a sieve meant to strain flour from all rubbish, and there will be no inaccuracies; then Torah will flourish and shine in the world, and we will witness the fulfillment of "Your God has manifested His kingdom." This will be in the merit of the Torah that will be taught by Mashiach, and then Hashem will be King over the entire worlds, and His Kingship will be accepted universally, and all the inhabitants of the world will recognize that Hashem is G-d over the Heavens Above and the earth below.

Thus father, zt"l, longed and yearned for the coming of Mashiach, and his entire aspiration was to learn Torah accurately from Mashiach himself, and so that the Kingship of Hashem should spread throughout the world, because this is the quality of "Torah of Truth," that it flourishes and leads to more revelations, and consequently the Name of Hashem, Who is the giver of the Torah is glorified, and His Kingdom is recognized by all. May the merit of the Torah protect us and all of Klal Yisrael.

## Treasures

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



### No change

Bilaam the rasha marvels at Bnei Yisrael and says (Bamidbar 24:5), "**How goodly are your tents, O Jacob.**"

Says the Gemara (Sanhedrin 105b): these are the Batei Knessiyot and Batei Midrashot where Bnei Yisrael sit and engage in Torah.

Bilaam's awe is similar to the awe of many people who come to visit Torah institutions and yeshivot.

These people, for the first time in their lives, are exposed to the world of Torah directly and see hundreds of kollel avrechim or quality young boys learning and delving in the holy Torah with fervor and excitement, and arguing the words of Abaye and Rava with conviction.

At that moment we can imagine how they are moved by this scene and perceive the beauty of the Torah world. They feel respect toward the scholars learning Torah and waving its banner, and for all those who dedicate themselves to Torah in the tent of Torah, while abandoning all the follies and pleasures of the world.

So if this awesome sight touches them so deeply, why doesn't it leave its mark on them afterward? Ultimately, the great admiration of these people fade away after a while, and they do not join those learning in the yeshivot and kollelim. Why are they not affected at all?

The answer is simple and clear. Because this is the way of the Yetzer Hara. True, he allows man to marvel and delight in what he sees, but the Yetzer Hara won't allow him to awaken his innermost feelings, the ones that would bring about a real change, so that he should not follow in the proper path. Thus we see how difficult it is for a person to free himself from bad habits, and how easy it is to continue chasing all the vanities of the world and passions, without accepting upon himself the burden of Torah and mitzvot. And so he remains in his bad ways without correcting anything.

This was the case with Bilaam the rasha. He was very impressed by Bnei Yisrael. When he saw them camping in groups and engaging in Torah, the words came out of his mouth, declaring: How goodly are your tents, O Jacob." However, he himself was not prepared to change. It seemed too difficult to him and impossible in his eyes to subject himself to the laws of the Torah and follow its commandments. He chose to continue behaving in an undisciplined way and be led by the Yetzer Hara. This is why his admiration for Bnei Yisrael did not bear fruit.

# RELEVANT TOPICS



## The Fourth Fast ~ 17th of Tammuz

This year the fast on the 17th of Tammuz falls on Shabbat. Therefore, the fast is postponed until Sunday, the 18th of Tammuz.

In the Sephardic and Eastern communities, it is customary to announce the fast on Shabbat.

Chazal relate that five dreadful events occurred on the 17th of Tammuz:

The first Tablets were broken. The daily [continual] burnt-offering ceased. The city's wall was breached. Apostimos the wicked burned the Torah. An idol was erected in the Temple.

### The Tablets were Broken

On the seventh of Sivan, after the giving of the Torah, Moshe returned to ascend Mount Sinai (it was still prohibited for the nation to approach the mountain, as they were warned prior to Matan Torah). Moshe went to learn straight from Hashem all the rules and details and laws of the Torah, and to receive the Tablets of Testimony.

When Moshe went up to Heaven, he told Am Yisrael: At the end of forty days, at the commencement of the sixth hour (of the day), I will come and bring you the Torah. They thought that the day that he ascended counted as the first day. However, Moshe had told them it would be forty full days, and a full day begins at the sunset preceding it. Thus, the day that he ascended did not count as the first day because it was not a full day beginning at the sunset prior to it. As we know, Moshe ascended on the seventh of Sivan, and accordingly the fortieth full day came out on the 17th of Tammuz.

On the 16th of Tammuz the Satan came and confused the world with images of blackness and muddle, images of cloudiness, fog and turmoil, saying, certainly Moshe died, since the sixth hour of the morning already passed and he did not return.

The Satan said to them: Moshe, your leader, where is he? They said to him: He ascended to Heaven. He said to them: "The sixth (hour) has passed!" – But they paid no heed to him – "He died!" – and they did not pay attention to him. He showed them an image of his coffin. They ran to Aharon hysterically in confusion and said to him: "Make us a G-d!"

The next day, Moshe came down from the mountain. When Hashem gave Moshe the Tablets, the Tablets carried themselves. However, when Moshe descended and approached the Camp and saw the Golden Calf, the letters floated out of the parchment and the Tablets became unbearably heavy in Moshe's hands. Immediately – "Moshe's anger flared up," and he threw them from his hands.

Also during the destruction of the first Beit Hamikdash, the [wall of the] city was breached in Tammuz, on the ninth day of the month. However, because one cannot burden the people excessively, we do not institute two consecutive fast-days. Therefore, the fast was set on the 17th of Tammuz, since the destruction of the second Temple was worse.

## The Daily [lit. Continual] Burnt-Offering Ceased

During the destruction of the First Temple, the following occurred. On the ninth of Tammuz, the wall surrounding Yerushalayim was breached and the enemies charged through the city and caused destruction. However, the enemies could not enter the Temple, because the Kohanim barricaded themselves within and continued performing the services until the seventh of Av. But the supply of sheep for the daily sacrifice was lacking from the thirteenth of Tammuz, since they always kept a four-day supply of sheep that were checked for flaws and ready for sacrifice. From the thirteenth of Tammuz and onward they bribed the enemies who made a siege on them: They lowered silver and gold, and they sent up sheep for them. This is what they did until the 17th of Tammuz.

### The [wall of the] City was Breached

This event took place during the destruction of the Second Temple when the wall surrounding Yerushalayim was breached on the 17th of Tammuz as Titus and his army invaded the city.

### Apostimos Burned the Torah

This event which is mentioned in the Mishnah; its description is not recorded in the earliest sources.

The later commentators speculate that this event refers to the period of the Roman commissioner Cumanus. It took place approximately sixteen years before the Great Revolt against the Romans. At that time the commissioner's troops provoked the Jews and their service in the Temple, causing large disturbances that subsequently quieted down. Regarding that period, Josephus relates the following:

"After this calamity (when ten thousand people were killed on the Temple Mount because of the uproar caused by the Romans) a new uproar began because of highway robbers, since on the main road next to Beit Horon, bandits attacked the convoy of Stephen, a servant of the Caesar, and robbed him. Cumanus sent members of his army to the nearby villages where the robbery took place, and commanded the arrest of the villagers and to have them brought to him, since he accused them of not chasing after the highway robbers to catch them. One of the soldiers took the sacred Torah scroll in the village and tore it up and burned it. All over the Jews were frenzied, as if the entire country before them was consumed by fire. Immediately upon hearing what happened, people fueled by their zealotry over the holy scroll, rushed like arrows flying from a sling to Caesarea to see Cumanus, so he should not delay the punishment of the man who always cursed at G-d and His Torah. The Commissioner realized that the storm would not subside until he would calm their spirits. Therefore, he ordered the soldier hung on the gallows in the midst of the throngs demonstrating against him. Thereafter, the Jews returned to their homes.

### An Idol was Erected in the Temple

There are those who claim that also this was performed by Apostimos the wicked on the fateful day of the 17th of Tammuz. And there are those who claim that it is referring to the idol that Menashe Hamelech erected in the Temple, which was on the very day of the 17th of Tammuz as well.