

Pachad David

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

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MASKIL LEDAVID

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

A Spontaneous Song of Thanks

"Then Moshe and the Children of Israel chose to sing this song to Hashem" (Shemot 15:1)

Chazal tell us: "One only sings shira (song of praise) over wine" (Berachot 35a). The Brisker Rav zt"l questions this statement for we find many times that shira was sung without wine. Am Yisrael, after crossing the sea, sang the Song of the Sea without wine. One says Hallel when slaughtering and offering the Pesach Offering. In this case too, the Hallel is not accompanied by wine yet one still sings?

In order to answer this question, we first have to understand this Chazal. What is lacking when one sings shira without a cup of wine?!

I would like to suggest, with siyata dishmaya, that shira is only considered genuine when it flows from the depth of one's heart. It is not enough just to sing the words with one's mouth; shira that is a true expression of gratification and joy- gushes from the heart. When a person feels good and is happy and cheerful, this gladdens his heart and he breaks out in a spontaneous burst of song. Wine has this potential, as we are told: "And wine that gladdens man's heart" (Tehillim 104:15). Wine gives us peace of mind and makes us feel happy. In this state of mind, one's heart expands and opens wide, and then shira rises up on its own from deep inside him. It is not something external. Due to this, Chazal said that one only sings shira over wine. It does not mean that there must be a bottle of wine on the table when singing shira, rather the intention is to stress the character of genuine shira. Only when a person feels truly joyful and his heart is glad, can shira flow from the depth of his soul.

This being the case, there are certainly many occasions when a person's heart is glad and he feels joyful, even without the assistance of wine. When the Bnei Yisrael stood by the sea and saw the force of Hashem's Might and experienced His strong hand and outstretched arm, at that moment their hearts certainly expanded and they delighted in the blissful feeling of closeness to Hashem. They certainly didn't need wine in order to awaken their feelings. The shira simply burst out of their hearts on its own, with sincere praise to Hashem for all the good that He performed for them. This is what Rashi says on the verse "Then Moshe... chose to sing" (Shemot 15:1): "When he saw the miracle his heart wished to sing shira." After experiencing Hashem's miracles, a song burst out from the depths of Moshe Rabbeinu's heart, offering praise and thanks to Hashem, and the Bnei Yisrael joined him in praising the Almighty G-d.

The same idea applies concerning the hallel that is said when slaughtering the Pesach offering. At that moment a person doesn't need wine to gladden his heart, for as soon as he remembers the great miracles, gladness and joy wash over him, causing the shira and hallel to emerge from the depths of his heart.

Now we can understand why the Torah is referred to as 'shira' (song), as in the verse: "And now write for yourselves this song" (Devarim 31:19). Just as shira is only considered genuine when it flows from one's innermost core, so too Torah must arise from the depths of one's heart. It should not be an external intellectual exercise, rather a person is obligated to devote himself and commit himself to the Torah with his entire heart.

Another important foundation of shira is that it is something that is expressed only after experiencing salvation. David HaMelech writes: "But as for me, I trust in Your

kindness; my heart will exult in Your salvation. I will sing to Hashem, for He has dealt kindly with me" (Tehillim 13:6). The Gaon Rabbi Chaim Brisker zt"l writes that it is important to note the appropriate time for saying shira. Is it only once the miracle has occurred or, if a person is certain that a miracle will take place, for example if a Navi promises that it will occur, can one already say shira in this case? Rabbi Chaim brings a proof from the above verse "But as for me, I trust in Your kindness". When I am certain of Hashem's kindness, even before the miracle has occurred, then "my heart will exult in Your salvation". I rejoice in anticipation of the miracle that is going to take place. But "I will sing to Hashem", the actual shira, is only when "for He has dealt kindly with me" - once he has experienced the miracle.

This gives rise to a question that the commentaries address: When the Bnei Yisrael sang shira for the wonders of Hashem by the splitting of the sea, part of the shira also mentions miracles that will occur in the future, as in the verse, "You will bring them and implant them on the mount of Your heritage, the foundation of Your dwelling-place that You, Hashem, have made" (Shemot 15:17). This is praise concerning the future when the Bnei Yisrael will enter Eretz Yisrael and will merit seeing the building of the Beit HaMikdash. According to what we explained above, that the correct time for shira is only after the miracle has taken place, we need to understand why here they included a future miracle as part of the shira. Even though they trusted in Hashem's kindness and while they were still in Mitzrayim, Hashem already promised them that this will occur, "I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand" (Shemot 6:8), nevertheless since they had not yet seen this salvation with their own eyes, it does not seem fitting to include it in the shira?

I would like to suggest that although we have a proof from the verse "But as for me, I trust in Your kindness" that the appropriate time for shira is after the miracle, and even if a Navi promises that salvation will come one doesn't say shira until it is fulfilled, however, a promise that is mentioned in the Torah is fundamentally different than any other promise. Our holy Torah is the Ultimate Truth. Therefore, even before the promise has been fulfilled it is considered as if it has already taken place. Our Torah is a Torah of Truth and is Eternal. Just as the Torah will never obligate us to perform a mitzva that is impossible to fulfill, so too, the promises that are mentioned in the Torah about entering Eretz Yisrael and the building of the Beit HaMikdash, will certainly be fulfilled in their entirety without any shade of doubt. In the haftarah blessings we say, "Not one of Your words is turned back to its origin unfulfilled, for You are G-d, trustworthy in all His words".

When the Bnei Yisrael stood by the sea, they believed with certainty about the future redemption, to the extent that it was as if it had already come to fruition in front of their eyes and they were already situated in that place of after the miracle. They were in Eretz Yisrael, having merited the building of the Beit HaMikdash. This is how we can understand that they sang shira about future miracles. For them it wasn't a future prophecy; it was something they were experiencing right now. Therefore, the shira burst forth from them and they sang a new song of praise to Hashem.

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Hilula

13 - Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch

14 - Rabbi Ya'akov Yehoshua, author of 'Pnei Yehoshua'

15 - Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Margalio, author of 'Sha'arei Teshuva'

16 - Rabbi Shalom Mordechai HaKohen Shwadron

17 - Rabbi Chaim Falaji

18 - Rabbi Binyamin Beinush Finkel, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva

19 - Rabbi Yitzchak Baruch Sofer



Walking in their Ways

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

Faith in the Righteous

On Chol Hamoed Pesach 5771 when I was in Eretz Yisrael, I was invited to speak in Netivot at an evening of shira that took place in the bet haknesset 'Lev Elyahu' which is under the leadership of Rabbi Moshe Peretz shlita. At the end of my speech, a man called R' Avraham Cohen, approached me and told me a remarkably moving story that happened fifteen years ago. This is the story in his words:

"Fifteen years ago, we were blessed with a baby boy. But as soon as the baby entered the world, our joy turned to anguish. The baby lay there, as still as a stone, and did not make a sound. His utter silence screamed louder than the usual healthy wail that babies let out with their first breath. To our great consternation, the doctors' predictions were pessimistic. They did not give our precious baby much chance at survival. According to their estimation, he would not survive for more than a few hours...

We, however, placed our trust in Hashem's mercy and didn't give up. I immediately called Rabbi David shlita, and asked for a bracha. When Moreinu heard the story, he was quite shaken but told me: "You don't need to worry! I promise you that in the merit of my holy father Rabbi Ahron Pinto zya"á, the baby will regain its health and live. And if you invite me to be the sandak at his brit, I will be happy to accept the invitation."

As we gazed at our sick baby, lying so still in his bassinet, the words of Moreinu seemed very far from reality. Nevertheless, I believed with my whole heart in the merit of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zya"á, and clung to the Chazal, "A tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills". And indeed, despite the doctors' predictions, the baby gained enough strength to be able to have his brit,

and of course Rabbi David shlita honored us by being the sandak.

The days passed and our baby's condition took a turn for the worse. Once again the doctors filled our hearts with grave expectations and informed us that he will not likely survive beyond his first birthday. But we didn't despair. We possessed great faith in the blessing of the Rav shlita, that in the merit of his holy fathers' zya"á, who with siyata dishmaya were renowned for their ability to perform miracles, we too will merit a nes. Baruch Hashem our dear son indeed defied the doctors' assumptions in what can only be called a miraculous way. Today he is fifteen years old- a beautiful, healthy child!"

I was extremely moved on hearing the ending to this story that I was involved in fifteen years ago, and on witnessing the great power of Kiddush Hashem that resulted from this wonderful story. In truth, it is clear to me that it was not I who brought about his salvation, rather it was R' Avraham's total faith in my righteous father, Moreinu Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto zt"l zya"á, who was a devoted servant of Hashem and dedicated his whole life to avodat Hashem. It was the power of this strong faith that brought salvation and blessing to that baby.

A person therefore must try with all his might to strengthen his faith, and to believe with absolute faith in Hashem and in His righteous servants, as we are told: "And they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant." There is a mechilta that questions: If they believed in Moshe, all the more so they believed in Hashem? This comes to teach us that anyone who believes in a faithful shepherd, it is as if he believes in the One who said and the world came into being.



Words of our Sages

Are we Aware of the Power of Prayer?

"When Pharaoh's cavalry came with his chariots and horsemen into the sea" (Shemot 15:19)

The Rashbam on the gemara (Pesachim 117a) tells us that after the Bnei Yisrael crossed the Yam Suf and were standing on the other side, they started praying the psalm (prayer) "Not for our sake," (Tehillim 115), since they were unsure if Pharaoh and his army would also cross the sea and come after them and kill them.

The question is clear: Did Am Yisrael really think that after Hashem performed all these miracles for them, Pharaoh and his army would merit to cross the sea on dry land and harm them? What was their doubt?

Rabbi Ezra Barzel zt"l brings a proof from this of the obligation of prayer which is incumbent on a person at all times and in all situations. Although their miraculous circumstances showed that they had nothing to fear, they could not rely on this. Ultimately, it is impossible to experience salvation without tefillah.

One must pray for every single thing in life. One who has tried this wonderful 'segulah' that is called tefillah, one who uses it in every step in his life, can tell his friends and acquaintances about its potency, and he can serve as a faithful witness that it is something worth implementing...

A talmid chacham told Rabbi Yitzchak Silberstein shlita, that recently he had come up against several challenges in different areas - in chinuch, shalom bayit, parnassah... This was only a partial list...

In his distress he turned to one of the gedolim of Bnei Brak. He poured out his sorrows to him amidst many tears, with his words flowing from a broken heart. The Gadol listened and listened, without saying anything. Only once the talmid chacham finished his tale of woes, the Gadol shlita asked, "What about prayer - did you pray?!"

The talmid chacham was quick to reply: "But of course I prayed!"

But the Gadol didn't relent: "Did you pray as you are supposed to? Did you feel like Hashem can help you?" Silence. The talmid chacham, sitting in the presence of the Gadol, felt how his words had touched the core of his problem. He had prayed many tefillot in the past, but almost never felt that Hashem could really help him.

Now, after hearing this 'rebuke' from the Gadol, he went to pray ...

The talmid chacham added that after praying several tefillot with emotion and passion, feeling that only the Creator can save him, almost all of his problems were solved in an amazing way.

If we say 'amazing way' we are actually making a mistake.

It is not an amazing thing! If we would merit taking ourselves in our hands and prayer as we are supposed to, we can witness this wonder every day! This is the power of prayer!

A person who merits transforming his essence into 'prayer', will experience miracles at every step of the way. True miracles will happen to him in all areas, and as we said - all these will not even be considered miracles, but 'nature'. Hashem created this awesome 'segulah' as part of nature - and our chachamim and nevi'im have passed down this concept to us, that in order to succeed one must pray. This is how things work; there is no other way. ('Borchi Nafshi')

The Haftarah



"Devorah sang" (Shoftim 5)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah speaks about the downfall of Sisera and his army and about the shira of Devorah the prophetess and Barak the son of Avinoam, where they praise Hashem for the miracle of saving them from their enemies. The Parsha talks about the downfall of the wicked Pharaoh and the drowning of his army in the deep waters of the Yam Suf and about the shira of Moshe Rabbeinu and Bnei Yisrael that they sung by the sea.

Askenazim read from **"Devorah was a prophetess"** (Shoftim 4)



Guard Your Tongue

Why Did You Help So-and-So?

One must take care when asking one's friend for a favor. If he replies that he is unable to fulfill the request, one must not ask him, "Why did you do this favor for so-and-so, he himself told me that you helped him?"

This can cause the friend to feel resentment towards the person for mentioning that he helped him, for this fact is now being used against him.



Pearls of the Parshah

Extraordinary Conduct

“G-d did not lead them by way of the land”
(Shemot 13:17)

Hashem Yitbarach did not lead the Bnei Yisrael according to the natural way of the world, for the way of the world is that water comes down from heaven and bread comes up from the ground. While the Bnei Yisrael were in the midbar they experienced the opposite of nature - Hashem gave them food from heaven whereas their water rose up for them from the ground. (‘AleI Be’er’)

Income and Lashon Harah

“Hashem shall make war for you, and you shall remain silent” (Shemot 14:14)

This verse can be taken as a hint to a prohibition laid down by the Chafetz Chaim zt”l concerning the laws of lashon hara and rechilus: If a person is asked to speak lashon hara about his friend and refusing to tell will result in him being fired from work, the law is that he is nevertheless forbidden to speak lashon hara.

In light of this the ‘Ohr Moshe’ explains the verse, “Hashem will fight (יחמ) for you” – יחמ can be taken as an expression of sustenance (חמל), meaning that Hashem will provide your sustenance and “you shall be silent” – you should not speak lashon hara!

Remembering the Past

“They could not drink the waters of Marah because they were bitter; therefore they named it Marah” (Shemot 15:23)

Why did they not call the place ‘matok’ – ‘sweet’, in memory of the miracle that the bitter waters became sweet?

Rabbi Ahron Zakai shlita offers a novel insight in his sefer ‘Torat HaParsha’: When a troubling time befalls a person and later he merits Hashem’s salvation, he must not become proud and forget the past as in “Yeshurun became fat and kicked” (Devarim 32:15), but he must always remember the past and thank Hashem for the present. This will bring him to think of other people who are suffering and he will thereby come to their aid.

Therefore “they named it Marah”, to teach us that a person must always remember the past, and this will help him to have mercy on those who are now going through a difficult time.

Treasures

*Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita*



The Nature of a Servant

“When Pharaoh’s cavalry came with his chariots and horsemen into the sea” (Shemot 14:10)

The Ibn Ezra asks: How is it possible that a huge camp of six hundred thousand men were afraid of those pursuing them? Why did they not retaliate in order to save their lives and the lives of their children?

I would like to add another question: How is it possible that after all the miracles that Hashem performed for the Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim – they were still afraid of Pharaoh and his army? They clearly saw Hashem’s intervention- watching over them, saving them and protecting them from any harm. Now too, they should have continued trusting Him and believing that certainly nothing bad will happen to them. Why indeed were the Bnei Yisrael scared?

The Ibn Ezra answers: The Egyptians were the masters of the Bnei Yisrael. This generation who came out of Egypt were brought up from their youth to endure the bondage and they therefore felt like lowly people. How could they now fight against their masters if they felt worthless?” These are the words of the holy Ibn Ezra.

Even though the Bnei Yisrael experienced Hashem’s might and His wonders, still, the effects of the bondage were so deeply entrenched in their souls that they didn’t possess the strength to overpower the Egyptians. Until this point they had been considered their servants and under their dominion. This is the nature of a servant- he is submissive to his master and humiliated by him. Even once he becomes a free man, this meekness still remains in his heart and he is not capable of facing his master assertively. The Bnei Yisrael were enslaved by the Egyptians for two hundred and ten years. Therefore, even now once they had been let free, they didn’t have the audacity to rise up against them, despite the Egyptians being smaller in number than the Jewish people.

I have actually experienced this phenomenon on my visits to the concentration camps in Auschwitz; the camps that are left as a silent tribute to the horrific experiences of the shoah. There are pictures hanging there which show tens of thousands of Jews who were placed under the authority of only tens of German officers. I often wonder about this. Why did the Jewish prisoners not rise up in rebellion against the wicked German officers? Surely they would have overcome them? We can suggest an answer according to the above Ibn Ezra, who explains that the nature of a servant is to be submissive to his master and he lacks the necessary inner strength to fight against him. Servitude is so deeply embedded in his soul that even when it is taken away and he becomes a free man, the image of his master still appears before him and he is not capable of mustering the strength to rebel.

This idea contains a great practical lesson for our avodat Hashem. The obligation of a person in this world is to be a faithful servant to his Master. This should be our entire goal in life – to stand before our Master and serve Him, fulfilling His will wholeheartedly without turning to the right or the left. If a person is indeed subservient to Hashem and feels that he must obey Him as a servant obeys his master, it will never come about that he is able to summon the strength to rebel against His word by sinning. If nevertheless, a person has the insolence to rebel against the laws and commandments of Hashem Yitbarach, it is clear sign that he does not feel subservient to the Master of the World and this cannot be called servitude.

A person must strive to accept the yoke of Hashem’s Kingship with love, and his entire soul should yearn to be a faithful servant to Hashem, to the degree that this feeling of servitude becomes totally embedded in him.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



“No man may leave over from it until the morning”
(Shemot 16:19)

Why did Hashem command the Bnei Yisrael to eat the manna on the same day that it fell and not to leave any over for the next morning?

The Midrash tells us that the reason was to accustom the hearts of Am Yisrael to rely on their Father in Heaven.

Those who had children would worry- maybe tomorrow the manna will not fall and then how will we feed our families? Since each day anew they were dependent on the kindness of Hashem Yitbarach, their hearts learnt to place their trust in their Father in Heaven.

Men of Faith

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

Teshuvah Inspired by a Picture

A Jewish merchant from Paris engaged in buying and selling imported merchandise, without declaring them in customs. Fear and worry were his constant companions. He was terrified that at any given moment someone would inform on him, and he would be arrested for tax evasion.

Once, he received a truckload full of fabric, and he hurried to unload the goods, taking care to hide them in a secret place. However, his greatest fears were realized when his “friends” informed the authorities that he was selling merchandise which he had not declared for tax purposes.

The police quickly arrived at the scene in order to search the place and confiscate the merchandise. The merchant was afraid that the police would go up to the second floor, where there were hundreds of yards of fabric which he had not declared. He quickly hung a picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hakatan on the staircase. He was confident in the power of the tzaddik and waited to see what would happen.

The police, equipped with accurate information, searched the ground floor, but found nothing. They de-

clared to go to the second floor, but a miracle took place. Each policeman who started going up the stairs came down abruptly for no comprehensible reason. The police must have realized that the goods they were looking for were probably on the top floor, but for an inexplicable reason, they felt that they were being driven away.

In the end, they wrote a report stating that they had conducted a complete search of the place, but had not found any merchandise that had to be declared.

This was an extraordinary miracle, which occurred in the merit of the merchant’s faith in the tzaddik. The picture of the tzaddik, facing the police on the staircase, did not allow them to ascend, despite the fact that they clearly saw that the stairs led to another floor. Ultimately, they never found the merchandise.

The man continued to relate that because of this miracle, he donated a substantial sum of money to various charity organizations all over the world. Also, following his scare, he stopped this business.