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Weekly Bulletin on the Parsha

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 L'David

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

The proper path

"And they brought before the L-rd foreign fire, which He had not commanded them"

(Vayikra 10:1)

At the beginning of Vayikra, it is stated (Vayikra 1:7), "And the descendants of Aaron the kohen shall place fire on the altar." Even though the fire descended from Heaven, the kohen was commanded to light fire on the altar. However, Nadav and Avihu had still not heard this law from Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, and they concluded it on their own, bringing before Hashem foreign fire, which He had not commanded them yet.

This implies that the main sin was that they transgressed the Torah commandment of (Devarim 13:1), "You shall neither add to it, nor subtract from it." Just as it is forbidden to detract from a mitzvah of Hashem, so too it is forbidden to add to it on one's own, and anyone who adds actually detracts. This is because all the commandments are given to us from Heaven precisely according to Hashem's exact judgment. So how do we, shortsighted people of flesh and blood, dare to meddle and add to the commandments?

Although Nadav and Avihu were considered highly learned and exalted leaders of the Jewish people, the Torah states (Devarim 17:11), "You shall not divert from the word they tell you, either right or left." It is permitted for Torah sages to add safeguards and protective provisions according to their opinion as they see fit in order to strengthen the observance of the laws of the Torah. Nevertheless, in this case it was considered a sin, since Moshe Rabbeinu was present, and he was the head of the Sanhedrin, and they decided a law before their master. Therefore, it was wrong that they added a mitzvah on their own.

Regarding the mitzvah of the study of Torah, it is possible to fulfill one's obligation by reciting Kriyat Shema in the morning and in the evening, and this is sufficient. But one who excels in this mitzvah and studies Torah with all his might day and night is considered saintly. This is actually the mitzvah in its entirety, and of course, about this there is no prohibition of "do not add," because anyone who adds in his toil of Torah, more life is added for him, and he is most fortunate, both in this world and in the World to Come, and this is the essence of the mitzvah to toil in Torah day and night.

Similarly, we find about all Torah sages that they fulfilled the mitzvah of the study of Torah in its entirety and dedicated their lives with self-sacrifice in the study halls of Torah, and they did not relax or slacken in their studies, investing all their strength in it. It is told about a close friend of my great grandfather Rabbeinu Chaim Pinto, zya"a, Rabbeinu David Ben Chazan, zt"l, who would place his feet in a bowl of ice-cold water at night so that he would not fall asleep while he studied, and in this way he would study without a break. Also it is told about Rabbeinu Shmuel Eidelis, the Maharsha,

ztk"l, who would not cut his hair short in order to tie the hairs of his head to a string above him, so that he would not be able to rest his head and doze off. It is also told about one of the great Torah sages who held a candle in his hand to learn by its light. Once he was so engrossed in his studies, he did not notice his fingers getting burned from the flame of the candle. His wife who smelled burning flesh hurried to save him.

Thus, it is clear that in some mitzvot that Hashem commanded us there is no prohibition to "add", and moreover, one who adds to them excels in its fulfillment. The greater a person is, the more he seeks to fulfill mitzvot in its entirety and dedicate himself with self-sacrifice to do so, and his reward from Heaven is endless. There are many heroic stories about seemingly simple people who merited fulfilling Hashem's command with tremendous self-sacrifice.

However even when fulfilling mitzvot a person must use his better judgment to fulfill them with wisdom and to the right extent, because sometime it is preferable for a person to forgo some stringency or avoid behaving on the level of Chassidut, which is not an obligation according to the law, in order to maintain peace in his home, or in order to keep peace between him and his fellowman. Being meticulous in matters between man and his fellowman is more important in Hashem's Eyes than behaving with Chassidut.

This is particularly true in the issue of maintaining peace at home.

For example, we know that honoring Shabbat is expressed by preparing a spread of the finest delicacies, and the nature of a woman is to excel in this and spend many hours in the kitchen preparing good food. Sometimes the husband returns from work tired and irritable and he becomes furious at all the activity and raises his voice in anger to his wife, complaining about all the preparations: Why are you going overboard?

A wise woman, who seeks to bring peace into her home, will realize the consequences, and submit to her husband's will, even if he is not right. It is preferable for her to forgo the outstanding preparations in honor of the Shabbat, so that she should gain peace in her home. She must internalize in her mind that even if they would eat a simple sandwich on Shabbat, it is better to make do with it and preserve the joy and peace in the home. Even if it seems to impact the mitzvah of honoring the Shabbat, the will of Hashem is to have peace reside between husband and wife, and it is preferable for a person to relinquish a conduct of Chassidut, or other segulot, for the sake of peace in his home.

Peace between man and his wife and between man and his fellow is paramount, and if Hashem permitted His Holy Name to be erased for this purpose through the purified waters, how much more are we obligated to subjugate ourselves to this end. It is our fervent desire to succeed in implementing the essential trait of peace between us, Amen.

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Hillulah of Tzaddikim

22 - Rabbi Yehudah bar Shmuel Rozanis The
"Mishnah I'Melech"

23 - Rabbi Moshe bar Yosef De Trani

24 - Rabbi Chaim Yitzchak Chaikin Rosh
Yeshiva of Aix-les-Baines

25 - Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz Author
of "Divrei Chaim"

26 - Rabbi Efraim Navon Author of
"Machane Efraim"

27 - Rabbi Yehudah Kahana Author of
"Kuntras Hasfekot"

28 - Rabbi Moshe Halberstam



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

A Toast to Sanctity

The parashah discussing forbidden foods is contiguous to the parashah discussing the inauguration of the Mishkan on the eighth day of the Milu'im, in order to teach us that the foundation of the building of the Mishkan of Hashem, which is rooted deep in the hearts of the people, is dependent upon one's caution in distancing himself from forbidden foods.

Even if one inadvertently ate a forbidden food, this too creates a flaw in his soul and can harm him spiritually. Also a fetus in his mother's womb can be affected by forbidden foods consumed by its mother, which can stunt its spiritual growth in the future.

I recall that once when I was about twenty-four years old, I traveled with my esteemed father, zya"a, to Morocco, where he met with his long-time friend Mr. Shalom Hacohen, z"l.

Mr. Shalom accorded great honor to father and for the special occasion he placed before him all sorts of delicacies, including an expensive bottle of arak which he had saved in the cupboard. He declared, "I have not used this bottle for twenty years and only for someone of your prominence I have taken it out so I can honor you with it."

During the course of their conversation, one of the men suggested they drink a l'chaim from the liquor on the table. Father had a dislike for strong alcohol and asked that they wait for me to come home and join them in his stead. As I stepped into the

house, I found father's friends watching me expectantly.

"Why didn't you have a shot beforehand?" I asked in puzzlement.

"Your father asked that we wait for you to join us," they replied.

I was taken aback by this rejoinder. Father raised us with rock-solid distaste for hard drinks. Why did he want me to join in the drinking this time? But since I was also raised to revere my parents, I kept my reservations to myself and turned to the honor of pouring the drinks.

When I lifted the bottle, my face fell. The liquor was infested with tiny ants. All of the men seated were elderly and had blurred vision. They surely would never have noticed the tiny bugs at the bottom of the bottle. Hashem miraculously saved them from ingesting defiled creatures. Baruch Hashem, father had the foresight to prevent them from this terrible pitfall.

Father was overjoyed at being saved from transgressing a prohibition, and began to dance from joy.

I learned a great moral from this incident. Great care must be taken, and one must meticulously check any food before consuming it. If one is cautious in the matter, certainly Hashem helps protect him from transgressing, because "Hashem will not withhold good from those who go perfectly in His ways." He will also earn reward, since through his caution, Hashem will help him succeed in his personal building of the Mishkan in his heart, where Hashem resides.

Blessing wholeheartedly

"And Aharon lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them" (Vayikra 9:22)

What is the blessing that Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, blessed the people?

Rashi explains that he blessed them with the blessing of the kohanim: יְבִרְכֶּךָ - "May the L-rd bless you"... וְיִפְאֶר - "May the L-rd make His face shine"... וְיִשָּׂא - "May the L-rd lift His face...."

Why specifically now? Because the holy Shechinah descended just then, and then Aharon blessed Am Yisrael with the blessing of the Kohanim.

We may wonder, why only now did he bless the nation and not beforehand?

The "Mikri Dikdaki" explains: in the Shulchan Aruch it is decided as law that a Kohen who does not like the congregation that he is about to bless, or if the congregation does not like him, he may not raise his hands to bless the nation.

Now Aharon participated in the creation of the Golden Calf, and it is possible that he was angry at the people for forcing him to do so. Also the people, for their part, were angry with Aharon for causing them to sin with the Calf. Since they were angry at each other, Aharon could not bless them with the blessing of the Kohen.

But after they sacrificed the offerings, and Hashem had forgiven everyone, and they were reconciled, Aharon could bless the nation and sincerely say wholeheartedly, "May the L-rd bless you." In order to bless one's fellow wholeheartedly, he must feel love for him.

Rabbi Shimshon David Pincus, zt"l relates, (Tiferet Avot):

Once a woman approached me and begged, "Can the Rabbi pray for my son..." and against my will she handed me a twenty shekel bill. I took the money so as not to hurt her, and went right down to the corner store and bought myself a piece of cake and a drink.

After feeling good about the pastry and drink, I took out the note with the name of her son and blessed and prayed for him wholeheartedly.

The Haftarah

"And David continued [to gather]"

(Shmuel II 6)

The connection to the parashah: The haftarah tells about the death of the tzaddik Uzza, who was killed because he tried to grasp the ark unlawfully, which is similar to the parashah in which the two tzaddikim, Nadav and Avihu, were killed when they brought a foreign fire before Hashem, which He had not commanded them.



Guard Your Tongue

The Power of Speech

One may not rely upon it

As mentioned, it is a mitzvah to denigrate an "apikores," but this is only if he personally heard him express apikorsus. However, if other people told him about their apikorsus, he may not rely on them in order to denigrate them, whether before them or behind their backs. Also one may not decide in his heart that this is true, as is the law about accepting any lashon hara, but he may exercise caution and warn others not to associate with them until the matter is clarified.



Chazak U'Baruch

The summer period is approaching and the hot summer days are fraught with many obstacles for each and every one of us, from young to old, children and women. This is the time to dedicate the section of "Chazak U'Baruch to providing reinforcement and inspiration about the special mitzvah of guarding one's eyes from forbidden sights and protecting the sanctity of our thoughts.

Every time one leaves the entrance of one's home to walk in the streets, he must guard himself not to look at forbidden scenes, not to broaden his gaze and be lured by passion. The gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Efraim Hachohen, zt"l, (father of the Chacham Shalom Hachohen, shlit"a), would stand by the gates and admonish the people about the severity of gazing at forbidden sights, and he would say: A person walks in the streets and can transgress hundreds of sins with one stroll outside if he does not guard himself, and he can become a rasha, having committed hundreds of sins. On the other hand, with one stroll, he can return home to his house with hundreds of mitzvot if he guards himself from forbidden sights, because then through his efforts he returns home with many mitzvot.

Surely it is a difficult trial, and there are those that are convinced that they cannot withstand it. But it is forbidden to think this way. If it would not be possible to overcome the trial, the Torah would not have commanded us to do so. We only need to plan our actions and consciously make decisions about how to traverse the streets, and consider what we can do to protect ourselves.

If we would think about it, we would notice how a person behaves when he is a guest at his friend's house and learn from it. When he enters his fellow's house he behaves in a dignified manner, and does not do whatever he pleases. A person naturally feels constrained in a stranger's house, and does not do what he wishes. For example, he will not open the refrigerator in his friend's house and look for something to eat, even though he is very hungry.

This proves that when a person realizes that he is not in charge, he will act accordingly. We have to be aware all the time in this world that we are actually guests here and not in charge. When this feeling becomes reinforced, we have the ability to control our natural instincts and not do whatever we please when we walk the streets. When one is aware of his transience in the world, lo and behold, he does not feel free to do whatever he desires.

The gaon Rabbi Yehuda Adas, shlit"a, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Kol Yakov Yeshiva, once came to the saintly gaon Rabbi Meir Abuchatzera, zya"a, before the beginning of the new semester in the yeshiva and asked him: "What should I tell the young men so that they succeed in their studies?" Rabbi Meir said: "Guard your eyes and your thoughts and your speech. This is the secret to success."

Treasures

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



Silence is golden

"Then Moshe said to Aharon, 'This is what the L-rd spoke, [when He said], 'I will be sanctified through those near to Me, and before all the people I will be glorified.' 'And Aharon was silent.' (Vayikra 10:3)

Let us contemplate the greatness of Aharon in keeping silent and accepting Hashem's will with love when his two sons died.

The Gemara tells us (Gittin 57b) about Channah and her seven sons who sacrificed their lives for Hashem's sake, and before the seventh son was killed, Channah turned to him and said, "Go with your brothers to Avraham, your Father, and tell him 'You bound one son to the altar, but I have bound seven altars.'"

At a quick glance, it may appear to us that Channah's act was greater than that of Avraham Avinu, a"h, but I would like to suggest that Avraham Avinu's act was immeasurably greater than that of Channah, the righteous woman. The reason is because for Channah it was hard to bear the terrible grief. Therefore, she vent her pain and said to her sons, "Go to Avraham your Father, and tell him..." In this way she unburdened her pain and sorrow deep in her heart, as the pasuk states (Mishlei 12:25), "If there is concern in a man's heart, let him cast it down," and Chazal explain that it implies that one should talk it out, because when one talks about his sorrows to others, he eases the burden in his heart. Avraham Avinu was silent and did not pour out his heart to others, but accepted Hashem's will with absolute love and equanimity. He did not even feel pain in his heart, because he knew that this was Hashem's will, so why should he be grieved? He did not feel the need at all to vent his grief outwardly, but remained silent, which was golden.

Similarly, Aharon Hakohen, who the pasuk testifies about him, "And Aharon was silent," also did not vent his grief outwardly, but remained silent and accepted the decree from Heaven with absolute equanimity. This is why he received the exalted reward of Hashem speaking to him privately.

Chazal say that the main purpose of the building of the Mishkan is to build a Mishkan in the depth of one's heart, and thus Aharon Hakohen was a true example of how the internal building of the Mishkan in one's soul should be; it must be permeated with the awareness of Hashem's love for him, and with pure fear of Heaven. From this example we can learn how to purify our hearts to make it a proper receptacle for the Shechinah to dwell within it.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Expressing thanks even after experiencing grief

"And Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, each took his pan... And fire went forth from before the L-rd and consumed them, and they died before the L-rd... And Aharon was silent" (Vayikra 10:1-3)

Chazal say that when Aharon's two sons, Nadav and Avihu, died, the Torah praises Aharon by testifying, "And Aharon was silent," and he received reward for his silence.

But there is another level which is even higher than that, as we find by the sweet singer, David Hamelech, a"h, the Mashiach of Hashem. After all the troubles and grief that he experienced, he declared: "So that my soul will sing praises to You and not be silent." This implies that he even sings praises to Hashem for all his trials and hardships!...

(Tiferet Shlomo)

Men of Faith

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

Hashem Will Provide for Me

An amazing story happened to Mr. Ben-Simon, whose daughter was married to Rabbi Chaim's grandson. Moreinu v'Rabbeinu heard this story personally from Mr. Ben-Simon.

Mr. Ben-Simon was a goldsmith by profession. Once, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan entered his shop and requested, "Give me such and such amount of money for tzedakah." (Many times Rabbi Chaim would name a specific sum of money, and no one dared refuse him, since they knew that he could tell each person exactly how much money he was carrying in his pocket. For this reason, they always handed over the sum he requested without a word.)

The jeweler responded, "I have no money." This answer did not please the tzaddik, and he told the jeweler the following, "A Jew should never say, 'I do not have.' Instead, he should say, 'With the help of G-d, Hashem will provide me with the means and then I will be able to give you.' This is because if a person says, 'I do not have,' he draws evil upon himself."

The jeweler listened attentively to the Rav's advice. He immediately corrected himself and said, "With Hashem's help, Hashem will provide me with money, and then I will give the Rav as much as he requests!"

Then, Rabbi Chaim told the jeweler, "If so, I will wait a bit, and in a short while a woman will come who needs to marry off her daughter and will want to purchase gold. Sell her as much as she wishes to buy."

Rabbi Chaim lingered in the store. After a while, a woman entered. She was dressed very simply. She inquired of the jeweler about a piece of jewelry which she liked, "How much does this cost?"

The jeweler named a relatively high price, since he was sure that this woman was poor and she would surely not buy the expensive jewelry. The woman was very taken with the jewelry and said, "I have never seen such skillful work."

Afterward, she began to inquire about a number of items that she saw in the store, asking the price of each one. Again, the jeweler named exorbitant prices, surprised by the turn of events.

The woman neither disputed the price nor tried to bargain for a reduction. She quickly took out her purse and paid with cash the entire sum that the jeweler had named. Then, she left the store.

The jeweler looked at Rabbi Chaim incredulously. He raised his eyes heavenward and exclaimed, "Ribbono shel Olam! How unbelievable! This woman looked like a simple pauper, and yet she bought all the jewelry..."

Rabbi Chaim explained, "This woman never gave money for tzedakah. Therefore, I did not say a word to you about the inflated prices. Now, take for yourself the exact amount of money for the cost of the gold that you sold, according to the price that you would usually charge, and give me the difference so that I can distribute it for tzedakah."

The jeweler did as the Rav said. Afterward, Rabbi Chaim hurried after the woman and told her, "Madame! You paid too much for the gold, and this is the difference that I am returning to you. Would you prefer to keep the difference, or could it be donated for tzedakah?"

The woman responded, "Rabbi! I have never given money for tzedakah. I want to donate the entire sum to charity."