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Pachad David

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

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"z



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

At Your Doorstep

"There you shall place the Ark of Testimony and screen the Ark with the Partition" (Shemot 40:3)

The Ark of Testimony (Aron Ha'edut) was placed in the Holy of Holies, and the Partition (Parochet) served as a division between the Holy of Holies and the second chamber of the Tabernacle, the Holy, where the Menorah was placed. The Menorah was outside the Parochet and the poles of the Aron Ha'edut could also be seen from the outside. When the Kohen lit the Menorah he faced the Parochet and would see the poles of the Aron Ha'edut.

We can question why the Aron Ha'edut was kept in the Holy of Holies, the innermost Sanctuary. Seemingly, it would be ideal for Bnei Yisrael to be able to see the Aron Ha'edut which represents the Torah, the main purpose of creation. The Aron Ha'edut housed the Tablets of Testimony, (Luchot Ha'edut), which is why the Aron is called 'Aron Ha'edut'. Were Am Yisrael able to see the Aron Ha'edut, they would have a constant reminder of the Luchot that were placed inside it. This would lead them to the conclusion that the Torah must be found deep in the hearts of each person, as David Hamelech said in Tehillim (40:9), "and Your Torah is in my innards".

So why was the Aron Ha'edut placed inside the Holy of Holies, where nobody could see it besides the Kohen Gadol, who would enter this most holy place only once a year on Yom Kippur, to pray and carry out the incense service. Would placing the Aron Ha'edut on the other side of the partition not strengthen our realization that the entire purpose of creation is to toil in Torah? At the end of a person's life, he is placed inside an aron (coffin) and it is only the Torah which he has acquired that will stand for him as a merit, as it says (Yeshaya 58:8), "Your righteous deeds ('צדקה') will precede you". 'צדק' refers to the Torah as it says (Devarim 16:20), "Righteousness, righteousness shall you pursue".

Being able to see the Aron will bring a person to the fundamental recognition that his body too must be like a Testimony for the Torah since a person's body is made up of two hundred and forty-eight limbs and three hundred and sixty-five sinews, which added together correspond to the six hundred and thirteen mitzvot of the Torah. If a person merits sanctifying his body through the Holy Torah, then in his grave too, his lips will utter the holy words of the Torah.

Of course, the way that the Mishkan was set up contains deep and sublime ideas, since the entire creation is alluded to in the Mishkan. The Mishkan was built by Betzalel with Divine inspiration, as Moshe Rabbeinu told him, בצל-אלי, 'you were in the shadow of Hashem' and this is how you know the secrets of building the Mishkan, which hint to the secrets of the creation of the universe in its entirety. These concepts are unfathomable to our human minds, but with siyata dishmaya, we can offer the plain and metaphorical explanation that will help us understand the words of the Torah.

Harav Pacifici shlita, who used to be a Maggid shiur in

the Kollel in Lyon, France, asked me a powerful question: The Torah writes that the Parochet was placed in front of the Aron Ha'edut but this is surprising since at the time of the second Beit Hamikdash, the Parochet was placed in front of the Even Hashesi'ah, the stone found in the Kodesh Hakedoshim since at that time the King Yeshayahu had hidden away the Aron Ha'edut. Since the Parochet was only placed in front of the Aron Ha'edut at the time of the first Beit Hamikdash, seemingly the Torah should have mentioned that the Parochet will also be placed in front of the Even Hashesi'ah.

With siyata dishmaya, I would like to answer this question with an inspiring idea. A person must know that the Torah is neither in heaven nor across the sea. Wherever a person can be found, Torah is there with him and he can delve into it and fulfill its commandments. The main reason why a person comes down to this world is to toil in Torah since learning brings to accomplishment. However, one should not make do with learning alone and not put one's learning into practice. We can bring a proof for this from the Chazal that tells us that Hashem considers a positive intention as if it has been carried out. This is only in the case if a person is unable to carry out his intention. However, if a person has a positive thought and can bring it to fruition yet he does not accomplish this act, then the intention is not considered as having been carried out.

We asked why the Aron Ha'edut was placed in the innermost Sanctuary. This could be so that a person should always be occupied with seeking the truth until he finds it. 'Believe one who toils and achieves', since it is indeed not far from you. In truth, the Aron Ha'edut was right there, not far away at all, it was only covered and separated by the Parochet. Why? Because the Aron Ha'edut contained the Luchot Ha'edut, the Holy Torah. This alludes to the fact that each person must invest toil and effort in order to merit acquiring the Torah. Even if at the moment it can't be seen, it is nevertheless at your doorstep. With investment, it can become yours.

The poles which were used to carry the Aron Ha'edut could be seen from the outside, even though the Aron Ha'edut itself was covered by the Parochet. This contains a message that we must grasp hold of these poles which represent our holy sefarim, and through holding on to them we will reveal the great treasure that is concealed in the Holy Torah, the Torah that is deeper than the seabed. This will enable a person to taste the sweetness of Torah and see how pleasant is its merchandise.

A person must try and become an Aron Ha'edut. He should be as strong as a lion in overcoming his evil inclination, especially now that we no longer have a Beit Hamikdash, Kohen Gadol and Menorah which all had the power to arouse a person to understand and fulfill his role in this world. Studying Torah, which leads to its accomplishment, will enable a person to transform himself into a new being until he is considered like an Aron Ha'edut.



Walking in their Ways

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

A Tzaddik Sees Far Afield

When I was once staying in Lyon, France, a woman came to me and told me that her mother did not have children for many years and in her distress, she went to the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto zya" a asking him for a blessing for children. To her surprise, the tzaddik asked her to give him a certain amount of money, multiplied by three, so that the merit of the mitzvah of tzedaka will be a conduit through which his blessing can be fulfilled. When her mother asked why she needs to multiply the amount by three, he replied that he wishes to bless not only her but also her daughter and granddaughter. Her mother did as Rabbi Chaim zya" a requested and indeed not long after, with Hashem's great kindness, she merited giving birth to a baby girl.

Many years later, the headlines broadcasted the shocking news that a plane which was flying from Lyon to Strasbourg crashed, killing all its passengers besides one lady who miraculously remained alive. This survivor was called Mrs. Levi and she was the one who came to me together with her mother and told me this story. Now she understands, she said, why the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim zya" a asked her mother to give him a threefold amount of money so that it would serve as an atonement for the soul of her daughter and her future child. For what is the point of being blessed with offspring if one generation later they will be severed?

When I heard this story I began to tremble. Here was a proof of the far-reaching and all-encompassing vision of tzaddikim. They are able to anticipate the future and calculate their steps accordingly.

Hearing these kinds of stories strengthens our emunat chachamim, faith in the great leaders. This inspiration should not remain merely as a feeling, but it should initiate some action. Each person must take this lesson to heart and be scrupulous about fulfilling the Torah commandment (Devarim 17:10), "you shall be careful to do according to everything that they will teach you". Even if at first, the Rav's instructions seem to be puzzling, one must follow them blindly (see Shoftim 11), for it is only the gedolei hador with their sharp vision, who can anticipate the future and foresee the results.

The reason why they are endowed with this power is that they are bound up with the orders of Hashem which gladden the heart and enlighten the eyes. Each and every person can transform himself into a dwelling place for the Shechina, through occupying himself with Torah and fulfilling its commandments.

The Haftarah

"Thus said the Lord, Hashem/Elokim: "In the first [month]"
(Yechezkel 45)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah talks about the offerings that the Nasi would bring on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and also discusses the festival of Pesach. Similarly, the Maftir of Shabbat HaChodesh talks about Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the approaching festival of Pesach.

Guard Your Tongue

An Ancient Ban

The Poskim write that there is an ancient ruling and ban, not to talk slanderously about the dead, even if he was an am ha'aretz (ignoramus) and all the more so if he was a talmid chacham. Certainly, one who degrades a talmid chacham transgresses a serious sin and he is excommunicated on account of this, as ruled in Yoreh De'ah. The prohibition to degrade a talmid chacham includes both the person himself and especially his Torah.



Words of our Sages

The Rav who Saw the Vessels of the Mikdash

In the summer of 5689, the King of Italy, Victor Emanuel III, went to visit several countries that were under his rule, among them Libya and the city of Tripoli. The Jewish population arranged a beautiful reception in his honor, headed by their Rabbi, Harav Yitzchak Chai Bokovza zt"l, a Gaon in the concealed Torah who wrote many sefarim on Torah, halacha, Shas and Kabbalah.

The climax of his visit to Tripoli, was when the entire royal entourage arrived at the congregation's Beit Knesset. The elderly Rav went out to welcome the king, together with all the congregation's leaders and the rest of the Jewish population.

The entourage entered the Beit Knesset. The king stood on the bimah next to the Aron Hakodesh and the Heichal was opened, revealing the Sifrei Torah that glistened in all their magnificence and splendor. The king was fascinated by the sight. Harav Bokovza melodiously recited the blessing, 'Who grants salvation to the kings', while a translator translated the content of the blessing. The congregation answered 'Amen' with apparent emotion, on the occasion of hearing this rare blessing at this special event. The king was most gratified by the great honor that he was accorded by the Jewish congregation and was especially captivated by the Rav. He shook his hand, thanking him for the blessing that he recited from the depths of his heart, and gave the Rav a decoration of honor from the Italian government, as a sign of appreciation.

As they took leave, he invited the Rav for a reciprocate visit to Rome, to join him in celebrating his son's wedding. The Rav answered that it would be difficult for him and would take him away from his Torah studies. The king replied that he will send him his royal ship and the Rav should come together with his wife and several talmidei chachamim and in this way, the Rav will be able to continue his regular Torah study, to which Harav Bokovza agreed.

On the appointed day, the king's ship was sent to fetch the Rav and

his talmidim. The Rav was welcomed with great honor and was taken to the king's palace in Rome, where the magnificent wedding was set up. All the distinguished leaders and officials of Rome were seated around the tables, together with the many guests who had come to participate in the king's joy on the occasion of his son's wedding.

After the wedding, the Rav was invited for an audience with the king. He was welcomed with great honor and the king agreed to fulfill all his requests on behalf of his congregation. Finally, the king asked him if he has any personal request. At first, the Rav refused and said that he doesn't need anything for himself, but after the king urged him, he asked for permission to enter the Vatican, where several of the holy vessels from the Beit Hamikdash were concealed. Initially, the king explained that he could not authorize this visit since the Vatican was not under his authority. But when the king saw that the Rav was not interested in anything else, he spoke to the Pope and put pressure on him until he agreed to allow the Rav to enter, on his own, the next day.

Throughout that night the Rav secluded himself, sanctifying himself by delving into Torah. After praying the morning prayers, he set out for the place where they had arranged to meet. His talmidim waited outside the gate, while a servant from the Vatican accompanied the Rav inside. They went down to the basement where the servant moved aside a curtain behind which the vessels of the Mikdash were held. Harav Bokovza glanced at the vessels for just one moment and then said that he wished to leave, explaining that he had seen enough.

The talmidim who were waiting for their Rav with eager anticipation, imagined that he would come out with his face shining, but the Rav did not utter a word. He immediately set out on the return journey to Tripoli, Libya. Once home, he began a ta'anit dibbur which he kept up for forty days, all the while studying Torah without interruption. After forty days he returned his soul to his Maker, at the age of seventy-seven and the secret of what he saw was buried with him.



Pearls of the Parsha

The Best Time for Unity

"Moshe assembled the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael" (Shemot 35:1)

Rashi explains that this assembling of the entire nation took place on the day after Yom Kippur. The Kli Yakar writes that this hints to us that the point of this assembling was to administer peace between them, for 'a person cannot live with a snake in one basket'. Since Moshe wanted to tell the people about the construction of the Mishkan in which they would all participate, it was as if he was placing them all together in one living space. Therefore, he first had to gather them together, so that they should be united.

Since all Bnei Yisrael's campings took place with argument and separation, it would be impossible to assemble them all together. Therefore, Moshe decided that it would be wise to gather them together on the day following Yom Kippur, since on Yom Kippur peace reigns among the people and they are united, so it would be easy to gather them together.

The Rush to Donate for the Mishkan

"The entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael left Moshe's presence" (Shemot 35:20)

The holy Ohr Hachaim zya"l explains the stress on the words, Bnei Yisrael left 'השמ ינפלא', literally translated as 'before Moshe'. This was because Bnei Yisrael were concerned that Moshe would personally bring all that was required for the Mishkan since he greatly desired to perform Hashem's command. He also had the means to do this since he possessed much wealth. Therefore, they rushed to bring their contributions, so that they would manage to do so 'before Moshe', meaning before Moshe would precede them and donate all that was required for building the Mishkan.

The Fifth and Sixth Section of Shulchan Aruch

"He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge" (Shemot 35:31)

About Betzalel it says, "He filled him with G-dly spirit, with wisdom, insight, and knowledge" and a few verses later it says, "He gave him the ability to teach". This seems to be unnecessary repetition since if he was filled with wisdom and insight, then certainly he was also capable of ruling in halacha.

Rabbi Yosef Binyamin Wosner, in the name of his grandfather the Gaon Rabbi Shmuel HaLevi Wosner zt"l, explains: Hidden in these words lies an important foundation in regard to determining halachic rulings. A person can be filled with wisdom and understanding, but will not necessarily know how to decide matters of law since knowing how to rule and being able to take all the necessary details into account, requires a special blessing.

He added that it is a common saying that in order to decide halachic rulings one also needs to be familiar with the 'fifth' section of Shulchan Aruch (while in fact there are only four sections). What is the fifth section? How to interact with people. But over the years he also learnt the 'sixth' section of Shulchan Aruch, which teaches appropriate conduct when faced with those who cannot be considered as people...

Rejoice in Another's Good Fortune

"You shall anoint them as you had anointed their father" (Shemot 40:15)

Seemingly, Rabbi Shushan HaKohen pointed out, it would be enough to say "You shall anoint them", why does the verse find it necessary to add "as you had anointed their father"?

He explains in his sefer 'Perach Shushan', that with these words Hashem was hinting to Moshe that he should anoint the sons of Ahron with joy, just as he anointed his brother Ahron with joy.

Meaning that when Moshe anointed Ahron and appointed him to be Kohen Gadol, he certainly did not entertain any thoughts of jealousy since Moshe himself merited being the leader of all the Nevi'im and the king of the entire nation; his lot was greater than Ahron's. But when it came to anointing the sons of Ahron as Kohanim, there is a place to be concerned that Moshe might feel a trace of jealousy that the sons of Ahron merited the priesthood while his own sons did not. Therefore, Hashem told him that he should anoint Ahron's sons with the same joy "as you had anointed their father".

Treasures

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



The Connection Between Churban and Mishkan

"These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle of Testimony, which were reckoned at Moshe's bidding. The labor of the Leviim was under the authority of Itamar, son of Ahron the Kohen" (Shemot 38:21)

Rashi explains, "the Tabernacle, the Tabernacle" – these words are repeated to hint to the Mikdash that was taken as collateral and destroyed twice, because of the sins of Yisrael.

Reading the verse according to the plain meaning, gives rise to the question of why the word Mishkan (Tabernacle) is repeated. Rashi answers that in this lies a hint to the two Batei Mikdash which will eventually be destroyed. These Mikdashot were destroyed because Am Yisrael were not particular about observing the laws and commandments which were given to them during their sojourn in the Midbar and at Matan Torah. Since Bnei Yisrael showed disregard for Hashem's mitzvot, He expended His anger on sticks and stones and destroyed the Beit Hamikdash.

The holy Admor of Sanz zya"l asks why especially at this time of joy, when Am Yisrael were dedicating the Mishkan and were in a state of ecstasy, does the Torah come and remind them of the destruction of the Temple which will dampen their spirits and impair their joy? There was no shortage of occasions to give over this message to Am Yisrael, why just now?

One can answer his question by saying that 'משכן', Mishkan, contains the same letters as 'נמשך', to continue. This implies that Am Yisrael must continue the chain of the generations and cleave to the tradition of their ancestors. Each person is a personal Mishkan and just as Hashem's Shechina rests in the Mishkan, so can His presence be found in every upright Jew who observes the Torah and its commandments. Since Hashem's presence rests inside every Jew, he must take responsibility and guard the Shechina through continuing the tradition that has been passed down from his ancestors and being particular to fulfill all the Torah laws. When a person is lax in this duty and abandons his ancestor's ways, then the Shechina leaves him and leaves the Beit Hamikdash too, leading to the bitter end – churban, destruction of the Beit Hamikdash.

Hashem stressed this message to Am Yisrael especially at the time of dedicating the Mishkan, so that their joy should not lead to them to pride. On the contrary, mentioning the churban will be a painful reminder which will cause them to be even more scrupulous in fulfilling Hashem's commands and continuing the path of the holy Avot, who endangered their lives to fulfill Hashem's command. This will result in Hashem's Shechina continuing to rest among them.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

"These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle"

(Shemot 38:21)

Concerning Moshe Rabbeinu we are told "in My entire house he is the trusted one" (Bamidbar 12:7), so why did he feel it necessary to give a detailed listing of the amounts of gold, silver and copper that were contributed for the construction of the Mishkan? The reason is as the Midrash Tanchuma tells us: "He heard the mockers of the generation talking about him, as it says, 'Whenever Moshe would go out to the Tent...they would gaze after Moshe' (Shemot 33:8). And what were they saying: The one who is responsible for overseeing the building of the Mishkan, for talents of silver and talents of gold, whose value cannot be estimated, neither their weight nor their number, of course he will take riches for himself? When he heard this, he said, by your life, upon the completion of the construction of the Mishkan I will make a reckoning for you. Now that it was completed he said to them: 'These are the reckonings of the Tabernacle.'"

Whilst all of Am Yisrael were occupied with gathering the spoil from the Egyptians, Moshe Rabbeinu was searching for Yosef's coffin. How can one suspect such a person of embezzling money?

How can it be that "they would gaze after Moshe"? How could they suspect him? Why did Moshe have to give them an exact reckoning about the materials used for the construction of the Mishkan? We are talking about Moshe Rabbeinu! The one who led them out of Mitzrayim, the emissary for their wondrous redemption and for providing for them in the Midbar!

This is what lay behind their behavior: 'Wherever a person's thoughts are, that's where he is!'

This is clear in all areas of life: A shoemaker will notice shoes, a barber will notice hair, a builder shows an interest in buildings, and so forth. In this vein, there is a story told about the Alter of Novhardok who was once travelling by train where he met another Jew with whom he was unacquainted. After speaking to him for a short time, the Alter asked, "are you a forest merchant?" "Do you possess Divine inspiration?" he responded in surprise. The Alter replied, "the way of a craftsman is to observe things that concern him".

This is the answer, brought in the sefer 'Yeina Shel Torah – Emunah Shleimah', to Bnei Yisrael's suspicion of Moshe Rabbeinu, the leader of the generation: Wherever a person's thoughts lie, in the area where his interests and desires lie, that is where he is. Those covetous people viewed Moshe Rabbeinu through their own lenses. Since they themselves would never carry out such a task voluntarily, they automatically suspected Moshe of embezzling some of the contributions.

There is a joke told about a person who gravely told his friend that his grandfather had just passed away. The friend sympathized, "How sad, what did he have?" The grandchild replied, "One and a half rooms in south Tel Aviv"...

Where a person's thoughts are, that's where he is...

Can But Doesn't Want

When the esteemed Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef zt"l, author of 'Toldot Ya'akov Yosef', first came to visit the holy Ba'al Shem Tov zt"l, he had not yet become one of his chassidim. The Ba'al Shem Tov explained to him that every single thing that a person sees or hears can serve as a lesson in how to serve Hashem.

As they were talking, a non-Jew came to the Ba'al Shem Tov's home and asked him if he perhaps has any utensils, such as barrels or buckets, which have fallen apart and need repair since that was his profession.

"No" answered the Ba'al Shem Tov, "in my house, baruch Hashem, everything

is intact, there is nothing that requires fixing." "Nevertheless," the non-Jew tried his luck, "maybe after a proper search you might find something that is broken?"

The Ba'al Shem Tov turned to the 'Toldot' and said to him: "The non-Jew is referring to mere vessels, but in my eyes, he is a messenger sent specifically by Divine Providence to reproach me that I am not entirely perfect, I still have things that I must repair and improve. This goy unintentionally roused my attention to the fact that I need to search and examine my deeds again and again and make a soul reckoning."

The 'Toldot' found it hard to accept that one can derive spiritual messages even from the words of a non-Jew.

The 'Toldot' took leave of the Ba'al Shem Tov, deep in thought. Suddenly a goy turned to him pleading: "Dear Jew, please help me pick up my overturned wagon. I am too weak and feeble to attempt it on my own". Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef replied, "I cannot help you." "Yes you can, Jew," the goy screamed at him, "you just don't want to!"

These words penetrated Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef's heart and soul. He felt himself being zipped by a strong, stirring current.

The 'Toldot' turned back on his heels, returned to the holy Ba'al Shem Tov's home and told him: "My master and teacher, indeed your words are true and just".

The sefer 'Toldot Ya'akov Yosef' later used this idea to explain the verse, "for the ways of the world are His" (Chabakuk 3:6). Whatever a person sees and hears in this world is destined for him, so that he should learn a lesson from the event. The ways of the world serve as an ethical lesson and provide us with direction on how to serve Hashem. For if a person would not need to hear all that he, as if incidentally, hears, Hashem would not have caused him to hear this. This is the meaning of 'for the ways of the world – are his'. They are destined for man and are uttered for his sake.