

Mishpatim
Shabat Shekalim
February 13th 2021
1st of Adar 5781
890



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Hilula

- 1 - Rabbi Tzedakah Chutzin, author of 'Meikitz Nirdamim'
- 2 - Rabbi Ben Tzion HaKohen Rabin
- 3 - Rabbi Eliezer De Abilla zya"n, author of 'Magen Giborim'
- 4 - Rabbi Yosef Abuchatzera
- 5 - Rabbi Rafael Aharon Yaffan
- 6 - Rabbi David Povarsky, Rosh Yeshiva of Ponivezh
- 7 - Moshe Rabbeinu a"n, the father of the prophets

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

Published by Mosdot "Orot Chaim U'Moshe" in Israel

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"a



MASKIL LEDAVID

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

Detachment from Materialism - A Condition for Accepting the Torah

"Moshe arrived in the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain; and Moshe was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights"

(Shemot 24:18)

When Moshe Rabbeinu ascended to heaven, the angels wished to burn him claiming, "What is this human being doing among us?" Hashem told Moshe to answer the angels' claim. Moshe said, "Master of the World, I am afraid that they will burn me with the vapor of their mouths". Hashem replied, "Hold on to my Throne of Glory and answer them" (Shabbat 88b). Moshe grasped Hashem's Throne of Glory and thereby drew upon the strength to refute the angels' claim.

There are several things that we need to clarify from this Gemara. First of all, why was Moshe scared to answer the angels? He went up to heaven on the command of Hashem, sanctifying himself and ascending to a level as if he himself was an angel, so what place was there to be afraid of them?

Secondly, why did Hashem not answer the angels Himself when He saw that Moshe was afraid? Instead, He told him to grasp the Throne of Glory and thereby he will receive inspiration to offer a suitable retort to the angels.

Furthermore, why was Moshe asked to ascend to heaven in the first place? Hashem could have given him the Torah down on earth in the Wilderness and this would have prevented the dispute between Moshe and the angels. Moreover, it is written about the Torah "It is not in heaven" (Devarim 30:12). This being the case, why was it transmitted to Moshe on High?

There seems to be a single answer which can reconcile all these difficulties. Hashem intentionally told Moshe to ascend to heaven to receive the Torah since He wanted to give Moshe the feeling that he is the choice one of creation and therefore has no need to fear the angels. For when a person holds on to Torah and mitzvot, he ascends to a very elevated level and is considered as an angel. Also, it is known that originally the angels were created to serve and sustain man, but when Adam HaRishon sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, he was expelled from Gan Eden and descended in level and title to the extent that he was no longer considered as the choice one of creation. But Moshe Rabbeinu who sanctified himself through the per-

mitted, separated from his wife, and did not eat or drink for as long as he remained on High, rose to the level of angels and therefore had no reason to fear them. On the contrary, by the Torah being given to Moshe on High, Hashem implanted this knowledge deep inside him that one who kills himself in the tent of Torah is comparable to the Holy Ofanim and Seraphim. Moshe, who was not yet aware of his exalted level, was afraid of the angels since he thought that they were on a higher level than him and therefore did not feel capable of responding with a suitable answer.

Hashem told Moshe to answer the angels by himself since this was a message to Moshe and all future generations that a person must accustom himself to replying to the angels and refuting their claim since after one hundred and twenty years a person will ascend on High and if he receives a favorable judgement, he will walk around in the World of Truth together with the angels and have to face their questions. Therefore, he must become accustomed to responding to them. Through Moshe answering the angels himself, he gave over this power to all future generations.

One can also add that the Torah was especially given on High because this symbolizes the idea that receiving the Torah requires man to detach himself completely from materialism and lift himself up considerably from the ground since materialism and earthliness are not compatible with Torah. Man must abstain from futilities so that Torah can rest within him. Indeed, when Moshe ascended on High, he did not eat or drink for forty days and nights and thereby became a symbol for the entire world that one must separate from materialism for the sake of accepting the Torah.

This idea is so critical that even the Ohel Mo'ed was not considered a holy or spiritual enough place for receiving the Torah because it was constructed from earthly raw materials, for example, the curtains etc. This demonstrates that to accept the Torah, man must completely cut himself off from the futilities of This World for this is the only way to merit retaining the Torah. Even Hashem revealed Himself to Bnei Yisrael on a mountain and gave them the Torah on it, for a mountain symbolizes severance from the earth and rising above materialism which was a lesson for those receiving the Torah and all future generations.



Walking in their Ways

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

Detained for a Blessing

A tremendous crisis hit a family from the Jewish community of Strasbourg, France. Their son was diagnosed with a dreaded disease and the doctors despaired of his recovery.

The despondent family and friends ascended to the grave of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto zya"a, in Morocco, where they prayed from the depths of their hearts for the recovery of this sick boy. Afterwards, R' Mordechai Knafo, who always hosts me on my trips to Morocco, turned to the boy's father and said, "Rabbi David Pinto, shlita, grandson of Rabbi Chaim, is at present in the airport in Morocco. It would be worth your while to hurry and go there to ask for his blessing in the merit of his ancestors. Take with you a bottle of water for the Rav to recite a blessing over it and with Hashem's help you will yet see salvation."

The boy's father, a simple man with complete faith in the power of the tzadikim, hurried to the airport. He offered a silent prayer that the flight should be delayed so that he could meet me and receive my blessing. He finally arrived very close to departure time and all the passengers, myself included, were already seated on the plane.

When the man saw that he had missed the boat, he refused to surrender or despair. He begged the airline crew to allow him to enter the plane for a few moments, just to receive a blessing on behalf of his sick son.

With Hashem's kindness, he managed to arouse the compassion of the airplane personnel in an unexplainable and miraculous way and they allowed him to board the plane. They even delayed the plane for a few moments so that he could receive my blessing for a complete recovery. It was something most extraordinary.

I blessed him wholeheartedly that his son should recover in the merit of my holy ancestors zya"a. With Hashem's abundant mercy, his son was completely cured. He merited setting up his own home and has three children, may there be many more!

There is no doubt that this man's complete faith in Hashem's power to heal his son and his trust in the power of the tzaddikim to arouse Heavenly mercy, are what gave him the siyata dishmaya (heavenly assistance) to be allowed on the plane and even delay the flight for the sake of his son's recovery.

The Haftarah

"Yehoyada then sealed the covenant" (Melachim II, 11)

Askenazim begin reading from "Yehoash was seven years old" (ibid, 12)

The connection to the Parsha: The Haftarah talks about the shekalim which Bnei Yisrael donated for the upkeep of the Beit Hamikdash, which is related to this week, Parshat Shekalim, the Shabbat on which one announces about the shekalim that the Bnei Yisrael donated for the Beit Hamikdash.

We add two verses from the Haftarah of Rosh Chodesh, **"The Heaven is My throne"** (Yeshaye 66)

Guard Your Tongue

The Way to Achieve Complete Repentance

By offering information about someone else that can cause him harm, one transgresses both a sin 'between man and G-d' and also 'between man and his fellow'. Regret, confession and commitment for the future is the fitting form of repentance for sins 'between man and G-d'. However, there is no atonement for sins 'between man and his fellow' until one asks one's friend for forgiveness.

This only refers to a situation where one's speech has already caused damage, but if the person has not yet been harmed, the speaker is responsible to do all that he can to prevent the damage from occurring.

A practical way to prevent the damage is to approach all those who listened to his damaging speech and explain that his words were not accurate.



In Our Father's Path

What Will Prevent Thieves from Carrying Out Their Desire?

The Torah guidance on how to treat a Jew who stumbles with the prohibition of theft, says HaGaon Rabbi Yosef Sholom Elyashiv zt"l, is simply something amazing. It is known that in every country throughout the world, where the law is defined according to non-Jewish rulings, harsh punishment is meted out to thieves. Sometimes the presence of only one witness is enough to pronounce them guilty and this could even be a relative or someone prejudiced, and even circumstantial evidence is enough to punish. These severe rulings stem from a simple and rational supposition, that if not for these punishments, "a person would swallow his fellow alive".

However, as far as we, the Jewish people, are concerned, the Torah tells us that a thief is only obligated to pay if there were two witnesses. And even in this case, if he admits to the theft before the witnesses arrive, he is exempt from the fine. Besides, even if he was found guilty, if he doesn't have the means to pay, he is sold as a servant. And then, not only is he exempt from finding the money to pay, but he is now afforded a life of comfort! His master is obligated to feed him with good food, just as he himself is accustomed to eating, and he must dress him in the same quality clothes that he himself wears. The 'thief' has no financial worries about how to support himself and his family.

One who contemplates this will certainly wonder: If this is the situation, what will deter the thief from stealing? How will order be retained in the world? People will prefer to steal in order to 'merit' "he shall be sold for his theft" when he is then freed from the burden of livelihood and able to live a comfortable life on the account of his master?

But Harav Elyashiv points out something wondrous: From here we see that the Torah is teaching us an important and fundamental point: We should not establish the gallows and the sword of punishment as the threat which will deter thieves from committing crimes, for this is not what will stop them, help them change their essence and once and for all stop transgressing. On the contrary, what will, in effect, cause them to stop stealing, is actually the pleasant way in which they are treated, the honor and sensitivity which they are accorded. This, together with being influenced by the good qualities that they see in their master's home, the basics of following in the path of the Torah and having faith in Hashem, is what will be responsible to ensure that order reigns in the world. This is what will bring to a dearth of stealing! The opinion of ba'alei batim is in direct contrast to the opinion of da'at Torah. This is the Torah outlook on this topic!

The topic of the Eved Ivri (a Jewish bondsman) is, in fact, the classic example of good middot!

HaGaon Rabbi Michal Zilber shlita, Rosh Yeshiva of Zvhil, testifies about the conduct of his master, Maran HaGaon Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky zt"l, author of 'Chazon Yechezkel'. He witnessed the special treatment which Harav Abramsky accorded his household help.

Every so often he would call her over in the middle of her work, and tell her to rest for a bit. He also told her that in general, it would make him happy if she would work slowly and with ease, rather than exhausting herself by working quickly. This was his wish, even though working slowly meant that he had to pay her more since she was paid by the hour.

This considerate conduct with which Harav Abramsky treated his domestic help, certainly enhanced her view of a Torah way of life, as she witnessed its pleasant ways. This approach of treating each person with equal honor, no matter their status, is what brings peace and harmony to the world.



Pearls of the Parsha

Unnecessary Words Cause Harm

"For every item of liability, whether an ox, a donkey" (Shemot 22:8)

The sefer 'Kaf HaKohen' says that this verse alludes to the Mishna (Avot 1:17), "One who talks excessively brings on sin". This is the meaning of, "for every item", 'דבר', item, is also an expression of speech, meaning that one who talks excessively, "is liable", brings on sin. But, this is particularly "whether an ox, a donkey", referring to the ignorant who are compared to an ox and donkey, but concerning Talmidei Chachamim, even their secular speech requires some lesson for us.

One Gains More Than One Loses

"If a man shall borrow from his fellow" (Shemot 22:13)

The mitzvah of lending to others, writes the Peleh Yo'etz, is a great kindness, "Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endures forever". Even if he sustains some loss from this, he gains more than he loses from the reward that he receives from Hashem for his kindness. In addition, he will also be blessed by the borrower.

Every person should advise his wife to be kindhearted and purchase spare utensils for the home so that she can lend them to others and will not have to send them away empty-handed, and Hashem will repay them sevenfold.

Included in the mitzvah of generosity is to be generous with one's being, wisdom, and advice for the sake of helping any person who asks for assistance. He should not hold back any good that he can offer and whatever he can give, be it a little or much according to his capabilities, should be offered pleasantly and generously, for this gives pleasure to his Creator and he will be repaid for his kindness.

Fear of Death Saves from Death

"Do not execute the innocent or the righteous" (Shemot 23:7)

The Holy Ohr HaChaim zya"a explains that sometimes it is enough for a person to experience the fear of death and through this alone he receives atonement for his sins and it is considered as if he died. Therefore, the ruling is that if the Beit Din rule that a certain person deserves the death penalty and just a moment before carrying out the ruling, someone comes and says that he has what to say in his defense, he is taken back to Beit Din and judged with a favorable outcome.

This is hard to understand for the verse says "G-d stands in the Divine assembly", meaning that the Beit Din receives siyata dishmaya (heavenly assistance) to rule correctly. So if he has already been condemned, how can the ruling later be changed to his credit? The answer is that sometimes Hashem desires that the person should just suffer through the fear of death which will cause him to repent. He then achieves atonement and becomes worthy.

A Personal Blessing

"You shall worship Hashem, your G-d, and He shall bless your bread" (Shemot 23:25)

Chazal tell us, "What is service of the heart? This refers to prayer". "You shall worship", is written in the plural and refers to prayers that are recited with the public. "He shall bless your bread", this is written in the singular and means that Hashem will bless the bread of each individual. The reason why the verse begins in the plural and ends in the singular, writes Rabbeinu Ya'akov Ba'al HaTurim, is that "You shall worship" in the plural refers to communal prayer that is never despised and rejected. "And He shall bless your bread" is in the singular since Hashem blesses each one according to his individual needs.

The Chatam Sofer corroborates this as each individual protects and atones for his friend when they join together.

The Maharsha (Baba Metzia 107b) explains that "You shall worship" refers to fulfilling the mitzvot for which we are all responsible for one another, but sufficing with bread and water is the lot of unique individuals and that is why it is written in the singular.

Treasures

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



the Torah is not in heaven

"Moshe arrived in the midst of the cloud and ascended the mountain; and Moshe was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights" (Shemot 24:18)

When Moshe ascended to heaven the angels rose up against him and asked, "What is this human being doing among us?" He almost lost his life until he replied that he had come to bring the Torah down to Bnei Yisrael who are in the earth below since the world cannot exist without Torah. When I read this Midrash I was most surprised. Just previously when Bnei Yisrael said, "We will do and we will obey", the angels descended and placed two crowns on their heads, one for 'we will do' and one for 'we will obey'. If so, if the angels did not want Am Yisrael to receive the Torah, why did they rejoice with them in their happiness and adorn them with crowns? And if they truly rejoiced with them, why did they now rise up against Moshe when he ascended to heaven to bring down the Torah to his people?

The answer seems to be that the angels' resentment to Moshe's arrival on High teaches us a powerful message that "the Torah is not in heaven" and the place to study it is down on earth. Therefore, when Am Yisrael said "we will do and we will obey" the angels tied crowns to their heads and expressed their joy that the Torah had arrived at its true destination, the earth below which is where it is supposed to be studied and fulfilled. But when Moshe ascended to heaven, the angels thought that he wished to learn Torah in heaven and that is why they wanted to kill him, for Torah learning must take place down below and not in the heavens. But when Moshe explained to them that his goal of ascending to heaven was to learn Torah from the Mighty One in order to transmit it accurately to those down below, they were appeased and left him alone.

Torah study is acquired in This World through toil, and man's Evil Inclination stands in wait to try and make him stumble time after time and take him away from Torah study. The more difficult is man's struggle to study Torah, to that extent his reward grows and intensifies, for Torah that is acquired easily cannot be compared to Torah that is acquired with great toil and effort.

I once heard about someone who made a commitment that for two hours a day he would dedicate his time for Torah study alone without any interruption for business matters. One day someone approached him just at this time and tried to interest him in a business deal that could bring him enormous profit if it would go through. Our friend did not pay attention to the offer and continued learning as if nothing had happened. When he saw that there was no one to talk to, the one offering the deal approached the man's wife and told her that he was surprised at her husband's behavior. Only a crazy person would not grab at this opportunity with two hands! At the end of his study session, the husband looked up from the sefarim that he was studying and told his wife, "You should know that this person who approached me is simply the Yetzer Hara in the disguise of a man. All he wanted was to test if I would stand by my commitment". He added that if this was truly beneficial for their livelihood, then Hashem would have brought it about that this person would have come later in the afternoon or the evening and not specifically at the time that he had dedicated to Torah study.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

This Parsha, which discusses numerous mitzvot between man and his fellow, illuminates the correct path that a Jewish person must follow.

But it is not enough to walk confidently in the path of Torah, we must also enlighten and guide those who do not take the path that leads to G-d, enabling them to repent and rectify their ways.

In fact, points out Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Margalit shlita in his sefer 'Mapik Margalyos', this is an amazing and surprising phenomenon. If you approach someone and point out that he has an ugly stain on the back of his shirt, will he be insulted? Definitely not. On the contrary, he will thank you wholeheartedly for your great kindness of bringing it to his attention. He was just about to leave for a wedding and could have walked around with a big, ugly stain on his festive clothing. How would he look in the pictures? You saved him from embarrassment and shame.

Taking this a step further, what if a person is about to eat something and I remark that the food is bad and will endanger his health? Will he be angry with me? Definitely not. He will kiss my hand and thank me for protecting his health.

If so, why when pointing out to someone that his conduct was inappropriate according to the halacha or ethical way of behaving, he immediately grows angry and begins to attack: "Who appointed you as my judge and police officer?!" Why is he so angry? The goal of the one who drew this to his attention was simply to help him rectify his ways, to assist him in his spiritual quest by cleaning a stain that he has on his soul, much more severe than a stain on one's shirt. So why do we immediately get uptight when hearing words of reproof? Our instant reaction is to try to shake off the rebuke and put the person in his place. It would be more appropriate to accept his words with love and try and rectify our ways as long as this is still possible.

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim of Bavel zya"a, the Ben Ish Chai, relates that there was once a lame man standing by the wayside. He was poor, tired, hungry and thirsty. He stood with his arm outstretched trying to hitch a ride, but no one stopped for him. Suddenly a horse drew up next to him. The rider jumped down and asked him, "What can I do for you?" The lame man replied, "I am hungry and thirsty, I have not eaten already for several days." The rider took out food and drink from his bag, gave it to the unfortunate man and waited patiently until he had satisfied himself.

When he finished eating, the rider was about to return to his horse and continue on his way. However, the lame man turned to him and pleaded, "One moment. Maybe by chance you are travelling to the town of ...?" "Indeed I am," was his reply. "So maybe you can take me with you?" Being a great ba'al chesed, he agreed to take him and thought to himself, "If I sit up front and hold the reigns, with the lame man sitting behind me, he might fall because he does not have legs with which to hold onto the horse. So it will be better for the lame man to sit at the front and hold the reigns and I will watch over him from behind that he shouldn't fall.

This was how they travelled, arriving safely at their destination.

When they arrived at the town square, the lame man turned around and addressed the owner of the horse, "Okay, we have arrived. Say thank you and get off!" For a moment he was simply astounded by his insolence, but then immediately pulled himself together and shouted: "Ungrateful one, are you not ashamed? What did I not do for you? I gave you food, I gave you drink, I took you to your destination while making sure that you sit in a comfortable and safe place on the horse, and now you are repaying me with evil for good?"

The lame person responded in kind: "You are the one who should be ashamed! I gave you a ride, brought you to town, and now you want to steal the horse from me, my single remaining possession!"

Of course, crowds began to gather to listen to the interesting argument and immediately took the side of the lame man...

The benefactor saw that he had fallen into an evil trap and said that he wishes

to approach the town's Rav, the Ben Ish Chai, and he will accept whatever he rules. The two went to the Rav and each one told over his version. The Ben Ish Chai, with his wisdom and sense of justice, realized immediately that the owner of the horse was speaking the truth and the lame man was evil and dishonest, exploiting his handicap to achieve things deceitfully. He returned the horse to its rightful owner and sent the lame man away in shame.

But before taking leave of the owner he told him, "I will give you some good advice. Next time you pick up a hitchhiker, don't give him the reins. Don't allow him control."

Human beings are made up of horse and man. We each have a materialistic part and a spiritual part. It is impossible to ignore the body, it exists, it is alive and kicking. It must be given its needs. But never give it the reins.

There are some 'generous and good-hearted' people who willingly give over the reins to the body. What happens eventually is that the body pushes away all spirituality and begins to control the soul too. We must never leave the reins in the hands of others, no matter what.

It is worth remembering when a person remarks that a certain behavior of yours was inappropriate, although our immediate instinct is to object and cast off the criticism, it could be that the comment is in place and it could be that it is off the mark. It is worthwhile and appropriate to pay attention to his words and it is important to examine one's ways. Maybe indeed he is correct, maybe there is truly something you have to rectify. The premise must be: On the contrary, I want to hear mussar. I wish to know how I appear in other people's eyes because a person is not capable of seeing his own faults and mistakes.

One who loves others and wants his good, will reprove him for his shortcomings. "For Hashem admonishes the one He loves". He allows sinners to rot in their sin and does not arouse them to repent and rectify their ways. If you do not offer rebuke, it is a sign that you are lacking in your love of others.