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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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

Son of the tzaddik 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

The Mishkan Teaches us How to Attain The Divine Presence Among Us

This Parsha includes several commands and laws in connection with the building of the Mishkan and its service. The Holy Alshich writes on the verse, "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among them": It does not say 'among it' but 'among them', which implies among each one of Am Yisrael. His words are based on the Holy Zohar (Tikunei Zohar, Introduction 13:1), "Rectifying one's body is like rectifying the Mishkan". A Jewish person's spiritual composition is formed after the model of the Mishkan.

The Mishkan's form, arrangement, and special service, all of which brought the Divine Presence to rest inside it, serve as a lesson for us how to conduct our personal service of G-d, how to purify and sanctify ourselves and prepare ourselves to become a fitting vessel for the Divine Presence to dwell among us.

The first mitzvah in this Parsha is the mitzvah of giving a half-shekel (a coin with a specific weight of silver) to conduct a census of Am Yisrael. The sockets which held up the walls of the Mishkan were made from this silver. This mitzvah includes the command "The wealthy shall not increase and the destitute shall not decrease from half a shekel". Each person had to give a half-shekel only, not more and not less. The reason for this instruction, the Da'at Zkeinim explains, was so that the rich should not say 'I have a greater share in the Mikdash than you'. Therefore, rich and poor all had to give the same amount. In this light, one can explain that is the reason why the Torah commanded to give specifically a half and not a whole coin, to remove the feeling of pride and conceit from man's heart. Rather he should always feel that he is 'half' and lacking perfection. As the verse says, "A heart broken and humbled, O G-d, You will not despise". "Hashem desires the heart", a heart that is split, broken, and submissive before Him and not conceited.

The commentaries also explain that the half coin comes to teach us that on his own every individual is only a half and lacks perfection. Only by connecting to one's fellow, to the public, can one achieve perfection. A Jew's perfection comes only through unity. This is the quality and distinctiveness of Am Yisrael over all the nations, that they are one united nation.

These two ideas, submission and unity, are dependent on each other. For unity and connection between man and his fellow is not possible if one is afflicted with the trait of pride. The conceited person builds a platform for himself and will always seek to give prominence to the way in which he feels worthier than his fellow and will see no reason to unite with someone who he feels has less value than himself.

Just as the submission and self-effacement, and the resultant unity, constituted the power that kept the Mishkan erect, (the half-shekel was used for the sockets which were the basis for the Ohel Moed), so too, the foundations of each person's personal Mishkan is distancing himself from the trait of pride which is contrary to the Divine Presence. For concerning pride Hashem says, "I and it cannot dwell in the same space" (Sotah 5a). And concerning the modest and humble person, we are told (Yeshay 57:15), "I abide in exaltedness and holiness, but I am with the despondent and lowly of spirit".

Unity and the segulah of being part of the public is also a condition for the Divine Presence to rest among us, for the

Shechina does not rest where there are less than ten men. Hashem did not descend on Har Sinai until Am Yisrael fulfilled "and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain", on which Rashi expounds, "As one man with one heart" (the word 'encamped' in Hebrew is written in the singular).

Following the command of giving a half-shekel for the census, the Torah then commands about making the Kiyor, the copper Laver and its base from which the Kohanim were required to wash their hands and feet before performing the service. The purpose of this washing was for sanctity rather than cleanliness, to purify themselves and prepare their bodies to serve Hashem in holiness. Every Jew is comparable to a Kohen who serves Hashem through his personal service and prayer. For our entire role in This World is to act like servants who serve their Master, fulfilling His will and serving Him. By virtue of the superiority of this role, we are obligated to guard our holiness and purity, both in thought and deed, with exceptional integrity, so that we should be fitting to serve the King of Kings, The Holy One Blessed Be He, for one may not approach the King 'dressed in sackcloth'.

The following is another lesson we can derive from the Kiyor that was fashioned from the copper mirrors donated by the women. When a person stands in front of the mirror and faces his own image, this can rouse a person to remember that "There is a watchful Eye, an attentive Ear and all your deeds are recorded in a Book". When a person attains the level of "I have set Hashem before me always", where he sees the Book open and the Hand writing, he will certainly guard himself carefully from any trace of sin. This is how he will merit the Divine Presence resting inside him.

The Parsha continues with the command to make Anointment Oil which would be used to anoint and consecrate all the vessels of the Mishkan. The oil alludes to good deeds, as it says, "A good name is better than good oil", and it also says (Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu Rabba 7), "Oil refers to good deeds, as it says 'Like the scent of goodly oils', like the scent of your good deeds". Man must train himself in good middot and good deeds so that his good deeds exceed his wisdom. He should gain a good reputation, to be beloved Above and pleasant below. Just as the Anointment Oil consecrated the Mishkan and its vessels, so a person's good deeds transform his body into a holy being and then Hashem's Shechina will rest in him.

The fourth command in the Parsha is to make the Ketoret, the Incense, from which we can derive the correct and upright behavior fitting and necessary for a Talmid Chacham or anyone who desires meriting the Divine Presence. On the verse, "Thoroughly mixed, pure and holy", Chazal expound (Kallah 3b), "A Talmid Chacham must act pleasantly to every person and should not be like a dish without salt". A Talmid Chacham must be agreeable to Heaven and agreeable to people, to the extent that others exclaim about him, "Look at so and so who studies Torah. How pleasant are his deeds!" Through this he causes a sanctification of Hashem's Name and makes the Torah beloved to people, thereby increasing Torah study in the world. For when people witness the glory of the Torah, how it refines and elevates man, they will cleave to it to acquire its qualities. And then automatically, Hashem's Name will be intensified in the world, which translates into the presence of His Divine Spirit.



Walking in their Ways

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

Tough Love

"Honored Rav," a Jew from New Zealand addressed me, "a terrible thing happened to me, but because of it, I merited returning to my Father in Heaven." He told his story:

"One night, I dreamed that a figure came to me and said, 'I have come to inform you that your son died in his sleep! You have two options – either to continue sleeping or to check up on him. But, no matter what you choose, his condition will not change.' Then the figure disappeared.

"I awakened immediately and went to my son's bed. I found him dead. After the initial shock, I understood that this was retribution for my misdeeds. Then and there, I resolved to do teshuvah and accept the yoke of Torah and mitzvot."

I could not hold myself back from asking, "How did you feel upon revealing that the figure had spoken the truth and your son lay dead before you? Were you angry? Did you not wish to protest and rebel?"

"What would I have gained had I held grievances toward G-d? Hashem is the King of the universe. I cannot do a thing against His wishes!"

When I heard the words of this giant of spirit, I felt greatly inspired. Often, when a Jew is hit with troubles, he feels angry and rebellious toward Hashem. But this does not achieve the desired result. Hashem is sending him a message to draw closer to Him and reinforce his mitzvah observance, not that he should rise up in grievance against Him. Anger toward Hashem only distances a person from Him. It is the catalyst for him to receive more Heavenly signals in the form of suffering, until, finally, he understands that his Father is calling him back, and he repents.

Isn't it a shame that some people just don't "get the message" the first time? They need constant reminders to repent, in the form of painful incidents. Who in their right mind would choose a life of difficulties?

One can avoid these trials and tribulations if he would only repent after the first signal. After doing teshuvah, he is beloved by Hashem and draws an abundance of blessing upon himself.

The Haftarah

"The word of Hashem came to me, saying, 'Son of Man...'" (Yechezkel 36)

The connection to the Parsha: For the Maftir of Parshat Parah, we read the Torah section that describes how the contaminated ones were purified with the water from the ashes of the Red Heifer. The Haftarah, too, tells us that in the future Hashem will purify His children with the waters from the ashes of the Red Heifer. This expresses our longing for the future redemption, which we yearn to merit speedily in our days.

Guard Your Tongue

An Untrue Statement

All kinds of lashon hara are forbidden, even if the words are true and accurate. The fact that the statement is true does not exempt one from the prohibition of speaking derogatory or damaging words.

'Motzi shem ra', an untrue statement, is a greater sin and worse than lashon hara, which although derogatory is true.

Derogatory statements that are based on the truth but one exaggerates the facts or slightly changes them, are also included in the prohibition of 'motzi shem ra'.



In Our Father's Path

What Were the Indian Villagers Excited About?

On Shabbat Ki Tisa, when we read about the sin of the Golden Calf, the Gaon Rabbi Yechiel Meir Tzucker shlita (Doresh Tov) related the following amazing story, concerning the son of a judge from the High Court of Justice, who became religious. Today he is an outstanding Talmid Chacham and he tells of the catalyst that brought him to repent:

The story began when as a young man, wishing for some change of scenery, he decided to tour India. There is a prohibition in India of bringing alcoholic drinks to the beach. Whoever wishes to drink must purchase from the kiosks found on the coast. In this way, the concessionaries who won the bid for managing the kiosks can demand an exorbitant price for every can of beer. Anyone caught taking a can of beer out of his bag can receive a heavy fine.

Our young man decided not to be a sucker and on no account was prepared to pay five dollars for a can of beer that costs half a dollar in a regular store. What did he do? He brought along a can of beer in his bag.

As soon as he took out the can from his bag, an Indian jumped up and began shouting at him in English, "Thief! Impudent fellow!"

After throwing several more curses at him, he suddenly stopped abruptly and asked him. "One moment! Are you a Jew?" And when the young man replied in the positive, he began apologizing: "I am so sorry, I did not mean it. I never intended to offend a Jew"...

He quickly ran away but a few moments later returned and asked: "Can you do me a favor and come with me to my village? I have a motor-scooter and I promise you that on the way to the village I will take you to many interesting sites which you will enjoy very

much. Didn't you come here to have a good time? Trust me, you will enjoy this!"

The Indian kept his word. He took him to all kinds of astonishingly beautiful places, which although lengthened the journey, definitely made it worthwhile.

Eventually, they arrived at his village. According to the residents' behavior who accorded this Indian the utmost respect, it seemed that he was village Mukhtar. He instructed his guest to sit on a bench in the center of the village and wait. He himself rode around with his motor-scooter and instructed all the villagers to assemble next to the bench where the young man sat.

It took only several minutes for all the villagers to assemble; simple Indian villagers who surrounded our Israeli friend. The Indian got off his scooter, quieted the crowd and announced:

"The man sitting here on the bench is from the Chosen Nation! He is a Jew! He is part of the nation that G-d chose!"

The villagers were electrified...

Some hurried to bring him flowers, others rushed to their homes to bring him almonds and nuts... They simply did not know what to do with themselves out of their great excitement.

"I ask you to understand", he continued relating his personal tale. "I sat there, a completely irreligious Jew, complete with spiky hair and earrings, and said to myself: 'What is he talking about? Why is the crowd so excited? What, in fact, is the Chosen Nation? How am I different to them? I felt so uncomfortable about my lack of knowledge that I promised myself: First thing I am going to do when I return to Israel is to find out the significance of being part of the Chosen Nation. What are they so enthused about?"

Indeed, on my return, I inquired about a place where I could learn about the significance of belonging to the Chosen Nation. I was directed to an Arachim seminar and thus began my journey of repentance." This is the story that he told over.

The nations of the world acknowledge the superiority of the Chosen Nation. They are all aware that a Jew is 'G-d's child'. The main problem is that we are not aware of it! We do not acknowledge our singularity! We do not walk around with the feeling that we are 'G-d's Children'!



Pearls of the Parsha

The Segulah of Reciting the Ketoret

"Hashem said to Moshe: 'Take yourself spices'" (Shemot 30:34)

In the Holy Zohar, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai praises the segulah of reciting the section of Ketoret, the Incense, as he says: "Would Bnei Yisrael realize how sublime is the act of offering the Incense before Hashem, they would take every word from this section and fashion it into a crown for their heads, like a golden crown. One who engages in it should contemplate the act of offering Incense and if he reads it attentively every day, he will acquire a share in This World and the World to Come, and death will depart from him and from the entire world and he will be saved from all retribution in This World, from evil forces and the judgment of Gehinom and the judgement of other nations.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai adds that when the Ketoret would rise in a pillar of smoke, the Kohen would see the letters of Hashem's Name flying in the air, rising upwards in that pillar of smoke. After that, several Holy Chariots would surround the pillar of smoke on all sides until it ascended in light and joy.

Rabbi Chiya's Sign

"Its desecrators shall be put to death" (Shemot 31:14)

The Yerushalmi brings an incident where Rabbi Chiya saw someone plucking grass on Shabbat. After Shabbat Rabbi Chiya approached him and wrote for him on a paper "מחלליה מות יומת", its desecrators shall be put to death".

The Vilna Gaon wondered about this. Why did Rabbi Chiya not tell him right away while he was engaged in the act? And why did he write it on a paper and not just tell him?!

He answers that the Gemarah explains (Megillah 24b) that Rabbi Chiya would pronounce the letter 'chet' as 'heh'. If so, had he said the verse aloud, it would sound like "מהלליה מות יומת", those who praise it shall be put to death" and this is blasphemy. That is why he waited until after Shabbat and then wrote the words for him on a paper rather than saying it orally.

Adding to the Length of the Shabbat Day Guards Us

"You shall observe the Shabbat" (Shemot 31:14)

This observance, as the Yalkut Meor Ha'afelah brings, refers to observing the Shabbat before the onset of Shabbat and after its strict time of departure, as we are told, "It is proper to add from the weekday onto the holy day".

We are stringent with the twilight both preceding and succeeding Shabbat and begin observing Shabbat well before its onset and take leave of Shabbat well after dusk. These times that we 'add' to Shabbat from the weekday on which we do not perform forbidden acts, are a fence for Shabbat which serves as a protection for us.

Holiness Flew Away Following the Sin

"He shattered them at the foot of the mountain" (Shemot 32:19)

Rabbi Avraham Chizkuni in his sefer 'Shtei Yadot', explains how Moshe could break the Luchot, even though one is forbidden to break vessels out of anger. He quotes the Maharsha in his commentary on Masechet Shabbat (105b), who says that there is no prohibition to tear something insignificant and not substantial.

The Yerushalmi in Masechet Shekalim brings that when Am Yisrael made the Golden Calf, the letters flew from the Luchot.

It follows then that when Moshe broke the Luchot they were already considered as 'insignificant' and not a substantial object, so there was no prohibition of shattering them in his anger.

Treasures

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



The Torah is Hashem's 'Clothing'

"And now, desist from Me. Let My anger flare up against them and I shall annihilate them; and I shall make you a great nation" (Shemot 32:10)

The Gemara tells us (Berachot 32a), "Rabbi Abbahu said: 'If this verse were not written in this way, it would be impossible to utter it'. The words 'desist from Me', teaches that Moshe grasped hold of Hashem like someone grasps his friend by his garment, and said to Him, 'Master of the World, I will not let go of You until You forgive and pardon them'."

It is clear that this Chazal is only a parable for our clarity, for Hashem is not physical and has no bodily form. However, we will try to understand why Chazal specifically used the expression of 'grasping hold of His clothing', when they wanted to express Moshe's great effort through his pleading and begging to beseech Hashem that He forgive Am Yisrael for the sin of the Golden Calf.

The role of a garment is to cover and hide. When one sees a garment, one does not know what is hiding underneath it. We know that the entire Torah is actually the Names of Hashem, which signifies that Hashem's glory and Presence are, as if, concealed in the Torah. The Torah is His Names and a name always signifies the essence of an object.

The goal of our service is closeness to Hashem and cleaving to Him, as the verse says, "To love Hashem, your G-d, to walk in all His ways and to cleave to Him" (Devarim 10:20). But since one cannot connect to Hashem directly, Hashem therefore gave us the Torah in which His Names and glory are hidden. Through studying the Torah, we are afforded the possibility of connecting to Hashem and cleaving to Him.

It follows that the Torah is the dress and cover of Hashem, through which we can acquire some understanding of Him and cleave to Him as much as our diminished value allows. Hashem concealed Himself in the Torah. The word אנכי, I am, is an abbreviation for אנכי נפשי כתבתי, 'I, Myself have written and given', in concealment and modesty. As it is Hashem who has written and given the Torah, it follows that our entire grasp and connection with Hashem is through His dress, the Holy Torah. We also find in the "515 prayers of the Ramchal", in prayer 287 it is written, "A One and Singular G-d... In the Five Books of the Torah which are the light of Torah, and they are Your dress as it says, 'wrapped in a robe of light'".

When Moshe Rabbeinu begged Hashem to forgive Am Yisrael and not wipe them out in His anger, he seized Hashem's 'clothing', the Holy Torah and maintained, 'Behold Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people are One. The heaven and earth were only created for the sake of the Torah and Yisrael who are called 'first' or 'beginning' (Rashi Bereishit 1:1, Midrash) so that Yisrael should come and fulfil the Torah. As the Holy Zohar says (Shemot 200:1), "Go and see, when the Holy One Blessed Be He created the world, He only created it so that Yisrael would come and accept the Torah". If so, what purpose is there in the entire creation if Yisrael are not part of it? What merit will the world have to exist without Am Yisrael whose role it is to bring the creation to its purpose, engaging in Torah and fulfilling its mitzvot?

By seizing the 'clothing' of Hashem, Moshe was expressing the connection, the union, and the dependency between Hashem, the Torah and Yisrael. Moshe Rabbeinu who represented Yisrael, together with Hashem's 'clothing' which is the Torah, and the Holy One Blessed Be He Himself, are strongly connected and intertwined and it is impossible to separate and detach one from the other.



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

We are often subject to different events that occur in the world, without having any perception of why Hashem made it happen, and we find it hard to understand the purpose behind them. But after some time passes, which may even be a long period of many years, we suddenly merit seeing the full picture which gives us a tangible sense of the Hand of Divine Providence that was behind each event and how each incident was necessary to bring about a certain result. Then in hindsight, we understand that not a single detail was superfluous, all the events and occurrences served as some kind of preparation and preface to bring about the eventual salvation and delivery for Am Yisrael, whether on an individual or national level.

The Chatam Sofer zya"l says that this message is alluded to in a verse in this week's Parsha, "You will see My back, but My face may not be seen". This means that if you wish to see Divine Providence, do not wait to see the meaning and purpose of every incident right away, since "My face may not be seen". Only once the purpose has been achieved, do we then sometimes acquire a glimpse of how each detail was woven with perfection to create the complete picture. Retroactively we understand the purpose of whatever Hashem brought about, as in "You will see My back".

The Chafetz Chaim zt"l has a famous a parable which sheds light on this topic:

One Shabbat, a guest was staying in a certain city and witnessed how the Gabbai was distributing the aliyot and honors in the Beit Knesset. It seemed to him that the way the Gabbai was choosing the honorees was very strange, to say the least. At the end of the prayers, he approached the Gabbai and expressed his surprise why he honored so and so rather than someone else? And why was

this one called up to the Torah before the other one? And in general, why does he not just call up the congregants in the order of the seating arrangement? In this way, each one will know when his turn is approaching and it will prevent arguments.

This is what the Gabbai answered:

"His honor has come to join us for one Shabbat and therefore has questions. Allow us the honor of hosting you for several more Shabbatot and then you will see that so and so already received an Aliya the previous Shabbat and this other person is celebrating a joyous occasion or *yahrzeit* this Shabbat. Then you will realize that the considerations and yardstick of how to distribute the honors every Shabbat are much broader than you think.

This is a perfect allusion for life in This World, says the Chafetz Chaim. Sometimes it seems to us that there is 'No judgement and no Judge', no order or justice, for, G-d forbid, it seems as if Hashem is raising the wicked and lowering the righteous, or someone suffers a hardship and wonders why he deserves it. Where is the fairness in the way the world is conducted?

But the truth is that man's life in This World is too short to be able to see down here with his human eyes that "The judgements of Hashem are true, altogether righteous". A human being's vision is too limited to be able to include all the details of His conduct and understand the depth and uprightness of Hashem's ways.

But, would Hashem lengthen a person's days and open his eyes, he would understand and tangibly see the exemplary order with which the creation is governed, both in an individual's life and in public affairs. He would simply marvel in astonishment in the face of the truthfulness of His conduct and the uprightness of His judgement. "The Rock! Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice".

Rabbi Eliezer Turk shlita, in his sefer 'Otzroteihem Amaleh', brings a wonderful piece of advice which can help increase our faith in Divine Providence. He quotes a letter written by the leaders of the Diaspora, the Gaonim Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Ya'akov Kaminetzky

zt"l, as an introduction to a commentary dealing with the subject of Divine Providence. The following is the essence of their essay:

During his life, every single person goes through many incidents when he feels that he was delivered miraculously from a hardship or a troubling time that he had experienced. He comes across numerous instances of clear kindnesses that Hashem has done for him, like providing something that he required urgently or other similar things, and he stands astounded at the Divine Providence that he merited seeing with his own eyes.

How important and advisable it is to write down every experience of Divine Providence (Hashgacha Pratit) in a personal notebook to preserve the memory of these incidents so that every time he finds himself coping with a similar problem or hardship or any challenging situation, he can read through his list and thereby strengthen his faith in Hashem, particularly by recalling the personal incidents that he experienced in the past. This is good advice which will serve to instill in man's heart the simple truth and clear recognition that there is None other than Him, and Hashem does not remove His Divine Providence from His people for even one moment.

"Similarly," testifies Harav Turk shlita, "I heard from the Gaon Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Shulsinger zt"l, author of 'Mishmar HaLevi', in the name of the Brisker Rav, "More than a person can achieve through Mussar sefarim that engage in matters of faith and trust in Hashem, can a person attain from the personal incidents that he experiences".

This is exactly what faith is all about. When a person establishes in his heart that everything is orchestrated and performed by the Upper Hand, difficulties do not distress him! This faith implants in him the recognition that this is part of the process that he has to endure and everything is for his good. This knowledge strengthens him, instills him with hope and enables him to endure the difficulties with a lighter feeling.