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Hilula

5 – Rabbi Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag,
 author of Birkat Shalom

6 – Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef, the doctor

7 – Rabbi Ya'akov Antebi

8 – Rabbi Avner Yisrael Hatzarfati,
 Av Beit Din Pass

9 – Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik
 of Brisk

10 – Rabbi David Knafo, Av Beit Din
 Magador

11 – Rabbi Shlomo Bochbat

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

When Standing Before Hashem One Should be in a Forward Position

"Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Israel: He said to them, 'I am one hundred and twenty years old today; I can no longer go out and come in'" (Devarim 31:1-2)

Where in fact did Moshe go to? He was facing his imminent passing, speaking to Am Yisrael and offering rebuke already from the beginning of the Sefer Devarim. He now announces that his end has come as it says, "I am one hundred and twenty years old today" which the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11a) interprets as "Today my days and years have come to completion." So where did he suddenly go in the middle of speaking to Am Yisrael?

We can ask another question. Most years the Parshiot of Nitzavim and Vayeilech are combined and read on the same Shabbat. Why are they put together and what is the connection between them?

We will explain by introducing another topic. In this Parshah we are told how Moshe Rabbeinu wrote a Sefer Torah and then gave it to his tribe, the Levites.

Why did he give it to them? So they would guard the charge well, and if in the future Bnei Yisrael would come and claim the Holy Torah was not given by Heaven through Moshe Rabbeinu, the tribe of Levi will show them the Sefer Torah and prove that Moshe Rabbeinu indeed brought down the Torah from heaven, the proof being that he himself wrote this Sefer Torah.

In addition, Moshe Rabbeinu did not only write the Sefer Torah but upon its completion appointed the heaven and earth as eternal witnesses that if G-d forbid Bnei Yisrael do not observe the Torah, they will be punished. They should understand clearly that all hardships come upon them for not observing the Torah, as the verse says (ibid 31:21), "It shall be that when many evils and distresses come upon it [Bnei Yisrael], then this song shall speak up before it as a witness, for it shall not be forgotten from the mouth of its offspring."

Moshe Rabbeinu also brings the Torah itself as a witness as it says (ibid 31:26), "Take this book of the Torah and place it at the side of the Ark of the Covenant of Hashem, your G-d, and it shall be there for you as a witness." He wished to inform Bnei Yisrael that in the future the Torah will bear witness against them when they do not observe the Torah and this will bring misfortune upon them. They must understand already now that they are forbidden to forsake the Torah.

Now we can suggest that "Moshe went" refers to going to write the Sefer Torah which would serve as a witness for Bnei Yisrael and warn them to continuously guard the Torah and follow its laws. This clarifies the connection between the Parshiot of Nitzavim and Vayeilech. The verse says (ibid 29:9), "You are standing

today, all of you" on which the Holy Zohar (vol. 2, 32b) writes his famous statement: "Today" refers to Rosh Hashanah, the day when all mankind stands before Hashem in judgement and He decides who will live and who will die, who will die at his predestined time and who before his time...

However, despite Rosh Hashanah being a Day of Judgement, we must not despair and fear this awesome day. On the contrary, it is a time to rejoice and feel certain Hashem will judge us with a favorable outcome. We must strengthen ourselves and follow the ways of Hashem, utilizing every moment and every day for avodat Hashem, and then we will emerge worthy and be inscribed immediately for a good and blessed year, for a long life and for peace.

This then is the significance of combining the Parshiot of Nitzavim and Vayeilech. Almost every year these two Parshiot are read around the time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when mankind stands trial before Hashem, unaware of the outcome. Therefore, when standing (Nitzavim) before Hashem, the main thing to keep in mind is that we must always be in a position of Vayeilech, of going forward. We must follow the ways of Hashem and study Torah, teaching it also to our children who are considered the tribe of Levi, until the Torah will be 'placed in the Aron', engraved in their hearts for an eternal remembrance.

This was the intention behind Moshe Rabbeinu's actions before his death. Before he left the world he taught Bnei Yisrael how to educate their children (the tribe of Levi) with a pure Jewish education, not to pasture in foreign fields but to always stand before Hashem with complete faith, going in the ways of the Torah and not steering from it to the right or to the left.

Despite Moshe Rabbeinu being one hundred and twenty years old at the time of his passing, "his eyes had not dimmed and his vigor had not diminished" (Devarim 34:7). Rather, with the alacrity of a young man, he went and fetched skin (parchment) and in front of all Bnei Yisrael, wrote the entire Torah with all the intentions. He wished to impart to Bnei Yisrael the essence of the Holy Torah and the value of studying it at all times, teaching them that Torah study is not limited to a certain age.

This is the lesson we can derive from Parshat Vayeilech. Despite his old age, Moshe Rabbeinu continued teaching and influencing Bnei Yisrael through the Torah, imparting mussar and morals. Through his 'going' ("Moshe went") he hinted to them there are situations where one must stand firmly in place, but there are also situations where we must not remain in one place but rather strengthen ourselves and go forward.



Walking in their Ways

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

True Riches

A very wealthy woman once asked for my advice. Blessed be Hashem, Who put the right words in my mouth. After she thanked me for my wise words, I felt her heart had softened somewhat so I tried convincing her to return to Torah-true Judaism.

Five years passed. The woman still stubbornly stuck to her wrongful ways. I contacted her once again and encouraged her to do teshuvah and accept upon herself the yoke of Torah and mitzvot. She finally capitulated and agreed to return to the ways of her fathers.

Some time later, we met again. She breathlessly told me, "Honored Rav, only now, after doing teshuvah, do I feel happy with my life. Only now do I enjoy my wealth and honor. Until today, I never felt real satisfaction. I was always worried about my money. But after recognizing my Creator, I understand the true meaning of life and where real bliss lies."

Chazal teach (Avot 2:7), "The more possessions, the more worry." The rich always live with fear regarding their possessions. They are worried about losing them and are envious of their wealthier friends. In contrast, one who lives by the dictates of Torah is blessed with an inner happiness, reassured that Hashem takes care of all his needs.

The Haftarah

"Return, Israel" (Hoshea 14, followed by Micha 7)

The connection to Shabbat: This Haftarah is read on 'Shabbat Shuva', the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Since it speaks about the idea of repentance it is fitting to read this section during the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, a time auspicious for repentance.

Guard Your Tongue

A Partner in Crime

Besides the prohibition of listening to lashon hara, doing so makes one a partner in the sin of speaking lashon hara, for by listening he enables the other person to say his forbidden words. He is therefore considered a partner in the speaker's sin.

In the event of a single listener, he also transgresses the prohibition "You shall not place a stumbling block before the blind" which includes making another Jew sin. So if there is only one listener, he is also held responsible for enabling the speaker to sin.



In Our Father's Path

Yom Kippur in Chutz L'aretz

Those living outside of Eretz Yisrael observe the festivals for two days due to s'faik d'yoma, a doubt concerning which day to celebrate the festival. The Beit Din Hagadol in Yerushalayim used to sanctify the new month according to when they sighted the moon, and the day the month begins determines the day the festival will fall. However, the messengers did not always arrive in Chutz L'aretz before the onset of the festival, and so due to the doubt they observed two days. Still today, although the calendar has been established and we know exactly when to celebrate each festival, those living in Chutz L'aretz continue to observe two days since it had become an established custom. The second festival day is called Yom Tov Sheinu shel Galuyot, and those living in Chutz L'aretz are obligated to observe it just as the first. However, the Holy day of Yom Kippur is different and Chazal did not establish a second fast day for those residing in Chutz L'aretz despite s'faik d'yoma.

Why is this?

The Hagahot Maimoniot writes: "We do not observe two days of Yom Kippur as with the other festivals due to the danger."

This reason is also found in the Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashanah 1:4) where it tells about the father of R' Shmuel who fasted for two days and on the completion of his fast at the end of the second day, he passed away.

Another reason is brought by the Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 624): "If one observes a second day of Yom Kippur, the day before the second day would be Erev Yom Kippur on which it is forbidden to fast (for it is a mitzvah to eat on the ninth day) so how can he fast [on the first day]? It would be a clear contradiction."

In later generations we do not find that people took this stringency upon themselves. The Ben Ish Chai testifies: "Nowadays we do not hear about those who observe Yom Kippur for two days and it is the correct custom to not do so." The Chaye Adam also writes: "The Shulchan Aruch writes that some have the custom to observe two days of Yom Kippur but nowadays we do not hear that anyone practices this custom."

However, there have been some great sages who were stringent because of s'faik d'yoma and fasted for two days straight!

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 21a) brings one example and says that the Amora Rava was accustomed to fasting for two days. Rashi explains, he would fast for two days including the night, for perhaps the Beit Din had declared that the previous month had 30 days and so the eleventh of Tishrei is really the tenth.

Rabbeinu Ya'akov Ba'al Haturim testifies: "The pious ones of Germany are accustomed to observing two days of Yom Kippur. They sometimes had a minyan of people and would pray the entire order of the Yom Kippur prayers on the second day too. But my master and father, the Rosh z"l, would protest this custom."

In the sefarim written by the Acharonim we find many opinions in favor of the stringency of fasting for two days. The Gaon Rabbi Yeshayahu Berlin in his commentary She'elat Shalom on the She'iltot, writes: "One who feels capable of fasting two days should do so. 'Those whose hope is in Hashem will have renewed strength' and may my portion be with the sweetness of those who observe two days."

The Elef L'mateh also defends those who are stringent: "Those who are stringent hold that the father of R' Shmuel (mentioned above) was weak and therefore fasting for two days straight harmed him. But if one can assess he is capable of completing a fast of two days, he does not have to be concerned, for we see many people who fast for a few days straight and are not harmed."

It should be noted that according to the Magen Avraham, who is of the opinion that one should not fast for two days in Chutz L'aretz since this would override the mitzvah of eating on the ninth, fasting on the eleventh is a contradiction to fasting the day before and therefore one should not be stringent!



Pearls of the Parsha

They are still Kid Goats, Don't be Harsh with them

"Moshe summoned Yehoshua and said to him before the eyes of all Israel, 'Be strong and courageous'" (Devarim 31:7)

The Sifri tells us that Moshe told Yehoshua:

"This nation I am handing over to you, are still kid goats; they are still infants. Do not be exacting with them and do not grow angry with them for their deeds, for even their Master was not exact with them for all they did, as He said 'When Israel was a lad I loved him' (Hoshea 11:1)."

It Depends on Us Alone

"And teach it to the Children of Israel, place it in their mouth" (Devarim 31:19)

To what can this be compared?

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, in his sefer Michtav M'Eliyahu, writes:

A healthy person who wishes to eat a certain food puts it in his mouth and eats. On the other hand, a weak person or small child requires other people to feed him. But even then, they can only put the food in his mouth; they can't make him swallow. He is the only one who can do this, without the help of others.

So it was after the Giving of the Torah: Hashem sent Moshe Rabbeinu to give the Torah to Bnei Yisrael and teach it to them, as in "place it in their mouth", but 'swallowing' the Torah and implanting it in our hearts, is dependent on us alone!

The End of the Merchandise

"It shall be when many evils and distresses come upon it" (Devarim 31:21)

Towards evening, writes the Dubno Maggid zt"l, when a peddler has finished selling his wares and is in a rush to go home, he takes the few remaining pears from one basket and the few plums from the other basket, puts them together and sells them for half the price because he wants to get rid of them, the quicker the better.

The Torah says, "when many evils and distresses come upon it" – when you see Am Yisrael beset by a combination of various, unusual hardships, it is a sign that we have come to the end of the merchandise and are up to the last remnants, the footsteps of Mashiach, may he arrive speedily in our days.

... The Sabbatical Year ...

1. Sefichin is the term for any type of grain, legume or vegetable which grows in the ground during the Shemittah year, either from seeds that fell into the ground while harvesting before Shemittah began, or from harvested roots that re-grew.

2. According to the Torah one is permitted to eat sefichin just as one may eat any produce of the seventh year. But when the Sages realized it led to stumbling, for farmers would sow secretly in the seventh year and pretend it was sefichin that grew by itself, they forbade eating this produce even if indeed it grew by itself.

3. Nevertheless, although sefichin may not be eaten, one may benefit from it in other ways.

4. Seeds that sprouted while in storage etc. are not considered sefichin and also do not have to be tithed.

Treasures

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



Torah is a Taste of Gan Eden in This World

"Moshe went and spoke these words to all of Israel" (Devarim 31:1)

On the words "Moshe went", the Holy Ohr Hachaim zy"a asks, where did Moshe go? He quotes Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel who says he went to study in Yeshiva or he went from the camp of Levi to the camp of Yisrael, like someone taking leave of his friend. But the Holy Ohr Hachaim disagrees with this interpretation of the verse. He also questions, how did Moshe know his days were completed? Man is not told how long he will live.

When someone engages in Torah he merits feeling a taste of Gan Eden already in This World. To prove this to one and all, before his death Moshe gave over all his Torah to Yehoshua, his talmid, in front of all Yisrael. Particularly before his death, Moshe Rabbeinu enabled Yehoshua to feel the taste of Gan Eden in the Torah, since he wanted to hint that this is what he, Moshe Rabbeinu, will taste in the World of Truth, after sacrificing himself for the sake of studying and teaching Torah all his life. "Moshe went" refers to going to the Beit Midrash before his death to give over the Torah to Yehoshua. This is also the meaning of Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel's explanation that Moshe went to study in Yeshiva and then went from the camp of Levi to the camp of Yisrael. Moshe Rabbeinu walked around among Am Yisrael, allowing them to feel the taste of Gan Eden in Torah study. Moshe wanted to teach them that this taste of Gan Eden which we will merit in the World of Truth can already be experienced in This World, IF we engage in Torah.

This is why it is hard for tzadikim to depart from This World. Here they merit feeling the taste of Gan Eden when observing the mitzvot and toiling in Torah. Besides the benefit of feeling the pleasure both in This World and the Next, they bring pleasure to Hashem through overcoming their Yetzer Hara. They subdue the Yetzer Hara by showing him Gan Eden already in This World.

"We are fortunate, how good is our portion, how pleasant our lot." Hashem merited us with feeling some of His Glorious Presence in This World too. This is how David Hamelech expresses it (Tehillim 27:4), "One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek: That I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life; to behold the sweetness of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary."



A NOVEL LOOK AT THE PARSHA

A Golden Opportunity to be Saved from Bad Decrees

One of the most precious gifts Hashem gave mankind is the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Ten Days of Repentance, in which man can reverse his sentence and change his status from one extreme to the other. A person may be sentenced to a severe decree but his advocates plead for his soul in the Heavenly Court and beg Hashem to sweeten the verdict.

Is there an easy way to sweeten the verdict?

Surprisingly, the answer is yes.

Yes. One can change the verdict from bad to good. Chazal have revealed to us a precious formula which has the power to move heaven and earth and bring about a complete transformation. According to Chazal, it seems that the sweetest and least damaging form of distress is through suffering insults. If a person knew what the insult spares him, he would dance with joy!

The mekubal Rabbi Moshe Cordovero zy"l writes about this idea in his sefer Tomer Devora: "What is the best kind of suffering that will not disturb one's avodat Hashem? There is nothing dearer than being cursed, insulted and degraded, for his strength and energy will not be withheld from him due to sickness, and his food and clothing will not be withheld from him, and his life and the lives of his children will not be taken from him with death. This being the case, he should desire [the insults] and say: It is better that I suffer shame and disgrace through man. And when faced with insults he should welcome them."

One of the most unpleasant situations which cause the greatest feel-

ings of outrage is when one is falsely suspected.

The upright person knows he is not guilty and the story being fabricating about him distresses him and deprives him of any serenity. If he can prove his innocence, certainly, he should do so. But even if there is no way to prove it to his fellow man, as believing Jews we know that man is limited to physical sight while Hashem sees deeply into the heart.

However, regarding the situation from a more objective, purposeful perspective, the truth is that one who is falsely suspected is faced with a golden opportunity to be saved from harsh decrees G-d forbid, and even merit Heavenly gifts. And who knows if this opportunity will ever return?

An Opportune Time for Blessing

The Chafetz Chaim zt"l used to travel around from town to town, selling his sefarim for a few pennies, less than their true value, to merit the public. He was even prepared to sell them on credit so that people could study them without delay. He would record the debts in a special notebook and on his next visit to that town, he would collect the debts.

One day the Chafetz Chaim arrived in Drohichin, hometown of Rabbi Mordechai Leib HaKohen, a G-d fearing talmid Chacham. He bought several sefarim and paid the Chafetz Chaim right away. For Rabbi Mordechai this was a matter of principle; he never purchased anything on credit!

When the Chafetz Chaim returned to this town some time later, his messengers went over to Rabbi Mordechai and told him he had a debt registered in the Chafetz Chaim's notebook. Rabbi Mordechai claimed it cannot be, he never owes anything to anyone – not even one kopika. However, they showed him it was recorded in black and white that Mordechai the Kohen from Drohichin owes the Chafetz Chaim ... for the sefarim he bought on ...

Even though Rabbi Mordechai was

certain he was right, he did not continue arguing and paid the 'debt'. A while later the mistake came to light: Drohichin was home to two Jews called Mordechai HaKohen, but the second Mordechai was not called Leib and it was this second Mordechai who owed money to the Chafetz Chaim.

The Chafetz Chaim hurried over to Rabbi Mordechai Leib HaKohen to ask his forgiveness in person, but it turned out that he possessed lofty middot and held no grievances about the matter. The Chafetz Chaim was impressed at his noble conduct and blessed him: "You should be blessed with long life and good years!"

Indeed, this Rabbi Mordechai Leib HaKohen merited moving to Eretz Yisrael and lived until the ripe old age of ninety-six.

Later on Rabbi Mordechai would relate this wonderful story to his descendants, explaining that when someone suspects his friend and it turns out to be a false accusation, it is an opportune time, worthwhile utilizing, to bless the one suspected. From where do we learn this? From the incident with Chana. She prayed quietly; only her lips were moving but no sound could be heard and therefore Eli HaKohen thought she was drunk. When it turned out that he was mistaken and Chana was simply praying from the depths of her pain, he immediately blessed her that Hashem should answer her plea. His blessing was fulfilled and she gave birth to Shmuel. "Rabbi Eliezer said: From here we learn, one who suspects an honest person must appease him." If a wise person is faced with this opportune time of being falsely suspected, in place of being tempted to punish the perpetrator, it is preferable that he ask the perpetrator to bless him with his most longed-for desire. Then the heartache he suffered will be dwarfed in comparison to the benefit he will derive from the blessing offered to him at this opportune moment.