

PACHAD DAVID

Bamidbar



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v' Rabbeinu, the Admor 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

"The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their fathers' household" (*Bamidbar* 2:2).

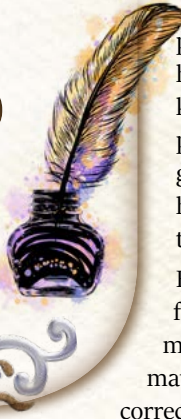
Bnei Yisrael were organized into formations of three tribes each, known as *degalim*, banners, and each banner was led by a designated tribe. Each individual tribe also had its own flag. We will try to clarify the meaning and purpose of these banners.

A banner is an expression of Hashem's love for Am Yisrael. Where do we find this idea? From the words of Shlomo Hamelech (*Shir Hashirim* 2:4), "He has brought me to the house of wine and His banner upon me is love." Chazal (*Bamidbar Rabba* 2:3) explain that י"ו, wine, has a numerical value of seventy. Hashem inspected His house of wine, referring to the seventy nations, and from among them all chose Am Yisrael whom He loves the most.

On the verse "He has brought me to the house of wine," Chazal say that when Hashem revealed Himself on Har Sinai, an entourage of twenty-two thousand angels descended with Him, and they all appeared in formations (banners). When Am Yisrael saw this, they too desired banners and said, "If only we too were organized into formations like them!" This is the meaning of, "He has brought me to the house of wine and His banner upon me is love." The house of wine refers to Har Sinai where the Torah was given, and Torah is compared to wine. Hashem said to Bnei Yisrael, "You desire banners; I promise to fulfill your wish." Hashem immediately demonstrated His love for Yisrael and told Moshe, "Go and make them banners as they wish."

These words of Chazal teach us that such was the aspiration of Bnei Yisrael – to be banners like the angels; meaning, to be arranged in formations. The virtue of angels is their orderliness; that is how they serve Hashem in heaven and this is what Bnei Yisrael desired. Indeed, this aspiration is something most

maskil Le'David Striving to Transcend, Resembling Tzaddikim and Angels



positive. When man is orderly, he acts appropriately and knows the correct time and place for everything, how to go about it and how to fulfill his goals. As a result he is able to transcend to higher levels.

Furthermore, we must strive for orderliness not only in material matters but in spiritual matters too, investigating the correct way to go about our avodat

Hashem, Torah study and mitzvah observance. Thus, when a person has order in his life, he is not alarmed by the constant challenges and does not experience great confusion in his life's journey, because he knows well how to conduct himself in every situation.

It is related about the Alter of Kelm zt"l that on occasion he would visit his son's yeshiva to keep tabs on how he was doing. It was enough for him to check the state of orderliness in his son's room, and that told him everything. For indeed an organized person knows his priorities and knows how to ascend his spiritual ladder.

This is what lay behind Bnei Yisrael's desire to have a set formation like the angels. Bnei Yisrael wanted to transcend and become angelic; living in an orderly manner, particularly when it came to spirituality. Indeed, when Hashem saw their aspiration and great desire, He immediately told Moshe Rabbeinu, "The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their fathers' household." Each tribe was to be ascribed their own flag so they could all elevate themselves and draw closer to Hashem.

Bnei Yisrael had a great desire to grow and resemble angels and *seraphim*, a most lofty virtue. At the Giving of the Torah Bnei Yisrael said, "We will do and we will listen," and at that moment they became greater than angels. Now too in the Wilderness they had the same desire to ascend and grow and be arranged in a formation like angels, for this would enable them to reach the level of angels.

27 Iyar 5782
28 May 2022

957

Shabbat Mevarchin
Molad: Tuesday night at 6:04 and two parts



Hilula

27 Iyar – Rabbi Yitzchak Abulafia

27 Iyar – Rabbi Aharon Meir Auerbach

28 Iyar – Shmuel HaNavi

28 Iyar – Rabbi Yitzchak of Korbil,
author of the *Smak*

29 Iyar – Rabbi Ben Tzion Aton,
of the 'Porat Yosef' Sages

29 Iyar – Rabbi Meir of Premishlan

1 Sivan – Rabbi Yosef Nissim Burla,
author of *Vayeshev Yosef*

1 Sivan – Rabbi Avraham Menachem
Steinberg, Av Beit Din of Brody

2 Sivan – Rabbi Yaakov Shaul Duvek
HaKohen, the Chacham Bashi

2 Sivan – Rabbi Yisrael Hager,
author of *Ahavat Yisrael*

3 Sivan – Rabbi Yosef Irgas,
author of *Divrei Yosef*

3 Sivan – Rabbi Mordechai Abadi,
author of *Mayan Ganim*

4 Sivan – Rabbi Yosef Avraham Wolf

4 Sivan – Rabbi Mantzur Marzouk





WORDS OF THE SAGES

Know That Your Son Has Forsaken the True Path ...

The Imrei Chaim of Vishnitz zt"l explains the severity of the prohibition of idle talk based on the verse at the beginning of the Parshah: "Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting" (*Bamidbar* 1:1). Bnei Yisrael were warned that all their words (a play on the word במדבר, which literally means 'in the desert', but can be also understood as containing the root *diber*, meaning speech) should be as "Sinai" referring to words of Torah, and if not, it is preferable not to speak at all.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Alter hy"d, the youngest son of the Sfat Emet zt"l, in addition to being one of the greatest rabbis in Poland and Rav of Pavnitz, also headed a distinguished yeshiva called Darkei Noam. This yeshiva existed until the First World War and was known as a high-level yeshiva. Once the Rav of Pavnitz wrote an urgent letter to the father of one of the students:

"Know that your son has forsaken the true path..."

One can understand the great panic which gripped the father upon receiving this surprising letter. There had been no early signs that his son was deteriorating spiritually. As soon as the father received the letter he got on a train and travelled to the yeshiva to see what was happening with his son and do everything he could to set him back on the correct path.

To his surprise, when the father arrived, he found his son sitting with the rest of his good friends, studying aloud and with great enthusiasm. It was not noticeable on him that he had changed in any way. The father approached the yeshiva staff, inquired about his son, and they all praised him highly. When the father insistently asked if any of the staff members had noticed any deterioration, they responded in astonishment: "Baruch Hashem, your son sits and studies diligently, prays as he should and his entire conduct is upright."

The father was very surprised and could not understand the meaning of the Rosh Yeshiva's letter. The father turned to the Rosh Yeshiva's house and asked him what he meant.

The Rosh Yeshiva replied: "Are you the father of ...? You should know that with my own eyes I saw him interrupt his studies and begin talking about trivial matters..."

On these lines the holy Ohr Hachaim zy"a writes (*Devarim* 1:1): "These are the words' can be interpreted according to Chazal's statement (*Yoma* 19b): 'Rava said, "You shall speak of them" and not of idle matters.' From here we learn that one's speech should consist of Torah and *yirah* alone. The verse is pointing out that 'These are the words that Moshe spoke' all his life, apart from the words that Hashem commanded him to speak, which means he fulfilled 'And you shall speak of them.' Anyone who heard Moshe Rabbeinu speak could testify that his speech was entirely words of Torah, wisdom and mussar."



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

A Blessed Misunderstanding

I was once engrossed in a phone call when a woman suddenly burst into my office. She cried that her husband was in the throes of death, *r"l*, and in dire need of salvation. Since I was in the middle of an important call, I asked the woman to wait a few moments until I finished, then I would be able to give her husband a complete, wholehearted blessing. But instead of waiting, the woman said, "Thank you, thank you," and with relief written on her face, left as suddenly as she had come.

I was quite surprised by her reaction and asked those in the room if they had any idea why she had thanked me. They, too, were astonished at her words and hurried to find her and ask for an explanation. When they reached her, she stated, in all innocence, that she understood I had blessed her husband with a complete recovery and that he would shortly get up from his sickbed.

At this, I was really stumped. I had not offered her any blessing at all. I had not even said anything which could be understood as a guarantee that her husband would live. All I had done was ask her to wait patiently until I could hear her out. She left so fast, before I could understand her husband's condition or offer him a blessing.

The poor woman was certain I had promised that her husband would be well. What if Hashem decided to take him from This World? What a *chilul Hashem* (desecration of Hashem's Name) would result!

I asked my secretary to call her up and straighten things out. She should be told I was not guaranteeing her husband's recovery. But when my secretary reached her, she did not let him speak. With great emotion, she said, "Relay my thanks to Rabbi David. My husband miraculously came back to life!"

The miracle that happened to this man was undoubtedly in the merit of his wife's perfect faith. She thought I had blessed him with a complete recovery and was therefore calm. How powerful is simple faith!

It can literally bring people
back to life!



FROM THE TREASURY

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

Parshat Bamidbar – Preparation for Shavuot

Why did Chazal determine that Parshat Bamidbar always be read before Shavuot, and what is the connection between this Parshah and the chag?

I would like to suggest an answer according to the Midrash on the verse, “Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai.” From here Chazal learn: “The Torah was given through three things: fire, water and Wilderness.” It is possible that this statement is informing us that our Torah study can only endure if it contains these three attributes. This is also the only way to overcome the Yetzer Hara who tries to prevail every day. Chazal say, “I created the Yetzer Hara and I created Torah as a remedy for it. If you engage in Torah you are not given over to its hands, but if you do not engage in Torah you are subject to its power.”

Since the Yetzer Hara is made of fire, as it says (*Tehillim* 104:4), “The flaming fire His attendants,” man cannot resist the Yetzer Hara except with the power of Torah which is also likened to fire, as it says (*Yirmiya* 23:29), “Behold, My word is like fire – the word of Hashem.” The Yetzer Hara resembles a small fire that is easily extinguished, while Torah resembles a large fire that can never be extinguished for eternity, as it says (*Shir Hashirim* 8:6-7), “Its flashes are flashes of fire, the flame of Hashem. Many waters cannot extinguish the [fire of this] love.” If a small flame erupts and one does not have water to extinguish it and fears it will spread, what can be done? Throw it into a bonfire in which it is annulled. Similarly, the fire of the Yetzer Hara is only smothered by the fire of Torah.

So that the fire of Torah should not lead to pride, man must humble himself and resemble water. Just as water always descends from a high place to a low place (*Ta'anit* 7a), so the talmid chacham should behave with humility. Torah only endures in one who is humble, and the Yetzer Hara will not succeed in instilling pride in one who personifies humility. Humility leads to giving oneself over completely to avodat Hashem, becoming ownerless like a desert, similar to Moshe Rabbeinu who separated from his wife since he had to maintain a constant state of purity to be able to speak to the Shechinah at all times (*Tanchuma*, *Tzav* 13). Rather than engaging in his own needs, he dedicated himself to the needs of Am Yisrael.

When man dedicates his entire self to Torah and becomes like a desert, he never challenges Hashem's ways. This is the meaning of Chazal's statement (*Berachot* 54a), “Man must bless for the bad just as he blesses for the good, even if He takes your life.” Similarly, David Hamelech said (*Tehillim* 35:10), “All my limbs will say, ‘Hashem, who is like You?’” This shows us that David gave over every one of his limbs to Hashem and carried out all that Hashem commanded him to do.

Chazal established that Parshat Bamidbar should be read before the festival of the Giving of the Torah to remind us that Torah only endures when a person makes himself ownerless like a desert, surrendering himself totally to the will of Hashem, just like a servant belongs to his master and does all that he commands him to do.

A DAY OF DELIGHT

A Priceless Gift Called Shabbat



Hashem said to Moshe: “I have a precious gift in My treasury and Shabbat is its name. I wish to give it to the Jewish people; go and inform them” (*Shabbat* 10b).

Chazal say that Shabbat is the “spouse” of Am Yisrael, and indeed Shabbat and the Jew are one. The entire Jewish way of life absorbs its vitality from Shabbat, the day when the Jew leaves aside all his secular concerns and delights in Hashem. On this day his soul merits a special illumination.

What causes this special illumination? How does the Jew, each and every week, manage to attain such a quality and genuine peace of mind? How, without wandering to any far-off place, does the Jew achieve such inspiration and tranquility, right inside his home?

It is clear that the recipe for this is not a human one; it is not an invention or brainwave of a human being. The Jewish Shabbat is a Divine recipe, a kind of “professional secret”, a priceless gift the Creator gave His beloved children. This recipe includes special instructions which neutralize the person from mundane work and elevate him to “A world that is entirely Shabbat and rest.”

Harav Hirsch writes, “Of all the precious gifts the Torah has given to those who grasp it, there is no gift that imparts happiness in life in such abundance, as the very first mitzvah – the mitzvah of Shabbat.

“Take Shabbat from a Jew, and you have taken away his most precious pearl; whatever you give him in return will not fill its place. He will not find satisfaction in any other kind of joy or delight you provide for him, as he finds in the pleasant serenity and peaceful tranquility inherent in the Shabbat day.”

It is told that the Chafetz Chaim zt”l was once informed about a Jewish business owner who began keeping his store open on Shabbat. The Chafetz Chaim, who was acquainted with this unfortunate Jew who had begun to stray from the true path, was greatly distressed to hear this news and asked that the storeowner be brought to him. When he arrived the Chafetz Chaim addressed him:

“My dear friend, I want to ask you a question. Your storefront boasts a large sign: ‘Carpentry’. If one day you cannot go to work and serve your customers as you do every day, will you take down the sign?”

“No, of course not,” the storeowner replied, wondering where this was leading to.

The Chafetz Chaim continued: “And if you want to go on a long trip and take a long vacation, will you then remove the sign?”

“No, not then either.”

“Is there any case in which you would decide to remove the sign?”

“Ah ... well, only if I would decide to close the store completely and choose to pursue a different profession.”

The Chafetz Chaim looked at the lost Jew and rebuked him lovingly:

“Know, my son, wherever a Jew is, even if he does not keep all of the commandments religiously, as long as he observes Shabbat he proves that he is proud the Creator merited him with being a Jew. It is as if he raises a flag and declares, ‘I am a Jew; I am not ashamed of it!’ Not so the Jew who has distanced himself so greatly, as to disregard the observance the Shabbat. If that happens, he shows that he is removing the sign ‘I am a Jew,’ and does not desire to come close to Hashem, the Jewish people, and the holy Torah which is our precious inheritance.”



Rabbi Ovadiah Bartenura zt"l

"He accomplished wonderful things. He did not leave anything that required explanation unresolved, presenting all his insights with a special clarity and purity."

This is how the author of *Darkei Hamishnah* describes and extolls Rabbi Ovadiah Bartenura's exceptional commentary on the Mishnayot.

Rabbi Ovadiah Bartenura was born in the city of Bartinuro in northern Italy, around 1440. Rabbi Ovadiah served as Rav of Bartinuro and his family name is taken from the name of this city. Much later, the mayors paid tribute to this distinguished personality who made the city famous all over the world, and commemorated his name by calling the city square "Ovadiah Bartinuro Square."

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5246, Rabbi Ovadiah left Bartinuro and made his

way to Eretz Yisrael, where he arrived after an arduous journey that took almost three years!

He settled in Yerushalayim where he was appointed head of the small Jewish community, which he developed and strengthened both spiritually and materially. Its inhabitants were poor and did not even own Sifrei Torah! He invested a large part of his energy in establishing the local Jewish community and significantly improved the dismal situation. He lived there for about twenty years, until the day he passed away.

A description of his visit to Gaza appears in a letter he wrote to his elderly father. This is how he describes the city:

"In Gaza I saw the house Shimshon threw on the Philistines, pointed out to me by the local Jews. Today there are about seventy rabbis, and two Samaritans, and I did not see any Karaites. We remained in Gaza for four days and I was hosted by an Ashkenazic rabbi called Rabbi Moshe of Prague who fled from Yerushalayim. He brought me to his house against my will and I remained with him the entire time. On Shabbat all the community leaders and devout Jews came to dine with us, bringing grapes and fruit as is their custom. We drank seven or eight cups before beginning the meal, and there was a feeling of great joy."

About the city of Yerushalayim, he notes, among other things:

"The holy city of Yerushalayim is home to about two hundred families who are extremely careful not to sin and are meticulous about every mitzvah. Each evening, morning and afternoon they all gather, rich and poor alike, to pray with deep concentration. There are two G-d fearing cantors who lead the prayers and utter each letter and word with great intention. Twice a day the entire congregation comes together to listen to a Torah lecture.

"I live in a house here in Yerushalayim near the *beit kneset*. I must give thanks to Hashem Who has showered me with His blessings and I did not become sick like the rest of the people who came here together with me. Most of those who come to Yerushalayim from a distant city become sick due to the change in the atmosphere and the rapid shift from cold to heat and vice versa. All the winds in the world come and blow in Yerushalayim."

Rabbeinu Ovadiah published an outstanding commentary on the Six Orders of the Mishnah, which first appeared in the Venetian printing press and since then has become a standard part of almost all publications of the Mishnah printed to date.

According to tradition, the day of his passing falls on the third of Sivan, and he is buried in a small cave at the foot of Har Hazeitim, opposite the holy site of the Beit Hamikdash.

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