

PACHAD DAVID

Lech Lecha



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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu, the Admor Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlit'a
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"But it occurred, with Avram's coming to Egypt, the Egyptians saw the woman was very beautiful. When the officials of Pharaoh saw her, they lauded her for Pharaoh, and the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house" (*Bereishit* 12:14-15).

These are the parshiot in which the Torah describes the lives and conduct of our holy forefathers. Through contemplating their deeds we can discern the correct mode of behavior Hashem demands from us, the path that every Jewish person in every generation should follow. Every single thing that exists has a specific purpose. A person's sincere desire to clearly understand his purpose in this world is the only way to achieve success. The task of a Jewish person is to progress in his *avodat Hashem*, similar to a newborn baby who progresses from day to day until he becomes an independent individual.

Now we can understand why Sefer Bereishit details the lives of the holy Avot whereas there is no mention of the actual commandments. It alludes to our obligation to learn from the deeds of our Fathers so we should become fitting to observe the commandments. As we are told in Avot (3:17), "If there is no Torah there is no worldly occupation; if there is no worldly occupation there is no Torah." Torah can only exist in a suitable vessel. Torah is compared to water which needs a vessel to contain it; a person forms this vessel through behaving with upright *middot* and *derech erez*.

Parshat Lech Lecha describes how Avraham Avinu, a"h, fought against the mighty kings; he was not afraid or troubled by anyone. Nimrod considered himself a god and the entire world feared him. When Nimrod would walk around, even the animals would flee from him because he wore the garments of Adam Harishon which had pictures of animals designed in the fabric (*Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 24). However, Avraham Avinu was not frightened when he heard that his nephew Lot had been captured. He unflinchingly went to fight against the four kings, alone but for his servant Eliezer. "And it happened in the days of Amraphel, king of Shinar...And they captured Lot and his possessions...when Avram heard that his kinsman was taken captive, he

maskil Le'David

All Your Deeds
Should Be for
The Sake of
Heaven



armed his disciples..." (*Bereishit* 14:1-14). Rashi explains that Amraphel was Nimrod, who went to war together with another three kings.

Taking his courageous behaviour into account, it seems strange that Avraham, who confronted the mighty Nimrod, did not put up a fight against Pharaoh in Mitzrayim in order to save his wife? Similarly, when Avimelech captured Sarah, we do not find that Avraham waged war against the king in order to reclaim his wife. We are only told that he prayed. Why in these instances did he not go out to fight against them?

We can answer this by taking a glimpse at the way Avraham viewed himself. He said about himself, "Although I am but dust and ash" (*Bereishit* 18:27). Since he considered himself as lowly and insignificant as the dust, when it came to his and his family's own needs, and even his wife's, he did not regard himself as having any significance and therefore thrust his burden on Hashem. When he was the recipient of injustice he prayed to Hashem, but did not consider himself worthy of engaging in battle. But when it came to a question of a *chilul Hashem* in the world, when Nimrod (whose name personifies his deeds for he led the world to rebel against Hashem) captured his nephew Lot, Avraham discarded his normal self-effacing behaviour and fought single-handedly, with only his servant Eliezer, against the mighty kings, and was victorious.

Indeed, Avraham refused to enjoy any personal benefit from the battle, and even after the king of Sdom said to him, "Give me the people and take the possessions for yourself" (*Bereishit* 14:21). Avraham swore "If so much as a thread to a shoestraps; or if I shall take from anything of yours!" (*ibid.* 23). He was implying that even the smallest thing like a shoestraps he will not take from this battle for he fought for the sake of Hashem's Name only. But when it came to his own personal challenges, he trusted in Hashem and followed Him according to the way he was led. Even when Hashem said to him "Go for yourself...to the land I will show you" (*ibid.* 12:1) and upon arriving he was greeted by a famine in the land, he trusted in Hashem explicitly and never questioned His ways.

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13 Cheshvan 5784
28 October 2023

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Hilula

13 Cheshvan
Rabbi Chaim Yakov Vaknin

14 Cheshvan
Rabbi Avraham Elimelech hy"d,
Admor of Karlin-Stolin

15 Cheshvan
Rabbi Leib Ba'al Yissurim

16 Cheshvan
The esteemed Rabbi Chaim
Pinto Hakatan, zy"l

17 Cheshvan
Rabbi Binyomin Zev Cheshin

18 Cheshvan
Rabbi Rafael Baruch Toledano

19 Cheshvan
Rabbi Yoshu'a Attia





FROM THE TREASURY

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

Lot Felt a Connection to the Ways of Sdom

We can learn a very deep lesson in *avodat Hashem* from the story of Lot's separation from Avraham. In a certain sense Lot was righteous and had faith in Hashem. We see this from the fact that he didn't reveal to the Egyptians that Sarah Imeinu was Avraham's wife, even though this could have resulted in him becoming rich. And seemingly, even when Lot allowed his sheep to graze in fields belonging to others, he had a "justified" reason for this. He reckoned that since he was the sole heir of Avraham Avinu who was at that point childless, all Avraham's possessions belonged to him, including those fields.

Avraham Avinu definitely did not tell Lot that he will inherit the land, because he had faith in Hashem, that he would merit children as He had promised him (*Bereishit* 12:2), "And I will make you into a great nation." Hashem had also hinted to this blessing in the command, "Go for yourself," which has the numerical value of one hundred, implying that a son will be born to him when he reaches the age of one hundred. However, Avraham only told the people who were accompanying him that Hashem had commanded him to go to this land, as it says (*ibid.* 1) "To the land that I will show you." Lot, an intelligent person, reached the conclusion on his own accord that if Hashem is commanding Avraham to leave Choron for a different land, it is a sign Avraham would inherit this land. If so, when Lot allowed his shepherds to graze his sheep in fields that did not belong to him, he did not intend to steal. Rather, he did so with the assumption that one day the fields will anyway belong to him.

Later on, we once again see the righteousness of Lot, when he put his life and his daughter's lives in danger, by inviting the angels into his home. Even Avraham Avinu did not perform *hachnasat orchim* under these conditions. Chazal (*Yalkut Shimoni* remez 82) add that he gave his guests matzah since it was Pesach. If he was particular to eat matzah, we can assume he was also particular to rid his house of chametz and also observed all the other mitzvot connected to Pesach, as he learnt from Avraham Avinu.

So how do we understand that Lot chose to go to Sdom, a town of thieves and wicked people? Despite his righteous behaviour in some areas, he felt a connection to this town. He felt comfortable here among his own kind. This was due to the fact that he did possess a trace of *midat Sdom* — theft — because even according to his claim that he would be his uncle's heir, he allowed himself to benefit from the fields now on account of the future.

This behaviour can be compared to two people who intend to play a game. The player who is well versed in the rules of the game, takes possession of his opponent's assets even before the game starts by claiming that anyway he is certain to win since the other player is not familiar with the game. This was Lot's mistaken attitude.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

He Gazes at the Image of Hashem

The following incident took place in Kislev, 1990, in Lyon.

R' Yitzchak Matzliach, z"l, was an elderly G-d-fearing Jew. He was extremely close with the Pinto family. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with cancer. The disease spread throughout his body, rendering him completely paralyzed and a short time later he passed away.

After I returned to France from Morocco, I immediately headed toward his house to participate in the shiva. R' Matzliach's sons told me an unbelievable story.

R' Matzliach had a picture of Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a, hanging on the wall of his home. His own picture, much smaller, hangs on the opposite wall. That Monday morning, one of the sons of the deceased woke up to a most amazing sight. The picture of Rabbi Chaim seemed to have a life of its own. It moved to the spot where R' Yitzchak Matzliach's picture was hanging.

The man was visibly shaken. He immediately called for his brother and asked if he noticed anything amiss. His brother did, too, and asked if he had any idea how it had happened. They thought they were hallucinating, due to their recent constant focus on their father. But when the rest of their brothers entered the room, they too were stunned by the change. First, the tzaddik's picture moved to the opposite wall, and then it returned to its former place.

I asked a relative who had been staying in the home of the deceased the previous evening to verify these narratives. The man replied, "Honored Rav, I am a scientist by profession. I am not easily convinced of anything. If these men would merely have told me this story, I would most definitely not have accepted it as true. I would have thought that something snapped in their heads. But what can I say? Seeing is believing. What they said is the indisputable truth."

All were dumbstruck at this story. The family wished to glean a lesson from it. I told them, "This is a sign from Heaven that Hashem is the Creator and can do anything He pleases. You are obligated to take this lesson to heart, and return to your Father in Heaven. Additionally, your father was a very strong believer in the merit of the tzaddikim. He may have had a spiritual connection with the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a. Maybe that is why Rabbi Chaim approached him, wishing to escort him on his final journey."

*This story spread among the residents of the town.
It broadcasted to all the greatness of faith
in the power of tzaddikim.*



WORDS OF THE SAGES

The Truth is Revealed

“Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her domination” (Bereishit 16:9).

There is a famous question asked by Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin zt”l, on the conversation that took place between the angel and Hagar. The angel asks Hagar who she is fleeing from and she answers, “I am running away from Sarai my mistress.” What does the angel answer her? “Return to your mistress and submit yourself to her domination.”

Is this the way to answer? The very reason for her fleeing was because Sarai exercised authority over her?

Rabbi Yosef Berger, shlita, author of *Peninim*, explains this dialogue with an original insight, using the story told about the Nodah B’Yehuda, zt”l, who presided over a certain din Torah.

Two people approached the Noda B’Yehuda, one dressed in clothing exclusive to the rich, while the other was dressed as befitting a poor man. The latter claimed he was really the rich one, whereas the one dressed as rich man was in fact just a simple wagon driver he had hired to take him to the nearby town. In the middle of the journey the wagon driver had stopped and forced him to exchange his clothing for the wagon driver’s rags.

His intention was to take control of all the money the rich man was carrying with him and claim it as his own, with the proof being that, look, he is the one wearing the clothes of a rich man while the other one is dressed in rags...

The Noda B’Yehuda thought for a few minutes and then suddenly turned to the two men and said: Return tomorrow morning and then I will know what to decide according to the dictates of the Torah.

Meanwhile, the Noda B’Yehuda told his *shamash* that the following day, when they enter the waiting room, he should leave them there for many hours and should only let them in to his study when he signals.

This is indeed what took place. The two men arrived the next day at the pre-arranged time, and the *shamash* told them to take a seat and wait. One hour passed, another hour dragged by, with their nerves aggravated by the long wait.

After they had already reached the limit of their patience, the Rav opened the door and called out: “The wagon driver should enter...”

Of course, who stood up? The one disguised in the rich man’s clothing who was in fact the wagon driver trying to steal from the rich man...

The cleverness of the Rav was to give them plenty of time to become bored and frustrated, and then when he suddenly calls out, “The wagon driver should enter...,” out of habit the real wagon driver will get up and without thinking reveal his deception

It could be that this was the intention of the angel when talking to Hagar. The argument amongst Sarah and Hagar was that Hagar claimed she is no longer a maidservant since she married Avraham and is therefore no longer required to work. Whereas Sarah claimed the opposite, that she is still a servant and is obligated to work. Avraham agreed with Sarah’s opinion and Hagar fled. And then the angel came and suddenly said to her: “Hagar, maidservant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?” and out of habit Hagar immediately answered, “I am running away from Sarai my mistress!”

With this she revealed her true role and position in the house of Sarah.

cont. from p. 1 >>>

Any other person would have protested and complained to Hashem. This is the land to which You sent me? It is a land beset by famine! But Avraham kept quiet and left the land for Egypt, for he put his whole being at the bidding of Hashem and didn’t consider his own personal needs at all.

The valuable lesson that comes out clearly from this incident is that we should be concerned with one thing only – the honor of the Name of Hashem – and not about ourselves and our own needs.

Venezuela is the land of tropical rainforests and hurricanes. Countless accidents result from the frequent storms and avalanches. Homes and trees are entirely uprooted. Tornadoes rip apart anything in their way, wreaking complete destruction. It is life-threatening to be found in the eye of a storm. A man recently related that he was miraculously spared twice from such storms.

The first time, he was trapped in his car. The windows were shattered by the mere velocity of the gales. He was sure that within a few moments, he would meet his end. Suddenly, a mysterious hand opened his door and allowed him to escape certain death.

The second time, he was once again seated in his car, when a storm erupted. Mountains crumbled and boulders broke apart. By a miracle, he was thrown with his car into a ditch. This provided him with a shelter of sorts from the threatening winds, and saved his life.

When I heard the man’s tale of escape, I asked him, “Do you wear tefillin daily?”

“For many years, I used to wear tefillin. But as of late, I have stopped.”

“You stopped wearing tefillin?” I was incredulous. “Didn’t you see Hashem’s hand saving you twice from certain death? Don’t you consider this a signal from Heaven that you should mend your ways? You surely repaired your wrecked car. But what about fixing your spoiled soul?!”

This is a person who thinks only about his own needs and not about the will of Hashem. When he is saved he rejoices, but does not consider giving something to Hashem in return, as a thanks-offering. The moral guidance we have received as a legacy from our holy Avot is that we must act with self-sacrifice when it comes to preserving Heaven’s honor, but when it is a question of one’s personal needs one should have faith in Hashem and not allow them to be his foremost concern.



GUARD YOUR TONGUE

Falsehood as a Last Resort

What should a person reply if he is asked, “What did so and so say about me?”

If he can think of an idea that won’t be a complete lie and also won’t be *rechilus*, then he should reply in this way and shouldn’t lie. However, if he feels his friend will not accept this answer, he is allowed to say an outright lie for the sake of peace, but he should *chas v’shalom* not swear to the “truth” of the lie.

ZECHER TZADDIK LIYRACHA



The esteemed Maran Rabbi Chaim Pinto HaKatan, zy"a

This week we mark the hilula of one of the great Torah giants, a descendant of the highly regarded Pinto family from Morocco, the tzaddik and miracle worker, the esteemed Maran Rabbi Chaim Pinto HaKatan, zy"a. The tzaddik Rabbi Chaim assisted and still today assists an enormous amount of Jewish people, both spiritually and materially, for he returned the hearts of the people to their Father in heaven, not only while he was alive but also after he ascended to the Heavenly Yeshiva.

This week when we read in the Torah about Avraham Avinu, the pillar of chessed, we will focus on the aspect of the *avodat hachessed* of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, only one facet of his exemplary righteousness with which he lit up the world.

Hundreds and thousands of Jews merited feeling the warm touch of the hands of the tzaddik Rabbi Chaim Pinto, either as one of the generous philanthropists handing over a donation, or as one on the receiving end of his *tzedakah*. *Gemilut chassadim* was one of the pillars to which Rabbi Chaim held steadfastly. Rabbi Chaim was without a doubt "one who bestows beneficent kindness upon His people Israel." He went all out with his concern and efforts for the sake of supporting the poor

and needy in his town. He had a fixed daily routine. After davening Shacharit, he would go to visit the kever of his grandfather in the old cemetery, the tzaddik and mekubal Rabbi Chaim HaGadol, zy"a, whose name he would always mention when he blessed people. This is how he blessed them: "May the merit of the honor of my holy grandfather protect you."

The radiant countenance of the tzaddik was deeply embedded in the heart of every Jew that came to Mogador:

Rabbi Chaim Pinto used to sit by the town's entrance, waiting for guests who would arrive from other cities, to offer them the opportunity of partaking in the mitzvah of *tzedakah*.

There were also many people who would search out Rabbi Chaim or make a point of meeting him, so he should ask them for a certain amount of money for *tzedakah*. Everyone knew and believed that if Rabbi Chaim Pinto would ask them for charity and they were able to give, it was a *segulah* for success and they would merit blessings in all their endeavours that day.

It was a famous occurrence that circled among the Jews of Morocco: All those who merited a blessing from Rabbi Chaim for their generosity would have a successful day and experience miracles during that week.

Complete Happiness

During the Chagim and especially before Pesach when expenses are great, Rabbi Chaim did not hesitate to use all his powers of influence over the rich people, so they would donate generously for the sake of the town's poor. Before Pesach Rabbi Chaim Pinto would go from house to house and ask each one to open his heart and pocket in order to bring

joy to needy families, widows and orphans on the Chag, so all would be able to celebrate in a joyful and respectable manner.

Washing off Impurity

Rabbi Chaim Hakatan used to bundle the money he collected for charitable purposes in a handkerchief specifically designated for this mitzvah. After the stars came out, even before Rabbi Chaim began to learn Torah, he would ritually wash the kerchief that held the money.

When questioned about this custom, the tzaddik explained, "I wash the kerchief from the *kelippot* and contamination of this world. The greatest filth in this world is money. Therefore, after distributing the funds for *tzedakah*, I wash the kerchief."

The washing of the cloth that held the coins was a well-known fact among the Jews of Morocco.

Sanctified for the Poor

One night, Rabbi Chaim Hakatan could not fall asleep. He immediately rose from his bed and approached his wife, asking her, "Did you perhaps take some of the money I collected?" "Yes," answered his righteous wife. "I took some money to purchase provisions in honor of Shabbat."

Rabbi Chaim explained to her in no uncertain terms that he was not pleased. He told her, "Since you took money that was sanctified for the poor, a foul odor of this world entered our home and I could not sleep because of it."

The tzaddik quickly took the money and set it aside for the poor.

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