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maskil Le'David

Yissachar's Wise Advice

"It was on the day that Moshe finished erecting the Tabernacle that he anointed it, sanctified it and all its utensils, and the Altar and all its utensils, and he had anointed and sanctified them. The leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' household, brought offerings; they were the leaders of the tribes, they were those who stand at the countings. They brought their offering before Hashem: six covered wagons and twelve oxen – a wagon for each two leaders and an ox for each – and they brought them before the Tabernacle" (*Bamidbar* 7:1-3).

Rashi writes, "Rabbi Natan said, why at the dedication of the Mizbeach, did the leaders donate at the beginning, whereas when the Mishkan was being built they did not bring a donation right away? The answer is, when the Mishkan was being constructed the leaders said, "The congregation will offer whatever they offer and whatever is missing we will complete." When they saw that the congregation completed everything, as it says, "But the work had been enough," they said what is now left for us to do? So they brought the *shoham* stones and the stones for the settings of the Ephod and the Breastplate. That is why at the dedication of the Mizbeach they were the first to donate."

Since the leaders realized they were not sufficiently quick to donate toward the construction of the Mishkan, they ensured they would be the first to bring an offering at the dedication of the Mizbeach. They brought six covered wagons that would be used to carry the Tabernacle and its vessels when they travelled from place to place.

Who was the one who advised them to bring these wagons?

The Midrash tells us that it was the tribe of Yissachar who gave this advice and they were rewarded by being the second tribe to bring an offering, after the tribe of Yehuda. Rashi asks: "Why did Yissachar merit this? One reason is that they were learned in Torah, as it says, "Of the children of Yissachar, men with understanding for the times," and a second reason is that they were the ones who advised the leaders to

bring these offerings." At first Moshe Rabbeinu, a"h, was reluctant to accept the leaders' offerings, until Hashem commanded him to accept them.

In order to understand this properly we have to contemplate the great loftiness of the Giving of the Torah, which took place on the holy day of Shavuot. It is well known that true acceptance of Torah means toiling in it, and the main area of toil is in the Oral Law. Although the Written Law, which contains the six hundred and thirteen commandments, was given to us by Hashem, He concealed numerous laws in each commandment. This is the Oral Law, which we must toil and exert ourselves to derive from the Written Law.

Now, it is clear why Hashem did not command them to bring wagons. Hashem wanted this law to be an aspect of the Oral Law, meaning Bnei Yisrael should weigh up and discuss how it would be possible to carry the Mishkan on all the journeys without wagons. This deliberation would lead them to understand that it is Hashem's wish that they prepare wagons. This is exactly what the tribe of Yissachar did. They, who were known as being Torah scholars, were the ones who derived this law. Certainly, had they not introduced this idea, Hashem would have commanded it. But Hashem kept it concealed so the tribe of Yissachar would exert themselves and develop this understanding.

Hashem's delight with Yissachar's advice, is expressed by Chazal who tell us (*Midrash Rabbah Nasso* 12) that those twelve oxen the leaders donated on the advice of Yissachar, remained alive until the days of King Shlomo, a"h, when he offered them as sacrifices. There is a *Beraita* in the name of Rabbi Meir that is of the opinion that they are still in existence today and did not get disfigured or grow old as it says, "And they shall be to perform the work of the Tent of Meetings." Hashem rejoices with a person who toils and exerts himself to understand the Torah and derives practical laws from his efforts. That is why Hashem commanded Moshe, "Take from them" – I desire this donation that came about through the advice of Yissachar. It is the true intention of the Torah. This idea is hinted to in the word "מאתם" ("Take from them"), which contains the same letters as the word "אמת" (truth), as well as the letter "מ". This refers to the fact that the Torah, the Truth, was given in forty ("מ") days. Yissachar's understanding is indeed a Torah truth and this Torah brings Me pleasure.

cont. p. 4 >>>

9 Sivan 5784
15 June 2024

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Nasso



Hilula

9 Sivan
Rabbi Yaakov Meir

10 Sivan
Rabbi Yeshaya Meshorer

11 Sivan
Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Weiss,
Ra'avad of Yerushalayim

12 Sivan
Rabbi David Pardo

13 Sivan
Rabbi Yaakov Mutzafi

14 Sivan
Rabbi Nissim Yagen

15 Sivan
Rabbi Yedidya Rafael
Abulapiah





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

A Personal Blessing

"So shall you bless the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 6:23).

Why does the verse start in the plural: "So shall you bless the Children of Israel, say to *them*," and afterward, in the wording of the blessings, the verse switches to the singular: "May Hashem bless *you* and safeguard *you*. May Hashem illuminate His countenance for *you*..."?

The *sefer Dan M'Daniel* offers an interesting explanation: Not every blessing can be said in the plural, for blessings can mean different things for different people.

For example, "May Hashem bless you" can either mean "with money" or "with children." Money is something that can be a blessing for one person, yet for his friend it can be a curse — money destroys him and takes him away from the correct path. The same is true regarding the blessing of offspring. When the children are well behaved and give their parents *nachat*, this is certainly a blessing, but when all the parents get is sorrow and heartache, this can hardly be called a blessing.

This is the reason why the blessings were said in the singular — each one should be blessed with the blessing that is appropriate for him.

A Segulah for One's Prayers to Be Accepted

"So shall you bless the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 6:23).

The holy *sefarim* explain that this exalted commandment of the priestly blessing serves to awaken Heavenly mercy to shower us with an abundance of kindness and salvation.

The *sefer Eretz HaChaim*, written by a student of the Baal Shem Tov, zy"a, writes that there is a kabbalah from the righteous Gaon, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostrapalia, zy"a, that the following times are most opportune for one's requests to be accepted: At the time of opening the Aron HaKodesh, when lifting up the Sefer Torah, and at the time of the Priestly Blessing. He concludes with good advice: "Therefore one who has a particular request should beseech Hashem at these times and his prayers will certainly be accepted."

Not a Duplication

"On the second day, Netanel son of Zuar offered, the leader of Yissachar" (Bamidbar 7:18).

In the section concerning the offerings of the leaders, we see that the holy Torah, which is particular with each letter, repeats the details of each leader's offering even though each tribe brought the exact same offering.

We can also point out that concerning the first offering it says, "His offering was: one silver bowl," whereas with the second it says, "He brought his offering."

Maran HaGaon Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul, zt"l, explains this distinction in his *sefer Or L'Tzion — Chochma U'mussar*. Through this repetition the Torah stresses that the offering of every leader was a result of his own desire, not because he saw the deeds of the others and wished to copy them. Therefore, it is understandable why the Torah details each one. This is also the reason why regarding the second leader it says, "He brought his offering," since he brought it on his own initiative.

This idea also contains a practical ethical message for us: A *talmid chacham* who issues halachic rulings must not rule based on the decision of a previous Rav who was faced with the same query.

Rather, he should delve into the depth of the issue himself, understand the situation well, and only then come to his own decision.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

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

All Are Equal in Hashem's Eyes

Someone once came to me to request a blessing. He told me he has three daughters of marriageable age, but he has no means of offering a suitable dowry for even one of them. In addition, they live in a rented apartment and do not possess a house of their own.

When I asked him if he would like financial assistance, he replied that he does not want to take charity. He had come just to ask for advice and for a blessing that Hashem should open the Gates of Heaven for him and he should merit Divine assistance.

I mentioned to him that he has a very wealthy neighbour who would certainly be able to help him. He replied — Hashem is the One who blessed this neighbour with success, and besides this he also invests great effort in his business. I do not wish to take charity. I trust in Hashem that He can provide for me...

When I heard these pure words of faith, I was amazed. He showed no jealousy of another person's blessings, even though he himself had very little. I told him I am certain that in the merit of his complete faith and benevolent spirit, Hashem will bless him lavishly so he will have the means to marry off his daughters. There is no need to worry, for Hashem has thousands of ways to meet a person needs.

The reason parshat Nasso is read around the time of Shavuot — either just before or just after — is because a person must know that the main merit of acquiring Torah is through being particular about his *middot* and correcting his interpersonal relationships. This is the only way for him to elevate himself in the ways of Hashem.

We must learn from Hashem's ways. He raises and elevates the tribes by counting them, affording honor to their families, and not belittling even one tribe, G-d forbid. We are all equal in his eyes. Hashem was concerned about showing respect to the family of Gershon even though their role was not as important as the family of Kehat. The Torah details them and there are verses written about them.

Hashem respects and honors the tribe of Levi for serving in the Beit Hamikdash, even though in actual fact it is an honor for them that they were chosen to work in the Mishkan. Nevertheless, Hashem appreciates it. All the more so we should realize the extent to which we must respect and elevate others and understand that each person is precious. This is the only way to merit receiving the Torah for "Love your fellow as yourself is a fundamental rule of the Torah."



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Who Are the Sons of Gershon?

"Take a census of the sons of Gershon, as well, according to their fathers' household, according to their families" (Bamidbar 4:22).

We must understand what the Torah is coming to teach us by saying, "as well, according to their fathers' household"? Would we consider not counting the family of Gershon? All the tribes were counted, so why should Gershon not be counted too?

Rabbi Reuven Elbaz shlita, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ohr Hachaim, offers a wonderful explanation. He says that the sons of Gershon are an allusion to those who have divorced themselves from Torah and mitzvot and been driven away from their Father's table.

The Torah commands us: Do not push them away and alienate them. On the contrary, "Take a census of the sons of Gershon" — elevate them and bring them closer to their Father in Heaven.

What is the reason behind this approach? To answer this, the verse adds, "as well, according to their fathers' household." Even if they themselves are not following the correct path, they are descendants of a holy lineage. Their fathers and forefathers were righteous. All of them are sons of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

The Ohr HaChaim yeshiva once held a convention in honor of Shavuot, which was attended by yeshiva students from all over the country. One of the yeshiva's *avreichim*, well versed in Torah and halacha, told over his personal story:

Despite being brought up in a place bereft of Torah observance, with no trace of religion having any effect on his upbringing, deep in his heart he always felt some inkling of faith. However, he was clueless as to how to put this into practice in his daily life. He served as an officer in the Israeli army during the Second Lebanese War. During this time, he experienced great miracles and clearly saw Hashem's Divine intervention personally watching over him.

...Then came the turning point. "I entered the gates of Ohr HaChaim and was greeted with an overwhelming sight: the *beit midrash* was full of hundreds of yeshiva students who were learning with great excitement. What intensity! The roar of Torah that rose up in the *beit midrash* was mightier than a hundred tanks engaged in battle.

"With Hashem's kindness I started learning in yeshiva and merited growing in Torah. I feel that every moment that I am in yeshiva is a greater miracle than all the miracles I experienced in the army. I feel that Hashem is holding my hand at every step of the way." If we stop and ask ourselves, how did these precious *avreichim* merit achieving such lofty levels? There is no doubt that it is in the merit of their fathers. Their ancestors were certainly great tzaddikim. Who knows, maybe they are descendants of the Rambam? Of Maran the Beit Yosef? Or of the holy Ari, zt"l?

Their holy ancestors are watching over them from Gan Eden and advocating for them. They are the ones who are lighting up their souls and kindling the spark of holiness that is hidden deep inside them.

The soul of a Jew is hewn from under the Heavenly Throne. His fathers and forefathers are looking down at him from above, in concern for his soul. Even if a person distances himself from them, we have a mitzva to raise him up, elevate him and bring him closer to the Rock from which he was hewn, to our Father in Heaven.



FROM THE TREASURY

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

Keeping Arrogance at a Distance

"Should a man's wife go astray and deal treacherously with him" (Bamidbar 5:12).

The parashah discusses a married woman who secludes herself with a man, which causes her husband to suspect her of sinning with him. He brings her to the Kohen to have her drink the bitter curse-bearing waters in order to ascertain whether she sinned. The Torah states, "And it shall be that, if she had been defiled and was unfaithful to her husband, the curse-bearing waters shall enter her to become bitter, and her belly will swell, and her thigh will rupture. The woman will be a curse among her people. But if the woman had not become defiled and she is clean, she shall be exempted and bear seed" (ibid. 5:27-28).

Chazal say, "Jealousy, lust and honor remove a man from the world" (*Avot* 4:21).

It is important to understand that Chazal do not only mean that these vices remove a person from the World to Come; they also remove him from this world. For example, an arrogant person will never admit his mistake and acknowledge his sin. Even when he will be in a situation where the noose is tied around his neck, he will continue to justify himself until he destroys himself.

It seems that this was the evil of the suspected woman that eventually destroyed her. Because of her arrogance she did not admit her bad deeds and was not willing to accept blame. Therefore, even though she knew she would inevitably die after drinking the bitter waters, she stood her ground, denying any wrongdoing, declaring brazenly, "I am clean of sin," because this is the way of an arrogant person. Arrogant people are willing to remove themselves from this world and from the World to Come, so long as they do not admit their mistake.

This parashah is read immediately following the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, so a person will realize that the vice of pride is so despicable it removes him from the world. Moreover, the Torah does not reside within an arrogant person. One should make sure to acquire the virtue of humility, which is the root of all virtues, and thereby merit that the Torah will reside within him and become his acquisition.

"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True Eshet Chayil
In memory of Rabbanit
Mazal Medlin Pinto, a"h



"She arises while it is yet night-time, and gives food to her household and a ration to her maidens"

A wonderful description of the righteousness of Rabbanit Marat Baila, a"h, wife of Rabbi Yehoshua Pollack Katz, zt"l, author of the *Sema*, is penned by her son in his foreword (*Drisha* 10). These are his enlightening words:

"Who can compose the words that describe the great splendor of the distinguished woman, the wealthy, modest, pious and upright mistress, my mother, Rabbanit Baila, daughter of the nobleman and philanthropist, Harav R' Yisrael Idlish, zt"l. She fasted every day the entire day and at night would not partake of animal products. She possessed the key to the *ezrat nashim* for she was the first to come to the *beit hakneset* and was the last to leave, leaving an hour or two after everyone else. After completing her prayers, she did not turn her attention to frivolous matters. Instead, she went from strength to strength and would study the Torah portion of the week with Rashi and other commentaries. My esteemed father's *talmidim*, who would eat at his table, were familiar with my mother joining in the give and take of the Torah discussions that took place round the table, and sometimes she would even suggest her own explanation that was sweeter than honey, 'The sweetness of Torah dripped from her lips'...

"...After occupying herself with Torah and prayer, she would concern herself with performing deeds of kindness — she would visit the sick and comfort mourners. There was no place in the town that her legs did not tread. If she still had time, she did not spend it on meaningless activity. Instead, she would occupy herself with twining *tzitzit* and threads used for sewing the Sefer Torah and sewing prayer shawls and *kitlach* (a long white garment). She presided over her house and guided her children and grandchildren and other young lads, doing kindness with them, offering them food and repairing their clothing and washing their hair in honor of the Shabbat. She possessed not a trace of pride. She was generous with charity, giving much more than what she owned, and all her ways, thoughts and deeds were in pursuit of mitzvot. Who can detail every facet of her good deeds, piety and abstention, and how

she forbade herself to partake even from what is permitted? The parchment is too short to describe all her ways of fame."

My Role Is to Provide

The following story is an illustration of the exalted power of a Jewish mother, the *eshet chayil*, who with her wisdom and insight provides sustenance for her home and establishes generations of blessed and upright children.

Rabbi Ezra Attia, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef, was born to his father, Chacham Yitzchak Attia, who taught young children in the Jewish community of Chalev, and to his mother Leah, daughter of Chacham Michael Shma'a, who was a descendant of the famous Chacham Rabbi Eliyahu Shma'a. When he was just three years old, the young Ezra started learning in Kotav, the Talmud Torah in Aram Tzova, where he was recognized for his exceptional talents and showed a promising future. He quickly surpassed the level of his entire class and even when he started learning with the *mekubal* Rabbi Eliyahu Avud, zt"l, it was clear he was on a higher level than all the other students.

The year 5666 was a decisive one for the Attia family. The head of the family, Rabbi Yitzchak, fell ill due to the stress of providing for his family. He was *niftar* on the 16th of Cheshvan, leaving behind a widow, and his young son Ezra, who struggled with the painful, excruciating reality of orphan hood. Since his older brothers and sisters were already married and he was the only one left at home, he felt responsible to provide for his mother.

Hard times befell them and hunger started leaving its signs in their home. Rabbi Ezra did not worry about himself and accepted the hunger pains with love. But when one Erev Shabbat there was not a penny in the house with which to prepare for Shabbat, he could not bear his mother's distress. He walked around the almost empty house, contemplating each object — maybe there is something he can sell?

"Why are you not going to the *beit midrash* to learn?" His mother did not understand.

"How can I go and leave you empty-handed?"

"Don't worry my child," his mother courageously replied, "your role is to learn Torah, and my role is to provide for the home. Hashem will help us!"

Close to Shabbat, Rabbi Ezra returned home. His Torah learning had restored his spirits and made him forget his troubles. His mother greeted him with a shining face. A surprise awaited her dear son — the Shabbos food was prepared and ready! Her eyes shining with joy, she explained: "I know well of your great desire to devote yourself to Torah study. I tearfully begged the Master of the World and poured out my heart that He shouldn't keep you back from the learning you love so dearly. Immediately after my prayers I found an old gold earring from when I was a bride that had rolled away and which I had forgotten about! I quickly went and sold it in honor of Shabbat... Their salvation was on the way.

At that time, the first yeshiva opened in Yerushalayim for the scholars of Aram Tzova. Rabbi Ezra Harari-Raful established the yeshiva, and Rabbi Refael Shlomo Laniado stood at its head. When Rabbi Ezra Harari-Raful heard that Rabbi Ezra Attia had become an apprentice to his uncle in order to study carpentry, he was dismayed. Will the world lose one of its greatest lights? Will the Jewish people G-d forbid lose one of its future teachers?

He wasted no time and approached Rabbi Ezra with an offer. Come and study in my yeshiva, and from now on I will take responsibility for your *parnassah*. With great thanks to Hashem, Rabbi Ezra started learning in the yeshiva Ohel Moed, where he quickly became known as one of the foremost Torah scholars.

This righteous Jewish mother's copious tears in concern for her son's Torah learning, afforded her the merit of her son serving as the Rosh Yeshiva of Porat Yosef for close to forty-five years, leaving thousands of talmidim who follow in his path and continue to spread his Torah until today.

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The practical lesson we should take from this is that just as Bnei Yisrael set up the Mishkan, so every person must establish his own personal Mishkan by investing and exerting himself in the toil of Torah. He should strive with sincerity, and this is the only way to merit

tranquillity and pleasure in the Next World, for only one who toils on Erev Shabbat will have what to eat on Shabbat. But one who does not toil in Torah in this world, will certainly not merit tranquillity and pleasure in the Next World, which is entirely good. Therefore, it is

our obligation to toil in the holy Torah with all our strength, with all our 248 limbs and 365 sinews, and through this we will merit that Hashem will be pleased with us, and we will merit all the blessings that are written in the Torah, Amen.