

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON PINCHAS - 5758

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Ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Pinchas

Note: This will be the last "RavFrand" prior to the summer break. The next class is planned for the week of Parshas Re'eh. Have a wonderful summer!

Standing Up Against the Prevailing Winds In this week's parsha, Tzelofchad's daughters came to Moshe Rabbeinu with a Din Torah. According to Jewish law a son inherits from his father to the exclusion of his sisters. Tzelofchad had died without any sons. He only had daughters. The daughters came and argued that they should not be left out. They did not want their father's inheritance in Eretz Yisroel to be lost. Moshe Rabbeinu took this query to G-d who in fact ruled that when there are no sons, the daughters inherit. The Medrash here comments: "There are times when an individual can take the reward of an entire generation. Noach stood up against his generation and took the reward that was destined for them; Avraham stood up to his generation and merited taking the reward of that whole generation; Lot stood up to the people of Sodom and took the reward that was destined for all of them." The Medrash concludes that the daughters of Tzelofchad too, took the reward of their entire generation. But what did they do? We know that Noach fought off his generation for 120 years; Avraham jumped into the fiery furnace for his ideals; Lot withstood the decadence of the surroundings of Sodom; but what did the daughters of Tzelofchad do? They went to probate court -- they wanted their inheritance. What is so noble about that? The Medrash explains -- consider the times. When everyone was yelling "Let's go back to Egypt, this is not going to work, this is no good..." Moshe was taken aback by the request of these women. Their interest in and desire for the Land was totally out of step with the "issues of the day". They were determined. They said "We don't care what everyone else is saying now, we know that the Land of Israel is where the future of the Jewish People lies." At a time when others are nullifying the Torah, that is the time to stand up and be counted. This Medrash is telling us an important thing. The activities and deeds of human beings cannot be judged in a vacuum but must be judged in the context of the times. Under normal times, going into court and asking for one's father's inheritance does not constitute a brave and courageous act. There are however times in history where the most innocuous and simple act can be an act of utmost bravery. Tzelofchad's daughters exhibited such an act. In the climate of widespread criticism of Eretz Yisroel and longing for the wonderful life of Egypt, they stood up against the tide, they swam against the prevailing current and marched to the beat of their own drummer. This was a courageous act. This is a tremendous lesson for us. Sometimes, even the most mundane of activities, given the atmosphere and climate, can be a most noble act -- to such an extent that the Medrash lists the daughters of Tzelofchad with Avraham Avinu!

Setting The Precedent For Future Generations The other insight that I would like to share is from the Mikdash Mordechai. The Medrash comments on the juxtaposition of the incident of Tzelofchad's daughters with the appointment of Yehoshua bin Nun (Joshua) to succeed Moshe. The Medrash says that after the daughters of Tzelofchad took care of their matter of inheritance, Moshe began to think about his own "Estate" and reasoned that if Tzelofchad's daughters inherited from their father, it followed that his own children should inherit his position of honor. He came, as it were, to G-d and said "Master of the Universe, I am getting old. We need a new leader. I want my sons to take over." The Medrash continues that G-d responded to Moshe that his children were not worthy. Yehoshua, on the other hand, never left Moshe's side. He was Moshe's trusted disciple and he would

B'S'D' become the next leader of Israel. This Medrash always bothered me. It seems to me that the mark of true greatness is the ability for a person to elevate himself above his own personal interests. With the average person, we can readily imagine interests of self, interests for children. But the true adam gadol -- we always imagine -- does not have this kind of agenda. If any other personality in our history had made such a request of G-d, it would perhaps be understandable. But Moshe Rabbeinu was the Rabbi of Klal Yisroel, the Servant of G-d, the most humble of all men, the accolades are endless... Should he not be able to perceive that his children were not worthy of this position? Did he not realize this? Is this just, Heaven forbid, a case of a father trying to intervene to make sure that his son gets the job? What does it mean "It is time for me to take care of my own family's needs?" The Mikdash Mordechai suggests that Moshe knew full well that his sons were not worthy for the job and that G-d would answer him with a flat no. But he wanted to make the point -- he wanted to ask and he wanted to be refused! He wanted the Jewish people to understand that land goes through inheritance, the business goes through inheritance, but Torah does not go through inheritance. This was like a test case brought to the Supreme Court to issue a ruling, setting a binding precedent. Moshe Rabbeinu knew he was going to hear a 'No' and he wanted to hear a 'No'. But he wanted the precedent to be set. He wanted it on the books, and he wanted that it should be known for all generations: Torah is not passed down through inheritance. There is no monopoly on Torah. The Ramba"m writes in the Laws of Teaching Torah [3:1] that there are three crowns -- the crown of Monarchy, the crown of Priesthood and the crown of Torah. The crowns of Monarchy and Priesthood can only be acquired through inheritance. But the crown of Torah is available to anyone who wants to come and take it. The son of the biggest ignoramus can go on to the greatest heights of Torah. One need not have yichus; only desire, patience, and perseverance.

Sources and Personalities Mikdash Mordechai -- Rav Mordechai Ilan; contemporary, Israel. Ramba"m -- Rav Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1204); Spain, Egypt. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net RavFrand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/Baltimore,MD21215>

yated-usa@mailserver.ttec.com Peninim Ahl HaTorah Parshas Pinchas by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

"Therefore say: I give unto him My covenant of peace." (25:12) Pinchas was rewarded with peace; Hashem would be amicable towards him as a symbol of His gratitude. Ibn Ezra interprets this peace as a protection from retaliation at the hands of Zimri's henchmen and friends. Regardless of the type of peace, we may question the form of middah k'neged middah, measure for measure, of this reward. The reward is to be commensurate with the mitzvah. Pinchas performed an act of zealotness; should his reward be a covenant of peace? Horav M.D. Solveitchik, Shlita, cites his grandfather, Rav Chaim Brisker, zl, who commented that Pinchas's act of kana'us was in reality an act of peace, since it was performed l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. His intentions were so noble, his virtue so pure, that he transformed what might have been perceived as an act of violence into an act of reconciliation. Rav Chaim made an analogy in order to demonstrate the difference between the genuine kana'i and the one who merely portrays himself as a kana'i. The situation can be compared to a case in which one purchases a cat to rid his home of a profusion of mice. Undoubtedly, the owner of the house and the cat both dislike mice and want them destroyed. There is a difference, however, between the home-owner and the cat: The owner would rather no mouse disturb his home at all, while the cat is pleased to encounter and kill as many mice as he can. The same idea may be applied to the kana'i. He who puts on a show of zealotness is nothing more than a charlatan who always seem to get involved when there is a scandal or conflict in a community. Indeed, such an individual, like the "cat," looks for situations in which he can demonstrate his zealotness. The real kana'i, on the other hand, would be quite satisfied if he had no battles to fight.

"And it shall be for him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he

took vengeance for his G-d and he atoned for the Bnei Yisrael." (25:13) The text of the pasuk seems inconsistent. Did Pinchas achieve vengeance only for "his G-d"? Should the Torah not have said that he took vengeance for the G-d of all of Yisrael, in the plural? Was Pinchas acting as a member of Klal Yisrael or not? The Ozrover Rebbe, zl, infers from here that one must serve Hashem as if he were the only person in the world and that his mitzvah is the only mitzvah that will be performed! This is in keeping with the dictum of Chazal in the Talmud Sanhedrin 37a who say that everyone should feel that "bishvili nivrah ha'olam," "because of me the world was created." Imagine the enormous responsibility of the individual who has a "global" view of his relationship with Hashem. His mitzvah observance takes the form of a new profile. He adopts a new image. He has an overwhelming responsibility to correct and observe, to rectify wrongs and strengthen mitzvah performance. Pinchas saw a public travesty, an open degradation of Jewish morals, a humiliation of Torah leadership. Surely someone had the responsibility to do something! When he saw that no one was responding, he grabbed the spear and took appropriate action. He did not say, "Since the great leaders are not taking action, why should I?" Pinchas rose to the occasion and took vengeance for his G-d. Every Jew is a member of the community of "Klal" Yisrael, but this status should not overshadow one's individuality. One must view himself as the only one in the world who can do what he is about to do. He is not to wait and rely upon others. True, there is strength in numbers. When a group is working together for the sake of Heaven, then by all means, he should participate. When he perceives no public response, be it due to apathy or indifference, he must not permit this collective inaction to influence his own response. After all, he is the only one and if he does not act, who will?

"And the daughters of Tzafchad drew near and they stood before Moshe. Our father died in the desert.. and he had no son Give us a possession among our father's brothers." (27:1,2,3,4,5) The Midrash comments that when Moshe learned that Tzafchad's daughters would inherit their father's property, he decided that the time had come for him to appoint an inheritor for his position. Consequently, he requested that Hashem designate his two sons to assume his position. We may question Moshe Rabbeinu's timing. Tzafchad's daughters were seeking material possessions, while Moshe's request was for spiritual continuity. What relationship is there between the two? Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl, posits that Tzafchad's daughters' request was not motivated by material needs. Rather, it was spiritual in nature. One's inheritance tends to bond a child to his parents. When one assumes ownership of the "home" of his parents, the atmosphere that permeated in his parents' home dominates. His parents are alive! Even the most alienated child will not denigrate his parents' memory. What was precious and dear to them, the values and orientation to which they adhered, their faith and conviction, will continue to inspire those descendants who remain connected to the past generation. Indeed, the children will strive to demonstrate their affinity with their parents' lifestyle; as long as they are using their inheritance. This was the women's claim. "Why should we be deprived of our family heritage? If we do not receive a portion, then the golden chain that ties us together will be severed. We might forget the beauty and sanctity that reigned in our home. We fear that if we are forced to move elsewhere, our father's memory will not be transmitted to his descendants. Moshe sensed that this claim was not mercenary. He saw that their concerns were not petty like those of so many others. Their concerns focused on the very heart of Jewish continuity and survival. Their concern for their families' future inspired Moshe to protect his own personal interests.

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Today's Learning Taharot 6:4-5 Kitzur 176:5-177:1 Eruvin 75 Yerushalmi Eruvin 5

The Temperament of a Kohen "Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the kohen . . ." (25:11) Rashi writes that after Pinchas killed Zimri in defense of G-d's honor, Bnei Yisrael teased him, "Look at the acts of the grandson of Yitro [on his mother's side] who fattened calves for idolatry." In

Pinchas' defense, Hashem emphasized that Pinchas was a descendant of Aharon. R' Moshe Shick z"l (19th century) elaborates: The gemara (Kiddushin 70b) states, "If you see a kohen who is arrogant, be assured that his lineage is genuine, as it is written (Hoshea 4:4), 'Your nation is argumentative like a kohen.'" Thus Hashem said, "Pinchas has demonstrated by his anger at Zimri that he is a genuine descendant of Aharon." (Maharam Shick Al Hatorah)

R' Shmuel Eidels z"l ("Maharsha") explains the above words of the prophet Hoshea as follows: Kohanim are argumentative because they think they are too important to give in. The prophet is rebuking the rest of the nation for acting like kohanim, i.e., being argumentative, even though they are not as important as the kohanim. (Chiddushei Aggadot: Kiddushin 70b)

Another gemara (Bava Batra 160b) makes a related statement: "Kohanim are bad-tempered." Maharal explains that this is so because the "fire of holiness" burns within them and causes them to "boil." (Chiddushei Aggadot, end of tractate Sanhedrin)

R' Yehonatan Eyebchutz disagrees. He writes: Kohanim are meant to be kind-hearted people, just as their ancestor Aharon was known as a "lover of peace and pursuer of peace." However, so great is the strength of the forces of impurity which have overtaken us that the very things which are potentially the most holy in fact have become the most profane. This goes so far that the gemara records instances of kohanim killing each other in the Temple courtyard while arguing over who would perform certain Temple services. (Ya'arot D'vash I, No. 1)

Or: Because kohanim are by nature kind-hearted, their kindness must be balanced by bad-temper, lest they carry kindness to absurd extremes. Chessed perverted leads to immorality and adultery [see Vayikra 20:17], precisely the sin of Zimri. Because Pinchas saved the day by exhibiting anger and opposing the perversion of chessed, he merited to become a kohen. (Me'or Enayim: Parashat Pinchas)

The gemara (Berachot 44a) records that the population of a certain city in Eretz Yisrael was once found to include 80 pairs of brothers who were kohanim married to 80 pairs of sisters who were daughters of kohanim. A similar search was conducted in Bavel and all that was found was one pair of brothers who were kohanim married to a pair of sisters, but those sisters were not daughters of kohanim.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l observes that this gemara highlights the unique qualities of Eretz Yisrael. Given the arrogant and argumentative nature of kohanim, those 160 marriages (in which both spouses were kohanim) were potential time bombs. Nevertheless, they apparently were successful, for if they had not been, the second sister of each pair would not have married her brother-in-law's brother. In contrast, outside of Eretz Yisrael, even one such marriage could not exist. (Ein Ayah p.197)

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Weekly@virtual.co.il] * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Pinchas <http://www.ohr.org>

Helping Daddy "By avenging My vengeance..." (25:11) He expressed the anger that was Mine to show -- Rashi. When you ask your three-year old to help you set the table for Shabbos and he manfully steers the kid dush cup onto the table, you get a tremendous feeling of nachas. You certainly don't gain anything from his help, except of course, enormous pleasure. You could have just as easily done what he did at the same time as you brought in the rest of the plates and the cutlery. But you gave him a job all of his own!

Rashi explains the meaning of the expression "he avenged My vengeance" to mean: He expressed the anger that was Mine to show. It was specifically because Pinchas did something that was really Hashem's to do that he merited such a great reward. The same idea applies to tzedaka, charity. Turnus Rufus once asked Rabbi Akiva: "If Hashem loves the poor why doesn't He feed them?" Rabbi Akiva answered that the poor give us

more than we give them -- for through giving them tzedaka, they save us from gehinom (purgatory). Rabbi Akiva was saying that, of course, it's Hashem's "job" to feed the poor, but He allows us to feed them instead. And by doing "Hashem's job for Him" we earn a far greater reward. We are like the little boy setting the table for Shabbos. Of course, Hashem can feed the poor Himself, but He gives us the job to do, even though we're really not "helping" Him at all.

Kindred Spirit "Moshe spoke to Hashem, saying: 'May Hashem, the G-d of all the spirits of all the flesh, appoint a man over the assembly.'" (27:15-16) "The G-d of all the spirits" is an unusual phrase. What was Moshe hinting to when he addressed Hashem thus? The best kind of leader is someone who understands intimately the individual natures of those he leads. No one can know us as G-d knows us. Thus Moshe prayed that whoever would replace him should resemble G-d's quality of knowing the spirits of all the flesh; that he should be able to intuit the needs, the virtues and the foibles of those that he was to lead.

Sources: Helping Daddy - Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, z"tl Kindred Spirit - Rashi Haftorah: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3 The three Haftorahs which are read in the Three Weeks (between 17th Tammuz and 9th Av) are called the "three of affliction." They detail the dire consequences that will befall Bnei Yisrael if they do not return to Hashem. Nevertheless, each of these three Haftorahs ends on a note of optimism, expressing the confidence that Hashem never forgets His people even in the deepest and darkest exile. Bad Company "Thus says Hashem: 'I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown.' Israel is sacred to Hashem, the first of His grain; all who devour him shall bear his guilt, evil shall come upon them -- the word of Hashem." (2:2-3) Once there was a sensitive lad who spent all his days in study and refinement of his character. While still at a tender age he was captured by bandits and forced to live among them. At first he was repulsed by their coarseness and clung to his original demeanor. However, as the weeks lengthened into years and no sign of rescue came, slowly but surely he began to degenerate to the level of his captors and eventually he became indistinguishable from them. When the Jewish People are finally redeemed from exile the nations that have oppressed them will be held to account, not just for their own misdeeds against Israel, but also for Israel's transgressions, for had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert. That is the meaning of these verses: I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown. I remember, says Hashem, how you were when you followed after Me through the wilderness, before you were exiled among the nations. At your root you are holy, and if you have sinned it is because of the atmosphere you have imbibed during the long night of exile. (Kochav m'Yaakov in Mayana shel Torah)

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Weekly-halacha@torah.org WEEKLY-HALACHA SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS PINCHAS By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav. And on the Shabbos day... (28:9)

EYEGASSES THAT BREAK ON SHABBOS

Before we see if and how broken eyeglasses can be fixed on Shabbos, we will list the halachic violations that may be incurred when doing so. Our discussion covers the two most common mishaps - a temple (earpiece) breaking off from a frame, and a lens popping out of a frame. There are three areas of concern: It is Biblically forbidden to firmly attach two objects on Shabbos and Yom Tov, either because of boneh or tikun mana, a form of makeh b'patish(1). It makes no difference whether the objects are fitted into

each other tightly or screwed into each other tightly. [Even though a minority view holds that the Biblical prohibition applies only when the items are forced together but not when they are merely screwed into each other(2), in practice we should follow the stringent view(3).] Accordingly, it is strictly forbidden to screw a temple onto a frame on Shabbos and on Yom Tov(4). Even inserting the screw into the hinge without tightening it is forbidden, since the normal tendency is to tighten the screw and one can easily forget himself and inadvertently tighten it(5). This Rabbinical prohibition is called shema yitka, lit., "liable to be firmly attached." The decree of shema yitka, applies only on Shabbos, not on Yom Tov, since the Rabbis felt it would cause undue hardships and interfere with Simchas Yom Tov(6). As an added precaution, the Rabbis forbade handling the detached objects and rendered them severe muktzeh. The case which the Shulchan Aruch(7) discusses involves a kirah, a four-legged stove, whose leg (or legs) became detached. The halachah is that both the base and the detached legs may not be moved, since one may easily forget and reattach the legs to the stove, thus violating a Biblical prohibition. Since this Rabbinical prohibition originated with the case of a stove, it became known as gzeiras kirah, "the decree concerning the stove." In the following cases gzeiras kirah does not apply: If the leg is broken or missing and can no longer be re-attached. In such a case the stove is not muktzeh, since we no longer fear that the detached parts will be re-attached(8). If the leg was detached before Shabbos and the stove was being used even though it was missing a leg(9). On Yom Tov, gzeiras kirah does not apply(10). As mentioned above, the Shulchan Aruch uses a stove as his case in point(11). The Rama adds that the same rules apply to a bench whose legs became detached. Most later-day poskim(12) agree that all similar objects are included in this Rabbinical prohibition(13). It follows, therefore, that the halachos concerning a temple which becomes detached from its frame will be similar to the cases of the stove and the bench mentioned above.

Based on these principles, we can now answer the following questions: Q: Can the temple be screwed back onto the frame? A: Strictly forbidden, according to all views. Q: Can the screw be inserted into the hinge without tightening it? A: No. The prohibition of shema yitka applies. On Yom Tov, however, it is permitted. Q: May one wear the glasses while only one temple is attached? A: On Yom Tov, yes. On Shabbos, however, it depends: If the detached temple or screw is lost, it is permitted to wear the frames minus the temple, since gzeiras kirah does not apply. If the detached temple and screw are accessible, the frames become muktzeh. If, however, it is acceptable to be seen in glasses that have a missing temple, the glasses may be worn(14). If it would be embarrassing to be seen in such glasses, gzeiras kirah applies and the frames are muktzeh(15). If the temple broke off before Shabbos and the glasses were already worn in their broken state, all poskim agree that it is permitted to wear them on Shabbos, regardless of whether the other temple or screw is missing or not(16).

Q: Can the temple be attached to the frames using a wire or a pin? A: If the original screw, or a replacement, is available, then the frames, temple, and screw are severe muktzeh, based on gzeiras kirah. Consequently, they may not be moved at all on Shabbos. If the screw is lost and no replacement is available, then gzeiras kirah does not apply. It would be permitted to attach the temple to the frames using a pin or a wire, provided that it will be removed within 24 hours. The pin or wire may not be tightened or firmly wound around the frame. On Yom Tov, since shema yitka and gzeiras kirah do not apply, it would be permitted to attach the temple using a pin or wire [as stated above], regardless of whether or not the screw is lost.

Q: There are frames (usually plastic ones) that hold the lens in place merely by exerting pressure on the lens; there is no screw involved. What can be done if a lens pops out of such frames? A: If the lens pops out because the pressure on it has slackened (e.g., the frame expanded slightly due to wear and tear), then it may be reinserted(17). If, however, the lens is knocked out forcibly and would have to be forced back in, then the poskim differ in their opinions. Some are stringent and forbid re-inserting it on the grounds of tikun keli(18), while others do not consider this an instance of tikun keli since the lens can be re-inserted with minimal pressure(19).

Q: What can be done if the frames break in half? A: Nothing. Since they can no longer be worn, the frames are a severe muktzeh and may not be moved for any reason.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Mishnah Berurah 308:37. 2 Taz O.C. 313:7. See Minchas Yitzchak 4:122-21. 3 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 313:32, based on the view of the Magen Avraham. [See also Binyan Shabbos (Boneh, 2nd edition) who quotes Harav E. Auerbach's view that the lenient opinion was referring to objects which - although screwed into each other - can still be adjusted or turned, but not to tightly connected objects like a temple attached to frames.] 4 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 519:12. 5 Mishnah Berurah 313:45 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 32. 6 Mishnah Berurah 519:9; Hilchos ha-Moadim 13, note 4; Binyan Shabbos, pg. 58. 7 O.C. 308:16. See also 313:8. 8 Mishnah Berurah 308:69. 9 Rama 308:16. 10 Since gezeiras kirah only applies if shema yitka applies as well. 11 For this reason, this Rabbinical prohibition is known as gezeiras kirah, the decree of the stove. 12 Ketzos ha-Shulchan 109:10; Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Shalmei Yehudah, pg. 86); Knei Bosem 1:19. 13 A minority view maintains that gezeiras kirah applies only to the two cases specifically mentioned in the original sources: a stove and a bench. This is the opinion of Imrei Yosher 1:102, Chelek Levi O.C. 101, and Beis Yisrael, 12, quoted in Tzitz Eliezer 9:28-9. 14 Harav M. Feinstein (Sefer Titulei Shabbos, pg. 148); Az Nidberu 8:33. 15 Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, quoted in Shalmei Yehudah, pg. 85-86. 16 Rama O.C. 308:16. 17 Harav S. Y. Elyashiv (Shalmei Yeudah, pg. 88); Az Nidberu 8:33; B'tzeil ha-Chachmah 6:123. 18 Harav S. Y. Elyashiv, ibid; Shraga ha-Meir 3:43; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 15:79; Binyan Shabbos, pg. 149. According to this opinion, the frames and the lenses would now be muktzeh, due to gezeiras kirah. 19 Tzitz Eliezer 9:28-9; Az Nidberu 8:33.

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Machon_meir@virtual.co.il Machon Meir Parshat Pinchas

Leadership by the Power of Spirit Rabbi Dov Bigon

"Hashem said to Moshe, take for yourself Yehoshua bin Nun, a man who has spirit within him, and place your hand upon him". Rashi explains, "A man who has spirit within him - He is able to oppose the spirit of each individual". There are leaders who rule by the power of their might, tyrants who rose to power through the power of deceit and rule through force. They cruelly silence their opponents by force. They cannot bear their opponents' opinions and do not allow them to voice those opinions. These are people who have "force within them" and they do not have "spirit within them". In contrast, there are leaders such as Yehoshua bin Nun, "a man who has spirit within him". He, with his spiritual, moral power, rules the nation. He can oppose the spirit of everyone because he has a great and inclusive spirit that also contains within it the spirit of each of the individuals in the nation. He convinces those who oppose him with his spirit and not by force.

It is well known that there have always been and will always be a variety of opinions in Am Yisrael, for "their opinions are not similar to one another just as their faces differ from one another. Such a nation needs a leader with a great spirit who can stand up against each and every member of the nation with his opinions, uniting them despite the differing spirits. As of now, we are living in the period of the ingathering of the exiles and crystallizing the nation anew in Eretz Yisrael after two thousand years of exile. The many opinions and the varying spirits found in the nation characterize our nation. Our nation is therefore worthy of a leader who is able to rule by power of his spirit, dealing with the spirit of each and every one, leading the nation upwards on the way towards complete redemption. In anticipation of redemption, Dov Bigon. ... Machon Meir 2 Hameiri Avenue Kiryat Moshe Jerusalem tel. 02-6511906

Parsha-insights@torah.org Parsha-Insights: Pinchas

This week we read the parsha of Pinchas. Bil'am, upon seeing that he was unable to harm Bnei Yisroel (the Children of Israel) through cursing, suggested a different option to Moav. Bil'am knew that Hashem despises immorality -- it causes Him to distance Himself from Bnei Yisroel. He told Moav to send their daughters to Bnei Yisroel to try to seduce them. The nation of Midian joined Moav and sent their own daughters to also try to seduce Bnei Yisroel. The successful implementation of this advice caused a

heavenly plague which left twenty four thousand of Bnei Yisroel dead. "Pinchas ben Elazar...haishiv es chamasi... v'lo chilisi es Bnei Yisroel (Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the Kohen turned away My anger... and I didn't destroy Bnei Yisroel) [25:11]." Pinchas had acted courageously and zealously to stop the immorality that was going on around him. This caused the cessation of the plague. Hashem therefore rewarded him with Kehunah -- priesthood. "And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: Harass the Midianites and kill them [25:17]", to avenge that which they did to you. Why was Moshe commanded to avenge Midian and not to avenge Moav? Rashi [31:2] explains that the Moavites had a legitimate fear -- Bnei Yisroel would be traveling right through their land. Midian, however, involved themselves in a battle that wasn't theirs. The Bnei Yisroel wouldn't have been traveling through their land and they had nothing to fear. Moshe was, therefore, commanded to battle against them. "Vayishlach o'som Moshe... v'es Pinchas ben Elazar (And Moshe sent them... and Pinchas, the son of Elazar) [31:6]", to wage battle against Midian. The Tosafos ask: 'If Hashem commanded Moshe to avenge, how could Moshe shun this responsibility and send Pinchas?' He offers an amazing explanation: 'Since Moshe had spent many years in Midian when he had fled from Paroah, he felt it was improper for him to personally wage a war against a nation that had helped him. As the expression goes: Don't throw earth into a well that you drank from.' The Ohr Yabel pursues this point further. Hashem told Moshe to avenge the Midianites! How could Moshe disobey Hashem's command, even if Midian had helped him?! He explains that Moshe understood that, since he had grown up in Midian and had benefited while there, Hashem's command to avenge Midian couldn't have been for him personally to do it. Moshe had been commanded on Sinai: "V'ha'lachta bid'ra'chav", to follow in the ways of Hashem! His personally avenging Midian would be acting contrary to the ways of Hashem! Don't throw earth into a well that you drank from... It was clear to Moshe that the way to fulfill the command of Hashem was to have Midian avenged through someone else. Through someone who didn't owe them a debt of gratitude. He sent Pinchas. Pinchas who had begun the mitzvah of defeating Midian was summoned to complete that task. This midah (attribute) of 'hakaras ha'tov' -- recognizing and appreciating what others have done for you and giving back in return -- is a midah of Hashem. Everything in this world is accounted for. Sometimes we get a glimpse of that accounting and other times we blindly miss or ignore it. But the account is always settled...

Rav Paysach Krohn (In the Footsteps of the Maggid) tells of Rav Yosef Reichner and his wife, Faigela, who lived with their eleven children in Pressburg, Hungary in the mid-1800's. Eight of the children were boys and were privileged to have been taught by an exceptional Rebbe, Rabbi Lazer HaKohen Katz, known as the tzadik of Pressburg. His impact on the boys was extraordinary and they endeavored to emulate him and his ways. Years went by and Rav Lazer became weak and frail. Unable to continue teaching, he spent his days alone in his apartment, subsisting on a meager stipend given to him by a chessed (charitable) organization. Mrs. Reichner, however, didn't forget the wonderful impact that Rav Lazer had on her sons. Every day she'd send a package of food for lunch to Rav Lazer's small apartment on a street known as Z'idvoska Ulitza (Jewish Street). This package also contained enough for supper. Additionally, before every Yom Tov (holiday) she would place some money in the package allowing Rav Lazer to purchase something extra for the holiday. This went on for more than twenty years! Shortly after Pressburg became part of Czechoslovakia in 1925, Rav Lazer passed away. A few years later, Rav Yosef Reichner and his wife, Faigela, also passed away. A generation later, on the night after Yom Kippur, 1944, the Nazis were furiously raiding every Jewish house in Pressburg, searching for Jews to deport to the concentration camps. All Jews that were found, regardless of the passports they carried, were dragged off to meet their bitter fate. Two Nazis burst into the home of Ashi Reichner, one of Mrs. Faigela Reichner's eight sons. As they ordered him and his wife outside, Ashi turned to them. "You should be ashamed of yourselves disturbing elderly people in their homes", he said with dignity. "What good can an old man like me be in a labor camp?!" "Out, both of you", barked the

Nazi. Outside, the Nazis suddenly disappeared. Ashi and his wife, Miriam, could not figure out where they had gone but they knew that they must take advantage of this unexpected chance for freedom. He said that Jews were being hidden in a bunker somewhere on the left side of the city. She argued that there was a safer place on the right side of the city. Terrified, they argued in which direction they should run. Ashi, in keeping with the Talmudic teaching that a woman is imbued with an extra sense of insight, listened to his wife. They ran as fast as they could to the right side of the city to the building where she had heard that the Jews had found shelter. They came to Z'idvoska Ulitza, ran up to the second floor of the building and knocked violently on the door. A gentile woman, known as Aunt Anna, recognized them as Jews and ushered them in. This noble woman risked her life daily for eight months until the Russians came and liberated Czechoslovakia. She would purchase enough food from the grocer to sustain all of the people she was hiding in the apartment. She'd then cover the food with either wool or coal so as not to arouse the suspicion of the Nazis she'd pass in the street. The Reichners were introduced to the other twelve people hiding in two rooms behind a large closet. Remarkably, they found amongst them other Reichner family members: their daughter, son-in-law and grandchild who had also secretly made their way there. How did the Reichners merit to have so many family members saved in this one apartment? This apartment, many years before, had belonged to Rav Lazer... The same apartment to which Mrs. Reichner had sent so many care packages to keep the tzadik of Pressburg alive was now sheltering her children, grandchildren and great-grandchild. Everything in this world is accounted for. Sometimes we get a glimpse of that accounting and other times we blindly miss or ignore it. But the account is always settled...

Good Shabbos, Yisroel Ciner Parsha-Insights, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Yisroel Ciner and Project Genesis, Inc. Rabbi Yisroel Ciner is a Rebbe [teacher] at Neveh Zion, <http://www.neveh.org/> Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215

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PINCHAS - The Chain of Tradition by Rabbi Emanuel Levy, Palmers Green Synagogue This week's Sidra describes the moving scene wherein Moses, at the command of G-d appoints Joshua as his successor. "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lay your hand upon him" (Bemidbar 27:18). Rabbi Isaac Lev Soloveitchik, the 18th century Rabbi of Kovno, explains the fundamental difference between the leadership of Moses and Joshua. Moses had the extraordinary ability to approach the Almighty directly and communicate with Him "face to face" at any time, a phenomenon which was denied all subsequent leaders.

When the daughters of Zelophchad in our Sidra approached Moses with the request that they themselves should inherit a share in the land of Israel since their father left no male heir, the Torah tells us "And Moses brought their case before the Almighty" (23:5). This implies that Moses need only to ask, and G-d would answer him directly. Moses' ability to "converse" with G-d is highlighted by Rashi in the episode of Pesach Sheni, when some individuals who were unable to offer up their pascal lamb on the 14th Nisan, asked to have a second opportunity. Moses replied: "Stand still and I will hear what the G-d will command concerning you" - like a pupil who is certain he will gain information from his teacher at any time. Happy is a human being who may so confidently rely that at any time he may speak with the Divine Presence. (Rashi Bemidbar 9:7). Subsequent leaders had to address their questions to the breastplate worn by the High Priest. Various letters on the stones of the breastplate would light up which formed words and the required answer. This latter form of Divine communication was therefore indirect and on a lower level than a direct response from the Almighty himself. This explains why in our Sidra, Joshua was made to stand "before Eleazar the Priest who shall ask counsel for him after the judgement of the Urim before G-d" (27:1). Only through the letters which lit up on the breastplate worn by Eleazar could Joshua receive Divine prophecy.

Rabbi Ya'akov Kaminetsky, z'l, of America, in his work Emet L'Yaakov

develops this idea a stage further. In this context he quotes the Talmud (Shabbat 112b) "If the earlier generations were like children of angels, we are human beings, and if the earlier generations were like human beings, we are like asses." The Talmud here lays down the principle that with the gradual passage of time since the moment of G-d's Revelation on Mount Sinai, the spiritual standing of our people has gradually declined. This, he explains, is an inevitable process, and nothing can be done to halt it. The Ethics of the Fathers begins with the words "Moses received the Torah from Mount Sinai and handed it over to Joshua". When Moses died, there died with him 'the era of receiving the Torah from Sinai', and the new order of Joshua's transmission began. But Joshua could not transmit as much as Moses. The Talmud tells us that when Moses died, Joshua immediately forgot 300 laws and 700 doubts arose in his mind (Terumah 16a). This gradual decrease in standards explains why one generation of scholars could never argue with those that preceded it. The Amoraim, 3rd to 6th century CE scholars from Babylon and Palestine, could never question the rulings of the Tannaim, of the first two centuries CE.

Reverting to our Sidra, we can understand more fully the significance of G-d's command to Moses, "And you shall place some of your glory on him (Joshua)". Rashi comments "The face of Moses was like the face of the sun, but that of Joshua was only like that of the moon" (9:29). In the Midrash, the elders of the people, being a stage lower than Joshua, are actually compared to the stars. The German scholar Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz (1730-1805) in the introduction to his work Hafla'ah explains the following Mishnah in Avot (2:1) in homiletic terms "Know that which is above you - an eye which sees, an ear which listens and all your deeds are written in a book". On its simple level, the Mishnah refers to G-d's omnipotence - He looks down upon mankind from above; but on a deeper level "that which is above you" refers to the generations who preceded us. First came "the seeing eye" referring to the generations of the prophets who were known as 'seers'. With the cessation of prophecy came the Bat Kol or Heavenly Voice. The ability of mankind to hear it was known as "the ear which listens". Finally, in the later generations, when the totality of the Oral Law was in danger of being forgotten altogether, it was committed to writing in the form of the Mishnah and Talmud. This is shown by the words "And all your deeds are written in a book". This Mishnah thus depicts the gradual weakening in the power of transmission of the Jewish heritage. From the Talmud in Yoma (9b-10a) it is clear that with the destruction of the First Temple, the spirit of prophecy ceased from Israel, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi were the last prophets. Nevertheless, according to tradition the works of certain great scholars, such as Rashi's commentary on the Torah and Rabbi Josef Karo's Shulchan Aruch were considered as being Divinely Inspired. Prophecy is destined to return to the Jewish people in the Messianic era. This belief is based upon the verse in Isaiah 59:21 which we actually recite every morning: "My spirit which is upon you and my words that I have placed in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth...from now and to eternity." According to Targum Jonarhan, the spirit referred to is that of prophecy. Although prophecy per se had ceased, the Torah with its inherent prophetic wisdom contained therein has been handed down the generations until our own time. Just as Moses handed over the Torah to Joshua, so must we on an individual scale hand over our traditions to our own children. They in turn will be the teachers of the next generation.

MY SEAT by Rabbi Daniel Roselaar - Belmont Synagogue, Middlesex In many modern synagogues worshippers are not allocated specific seats within the shul. However, according to the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch, it is proper that a person should always pray in the same place, instead of one day here and one day there. This is based on a verse in the Torah which states that Abraham went to stand and pray in a specific place (Bereshit 19:27). According to some classical halachists, this rule does not apply to the situation within a particular synagogue, though most authorities, including the Shulchan Aruch disagree. Basing their dissent on a passage in the Palestinian Talmud, they are of the opinion that one should not only always pray in the same synagogue, but that a person should also have a fixed seat within that synagogue. Additionally, several authorities rule

that someone who prays at home should also have a fixed place in the house where he can be certain of praying uninterrupted. It should also be noted that the Magen Avraham states that any spot within a radius of four amot (approx 3 metres) of a person's regular place for prayer is considered sufficiently close for this purpose. Despite the fact that people are encouraged to pray in a particular seat and in a particular shul, where necessary it is permissible to deviate from this practice. Consequently one may worship in another shul on the occasion of a simchah, or other such special occasion. Likewise, a person may occupy another seat if he finds that someone is already sitting in his regular place. Interestingly, the Pri Megadim rules that it is permissible to daven in one (well heated) shul in the winter and a different shul in the summer. This may be the basis for the custom in many communities to hold services in the main synagogue on Shabbat, but in a small Bet Midrash on weekdays. Whilst one recent halachist has suggested that this rule only applies for the Amidah prayer, most of the Codes imply that it applies to the entire service.
