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date: Jul 1, 2021, 9:10 PM

subject: **Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur**
Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Pinchos 5781

1 – Topic – A lesson from the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu - Yehoshua

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Pinchos, as we are in the first Shabbos of the three weeks, the Bein Hamitzarim, the time we think about Eretz Yisrael and Kavod Shamayim. Let me begin with a Vort on the Parsha and a Vort for this time of the year the Three Weeks.

In this week's Parsha we have of course Moshe Rabbeinu kind of asking or requesting from the Ribbono Shel Olam to appoint someone to succeed him. Although he wanted his children to succeed him, Yehoshua his main Talmid was the one who did.

Chazal tell us as is found in Maseches Bava Basra 75a (7 lines from the bottom) (פני משה כפני חמה פני יהושע כפני לבנה). Moshe Rabbeinu was as bright as the sun and Yehoshua was as bright as the moon. In other words, the Ruchniasdika glow of Moshe Rabbeinu was as powerful as the sun and in comparison Yehoshua was like the moon. When Klal Yisrael saw that, Yidden said, (אוי לה לאותה בושא אוי לה לאותה כלימה). Woe to the Busha and Klima. Poshut Pshat that we have such a Yerida, such a lowering of the generations that Yehoshua is only (כפני לבנה).

I would like to share with you a thought that Rav Leib the son of the Chofetz Chaim said in the name of his father. I was reminded of it this week. I had seen it I believe in Neturai Torah but I am not certain. Rav Leib asked his father, what are they saying (אוי לה לאותה בושא) as if they are deriding Yehoshua, (אוי לה לאותה בושא אוי לה לאותה כלימה) we have a leader like Yehoshua. Sof Sof, the fact is that Yehoshua was the one of the generation, how are they deriding him by talking about (אוי לה לאותה בושא אוי לה לאותה כלימה)? To that the Chofetz Chaim expressed the following thought on this Maimar Chazal beginning with a Mashul.

The Chofetz Chaim told the story of a man that was a wealthy diamond dealer. He was an Ashir. It came a point that he had to travel to Africa to go to the place where the diamonds are mined in order to be able to help his business along. He was looking for someone to accompany him on this difficult trip as there was no first class in the time of those generations. One Yid who was one of the Aniyim in town agreed to accompany him on his trip. You understand already that they traveled together and this Ani was Meshameish, he served the wealthy man whatever was needed. During the trip he learned about diamonds. He learned how to tell the difference between a good diamond and a not good diamond, how to price diamonds, how to purchase diamonds and be able to sell them at a profit. By the time he came back six weeks later, he had training in dealing with diamonds. When he came back, he started his own diamond business and he also was successful and based on what he had learned he in turn became a wealthy person.

The people in town looked at him with great jealousy. He said why are you jealous of me, the rich man is a rich man. They said no. He is an Ashir. Every town has rich people and poor people. When we looked at him we didn't feel any jealousy. When we look at you we say look, you are one of us, we are a bunch of Aniyim in town. But what happened? He needed someone to accompany him. I could have done it too, I could have gone along with him. I didn't go along with him. You went along with him and for those 6 weeks of bother, of Tircha, you ended up a wealthy man. We say to ourselves why weren't we like you? Why didn't we take the opportunity when we had the opportunity?

Zagt the Chofetz Chaim, Moshe Rabbeinu was Moshe Rabbeinu, his face was like the sun and nobody was jealous because they understood that Lo Kam K'moshe. But then they looked at Yehoshua and they said Yehoshua was a Talmid, just he was the Talmid who as is found in Shemos 33:11 (לא ימיש מחרוץ האהל) he was the constant Talmid, all the time a Talmid. I could have done that too. Why didn't I do that?

(אוי לה לאותה בושא). They looked at Yehoshua and they saw that he was a moon. What was Yehoshua? He was someone who shined back what he had from Moshe Rabbeinu. People said (אוי לה לאותה בושא). They were not deriding Yehoshua. They were talking about their own Busha, that they deserved to be ashamed. They deserved to be embarrassed. (אוי לה לאותה בושא). We could have done it. We could have been the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu.

The lesson being that a person has to seize the opportunities when he could connect to someone who helps lift him up, connect to that person. Connect to him. If you didn't do it to your Rebbi until now, find a Rebbi now, find a Rav now, find someone to connect to. It will lift you up, it will bring you higher, it will elevate you. That is the lesson of the Chofetz Chaim (אוי לה לאותה בושא). Not deriding Yehoshua. But looking at Yehoshua who was (כפני לבנה). His entire greatness came because of his association with his Rebbi, with Moshe Rabbeinu. Oi, we should have done the same. This is a thought on Parshas Pinchos. A lesson from the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu.

I will add what has been noted by many. Yehoshua was a great Talmid. We find two times in Kol Hatorah Kulo that Moshe Rabbeinu speaks directly to Yehoshua. Both times he is criticizing him. In Parshas Behaloscha when Yehoshua says to Moshe Rabbeinu as is found in 11:28 (אֲדֹנָי מִשְׁפָּה, קְלָאָם) silence (אֶלְדָּד וּמִיָּדָד). Moshe Rabbeinu responds in 1:29 (וּמִי יִתֵּן קֶל-עַם יִרְרָן,) (נְבִיאִים). Why are you saying that? Yehoshua you are wrong.

We find another place in Parshas Ki Sisa when Yehoshua says as is found in 32:17 (קוֹל מִלְחָמָה, בַּמִּדְבָּר). Moshe Rabbeinu says you are wrong and he explains to him what it is that he is hearing. Rashi says he tells him that a Manhig has to understand what he is hearing when he hears the people. The lesson of the Torah and the two times that Moshe Rabbeinu talks to Yehoshua and he is critical of him, is that what is a Talmid, a Talmid is someone who can take the criticism and learn from it and not look at it in a negative way. That is the Yehoshua that we should all aspire to be.

2 – Topic – A Thought about the Three Weeks

As you know, the Vilna Gaon tried very much to go to visit Eretz Yisrael. He put effort into it. He wrote a good bye letter to his wife, a fascinating letter. The Igeres HaGR”A is really a letter from which we can learn much. He writes to his wife that I will come back. In an amusing line he writes, of course I am coming back don’t you see I left my Seforim? He left his children also. He is coming back. He wanted to be in Eretz Yisrael.

We know that many Rishonim hold that there is a Mitzvah of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael. Is there any Mitzvah to go to Eretz Yisrael temporarily and come back? This is a Machlokes between the Maharit and his Talmid the Keneses Hagedola of the earliest Achronim.

The Maharit in a Teshuva Cheilek Bais Teshuva Chaf Ches says that there is no Mitzvah to just visit, the Mitzvah is to live there. The Keneses Hagedola in Even Ezer Siman Ayin Hei S’if Kotton Chaf Zayin quotes him and he brings the words of his Rebbe and disagrees. He says even to visit Eretz Yisrael and be there for a little while is a Mitzvah. After all, the Gemara says in Maseches Kesubos 111a (12 lines from the bottom) (כל המהלך ארבע אמות) (בארץ ישראל מובטח לו שהוא בן העולם הבא). It must be some sort of a Mitzvah if there is some Zechus in Olam Habo to walk there.

The Rambam brings it L’halacha in the 5th Perek of Hilchos Melachim (Sefer Shoftim) in 5:11 (אפילו הלך בה ארבע אמות זוכה לחיי העולם הבא). So obviously there is some sort of a Mitzvah.

The Maharit disagrees. The Maharit brings a Raya from Shulchan Aruch from the Teshuvos HaRosh which is in the Shulchan Aruch. In Yore Dai’a 228:36 (מי שנדר לעלות לארץ ישראל). Someone who took an oath to go to Eretz Yisrael (יש לו התרה), it is possible to be Matir Neder such a Neder.

We have a rule that Nidrei Mitzvah, if something is a Mitzvah we are not Matir Neder. It must be that just to go to Eretz Yisrael without living there is not a Mitzvah, it is a Zechus but it is not a Mitzvah. This is the dispute between the Maharit who holds that it is not a Mitzvah and the Keneses Hagedola who holds that even going temporarily is also a Mitzvah.

Now if it is not a Mitzvah it needs an explanation. Why did the GR”A go through such pain and such difficulty and such Bitul Zman to try to visit Eretz Yisrael, he was not successful. I thought well let’s see what does the GR”A says in Yore Dai’a. Guess what? In Yore Dai’a 228:36 where it says that if someone swears to go to Eretz Yisrael he could be Matir Neder, the GR”A there in his Haga, in his notes on Shulchan Aruch, he explains that Hataras Nedarim works for someone who is Oleh L’eretz Yisrael by sending us to another place in Yore Dai’a where we find in S’if 42 that certain Nidrei Mitzvah do have an Hataras. So the GR”A is saying it is a Mitzvah. Ai the Maharit’s proof? The Maharit says why can you be Matir Neder? The GR”A in a few words says look in S’if 42. There are exceptions.

Al Kol Panim, there is a difference of opinion on the matter. What is interesting is that the Mishna Brura in Siman 248 in Hilchos Shabbos S’if Kotton 28 brings the two opinions, he actually brings the two opinions if there is a Mitzvah to go up to Eretz Yisrael if you are going up only for a visit, only temporarily. The point that I want to make is if you are going to Eretz Yisrael temporarily and you hold that it is not a Mitzvah, how do we understand the tremendous desire and Teshuka of Gedolim to go to Eretz Yisrael?

I want to share with you something that we in Chutz L’aretz have to understand. Chibas Eretz Yisrael, a love for Eretz Yisrael is not just a nice thing, it is not just loving good things. Ohavei Hashem Si’nu Ra, we have love for the Ribbono Shel Olam and we have hatred for bad. This is something good. It is much more than that. Chibas Eretz Yisrael is a lifeline of Yidden in Galus. It is a lifeline. It keeps Yidden from assimilating, it keeps Yidden from blending in, it keeps Yidden having protection from Shamayim.

The Chasam Sofer in Devarim Reish Perek Chaf Vav says B’chol Makom She’holchu Bnei Yisrael L’galus U’teshukasam L’eretz Yisrael, in whatever country Jews were in Galus and they had a Teshuka, a desire, Yaguru Bishalom, they lived in peace in Chutz L’aretz. You hear this? If you have

Chibas Eretz Yisrael that is a Zechus to live B’shalom, the Goyim will leave us alone.

He says that is what happened in Mitzrayim, as long as the Shevatim said “Lagur” B’aretz Banu, we are strangers in this land, so Pharaoh didn’t start up with them. Only as is found in Shemos 1:6 (וְנִמְתּוּ יוֹסֵף וְכָל-אֶחָיו, וְכָל הַדּוֹר הַהוּא) and then (וַיָּקָם מִלֶּךְ-הָאֱדוֹמִי). Only later.

Zagt the Chasam Sofer this is true in every station of our Galus. Wherever we go if we have a Hishtokekus to Eretz Yisrael, we have a Chavivos for Eretz Yisrael, if have a desire for Eretz Yisrael then our heads are on straight and it works.

Zagt the Chasam Sofer that we say in the second Parsha of Krias Shema as is found in Devarim 11:17 (וְנֹאבְדְתֶם מִהֲרָה, מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבֵּה). It says that Klal Yisrael is going to go into a Galus. They are going to go into a Galus. (וְשָׁמַתְם) (לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם, וַיְמִי בְנֵיכֶם, עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲתֵּם-דְּבַרְי אֶלֶה, עַל-לִבְבְּכֶם). That if you want to be Matzliach you have to keep in mind the Teshuka, the desire to Eretz Yisrael.

I once saw an anecdote. A boy came home with a report card and his father reads Science – C, Social Studies – D, Math – C, Music – A. When he saw the A in music he slapped the child. The child said for the A you are giving me a slap? The father said to him no, but if you are not successful in all of your studies why are you singing so happily?

Klal Yisrael in Galus. Unfortunately we are still in Galus. We are not doing well. So we get a slap if we say but we are happy where we are. No. It needs to be a Teshuka to Eretz Yisrael. A Chibah to Eretz Yisrael. Even to go there to walk Daled Amos there.

May HKB”H grant us all that we should have our heads on straight. We belong in Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael is our place. We are here temporarily, we are strangers here. If we remember that then we don’t need the Goyim to remind us. We are strangers here.

May HKB”H grant us that we should be able to be in Eretz Yisrael B’biyas Go’el and if Im Yisma’mai’a we should be Zoche to go there, to visit, to absorb from Eretz Yisrael. That is our Teshuka and that is our desire. I have tickets for the 22nd please Daven that I should be able to go and get in and be Nehene from Eretz Yisrael.

Wishing one and all an absolutely wonderful Shabbos, a Bein Hamitzarim Shabbos. A Shabbos of Chibas Eretz Yisrael. When you Daven Shemoneh Esrei do me a favor, face Eretz Yisrael, don’t just face Mizrach. Face Eretz Yisrael. Think that you are facing Eretz Yisrael. Your Davening is coming in the back of everyone standing at the Kosel and is being blown right in. Let’s have the Teshuka and Chibah and we will have HKB”H’s love even more. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

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date: Jul 1, 2021, 11:20 AM

subject: Rav Frand - Summer Vacation Begins With a Reminder: No Vacation from Divine Service

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

Parshas Pinchas

Summer Vacation Begins With a Reminder: No Vacation from Divine Service

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1169 – 17 Tamuz–When Does It Start? Wearing Laundered Shirts in Nine Days?

Note: The shiur will now pause for the summer break. The next shiur is planned for Parshas Shoftim. Good Shabbos!

Parshas Pinchas contains the Korbonos of the Yomim Tovim, preceded by the Korban Tamid – the (twice) daily offering. The pasuk says “Command Israel and say to them... This is the fire offering that you shall offer to Hashem — year old unblemished lambs, twice a day, an eternal burnt

offering. The one lamb you should offer in the morning, and the second lamb you shall offer in the evening. [Bamidbar 28:2-4].

The week began with Shiva Asar B'Tamuz, the 17th of Tamuz. Chazal say that five things happened to our forefathers on the 17th of Tamuz. The reason we fast on this day is to commemorate those five terrible things. The Gemara in Taanis lists the five things: The Tablets were broken (when Moshe descended from Mt. Sinai and saw the people worshipping the Golden Calf); the Korban Tamid stopped being brought; the Outer Wall of the City of Jerusalem was breached; Apostomas (the Roman General) publicly burned a Sefer Torah; and he erected an idol in the Beis HaMikdash. These are the five terrible things that happened on the 17th of Tamuz.

If we were asked to rank these five events in terms of their seriousness, which event would you pick to be number five (i.e. – the least catastrophic)? I heard an observation from Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, zt”l, that at first glance the suspension of the Korban Tamid does not seem to be as tragic as the other four events. We lost the Luchos that were written by the “Finger of Elokim”; the city wall was breached—this was the beginning of the end of the Jewish Commonwealth. Putting up an idol in the Beis HaMikdash and burning the Torah were unspeakable insults to our religion. But the suspension of the Tamid did not mark the total end of the Service in the Beis HaMikdash at that point. What was the tragedy of the Bitul haTamid which caused it to be listed with the other four catastrophic events? Apparently they are all equally great tragedies.

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein explains this based on an incredible Medrash that the Maharal brings in his Nesivos Olam (Nesiv Ahavas Rei’ah, Perek Aleph). I quoted this Medrash at a Siyum HaShas. Many people asked me where the Medrash was. Ironically, I cannot find this Medrash — which is not that impressive a statement. However, what I mean is the computer cannot find this Medrash either! However, the Maharal brings this Medrash, and he mentions that it can be found in the author’s introduction to the Ein Yakov. If the Ein Yakov brings the Medrash, and the Maharal brings the Medrash, I trust it — even though I cannot locate the original source. Earlier generations possessed Medrashim that we no longer have.

The Medrash quotes various Tannaim, who each bring a pasuk which, in their opinion, encapsulates all of the Torah: Ben Zoma cites his view of the pasuk which defines the Torah: Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad (Hear O Israel the L-rd Our G-d the L-rd is One). Ben Nanas cites the pasuk “V’Ahavta L’Rei’acha Kamocha” (Love your neighbor as yourself). Shimon ben Pazzi claims that there is an even more fundamental and all-encompassing pasuk: “Es ha’keves ha’echad ta’aseh ba’boker, v’es ha’keves ha’sheni ta’aseh bein ha’arbaim” (The one lamb you should make in the morning, and the one lamb you should make in the evening.).

The pasuk that is the essence of Torah—which encompasses the entirety of Torah according to Shimon ben Pazzi—is the pasuk which commands us to bring the daily Korban Tamid, morning and evening. We can readily understand Ben Zoma’s pasuk as being a candidate for the Torah’s most fundamental principle. Monotheism is clearly a fundamental Jewish belief. We can accept Ben Nanas’ pasuk as being the fundamental principle underlining all interpersonal interactions. But never would I pick “Es ha’keves ha’echad ta’aseh ba’boker, v’es ha’keves ha’sheni ta’aseh bein ha’arbaim”! What did Shimon ben Pazzi have in mind?

The Maharal, in his Nesivos Olam, explains that the essence of Divine Service, the essence of being a Servant of the Ribono shel Olam, is consistency: Day in, Day out; Day in; Day out! Every single day, without exception. This shows my TOTAL devotion to the Almighty—every single day without a stop. Rain, sleet, snow, hail, no matter what, “Here I am!” Torah is about being an Eved HaShem, and being an Eved HaShem entails constant and unbroken service.

The Korban Tamid never stopped—Yom Kippur, Erev Pesach, Pesach. There was never a vacation. There was always a Korban Tamid.

That was the tragedy of the Bitul HaTamid that occurred on the 17th of Tamuz. Once the streak is broken, once the continuity is interrupted, then everything begins to dissipate and fall apart. That is why this indeed WAS the beginning of the end. From the time they built the Mishkan—through Nov, Givon, Shilo, and all the years of the Beis HaMikdash—every single day, morning and evening, they ALWAYS brought the Korban Tamid. When that stopped, it was the beginning of the end.

You can understand the context in which I mentioned this Medrash at the Siyum HaShas. That is what Daf Yomi is. Day in, day out, every single day—whether it is Erev Pessach or Yom Kippur or whatever it is. It must get done. This is what Divine Service is all about. That is why Ben Pazzi singles this out as the most fundamental pasuk in Torah. The Medrash, in fact, concludes that the Halacha follows Ben Pazzi. This is indeed the most definitive pasuk in the Torah—One calf you should bring in the morning and one calf you should bring in the evening.

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This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. ...A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information.

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subject: Lessons of a Leader (Pinchas 5781)

Lessons of a Leader (Pinchas 5781)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZL

The parsha of Pinchas contains a masterclass on leadership, as Moses confronts his own mortality and asks God to appoint a successor. The great leaders care about succession. In parshat Chayei Sarah we saw Abraham instruct his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac, so that the family of the covenant will continue. King David chose Solomon. Elijah, at God’s bidding, appointed Elisha to carry on his work.

In the case of Moses, the Sages sensed a certain sadness at his realisation that he would not be succeeded by either of his sons, Gershom or Eliezer.[1] Such is the case with Keter Torah, the invisible crown of Torah worn by the Prophets and the Sages. Unlike the crowns of priesthood and kingship, it does not pass dynastically from father to son. Charisma rarely does. What is instructive, though, is the language Moses uses in framing his request:

“May the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, choose a person over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep without a shepherd.” (Num. 27:16)

There are three basic leadership lessons to be learned from this choice of words. The first, noted by Rashi, is implicit in the unusually long description of God as “the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh.” This means, Rashi explains, “Master of the universe, the character of each person is revealed to You, and no two are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will bear with each person according to their individual character.”[2]

The Rambam says that this is a basic feature of the human condition. Homo sapiens is the most diverse of all life forms. Therefore co-operation is essential – because we are each different, others are strong where we are weak and vice versa – but cohesion is also difficult, because we each respond to challenges in different ways. That is what makes leadership necessary, but also demanding:

This great variety, and the necessity of social life, are essential elements in human nature. But the well-being of society demands that there should be a leader able to regulate the actions of each person; they must complete every shortcoming, remove every excess, and prescribe for the conduct of all, so that the natural variety should be counterbalanced by the uniformity of legislation, and the order of society be well established.[3]

Leaders respect differences but, like the conductor of an orchestra, integrate them, ensuring that the many different instruments play their part in harmony with the rest. True leaders do not seek to impose uniformity. They honour diversity.

The second hint is contained in the word *ish*, “a person” over the congregation, to which God responds, “Take for yourself Joshua, a person [*ish*] of spirit (v. 18). The word *ish* here indicates something other than gender. This can be seen in the two places where the Torah uses the phrase *ha-ish Moshe*, “the man Moses”:

One is in Exodus:

The man Moses was highly respected [*gadol me'od*, literally “very great”] in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh’s servants and the people. (Ex. 11:3)

The second is in Numbers:

Now the man Moses was very humble [*anav me'od*], more so than anyone else on the face of the earth (Num. 12:3)

Note the two characteristics, seemingly opposed – great and humble – both of which Moses had in high degree (*me'od*, “very”). This is the combination of attributes Rabbi Yochanan attributed to God himself: “Wherever you find God’s greatness, there you find His humility.”[4] Here is one of his proof-texts: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the orphan and the widow, and loves the stranger residing among you, giving them food and clothing” (Deut. 10:17-18).

An *ish* in the context of leadership is not a male but rather, someone who is a *mensch*, a person whose greatness is lightly worn, who cares about the people others often ignore, “the orphan, the widow and the stranger,” who spends as much time with the people at the margins of society as with the elites, who is courteous to everyone equally and who receives respect because they give respect.

The real puzzlement, however, lies in the third clause: “Choose a person over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in.” This sounds like saying the same thing twice, which the Torah tends not to do. What does it mean?

The Torah is hinting here at one of the most challenging aspects of leadership, namely timing and pace. The first phrase is simple: “who will go out before them and come in before them.” This means that a leader must lead from the front. They cannot be like the apocryphal remark of one British politician: “Of course I follow the party. After all, I am their leader.”[5]

It is the second phrase that is vital: “who will lead them out and bring them in.” This means: a leader must lead from the front, but he or she must not be so far out in front that when they turn around, they find that no one is following. Pace is of the essence. Sometimes a leader can go too fast. That is when tragedies occur.

To take two very different examples: when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister she knew she was going to have to confront the miners’ union in a long and bitter struggle. In 1981 they went on strike for a pay rise. Mrs Thatcher immediately made enquiries about the size of coal stocks. She wanted to know how long the country could survive without new supplies of coal. As soon as she discovered that stocks were low, she in effect conceded victory to the miners. She then, very quietly, arranged for coal to be stockpiled. The result was that when the miners went on strike again in 1983, she resisted their demands. There was a prolonged strike, and this time it was the miners who conceded defeat. A battle she could not win in 1981 she was able to win in 1983.

The very different example was that of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The peace process he engaged with the Palestinians between 1993 and 1995 was deeply controversial, within Israel and beyond. There was some support but also much opposition. The tension mounted in 1995. In September of that year, I wrote an article in the press giving him my own personal support. At the same time, however, I wrote to him privately saying that I was deeply worried about internal opposition to the plan, and urging him to spend as much time negotiating with his fellow Israeli citizens – specifically the religious Zionists – as with the Palestinians. I did not receive a reply.

On Motsei Shabbat, 4 November 1995, we heard the news that Prime Minister Rabin had been assassinated at a peace rally by a young religious Zionist. I attended the funeral in Jerusalem. Returning the next day, I went straight from the airport to the Israeli ambassador to sit with him and talk to him about the funeral, which he had not been able to attend, having had to stay in London to deal with the media.

As I entered his office, he handed me an envelope, saying, “This has just arrived for you in the diplomatic bag.” It was Yitzhak Rabin’s reply to my letter – one of the last letters he ever wrote. It was a moving re-affirmation of his faith, but tragically by the time it was delivered he was no longer alive. He had pursued peace, as we are commanded to do, but he had gone too fast for those who were not yet prepared to listen.

Moses knew this himself from the episode of the spies. As Maimonides says in *The Guide*,[6] the task of fighting battles and conquering the land was just too much for a generation born into slavery. It could only be done by their children, those born in freedom. Sometimes a journey that seems small on the map takes forty years.

Respect for diversity, care for the lowly and powerless as well as the powerful and great, and a willingness to go no faster than people can bear – these are three essential attributes of a leader, as Moses knew from experience, and as Joshua learned through long apprenticeship to the great man himself.

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Parshas Pinchas - Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of

Reuven ben Aaron z"l. “May his Neshama have an Aliya!”

Responsibility for the Law

The daughters of Tzelofchad came [...] And stood before Moshe and Elazar the Kohen and in front of the Nesi'im and the entire congregation (27:1-2).

This week’s parsha relates the quandary of the daughters of Tzelofchad who wished to receive their father’s portion in Eretz Yisroel even though he died prior to the division of the land and had no male heirs to inherit. They argued that it wasn’t fair that his portion should be taken away from his family just because he had no male heirs. According to Rashi (ad loc), Moshe forgot what the law was in such a case and therefore presented the question to Hashem. Ultimately, Hashem sided with the daughters of Tzelofchad and they were awarded their father’s share in Israel.

Maimonides (Yad, Hilchos Mamrim 1:4) describes a fascinating process of determining the law during the times of the Beis Hamikdash: “As long as there was the Beis Din Hagadol in Jerusalem there was never a conflict among the Jewish people (as to what the law was). If someone needed to know a law he would ask his local Beis Din, [and] if they knew the answer they gave it to him. If they did not, then both the inquirer and the Beis Din would travel to Jerusalem to ask the Beis Din that was located on the Temple Mount [...] If they didn’t know then everyone went to the Beis Din that was at the entrance to the courtyard and asked the question [...] If they didn’t know then everyone went to the Beis Din Hagadol in the Lishkas Hagazis (hewn chamber – a room adjacent to the Beis Hamikdash).” That was the

court of final appeal and one way or another they would determine the final law to resolve the original question.

According to Rambam, every single court must accompany the original inquirer on this process until his question is answered; making it possible to have well over a hundred people present while this question is being presented to the Beis Din Hagadol. What could possibly be the reason for this? Additionally, Lechem Mishna in his commentary on Rambam (ad loc) asks: From where does Maimonides know that this is the process; what is the source for this?

In most societies, a court system is intended to adjudicate and apply the laws that have been enacted by a separate legislature. There is no actual responsibility for the law, just its application. In Judaism it is very different. Every court has a responsibility for the law. If someone presents a problem and the court doesn't know the answer, it becomes the court's question as well. Because each court has a responsibility for the law, a lack of knowledge of the law is a problem for the court itself. Therefore, the court itself now becomes a principal in the quest for a resolution as to what the law is. It is for this reason that every court must join the process of coming to a resolution.

Clearly, Maimonides found a source for this law in the story of the daughters of Tzelofchad. The possuk seemingly makes a random observation; the daughters "stood before Moshe and Elazar the Kohen and in front of the Nesi'im and the entire congregation." The Torah isn't in the habit of repeating meaningless facts. Therefore, it must be that their presence had something to do with the original question. Rashi (ad loc) points out that this is very strange; if Moshe didn't know then for sure Elazar wouldn't know either!

This is how Maimonides knows that, after a question is presented through the normal chain of law, every person in that chain has a responsibility to see it through to the end. That is why all those individuals are mentioned as being present when the daughters of Tzelofchad finally presented their question to Moshe.

A Definite Impact

Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the Kohen, turned away My wrath from Bnei Yisroel when he took My vengeance in their midst, and I did not destroy Bnei Yisroel in My vengeance (Bamidbar 25:11).

The word "b'socham—in their midst" that appears in this possuk seems to be superfluous. We are certainly aware that Pinchas' act of zeal took place in the midst of the Jewish people; ostensibly, there should be no reason for it to be mentioned here. What does this word add to the narrative?

It is also difficult to understand exactly what Pinchas accomplished by killing Zimri. By this point in time, 176,000 Jewish men had succumbed to the temptation of avodah zarah, and an unknown number had sinned with Midianite women. How could the slaying of a single sinner, even a prominent public figure, motivate the rest of the nation to refrain from sinning?

The Torah states (Bamidbar 25:6), "And behold, a man from Bnei Yisroel came, and he brought the Midianite woman near his brethren, before the eyes of Moshe and before the eyes of the entire congregation of Bnei Yisroel, and they were weeping at the entrance to Ohel Moed."

As the next possuk relates, Pinchas immediately carried out the execution of Zimri and Kozbi, the Midianite princess, in the middle of their sin.

However, why does it mention the fact that the people were weeping? In what way is it germane to the narrative? The Torah is indicating that Bnei Yisroel were collectively aware of the impropriety of Zimri's actions; they knew that what he was doing was wrong, and this is what caused them to weep.

Pinchas was well aware that Hashem was furious with the Jewish people, and that the entire nation was facing the threat of destruction; however, it was only after Pinchas saw that the people were weeping that he reminded Moshe that the sinners should be slain. The reason why the Torah emphasizes that Pinchas' vengeful act was carried out b'socham, "in [the Jewish people's]

midst" is because Pinchas acted in a way that he knew would have an impact on the many people who would witness it. He waited to act until an opportune moment, when he knew that his action would serve as a message to the rest of the nation to desist from sin – and that was possible only when the public perception of the situation was such that people understood the necessity for change. Striking out at a sinner can have an effect on others only if they recognize that the sinner is wrong; if that is the case, then such an act can cause others to rally and bring about a much-needed change. Without that crucial public awareness, an act of zeal might not create any change at all.

Make Yourself at Home

This week's parsha describes the sacrifices brought for each of the yomim tovim. On the holiday of Sukkos there is a curious procedure relating to the amount of sacrifices that are brought; every succeeding day one less bull is brought as a sacrifice. In other words, on the first day thirteen bulls are brought, on the second day twelve bulls are brought, on the third day eleven bulls are brought, and so on.

Rashi (29:36) quotes the Midrash Tanchuma: "The Torah is teaching us how to properly conduct ourselves; one who has a guest in his home on the first day he should feed him stuffed fowl. On the next day he should feed him fish. On the next day he should feed him meat. On the next day he should feed him a bean dish. On the next day he gives him vegetables...He progressively decreases (every day) just like the bulls of the holiday of Sukkos."

This is difficult to understand; surely the Midrash isn't telling us that the proper way to treat guests is to make them feel less welcome each succeeding day that we are hosting them! Additionally, as Tosfos (Chullin 84a) points out, meat is more expensive than fish or fowl. In other words, if you follow this menu some of the succeeding days are more expensive than the prior days. So what exactly is the parallel of progressively decreasing?

The difficulty for most people who are guests in someone else's home is the uncomfortable feeling of imposing on their personal space. As the Gemara (Brachos 58b) explains, "The proper guest says 'Everything that the host has toiled for he has toiled for me.'" That is to say that a proper guest is very sensitive to the efforts expended by the host.

There are two ways for a host to compensate; the first is to make the guest feel as though the host is honored to host them, the second is to make them feel as if it is no imposition at all.

The proposed menu for a guest isn't listed in a declining order of expense, it is listed in a declining order of preparation. On the first day the host goes out of his way to prepare a very fancy meal of stuffed fowl, this requires the highest degree of preparation. The second day is fish, which is very delicate and needs to be seasoned and cooked very carefully but isn't as much preparation time as the first day. The third day is meat, which requires an even lesser amount of expertise and cooking technique (after all, every man is a BBQ grill master - it's in the DNA). The next day is a bean soup, which is simple fare and even easier to prepare, etc.

On the first day, the host prepares an elaborate meal to express his delight at hosting the guest. As the days go on, the host slowly begins to lessen his efforts in order to make the guest feel more at home and less as someone who has to be catered to. The host's goal at this point is to show the guest that it is really no imposition at all and that the guest is welcome to stay as long as he wants as part of the family. That is the highest level of Hachnosas Orchim.

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Aveilus on Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

The Torah discusses the dinim of the moadim in three different parshiyos: Emor, Pinchas, and Re'eh. In Parshas Emor we read about the issue of melocha. In Parshas Pinchas we learn about the korbanos musafim, and in Parshas Re'eh we read about the particular mitzvos that are unique to each of the yomim tovim.

In the second half of Parshas Pinchas the Chumash lists off all the various yomim tovim, and includes Chag ha'Pesach and Chag ha'Matzos as two different yomim tovim. The afternoon of Erev Pesach is the time of hakorvas korban Pesach, which constitutes a yom tov known as Chag ha'Pesach. What we call Chag ha'Pesach, but the Torah refers to as Chag ha'Matzos, starts on the fifteenth of Nissan and lasts for seven days. Even though the Chumash only mentions the mitzvah of simcha in connection with Sukkos, the Torah she'b'al peh has established that it applies to all Shalosh Regalim, and even to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Regarding Chag ha'Pesach, i.e. erev Pesach after chatzos, there is a dispute amongst the rishonim whether there is a chiyuv simcha. The din is well known that if one is in the midst of aveilus or shiva when yom tov arrives, the chiyuv simcha of yom tov cancels the remainder of shiva. If one is in the middle of sheloshim when yom tov arrives, then yom tov cancels the remainder of sheloshim. Because we have a rule that whenever there is a slight safeik in hilchos aveilus we follow the lenient position, the Remah (Yoreh Deah) paskens that when chatzos arrives on erev Pesach, the yom tov of Chag ha'Pesach cancels shiva or sheloshim and there is no need to wait until Chag ha'Matzos arrives.

The mishna tells us that although one does not observe aveilus on chol hamoed, nevertheless, one does rip kriya. The gemorah explains this is true because kriya is not part of the laws of aveilus. Pursuant to this, while the accepted opinion in Shulchan Aruch is that unlike other mitzvos, we are not mechanech children before bar mitzvah in the observance of aveilus, nonetheless there is chinuch for the mitzvah of tearing kriya, because kriya is not an element of nihug aveilus. The gemorah even says that if the one who lost a relative is an infant so young that he does not even understand anything about death, we tear a little bit of a kriya just to demonstrate to the menachamim what a tragedy has occurred.

After the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, the tanaim introduced three levels of ripping kriyah upon witnessing different aspects of the churban: kriya on the Beis Hamikdash in the state of churban, on Yerushalayim in the state of churban, and on arei Yehudah in the state of churban. The Magen Avraham points out that these three forms of kriya are unlike the law of kriya when a person dies. These are an aspect of aveilus, and therefore would not apply on chol hamoed or to a child before bar mitzvah.

Erev Pesach in the afternoon has the same din with respect to aveilus as chol hamoed. Therefore, if one visits the Kosel ha'Maaravi on erev Pesach in the afternoon, he would not tear kriya. Based on this din, many have the mistaken impression that on every erev Shabbos and on every erev yom tov after chatzos, one would not tear kriya when visiting the Kosel, but this is clearly a mistake. The Pischei Teshuva in the very end of Yoreh Deah mentions that many have the practice that on every erev Shabbos and every erev yom tov after chatzos, one does not observe shiva. This, however, is clearly a mistake and a carryover from erev Pesach after chatzos.

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Weekly Parsha PINCHAS 5781

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

There were extremely negative murmurings within the people of Israel in objection to the actions of Pinchas for his zealousness in slaying Zimri together with the lecherous princess of Midian, Kozbi bat Tzur. Many

attributed the violence of his act to the fact that his mother that his mother was a Midianite and that he was descended from a priest of Midian himself. There are those amongst us who abhor violence at all costs, in all circumstances. There is no such thing as a justifiable homicide as far as they are concerned. Human life is so precious that even the most evil of people must be protective so that no harm should befall them. Apparently, these murmurings against Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon, who was the most beloved of all leaders of the Jewish people, were so strong that the Lord had to "intervene" to defend Pinchas and highlight the justification and necessity of his act.

In theory, pacifism is a noble idea. However, the contentious and dangerous world that human beings are forced to live in becomes a certain recipe for disaster, and the triumph of tyranny and evil. Justice is a messy business to put into practice. The effect of the immorality of Zimri on the general Jewish society was so detrimental that the Lord indicates that a plague of enormous consequences would have been loosed on the Jewish people were it not for the actions of Pinchas.

One of the basic questions in ethical literature, and it appears as a basic question in Halacha, debates the morality of sacrificing one's life in order that many lives will be saved and spared. It is not my purpose in this article to develop this into a complex issue, but to point out that in this very instance, a moral dilemma of human beings was addressed by the statement of the Lord in defense of the actions of Pinchas.

Nevertheless, even with the apparent endorsement of Heaven for this act of zealotry, Judaism shies away from all forms off fanaticism. There is no other person in the holy writings of Scripture whose zealotry is condoned by Heaven. In fact, a great prophet Elijah is rebuked by Heaven itself for the zealotry that he displayed against the Jewish people. There is no question that the people were sinners and idolaters, and we can feel and empathize with the pain and loneliness of Elijah, seeing how disastrously Israel had wandered from their core beliefs and mission. Nevertheless, Elijah is instructed that until he removes that attitude of zealotry from his relationship with the people of Israel, he cannot remain the instrument of God's will to communicate with Israel.

At that moment in his life, Elijah is transformed from an avenging angel into the angel of generational covenant, the messenger of the tidings of redemption, and the comforting presence that has accompanied the Jewish people throughout the world over its long and painful journey of exile. So, we are brought full circle in dealing with vengeance and zealotry, and we are reminded not to be unrealistic pacifists at the same time.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

<https://www.yutorah.org/download.cfm?materialID=533887>

The DNR [do-not-resuscitate order] in

Jewish Law

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The Challenge

1. Mishnah Yoma 8:6 (83a)

If a building collapses on him [on Shabbat]... we dig through the pile for him.

2. Lord Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits (20th century England), HaRefuah v'haYahadut pg. 152

The value of human life is infinite, and therefore it cannot be divided – each portion of it is infinite. It then emerges that seventy years of life have the exact same value as thirty years, or one year, or one hour, or one second.

This demanding definition of the sanctity of human life is founded not only on strict mathematics or logic; it is founded equally upon ethical considerations. If human life were to be diminished in value because its end

was near, human life would lose entirely its absolute value, and receive relative value – relative to its life expectancy, health, benefit to society...

3. Talmud, Ketuvot 33b

The pain of lashes may be considered a punishment harsher than death, for Rav taught: Had the Babylonians whipped Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah, they would have worshipped the idol!

4. Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg (20th century Israel), Tzitz Eliezer 13:87

So long as it is given by a doctor to reduce great suffering, one may give it to the patient even when it will also harm him and it could bring his death closer. This seems to be part of the Torah's license for the doctor to heal...

5. Talmud, Ketuvot 104a

Rebbe's maid ascended to the roof and said, "The Heavens request Rebbe and the earthly realm requests Rebbe. May it be Gd's will that the earthly realm should overpower the Heavens!" When she saw how often Rebbe had to go to the washroom, removing his phylacteries and then putting them back on, and how he was in great pain, she said, "May it be Gd's will that the Heavens should overpower the earthly realm!" The sages were not silent in their prayers for Gd's mercy, so she took a pitcher of water and threw it from the roof. The praying people paused, and Rebbe passed away.

6. Rabbeinu Nisim (14th century Spain) to Talmud, Nedarim 40a

Sometimes one needs to pray for mercy for the patient to die, such as where the patient is in great pain due to his illness and he cannot live.

7. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (20th century Israel), Minchat Shlomo 1:91:24

As one requests and prays to Gd for the patient to die, he is also obligated to involve himself in saving the patient and desecrating Shabbat for him, even many times.

8. Talmud, Gittin 70a

Shemuel said: If someone is struck with Persian [poison-tipped] lances, he will not live. At this point, give him rich meat barbecued on coals, and undiluted wine, and perhaps he will live a bit and instruct his household.

A Digest of Four Approaches

9. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 18a

They brought [Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon] and wrapped him in a Torah scroll, and bound him with vines and kindled them. They brought wool sponges and soaked them in water and placed them on his heart so that his life would not depart quickly... His students said to him... Open your mouth and let the fire enter! He said to them: Better that the One who gave it take it back, and not that I harm myself.

The executioner said to him: My master! If I were to increase the flame and remove the wool sponges from your heart, would you bring me to the next world? He replied: Yes. [The executioner said:] Swear to me! He swore.

10. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (19th century Poland), Aruch haShulchan Yoreh Deah 339:1 Although we see that he is in great pain in his death throes, and it would be better for him to die, still, we are prohibited from doing anything to hasten his death. The world and all in it belong to Gd, and such is Gd's will.

11. Rabbi Dr. J. David Bleich (20th century USA), Tradition 30:3 (1996), pp. 59-60

Any distinction between "natural" and "artificial" means of treatment is without precedent in Jewish law. Indeed, upon examination, the distinction is fundamentally specious. Medical substances synthesized in the laboratory are certainly not "natural," yet it is unlikely that ethicists would regard such medications as "artificial." For that matter, even drugs extracted from plants and the like are hardly "natural" sources of nutrition for man but assuredly would not be classified as artificial. The obligation to revive a person from drowning is one of the paradigms of pikuah nefesh advanced by the Gemara, Sanhedrin 73a. That obligation includes the duty to throw a life preserver to the potential victim. In what sense is a respirator designed to deliver oxygen to the lungs different from the casting of a life preserver?

12. Washington State Medical Association, Pain Management and Care of the Terminal Patient (1992) Adequate interventions exist to control pain in 90 to 99% of patients.

13. Dean Lorne Sossin, Carter & dying with dignity: now comes the hard part, Canadian Lawyer Feb. 9 '15 Palliative and hospice care remains one of the more poorly funded and least understood spheres of medicine. The health professions and funding models are understandably directed at healing people.

14. Rabbi J. David Bleich, Treatment of the Terminally Ill, Tradition 30:3 (1996), pg. 62

[E]very prudent effort should be made to alleviate the patient's suffering. This includes aggressive treatment of pain even to a degree which at present is not common in current medical practice. Physicians are reluctant to use morphine in high dosages because of the danger of depression of the cerebral center responsible for respiration. The effect of morphine administered in high doses is that the patient cannot control the muscles necessary for breathing. There is, however, no halakhic objection to providing such medication in order to control pain in the case of terminal patients even though palliation of pain may ultimately entail maintaining such a patient on a respirator. Similarly, there is no halakhic objection to the use of heroin in the control of pain in terminal patients. The danger of addiction under such circumstances is, of course, hardly a significant consideration. At present, the use of heroin is illegal even for medical purposes. Judaism affirms that everything in creation is designed for a purpose. Alleviation of otherwise intractable pain is a known beneficial use of heroin. Marijuana is effective in alleviating nausea that is a side-effect of some forms of chemotherapy. There is every reason to believe that these drugs were given to man for the specific purpose of controlling pain and discomfort. Jewish teaching would enthusiastically endorse legislation legalizing the use - with adequate accompanying safeguards - of those substances in treatment of terminal patients.

15. Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz (19th century Danzig), Tiferet Yisrael to Mishnah Yoma 8, Boaz 3

To me, digging through a pile is different, for when one removes the stones from him one certainly eases his suffering. Even though he continues to live in pain, better that he should die slowly and with less pain, than for his life to be shortened and for him to die painfully, beneath a burden of stones. But the story of Rebbe was the opposite – had she not prayed [for his death], his suffering would have grown.

16. Rabbi Yaakov Kanaievsky (20th century Israel), Karyana d'Igrita 1:190 Regarding the basic principle that one must do everything possible to extend the life of a patient [even though it is only temporary life]: In truth, I also heard statements like this in my youth, but I don't know whether it comes from someone reliable. In my eyes, this requires great examination, for in Yoreh Deah 339 it is clear that one may remove an obstacle to the death of a patient [when that would also prevent great suffering]. One only may not act upon his body. If so, then I see no reason to prohibit sitting without acting [where acting would increase suffering]; just the opposite, one should learn from here to refrain from acting...

17. Rabbi Eliezer Zylbershtein (21st century Israel), Shiurei Torah l'Rofim 189

Based on what has been said, it appears that a patient may refuse surgery or any therapeutic treatment which involves great suffering. There is no obligation to pain him and cause him suffering with treatment that will extend temporary life.

18. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:73:1

In such people, where the doctors recognize that he cannot be healed and live, and that he will not live as a sick person without pain, but they can give medicine which will extend his life as he is, with suffering, then one should not give medicine, but leave them as they are.

19. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:74:3

One must give oxygen, even in a situation in which one cannot heal him, for this eases his suffering; the suffering that results from inability to breathe is great, and oxygen removes it.

Along similar lines, his honour asked whether one must feed patients intravenously when they cannot eat and they are in danger. This would extend his life as it is, in suffering, and we think he is not suffering due to not eating. It is obvious that one must feed him food that will not harm and not damage, for this certainly strengthens him a bit even where the patient himself does not sense it, and those who stand and serve him do not sense it. 20. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (20th century Israel), Minchat Shlomo 1:91:24

Logically, where an ill person suffers from great pain and suffering, or even very strong emotional pain, I would think that we would be obligated to give him food and oxygen for breathing, even against his will, but we could refrain from treating with medicine that would cause suffering for the patient, if the patient wished it.

21. Rabbi Moshe Isserles (16th century Poland), Yoreh Deah 339:1

One may not cause a dying person to die quickly... However, where something prevents the soul from departing, such as where there is a sound of knocking near the house, such as from a woodchopper, or there is salt on his tongue, and these keep the soul from departing, one may remove them. There is no deed in this, he is only removing an obstruction.

22. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:74:3

You asked whether one should distinguish between temporary life and on-going life regarding the obligation to heal, where it is not possible to heal him from suffering but only to extend his life in pain for as long as he lives. [You mean] that there is no obligation to heal him when the healing will cause him to live in suffering during that brief time, but if he were healed for on-going life, as people today live, then one would be obligated to heal him. In truth, I never mentioned this distinction, and in truth, it is not logical to distinguish; using logic, one could also argue the opposite...

23. Talmud, Bava Metzia 112a

"For this he puts his life on the line (Devarim 24:15)" – Why did this person climb the ramp, become suspended from the tree, and give his life over to death? Was it not for his wages?

24. Rabbi Hershel Schachter (21st century USA), רשפנ תא אשונ אוה וילא, Beit Yitzchak 1986 Three distinct categories of cases emerge, as law:

1) Where there are clear grounds to believe that all people would want such treatment, then we say that his view is cancelled before that of all people, and we compel him, under [the mitzvah of] "You shall protect your lives."

2) Where there are grounds to believe that all people would not want such treatment, then we say that his view is cancelled before that of all people, and we may not torture him with treatment, even should he wish it.

3) And where there are no clear grounds supporting either side, then it depends on the view of the patient...

25. Rabbi Zev Schostak, Ethical Guidelines for Treatment of the Dying Elderly, J. of Halacha and Contemp. Soc. 22, pg. 84

Rabbi Herschel Schachter and Rabbi Chaskel Horowitz (the Viener Rav) maintain that artificial nutrition and hydration are medical procedures which a terminal patient may direct to be withheld.

from: Michael Hoenig <MHoenig@herzfeld-rubin.com>

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date: Jun 22, 2021, 8:08 PM

subject: Fwd: Mitzvah Connection - Parshas Pinchas - TZA'ROR

Subject: Mitzvah Connection - Parshas Pinchas - TZA'ROR

The following is a Mitzvah Connection from Parshas Pinchas :

TZA'ROR --- (Pinchas, 26:17)

In Parshas Balak (25:1-9), Yisrael's sin of Z'nus, harlotry, with Moabite and Midianite women sent to seduce them into worship of the idol, Baal Peor, is related . Rashi observes that these events were initiated through Bilaam's advice to corrupt Yisrael's moral purity and get them to commit grave immoral acts which, in turn, would cause Hashem's protection to be removed . Kach Hoyah, and so it was . The priestesses of Baal Peor invited the Jews to commit debaucheries and worship the idol .

Rav Elie Munk cites Alshich to clarify that both the daughters of Moav and Midian participated in the events . The Moabite women committed harlotry indiscriminately whereas the daughters of Midian targeted chiefs and leaders of Yisrael . An example of the latter was Cozbi, daughter of Tzur , a Midianite noble described in Parshas Pinchas (25:15) as Rosh Umos Beis Av B'Midian (Head of the Peoples of a Paternal Household in Midian - Artscroll- or, as R' Shmshon Raphael Hirsch translates : " The National Head of a Patriarchal Family in Midian. ") R' Elie Munk, Kol HaTorah, Balak, at 25:1 . There, it is suggested that Tzur was formerly Balak, the king of Moav .

Rav Munk, citing Alshich, also says that Cozbi, upon her father's advice, amazingly , wanted to corrupt only Moshe but, failing that, targeted Zimri, a leader of Shevet Shimon . (Ibid.) Although Pinchas kills Zimri and Cozbi , earning Hashem's praise, the " debauchery strategy " hatched by Bilaam succeeded too well . Hashem's anger flared (VaYichar Af Hashem ; Balak, 25:3) . Moshe ordered the Judges to execute those men who became attached to Baal Peor . According to Rashi and Sanhedrin 38, every one of the 88,000 Judges killed two offenders -- resulting in 176,000 executions . Ramban disagrees, suggesting the number seems excessive and, further, does not square with the census taken later . Rather, Ramban suggests that the Judging took place but the judgments were not carried out because Pinchas intervened and turned away Hashem's wrath . Nonetheless, some 24,000 men died in a plague , as recorded in Devorim ,4:3 . (Kol HaTorah, Balak, at 25:5)

Irrespective of the precise number of punished offenders, it is clear that the " debauchery strategy " had posed a grave moral threat to Yisrael's purity. Therefore, it is not surprising that retribution against Midian would be forthcoming . The announcement of that revenge appears in Parshas Pinchas (at 25:16), although the details of the war of retribution are not related until Parshas Matos (see 31:1 - 53) . Here we focus on the opening words of Hashem's terse command to Moshe at 25:17 . The terminology Torah records seems awkward and, thus raises questions .

Hashem says to Moshe : TZA'ROR Es HaMidianim VeHikisem Osam -- " Cause The Midianites DISTRESS And Smite Them ." (Artscroll's translation .) Rav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch translates TZA'ROR as " OPPRESS The Midianites ." He says the word TZA'ROR literally means " to press together ", to oppress, to limit someone's strength . (R' Hirsch Commentary at 25:17) . Still, in context, TZA'ROR is an unusual word since it is followed by the command to " Smite " the Midianites, i.e., to kill them . Well, if they are to be killed (see Matos, 31:6-7), then why are they to be OPPRESSED or DISTRESSED ?

Further, the very next Posuk, verse, says the reason for OPPRESSING them is because they " Cause You Distress Through Their Deception, By Having Beguiled You In The Matter Of Peor" (using the words Ki TZORERIM Lochem) . Does that parallelism mean that Yisrael is to somehow deceive and beguile the Midianim in kind, before smiting/killing them ? No . Rav Hirsch actually translates the quoted language in 25:18 to mean : " For They STILL OPPRESS You With Their Wiles, Wherewith They Have Beguiled You In The Matter Of Peor ." In other words, the Midianim STILL constitute a moral threat - even after the execution of Jewish offenders and death of many in the plague . Rav Hirsch explains : " For They Still Threaten You As Enemies With Ruin. " (He notes that Haman was called TZORER HaYehudim (Esther, 8:1) . Thus, the Midianites " Still Continue To Employ The Seductive Arts Which They Have Already Exercised With Only Too Great Success Against You ." (R'Hirsch Commentary, at 25:18)

In this the Midianim differed from the Moabites who, after succeeding in creating corruption and death, ceased from further attempts . But, says Rav Hirsch, the Midianites persisted in this hostile threat , inviting revenge . (Ibid.)

Rashi observes that the word TZAROR is not the usual imperative form . Rather, it is a variation of the infinitive -- To Cause DISTRESS . This implies, as Rav Munk concludes : " It Is Incumbent On You To KEEP TREATING Them As Enemies ." (Kol HaTorah, 25:17) The meaning , thus, is : " Always Consider The Midianites As Enemies, Even If You Are Not Waging War Against Them . You Can Never Know When They Will Try To Tempt You To Their Ways Or What Subterfuge They Will Use . The Torah Warns Us Not To Yield To Their Beguiling Words ." (Ibid.) So, in essence, the Midianite threat is a kind of continuous, persistent danger . This (or Rav Hirsch' s approach) means that Yisrael is always to treat Midian as an enemy .

Thus, when Hashem says VeHikisom Osam -- And Smite Them -- this refers to the Order that Yisrael WILL Receive Later To Wage War Against Them And Smite Them . That actual order comes in Parshas Matos, at 31:1, and Moshe acts upon it quickly, even though Hashem has told him that, after the war of vengeance, Moshe will be " gathered into your people ." In this war, the army of Yisrael killed " every male " (31:7) plus the Midianite kings and, also, Bilaam .(31:8) Yet, the army apparently DID NOT FOLLOW Moshe's Orders . They DISOBEYED the RULING of their RAV . Thus they brought back the Moabite women, children, animals, booty, etc. (31:9-12) .

Upon the army's return, Moshe, Elazar the Kohein and the leaders go to meet them outside the camp . Moshe saw the women captives and became angry (VaYiktsif Moshe ; 31:14) . It was unacceptable that the women - who caused the moral corruption - had been left alive . Later, however, Moshe would spare those young female captives who had not lain with a man (31:17-18) . The Meforshim discuss whether Moshe partially relented in his anger at the army's DISOBEDIENCE Of His RULING because Pinchas intervened with certain exculpatory rationales or because Moshe realized that his instructions were vague and that misinterpretation was possible . (see R' Munk, Kol HaTorah, 31:7, discussing Sifre, Ramban, etc.)

TZAROR equals 496 . Mitzvah Number 496 is : Lo Sosur Min HaDavar Asher Yagidu Lach (Devorim, 17:11) -- " You Shall Not Depart From The Word Which They May Tell You ." IT IS FORBIDDEN TO DISOBEY THE RULINGS OF A BEIS DIN OR OF A RAV !!!

Moshe was the " ultimate " RAV -- he was Moshe RABBEINU, our RAV . Further, he was the Chief Justice , the determiner of ultimate appeals . He was the DECISOR when the appropriate course of action was unclear . When the army DISOBEYED his Command, they, in effect, were contravening the spirit (perhaps even the law) of Mitzvah Number 496 . The fact that Moshe partially relented later and that Hashem eventually allowed some of the spoils of war to be retained and divided among the people , is a post hoc decision by the RAV to soften the consequences of the infraction and partially forgive .

We can see that the unusual word TZAROR , which requires some explanations from the Meforshim, naturally invites curiosity and exudes Remozim, hints, beyond a mere translation of the term. As such, it is a worthy candidate to probe for a Mitzvah Connection . And it does not disappoint .

M.H.

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Pinchas - Moshe's Last Stand

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

This week the most illustrious career in Biblical history begins its final chapters. Moshe is officially informed that he will pass on and is told who his successor would be. But in informing Moshe of the transition, Hashem

repeats both here in the Book of Bamidbar (27:12) and again in the Book of Devorim (32:51) the reason that Moshe will not lead the B'nai Yisrael into the Land of Israel. It is because he hit the water producing rock instead of speaking to it.

Why does Hashem seem to stress Moshe's sin? Rashi, the classic medieval commentator, explains that Moshe asked Hashem to publicly declare his sin in order to declare that this sin was his only flaw. He was afraid lest some would say that he, too, was amongst those who were destroyed for rebellion in the desert. He was afraid that he would be equated with the rebels and sinners. Thus, he asked Hashem to emphasize that the only flaw he committed was that of the rock.

It is very difficult to understand. How could Moshe even suspect that anyone would place him on that level? How could one even imagine that he was excluded from entering Israel for an act of treason that led to the demise of others? Why was it so important to Moshe that the Torah reiterates that the incident at the rock was his only transgression?

Radio commentator Paul Harvey once presented a piece of American history in the following manner:

George Armstrong was appointed to the United States Military Academy in 1857. After graduating and commissioned in the cavalry, he quickly established a reputation for daring and brilliance in battle. His reputation was so well acclaimed that at the age of twenty-three, he was made the youngest brigadier general in United States history. George's energy and cunning paralleled the other great Georges who left their mark on military history — Generals George Washington and George S. Patton. In fact, George Armstrong was so successful, that by the end of the Civil War he became of the one of the most celebrated commanders.

His pursuit of Lee's army from Richmond in April 1865 destroyed the confederate lines of defense and captured prisoners, wagons, and guns — until, on the morning of April 9 he had totally defeated the enemy. It was to no one other than General George Armstrong that the Confederate flag of defeat was first presented.

After the Civil War, his career continued to flourish. He was assigned to the newly formed seventh Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In the fall of 1868 he won a brilliant victory over Black Kettle's band of Cheyenne Indians in the battle of the Washita and took part in many successful engagements over the next eight years.

But history has almost no recollection of the illustrious career of General George Armstrong. On June 22, 1876, General George Armstrong and his regiment, a force of about 655 men, set out for Little Bighorn. He encountered an overwhelming force of at least 4,000 well-armed Sioux warriors and was killed together with his entire regiment.

No longer were the Civil War successes the hallmark of General George Armstrong's career. Only remembered is the great defeat at Little Bighorn led by General George Armstrong — did I mention his last name — Custer — General George Armstrong Custer at his last stand.

People often tend to forget the illustrious careers of great people because of a flaw that ended it. Moshe was punished for an infraction that is difficult to comprehend in mortal terms. He hit a rock, and produced water — one of history's greatest miracles — for a thirsting nation. Yet something was wrong. He was supposed to speak to the rock and instead he hit it. And between him and his Creator, there was a price to pay. We however must realize that a mistake, as great as its consequences were, cannot mar the illustrious career of the man who led us out of Egypt and developed us into the nation that we are today. In no way can that punishment diminish any regard that we have for Moshe. At Moshe's departure, that point was to be reiterated repeatedly. It is only because of the rock that he did not enter.

How often does a man who works tirelessly for years and who errs in his last stand, go down in disgrace for the act that terminated his career? How many people's last stand becomes their most notorious if not their only stand? Perhaps Hashem's reiteration vis-a-vis Moshe are a lesson to all of us. There

are no first stands and there are no last stands. If we stand for something worthy, then we stand forever!

In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Dovid Reuvain Berenholz

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Rav Kook Torah

Chanan Morrison

Pinchas: Appointing a Leader for Israel

Moses was worried. Who would lead the Jewish people after his death?

“Moses spoke to God, saying, ‘Let God... appoint someone over the community... so that God’s community will not be like sheep that have no shepherd.’

God told Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand on him.’

Moses did as God ordered him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Elazar the priest and before the entire community. He then laid his hands on him and commissioned him.” (Num. 27:15-23)

Joshua’s appointment to replace Moses was a critical point in the spiritual and political development of the Jewish people. Every detail of this transfer of power is significant.

We read that God commanded Moses to “lay your hand” on Joshua, and the Torah testifies that Moses did as he was commanded. In fact, Moses placed both of his hands on his disciple. What is the significance of this change?

Material and Spiritual Leadership

The Jewish people require two types of leadership. Like any other nation, they need leaders for worldly matters, whether they be economic, societal, political, or military. In addition, as bearers of God’s Torah, they require spiritual guidance. Capable leadership will bring success in both spheres, revealing the greatness of Israel. All will recognize the wisdom of their ways, as befits a special people who enlighten the world with spiritual knowledge and holiness.

In his plea before God, we find that Moses referred to the people as “the community” and also as “God’s community.” This reflects Moses’ desire that they have a leader in both spheres, material — as any nation — as well as spiritual — as “God’s community.”

One or Two Leaders?

The question is: Can both of these realms be combined under the guidance of a single leader? Or perhaps, it is necessary to establish two positions, one leader to govern the nation’s material needs, and a second for spiritual direction.

If there is no conflict between the two functions, it is preferable to limit the number of leaders. King Solomon described the instability generated by too many authorities: “Because of a land’s sins, it will have many rulers. But a leader of understanding and knowledge will bring stability” (Proverbs 28:2). The answer — whether spiritual and worldly leadership should be combined into one position — depends upon the state of the nation and the world. When God’s unity is manifest and the entire world enjoys God’s beneficence, anything contributing to the world’s advance is directly connected to God’s will. With material progress, the spirit gains understanding and insight. As the Talmud teaches, “All of your builders will be disciples of God” (Berachot 64a, based on Isaiah 54:13). Those who build up the world, in all of its aspects, will be granted enlightenment and wisdom. All who facilitate the world’s progress will be carrying out the will of their Creator. In their actions, they cleave to God’s holiness, just like the holiness associated with performing mitzvot and studying Torah.

In such an elevated reality, there is no conflict between the spiritual and material spheres, and supervision of both realms should be combined under a

single leader. The prophetic visions foretold this state of the world under the leadership of the messianic king.

This was also the level of Moses, who was responsible for both the spiritual and physical needs of Israel in the wilderness. He was an עבד נאמן, a faithful servant who looked after the people’s material needs, yet was also crowned with כלייל תפארת, pure splendor, an expression of Moses’ lofty spiritual state. Moses never felt a contradiction between these two functions. His bodily powers were not weakened when he experienced prophecy, due to his clear recognition of the unity in God’s Divine will.

But when we are unable to attain such an elevated state — when we can grow spiritually only when we are not encumbered by material occupations — then it is necessary to limit the time and effort spent in worldly matters.

In summary: when the Jewish people merit the revelation of God’s unity in all realms, then they should be governed by one leader, who provides enlightenment in spiritual matters and leadership in material ones. Occupation in worldly matters will not distance him from holiness.

When, however, the Jewish people are not on this spiritual level, there is a conflict between the physical and the spiritual realms. Then they require two distinct leaders.

Two Hands

Now we can understand why God commanded Moses to place a single hand on Joshua. The hand is a metaphor for control and governance. Placing two hands would reflect control over both realms, both spiritual and material. Were God to command Moses to place both of his hands on Joshua, that would indicate that — for all times — both spiritual and practical leadership would be Divinely issued. In dark times, when material life is distant from the spiritual, we can hardly ascribe to the material leader the same Divine right to rule that Moses passed on to his disciple.

Why then did Moses place both hands on Joshua?

Moses understood from God’s command that only the spiritual realm would benefit from leaders who are Divinely-appointed. Nonetheless, Moses wanted to prepare the stage for a future world, an era in which both spheres will be united under one leader. Therefore, he made Joshua stand before both the high priest (representing the spiritual realm) and the common people (the physical). Moses then placed both of his hands on the new leader.

(Adapted from Otzarot HaRe’iyah vol. II, pp. 179-186)

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subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Pinchas

פרשת פינחס תשפ"א

פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב חמתי מעל בני ישראל... לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום

Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen, turned back My wrath from Bnei Yisrael... Therefore, say: Behold! I give him my covenant of peace. (25:11,12)

Hashem granted Pinchas and his descendants the covenant of peace as a result of Pinchas’ zealous intervention. Why was Pinchas granted this reward more than Moshe *Rabbeinu*? When *Klal Yisrael* sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe intervened on their behalf. He petitioned Hashem to forgive them to the point that he was prepared to see his name erased from the Torah. He succeeded in quelling Hashem’s displeasure with the Jewish nation — not once — but many times. Yet, it was Pinchas who intervened one time during an act of moral profligacy, and, consequently, was credited with turning back Hashem’s anger. How was his intervention different from that of Moshe?

The *Maggid*, *zl*, of *Dubno*, explains that, indeed, Moshe prayed for the Jewish people. His intercession on their behalf achieved a delay in their punishment. *Chazal* (*Sanhedrin* 102a) teach that every punishment that is meted out to *Klal Yisrael* contains within it some form of retribution for the

sin of the Golden Calf. In contrast, Pinchas did not merely delay the punishment – he eradicated it. Pinchas turned back the wrath, thus meriting the covenant of peace.

Sforno explains the achievement of Pinchas' zealotry in that he avenged Hashem's honor in sight of all. *Klal Yisrael* was privy to Zimri's despicable act. Indeed, he wanted it to be noticed publicly. Sadly, the members of the nation just stood there. No one protested. This means that the masses of Jews were not guilty of harlotry or idolatry. They were guilty of apathy (a sin which continues to plague us to this very day), having witnessed the licentiousness, the grave sins that were committed by those whose morals and faith were questionable, and failed to intervene or object. Their atonement was attained when they observed Pinchas intervene and slay Zimri – and they did nothing to prevent him from carrying out his self-proclaimed mission of zealous mercy. Veritably, they personally did not intervene, but the fact that they did not stand in the way of Pinchas earned them atonement.

Horav Eliyahu Svei, zl, compares this to the earlier incident of the Golden Calf, when *Bnei Levi* killed three thousand sinners. They went from tent to tent seeking out those who had flagrantly sinned – regardless of their relationship with the sinner. This act of dedication catapulted *Bnei Levi* to achieve spiritual superiority. One wonders how committing an act that involves blood-spilling of another Jew warrants one's ascension to spiritual aristocracy.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* quotes from the *Meshech Chochmah* that *Bnei Levi* were a scant minority of 8,000 men standing up against 600,000. The nation could have easily banded together and vanquished them like swatting a fly. They did not, because they knew, once Moshe *Rabbeinu* descended the mountain that they had erred egregiously and deserved whatever punishment Hashem would mete out to them. No one fought *Shevet Levi*. They were wrong, and they would pay for it. That was their atonement. Thus, by answering Moshe's clarion call of *Mi l'Hashem eilai*, "Who is for Hashem (come) to me!" *Shevet Levi* became the catalyst to buttress *Klal Yisrael's emunah*, faith, in Hashem.

The Golden Calf incident rocked the nation's faith. The *Leviim* brought it back. Likewise, the nation acquiesced/or at least were not repulsed by Zimri's act. Pinchas entered the scene and put a stop to Zimri. When he publicly killed Zimri, the nation could have balked and prevented him from executing his mission. They did not, because they were acutely aware that they had been wrong and Pinchas was acting correctly. This was their atonement – sponsored by Pinchas. In this manner, he earned the covenant of peace.

ובני קרח לא מתו

The sons of Korach did not die. (26:11)

Chazal teach that *Bra mizaki abba*; "A son (children) brings merit to his father (forebears)." If so, why did the *teshuvah*, repentance, committed by Korach's sons not serve as a merit to save him from spiritual infamy? *Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl*, offers a powerful insight. The idea that a son's *mitzvos*, *z'chusim*, merits, can somehow mitigate a father's punishment applies only as long as the father has not become deficient in the principles/foundations of *emunah*, faith. A *kofer*, apostate, heretic, who has denied the existence of his Father in Heaven, who has repudiated Hashem, Our Father, Our King, cannot be availed the merits generated by his son's good deeds. It is *middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure. He severed his affiliation with his Father in Heaven; likewise, his son's merits cannot be considered on his behalf. If one has reneged his Father, why should he benefit from the merits that come with fatherhood? Korach denied Hashem. As such, he broke with the Heavenly Family. His payback is a lacuna in his own father/son relationship and the resultant benefits.

We can extrapolate from the words of the *Mashgiach* that one who severed his relationship with his Father in Heaven can expect no less from his physical son. While the physical relationship may exist, the spiritual benefits follow one's spiritual relationship. What about a father who has

abandoned his children, who has terminated his father/son relationship? Will he be protected by his son's merits? I would assume that the father who does not act like a father to his son should be no different than the father who has reneged against his Father. It is a reciprocal relationship. One receives the benefits when he values the relationship. No relationship – no benefits.

If the above would be true, the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud av v'eim*, honoring one's father and mother, would not apply concerning an abusive or derelict parent. Yet, it does. This means that it is not about one's feelings, if one loves or not, if his father/mother treats him appropriately. It is about honor, even when a person does not deserve that honor. We honor flawed people. Why should our parent be any different than some fellow on the street whom we, as Jews, are supposed to treat with respect? Hashem commands us to overlook the abuse, ignore the dereliction of duty, turn our cheek concerning the lack of reciprocity and, instead, show love rather than antagonism. The "worst" that will happen is that one's children who are watching will become better children – better people.

I could go on writing, but that is not the focus of this *dvar Torah*. I think the best summation would be: parents are also people. Some are more perfect than others. Some have much to carry on their shoulders. Some are themselves the products of troubled childhoods, dysfunctional families. We are not here to judge, and perhaps not even to love. The Torah commands us to "honor." That is our obligation. The rest is up to us.

אבינו מת במדבר והוא לא היה בתוך העדה הנועדים על ד' בעדת קרח

Our father died in the wilderness, but he was not among the assembly that was gathering against Hashem in the assembly of Korach. (27:3)

The daughters of Tzafchad approached Moshe *Rabbeinu* concerning their father's inheritance. Moshe replied that he would present their case to Hashem. Our quintessential leader rarely had an issue with proffering an immediate response to a *Halachic* query. Why was he reluctant to answer *Bnos Tzafchad*? Furthermore, the women added a caveat to their identity of Tzafchad, claiming that he had not been a member of Korach's mob of usurpers. Their father was not guilty of impugning Moshe's authority. What did this introduction have to do with the case?

The *Minchas Chinuch*, who asks this question, replies practically by employing an incident in which he was personally involved. Two litigants came to the *Minchas Chinuch* and asked him to adjudicate a dispute they had between one another. During the discussion, one of the litigants mentioned as an aside that the *Minchas Chinuch's* father was his *mesader kedushin*, officiated at his wedding ceremony. Hearing this, the *Minchas Chinuch* turned to the other litigant and asked, "Did my father, likewise, officiate at your wedding?" The man replied that he had not. When the man rendered his negative response, the *Minchas Chinuch* declared that he must recuse himself from the case. He felt that, since he was now aware that his father had officiated at the wedding of one of the litigants, he subconsciously would be predisposed to helping that litigant. Thus, he was no longer fit to render judgment.

With this vignette in mind, we approach the Tzafchad incident. A judge may not rule in a case if he accepts any form of bribe – money or anything which might in some way alter his line of thinking. The daughters of Tzafchad mentioned that their fate was not bound to the Korach insurrection. Was this their way of currying a favorable reply from Moshe? Probably not, but quite possibly, Moshe felt compromised enough to recuse himself. This case required the adjudication of a Higher Authority.

יפקד ד'... איש על העדה אשר יצא לפניהם ואשר יבא לפניהם... ולא תהיה עדת ד' צאן אשר אין להם רעה

May Hashem appoint... a man over the assembly who shall go out before them and come in before them... and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd. (27:16,17)

The text of the *pasuk* appears superfluous. Once Moshe *Rabbeinu* presented his request for a leader who would go out and come in before the nation, it is obvious that he was seeking someone who exemplified caring leadership. If so, why was it necessary to add "the assembly should not be like sheep who

have no shepherd”? If they have a leader who cares and worries about them, it goes without saying that they will not be left like sheep without a shepherd. That is the purpose of a leader.

Horav Avraham Yoffen, zl, explains by relating an incident that occurred during the Russo-Japanese war, circa 1904-1905. When countries go to war, their citizens usually suffer economic hardship. This is especially true for the citizens who are struggling just to keep their heads above water. The Jewish communities in Russia suffered greatly. Hunger and deprivation were added challenges to the usual issues that confronted the Jewish community in Russia 120 years ago. This economic adversity was especially rough on the *yeshivah* world, whose students on a “good” day survived on very little nourishment. It reached the point that the *yeshivos* were compelled to send *shluchim*, collectors, to fundraise in areas of Western Europe unaffected by the war. The problem was that it would appear that these fundraisers might be developing a pact with countries not friendly to Mother Russia. When the government sought a scapegoat, they usually looked at the Jewish community. Thus, a number of *Roshei Yeshivah* decided that fundraisers would not pass scrutiny. As a result, the *yeshivos* suffered even more. It became so difficult that the *yeshivos* had no money left to purchase kerosene which provided light during the long winter nights. Learning, however, must continue. Thus, the *yeshivah* students studied in the dark by memory. This is how Torah study was maintained in Russia 120 years ago.

A conference of *Roshei Yeshivah* was convened. They decided that, since they could not take the chance of sending *shluchim* outside of the country, they would send fundraisers throughout the Jewish community to collect whatever scraps were available. Torah study must continue at all costs. The next hurdle was to determine whom to send to collect. Any able-bodied person was working for the war effort. The students had to learn Torah. No one was left but the *Roshei Yeshivah* themselves, who would personally have to go from door to door seeking whatever alms and food was available to sustain their students. The decision was made, and the names of the *Roshei Yeshivah* were entered on a list and divided up according to geographic area. Everything was moving forward to enable the *yeshivos* to continue with their unhindered devotion to Torah study.

Suddenly, *Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, zl*, the *Alter m'Novarodok*, stood up and asked to speak, “Veritably, the *matzav*, situation, in the *yeshivos* is bleak. The students are starving. They are down to existing on crumbs of bread to sustain them throughout the day. I suspect, however, that, if the honored *Roshei Yeshivah* will leave their institutions to tread from door to door in search of sustenance, they will return with bread, but, by the time they return, their students will be gone! I, for one, am returning to my *yeshivah* to be with my students.”

The conference broke up. Everyone was in a state of tumult, regarding what to do. One thing was certain: the issue and its resolution were no longer cut and dry. Each *Rosh Yeshivah* would have to mull over the pros and cons and decide on his own. The *Alter* had painted a grim picture in which the resolution to the problem was worse than the problem. A short while later, the *Alter* of Novarodok received a letter from *Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl*, of Slutzk, saying that the *Alter's* sharp words saved the *yeshivah* world from demise. Without *Roshei Yeshivah* who stand at the helm of their institutions – they would have bread, but no students.

We derive from this vignette that a Torah leader does not leave his ship. His students are his sheep, and he is their shepherd. A shepherd does not abandon his sheep. If a *Rosh Yeshivah* must leave for a very short interval, he must carefully weigh the benefits against the disadvantages that might result.

This is to what Moshe was alluding when he detailed the criteria for a leader. He must go out and come in before them; he must concern himself with the welfare of the people. If their welfare is dependent upon his leaving his post, abandoning his community, however, he must take into consideration that the negative consequences resulting from his departure

might far outreach whatever advantages will incur. A leader's place is with his flock. ...

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