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To: parsha@groups.io  
From: Chaim Shulman  
<cshulman@gmail.com>

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON PINCHAS - 5785

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** [ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org) [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)  
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Sefas Emes on Pinchas' Connection to Aharon and His Receipt of the Eternal Covenant of Kehuna  
Sefas Emes on Pinchas' Connection to Aharon and His Receipt of the Eternal Covenant of Kehuna

The pasuk says, "Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aaron the Kohen, turned back My wrath from upon the Children of Israel, when he zealously avenged Me among them, so I did not consume the Children of Israel in My vengeance. Therefore, say: Behold! I give him My covenant of peace, and it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d, and he atoned for the Children of Israel." (Bamidbar 25:10-13).

Pinchas was gifted with the Kehuna for himself and his descendants because of his act of zealotry in killing Zimri, the nasi (prince) of the shevet (tribe) of Shimon, together with Kozbi, a princess of Midyan, for their public act of immorality and desecration of Hashem's name. (Although Pinchas was a son of Elazar Hakohen and grandson of Aharon Hakohen, he had been born prior to their inauguration as Kohanim, and until this point he had not been a Kohen himself.)

Rashi points out that the lineage of Pinchas in these pesukim (verses) is traced back to Aharon Hakohen because the shevatim (tribes) were mocking him based on his lineage stemming from his maternal grandfather Yisro, who himself had originally been a priest to avodah zarah. They castigated Pinchas for having the audacity — as the grandson of a priest of idolatry — to kill a nasi of a shevet of Bnai Yisroel. Consequently, the pasuk traces his lineage along his paternal line back to the great Aharon, Kohen Gadol.

We have spoken about the obvious question in previous years as well: Tracing Pinchas' lineage through his paternal ancestry does not really solve the problem. Why would that appease anyone? We know that he was the grandson of Aharon, but he was also the grandson of Yisro, the former priest of idolatry. The people were saying that his present act of zealotry must not have come from the peace-loving Aharon. Aharon would never do such a

thing. They claimed that this act was inspired by the genes Pinchas inherited from Yisro, which were rearing their ugly heads. Therefore, what did the Torah accomplish by saying that he is "Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon Hakohen?"

In past years, we have cited the Ksav Sofer (the son of the Chasam Sofer) that the Torah's point was not Pinchas' genealogy, but rather it was testifying regarding from where Pinchas inherited his righteous zealotness that prompted him to kill Zimri and Kozbi. The Torah is saying that this brazen act came from Aharon Hakohen. How could it be, you may ask, that such violence can come from the prototype model of "loving peace and pursuing peace," the gentle Aharon Hakohen? The Ksav Sofer famously points out that we are taught that Aharon was an "ohev shalom v'rodef shalom" rather than a "rodef achar shalom" — meaning that sometimes he was "rodef" the shalom. (he pushed aside the peace). Sometimes shalom is not the solution. Of course, in general, Aharon tried to bring shalom between people, but when a situation necessitated it, he was "rodef shalom" — he pushed it away!

I saw a similar approach to this question in a sefer of Rav Buchsban, which he based on the Sefas Emes. Rav Buchsban suggests that the expression "Aharon was an ohev shalom v'rodef shalom" might also have another meaning:

Who isn't for peace? Peace is one of those things that everyone subscribes to. "Of course I want shalom!" But it is not always easy to act for shalom and to promote shalom. People say "Of course I advocate for shalom, but how can I get involved?" That was not the approach of Aharon Hakohen. Aharon Hakohen was a "lover of peace," as is everyone else in the world. But it is easy to just be an "ohev shalom." However, not everyone who is an ohev shalom is also a rodef shalom, meaning that when the situation demands it, the person actually promotes shalom by being proactive to create that shalom.

That was Aharon. He was both an ohev shalom and a rodef shalom. When he saw a situation in which it was not enough to just "profess" love of peace, but it was necessary to actually "act" to bring about peace, he in fact did so. The situation with Zimri and Kozbi necessitated killing the offenders in order to bring peace so that is exactly what Pinchas did.

The people witnessing this horrible act of public brazen immorality "were crying at the opening of Tent of Meeting" (Bamidbar 25:6). In other words, the standard reaction was to fret and to cry and to bemoan what was happening — but NOT to do anything about it! The masses were crying, but who is the only one who did anything? The only one who picks up a spear and says "I need to stop this situation" is Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon Hakohen! He is the one who acts. He inherited that initiative from his zeide (grandfather). His zeide was not only a lover and a professor of peace, but he was also a rodef shalom — he did whatever it took to make peace.

That is why the Sefas Emes says that the appropriate reward for Pinchas' action was that he became a Kohen. A Kohen takes people's thoughts and "activates" them. A person who does an aveira (sin) is obligated to bring a Korban Chatas (Sin offering) or a Korban Asham (Guilt offering) or a Korban Olah (Burnt offering). The sinner has thoughts of seeking atonement but the person who actualizes those thoughts and actually brings the korbanos is the Kohen. Therefore, the appropriate gift for Pinchas' actions is "bris kehunas olam" (the eternal covenant of priesthood).

The "Shame and the Embarrassment" of the Elders Was Their Own Parshas Pinchas contains the transition of the leadership of Klal Yisrael from Moshe Rabbeinu to Yehoshua bin Nun. The pasuk says "Hashem said to Moshe: 'Take to yourself Yehoshua son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lean your hand upon him.'" (Bamidbar 27:18). The Medrash remarks "Take Yehoshua, in fulfillment of that which is stated: 'Notzer te'ayna yochal piryah (The protector of a fig tree will eat its fruit), and the guardian of his master will be honored.'" (Mishlei 27:18).

Yehoshua was picked to lead because he put in the hours. "And the one who served him, the lad, Yehoshua bin Nun, did not depart from the tent." (Shemos 33:11) He did not leave his master's side. He cleaned up the Beis

Medrash. He is the one who worked. He is the one who sweated and toiled. Therefore “notzer te’ayna yochal piryah.”

The Gemara says (Bava Basra 75a) that when this transition occurred, the elders of that generation said “Moshe’s face is like that of the sun; Yehoshua’s face is like that of the moon. Woe to the embarrassment! Woe to the shame!” The elders who remembered Moshe in his prime felt that Yehoshua paled in comparison to their former leader.

Let me ask a question: What happens nowadays when a great Rosh Yeshiva dies and another Rosh Yeshiva steps into his shoes? Did you ever hear anyone get up at the hesped of the deceased Rosh Yeshiva and say “I remember the late Rosh Yeshiva. He knew how to learn. He was a true gadol. This thirty-year-old fellow who is now becoming the Rosh Yeshiva – what does he know? Woe to us at such shame and embarrassment!” Have you ever been to such a hesped? According to this Gemara in Bava Basra, that, in effect, is what the “elders of the generation” said about Yehoshua! Can we imagine such a public humiliation of Yehoshua bin Nun?

I saw a very interesting pshat quoted in the name of Rav Itzele of Volozhin. Chas v’shalom! The elders were not disrespecting Yehoshua. They were saying that they remember Moshe Rabbeinu in his youth. Moshe Rabbeinu, from the moment he was born, was a different type of person. At the moment of his birth, the room was entirely filled with light. He was a miraculous child. He was not a once-in-a-generation or a once-in-a-lifetime personality. A person like Moshe Rabbeinu was unique in the history of the universe. Each elder said as follows:

I am not Moshe Rabbeinu. When I was born, the house did not fill with light. Nothing like that happened. But Yehoshua? I went to cheder with Yehoshua bin Nun. I remember him as a child. He was nothing special. He was not even the best boy in the class. He didn’t get all A’s and he did his share of fooling around. But then something happened to Yehoshua bin Nun and he became a different person. It was not because of his brilliance or natural born gifts, but rather it was because “notzer te’ay’nah yochal piryah.” He put in his time. He never left the side of Moshe Rabbeinu. When I was out doing who knows what, Yehoshua was there with Moshe Rabbeinu. When I was fooling around, he was cleaning up the Beis Medrash.

This Yehoshua, the fellow that I knew and the fellow that I grew up with, has now become the next leader of Bnai Yisroel. Moshe was a “sun” – no one could ever again be like Moshe Rabbeinu. But Yehoshua bin Nun is like the “face of the moon” – he is a reflection of the brilliance of Moshe, just as the moon reflects the brilliance of the sun. Anyone could have done that and become the next leader of Bnai Yisroel – had they put in the time and had they put in the effort.

“Woe to the embarrassment and woe to the shame” is not referring to Yehoshua. It is reflexive, going back on the elders themselves. How embarrassing and shameful it is for us that we spent our time fooling around rather than emulating Yehoshua and seizing the advantage of being constantly with our great leader Moshe Rabbeinu.

I am sure all of us had experiences like this. “I went to school with this person. He became the (fill-in-the-blank) Rosh Yeshiva!” There are dozens of people like that. That is the shame and embarrassment of which they spoke. Had I only put in the time, effort, sweat and toil that he put in, maybe I could have also become like that, but I did not do so. Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org 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. Rav Frand © 2023 by Torah.org. 7/18/25, 12:00 AM Gmail - Rav Frand - Sefas Emes on Pinchas’ Connection to Aharon and His Receipt of the Eternal Covenant of Kehuna

Hamizrachi Parshat Pinchas 5785  
**Inheritance and Dina De’malchusa**  
**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

About forty years ago, a prominent chassidishe rebbe passed away in America. Years earlier, he had purchased three cemetery plots on Har Hamenuchos – one for himself, one for his wife, and an extra one. After his death, two of his sons were arguing over which of them would have the privilege to be buried next to their father. The oldest son was in business but felt that since he was the bechor, he should be entitled to the third plot. The younger son took over his father’s position as the chassidishe rebbe, and he felt that because he was his father’s mimaleh mokom in the chassidus, he should be entitled to the privilege of being buried in the third plot. When they finally agreed upon whom they would present the question to, the rov whom they asked paskened that kol ha’kodem zoche. Why should this be the psak?

In Parshas Pinchas, the Torah speaks about yerusha. The monetary assets of an individual are passed on b’yerusha to his closest relative, and only relatives from the Mishna teaches us that if a woman who is not currently married dies, her children inherit her monetary assets, but if children predecease their mother, their mother does not inherit their assets. The reason for this difference is that the relationship children have with their mother is one of “she’er basar” but is not one of “mishpacha.” Only relatives from the father’s side have the halachic status of “mishpacha,” and yerusha only occurs when there is a relationship of mishpacha. As such, a mother does not inherit her children. Children do inherit from their mother only because of the idea of “kom tachtov” – children are kom tachas their mother, but a mother is not kom tachas her children. The laws of yerusha are very clearly spelled out in the Gemara and in the Shulchan Aruch, but unfortunately, are not observed properly. There were Jewish communities in the Middle East where they assumed that even Jews should follow dina de’malchusa (“the law of the land”) with respect to yerusha. In the sixteenth century, the rabbonim in Tzfat sent a young talmid chacham (Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon) to explain to these communities that whenever all the parties involved in a monetary issue are Jewish, we follow the Torah law as opposed to dina de’malchusa. The Rambam records a very interesting concept: we consider yerusha to be a matter of issur v’heter, based on the terminology used in the possuk in Parshas Pinchas, which describes yerusha as a “chukas mishpat.” As such, we should certainly not follow dina de’malchusa regarding yerusha, since dina de’malchusa only applies in areas of dinei mamanos (monetary matters) and not at all in areas of issur v’hete father’s side of the family are referred to as “mishpacha.” The Minchas Chinuch points out, however, that the Gemara speaks of another concept called “kom tachtov” which is not identical with yerusha. When a married man dies, leaving children, the surviving almana does not require chalitzah because the children are kom tachtov of the father. An eved kena’ani is considered a monetary asset of his owner, and when the owner passes away, ownership of the eved transfers via yerusha to the closest relative in the mishpacha. An eved Ivri, however, is not considered a monetary asset and therefore should not lend itself to the laws of yerusha, and yet the son does in fact take the place of the father as master of the eved Ivri. This is based on the concept of kom tachtov, and only applies to the master’s son and not to his daughter. There is a view in the Yerushalmi that an ama ha’ivriya, upon the death of her owner, is transferred only to the master’s daughter and not to his son. These are all details within the concept of “kom tachtov.”

The Mishna in Nazir records the following halacha, which R’ Yochanon explains is a halacha l’Moshe miSinai: if a father and son were each a nazir, and the father set aside animals for the korbanos he must bring upon the completion of his term of nezirus, but then dies before he had a chance to bring those korbanos, his son is permitted to bring those animals for his own korbanos at the termination of his period of nezirus. This is a surprising ruling; usually, korbanos have to be designated at the time of their sanctification for a specific purpose, in this case, they were designated for the father’s nezirus, and yet we allow the son to bring them later for his own nezirus! This halacha is also based on the concept of “kom tachtov.” The Gemara in Nazir discusses a slightly more complicated case than the one in

the Mishna: what if the father who was a nazir leaves two sons who are both nezirim - do they divide the korbanos designated by the father equally between the two of them, or do we say that kol ha'kodem zocheh, i.e. whichever son's nezirus ends earlier has the right to use all of the father's korbanos for his nezirus? Apparently, in Europe, it was an accepted practice that the rule of kol ha'kodem zocheh would be applied in such cases. The psak issued by the rov in the case we described earlier (where two brothers who both wanted to be buried next to their father in the last available plot) was apparently based on these ideas that appear in the Gemara. The Mishna teaches us that if a woman who is not currently married dies, her children inherit her monetary assets, but if children predecease their mother, their mother does not inherit their assets. The reason for this difference is that the relationship children have with their mother is one of "she'er basar" but is not one of "mishpacha." Only relatives from the father's side have the halachic status of "mishpacha," and yerusha only occurs when there is a relationship of mishpacha. As such, a mother does not inherit her children. Children do inherit from their mother only because of the idea of "kom tachtov" – children are kom tachas their mother, but a mother is not kom tachas her children. The laws of yerusha are very clearly spelled out in the Gemara and in the Shulchan Aruch, but unfortunately, are not observed properly. There were Jewish communities in the Middle East where they assumed that even Jews should follow dina de'malchusa ("the law of the land") with respect to yerusha. In the sixteenth century, the rabbonim in Tzatz sent a young talmid chacham (Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon) to explain to these communities that whenever all the parties involved in a monetary issue are Jewish, we follow the Torah law as opposed to dina de'malchusa. The Rambam records a very interesting concept: we consider yerusha to be a matter of issur v'heter, based on the terminology used in the possuk in Parshas Pinchas, which describes yerusha as a "chukas mishpat." As such, we should certainly not follow dina de'malchusa regarding yerusha, since dina de'malchusa only applies in areas of dinei mamanos (monetary matters) and not at all in areas of issur v'heter.

from: Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein <rav@adlerstein@torah.org>  
to: targumim@torah.org  
date: Jul 17, 2025, 4:46 PM

**Be'er Moshe** - Parshas Pinchas

**By Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein**

When Chesed Becomes Din – And That's A Good Thing![1]

Therefore say: Behold, I give him my bris of shalom.[2]

The Mesorah points to only one other use of the phrase, "therefore say." Hashem uses it in commanding Moshe to bring word of the soon-to-come redemption from Egyptian slavery: "Therefore say to the Bnei Yisrael, I am Hashem!"[3] What is the connection? What lesson does the Mesorah find in this similarity?

The answer can be found in a mashal taught by the Toldos Yaakov Yosef, about an extremely coarse and lowly person who disparaged the king. Rather than execute him, the king came up with an even more painful punishment: he gave him a ministerial position. The culprit quickly found out about the real sterling and noble character of the king. His embarrassment and humiliation became unbearable, as he became consumed with guilt for his misdeed. At which point the king promoted him once more. Etc. With each promotion, the king's maligner learned more about the greatness of the figure he had insulted – which only added to his pain and remorse.

The Besht employed this idea in explaining a line in Tehillim: "G-d of vengeance! G-d of vengeance, shine forth!"[4] Hashem is indeed a G-d of vengeance. How does He take revenge? By showing more of Himself! He heaps upon us more and more chesed – which causes us to shrink in painful remorse when remembering how we have behaved so terribly towards Him. This remorse, however, is extremely valuable. "A single impulse of self-reproach," says Reish Lakish,[5] "is more effective than a hundred lashes." Furthermore, because we react to Hashem's largesse to us with humility rather than self-aggrandizement, His chesed acts as din! When din might

otherwise demand that we sustain some punishment, c"v, heaping even more of His kindness upon us can get us to the same end even more effectively. Hashem's punishment is never of the vindictive variety; it is meant to return us to proper behavior. When we react to His chesed by diminishing ourselves, and further subjugating ourselves to His Will, we arrive at the true purpose of His din.

Our pasuk now takes on new meaning, as does the pasuk in Shemos to which the Mesorah points. "Therefore say:" Because Pinchas demonstrated his intense yir'as Hashem by undertaking his dangerous action against Zimri, there is no risk that showering him with spiritual riches will lead to ga'avah. To the contrary, he will receive them with so much gratitude, that he will become even more humble than before. Therefore, I Hashem will grant him a gift of a revelation of Divine peace.

Similarly, Hashem instructed Moshe "Therefore say." They, too, will receive Divine chesed with submissive gratitude, rather than with inflated egos. Therefore, say to them "I am Hashem," i.e. midas harachamim. I can shower them with extraordinary displays of chesed, and they will react properly. Which is why the following pasuk explicitly articulates not one, but four different expressions of redemption.

Halevai that we should always receive Hashem's favors to us by minimizing ourselves, and stand in ever greater awe of His Majesty!

1. Adapted from Be'er Moshe, by the Ozherover Rebbe, zt"l. 2. Bamidbar 25:12. 3. Shemos 6:6. 4. Tehillim 94:1. 5. Berachos 7a

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by **Rabbi Shmuel Kraines**

"Study improves the quality of the act and completes it, and a mitzvah is more beautiful when it emerges from someone who understands its significance." (Meiri, Bava Kama 17a)

PREFACE

The three-week period between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av, when we mourn over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and our exile from Eretz Yisrael, is an appropriate time to contemplate the greatness we lost and hope to regain soon. We will explore the topic of living in Eretz Yisrael, which is a major focus in the Torah. Halachic authorities dispute whether it is a full-fledged Mitzvah or only a means to perform the Mitzvos that are applicable to Eretz Yisrael, such as tithing produce, but all agree about its foremost importance. This needs to be understood. Why is this land better than all the other lands, and why is it virtuous to live there? Why were our Patriarchs rewarded for all their loyalty to Hashem with this land, and why were all the tragedies of Tisha B'av decreed when our ancestors in the Wilderness rejected this land (Taanis 29a)? The coming article will scratch the surface of this vast topic.

THE LAND OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai expounded: Hashem examined all the lands and did not find a land that was fitting to give to the Jewish people other than Eretz Yisrael (Vayikra Rabbah 13:2). Midrash Tanchuma (Masei §4) similarly compares Eretz Yisrael to clothing that is a perfect fit for the Jewish people. In light of this, it appears that it is important to live in Eretz Yisrael because it suits us and completes us.

To elaborate, Eretz Yisrael is not an ordinary inanimate land; it is spiritually alive. Indeed, Eretz Yisrael is called "the Living Land" (Yechezkel 26:20). Just as the Jewish people have a higher spiritual quality than gentiles, Eretz Yisrael has a higher spiritual quality than other lands. Only when we live in Eretz Yisrael is our spiritual quality complete (see Sacred Soil). For example, Hashem watches over the Jewish people with special providence (Derech Hashem 2:4 §8), and He watches over Eretz Yisrael with special providence (Devarim 11:12). Thus, only when we live in Eretz Yisrael is the way He watches over us complete. Whereas, when a Jew lives outside Eretz Yisrael, he is missing a degree of connection with Hashem. About this, the Sages made an astounding comment: "Whoever lives outside Eretz Yisrael is considered as if he does not have a God." As the

commentators explain, Eretz Yisrael is the main resting place of the Divine Presence (Tashbetz §565) and Hashem watches over its inhabitants with special Divine providence (Rif to Ein Yaakov). Whoever lives outside Eretz Yisrael is missing this connection with Hashem.

The combination of qualities when we live in our land is not merely one plus one equals two. Just as clothing is an extension of a person, Eretz Yisrael is an extension of us. When we live there, our spiritual qualities expand to include a whole new dimension. This has ramifications on everything we do. A Mitzvah that is performed in Eretz Yisrael is much greater than a Mitzvah that is performed outside it. One of the leading Torah scholars of this generation once advised someone who flew to Eretz Yisrael and put on tefillin when he davened on the plane that he should ideally put them on again the same day when arriving in Eretz Yisrael. He explained that although we are only obligated to put on tefillin a minimum of once a day, doing a Mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael is not just a greater fulfillment of the same Mitzvah; it is a different Mitzvah, on a whole new dimension.

Kol Bochim goes so far as to suggest that Eretz Yisrael is not just like clothing to our body but like a body to our soul (cited in Eretz Yisrael §85, in commentary Ben Yisrael). In other words, it is an extension of us and connected to us, and without it, we cannot accomplish our purpose in this world. Perhaps according to this, “Eretz Yisrael” does not just mean “the land that belongs to the Jewish people,” but also “the land that is the Jewish people.”

Kol Bochim illustrates this concept by citing the teaching of the Sages that tzaraas, a spiritual disease that results from sin, only affects homes in Eretz Yisrael. [This was discussed in an earlier article about tzaraas.] If someone were to commit the exact same sin outside Eretz Yisrael, his home would not be stricken with tzaraas (see Vayikra 14:34). What is the difference? It is because only the land of Eretz Yisrael connects with the Jewish people who live there, feels the impurity of their sins, and reacts with tzaraas. In contrast, the land outside Eretz Yisrael is like dead flesh that does not feel nor react. The Torah similarly states that if people commit abominable sins within Eretz Yisrael, it “vomits” them out (Vayikra 18:28). This is because Eretz Yisrael is alive with spirituality and therefore reacts to anything that does not agree with its holy nature. While it is sensitive to all that occurs upon it, it is especially sensitive to the nation of which it is part, the Jewish people. On the other hand, when the Jewish people act virtuously in Eretz Yisrael, it feels and reacts positively. It becomes the bountiful and blessed land that was promised to our patriarchs as the greatest possible reward in this world, in which Hashem’s Presence rests upon His people and shines forth throughout the world.

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תורת חיים: Torah as a Way of Life

Pinchas 5785 – Becoming Torah

#### **Rabbi Moshe Hauer**

Are Torah-observant Jews different or do we just do different things? How personally transformative is our faith and practice?

Klal Yisrael was consistently exhorted by our prophets and leaders to be mindful of ritual actions and words empty of feeling (Yeshayahu 29:13), and of the utter inconsistency, meaninglessness, and even repulsiveness of the religious observances of those who are harmful and apathetic to others (Yeshayahu 1:10-17). If we are just doing and not feeling, or if we are doing some things while blatantly ignoring others, we are in that failed zone of doing without being. “Making it a part of ourselves” may sound cliché, but there is nothing more real.

Pinchas was someone who successfully made the Torah part of himself. My rebbe, Harav Yaakov Weinberg zt”l, whose yahrzeit was this week (17th of Tammuz), noted how the first Mishna in Pirkei Avot teaches us “ha’ami talmidim harbei, raise up – or more literally stand up – many students.”

While we are accustomed to teachers telling their students to sit down and listen, the ideal is to empower the students to make the lessons their own and

to get up and act upon them. That was Pinchas. When Moshe himself was unable to respond it was Pinchas who stood up and acted upon the lessons that Moshe had taught him (Rashi Bamidbar 25:6-7). Hashem Himself then offers the ultimate description and accolade of Pinchas’ integration of religious values when He praises Pinchas for being passionate on His behalf, b’kano et kinati (Bamidbar 25:11). Pinchas did not just do Torah, he became Torah, as his own feelings and visceral reactions reflected the values of Hashem and His Torah.

This perspective may add a layer of meaning to the known tradition that identifies Pinchas with another great person known for his passion on G-d’s behalf, Eliyahu Hanavi (Pirkei d’Rabi Eliezer 16). Amongst other things, Eliyahu had the unusual experience of leaving this world by ascending in a chariot of fire – body and soul – to the heavens (Melachim II 2:11). He was the very opposite of Korach, who descended – body and soul, still breathing – into the depths of the earth. Typically, death testifies to the failed integration of body and soul, as “the dust returns to the earth where it began, and the spirit returns to the G-d Who gave it” (Koheles 12:7). In the case of Korach, his denial of the divine communication and connection experienced by Moshe testified to the utter grounding of his own spirit, its complete absorption by his physicality, to the point where it joined the body in being swallowed up by the earth. Eliyahu/Pinchas was the opposite. He passionately and completely upheld and supported Moshe, believing and feeling the connection of G-d and man to the point where his body joined his soul in its ascent to the heavens. Eliyahu/Pinchas was – to use a phrase that may sound shallow – a totally spiritual person. He wasn’t just doing Jewish; he was transformed by his Judaism.

We have just begun the Three Weeks, the period of mourning over the destruction of Yerushalayim and the Mikdash. As the Talmud records, the attacking Babylonian generals – or for that matter their Persian, Greek, Roman, German, Russian, Palestinian, and Iranian successors – were powerless to destroy a city or a temple occupied by G-d. They could only destroy an empty shell. “A Divine Voice emerged and said to (Nevuzaradon): You killed a nation that was already dead, you burned a Sanctuary that was already burned, and you ground flour that was already ground (Sanhedrin 96b).” Our task during this time and always is to ensure that our Jewish communities, our shuls, and our selves are not hollow shells but living, breathing entities, transformed and infused through and through by our vibrant connection to Hashem and His Torah.

Rabbi Moshe Hauer Rabbi Moshe Hauer joined the Orthodox Union (OU) as its Executive Vice President on May 1, 2020. In this role he serves as the organization’s rabbinic leader, heading its communal-oriented efforts and serving as its professional religious/policy leader and primary spokesman. Prior to joining the OU, Rabbi Hauer served as the senior Rabb... Show more

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from: Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org>

date: Jul 17, 2025, 5:16 AM

subject: Rav Kook on Pinchas: Our Offerings of Bread, Fire and Fragrance

Pinchas: Our Offerings of Bread, Fire and Fragrance

The Torah uses a striking series of poetic metaphors to describe the daily Tamid offering: “Be careful to offer My offering — My bread-offering, My fire-offering, My appeasing fragrance — at its proper time.” (Num. 28:2) What is the deeper significance of these four descriptions: offering, bread, fire, and fragrance?

Each phrase reflects a core quality common to all Temple offerings. Yet they are particularly fitting for the Tamid, the communal offering that embodies the aspiration to infuse holiness into the daily life of the nation.

Korbani — ‘My Offering’

The word korban shares a root with karov, meaning “close” or “near.” Every offering is an expression of the soul’s inner longing to draw near to God.

The Tamid gives voice to these yearnings in the collective soul of the nation.

Lachmi — ‘My Bread’

Why does the Torah compare the offerings to bread?

Bread sustains life; it binds the soul to the body, allowing the spirit to animate physical powers. The Hebrew root *lechem* also means “to solder” or “fuse together.”

In this sense, the Temple offerings are like *lechem*, a medium that binds the physical and spiritual, cultivating the manifestation of the nation’s sacred qualities in the realm of action.

Ishi — ‘My Fire-Offering’

Fire is a source of tremendous energy, capable of igniting and transforming physical matter.

The Temple offerings reflect the goal that the Divine within the nation’s soul is not limited to the intellectual and emotive spheres, but finds expression also in all aspects of physical life.

Rei’ach Nichochi — ‘My Appeasing Fragrance’

This final metaphor evokes pleasantness and sweetness.

The Temple offerings awaken a sense of spiritual delight — both for the individual and for the nation as a whole — as the soul is uplifted and refined. This inner sweetness is rooted in Israel’s unique bond with God, as we live a life of sanctity and meaning.

(Adapted from *Olat Re’iyah* vol. I, pp. 128-129)

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YUTORAH IN PRINT • Pinchas 5785

### **A Silent Mountain of Hope and Tears**

#### **Rabbi Moshe Taragin**

Jewish history unfolded across many legendary mountains. Our story is etched into numerous mountaintops of joy and revelation.

On a desert cliff named Sinai—its exact location now lost—Hashem gave us the Torah. Years later, upon the twin peaks of Gerizim and Eival in northern Israel, we reenacted Sinai. This mountain covenant bound a new generation directly to the revelation their parents had witnessed on those same Sinai heights.

In the heart of Yerushalayim stands another fabled mountain named Moriah. There, Avraham offered Yitzchak, and Yaakov dreamed of a ladder stretching heavenward. That mountain became the site of the Beit HaMikdash—a house built by man to host the presence of Hashem. Moriah is the mountain where Jewish history first took shape— and the one toward which all of history returns. It is both our point of origin and our final destination.

Judaism was shaped on summits—where heaven touched earth and the timeless broke into the flow of history.

A Mountain of Farewell

But not all mountains in Jewish history are bright. One mountain, shrouded in sorrow, rises in what is now Jordan. From its summit, Moshe Rabbeinu caught a final glimpse of the Land he would never enter. It is a heart-wrenching scene. Moshe had once spoken to slaves in Egypt of a land flowing with milk and honey, and had led a liberated nation across barren deserts. Now he stands alone—lonely and barred from the very land he had promised and dreamed of.

He climbs Mount Nevo, not to arrive, but to gaze—to look upon a homeland he will never touch. A lifelong dream stretched out before him, just beyond reach.

It’s curious that Hashem speaks of Moshe’s final ascent while so much still lies ahead. This moment appears in Parshat Pinchas, immediately following the guidelines for dividing the Land of Israel—yet Moshe remains deeply engaged in preparing the people for their entry, only ascending the mountain much later. He will still wage war against Midyan, negotiate with the tribes who wish to settle east of the Jordan, and deliver many more sections of the Torah. Most significantly, he will compose the great valedictory of Sefer Devarim—a second articulation of the Torah’s covenant.

Only at the very end of his life, after all is complete, does he finally climb the mountain to glimpse Israel. So why does Hashem command Moshe now to ascend, rather than waiting for that final moment? Perhaps Hashem wished to gently prepare Moshe for the painful truth that he would never enter the land. The instant he stands atop that mountain, gazing at a homeland he will never walk, will be shattering. To soften this blow, Hashem offers advance

notice. It is an act of compassion, allowing Moshe space to come to terms with the impossible. Moshe understands he will not enter long before he ascends that tear-drenched mountain.

A Selfless Gaze

Ironically, this recognition reshapes the end of his life, casting it in even greater heroic light. Until now, Moshe clung to the hope that he would eventually enter the land. He worked tirelessly, driven by the hope of experiencing the life he helped build in Israel.

Although the decree barring him from entry had already been issued, he believed it might be reversed. After all, he had prayed twice and saved the people from destruction. His confidence grew when he was entrusted with delivering the instructions for dividing the land—perhaps a sign he would personally oversee the process. Hearing that he will one day ascend the mountain to glimpse the land—but never enter—cements his fate. It becomes unmistakably clear: Israel is beyond his reach.

Yet heroically, he does not step aside. There are still wars to fight, laws to teach, and a final farewell speech to deliver. Moshe now labors selflessly for a future beyond his own lifetime. Though he will never dwell in Israel, every ounce of his strength is poured into preparing us to live there. His fate is clear, but his focus remains steadfast—working wholly for a tomorrow he will never see.

Faith in the Incomplete Moshe’s final days stand as a metaphor for life in Israel. Life here is about building toward a future we may never see or fully experience. Israel is a land shaped by history, where each generation lays the foundation for those who come after. Though we may not witness that future, we are the builders who make it possible. Nevo is more than the mountain where Moshe stood—it is a mindset, a vision carried in the heart of every person in Israel.

We are slowly emerging from a grueling two-year war, burdened by mental and emotional fatigue, swallowed by confusion. Conflicting reports, opposing visions—each pulling us in different directions. We hear reports of a new Middle East—promises of change, new alliances, and shifting powers. Yet beneath these headlines, the reality remains stark: our enemies have not disappeared. They remain relentless, working tirelessly to defeat us. The landscape may be changing, but the threats we face endure.

Additionally, antisemitism has flared anew, menacing Jews across the globe, casting shadows over Israel’s diplomatic standing. Where are we headed? Toward a radiant, hopeful future, or a more tangled, uncertain one? It’s difficult to discern what to believe—or who to believe in. Should we lean toward optimism or brace for pessimism? The answer is unclear.

One thing is certain—this journey will take time. Short of divine intervention, full closure and perfect solutions are unlikely to come within our lifetime. We must not be discouraged or lose heart in the face of the long arc of life in Israel. Like Moshe standing atop Nevo, we labor for a future our nation will inherit—one we may never fully live to see. Unlike Moshe, we have entered this land. We have built, and will continue to build, knowing the final chapters we seek belong to a tomorrow beyond our own. We are the bricklayers of history—the builders of a shared destiny. The work will be finished, and we remain bound to its continuing story.

Life in Israel hangs on the edge of Nevo—caught between what has been and what will be.

The View from Nevo

Nevo is not simply a cliff to stand upon, a place to ponder selfless commitment to a future we may never witness. It is more than a mountain of vision—it is a mountain of longing. For thousands of years, Jews like Moshe have stood atop this peak, yearning for a distant land they never saw but carried deep in their imagination. For Moshe, that land was barred by divine decree; for generations of Jews, Israel was barred by exile and the harsh grip of fate.

The gates of Israel have now opened. No divine decree, no barrier of exile stands in the way. Yet still, many Jews stand atop Nevo, yearning to walk the land that Moshe could not enter. Life is complex, and not every soul who longs to cross that threshold will make the journey. But like Moshe, their

yearning shapes them—Israel becomes woven into their identity and etched deep within their imagination.

Moshe does not stand alone on Nevo—we stand with him. Together, we gaze toward a future we build but may never fully enter. Together with him many Jews look toward a land they may never cross.

Nevo is still with us—a mountain of longing and faith—a place where every Jew stands, caught between hope and history.

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from: Ira Zlotowitz <iraz@klalgovoa.org>

date: Jul 17, 2025, 7:01 PM

subject: Tidbits • Parashas Pinchas 5785 in memory of Rav Meir Zlotowitz ZTL

This week is Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Menachem Av. Rosh Chodesh is next Shabbos, July 26th. The molad is Friday morning at 10:42 AM and 5 chalakim.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levana is Monday night, July 28th. The final opportunity is at 10:43 PM on Friday night, August 8th.

The Y'mei Bein Hametzarim, the Three Weeks, began at nightfall (shekiya) on Motzaei Shabbos, July 12th (see Tidbits to Parashas Balak for more information). The haftarah of Parashas Mattos (Yirmiyah 1:1-2:3) is leined this Shabbos. This haftarah is the first in the series of the Shalosh D'Puranusa, the Three Haftarahs of Chastisement, that are leined on the three Shabbosos leading up to Tisha B'av. The Nine Days will begin next Shabbos, Parashas Mattos-Masei. As wearing new or freshly laundered clothing (or linen) is restricted during this time, one should briefly wear freshly laundered clothing and briefly utilize any fresh towels or linen before the Nine Days to remove its freshness. See the upcoming Tidbits for Mattos-Masei for more information on the Nine Days.

Pirkei Avos: Perek 1

Daf Yomi - Shabbos: Bavli: Avodah Zara 31 • Yerushalmi: Pesachim 51 • Mishnah Yomis: Zevachim 2:2-2:3 • Oraysa (coming week): Moed Katan 8b-10b • Kitzur Shulchan Aruch: 181:14-182:1

Summary

PINCHAS: Pinchas and his descendants are rewarded with Kehuna • Commandment to wage war against the Midianites • The generation of the 40th year in the Midbar is counted • Eretz Yisrael is to be divided among the Shevatim • The Bnos Tzelaftchad request their father's portion of the land • Hashem informs Moshe that he will pass away before entering the land • Yehoshua bin Nun is appointed as Moshe's successor • The daily Korban Tamid • The Korbanos Mussaf of Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and the Holidays Haftarah: The haftarah of Parashas Mattos is leined. The Navi Yirmiyah (1:1-2:3) foretells the impending destruction of Yerushalayim because of the sins of the Bnei Yisrael. The haftarah ends with predicting the future redemption, "Zacharti lach chessed ni'urayich", that Hashem will remember the nation's earlier good deeds and grant their return to Eretz Yisrael.

Dvar Torah

Uvayom Hashabbos Shnei Kvasim Bnei Shana Temimim. "And on the Shabbos Day [you shall bring] two male lambs at one year old, unblemished" (Bamidbar 28:9)

The Midrash says that the two lambs brought for the korbanos mussaf of Shabbos must be identical in appearance.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains that the two lambs correspond to the two mitzvos of Shabbos, Zachor and Shamor. The mitzvah of Zachor, to commemorate, is to honor the Shabbos and partake in oneg Shabbos, a mitzvah which is easily accepted and enjoyable to a person. The mitzvah of Shamor, however, is to guard and abide by the Shabbos prohibitions by not performing melachah. Such prohibitions may feel restrictive, and at times one may think he is losing out financially or in some other way by observing these prohibitions. But this is not the case. Shabbos is the source of all blessing, and all success and berachah attained during the work week is in fact derived from Shabbos.

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from: Michal Horowitz <michalchorowitz@gmail.com>

date: Jul 17, 2025, 8:03 AM

subject: **Pinchas 5785: The Transmission of Torah  
The Command to Go to War**

**Michal Horowitz**

The beginning of this week's parsha, Parshas Pinchas, resumes the narrative that began at the end of last week's sedra, Balak. At the end of Balak we read of the sins of the nation of Israel, who were persuaded to sin with the Midyanite women, and were worshipping the avodah zarah of Ba'al Peor (Bamidbar 25:1-3).

How did this disastrous situation come to be? After Bilaam's failure to curse the Jews, he gave King Balak advice as to how to bring destruction upon the nation of Israel. He encouraged Balak to set up tents (in the shuk) selling new linen garments, with zonos (seductive women) on the outside and inside of the tents, who would serve the Israelite men wine and then seduce them, which ultimately would lead to their worshipping idols (Sanhedrin 106a). His plan worked and Hashem's anger burned against the nation (25:3). When the prince of the tribe of Shimon publicly lay with a princess from Midyan, Moshe was overcome with distress, and Pinchas – a grandson of Aharon – rose up with a spear in his hand, and killed the pair who were sinning. Once he killed them, the plague which had been decimating Israel (due to G-d's wrath) subsided. The total number that fell by plague was 24,000 men (25:4-9).

In the beginning of Parshas Pinchas, the narrative resumes (25:10-15). For Pinchas' brave actions, which were solely for the sake of Heaven, Hashem rewarded him with the covenant of peace and eternal priesthood. The Torah identifies the couple who were publicly laying together as Zimri ben Salu from Shimon, and Cozbi bas Tzur, a Midyanite princess.

Immediately after this narrative, Hashem instructs Moshe to go to war against Midyan. "Antagonize the Midyanim and strike them for they antagonized you with their schemes, that they schemed against you at Baal Peor..." (25:16-18).

It is interesting to note that Hashem had to command Moshe (and the nation) to go to war against Midyan. 24,000 men had just died in a plague, brought upon them because of the seduction by Midyanite women. Would they not, on their own, decide to go to war?!

Rabbi Dovid Holzer notes that "The Bnei Yisrael (Bn'Y) suffered tremendous losses because they allowed themselves to be seduced by the Midianite women. Despite this, they were not eager to exact revenge on Midian afterwards. In fact, Hashem had to order Bn'Y to attack them. By contrast, when facing Amalek, Bn'Y seized the initiative to go out to battle (Bamidbar 21:1-3 w/ Rashi). How do we account for these two different reactions?" To answer his astute question, R' Holzer quotes Rav Soloveitchik, zt"l: "(My son) Chaim told me a story that is very characteristic (of our relationship with non-Jews). When you study the Gemara, (tractate) Avodah Zarah, there are many instructions pertaining to the relationship between Jew and non-Jew. One instruction says that a Jew should not walk in front and let a non-Jew walk behind him, because he may stab him in the back. Then there is another injunction that a Jew should not take a haircut or shave from a non-Jew.

"When he learned this Gemara, so a group of (his) students protested against our intolerance and suspicious nature. And, of course, they accused us of being too parochial and so forth and so on, of not caring for human beings, but just Jews. We are accused now of that...this is the major charge now of anti-Semites, I want you to know...the Jew is clannish, he is not universal..." "Chaim didn't say a word, he didn't say a word. And he told them he wants to take a walk with them. Alright, he took them for a walk, took them straight to the Old City, and they passed by a barber shop, an Arab barber shop. So one of his students needed a haircut, so he told him, here is a barber shop. 'I should go to the Arab barber shop!?' Where with the razor he'll cut my throat!' the student exclaimed. "...There is an autobiography by Rav Yaakov Emden (18th century). He writes that 'a miracle happened to me'. So you read what happened to him. He left the ghetto and he met a monk, and the monk gave him a stern look, but he didn't do anything to him. So he came home and wrote down that a miracle happened to him that a monk didn't do anything, didn't do any harm."

How does this answer the question of R' Holzer: against Amalek we were eager to attack, but against Midyan we had to be ordered to go to war? Says R' Holzer, "With this teaching (of the Rav) we can explain the different reactions of Bn'Y to the Midianites and the Amalekim. When the nations attack and oppose us openly, we recognize the danger and respond accordingly, as in the case of Amalek. But when the nations seduce us with their civility and surface friendship – as in the case of Midian – they can be just as destructive, or even more destructive, without us realizing" (The Rav Thinking Aloud, Sefer Bamidbar, p. 206-210).

Historically, throughout our long years of exile, our enemies can be divided into two camps, two thoughts, two ideologies. The first category, the Amalek type, are those who seek to destroy us physically, eradicate our Torah, nation, holy places of study and worship, and erase any vestige of Am Yisrael from the world

However, the second type of enemy is the enemy of Midyan, their seductive women, and overtures of acceptance, friendship, and camaraderie. "Shev – come sit in my tent, the Midyanite women said to the Israelite men, beror le'atzmecha – choose whichever linen garments you like, v'tzir tzurei shel yayin Emoni mutzlach etzlah, and a pitcher of wine sat next to her" (Sanhedrin 106a).

This enemy can be even more dangerous than the Amalek type, because it's a foe-turned-friend, whose wicked design against our holiness, purity, morality, and Torah ways, we may not even realize... until "and his passion burned within him and he said to her, lay with me!" (ibid)

Today, enemies of all kinds rise up to destroy us once again! There are those who want to kill us, destroy our home and our Land, and those who seduce us with their crooked beliefs and twisted ways, beckoning us to join them in their way of life.

As Torah Jews, we must be ever vigilant against all who rise to destroy us. The path to our eternal survival lies in Torah and mitzvos, ki heim chayeinu v'orech yameinu. When we remain in the tents of Torah, remain faithful to G-d and committed to Am Yisrael, we will be victorious over every enemy who rises to destroy us; ViHKBH Matzileinu Miyadam.

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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> reply-to: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> to: internetparshasheet@gmail.com date: Jul 17, 2025, 7:55 PM subject: Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - Take the First Step read this on the web

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg Take the First Step In Parshas Pinchas, the daughters of Tzafchad approach Moshe Rabbeinu with a request to be given their father's portion in Eretz Yisrael (27:1-4). When they heard Hashem's command, "To these (meaning to those who were counted) shall the land be divided as an inheritance" (26:53), the daughters of Tzafchad understood that only males were to receive a portion in Eretz Yisrael (see Tosafos, Bava Basra 119b, s.v. "ilu"). Since their father did not have any sons, he would be denied a share in the land. They therefore asked to be given their father's portion.

On the surface, their request seems puzzling. If they knew that women were not supposed to receive a share of the inheritance, then why did they ask for their father's portion? The answer is that the daughters of Tzafchad (and the women of that generation in general) had a deep affection for Eretz Yisrael (see Rashi, Pinchas 26:64, and Midrash Rabbah there 21:10). They could not bear the thought that their father and his family would not be given a share of the land. Therefore, despite the fact that their request seemed illogical, they felt the need to ask. And what happened? Hashem responded by including a clause in the laws of inheritance that allows for a daughter to receive her father's possessions when there are no sons in the family.

This is a recurrent theme we find in many different contexts - that when a person feels an intense desire for spiritual connection, Hashem enables that person to achieve his aspiration, but only after the person pushes himself and takes the first step toward his goal.

In Parshas B'ha'aloscha (9:7), after Moshe Rabbeinu instructs the Jewish people to bring a korban Pesach, a few men who were ritually impure approach Moshe Rabbeinu with a complaint: "Why should we be diminished

- lama nigara - by not offering Hashem's korban in its proper time with the rest of bnei Yisrael (just because we are tamei)?" At first glance, their objection seems unreasonable. If the halacha dictates that one who is ritually impure cannot bring a korban, then their problem is insurmountable. What purpose was there in protesting a rule of the Torah?

Apparently, these men had such an intense desire to bring the korban Pesach that they could not let go. Even though their complaint did not make sense, they had to speak up. And, once again, what is Hashem's response? He introduces the mitzvah of Pesach Sheini to offer a second chance for those who were unable to bring the korban Pesach on time. Both the daughters of Tzafchad and the men who were ritually impure are given the spiritual connection they requested, but only after they ask for it.

Similarly, Yaakov Avinu experiences a miracle on his way to Charan because of his heartfelt spiritual aspiration. The Torah says, "Vayifga bamakom - and he encountered the place" (Vayeitzei 28:11). The word vayifga sounds like Yaakov Avinu arrived at the place unexpectedly. Chazal explain (Chullin 91a) that this indicates that the earth contracted for him - kaftza lo ha'aretz. When Yaakov arrived in Charan, he said to himself, "Could it be that I passed a place where my forefathers davened, and I didn't daven there?" He set his mind to return, and the earth contracted and brought Har Hamoriyah to him.

If Hashem wanted Yaakov to daven at Har Hamoriyah, the future location of the Beis Hamikdash, then why did He not stop him there on his way to Charan? Rashi (Vayeitzei 28:17) answers that since Yaakov did not have the desire in his heart to daven when he passed the makom Hamikdash, Hashem did not stop him. Only after he set his mind to return to the place, and he traveled to Beis El, did the earth contract on his behalf. When Yaakov felt an intense desire to connect with Hashem through tefillah, and he acted on that feeling, Hashem performed a miracle to make it easier for Yaakov to reach his goal.

There is no limit to what Hashem can do to help a person achieve all his spiritual aspirations. But He waits for the person to take the first step. And sometimes that can seem like a daunting task. Megillas Eichah ends with the plaintive cry of the Jewish people, "Hashiveinu - return us, Hashem, to You, and we will return (we will do teshuva)." Chazal comment (Midrash Rabbah Eichah 5:21), "The Jewish people say to Hashem, 'It is up to You; return us Hashem to You, and we will return.' But Hashem responds, 'No, it is up to you, 'Return to Me, and I will return to you' (Zecharya 1:3)."

We long for redemption, for reconciliation with Hakadosh Boruch Hu. But Hashem waits for us to draw closer to Him. "Ha'ba li'taheir mesayim oso - one who seeks to purify himself receives the heavenly assistance he needs to achieve that goal" (Shabbos 104a). Hashem is willing and able to help, but only if a person is ba li'taheir - only if he really wants it and he makes the first move to come close.

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### **The 'Zealotry' of Pinchas Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald**

This week's parasha, parashat Pinchas, opens with the conclusion of the story, that began in last week's parasha, of a tribal leader of Israel who committed a lewd public act with a Midianite woman.

In parashat Pinchas the protagonists are identified as people of pedigree background, Zimri the son of Salu, a prince of the tribe of Simeon, and Kozbi the daughter of Zur, a Midianite princess.

The Midrash (Tanchuma, Numbers 25:26 and Talmud Sanhedrin, 82a), cited by Rashi, portrays the brazen act of Zimri and Kozbi as a direct challenge to Moses' authority and personal integrity. The Midrash states that Zimri approached Moses, demanding to know whether he could cohabit with Kozbi, the Midianite princess. When Moses categorically prohibited the act,



Zimri directly challenged Moses by saying: “Why then were you [Moses] permitted to cohabit with a Midianite woman [Tziporah]?!” Of course, Moses’ marriage to Tziporah had occurred many years before the Torah was given, and was therefore not subject to the laws of sanctification through marriage that had been given at Sinai. But Zimri wanted to be provocative, and he clearly succeeded! Moses obviously felt compromised, and seemed unable to respond to Zimri, who proceeded to perform a carnal act with Kozbi in front of all the people. Into this void stepped a young relative of Moses, the grandson of his brother Aaron, whose name was Pinchas. At least according to the Midrash, (Tanchuma, Numbers 25:26 and Talmud Sanhedrin, 82b) cited by Rashi (Numbers 25:11), Pinchas knew well what it meant to be subject to public embarrassment and scorn. The Torah (Leviticus 9), records that on the first day of Nissan, in the second year of the people’s travels in the wilderness, the Tabernacle was sanctified and dedicated. On that same day the priests were invested into the priesthood. Despite being Aaron’s grandson, Pinchas the son of Elazar, was not designated to serve as a priest together with his father and his uncles. The skeptics of Israel, of whom there were always many, immediately noted the failure of Pinchas to become a priest. Looking for a reason to explain why Pinchas was not invested, they ridiculed him, pointing out that Pinchas was obviously not worthy of the priesthood since, on his mother’s side, he was the grandson of Jethro the idolater, who offered fattened animals as a sacrifice to the idols. They began to refer to Pinchas by the embarrassing name, “Ben Puti,” the son of one who fattens! Obviously stunned by the actions of Zimri and Kozbi, neither Moses, Aaron nor any of the seventy elders who witnessed the travesty, responded to this brazen challenge. Pinchas, who had spent much of his life fending off critics and attackers, felt compelled to step in to defend the dignity of G-d and Moses. The Al-mighty subsequently rewarded Pinchas for his heroic actions with a Brit Shalom” (Numbers 25:12) G-d’s covenant of peace, as well as “Brit K’hoo’not Olam (Numbers 25:13) the covenant of an eternal priesthood, because of the vengeance that he exacted on the enemies of G-d, as well as for bringing about atonement for the sins of the Children of Israel. Through his courageous act, Pinchas showed that he was not at all a zealot, but rather a seeker of peace. Pinchas’ actions were motivated by his concern lest Zimri’s act of immorality would cause resounding harm to the people. A plague had broken out among the people, and Pinchas felt compelled to act in order to save the nation. It was only because of Pinchas’ actions that the plague, that had struck the people of Israel, killing 24,000 people as the result of their immorality with the Moabite and Midianite women, was now stayed. In this way, Pinchas showed that he was a faithful descendant of his grandfather Aaron, a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, who deeply loves G-d’s creatures\_\_

**Potomac Torah Study Center Divrei Torah** for Shabbat Pinchas 5785

from: Alan Fisher <afisherads@yahoo.com>

BS”D July 18, 2025

Potomac Torah Study Center Vol. 12 #39, July 18-19, 2025; 23 Tammuz 5785; Pinchas 5785; Mevarchim HaHodesh Rosh Hodesh Av is next Shabbat Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) at [www.PotomacTorah.org](http://www.PotomacTorah.org). Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah archives.

If a person reads the verses in the parsha for this week and does not know the name of the parsha, would “Pinchas” be an obvious choice? Of the fifty-four parashot in the Torah, only six – eleven percent – have a person as the name: Noach, Chayei Sarah, Yitro, Korach, Balak, and Pinchas.

Three of the individuals whose names identify a parsha are not Jewish (Noach, Yitro, and Balak). Korach and Balak are “bad guys,” to use a description that my children and grandchildren used when young. There is no parsha named for Avraham, Yitzhak, Yaakov, Aharon, or most other significant Jews. Why Pinchas?

Pinchas comes to our attention after he takes a sword and kills Zimri, a prince of Shimon, and Cozbi, daughter of a prince of Midian, when they perform a disgusting form of idolatry to Peor (the central idol of Midian and

Moab). Once Zimri and Cozbi perform their idolatry in front of B’Nai Yisrael, God starts a plague that quickly kills 24,000 people. When Pinchas kills Zimri and Cozbi, Hashem stops the plague and announces a reward of peace (and permanent status of Kohen for Pinchas and his descendants). Rabbi David Fohrman and his associates at [alephbeta.org](http://alephbeta.org) summarize the stories in Pinchas to determine a common theme. Here are the stories in the parsha:

- (1) Pinchas kills the sinning couple (a high ranking Jewish man and a Midianite princess), and God presents an everlasting reward to Pinchas.
- (2) God has Moshe conduct a census of the Jews, by tribe and family, listing the heads of each family by name. These families will inherit permanent holdings in the land.
- (3) The daughters of Tzelofchad approach Moshe, say that their father is dead and that they have no brothers. They also want to inherit so there can be a permanent land holding to keep their father’s name alive. God finds their request to have merit and amends the inheritance to include daughters when there is no son to inherit.
- (4) God tells Moshe to go up a mountain to view the land and informs him that he will then die. Moshe requests that God appoint a proper leader to lead the people into the land. Hashem selects Yehoshua and tells Moshe to appoint him in front of the people and to transfer some of his Ruach Kodesh to Yehoshua.
- (5) Hashem tells Moshe to command the people which korbanot to present each day and the Musaf (additional) offerings to give on Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, and each Yom Tov.

Rabbi Fohrman and his scholars identify legacy as the common theme that connects all the stories in the parsha. The legacy for Pinchas is that he becomes a Kohen and all his descendants will also be Kohanim. (The initial appointment of Kohanim is to all sons of Aharon born after his appointment. Since Pinchas was born before Aharon becomes a Kohen, he is not a Kohen himself until God appoints him as a reward for stopping the plague at Baal Peor.)

The census and request of the daughters of Tzelofchad clearly relate to legacy, because they determine the permanent land holdings of the families that enter Eretz Yisrael at the time of Yehoshua. Although needy families could “sell” their land if necessary, the land reverts to the original land holders every Yovel year – so the land allocations are permanent until conquering nations take the Jews into exile and tribal identities are lost. The land allocations do not include Moshe – there are no grants to his sons Gershom and Eliezer. Pirkei Avot opens by presenting Moshe’s legacy – Yehoshua, the judges, the men of the great assembly, and a long list of Rabbis who preserve the Torah that Hashem presents to Moshe and that his followers clarified through the Oral Law, always connecting new decisions by connecting them with statements in the Torah and previous religious case law.

Hashem presents the laws in chapters 28 and 29, the daily korbanot and all the Musaf korbanot, to Moshe either on Har Sinai or while B’Nai Yisrael are near the base of Har Sinai before our ancestors leave to complete the journey to Eretz Yisrael. The Torah presents this material here, in Pinchas, for thematic reasons. Once Pinchas becomes a Kohen and the priesthood will remain among his descendants, the details of the burnt offerings (olot) fit thematically in this parsha. Performing these korbanot is an important part of the legacy of Pinchas.

Rabbi Dr. Katriel (Kenneth) Brander reminds us weekly that the period since the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023, with the surge in anti-Semitic attacks all over the world, has brought Jews in Israel and the Diaspora closer together. While the obligations of Haredi Jews in helping defend Israel is still evolving, many frum Jews in Israel – both men and women – combine religious studies with helping defend the country. Half the women graduates of religious Zionist high schools now enlist in the IDF, and ten percent of them seek role in combat units. As more segments of the Israeli society work together to defend the country, and Jews in the Diaspora identify more closely with Israel, we look forward to a better future for Israel, Jews, and all people who wish for a better world. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard



Cahan, z"l, shared Rabbi Brander's desire for all elements of the Israeli community to work together, and we try to teach this wish to our children and grandchildren.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and Alan

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**Alan A. Fisher** American Dahlia Society 1 Rock Falls Ct. Rockville, MD 20854 USA [AFisherADS@Yahoo.com](mailto:AFisherADS@Yahoo.com)

from: **Rabbi Kaganoff** <ymkaganoff@gmail.com> to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com date: May 13, 2025, 5:19 AM subject: Klal hatzarich lifrat

Since one of the examples of klal hatzarich lifrat is in Parshas Emor...

The Thirteen Midos of Rabbi Yishmael

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Reasoning Can we restore a lost mesorah on the basis of logic?

Question #2: Kal vachomer If an opening is large enough for a football tackle to rush through unimpeded, shouldn't a healthy ten-year-old be able to walk through it?

Question #3: Gezeirah shavah What is meant that something is an "equal decree"?

Foreword: Immediately prior to the kaddish derabbanan recited at the end of the korbanos section of our davening, we recite a beraisa in which we enumerate the thirteen "midos" of Rabbi Yishmael, a listing of methods whereby the laws of the Torah shebe'al peh are derived from the written Torah. This beraisa is the beginning of the introduction to the Sifra (also called the Toras Kohanim), the halachic midrash of the book of Vayikra.

The goal of this article is to explain the beraisa of Rabbi Yishmael, but I must first explain what halachic midrash is. Halachic midrash is the method whereby the laws of the Torah shebe'al peh can be derived from the Written Torah. When Moshe Rabbeinu spent forty days on Har Sinai, Hashem taught him all the laws of the Oral Torah. Moshe then taught these laws to the Bnei Yisrael in a method that is described in the Gemara (Ervin 54b) such that each adult male Jew would hear the laws four different times. Each person kept his own private notes to help him remember the laws of the Torah shebe'al peh.

The system was not perfect. When Moshe Rabbeinu passed on, the Jewish people realized collectively that they could not recall clearly thousands of laws that Moshe had taught them. The Gemara teaches that Asniel ben Kenaz was able to restore these laws to the collective memory by figuring them out bepilpulo, by use of dialectic reasoning.

To quote the passage of Gemara (Temurah 16a):

Immediately prior to his passing on to Gan Eden, Moshe Rabbeinu said to Yehoshua, "Ask of me every doubt that you have!" Yehoshua answered, "Rebbe, have I left you for a moment and gone somewhere else? Did you not write about me that 'his assistant, Yehoshua bin Nun, never left the ohel mo'eid'" (Shemos 33:11)? At that moment, Yehoshua weakened (as a punishment for the lack of humility implicit in his answer [Maharsha; cf. Rashi]): he forgot three hundred halachos and also now had seven hundred uncertainties (which were discovered after Moshe passed away). The entire people of Israel rose up against Yehoshua, planning to kill him... The beraisa taught: seventeen hundred cases of kal vachomer, gezeirah shavah, and derived halachic details were forgotten during the mourning period for Moshe. Rabbi Avahu responded that they were "retrieved by Asniel ben Kenaz with his dialectic reasoning."

Thus, the opening question to our article: "How can we restore a lost mesorah on the basis of logic?"

The answer is that, alongside the Torah shebe'al peh and the written Torah, there is a mesorah of rules whereby the laws of the Torah shebe'al peh are derived from the written Torah. These laws were all part of the original Oral Torah, as were the rules, which provide a backup whereby the laws may be retrieved should they be forgotten.

The rules for deriving the laws fall into two categories:

Extra words -- yalfusa 1. Some halachos are derived on the basis of extra words or parts of words in the Torah. An example of this is that, when the Torah provides lengthy instructions for offering the various korbanos each day of Sukkos, a discerning reader will notice that the template reading of the different days is not identical. While the wine libations on these days are identical, the

word used to describe those libations varies, twice with a נ added and once with a ו added. These extra letters spell the word נלם, water, whence we derive that, on Sukkos, there is a unique service called nisuch hamayaim, pouring of water on the mizbei'ach. This law is not mentioned anywhere else in the Written Torah, but is expounded upon in the Oral Torah, the Torah shebe'al peh.

Clearly understanding the pesukim of the Torah provides the sources for these halachos, and this is a common way that these laws are derived by the Gemara and by the halachic midrashim. Understanding the grammar as Chazal understood the pesukim of the Torah is an essential way towards deriving these laws. The absolute master in explaining these rules is the Malbim, in his work entitled Ayeles Hashachar, usually printed as an introduction to his commentary to Vayikra. The Malbim writes that he had originally planned to provide a thorough explanation of the halachic exegesis process as a running commentary to the Sifra. However, after writing the commentary to just two pesukim, he discovered that the results of this work would be the length of a multi-volume encyclopedia. As a result, he wrote instead an introductory work, Ayeles Hashachar, elucidating the grammatical principles whereby Chazal derived the words of the Torah as a source for the laws of Torah shebe'al peh. Throughout his commentary to Vayikra, the Malbim refers to the Ayeles Hashachar to explain how Chazal understood each pasuk and arrived at their conclusion.

Midos 2. Other halachos are derived on the basis of hermeneutic rules, called midos, that are methods whereby halachos not obviously mentioned in the written Torah are taught. In other words, these halachos were included in the Torah shebe'al peh, but, again, as a backup, they could also be derived on the basis of the rules of Torah shebe'al peh. The thirteen rules that we recite in our davening is Rabbi Yishmael's version of these rules. There are slight discrepancies or differences of opinion among tanna'im concerning some of the rules used to derive these laws, meaning that the details of how these rules work were occasionally disputed. That is why the midos are referred to as the thirteen rules of Rabbi Yishmael. This article will not address the disputes.

These are the thirteen rules that are mentioned in the beraisa of Rabbi Yishmael, as understood by the Ra'avad and most late commentators: 1. Kal vachomer 2. Gezeirah shavah 3. Binyan av 4. Klal ufrat 5. Prat uchlal 6. Klal ufrat uchlal 7. Klal shehu tzarich lefrat 8. Davar shehayah bichlal viyatza lelamid 9. Davar shehayah bichlal viyatza ke'inyano 10. Davar shehayah bichlal viyatza shelo ke'inyano 11. Davar shehayah bichlal viyatza bedavar chodosh 12. Davar halameid mei'inyano 13. Shnei kesuvim hamach'chishin.

Those familiar with the beraisa of Rabbi Yishmael will immediately note that I have omitted significant sections of the beraisa.

A. In some instances, the beraisa provides two variations of a rule, such as, it presents two types of binyan av. I will explain why there are two types, but they are both manifestations of the same hermeneutic principle.

B. Some of these rules are mentioned by the beraisa without any explanation as to how they work or what they mean. For example, four of the first five rules, kal vachomer, gezeira shavah, klal uprat and prat uchlal are not at all explained. On the other hand, the method of derivation of most of the other rules is mentioned in the beraisa, although they are never fully explained. Iy"H, I will be explaining these rules.

Frequency We should also be aware that some of these rules have thousands of applications, whereas others of them appear very few times in all of Talmudic literature.

Kal vachomer At this point, I will explain the first of Rabbi Yishmael's midos, which is perhaps the most obvious rule in terms of logic: the kal vachomer. Among the thirteen rules, this one is unique, because it actually appears several times in the Chumash itself as part of someone's logical argument. For example, to prove that they are innocent of stealing Yosef's goblet, the brothers rally a kal vachomer. "If we returned the money that we found in our sacks, how could we possibly have considered taking something that is not ours?" (Bereishis 44:8). Very simply put, a kal vachomer means that if something is true in a more obvious situation, it should certainly hold true in a less obvious situation. A simple application is as follows: If a burly, 6' 10" football tackle weighing 350 pounds can race through a passageway unhindered, a 100-pound, 5' person with no ambulatory difficulties should certainly be able to enter via the same opening. Ein onshin min hadin There are a few instances in which a kal vachomer cannot teach a halacha. Although a kal vachomer can prove that something is prohibited, it cannot be used to establish punishment, a principle called ein onshin min hadin. When the Torah imposes a penalty or punishment for violating a law, we cannot

derive by means of a kal vachomer that this penalty or punishment applies to a newly derived law.

Why not? We find two different reasons why ein onshin min hadin. One is that, although the punishment described by the Torah may be appropriate for a lesser crime, someone violating a more serious infraction should perhaps be punished in a harsher way. In other words, kal vachomer can teach that if the Torah prohibited a lesser sin, it certainly prohibited a more serious infraction. However, the more serious crime might require a more severe punishment than what the Torah meted out for the lesser offense.

Another reason explains that ein onshin min hadin is based on possible human logical fallibility. In general, we are obligated to apply our G-d-given intelligence when studying mitzvos, and kal vachomer is an example of this. However, prior to meting out judgment on the basis of a kal vachomer, we must recognize that there might be a reason why what appears as a kal vachomer is actually not.

According to this approach, the Torah's precept not to punish someone until and unless we are absolutely certain of his guilt requires that he not be punished on the basis of a kal vachomer.

These two approaches are not mutually exclusive; both factors might be true. We cannot punish someone on the basis of a kal vachomer because the kal vachomer itself may not be fully accurate; or the kal vachomer might be correct, and precisely because this act is a more serious crime its perpetrator should not be punished this way.

Dayo There is another instance whereby someone might think he can apply a kal vachomer, but he cannot. This is referred to as a case of dayo laba min hadin li'heyos kanidon, which means that you cannot derive with a kal vachomer more than the original source teaches, regardless as to how compelling the kal vachomer might appear. The Sifra picks an example of this from a pasuk in Chumash. When Miriam complained to Aharon about Moshe's behavior regarding his wife Tziporah, Miriam was guilty of saying loshon hora at that moment and turned white as a metzora. The pasuk then states, "Had her father spat in her face, would she not not have been ashamed for seven days" (Bamidbar 12:14). The Sifra completes the thought of the pasuk: for violating what Hashem has taught, she should be punished for fourteen days. Yet the Torah continues that her punishment is for seven days! Since the Torah concludes that she should be punished for no longer than she would have had her father censured her, any longer cannot be attributed to the kal vachomer.

Gezeirah shavah The second principle of Rabbi Yishmael's list is gezeirah shavah, which is a legal analogy based on the use of the same term in two separate cases. To explain this, we first need to translate and explain the words. Most people familiar with the concept of gezeirah shavah are not aware of the origin of the term. The word gezeirah in this context means "word structure;" the word shavah means "similarity." Therefore, the term means "a similarity of words."

Here is an example of a gezeirah shavah: through the use of the same term regarding the mitzvos of eating matzoh on Seder night and on sitting in the sukkah on Sukkos we derive that, although on the rest of the seven days of Sukkos a person may avoid eating bread and other foods that require him to eat in the sukkah, on the first night of Sukkos he is, indeed, required to eat a meal in the sukkah.

Please note that the halacha requiring that we eat in the sukkah on the first night was taught as a mesorah from Sinai. The gezeirah shavah is a means for making certain that this law would not be forgotten.

At this point, we can answer another of our opening questions: What is meant that something is an "equal decree"?

The answer is that this is a complete mistranslation and misunderstanding of the words gezeirah shavah, just as a "helicopter mom" does not require a pilot's license. The word gezeirah shavah means "a similarity of words."

Same meaning Those who are familiar with studying the concept of gezeirah shavah as it surfaces in the Gemara know that sometimes a gezeirah shavah is the exact same word, other times it is the same root, but not the exact same word, and at other times it can even be two words or terms that mean the same thing but are completely different words. One example of this last case is a gezeirah shavah that the Gemara derives from the words shav and ba in the laws of metzora (which is cited by Rashi on Chumash, Vayikra 14:39). Another example is where the words shachat and zavach are used as a gezeirah shavah (Chullin 85a). The two words both mean to slaughter.

There are many rules governing how a gezeirah shavah may be used to derive laws, depending on such issues as whether the word is repeated in both instances

of its application, the exact word is used in both places, and are there other places in which a more obvious comparison may exist. We will not study these differences in our article.

Most people do not realize how many gezeiros shavos actually exist. I am in possession of a lengthy manuscript that explains many of the usages and rules applying to gezeirah shavah, and includes an extensive list of every case of gezeirah shavah that its author identified -- over four hundred instances of gezeirah shavah and thousands of applications.

Gezeirah shavah is unlike any of the other thirteen midos in one very important way: regarding every other midah, a general mesorah exists to use the midah to derive halachos. Gezeirah shavah, on the other hand, requires that there is also a mesorah via Moshe at Har Sinai that the specific words are a gezeirah shavah. Otherwise, ein adam dan gezeirah shavah mei'atzmo, someone cannot declare that certain terms or words are a gezeirah shavah on the basis of his own personal authority.

Exception Based on a passage of Talmud Yerushalmi (Pesachim 6:1), we know that there is one exception to this rule. The Yerushalmi notes that, in an instance when we have a mesorah from an earlier source that a specific law is true, but we no longer know the hermeneutic origin for this law, someone may suggest a comparable word association, a gezeirah shavah that might be the hermeneutic source for this law.

However, in this instance, we cannot derive any new rulings with the gezeirah shavah. All we can do is suggest that perhaps the hermeneutic source of this law is the gezeirah shavah. (According to many rishonim, including Rashi, a similar concept exists relative to Halacha leMoshe miSinai. When we know that a halacha is true, but we are unaware that it has a hermeneutic source, we can suggest that its origin is a Halacha leMoshe miSinai [see Rashi, Bava Kama 3b].) Be'ezras Hashem, we will continue this topic of analyzing the thirteen midos taught by Rabbi Yishmael in a future week.

Conclusion When the Gemara teaches that the teachings of the rabbonim are dearer to Hashem than the laws of the Torah, it certainly includes the vast halachic literature devoted to understanding the thirteen midos. The Gemara expresses this notion by saying that what is derived from a drasha is more cherished even than the Written Torah (Yevamos 2b; 3a; see also Ritva and Aruch Laneir, Makkos 13a; Maharam Lublin, Bava Kamma 17b). To quote Rav Chaggai in the name of Rav Shmuel bar Nachman: "The Torah refers to that which is taught in the Oral Torah and that which is taught in the Written Torah, yet we do not know which is more cherished. When the pasuk states, 'according to these words I sealed the treaty with you and with Yisrael' (Yirmiyahu 33:25), this teaches us that the Oral Torah is more dear" (Yerushalmi, Peah 2:4).