



# הַמִּזְרָחִי

# HAMIZRACHI

## PARSHA WEEKLY



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ISRAEL  
Parsha Picture

אַךְ בְּגוֹרֵל יִחַלֵּק אֶת הָאָרֶץ...  
במדבר כ"ג

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Dedicated in celebration of the birth of Ben-Yishai Lavi Mirvis.  
May he grow up to cherish the values of Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael.



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# “G-d of the Spirits of All Flesh”

## The Two Crucial Leadership Qualities



**Rabbi Doron Perez**  
Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

No one knew better than Moshe what qualities any future leader would need in order to succeed. After all, hand-picked by G-d, Moshe had loyally led the Jewish People through forty of the most tumultuous years in Jewish History and knew them better than anyone. The time had come to select a successor to bring Bnei Yisrael into the land.

Moshe beseeches G-d to provide the ideal type of leader and while doing so refers to Hashem by a unique terminology, used only twice in all of Tanach – both by Moshe himself and both in the book of Bamidbar. This phrase unlocks the key to the mystery of inspiring optimal leadership:

”וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־ה' לֵאמֹר: יִפְקֹד ה' אֱלֹקֵי הַרוּחַת לְכָל־בְּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל־הָעֵדָה.”

“Moses spoke to G-d, saying, Let G-d, **G-d of the spirits of all flesh**, appoint someone over the community.” (Bamidbar 27:15-16)

What an unusual reference to G-d! Every reference to Hashem reveals a different quality of G-d's interaction with the world. Elokim – the All Powerful G-d of Justice; Y-K-I-K, G-d of Mercy and many more. What is the necessary G-dly leadership quality that Moshe wishes to evoke in Hashem as ‘G-d of the spirits of all flesh’?

Rashi famously quotes the Midrash to reveal the answer:

Moshe prayed: “Lord of the Universe, the personality of every person is known to you, and no two people are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will tolerate each person according to their individual character” (Rashi's comment on the above verse quoting Midrash Tanchuma 10).

Nothing is more unique than the human spirit. Each and every one of the billions

of human beings on earth are different one from the other. Their unique external facial features reflect a unique set of internal qualities and traits shaping their individual personalities. Although all are created in the Image of G-d, the greatness of G-d is that each person's *neshama* reflects a different facet of G-d's greatness. Each person is entirely different and indeed a world unto themselves – a unique free and individual spirit.

No one knew this better than Moshe. He therefore knew that the type of ideal leader has to have exceptional Emotional Intelligence – particularly a deep empathetic understanding of the differences between all people and the crucial ability to put up with and tolerate these differences.

### להכיל – What's in a word

There is a beautiful word in Hebrew which expresses this quality without parallel word in English. It is להכיל – roughly and inadequately translated as ‘the ability to put up with, accommodate, contain, tolerate’ – all falling short of the mark. In Hebrew it is extracted from the root word כָּל – all or everything’ – and in the infinitive would mean something like ‘to be able to put up with and find place for everyone’ – all expressed in one encompassing Hebrew word.

This is the greatest G-d given quality needed for a leader according to Moshe.

Hence Joshua is selected by G-d two verses later because he possesses this very quality: ”וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה קַח־לְךָ אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־רוּחַ בּוֹ וְסָמַכְתָּ אֶת־יָדְךָ עָלָיו.”

“And G-d answered Moses, ‘Single out Joshua son of Nun, who has **spirit in him** and lay your hand upon him’” (Bamidbar 27:18).

## One person sins and all are punished?

In this very same way, Moshe approached G-d in Parashat Korach in order to evoke the same quality. When Korach initiated his rebellion against Moshe, it seemed that he managed to win over the entire community with his demagoguery.<sup>1</sup>

Hashem then turns to Moshe and Aharon and says:

”וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: הַבִּדְלוּ מֵתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאֹכְלֶהָ אֲתֶם כְּגֹעַ: וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחַת לְכָל-בָּשָׂר הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יִחְטָא וְעַל כָּל-הָעֵדָה תִּקְרָא׃”

“And G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Stand back from this community that I may annihilate them in an instant!’ But they fell on their faces and said, ‘O G-d, **G-d of the spirits of all flesh**, When one member sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?’” (Bamidbar 16:20-22)

Hashem tells Moshe and Aharon to separate themselves from the congregations Hashem intends to destroy them all. Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah, says that the simple reading of the verses apply to the whole Congregation of Israel who had been won over to Korach's cause.

Hashem tells Moshe and Aharon to separate themselves from the congregation as Hashem intends to destroy them all. Moshe and Aharon knew that it was only Korach who had instigated the entire rebellion and turned to Hashem and only he who ought to be punished. Referring to Him as the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, they beseech him to single out the real sinner and instigator for punishment – the G-d who understands the innermost thoughts of all human beings knows therefore to distinguish between the innermost motives and intentions of the spirit – to discern what the human eye cannot.

We see with clarity that the phrase of ‘G-d of the spirits of all flesh’ refers once again – to one particular Divine quality – the unique ability to discern the differences of the innermost thoughts, traits and qualities of all human beings. The ability to not only discern but also to patiently put up with these differences is the single most critical quality of a leader according to Moshe.

## Pinchas is Disqualified as the Leader

The Kotzker Rebbe says something remarkable regarding the timing of Joshua's selection as the incoming leader. He questions as to why it took so long for Moshe to appoint a leader since already two Parashat ago Moshe is told that he won't be leading the people into the land. Why specifically now after the incident of Pinchas killing the Jewish tribal prince and Midianite woman is Joshua selected?

He answers amazingly that Moshe had believed that Pinchas was the one to succeed him as the next leader of the people until he killed the sinners. Although his zealous act for G-d stopped the terrible plague and he was rewarded with the great blessing of *Shalom*, the Kotzker Rebbe writes –

קנאי לא יכול להיות מנהיג ישראל

A zealot cannot be a leader of Israel. (Amud Ha'emet pg. 42)

While zealousness and fundamentalism have an important place in religious life, it disqualifies one for successful leadership. A more understanding demeanor of the failings, foibles and idiosyncrasies of the human spirit is necessary.

## Leading From the Front

The second critical quality that Moshe expects his successor to possess is the courageousness to lead from the front:

”אֲשֶׁר-יֵצֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עִדָּתוֹ כִּצְאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-לָהֶם רֹעֵה׃”

“Who shall go out before them and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in so that G-d's community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.” (Bamidbar 27:17)

Once again, Rashi highlights the uniqueness of this requirement. He shares that the practice of many of the leaders of the time was **not** to go out to battle but rather remain in the comfort of their homes and palaces while their soldiers fought.

Indeed, over the years and including today, not only political leaders but even high-ranking military officers don't endanger themselves to lead from the front but rather remain in the rear.

Jewish leadership could not be more different. It requires the leader to lead by example and therefore to lead from the front, even if it means putting themselves

in harm's way. Moshe, himself, as Rashi recounts, led the battle charge against Sichon – the King of the Emorites and Joshua and David would do the same. Jewish leadership is to lead from the front. The truth is that there is a strong rationale as to why a leader should remain behind. Leading from the front means endangering the most important person in the battlefield, the leader themselves. While protecting them makes perfect sense, a critical price is paid in keeping the leader back – the lack of commitment and personal example. Leading from the front shows this personal example: a self-sacrifice, deep courage and conviction and wholehearted commitment to the cause. Few things are more motivating and inspiring to followers than a leader who talks the talk and walks the walk. Leading means demanding of yourself more than you demand of your followers. Leading through a sense of service as opposed to privilege.

It is true that the likelihood of the higher ranking military brass and leadership falling in battle is higher with this ‘lead from the front’ attitude. This does therefore place a greater responsibility on the system to produce a chain of successive leadership command where others can take over in the case of a loss. Such is the case in the Israeli army where there is a disproportionate loss of field officers in battle. ‘אחרי’ – after me is the army motto. The I.D.F therefore places a great premium on nurturing a chain of command prepared to step up and fill the leadership shoes.

## The Bottom Line

The twin complementary leadership qualities then are these – leading from the front by personal example with unrelenting conviction, courageousness and personal example while at the same time having a deep understanding, care and concern for every individual, lovingly tolerating all that one is leading.

Such was Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership throughout his time in the desert. Such was the quality of Yehoshua and such is the recipe for the success of all Jewish leaders.

1. Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah to this verse says that the simple reading of the verses imply that indeed the whole Congregation of Israel had been influenced by Korach.

## PIRKEI AVOT

## Sustaining Peace



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רְבוֹ שְׁמֵעוּ בְּן גְּמְלִיאל אוֹמֵר, עַל שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד: עַל הַדִּיּוּן, וְעַל הַאֲמֵת, וְעַל הַשְּׁלוֹם,  
שְׁנָאֵמֵר (זכריה ח) אֲמֵת וּמִשְׁפָּט שְׁלוֹם בְּשִׁעְרֵיכֶם (אבות א:ח):

## A Significant Peace

Last week we saw that Rashba<sup>1</sup> presents *din* and *emet* as two of the three values that sustain the world. The third value is *shalom*. Though we value and strive for justice and truth, it is critical that we also sustain and foster *shalom*. A world that values only truth and justice is not sustainable.<sup>1</sup>

The Torah places *shalom* at the climax of *Birkat Kohanim*. Chazal followed suit with “all of our tefillot” (including *Shemoneh Esrei*, *Bentching*, and *Kaddish*). Shas Mishnayot (Uktzin 3:12) also concludes with *shalom*, which it celebrates as the vessel that encompasses and facilitates *berachah*.

Chazal teach us that *shalom* is equal in significance to the entire creation and the combined significance of all that exists; “without it, we have nothing.”

*Shalom* is important to both man and G-d. Obviously, it is important for man who needs peace in order to survive, thrive, and build society. Interestingly, Hashem values *shalom* as well. He chose it as one of His names and gave us the Torah only once we were at peace with one another. Chazal go even further in asserting that when we live in peace with each other (even if we are idol worshippers) Hashem “cannot” (!) cause us to be defeated in war.

To restore peace between husband and wife, Hashem mandated that a *sotah* drink miracle water which clarifies her fidelity. To show the importance of the goal, Hashem commanded that we erase His name as part of the process. The same result could have been achieved without this erasure; by including it, Hashem taught us how much He values and we should value *shalom*.<sup>2</sup>

## Pursuing Peace

Rebbe Yehudah learned from the *sotah* precedent that *shalom* is also something we should actively pursue. Sefer Tehillim (34:15) encourages us to “seek” and “pursue” peace. This is significant because many *mitzvot* are situational. If we happen upon eggs under a mother bird, we send away the mother before taking the eggs. If we choose to build a house, we put a *mezuzah* on it. *Shalom*, though, is something we are meant to proactively seek out.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier on in Avot’s first Perek, Hillel identifies Aharon HaKohen as the one we should emulate as a model of how to love and pursue peace. Aharon worked tirelessly to restore peace between spouses and between friends. He would help them appreciate each other and realize that the other appreciated them as well.<sup>4</sup> Understandably, when Aharon died, the whole Jewish people deeply mourned his loss.

The pursuit of peace is so important that we do so even at the expense of other significant values. In order to generate peace, Chazal instituted our using the word *shalom* as a friendly greeting to one another despite it being Hashem’s holy name.

Though one of the world’s pillars, even *emet* may and should sometimes be sacrificed for the *shalom* sake. Chazal derived this from the fact that Hashem lied to Avraham (about Sarah’s reaction to the news of her upcoming pregnancy) and Yosef’s brothers lied to him (about Yaaqov’s commandment that he forgive them) in order to sustain peace.

This is also why Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel married “across party lines” despite their disagreements concerning issues of marital status. Though both groups firmly believed in the truth of their respective

opinions, they avoided separating from one another. The Gemara (Yevamot 14b) explains that their actions fulfilled the pasuk “*ha’emet v’ha’shalom ahavu*” (Zecharia 8:19). They loved *emet*, but they loved *shalom* as well. We should learn from them not to allow our commitment to truth to keep us from living in peace with one another as one people.

## Higher Peace

The Akeidat Yitzchak and Rav Kook explain that *shalom* includes more than just the absence of hostility. The fullest (and truly meaningful) sense of the word includes people not just living in peace with one another, but also appreciating and working together with them. As opposed to the word “peace,” which derives from the Roman word “pax” and is related to the word “appeasement,” the Hebrew word “*shalom*,” like the related word “*shalem*,” means whole or complete. “*Shalom*” describes a situation where the whole Jewish people (and the whole world) live and work together as part of a complete, whole creation.

Rav Kook applies this to the goals described by Shimon HaTzadik at the beginning of Avot’s first perek. He explains that those involved in *gemilut chassadim* and those involved in *avodah* should appreciate one another’s endeavors. Additionally, both of them should respect and work with the theorists – those involved in the learning of Torah. In this way, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel’s statement at the end of the perek relates back to Shimon HaTzadik’s earlier one.

## Two Pieces

*Emet* and *shalom* are both important. The *mishnah* concludes by quoting the pasuk from Zechariah which teaches that both

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HAFTARAH - PARSHANUT ON THE PARSHA

# What We See – is What We Shall Be Begetting...Beatings or Blossoms?



**Rabbanit Shani Taragin**  
Educational Director, World Mizrahi

**A**s we approach the twenty-one days “*Bein HaMetzarim*” between Shiva Assar B’Tamuz and Tisha B’Av, we read the prophecies foretelling the destruction of Yirmiyahu and Yeshayahu. The three haftarah readings (ג' דפורענותא) begin with the first chapter of Yirmiyahu (1-2:3) who is inaugurated as a navi forty years prior to the destruction of the first Beit HaMikdash with visions accompanied by Hashem’s imploration - “What do you see?”

Yirmiyahu answers “I see a rod (*makel*) of an almond tree (*shaked*)” whereupon Hashem responds: “You have seen well for I shall bring My word quickly”. Rashi explains that the almond rod is indicative of the quick pace of the punishment Hashem will bring and quotes a *midrash aggada* (Kohelet Rabba 115b): Just as the almond blossoms for twenty-one days until fruition, so too Hashem will bring punishment in the twenty-one days between Shiva Assar B’Tamuz (when the siege around Jerusalem was breached) and Tisha B’Av (when the Mikdash was destroyed).

The Malbim (Yirmiyahu 1:11), with philological sensitivity, explains that one should not just focus on the almond, but also on Yirmiyahu’s identification of the rod as a *makel*; not a staff of leadership (*mateh*) nor a cane of support (*mishenet*), but particularly a *makel*, i.e. a rod used for striking. Yirmiyahu understood that Hashem’s message was an indicator not only of the pace but also of the theme; Hashem was to bring His word, i.e. His rod of striking and punishment upon the Nation.

Perhaps that is why Hashem inquires, “Yirmiyahu what do you see?” for Yirmiyahu could have easily seen the same rod and identified it as a *mateh*! After all, we recently learned in Parshat Korach (Bamidbar 17) that following the rebellion of Korach and his 250 followers against the G-d-given appointment of Aharon as the Kohen Gadol, Hashem demonstrated the divine nature of selection. Each tribal leader was commanded to present a staff (*mateh*) representing his tribe (*mateh*) before the Aron Hakodesh with his respective tribal name engraved. The next morning, only Aharon’s staff blossomed, brought forth buds, and bore ripe almonds, indicating Hashem’s selection of Aharon and his descendants as priestly leaders for generations to come. Yirmiyahu, himself a descendant of kehuna, could have mistakenly identified the almond rod as a *mateh* of leadership and divine selection. Hashem enjoins him to look closely – “Mah **Ata** Roeh?” – What do **YOU** see? , i.e. Do you see a staff of leadership and selection, or as you appreciate the context of Hashem’s words and the religious-historical *zeitgeist*, do you see impending punishment represented through the *makel*? Yirmiyahu intuitively answers correctly – he sees a *makel* of almond grain (Radak) – the striking of the people that is imminent.

Thirty-three years after the appointment of Yirmiyahu as court-prophet and the initial prophetic vision of the *makel shaked* (almond rod), Yirmiyahu is told that he must encourage the exiled Judean aristocracy to settle in the Diaspora! But the day will come, he encourages them, when Hashem will heal them of their wounds and return their wearied souls to the Land

of Israel - “And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them (*shakadeti*) to pluck up and to break down, and to overthrow and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over (*eshkod*) them to build and to plant, says Hashem.” (Yirmiyahu 31, 27)

The same verb – “*shakad*” is employed in these words of comfort; Just as Hashem brought the *makel* of striking - quickly as a *shaked*, so too He will bring redemption and rebuilding with similar alacrity and intensity. The employment of the same verb underscores the message of consolation; at times we are meant to anticipate the beatings of *galut* and punishment, and at other times we are meant to see the blossoming of fruit and redemption.

The divine question of Hashem to Yirmiyahu - “What do YOU see?” reverberates today, and is meant to echo in our hearts and minds particularly during these three weeks of national mourning. What do WE see? Do we see and anticipate rods of retribution or do we see blossoms of redemption? The answer lies in our internalizing the messages of the prophecies of the past. Are we deserving of the fruitful almonds and blossoms of planting in the Land or are we to be wary of impending strikes for not properly following religious directives and social sensitivities? The answer we learn from this week’s haftarah of Yirmiyahu’s vision of the almond rod is - what we see is up to us! This is the season wherein we determine what will blossom and ensue from our actions. Let us take these twenty-one days *Bein Hametzarim* to see and process our religious-national state with clearer vision and understanding so we may merit beautiful blossoms and fruit of redemption!

# Halachic Q&A



**Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon**

Head, Mizrahi Rabbinic Council | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot

**Question:** I am currently spending two weeks at Camp Simcha (a summer camp for children sick with serious cases of cancer, all are mid-chemotherapy), and am serving as the Rav of the camp. The camp has hundreds of children from all over the world, and it is touching to see how the volunteers from all over come and care for the children to the point where the children almost forget about their illnesses. Some of the volunteers asked me if they could wear their costumes during tefillah. They wear costumes throughout the morning, and it is difficult for them to go back and change throughout the day for tefillah (many of the children come from non-religious homes and the volunteers often do not have time to even daven three times a day). It is clear to me that the costumes add tremendously to the environment of simcha that is necessary for the camp, and it seems to me that the costumes fall in the category of “bigdey mitzvah” (clothing of a mitzvah) when being worn. Is there room to be lenient and allow for this?

Answer: Yasher Koach on this very important program. It is touching and warms my heart.

Every person must wear honorable clothing during tefillah (SA OC 98:1). The SA paskins based on the Rambam that a person should not daven with his money-belt, but he adds an important rule:

“One should not stand with one's money-belt, and not with an uncovered head or uncovered legs if it is the practice of the people of that place not to stand in front of important people unless their legs are covered.” (SA OC 91:5)

We see an important rule from this: Proper dress in tefillah is affected by the local standards of how people generally dress before gedolim.

The Mishna Berura (OC 91:12) gives examples of this rule. If the practice is to wear a hat

before gedolim, then it must be worn during tefillah. He writes not to daven in pajamas, but since the principle is the minhag of the place, an elderly or sick person could daven in pajamas if this is how he dresses even when people come to visit at home.

Based on all of this, we can now look at our case. In this camp it is normal for people to walk around in costume and there is no lack of respect in doing so, rather, it is intended to bring joy to kids. Therefore, seemingly we can allow for this. In a similar case, the Shevet Halevi paskins that people can daven in their costumes on Purim as long as they are properly covered as much as needed and they daven with the proper kavanah of standing in fear in front of the King. He allows for this because the dressing up is not for the sake of frivolity but rather for the sake of a mitzvah.

Therefore, if you stand in tefillah with seriousness and the purpose of the costume is for a mitzvah to bring joy to children, in a case where there is a need we can allow one to daven in costume.

We can take this one step further. While on the one hand, the Shevet Halevi's case seems like more of a reason for leniency because this is the accepted dress for all on Purim, in your case the reasoning for costumes seems to have more significance. While it is only the “minhag hamakom” in your camp and not how all people dress up (as opposed to on Purim), the dressing up is intended to bring joy to others (see the Gemara in Taanit 22a which says people who bring laughter and joy to others merit olam habah). This is especially significant when we are discussing children with illness when dressing up will induce mercy from our Creator, Blessed Be He, when He sees how his sons and daughters are treating others with mercy.

**A foundational element of davening is having proper concentration as we begin.** A person needs to have the proper

understanding that he is standing before a King. However, in addition to this, he must also be filled with ahavat Yisrael (love for all Jews). Through ahavat Yisrael, through caring for every person, we can properly approach and ask from G-d for ourselves as well.

The Ar”i Hakadosh would say that before tefillah, one should accept upon himself the positive commandment of “v'ahavta lereiacha kamocho” (loving your fellow as yourself). Rav Chaim Vital writes in Pri Etz Chaim that one should say this as well.

Why is this so? We can understand this through realizing that loving other people is a prerequisite for loving G-d. Somebody who truly loves G-d must also love the creations which are in His image. Additionally, our connection with G-d is through Knesset Yisrael. When we are connected together, our connection towards G-d is much stronger.

Additionally, somebody who loves others is also removed from a selfish mindset, and he is able to connect to his G-dly mission, and therefore he is able to stand in tefillah in front of G-d and be able to experience a truly exalted connection between him and G-d (this seems to be how Rav Chaim Vital explains).

However, based on what we explained earlier, we can explain that the more we are ready to act with chesed towards Am Yisrael, so too, G-d's Shechina will rest on Am Yisrael, and the greater will our tefillot be answered. When Hashem sees the traits of chesed and rachamim in us, He responds with midah keneged midah (measure for measure).

Bezra'at Hashem, you should merit to continue to strengthen the amazing children, and Hashem should quickly grant them a refuah sheleima min hashamayim.

● *Translated from Hebrew and abbreviated by Yaakov Panitch.*

# תקציר פרשת פנחס

הרבנית שרון רימון



המקרים קבוצת אנשים מנועה מלקיים מצווה, ובאה אל משה בטענה "למה נגרע". משה איננו יודע מה להשיב להם, וממתין לתשובה מאת ה', אשר מקבל את הטענה, ומחדש הלכה בעקבות הבקשה.

הדמיון בין הסיפורים איננו מקרי. קרבן הפסח והנחלה בארץ ישראל הם שתי מצוות יסודיות, המבטאות את השייכות לעם ישראל בשני היבטים עקרוניים – יצירת עם ישראל וירושת ארץ ישראל. מי שאינו יכול לקיים מצוות אלה מרגיש שנפגעת שייכותו לעם ישראל. לכן, הטמאים לנפש אדם אינם מוכנים לוותר על השתתפותם בקרבן הפסח, ובנות צלפחד אינן מוכנות לוותר על נחלה בארץ על שם אביהן.

מי שמבין את משמעותן של המצוות הללו, וחשוב לו להיות שותף בהן כחלק מעם ישראל, ראוי שדבריו יתקבלו ושה' יחדש הלכה עבורו, כך שיוכל להמשיך להיות שותף בעם ישראל בכל היבט משמעותי.

דתן ואבירם הזכרו מכיוון שנשללה זכותם לנחול את הארץ, בעקבות מותם בחטא עדת קרח.

בנות צלפחד חוששות שאביהן יאבד את נחלתו מכיוון שאין לו יורשים. הן דורשות שדינו של אדם שאין לו יורשים לא יהיה זהה לאדם שחטא בחטא חמור (כמו חטא קרח).

בנות צלפחד אינן מבקשות נחלה ממניעים אישיים, אלא ממקדות את בקשתן בזכותו של אביהן ל"שם" – הנחלה בארץ מנציחה את שם המשפחה, ואדם שלא מקבל נחלה שמו נכרת מן הארץ. הקמת שם למת היא דבר משמעותי מאוד, ובנות צלפחד נלחמות על שמו של אביהן ועל זכותו לקבל נחלה על שמו בארץ ישראל.

הקב"ה מקבל את טענתן, ומדגיש את כנות מניעיהן: "כִּן בְּנוֹת צֶלְפָּחַד דְּבָרְתָּ".

סיפור בנות צלפחד מזכיר בפרטים רבים את סיפור הטמאים לנפש אדם המבקשים לחוג את הפסח: בשני

ל אחר המגפה של חטא בעל פעור, הקב"ה מצווה את משה ואלעזר הכהן לבצע מפקד בבנ"י, שמטרתו איננה רק ספירת הנשאים מן המגיפה, אלא בעיקר ריכוז ורישום המשפחות העתידות לנחול נחלה בא"י. באופן כללי (מלבד שבט ראובן ושבט מנשה), שמות המשפחות הנזכרות במפקד אינם שמות האנשים הנכנסים לארץ, אלא הם שמות נכדיו וניניו של יעקב בירידתו למצרים שעל שמם נקראות המשפחות של הנוחלים את הארץ.

לעומת זאת, בשבטים ראובן ומנשה הפסוקים חורגים מתבנית זו, ומאריכים את תיאור תולדות המשפחה עד לדורות הבאים לרשת את הארץ. בכך מצרפת התורה שני סיפורים שלכאורה לא נראים שייכים למפקד – סיפור דתן ואבירם וסיפור בנות צלפחד. למעשה, שני סיפורים אלה רלוונטיים מאוד, מכיוון שהם מבררים סיטואציות בהן אדם עלול לאבד את נחלתו: בעקבות חטא חמור או מפני שאין לו יורשים.



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# Piece of Land



**Sivan Rahav Meir and Yedidya Meir**  
World Mizrahi Scholars-in-Residence

“Shalom, Sivan. My name is Roni Moskowitz, graduate of Midreshet Danieli. Three years ago, we held a goodbye party for Zion Hanukkah, from the famous shop “Shoes of Zion” in the Mahane Yehudah market in Jerusalem. This dear man, at the time 84 years old, has been sitting there since he was 8 years old, and making shoes for us. At the conclusion of a sad legal battle, he had to leave the shop. Zion is amongst the elderly of Jerusalem, a man whose shop everyone emerged from with a smile and a blessing. Every purchase at his shop was a lesson: there are those who went in only to

hear a Dvar Torah or a kind word, there are the needy ones who got shoes with a discount or for free, and his bright countenance has accompanied everybody long after the shoes were worn out. Zion has no family or children, and he has dedicated his life ‘to serving the community,’ as he himself said at the goodbye party. This sounds naive in a generation in which service is sometimes hard to come by. Zion really feels that he is a vessel, a channel. He didn’t just sell shoes. Without a tint of cynicism, he felt that his job was to help our generation walk this land. Thousands and thousands of people owe him their comfortable steps all across

our country. At the goodbye party, I told those who were there how the Midrashah made me look for the good in society and magnify it, and this is how I found Zion and his story. We talked also about the Pinchas Portion, in which the aspiration to get a piece of land in Israel is described, as well as the good spirit that we must have upon our entrance into the Land. Zion is precisely this type of those quiet, humble people who form the foundation of the home we are building here together, but who no one would ever talk about or thank. So we did.”



הספירה והמפקד של כל העם, מופיעה האינפורמציה המפתיעה הזו: בני קורח לא מתו. קורח ניהל כזכור מחלוקת עזה נגד משה, ורבים נהרגו באותו מאבק טרגי. אבל הנה, מתברר שבניו ניצלו. רש"י מסביר מה קרה: “בשעת המחלוקת – הרהרו תשובה בליבם.”

כלומר, ברגע האחרון ממש הם קלטו את הטעות והתחרטו. זה מסר אדיר: אם אתה בן של קורח, אתה לא חייב לצאת קורח. או – אם אבא שלך עברין זה לא אומר שאתה חייב ליפול למעגל הפשע. זה נכון בכל תחום: גם כשהכול נראה אבוד וקבוע מראש, גם אם הסתבכת, גם אם הסביבה והמשפחה משפיעים עליך מאוד, אפשר לעצור, אפשר לשנות, אפשר להשתנות. עובדה: בני קורח לא מתו.

סוג של סקופ. לא כך דמיינתי את הכניסה לארץ ישראל: הגברים מתו במדבר במשך ארבעים שנות הנדודים, כיוון שהאמינו למרגלים ומאסו בארץ ישראל, אבל הנשים נכנסו לבסוף לארץ. מבוגרות, אלמנות, אבל מאמינות. המדרש מוסיף שזה נכון לא רק לגבי חטא המרגלים, אלא גם לגבי חטא עגל הזהב. גם שם הגברים מיהרו להשתתף בחגיגה של עבודה זרה, בעוד הנשים לא הסכימו לתרום את התכשיטים שלהן. “אותו הדור היו הנשים גודרות מה שהאנשים פורצים”, כותב המדרש. בקיצור – מכירים את הספר “גברים ממאדים ונשים מנוגה”? הפרשה מלמדת אותנו על חלוקה מגדרית אחרת: “גברים ממדבר סיני ונשים מארץ ישראל.”



מדובר אולי בארבע המילים האופטימיות ביותר בתורה: “וּבְנֵי קִרְחַ לֹא מָתוּ”. באמצע פרשת השבוע, תוך כדי

סקופ היסטורי: זוכרים את חטא המרגלים? ובכן, לפי מה שפרשת השבוע מספרת היום – אם היו שולחים מרגלות, זה פשוט לא היה קורה.

“אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: לפי דעתי שאני רואה בעתיד היה יותר טוב לשלוח נשים המחבבות את הארץ כי לא יספרו בגנותה... לדעתי היה יותר טוב לשלוח נשים כאמור.”

את הפירוש הזה כתב הרב שלמה אפרים מלונטשיץ (המכונה “הכלי יקר”) לפני כ-400 שנה בפולין. אבל הוא לא היחיד. מתברר שהיה הבדל תהומי בין הגברים לבין הנשים בתקופת יציאת מצרים – הגברים היו פסימיים ולא רצו להמשיך את המסע לארץ ישראל, והנשים היו אופטימיות והאמינו בבשורה הזו ובשליחות וברעיון. “על הנשים לא נגזרה גזירת המרגלים, לפי שהן היו מחבבות את הארץ”, כותב רש"י בחלק היומי. גם זה

Continued from page 4

need to be part of our judicial system. This is why our system includes both din and pesharah (compromise). In fact, Rav Yehoshua Ben Karcha learns from the same pasuk in Zechariah that pesharah should always be the preferred option. Though we value truth, we prefer reaching a decision that will foster peace.

May we learn from our *mishnah* to prioritize peace in our personal lives and national spheres!

● Transcribed by Yedidya Rosenswasser.

1. Derech Eretz Zuta, Perek Shalom. Masechet Derech Eretz Zuta has a whole perek (Perek HaShalom) devoted to the greatness of shalom; each of the different Amoraim there begin with the line, “Gadol hu hashalom.”
2. The Maharal (Netivot Olam, Netiv Ha'Shalom 1) explains that Hashem allows his name to be erased in case of a sotah because it generates shalom. As “shalom” is Hashem’s

name, His name is actually being created, not (only) destroyed.

3. Kallah Rabbati 3, Derech Eretz Zuta, Perek Shalom.
4. Avot D'Rebbe Natan 12:3, Mesechet Kallah 3. This seems to be the meaning of the phrase “hava'at shalom” used by the first mishneh in Mesechet Pei'ah. See Tiferet Yisrael (Yachin) there who explains that this refers to ‘bringing’ peace even in a situation where the two arguing are uninterested.

# For the Shabbat Table



## Rabbi Danny Mirvis

Deputy CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi at Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“**A**nd Moshe said to Hashem, as follows: 'May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall take them out and bring them in, and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd'" (Bemidbar 27:15-17).

In this week's Parsha, Moshe was informed by Hashem that the day of his death was approaching. Upon receiving this news, Moshe did not wallow in self-pity, but immediately responded, "May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly". Moshe's first thoughts were not for his own demise, but for his people, to ensure their needs would be cared for, with Yehoshua being appointed as a result.

However, the question must be asked – What about Moshe's sons? Surely the most natural appointment would have been for one of Moshe's children to replace him.

Why were they overlooked for the position and not even mentioned in this passage?

The Midrash informs us that Moshe did in fact request for his sons to succeed him. However, Hashem responded:

"Your sons sat doing their own thing (with their time) and did not occupy themselves with Torah. Yehoshua – much did he serve you and much honour did he give to you. He would organize the benches and spread out the mats in your meeting house (for Torah study) early in the morning and in the evening. Seeing as he served you with all his might, he is appropriate to serve Israel..." (Bemidbar Rabbah 21:14).

When it came to choosing a leader for the Nation, it was not a question of family background, stature, or importance, but a question of who was most appropriate for the job. Yehoshua's commitment to honouring Moshe and performing menial tasks in the Beit Midrash gave

him precedence over Moshe's sons, despite their stature and natural claim for the position.

"Why is it uncommon for the children of scholars to turn out to be scholars? Rav Yoseph said, 'So that it shouldn't be said that the Torah came to them by inheritance'" (Nedarim 81a).

Nobody – not even the sons of scholars – can take it for granted that Torah will come to them naturally. It is not an inheritance that naturally falls into one's possession. Rather, effort, commitment and self-sacrifice are required to be able to receive Torah and pass it on. The lack of a family learning background or tradition should not prevent anyone from striving for greatness, for it is not about prestige or connections - it is about personal effort.

"Rabbi Yosei says, 'Prepare yourselves to learn Torah, for it does not come to you by inheritance'" (Avot 2:12).

Shabbat Shalom!



World Mizrachi mourns the passing of our dear friend and legendary President

**גרשון בן מרדכי ז"ל ו"א Kurt Rothschild z"l**

A humble giant who lived for the People, Torah, and Land of Israel, with unshakeable determination, exceptional *menschlichkeit*, pioneering leadership, and endless love.

We are heartbroken and our hearts go out to his wife Edith, and children Lenny, Naomi, Michael, and the extended Rothschild family at this time.

יהי זכרו ברוך

# Elijah and the Still, Small Voice



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

*Then the word of the Lord came to him: 'Why are you here, Elijah?' He replied, 'I am moved by the zeal for the Lord, G-d of Hosts...' The Lord said to him, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire - a still, small voice. (1 Kings 19:9-12)*

In 1165, an agonising question confronted Moroccan Jewry. A fanatical Muslim sect, the Almohads, had seized power in Morocco and was embarking on a policy of forced conversion to Islam. The Jewish community was faced with a choice: to affirm Islamic faith or die. Some chose martyrdom. Others chose exile. But some acceded to terror and embraced another faith. Inwardly, though, many of the 'converted' continued practising Judaism in secret. They were the *anusim*, *conversos*, Crypto-Jews, or as the Spanish were later to call them, the *marranos*.

To other Jews, they posed a formidable moral problem. How were they to be viewed? Outwardly, they had betrayed their community and their religious heritage. Besides, their example was demoralising. It weakened the resolve of Jews who were determined to resist, come what may. Yet many of the Crypto-Jews still wished to remain Jewish, secretly fulfilling the commandments and, when they could, attending the synagogue and praying.

One of the converted addressed this question to a Rabbi. He had, he said, converted under coercion, but he remained at heart a faithful Jew. Could he obtain merit by

observing in private as many of the Torah's precepts as possible? Was there, in other words, hope left for him as a Jew? The Rabbi's reply was emphatic. A Jew who had embraced Islam had forfeited membership in the Jewish community. He was no longer part of the house of Israel. For such a person to fulfil the commandments was meaningless. Worse, it was a sin. The choice was stark and absolute: to be or not to be a Jew. If you choose to be a Jew, you should be prepared to suffer death rather than compromise. If you choose not to be a Jew, then you must not seek to re-enter the house you deserted.

We can respect the firmness of the Rabbi's stance. He set out, without equivocation, the moral choice. There are times when heroism is, for faith, a categorical imperative. Nothing less will do. His reply, though harsh, is not without courage. But another Rabbi disagreed.

The name of the first Rabbi is lost to us, but that of the second is not. He was Moses Maimonides, the greatest Rabbi of the Middle Ages. Maimonides was no stranger to religious persecution. Born in Cordova in 1135, he had been forced to leave, along with his family, some thirteen years later when the city fell to the Almohads. Twelve years were spent in wandering. In 1160, a temporary liberalisation of Almohad rule allowed the family to settle in Morocco. Within five years he was forced to move again, settling first in the land of Israel and ultimately in Egypt.

Maimonides was so incensed by the Rabbi's reply to the forced convert that he wrote a response of his own. In it, he frankly disassociates himself from the earlier ruling and castigates its author whom he describes as a 'self-styled sage who has never experienced what so many Jewish communities had to endure in the way of persecution'.

Maimonides' reply, the *Iggeret ha-Shemad* ('Epistle on Forced Conversion'), is a substantial treatise in its own right.<sup>1</sup> What is striking, given the vehemence with which it begins, is that its conclusions are hardly less demanding than those of the earlier response. If you are faced with religious persecution, says Maimonides, you must leave and settle elsewhere. 'If he is compelled to violate even one precept it is forbidden to stay there. He must leave everything he has and travel day and night until he finds a spot where he can practise his religion.'<sup>2</sup> This is preferable to martyrdom.

Nonetheless, one who chooses to go to their death rather than renounce their faith 'has done what is good and proper'<sup>3</sup> for they have given their life for the sanctity of G-d. What is unacceptable is to stay and excuse oneself on the grounds that if one sins, one does so only under pressure. To do this is to profane G-d's name, 'not exactly willingly, but almost so'.

These are Maimonides' conclusions. But surrounding them and constituting the main thrust of his argument is a sustained defence of those who have done precisely what Maimonides has ruled they should not do. The letter gives Crypto-Jews hope. They have done wrong. But it is a forgivable wrong. They acted under coercion and the fear of death. They remain Jews. The acts they do as Jews still win favour in the eyes of G-d. Indeed doubly so, for when they fulfil a commandment it cannot be to win favour of the eyes of others. They know that when they act as Jews they risk discovery and death. Their secret adherence has a heroism of its own.

What was wrong in the first Rabbi's ruling was his insistence that a Jew who yields to terror has forsaken their faith and is to be excluded from the community. Maimonides insists that it is not so. 'It

is not right to alienate, scorn and hate people who desecrate the Sabbath. It is our duty to befriend them and encourage them to fulfil the commandments.' In a daring stroke of interpretation, he quotes the verse, 'Do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.' (Proverbs 6:30) The Crypto-Jews who come to the synagogue are hungry for Jewish prayer. They 'steal' moments of belonging. They should not be despised but welcomed.

This epistle is a masterly example of that most difficult of moral challenges: to combine prescription and compassion. Maimonides leaves us in no doubt as to what he believes Jews should do. But at the same time he is uncompromising in his defence of those who fail to do it. He does not endorse what they have done. But he defends who they are. He asks us to understand their situation. He gives them grounds for self-respect. He holds the doors of the community open.

The argument reaches a climax as Maimonides quotes a remarkable sequence of midrashic passages whose theme is that prophets must not condemn their people, but rather defend them before G-d. When Moses, charged with leading the people out of Egypt, replied, 'But they will not believe me' (*Exodus* 4:1) ostensibly he was justified. The subsequent biblical narrative suggests that Moses' doubts were well founded. The Israelites were a difficult people to lead. But the Midrash says that G-d replied to Moses, 'They are believers and the children of believers, but you [Moses] will ultimately not believe.' (Shabbat 97a.)

Maimonides cites a series of similar passages and then says: If this is the punishment meted out to the pillars of the universe, the greatest of the prophets, because they briefly criticised the people – even though they were guilty of the sins of which they were accused – can we envisage the punishment awaiting those who criticise the *conversos*, who under threat of death and without abandoning their faith, confessed to another religion in which they did not believe?

In the course of his analysis, Maimonides turns to the Prophet Elijah and the text

that usually forms this week's haftarah. Under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, Baal worship had become the official cult. G-d's prophets were being killed. Those who survived were in hiding. Elijah responded by issuing a public challenge at Mount Carmel. Facing four hundred of Baal's representatives, he was determined to settle the question of religious truth once and for all.

He told the assembled people to choose one way or another: for G-d or for Baal. They must no longer 'halt between two opinions.' Truth was about to be decided by a test. If it lay with Baal, fire would consume the offering prepared by its priests. If it lay with G-d, fire would descend to Elijah's offering.

Elijah won the confrontation. The people cried out, 'The Lord, He is G-d.' The priests of Baal were routed. But the story does not end there. Jezebel issues a warrant for his death. Elijah escapes to Mount Horeb. There he receives a strange vision, as seen as the beginning of this week's essay. He is led to understand that G-d speaks only in the 'still, small voice'.

The episode is enigmatic. It is made all the more so by a strange feature of the text. Immediately *before* the vision, G-d asks, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' and Elijah replies, 'I am moved by zeal for the Lord, the G-d of Hosts...'. (I Kings 9:9-10). Immediately *after* the vision, G-d asks the same question, and Elijah gives the same answer (I Kings 19:13-14). The Midrash turns the text into a dialogue:

Elijah: *The Israelites have broken G-d's covenant*

G-d: Is it then *your* covenant?

Elijah: *They have torn down Your altars.*

G-d: But were they *your* altars?

Elijah: *They have put Your prophets to the sword.*

G-d: But you are alive.

Elijah: *I alone am left.*

G-d: Instead of hurling accusations against Israel, should you not have pleaded their cause?<sup>5</sup>

The meaning of the Midrash is clear. The zealot takes the part of G-d. But G-d expects His prophets to be defenders,

not accusers. The repeated question and answer is now to be understood in its tragic depth. Elijah declares himself to be zealous for G-d. He is shown that G-d is not disclosed in dramatic confrontation: not in the whirlwind or the earthquake or the fire. G-d now asks him again, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' Elijah *repeats* that he is zealous for G-d. He has not understood that religious leadership calls for another kind of virtue, the way of the still, small voice. G-d now indicates that someone else must lead. Elijah must hand his mantle on to Elisha.

In turbulent times, there is an almost overwhelming temptation for religious leaders to be confrontational. Not only must truth be proclaimed but falsehood must be denounced. Choices must be set out as stark divisions. Not to condemn is to condone. The Rabbi who condemned the *conversos* had faith in his heart, logic on his side and Elijah as his precedent.

But the *Midrash* and Maimonides set before us another model. A prophet hears not one imperative but two: guidance and compassion, a love of truth and an abiding solidarity with those for whom that truth has become eclipsed. To preserve tradition and at the same time defend those others condemn is the difficult, necessary task of religious leadership in an unreligious age.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Elijah needed to be shown this vision?
- Why does G-d reveal Himself only in the still, small voice?
- What are the pros and cons of zealotry?

1. An English translation and commentary is contained in Abraham S. Halkin, and David Hartman. *Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985) pp. 15-35.

2. *Ibid.*, 32.

3. *Ibid.*, 30.

4. *Ibid.*, 33.

5. Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah 1:6.

# Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai



**Rabbi Hershel Schachter**

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**T**he Mishnah (Sukkah 4:9) records that the Tzeddukim did not observe the practice of nisuch hamayim in the Beis HaMikdash on Sukkos. This was because they subscribed only to the Torah SheBichsav and did not accept the traditions of the Torah SheBe'al Peh.

The source in the Torah SheBe'al Peh for the institution of nisuch hamayim is a matter of dispute among the Tanna'im (Ta'anis 2b-3a). One opinion holds that it is a Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai, a tradition of the Torah SheBe'al Peh that has no source in the Torah SheBichsav. It cannot be derived through any of the exegetical principles through which the Torah is expounded. Other Tanna'im disagree and do find a source in the Torah SheBichsav for nisuch hamayim.

The Rambam interprets another Tannaitic dispute on the basis of this machlokes. The Gemara in Zevachim (110b) discusses which of the Beis HaMikdash avodos one would be punished for performing if he did so outside of the Beis HaMikdash. According to Rabbi Elazar, not only is one who is shochet or ma'aleh a korban outside the Beis HaMikdash liable to a punishment of kares, but also one who performs the nisuch hamayim outside during Sukkos. The Gemara states, "Rebbi Elazar said [this ruling] according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, his teacher, who said that nisuch hamayim is of Biblical origin," but the Gemara does not explain the interdependence of these two teachings.

The Rambam explains that if we were to derive nisuch hamayim from the Torah SheBe'al Peh exposition of Rabbi Akiva, reading inbetween the lines of the Torah SheBichsav, the punishment of kares

would be appropriate if nisuch were to be performed outside. The Rambam writes that since, instead, nisuch hamayim is a Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai, we do not accept the opinion of Rabbi Elazar, and one who is menasech on Sukkos outside the Beis HaMikdash would not be liable.

The Rosh makes a similar comment regarding the Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai of half-payment for damages due to pebbles sent flying in the normal course of an animal's activity. Rava raises the question whether damage caused by the force generated by the animal, is generally treated as if it was caused directly by the body of the animal itself, so that the owner in this case should have been obligated in full-damages, or if generally one's force is not like his body – and the owner should therefore have been totally exempt from payment for damages. Rava concludes that the former explanation is the correct one; one's force is considered like his body. The Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai that the rabbis have received as part of the Oral tradition serves to reduce the owner's liability to half-damages in this case. However, Rava does not reveal what led him to this resolution.

The Rosh explains that what Rava realized is that the nature of Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai is always to be lenient, to reduce one's obligation. The Rosh writes that the Gemara (Sukkah 6b) employs a similar logic in discussing how many walls are required in the construction of a sukkah – three full walls plus a tefach to serve as the fourth wall, or two full walls plus a tefach to serve as the third wall. The Rosh explains that the thrust of the Gemara is that the Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai

always comes to detract from the requirement of one of the full walls. Thus,

the discussion revolves about whether a sukkah starts with a four-wall or only a three-wall minimum; the final wall is then reduced by the Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai to measure only the size of a tefach.

The Mekuballim provide the rationale for this approach. They explain that the Torah SheBe'al Peh was given with the Middas HaChessed, always to take a lenient position on one's obligations. In contrast, the Torah SheBichsav was etched in stone, given with the Middas HaDin. Thus, the Oral Tradition of hataras nedarim, which "hover in the air, and have no [Scriptural] support" (Mishnah Chagigah 1:8), serves to remove the restrictions of a neder. Similarly, while the Torah SheBichsav demands "an eye for an eye," the Torah SheBe'al Peh is more tolerant, requiring of the assailant only a monetary penalty.

Rav Chaim and the Rogachover Gaon offered a famous explanation. They explained that there exist two types of Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai, one which is מחדשה – creating a totally new din – which cannot be derived from the Torah SheBichsav, and one which is מפרשה – an Orally-derived explanation – which serves to reveal exactly what is included in the passuk.

For example, the issur of orlah in Chutz La'aretz may be viewed as a Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai which is מפרשה. It explains that the opening phrase of the passuk "When you shall come to the land and you shall plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as forbidden" (Vayikra 19:23), serves to limit the issur only in time, not place. Thus, the issur of orlah

*Continued on next page*

# A Thought for the Three Weeks



**Rabbi Yisroel Reisman**  
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In the Hakdama of Lahavos Aish of Rav Avraham Chaim Feuer, published on the Moadim five years ago, I saw a letter from Rav Akiva Eiger in the Igros Sofrim, letter 22. In the Hakdama, he quotes an incredible letter in which Rav Akiva Eiger writes to his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, about the town of Kuzna, the town in which he was a Rav. Rav Akiva Eiger writes, “Chiddush B'ainai” it is a Chiddush for me, “She’bezras Hashem Ruban K’kulam Po Yir'ai Hashem” most people here have Yir'as Shamayim. “Aval Ain Ha’aish Ba’ir B’kirbam” but there is no fire in their service to Hashem. “V’ainom Baalei Maaseh” and they do not go to be active to do anything. “V’nisharti Ani L’vadi Lil’chom Lachem Es Hashem” and I myself must provide the inspiration. “Hashem Yigmor Ba’adi L’man Tora-seinu Hakedosha”, may Hashem give me Hatzlacha. The people lack the fire, the inspiration.

When the three weeks begin, we keep the mitzvos of the three weeks. We do the things we need to do. Where is the fire, where is the feeling, where is the Hergish? Three weeks is a time of feeling, of Aveilos, not just practicing Aveilos.

In Hilchos Aveilos, the Divrei Yechezkel writes that someone who fulfills all the



**When the three weeks begin, we keep the mitzvos of the three weeks. We do the things we need to do. Where is the fire, where is the feeling, where is the Hergish? Three weeks is a time of feeling, of Aveilos, not just practicing Aveilos.**

Mitzvos of Aveilos, all the prohibitions, but is unaware that his relative has died, is not Aveilos. His relative died and he did everything, he happened not to shower and he wore sneakers for the last week, etc., that does not count. Aveilos is Aveilos connected to a Maaseh connected to a feeling. The Maaseh must be connected to a feeling. For the three weeks to mean something, they must be associated with a feeling.

The best place to look for that feeling is in Shemoneh Esrei. We pray anyway. We say Hamachazir Shechinaso L’tzion. We say V’lirushalayim Ircha B’rachamim Tashuv. Put feeling into it, put in Hergish. Make it meaningful.

In camp when I was growing up, they used to say Al Naros Bavel before Bentsching. If you do not say the whole Al Naros Bavel, say the first Posuk in Tehillim 137. על נהרות, בקל שם שְׁבַנּוּ, גַם בְּכִינוּ: בְּזָכְרֵנוּ, אֶת צִיּוֹן.

This verse talks about it. Say it. Put some Hergish, some feeling, some fire to what is going on these days. This is important because the whole Avoda of the three weeks, the nine days, of Tisha B’av is a chaval, a missed opportunity, if it is not connected to something that gives it meaning. Chiddush Hu B’ainai, Ruban K’kulam Po Yir'ai Hashem, Aval Ain Ha’aish Ba’ir B’kirbam. Where is the fire, where is the inspiration?

Let us make these three weeks meaningful. Three weeks in which we feel the loss of Tzion, the loss of Yerushalayim. Let us take these three weeks to a closer connection with the Ribbono Shel Olam.

Halevai, we always say at the end that we should celebrate this Tisha B’av in Yerushalayim. Amen! But if we do not, then at least Halevai Tisha B’av should come and we should feel that we have served Hashem during these three weeks by reflecting on the Bais Hamikdash that we lost and making feelings, Hergeishim, true.

● Edited by Jay Eisenstadt and Ari Levine.

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only commenced with Bnei Yisrael's entry into Eretz Yisrael, but it includes, after that point, even fruits of Chutz La’Aretz.

Orlas Chutz La’Aretz is not a new halachah; rather, once the Halachah LeMoshe MiSinai was stated, it is considered as if this orlah is explicitly mentioned in the passuk

prohibiting orlas Eretz Yisrael. According to this view, continued Rav Chaim, eating this fruit would be punishable with malkos, just as in the case of orlas Eretz Yisrael. Furthermore, according to this approach, the fruits of those trees in their fourth year would be subject to the special din of neta revai.

If, on the other hand, orlas Chutz La’Aretz is a new halachah that is not connected to the issur of orlah mentioned in the Torah, then eating this fruit would not be punishable with malkos.

● From ‘Rav Schachter on the Parsha’.

# True “Zealousness for Hashem”



**Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zt”l**  
Former Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel

**A**fter Bnei Yisrael sinned and took wives from the daughters of Moav, the parashah states “...Just then a certain Israelite man came and brought a Midianite woman over to his companions, in the sight of Moses and of the whole Israelite community who were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. When Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly and, taking a spear in his hand, he followed the Israelite man into the chamber and stabbed both of them, the Israelite man and the woman, through the belly. Then the plague against the Israelites was checked. Those who died of the plague numbered twenty-four thousand. G-d spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Phinehas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the Israelites by displaying among them his passion for Me, so that I did not wipe out the Israelite people in My passion. Say, therefore, “I grant him My pact of friendship.”’” (Bamidbar 25:6-12). It is explained that because Pinchas was zealous for Hashem’s Honor and risked his life to kill Zimri – and that because of this act Hashem changed his mind about the retribution He would inflict on His people to destroy them – that Hashem rewarded him with the great gift that he and his descendants would become Cohanim, just like the other sons of Aron.

Our Chachamim have taught us that all the rewards Hashem gives a person are proportionate to the person’s deeds. Thus, if a person behaves from a perspective of strength, then it is appropriate for Hashem to respond with a gift that symbolizes strength. If so, it is difficult to understand what is going on here, for Pinchas’ action was not one of shalom, but on the contrary, his action was combative in nature, namely to rise up and kill a prince of one of the tribes of Yisrael and

also to kill Kozbi who asked Tzur. If this is so, why did Hashem give him a reward symbolizing shalom?

However, when we examine the pessukim, we see that Pinchas killed Zimri only for Hashem’s sake [in Hebrew, “l’shem shamayim”], without ulterior motives. That is, not out of revenge against a person who had done something that went against Pinchas’ personal views, but only because this act was against Hashem’s will and involved a chillul Hashem beyond imagination that also enticed others to sin. Therefore, he girded himself with sheer determination, he rose from a perspective of pure zeal that engulfed him, and he killed Zimri and Kozbi. And about this, Hashem testified to Himself when He said, “who was zealous in My cause,” for it was pure zeal for Hashem’s honor that motivated Pinchas to act. Therefore, his deeds were especially pleasing in Hashem’s eyes.

The result was that through Pinchas’ action, Hashem’s anger was taken away from Bnei Yisrael. Thus, Pinchas enabled shalom to prevail between Bnei Yisrael and their Father in Heaven. And there is nothing greater than shalom between Yisrael and their Father in Heaven. Therefore, Hashem gave him a juicy reward, measure for measure, the reward of shalom, namely the priesthood, which also creates shalom between Yisrael and their Father in Heaven by offering the sacrifices.

It once happened in a certain yeshiva that the Rav, who was giving a shiur, had to leave the classroom for a few minutes. One of the students took the opportunity and wanted to fool around, so he got up and put on the Rav’s long jacket. Immediately, one of the prominent students stood up and asked the boy to take off his jacket. When he refused, he slapped him for disrespecting the Rav. Immediately, the student wearing the jacket retaliated by slapping him, and then the student slapped him

a second time! The student wearing the jacket stopped him and said, “The first slap I accept with love, because you were right to slap me because you were angry that I disrespected your Rav, but the second slap you gave me only because you were sorry for your own honor, because I retaliated by slapping you, and therefore I am not willing to accept it.”

We should learn from this story that someone who wants to take someone to task for their behavior must weigh their actions carefully so that they do not lose their reward because of what they say. For example, those who, when they see someone talking in the Bet Keneset, call out, “Stop talking,” and only exceptionally embarrass the person who spoke. And if they were concerned about the safety of Heaven, they certainly would not behave that way, but would first consider how to properly preserve the honor of the Bet Keneset. So the end result is that not only did they embarrass their colleague inappropriately and for nothing, but they were ineffective. As it says in the Melachim, Hashem does not want the prophecy of a person working against the Jewish people.

Zeal is a virtue, but it must be used only rarely, and indeed there are almost no suitable people who use this virtue with due diligence and avoid any personal gain from their zealous deeds. For the moment the zeal does not fully serve Hashem, His honor, and His will, Hashem no longer wants that deed. Even Elijah HaNavi, Hashem said to him, “Go anoint Elisha HaNavi in your place, for I do not want your zeal. Even if you are descended from the descendants of Pinchas, you must be careful with the virtue of zeal, for this will increase Hashem’s honor in the world and Hashem will do His will in the world.” However, this is only the case when a person is zealous “for the sake of His zeal” and is not zealous for any other reason.

# Intellectual and Emotional Transmission of Torah



**Rabbi Shalom Rosner**  
Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

In this week's parsha, there is a formulation that appears only once in the Torah. The Torah states: *vayedaber Moshe el Hashem leymor* (Bamidbar 27:15). Typically, a pasuk would state that G-d spoke with Moshe. In this instance, Moshe initiated the contact. The pasuk stresses that Moshe spoke to Hashem. After being informed that he will only see and not enter Eretz Yisrael, Moshe asks Hashem to appoint a successor. Once again, we witness Moshe's greatness. Rather than considering his own needs and desires as he nears his departure from this world, he first and foremost expresses his concern about the future of Am Yisrael.

Moshe specifically requests that Hashem select a leader for the nation so that they do not wander like "sheep without a shepherd". The language used is: *כִּצְאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵינִי לָהֶם רֹעֶה* (Bamidbar 27:17). Why did it not just state *כִּצְאוֹן לֵאמֹר רֹעֶה* – why the addition of the term **לָהֶם**? (that **they** lack?) The Lekach Tov explains that it is to underscore that a leader's main concern needs to be with the interests of the people (להם), not their personal interests.

Hashem responds by informing Moshe that indeed Yehoshua will be his successor. In pasuk 18 Hashem instructs Moshe *וְקִמַּחְתָּ אֶת יְדְוֶךָ עָלַי* – you shall lay your **hand**



**One can learn hilchot Shabbat, yet not truly comprehend the unique and special aspect of the Shabbat. To truly understand Shabbat, one has to experience it.**

upon him. Yet, when Moshe appoints Yehoshua, it states: *וַיִּסְמְךָ אֶת יְדְוֶיךָ עָלָיו* (pasuk 23) – He laid his **hands** upon him. The instruction was to do smicha with one hand, yet Moshe used two hands. It may seem trivial, yet, Rav Yosef Solovetchik (Masores Harav), derives an important message from this distinction.

The Rav explains that in pasuk 20 Hashem instructs Moshe to not only appoint Yehoshua but to also *וַיִּתְּתָה מִהוֹדְךָ עָלָיו* – You shall bestow some of your majesty (hod) upon him. This "majesty" was figuratively imparted via Moshe's second hand.

There are two *mesorot* that Moshe transferred to Yehoshua. One is the tradition of learning Torah. The second (hod), was experiential. One can learn hilchot Shabbat, yet not truly comprehend the unique and special aspect of the Shabbat. To truly understand Shabbat, one has to

experience it. Yehoshua was selected not only because of his intellectual pursuit of Torah, rather because he never left Moshe's side, as is stated: "His attendant, Yehoshua Bin-Nun, a lad, would not depart from the tent (Shemot 33:11). Yehoshua learned from the way Moshe spoke to others, benched, and conducted himself on a daily basis.

It is interesting to note that Yehoshua is often referred to as lad (na'ar) even though he was clearly in his fifties! He had the attitude of a na'ar, someone willing to learn and absorb from every act of his Rebbe. Therefore, Yehoshua merited two *mesorot*, the *mesorah* of the mind and the *mesorah* of the heart- transmitted via Moshe's two hands.

Our task is to be able to transmit these two *mesorot* to our students and children. Torah is not just an intellectual pursuit, but one that has to pierce the heart and emotions of an individual. Like Moshe, we need to serve as a personal example and do all we can so that we convey the emotional as well as the intellectual beauty of the Torah.

# Parshas Pinchas: Consistency in Avodas Hashem



**Michal Horowitz**  
Judaic Studies Teacher

**I**t is year forty of desert wanderings. As a result of the sin at *Mei Merivah* (Bamidbar Ch.20) Moshe's days are numbered and he will not be leading the Jews into the Land of Israel. Hence, in this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Pinchas*, Moshe asks Hashem to appoint a leader who will take care of the nation after his death, and lead them across the Jordan River.

*And Moshe spoke to Hashem saying: Let Hashem, the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who will go forth before them and come before them, who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of Hashem will not be like sheep without a shepherd* (Bamidbar 27:15-17).

Moshe Rabbeinu was the essence of leadership, whose main concern was the well-being of his flock after his demise. Though his hope and prayer to enter the Holy Land was not granted, when facing his death, his primary thoughts were not about himself; they were with the nation he had loved and led for the past forty years.

In deference to his request, G-d instructs Moshe to appoint Yehoshua bin Nun as the next leader (v.18-23), which Moshe promptly proceeds to do, before the eyes of the entire assembly.

Interestingly, the very next topic in the *parsha* is the *Korban Tamid* – the daily burnt offering offered twice a day in the *Mishkan* (and then *Beis HaMikdash*). The very next *pasukim* say: *And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying: "Command Bnei Yisrael and say to them: My offering, My food, for My fire offerings, a spirit of satisfaction for Me, you shall take care to offer to Me at its appointed time"* (28:1-2).

Rabbi Shalom Rosner asks, "What is the connection between Moshe requesting a successor and the *korban tamid*?"

"The *Mishkan Betzalel* (Rabbi Betzalel Yehuda Rudinsky) offers a beautiful

explanation linking these two seemingly distinct directives. A leader, like a king, is totally committed to his people, constantly acting on their behalf. There is no personal time for a king, no moment when he is free from responsibility. He is on duty 24/7. Moshe's request of HKB"H was that He would appoint a leader who is like a king, like a shepherd. Just like sheep cannot be abandoned for a moment, so too, Bnei Yisrael cannot be abandoned for a moment.

"HKB"H replies to Moshe: You are asking that Bnei Yisrael should have a constant leader? You are asking Me to do something constant for them? Tell them to do something constant for Me. The *korban tamid* is offered twice daily. Please have Bnei Yisrael offer a daily sacrifice to show they are constantly connected to Me. If Bnei Yisrael do that for me, I will provide them with a leader that will care for them.

"...The significance of the *korban tamid*, as its name implies, lies in its constancy and consistency. It is the same sacrifice that we offer each morning and evening. It symbolizes the way we are required to approach our *avodat Hashem*. Indeed - *Shachrit* and *Mincha* were instituted based on the *korban tamid*. We cannot have an attitude of, 'Oh, I davened and learned yesterday, let me take a break today.' We must act in a *consistent, persistent and unrelenting* manner. If we serve G-d with consistency, He will provide us with the constant supervision and guidance of devoted and dedicated leaders" (Shalom Rav, v.II, p.281-283).

As we enter the summer months, this is an especially relevant, timely and pertinent lesson and reminder. Our level of *avodas Hashem* should not change based on vacations we may take, new places and environments we may visit, and new situations we find ourselves in. To be an *eved Hashem* is to live by the maxim of *לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד*, *I have placed Hashem*

*before me always and consistently* (Tehillim 16:8).

Parshas Pinchas teaches us that when we are consistent in our service of G-d, *middah k'neged middah* (measure for measure), He will be consistent in the care and providence He provides for us, and to us.

Rabbi Boruch Perton relates, "When I was *Mechina* (in Yeshivas Ner Yisrael Baltimore), I had earned the rank of Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts. I wanted an extra 'out Shabos' to attend the special celebration being held in my honor. I asked Rebbi (Rabbi Yosef Tendler z'l), who had never heard of an Eagle Scout, for permission to go. I explained what an Eagle Scout was, and he said, 'You can go on one condition. I will write a *dvar Torah* that you will say at the event.' And he did. It was about priorities and values, and stressed that the most important thing in this world is not being an Eagle Scout, but being a *ben Torah*. I went, and I gave the *dvar Torah*. Without exaggeration, every time I spent Shabos with him for the next thirty years, he reminded me of that *dvar Torah*. In November 2010, I was spending a Shabos with Rebbi when his brother, R' Shalom, was there. Once again, Rebbi reminded me of that *dvar Torah*, saying it over to his brother at the Shabos table" (I am Your Servant, Artsroll, p.246).

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik zt'l teaches that, "An individual must be the same person on the street, at home, in the office, in his bedroom, and in Shul as he is when he stands wrapped in his *tallis* during *Ne'ilah*... This idea is the underlying theme of the maxim, *לְנִגְדֵי תָמִיד*. In His audience, one's behavior is consistent" (Machzor Ha'Rav la'R"H, p. 577-579).

In our everyday lives, may we place G-d before us always and consistently, and in His great compassion, may He place us and our needs before Him *tamid*, always and consistently.

# The Internal Structure of the Holiday Torah Reading



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**Y**ou may not have noticed, but on every Jewish holiday (including Rosh Chodesh) the Torah reading – either the entire reading or at least the “maftir” section – is **always** from Parshat Pinchas!

Likewise, we include a quote from Parshat Pinchas in every **musaf** prayer that we daven.

The second half of Parshat Pinchas presents a lengthy set of mitzvot that, at first glance, appears to describe the ‘Jewish Holidays.’ However, as we study this unit more closely, we’ll notice that a more accurate title for this unit would be ‘Parshat ha’**T**midim u’**Musafim**.’ This distinction will help us better understand why the holidays come up again here, in Sefer Bamidbar, even though they were already discussed at length in Parshat Emor.

## Parshat Emor and Parshat Pinchas

In contrast to Parshat Pinchas, whose primary concern is korbanot, the focus of Parshat Emor is the holidays themselves. In fact, the title of this section in Parshat Emor is “moadei Hashem...” – God’s appointed times. That unit details the nature of, and specific laws regarding each holiday. This parsha outlines the prohibition to work, the requirement to assemble the nation (“mikra’ei kodesh”), and special mitzvot for each holiday – offering the “omer,” the “shte’i ha’lechem,” blowing shofar, fasting on Yom Kippur, sukkah, lulav and etrog, etc.

You’ll notice that the presentation of each holiday in Parshat Emor includes the mitzvah of “v’hikravtem ishe la’Hashem – you shall bring an offering to God.” This

commandment is a most ambiguous one, as it doesn’t specify which korban must be offered. However, a key summary pasuk toward the end of that unit points us directly to Parshat Pinchas: “These are God’s appointed times set aside for gathering **in order** to offer an **ishe la’Hashem** – an **olah**, **mincha**, **zevach**, and **nesachim** – on **each day** what is proper to it – **dvar yom b’yomo**.”

What does “dvar yom b’yomo” refer to? Most likely, it directs us to the details regarding these korbanot as recorded in Parshat Pinchas!

Finally, look carefully at the names of the chagim in the opening pasuk of each parshia in Parshat Pinchas. The name used in each instance reflects the primary aspect of each chag as described in Parshat Emor. However, other than the details of the musaf, Parshat Pinchas does not add any new specific laws for any of the chagim.

## The Internal Structure of Parshat HaMusafim

Let’s now return to Parshat Pinchas and examine the korbanot themselves to see what they’re all about.

Even though the Torah affords the korban musaf of each holiday its own, separate parshia, the korbanot themselves are quite similar in content:

An **olah** offering of **parim** (bulls), **eilim** (rams) and **kvasim** (sheep);

The appropriate flour and wine offerings, known as **nesachim**;

A **chatat** offering of a **se’ir izim** (a goat).

What emerges from this chart is a classification of the various festivals into different groups (which we may not have expected):

### Group One [2-1-7-1]:

Rosh Chodesh, Chag HaMatzot and Shavuot

Notice that all three are connected to **Yetziat Mitzrayim**.

### Group Two [1-1-7-1]:

Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Shmini Atzeret

Notice that all three are in Tishrei. Since the first two are ‘days of judgement,’ we may presume that Shmini Atzeret is also to be considered a ‘day of judgement’ [e.g. “tfilat geshem” etc.].

### Group Three [ {13-7} -2-14-1]:

The seven days of Sukkot

This is the most interesting group, as the number of **parim** decreases daily (unlike Chag HaMatzot), even though all seven days of Sukkot are, in essence, one holiday.

### Double Nature

In addition to this obvious division into three groups, another intriguing phenomenon emerges from the above chart. For some reason, the **olah** offering on Sukkot is **double**. Whereas every other holiday requires the offering of **one ayil** and **seven kvasim**, on each day of Sukkot we double these offerings, offering **two** and **fourteen** (rams and sheep, respectively) instead! Furthermore, the number of **parim** ‘explodes’ on Sukkot. Instead of just

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# Testing Our Sincerity



**Rabbi Eli Mansour**

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**P**arashat Pinchas begins with G-d informing Moshe of the reward that He would grant to Pinchas for his act of zealotry during the incident of Ba'al Pe'or, when the nations of Moab and Midyan conspired to lure Beneh Yisrael to sin. These nations sent their young women to seduce Beneh Yisrael and lure them to immorality and idolatry – two of the three cardinal sins (the third being murder). As the entire nation was spiritually unraveling, a prominent leader named Zimri publicly engaged in relations with a Midyanite woman, Kozbi. Pinchas heroically arose and killed them, which brought an end to the plague which G-d had brought upon Beneh Yisrael. In reward for this act, G-d named Pinchas a Kohen. Until this incident, Pinchas would not have become a Kohen, despite his being a grandson of Aharon, but he earned this privilege as a result of his heroism during the sin of Ba'al Pe'or.

Interestingly, however, the Gemara comments in Masechet Zebachim (101) that Pinchas did not receive his reward immediately. Rather, his status of Kohen was delayed until later, during the time of Yehoshua, when Pinchas helped resolve another national crisis that arose. As we read in the Book of Yehoshua (22), the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Menashe, who resided east of the Jordan River, constructed an altar on the riverbank. The other tribes, who lived in the mainland of Eretz Yisrael, west of the Jordan, assumed that this altar was constructed for idolatry, as an act of rebellion against G-d, and they prepared to wage war against these three tribes. Before attacking, however, they sent Pinchas to speak to Reuben, Gad and Menashe and find some resolution. These tribes explained to Pinchas that their intent in building the altar was not for idolatry, but rather as a sign and reminder of their

identification as part of the Nation of Israel. Pinchas returned to the other tribes and conveyed to them the explanation, thereby avoiding a deadly conflict. At this point, the Gemara comments, Pinchas received the status of Kohen in reward for his heroism during the sin of Ba'al Pe'or.

Why was Pinchas' reward delayed? Why wasn't he named a Kohen immediately?

Often, people act the right way and do the right things not because of their devotion to God and to His commands, but because of their natural tendencies. For example, many people are naturally kind and sensitive, and others are naturally drawn to the intellectually stimulating experience of Torah. For this reason, actions do not always reflect a genuine, sincere commitment to G-d. The way we test our sincerity is by determining whether we are prepared to act the opposite way to fulfill the divine will. Thus, for example, Abraham Abinu excelled in the area of Hesed – loving-kindness to all people – and so He was tested by the command of the Akeda, when he showed he was willing to tie his beloved son on an altar and cut his throat in fulfillment of G-d's will. If a person is prepared to act in a manner that directly opposes his natural tendency, in order to fulfill G-d's will, then he has proven his sincerity.

I once received a phone call before Yom Kippur from a woman who told me that her husband, an eighty-year-old man, was instructed by his doctor to eat on Yom Kippur.

"Ok," I replied, "if the doctor said so, then this is what he should do."

The woman explained to me that her husband outright refused to eat. He had fasted on Yom Kippur every single year since his Bar Misva, and was not prepared

to eat on Yom Kippur that year. I tried gently explaining to the woman that the same G-d who commands healthy people to fast on Yom Kippur commands ill patients to eat on Yom Kippur. For the last sixty-seven years, G-d wanted her husband to fast on Yom Kippur, but that year He wanted him to eat.

If a person is not willing to eat on Yom Kippur when Halacha requires him to do so, then his sincerity must be questioned. Was he fasting on Yom Kippur all these years in order to fulfill Hashem's will, or because this is what he grew up with, or because he received some personal satisfaction from the experience? If he was truly sincere in his desire to fulfill G-d's will, then why would he refuse to eat when this is what G-d wants him to do?

This is the question that had to be answered before Pinchas could receive his reward for killing Zimri and Kozbi. Did he truly act out of religious passion, and a genuine desire to defend G-d's honor and end the plague? Or, was he just in a bad mood that day, or was he naturally drawn to violent behavior?

Pinchas' sincerity in committing this act was tested at the time he was sent to speak to Reuben, Gad and Menashe. Here he was given the precise opposite mission. Rather than kill two sinners, his job was to bring peace between conflicting factions. Whereas in Ba'al Pe'or the extraordinary situation called for an extraordinary measure of violence, Pinchas was now called upon to work as a diplomat and resolve a conflict. He was sent specifically to prevent a situation of battle against sinners – the very kind of battle he waged at Ba'al Pe'or. He dutifully executed his mission, thereby confirming his sincerity and establishing that he was worthy of the lofty stature of Kohen.

# Holy Retaliation



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**T**he psukim (Bamidbar 25:11-12) contain a seeming contradiction: “Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the kohein turned My anger away from the children of Israel by zealously avenging Me among them so that I not destroy the children of Israel in My jealousy. Therefore I say, ‘Behold I give him My covenant of peace.’” How does Hashem’s characterization of Pinchas as a zealous avenger of His honor square with the presumably appropriate blessing of peace?

## Kohanim – Loving or Exacting?

Chazal speak about the personality traits of kohanim in many places. Kohanim are known as being so humble that according to the Gemara (Kiddushin 70b), if one finds a kohein who is brazen and lacks shame, it is doubtful whether he is truly a kohein. Every time the kohanim bless the Jewish people, he make the blessing, “Who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aharon and commanded us to bless His people Israel with love.”

On the other hand, the Gemara also says (Bava Basra 160b) that kohanim are generally very exacting in their dealings with others. Even in the daily life of the kohanim in the Beis Hamikdash, they were constantly involved in slaughtering the sacrifices, catching blood, carrying blood, and sprinkling blood. Their lives were surrounded by blood. And at the time of the Greek occupation of Eretz Yisroel, it was the Chashmonayim, the kohanim, who would no longer tolerate the degradation of the Jewish people and led an ultimately successful revolt against the Greeks.

## Pinchas and Eliyahu

It is known (Zohar Ki Sisa 190a) that Eliyahu Hanavi has the same soul as Pinchas.

But this connection is fraught with apparent contradictions as well, as illustrated in the piyut we sing after Shabbos about Eliyahu Hanavi: “The man who was zealous for Hashem’s sake; the man for whom peace was announced through Yekusiel [Moshe Rebbeinu].” Eliyahu was known as a very strong zealot. Because of the Jewish people’s sins, he decreed a famine in Eretz Yisroel (Melachim I 17:1). Eliyahu Hanavi was an uncompromising zealot for the truth and radiated a sense of great awe and fear. Eliyahu even said about himself (Melachim I 19:14) “I have been zealous for Hashem.”

Yet on the other hand, the last prophet in Tanach (Malachi 3:23-24) tells us that at the end of days, it will be Eliyahu who will come and “turn the hearts of the fathers back through their children and the hearts of the children back through their fathers.” This Navi who is otherwise known as the ultimate zealot will bring peace between the generations and, in his prior life as Pinchas, was blessed with peace.

## Love and Jealousy – Two Sides of a Coin

The reality is clearly that the two seemingly opposite characteristics of love/peace and jealousy/zealousness are not contradictory at all. The pasuk in Shir Hashirim (8:6) says, “Place me like a seal upon your heart because love is strong as death, jealousy is as powerful as the depths, its coals are like coals of fire, the flame of G-d.” True zeal and jealousy are the natural result of love.

The Midrash (Shir Hashirim Raba 8) says that “Hashem loves you” and goes on to explain the pasuk as follows: “‘Love is strong as death;’ in the future, the Holy One will avenge Zion with great jealousy,

as the pasuk (Zecharia 8:2) says, “Thus says Hashem, I have become jealous of Zion with a great jealousy.” Real love naturally results in jealousy when someone from the outside drives a wedge between two people who love each other or if someone attempts to or actually succeeds in hurting one of them.

The Ramchal describes the relationship between zealousness/jealousy and love in the life of a pious Jew (Chelkei Hachasidus): “It is obvious that if one loves his friend, he cannot tolerate seeing another hitting him or denigrating him. He will undoubtedly go out to assist him. So too one who loves the Name of G-d cannot tolerate seeing people desecrate It, G-d forbid...”

It is therefore clear that the root of jealousy and zealousness is a love that does not allow one to be indifferent or apathetic to the subject of his love. Expressing this idea, the Sfas Emes explains that the pasuk (Bamidbar 25:7), “And he took a spear in his hand” as follows: The root word for spear (רמח) has the same letters as the Aramaic word for love (רחימותא). Pinchas killed Zimri and Kozbi, but his entire motivation was a love for Hashem and the Jewish people and a desire that the relationship between them not be defiled.

In Pinchas’s time, there were those who stood by and were able to tolerate those who brought idolatry and immorality into our relationship with Hashem. They were complacent. But Pinchas was not one of them. Like the old song says, “I only have eyes for you.” Pinchas realized our relationship cannot be with anyone “other than Hashem alone.” That is why the Navi (Malachi 2:5) says about Pinchas/Eliyahu,

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# The Mission Statement of Judaism



Rabbi YY Jacobson  
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## The Verse that Says It All

A fascinating Midrash credits an isolated verse in this week's Torah portion, Pinchas, encapsulating the quintessence of Judaism.

The Midrash quotes four opinions as to which biblical verse best sums up the ultimate message of the Torah. One sage, by the name of Ben Azzai, believed it was the verse in Genesis: "This is the book of the chronicles of man; on the day that G-d created man He created him in the image of G-d."

Another sage, Ben Zoma, holds a different verse to be more central to Jewish thought: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One."

A third Talmudist, Ben Nanas, chooses this verse: "You shall love your fellow man like yourself." Finally, the fourth sage, Shimon, the son of Pazi, casts his pitch for the epic verse of the Torah. It is culled from the section in this week's portion that deals with the obligation during the time of the Temple to bring each day two lambs as an offering to G-d. "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon." This verse, according to Shimon, the son of Pazi, is the defining verse of Judaism.

The Midrash concludes: "One of the rabbis stood on his feet and declared, 'The verdict follows the opinion of Shimon the son of Pazi!'"

## The Big Question

This is strange. The first three opinions make sense. The notion that all of Judaism can be traced back to the idea that a human being reflects G-d seems right. The same can be said about the concept of a single and universal G-d, or the injunction to love our fellow man like ourselves – these ideas, introduced 3300 years ago by the Hebrew Bible, vividly embody the essential *weltanschauung* of Judaism and its contribution to civilization.

But how does the verse "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon" represent the core essence of Torah? How can one even begin to compare the message about offering two lambs with the global and noble ideas contained in the other three opinions?

What is even more astonishing is that the final verdict in the Midrash selects this verse about the sheep as the "winner." The biblical verses dealing with love, monotheism and human dignity, the foundations of morality and civilization, did not "make it" in the contest; it is precisely this verse enjoining us to offer a lamb in the morning and a lamb in the afternoon – that was chosen as the ultimate embodiment of Judaism!

## The Depth of Perseverance

One of the most seminal Jewish thinkers in the post-medieval period was Rabbi Judah Loew (1525-1609), who was known as the Maharal and served as the Chief Rabbi of Prague. In one of his works he offers a powerful answer.

What the fourth and last sage, Shimon the son of Pazi, was suggesting is that the verse that ultimately defines what it means to be a Jew is the one that speaks of unwavering consistency, "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon." Every single morning and every single afternoon you shall make a sacrifice for your Creator.

The biblical declarations that reveal the philosophical depth of Torah and its grand vision for humanity – monotheism, love, human dignity – are powerful, splendid, and revolutionary. They have redefined theology, sociology, and psychology. But what makes Judaism and Jewish life unique is the unswerving commitment to live and breathe these truths day in, day out, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

I can be moved to tears by the notion of *tikkun olam*, of healing the world; I can preach about the ideals of human dignity, love, and

peace. But the ideas and inspiration are fleeting. The real and ultimate power of Judaism is that it managed to translate the profound visionary ideals into daily routines and behaviors. Judaism always inspired its people to cultivate their relationship with G-d on a continuous basis, every day of their lives. Torah asks the human being to make daily sacrifices for truth, love, peace, G-d, family, for marriage. "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon."

During exciting days and monotonous days, on bright days and bleak days – "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon." In the morning, when you awake, you are called to make a sacrifice to G-d. In the afternoon, when your day is winding down, you are again called to sacrifice something of your ego and insecurity for G-d.

Judaism is not only about a moving Yom Kippur experience or an emotional memorial ceremony; it is something the Jew lives every moment of his life. It is the dedication of ordinary people to construct, through daily ordinary acts, a fragment of heaven on planet earth.

It is a truth the great artists grasp well: Consistency is the soil in which creativity blossoms. The mission statement of Judaism is that you are always an ambassador of the Divine, an ambassador for love, light, and hope. When your sun rises and when your sun sets, you are G-d's agent here on earth to infuse it with meaning, purpose, and harmony, creating unity out of chaos, oneness out of fragmentation, and light weaved from the stuff of darkness. You may be having a good day or a bad day, you may be at peace or in the midst of a struggle, but you are, in the words of the Maharal, an "Eved Hashem," a servant, a messenger of G-d. You are a ray of infinity, working for G-d, and reflecting His oneness in the world you inhabit.

# Pinchas: Many Chapters



**Rabbi Judah Mischel**

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**R**av Yitzchok Zilberstein, shlit'a, Rav of Ramat Elchanan, is a celebrated *gadol baTorah* and a poseik at Mayanei Hayeshua Hospital in Bnei Brak.

While at a *sheva brachos* for the son of a renowned talmid chacham in Bnei Brak, Rav Zilberstein heard the following *ma'aseh* from the *ba'al simchah* about a dramatic day in Europe, before the War.

There was a cheder student who struggled to maintain the behavioral standards expected by the school. He was known to be wild and unfazed by disciplinary actions, making his *rabbeim* crazy whenever he would get into trouble. One day, the *melamed* heard a strange bleating sound coming from the shul adjacent to the cheder. When he went to see what was going on, to his great shock, a goat jumped out of the *aron kodesh*. When the *melamed* returned to class, all eyes were on the usual culprit. The *menahel* soon arrived, and the boy admitted to the prank, but the *menahel* decided this was the final straw and announced that he would be expelled from cheder.

Frowning and standing as tall as he could before the *menahel*, the child retorted, "With respect due to the *Rov*, the *Menahel*, I will not leave the cheder. And... please know that I hereby summon you to the *Beis Din*!" All were stunned to silence while the young boy strode out the door and down the street to the *Beis Din*, where he begged the secretary for an audience. Bewildered, the *menahel* and *melamed* followed behind.

When the door to the *Beis Din* opened to the unlikely crew, the boy stepped forward and confessed, "Your Honor, I understand that what I did was wrong, and I deserve to be punished. But kicking me out of *yeshivah* will not only affect the rest of *my* life, it will also affect my future offspring... Did the *menahel* consult with them? Did he take

their lives and spiritual well being into account?"

The *menahel* and *Av Beis Din* stared at each other in surprise for a full minute. While he may have been a trouble-maker, the boy was clearly very sharp! Needless to say, he was given another chance, and he soon settled down in cheder. In fact, from that day on, he began to focus his unconventional intensity and lack of inhibition upon his Torah study – and excelled above many.

"And I..." paused the *ba'al simchah* with emotion, "I am the great-grandson of that trouble maker!"



Almost forty years after the initial counting of Am Yisrael in the Desert, everyone from the *Dor haMidbar* has passed away. A new generation has grown up and is ready to enter Eretz Yisrael in their stead. In the wake of the *mageifah*, the horrific plague which Pinchas has ended, Hashem now instructs Moshe and Elazar to conduct another census and engage in *chalukas ha-Aretz*, to divide and assign regions of the Holy Land as tribal inheritances:

"The land, moreover, is to be apportioned by lot... Each portion shall be assigned by lot, whether for larger or smaller groups... The inheritance shall be apportioned between the numerous and the few, according to lot..." (26:56)

Instead of allowing power, influence or coalition politics to determine where each *Shevet* would go, Rashi explains the Torah's intent in making it according to a lottery system: "The Land was divided by means of the Divine Spirit." Similarly, when Yehoshua leads the nation into Eretz Yisrael, it is "in accordance with Hashem's word." (*Yehoshua*, 19:50)

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz adds that the portions of Eretz Yisrael were assigned according to unique spiritual character

traits that matched the qualities of the geography. Each location corresponded to the *shores ha-neshama*, the spiritual root of each tribe. Only Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, knows the true hidden potentials and abilities of each tribe. Only Hashem knew the strengths and talents hidden beneath the occasional appearance of 'trouble-making'. Identifying the deeper spiritual stature of each tribal founder and their offspring needed to be accomplished through *Ruach haKodesh*.

Our sedra describes the first *Shevet* to receive their inheritance: "Reuven, *b'chor Yisrael*, Israel's firstborn: the descendants of Reuven were the *Chanochi* family (חֲנֹכִי) from *Chanoch*; the *Palu'i* family (הַפְּלִיאִי), descendants of *Palu*..." (26:5)

Rashi notes the spelling of the family names in this verse, and offers that it is in response to the nations who had cast aspersions on their lineages. Our enemies had attempted to denigrate them, saying, "How can they trace their lineage by their tribes? Do they really think that the Egyptians did not exploit their mothers? If [the Egyptians] mastered the bodies [of the Hebrews], all the more so [did they exercise authority over] their wives." For this reason, proclaims Rashi, the Hashem appended His Name to the names of these families, adding the letter **ה** to one side and the letter **י** to the other side (חֲנֹכִי and הַפְּלִיאִי). This was as if to say, 'I bear witness that these are the sons of their fathers!'

As we recognize the Creator's willingness to testify on our behalf, to stand up for us 'in court' and to proclaim his belief in us, how can we not become deeply patient, humble and kind in the way we see and judge others? Each of us lives out a story consisting of many chapters. Only Hashem knows how many chapters there will be and how the narrative will unfold. May there always be a sweet and happy ending, with revealed good in store for us all!

# Spiritual Connection to the Land

## Mrs. Shira Smiles

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The five daughters of Tzelafachad approached Moshe Rabbeinu with a claim, “Avinu meit bamidbar...uvanim lo hayu lo” (Bamidbar 27:3). These women had no brothers to inherit their father’s portion in Eretz Yisrael and requested that they be given their due share. Not only did Hashem tell Moshe that their appeal was legitimate, but they also merited having an additional segment of Torah law regarding inheritance to be given in their honor. What motivated their claim and how can we make it relevant to us?

Rashi notes that their lineage goes all the way back to Yosef Hatzadik. Chazal teach us that just as Yosef Hatzadik loved the Land and wanted to be buried there, this trait was also passed on to his descendants. Rav Gamliel Rabinovitz in Tiv HaTorah points out that seven generations separated Yosef Hatzadik and bnot Tzelafachad! This demonstrates how strong one’s dominant character traits are and how the mesirut nefesh one has to maintain his values is transmitted for generations to come. It is powerful



**It is powerful to contemplate that our actions not only affect us but leave a spiritual genetic imprint on our descendants long after we are gone.**

to contemplate that our actions not only affect us but leave a spiritual genetic imprint on our descendants long after we are gone.

Rav Shmuelevitz in Sichot Mussar quotes Rashi saying that the women did not perish in the desert and indeed were able to enter the Land. The women, as we see from the bnot Tzelafachad, fervently loved the Land and desired nothing more than to settle it. Their request for a portion was not motivated by a financial concern, rather for the spiritual connection to the Land. Further proof of this, notes the Chatam Sofer, is that they insisted on receiving Land within the borders of Israel, rather than being satisfied with

a share in the Transjordan territory of Menashe. Such was their passionate love for Eretz Yisrael and its ethereal significance.

Rav Friedlander in Siftey Chayim explains that their desire for a portion in the Land was far deeper than a craving for mere possessions and wealth. The Talmud teaches (Sotah 2a) that one’s place of dwelling is predetermined before he is born. The bnot Tzelafachad understood that a child’s task is to continue their parents’ path in avodat Hashem. The Land was just but a means to enable them to serve Hashem more fully. They were trying to understand their life mission and how to continue their father’s legacy within the context of entering Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Levovitz in Da’at Torah observes that they were worthy of having this parashah given in their merit since “megalgelim zechut al yedei zakai” (Sanhedrin 8a). This teaches us the great reward of those who seek out Hashem and desire to connect to eternity.

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one or two parim, the first day of Sukkot requires **thirteen!** Even more enigmatic is the incremental decrease of one **par** each day throughout the seven days of Sukkot.

So what’s behind the korbanot on Sukkot?

One could suggest that Sukkot should not be considered a separate, third category, but rather a **combination** of the other two.

On the one hand, Sukkot could very easily be included in Group One, which contains the other two “regalim” (i.e. Chag

HaMatzot and Shavuot). On the other hand, Sukkot could also join Group Two, which contains all the other holidays in the seventh month (i.e. “chagei Tishrei”).

Sukkot fits into both groups conceptually, as well. On the one hand, it is a festival of thanksgiving (like the holidays in Group One), as we thank God for the harvest; this is why Hallel is recited on Sukkot. On the other hand, it is also a time of awe (like the holidays in Group Two), as we anticipate the rainy season, which will determine

the fate of the forthcoming year; this is why Hoshanot are recited on Sukkot.

There is definitely more in the parsha than meets the eye. What appears to be a rather monotonous list of korbanot may actually contain some very fundamental aspects of the “chagim.” Hopefully, next time you daven musaf, you will better understand what the prayer is all about, and your tefillah will be a bit more meaningful.

# When the Covenant is Broken



**Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi**  
Popular Torah teacher and author

**W**hen Zimri, the head of a tribe in Israel, takes a foreign wife, there seems nothing for it but to weep. Terrible weeping: “and all the Israelite community stood weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.”

Never before has an act of betrayal been described in the Torah. The people of Israel weep at the entrance of the Tabernacle, because that is where the women brought the burning sight that restored the marriage that was on the verge of dissolution in Egypt. Right there they fill the washbasin with salty tears because they cannot believe that their covenant has been broken.

The betrayal became possible in the world only through the 17th of Tammuz. It was the first breaking of the “wedding day” when Moshe held the covenant between G-d and His people in his hands and the tablets of the heart were broken. The engraved letters turn into flowering air.

This is how the “Shem Mishmuel” explains Pinchas’ terrible act: when he takes a spear and cuts between Zimri and Kazbi, he wants to illustrate the meaning



**If a relationship that seems to be eternal can be reversed, then even the loneliness based on the situation of the five bnot Tzelafchad can be expanded into a home.**

of infidelity between husband and wife, who are supposed to be two lovers who do not separate! Two inseparable lovers! One cuts a living being! That is what he will tell the prostitutes on the ships. Cry.

And what will happen now?!

Here, bnot Tzelafchad come to this difficult matter. “They were women of intelligence.” They studied the Torah and through it gained a wonderful perspective: if an unchanging relationship – broken in this way – then a break that seems unchanging can also be connected... In other words, if a relationship that seems to be eternal can be reversed, then even the loneliness based on the situation of the five bnot Tzelafchad can be expanded into a home...

“Five tragic events befell our forefathers on the seventeenth of Tamuz”? Terrible, but here come “five women that befell the people of Israel” just before entering the land... They will ask for a relationship and a house and a piece of land and a courtyard where no girls are allowed to come, they will not cry at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, because they have cried enough. The scholars will not cry for long, they will pick up letters that have blossomed in the air and insist on writing them on two stone tablets like the first ones that were broken. On that terrible day, the 17th of Tammuz, even loneliness can be broken, even letters engraved on the heart, like “You shall not desire anymore, you shall not have. Thou shalt not steal the sweet moments with thy husband when the children fall asleep. Thou shalt not answer thy neighbor, for there is none.” Even the terrible “no” written in black ink on white fire could become a “yes.”

“The plea of Tzelafchad's daughters is just.”

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“My covenant of life and peace was with him.”

Kohanim also come from a perspective of great love, and depending on the circumstances, that love expresses itself in different ways. As we see with Eliyahu

Hanavi, an intolerance for those who would hurt our people is the only way to achieve true peace.

With G-d's help, may we merit to see the fulfillment of that which we sing in the piyut: “He will announce good news for us,

he will cause the sons to rejoice over the fathers after Shabbos... Fortunate is one who sees his [Eliyahu's] face in a dream, fortunate is he who merits to greet [Eliyahu] with ‘Shalom,’ and who [Eliyahu] answers with ‘Shalom.’ May Hashem bless his nation with peace.”

# Hebrew Language in the Parsha



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**P**arashat Pinchas includes the second census of the Israelites during their time in the wilderness. In addition to counting the population of each tribe, it also provides some historical details. For example, it recounts the Korach incident, noting what happened to Korach's assembly:

וַתִּפְתַּח הָאֲרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־קִרְחַן בְּמֹת  
הָעֵדָה בְּאֹכֶל הָאֵשׁ אֵת חֲמִשִּׁים וּמְאֹתָיִם אִישׁ וַיְהִי לְנִסִּי:

“Whereupon the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with Korach – when that band died, when the fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men – and they became an example.” (Bamidbar 26:10)

This translation renders the end of the verse, וַיְהִי לְנִסִּי, as “they became an example.” There are many other suggestions

found in different translations, including “they became a signal-of warning,” “they became a sign,” and “this involved a divine miracle.”

The different interpretations emerge from the various meanings of the word נִסִּי. Today, the most common use of נִסִּי is “miracle.” However, that was not the meaning generally found in biblical Hebrew. In almost all cases, it meant “flag” or “flagpole.” From there it took on the more broad sense of “sign”, and then in later Hebrew, the more specific “divine sign”, i.e., “miracle.”

A similar pattern can be found in the word אִוָּה, which in biblical Hebrew means both “sign” and “miracle.” And all these meanings are reflected in the various translations to our verse.

Many scholars say that the word נִסִּי is related to the root נָשָׂא – “to lift up,” which makes sense if we think of how a flag is raised.

But what about another word that seems to have a similar root נִסְיוֹן – “trial, attempt”? It comes from the verb נָסָה – “to try, to test.” Some scholars therefore say that נִסִּי and נִסְיוֹן aren't related. But one interesting suggestion connects the two. It derives נִסְיוֹן from the earlier meaning of נָשָׂא, proposing that the way we test the weight of an object is to lift it up, and a person's strength is measured by his ability to lift, to bear. From here it developed the sense of testing in general.

## Parsha Riddle



**Reb Leor Broh**  
Mizrachi Melbourne

Can you name 9 women who appear in Parshat Pinchas?

### Answer to the Parsha Riddle

מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה, מִלְכָּה  
Ref: 25:15, 26:46, 26:59, 27:1



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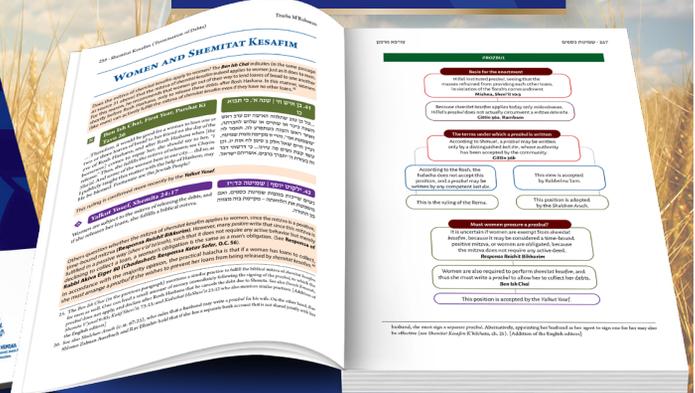
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