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The Yeshiva would like to thank Moshe (Michael, 5757-58) and Aliza Pilevsky for hosting Rav Yoel Rackovsky and the alumni who came to spend Shabbat with him on Shabbat Parshat Shlach.

May Hakadosh Baruch Hu repay you many times over for your chesed and kavod haTorah.

**CHUG IN CAMP HASC**

There will be a chug on Thursday night (July 14) at Camp HASC at 10:30 PM.

The weekly Monday night chug at Camp Morasha will not meet this coming week (July 18).



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**HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Pinchas**

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

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There are still sponsorship and dedication opportunities for the following upcoming



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## "TRUE DEDICATION AND DEVOTION TO TORAH"

### "HE WHO GUARDS THE FIG TREE SHALL EAT ITS FRUIT"

In our Parsha Moshe Rabenu requests from Hashem: "May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly" (Bamidbar 27:16). According to Rashi, Moshe's request was far more detailed: "Once Moshe heard that the Omnipresent said to him: 'give Zelafchad's inheritance to his daughters', he said: 'the time has come that I should claim what I need - that my sons inherit my position'. The Holy One, Blessed is He, said to him: 'this is not what has entered My mind, Yehoshua is worthy of taking reward for his service: 'for he would not depart from within the tent'".

Clearly Moshe Rabenu would not request that his sons inherit his leadership position if they were not worthy of such a position. Moshe Rabenu is not like other people, who see in their children virtues that they do not possess(!) Moshe Rabenu weighs every detail with accurate holy scales. If he feels that his children are indeed worthy of leading the Jewish people, then clearly they are fit for the position. Why then did Hashem choose Yehoshua to succeed Moshe Rabenu rather than Gershom and Eliezer? Chazal tell us: "Hashem said to him: 'he who guards the fig tree shall eat its fruit' (Mishle 27:18). Yehoshua spent much time in your service ... he would rise early and remain late in your house of meeting, he would arrange the benches ... he is worthy of serving the Jewish people" (Bamidbar Rabba 21:14). (There is an inherent difficulty with this Midrash, for why was there a need for benches in Moshe Rabenu's Beit Midrash, are we not told: "from the days of Moshe until Rabban Gamliel, they would not learn Torah any other way but standing. Once Rabban Gamliel died, feebleness descended to the world and they would learn Torah sitting" (Megillah 21a). Perhaps the benches were needed for the tefillot).

We find Yehoshua's devotion elsewhere as well. When Moshe Rabenu descended Har Sinai, Yehoshua was waiting for him at the foot of the mountain (see Shmot 32:17). Why did he wait there? Could he not have awaited his arrival in the camp? No! Moshe was returning from Har Sinai brimming with "*chiddushei Torah*"! Yehoshua cannot wait for Moshe Rabenu to return to the camp, he awaits his arrival at the foot of the mountain - imagine how many "*chiddushei Torah*" he can hear as he accompanies Moshe from the mountain to the encampment!

Yehoshua did not just go to the foot of the mountain on the fortieth day, he waited at the foot of Har Sinai for all forty days! (see Rashi Shmot 24:13). For what reason? Did Moshe not inform the people prior to ascending up the mountain that he will remain on top for a total of forty days? (see Rashi Shmot 32:1). Yehoshua therefore could have remained in the camp the entire time only returning to Har Sinai on the fortieth day to greet Moshe! This is not, however, what Yehoshua does. He feared that perhaps the Divine Plan would be altered, perhaps Hashem would decide that Moshe must return from the mountain prior to the forty days stipulated. If so, he did not wish to risk losing even one single moment. He therefore remained for forty days at the foot of Har Sinai awaiting Moshe's return.

As we mentioned, if Moshe requested that his sons inherit his position then clearly they too must have been men of stature in Torah, Yirat Shamayim, and in all other Middot. They may even have surpassed Yehoshua's level in certain areas. Even so, there is at least one area in which Yehoshua was greater than Moshe's sons - in his self-sacrifice and thirst for words of Torah. It was for this reason that Hashem chose Yehoshua to succeed Moshe and not Gershom and Eliezer.

## DID YOU STUDY TORAH IN CLOSE QUARTERS WITH PEOPLE WITH INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES?

We find a rare and unique reward for self-sacrifice for Torah during the time of the Amoraim as well. The Gemara relates: "when it was time for R' Yehoshua ben Levi to die, they said to the Angel of Death: 'go do for him whatever he wishes'. The Angel went and appeared to him, R' Yehoshua ben Levi said to it: 'take me to the Garden of Eden and show me my place there'. The Angel said: 'Fine'. R' Yehoshua ben Levi said to the Angel: 'give me your knife lest you frighten me along the way'. The Angel gave the knife to R' Yehoshua ben Levi. When he arrived there, the Angel lifted R' Yehoshua ben Levi up and showed him his place in the Garden of Eden. R' Yehoshua ben Levi leaped and fell to the other side" (managing to evade the knife of the Angel of Death) (Ketubot 77b).

The Gemara continues: "R Chanina bar Pappa was a close and constant friend of the Angel of Death. When it was time for him to die, they said to the Angel of Death: 'go do for him whatever he wishes'. The Angel went near him and appeared to him ... R' Chanina bar Pappa said to the Angel: 'show me my place in the Garden of Eden'. The Angel said: 'fine". R' Chanina bar Pappa said to the Angel: 'give me your knife lest you frighten me along the way'. The Angel replied to him: 'you want to do to me as your friend did?' R' Chanina did not have the merit to enter Gan Eden alive as did R' Yehoshua ben Levi. R' Chanina said to the Angel: 'bring a Torah scroll and see if there is anything that is written in it that I did not fulfill' ..." (ibid.). And indeed the Gemara reports that "when he died a column of fire appeared and stood as a separation between him and everyone else, and there is a tradition that a column of fire does not appear and stand as a separation except for one person in a generation or two persons in a generation" (ibid.).

R' Chanina bar Pappa was obviously a man of great stature, he was the Gadol of his generation - or at least one of the two Gedolim of his time. He was a Gadol in no ordinary generation but in one of the generations of the holy Amoraim whose greatness we cannot begin to describe or measure. Yet, explained the Angel of Death to R' Chanina bar Pappa, there is one thing that R' Yehoshua ben Levi did that you did not: "did you stick close to people afflicted with 'raatan' and engage in the study of Torah?" (ibid.). (*Raatan* was a very difficult and infectious disease.) Amoraim were in the habit of distancing themselves from those afflicted with this illness to avoid being infected by them. But R' Yehoshua ben Levi would come close to people afflicted with *raatan* and would sit and learn Torah with them. Perhaps he would give them their own private *shiur* as was the case, in our generation, with R' Aryeh Levin zt"l who would visit a leper colony on a regular basis, for there was no one else willing to do so. R' Chanina bar Pappa certainly gave of all his resources for his own Torah study as well as for the disseminating of Torah to others. There is also no doubt that immediately after his death he arrived in Gan Eden. Yet he did not have that unique self-sacrifice we find in R' Yehoshua ben Levi - endangering his life by teaching Torah to people afflicted with '*raatan*'. This explains why he did not merit being saved from the sword of the Angel of Death and entering Gan Eden while still alive, as did R' Yehoshua ben Levi.

## I DID NOT BENEFIT FROM WORLDLY PLEASURES EVEN BY ONE BABY FINGER'S WORTH!

Chazal tell us: "from the days of Moshe until Rebbi we do not find Torah and authority preeminent in one place" (Gittin 59a). What special trait did Rebbi possess that was not found in anyone else from the period of Moshe Rabenu until his time? The Gemara relates: "at the time of Rebbi's passing, he extended his ten fingers heavenward and he said: 'Master of the Universe it is revealed and known before You that I toiled with my ten fingers in the study of Torah but I did not benefit from worldly pleasure even according to the toil of my little finger. May it be Your will that there be peace in my place of eternal rest" (Ketubot 104a). Had Rebbi been a pauper this declaration would not have been such a big deal- OK, so he derived no worldly pleasures from this life. Rebbi, however, was no pauper, he was an extremely wealthy man.

For a man of such means to avoid deriving any benefit from this world is something very great indeed. In his position, he surely had to host many dignitaries such as the Caesar, the Roman governor, and "*lehavdil*" many Gedolei Yisrael. Without a doubt they were served the finest delicacies. In spite of all this, he personally did not enjoy even a little finger's worth of pleasure in this world. Rebbi was totally devoted to the Torah. This is probably what made him worthy of compiling the Oral Torah for us in the form of the six books of the Mishna.

## "KILL" THE BODY AND RESUSCITATE THE SOUL

The Torah tells us: "this is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent" (Bamidbar 19:14), to which Chazal comment: "The words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over it" (Shabbat 83b). As nice a drasha as this may be, it does not appear to bear any relationship to the simple

meaning of the *pasuk*. The *pasuk*, after all deals with contamination associated with coming in contact with the dead. How does this relate to "the words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over it"? I believe that we can relate this drasha to the simple understanding of the *pasuk*. What is the Torah teaching us here? That when a person dies, as pure as he may have been during his lifetime, his body attains the ultimate level of "tumah" once his soul takes leave. This serves to teach us that the body on its own, in the absence of the soul, is the ultimate in impurity. It is only the soul, the spiritual component of the body, that imbues a person with sanctity and purity. In order to merit the Torah which is all sanctity and purity, we need to "kill" our body and "resuscitate" our soul, for holiness and sanctity can only be found in the soul. While it is true that the body contains a certain degree of sanctity, it is after all the image of Hashem and must be buried in a dignified manner, nonetheless, the body on its own is the ultimate in impurity.

It is because a person must "kill" his body that the Braita teaches us: "This is the way of the Torah: eat bread with salt, drink water in small measure, sleep on the ground, live a life of deprivation - but toil in the Torah" (Avot 6:4). The Israeli government in fact would like the Yeshivot to only provide their students with bread and salt and water in small measure! The truth is that today we will never be able to attain high levels of Torah learning by living under such conditions. This may have been fine for the Gr"a and others of his stature. For us, however, were we to sustain ourselves only on bread with salt and water in small measure we would not be able to fulfill the rest of the Braita to sleep on the ground, instead we would fall asleep on our "*shtender*". We could never learn under such austere conditions. We need to eat until we are satiated, all the while guarding ourselves against being ruled and guided by the physical world. Our soul must be the one to direct us not our body. In order to properly function, the body must be provided with its basic needs - we must not deprive ourselves of necessary sleep, and we must eat enough as well. Our goal in these physical activities must be, however, to enhance our Torah learning and Mitzvah observance.

There is a particular Gadol whose "*chiddushei Torah*" can be found in all of the Yeshivot. People say that it is evident from his writings that he was a very wealthy individual. He served Hashem and merited that his writings be studied throughout all of the Yeshivot, nevertheless had he learned in conditions of poverty, his "*chiddushim*" would have been that much greater. R' Shmelka of Niklesburg and his brother R' Pinchas author of the "*Haflaa*" were known to learn Torah day and night sleeping only when exhaustion overpowered them. The story is told that one of the brothers once reached his hand for a pillow to place under his head, at which point his brother remarked: "if you still have sufficient strength to reach for a pillow then you still have enough strength to continue learning!" Their mother used to say that she had two unusual sons - they rarely recited Birkat HaMazon (for they hardly ever ate) and they rarely recited "HaMapiil" (for they hardly went to sleep) ... It was known that the Gr"a would learn twenty-two hours daily (see the introduction to the commentary of the Gr"a to the Shulchan Aruch written by his sons).

These are examples of people who "kill themselves over (the Torah)". This type of behavior, however, is not for us. For those on our level, we need to enjoy this world in order to succeed in learning. I am referring not only to a "little finger's" worth of pleasure but a mouthful. Even so, we must not let our physical desires dictate our direction in life, they must only be used as needed to serve Hashem and not more.

We must not let our thoughts and decisions be influenced by this world. When we weigh the various factors required to render a decision we must not take into account what is good for our stomachs, like those people who "make their stomach into their gods" (Chovot HaLevavot). What must be exclusively on our mind is "what does the Torah want from me", "what does Hashem want from me", "which decision would better spread Torah throughout Am Yisrael", "what would better sanctify the Name of Heaven". Other factors are of no significance.

### **"GAME IN THE MOUTH CAN CAUSE BLINDNESS IN THE EYES!"**

The Torah tells us regarding Yitzchak Avinu: "Yitzchak loved Esav for game was in his mouth" (Bereishit 25:28). The simple meaning of the *pasuk* would indicate that the reason Yitzchak loved Esav and was not able to see his shortcomings was because Esav would care for his father's physical needs: "Yitzchak loved Esav for game was in his mouth - "in the mouth of Yitzchak" (Rashi). We cannot say that this is what truly happened to one of the holy forefathers whose merit we mention three times a day "G-d of Avraham, G-d of Yitzchak, and G-d of Yaakov". We must realize that this is not the real way to understand what is happening here. We have no choice, however, but to learn the Torah with our own simple minds. On this simple level of understanding there is a terrible lesson we can learn from this - personal involvement can totally skew a person's judgment. In this case the physical desires blinded Yitzchak's eyes to who Esav really was.

## YERAVAM ABOLISHES THE PILGRIMAGE OF SHALOSH REGALIM

Let us discuss another personality who was also a Gadol baTorah but not a *tzaddik* like Yitzchak Avinu. The *pasuk* states: "It happened at that time, while Yeravam was leaving Yerushalayim, the prophet Achiya the Shilonite found him on the way; he was clothed in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the field" (Melachim I 11:29). Chazal derived from here: "what is the meaning of a new garment? Rav Nachman said: 'like a new garment, just as a new robe has no defect, so too Yeravam's Torah knowledge had no defect'. An alternate explanation: 'a new garment - they innovated things no ear ever before heard'. What is the meaning of 'the two of them were alone in the field'? Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: 'that all the other Torah scholars were like grass in the field compared to them'. And some say - 'that all the reasons for the commandments of the Torah were as revealed to them as an open field is to an onlooker'" (Sanhedrin 102a).

We see that Yeravam was a great "*lamdan*". He probably had tremendous "*yirat Shamayim*" as well. If Hashem sent Achia HaShiloni to crown him as king of Israel, it must have been for good reason. Yeravam was a good foundation upon which Torah and *Yirat Shamayim* could be built. There are those who claim that the Moshiach ben Yoseph descended from him (see Zohar Chadash Balak 56:1). Had he been meritorious, perhaps he himself would have become the Moshiach ben Yoseph. It was all to no avail, for he abolished the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim for the festivals (this was after he rebuked Shlomo for having done so: "You father David made breaches in the wall so that Israel might come up for the Festivals, you, on the other hand, closed up the breaches in order to levy a toll for Pharaoh's daughter" (Sanhedrin 101b).

Is Yeravam openly declaring that he is acting against the Torah? G-d forbid! He has *halachic* justification for his actions: "If this people will go up to bring offerings in the Temple of Hashem in Jerusalem, the heart of this people will revert to their lord, to Rechavam king of Yehuda, and they will kill me" (Melachim I 12:27). In other words, to allow the Jewish people to make the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim would endanger his life! Why? Because "there is no sitting permitted in the Temple Courtyard by anyone other than the kings from the house of Yehuda. When the people see Rechavam sitting there, while I, who am not from Yehuda will stand, they will think" this one (Rechavam) is the king, whereas that one (Yeravam) must be the servant. And if I, too, sit, I will be regarded as a rebel against the Davidic monarchy and they will kill me" (Sanhedrin 101b).

## ALL IS PERMITTED TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE KING (!)

According to Yeravam this is a clear situation of "*pikuach nefesh*" which permits all Torah prohibitions to be violated. There is no choice but to abolish the pilgrimage to Yerushalayim and to serve Hashem in Beit Kel and Bedan. With his great Torah wisdom, Yeravam decided that just as thousands of people may violate not only one Shabbat but even many Shabbatot in an effort to save one Jewish soul, certainly for the sake of saving a life, ten tribes can be prevented from making their festival pilgrimage to Yerushalayim. Never again will they make the ascent to Yerushalayim for the festival. In addition, they will have violated prohibitions punishable by *karet* such as slaughtering and bringing offerings outside Yerushalayim (see Zevachim 106a). All this in order to save the life of the king. It is true that "*pikuach nefesh*" permits us to violate many Torah prohibitions, but I am not sure whether it was permitted to this extent. It appears not.

Yeravam went even further. The prophet tells us: "He ascended the altar that he made in Beth Kel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month that he had fabricated with his imagination; he made a holiday for the Children of Israel" (Melachim I 12:33). What is the meaning of "the month that he had fabricated with his imagination"? How could Klal Yisrael have heeded his command to make a festival on the eighth month? Had none of them learned that the Torah commands us to observe Sukkot on the seventh month and not the eighth month? The answer is that Yeravam proclaimed the eighth month as the seventh month. That year the Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim did not proclaim a leap year (an additional month), while Yeravam's Sanhedrin declared a leap year. He decided that given that his Sanhedrin represents the ten tribes and the Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim represents only two tribes, the *halacha* must follow his Sanhedrin. If so, what the Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim referred to as the eighth month, to Yeravam's Sanhedrin was only the seventh month. It was on this seventh month that he celebrated the festival of Sukkot.

The prophet, of course, did not approve of this and insisted on calling it the eighth month because "from Zion will the Torah come forth and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem" (Yeshayahu 2:3). Only the Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim can determine whether or not a year has the additional month. Yeravam, whether his error

was intentional or unintentional, refused to acknowledge the centrality of Yerushalayim (because it posed a threat to his life). He therefore claimed that the Sanhedrin representing the ten tribes had greater authority. Why did he not consult with Achia HaShiloni on this matter? Perhaps he felt that this is not the type of question one asks a prophet, it is more of a *halachic* issue. As we mentioned earlier "all the other Torah scholars were like grass in the field compared to them". If that is the case then he can rule for himself, there is no need for him to consult with Achia HaShiloni!

Even so, Achia HaShiloni could have assured him that if Achia crowned him king over Israel then there is no danger in his making the ascent to the house of Hashem in Yerushalayim. If Hashem gave you sovereignty over Israel then there is no danger in your going even if Rechavam, and not you, is sitting in the courtyard. On the contrary, as we mentioned, had he gone to the house of Hashem perhaps he would have become the Moshiach ben Yoseph! Yeravam, however, did not consult with the prophet. He decided using his Torah wisdom that the threat to his own life takes precedence over everything else. The festival pilgrimages must be abolished even if this results in causing Klal Yisrael to transgress the prohibition against slaughtering sanctified animals outside the Beit HaMikdash and establishing a separate Sanhedrin.

Yeravam may not have come to consult with the prophet, but Hashem sends a prophet to him. The prophet Ido comes and "he called out to the altar, by the word of Hashem and said: 'altar, altar! thus said Hashem: behold a son will be born to the house of David, Yoshiyahu will be his name, and he will slaughter upon you the priests of the high places, who burn sacrifices upon you; human bones will be burnt upon you" (Melachim I 13:2). "And he provided a proof on that day saying: 'this is the proof of which Hashem spoke: behold the altar is split and the ashes upon it are spilled" (ibid. 3). "It happened when the king heard the words of the man of G-d who had called out to the altar in Beit Kel, that Yeravam stretched out his hand from upon the altar saying: 'seize him!' and his hand that he had stretched out towards him became paralyzed; he was not able to bring it back to himself ... The king then spoke up and said to the man of G-d: 'please entreat the presence of Hashem your G-d and pray for me, so that my hand may return to me!'. So the man of G-d entreated the presence of Hashem; the use of the king's hand returned to him, and it became as it had been before" (ibid. 4-6).

Yeravam sees open miracles that should have brought him to the conclusion that he had erred in his ways. Does Yeravam draw the appropriate conclusions? Chazal tell us: "'the use of the king's hand returned to him, and it became as it had been before'. What is the meaning of 'it became as it had been before'? That he continued to make offerings as he had done before" (Yalkut Shimoni Melachim I Remez 201). Until now he was mistaken, he had thought that this was a clear case of "*pikuach nefesh*" in which everything he did was permitted. Now the prophet is telling him in the name of Hashem that his ways are wrong. It is clear that this is a true prophet of Hashem - he attempted to seize him yet his hand got stuck in the air, the altar split and the ashes upon it were spilled. Why does Yeravam not repent?

Because of his personal bias! Imagine the embarrassment if he admits his mistake! Who knows how many people would shout at him for having mislead so many people into committing such terrible sins. What is his only recourse? To continue offering upon this altar as he had done before. He accords great respect to the prophet: "the king then spoke to the man of G-d: 'come home with me and dine, and I shall give you a gift'" (Melachim I 13:7). The bottom line was, however, that Doctor Ido repaired his hand, but he did not return from his ways. This already was too difficult.

### **"WHO WILL BE AT THE HEAD?"**

Chazal tell us "The Holy One, Blessed is He, seized Yeravam by his garment and said to him: 'return and then I, you, and the son of Yishai will stroll together in Gan Eden'" (Sanhedrin 102a). What can be better than to stroll with Hashem in Gan Eden? Should this not be what every person yearns for? This is the closest one can get to Hashem. What was Yeravam's reaction? He asks "Who will be at the head?" (ibid.) - me or the son of Yishai. "Hashem replies: 'the son of Yishai will be at the head', 'if so', Yeravam says: 'I do not desire it'"

(ibid.). How stubborn can one get! He is prepared to forfeit his entire share in the Next World rather than acknowledge that David is a more important king than himself, that the kingdom of Yehuda is more significant than the kingdom of Yoseph (Yeravam was a member of the tribe of Ephraim), and that the Moshiach ben David takes precedence over the Moshiach ben Yoseph.

This is no longer a question of "*pikuach nefesh*", the issue here is whether or not to stroll with Hashem in Gan Eden. What can be better? But he is not willing! He would rather sit in Gehinom for eternity than

acknowledge that the descendant of David is more important than himself. Yeravam, after all is among those who has no share in the Next World (see Sanhedrin 90a). Yeravam is of the lowest people who ever lived, so low that all the suffering in Gehinom will not atone for him. This idea is frightening, just how far "the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise" (Devarim 16:19), just how far a person's personal interests can blind him to reality. We are speaking of a *Gadol baTorah*, compared to whom "all the other Torah scholars were like grass in the field". Nevertheless, this form of "bribery" prevented him from admitting to the truth.

### **THE SOTAH - CHOOSES DEATH RATHER THAN PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT!**

The Torah commands us to give the Sotah to drink from the waters. The Sotah is well aware "it shall be that if she had become defiled and had committed treachery against her husband, the waters that cause curse shall come into her for bitterness, and her stomach shall be distended and her thigh shall collapse" (Bamidbar 5:27). What do we ask of her? Just one word: "I am guilty". But the potential embarrassment does not allow her to confess. She should rather die, so long as she not have to endure hearing what they are saying about her in the streets. There is a way in which she can avoid the death and the embarrassment - the Torah does not require her to admit her guilt, it is enough for her to say "I will not drink" - without any justification. In this way she can also save her life (see Sotah 6a). The only negative side to her refusal to drink the waters is that she will thereby forfeit her Ketubah (see Sotah 24a). She will, however, be permitted to marry another Jew and remain alive.

Even this she is not willing to do. She would rather drink the waters and die (there were Sotahs throughout history who did drink the water and die). Why? Because a refusal to drink the waters would be interpreted as an admission of guilt. Refusal to drink is just easier than an open admission. This woman would rather die than walk around with embarrassment "For the bribe will corrupt those who see" (Shmot 23:8). The potential embarrassment prevents her from confessing and thereby saving her life. She swears falsely, causes the Name of Hashem to be erased, all in order to save herself the embarrassment.

### **"BRIBERY BLINDS THE EYES OF THE WISE" - EVEN GEDOLEI YISRAEL**

"*Lehavdil elef alfei havdalot*" - the following story is told about the Shach. The Shach was once involved in litigation. The other litigant asked if they could have their case tried in a Beit Din in another town where neither of them were known and they would therefore receive an impartial ruling. He claimed that everyone here knew of the Shach's great scholarship and would dare not rule against him. The Shach acquiesced and so they went to a faraway place where the local Rav did not know the Shach. The Rav in the far away Beit Din ruled in favor of the other person using a very novel understanding of the issue. The Shach, quite surprised by the Rav's ruling, asked where he came up with such a unique approach to the *halacha*. The Rav replied that he just received a new *Sefer* in which this "*svara*" appears. The Shach asked if he could see this *sefer*, and the Rav opened his closed and took out the Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat containing the new commentary of ... the Shach! He showed the Shach just what he based his ruling on - it is written in the Shach!

How could it be that the Shach himself did not remember this "*svara*" in deciding the case? He, after all, was the one who "discovered" the *svara*. The answer is that at the time the Shach wrote his commentary he was an impartial party, and thus had the ability to come up with this unique interpretation. Once he had a vested interest, not only was he unable to recall his own "*chiddush*" but was even surprised to hear it espoused by another! I am not sure if the story is accurate, but it certainly could have happened - "for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise" was said even with regard to Gedolim. Even one on the level of the Shach when he had a vested interest was unable to recall a relevant *halacha*. The body can blind the eyes.

We must attempt as best we can to overpower our negative traits: jealousy, desires, honor, and all the other negative traits. "This is the teaching regarding a man who would die in a tent" - we must live with the physical world within the "tent of the Torah" - not to die, G-d forbid. We must eat and sleep. The negative traits, however, must be killed, for "the words of Torah are not retained except by one who kills himself over it".

## Kollel Rennert Dvar Torah by HaRav Yoni Evron

### "In a Place where there are no Leaders Strive to be a Leader"

We can learn from our parsha how it is possible to rise to a high level of leadership even in a situation where chaos and despair reign.

The parsha begins with Hashem's promise to Pinchas: "Pinchas son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen turned back My wrath from upon the Children of Israel, when he zealously avenged My vengeance among them, so I did not consume the Children of Israel in My vengeance. Therefore say: 'Behold I give him My covenant of peace.'" (Bamidbar 25:11-12).

What was Pinchas' act which was so praiseworthy? The Torah describes at the end of Parshat Balak that after Bilaam's unsuccessful attempts at transforming blessings into curses against the Jewish nation, he reveals to Balak the secret to defeating the Jewish nation. If the Jewish nation sins, Hashem will no longer protect them and Balak will then be able to defeat them. Bilaam suggested to Balak as follows: given that the G-d of the Jewish nation loathes licentiousness (see Sanhedrin 106a), why not cause them to sin with immorality and that way you will be able to defeat them.

This is what transpired: "the people began to act promiscuously with the daughters of Moav" (Bamidbar 25:1), furthermore they even worshipped *avoda zara*. The result was: "the wrath of Hashem flared up against Israel" (ibid. 3).

Hashem then commanded Moshe to quickly judge and punish those who worshipped *avoda zara* so that Hashem's wrath may be turned back. Moshe then commands the judges of Israel: "let each man kill his men who were attached to Baal-Peor" (ibid. 5). Rashi comments: "each and every one of the judges of Israel would kill two, and the judges of Israel were 88,000" (see Sanhedrin 18a). If each judge were to kill two individuals, this means that 176,000 people should have been killed!

In the midst of all this, the *nasi* of the tribe of Shimon complained to Moshe about the actions of the judges of Israel, saying to Moshe: "Moshe, is this woman (the Midianite) forbidden or permitted? If you will say she is forbidden, who permitted the daughter of Yitro to you?" (See Sanhedrin 82a). Clearly their assessment of Moshe's situation was mistaken, for Moshe married Zipporah prior to Matan Torah. However given the chaotic atmosphere: "the law which applied to the situation was concealed from Moshe, so they all cried out in weeping" (Rashi Bamidbar 25:6).

Pinchas, whose stature was no different than anyone else, took action. He had learned from Moshe Rabenu that: "one who cohabits with an Aramean woman, zealots may kill him" (Sanhedrin 81b). What did he do? "He stood up from amid the assembly and he took a spear in his hand" (Bamidbar 25:7) and killed Zimri as well as the Midianite woman. Furthermore, we find in Tehillim (106:30): "Pinchas arose and executed judgment, and the plague was halted" - they were supposed to kill 176,000 people of Israel, but Pinchas arose, prayed, and acted to halt and turn back the wrath of Hashem from the Jewish nation. The plague was halted and "those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand" (Bamidbar 25:9).

Pinchas' act gave him the eternal gift of "it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal kehuna" (ibid. 13).

In addition to learning that it is possible to rise to leadership in the midst of chaos and despair, we can also learn from these events, the power of the individual Jew. When 88,000 judges are readying themselves to punish the sinners and his act turns back the wrath of Hashem, "Pinchas arose and executed judgment" which resulted in "the plague was halted". The individual has it within him to turn back the wrath of Hashem from the Jewish nation and to bring blessing and salvation to the entire Jewish nation.

## Petuchei Chotam on Parshat Pinchas



Rav Chanan Bina will be teaching a passage from the sefer Petuchei Chotam each week on the parshat hashavua. The sefer was written by HaRav Yaakov Abuchatzzeira zt"l.

Click [here](#) to listen.

### Dedications, Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

#### Visitors

The following people visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Rabbi Adam Simon (5764-66)

## DEDICATE

YNA now offers the ability to be  
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#### Mazal tov's

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh would like to wish a mazal tov to:

- [Shmueli](#) Landsberg (5769-70) on his engagement to Michal Blumenfeld.
- [Joshua](#) Gormley (5769) on his engagement to Jenny Schwartz.
- [Eddie](#) Rahmey (5765-66) on his marriage to Esther Malka.
- [Donny](#) (5757-58) and Rivka Schwartz on the birth of a baby boy.

#### Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the loss of:

- The maternal grandfather of [Yochanan](#) Redlich (5772).

#### Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Michoel Pinchas ben Frachah            | • Rafael Matityahu Yaakov ben Gittel Rivka |
| • Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah            | • Ada Bat Miriam                           |
| • Rachel bat Chana                       | • Reuven ben Tova Chaya                    |
| • Yehuda Pinchas ben Asna                | • Aharon ben Simah                         |
| • Sagit bat Esther                       | • Shayna bat Chava                         |
| • Fruma bat Ita                          | • Zev eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel           |
| • Chaya bat Grunia                       | • Avram Gershon ben Tzippa                 |
| • Tamara Nechama bat Karmela             | • Reuven HaLevi Ben Sheina                 |
| • Ester bat Chaya                        | • Ari ben Rivka                            |
| • Binyamin Yonatan ben Leikah            | • Yosef ben Golda                          |
| • Chaya Chana bat Alta Rivkah            | • Esther bat Brana                         |
| • Yosef ben Hilda                        | • Miriam bat Shulamit                      |
| • Maron ben Hadas Esther                 | • Rivka Chava bat Rachel                   |
| • Chaya Meira Mindel bat Chava Golda     | • Margalit Chaya bat Rachel                |
| • Chinoam Rina bat Avital Hoday-ya       | • David ben Leah                           |
| • Ditza bat Vardit Tali bat Devorah Bina | • Elizabeth bat Annette                    |

- Akiva ben Gittel
- Marcel Ben Prinah
- Evelyn Bat Dina
- Avraham Elizar ben Chana Pesha
- Mordechai Eliezer Hacoheh ben Esther Miria
- Yaakov Dov ben Blima Chana
- Edmund Ben Nazira
- Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa
- Alyza Sarah Bat Yehudit
- Inbal bat Nelya
- Yitzchak Shraga ben Chava
- Rav Avraham Zev (Levi) ben Faiga



And of course we are always davening for the safe release of  
Gilad Shalit (Gilad ben Aviva)  
and Jonathan Pollard  
(Yehonatan ben Malka Pollard)



[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?**- [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

**Shabbat Shalom,**  
Rav Bina,  
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh