

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

LITTLE ME

And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d" (25:13)

Why wasn't Pinchas anointed with Aharon and his descendents long before his extraordinary zeal in avenging G-d's name? Why was it necessary for Pinchas to be rewarded with a "covenant of eternal priesthood" rather than having the *kehuna* as his right?

The mystical sources teach that the soul of Pinchas came from the same soul-source as Cain. Cain killed his brother Hevel. The Zohar says that any *kohen* who murders is disqualified from the *kehuna* forever, and thus Pinchas, through Cain, "forfeited" his right for his offspring. Cain lost the *kehuna* for Pinchas, and only Pinchas' extraordinary zeal earned the *kehuna* for himself and his descendents.

How did Pinchas' actions heal the damage that Cain's killing created?

The name Cain comes from the same root as *kinyan*, meaning "acquisition," as Chava, Cain's mother, said "I have acquired a man with G-d." (Genesis 4:1) In Jewish thought, acquisition is synonymous with existence. We talk of G-d "acquiring Heaven and Earth." G-d's "acquisition" was the action by which he brought Heaven and Earth into existence.

In Cain's eyes, he was the only acquisition in this world, its

only existence. This is the root of all evil. For there can be no room for G-d in a world which is filled with "BIG ME." If the world is filled with the glory of ME, how can there be any other Existence? BIG ME is the root of all atheism. BIG ME is the root of all jealousy. And ultimate jealousy leads ultimately to murder. For BIG ME has no more effective means to remove jealousy than to remove the source of jealousy — Little You. (You don't exist anyway.)

However, the sense of self can have a positive side. For every single person is obliged to say to himself "the world was created for me." (*Sanhedrin 37*) In some way, we are supposed to look at the world as though we were the only *kinyan* in it. In the Book of Chronicles it says that "The heart of King Yehoshofat, (son of David) was raised up in the ways of G-d." A heart can be high with ego and evil, or it can be raised up with a zealotness to serve G-d.

When Pinchas took it upon himself to avenge the vengeance of G-d, even though he was not obliged to do so, he tapped into the positive side of Cain's unregenerate egocentricity.

For it is only when someone does something that they do not have to do can we recognize the paradox of the heart that is raised up to serve.

Sources:

Based on the *Shem MiShmuel*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive G-d's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action - executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. G-d commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites who lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. G-d instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the Levites' families is recorded. Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with Moshe: In the

absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks G-d for the ruling, and G-d tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance. G-d tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks G-d to designate the subsequent leader, and G-d selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.

THE DIVINE PEACE PRIZE

Peace is what is on the mind of every Jew in Israel. Two perspectives of peace are offered in this week's Parsha that must be applied to the search for peace in our day.

One is the Divine command to make war against the Midianites who terrorized them. The "suicide bomber" that nation sent was no less than a princess whose mission was to harm the Jewish people by luring the head of one of its tribes into immorality and idolatry which would invoke the wrath of their G-d. It took the courage of a Pinchas, for whom this portion of the Torah is named, to eliminate both her and the Jewish traitor she subverted with her charms.

The Jews had no previous quarrel with the Midianites and were happy to live in peace with them as neighbors. But when these neighbors proved to be a threat to the security of the

nation the only road to peace was war.

What is most interesting is that after Pinchas carried out his "targeted assassination" of the Midianite "human time bomb" threatening his people, he was honored with a "covenant of peace" by G-d, the equivalent of a Divine Nobel Peace Prize. This came in recognition of the peace he achieved between G-d and His people by "removing the wrath" caused by the spiritual terrorism of the Midianites.

The underlying lesson is that while there is sometimes a need to wage war against external enemies in order to achieve peace, there is always a need to make peace with our Creator by eliminating from within our own ranks the vestiges of immorality and worship of pagan culture in order to secure real peace for Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

ROOM FOR EVERYONE

We pray daily for the return of all Jews to *Eretz Yisrael*. Is there really room in this country for so many people?

The same question was put to Rabbi Chanina by a heathen skeptic who scoffed at the claim made by the Sages that millions of Jews once lived in just a portion of the Holy Land that appeared to him too small to hold so many. *Eretz Yisrael*, explained the Sage,



is compared by the Prophet Yirmiyahu to a deer. When the skin of a deer is removed from its carcass it is impossible to once again have it envelop the deer's flesh. Similarly, when Jews live in *Eretz Yisrael* the land expands to absorb them, but when they are in exile it contracts.

The answer then is – yes, there is room in *Eretz Yisrael* for every Jew.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

SILVER LINING TO THE CLOUD OF TERROR

Can some good come from terror? Perhaps this story, which appears in the new work "*Aleinu Leshabe'ach*" of Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, provides some sort of silver lining for the cloud of terror which darkens the lives of Jews in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Two Jews were in the final stage of a business deal conducted in the lobby of a hotel. To conclude the deal the prospective buyer had placed a large wad of dollar bills on the table to be handed over as soon as an agreement was signed. Then came an announcement on the P.A. system that the hotel must be evacuated immediately because of the discovery of an object suspected of being a terrorist bomb. In his haste to run for his life this fellow left the money on the table. When he returned it was gone and all the attempts of the police to find the thief were of no avail.

A day later another Jew who had heard of the incident visited the lobby of that hotel and noticed a large flowerpot

standing in a slightly tilted position. When he walked over to investigate he saw a dollar bill sticking out, and when he came even closer he discovered that this was the place where the thief had concealed the stolen money.

After tracking down the victim of this theft and informing him of the good news he was surprised to hear from him that he had already despaired of recovering the money and it was therefore the property of the finder. The finder stubbornly insisted that the money belonged to its original owner and hit on an idea how to break this bizarre impasse.

"Do you have a son?" he asked. "Yes," answered the other, "and he is waiting for me in the car below." Well," continued the finder, "I have a daughter, so how about introducing them!"

This brilliant solution eventually led to a successful *shidduch* with the disputed money given to the young couple to establish their home.

THE SPECIAL DISPENSATION

Once the blood of a fowl brought as a *chatat* sin offering has been sprinkled on the altar its flesh may be eaten by the *kohanim*. The source for this ruling in the *mishna* is the passage in which the Torah lists the sacrificial items awarded to the *kohanim*. One of these is “all their *chatat* sacrifices” (*Bamidbar 18:9*). The *gemara* (44b) explains that if the only intention of the passage was to award to the *kohanim* the flesh of an animal offered as a *chatat* there would be no need for the inclusive term “all”. It is therefore derived that it is a signal to us that even the flesh of a fowl offered as a *chatat* is eaten by the *kohanim*.

But why should we have ever assumed that the *kohanim* would not be as entitled to the flesh of the fowl as they are to the flesh of the animal?

The answer lies in the method that the Torah (*Vayikra 5:8*) gives for the slaughtering of the fowl offered as a sacrifice. While an animal is slaughtered through *shechita* – the severing by a knife of the trachea and esophagus – the fowl is slain through *melika* – the severing of one of the above vital organs by the thumbnail of the *kohen* inserted from the back of the neck. Since this is not a form of slaughtering which would make a non-sacrificial fowl kosher for eating we might have assumed that it is forbidden as well for *kohanim*. The term “all” in the above-mentioned passage teaches us that the *kohanim* may indeed eat the flesh of the *chatat* fowl slain in this fashion even though technically it should be viewed as *neveila* – the flesh of an animal or fowl that died through means other than *shechita*.

An extension of this idea is found in another *gemara* (*Menachot 45a*), which explains an enigmatic passage in the prophecy of Yechezkel (44:31) about a ban on *kohanim* eating *neveila*. Why are *kohanim* singled out, asks the *gemara*, when the prohibition on eating *neveila* applies to all Jews? While Rabbi Yochanan considered this an insoluble mystery that would be solved only with the arrival of the Prophet Eliyahu, the Sage Ravina offered a solution. Since *kohanim* are permitted to eat the flesh of the *chatat* fowl that is technically *neveila*, we might have assumed that they had a general dispensation in regard to all forms of *neveila*. The prophet therefore reminded them that this dispensation was restricted to the *chatat* sacrifice, and that as far as any other *neveila* was concerned they had the same prohibition as all other Jews.

• *Zevachim 43a*

WHEN SILENCE IS GOLDEN

“An *olah* offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to G-d.” (*Vayikra 1:9*) This passage in the opening chapter on sacrifices contains all the objectives which each sacrifice is intended to accomplish — both in regard to the nature of the sacrifice, the manner in which its parts are burned and its purpose in serving the Creator. Although it would seem to be ideal for those performing the sacrificial service to actually declare that they are doing so with these objectives in mind, the *mishna* informs us that there was a rabbinical decree to avoid doing so. The reason for this decree is found earlier in our *mesechta* (2b). Should such a declaration be required, there is a danger that the wrong declaration will be made by stating that it is being done for another sacrifice or another donor, declarations which can compromise the effectiveness of the sacrifice. It was therefore ordained that the sacrificial services be performed without any declaration in order to avoid such a possibility.

A similar problem seems to exist in regard to an agent delivering a *get* (divorce document) to *Eretz Yisrael* from abroad. The *mishna* (*Mesechta Gittin 2a*) states that he is required to testify before the court that the *get* was written and signed in his presence. The Sage Rabbah’s position is that he must also subsequently certify that the *get* was written specifically for the woman to whom he has brought it. Why then was he not required at the outset to declare that it was written and signed specifically for this woman in his presence? The answer given is that if too long a declaration is required there is a danger that he may omit a part of it and thus nullify the effectiveness of his mission.

Tosefot (*Zevachim 2b*) asks why Rabbah did not offer the same explanation given in our *gemara* – that if he will be required to declare that it was written specifically for this woman there is a danger that he may declare that it was written for someone else. The difference, he concludes, is that it is unthinkable that an agent delivering a *get* to a specific woman will declare that it was really intended for someone else. In regard to a sacrifice, however, there is the danger that he may make a mistake in regard to the nature of the sacrifice and make the wrong declaration.

• *Zevachim 46b*

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the *yud* and *hey* added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a “sign.” What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach’s children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov’s only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How long to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na’aman all have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad’s daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad’s daughters’ names?
14. Tzlofchad died for what transgression?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase “G-d of the spirits of all flesh”?
16. Moshe “put some of his glory” upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called *Yom Habikkurim*?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 25:13 - *Kehuna* (priesthood) was given to Aharon and his sons (not grandsons), and to any of their descendants born *after* they were anointed. Pinchas, Aharon’s grandson, was born *prior* to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
3. 26:5 - That the families were truly children of their tribe.
4. 26:10 - That *kehuna* was given forever to Aharon and his sons, and that no one should ever dispute this.
5. 26:11 - Because they repented.
6. 26:13,16,24,38,39,42 - Zerach, Ozni, Yashuv, Achiram, Shfufam, Shucham.
7. 26:46 - Serach bat Asher
8. 26:53 - Seven years. Seven years.
9. 26:55 - Two portions. That is, the four cousins merit four portions among them. These four portions are then split among them as if their fathers were inheriting them; *i.e.*, two portions to one father and two portions to the other father.
10. 26:24,56 - They came down to Mitzrayim in their mothers’ wombs.
11. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim*, only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. 27:1 - Love for *Eretz Yisrael*.
13. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
14. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva says that Tzlofchad gathered sticks on Shabbat. Rabbi Shimon says that Tzlofchad was one who tried to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
15. 27:16 - He was asking G-d, who knows the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person on that person’s level.
16. 27:20 - That Yehoshua’s face beamed like the moon.
17. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the west side of the slaughtering area and the afternoon offering on the east side.
18. 28:15 - For unnoticed ritual impurity of the Sanctuary or its vessels.
19. 28:26 - The Shavuot double-bread offering was the first wheat-offering made from the new crop.
20. 29:18 - The seventy nations.

BONUS QUESTION?

Bonus Question:

It’s written in the Parsha: “Behold I give him My covenant of peace. It will be for him and his offspring after him, an everlasting *kehuna* covenant.” Why was Pinchas rewarded for his deed in this world? Isn’t it a Torah principle that the reward for mitzvot is in the World to Come?

Bonus Answer:

Although the entire reward for *mitzvot* remains for the World to Come, *mitzvot* that involve acts of kindness earn “dividends” in this world as well. Pinchas’ act was an act of kindness, because through it he stopped the plague that was decimating the Jewish People.

• The Steipler Rav

LOVE

From: Barbara in England

Dear Rabbi,

The religious form of dating seems somewhat artificial and contrived. I mean, how can two people who are "set up" unnaturally actually fall in love. The lack of romance and infatuation would seem to doom the couple to a marriage of boredom at best. Thank you for your answer.

Dear Barbara,

Infatuation is not romance, romance is not love, and neither of them necessarily leads to happiness in marriage. Dr. Dana L. Farmsworth, Director of the Harvard University Health Services wrote, "the experiences in our college and other psychiatric services lead us to believe that those who ignore conventional standards are surely no more effective or happy than those who observe them. In fact...non-conformists experience more depression, anxiety, agitation, loss of self-esteem and other inhibiting emotional conflict". Documented studies by sociologist Robert O. Blood, Jr. also reveal that "premarital intimacy is associated more closely with broken relationships than with strengthened ones; that twice as many engagements are broken among couples who had intimacy than among those who did not...and that both divorce and adultery are more common among those couples who indulge."

In addition, many people have a mistaken concept of love. Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian commented that people often say they love fish. What do they do with the fish that they love? They kill it, cut it up, bake it, chew it, and swallow it. Do they really love the fish? They love themselves and the pleasure that the fish provides them. The fish is nothing more than an object for self-gratification. When they're done with the fish, they throw the remains to the garbage. In our society of convenience and disposability, people often treat people as objects for immediate gratification to be discarded after use.

They call this love. Our Sages thus taught, "Love that depends on another factor, when the factor ceases to exist, so does the love. But when love does not depend on another factor, it never ceases to exist". "Love" that is no more than infatuation based on fleeting factors like good looks, wealth or fame is doomed to failure, while love which grows over time as a result of mutual giving and appreciation of another's inner traits endures.

The idea of "falling" in love, then, is foreign to Judaism. Rather a Jewish couple is elevated and grows in love. This is evident in the verse "Isaac brought [Rebecca] into his mother Sara's tent, she became his wife, and he loved her." Shouldn't Isaac have loved Rebecca before marrying her? The answer is that he couldn't have. Only after seeing that her righteousness and inner beauty continued in the context and commitment of married life, despite its difficulties, was he truly able to love her. The same applies for her love of him. Then they "rose" in love together.

The Hebrew word for love is *Ahava*, the root of which is *Hav*, which means to give. Only through mutual giving can a couple achieve true love. Furthermore, the gematria (numerical equivalent) of *Ahava* is 13, and so is that of *Echad* (one). From here we see that a couple achieves unity only through love and giving; if each only takes from the other, they will never unite but always remain separate. In fact, the commandment "Love your fellow as you love yourself" also applies to husband-wife relationships. The Talmudic rabbis taught: "One must love his wife like himself, and honor and respect her more than himself." Once Rabbi Aryeh Levin's wife felt pain in her foot. They went to the doctor together whereupon the doctor asked, "What can I do for you?" Rabbi Levin answered in all sincerity, "Doctor my wife's leg is hurting us."

Sources:

- *Jewish Alternatives in Love, Dating, and Marriage*, Pinchas Stolper, p. 4.
- *Lev Eliyahu, Parshat Vayetze*
- *Pirkei Avot 5:16*
- *Genesis 24:67, Targum Onkelus*
- *Berachot 24a, Yebamot 62b*

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AN OVERDOSE OF "VITAMIN P"

Question: The school in which I wish to enroll my daughter is flooded with applications and will only accept a limited number of students. My daughter may not be the leading candidate based on her academic record but I do have pull with a key member of the admissions committee. Is it right for me to use this connection to get her accepted?

Answer: A guest speaker once arrived at a university auditorium where he was scheduled to speak about how to get ahead in life. His busy schedule had denied him the opportunity to properly prepare his lecture, and he relied on being struck with an inspiration. This did indeed happen when he reached the door of the hall and saw the word "Push". He quickly decided to extol the virtues of ambition and aggressiveness indicated by that word. He therefore began his talk by telling his audience that there was one element in life which was indispensable to success, and that they could discover what it was by looking at the door of the hall the way he had done. The students dutifully turned

around and saw on their side of the entrance door the word "Pull".

Pull, otherwise known as "protektzia" or "Vitamin P", is indeed an important element in life, and it is difficult to fault the use of it as immoral unless it is used to put down a competing candidate. The problem that may arise, however, is an overdose of Vitamin P. This happens when parents have been warned by the school of their choice that their daughter would do better elsewhere but ignore this advice and use their pull to force her acceptance into this prestigious school. The same situation arises in regard to a position for which you have been told you are not suited and you use your connections to get hired anyway.

Tragic results have often resulted from such a misuse of connections, because the school or the position has actually proved to be counterproductive. Before using the pull, you may have to remember what a wise cynic once said: "There are two tragedies in life. One is not getting what you want. The other is getting it."

PUBLIC DOMAIN _____

Re: Saved by the Mishna (Ohrnet Korach)

My father's cousin, not religious at all, during the Korean war, bent down to pick up his "lucky siddur" that he ran back for and had almost lost and always kept with him and missed being killed by a sniper when he bent down.

• Y. S.

Re: Saved by the Mishna (Ohrnet Korach)

Thank you for this interesting story. However, I would suggest that you use the term terrorist, not activist, to describe the Hamas bomber. It is bad enough when the mainstream press does that. Thank you.

• E. K.

Re: Cellphone Manners (Ohrnet Shlach)

But what would have happened if that same cellphone had started ringing in the middle of the rabbi's eulogy or the mourner's recital of Kaddish? It is situations such as these which have prompted synagogues, *yeshivot* and other public places to post prominent warnings to all who enter their premises to turn off their cellphones while inside.

In principle, I turn off my cell phone in such places or during classes and lectures. But I do forget sometimes. A suggestion to those like me: use the ringing of someone else's phone to remind you to check yours.

• Haim

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