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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON PINCHAS - 5772

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from: **TorahWeb** torahweb@torahweb.org to:
weeklydt@torahweb2.org date: Wed, Jul 11, 2012 at 10:14 PM
subject: Rabbi Yonason Sacks - Torah, Avodah, and Gemilus Chassadim

Rabbi Yonason Sacks Torah, Avodah, and Gemilus Chassadim

In the introduction to Ein Yaakov, the author cites a classic Tannaic dispute pertaining to what verse constitutes a klal gadol baTorah - a great Torah principle. While Ben Zoma identifies Shema Yisroel as the paradigmatic klal gadol baTorah, Ben Nanas cites v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha and Shimon Ben Pazi quotes es hakeves ha'echad ta'aseh baboker. Perhaps one could suggest that these three opinions reflect the three pillars of the world described in our mishnah: Shema Yisroel refers to the paramount importance of Torah; es hakeves ha'echad ta'aseh baboker alludes to the avodah; and v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha highlights gemilus chasadim.

While the opinions of Ben Zoma and Ben Nanas are quite understandable, Shimon Ben Pazi's citation appears to demand explanation. Why does Shimon Ben Pazi overlook broader, more

universalistic aphorisms in favor of a seemingly specific and technical halacha pertaining to the daily Mikdash service?

Perhaps Shimon Ben Pazi wishes to convey that the foundation of the Torah rests upon consistency and persistence in the service of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Just as the korban tamid is brought twice daily - day-in and day-out - our commitment to Torah and mitzvos must always be present, regardless of emotional reluctance or personal hindrance. Indeed, the Mesilas Yesharim (ch. 25) teaches that true yir'as Shamayim can only be obtained, "berov ha'asmada baTorah u'derache'ha bli hefsek - through unwavering commitment to the study of Torah and its ways." Only through constant contemplation and emulation of the ways of HaKadosh Baruch Hu can a person truly imprint the seal of yir'as Shamayim upon himself.

Perhaps one could suggest that these three pillars correspond to the Beis HaMikdash, as well. The Netziv teaches that the aron kodesh and the menorah of the Mishkan represented the Torah. As the storage site for the luchos received at Har Sinai, the aron kodesh represented the Torah b'ksav, while the illumination and clarity produced by the menorah represented the Torah she'b'al peh (see Berachos 57a and Midrash Rabbah Bereishis 91). As such, these two keilim correspond to the first pillar of the world. The Rashbatz adds that, as the ultimate site for the offering of sacrifices, the mizbe'ach represents avodah, or the second pillar of the world. Finally, the Ramban (Shemos 25:24) explains that the shulchan represents the support and sustenance that HaKadosh Baruch Hu provides for Bnei Yisroel. Accordingly, the Shulchan may be seen as representative of the third pillar of the world, gemilus chasadim.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains that although Torah, avodah and gemilus chasadim are presented as three distinct pillars, the pillar of Torah essentially defines the other two. If one does not know the Torah's laws, one cannot possibly perform true avodah or true gemilus chasadim. Before the Torah was given, for example, Adam harishon, Kayin, and Hevel offered valid korbanos to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Once the Torah was given, however, such avodah would be wholly rejected as abominable shechutei chutz - offerings prepared outside of the Beis Hamikdash. Similarly, before the Torah was given, lending with interest would be considered an act of kindness (see Taz, Yoreah Deah 160:1); subsequent to the giving of the Torah, one who lends with interest does not merit revival after death. Rav Chaim also cites the story of R' Akiva, who, upon first beginning to learn Torah at a late age, crossed a meis mitzvah (unattended corpse) on the road and, in an attempted act of kindness, carried it for several miles to facilitate its burial. Only after becoming more learned in Torah did R' Akiva realize that meis mitzvah koneh mekomo - an unattended corpse acquires its location and should be buried on site, recognizing that his attempted act of kindness was actually an act of cruelty. From these examples, Rav Chaim proves the essential role of the Torah in defining what exactly constitutes proper avodah and gemilus chasadim.

In discussing the difference between actions performed before and after the giving of the Torah, Rav Chaim cites the well-known teaching of Chazal that the avos observed the mitzvos of the Torah long before it was given at Sinai. Rav Chaim explains that the avos observed the mitzvos not because they were expressly commanded to do so, but rather because they perceived the cataclysmic powers of the mitzvos to effect change in both their world as well as the upper worlds. Because their performance was rooted in their own understanding and intuition, the avos were able to deviate from the mitzvos in specific situations. For example, Yaakov avinu married two sisters, despite the explicit violation mentioned in the Torah, because he understood the monumental importance of such an action in the ultimate scheme of the world. Once the mitzvos were formally commanded at Har Sinai, however, no individual would ever be permitted to consciously violate any mitzvah. No matter how clearly one understood his role, the binding nature of Har

Sinai demands unwavering adherence to each and every mitzvah (see Nefesh HaChaim 1:21).

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From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** To: ravfrand@torah.org Sent: Thursday, July 12, 2012 12:05 PM Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Pinchas

Rabbi Yissocher Frand Parshas Pinchas

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 821, Chulent On Sunday of the Nine Days. Good Shabbos!

Playing It Safe By Doing What The Torah Commands

In Parshas Pinchas, Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to go out, do battle, and take revenge against the Midyanites. The Midyanites allied themselves with the Moavites and were unfortunately successful in causing the Jewish men to succumb to the sin of illicit relationships with the daughters of Midyan. Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to wipe out all the people who participated in this terrible act. The Medrash comments that causing one to sin is worse than killing a person, for when a person is killed he loses his life in this world but will still have life in the world-to-come. When a person sins, however, he loses his life in both this world and in the next world. Since the next world is far more valuable than this world, the crime of seducing one to sin is worse than murder.

As proof to this distinction, the Medrash cites a contrast between two nations who afflicted the Jewish people physically and two other nations who afflicted us spiritually. The Egyptians and the Edomites did physical battle with us. The Moavites and the Ammonites enticed us to sin. Concerning the Edomites, who merely tried to kill us, the Torah tells us "Don't hate an Edomite" (lo tesaev edomi) but concerning an Ammonite and Moavite, who caused us to sin, we are taught "An Ammonite and a Moavite shall not enter the community of Hashem." They are rejected from having any connection with Klal Yisrael because they did something far worse than attack us – they made us sin.

The Medrash further states that anyone who tries to be nice to the Ammonites and Moavites will wind up paying a terrible price. This happened with Dovid HaMelech [King David]. When the King of Ammon died, Dovid HaMelech sent a delegation to pay homage (for favors he had received from the King of Ammon) and offer condolences before the son of the King, whose name was Nachash the Ammonite. We are told in the book of Shmuel that the delegation was accused of being spies for the King of Israel and they were humiliated by being forced to shave off half their beards and sent back to Jerusalem in that condition. Nachash the Ammonite further hired mercenaries and he did battle with the Jewish people.

The Medrash teaches that this happened to Dovid HaMelech for trying to be "smarter than the Torah" and "more religious and compassionate than the Torah" (which counsels not to be nice to the Ammonites). The Medrash references the pasuk "Do not be overly righteous or overly wise..." [Koheles 7:16]. Like the motto of the Marines "Ours is not to question why? Ours is simply to do and die."

Before coming to America, Rav Moshe Feinstein led a small community in Eastern Europe. There was a "moser" [an individual who made it his practice to slander fellow Jews to the communist government] in town. A moser was classically known as the most despicable type of person. The man left a Will and Testament: "I was such a terrible person in my lifetime that I want to do Teshuva after my death. Therefore, I want my body to be mutilated and treated with utter disrespect, as one would treat a donkey! I want to be buried away from the Jewish section of the cemetery and I want all this to be an atonement for my sins and for all the trouble I caused the Jewish community during my lifetime."

The Burial Society came to their Rabbi and showed him the Will, asking for his advice as to how to proceed. Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled: You must bury him like you bury every other Jew – with respect and with dignity. He ruled that a person does not have control even over his own body after he dies and the Halacha forbids desecrating a dead body. The Chevra Kaddisha argued with Rav Moshe, "But look, he said he wanted to do Teshuva. This would be his atonement!" Rav Moshe responded, "The law is the law. We cannot superimpose our own thoughts or emotions onto it!" The Burial Society reluctantly listened to their Rabbi and buried this Jew like all other members of the community.

Three weeks later, a delegation came from the government and presented a government order to the caretaker of the cemetery demanding to exhume the body. They exhumed the body, opened the coffin, examined the body and saw that his body has not been desecrated. They further confirmed that he was buried in the regular part of the Jewish cemetery. They then reburied the body.

The caretaker asked what this whole investigation was about. They explained that before the man died, he sent a letter to the Russian Government. The letter stated that the Jews hate the government and they mistreat anyone who had any connection with the government. He claimed that he would prove this claim by his "prediction" that the Jews would desecrate his body and bury him in a separate portion of the cemetery! In other words, repentance and atonement was the farthest thing from the man's mind. He intended to give a parting shot to the community from the grave and "trap them" into committing an incriminating "crime and insult" against the government.

Anyone who hears this story states "Rav Moshe Feinstein had ruach haKodesh [Divine intuition]. How else was he able to smell this rat?" Rav Moshe Feinstein may well have had ruach haKodesh, but this story is not proof of that. This story is not about Rav Moshe Feinstein, the possessor of Divine Intuition. This story is about Rav Moshe Feinstein, the posek [decider of Jewish law]. Because of his fealty to Halacha, he saved himself and his community from untold troubles.

This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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From: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> Date: Thu, Jul 12, 2012 at 5:10 PM Subject: Parshat Pinchas - Shabbat Shalom from the OU

Orthodox Union

**Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
The Zealot**

With Pinchas a new type enters the world of Israel: the zealot. “Pinchas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned My anger away from the Israelites by being zealous with My zeal in their midst so that I did not put an end to them in My zeal” (Num. 25: 11). He was followed, many centuries later, by the one other figure in Tanakh described as a zealot, the prophet Elijah. He tells God on Mount Horeb, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty.” (1 Kings 19: 14). In fact, tradition identified the two men: “Pinchas is Elijah” (Yalkut Shimoni, Torah, 771). Pinchas, says Targum Yonatan (to Num. 25: 12), “became an angel who lives forever and will be the harbinger of redemption at the End of Days.”

What is truly fascinating is how Judaism – both biblical and post-biblical – dealt with the idea of the zealot. First, let us recall the two contexts. First is that of Pinchas. Having failed to curse the Israelites, Bilaam eventually devised a strategy that succeeded. He persuaded the Moabite women to seduce Israelite men and then lure them into idolatry. This evoked intense Divine anger, and a plague broke out among the Israelites. To make matters worse Zimri, a leader of the tribe of Shimon, brought a Midianite woman into the camp where they flagrantly engaged in intimacy. Perhaps sensing that Moses felt powerless – he had himself married a Midianite woman – Pinchas seized the initiative and stabbed and killed both of them, ending the misbehaviour and the plague by which 24,000 Israelites had already died. That is the story of Pinchas.

Elijah’s story begins with the accession of Ahab to the throne of the northern kingdom, Israel. The king had married Jezebel, daughter of the king of Sidon, and under her influence introduced Baal worship into the kingdom, building a pagan temple and erecting a pole in Samaria honouring the Ugaritic mother goddess Asherah. Jezebel, meanwhile, was organising a programme of killing the “prophets of the Lord.” The Bible (1 King 16) says of Ahab that “he did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.”

Elijah announces that there will be a drought to punish the king and the Baal-worshipping nation. Confronted by Ahab, Elijah challenges him to gather the 450 prophets of Baal to a test at Mount Carmel. When all are present, Elijah issues the challenge. They and he will prepare sacrifices and call on God. The one who sends fire from heaven will be the true God. The Baal prophets do so and call on their god, but nothing happens. In a rare show of scornful humour, Elijah tells them to cry louder. Maybe, he says, Baal is busy or travelling or having a sleep. The false prophets work themselves into a frenzy, gashing themselves until their blood flows, but still nothing happens. Elijah then prepares his sacrifice and has the people douse it three times with water to make it harder to burn. He then calls on God. Fire descends from heaven, consuming the sacrifice. The people, awestruck, cry out, “The Lord – he is God! The Lord – he is God!” words we say nowadays at the climax of Neilah at the end of Yom Kippur. The people then kill the prophets of Baal. God has been vindicated.

There can be no doubt that Pinchas and Elijah were religious heroes. They stepped into the breach at a time when the nation was facing religious and moral crisis and palpable Divine anger. They acted while everyone else, at best, watched. They risked their lives by so doing. There can be little doubt that the mob might have turned against them and attacked them. Indeed after the trial at Mount Carmel, Jezebel lets it be known that she intends to have Elijah killed. Both men acted for the sake of God and the religious welfare of the nation. And God himself is called “zealous” many times in the Torah.

Yet their treatment in both the written and oral Torah is deeply ambivalent. God gives Pinchas “my covenant of peace,” meaning that he will never again have to act the part of a zealot. Indeed, in Judaism, the shedding of human blood is incompatible with service at the Sanctuary (King David was forbidden to build the Temple for this reason: see I Chronicles 22: 8, 28: 3). As for Elijah, he was implicitly rebuked by God in one of the great scenes of the Bible. Standing at Horeb, God shows

him a whirlwind, an earthquake and a fire, but God is not in any of these. Then He comes to Elijah in a “still, small voice” (1 Kings 19). He then asks Elijah, for the second time, “What are you doing here?” and Elijah replies in exactly the same words as he had used before: “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty.” He has not understood that God has been trying to tell him that He is not to be found in violent confrontation, but in gentleness and the word softly spoken. God then tells him to appoint Elisha as his successor.

Pinchas and Elijah are, in other words, both gently rebuked by God.

Halakhically, the precedent of Pinchas is severely limited. Although his act was lawful, the sages none the less said that had Zimri turned around and killed Pinchas instead, he would be deemed innocent since he would have acted in self-defence. Had Pinchas killed Zimri even a moment after the act of immorality he would have been guilty of murder. And had Pinchas asked a court of law whether he was permitted to do what he was about to do, the answer would have been no. This is a rare instance of the rule, halakhah ve-ein morin kein, “It is a law that is not taught” (Sanhedrin 82a).

Why this moral ambivalence? The simplest answer is that the zealot is not acting within the normal parameters of the law. Zimri may have committed a sin that carried the death sentence, but Pinchas executed punishment without a trial. Elijah may have been acting under the imperative of removing idolatry from Israel, but he did an act – offering a sacrifice outside the Temple – normally forbidden in Jewish law. There are extenuating circumstances in Jewish law in which either the king or the court may execute non-judicial punishment to secure social order (see Maimonides, Hilkhhot Sanhedrin 24: 4; Hilkhhot Melakhim 3: 10). But Pinchas was neither a king nor acting as a representative of the court. He was acting on his own initiative, taking the law into his own hands (avid dina lenafshei). There are instances where this is justified and where the consequences of inaction would be catastrophic. But in general, we are not empowered to do so, since the result would be lawlessness and violence on a grand scale.

More profoundly, the zealot is in effect taking the place of God. As Rashi says, commenting on the phrase, “Pinchas ... has turned My anger away from the Israelites by being zealous with My zeal,” Pinchas “executed My vengeance and showed the anger I should have shown” (Rashi to Num. 25: 11). In general we are commanded to “walk in God’s ways” and imitate His attributes. “Just as He is merciful and compassionate, so you be merciful and compassionate.” That is not, however, the case when it comes to executing punishment or vengeance. God who knows all may execute sentence without a trial, but we, being human, may not. There are forms of justice that are God’s domain, not ours.

The zealot who takes the law into his own hands is embarking on a course of action fraught with moral danger. Only the most holy may do so, only once in a lifetime, and only in the most dire circumstance when the nation is at risk, when there is nothing else to be done, and no one else to do it. Even then, were the zealot to ask permission from a court, he would be denied it.

Pinchas gave his name to the parsha in which Moses asks God to appoint a successor. R. Menahem Mendel, the Rebbe of Kotzk, asked why Pinchas, hero of the hour, was not appointed instead of Joshua. His answer was that a zealot cannot be a leader. That requires patience, forbearance and respect for due process. The zealots within besieged Jerusalem in the last days of the Second Temple played a significant part in the city’s destruction. They were more intent on fighting one another than the Romans outside the city walls.

Nothing in the religious life is more risk-laden than zeal, and nothing more compelling than the truth God taught Elijah, that God is not to be found in the use of force but in the still, small voice that turns the sinner from sin. As for vengeance, that belongs to God alone.

from: genesis@torah.org reply-to: genesis@torah.org to:
weekly-halacha@torah.org date: Thu, Jul 12, 2012 at 3:55 PM
subject: Weekly Halacha - Pinchas

Weekly Halacha
by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt
Theft and Deception

Question: Some people are under the assumption that the Biblical prohibition “Do not steal” applies only to stealing from a Jew. Is there a basis for such an assumption?

Discussion: No, there is not. Stealing from a non-Jew, either from a private person, corporation or government entity, is strictly forbidden min ha-Torah[1]. In a certain respect, stealing from a non-Jew is even worse than stealing from a Jew, since it causes a greater level of chillul Hashem[2]. In addition, some poskim maintain that although the Biblical prohibition against stealing from a Jew is limited to stealing more than the value of a perutah, stealing from a non-Jew is forbidden min ha-Torah even for an item valued less than a perutah[3].

Question: If a cashier at a non-Jewish owned store mistakenly returns too much change or fails to charge for an item, is one required to make the cashier aware of his mistake?

Discussion: If there is a chance – even a small one - that a chillul Hashem will occur, e.g., the cashier might notice his mistake and realize that the Jew hid something from him; or, the cashier intentionally “made a mistake” in order to test the integrity of an Orthodox Jew, then one is halachically obligated to notify the cashier of what happened[4]. Even if there is no possibility of causing a chillul Hashem, but there is an opportunity for making a kiddush Hashem, e.g., the non-Jew will be impressed by the honesty and integrity of an Orthodox Jew, then one is strongly urged to take the opportunity to make a kiddush Hashem[5]. If there is no possibility of a chillul Hashem, and there is no opportunity for a kiddush Hashem, then one is not obligated to notify the cashier of his mistake.

Question: If there is no possibility of chillul Hashem and there is no opportunity for kiddush Hashem, is it permitted to deceive or trick a non-Jewish cashier, e.g., to intentionally hide an item so that you are not charged or falsely claim that an item was defective?

Discussion: It is strictly forbidden to deceive or trick any merchant, Jewish or not. Doing so is considered “stealing” min ha-Torah which is forbidden without any exception, as stated earlier[6]. [The poskim disagree whether or not one who was unaware of this halachah and deceived a non-Jew is halachically required to return the item[7]. Obviously, if a chillul Hashem may result, then one is obligated to return the stolen items to the non-Jew.]

Question: Is it permitted to purchase an item at a store with the intent of using it for a short period of time and then returning it for full credit?

Discussion: The answer to this question will depend on the policy of the individual store or chain of stores. Most stores would never allow such a thing. It would be forbidden, therefore, to buy an item from such a store with the intent of using it and returning it, since doing so is geneivas da’as, misleading while engaging in deceptive behavior. Behaving with Geneivas da’as applies equally against Jews and non-Jews[8]. Quite possibly, purchasing an item with the intention of using it briefly and then returning it may be considered theft as well, since the store incurs an actual loss when it is forced to repackage and restock the returned item. But there are some mega-stores and chains which may permit their associates to sell an item to a customer even if they are clearly aware that the customer intends to return the item after trying it out for a short period of time. Their market research shows that invariably, some customers change their minds and decide to keep the purchase even though initially they had no intention to do so. Other customers are forgetful or lazy and fail to return the item within the time period allotted, thereby forfeiting a refund and remaining with only a

credit to be used in the store. More often than not, the store makes money on these customers as well, and even if the store is “outsmarted” occasionally, in the long run it is profitable to allow this practice. The only way to find out what the store policy is, is to ask. Until that information is obtained, it would be forbidden to purchase an item with the intent of using it briefly and then returning it. According to many poskim, geneivas da’as is forbidden min ha-Torah[9], and needless to say, one must be particularly stringent with a Torah prohibition[10].

1. Shach, C.M. 348:2, followed by all of the poskim.
2. Tosefta, Bava Kama 10:8, and Minchas Bikkurim.
3. Aruch ha-Shluchan, C.M. 348:1.
4. Rama, C.M. 348:2; Shach 3; Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav, Gezeilah 4.
5. See Mordechai, Bava Kama 10:158, quoting Yerushalmi and Knesses ha-Gedolah, C.M. 183:54
6. Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav, Gezeilah 4; Aruch ha-Shulchan 348:2.
7. See Sha’ar Mishpat 348:2, Machneh Ephaim, Gezeila 4, Aruch ha-Shulchan 348:2. Rav Y.S. Elyashiv is quoted (Sefer Mamon Yisrael, pg. 45) as ruling leniently on this question.
8. C.M. 228:6.
9. See Ritva, Chullin 94b; Sefer Koveitz on Rambam Hilchos De’os 2:6. See also Seforno, Vayikra 25:14, who writes that geneivas da’as is included in the prohibition against ona’as devarim.
10. In addition, the chillul Hashem factor must also be taken into account. If the sales person recognizes the true intent of the buyer and that will cause him to look negatively at an Orthodox Jew, it must be avoided.

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com
to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Jul 12,
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Peninim on the Torah
by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Pinchas

Shema Yisrael Torah Network shemalist@shemayisrael.com
to Peninim PARSHAS PINCHAS
Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen. (25:11) Rashi notes the Torah's tracing of Pinchas' lineage to his paternal grandfather, Aharon HaKohen. He explains that Pinchas had his detractors who claimed that his act of vengeance was not motivated by pure intentions. They asserted that, as the maternal grandson of Yisro, he was following in the spirit of an individual who had served every idol. The fact that Yisro arrived at the decision that they were all figments of overactive pagan imaginations meant nothing to these people. When one decides to denigrate someone, reason and rationality become scarce. Thus, the Torah records his pedigree as descending from Aharon HaKohen, to emphasize that

Pinchas had two grandfathers. For those who had a problem with Yisro, let them consider Aharon HaKohen.

In his sefer *Mitzion Michlal Yofi*, Horav Avigdor HaLevi Nebentzhal, Shlita, offers two reasons which have great halachic practicality for the significance of tracing Pinchas' pedigree back to Aharon. In the Talmud Zevachim 101b, Chazal ask why Moshe Rabbeinu did not look at his sister Miriam's negaim, skin plagues, to determine if they were tzaraas, thus requiring her to be secluded for seven-days. The Talmud explains that although Moshe was considered to have Kohen Gadol, High Priest, status, he was still not included among those who are Bnei Aharon, sons of Aharon. Since he did not have this specific pedigree, he was not permitted to rule concerning the validity of tzaraas.

We derive from Chazal that a special condition concerning mar'os negaim, viewing plagues, is that the individual who rules must be mi'zera Aharon, a descendant of Aharon HaKohen. One who is a Kohen, but does not descend from Aharon, who is granted this unique status for reasons other than his pedigree, is excluded from ruling on negaim. This includes such giants as Moshe, who was granted every distinguished status, as well as: Melech, king, Kohen Gadol, Rabban Shel Kol Yisrael, quintessential Torah teacher of the Jewish People; and Pinchas, who was granted Kohen status as a result of his ma'ase kanaus, act of zealotry. Imagine making it up there, even having Kohen status, and still not to be able to rule on negaim. Thus, the Torah emphasizes that not only was Pinchas granted the Kehunah, he was given the status of zera Aharon, his pedigree ascending to his grandfather, Aharon.

Alternatively, Rav Nebentzhal cites the Talmud Taanis 11b that states that during the Shivaas Yemei Miluim, Seven Inauguration Days for the Mishkan, Moshe Rabbeinu acted as Kohen Gadol, but did not wear the Shemoneh Begadim, Eight Priestly vestments, reserved specifically for the High Priest. Rashi explains that the command concerning Bigdei Kehunah was given only to Aharon and his sons. Moshe - despite the fact that he was the acting Kohen Gadol - was not Aharon. Thus, he served wearing white linen vestments.

This implies that the mitzvah of Bigdei Kehunah was given specifically to Aharon and his male descendants. Moshe was the quintessential Rebbe, the holiest man in Klal Yisrael, the one who spoke directly with the Almighty; yet, he was not commanded to wear Bigdei Kehunah. We now understand that had Pinchas not have been descended from Aharon, he, too, would not have been able to wear Bigdei Kehunah. After all, he should not have been different than his great-uncle, Moshe. By delineating his lineage as descending from Aharon, Pinchas received full status as a Kohen.

Turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael when he zealously avenged Me. (25:11)

Sforno explains that by acting publicly in front of the entire nation, Pinchas was able to catalyze their atonement. Their sin was indifference, as they watched helplessly as those who cohabited with the Moavite women brought down not only themselves, but the entire nation. When Jews publicly desecrate Hashem's Name, we must admonish them - at first diplomatically, then with greater emphasis, but never allowing ourselves to descend to their level. Name calling, stone throwing, and cursing, are not behaviors that religious Jews do. We also do not ignore disgrace. A fine line exists between subtle protest and indifference. Whoever has difficulty defining this fine line has greater problems. When the Jews of that time looked away from the sins of their brethren, they became partners and facilitators in their crime. When they allowed Pinchas to act definitively with zealousness for Hashem's honor, they atoned for their earlier indifference.

When the Satmar Rebbe, zl, once visited Yerushalayim, he was approached by Horav Amram Blau, zl, who poured out a heavy heart concerning the dearth of zealots who were prepared to "fight" on behalf of kavod Shomayim, the glory of Heaven. This was at a time when the Holy Land was undergoing tremendous turmoil, with the religious on

one side and the nouveau Israelis taking sides. Needless to say, the discord was agitated on a regular basis, as religious life as it had been lived for generations was being impugned, misrepresented and disgraced. Rav Blau was the head of those whose devotion to the protection of religious life in Eretz Yisrael was sacrosanct. He shared his pain with the Rebbe, hoping to hear words of encouragement.

The Rebbe instructed him to continue with his religious protests. Rav Blau replied that, alas, most of the time he was alone in taking a stand, finding it very difficult to garner support from the hamon am, average Jew. Why should more Jews not answer the call and rally to the protests? Only a handful were ready to join in this holy endeavor. The Rebbe responded, "You should be happy that your co-religionists are not banding together in protest against you!" The Rebbe quoted the Sforno to support his intimation that when it relates to kanaus, one must be concerned with garnering the support of his original "supporters." Regrettably, often when one stands up for what is right, he discovers that he stands alone.

When he zealously avenged Me. (25:11)

Far be it from any zealot to claim that he is doing anything less than fighting the good fight. His actions are sincere and truly l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. Indeed, he becomes mortally insulted if one were to question his motives, to suggest even remotely that his actions might have a little bit of "himself" involved. Was he grandstanding, or was he sincere? Does he care about himself or is he all for the sake of Heaven? In an effort to graphically portray the meaning of kanaus, zealotry, and present a perspective on the idea of l'shem Shomayim, Horav Sholom Schwadron, zl, presents a fabricated story placing himself in the star role. This story could be about anyone of us - so practical are its implications. Regrettably, there are some who will take this story as some sort of joke, ignoring that the narrative is actually about them.

It was Shabbos Rosh Chodesh, and Rav Sholom HaKohen was invited to be scholar-in-residence at one of the moshavim surrounding Yerushalayim. It involved speaking in the various shuls over the course of Shabbos. Rav Sholom did not mind. It was what he did best. Friday night, he delivered a brilliant, animated lecture on the parshah, thrilling the packed crowd of avid listeners. It was for this reason that "subconsciously" he was a bit "surprised" that he was not given the first aliyah, to be called up to the Torah as a Kohen. Rav Sholom was a guest and a well-known Kohen. He figured that the gabbai who was calling people to the Torah was saving Maftir for their distinguished guest. Apparently, that was also not the case, since another member of the shul was given the privilege of reading the Haftorah.

Rav Sholom conceded that he was sort of surprised, but assured himself that they were probably going to ask him to lead the Mussaf prayer instead. This also was not going to happen, since the man who had read the Haftorah immediately continued with the Mussaf service. As surprised as Rav Sholom was about the series of events, he added that he was a bit upset with himself. After all, why would he make a "to-do" about not receiving a minor honor? Is this the reason that he had spent his life studying, teaching, admonishing others? He should be an example of self-control and humility. Having come to this realization, the venerable Maggid listened to the recital of the Mussaf Shemoneh Esrai.

The Chazzan began chanting the service, unfortunately forgetting to insert the words, Atah Yatzarta, in place of Tikanta Shabbos. That Shabbos was Rosh Chodesh, and, as a result, the Shemoneh Esrai should have been changed. Hearing the error, Rav Sholom immediately gave a loud bang, "Atah Yatzarta - nu! Atah Yatzarta, nu!" It was as if the Chazzan had acted in the most heinous manner, when, in fact, it had been a simple, correctable error.

Suddenly, Rav Sholom looked deep and hard at the crowd seated before him and said, "Yes, I corrected him, and I certainly acted appropriately. Was it l'shem Shomayim, however, or was I simply happy to 'avenge' my honor?" With these words, the Maggid touched on what is a sore point among many of us. We all want to reach out to others, to correct, to repair, to encourage, to admonish, to give hope, but is it for them - or for us? There are wonderful baalei chessed who go out of their way to help others, but what is their true motivation? How does one discern the truth?

It all boils down to how we act under pressure: when things do not work out exactly as we planned; when the subject upon whom we are focusing does not respond exactly as we had expected - then we show our true colors. We are there to remind them - and keep them reminded - of their error. Why? Is it l'shem Shomayim? Or perhaps it is to assuage our ego.

I think that the answer lies in the words b'kano es kinaasi, "when he zealously avenged Me." It took Hashem Himself to make that statement, to ratify Pinchas' actions. It took the Almighty to give His approbation validating Pinchas' kanaus. Hashem said he acted in My behalf. The Almighty attested to the veracity of Pinchas' act. Are we prepared to have our actions held to such scrutiny?

Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen turned back My wrath from upon the Bnei Yisrael. (25:11)

If Hashem actually took umbrage with the entire nation, why did Pinchas only kill Zimri? He should have gone on a rampage and punished more than the Prince of Shevet Shimon. Horav Avraham Abuchatzzeira, zl, explains that while it is true that many others sinned, a major difference existed with regard to their sin. They left the Jewish camp and carried out their perverse moral debauchery in private. They did not have the chutzpah, audacity, to bring it into the Jewish camp. Zimri's act was not only morally repugnant, it was an audacious, public flaunting of his sin, a desecration of the defining moral principles upon which Judaism is built.

This is so true and, regrettably, quite common. There are those who will not settle to transgress in private, to defer to their moral weakness in a manner that does not impinge on the sensitivities of others. They do not believe in keeping secrets. They openly flaunt their indiscretions in a manner that brings shame - not only on themselves - but on the entire collective Jewish nation. If they have a problem with halachah, they will publicize their feelings while acting in a manner that calls attention to their desecration of everything that is holy. Why not? They have a problem with the Torah's restrictions. What right do the "rabbis" have to issue bans on activities which impede their religious expression. I write this as I sit in the shul just off the Kosel Maaravi proper, thinking that even here in one of Judaism's holiest sites, there are those who decry what they perceive as religious gender preference. Before they worry about the Tallis and Tefillin, the mechitzah at the Kosel, and other complaints, let them address their Shemiras Shabbos, Kashrus, family purity. Tznius, modesty, privacy, not calling attention to oneself, is the hallmark of a Jew. There are so many other ways to express one's religious feelings - without transgressing Judaism's basic principles.

Therefore, say: Behold! I give him My covenant of peace. (25:12)

Was there no other appropriate reward for Pinchas? It is not that the blessing of peace is not a wonderful reward. Is it practical? After all, by his actions, he prevented the plague that was taking a mortal toll on the nation from spreading. Perhaps his reward should be such that his heroic efforts be recognized with greater emphasis. The Pnei Menachem explains that Hashem's reward to Pinchas was indeed very practical and suitably appropriate.

The deciding factor which determines the integrity of an act of zealotry is whether, once it is over, the situation has been resolved, the parties that had been in dispute have settled their differences. Peace

and harmony have prevailed. We now will see of what mettle the kanai is comprised. If the zealot returns to his previous status quo, his Gemorah and everything else that was his original pastime, this is an indication that he is, in fact, a righteous zealot whose veracity is above question. If after it is all over, however, the zealot looks for more "work," it is an indication that he is not really concerned with peace and harmony. His primary objective is to create a tumult. Once this one comes to an end, he will find another one - even if it means generating a new machlokes, controversy. He lives for dispute. He loves to get himself dirty. He thrives on shmutz.

The true kanai is happy when he has no work. Peace stands in stark opposition to kanaus. Peace "undermines" everything that he has "fought" so hard to achieve. Pinchas' act of zealotry was the apogee of veracity. He had no vested interests. All he wanted was peace, so that he could go back to his learning and avodas Hashem, service of the Almighty. Thus, Hashem rewarded him with Bris Shalom, My covenant of Peace. After all, it was what he really wanted.

Behold! I give him My covenant of Peace. (25:12)

Pinchas stood up for Hashem and, as a result, the Almighty rewarded him with the covenant of peace. Sforno writes, "Since Pinchas fought My fight, I will save him from any discord and controversy. He will be blessed with peace." Interestingly, Pinchas' reward is mentioned by the Torah prior to the mention of the action that catalyzed this reward. Should it not be the other way around? The Midrash says B'din hu she'yitol scharo, "It is only right that Pinchas should receive his reward." It is as if the reward is the primary objective. Why should this be? Is there any mitzvah that does not incur reward? Every action creates a reaction. If the original action is positive, the reaction will likewise be of a positive nature. Why did Pinchas' action stimulate such an intense reaction?

Horav Yaakov Neiman, zl, offers a practical response which goes to the very core principles of mitzvah performance. We must accept that anyone who expects a reward for serving Hashem is no different than a young child who refuses to partake of his meal unless he is provided with a prize. Any sane person who possesses a modicum of intelligence understands that eating is good for a person. The nourishment he receives is what keeps him healthy and alive. On the contrary, such a person should thank his benefactor for providing him with food.

It is quite similar concerning mitzvah performance. We act as if we are doing Hashem a favor, when, in fact, He is providing us with the greatest gift. One who observes the Torah and performs its mitzvos, experiences a profound sense of satisfaction in the knowledge that he is executing Hashem's Will. He experiences a euphoric feeling of joy that he has properly fulfilled Hashem's command. With this in mind, how can a person who has achieved such satisfaction and joy ask for more? How can he request reward - on top of all that? Thus, the individual who insists on obtaining reward in return for his positive deeds and mitzvah observance is truly not thinking rationally.

This idea applies to all mitzvos of the Torah - except the zealous response that Pinchas had to Zimri's blatant act of immorality. By its very nature, an act of zealotry may not elicit any personal pleasure or satisfaction, for then it is not pure. If the zealot has personal benefit from his kanaus, it is no longer kanaus. It is a sin. Rav Neiman quotes Rabbeinu Yonah who writes in his Shaarei Teshuvah, "Essentially, exposing falsifiers and chameleons is a sin. A dispensation is made during an instance which involves a chillul Hashem, desecration of Hashem's Name. Under such circumstances, it is an aveirah liShmah, a sin committed for the sake of Hashem. This dispensation is permitted only under condition that the individual derives absolutely no benefit, gain, or pleasure. He is acting with a pure heart."

We now understand why Chazal use the words, B'din hu she'yitol scharo: It is halachically correct that Pinchas should receive his reward. Since Pinchas acted properly l'shem Shomayim, he did not derive any

personal gain from his actions. It is, therefore, only right that he receive his due reward.

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. (27:16,17)

Moshe Rabbeinu alludes to the type of leader that Klal Yisrael needs, an individual who is sensitive to the needs of each member of this diverse nation, who will lead and not be led, who will place the security of his people above all else. Horav Yechezkel, zl, m'Kuzmir once spoke with a rav who was regrettably well-known for his isolation from his community. He remained aloof, sequestering himself in his study all day. When asked why he did not have greater involvement in the daily endeavors and issues of his community, he responded, "It is below my dignity. It is not my cup of tea."

Rav Yechezkel pointed to the mezuzah on the door and said, "The mezuzah has value as a protecting agent only as long as it is on the front door. If one were to remove the mezuzah from the front door and place it on the doorpost of any room within the home, it would lose its efficacy. Why? The door to outside may not be the most impressive and exalted place to position the mezuzah; perhaps, inside the house on the door to the study would be a more distinguished setting for the mezuzah. Obviously, in order to protect the house the mezuzah must remain outside the house.

"The same idea applies to a rav. A rav who does not pursue kavod, glory, but rather cares about his community and is actively involved and oversees every aspect of his flock - he will protect the community. One who cloisters himself in his house, shutting everyone else out, will have little effect on his community. This idea is alluded to by the pasuk which asks for a leader who will stand at the "gate" and observe the "goings" and "comings" of his community. It might not be the most glorious position, but if he does not act in this manner, he will have no community to worry about."

Hashem said to Moshe, "Take to yourself Yehoshua... you shall place some of your majesty upon him. (27:18, 20)

Moshe Rabbeinu was instructed to induct Yehoshua, his faithful disciple, as his successor. In describing this induction, the Torah says, "You shall place some of your majesty upon him." This prompts Chazal (Bava Basra 75) to say that not all of Moshe's majesty was transferred to Yehoshua. The face of Moshe was like the sun and that of Yehoshua was like the moon. This means that Yehoshua was a reflection of Moshe's greatness, but not his equal. Chazal conclude with a statement made by the Zekeinim, Elders, who witnessed this change in "illumination" between Rebbe and talmid, teacher and student. Oy l'oso bushah; Oy l'oso klimah, "Woe, for that shame! Woe, for that disgrace!" the simple explanation of this enigmatic statement is: What a shame and disgrace that the majesty of the very next prophet, Yehoshua, is so much lower than that of his Rebbe, Moshe.

What shame and disgrace were experienced by the Zekeinim? The Chida explains that Yehoshua merited to become Moshe's successor, due to his devotion to the little things. He did not care that some of the functions of his service might be demeaning. For instance, he would clean up the study hall nightly, regardless of its condition. He saw to it that every chair was returned to its rightful place. The Zekeinim did not do this. It was below their dignity to carry out such menial labor. True, it was the bais ha'medrash, study hall. But, they were the Zekeinim! They were ashamed to do what Yehoshua was doing. This was their bushah, shame, and klimah, disgrace. Now, it had all changed. When they saw Yehoshua become Moshe's successor, when they saw the illumination of his face, they became envious. Woe to that bushah and klimah, shame and disgrace, that we claimed had prevented us from cleaning up the bais ha'medrash. It did not stop Yehoshua from doing what was right. Then

we were ashamed; thus, now we will be Yehoshua's disciples - instead of being the teachers.

It happens all of the time; we refuse to get our hands "soiled," delegating the role to someone else. Our self-centered arrogance convinces us that some jobs are simply disgraceful and below our dignity. Later, we discover that the path to greatness and distinction was via that job which we eschewed. We should learn that any activity which revolves around Torah is not shameful - whether it means being a waiter, working in the kitchen, etc. If it is Torah-related, it is not disgraceful. Look at Yehoshua's reward, and let it serve as an inspiration.

In his inimitable manner, the Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explained that the statement, "Woe to that bushah; Woe to that klimah!" was not expressed by the Zekeinim. Rather, it is Chazal's comment, bemoaning the sad state of affairs whereby people were measuring their Rebbe: Moshe is so great. Yehoshua is not as great. This, too, is regrettably quite common. People determine the Torah status and distinction of their rabbis, Roshei yeshivah, and spiritual leaders. Individuals who are still in need of spiritual guidance themselves determine who is worthy of leadership - and who is not. Is anything more shameful?

Va'ani Tefillah Yotzer hameoros. Who fashions lights.

In concluding this brachah, we thank Hashem for "lights" in the plural sense: physical light; and Ohr HaShechinah, spiritual light emanating from the Divine Presence. We cannot survive without these two lights. The physical light/sun provides our physical sustenance. It is the source of life and health. Without the spiritual light we live in a vacuum with nowhere to go. Life has no meaning without its spiritual source. Furthermore, without our gratitude for the physical benefits which we derive, we cannot sufficiently be grateful for the benefits of Torah. The luminaries activate certain qualities which are potentially inherent in us. Horav Avigdor Miller, zl, observes that, without light, we have no shame. This enables man to develop the qualities of character which are prerequisite for Torah. After all, Derech erez kadmah laTorah, "Character refinement/mentchlichkeit precedes the Torah." This blessing serves as a fitting preface for Ahavah Rabbah, the blessing of the Torah.

In loving memory of Jeremy Handler Yaakov Avraham ben Azariah Binyomin z"l niftar 19 Tammuz 5766 July 15, 2006 by the Handler Family

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RABBI BEREL WEIN
FAST DAYS AND A SLOW SUMMER
Monday, July 9, 2012 Printer Friendly

Summer here in Israel is the time for Saturday night demonstrations. Most of the time the demonstrations are gatherings looking for a cause rather than a cause inspiring demonstrations. It is just the thing to do on the warm Saturday nights in Tel Aviv. For many years the demonstrations concentrated on the peace process with the Palestinians.

However it has become clear to the vast majority of Israelis that the Palestinians are not interested in any sort of peace process that would accommodate the security or even the existence of a Jewish state of Israel. Thus the peace process can no longer inspire demonstrations or gatherings. This is in spite of the protestations of the hard core Left here in Israel, that the lack of peace with the Arab world is all the fault of Israel and the settlements. Last summer it appeared that the

demonstrators had found an issue that would resonate within the general Israeli public – social and economic equality. But this issue has also petered out with the politicians paying lip service to it and appointing commissions to study it (the price of cottage cheese was temporarily lowered but has started to creep up again) but very little has been truly or basically accomplished on this front. The fact that agitators and anarchists have used the social equality demonstrations to wreak violence and havoc has seriously dampened any enthusiasm for further popular participation in demonstrations on behalf of this seemingly worthy cause. So this year's rallying point and issue for demonstrations is one of the favorite ones of Israeli society – bashing the Charedim and forcing them to do military or national service. Charedi society is to put it mildly not very popular or respected in the general Israeli public. There are many reasons for this, some of them justified by the behavior of many Charedim, but most of them imaginary and unjustified. Nevertheless, Charedi society has never seen fit to engage and enlighten its adversaries regarding any of the core values and lifestyle systems that govern it. And the fact that it allows itself to be run in a de facto fashion, not by its rabbinic leaders but rather by handlers, politicians and "machers," only further beclouds and besmirches its image in the eyes of the general Israeli public. Thus, Charedim and service in the army is the natural default issue for Saturday night demonstrations when all other public issues no longer are troubling enough to attract thousands to come out on the street. But all logic and common sense tells us that bringing the Charedi public into general Israeli society and to achieve its participation in military or national service is an evolutionary process – one that will require time, patience, tolerance, education, compromise and good will on behalf of everyone involved. Coercion, mandatory prison sentences, fines, etc. are populist solutions that will have no real effect in the real world that we currently inhabit. It is a great populist electioneering issue – equal distribution of national service – but like the social equality issue it will not be solved by government fiat or political bombast. Last Sunday we commemorated the fast day of the seventeenth of Tammuz – a day of many tragedies in Jewish history. Some of these tragedies were due to outside forces – the breaching of the defensive wall outside Jerusalem, the burning of the Torah by the tyrant, etc. – but some were self-inflicted by the behavior of the Jewish people, such as the shattering of the tablets of stone by Moshe, at the sight of Israel worshipping the Golden Calf. Even though the "outside" tragedies occurred to us also because of our spiritual shortcomings, at least we can accommodate our thinking to the fact that we have bitter and powerful enemies in the world who sometimes are successful in temporarily prevailing over us. However the self-destructive nature of our inner self-inflicted tragedies can never be rationalized or excused. Demonizing and coercing an entire large population of Jews into doing what others wish them to do is counter productive and doomed ultimately to failure. Those who danced around the Golden Calf proclaimed: "This is your God, Israel!" They were unwilling to accommodate a different opinion or lifestyle – everyone had to worship the Golden Calf. This led to civil war, thousands of Jewish deaths and the destruction of their precious Golden Calf itself. It is ironic that those, here in Israel, who continually rail against religious coercion now are in the vanguard of enforcing real coercion against others. Only a gradual and tolerant program of integration over time will inexorably lead to a solution to this most nettlesome problem. Summer night demonstrations won't accomplish much in this area. Shabat shalom Berel Wein