

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS**

### Covenant & Conversation

**P**inchas contains a mini-essay on leadership, as Moses confronts his own mortality and asks G-d to appoint a successor. The great leaders care about succession. In Chayei Sarah we see Abraham instruct his servant to find a wife for Isaac so that the family of the covenant will continue. David chooses Solomon. Elijah, at G-d's bidding, appoints Elisha to carry on his work.

In the case of Moses, the sages sensed a certain sadness at his realisation that he would not be succeeded by either of his sons, Gershom or Eliezer.<sup>1</sup> Such is the case with keter Torah, the invisible crown of Torah worn by the prophets and the sages. Unlike the crowns of priesthood and kingship, it does not pass dynastically from father to son. Charisma rarely does. What is instructive, though, is the language Moses uses in framing his request: "May the Lord, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, choose a man over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep without a shepherd." (Num. 27: 16)

There are three basic leadership lessons to be learned from this choice of words.

The first, noted by Rashi, is implicit in the unusually long description of G-d as "the Lord, G-d of the spirits of all flesh." This means, he says, "Master of the universe, the character of each person is revealed to you, and no two are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will bear with each person according to his individual character."<sup>2</sup>

Maimonides in *The Guide for the Perplexed* says that this is a basic feature of the human condition. Homo sapiens is the most diverse of all life forms. Therefore co-operation is essential – because we are different, others are strong where we are weak and vice versa – but it is also difficult, because we respond to challenges in different ways. That is what makes leadership necessary, but also demanding: This great variety and the necessity of social life are essential

<sup>1</sup> That is the implication of the statement that "Moses long to die as did Aaron," Sifrei, Pinchas, 136, s.v. vayomer.

<sup>2</sup> Rashi to Num. 27: 16, based on Tanhuma, Pinchas, 11.

elements in man's nature. But the well-being of society demands that there should be a leader able to regulate the actions of man; he must complete every shortcoming, remove every excess, and prescribe for the conduct of all, so that the natural variety should be counterbalanced by the uniformity of legislation, and the order of society be well established.<sup>3</sup>

Leaders respect differences but, like the conductor of an orchestra, integrate them, ensuring that the many different instruments play their part in harmony with the rest. True leaders do not seek to impose uniformity. They honour diversity.

The second hint is contained in the word ish, "a man" over the congregation, to which G-d responds, "Take for yourself Joshua, a man [ish] of spirit (v. 18). The word ish here indicates something other than gender. What this is, is to be found in the two places in the Torah where we found the phrase ha-ish Moshe, "the man Moses":

One is in Exodus: The man Moses was highly respected [gadol me'od, literally "very great"] in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and the people. (Ex. 11: 3)

The second is in Numbers: Now the man Moses was very humble [anav me'od], more so than anyone else on the face of the earth (Num. 12: 3)

Note the two characteristics, seemingly opposed – great and humble – both of which Moses had in high degree (me'od, "very"). This is the combination of attributes Rabbi Yohanan attributed to G-d himself: "Wherever you find G-d's greatness, there you find his humility."<sup>4</sup> Here is one of his prooftexts: "For the Lord your G-d is G-d of gods and Lord of lords, the great G-d, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger residing among you, giving them food and clothing" (Deut. 10: 17-18).

An ish in the context of leadership is not a male but rather, someone who is a mensch, a person whose greatness is lightly worn, who cares about the people others often ignore, "the fatherless, the widow and the stranger," who spends as much time with the people at

<sup>3</sup> Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, book 2 chapter 40.

<sup>4</sup> From the liturgy on Saturday night. The source is Pesikta Zutreta, Ekev.

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the margins of society as with the elites, who is courteous to everyone equally and who receives respect because he or she gives respect.

The real puzzlement, however, lies in the third clause: "Choose a man over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in." This sounds like saying the same thing twice, which the Torah tends not to do. What does it mean?

The Torah is hinting here at one of the most challenging aspects of leadership, namely timing and pace. The first phrase is simple: "who will go out before them and come in before them." This means that a leader must lead from the front. He cannot be like the apocryphal remark of one British politician: "Of course I follow the party. After all, I am their leader."<sup>5</sup>

It is the second phrase that is vital: "who will lead them out and bring them in." This means: a leader must lead from the front, but he or she must not be so far out in front that when they turn around, they find that no one is following. Pace is of the essence. Sometimes a leader can go too fast. That is when tragedies occur.

To take two very different examples: when Margaret Thatcher was prime minister she knew she was going to have to confront the miners' union in a long and bitter struggle. In 1981 they went on strike for a pay rise. Mrs Thatcher immediately made enquiries about the size of coal stocks. She wanted to know how long the country could survive without new supplies of coal. As soon as she discovered that stocks were low, she in effect conceded victory to the miners. She then, very quietly, arranged for coal to be stockpiled. The result was that when the miners went on strike again in 1983, she resisted their demands. There was a prolonged strike, and this time it was the miners who conceded defeat. A battle she could not win in 1981 she was able to win in 1983.

The very different example was that of Yitzhak Rabin. The peace process he engaged with the Palestinians between 1993 and 1995 in was deeply controversial, in Israel and outside. There was some support but also much opposition. The tension mounted

in 1995. In September of that year I wrote an article in the press giving him my own personal support. At the same time, however, I wrote to him privately saying that I was deeply worried about internal opposition to the plan, and urged him to spend as much time negotiating with his fellow Israeli citizens – specifically the religious Zionists – as with the Palestinians. I did not receive a reply.

On Motsei Shabbat, 4 November 1995, the world heard the news that Prime Minister Rabin had been assassinated at a peace rally by a young religious Zionist. I attended the funeral in Jerusalem. Returning the next day, I went straight from the airport to the Israeli ambassador to tell him about the funeral, which he had not been able to attend having had to stay in London to deal with the media.

As I entered his office, he handed me an envelope. "This has just arrived for you in the diplomatic bag." It was Yitzhak Rabin's reply to my letter – perhaps one of the last letters he wrote. It was a moving re-affirmation of his faith but by the time it was delivered he was no longer alive. He had pursued peace, as we are commanded to do, but he had gone too fast.

Moses knew this himself from the episode of the spies. As Maimonides says in *The Guide*,<sup>6</sup> the task of fighting battles and conquering the land was just too much for a generation born into slavery. It could only be done by their children, born in freedom. Sometimes a journey that seems small on the map takes forty years.

Respect for diversity, care for the lowly and powerless as well as the powerful and great, and a willingness to go no faster than people can bear: these are three essential attributes of a leader, as Moses knew from experience, and as Joshua learned through long apprenticeship to the great man himself. ©2014 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org

### **RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

## **Shabbat Shalom**

"**A**nd the Lord said to Moses, 'Take for yourself Joshua the son of Nun, an individual who has spirit within him, and lay (or lean) your hand upon him. Stand him up before Elazar the Priest and before the entire congregation, and command him before their eyes. And give of your glory upon him in order that the entire congregation of the children of Israel may obey him.'" (Numbers 27:18-20)

In these three verses we see the "passing of the guard," the succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Embedded within the three different actions which G-d commanded Moses to perform, we may begin to define three different forms of traditional Jewish leadership. Firstly, Moses was to "lay his hands" upon Joshua, an act which expressed a conferral of

<sup>5</sup> The phrase has been attributed to Disraeli and Baldwin.

<sup>6</sup> *The Guide for the Perplexed*, book 3, chapter 32.

rabbinic authority, semikha (literally a laying upon or leaning upon), from master to disciple (cf. Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:1). Since Moses was traditionally known as Moshe Rabbenu (our religious teacher or rabbi) and since Joshua is biblically and midrashically pictured as Moses' devoted disciple, it is perfectly logical to assume that the first transference from Moses to Joshua was that of religio-legal authority. Moreover, Moses was a great prophet who conveyed the Divine word to his nation; since the scholar (hakham) is heir (and even superior) to the prophet, and since the prophet was always expected to be a great intellectual and spiritual personality, Moses was bestowing upon Joshua his own authority as religious master and prophet (Rabbenu) by the act of his laying of his hands upon Joshua.

Moses is then commanded by G-d to "stand Joshua up" before Elazar the Priest. The Kohen Gadol or High Priest was certainly a leader in ancient Israel - but his Divine service was formal, ritual and external, very much limited to the Sanctuary or Holy Temple. It was necessary for the Rabbi-scholar-prophet to be recognized and respected by the High Priest, and vice versa; however, whereas the former had to constantly bring the living word of G-d to the people and in the process often came into conflict with the ruling authorities and even with the majority of the Israelites, the latter merely had to perform the precise Temple ritual so that the continuity of the Divine service from generation to generation could be maintained. Joshua therefore had to appear, or be stood up, before the High Priest, but he was not given the ritual authority of the High Priest. Moses and Joshua were the seat of religious, moral and ethical authority; Aaron and Elazar were the seat of ritual authority. The Rav was expected to teach and interpret G-d's word for every generation; the High Priest was expected to ritually perform and maintain the ritual structures from generation to generation.

And finally, Moses was to "give of his glory (Hebrew hod) upon (Joshua) in order that the entire congregation of Israel may obey him." In addition to being the Rabbi-scholar-prophet, Moses also served as authoritative King (cf. Deut. 33:4-5), the chief executive officer of the Israelite nation. This authority was the power, or glory, he conferred upon Joshua as well. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom, defines the distinction between both aspects of Moses' leadership as that of influence verses power. Moses, as master prophet and religious teacher, wielded enormous influence, not only in his generation, but in every generation, including our own which still studies Moses' divine words. Moses, as King of Israel, controlled much power, and so - in the final analysis - managed to quell the rebellions of all his detractors: Korah, Datan and Aviram, and Zimri ben Salu.

But influence and power are very different sources of authority. Rabbi Sacks sees this distinction as emanating from the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 21:15), which compares the giving over of power to "a pouring out from one vessel to another," whereas the conferral of influence is likened to "the kindling of one candle from another candle." When wine, for example, is poured from one goblet into another, the first goblet becomes emptied and devoid of its joy-giving liquid. Similarly, when a political leader leaves office and his successor takes over, no authority remains in the hand of the incumbent.

How different is the realm of influence. After the initial candle has kindled its flame onto another candle, the light of the first candle has in no way become diminished; much the opposite, now there are two candles shining brightly, providing double the amount of light in the room. My revered teacher, Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik, went one step further, when he interpreted the Biblical text of our weekly portion at the celebration of my class's rabbinical ordination. The "laying of the hands" is usually interpreted as an inter-generational conferral of authority: the master from a former generation is "handing over" the authority of our ancient tradition (trado in Latin means to hand over) to the younger generation.

However, says Rav Soloveitchik, that is not the picture presented by the biblical text. The Hebrew samokh (Semikhah) principally means to lean on, so that the picture being conveyed is that of an elderly Moses leaning with his hands upon a younger Joshua. The message seems not to be that of a young Joshua dependent on the authority of an elder Moses; it rather seems to be that of an elder Moses dependent for his support on a younger Joshua. Rabbi Soloveitchik looked at us, his student-rabbis, with great yearning and expectations. "It is I who am dependent upon you. Without you, my Torah and my unique teaching, indeed all of the traditions which I imbibed from the previous generations, will all die with me. You are my insurance policy. It is through you and your teachings that my Torah will continue to live."

This is why Moses had to put down Korah - who wanted to usurp power for a false end - but encouraged Eldad and Medad, who were influenced by a Divine spirit. And this is the true meaning of our Sages' adage that a father is never jealous of a child nor is a teacher ever jealous of a disciple. Politics yield power, which disappears in the sand-dunes of times; learning and piety breed influence, which last for all eternity. The Israelite Kings are scarcely remembered while the Israelite prophets and sages are still being studied and interpreted today. Lust for power is ultimately consumed by fiery flames, while the influence of Torah education will enable the light of the menorah to emblazon the path to the tree of life in our return to Eden. ©2014 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

**RABBI BEREL WEIN**

## Wein Online

In the midst of the sadness and angst that envelops us yet here in Israel and throughout the entire Jewish world, the story of Pinchas, the righteous zealot, rewarded by Heaven for his act of zealotry and violence, intrudes. We are still reeling from the killings and rockets and losses that we have so recently suffered. So, what are we to make of this most puzzling incident recorded for us in our holy Torah?

The Talmud teaches us that it was only through miraculous Heavenly interventions that Pinchas was able to slay the Midianite princess and the Leader of the tribe of Shimon and escape with his own life still intact. And the fact that the Lord, so to speak, extends His Divine hand of friendship, priesthood, peace and position to Pinchas, certainly shows G-d's acquiescence to Pinchas' act.

Yet the Talmud and Jewish tradition are of the opinion that only Pinchas' act of zealotry is to be admired. All other acts of unilateral zealotry in Jewish society in later generations are to be shunned. The prophet Elijah, who in Jewish tradition is identified somehow with Pinchas, is chastised by Heaven to moderate his zealotry and despair regarding the acknowledged evils of Jewish behavior in his time. Instead, he is assigned to be present at all circumcision ceremonies, Pesach sederim and to be the prophet of Jewish redemption and reconciliation.

He becomes the witness to Jewish loyalty and continuity. In effect, his zealotry is to be rechanneled into positive energy and eternal goodness. Elijah becomes thereby the fulfillment of G-d's commitment to Pinchas of peace, nobility and eternal greatness. It is this redirection of zealous energy to positive force that lies at the heart of G-d's commitment to Pinchas.

The Talmud teaches us that we cannot exist as human beings in this world by attempting to eliminate completely our negative instincts -- our yetzer hara. Our task, rather, is to redirect those instincts and forces that define us as human beings into positive and productive activities and behavior.

One of the fundamental weaknesses of other faiths has been their attempt to completely negate the natural impulses that are part of all human nature. Celibacy and long states of meditation are not the tools of lasting spiritual enhancement and human continuity. Engaging our instincts and energy and channeling them into positive projects and holy endeavors is the wish of the Torah.

The zealotry of Pinchas and Elijah should be exploited for good causes -- the priesthood and public service, compassion for others and a sense of Jewish unity, eternity and holy mission. It is the transformation of Pinchas from the man of violence to the man of peace that is the message of the Torah in this week's

parsha. The story of Pinchas is recorded for us in the Torah to teach us that such transformations are possible and indeed necessary for the ultimate good of the Jewish people and humanity generally. The Jewish story is that Pinchas becomes Elijah and Elijah becomes the harbinger of Jewish redemption and eternity. ©2014 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)

**RABBI AVI WEISS**

## Shabbat Forshpeis

After Pinchas killed the Jewish man and Midianite woman who were committing immoral acts, G-d applauds Pinchas, granting him a "covenant of peace (brit shalom)" (Numbers 25:12). Can we deduce from G-d's approval, that zealotry is desirable?

Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin, 19th C.) sees the brit shalom as a counter measure to zealotry. He notes "that the nature of his (Pinchas) act, killing with his own hand, tends to leave a harsh feeling in the heart. He who acted for the sake of heaven, was [therefore] granted a blessing to remain gentle and peaceful." Here, Netziv points out the need of an antidote for zealotry.

Perhaps his idea can be taken a step further. Rather than viewing the Pinchas story as an approval of other acts of zealotry, it may teach the opposite. Zealotry is limited to the case of Pinchas, who received the brit shalom from G-d. In other cases, where G-d does not offer His explicit imprimatur, zealotry is prohibited.

Note that the ancestor of Pinchas disapproved of zealotry. Pinchas is a descendant of Levi who participated in the decimation of the city of Shekhem. His father Yaakov (Jacob) was incensed, and on his deathbed disavowed any connection to Levi's brutal act (Genesis 49:6).

Note also that Pinchas' descendant, the prophet Eliyahu (Elijah) may have been removed from his position after becoming over-zealous. This occurs when Eliyahu, in this week's Haftarah, declares to G-d "zealous have I been for the Lord...for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant" (I Kings 19:10). G-d then indicates to Eliyahu that His spirit is not found in the wind, the earthquake or fire ...rather G-d's presence is best felt through "a still small voice" (I Kings 19:11,12). After Eliyahu persists in his commitment to being zealous, G-d tells him that he will be replaced by his student, Elisha (I Kings 19:14-16).

In fact, a reading of the Book of Joshua reveals that Pinchas comes full circle. Years after his zealous act, Pinchas brokers a truce between Israel and the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of Menasheh (Joshua 22). Some commentaries suggest that only after

Pinhas' intercession, an intercession which avoids a split within the Jewish people, is Pinhas completely embraced as a leader (Tosafot, Zevachim 101b).

The pathway to redemption is not the way of the Pinhas in our portion, but the Pinhas in the Book of Joshua. This pathway to redemption will reach its crescendo when Eliyahu, the descendant of Pinhas, returns parents to children and children to parents, the antithesis of zealotry, as he announces the coming of the Messiah (Malakhi 3:23-24). ©2012 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

### RABBI YITZCHOK ADLERSTEIN

## Be'eros

**B**e'er Yosef: "The pasuk begs for more information. Having been spared from death, what happened to them? Rashi gives us the fuller picture. 'Initially, they took part in Korach's counsel. At the time of the dispute, their hearts entertained thoughts of teshuvah. A place was created for them at a high place of Gehinom, and they took up residence there.' The gemara (Sanhedrin 110a) from which Rashi takes his comment adds that from the place that they are installed, they sing shirah."

The sons of Korach directly appear in Tehilim. (44:1-2) "For the conductor, on the shoshanim, by the sons of Korach: My heart stirs with a good thing; I say, 'My works are for the King.'" A midrash elaborates. Seeing the Gehinom open beneath them, and surrounded by fire on all sides, Korach's sons could not utter the words of these pesukim. The thought merely stirred within, i.e. took shape in their minds, but had not made its way to their lips. Yet HKBH accepted that thought as teshuvah.

Putting it all together, Chazal's message seems to be that the teshuvah of Korach's sons took the specific form of this perek of Tehilim. Furthermore, we the message of that perek shows the precision of measured, weighed teshuvah, including insights of the authors that directly addresses the source of their sin.

What had they done? According to yet other midrashim, they had been part of a campaign to unseat Moshe by mocking and deriding him. They sought to instill hatred of Moshe into the hearts of the nation, by reframing him as a cruel and power-hungry tyrant.

They now switched courses. In a moment of clarity, they composed an unspoken paean to the character of the true talmid chacham. Thus the reference to shoshanim, to roses. By this they meant, says a midrash, that the talmid chacham is soft like a rose, pleasant like a rose, and redolent with good deeds. In other words, they now sought to praise Moshe, the consummate talmid chacham, and to endear him to the people.

We must ask ourselves, however, what they meant by soft as a rose. Does not the gemara (Taanis 4a) take an antipodal position, when it says that a talmid chacham must be hard as iron?

The resolution is as follows. In general, a talmid chacham should be soft and pleasant, with the exception of those scholars who occupy public positions of authority. Those who lead, and those who judge, must ensure that their words are heeded. They must speak with strength, and not bend to unworthy opposition. All others, however, should be seen by people as agreeable, pliable and giving, as a consequence of the Torah they acquired.

Furthermore, the distinction between the two groups is not absolute. Every talmid chacham must be at his core soft and pleasant. At times, he may have to assume a persona of unyielding toughness -- but drop it in all interactions with people in which that strength does not have to be deployed.

R. Yochanan Ben Zakai was lauded by his students. (Berachos 28b) "Our master, lamp of Israel. The pillar of the right, strong hammer." We could explain this along the lines of our discussion. R. Yochanan ben Zakai was a leader, a nasi -- the guiding light of Israel. As such, he was forced to assume the role of a strong hammer. Nonetheless, he remained the pillar of the Right, i.e. of chesed, which is often called the "right," or fundamental midah relative to din on the secondary left.

Returning to our pasuk, the sons of Korach, unable in the briefest moment available to them to do complete teshuvah, could not manage more than a thought of contrition. Remarkably, not only did Hashem accept this as teshuvah, but He rewarded it with the clarity and vision needed to formulate shirah that would be used far into the future. (Based on Be'er Yosef, Bamidbar 26:11) ©2014 Rabbi Y. Adlerstein and torah.org

### RABBI DOV KRAMER

## Taking a Closer Look

**W**hen the Torah lists the families of each Tribe counted for the census taken in the 40th year in the desert (Bamidbar 26:5-50), it closely resembles the list of the "seventy souls" who left Canaan to live (temporarily) in Egypt (B'raishis 46:9-25). As a matter of fact, Rashi (Bamidbar 26:24) tells us that these families were based on those who went down to Egypt, thereby inviting a direct comparison between the two lists.

Some Tribes (R'uvein, Z'vulun and Naftali) are exactly the same in both lists. Most of the differences in the other Tribes are minor (such as the only family in Dun being "Shucham" instead of "Chushim"), with these differences being easily attributable to how the family was referred to now as opposed to how the person was known (which can itself be attributable to various factors, including the need to alter the family name

based on what the original name might have meant in the Egyptian language/culture). There are three Tribes, however (Shimon, Asher and Binyamin), that have fewer families listed in this census than there were individuals who went down to Egypt. What happened to the families of these individuals?

[Binyamin's decline from ten names to seven families is a topic onto itself, as two of the seven are grandchildren with names that are the same or very similar (at least as similar as the other name discrepancies) to two of the sons who do not have corresponding families in the census. This issue deserves its own discussion (see Rashi on 26:24 for his take), but doing so here would distract from the discussion about the missing families. For our purposes, we will consider there to be corresponding families for only five of the ten sons who went down to Egypt, with the focus being on what happened to the missing ones.]

Some (e.g. Chizkuni) say that a family not being included here may simply be the result of not having enough descendants to warrant being considered a separate family. Other, more complicated, approaches are suggested as well, approaches that bring other issues with them.

Rashi (26:13) dismisses the possibility that these families were lost in the plague following the sin of P'or, as "only" 24,000 died in the plague, and there were significantly more than that lost in the Tribe of Shimon alone (comparing the numbers of this census with the one taken at the beginning of the second year in the desert). Rashi must agree with the Ramban's contention (25:5) that no sinners ended up being prosecuted/executed by the courts (since Pinachas' act of zealotry had already succeeded in calming G-d's wrath), as otherwise many more than 24,000 would have died, just not in the plague. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that some court proceedings had already occurred before Pinachas killed Zimri, with many leading to executions -- enough to cause the loss of several families (the sinners may have been concentrated among several families, similar to how Rashi assumes they were concentrated in one Tribe). Bear in mind that Zimri didn't get involved with the Midianite princess until his Tribe demanded that he do something about being summoned to court (see Sifre). It may have even been seeing others executed that led Zimri's Tribe to confront him, not just that courts were being convened.

As far as the Ramban's point that the Torah never tells us that the judges did what Moshe had commanded them, if Pinachas' act made it unnecessary to conduct any further trials (as opposed to none ever even starting, as the Ramban understands it), it could not be accurately said that they fulfilled Moshe's instructions. The Torah may have relied on our comparing the numbers of the two censuses to realize

that many more than 24,000 died for of the sin of P'or. It should be noted that the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:8 and Midrash Tanchuma Pinachas 5) says explicitly that the missing families "were lost because of the illicit relations that resulted from Bilam's advice."

Tz'ror HaMor (B'reishis 46:21) says that the five missing families from Binyamin died in Egypt because they were wicked; with so many having died during the plague of darkness, such a large loss (i.e. entire families, which might have occurred on a smaller scale to other Tribes as well) is very feasible. Proof that these families were lost in Egypt rather than in the desert is brought from the fact that in the second census there are significantly more people in the Tribe of Binyamin (45,600) than there were in the first census (35,400), something inconceivable if half of its families were lost between the two censuses. [The other changes in the family names are attributed to those families repenting (in Egypt) and taking a new name to reflect the change in their ways.]

Rashi (26:13), based on the Y'rushalmi (Sotah 1:10) says that seven families were lost during a civil war that occurred after Aharon's death. Besides the five families from Binyamin, there was one family missing from Shimon (Ohad), bringing the total to six. A comparison of the list of names of those who went down to Egypt to the families listed here would lead to the conclusion that the seventh "missing family" was Asher's son Yishvah, as despite any differences in the names of the families, no other Tribe has fewer families than the number of sons (or grandsons) who left Canaan for Egypt. However, Rashi says it was Gad's son Etbzon, who is not mentioned in the census, even though another name, Uzni, is there instead. Not only does Rashi not account for Asher's missing family and ignore the fact that there are the right amount of families of Gad, but later (26:16) Rashi himself says that Etbzon and Uzni are one and the same! This leads to a major discussion among the commentators as to how Rashi can contradict himself, as well as how he could ignore Asher's missing family. To complicate matters further, our version of the Y'rushalmi says that there were eight families lost in the civil war, not seven, and the Midrash (Rabbah/Tanchuma) quoted above says there were six, but only has three missing from Binyamin (making it the equivalent of the Y'rushalmi's eight). The Midrash has different families missing, making it even harder to reconcile with Rashi. It should be noted that neither the Y'rushalmi or the Midrash equates the two lists, so any name difference could be attributed to it being a totally different family, even one without a corollary in the first list. Rashi, however, does equate them, thereby limiting the possible explanations.

Mizrachi discusses the contradiction within Rashi, but has no way to explain it. (He also says there are only six families of Gad mentioned in the census, when there are clearly seven.) Gur Aryeh suggests that

Uzni was Etbzon, but because they had lost so many in the war, it was considered as if the family was lost. The L'vush says that Uzni was one of Etbzon's sons, and his offspring became such a large family that the entire "Etbzon" family became known as Uzni. During the civil war, all the others (besides those from Uzni) were lost, so Etbzon was considered a "lost" family while Uzni was able to take that slot in the census since his ancestor was among those listed going down to Egypt. (These approaches don't address Asher's missing family.) Nachalas Yaakov (see also Bartenura) points to Rashi's second reference to Etbzon being preceded by the words "and I say," indicating that first he quoted the Y'rushalmi's approach and then gave his own. (He adds that Rashi could be of the opinion that the loss of Yishvah, the missing Asher family, was not related to the civil war, so wasn't mentioned. I'm not sure why Rashi would ignore this missing family completely rather than say it was lost under different circumstances.)

Sefer HaZikaron assumes that naming Etbzon as a lost family is a misprint, and even found a manuscript that had Yishvah written instead of Etbzon. However, it is more likely that the scribe who wrote that manuscript purposely changed it because of these questions rather than all the other manuscripts being mistaken. If this was what Rashi meant, the primary questions fall away. It should be noted, though, that Asher gained almost 12,000 members since the first census, while Gad lost over 5,000, making it much more likely that such a loss came from Gad rather than from Asher.

The population growth experienced by Asher and Binyamin make it difficult (but not impossible) to attribute their lost families to something that occurred between the two censuses. Yet, this is precisely what Rashi does. [The Y'rushalmi itself is not trying to explain how these families were lost; the "eight families" mentioned there need not refer only to the families that qualify for the census, making the discrepancy in the amount of families irrelevant.] What if the bulk of each of these families died in Egypt, but the few members who survived were able to maintain the family name, and it was this remnant that died in the civil war, thereby completing the loss of these families? (If the "wickedness" of those who died during the plague of darkness was that they didn't want to leave Egypt, the remnant of those families wanting to return to Egypt after Aharon died fits well.) The growth of the other families in the Tribe could account for its overall population growth, while the death of the few that remained from those families that had already been decimated in Egypt wouldn't impact the numbers that much.

This works for the five lost families of Binyamin as well as for the lost family of Asher. And we don't need to play with the numbers for the lost family of

Shimon (who lost many at P'or as well). Nevertheless, there are two families from Shimon that are missing in the census, so Rashi has to point out which one was lost and which one just has a different name. He also had to discuss Binyamin because of the other issues there, including how many families were lost in the civil war (since there are seven families included in the census). But there is no reason to mention the lost family of Asher, since it is easy to figure out which one it was.

Rashi's version of the Y'rushalmi might have also said that eight families were lost, with seven of them being the same seven families missing from the census. The eighth "family" lost during the civil war (thereby accounting for Gad's population loss) was Etbzon, whose family was decimated yet had enough of a remnant to be included in the census. As Rashi points out, we don't know why the family name was changed to Uzni. Was it because this remnant came from him, and after their loss in the civil war they didn't want to be known by the same name anymore? Was it because the word Uzni is related to the word Etbzon (see B'er BaSadeh)? Was it a reference to them being warriors (see Maskil L'Dovid)? Either way, the family was still intact enough to be included in the census, but was so decimated in the civil war that it is considered (by the Y'rushalmi) to be a lost family. Therefore, when explaining the Y'rushalmi, Rashi adds that the name Etbzon isn't included in the census based on their losses in the war. ©2014 Rabbi D. Kramer

#### **RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ**

## **Shabbat Shalom Weekly**

**F**ollowing Pinchas's action to stop a public display of immorality, the Torah states: "And it shall be for him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he (Pinchas) was zealous for his G-d, and he atoned for the children of Israel" (Numbers 25:13).

Why does the Torah use the words "for his G-d"?

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Chasman, of the Hevron Yeshiva, answers, "This tells us that Pinchas's zealotry was entirely with pure intentions. He had no other motivation whatsoever other than doing the will of the Almighty. Without pure intentions an act of zealotry can be a crime in itself. Therefore, one must be very certain of one's true motivations before acting zealotry."

There are many personal motives that could transform an act of zealotry from a mitzvah to a transgression. For example, someone might want glory and therefore acts zealotry to be in the limelight. Another person might enjoy excitement. He is bored and wants to be involved in some action. Yet another person might have a grudge against someone or feel envy or personal hatred. He therefore, views this

moment as an opportunity to embarrass the other person. A fourth person might see some financial gain for himself.

Regardless of what the personal motivation is, it renders an act of zealousness a sin for personal gain. Frequently, it could cause a chilul HaShem -- a desecration of the Almighty's name. This is especially so when irresponsible youths take action without consulting Torah scholars. Because of the potentially negative side-effects of zealousness, it must be used with great care! *Based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin © 2014 Rabbi K. Packouz & aish.com*

### SHLOMO KATZ

## Hama'ayan

**"T**he name of the slain Israelite man who was slain with the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, leader of a father's house [i.e., a family group] of the tribe of Shimon." (25:14)

Midrash Rabbah comments: Just as Hashem occupies Himself with publicizing the praise of the righteous, so He occupies Himself with publicizing the disgrace of the wicked. Pinchas was publicized as praiseworthy, while Zimri was publicized as worthy of condemnation. About them it says (Mishlei 10:7), "The memory of a tzaddik for a blessing, and the name of the wicked should rot." [Until here from the midrash]

R' Yaakov Kranz z"l (1740-1804; the Dubno Maggid) explains with a parable: An elderly merchant decided that he would no longer travel to bring merchandise; instead, he would send his son in order to train him. The young man's mother prepared many different outfits for him, each one appropriate for each of the climates through which he would travel. She also prepared many delicacies for him. At the last minute, she remembered that he occasionally suffered from a certain malady, so she ran to the pharmacy to fill a prescription for him. Before he departed, she called to him: "Look, my precious son! On this side of the suitcase are the delicious cakes that I prepared. On this

side are the other delicacies. Don't be stingy; eat them, and may they taste sweet to you." She then reached the container with the medicine, and she said with a sigh, "My son -- remember! Here is the medicine. Hopefully, you will not need it. G-d forbid, if you do need it, it is here." In short, she blessed him that he would enjoy all of the delicacies, but she did not bless him that he would enjoy the medicine.

Similarly, Hashem points out positive role models such as the Patriarchs and Yosef, and he wishes us success in emulating them. The Torah also points out negative role models such as Korach and Zimri from whom we should learn what types of behavior to avoid so that we won't be punished as they were.

This is what the midrash means: "Just as Hashem occupies Himself with publicizing the praises of the righteous, so He occupies Himself with publicizing the disgrace of the wicked," just like the mother who points out to her son both the delicacies and the medication. There is a difference, however. Regarding the tzaddikim He says, "The memory of a tzaddik for a blessing." Like the mother who tells her son, "Enjoy the delicacies," Hashem takes pleasure, so-to-speak, from speaking of the righteous. In contrast, "The name of the wicked should rot." Like the mother who prefers that her son not need the medicine she packed in his suitcase, Hashem would prefer that we not need the negative role models. (Mishlei Yaakov) © 2014 S. Katz & torah.org

### RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

## Weekly Dvar

**P**arshat Pinchas relates the story (27:1-12) about the daughters of Tzafchad, descendants of Yosef (Joseph). These daughters wanted and loved the Land of Israel so much that they wanted a piece of it. As Rav Moshe Feinstein asks, why do they have to have a claim in the land, just because they love it? Wouldn't entering or living in the land be fulfilling enough?

Rav Moshe thus concludes that if a person truly loves something, they'd want it to be theirs, and no one else's. This is why the daughters wanted to actually own a piece of the land, rather than simply living in it. This logic applies to marriages, as well as the Torah's preference that every Jew writes their own Torah (or a portion of it). In our terms, it's not enough to borrow and read Jewish books. We need to love the Torah we read so much that we feel the need to own it. As this week's Parsha urges, we should not only seek, read and enjoy words of Torah, but we should own those books, and live those words. © 2014 Rabbi S. Ressler & LeLamed, Inc.



### Parsha Puns!

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