

SHABBAT PARSHAT PINCHAS · 24 TAMMUZ 5775 · JULY 11, 2015 · VOL. 22 NO. 39

PARSHA INSIGHTS

IRON MAN

“May G-d... appoint a man over the assembly who shall go out in front of them and who shall come in before them...” (27:16-17)

Democracy has many virtues: its greatest weakness however is that it produces politicians rather than statesmen. When power is vouchsafed to the continuing popularity of the leader, that leader will always be looking over his shoulder to make sure that he still has the support of his power-base. He seeks the advice of spin-doctors to make palatable the compromises that bought his election support. His media image is as, if not more, important than the content of his policies. His every word and move reflect his dependence on the electorate.

In Britain in the twentieth century, two people come to mind who managed to climb above petty-politicking and ascend to the level of statesmanship: Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. Interestingly both owed their initial power-base to the Jewish vote. Churchill started his political career as Member of Parliament for Manchester North West where the Jewish vote was significant, and Mrs. Thatcher’s parliamentary seat was East Finchley in London, a predominantly Jewish electorate.

I well remember the “Iron Lady’s” classic October 10th, 1980 speech, when faced with soaring unemployment from 1.5 million to 2 million within the space of a year. “The

Lady’s not for turning,” said she. And Churchill’s indomitable spirit of resistance put heart and backbone into a nation standing alone against the vicious and merciless Hun.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a) says about the generation of Mashiach, “The face of the generation is the face of a dog.”

When you see someone taking his dog for a walk, the dog will often run out in front of his master, but he will be constantly looking behind him to see in which direction his master is going. The dog may be in front, but there’s no doubt who’s following whom.

Moshe sought from G-d a leader who would go out in front of the people and who would come in before them; someone who wouldn’t be constantly looking over his shoulder for approval.

And G-d answered him, “Take Yehoshua bin Nun, a man in whom there is spirit.” Rashi explains, “That he can go against the ‘spirit’ of each and every one.” Someone who wouldn’t be looking over his shoulder to check his “approval ratings”.

• Sources: based on the Beit Yitzchak in the name of Rabbi Moshe Mendel; Rabbi Yisrael Salanter as seen in Lekach Tov

PARSHA OVERVIEW

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

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

NEDARIM 51- 57

“Perhaps the big fish (“dag”) spit him (Yona) out, and a small fish swallowed him?”

This suggestion is how Abayei answers Rav Papa’s question on a statement in a *beraita* in which Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar teaches that a person who makes a *neder* not to eat “dag” forbids large fish, whereas if he says “daga” he forbids “small fish”. Rav Papa questions this distinction based on verses in Sefer Yona which seem to use these two words interchangeably. Abayei defends Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar by suggesting that the verses may be speaking of two different fish: a large fish which first swallowed Yona, and then spit him out into a small fish. This would explain the distinct words in the verses, in accordance with the *beraita*.

This suggestion is also in accordance with the Midrash that locates Yona at first in a spacious (i.e. “large”) male fish (“dag”), and since he had enough space there he did not feel a need to pray to G-d. However, G-d wanted him to pray and realize that he was wrong to flee from his mission to rebuke Ninveh to atone, and therefore caused him to be spit out by the male fish and swallowed up by a female, pregnant (i.e. “small”) fish (“daga”), and since he was cramped he prayed to G-d to get out.

The *gemara* concludes that in the Written Torah there is really no distinction between the two words — they both refer to all fish in general. However, when examining a *neder*, such as in the case of the *beraita*, the way that people speak is what matters, and people use “dag” for large fish and “daga” for small ones. (See the Maharal who points out an apparent difficulty to the suggestion of Abayei, since the verse states that in response to Yona’s prayer G-d spoke to the “dag” — not “daga” — to spit him out.)

• Nedarim 51b

“If a person makes himself like a desert, which is available to all, the Torah is given to him as a gift.”

Rava said this to Rav Yosef on our *daf*, and derives it from a verse in Sefer Bamidbar (21:18). His intent was to warn Rav Yosef to be exceedingly humble, as seen in the context of the *sugya*. (Rabbeinu Nissim)

What is meant here by stating that the Torah is given to him “as a gift”? Only a person who is humble, like Moshe Rabbeinu, can truly connect to Torah. He is given the gift of Torah if he has the proper humility and lack of haughtiness that are pre-requisites for being a *ben Torah*. (Maharal) And although one may learn Torah, he is likely to forget it as well. But if he “works on himself” to acquire the character trait of humility, G-d will give him the Torah as a gift, and he will not forget what he learns. (Maharsha)

• Nedarim 55a



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PARSHA Q&A ?

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

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

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Abarbanel

ON THE PARSHA

Pinchas

At the beginning of this *parsha* G-d grants two rewards to Pinchas for his zealousness in displaying vengeance for his G-d by killing Zimri and Cozbi who had brazenly cohabited in front of the entire congregation. It appears at first glance that both rewards were superfluous. The first, a covenant of peace, is a reward granted to all who avoid transgression. The second, the covenant of the priesthood, was already Pinchas' entitlement, since he was of the offspring of Aharon the Kohen.

First of all, as the son of Eliezer, son of Aharon the Kohen, Pinchas knew nothing of the sword and battle, and yet he single-handedly stood up and carried out G-d's vengeance, putting a halt to a plague which threatened to decimate the nation. That is to say, he took vengeance in a situation where G-d could have carried out the vengeance Himself. He also carried out the execution of the two individuals — one of whom was a prince of his own people — in the midst of the congregation, completely oblivious to any danger to himself.

Many felt that Pinchas was threatened by possible revenge from relatives of Zimri, and actually required a constant bodyguard. Additionally, having come into direct contact with death through the execution of Zimri and Cozbi, he might be disqualified from Divine service in the Tabernacle. As a result, it was publicized to the entire congregation that G-d would protect him from his enemies with a special covenant of peace, and not only would he not be disqualified from service in the Tabernacle but his descen-

dants would permanently merit the High Priesthood as well as long life. Standing up for the honor of G-d was such a momentous act on his part that he merited the most honorable service to G-d. In terms of the nation, his act served as an atonement for them, and the permanent priesthood would continue to serve as an atonement for the nation through the Divine Service in the Tabernacle and the Temple to follow. Many other commentators also support the idea that the High Priesthood remained with his descendants throughout both Temple periods.

After mentioning his rewards of the covenant of peace and the covenant of the priesthood, the Torah specifically mentions the names and importance of the two transgressors, to teach us the magnitude of Pinchas' act. Again, the covenant of peace would be with the blood avengers of Zimri's tribe, from whom Pinchas would be Divinely protected.

However, there would be no covenant of peace with the Midianites. They were to be totally destroyed. The actual command to go to war with Midianites is given later in Parshat Matot-Masei. Here the Torah is letting us know the extent of the enmity between *Bnei Yisrael* and Midian, which is the reason for the total destruction to follow. The Torah tells us that the Midianites harassed *Bnei Yisrael* with their conspiracies. That is to say, they maliciously conspired to destroy us through the matter of Ba'al Peor, the attempt to curse us through Bilaam and the brazen immorality of Cozbi, the daughter of one of Midian's most important leaders.

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Rav Bulman *zt"l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

UNDER OATH

From: Dennis

Dear Rabbi,
I often hear people use the phrase “bli neder” which I understand means something like “without an oath”. I’m confused as to why people say this, when it applies and when not. Not understanding this and trying to use the phrase myself has been awkward, so any light you could shed on this would spare me more embarrassment.
Thanks.

Dear Dennis,

Technically speaking, a *neder* is a very specific form of obligation, but is colloquially used to refer to all verbal commitments made using the various terminologies for oaths. The laws of the different forms of oaths are very complicated and beyond our scope. So I’ll discuss only the reason and customs behind the phrase “bli neder” used commonly in conversation, as you’ve heard.

A *neder* is the Hebrew word which is commonly used to refer to an oath that is binding and which obligates a person to do some deed, whereby abrogation of the *neder* makes one accountable by Heaven for not fulfilling that oath. Therefore, people take the possibility of speaking under oath and its consequences very seriously.

The basic idea is that our power of speech is so great that if we commit to do something as an oath, this promise is spiritually recorded and creates an obligation which hovers over a person until he fulfills his pledge. If he doesn’t, the obligation is exacted from him in the form of punishment.

Accordingly, the reasoning behind making the qualification “bli neder” is to exempt a person from any possible obligation or ensuing punishment for not keeping his word.

Let’s first explore cases where this qualification is not relevant in order to properly understand when saying “bli neder” is warranted.

Usually, expressing a willingness or commitment to do something mundane would not oblige a person to do it without the person’s verbally stating some term relating to oaths. So saying, for example, “I will go to the store” would not require a person to do so, nor would he be held accountable for not going. Saying “bli neder” in this type of scenario would be nonsense.

Conversely, actions which are either required as *mitzvot* or forbidden as *aveirot* are not subject to oaths at all (Y. D. 139:4, 6). In the case of a *mitzvah*, making a *neder* does not create any special obligation since he’s already obligated by the Torah, independent of the *neder*. Similarly, in the case of a prohibition, making an oath to sin, G-d forbid, cannot create an obligation to transgress since he’s prohibited a priori from sinning. So saying, “I will put on tefillin, bli neder” or “I will eat non-kosher food, bli neder” would also be nonsense. One may not qualify his obligations to G-d, neither toward observance nor transgression.

So when is saying “bli neder” appropriate?

When there is some non-obligatory, voluntary *mitzvah* aspect to his commitment. So, going back to the example of saying he’ll go to the store, if it’s in the context of helping someone, where there is a non-obligatory element of the *mitzvah* of *chesed*, one should qualify his pledge to go to the store with the phrase “bli neder” to indicate that his expression of goodwill should not be mistaken as a binding oath.

Similarly, if he makes a voluntary monetary pledge, or even if the pledge is required but the amount is not, for example when making an *aliya* to the Torah, a person should qualify the pledge by saying “bli neder” in order to avoid the consequences of his good word becoming obligatory as an oath.

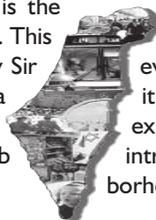
In summary, the general rule of thumb for using the phrase “bli neder” in conversation is that it doesn’t apply for mundane acts which don’t have some aspect of *mitzvah*, nor does it apply to situations of either explicit *mitzvot* or transgressions; rather it applies to something that has some voluntary element of *mitzvah* where verbally expressing a willingness to do it may be construed as an oath, such that saying “bli neder” negates that possibility.

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

THE WINDLESS WINDMILL

One of Jerusalem’s most famous historical sites is the large windmill in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood. This windmill was sent to Jerusalem from London by Sir Moses Montefiore to enable the Jews of Batei Yehuda Touro to grind their own wheat and earn a livelihood. This also enabled them to no longer be dependent on the Arab monopoly on wheat grinding.



Despite the good intentions behind its establishment, the windmill had a very short lifespan. It soon became evident that there was not enough of a steady wind where it stood. It could therefore, unfortunately, not live up to the expectations of those who saw it as the first attempt to introduce economic self-sufficiency into a Jerusalem neighborhood.

SHEMONEH ESREI: THE FIFTEENTH BLESSING - PART 2

“The offspring of David, Your servant, may You speedily cause to sprout forth, and strengthen him (Mashiach) through Your salvation, because we hope for Your salvation all day long.”

The Talmud states that one of the first questions a person is asked in Heaven after he dies is if he hoped for the redemption each day. Accordingly, one should have in mind when reciting this blessing that he is awaiting G-d’s salvation, since in doing so he will be able to answer “Yes” when asked this question by the Heavenly Court on his day of judgment. (Arizal) Although this question applies to the requirement of awaiting the *final* redemption, it is also beneficial for one to anticipate G-d’s salvation at all times from any misfortune, either present or future. (Shelah Hakadosh)

The prophets speak of great battles to be fought before the Davidic throne is restored to its former glory and sovereignty. We therefore pray that G-d strengthen the Machiach, a descendent of King David, in his battles. An alternative answer: The intent of the phrase “And strengthen *him*” refers to Mashiach ben Yosef. The prophets speak of two

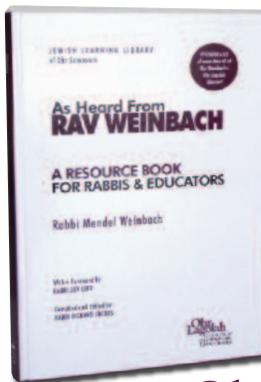
Mashiachs, one from the house of David and one from the house of Yosef. The Sages of the Talmud explain that Mashiach ben Yosef is destined to fall in battle. We are thus asking that G-d strengthen him in battle.

“Trust In G-d...”

It must be noted that the reason we are asking for G-d’s salvation is because we have hoped for it and anticipated it. This needs explanation. If we are deserving of redemption, it should come even if we do not hope for it; and if we do not deserve it based on our merit, why would hoping for it help since we don’t deserve it?

We have already been taught by our Sages that the very fact that we hope and anticipate G-d’s deliverance from exile gives us the merit of being worthy of redemption. It is for this reason that we ask for G-d to reestablish the Davidic throne, and even if we are lacking the needed merit, we declare how we await His salvation “all day long”. (Chida)

The fact that it is a mitzvah to await G-d’s return each day indicates just how important it is. G-d has promised us that He will deliver us from exile. Thus, by placing our hope in Him, trusting in His kindness and mercy — which are never-



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SHABBAT – PART 2

One idea behind the depth of the Shabbat is its resemblance to and reflection of the World-to-Come, as explained previously. Its laws echo this idea, since it means that just as one may only reap the benefits of one's actions from this world when one enters the World-to-Come, likewise, the only enjoyment that one obtains on Shabbat is due to his preparations beforehand.

Taking this relationship between Shabbat and the World-to-Come even further, we are faced with the following question: What is the meaning behind the halacha of allowing raw food to cook on Shabbat, an act ordinarily forbidden, as long as it was properly placed on a covered heat source from before Shabbat's commencement? How is this halacha portrayed in Shabbat's connection to the World-to-Come where seemingly no new changes can take place?

In order to answer the above question we first need to analyze a seemingly obscure Gemara about the judgment that takes place every year on Rosh Hashana. The Gemara says that on Rosh Hashana G-d opens up both the Books of the Living and the Books of the Dead for judgment. This statement of our Sages seems puzzling, as why would the Books of the Dead be opened for judgment? What new deeds have the dead performed for which they deserve an additional judgment?

We are taught that the actions of one's child can bring extra merits to the parents even after a parent's death. The reason for this is that since the parents brought the child into the world and furthermore directed the child to the correct path, they rightfully have a share in all the good deeds that their children will perform in the future. The same is true of a teacher who taught his students Torah and *mitzvot*. He too has a share in everything that his students will do, since in a way he was the catalyst to bring them about.

The Anaf Yosef (Berachot 18b s.v. *ela ben ish chai*) uses this principle when clarifying the Gemara that describes that the righteous in their death are called alive and the wicked when they are alive are called dead. Since the purpose of life in this world is performing *mitzvot*, a wicked person who misuses his gift of life by selfishly refraining from *mitzvah* observance is called dead. A righteous person, however, continues to acquire *mitzvot* even once he has left this world through what he has left behind. The Vilna Gaon explains that this is the meaning behind the statement from the Gemara: *Rabbi Chiya the son of Rav Ashi said in the name of*

Rav, the righteous have no rest, not in this world and not in the World-to-Come, as it says: they will go from strength to strength... (Berachot 64a). Since the righteous have affected many lives, and their actions have tremendous positive repercussions, they continue to rise in greatness even after they leave this world.

This idea further explains the Gemara that says that when one quotes words of Torah in the name of he who had originated this Torah thought (someone who had already passed on), the lips of the dead move in his grave (Yevamot 96b). The B'nei Yisaschar (M'amrei Chodesh Adar 3:6:14) elaborates that *mitzvot* may only be performed with a physical body implanted in this physical world. When someone performs the *mitzvah* of giving over words of Torah, and indeed gives the proper credit to the deceased scholar, it is as though the dead had performed the *mitzvah* with his own body; thus the idea of his lips moving in the grave.

Using the ideas above we can address the Gemara that says even the dead are judged on Rosh Hashana. Rabbi Aharon Kotler (Mishnat Rabbi Aharon p. 252) explains that while the dead have not performed any new actions during the previous year, they are judged every year for the results their actions have caused during the previous year. Thus, even though they cannot *do* any more *mitzvot* once they leave this world, they nevertheless can *gather mitzvot* through the influences they left behind.

We may now address the original question posed. One who leaves behind the six days of the week and enters into the holy day of Shabbat is compared to one who leaves this world and enters into the World-to-Come. While an individual may no longer actively perform any new *mitzvot* while in the World-to-Come, any ramifications from the *mitzvot* he had performed while alive will continue to flourish, and he can still obtain benefit for those *mitzvot* while in the World-to-Come. Similarly, a creative forbidden act that had been initiated from before the Shabbat began, like cooking, may continue to take effect even once the Shabbat has entered. Thus, even this halacha of Shabbat exactly mirrors the nature of the World-to-Come. May we all merit taking this lesson of the Shabbat to heart and leave as many good influences in this world as possible.

CHAIM LICHTENSTEIN

Riverdale, NY - NYU, BA in Accounting

The Bronx is a NYC borough with a reputation for drugs, gangs and violent crime. Most “nice” people stay away from it. However, there is a corner of the Bronx that is separated from the rest of the Bronx by water and bridges and is, in part, actually rustic and bucolic – with grand homes on vast green and wooded lots on the bluffs high above the Hudson River. This is Riverdale — home of a vibrant Orthodox Jewish community and the home of Chaim Lichtenstein and his family.

Chaim is the principal of a successful New York commercial real estate sales agency, LichtensteinRE.com. He is an owner of commercial and multifamily real estate in NYC and Florida, and has sold and helped finance almost one billion dollars’ worth of commercial real estate in the city. He finances real estate deals through another of his companies — DoctorMortgage.com. He is passionate about his business and in helping his clients realize their real estate investment dreams.

His journey to observance was an unusual one, even for Ohr Somayach. Chaim sees it as clear *hashgacha pratit* (Divine Providence). In the early 1990’s his father, Gedalia, who had been a successful businessman in New York,

became *frum* and came to Israel to study at Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. Chaim, who had recently graduated from NYU Stern School of Business with a major in accounting and a deep interest in real estate financing, went to visit him there in 1997. His father introduced him to Ohr Somayach and Chaim decided that he would stay for a few weeks to see what yeshiva was like.

He was interested enough to make a decision to return for six months of study at the Yeshiva. He returned a year later and was fascinated by the classes here. During that time he grew particularly close to Rabbi Akiva Tatz and Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb. Towards the end of his stay in Israel he was introduced to his future wife by Rebbitzin Sinclair, the wife of staff member Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair. They recently made a bar mitzvah for their oldest son Eli.

Chaim describes his life as the pursuit of *hashgacha*. “I try to include Hashem as my partner in everything I

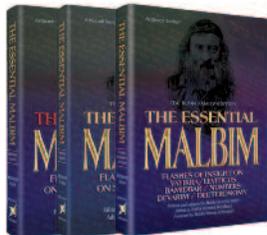
do. I am totally reliant on *hashgacha*.” A few years ago he made a *siyum* on *Shas*. He attributes whatever success he has had in learning to his wife who “pushed me out the door every morning to learn”. His *hakarat hatov* (gratitude) to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and to the Yeshiva that educated him knows no bounds.



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