

במחשבת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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Rosenbaum shlita**

Pinchos

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Parshas Pinchos

Pinchos Set the Yeitzer Tov Against the Yeitzer Hara/Zealotry Must be L'Sheim Shomayim/The Bris Atones for Sins/The Power of Temimus/ Forgiven Every Day/One Can Only Hurt his Friend if it Was So Decreed/A Leader Who is Part of the Nation/Hashem Wants to Hear Praises of His Nation/The Job of a Leader/Parnassah for the Sake of Torah/Mesiras Nefesh is Considered Like Bringing Korbanos/Learning Torah at Night is Mesiras Nefesh/Hashem Grants Him a "String of Chesed"/Serving Hashem With Humility/One Who Has Not Sinned Cannot Repent

פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן אַהֲרֹן הִפְקֵדוֹן הַשִּׁיב אֶת חֲמָתִי מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִנְיָאֵן
 אֶת קִנְיָאֵתִי בְּתוֹכֵם וְגו' (כה, יא)

Pinchos the son of Elazar the son of Aharon the Kohein turned back My anger from upon the children of Yisroel by his zealously avenging Me among them... (25:11)

**Pinchos Set the Yeitzer
 Tov Against the Yeitzer
 Hara:**

Rashi states: "By his avenging My vengeance, by his releasing the wrath that I should have released."

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy"ra explains this Rashi by

citing the Gemara (Brachos 5A) that says: "One should always angrily set his *yeitzer tov* upon his *yeitzer hara*, as is stated (Tehillim 4:5): 'Be angry, and do not sin'." He asks how *tzadikim* can make use of the *middah* of anger. This is a bad *middah*, so how can *tzadikim* have any connection to it?

He answers by quoting the later Gemara in Brachos (7A) that learns from the verse (Tehillim 7:12) that Hashem is “angry” for one second every day. *Tzadikim* can use the influence of this second to obtain the power of anger needed to set their *yeitzer tov* against their *yeitzer hara*.

Chazal (ibid) go on to learn from the *pasuk* (Bamidbor 23:8) that during all of the days that Bilaam tried to curse Klal Yisroel, Hashem did not become angry at all so that he would be unable to curse the nation during that second. Accordingly, during the time when Klal Yisroel sinned, they could not use the *middah* of anger to fight their *yeitzer hara*, which is what led to the downfall. Still and all, Pinchos pushed himself to find the anger needed to zealously oppose the sinners. Thus, he personally utilized the *middah*

of anger that Hashem would otherwise have used, even though Hashem did not use it during that time.

This is the intent of Rashi when he says that Pinchos used the anger that Hashem should have used. He was the one who made use of the *middah* of anger that Hashem usually uses in order to fight against the *yeitzer hara*.

Zealotry Must be L'Sheim Shomayim:

The Sema”k asks why the story of Pinchos’s zealotry is written at the end of Parshas Balak, but the reward he received is not written until the beginning of Parshas Pinchos. Why is a separation placed between the story and its reward?

He answers that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson

about *kana'us*. The reward for acts of zealotry is not given immediately. Rather, the person is first evaluated to determine if all of his intentions were *l'sheim*

shomayim, with no thoughts of personal gain at all. Only after it is determined that the person acted solely for the sake of Hashem is he rewarded.

וְהִיָּתָה לּוֹ וּלְיִלְדָיו אַחֲרָיו וּגּו' תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קָנָא לְאֱלֹהָיו וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
(כה, יג)

And it will be for you and your offspring after you... because he was zealous for his G-d and atoned for the children of Yisroel. (25:13)

The Bris Atones for Sins:

Sefer Agra D'Pirka (Ois 146) quotes Rav Shlomo of Karlin *zy" a* as quoting a Medrash that says that When Hashem commanded Eliyahu Hanavi to attend every *bris milah*, Eliyahu said: "You know that I act with passion to sanctify Your name. If the father at the bris is a sinful person, I won't be able to stand being there!" Hashem, therefore, promised him that the father of the baby would be forgiven of his sins and would be cleansed of all his *aveiros!*

Eliyahu continued, "What if the mohel is a sinful person"?

Hashem then promised that the mohel would also be forgiven for his sins.

Eliyahu persisted, "What if one of those in attendance is sinful?"

Hashem finally promised that He would forgive anyone who attends a bris of all of their sins.

The Agra D'Pirka adds that this is hinted at in the verse (ibid:13): "Because he was passionate for Hashem and

atoned for *bnei Yisroel*.” This indicates that because he was a passionate person, and could not stand being in the presence of sinners, **all of *bnei Yisroel* had to be forgiven.**

The Power of Temimus:

In this week’s Parshah, the Torah praises Pinchos for the action he took to remove Hashem’s anger from Klal Yisroel. However, on many occasions, the Baal Shem Tov *zy”a* revealed to his students that harsh decrees against the nation had been cancelled due to the simple people who serve Hashem with *temimus*.

It is related that the Besh”t once saw that a harsh decree had been issued in Shomayim against Klal Yisroel. He gathered his students and told them to fast, but this did not help to annul the decree. He then gathered all of

the men and women together to daven to Hashem and say Tehillim to avert the decree. However, he still saw that this too did not help. Shortly thereafter, he turned to his student, Rav Nachman of Horodenka *zy”a*, and happily said that the decree had been cancelled. When he made this announcement, all of the *talmidim* rejoiced.

A short time later, the Besh”t told his *talmidim* that the *gezeirah* had been annulled due to one simple woman. This woman did not know how to read, and as everyone was saying Tehillim and crying out loud, she stood in the Ezras Nashim and lifted her eyes towards the Heavens. She declared, “Ribono Shel Olam. You are our Father and we are Your children. Your children are crying out to you. I Have five children. When they cry, I can’t stand to hear their sad

voices... You have many children who are crying. Even if Your heart is made of stone, you have to hear to listen. Father, listen to your children!”

These words, said with such *temimus*, broke through the Heavens and succeeded in cancelling the decree.

On another occasion, it became known to the Besh”t that a *gezeirah* had been issued in Shomayim to destroy a certain city. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he davened excessively to save them. However, during Tefilas Ne’ilah, his students could tell that the decree had not been rescinded, so they too began to exert themselves to cry out to Hashem as much as they could. When the rest of the assemblage saw how much the Besh”t and his students were crying, they understood that something was wrong, so they joined them. Nighttime

arrived, but the people continued to cry. They recognized that they were facing something serious, and the walls shook from their screams.

Present at that time was a simple villager who was accustomed to coming to the Besh”t’s *bais medrash* for the Yomim Noraim. Since he was an ignorant, unlearned man, he didn’t realize that something out-of-the-ordinary was occurring. He just stood there quietly and watched everyone screaming. Since he was a farmer, he was used to hearing the sounds of different animals. His favorite sound was that of the rooster. When he heard everyone else screaming, he got very sad and he let out a loud imitation of a chicken. He cried, “Kukariku! G-d have mercy!”

Everyone was shocked to hear a chicken noise, and some people even ran over to tell the man to

quiet down, but he told them, “I am also a Jew. Your G-d is also my G-d.” So they left him alone.

A few minutes later, the Baal Shem Tov and his students finished the Shemonah Esrei of Neilah, and the Besh”t’s face was shining with joy. He recited Chazaras Hashatz with much happiness and emotion.

At the *seudah* of Motzoei Yom Kippur, he told his *talmidim* about the decree against the city. He said that as he davened for it to be annulled, he realized that there also was a complaint in Shomayim against him. The prosecuting angels came with

the claim that he was settling Jews in small villages amongst the gentiles, and they were in danger of learning from their neighbors’ ways. It was decided that the spiritual level of these people should be checked out. In the beginning, things were not looking good until, suddenly, the sounds of this man’s prayer, uttered with extreme *temimus*, were heard in Heaven. They heard him scream, “**Kukariku! Father in Heaven, have mercy!**” **And this prayer was a source of much Divine pleasure and it annulled all of the complaints against Klal Yisroel.**

וְאָמַרְתָּ לָהֶם זֶה הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרִיבוּ לָהּ כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם שְׁנַיִם
 לַיּוֹם עֶלְיָה תְּמִיד, אֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֶּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה
 בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים (כת, ג-ד)

And you shall say to them: This is the fire offering which you shall offer to Hashem: two unblemished lambs in their first year each day as a Olah Tamid. The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon. (28:3-4)

Forgiven Every Day:

Rav Yitzchok of Drohovitch zy”a (the father of the Magid of Zlotchov zy”a) explained these *pesukim* as follows (quoted in Ginzei Tzadikim, Parshas Pinchas):

Many people keep the anger and hatred they have towards their friends within them until erev Yom Kippur, when everyone asks each other forgiveness. This is improper. Rather, every night before one goes to sleep, he should forgive anyone who caused him pain during the day. If someone causes his friend pain at night, he should be forgiven before the morning. One should certainly not go a full year without forgiving his friend, as if one does so, he transgresses the prohibition to hate one’s brother in his heart (Vayikroh 19:17).

Accordingly, the *pasuk* can be

understood to be saying: “And you shall say: This is the offering you shall offer to Hashem” – this is how you can bring pleasure to Hashem. “*Kevasim bnei shana temimah*” (two unblemished lambs in the first year)– the word “*kevasim*” (lambs) indicates “*kivush*”, hiddenness. This is a hint that one should not keep hidden within him any anger or hatred towards someone else for a “*shana temimah*” (a full year), until erev Yom Kippur. Rather, “*shnayim layom*” (two each day) – two times each day, a person should make sure to forgive those who harmed him. “*Es hakeves echad ta’aseh baboker*” (one sheep should be done in the morning) – if one has anger towards his friend in his heart at night, he should rectify it in the morning by forgiving him. “*V’es hakeves hasheini ta’aseh bein ha’arbayim*” (and the second sheep shall be done in afternoon) – and if one has anger towards

his friend during the day, he should rectify it before going to sleep at night.

One Can Only Hurt his Friend if it Was So Decreed:

In order for one to be able to forgive his friends every day for harm they caused him, he must truly believe that no one can raise a finger to touch anyone else unless Hashem wanted it to happen. If one believes this, he will have no reason to be angry at his friend, as he will understand that he is only Hashem's messenger.

The Baal Hatanya writes in Igeres Hakodesh: "Even if a person who has free will hits someone and is liable by monetary law to pay for the damages, the one damaged

should know that it was already decreed upon him in Shomayim that this would happen, and Hashem has many messengers."

The Baal Hatanya continues: "If one hates his friend for harming him, even if he did all the bad things in the world to him, it is '*sinas chinam*' because everything comes from Hashem and his friend is only His messenger. Therefore, one should accept whatever occurs with love and joy and as an atonement for his sins. If one does not have this type of *emunah* that Hashem is in charge of every detail of this world, it is like he literally serves idols. This can be compared to a baby who falls on the ground, and his father hits the ground to get back at it for hurting his child."

יִפְקֹד ה' אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכֹל בְּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה וּגו' (כז, טז)

May Hashem, the G-d of spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation.
(27:16)

A Leader Who is Part of the Nation:

The Kotzker Rebbe zy"א explains that this *pasuk* is teaching us the essence of a Jewish leader. He must be "a man over the congregation". He is not meant to be an angel who is above and apart from the people. Rather, he should be "a man" who is part of his people and lives amongst them, but he also has to be "over the congregation", in the sense that he must be of a stature that they can respect.

Hashem Wants to Hear Praises of His Nation:

Leaders of the congregation are not the only ones who have the ability to provide benefit for

the public. Rather, every Yid can help others. One can do this by speaking positively about his fellow Jews, as whenever one praises members of Klal Yisroel, Hashem is very pleased and He accepts these words.

The Rashab of Lubavitch zy"א would say that people think that taking "*pidyonos*" is a hard job that only a Rebbe can do. The truth is, however, that any Jew can accomplish the same thing by genuinely speaking positively about his friend. On Rosh Hashanah, hundreds of Heavenly angels eagerly wait for Jews to praise their friends, as they know that Hashem desires such praises of His children just as much as He desires the *tefilllos* of *tzadikim*.

The Job of a Leader:

The Kedushas Levi writes that one can defend Klal Yisroel for not obeying Hashem at all times like angels do by noting that they are busy earning a living. He says that Avrohom Avina was a man of *chesed* and defended Klal Yisroel in this way. Therefore, when he was visited by angels, he gave them food to eat in order to show them that human beings must eat every day so that they would come to understand this and they would not complain against Klal Yisroel.

Accordingly, Moshe Rabenu spoke to Hashem “the G-d of all flesh”, meaning that he said that man is merely flesh and blood and he must work for a living. Therefore, he may not serve Him perfectly at all times. He asked to appoint a leader over the nation who would defend them in this way. Just like He understands this and defends

Klal Yisroel in this way, Moshe asked for them to have leaders who do the same.

Parnassah for the Sake of Torah:

Sefer Ateres Yeshua uses this idea to explain the next words of *pasuk*: “Who will go forth before them and come before them.”

He cites the Alshich Hakadosh on the words of Chazal (*Avos* 3:17): “If there is no flour, there is no Torah. If there is no Torah, there is no flour.” The Alshich says that Hashem first said to Klal Yisroel that if there is no Torah, there can be no livelihood. Therefore, they must first learn Torah and He will then provide them with *parnassah*. Klal Yisroel retorted that if there is no livelihood, there can be no Torah. Therefore, He should first grant them *parnassah* and they will then learn Torah.

The job of *tzadikim* is to convince Hashem to first send *parnassah*. This is seen from the verse (Devarim 33:38) that states: “Zevulun will rejoice in his goings and Yissochor in his tents.” Zevulun, who represents *parnassah*, must first provide the livelihood before Yissochor, who represents Torah, can sit and learn.

Moshe asked Hashem to appoint leaders like this, “who go and come”, meaning that they make sure that Klal Yisroel has *parnassah* so that they can sit and learn. (The word “go” symbolizes *parnassah*, as it is used for Zevulun in the

aforementioned verse, and the word “come” symbolizes coming into the tents of Torah. We thus see from this verse that leaders first should take care of *parnassah* before the people go to learn Torah.)

In this vein, the Ziditchoiver Rebbe zy”a (quoted in Sefer Peer Yitzchok) would explain the words we recite in the tefillah of Ana B’Koach: “*Barchein tahareim*” (bless them, purify them). **We first ask Hashem to bless them with an abundance of *parnassah*, and then it will be possible to purify them, as they will not be worried about their livelihood.**

וַתִּקְרַבְנָה בָּנוֹת צֶלְפַחַד וְגו' (כו, א)

And the daughters of Tzelafchad came close. (27:1)

Mesiras Nefesh is Considered Like Bringing Korbanos:

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that the most important part of

bringing *korbanos* is the *mesiras nefesh* one has when he brings them. This is seen from the *pasuk* (Bereishis 4:4) that says: “And Hevel brought also he

from the first of his sheep.” This can be understood to mean that Hevel “brought himself” as a *korban*, meaning that he was *moser nefesh*.

Hashem doesn't merely desire animal sacrifices. He desires the *ratzon* of the person bringing it. This is also seen from the verse (Bereishis 29:39): “This you shall do for Hashem in your appointed times, besides for your voluntary offerings.” This can be understood to mean that the *korbanos* themselves are one thing, but the main thing is the *mesiras nefesh* that one voluntarily exerts to bring an offering for Hashem.

With this in mind, he explains the *pasuk* as follows: “And the daughters of Tzelafchad came close... and they stood before Moshe...” This can be translated to mean that they brought themselves close with *mesiras nefesh* for Moshe and Klal

Yisroel.

This also explains the *pasuk* in Tehillim (106:3): “And Pinchos stood and he prayed.” This means that he stood with *mesiras nefesh* before Hashem. And this is how all *tzadikim* daven and serve Hashem. Accordingly, Hashem answered “*kein bnos Tzelafchad*”, meaning that the way that the daughters of Tzelafchad acted is the proper and effective way to draw close to Him on behalf of Klal Yisroel.

Learning Torah at Night is Mesiras Nefesh:

We may add that learning Torah at night is also a form of *mesiras nefesh*.

The Sefer Charedim writes: “Your children are holy amongst the nations. They are *moser nefesh* like Olos and Shelamim for Your desire to remove sleep

from their fluttering eyes.” The Yitav Panim (Or Hamakif, Ois 12) explains that **when one pushes away sleep in order to learn Torah, it is a form of *mesiras nefesh***, as Rashi states (Chulin 120A) that the word “*nefesh*” connotes something the body desires. When one pushes away such desires for the sake of Hashem, it is *mesiras nefesh*.

Hashem Grants Him a “String of Chesed”:

My ancestor, Rav Mordchele of Nadvorna *zy”a* once met a man who served Hashem privately and with humility. He sensed that the man was worried about the fact that no one knew about his *limud haTorah* and that he was getting no respect as a result of it. He told him that Chazal say (Beitzah 15B) that Hashem tells us, “Borrow on my account and I will pay you back.”

He explained this statement by citing the Gemara (Chagigah 12B) that says: “If one learns Torah at night, a ‘string of *chesed*’ is placed upon him by day.”

Accordingly, the Gemara is saying: **“Borrow on my account” – connect to me and become close to me in a private way. “And I will repay you” – and I will reveal Myself to you.**

In other words, Hashem promises to grant “a string of kindness” to those who “borrow on His account” by not publicizing their Torah and good deeds.

Serving Hashem With Humility:

One should bear in mind that the greatness of serving Hashem privately is when one doesn’t expect glory or honor for his

avodas Hashem.

There once was a *chasid* who had a good friend. The two eventually parted ways and didn't see each other for a long time. When they met after a lengthy separation, they were very happy to see each other. However, the *chasid* realized that something was bothering his friend. When he asked him how he was faring, his friend said, "Everything is fine. I am not lacking anything."

He continued to ask, "Are you healthy and well? Is your family doing well? Do you have *parnassah*? If everything is fine, why do you look so nervous?"

The friend answered, "I always wanted to be a 'something'. I always wanted people to recognize me so that I could influence others, but this never happened. I feel like I am nothing!"

The *chasid* replied, "**I envy you. I wish I could be in your place. I always wanted to be a nothing, but I keep feeling like I am a something. But you are so lucky that you merited to be a nothing!**"

One Who Has Not Sinned Cannot Repent:

One of the *mashpi'im* of Lubavitch said: There are two ways to rectify one's past sins – either by doing full *teshuva* or by giving *tzedakah*. If one cannot fast, he should give *tzedakah*. If one cannot give *tzedakah*, he should fast. If one can't do either of those things, he should never sin!



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