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THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

PARSHA INSIGHTS

WHEN BROKEN IS WHOLE

“I am giving him My covenant of peace” (25:12)

“Nothing is as whole as a broken heart.” Thus wrote the *Kotzke Rebbe*. Nothing is as complete in its devotion to the Creator as a contrite spirit.

When we see ourselves as perfected, as completed, then we are a million miles from Hashem because we have made ourselves the center of our own illusory, perfect universe. When our hearts are broken and our spirits humbled, it is then that we are able to come close to our Father in Heaven.

If you look in a Sefer Torah, you will see that when the Torah writes about Pinchas, “I (Hashem) am giving him My covenant of *shalom*,” the letter *vav* in the word *shalom* is broken in the middle. The letter *vav* is like a person. It is a straight vertical line. It looks like someone standing upright. The numerical equivalent of *vav* is six. Man was created on the sixth day.

The letter *vav* is ‘broken.’ This hints to us that in order to be truly *shalem* (whole), a person has to be ‘broken’ — contrite and humble in spirit.

KEEPING UP WITH THE GOLDBERGS

“...because he showed zealotness for His G-d” (25:13)

Why are the Ten Commandments written in the singular? If they were given to the Jewish People as a whole, shouldn't they be written in the plural?

The Ten Commandments are written in the singular so that we should

feel they were given to each one of us alone. Each person is responsible for keeping the Torah, no matter what others are doing.

In life, there is a great temptation to set our level of self-expectation by the standards of other people. We look around us and think: “Well, Mr. Goldberg gives only \$10,000 to charity, and he earns the same as me. Why should I be *frumer* (more pious) than him?”

The Ten Commandments were

“Nothing is as whole as a broken heart.”

written in the singular to teach us that we shouldn't look at what others are doing — or not doing.

Pinchas saw Moshe and Aaron and the seventy elders standing and watching Zimri committing a grave sin, and none of them lifted a finger. He could certainly have said to himself, “Moshe and Aaron aren't doing anything. Why should I be *frumer* than them?”

However, Pinchas picked up his spear and avenged the honor of Heaven without a second thought and without reference to what others were doing or not doing.

It is for this reason that the Torah writes “he showed zealotness for his G-d.” Pinchas acted as if Hashem was

his G-d, and that there was no one else in the world to do the job.

WAR AND PEACE

“...My covenant of peace” (25:12)

Pinchas' reward for avenging the honor of Heaven by executing Zimri and Kozbi was “My covenant of peace.”

Isn't it ironic that the reward for a violent killing should be a “covenant of peace”?

The Hebrew word “*shalom*” means more than just peace; it also denotes completeness and perfection. Any peace which lacks completeness and perfection is not really peace.

If something is perfect, it means that it can only be perfect in *one* way — the way it is. If it could also be perfect in another form, then the perfection itself is lacking.

There can only be One Completeness and One Perfection, and thus there can only be One real Peace — Hashem's peace, for only “He who makes peace in His exalted realms, He will make peace for us and for all of Israel.”

Appeasement is not peace and never leads to peace. However, an act of zealotness divorced of pure intentions can be a crime in itself. For this reason the Torah points out that Pinchas acted “for his G-d” — i.e., he had no motivation whatsoever other than to do the will of the Almighty. Only when our intentions are *entirely* pure can zealotness lead to “a covenant of peace.”

Sources:

When Broken Is Whole - Rabbi Menachem Zvi Goldbaum, *Darchoi Mussar*, Moser Derech
Keeping Up With The Goldbergs - Chomas Aish
War And Peace - Ohr Yoel

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Hashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action — executing *Zimri* and the Midianite princess *Kozbi*. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the *Midianim* because they allured the Jewish People to sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each of the Tribes. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the

Land of Israel to the *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the families of the Levites is recorded. The daughters of *Tzlofchad* file a claim with Moshe: In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem what the ruling is in this case, and Hashem tells him that the daughters' claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of an inheritance. Hashem tells Moshe to ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks Hashem to designate the subsequent leader of the people, and Hashem 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 *Beis Hamikdash*.

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FATHERLY ADVICE

*Tidbits From the 'Ethics of the Fathers'
Traditionally Studied on Summer Sabbaths*

*WHAT IS THE PROPER PATH FOR A PERSON TO FOLLOW?
TO CONSIDER THE FUTURE IMPLICATION OF HIS ACTIONS.
WHAT IS THE WRONG PATH WHICH A PERSON MUST AVOID?*

TO BE A BORROWER WHO DOES NOT REPAY.

Rabbi Shimon, Avos 2:9

In response to the challenge of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, four of his five great disciples offered a positive approach as the proper path and its opposite as the wrong path. (Good heart — evil heart; good friend — evil friend, etc.) Only Rabbi Shimon broke this pattern. He did not suggest that one who fails to

anticipate the consequences of his actions will necessarily meet with failure, since there is a possibility that he will be capable of improvising a solution. But one who loses his credit by failing to repay debts is definitely doomed, because he will find no one to lend him money in his moment of abject need.

לע"נ
ר' יהודה בן ר' דוד ז"ל
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why does the Torah identify Kozbi bas Tzur?
3. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
4. To which family name were the letters 'yud' and 'hey' not added? Why not?
5. The Torah states that Korach and his congregation became a sign. What do they signify?
6. Based on the census taken at the beginning of the forty years and the one at the end, which tribe shows the greatest decrease in number?
7. In *Bereishis* 35:18, Rachel named her younger son Ben Oni (my unfortunate son). How was her prophecy fulfilled?
8. How long did it take to *conquer* the Land? How long to *divide* the Land?
9. Two brothers come out of Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son, Ploni. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will Ploni actually receive?
10. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
11. What trait did the daughters of Tzlofchad exhibit that was exhibited by their ancestor Yosef?
12. Tzlofchad died because of his own sin. What was it?
13. Why didn't Moshe know what to answer the daughters of Tzlofchad?
14. When asking Hashem to appoint a successor, why did Moshe address Him as, "Hashem of the spirits of all flesh"?
15. Moshe "put some of his glory" upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
16. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
17. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
18. Why is Shavuot called *Yom HaBikkurim* (the day of the first fruits)?
19. What is the symbolic meaning of the seventy bullocks offered on Succos?
20. To whom did the lambs offered on Succos allude?

BONUS QUESTION?

"...Behold I give him My covenant of peace. It will be for him and his offspring after him an everlasting Kehuna covenant..." Why was Pinchas rewarded for his deed in this world? Isn't it a Torah principle that the reward for *mitzvos* is in the World to Come?

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

"On the Shabbos day, two flawless yearling sheep..." (28:9)

Why two sheep? One corresponds to the command "Remember the Shabbos Day" and one corresponds to the command "Keep the Shabbos day."

HAFTORAH: YIRMIAHU 1:1-2:3

The three Haftorahs which are read in the Three Weeks (between 17th Tammuz and 9th Av) are called the "three of affliction." They detail the dire consequences that will befall Israel if they the Jewish People do not return to Hashem. Nevertheless, each of these three Haftorahs end on a note of optimism, expressing the confidence that Hashem never forgets His people even in the deepest and darkest exile.

BAD COMPANY

"Thus says Hashem: 'I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown.' Israel is sacred to Hashem, the first of his grain; all who devour him shall bear his guilt, evil shall come upon them — the word of Hashem." (2:2,3)

Once there was a sensitive lad, who spent all his days in study and refining his character. While still at a tender age, he was captured by bandits and forced to live amongst them. At first, he was repulsed by

their coarseness, and clung to his original demeanor. However, as the weeks lengthened into years and no sign of rescue came, slowly but surely he began to degenerate to the level of his captors, and eventually he became indistinguishable from them.

When the Jewish People are finally redeemed from exile, the nations that have oppressed them will be held to account, not just for their own misdeeds against Israel, but also for Israel's transgressions; for had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert.

That is the meaning of these verses: "I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown." I remember, says Hashem, how you were when you followed after Me through the wilderness, before you were exiled amongst the nations. At your root you are holy, and if you have sinned it is because of the atmosphere you have imbibed during the long night of exile.

• Kochav M'Yaakov in *Mayana shel Torah*

WEEKLY DAF

NIDDAH 4 - 10

THE MYSTERY OF GALILEE

“The Torah scholars in Galilee guard the ritual purity of their wines and oils.”

This historical observation of the Sage Ulla arouses wonder for two reasons. First of all, what purpose was there for guarding the ritual purity of these items in the days of Ulla, centuries after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* where ritually pure wine and oil were required for libations and meal offerings? This same question applies to the Sage Rebbie in our Gemara who issued a ruling in a case of ritual purity even though he too lived at a time when there was no *Beis Hamikdash*.

The answer to this question is that both in the days of Rebbie, and later in the days of Ulla, there were pious sages in Galilee who lived with the hope that Mashiach would come at any moment and the *Beis Hamikdash* would be rebuilt. They therefore wished to have immediately available the wine and oil necessary for the sacred service.

Another source of wonder is

discussed in *Mesechta Chagigah* (28a). During the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* the wines and oils of Galilee were not accepted for use on the altar because a stretch of foreign land ran between Galilee and Judea in which Jerusalem was located. Since the Sages had decreed a state of impurity on any land which did not have the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael*, any wine and oil which passed over this stretch would become contaminated and unfit for use on the altar. What then was the purpose of those pious scholars in Galilee guarding the purity of their produce?

The answer to this second question is that they guarded the purity of their wine and oil and stored them in anticipation that the Prophet Eliyahu would reveal to them a passage from Galilee to Judea. This passage would indeed have the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* so that their precious wares could safely be brought to the rebuilt *Beis Hamikdash*.

• *Niddah 6b*

THE GREAT PARADOX

“Who can produce purity from

impurity if not the One?”

This is the way *Iyov* (14:4) described the wondrous workings of the Creator which sometimes appear so paradoxical to human understanding.

The Sages interpret the paradox of *Iyov* in a number of different ways.

Rabbi Yochanan suggests that *Iyov* is referring to male's seed, which makes one impure, but produces a human who is pure.

Rabbi Elazar, however, relates *Iyov's* paradox to the classical paradox of the Red Heifer, of which the wisest of men, King Solomon, declared (*Koheles* 7:23): “I thought that I would understand it but it remained remote from me.” A Jew who became impure because of contact with the dead could become pure again by having a solution of red heifer, ashes and spring water sprinkled on him. If someone touched or carried this sprinkling solution, not for the purpose of sprinkling it on an impure person, then he became impure. But if he sprinkled it on an impure person, he purified him and remained pure himself.

Only the One Above could, in His Divine wisdom, allow purity to emanate from impurity.

• *Niddah 9a*

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ASK the RABBI

CURSES!

Shira Aliza Phillips
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from Brooklyn, New York wrote:

Dear Rabbi,
If you are cursed by somebody will it really have an effect? I know that when Bilaam cursed people it really worked, but is this still true today? Will it work if the person who utters the curse is not a Talmid Chacham [Torah Scholar]? I'm asking because almost exactly one year ago, the following happened to me: A classmate made a face at me, I made one back at him, he made a disparaging comment about my maturity and I replied that he wasn't all that mature himself. He then told me, "You'll pay for this." On my way down to my locker after that very class, ironically, while asking him exactly how he was going to make me pay, I fell down the stairs and twisted my ankle badly. I was on crutches for two weeks. Are these two things correlated? Also, if you curse someone (with swear words, not like "May you grow like an onion, with your head in the ground") will that have any effect on the person? I personally have never used a swear word in my life, but a few classmates tell me that that's weird and that cursing is normal. Are there any sources in the Torah about either kind of cursing? Eagerly awaiting your reply.

Dear Shira Aliza Phillips,

Hashem created us with a very powerful gift that can have tremendous impact. When we use our mouths for good, to pray, to learn Torah, or to cheer someone up, we bring spiritual illumination to the world.

However, when we use our mouths to gossip, dispute, insult, or curse, then we spread spiritual pollution in the world.

It is a Torah prohibition to curse a fellow Jew. The root of this prohibition is to avoid causing injury with the power Hashem put into our mouths. Even though we have no ability to know exactly how a curse will effect the other person or how much power we personally have to utter a curse, however, even a simple person might be able to bring suffering and pain through a curse.

I don't think you need to correlate your ankle injury with your classmate's 'curse.' Let's understand rather that the juxtaposition of events was a Heavenly hint that the power of the mouth is something we have to relate to and work on.

As for 'curse words,' they are certainly forbidden. "One should always speak with refined language," says the Talmud. When possible, the Sages avoided saying even such words as 'defiled,' choosing 'not pure' instead. They even avoided saying the names of non-kosher animals.

Suppose the Queen of England asked you to describe the odor of week-old fish. Would you say "Very displeasing, your majesty", or would you say "Yuch! Disgusting!" The way you speak to a queen is the way you should always speak. It shows what type of person you are, and what type

of person you will become.

Once, in Temple times, a certain *kohen* made a disparaging remark about the size of the sacrificial portion he received. "I only got a piece the size of a lizard's tail." Because he used a word for a non-kosher animal in connection with a holy offering, he aroused the suspicion of the Sages. They checked into his ancestry and discovered that his priestly lineage was indeed invalid, that his birth was the result of a prohibited relationship and that he was unfit to serve in the Temple.

Although 'curse words' may be common, so are mosquitoes! You should avoid both. One of the most difficult trials in life is doing that which is right when those around you are not. Keep up the good work!

Sources:

- Leviticus 19:14, Exodus 22:27
- Sefer HaChinuch 231
- Talmud, Tractate Pesachim 3a
- Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 33a

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked:

What holiday addition to the 'grace after meals' is it that most people don't say and hope they never have to?

Answer: *Ya'aleh Veyavo* for Yom Kippur. If a sick person needs to eat on Yom Kippur, he adds the *ya'aleh veyavo* insertion into the 'grace after meals' and mentions Yom Kippur. Even sick people rarely say this, because — if they can — they always try to eat small amounts which don't require 'grace after meals.' Good health to everyone!

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 618:10

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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 - The *Kehuna* was given to Aaron and his sons, and to their descendants who were born after they were anointed. Pinchas was born prior to the anointing.
2. 25:15 - To show the hatred of the Midianites for the Jewish People; that they disgraced their princess in order to cause them to sin.
3. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
4. 26:5 - *Yimnah*, because the name *Yimnah* already has it's own 'yud' and 'hey' at the beginning and end.
5. 26:10 - They are a reminder that the *Kehuna* was given forever to Aaron and his descendants, and that no non-*kohen* should ever dispute this right.
6. 26:13 - Shimon.
7. 26:24 - Binyamin had ten sons, only five of whose descendants entered *Eretz Yisrael*. Also, in *Sefer Shoftim* 20:35, nearly the entire Tribe of Binyamin was destroyed in the incident of *Pilegish b'Givah*.
8. 26:53 - Seven years to conquer, and seven years to divide.
9. 26:55 - Two portions.
10. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim* only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
11. 27:1 - Love for the Land of Israel.
12. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva said that he was the one who gathered sticks on Shabbos. Rabbi Shimon said that he was among those who attempted to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
13. 27:5 - Moshe was being punished for speaking haughtily and saying to the judges, "A case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me" (*Devarim* 1:17). Also, because the daughters of Tzlofchad merited that a portion of the Torah should be written because of them.
14. 27:16 - He was asking Hashem, who understands the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person according to that person's nature.
15. 27:20 - That Yehoshua's skin also shone. Moshe's face beamed like the sun, Yehoshua's face beamed like the moon.
16. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the western side of the slaughtering area, and the evening offering on the eastern side.
17. 28:15 - For ritual defilement of the Sanctuary or its vessels, of which no one is cognizant.
18. 28:26 - Two loaves of bread were brought as an offering on Shavuot. They were the first of the wheat-offerings brought from the new grain.
19. 29:18 - They allude to the seventy nations of the world.
20. 29:18 - To the Jewish People.

BONUS ANSWER!

True, the entire reward for *mitzvos* remains for the World to Come. However, *mitzvos* which involve acts of kindness earn 'dividends' in this world as well. Pinchas's act was an act of kindness because through it he stopped the plague that was decimating the Jewish People.

• The Steipler Rav in *Birchas Peretz*

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

RAMBAN

26:57	Counting the <i>Levi'im</i>
27:9	Inheritance
28:2	The Daily Offerings
7:13	Gifts of the <i>Nesi'im</i>

SEFER HACHINUCH

400	Inheritance
401	The Daily Sacrifices
405	<i>Shofar</i>

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