

## Rabbi Elchanan Shoff

### PARSHAS PINCHAS

#### Parshas Pinchas and the 3 Weeks

Rabbi Chaim Palagi (in *Amudei Chaim, Amud Haavodah* 11) explains why Parshas Pinchas is always read in the beginning of the 3 weeks between the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz and the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av. He cites the work *Sefer HaMiddos (Erech Hamtakas Din, 2:4)* who writes that it is a *segulah* to be saved from idolators and be successful in litigation with them for one to read the passages in Parshas Pinchas concerning the daily sacrifices and the special *mussaf* sacrifices for each holiday. Now, during the 3 Weeks, we say that “When Av has entered, we lessen our happiness” (*Taanis* 26b) and if a Jew has litigation with an idolater he should try to delay it until after Tisha B’Av, this is because this time of the year is especially ominous in terms of the Jews’ relationships with non-Jews. Accordingly, in order to somewhat counteract the effect of these weeks, we always read Parshas Pinchas in the beginning of the three weeks because it includes the passages about the daily sacrifices and the special *mussaf* sacrifices which serves to protect us in some ways.

#### Pinchas’s Lineage

**Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen (Num. 25:11).** Elsewhere, the Torah tells us that Elazar married a daughter of Putiel (another name for Yisro) and she begat Pinchas (Ex. 6:25). Based on that, Rashi (here) explains that the Torah felt the need to detail Pinchas’ lineage all the way to Aharon because some elements of the Jewish People had been mocking him. They said, “Look at this son of Puti whose maternal grandfather [Yisro] would fatten (*mifatem*) cows for idolatrous purposes, and he went and killed the prince of a tribe” (*Sanhedrin* 82a). In order to defend Pinchas’s lineage, the Torah makes a point of stating that he was Aharon’s grandson.

When the Torah reports about the Jewish bachelors going to fornicate with the Midianite women and especially about Zimri going to publicly fornicate with Kozbi, the Bible relates about the Jewish People as a whole “and they were crying” (Num. 25:6). Ibn Ezra explains that “and they were crying” means that they were praying to Hashem. The *Yalkut HaGershuni* (end of Parshas Balak) explains in the name of Rabbi Moshe Greenwald (Rav of Chust) that this comes to teach us an important lesson: In many situations, the best thing a person can do is get up and pray to Hashem with the hope that He will fix the situation. However, when a father sees his son deviating from the proper path that is not the appropriate time for him to just give up and pray to Hashem that everything will be correct. As a father, he still has the responsibility to educate his child and train him to follow the right path. The father cannot just take the easy path and just pray without doing anything else.

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Accordingly, he explains that when the Jewish People saw their youngsters going to the Midianite women to fornicate with them, they should have taken a sword or some other weapon and forcibly corrected these youngsters' mistakes and teach them what they should really be doing. Instead, the Jewish People abdicated that responsibility and just prayed (i.e. "they were crying") that the youngster correct themselves.

This was the situation until Pinchas came along. He took a spear and meted out punishment by killing Zimri and showing the Jewish bachelors in a harsh way that fornicating with the Midianite women was unacceptable. In doing so, Pinchas relayed the message that simply praying in this case is not enough; something more concrete had to be done.

In response, the Jewish People felt the need to defend their actions (or inaction) by belittling Pinchas. They argued that for someone like Pinchas prayer would not be enough to deal with this type of situation, but for them, prayer is a perfectly legitimate response. They supported this argument by pointing to Pinchas's idolatrous lineage and the fact that his maternal grandfather had once been an idolatrous priest. Because of this tainted lineage, Pinchas's power of prayer was weaker than the rest of the Jews', so Pinchas could not just hope and pray to fix the situation, he had to do something about it, but they how had a stronger power of prayer were justified in simply praying (i.e. "crying") in response to the situation without actually doing anything about it. This idea is based on the fact that the Torah earlier reports that when Yitzchak and Rivkah prayed together that Hashem grant them a child, He listened to Yitzchak's prayer, as if to say that He listened to Yitzchak as opposed to Rivkah (Gen. 25:21). Rashi (there) explains that this is because the prayer of a righteous person, son of a righteous person is greater than the prayer of a righteous person, son of a wicked person. Accordingly, because both Yitzchak and his father Avraham were righteous, Yitzchak's prayers were more powerful than Rivkah's prayer, for Rivkah was personally righteous, but her father was not. Accordingly, the Jewish People belittled Pinchas by saying that his power of prayer is weaker than theirs because he has an idolatrous lineage.

In order to counter this false idea, the Torah purposely highlights Pinchas's lineage as extending back to Aharon, to inform us that Pinchas' power of prayer was not in any way diminished by the fact that Putiel was his maternal grandfather, because his paternal grandfather was Aharon. By doing so, the Torah tells us that Pinchas' attitude that prayer is sometime not enough and action must be taken is indeed the correct attitude, and the Jews who simply hid behind prayer instead of doing something about the bachelors fornicating with the Midianites were totally unjustified.

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#### Peace Treaty

**Behold I will give him My treaty of peace (Num. 25:2).** Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz (*Imrei Pinchas*) writes that the idea behind Elijah the Prophet (who is identified as Pinchas) is that he transcends the concept of destruction which is an outgrowth of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. For this reason Elijah the Prophet is indestructible and never died. R. Pinchas explains that there are certain elements of creation which are likewise indestructible and are immune to the effects of obliteration. For example, even though the Holy Temple was destroyed, but the Western Wall continues to exist. Similarly, there is a city named Luz about which the Talmud (Sotah 46b) says that there is no death in that city, and we are also taught that a person has a bone called a Luz bone which never decomposes after death and will be the nucleus from which he will be resurrected during the Resurrection of the Dead. Similarly, he notes that there is a bird called a Chol bird which also never dies. Rabbi Pinchas says that he thinks that the Chol bird only eats on Motzei Shabbos and not on Erev Shabbos, so it never enjoys any of its substance from the day that the Tree of Knowledge was eaten, which is why it can live forever. (For we are taught that the Luz bone is fed only from food eating on Saturday Night, at melava malka.) He claims that this bird exists in Saxony and people have attested to the fact that it only eats on Motzei Shabbos. In the same way that all of these things transcend utter destruction, among the people of the world Elijah the Prophet also transcends utter destruction, which is why he will never die. This is also why Elijah's Torah is the most complete and he will be the one to answer all questions. When the Talmud leaves a question unanswered it says *teiku* (literally, "let it stand") which is an acronym for "the Tishbite [i.e. Elijah] will answer all difficulties and questions" (תשבי יתרץ = תיקו = קושיות ואבעיות).

Some of these ideas are based on what the Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, writes (*Otzaros Ramchal*, vol. 4 p. 251) where he explains that just as when a person dies and is buried, what is left of him is the Luz bone from which his entire body will be reconstructed, and there is also a part of his *nefesh* which is called *havla de-garmi* which does the same for his *nefesh*, the same is true of the Holy Temple which was destroyed, but its Western Wall remains like the Luz bone and from that the Future Temple will be built. All of this is based on what the Arizal writes (*Likkutei HaShas*) that when the Talmud (*Megillah* 10a) says that the first consecration of the Holy Land consecrated the land then and for the future, this means that once a place is marked with holiness, said holiness will never be entirely gone from there, but will remain forever on some level. He uses this to explain why Chazal say that "The Holy Presence never moved from the Western Wall", in the same fashion as the *havla de-garmi* will always remain to serve as the reconstructive nucleus at the time of the

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resurrection. Rabbi Isaac Chaver in *Siach Yitzchak* (Drasha about the two backwards *num's*) also speaks about this concept at length.

#### *Zealous Against God*

***Because he was zealous for his God (Num. 25:13).*** The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 82b) relates that when the plague hit and Jews started dying, then “And Pinchas stood up and he prayed”. The Talmud explains that the word “and he prayed” (ויפלל) in this context is spelled differently than it would otherwise normally be spelled (ויתפלל), as if to say that it was not “prayer” (תפלה) which Pinchas offered to Hashem, but “litigation” (פללים) as he “argued” to Hashem that the Jews should not be killed. Rabbi Avraham Chaim Schorr in *Toras Chaim* (to *Sanhedrin* 44a) writes based on this, then when lauding Pinchas’s virtue, the Torah says “because he was zealous for his God” the letter *lamed* (לאלקוי) in this passage could also be interpreted to mean that Pinchas “was zealous to his God”—an allusion to Pinchas “litigating” or “arguing” against Hashem that the Jews should not die in the plague.

#### *The Difference Between Zimri and Kozbi*

***And the name of the man who was smitten—who was smitten with the Midianite woman—was Zimri, son of Salu... and the name of the Midianite woman who was smitten was Kozbi daughter of Tzur... (Num. 25:14–15).*** Rabbi Yosef Rosen in *Tzafnas Paneach* notes that when articulating the name of the man that Pinchas killed, the Torah makes a point of also mentioning that he was smitten alongside the Midianite woman, but when articulating the name of the woman that Pinchas killed, the Torah does not bother to mention the man killed with her. He accounts for this difference by noting that the Zimri was killed only because he was publicly engaged in fornication with a non-Jewish woman. According to Halacha, such a man is not really liable for the death penalty unless he is caught by a zealot in the heat of the moment (i.e. in middle of the forbidden act), but once he had already separated himself from her, then he would no longer be liable for the death penalty. Accordingly, when revealing Zimri’s name, the Torah made a point of saying that he was killed *with the Midianite woman*, because otherwise there would have been no justification in killing him. On the other hand, when it comes to the Midianite woman herself, the Halacha is that any non-Jewish woman who illegally fornicated with a Jewish man is liable for the death penalty even when they are no longer engaged in the act of intercourse (see Maimonides, *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 12:10), so the Torah did not need to mention that she was killed alongside Zimri because even had Zimri no longer been engaged in a forbidden act with her, she would have still been liable for the death penalty.

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Why was Kozbi killed?

***And on the matter of Kozbi the daughter of the prince of Midian their sister, who was smitten on the day of the plague over the matter of Peor (Num. 25:18).*** This passage suggests that Kozbi was killed because of her involvement in causing the Jews to worship the Midianite/Moabite god of Baal Peor. However, as we mentioned above, Maimonides rules that any non-Jewish woman who illegally fornicated with a Jewish man receives the death penalty, and he adduces this view from the story of Pinchas killing Zimri and Kozbi. How can Maimonides derive from this lesson from the story at hand, if the Torah itself explicitly says that the reason why Kozbi was killed was her involvement in the Baal Peor debacle? Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank (*Har Tzvi al HaTorah*, p. 112) asks this question.

He offers an answer in the name of Rabbi Shimshon Polanski—also known as the Tepliker Rav: Maimonides also writes (there) that if a Jewish man publicly fornicated with the daughter of a *ger toshav*, then he may not be killed by a zealot, but only receives rabbinic lashes for this transgression. Accordingly, the Tepliker Rav answers that even though Kozbi publicly fornicated with Zimri, she still could have been saved from death if she had been a *ger toshav*. However, one of the conditions of being a *ger toshav* is that one accepts upon oneself not to worship idolatry, such that Kozbi's involvement in the Baal Peor cult precluded her from being considered a *ger toshav*, which is why she was indeed ultimately killed. So, in essence, both are true: she was killed because of her public fornication with Zimri and because of her involvement in the Peor cult.

Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank also notes that according to the *Or Hachaim*, (end of Parshas Balak), Kozbi was killed because of the either “stumbling block” or “embarrassment”. These two concepts refer to the reasons given in the Talmud for killing an animal with which a Jew illegally fornicated and committed the sin of bestiality. The Talmud explains that aside from the human sinner being put to death, the animal is also killed either because it was a “stumbling block” and caused someone to sin, or because it is an “embarrassment” that this animal would always remind others of the crime committed that brought about the death of the sinner. Similarly, *Or Hachaim* argues that Kozbi was killed either because she caused Zimri to sin and might cause others to sin, or because she caused Zimri to be killed, so she too should be killed. Indeed, R. Tzvi Pesach Frank notes that Maimonides himself invokes this idea to explain why the other Midianite women were killed in the ensuing war.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Frank ultimately backs down from his opening question, by explaining that the Torah never said that Kozbi was killed *because* of her involvement in the Peor saga.

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Rather, the Torah simply said that Kozbi was killed on the day of the plague which was brought about because of the Peor story.

#### A Special Place in Hell

**And the sons of Korach did not die (Num. 26:11).** The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 110a) explains in the name of Rabbeinu that Korach's sons did not die, rather there was a special ledge<sup>1</sup> created for them in *gehinnom* and they sat upon that place and sang songs. Rabba bar Bar Chana said that one time he was travelling on the road and he met a certain Arab who said to him, "Come and I will show you the those swallowed up with Koach". He went and saw two cracks in the ground from which smoke came up. When he put is his ear closely to hear what they were saying, he heard them say, "Moshe and his Torah are true, and they [i.e. themselves] are liars". His Arab tour guide told him that every thirty days<sup>2</sup> they are flipped over in *gehinnom* like meat being washed by a butcher and they say "Moshe and his Torah are true, and they [i.e. themselves] are liars".

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Avraham Chaim Schorr in *Toras Chaim* (to *Eruvin* 19a) infers from this that that are different degrees of heat in *gehinnom*, and the higher up one is in *gehinnom*, the cooler the temperature. For this reason, Korach's sons were on a ledge in *gehinnom* which was significantly cooler than if they would have damned to the depths of hell.

<sup>2</sup> The Maharsha (there) explains that this would happen every month on Rosh Chodesh (see *Aggados Maharit* by Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum for an explanation of this). To briefly explain the significance of Rosh Chodesh in this context, I would point out that on Rosh Chodesh we offer a special sacrifice to atone for the moon's sin of trying to usurp the sun's role (which is why Hashem made the moon smaller than the sun). In this way, the holiday of Rosh Chodesh celebrates the relationship of the moon vis-à-vis the sun, which is supposed to be that of a receiver vis-à-vis the influencer. This is also why Rosh Chodesh is considered a special holiday for women, who play the role of the receiver in the male-female dynamic where the male represented the giver/influencer, and the female represents the receiver/influenced. The Talmud also compares this dynamic to the relationship between student and teacher, by saying that Moshe's face was like the face of the sun, while Yehoshua's face was like the face of the moon. In that context too, Moshe was the giver/influencer and Yehoshua was the receiver/influenced. Accordingly, Korach was really expected to be a student of Moshe Rabbeinu in the same way that Yehoshua was, he too was supposed to the moon to Moshe's sun. Instead, Korach wanted to become the teacher, i.e. the sun itself. In this way, Korach's sin parallels the moon's sin of trying to usurp the role which did not belong to it, and **therefore Korach was befittingly punished specifically on Rosh Chodesh.**

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Rabbi Efraim Lunshitz (in *Olelos Efrayim*, vol. 4, Maamar 13, also cited by *Chiddushei HaGeonim* to *Ein Yaakov*, *Bava Basra* 74b) explains that when the Talmud says that the Arab tour guide showed Rabba bar Bar Chana that Korach's sons did not die, this is a metaphor, and means that the Arab somehow taught him that the concept of Korach's sons' continue to exist in every generation. These are the rabble rousers who create arguments, who are jealous of others and pursue honor. Such people are on par with Korach's sons. Accordingly, when the Arab showed Rabba bar Bar Chana two cracks in the ground, these two cracks represented the two negative character traits of (1) jealousy and (2) pursuit of honor, which are the main catalysts for disputes. The smoke which came up from between them alludes to the fire of disagreement (i.e. the heat of the controversy) and the smoke of punishment. Ultimately, Rabba bar Bar Chana saw that even though Korach's sons admitted the truth and said "Moshe and his Torah are true, and they [i.e. themselves] are liars", they still continued to argue because this is the way of such people who are driven by the desire for victory to fight for something which they themselves know is not true.

#### Tznius in the Home

**And the sons of Korach did not die (Num. 26:11).** As mentioned above, the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 110a) explains that Rabba bar bar Chana heard Korach's sons saying "Moshe and his Torah are true, and they [i.e. themselves] are liars". Rabbi Chaim Palagi (*Pnei Chaim*, end of *Parshas Korach*) notes that the wording of their declaration is somewhat superfluous, because if Moshe and his Torah are true, then they are evidently liars. The fact that they argued with Moshe and received a divine punishment and were swallowed up by the ground already proved as much. So why then did they have to say that Moshe and his Torah are true, and also that they themselves are liars?

Rabbi Chaim Palagi answers that when Korach's people originally wanted to take the Kehunah for themselves, and say that it did not belong to Aharon and his descendants, they ignore the fact that in order to become a Kohen Gadol and have children who are Kohanim Gedolim, one must be an exemplary model of the character trait of *tznius*. This is found in Chazal who say about a woman called Kimchis that she merited to see each of her seven sons become a Kohen Gadol because she was meticulously modest in covering her hair such that even the beams of her own home never saw her hair (see *Yoma* 47a and *Bamidar Rabbah* 2:26). Korach's people on the other hand were considered especially aberrant in this regard, as it was said about Korach's follower On ben Peles that his wife<sup>3</sup> revealed her hair<sup>4</sup> in order

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Menachen Azariah of Fano (in *Gilgulei Neshamos* 11) writes that On ben Peles' wife was reincarnated as Michal (daughter of King Saul, wife of King David). Just as On ben Peles put in much effort

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to chase away Korach's people who tried to get her husband to join in the showdown with Moshe. If the people of Korach's cult were so flamboyantly immodest, it does not make sense that any of them should ever hold the office of Kohen Gadol.

Accordingly, when Korach's sons finally admitted that Moshe and his Torah were true, this was an admission that it was true that Hashem decreed that Aharon and his sons should be Kohen Gadols on account of their superlative modesty. When they said "and they [i.e. themselves] are liars" this was an admission of the fact that even if Hashem had not chosen Aharon for the job, they themselves were liars and utterly unfit for the position.

*It's all about the Benjamins...*

***And the sons of Binyamin...* (Num. 26:38).** A Midrash cited by Rabbi Avraham Saba in *Tzror HaMor* (also brought by *Torah Shleimah* here) explains why the Torah only lists five sons of Binyamin, while in Genesis 46:21, the Torah lists that Binyamin had ten sons. The Midrash explains that **five families of the tribe of Binyamin** were destroyed in Egypt

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to save her husband from sin, so did Michal risk her life to save her husband by giving him bread and putting *terafim* in his bed when King Saul wanted to kill him. In light of what Rabbi Chaim Palagi writes here, we can better understand why On ben Peles' wife needed to be reincarnated—that is, because she needed to rectify her sin of revealing her hair; even though she did so for noble reasons, this was still taken as symptomatic of a certain character flaw present in Korach's followers. After all if immodesty came about through their actions, even if it was needed to save them, that is still a weakness. We may also note an interesting parallel between On ben Peles' wife and Michal, wife of King David. The Talmud (*Eruvin* 96a) says that Michal wore *tefillin* and the sages did not protest her actions. The *Ohr Zarua* (Laws of Rosh Hashana, 266) and *Hagahos Maimoniyos* (Tzitzis, ch. 3 30) explain that one might have otherwise expected the sages to protest Michal wearing *tefillin* because *tefillin* was worn on the head, and a married woman's hair is considered nakedness. The *Talmud Yerushalmi* differs from the Bavli and relates that the rabbis actually did protest Michal wearing *tefillin*—ostensibly because her doing so would somehow violate the expectation for a married woman to cover her hair. Indeed, Rabbi Yissachar Teichtel in responsa *Mishnah Sachir* (22) proves from this discussion that even if a woman covers her entire head, but there is still some hair sticking out on the side, this a problem. He argues that because Michal wore *tefillin*, this covered her entire head, but still there was some hairs on the side which the rabbis deemed problematic. This parallels On ben Peles' wife also failing to cover her hair.

<sup>4</sup> See *Sefer Ha-Aruch* (s.v. **ינל**) whose version of this passage reads that On ben Peles' wife was naked, not that she just exposed her hair.

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because they were especially wicked and did not repent their sins. Nonetheless, the Midrash explains that even though the same might have been true of other tribes, no more than one family from any other tribe was destroyed in Egypt, while from the tribe of Binyamin it was half of the families that were destroyed then. The Midrash justifies this by explaining that Binyamin was originally named by his mother Rachel “Ben Oni” – “the son of my affliction” (Gen. 35:18), while his father Yaakov called him “Ben Yamin” – “the son of my right hand [i.e. strength]”. Accordingly, because of the name his mother gave him, half his families died, and because of the name his father gave him, the other half continued to live.

We can explain this phenomenon based on what Rashi (to Gen. 46:21) writes that the names of all ten of Binyamin’s sons allude to the family’s mourning over the “loss” of Yosef. When a person is in a situation of mourning, there are two ways to look at it. One is the attitude of “Ben Oni” – “the son of my affliction” which represents somebody who has given up hope and had totally emerged themselves in their affliction. The other attitude is that of “Ben Yamin” – “the son of my right [i.e. strength]” which represents somebody who looks at his times of suffering as a reason to change himself into a better person and continue to grow. Accordingly, the first attitude toward suffering kills people, while the second attitude gives them a reason to live. Even the word Oni, which means affliction can also mean strength too, *rieshis oni* and thus Yaakov turned the word *oni* into *yemin* converting it from an ambiguous word to one that only means strength.

#### Moshe’s Spiritual Heir

***May Hashem—God of the spirits of all flesh—appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out in front of them and will come in in front of them, and he will bring them out and he will bring them in, and the congregation of Hashem shall not be like sheep which do not have a shepherd (Num. 27:16–17).*** Rabbi Nissan Kaplan relates in his *Kesher shel Kayamah* (2010) that when the Gerrer Rebbe the *Lev Simcha* died, they appointed his brother the *Pnei Menachem* to succeed him at the Gerrer Rebbe. The first time he made a *tisch* on Shabbos was on the week of Parshas Pinchas, and when he spoke, he noted that some parts of this passage are superfluous and extraneous. He argued that if Hashem will “appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out in front of them and will come in in front of them” then it follows that the Jewish People will “not be like sheep which do not have a shepherd”, so why then did Moshe have to say both points when praying to Hashem that He choose a successor? He answered that Moshe had to say both clauses in his prayer, because it could be that Hashem will “appoint a man over the congregation, who will go out in front of them and will come in in front of them”, but even though this leader will act like a leader, the Jewish People will not accept him. In that case,

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even though Hashem chose a leader for them, they would still be “like sheep which do not have a shepherd”. Accordingly, Moshe prayed that **not only Hashem appoint a good leader over the Jewish People, but that the public at large should accept this leader** such that “the congregation of Hashem shall not be like sheep which do not have a shepherd”.

#### A Friend for eating

**Take for yourself Yehoshua... (Num. 27:18).** The Midrash (Sifrei, cited in *Yalkut Shimoni*, Numbers 766) says that the term “take for yourself” refers to man acquiring a friend for himself, which can only be done by putting in effort. The Midrash says that this is the source that one should have a friend with whom he will read and learn and eat and drink and reveal his secrets.<sup>5</sup> Regarding the Midrash’s point that one ought to have a friend with whom he can “eat and drink”, Rabbi Abraham in *Darkei Avos* points to the Tzanzer (*Divrei Chaim, Parshas Acharei Mos*<sup>6</sup>) who writes that the righteous are accustomed to eating in groups, because eating is considered an especially great endeavor. This is in contrast to the philosophers who tended to seclude themselves while eating (because they did not recognize the importance of eating beyond its role in physically sustaining a person).

#### Moshe/Sun and Yehoshua/Moon

**And you shall give from your splendor upon him... (Num. 27:20).** The Talmud (*Bava Basra* 75a) infers from this passage that Moshe was to give “from” his splendor to Yehoshua, but not all of his splendor. This is why the elders of that generation exclaimed that Moshe’s face was as shining as the sun, while Yehoshua’s face was only as shining as the moon. The Ostrovitzer Gaon (in his approbation to *Givas Pinchas* 1, also cited in *Beis Meir al haTorah* vol. 1, pg. 247) explains that the difference between the sun and the moon is alluded to in Moshe’s name. He notes that while we perform *Kiddush Levana* which thanks Hashem for creating the moon every month, we only perform *Birkas HaChamah* which thanks Hashem for creating the sun once every 28 years. Now in 28 years, we say *Kiddush Levana* 336 times if we multiply 28 years by 12 months per year ( $28 * 12 = 336$ ), but since in 28 years there will

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<sup>5</sup> *Tanna deVei Eliyahu Zuta* (ch. 16) has a version of this Midrash which reads: “and reveal to him the secrets of the Torah and the secrets of *derech eretz*”.

<sup>6</sup> I was unable to find this source.

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be an average of nine leap-years that have an extra month,<sup>7</sup> this means that in 28 years we actually say *Kiddush Levana* 345 times ( $336 + 9 = 345$ ). Accordingly, we recite *Birkat/Kiddush HaLevana* 345 times more often than we recite *Birkat HaChamab*. This is alluded to in Moshe's name who *gematria* equals exactly that number (משה = 345).

The *Ben Ish Chai* (*Drushim, Parshas Korach*) explains that Moshe is compared to the sun because just as the sun looks small to us because we are so far away from it, but the closer we get, the more we see that the sun is actually much bigger than it appears, so is it with Moshe that we tried to understand the Scriptural descriptions of him, we would only understand a small part of him, but if we can come closer to him, we would be able to see that he is actually much bigger and greater than we thought.

The *Ksav Sofer* explains that Moshe was only commanded to confer some of his splendor upon Yehoshua but not all of it, because then one might use Yehoshua to support Korach's arguments. Korach argued that Moshe was not special but that every Jew is holy just like Moshe is. Nachmanides explains that Korach's argument was that Moshe did not inherently have any more holiness than anyone else, but that by force of him becoming the leader, he became holier, but if somebody else (i.e. like Korach himself) would be the leader, then he too would be on the same level as Moshe by virtue of being the leader of the Jewish People who in of themselves were holy. The truth is, of course, that Moshe was inherently more holy than Korach *which is why Hashem chose him as the leader* in the first place. Accordingly, if Moshe's successor would attain the same splendor as Moshe did, one might argue that Korach was right and it whoever would lead the Jewish People would be as holy as Moshe and there was nothing inherently holy about Moshe himself other than the fact that led the Holy People.

Just one more day...

**On the eighth day, there shall be an atzeres for you—all work shall you not do (Num. 29:35).** Rashi explains that *atzeres* is a term of endearment and an expression of love, like somebody who take leave of his father, and his father says to me, "It's hard for me to separate from you, please stay one more day". The *Yalkut HaGersbuni* writes in the name of Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum that this refers to the fact that with the culmination of the high holidays of Tishrei with Rosh HaShannah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkos, man is prone to

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<sup>7</sup> A leap month is added to seven years of a nineteen-year cycle. Meaning, years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 of a 19-year cycle will have an extra month. Accordingly, in 28 years, an average of 9 extra months will be added (depending on exactly where the 28-year cycle starts within the 19-year cycle).

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returning to his previous unrefined ways as though he did not spend the time repenting out of fear and love during those holidays. Hashem does not want us to return to that state of sin and “separate” ourselves from Him. For this reason, He says, “It’s hard for me to separate from you, please stay one more day” which is why He gave us the holiday of Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah immediately after Sukkos.

*Much of the material presented in **Oneg!** has been translated by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein from Rabbi Elchanan Shoff's weekly Hebrew 'Aalefcha Chochma' parsha sheet. To sign up to the **Oneg!** weekly email list, or to sponsor a week of **Oneg!** send an email to [BKLAshul@gmail.com](mailto:BKLAshul@gmail.com)*