

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו,  
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכתך,  
ויום השביעי שבת לה'

# SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK

PARASHAT PINCHAS

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## EATING PEANUT BUTTER L'SHEM SHAMAYIM

JACOB SEITLER  
SHEVET MORASHA

This week's parasha starts by relating the praise given to Pinchas, who took the law into his own hands by killing the Israelite man who was having relations with Midianite women. The parasha continues to speak of the counting of Bnei Yisrael, the division of the land of Israel and the query of the daughters of Tzafchad.

We are introduced to Pinchas at the start of the parasha as "Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon the Kohen" (Bamidbar 25:11). This seems unusual as just four pesukim earlier when Pinchas is first mentioned it also refers to him as "Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon the Kohen" (Bamidbar 25:7). Why is this repetition necessary at the start of our parasha and what can it teach us?

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (82b) may give us some insight to answer this question. The Gemara relates that people mocked Pinchas by saying that his maternal grandfather was Yitro, who worshiped idols, and he had the audacity to kill a prince of Israel; therefore the verse comes to emphasise his lineage to Aharon Hakohen.

Rav Kook explains that acts of zealotry are approved by the Torah only when they are done purely for the sake of Heaven. When Pinchas acted in a zealous manner it may have appeared that he was not acting for the sake of Heaven, but rather to show his faithfulness to Israel despite having a grandfather who was

involved in idolatry. This was the mocking that the Gemara spoke about; it appeared that he did not have the correct intentions due to his lineage. Therefore, the Torah goes out of its way to emphasise that he was a disciple of Aharon Hakohen to highlight to us that this act of Pinchas was a pure God-focused act.

Aharon Hakohen specifically highlights this point as he was someone who "loved peace and pursued peace" (Mishna Avot 1:12). Pinchas also gained this trait of Aharon; killing the Israelite was not in contrast to these traits as his act was performed with selfless intentions and a pure heart. The Maharal explains that peace is achieved when various segments of society complement each other and form a harmonious whole; it may be that by removing the act of the Israelite, Pinchas contributed to peace, as this act had no place in society.

I think the act of Pinchas can show us the importance of being firm in what we believe in and always acting for the sake of Heaven. I remember a Talmid in Yeshiva asking, "does Hashem want me to do this?" before eating a spoon of peanut butter - not that I recommend eating peanut butter, but to have the perspective of always striving to act for the sake of Heaven, whether in the minor aspects of daily life or the broad aspect of one's life. Although there is not always a clear answer when one asks, "does Hashem want me to do this?" asking the question itself helps to shape our lives as God-focused rather than me-focused.

### Point To Ponder:

Why is the story of Pinchas spread across two parshiot?

### JACOB WAS A PARTICIPANT ON TORANI 5780.

London	In: 21:00 Out: 22:25	Oxford	In: 21:03 Out: 22:32	Leeds	In: 21:15 Out: 22:53
Manchester	In: 21:16 Out: 22:52	Bristol	In: 21:06 Out: 22:35	Liverpool	In: 21:19 Out: 22:55
Cambridge	In: 21:00 Out: 22:31	Birmingham	In: 21:09 Out: 22:41	Jerusalem	In: 19:12 Out: 20:29

# PINCHAS 5780: WRONG THING, RIGHT REASON

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG | RAV SHALIACH



Much ink has been spilled analysing the story of 'Bnot Tzlafchad'. Five sisters whose father had died, leaving no male heir in the family, approached Moshe Rabbeinu to ensure that they would

not be left out and their family too would receive a portion in the land of Israel. These five women are a symbol of righteousness – through their passion to fulfil the mitzvah of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* they merited to have their story recorded in the Torah for all to remember. Yet their father, Tzlafchad, seems to be described in less than glowing terms. The pasuk (Bamidbar 27:3) makes clear that his death was punishment for his sins. Who exactly was Tzlafchad and what was the sin that brought about his early demise? And if he himself was so bad, why did he merit such a righteous family?

Rashi quotes two opinions from the Gemara as to what the sin of Tzlafchad was. According to R' Shimon he was one of the *ma'apilim* – those who attempted to enter Eretz Yisrael without permission and were killed in battle. According to R' Akiva he was the *mekoshesh etzim* – the man who went gathering wood on Shabbat and was subsequently punished by death.

At first glance R' Shimon's opinion seems easier to digest. Yes, Tzlafchad had sinned, but he had been motivated by a misplaced zeal to enter the land of Israel, even when the time was not right. It was this enthusiasm for the mitzvah, channelled in the right way, that his daughters had inherited and come to embody.

But R' Akiva's opinion seems strange. The first public desecration of Shabbat could hardly have been said to come from ideological

motives. Could this really be the man to bequeath such religious devotion to his daughters?

The surprising answer can be found in the words of Tosfot (Bava Batra 119) who explain that the wood-gatherer actually acted *l'shem Shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven! The incident took place, they explain, immediately after the sin of the spies. Since the people had lost their right to enter into the land of Israel, there were those who mistakenly thought they were no longer obligated in mitzvot. In order to impress upon them their mistake, Tzlafchad placed himself in a situation where he would be subject to the death penalty. Seeing this, the people would understand

that the full weight of the mitzvot were still in force. He sacrificed his life in order to ensure that others stayed on the path they were meant to.

Tzlafchad was mistaken in what he did. Whether it was going against an explicit command not

to enter the land of Israel (at that particular time) or failing to observe Shabbat as he had been commanded. But his intentions in doing either were much loftier than we may have initially thought.

The Mesilat Yesharim explains that just as one can do the wrong actions with the right intentions, one can easily perform the right actions with the wrong intentions. Ultimately, we don't have a right to pick and choose which mitzvot we keep. But we can learn from Tzlafchad to have our heart in the right place in whatever we do.

Shabbat Shalom!

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**FOLLOW RAV JOEL ON FACEBOOK (RAV SHALIACH PAGE) AND ON TWITTER (@JOEL KENIGSBERG).**

# A TASTE FROM THE ARCHIVES: PARASHAT PINCHAS 5756

## JONNY DICKSON

Following the plague in this week's parasha, which resulted in Bnei Yisrael turning to idol worship, Hashem commanded Moshe to take a census of all the tribes. In addition to listing all the tribes, the Torah also lists the families within the tribes. At the conclusion of this census, Hashem declares, "*amongst these people you will divide up the land,*" and explains how this will happen – Rashi solves the apparent contradiction between the verses, saying that the division will be carried out by a lottery and also saying that each shevet will receive a piece proportional to their size, by explaining that it was a Divinely inspired lottery, arranged such that each shevet would get the correctly sized piece of land.

After this, the daughters of Tzafchad approach Moshe. They complain that as their father has died in the desert without any sons, his share in Eretz Yisrael will, under the current system, go to his brothers. As a result, there will be nobody and no property left to continue his family name. Moshe, not knowing the halacha, goes to ask Hashem's advice. Hashem tells him to give the daughters of Tzafchad the share their father would have had if he had still been alive, and then proceeds to give a list of people who inherit in the absence of a son. Hashem then tells Moshe about his impending death, brought forward by Moshe's striking of the rock. The next few verses read as follows (Bamidbar 27:16-17): "*Let Hashem, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who will go before them and who will come before them, who will bring them and who will take them, so the congregation of Hashem will not be like sheep without a shepherd.*" Hashem then commands Moshe to induct Yehoshua bin Nun as his successor.

Moshe's request presents problems – even if Moshe honestly believed Hashem would leave His people leaderless, why is it that he chooses this long-winded way of asking Hashem to appoint a successor to him? Even the prelude to this request is strange – this is the only occasion the verse "*vayedaber Moshe el Hashem*" appears in the Torah – i.e. it is the only time that Moshe 'spoke' to God – generally regarded as harsher than 'vayomer'. So why is it (a) that Moshe makes this request at all, and (b) that he makes it in the form he does?

The Midrash Rabba writes as follows: Moshe had just seen the daughters of Tzafchad present their perceived injustice before God and receive their inheritance. This started Moshe thinking about his own sons – what would they inherit? Surely it was only fitting that a person of his greatness be able to pass this on to his sons. So, Moshe put his claim before Hashem, and did so forcefully – he in effect said to Hashem, now the daughters of Tzafchad have received their inheritance, let my sons receive theirs – appoint one of them as leader. But Hashem replied with a verse from Mishlei – "*one who looks after a fig tree will eat its fruit*" (27:18). Your son's only claim to fame is that he is your son. Yehoshua bin Nun (already described as "*mesharet Moshe*" – he who serves Moshe), on the other hand, has both learnt Torah and served you enough to know how to lead Bnei Yisrael. Leadership is not hereditary – it is not merely an honour to be passed on by virtue of parentage alone. It is only acquired by those who deserve it. The same idea is reflected later on in *malchut* (kingship) – on the death of a king, in many cases his son did not become king.

However, it is a sign of Moshe's greatness and dedication to both Hashem and his people that, once commanded to appoint Yehoshua as leader, he took this mitzvah on wholeheartedly. Rashi points this out from the fact that Moshe was commanded simply to take Yehoshua and place his hand on him. Moshe went further than this – he carried out this procedure publicly, before the entire people, and the Torah specifically tells us that he used both his hands, i.e. doing over and above what he had been commanded. In fact, Rashi, disagreeing with the above Midrash, says that the fact that Moshe asked about his successor at this time, straight after being told about his death, was a sign of his righteousness – that even at this point in his life his main concern was his people.

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# WHAT'S GOING ON?

- The London and Manchester Batim are opening for **Tefila services!** Advance registration is required. The **London Bayit** holds services Monday-Friday, with **Shacharit** at 8.30am, and **Mincha-Ma'ariv** at 7.30pm. Sign up at [tinyurl.com/ba-london-tefila](http://tinyurl.com/ba-london-tefila). **Shabbat Shacharit** at the **Manchester Bayit** will take place at 10am. Sign up at [forms.gle/NFLyvXekMmnhw8iQA](http://forms.gle/NFLyvXekMmnhw8iQA). Please see our health and safety policy at [bauk.org/bayit-tefila](http://bauk.org/bayit-tefila).

- We are delighted to have opened bookings for our activities this summer! We will be running **Summer Machane Activities** and **Summer Day Trips** in London and Manchester. For more details, FAQs, the schedule, and to apply go to [bauk.org/camps](http://bauk.org/camps).

- Applications are now open for Sviva 5781! If you would like to be involved as a Madrich, Sgan or Rosh please fill out the application form at: <https://www.bauk.org/sviva-registration-form>.

Don't miss your opportunity to shape the movement!

- **Sichot B'Ivrit**, our Ivrit ulpan taught by the Bnot Sherut continues on **Sunday at 4.30pm**. To sign up head to [bit.ly/ba-ivrit](http://bit.ly/ba-ivrit). For more information contact Eli at [israel@bauk.org](mailto:israel@bauk.org).

- **Student Bet Midrash** continues on Thursday 16th July! Join us at **7.00pm** for a choice of chaburot, followed by a thought from one of our Lilmod Ul'lamed participants and a shiur by our guest speaker. Email Chana at [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) for more details or if you have any questions. Zoom links will be posted on the Student Bet Midrash Facebook page.

- Be sure to like our **Facebook page (Bnei Akiva UK)** and follow our **Instagram (bneiakivauk)** to stay informed of our online content!

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- Visit [bauk.org/feedback](http://bauk.org/feedback) for contact details for all Mazkirut members and to leave any general feedback!

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Why was Moshe commanded to smite the Midianites when it was the Moabites who played the main role in seducing Bnei Yisrael? (**See Rashi on 25:17**)

2. Why is Yehoshua described as having a spirit within him? (**See Rashi on 27:18**)



# SUMMER MACHANE BOOKINGS NOW OPEN!

To see more details and the full schedule, go to [www.bauk.org/camps](http://www.bauk.org/camps)



### Veida 5780

Sunday 26th July

Don't miss the opportunity to submit motions, engage in debates, and shape the future of YOUR tnu'a!

- Submit motions, view the Constitution and a report of last year's Veida, and find out how this year's Veida will run at [bauk.org/veida](http://bauk.org/veida).
- Apply for the Hanhalla or to stand as our rep to the Board of Deputies at [bauk.org/hustings](http://bauk.org/hustings).
- To submit/second a motion and attend Veida you **MUST** have Mas Chaver! A **special Mas Chaver rate of £5** is available to Chaverim in Shevatim Hineini to Na'aleh at [bauk.org/mas-chaver](http://bauk.org/mas-chaver).

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Rafi Cohen at [mazkir@bauk.org](mailto:mazkir@bauk.org).

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