



# The Marcos and Adina Katz YUTORAH IN PRINT

## Pinchas 5774

### Pinchas 3-D

*Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner*

In last week's parshah (Bamidbar 25:7), Pinchas was introduced with a mighty name, "Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon, the kohen." His paternal grandfather Aharon was the first kohen gadol (high priest). His paternal grandmother Elisheva was among the leadership of the royal tribe of Yehudah. His maternal grandfather, Yitro, was a celebrity in his own right and Moshe's father-in-law. His father was Elazar, was the leader of the Levites and the nation's second kohen gadol.

In the middle of a full-fledged rebellion against Moshe and Torah; as Jewish aristocracy and rank-and-file alike were rejecting Divinely legislated morality and entering the tents of Midianite women; as the leader of the mighty tribe of Shimon publicly flouted the law; up stepped this man with the magnificent name, Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon the kohen. When Moshe failed to act, when Aharon failed to act, when the nation stood by and wept, one man abrogated the chain of judicial command, subverted the authority of his prophetic betters, and executed the leader of a tribe. Only a man of regal heraldry could have done this.

Despite his aristocratic heritage, though, Pinchas gained a new name via his vigilante justice. Quailing at his strength, fearing that he might turn against them next, the Jews labelled him kana'i, the Zealot. (Vayikra Rabbah 33:4) Worse, they called him ben Puti, mocking Pinchas for the fact that his grandfather, Yitro, had once been an idolater who had fattened (pitem) calves for idolatry. (Sotah 43a) Despite Divine approval for Pinchas' actions, he gained a stigma among those who feared him.

And then the curtain rose on a third act: Pinchas persevered despite national opprobrium, entering Israel and embarking upon a new career as a prophet. (Seder Olam 20) Pinchas served as an ambassador of peace, halting a near civil war fourteen years after the Jews entered Israel. (Yehoshua 22) Pinchas was the prophet consulted by the Jews of a later generation, before launching a war

against their own tribe of Benjamin. (Shoftim 20:27-28) According to the sages (Vayikra Rabbah 1:1), Pinchas came to a woman named Hatzlelponit and told her that the baby she carried in her womb would grow up to be none other than Shimshon. In these roles, Pinchas became known by a new name: malach Hashem, an agent of G-d.

These three distinct roles were not mutually exclusive. Pinchas did not cease his outrage for G-d when he became malach Hashem, and he was still the child of leadership and privilege when he lashed out against immorality. Pinchas's path was not so much metamorphosis as it was accretion; each additional layer provided another potent weapon for his arsenal.

With these three dimensions, Pinchas fulfilled the words of an insightful midrash regarding the breadth of each human being's life: "A person is known by three names: One is the name which his father and mother call him, one is the name which others call him, and one is the name by which he will be known in the book of chronicles of his existence." (Vayikra Rabbah 7:3) We gain talents, skills and proclivities from three unique sources, and these are embodied in the names by which we become known.

Just as each name assigned to Pinchas was true and accurate, albeit incomplete, so our names represent non-exclusive facets of our own trifurcate identities. Our parents, the roots of our nature and providers of our nurture, establish our initial name. Our peers exert their social pressure, as role models, sounding boards and reality checks. Our actions provide a third dimension; we are blessed with an innate desire to rebel, and this desire to make our own way catalyzes a limited independence.

These multiple names can be confusing, leaving us wondering about our "real" selves. Am I my parents' child? Am I the person others perceive? Am I the

identity I shape? Faced with these questions, we can learn much from Pinchas's experience. Each of our names is legitimate, and should be pursued. The names bestowed by our parents are justifiably powerful and durable. The names given us by our peers reflect the

## A Lasting Legacy

Rabbi Reuven Spolter

Last week I officiated at the wedding of an old classmate from grade school. It was great to participate in his wedding, and I enjoyed being a part of their simcha. During the dinner, his mother and I were talking, and she said something that stuck in my mind. She said, "You know, no matter what you do in your profession, no matter how great your accomplishments, the bottom line is that your greatest legacy is your children."

The conversation was about her, so I didn't tell her what I was thinking, but what crossed my mind is, "And that's why I now live in Israel." Twice this week I've seen people from the States, both of whom asked me whether I miss the rabbinate. (I won't answer the question now - that's an entirely different post.) But it was very hard - gut-wrenchingly hard - to leave our shul and congregational life. It was, without a doubt, the hardest decision we ever made, because while we loved leading the membership of the shul and playing a role in our community, we knew that no matter how good Detroit or the rabbinate was for us, Israel would be better for our children.

And we were right on so many different levels. The schools are an order of magnitude higher than comparable schools in the States (at least for us). Life has much greater meaning. Children are freer, and yet given more responsibility. My children already have a sense of devotion to Am Yisrael that it would have been difficult, if not impossible to convey to them in the States.

I thought of this notion of legacy in light of a rather tragic section in Parshat Pinchas. After God instructs Moshe to climb Mount Avarim and gaze upon the Land of Israel before his death, Moshe asks God to appoint a new leader for the Jewish people. Rashi wonders: why does he wait this long? After all, he knew that he was going to die long before, so why does he only ask God to appoint a new leader at this point.

Rashi's answer always makes me a little sad:

כיון ששמע משה שאמר לו המקום תן נחלת צלפחד לבנותיו  
אמר הגיע שעה שאתבע צרכי שיירשו בני את גדולתי. אמר לו

assessment of those who see us most clearly. The names we craft for ourselves reflect our deepest ideals and desires. We are a composite of all three, as Pinchas was a composite of all three; may we succeed in harnessing all of our names to the service of Hashem.

הקב"ה לא כך עלתה במחשבה לפני, כדאי הוא יהושע ליטול  
שכר שמושו שלא מש מתוך האהל

*When Moshe heard God's instructions regarding Tzafchad's inheritance that went to his daughters he said, "The time has arrived for me to make my own request - that my sons should inherit my greatness. Said God, "That did not enter into consideration before Me. Yehoshua is worthy to receive the reward for his service, for he did not stray from within your tent."*

After everything Moshe had done for God and the Jewish people; after all his hard work and dedication; after giving up his nice life in Midyan to save the Jewish nation, separating from his wife, suffering through the forty years in the desert - after everything, all he wants is one thing. הגיע שעה שאתבע צרכי - "the time has come for me to claim my needs." For all that he had done: rescuing a nation, transmitting the Torah to them, remaking world history single-handedly; none of that was enough. He wanted his legacy to be his children. And that he could not have.

I listen regularly to a podcast called "This American Life." A recent episode called "Origin Stories" contained a story about advertising executive Julian Koenig, who made up famous ad campaigns like the "Think Small" campaign for the VW Beetle. Apparently, a former colleague claimed credit for much of his work, and Julian Koenig has spent a ton of time trying to retake credit for his work. But why, his daughter asked him, did he care that much about who got credit? After all, no one really knows about this stuff or cares, and anyone who does care already knows the truth? His daughter Sarah, who narrates the story says,

*He's eighty eight years old now, so his legacy is understandably on his mind. And even though he did famous campaigns: for all sorts of good causes: gun control, nuclear proliferation, Robert Kennedy's senatorial and presidential campaign, my father's not really satisfied with his work.*

Said Julian:

*Advertising is built on puffery, and on deception, and I don't think that anyone can go proudly into the next world with a career built on deception, no matter how well they do.*

On one hand, it's impressive to see a person capable of looking back at his life's work with honesty and candor. But from another perspective, all I can think is: How sad. How many people will look back at a life of work spent sitting at a desk in front of a computer at an office, knowing that

they helped corporations grow and prosper, or computers talk to one another, but spent less time on our true legacies - the values and principles they passed to their children; the energy they spent on their people, or their relationship with God?

## The Zealotry of Pinchas

*Rabbi Solomon Drillman z"l - Written by Rabbi Benjamin Kelsen*

**A**nd God spoke to Moses saying, 'Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon HaKohein has removed My fury from being sent upon the children of Israel did not destroy ...' (Bamidbar, 25:10)

It is written in Maseches Sanhedrin (82b) that the Malochei HaShoreis asked the Ribbono Shel Olam for permission to punish Pinchas for killing Kozbi and Zimri. HKB"H said to them "let him go, he is a "Kanoi"(zealot), the son of my Kanoi, an appeaser of my wrath, the son of one who appeased My wrath."

Why did the Malochei HaShoreis wish to punish Pinchas? The Mei Shiloach explains that the Malochim wanted to punish Pinchas, because there is a din that a mortal may not exact the punishment of HKB"H on another person unless he, too, has not committed the sin in question. For this reason HKB"H responded to the Malochim's request that Pinchas was "a Kanoi, the son of my Kanoi," in order to demonstrate that Pinchas was pure.

And yet why is Pinchas called the "son of my kanoi"? Because he was descended from Levi who together with his brother Shimon exacted revenge upon Shechem and the entire city for what was done to their sister Dina. Furthermore, Pinchas is called "the son of one who appeased My wrath" because he was the grandson of Aharon HaKohein who appeased HKB"H's fury during the Korach Controversy.

**A**nd Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aharon HaKohein saw ... and took a spear ..." (Bamidbar, 25:7) The Mei Shiloach explains that Zimri was not engaged in simple Niuf (random or lewd sexual behavior) because had this been the case, the Ribbono Shel Olam, would not have made a special Parsha in the Torah. Therefore there must be something deeper to the story.

There is indeed a "Sod", a secret, in this story. There are ten different levels of zenus (perversity or general licentiousness). The first, and worst, level is the case of one who intentionally goes to commit a sexual transgression,

someone who deliberately invites the Yeitzer HaRah upon himself. The next nine levels correspond to situation in which a man's freedom choice is increasingly taken from him and with each level it becomes more and more difficult to resist. The tenth level corresponds to a situation where one does his best to distance himself from the evil inclination and guards himself from sin to the best of his ability but the Yeitzer HaRah overwhelms him and he commits the sin. In such a situation, the Ishbitzer says, it must truly be the Ribbono Shel Olam's will that the two people be together. An example of this tenth level is the case of Yehudah and Tamar, because she was his soul-mate.

This is also the case here, in our parsha. Zimri tried as best as he could to resist his desires but once it was not within his power to resist any longer he concluded that she was, in actuality, his soul-mate. Yet how did he arrive at this idea? In Maseches Sanhedrin (83a) Chazal tell us that in truth Kosbi was Zimri's soul-mate but the time was not yet right and she was still not ready for him.

Pinchas, however, felt that it was still in Zimri's power to resist. The Mei Shiloach suggests that this is hinted at in Maseches Sanhedrin (82b) which states that "six miracles were performed for Pinchas." The Gemara explains that if Zimri had killed Pinchas, then he would have been found innocent of murder because he was acting in self-defense. The miracle, Chazal tell us, is that he did not do this.

Pinchas' actions were not without room for improvement. Pinchas considered Zimri to be a noef b'alma (sexually corrupt) and according to Halacha (as brought down in Maseches Sanhedrin (81b) worthy of Kanoim Pogim Bo, death at the hands of a zealot. However, the secret, as referred to earlier, is that according to the AR"Y HaKadosh as brought down by Rav Chaim Vital, Kosbi was, in fact, Zimri's soul-mate as declared during Ma'aseh Bereishis, the six days of creation. It was for this reason that Moshe Rabbeinu himself did not become involved and sentence Zimri to death. Therefore, Pinchas' response is compared to that of a child which means that

he did not fully comprehend the the situation.

So why did HKB”H give Pinchas a beracha? Because in Pinchas’s mind he had done a great and selfless act.

**T**herefore say, I give him My covenant ...”  
Unfortunately Tzlofchad did not keep the second Shabbos that was commanded since the Mattan Torah. This is especially disheartening because had he only kept this second Shabbos, we would have all been able to learn the secrets of Shabbos because the deepest level of Shabbos, that of Moshe Rabbeinu, would have been revealed immediately to all of Klal Yisroel. It was because of Tzlofchad sin that this deep level of understanding of the light of Shabbos was hidden from us. It was for this reason that Moshe Rabbeinu was uncertain what to do in the case of Tzlofchad’s daughters, whether or not he could be lenient. As Chazal tell us in Maseches Yoma (23a) when dealing with physical damage it is forbidden for a Dayan to be lenient, however, with regards to monetary damage he is required to be lenient. We are also told in this gemara that “all who restrain their anger and act toward others with lenience” will have their sins forgiven. In other words, monetary damage, since it is of

this world, can be corrected through restitution, while a physical injury is something that leaves a scar forever, and therefore complete restitution cannot be made. Since full and complete restitution cannot be made in the case of a physical injury it one cannot be completely forgiven.

Moshe’s uncertainty arose because he was unsure how to classify Tzlofchad’s sin. Was this a case of monetary damage which would mean that since in the future HKB”H would return this light to Klal Yisroel the loss was only temporary. Or, perhaps, this should be considered a case of physical damage, because if the Klal Yisroel knew the secret depths of Shabbos they would have been able to serve the Ribbono Shel Olam with great strength and awesome devotion.

Furthermore, because Moshe Rabbeinu himself was uncertain as to the proper application of the Halacha in this case the rest of the dayanim were afraid to rule on the case for fear that they would insult Moshe Rabbeinu’s honor. HKB”H, through his giving of a brochah to Pinchas was telling Moshe that since the light of Shabbos was only hidden from Klal Yisroel temporarily, this could be considered a case of monetary damage, and thus Moshe could be forgiving.

## The Daughters of Israel and their Love for the Land of Israel

Rabbi David Horwitz

**C**hapter 26 of the Book of Numbers describes the census of the children of Israel that was held in the fortieth year of their travels in the desert, just before they were about to enter the Land of Israel. At the end of the census, the Torah states:

*These are the persons enrolled by Moses and Eleazar the priest who registered the Israelites on the steppes of Moab, at the Jordan, near Jericho. Among these there was not one of those enrolled by Moses and Aaron the priest when they recorded the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai. For the L-RD had said of them, “They shall die in the wilderness.” Not one of them survived, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. (Numbers 26:63-65)*

According to the simple reading of these verses, the term not one refers to both men and women. Hazal, however, homiletically interpret that the decree that the Israelites of the generation of the desert should all die only applied to men, not to women. They deduce that only the women possessed a strong love of the Land of Israel (See Rashi to Numbers 26:64, and see Tanhuma, [Solomon Buber ed.] to Numbers 27:4, and see Sifre, Numbers [ed.

Horovitz], to Numbers 27:1 and 27:4) Amplifying this Midrash of Hazal, R. Solomon Ephraim Luntshitz, author of the seventeenth century commentary Keli Yaqar on the Torah, discusses this notion at length, in his comments on Numbers 26:64. First, he presents the position of the men in remarkably strong terms. The men did not merit entering the land, he writes, because they hated Eretz Israel, as the verse (regarding the spies) states: And they said to one another, “let us head back for Egypt.” (Numbers 14:4) The women, on the other hand, cherished the land, as the verse pertaining to the daughters of Zelophehad states: Give us a holding [in Eretz Yisrael]. (Numbers 27:4)

Keli Yaqar offers two interpretations of the notion that davka women and not men possessed this extraordinary love for Israel. His interpretations contain a unique blend of typological categories, ta’amei ha-mitzvoth (reasons for commandments of the Torah) structural hypostatization of comments of Hazal, and assessments of human psychological attitudes.

His first explanation connects the notion of human tzeniut, modesty with respect to sexual behavior, with

different locales on the globe. (One is reminded of Rav Yehudah Ha-Levi's explanation that the fact that the land that is most propitious for prophecy is Eretz Yisrael is itself connected with the unique climate of the land: in the Kuzari's thought as well, a feature of human behavior is organically connected with properties of a certain place on the globe). Eretz Yisrael, the Keli Yaqar claims, naturally is a land that is propitious for the growth of modest people. On the other hand, Shittim (located in Jordan), where the Israelite men sinned with the daughters of Moab, is a place that is conducive to immoral sexual behavior.

(See Numbers 25:1-2: While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people profaned themselves by whoring with the Moabite women, who invited the people to the sacrifices for their god. The people partook of them and worshiped that god.)

Hazal (Ba-Midbar Rabbah 20:22) declare that the sojourn of the children of Israel in Shittim was a cause of their succumbing to sexual sins. On the other hand, the Torah states that the land of Israel cannot tolerate sexual immorality, and therefore the land "vomited" its inhabitants the Canaanites, who were sexually immoral.

Because the men of Israel were perutzim ba-arayot, because they were sexually promiscuous, they hated the land of Israel. Conversely, because the women of Israel were modest, they loved the land. A proof to this notion, R. Luntshitz writes, is the fact that the Torah singled out Shelomith bat Dibri (Leviticus 24:11, with the amplification of Hazal's traditions on this score) as a lone immodest woman.

This is why the Torah states that there was no man, no ish counted in the second census that was also counted in the first one. The use of the masculine pronoun ish is purposeful. Only the men, who were promiscuous and therefore could not love Eretz Israel, died. The women, on the other hand, were modest, and therefore loved the land of modesty, i.e., Israel, and therefore lived to enter the Land.

The second explanation of Keli Yaqar takes into account the fact that rain is more common in Israel than in Egypt and the surrounding lands. Farmers in Egypt have to irrigate their fields by themselves, and much effort is entailed. R. Luntshitz suggests that the reason why terumot u-ma'aserot (the biblically mandated agricultural gifts to the Kohen and Levi) are not obligatory in these lands outside Israel is precisely because there so much effort is necessary in producing crops. Consequently, it would be to psychologically hard for the farmers to give a part of their crops away to the Kohen or Levi who did not

work at all to produce them. On the other hand, in Israel, the owners of the crops know that they did not do all the work. God (in a manner of speaking) provided His share of the work by sending the rain to water the growing crops. Thus, even though the Israelites contributed the plowing, planting, harvesting, etc., the very fact that they did know that they did not do all the work and nonetheless achieved fully grown crops makes it psychologically easier for them to give terumot u-ma'aserot to the Kohanim and Leviyyim. Keli Yaqar quotes Deuteronomy 11:10-12 on this score:

For the land which you are about to invade and occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden; but the land you are about to cross into and occupy, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. It is a land which the L-RD your God looks after, on which the L-RD your God always keeps His eye, from years beginning to year's end.

The Hebrew word that is translated as looks after in the JPS translation is doresh: The Yalqut to Parsahat Egev (# 860) comments that davka the produce of that land (Israel) is appropriate for derishah, i.e., to take a portion of the produce and to give it as terumot u-ma'aserot, and not that of other lands. Keli Yaqar asserts that it is "obvious to anyone who has eyes to see and an intellect (literally, heart) to understand" that the Yalqut is providing a reason why the mitzvot ha-teluyot ba-arets of terumot u-ma'aserot are indeed limited to Israel. Since in Israel, part of the work was performed by God, it is indeed appropriate that some of the produce be given in return to His representatives, that is, the Kohanim and Leviyyim.

Returning to why davka men were barred from entering Israel but women were allowed the privilege, R. Luntshitz remarks that the men hated the land because they hated to give charity. The men cried: We remember the fish that we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. (Numbers 11:5) Hazal are doresh that they were really saying that this food was free from the obligation to give terumot u-ma'aserot. And that is why the Torah singled out those species of foods (cucumbers, etc.). The reason is because these foods are exempt from terumot u-ma'aserot even on the rabbinic level!

The righteous women of that generation, on the other hand, loved to give charity. Not only did they love to separate hallah, a mitzvah particularly relevant to them, but they loved to give the charity expressed in all terumot u-ma'aserot. Therefore, they loved the fact that they would be entering a land where the giving of such agricultural

gifts was obligatory. As they knew that their real estate (with the attending crops) would legally belong to their husbands and not to them, they desired to enter a land where their husbands, at least, would be obligated to give charity. This is the meaning, R. Luntshitz declares, behind the statement of Hazal that it was due to the merit of the righteous women of the generation that the children of Israel were redeemed from Egypt (Sotah 11b). The point is not just that they left Egypt. The point is also that they went davka to Israel, a land that would have an obligation of agricultural tzedakah placed upon their crops, and the desire of the women to give tzedakah would be fulfilled. And this is why the daughters of Zelophehad cried, Give us a holding [in Eretz Yisrael]. (Numbers 27:4)

After providing two explanations why davka the women of the previous generation merited to enter the Land, Keli Yaqar points out that these traits, modesty and abstention from sexual immorality on the one hand and beneficence, kindness, and generosity in the matter of giving charity on the other, were both characteristic of Joseph “the tzaddiq.” (To be sure, this notion may already be adumbrated in Rashi and the Sifre to Numbers 27:1. These sources, however, only state that Joseph loved the land. They do not

make the further equation between the specific traits of Joseph and the traits of the daughters of Zelophehad. Keli Yaqar does). Joseph’s resistance against Potiphar’s wife’s seductive charms illustrated his iron discipline in the matter of sexual behavior. On the other hand, his generosity in feeding the nation of Egypt during the famine expressed his desire to give charity to the poor. His descendants, the daughters of Zelophehad, inherited both traits. Therefore, they yearned for an inheritance in the Land of Israel.

The Book of Numbers concludes with the report that the daughters of Zelophehad married men from the tribe of Joseph. Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, Zelophehad’s daughters, were married to sons of their uncles, marrying into clans of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph; and so their share remained in the tribe of their father’s clan (Numbers 36:110-12). Hazal comment that these righteous women married men who were fitting for them. For his part, Keli Yaqar concludes his exposition by commenting that they married individuals who, like them, were careful not to transgress any violations of sexual immorality, and who were lovers of charity. And in adhering to the moral law of abstention from immorality, they were indeed “wise.”

## Take Care of Me When I’m Dead

*Rabbi Josh Hoffman*

Some years ago I heard a talk given by a history professor about a book he wrote in which he discusses the contributions to American democracy of Alexander Hamilton, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The author mentioned that all of these men were worried about the legacies that they would leave behind, and wanted to be remembered in a good light. John Adams, in fact, began working on his legacy more than twenty years before he died. Finally, despairing of explaining himself properly to the American people, he said to his good friend James Madison, “take care of me when I’m dead,” thereby entrusting his legacy to him. This story resonated for me because of what we read in this week’s parsha about the petition made by the daughters of Zelophchod to Moshe, and the subsequent petition of Moshe to God, which, as we shall see, can be phrased as, “take care of my people when I’m dead.”

After recording the census of the Jewish nation taken before entering the Holy Land, the Torah tells us that daughters of Zelophchod came before Moshe and Elozor and said that their father died in the wilderness without

having any sons, and, therefore, they should receive his portion in the land. As Rashi points out, this episode occurred in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, after the death of Aharon, because if Aharon had still been alive, the Torah would have recorded that it was Moshe and Aharon who the daughters petitioned, not Moshe and Elozor. Moshe, not knowing what the law was in this case, brought the petition before God, and He responded that the daughters were correct, and that they should receive their father’s portion in Eretz Yisroel. God then told Moshe to ascend a mountain and view the Holy Land before he died, because he would not enter it. Moshe petitions God to choose a leader for the nation, and God tells him to appoint Yehoshua. Rashi writes that the reason Moshe made this request now was because he heard God’s response that the daughters of Zelophchod spoke correctly, and they inherit their father’s portion in the land. Moshe thought that the time had also come for him to claim his rights, and ask that his sons inherit his position and become the leaders of the nation. There are a number

of things we need to understand, in connection with this explanation of Rashi. First, even though Moshe did not know how to respond to the daughters of Zelophchod, he did know that there is a law of inheritance. Therefore, why didn't he ask about the inheritance of his leadership earlier? Secondly, if Moshe was simply claiming his inheritance, why did he phrase his request in the manner in which he did, asking for a leader who would be able to relate to each person on their own level, and praying that the nation not be left as a flock of sheep without a shepherd? On the other hand, if his primary motivation was to assure that the people would have a leader after his death, why did he ask that his sons be appointed? Moreover, if he did have a claim for transferring the leadership role to his sons, why, then, was it given to Yehoshua, instead?

Rav Nissan Alpert, zt"l, in his *Limmudei Nissan*, writes that even though Moshe had been taught the laws of inheritance at Mt. Sinai, they did not register with him internally until he was confronted with an actual question in regard to their application. This explanation aligns with an explanation given by Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, zt"l, of the gemara in Shabbos, which tells us that when Moshe ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah, the angels complained and said that the Torah should remain in heaven, with them, and not be given to human beings, who would only corrupt it. Moshe told them that the Torah should of right be given to man, because only human beings experience the circumstances to which the laws of the Torah apply. For example, he argued, only human beings, and not angels, have parents whom they need to honor and fear, and only men work for six days of the week and must observe the seventh day as Shabbos, as a testimony to God's creation of the world. Rabbi Abramsky explained that even though the angels understood this, they still wanted to retain control of the halachic process, and decide how the laws of torah should be applied, rather than allowing human beings to make such decisions. Moshe argued, however, that only those who actually observe the Torah are able to understand the halachic process in a proper way, and apply the laws appropriately. According to Rabbi Alpert, then, Moshe, in a similar way, did not appreciate the full implications of the laws of inheritance until he was confronted with an actual case that he had to decide. Once the daughters of Zelophchod presented their petition, Moshe realized that the time had come for him to make his own petition, as well. I believe, however, that there is an additional element in the petition of the daughters of Zelophchod that motivated

Moshe to make his request, and can help explain why he presented it in the way which he did.

After the daughters of Zelophchod presented Moshe with the basic facts of their case, they asked, "Why should the name of our father be omitted from among his people because he had no son?" (Bamidbar 27:4). The words used to express the issue of being omitted, 'lamah yigarah' - literally, why should it be omitted - are very similar to the words used by the people who, as recorded in parshas Beha'aloscha, were impure at the time the Pesach sacrifice was brought in the second year after the exodus, and were thus precluded from bringing it. They then came to Moshe and said, "Why should we be left out by not offering God's offering in its appointed time among the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 9:7). The words these people used were 'lamah nigara' - why should we be left out, similar to the words used by the daughters of Zelophchod, 'lamah yigara.' In both cases, the petitioners felt an inner sense of loss by being excluded from the Jewish people in a seminal event in its history, and asked Moshe to be included. When Moshe then realized that, just as the daughters of Zelophchod had a claim to their father's inheritance, his own sons had a claim to his, he also understood that a leader needs to respond to the inner essence of each individual, as expressed by the daughters of Zelophchod when they said 'lamah yigara,' and the petitioners in parshas Beha'aloscha said, 'lamah nigara. Therefore, when Moshe asked God to appoint a leader in his place, he said, "May the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh appoint a man over the assembly" (Bamidbar 27:14), meaning, as Rashi explains, that God, who knows the personality of each individual, should appoint a leader who will be able to deal with each person according to his unique personality.

Rabbi Avrohom Binyomin Sofer, known as the Kesav Sofer, writes in his commentary that the reason Moshe felt that only his sons were qualified to lead the people was that they had observed him on a day to day basis, dealing with the individual needs of each person who came to him. God, however, responded that his student Yehoshua, who never left his tent, and constantly observed him throughout their forty years in the wilderness, was the one who was really qualified to lead the nation in this manner. Why was Yehoshua more qualified than Moshe's sons to lead the people in a way that responded to each person's inner essence? Rabbi Avrohom Borenstein, in his commentary *Shem MiShmuel*, writes that while the leader of the nation must respond to each person's inner needs,

he must, at the same time, maintain the unity of the nation. This is why, he says, the section of the daily olah sacrifice, or 'korban tomid,' immediately follows the section of Yehoshua's appointment. That daily sacrifice came from communal funds, and represented the unity of the nation. Although Rabbi Bornstein does not say this, perhaps we can suggest that this was also the element that Yehoshua had which Moshe's sons lacked, since Torah, as well, is the

## The Role of Yichus

*Rabbi Avraham Gordimerb*

**P***inchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon the Kohen removed My wrath from the Children of Israel...*" (Bamidbar 25:11). Rashi, quoting the Talmud (Sanhedrin 82b), explains that the Torah presented Pinchas' lineage at this juncture in order to counter the harangue of some people who posited that Pinchas was unjustified in slaying Zimri, as Pinchas was from a stock of idolaters (his mother was from Yisro's family) and Zimri was a prince of the tribe of Shimon. In light of the baseness of Pinchas' ancestry, there were Jews who held that he exhibited "chutzpa" to rise up in zealousness against the royal Zimri. The Torah therefore related that Pinchas was of priestly ancestry, tracing him directly to Aharon the Kohen Gadol.

What does the above explanation mean? Despite Pinchas' relationship to Aharon, he was still also descended from Midianites. Thus, how does the Torah's emphasis that Pinchas was from the family of Kohanim dispel the notion that a young descendant of a formerly idolatrous clan (Yisro's household) dared to strike a prince of Shimon? Furthermore, Pinchas' priestly lineage was already known to the public; his relationship to Aharon and Elazar was not a secret. What was gained by the Torah noting this already-established ancestry?

If we explore the parsha further, we again see lineage brought up for discussion. The daughters of Tzelofchod claimed that they were entitled to their father's portion in the Land due to their relationship, and Rashi notes (27:7, from Sifri 18) that the daughters of Tzelofchod (out of their love of Eretz Yisroel and their quest for halachic guidance) merited having intuited that they had an halachic right to the land they requested. Rashi also explains (27:16, from Tanchuma 11) that prior to Yehoshua being appointed as the next leader, Moshe Rabbeinu sought for his own sons to succeed him in this post, but that Hashem rejected the idea, as Yehoshua

basis of the unity of the Jewish people. Thus Yehoshua, as Moshe's devoted student, understood not only how to respond to each person's inner needs, but also understood how these needs actually emanated from each person's connection to the Torah. With this understanding, he was able to maintain the unity of the nation while at the same time responding to each person's inner essence.

merited this position instead due to his attachment and devotion to Moshe, his rebbe.

What comes out of these cases is that lineage is ignored in favor of personal merit and spiritual accomplishments. The position of the anti-Pinchas faction was that "yichus" - lineage - was a legitimate qualifying factor for taking a stand in a Torah matter. They argued, "How can one from flawed stock challenge one from royal ancestry?" Pinchas' opponents were told that they were totally incorrect, for yichus is not a factor; Pinchas could be viewed as the regal grandson of Aharon the Kohen just as easily as he could be viewed as a descendant of lowly Midianites. (This is the real point of the Torah's emphasis of Pinchas' lineage.) The Torah instructed the people to look at Pinchas' deeds, not his background, for one's deeds are what count when it comes to spiritual endeavors and standing up for Torah principles.

So, too, the daughters of Tzelofchod were given high praise by Chazal, for their love for Eretz Yisroel and sincere pursuit of halachic guidance were what counted in the eyes of our sages. The fact that Tzelofchod committed a major public sin and was executed on account of it did not detract from the merit or standing of his daughters.

Yehoshua succeeded Moshe Rabbeinu not because of ancestry or family connections; it was Yehoshua's status as Moshe's prime talmid - a status that was acquired through years of study at Moshe's feet - that made him worthy to succeed his rebbe and become the leader of the generation.

Some aspects of yichus are of import in certain areas, but attainment of spiritual greatness is open to the masses. The halacha is that a Torah scholar who is the product of an illegitimate parental union is to be accorded greater honor than a Kohen who is not a talmid chochom. Let us keep this in mind as an example of what our priorities should be when it comes to choosing our leaders and assessing the attainments of others.