

# פרשת פנחס

This week's adaptation is dedicated in honor of:  
our new baby girl - Shifra Tova

מזל טוב!!!

"פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרון הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל  
בני ישראל"

**"Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon,  
the Kohen, has turned My anger away from  
the children of Israel"** (כה, יא)

Why does the *pasuk* provide Pinchas's lineage by including his grandfather, Aharon Hakohen, rather than the standard practice of only listing one's father's name? R' Tanchuma says that whenever there are three consecutive *tzaddikim*, father to son, a covenant is forged that can never be broken – as we see with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, since Aharon founded three such consecutive generations (Aharon, Elazar and Pinchas) – Hashem established a covenant that would never cease. That is why the *pasuk* lists Pinchas, Elazar and Aharon followed by, "therefore, say, 'I hereby give my covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants as an eternal covenant of Kahuna.'"<sup>2</sup> This is what is meant by "and a three-stranded cord will not quickly be broken."<sup>3</sup> (*Midrash Aggada*)

"עת לעשות לד'"

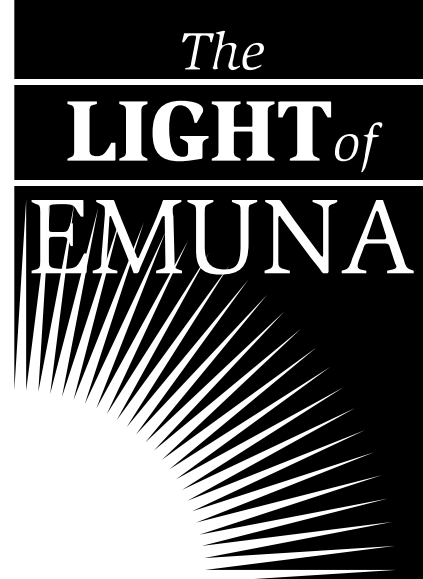
## "A Time to Act For Hashem"

At the end, all that remains is what we have done for Hashem's honor. That is our world-to-come, our immortality - that is what will rise again at *techiyas hameisim*. Hashem does not need honor from the angels. He loves adoration from simple human beings like us. He desires that everything be done in deference to Him – that we forget our

<sup>1</sup> אשר כרת את אברהם, ושבעתו לישחק, ויעמידה ליעקב לחוק, לישראל ברות עולם. (תהילים ק"ה, ט-י)

<sup>2</sup> לכן אמור הנני נותן לו את בריתי שלום. והיתה לו ולזרעו אחריו ברית כהונת עולם (כה, יב-יג)

<sup>3</sup> ההחוט המשולש לא במהרה ינתק (קהלת ד, יב)



Based on Harav Menachem Azolai's "Ohr Ha'Emuna"

own motivations momentarily – that we remember that there is only Hashem in the world – that we know Him and feel His Presence in our daily reality – in our base materialism. Our entire mission is to reveal His Kingship in the world. We must understand that whatever Hashem created was for His glory, not ours.

Pinchas was not required to do what he did. He rose up and killed a leader of a Jewish tribe despite not having been explicitly commanded to do so. This was true zeal, for Hashem's sake, that burned in Pinchas's heart, without any personal interest or desire to receive anything – a fragrant offering to Hashem. His zealotness was entirely for Hashem, without a grain of self-interest. By nature, Pinchas was not a cruel person – he was not prone to anger and wrath. He was full of love for others, a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace<sup>4</sup> (like his grandfather Aharon). This *tzaddik* subdued his refined attributes – he overcame his difficulties and hesitations - because it was a time to act for Hashem. He performed an act of heroism, against his nature – for Heaven's sake.

A lone person can perform a solitary act and thereby save an entire nation. Were it not for Pinchas, no remnant of the Jewish people would have remained, G-d forbid. Where did Pinchas draw the strength to conduct himself in such a

<sup>4</sup>

אוהב שלום ורודף שלום

manner? He drew on his intense desire to protest the desecration of Hashem's honor. A person, by gathering all of his strength and exhausting all of his efforts, is capable of performing miracles. All depends on the person's aspirations and nothing can impede desire. When we do everything in tribute to Hashem or to prevent a desecration of Hashem's honor – the sky is the limit.

A person feels as if he is deprived in various areas – because he essentially believes that the world was created for him. Everyone is certain that the world was created for them. This is how we were raised, this is how we raise our children – and herein lays our challenge. We must understand that all of existence was created for Hashem's glory. Hashem created the entire world for His veneration. When do we increase Hashem's honor? - when we accept the yoke of His sovereignty wholeheartedly. Honor and kingship go hand in hand. We say ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד. Hashem's glory is when we coronate Him over ourselves. A king is perceived in the eyes of people according to the respect that he is accorded. When we exalt Hashem, we are transformed into subjects of the glorious King. In turn, the subjects of an esteemed king are afforded much honor. When we venerate Hashem, we receive distinction in return – this is the soul that sings to Hashem. A person feels like singing to Hashem, blessing Hashem, praising Hashem – that is our honor. That is how we coronate Him over us. Hashem created the world so that His honor would be revealed – in the midst of a world full of people who have free will, who can become confused at any moment, who can forget the purpose of creation at any time, who continuously grapple with personal objectives – for this is the reality of mankind: we are contained within bodies that are filled with all sorts of longings, thoughts and desires – even Hashem's will is interpreted according to our own cravings. If we forget Hashem and think that we have alternate paths - and then we overcome those feelings and we crown Hashem and understand that now we need only turn to Him – this act is so great and powerful that it cannot even be described. (*Beor Pnei Melech Chaim*)

When we perform *mitzvos* with the simple intent of doing Hashem's will, the *mitzvos* have a higher taste/reason and are so much more praiseworthy – they are qualitatively better. Let's take philanthropy as an example. Charity exists in the non-Jewish world – but its motivations are selfish – that is why the *pasuk* says, “the kindness of the kingdoms is sin.”<sup>5</sup> When something is no longer agreeable to them, great love instantly transforms into live prey. That's why Chazal teach us, “any love that is dependent on something – if the thing is annulled, so is the love.”<sup>6</sup>

Master of the World – may we merit doing everything for Your honor, according to Your will, the way that You commanded. May we merit being diligent and consistent – like those who, when they fall, get up and start again – for we know, Father, that in Your eyes, the most important elements are consistency and determination – more so than success – as we learn from the example of Yehoshua bin Nun in this week's *parsha*. Despite not being the greatest of his generation initially (there were other leaders that were considered superior to him), he was chosen to succeed Moshe Rabbeinu because of his diligence. May we merit being good influences on our surroundings, being happy for the successes of others, having a “good eye” – for that is precisely what You want from us – to be like You – like Moshe Rabbeinu in this week's *parsha*. You commanded Moshe to lean his hand on Yehoshua and to impart to him from his own wisdom, yet he leaned both hands. With a generous eye - more than what was commanded. So too, Father, we want to be like him – to do everything for Your honor. Everything should be for the purpose of doing Your will. May we merit doing everything with love. Like when we do *teshuva* – out of great love and yearning we leap over everything, we break everything, we run away from everything – no one forces us, we do it out of love.

<sup>5</sup> חסד לאומים חטאת (משלי יד, לד)

<sup>6</sup> כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה (פרקי אבות)

When a Jew gives charity and does acts of kindness, he should not do so only out of compassion, but because his Creator commanded him to do so. Only this is true charity.

Rebbe Bunim of Peshischa zy" a once stopped in a city in which a righteous convert named R' Zalman Chasid lived. As great as his righteousness was, so was his poverty. R' Bunim summoned the *tzaddik* to visit him in his inn. When R' Zalman arrived, R' Bunim gave him two handfuls of money and asked him to prepare a regal banquet in his home. R' Zalman bought all of the necessities for the banquet but still had money leftover. Meanwhile, the Rebbe instructed his assistant to visit the local furrier to buy R' Zalman a warm coat, a fur hat and shoes. When it was time for the banquet, the Rebbe took the new wardrobe and dressed R' Zalman from head to toe. When he saw the rest of the household and the children trembling from the cold, he sent his assistant back to the store to buy fabric for clothing for all of them. The joy in the house was boundless. After the meal, R' Zalman escorted the Rebbe back to his inn and as they took leave of each other, the Rebbe gave R' Zalman some additional money. R' Zalman refused to accept it. "I still have change left of the money for the banquet and you outfitted my entire family, what more do I need," protested R' Zalman. The Rebbe gently explained that what a person gives to the destitute out of compassion is not considered real charity - he is merely restoring himself - he cannot bear to watch the poor person suffer. Therefore the Torah instructs, "נתון תתן" - we must give and then give again. First, we must give until our hearts stop aching from the poor man's deficiencies. Then, once we no longer feel the pain of his situation because we have alleviated it, we can give true *tzedaka*. The Rebbe concluded, "the whole reason that I stopped off in this city was to perform the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka*. If you refuse to accept this money from me, all of my efforts will have been for naught." When R' Zalman heard the explanation, he amiably accepted the money and they departed with blessings of peace. (Ramasayim Tzofim)

True charity is precisely when charity is given only because of Hashem's command. There is a famous story of Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin zt"l. When he was seven years old there was a famine in Lithuania and his mother, a *tzaddekes*, would feed the poor who passed through town in search of food. Once, she did not have enough food for all of the impoverished people and some of them started to curse her terribly. She was so hurt that she began to cry. Her little Moshe said, "Mommy, do not be upset by their words - just the opposite - even if they curse you, you do your part and you will thereby be doing the *mitzvah* perfectly - only for Hashem. If they would praise and bless you, you would not be able to do the *mitzvah* completely altruistically, for Hashem." With these words, he was unwittingly aligned with the *gemara* (*Yerushalmi Peah 36b*) that tells the story of R' Elazar, who was a *gabbai tzedaka*. One day, when he came home, he asked what had occurred while he was away. He was told that a group of needy people arrived, they ate and drank and they blessed him and *davened* for him. He said, "I will not receive a good reward for this." Another day he asked the same question and was told that a group of poor people had been there, they ate and drank and insulted him. This time he said, "Now I will receive a good reward."

Pinchas was truly zealous - only for Heaven's sake - without any desire for personal profit. His zealousness derived from his love of his fellow Jews, his desire to prevent the desecration of Hashem's name or the Torah and from his feeling connected to the Jewish people (a feeling of responsibility of each Jew towards others). But, there is another zealousness (really - fanaticism) that is more of a defilement of Hashem's name than a passion for Hashem.

Sometimes, there are people who have difficulties with themselves - they do not progress in their service of Hashem. Instead, they substitute their own piety with the decision to worry about everyone else's devotion to Hashem - to fix everyone else. They start with protest advertisements - screaming, defaming sinners, trampling them and innovating

elaborations and enhancements on the *mitzvah* of zealotry – boycotts, printing ads, distributing posters (פּשְׁקוּוּיִלִים) – with an outcry of “who is for Hashem, with me.” They think that they are sanctifying Hashem’s name publicly when they are actually doing the exact opposite. True zealotry must come from a place of love of fellow Jews, not hatred. We must act like Hashem, who sometimes rebukes us with love “just as a man chastises his son, so does Hashem your G-d, chastise you.”<sup>7</sup> If you want to assess your love of another, when you are compelled to hurt him, do you exercise restraint or do you attack? If one

is able to remain complacent when others try to endanger his loved ones – his love is not love at all. When Pinchas witnessed the damage to his people, he was unable to stand idly by. He acted with fervency, with great courage, with daring enterprise - to protect his brothers. Therefore, the gift he received after such a revelation of love was: PEACE. Hashem rewarded him with His “covenant of peace.” Otherwise, how can we explain the connection between zealousness that is all might and peace? It must be that this was zealousness of love, of kindness.

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## תפילה

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**Master of the World!** Help me be so close to You, so connected to You – so that I should be ashamed to do anything that is not good, anything that is opposed to what You want from me. I should feel compelled to do good. I should so intensely feel how You are constantly watching and guiding me, that I should be ashamed before You.

Help me, Father, to stop commenting to others. It is so annoying and no one can tolerate it.

When I am driving, help me to stop happily for someone who needs a ride and not be happy when the light changes too quickly and I can act as if there was no way for me to stop without affecting other cars. Remind me, Father, what one of the *tzaddikim* said, that the best insurance while driving is giving someone a ride.

When I arrive at *yeshiva* or work - help me smile at everyone, even those people that don’t like me and I don’t like.

When I suddenly find myself getting angry, help me remember, that it is You who is doing everything to me, everything is from You. This is so difficult for me because when someone is actually hurting me, I feel hurt, I get angry, I see him in front of my eyes, I still have not merited seeing only You, Father.

When I am at home, help me stop running to the refrigerator every hour and a half to stuff my face in order to calm myself. Help me, Father, so that the happiness of overcoming this passion should be greater than the joy of the tasty food.

**Master of the World!** Help me feel so close to You, so attached to You, that I feel compelled to do only good, only Your will.

Have an awesome, uplifting and wonderful Shabbos,

דוּב

Notice: The foregoing is based on my limited understanding of the Parsha Sheet, *Ohr Ha’Emuna*, disseminated by Harav Menachem Azolai Shlita and is not a complete or exact adaptation of *Ohr Ha’Emuna* and is not necessarily even a reliable interpretation of the ideas presented therein. *Ohr Ha’Emuna* is published in Hebrew; in translation, accuracy is always compromised. Rav Azolai has not reviewed this material and is not even aware of its existence. Any inaccuracies, omissions or confusion should be attributed exclusively to me. I still hope you enjoy and it provides some *chizuk*.

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<sup>7</sup> כאשר ייסר איש את בנו, ד' אלוֹקִיךָ מֵיִסֵּרְךָ (דברים ח, ה)