

BE LIKE A KOHEN AND EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

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Pinchas

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Today's Learning:

Sukkah 3:5-6

Orach Chaim 308:19-21

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Nedarim 3

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Kiddushin 9

R' Pinchas Shapiro of Koretz z"l (1726-1791; student of the Ba'al Shem Tov and early chassidic rebbe) lived in terrible poverty. His house was shabby and it looked ready to fall at any moment.

Once, R' Pinchas' chassidim in another town invited him to spend Shabbat with them. In honor of the occasion, they bought him a new suit and prepared a beautiful apartment in which he would stay.

On Friday night, R' Pinchas was in high spirits. He said: "Here, where I am a guest, they feed me on silver platters like a wealthy man, whereas at home, the poverty reaches every corner of my house. I assume that my chassidim learned to treat me this way from the Torah itself."

He explained: "Parashat Pinchas contains a description of the sacrifices for all of the holidays, yet this parashah's regular place (its 'home') is during the depressing Three Weeks. On the other hand, when

this parashah comes as a guest, it is Yom Tov (i.e., on each of the holidays, we read the day's sacrifices from Parashat Pinchas as a maftir).

"Similarly, I, Pinchas, make my home in depressing surroundings, but when I come as a guest, it becomes a Yom Tov." (Quoted in Otzrot Tzaddikei U'geonei Ha'dorot p. 489)

"Behold! I give him My covenant of peace."
(25:12)

R' Shaul Broch z"l (Hungarian rabbi; died 1940) asks: We are taught (Rashi to Gittin 81b; see also Kiddushin 70b) that kohanim are "kapdanim" / stubborn people who stand up for what they believe is right. How is this consistent with Pinchas, who was a kohen, being given a "covenant of peace"?

He answers: The Torah commands (Vayikra 19:17), "You shall not hate your brother in your heart." If you have a legitimate complaint against another, do not keep it in your heart and let your silent hatred fester. Rather, speak to your "brother" about your complaint so that he can explain himself or make amends.

Similarly, it is true that kohanim are "kapdanim," but it is precisely their trait of not hiding their hurt feelings that causes them to have peaceful relations with others. (Givat Shaul)

"Hashem spoke to Moshe and to Elazar . . . 'Take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael.' Moshe and Elazar Hakohen spoke to them in the plains of Moav . . ." (26:1-3)

Rashi writes: Moshe and Elazar spoke to Bnei Yisrael about the fact that Hashem commanded them to count Bnei Yisrael.

It appears from Rashi's comment that Bnei Yisrael were reluctant to be counted and that Moshe and Elazar had to reassure them. Why?

R' Yosef Shaul Nathanson z"l (1808-1875; rabbi of L'vov, Galicia) explains: In connection with an earlier census, Rashi (to Bemidbar 1:49) writes that the tribe of Levi was counted separately from the other tribes because Hashem knew that those who were counted were destined to die in the desert, and the tribe of Levi did not deserve that fate. Thus, writes R' Nathanson, when Moshe and Elazar began to take a census of the new generation and Bnei Yisrael saw that, again, the Levi'im were not included, Bnei Yisrael balked at being counted. Moshe and Elazar had to speak to Bnei Yisrael and explain that the purpose of this census was to prepare for dividing the land. The reason that the Levi'im were not included in this census is that they had no share in the Land. (Divrei Shaul: Mahadura Tinyana)

"The sons of Eliav: Nemuel and Datan and Aviram, the same Datan and Aviram who were summoned by the assembly who contended against Moshe and Aharon among the assembly of Korach, when they contended against Hashem. Then the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed them and Korach with the death of the assembly, when the fire consumed 250 men - and they became a sign. But the sons of Korach did not die." (26:9-11)

R' Shlomo Kluger z"l (1783-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) writes: Korach, Datan and Aviram, on the one hand, and their 250 followers, on the other hand, did not have the same intention in rebelling. Korach's followers were rebelling against Moshe and Aharon, as Korach said that he was. In reality, though, Korach himself was rebelling against Hashem.

This is alluded to in Tehilim (106:16): "They were jealous of Moshe in the camp, of Aharon, Hashem's holy one." In the camp, i.e., in public, Korach, Datan and Aviram acted as if their fight was with (what they claimed was) Moshe's own decision to make Aharon Kohen Gadol. In fact, though, they knew that Aharon was Hashem's holy one, and they were fighting against Hashem's decision to choose Aharon.

This is why Korach, Datan and Aviram, on the one hand, and the 250 followers, on the other hand, received different punishments. The former group was swallowed by the earth, while the latter group was consumed by fire, in order to demonstrate that the two groups did not sin equally. And, Korach's, Datan's and Aviram's true intentions were revealed thereby, as Moshe said (16:30), "If Hashem will create a phenomenon, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them . . . then you will know that these men have provoked Hashem," i.e., they did not merely attack myself and Aharon.

R' Kluger continues: The difference between the rebellion's leaders and its followers is alluded to in our verses. We read, "Datan and Aviram who were summoned by the assembly who contended against Moshe and Aharon among the assembly of Korach, when they contended against Hashem." The assembly contended only against Moshe and Aharon when they, Datan and Aviram, contended against Hashem.

We read further: "Then the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed them [i.e., Datan and Aviram] and Korach with the death of the assembly, when the fire consumed 250 men[.]" Korach, Datan and Aviram were swallowed "with" (i.e., at the same time as) the death of the assembly, at precisely the same time that the fire consumed the 250 men. As mentioned, this happened in order to highlight the difference between them.

Lest one argue that there was no difference between Korach and his followers and that the followers were punished differently because they had repented, our verses conclude: "But the sons of Korach did not die." Korach's sons repented and were saved. Had the 250 men repented, they too would not have died. Rather, the reason they were punished differently was that their sin was different. (Imrei Shefer)

"And of these [the people who were counted by Moshe and Elazar] there was no man of those counted by Moshe and Aharon Hakohen, who counted Bnei Yisrael in the Wilderness of Sinai." (26:64)

R' Aharon Kotler z"l (rosh yeshiva in Kletzk, Poland and Lakewood, N.J.; died 1962) observes: Bnei Yisrael saw with their own eyes that an entire generation died out precisely as Hashem foretold through Moshe. They saw that throughout the 40 years in the desert, anyone who angered Hashem was swiftly punished. Certainly this should have been powerful mussar / reproof!

Nevertheless, a substantial part of the book of Devarim is devoted to Moshe's giving additional mussar to this generation. Why? Answers R' Kotler: We learn from here how great the power of the yetzer hara is and how intense is man's desire to ignore even that which is obvious. Moshe could not assume that they would learn from what they had witnessed, and he had to point every detail out to them in order to reprove them. (Mishnat Aharon II, p. 86)

R' Yishayah Bardaky z"l

Died 18 Cheshvan 5623 / 1862

R' Bardaky was a son-in-law (in his second marriage) of R' Yisrael of Shklov, who refers to his son-in-law as, "an important man and a talmid chacham, the sharp and erudite rabbi who is more G-d-fearing than most . . ." R' Bardaky was born in Pinsk and taught Torah there, but he decided to settle in Eretz Yisrael after his first wife died. When the ship carrying R' Bardaky, his son, Shmuel Akiva, and his daughter, neared the port of Akko, it was wrecked, and all the passengers were thrown into the sea. R' Bardaky, however, was a powerful swimmer, and, with his two children on his back, he swam ashore.

Upon reaching Yerushalayim, R' Bardaky was appointed head of the Ashkenazic community. He also was appointed vice-consul of the Austrian Empire as a result of the following incident: The Austrian Emperor took ill and sent a message to Yerushalayim that R' Bardaky, who was known as a holy man, should pray for the Emperor at the kotel ha'maaravi. Until that time, R' Bardaky had never visited the kotel because he was afraid that when he touched the wall he might inadvertently put his finger into a deep crevice in the wall, thus inadvertently trespassing on the Temple grounds in a state of ritual impurity. However, to fulfill the Emperor's request, R' Bardaky did pray at the kotel, and the Emperor was cured.

A pauper once visited R' Bardaky, who was in charge of distributing stipends, and asked for an advance on the following month's payment. R' Bardaky responded that regrettably he had no money to distribute at that moment. The pauper became agitated, and when R' Bardaky continued to demur, the pauper slapped him. "Wait here," R' Bardaky said in response, and he ran out of his house. Returning a while later with money that he had just collected, R' Bardaky apologized to the

pauper: "I'm sorry, I did not realize how great your need was."

The entry in Yerushalayim's Chevrah Kadishah journal recording R' Bardaky's death states: "Zion will cry bitterly over the destruction which G-d has wrought in Zion, how the ark of G-d was taken . . . the famous rabbi and gaon whose name went from one end of the world to the other." (Source: Gedolei Ha'dorot p. 638)

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