

# BEING AND SPEAKING SHALOM

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BS"D  
Volume 30, No. 41  
24 Tammuz 5776  
July 30, 2016

Today's Learning:  
Nach: Mishlei 5-6  
Mishnah: Kilayim 8:5-6  
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Bava Kamma 60

As our parashah opens, Hashem says of Pinchas: "Behold! I give him My covenant of shalom / harmony." R' Azaryah Figo z"l (Italy; 1579-1647) writes: Just as man's physical existence depends on good health--preferably, staying healthy, but at a minimum, taking medicine--so society's existence depends on unity and love. Ideally, we would always feel shalom and brotherhood so that we would not come to dissension and separation; at a minimum, we must pursue shalom to repair any breaches among us.

He continues: We learn in Pirkei Avot (ch.1), "Be among the students of Aharon: lover of shalom and pursuer of shalom, he loves people and bring them closer to the Torah." Being a "student of Aharon" means that one is personally at peace with everyone. Otherwise, it is impossible to emulate Aharon by pursuing peace among warring individuals or groups.

We read in Tehilim (120:7), "I am shalom, and when I speak, they are for war." R' Figo explains: There are some people who speak softly, but who are full of conflict inside. On the other hand, there are people who are gentle inside but who speak gruffly, or even harshly. King David said, "I have the best trait of each of these groups: 'I am shalom, and [also] when I speak, [I] speak shalom[.]' But the wicked are not so; 'they are [always ready] for war.' Even when they speak gently, it is only to lull the listener into complacency."

R' Figo continues: The proper path is to hold on firmly to shalom in both forms that we mentioned, i.e., always loving and doing whatever is possible to eliminate hatred. (Binah La'ittim: Drush Eit Shalom)

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***"Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon Hakohen, turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged Me among them, so I did not consume Bnei Yisrael in My vengeance. Therefore, say, 'Behold! I give him My covenant of peace'." (25:11-12)***

R' Zvi Yehuda Kook z"l (rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Yerushalayim) observes: Why did Pinchas merit Hashem's covenant of peace? Because his zealotry was motivated by a feeling of being "among them," by a love for the Jewish People of which he was part. (Pe'amim)

Midrash Rabbah comments: "'Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen'--it is only right that he should receive his reward."

R' Yehuda Leib Adel z"l (1757-1828) asks: Wouldn't the comment by the midrash seem to relate more to the second part of the verse, i.e., he turned back My wrath; therefore, "It is only right that he should receive his reward"? He explains:

A person deserves the greatest reward when he acts against his nature. The midrash is pointing out that Pinchas was the grandson of Aharon, the lover of peace and pursuer of peace. Nevertheless, when the situation called for zealous action, Pinchas acted against that inherited nature. That is why he was deserving of a special reward. (Afikei Yehuda)

R' Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg z"l (rosh yeshiva in Berlin and Switzerland; died 1966) observes that a kana'i / one who acts zealously to defend G-d's honor must have pure motivations. That is why Moshe did not kill Zimri himself. Chazal say that when Moshe rebuked Zimri for consorting with a Midianite, Zimri retorted, "And who gave you permission to marry a Midianite woman?" Of course, Moshe's case was different, for Moshe married Tzipporah before the Torah was given. Nevertheless, in his humility, Moshe feared that if he killed Zimri, he might derive even a tiny bit of satisfaction from taking revenge on the person who insulted him.

Moreover, if Moshe had killed Zimri, cynics might have perceived it as an attempt to erase his own shame at having married a Midianite. Or, perhaps such a motivation might even sneak into Moshe's heart, however subtly. Moshe was afraid of this, so he did not act. That is why Bnei Yisrael rebuked Pinchas by mentioning that he too had Midianite blood. They said, "Are you holier than Moshe? He did not trust his own motivations, but you do?!"

To this the Torah answers, "Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon Hakohen" -- Man does not always know what motivates him, but Hashem does. Though Pinchas was the grandson of a Midianite on one side, he did this as the grandson of Aharon. (Lefrakim p. 608)

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***"The daughters of Tzelofchad approached . . ." (27:1)***

The Aramaic translation and commentary Targum Yonatan ben Uziel states: "When the daughters of Tzelofchad heard that the land would be divided among males only, they prayed for mercy from the

Master of the world."

What was the purpose of this prayer? asks R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l (Poland; 1768-1833). If they were entitled to a share in the Land, they would receive it without prayer. If they were not entitled, how would prayer help? He explains:

Rashi z"l writes (in his commentary to Bereishit 1:1) that the Torah begins with an account of Creation to teach that Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Creator and He can give it to whatever nation He pleases. It was with this idea in mind that the daughters of Tzelofchad prayed: "Master of the world! Eretz Yisrael is Yours and You can give a share to whomever You wish, even if we are not entitled." (Kometz Ha'minchah)

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***"Moshe spoke to Hashem, laimor." (27:15)***

We are used to verses that say that Hashem spoke to Moshe "laamor," meaning that Hashem instructed Moshe to repeat Hashem's words to Bnei Yisrael. But what does it mean that Moshe spoke to Hashem "laamor"? Our Sages explain that this is one of the three occasions on which Moshe demanded an answer from G-d.

Why was Moshe so forceful regarding the matter of appointing a successor? [Surely Moshe knew that Hashem would not abandon Bnei Yisrael when Moshe died.] Nevertheless, explains R' Elya Meir Bloch z"l (co-founder and co-rosh yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland) due to Moshe's great concern for Bnei Yisrael, he wanted to have the opportunity to pass on to his successor whatever information it was necessary for him to know. (Peninei Da'at)

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***"May Hashem, Elokim of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and who will bring them in . . ."***  
***(27:16-17)***

Rashi z"l comments: "Who will lead them out"--safely, through his merits. "And who will bring them in"--safely, through his merits.

R' Yerucham Levovitz z"l (mashgiach ruchani of the Mir Yeshiva; died 1936) observes: We learn from Rashi's comment that the Jewish idea of leadership is very different from the world's idea of leadership. A Jewish leader is not someone who uses his power to command others to do his will. A Jewish leader is one who carries the entire congregation on his shoulders, who is ready to give up his own merits [i.e., the reward for his own good deeds] for the well-being of his charges. (Da'at Torah)

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## Letters from Our Sages

This letter was written by R' David ben Shlomo ibn Zimra z"l ("Radvaz"; 1479-1573), Chief Rabbi of Egypt and a prolific author.

You have asked me: According to the opinion that Pinchas is Eliyahu [see, for example, Ba'al Ha'turim on Bemidbar 25:12], how was Eliyahu [who would, therefore, have been a kohen] allowed to resuscitate the son of the Tzorfit woman [see Melachim I, ch.17]?

Answer: A number of things have been said about this. [1] Some say that the boy was not dead. But this is not correct at all, for his mother said he was dead, and Eliyahu said that he returned the boy to life. [2] I saw that Rabbeinu Bachya writes that the Tzorfit woman was a gentile [and, therefore, her son was a gentile], and that corpses of gentiles do not transmit tumah to others merely by being under the same roof. This is not correct either, for our Sages say that this child was [the prophet] Yonah ben Amitai. Was Yonah, a prophet of Hashem, the son of a gentile? And, if you will say that he converted, how could he be known by his paternal pedigree? [3] The Tosafot answer that Eliyahu was confident that he could bring the boy back to life. In that case, saving a life would permit [a kohen to come in contact with a corpse]. This is difficult, for how can one rely on a miracle? [4] It is possible to explain that Eliyahu never touched the boy. This, too, is difficult, for the verses say that he took the boy up to the attic, which presumably was under a roof [which transmits tumah without physical contact]. [5] It also is possible to explain that it was a hora'at sha'ah / one-time ruling in order to make a kiddush Hashem. In the same way, Eliyahu offered a sacrifice outside of the Bet Hamikdash. [6] Another possibility is that the boy was a mait mitzvah who had no one to bury him, in which the law of tumah [of a kohen] is set aside. Personally, I prefer the answer that says it was a hora'at sha'ah. Behold, I have written to you the answers that I know. Now you choose. Also, according to kabbalists, there is no question, for the one who says that Pinchas is Eliyahu only means that Eliyahu's soul came from the same source as Pinchas' soul. According to this, when one of the Sages said to Eliyahu, "Are you not a kohen?" Eliyahu did not disagree, in order to preserve his secret. (She'eilot U'teshuvot Ha' Radvaz No. 2,203)