



A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

GO AGAINST YOUR GRAIN

RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISNER

LAST WEEK'S PARASHA ENDS WITH PINCHAS'S heroic act of zealousness, killing the adulterous sinners, Zimri and Cozbi. Parshas Pinchas begins with the reward given to him: *brisi shalom*, a covenant of peace. Our Sages tell us (Yalkut Shimoni; 771) that Pinchas will eternally atone for the Jewish people. Pinchas is Eliyahu Hanavi who never died, and is always present, helping to atone our sins.

Mishchas Shemen asks, what was so tremendous about Pinchas's act, more than any other *mitzvah*, that he was deserving of such a long-lasting reward?

He explains that Hashem created the physical world where people function with certain natures and desires. However, a Jew could strengthen himself, and, with *mesiras*

nefesh (self-sacrifice), he can rise above his desires for Hashem's sake, and in turn, Hashem grants him reward transcending time and nature.

Pinchas acted with incredible *mesiras nefesh* when he killed an important Jewish Leader in front of his tribe for the sake of Hashem. That's why his merit is still ongoing, transcending *teva* (nature).

We find a similar concept by *akeidas Yitzchak*, the binding of Yitzchak to the alter. Chazal tell us that the Jews reap reward for this act until the end of days. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 2:11) states that whoever reads the verse in Vayikra (1:11) will invoke the merit of *akeidas Yitzchak*.

Avraham exhibited enormous *mesiras nefesh*, breaking his character of tremendous

love and compassion for his son, for the sake of Heaven. This was deserving of reward above the confines of nature.

Mishchas Shemen relates a story of a family who was unfortunately non-Torah observant. One of the girls became inspired to return to her roots and began observing *mitzvos*. Her family was not so accepting of her change, but with tremendous fortitude, she kept up her religious lifestyle.

One Shabbos, the family left town and her father left her to run their store. Out of fear of her father's anger, she went to the store, but resolved to not transgress any Shabbos prohibitions.

She decided that whenever a customer would want to buy something, she would charge an exorbitant price to discourage the potential purchaser. One man entered the store and found an item which he had been looking for unsuccessfully all over the city. He was astounded when she charged him 100 times the value of the cheap object, and he started yelling at her, but she remained firm. He left and returned a few times, and finally, in the evening after Shabbos ended, he agreed to buy the item for the price she charged.

When her parents came home she said, "you see how my firm commitment to keep Shabbos ultimately caused a great profit!" Her *mesiras nefesh* to keep Shabbos at all costs also influenced her whole family to become observant.

Whenever doing something right may be hard and against your nature, remember that the reward could be supernatural!

Making the Gemara come alive



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A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Eruv Chatzeiros

The past few weeks we have discussed *mechitzos* (physical partitions) and their *halachik* equivalents, which are used to enclose a domain and turn it into a *reshus hayachid*. However, even after all that, there remains a Rabbinic decree requiring an *eruv chatzeiros*. The Gemoroh Eruvin (21b) tells us that Shlomo Hamelech restricted carrying between certain private domains; joining the residents of a domain renders them a single entity and avoids this restriction. This is accomplished by taking a food item that is the shared property of all the residents and placing it in someone's private domain. This process is referred to as *eruv chatzeiros*.

The reason for the decree (see O.C.

366:1) is that *Chazal* were concerned that a private domain may be confused with a public domain, and one might erroneously conclude that transferring between a *reshus hayachid* and *reshus harabim* would also be permitted. When everyone is joined together through the shared food, separate domains and, therefore, the similarity to transferring between *reshus hayachid* and *reshus harabim*, are eliminated.

An *eruv chatzeiros* must consist of bread or some other baked flour product. Since the *eruv* becomes invalid if the food spoils, it has become customary to use matzah. (Ramoh OC 367:5)

The standard procedure is for one individual to donate his own matzah for this purpose. However, a *kinyen* (act of acquisition) must be made by a *shaliach* (agent) in order to transfer ownership of this matzah to all of the parties participating in the *eruv*. The matzah is now owned jointly by all members of the domain.

After the agent receives the matzah, but

before he lifts it up to acquire it, a *brocha* is recited by one individual on behalf of all the residents. Afterwards, the donor of the matzah cites a proclamation. The *eruv chatzeiros* is then stored in a personal domain within the courtyard/city.

Since not all the people residing inside the *eruv* are Jewish, it is necessary to rent the area of the non-Jewish residents. Classically the town mayor or chief of police has access to everyone's houses and as such it is possible to rent the entire town from the mayor

In Cincinnati, the *eruv chatzeiros* is made again every year before Pesach and stored in Rabbi Weinrib's office at CZE. However, since our *eruv* route does not merely pass through different neighborhoods but different cities, the Cincinnati Eruv had to rent from different municipalities (Cincinnati, Amberley, Golf Manor, Sycamore Township, Springfield, Reading, Columbia Township, Arlington Heights) and had to write up contracts and attain signatures from every mayor.



A RIDDLE FOR YOU

When are we commanded to circumcise an infant that is less than eight days old?

Look for the answer in two weeks!

PREVIOUS RIDDLE:

Q For what *halachah* regarding Chanukah do Sephardim follow the opinion of Tosafos (an Ashkenazi) and Ashkenazim follow the opinion of the Rambam (a Sephardi)?

A This happens regarding how many members of a household light the *menorah*. According to Tosafos only the head of household lights a menorah, while according to the Rambam all adult male members of the household should light their own menorah. (O.C. 671:2)

GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

RABBI RAPHAEL BUTLER HAILED A TAXI IN JERUSALEM one day and, as Israeli taxi drivers are wont to do, the driver began asking Rabbi Butler where in the world he had traveled before. "Have you been to England?" "Yes." "Have you been to New York?" "Of course." "I've also been to these places," said the taxi driver. "You see, I was in that famous picture of the three soldiers standing next to the Western Wall in '67, and because that picture

became so famous, the government flew me around the world to sell Israel Bonds." When Rabbi Butler conversationally asked where he lived now, the answer surprised him. "My family used to live in Haifa. After the war, I began to reflect on the experience of liberating the Wall, and the sacrifice for it, and I decided the only place for me was Jerusalem. Moving to Jerusalem led me to learn more about Torah and *mitzvot*. Today, my grandchildren keep Torah and *mitzvot*."

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On the 23rd of Tammuz, 5707 (1947), Jewish Cincinnati Bernard Marks, captain of the ship *Exodus*, left France with 4,500 Jewish refugees on board with the intent of running the British blockade and bringing the passengers to Israel. Near Haifa, the British Navy gave chase, rammed, and subsequently boarded. Not having any weapons, the Jews at first threw at the British sailors whatever was available. When things began to get dangerous to the passengers, Marks surrendered the ship. All the passengers were soon shipped back to Germany, while Marks was imprisoned for three months in Israel. Marks had previously served in the Merchant Marines during World War II, sailing on cargo ships that carried war supplies to Britain. After hearing stories of the Holocaust, Marks was compelled to help the survivors and volunteered to help the *Haganah* move refugees to Israel and had previously succeeded in bringing a different ship into Haifa before attempting again with the *Exodus*.

"EXODUS." CINCINNATI POST AND TIMES-STAR. 17 MARCH, 1961.

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