

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

More Than *Yichus*



After Pinchas’s daring act of killing Zimri and Cozbi out of zealousness on behalf of G-d, as detailed at the end of last week’s Torah portion, the tribe of Shimon was none too happy that he had killed their leader. They sharply criticized Pinchas for what he had done. Rashi relates their underlying message: Who does Pinchas think he is? His grandfather (Yisro) had fattened bulls for idol worship, and he thinks he can pass judgment on the leader of a tribe? To this claim, the Torah answers that Pinchas was the grandson of Aharon the *Kohen Gadol* and, therefore, this action befitted him.

This is a seemingly strange conversation. What does the fact that a grandfather fattened bulls for idol worship have to do with stopping a transgression of Hashem’s Torah? And if it were somehow unfavorable that his grandfather served idols, then why would having a saintly grandfather make it any better? To better understand what was going on in this conversation, says Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, we need to first understand something about acting out of zealousness for the honor of Hashem and his Torah. It is only permitted to act as a zealot if the person himself is a pure soul and the act is done with absolutely pure intentions. When committed by a

person who is not established as one of unquestionable character, or who has a minute degree of personal gain or vindictiveness, an act of zealotry is completely forbidden. This, then, was the charge against Pinchas—even if motivated by zealousness for Hashem, he was not pure. He was most probably emulating the ways of his idolatrous grandfather, for how else could he move so quickly against a leader like Zimri? To this the Torah responded: You are correct that Pinchas walks in the ways of his forefather, but you’ve got the wrong ancestor. Pinchas was a student to the highest degree of his grandfather Aharon, about whom the *Mishna* in *Avos* states that he was “a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace.” Aharon went above and beyond in his efforts to quell disagreement and to bring harmony to every home. This, says the Torah, was the way of Pinchas, his grandson, as well. About one who loves peace and abhors discord, we can truly say that his zealotry is pure through and through. 🕊

A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Name a situation where a person is in the middle of fulfilling a Torah *mitzvah* besides learning Torah and he would be required to stop in order to fulfill a Rabbinic *mitzvah*? 🕊

See reverse side for the answer

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

We began a few weeks ago discussing relevant *halachos* that come up in a hotel. Let’s continue by focusing on two potential issues that arise on Shabbos.

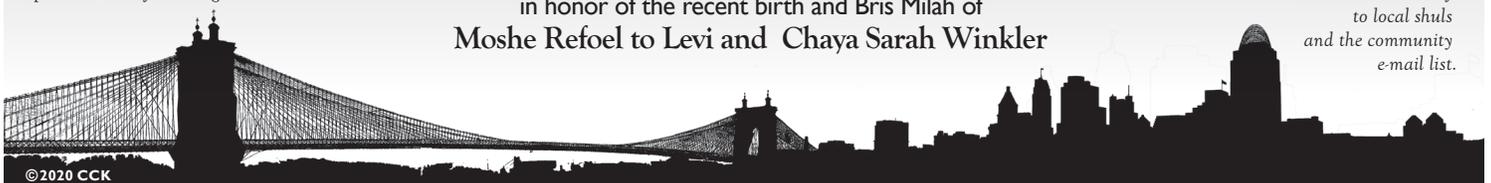
Shabbos Candles – Even if one lights many candles at home, common custom allows the lighting of two candles while away (S.S.K. 43:3). If one will be eating in the hotel’s dining room, he should arrange to light the candles near the table where he will be dining (S.S.K. 45:9; see note 44 where he frowns upon lighting in a separate room near the dining room). An electric light should also be left on in the hotel room (or bathroom, if it can shed light in the room) so that one will not stumble in the dark (M.B. 263:2). If it is not possible to light candles in the dining room, or if one is eating in his own room, then he should light the candles in his sleeping quarters. If the hotel does not allow the lighting of candles in the room due to the potential fire hazard, then *halacha* prohibits one to light there (R’ Moshe Heinemann). Instead, one should light, with a *bracha*, an electric incandescent lamp or an incandescent flashlight (*Toras Hayoledes* 38:5; see S.S.K. 43:4, note 22). Two things to keep in mind are 1) one should ensure that there are fresh batteries in the flashlight so that they will last until after dark, and 2) if the light was already on, it should

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

be turned off and then turned on again specifically for Shabbos.

A man who is away from home in a hotel room cannot rely upon his wife's lighting candles at home, and is obligated in *hadlakas neiros* with a *bracha*. (M.B. 263:28 *Chovas Hadar* p. 88).

Hot Food – It is a mitzvah to eat hot food on Shabbos, especially for the daytime meal. If the hotel is amenable, one may use a hotplate in his room and place cooked food on it before Shabbos (on Yom Tov it is unnecessary).

Many hotels offer morning coffee to their guests. If the hotel caters to non-Jewish clientele, then we may assume that the coffee is prepared for them and nothing is added for the Jews who comprise the minority of the guests. In this case, one may partake of the coffee even on Shabbos providing 1) the coffee is unflavored, 2) no lights are activated while taking coffee, and 3) the water does not enter automatically when coffee is removed (S.S.K 30:48).

However, if Jews comprise the majority of the guests, or if there is a contingent of Jews staying at the hotel, and there is a special place

Mazal Tov to

Mazel tov to Berish Edelman and family on the occasion of the Bar Mitzvah of Dovid Aryeh! 🎉

IT HAD TO BE HASHEM

A man in Albany, New York passed away and his children were looking for a home for their father's *seforim* and so they asked Rav Zalman Levine, a local Tora scholar who they assumed could find somewhere for them to go. Rav Zalman loaded the heavy tomes, which were the complete sets of the Talmud, Tur, and Rambam, into his car and drove down to the Lower East Side of Manhattan to see if any *seforim* store would want to buy and resell them. After he parked near Goldman's Otzar Hasfarim store he saw Rav Reuven Grozovsky who was an old friend and the son-in-law of his rebbe, Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz. After talking for a few minutes, Rav Reuven shared that he was looking to find a *seforim* store owner who would let him buy a set of either the Talmud, Rambam, or Tur and pay in installments as he was desperate to have *seforim* to learn

such as a "Kiddush room" set aside for them, then the coffee there would not be permitted to those individuals on Shabbos; however, it would be permitted on Yom Tov. 🎉

from but, being newly arrived in America, could not really afford them. Hearing what Rav Reuven was after, Rav Zalman told him to join him in the car and asked him where he was living. Puzzled, Rav Reuven followed and when they arrived at the apartment, Rav Zalman shared why he had come to Manhattan that day, and that Rav Reuven would now have his own set of Talmud, and Tur, and Rambam to learn from and, more importantly for the Jews of America, to teach from. 🎉

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THE TRAILBLAZERS, TRIALS, & TRIUMPHS OF AMERICAN JEWRY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

The arrival of the "Malach," Rav Chaim Avrohom Dov Ber Hakohein Levine, was actually due to his only son, Rav Zalman Levine, deciding that he wanted to live in America. Rav Zalman was a Torah scholar in his own right, and he would keep up correspondence with his teacher, Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz, until Rav Boruch Ber's passing. He also held a rabbinic ordination signed by Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, Rav Simcha Zelig Rieger, and Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. Originally settling in New York City with his father, Rav Zalman served as a lecturer at Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and as a tester for ordination at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. While father and son would share a bond of Torah learning, their paths in America went opposite directions. His father spurned anything "American," but Rav Zalman acclimated. Even though he was set with positions in two respected *Yeshivos*, his marriage to the daughter of the rabbi of Albany resulted in his living the rest of his life in the Albany community. He had no designs to inherit his father-in-law's position, as he had decided that the rabbinate was not for him. Although he would be a member of the local *kashrus* board and would oversee the construction of a new *mikvah*, he would make his living as an insurance agent. Beyond the regular Torah classes he gave, he also devoted many hours daily before and after work to Torah learning, and gave of his time to help Jewish college students reconnect with their heritage. His father, the "Malach," would constantly exhort his son to leave his "exile" in Albany and to achieve ever greater heights of service to G-d. The letters, demanding in nature, were not kept private by Rav Zalman and were published by students of his father. When asked by someone why he had kept such severe letters, much less allowed them to be published, Rav Zalman's answer was, "If you would have had a father like I did, you wouldn't even be asking that question." 🎉

SOURCE: Levine, Dr. Yitzchak. "The Malach's Son – Rav Rifa'el Zalman Hakohen Levine." *The Jewish Press*. 2015

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