

Our *Parashah* begins with *Hashem* announcing Pinchas' reward for his act of self-sacrifice, risking his life for the Jewish People at the end of last week's *Parashah*. The Torah says (25:12-13), "Therefore, say, 'Behold! I give him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and for his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his *Elokim*, and he atoned for *Bnei Yisrael*.'" Until now, Pinchas was not a *Kohen*. (Despite being a grandson of Aharon, Pinchas was not a *Kohen* because he was born before Aharon was made a *Kohen*.) Now Pinchas, too, became a *Kohen*.

R' Chaim Zaichyk z"l (1906-1989; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bet Yosef-Novardok in Buchach, Poland; later in Israel) writes: Once a person fulfills the mission for which he was put in this world, he has no reason to live any longer. Without a doubt, Pinchas' heroic act was the pinnacle of his existence and, presumably, the reason for which he was born. Therefore, he should have died now. However, when a person shows unusual dedication to serving *Hashem*, *Hashem* will give him a new mission when he completes his original one. That is what happened here; Pinchas was given a new mission, "a covenant of eternal priesthood."

We read in *Melachim I* (19:4) that Eliyahu Ha'Navi asked *Hashem* to take his life. R' Meir Leibush Weiser z"l (1809-1879; known as "*Malbim*") explains that Eliyahu felt he had perfected himself as much as he was expected to; therefore, he had no further reason to live. Instead, however, R' Zaichyk writes, *Hashem* gave Eliyahu a new mission--to live forever and attend every future *Brit Milah*. (Notably, there is a *Midrash* saying that Pinchas and Eliyahu are the same person.)

- Continued in box on page 2 -

Shabbat

"Command *Bnei Yisrael* and say to them, 'My offering, My food for My fires, My satisfying aroma, you shall be scrupulous to offer to Me in its appointed time.'" (Bemidbar 28:2)

Rashi z"l comments: Every day is the "appointed time." [Until here from *Rashi*]

Our Sages teach that the *Korban Tamid* / continual offering, the subject of our verse, is brought every day--even on *Shabbat*. In contrast, building the *Mishkan* / Tabernacle or the *Bet Hamikdash* / Temple may not be done on *Shabbat*.

Why not? R' David Kahn *shlita* (*Toldos Aharon Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) explains based on the writings of R' Moshe Alsheich z"l (1508-1593; Tzefat, *Eretz Yisrael*): We read (*Shmot* 25:8), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, and I shall dwell among them." The verse does not say that *Hashem* will dwell in the Sanctuary--the *Mishkan* or the *Bet Hamikdash*. Rather, it says, "I shall dwell among them." Thus we read (*Yirmiyah* 7:4), "The sanctuary of *Hashem* are they."

We read additionally (*Tehilim* 90:17), "May the pleasantness of *Hashem*, our *Elokim*, be upon us; our handiwork, establish for us; our handiwork, establish it." This verse (which Moshe Rabbeinu said at the dedication of the *Mishkan*) teaches that the *Shechinah* first rests on us, and only then on our handiwork--the Tabernacle.

What is the means by which we cause the *Shechinah* to rest upon us? *Shabbat*! This is learned from the same verse from which we learn the prohibition of building the *Mishkan* on *Shabbat* (*Shmot* 31:13): "However, you must observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I am *Hashem*, Who makes you holy." (In context, the opening word, "However," means: Although I commanded you to build a *Mishkan*, nevertheless you shall not do so on *Shabbat*.) *Shabbat* is the sign of the covenant between *Hashem* and us; the sign that He makes us holy. The Torah is telling us why we should not build the *Mishkan* on *Shabbat*: It is *Shabbat* that makes us holy, and only with that holiness can we sanctify the *Mishkan* or the *Bet Hamikdash*. (*Leich ve'hodi'am*: Introduction)

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“Hashem said to Moshe, “Take to yourself Yehoshua son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and lean your hand upon him. You shall stand him before Elazar the *Kohen* and before the entire assembly, and command him before their eyes. You shall place some of your majesty upon him, so that the entire assembly of Yisrael will pay heed . . .’ Moshe did as Hashem had commanded him. He took Yehoshua and stood him before Elazar the *Kohen* and before the entire assembly. He leaned his hands upon him and commanded him, as Hashem had spoken through Moshe.” (27:18-20, 22-23)

Hashem commanded Moshe to place one hand on Yehoshua (to ordain him as his successor), but Moshe used two hands. Also, Hashem commanded Moshe to first ordain Yehoshua and then present him to the Nation, but Moshe reversed the order. Why did Moshe make these changes? Indeed, how could Moshe Rabbeinu deviate from Hashem’s instructions?

R’ Moshe Cheifetz z”l (Italy; 1664-1711) explains: Hashem’s instructions were intended to increase Moshe’s honor in the eyes of the Nation and to reassure Moshe that Yehoshua was not independently worthy; rather, his greatness was a derivative of Moshe’s. Moshe, in his humility, wanted to convey exactly the opposite message: that Yehoshua was independently great.

We read about Yehoshua that he never left the study hall (*Shmot* 33:11). As such, he was a brilliant scholar, but he lacked “street smarts” (see *Shmot* 32:17-18). Therefore, Hashem told Moshe, in effect: “Yehoshua is a man in whom there is a spirit of wisdom. Add to that by placing one of your hands on him, and then send him out to the Nation. Blessed with ordination from you, he will quickly pick up what he needs to know in order to be an effective leader.” If the Nation saw Yehoshua before Moshe placed his hand on him (*i.e.*, passed his leadership abilities on to him), the Nation might then look down on Yehoshua. Also, however, Hashem said this to make Moshe feel good by reaffirming that Yehoshua’s greatness was a derivative of Moshe’s.

R’ Cheifetz continues: Moshe, in his humility, did not think that Yehoshua needed Moshe’s blessing in order to qualify as the leader. He did not want to place his hand on Yehoshua’s head before introducing him to the Nation, so that no one would think that Yehoshua’s greatness was merely derivative. Therefore, Moshe introduced Yehoshua to the nation immediately. Afterward, he placed his hand on Yehoshua’s head because, after all, Hashem had commanded him to. But, in order to demonstrate that he felt no jealousy toward Yehoshua, he ordained him with both hands instead of with only one.

(*Melech Machshevet*)

“But the sons of Korach did not die.” (26:11)

R’ Henschel Leibowitz z”l (1918-2008; Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim Rabbinical Seminary of America in New York) writes: Our Sages ask how a person as intelligent as Korach could do something so foolish as to mutiny against Moshe. They answer, “He saw great lineage descending from himself.” Korach reasoned that since his descendants would include the Prophet Shmuel, he obviously would not perish and, presumably, would succeed. What he failed to take into account was that his sons, who seemed to be so closely aligned with him, would repent and survive him.

What inspired the sons of Korach to repent? The *Midrash Yalkut Shimoni* relates: By going to the tent of Datan and Aviram, Moshe saved four Tzaddikim from *Gehinnom*: the three sons of Korach and the co-conspirator On ben Pelet. In what merit were Korach’s sons saved? When they were sitting with their father and they saw Moshe approaching, they were embarrassed to look at him. They said, “If we stand for Moshe, we are degrading our father, contrary to the *Mitzvah* of honoring one’s parents. But, if we don’t stand for Moshe, we are transgressing the command to stand for an elder! It is better if we stand for Moshe Rabbeinu.” At that moment, they had thoughts of repentance. [Until here from *Yalkut Shimoni*]

R’ Leibowitz explains: This *Midrash* is teaching us the powerful impact that actions have on a person. Korach’s sons were aligned with their father in believing that Moshe had selfishly appointed his brother, Aharon, as *Kohen Gadol* without a command by Hashem to do so. Nevertheless, the act of standing for Moshe, of showing him a small amount of honor because he was an elder, was a catalyst to cause them to rethink their position.

From here we learn, continues R’ Leibowitz, that a person who wants to acquire any good *Middah* / character trait should perform actions that reflect that trait even if, at first, they will not be genuine reflections of his feelings or his current state of mind. [For example, rather than saying, “I will study Torah after I learn to appreciate it,” a person should just start studying. Rather than saying, “I will be nice to people after I learn to appreciate them,” a person should just start being nice to people.]

(*Chiddushei Ha’lev*)

- Continued from front page -

R’ Zaichyk continues: The *Chassidic Rebbe*, R’ Yisrael of Kozhnitz z”l (1737-1814) was a very sickly person. When asked how he nevertheless lived to an old age, he replied: “Life ends when a person finishes his mission in this world. As for me, whenever I felt I had completed my mission, I immediately accepted new tasks and new goals on myself. Therefore, I could not be taken from this world.” (*Ohr Chadash*)