



KINDER TORAH

ת"טז

PARASHAS PINCHAS

YOUR GREAT NAME

"Abba, I have a question for you."

"Go ahead, Chaim."

"What was Pinchas' name?"

Chaim's father thinks for a moment.

"You must be referring to the Medrash (Yalkut) that says that he received a new name – Eliyahu."

"That is exactly what I mean, Abba. This leads me to another question. Why did he receive a new name?"

"That is a deep subject, Chaim. The Vilna Gaon discusses this in the beginning of this week's parasha. A name is a reflection of a person's *neshama*. When a person does good deeds, he renews his *neshama*. That renewed *neshama* has a new name. That is why our forefathers had more than one name. Avram became Avraham. Yaakov became Yisrael."

"Very interesting. Why do good deeds renew our *neshama*, Abba?"

"The *neshama* is a deep subject that takes many years of study to understand, Chaim. However, even in our world we see that a name is a reflection of one's deeds. A family's good name can reflect their honesty, chessed, Torah knowledge, or *middos*. A company earns a good name by providing reliable products and services. Pinchas elevated his *neshama*, thereby earning his new name, Eliyahu, by quelling Hashem's anger and stopping a plague that was destroying Klal Yisrael." "That is amazing, Abba. Is there a lesson in this for us?"

"Yes, Chaim. We are always trying to do as many mitzvos as we can. We know that they will earn us great reward in Olam Habo. Now we have another benefit from doing mitzvos. Our forefathers' mitzvos brought them a new *neshama* and a new name. Even if we cannot accomplish that, our mitzvos can earn for us a good name. People will hear your name, and know that you are a person with integrity, who serves Hashem with all of his heart."

Kinderlach . . .

What's in a name? It reflects your neshama and your deeds. When you do good deeds, you earn a good name for yourself. Although we do not change our names nowadays, we do change the title by which we are called. One who gets married becomes Reb. As he learns more Torah, he may become a Rebbe or a Rav. If he becomes the head of a Yeshiva, he will earn the title Rosh HaYeshiva. Those who lead the entire generation are called Gaon or Gadol. Those whose mitzvos are outstanding are called Tsaddikim. What do all of these great people have in common? Ambition for greatness. They strive for great deeds, which subsequently earn them a great name. Emulate them, kinderlach. Set your sights high. Strive for greatness. Earn a great name for yourself.

FAMILY

Everyone was excited beyond words. The big day had finally come - the wedding of the family's oldest child.

"Okay, everyone, smile. Come, let's see those big white teeth. Say, 'cheese'." The photographer snapped the picture. "What a beautiful, happy family!"

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin relates that the Torah teaches us the proper choices in life. "It is not good that man be alone" (Bereshis 2:18). Choose to marry and raise a family. There is obviously great happiness and lofty purpose in family life. However, there is also a much deeper reason to choose marriage. The family is a "school" to learn how to love your fellow man. A person naturally loves his parents, his spouse, his children, and his relatives. Through family life, he learns to love and give to his friends, acquaintances, and eventually everyone.

Rav Sorotzkin goes on to explain that the life during the forty years in the desert was like one big family. All of Klal Yisrael lived under one big roof - the Annanei HaKovod (Clouds of Glory). They ate the man from one table (so to speak), and they drank from one well. Therefore, when the census was taken in the beginning of parashas Bamidbar, no family names were mentioned. We were like one big family. Now, in parashas Pinchas, we were preparing to enter the Land of Israel. No Annanei HaKovod, no man, and no well. What would happen to our unity? Would it break apart completely? No. We would retain the togetherness on a smaller level - the family structure. Therefore, at the census taken now, in parashas Pinchas, the family names are mentioned. To teach us that this is our new unity structure. The families would live together, and receive their inheritance together in the Land. There they would hold on to their great tradition of loving and giving to each other, and to their greater family: Klal Yisrael.

Kinderlach . . .

School is not the only place to learn. We also receive a great education in the home. What do we learn there? How to love and give. Within the walls of our house lives our family. We love them and we constantly give to them. "Please pass me the salt." An opportunity to do chessed. "Let's wash the floors." A chance to work together. "Oy vey. I cut my finger." Work on being empathetic. "Oh no, the cookies are gone and I did not get one." Now is the time to give. The home is the place to learn to love and give. Then we can "graduate" to learning to give to friends, neighbors, and eventually all of Klal Yisrael. Kinderlach, may you all become geniuses at loving and giving.

A BIG SACRIFICE

"For on the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the *Korbon Tomid* ceased."

"For on the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the *Korbonos Olah* and *Zevach* ceased."

"For on the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the service of the *Korbonos* ceased."

We will recite these words during the selichos on the Seventeenth of Tammuz. It was indeed a dark day in Jewish history. A day that marked the end of the *Korbonos* and their Temple service. Of what value were the *Korbonos*? What did we lose?

The Medrash Rabba (Pinchas 21:21) relates that there was never a man in Yerushalayim with a sin in his hand. How could this be? The morning Tomid would atone for sins of the night. The late afternoon Tomid would atone for sins of the day. How wonderful! A life without sin! The *Korbon Todah* was a means of expressing our thanks to Hashem. Every Yom Tov was celebrated with *Korbonos*. The *chagiga* and *reiya* are two examples. *Korbonos* made it possible to be a nozir. The *Parah Aduma* allowed us to be tahor. Over 170 of the 613 mitzvos are connected to *korbonos*. Life in the times of the Beis HaMikdash was on a different spiritual plane.

Kinderlach . . .

We have no Korbonos. So much has been lost. Yet, there is hope. We do have a substitute. The verse states, "vi'nashalma parim sifaseinu" (and we will repay with the oxen of our lips)[Hoshea 14:3]. Our sages darshen this to mean that words of tefillah and learning about korbonos serve in place of the actual sacrifices. Our prayers serve as Korbonos. Specifically the recitation of the Korbonos themselves. It just takes a few extra minutes before the shacharis (morning) and mincha (afternoon) prayers. Say the korbonos. Learn about them and understand them. New worlds will open up to you. Your life will be richer. Sacrifice the time for sacrifices.

Parasha Questions:

- What was Pinchas' bris shalom? (Rashi 25:12)
- Why did Hashem command Moshe and Elazar to take a census of the Jews? (Rashi 26:1)
- What was the total number counted? (26:51)
- What are the laws of inheritance of daughters? (27:6-11)

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