**PARSHA INSIGHTS**

**THE SEEKER**

"And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Take to yourself Yehoshua ben Nun, a man in whom there is spirit...’" (27:18)

What is the essential ingredient of greatness? Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, zatzal, one of the great Torah scholars of the previous generation was once visiting his uncle, Rabbi Avraham Yafin, zatzal, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Nevardok Yeshiva. As they entered the Beit Midrash (study hall), Rabbi Shmuelevitz asked Rabbi Yafin, “Who is your sharpest student?” Discreetly, Rabbi Yafin pointed out a certain pupil. “And who is the most studious?” Rabbi Yafin showed him another. “And who has the greatest breadth of knowledge?” Rabbi Yafin indicated yet a third. “And who,” said Rabbi Shmuelevitz finally, “is the best student?” Rabbi Yafin was surprised when Rabbi Yafin indicated none of the previously mentioned students, but another one entirely. “He is my best bachur (young man).” said Rabbi Yafin. “But until now you didn’t mention him.” said Rabbi Shmuelevitz. “What makes him the best?” Rabi Yafin looked at Rabbi Shmuelevitz and said, “This one is a seeker.”

In the ascent to greatness, the most precious quality that a person can have is the desire to seek, to pursue truth with a ceaseless and tireless longing.

“And Hashem said to Moshe, ‘Take to yourself Yehoshua ben Nun, a man in whom there is spirit...’”

The Sforno explains the phrase, “a man in whom there is spirit,” to mean “prepared to receive the Light of the Face of the Living G-d.” The Sforno compares Yehoshua to the artisans who crafted the Mishkan and its vessels in the desert. About them G-d said, “And into the heart of all wise of heart, I have placed wisdom.” (Shmot 31:6)

The closest those artisans had come to the extremely skilled work needed to construct the Mishkan was shlepping cement to build Egyptian treasure-cities. How were they able, with no previous experience, to fabricate something as beautiful, delicate and spiritually precise as the Mishkan?

To be “wise of heart” means to be prepared to receive “the Light of the Face of the Living G-d;” to be dissatisfied with the knowledge that one has already, and to want more; to want G-d’s radiance to illuminate our minds. Whatever those artisans, those painters, builders and draughtsmen lacked in experience was more than made up for by their overwhelming enthusiasm to build the Mishkan.

When the Torah lists the heads of the Jewish People who were sent to spy out the Land of Israel, it lists them according to their importance. Yehoshua appears fifth in that list. G-d chose him to be the leader of the Jewish People precisely because of the quality that he was a seeker and wanted more.

When Moshe ascended to the supernal realms, Yehoshua waited for him at the foot of Mount Sinai for forty days. Yehoshua took no tea breaks, no days off. Even though he could have rushed out to meet Moshe and resumed his learning as soon as Moshe returned, Yehoshua was not prepared to waste those few precious extra moments between the camp and the foot of the mount.

Such is the nature of a seeker.

Oh, by the way, I almost forgot. That student that Rabbi Avraham Yafin described as his ‘best bachur’ became better known as the Steipler Gaon, one of the greatest halachic arbiters of his generation.

Source: Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz in Sichot Mussar; with thanks to Rabbi Mordechai Perlman and Rabbi Eli Merl and Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
The wise man does not speak before one who is wiser than him and does not break into the words of another” — (Avot 5:7)

When he debates a point with someone the wise man waits until the other person has completed all that he has to say, and only then will he respond if he has anything with which to challenge the statements. He will never break into the other’s words, for this causes him to become confused and prevents him from properly expressing himself. The wise man, after all, is prepared to concede to the truth no matter whom it comes from.

It is also poor manners to insult a chaveruta (study partner) or a talmid (student) by thus interrupting him, as if to say that there is no value to his words. Nothing but arrogance can explain such behavior.

*Tiferet Yisrael*
1. Why was Pinchas not originally a kohen?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the yud and heh added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a “sign.” What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach’s children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov’s only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How long to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the midbar. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na’aman all have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad’s daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad’s daughters’ names?
14. Tzlofchad died for what transgression?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase “G-d of the spirits of all flesh”?
16. Moshe “put some of his glory” upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as musaf sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called Yom Habikkurim?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

**PARSHA Q&A!**

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

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When I call out the Name of G-d, said Moshe to the Jewish People, you must give praise to His greatness.”

“...”

The Sage Rebbie in explaining the source for the response of those who heard the Kohen Gadol’s confession (Yoma 37)

“...”

Rabbi Yochanan (Yoma 38b)

The entire universe is sustained by the merit of one righteous person, as it is written (Mishlei 10:25) ‘And the tzad-dik is the foundation of the universe’.”

Rabbi Yochanan (Yoma 38b)
When officials of Rockland County in New York State decided to allocate the use of county sports fields to baseball teams in the Orthodox “Little League” as part of services due to local residents, they included professional umpires in the package. One of these umpires, who also officiates at games of non-Jewish Little League teams, was recently reported as commenting on the difference between the two leagues.

At those other games, he said, there are frequent violent clashes, not only between the players of the opposing teams but even between the fathers who are spectators. What a pleasure, he concluded, it is to umpire a game in which the players are so well behaved!

It may also be assumed that there is no trouble between the fathers who are probably using their free time to study Torah rather than watch their children play.
Question: I sometimes take a cab to an important appointment that I am in a hurry to reach. The impression I get from some cabbies is that they are overly cautious when it comes to crossing an intersection when a traffic light is about to change from green. As I nervously look at my watch and see the precious seconds passing as we wait for the light to change to green (and at the meter registering a higher fare!), I cannot help thinking that I would have made that light. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: While we can empathize with your frustration in the situation you describe, we must point out why you have no justified cause for being upset with your cautious cabbie. Crossing an intersection when the light is about to change is a risky business. If you are wrong in your estimation you face not only the danger of being fined for passing a red light, but also the peril of being involved in an accident with a pedestrian or another car. Although you feel confident of avoiding both of these dangers when you are driving, it is unfair to expect your cabbie to take the same risk. It should also be remembered that, unlike you, the cabbie drives for a living and cannot afford to take chances.

So just sit back and relax and be happy that you will reach your destination safe and sound.