NEW

לקוטי שיחות

PINCHAS פנחס

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Dedicated to

Emmanuel (Mendel) Karp

1905 - 1989

son of Bernard (Berl) and Rose (Rezele)

Manny Karp was the first of his family born in the United States, in 1905. His first language was Yiddish. Losing his mother to the Spanish Flu shaped his resilience and commitment to helping others, ultimately leading to a career as a guidance counselor in Philadelphia public schools. He also served many years as the director of Camp Akiba in the Poconos.

Karp's legacy is characterized by his optimism and unwavering dedication to learning and mentorship. Emmanuel Karp died in 1989.

PINCHAS I | פנחס א

Adapted from *sichos* delivered on 12 Tammuz, 5713 (1953) and 5714 (1954)

Introduction

There are people who freeze in times of danger. If they feel a threat to themselves, their families, or anyone they really care about, they're at a loss. They do not know what to do and often end up doing little or nothing at all.

And then there are others who always spring into action in times of challenge. Their adrenaline flows and they act decisively, often going above and beyond the call of duty. They assess a situation and immediately focus on the desired end-result – the danger that must be averted and/or the problem that must be solved. They are willing to take risks – to their honor or to their finances, and even to risk their lives, because they are motivated by the mission, by the goal, by what they know must be accomplished.

The *sichah* that follows focuses on the story of Pinchas and the zealousness he showed when he – and the Jewish people as a whole – were confronted with a display of public immorality. In it, the Rebbe explains that sometimes there arise situations where, were one to come to a Rabbinic court and ask whether any action should be taken to prevent the act, the judges would answer that doing so is forbidden. Nevertheless, when a person is inspired with a zeal granted to him by G-d and does not ask, but instead takes immediate action, he – like Pinchas – will be rewarded with unique Divine success and blessings.

This is a timeless message.

True, when the Rebbe first delivered it, he was speaking directly to the American Jewish community at a particular time – the mid-1950s. American Jews were recovering from the wounds of the Holocaust and felt the need to fully integrate into American life. Many were busy searching for their own sense of security; Jewish education and Jewish life were not their highest priority. Pained by the loss of even one Jew to our spiritual heritage – and how much more so, the loss of many Jews – the Rebbe cried out for action. Something had to be done, and it had to be done immediately.

Although those times are far behind us, the Rebbe's words are equally relevant today. We all – as individuals and as a collective – continue to face situations where complacency is sinful and action must be taken. When we see Jewish souls at risk, we cannot sit back. For us, today, Pinchas serves as an exemplar and his conduct as inspiration and a model.

When Initiative Is Called For

Rising to the Challenge

1. This week's Torah reading relates that after Zimri committed an act of public immorality,[1] the leaders of the people were confounded and **did not know what to do. Moshe, Elazar, and the elders** of the people **were** all **present,** but were unsure how to respond. **Then Pinchas, the youngest of that group, took action.**[2] Until that point, Pinchas was not known as a person of distinction. For example, when **the Talmud**[3] **describes the order in which Moshe taught the Torah to the Jewish people,** it relates that **he first studied with Aharon, afterwards with Elazar and Isamar, then with the 70 elders, and** lastly **with the entire Jewish people. Pinchas** was not included in the first three groups; he **was taught at the same time as the people as a whole.** Nevertheless, when everyone else was at loss for what to do, he remembered the law that when there is such disregard for morality in public, **"the zealous may strike [the transgressor]."** When he reminded Moshe of that law, Moshe **told him, "Let the one who reads the letter be the agent [who fulfills it]."**[4]

This story contains **a lesson for us:** There are times when **there are** pressing **matters, and** yet **the leaders of the generation remain silent.** However, their silence **should not necessarily** be interpreted **as proof that nothing need be done and** that one might **excuse himself by making learned calculations** as to why action is not necessary. **If a person sees** that there is a troubling matter and he realizes **that he can do something about it, he must take action. The fact that greater people than him do not address the issue** can be a

א. אִין הַיְינְטִיקֶער סֶדְרָה וֶוערְט דֶערְצֵיילְט, אַז וֶוען עֶס אִיז פָּארְגֶעקוּמֶען דִי מַעֲשֶׂה זִמְרִי, הָאט מֶען נִיט גֶעווּאוּסְט וָואס צוּ טָאן, כָּאטשׁ עֶס זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען דֶערְבַּיי מֹשֶׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר* מִיט דִי זְקֵנִים. הָאט זִיךְ דַאן אָנְגֶערוּפְן פִּנְחָס, וָואס עֶר אִיז גֶעוֶוען דֶער צָעִיר שֶׁבַּחֲבוּרָה[א] (דִי גְמָרָא[ב] רֶעכְנְט אוֹיס דֶעם סֵדֶר וִוי מֹשֶׁה הָאט גֶעלֶערְנְט תּוֹרָה מִיט אִידְן: צוּ עֶרְשְׁט הָאט עֶר גֶעלֶערְנְט מִיט אַהֲרֹן'עֶן, דֶערְנָאךְ מִיט אֶלְעָזָר וְאִיתָמָר, דֶערְנָאךְ מִיט דִי שִׁבְעִים זְקֵנִים, אוּן דֶערְנָאךְ מִיט אַלֶע אִידְן, קוּמְט דָאךְ אוֹיס אַז פִּנְחָס הָאט גֶעלֶערְנְט צוּזַאמֶען מִיט אַלֶע אִידְן גְלַייךְ), אַז קַנָּאִים פּוֹגְעִים בּוֹ. הָאט מֶען אִים גֶעזָאגְט, קַרְיָינָא דְאִגַּרְתָּא אִיהוּ לֶהֱוֵי פַּרְוַנְקָא[ג] דֶער לֵייעֶנֶער פוּן בְּרִיוו, עֶר זָאל אוֹיךְ זַיְין דֶער שְׁלִיחַ.

דִי אָנְוַוְיְיזוּנְג פוּן דֶעם אִיז:

עֶס זַיְינֶען פַּארַאן עִנְיָנִים וָואס גְדוֹלִים שֶׁבְּדוֹר שְׁווַיְיגְן אוּן זָאגְן נִיט וֶועגְן דֶעם, אִיז דָאס נִיט אַלֶעמָאל אַ רַאְיָה אַז מֶען דַארְף גָארְנִיט טָאן, אוּן מַאכְן חֶשְׁבּוֹנוֹת אוּן לוֹמְדוּת אוֹיף אַרוֹיסְדְרֵייעֶן זִיךְ פוּן דֶעם. מֶען דַארְף וִויסְן, אַז אוֹיבּ עֶר זֶעט אַז עֶר קָאן טָאן אִין דֶעם, דַארְף עֶר טָאן, אוּן דָאס וָואס גְרֶעסֶערֶע פוּן אִים זָאגְן גָארְנִישְׁט, אִיז

1. See *Bamidbar,* ch. 25.

2. ***Bamidbar Rabbah*** **20:25;** ***Midrash Tanchuma, Balak,*** **sec. 21.**

3. ***Eruvin*** **54b.**

4. ***Sanhedrin*** **82a.** I.e., Moshe instructed Pinchas to be the one to take action.

sign **that this is his personal mission which he must undertake and accomplish – and through that, he will reach his own perfection.**

To refer back to the example of Pinchas: Our Sages[5] question why, although previously Moshe had risen to the occasion during many times of controversy, in this instance, he was at a loss. They explain that it was Divinely ordained for Moshe not to intervene, **so that Pinchas would** take the initiative and act in a manner that would **earn him the priesthood.**

Similarly, in every person's life, there are times when Divine Providence creates circumstances that enable him to carry out his individual mission. **Just as, in a material sense, every person has his own portion designated for him and "no person can affect the livelihood [destined] for another,"[6] so too – and, indeed, to an even greater extent – does this apply in a spiritual sense.** This is reflected in the request,[7] **"Grant us our portion in Your Torah,"** i.e., **every Jew has a portion in the Torah** associated with his individual soul. The intent is **not only that he comprehend** a specific portion of **the Torah, but also that he develop new insights. In that vein, the Talmud[8] states that Rabbi Akiva related a *halachah* that even Moshe did not know.**

Similar concepts apply **regarding the observance of the *mitzvos*. Every person has a mission that** only **he can fulfill.** Just as with material things **"no person can affect the livelihood** destined **for another,"[6]** so too, in a spiritual sense, every person has a unique mission that he is destined to fulfill. **True, our Sages taught[9]** that there are situations where one who **"merits acquires his portion and the portion of another." However, that is speaking about the reward for the *mitzvos*** that one receives in ***Gan Eden,*** the afterlife. **With regard to the *mitzvos* themselves – and they surpass the reward one receives for their** observance **– every person has his own portion. Thus, it is possible that the reason**

דָאס אֶפְשָׁר כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּטּוֹל פִּנְחָס אֶת הַכְּהֻנָּה[ד]. דָאס הֵייסְט אַז דָאס אִיז זַיְין חֵלֶק וָואס עֶר דַארְף דָאס מְבָרֵר זַיְין, אוּן דוּרְכְדֶעם דַוְקָא וֶועט עֶר צוּקוּמֶען צוּ זַיְין שְׁלֵימוּת.

אַזוֹי ווִי אִין גַשְׁמִיּוּת הָאט דָאךְ יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶער זַיְין חֵלֶק, וְאֵין אָדָם נוֹגֵעַ בְּפַרְנָסָתוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ[ה], אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ, אוּן נָאךְ מִיט אַ כָּל שֶׁכֵּן וְקַל וָחֹמֶר, אִין רוּחְנִיּוּת, אַז יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶער הָאט זַיְין חֵלֶק אִין תּוֹרָה

- דָאס אִיז וָואס מֶען זָאגְט, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ[ו], וָואס דָאס מֵיינְט נִיט נָאר אִין פַארְשְׁטֵיין תּוֹרָה, נָאר אוֹיךְ אִין מְחַדֵּשׁ זַיְין, ווִי דִי גְמָרָא דֶערְצֵיילְט אִין מְנָחוֹת[ז] אַז רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא הָאט גֶעזָאגְט אַ דְבַר הֲלָכָה וָואס אֲפִילוּ מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ הָאט נִיט גֶעווּאוּסְט פוּן דֶעם -

אוּן אִין קִיּוּם הַמִּצְוֹת, וָואס יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶער דַארְף אוֹיפְטָאן, וְאֵין אֶחָד נוֹגֵעַ בְּפַרְנָסָתוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ. דָאס וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט[ח], זָכָה נוֹטֵל חֶלְקוֹ וְחֵלֶק חֲבֵרוֹ, דָאס רֶעדט זִיךְ וֶועגְן גַן עֵדֶן, וָואס דָאס אִיז שְׂכַר הַמִּצְוֹת, אָבֶּער דִי מִצְוָה אַלֵיין וָואס אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן אִיר שָׂכָר, אִין דֶעם הָאט יֶעדֶער

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5. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 20:24.

6. To refer to a **similar** statement by our Sages (*Yoma* 38b), "No person **can touch that which has been designated for another."**

7. *Avos* 5:20.

8. *Menachos* 29b.

9. *Chagigah* 15a.

no one else is dealing with a particular matter is because this task is intended for a specific person – **it is his personal mission that he must carry out.**

אֵיינֶער זַיְין חֵלֶק. וּבְמֵילָא קָאן זַיְין אַז דָאס וָואס קֵיינֶער טוּט עֶס נִיט, אִיז עֶס וַוִיילֶע דָאס אִיז זַיְין עִנְיָן וָואס עֶר דַארְף אִים אָפְּטָאן.

Powers That Surpass Those of Mortals

2. It is stated[10] **regarding Pinchas, "Pinchas is Eliyahu."** That statement **appears problematic because Pinchas lived before Eliyahu. Thus, seemingly, the statement should read, "Eliyahu is Pinchas." A resolution** can be **offered based on the** ***Zohar,***[11] **which states that Eliyahu existed earlier, but as an angel – not as an ordinary mortal. Therefore, it is said, "Pinchas is Eliyahu;"** for Eliyahu's soul descended into Pinchas' body.

ב. אוֹיף פִּנְחָס'ן שְׁטֵייט[ט]: פִּנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ. פְרֶעגְט מֶען אוֹיף דֶעם דִי קַשְׁיָא, פְּרִיעֶר אִיז דָאךְ גֶעוֶוען פִּנְחָס אוּן דֶערְנָאךְ אֵלִיָּהוּ, הָאט דָאךְ גֶעדַארְפְט שְׁטֵיין, אֵלִיָּהוּ זֶה פִּנְחָס? אִיז דֶער תִּירוּץ אוֹיף דֶעם, לוֹיט דֶעם וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין זוֹהַר[י], אַז אֵלִיָּהוּ אִיז גֶעוֶוען נָאךְ גָאר פְּרִיעֶר, נָאר דַאן אִיז עֶר נִיט גֶעוֶוען קֵיין יְלוּד אִשָּׁה, וָואס אִיז גֶעבָּארְן גֶעוָוארְן פוּן אַ פָּאטֶער אוּן מוּטֶער, נָאר אַ מַלְאָךְ, אוּן דֶערִיבֶּער זָאגְט עֶר פִּנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ.

The application of **this concept in our Divine service is that, as stated previously, each person** has an individual mission and responsibility. **It is demanded of him not to look at another person** and simply follow his lead, **but to** take the initiative and **accept and carry out** every positive spiritual act **that presents itself to him. If he will ask, "From where will I derive the power to do this?" he is told, "Pinchas is Eliyahu." Since G-d presents him with a task that requires** ***mesirus nefesh*** **("self-sacrifice") to fulfill,** He certainly **provides him with the potential to accomplish it. It is possible that,** while doing so, **the spark of a heavenly being will enclothe itself in him** to enable him to carry it out.

אִין עֲבוֹדָה אִיז דָאס:

מֶען הָאט דָאךְ פְּרִיעֶר גֶעזָאגְט, אַז מֶען מָאנְט בַּיי יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶעם, נִיט קוּקְן אוֹיף קֵיינֶעם, אוּן אַן עִנְיָן הַבָּא לְיָדוֹ דַארְף עֶר נֶעמֶען אוּן אָפְּטָאן. פְרֶעגְט מֶען: ווָאוּ נֶעמְט מֶען כֹּחַ אוֹיף דֶעם? אִיז אוֹיף דֶעם זָאגְט מֶען פִּנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ, וְוִיבַּאלְד אַז דֶער אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער הָאט אִים מַזְמִין גֶעוֶוען אַן עִנְיָן וָואס עֶר דַארְף אִים טָאן בִּמְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ, גִיט מֶען אִים כֹּחוֹת אוֹיף דֶעם, אוּן עֶס קָאן גֶעמָאלְט זַיְין אַז אִין אִים גֵייט אַרַיְין אַ נִיצוֹץ פוּן אַזַא וָואס אִיז נִיט קֵיין יְלוּד אִשָּׁה.

Taking the Initiative and Doing So with *Mesirus Nefesh*

3. The directive from the above for all the young people of our generation is that when a challenge presents itself, **one should not make a**

ג. דִי הוֹרָאָה פוּן דֶעם אִין אוּנְזֶער דוֹר צוּ אַלֶע יוּנְגֶע לַיְיט אִיז, אַז זֵיי דַארְפְן

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10. *Targum Yonason, Shmos* 6:18; *Yalkut Shimoni,* in the beginning of *Parshas Pinchas,* sec. 771; *Zohar,* Vol. II, p. 190b; *Ralbag, I Melachim* 17:1.

11. *Zohar,* Vol. I, p. 46b; see the notes entitled *Derech Emes, et al.*

reckoning that so-and-so should deal with it, or if not him, **someone else. Instead,** when a positive spiritual task **presents itself to him, he must realize that this is his mission, that he has been given the potential to carry it out, and that he must do so with *mesirus nefesh.***

The above does not only apply to matters that dominate others' attention. **As the Rebbe** Rayatz **would say,**[12] ***mesirus nefesh* does not mean climbing a roof and throwing oneself off it, Heaven forbid.** Instead, ***mesirus nefesh* should be without fanfare or commotion,** as it is written regarding Eliyahu's vision,[13] **"G-d was not in the thunder."** ***Mesirus nefesh* must be expressed in all one's activities in day-to-day life,** including avoiding undesirable influences, as it is written about the one who walks on a righteous path: **"He blocks his ears"** and **"shuts his eyes"** so as not to hear or see unseemly matters.[14]

***Mesirus nefesh* is necessary even in Torah** study. **One must give oneself over to the Torah** and change himself according to its standards, **not take the Torah and adapt it** according **to his** understanding.

If a person truly desires to accomplish these goals, **he will be successful.** Moreover, **when one proceeds with self-sacrifice** like that **of Pinchas, then** he will merit to bring about the coming of **"Pinchas [as] Eliyahu," who will be the one to herald the Ultimate Redemption.**[15] This means that performing **all our Divine service at present** with the *mesirus nefesh* of Pinchas **will prepare for *Mashiach's*** coming and **for making the world a sanctuary for G-d.**

12. See *Toras Menachem,* Vol. 4, pp. 312-313; see *Sefer HaSichos 5697,* p. 165.

13. ***I Melachim* 19:11.**

14. ***Yeshayahu* 33:15. See *Kuntreis HaAvodah,* ch. 2.**

15. ***Targum Yonason, Shmos* 6:18.**

נִיט מַאכְן קֵיין חֶשְׁבּוֹנוֹת, אַז דֶער קָאן טָאן אוּן יֶענֶער קָאן טָאן, נָאר יֶעדֶער זַאךְ וָואס קוּמְט צוּ זֵייעֶר הַאנְט, דַארְפְן זֵיי ווִיסְן אַז דָאס אִיז זֵייעֶר חֵלֶק, אוּן זֵיי הָאבְּן כֹּחוֹת אוֹיף דֶעם, אוּן זיי דַארְפְן דָאס טָאן מִיט מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ.

אוּן מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ אִיז ווִי דֶער רֶבִּי הָאט גֶעזָאגְט: מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ מֵיינְט נִיט אַרוּפְגֵיין אוֹיף אַ דַאךְ אוּן אַרָאפְּוואַרְפְן זִיךְ, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם. מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ דַארְף זַיְין אָן רַעַשׁ אוּן אָן טוּמְל, ווָארוּם לֹא בָרַעַשׁ הֲוָיָ'[יא]. עֶס דַארְף זַיְין מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ אִין אַלֶע פְּעוּלוֹת פוּן טָאג־טֶעגְלֶעכְן לֶעבְן, אוֹטֵם אָזְנוֹ וגו' וְעוֹצֵם עֵינָיו[יב]. אֲפִילוּ אִין תּוֹרָה דַארְף אוֹיךְ זַיְין מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ, אַז עֶר זָאל נִיט נֶעמֶען תּוֹרָה צוּ זִיךְ נָאר נֶעמֶען זִיךְ צוּ דֶער תּוֹרָה. אוּן אַז מֶען ווִיל מִיט אַן אֱמֶת, ווֶעט מֶען אוֹיסְפִירְן.

אוּן בְּשַׁעַת מֶען גֵייט מִיטְן מְסִירַת נֶפֶשׁ פוּן פִּנְחָס'ן, אִיז אוֹיךְ - פִּנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ, וָואס עֶר ווֶעט מְבַשֵּׂר זַיְין דִי גְאוּלָה[יג], דָאס הֵייסְט אַז דִי גַאנְצֶע עֲבוֹדָה פוּן אִיצְטֶער, אִיז אַ הֲכָנָה צוּ מָשִׁיחַ'ן, אוֹיף מַאכְן דִי ווֶעלְט אַ מִקְדָּשׁ לוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

(משיחת י"ב תמוז, תשי"ד)

*) כן צריך להיות גם בהוצאות שלפני זה.

א) במדבר רבה פ"כ, כה. תנחומא בלק, כא.

ב) עירובין נד, ב.

ג) סנהדרין פב, א.

ד) במדבר רבה פרשה כ, כד.

ה) על דרך אין אדם נוגע במוכן לחבירו – יומא לח, ב.

ו) אבות פרק ה משנה כ.

ז) כט, ב.

ח) חגיגה טו, א.

ט) תרגום יונתן וארא ו, יח. ילקוט שמעוני אָנפאַנג פנחס. זהר חלק ב קצ, סע"ב. רלב"ג מלכים א יז, א.

י) חלק א מו, ב. עיין שם בהגהות דרך אמת ועוד.

יא) מלכים א יט, יא.

יב) ישעי' לג, טו. און זע קונטרס העבודה פרק ב.

יג) תרגום יונתן וארא ו, יח.

PINCHAS II | פנחס ב

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Yud-Beis Tammuz,* 5713

Introduction

There is always a fundamental tension between the textbook definition of Torah Law and its application in actual life. From Sinai onward, G-d gave us guidelines to govern our conduct. Over the years, these guidelines have become defined and established as *halachic* protocols and codified in works like the *Shulchan Aruch.*

Nevertheless, there are moments when immediate action is required that goes beyond standard legal procedures. The story of Pinchas exemplifies this dilemma – his zealous intervention stopped a plague that was devastating the Jewish people. However, he acted on his own initiative; a Rabbinic court would not have advised him to do so.

The challenge becomes even more complex in our contemporary world, where religious extremism often masquerades as Divine service. How do we distinguish between authentic zealousness for G-d and dangerous fanaticism? What internal criteria can guide someone to know when immediate action is called for, and when patient consultation with established authorities is required?

The Rebbe teaches that the answer lies not in external circumstances, but in the purity of one's motivations. True zealousness emerges only when the ego is completely absent – when a person acts not from personal conviction or anger, but from a soul so aligned with G-d's will that it becomes a transparent vessel for Divine purpose.

This distinction is crucial for our times. In an era when many claim to act on behalf of Heaven, the Torah's wisdom about authentic Divine service becomes more relevant than ever.

When to Look Beyond the Book

Acting Zealously for G-d

1. This week's Torah reading describes the actions of Pinchas, who displayed "zeal on behalf of G-d, Commander of legions."[1] Although this incident has been discussed previously, **"it is impossible that a new insight will not be developed when [a session in] a study hall [is convened]."**[2] **This was said regarding the Oral Law. How much more so** does it apply regarding **the Written Law, in which each letter is the source for many laws. And since** the Torah contains **a description of the entire narrative of Pinchas' actions,** how much more so can we continually derive **new insights** from it.

What is one of **the unique dimensions of this narrative?** It reveals the legal construct that there are situations concerning which when a question is brought to a *halachic* arbiter, **he should not answer as dictated by *halachah*.**[3] Nevertheless, a zealous person will act as the *halachah* dictates. For example, when there is a public disregard for morality – as was the case with the incident to which Pinchas reacted – **"the zealous may strike [the transgressor]."**[4] **In other words, there are instances when – were one to come to a court of law and ask what must be done –** the judges **would answer that** taking violent action **is forbidden because that is the answer the *Shulchan Aruch* instructs them to give. Nevertheless, the same *Shulchan Aruch*** states,[5] **"The zealous may strike [the transgressor]," i.e., when a person does not**

ד. אִין הַיְינְטִיקֶער סֶדְרָה וֶוערְט דֶערְצֵיילְט דִי מַעֲשֶׂה מִיט פִּנְחָס'ן וָואס עֶר הָאט מְקַנֵּא גֶעוֶוען קִנְאַת ה' צְבָאוֹת. בִּכְלַל אִיז דָאךְ אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ בְּלֹא חִידּוּשׁ[יד]. דָאס אִיז אִין תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה; תּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתַב, וָואס פוּן אַן אוֹת לֶערְנְט מֶען אָפּ גַאנְצֶע הֲלָכוֹת, אִיז דָאךְ מִכָּל שֶׁכֵּן אַז אַ גַאנְצֶער סִפּוּר הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, אַזוֹי וִוי דֶער סִפּוּר פוּן פִּנְחָס'ן, אִיז אִין דֶעם פַּארַאן אַ חִידּוּשׁ.

וָואס אִיז דֶער חִידּוּשׁ אִין דֶעם סִפּוּר? דֶער דִין פוּן הֲלָכָה וְאֵין מוֹרִין כֵּן[טו], אוּן קַנָּאִין פּוֹגְעִין בּוֹ[טז]. דָאס הֵייסְט אַז עֶס זַיְינֶען פַּארַאן אַזֶעלְכֶע זַאכְן וָואס בְּשַׁעַת מֶען קוּמְט צוּ בֵּית דִין פְרֶעגְן וָואס צוּ טָאן, וֶועלְן זֵיי עֶנְטְפֶערְן אוֹיף נִיט, וַוְיילֶע אַזוֹי שְׁטֵייט אִין שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ. פוּנְדֶעסְטְוֶועגְן אִיז אִין דֶעם זֶעלְבְּן שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ שְׁטֵייט אַז קַנָּאִים פּוֹגְעִים בּוֹ, דָאס הֵייסְט אַז בְּשַׁעַת עֶר קוּמְט נִיט צוּ בֵּית דִין נָאר עֶר

1. Cf. *Bamidbar* 25:10. Cf. *Yeshayahu* 9:6, *et al.*

2. ***Chagigah* 3a.** Since the Torah is "the word of G-d," it serves as an ever-flowing source of inspiration and ideas.

3. ***Eruvin* 7a*; Beitzah* 28b.** I.e., there are instances when, although theoretically the *halachah* is defined in a certain manner, in practice, a Jewish court should not rule in that manner for various reasons. This interpretation of the foregoing Talmudic concept follows the perspective of *Rashi* (*Beitzah* 29a, *Bava Kama* 30b), *et al.* There are others who interpret the concept as meaning that the Rabbinic court should simply refrain from answering in such an instance.

4. ***Sanhedrin* 82a.**

5. See *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer* 16:2; *Rama, Choshen Mishpat,* sec. 425.

go to the court to ask, **but rather acts on his own** initiative **because the inner dimension of his soul motivates** him to act, **his action is sanctioned by law.**[6] This is what is meant by the expression, **"This is the law, but one should not rule in this manner."**[3] When a person acts according to the law, without asking a Rabbinic court for direction, his own will **is aligned with** G-d's **sublime will.**

By and large, one must always consult a court, i.e., act according to the directives he is given. **However, when a situation arises** where one is aroused to display **"zeal on behalf of G-d, Commander of legions,"** there is no place for hesitation or question. To cite **a parallel, one who** hesitates and **consults a Rabbinic authority** – when there is a pressing question whether to violate the *Shabbos* laws **in order to save a life – is considered as having shed blood.**[7] **The** need for action **should move a person to the extent that he is motivated to act on his own initiative without consulting the court.**

Similarly, when it comes to a matter involving zealousness for G-d's sake and the inner dimensions of the person's soul are aroused, such a person does not consult the court. He cannot wait to be assured of the propriety of his actions[8] and **do nothing unless instructed by the court because every moment is precious. Furthermore, even when he knows that the court would rule otherwise,** nevertheless, **"the zealous may strike [the transgressor]." Indeed, this is G-d's will – "the zealous may strike [the transgressor]" is a law cited in the *Shulchan Aruch.***[5]

To explain the above: "A person will only transgress when he is overcome by a spirit of folly."[9] **As the Alter Rebbe states,**[10] **a Jew's natural tendency is that "he neither wants, nor is he able, to separate himself**

טוּט אַלֵיין ווִי עֶר אִיז מַרְגִּיש מִצַּד פְּנִימִיּוּת נַפְשׁוֹ, הָאט עֶר גֶעטָאן ווִי עַל פִּי דִּין אִיז (הֲלָכָה וְאֵין מוֹרִין כֵּן) אוּן עֶר הָאט מְכַוֵּן גֶעוועֶן צוּ דֶעם רָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן.

אַזוֹי, אַלֶע מָאל, דַארְף מֶען יֶעדֶער זַאךְ פְרֶעגְן בַּיי בֵּית דִּין. אָבֶער בְּשַׁעַת עֶס הַאנְדְלְט זִיךְ ווֶעגְן קִנְאַת ה׳ צְבָאוֹת, אִיז דָאס עַל דֶּרֶךְ ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט[ז], אַז דֶער ווָאס פְרֶעגְט אוֹיף עִנְיָנִים פוּן פִּקּוּחַ נְפָשׁוֹת אִיז עֶר שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים. דֶער עִנְיָן הָאט אִים גֶעדַארְפְט דֶערְנֶעמֶען אוֹיף אַזוֹי פִיל אַז עֶר זָאל דָאס אַלֵיין אָפְּטָאן, נִיט פְרֶעגְנְדִיק בַּיי בֵּית דִּין. אַזוֹי אִיז אוֹיךְ ווֶען עֶס אִיז קִנְאַת ה׳, אוּן דֶער עִנְיָן דֶערְנֶעמְט אִים אִין פְּנִימִיּוּת נַפְשׁוֹ, דַאן גֵייט עֶר נִיט פְרֶעגְן בַּיי בֵּית דִּין; דַאן דַארְף מֶען נִיט ווֶעלְן גֵיין דַוְקָא אוֹיף אַן אַיְיזֶערְנֶער בְּרִיק, אוּן גָארְנִישְׁט טָאן אָן בֵּית דִּין – ווַיְילֶע עֶס אִיז אַ שָׁאד יֶעדֶע מִינוּט, אוּן נָאךְ מֶערֶער, אֲפִילוּ ווֶען מֶען ווֵייס אַז בֵּית דִּין ווֶעט פַּסְקֶ׳נֶען אוֹיף נִיט, אִיז קַנָּאִים פּוֹגְעִים בּוֹ, אוּן דָאס אִיז ווִי דֶער רָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן, ווַיְילֶע קַנָּאִים פּוֹגְעִים בּוֹ אִיז אַ דִּין אִין שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ.

דִי הַסְבָּרָה אִין דֶעם אִיז:

אֵין אָדָם עוֹבֵר עֲבֵירָה אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן נִכְנַס בּוֹ רוּחַ שְׁטוּת[ח], ווָארוּם אַ אִיד מִצַּד עַצְמוֹ – אִיז ווִי דֶער אַלְטֶער רֶבִּי הָאט גֶעזָאגְט: אַ אִיד נִיט עֶר ווִיל אוּן נִיט עֶר קֶען זַיְין אַ נִפְרָד

6. It must be emphasized that wholesale license to take the law into one's own hands is not given. The license is given only to one whose zeal – like that of Pinchas – is motivated by the inner dimension of his soul.

7. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma* 8:5.

8. This phrase translates the Yiddish idiom used by the Rebbe that literally means, "go on an iron bridge" whose strength guarantees one's safety when crossing it.

9. *Sotah* 3a.

10. Quoted in *HaYom Yom,* entry for 21 Sivan and entry for 25 Tammuz.

from G-dliness." It is **only because of the spirit of folly, the animal within him, i.e., his animal soul, that it is possible for him to act** with the spiritual insensitivity of **an animal.**

Thus, when he is aroused to zealousness – not for his own honor, nor for the honor of his father's house – but zealousness for G-d's sake, he is so wrapped up in the matter that he does not pause to **think whether a sin is involved or not. He is so totally permeated by his zeal for G-d that he is not concerned with his own self at all; he ignores his body and his animal soul entirely. All that** matters at that time **is his G-dly soul, which is always faithful to Him**[11] **and which is the source of his zealousness. Accordingly, when** he is so aroused that **he is not concerned with his animal soul, the soul on its own accord will certainly align itself with G-d's will.**

Expressing such zealousness produces positive consequences of a uniquely broad scope. To refer to the narrative in this week's Torah reading, **by killing Zimri, Pinchas caused the plague to cease and saved many thousands of Jews from a severe sin, the sin of** worshiping **Baal Peor.**[12] Concerning that sin, **the *Midrash***[13] **states that this transgression continuously arouses negative heavenly forces and it is Moshe**'s burial and gravesite **that negate them. No other sin** aroused such negative consequences. **Pinchas saved the Jews from this severe transgression. As a result, he merited** that G-d **"grant[ed] him [His] covenant of peace."**[14] Moreover, **"Pinchas is Eliyahu"; he is present at the *bris* of every** Jewish child,[15] **and he will announce the Ultimate Redemption.**

פוּן אֱלֹקוּת, נָאר מִצַּד דֶעם רוּחַ שְׁטוּת, מִצַּד דֶער בְּהֵמָה וָואס אִין אִים, דֶער נֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית, מִצַּד דֶעם קָאן עֶר טָאן מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהֵמָה. וּבְמֵילָא בְּשַׁעַת עֶר וֶוערְט נִתְעוֹרֵר מִיט אַ קַנָּאוּת, נִיט צוּלִיבּ זַיְין כָּבוֹד אוּן נִיט צוּלִיבּ כְּבוֹד בֵּית אַבָּא, נָאר קַנֹּא קִנֵּאתִי לַהֲוָיֶ׳, אוּן דֶער עִנְיָן דֶערְנֶעמְט אִים אַזוֹיפִיל אַז עֶר טְרַאכְט אֲפִילוּ נִיט צִי עֶר אִיז עוֹבֵר אַן עֲבֵירָה דֶערְמִיט צִי נִיט, וַוייְלֶע עֶר אִיז אִינְגַאנְצְן דוּרְכְגֶענוּמֶען מִיט דִי קַנָּאוּת לַהֲוָיֶ׳, בְּמֵילָא הָאט עֶר זִיךְ אַוֶועקְגֶעלֵייגְט אִינְגַאנְצְן אָן אַ זַיְיט, אִיז בְּשַׁעַת דֶעם גוּף וְנֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית לֵייגְט עֶר אַוֶועק אָן אַ זַיְיט אוּן עֶס בְּלַייְבְּט נָאר דֶער נֶפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית וָואס אִיז שְׁטֶענְדִיק בְּאָמְנָה אִתּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ[ט], וָואס מִצַּד דֶעם קוּמְט בַּיי אִים דִי קַנָּאוּת, אִיז דָאךְ וַדַּאי אַז בְּשַׁעַת דֶער נֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית אִיז נִיט מְבַלְבֵּל, וֶועט דִי נְשָׁמָה מִצַּד עַצְמָהּ זִיכֶער מְכֻוָּן זַיְין צוּ דֶעם רָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן.

דֶערְפַאר זֶעעֶן מִיר אַז דוּרְךְ דֶעם וָואס פִּנְחָס הָאט גֶע׳הַרְגֶ׳ט זִמְרִי׳ן, אִיז וַתֵּעָצַר הַמַּגֵּפָה, עֶר הָאט מַצִּיל גֶעוֶוען כַּמָּה אֲלָפִים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל פוּן אַן עָוֹן חָמוּר בְּיוֹתֵר, דֶער עֲוֹן בַּעַל פְּעוֹר, וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין מִדְרָשׁ[כ] אַז דֶער עָוֹן פוּן בַּעַל פְּעוֹר אִיז שְׁטֶענְדִיק מְקַטְרֵג אוּן מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ נֶעמְט אַרָאפּ דֶעם קִטְרוּג, וָואס אוֹיף קֵיין עָוֹן גֶעפִינְט מֶען דָאס נִיט, אוּן פִּנְחָס הָאט מַצִּיל גֶעוֶוען דִי אִידְן פוּן דֶעם עָוֹן. דֶערְפַאר הָאט עֶר זוֹכֶה גֶעוֶוען אַז הִנְנִי נוֹתֵן לוֹ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שָׁלוֹם, דְּפִנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ וָואס עֶר קוּמְט אוֹיף יֶעדֶער בְּרִית מִילָה[כא] אוּן עֶר וֶועט קוּמֶען מְבַשֵּׂר זַיְין דִי גְאוּלָה.

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11. ***Tanya,* ch. 24.**

12. See *Bamidbar,* ch. 25.

13. ***Tosafos, Sotah* 14a,** s.v, *mipnei mah.* ***Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer,* the end of ch. 45, *et al.***

14. *Bamidbar* 25:12.

15. ***Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer,* ch. 29; Avudraham, *Hilchos Bris Milah.***

A Time for Zealousness

2. We are presently also living in a time of plague, Heaven forbid. As my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz said,[16] as part of the birth-pangs of *Mashiach's* imminent arrival, "G-d has set the walls of exile on fire." There is no need for proofs or explanations about this matter; it is obvious. We see how in actual fact so many Jews in the Diaspora and in the Holy Land are becoming lost to Judaism. They are following a crooked path which leads them to become opponents of G-d and His Torah. In such a time, a time when a fire is raging, when Jewish boys and girls are apt to be lost to Judaism, it is not necessary to consult a Jewish court or to look in holy books to see whether one may give up an hour of Torah study in an attempt to rectify this problem. There is no time for questions like this. Every moment lost increases the danger. Now is the time when we must act.

In such a time, every person must ignite the pure flame of zealousness in his soul. This can be accomplished through studying *pnimiyus haTorah.* With that energy, he must go out from his own private setting and approach other Jews and speak to them in a pleasant manner and with heartfelt words. There is no need for intellectual disputes and to argue back-and-forth. When such a destructive fire is raging, there is no time for this. When there is danger to a person's soul, the way to influence the other person is not through the mind. Instead, it is necessary to speak with feeling, with soul-felt words. This is the way to ignite the pure flame lying deep within the soul of the other Jew, of which it is said,[17] "Its sparks are sparks of fire,

ה. אִיצְטֶער אִיז דָאךְ אוֹיךְ אַ זְמַן פוּן אַ מַגֵּפָה, רַחֲמָנָא לִצְלַן. ווִי כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ״ר הָאט גֶעזָאגְט אַז דֶער אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטֶער הָאט אָנְגֶעצוּנְדן דִי גָלוּת־ווֶענְט[כב], ווָאס דָאס אִיז אַן עִנְיָן ווָאס מֶען דַארְף נִיט הָאבְּן אוֹיף דֶעם קֵיין רַאְיוֹת אוּן הַסְבָּרוֹת, נָאר מֶען זֶעט דָאס בְּמוּחָשׁ. מֶען זֶעט בְּמוּחָשׁ ווִי כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אִין חוּץ לָאָרֶץ אוּן אִין אֶרֶץ הַקְדוֹשָׁה תִּבָּנֶה וְתִכּוֹנֵן ווֶערְן פַארְלָארְן פוּן אִידִישְׁקַיְיט, זֵיי גֵייעֶן אוֹיף אַ קְרוּמֶען ווֶעג ווָאס דָאס פִּירְט זֵיי אַז זֵיי זָאלְן ווֶערְן חַס וְשָׁלוֹם מְנַגְּדִים עַל הֲוָיָ׳ וְעַל תּוֹרָתוֹ, אִיז אִין אַזַא צַיְיט, אַ צַיְיט פוּן אַ שְׂרֵיפָה, אַ צַיְיט ווָאס אַ אִידִישֶׁער אִינְגֶעלֶע אָדֶער אַ אִידִישֶׁע מֵיידֶעלֶע קָאנֶען ווֶערְן חַס וְשָׁלוֹם פַארְלָארְן פוּן אִידִישְׁקַיְיט, אִין אַזַא צַיְיט דַארְף מֶען נִיט גֵיין צוּ בֵּית דִּין אוּן נָאכְקוּקְן אִין סְפָרִים צִי עֶר מֶעג מְבַטֵל זַיְין אַ שָׁעָה לֶערְנֶען צוּלִיבּ דֶעם צִי נִיט, אוּן נָאךְ אַזֶעלְכֶע שְׁאֵלוֹת, ווָארוּם עֶס אִיז אַ סַכָּנָה יֶעדֶער מִינוּט אָפְּצוּלֵייגְן, - מֶען דַארְף טָאן.

אִין אַזַא צַיְיט דַארְף יֶעדֶער אִיד אָנְצִינְדְן דִי קַנָּאוּת שֶׁבְּנַפְשׁוֹ, ווָאס דָאס קָאן מֶען דוּרְךְ פְּנִימִיּוּת הַתּוֹרָה, אוּן אַרוֹיסְגֵיין פוּן דִי אֵייגֶענֶע ד׳ אַמּוֹת אוּן גֵיין צוּ אִידְן אוּן רֵיידְן מִיט זֵיי בְּדַרְכֵי נוֹעַם אוּן מִיט רֶגֶשׁ׳דִיקֶע ווֶערְטֶער - מֶען דַארְף נִיט אוֹיס׳טַעֲנֶה׳ן זִיךְ מִיט זֵיי מִיט שֵׂכֶל׳דִיקֶע וִיכּוּחִים, ווָארוּם בְּשַׁעַת אַ שְׂרֵיפָה אִיז נִיטָא דִי צַיְיט אוֹיף דֶעם, אוּן בִּכְלַל - ווֶען עֶס הַאנְדְלְט זִיךְ ווֶעגְן פִּקּוּחַ נְפָשׁוֹת נֶעמְט מֶען נִיט יֶענֶעם מִיט שֵׂכֶל. מֶען דַארְף רֵיידְן מִיט רֶגֶשׁ - נְשָׁמָה־ווֶערְטֶער - ווָאס דֶערְמִיט ווֶעט מֶען אָנְצִינְדְן דֶעם פַיְיעֶר ווָאס בַּיי זֵיי, רְשָׁפֶיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שַׁלְהֶבֶת

16. Introductory page for *HaYom Yom; Igros Kodesh Admor Rayatz,* Vol. 6, Letter no., 1824.

17. *Shir HaShirim* 8:6.

יָ־ה[כג], און עֶס וועט זַיְין וַתֵּעָצַר הַמַּגֵּפָה.

און דַאן אִיז מֶען זוֹכֶה אַז פִּנְחָס זֶה אֵלִיָּהוּ, ווָאס עֶר ווֶעט קוּמֶען לִפְנֵי יוֹם הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא, וְהֵשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בָּנִים וגו'[כד], און עֶר ווֶעט מְבַשֵּׂר זַיְין דִי גְאוּלָּה עַל יְדֵי מָשִׁיחַ צִדְקֵנוּ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.

(משיחת י״ב תמוז, תשי״ג)

the flame of G-d.” This G-dly fire will cause **the plague to cease.**

Then we will merit the revelation of **“Pinchas [as] Eliyahu,” who will appear “before the great and awesome day** of G-d **and will turn the hearts of parents to [their] children…”**[18] **and herald the Ultimate Redemption** led by ***Mashiach;* may it happen speedily in our days.**

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18. *Malachi* 3:23-24.

יד) חגיגה ג, א.
טו) עירובין ז, א. ביצה כח, ב.
טז) סנהדרין פב, א.
יז) ירושלמי יומא פרק ח הלכה ה.
יח) סוטה ג, א.
יט) תניא פרק כד.
כ) תוספות סוטה ענדע פרק א. פרקי דרבי אליעזר ענדע פרק מה. ועוד.
כא) פרקי דרבי אליעזר פרק כט. אבודרהם הלכות ברית מילה.
כב) היום יום עמוד 12.
כג) שיר השירים ח, ו.
כד) מלאכי ג כג-כד.

PINCHAS III | פנחס ג

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on 16 *Tammuz,* 5712 (1952)

Introduction

When the Torah describes how *Eretz Yisrael* was divided among the twelve tribes, it presents us with a puzzling contradiction. On the one hand, we're told the allocation was determined "by lottery" – a system that seems to leave everything to chance. On the other hand, the same verses indicate that the *Kohen Gadol,* using the guidance of the *Urim v'Tumim*, was also involved – suggesting careful Divine direction rather than random distribution.

This apparent contradiction becomes even more perplexing when we consider what a lottery represents spiritually. A lottery operates beyond human logic and reasoning, yet when it comes to our spiritual lives, shouldn't our choices be guided by wisdom, study, and careful consideration? Nevertheless, just as in a physical sense, *Eretz Yisrael* was divided by lottery, the spiritual *Eretz Yisrael* – the modes of Divine service to be followed by the Jewish people – are divided by lot. Now, Divine service requires discernment between right and wrong, permitted and forbidden. How can it be governed by something that transcends rational thought?

The Rebbe teaches that the way *Eretz Yisrael* was divided illuminates a profound truth about how each of us discovers our unique spiritual calling. Just as every tribe received exactly the portion of *Eretz Yisrael* that corresponded to their spiritual essence, each individual has a specific spiritual character that no one else possesses. This is his *Eretz Yisrael* – the *mitzvos* and spiritual initiatives that relate to him in a particularly personal way.

Our encompassing commitment to the Torah and its *mitzvos* as an organic whole does not cancel out our individuality. Although we are obligated to observe all *mitzvos*, we each have a personal gateway through which to advance spiritually.

Nothing Is Random: A Divine Mission for Each Individual

The Paths G-d Assigns

1. One of the novel aspects related **in** ***Parshas Pinchas*** **is the order of inheritance. The** description **of the sacrifices and the census of the Jewish people,** which also feature in *Parshas Pinchas,* **are found in other Torah readings as well;** indeed, they are discussed **at length** in those *parshiyos*. Thus, regarding these elements, there is no fundamental new aspect introduced in *Parshas Pinchas.* **By contrast, the order of inheritance in general, and** the division **of** ***Eretz Yisrael*** into tribal **heritages in particular, is explained** primarily **in** ***Parshas Pinchas.***

The division **of** ***Eretz Yisrael*** into tribal **heritages was determined by lottery,** as it is written,[1] **"Only by lottery shall the land be divided." The Talmud**[2] **and Midrash**[3] **explain that** the division **was made by lottery and also by the** ***Urim v'Tumim*****.**

On the surface, clarification is required: The division of ***Eretz Yisrael*** **in a physical sense follows the division of** ***Eretz Yisrael*** **in a spiritual sense. This implies that the pattern through which** the different modes of **Divine service**[4] **are allocated** among the Jewish people **is dictated by lottery. This is seemingly problematic. The pattern** determining a person's **Divine service must be based on logic and not by lottery, which is above reason and understanding.**

א. אֵיינֶער פוּן דִי חִדוּשֵׁי עִנְיָנִים אִין פַּרְשַׁת פִּנְחָס, אִיז דֶער סֵדֶר הַנַּחֲלָה.

דֶער עִנְיַן הַקָרְבָּנוֹת, אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן צֵיילְן דִי אִידְן, אִיז פַּאַראַן אוֹיךְ אִין אַנְדֶערֶע פַּרְשִׁיוֹת וּבַאֲרוּכָּה, אָבֶּער דֶער סֵדֶר הַנַּחֲלָה בִּכְלַל אוּן סֵדֶר נַחֲלַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּפְרַט, אִיז מְבוּאָר אִין פַּרְשַׁת פִּנְחָס.

דֶער סֵדֶר הַנַּחֲלָה פוּן אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִיז גֶעוועֶן עַל פִּי גוֹרָל, אַךְ בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת הָאָרֶץ. אִין גְמָרָא אוּן מִדְרָשׁ[כה] אִיז מְבוּאָר, אַז עֶס אִיז גֶעוועֶן עַל פִּי גוֹרָל אוּן אוֹיךְ עַל פִּי אוּרִים וְתֻמִּים.

אִין פְּלוּג דַארְף מֶען פַארְשְׁטֵיין, ווִיבַּאלְד אַז דֶער סֵדֶר חֲלוּקַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִין גַשְׁמִיוּת אִיז ווַיְילֶע אַזוֹי אִיז דֶער סֵדֶר חֲלוּקַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִין רוּחְנִיוּת, דָאס מֵיינְט אַז דֶער סֵדֶר הַחֲלוּקָה אִין עֲבוֹדָה[כו] אִיז עַל פִּי גוֹרָל, אִיז נִיט פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק: דֶער סֵדֶר אִין עֲבוֹדָה דַארְף דָאךְ זַיְין עַל פִּי שֵׂכֶל, אוּן נִיט עַל פִּי גוֹרָל ווָאס דָאס אִיז לְמַעְלָה מִטַעַם וְדַעַת?

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1. *Bamidbar* 26:55.

2. ***Bava Basra*** **122a.**

3. ***Bamidbar Rabbah*** **21:9**, commenting **on** ***Bamidbar*** **26:55.** See *Rashi, Bamidbar* 26:54.

The term *Urim V'Tumim* refer to the mystic names of G-d embedded in the breastplate of the *Kohen Gadol,* which served as oracles for the Jewish people.

4. See the beginning of ***Parshas Vayeishev*** **in** ***Torah Or*** **and** ***Toras Chayim.***

True, the foundation of Divine service is *kabbalas ol,* the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven,[5] which requires going beyond one's logic and understanding. This is expressed by using a lottery,[6] wherein a person does not use his own logic to make a choice. **However, *kabbalas ol* is only the foundation of Divine service.** When one **actually begins his Divine service, he must discern how to act, what is permitted and what is forbidden. This must be** dictated **by the guidelines of the Torah, which involve intellect and comprehension. Why then does it say here that the division – that is, the discernment and allocation** of the modes **of one's Divine service and actions** to follow – must be determined **by a lottery?**

אֱמֶת טַאקֶע אַז דֶער יְסוֹד הָעֲבוֹדָה אִיז קַבָּלַת עֹל דַוְקָא, דָאס אִיז דָאךְ בְּלוֹיז דֶער יְסוֹד הָעֲבוֹדָה. אָבֶּער דֶער אָנְהוֹיבּ הָעֲבוֹדָה, ווֶען עֶר דַארְף פַאנַאנְדֶערְקְלַײבְּן ווִי צוּ טָאן, ווָאס מֶען מֶעג אוּן ווָאס מֶען טָאר נִיט, דַארְף דָאךְ דָאס זַײן עַל פִּי תּוֹרָה דַוְקָא, ווָאס דָאס מוּז זַײן מִיט שֵׂכֶל אוּן הַשָּׂגָה, אִיז פַארְווָאס זָאגְט מֶען אַז דִי חֲלוּקָה, דָאס הֵייסְט דֶער פַאנַאנְדֶערְקְלַײבְּן אוּן פַאנַאנְדֶערְטֵיילְן עִנְיָנֵי עֲבוֹדָתוֹ וַעֲשִׂיּוֹתָיו, אִיז עַל פִּי גוֹרָל?

Even more puzzling is the wording of the verse,[1] **"Only by lottery shall the land be divided." "Only" implies limitation, meaning that the division should be determined solely by lottery. Yet, at least on the surface,** the division **should be determined solely by reason and logic.**

נָאךְ מֶער אִיז נִיט פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק, ווָאס עֶר זָאגְט אַךְ בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת הָאָרֶץ, ווָאס אַךְ אִיז אַ מִיעוּט, דָאס הֵייסְט אַז דִי חֲלוּקָה דַארְף זַײן נָאר עַל פִּי גוֹרָל, וְלִכְאוֹרָה דַארְף עֶס זַײן נָאר עַל פִּי טַעַם וְדַעַת?

An Individual Gateway to Divine Service

2. In a *maamar* of the Rebbe, the *Tzemach Tzedek,*[7] as well as in *maamarim* of the later Rebbeim, there are discussions of the concept implied by **"only by lottery shall the land be divided" as it applies to the soul and Divine service. According to the explanation in those sources, the above-mentioned difficulty is resolved** with the following explanation:

ב. אִין אַ מַאֲמָר פוּן רֶבִּי'ן דֶעם צֶמַח צֶדֶק[כז], אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ אִין מַאֲמָרִים פוּן שְׁפֶּעטֶערְדִיקֶע רַבֵּיִים, רֶעדט זִיךְ ווֶעגְן דֶעם עִנְיָן "אַךְ בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת הָאָרֶץ" בְּנֶפֶשׁ וּבַעֲבוֹדָה. אוּן לוֹיט דֶעם בִּיאוּר דָארְט אִיז פַארֶענְטְפֶערְט אוֹיךְ דִי אוֹיבְּנְדֶערְמָאנְטֶע קַשְׁיָא:

A lottery transcends reason and understanding.[8] **The division of the land must be** determined **solely by lottery because this division stems from a level that transcends reason and understanding.**

גוֹרָל אִיז לְמַעְלָה מִטַעַם וְדַעַת, אוּן חֲלוּקַת הָאָרֶץ מוּז זַײן נָאר עַל פִּי גוֹרָל, ווַײלֶע דִי חֲלוּקָה קוּמְט פוּן אַן עִנְיָן שֶׁלְמַעְלָה מִטַעַם וְדַעַת.

This idea can be explained by first clarifying another matter: Every Jew is obligated in all the

וְהַבִּיאוּר בְּזֶה, וּבְהַקְדָּמָה:

הֲגַם אַז יֶעדֶער אִיד אִיז מְחוּיָּב

5. *Tanya,* ch. 41.

6. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* Epistle 7.

7. See the *maamarim* entitled *Ach BeGoral,* (published in ***Or HaTorah, Bamidbar,* Vol. 4, p. 1059ff., 5626,** (published in *Sefer HaMaamarim, Toras Shmuel, 5626,* p. 171ff.) **and *5646*** (published in *Sefer HaMaamarim 5646,* p. 14ff.).

8. In other words, rather than make the decisions on the basis of logic and reason, the person commits himself to follow the results of the lottery.

commandments. Nevertheless, there are specific matters that relate particularly to each Jew as an **individual.**

In *Tanya*, **in** *Iggeres HaKodesh*,[9] the Alter Rebbe **explains this concept,** citing the fact **that we find numerous Sages of the Mishnah and the Gemara who were especially careful in** the observance of **certain commandments.** Now, certainly, **they were careful in the observance of all the commandments; however, there were specific matters in which they were especially careful, because these matters related to them specifically. These matters** served as the gate through which the Divine energy generated by their observance – not only of these particular commandments, but of all **other commandments as well – ascended** upward and the beneficence generated by these *mitzvos* **was drawn down** to this physical plane.[10]

Each person's connection to such **specific matters is not rooted in reason and understanding;** it is not **that he intellectually appreciates that he has a special connection to them. Rather, his connection transcends reason and understanding. This is the concept of a lottery.**

אִין אַלֶע מִצְוֹת, פוּנְדֶעסְטְוֶועגְן זַיְינֶען פַאראַן בַּיי יֶעדֶער אִידְן עִנְיָנִים מְיוּחָדִים וָואס זַיְינֶען שַׁיָיךְ צוּ אִים בִּפְרַט.

אַזוֹי ווִי עֶר דֶערְקְלֶערְט אִין תַּנְיָא, אִין אִגֶּרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ[כח], דֶעם עִנְיָן וָואס מִיר גֶעפִינֶען בַּיי כַּמָּה תַּנָּאִים וְאָמוֹרָאִים, אַז זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען זָהִיר טְפֵי (מֶערֶער) אִין גֶעווִיסֶע מִצְוֹת. זֵיי זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען זָהִיר אִין אַלֶע מִצְוֹת, אָבֶער אִין גֶעווִיסֶע עִנְיָנִים זַיְינֶען זֵיי גֶעוֶוען זָהִיר טְפֵי, ווַיְילֶע דִי עִנְיָנִים זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען שַׁיָיךְ צוּ זֵיי בִּפְרַט, אוּן דוּרְךְ דִי עִנְיָנִים, אִיז גֶעוֶוען אוֹיךְ דִי הַמְשָׁכָה אוּן עֲלִיָּה פוּן דִי אִיבֶּערִיקֶע מִצְוֹת זֵייעֶרֶע.

דִי שַׁיְיכוּת פוּן יֶעדְן אֵיינֶעם מִיט זַיְינֶע סְפֶּעצִיעֶלֶע עִנְיָנִים, אִיז נִיט קֵיין עִנְיָן פוּן טַעַם וְדַעַת, וָואס עֶר פִילְט מִיט זַיְין שֵׂכֶל אַז עֶר הָאט אַ שַׁיְיכוּת סְפֶּעצִיעֶל צוּ דִי עִנְיָנִים, נָאר דָאס אִיז אַן עִנְיָן פוּן לְמַעְלָה מִטַּעַם וְדַעַת, וָואס דָאס אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן גוֹרָל.

What Resistance Teaches

3. For this reason, when someone sees that he experiences very severe difficulties and impediments in connection with the observance of **a particular commandment, this is a sign that this commandment has a greater connection to him.**[11] **The very fact that he encounters such resistance is proof that this matter is more relevant to him.**

Even if he does not at all intellectually perceive the connection he has to this matter – on the con-

ג. דֶערְפַאר, ווֶען אֵיינֶער זֶעט אַז אוֹיף אַ גֶעווִיסֶער מִצְוָה הָאט עֶר הַעֲלָמוֹת וְהֶסְתֵּרִים בְּיוֹתֵר, אִיז דָאס אַ רַאְיָה[כט] אַז דִי מִצְוָה הָאט צוּ אִים מֶערֶער אַ שַׁיְיכוּת. פוּן דֶעם גוּפָא וָואס מֶען שְׁטֶעלְט זִיךְ אַזוֹי אַנְטְקֶעגְן, אִיז אַ רַאְיָה אַז דָאס אִיז אִים מֶערֶער נוֹגֵעַ.

אוֹיבּ אֲפִילוּ עֶר זֶעט אִינְגַאנְצְן נִיט מִיט זַיְין שֵׂכֶל דִי שַׁיְיכוּת וָואס עֶר

9. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* Epistle 7. See also Rav Chayim Vital's introduction to *Shaar HaHakdamos* (printed at the end of *Kuntreis Eitz HaChayim,* the bottom of p. 73) and *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz, 5700,* p. 22.

10. See *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz, 5700,* p. 22.

11. See *Kuntreis HaAvodah,* the end of ch. 6.

trary, he sees that this commandment comes harder to him than others, or that he feels no enjoyment or success in this particular field of Torah study – nevertheless, this is the special matter that relates to him specifically. Through it, he will elevate the Divine energy generated by **his** study of the **Torah and** observance of the **commandments as a whole. This is the reason the evil inclination opposes it so strongly – because this matter is most relevant to him.**

Consequently, he should not abandon this matter and occupy himself with other matters. On the contrary, he should endeavor to accomplish this matter specifically, because it is most relevant to him. The very fact that he does not understand his **connection** with it **and does not see how it is relevant to him is** itself **part of the concealment and obstacles** that indicate how important this particular matter is for him.

הָאט צוּ דֶעם עִנְיָן, אַדְּרַבָּה, עֶר זֶעט גָאר אַז דִי מִצְוָה קוּמְט אִים אָן שְׁוועֶרֶער פוּן אַנְדֶערֶע, אָדֶער אַז אִין אָט דֶעם מִקְצוֹעַ בַּתּוֹרָה הָאט עֶר נִיט קֵיין גֶעשְׁמַאק אוּן הַצְלָחָה - פוּנְדֶעסְטְוֶועגְן אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן, זַיְין עִנְיָן מְיוּחָד וָואס אִיז שַׁיָיך צוּ אִים בִּפְרַט, אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם וֶועט זַיְין אַן עֲלִיָּה אִין זַיְין כְּלָלוּת הַתּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, אוּן דֶערְפַאר שְׁטֶעלְט זִיךְ דֶער יֵצֶר הָרָע אַזוֹי שְׁטַארְק אַנְטְקֶעגְן, וַוְיילֶע דֶער עִנְיָן אִיז אִים נוֹגֵעַ בְּיוֹתֵר.

וּבְמֵילָא דַארְף עֶר נִיט אָפְּלָאזְן דֶעם עִנְיָן אוּן נֶעמֶען זִיךְ צוּ אַנְדֶערֶע עִנְיָנִים, נָאר אַדְּרַבָּה מִשְׁתַּדֵּל זַיְין זִיךְ אוּן טָאן דַוְקָא דֶעם עִנְיָן, וַוְיילֶע דָאס אִיז אִים נוֹגֵעַ בְּיוֹתֵר. אוּן דָאס גוּפָא וָואס עֶר פַארְשְׁטֵייט נִיט דִי שַׁיְיכוּת, אוּן זֶעט נִיט וִוי דָאס אִיז אִים נוֹגֵעַ, דָאס אִיז אֵיינֶע פוּן דִי הַעֲלָמוֹת וְהֶסְתֵּרִים.

When Earth Mirrors Heaven

4. On this basis, it is possible to understand the meaning of **the verse, "Only by lottery shall the land be divided"** – that the division was to be made by **a lottery which is above reason and understanding.**

In *Eretz Yisrael,* there were different portions: mountains, lowlands, valleys, fields for grain,[12] orchards,[13] etc. The division that took place – that one received a portion in the mountains, while another in a lowland or valley, or that one received an orchard and another a field for grain – was based on each person's particular connection to the spiritual *Eretz Yisrael.* As a result, the physical *Eretz Yisrael* was also divided in such a manner.

ד. דֶערְמִיט וֶועט מֶען פַארְשְׁטֵיין וָואס עֶס שְׁטֵייט, אַךְ בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת הָאָרֶץ, וָואס גוֹרָל אִיז לְמַעְלָה מִטַּעַם וָדַעַת.

אִין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל זַיְינֶען גֶעוֶוען פַארְשִׁידֶענֶע חֲלָקִים, הַר, שְׁפֵלָה וְעֵמֶק, שְׂדֵה לָבָן, שְׂדֵה פַּרְדֵּס[ז] אוּן אַזוֹי וַוְייטֶער. דִי חֲלוּקָה וָואס אִיז גֶעוֶוען, אַז דֶער הָאט גֶעהַאט בָּהָר, דֶער הָאט גֶעהַאט בַּשְּׁפֵלָה וְעֵמֶק, דֶער הָאט גֶעהַאט שְׂדֵה הַפַּרְדֵּס אוּן דֶער שְׂדֵה הַלָּבָן, אִיז דָאס גֶעוֶוען לוֹיט דֶער שַׁיְיכוּת הַפְּרָטִית פוּן יֶעדֶערְן אִין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָרוּחָנִית, וָואס דֶערְפַאר אִיז אַרָאפְּגֶעקוּמֶען דִי חֲלוּקָה בְּאוֹפֶן כָּזֶה אִין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַגַּשְׁמִית.

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12. This is the meaning of the term *sadeh lavan,* literally, "white field."

13. See *Bava Basra* 122a, explained according to *Chassidus* **in** *Toras Shmuel,* ***Sefer HaMaamarim 5626,* p. 205 (p. 177ff. in the 5749 ed.).**

און דָאס אִיז וָואס אַךְ בְּגוֹרָל יֵחָלֵק אֶת הָאָרֶץ, ווַיְילֶע דִי שַׁיְיכוּת פוּן יֶעדֶערְן צוּ זַיְין חֵלֶק, אִיז נִיט קֵיין שַׁיְיכוּת עַל פִּי טַעַם וְדַעַת, נָאר דָאס אִיז אַן עִנְיָן פוּן לְמַעְלָה מִטַּעַם וְדַעַת, וָואס דוּגְמָתוֹ לְמַטָּה אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן גּוֹרָל.

This is what is meant by the statement, "Only by lottery shall the land be divided" – that **each person's connection to his portion is not based on reason and understanding. Rather, this is a matter that transcends reason and understanding.** As such, the division was made by employing an **earthly parallel to something above logic – a lottery.**

Focusing on Our Unique Mission

ה. ווִיבַּאלְד אַז מֶען הָאט דָאס אוּנְז דֶערְצֵיילְט, און תּוֹרָה אִיז אֵייבִּיק פַאר יֶעדֶער צַיְיט און יֶעדֶער אָרְט, אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן נוֹגֵעַ אוּנְז בְּיִחוּד.

5. Since this concept **has been related to us by the Torah – and the Torah is eternal,** significant **in every time and every place – it is particularly relevant to us.**

יֶעדֶער אֵיינֶער הָאט אַן עִנְיָן מְיוּחָד וָואס אִיז שַׁיָּיךְ צוּ אִים בִּפְרַט, און נִיט קוּקְנְדִיק אוֹיף דִי הַעֲלָמוֹת וְהֶסְתֵּרִים וָואס עֶר הָאט אִין דֶעם עִנְיָן, אַדְּרַבָּה, כַּנַּ"ל, ווִיבַּאלְד עֶר זֶעט אַז אִין דֶעם שְׁטֶעלְט זִיךְ דֶער יֵצֶר הָרָע, דִי וֶועלְט, גָאר שְׁטַארְק אַנְטְקֶעגְן, דַארְף עֶר זִיךְ מִשְׁתַּדֵּל זַיְין מֶער און מֶער דָאס צוּ טָאן, ווַיְילֶע דֶער עִנְיָן אִיז שַׁיָּיךְ צוּ אִים בְּיִחוּד און דוּרְךְ דֶעם עִנְיָן וֶועט זַיְין אַ הַמְשָׁכָה וַעֲלִיָּה אוֹיךְ אִין זַיְינֶע אִיבֶּערִיקֶע עִנְיָנִים.

(משיחת ט"ז תמוז, תשי"ב)

Every person has a special *mitzvah* or mode of Divine service **that relates to him specifically. Even though he may experience difficulties and hindrances in** carrying out **this matter,** he must know that, **as mentioned above, since he sees that the evil inclination and the world** appear to **oppose** these efforts **very powerfully, he must endeavor to accomplish his objective with greater** energy. He must realize that this *mitzvah* or spiritual initiative **relates uniquely to him and, through it, he will be able to elevate** the Divine energy generated by his service of G-d as a whole **and draw down the accompanying beneficence.**

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כח) סימן ז. זע אויך הקדמת הרב חיים ויטאל לשער ההקדמות (געדרוקט אויך בסוף קונסרס עץ החיים עמוד 73 בסופו). ספר השיחות קיץ ה'ש"ת עמוד 22.

כט) זע קונטרס העבודה ענדע פרק ואו.

ל) זע בבא בתרא קכב, א. ומבואר בסה"מ תרכ"ו ע' רה (בהוצאת תשמ"ט ע' קעז ואילך).

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Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky OBM,
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