

food for people. There are also seeds, which people spit out only to germinate and produce new trees and fruits.”

Looking up at the beauty of the universe is clear testimony of Hashem’s impeccable design. Publicizing the Handiworks of the world’s perfection, is fruitful and brings us closer to our creator. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller’s teachings with permission from Simchas Hachaim Gedola Bais Yisrael)

### Resilience and Resolve

Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, who later in life was simply known as the Steipler Gaon, was about to become engaged to the *Hazon Ish*’s sister. But before he determined to make her his *kallah*, he felt that it was important that he share with her an incident that had taken place while he was in Siberia.

The forced labor in the Russian army in Siberia was back-breaking. Aside from the bitter cold and blinding snow, the actual labor required pure brute force. The Steipler had been inducted into the army against his will, yet regardless of the terrible conditions and the impossible work, he knew that only one task mattered – serving the Master of the world. He would do whatever was needed to accomplish that task.

One of the first obstacles he had to overcome was the army system itself – the ordinances dictated that everyone must work seven days a week. To the Steipler that was absolutely unacceptable. He approached the officer in charge, a brutal anti-Semitic ogre, and requested that he be granted a furlough every Saturday. The official paused for a moment and then belted out an evil, cynical laugh. Immediately he answered that he would grant the request on one condition: the Steipler first had to prove himself a valiant warrior. He quickly ordered his men to form two rows and arm themselves with truncheons. The young Steipler watched the soldiers move into formation and heard the words of the evil officer, “Kanievsky, here is the deal. If you are able to make it through these lines and survive the blows from my officers, then you may rest on your Sabbath. However, if you don’t...” His voice trailed off, and he belted out a hearty, evil laugh. Clearly he was enjoying his little game.

The Steipler did not flinch. Instead he quietly whispered a heartfelt prayer to Hashem to help him survive this difficult test. He knew that he could give up and the game would be over. But if he admitted defeat, then his attempt to be released from working on Shabbat would be over. The guards motioned to their commanding officer that they were ready; the officer and his comrades then stood back to watch the fun.

The Steipler approached the path and again murmured one last plea. He held his hand over his head and ran between the awaiting guards. With all their might they began to pummel him and beat him incessantly. The pain was unbearable, but the Steipler persisted and trudged forward. Blood trickled into his eyes but he continued to move forward. Step by step he inched ahead until finally he reached the end of the treacherous path. He collapsed at the finish line. As he lay there a smile formed on his lips. He had won. He was in incredible pain – but he had won! The Shabbat was still holy and he would be able to observe it. The commanding officer grudgingly informed him that he would not have to work on Saturday. Nobody helped him off the ground but it did not matter because he had survived.

The Steipler finished recounting his tale to his *kallah*. He explained to her that this was his level of *mesirat nefesh* (self-sacrifice). “The blows had hurt but I was happy to have had the privilege to suffer for the sake of Shabbat.” He then asked her if she was prepared to join him in his continuous sacrifice for Torah. She replied that she was, and they became *hatan* and *kallah*. (Touched by a Story)

*The Lorraine Gammal A"K Edition*

לְעִילּוֹי נְשָׁמַת לְאָה בֵּת בְּהִיָּה

בס"ד

## Congregation Magen Abraham

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SHABBAT PINHAS ☆ שַׁבַּת פִּינְחָס

Haftarah: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3

**JULY 2-3, 2021 23 TAMUZ 5781**

Early Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **6:30 pm**

Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **7:00 pm**

Late Shir Hashirim/Minhah: **7:30 pm**

Candlelighting: **8:11 pm**

Evening Shema after: **9:09 pm**

These times are applicable only for the Deal area.

Shaharit: **4:32, 6:45, 7:30, 8:25, 9:15 am**

Morning Shema by: **8:18 am**

Shabbat Class: **6:50 pm**

Shabbat Minhah: **1:30 & 7:50 pm**

Shabbat Ends: **9:09 pm (R"Y 9:41 pm)**

Weekday Minhah: **6:45 & 7:30 pm**

**Mabrook to Ido & Jacqueline Saka on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Hymie & Ana Biton. Mabrook to the great-grandparents, Armando & Luisa Behar.**

### A Message from our Rabbi

”לֵכֵן אָמַר ה'נִי לֹא אֶת־בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם”

“Therefore say: Behold! I give him My covenant of peace.” (Bemidbar 25:12)

Pinhas was a hero. He killed Zimri, which ended a plague and saved the lives of many Jewish people and calmed the anger of Hashem. Pinhas merited a covenant of peace. The *Targum Yonatan* says he will become an angel (known as Eliyahu *Hanavi*) who will live forever and will announce the *Geulah* (the coming of *Mashiah* at the end of time).

Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt”l asks: How are we to understand the reason that Eliyahu *Hanavi* didn’t die whereas Moshe *Rabenu* did?

Moshe *Rabenu* was greater than Eliyahu *Hanavi* by far. Abraham *Abinu* was greater than Eliyahu by far. All of them tasted death. Eliyahu *Hanavi* was a special case. It was a demonstration by Hashem.

The demonstration was this: There was nobody in our history who had as many people who tried to put him to death, as Eliyahu *Hanavi* had. He was hunted like a wild animal; he had to live in the deserts. Ahav the King sent messengers everywhere, all over. The *Gemara* says that he sent people throughout the inhabited world.

Eliyahu was hiding for his life like a wild animal, in the thickets in the caves, so Hashem said, “I’m making a demonstration. You’re going to be a symbol of the Jewish people. It says in the *Haggadah* of Pesah, ‘In every generation they stand up against us

to destroy us!’ but you re going to be like the nation that will be eternal. All the others will go underground eventually.

“You want to look for ancient Babel? You need a bulldozer to excavate it from under the sand. So too with ancient Persia and all the ancient civilizations.

“You’re the only one that keeps on walking, and you walk on top of their graves. And you, Eliyahu *Hanavi*, whom so many people tried to destroy, I’m going to demonstrate to the world that you’re never going to die.”

It was a sign for a man who risked his life consistently to bring the message of Hashem into the world. He did that, knowing that every minute he could lose his life, and they tried their best to kill him.

Hashem said, “This man is never going to die.”

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

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## Against the Prevailing Winds

In this week’s *perashah*, Selofchad’s daughters came to Moshe *Rabenu* with a *Din Torah*. According to Jewish law a son inherits from his father to the exclusion of his sisters. Selofchad had died without any sons. He only had daughters. The daughters came and argued that they should not be left out. They did not want their father’s inheritance in *Eress Yisrael* to be lost. Moshe *Rabenu* took this query to G-d who in fact ruled that when there are no sons, the daughters inherit.

The *Midrash* here comments: “There are times when an individual can take the reward of an entire generation. Noah stood up against his generation and took the reward that was destined for them; Abraham stood up to his generation and merited taking the reward of that whole generation; Lot stood up to the people of Sodom and took the reward that was destined for all of them.”

The *Midrash* concludes that the daughters of Selofchad too, took the reward of their entire generation. But what did they do? We know that Noah fought off his generation for 120 years; Abraham jumped into the fiery furnace for his ideals; Lot withstood the decadence of the surroundings of Sodom; but what did the daughters of Selofchad do? They went to probate court — they wanted their inheritance. What is so noble about that? The *Midrash* explains — consider the times. When everyone was yelling “Let’s go back to Egypt, this is not going to work, this is no good...” Moshe was taken aback by the request of these women. Their interest in and desire for the Land was totally out of step with the “issues of the day”.

They were determined. They said “We don’t care what everyone else is saying now, we know that the Land of Israel is where the future of the Jewish People lies.” At a time when others are nullifying the Torah, that is the time to stand up and be counted.

This *Midrash* is telling us an important thing. The activities and deeds of human beings cannot be judged in a vacuum but must be judged in the context of the times. Under normal times, going into court and asking for one’s father’s inheritance does not constitute a brave and courageous act. There are, however, times in history where the most innocuous and simple act can be an act of utmost bravery. Selofchad’s daughters exhibited such an act.

In the climate of widespread criticism of *Eress Yisrael* and longing for the wonderful life of Egypt, they stood up against the tide, they swam against the prevailing current and marched to the beat of their own drummer. This was a courageous act.

This is a tremendous lesson for us. Sometimes, even the most mundane of activities, given the atmosphere and climate, can be a most noble act — to such an extent that the *Midrash* lists the daughters of Selofchad with Avraham *Abinu*! (Rabbi Yissocher Frand)

## Sweet Revenge

“*Vayishlah otam Moshe... v’et Pinchas ben Elazar (And Moshe sent them... and Pinchas, the son of Elazar) [31:6]*”, to wage battle against Midian.

The *Tosafot* ask: “If Hashem commanded Moshe to avenge, how could Moshe shun this responsibility and send Pinchas?”

He offers an amazing explanation: “Since Moshe had spent many years in Midian when he had fled from Pharaoh, he felt it was improper for him to personally wage a war against a nation that had helped him. As the expression goes: Don’t throw earth into a well that you drank from.”

The *Ohr Yahel* pursues this point further. Hashem told Moshe to avenge the Midianites! How could Moshe disobey Hashem’s command, even if Midian had helped him?!

He explains that Moshe understood that, since he had grown up in Midian and had benefited while there, Hashem’s command to avenge Midian couldn’t have been for him personally to do it. Moshe had been commanded on Sinai: “*V’halachta bidrachav*”, to follow in the ways of Hashem! His personally avenging Midian would be acting contrary to the ways of Hashem! Don’t throw earth into a well that you drank from...

It was clear to Moshe that the way to fulfill the command of Hashem was to have Midian avenged through someone else. Through someone who didn’t owe them a debt of gratitude. (Rabbi Yisroel Ciner)

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## Forgive and Forget

It is not easy to forgive someone who hurt you. Whether the damage was financial, physical, or emotional, the pain caused does not disappear totally. Even if you should decide to forgive, it is still very difficult to forget. Overcoming this difficulty is a requirement for good human relations, as expected by our Father in Heaven.

Even after being sold by his brothers into slavery, Yosef was able to forgive. Upon confronting his siblings years later when he was in a position of power, not only did he choose to refrain from inflicting punishment, but he consoled the brothers and assisted them. Where did he get the superhuman strength to decline the sweet taste of revenge? Our Sages use the following parable to answer this question.

There was a man who was annoyed by the barking of a dog. He picked up a stick and whacked the animal. The boisterous pup retreated to a corner whimpering softly. When the man discarded the stick and turned to walk away, the dog violently attacked the piece of wood, biting and growling. The man smiled at the creature which had failed to realize that it was the man, not the stick, who had struck him.

The connection is apparent. Hashem uses everything and everyone in Creation as His tools to mete out punishment, pay rewards, and bring justice to our planet. If you are struck, or hurt, look in the mirror and search for the true cause of the pain. You will see that the source is probably not what you think. Don’t bite the stick; acknowledge the One Who hit.

Becoming adept at this technique will save you much anger and aggravation, and a great deal of misguided bad feelings towards others. The more you realize that Hashem is in charge, the more you can forgive and really forget. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

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## Handiworks

“Golden oranges and red apples are as beautiful as if they were painted by an artist. They look like perfect plastic decorative objects. Inside of each fruit, there is luscious