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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Pinchas ✍️ Rabbi Moshe M. Willner

The Courageous Battle

The only thing that is more difficult than having to repeat oneself is having to listen to something twice. Nevertheless, the Torah finds it important to repeat the zealotness of Pinchos. The Alter from Kelm explains the reason for this seeming repetition. The Torah is emphasizing the great value of Midas Hagevurah, courage, and further brings out this idea by publicizing the names of the recipients of Pinchos's zealotness. Although they were famous and powerful personalities, Pinchos was not deterred from standing up and doing what was right. Perhaps this is why we are not informed of the recipients identity in last week's parsha. For when Pinchos carried out this courageous act, who the people involved was irrelevant to him. All that mattered was that kvod shamayim, Hashem's honor, be restored. Possibly, that's why the parsha did not tell us of Pinchos's reward until this week. Rewards were not part of Pinchos's decision to take action for his focus was solely on doing what was right.

The Alter points out that had there not been a display of courage, it seems the plague would not have subsided. As the possuk says, due to Pinchos's zealotness Klal Yisroel was not destroyed. Why was the middah of Gevurah specifically needed to remove Hashem's wrath? We can understand this through analyzing a brocha we recite daily. In Birchas Hashachar we say Ozer Yisroel Bgvurah- Hashem girds Yisroel with strength. The Rambam writes one should recite this brocha upon buckling one's belt. We can ask, what is so special about putting on one's belt other than the obvious benefit of suspending one's pants? What is unique about klal yisroel in that they gird themselves? Do we not find non-Jews wearing belts as well? Furthermore, what strength is gained through this daily procedure? R' Shimshon Pincus explains that the idea of a belt is to create a separation between one's heart and one's base desires. This benefit is something unique only to klal yisroel.

The non-Jews live a life void of separation. The lower half of their body rules them. Malachim, angels, live in a totally spiritual way, with no evil inclination whatsoever. Yidden however, have the yetzer horah, yet they elevate themselves from living like animals. This takes gevurah, inner strength, and therefore we have the Brocha, Ozer Yisroel BGevurah. Hashem gives Klal Yisroel the strength to fend off the onslaught of the yetzer horah. During the episode with the daughters of Midyan, Klal Yisroel were lacking in the midda of Gevurah. They had succumbed to the trap of the Yetzer horah. Pinchos, however, by exhibiting a tremendous amount of Gevurah, was able to inject this strength into klal yisroel once again. Once we were sufficiently infused with the proper balance of Gevurah, the plague subsided. The summer months are upon us, bringing with them nisyonos- tests in these areas.

Through learning the parsha of Pinchos may we all gain the proper level of Gevurah needed to withstand our daily nisyonos.

Rabbi Willner learns full-time at the kollel.

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YARCHEI KALLAH

July 25-31, 2007

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HaRav Dovid Zucker, Rosh Kollel

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Meat and Milk at the Same Table

Rabbi Yisroel Langer

Chazal take many measures to ensure that the prohibition of eating basar b'cholov, meat and milk, not be transgressed. Perhaps the reason why chazal are extra cautious with regard to this prohibition more so than other prohibitions is because the Torah places an emphasis on the kedusha of klal yisroel with regards to this mitzvah. The posuk says, "You are a **holy nation** unto Hashem, do not cook **meat and milk together**" (see Issur V'heter 31:20). By Torah law, the only time a person transgresses the prohibition of eating basar b'cholov is if the meat and milk were cooked together prior to eating them. However, Chazal forbade us from eating meat and milk together even if they weren't cooked together. Chazal even went as far as to make a gezeira (enactment) not to eat meat at a table that has dairy on it, and not to eat dairy at a table that has meat on it. This gezeira is the subject of our discussion.

Background

The mishnah in Chulin (104b) brought by the Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. 88:1) states that it is forbidden to eat meat or poultry on a table that has dairy on it. Shulchan Aruch (ibid) explains that the reason for this gezeira is that we are afraid lest one forget himself and eat the meat and dairy food simultaneously. This gezeira applies to one who is eating alone, as well as to one who is eating in the company of others. The poskim (Badei Hashulchan 88 s.k. 6) even prohibit one who is eating meat from having a closed package of dairy or a closed bottle of milk on the table. However, one who has finished eating his meat (or poultry) but has not yet waited the required 6 hours, may still eat parve at a table that contains dairy products. Additionally, this gezeira is only applicable to one who is eating. One who is merely setting up foods may place the meat and dairy foods side by side on the same table (being careful that they don't touch) (S.A. ibid).

Permissible Methods

Many times family members or friends will want to sit down and eat a meal together with some members desiring to eat fleishigs and others milchigs. How can this be done in a halachically permissible way?

1) One permissible method is if the dairy products are out of hands reach from the person eating meat, and the meat products are out of hands reach from the person eating milk products. In this situation chazal were not concerned that a person may forget himself and eat from the "wrong" foods (Pischei Teshuvah 88:3 citing Maharshal).

2) Each person eating on his own tablecloth or placemat will serve as a reminder for the one eating fleishigs not to eat from the dairy food and vice-versa. If one eats his fleishigs over a placemat and the other eats over the bare table that is also a sufficient reminder for both of them not to eat from the wrong food. However, the poskim point out

that if it's customary for these individuals to eat on placemats all the time, then the placemats cannot serve as a reminder (Yad Avraham see also Badei Hashulchan 88:16-17).

3) A third permissible method is to place a "heker" **in between** the one eating fleishigs and the one eating milchigs. A "heker" is defined as an object which is not usually placed on the table (or at least on that part of the table). Food, such as a loaf of bread, can also serve as a heker provided that nobody at the table will eat from it. (There is a dispute amongst the poskim whether the loaf must be whole- see Pri Migadim S.D. 88:8.) The heker must be large enough to be noticeable.

Eating Alone

The first permissible method ("out of reach") may be used whether one is eating alone or in the company of others. With regard to the second and third methods ("placemats and "heker") there is a dispute amongst the poskim whether these can be used when one is eating alone. The Chochmas Adam permits these latter methods whether one is eating meat in the company of others eating dairy, or if one is eating meat alone while have dairy on the table. However, the Darchei Teshuvah quotes a number of poskim who only permit these latter methods when one is eating in the company of others, and **not** when one is eating alone. (If others are present at the table, even should one forget himself and reach out for the "forbidden" food, his friend will remind him that it is forbidden to him.) For a final ruling in this matter one should consult their rav. (Note: the Badei Hashulchan 88:14, holds that eating with a minor has the same status as one eating alone and is subject to the above dispute).

The only time chazal were concerned that one would take from another person's dairy food while eating fleishigs or vice-versa is if the other person is a good friend or family member (even if they aren't on the best of terms). However, two strangers may eat at the same table with one eating his milchigs and the other eating his fleishigs without the need for any of the above heterim, as there is no concern that one would take from the other's food.

Eating With Non-Jews

If one is sitting next to his non-Jewish friend who is eating non-kosher food there is no concern that a Jew will come to eat from that food since it is always forbidden to him (except for non-kosher bread where we are concerned, see Shach 88:2). However, if the non-Jew is eating kosher food (that is dairy, and the Jew is eating meat or vice-versa) and one is friendly with him to the point where he would feel comfortable taking from his food, this gezeira would be in effect. (Note: one could use the first method "out of reach". The latter two methods would be subject to the dispute between the Chochmos Adam and the other poskim quoted by the Darchei Teshuvah).

Rabbi Langer learns full-time at the kollel.