



From the desk of  
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1

## Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

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### TORAT

### Parashat Pinchas

### HAMELECH

#### Who is Qualified For Leadership?

In our *parashah*, the Torah teaches us that Moshe requested Hashem to appoint a leader for the people, "May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them and come in before them..." [27:16-17]. Hashem answered that he had selected Yehoshua, who was a, "man who had a spirit within him" [27:18]. In the *Sifri Zuta* it explains this to mean that he would act with strict individuals according to their way and to the mild-mannered individuals in a manner that they related to. Rashi explains that Hashem had responded to Moshe's request by granting them a leader "who could go act in a manner befitting the spirit of each individual."

#### Questions:

1. Why did Yehoshua merit carrying on the Jewish leadership after Moshe? For it states in the Ramban [*Parashat Shlach*] that the spies were listed in the *pasuk* according to their level of greatness. It reasons therefore, that since Kalev was mentioned in the *pasuk* before Yehoshua, that it was he who deserved being the next leader of the Jews!
2. Furthermore, the *Mishnah Sachir* [*Parashat Pinchas*] quotes the *Mordechai* in *Masechet Taanit* as teaching that a leader is specifically an

individual who is responsible for saving the nation from the misfortune that befalls them. He therefore asks that in the beginning of the *parashah* we find that the *pasuk* explicitly praises Pinchas for "turning back my anger from upon the Jewish Nation ... and I did not consume the Jewish Nation in My vengeance." Additionally, our Sages teach [*Sanhedrin* 82a] that Pinchas's act was performed with great self-sacrifice, and he put his life on the line for the sake of the generation. Therefore according to the *Mordecai*, instead of appointing Yehoshua, it was Pinchas who was deserving of leadership, because he was the one who was responsible for saving the generation from the terrible danger that was hovering over them at the time. Why, then, did Moshe even have to pray for a leader at all; it was Pinchas who should have been the logical choice for leadership, as he saved the generation from destruction?

3. From the time that Eldad and Meidad prophesied in the camp, Moshe already knew that Yehoshua would be the one to bring the Jews into Eretz Yisrael (see *Sifri Bamidbar* 11:26). Why then did Moshe pretend as if he did not know this and consult with Hashem about appointing a proper leader for the Jewish people?
4. Furthermore, he asks on the expressions in the *pasuk*, "Who shall go out before them; come in



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2

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before them; who shall take them out; and bring them in." It seems as if the same idea is being repeated four times?

5. In addition, asks *Rabbeinu Shlomo Alfandri zt"l*, why does the *pasuk* state that Moshe requested that a man be appointed "*al ha'eidah*" [over the assembly] and not "*el ha'eidah*" [to the assembly]?

6. Why does the *pasuk* first use the expression, "*asher yeitzei*" [who will go out] and then "*asher yavo*" [who will go in]? Why does the *pasuk* need to repeat the words "*lifneihem*" [before them] two times?

7. Why does the *pasuk* have to then say, "*va'asher yotzieim, ve'asher yoviem*" [who will take them out and who will bring them in]?

8. It would seemingly make more sense to say that the assembly of Hashem should not be like sheep without a shepherd, and not "sheep that has no shepherd," which implies that they, indeed, have a shepherd, it is just that he is not leading them.

### How is it Fitting to Lead

The Torah is coming to teach us how it is fitting for every man to lead and also **who** is fitting to lead. For, in essence, the job of a leader is divided up into two categories: 1) He must be a "man inside whom there is a spirit." He must know how to accept each individual the way he

is, even when his views contradict those of the world. For wisdom lies in knowing how to be perceptive of another and how to descend to their level and to then gradually assist them in steadily ascending higher and higher. Sadly, there are many upstanding individuals that do not know how to get along with individuals who do not act according to the manner accepted in the world. They think that the proper way is to openly oppose the path that these individuals have chosen. This is similar to the way of Shammai who was strict by nature, and therefore rejected all of the converts whose views did not coincide with his own. However, Hillel understood how to conduct the matter with wisdom, and to draw them near, in accordance with the way of each individual. He acted in accordance with the words of Shlomo Hamelech, "Educate the child according to his way" – and not according to **your** way and **your** world perspective. Utilize the tools that he possesses in order to raise him up and help him grow [see *Shabbos* 31a].

Therefore Moshe turned to Hashem with a request. Perhaps Kalev was greater than Yehoshua, and Pinchas acted zealously for the sake of Hashem, and by doing so, saved the Jewish people. However, a leader cannot be zealous nor strict; rather, he must be a man who has a spirit inside of him and knows how to relate to every man. Only then will he be able to draw



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him closer to Torah and good deeds. This is as the Tanna states in *Masechet Avot* [2:5], "Do not judge your fellow until you have reached his place." This is not only meant for the leader of the Jewish Nation. Rather, whether it is man's role as leader of his household, or at work, or in his congregation, etc., he must know how to lead properly. Many err, thinking that everyone has to act like they do. They do not understand that the reality is not so – each person has different attributes and a different purpose in the world. It is wisdom to grasp the nature of each child, employee, or member of the congregation and to understand each one's situation, needs, and abilities. According to this, he should direct him and draw him close to Torah. If he does not act in such a fashion, and instead, fights with his child who does not match the standard, accepted approach in society – he has lost everything. 2) The leader must lead and not be led. For if he is led, he will have no chance to succeed. Therefore the *pasuk* stresses that he must "take them out" and "bring them in" and he must "go before them." In other words, the *pasuk* is alluding that he must represent a symbol of leadership. Only then will he succeed at his post.

### Why Was Yehoshua Chosen?

Let us discuss the first part of being a leader: It states in the Midrash Aggadah [*Parashat Pinchas* 16] that when Moshe heard that he was going to

die, he began to beseech mercy for the Jewish Nation, that Hashem give them a leader who would tolerate them. He began by saying to Hashem that He knows the spirits of man – who is tolerant and who gets angry. He asked that Hashem appoint a man over the assembly who would go out before them in the wilderness, and would enter before them to do what they need, etc. Hashem answered that all of these qualities could be found in his disciple, Yehoshua. We see then that Yehoshua was chosen because of his ability to understand each individual and to be tolerant and not angry or strict. He had the ability to deal with the nation on their level and raise them up. Otherwise, it would be impossible to lead the Jews, who consist of all different types of individuals: those who are troublesome, irritable, and those who complain, and the like.

In *Sichot Mussar*, R' Chaim Shmulevitz zt"l explains that a condition to be a leader is to be a loving father to the Jewish Nation, for a father understands his son. This is as Moshe stated [*Bamidbar* 11:12], "Did I conceive this entire nation or did I give birth to it?" It is brought in the name of the Seforno, that the unique quality of a father is that he can lead his children even when they are different. This is because their eyes are turned to their father. They love him and trust in him that he will help them. However, when the Jewish people complain and do not exhibit faith in their leader, he cannot lead them.



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### Why did Moshe Ask?

Now we can understand why Moshe Rabbeinu asked to appoint a leader for the Jewish Nation even though he was already told that it was going to be Yehoshua. Pinchas had displayed great leadership qualities upon endangering his life for the sake of the Jews. Hashem had even promised him his "covenant of peace." This was similar to the leadership of Moshe, who said following the sin of the golden calf [*Shemot* 32:32], "And now if You will pardon their sin, and if not, erase me from Your book that You have written." So Moshe was concerned that now Pinchas would be appointed as the ruler. Therefore Moshe said that the leader should be a man who knows how to relate to each man according to his own way. Pinchas however, who was a zealot, perhaps would not be tolerant when the Jews would act in a manner less than befitting of them. Hashem therefore answered, that despite Pinchas's bravery, it would be Yehoshua who would be the leader because of the spirit within him, as the Midrash stated. I saw a similar idea in the *sefer Daf al Daf* on *Sanhedrin* 82a, see there.

As we explained, these words do not only apply to the leader of the Jewish Nation; rather they apply to a husband in his home, a father with his sons, an employer with his employees, the *gabbai*

in the *beit haknesset*, and the *rav* with his congregation. This is the secret to success in leadership. Additionally, in order to receive the Divine assistance needed to lead, a leader must be a "man with a spirit inside him." He must know how to be a loving father to each individual, and to lead in accordance with each one's qualities.

### Speak Respectfully to Your Underlings

We see this trait in Hillel's words and deeds.

In *Avot* (1:12), Hillel teaches: Be of the students of Aharon: Love peace, pursue peace, love people and draw them near to Torah.

Hillel is teaching how to draw people close to Torah; by loving them. When the learning session is pleasant, the audience will want to listen.

When I stood at the head of a boy's *cheder* in Elad, I would stand at the entrance of the *cheder* and greet each boy warmly as he entered. An irreligious guard stood nearby and after seeing how I spoke to the boys, he commented, "I come from a religious family. But when my *cheder* rebbi spoke harshly to me and embarrassed me, I wanted to run away. When I was big enough, that's what I did. If I would have been greeted warmly and been spoken to in the manner which you speak to your students, it is most likely that I never would have left."



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### The New Rabbi

Now for the second part of being a leader: In the *sefer Arzei Halevanon*, a story is related about R' Yitzchak ben R' Avraham Akrish, one of the greatest students of the *Saba Kadisha, Moreinu Harav Shlomo Eliezer Alfandri zt"l*, and the author of the *sefer, Kiryat Arba*.

R' Yitzchak was an elderly, towering scholar, and a very zealous servant of Hashem. He constantly risked his life for the sake of sanctifying Hashem's Name. Several times he was put into jail because of his religious activities, and his great *rav*, R' Alfandri redeemed him from captivity each time. He was also very poor. Therefore, he once asked his *rav* to assist him in securing a position as a *rav* in one of the cities of Kushta, so that he would be able to adequately support his family. R' Alfandri said to him, "I will exert effort on your behalf, but on condition that whichever city in Kushta offers you a position, you will not refuse it."

R' Yitzchak Akrish agreed, and the *rav* tried to get him to assume his own position. R' Yitzchak did not wish to assume such a position of leadership, in the same city as his *rav* would be living, but what could he do, as he had already given his word to R' Alfandri? Even though R' Yitzchak was a very great man, the congregation considered it beneath their dignity to take a different *rav* in the place of the *Chacham* Alfandri. But from then on, R' Alfandri would no longer rule on *halachic*

matters; he simply rented an apartment in his neighborhood for R' Yitzchak, and he would refer everyone who had a question to R' Yitzchak. He would say, "There is the house of the *rav* of the city." They therefore were forced to agree to accept R' Yitzchak as their *rav*, and they paid him a handsome salary.

The first Shabbat, R' Yitzchak said a *drasha* before the people. All of the *chachamim* and *rabbinim* of Kushta, as well as all the community leaders attended. Then R' Alfandri spoke and he quoted the *pasuk* from the *parashah*, "May Hashem ... appoint a man over the assembly who will go out before them..." He then asked the questions we mentioned above. R' Alfandri explained, that in our generation, much to our sorrow, when a *rav* is appointed to a congregation, his role is only to answer halachic questions. However, regarding other aspects of the city, they do not pay attention to what the *rav* says; rather, they act according to the decision of the community members. Furthermore, they claim that the *rav* instructed them to do things when he really didn't, and the *rav* remains silent. Therefore, it is not known who is truly in charge; is the *rav* over the congregation or the congregation over the *rav*?

Therefore Moshe requested that he be a leader *al haeidah* [**over** the assembly] and not that they be over **him**. He should also go out and come in



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6

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**before them** [*lifneihem*] and not **after them**; in other words, he should not follow their whims; rather, they should follow him. They should also not be like sheep “who have no shepherd.” In other words, they indeed have a shepherd, but it is not known **who** is the shepherd – the *rav* or one of the community members who controls the *rav*. The main thing is for a leader not to favor any man and to control all matters in the city according to the Torah. So said the *Saba Kadisha*.

Perhaps we can say that this is the reason that the *rav* of a city is called a *Mara De'atra*, which means that he is the master of the city. This is to the degree that whatever the *rav's* view is and however he and his family are accustomed to doing in their home, so too, must the city follow suit in all matters. Woe is to our generation that politicians motivated by personal interests who disgrace the honor of the Torah, act according to their own views, without considering or seeking the advice of the *rav* of the city. Praiseworthy is he who goes in the ways of the Torah which teaches us the proper way to understand the extent that the city's population must be careful to honor the Torah.

### Who Erred?

Rabbi Yaakov Loberbaum, Rav of Lisa, came to Nickelsberg and delivered a lecture. The local Rav, Rav Mordechai Banett attended. At a certain point, Rabbi Banett posed a challenging question.

Rabbi Loberbaum did not answer the question. He continued the lecture, making it seem that Rav Banett's question was indeed compelling.

Rav Banett came home and looked up the source for his question and realized that he had erred. His whole question was based upon a mistaken premise. Rabbi Loberbaum was right!

So why did he not defend his position? Because he did not want to prove the local Rav wrong in front of his *kehillah*. It is so important for a *kehillah* to respect their Rav! Better that he should appear to have erred.

### Dual Lesson

We have learned that being a successful leader is dependent on two things: 1. Tolerance of each individual, to understand his specific nature, and to take part in his pain and joy. This way he will connect to the leader, and the leader can influence him in the proper way. 2. It is forbidden for a leader to be led; rather he must be the leader. This must be clear so that they acknowledge his superiority. Even in the home, it must be clear that the father always has the final word. Only then will it be possible to raise and educate his children. This is true in every situation that man is in; he must utilize these two aspects, and only then will he be successful in his role.

**Shabbat Shalom,**  
**Mordechai Malka**