

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Self Inspired

PARSHAS
PINCHAS

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN

DEDICATED TO DONATING

Parshas Pinchas begins with Hashem thanking Pinchas for single-handedly putting down a rebellion led by the leader of *Shevet Shimon*, Zimri ben Salu.¹ Pinchas was showered with blessings, given the status of Kohein,² and an extremely long life.³ Pinchas had great courage — he risked his life in his act of heroism. Though this is clearly a meritorious act, Rashi⁴ identifies one particular factor that granted Pinchas these incredible blessings. Rashi explains that Pinchas ‘jumped ahead,’ and acted ‘where Hashem should have acted.’ In other words, a Divine response was warranted, but Pinchas took it upon himself to act for Hashem’s honor. Because of this exceptional quality of standing up for Hashem, Pinchas was amply rewarded.

Reb Moshe Feinstein⁵ points out that we all have an opportunity to act like Pinchas on a daily basis. How so? The Gemara⁶ recounts a conversation between the great Rabbi Akiva and Turnus Rufus, the governor of Israel at the time. Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva that Hashem must not love the poor, after all, why does He not provide for them? Rabbi Akiva responded that Hashem should indeed provide for them, however, He allows their neediness to continue in order to give merit to those who do provide.⁷

Based on this exchange, Reb Moshe explains that by sharing our wealth with the less fortunate, we are ‘jumping ahead,’ and providing where Hashem should be providing. We are, in a way, standing up for Hashem’s honor, and not allowing His nation to flounder in poverty. Reb Moshe compares this to a child who wants to help her mother carry packages. The mother may hand the child a light package, or perhaps even hold the item with the child. The child isn’t really helping in any physical sense, but she is exhibiting her love for her mother with her precious desire to be helpful.

Thus, we too can rise to the heroism of Pinchas, simply by placing a coin in the *tzedakah* box.

1 See *Sanhedrin* 82b for his identity as the leader of Shimon

2 *Bamidbar* 25:13

3 *Yalkut Shimoni*, beginning of *Parshas Pinchas*, where Pinchas is identified as Eliyahu

4 *Rashi* on *Bamidbar* 25:11, s.v. בקנאו את

5 *Darash Moshe, Parshas Pinchas*, s.v. בקנאו את

6 *Bava Basra* 10a

7 Of course, there are other reasons for paucity as well, see *Sefer HaChinuch* 66

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

We may find that it is difficult to give up some of our hard-earned money to others, especially if we feel that by doing so, we are losing out.

The *Rambam*¹ specifically addresses this in his commentary on *Pirkei Avos*. He says that a person doesn’t acquire good traits through one great action, rather, traits are acquired through repetition.

By way of example, he explains that it is better to give one gold coin to one thousand separate people, than to give one thousand gold coins to one person.

The one act, though amazing and noble, will not have the desired effect of influencing one’s underlying behavior.

However, the repeated act of giving, to person after person, will eventually turn a person into a charitable and considerate individual.

It might be a good idea to always carry some small change on one’s person, that way, whenever approached, a person can at least give something, and get into the habit of giving.

1 *Avos* 3:15, s.v. המאמר זה



Our Yeshivos owe their existence to their Mashgichim — their Mussar teachers. The Yeshivos were being decimated by foreign ideals, until the Mashgichim, constantly emphasizing the messages of Mussar, successfully restored the spirit of Torah within each Yeshiva. - Brisker Rav, R’ Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik zt”l, Shaarei Hashiva pg. 288

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GET AND GIVE

Rabbi Zevi Braun* stared at the computer screen, his forehead resting in his hand. There simply was no way around it, the math just didn't add up. His mother, recently an *almanah* after his father's untimely passing, was not bringing in the income needed to provide for both day-to-day needs, and pay the mortgage that was still outstanding on the house. This was in addition the other debts his father had accrued over the years. Rabbi Braun simply wasn't sure how his mother would be able to continue living in the house.

Lost in thought, Rabbi Braun almost didn't feel his cell phone vibrating. He quickly fumbled the phone out of his pocket, and looked to see who was calling. It was his mother.

"Hi, I was just thinking about you!" Rabbi Braun said in the cheeriest voice he could muster. "How are you doing?"

"*Boruch Hashem*. I'm sure you're busy," Mrs. Shulamis Braun started, "I just had a quick question..."

"Of course! What can I help you with?"

"Well, Pesach is coming, and as you know, it can be very expensive to make Pesach," Mrs. Braun began, with a quiver in her voice.

Rabbi Braun furrowed his brow in concentration. He knew what was coming, and was simply not sure where to get the funds.

"Anyways, I was thinking, I'd like to try to help out a bit. I'm not planning on an extravagant Pesach, I think, maybe, I can give some money towards somebody's expenses. Do you know of an organization that would take the money?"

Silence. Rabbi Braun didn't know what to say. He knew exactly how much money was in his mother's bank account, and knew that there was very little room to maneuver. "Mommy, are you sure? I mean..."

"Of course, Zevi," Mrs. Braun interrupted. "I know that I'm not wealthy by any stretch of the imagination. But I do have something to give, and I'd like to. In the past, Tatty's taken care of it, but now... well, can you help me?"

Rabbi Braun swallowed the lump in his throat. "Of course, Mommy. That's very kind of you, I think I know who to contact."

"Thank you sweetie! I knew you would know. We'll be in touch, have a good day!"

Zevi Braun stared at the phone for a long time after hanging up. He shook his head incredulously as a slight smile came to his lips.

**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- One should view their assets as a deposit from Hashem. The goal is to disperse this money amongst those who need it; the one stipulation is that one is allowed to take from that money for their needs.¹
- There is absolutely no more effective way to increase our own happiness on Purim than by giving to the poor and downtrodden.²

¹ *Rabbeinu Yonah* on *Avos* 3:7, s.v. שאתה ושלך

² *Rambam, Hilchos Megillah* 2:17

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