

## Parshas Pinchas

by **Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim**  
Rosh Yeshiva

### Scheduled Success

One of the young professionals (YPs) who moved into the PTI YP house to join our yeshiva told me, “The move was a game changer for me. After I came back from yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael, I went back home. But my parents live far away from a Jewish community. There’s no shul nearby. I needed more connection! Now, I’m able to conveniently daven Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv with a minyan, and I have a learning seder every morning and night!”

In Parshas Pinchas, Hashem provides the mitzvah to bring the Korban Tamid (daily offering) in the Beis HaMikdash. It consists of a sheep offering in the morning and a sheep offering in the afternoon.<sup>1</sup>

The Gemara<sup>2</sup> brings two opinions regarding the basis of our daily prayers. According to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, our prayers are a replacement for the Korban Tamid, since it can’t be offered without the existence of the Beis HaMikdash. Shacharis replaces the morning offering, Mincha replaces the afternoon offering, and Maariv replaces the nighttime sacrifice of the limbs and fats which were not burnt during the day.

The daily offering has a remarkable power. The Midrash<sup>3</sup> says that the morning Korban forgave everyone for sins committed the night before, and the afternoon Korban forgave everyone for the sins of that day. Rav Shimon Schwab<sup>4</sup> says that although prayers replace the daily offerings, they do not have the power to grant pardon like the offerings did. However, the Gerrer Rebbe, Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter,<sup>5</sup> says that our daily prayers *do* have that power!

The Gemara brings another opinion that the daily prayers were instituted by the Avos (Patriarchs). Shacharis was instituted by Avraham, Mincha by Yitzchak, and Maariv by Yaakov. The Gemara concludes that both opinions are accurate. The prayers were established by the Avos...and...they serve as a replacement of the Korban Tamid.

We all know how challenging it is to stay focused during the daily prayers. The Shulchan Aruch<sup>6</sup> rules that at minimum one must have proper concentration during “Avos”, the first bracha of Shemoneh Esrei, and he must repeat the Shemoneh Esrei if he didn’t remain focused during that bracha. The Rama brings the ruling of the Tur that one should *not* repeat the Shemoneh Esrei for lack of focus, since it is likely that the person will not have focus the second time around either.

The Gerrer Rebbe provides an incredibly encouraging opinion as to why one’s Shemoneh Esrei is valid even without the proper focus during the first bracha: A Korban needs to be offered *lishmah*, for the proper purpose. If not, it is invalid. However, there is a rule called *staman lishmah* – the *assumed* intent of a person with regard to the Korban makes it valid.

The Avos established the three daily prayers, and when they did so, they had the proper intent and focus. We thus deem everyone who recites the prayers to be following their path. Therefore, even though we may not be able to guarantee absolute focus for the bracha of Avos, it’s considered as if we focused, since our Avos set the direction.

As we move forward with the new building for our yeshiva, a few professionals advised me to have weekly meetings to assess what’s been accomplished that week, and to then plan the next steps for the coming week. I was told that to help ensure that we have productive meetings, they should be scheduled for the same day and the same time each week. A fixed day and time...keep us on track!

The importance of scheduling also applies to Torah learning: The Gemara<sup>7</sup> says that one of the six questions one is asked after passing away is, “Did you schedule time to learn Torah?” Although the mitzvah to learn Torah is constant – day and night – a person must have specific times scheduled to learn. Having scheduled times shows that it’s important and a priority. It also helps guarantee that it will be done.

Starting and ending one’s day with davening creates a positive opening and closing of one’s day. It helps start the day on the right foot and concludes it properly. Although we might spend most of our day in “mundane” matters, the way we start and close determines our values and true priorities. Similarly, with scheduled times to study Torah we demonstrate where we have set our priorities.

Do you need a fresh start? Do you want to refine your priority list? I invite you to reach out to me to help schedule a time to learn at our yeshiva. You can experience the joy and sweetness of deep Torah learning with a schedule that truly works for you. Our yeshiva is available to you as your second home!!

**Yom Iyun for Men and Women with Rabbi Benzion Shafier**

**Friday, July 3**

**Some of the 10 Dumb Mistakes That Very Smart Couples Make**

**Hot Breakfast Buffet 9:00 am**

**Shiur 9:30 am**

- 1 Pinchas 28:1-4
- 2 Berachos 26b
- 3 Midrash Tanchuma 13
- 4 Rav Schwab on Prayer, Korbanos
- 5 Pnei Menachem, Pinchas
- 6 Orach Chaim 101:1
- 7 Shabbos 31a

In Hashem's praise of the actions of Pinchas, the *pasuk*<sup>1</sup> states בקנאו את קנאתי *when he zealously avenged My vengeance*. A similar wording is used in the *pasuk*<sup>2</sup> in the *Haftarah* for *Parshas Pinchas* (which is not read in most years, this year included) when *Eliyahu* tells *Hashem* why he ran away after killing the false prophets of *Ba'al* in his fight to uphold the *Torah* in general and specifically the *mitzvah* of *bris milah* that was apparently not being performed due to the decree of *Achav* and *Izevel* against the *mitzvah*. He says "קנא קנאתי לה" *I have been exceedingly zealous for Hashem*. Indeed, *Rashi*<sup>3</sup> writes that the similarity of wording between both *pesukim* is the source for the tradition<sup>4</sup> that *Pinchas* is *Eliyahu Hanavi*.

*Pirkei D' Rebbe Eliezer*<sup>5</sup> teaches that in *Hashem's* response to *Eliyahu*, He recognized that *Eliyahu* was zealous in the past and now once again regarding the decree against *bris milah*. *Hashem* then took an oath that *Yisrael* would not do *bris milah* without *Eliyahu's* seeing it with his own eyes. *Pirkei D' Rebbe Eliezer* concludes that based on this the Rabbis instituted that there should be an honorable seating for *Eliyahu*, the מלאך הברית. Indeed, *Abudraham*<sup>6</sup> writes that this is the basis for the practice to have a chair designated for *Eliyahu* at a *bris*, as is quoted in *Tur*<sup>7</sup> and *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>8</sup>.

*Prisha*<sup>9</sup> explains that *Hashem's* promise that *Eliyahu* would see every *bris* is a demonstration of praise and approval of *Eliyahu's* declaration of קנא קנאתי and a reward for his zealousness to uphold the *mitzvah* of *milah*. However, he writes that there are those who interpret *Hashem's* oath as rebuke of *Eliyahu's* actions as if to say *because you bad mouthed My children for not fulfilling the mitzvah of bris milah, you will see with your own eyes that they indeed do fulfill it!* In fact, *Iyun Tefillah*<sup>10</sup> points out that the wording in *Medrash Rabbah*<sup>11</sup> is explicit that *Hashem* was being critical of *Eliyahu* and was expressing His dissatisfaction for *Eliyahu's* getting involved in *Hashem's* matters as if they were his own. Similarly, it is explicit in *Zohar*<sup>12</sup> that *Eliyahu* was punished for speaking negatively against *Hashem's* children and for being overly zealous. Although *Prisha* acknowledges that even the wording of *Pirke D' Rebbe Eliezer* implies the same, he maintains that it is hard to believe that *Eliyahu* would have spoken negatively against the nation. Additionally, he questions who would force *Eliyahu* to attend if his required presence at every *bris* was in fact a punishment. Yet perhaps we can answer that *Hashem* Himself places *Eliyahu* at every *bris*.

This theory may also answer how *Eliyahu* can come from outside of the תחום, the boundary for travel on *Shabbos*, even though the *Gemara*<sup>13</sup> posits that if there is a prohibition of תחום even above the height of 10 handbreadths off the ground, *Eliyahu* cannot come on *Shabbos* to herald the coming of *Moshiach*. When he comes of his own volition to announce the ultimate redemption, he must obey the תחום limitations. However, if his attendance at a *bris* is a punishment, requiring coercion, as *Prisha* assumes, perhaps *Hashem* physically transports *Eliyahu* to each *bris* against his will and without any active participation, enabling him to attend even on *Shabbos*.

Yet, *Chasam Sofer*<sup>14</sup> has another approach that justifies *Eliyahu's* attendance at a *bris* on *Shabbos*. He explains that *Eliyahu* can appear in two different forms. When he

comes to herald the ultimate redemption, his soul will reunite with his body, and he will have the status of a human being with the authority to issue decisive rulings to all unanswered *halachic* issues. He will also be obligated in *mitzvohs* and subject to the limitations of תחום. So is the case anytime he makes an appearance in this world in human form. However, when he appears as a soul, as when he appears at a *bris*, he is not obligated in *mitzvohs* and cannot issue *halachic* rulings.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv<sup>15</sup> expounds that the *Gemara* records several stories in which *Eliyahu* makes a physical appearance in this world in a body. In those instances, he is *halachically* considered a living person and is thus obligated in *mitzvohs* and subject to the prohibition of defiling himself through contact with a dead body as he is assumed to be a *kohen*. Indeed, the *Gemara*<sup>16</sup> records that on one of those occasions, he had to justify his presence in a cemetery and explained that it was a non-Jewish cemetery. However, when he appears at a *bris*, he is not in bodily form and thus is not obligated in *mitzvohs* and not constrained by the limitations of תחום.

This approach can also answer the following questions concerning *Eliyahu's* attendance at a *bris*:

Rav Shlomo Kluger<sup>17</sup> was asked if one can make a *bris* in a *shul* in which there lies a dead body considering that *Eliyahu* may not be able to attend since he is a *kohen*. He answers that in the *Gemara's* story, he was clothed in a body and appeared as a living person. Therefore, he was obligated in *mitzvohs* and prohibited from contacting a dead body. However, when *Eliyahu* is not in living form and appears without a human body, such as his appearance at a *bris* as a מלאך, in angel form, he is exempt from *mitzvohs* as any other deceased person. Therefore, a *bris* may indeed be done even in a *shul* wherein there is a dead body, and *Eliyahu* may attend in his מלאך state.

Similarly, Rav Avraham Eliezer Hirshovitz<sup>18</sup> quotes *Sefer Ba'al Hanitzachon*, who applies this approach as a response to the skeptics who doubt the notion of *Eliyahu's* appearance at every *bris* and ask how he could be at multiple *brisos* simultaneously in different places. One answer he suggests is that *Eliyahu* is compared to the sun that shines on the whole world at once. Just as the *Gemara*<sup>19</sup> reconciles *Hashem's* presence at every concurrent *minyan* happening worldwide based on this metaphor, so too, he rationalizes *Eliyahu's* observation of each simultaneous *bris*. However, the common assumption is, as is stated in the *Zohar*<sup>20</sup>, that *Eliyahu* actually travels to each *bris*. Alternatively, he explains that just as the מלאך המות, the *angel of death*, can traverse the entire globe in an instant, so too *Eliyahu* can attend every *bris* because he does not appear at a *bris* in a physical body but rather comes in the form of a מלאך. Indeed, *Pirke D' Rebbe Eliezer* refers to *Eliyahu* in this context as מלאך הברית as he is portrayed in the *pasuk*<sup>21</sup>.

We eagerly await the fulfillment of the *pasuk*<sup>22</sup> הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא, when we will merit *Eliyahu's* appearance in "flesh and blood" as he announces the coming of *Moshiach* בימינו.

- 1 במדבר כ"ה:י"א
- 2 מלכים א' י"ט: י"ד
- 3 רש"י בי"מ ק"י"ד ע"ב ד"ה לאו
- 4 תרגום יב"ע וארא וי"ח, ילקוט שמעוני פינחס אות תשע"א
- 5 פרקי דר"א פרק י"ט וביאור הרד"ל שם
- 6 ספר אבודרהם הלי ברכות השער התשיעי
- 7 טור יו"ד סי' רס"ה
- 8 שלחן ערוך יו"ד סי' רס"ה סעי' י"א
- 9 פרישה יו"ד סי' רס"ה
- 10 עיני תפלה - סדור אוצר התפלות סדר ברית מילה
- 11 מדרש רבה שיר השירים א:ו
- 12 ספר הזהר לך לך צ"ג ע"א, ויגש ר"ט ע"ב
- 13 עירובין מ"ג ע"ב
- 14 שו"ת חת"ם סופר ליטוטים סי' צ"ח

- 15 הערות רבינו הגר"ש אלישיב ברכות ג ע"א, כתובות ק"ג ע"א, בי"מ פ"ה ע"ב, פסחים י"ג ע"א
- 16 בי"מ ק"י"ד ע"א - ע"ב
- 17 שו"ת טוב טעם ודעת מהדו"ג ח"ב סי' רל"ד
- 18 אוצר כל מנהגי ישראל סי' מ"א אות ד
- 19 סנהדרין ל"ט ע"ב
- 20 ספר הזהר הקדמת הזהר י"ג ע"א
- 21 מלאכי ג:א ורדק שם ד"ה האדון
- 22 מלאכי ג:כ"ג

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**May All of Klal Yisrael Have a Good Shabbos!**

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