



A PROJECT OF CHICAGO COMMUNITY KOLLEL

PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

15 Tammuz 5768 / July 20, 2008

Parshas Pinchas ✍️ Rabbi Meir Stern

Doing His Job

At the beginning of the *parsha*, Hashem describes *Pinchas's* act of killing *Zimri* as “*B'kano es kinusi*” – when he avenged my vengeance. *Rashi* elaborates that “he was filled with the anger that I should have vented”. R' Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* explains that we are being told why *Pinchas* deserved such great reward for his deed. In actuality it was *Hakodosh Baruch Hu's* place to take action against the flagrant acts of immorality which *Zimri* was committing. When *Pinchas* killed *Zimri* he was doing Hashem's job so to speak. “When he avenged **My** vengeance” is the reason *Pinchas's* act was so great.

R' Moshe says it follows that other *mitzvos* which involve “doing Hashem's job” also merit the same great reward. For example, the *Gemara* (*Bava Basra* 10a) relates that Turnus Rufus asked R' Akiva, “If your G-d loves the poor why doesn't he support them?” To which R' Akiva replied, “In order that we may merit through them (the poor) to be saved from *Gehinom*.”

The *Gemara* is teaching us although it is Hashem's “duty” to support the poor He allows man to carry out this task and thereby earn great reward. This can be likened to a young child who wants to assist his mother in carrying her many packages. The mother takes off a small package and hands it to her child to carry. Of course, the child is not actually lightening the mother's load significantly. Yet, the child's desire to help demonstrates his affection for his mother which gives her get pleasure. This idea helps us understand the greatness of *Pinchas's* vengeance in our *parsha* and the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka* in general, both of which are human acts of “lightening Hashem's load”.

R' Yeruchom Olshin *shlita* applied this approach to explain how *Pinchas* was rewarded *middah k'neged middah* – measure for measure for his actions. As we know, “*Tishbi Yitaretz*

Kushios Vi'abayos”. In the future, *Eliyahu Hanavi* (who *Chazal* say is *Pinchas*) will teach us the resolution for all unanswered *halachic* difficulties. We also know that Hashem is the “*Melamed torah l'amo yisroel*” - the teacher of Torah to *Bnei Yisroel*. It turns out that *Pinchas*, who did Hashem's job of avenging a breach in morality, will merit in the future to carry out Hashem's mission of teaching Torah to *Bnei Yisroel*.

Similarly, *Pinchas/Eliyahu* was rewarded with going up to heaven in a chariot and becoming a *malach*. This, too, can be viewed as “*middah k'neged middah*”. The character of a *malach* is to serve as a *shaliach* of Hashem in carrying out his missions. By taking it upon himself to assume Hashem's role, *Pinchas* merited becoming a *malach* whose very essence is serving as a messenger of Hashem.

May we strengthen ourselves in the areas of avenging Hashem's honor and *Tzedaka*, and thereby merit the fulfillment of “*Tishbi Yitaretz Kushios Vi'abayos*” with the arrival of *Eliyahu Hanavi*.

Rabbi Stern learns daily at the kollel.

YARCHEI KALLAH 5768

Shabbos Parshas Devarim-Chazon

Special Shabbos Program with

HaRav Yitzchok Sorotzkin, shlita

Drasha following Shacharis &

Shabbos Day Shiur @5:00 pm at the home of

Rabbi & Mrs. Simcha Dachs

HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Havdalah: Part 1

Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

Havdalah, the *mitzvah* that we are privileged to perform weekly, is our opportunity to escort out the *Shabbos*. Just as *Kiddush* marks the onset of this holy day, *Havdalah* marks its end. Although *Havdalah* takes but a few minutes, one must be well acquainted with a plethora of details in order to properly perform this *mitzvah*. Let us familiarize ourselves with some of them.

Standing or Sitting?

The *Kol Bo* says that it is proper to recite *Havdalah* while standing because it is an act of accompanying the King back to His home. *Tosfos* (*Brachos* 43a *d.h. ho'il*) questions this practice based on the *gemara* that states that if one wishes to include others in his *bracha* on bread or wine, the group he is including must be established and unified. This occurs only if the group is seated together, but if they are all standing, they lack the cohesiveness necessary to be called a "group". How, then, can one person make the *bracha* on wine during *Havdalah* for a group if not everyone is sitting? *Tosfos* suggests that since everyone has joined into a unified group in order to be exempt from having to recite the *bracha* of *Havdalah*, this joining can be used to consider themselves a group for the *bracha* on wine. However, *Tosfos* concludes by saying that it is proper for everyone to sit during *Havdalah* as this creates the ideal cohesiveness.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (296:6) writes that *Havdalah* should be recited while sitting. This is the *minhag* (custom) of many people including the *Gra* (see *Bi'ur HaGra* on *S.A.* *ibid.* See also *IG"M O.C.* 5:20:17 regarding an apparent contradiction of the *Gra's* position). [According to this opinion, one should sit while reciting *Havdalah*, even if no one else is present (*IG"M* *ibid.*). However, some say that if one is reciting *Havdalah* only for himself, it should be recited while standing (see *M.B. s.k.* 27).] The *Rema*, however, argues and says that the custom is to stand while reciting *Havdalah*. The *Aruch Hashulchan* (*s.k.* 17) and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (96:7) also follow this view. This is the recommended practice unless one has a custom to sit (*IG"M* *ibid.*).

If one is listening to *Havdalah* from someone else, he should follow the practice of the one reciting *Havdalah* regardless of his own personal custom (*Oz Nidberu* 5:53, Harav D. Zucker Shlita).

Women:

Havdalah is an example of a *mitzvas aseï shehazman grama* (a time-constrained *mitzvah*) which women are usually exempt from. According to many opinions, however, women are obligated in *Havdalah* just like men are. This may depend on whether the obligation to recite *Havdalah* is *midioraisa* or *midirabbanan*. In the opinion of the *Rambam* it is *midioraisa*, similar to *Kiddush*. Just as women are obligated in *Kiddush* (see *S.A.* 271:2), so too they are obligated in every *Shabbos*-related *mitzvah* including *Havdalah* (*M.M. Hil' Shabbos* 29:1). On the other hand, some *Poskim* hold that *Havdalah* is a *mitzvah dirabbanan* (see *M.M. ibid.*). According to this opinion, are women obligated in the *mitzvah*? The *Maggid Mishna* (*ibid.*) states that the *Rabbanan* instituted *Havdalah* for women and men alike. However, the *Orchos Chaim* argues that *Havdalah* was instituted only for men. Unlike *Kiddush*,

which is recited *on Shabbos*, *Havdalah* takes place on a weekday, *after Shabbos* is over and is therefore not considered a *Shabbos*-related *mitzvah*.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (296:8) writes that women are obligated in *Havdalah* as they are in *Kiddush*, but he writes that some argue and say that women are exempt. In accordance with the latter opinion, the *Rema* writes that women should hear *Havdalah* from a man and not recite it themselves. The simple reading of the *Rema* indicates that a woman may not recite *Havdalah* on her own even if she has no other option. The *Bach* vehemently argues that according to the lenient opinion, women are not *obligated* to recite *Havdalah*, but they may do so if they wish (see Hagaon Rav Akiva Eiger *O.C.* 489:9 who says that the *Rema* really agrees with this opinion). The *Mishne Brura* (*S.H. s.k.* 34) writes that the *halacha* follows the *Bach*, and a woman may recite *Havdalah* on her own. However, it is still preferable to hear *Havdalah* from a man that has not yet recited it, because the custom is that women avoid drinking the *Havdalah* wine (*M.B. s.k.* 35). If a man has already recited *Havdalah*, it is preferable that the woman recite *Havdalah* herself rather than the man repeating it for her (*M.B. s.k.* 36). However, if the woman is unable to recite *Havdalah* herself, and there is no man present who has not yet fulfilled his *Havdalah* obligation, a man may recite *Havdalah* on her behalf (*A.H. seif* 5).

There is much dispute amongst the *poskim* as to whether a woman should recite the *bracha* on the candle if she recites *Havdalah*. As mentioned previously, many *poskim* say that a woman is obligated in the *mitzvah* of *Havdalah* because it is *Shabbos*-related. Therefore, some *Poskim* say that a woman is not obligated to recite the *bracha* on the candle because this *bracha* has no connection to *Shabbos* whatsoever (*Biur Halacha* 296:8 *d.h. lo*). Based on this, some *poskim* say that a woman *should not* recite the *bracha* while saying *Havdalah* because it might be considered a *hefsek* (interruption) (*S.S.K.* 61:24). [She can, however, recite the *bracha* after she drinks the wine if she so wishes (*ibid.*).] However, some *poskim* say that the simple reading of the *Shulchan Aruch* indicates that a woman should recite the entire *Havdalah*, including the *bracha* on the candle (*IG"M C.M.* 2:47:2, *Be'er Moshe* 4:28).

Children:

As with all *mitzvahs*, we have a responsibility to *mechanech* (educate) our children in the *mitzvah* of *Havdalah*. This begins when the child understands the meaning of *Shabbos* (*M.B.* 343:3) which is approximately at the age of six or seven. In the summer months, when *Shabbos* ends late, there is no obligation to wake or keep a child awake in order to hear *Havdalah* (Harav D. Zucker Shlita). Should the child recite *Havdalah* on Sunday morning when he wakes up? Some *poskim* say that the child must recite *Havdalah* in the morning (*The Radiance of Shabbos* 19:IV: footnote 20 in the name of Hagaon Rav Y.S. Elyashiv Shlita and Hagaon Rav C.P. Scheinberg Shlita. See also *S.S.K.* 58:20). However other *poskim* say that the child is not *obligated* to recite *Havdalah* on Sunday morning, but it is proper for them to do so (*ibid.* in the name of Hagaon Rav M. Feinstein Zt"l, Harav D. Zucker Shlita).

Rabbi Niehaus learns full-time at the kollel.