

Parshat Pinchas Qualifications of Leadership

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Avishai David

In this week's parsha, Hashem tells Moshe to appoint Yehoshua to become his successor. The Rambam in Mishne Torah asks why specifically Yehoshua merited to be selected. There were other more qualified candidates, like Elazar and Pinchas, who surpassed him in their intellectual acuity. The Rambam answers that although Yehoshua, Pinchasi, and Elazar were all students of Moshe, Yehoshua was the talmid neeman, most faithful disciple. He ministered to Moshe, followed him everywhere and scrutinized his every action. Of him the Chazal say, *gedola shimusha shel Torah yoxer m'lemuda*. Personally attending a Torah scholar is greater than studying the Torah itself. This is why Yehoshua merited to inherit the mantle of leadership from Moshe.

The midrash comments, "Notzer t'eina yochel piryah. The one who guards the fig tree will

merit to eat its fruit." Often we think that the greatest scholars, the ones with the sharpest minds and broadest knowledge, are worthy to become leaders. Yehoshua was an outstanding talmid chacham, but he did not become Moshe's successor by virtue of his superior learning, but because he served Moshe faithfully.

The Ramban writes that when Moshe descended the mountain after cheit haegel and sensed the unrest in the Jewish camp, Yehoshua said there must be a war going on. Moshe countered that he was mistaken and that the Jews were involved in blasphemous conduct. How did Moshe know the truth, while Yehoshua did not? Moshe had led the Jews for so many years that he was able to discern correctly what was happening. Yehoshua was still a novice. By serving Moshe and observing his ways, he eventually acquired the ability to

sense the nation.

The Baal Shem Tov had many students who were great Torah scholars, prominent among them, Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye. However, the Mezhreticher Magid merited to assume leadership of the Chassidic movement after the Baal Shem Tov's passing. This was because he, of all of the Baal Shem Tov's students, was most familiar with the Baal Shem Tov's ways and conduct, having served him faithfully for so many years.

The ability to serve a great Torah giant, to study his behavior and responses to various stimuli, is crucial for a potential leader's training. Many people can acquire knowledge. Torah can be studied through many different venues. But *shimush*, serving a Torah leader, is the critical factor in the making of a future leader in klal Yisrael.

Growing In Ruchniyut During The Three Weeks

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Beinush Ginsurg

When we visualize the *Beit Hamikdash* in its glory, we imagine there was nothing holier than it. Yet Chazal tell us that studying Torah is even greater. "Hashem consoled David who did not merit to build the *Beit Hamikdash*, "One day of Torah learning in your courtyard is greater in my eyes than one thousand sacrifices." Similarly David said, "*Tov li Torahat picha...*" David gathered great quantities of precious metal for the *Beit Hamikdash* yet he affirmed that Torah was worth more to him than thousands of pieces of gold and silver. Additionally Chazal tell us, "The Torah study of children may not cease even to build the *Beit Hamikdash*."

Bitul Torah was the cause of the first exile. It says, "*Im bechukosai teileichu*." Rashi explains, "*Shetihyu ameilim b'Torah*," If we immerse ourselves in Torah we will merit blessings, if not, *klalot* (curses) will come upon us. The Ramban says that the *tochacha* of Bechukosai corresponds to the first *Beit Hamikdash* and the *tochacha* of Ki Tovo corresponds to the second *Beit Hamikdash*. We can understand from this Rashi and the Ramban that the first *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed because of a weakening in Torah study.

In *Eicha* it says, "Her kings and her priests are exiled among the gentiles and there is no

Torah." Rav Dessler lived in England and in his later years settled in Eretz Yisrael. He once said that a day of Torah study in Eretz Yisrael could not equal many days of learning in *chutz l'aaretz*. Indeed Chazal say, "There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael." The Gra writes that exile lacks the special spiritual aura of Eretz Yisrael. We end *Shemone Esrei* with a prayer to rebuild the *Beit Hamikdash* and we add "Give us a portion in your Torah." The Gra explains that the sufferings of exile weakened our Torah study. Therefore we ask Hashem to restore the *Beit Hamikdash* so that we can once again serve Him with all our capacities in Eretz Yisrael.

Lost Property Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dayan Shlomo Cohen

If you find lost property in a public place at a time when the owner didn't yet know that he lost the property and hadn't given up hope, then you cannot take the item for yourself.

You have to look after it and make every effort to find the owner. The obligation to return the property won't go away even after the owner has given up hope. How can you know whether the owner knows if he lost the object or not? You can tell by the way the object is lying on the ground that it's been there for a while. If it's covered with dust or the like, you can presume the owner already knows that it's lost. If the property has *simanim* (identifying features), you would be obligated to announce your find and give the owner a chance to get his property back. If it doesn't have *simanim* and you have an obligation to return it, but you can't find the owner, then you would need to keep it and guard it until Mashiach comes and Eliyahu Hanavi can reveal the owner. Alternatively, you can make a note of the approximate value of the property and take it for yourself or sell it or discard it and when Eliyahu Hanavi reveals

the owner you can return its monetary value. If it has *simanim*, you must make a note of that too.

There are certain types of property where it could always be presumed that the owner knows straightaway that he's lost it. People who walk around with large sums of money generally know how much they've got and are always feeling their pockets to make sure it's there. Therefore, if you find a large amount of cash it could always be presumed that the owner knows of his loss and seeing that there are no identifying features you can take it for yourself. Even if the owner wrote down the serial number of the notes, it won't help because the notes are constantly changing hands and it can't be used as proof that he's the owner. Even if it seems that the owner hasn't give up hope, the truth is he has, and is only looking for the money out of desperation. Nevertheless, it's certainly fitting to return it, if it's clear he's the owner. All this applies to large sums of money where the owner would know right away that he lost it. The *Poskim*

argue whether the same applies to small sums where people don't know usually know exactly how much they've got. Some *Poskim* say it doesn't make any difference what amount it is, seeing as the Gemara says, if you find money you can take it. The same principle would also apply to a pen or a handbag or suitcase where one would quickly realize if it was lost. If you find it in a public place you could take it. The larger the object the more one can presume the owner already knows it's lost.

In the case where one finds objects such as a phone, wallet or keys where people are always checking if they have it, we can presume the owner knows it's lost and has relinquished ownership. Even so, the right thing to do would be to return it if it has *simanim*. If it doesn't have *simanim*, in many cases the owner can be believed. Still, each situation should be judged on its own merit whether you can presume that the owner knows of his loss and has given up hope in which case you can take it or if he hasn't yet realized he lost it, in which case you have an obligation to find the owner.