

Punches

AUGUST 1981

One of the big problems that we all face today is the question of tolerance and approval. In our day and age we have seen a great deal of eroding of standards. People are now willing to say ^{that} if something allows you to feel good then do it. Feeling good about something seems to be the only criteria to determine whether or not a person should do something. Also, a person's personal freedom to do what he or she likes is brought into direct conflict with what society or other individuals demand or expect. How do we deal with other people who have values different than our own? How should we react toward them? We obviously cannot approve of everything. There is no way that Judaism can countenance immorality; violence, incest, homosexuality, etc., but what should be our stance for others who do have different values than our own? Obviously, we cannot assume a standard that a person can do anything he likes if he does not hurt anybody else as a guide because almost anything that person does will affect me. Because of drinking people have more accidents and my insurance rates go up. Because people take drugs the incidence of crime rises dramatically and I may be mugged in order to satisfy the drug user's habit. Divorces and broken homes make for more welfare payments and my taxes rise.

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The events of the past week have reminded me of a story. It happened once that a Frenchman, an Englishman and an Israeli were captured by cannibals. They were about to be put in the pot. The leader came and said, "It is our custom that we have everyone before we put him in the pot one last wish". He asked the Englishman what he wanted and the Englishman said he wanted some plum pudding. He asked the Frenchman what he wanted and he said that he wanted some wine. He asked the Israeli what he wanted and he said that he wanted to be kicked in the rear. The chief said, "Are you sure that is what you want?" and the Israeli said, "Yes", so the king kicked him in the rear. After he did so, the Israel pulled out an Uzi automatic machine gun from where it was hidden under his shirt and quickly dispatched the cannibals. The Englishman and Frenchman looked at the Israeli and said, "If you had that Uzi all along why did you request to be kicked in the rear first?" The Israeli replied, "Because I didn't want to be labeled an agressor". Everyone knows that the P.L.O. was out to destroy Israel and to kill or expel every Jew from its territory. The world likes to fool itself and for oil it will do anything. The story is told of a man who swallowed a dollar bill. He was rushed to the hospital. The next day I called to ask how he was and the nurse said, "No change". In Europe today there has been no change. People who return even from England speak about all the anti-Semitism they have found there. We are the only ones who want to stick up for ourselves, and when we do the world is not happy. In this week's Torah portion we have something very unusual. We have a sentence which ends right in the middle. It does not finish and it even ends a paragraph. It says "and it was after the plague". The Jewish people were ready to enter the land of Israel but before they entered the land of Israel they were beset by a trap set by Midian. The Midianites did not engage them in battle. Instead they sent their daughters to seduce the Jewish people into participating in some lewd, sensual, sexual, pagan rites. Because of this action over 20,000 Jews died in a plague. We do not learn all the details of the plague. It just says "and it was after the plague".and G-d commanded Moses to lift up the head of all the Congregation of Israel in preparation for their entering of the land of Israel. Many Jews when they are faced with the perils of the world adopt the wrong course of action.

The world is a dangerous place. What should the Jewish people do vis a vis the world? Some nations attack the Jewish people. Others try to seduce them. Some leaders would try to claim let's not enter the world. Let's stay in the desert. Others would respond let's give up, let's assimilate. A third course of action would be to participate in the world but to lift up your head. There are many Jews today who want to give up. They want to change their names and their noses and be like everybody else. There are others who do not want to assimilate but they want to maintain a very low profile. They do not want to make waves. They want to demonstrate how similar they are to everybody else while maintaining a tenuous link to their tradition. Others, especially among the Chassidic groups, want to withdraw completely from the world. After the Holocaust, it was after the plague, they really do not want to have anything to do with the world. This is a paradox in a way because the Chassids in Eastern Europe were among the most acculturated to native village culture, but they say the world only brings plagues to us. We want to be completely apart. This is not the Torah's way. In this week's Torah portion we learn we are still supposed to participate in the world. We are not supposed to withdraw. We are to enter the world with our heads high. Moshe was commanded the world is dangerous, the world is perilous, but you still must enter the world but remember enter it lifting up your heads.

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In the Torah portion, Pinchas, we have the problem of the zealot. The problem of the zealot is an especially difficult problem. In Judaism nobody is allowed to take the law into their own hands. Even though Zimry was performing a lewd, licentious act of worship to the idle poor, Pinchas had no legal right to kill him. If Zimry had turned around and killed Pinchas for attacking him Zimry would be blameless. It is a difficult problem, zealotry, because we need passion in religion. Without passion we cannot have commitment and especially if you are a minority you need passion and commitment just to maintain yourself. It is so much easier just to melt into the majority. We all know the harm that zealots can do. We all know the divisiveness they can cause, the self-righteousness they are plagued with, and their holier-than-thou attitude. But on the other hand, without a certain amount of passion religion becomes boring and irrelevant. Most people when you talk to them about services or religion, the first word that comes to their mind is boring. It is boring. In fact, I remember a Rabbi who was once talking to his Congregation and said, "You know what the problem with many American Jews is? They are ignorant and apathetic, but I do not care and I do not know". Perhaps because of this apathy we have a reaction of zealotry sometimes. It is not right for Jewish groups not to want to talk with each other, etc. Right after we learn about the incident of Pinchas we learn how G-d had to give him His blessing of peace because what happens many times is that the zealot enjoys doing violence. He gloats on it. He is happy he has killed innocent people along with the guilty. Pinchas had to be saved from this type of arrogant view. Because he was a zealot, though, he was not given the leadership of the Jewish people. Right after this incident we learn how G-d commands Moshe to harass the Midionites. The word Midion can also mean those who start quarrels. Moshe was commanded to stop all this senseless division and quarrels and nitpicking with people, always finding fault with each other and saying, "I saw him drinking a coke in McDonalds", etc. Right after this it says "and it was after the plague". This is one of the few sentences in the Torah which ends in the middle. The musical note signifies the middle not the end. The plague of zealotry, of senseless quarreling, is unfortunately ongoing. In Judaism we say what a person does in private is his own business. No zealot should interfere. It is only

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things that happen in public that we should be concerned about. Passion has its limits. We can see the evils of zealotry in the PLO. They gloat over their killing of women and children. They are so sure of their cause that they will not even change their Palestinian covenant which calls for the elimination of Israel and the expulsion of all Jews who were not there before 1917. That way can only lead to death. Perhaps now a new Palestinian organization will arise and be willing to compromise and to live and let live. That's what we Jews want. We want their blessing, not their extermination. Unfortunately, many in the world today are trying to save the PLO. This will only delay true peace. This type of zealotry leads only to more and more destruction. Let a new Palestinian organization arise. This reminds me of a story about an orchestra that was playing Beethoven's Ninth Symphony outside. They took an intermission. The wind came up and started to blow their music away. They started to tie down the music except for the basses who went for a drink. The conductor was dismayed to find it was the end of the ninth, the scores were tied, and the basses were loaded. It is now the end of the ninth for the PLO. Let them strike out. Peace cannot be made with zealots. Pinchas could not get the leadership. Let us hope and pray that peace will come soon to the Middle East.

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In the Torah portion Pinchas we learn about zealotry. The rabbis are not very happy with Pinchas. Zealotry can lead to all sorts of evils. Today, too, we witness a revival of zealotry and extremism. The Jewish tradition for the last 2000 years has been a non-violent one. We have been made fun of and scorned and derided because we really did not believe too much in fighting back. We were scattered throughout the world in small groups, and to fight back would almost always be suicide, because once you provoke someone by fighting back they, many times, rise to the challenge and want to wipe you out. However, besides that, in the Jewish tradition there is an abhorrence with taking life and shedding blood. We Jews have been criticized during the Holocaust for going to our deaths like sheep. This really is not fair since not only did we not have a State or an army or a way of organizing ourselves, but, what's more, nobody, we included, really believed Hitler would do what he said he would do: wipe us out. After all, the Germans had the highest culture. Just 20 years before in the First World War they had treated us with such dignity and respect. They treated us so much better than the Poles and Russians. Many Jews looked forward to the Germans coming into Poland. They could not believe that these refined people could be capable of mass murder. Perhaps if someone would have killed Hitler in the 1930's things would have been different. Perhaps in that instance zealotry would have been called for. However, today is not the 1930's. Today we have a State with an army and there is no excuse at all for any type of taking the law into our own hands. The rabbis were aghast about how Pinchas would take the law into his own hands right in front of Moshe. How could he, whose mother was also a daughter of Jethro, have done what he did? G-d had intervened personally to save Pinchas by giving him His covenant of peace. Otherwise he would have been tried and convicted as a murderer. Why do zealots act the way they do? In the bulletin, I discussed that they do it out of fear. They also feel that more is better, that if a little security is good, total security is better. It reminds me of a friend of mine who was a little bit puny, but he thought if he broke a matchstick one day, two matchsticks the next day, three matchsticks the next day, etc. that he would be able to break a telephone pole at the end of the month. This, of course,

is ridiculous. More is not always better. Every cook knows this. If a recipe calls for one cup of something and you add two or three cups, you will ruin the recipe. Every chemist knows this, too. If you add too much of a chemical you can cause an explosion. A person for whom the doctor prescribes one pill every four hours and who takes two pills every four hours is not going to get well sooner. He is just going to damage his health. Fanaticism is a terrible plague which can completely destroy society. More is not always better. That's why it says in the story of Pinchas, "and it was after the plague." This sentence is an incomplete sentence, and many rabbis explain this means, "and it was after the plague of zealotry." More is not always better. It is sometimes much worse. I am reminded of the story of a lettuce who was very small and wanted to be bigger so he went to a geneticist so he could make him a bigger, better lettuce. The geneticist said he would help him by splicing some genes. He did but, unfortunately, the lettuce turned into a radish. This just goes to prove that sometimes it does not pay to get a head.

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Pinchas was rewarded for his act of zealotry by being given the high priesthood. However, the rabbis say that unless G-d would have intervened, Pinchas would have been tried as a criminal. We also learn in this Torah portion a census of the Jewish people because the Jewish people were afflicted by a plague after many of them had involved themselves with the world of Baal PaOr, with licentious idolatrous sexual rites. After we learn about the census we learn about how the land was to be divided. Then we learn that the Tribe of Levi was not to be given a portion in Israel. It says, "For they were not numbered among the Children of Israel because there was no inheritance given them among the Children of Israel." Why should this be mentioned here? Why should we mention that Levi was not to be given an inheritance among the Children of Israel? This is a fact which had been mentioned earlier. Why should we mention it right here, especially in the Torah portion which has to do with zealotry?

Pinchas, of course, was from the Tribe of Levi. We know, too, that in Jewish tradition there were two tribes which were known as zealots. These two tribes were Shimon and Levi. In fact, Jacob on his deathbed, in effect, cursed these two tribes by saying that they would not be given a portion among Israel but that they would be scattered among the other tribes. What's more, he said he did not want his name associated with them, because it was these two tribes who had perpetrated the foul deed of destroying a whole city in Israel. They had done this after their sister, Dena, had been raped by the son of the head of this city, the city of Schem, a city which still gives the Jewish people a lot of trouble and throughout Jewish history has given the Jewish people a lot

of trouble. Jacob did not like what they had done. They had taken revenge against a city and, through an ingenious plot, had wiped out the city. Jacob did not like this act of zealotry, and, therefore, he said that these two tribes should be scattered throughout all Israel, that he did not want them to be concentrated because he was afraid of what their zealotry not to the gentiles but to the Jews, themselves. It is interesting to note that Levi turned his curse into a blessing. It was true that he became scattered among Israel, but he became the leaders and the teachers of Israel. Just as today you have rabbis scattered throughout all the cities of Israel, so they became the rabbis of their day being scattered throughout Israel, teaching the people, exhorting them to try to get them to live according to higher standards. Shimon, on the other hand, let his curse remain a curse. He did not turn it into a blessing. He had some cities in the south of Israel which later were just incorporated into the Tribe of Judah. Why, though, should we mention Levi here, that he was not given a portion among the tribes of Israel?

It seems to me that what we have enunciated here in this Torah portion is a lesson of why zealotry should never be used or should be used very, very sparingly. The reason for it is that zealots can swing both ways. A zealot feels that because he is right, therefore he is justified in doing what he is doing, that he can cut through all the redtape and beauracracy and can take direct action with consulting anyone, without going through any of the normal safeguards of civilization because he is right. Sometimes, it is a true, a zealot is right, but many times a zealot is wrong. Not every time we think we are right are we really right. That is illustrated here in this Torah portion, because the

confrontation between Pinchas and Shimon was really a confrontation between two zealots. Zemri Ben Tzaluah, who was the head of the Tribe of Shimon, acted in a zealot fashion. He thought that he was right. He thought the Jewish people were about ready to enter the land of Israel, and that they should throw off some of this discipline and self-restraint of the desert and start to act more like the Canaanites. After all, it would be good in order to make good relations with these people, in order to conquer the land easier. Therefore, he participated not secretly in some hideaway. He did not do it because he succumbed to some passion. After all, the rabbis recognize that many times we sin and do things we should not do because of the passion of the moment, but Zemri did not do it for that reason. In fact, in Jewish law there are two different types of sinners. There is a Moomer L'Teavon and a Moomer L'Hachis. There is a person who just cannot stand the temptation and succumbs, and there is another person who really is not tempted but he wants to do it to prove that he can do it. He does it out of principle. It is like the Socialists did in America at the turn of the century where on Yom Kippur they used to rent a hall right opposite a shul and have a dance on Yom Kippur and eat Chazer. There is a difference between that type of person who does it out of principle than a person who does it out of weakness. That person says, "I just can't stand it. That ham sandwich looks so good." That is a different type of sinner, and a person who does it because he cannot control himself is a lesser sinner than a person who does it out of principle. Zemri Ben Tzaluah did it right of Moshe. He committed this licentious, idolatrous, sexual act right in front of Moshe, right in front of the Ark, right in front of the Oleh Moed. He did it out of principle.

We see that a zealot can do things he thinks is right when really they

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are terribly destructive. He should have consulted with others. He should have discussed his position. He should have gotten permission to do what he did. Pinchas acted here, in this particular instance, in order to save the Jewish people from the sin of following after Zemri. The rabbis, as I said earlier, really did not like what he did, and it was only because G-d intervened, that he was spared and not punished himself as a murderer or manslaughter. When it comes to zealotry we must be very, very careful because the door swings both ways. Many times we approve of what zealots do because they have acted right, and we think that by cutting through the beauracracy and red tape, etc. that they have fulfilled an important mission in this world, and we agree with them. However, we have to be careful because zealots many times think they are right when they are wrong.

This is, of course, what happened in Europe between the world wars when Mussolini and Hitler came to power. The people applauded them. After all, Hitler was elected democratically because he was going to cut through the red tape and he was not going to have to worry about all these rules and rights, etc. Of course, the door swings both ways, and Hitler and Mussolini did many, many things which were heinous, and, of course, the way he treated our people made him the most evil man who ever lived. We have to be careful about zealotry.

In fact, in this week's Torah portion we learn how Moshe Rabbeinu, immediately after this incident, asks G-d to appoint a leader over the Jewish people. It says, "Let the G-d of the spirits of all flesh set a man over the congregation." This is a very peculiar sentence in Hebrew. Up to this time Moshe Rabbeinu thought that Pinchas would be his heir.

Pinchas was his grand-nephew. He had strenght, courage, intelligence, leadership ability. Moshe thought Pinchas would be his successor, but after Moshe saw his zealot act, Moshe could no longer agree that Pinchas should be his successor, because Moshe knew that when people sin the way you attack the sin is not to destroy the sinner but to try to get him to change. That was Moshe's whole approach. When G-d wanted to destroy the Jewish people Moshe intervened and said, "Listen, give them another chance. We want to change them. We want to make them good." Pinchas, though, acted in the exact opposite fashion by slaying the sinner immediately without trying to change him, without trying to make him better. It is true that maybe in certain instances zealotry is required. If someone put a bomb right in front of the White House you should not have to go before the Supreme Court and Congress before you can remove it, but these instances are very few. Pinchas' whole character was geared to zealotry and being a zealot.

G-d listened to Moshe and told Moshe to "take Yehoshua Binun - and make Joshua his successor". This choice suprised many because Joshua was known as a Meshorish - a servant - to Moshe. He was a man who was quiet and understanding. He was a man who was not a zealot. In fact, the rabbis say the reason he was given spiritual leadership was because when the spies went into the land of Israel to spy out of the land, there were two, of course, who did not agree with the spies and their negative report: Joshua and Kolaiv Ben Yefuna. Kolaiv Ben Yefuna separated himself from the othe spies and went to Chevron. Joshua stuck with these spies and tried to change their minds and convince them they were doing wrong. He was unsuccessful, but at least he tried to interact with these people and change these people. He was not afraid that maybe they would

change him. He knew he had to interact with his people, and so, therefore, as a reward Kolaiv Ben Yefuna was given an extra piece of land in Israel in Chevron, but Joshua was given the spiritual leadership of the people because he knew how to interact with people.

That, of course, is what we must look for in a leader. It is not a zealot but a person who is understanding and tolerant and a person who is willing to consult and does not want to take the laws into his own hands and violate individual rights, etc. We have had enough dictators who feel that in order to preserve the Constitution, they have to break the Constitution, that only they can save the people, that if there is any threat to them or their person of being dislodged from office, being voted out of office, etc., that they had to stop it because they are the only people who know what is right, etc.

In this Torah portion we learn that we must be very careful of zealotry because it swings both ways. A zealot will always do what he thinks is right, but many times a zealot is not right. A zealot has to consult. We see the effects of zealotry throughout all society. Many times we see a marriage where one partner is willing to do something without consulting the other. We see that in institutions where someone takes the law into his own hands and does not consult the board of directors. We have seen that interestingly enough this past week in the Irangate hearings when we see how an unelected official, an appointed official decided to take the law into his own hands and do what he thought was right without even consulting the President. This, of course, was a foolish thing to have done, and even if now we can say the President did not know, he still damaged the President tremendously because the

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President comes out looking like a schlemiel. It is true that sometimes by cutting red tape and not consulting we can get the job done, but sometimes we choose the wrong job as Zemri Ben Yzaiuh did. We choose to do something which really is not right. Not everything we choose to do is necessarily right even if we think it is right. This is an important lesson we all have to learn.

I am reminded of the story who frantically called the humane society saying that on her covered patio there was a skunk and she did not know what to do. The man told her to take some pieces of bread and put them from the patio to the end of her yard so the skunk will eat it and then leave. She went out and did it. Ten minutes later she called frantically back to the humane society. The man wanted to know what was wrong. She said it was worse. The man asked if she had done what he told her to do, and she replied, "Now I have two skunks." That, of course, is what happens when you have a zealot. Because he is willing to do anything to implement what he thinks is right, many times he can cause double and triple trouble. Let us all hope and pray that we learn this lesson, that zealotry must be confined to very, very specific instances, and not everybody who is brilliant knows the truth all the time. I was reading recently about Newton, the great founder of modern science. This man was a genius. He was brilliant in many areas, but if you gave him any power he would wreck people's careers, destroy their reputations. He was a man who was right in many areas but also wrong in many areas. We must always remember that not everybody is right all the time, and, therefore, zealotry can be a terrible curse. Let us all hope and pray that we will always conduct our affairs without zealotry so that we will have peace and thrive.

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In the Torah portion Pinchas we learn how Pinchas was given G-d's "Breeseed Sholom - G-d's covenant of peace". The word Sholom is spelled peculiarly because the vahv there is split. Usually when a letter is split and not complete in the Torah, the Torah becomes "Possel - unfit to use". In this word Sholom here the vahv, itself, is split purposely. The rabbis ask why. The answer is that with this word Sholom when you just take the top of this split vahv, it becomes the word "Sholaim - complete, perfect". Of course, when you complete the vahv it means "Sholom - peace".

In life we always have to balance two competing forces: the urge for perfection, to implement standards completely; and the need for peace. As always in Judaism, we never say either/or. We always say both. It is so difficult to do this. We say that we have to please ourselves and please others. How can you do it? It is very difficult, but we have to do it.

Pinchas, here, was too interested in standards, in perfection. That is why he was a zealot. He was intolerant of anything that was not perfect, and, therefore, he had to be given this covenant of peace. On the other hand, there are many people who, for the sake of peace, will do things they should not do. For example, in a marriage one of the partners will act almost like a slave because they want to maintain peace, or parents will sometimes give in to children for the sake of peace and give them money for drugs, etc. That we should not do. You have to balance the need for standards with the need for peace. In this instance Pinchas went too much on the side of standards and not enough on the side of

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peace. Other people sometimes go on the side of peace and not enough for standards.

In order to lead the good life, in order that we can have love and harmony among all humanity and morality, we must learn to balance peace and perfection. Let us hope that we can do so so that the Mashiach will come.

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In the Torah portion Pinchas, we learn about how Joshua was chosen the leader of the Jewish people. Right before we learn how Joshua was chosen to be the leader of the Jewish people, we learn about the daughters of Tzelophechad, how they came to Moshe Rabbeinu asking that they be given an inheritance in Israel. Their father had died. He had been a convicted criminal, although he was not among those who had rebelled against Moshe and Aaron during Korach's revolt. He left no sons, and his daughters wanted to inherit land in Israel. They were from the Tribe of Menashe. The land in Israel was now to be allotted to the nine-and-a-half tribes. Half of Menashe was given land in Transjordan, but they did not want land in Transjordan. They wanted land in Israel. The rabbis say that they were great lovers of the land of Israel. Moshe did not know what to do, so he asked G-d, and G-d said that the daughters of Tzelophechad had spoken properly and that since there were no sons, they were to be given the ancestral land. This land was, of course, to be passed down from family member to family member, and was to revert to the family if it was ever sold in the Jubilee Year. The problem with having daughters inherit was it was possible that land could be alienated from one tribe to another if the daughters married outside the tribe. Some rabbis say that Moshe knew that daughters inherited, but he was not sure the daughters of a convicted criminal

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should inherit. Also, Moshe was worried about the relationship between the sexes.

We all know that the relationship between the sexes is very delicate. One of the problems of the modern era is that the power relationship between men and women has shifted. Women basically do not need men any more. In the past, the woman needed a man for protection. A strong man could always take a knife away from a woman, but with the advent of the gun, a woman is any man's equal. Besides which, the birth control pill has freed women from the fear of pregnancy, and she does not need a man to take care of her now if she should get pregnant. There is also artificial insemination, and a woman can go to a sperm bank and become impregnated without a man. Because of high paying jobs for educated women, women do not even need a man to support them.

Immediately after this incident of the daughters of Tzelophechad, Moshe tells G-d to appoint a person in his stead, and he uses a very strange expression. It says, "And G-d shall appoint, the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, a man over the

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congregation." The word for spirit is Ruach, and that word is also the word for soul. The rabbis say that we have five levels of soul. We have Chaya, which speak about our basic needs; Nefesh, which speaks about our artistic needs; Neshoma, which speaks about our spiritual needs; Yecheeda, which speaks about our need for love and sex; and Ruach, which speaks about our needs for freedom and holiness. Moshe was concerned that the Jewish people should have a leader who was concerned about all their needs. Originally, he thought that Pinchas would be the leader of the Jewish people, but Pinchas was a zealot. He divided people; he did not unite them. He was not understanding and was too concerned with imposing his will. Yehoshua was a more fit leader because he got along well with everyone, and he knew that he had to raise people up to the right level. He was called Yehoshua Bin Nun. A Nun starts out straight, then bends a little, then comes back. A leader has to tolerate the people's foibles. Tolerance does not mean approval, and lead them back to the right path. Moshe, too, was concerned that the leader would not understand well the relationship between the sexes. Pinchas did not understand this either. After all, a quarter of the Talmud speaks about the relationship between the sexes. In yeshiva, you do not learn any of the gemorahs about Shabbat or Pesach or Yom

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Kippur. That you are expected to learn by yourself. What you do learn about is the gemorahs about the relationship between the sexes, Kesuvos, Gittin, Kedushim, Nevomos, and you learn civil law.

The relationship between the sexes is a very delicate thing. Women need to build their nest, and men have to be made to feel important and to sow their seed. Women need their nest protected, and men need to feel that they are needed. That's why it is that the dumb blond always seems to get her man, and I know when I went to college, they would tell the girls, "Never beat your boyfriend in tennis if you still want him to be your boyfriend."

Today, marriage is a declining institution. There are 43% less marriages performed today than 40 years ago. 53% of all teenage girls see nothing wrong with having a child out of wedlock. There are more households with single or non-married couples than households with married couples. Many women do not feel they need men anymore. They are able to take care of their basic needs without men.

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I think that is why Moshe Rabbeinu used the strange phrase that he used, that G-d, the G-d of the spirit of all flesh. In the Torah portion Bereishis, we learn how man is commanded to leave his father and mother and cling to his wife and become one flesh. Moshe was telling G-d, "Make sure, G-d, that You choose a leader who not only can defend the people against their enemies, who can maintain their economy, who can maintain justice among the people, but also one who can make sure that the relationship between men and women remains secure." There has been an unwritten pact in Jewish life for many years in which the woman controlled the sex and household budget, and the man got an aliyah. Men were given public honor for giving all the private power to their wives. This pact seems to be broken down today.

One of the reasons I believe that orthodoxy has had a resurgence is because many young women now feel that this was a good pact and should be renewed. True, Judaism has always allowed divorce, but the assumption was that the parties would marry someone else. Just because a business fails does not mean that all businesses should be banned. You open another business. Many young women, especially feel that marriage is not a worthwhile institution. They

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would rather raise their children themselves without their husband's interference. Statistically, these children do not turn out as well. There have always been widows and divorcees who have raised their children, but statistically they do not come out as well as two-parent families.

Moshe asked G-d to make sure that the leader would understand that people have many needs. Marriage is not just to fulfill physical needs, but also spiritual needs. That's why marriage is called Kedushim, holiness. Those young women today who feel that marriage is unnecessary are making a mistake. It is true they do not need men for protection or propagation or even financial security, but they do need men to achieve the wholeness which is necessary for the upper levels of our soul. We need to feel complete, and this we can only do in marriage.

That's why G-d said man should leave his parents and cling to his wife and become one flesh. Moshe said, "Appoint a man who understands the souls of all flesh," meaning here the higher soul of wholeness which comes from a stable marriage relationship. In spite of the statistics, we know that marriage is

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necessary to achieve spirituality.

I am reminded of the story they tell about a woman who took her husband to the doctor. The doctor examined the husband and said to the woman, "Will you please step outside for a minute with me?" She said, "What's the matter?" The doctor replied, "I don't like the way your husband looks." She said, "I don't either, Doctor, but he is good to the children." Our relationships are very complex. Let us hope and pray that we will realize that the relationship between men and women is very essential if society is to continue. The old relationship may need some tinkering with, but it should never come to the point where men say they do not need women, or women say they do not need men. We need each other so we can both achieve spiritual heights. May we do so soon so the Mashiach will come quickly in our day. Amen.