

*Anyone Who Forgets One Thing From His Learning,  
The Written Torah Counts It for Him As If He Is Liable  
For His Soul ( Pirkei Avoth 3,9)*

In Parshath Balak, Bilaam hired by Balak to curse the Jews in order to weaken them spiritually, so that his nation might have a chance of defeating them physically in battle. After failing to do so, Bilaam advises Balak that “The G-d of these people hates illicit relationships. “ As such, if they were to send their woman to entice the Jewish soldiers, they would be able to weaken them so much, that possibly, HaShem Himself would wipe them out.

And so it happened. The woman of Moav and Midyan successfully enticed the Jewish soldiers and a plague broke out that ultimately lead to the death of 24,000 Jewish men.

However, while the men were sinning, and the plague was raging, men from the tribe of Shimon approached their Nasi and complained to him that they were being wiped out, and he wasn't doing anything to stop the deaths.

So the Torah records for us, how the Nasi himself goes and takes a Princess of Midyan and brazenly performs a grave sin, semi-publically.

Our Rabbis comment that the Nasi was until then a tzadik, as noted by the use of Ish/Man of Stature, to describe him. Also they teach us that he was 248 at the time of the sin.

So it's troubling and makes us wonder, as to what could have made this man make such grave error, at his stage, given his stature, and his lineage.

It says in Pirkei Avoth , “ Anyone who forgets one thing from his learning, the written Torah counts it for him as if he is liable for his soul, as it says ... Is it possible that this is so even if his learning was ‘grabbed away from him’? So we answer, as the *pasuk* says ...., he is not Liable until he is *Yeshev*/sits, and removes it from his heart.”

And that is what happened here.

The tribesmen were ensnared by the *Goyoth* into sinning, the plague to wipe them out broke out, and they came to their Rabbi and asked for a way out- a *Heter* to do what they were doing, and not die.

Their Rabbi/Nasi , sat/*yashav*, put on his *Gemara Kup* and thought. What is actually going on here, what are women, dressed in their finest, all dolled up with their makeup and jewelry doing on a battlefield? Where else do we have such a scenario? And then he had an eureka moment.

We were taught by the Master Teacher – Moshe Rabeinu , that if one goes out to battle, and sees on the battlefield, a lady all dressed up in her finest party clothing, and bedecked with her jewelry ,makeup, hair and nails done , and is enticed by her in the heat of the moment, that he is allowed to take her for himself.

One is forced to wonder, why would such a dolled up lady be doing on a battlefield? And the *Chachamim* explain that when the *goyim* went out to battle, they would make a two pronged attack. There would be one wing of men with their swords, shields, javelins, and bows and arrows, but at the same time they would send out their young ladies, looking their best, in order to entice the other side's soldiers, and as such weaken them. Such was the common practice back then.

However, in this case, Moav and Midyan had already come to the conclusion, that there was no point in sending out the armed male soldiers here, being that Bnei Yisrael were so spiritually powerful, and as such untouchable on a battlefield. Instead they simple sent out their second wing of attack- their bedecked woman, to entice and weaken the Jewish men.

Given that this was the case, a Gemara master would be able to offer Jews who were looking to him for a *heter*, a legal way to continue in their sins.

Therefore – the Nasi of Shimon, decided to sit/*yeshev* and think, and in the process *remove from his heart*, another law that he was taught by Mosheh Rabenu, which states that “ one who has relations with an *Arami/Goyah* the zealous ones have free license to attack him, and kill him.” And so it happened.

Now, where does the *pasuk*/Written Torah count it for him that he is liable for his soul?

To answer this, we simply have to look at the name of the Nasi. In the *parshah* of *Pinchas* he is name Zimri ben Saloo, but previously he was known as Shelomiel ben Tsuryshadai.

When the Torah mentions the names of the *Nisiim* in *Parshath Bamidbar* , we see that many of them had names that were composed of different combinations of HaShem's names such as Kel, Shakai, Shalom, Tsur etc. We note, that the one that had all four parts of his name comprised of the names of HaShem was the *Nasi* of *Shimon*- Sheloomiel ben Tsuryshadai, which can be translated as: My Peace is with HaShem the son of My Rock is the One who Created the Universe.

One, who is at peace with HaShem, is privileged to live an extended life. And so HaShem states in Parshath Pinchas- “Behold, I will give him my covenant of peace “to Pinchas, which the Chachamim teach us means long life.

Up until now, the *Tzadik Shelomiel ben Tsuryshadai*, was privileged to have long life, but when he makes the mistake of giving in to his tribesmen's request, and using his Gemar Kup, contrives a heter for them to continue in their grave sin, and orchestrates an ill conceived stratagem to join them in order to prove that he's right, ( Zimri coming from zemer – harmonization and musical orchestration ) , he immediately loses his name and his ' treaty of peace" with HaShem , and is killed , ignominiously, by the Zealot who remembered that one who has relations with an *Arami/Goyah* the zealous ones have free license to attack him, and kill him.

May we all be *Zocheh* to constantly have clarity of mind and thought, and to never use our intellects, to justify straying way from the faithful service of *HaShem*. Amen.

And may all those that erroneously justify straying from the proper path, wake up, and return to the ways of our righteous fathers and mothers.

