

Rabbi Yisroel Weinberg
 Director,
 Kiruv Activism
 Department
 Project Inspire
 (646) 961-4961
 yweinberg
 @projectinspire
 .com

PROJECT
INSPIRE
 Presents:

Shabbos INSPIRE.

MONTHLY PARSHA SHEET

Parshas Pinchas
 פרשת פנחס
 2010 / 5770
 Volume 1
 Issue #6

Pinchas Rose to the Challenge

The Parsha of Pinchas illustrates the power of one man and the ability in all of us to make a difference. Pinchas rose to the challenge. He experienced a deep emotional response toward the appalling circumstances at hand and decided to do something about it. Pinchas was the only one to take a stand; hence, he alone receives credit for saving Klal Yisroel at that time. "Pinchas ... turned back my wrath from upon the Bnei Yisroel."

There have been many great individuals throughout our illustrious heritage that went against the grain and transformed the world. Avraham Avinu revolutionized mankind by spreading the belief of monotheism. Moshe Rabbeinu stood by his brethren at all costs when Hashem expressed His desire to annihilate Klal Yisroel. And Rabbi Akiva rebuilt Torah in the face of tragedy after the loss of virtually every one of his students.

It is not only luminaries of biblical proportions of yesteryear that have forever impacted the destiny of Klal Yisroel. In pre-war Europe, Sarah Schenirer, the founder of Bais Yaakov schools, identified a problem, presented a solution to the Jewish world and gave her life to implement a plan against great odds and opposition. Approximately 200 schools were developed during her lifetime, catering to nearly 35,000 students. Where would Klal Yisroel be today without the Nashim Tzidkanios as the backbone of the Jewish Family? It was Sarah Schenirer and her revolutionary idea and establishment of a girl's school system that has enabled Yiddishkeit to thrive today.

As the director of Project Inspire of Toronto, I have had the privilege over the past year and a half of witnessing the beginning of something remarkable. What began as a dream of a few has blossomed into the vision of many. Recently, 800 strong attended the first annual Project Inspire convention in Stamford, CT. The sense of Achdus and excitement was palpable. I felt the great power of a grassroots movement amongst Klal Yisroel that has now begun to take form.

The deeper sources explain a concept
 continued on back >

Returning in the Thousands

By Rabbi Meir Goldberg

Shortly after the founding of the Ponovizher Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, two bachurim walked into the house of the Chazon Ish. "Rebbe," they said, "We have just witnessed a most unusual sight. Two young men from a secular kibbutz walked into the beis midrash with shorts and sandals. They came over to us and asked us to teach them some Torah. What do we do? Why would they be interested?"

"Teach them," replied the Chazon Ish. "Do you know that when these kibbutznik's frum grandparents saw their children go off the derech, they cried bitter tears to Hashem, begging and beseeching Him to help their children do teshuvah? Hashem collected their tears, which would eventually be mashpia on their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. You will see. Soon they will be returning in the thousands!"



The Chazon Ish predicted this 15 to 20 years before any mass teshuvah movement ever began. Today, kiruv and baalei teshuvah are a natural part of the frum world. Stories of teshuvah abound. There are more mekarvim on the front lines than ever before. What inspires people to become frum? What can we do to inspire them?

My first kiruv job was working for Lakewood Links-Project Geshher under the tutelage of Rabbi Aron Gruman, Geshher's director. I remember sitting in his office as a novice, looking for tips on how to succeed. He looked me in the eye and explained, "The thing that people who aren't frum want to see in you is that you are happy, normal, and well adjusted. They want to see that you have a stable family life."

With several more years of kiruv experience under my belt, the midah of simcha is, in my mind, the only prerequisite that one must have when trying to influence another to come closer to Hashem. Let me explain further.

Perhaps the one thing that the secular world seeks more than anything else is happiness. They search and search, yet they cannot seem to find it. Americans spend millions each year pursuing happiness. Some wait on line for days (yes, they really camp out around an electronics store) waiting to buy the new iPhone. Others insist on driving the fanciest cars or going on the most exotic vacations. Yet, when all is said and done, we live in one of the unhappiest societies in history, where divorce is rampant and children who have every conceivable material advantage turn to drugs to escape from the tremendous void that they feel. Perhaps we should not expect anything more from a society that considers the convenient use of a MasterCard as "priceless."

Years ago, when the teshuvah movement was in its infancy, frum Jews often thought it strange that a non-frum person would want to become a baal teshuvah. After all, they have no restrictions and can have everything. Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky, a well-known mekarav from Ohr Somayach, told a story of a woman that once approached him: "Rabbi," she said. "Do you know why you are such a threat to me? It's not any of your classes or talks that threaten me. Rather, here I am a secular Jew, unrestricted in anything. I can do whatever I want. You are an observant Jew with many varied requirements and restrictions. Yet you are clearly enjoying life more than me."

To explain this phenomenon, I would like to use a powerful mashal that Dayan Dunner once gave at an Agudah convention some years ago.

There was once a king who was searching for true happiness. He searched and searched, until he found a man who directed him to a shepherd in a faraway village.

continued on back >

ARIZONA

Scottsdale
 Phoenix

CALIFORNIA

Calabasas
 Hollywood
 Los Angeles
 North Hollywood
 Northridge
 Oakland
 Sacramento
 San Jose
 San Francisco
 San Diego

COLORADO

Boulder

CONNECTICUT

West Hartford
 New London
 Stamford

CANADA

Thornhill
 Toronto

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington

FLORIDA

Aventura
 Boca Raton
 Fort Lauderdale
 Hollywood
 Miami
 North Miami Beach
 Sunny Isles Beach
 Surfside
 Tampa

OHIO

Cincinnati

MARYLAND

Baltimore
 Silver Spring

MASSACHUSETTS

Brookline

NEW JERSEY

Cherry Hill
 Fairlawn
 Lakewood
 Linden
 Long Branch
 Passaic

NEVADA

Las Vegas

NEW YORK

Airmont
 Bayswater
 Boro Park
 East Northport
 Far Rockaway
 Flatbush
 Flushing
 Forest Hills
 Fresh Meadows
 Harrison
 Hewlett
 Kew Gardens Hills
 Lawrence
 Marine Park
 Monsey
 New Rochelle
 Spring Valley
 Staten Island
 Woodmere

PENNSYLVANIA

Bala Cynwyd
 Montgomery
 Lancaster

TEXAS

Dallas
 Houston

► continued from front

called Eisarusa D'lisata (an awakening from below). It is a power from below that initiates an influx of G-dly radiance from above. Eisarusa D'lisata is a mundane cause that affects a monumental surge from on high. The returned transcendental flow is referred to as Eisarusa D'liayla (an awakening from above). These concepts can be compared to small drops of water evaporating heavenward producing a torrential downpour.

The awakening must be grassroots and sprout forth from the ground up.

The actions of one man below with a spear in hand ignited great Divine mercy from above. The plague responsible for the death of 24,000 was halted and Hashem granted Pinchas a covenant of peace and an eternal line of priesthood was promised.

Project Inspire is endorsed by many Gedolim who share their deep acknowledgement of Project Inspire's mandate. It is to awaken in the hearts of every observant Jew the commitment to reach out to less affiliated Jews everywhere and to share with them the beauty and relevance of Yiddishkeit.

However, unlike times of old where the greatest leaders shaped the destiny of Klal Yisroel, I believe at this time, the time of Ikvasa Dmashicha (the lowly footsteps of Moshiach) Hashem is waiting for us to show Him that we care. The awakening must be grassroots and sprout forth from the ground up. The war is raging on. It is the soldier on the ground with spear in hand that will ultimately win the battle.

Pinchas fought for the honor of Hashem. Today, the plague far outnumbers 24,000. How long will we be bystanders observing from the sidelines as the plague increases? It is no longer enough to experience an emotional response to those less fortunate. It is a time of action. Hashem wants to bring His children home. Kiruv is in G-d's hands. However, He is waiting for each and every one of us to show the initiative. If we do our part there is no telling of the incredible response that Hashem will in turn shower back on us. **PI**

Good Shabbos,

Rabbi Moshe Zionce
Director, Project Inspire Toronto

► continued from front

"He is the happiest person in the world," said the man to the king. "If he lets you wear his shirt that makes him happy, you will become happy, as well." After a few days of searching, the king found the poor shepherd. "Let me wear your shirt so that I can be happy," demanded the king. "But your majesty," replied the shepherd, "I don't own a shirt."

As frum Jews, we recognize that a life of Torah and mitzvos—a life of purpose and meaning, a life connected to Hashem—gives us great happiness. The Torah commands us to love every Jew as ourselves. We must share our enthusiasm and happiness with our non-frum brethren. We can't seriously proclaim each night during Maariv, "v'nismach b'divrei Torasecha uv'mitzvosecha le'olam va'ed" and not want to share that with them.

So how indeed do we share the beauty and joy of Yiddishkeit with those who did not grow up with it? Perhaps the most basic way is by inviting them for Shabbos. While the Shabbos experience and the family togetherness that it brings is powerful, the mere fact that you are inviting them into your home is already a novelty for many secular Jews. Often, when we arrange Shabbatons in frum neighborhoods for our students at Rutgers University, students will ask me, "Rabbi, do I have to pay these people? Do you mean they will let me stay in their home without even knowing me?" One doesn't need to be especially knowledgeable or have all of the answers to have an impact.

Natalie G. was a student at Rutgers who began to get involved in our programs. We did a Shabbaton in Edison, New Jersey, together with some members of the Agudah of Edison. On Shabbos afternoon, we had the students attend a panel discussion by frum businesspeople who spoke about their experiences being a frum Jew in the business world. Several weeks later, Natalie told us that she was supposed to have a job as a waitress for a non-Jewish caterer during the previous Shabbos. She had really been looking forward to it, because she really needed the money. After hearing how the businesspeople just dropped everything and left their offices every erev Shabbos, she decided that she would not take that job. "I want to have that much willpower, to control my desire for material things, so I decided to stay for Shabbos," she said.

Another exciting kiruv opportunity is to invite them to a simcha. The thrill and excitement of a frum chasunah, where people are mesameiach in a kosher environment, is a powerful tool. When I was a bachur learning in Eretz Yisrael, we were asked to attend a chasunah of recent baalei teshuvah. We were told that they didn't have enough people to be mesameiach them. Word spread of this mitzvah opportunity, and at least a hundred bachurim, ranging from Sephardi to yeshivish to Yerushalmi, attended. The dancing was incredible and the simcha was palpable. A day later, word spread around the yeshiva that four people who had attended the chasunah decided to become baalei teshuvah. We all were giving our opinions as to what happened that so inspired them. An Israeli youngster explained, "It's very simple. Secular Israelis see chareidim as people who have to be serious about everything and must therefore have no joy in their lives. The dancing and simcha at the chasunah shattered their preconceived notions."

The story is told of a kiruv rabbi who was giving a class to some college students. There was one fellow who was particularly belligerent, fighting this rabbi at every step. A few years passed, and this young student met the rabbi in the street. The rabbi didn't recognize him, because the student was now dressed like a ben Torah. The young man asked, "Don't you recognize me? I was that student who fought you constantly about different issues in Jewish hashkafah. I ended up going to a baal teshuvah yeshiva for a while, not expecting it to affect me much. I started learning Gemara in depth. I was taught a Ketzos and it totally blew my mind. I decided that nobody could make this up, and I eventually became frum. **PI**

Rabbi Meir Goldberg is the director of the Rutgers Jewish Xperience, a kiruv organization at Rutgers University. He resides in Lakewood with his wife and three boys.

Reprinted with permission from Hamodia, where this article appeared originally.

This Tisha B'Av, show Project Inspire's new film "WIPING A TEAR" in your Shul or home.
For more information to to www.kiruv.com

**PROJECT
INSPIRE.**
www.kiruv.com

If you would like to bring the Shabbos Inspire Parsha Sheet to your shul, or to get involved with Project Inspire, please call (646) 961-4961 or email yweinberg@projectinspire.com.

Project Inspire is a grassroots movement inspiring the Jewish people to share the beauty and relevance of our heritage with our fellow Jews.