# The Path To Follow **PINCHAS** July 7th 07 21 Tamouz 5767 **Publication HEVRAT PINTO Under Aegis of** RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO CHLITA 11, rue du plateau **75019 PARIS** Tel: +331 42 08 25 40 Fax +331 42 08 50 85 www.hevratpinto.org Responsable of publication Hanania Soussan

# FOR HASHEM'S HONOR OR YOUR OWN?

(BY RABBI DAVID HANANIA PINTO SHLITA)

t the beginning of this week's parsha we read, "Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest, turned back My wrath from upon the Children of Israel" (Numbers 25:11). Here Rashi cites the Sages in explaining: "The tribes were disparaging him, saying: 'See this son of Puti, whose maternal grandfather fattened cattle for idols, and who has now slain the leader of a tribe of Israel!' For this reason Scripture traces his lineage to Aaron [Sanhedrin 82b]."

The Sages have said that all Pinchas did was solely for Hashem's honor, having devoted himself completely to Him (Yerushalmi, Sanhedrin 10:2). Furthermore, there is a disagreement as to whether Pinchas' name is written with or without a yud (see Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 129). Now a yud indicates that everything is done for the sake of Heaven, illustrating the principle that "in a place where there are no men, strive to be a man" (Perkei Avoth 2:5).

Some questions must be raised. The Sages have said, "One does not teach Halachah before his teacher" (Yerushalmi, Gittin 1:2). Now since Moses and Aaron, as well as the 70 elders of Israel, were present at that time, how could Pinchas have killed a tribal leader of Israel on his own initiative?

There are even more difficult questions that must be raised. The Sages said of Pinchas, "He saw what was happening and remembered the Halachah" (Sanhedrin 82a). That being the case, why didn't Pinchas remind Moses of the Halachah? Pinchas would have received his full permission to kill the sinner, and therefore he would not have taught a Halachah before his teacher! Pinchas could have even used the same approach adopted by his father Elazar when Moses forgot the Halachah after

becoming angry with the army commanders when they returned from battle (Numbers 31: 14). Elazar said, "This is the decree of the Torah, which the L-RD commanded Moses" (v.21). In other words, he taught them the Halachah in the name of Moses. Elazar's son Pinchas could have done the same, which is to have spoken in Moses' name.

The Sages said, however, that Pinchas saw what was happening and remembered the Halachah. This means that he saw the actions of the first man and remembered what happened to him. Pinchas recalled that the Holy One, blessed be He, had warned Adam not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (Genesis 2:17). Yet on his own, Adam believed that it was preferable to eat from it, for he was intelligent and knew that by eating from it he would be able to serve Hashem with even greater strength. The pride of an alien fire. one that Hashem did not command, made its way into Adam and he sinned. Instead of concentrating on Hashem and His mitzvot, he thought only of himself. He thought only of increasing his own honor by transgressing Hashem's commandment, and in so doing he brought the evil inclination into his heart, where it constantly fights man. Needless to say, this is something that Hashem did not want. Nevertheless it happened to Adam because he received no help from "the merit of the fathers." He was the work of G-d's hands (Devarim Rabba 11:3) and believed that he could do anything he desired, which led him to sin. From here we see the importance of such merit, for Adam did not have it to protect him, whereas Pinchas did. This is why our parsha connects Pinchas to Aaron, for it is precisely the merit of the fathers that gave him tremendous help in overcoming his trial. Let us try and understand how Adam, the very work of G-d's hands, could have sinned. The Holy One, blessed be He, gave him a warning by saying: "For on the day that you eat of it, you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). However Adam had no idea what death was, and therefore he failed to understand the seriousness of this prohibition. Pride is what pushed him to sin, for he believed that he could conquer the evil inclination.

If our assumptions are correct, we may understand the difference between Pinchas and Adam. The Mishnah states, "Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin: Know from where you came, to where you are going, and before Whom you are destined to give an accounting. 'From where you came' – from a putrid drop" (Perkei Avoth 3:1). I have read certain commentators who state that "from where you came" did not apply to Adam, since he was the work of G-d's hands. Since he did not come from a "putrid drop," he was unable take this teaching to heart.

Such was not the case with Pinchas. He is described as "the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest," meaning that he was born from a woman; he originated from a "putrid drop." Realizing this is what led him to humility, not pride, for these three things did apply to him. As for Adam, to whom Hashem had said, "On the day that you eat of it, you will surely die," he did the opposite of Pinchas, who knowingly risked his life in order to increase Hashem's honor.

This is why the Holy One, blessed be He, gave Pinchas a tremendous reward. As the parsha tells us, "I give him My covenant of peace, and it will be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood" (Numbers 25: 12-13). This is because all Pinchas' deeds were done for the sake of Heaven. As for Adam – who did not devote his soul to G-d, and who only cared for his own life – he received death, not life.

From this we learn that increasing the honor of Hashem while decreasing our own honor should be everyone's goal in life. Now a person is liable to think, "If I diminish my own honor, then everyone will walk over me. I'll be a nobody!" In reality, however, a person must do just that – he must make himself a mat upon which every Jew can walk.

This is why a person should think about the fact that he truly comes from a putrid drop. He should rejoice when he does so, for in this way he is helping to rectify the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. He should not think that he has to bring the evil inclination into his heart in order to fight it there. On the contrary, he must get as far from evil as possible and cleave only to the good. He will then experience good in this world and in the World to Come. Amen, may it be so.

### **GUARD YOUR TONGUE!**

King David's Prescription

Some people have lost hope of ever being able to control what they say. When they see how most people fail in this regard, they have the impression that nobody can successfully perform this mitzvah. How is this possible? It is like a city where all the inhabitants have been afflicted with a terrible illness, yet no doctor has been able to help them. Everyone has given up hope and is resigned to their fate, and even when a world-renowned physician arrives in town, only a single person rushes to see him. When asked why he alone is hastening to see the doctor, he replies: "Don't be foolish! What do I care what others are doing? My life is at stake!"

If such is the case when it comes to the health of the body, how much more is it the case when the health of the body is concerned! Now there is no spiritual doctor more faithful to us than King David, and he asked: "Who is the man who desires life, who loves days of seeing good?" (Psalms 34:13). His answer serves as good advice: "Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully" (v.14). That being the case, will anyone who is considered intelligent not rush to take this spiritual elixir prescribed by King David?

# MUSSAR FROM THE PARSHA

### **Purity of Heart**

It is written, "Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest" (Numbers 25:11).

Rashi explains that the tribes were disparaging Pinchas because he was a descendant of Jethro. Therefore the verse traces his lineage to Aaron.

This explanation presents us with a problem, for were the tribes unaware that Pinchas was Aaron's grandson? Furthermore, had they not seen that Pinchas' action saved everyone from the plague? That being the case, what importance did his lineage make?

Let us begin with the explanation of the Divrei Emet: "If the evil inclination wants to deceive a tzaddik and make him do wrong...it outsmarts him by leading him to think that sins are mitzvot. It tells him that he is allowed to speak Lashon Harah about so and so, and that it is alright to scorn and shame him. The evil inclination incites him to do this quickly and with fervor, for the zealous are the first to perform a mitzvah. Thus the evil inclination tries to confuse him, preventing him from seeing things clearly so he no longer understands what a sin is. In reality, our eyes often open to reveal that what we once took for a great mitzvah is really a grave sin." In his lectures, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein Zatzal vehemently spoke out against disparaging the honor of a great Torah figure. He said: Let us employ some common sense and ask a person who is publicly shaming a great Jewish figure the following question: When he himself has committed a sin - be it serious or not, or deliberate or not - does he shout and lecture himself on morality, as he does when others commit a sin? Obviously not, for with regards to a person's own sins, the gates of justification are never closed, and even without them he will try and find excuses for himself. As a result, his heart does not grieve when he transgresses the will of his Creator.

When we see great Jewish figures fighting with all their strength against those who turn away from Judaism, it is because they realize, in their vast wisdom and understanding, the magnitude of the danger that this represents. All their battles are truly for the sake of Heaven, and they know how to distance people as well as how to draw them close. Yet do we ever ask ourselves if we are at the same level? Are all our deeds for the sake of Heaven, especially with regards to Lashon Harah, a sensitive issue that precipitated the destruction of the Temple? This is what the tribes did concerning Pinchas, for they claimed that his actions did not stem from a pure source. It is also why they did not connect him to his grandfather Aaron, for Aaron loved his fellowman and brought people closer in pleasant ways. He was a great figure in his generation, knowing how to push people away and draw them closer, and all his deeds were for the sake of Heaven. However the tribes claimed that the same was not true of Pinchas.

Therefore they said that the action he took had its origins in the defects he inherited from his mother's father, who fattened cows for idolatry. They claimed that he was not worthy of praise, but rather of the opposite. This time the Children of Israel were saved by him, they said, yet who knows what could happen tomorrow! Thus Hashem, Who probes the heart of man and knows his innermost thoughts, testified in Pinchas' defense that all his deeds were for the sake of Heaven. They had their origins in true zeal for Hashem, which is why He traced his lineage back to Aaron the priest.

#### A Pearl From the Rav

It is written, "Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest...zealously avenged Me among them" (Numbers 25:11).

In his book Pahad David, Rabbi David Pinto Shlita states that Pinchas was apparently forbidden to do what he did without the consent of the Beit Din! Furthermore, how could Pinchas have risked his life by what he did, not to mention the fact that he taught a Halachah before his teacher Moses when he forgot it? How is this possible?

We shall see the extent to which Pinchas' action was done for the sake of Heaven. We already know the power of Moses, who with every decree made against the Children of Israel aroused himself to pray on their behalf. He even reached the point of asking Hashem, "Erase me please from Your book" (Exodus 32:32). In contrast to this, Moses did not know the Halachah when Zimri committed his wicked deed, though he greatly suffered at the desecration of Hashem's Name that resulted from it. This is why Hashem gave Pinchas the power to take action, despite the guard who protected Zimri and the dangers of teaching Halachah before his teacher, since Pinchas did not want Moses to suffer. Hence at that point Pinchas truly deserved to be a part of the priesthood. As our Sages said, Pinchas did not become a priest until after he killed Zimri the son of Salu.

#### The Son of Both Aaron and Elazar

It is written, "Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest" (Numbers 25:11).

As Pinchas was preparing to enter the tent of Zimri, thousands of people from the tribe of Shimon wanted to kill him, and out of sheer terror his soul left his body. The Holy One, blessed be He, then sent the two souls of Nadav and Avihu in its place, at which point Pinchas merited becoming a High Priest. This is why the verse states, "Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest," meaning that Pinchas was the son of both Elazar and Aaron, for the two souls of Nadav and Avihu entered his body.

### Peace as a Counterweight

It is written, "Therefore say: Behold, I give him My covenant of peace" (Numbers 25:12).

The Ketav Sofer explains that zeal is a characteristic of extremism that is filled with danger, to be used only in exceptional cases. The ability of great Torah figures lies in the fact that they know when and how to use this trait. Pinchas the son of Elazar was the first to employ such zeal, using it under demanding circumstances. Since he was forced to adopt such an extreme attitude in order to save his people, Hashem gave him peace as a counterweight to his zeal. This serves as a future guideline: In the life of the community or the individual, it is better to use peaceful methods than to resort to zealous extremism.

#### He Should Receive His Reward

It is written, "Therefore say: Behold, I give him My covenant of peace" (Numbers 25:12).

In the Midrash our Sages have said, "It is right that he should receive his reward" (Bamidbar Rabba 21:1). The Chiddushei HaRim cites the verse, "Yours, O L-rd, is kindness, for You repay each man according to his deeds" (Psalms 62:13), and asks why this is described as kindness, since a person is rewarded according to his deeds. In other words, he deserves what he gets! The answer is found in how the Sages explain the verse, "Who has a claim on Me from before, that I should repay him?" (Job 41:3). They cite Hashem as stating: "Who performed circumcision in My Name before I gave him a male child? ... Who made a mezuzah for My sake before I gave him a house?" (Vayikra Rabba 27:2). Therefore every reward that a person receives for a good deed really originates from Hashem's kindness.

This only applies, however, when a person does what he is obligated to do. Pinchas did something that was "a Halachah that we do not teach" (Shabbat 12b). If he had gone to the Beit Din, they would not have obligated him to act. Yet because he did act, it was only right that he should receive his reward.

### **Purity of Heart**

It is written, "Moses brought their claim before the L-RD" (Numbers 27: 5).

The daughters of Zelophehad said to Moses, "Our father died in the desert, but he was not among the assembly that was gathering against the L-RD in the assembly of Korach" (v.3). In saying this, they wanted Moses to know

that their father had not been one of his opponents. Moses had believed that Zelophehad was somehow implicated in Korach's rebellion, but he did not want to make a decision on his own. Therefore he brought their case before Hashem.

- Ma'ayana Shel Torah

#### Alas!

It is written, "You shall place some of your glory on him" (Numbers 27: 20).

In the Gemara our Sages state, "Not all your glory. The elders of that generation said: The countenance of Moses was like that of the sun; the countenance of Joshua was like that of the moon. Alas for such shame! Alas for such reproach!" (Bava Batra 75a).

The Torah Temimah asks why shame is mentioned here, since Moses was the father of all the prophets. When Moses gave of his glory to Joshua, he did so generously. He gave of his own spirit and deprived Joshua of nothing. Moses even gave more than what Hashem had asked, for when he was told, "Take Joshua...and place your hand on him" (Numbers 27:18), the text tells us that Moses "placed his hands" – both of them – on Joshua (v.23). Despite the fact that Joshua never left Moses' side, he was still incapable of receiving the full magnitude of his glory. He could only capture what the moon receives from the sun.

### **Not Disgraceful, But Meritorious**

It is written, "You shall place some of your glory on him" (Numbers 27: 20).

The Torah Temimah offers another explanation for the statement, "Alas for such shame!" He cites the commentary of the Chida on Perkei Avoth: In the Midrash, our Sages said that Joshua merited to succeed Moses as the leader of Israel because he conducted himself as a faithful servant during his lifetime, as it is written: "Joshua...the servant of Moses" (Numbers 11: 28). He set out the benches and spread out the carpets in the Beit Midrash, which is why he saw the fruits of his work. At the time, the elders of Israel felt that it was disgraceful to do what Joshua was doing. However when they realized that it was precisely on account of such actions that Joshua became the leader of Israel, and that his face shined like the moon, they said: "Alas, what shame we feel because we hesitated to set out the benches in the Beit Midrash!" It was this hesitation that made the elders of Israel into students of the young Joshua! From here we must realize just how great is the merit of those who maintain the house of Hashem, meaning the synagogue and Beit Midrash.

#### Overview of the Parsha

Parsha Pinchas begins the last segment of the book of Numbers with the generation that is about to enter the land of Israel. The parsha mentions the conquest of the land and speaks about Moses' successor, the one who would lead Israel after his death. Because Pinchas manifested great zeal and was able to turn Hashem's anger away from the Children of Israel, Hashem enters into a covenant ("My covenant of peace") with him and declares that his descendants will be priests for all time. The people then receive the order to harass the Midianites on account of Peor and Cozbi. After a plague breaks out, the people are counted in the plains of Moab according to tribe and family, which will receive an inheritance in the land. Also counted are the families of the tribe of Levi, which will not receive an inheritance in the land. Following the complaint of the daughters of Zelophehad regarding their inheritance (since their father died without having sons), Hashem tells Moses that they should receive from their father's own inheritance. Before Moses dies. Hashem tells him to survey the land of Israel from the summit of mount Abiram. Afterwards Moses asks Hashem to name a successor who will lead the people, and Hashem tells him to select Joshua. The end of the parsha gives a list of the daily offerings, as well as those for the festivals, that the Children of Israel must bring upon entering the land.

# **REASONS FOR THE MITZVOT**

### **Prayer Replaces Offerings**

It is written, "Command the Children of Israel and say to them: My offering, My food-offering consumed by fire, a pleasing odor to Me...two per day, a continual burnt-offering" (Numbers 28:2-3).

We have received the order to bring two offerings each day when the Sanctuary stood. These are known as the tamid (daily burnt-offering) because they were offered tamid (continuously). If we ask how this mitzvah can be performed in our time, since to our great regret the Sanctuary no longer stands, the answer is given by the prophet Hosea: "Our lips will substitute for bulls" (Hosea 14: 3), meaning that our prayers will substitute for offerings. We need to look at how reciting prayers can be considered as if we had brought offerings in the Sanctuary. The fact is, bringing offerings is a way of focusing our attention on cleaving to Hashem. This is because, as we know, a person is influenced by his deeds. Therefore he must rouse his spirit twice each day and want to constantly remember his Creator. This requires him to perform righteous deeds, for which Hashem will bless him. The same applies to prayer. If a person realizes that he can cleave to his Father in Heaven through prayer and ask Him for whatever he needs, he will immediately rectify the garments of his soul, meaning his deeds. He will then be able to come before the King, rejoice in the splendor of His glory, and receive all that he needs, at which point he will lack nothing. This in fact is the goal of prayer – to recognize that we depend on Hashem to receive all that we need. Hence at the beginning of the Amidah we praise the Creator and proclaim that He is all-powerful. This instills us with a love for Hashem, and it also draws us closer to Him. While standing before Him, we ask for wisdom before all else; we ask for the understanding to use His blessings solely for the good. Only afterwards do we ask, "Cause us to return, our Father, to Your Torah...in whole hearted repentance." Once we have received understanding, and once we have cleansed ourselves by repentance, we are ready to pray for our material requirements, those we need in order to perform mitzvot. At the end of our prayer, we ask for the construction of the Sanctuary, deliverance from exile, and for our supplications to be heard. We also thank Hashem for all the beneficences He has granted us up to now.

We should realize that this constitutes a great kindness on Hashem's part, for through prayer we can preserve the bond that exists between ourselves and Him, our Father in Heaven. We are not like the serpent, which was cursed with finding its food wherever it went ("Dust shall you eat all the days of your life" – Genesis 3:14). This in fact is a terrible curse, for Hashem did not even want to hear its voice in prayer, and therefore it was cursed with finding its food without having to resort to prayer. However this does not apply to us. The Holy One, blessed be He, loves to hear our voices in prayer, and this should fill our hearts with joy. It should encourage us to pray for everything we need and to place our trust in Him, for as it is written: "The L-RD is close to all who call upon Him" (Psalms 145:18).

# **EISHET CHAYIL**

#### How to Merit a Son Like Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin

The author of Sha'agat Aryeh would normally study Torah at the home of Rabbi Yitzchak of Volozhin, for he possessed a complete Talmud and other important books, which was rare at the time. One day as the Sha'agat Aryeh was studying, Rabbi Yitzchak's wife felt that she was about to give birth. Since she knew that the Sha'agat Aryeh was studying and she did not want to disturb him, she controlled herself and did not scream during her contractions. After she gave birth, the Sha'agat Aryeh learned of her incredible courage and was amazed at her devotion to Torah. He therefore blessed her husband Rabbi Yitzchak that he should have sons who would become great Torah scholars. His blessing bore fruit, and all their sons became eminent Torah scholars. Among them were Rabbi Chaim and Rabbi Zalman of Volozhin, two of the Vilna Gaon's greatest disciples.

- Leshichno Tidreshu

## A TRUE STORY

#### The Trial of Avraham

It is written, "It shall be for him and his offspring a covenant of eternal priesthood" (Numbers 25:13).

In his youth, Rabbi Avraham Hacohen of Djerba earned a living by selling needleware and perfume in Arab villages. He normally left his belongings with an Arab that he got along with. One day Rabbi Avraham returned to get his things, but the Arab's wife tried to seduce him. When he refused, she begged him to give in to her. However Rabbi Avraham struggled against her and fled after breaking down a door.

As it turned out, this was all a ploy that the woman's husband had concocted in order to test Rabbi Avraham. After he fled, the Arab emerged from his hiding place and ran after him to say that it was all a test. He also showed Rabbi Avraham his gun, telling him that if he had not resisted his wife's advances, he would have killed him on the spot. The Arab then began to sing the praises of the Jewish religion and the purity of its morals. When Rabbi Avraham returned home, he went to see his Rav, Rabbi Shaul Hacohen, and told him the whole story.

At that time Rabbi Shaul was very old, and he needed a young Rav to oversee the community. After listening to the story and understanding the resolve of his student, he recommended him for the position. Thus Rabbi Avraham became the Av Beit Din of Djerba.

- Ma'aseihem Shel Chachmei HaSefaradim

## YOUR EYES SHALL BEHOLD YOUR TEACHER

# Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh Guterman of Radzymin

Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh Guterman Zatzal, known as the Saba of Radzymin, was born in 5552. From his youth, people already foresaw great things for him, and he quickly became known throughout the land. After his marriage he settled in his father-in-law's city, Ridzwal, where he remained learning in solitude until his name became respected everywhere. At first he stayed near the Maggid of Koznitz, the saintly Rabbi Israel, and later he became the main disciple of Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pshischa. He also frequented the saintly Rabbi Yitzchak, the Rebbe of Vorki. After the Rebbe's death in 5608, Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh began to lead the community from his small town of Radzymin. From every corner of the globe, people gathered around him to ask for his blessing, since he was known as a miracle worker. With him things were done discreetly, according to the definition of the tzaddikim of the generation. Rabbi Simcha Bunim used to say that his prayers made a great impact in Heaven. In fact he often joined him in prayer when he wanted to annul decrees that threatened the Jewish people, for he said that Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh's prayers could pierce the Heavens. Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh was also the faithful friend of the Chiddushei HaRim, the Rebbe and founder of the Ger dynasty. On Tammuz 18, Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh's soul ascended to heaven, and his body was laid to rest in the ancient Warsaw cemetery, where a mausoleum was later built over his grave. May his merit protect us all.

# IN THE LIGHT OF THE HAFTORAH

## Will You Judge?

It is written, "Anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat...as a prophet in your stead" (I Kings 19:16).

The prophet Elijah fled from Jezebel as she was trying to kill him. While fleeing, he made his way to the desert of Judah and eventually to Mount Sinai. There Hashem asked him, "Why are you here Elijah?" He replied, "I have acted with great zeal for the L-RD, G-d of hosts, for the Children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant." This answer did not please the Holy One, blessed be He, and He ordered Elijah to "anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat...as a prophet in your stead." Rashi explains this to mean: "I do not want your prophecy, since you plead for the prosecution of My children." This demonstrates how valuable the Children of Israel are to our Father in Heaven, for although the prophet Elijah had devoted his entire life to guiding Israel in the ways of Hashem, although he would have obviously found a way of defending them if he could, and although his intentions were solely for the sake of Heaven, solely to help Israel – nevertheless the Holy One, blessed be He, did not want him as His prophet any longer. Therefore he named Elisha as his successor. That being the case, this obligates us to love Hashem as much as He loves us, and to never forget the greatness of every Jew. We must love our fellow Jew with all our heart and soul, and we must do all we can to avoid hurting him. When it becomes necessary to reprimand him, it should done through love, as the Holy One, blessed be He, told the prophet Ezekiel: "Will you judge, will you judge? (Ezekiel 22:2). Here Tanna D'vei Eliyahu explains, "If you want to reprimand them, reprimand them." The Shai LaMora goes further: "If you do so in complete love, you have the right to reprimand. However if you are not at that level, do not reprimand them."

# THE DEEDS OF THE GREAT

# **Speaking the Truth From His Heart**

Rabbi Safra had an item that he wanted to sell, and a customer arrived while he was in the midst of reciting Shema. Although the customer consented to pay the asking price, Rav Safra made no reply because it is forbidden to interrupt the recitation of Shema. Thinking that this lack of response meant that his offer was not high enough, the customer increased it. When Rabbi Safra finished reciting Shema, he told the customer to take the item at his initial offer, since in his heart he had already agreed to sell it at that price. He therefore refused to exploit the error of the buyer, for he felt obligated to speak the truth from his heart (see Rashbam on Bava Batra 88a).

The Gemara also recounts the following story about Rav Safra: "Mar Zutra the son of Rabbi Nachman was once traveling from Sikara...while Rabba and Rav Safra were going to Sikara. They met on the way. Believing that they had come to meet him, [Mar Zutra] said: 'Why have the Rabbis taken this trouble to come so far [to meet me]?' Rav Safra replied: 'We did not know that the Master was coming. Had we known of this, however, we would have been willing to travel an even greater distance.' Rabba said to him, 'Why did you tell him this? You have now upset him.' [Rav Safra] replied, 'But we would have been deceiving him otherwise' "(Chullin 94b).