



Dedicated in memory of Rachel Leah bat R' Chaim Tzvi

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Pieces of Peace: Parshas Pinchas

Based on a Naaleh.com class by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summarized by Channie Koplowitz Stein

As reward for his zealous execution of Zimri, Pinchas is granted a covenant of peace with Hashem, thereby conferring priestly status to Pinchas and his descendants. That peace be offered in recognition of violence seems incongruous. Seeing as a priest who murders forfeits his privilege to bless the people and serve in the Temple, appointing Pinchas to become a priest is confounding.

To resolve this conflict, we examine both the sequence of events and the motivation of Pinchas. First, this was not a rash act of violence. When Pinchas witnessed Zimri's brazenness, he remembered what the halacha, Jewish law, dictated: When a Jew sins with a non-Jewish woman in front of at least ten people, a zealot should kill him. But since Moshe himself had not taken action, Pinchas ran to him to verify the law. Only after Moshe's confirmation did Pinchas pick up a spear and implement the prescribed procedure. After God's honor was upheld within the parameters of halacha, His anger was appeased and the plague ended.

Now let us analyze Pinchas' motivation. We have already determined that Pinchas was not motivated by the negative emotions of anger or pride, but by overwhelming love for Hashem and His nation. He could not bear to see the name of Hashem dishonored, nor

could he bear to see the suffering of his people. In fact, the S'forno says his compassion for Bnei Yisroel was greater than his sense of Heavenly justice, and Tehillim tells us that Pinchas prayed for Bnei Yisroel at this time. His intention was pure: to stop the plague and restore the peace and harmony that his grandfather Aharon was renowned for. This is the Torah paradigm of a zealot.

A mitzvah performed selflessly atones for many sins, even those of others. It creates a bond of love between the doer, Hashem, Bnei Yisroel, and all of creation. It was this altruism that brought about the end of the plague. Pinchas understood that if this mitzvah presented itself to him, he must fulfill it, even though it was against his natural inclinations. He picked up the spear and relied on Hashem to help him. In the census that followed this plague, Hashem affirms the actions and motivation of Pinchas by joining His name to the tribes of Bnei Yisroel. Each family and tribe is named with a "Heh" at the beginning and a "Yud" at the end, "Horeuveini," "Hashimoni." Hashem again brought us close to Him through the atonement generated by the pure motivation of Pinchas' action.

In his love of Hashem and Bnei Yisroel, Pinchas mirrored his grandfather Aharon's

traits. The Torah records the joy with which Aharon went to meet his brother even though he knew Moshe was chosen to lead Bnei Yisroel out of Egypt. Aharon's love for Hashem precluded any jealousy toward Moshe. Aharon's reward was the Priesthood. Appropriately, Pinchas too merited the priesthood for his demonstration of love.

True love of Hashem means loving all people, as when each of us carries out His will, His Name becomes more glorified. It precludes feeling jealous of another's accomplishments. There was much Torah study in the Temple era and many acts of gemilat chassadim, kindness. Yet each begrudged the other his accomplishments. This was not love of Hashem, but love of self, fear of one's own honor being diminished, and it led to sin'at chinam, the unwarranted hatred that brought about the destruction of the Temple.

As we begin the Three Weeks, we must work on purifying our intentions in our performance of mitzvos. We must emulate Pinchas by praying for our fellow Jew and sharing his pain. We must speak out and take action when we see Hashem's honor being compromised. Like Pinchas, we have the responsibility to try to repair the world under the Sovereignty of Heaven and pray that Hashem will help us succeed.



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 Mishneh 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, Pinchas, and Elazar were all students of Moshe, Yehoshua was the talmid ne'eman, the most faithful disciple. He ministered to Moshe, followed him everywhere, and scrutinized his every action. Of him Chazal say, "Gedolah shimushah shel Torah yoter m'limudah"—personally attending a Torah scholar is greater than studying Torah itself. This is why Yehoshua merited to inherit the mantle of leadership from Moshe.

The Midrash comments, "Notzer te'ainah

yocheil 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. Rather, he earned the role because he served Moshe faithfully.

The Ramban writes that when Moshe descended the mountain after cheit ha'eigel and sensed the unrest in the Jewish camp, Yehoshua thought there must be a war going on. Moshe recognized that the people were engaged in blasphemous conduct. Having led the nation for many years, Moshe had developed the ability to discern the truth, while Yehoshua was still learning. By serving Moshe and observing his ways, Yehoshua eventually

acquired the ability to understand the nation.

The Baal Shem Tov had many outstanding students, including Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye. Yet the Mezhritcher Maggid merited to assume leadership of the Chassidic movement after the Baal Shem Tov's passing because he was the student most familiar with his teacher's conduct, having served him faithfully for many years.

The ability to serve a great Torah leader, to study his behavior and responses to different situations, is crucial for developing future leadership. Many people can acquire knowledge, and Torah can be studied through many avenues. But shimush—serving a Torah leader—is the critical factor in shaping a future leader of Klal Yisrael.

Bitachon: Meaning of Trust – Simcha and Bitachon #5

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

We all understand that we are better off not stealing or murdering. Having a day of rest is beneficial, as is treating others kindly. But Torah takes us beyond our comfort zone. If you don't believe, you'll only be ethical when it's easy. A person with emunah remains steadfast because he trusts that there are Divine consequences and accountability. The Torah is the blueprint of the world. Hashem desires certain choices and therefore established corresponding consequences. Although all mitzvot bring reward and sins bring punishment, there is always hashgacha, even when events appear to unfold naturally. The more open a person is to seeing Hashem, the more clearly he will perceive Him. When you truly believe He is present, you recognize the Torah as Hashem's imprint on reality.

"A tzaddik lives by his faith." The Torah says that Avraham believed in Hashem, and Hashem regarded it as righteousness.

Avraham saw Hashem as the Master of all cause and effect in a transcendent way. He chose to be thrown into the fiery furnace because he believed that doing Hashem's will could only bring goodness into the world. His actions were driven not by ego or stubbornness, but by emunah.

On a national level, the Jewish people experienced ruach hakodesh in the merit of their emunah. When they sang Shirat Hayam at the Red Sea, they were expressing more than gratitude for a miracle—they were singing a vision that extended to the days of Mashiach. The central theme of the song is that Hashem is present throughout history in

countless ways. Although the Jewish people possessed many merits, it was emunah that redeemed them from Egypt.

Following the path that begins with emunah can ultimately lead a person to ruach hakodesh. Galut challenges us by making Hashem's presence seem hidden. When we affirm His presence and cultivate genuine faith, we become worthy of redemption.

The Vilna Gaon sent his students to settle in Eretz Yisrael because he believed that the mitzvot dependent on the Land inspire emunah more than any others. In the Land of Israel, one can perceive Hashem's providence and presence from moment to moment. This heightened awareness is what will ultimately bring about our spiritual redemption.