

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS PINCHAS - 5757

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List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Pinchas -

The Pitfall of Consistency: Been There; Done That

Parshas Pinchas contains a long list of sacrifices that are brought on various occasions. The first offering the Torah discusses is the Korban Tamid - the Daily Sacrifice. When the Temple is standing there is a Biblical command to offer a Tamid Offering, every single day -- "One Lamb is to be offered in the morning and one Lamb is to be brought toward the evening" [Bamidbar 28:4]. This offering is brought every day of the year, even on Shabbos, even on Yom Kippur. There is something beautiful about consistency. But consistency does have one major pitfall.

This pitfall is hinted to, by an incongruous verse in the middle of the chapter of the Daily Sacrifice. For no apparent reason, the Torah inserts, into the description of the Korban Tamid, the verse, "The continual Burnt Offering which was made at Mt. Sinai for a pleasant aroma, a Fire Offering, before HaShem [Bamidbar 28:6]." What does the Olah that was brought on Mt. Sinai have to do with this section about the Daily Sacrifice? That which happened on Mt. Sinai is history! Why is it mentioned in the middle of the section of the Korban Tamid? In the Sifrei and the Talmud [Chagiga 6b], the Tanaaim are all bothered by the question, "What is this verse teaching us?" One opinion states that the Olah on Mt. Sinai needed accompanying libations; one says it did not need libations; one says they did not offer the Daily offering at Mt. Sinai and that it only started later on. They are all troubled by the presence of this verse over here.

Rav Yosef Salant says that although the Rabbis of the Talmud are arguing about a HALACHIC issue, there is also a very important HASHKAFIC point that we derive from the presence this verse. That hashkafic point relates to relates to this pitfall of consistency. When something is done day in day out, as wonderful as it may be, it eventually becomes done by rote. It becomes stale. It becomes automatic, without thought. One only needs to have the nachas of seeing a son put on Tefillin for the first time, to remember what it was like. We can come in late and quickly put on our Tefillin in the time between Yishtabach and Borchu [names of specific prayers] and still have time to answer 'Yehei Shmei Rabba'. That is the amount of time it takes us to put on Tefillin! But watch a Bar Mitzvah boy put on Tefillin, making sure they are straight and making sure they are tight enough and that every strap is in order. What is the difference? We have been putting on Tefillin for forty years. On the one hand that is great -- it is 'Tamid'. We can look back and say, we never missed a day! But that 'Tamid' becomes 'old hat' and sometimes lacks the true meaning of the Mitzvah. That is the pitfall of Tamid.

Therefore, the Torah inserts, "The Continuous Burnt Offering that was offered on Mt. Sinai for a pleasant Aroma, a Fire Offering before HaShem," in the middle of the parsha of the Korban Tamid that applies for all generations. Remember that first Tamid! Remember the Tamid that was brought on Har Sinai with all the enthusiasm and all the newness and excitement. Remember that! There should always be a little of THAT Tamid in the Tamid that is brought every single day. That is the way it should be with our Tefillin and with our Kerias Shemah and with our Shmoneh Esreis [names of specific prayers]. We cannot lose the whole value of consistency by letting that very value become the pitfall.

King David says in Tehillim, "I asked one thing from G-d, that is my request; to dwell in the House of G-d all the days of my life, and to visit His

Palace." [Tehillim 27:4] The commentaries all ask what David is saying. First he asks to DWELL in G-d's House his entire life, and then he asks to be a VISITOR? Which is it -- a Resident or a Visitor? Is he a "shivti b'veis HaShem"-nik or is he a "L'vaker b'Heicholo"-nik? David's request is to have it both ways. He wants to be one who dwells everyday in G-d's house, but he wants to FEEL as if he is only a visitor. He always wants it to feel special and new.

This is a difficult request, because these two qualities are almost mutually exclusive. When one has 'Tamid' he does not have 'Chiddush' and when one has 'Chiddush' he does not have 'Tamid'. But this is the goal and this is the lesson of the Korban Tamid. It needs to be "One every morning and one every evening" but it also must be "like the first one which was ever offered, on Mt. Sinai."

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<http://www.jpost.co.il/Columns/> Thursday, July 24, 1997 SHABBAT SHALOM: Cats, mice, priests and housewives By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN (July 25) "And God spoke to Moses, saying, 'Pinchas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned my wrath away from the children of Israel ... that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.'" (Num. 25:11) How does Jewish tradition look upon a zealot, one ready even to take the life of a flagrant transgressor when all of Israel seems in danger? From a certain perspective, Pinchas the zealot saved the day. After all, the glory of the Jewish people had been its commitment to a unique morality. All this is threatened when a prince of the tribe of Simeon mocks Moses and the Law by publicly fornicating with a Midianite woman. When similar intentions begin stirring the libidos of the onlooking Israelites, Pinchas sprints into action, impaling both transgressors.

Even though we understand Pinchas's action - Zimri's brazen defiance could not be ignored - our modern sensibility finds the concept of zealotry hard to swallow. We do not like zealots.

But the Bible seems appreciative: "Therefore tell him that I have given him my covenant of peace. And he shall have it, and his seed after him, the covenant of an eternal priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel." (Num. 25: 12-13)

But is there a hidden message of ambivalence?

Three questions: Why does God give Pinchas a covenant of peace? In Hebrew it sounds meritorious - brit shalom - but what exactly does it mean? Even if we understand the need for Pinchas's action, it's hard to forget that he aimed his spear with deadly precision and amazing strength. Is this the background for a brit shalom? Secondly, why is God bestowing a covenant of eternal priesthood on Pinchas? Haven't we just been informed that Pinchas is the "son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest"? (25:11) Since the priesthood is patriarchal, Pinchas is only one generation removed from the High Priest himself! Why give Pinchas what he presumably already possesses? Third, given the zealotry in Pinchas's character, isn't it strange that when he receives the priesthood, one of the first things he will be doing is reciting the following blessing: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with the holiness of Aaron, and commanded us to bless thy people Israel with love"? From what we've seen, it's difficult to characterize his primary emotion as "love"! Furthermore, why is the priestly blessing singled out as the one commandment that has to be done with love?

Regarding our question about Pinchas and his "gift" of priesthood, commentators offer different explanations. Rashi, apparently affirming Pinchas's action, understands the gift from a chronological point of view, noting that the priesthood had already been given to Aaron, his sons, and their children. But Pinchas, who was born earlier, was not included in the priesthood. Rashi then quotes from the Talmud: "Pinchas did not merit the priesthood until he killed Zimri." (B.T. Zevahim 101b) In effect, according to Rashi, the priesthood was Pinchas's reward for preventing adultery and

intermarriage. In changing the course of future generations, he was rewarded with a gift for his own future descendants.

The commentary Moshav Z'kenim has a more negative approach, and this from a religio-legal perspective. Since we know from the Talmud that a priest with blood on his hands cannot participate in the priestly blessing ceremony (B.T. Brachot 32b), upon killing Zimri, Pinhas would have lost his priesthood, "never again to bring a sacrifice." Despite the fact that the zealot may have had only the purest of intentions, killing changes one's priestly status. How can hands that once killed then be held aloft during the priestly blessing? Nevertheless, God makes an exception in the case of Pinhas, and despite his murder awards him the covenant of eternal priesthood.

The Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 1817-1893) in his commentary Ha'amek Davar goes one step further. He acknowledges that anyone who kills, even justifiably, grows harsher and less sensitive, suffering a stain on his soul. Thus Pinhas receives these two gifts: first, a covenant of peace, a guarantee that he will not be tainted by his own act, and second, the eternal priesthood, which reconnects him to Aaron, the archetypal pursuer of peace. The Almighty is in effect entreating Pinhas the zealot to re-connect with Aaron the peacemaker, true patriarch of the priesthood.

I believe this is the true meaning of the blessing which serves as an introduction to the priestly benediction (birkat kohanim). The priest-leader is ultimately responsible to and for the entire nation, and he may well see the necessity - as did Pinhas - of committing an act of zealotry. The blessing reminds us that even if that is the case, whatever one does he must do out of love for his people. As Rav Haim, the famed Rav of Brisk was wont to say: Two creatures destroy mice - housewives and cats. But whereas the first does so out of love and concern for her household, and genuinely wishes there were no mice, the second looks for mice in order to eat them. The priest-leader must look at transgressors with the eyes of the housewife, not those of the cat. The priest's blessing conveys a crucial message to the priests of every generation: Be like Aaron, and not like Pinhas; emphasize love and peace over zealotry and strife. Shabbat Shalom

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weekly-halacha@torah.org WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5757  
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PARSHAS PINCHAS

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

My offering, My food for My fires.... two a day as a Tamid offering (28:2,3). On the 17th of Tammuz the Tamid sacrifice was discontinued (Ta'anis 26b)

#### THE THREE WEEKS

The three week period between the fast of the 17th of Tammuz and Tishah b'Av, known as Bein ha-Meitzarim, was established by the Rabbis as a period of mourning over the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash. There are certain activities, normally permitted, which are prohibited during this period. The Talmud(1) tells us that only one who has properly mourned over the Temple's destruction will merit to see its rebuilding. It is important, therefore, to become more knowledgeable about the exact nature of those prohibited activities. Let us review:

There are four forbidden activities, for men and women, which are specific to the Three Week period: 1. Taking a haircut or a shave; 2. Getting married or participating in a wedding; 3. Listening to music and dancing; 4. Reciting shehecheyanu.

Important Note: The Three Week period includes another period of mourning, called The Nine Days. The halachos of those days - from Rosh Chodesh Av through midday of the tenth of Av - are more restrictive in several areas. Here we are discussing the laws of the Three Weeks only, not the special, more stringent, halachos of the Nine Days.

**HAIRCUTS - WHEN IS IT PERMITTED? WHEN IS IT PROHIBITED?**

It is permitted to trim a mustache that interferes with eating(2). It is permitted to trim eyebrows or eyelashes(3). Married women may cut hair that is protruding from their head covering(4). It is permitted to comb one's hair even though some hair will get torn out while combing(5). Nail cutting is permitted(6). It is permitted to shave if otherwise one will not be allowed to come to work or will lose his job(7). But if he would be permitted to work, it is prohibited to shave - even though he may be ridiculed(8). A mourner who completed his mourning period during the Three Weeks, may take a haircut and a shave(9). The prohibition of haircutting applies even to small children under the age of chinuch(10). Thus if an upsheren occurs during the Three Weeks, it should either be done earlier or postponed(11). In time of necessity, it is permitted to take a haircut or a shave on the evening of the 17th of Tammuz(12). There are poskim who support the custom of those who shave on erev Shabbos(13). But this is not the custom today in most communities(14). On the day of his son's bris(15), the father, the sandak and the mohel may take a haircut(16).

**WEDDINGS - WHEN IS IT PERMITTED? WHEN IS IT PROHIBITED?** A wedding is permitted on the evening before the 17th of Tammuz if no other date is feasible(17). Engagements are permitted and even may be celebrated with a party or a meal(18).

**MUSIC - WHEN IS IT PERMITTED? WHEN IS IT PROHIBITED?** A professional musician, or one who is learning to play professionally, may play music during the Three Weeks(19). Listening to music is prohibited, whether it is live, from the radio or pre-recorded(20). Programs or other circumstances where the musical entertainment is incidental to the main event may be attended or viewed(21). Children who have reached the age that they understand about the destruction of the Beis ha-Mikdash may not listen to music(22). Several poskim, however, permit a child to practice his music lessons(23). Singing in praise of Hashem at a seudas mitzvah without musical accompaniment, is permitted(24).

**SHEHECHEYANU - WHEN IS IT PERMITTED WHEN IS IT PROHIBITED(25)?** On Shabbos, it is permitted to recite shehecheyanu(26). On Rosh Chodesh Av, it is permitted to recite shehecheyanu(27) over new fruit(28). A new fruit that will not be available after the Three Weeks may be eaten and a shehecheyanu recited(29). A shehecheyanu is recited at a pidyon haben(30) and at the birth of one's daughter(31). A shehecheyanu may be recited if by mistake the Borei pri ha'eitz was already said on the fruit(32). The blessing of Ha'tov v'hameitiv may be said during the Three Weeks. Since it is prohibited to recite shehecheyanu, it is also prohibited to buy any item which normally requires shehecheyanu to be recited. It is forbidden, therefore, to buy a new car for personal use during the Three Weeks. It is permitted, however, to buy a car for business use [and the shehecheyanu will be recited after the Three Weeks] or for the benefit of the family [since in that case Ha'tov v'hameitiv is recited instead of shehecheyanu](33). It is forbidden to buy or wear clothing which normally would require a shehecheyanu to be recited(34). If the clothing needs alterations, they may be bought during the Three Weeks and altered after the Three Weeks are over(35).

#### FOOTNOTES

1 Ta'anis 31b, quoted in Shulchan Aruch O.C. 554:25. 2 O.C. 551:13. 3 Bein Pesach l'Shavuos, pg. 241 quoting an oral ruling from Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S. Wosner. 4 Mishnah Berurah 551:79. When necessary, women may shave their legs - Harav M. Feinstein (Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 9). See also Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:137 where he allows women to take haircuts in time of necessity during the Three Weeks. When necessary, a girl of marriageable age may take a haircut - Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Bei'sah, pg. 371). 5 Mishnah Berurah 551:20. 6 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 122:5. 7 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:102; She'orim ha-Metzuyanim B'halachah 122:5. 8 Igros Moshe C.M. 1:93. 9 Mishnah Berurah 551:87. 10 Sha'ar ha-Tzyion 551:91. Aruch ha-Shulchan 551:31, however, seems to hold that only children above the age of chinuch are prohibited. 11 Mishnas Ya'akov O.C. 551 quoting Harav Y.Y. Teitelbaum (Satmar Rov). 12 She'orim ha-Metzuyanim B'halachah 122:1, based on Igros Moshe O.C. 1:168. 13 Kaf ha-Chayim 551:66. See also Biur Halachah 551:3 quoting R'

Akiva Eiger. 14 Shmiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42:52. 15 Or the evening before - Mishnah Berurah 493:13. If the bris is on Shabbos, it is permitted to take a haircut on Friday - ibid. If the bris is on Sunday, most poskim do not permit to take a haircut on Friday - see Kaf ha-Chayim 493:36. 16 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 122:15; Shaar ha-Tziyon 551:4 quoting Chasam Sofer; Kaf ha-Chayim 551:10; Pischei Teshuvah 551:1; She'orim ha-Metzuyanim B'halachah 122:16. See, however, Be'er Heitev 551:3 who is stringent. 17 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:168. Other poskim are more stringent - see Tzitz Eliezer 10:26. 18 Mishnah Berurah 551:19 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyon 26. 19 Biur Halachah 551:2; Igros Moshe O.C. 3:87 20 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:166; 3:87; Minchas Yitzchak 1:111; Yechaveh Da'as 3:30. 21 Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 128). 22 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:21-4. 23 See She'orim ha-Metzuyanim B'halachah 122:2 and Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 128. 24 Harav M. Feinstein (Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 128). Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Bein Pesach l'Shavuos, pg. 285; Yechaveh Da'as 6:34).

25 Not all poskim prohibit reciting shehecheyanu during the Three Weeks and some conduct themselves according to that view - see Aruch ha-Shulchan 551:38. Our discussion here is based on the view of the Mishnah Berurah who is stringent, and this has become the custom by the majority of people. 26 Mishnah Berurah 551:98. Bein Pesach l'Shavuos, pg. 293, quotes Teshuvos Riva that this is permitted only on Shabbos itself, but new clothing may not be worn for the Minchah service on erev Shabbos. 27 Sha'ar ha-Tziyon 551:99. 28 Halichos Bei'sah, pg. 371 - since clothing may not be bought during the Nine Days. 29 Rama O.C. 551:17. 30 O.C. 551:17. 31 Nitei Gavriel, pg. 35. 32 Birkei Yosef 555:12. 33 Igros Moshe O.C. 3:80. 34 Mishnah Berurah 551:45; Igros Moshe O.C. 3:80. 35 Kaf ha-Chayim 551:88.

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<ftp://ftp.torah.org/classes/drasha/drasha@torah.org> MOSHE'S LAST STAND -- PARSHA PARABLES -- PINCHOS Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

This week the most illustrious career in Biblical history begins its final chapters. Moshe is officially informed that he will pass on and is told who his successor would be. But in informing Moshe of the transition, Hashem repeats both here in the Book of Bamidbar (27:12) and again in the Book of Devorim (32:51) the reason that Moshe will not lead the B'nai Yisrael into the Land of Israel. It is because he hit the water producing rock instead of speaking to it. Why does Hashem seem to stress Moshe's sin? Rashi, the classic medieval commentator, explains that Moshe asked Hashem to publicly declare his sin in order to declare that this sin was his only flaw. He was afraid lest some would say that he, too, was amongst those who were destroyed for rebellion in the desert. He was afraid that he would be equated with the rebels and sinners. Thus, he asked Hashem to emphasize that the only flaw he committed was that of the rock. It is very difficult to understand. How could Moshe even suspect that anyone would place him on that level? How could one even imagine that he was excluded from entering Israel for an act of treason that led to the demise of others? Why was it so important to Moshe that the Torah reiterates that the incident at the rock was his only transgression?

Radio commentator Paul Harvey once presented a piece of American history in the following manner: George Armstrong was appointed to the

United States Military Academy in 1857. After graduating and commissioned in the cavalry, he quickly established a reputation for daring and brilliance in battle. His reputation was so well acclaimed that at the age of twenty-three, he was made the youngest brigadier general in United States history. George's energy and cunning paralleled the other great Georges who left their mark on military history -- Generals George Washington and George S. Patton. In fact, George Armstrong was so successful, that by the end of the Civil War he became one of the most celebrated commanders. His pursuit of Lee's army from Richmond in April 1865 destroyed the confederate lines of defense and captured prisoners, wagons, and guns - until, on the morning of April 9 he had totally defeated the enemy. It was to no one other than General George Armstrong that the Confederate flag of defeat was first presented. After the Civil War, his career continued to flourish. He was assigned to the newly formed seventh Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In the fall of 1868 he won a brilliant victory over Black Kettle's band of Cheyenne Indians in the battle of the Washita and took part in many successful engagements over the next eight years. But history has almost no recollection of the illustrious career of General George Armstrong. On June 22, 1876, General George Armstrong and his regiment, a force of about 655 men, set out for Little Bighorn. He encountered an overwhelming force of at least 4,000 well-armed Sioux warriors and was killed together with his entire regiment. No longer were the Civil War successes the hallmark of General George Armstrong's career. Only remembered is the great defeat at Little Bighorn led by General George Armstrong - did I mention his last name -- Custer - General George Armstrong Custer at his last stand.

People often tend to forget the illustrious careers of great people because of a flaw that ended it. Moshe was punished for an infraction that is difficult to comprehend in mortal terms. He hit a rock, and produced water -- one of history's greatest miracles -- for a thirsting nation. Yet something was wrong. He was supposed to speak to the rock and instead he hit it. And between him and his Creator, there was a price to pay. We however must realize that a mistake, as great as its consequences were, cannot mar the illustrious career of the man who led us out of Egypt and developed us into the nation that we are today. In no way can that punishment diminish any regard that we have for Moshe. At Moshe's departure, that point was to be reiterated repeatedly. It is only because of the rock that he did not enter. How often does a man who works tirelessly for years and who errs in his last stand, go down in disgrace for the act that terminated his career? How many people's last stand becomes their most notorious if not their only stand? Perhaps Hashem's reiteration vis-a-vis Moshe are a lesson to all of us. There are no first stands and there are no last stands. If we stand for something worthy, then we stand forever! Good Shabbos

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<http://www.ohr.org.il/thisweek.htm> \* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Pinchas

Keeping Up With The Goldbergs "...because he showed zealotry for His G-d" (25:13) Why are the Ten Commandments written in the singular? If they were given to the Jewish People as a whole, shouldn't they be written in the plural? The Ten Commandments are written in the singular so that we should feel they were given to each one of us alone. Each person is responsible for keeping the Torah, no matter what others are doing. In life, there is a great temptation to set our level of self-expectation by the standards of other people. We look around us and think: "Well, Mr. Goldberg gives only \$10,000 to charity, and he earns the same as me. Why should I be frum (more pious) than him?" The Ten Commandments were written in the singular to teach us that we shouldn't look at what others are doing -- or not doing. Pinchas saw Moshe and Aaron and the seventy elders standing and watching Zimri committing a grave sin, and none of them lifted

a finger. He could certainly have said to himself, "Moshe and Aaron aren't doing anything. Why should I be frumer than them?" However, Pinchas picked up his spear and avenged the honor of Heaven without a second thought and without reference to what others were doing or not doing. It is for this reason that the Torah writes "he showed zealotness for his G-d." Pinchas acted as if Hashem was his G-d, and that there was no one else in the world to do the job.

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<http://www.ohr.org.il/thisweek.htm> \* PARSHA Q&A \* In-Depth  
Questions on the Parsha and Rashi's commentary. Parshas Pinchas  
Parsha Questions

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a kohen? 2. Why does the Torah identify Kozbi as Tzur? 3. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian? 4. To which family name were the letters 'yud' and 'hey' not added? Why not? 5. The Torah states that Korach and his congregation became a sign. What do they signify? 6. Based on the census taken at the beginning of the forty years and the one at the end, which tribe shows the greatest decrease in number? 7. In Bereishis 35:18, Rachel named her younger son Ben Oni (my unfortunate son). How was her prophecy fulfilled? 8. How long did it take to conquer the Land? How long to divide the Land? 9. Two brothers come out of Egypt and die in the midbar. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son, Ploni. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will Ploni actually receive? 10. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women? 11. What trait did the daughters of Tzlofchad exhibit that was exhibited by their ancestor Yosef? 12. Tzlofchad died because of his own sin. What was it? 13. Why didn't Moshe know what to answer the daughters of Tzlofchad? 14. When asking Hashem to appoint a successor, why did Moshe address Him as, "Hashem of the spirits of all flesh"? 15. Moshe "put some of his glory" upon Yehoshua. What does this mean? 16. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered? 17. Goats are brought as musaf sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone? 18. Why is Shavuot called Yom HaBikkurim (the day of the first fruits)? 19. What is the symbolic meaning of the seventy bullocks offered on Succos? 20. To whom did the lambs offered on Succos allude?

Bonus QUESTION: "...Behold I give him My covenant of peace. It will be for him and his offspring after him an everlasting Kehuna covenant..." Why was Pinchas rewarded for his deed in this world? Isn't it a Torah principle that the reward for mitzvos is in the World to Come?

I Did Not Know That! "On the Shabbos day, two flawless yearling sheep." (28:9) Why two sheep? One corresponds to the command "Remember the Shabbos Day" and one corresponds to the command "Keep the Shabbos day."

Recommended Reading List Ramban 26:57 Counting the Levi'im 27:9 Inheritance 28:2 The Daily Offerings 7:13 Gifts of the Nesi'im Sefer Hachinuch 400 Inheritance 401 The Daily Sacrifices 405 Shofar

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated 1. 25:13 - The Kehuna was given to Aaron and his sons, and to their descendants who were born after they were anointed. Pinchas was born prior to the anointing. 2. 25:15 - To show the hatred of the Midianites for the Jewish People; that they disgraced their princess in order to cause them to sin. 3. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav. 4. 26:5 - Yimnah, because the name Yimnah already has its own 'yud' and 'hey' at the beginning and end. 5. 26:10 - They are a reminder that the Kehuna was given forever to Aaron and his descendants, and that no non-kohen should ever dispute this right. 6. 26:13 - Shimon. 7. 26:24 - Binyamin had ten sons, only five of whose descendants entered Eretz Yisrael. Also, in Sefer Shoftim 20:35, nearly the entire Tribe of Binyamin was destroyed in the incident of Pilegish b'Givah. 8. 26:53 - Seven years to conquer, and seven years to divide. 9. 26:55 - Two portions.

10. 26:64 - In the incident of the meraglim only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter Eretz Yisrael. 11. 27:1 - Love for the Land of Israel. 12. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva said that he was the one who gathered sticks on Shabbos. Rabbi Shimon said that he was among those who attempted to enter Eretz Yisrael after the sin of the meraglim. 13. 27:5 - Moshe was being punished for speaking haughtily and saying to the judges, "A case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me" (Devarim 1:17). Also, because the daughters of Tzlofchad merited that a portion of the Torah should be written because of them. 14. 27:16 - He was asking Hashem, who understands the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person according to that person's nature. 15. 27:20 - That Yehoshua's skin also shone. Moshe's face beamed like the sun, Yehoshua's face beamed like the moon. 16. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the western side of the slaughtering area, and the evening offering on the eastern side. 17. 28:15 - For ritual defilement of the Sanctuary or its vessels, of which no one is cognizant. 18. 28:26 - Two loaves of bread were brought as an offering on Shavuot. They were the first of the wheat-offerings brought from the new grain. 19. 29:18 - They allude to the seventy nations of the world. 20. 29:18 - To the Jewish People.

Bonus ANSWER: True, the entire reward for mitzvos remains for the World to Come. However, mitzvos which involve acts of kindness earn 'dividends' in this world as well. Pinchas's act was an act of kindness because through it he stopped the plague that was decimating the Jewish People. (The Steipler Rav in Birchas Peretz)

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<http://194.90.124.37/parsha/penim/index.htm> Penim on the Torah  
Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Parshas Pinchas  
Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon Ha'kohen turned back My wrath from upon the Bnei Yisrael when he zealously avenged Me among them...Behold! I give him My covenant of Peace...And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood. (25: 11,12, 13) Pinchas receives the ultimate reward--Kehunas olam--eternal priesthood. This blessing of everlasting priesthood was not bestowed upon anyone else. It was not bestowed neither upon Moshe the lawgiver, nor Aharon the Kohen, who was the paradigmatic peacemaker. Horav Moshe Swift, zl, notes that the blessing of continuity, the concept of uninterrupted service to Hashem, was neither a product of the service in the Mikdash nor the teaching in the Bais Ha'midrash. While these contribute to future development, they do not actually forge the links in the chain of continuity. They do not create a "lo ul'zaro acharav" for him and his offspring after him. That emanates from the morality, the purity and the integrity of the home. Pinchas was aware of Bilaam's subterfuge. Bilaam was no fool. He realized that cursing the Jew, attempting to destroy him through hatred and persecution, has no lasting effect. Indeed, the uncouth gentile's virulent, blatant anti-Semitism frequently has a revitalizing effect on the Jew. Suddenly, everybody is proud of his heritage. Individuals who have not been inside a shul since they became bar mitzvah become the spokesmen for the entire Jewish people. The community rallies together in support and solidarity. Judaism is once again acceptable. No, Bilaam knew that in order to destroy the Jew, he must focus on the home. A home that is spiritually destroyed has a lasting effect upon its inhabitants. A shul that is gutted only encourages greater participation. A home that is religiously burnt out, is one in which children are raised ignorant of their noble heritage. They are exposed to the filth that dominates our secular society and are permitted -- and at times even encouraged --- to maintain friendships with those of another faith. Their exposure to intermarriage, impurity and immorality does not receive vehement resistance. This is a home that will not produce everlasting Jewish offspring. Bilaam understood this. He advised Balak to give the Jews the pagan girls to expose

them to immorality, cognizant than idolatry would follow shortly thereafter. Bilaam was clever. He did not focus on the simple Jew, he did not bring his harlotry to the masses. He sought out Klal Yisrael's leadership. Once the leaders had fallen victim to the desires of the flesh, who would teach the masses? When the leaders are involved, who will reach out to the common Jew? This type of sin that Bilaam propagated was unique in the sense that the punishment for its perpetration is not meted out by a court of law. This sin, this type of immorality, is so foreign to Jewish family life that its punishment is to be executed by zealots. The pious ones are those who are totally devoted to Hashem; those who understand the gravity of this brazen sin. These individuals realize that this incursion into the fiber of Jewish family life is not a sin against man or the community -- it is a sin against Hashem. Morality distinguishes the Jew from the rest of the world. To break down the purity of Jewish family life is to declare war on Hashem. Pinchas cried out to the people, "How can you sin against Hashem?" He was jealous for Hashem's sake. Pinchas fought for family purity, for the morality and integrity of Jewish family life. He fought for Hashem. He was the man of peace. The covenant of generations of committed Jews is awarded to the one who fought to uphold the purity and chastity of Jewish family life. Pinchas was the true man of peace. Sometimes in order to create peace, one must fight. The ever-ready peacemaker, the one who is accessible to all, who is tolerant and pliable, is not the one who is guaranteed peace. Tolerance has its shortcomings; peace has its price. The true peacemaker does not fear a fight when his conscience dictates it. Peace does not come from surrendering one's ideals or values in the name of unity. Everlasting peace, peace that is handed down from generation to generation, is one for which people are willing to fight. Peace takes courage, not cowardice. Peace takes firmness and stalwart commitment to ideals, not wavering, ineffectual commitment. How regrettable it is that some of us have confused tolerance with submission, flexibility with concession, and peace with surrender.

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<http://www.aish.edu/shabbat-shalom/ssf.htm> Aish HaTorah's Shabbat Shalom Weekly by Rabbi Kalman Packouz

GOOD DAY! I received the following via the Internet. It is such an incredible and amazing story that I felt the obligation to track down its source and verify the facts. At the 1987 annual awards dinner given by the American Academy for Forensic Science, AAFS president Don Harper Mills astounded his audience in San Diego with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story: On March 23, 1984, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus and concluded that he died from a shotgun wound to the head. The decedent had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide (he left a note indicating his despondency). As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the decedent was aware that a safety net had been erected at the eighth floor level to protect some window washers and that Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide anyway because of this. Ordinarily, Dr. Mills continued, a person who sets out to commit suicide ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended. That Opus was shot on way to certain death nine stories below probably wouldn't have changed his mode of death from suicide to homicide. But the fact that his suicidal intent would not have been successful caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands. The ninth floor room whence the shotgun blast emanated was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing and he was threatening her with the shotgun. He was so upset that, when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife and pellets went through the window striking Opus. When one intends to kill subject A, but kills subject B in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject B. When confronted with the charge, the man and his wife were both adamant that neither knew that the shotgun was loaded. The old man said it was his long standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention to murder her - therefore, the killing of Opus appeared to

be an accident. That is, the gun had been accidentally loaded. The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun approximately six weeks prior to the fatal incident. It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, loaded the gun expecting that his father would shoot his mother. The case now becomes murder, on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus. There's a final exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son, one Ronald Opus, had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on March 23, only to be killed by a shotgun blast through a ninth story window. The medical examiner closed the case as a suicide.

When I reached Mr. Mills, he informed me that he created the story to entertain the attendees at the convention. The story had traveled the internet since 1994. Lastly, Mr. Mills informed me that I am the 463rd person to call. (I got his number via the Academy which I received from the local medical examiner). If the story were true, I'd point out Divine providence, Divine justice ... as it is, the only lesson, I figure, is that one must verify the facts. By the way, "Opus" means "a literary work" and this one's a beaut!

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Pinchas Based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin The Torah states, "These are the children of Dan according to their families ... sixty-four thousand and four hundred (Numbers 26:42-43). The Torah also states that, "These are the sons of Benjamin ... forty-five thousand, four hundred" (Numbers 26:41). What lesson for life can we learn by comparing these numbers? The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, the greatest rabbi of his generation, points out something very interesting: Benjamin had ten sons; Dan had only one son, Chushim. Yet, Dan had more descendants than Benjamin! From here we can see, said the Chofetz Chaim, that if the Almighty wants a person to be successful, he will succeed even if it appears at first that he has less of a possibility than someone else. We must put forth our every effort, but realize that in the end success is out of our hands -- it ultimately depends on the Almighty ("man proposes, G-d disposes"). A corollary -- we should at least appreciate what we have. After all, it too is a gift from the Almighty. A wise man once asked, "If you don't appreciate what you have, how will you appreciate anything else that you will receive?"

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<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/kornfeld/> The Weekly Internet P A R A S H A - P A G E by Mordecai Kornfeld of Har Nof, Jerusalem Email [kornfeld@jencom.com](mailto:kornfeld@jencom.com)

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PARASHAT PINCHAS 5757 WHAT'S IN A NAME Ketia bar Shalom: His story and his name. The Gemara in Avodah Zarah tells us: There was once a Caesar who hated the Jews. He asked his advisers, "If someone has dead flesh in his foot, should he cut it off and become healed or should he leave it and suffer?" They answered him, "He should cut it off and become healed." (He was referring to the Jewish people in his empire, whom he saw as a constant source of frustration.) Ketia bar Shalom, one of the advisers, then interjected, "Firstly," he said, "you will never be able to kill all of them, for they are dispersed throughout the four corners of the world ... and they are as important for the continued existence of the world as the winds. (Therefore other monarchs who have a greater appreciation for the indispensability of the Jews in \*their\* kingdoms will foil your plans -MK). Furthermore, if you execute all the Jews of your kingdom, your reign will go down in history as a bloody one! The king responded, "You have argued cogently. However, there is a rule that whoever outwits the king must be put to death. As they were taking Ketia away, a Roman matron called out, "Woe to the ship that travels without paying its dues!" Ketia immediately circumcised himself, exclaiming, "I have paid my dues -- now I may pass through [the Gates of the World to Come] freely!" As they were throwing him to his death he cried out "All my property is granted to Rabbi Akiva and

his colleagues!" A heavenly voice was heard saying, "Ketia bar Shalom is destined for the Hereafter!" (Gemara Avodah Zarah 10b)

The moving account of Ketia bar Shalom's defense of the Jews serves as an inspiring testimony to Hashem's protection of His nation. The selfless Ketia was in just the right place at just the right time to counter the murderous plotting of the evil Caesar. Let us examine the story more carefully now. That Ketia bar Shalom, specifically, stood up in defense of the Jews, is even more striking than is at first apparent.

In the Gemara (Berachot 7b) we are told that a person's name holds within it a clue to what his future destiny will be. In our case, it is immediately obvious that the name Ketia is intricately intertwined with the seminal event of Ketia's life (as pointed out by R. Reuven Marguliot in his "Lecheker Shemot VeKinnuyim BaTalmud," #1, letter Lamed). When the Caesar asked about "cutting off" the dead flesh, the word used is "Yikte'ena" (root: Kata, the same root as that of Ketia). When Ketia objected that killing the Jews would result in a bloody reign, the words he used were "Malchuta Ketia." And the word used to describe his circumcision is "Kat'ah" (root: Kata). The same root from which his name was derived described the problem with which he was faced (Caesar's challenge), his solution to the problem, and his dramatic circumcision, whereby he merited a share in the Hereafter.

Even Ketia's surname, or father's name, is appropriate in the context of this story. ("Bar," in Aramaic -- as in "bar Shalom" -- and "ben," in Hebrew, literally mean "son of." However, they are often used in a broader sense, meaning "from" or "of.") "Bar Shalom" would mean "son of peace," and indeed Ketia guaranteed the peace of the Jewish people. Furthermore, he acquired for himself eternal peace ("Shalom"), as the Hereafter is described in Yeshayah (57:2): "He who goes on the straight path [in his lifetime] will attain \*peace\* and will rest in his place of repose." Ketia's very name was replete with references to his most outstanding achievement!

Ketia bar Shalom in the Torah.

## II

"There is nothing that is not hinted at somewhere in the Torah" (-see Gemara Ta'anit 9a, Zohar 3:221). In fact, we find an allusion to the story of Ketia bar Shalom right in this week's Parasha. In Parashat Pinchas we are told that Pinchas saved the B'nei Yisroel from annihilation. He fearlessly slayed one of the sinners, who was a distinguished member of the tribe of Shimon, in public. Pinchas's reward from Hashem for his heroism was: "Behold, I am giving him My covenant of peace ('Shalom')." (Bemidbar 25:12). In Kiddushin 66b the Gemara tells us that the Hebrew letter 'Vav' of the word "Shalom" should be written "broken," i.e. in two disjointed pieces. As the Gemara puts it, "The Vav of 'Shalom' is 'Ketia' [=cut up]." This broken letter Vav (which is, incidentally the only instance of this phenomenon in the entire Torah) is thus a "Ketia" of "Shalom" -- or "Ketia bar Shalom"! This is clearly a hint to the events related in the story quoted above from Avodah Zara! (This idea was first called to my attention by a friend of mine, Rav Chaggai Preschel, who is presently Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Tikvat Ameinu in Moscow. I later saw that Rav Reuven Marguliot [ibid., footnote #17] alludes to this as well.)

There are actually several parallels between the episode of Pinchas and that of Ketia. Firstly, both men saved the Jews from situations which threatened them with total annihilation. ("Pinchas son of Elazar turned back My wrath from the Children of Israel, so I did not annihilate them...." -- 25:11.) Furthermore, the Sages tell us that Pinchas and the person referred to in Kings as Eliyahu Hanavi [=Elijah the Prophet] are one and the same (Bava Metzia 114b, and Rashi ad loc. s.v. "Lav"; Yalkut Shimoni, beginning of Parashat Pinchas). As a reward for the zealotry he displayed, Eliyahu was awarded a place of honor at every circumcision ceremony throughout the generations. This is why we prepare a "chair of Eliyahu" at every circumcision (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer, end of Chap. 29). This was what Hashem meant when He gave Pinchas (=Eliyahu) a "covenant ('Brith') of peace." (The word 'Brith' is commonly used to refer to the Covenant of Circumcision.) Thus, the ultimate rewards of Pinchas and Ketia also bear a

similarity to each other. Both of their rewards involved circumcision -- Pinchas became an eternal witness to circumcision, and Ketia was himself circumcised.

Dama ben Netina: His story and his name.

III Perhaps we can point out another example of such a case, where a man's name holds within it a hint at his future actions in life. We learn in Kiddushin: They once asked R. Eliezer: How far does the Mitzvah of honoring one's parents extend? He answered: You can learn from what a certain non-Jew named Dama ben Netina of Ashkelon once did for his father. One time the treasurers of the Temple offered him 600,000 dinar coins for a precious stone (-the Yashfeh stone, according to the Yerushalmi Kiddushin 1:6) that they needed in order to complete the breastplate of the Kohen Gadol [=High Priest]. But the keys to the jewel's box were under the pillow of Dama's father, who was sleeping! Dama decided not to disturb his father, and he passed up the deal. The following year, Dama's cow gave birth to a red heifer. The Temple treasurers wanted to buy it from him for the ritual of purification (Bemidbar 19). He told them, "I know that you would be willing to pay all the money in the world for this heifer. However, I will ask you only for the money which I declined in last year's gem transaction!" (Gemara Avodah Zara 23b, Kiddushin 31a) In this story, too, the name of the main character ("Dama") is intertwined with the story told about him. The word that the Gemara normally uses for "money" is "Damim." Sleeping is expressed by the word "Damich," in the Yerushalmi's version of the story. And the word for \*red\* heifer is "Adumah." All three of these words are built around the core letters of DaMa.

It may further be noted that the stone Dama sold to the Temple representatives was the Yashfeh (as mentioned by the Yerushalmi). Rabbenu Bachya, in his commentary to Shmot 28:15, mentions that this particular stone has in it a power to control excess bleeding (blood = Dam). Thus, there is a further parallel between Dama's name and the stone that he was so famous for selling.

Dama ben Netina in the Torah IV Can an allusion to the story of Dama ben Netina also be found in the Torah? Let's take a close look at the following section, from Parashat Toldot: Yakov was cooking lentil soup (lentils are a food traditionally eaten by mourners, and Yakov was making it for his father Isaac, who had just suffered the loss of \*his\* father, Avraham - Rashi). Meanwhile, Esav returned from the field, exhausted. Esav said to Yakov, "Give me some of that red stuff ("Adom"), I'm completely drained!" --this is why Esav became known to all as "Edom" [=Red]. Yakov said, "Sell me your birthright (the right to officiate at religious sacrifices, which was reserved for the firstborn in those days - Rashi)." Esav answered, "Here I am about to die, what do I care about the birthright?"... and he sold his first-born rights to Yakov. Yakov gave ("Natan") Esav bread and lentils... and Esav disgraced his birthright. (Bereishit 25:29-34) Esav was called Edom ("Red") because his desire for the red lentils was so strong that he traded his birthright in exchange for it. Perhaps this is the hint to Dama ben Netina. "Adom" (Alef, Dalet, Mem) is spelled with the same letters as Dama (Dalet, Mem, Alef). The red lentils ("Adom") which were given over ("Netina") could be said to be the "Dama ben Netina" of the Torah! (Alternatively, Esav ("Edom") who gave away ("Netina") his first-born rights for a dish of lentils, was the Dama ben Netina of the Torah.) But what does the story of Esav have to do with that of Dama? The Sages (Yerushalmi, ibid.) tell us that Esav was outstanding in his performance of the Mitzvah of honoring one's parents. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, the Nassi (spiritual and temporal leader of Israel), declared that in all his years of serving his father, he did not do for him even one percent of what Esav did for his father! Dama, who was a Roman general according to the Gemara (ibid.) and thus a descendant of Esav (see Rashi Bereishit 27:39, 36:43), also excelled in the execution of this Mitzvah.

Why is this particular event in Esav's life chosen to contain the hint to Dama's noble behavior? As the Torah itself says (Bereishit 25:34), Esav acted contemptuously by displaying such a cavalier attitude toward the birthright, which included the right to personally participate in the service of Hashem in the Holy Temple. On the other hand, there was a positive side to

his actions as well. Yakov, who was obviously more fitting for the position, was enabled to become the one who would officiate in the service of Hashem. Because of this positive outcome, Esav was blessed with the righteous Dama as one of his offspring. Although it was already many generations later, Esav, through his descendant Dama, was given a chance to rectify his sin of spurning the sacrificial service of Hashem. A sin is considered rectified and proper repentance is considered to have been done, if the sinner later faces the same temptations as he did when he first sinned, but succeeds in overcoming them (Rambam Hilchot Teshuva 2:1). On a broader scale, perhaps such repentance can be accomplished even on the time scale of generations. The descendant of a sinner can "set the record straight," to a certain extent, by not falling into the trap as his father, when confronted with the same situation that his father had originally faced.

In the case of Dama be Netina, when the Temple representatives were looking for the components necessary to carry out the Temple service, the means to supply these objects fell into Dama's hands. Esav, the "grandfather," had shown his disdain for the Temple service in his exchange. Dama, on the other hand, showed respect for the Temple's needs. He was able to \*support\* the continuation of the Temple service, by supplying the Sages with the missing stone. Secondly, while Esav was willing to "sell" the service of Hashem in order to satisfy his uncontrollable desires for physical pleasure, Dama turned down the huge financial gain he was offered for the stone that he gave for use in the Temple services.

It is also interesting to note that just as Esav received something red -- red lentils -- in return for his sale, so too Dama was granted the \*red\* heifer as a reward for his.

"Has a mouth" V

Another parallel may be drawn. As Rashi pointed out, lentils are a food traditionally eaten by mourners. Why is this? Rashi explains that just as lentils have no "mouth" ("Ein Lahen Peh" - lentils, unlike other beans, are perfectly round, and do not have an indentation), so too a mourner has no "mouth." He is forbidden to exchange greetings with other people (see also Bava Batra 16b). As Yosef Goldstein of Baltimore, Md., pointed out to me, Dama, too, "did not have a mouth," as he conducted himself with abnormal restraint by not awakening his father to get his jewel. Yosef added that the name, "Dama," describes this trait as well. The Hebrew word "DoM" (as in "Vayidom Aharon," Vayikra 10:3) means "be silent." Furthermore, each of the twelve stones on the Kohen Gadol's breastplate represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel. The Yashfeh stone was inscribed with the name of Binyamin, as it represented that tribe. Rabbeinu Bachya explains the connection between Binyamin and the Yashfeh stone: "Binyamin knew that his brothers had sold Yosef into slavery, yet he did not reveal their shameful deed to their father, Yakov. Although Binyamin had misgivings about whether he should withhold this information from his father, he overcame his desire to reveal the secret. Yashfeh may also be read, by rearranging the vowel marks, as `Yesh Peh' -- `there is a mouth.' Even though Binyamin was able to tell his father about his brothers' conduct -- `he had a mouth' -- he refrained from doing so." (Rabbeinu Bachya, Shemot 28:15, from Midrash Bereishit Rabba 71:5) The Yashfeh ("has a mouth") stone may be said to be the opposite of lentils (which "have no mouth"). Similarly, Dama was the opposite of Esav. At the time that Esav sold the birthright, by nature he should not have "had a mouth." He ought to have been mourning for his grandfather, not hunting himself weary and then demanding lentils. Dama, on the other hand, had every reason to "speak up" and awaken his sleeping father. Like Binyamin, he had a mouth, but he refrained from using it. How appropriate it is, then, that he demonstrated this restraint with the sale of a \*Yashfeh\* (Yesh Peh) stone!

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 PINCHAS SICHA OF HARAV LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT"A  
 "Behold, I Give Him My Covenant of Peace" "And God spoke to

Moshe saying, Pinchas the son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen, has turned My anger from Benei Yisrael because he was zealous for My sake... Therefore say, Behold, I give him My covenant of peace." (Bemidbar 25:10-12) Upon reading these pesukim we are faced with the question of what possible connection there could be between the concept of peace and Pinchas's act of zealousness - an act which appears to stand in opposition to peace.

The commentaries, in dealing with this question, propose various explanations. The Ibn Ezra explains: "The reason [for the promise of the covenant of peace] was so that the brothers of Zimri would not come after him, for he was the prince of his tribe...." In other words, since Pinchas had assassinated an important personage - the prince of the tribe of Shimon - there was reason to expect that the latter's blood would be avenged, and therefore God promised him His covenant of peace in order to guard him.

Rashi proposes a different reason: "That he should have a covenant of peace, like someone who has special regard for a person who has done him a favor. In the same way, God rewards him here with peace." In other words, there really is no substantive connection between Pinchas's act and the covenant of peace; it is granted to him simply as a reward for his act of Kiddush Ha-Shem.

We may propose a third solution, which connects both of the above explanations both from the point of view of Pinchas's character and from the point of view of the event itself. Let us return to the end of the previous parasha, where Pinchas's deed is recorded, and let us review the event: "And behold, a man from amongst Benei Yisrael got up and brought to his brethren a Midianite woman, before Moshe and before all of the nation of Israel, and these were crying at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. And Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the Kohen, saw and rose up from amongst the congregation and took a spear in his hand. And he came after the man of Israel into the chamber, and stabbed both of them through..." (ibid. 25:6-8) A chilling scene is depicted here: a violent character appears, spear in hand, and kills a man in cold blood, without any hesitation and with no thought of a trial. Our confusion increases with the knowledge that the character involved is none other than Pinchas Ha-Kohen. Pinchas, descendant of the family of Kohanim about whom the prophet Malakhi said, "And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that My covenant should be with Levi... My covenant was with him for life and for peace... The Torah of truth was in his mouth... He walked with Me in peace and uprightness... for the Kohen's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek Torah at his mouth." (2:4-7) The image of the Kohen is that of a man of peace and truth, who is favored by his fellows and is easy-going with them. As the Rambam explains, "Why did the tribe of Levi not merit to receive an inheritance in Eretz Yisrael and in the spoil of the land, like their brethren? Because they were separated for Divine service, to serve Him and to teach His ways of uprightness and His righteous laws to the masses." (Hilkhot Shemitta ve-Yovel 13:12). And to top it all, Pinchas is the grandson of Aharon - the same Aharon who was known to "love peace and pursue peace," who "loved his fellow-men and brought them close to Torah." Hence we would expect that his grandson, too, would have been educated in the same spirit of peace and kind outreach, not towards acts of murder, rejection and revenge.

The gemara in Massekhet Sanhedrin learns from the verse, "And he GOT UP from amongst the congregation and he took a spear in his hand..." that it is forbidden to enter the Beit Midrash (study hall) carrying a weapon. In other words, Pinchas did not habitually carry a weapon; he generally spent his time in the Beit Midrash. In rising he was indeed departing from his usual manner and from the spirit in which he had been educated - the spirit of peace and truth. On the other hand, this rising also contains an element of elevation. For not everyone is capable of standing up and doing what is required when the nation is in a situation of crisis. And a close examination of the verse reveals that this was indeed the case at the time: a plague was raging amongst the nation, and the leaders were crying at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. The scene is one of breakdown among the leadership and general despair. At such a difficult hour, only someone

as great as Pinchas was able to take control of the situation. He knew that the situation required him to temporarily depart from his usual peaceful manner and to rise up to perform a radical act, which would eventually lead to calm.

The granting of peace to Pinchas can now be explained in a new light. Even a person who throughout his life follows the path of peace and truth, if he should take up a spear - even for just one moment - and kill someone, then there is a danger that something within him has changed; that something of his sensitivity has been impaired. Therefore there is a need for the covenant of peace - an assurance that he will return to the natural and desired path, where he belongs. "Pinchas the son of Elazar - God said: It is just and fair that he should receive a reward, 'Therefore say, behold - I give him My covenant of peace.' Great is the peace that was granted to Pinchas, for the world operates only because of peace, and the entire Torah is peace, as it is written: 'Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.' And if a person arrives after a journey, we ask after his peace... We conclude the Shema with '...Who spreads his tabernacle of peace...' and the Amida, too, closes with the blessing of peace... The Birkat Kohanim (priestly blessing) also concludes with peace. Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta said, 'There is no vessel that can contain blessing other than peace, as it is written: God will give strength to His nation; God will bless His nation with peace.'" (Bemidbar Rabba, 21:1)

(Originally delivered on Shabbat Parashat Pinchas 5752. Translated by Kaeren Fish.) VISIT YHE'S WEB SITE:  
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