

RED ALERT!

Pi-N'CHAS

*by Rabbi Eddie Davis (RED)
of the Young Israel of Hollywood -
Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)*

DIVREI TORAH

- (Sanhedrin 82b) After Pinchas killed Zimri, the prince of the tribe of Shimon, the Talmud states that the tribes started ridiculing Pinchas: that Pinchas's maternal grandfather fattened calves for idol worship, and now he killed a prince of Israel. Therefore the Torah related Pinchas to Aharon, the beloved Kohen Gadol. The Talmud was pointing out that many people of Israel rallied against Pinchas. The Yerushalmi further adds that they wished to ostracize Pinchas. This shows us two points.

One - that people were upset that Pinchas acted on his own, ignoring law and order,

Two - that there was no widespread condemnation of Zimri's immoral act.

Perhaps Pinchas did require Hashem's protection from the people, from the tribe of Shimon in particular.

- Pinchas was not the picture of the Kohen that we see portrayed in the Torah. He killed two people. He was asked to lead the war against the Midianites. And later he was one of the two spies chosen by Yehoshua to

spy on Yericho. Definitely not the role for a future Kohen Gadol. Yet he not only becomes the Kohen Gadol, but he becomes the ancestor of many of the future Kohens Gadols. This was his reward for rising up to defend Hashem's honor in the shameful display of immorality when Bilaam left center stage in the narrative. He did risk his life in doing so. Hashem showed the entire people His gratitude to Pinchas for what he did. A Covenant of Eternal Peace.

- Our Sages historically linked Pinchas to Eliyahu the prophet. Nowhere in Scripture is there anything that connects these two people. And there is no indication that Eliyahu was a Kohen. But our Sages were possibly aiming at a different statement. Maybe Eliyahu was not a physical descendant of Pinchas's. And maybe Pinchas's soul does not return to earth as Eliyahu. What our Sages were getting at was to compare the two personalities. Each were strong-willed Zealots rising to protect Hashem's honor against great odds. They both stood up against fellow Jews who were involved with idolatry. At great personal risk.

- In a previous census, one of Yissachar's sons is listed as Yov. In this census, the same son is listed as Yashuv. The Daat Zekeinim explains that after naming his son Yov, Yissachar was told that there was an

idol with the name Yov. And therefore Yissachar gave one of the Hebrew letters of S(H)IN in his name to his son, changing his name from Yov to Yashuv. That is why the name Yissaschar pronounced with only one SIN. My Rebbe, Rav Soloveitchik, ruled that the Baal Korei in his Minyan in Boston should read Yissaschar with the extra SIN until this Parsha where the name of Yashuv is mentioned. From now on in the Script, he should now read his name as Yissachar.

- The subject of Moshe's successor is covered in this Parsha. Moshe felt quite strongly that the Jewish people always require a shepherd. I believe that there is real sadness in Moshe when he realizes that he will not be able to fulfill his true mission: to bring Am Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael. When Hashem first approached Moshe at the scene of the Burning Bush, He said that the goal was to bring Bnei Yisrael into the Promised Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey. Moshe raises the issue now immediately after the narrative of the daughters of Tz'lofchad. This brought the importance of certain things that should stay in the family. This is why, according to many commentators, Moshe was hoping that his role of leadership could possibly be given to his offspring. No mention is made of this, but connecting the two stories makes sense of this interpretation.

- From the middle of this Parsha, a new narrative begins. The Torah is now preparing Bnei Yisrael for entering and settling the new country of Israel. The people are told a way of transforming Canaan into Eretz Yisrael. If they could only stick to the Divine Plan outlined in the Torah text. Forming the Torah society as outlined by Moshe should have been simple, but Bnei Yisrael could not completely execute the plan. Firstly they could not remove the Canaanite people from the Land. This was a major mistake on their part. Secondly they were told the three top Mitzvot that should have been observed as soon as they settled in the Land. To destroy Amalek, to select a king, and build the Beit HaMikdash. These Mitzvot took a long time to accomplish. But let us settle in and take note of the preparatory steps outlined by Moshe in his final months of his life.

- The selection of Yehoshua as Moshe's successor comes as no surprise to anyone. He dedicated his life to his Rebbe, teacher, and mentor. The key here is to publicize the selection to the entire nation. Take note that Yehoshua is no Moshe. Our Sages coined it best: Moshe is likened to the Sun. Yehoshua is likened to the Moon. But we will learn to admire Yehoshua as the national leader, in whose time, there was no

rebellion. There was allegiance to the Torah. We know very little of his personal life. Our Sages fill in what little data on him. He married Rachav, the harlot they saved from Yericho, who deserved her elevation in life for the Chessed she performed in protecting the two Jewish spies sent to scout the city of Yericho before being conquered by Bnei Yisrael as they entered Canaan. Rachav and Yehoshua were never blessed with offspring. Hence when they died, they left nothing behind them.

- MIDRASH. The successor to Moshe will follow his footsteps and “go out in front of them, and come in front of them.” (27:17). Not like the kings in the non-Jewish world. They send their armies out to war, and they watch the proceedings from the comforts of their palace. Not like a Jewish king like King David. All of Bnei Yisrael loved King David because he did lead them in battle!

Questions by RED

From the text

1. What reward did Pinchas receive for killing a prince of Israel? (25:13)
2. Who decided which tribe got which portion of Eretz Yisrael? (26:55)
3. Which 2 laws were taught because some of the people asked for it? (chapters 9 and 27)
4. Who was chosen to be Moshe’s successor? (27:18)
5. Which sacrifices are described in chapters 28 and 29?

From Rashi

6. Why does the Torah identify by name the two people whom Pinchas killed? (25:14)
7. Why did the Torah mention that the sons of Korach did not die (during the rebellion)? (26:11)
8. After mentioning Tzelofchad’s death, the Torah repeats that their patriarch Menashe was the son of Yosef. Why? (27:1)
9. On Rosh Chodesh, the sin offering was FOR Hashem’s sin. What sin did Hashem commit? (28:15)
10. Why is Shavuot called the Festival of First Fruits? (28:26) (It is not due to the Bikurim)

From the Rabbis

11. Why is there a space in the Torah between chapters 25 and 26? (Chizkuni)
12. How is it possible that the census of each tribe ended with a fifty or a hundred number? (Torah Temima)
13. In the census, why did the tribe of Shimon suffer the biggest loss in numbers? (37,100, down 62.6%)

Midrash

14. What occasion was the most joyous event on the Jewish calendar?

Haftara - Yirmiyahu

15. From which direction will the invasion of Yerushalayim come?

Relationships

- a) Pinchas - Eliezer
- b) Pinchas - Putiel
- c) Pinchas - Yocheved
- d) Elazar - Gershom
- e) Na'ama - Lemech

ANSWERS

1. Pinchas became a Kohen, and he and his descendants would become Kohen Gadol.
2. Hashem did with a divine lottery.
3. Pesach Sheini and the laws of inherited land in Eretz Yisrael (via the daughters of Tzelofchad)
4. Yehoshua
5. The daily Tamid sacrifice and then the Musaf offerings of Shabbat and the holidays.
6. To show that Pinchas really risked his life by killing a prince of Israel and a princess of Midian.
7. Rashi relates that initially the sons followed their father Korach, but after the rebellion began, the sons repented and withdrew from the rebellion.
8. Just as Yosef exhibited love for Eretz Yisrael (he requested to be buried there), these young women also demonstrated love for Eretz Yisrael.
9. Hashem had created the Sun and Moon to appear in the sky at the same time. The Moon told Hashem that it was a waste of his existence. Hashem responded by making the Moon smaller and placed him at nighttime. This was Hashem's sin to the Moon.
10. It is because the holiday has the first meal offering brought from the

new wheat crop.

11. To tell us that all the people mentioned after chapter 25 would enter Eretz Yisrael.

12. The Torah rounded off each number to a 50 or a 100.

13. Shimon's people were heavily involved in the immoral sin at Pe'or.

14. The water libation during Sukkot.

15. From the north.

Relationships

a) First cousins once removed.

b) Grandson & Grandfather

c) Great-grandson &
Great-Grandmother

d) First Cousins

e) Lemech was the name of both
Na'ama's father and father-in-law