

RED ALERT!

Pinchas

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DIVREI TORAH

- Pinchas was not a Kohen because he was not a son of Aharon when they (Aharon and sons) became Kohanim. As a result of Pinchas' killing Kozbi and Zimri, which stopped a devastating plague, Pinchas was rewarded with Kehuna and eventually being the Kohen Gadol and being the ancestor of all future Kohanim Gedolim. It is ironic that he becomes a Kohen and a model of peace through an act of murder. But it was a case of KANA'IM BO, "the zealous ones can attack him", which Pinchas committed out of pure love for Hashem, and not through hate for the sinners. This was a remarkable and courageous act by Pinchas. He was not daunted by killing a prince of an Israel tribe and a princess of Midyan. He was verbally attacked by Zimri's followers and powered through. He was now validated by Hashem Himself.

- Hashem's decision to command a war with Midyan raises the issue of why did Hashem not declare war with Moav as well. One answer that Rashi poses is that Ruth was destined to come from Moav. I don't care for that

answer because no one knew about that future occurrence. I prefer the second answer presented by Rashi later in 31:2 and the Ramban that Moav legitimately feared the approaching Jewish people. But Midyan was not in the way of Bnei Yisrael. Midyan acted out of hate, unsolicited hate for Am Yisrael. They therefore deserved the upcoming war. I prefer this explanation, but not fully. Balak had approached Midyan and "invited" them to join Moav in confronting Bnei Yisrael. So Midyan involved themselves in this confrontation and were involved due to Moav.

- Chapter 26 starts in a strange fashion: there is a pause, a blank space after the opening clause "It was after the plague", before the Torah begins the new census. Chizkuni (Chizkiyah ben Mano'ach, French commentator of the 13th century) stated the these deaths that just now occurred were the last deaths that would be decreed upon that generation. All the people mentioned and counted in this census will enter the Promised Land. We are imminently about to enter the Land; we are months away. So this is not a big deal to state what Chizkuni has stated. Things will radically change with the sin that occurred at Jericho. The original plan was that every encounter would be like Jericho. No physical confrontation. Hashem will destroy the enemy without a fight. No

loss of Jewish life. With Achan's sin in taking loot from the victory, Hashem will insist that the Jewish army fight the enemy physically.

- Shimon loses the numbers game in the census, mainly due to the fact that the 24,000 men who died in the plague of the sin of Pe'or were all from the tribe of Shimon. The real story began when Shimon and Levi combined to annihilate the entire city of Shechem. This annoyed Yaakov tremendously. From that time on, the secondary story in the Torah is the one of Shimon and Levi. Levi continued to rise in leadership and sanctity while Shimon would descend. This reached a crescendo with Pinchas, a Levi, killing Zimri, from Shimon. Shimon will continue to decline in Jewish history, virtually disappearing from the map of Israel. No mention of this is recorded, but this is a real development in Jewish history.

- The daughters of Tz'lofchad are heroes in Torah literature because they demonstrated a strong love for Eretz Yisrael. Additionally what I find interesting is the parallel between this story and the request for a Pesach Sheini. The men in the Pesach Sheini story and the women in this story use the same verb in describing their question. "Why should our father's name be diminished" and "why should we be diminished" is an obvious connector between the two

stories. And there is a positive answer to each request. The questioners in both stories introduced a new Torah Halacha. Each episode showed the close relationship between Hashem and His chosen people. That Hashem will respond to a questioner is a positive important idea in the religious life of every Jew.

- One time two men had an argument and their debate to the great Rav Avraham of Sochotzav (Rav Avraham Bornstein, 1839-1910, student of the Kotzker Rebbe). One of the men said to the Rav that a year ago when the Rav wanted to remove a Shochet from his job, this man sided with the Rav the whole time. When the Rav heard this, he told the man that he cannot be a judge in this dispute. He supported his decision on the Torah case of the daughters of Tz'lofchad. The women said that their father had died, but he did not side with Korach. When hearing this, Moshe decided that he cannot judge the case. He turned it over to Hashem.

- When it came time to appoint a successor to Moshe Rabbeinu, Rashi wrote that Moshe wanted his sons to inherit his position of leadership. In response Hashem rejects the request and appoints Yehoshua. Hashem does not state anything negative about Moshe's sons; it is just that Yehoshua deserved the promotion. He never left Moshe's side, even when Moshe

was atop Mt. Sinai. Yehoshua was at the base of the mountain, separate from the people, anticipating Moshe's return. Loyalty and devotion, these were Yehoshua's qualities. The connection between master and student would last throughout the student's life. The Rambam viewed Moshe as a king of Israel, and he would similarly view Yehoshua in a Halachic understanding of a king.

- MIDRASH. Rabbi Shimon analyzed the holidays of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals, and said that Pesach and Sukkot are week long festivals because the fields were not worked at that time, but Shavuot is a one day holiday because farmers need to work their farms at that time of the year. This demonstrates that Hashem does concern himself with the welfare of the Jewish farmer.

Questions by RED

From the Text

1. What reward did Pinchas receive for his act of heroism? (25:22-23)
2. Contrasting the census in Bamidbar and Pinchas, which tribe lost the most and which tribe gained the most?
3. What did the daughters of Tzelofchad request? (27:3-4)
4. Who did Hashem appoint as Moshe's successor? (27:18)
5. How many lambs were the Shabbat Musaf offering? (28:7)

From Rashi

6. Why does the Torah now identify the names of the two people whom Pinchas killed? (25:14)
7. Why does the Torah command war with Midyan and not Moav? (25:18)
8. Why does the Torah mention that Korach's sons didn't die (in the rebellion)? (26:11)
9. Why does the Torah trace the lineage of the daughters of Tzelofchad all the way to Yosef? (27:1)
10. What made Moshe think that Hashem had a change of heart and would now allow Moshe to enter the Promised Land? (27:22)

From the Rabbis

11. Why did Hashem command a new census? (Abravanel)
12. What was Hashem promising Moshe when he told him to go up the mountain and he will "see" the Promised Land? (Our HaChayim)
13. What was Moshe to teach Yehoshua when Yehoshua was selected to succeed Moshe as the leader? (Ramban)

From the Midrash

14. Moshe did know how to answer Tzelofchad's daughters. Then why did Moshe say that he had to ask Hashem?

From the Haftara (Yirmiyahu)

15. What is the common ending of all three Haftarot of the Three Weeks?

Relationships

- a) Menashe - Machir
- b) Korach - Sh'muel
- c) Machalat - Elifaz
- d) MalkiTzedek - No'ach
- e) Cham - Nimrod

ANSWERS

1. Pinchas will become a Kohen and the Kohen Gadol, and all future Kohanim Gedolim will come from his line.

2. Lost the most: Shimon lost about 37,000 men. Gained the most: Menashe gained about 30,000.

3. Since their deceased father had no sons, they requested receiving his heritage portion in the Promised Land.

4. Yehoshua

5. Two lambs

6. Pinchas deserved more praise for killing two prominent people from their respective societies.

7. Ruth will come from Moav.

8. The sons were originally part of the rebellion but did T'shuva immediately.

9. Because Yosef loved Eretz Yisrael, just as those women did.

10. Two things: One was that Hashem told Moshe about the laws of heritage land inheritance. Second was after defeating Sichon and Og, those lands were now part of Eretz Yisrael, and Moshe was in that territory.

11. To find out how many fighters there were in the army.

12. That Moshe was to experience a pain-free sacred death just like his brother had.

13. To instruct Yehoshua regarding his duties as a leader.

14. To give honor and respect to Hashem.

15. They all end with a note of hope and inspiration.

Relationships

- a) Father & son
- b) Korach was the great... grandfather of Sh'muel
- c) Stepmother & stepson
- d) Son & father
(MalkiTzedek was Sheim)
- e) Grandfather & grandson