



# Parshas Pinchas

For the week ending 19 Tammuz 5756  
5 & 6 July 1996

## Summary

**H**ashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that he will receive Hashem's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action — executing *Zimri* and the Midianite princess *Kozbi*. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the *Midianim* because they allured the Jewish People to sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each of the Tribes. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to the *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the families of the Levites is recorded. The daughters of *Tzlofchad* file a claim with Moshe: In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem what the ruling is in this case, and Hashem tells him that the daughters' claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of an inheritance. Hashem tells Moshe to ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks Hashem to designate the subsequent leader of the people, and Hashem selects *Yehoshua bin Nun*. Moshe ordains *Yehoshua* as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

## Commentaries

### WAR AND PEACE

#### "...a covenant of peace." (25:12)

It may seem ironic that the reward for a violent killing should be "a covenant of peace."

The word in Hebrew "Shalom" not only means peace, but also connotes completeness and perfection — any peace which lacks completeness and perfection is not really peace. And just as there can only be One Completeness and One Perfection, so too there can only be one real peace — Hashem's peace, for only "He who makes peace in His exalted realms, He will make peace for us and for all of Israel...."

If something is immoral, then appeasement is not peace and doesn't lead to peace. On the other hand, an act of zealotry divorced of pure intentions can be a crime in itself. For this reason the Torah points out that Pinchas acted "for his G-d" — i.e., he had no motivation whatsoever other than to do the will of the Almighty. Only when intentions are *entirely* pure can zealotry lead to "a covenant of peace."

(Based on the Ohr Yoel)

### HELPING DADDY

#### "By avenging My vengeance..." (25:11)

'He expressed the anger that was Mine to show.' — Rashi

When you ask your three-year old son to help you set the table for Shabbos, and he manfully steers the kiddush cup up onto the Shabbos table, you get a tremendous feeling of *nachas*. You certainly don't gain anything from his help, except of course, enormous pleasure. You could have just as easily done what he did at the same time as you brought in the rest of the plates and the cutlery. But you gave him a job all of his own!

Rashi explains the meaning of the expression "he avenged My vengeance" to mean: "He expressed the anger that was Mine to show." It was specifically because Pinchas did something that was really Hashem's to do that he merited such a great reward.

The same idea applies to *tzedaka*, charity. Turnus Rufus once asked Rabbi Akiva how it was that "If Hashem loves the poor why doesn't He feed them?" Rabbi Akiva answered that the poor give us more than we give them — for through giving them *tzedaka*, they save us from *gehinnom* (purgatory).

Rabbi Akiva was saying that, of course, it's Hashem's 'job' to feed the poor, but He allows us to feed them instead. And by doing 'Hashem's job for Him,' we earn a far greater reward. We are like the little boy setting the table for Shabbos. Of course, Hashem can feed the poor Himself, but He gives us the job to do, even though, we're really not 'helping' Him at all.

(Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l)

**NEW! THIS DOCUMENT IS NOW FORMATTED FOR US LETTER SIZE PAPER.**

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

ohr@jer1.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for Torah Weekly — Please contact us for details.

Parshas Pinchas — 19 Tammuz 5756, 5 & 6 July 1996

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

CURTAIN CALL

**“By avenging My Vengeance” (25:11)**

When Zimri, prince of the tribe of Shimon, committed an act of gross indecency with Cozbi, princess of Moav, everyone including Moshe was frozen in disbelief. Everyone, that is, except Pinchas. Pinchas didn't hesitate to avenge Hashem's honor and execute the pair.

The Midrash tells "that because of Moshe's hesitation, no man knows the place of his burial."

What can one thing possibly have to do with the other? Why did Moshe's hesitation mean that his burial place is unknown?

The reason is as follows: Skeptics claim that Moshe couldn't have been as great as the Torah's description of him. For if had he been so great, if he had really gone up to Heaven and spoken face-to-face with the Divine Presence, he should have merited eternal life. Instead of dying a human death, he should have ascended alive to Heaven like *Chanoch* and *Eliyahu*. So, claim the skeptics, the Torah of Moshe must be nothing more than a panegyric of self-glorification.

This claim, however, is laughable. For if Moshe had wanted to write himself a fictitious final scene, he could certainly have written

something like "And Moshe ascended to Heaven alive in a fiery chariot." That would have been a real curtain-closer!

But what does it say in the Torah? "And Moshe died..."

Can there be a stronger proof of the Torah's truth than those few prosaic words: "And Moshe died..."? How easy it would have been for Moshe to write himself a glorious supernatural exit to rival the biggest Hollywood blockbuster — and add immeasurably to the luster of his memory!

However, the strength of this proof relies on one other factor — no one knows Moshe's burial place! Because, if it were known, then Moshe could never have claimed that he ascended to Heaven alive — his grave would be there for all to see.

Now we can understand the words of the Midrash: "Because of Moshe's hesitation, no man knows his burial place." If Moshe had stepped in and executed Zimri, had he "avenged the vengeance of Hashem," necessarily he would have merited the reward that *Pinchas in fact received — an eternal life without death.*

But if Moshe had lived forever, he would never have been able to confound the skeptics and prove the truth of the Torah by those few words "And Moshe died..."

(Bircas Hashir)

**Haftorah: Yirmiyahu 1:1-2:3**

**“Thus says Hashem: ‘I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown. Israel is sacred to Hashem, the first of His grain; all who devour him shall bear his guilt, evil shall come upon them’ — the word of Hashem.” (2:2-3)**

Once there was a sensitive lad, who spent all his days in study and refining his character. While still at a tender age, he was captured by bandits and forced to live amongst them. At first, he was repulsed by their coarseness, and clung to his original demeanor. However, as the weeks lengthened into years and no sign of rescue came, slowly but surely he began to degenerate to the level of his captors, and eventually he was indistinguishable from them.

When the Jewish People are finally redeemed from exile, the nations that have oppressed them will be held to account, not just for their own misdeeds against Israel, but also for Israel's transgressions, for had it not been for the company the Jewish People kept in exile, they would still be on the same spiritual level that they were on when they were in the desert.

That is the meaning of these verses: 'I remember for your sake the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, your following after Me in the wilderness in a land not sown. I remember, says Hashem, how you were when you followed after Me through the wilderness, before you were exiled amongst the nations. At your root you are holy, and if you have sinned it is because of the atmosphere you have imbibed during the long night of exile.

The three Haftorahs which are read in the Three Weeks (between 17th Tammuz and 9th Av) are called the "three of affliction." They detail the dire consequences that will befall Israel if they do not return to Hashem. Nevertheless, each of these three Haftorahs end on a note of optimism, expressing the confidence that Hashem never forgets His people even in the deepest and darkest exile.

(Adapted from Kochav M'Yaakov in *Mayana shel Torah*)



INSIGHTS INTO THE ZEMIRO  
SUNG AT THE SHABBOS TABLE  
THROUGHOUT THE GENERATIONS.

MAH YEDIDUS = םושׁשׁ ןח  
"HOW BELOVED..."

"We shall inherit the estate of Yaakov  
An estate without limits"

נחלת יעקב יידשׁ  
בלי מצרים נחלה

nachalas yaakov yirosh  
bli mitorim nachalah

One who honors the Sabbath by properly enjoying it, says Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Yossi (Shabbos 118) will be granted an estate without limits like the one which Hashem promised to Yaakov Avinu. Rabbi Yehuda in the name of the Sage Rav says that his reward will be the fulfillment of all his desires.

At first glance these two rewards may seem to differ. But they are actually complementary. A man who has a hundred dollars, says the Talmud, wants two hundred. Fulfillment of one's desire only gives birth to another. In order for the Sabbath celebrator to be rewarded with the fulfillment of all his desires, he must be given an estate with no limits at all.

Parshas Pinchas

For the week ending 19 Tammuz 5756, 5 & 6 July 1996

Torah Weekly is available from several sources: • World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.jer1.co.il/orgs/ohr> • Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America . Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details. • E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message 'sub weekly {your full name}' to [listproc@jer1.co.il](mailto:listproc@jer1.co.il)

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.