

**Wembley Synagogue**

פינחס

Insights from the commentators into the Sidra of Pinchas

Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the *Kohen*. (25:11) *Kinah and shalom*, zealousness and peace, vengeance and harmony, are terms that just do not seem to fit together. At first glance, one would think that they contrast one another. The Torah does not present it in this light. Pinchas acted zealously; he avenged Hashem's vengeance, and Hashem rewarded him with the Covenant of Peace. It was not, however, Pinchas' personal vengeance. Rather, he acted on behalf of Hashem. Someone had to respond to the fact that Hashem's Name was being defamed. Pinchas saw the people's apathy. Everyone just stood by while Zimri acted in the most reprehensible manner. This was a gross chillul Hashem - profaning of Hashem's Name, which could only be improved through a Kiddush Hashem. The perpetrator, regardless of his exalted position, must be stopped in such a manner that would shock the people back into reality. Pinchas returned the crown of peace to the Bnei Yisrael. He returned peace, by bringing back Israel's sheleimut - completion. Pinchas' act of Kiddush Hashem healed the rift which the chillul Hashem (profanation of Hashem's name) had caused. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

-In his (acting) zealous(ly) with my zeal (25:11)

Rashi explains this verse to mean that Pinchas performed the zealous act that Hashem would have performed. Although Hashem can do anything effortlessly, it is praiseworthy to do something that Hashem would have done. This is the point that Rashi is making about Pinchas' action. Such actions are especially praiseworthy since they demonstrate one's love for Hashem. When one shows that he wishes to "help" Hashem - even though he realizes that Hashem does not actually need his help - he shows how much he loves Hashem and wants to fulfill his will. (Source: Darash Moshe)

-And it shall be for him and his children after him a treaty of priesthood forever, (in reward) for that which he acted zealously for his G-d and he atoned for the Children of Israel (25:13)

Pinchas averted a major desecration of G-d's Name by killing a perpetrator, Zimri. Zimri sinned publicly with a Gentile woman in order to desensitize the people to such abominations. Pinchas' noble act stopped a plague that was decimating the Jews in punishment for the acts of Zimri and others who yielded to temptations. As a reward, he became a Cohen (priest). This reward fit his act in a manner of measure for measure. Many righteous people were incensed by Zimri's act. However, they were at a loss as to what to do in order to uphold the sanctity of G-d's Name. Pinchas, in effect, represented these people with his action. Because he took it upon himself to represent the people in their time of need, he merited the distinction of being appointed a Cohen and representing the people with Divine service. (Source: Sfat Emet - Itturei Torah)

-For Chanoch, the family HaChanochy.

The Torah prefixes the names of the Jewish families with the letter "Heh." Also, the Torah suffixes these names with the letter "Yud". Together, these letters spell Yud-Heh which is one of G-d's Names. The question arises: Why were the letters of G-d's name placed around the families' names in reverse order, Heh at the beginning and Yud at the end? G-d's name is Yud - Heh. This can be explained in light of the following statement of the Sages. "When a man and a

woman dwell together (in harmony) the Divine presence is among them." That is, a holy union of a man and a woman invites the Divine Presence among them. This is indicated by the fact that the Hebrew word for "man" contains a "Yud" and the word for "woman" contains a "Heh" - together spelling the name of G-d. Thus, the holiness of the man is represented by the letter "Yud" and the holiness of the woman is represented by the letter "Heh"

As indicated in various Midrashim, the Jewish women in Egypt were more meticulous than the men in upholding the sanctity of the Jewish family. Thus the letter "Heh" representing the women's role in preserving the holiness of the Jewish family is put before the "Yud," which represents the role of the man. (Kli Yakar - Ma'ayana shel Torah)

אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה -אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא לִפְנֵיהֶם - Who shall go out before them and come in before them... and let the assembly of G-d not be like sheep that have no shepherd." (27:17) Why is it necessary to give the analogy of sheep *without* a shepherd? Suffice it to say, "The congregation will have a shepherd." When a shepherd takes his sheep to pasture, the sheep run ahead and he walks behind them with a stick. Thus, a herd of sheep in the pasture can appear to lack a shepherd. Moshe prayed to Hashem to appoint a leader for the Jewish people, one who would not walk behind them and keep a low profile, but one who would take the initiative and give direction, a leader, in short, who would always be a trailblazer for the people to follow. (Source: Vedibarta Bam)

אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה -אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא לִפְנֵיהֶם - Appoint a man over the Assembly, who shall go out before them. And come before them, who shall take them out and bring them in; and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd. (27:17) Hashem said to Moshe, "Take to yourself Yehoshua, son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit. (27:16,17, 18,19) Moshe spoke to Hashem. He asked for a leader to succeed him in shepherding the Jewish People. Moshe did not simply ask; he more or less demanded a leader, so that the people should not be left alone as sheep without a shepherd. Moshe understood the nature of leadership. After all, he was the consummate leader. He knew that a leader must be patient; he must be able to be "sovel," tolerate/bear, the people.

Moshe understood the people. He knew they could not be left alone, without guidance, without direction, without leadership. He could not leave this world until Hashem had named his successor. Ostensibly, Moshe could not pick his own successor. He felt himself to be incompetent for this selection. This act required Hashem himself. Hashem knew who could tolerate Bnei Yisrael, who could patiently bear their burden, who could advise each individual person. Hashem responded to Moshe with one name: Yehoshua, "ish asher ruach bo," a man in whom there is spirit. The Alter m'Novordok explained the key for finding the individual who fit the bill, who exemplified those areas of conduct, character refinement and aptitude, one who could succeed Moshe at the helm of the Jewish people. He was to look for someone who possessed "ruach bo," the one "in whom there is spirit." Only someone who has mastery over himself can inspire and lead others. The Jewish leader must first be able to lead himself before he can lead others. (Source: Peninim on the Torah)

Shabbat Shalom



Shabbat starts 8.00pm



Shabbat ends: 10.22pm

The *Insights into the Sedra* sheet is produced by Chazan Anthony Wolfson

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