



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת פינחס

פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי. לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום. והיתה לו וילזרעו אחריו ברית כהנת עולם תחת אשר קנא לאלקיו ויכפר על בני ישראל. (במדבר כה, י"ג)

Pinchos, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen, turned back My wrath from upon the Bnei Yisroel when he zealously avenged My vengeance among them, so I did not consume the Bnei Yisroel in My vengeance. Therefore, say: Behold! I give him My covenant of peace. And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d, and he atoned for the Bnei Yisroel.

(Bamidbar 25:10-13)

In this week's *Sidrah*, we learn about the heroic act of Pinchos. After Bilom failed miserably in his attempt to curse Klal Yisroel, he sought a way to lead them to spiritual self-destruction. He advised Balak that Hashem does not tolerate immorality, and enticing the Klal Yisroel to engage in promiscuous behaviour would lead to their downfall. A Midianite woman succeeded in ensnaring Zimri, the Nasi of Shimon, into flagrantly sinning, which demanded an immediate response. Pinchos, armed with a spear, took decisive action and killed both Zimri and the woman. In recognition of his action, Hashem rewarded Pinchos with a covenant of peace and eternal *kehunah*.

The *possuk* teaches the two rewards that Pinchos received in recognition of his courageous act of killing Zimri. Hashem granted him: a) a covenant of peace, and b) eternal priesthood. We understand that Hashem rewards and punishes in kind – *middah kneged middah*. How do these rewards reflect Pinchos' actions?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that Pinchos' zealous action accomplished two significant outcomes, each corresponding to a reward. Firstly, Pinchos facilitated peace between Hashem and Klal Yisroel by helping subdue Hashem's anger. The plague, which was raging due to the חרון אף, ended as a result of Pinchos' act. Thus, he was rewarded with the ברית השלום, *a covenant of peace*, for the peace he brought between man and Hashem. Secondly, Pinchos helped Klal Yisroel achieve atonement, as indicated by the *possuk*, ויכפר על בני ישראל, *and he atoned for the Bnei Yisroel*. For his role in securing atonement for the people, he was rewarded with the covenant of eternal priesthood. Pinchos and his descendants would provide the Kohanim Gedolim in the Beis HaMikdash, who would play a crucial role in achieving atonement for Klal Yisroel throughout the generations.

The *possuk* in Malachi (2:5) states: בריתי היתה אתו והשלום, *My covenant was with him, life and peace*. Rashi explains that this refers to Pinchos, who was granted a covenant of life, as the *possuk* in our *parshah* states: את בריתי שלום. Indeed, Pinchos merited an extraordinarily long life. The *possuk* in Shoftim mentions that Pinchos was still alive during the times of the Pilegish from Givah, and Chazal assert that he lived during the days of Yiftach, which was three hundred years after the people entered Eretz Yisroel. Additionally, there are opinions that Eliyohu Hanavi is the same individual as Pinchos, demonstrating an incredibly long life, with Pinchos still being alive today.

The Meforshim question the inclusion of this בְּרִית הַחַיִּים, *covenant of life*, as it seems to be an additional reward not mentioned in our *parshah*. We are taught that Pinchos received both the בְּרִית הַשְּׁלוֹם and the בְּרִית קְהֵנָה; where does the blessing of longevity come into play?

The Seforno explains that the בְּרִית הַשְּׁלוֹם encompasses the covenant of life. The peace granted to Pinchos does not merely refer to external harmony between a person and their environment; it also includes inner peace. He explains that death results from conflicting forces within oneself. Therefore, by being blessed with complete internal peace, Pinchos also earned the merit of a long life.

The Malbim elaborates on this concept by explaining that death and deterioration arise from conflicting forces and division, while peace is achieved when all powers work together in harmony. Since the existence of the world is a mixture of contradictory forces and countless components, only the Shechinah, as the Soul of Creation, can unite them all into a cohesive universe. The Shechinah creates 'peace' by bringing together all the forces and parts of creation for a single purpose. On a smaller scale, when a person focuses all their abilities on achieving a single goal, setting aside any other motives or influences, they too can bring 'peace' into their being and harmoniously unite their powers.

When Pinchos completely dedicated himself to the will of Hashem, bravely risking his life to perform a zealous act, he was rewarded with the בְּרִית הַשְּׁלוֹם. By ignoring any conflicting interests and concentrating solely on Hashem's will, he attained a remarkable level of inner peace within himself. For this reason, he was blessed with a lasting covenant of peace, ensuring that this harmonious state would remain with him throughout his life, resulting in longevity.

The Rosh Yeshiva explains that the Malbim's insight regarding Pinchos suppressing *all* his drives to avenge the vengeance of Hashem can be understood more deeply. The Mishnah (*Berachos* 54a) interprets the phrase וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ, *You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart*, to mean וְיֵצֶר טוֹב וְיֵצֶר הָרָע, *with both your inclinations - the yetser tov and yetser horah*. Talmidei Rabbeinu Yonah suggest that the *yetser hatov* can be seen as the *middah* of compassion and similar qualities that guide one toward good deeds. In contrast, the *yetser horah* is associated with the *middah* of cruelty, leading one toward bad deeds. When a person shows no mercy to the wicked and acts cruelly toward them, he performs a great *mitzvah* and serves Hashem through the *yetser horah*. Thus, Pinchos' zealous action, in addition to being a display of כָּל נַפְשְׁךָ, *with all your soul* - as he risked his life to kill Zimri - also involved בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ. He utilised the trait of cruelty, symbolised by the *yetser horah*, in submission to fulfilling Hashem's will.

The great blessing of life that Pinchos received from his covenant of peace conveys a fundamental lesson: pain, suffering, and ultimately death stem from a lack of harmony. In contrast, peace, blessing and life emerge from the complete unity of opposing forces. Pinchos demonstrated extraordinary *mesirus nefesh* with his zealousness, acting with full dedication to Hashem's will while disregarding any personal interests. Because of this remarkable level of internal harmony, he merited complete peace and longevity. May we too strive to develop greater levels of pure dedication in performing Hashem's will and, in turn, merit much goodness.

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