

## Inspirations from the Haftara

Parshas Pinchus

by Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

The Haftara for Parshas Pinchus is only read on rare occasions. Most years Matos and Masei are read together which forces the Shabbos in which we read Parshas Pinchus into the three Weeks. So the special Haftara for the Three weeks is read instead. In the rare event that Matos and Masei are separated, the Haftara for Pinchus which discusses Eliyahu Hanavi's adventures while running away from King Achav and Queen Izevel is read.

One obvious connection is that the Torah Reading was about How Pinchus stopped the plague and Hashem's punishment for the acts of immorality being committed. Zimri Ben Salu, the head of the tribe of Shimon brought the Midianite princess into his tent in front of everyone. Pinchus took a spear and killed both of them. The plague then stopped. Hashem himself testifies that his zealousness was for Hashem alone without any ulterior motives. The Torah and the navi both use the expression of *kina*, zeal to describe the behaviors of Pinchus and Eliyahu

Another connection is the mesorah that we have that Pinchas and Eliyahu Hanavi were in fact the same person. At both periods of his life Pinchus/Eliyahu showed his zeal to fight for Hakadosh Baruch Hu against the popular trends of the society he was living in. In the time of the Torah reading we know how Bnai Yisroel were committing Acts of immorality with the daughters of Midian and Moav. It took courage to stand up to the whole society and punish a tribal leader when desecration of Hashem's name is involved. Pinchus remained steadfast because immorality is immorality regardless of the perpetrator. It may be easy for us to say it but how many among us really have the courage to do what Pinchus did when a major leader is desecrating Hashem's name? Similarly, in the time of the Haftara, Eliyahu Hanavi stood up to the entire society of his time. He proved Hashem's existence when he was able to make his ox, drenched in water, get consumed by a heavenly fire in response to his Tefilos. While he may have won over the masses, Izevel was more determined than ever to punish Eliyahu Hanavi. The Haftara describes his wanderings all over Eretz Yisroel including Beer Sheva, Har Sinai and to the north.

An important lesson we all learn from Eliyahu Hanavi is courage to stand up against all wrong even when alone and without support. He felt as he was fighting not only his community but his entire society. When he had to he would even say to the King Achav, "I am not the trouble maker. You are the trouble maker causing Am Yisroel to go away from Hashem and after the Baalim. Indeed, there are times when we all are called to stand up for what is right even if we are in the minority.

