

ON THE PARSHA

PARSHAT PINCHAS

BASIC COMMENTARIES ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA,

BY RABBI TZVI MANDEL

Pinchas' Final Fixing of Aharon's Sin

Ch. 25, V. 11. *Pinchas, son of ...* **Or Hachaim** asks why does the Torah mention his ancestry? [see **Rashi**]. He answers: a) because the Torah gives them credit for having a descendant of such great status; b) because since Aharon (Pinchas' grandfather) was involved in the sin of the Golden Calf and caused great destruction [see **Sh'mos** Ch. 32, V. 35] and Aharon, as part of his repentance busied himself with teaching Torah and good deeds to all the Jewish Children [as quoted in **Medrash**], that was the beginning of Aharon's "fixing" for his sin and his grandson Pinchas fulfilled the rest of Aharon's "fixing" through his great deed. Therefore the Torah mentions his ancestry back to Aharon.

Marking Pinchas' Greatness

Or Hachaim notes three main reasons for Hashem's "turning His anger away from them" [vs. 11]: a) because Pinchas himself "defended Hashem's cause" and consequently put himself in physical danger since he could have gotten killed by those present ; b) he did it solely for Hashem's sake, which is the most wholesome way a Mitzvah [good deed] should be performed; and c) he sanctified the Name of Hashem by performing it in public as the Talmud [Sanhedrin 82] says, he killed Leader of the Tribe of Shimon in front of the whole tribe!

The Length of Elijah's Life

Ch. 25, V. 12. *My covenant of peace.* **Seforno** says since according to one view, Pinchas is Elijah the Prophet, therefore his reward was that he was freed from the sword of the Angel of Death and is still alive this very day! And, according to the view that he died a mortal death, he lived over three hundred years!

The Status of Angels

Ch. 25, V. 12. *Peace*. **Targum Yonatan** [according to **Pirush Yon**] says Hashem rewarded Pinchas by making him an angel [see #1]: a) since they are referred to as "Angels of Peace" because they have no hatred or jealousy! [see #6-B], and b) since one of Hashem's names is "Peace", they are therefore called "Angels of Peace".

Small "Vav" in "Shalom" – Waiting for Moshiach

In the Torah scroll the "Vav" in "Shalom" [peace] is written small [comparative to "Yud" rather than "Vav"]. **Baal Haturim** says the reason for this is because since Pinchas became Elijahu the Prophet, and since we find "Elijahu" spelled occasionally without a "Vav", and since we also find "Yaakov" spelled occasionally with a "Vav" – because Yaakov "took" the "Vav" from Elijahu as collateral until he comes with Moshiach to redeem his children from our Exile!!! – then Yaakov will rejoice and return the "Vav" to Elijahu – a) "Yishmach" (meaning "rejoice") has the same letters as "Moshiach"! and b) "Shalom" (meaning "peace") is the same numerical value (gematria) as "Zehu Moshiach" ("this is Moshiach").

Elijahu Attains Forgiveness for Future Generations

Ch. 25, V. 13. *And he attained forgiveness for the Jewish children*. **Baal Haturim** notes that the literal translation is: "and he will forgive" in the future, because Elijahu advocates and gets forgiveness for all the Jewish Generations until the end of time.

The Holiness of the Jewish Women

Ch. 26, V. 1. *Take a census...* Rashi in Verse 5 says the Nations embarrassed the Jewish Children by saying that if the Egyptians manipulated your People into being slaves, for sure they manipulated your Mothers and forced them into illicit relationships, and therefore the Torah refutes this claim and adds Hashem's "signature" to the names of the families of the Jewish Tribes, which insinuates that Hashem Himself gives witness to the purity of the private lives of His People. **Kli Yakar** [here on V. 1] explains why Hashem's name "Yud Hay" was used, as opposed to any other of His Holy Names, because the Talmud says that if there is peace between husband and wife, then Hashem's name of "Yud Hay" dwells among them. Now, until the episode at Shitim occurred [see end of Balak] there was no need for Hashem to give witness to the purity of the Jewish Families – however, after the sin of Shitim where Jewish men sinned with women of the Nations, the Nations found cause for suspicion that in Egypt too, perhaps, the Jewish Family did not keep its purity and had relationships with Egyptians; therefore, Hashem saw it fit now, after Shitim, to counter that embarrassment. However, why does the Torah put the "Hay" before the "Yud" [as in v. 5 "Hapalney"] if Hashem's name has "Yud" first and then "Hay"? **Kli Yakar** answers because the women were on a higher level of purity than the men and the "Hay" is "borrowed" from "woman" in Hebrew, "Ishah", which is spelled "Alef-Shin-Hay" and the "Yud" is borrowed from man in Hebrew, "Ish", which is spelled "Alef-Yud-Shin".

Ch. 26, V. 1-2. "*And it was after the plague... And Hashem said...take the sum...* Or Hachaim explain why the Torah starts a whole new section [which is marked with the "Fae" between "the plague" and "And Hashem said"] in the middle of a verse – because a) it was after the Plague and the Sages give a parable about a group of wolves that attacked sheep and killed some of them and after the attack the Shepherd counted how many were left over; b) when they left Egypt and were given into the jurisdiction of Moshe they were counted – now, when Moshe was getting closer to leaving this world, he counted them before "returning them" to Hashem [see Rashi]. So the former reason is mentioned in the Torah explicitly "And it was after the Plague." And, to hint to the latter reason, the Torah starts a new section.

Ch. 26, V. 5. *the family...* Ramban says the reason why the counting was according to families is because the dividing of the Land was according to families.

Ch. 26, V. 9. *they were Datan and Aviram...* Ramban says the Torah is stressing that only the families of Pallu and N'muel inherited. However, Datan and Aviram and all that belonged to them sank into the earth [see Parshat Korach].

Datan and Aviram Instigate Korach

Or Hachaim adds that Datan and Aviram instigated the People against Moshe, and perhaps they even instigated Korach against Moshe! – and if they would not have been involved, then the Jewish People would have repented and many lives would have been saved. Therefore, when the Talmud [Sanhedrin 106] discusses whether the Congregation of Korach were given a part in the Coming World – perhaps they were all given a part except for Datan and Aviram – it is for this reason that the Torah immediately reiterates [in Vs. 11] "and the children of Korach didn't die" because the Torah is stressing the comparative innocence of Korach as compared to Datan's and Aviram's evil doings.

Understanding Beautiful Sefardic Custom of Naming

Ch. 26. Ramban says the Jewish custom during those times was like the custom of the descendants of Yishmael and the Jews coming from that side of the world; that every family would designate a respected family member whom they would all be named after. Ramban adds that perhaps the source of this custom stemmed from when they started being fruitful and multiplying in Egypt and they feared that they might assimilate with the Egyptians – they then appointed heads of the family upon whose name they were referred to, and this separated them.

The Modesty and Rationale of Tzafchad's Daughters

Ch. 27. *And the daughters of Tzafchad came close...* Targum Yonatan and Pirush Yonat quoting Yalkut say that as soon as they heard that Hashem was dividing the Land according to Males, they

gathered into a meeting and were advised that Hashem's Mercy is greater than the mercy of humans – He must have mercy upon all his creations, both male and female.

Or Hachaim adds that after they gathered among themselves in a decent and logical manner, they then approached the leaders of their tribe out of respect due to them. Also, these great women were naturally shy and didn't want to approach and "stand in front of Moshe" [Vs. 2] unless they were clear that their claim was substantial.

Seeing Physically and Spiritually

Ch. 27, V. 12. *And see the Land...* V. 13 *And you will see.* **Or Hachaim** explains that first Hashem commanded Moshe to look at the Land, and then he promised him that he will see in a miraculous manner, not just with mortal seeing, but rather through the "hidden light" which Hashem hid for the Righteous.

Death Through Hashem's Kiss

Ch. 27, V. 13. *You too will be gathered...like your brother Aharon.* **Or Hachaim** explains that the special "Death through Hashem's Kiss" which both Moshe and Aharon experienced was an exceptionally sweet death which Hashem wanted them to desire and not to be forced on them; and also, this way they were able to accept Hashem's decree to the fullest. Also, a) Hashem, out of Love for His Righteous Followers, doesn't want to take their soul without their fullest will; and b) this way with their death they are performing the commandment of "Loving Hashem with all your Soul" [Devarim 6 – Shema --].

Ch. 27, V. 15 & 16. *And Moshe spoke...Let the Lord...set a man over the congregation.* **Baal Haturim** says that in these two verses there are 28 words and Yehoshua guided the Jewish Children for 28 years.

HAVE A JOYOUS SHABBOS!!