



LOUGHTON SHUL
MORE THAN A SHUL

INSPIRE

PINCHAS 19 TAMMUZ - 11 JULY IS EVERYTHING OK?

By Rabbi Yossi Goldman

Once upon a time, in the days of Moses and the Jews in the Wilderness, the Moabite women were seducing young Jewish men. The Almighty was angered and sent a plague upon His people. Jews were dying left, right and center. To compound matters, Zimri, a Prince from the Tribe of Shimon was himself consorting with a Midianite Princess named Kozbi and flaunting their illicit relationship in the face of Moses. Enter Pinchas, a young Jewish zealot, and in true zealot tradition he kills both Zimri and Kozbi. Suddenly, the plague stops. No more Jews die. And G-d declares Pinchas not a murderer but a hero, Defender of the Faith, and bestows upon him the world's first peace prize. "Behold I give him my covenant of peace." He is appointed to the priesthood and as befits a hero gets a whole portion of the Bible named after him, this week's parsha, Pinchas. Now I have serious reservations as to whether Dale Carnegie would use Pinchas as a role model for How to Win Friends and Influence People. And I'm definitely not suggesting that we root out all sinners by putting a spear through them. What was appropriate in ancient times is not necessarily appropriate today. The way to stop the internal hemorrhaging of our people through assimilation and intermarriage is obviously not the way of Pinchas. Zimri was rebellious with intent. He knew full well that what he was doing was wrong. It was a deliberate provocation on his part. Most people who turn their backs on Judaism today, on the other hand, do so out of ignorance. They simply don't know. Nobody taught them. It's not their fault. We cannot condone it, but such people don't need a whipping, they need a whetting of their spiritual appetite. They need an education, urgently. They need a lot of love and warmth and for people to reach out to them and share the beauty of a Shabbat or an inspirational Shul experience. Show them their own Jewishness and how meaningful it truly is, and they will no longer want to give it up. What, then, is the message of Pinchas for our time? That sometimes, even today in our super-sensitive, tolerant society, we do need to take a stand. That there will be issues which demand that we put our foot down, that we insist, that we say "No!" It might be different issues for different people. For some it may be Jerusalem, for others Yom Kippur, and for still others it might be insisting that their daughter's boyfriend cannot sleep over. Somewhere, surely, there has got to be a bottom line. Generally, diplomacy and positive encouragement work much better than fighting. We are not trying to train Jewish holy fundamentalists to go around killing infidels. But inevitably there will be occasions when even pacifists like us will need to adopt the zero-tolerance Pinchas approach. Occasions when we will be required to stand up and be counted. When we, too, will have to say, "I'm sorry. I cannot accept this kind of behavior. This is wrong. Stop!" Even in our OK Generation, not everything is OK.

Psalms about Future Events

If King David authored Psalms, how is it that several of the Psalms talk about events which occurred long after David's time. Some examples are Psalm 74 which talks about the destruction of the Temple, and Psalm 137, about the Babylonian Exile ("By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and also cried as we remembered Zion").?

The Aish Rabbi Replies:

Thank you for your good observation. This general issue is discussed primarily in the context of Psalm 137, which was clearly written in reference to the First Temple's destruction and the Babylonian Exile – which occurred hundreds of years after King David's death. Before addressing the primary issue, one important clarification is due. What you stated in your question is not entirely true. It is clear that King David was not the sole author of all of the psalms. A large number of them are attributed to other authors, such as Asaf, Heiman, and Moses. The Talmud (Baba Batra 14b) states that King David authored the Book of Psalms together with "ten elders," most of them contemporary to David, but several much earlier. (It's possible the other authors served as the inspiration for the other psalms and David put them in their final forms. See Rashi to Talmud there and Ibn Ezra's introduction to Tehillim. Also, although two psalms are attributed to David's son Solomon (72 & 127), the commentators explain that David wrote them in honor of his son, the future king.) In terms of Psalm 137, about the Babylonian Exile, the Talmud (Gittin 57b) explains that God showed King David a prophetic vision of the Temple's destruction, and he was stirred to write a psalm about the future tragedy. The Talmud in fact notes that David was even shown a vision of the Second Temple's destruction. This is why at the end David calls on God to remember the acts of the Children of Edom (Rome) and to punish them as well. More generally, the Talmud observes that King David wrote Psalms with Divine inspiration (see Talmud Pesachim 117a, Brachot 4b), and thus he very often alludes to future events. See for example Psalm 126. A second opinion appears in Ibn Ezra's introduction to the Psalms, that such chapters of the Psalms were written much later, by one of the actual exiles in Babylonia. According to this opinion, Psalms was not completed until a much later time in history. It should be noted that even according to this opinion, Psalms was presumably completed at around the time of the Babylonian Exile. This was still the era of prophecy – at (or before) the times of such figures as Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordechai, and Malachi. Other books of the Torah were still being recorded. Psalms too, in its entirety, was a sacred work written with Divine Inspiration. Generations later, the Men of the Great Assembly recognized this and determined that Psalms deserved to be a part of the Torah.

SHUL TIMES

Shabbat Times

Candle Lighting

9:00pm

Shabbat Ends 10:30pm

Friday, 10 July

7pm with Rabbi

Yehuda Aronovitz

Kabbalat Shabbat on
zoom

Tuesday cooking with
rabbi & Rebbetzen

Abrams 8pm

Thursday

Movie night

PARSHA SUMMARY

Aaron's grandson Pinchas is rewarded for his act of zealotry in killing the Simeonite prince Zimri and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: G-d grants him a covenant of peace and the priesthood. A census of the people counts 601,730 men between the ages of twenty and sixty. Moses is instructed on how the Land is to be divided by lottery among the tribes and families of Israel. The five daughters of Tzelafchad petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; G-d accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance. Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people into the Land of Israel. The Parshah concludes with a detailed list of the daily offerings, and the additional offerings brought on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh (first of the month), and the festivals of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

The prophet Elijah is the main protagonist of this week's haftorah. According to tradition, Elijah shared the same soul as Pinchas, the hero of this week's Torah portion. They also both zealously fought on G-d's behalf, while disregarding the dangers involved. Following the showdown with the Baal prophets at Mount Carmel, which led to the execution of the Baal priests, the evil Queen Jezebel issued a death sentence for Elijah. Elijah fled to the Judean desert and asked G-d to take his life. While he slept, an angel awoke him and provided him with food and drink. Reenergized, Elijah went for forty days until he arrived at Mount Horeb (Sinai), and he slept in a cave on the mountain. And the word of G-d came to him and asked him for the purpose of his visit. "And [Elijah] said: 'I have been zealous for G-d, the Lord of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant. They have torn down Your altars and they have killed Your prophets by the sword, and I have remained alone, and they seek my life to take it.' Elijah was instructed to leave the cave and stand on the mountain: "Behold! G-d's Presence will pass." There was a great and strong wind splitting mountains and shattering boulders, but Elijah realized that G-d was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake followed by fire, but again Elijah understood that not in the earthquake nor the fire was G-d. After the fire there was a subtle silent voice, and Elijah realized that the Divine Presence had appeared. G-d asked Elijah again for the purpose of his visit, and Elijah repeated his earlier response. G-d instructed Elijah to go to Damascus and anoint Hazael as king of Aram and Jehu as king of Israel and to anoint Elisha as a prophet in his stead. These three would continue Elijah's battle against the Baal. Elijah followed the instructions and he immediately found Elisha and recruited him as his aide and eventual successor.

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK CHAIM ARUCHIM

Piatkus Brian Brother Asher ben Yosef 18 Tammuz
Sugarman Paul Mother Chava bas Binyomin 20 Tammuz
Austin Elaine Father Yitzchok ben Yitzchok 21 Tammuz
Fox Stuart Father Peretz ben Yaakov HaCohen 23 Tammuz
Leigh Phillip Mother Bleimal bas Peretz HaCohen 23 Tammuz
Newman Michael Mother Rivka bas Nissan 23 Tammuz

JEWISH HUMOR

Moishe and Miriam Koplewitz had been married for 45 years and had raised 11 children and were blessed with countless grandchildren. When interviewed by a local newspaper and asked the secret to raising so many children and staying together all that time, Miriam replied, "Many years ago we made a promise to each other: the first one to leave has to take all the kids."

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

This can be found working inside some homes during the winter months
But can you work out its name?
Surrounded by a mantelpiece it has logs that are aflame

**Answer to last week's Riddle.
Your word**

STORYTIME

Millions of shining pin dots of lights spotted the black sky, and not a rustle or breath of sound was heard as Rabbi Avraham Halevi Bruchim made his nightly rounds through the narrow, winding streets of Safed. Every night, without fail, Rabbi Avraham walked up and down the streets calling to the sleeping inhabitants: "Awake, awake, Jews; Awake Reb Yaakov! Get up, Reb Yitzchak!" calling each by his name until sleep was shaken away and they rose to address the Creator of the Universe. According to custom, it was time to begin praying the "Tikun Chatzot" - the midnight supplication prayers; the sleeping scholars of the city must be roused from their slumber. It was time to remember the Holy Temple, and plead with the Master of the Universe to remember His children and fulfill His promise to rebuild the Holy Temple. The age-old custom of praying for the Holy Temple was maintained with great devotion in Safed, and the scholars who lived there never overslept thanks to the dedication of Reb Avraham Halevi. He persistently called the people of Safed to their prayer and study until the many study halls were filled and the voices of the Jews blended into a melodious spiritual symphony of prayer and study spiraling through the starry skies in a crescendo which reached all the way up to the Celestial throne. The holy AriZal, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the famed Kabbalist, lived at this time and knew the saintly Reb Avraham Halevi very well. Once, the AriZal came to Reb Avraham with very grave tidings: "It has been disclosed to me that your life is coming to its end. All the years allotted to you have passed. However, I see one possibility for you to live. If you travel to Jerusalem and pour out your heart in prayer at the Western Wall, G-d may look favorably upon your prayer. If you are granted a vision of the Shechina, the Divine Presence, it will be a sign that your petition has been accepted and you will live another 22 years." Rabbi Avraham Halevi immediately did as the AriZal had instructed him. He travelled to Jerusalem and prepared himself to storm the Heavens by fasting for three full days and nights. When he finally reached his destination, he was ready and the prayer rose from the depths of his soul and he wept and begged the Almighty to spare his life. When he lifted his eyes to gaze at the Western Wall, he saw a vision of the G-dly Presence and the glory of what he saw cause him to fall upon his face on the stones. He wept from the great and turbulent emotion until he fainted. In his unconscious state he dreamt that the Shechina again appeared to him and said, "My son Avraham, take comfort, for there is hope for your future. Your sons will return to their borders, for I will return the captives from their exiles, and I Myself will comfort them." Rabbi Avraham awoke from his faint in elevated spirits, filled with joy. He returned to Safed and resumed his activities there. One day the AriZal met him on the street. "I see by looking at your face that you had success in Jerusalem and that you did see the Shechina. You will surely live another 22 years." The prediction of the AriZal was realized. Rabbi Avraham lived 22 more years, bringing many Jews to prayer and repentance. A full 22 years after this event occurred he passed away to his eternal reward. The AriZal said of him that he was a reincarnation of the Prophet Jeremiah, who also called his fellow Jews to repentance before the destruction of the First Holy Temple.

FOOD 4 THE SOUL

Wherever light radiates, it does not find darkness. For light, darkness does not exist. Wherever darkness spreads, it does not find light. For darkness, light does not exist. In a time yet to come, the two shall meet and know one another in perfect union. At that nexus we will see the One who created all things. In the meantime, we glimpse a premonition of that wonder. For this is the human being: A breath of the divine within a material body; light and darkness face-to-face within a single being.