

PARSHAS PINCHAS

By Rabbi Yaakov Feitman

Kehillas Bais Yehudah Tzvi

READING ABOUT PINCHAS AND BECOMING PINCHAS

Usually we take a Posuk or a theme from the Parshah for analysis and discussion. This week, we will examine how the *entire* Sedra is the appropriate introduction to the Nine Days. The Apter Rebbe (Sefer Ohev Yisrael) famously notes that “just as there are 21 days between the 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av so there are 21 days of special holiness and joy *m’doreisa* – Biblically. They are Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, 7 days of Pesach, 1 day of Shavuos, 2 days of Rosh Hashanah, 1 day of Yom Kippur and 8 days of Succos. The 21 days of Tamuz and Av are the source and matrix of all the Jewish Yomim Tovim...G-d willing, when we all do teshuvah and purify ourselves with mitzvos, the 21 sad days will turn into wonderful days, with Tishah B’av becoming the greatest of all.” The Maor Vashamesh puts it slightly differently. He sees the 21 days of tragedy as corresponding to the 21 days beginning with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Hoshanah Rabbah. Either way, these giants of Chassidus understand Parshas Pinchas as the appropriate Sedra to usher in the Nine days, since all of the Yomim Tovim are mentioned in its pesukim. The Maharsha (Bechoros 8a) too, teaches that just as the 21 days from Rosh Hashanah to Hoshanah Rabbah are days of compassion and forgiveness, so the 21 days of Tamuz and Av can bring *kaparah* through their suffering for all of Klal Yisrael.

The Rizhener Rebbe goes even further than all these Rebbes. He states that when the “bad “ days turn good with the coming of Moshiach, the 17th of Tamuz will be considered the first day of the new Yom Tov and Tishah B’av the last, the days in between being considered the new Chol Hamoed. This explains also why Parshas Pinchas is read on this Shabbos, evoking the Yomim Tovim which the Nevi'im (Yirmiya 31:13; Zecharya 8:19) predicted long ago. The B'nai Yissaschar has his own take on this profound juxtaposition. He teaches that the *Chachomim* long ago were concerned that we would fall into dejection during these tragic days, so they gave us the Parshah of Yomim Tovim as an antidote to instill hope and joy into our collective hearts. The Sefas Emes (5642) suggests that the purpose of this week's Sedra at this time was to cause us to yearn for the lost glory of the Bais Hamikdash and the korbanos, which will help us to merit its return soon iyH.

The Sefer Yagdil Torah, which quotes a number of these sources, also offers another connection. Rav Chaim Nochum Lichtenstein zt”l reminds us that Pinchas and Eliyahu are one and the same (Targum Yonasan beginning of this week's Sedra). When we remember Eliyahu Hanovie, we focus once again on restoring the korbanos – the sacrificial order – as described in our Sedra. The zchus of our yearnings, as the Sefas Emes taught us, can indeed bring us the wonderful day when all this will be ours once again. Perhaps we may add that just as Pinchas acted audaciously and courageously, bringing a *yeshuah* to Klal Yisrael, so it is up to every one of us as individuals to bring the geulah through our tefilos and genuine internal longing to have the Bais Hamikdash back in our midst. As Rav Shmishon Pincus zt”l said eloquently, “Pinchas triumphed because he truly cared.” We, too, can become Pinchas by caring about the Bais Hamikdash, korbanos and Moshiach.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH

HALACHA OF THE WEEK 5778

PARSHAS PINCHAS

BY RABBI YAAKOV FEITMAN

KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDAH TZVI

We continue this week with questions and answers about the Nine Days and Tishah B'av

Question: I know that meat and wine are forbidden during the Nine Days. My friend is making a “*lechaim*” during the Nine Days, which he was told was permissible since the mechutanim are only here briefly from Eretz Yisrael. May we actually make a *lechaim* on whisky etc.?

Answer: Yes. Although wine is forbidden and many people like various beverages more than wine, only wine itself is forbidden. The Gra (551:9 and 11) cites the Gemara (Bava Basra 60b) that wine is forbidden since it was used in the Bais Hamikdash for the nesachim (libation) and we refrain from things we cannot offer on the mizbeach because of the churban. Therefore, even if alcoholic drinks would cause simcha, they are not forbidden (Tosfos ibid; Shaarei Teshuvah 551:11 in name of *Ohr Hane'elam*).

Question: May a young man or young lady put on new clothing during the Nine Days in order to go on a shidduch date?

Answer: Yes (Steipler zt”l in the name of the Chazon Ish [Orchos Rabbeinu 2:132]). Girls may also cut and set their hair for a date up to Tishah B'av since this year, there is no “week of Tisha B'av.” During regular years, when Tishah B'av does not fall on Shabbos or Sunday, they may not cut or set their hair starting with the week before Tisha B'av (*Piskei Teshuvos* 551:42, page 92, note 227).

Question: I have heard various opinions about showering Erev Shabbos Chazon. What is the Halacha?

Answer: There is a wide range of opinion on this matter. The Rama (551:16) writes that the prohibition to wash oneself during the Nine days applies even to Erev Shabbos Chazon. Nevertheless, he cites opinions that those who wash their hair with warm water every Shabbos may do so at this time as well. The Mishnah Berurah (No. 96) is strict in forbidding soap or shampoo even according to this opinion. The Steipler zt”l (Orchos Rabbeinu 2:134) is even machmir that we may not wash our feet since in our time, we do not go barefoot. The Aruch Hashulchan (No. 36) also rails against those who have taken it upon themselves to be lenient in “our generation...and the bathhouses were always closed on Erev Shabbos Chazon.” The Klauzenberger Rebbe zt”l (Divrei Yetziv 237) also testifies that in his time as well the bathhouses were closed (and obviously no one had showers or bathtubs). All that being said, many of the Gedolim of the previous generation were lenient about showering on Erev Shabbos Chazon. First of all, the Mishmeres Shaom (40:1) from Koidinev, states that in Koidinev the custom has been extant for many generations to wash on Erev Shabbos Chazon since the prohibition is not mentioned in the Gemara and it is a great mitzvah to wash up for Shabbos. Furthermore, he maintains that according to Kabbalah, it is very important not to miss this Shabbos preparation. Even more to the point, many Poskim of recent generations are lenient about showering during the entire Nine Days (Igros Moshe Even Haezer 4:84; Salmas Chaim 4:19; Rav Y.E. Henkin zt”l in his haskamah to Sefer Nechamas Yosef) if one showers regularly during the rest of the year and does so for basic hygiene, not pleasure or luxury.

A GUTTEN SHABBOS AND A GUTTEN CHODESH