

*SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 24 Tammuz 5778 the first Shabbat of the "Three Weeks" which culminates with Tisha B'Av. As such, the haftorot of these three weeks are pre-set and are not representative of the Torah reading, but rather of the theme of the Three Weeks period. We bless the month of Av which begins this Friday. The Molad (re-appearance of the moon) for the month of Av will be Friday morning (July 13) at 6:49 a.m. and 8 chalakim (about 27 seconds), Jerusalem time. We omit Av HaRachamim.*

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 686 Hz) (p. 932 S) (p. 612 Hi) (p. 876 AS)

PINCHAS פִּינְחָס Numbers 25:10

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus (RED)  
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1. The beginning of today's parsha is a continuation of the story which ended last Shabbat when Pinchas arose with a zealous feeling to protect God's name and slew the prince of Shimon and the Midianite woman with whom he was cavorting. Pinchas is given a reward and is identified yet again as being the son of Elazar and grandson of Aharon. Most commentaries deal with the fact that Pinchas was probably not a Kohen prior to this incident, but earned the Kehunah as a result of his rising to protect God's name. Others maintain that he had the Kohanic status but yet was not inducted with his father's generation and his grandfather. Others dwell on the fact that in this case, meaning that if we assume that Pinchas was already a Kohen, what brachah does he receive at this juncture? Is it enough of a reward to understand that Pinchas earned it himself and did not receive the Kehunah as an inheritance. There is a distinction between these two concepts, the distinction being that if you earned it instead of inheriting it, it is a greater merit for you. [RED's note: I know that this is true of many other disciplines. For example if I think of a novel explanation on a Torah matter on my own, it stays with me in greater depth and length of time than if I were to have read it in some other source. Working it out on your own has benefits to your ability to remember it and to plumb its depth.] This is true of Pinchas' ability to have earned his status as a Kohen, and ultimately as the Kohen Gadol, and the ancestor of all other High Priests in the future.

2. An interesting discussion follows the opinion that Pinchas was already a Kohen when he killed Zimri. It is recorded in the Talmud and codified in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 128:35) that a Kohen who killed a human being is not permitted to duchen and to bless the people. Consequently this might apply to Pinchas' Kohen status, which might have been forfeited by his act of killing. Maybe that is the reward that he received in being recognized as a Kohen in this particular incident. This has had ramifications in discussions throughout Jewish history and especially in the modern period. In his Responsa Yechaveh Da'at Volume 2, Responsum 14, Rav Ovadiah Yosef discusses the law of a Kohen who serves in the Israeli army of today and kills an enemy. Is he permitted to duchen even though he has killed a human being? Rav Yosef goes through a lengthy discussion and concludes that we should honor such an individual and give him a

major *yasher ko'ach* (all the power to you) when we see him for the service he rendered to his people and definitely he would be permitted to duchen and function as a Kohen in our day. (RED)

3. Immediately after rewarding Pinchas Hashem tells Moshe to attack the Midianites. This is a directive not just because they were involved in bringing the people to sin in the idolatry of Peor, but the Torah seems to indicate a constant threat emanating from Midian. They are in the present tense, not just in the past, harassing the Jewish people (25:18). This would indicate that attacking Midian is not only because of the past sins against the Jewish people but also because of the current and future possibility of attack. They are our enemy and desire to inflict evil and pain against Bnei Yisrael. This clear directive regarding Midian places a consideration for future relations with constant enemies of the Jewish people. I would think that our current situation with Iran fits the bill. They have harassed and incited evil against the Jewish people in the past and continue to do so in their support of Arab terrorism against the State of Israel, and have articulated clearly their intent to continue to fight and attempt to annihilate the Jewish state. If Hashem wished Moshe to attack Midian because they are a constant and future threat to the Jewish people, would this also be a directive in the current state of affairs with the Jewish people's relations with Iran and even with Hamas? (RED)

4. When the Torah gives us a census report in Chapter 26, it states that the sons of Korach did not die. Children normally absorb and inherit a great deal from their parents. Usually we observe that the good character traits of the parents don't automatically extend to the children, but the children seem to quickly absorb the bad character traits. If the father is contentious and argumentative in his relationship with others, usually the children follow in his wake; and in many instances, the children are not only alongside the father but in front of him to lead the charge. Contrary to this, the sons of Korach "miraculously" did not follow in their father's footsteps. In the time of the rebellion that their father led, the sons felt penitent and did not assist their father. Consequently this part would truly be looked upon as a miracle. (Yalkut Sofer on 26:10, 11)

HAFTORAH

(p. 710 Hz) (p. 968 S) (p. 904 Hi) (p. 1192 AS)

JEREMIAH יְרֵמְיָהוּ 1:1

All three of the selected haftorot for the Three Weeks have the purpose of bringing to our minds the understanding of the exile, the knowledge of the causes of its occurrence and its duration. The national custom of imposing a character of mourning on these weeks is not to commemorate the events of the past, but to bring home to us the shortcomings and sins of every contemporary age of the exile. Just as the Kohen serves as a priest to the people of Israel, so was the role of the Jewish people to serve as the priesthood of the human race. God appoints Bnei Yisrael to this task just as He appoints the prophet to serve even before his birth. **נָבִיא לְגוֹיִם נִהְיֶה** *to be a prophet unto the nations did I ordain you*, is a statement made not only to the prophet Jeremiah but also to all of Israel. (Hirsch)

## QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT PINCHAS 5778

by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus

- I. From the Text
  1. What did Pinchas do to deserve being rewarded? (25:7,8)
  2. What was Pinchas' reward?
  3. Which tribe was the largest; and which was the smallest, and why? (26:6...)
  4. What was the request of the daughters of Tzelafchad? (27:1-4)
  5. Whom did Hashem pick to be Moshe's successor as leader of Bnei Yisrael? (27:18)
- II. From Rashi
  6. Pinchas was a grandson of Aharon. How was he not born a Kohen? (25:13)
  7. Moav and Midian were the root cause of the recent plague against Bnei Yisrael. Why did Hashem order retribution against Midian, and not Moav? (25:18)
  8. Why is Moshe told that he would die and not enter the Promised Land immediately after the law of inheritance is stated? (27:12)
  9. How is Yehoshua described in comparison to the greatness of Moshe? (27:20)
  10. If a person makes a vow to bring a sacrifice, when is the normal time to fulfill the vow? (29:39)
- III. From the Rabbis
  11. In the census, one son of Yissachar is Yashuv. In Bereishit (46:13) he is listed with the name Yov. Why the change? (Daat Zekeinim)
  12. If the families were counted here to assess the eventual division of the Land, then why was the tribe of Levi counted, albeit separately? (Ramban)
  13. What two laws in the Torah came about in response to the request of certain people?
- IV. From the Haftorah : Jeremiah (the Haftorah of Mattot)
  14. From which direction will the enemy come to make war on Israel and destroy the First Holy Temple?
- V. Relationships
  - a) Noa - Tirtzah
  - b) Chanoch - Chetzron
  - c) Serach - Zerach
  - d) Yosef - Machir
  - e) Shucham – Chushim

## ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT PINCHAS 5778

1. He threw a spear and killed Zimri, a prince of Shimon, and his "girlfriend" Cozbi of Midian.
  2. Pinchas became a Kohen and a future Kohen Gadol.
  3. Yehudah was the largest (76,500); and Shimon was the smallest (22,200) because they lost 24,000 in the plague in the sin of Pe'or.
  4. They said their father died in the desert. He had no sons, just the 5 daughters. The daughters wanted to inherit their father's portion in the Promised Land.
  5. Yehoshua
  6. At that time only Aharon and his four sons became Kohanim and all their future offspring. Pinchas was born before they became Kohanim and therefore was born a Levi.
  7. Ruth, the ancestress of King David came from Moav. (Ramban: Moav acted out of fear. Midian was motivated by hatred)
  8. Once Moshe heard Hashem delineate the new law on inheritance, he thought that the divine decree of his entry into the Promised Land might have been repealed.
  9. Moshe is likened to the sun; Yehoshua is likened to the moon.
  10. During the festival (Chol HaMoed)
  11. After his naming, Yissachar found out that there was an idol named Yov. So Yissachar gave one of his "shins" to his son Yov making him Yashuv.
  12. The tribe of Levi received 48 Levitical cities in the Promised Land.
  13. Pesach Sheini and the Laws of Inheritance.
  14. From the north.
- Relationships
- a) Sisters
  - b) Brothers (sons of Reuven)
  - c) First Cousins (Serach, daughter of Asher, and Zerach, son of Yehudah)
  - d) Grandfather Yosef
  - e) Same person

