

## Parshat Pinchas 5777

### Pinchas – Thank’z’alot

Who was Pinchas?

Well we know that he was the son of Elazar and so the grandson of Aharon the Kohen on the one side and he was also a grandson of Yitro on the other side. However, this is just his physical ancestry.

We also know that he acted with “zealotry” when he killed Zimri who was openly sinning in front of the B’nei Yisrael. (Certain translations use the word “passion” but the pun in the title doesn’t work quite so well with that translation!)

However, it is the question of from where he got this zealotry that taxes several of the meforshim. Interestingly they tie Pinchas to two other giants of our Tenach, one who died long before Pinchas and one who lived a lot later.

The *Shem miShmuel* quoting the Arizal says that this zealous behaviour finds its roots in the behaviour of Adam’s son. Kayin. Kayin’s name comes from the word *kinyan* meaning to acquire something. Kayin believed that he was acquired from Hashem and as a result become very arrogant and very sure of himself.

In fact, he was so arrogant that when Hashem rejected his *korban* in favour of that of Hevel, he was convinced that he was correct and not Hashem, and so he killed Hevel. He killed someone in an impassioned zealous way.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 38a) says that every person must say that “because of me, the world is created”, because we all have a place and we all have a

job to do. So we see it is not necessarily Kayin’s self-assuredness that caused the problem, but how he used it.

As we move onto Kayin’s spiritual descendant, Pinchas, we see that he had been born with this same zealous urge. The question was whether this instinct would be used for evil as with Kayin, or for good (or indeed for G-d).

When he saw the sin of Zimri, he did not need to act but did so instinctively because of how he felt. He was sensitive to the outrage against Hashem that was taking place and his inability to tolerate it. He acted *leshem shamayim*.

In doing so, therefore, not only did he act to protect the people from Hashem’s anger there and then, but he also, as it were, corrected the defect of Kayin all those years ago. That is why his reward was “*kehunat olam*”, an everlasting priesthood, because his actions transcended time.

As well as to the past, Pinchas is also linked to the future. The midrash says that Pinchas is Eliyahu Hanavi and Eliyahu Hanavi is Pinchas. On a very simple level, we can see the similarities between the zealotry employed by Pinchas in this parshah with the zealotry of Eliyahu when he kills the false prophets of Baal on Har HaCarmel.

We can see other hints to this relationship. In the Sefer Torah, the letter *vav* of the word *shalom* of “*briti shalom*” is broken. This is to teach us that there can be no absolute *shalom* until Moshiach led by Eliyahu Hanavi appears.

His arrival will complete the *brit shalom* and so complete the timeline from Kayin to Moshiach via Pinchas/Eliyahu