

ELIYAHU CHAI!

by Rabbi Pinchas Winston

Friday Night:

Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon HaKohen . . . (Bamidbar 25:11)

Before the end of last week's parshah, we had barely heard of Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon HaKohen. However, zealousness on behalf of G-d is a powerful catalyst to rise to the highest heights. Nevertheless, as the Midrash makes clear, such opportunity only knocks on the doors of people who are spiritually home:

"They were crying at the opening of the Appointed Tent" (Bamidbar 25:6): their hands became weakened at that moment. To what can this be compared? To the daughter of a king who was adorned in preparation to go to the chupah,, and instead is unfaithful with another. Don't her father and relatives become distraught? Likewise, at the end of the 40 years, as the Jewish people camped by the Jordan river ready to cross over into Eretz Yisroel . . . they went ahead and acted promiscuously, weakening Moshe and the righteous people with him. They cried?! Did he [Moshe] not stand up against 600,000 [at the time of the golden calf], as it says, "He took the calf which they had made . . ." (Shemos 32:20), [and yet you say that] his hands were weakened?! Rather, [Moshe was made to forget the law] in order for Pinchas to take that which he deserved. (Bamidbar Rabbah 20:24)

And when such opportunity does knock, the delivery can be unbelievable:

Regarding Eliyahu, my teacher said that he is alluded to in the posuk, "If [one is drawn] to scoffers, he will scoff; but if to the humble, he will find favor" (Mishlei 3:34), since the head-letters spell "Eliyahu chai" ("Eliyahu lives"). The Zohar says (Ray"ah Mehemna, Bereishis 25b; 253) that even though Moshe Rabbeinu was the teacher of all of Israel, his interpreter was Aharon HaKohen, as it says, "He will be a mouth for you" (Shemos 4:16), since Moshe had a "heavy mouth" and "heavy tongue." In the "End of Days" in the generation of Moshiach, Moshe will return to teach Torah to Israel and will still be of "uncircumcised lips." However, Eliyahu, who will be "chai," will be his interpreter, and this is the sod of the posuk, "Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aharon HaKohen" (Bamidbar 25:11). This is as it is written, "If [one is drawn] to scoffers, he will scoff" (Mishlei 3:34): when they will need a translator for Moshe, Eliyahu who will be "chai" will translate and be Moshe's interpreter. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 36)

It misses something in the translation. The Hebrew word for "scorn" in this posuk is "yalitz," and the word for "interpreter" is "meilitz," basically the same word. Therefore, on a Pshat-level, Shlomo HaMelech is talking about how G-d scorns the scorers, but on a Drush-Sod-level, it is an allusion to what it will be like at the end of days.

Thus, even in Yemos HaMoshiach, Moshe's level of understanding will still be far too sophisticated for those meriting to learn from the teacher of all teachers. Like in Egypt, we will again require someone capable of understanding Moshe Rabbeinu's teachings and also possess the ability to bring it down to our level. That will be Eliyahu HaNavi, nee Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen, in payment for having been prepared to risk his life for G-d and Torah.

Shabbos Day:

Elazar the son of Aharon took a daughter of Potiel for a wife and Pinchas was born. (Shemos 6:25)

In everyday we life, we acknowledge that something does not come from nothing. For example, when someone does some kind of horrible crime, the first thing we do is look at the person's past and analyze what it was that made the person capable of doing something so despicable, and we usually find it.

Likewise, when a person accomplishes something great, even though we saw little greatness in the person previously, there is usually a previous reason why. It was no different with Pinchas who became Eliyahu HaNavi.:

Regarding Pinchas' birth it says, "Elazar the son of Aharon took a daughter of Potiel for a wife and Pinchas was born" (Shemos 6:25). On this Chazal say: Potiel-this is Yosef, "sh'patpet" (controlled) his yetzer hara; this is Yisro, "sh'patem" (fattened) calves for idol worship. This is the sod: when Pinchas was born, he incorporated two soul-sparks. This is the meaning: "Potiel," which is similar to "tippin" (drops), for he was from two soul-drops, one spark from the root of Yosef HaTzaddik and the second spark was from the side of Yisro. This level that incorporates these two souls is called "Pinchas." (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 32)

Thus, Pinchas was like a spiritual time bomb waiting to go off. Though he may not have been conscious of it himself, there was something in him waiting to burst forth when the time was right. All it would take was the proper ignition, and then the two soul-sparks that Pinchas contained would reveal themselves through his act of zealousness.

And, it wasn't only the souls of Yosef and Yisro that played a role in shaping Pinchas' future:

Thus, we find that Pinchas received a soul-spark from Yisro, which was the level of Ohr P'nimi of the Nefesh of Adam HaRishon from Atzilus. After that, Nadav and Avihu died because they brought the unauthorized Incense-Offering (Vayikra 10:1), and when Pinchas killed Zimri, he merited the souls of

Nadav and Avihu, which were the Ohr Makif of Adam of Atzilus. (Ibid.)

However, it is even more complicated than this, as the Arizal explained:

There is another matter as a result of this difference. The soul that comes to a man when he is born is an actual gilgul, even if it is the combination of two sparks, as in the case of Pinchas who had a spark of Yosef and a spark from Yisro. Nothing else is required to coalesce them. (Ibid.)

In other words, they automatically join with the body and remain with it until the person dies; the body cannot survive without them, and they cannot leave the body before its time is up. However:

In the case of a soul that comes b'sod ibur after birth, like the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu that came to Pinchas, another spark must accompany it. Furthermore, this spark must be new to the world and not a reincarnation. Such a spark joined with the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu that came b'ibur, to unify it with the Nefesh of Pinchas, which was an actual reincarnation. Therefore, another new soul had to come b'ibur in Pinchas called "Eliyahu HaTishbi" from the inhabitants of Gilad, and from the root of Gad, which was a new soul at that time. This was in order to combine the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu with the Nefesh of Pinchas itself, a gilgul from the time of his birth. (Ibid.)

Thus, reviewing the composition of Pinchas' soul, we find that he was born with a soul-spark from both Yosef HaTzaddik and Yisro, Moshe's father-in-law. This was the soul with which he was born, and which made him Pinchas ben Elazar HaKohen, and with which he would have died, had he not metamorphosed into a new being called "Eliyahu HaNavi."

However, when he acted zealously by killing Zimri and Cozbi in last week's parshah, he inherited two additional souls, that of Nadav and Avihu, which, apparently, had been on a long journey through history in the process of tikun. Since these were not Pinchas' main souls, they could come and go as was necessary, enhancing Pinchas' spiritual ability, and therefore required something to "bind" them to him. That extra soul is called, "Eliyahu HaTishbi" from the root of Gad.

Thus, Eliyahu who never died, but had ascended to Heaven in a fiery chariot to become an angel, had not been born either. He was a soul that entered and attached itself to an existing person, Pinchas ben Elazar.

And, as if that wasn't confusing enough, the Arizal explained further:

He also required an additional new soul in order to unite the new soul called "Eliyahu HaTishbi" with the rest of the older souls, that is, the Nefesh of Pinchas and that of Nadav and Avihu. Therefore, he received an additional soul called "Eliyahu" from the root of Binyomin, mentioned in Divrei HaYomim in the posuk, "And Ya'areshyah, Eliyahu, and Zichri were the sons of Yerucham" (I Divrei HaYomim 8:27), as Eliyahu himself wrote to the Chachamim, "from the children of the children of Rachel" (Bereishis Rabbah 71:12) . . . Thus we find that four levels were in Pinchas. The first was that of the Nefesh of Pinchas with which he was born, a single soul even though it was the combination of two drops, one from Yosef and one from Yisro. The second level was the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu,

which came b'sod ibur and was also called "one soul," as is known from the Zohar: Nadav and Avihu were two limbs of one body (Acharei Mos 57b). The third was a Nefesh called "Eliyahu HaTishbi" from the root of Gad, and the fourth level was "Eliyahu" from the root of Binyomin. (Ibid.)

SEUDAH SHLISHIS:

Therefore, I give him My Covenant of Peace. (Bamidbar 25:12)

This was one of the rewards for Pinchas' act, a "Covenant of Peace." In a Sefer Torah, in the word "shalom," there is a "Vav Katiah" - a cut vav; the entire vav is not written, as dictated by the tradition, and it too tells a part of the story of the life of Pinchas/Eliyahu HaNavi.

The Arizal explained:

Later in history, when the incident of the daughter of Yiftach HaGiladi occurred, they (Eliyahu and Yiftach) were both punished. For, as Chazal say, Yiftach was a judge and he did not want to come to Eliyahu to cancel his vow, and, Eliyahu did not want to come to him, for he said, "The one who is suffering must come to the doctor" and thus between the two of them the daughter of Yiftach went. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 32)

It's a long story, but one that can be found in Tanach (Shoftim 11:34), and one that had a sad ending for all those involved: Yiftach, his daughter, and Pinchas:

... Eliyahu was punished by the departure of the Shechinah, as Chazal say (Bereishis Rabbah 60:3) on the posuk, "And Pinchas the son Elazar had been the supervisor over them in former times, for G-d was with him," (I Divrei HaYomim 9:20), which is talking about Pinchas. Thus it seems that he had been the "supervisor" over them, but no longer. After the Nefesh of Nadav and Avihu that had been in him b'ibur was removed from him, it later reincarnated into Shmuel HaNavi, as we will explain. This is the sod of what Chazal say: The "vav" of "Brisi Shalom" (Bamidbar 25:12) is cut. They also say in the Zohar (Acharei Mos), that the "yud" of "Pinchas" is small (Bamidbar 25:11). Thus, in the incident with Zimri he merited the ibur of Nadav and Avihu, as mentioned in the Zohar (Pinchas 217a), but he lost the ibur as a result of the sin from the daughter of Yiftach. This is why the vav is "cut," to represent the sefirah of Yesod, which is called "Brisi Shalom." It was actually "cut" when he lost the Shechinah and the ibur of Nadav and Avihu. (Ibid.)

Nevertheless, for Pinchas there is a happy ending after all:

After this, his name changed to "Eliyahu HaTishbi." Nadav and Avihu had not been rectified in him, and Pinchas, himself from the side of Yisro, had been involved in the sin of the daughter of Yiftach. Eliyahu from the tribe of Binyomin and had only been in him b'ibur to join together the other souls. Thus, what remained as the main part was Eliyahu from the root of Gad, and therefore he could no

longer be called "Pinchas," but rather, "Eliyahu HaTishbi," alluding that his soul was from the tribe of Gad. When prophecy returned to him it was after he was called "Eliyahu HaTishbi," and after Shmuel had died so that Nadav and Avihu could return to him b'ibur during the incident of Mt. Carmel. At that time, the people fell on their faces and said, "Hashem is Elokim" (I Melachim 18:20-29). When they said, "Hashem is Elokim," they [Nadav and Avihu] were forgiven for their sin of "cutting off their plantings" when they blemished the Divine Presence. (Ibid.)

So, the heroic episode when Eliyahu won back the hearts of the Jewish people to G-d's side was not only a tikun for the Jewish people, but Pinchas as well. And, with it, he finalized his role within history, becoming the one who will herald the arrival of Moshiach, may it happen soon in our time.

MELAVE MALKAH:

We are now in the month of Tammuz, and approaching the period of the Three Weeks. On my website (www.thirtysix.org), I have posted a series of essays called, "In Preparation for Tisha B'Av," from which the following has been excerpted.

In Preparation For Tisha B'Av, Part One

There is a story that once Napoleon happened upon a shul, and saw Jews sitting on the floor and mourning. When he inquired about this strange behavior, they explained that it was Tisha B'Av, and that they were mourning the loss of the Temple. Napoleon's response? "Any people that can mourn an event that occurred thousands of years ago will one day return to their land."

What would Napoleon have said today?

Perhaps, one of the most destructive elements of the Holocaust - a churban unto itself, and part of the Tisha B'Av mourning - is that it completely distracted us from our history. It was such a monstrous and painful event that all we could do when it was over was focus on the present, and if and when we dared, the future of the Jewish people. The recent past was too excruciating to contemplate, and beyond that was too distant to relate to.

Now, decades later, that past has been called into question, and it is being called into question in a city that, by international standards today, it should not be all that important.

It is a money world today, and what counts the most to the world are the money capitals: Washington, New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong - all the most cosmopolitan cities in the world and homes of "Big Money." In the past, perhaps, it was the dream and ambition of all great leaders to conquer Jerusalem.

However, today Jerusalem is but an archeological relic from the past, beautiful to visit, but not a

place to spend one's energies and resources, blockading and overpowering. Conquer New York financially, and that's a real conquest. Even to the secular Israeli, Tel Aviv, home of the Bursa (Stock Market), is the pulse of the nation.

Except, of course, for the three major world religions.

The Jews want Jerusalem because it is Jerusalem and all that it has ever meant to the Jewish people throughout Tanach and history. The Arabs want Jerusalem because they believe Mohammed ascended to Heaven from there, and more than likely, also and if not specifically, because the Jews want Jerusalem. The Christians want it because that was where their religion began, and also because of what it means to the Jewish people.

However, in spite of the logic of it, Jerusalem is fighting its way back on to the international scene. Washington, London, Paris - all of them have to deal with the Jerusalem issue. For, ironically, the Arab nations who are fighting for Jerusalem also control the money markets, or at least wield great influence over them. History (read: Divine Providence) has worked it out that the most fearful nations today, both financially and politically, like the old days, want to vanquish Jerusalem as well.

A strange twist of fate? It might have been had it not been prophesized thousands of years earlier. As it says:

After Moshiach comes, a major war will be instigated against Israel, as mentioned in the Holy Zohar (Shemos 7b), and in Parashas Vayaira (119a) and Toldos (139). This is the war of Gog and Magog spoken about in Yechezkel (38, 39), and Zechariah (14), as well as in Midrash Tehillim (Mizmor 118:9). There it says: Three times in the future Gog and Magog will come against Israel and go up against Jerusalem, and assemble and anger the nations with him to go up to Jerusalem . . . (Sha'arei Leshem, page 491)

So, we see, Jerusalem is expected to be the central issue as history winds down. And, more specifically, the Temple Mount, upon which the Arabs conveniently built their mosque. Thus, whether we like it or not, and whether we are ready for it or not, Jerusalem and the Temple is drawing Jews after it onto the world stage, and back into our past, the only place, seemingly, where the answers to resolve the present and the future conflicts can be found.

Have a great Shabbos,
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