Points to Ponder

Pinchas 5779

**פִּֽינְחָ֨ס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָ֜ר בֶּן־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֗ן Pinchas Ben Elazar Ben Aharon (25:11)** - Why does the Torah list his lineage after both of these ancestors specifically? **Meshech Chochma** explains Pinchas did 2 things within this action. The first was that he took a life in order to preserve Kavod Shomayim. The second was that he gave up his Olam Haba for the benefit of the Jewish people. In regard to the first issue he was acting as Elazar did — when Aharon died and there was an attack and the לויים came to fight and Elazar was their leader. Aharon was the source of the second stand. Pinchas’s actions were in concert with the standards set by his predecessors לכפר על בני ישראל.

**פִּֽינְחָ֨ס בֶּן־אֶלְעָזָ֜ר בֶּן־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן הַכֹּהֵ֗ן Pinchas (25:11) - Rashi** cites the Midrash that notes that the people were not enamored with Pinchas and challenged why the person whose grandfather was an idolator dared to rise and kill a Nasi. The **Yaaros Dvash** wonders how the people could have thought Zimri was correct? He explains that the people did not actually think Zimri was correct but they gossiped anyway in order to assuage their own guilt as to why they THEY didn’t rise to the occasion in the way HE did. They reasoned that if a great person had done it, it would have brought out a bigger Kiddush Hashem. That is why the Possuk writes his lineage -- to show us that he WAS correct EVEN according to their reasoning. **Rav Yerucham Levovitz ztl.** adds that this is Yirmiyahu’s argument to Hashem in the Haftorah that he is “but a Naar”. We have lost many opportunities in life because the people did not rise to the occasion.

**דְּבַ֣ר פְּע֑וֹר Peor (25:18) - Rav Yaakov Kamenetzsky ztl** explains that the Avoda Zara of Peor with all of its disgusting nature, was an Avoda Zara of Hefkeirus. When one lives a life of Hefkeirus where everything goes and everything is equal, we come to the actions of Zimri.

**אַךְ־בְּגוֹרָ֕ל יֵֽחָלֵ֖ק אֶת־הָאָ֑רֶץ Through the lottery you shall divide the land (26:55)** – In the end, the land of Israel is divided based on the tribes and the earlier generations. **Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky ztl.** would remind the Chalutzim who established the Medinah that they needed to remember the vision of the Chareidim of Europe who had their own version of Zionism (They davened daily V’Sechezena Eineinu) and helped shape the land and vision of the Medinah today. We too, need to recall that when we study Torah we do so with the homage and respect to the earlier generation. If we do not, Torah, like Eretz Yisrael provides us with no person portion either.

**אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵ֣א לִפְנֵיהֶ֗ם וַֽאֲשֶׁ֤ר יָבֹא֙ לִפְנֵיהֶ֔ם Who will go out before them and will return before them (27:17)** - Why does the Torah repeat the idea of “before them” in establishing the criteria of the next leader? **Rav Yisrael Salanter ztl**  explains that sometimes leaders look behind them to see if the people agree with their leadership. When that happens the people are leading the leaders. Moshe asks Hashem for a leader who will always be in front and looking ahead -- a real true leader.

**וְצִוִּיתָ֥ה אֹת֖וֹ לְעֵֽינֵיהֶֽם You will command him in front of their eyes (27:19) - Rav Schachter Shlita** would quote from  the **Sreidi Eish** that this is the source for the concept of a Chag HaSemicha. Semicha is not a simply private matter. It is a celebration that is held in public because it is dependent upon the acceptance of the Tzibbur. In fact Rabbi Meir had to receive Semicha twice since he was deemed too young when he received it the first time.

**וְנָֽתַתָּ֥ה מֵהֽוֹדְךָ֖ עָלָ֑יו You shall give from your glory onto him (27:20) - Rashi** notes the Midrashic comment here that Moshe was like the sun and Yehoshua like the moon -- woe for the embarrassment!. What exactly is so bad about reflecting the teaching of Moshe? **Rav Zalman Sorotzkin ztl.** explains that the sun worries about what will illuminate after it sets. The moon does not. The same was true of Yehoshua. He failed to recognize the need to prepare for life after his own existence.

**Haftara:כִּֽי־שֹׁקֵ֥ד אֲנִ֛י עַל־דְּבָרִ֖י לַֽעֲשֹׂתֽוֹ: I hasten my word to accomplish it (Yirmiyahu 1:12) - Rav Yehuda Landy Shlita** points out that this Nevuah was offered to Yirmiyahu 40 years prior to the Churban. If so, what type of speed did Yirmiyahu refer to? Rav Landy explains that this Nevuah happened prior to the discovery of the Sefer Torah that led to Yoshiahu’s Teshuva campaign. When Yoshiahu did Teshuva the calamity was postponed. This is consistent with the Rambam’s understanding that the misfortune warned by a Novi can be avoided if the people repent.