

Points to Ponder
Pinchas 5775

When he acted on my jealousy (25:11) – The Midrash tells us that Hashem gets angry for one moment each day. It was precisely that moment which Bilaam was able to account and to try to curse Bnei Yisrael in the moment. On the day that Bilaam tried, Hashem did not get angry. **Rav Meir Shapiro ztl.** explains that Hashem's anger holds the world back from such extreme free love that would fuel unchecked boundary violations in the name of love. Thus, Hashem's anger is a check and balance to acting on Taava (pure id?). This is why when Hashem was not angry on the day in question, the result was Bnos Moav and the enticement of the Jewish men. It was Pinchas's anger that provided the spark that restored the homeostatis to the "free love" in the Jewish camp.

And the name of the man ...was Zimri (25:14) – The Midrash comments that his real name was Shlumiel Ben Tzurishadai. Why is his name hidden? The author of **Likkutei Chaver Ben Chaim** suggests that in naming one who was a rasha in his evil, we do not want to mention the names of Hashem that were in his name. He also adds from the **Chasam Sofer** that a person with no mazal is called a Shlumiel because the Gemara identifies 12 miracles that happened to Pinchas in order to kill Zimri. If Pinchas had the mazal, Shlumiel obviously didn't. Still, we do not want to call a person a Rasha and as a result, we call him Shlumiel as opposed to Zimri.

They were Dasan and Aviram who rebelled (26:9-10) – So Korach gets no mention in this census and Dasan and Aviram bear the brunt of the rebellion? Why? **Rav Bentzion Tzislung ztl, Maggid in Yirushalayim** explains that when a community seeks elections, say, for a rabbi or principal, there are many factions and focus groups who bring about their different personal concerns about the position. However, one group in the bunch, is a group with no personal interest. This group considers it their job just to make trouble and stir the pot. The same is said about the Korach episode, the Bechorim and Shevet Levi had something to lose with Aharon's appointment to the Kehuna Gedolah. However, once we learn in this week's Parsha that Dasan and Aviram had an older brother – Nemuel – they were neither Levi nor Bechor. The only reason they fought hard, was for the sake of the Machlokes. Therefore they bear a brunt of its mention.

And the daughters of Tzlofchad came close (27:1) – The Gemara (Bava Basra 119b) notes that the women were Tzidkaniyos for they did not marry until they found someone worthy. Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov says that the youngest got married at 40 because they waited for Mr. Right. Does it make sense that they didn't meet Mr. Right in 40 years?! The author of the **Ir David** suggests that people in the Dor Yotzai Mitzrayim stayed away from the daughters because they thought the father Tzlofchad was a bad person who was Michallel Shabbos only thinking of himself. When this episode happened, it became clear that even Tzlofchad had intended L'Shem Shomayim and his daughter especially – were worthy to receive a section in the land of Israel. At that point they found worthy spouses.

And the daughters of Tzlofchad came close (27:1) – The Midrash notes that the women did not participate in the Cheit HaEigel nor in the Cheit HaMiraglim which is why this section appears at the same place as the death of those in the Midbar to demonstrate that those perished and these lived on. **Targum Yonasan (Micha 6:4)** explains that Miriam was sent to the people to teach Torah to the women. **Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriah ztl.** explains that in a certain sense, she did her job better than Moshe and Aharon did. How is it that the Man of Hashem and the Kohein Gadol should not be as successful as their sister? Rav Neriah ztl. suggests that the secret to success in Chinuch I in the connection between teacher and students. Moshe spoke truth, Aharon practiced truth and people admired him for it. But in

addition to teaching and modeling, Miriam got in with the women. She led and danced WITH them and brought out the proper way of being WITH them to them. Everyone saw that one could be like Miriam and as such aspired to do so in their own lives.

Let Hashem choose a man on the people (27:16) – Moshe wanted his children to take over for him. **Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita** explained that every parent wants to see his child take over for him but it isn't guaranteed. Moshe's Semichos are all b'Yad but the Tzibbur must go along with it. Hence Moshe appointed Yehoshua in front of the people.

And you will make an Olah as a Reiach Nichoach to Hashem (29:2) – This is the only time that the word VaAsisem (you will make) is used instead of V'Hikravtem. Why? The **Yirushalmi (R.H. 4:8)** learns that when we go to Din on Rosh Hashana and emerge in peace, it is as if we have become new people. How does one remake himself in such a short time? **Rav Nosson Tzvi Wachtfogel ztl.** explained that man doesn't remake himself. Man merely chooses a path in life – good or evil. If he chooses good as his guiding principle then things will be good and he will change over time. On Rosh Hashana, man has the chance to choose to be good or to be evil. That choice is not as long.

Haftorah: What do you see? A staff that is beginning to give off its almonds (Yirmiyahu 1:11-12) – **Rav Yakov Kamenetzsky ztl.** explains that there are certain facts that are not evident at the time we look at them. That a staff that has no leaves or buds will give off almonds or that a pot that is boiling has its heat coming from the north, are matters that are normally concealed from the human experience. However, the power of Nevuah clues us in to the intentions of Hashem who runs the world, long before the Churban happened. Yirmiyahu knew and he tried to warn the people.