

## **PINHAS 1 - THE RETURN OF DIVINE JUDGEMENT**

Pinhas recalled the teaching he had heard from his teacher Moshe. If a Jew is having relations with a gentile woman (publicly) - he is to be executed by the zealous. 1 He instantly took a spear in his hand....2 It behooves us to attempt to understand the spiritual underpinnings of this episode in Jewish history. What prompted Zimri to descend and commit such an act publicly? What exactly did Pinhas accomplish by executing Zimri and Kozbi to earn him the covenant of shalom? Why is the law stated exclusively with regards to a Zealous one? In order to answer these queries we have to go regress back into last weeks parasha. We were taught that Bil'am had the unique ability to decipher the exact moment of Divine anger. 3 He would attempt to use this knowledge to curse Bene Yisrael at the opportune time. The Talmud teaches that he was unsuccessful in his repeated attempts to curse - as God had temporarily removed at that time any vestige of Divine Judgement. This removal of any trace of Divine Anger would stymie Bil'am's attempts to curse Israel. However, the removal of Din or Divine Judgement would incur serious repercussions for Israel. Without any Gevurot extant to assist Bene Yisrael in its fear of God - Bil'am was able to circumvent his apparent inability to curse. This removal of Divine Judgement opened for him an alternative pathway to lead Israel into sin. It was this absence of Din that allowed Bene Yisrael to fall into the sin of Arayot so easily. It was through the act of Pinhas who would return the Divine Judgement back into the world to halt the sin and earn him the celestial role as the model of Shalom.

## **DIVINE ANGER - JUDGEMENT REMOVED**

The initial approach of Bil'am was to curse Israel using his unique knowledge of the exact moment of Divine Judgement. We cited earlier a Talmudic teaching that there is a moment daily where Divine Judgement is aroused - The knowledge of this time was exclusively known by Bil'am. It could alternatively be detected the Talmud teaches by certain specific movements of the Rooster. 4 The rooster is called a Gever as taught in Tractate Yoma. 5 Similarly Bil'am refers to himself by this very same name - "The Gever" 6- as Bil'am is associated with Din. Parenthetically we use the Gever in order to sweeten judgements associated with Erev Yom Kippour. We take a chicken/rooster at that time and slaughter it and cover its blood. The Talmud teaches in the name of R. Elazar - "The Holy One Blessed Be He, said to Israel: realize how many benevolences I bestowed upon you - in that I did not become angry in the days of the wicked Bil'am when he was seeking to curse you. No remnant of you would have remained. 7 This is the meaning of that which Bil'am admitted to Balak - 'מה אצעם לא זעם ה' - How can I arouse anger - if this Midah has been closed off by Hashem? Bil'am was rendered impotent even with his knowledge to precisely pinpoint the time of Divine Anger. All this as Hashem removed this spiritual channel from the world. This was done only in order to protect us from the curse of Bil'am. As without Din he would have nothing to attach his curse.

## **NO JUDGEMENT - LEADS TO SIN OF IMMORALITY**

R.B. Rosenblum cites Sefer Ohr Gadalya in the name of R. HaAri, that there is a telling verse in 22nd Perek that can be elucidated literally as "the Divine Judgement or Anger as expressed in the name Elokim has left us." 8 Rashi calls out that from the passages that follow - it was apparent that it is particularly an Angel of mercy that is sent to thwart the efforts of Bil'am. 9 R. Gadalya Shur explains that Bil'am's hands were tied in terms of making use of Divine Judgement. He realized that without din or the supervision associated with the fear of God - it would be more opportune to injure Israel thru the sin of immorality. Without any aspect of fear of God extant - it would be rather simple to cause Israel to sin. We know that immorality is associated with hesed. A verse in Mishle relates ervah - (immorality) with

the divine supervision of kindness when it describes this trait as the foundation upon which the world was built. 10 Namely the intimate relationship between the children of Adam amongst themselves - was to populate the world in its early stages. 11 Thus teaching that Ervah is aroused during a time that the spiritual force that is active in the world is one of kindness especially in the absence of the trait of fear or judgement. Bil'am was successful as it is written " Israel was staying in Shittim ... And became involved with Ba'al Pe'or". 12

## **RETURN OF DIVINE JUDGEMENT**

The spiritual force that was exclusively in effect was one of kindness. This led to the brazen act of Zimri and other Jews in Shittim. It is inconceivable that a leader of Israel - in this instance Zimri of the tribe of Shimon can publicly have relations with an Aramite? The Torah had pre-empted this eventuality with the law recalled by Pinhas. If the time would come when Divine Fear would be absent; which can result in even great ones sinning - then - only a true Zealous one of God has the ability to properly reintroduce the channel of Divine Judgement. The Zohar affirms this spiritual level of Pinhas when it teaches that he was endowed with the soul of Yishak. Hashem admits to the purity of Pinhas praising him for his act of zealousness. He writes " Pinhas had a vengeance for me among them" 13 - We can add that Pinhas had aroused this Divine Channel of Rage on behalf of Hashem.

## **THE COVENANT OF SHALOM**

As a result of his Vengeance which was explained above as one who reintroduced the Divine Judgment - We see he was promised a covenant of Shalom. This can be best understood by seeing the place of Pinhas in our liturgy. He is found in the Selihot as partnering with Yoseph as establishing an aspect of the spiritual channel of Yesod. 14 This of course being associated with the Holy Berit. In fact the Zohar also associates him with the soul of Yoseph. This spiritual channel is also called "The Life of the worlds"-in fact we call attention to it immediately preceding the spiritual coupling done in the blessing of Sim Shalom. 15 We preempt the Divine Unity of the amida repetition and call out ברוך חי העולמים - This to arouse the spiritual channel of Yesod which represents the middle column attribute of אשלום as it is established through the balance of Hesed and Din. 16 So through his reintroduction of Din - he was able to reawaken the holy channel of Yesod - Shalom. We know that Pinhas is Eliyahu - the Targum Yonatan explains that " I will make him an angelic being who will live forever. He will announce the redemption towards the end of time." 17 Since he had perfected this Midah - the Angel of death says R. Yose in the Zohar, has no access to him and will henceforth live forever. 18 We can therefore look forward to Pinhas in the form of Eliyahu heralding in the messianic era - As the Malakhi says - "My Berit is with him - that of Hayyim and Shalom." 19

## **Shabbat Shalom**

**Victor Bibi**