

## SPREAD LIGHT 358



Parsha

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Pinchas

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## Gematria on the Parshah: Hashem's Choice for Leadership

By: Reb Moshe Herskovits



In Parshat Pinchas we see the elevation of two leaders who would successfully lead Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael: Yehoshua and Pinchas. Sefer Yehoshua tells us that as long as Yehoshua was alive, Am Yisrael remained loyal to the Torah. Pinchas was the third Kohen Gadol and, according to tradition, was later known as Eliyahu HaNavi. Why were these two figures chosen as leaders? What does it teach us about our own lives?

### Pinchas Stands Up

At the beginning of the parshah, Pinchas is blessed with the crown of the priesthood. Pinchas famously stood up and killed Zimri and Kozbi, stopping a massive chillul Hashem. Others saw, but remained bystanders. Pinchas, like Moshe in Sefer Shemot, saw evil and had to act. Rashi says Pinchas is called the grandson of Aharon in the pasuk because, like Aharon, Pinchas' nature was peaceful, yet he went against his nature to stand up for Hashem.

Amazingly, the gematria of מתוך העדה (he stood up from the midst of the camp) is 706. It is the same as כתר כהונה (crown of the priesthood) and אהרן בן עמרם ויוכבד (Aharon the son of Amram and Yocheved). This reveals that Pinchas was selected because of his act of standing up, and that he stood up with the spirit of Aharon, the peacemaker.

The Ben Ish Chai tells a parable to illustrate Pinchas' greatness. A king was on a journey, traveling with great warriors and a frail attendant who tended to his needs. The king and his men camped out in the forest. Suddenly, the king was ambushed by a group of bandits. The warriors failed to stand up and save him. Without hesitation, the frail attendant grabbed a sword and killed the attackers, saving the king's life.

This is why Pinchas was so greatly rewarded. His love for Hashem was so great that he went against his peaceful nature.

### Yehoshua's Humility

Yehoshua is also selected as Moshe's successor in this parshah. Why did Hashem choose him? Like Moshe, Yehoshua achieved a very high level of humility. Moshe is called the sun and Yehoshua the moon. He was a total reflection of his Rebbe's light, and thus had

the ability to be a pure vessel for illuminating Hashem's mission. יהושע (Yehoshua) has the gematria of 391, the same as אלהי משה (the God of Moshe) and פנים אל פנים (face to face), alluding to this very idea.

Yehoshua was also the first person to receive סמיכה (smichah, rabbinic ordination). The gematria of סמיכה is 135, the same as קהל (congregation). This alludes to why he was chosen. Yehoshua, like Moshe, was a truly humble person. In contrast to Korach, also a great man, neither Moshe nor Yehoshua cared about their own honor. They lived their lives for the sake of the nation. And in both their times, the nation remained loyal to Hashem.

So too the lesson for our own lives. When we live for the sake of the קהל (congregation) thinking about the needs of others as our own, we become worthy in the eyes of Hashem.

A closing thought. The Lubavitcher Rebbe would be in bed for only four hours a night. Two hours he would sleep, and for two hours he would think about world Jewry, what they needed, and everything he could do to help them. So too, like the Rebbe, let us take some time this week to think about what we can do for the Jewish people.

For more check out Gematria Torah on YouTube!

## The Most Dangerous Place Ego Can Hide

By: Reb Adam Klasner



Most of us think the greatest spiritual danger is doing the wrong thing.

The Torah suggests something even more subtle.

The greatest danger is doing the right thing for the wrong reason.

That is the uncomfortable question at the heart of the story of Pinchas.

After Pinchas risked everything to stop the plague that was devastating the Jewish people, you would expect him to be celebrated. Instead, Chazal tell us that many questioned him. They did not necessarily question his actions. They questioned his motives.

Was this truly an act of selfless devotion to Hashem? Or had he simply found a religious justification for anger that already existed within him?

It is a painful question because it is one every one

of us must ask ourselves.

How often do we tell ourselves we are "just being honest" when we are really being hurtful?

How often do we say we are "standing up for the truth" when we are actually defending our ego?

How often do we convince ourselves we are doing something "for their own good" when, if we are completely honest, it is really to relieve our own discomfort?

The frightening reality is that ego is intelligent. It rarely introduces itself as ego. It often dresses itself in holy clothing.

It speaks the language of responsibility.

It speaks the language of Torah.

It speaks the language of values.

It even speaks the language of love.

That is why this work demands so much honesty.

Hashem's response to the criticism of Pinchas is remarkable. The Torah identifies him not through Yisro, but through Aharon HaKohen. Why?

Because Aharon embodied peace. He loved peace, pursued peace, loved every person, and devoted his life to restoring relationships. Hashem was testifying that Pinchas did not act from violence. His act emerged from the same heart as Aharon. It came from a place of complete alignment, free from personal agenda.

That is why his reward was not honor or power.

His reward was Brisi Shalom, a covenant of peace.

Not because what he did looked peaceful.

But because peace was the place from which he acted.

This becomes deeply practical.

Before speaking to your spouse, ask yourself where your words are coming from.

Before correcting your child, ask yourself whether you are trying to help them or regulate yourself.

Before confronting a colleague, ask yourself whether you are serving truth or serving your need to be right.

Sometimes the words are exactly the same. The difference is invisible.

Only Hashem knows the heart.



The story also teaches the opposite lesson. Just as we must question our own motives, we should be slow to assume we know someone else's.

We are often convinced that another person's kindness is manipulation, that their generosity is for attention, that their leadership is driven by ego. Sometimes we are right. Many times we are simply projecting our own wounds onto them.

It is far easier to pull someone else into a ditch than to climb our own mountain.

Real spiritual growth is not making other people smaller.

It is becoming bigger ourselves.

Perhaps that is one of the deepest messages of Pinchas.

Holiness is not measured only by what we do.

It is measured by the place inside us from which we do it.

The more we remove our fear, our pride, and our need for validation, the more our actions become expressions of our soul rather than reactions from our wounds.

That is the peace the Torah is speaking about.

Not the absence of conflict.

The presence of inner alignment.

## The Sound of an Unbroken Soul!

By: Rabbi Avrohom Jacks



We use words to communicate. We use them to unveil our ideas and give expression to our inner dreams. But the danger of words is that as much as they reveal, they can also conceal. As much as they liberate our thoughts, words can also be confining and restrictive.

On Rosh Hashanah, we use a prayer book filled with a rich and potent liturgy. These ancient prayers were polished by generations of pure, holy souls. Yet at the climax of our Rosh Hashanah prayers, we put down the prayer book, and we produce a sound that no language can hold. We release the shofar's call.

"I've always been bad at this." "Why bother? It'll just end the same way it always does." I'm exhausted." The vocabulary in these sentences is rooted in old experiences. And while they may sound honest, these statements build versions of ourselves that fit what has already happened. The same sentences that name your pain also keep you small enough to live inside it.

The shofar defies and dismantles these structures. It is a raw, wordless cry that exists on a level before language has had a chance to box you in. The shofar is the voice of a soul that doesn't yet know how to be broken. It is the sound of who you were at birth, before the world handed you a label to shrink into.

This is one of the most important secrets of renewal. You cannot become someone new while using the language of who you used to be. You will keep arriving back at the same place because the words will always lead you back there.

Once a year, G-d says, drop the script. Connect with the sound that refuses to let you feel defeated. Where you have infinite potential. Where your soul is fully intact despite everything that has happened to you.

Every Rosh Hashanah, G-d calls us to a new frequency. So, hear the message of the shofar. Connect to your pure essence, and become brand new.

## Pinchas and Eliyahu – Turning Fire Into Peace

By: Reb Yacov Aboudi



Chazal teach:

"פינחס הוא אליהו."

Pinchas is remembered for zeal. Eliyahu is remembered for zeal.

Pinchas rises from within the nation and acts when no one else can. Eliyahu stands at Har Carmel and declares the truth of Hashem before all of Israel.

Eliyahu himself says:

"קנא קנאתי לה' אלקי צבאות" (מלאכי א' יט:י)

Yet the reward given to Pinchas is surprising:

"הנני נתן לו את ברייתי שלום" (במדבר כה:יב)

Why is the reward for zealotry peace?

The Zera Shimshon explains that Pinchas received two rewards because there were two dimensions to what he did.

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But בריית שלום was a reward for his heart. Hashem testified that Pinchas did not act from anger, ego, or personal honor. His zeal was pure. His fire came from love of Hashem and love of Klal Yisrael.

This is the Torah's definition of true קנאות.

A false zealot wants to win.

A true zealot wants to heal.

A false zealot burns with anger.

A true zealot burns with love.

The Netziv adds that even a justified act of judgment can change a person. Therefore, Hashem gave Pinchas a covenant of peace so that this act would not make him harsh. He performed an act of דין without becoming a man of דין.

This may be the connection between Pinchas and Eliyahu.

Eliyahu also burns with zeal. But when Hashem appears to him at Har Chorev, Hashem is not found in the wind, not in the earthquake, and not in the fire.

"ואחר האש קול דממה דקה" (מלאכי א' יט:יב)

After the fire comes the still, small voice.

Perhaps Hashem was teaching Eliyahu that zeal has a place, but fire is not the final language of leadership. The ultimate goal is not fire. The ultimate goal is peace.

That is why Eliyahu's final mission is not to defeat the wicked, but to reunite broken hearts:

"והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם" (מלאכי ג:יב)

The same soul that began with Pinchas' spear returns as Eliyahu to bring fathers and children back together.

That is the journey of the zealot.

First, he must be willing to stand for Hashem.

But ultimately, he must learn to bring hearts back to Hashem.

The Tanya teaches that the task of a Jew is not merely to silence the fire within him, but to transform it and direct it toward holiness. The same passion that can become anger, ego, or conflict can become courage, זריזות, and burning love for Hashem.

That is the secret of true קנאות.

The question is not whether I have fire.

The question is: what has become of my fire?

When I am passionate, is it because I care about Hashem's honor, or because my own honor was touched?

When I correct someone, am I trying to heal, or am I trying to win?

When I stand up for truth, does my fire bring people closer to Hashem, or does it only push them further from me?

Pinchas teaches me that silence is not always peace.

Eliyahu teaches me that fire is not the final goal.

The highest form of קנאות is not to burn.

It is to turn fire into peace.

May we merit to carry the courage of Pinchas, the voice of Eliyahu, and the purity of heart that turns passion into holiness, so that our strength never hardens us, our truth never distances others, and our homes become places of healing, closeness, and בריית שלום.

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