

BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS PINCHAS – 23 TAMUZ 5781

Bostoner Rebbe shlit" a – Yerushalayim

Secretariat Email: bostonrebbe@gmail.com



The Alsheteiter Rav cites the Noam Elimelech who discusses the concept of Gilgulim at the end of Parshas Bamidbar. Based on the Zohar, he explains that some people are born with an inclination to become Tzadikim for three reasons: (1) Their parents were Tzaddikim; (2) Their given name endows them with a potential for righteousness in their generation; or (3) Their soul is a Gilgul of a Tzaddik from a previous generation who has reentered This World in order to rectify something missing from a previous lifetime.

Pinchas was the son of Elazar and the grandson of Aharon HaKohen. The name Pinchas has the same numerical value (208) as the name Yitzchak. The Zohar (Pinchas 217:1] indicates that when the tribe of Shimon gathered around Pinchas, in response to his confrontation with Zimri the head of the tribe of Shimon, his soul departed and the souls of Nadav and Avihu entered in its place. Accordingly, the words “son of Aharon” (Bamidbar 25:11) do not only come to describe Elazar, but to directly describe Pinchas himself, as the souls of Nadav and Avihu were part of Pinchas.

One of the miracles mentioned by the Midrash (Bamidbar Raba 20:26) is that Zimri and Kozbi remained alive even after the spear had pierced through both of them in order that Pinchas should not become Tamei. However, if Pinchas was not yet a Kohen, why would it be necessary to make a miracle of that nature to prevent Pinchas from becoming Tamei. One suggestion would be that since the souls of Nadav and Avihu were present within Pinchas, it was for their benefit that Hashem performed such a miracle.

Moshe requests from Hashem to “appoint a man over the congregation who will...take them out and bring them in and let the congregation of Hashem not be like sheep without a shepherd” (Bamidbar 27:15). Hashem informs Moshe that his replacement will be his primary student Yehoshua. Hashem commands that Moshe that he should “stand him before Elazar the Kohen in front of the entire congregation and command him before their eyes”. Thus, Elazar has replaced Aharon, Moshe will be replaced by Yehoshua, however who will replace Miriam and her role for the nation, as it says in last week’s Haftarah, “When I brought you up from Mitzrayim and redeemed you from the institution of slavery, I sent before you Moshe, Aharon and Miriam (Micha 6:4)

I would suggest that the daughters of Tzafchad are introduced in Parshas Pinchas, immediately before Moshe is told once again that he will not enter Eretz Yisroel, but will rather die in the desert “like his brother Aharon” (Bamidbar 27:13), and that Yehoshua will replace him as leader, in order to indicate that the daughters of Tzafchad were in fact the successors of Miriam.

The Zohar explains that there are three angels whose names are Chayma, Af and Mashchis, and their mission is to punish those whose transgress the three cardinal sins of illicit relationships, murder and Idolatry. This is indicated in the Pasuk we recite often in daven and most notably before beginning Maariv והוא רחום וחנוּתוּן ולא יעיר כל חמתוּן, which allude to these three names and hint to Hashem to protect us from Chayma, Af and Mashchis. Regarding the episode of Bnos Moav it says, “the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moav” and “prostrated themselves to their gods” (Bamidbar 25:1-2). Immediately afterwards Hashem tells Moshe, to put the violators to death in order to “withdraw the fiery wrath of Hashem” (Bamidbar 25:4), the double language corresponding to the two cardinal sins that they were in violation of.

The three weeks between the 17th of Tamuz and the 9th of Av that we find ourselves in is also a period of time to do Teshuva for the the three cardinal sins of illicit relationships, murder and Idolatry, for which the first Beis HaMidrash was destroyed. May it be His will that the three fasts of 10 Tevet, 17 Tamuz and 9 Av that are directly related to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash will merit that we should rebuild the Beis HaMikdash, while the completion of the fourth fast of Tzom Gedalya, which mourns the loss of the leadership of Gedaliah ben Achikam due to Jewish infighting, will merit that Jewish leadership will return to us, with the coming of Moshiach ben David speedily in our days.