



GRASSROOTS REVOLUTION

Why did Pinchas earn eternal reward—and what does that teach us about the power of one person who takes action, even when everyone else stays silent?

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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PARSHAT PINCHAS

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After Balaam failed to curse the Jewish people, he advised Balak to cause them to stumble through immorality and idolatry (Source 1). His advice was implemented, and in response, G-d commanded the execution of the sinners (Source 2).

The tribe of Simeon, frightened by the punishment, turned to their prince to legitimize their actions. Zimri approached Moses accompanied by a Midianite woman and cynically asked how Moses forbade them from the Midianites when Moses himself had married Jethro's daughter (Sources 3 & 4).

Pinchas, witnessing the events, killed Zimri and the Midianite woman, thereby calming G-d's anger and stopping the plague that afflicted the people because of the sin (Sources 5 & 6). As a reward for this act, Pinchas and his descendants merited eternal priesthood (Source 7).

B. What is Special About Pinchas' Act?.....7

The Rebbe asks: Why did Pinchas alone merit such a special reward for calming G-d's anger and stopping the plague, when Moses also did this many times but did not receive such a reward? Moreover, when Moses asked that his leadership be passed on to his sons, his request was denied (Source 11).

Examples: Moses calmed G-d's anger after the sin of the Golden Calf (Source 8), at the sin of the complainers (Source 9), and in the episode of the spies (Source 10).

C. The Subtle Difference.....11

Explanation: There are fundamental differences between the actions of Moses and Pinchas:

Method of action: Moses calmed G-d's anger through prayer, which leads to forgiveness from above to below. Pinchas, however, acted with a deed that awakened the people to repentance—from below to above.

Type of self-sacrifice: Moses was willing to risk his spiritual life for the people but not his physical life, whereas Pinchas risked his physical life, risking it against the tribe of Simeon.

These differences arise from the very nature of their respective forms of Divine service:

Moses always acted from above to below. He received the Torah from Heaven and gave it to the Jewish people, which naturally protects them from darkness. Thus, he removed decrees through prayer to G-d, and when required, risked his spiritual soul for the people.

Pinchas, by contrast, acted from below to above. He stirred the people to repentance and, when required, risked his physical life.

What is the difference in outcome?

Influence coming from above is powerful, but it doesn't create lasting inner change. When the divine light is withdrawn, the influence weakens, and a person might revert to his former state. On the other hand, when a person acts from below in a genuine inner way, the result endures over time.

This is why Pinchas merited that his reward would be inherited by his descendants forever—because his influence penetrated deeply and effected an essential, eternal change.

(This connects to the well-known tradition that Pinchas is Elijah the prophet, who acted similarly by helping the people return to G-d, as at the event of Mount Carmel and the prophets of Baal (Sources 12 & 13)).

Introduction

There are moments when everything around you collapses. Values become blurred, boundaries are broken, leadership is silent—and people just go with whatever is convenient.

And then suddenly, one person rises. He doesn't wait for instructions. He's not confused by public pressure. He doesn't ask, "What's in it for me?" He feels that the moment of truth has come—and he acts. Out of responsibility. Out of faith. Out of genuine care.

This is the story of Pinchas.

A story of courage. Of devotion. Of change that comes from below, from the grassroots, from the heart. And because of this—he, not Moses, merited the greatest reward: an eternal covenant. Priesthood for generations. An influence that continues to this day.

What is the secret of Pinchas' act? And why did he alone receive a reward that lasts forever?

השיעור לפרשת פינחס

משיחת שבת פרשת פינחס, ה'תשכ"א
לקוטי שיחות חלק י"ח, פינחס ג', בתרגום ללה"ק

A. Pinchas – The First Zealot

In the previous Torah portion, we learned about Balaam, who came to curse the Jewish people but, against his will, ended up blessing them. Balak, king of Moab, who hired him to curse the Jews, was deeply disappointed. Even Balaam himself did not truly want to bless the children of Israel, but G-d put the blessing in his mouth against his will.

Therefore, before Balaam returned home, he gave Balak advice on how to harm the Jewish people.

The Talmud tells us about this:

Balaam's plot: ensnare the Jews with idol worship

Source 1 Talmud, Sanhedrin 106a

Student's
pg. 1

Balaam said to them: The G-d of these Jewish people despises lewdness, and they desire linen garments, as they have no new garments. Come, and I will give you advice. Make them enclosures using wall hangings and seat prostitutes in them, with an old woman outside the enclosure and a young woman inside, and have the women sell them linen garments.

Balak made them enclosures using wall hangings, from the Chermon mountain, until Beit HaYeshivot, and he sat prostitutes in them, with an old woman outside and a young woman on the inside. At the time when Jewish people were eating and drinking and were glad and going out to stroll in the marketplace, the old woman would say to the Jew: Aren't you seeking linen garments? He would enter the enclosure and ask the price, the old woman would quote him a price equal to its value, and the young woman would quote him a price less than its value. That scenario would repeat itself two or three times.

And thereafter she would say to him: You are like a member of our household, sit and choose for yourself the merchandise that you want. A jug

אמר להם עצה זאת: אלקיהם של ישראל שונא זמה הוא, והם ישראל מתאוים לכלי פשתן, שאין להם בגדים חדשים, בוא ואשיאך עצה זו: עשה להן סכות, והושיב בהן זונות, זקנה מבחוץ וצעירה מבפנים, וימכרו להן כלי פשתן.

עשה להן קלעים מהר ההרמון עד בית הישמות, והושיב בהן זונות, זקנה מבחוץ וילדה מבפנים, ובשעה שישאל אוכלין ושותין ושמתין ויוצאין לטייל בשוק, אומרת לו הזקנה: וכי אין אתה מבקש כלי פשתן? נכנס לראות ושאל למחיר, זקנה אומרת לו במחיר השנה, וילדה אומרת לו בפחות, וכך באים שתים ושלוש פעמים.

ואחר כך אומרת לו: הרי אתה כבן בית אצלנו, שב פרר לעצמך סחורה שאתה חפץ בה. וכד של יין עמוני מנח אצלה, וצדין לא נאסר לישראל סתם

Student's
pg. 1

of Ammonite wine was placed near her—neither Ammonite wine nor gentile wine had been prohibited yet for Jews. She said to him: Do you want to drink a cup of wine? Once he drank the wine, his evil inclination burned within him.

He then said to her: Submit to me and engage in relations with me. She then removed the idol that she worshipped from her lap and said to him: Worship this. He said to her: Am I not Jewish? I am forbidden from engaging in idol worship. She said to him: What is your concern? All we are asking you to do is to defecate in its presence. The Jew didn't know that its worship is conducted in that manner. Once he did so, she said to him: Moreover, I will not leave you until you deny the Torah of Moses your teacher, as it is stated: "But when they came to Ba'al-Peor they separated themselves to the shameful item; and they became detestable like that which they loved" (Hosea 9:10). This means that they devoted themselves to the disgrace of defecation, and detested the name of G-d.

Student's
pg. 2

With regard to the verse: "And Israel dwelt in Shittim" (Numbers 25:1), Rabbi Eliezer says: Shittim is the name of the place. Rabbi Yehoshua says: It is an allusion to the fact that they were engaged in matters of nonsense [shetut], i.e., prostitution and idol worship.

The Torah recounts this briefly, and tells of G-d's reaction:

Source 2 Numbers 25:1-5

Student's
pg. 2

Israel settled in Shittim, and the people began to engage in immoral behavior with the daughters of Moab.

These women invited the people to participate in the sacrificial rites of their gods; the people ate and bowed down to their gods.

Israel became attached to Baal Peor, and the wrath of G-d flared against Israel.

G-d said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang them before G-d, facing the sun, so that the burning anger of G-d may be turned away from Israel."

זֵין שֶׁל עַמּוֹנִי וְלֹא זֵין שֶׁל גּוֹיִם.
אָמְרָה לוֹ: רְצוֹנָה שֶׁתִּשְׁתַּהּ כּוֹס
שֶׁל זֵין? כִּיִּן שֶׁשְׁתַּהּ, כְּעַר בּוֹ
יִצְרוּ.

אָמַר לָהּ: הִבְעַלְי לִי. הוֹצִיָאָה
פֶּסֶל שֶׁל עַבּוּדָה זָרָה מִתּוֹךְ
חִיקָהּ, אָמְרָה לוֹ: עַבֵּד לְזֶה!
אָמַר לָהּ: וְהֵלֵא יְהוּדֵי אֲנִי
וְאִסּוּרָה עָלַי עַבּוּדָה זָרָה!
אָמְרָה לוֹ: וּמָה אַכְפַּת לָךְ?
כָּלוּם מִכְּקוֹשִׁים מְמַךְ אֶלָּא פְעוּר
(הַטְּלַת צוּאָה בְּפָנָיו), וְהוּא
אֵינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁעַבּוּדַתָּהּ בְּכָךְ. כִּיִּן
שֶׁעֲשֵׂה כֵן אוֹמְרַת לוֹ: וְלֹא עוֹד
אֶלָּא שֶׁאֵינִי מִנְחַתֶּךָ עַד שֶׁתִּכְפַּר
בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה רַבֶּךָ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
"הִמָּה כָּאוֹ כַּעַל פְּעוּר וַיִּגְזְרוּ
לְבַשְׁתָּ וַיְהִיו שְׂקוּצִים כְּאַהֲבָתְכֶם"
(הוֹשֵׁעַ ט, י), שֶׁנֶּחְנָנוּ עֲצָמֵם
לְחֻרְפַּת הַפְּעוּר, וְאַף שֶׁקִּצְרוּ שֵׁם
ה'.

וְעַל הַנֶּאֱמָר "וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּשֵׁטִים" (כַּמְדַּבֵּר כֹּה, א), ר' י
אֶלְיָעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: "שֵׁטִים" שְׂמָה,
ר' יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר: רְמֵז הוּא
שֶׁנִּתְעַסְקוּ בְּדַבְרֵי שְׂטוֹת שֶׁל
זָנוֹת וְעַבּוּדָה זָרָה.

וַיֵּשֶׁב יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשֵׁטִים, וַיַּחֲל
הָעָם לְזָנוֹת אֶל בָּנוֹת מוֹאָב.

וַתִּקְרְאוּן לָעָם לְזֹכְחֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶן,
וַיֵּאֱכַל הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לֵאלֹהֵיהֶן.

וַיִּצְמַד יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַעַל פְּעוּר,
וַיַּחַר אֵף ה' בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה: "קַח אֶת
כָּל רֵאשֵׁי הָעָם, וְהוֹקַע אוֹתָם
לְה' נֶגֶד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, וַיֵּשֶׁב חֲרוֹן אֵף
ה' מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל."

Student's
pg. 2

Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you shall kill the men who became attached to Baal Peor."

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל שֹׁפְטֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל: "הֲרֹגוּ אִישׁ אֲנָשָׁיו
הַנִּצְמָדִים לְבַעַל פְּעֹר."

Following the explicit command of G-d, the courts began to hold proceedings—hearing testimonies and examining evidence to determine who had engaged in idol worship—and issuing death sentences accordingly.

At that point, the sinners from the tribe of Simeon panicked. They ran to their leader, the prince of the tribe of Simeon, and cried out in fear: "They're going to kill us! Do something!"

He decided to take a drastic step—something that might tip the scales and legitimize the actions of the daughters of Moab.

The prince of the tribe of Simeon challenges Moses

Source 3 Numbers 25:6

Student's
pg. 2

Then an Israelite man came and brought the Midianite woman to his brethren, before the eyes of Moses and before the eyes of the entire congregation of the children of Israel, while they were weeping at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

וַהֲנֵה אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא,
וַיִּקְרַב אֶל אָחָיו אֶת הַמִּדְיָנִית
— לְעֵינֵי מֹשֶׁה וּלְעֵינֵי כָל
עַדַּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהִמָּה
בְּכִים פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד.

The Talmud explains:

Source 4 Talmud, Sanhedrin 82

Student's
pg. 3

The tribe of Simeon went to Zimri, son of Salu, their leader, and said to him: They are judging cases of capital law and executing us, and you are sitting and are silent? What did Zimri do? He arose and gathered twenty-four thousand people from the children of Israel, and went to Cozbi, daughter of Zur, princess of Midian, and said to her: Submit to me and engage in relations with me. She said to him: I am the daughter of a king, and this is what my father commanded me: Submit only to the greatest of them. Zimri said to her: He, too—referring to himself—is the head of a tribe; moreover, he is greater than Moses, as he is the second of the womb, as he descends from Simeon, the second son of Jacob, and Moses is the third of the womb, as he descends from Levi, the third son of Jacob.

הֲלֹךְ שִׁבְטוֹ שֶׁל שִׁמְעוֹן אֶצְל
זִמְרִי בֶן סְלוּא נְשִׂיאָם, אָמְרוּ
לוֹ: "הֵן דִּינֵי נַפְשׁוֹת
וְהוֹרְגִין מֵאַתְּנוֹ, וְאַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב
וְשׁוֹתֵק?" מָה עָשָׂה, עָמַד
וְקִבֵּץ עֲשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה אֲלֶיךָ
מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, וְהֵלֵךְ אֶצְל כּוֹזְבִי
בַּת צוּר נְסִיכַת מִדְיָן, אָמַר
לָהּ: "הֲשָׁמִיעִי לִי (שְׁכָבִי
עִמִּי)".

Student's He seized her by her hair and brought her before
pg. 3 Moses. Zimri said to Moses: Son of Amram, is this woman forbidden or permitted? And if you say that she is forbidden, as for the daughter of Jethro to whom you are married, who permitted her to you? (Of course, at that time the Torah had not yet been given.)

תפשה בציצת שערותיה והביאה
אצל משה. אמר לו: "כן עמרם,
זו אסורה או מתרת? ואם תאמר
שהיא אסורה, אם פן בת יתרו
שאתה נשוי לה מי התירה לך?"
אף שפמוכן כשנשא משה את
בת יתרו היו שניהם בני נח –
ומתרים זה לזה.

With this act, Zimri intended to cast serious doubt on the entire prohibition—and to publicly legitimize the immorality, as if it were officially permitted.

And then Pinchas arrived...

Pinchas' courageous act

Source 5 Numbers 25:7-10

Student's Pinchas the son of Elazar the son of Aaron the
pg. 3 Kohen saw this, arose from the congregation, and took a spear in his hand. He went after the Israelite man into the chamber and drove it through both of them; the Israelite man, and the woman through her stomach, and the plague ceased from the children of Israel. Those that died in the plague numbered twenty four thousand.

וירא פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן
הכהן, ויקם מתוך העדה ויקח
רמח בידו. ויבא אחר איש ישראל
אל הקבה, וידקר את שניהם –
את איש ישראל, ואת האשה אל
קבתה – ותעצר המגפה מעל בני
ישראל. ויהיו המתים במגפה,
ארבעה ועשרים אלף.

Source 6 Talmud, Sanhedrin 82a

Student's Rabbi Yitzchak said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer:
pg. 4 Pinchas saw that an angel came and wreaked destruction among the people in punishment for the sin of Zimri, and he realized that he must take immediate action to ameliorate the situation.

רבי יצחק אמר בשם רבי אליעזר:
ראה שבא מלאך והשחית בעם,
והבין שיש לתקן הדבר שלא
יגבר הנגף...

Pinchas removed the blade of the spear and placed it in his garment and held the shaft of the spear like a walking stick, and he was walking, leaning on his walking stick, the shaft of the spear. Once he reached the tribe of Simeon he said: Where did we find that the tribe of Levi is

שלף פינחס שנגה (הוציא את
חד הרמח), והניחה בכגדו ונראה
הרמח כמקל בלבד, והיה נשען
והולך על מקלו על עץ הרמח. וכיון
שהגיע אצל שבטו של שמעון,
אמר: "היכן מצאנו ששבטו של
לוי חשוב משל שמעון? אם כל
בני שבטכם עושים פן שמפקירים

Student's greater than that of Simeon? If all the members of
 pg. 4 your tribe submit to the temptation of the women
 of Moab, I may do so as well. After hearing that
 statement, the members of the tribe of Simeon said:
 Allow him to enter; like us, he too is entering to
 attend to his needs and engage in relations with the
 Moabite women. They rejoiced and said: Apparently,
 the pious and G-d-fearing have permitted this
 matter, as Pinchas is one of them.

עצמם אחר בנות מואב, גם
 לי מתר. מששמעו דבריו
 אמרו: הניחו לו להכנס, אף
 הוא כמותנו וְלעשות צרכיו
 (לתשמיש) נכנס. ושמחו
 ואמרו: "התירו פרושין
 (חסידים ויראים, שפינהס
 מגוי עמהם) את הדבר".

The sinners from the tribe of Simeon, upon seeing Pinchas approach, thought their plan had succeeded. "Look," they said, "even someone from the tribe of Levi—even the grandson of Aharon the Kohen himself—is coming to join in the sin with the daughters of Moab!"

Student's Pinchas came and slammed them on the ground
 pg. 4 before G-d and said before Him: Master of the
 Universe, will twenty-four thousand of the children
 of Israel fall due to these sinners? As it is stated:
 "And those that died in the plague were twenty-
 four thousand" (Numbers 25:9). And that is the
 meaning of that which is written: "And Pinchas
 stood and wrought judgment and the plague was
 halted" (Psalms 106:30).

בא פינהס וּחבטן לפני המקום,
 אמר לפניו: "רבנו של עולם!
 וכי על אלו יפלו עשרים
 וארבעה אלף מישראל?"
 שהלא נאמר "ויהיו המתים
 במגפה ארבעה ועשרים אלף"
 (במדבר כה, ט). וזהו שְנאמר:
 "ויעמד פינהס ויפיל ותעצר
 המגפה".

Following Pinchas' actions, the Torah says at the beginning of this week's reading:

Source 7 Numbers 25:10-13

Student's G-d spoke to Moses, saying: Pinchas the son of Elazar
 pg. 4 the son of Aaron the Kohen has turned My anger
 away from the children of Israel by his zealously
 avenging Me among them, so that I did not destroy
 the children of Israel because of My zeal. Therefore,
Student's say, "I hereby give him My covenant of peace. It
 pg. 5 shall be for him and for his descendants after him
 as an eternal covenant of kehunah [priesthood],
 because he was zealous for his G-d and atoned for
 the children of Israel."

וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר:
 "פינהס בן אלעזר בן אהרן
 הכהן, השׁיב את חמתי מעל
 בני ישראל, בקנאו את קנאתי
 בתוכם, ולא כליתי את בני
 ישראל בקנאתי. לכן אמר,
 הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום.
 והיתה לו וּלזרעו אחריו ברית
 כהנת עולם, תחת אשר קנא
 לאלקיו ויכפר על בני ישראל".

Rashi

Student's Although the priesthood had already
 pg. 5 been granted to the descendants of
 Aaron, this only applied to Aaron

שאף על פי שכבר נתנה כהנה
 לזרעו של אהרן, לא נתנה אלא
 לאהרן ולבניו שנמשחו עמו

and his offspring born after he was anointed. Pinchas was born before, and thus not part of the priesthood until now. The Talmud says (Zevachim 101): "Pinchas was not a kohen until he killed Zimri."

וְלִתְּוֹדוֹתֵיהֶן שִׁיּוּלֵידוֹ אַחֵר
הַמְשַׁחְתָּן, אֲבָל פִּינְחָס שְׂנוּלֵיד
קֹדֶם לָכֵן וְלֹא נִמְשַׁח לֹא בְּאֵל
לְכָלֵל פְּהִנָּה עַד פְּאֵן; וְכֵן שְׂנִינֵנוּ
בְּזִבְחִים (דף ק"א) לֹא נִתְּפַקֵּן
פִּינְחָס עַד שֶׁהִרְגוּ לְזִמְרִי.

B. What is Special About Pinchas' Act?

>> The Rebbe

Moses saved the Jews three times

Student's
pg. 6

In this week's Torah portion, we are told that Pinchas "turned My anger away from the children of Israel by his zealously avenging Me among them, so that I did not destroy the children of Israel because of My zeal." As a result, G-d granted him the reward of "My covenant of peace—It shall be for him and for his descendants after him as an eternal covenant of kehunah ."

From the wording of the verse, it seems that the main reason he merited the reward of "My covenant of peace" was because he "turned My anger away from the children of Israel . . . so that I did not destroy the children of Israel."

But this is difficult to understand: this idea of turning away G-d's anger from the Israelites and preventing their destruction is something we also find with Moses—not just once, but many times, as the Torah describes. If so, what is unique about Pinchas that he, specifically, was granted this reward of "My covenant of peace" for doing so?

בפרשתנו מסופר, שכיון שפינחס "השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי", על כן יתן לו הקב"ה את השכר של "בריתי שלום. והיתה לו ולזרעו אחריו ברית כהונת עולם גו'".

מלשון הפסוק משמע, שעיקר הטעם שזכה לשכר של "בריתי שלום", הוא לפי ש"השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל גו' ולא כליתי את בני ישראל גו'".

ואינו מובן: הענין של "השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל גו' ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי" מצינו גם לגבי משה רבינו; ולא פעם אחת בלבד, כי אם כמה פעמים¹, כמסופר בכתוב² - ואם כן מהו החידוש לגבי פינחס, שדוקא הוא זכה לשכר זה של "בריתי שלום" על כך?

Source 8 Exodus 32:9-11; 14

At the sin of the Golden Calf, when the Jewish people committed idolatry just forty days after hearing directly from G-d, "You shall not have other gods before Me," G-d was deeply disappointed with the people and expressed a desire to destroy them and start anew with Moses. But Moses stood in prayer, pleading on their behalf, and moved G-d to forgive the Jewish people and not destroy them.

שלח יד, יג. וראה פרש"י קורח טז, ד.

1. ראה זהר פרשתנו רכ, א.
2. בחטא העגל - תשא לב, יא ואילך. במתאוננים - בהעלותך יא, ב. במרגלים -

Student's And G-d said to Moses, "I have seen this people—
pg. 6 and behold, they are a stiff-necked people. Now
leave Me be, and My anger will burn against them,
Student's and I will destroy them. Then I will make you into
pg. 7 a great nation." But Moses pleaded before G-d and
said, "Why, O G-d, should Your anger burn against
Your people, whom You brought out of the land of
Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?" G-d
then reconsidered the evil He had said He would do
to His people.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה: "רְאִיתִי אֶת
הָעָם הַזֶּה, וְהִנֵּה עִם קֹשֶׁה עֲרָף
הוּא. וְעַתָּה הִנֵּחָה לִּי, וַיִּחַר
אִפִּי בָהֶם וְאֶכְלֶם, וְאַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ
לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל". וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פְּנֵי
ה' אֱלֹהָיו, וַיֹּאמֶר: "לָמָּה ה'
יַחַרְהֵ אִפְךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גְּדוֹל וּבְיָד
חֲזָקָה? ... וַיִּנְחֵם ה' עַל הָרָעָה
אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ.

Source 9 Numbers 11:1-2

While in most cases, when the Jews complained against G-d and against Moses, they had some specific grievance—no food, no water—there was one time when they complained for no particular reason at all. They were simply bitter, and grumbled just for the sake of it.

Student's The people were looking for a reason to complain,
pg. 7 and it was evil in the eyes of G-d. G-d heard, and His
anger flared. A fire from G-d broke out among them,
consuming the outskirts of the camp.

וַיְהִי הָעָם כְּמִתְאַנְּנִים רַע בְּאֲזְנֵי
ה', וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' וַיִּחַר אָפוֹ, וַתִּבְעַר
בָּם אֵשׁ ה', וַתֹּאכַל בְּקִצְהָ
הַמִּחֲנֶה.

The people cried out to Moses; Moses prayed to G-d,
and the fire subsided.

וַיִּצְעַק הָעָם אֶל מֹשֶׁה, וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל
מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַתִּשְׁקַע הָאֵשׁ.

Once again, Moses rushed to their aid—praying on their behalf and preventing the wrath of G-d from destroying a great multitude of the Jewish people.

Source 10 Numbers 14:11-13; 19-20

Also in the story of the spies, when nearly the entire Jewish people were swayed by the sinful report and wanted to return to Egypt, G-d once again expressed a desire to destroy the nation and start anew with Moses. And once again, Moses stood in prayer, pleading on their behalf, and brought about forgiveness from G-d.

Student's G-d said to Moses, "How long will this people provoke
pg. 7 Me? How much longer will they not believe in Me,
despite all the signs I have performed among them?

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה, "עַד אַנְהָ
יִנְאַצְנֵי הָעָם הַזֶּה, וְעַד אַנְהָ לֹא
יֵאֱמִינוּ בִּי, כְּכֹל הָאוֹתוֹת אֲשֶׁר
עָשִׂיתִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ.

I will strike them with a plague and wipe them
out—then I will make you into a nation greater and
mightier than they."

אֶכְנֶנּוּ בַדָּבָר וְאוֹרְשָׁנוּ, וְאַעֲשֶׂה
אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעָצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ."

Student's But Moses said to G-d ... "Please forgive the
pg. 7 iniquity of this nation, in accordance with Your abundant kindness, as You have carried this people from Egypt until now."

And G-d said, "I have forgiven them as You have spoken."

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה': "...סֶלַח נָא
לְעוֹן הָעָם הַזֶּה כַּגְּדֹל חַסְדְּךָ,
וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׂאתָה לְעָם הַזֶּה מִמִּצְרַיִם
וְעַד הַנְּהָה."

וַיֹּאמֶר ה', "סֶלַחְתִּי כַּדְבָרְךָ."

Why was Moses not similarly rewarded like Pinchas? Did he not deserve a "covenant of peace?"

>> The Rebbe

Moses' children sidelined

Student's We don't find that Moses received this kind of
pg. 7 reward—"My covenant of peace . . . for him and for his descendants after him." On the contrary, we find that G-d specifically withheld this form of reward from him. As the sages explain regarding the later episode in this week's portion, when Moses asked G-d, "May G-d appoint someone over the community," his intention was that his own sons should inherit his position of honor. But G-d did not agree, and instead said, "Take Joshua, the son of Nun," meaning that Moses' position was not passed down to his descendants after him.

Student's
pg. 8

לא זו בלבד שלא מצינו אצל משה שכר זה של "בריתי שלום... לו ולזרעו אחרי", אלא אדרבה, מצינו דוקא שהקב"ה נמנע מלתת לו אופן זה של שכר - כביאור חז"ל³ על המסופר להלן בפרשה⁴, שבבקשת משה מהקב"ה "יפקוד ה' גו' איש על העדה", היתה כוונתו "שיירשו בני את כבודי" - והקב"ה לא הסכים על ידו, ואמר "קח לך את יהושע בן נון גו'", היינו שגדולתו של משה לא עברה "לזרעו אחרי".

Source 11 Numbers 27:15-18

Student's Moses spoke to G-d, saying: "May G-d appoint
pg. 8 someone over the community who will go forth before them and come before them, who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of G-d will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

G-d said to Moses, "Take Joshua, the son of Nun, a man of spirit, and place your hands over him."

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' לֵאמֹר: "יִפְקֹד
ה' אֱלֹקֵי הָרוּחַת לְכָל בָּשָׂר, אִישׁ
עַל הָעֵדָה. אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם
וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֵא לְפָנֵיהֶם, וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיֵאם
וְאֲשֶׁר יָבִיֵאם, וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדֹת ה'
כַּצֹּאֵן אֲשֶׁר אֵין לָהֶם רֹעֵה."

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה: "קַח לְךָ אֶת
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון, אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ בּוֹ,
וְסִמַּכְתָּ אֹת יָדְךָ עָלָיו."

3. תנחומא פרשתנו יא. במדבר פכ"א, יד. פרש"י עה"פ (ושם: גדולתו).
4. כז, כז, טז ואילך.

Moses asks G-d to appoint someone to succeed him. This is somewhat surprising—why does Moses suddenly consider his own passing? And why specifically here?

The explanation is that after the Torah detailed how children inherit from their parents, and even daughters inherit when there are no sons, Moses took advantage of the law of the daughters of Zelophehad to request that the inheritance laws apply within his own family as well.

Bamidbar Rabbah 21:14

Student's
pg. 8

Moses said: This is the moment for me to demand my needs. If the daughters inherit, it is only right that my sons inherit my prominence. G-d said to him: “The guardian of a fig tree will eat its fruit” (Proverbs 27:18)—your sons sat idly and did not engage in Torah study. Joshua served you very much and accorded you great honor, and he would come early and stay late at your house of assembly. He would arrange the benches and spread the mats. Because he served you with all his might, he is worthy of serving Israel, as he will not be deprived of his reward.’ “Take for you Joshua son of Nun” (Numbers 27:18)—to realize what is stated: “The guardian of a fig tree will eat its fruit.”

אָמַר מֹשֶׁה, "הֲרִי הַשָּׁעָה
שְׁאַתְּבַע בָּהּ צָרְכִי. אִם הַבָּנוֹת
יִוָּרְשׁוּת – בְּדִין הוּא שְׂיִרְשׁוּ
בְּנֵי אֶת כְּבוֹדִי".

אָמַר לוֹ הַקַּב"ה: "נִצֵּר תְּאֲנָה
יֹאכַל פְּרִיָּהּ (מִשְׁלֵי כֹז, יח),
בְּנֵיָהּ יֵשְׁבוּ לָהֶם וְלֹא עָסְקוּ
בְּתוֹרָה, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַרְבֵּה שִׁרְתָּהּ
וְהַרְבֵּה הִלַּק לָהּ כְּבוֹד, וְהוּא
הָיָה מְשָׁפִים וּמְעָרִיב בְּבֵית
הַנֶּעַד שְׁלָהּ. הוּא הָיָה מְסַדֵּר
אֶת הַסְּפָסְלִים, וְהוּא פּוֹרֵס
אֶת הַמַּחְצְלָאוֹת. הוּא אֵיל וְהוּא
שִׁרְתָּהּ בְּכָל כּוֹחַ, כְּדֹאֵי הוּא
שְׂשִׁמְשׁ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׂאִינּוּ
מֵאֲבֵד שְׁכָרוֹ. קַח לָהּ אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
בֶּן נוּן" – לְקַיֵּם מָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
"נִצֵּר תְּאֲנָה יֹאכַל פְּרִיָּהּ".

C. The Subtle Difference

>> The Rebbe

Sacrificing the soul or the body

Student's
pg. 9

There are some differences between the way Moses acted and the way Pinchas acted:

A. In Moses' case, he turned back G-d's anger by praying to G-d. His prayer caused the decree against the Jewish people to be canceled from above. In contrast with Pinchas, where it happened in a different way: through his own zealous action—and especially, as emphasized in the phrase “when he avenged Me among them”—he influenced the people themselves to repent. As a result, “he atoned for the Israelites.”

Moses prayed to G-d and arranged matters above—he persuaded G-d to annul the decree and forgive the Jewish people.

Pinchas, on the other hand, arranged matters below—through his bold action, he awakened the people to take responsibility and return to G-d in repentance.

Student's
pg. 9

B. Moses stood up for the Jewish people to the point of self-sacrifice—saying, “If not, erase me from your book You have written.” This was a form of self-sacrifice, endangering his soul.

It's true that Moses prayed with such intensity that he became physically weak, but that still isn't actual self-sacrifice.

Student's
pg. 9

Pinchas, on the other hand, showed literal self-sacrifice by putting his own body—his physical

מהחילוקים שבין עבודת משה לעבודת פינחס:

(א) אצל משה, "השיב את חמתי" נפעל על ידי שהתפלל לקב"ה, ותפילתו גרמה לביטול הגזירה מעל בני ישראל מלמעלה. מה שאין כן אצל פינחס היה הדבר באופן כזה, שעל ידי עבודתו "בקנאו את קנאתי" - ובפרט על פי ההדגשה "קנאתי בתוכם" - פעל אצל בני ישראל שיעשו תשובה ועל ידי זה "ויכפר על בני ישראל".

(ב) משה התייצב למען בני ישראל עד למסירות נפש⁵ - "ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת"⁶ - מסירות נפש מצד הנשמה?⁷

ואילו אצל פינחס היתה מסירות נפש כפשוטה, בהעמידו את גופו בסכנה

7. להעיר מדרש"ל (ברכות לב, א. ועוד) עה"פ ויחל משה - אבל מוכן שא"ז מסנ"פ דגוף.

5. ראה זהר פרשתנו רכ, א.
6. תשא לב, לב.

Student's life—in real danger. As the sages explain, the
pg. 9 tribe of Simeon wanted to kill him, and he was saved only through a miracle.

ממש; וכמובא בדברי חז"ל⁸ שביקשו שבט שמעון להרגו וניצל בדרך נס.

After Pinchas killed the prince of the tribe of Simeon, members of the tribe wanted to kill him—and he was saved only through a miracle.

Pinchas knew exactly what he was walking into. He knew this was an entire tribe steeped in idolatry and immorality, with a leader trying to legitimize it all. And he knew they would surely defend their prince.

But even so, he didn't hesitate. He didn't make calculations. He entered the danger head-on—and killed him.

Student's (Of course, the fact that we don't find Moses
pg. 9 putting his physical life on the line doesn't mean, G-d forbid, that he wasn't willing to do so. Certainly, if physical self-sacrifice had been required, Moses would have done it. Rather,
Student's the reason he didn't experience a situation that
pg. 10 called for it was because this was not the form that his Divine service was meant to take.)

(מובן ופשוט, שמה שלא מצינו אצל משה ענין של מסירות נפש בגופו, אין פירושו חס ושלום שלא היה משה נכון לזה - ודאי שאילו נדרשה מסירות נפש בפועל, היה משה רבינו עושה כן - אלא טעם הדבר הוא שלא זו היתה מהות עבודתו.)

From top down and from bottom up

Why did Moses choose to act in his way—from above to below—and Pinchas in his way—from below to above?

The Rebbe explains that this reflected the life path and spiritual approach of each of them:

Student's The explanation of the difference between
pg. 10 Moses' form of Divine service and that of Pinchas is as follows:

נקודת הביאור בהפרש שבין עבודת משה⁹ לעבודת פינחס¹⁰:

Moses served in a way that flowed "from above to below"—through the revelation of Divine light. Pinchas, by contrast, served in a way that moved "from below to above"—refining the lower world and raising it upward.

עבודת משה היתה בדרך "מלמעלה למטה" - מצד גילוי אור; ואילו עבודת פינחס היתה בדרך "מלמטה למעלה" - זיכוך ה"מטה" והעלאתו "למעלה".

8. ראה ספרי ותנחומא ס"פ בלק, סנהדרין פב, ב.
9. וגם מצ"ע: משה תיקף כשגולד "טוב הוא" וגם "נתמלא הבית כולו אורה" (שמות ב, כ. סושה יב, א) וראה אזה"ת עה"פ: פנחס - לא נתכהן עד שהרגו לזמרי (זכחים קא, ב).
10. בהבא לקמן - ראה סד"ה וידבר גו' פינחס תרע"ה (בהמשך תער"ב חלק ב').

8. ראה ספרי ותנחומא ס"פ בלק, סנהדרין פב, ב.
9. וגם מצ"ע: משה תיקף כשגולד "טוב הוא" וגם "נתמלא הבית כולו אורה" (שמות ב, כ. סושה יב, א) וראה אזה"ת עה"פ: פנחס - לא נתכהן עד שהרגו לזמרי (שמות ב, כ. סושה יב, א) וראה אזה"ת עה"פ: פנחס - לא נתכהן עד שהרגו לזמרי

Student's
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This is why Moses' primary role was that he "received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it" to his students—from above to below. He taught Torah to the people, and Torah protects against negative influences in the manner of "Torah is light"—divine light drives away darkness. That is, the divine light of Torah works from above to below, so that darkness is pushed aside automatically.

Pinchas, on the other hand, stirred the people to repentance through his actions. He broke through the darkness and elevated it, leading the people back to G-d.

Moses' role was to receive from above and bring it down below. He teaches us the Torah that he received from above—and this Torah, by its very nature, dispels darkness.

That's why, when challenges arose, he addressed them in that way—from above to below.

Pinchas, by contrast, dealt with matters from below to above.

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This explains the two differences mentioned earlier between Moses' Divine service and that of Pinchas:

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A. Moses, through his prayer to G-d, caused G-d to remove the decree against the Jewish people—a process that flowed from above to below. Pinchas, on the other hand, brought about the same result through his own actions and through the people's repentance—a process that moved from below to above.

B. In Moses' case, his self-sacrifice came from his soul. In Pinchas' case, it came through his body.

ולכן ענינו של משה היה (בעיקר) -
"משה קיבל (מלמעלה למטה) תורה
מסיני ומסרה"¹¹ לתלמידיו, לימוד
תורה עם בני ישראל, והתורה מגינה
מפני ענינים בלתי רצויים באופן של
"תורה אור"¹² - אור דוחה חושך: אור
אלקי של התורה פועל (מלמעלה
למטה) שהחושך נדחה "מאליו
וממילא"¹³;

ואילו פינחס עורר אצל בני ישראל
על ידי עבודתו תנועה של תשובה
- שבירת החושך ועלייה וחזרה לה'
יתברך.

וזהו הביאור בנוגע לשני החילוקים
הנ"ל בין עבודת משה לעבודת
פינחס:

(א) משה, על ידי תפילתו לקב"ה,
פעל שהקב"ה יסיר את הגזירה
מעל בני ישראל - בדרך מלמעלה
למטה; ואילו פינחס פעל זאת על ידי
עבודתו ועל ידי תשובת בני ישראל -
בדרך מלמטה למעלה.

(ב) אצל משה מסירות הנפש היתה
מצד הנשמה, ואילו אצל פינחס -
מצד הגוף.

13. לשון אזה"ז - תניא פי"ב.

11. אבות בתחילתה.
12. משלי ו', כג.

Long-term effectiveness

Student's
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The practical difference between these two approaches to serving G-d lies in their results:

When the process flows from above to below, through the revelation of divine light, then in the moment itself the lower reality may indeed be illuminated and filled with light. However, since the lower realm itself has not been refined, it's possible that once the light is no longer present, things will return to the way they were before.

This is what happened at the giving of the Torah: although it brought about a spiritual purification of the people, the sin of the golden calf was still possible after that, and this brought the impurity back.

However, when the process flows from below to above, the lower realm itself becomes refined and elevated. That kind of change is lasting. This is why the atonement brought about by Pinchas was not temporary—it was enduring and continuous. As the sages teach on the verse “he atoned for the Israelites”—“He still hasn't stopped; he continues to bring atonement until the resurrection of the dead.”

What comes from above is extremely lofty—but it depends on the revelation of Divine light. Once that revelation stops, the light disappears.

That's why, for example, the Divine light that shone upon the Jewish people at the giving of the Torah ceased immediately after the sin of the Golden Calf.

But what comes from below—through the heartfelt return and repentance of the people—that remains with them forever.

והנפקא מינה בין שני אופני עבודה
אלו - בתוצאתם:

כאשר העבודה היא בדרך מלמעלה למטה, מצד גילוי אור, אזי בשעת מעשה ה"מטה" אמנם מואר וממולא בגילוי האור, אבל כיון שה"מטה" גופא לא נזדכך, יתכן, שלאחר שייפסק הגילוי - יוותר ה"מטה" במעמדו ומצבו הקודם.

וזהו שמצינו במתן תורה, שאף על פי שפעל אצל בני ישראל ש"פסקה זוהמתן"¹⁴, הנה גם לאחרי זה היה מקום לחטא העגל, שעל ידו "חזרה זוהמתן"¹⁵.

אבל כאשר העבודה היא בדרך מלמטה למעלה, הרי ה"מטה" גופא מזדכך ומתעלה, וזהו ענין של קיימא. ולכן הכפרה שפעל פינחס לא היתה רק לפי שעה, אלא היתה זו כפרה תמידית ודבר "נמשך"¹⁶; וכמובא בספרי על הפסוק "ויכפר על בני ישראל" - "שעד עכשיו לא זו אלא עומד ומכפר עד שיחיו המתים"¹⁷.

14. לשון הרגצובי - צפע"נ עה"ת ריש פרשתנו. וראה גם צפע"נ לסנהדרין פב, ב.
15. ובסנהדרין שם: וראוי כפרה זו שתהא מכפרת והולכת לעולם.

14. שבת קמו, רע"א. זח"א נב, ב. זח"ב קצג, ב.
15. זהר שם. וראה תניא ספלי"ו. המשך תערי"ב ח"ב ע' תתקל ואילך.

Pinchas is Elijah

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This is emphasized in our sages' statement that Pinchas is Elijah. Because Elijah's form of service, like that of Pinchas, followed the pattern of moving from below to above.

וענין זה מודגש במה שאמרו רז"ל¹⁸
"פינחס הוא אליהו". לפי שגם עבודת
אליהו היתה בדרך מלמטה למעלה.

Source 12 Midrash Agadah Bamidbar 25

Student's
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Reish Lakish said: He is Pinchas, he is Elijah.

G-d said to him, "You brought peace between Me and the Jewish people—so too in the future, you will once again bring peace between Me and them, as it says: 'Behold, I am sending you Elijah the prophet...'"

"And it shall be for him and his descendants after him,' that they will be blessed by Me forever."

אמר ריש לקיש הוא פינחס הוא
אליהו.

אמר לו הקב"ה, "אתה נתת שלום
ביני ובין בני ישראל, אף לעתיד
לבוא אתה עתיד לתן שלום ביני
וביניהם", שנאמר, "הנה אנכי שלח
לכם את אליהו הנביא",

"והיתה לו ולזרעו אחריו", שיהיו
מברכים ממנו לעולם.

>> The Rebbe

Student's
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As we see in the famous story of Elijah the prophet, he brought Jews back to G-d—a repentance that rose from below to above.

כפי שידוע הסיפור, שאליהו הנביא
החזיר יהודים בתשובה - תשובה
מלמטה למעלה.¹⁹

Source 13 I Kings 18:20-39

These were the days of King Ahab's rule over the Kingdom of Israel. Together with his wife Jezebel, Ahab spread idolatry throughout the land—especially the worship of the Baal.

As the situation grew increasingly severe, Elijah came up with a bold idea. He proposed to Ahab that he gather the prophets of Baal along with the entire nation for a public showdown on Mount Carmel—to determine, once and for all, who the true G-d is.

Ahab agreed, and the great confrontation began:

18. נסמך בלקי"ש ח"ד ע' 1071 הערה 8. ח"ח ע' 170 הערה 59. וראה המשך תער"ב שם.

19. מההנחה בלתי מוגה.

Student's Ahab sent among all the children of Israel
pg. 12 and gathered the prophets to Mount Carmel.

Elijah approached all the people and said, "How long will you keep hopping between two opinions? If the L-rd is G-d, go after Him, and if the Baal, go after him." But the people did not answer him a word.

The Challenge

Student's Elijah said to the people, "I alone remain a
pg. 13 prophet to the L-rd, but the prophets of the Baal are four hundred and fifty men.

Let them give us two bulls, and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it up and place it on the wood, but fire they shall not put. And I will prepare the other bull and place it on the wood, and I will not put fire.

And you will call in the name of your god, and I will call in the name of the L-rd, and it will be that the G-d Who answers with fire, He is G-d." And all the people answered and said, "The thing is good."

The Prophets of Baal Try Their Luck

Student's So they took the bull that he had given them,
pg. 13 and they prepared it. And they called in the name of the Baal from morning until noon, saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice and no answer.

Elijah's Turn

Student's And Elijah said to all the people, "Come near
pg. 13 to me," and all the people came near to him. And he arranged the wood, and he cut up the bull and placed it on the wood.

וַיִּשְׁלַח אַחָזָב בְּכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וַיִּקְבֹּץ אֶת הַנְּבִיאִים אֶל הַר
הַכַּרְמֶל.

וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלֵיהֶם אֵל כָּל הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר:
"עַד מַתִּי אַתֶּם פֹּסְתִים עַל שְׁתֵּי
הַסַּעֲפִים! אִם ה' הָאֱלֹהִים –
לְכוּ אַחֲרָיו! וְאִם הַבַּעַל – לְכוּ
אַחֲרָיו!" וְלֹא עָנוּ הָעָם אֹתוֹ דְבָר.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם אֵל הָעָם, "אֲנִי
נֹתַתִּי נְבִיא לַה' לְבַדִּי, וְנְבִיאֵי
הַבַּעַל אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים אִישׁ.

וַיִּתְּנוּ לָנוּ שְׁנַיִם פָּרִים וַיִּבְחָרוּ לָהֶם
הַפֶּר הָאֶחָד, וַיִּנְתְּחוּהוּ וַיִּשְׂימוּ עַל
הָעֵצִים וַאֲשׁ לֹא יִשְׂימוּ, וְאֲנִי
אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת הַפֶּר הָאֶחָד, וְנִתַּתִּי עַל
הָעֵצִים וַאֲשׁ לֹא אֲשִׂים.

וַקְרָאתֶם בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְאֲנִי
אֶקְרָא בְּשֵׁם ה', וְהָיָה הָאֱלֹקִים
אֲשֶׁר יַעֲנֶה בְּאֵשׁ הוּא הָאֱלֹקִים."
וַיַּעַן כָּל הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ: "טוֹב
הַדָּבָר."

וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת הַפֶּר אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ, וַיִּקְרָאוּ בְּשֵׁם הַבַּעַל
מִהַבְּקָר וְעַד הַצְּהָרִים לֵאמֹר:
"הַבַּעַל עֲנֵנוּ!" וְאִין קוֹל וְאִין עֲנָה...

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם לְכָל הָעָם: "גִּישׁוּ
אֵלַי", וַיִּגִּשׁוּ כָל הָעָם אֵלָיו...
וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת הָעֵצִים וַיִּנְתַּח אֶת הַפֶּר
וַיִּשֶׂם עַל הָעֵצִים.

Student's
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At the time of the afternoon meal offering, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "L-rd, G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are G-d in Israel, and I am Your servant, and at Your word have I done all these things.

Answer me, O L-rd, answer me, and let this people know that You are the L-rd G-d, and You have turned their heart backward."

The L-rd is G-d!

Student's
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A fire of the L-rd fell and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the earth, and the water that was in the trench it licked up.

Student's
pg. 14

All the people saw and fell on their faces, and they said, "The L-rd is G-d! The L-rd is G-d!"

>> The Rebbe

Student's
pg. 14

This is why the reward of "My covenant of peace . . . for him and for his descendants after him" was given specifically to Pinchas. Since Pinchas turned back G-d's anger in a way that was lasting and uninterrupted, the reward he received was measure for measure—an enduring covenant of peace that continued for him and his descendants without interruption.

The lesson

Student's
pg. 14

The practical lesson from all this is as follows:

There are people whose entire focus is on the spiritual—Torah study, prayer, and so on—but

וַיְהִי בַעֲלוֹת הַמִּנְחָה, וַיִּגַּשׁ
אֶלְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר: "ה' אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל, הַיּוֹם
יִדָּע כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ, וּבְדִבְרֶךָ עָשִׂיתִי אֵת
כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה.

עֲנֵנִי ה', עֲנֵנִי, וַיִּדְעוּ הָעָם הַזֶּה
כִּי אַתָּה ה' הָאֱלֹהִים, וְאַתָּה
הַסַּבְתָּ אֶת לְבָבָם אַחֲרָנִית."

וַתִּפֹּל אֵשׁ ה' וַתֹּאכַל אֶת הַעֹלָה
וְאֶת הַעֲצִים וְאֶת הָאֲבָנִים וְאֶת
הָעֶפֶר, וְאֶת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר בַּתְּעֹלָה
לְחִכָּה.

וַיֵּרָא כָּל הָעָם וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם,
וַיֹּאמְרוּ: "ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים! ה'
הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים!"

וזהו הטעם שהשכר של "בריתי שלום... לו ולזרעו אחריו" ניתן לפינחס דוקא - מכיון שענין זה שפינחס "השיב את חמתי גו", היה באופן שאין בו שום הפסק, על כן היה גם השכר מדה כנגד מדה, ש"בריתי שלום" נמשך "לו ולזרעו אחריו" ללא הפסק.²⁰

ההוראה מזה בעבודה בפועל:

יש כאלה שחיותם היא בענייני הנשמה - תורה ותפלה כו', אבל

20. ראה המשך תער"ב (דלעיל הערה 31), ד"בריתי שלום" הו"ע "ברית שלומי לא תמוט".

Student's
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are not committed to working with the physical side of life, making sure that the body and material aspects are also filled with holiness.

Or more broadly: a person might serve G-d in every area of their personal life—not just in spiritual matters, but even in physical needs and in their share of the world. Yet they remain within their own private space, and do not engage with others or with the outside world.

It's important to understand that this kind of inward-focused service is not always sustainable.

Student's
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While the person may feel uplifted when involved in spiritual matters, when they come into contact with worldly matters they might not only fail to elevate them, but actually get dragged down by them, bringing them to a more materialistic state.

This applies on a broader scale as well: when someone remains in their own protected space, everything may seem complete. But if circumstances force them to engage with the outside world, that world can potentially pull them down from their spiritual level.

Therefore, a Jew is required to not only work on their own inner spiritual growth, but also to engage with the world around them—even with the lowest, most distant parts—so that they too become receptive to the values of Torah and its teachings.

אינם מסורים לעבודה עם ה"מטה", שעניני הגוף יהיו חדורים בקדושה.

או באופן כללי יותר: מי שכלפי עצמו פועל בכל הענינים, לא רק בעניני הנשמה, אלא גם בעניני הגוף ואפילו בחלקו בעולם - ברם הוא נשאר בארבע אמותיו הפרטיות, ועם הזולת וה"חוץ" אינו מתעסק.

יש לדעת שסדר עבודה שכזה אינו תמיד בר קיימא. אמנם בשעה שהוא עוסק בעניני הנשמה הוא נמצא במעמד ומצב של רוממות, אבל אחר כך, כאשר הוא בא במגע עם עניני העולם, הרי לא זו בלבד שאינו מעלה אותם, אלא אדרבה, הם, רחמנא לצלן, פועלים בו ירידה והגשמה.

וכן הוא גם בנוגע לכללות ה"מטה" ו"חוץ": בשעה שהוא נמצא בארבע אמותיו הרי הוא בשלימות, אבל אם מזדמן לו מצב שבו הוא מוכרח לבוא במגע עם העולם, עם ה"חוץ", עלול ה"חוץ" להורידו חס ושלום ממדרגתו.

ולכן הדרישה מיהודי היא, שיחד עם העבודה הפנימית בעניני הנשמה, יתעסק גם עם ה"חוץ", עד לחוץ שאין למטה ממנו, שאף הוא יהיה כלי למעינות התורה ומצוות.

משיחת שבת פרשת פינחס, ה'תשכ"א
לקוטי שיחות חלק י"ח, פינחס ג', בתרגום ללה"ק

Key Points:

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- Balaam, who failed to curse Israel, advised Balak to cause Israel to stumble through immorality and idolatry. The plan succeeded, and G-d demanded that the sinners be executed.

- Zimri provokingly took the Midianite princess before Moses, and asked: If this is forbidden, how did you marry Jethro's daughter? With this, he sought to legitimize and permit the sins. Pinchas killed Zimri and the Midianite woman, stopping the plague among the people. In return for his deed, Pinchas and his descendants were granted the priesthood forever.

- The Rebbe asks: What is special about Pinchas' act that calmed G-d's anger and ended the plague, earning him eternal priesthood? Moses did this many times but did not receive this special reward. When Moses asked to appoint his successor, he was refused!

Student's
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- The explanation: There are two key differences between Moses and Pinchas:

1. Moses' method was prayer to G-d—from above to below; Pinchas' method was awakening the people to repentance—from below to above.
2. Moses gave his spiritual life for the people; Pinchas risked his physical life for them.

These differences stem from the essence of their spiritual service:

- Moses always acted from above to below. He transmitted the Torah from above, which naturally protects them from harm. Thus, he removed decrees through prayer to G-d and, when required, gave his spiritual life for the people. Pinchas awakened the people to teshuvah from below to above and, when needed, gave his physical life.

- The difference lies in the result: influence from above is powerful but does not produce lasting inner change. When change comes from within, it remains forever.

- This is why Pinchas merited a special reward that passed to his descendants eternally—because his influence penetrated deep and achieved an essential, eternal transformation.

Takeaway:

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Pinchas teaches us a profound lesson: true change does not always have to come from the leaders, the establishment, or from above. Sometimes, real transformation happens precisely when we act—not because we were commanded, but out of inner truth.

Pinchas' power was not that he received an explicit command, but that he did not wait. He felt the situation could not continue—and he acted.

What's amazing is that this change came from below to above—from the simple person to the entire nation; from a small act to an eternal impact.

Perhaps this is the strongest message:

If you see something that needs fixing—don't wait to be told what to do.

Start yourself. Because when change comes from below, it touches the heart and remains forever.