

Pardes Yehuda

Weekly Torah Journal By Yehuda Z. Klitnick

Parshas Pinchas 5784 Year 14, #591

פרשת פינחס תשפ"ד

How was Pinchas able to be a Kohen when he killed a person?

ו פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתו מעל בני ישראל בקנאו את קנאתי בתוכם ולא כליתי את בני ישראל בקנאתי לכן אמר ה'ני נתן לו את בריתי שלום: והיתה לו ולזרעו אחריו ברית בהננת עולם תחת אשר קנא לאלקיו וכפר על בני ישראל: (כה יג)

Pinchas the son of Elazar 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, say, "I hereby give him My covenant of peace. It shall be for him and for his descendants after him as an eternal covenant of Kehunah, because he was zealous for his G-d and atoned for the children of Israel."

Rashi explains the verse "an eternal covenant of Kehunah": Although the Kehunah had already been given to Aaron's descendants, it had been given only to Aaron and his sons who were anointed with him, and to their children whom they would beget after their anointment. Pinchas, however, who was born before that and had never been anointed, had not been included in the Kehunah until now. And so, we learn in Gemara Zevachim 101b, "Pinchas was not made a Kohen until he killed Zimri." The Rabbeinu Bachya also says this insight word for word.

According to this, Pinchas was given the reward of becoming a Kohen. The Steipler Gaon author of Kehilas Yaakov in his Sefer "Birchas Peretz" asks a question: the Torah praises Pinchas' act, and ends by saying that as a reward for his act, he will be granted the priesthood - "and there was a covenant of eternal priesthood for him and his seed after him" Yet from the language of the verses, "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, say, "I hereby give him My covenant of peace", it means that Pinchas's reward in the priesthood does not stem from the actual mitzvah and dedication of his soul, but only from the accompanying result, which is the salvation of the people from all over Israel.

The Steipler Gaon answers this question, as follows: For the mere fulfillment of the mitzvos, a person does not receive his reward in this world, but in the next world. Therefore, the mere act of killing Zimri does not bring reward in this world. On the other hand, the collateral result of the salvation of Klal Yisrael is already on the level between a person and his fellow, Bein Adam Lechaveiro, and on the Mitzvos between a person and his fellow the rule is that "a person eats their fruits in this world" that is, although the main reward is reserved for

the next world, but a person enjoys the fruit of the deed in this world as well. As we say every morning after Birchas Hatorah אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פרותיהם בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לו Therefore, the reward of the priesthood was promised to Pinchas not because of the actual mitzvah but because of the salvation of Klal Yisreal that resulted from it.

The Chidushei Harim of Gur, explains it in a different way why the verse specifically emphasizes the salvation of Klal Yisreal and not the actual act of the mitzvah and dedication of the soul as a reason for the reward of the priesthood: As is well known, the rule is that a priest who kills a person is disqualified from blessing the priest's blessing, Birkas Kohanim, see Berachos 32b "A priest who kills the soul shall not go to bless the Yidden"; and so it is ruled in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 128:35. Since killing a person is precisely something that deprives the priest of the virtues of his priesthood; And if so, apparently the act of Pinchas, which was an act of murder, should have deprived him of the priesthood. To this, the Torah replies, this is not the case, because Pinchas indeed killed a soul, but his action was an action of saving from death since he saved Klal Yisrael from death;

On the contrary, the whole reason we disqualify a priest who killed the soul from blessing the Birkas Kohanim, the blessing of priests, lies because killing is an act of Din, Judgement, and the laying of hands during the blessing is an act of mercy, Rachamim. Therefore, it is not proper for the one who killed, to bless with his hands, because the things do not agree; But here, the act of Pinchas atoned for the Klal Yisrael and prevented a plague and saved lives, therefore his action was an act of mercy and therefore it was preferred, "and he and his seed after him had a covenant of eternal priesthood". According to this, as mentioned, it is well understood why the verse emphasizes the matter of saving Klal Yisrael, because it is this matter that turns Pinchas' act into "mercy".

With this insight we understand the Gemara Zevachim 101b, "Pinchas was not made a kohen until he killed Zimri." The punchline is that sometimes the killing of another person, can be deemed as mercy and warrant the Kehuna as a reward. (Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

STORY OF THE WEEK (By Yehuda Z. Klitnick)

**** *The sermon of Rav Akiva Eiger in Nikolsburg was an inspiration for the whole City* ****

Rabbi Akiva Eger was one of the greatest scholars of his time, and he greatly influenced Jewish life. He was born in Eisenstadt, Hungary, in the year 5521 (1761) He was the Rabbi of the famous city of Posen, and became the chief rabbi of the entire Posen province. He later on became the father in law of the heilige Chasam Sofer, who had great respect for him. He was ordained by Rabbi Mordechai Banet (1753–1829) Rabbi of Nikolsburg and chief rabbi of Moravia. Rav Akiva Eiger shied away from fanfare and despised being a showcase.

Once Rav Akiva Eiger had to be in Nikolsburg for a few days and he didn't want to stay by his Rebbe so as not to distract or bother him. He also didn't want his Rebbe to know that he was in town and chose to ask a certain Yid who gladly welcomed Rav Akiva to be his guest. The Yid asked what he did for a living and Rav Akiva Eiger answered that he was a teacher. Rav Akiva then asked the Yid, who was the Shochet for his meat? He answered it was Glatt kosher, and he that he was the Shochet. Rav Akiva asked him to show him the Knife he used. He went to his room and brought a knife and after Rav Akiva checked the knife, he was furious as he found it to be unfit to use. Rav Akiva Eiger was now determined to visit his Rebbe and tell him to alert the people in Nikolsburg not to eat the chickens slaughtered by the Shochet!

Rav Akiva Eiger knocked on the door of his Rebbe who welcomed him warmly and told him to be his guest. When he told him about his ordeal with the Shochet, Rav Mordechai calmed him that the Shochet was a G-d fearing Jew. I had checked his knife and it was kosher. Rav Akiva Eiger trusted his Rebbe and was calm. The two Rabbanim discussed the Torah and Rav Mordechai said that he wants Rav Akiva Eiger to deliver the Torah sermon on Shabbos. Word went out that the great Gaon of Posen was in town and he would give a sermon on a difficult subject in the Talmud.

Shabbos afternoon the Shul was packed with many Torah scholars who heard of the Gaon of Posen. The door opened and the two Rabbanim walked into Shul hand in hand. Rav Mordechai gave an brief introduction on the Bima and Rav Akiva Eiger began his sermon. He intertwined different aspects and the scholars relished his brilliance and sat in awe. Then Rav Akiva Eiger gave a brilliant insight to answer a difficult Gemara when Rav

Mordechai Banet couldn't contain himself and asked forgiveness from Rav Akiva Eiger, as he had a question on his insight. Rav Akiva Eiger was grateful to let his Rebbe ask. All eyes were on Rav Mordechai who was humble to his student and began his refute. The scholars agreed that the Rav asked to the point. Rav Akiva Eiger listened and thought for a while, acknowledging that the question was very powerful!

The sermon went on for a long time and the congregants were astonished at the vast knowledge of Rav Akiva Eiger. After the sermon, the people lined up to thank Rav Akiva Eiger for the beautiful sermon. When the two Rabbanim came home, Rav Akiva Eiger began answering the question of Rav Mordechai. The discussion was great and deep and after a while, Rav Mordechai gave Rav Akiva Eiger a thank you for his answer.

Rav Mordechai was overwhelmed at the greatness of his student and asked him, if he had an answer, why didn't he answer it at the sermon? Rav Akiva Eiger was a genius in humbleness and answered: If I would have answered the question at the sermon it would have been a great honor for me that I outsmarted the Rav. Yet when I said it was a beautiful question it raised the honor of the Rav that he was able to refute the Rav of Posen. I have enough honor in Posen. Here in Nikolsburg, the honor belongs to you!

After Shabbos was over Rav Mordechai asked the Gabbay to summon the so-called Shochet who showed the knife to Rav Akiva Eiger. The Yid showed up to the Rav who was surprised to see a very honorable Torah scholar but was not the Shochet. Rav Akiva Eiger was bewildered and glad he didn't make a fuss in town and tell Lashon Hara! Then he asked the Yid if he wasn't a Shochet, why did he say that he was a Shochet? The Yid answered: When you came to my house I recognized you as the Rav of Posen. Yet when I asked you who you were, you answered that you were a Melamed. Well if you're a Melamed then I am a Shochet! The mystery was solved! Rav Akiva Eiger asked the Shochet to forgive him for suspecting him of delivering unkosher meat to the city, and he forgave him.

They immediately went into a discussion in learning, and the three scholars dove deeper and deeper into the Talmud and it was a great enjoyment for them. This great act of being humble was a lesson to all the people of Nikolsburg.

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