



RABBI DOVID

ORATZ

Director, Yachad Vocational Program



The Key To a Better World

At the end of last week's parsha, Pinchas grabs a spear and kills Zimri who took a Midianite woman and was acting inappropriately in front of the entire Jewish nation and causing a great *Chillul Hashem*. In doing so, Pinchas sanctified G-d's name in front of all of Bnei Yisroel. He was rewarded with the position of Kohen Gadol for his zealotness in defending Hashem's Honor.

The first Pasuk says: '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...etc.

Rashi says that the other tribes were speaking badly about Pinchas and looking down upon him for his action. They claimed that he was acting incorrectly and just hiding his murderous intentions. Therefore the posuk states: Pinchas, son of Elazar, **son of Aharon**. This Rashi is quite peculiar. What does this incident have to do with connecting Pinchas to his grandfather, Aharon? Everybody knew his grandfather was Aharon HaKohen,

so why bother mentioning it here in this posuk?

Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky gives a brilliant insight. The other tribes claimed that Pinchas' intentions were not for the sake of heaven. Perhaps Pinchas was really just a blood thirsty man looking for some outlet to vent and Zimri gave him the perfect excuse. The Gemara in Bava Basra teaches that Kohanim are people with naturally violent tendencies because they were meant to work with korbanos in the Beis Hamikdash. The people claimed that Pinchas' violent tendencies got the best of him. Zimri was the perfect crime as it made him look like a righteous zealot instead of a murderer.

This is why the Torah comes to his rescue with our posuk above. It testifies that Pinchas was acting for the sake and honor of Heaven and not any other reason. But how does calling him Pinchas, son of Elazar, son of Aharon HaKohen prove his innocence and his noble intentions? The answer is that it refers to Aharon HaKohen as a *zechus* on Pinchas' behalf. The paradigmatic attribute of Aharon was that he was known as the "*Ohev Shalom Vi'rodef Shalom*" – One who loved peace and pursued peace between his fellow men. This trait of *Rodef Shalom* was the

very inherent nature Pinchas inherited from Aharon that was embedded within his DNA. By having the posuk explicitly mention Aharon's name, it alludes to the idea that Pinchas acted as Aharon would have, with a passion for peace and love for his fellow Jew. Pinchas killed Zimri, thereby defending Hashem's Honor and restoring the very justice that Zimri tried to distort.

There are many powerful lessons to take from this idea, but there is one in particular that I want to focus on. The lesson is about the immense impact an environment can have on an individual. The attachment Aharon felt to *shalom*, striving to bring peace to everyone, everywhere, was instilled within his children and grandchildren so much so that it became ingrained into his descendants' personalities. Never underestimate the positive impact your good attributes can have on children, the future generations and those that you interact with around you.

At Yachad, we see ourselves as a family that strives to create the proper environment for our members, filled with positivity and Torah. We help our members develop healthy habits, respect, and love for everyone, just like Aharon Hakohen. Everyone has difficulties and struggles in life but as long as we create a healthy, nurturing, and supportive environment, we can work together to grow and thereby enable ourselves to be a "light unto nations" and help create a better world. Shabbat Shalom! ■

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