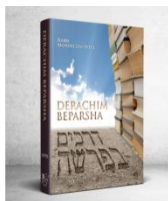


דרכים בפרשה פינחס

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פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתו

*Pinchos, son of Elazar, son of Aharon the Kohen, turned
My anger away*

The word “shalom” in the Torah is written with a vov ketia, a broken or cut vov.

This should make us stop and think for a moment: Shalom means שלימות, wholeness, everything in place. So why would the word itself look like something is missing?

Maybe that is already a key to understanding Parshas Pinchos.

The Torah says: “פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב את חמתו...” and as a result he is given a “ברית שלום.”

At first glance it feels like a contradiction. Pinchos acts with קנאה, fire and intensity, and the reward is shalom, peace and calm. קנאה divides, shalom brings together. So how do you get from one to the other?

The Sfas Emes says something so simple but very important. Shalom does not just mean calm. Shalom means שלימות. When everything is in its right place, there is shalom. When things are mixed up, there is פירוד.

So Pinchos is not moving away from shalom. He is actually putting things back where they belong in a world that became very mixed up. And putting things back in place is not always a quiet job. Nobody really calls it peaceful while it is happening.

The Kedushas Levi adds another point. קנאה depends on where it comes from, what its שורש is.

Two people can do the same action. One looks like anger. The other looks like he cannot tolerate falsehood in front of him.

It depends on the שורש.

If it comes from ego, then even something that looks holy only creates more fire. One reaction leads to another and it only adds more conflict.

But if it comes from אמת, then it is not really reaction at all. It is clarity. When something is clear, it simply does not fit anymore. Not because of anger, but because it does not belong.

That is the entire difference. The same act can come from completely different worlds, depending on its שורש.

Now we can come back to the vov ketia.

Perhaps the broken vov is hinting that this shalom did not come in a smooth way. Something had to be cut away first. Something that was disturbing the unity between Klal Yisrael and the Shechina had to be removed.

The break in the letter reflects the break that was there in reality.

But once that is gone, what remains is not a partial peace. It is a ברית שלום, a lasting wholeness.

There is a story about the Kotzker. Once two chassidim were arguing loudly outside his room. Someone said, “This does not look like shalom.”

The Kotzker called out, “Two Yidden arguing about the truth are still closer to shalom than two people smiling while each one only cares about himself.”

Not every argument is the opposite of peace. Sometimes the opposite of shalom is indifference, when nobody cares anymore about what is true or what is right.

Al pi Chassidus, true shalom is not the absence of strong forces. It is when all kochos are pointed toward one source, the Aibishter. Even strong middos become part of unity when they are rooted in *Eloikus* instead of ego.

And maybe that is why the vov is only cut and not completely gone. The shalom was never destroyed. It was just covered over. Pinchos removes what was blocking it, and suddenly it can be seen again.

Usually when people cut things apart, it ruins shalom. By Pinchos, the cutting was what let the shalom come back. It is not emotion; it is reality becoming too clear to ignore.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos