

# Pinchas 5778

BS"D Parashat Pinchas 5778

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## Passing the Final Test

This parsha always draws me close to tears because of how I feel for the greatest of men – Moshe Rabbeinu – who was forced to accept HaShem's absolute and irrevocable judgment prohibiting him from entering the Holy Land. But it should not have come as a complete surprise to the great Moshe. Among his ten names, Moshe's holy Jewish name given to him by his parents at birth was Tuvia, Moshe was the name given to him by Batya, the Egyptian princess who saved him as a baby from the river (Moshe in ancient Egyptian means "to draw out from water").

From all his names, why did HaShem choose to call him by the Egyptian word "Moshe"? HaShem was more than hinting that Moshe's mission in life would be to draw the Jewish people out from slavery, but he would not merit to bring the Jewish nation into Eretz Yisrael.

And why not? You might reply because Moshe and Aharon sinned by hitting the rock instead of speaking to it as HaShem had directed. That is the reason that appears in the text of the episode. However, Hashem was behind the curtains of the episode was HaShem prearranging the circumstances in which Moshe could not have acted in any other way. HaShem could not have permitted Moshe to enter Eretz Yisrael, because to do so would have led to completely different historical moments.

Had Moshe entered the Holy Land, the Bet Hamikdash would have been built and never destroyed. No gentile pagans would have been left to influence the Jewish people, and we would have “lived happily ever after”. But this was not the Creator’s plan.

The prearranged outcome that befell Moshe was in fact a repetition of HaShem’s prearranging history, as He has done since the first day of human existence.

By definition, HaShem is perfect. Therefore, this leaves no room for Him to produce anything less than perfection. Hence, Adam was the consummate man, Chava the most exquisite of women, Gan Eden (the Garden of Eden) the perfect location and the snake the “zenith” of animals.

But HaShem’s plan for humanity was for us to lead imperfect lives. So, the problem was how to create a perfect world in every way from which would evolve an imperfect one.

HaShem, in His wisdom, created perfection but built into the system the inevitable downfall of all the “players”.

Adam was indeed the consummate perfection of man and Chava the most exquisite of women; but as perfect as she was, she could not escape the fact that she was created second and from a part of Adam. The snake, who was described in the Torah as the most cunning of creatures, offered Chava the one thing that she so desperately desired – to be equal to Adam, if not more. Chava knew that the Tree of Knowledge held out the only means for her to bridge the gap between man and woman.

She partook of the forbidden fruit and attained a quantum level of understanding that forced Adam to partake as well in order to retain his preferred status. HaShem appeared to all the players who had descended from their status of perfection by transgressing the will of the Creator. Each one was presented with a new, far-from-perfect destiny. From now on, man would have to fend for himself, woman would suffer the

pangs of childbirth and other distresses, the snake would take on a new physical appearance and the gates to Gan Eden would be closed to them all.

The desire of the Creator was for man to live in an imperfect world. And this imperfect world would serve as a moral and spiritual “battleground” where the forces of good would compete with the forces of evil; a world where the Torah way of life would eventually vanquish all other alternative life styles, and where all the souls brought into the world would earn their rewards or punishments in relation to the degree that they observed the commands of the Creator.

With Adam and Chava in Gan Eden, and Moshe’s presence in Eretz Yisrael, the free expression of human emotions and desires would not be permitted, nor could life develop in the desired battlefield of good vs. evil.

By preventing Moshe’s entrance into the Holy Land, the Jewish people were able to produce the generations of the Judges – from Otniel ben Kenaz to Eli the High Priest. We would have kings like David, Shlomo, Chizkiyahu and Yishayahu. The Men of the Great Assembly followed by the Tannaic and Amoraic Rabbis would become realities. The Torah would now have had the opportunity to overcome the dissident, unholy beliefs of mortal man.

Life under Moshe Rabbeinu in Eretz Yisrael would not have afforded the Jewish people the opportunity to express their obstinate, resolute, and unflinching will to cling to HaShem’s Torah.

No man can recount the collective suffering of the Jewish nation that was inflicted upon us because of our desire to be faithful to the word of HaShem. So, we find ourselves today – after 2000 years of galut and emerging from the disastrous Shoah – not as remnants of 3500 years of Jewish suffering, but

as heroes of the battleground which HaShem had created to forge the indestructible people of Israel.

The final test before the close of history is for all the Jewish people to leave the lands of their galut in order to rebuild our ancient Holy Land. This struggle will be the most difficult, because in the global village we call the world, the Holy Land is the village's Jewish ghetto.

It is a test that will decide the future of mankind in accordance with the way they relate to the Jewish State. It is certainly a test for the individual Jew: Will he make it to the "finish line" in Eretz Yisrael, or will he falter and succumb to failure now when the end is so close?

## **Logical vs. Divine Outcomes**

The greatness of a chemist is his ability to manipulate the resources at his disposal in achieving a desired result that can be repeated and explained as a logical step-by-step sequence of his efforts. When X chemicals are mixed at Y temperature and at Z pressure, the result is A, because of the configuration of the molecules or other inherent characteristics.

But it is not humanly possible to repeatedly manipulate factors or agents and achieve outcomes that are diametrically opposed to what logic and experience dictate. That is only in the realm of the Creator, Who is above logic and causal experience.

In our parasha, HaShem rewards Pinchas with everlasting membership in the Kohanic peace covenant "Briti Shalom", the goal of which is to bring about peace between our Father in Heaven and His children Yisrael, and among the nation of

Yisrael.

This “noble peace prize” was awarded to Pinchas for his role in the episode of the Daughters of Midyan, when he trespassed into the private chambers of Zimri ben Salu, President of the tribe of Shimon, as he was gratifying his forbidden lust with the Moabite princess Kazbi bat Tzur and killed them both.

It was this act of taking two lives that awarded Pinchas with the “covenant of peace” – much like the phrase “fighting for peace”.

Our father Avraham and mother Sarah were born physically unable to produce children. Yet, our two infertile ancestors brought forth the greatest nation on earth – an inconceivable, unprecedented, and impossible occurrence diametrically opposed to the laws of nature.

Despite the evil Lavan tricking and stealing from Ya’akov 100 times, Ya’akov became wealthy by breeding pure white male with female animals and obtaining spotted ones.

Yosef was sold into slavery, followed by a life sentence in prison, and yet ended his life as the power behind the throne of Egypt.

Only HaShem can sequentially produce opposite effects from what we consider to be the logical norm.

Why does He do so? In order to confirm that the destiny of the Jewish nation is essentially not tied to this material, temporal world of natural law, nor subject to the empiric “laws” of cause and effect that govern other peoples of the world.

This phenomenon is happening now on a grand world scale.

Our many enemies in the Second World War intended to eradicate

the Jewish nation from the face of the planet, but from out of the war's ashes arose Medinat Yisrael.

The Arab invasions in 1948 were intended to eradicate the Jewish yishuv (community) in Eretz Yisrael. It ended with the Medina doubling its size.

The Six Day War was intended to eradicate the Jewish Medina, with the opposite result that we liberated the lands between the Sea and the river.

The next major event here will produce the unintended result for the majority of the world – the rebuilding of the Bet HaMikdash, the return of all the Jewish nation to Eretz Yisrael, and the recognition of those gentile people who will remain after the great cataclysm that the Jewish nation is indeed the chosen people of the Creator.

Shabbat Shalom,

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