

Pinchas & Matot-Masei 5772

BS"D Pinchas and Matot-Masei 5772

Three major incidents in parashat Pinchas were enacted by individuals who were nonconformist by acting against the national consensus.

Pinchas acted quickly and zealously, while the nation's leaders, Moshe and the Sanhedrin, stood on the sidelines. He killed Zimri, head of the tribe of Shimon, in order to stop a heinous transgression, while being aware that his act would antagonize the people. In fact, it did to such a extent that many actually tried to kill him.

The five daughters of Tzelafchad went against the general consensus when they demanded to inherit their deceased father's homestead in Eretz Yisrael, as stated in the Midrash Shimoni (Bamidbar 5773):



Rabbi Natan says: The strength [acts] of women surpasses that of men. Moshe asked [the daughters of Tzelafchad]: "Why are you demanding a portion in the Land, when the men of Israel are clamoring to return to Egypt?" They replied: 'We know that eventually the Jews will control the Land [and wish to guarantee our portion]'".

The third personality was Yehoshua bin Nun. He was chosen over seemingly more competent candidates to succeed Moshe Rabbeinu as the nation's leader, including Moshe himself who was hoping that HaShem would choose one of his sons. But Yehoshua was chosen by HaShem by virtue of his consistent dedication to Moshe and to Torah study, which included physically cleaning the bet midrash and preparing it for the next day's study.

Although the three personalities were very different, they

overcame overwhelming opposition by virtue of a shared attribute. They possessed a **spiritual and moral compass** that always pointed to one direction – HaShem’s chosen people, living in HaShem’s chosen land, according to HaShem’s Torah.

- Pinchas understood that Zimri’s public flaunting against the Torah was endangering the nation in that it might bring HaShem to banish them to another extended period in the desert, rather than permitting the nation to enter the Holy Land.
- The daughters of Tzelafchad had an inherent attraction to the Holy Land (as have Jewish women, in general), that served as their spiritual compass.
- Hashem, as the Master of the compass, knew that Yehoshua, the scholar-soldier, was the man to actualize the plan of HaShem’s chosen people, living in HaShem’s chosen land, according to HaShem’s Torah.

In our very complex world, we turn for direction to rabbis as the focus of Torah wisdom. However, all too often, we receive mixed signals.

We are at a stage where there is such a supermarket of rabbinic decisions and directives that one can know before hand what a particular rabbi will decide, thereby allowing the querier to shop for the answer that best suits him. If you want to eat a certain brand of tuna fish, you know who to ask and who not to ask. If you need encouragement, support and reassurance to ignore the miracles of our generation and remain in the galut, ask most Chareidi rabbis in the USA.

So where can the pure truth of Torah be found? The answer is: Inside your pure Jewish conscience, according to the **compass** that HaShem has given each of us: HaShem’s chosen people, living in HaShem’s chosen land, according to HaShem’s Torah.

Every decision in your life should be held up to the light of this compass. Will the person you wish to marry be you partner

in this compass? Is the school that you send your children to educating them in the direction of the compass? Is the place where you live and work conducive to permitting you to come on aliya?

And for us who have merited to live in the holy Land: Is our lifestyle in Eretz Yisrael complimentary to the ideals of HaShem's chosen people, living in HaShem's chosen land, according to HaShem's Torah? Do you study the Torah as much as you can and should? Do you relate to your fellow Israeli as brothers and sisters? Do you serve in the army or in any of the defense options available? Do you present the Torah to others in a respectful and honorable fashion?

The compass implies that any act, big or small, that brings one closer to Eretz Yisrael is consistent with the will of HaShem. Any act performed in Eretz Yisrael that furthers our ideal of creating a Torah based society is consistent with the will of HaShem. Conversely, any act, big or small, or suggestion that keeps a Jew away from the Holy Land is inconsistent with the will of HaShem.

If you do not follow the compass of HaShem's chosen people, living in HaShem's chosen land, according to HaShem's Torah Am Yisrael, you or your children will surely die spiritually – just as a person lost in the thick jungle of Africa without a compass will die.

When you hear the words of the prophet Yeshayahu in the haftorah this Shabbat (Shabbat Chazon), be aware that these were not just hollow threats, but have, unfortunately, all come about in our history.

HaShem is absolutely serious in His treats. When the red line of immorality was crossed, He did not hesitate to send a flood that destroyed all humanity. The highly developed and deeply immoral city of Sodom and its four sister cities were destroyed in fire. The Egyptian army was drowned at the Red

Sea. HaShem exhibited His wrath at societies, which are now mere displays in museums, when they did not live up to the moral and ethical standards HaShem had set for the Noachides of the world.

The Jewish people have not been exempt from His wrath when we strayed from the ideal of Am Yisrael living according to the Torah in Eretz Yisrael.

One cannot be certain of the future of the Jews still stubbornly clinging to their spiritually endangered communities in the galut. They are denying the window of opportunity afforded by Hashem to return home before the anti-Semitic, anti-Israel world takes that last fatal step across the "red line".

But just as HaShem was true to his threats when we sinned, He is true to His promises of redeeming and restoring HaShem's chosen people, living in HaShem's chosen land, according to HaShem's Torah.

Which is happening now!

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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