



# SERMON RESOURCE FOR SHLUCHIM

**PINCHAS / פנחס**

**IS PEACE POSSIBLE?**

**DISTRIBUTION DATE:**

**TUESDAY JULY 3, 2007 / י"ז תמוז תשס"ז**

**PARSHA:**

**PINCHAS / פנחס**

**SERMON TITLE:**

**IS PEACE POSSIBLE?**

**A PROJECT OF THE SHLUCHIM OFFICE**

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Sponsored by Shimon Aron & Devorah Leah Rosenfeld & Family  
In loving memory of

ר' מנחם זאב בן פנחס ז"ל  
Emil W. Herman אה who loved and supported Torah learning.



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IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

## PINCHAS

### IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

Have you ever engaged in a conversation with an Israeli taxi driver about politics? Try asking them if peace will ever be possible in the Middle East - I can tell you from experience – they ALL have an opinion – and they all think that theirs is the only solution!

Chassidus teaches that everything in life can be found in the Torah. So let's take a look at this week's parsha for a hint as to what the *real* answer might be.

This week we read the story of Pinchas "the zealot." Pinchas saw how Zimri, the Jewish leader was leading the Jews to worship the idol "Pe'or". Pinchas rose up killed Zimri thereby freeing the Jews from his influence and bringing an end to the plague that G-d sent upon the Jews as a punishment for idol worship.

As a reward for this act G-d gave Pinchas a gift, "It shall be for him and for his descendants after him [as] an eternal covenant of kehunah (priesthood)." Until then Pinchas was not a Kohen but through his brave act he and his descendants for all generations would now be Kohanim!

Later in the parsha G-d instructs Moses to ascend on Mt. Evarim and to bid farewell to his people for he would not be leading them into Israel. Moses then requests that G-d appoint a new leader for the people to which G-d responds that Joshua would be the next leader.

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The Midrash tells us that Moses dearly wanted his position to pass onto his own sons. G-d however did not deem them fit for such glory.

"He who plants the tree shall enjoy the fruit," G-d said. "Your sons sat around idly and did not toil in Torah study. Joshua, on the other hand, has served you faithfully and accorded you great respect. He is therefore worthy to serve as the people's new leader."

We find here an interesting inconsistency. Pinchas, through a single heroic act earns the priesthood for his entire family for all times. On the other hand, Moses, the father of all prophets, cannot bequeath his position to his children. Why?

Perhaps the reason is, that Pinchas' greatest virtue, his zealousness could be passed on to later generations. It is quite feasible that a child who is raised in a zealous home by zealous parents will grow up a zealot and will raise his own litter of zealous children.

However, greatness in Torah knowledge is not something that children can pick up from their surroundings. If a child is able and willing to learn he will grow to be a great Torah scholar, otherwise they simply will not grow to be a proper successor for Moses. As the Mishna in the Ethics of our Fathers states, "Prepare yourself to study Torah for it will not be given to you as an inheritance."

We find this factor in other areas as well. For example:



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Torah law dictates that any non-Jew who truthfully commits to the Jewish way of life and converts on Torah's terms is to be accepted as a Jew like all other Jews. There is one exception, a son of the nations of Amon and Moab "even the tenth generation" and even if he converts properly shall not be allowed to marry into the Jewish people.

The reason, as the verse explains is, "For they did not present you with bread and water when you were on your way out of Egypt."

What's going on here? Are we seriously punishing these nations until this very day because 3300 years ago they "weren't nice to us"? Are we not going to let their descendants into our club because thousands of years ago they didn't share their lunch with us?! Shouldn't we get over it already, should we "let it go"?

The explanation is as we said before; behavior and attitude can be passed from father to son. It is therefore quite feasible that all descendants of Amon and Moab are as stubborn as their ancestors.

So we are not exacting revenge from the children for the parents' cruelty. Instead G-d is warning us that children raised by cruel parents will grow up cruel. Since they see this behavior at home from a very young age it becomes second nature to them and they cannot free themselves of it.



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This second nature is something Jews want no part of. Every Jew is a descendant of Abraham Isaac and Jacob hence the second nature we learned in their homes is to be "quiet, merciful and kind."

In Jewish homes, no matter what the observance level, kindness and mercy are a part of everyday life and these are the attributes that are engraved in the souls of our children. Even a child who rebels against his parents and drops everything else they'd taught him cannot escape these clutches of these engrained attributes and he too will be kind and merciful.

And now we come back to the "Crisis in the Middle East". Do you want to know whether peace is possible with the Palestinians or not? I'll tell you what I think. (I have an opinion too!) Just as Jews train their children to say please and thank you while they're still wearing diapers, the Palestinians train their children to hate and to kill. While still in kindergarten Palestinian kids are taught that they must grow up to be martyrs - to fight the Zionist enemy! They are taught from age zero to hate every Jew and they grow up with this hatred as a second nature.

Therefore, building universities for them is not going to help because no matter how educated they are, this hatred is engrained in their psyche and no philosophical answer will be able to change the way they feel about Jews. Clearly then, peace with the Palestinians is in fact impossible. The only way our nations can coexist is if they start teaching their children to love Jews- and that will only happen with the coming of Moshiach!

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