

BITACHON LESSON FROM THE PARSHA

פרשת פינחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן תשפ"ו – *Bitachon Brings Peace!*

הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לְךָ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שְׁלוֹם - I bestow My covenant of peace upon him (Bamidbar 25:12)

The *Sforno* teaches:

את בריתי שלום ממלאך המות...כי אמנם ההפסד לא יקרה אלא בסבת התנגדות ההפכים וזה אמנם נתקיים בפינחס שהאריך ימים הרבה מאד מכל שאר אנשי דורו עד שהיה הוא משמש במשכן שילה בזמן פלגש בגבעה...וכל שכן לדברי האומר אליהו זה פינחס והוא עדיין חי וקיים

We are constructed from four conflicting elements: fire, water, wind, and earth. These elements can't really coexist. Water puts out fire. Earth is physical, while wind is very much spiritual. The natural result of mixing these four ingredients is deterioration, and this is why the human body, slowly but surely deteriorates and ultimately dies. It really would happen immediately at birth, or at least much quicker than it does, if not for Hashem making peace among these conflicting elements, and allowing them to coexist for the duration of our lifetime.

The *Sefer Ha'Ikrim* (Ma'amar 4:51) writes similarly: פירוש השלום ההתמדה והקיום לנפש בגוף, וזה יהיה כשתמיד ההסכמה בין היסודות ההפכיים בענין שלא יגבר ההפך האחד על האחר, ועם ההסכמה הזאת שהיא השלום תסור סבת ההפסד (ומפליא לעשות ומה שכתב רמב"ם סימן 6, סוף סוף 1)

Even in the heavens, there are Malachim of fire and Malachim of water, who, if not for Hashem allowing them to peacefully interact – עושה – would destroy each other. This is why we daven multiple times daily that Hashem, Who makes peace among the heavenly bodies, should also allow us mortals to live in peace - הוא יעשה שלום עלינו

That is the human condition. Hashem allows the conflicting elements that make up our existence to survive for our sojourn here on earth for 120 years, give or take a few years, and then we end up back in the earth where the elements revert to their original sources.

Pinchos was the exception. He was granted the eternal gift of שלום. The four elements in his body were perpetually at peace. And he lived, and he lived and he kept on living for hundreds of years, and according to the opinions that he is Eliyahu Hanavi, he continues to live eternally.

The warring elements – אש, רוח, מים, עפר – are not just physical; they are also cerebral. For example, אש, fire, gives us the ability to get angry or passionate. רוח, wind, or spirit, gives us the ability to get worried, sad or happy; it determines our מצב רוח. עפר, earth, gives us the ability to crave earthly and animalistic pleasures. מים, water, gives us the ability to be calm and nurturing.

All of our conflicting Midos are constantly vying for dominance of our heart, mind, body and soul. This is why human beings can easily swing from מנוחת הנפש to פיזור הנפש. We must anchor ourselves, via our שכל – the part of us that is akin to Malachim, who are not made of conflicting elements – and be razor-focused on doing Ratzon Hashem – which is the epitome of מנוחת הנפש.

שָׁלוֹם = מנוחת הנפש. שָׁלוֹם is living without conflict. שָׁלוֹם is knowing Ratzon Hashem and having no desire to defy that Ratzon. שָׁלוֹם is a divine gift.

Sinners are stripped of שָׁלוֹם, as the Posuk (Yeshayahu 57:21) states: אֵין שְׁלוֹם אֶמְרֵ אֱלֹהֵי לְרָשָׁעִים. They live in turmoil – with שָׁלוֹם. Tzadikim are blessed with שָׁלוֹם, and they therefore live with מנוחת הנפש. Sinners, due to their inner turmoil, are always running from desire to desire, craving to craving, sinful pleasure to sinful pleasure, always seeking peace of some kind, but never acquiring it. Instead their lives are riddled with pain, guilt and confusion, day and night. Where there's no שָׁלוֹם, there's no מנוחת הנפש.

Pinchos was granted the ultimate gift - הִנְנִי נֹתֵן - and it elevated him, it calmed any inner conflicts, it grounded him, it gave him a stress-free life which gave him longevity and eternal peace.

What enabled Pinchos to do what he did and thereby earn the ultimate gift? *Rabbeinu Bechayei* (introduction to Parshas Pinchos) tells us that Pinchos excelled in two Midos: *Yiras Hashem* and Bitachon! His staunch fear of Hashem made him unable to stand by as Hashem's honor was being defiled. His firm Bitachon made him unafraid to stand up and do the right thing. He relied on Hashem to protect him from the mobs who tried to kill him.

His presence of mind - מנוחת הנפש - to do what nobody else was willing to do stemmed from his lofty level of Bitachon, and as a reward he was granted the ultimate שָׁלוֹם – a life of מנוחת הנפש, a life free of turmoil.

We can all strive for such a life. The Alter of Kelm (Chochma U'Mussar Vol. 2 page 257) teaches that the way to quell the conflicting Midos in our inner self is via the learning of Mussar; this will lead us to שָׁלוֹם and מנוחת הנפש, which the *Chovos Halevavos* tells us, is the essence of Bitachon.

עושה שלום
במרומי
הוא יעשה
שלום עלינו

Good Shabbos!