



Parshas Pinchas 2022, a role to play

This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Pinchas, the grandchild of Aaron, receiving a reward for killing Zimri, the head of the tribe of Shim'on. Zimri was publicly consorting with a Midianite princess, so Pinchas took a spear and ended both of their lives.

The reward Pinchas received was the Kehunah, priesthood. The Talmud in Zevachim (101b) explains that when G-d anointed Aaron and his four sons to the priesthood. G-d said this appointment was for Aaron, his sons, and the future generations. Since Pinchas was alive when they were anointed, he did not receive the priesthood.

Moshe was subsequently asked to count how many Jewish people were left after all the executions; the total was just above 600,000. When Moshe finished counting the Jewish nation, G-d told him to go up Mt. Avarim and catch a glimpse of Israel. Since he would not enter the land, this was the only way to fulfill his dream of entering Israel partially.

Moshe then asked G-d who would be his successor? He thought that his children would succeed him as they did his brother, Aaron, the high priest. But G-d had a different plan; He told Moshe that his most devoted disciple, Yeshua Ben-Nun, would take over him.

The Torah portion concludes by detailing all the communal sacrifices offered in the Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash. Many were offered daily, but some were brought on Shabbos and holidays.

However, a question comes to mind: As stated, the Parsha ends with the sacrifices offered in the Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash. Usually, the Torah follows a narrative that is at least partially connected.

But what is the connection between sacrifices and Moshe Rabbeinu learning who his successor will be? Why are these two presumably different topics written together?!

The Ramban (*Rav Moshe Ben Nachman, a leading scholar, philosopher, and Kabbalist from the 13th century*) gives a simple explanation. He writes that although many sacrifices were previously mentioned in Parshas Emor (Vayikra, ch 23), here it is different. In Parshas Emor, the Mishkan was just built, and the Kohanim were still learning how to perform their priestly duties.

The Ramban explains that the nation just learned who will succeed Moshe, so G-d details the sacrifices that Yeshua Ben Nun must oversee. Since he will lead them into Israel, he must ensure that the sacrifices are brought in their proper time.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a Moroccan commentary and Kabbalist from the 18th century*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the sacrifices are repeated to teach the future leader a powerful lesson. Just as the whole community offers these sacrifices, he must lead by empowering his people. He should delegate and entrust some leadership responsibilities to his people and believe they will fulfill their duty.

The Ohr Hachaim learns this idea from the words (28:2), "צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם - **command the Jewish people and tell them.**" That the leader should tell the nation what they must do and let them perform the sacrifices. The intention behind the Pasuk was to show Yeshua Ben Nun that every person has a role to play in the community.

Some are Kohanim, who represent us in the Beis Hamikdash; others are rabbis who educate and lead. But many others are the ones who enable both by financially supporting and investing in holy causes.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that G-d shows Yeshua Ben Nun the significance of his people and their purpose in the world. **Each person has a role to play and a unique light to share with the world.**

In our daily life, it is imperative we recognize the value of others and the unique soul G-d gifted them. Every person was created with a task that only they can accomplish, and only once we all achieve it can G-d's light shine freely again.

**"Always remember that you are absolutely unique.
Just like everyone else."**

Have a meaningful Shabbos, Rabbi Sholom Yemini