



Parshas Pinchas 2020, the definition of a leader

The Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward, may his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with Pinchas, the grandchild of Aaron, receiving a reward for killing Zimri, the head of the tribe of Shimon. Zimri was publicly consorting with a Midianite princess, so Pinchas took a spear and ended 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 Kehunah, he said, that this appointment was for Aaron, his sons, and the future generations. Since Pinchas was alive when they were anointed, he did not receive the Kehunah.

After Moshe counted the Jewish nation, G-d told him to go up Mt. Avarim and catch a glimpse of Israel's land. For he would not enter the land, and this was the only way to fulfill his dream of going to Israel.

However, a question comes to mind: Immediately following his glance at the land, Moshe asked G-d to appoint his successor. As the Pasuk writes, (27:17-18) *“Let G-d, the source of breath of all flesh, appoint a man over the community. Who will go out before them and come in before them, who will take them out and bring them in, so the congregation of G-d will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”* What prompted Moshe Rabbeinu to now ask G-d to appoint his successor?

Rashi explains that Moshe Rabbeinu asked G-d to appoint his successor because he just finished teaching the inheritance laws to the Jewish nation. When the five daughters of Tzelophchad asked him for a portion in the land, he did not have an answer and had to turn to G-d.

And now he wanted to know if one of his children would inherit his position, or would one of his students become the next leader of the Jewish people.

However, the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Chaim Ben Attar, whose yahrzeit was this past Tuesday on the 15 of Tammuz,*) gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He explains that since Moshe knew he wouldn't enter Israel, he wanted to ensure that they would be led into the land by a proper and suitable leader.

Since Moshe was the ultimate leader, he knew that the next leader had to be a person of great holiness and understanding. A person who is empathetic and compassionate towards everyone, as well as focused, driven and galvanizing.

The next leader had a tough job ahead of him, he would have to lead the Jewish people into battle against the nations of Cana'an. Then, see to it that they settle in the land peacefully.

Moshe used unique terms like "*G-d, the source of breath of all flesh*" and "*who will go out before them and come in before them, who will take them out and bring them in.*" For Moshe wanted to know before leaving his people that his successor realized what he was taking upon himself. He is now the leader of many tribes with different personalities and perspectives on life, and it was up to him to lead this nation of individuals into Israel.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we be a leader in our life. This means being compassionate and empathetic and seeing the big picture for ourselves and others. When we take responsibility for our actions, we start to make smart and reasonable decisions leading us ever closer to accomplishing our goals and achieving our potential.

**“The most powerful leadership tool you have
is your own personal example.”**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*