

And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal Priesthood. (25:13)

Up until that time, only Aharon *HaKohen* and his sons had been inducted into the Priesthood. Any additional offspring who would be born into the family would be “born *Kohanim*.” Pinchas was already born; thus, he was not to be included in the Priesthood. As a result of his decisive act of zealotry, he was granted a place in the Priesthood, a place for himself and his offspring. The *Zohar HaKadosh* questions Pinchas’ induction into the Priesthood, since he had just killed a Jew. We have a rule that a *Kohen* who takes a life is not permitted to serve. Here we see that specifically because Pinchas killed Zimri, he was granted the Priesthood. How are we to resolve this issue?

The **Sfas Emes** explains that the righteous are willing to give up their lives in order to serve Hashem. Their devotion is so exemplary that they will even relinquish their spiritual ascendancy in order to perform Hashem’s Will – they will give up their portion in the World to Come. This is how we may describe Pinchas. Realizing that by taking Zimri’s life, he was giving up his right to the *Kehunah*, Priesthood, Pinchas still responded and acted accordingly. It was more important that he curb the desecration of Hashem’s Name by killing Zimri. If, as a result of his actions, he would lose out on the *Kehunah* – so be it! Saving the Jewish People had much greater significance. Since he was prepared to lose the *Kehunah* for the glory of Heaven, the Almighty rewarded him with everlasting Priesthood.

The *Bais Yisrael* quotes his father, the **Imrei Emes**, who contends that Pinchas did not receive the Priesthood until after he killed Zimri, so that when he killed him, he was not yet a *Kohen*. Otherwise, he would not have been allowed to kill him. He questions this, wondering what difference it makes when he became a *Kohen*. After all is said and done, Pinchas was Pinchas; the person did not change. Pinchas the person (not yet a *Kohen*) still had blood on his hands. How could he become a *Kohen*? The *Bais Yisrael* explains that the Pinchas who existed prior to becoming a *Kohen* and the Pinchas after becoming a *Kohen* were not the same person. He quotes the *Zohar* who says that, following Zimri’s death, Pinchas’ *neshamah*, soul, left him, and another *neshamah* took its place.

The *Bais Yisrael* related that a young *avreich*, man who was proficient in his Torah knowledge, but lacked the humility that should accompany his erudition, visited **Horav Baruch, zl, m’Meziboz**. The young man entered the room expecting the holy sage to greet him in accordance with his outstanding scholarship. He was, therefore, quite surprised when the *Rebbe* practically did not acknowledge his presence. He did not give the young man the time of day.

Realizing that he was being snubbed, the young man decided that this was obviously not a place for him. He would return home and move on elsewhere. On the way home, he suddenly became tired and stopped along the road. He sat down on a large rock to rest. His mind began to confront

the reality that his arrogance had gotten the better of him and his self-consuming pretentiousness had catalyzed such a reaction from the *Rebbe*. Confronting the error of his foolish pomposity, the young man began to weep bitterly. Finally, he decided to take his chances and return to the *Rebbe*.

The *Rebbe* sensed the change in the young man as he was entering his courtyard, and, consequently, went out to greet him with a smile and good cheer. Following the young man's return, the *Rebbe* treated him with great deference in accordance with his Torah achievement.

The eight-year-old grandson of *Rav Baruch* had observed the entire episode: the original cold shoulder and the present warm embrace. He questioned his grandfather's actions: "Is this not the same man that you distanced earlier, and now he is being received with familiarity?" The *Rebbe* replied, "You are wrong. This is not the same person who came earlier; this is a totally different/new man." Likewise, Pinchas was transformed into a new man, once he had been granted *Kehunah*. Someone who has been rehabilitated, either with help or by his own volition, deserves to be recognized by his new status. There is a reason we pray to Hashem, *Al tizkor lanu avonos rishonim*, "Do not recall to us the sins of the ancients." It may also be interpreted as: "Do not recall to us our ancient sins."