Parshas Pinchas

This week's Parsha- Pinchas- is named for Pinchas Ben Elazar Ben Ahron Hakohen, who stopped the plague continuing amongst the Jews by stabbing the perpetrators of promiscuous acts, which Balak initiated. The Lubavitcher Rebbe elaborates on the explanation of the Midrash as to why Pinchas' lineage is listed, because although Pinchas' act of killing Zimri was zealous, and he was criticized for it, he was in truth more like his grandfather, Ahron, who was a runner to peace. The Rebbe explains that Pinchas went against his nature to commit the act he did, to stop the plague. This message is about knowing when to do the right thing at the right time. Pinchas was being attacked for his act by the house of Shimon, and yet the Midrash explains that despite his fear, he was imbued with the souls of Nadav and Avihu, who had died. This boost of energy gave Pinchas the strength to act as he did.

In Pinchas' parsha, there is another counting of the Jews, and then there are the listings of all the sacrifices that are brought during the holidays, as well as a review of other laws (such as the laws of the daughters of Tzelaphchad). This is because Pinchas' act brought peace to the world (as the Midrash explains). Pinchas and Eliyahu are connected in how they bring peace into the world. Shabbos, like the holidays of our calendar, are the way we bring peace to the earth and harmony between the Jews and Hashem. As the Mepharshim explain, he holidays are sprinkled through the year to ensure there is always a time to connect to Hashem. This connection is a rejuvenation of bringing peace into the world, just as Pinchas did with his action.

In posuk 28:2, there is a reference to the fact that the Jews' offering nourishes Hashem. As the other narratives of the Parsha reference, our connection to Hashem remains strong, regardless of the disconnection that may seem apparent due to a punishment (such as the plague in Shimon). Nevertheless, the relationship and connection to Hashem and the Jews are eternally bound.

In our times, we don't attribute actions and bad things as punishments; we are not privy to such declarations. Instead, we are the generation that connects and remains connected to Hashem throughout the year. We are also taught to act zealously at times when the situation calls for it. Meaning there are specific times and places for zealotry, but those can be difficult to ascertain. Therefore, we should remain connected to Hashem by being His servants, acting like Jews all the time, connecting during the Holidays, and keeping the battery of our connection charged. This then makes sense as to why Parshas Pinchas follows the past Parsheos where there were incidences of tests, failures, and outside forces trying to curse us. If we remain connected, especially during the Holidays, we will also remain protected. And on a level, our being regimented and strict about our holidays and not conforming to the schedules of the rest of the world is an act of zealotry, that brings light into the world for the rest of the world to see, which is why, during holiday prayers, we say Ata Vichartanu Mikol Haamim. That Hashem chose us from amongst all the nations. I saw a comedic clip recently

where someone who wasn't Jewish but with a Jewish-sounding name was asked if he ever used it to his benefit. To which he answered, 'It is to participate in all the 'time off' because of the Jewish Holidays.' Meaning, even he recognized that Jews are special, and do not conform to the rest of the world's schedule. And for this we should be proud like a Pinchas, and stay connected to Hashem.

Good Shabbos