

Dvar Torah for Parshat Pinchas

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July 1, 2010

Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Shavuot 2:35* and *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom #96*

“Therefore, proclaim, Behold! I [God] give [Pinchas] My covenant: Peace” (Numbers 25:12).

We know that God acts measure for measure. How, then, does a spear-toting, tribal-head killing “zealot” (a loaded word, if ever there was one!) get rewarded with God’s covenant of *shalom*, peace?! A question like this tells us we need to re-examine our definitions and premises.

It’s easier to deal with one opponent than with many. So, one accused of suspect behavior is better off being attacked by a vigilante than by a mob. The mob’s judgment would overwhelm him. Therefore, by silencing the mob with his attack, the vigilante does the suspect a great favor.

This is what happened in the episode of Pinchas and Zimri. “Pinchas...turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, when he took My revenge...and I did not destroy them” (Numbers 25:11). Pinchas killed the sinner Zimri, taking judgment into his own hands. Had he not done so, the Jews would have been annihilated, God forbid. But because Pinchas took God’s vengeance into his own hands, the accusation against the Jews was silenced.

So, although your opponent—and you—may not realize it, his attack may be saving you from something worse. As a people this is also true. Protests made by one element of our wonderful nation, may be saving the rest of us from who knows what tragedy, God forbid!

But wait! Who says “the other guy” or “they,” are wrong? Maybe they’re OK and the protestor is wrong? Oyyy! That’s another reason this long, bitter *galut* (exile) is so horrible—everybody claims they’ve got the truth! “With God and/or Torah on our side” (and not theirs!) is a refrain understood, if not actually heard, from many religious quarters. And for better or worse, the Godless make claim after claim of other truths, with a certainty that rivals religious fervor.

What’s a seeker to do?

Reb Noson writes that somehow, in some amazing fashion, despite the constant, daily attacks, God protects and preserves the essence of truth from being falsified or adulterated. He quotes Rebbe Nachman: “*Gott firt tamid ois*; God is constantly finishing” His work of perfecting the world. One who seeks the truth even after thinking he’s found it, will continue to seek it. He will observe the effect of his giving charity. Wrong charity will lead to dissension; kosher charity will lead to *shalom*.

But! warns Reb Noson, peace is not apathy! To let wrongdoing continue because one doesn’t want to be a troublemaker or is content with his situation, is flattery and falsehood, not *shalom*. Real truth cannot be done away with, and will not be silenced. *Shalom* can only be established when the lies surrender, and submit to the truth.

May the One Who makes *shalom* above, make *shalom* between us and between all Israel. Amen!

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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