



OU-JLIC ISRAEL



ALIYAH DERFLER

JLIC JERUSALEM'S BAT SHERUT

HASHEM'S COVENANT OF PEACE

Can an act of violence ever lead to peace?

After Bnei Yisrael became involved in improper relationships that led them toward idolatry, Hashem's anger was aroused and a plague broke out, killing 24,000. At the height of this, Zimri publicly brought a midyanite woman into the camp, and Pinchas responded by killing them both. Hashem then stopped the plague.

"Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, Pinchas the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the priest, turned back my anger from upon Bnei Yisrael, with his arousal of zeal - my zeal - within them. And I did not finish the children of Israel. Therefore say, Behold I give him My covenant of peace:" (Bamidbar 25:10-12)

Why should Pinchas—who acted violently—be given a covenant of peace? Pinchas's action expressed his own wholehearted love for Hashem and awakened that zealotry within the Jewish people. Pinchas inspired the people to improve. This is a core aspect of being a true leader.

In English, the word peace brings to mind appeasement. When people are appeased, there can be peace, or the end of violence.

In Hebrew, the word for “peace” comes from the word “Shalem,” meaning “wholeness” or “harmony.” True peace is an active state that requires harmonious interaction between people, not just appeasement. Just as true peace is an active state, a true peacemaker is an active participant.

Pinchas's difficult action inspired Bnei Yisrael toward doing good, as opposed to passively staying away from evil.

May we be inspired to pursue true harmony and find the courage to stand for what's right, for Hashem's values. Shabbat Shalom! ■

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