

Kol Rina
An Independent Minyan
Parashat Pinchas
July 8, 2023 *** 19 Tammuz, 5783

Pinchas in a Nutshell

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2236/jewish/Pinchas-in-a-Nutshell.htm

The name of the Parshah, "Pinchas," refers to Phineas, who zealously avenged G-d's name, and it is found in Numbers 25:11.

Aaron's grandson Pinchas is rewarded for his act of zealotry in killing the Simeonite prince Zimri and the Midianite princess who was his paramour: G-d grants him a covenant of peace and the priesthood.

A census of the people counts 601,730 men between the ages of twenty and sixty. Moses is instructed on how the Land is to be divided by lottery among the tribes and families of Israel. The five daughters of Tzelafchad petition Moses that they be granted the portion of the land belonging to their father, who died without sons; G-d accepts their claim and incorporates it into the Torah's laws of inheritance.

Moses empowers Joshua to succeed him and lead the people into the Land of Israel.

The Parshah concludes with a detailed list of the daily offerings, and the additional offerings brought on Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh (first of the month), and the festivals of Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret.

Haftarah – Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/4182762/jewish/On-the-Haftarah-A-Lesson-from-Jeremiah-and-Pinchas.htm

Introduction

This week's haftarah begins a series of three haftarot known in halachic literature as telata depur'anuta, "the three (haftarot) of retribution." We read these haftarot during the three-week period between the seventeenth of Tammuz and the ninth of Av—the time when we mourn the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jewish people. These readings are taken from three passages where the prophets warn the Jews of the looming destruction and the terrible suffering that will follow, and implore the people to mend their ways and avoid this tragedy.

The first of these haftarot is taken from the opening chapter of Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived through the destruction, and was its primary prophet.

Meet Jeremiah

The opening verses of the reading give us some background about its major

figure. Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) the son of Chilkiah was a kohen who lived in the territory of Benjamin. On his father's side he descended from Evyatar, the high priest who served in the days of King David. King Solomon, the son of David, had banished Evyatar to the territory of Benjamin due to his disloyalty in supporting Solomon's brother Adoniyahu (Adonijah) in his attempt at the throne.¹ The family had lived there for over three centuries since then.

In addition to this, Jeremiah also descended from Rahab. Rahab was the woman who hosted and saved the spies sent by Joshua to scout the city of Jericho just before its miraculous fall into Israelite hands. Our sages tell us that Rahab later converted and became the wife of none other than Joshua himself. Before the spies visited her, the verse describes Rahab as a zonah—literally translated as “a prostitute.”² In their quest to belittle Jeremiah, the people would use this ancestor of his as a pretext for ridicule. Rashi in his commentary to this verse quotes the words of our sages, who said about this: “Jeremiah was a descendant of one who had a rotten past but later mended her ways. It was fitting for him to come and rebuke the Jews, who came from good descent but who had now gone in rotten ways.”

The hesitation

The first live encounter we have with Jeremiah is his great reluctance to assume the position he was destined to take on. The narrative begins with the Almighty letting Jeremiah in on the fact that he had been designated and sanctified for this role even before his mother conceived him.

Rashi takes this to refer to the teaching of the sages that G-d showed Adam, the first man, all the leaders who were to lead each generation of the Jewish people. Why is this stressed especially with regard to Jeremiah? Radak, in his commentary, suggests that not only was Jeremiah destined for greatness by his creator, but that his parents also had an active role in his “sanctity before conception”: “This comes to teach us that his father and mother took care to be in a state of holiness and purity at the time of conception, so that the prophet would be sanctified.”³

Jeremiah, however, knowing well the difficulty that lay ahead of him, was extremely hesitant: “Alas . . . Behold, I know not to speak, for I am a youth.” In addition to literally being young, Jeremiah was indicating that he was still “young” in his experience with the people. He used the example of Moses, who had also rebuked the people, but had done so only at the end of his life. After doing so much for them and performing so many miracles, he was indeed in a position to rebuke his people. But here Jeremiah was called to do this right at the outset.⁴ G-d reassures Jeremiah that he had nothing to fear. The places where he would need to go and the words he would speak there were not going to be of his own after all. His mission would be tough, and sometimes dangerous, but he was not

acting alone: he was an agent of G-d. His mission would not be easy, but G-d would give him fortress-like resilience, and no harm would befall him.

Almond branch and boiling pot

The next part of the reading records two scenes that seem to be the beginning of Jeremiah's visions. The first was of an almond branch. The Hebrew word for an almond is shaked. The same word in Hebrew (טקש) also serves as the root for "diligence" or "haste," and this name is given to the almond and its tree due to its "haste" in the process of producing fruit. G-d was conveying Jeremiah that what He was soon to tell him was going to take place imminently.

Rashi, quoting a midrashic source, explains that the almond actually served as a precise point of reference. It takes three weeks from the time the almond tree buds till the almond ripens. In a similar way, it would take three weeks from the time Jerusalem succumbed to the siege (on the 17th of Tammuz) to when the Temple would be set on fire (the 9th of Av)—hence the observance of the "Three Weeks."

The second vision was of a boiling pot whose froth was mainly on its northern side. The message was that the evil would come upon Israel from a country to its north—namely Babylon.

Abarbanel makes note of the wording in this verse, "The evil will open up from the north." He understands this to imply that the evil will both "open" from the north and also culminate from there. Babylon is to the northeast of Israel, and Rome is northwest of it. It was Babylon who began the Jewish exile with the destruction of the first Temple, and Rome who, five hundred years later, brought the exile full circle with the destruction of the second Temple.

Final words of love

Although the haftarot of the Three Weeks can read as rather harsh and gloomy, they each finish with magnificent words of hope, strength and love to the Jewish people.

In a verse that we use in the prayers of Rosh Hashanah, the Almighty invokes the memory of the "early youth" of the Jewish people. At the time of the exodus from Egypt they were like a young bride, filled to the brim and overflowing with love and passion for G-d. They displayed this with their unbounded faith as they ventured out into the barren desert with nothing other than their faith as a provision. Traveling into such a place with no knowledge of how they would survive defied any rational calculation. But this was no deterrent. They plunged in with hearts filled with love and joy, casting their lot entirely with their creator. This is the true and pure nature of the Jew. For this they are a truly holy nation. The verse compares the status of the Jew to the status of terumah, the part of the crop that was given to the kohen. This portion was to be eaten exclusively by the kohen and his family, and had to be consumed in a state of purity. It is

forbidden for a non-kohen to partake of terumah, and the Torah provides strong consequences for this transgression. The Jewish people are thus compared to terumah in the sense that any foreign people who would “consume” them will ultimately pay dearly for this misdeed.

Food for Thought

Moshe's Disappointment by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/pinchas/moshes-disappointment/>

Hidden beneath the surface of parshat Pinchas, the Sages uncovered a story of great poignancy. Moses, having seen his sister and brother die, knew that his own time on earth was coming to a close. He prayed to God to appoint a successor:

Let the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over this community who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them home. Let not the Lord's community be like sheep without a shepherd. *Numbers 27:16-17*

There is, though, an obvious question. Why does this episode appear here? It should surely have been positioned seven chapters earlier, either at the point at which God told Moses and Aaron that they would die without entering the land, or shortly thereafter when we read of the death of Aaron.

The Sages sensed two clues to the story beneath the story. The first is that it appears immediately after the episode in which the daughters of Tzelophehad sought and were granted their father's share in the land. It was this that triggered Moses' request. A Midrash explains:

What was Moses' reason for making this request after declaring the order of inheritance? Just this, that when the daughters of Tzelophehad inherited from their father, Moses reasoned: the time is right for me to make my own request. If daughters inherit, it is surely right that my sons should inherit my glory. *Numbers Rabbah 21:14*

The second clue lies in God's words to Moses immediately before he made his request for the appointment of a successor:

The Lord said to Moses, “Ascend this mountain of Abarim and gaze upon the land that I have given to the Israelites. After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, *like Aaron your brother...*” *Num. 27:12-13*

The italicised words are seemingly redundant. God was telling Moses he would soon die. Why did He need to add, “like Aaron your brother”? On this the Midrash says: This teaches us that Moses wanted to die the way Aaron did. The *Ktav Sofer* explains: Aaron had the privilege of knowing that his children would follow in his footsteps. Elazar, his son, was appointed as High Priest in his lifetime. To this day *kohanim* are direct descendants of Aaron. Moses likewise longed to see

one of his sons, Gershom or Eliezer, take his place as leader of the people. It was not to be. That is the story beneath the story.

It had an aftermath. In the book of Judges we read of a man named Micah who established an idolatrous cult in the territory of Ephraim and hired a Levite to officiate in the shrine. Some men from the tribe of Dan, moving north to find more suitable land for themselves, came upon Micah's house and seized both the idolatrous artefacts and the Levite, whom they persuaded to become their priest, saying, "Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" ([Judges 18:19](#)).

Only at the end of the story (v. 30) are we told the name of the idolatrous priest: Jonathan son of Gershom son of Moses. In our texts the letter *nun* has been inserted into the last of these names, so that it can be read as Menasheh rather than Moses. However, the letter, unusually, is written above the line, as a superscription. The Talmud says that the *nun* was added to avoid besmirching the name of Moses himself, by disclosing that his grandson had become an idolatrous priest.

How are we to explain Moses' apparent failure with his own children and grandchildren? One suggestion made by the Sages was that it had to do with the fact that for years he lived in Midian with his father-in-law Jethro, who was at the time an idolatrous priest. Something of the Midianite influence re-appeared in Jonathan three generations later.

Alternatively there are hints here and there that Moses himself was so preoccupied with leading the people that he simply did not have time to attend to the spiritual needs of his children. For instance, when Jethro came to visit his son-in-law after the division of the Red Sea, he brought with him Moses' wife Tzipporah and their two sons. They had not been with him until then.

The rabbis went further in speculating about the reason that Moses' own sister and brother Aaron and Miriam spoke negatively about him. What they were referring to, said the Sages, is the fact that Moses had physically separated from his wife. He had done so because the nature of his role was such that he had to be in a state of purity the whole time because at any moment he might have to speak – or be spoken to – by God. They were, in short, complaining that he was neglecting his own family.

A third explanation has to do with the nature of leadership itself. Bureaucratic authority – authority in virtue of office – can be passed down from parent to child. Monarchy is like that. So is aristocracy. So are some forms of religious leadership, like the priesthood. But charismatic authority – in virtue of personal qualities – is never automatically handed on across the generations. Moses was a prophet, and prophecy depends almost entirely on personal qualities. That,

incidentally, is why, though kingship and priesthood in Judaism were male prerogatives, prophecy was not. There were prophetesses as well as prophets. In this respect Moses was not unusual. Few charismatic leaders have children who are also charismatic leaders.

A fourth explanation offered by the Sages was quite different. On principle, God did not want the crown of Torah to pass from parent to child in dynastic succession. Kingship and priesthood did. But the crown of Torah, they said, belongs to anyone who chooses to take hold of it and bear its responsibilities. "Moses commanded us the Torah as an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob," meaning that it belongs to all of us, not just an elite. The Talmud elaborates:

Be careful [not to neglect] the children of the poor, because from them Torah goes forth... Why is it not usual for scholars to give birth to sons who are scholars?

R. Joseph said: so that it should not be said that the Torah is their inheritance.

R. Shisha, son of R. Idi said: so that they should not be arrogant towards the community.

Mar Zutra said: because they act highhandedly against the community.

R. Ashi said: because they call people asses.

Rabina said: because they do not first utter a blessing over the Torah.

Nedarim 81a

In other words, the "crown of Torah" was deliberately not hereditary because it might become the prerogative of the rich. Or because children of great scholars might take their inheritance for granted. Or because it could lead to arrogance and contempt for others. Or because learning itself might become a mere intellectual pursuit rather than a spiritual exercise ("they do not first utter a blessing over the Torah").

However, there is a fifth factor worthy of consideration. Some of the greatest figures in Jewish history did not succeed with all their children. Abraham fathered Ishmael. Isaac and Rebecca gave birth to Esau. All twelve of Jacob's children stayed within the fold, but three of them – Reuben, Shimon and Levi – disappointed their father. Of Shimon and Levi he said, "Let my soul not enter their plot; let my spirit not unite with their meeting" ([Gen. 49:6](#)). On the face of it, he was dissociating himself from them.^[1] Nonetheless, the three great leaders of the Israelites throughout the exodus – Moses, Aaron and Miriam – were all children of Levi.

Solomon gave birth to Rehoboam, whose disastrous leadership divided the kingdom. Hezekiah, one of Judah's greatest kings, was the father of Menasseh, one of the worst. *Not all parents succeed with all their children all the time.* How could it be otherwise? We each possess freedom. We are each, to some extent,

who we chose to become. Neither genes nor upbringing can guarantee that we become the person our parents want us to be. Nor is it right that parents should over-impose their will on children who have reached the age of maturity. Often this is for the best. Abraham did not become an idolater like his father Terach. Menasseh, the archetypal evil king, was grandfather to Josiah, one of the best. These are important facts. Judaism places parenthood, education and the home at the heart of its values. One of our first duties is to ensure that our children know about and come to love our religious heritage. But sometimes we fail. Children may go their own way, which is not ours. *If this happens to us we should not be paralysed with guilt.* Not everyone succeeded with all their children, not even Abraham or Moses or David or Solomon. Not even God himself. "I have raised children and brought them up but they have rebelled against Me" ([Is. 1:2](#)). Two things rescued the story of Moses and his children from tragedy. The book of Chronicles ([1 Chron. 23:16, 24:20](#)) refers to Gershom's son not as Jonathan but as Shevual or Shuvael, which the rabbis translated as "return to God". In other words, Jonathan eventually repented of his idolatry and became again a faithful Jew. However far a child has drifted, he or she may in the course of time come back.

The other is hinted at in the genealogy in [Numbers 3](#). It begins with the words, "These are the children of Aaron and Moses," but goes on to list only Aaron's children. On this the rabbis say that because Moses taught Aaron's children they were regarded as his own. In general, "disciples" are called "children".^[2]

We may not all have children. Even if we do, we may, despite our best endeavours, find them at least temporarily following a different path. But we can all leave something behind us that will live on. Some do so by following Moses' example: teaching, facilitating, or encouraging the next generation. Some do so in line with the rabbinic statement that "the real offspring of the righteous are good deeds."^[3]

When our children follow our path we should be grateful. When they go beyond us, we should give special thanks to God. And when they choose another way, we must be patient, knowing that the greatest Jew of all time had the same experience with one of his grandchildren. And we must never give up hope. Moses' grandson returned. In almost the last words of the last of the prophets, Malachi foresaw a time when God "will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" ([Mal. 3:24](#)). The estranged will be reunited in faith and love. ^[1] Note however that Rashi interprets the curse as limited specifically to Zimri descendant of Shimon, and Korach, descendant of Levi.

^[2] See [Rashi on Numbers 3:1](#). ^[3] [Rashi on Gen. 6:9](#).

And the Lord spoke to Moshe saying, For these shall the land be divided as an inheritance according to the number of the names” (Bamidbar 26:52).

Parshat Pinchas discusses apportioning the land of Israel according to preset measurements, called “nachalot.” These delineations are to remain forever.[1] These land apportionments are intended to provide the setting for true “sustenance,” receiving in a way that connects us to the land and its Creator. Each shevet was tasked with specific roles in producing food for the nation and was thus acutely connected to their food. As part of the great system of sustenance, Hashem gave us land measures to keep as a sustainable and balanced inheritance. This system informs our approach, even outside of Israel. We need to strengthen our access to sustenance, both physically and spiritually, by feeling our connection to the land, even if we live in modern cities. We can do this by making human health and well-being a goal in the architecture and scale of our cities, and planetary health and well-being a guiding force in planning our source of nutrition.

The Torah directs us to live within the workings of Creation; approximately half of the mitzvot involve agriculture or land apportionment.[2] But city living distances people from the agricultural test of emunah, and thus they are also deprived of the resulting closer relationship with Hashem. In rabbinic literature, the order of the Mishnah related to agriculture is called Emunah, a Hebrew word that means faith in Hashem’s blessings. Dependence on the land deepens our relationship with Hashem through emunah. When we are aware of Hashem as the Source of all sustenance, we are able to see past the illusion of sustainability in urban and suburban areas. Without emunah, industrialized farming results in depleted soil, less nutritious food, and pollution from pesticides. This kind of farming has little regard for the natural balance of life. By working with nature, with Hashem, organic sustainable farming produces a healthy harvest that will sustain the human immune system, as well as the environment.

In addition to compromised nutrition, the overall health of city dwellers is an ancient issue. As early as the 11th century, Rashi explained: “Life is more difficult in the city, because so many live there, and they crowd their houses together, and there is no air, whereas in villages there are gardens and orchards close to the homes, and the air is good.”[3]

The Rambam commented about city communities in the 12th century: “The quality of urban air compared to the air in the deserts and forests is like thick and turbulent water compared to pure and light water. And this is because in the cities with their tall buildings and narrow roads, the pollution that comes from their residents, their waste ... makes their entire air malodorous, turbulent, reeking and thick...

And if you cannot move out of the city, try at least to live in a suburb created to the northeast. Let the house be tall and the court wide enough to permit the northern wind and the sun to come through, because the sun thins out the pollution of the air, and makes it light and pure.”[4]

We know today that imbalances such as lack of sunlight, lack of sleep, inadequate fresh air, and environmental stress—all deficits common to city life—degrade health and immunity levels.[5] The sages’ recommendations for the city are valid today, for they understood the balance of land and health.

Obviously, city living is imperative nowadays for many people seeking a livelihood. And while we cannot completely reorchestrate how humanity lives overnight, it can be beneficial to consider other effects of the city, which we commonly overlook. When we can give a name to a problem, we can address it. Individuals may be left weakened by living in places where identity is not reinforced and supported by a community[6]. Social fragmentation is created in cities where the public and private domains are in conflict. For Jews living in cities, the balance of public and private domain is defined by an eruv, a minimal structure symbolizing a fence that surrounds the city. Today there are many cities whose Jewish communities benefit from modern eruvim. The eruv is effective for enabling the carrying of objects on Shabbat, by symbolically unifying an entire community into one domain. Eruv construction and maintenance requires cooperative work by a community of people and benefits all involved. Thus, the eruv engenders a continuous social domain, which is supportive of community life that can be focused on Hashem. Being included in a city eruv combats social isolation and spiritual estrangement.

For city dwellers, one way of maintaining mental and physical health is to reconnect with the natural world, and its Creator. Cities without a connection to nature or agriculture, green space, sufficient light, clean air, and the horizon, can lend to an imbalance that can neither support physical nor spiritual life. Rabbi Nachman would go for walks in the woods to speak to Hashem just outside the town. In this manner, he was able to maintain a connection with nature and the Source of Creation.

By taking these minute, physical steps, we can reconnect to the land and the unity expressed in Creation. We can learn from our sages and return to the Source of all sustenance, “...by knowing and believing that all Creation is not separate from Hashem, but an extension of His oneness” (Rabbi Nachman of Breslov)[7]

(Michael L. Rosen, AIA LEED AP, is a California architect. Michael has given talks on Green Building issues at University and Professional organizations. He is a contributor to many Green Action Committees active in City and State projects, and has written on green topics from a Torah point of view for Jewish publications.) [1]See Rashi (11th cent. French Scholar and commentator) to Vayikra 25:15. “..When you sell or buy land, know how many years

remain until the jubilee year, and according to that number of years and number of yields that the land can produce in those years, the land should be sold to the buyer. Because, after all, the land will return to (the ancestral owner) in the jubilee year..." [2]Mind over Matter G-d and Nature Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Shamir Publications [3]Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaky, France, 11th cent. Scholar and commentator, in his commentary to Babylonian Talmud, tractate Kettubot 110b [4] "Rambam" is an acronym for Rabbi Moses Maimonides, or Rambam, Fost, Egypt 1135-1204 C.C, "The Preservation of Youth" [5]Golany, Gideon, Housing in Arid Lands, Halsted, 1980. [6]Mumford, Lewis. The Culture of Cities, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1938. [7]Mayim Breslov Publication, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Lesson written by Moshe Mykoff.

Desecrating God's Name and Jewish Principles: Parashat Pinchas by Rabbi Prof. David Golinkin

<https://schechter.edu/why-settlers-who-attack-palestinian-villages-are-desecrating-gods-name-and-jewish-principles-parashat-pinchas/>

Five years ago I made a video for Shavua Tov @ Schechter about the weekly portion of Pinchas in which I asked: was Pinchas a person who was Zealous for God, a good guy, or was he a Zealot, a bad guy?

The Torah itself and the books of Psalms, Ezra, Ben Sira, the First Book of Maccabees, Josephus, Philo, and most of the Sages in rabbinic literature thought that Pinchas was a good guy.

The people were worshiping idols, a Jewish leader had sexual relations with a Midianite leader as part of their idol worship. God sent a plague. Pinchas saw that no one had the power to do anything. He killed the two leaders and the plague stopped immediately. God then praises Pinchas and gave him ברית שלום a Covenant of Peace and a ברית כהונת עולם a Covenant of the Priesthood forever.

In other words, in the opinion of the Torah and all of these commentators, Pinchas was Zealous for God but not a Zealot.

On June 20th, four innocent Israelis were killed by terrorists at the settlement of Eli. Our hearts go out to the families and to the families of a total of 20 Israelis murdered by terrorists in the first half of 2023.

We hope and pray that the IDF will capture every single terrorist.

Unfortunately, over the next few days after that attack, large numbers of settlers attacked quite a few Arab villages, especially Turmus Ayya where they burned at least 15 houses, 20 cars and many fields.

If you ask them, they would probably tell you that they are Zealous like Pinchas. I would like to explain why this is totally false: They are not Zealous, they are Zealots.

Pinchas killed two specific people in order to stop a plague. The settlers who attacked many Arab villages and burned many houses, cars and fields transgressed at least four basic Jewish principles or *mitzvot*.

The first is found in *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) 3:14 in the mouth of Rabbi Akiva:

הוא היה אומר: חביב אדם שנברא בצלם, חיבה יתרה נודעת לו שנברא בצלם, שנאמר "כי בצלם אלהים ברא את אדם." (בראשית ט"ו)

He used to say: Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God. As a gesture of special love, it was made known to him that he was created in the image of God, as it is written: "For in the image of God he made MAN" (Genesis 9:6).

It does not say "Jews" or "Israelites"; it says "man". ALL human beings are made in the image of God, not just Jews. It is totally immoral to attack innocent men, women, and children, regardless of their religion.

The second principle or mitzvah which they transgressed was **חילול השם**, the desecration of God's name.

We read in *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 22:32

וְלֹא תַחֲלִלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשִׁי וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשֵׁכֶם:

"You shall not desecrate My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people—I am the Lord who sanctified you."

The Sages learned from this verse two *mitzvot*: **קידוש השם** 'to sanctify God's name' and not to do **חילול השם** 'not to desecrate God's name'.

This type of senseless violence desecrates God's name in the eyes of the world.

The third principle is found in the famous story of Hillel and the convert who wanted to learn the entire Torah while standing on one foot (*Shabbat* 31a).

Hillel says to him:

אמר לו: דעלק סני לחברך לא תעביד — זו היא כל התורה כולה, ואידך פירושא הוא, זיל גמור.

"He said to him: what is hateful to you do not do unto others. This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary. Go and learn."

For 1,900 hundred years, Jews were persecuted by non-Jews. Pogroms, blood-libels, expulsions. Now that we have our own sovereign state, and we are the majority, God forbid that we should persecute minorities or carry out pogroms.

What is hateful unto us, we should not do to others.

Finally, there is the subject in Judaism of **נקמה** or vengeance.

The word **נקמה** appears 44 times in the Bible. In most of those verses, it says that *God* will take vengeance on evildoers or on evil nations.

As for human beings, it says in *Vayikra* (Leviticus) 19:18:

לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטַּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ:

"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your people."

And if you say that this only applies to Jews, then listen to this verse from Proverbs (*Mishle*) 24:29

אל־תֹּאמַר כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה־לִּי כֵן אַעֲשֶׂה־לּוֹ אֲשִׁיב לְאִישׁ כַּפְעָלוֹ:

"Do not say I will do to him what he did to me, I will pay the man what he

deserves.”

Now this verse is part of the Wisdom Literature. The Wisdom Literature does not just address Jews, the Wisdom Literature in the Bible addresses ALL human beings.

Finally, we have the saying of Rav Pappa found in tractate *Sanhedrin*, folio 102b. He loved Aramaic folk sayings:

היינו דאמרי אינשי: דפרע קיניה מחריב ביתיה

“He who takes revenge destroys his own house.”

The settlers who rampaged through Arab villages and burned houses, and cars, and fields are not zealous for God like Pinchas. They are zealots who desecrate God's name.

The State of Israel and the IDF must do everything possible to prevent this type of behavior. So that one day we will have, like Pinchas, ברית שלום a Covenant of Peace. *(David Golinkin is President of The Schechter Institutes, Inc. and President Emeritus of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies. He received an MA in Rabbinics and a PhD in Talmud from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America where he was also ordained as Rabbi.)*

Yahrzeits

Peter and Rebecca Greene remember Peter's mother Marian Greene on Saturday July 8th.

David Rubin remembers his mother Hortense Janofsky Rubin on Sunday July 9th.

Burt Solomon remembers his sister Ann Solomon Wallace on Thursday July 13th.