

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Pinchas

Title: A Parsha of Peace, Zeal, and Justice

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

This *parsha* is a doozy full of interesting decisions being made by God. First off, Pinchas (whom this parsha is named for), son of Elazar, son of Aharon, is rewarded for killing two people. His reward is a "Peace Covenant" that comes from God. After that, God instructs Moshe and Elazar to take a second census of *Bnei Yisrael* because almost none



of them are the same Israelites that stood at Mt. Sinai. They had been in the harsh desert so long that the majority of living Israelites were a new generation of people. One of the men who died in the wilderness was named Zelophehad, and he had five daughters and no sons. The five daughters of Zelophehad approached Moshe with a case to inherit their father's property. Traditionally, women would not have been allowed to inherit land, but because they had no brothers, they decided to try. God agrees with the daughters' case and makes a new rule where, in this situation, women can also inherit property. And finally, Moshe asks God not to leave the Israelites without a leader, and together God and Moshe appoint Yehoshua to lead the people once they reach the Land of Israel. Phew! That was a lot!

Zooming In:

A Parsha of Peace

Pinchas kills two people for the sake of *shalom bayit* (peace in the home). *Shalom bayit* is valued highly in Judaism.

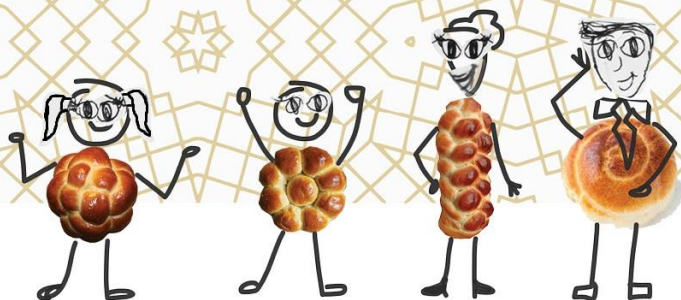
The word *shalom* is usually written *shin, lamed, vav, mem*: שלום. But in Bamidbar 25:12, in our parsha, the *vav* in this word is not allowed to be completed when it is written. This is a symbol that any peace achieved through violence is only an illusion of peace and not true peace.

A Parsha of Zeal

Pinchas is considered to be zealous on behalf of God.

Zeal means having fervor for a person, cause, or object; eager desire or endeavor; enthusiastic diligence; ardor. A person who behaves with zeal has both the power and the potential challenges of passion.

A Parsha of Justice



When God thought about the daughters of Zelophehad, He realized that the daughters were right and the law He had created was unjust. God admitted that He had been wrong.

Questions for Consideration:

- What things do you feel passionately about? What are the benefits of feeling passionate about something? What are potential challenges to feeling passionate?
- What can we learn from God seeing that a rule needed to be changed and changing it?
- After the new census of the people, it is clear that these people will be entering Israel with fresh eyes. What are the benefits of having a new clean slate? Are there downsides?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

The Parsha in Practice:

In what ways do we make positive changes to the world around us when we see injustice? Think about ways that your family can make a positive difference in your community. Brainstorm organizations that create change in areas that your family is passionate about and make a post-Shabbat plan to do something together that will contribute to that cause. This might look like volunteer work, letters or phone calls to government representatives, acts of kindness in the community, or anything else your family can think of. Be like the daughters of Zelophehad! Stand up for the values you believe in!

Shabbat Shalom!