

MAN-BASED MORALITY

Background

Zimri took a Midyanite princess into the camp of Yisroel, erected a tent and proceeded to live with her. Pinchas stood up and killed Zimri as well as Kasbi bas Tzur, the Midyanite with whom Zimri was cohabitating. Because of the sin of the Jewish men living with Midyanite women, 24,000 Jews were killed out. After the dust settled, some of the surviving Jews were mocking Pinchas, saying, “How dare he? A simple person rise up and kill a *Nasi*, the head of a tribe!”

ספר במדבר פרק כה

יֵאָדָה פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן הַשֵּׁיבִי אֶת חֲמַתִּי מֵעַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקָנְאוֹ אֶת קְנָאִתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם וְלֹא כָלִיתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקָנְאִתִּי

Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the Kohain, calmed my anger against the Jewish nation by taking My revenge, and I didn't destroy the Jewish nation in My vengeance.

רש"י על במדבר פרק כה פסוק יא

יֵאָדָה פִּינְחָס בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן - (סנהדרין פב. סוטה מב) לפי שהיו השבטים מבזים אותו הראיתם בן פוטי זה שפיטם אבי אמו עגלים לע" אוהרג נשיא שבט מישראל לפיכך בא הכתוב ויחסו אחר אהרן

Pinchas, the son of Elazar – The tribes were degrading him, saying, “Did you see this one? His mother's father fattened calves for the idols, and he killed the head of a shevet.” Therefore, the posuk certifies his lineage from Aaron.

Questions

How is it possible that the rest of the Jewish nation was mocking Pinchas? Didn't people understand that he was the *tzaddik* who directly followed the will of HASHEM? Didn't they see that the plague stopped as soon as Pinchas killed Zimri? How is it possible that they assumed that what Pinchas did was wrong?