

The Torah praises Pinchas and grants him eternal priesthood, yet the verses imply that this reward stems primarily from the result of his actions—saving the Jewish people from destruction. Was Pinchas rewarded for the intrinsic greatness of his act, or for the outcome it achieved?

Birkat Peretz on the Torah 25:13

Israel 20th c.

For the fulfillment of mitzvot themselves, a person does not receive reward in this world, but rather in the World to Come. Therefore, the act of killing Zimri in itself would not bring reward in this world. In contrast, the resulting outcome—saving the Jewish people—falls within the realm of mitzvot between man and his fellow, and regarding such mitzvot the principle is that “a person enjoys their fruits in this world” (meaning, although the primary reward is reserved for the World to Come, one benefits from the results even in this world). Therefore, the priesthood was granted to Pinchas not because of the act itself, but because of the salvation of the Jewish people that resulted from it.

ספר ברכת פרץ על התורה כ"ה:י"ג

יעקב ישראל קניבסקי (הסטייפלער)

על עצם קיום המצוות, אין אדם מקבל את שכרו בעולם הזה, אלא בעולם הבא. ולכן עצם הריגת זמרי אינה מביאה לשכר בעולם הזה. לעומת זאת, התוצאה הנלווית של הצלת בני ישראל היא כבר במישור שבין אדם לחברו, ועל מצות שבין אדם לחברו הכלל הוא ש"אדם אוכל פירותיהם בעולם הזה" (היינו, אמנם עיקר השכר שמור לעולם הבא, אך אדם נהנה מפרי המעשה גם בעולם הזה). לכן, שכר הבהונה הובטח לפנחס לא מחמת עצם המצווה אלא מחמת הצלת בני ישראל שנבעה ממנה.

Rav Kanievsky explains that Mitzvot themselves are rewarded in the World to Come, not in this world, so Pinchas's act alone would not warrant reward in this world. However, since his action resulted in saving the Jewish people he merited the priesthood, as one enjoys the fruits of such deeds even in this world.

Chidushei Harim Al Hatorah 25:13

Poland, 18th c.

As is well known, the rule is that a Kohen who has killed a person is disqualified from reciting Birkat Kohanim. Thus, generally, killing a person is something that strips a Kohen of the qualities of priesthood; accordingly, Pinchas's act, being an act of killing, should seemingly have disqualified him from the priesthood.

To this, the verse responds that this is not the case: although Pinchas did take a life, his action resulted in saving lives; indeed, the very reason we disqualify a Kohen who has killed from Birkat Kohanim is because killing is an act of judgment, whereas the priestly blessing is an act of mercy, and it is unfitting for one associated with killing to perform it. Here, however, since Pinchas's act atoned for the Jewish people, halted a plague, and saved lives, his action is considered an act of mercy; therefore...“it shall be for him and his descendants after him a covenant of eternal priesthood.” Accordingly, it is clear why the verse emphasizes the saving of the Jewish people, for it is this result that transforms Pinchas's act into one of mercy.

חידושי הרי"ם על התורה כה:יג

יצחק מאיר אלטער

כידוע, הכלל הוא שכהן שהרג אדם, נפסל מלבד ברכת כהנים ונמצא שעל דרך הכלל, הריגת אדם היא דווקא דבר השולל מן הכהן את מעלות הבהונה שלו; ואם כן, לכאורה מעשה פנחס, שהוא מעשה הריגה, אמור היה דווקא לשלול ממנו כהונה. על כך משיב הפסוק, לא כן הדבר, כי פנחס אמנם הרג נפש, אך פעולתו הייתה פעולה שתוצאתה הצלה ממוות (השיב את חמתי מעל בני ישראל וכו'); ואדרבה, כל הסיבה שאנו פוסלים כהן שהרג את הנפש מלבד ברכת כהנים, נעוצה בכך שהריגה היא פעולת דין, ונשיאת כפים היא פעולת רחמים (ולכן אין ראוי שמי שהרג ישא כפיו, כי אין הדברים מתיישבים); אך כאן, שמעשה פנחס כיפר על בני ישראל ומנע מגיפה והציל חיים, נמצא שפעולתו הייתה פעולת רחמים (וממילא לא שייך כאן הכלל "כהן שהרג את הנפש וכו'", אלא להיפך), ולכן אדרבה, "והייתה לו ולזרעו אחרי ברית כהונת עולם". ועל פי זה כאמור מובן היטב מדוע מדגיש הפסוק את עניין הצלת בני ישראל, כי תוצאה זו היא שהופכת את מעשה פנחס לרחמים.

The Chidushei Harim explains that although a priest who takes a life is generally disqualified from performing the priestly blessing because killing reflects judgment rather than mercy, Pinchas's act was fundamentally different. Since his action stopped a plague and saved lives, it is considered an act of mercy, and therefore it not only did not disqualify him, but earned him the priesthood.

Haemek Davar Bamidbar 25:13

Lithuania, 19th c.

The covenant of peace was granted to him not only because he turned back God's wrath through his zeal, for had the wrath not been aroused, he would not have merited the blessing of peace; rather, because his zeal, anger, and fervor were entirely for the sake of Heaven, therefore he was granted the blessing of peace.

העמק דבר במדבר כה:יג

הרב נפתלי צבי יהודה ברלין

ברית השלום מגיע לו, לא רק מחמת
שהשיב את חמתי בקנאו, ואם לא
הגיע לחמת ה' לא היה מגיע לו ברכת
השלום, לא כן אלא תחת אשר קנא
לאלהיו היה קצפו ורגזו אך לשם
שמים, על כן באה לו ברכת השלום:

The Netziv understands that Pinchas merited the covenant of peace not only because he stopped God's wrath, but because his zeal and anger were entirely for the sake of Heaven. Precisely because his intense action was pure and selfless, it was transformed into a blessing of peace.

Questions for Reflection:

1. If Pinchas's reward depends not on the act itself but on its outcome, why does the Torah still frame his merit in terms of zeal and action rather than explicitly in terms of the salvation it produced?
2. If Pinchas's zeal is what earns him the covenant of peace, why is peace specifically the reward for an act rooted in violence and judgment rather than something more closely aligned with its nature?

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Skokie Shabbaton

with the YU Torah Mitzion Kollel
PARSHAT MATOT - MASEI
JULY 10-11, 2026

Or Torah Drasha
8:00 AM MINYAN: Rabbi Yitzzy Weiss
WEST MINYAN: Rabbi Itai Jacobs
MAIN MINYAN: Rabbi Yitzzy Weiss

Kehilat Chovevei Tzion Drasha
ASHKENAZ MINYAN: Rabbi Reuven Brand
SEPHARDIC MINYAN: Rabbi Yitzchak Mandel
SHITBEI MINYAN CHABURA: Rabbi Yonatan Gershman

Community Luncheon at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion - 12:00 PM
D'VAR TORAH: Rabbi Reuven Brand

NILI Women's Shiur - 5:30 PM
Mrs. Alissa Zeffren: Hosted by Nicole Kremer, 3701 Arcadia St.

Pre-Mincha Shiur
OR TORAH - 7:10 PM: Rabbi Yonatan Gershman
KCT - 7:20 PM: Rabbi Itai Jacobs

Sundah Shlishit
KCT: Rabbi Yitzchak Mandel
YOUNG ISRAEL OF SKOKIE: Rabbi Yonatan Gershman
OR TORAH: Rabbi Reuven Brand

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Rabbi Reuven & Dr. Nechama Brand
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NILI Director
Mrs. Alissa & Mr. Levi Zeffren

Kollel Follows
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Parshat Pinchas July 4

LINCOLNWOOD 5:30 PM
MRS. ALISSA ZEFFREN
hosted by:
LISA GLASS
6714 CENTRAL PARK

SKOKIE 5:30 PM
RABBI ITAI JACOBS
hosted by:
MRS. KEREN KLUK
4036 EMERSON ST

WEST ROGERS PARK 5:30 PM
MRS. SHIRA WINNER
hosted by:
SHOSHIE NEIKRUG
3031 W. JARLATH

NORTHBROOK 5:30 PM
MRS. RACHEL POLSKY
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SHARON SHAPIRO
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