BS"D
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Potomac Torah Study Center
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NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah. New: a limited number of copies of the first attachment will now be available at Beth Sholom on the Shabbas table!

The chronological story of the Torah essentially ends in Pinchas. God tells Moshe that he is about to die and that he should go to the top of a nearby mountain to look at the land that he may not enter. Moshe asks God to appoint a leader for the people to care for them after his death. God tells him to take Yehoshua before Eleazar and the people, to give him S'micha (put his hands on Yehoshua and transfer some of his divine spirit). Moshe does so at the end of chapter 27. Yehoshua becomes the new leader of B'Nai Yisrael, Moshe dies, and Yehoshua leads the people into Eretz Yisrael. Of course we still have a quarter of the Torah to read before reaching Sefer Yehoshua – some concluding legal sections of Bemidbar and all of Sefer Devarim.

While we remember Pinchas primarily for his zealous action for the sake of God, Rosh Yeshiva Dov Linzer reminds us that zealotry in the name of God is scary and dangerous. Other acts of zealotry in Tanach sometimes pleased Hashem and sometimes did not please Him. Moshe unilaterally destroyed the luchot after the sin of Egel Zahav, because the penalty for violating the Sinai covenant was death. Moshe recognized that God's anger and the sin meant death for the people. By destroying the record of the first covenant, Moshe was able to negotiate a new covenant, based on Divine Mercy, and save most of the people from death.

Eliyahu also acted as a zealot for God in calling for a drought when B'Nai Yisrael persisted in idolatry. God indeed brought a drought, which persisted for three years before God told Eliyahu that it was time to end it. Eliyahu set a contest. Eight hundred fifty "prophets" of Baal prepared a bullock and called all day for Baal to accept it. Nothing happened. Eliyahu then prepared his bullock, put it on an alter, flooded the area with water, and called on Hashem. Immediately a fire came from the sky and consumed the sacrifice, the alter, the stones around the alter, and the water that flooded the area. The people cried that Hashem was God, and they killed the 850 false prophets of Baal. A tiny cloud then appeared in the sky, grew larger, covered the sky, and brought torrents of rain, thereby ending the long drought.

Although God ratified Eliyahu's punishment for idolatry, He decided at this point that it was time for Eliyahu to retire and for Elisha to take over as prophet. Rabbi David Fohrman distinguishes good zealotry (Pinchas) from bad zealotry (Eliyahu). Pinchas reacted to Hashem's divine anger and acted when Moshe failed to do so (25:4-9). Eliyahu, however, decided unilaterally to declare that it was time to invoke Hashem's anger. Rabbi Fohrman states that a person, even a prophet, may not decide when God is angry enough for a human to act to preserve what he perceives as God's will. When Pinchas acted because of God's expressed anger, his doing so saved many lives. When Eliyahu acted because he thought that God should have been angry, God decided that it was time for him to retire.

When Moshe destroyed the luchot, the work of God's hands was destroyed, but Moshe was able to save the lives of many people. When God permitted the Babylonians to destroy the Temple, the Temple was destroyed, but enough people survived to save Judaism and rebuild for the future.

Zealotry based on human interpretations of what God wants leads to religious strive, war, terrorist attacks, and murder. Throwing rocks at people who violate Shabbat is one form of zealotry based on human assumption of God's anger rather

than based on actual evidence of God's anger. Arab terrorist attacks on Jews in Israel, Los Angeles, and many other places also express human assumptions of God's will rather than God's anger itself.

I remember times when my beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, discussed zealotry – in the context of Pinchas, after high school kids threw raw eggs at him as he walked to services on Yom Kippur, and several other occasions. I believe that Rabbi Fohrman's distinction between zealotry in response to evidence of God's anger versus zealotry in response to human belief of what God's anger is (or should be) is a useful way of understanding the danger of acting as a zealot. God is fully capable of acting to enforce God's anger. We humans must recognize that we do not and cannot gain an endorsement for acting in response to our own anger (or our interpretation of God's anger).

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, David Leib ben Sheina Reizel, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, Dovid Meir ben Chaya Tzippa; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Ramesh bat Heshmat, and Regina bat Allegra, who need our prayers. I have removed a number of names that have been on the list for a long time. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Hannah & Alan

Drasha: Pinchas: Loyal Leadership

By Rabbi Mordechai Kemenetzky © 2007

[Please remember Mordechai ben Chaya (Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky) for a Mishebarach!]

At the end of Parshas Pinchos, Hashem tell Moshe Rabbeinu about the forthcoming end of his life, and the passing of the leadership to the next generation. Moshe, concerned about the future of his people, asks a request, "Hashem should choose a leader who will go and come in front of them, (the Jewish Nation) and the congregation of Israel should not be like a flock that does not have to them a shepherd."

Seemingly, Moshe Rabbeinu uses a few extra words. Instead of simply saying that the Jews should not be like "a flock without a shepherd," he adds the words "asher ein lahem roeh" that does not have to them a shepherd." Why the extra words?

Rabbi Paysach Krohn, in his book, "Around the Maggid's Table" (Artscroll, 1989) tells the following story. At the outbreak of World War One, A young man came to the great Gaon and leader of European Jewery, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky for a blessing not to be inducted into the Russian army. The hazards of war wee terrifying, and the army usually kept soldiers in their ranks for decades. After conversing with the teen for a bit, the Rav asked, "Do you wear tzitzis." "No." came the reply.

"Do your put on tefillin every day."

“No.”

“Do you observe the Shabbos.” The boy, looking down, embarrassed, and in a whisper he answered again, “No.”

Silence permeated the room and the boy stood in fear of what the holy tzaddik would tell him. Instead, after a few moments, Rav Grodzinksy looked up at him, and in a calming, loving voice, he said, “I bless you that the Soviet authorities should be just as disappointed in you as I am.”

Only a few weeks later, the boy came back to the Rav and told him, “Rebbe, your bracha worked! I was rejected by the Soviet army!” He them lifted his shirt to show the Rav his tzitzis. Needless to say, he returned to the path of observance.

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt”l would explain based upon a passage in the Sefer Kehilos Yitzchok. Rav Jacob Joseph, a great orator, was appointed as the maggid of the city of Vilna in 1883, five years before coming to the United States to assume the position of chief Rabbi of the city of New York. In his inaugural address, he answered the question as follows.

One who tends to his own sheep does not care about the sheep per se, rather he worries about his bottom line. His concern for an injured sheep would be more for his bottom line than for the welfare of is animal.

But one who is watching sheep for someone else, doesn’t care much about the bottom line. The sheep are not his, and he has no vested interest in them. His tending to the sheep is more idealistic, as he is concerned about the actual health and well-being of the sheep.

The same, explained Rav Joseph, is with leaders of people. There are many nations in the world – each one with a different leader. Some do their job well, but they ultimately care about their bottom line. The individual needs of the many citizens don’t concern that all that much – as long as their position is secure and they win the next election.

Moshe wasn’t worried that the Jews would be left without someone taking charge. He knew that knew that there will be a leader. He wanted to ensure that the leader was a leader “of them.” The new leader had to take into account the plight of every single Jew, each personal situation, and every individual’s struggles and challenges. He wanted the leader to celebrate with them and revel with joy in their accomplishments. Therefore, he implored Hashem, “Let the Jews not be like a flock that does not have to them a leader.” Moshe insisted that the leader be a leader “for them.”

Moshe, the ultimate leader of the Jewish Nation, knew to instill this important trait in the future of our leaders for generations to come.

Good Shabbos!

Use Your Words, Not Your Hands

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2021

Pinchas is synonymous with zealotry in the name of God. And that is scary. Throughout history, zealotry has led to violence: murderous attacks, lethal Crusades, and horrific acts of terror, all done in the name of God. Such actions have destroyed innumerous individuals, cultures, and communities, and have raised profound questions as to the morality and values of the religions that could promote such behavior.

And while such behavior has been quite rare among the Jewish people, it is exactly this zealotry that singles Pinchas out for praise. After having taken up a spear and stabbed to death an Israelite man and Midianite women who were publicly engaging in sexually immoral behavior, God lauds Pinchas for his actions: “Pinchas, son of Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the Israelites for being zealous on My behalf among them” (Numbers 25:11-13).

It appears, then, that God endorses such zealotry. This conclusion, however, is overly facile. A closer look at the verses reveals that Pinchas’s reward was not more of the same, not that he should embody or exemplify zealotry, but rather one

of a different type of behavior: “I grant him My covenant of peace.” The covenant, the defining relationship between this warrior and God, is not violence, but peace.

And yet, this covenant was given to him “because he has acted zealously for God.” How are we to make sense of that?

It seems that, from the Torah’s perspective at least, violence is sometimes required to defend God’s honor. Just consider the Levites gathering around Moses, swords drawn, immediately after the sin of the Golden Calf. Such acts are seen as ways of staving off even more disastrous and lethal Divine retribution: “And I did not destroy the Israelites in My anger.”

This may still leave many of us deeply disturbed and feeling that it has not solved the problem of violence in the name of God. And perhaps it hasn’t. What is critical to note, however, is that even from the Torah’s perspective, this was only justified in a world where God strikes people dead because of their disobedience. Once we have left that world behind, there would never be any justification for killing in God’s name.

Which brings us back to the covenant of peace. The Torah here is proclaiming loudly and clearly that violence, even on God’s behalf, even when it was seen as necessary, is not the way. The true religious path, the very covenant with God, is one of peace. To cultivate a religious personality is to live a Godly life, one of morality and ethics. There is no covenant of zealotry. There is only one of peace.

It is noteworthy that the Sages rule that acts of zealotry – even in the case of Pinchas – can never be condoned by the law. Zealots are always acting in contravention of the law. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Sanhedrin 9:7) even reports that the Elders at the time said that Pinchas had committed murder. The Bavli states that, had Zimri, the Israelite who was slain by Pinchas, taken up arms against him and killed him in self-defense, he would have been exonerated, for at that moment Pinchas was coming to murder him. The law is about preserving peace and protecting human lives. It has no place for zealotry, for acts that destroy lives and shatter the structures of society.

This covenant of peace bore fruit. After the conquest of the land of Israel, the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan River built their own altar, which almost provoked a civil war. Pinchas was sent to broker a peace between the tribes, and because of his diplomacy, war was averted (Joshua Ch. 22). The evolution of Pinchas here is quite compelling: The young warrior has turned into an elder diplomat. It was only at this moment, the Talmud tells us, that Pinchas became a priest, a true leader of Israel.

A life of religious zealotry may be an intense and passionate experience for the one living it. But it is a destructive life for others, for society, and ultimately for the person herself. It is in this parsha of zealotry that we are told that the covenant with God is one of peace. This is how one achieves deep meaning and fulfilment, how one partners with God to promote and protect life and society. Blessed are you, God, Who blesses his nation Israel with peace.

Shabbat Shalom.

https://library.yctorah.org/2021/07/use-your-words-not-your-hands/

Pinchas – Someone Else’s Zealot

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine* © 2015 Teach 613

Pinchas acted most definitively. When he saw the prince of the tribe of Shimon teasing Moshe he killed him. The prince, Zimri, had taken a Midianite princess dressed for prostitution, and teased Moshe loudly, asking, “May I be with this woman.” Pinchas- the man who acted- is known as a “Kanoi”, often translated as a zealot. Some people associate a zealot with being an angry person. A better description might be to describe him as a person with moral clarity.

Avraham for example lived in a world that rejected monotheism. Avraham’s position to stand up for his belief in one G-d could well have been described as an act of zealotry. Indeed there were people who wished to persecute him. Yet Avraham certainly wasn’t an angry person. Avraham as a person was kind, hospitable, and even pleaded the case for the city of Sedom when it was to be destroyed for its sinful ways.

The true root of the word zealous is zeal, which means to act with enthusiasm. Zeal is not destructive; it is not synonymous with lashing out at others. It is a sense of passion and a clarity regarding the difference between right and wrong.

Often, one who is uninitiated in a discipline cannot fathom why someone else would take it so seriously. A person unfamiliar with science, bacteria, and infection, for example, will find it hard to understand why the surgical staff would dress up like clowns before open heart surgery or hip replacement. The uninitiated onlooker might gawk and think the surgical team is queer, or maybe even fanatical. Yet, to someone who understands the risks of infection, and is truly concerned for the welfare of the patient, these precautions and behaviors are downright elementary.

We do not live in Biblical times. We are not called upon to manifest our loyalty to Torah as Pinchas was. Yet Biblical narratives are meant to guide us in fundamental ways. In this case to guide us regarding our clarity and enthusiasm to moral right and wrong.

A young man or young woman may find it excessively challenging to find appropriate clothing to purchase. They may find themselves going from store to store unsatisfied with the image which the available clothing would portray them. What motivates them to keep looking? It is an enthusiasm for the moral clarity that they believe in.

Likewise, as Jews we are expected to communicate with clarity even if we think our position might not be the popular view. Like most humans we strive for the formula which will bring us as close as humanly possible to utopia. As Jews we believe that the formula is found neither in wealth, nor in the freedom to act upon any impulse or whim. Not surprisingly, we believe that the closest humankind can come to utopia is to live as a family, man and woman as husband and wife, in peace, kindness, and harmony.

With heartfelt blessings for a wonderful Shabbos!

* Rav of Southeast Hebrrew Congregation, White Oak (Silver Spring), MD and Director of Teach 613. RMRhine@Teach613.org. Teach613, 10604 Woodsdale Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901. 908-770-9072. **Donations welcome to help with Torah outreach. www.teach613.org.** Note: Rabbi Rhine is on summer vacation and has authorized his followers to use an archived Dvar Torah until he returns.

http://www.teach613.org/pinchas-someone-elses-zealot/

Shepherds for Our Communities: Thoughts on Parashat Pinchas

by Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

When Moses approached the end of his career, he asked God to appoint a new leader for the Israelites, so that “the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd” (Bemidbar 27:17). He wanted to be sure that his successor would be someone who would lead the people as a shepherd who tends his flock.

A shepherd is often lonely. A shepherd often loses sleep. A shepherd watches over the entire flock, especially the weaker sheep and the stragglers. A shepherd keeps the flock in order, making sure that all are accounted for. A shepherd leads the flock with thoughtfulness and devotion.

A shepherd fails if he can’t keep the flock in a harmonious framework. He fails if he favors the strong sheep and ignores the weaker ones. He fails if he does not look out for the welfare of the flock, but places his own personal needs before theirs.

A good shepherd is strong enough to maintain control, and gentle enough to be sensitive to the needs of each member of the flock.

To be a shepherd of sheep is challenging. To be a shepherd of a community of people is far more challenging. Moses knew from experience how difficult it was to shepherd the Israelites. His plea to God was for a successor who could lead the people effectively, honorably and harmoniously.

Moses wanted the Israelites to have a leader who would emulate the best qualities of a shepherd.

An article by Professor Christine Porath (New York Times, June 21, 2015) discusses key research on the nature of effective leadership. She notes how incivility in the work place leads to demoralization and to a decline in quality of productivity. A survey of 4500 doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel, found that 71% tied medical errors to abusive, condescending or insulting conduct by those in authority. 27% tied such behavior to patient deaths!

Various studies have demonstrated a sharp decline in efficiency and effectiveness when employees were treated with incivility. They have shown that "the number one characteristic associated with an executive's failure is an insensitive, abrasive or bullying style." Such executives may think that rudeness and bullying are signs of power; in fact, these are the very qualities that undermine the success of those executives. They have not understood that a shepherd needs to be strong, but also gentle and sensitive to the needs and feelings of others.

What is true in hospitals and industry is even truer in religious institutions. When the shepherds, whether rabbinic or lay, serve the community with selflessness, idealism and sensitivity—the result is a harmonious community where everyone feels valued and respected. When the shepherds, whether rabbinic or lay, behave in a callous and bullying manner—the community becomes demoralized. When the community feels that the shepherds are more interested in their own power than in the needs of the people, the community begins to unravel. Demoralized people stray away, lose confidence, stop attending, and stop contributing. Without genuinely devoted shepherds, "the flock of the Lord" loses direction.

In responding to Moses' request, God replied: "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is spirit, and lay your hand upon him….and you shall put of your honor upon him so that all the congregation of the children of Israel may hearken" (27:18-20).

The Me'am Lo'ez, the classic Ladino biblical commentary, explains that Joshua was a man "of spirit," a man who understood the needs and sensitivities of each person. "And I [God] know that he is a man in whom the spirit resides, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, thoughtfulness and strength, fear of God and spirit of prophecy." Joshua would be the successor to Moses because Joshua had the qualities of a genuine shepherd. He was strong and was also considerate of each person. He put the interests of the public before his own personal interests. He was not one who hungered for, or abused, power.

In asking Moses to transfer authority to Joshua, God wanted the public to witness the smooth transition of leadership to Joshua. The people needed to be assured that they would be led by a true and good shepherd, someone endowed with the spirit of God.

Selfless, devoted and talented shepherds are not easy to find. But without them, we are lost.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.
https://www.jewishideas.org/shepherds-our-communities-thoughts-parashat-pinchas-july-11-2015 **The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website jewishideas.org or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Instutite for Jewish Ideas and Ideals at this time**.

Review of the Koren Edition of the Book of Samuel

Review by Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin *

"The Koren Tanakh of the Land of Israel – Samuel," published by Koren Publishers Jerusalem in 2021, is one of the best Bible commentaries in English. I say this because of its massive easy to read scholarly material on many far-reaching subjects, contributions by twenty renowned scholars, and because I see the value of this book after I used over a hundred such books while writing my own books on the Bible, such as my many volumes on the differences between the Hebrew Bible and its Aramaic translation called Onkelos, and after I have reviewed over 8,100 books, many dealing with the Bible.

This is the second volume in the Land of Israel series. The first focused on the second book of the Five Books of Moses, Exodus, which is equally praiseworthy. This one is on the book of Samuel, which like the first book of the Bible, Genesis, is interesting because it is filled with adventurous stories. In fact, the book of Samuel is for this reason taught in the elementary level in many Hebrew schools. This translation and commentary multiplies the enjoyment. The translation follows the suggestion of Maimonides to his own translator who translated his Arabic "Guide of the Perplexed" to Hebrew: Do not translate literally, word for word, because what is idiomatic and makes sense in one language often does not make sense and sounds stilted when copied literally in another language. So, find the intent in the original and make the translation clear by inserting the intent, such as rendering vayehi vayamim harabim, which literally means "And it was many days," should be rendered in Modern English as "Years passed."

The extensive commentary with a seven page introduction to the book of Samuel is filled with enlightening and fascinating information on every page. It is by highly respected Modern Orthodox rabbis and scholars of many fields, and is very rational. Among much else, the volume explains the ancient practice of polygamy, The Lord of Hosts, why Israelites had Egyptian names, vows, bareness in the ancient Near East, wine with sacrifices, cultic objects, names having significance, symbolism of a raised horn, rock, fate, amulets, Sheol, a heavy hand, cherubim, and other terms, why leaders were anointed, priestly corruption, the three-pronged fork used with sacrifices, priestly garments, women in the priesthood in the ancient Near East, nighttime revelations, madness and superstition, prophets as royal advisers, the belief that God was present in the Ark, did God become emotionally angry, the Philistines' golden mice, carts used in rituals, and much more.

A history of surrounding nation and their customs is included, including geography, archaeology, with information about the Philistines, Egyptology, and other nations. There are many maps, charts, timelines, dates, pictures of paintings by famed artists portraying events in this biblical book, and much more. There are articles on language, on what is Tanakh, the Tabernacle, ancient Hebrew, flora and fauna, Halakha, on the beginning of the monarchy in Israel, the reign of King David, did David learn from the Philistines, David's campaigns, the authorship of the book of Samuel, why is necromancy forbidden, political marriages, and the variant versions from the Masoretic Text in the Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls.

Everyone reading the 505 pages of this excellent book or even browsing through it, whether Jew or non-Jew, even if the reader has a university education on the Bible or attended Orthodox yeshivot for many years, will benefit from this book a thousand-fold by learning more about the Bible, biblical history, its comparison with the teachings of other ancient cultures, the history of the Jewish people, the making of the monarchy in Israel, and much more.

* Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin, author of many books, often reviews new books of Jewish interest.

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/review-koren-edition-book-samuel

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Parshas Pinchas @ 2020

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer *

As the concerns over Coronavirus continue and the unknowns remain, we find ourselves isolated and bereft of community. While the Zoom sessions alleviate the loss, we still feel as though a part of life has been put on hold and taken from us. There is a Rash"i in this week's Parsha which can give us much comfort and encouragement. It may be that even now we have far more of the essentials of life than we realize.

When Moshe learns that his time is near, he begins to pray for an appropriate successor. He opens his prayer with a unique phrase referring to G-d as "Elokei Haruchos l'chol basar" – "Lord of the spirits of all flesh". Rash"i (Bamidbar 27:16) explains that this reference was itself the beginning of Moshe's prayer. Moshe was saying "Master of the World, it is revealed and known before you the mind of each and every one and they are not similar to each other. Appoint over them a leader who will bear each and every one according to his mind."

Aside from the lessons Moshe's prayer teaches us about leadership, the language Rash"i uses can give us an insight into life in general. Rash"i explains that Moshe's concern was that the leader should have the ability to bear "each and every one." Moshe was not concerned about the leader's relationship with the other officials, with the communities at large, nor even with the individual families. Moshe's concern was for the leader's relationship and interaction with each and every individual.

When we generally think of community and of leaders and government officials, we tend to think of organizations and communal structures. A leader's ability to recognize and understand individuals may help in their understanding of the masses and their ability to develop proper systems for the whole, we would not expect the individual to be their focus. They have a much greater responsibility and cannot be expected to be focused on every individual they meet. Their time must be reserved for the public and the needs of the many.
Rash"i is presenting an entirely different perspective. The function of a leader, and by extension the function of community, is to serve the individuals. This perspective requires some explanation. The Jewish nation was comprised of two and a half million individuals. It was surely not humanly possible to tend to the needs of the community and still be focused on each individual. What did Moshe expect of his successor?

Perhaps the answer can be found in Hashem's response to Moshe. Hashem begins his response by commanding Moshe "Take Yehoshua" (Bamidbar 27:18). Rash"i explains that "Take" in this context means to take him with words – to draw him in with a message of the value of what he is accepting and to tell him "You are fortunate that you merit to guide the children of the Omnipresent." Moshe was not instructed to encourage Yehoshua with the honor and glory of leadership, with the significance of public life nor with what one can accomplish when engaging on a communal level. The message to Yeshoshua was to focus on the value and significance of the people he was leading, and the great honor it is to serve them. They are princes and princesses of the most noble stock -- they are all the children of G-d, each and every one.

From this perspective, we can understand Moshe's request. The individual us not simply a part of the group. Each individual is a precious and dear irreplaceable child of G-d. Each and every one of us has a role to play in G-d's world, a role so significant and important to G-d that our Rabbis teach us (Sanhedrin 37a) "every person is obligated to say 'The world was created for me.'" A Jewish leader's role is not the group. A Jewish leader's role is to ensure that each individual can maximize their own personal connection with G-d.

Although, we currently have limited connection with others, we all still have ourselves. Our individual growth and our own individual awareness of G-d and relationship with G-d is so valuable that He creates the entire world for each of us. We each have very important work to do, even under the circumstances.

[Rabbi Singer is on vacation. He suggested that I print his Dvar Torah from last year, especially because he completed it too late for me to include with my materials last year.]

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD.

When The Walls Get Breached

by Rabbi Moshe Rube*

My mind has been on walls all week.

First we receive news of the walls collapsing in Surfside. What a blow it has been to the victims, all their loved ones, and the Jewish community as we continue to wait for more news. What a blow it has been for the Birmingham Jewish community and me personally to hear that our honored friend, Gary Cohen and his brother Brad were in there and are still missing. May Hashem have mercy.

Right after that we had the Fast of Tammuz, when we remember the breach of the Jerusalem walls. This past Sunday we gathered in KI to mourn those walls as well as pray for Gary, Brad, and all the victims of Surfside.

Joy and happiness play a central part in Jewish life. But joy can dissipate when the walls come down. "There is no joy like the release of doubt," say our Sages. When the walls fall, when our carefully constructed edifice that we've built to secure ourselves in a world of change and chance tumbles down, we are exposed. We get thrown into the midst of doubt. And we pray to Hashem for guidance.

A way to taper over our new insecurity is escape. Escape into hedonism. Escape into loud and boisterous music. Escape into impulsive Amazon purchases. But during this time of the year, Judaism challenges us to take a different path.

During these weeks until Tisha B'av, we do not listen to joyous music. On the 9th of Av, Halacha enjoins us not to study Torah except for matters that relate to the mourning of the Temple. We can't even read Isaiah's prophecies of hope.

Our Torah and modern psychology know that the only way out is through. Escape does not solve a problem and can cause the wound to fester if done too long. We cannot rebuild our lives with a new and better structure until we fully immerse ourselves in our newfound insecurity.

Not for nothing do our Sages say that "Only those who mourn for Jerusalem will see it in its joy." They do not mean to say that we will be divinely punished if we don't follow the laws of mourning. Rather, they wish to communicate the simple fact that those who have not gone through the mourning process cannot reach the state of joy when we rebuild.

We know that there are many times of joy in the Jewish calendar. The holidays are only 3 months away. And I can't wait to send out emails that have more direct statements of joy soon. But this time of the year is a different time with a different focus.

So we'll keep mourning the Temple and being with the insecurity as we still wait for news from Surfside. We'll keep praying for the Temple to be rebuilt and for the success of the rescue mission. We'll make it out by going through.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Moshe Rube

* Rabbi, Knesseth Israel Congregation, Birmingham, AL.

Rav Kook Torah
Pinchas: Atonement for the New Moon

The Torah describes the offerings presented for each holiday, starting with those brought on Rosh Chodesh, the first day of the lunar month.

> *"This is the burnt-offering of the new month, throughout the months of the year. And one male goat for a sin-offering to God."* (Num. 28: 14-15)

There is a very peculiar Talmudic tradition about the purpose of the new moon sin-offering. For whom does this offering atone? The Talmud (Chulin 60b) explains that this is literally a "sin offering for God." The offering comes to atone for God, as it were, for making the moon smaller than the sun. (According to the Midrash, the sun and the moon were initially created the same size. The moon complained, "Is it possible for two kings to rule with one crown?" and was punished by being reduced in size.) For this reason, a sin- offering is presented with the appearance of the new moon.

Is it possible to say that God sinned? That God needs atonement?

Restricting the Infinite

This monthly offering relates to the essence of the creation process. The very act of creation is problematic, confining infinite holiness within the finite boundaries of time and place. This constriction is only possible if there is a continual process of renewal, whereby the physical limits are gradually released, expanding the material boundaries.

In Hebrew, the words "month" (chodesh) and "new" (chadash) share the same root. The new month signals renewal and advancement.

The animal brought for this sin-offering is a goat. Why a goat? The goat by nature is a destructive animal, devouring not only the leaves but the branches and roots, destroying the foliage and eroding the earth. Within the order of creation, the universe requires destructive forces, in order to break down the limiting borders and push forward the renewal of existence to ever higher levels. In this context, those phenomena that would seem to be purely negative and destructive are redeemed and given cosmic significance.

The principal offering for the new month was not the sin-offering, but an olah, an all burnt-offering. The word olah means to raise up or elevate. The atonement for the constrictive nature of the physical universe — as symbolized by the reduction in the moon's size — is through the combination of the destructive forces (the goat offering) with the continual renewal and elevation of the world (the olah offering).

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 278-279. Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 165)
http://www.ravkooktorah.org/PINCHAS60.htm

The Lost Masterpiece (Pinchas 5778)

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.*

A true story that took place in 1995: It concerns the legacy of an unusual man with an unusual name: Mr Ernest Onians, a farmer in East Anglia whose main business was as a supplier of pigswill. Known as an eccentric, his hobby was collecting paintings. He used to go around local auctions and whenever a painting came on sale, especially if it was old, he would make a bid for it. Eventually he collected more than five hundred canvases. There were too many to hang them all on the walls of his relatively modest home, Baylham Mill in Suffolk. So he simply piled them up, keeping some in his chicken sheds.

His children did not share his passion. They knew he was odd. He used to dress scruffily. Afraid of being burgled, he rigged up his own home-made alarm system, using klaxons powered by old car batteries, and always slept with a loaded shotgun under his bed. When he died, his children put the paintings on sale by Sotheby's, the London auction house. Before any major sale of artworks Sotheby's puts out a catalogue so that interested buyers can see in advance what will be on offer.

A great art expert, Sir Denis Mahon (1910-2011), was looking through the catalogue one day when his eye was caught by one painting in particular. The photograph in the catalogue, no larger than a postage stamp, showed a rabble of rampaging people setting fire to a large building and making off with loot. Onians had bought it at a country house sale in the 1940s for a mere £12. The catalogue listed the painting as the Sack of Carthage, painted by a relatively little known artist of the seventeenth century, Pietro Testa. It estimated that it would fetch £15,000.

Mahon was struck by one incongruous detail. One of the looters was making off with a seven branched candelabrum. What, Mahon wondered, was a menorah doing in Carthage? Clearly the painting was not depicting that event. Instead it was portrait of the Destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. But if what he was looking at was not the Sack of Carthage, then the artist was probably not Pietro Testa.

Mahon remembered that the great seventeenth century artist Nicholas Poussin had painted two portraits of the destruction of the second temple. One was hanging in the art museum in Vienna. The other, painted in 1626 for Cardinal Barberini, had disappeared from public view sometime in the eighteenth century. No one knew what had happened to it. With a shock Mahon realised that he was looking at the missing Poussin.

At the auction, he bid for the picture. When a figure of the eminence of Sir Dennis bid for a painting the other potential buyers knew that he must know something they did not, so they too put in bids. Eventually Sir Dennis bought the painting for £155,000. A few years later he sold it for its true worth, £4.5 million, to Lord Rothschild who donated it to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem where it hangs today in the memory of Sir Isaiah Berlin.

I know this story only because, at Lord Rothschild's request, I together with the then director of the national gallery, Neil MacGregor, gave a lecture on the painting while it was shown briefly in London before being taken to its new and permanent home. I tell the story because it is so graphic an example of the fact that we can lose a priceless legacy simply because, not loving it, we do not come to appreciate its true value. From this we can infer a corollary: we inherit what we truly love.

This surely is the moral of the story of the daughters of Zelophehad in this week's parsha. Recall the story: Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, had died in the wilderness before the allocation of the land. He left five daughters but no sons. The daughters came before Moses, arguing that it would be unjust for his family to be denied their share in the land simply

because he had daughters but not sons. Moses brought their case before God, who told him: “What Zelophehad’s daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father’s relatives and give their father’s inheritance to them” (Num. 27:7). And so it came to pass.

The sages spoke of Zelophehad’s daughters in the highest praise. They were, they said, very wise and chose the right time to present their request. They knew how to interpret Scripture, and they were perfectly virtuous.[1] Even more consequentially, their love of the land of Israel was in striking contrast to that of the men. The spies had come back with a negative report about the land, and the people had said, “Let us appoint a [new] leader and return to Egypt” (Num. 14:4). But Zelophehad’s daughters wanted to have a share in the land, which they were duly granted.[2]

This led to the famous comment of Rabbi Ephraim Luntschitz of Prague (1550-1619) on the episode of the spies. Focussing on God’s words, “Send for yourself men to spy out the land of Canaan” (Num. 14:2), Luntschitz argued that God was not commanding Moses but permitting him to send men. God was saying, “From My perspective, seeing the future, it would have been better to send women, because they love and cherish the land and would never come to speak negatively about it. However, since you are convinced that these men are worthy and do indeed value the land, I give you permission to go ahead and send them.”[3]

The result was catastrophic. Ten of the men came back with a negative report. The people were demoralised, and the result was that they lost the chance to enter the land in their lifetime. They lost their chance to enjoy their inheritance in the land promised to their ancestors. The daughters of Zelophehad, by contrast, did inherit the land – because they loved it. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

I cannot help but think that in some strange way the stories of the daughters of Zelophehad and the auction of the missing Poussin illustrate the state of Jewish identity today. For many of my contemporaries Judaism was like the story of Ernest Onian’s penchant for paintings. Judaism was something their parents had but not something that was meaningful to them. Like Onians’ children they were willing to let go of it, unaware that it was a legacy of immense value. When we don’t fully appreciate the value of something, we can lose a treasure without ever knowing it is a treasure.

Judaism, of course, is not a painting. It’s an identity. And you can’t sell an identity. But you can lose it. And many Jews are losing theirs. Our ancestors have given us the gift of a past. We owe them the gift of a future faithful to that past. At least we should not relinquish it simply because we don’t know how valuable it is.

The life-changing idea here is surely simple yet profound: if we truly wish to hand on our legacy to our children, we must teach them to love it. The most important element of any education is not learning facts or skills but learning what to love. What we love, we inherit. What we fail to love, we lose.

Shabbat Shalom

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Baba Batra 110b.

[2] Sifre, Numbers, 133.

[3] Kli Yakar to Num. 13:2.

* Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I have selected an earlier Dvar. *See*

https://rabbisacks.org/lost-masterpiece-pinchas-5778/

Appointed Time

By Menachem Feldman * © Chabad 2021

The biblical word for holiday is moed, which means “appointed time” as well as “meeting.” Holidays are “appointed times” set aside for us to “meet,” for on the holiday we have the space to meet with G d and with the parts of ourselves that we sometimes overlook due to the demands and distractions of everyday life.

Each of the holidays has a unique theme and energy. Each holiday gives us the opportunity to experience and internalize the inspiration of the time: exodus and freedom on Passover, Torah and spiritual enlightenment on Shavuot, holiness and atonement on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and joy on Sukkot.

Our weekly portion, Pinchas, lists the offerings we are commanded to offer at the Holy Temple on each of these moadim. Yet, in what seems to be a departure from the overall theme, the Torah also describes the daily communal offerings. The daily offerings were mentioned earlier in the Torah, so why are they reiterated here, and more specifically, why are they reiterated in the context of the extraordinary holidays?

We tend to view our lives as divided between the ordinary and extraordinary, between the usual routine and the excitement of the novel experience, between habit and inspiration.

Indeed, there are times that feel like holidays. The hand of G d that took our ancestors out of Egypt feels once again present in our life. We feel the light from above shining brightly upon us, the wind of inspiration under our wings, and enthusiasm for life pervading our entire body. Yet there are also days that feel unremarkable and monotonous, times when we feel sapped of energy, devoid of excitement and purpose.

The Torah seeks to teach us that, in truth, every moment is a miracle and every day a holiday. There is no such thing as an ordinary day. The magnificent sunrise, the beautiful sunset, is no less an expression of Divine power than the Exodus from Egypt.

When referring to the daily offerings, the Torah says:

The L rd spoke to Moses, saying: Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering, My food for My fire offerings, a spirit of satisfaction for Me, you shall take care to offer to Me at its appointed time. The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon.1

The Torah refers to each and every day as a moed, a unique appointed time. As Rashi puts it:

At its appointed time: Each day is the appointed time prescribed for the continual offerings.

Rashi is telling us that each and every ordinary day can indeed become a moed, a holiday, a day filled with enthusiasm, holiness and joy. If we take the time to experience the blessing of life G d gifted us with, if we designate a portion of each day to fulfill the purpose of our creation, then, indeed, each and every day is a holiday.2

Footnotes:

1. Numbers 28:1-3.

2. Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likkutei Sichot, Pinchas, vol. 28, sichah 2.

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https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/4759420/jewish/Appointed-Time.htm#footnoteRef1a4759420

Pinchas: Humility in Self-Assertion

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

> *G-d said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand upon him"*
> (Numbers 27:18)

Joshua was chosen as Moses' successor by virtue of his consummate diligence in absorbing Moses' instruction — both from the Torah that Moses taught and through Moses' personal conduct. The difference in their leadership was that Moses' was largely based on miracles whereas Joshua's was conducted naturally. Therefore, it was specifically through Joshua's leadership that the purpose of Creation — to sanctify the natural, mundane world — was fulfilled.

But Joshua succeeded only because he was a selfless reflection of Moses; his selflessness enabled the miraculous nature of Moses' leadership to carry over into his own, natural leadership. Thus, Joshua's first conquest, the city of Jericho, occurred miraculously.

From Joshua we learn to be fully committed both to humbly absorbing and transmitting the heritage and lessons of the Torah as they have been handed down to us by our predecessors, and to applying the Torah's teachings to the novel situations of our generation.

* From *Daily Wisdom #1*

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Likutei *Divrei* Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah via the Internet

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Covenant and Conversation
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Moral vs. Political Decisions *[1]*

[1] This essay was written on 11 Iyar 5780, 5 May 2020. Things will have moved on since, but the issues raised here are of general significance and not always fully understood.

The coronavirus pandemic raised a series of deep moral and political issues[1]. How far should governments go in seeking to prevent its spread? To what extent should it restrict people's movements at the cost of violating their civil liberties? How far should it go in imposing a clampdown of businesses at the cost of driving many of them bankrupt, rendering swathes of the population unemployed, building up a mountain of debt for the future and plunging the economy into the worst recession since the 1930s? These are just a few of the many heart-breaking dilemmas that the pandemic forced on governments and on us.

Strikingly, almost every country adopted the same measures: social distancing and lockdown until the incidence of new cases had reached its peak (Sweden was the most conspicuous exception). Nations didn't count the cost. Virtually unanimously, they placed the saving of life above all other considerations. The economy may suffer, but life is infinitely precious and saving it takes precedence over all else.

This was a momentous victory for the value first articulated in the Torah in the Noahide covenant: "He who sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God He created man" (Gen. 9:6). This was the first declaration of the principle that human life is sacred. As the Sages put it, "Every life is like a universe. Save a life and it is as if you have saved a universe."[2]

In the ancient world, economic considerations took precedence over life. Great building projects like the Tower of Babel and the Egyptian pyramids involved huge loss of life. Even in the 20th century, lives were sacrificed to economic ideology: between six and nine million under Stalin, and between 35 and 45 million under Chinese communism. The fact that virtually all nations, in the face of the pandemic, chose life was a significant victory for the Torah's ethic of the sanctity of life.

That said, the former Supreme Court judge Jonathan Sumption wrote a challenging article in which he argued that the world, or at least Britain, had got it wrong.[3] It was overreacting. The cure may be worse than the disease. The lockdown amounted to subjecting the population to house arrest, causing great distress and giving the police unprecedented and dangerous powers. It represented "an interference with our lives and our personal autonomy that is intolerable in a free society." The economic impact would be devastating. "If all this is the price of saving human life, we have to ask whether it is worth paying."

There are, he said, no absolute values in public policy. As proof he cited the fact that we allow cars, despite knowing that they are potentially lethal weapons, and that every year thousands of people will be killed or maimed by them. In public policy there are always multiple, conflicting considerations. There are no non-negotiable absolutes, not even the sanctity of life.

It was a powerful and challenging piece. Are we wrong to think that life is indeed sacred? Might we be placing too high a value on life, imposing a huge economic burden on future generations?

I am going to suggest, oddly enough, that there is a direct connection between this argument and the story of Pinchas. It is far from obvious, but it is fundamental. It lies in the difference – philosophical and halachic – between moral and political decisions.[4]

Recall the Pinchas story. The Israelites, having been saved by God from Bilam's curses, fell headlong into the trap he then set for them. They began consorting with Midianite women and were soon worshipping their gods. God's anger burned. He ordered the death of the people's leaders. A plague raged; 24,000 died. A leading Israelite, Zimri, brought a Midianite woman, Cozbi, and cohabited with her in full view of Moses and the people. It was the most brazen of acts. Pinchas took a spear and drove it through them both. They died, and the plague stopped.

Was Pinchas a hero or a murderer? On the one hand, he saved countless lives: no more people died because of the plague. On the other hand, he could not have been certain of that in advance. To any onlooker, he might have seemed simply a man of violence, caught up in the lawlessness of the moment. The parsha of Balak ends with this terrible ambiguity unresolved. Only in our parsha do we hear the answer. God says:

"Pinchas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the Priest, has turned back My anger from the Israelites by being zealous among them on My behalf, so that I did not wipe out the Israelite people in My zeal. Therefore say: I am making with him My covenant of peace." (Num. 25:11-12)

God declared Pinchas a hero. He had saved the Israelites from destruction, showed the zeal that counterbalanced the people's faithlessness, and as a reward, God made a personal covenant with him. Pinchas did a good deed.

Halachah, however, dramatically circumscribes his act in multiple ways. First, it rules that if Zimri had turned and killed Pinchas in self-defence, he would be declared innocent in a court of law.[5] Second, it rules that if Pinchas had killed Zimri and Cozbi just before or after they were engaged in cohabitation, he would have been guilty of murder.[6] Third, had Pinchas consulted a Bet Din and asked whether he was permitted to do what he was proposing to do, the answer would have been, No.[7] This is one of the rare cases where we say Halachah ve-ein morin kein: "It is the law, but we do not make it known." And there are many other conditions and reservations. The Torah resolves the ambiguity but halachah reinstates it. Legally speaking, Pinchas was on very thin ice.

We can only understand this by way of a fundamental distinction between moral decisions and political decisions. Moral decisions are answers to the question, "What should I do?" Usually they are based on rules that may not be transgressed whatever the consequences. In Judaism, moral decisions are the province of halachah.

Political decisions are answers to the question, "What should we do?" where the "we" means the nation as a whole. They tend to involve several conflicting considerations, and there is rarely a clear-cut solution. Usually the decision will be based on an evaluation of the likely consequences. In Judaism this sphere is known as mishpat melech (the legal domain of the king), or hilchot medinah (public policy regulations).[8] Whereas halachah is timeless, public policy tends to be time-bound and situational ("a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build").

Were we in Pinchas' position, asking, "Should I kill Zimri and Cozbi?" the moral answer is an unequivocal No. They may deserve to die; the whole nation may be eyewitnesses to their sin; but you cannot execute a death sentence without a duly constituted court of law, a trial, evidence and a judicial verdict. Killing without due process is murder. That is why the Talmud rules Halachah ve-ein morin kein: if Pinchas had asked a Bet Din whether he were permitted to act as he intended, he would be told, No. Halachah is based on non-negotiable moral principle, and halachically you cannot commit murder even to save lives.

But Pinchas was not acting on moral principle. He was making a political decision. There were thousands dying. The political leader, Moses, was in a highly compromised position. How could he condemn others for consorting with Midianite women when he himself had a Midianite wife? Pinchas saw that there was no one leading. The danger was immense. God's anger, already intense, was about to explode. So he acted – not on moral principle but on political calculation, relying not on halachah but on what would later be known as mishpat melech. Better take two lives immediately, that would have been eventually sentenced to death by the court, to save thousands now. And he was right, as God later made clear.

Now we can see exactly what was ambiguous about Pinchas' act. He was a private individual. The question he would normally have asked was, "What shall I do?", to which the answer is a moral one. But he acted as if he were a political leader asking, "What shall we do?" and deciding, based on consequences, that this would save many lives. Essentially, he acted as if he were Moses. He saved the day and the people. But imagine what would happen anywhere if an ordinary member of the public usurped the role of Head of State. Had God not endorsed Pinchas' action, he would have had a very difficult time.

The difference between moral and political decisions becomes very clear when it comes to decisions of life and death. The moral rule is: saving life takes precedence over all other mitzvot except three: incest, idolatry and murder. If a group is surrounded by gangsters who say, "Hand over one of you, or we will kill you all," they must all be prepared to die rather than hand over one.[9] Life is sacred and must not be sacrificed, whatever the consequences. That is morality; that is halachah.

However, a king of Israel was permitted, with the consent of the Sanhedrin, to wage a (non-defensive) war, even though many would die as a result.[10] He was permitted to execute a non-judicial death sentence against individuals on public policy grounds (le-takken ha-olam kefi mah she-ha-sha'ah tzerichah).[11] In politics, as opposed to morality, the sanctity of life is a high value but not the only one. What matters are consequences. A ruler or government must act in the long-term interests of the people. That is why, though some will die as a result, governments are now gradually easing the lockdown provisions once the rate of infection falls, to relieve distress, ease the economic burden, and restore suspended civil liberties.

We have moral duties as individuals, and we make political decisions as nations. The two are different. That is what the story of Pinchas is about. It also explains the tension in governments during the pandemic. We have a moral commitment to the sanctity of life, but we also have a political commitment, not just to life but also to "liberty and the pursuit of happiness."[12] What was beautiful about the global response to Covid-19 was that virtually every nation in the world put moral considerations ahead of political ones until the danger began to recede.

I believe that there are moral and political decisions and they are different. But there is a great danger that the two may drift apart. Politics then becomes amoral, and eventually corrupt. That is why the institution of prophecy was born. Prophets hold politicians accountable to morality. When kings act for the long-term welfare of the nation, they are not criticised. When they act for their own benefit, they are.[13] Likewise when they undermine the people's moral and spiritual integrity.[14] Salvation by zealot – the Pinchas case – is no solution. Politics must be as moral as possible if a nation is to flourish in the long run.

[2] Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:4.
[3] Jonathan Sumption, 'Coronavirus lockdown,' Sunday Times, 5 April 2020.
[4] Too little has been written about this. For one collection of essays, see Stuart Hampshire (ed.), Public and Private Morality, Cambridge University Press, 2012.
[5] Sanhedrin 82a.
[6] Sanhedrin 81b.
[7] Sanhedrin 82a.
[8] See especially R. Zvi Hirsch Chajes, Torat Nevi'im, ch. 7, Din Melech Yisrael.
[9] Tosefta Terumot 7:20.
[10] Shavuot 35b.
[11] Rambam Hilchot Melachim 3:10.
[12] The Jewish equivalent is: Life, liberty and the pursuit of holiness.
[13] The classic cases are Nathan and David, 2 Samuel 12; Elijah and Ahab, 1 Kings 21.
[14] The standard biblical term for this is "They did evil in the eyes of the Lord," an expression that occurs more than 60 times in Tanach.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'Take for yourself Joshua the son of Nun, an individual who has spirit within him, and lay (or lean) your hand upon him. Stand him up before Elazar the Priest and before the entire congregation, and command him before their eyes. And give of your glory upon him in order that the entire congregation of the children of Israel may obey him." [Num. 27:18-20].

In these three verses we see the "passing of the guard," the succession of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Embedded within the three different actions which God commanded Moses to perform, we may begin to define three necessary aspects of traditional Jewish leadership. Firstly, Moses was to "lay his hands" upon Joshua, an act which expressed a conferral of rabbinic authority, semikha (literally a laying upon or leaning upon), from master to disciple (cf. Mishnah Sanhedrin 1:1). Since Moses was traditionally known as Moshe Rabbenu (our religious teacher or rabbi) and since Joshua is biblically and midrashically pictured as Moses' devoted disciple, it is perfectly logical to assume that the first transference from Moses to Joshua was that of religio-legal authority, conveying the law to the next generation and continuing the march of the Oral Law – Torah Se'b'al Peh – from generation to generation.

Moses is then commanded by God to "stand Joshua up" before Elazar the Priest. The Kohen Gadol or High Priest was certainly a leader in ancient Israel – but his Divine service was more spiritual than intellectual, more emotional than legal. His areas was the Sanctuary or Holy Temple. And as the Bible expresses it: "They shall make for Me a Sanctuary (a Holy Temple or Synagogue) so that I may dwell among (and within) them" (Exodus 25:8). The task of the High Priest and the Priest-teachers was to have the wherewithal to constantly bring the living word of God to the people and to inspire them with love of God and love of Torah (the Priestly Benediction). The Rav (Moshe Rabbenu) was expected to teach and interpret God's word for every generation; the High Priest was expected to ritually perform and maintain the ritual experience from generation to generation, and to inspire every Jew to feel God's loving presence within him/herself.

And finally, Moses was to "give of his glory (Hebrew hod) upon (Joshua) in order that the entire congregation of Israel may obey him," as we find referring to King Solomon who was gifted with "the glory of majesty which was unique only to him (Chronicles 1,20,25). It was precisely this glorious majesty which Moses conferred upon Joshua, which can best be translated as charismatic influence. The great British Philosopher and Chief Rabbis, Jonathan Sacks of blessed memory, defines power as a function of strength to overcome one's enemies whereas charismatic influence secures posterity and continuity. He evokes the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 21:15), which compares the giving over of power to "a pouring out from one vessel to another," whereas the conferral of influence is likened to "the kindling of one candle from another candle." When wine, for example, is poured from one goblet into another, the first goblet becomes emptied and devoid of its joy-giving liquid. Similarly, when a political leader leaves office and his successor takes over, no

authority remains in the hand of the incumbent.

How different is charismatic influence? After the initial candle has kindled its flame onto another candle, the light of the first candle has in no way become diminished; much the opposite, now there are two candles shining brightly, providing double the amount of light in the room. My revered teacher, Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik, went even one step further when he interpreted the Biblical text of our weekly portion at the celebration of my class's rabbinical ordination. The "laying of the hands" is usually interpreted as an inter-generational conferral of authority: the master from a former generation is "handing over" the authority of our ancient tradition (trado in Latin means to hand over) to the younger generation.

However, says Rav Soloveitchik, that is not the picture presented by the biblical text. The Hebrew Samokh (Semikhah) principally means to lean on, so that the picture being conveyed is that of an elderly Moses leaning with his hands upon a younger Joshua. The message seems not to be that of a young Joshua dependent on the authority of an elder Moses; it rather seems to be that of an elder Moses dependent for his support on a younger Joshua. Rabbi Soloveitchik looked at us, his student-rabbis, with great yearning and expectations. "It is I who am dependent upon you. Without you, my Torah and my unique teaching, indeed all of the traditions which I imbibed from the previous generations, will all die with me. You are my insurance policy. It is through you and your teachings that my Torah will continue to live."

This is why Moses had to put down Korah – who wanted to usurp power for a false end – but encouraged Eldad and Medad, who were influenced by a Divine spirit. And this is the true meaning of our Sages' adage that a father is never jealous of a child nor is a teacher ever jealous of a disciple. Politics yield power, which disappears in the sand-dunes of times; learning and piety breed influence, which last for all eternity. The Israelite Kings are scarcely remembered while the Israelite prophets and sages are still being studied and interpreted today. Lust for power is ultimately consumed by fiery flames, while the influence of Torah education will enable the light of the menorah to emblazon the path to the tree of life in our return to Eden.

The Person in the Parsha
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

"Zealotry and Tolerance"

Jewish people teach Jewish values to their children, and to all who wish to be informed about their faith. If one is asked "Should I or should I not?" we generally respond with clear and certain advice: "Yes, you should", if the value is a positive one, or "No, you should not", when the value in question demands inaction.

Strangely, however, there is one positive value in our religion to which we are not to respond "Yes, go and do it". I speak of the value of zealotry.

Zealous acts are noble acts in our tradition. This is illustrated in the story begun in the last week's Torah portion and concluded this week in the parsha named for the zealot Pinchas (Numbers 25:10-30:1).

Pinchas confronted a Jewish prince named Zimri in an act of idolatrous promiscuity with a Midianite woman named Kozbi. He "took a spear in his hand…And thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly." For this he is commended by the Almighty Himself, who says, "Pinchas...was very zealous for My sake… Therefore…I give unto him My covenant of peace…Because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel."

Clearly, zealotry is a divinely approved positive value. Yet, I ask you, dear reader, suppose you had witnessed such an immoral and defiant act about to take place and would come to ask me, your Rabbi, whether or not you should take up a spear and thrust it through the two sinners. Would I be permitted to encourage you to emulate Pinchas?

The Talmud, in a passage in Tractate Sanhedrin 82a, tells us that Moses himself was uncertain as to whether this act of taking human lives was permissible. Pinchas acted on his own. Indeed, the Talmud clearly states that if someone comes to inquire as to whether or not to commit such an act of extreme zealotry, he should not be instructed to do so. I, as a Rabbi, would have to discourage you from taking up the spear and taking the lives of even the most blatant of sinners.

Yet, elsewhere in the Bible and in postbiblical writings, we find others besides Pinchas who performed similar acts of zealotry. One of them is the prophet Elijah whose story we will read in the haftarah for this Shabbat (I Kings 18:46-19:21). Elijah, whom our sages equate with Pinchas, says of himself, "I have been very zealous for the Lord…The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant…"

Yet another famous example is the High Priest Matityahu, whom we all recall from the story of Hanukkah. Of him we read, "Matityahu saw a Jewish man about to offer a sacrifice on an alien altar in the presence of the entire congregation, and he was zealous, and swiftly slaughtered the man…and smashed the altar to bits; thereby, he was zealous on behalf of the Torah just as Pinchas had done to Zimri." (Maccabees I: 1:45-50)

What a paradox! Three great heroes of the Jewish people, all praised highly for their zealotry. And yet, if any of us today were to inquire of a rabbi of the highest rank, or of a Jewish court, as to whether he could emulate them and zealously harm a sinner, he would not receive permission to do so.

It is apparent that such acts of zealotry are limited to those whose motives are of the purest order, and who are moved by their sincere desires to restore the glory of God when it is publicly profaned. Zealotry is not for every man.

This is a most timely lesson. There are many members of the Jewish people today who are stirred by feelings of righteous indignation to protest actions and statements that, to them, seem blasphemous, immoral, or just plain wrong. But they dare not act, and certainly not act violently, against those actions or statements. They must first be certain that their motives are as pure and authentic as were the motives of Pinchas, Elijah, and Matityahu. And none among us can be so certain of our motives!

Our times call for a different approach entirely. Today, we must conform to an almost opposite Torah value; namely, tolerance.

Tolerance is preferable to zealotry. This is a lesson which can be found in the very text which tells of Pinchas' zealotry. After he commits his violent act, the Almighty concludes His statement of approval with the gift of "My covenant of peace." Many of our commentaries, notably that of the Netziv, emphasize that this covenant was given to Pinchas as a kind of corrective, as a way of demonstrating that, although zealotry is sometimes warranted, the ultimate Jewish value is peace.

For individuals who are sincerely motivated to be zealous, there is a helpful perspective which is recommended. That perspective encourages us to find holiness buried within heresy, and sanctity somewhere in the midst of sin. When human faults can be seen as transient aberrations which cloud so much that is good and noble, zealotry fades into the background, and kindness and compassion prevail.

This perspective is expressed so eloquently in the poetic words of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, in his brief collection, Midot HaRayah, page 84. I am indebted to my good friend, Yaakov Dovid Schulman, himself an eloquent and poetic soul, for providing me with a translation of this passage:

Tolerance: When tolerance of points of view comes from a heart that is pure and cleansed of all evil, that tolerance is not liable to chill the flame of holy feelings containing simple faith —which is the source of all life. Instead, that tolerance broadens and magnifies the foundation of heaven-directed fervor.

Tolerance is armed with a very great faith. Ultimately, it realizes the complete impossibility of a soul being emptied of all

holy life. This is because the life of the living God fills all life. And so, even where actions come out in a destructive fashion, where points of view collide into heresy, there still must be —in the midst of the heart, in the depth of the soul—the living light of hidden holiness. And this is apparent in the good aspects that we find in many corners, even on those ravaged avenues touched by heresy and corroded by doubt.

From the midst of this great, holy knowledge and faith comes tolerance, which encircles everything with a thread of kindness.
"I will assemble Jacob, all of you!" (Micah 2:12) Words to remember, especially today.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Still Looking to Improve at Age 120: Moshe's Mussar Method Modification

The narration at the beginning of Parshas Pinchas is really a culmination of the incident at the end of Parshas Balak where, in an act of religious zealotry, Pinchas executes the Prince of the Tribe of Shimon, together with a Midyanite Princess, when the two were engaged in an act of immorality. In this week's parsha, Moshe is commanded to take revenge against the Midyanites for their heinous act of having their daughters seduce the men of Israel into committing acts of idolatry and sexual immorality.

The truth of the matter is that the battle against Midyan does not occur in Parshas Pinchas. It occurs in Parshas Matos. There we have again the command from G-d to Moshe to take revenge against the Midyanites, and there the command is linked with Moshe's death: "… And afterwards you will be gathered to your nation." [Bamidbar 31:2]. In Matos, Moshe gathers an army of 12,000 men. They attack Midyan and kill out their kings. However, rather than killing out the women, the Jewish soldiers capture them and bring them back to Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe is not pleased. He became angry with the officers: "Have you kept the women alive?" [Bamdibar 31:15]. What is with you? The women were the cause of this whole tragedy, and now you are keeping them alive?

Then the pasuk says further "Elazar the Kohen said to the men of the army who came back from the battle, 'This is the decree of the Torah which Hashem commanded Moshe…'" [Bamidbar 31:21-24].

In addition to the women, the soldiers came back with much booty of war—the "vessels of Midyan." This is the only place where the Torah states the laws of kashering (purging absorbed non-kosher food from the vessels in which they were cooked). Interestingly, this parsha is not told to Bnei Yisrael by Moshe Rabbeinu, but rather by his nephew, Elazar.

Rashi explains: Since Moshe became angry here, he made a mistake. Even though he became angry for legitimate reasons (he was chastising them—how did they dare keep the women alive) nevertheless, once he lost his temper, he erred. Rashi cites several incidents throughout the Torah where Moshe became angry, and as a result, he forgot the halacha. One of the examples Rashi cites is the incident in Parshas Chukas, "Hear you, you rebellious people!" (when the people were complaining about lack of water). This incident caused Moshe to lose his opportunity to enter Eretz Yisrael. Again, once he became angry, he made a mistake (by hitting the rock rather than speaking to it, according to Rashi's interpretation there). For this reason, the parsha of the "Vessels of Midyan" was given through Elazar, rather than through Moshe.

Parshas Devorim begins with "These are the words that Moshe spoke to all of Israel in Transjordan, in the Midbar, in the Aravah, opposite the Sea of Reeds, between Paran and Tofel, and Lavan and Chatzeiros, and Di-Zahav." [Devorim 1:1] Rashi on this, the first pasuk in Sefer Devorim, paraphrasing the Sifrei, writes: Each one of the places mentioned in pinpointing the location of this address alludes to some type of subtle chastisement that Moshe Rabbeinu was giving the people. The Sifrei elaborates on the message of the various locations: In the "Midbar" – to remind them of how they made the Almighty angry in the Wilderness. "B'Aravah" – reminded them of how they sinned in Aravah with their worship of Baal Peor. "Mul Suf" refers to Yam Suf. "Bein Lavan u'bein Tofel" – refers to how they badmouthed the mann, which was white (lavan). Virtually every word of this one pasuk alludes to chastisement.

I saw an interesting observation in a sefer called Maor v'Shemesh from Rav Klonimus Kalman haLevi Epstein. Chazal say that the word "Eleh" always excludes what had been mentioned previously. On the words "V'Eleh haMishpatim asher tasim lifneihem" [Shemos 21:1] Rashi points out that "Eleh" always excludes that which came prior.

The Maor v'Shemesh says that Moshe Rabbeinu "learned a lesson" (if we may use this terminology) over here. These are the last days of his life. Moshe said to himself, "I have made some mistakes in the past. One major mistake I made in the past was that I was too harsh with them. I have been too explicit with them in my criticism. I called them 'Morim' (you rebellious ones). [Bamidbar 20:10]" Now Moshe Rabbeinu decides he is going to take a different approach. He is going to give mussar, but he is going to do it subtly. "I will remind them of all the places they acted inappropriately, but I will do it derech remez (by hinting), because that is that way that mussar must be delivered.

There are two ways of giving mussar. When somebody does something wrong, you can say to him "How did you do that?" or you can say "How could you do that?" When the emphasis is on the word "that," the implication is that you have done a horrible thing. When the emphasis is on the word "you," the implication is that the act might not be so horrible, but a person of your great stature should not be doing it.

The famous Shaloh teaches a profound lesson on the pasuk in Mishlei "Al Tochach Letz pen Yisnaeka; hocheach l'chacham v'ye'ehavecha" [Mishlei 9:8] – (which on the surface means, do not give mussar to the cynic, for he will hate you, but give it to the wise person and he will love you). The Shaloh writes that this is not talking about two different people. It is the same person; however every person has a side of him that is a letz (a cynic) and a side of him that is a chochom (wise person). The Shaloh interprets the pasuk to be teaching that when giving mussar to a person, appeal to the wise man within him—do not beat down the cynic within him.

That is what Moshe Rabbeinu is teaching us here. In the past, I have taken the approach of giving mussar to the "letz," as when I said "Hear yea you rebellious ones!" However, now, at the end of his life, Moshe Rabbeinu says, "I am going to change my approach. I am going to give mussar, but only in the most discreet of terms."

The truth of the matter is that giving mussar is not really something that we should do on a normal basis. As the Chazon Ish writes [Hilchos Shechita, end of Siman 2], we do not know how to give mussar nowadays. Unless a person is a Rav or in a position of authority (e.g., a teacher or a Rebbi), it is not for us to chastise our fellow man, because we really do not know how to do it.

However, in one area we must all give mussar. In this area, we are obligated to chastise. That area is in the raising of our children. The lesson of the Shaloh haKodosh is that there is a right way to give chastisement to our children and there is a wrong way. The wrong way is to chastise the "Letz" within them. Rather, appeal to the "Chochom" within them. As Mishlei teaches, "Chastise the wise and they will love you."

This is one lesson. The other lesson is that Moshe Rabbeinu is now 120 years old. He has been in this business for the last forty years. He did a very good job. Most people, who have been at something for forty years, with the success that Moshe Rabbeinu had in his career, think to themselves, "There is nothing more for me to learn about how to do this business." However, Moshe Rabbeinu, on the very last day of his life, is looking at himself and saying, "You know what? I made mistakes along the way. My mussar sometimes was too strong. I got angry. 'I lost my temper.' I am going to try a different approach."

The different approach is that the benign-sounding pasuk at the beginning of Sefer

Devorim was his "mussar shmooz". At age 120, after doing this for forty years, Moshe Rabbeinu said, "Let us try something new." This is a lesson for all of us, no matter our age. I am a firm believer in the principle that a person is always in the child-raising business until he leaves this world, but even if we are not in the active child raising business anymore, we should all be in the business of learning how to improve our interpersonal skills. If Moshe Rabbeinu, at the end of his days, could introspect and say, "I have to change my approach", at least sometimes we need to look at ourselves and say, "I need to change my approach" as well.

Dvar Torah
Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

What is the hallmark of a great leader? In Parashat Pinchas we find Moshe appealing to Hashem prior to his passing, to appoint his successor. This would be in order to guarantee a smooth transition of authority from one leader to the next. But what would the qualities of the next leader need to be? Moshe said to Hashem, please appoint a man, "אשר יצא לפניהם ואשר יבא לפניהם – who will go out ahead of the people and come in ahead of the people …ולא תהיה עדת ה' כצאן אשר אין להם רעה – in order that the assembly of the nation should not appear to be like sheep who have no shepherd".

Why did Moshe use this particular comparison? The Ktav Sofer explains beautifully – he says, often when a shepherd guides his sheep, he allows them to run ahead to pasture, while he remains at the back, with his staff in hand in order to keep the flock together. Therefore somebody looking at this flock might not notice the shepherd lagging behind – they might appear as sheep who have no shepherd.

Why is the shepherd doing this, asks the Ktav Sofer? He is doing it to protect himself. If a thief or a wild animal should attack, at least the shepherd would be able to flee for his own life.

Moshe was appealing to Hashem for the next leader to be visible, who would be there for their sake and not merely to protect his own position. Let the next leader be one who will go out ahead of the people always, in order to guarantee their successful future.

Ever since that time, our nation has been blessed with some truly outstanding leaders who have gone out ahead of the nation, who have been visible and who have been trailblazers. It is as a result of these courageous leaders of conviction that our nation has not appeared as sheep who have no shepherd.

OTS Dvar Torah

Leading a Desert Generation
Rabbi Yehuda Shtauber

Historically, two main approaches to defining suitable leaders have appeared in the study of leadership in the Western world. One approach suggests that a leader is a celebrated individual with personality traits that set him or her apart from the rest of the nation. The fundamental premise behind this approach is that there are universally shared, optimal character traits independent of the time in which the leaders were active or of the events that shaped them into suitable leaders.

Scholars attempted to locate these character traits in various leaders, to no avail, and anyone who wished to define leaders based on these attributes would end up disappointed. Another scholarly approach came into being, with a definition of suitable leaders based on the leader's characteristics and how they are manifested in light of the reality in which they assumed their leadership (as opposed to leadership based on "fixed basic characteristics"). According to this view, the criteria used to assess whether people are suitable leaders must include the cultural zeitgeist and the events that transpired when they were at the helm. Moreover, it has become virtually impossible to compare between leaders who had lived at different times and had faced very different realities.

In Parashat Chukat, after Moses and Aaron sinned in the Mei Merivah affair, Hashem punished them, preventing them from leading the Jewish people into their land. The Shadal (Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto) writes the following regarding the nature of their sin:

Moshe Rabbenu committed one sin, and the commentators heaped on him thirteen more sins, for each of them came up with a new one… thus all my life I restrained myself from investigating the matter, fearing that a new interpretation may emerge from the investigation, when I, too, will have added a new sin on Moshe Rabbenu".

In light of this vagueness with regard to their sin, we'll try to propose another explanation for why Moses and Aaron did not merit to enter the land of Israel. It would be appropriate to look into what the roots of their sin were. It would seem that at that time, Israelite complaints were a well-known and everyday occurence. What, then, would have driven Moses and Aaron to react so harshly? Why did they feel so desparate, and why did they want to run away from their own people?

We might be able to find the answer to that question by looking into the identity of the complainers, instead of examining the content of the complaint. This event occurred on the fortieth year after the Israelites left Egypt. The generation that witnessed it was not made up of those who left Egypt, who had died after the sin of the spies; it was their children's generation. Moses acted rather forgivingly toward their parents' generation, who had a "slave mentality", but he placed much higher hopes on the change he would manage to bring about in the next generation, which was about to face complex challenges. Yet here, during an episode reflecting one of the first times they needed to face hardships, the children's generation exhibited weakness. In the eyes of Moses and Aaron, the nation has reverted to its original "slave-like" nature. It was a new generation, yet it used the same mantras and voiced the same complaints as their parents did. This left Aaron and Moses feeling very bitter.

Later in the parsha, a dramatic turn of events occurs as the nation suprisingly changes for the better. It takes responsibility for its war against the Canaanites, without involving Moses (the text emphasizes this with the words "and Israel swore an oath… and Hashem heeded Israel's call"). Later, the Israelites even chant a song of praise, at their own initiative ("And then Israel sang", in contrast with the well-known Song of the Sea, which begins with Moses leading the way: "Then Moses sang…"). Ultimately, when the Israelites tried to coordinate their passage through the lands of the Amorites, and later fought them after their appeal was rejected, Moses completely "vanished" from the scene. The Israelites themselves dispatched emissaries to negotiate with Sihon (in contrast to the emissaries to the king of Edom, who were dispatched by Moses).

It is now crystal-clear that a dramatic change is underway. The Israelites are taking responsibillty for their situation, and contending with difficult challenges, while Moses, their leader, remains minimally involved.

What caused this about-face in the nation's behavior? To answer that question, we need to review the sequence of events. Notably, the change had occurred immediately after Aaron's death. The people seemed to be going through an accelerated process of maturation. It was precisely this feeling of "orphanhood" after the deaths of Miriam and Aaron, coupled with Moses' impending death, that caused the Israelites to internalize that there was no leader who would face upcoming challenges or take responsibility on their behalf, or in their stead.

If we revisit the reason that Moses did not enter the land of Israel, in light of the events discussed here, we'll realize that it may bit a bit more involved than we originally thought. Moses' behavior was intense and formidable, and it essentially deprived the nation of the ability to produce their own forces and develop a capacity to face hardship by taking responsibility for the situation.

The kind of leadership best-suited to a populace that had left Egypt and maintained a slave-like mindset isn't what was needed to face a new reality and the emerging challenges at the entrance to the land. Perhaps, in this new reality that the nation was about to encounter, a less intense and more inclusive leadership was in order, one that could produce a vast network of local leaders.

The need for a shift in the leadership paradigm emerges in our Parsha, Parshat Pinchas, as reflected in the appointment of Moses' successor. Moses wanted a leader that could fill his enormous shoes, one who would continue treating the Israelites as a hapless flock of sheep needing a leader to do everything for them: "Let Hashem, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community. Who shall go out before them and come in before them, and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that Hashem's community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd."

Hashem's response to Moses was complicated. On the one hand, He heeds Moses' call to appoint a leader: "and Moses spoke unto Hashem, saying"! On the other hand, Hashem was telling him that a new type of leadership was needed.

Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him… But he shall present himself to Eleazar the priest, who shall on his behalf seek the decision of the Urim before Hashem. By such instruction they shall go out and by such instruction they shall come in, he and all the Israelites, the whole community.(Numbers 27:18-21)

Before his death, Moses asked that a suitable leader be appointed, one who would act as he did. On one side, an absolute leader, and on the other, a nation being led. Hashem's answer to Moses was that leadership needed to evolve along with the changing reality. The new leader would need to evolve, and the rest of the nation would need to evolve with him. It was high time for the people to face up to its responsibilities.

Indeed, the impact of this joint leadership is easily noticeable during Joshua's term as leader of the Israelites, and it's clear to us how relevant that leadership was for that time. The Israelites never pinned the blame on Joshua when they complained. Even when referring to serious incidents, such as the affair of the Gibeonites, the nation complained about its chieftains. This joint leadership moderated the criticism levelled at the "chief".

Though many passages in the biblical text imply that the reason that Moses did not enter the land of Israel was that he had sinned at Mei Merivah, this explanation suggests that there may have been another reason, one that has nothing to do with any particular sin that Moses had committed. This is hinted at in Moses' last supplication to Hashem to enter the land of Israel, in Parshat Va'etchanan. Hashem's response leads to the understanding that perhaps, Moses' sin could be forgiven. However, there was another reason Moses would not be allowed in.

"But Hashem was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me."

The reason wasn't just that a sin was committed. The decision was made on account of the Jewish people. It was for their own good. The people needed new leadership. New leadership forces needed to be produced from within the nation, so that it could cope with the ever-changing and complex reality of the land of Israel. What was needed was a leader who, as he led, involved others who would stand together and face a new challenge, both physical and spiritual, in their new life in the land of Israel.

Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org
Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky
Never Too Early to Prepare for Rosh Hashana

The summer is first beginning and Rosh Hashana appears a long way off. Many shuls have begun plans for Yomim Noraim. In todays challenging times, extra preparation must be made to prepare for a safe celebration of these special days. This week's parsha begins our preparation. The mitzvah of shofar appears in two places. In parshas Pinchas, Rosh Hashana is described as a yom teruah - a day of sounding the shofar. In parshas Emor, however, the actual blowing of the shofar isn't mentioned, rather Rosh Hashana is referred to as a day of zichron teruah - a time to remember the sounding of the shofar without actually blowing. Chazal suggest that the two pesukim are referring to different days of the week Rosh Hashana can occur. When Rosh Hashana falls out on a weekday it is a yom teruah - an actual day of blowing. The phrase zichron teruah is applicable when Rosh Hashana occurs on Shabbos. Although the Talmud Bavli in the fourth perek of Rosh Hashana rejects this interpretation of these two pesukim, the Talmud Yerushalmi does accept this resolution. The Talmud Yerushalmi accepts the view that the shofar is not sounded on Shabbos according to Torah law based on these two pesukim. The Talmud Bavli concludes that according to Torah law the shofar is always sounded. We do not blow shofar on Shabbos according to the view of the Talmud Bavli is rabbinic in nature. Chazal decreed not to blow on Shabbos because they were concerned one may carry the shofar in an area in which carrying is prohibited on Shabbos.

The view of the Yerushalmi, that the shofar is not blown on Shabbos according to Torah law derived from these two pesukim, poses a challenge. We are taught in the first mishna of the fourth perek of Rosh Hashana that they used to blow the shofar in the Beis Hamikdash even on Shabbos. What is the source in the pesukim for differentiating between the Beis Hamikdash and the rest of the world as to whether one should blow shofar or merely recite the pesukim that reference the shofar when Rosh Hashana occurs on Shabbos? The Yerushalmi solves the dilemma by citing a pasuk from parshas Pinchas. Following the commandment of yom teruah - which obligates us to actually blow the shofar, the Torah continues to instruct us as to the unique korbanos that are offered as the musaf on Rosh Hashana. These pesukim teach us that in the Beis Hamikdash where the korban musaf is offered, actual tekias shofar must occur even on Shabbos.

This connection between shofar and mikdash can be understood not only in a halachic sense. The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva notes that clearly tekias shofar is not just a mitzvah, but it is also a call to teshuva. On a day when our very lives hang in the balance, as the Books of Life and Death are opened, there is a tremendous opportunity to refocus on our priorities, which ultimately enables us to embark on the process of teshuva. It is this similar feeling that a person experiences when visiting the Beis Hamikdash. The Ramban in the beginning of Sefer Vayikra comments that when a person offers a korban he begins to realize that according to the strict rules of justice any sin should bring about immediate punishment. Yet, Hashem in His mercy gives us the vehicle of teshuva and kappara. By experiencing his korban being offered, the baal teshuva realizes that his life should have been taken from him and it is only the love and compassion of Hashem which keeps him alive. The shofar on Rosh Hashana and the korbanos that atone both highlight how our lives depend on Hashem's kindness. By acknowledging how frail our very existence is, we turn to Hashem and begin the process of teshuva.

As we begin the period of mourning for the Beis Hamikdash, we acknowledge how difficult it is for us to return to Hashem and attain atonement for our misdeeds. We mourn the loss of korbanos as a vehicle of teshuva. Yet, even now not all is lost. Although difficult, teshuva can be attained even in the absence of a Beis Hamikdash. The very fast days we observe mourning the loss of the Beis Hamikdash can themselves be a source of atonement. The teshuva, tefilla, and tzedaka associated with Shiva Asar B'Tamuz and Tisha B'Av can pave the way for the new Beis Hamikdash as we return to Hashem. Soon after Tisha B'Av begins, the month of Elul, with the sound of the shofar, awakens us once again to return. Although it may seem that Rosh Hashana is far away, if we listen carefully we can hear the call of the shofar beginning to sound even now. May Hashem help us to open our hearts and help us use these next several months in a proper way, enabling us to hear the shofar of teshuva that will lead to the shofar of Moshiach and binyan Beis Hamikdash.

Torah.Org Dvar Torah
by Rabbi Label Lam

A Mistake is Made Holy!

On the 17th of Tamuz the Tablets were broken! (Tractate Taanis)
The Tablets and the Broken Tablets rest in the Ark. (Brochos 8)

Now it came to pass when he drew closer to the camp and saw the calf and the dances that

Moshe's anger was kindled, and he flung the tablets from his hands, shattering them at the foot of the mountain. (Shemos 32:19)

And HASHEM said to Moshe: "Hew (carve) for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones. And I will inscribe upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. (Shemos 34:1)

And there was no other prophet who arose in Israel like Moshe, whom the HASHEM knew face to face, as manifested by all the signs and wonders, which HASHEM had sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and all his servants, and to all his land, and all the strong hand, and all the great awe, which Moshe performed before the eyes of all Israel.

before the eyes of all Israel: [This expression alludes to the incident where] his heart stirred him up to smash the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, "and I shattered them before your eyes" And [regarding Moses shattering the Tablets,] the Holy One Blessed is He gave His approval, as Scripture states, "(the first Tablets) which you shattered"; [G-d said to Moshe:] "Yasher Koach – Well done for shattering them!" – Rashi

Let us try to put the puzzle together. The 17th of Tamuz is a fast day which was brought about because of a number of tragedies that befell the Jewish people on this ominous day. Firstly, Moshe shattered the Luchos, the Tablets on this date. 40 days after the Nation of Israel stood united at Mount Sinai and heard The Almighty Himself pronounce, "I AM HASHEM…" and "Don't have any other gods before Me", because of delay in Moshe's arrival, a Golden Calf was created. When Moshe saw this he shattered those precious stones that were carved by the Finger of G-d".

Why did Moshe break those Tablets? What was the reasoning? The Meshech Chochmah, Meir Simcha from Dvinsk explains that Moshe understood that this golden idol was created because the Jewish People were looking for an intermediary. That's how idolatry devolves from a belief in HASHEM, as the Rambam explains in his introduction to the Laws of Idolatry. Since Moshe was delayed they formulated their own new medium. That's the birth of idol worship.

People who feel a deep urge to merge with Divinity end up seeking out cheap substitutes that make fewer demands on them. They fashion a god in their imperfect image rather than shaping themselves in the Image of G-d!

Moshe feared correctly that the Jewish People would latch onto the Luchos and worship them. Therefore he shattered them, landing a profound lesson that no intermediaries are tolerable.

So the 17th day of Tamuz is a fast day because of the national tragedy that the Luchos were smashed. Then at very end of Chumash Moshe is congratulated and applauded for having broken those Tablets. So was it a good thing or a bad thing? Then the Talmud tells us that the Tablets (the 2nd) and the broken Tablets rest in the Aron, which resides in the Holy of Holies, the most sacred and spiritual zone in the physical universe.

What's the story with these broken Tablets? Are they a symbol of misfortune or great fortune?

The fact that they had to be broken exposed a giant fault line in the spirit of our nation that needed to be cured. Moshe employed a shock treatment that made a lasting impression to the eyes and hearts of all Israel and he triggered a wave of Teshuvah for the next 80 days, until Moshe returned with a 2nd set of Luchos on Yom Kippur, indicating that that our relationship with HASHEM had been repaired.

So we see that although a terrible tragedy took place and there was an urgent need for some serious repair, but once a life lesson is learned, then even a mistake is made holy!

BS"D

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subject: **Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur**
Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Pinchos 5781

1 – Topic – A lesson from the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu - Yehoshua

As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Pinchos, as we are in the first Shabbos of the three weeks, the Bein Hamitzarim, the time we think about Eretz Yisrael and Kavod Shamayim. Let me begin with a Vort on the Parsha and a Vort for this time of the year the Three Weeks.

In this week's Parsha we have of course Moshe Rabbeinu kind of asking or requesting from the Ribbono Shel Olam to appoint someone to succeed him. Although he wanted his children to succeed him, Yehoshua his main Talmid was the one who did.

Chazal tell us as is found in Maseches Bava Basra 75a (7 lines from the bottom) (**פני משה כפני חמה פני יהושע כפני לבנה**). Moshe Rabbeinu was as bright as the sun and Yehoshua was as bright as the moon. In other words, the Ruchniasdika glow of Moshe Rabbeinu was as powerful as the sun and in comparison Yehoshua was like the moon. When Klal Yisrael saw that, Yidden said, (**אוי לה לאותה בושה אוי לה לאותה כלימה**). Woe to the Busha and Klima. Poshut Pshat that we have such a Yerida, such a lowering of the generations that Yehoshua is only (**כפני לבנה**).

I would like to share with you a thought that Rav Leib the son of the Chofetz Chaim said in the name of his father. I was reminded of it this week. I had seen it I believe in Neturai Torah but I am not certain. Rav Leib asked his father, what are they saying (**אוי לה לאותה בושה**) as if they are deriding Yehoshua, (**אוי לה לאותה בושה אוי לה לאותה כלימה**) we have a leader like Yehoshua. Sof Sof, the fact is that Yehoshua was the one of the generation, how are they deriding him by talking about (**אוי לה לאותה בושה אוי לה לאותה כלימה**)? To that the Chofetz Chaim expressed the following thought on this Maimar Chazal beginning with a Mashul.

The Chofetz Chaim told the story of a man that was a wealthy diamond dealer. He was an Ashir. It came a point that he had to travel to Africa to go to the place where the diamonds are mined in order to be able to help his business along. He was looking for someone to accompany him on this difficult trip as there was no first class in the time of those generations. One Yid who was one of the Aniyim in town agreed to accompany him on his trip. You understand already that they traveled together and this Ani was Meshameish, he served the wealthy man whatever was needed. During the trip he learned about diamonds. He learned how to tell the difference between a good diamond and a not good diamond, how to price diamonds, how to purchase diamonds and be able to sell them at a profit. By the time he came back six weeks later, he had training in dealing with diamonds. When he came back, he started his own diamond business and he also was successful and based on what he had learned he in turn became a wealthy person.

The people in town looked at him with great jealousy. He said why are you jealous of me, the rich man is a rich man. They said no. He is an Ashir. Every town has rich people and poor people. When we looked at him we didn't feel any jealousy. When we look at you we say look, you are one of us, we are a bunch of Aniyim in town. But what happened? He needed someone to accompany him. I could have done it too, I could have gone along with him. I didn't go along with him. You went along with him and for those 6 weeks of bother, of Tircha, you ended up a wealthy man. We say to ourselves why weren't we like you? Why didn't we take the opportunity when we had the opportunity?

Zagt the Chofetz Chaim, Moshe Rabbeinu was Moshe Rabbeinu, his face was like the sun and nobody was jealous because they understood that Lo Kam K'moshe. But then they looked at Yehoshua and they said Yehoshua was a Talmid, just he was the Talmid who as is found in Shemos 33:11 (לֹא יָמִישׁ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל) he was the constant Talmid, all the time a Talmid. I could have done that too. Why didn't I do that?

(**אוי לה לאותה בושה**). They looked at Yehoshua and they saw that he was a moon. What was Yehoshua? He was someone who shined back what he had from Moshe Rabbeinu. People said (**אוי לה לאותה בושה**). They were not deriding Yehoshua. They were talking about their own Busha, that they deserved to be ashamed. They deserved to be embarrassed. (**אוי לה לאותה בושה**). We could have done it. We could have been the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu.

The lesson being that a person has to seize the opportunities when he could connect to someone who helps lift him up, connect to that person. Connect to him. If you didn't do it to your Rebbi until now, find a Rebbi now, find a Rav now, find someone to connect to. It will lift you up, it will bring you higher, it will elevate you. That is the lesson of the Chofetz Chaim (**אוי לה לאותה בושה**). Not deriding Yehoshua. But looking at Yehoshua who was (**כפני לבנה**). His entire greatness came because of his association with his Rebbi, with Moshe Rabbeinu. Oi, we should have done the same. This is a thought on Parshas Pinchos. A lesson from the Talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu.

I will add what has been noted by many. Yehoshua was a great Talmid. We find two times in Kol Hatorah Kulo that Moshe Rabbeinu speaks directly to Yehoshua. Both times he is criticizing him. In Parshas Behaloscha when Yehoshua says to Moshe Rabbeinu as is found in 11:28 (אֲדֹנִי מֹשֶׁה, כְּלָאֵם) silence (אֶלְדָּד וּמֵידָד). Moshe Rabbeinu responds in 1:29 (וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל-עַם יְרוָנ, נְבִיאִים). Why are you saying that? Yehoshua you are wrong.

We find another place in Parshas Ki Sisa when Yehoshua says as is found in 32:17 (קוֹל מִלְחָמָה, בַּמַּחֲנֶה). Moshe Rabbeinu says you are wrong and he explains to him what it is that he is hearing. Rashi says he tells him that a Manhig has to understand what he is hearing when he hears the people. The lesson of the Torah and the two times that Moshe Rabbeinu talks to Yehoshua and he is critical of him, is that what is a Talmid, a Talmid is someone who can take the criticism and learn from it and not look at it in a negative way. That is the Yehoshua that we should all aspire to be.

2 – Topic – A Thought about the Three Weeks

As you know, the Vilna Gaon tried very much to go to visit Eretz Yisrael. He put effort into it. He wrote a good bye letter to his wife, a fascinating letter. The Igeres HaGR"A is really a letter from which we can learn much. He writes to his wife that I will come back. In an amusing line he writes, of

course I am coming back don't you see I left my Seforim? He left his children also. He is coming back. He wanted to be in Eretz Yisrael.

We know that many Rishonim hold that there is a Mitzvah of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael. Is there any Mitzvah to go to Eretz Yisrael temporarily and come back? This is a Machlokes between the Maharit and his Talmid the Keneses Hagedola of the earliest Achronim.

The Maharit in a Teshuva Cheilek Bais Teshuva Chaf Ches says that there is no Mitzvah to just visit, the Mitzvah is to live there. The Keneses Hagedola in Even Ezer Siman Ayin Hei S'if Kotton Chaf Zayin quotes him and he brings the words of his Rebbi and disagrees. He says even to visit Eretz Yisrael and be there for a little while is a Mitzvah. After all, the Gemara says in Maseches Kesubos 111a (12 lines from the bottom) (**כל המהלך ארבע אמות בארץ ישראל מובטח לו שהוא בן העולם הבא**). It must be some sort of a Mitzvah if there is some Zechus in Olam Habo to walk there.

The Rambam brings it L'halacha in the 5th Perek of Hilchos Melachim (Sefer Shoftim) in 5:11 (**אפילו הלך בה ארבע אמות זוכה לחיי העולם הבא**). So obviously there is some sort of a Mitzvah.

The Maharit disagrees. The Maharit brings a Raya from Shulchan Aruch from the Teshuvas HaRosh which is in the Shulchan Aruch. In Yore Dai'a 228:36 (מי שנדר לעלות לארץ ישראל). Someone who took an oath to go to Eretz Yisrael (יש לו התרה), it is possible to be Matir Neder such a Neder.

We have a rule that Nidrei Mitzvah, if something is a Mitzvah we are not Matir Neder. It must be that just to go to Eretz Yisrael without living there is not a Mitzvah, it is a Zechus but it is not a Mitzvah. This is the dispute between the Maharit who holds that it is not a Mitzvah and the Keneses Hagedola who holds that even going temporarily is also a Mitzvah.

Now if it is not a Mitzvah it needs an explanation. Why did the GR"A go through such pain and such difficulty and such Bitul Zman to try to visit Eretz Yisrael, he was not successful. I thought well let's see what does the GR"A says in Yore Dai'a. Guess what? In Yore Dai'a 228:36 where it says that if someone swears to go to Eretz Yisrael he could be Matir Neder, the GR"A there in his Haga, in his notes on Shulchan Aruch, he explains that Hataras Nedarim works for someone who is Oleh L'eretz Yisrael by sending us to another place in Yore Dai'a where we find in S'if 42 that certain Nidrei Mitzvah do have an Hatara. So the GR"A is saying it is a Mitzvah. Ai the Maharit's proof? The Maharit says why can you be Matir Neder? The GR"A in a few words says look in S'if 42. There are exceptions.

Al Kol Panim, there is a difference of opinion on the matter. What is interesting is that the Mishna Brura in Siman 248 in Hilchos Shabbos S'if Kotton 28 brings the two opinions, he actually brings the two opinions if there is a Mitzvah to go up to Eretz Yisrael if you are going up only for a visit, only temporarily. The point that I want to make is if you are going to Eretz Yisrael temporarily and you hold that it is not a Mitzvah, how do we understand the tremendous desire and Teshuka of Gedolim to go to Eretz Yisrael?

I want to share with you something that we in Chutz L'aretz have to understand. Chibas Eretz Yisrael, a love for Eretz Yisrael is not just a nice thing, it is not just loving good things. Ohavei Hashem Si'nu Ra, we have love for the Ribbono Shel Olam and we have hatred for bad. This is something good. It is much more than that. Chibas Eretz Yisrael is a lifeline of Yidden in Galus. It is a lifeline. It keeps Yidden from assimilating, it keeps Yidden from blending in, it keeps Yidden having protection from Shamayim.

The Chasam Sofer in Devarim Reish Perek Chaf Vav says B'chol Makom She'holchu Bnei Yisrael L'galus U'teshukasam L'eretz Yisrael, in whatever country Jews were in Galus and they had a Teshuka, a desire, Yaguru Bishalom, they lived in peace in Chutz L'aretz. You hear this? If you have Chibas Eretz Yisrael that is a Zechus to live B'shalom, the Goyim will leave us alone.

He says that is what happened in Mitzrayim, as long as the Shevatim said "Lagur" B'aretz Banu, we are strangers in this land, so Pharoh didn't start up with them. Only as is found in Shemos 1:6 (וַיָּמָת יוֹסֵף וְכָל-אֶחָיו, וְכֹל הַדּוֹר הַהוּא) and then (וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ). Only later.

Zagt the Chasam Sofer this is true in every station of our Galus. Wherever we go if we have a Hishtokekus to Eretz Yisrael, we have a Chavivos for Eretz Yisrael, if have a desire for Eretz Yisrael then our heads are on straight and it works.

Zagt the Chasam Sofer that we say in the second Parsha of Krias Shema as is found in Devarim 11:17 (וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה, מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה). It says that Klal Yisrael is going to go into a Galus. They are going to go into a Galus. (וְשַׂמְתֶּם אֶת-דְּבָרַי אֵלֶּה, עַל-לְבַבְכֶם). (לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם, וִימֵי בְנֵיכֶם, עַל הָאֲדָמָה). That if you want to be Matzliach you have to keep in mind the Teshuka, the desire to Eretz Yisrael.

I once saw an anecdote. A boy came home with a report card and his father reads Science – C, Social Studies – D, Math – C, Music – A. When he saw the A in music he slapped the child. The child said for the A you are giving me a slap? The father said to him no, but if you are not successful in all of your studies why are you singing so happily?

Klal Yisrael in Galus. Unfortunately we are still in Galus. We are not doing well. So we get a slap if we say but we are happy where we are. No. It needs to be a Teshuka to Eretz Yisrael. A Chibah to Eretz Yisrael. Even to go there to walk Daled Amos there.

May HKB"H grant us all that we should have our heads on straight. We belong in Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael is our place. We are here temporarily, we are strangers here. If we remember that then we don't need the Goyim to remind us. We are strangers here.

May HKB"H grant us that we should be able to be in Eretz Yisrael B'biyas Go'el and if Im Yisma'mai'a we should be Zoche to go there, to visit, to absorb from Eretz Yisrael. That is our Teshuka and that is our desire. I have tickets for the 22nd please Daven that I should be able to go and get in and be Nehene from Eretz Yisrael.

Wishing one and all an absolutely wonderful Shabbos, a Bein Hamitzarim Shabbos. A Shabbos of Chibas Eretz Yisrael. When you Daven Shemoneh Esrei do me a favor, face Eretz Yisrael, don't just face Mizrach. Face Eretz Yisrael. Think that you are facing Eretz Yisrael. Your Davening is coming in the back of everyone standing at the Kosel and is being blown right in. Let's have the Teshuka and Chibah and we will have HKB"H's love even more. A Gutten Shabbos to one and all!

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>
to: ravfrand@torah.org
date: Jul 1, 2021, 11:20 AM
subject: Rav Frand - Summer Vacation Begins With a Reminder: No Vacation from Divine Service

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

Parshas Pinchas

Summer Vacation Begins With a Reminder: No Vacation from Divine Service

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1169 – 17 Tamuz–When Does It Start? Wearing Laundered Shirts in Nine Days?

Note: The shiur will now pause for the summer break. The next shiur is planned for Parshas Shoftim. Good Shabbos!

Parshas Pinchas contains the Korbonos of the Yomim Tovim, preceded by the Korban Tamid – the (twice) daily offering. The pasuk says "Command Israel and say to them… This is the fire offering that you shall offer to Hashem — year old unblemished lambs, twice a day, an eternal burnt offering. The one lamb you should offer in the morning, and the second lamb you shall offer in the evening. [Bamidbar 28:2-4].

The week began with Shiva Asar B'Tamuz, the 17th of Tamuz. Chazal say that five things happened to our forefathers on the 17th of Tamuz. The reason we fast on this day is to commemorate those five terrible things. The Gemara in Taanis lists the five things: The Tablets were broken (when Moshe descended from Mt. Sinai and saw the people worshipping the Golden Calf); the Korban Tamid stopped being brought; the Outer Wall of

the City of Jerusalem was breached; Apostomas (the Roman General) publicly burned a Sefer Torah; and he erected an idol in the Beis HaMikdash. These are the five terrible things that happened on the 17th of Tamuz.

If we were asked to rank these five events in terms of their seriousness, which event would you pick to be number five (i.e. – the least catastrophic)? I heard an observation from Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, zt"l, that at first glance the suspension of the Korban Tamid does not seem to be as tragic as the other four events. We lost the Luchos that were written by the "Finger of Elokim"; the city wall was breached—this was the beginning of the end of the Jewish Commonwealth. Putting up an idol in the Beis HaMikdash and burning the Torah were unspeakable insults to our religion. But the suspension of the Tamid did not mark the total end of the Service in the Beis HaMikdash at that point. What was the tragedy of the Bitul haTamid which caused it to be listed with the other four catastrophic events? Apparently they are all equally great tragedies.

Rav Aharon Lichtenstein explains this based on an incredible Medrash that the Maharal brings in his Nesivos Olam (Nesiv Ahavas Rei'ah, Perek Aleph). I quoted this Medrash at a Siyum HaShas. Many people asked me where the Medrash was. Ironically, I cannot find this Medrash — which is not that impressive a statement. However, what I mean is the computer cannot find this Medrash either! However, the Maharal brings this Medrash, and he mentions that it can be found in the author's introduction to the Ein Yakov. If the Ein Yakov brings the Medrash, and the Maharal brings the Medrash, I trust it — even though I cannot locate the original source. Earlier generations possessed Medrashim that we no longer have.

The Medrash quotes various Tannaim, who each bring a pasuk which, in their opinion, encapsulates all of the Torah: Ben Zoma cites his view of the pasuk which defines the Torah: Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad (Hear O Israel the L-rd Our G-d the L-rd is One). Ben Nanas cites the pasuk "V'Ahavta L'Rei'acha Kamocha" (Love your neighbor as yourself). Shimon ben Pazzi claims that there is an even more fundamental and all-encompassing pasuk: "Es ha'keves ha'echad ta'aseh ba'boker, v'es ha'keves ha'sheni ta'aseh bein ha'arbayim" (The one lamb you should make in the morning, and the one lamb you should make in the evening.).

The pasuk that is the essence of Torah—which encompasses the entirety of Torah according to Shimon ben Pazzi—is the pasuk which commands us to bring the daily Korban Tamid, morning and evening. We can readily understand Ben Zoma's pasuk as being a candidate for the Torah's most fundamental principle. Monotheism is clearly a fundamental Jewish belief. We can accept Ben Nanas' pasuk as being the fundamental principle underlining all interpersonal interactions. But never would I pick "Es ha'keves ha'echad ta'aseh ba'boker, v'es ha'keves ha'sheni ta'aseh bein ha'arbayim"! What did Shimon ben Pazzi have in mind?

The Maharal, in his Nesivos Olam, explains that the essence of Divine Service, the essence of being a Servant of the Ribono shel Olam, is consistency: Day in, Day out; Day in; Day out! Every single day, without exception. This shows my TOTAL devotion to the Almighty—every single day without a stop. Rain, sleet, snow, hail, no matter what, "Here I am!" Torah is about being an Eved HaShem, and being an Eved HaShem entails constant and unbroken service.

The Korban Tamid never stopped—Yom Kippur, Erev Pesach, Pesach. There was never a vacation. There was always a Korban Tamid.

That was the tragedy of the Bitul HaTamid that occurred on the 17th of Tamuz. Once the streak is broken, once the continuity is interrupted, then everything begins to dissipate and fall apart. That is why this indeed WAS the beginning of the end. From the time they built the Mishkan—through Nov, Givon, Shilo, and all the years of the Beis HaMikdash—every single day, morning and evening, they ALWAYS brought the Korban Tamid. When that stopped, it was the beginning of the end.

You can understand the context in which I mentioned this Medrash at the Siyum HaShas. That is what Daf Yomi is. Day in, day out, every single day—whether it is Erev Pessach or Yom Kippur or whatever it is. It must get done. This is what Divine Service is all about. That is why Ben Pazzi singles this out as the most fundamental pasuk in Torah. The Medrash, in fact, concludes that the Halacha follows Ben Pazzi. This is indeed the most definitive pasuk in the Torah—One calf you should bring in the morning and one calf you should bring in the evening.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. ...A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit http://www.yadyechiel.org/ for further information.
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from: **The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust** info@rabbisacks.org >
date:Jun 30, 2021, 2:15 PM
subject: Lessons of a Leader (Pinchas 5781)

Lessons of a Leader (Pinchas 5781)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks ZL

The parsha of Pinchas contains a masterclass on leadership, as Moses confronts his own mortality and asks God to appoint a successor. The great leaders care about succession. In parshat Chayei Sarah we saw Abraham instruct his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac, so that the family of the covenant will continue. King David chose Solomon. Elijah, at God's bidding, appointed Elisha to carry on his work.

In the case of Moses, the Sages sensed a certain sadness at his realisation that he would not be succeeded by either of his sons, Gershom or Eliezer.[1] Such is the case with Keter Torah, the invisible crown of Torah worn by the Prophets and the Sages. Unlike the crowns of priesthood and kingship, it does not pass dynastically from father to son. Charisma rarely does. What is instructive, though, is the language Moses uses in framing his request:

"May the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, choose a person over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep without a shepherd." (Num. 27:16)

There are three basic leadership lessons to be learned from this choice of words. The first, noted by Rashi, is implicit in the unusually long description of God as "the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh." This means, Rashi explains, "Master of the universe, the character of each person is revealed to You, and no two are alike. Appoint over them a leader who will bear with each person according to their individual character."[2]

The Rambam says that this is a basic feature of the human condition. Homo sapiens is the most diverse of all life forms. Therefore co-operation is essential – because we are each different, others are strong where we are weak and vice versa – but cohesion is also difficult, because we each respond to challenges in different ways. That is what makes leadership necessary, but also demanding:

This great variety, and the necessity of social life, are essential elements in human nature. But the well-being of society demands that there should be a leader able to regulate the actions of each person; they must complete every shortcoming, remove every excess, and prescribe for the conduct of all, so that the natural variety should be counterbalanced by the uniformity of legislation, and the order of society be well established.[3]

Leaders respect differences but, like the conductor of an orchestra, integrate them, ensuring that the many different instruments play their part in harmony with the rest. True leaders do not seek to impose uniformity. They honour diversity.

The second hint is contained in the word ish, "a person" over the congregation, to which God responds, "Take for yourself Joshua, a person [ish] of spirit (v. 18). The word ish here indicates something other than

gender. This can be seen in the two places where the Torah uses the phrase ha-ish Moshe, "the man Moses":
One is in Exodus:
The man Moses was highly respected [gadol me'od, literally "very great"] in the land of Egypt, in the eyes of Pharaoh's servants and the people. (Ex. 11:3)
The second is in Numbers:
Now the man Moses was very humble [anav me'od], more so than anyone else on the face of the earth (Num. 12:3)
Note the two characteristics, seemingly opposed – great and humble – both of which Moses had in high degree (me'od, "very"). This is the combination of attributes Rabbi Yochanan attributed to God himself: "Wherever you find God's greatness, there you find His humility."[4] Here is one of his proof-texts: "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the orphan and the widow, and loves the stranger residing among you, giving them food and clothing" (Deut. 10:17-18).
An ish in the context of leadership is not a male but rather, someone who is a mensch, a person whose greatness is lightly worn, who cares about the people others often ignore, "the orphan, the widow and the stranger," who spends as much time with the people at the margins of society as with the elites, who is courteous to everyone equally and who receives respect because they give respect.
The real puzzlement, however, lies in the third clause: "Choose a person over the congregation who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them in." This sounds like saying the same thing twice, which the Torah tends not to do. What does it mean?
The Torah is hinting here at one of the most challenging aspects of leadership, namely timing and pace. The first phrase is simple: "who will go out before them and come in before them." This means that a leader must lead from the front. They cannot be like the apocryphal remark of one British politician: "Of course I follow the party. After all, I am their leader."[5]
It is the second phrase that is vital: "who will lead them out and bring them in." This means: a leader must lead from the front, but he or she must not be so far out in front that when they turn around, they find that no one is following. Pace is of the essence. Sometimes a leader can go too fast. That is when tragedies occur.
To take two very different examples: when Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister she knew she was going to have to confront the miners' union in a long and bitter struggle. In 1981 they went on strike for a pay rise. Mrs Thatcher immediately made enquiries about the size of coal stocks. She wanted to know how long the country could survive without new supplies of coal. As soon as she discovered that stocks were low, she in effect conceded victory to the miners. She then, very quietly, arranged for coal to be stockpiled. The result was that when the miners went on strike again in 1983, she resisted their demands. There was a prolonged strike, and this time it was the miners who conceded defeat. A battle she could not win in 1981 she was able to win in 1983.
The very different example was that of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The peace process he engaged with the Palestinians between 1993 and 1995 was deeply controversial, within Israel and beyond. There was some support but also much opposition. The tension mounted in 1995. In September of that year, I wrote an article in the press giving him my own personal support. At the same time, however, I wrote to him privately saying that I was deeply worried about internal opposition to the plan, and urging him to spend as much time negotiating with his fellow Israeli citizens – specifically the religious Zionists – as with the Palestinians. I did not receive a reply.
On Motsei Shabbat, 4 November 1995, we heard the news that Prime Minister Rabin had been assassinated at a peace rally by a young religious Zionist. I attended the funeral in Jerusalem. Returning the next day, I went straight from the airport to the Israeli ambassador to sit with him and talk to him about the funeral, which he had not been able to attend, having had to stay in London to deal with the media.
As I entered his office, he handed me an envelope, saying, "This has just arrived for you in the diplomatic bag." It was Yitzhak Rabin's reply to my letter – one of the last letters he ever wrote. It was a moving re-affirmation of his faith, but tragically by the time it was delivered he was no longer alive. He had pursued peace, as we are commanded to do, but he had gone too fast for those who were not yet prepared to listen.
Moses knew this himself from the episode of the spies. As Maimonides says in The Guide,[6] the task of fighting battles and conquering the land was just too much for a generation born into slavery. It could only be done by their children, those born in freedom. Sometimes a journey that seems small on the map takes forty years.
Respect for diversity, care for the lowly and powerless as well as the powerful and great, and a willingness to go no faster than people can bear – these are three essential attributes of a leader, as Moses knew from experience, and as Joshua learned through long apprenticeship to the great man himself.

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Parshas Pinchas - Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of
Reuven ben Aaron z"l. "May his Neshama have an Aliya!"

Responsibility for the Law

The daughters of Tzelofchad came […] And stood before Moshe and Elazar the Kohen and in front of the Nesi'im and the entire congregation (27:1-2).
This week's parsha relates the quandary of the daughters of Tzelofchad who wished to receive their father's portion in Eretz Yisroel even though he died prior to the division of the land and had no male heirs to inherit. They argued that it wasn't fair that his portion should be taken away from his family just because he had no male heirs. According to Rashi (ad loc), Moshe forgot what the law was in such a case and therefore presented the question to Hashem. Ultimately, Hashem sided with the daughters of Tzelofchad and they were awarded their father's share in Israel.
Maimonides (Yad, Hilchos Mamrim 1:4) describes a fascinating process of determining the law during the times of the Beis Hamikdosh: "As long as there was the Beis Din Hagadol in Jerusalem there was never a conflict among the Jewish people (as to what the law was). If someone needed to know a law he would ask his local Beis Din, [and] if they knew the answer they gave it to him. If they did not, then both the inquirer and the Beis Din would travel to Jerusalem to ask the Beis Din that was located on the Temple Mount […] If they didn't know then everyone went to the Beis Din that was at the entrance to the courtyard and asked the question […] If they didn't know then everyone went to the Beis Din Hagadol in the Lishkas Hagazis (hewn chamber – a room adjacent to the Beis Hamikdosh)." That was the court of final appeal and one way or another they would determine the final law to resolve the original question.
According to Rambam, every single court must accompany the original inquirer on this process until his question is answered; making it possible to have well over a hundred people present while this question is being presented to the Beis Din Hagadol. What could possibly be the reason for this? Additionally, Lechem Mishna in his commentary on Rambam (ad loc) asks: From where does Maimonides know that this is the process; what is the source for this?
In most societies, a court system is intended to adjudicate and apply the laws that have been enacted by a separate legislature. There is no actual responsibility for the law, just its application. In Judaism it is very different. Every court has a responsibility for the law. If someone presents a problem and the court doesn't know the answer, it becomes the court's question as well. Because each court has a responsibility for the law, a lack of knowledge of the law is a problem for the court itself. Therefore, the court itself now becomes a principal in the quest for a resolution as to what the law

is. It is for this reason that every court must join the process of coming to a resolution.

Clearly, Maimonides found a source for this law in the story of the daughters of Tzelofchad. The possuk seemingly makes a random observation; the daughters "stood before Moshe and Elazar the Kohen and in front of the Nesi'im and the entire congregation." The Torah isn't in the habit of repeating meaningless facts. Therefore, it must be that their presence had something to do with the original question. Rashi (ad loc) points out that this is very strange; if Moshe didn't know then for sure Elazar wouldn't know either!

This is how Maimonides knows that, after a question is presented through the normal chain of law, every person in that chain has a responsibility to see it through to the end. That is why all those individuals are mentioned as being present when the daughters of Tzelofchad finally presented their question to Moshe.

A Definite Impact

Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aharon the Kohen, turned away My wrath from Bnei Yisroel when he took My vengeance in their midst, and I did not destroy Bnei Yisroel in My vengeance (Bamidbar 25:11).

The word "b'socham—in their midst" that appears in this possuk seems to be superfluous. We are certainly aware that Pinchas' act of zeal took place in the midst of the Jewish people; ostensibly, there should be no reason for it to be mentioned here. What does this word add to the narrative?

It is also difficult to understand exactly what Pinchas accomplished by killing Zimri. By this point in time, 176,000 Jewish men had succumbed to the temptation of avodah zarah, and an unknown number had sinned with Midianite women. How could the slaying of a single sinner, even a prominent public figure, motivate the rest of the nation to refrain from sinning?

The Torah states (Bamidbar 25:6), "And behold, a man from Bnei Yisroel came, and he brought the Midianite woman near his brethren, before the eyes of Moshe and before the eyes of the entire congregation of Bnei Yisroel , and they were weeping at the entrance to Ohel Moed."

As the next possuk relates, Pinchas immediately carried out the execution of Zimri and Kozbi, the Midianite princess, in the middle of their sin.

However, why does it mention the fact that the people were weeping? In what way is it germane to the narrative? The Torah is indicating that Bnei Yisroel were collectively aware of the impropriety of Zimri's actions; they knew that what he was doing was wrong, and this is what caused them to weep.

Pinchas was well aware that Hashem was furious with the Jewish people, and that the entire nation was facing the threat of destruction; however, it was only after Pinchas saw that the people were weeping that he reminded Moshe that the sinners should be slain. The reason why the Torah emphasizes that Pinchas' vengeful act was carried out b'socham, "in [the Jewish people's] midst" is because Pinchas acted in a way that he knew would have an impact on the many people who would witness it. He waited to act until an opportune moment, when he knew that his action would serve as a message to the rest of the nation to desist from sin – and that was possible only when the public perception of the situation was such that people understood the necessity for change. Striking out at a sinner can have an effect on others only if they recognize that the sinner is wrong; if that is the case, then such an act can cause others to rally and bring about a much-needed change. Without that crucial public awareness, an act of zeal might not create any change at all.

Make Yourself at Home

This week's parsha describes the sacrifices brought for each of the yomim tovim. On the holiday of Sukkos there is a curious procedure relating to the amount of sacrifices that are brought; every succeeding day one less bull is brought as a sacrifice. In other words, on the first day thirteen bulls are brought, on the second day twelves bulls are brought, on the third day eleven bulls are brought, and so on.

Rashi (29:36) quotes the Midrash Tanchuma: "The Torah is teaching us how to properly conduct ourselves; one who has a guest in his home on the first day he should feed him stuffed fowl. On the next day he should feed him fish. On the next day he should feed him meat. On the next day he should feed him a bean dish. On the next day he gives him vegetables…He progressively decreases (every day) just like the bulls of the holiday of Sukkos."

This is difficult to understand; surely the Midrash isn't telling us that the proper way to treat guests is to make them feel less welcome each succeeding day that we are hosting them! Additionally, as Tosfos (Chullin 84a) points out, meat is more expensive than fish or fowl. In other words, if you follow this menu some of the succeeding days are more expensive than the prior days. So what exactly is the parallel of progressively decreasing?

The difficulty for most people who are guests in someone else's home is the uncomfortable feeling of imposing on their personal space. As the Gemara (Brachos 58b) explains, "The proper guest says 'Everything that the host has toiled for he has toiled for me.'" That is to say that a proper guest is very sensitive to the efforts expended by the host.

There are two ways for a host to compensate; the first is to make the guest feel as though the host is honored to host them, the second is to make them feel as if it is no imposition at all.

The proposed menu for a guest isn't listed in a declining order of expense, it is listed in a declining order of preparation. On the first day the host goes out of his way to prepare a very fancy meal of stuffed fowl, this requires the highest degree of preparation. The second day is fish, which is very delicate and needs to be seasoned and cooked very carefully but isn't as much preparation time as the first day. The third day is meat, which requires an even lesser amount of expertise and cooking technique (after all, every man is a BBQ grill master - it's in the DNA). The next day is a bean soup, which is simple fare and even easier to prepare, etc.

On the first day, the host prepares an elaborate meal to express his delight at hosting the guest. As the days go on, the host slowly begins to lessen his efforts in order make the guest feel more at home and less as someone who has to be catered to. The host's goal at this point is to show the guest that it is really no imposition at all and that the guest is welcome to stay as long as he wants as part of the family. That is the highest level of Hachnosas Orchim.

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Aveilus on Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov

Rabbi Hershel Schachter

The Torah discusses the dinim of the moadim in three different parshiyos: Emor, Pinchas, and Re'eh. In Iarshas Emor we read about the issue of melocha. In Parshas Pinchas we learn about the korbanos musafim, and in Parshas Re'eh we read about the particular mitzvos that are unique to each of the yomim tovim.

In the second half of Parshas Pinchas the Chumash lists off all the various yomim tovim, and includes Chag ha'Pesach and Chag ha'Matzos as two different yomim tovim. The afternoon of Erev Pesach is the time of hakorovas korban Pesach, which constitutes a yom tov known as Chag ha'Pesach. What we call Chag ha'Pesach, but the Torah refers to as Chag ha'Matzos, starts on the fifteenth of Nissan and lasts for seven days. Even though the Chumash only mentions the mitzvah of simcha in connection with Sukkos, the Torah she'b'al peh has established that it applies to all Shalosh Regalim, and even to Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Regarding Chag ha'Pesach, i.e. erev Pesach after chatzos, there is a dispute amongst the rishonim whether there is a chiyuv simcha. The din is well known that if one is in the midst of aveilus or shiva when yom tov arrives, the chiyuv simcha of yom tov cancels the remainder of shiva. If one is in the middle of sheloshim when yom tov arrives, then yom tov cancels the remainder of

sheloshim. Because we have a rule that whenever there is a slight safeik in hilchos aveilus we follow the lenient position, the Remah (Yoreh Deah) paskens that when chatzos arrives on erev Pesach, the yom tov of Chag ha'Pesach cancels shiva or sheloshim and there is no need to wait until Chag ha'Matzos arrives.

The mishna tells us that although one does not observe aveilus on chol hamoed, nevertheless, one does rip kriya. The gemorah explains this is true because kriya is not part of the laws of aveilus. Pursuant to this, while the accepted opinion in Shulchan Aruch is that unlike other mitzvos, we are not mechanech children before bar mitzvah in the observance of aveilus, nonetheless there is chinuch for the mitzvah of tearing kriya, because kriya is not an element of nihug aveilus. The gemorah even says that if the one who lost a relative is an infant so young that he does not even understand anything about death, we tear a little bit of a kriya just to demonstrate to the menachamim what a tragedy has occurred.

After the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash, the tanaim introduced three levels of ripping kriyah upon witnessing different aspects of the churban: kriya on the Beis Hamikdash in the state of churban, on Yerushalayim in the state of churban, and on arei Yehudah in the state of churban. The Magen Avraham points out that these three forms of kriya are unlike the law of kriya when a person dies. These are an aspect of aveilus, and therefore would not apply on chol hamoed or to a child before bar mitzvah.

Erev Pesach in the afternoon has the same din with respect to aveilus as chol hamoed. Therefore, if one visits the Kosel ha'Maaravi on erev Pesach in the afternoon, he would not tear kriya. Based on this din, many have the mistaken impression that on every erev Shabbos and on every erev yom tov after chatzos, one would not tear kriya when visiting the Kosel, but this is clearly a mistake. The Pischei Teshuva in the very end of Yoreh Deah mentions that many have the practice that on every erev Shabbos and every erev yom tov after chatzos, one does not observe shiva. This, however, is clearly a mistake and a carryover from erev Pesach after chatzos.

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Weekly Parsha PINCHAS 5781
Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

There were extremely negative murmurings within the people of Israel in objection to the actions of Pinchas for his zealousness in slaying Zimri together with the lecherous princess of Midian, Kozbi bat Tzur. Many attributed the violence of his act to the fact that his mother that his mother was a Midianite and that he was descended from a priest of Midian himself.

There are those amongst us who abhor violence at all costs, in all circumstances. There is no such thing as a justifiable homicide as far as they are concerned. Human life is so precious that even the most evil of people must be protective so that no harm should befall them. Apparently, these murmurings against Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon, who was the most beloved of all leaders of the Jewish people, were so strong that the Lord had to "intervene" to defend Pinchas and highlight the justification and necessity of his act.

In theory, pacifism is a noble idea. However, the contentious and dangerous world that human beings are forced to live in becomes a certain recipe for disaster, and the triumph of tyranny and evil. Justice is a messy business to put into practice. The effect of the immorality of Zimri on the general Jewish society was so detrimental that the Lord indicates that a plague of enormous consequences would have been loosed on the Jewish people were it not for the actions of Pinchas.

One of the basic questions in ethical literature, and it appears as a basic question in Halacha, debates the morality of sacrificing one's life in order that many lives will be saved and spared. It is not my purpose in this article to develop this into a complex issue, but to point out that in this very instance, a moral dilemma of human beings was addressed by the statement of the Lord in defense of the actions of Pinchas.

Nevertheless, even with the apparent endorsement of Heaven for this act of zealotry, Judaism shies away from all forms off fanaticism. There is no other person in the holy writings of Scripture whose zealotry is condoned by Heaven. In fact, a great prophet Elijah is rebuked by Heaven itself for the zealotry that he displayed against the Jewish people. There is no question that the people were sinners and idolaters, and we can feel and empathize with the pain and loneliness of Elijah, seeing how disastrously Israel had wandered from their core beliefs and mission. Nevertheless, Elijah is instructed that until he removes that attitude of zealotry from his relationship with the people of Israel, he cannot remain the instrument of God's will to communicate with Israel.

At that moment in his life, Elijah is transformed from an avenging angel into the angel of generational covenant, the messenger of the tidings of redemption, and the comforting presence that has accompanied the Jewish people throughout the world over its long and painful journey of exile. So, we are brought full circle in dealing with vengeance and zealotry, and we are reminded not to be unrealistic pacifists at the same time.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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https://www.yutorah.org/download.cfm?materialID=533887

The DNR [do-not-resuscitate order] in Jewish Law

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The Challenge

1. Mishnah Yoma 8:6 (83a)

If a building collapses on him [on Shabbat]... we dig through the pile for him.

2. Lord Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits (20th century England), HaRefuah v'haYahadut pg. 152

The value of human life is infinite, and therefore it cannot be divided – each portion of it is infinite. It then emerges that seventy years of life have the exact same value as thirty years, or one year, or one hour, or one second. This demanding definition of the sanctity of human life is founded not only on strict mathematics or logic; it is founded equally upon ethical considerations. If human life were to be diminished in value because its end was near, human life would lose entirely its absolute value, and receive relative value – relative to its life expectancy, health, benefit to society...

3. Talmud, Ketuvot 33b

The pain of lashes may be considered a punishment harsher than death, for Rav taught: Had the Babylonians whipped Chananiah, Mishael and Azariah, they would have worshipped the idol!

4. Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg (20th century Israel), Tzitz Eliezer 13:87

So long as it is given by a doctor to reduce great suffering, one may give it to the patient even when it will also harm him and it could bring his death closer. This seems to be part of the Torah's license for the doctor to heal...

5. Talmud, Ketuvot 104a

Rebbe's maid ascended to the roof and said, "The Heavens request Rebbe and the earthly realm requests Rebbe. May it be Gd's will that the earthly realm should overpower the Heavens!" When she saw how often Rebbe had to go to the washroom, removing his phylacteries and then putting them back on, and how he was in great pain, she said, "May it be Gd's will that the Heavens should overpower the earthly realm!" The sages were not silent in their prayers for Gd's mercy, so she took a pitcher of water and threw it from the roof. The praying people paused, and Rebbe passed away.

6. Rabbeinu Nisim (14th century Spain) to Talmud, Nedarim 40a

Sometimes one needs to pray for mercy for the patient to die, such as where the patient is in great pain due to his illness and he cannot live.

7. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (20th century Israel), Minchat Shlomo 1:91:24
As one requests and prays to Gd for the patient to die, he is also obligated to involve himself in saving the patient and desecrating Shabbat for him, even many times.
8. Talmud, Gittin 70a
Shemuel said: If someone is struck with Persian [poison-tipped] lances, he will not live. At this point, give him rich meat barbecued on coals, and undiluted wine, and perhaps he will live a bit and instruct his household.
A Digest of Four Approaches
9. Talmud, Avodah Zarah 18a
They brought [Rabbi Chanina ben Tradyon] and wrapped him in a Torah scroll, and bound him with vines and kindled them. They brought wool sponges and soaked them in water and placed them on his heart so that his life would not depart quickly... His students said to him... Open your mouth and let the fire enter! He said to them: Better that the One who gave it take it back, and not that I harm myself.
The executioner said to him: My master! If I were to increase the flame and remove the wool sponges from your heart, would you bring me to the next world? He replied: Yes. [The executioner said:] Swear to me! He swore.
10. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (19th century Poland), Aruch haShulchan Yoreh Deah 339:1 Although we see that he is in great pain in his death throes, and it would be better for him to die, still, we are prohibited from doing anything to hasten his death. The world and all in it belong to Gd, and such is Gd's will.
11. Rabbi Dr. J. David Bleich (20th century USA), Tradition 30:3 (1996), pp. 59-60
Any distinction between "natural" and "artificial" means of treatment is without precedent in Jewish law. Indeed, upon examination, the distinction is fundamentally specious. Medical substances synthesized in the laboratory are certainly not "natural," yet it is unlikely that ethicists would regard such medications as "artificial." For that matter, even drugs extracted from plants and the like are hardly "natural" sources of nutrtion for man but assuredly would not be classified as artificial. The obligation to revive a person from drowning is one of the paradigms of pikuah nefesh advanced by the Gemara, Sanhedrin 73a. That obligation includes the duty to throw a life preserver to the potential victim. In what sense is a respirator designed to deliver oxygen to the lungs different from the casting of a life preserver?
12. Washington State Medical Association, Pain Management and Care of the Terminal Patient (1992) Adequate interventions exist to control pain in 90 to 99% of patients.
13. Dean Lorne Sossin, Carter & dying with dignity: now comes the hard part, Canadian Lawyer Feb. 9 '15 Palliative and hospice care remains one of the more poorly funded and least understood spheres of medicine. The health professions and funding models are understandably directed at healing people.
14. Rabbi J. David Bleich, Treatment of the Terminally Ill, Tradition 30:3 (1996), pg. 62
[E]very prudent effort should be made to alleviate the patient's suffering. This includes aggressive treatment of pain even to a degree which at present is not common in current medical practice. Physicians are reluctant to use morphine in high dosages because of the danger of depression of the cerebral center responsible for respiration. The effect of morphine administered in high doses is that the patient cannot control the muscles necessary for breathng. There is, however, no halakhic objection to providing such medication in order to control pain in the case of terminal patients even though palliation of pain may ultimately entail maintaining such a patient on a respirator. Similarly, there is no halakhic objection to the use of heroin in the control of pain in terminal patients. The danger of addiction under such circumstances is, of course, hardly a significant consideration. At present, the use of heroin is illegal even for medical purposes. Judaism affirms that everything in creation is designed for a purpose. Alleviation of otherwise intractable pain is a known beneficial use of heroin. Marijuana is effective in alleviating nausea that is a side-effect of some forms of chemotherapy. There is every reason to believe that these drugs were given to man for the specific purpose of controlling pain and discomfort. Jewish teaching would enthusiastically endorse legislation legalizing the use - with adequate accompanying safeguards - of those substances in treatment of terminal patients.
15. Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz (19th century Danzig), Tiferet Yisrael to Mishnah Yoma 8, Boaz 3
To me, digging through a pile is different, for when one removes the stones from him one certainly eases his suffering. Even though he continues to live in pain, better that he should die slowly and with less pain, than for his life to be shortened and for him to die painfully, beneath a burden of stones. But the story of Rebbe was the opposite – had she not prayed [for his death], his suffering would have grown.
16. Rabbi Yaakov Kanaievsky (20th century Israel), Karyana d'Igrita 1:190
Regarding the basic principle that one must do everything possible to extend the life of a patient [even though it is only temporary life]: In truth, I also heard statements like this in my youth, but I don't know whether it comes from someone reliable. In my eyes, this requires great examination, for in Yoreh Deah 339 it is clear that one may remove an obstacle to the death of a patient [when that would also prevent great suffering]. One only may not act upon his body. If so, then I see no reason to prohibit sitting without acting [where acting would increase suffering]; just the opposite, one should learn from here to refrain from acting...
17. Rabbi Eliezer Zylbershtein (21st century Israel), Shiurei Torah l'Rofim 189
Based on what has been said, it appears that a patient may refuse surgery or any therapeutic treatment which involves great suffering. There is no obligation to pain him and cause him suffering with treatment that will extend temporary life.
18. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:73:1
In such people, where the doctors recognize that he cannot be healed and live, and that he will not live as a sick person without pain, but they can give medicine which will extend his life as he is, with suffering, then one should not give medicine, but leave them as they are.
19. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:74:3
One must give oxygen, even in a situation in which one cannot heal him, for this eases his suffering; the suffering that results from inability to breathe is great, and oxygen removes it.
Along similar lines, his honour asked whether one must feed patients intravenously when they cannot eat and they are in danger. This would extend his life as it is, in suffering, and we think he is not suffering due to not eating. It is obvious that one must feed him food that will not harm and not damage, for this certainly strengthens him a bit even where the patient himself does not sense it, and those who stand and serve him do not sense it.
20. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (20th century Israel), Minchat Shlomo 1:91:24
Logically, where an ill person suffers from great pain and suffering, or even very strong emotional pain, I would think that we would be obligated to give him food and oxygen for breathing, even against his will, but we could refrain from treating with medicine that would cause suffering for the patient, if the patient wished it.
21. Rabbi Moshe Isserles (16th century Poland), Yoreh Deah 339:1
One may not cause a dying person to die quickly... However, where something prevents the soul from departing, such as where there is a sound of knocking near the house, such as from a woodchopper, or there is salt on his tongue, and these keep the soul from departing, one may remove them. There is no deed in this, he is only removing an obstruction.
22. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (20th century USA), Igrot Moshe Choshen Mishpat 2:74:3

You asked whether one should distinguish between temporary life and on-going life regarding the obligation to heal, where it is not possible to heal him from suffering but only to extend his life in pain for as long as he lives. [You mean] that there is no obligation to heal him when the healing will cause him to live in suffering during that brief time, but if he were healed for on-going life, as people today live, then one would be obligated to heal him. In truth, I never mentioned this distinction, and in truth, it is not logical to distinguish; using logic, one could also argue the opposite...

23. Talmud, Bava Metzia 112a

"For this he puts his life on the line (Devarim 24:15)" – Why did this person climb the ramp, become suspended from the tree, and give his life over to death? Was it not for his wages?

24. Rabbi Hershel Schachter (21st century USA), ושפט תא אשונ אוה וילאו, Beit Yitzchak 1986 Three distinct categories of cases emerge, as law:

1) Where there are clear grounds to believe that all people would want such treatment, then we say that his view is cancelled before that of all people, and we compel him, under [the mitzvah of] "You shall protect your lives."

2) Where there are grounds to believe that all people would not want such treatment, then we say that his view is cancelled before that of all people, and we may not torture him with treatment, even should he wish it.

3) And where there are no clear grounds supporting either side, then it depends on the view of the patient...

25. Rabbi Zev Schostak, Ethical Guidelines for Treatment of the Dying Elderly, J. of Halacha and Contemp. Soc. 22, pg. 84

Rabbi Herschel Schachter and Rabbi Chaskel Horowitz (the Viener Rav) maintain that artificial nutrition and hydration are medical procedures which a terminal patient may direct to be withheld.

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date: Jun 22, 2021, 8:08 PM
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Subject: Mitzvah Connection - Parshas Pinchas - TZA'ROR

The following is a Mitzvah Connection from Parshas Pinchas :

TZA'ROR --- (Pinchas, 26:17)

In Parshas Balak (25:1-9), Yisrael's sin of Z'nus, harlotry, with Moabite and Midianite women sent to seduce them into worship of the idol, Baal Peor, is related . Rashi observes that these events were initiated through Bilaam's advice to corrupt Yisrael's moral purity and get them to commit grave immoral acts which, in turn, would cause Hashem's protection to be removed . Kach Hoyah, and so it was . The priestesses of Baal Peor invited the Jews to commit debaucheries and worship the idol .

Rav Elie Munk cites Alshich to clarify that both the daughters of Moav and Midian participated in the events . The Moabite women committed harlotry indiscriminately whereas the daughters of Midian targeted chiefs and leaders of Yisrael . An example of the latter was Cozbi, daughter of Tzur , a Midianite noble described in Parshas Pinchas (25:15) as Rosh Umos Beis Av B'Midian (Head of the Peoples of a Paternal Household in Midian - Artscroll- or, as R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch translates : " The National Head of a Patriarchal Family in Midian. ") R' Elie Munk, Kol HaTorah, Balak, at 25:1 . There, it is suggested that Tzur was formerly Balak, the king of Moav .

Rav Munk, citing Alshich, also says that Cozbi, upon her father's advice, amazingly , wanted to corrupt only Moshe but, failing that, targeted Zimri, a leader of Shevet Shimon . (Ibid.) Although Pinchas kills Zimri and Cozbi , earning Hashem's praise, the " debauchery strategy " hatched by Bilaam succeeded too well . Hashem's anger flared (VaYichar Af Hashem ; Balak, 25:3) . Moshe ordered the Judges to execute those men who became attached to Baal Peor . According to Rashi and Sanhedrin 38, every one of the 88,000 Judges killed two offenders -- resulting in 176,00 executions . Ramban disagrees, suggesting the number seems excessive and, further, does not square with the census taken later . Rather, Ramban suggests that the Judging took place but the judgments were not carried out because Pinchas intervened and turned away Hashem's wrath . Nonetheless, some 24,000 men died in a plague , as recorded in Devorim ,4:3 . (Kol HaTorah, Balak, at 25:5)

Irrespective of the precise number of punished offenders, it is clear that the " debauchery strategy " had posed a grave moral threat to Yisrael's purity. Therefore, it is not surprising that retribution against Midian would be forthcoming . The announcement of that revenge appears in Parshas Pinchas (at 25:16), although the details of the war of retribution are not related until Parshas Matos (see 31:1 - 53) . Here we focus on the opening words of Hashem's terse command to Moshe at 25:17 . The terminology Torah records seems awkward and, thus raises questions .

Hashem says to Moshe : TZA'ROR Es HaMidianim VeHikisem Osam -- " Cause The Midianites DISTRESS And Smite Them ." (Artscroll's translation .) Rav Shamshon Raphael Hirsch translates TZA'ROR as " OPPRESS The Midianites ." He says the word TZA'ROR literally means " to press together ", to oppress, to limit someone's strength . (R' Hirsch Commentary at 25:17) . Still, in context, TZA'ROR is an unusual word since it is followed by the command to " Smite " the Midianites, i.e., to kill them . Well, if they are to be killed (see Matos, 31:6-7), then why are they to be OPPRESSED or DISTRESSED ?

Further, the very next Posuk, verse, says the reason for OPPRESSING them is because they " Cause You Distress Through Their Deception, By Having Beguiled You In The Matter Of Peor ...." (using the words Ki TZO'RERIM Lochem) . Does that parallelism mean that Yisrael is to somehow deceive and beguile the Midianim in kind, before smiting/killing them ? No . Rav Hirsch actually translates the quoted language in 25:18 to mean : " For They STILL OPPRESS You With Their Wiles, Wherewith They Have Beguiled You In THe Matter Of Peor ." In other words, the Midianim STILL constitute a moral threat - even after the execution of Jewish offenders and death of many in the plague . Rav Hirsch explains : " For They Still Threaten You As Enemies With Ruin. " (He notes that Haman was called TZO'RER HaYehudim (Esther, 8:1). Thus, the Midianites " Still Continue To Employ The Seductive Arts Which They Have Already Exercised With Only Too Great Success Against You ." (R'Hirsch Commentary, at 25:18) In this the Midianim differed from the Moabites who, after succeeding in creating corruption and death, ceased from further attempts . But, says Rav Hirsch, the Midianites persisted in this hostile threat , inviting revenge . (Ibid.)

Rashi observes that the word TZA'ROR is not the usual imperative form . Rather, it is a variation of the infinitive -- To Cause DISTRESS . This implies, as Rav Munk concludes : " It Is Incumbent On You To KEEP TREATING Them As Enemies ." (Kol HaTorah, 25:17) The meaning , thus, is : " Always Consider The Midianites As Enemies, Even If You Are Not Waging War Against Them . You Can Never Know When They Will Try To Tempt You To Their Ways Or What Subterfuge They Will Use . The Torah Warns Us Not To Yield To Their Beguiling Words ." (Ibid.) So, in essence, the Midianite threat is a kind of continuous, persistent danger . This (or Rav Hirsch' s approach) means that Yisrael is always to treat Midian as an enemy .

Thus, when Hashem says VeHikisom Osam -- And Smite Them -- this refers to the Order that Yisrael WILL Receive Later To Wage War Against Them And Smite Them . That actual order comes in Parshas Matos, at 31:1, and Moshe acts upon it quickly, even though Hashem has told him that, after the war of vengeance, Moshe will be " gathered into your people ." In this war, the army of Yisrael killed " every male " (31:7) plus the Midianite kings and, also, Bilaam .(31:8) Yet, the army apparently DID NOT FOLLOW Moshe's Orders . They DISOBEYED the RULING of their RAV . Thus they brought back the Moabite women, children, animals, booty, etc. (31:9-12).

Upon the army's return, Moshe, Elazar the Kohein and the leaders go to meet them outside the camp . Moshe saw the women captives and became angry (VaYiktsof Moshe ; 31;14) . It was unacceptable that the women - who caused the moral corruption - had been left alive . Later, however, Moshe

would spare those young female captives who had not lain with a man (31:17-18) . The Meforshim discuss whether Moshe partially relented in his anger at the army's DISOBEDIENCE Of His RULING because Pinchas intervened with certain exculpatory rationales or because Moshe realized that his instructions were vague and that misinterpretation was possible . (see R' Munk, Kol HaTorah, 31:7, discussing Sifre, Ramban, etc.)

TZA'ROR equals 496 . Mitzvah Number 496 is : Lo Sosur Min HaDavar Asher Yagidu Lach (Devorim, 17:11) -- " You Shall Not Depart From The Word Which They May Tell You ." IT IS FORBIDDEN TO DISOBEY THE RULINGS OF A BEIS DIN OR OF A RAV !!!

Moshe was the " ultimate " RAV -- he was Moshe RABBEINU, our RAV . Further, he was the Chief Justice , the determiner of ultimate appeals . He was the DECISOR when the appropriate course of action was unclear . When the army DISOBEYED his Command, they, in effect, were contravening the spirit (perhaps even the law) of Mitzvah Number 496 . The fact that Moshe partially relented later and that Hashem eventually allowed some of the spoils of war to be retained and divided among the people , is a post hoc decision by the RAV to soften the consequences of the infraction and partially forgive .

We can see that the unusual word TZA'ROR , which requires some explanations from the Meforshim, naturally invites curiosity and exudes Remozim, hints, beyond a mere translation of the term. As such, it is a worthy candidate to probe for a Mitzvah Connection . And it does not disappoint .

M.H.

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha Parshas Pinchas - Moshe's Last Stand

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

This week the most illustrious career in Biblical history begins its final chapters. Moshe is officially informed that he will pass on and is told who his successor would be. But in informing Moshe of the transition, Hashem repeats both here in the Book of Bamidbar (27:12) and again in the Book of Devorim (32:51) the reason that Moshe will not lead the B'nai Yisrael into the Land of Israel. It is because he hit the water producing rock instead of speaking to it.

Why does Hashem seem to stress Moshe's sin? Rashi, the classic medieval commentator, explains that Moshe asked Hashem to publicly declare his sin in order to declare that this sin was his only flaw. He was afraid lest some would say that he, too, was amongst those who were destroyed for rebellion in the desert. He was afraid that he would be equated with the rebels and sinners. Thus, he asked Hashem to emphasize that the only flaw he committed was that of the rock.

It is very difficult to understand. How could Moshe even suspect that anyone would place him on that level? How could one even imagine that he was excluded from entering Israel for an act of treason that led to the demise of others? Why was it so important to Moshe that the Torah reiterates that the incident at the rock was his only transgression?

Radio commentator Paul Harvey once presented a piece of American history in the following manner:

George Armstrong was appointed to the United States Military Academy in 1857. After graduating and commissioned in the cavalry, he quickly established a reputation for daring and brilliance in battle. His reputation was so well acclaimed that at the age of twenty-three, he was made the youngest brigadier general in United States history. George's energy and cunning paralleled the other great Georges who left their mark on military history — Generals George Washington and George S. Patton. In fact, George Armstrong was so successful, that by the end of the Civil War he became of the one of the most celebrated commanders.

His pursuit of Lee's army from Richmond in April 1865 destroyed the confederate lines of defense and captured prisoners, wagons, and guns – until, on the morning of April 9 he had totally defeated the enemy. It was to no one other than General George Armstrong that the Confederate flag of defeat was first presented.

After the Civil War, his career continued to flourish. He was assigned to the newly formed seventh Cavalry, Fort Riley, Kansas, and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In the fall of 1868 he won a brilliant victory over Black Kettle's band of Cheyenne Indians in the battle of the Washita and took part in many successful engagements over the next eight years.

But history has almost no recollection of the illustrious career of General George Armstrong. On June 22, 1876, General George Armstrong and his regiment, a force of about 655 men, set out for Little Bighorn. He encountered an overwhelming force of at least 4,000 well-armed Sioux warriors and was killed together with his entire regiment.

No longer were the Civil War successes the hallmark of General George Armstrong's career. Only remembered is the great defeat at Little Bighorn led by General George Armstrong – did I mention his last name — Custer – General George Armstrong Custer at his last stand.

People often tend to forget the illustrious careers of great people because of a flaw that ended it. Moshe was punished for an infraction that is difficult to comprehend in mortal terms. He hit a rock, and produced water — one of history's greatest miracles — for a thirsting nation. Yet something was wrong. He was supposed to speak to the rock and instead he hit it. And between him and his Creator, there was a price to pay. We however must realize that a mistake, as great as its consequences were, cannot mar the illustrious career of the man who led us out of Egypt and developed us into the nation that we are today. In no way can that punishment diminish any regard that we have for Moshe. At Moshe's departure, that point was to be reiterated repeatedly. It is only because of the rock that he did not enter.

How often does a man who works tirelessly for years and who errs in his last stand, go down in disgrace for the act that terminated his career? How many people's last stand becomes their most notorious if not their only stand? Perhaps Hashem's reiteration vis-a-vis Moshe are a lesson to all of us. There are no first stands and there are no last stands. If we stand for something worthy, then we stand forever!

In honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Dovid Reuvain Berenholz

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Rav Kook Torah

Chanan Morrison

Pinchas: Appointing a Leader for Israel

Moses was worried. Who would lead the Jewish people after his death?

"Moses spoke to God, saying, 'Let God... appoint someone over the community... so that God's community will not be like sheep that have no shepherd.'

God told Moses, 'Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand on him.'

Moses did as God ordered him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Elazar the priest and before the entire community. He then laid his hands on him and commissioned him." (Num. 27:15-23)

Joshua's appointment to replace Moses was a critical point in the spiritual and political development of the Jewish people. Every detail of this transfer of power is significant.

We read that God commanded Moses to "lay your hand" on Joshua, and the Torah testifies that Moses did as he was commanded. In fact, Moses placed both of his hands on his disciple. What is the significance of this change?

Material and Spiritual Leadership

The Jewish people require two types of leadership. Like any other nation, they need leaders for worldly matters, whether they be economic, societal,

political, or military. In addition, as bearers of God's Torah, they require spiritual guidance. Capable leadership will bring success in both spheres, revealing the greatness of Israel. All will recognize the wisdom of their ways, as befits a special people who enlighten the world with spiritual knowledge and holiness.

In his plea before God, we find that Moses referred to the people as "the community" and also as "God's community." This reflects Moses' desire that they have a leader in both spheres, material — as any nation — as well as spiritual — as "God's community."

One or Two Leaders?

The question is: Can both of these realms be combined under the guidance of a single leader? Or perhaps, it is necessary to establish two positions, one leader to govern the nation's material needs, and a second for spiritual direction.

If there is no conflict between the two functions, it is preferable to limit the number of leaders. King Solomon described the instability generated by too many authorities: "Because of a land's sins, it will have many rulers. But a leader of understanding and knowledge will bring stability" (Proverbs 28:2).

The answer — whether spiritual and worldly leadership should be combined into one position — depends upon the state of the nation and the world. When God's unity is manifest and the entire world enjoys God's beneficence, anything contributing to the world's advance is directly connected to God's will. With material progress, the spirit gains understanding and insight. As the Talmud teaches, "All of your builders will be disciples of God" (Berachot 64a, based on Isaiah 54:13). Those who build up the world, in all of its aspects, will be granted enlightenment and wisdom. All who facilitate the world's progress will be carrying out the will of their Creator. In their actions, they cleave to God's holiness, just like the holiness associated with performing mitzvot and studying Torah.

In such an elevated reality, there is no conflict between the spiritual and material spheres, and supervision of both realms should be combined under a single leader. The prophetic visions foretold this state of the world under the leadership of the messianic king.

This was also the level of Moses, who was responsible for both the spiritual and physical needs of Israel in the wilderness. He was an עבד נאמן, a faithful servant who looked after the people's material needs, yet was also crowned with כליל תפארת, pure splendor, an expression of Moses' lofty spiritual state. Moses never felt a contradiction between these two functions. His bodily powers were not weakened when he experienced prophecy, due to his clear recognition of the unity in God's Divine will.

But when we are unable to attain such an elevated state — when we can grow spiritually only when we are not encumbered by material occupations — then it is necessary to limit the time and effort spent in worldly matters.

In summary: when the Jewish people merit the revelation of God's unity in all realms, then they should be governed by one leader, who provides enlightenment in spiritual matters and leadership in material ones. Occupation in worldly matters will not distance him from holiness.

When, however, the Jewish people are not on this spiritual level, there is a conflict between the physical and the spiritual realms. Then they require two distinct leaders.

Two Hands

Now we can understand why God commanded Moses to place a single hand on Joshua. The hand is a metaphor for control and governance. Placing two hands would reflect control over both realms, both spiritual and material. Were God to command Moses to place both of his hands on Joshua, that would indicate that — for all times — both spiritual and practical leadership would be Divinely issued. In dark times, when material life is distant from the spiritual, we can hardly ascribe to the material leader the same Divine right to rule that Moses passed on to his disciple.

Why then did Moses place both hands on Joshua?

Moses understood from God's command that only the spiritual realm would benefit from leaders who are Divinely-appointed. Nonetheless, Moses wanted to prepare the stage for a future world, an era in which both spheres will be united under one leader. Therefore, he made Joshua stand before both the high priest (representing the spiritual realm) and the common people (the physical). Moses then placed both of his hands on the new leader.

(Adapted from Otzarot HaRe'iyah vol. II, pp. 179-186)

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Pinchas

פרשת פינחס תשפ"א

פנחס בן אלעזר בן אהרן הכהן השיב חמתי מעל בני ישראל... לכן אמר הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום

Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon *HaKohen*, turned back My wrath from *Bnei Yisrael*… Therefore, say: Behold! I give him my covenant of peace. (25:11,12)

Hashem granted Pinchas and his descendants the covenant of peace as a result of Pinchas' zealous intervention. Why was Pinchas granted this reward more than Moshe *Rabbeinu*? When *Klal Yisrael* sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe intervened on their behalf. He petitioned Hashem to forgive them to the point that he was prepared to see his name erased from the Torah. He succeeded in quelling Hashem's displeasure with the Jewish nation – not once – but many times. Yet, it was Pinchas who intervened one time during an act of moral profligacy, and, consequently, was credited with turning back Hashem's anger. How was his intervention different from that of Moshe?

The *Maggid, zl,* of *Dubno,* explains that, indeed, Moshe prayed for the Jewish people. His intercession on their behalf achieved a delay in their punishment. *Chazal* (*Sanhedrin* 102a) teach that every punishment that is meted out to *Klal Yisrael* contains within it some form of retribution for the sin of the Golden Calf. In contrast, Pinchas did not merely delay the punishment – he eradicated it. Pinchas turned back the wrath, thus meriting the covenant of peace.

Sforno explains the achievement of Pinchas' zealousness in that he avenged Hashem's honor in sight of all. *Klal Yisrael* was privy to Zimri's despicable act. Indeed, he wanted it to be noticed publicly. Sadly, the members of the nation just stood there. No one protested. This means that the masses of Jews were not guilty of harlotry or idolatry. They were guilty of apathy (a sin which continues to plague us to this very day), having witnessed the licentiousness, the grave sins that were committed by those whose morals and faith were questionable, and failed to intervene or object. Their atonement was attained when they observed Pinchas intervene and slay Zimri – and they did nothing to prevent him from carrying out his self-proclaimed mission of zealous mercy. Veritably, they personally did not intervene, but the fact that they did not stand in the way of Pinchas earned them atonement.

Horav Eliyahu Svei, zl, compares this to the earlier incident of the Golden Calf, when *Bnei Levi* killed three thousand sinners. They went from tent to tent seeking out those who had flagrantly sinned – regardless of their relationship with the sinner. This act of dedication catapulted *Bnei Levi* to achieve spiritual superiority. One wonders how committing an act that involves blood-spilling of another Jew warrants one's ascension to spiritual aristocracy.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* quotes from the *Meshech Chochmah* that *Bnei Levi* were a scant minority of 8,000 men standing up against 600,000. The nation could have easily banded together and vanquished them like swatting a fly. They did not, because they knew, once Moshe *Rabbeinu* descended the mountain that they had erred egregiously and deserved whatever punishment Hashem would mete out to them. No one fought *Shevet Levi*. They were wrong, and they would pay for it. That was their atonement. Thus, by answering Moshe's clarion call of *Mi l'Hashem eilai,* "Who is for Hashem (come) to me!" *Shevet Levi* became the catalyst to buttress *Klal Yisrael's emunah*, faith, in Hashem.

The Golden Calf incident rocked the nation's faith. The *Leviim* brought it back. Likewise, the nation acquiesced/or at least were not repulsed by

Zimri's act. Pinchas entered the scene and put a stop to Zimri. When he publicly killed Zimri, the nation could have balked and prevented him from executing his mission. They did not, because they were acutely aware that they had been wrong and Pinchas was acting correctly. This was their atonement – sponsored by Pinchas. In this manner, he earned the covenant of peace.

ובני קרח לא מתו

The sons of Korach did not die. (26:11)

Chazal teach that *Bra mizaki abba*; "A son (children) brings merit to his father (forebears)." If so, why did the *teshuvah*, repentance, committed by Korach's sons not serve as a merit to save him from spiritual infamy? *Horav Eliyahu Lopian, zl*, offers a powerful insight. The idea that a son's *mitzvos, z'chusim,* merits, can somehow mitigate a father's punishment applies only as long as the father has not become deficient in the principles/foundations of *emunah*, faith. A *kofer*, apostate, heretic, who has denied the existence of his Father in Heaven, who has repudiated Hashem, Our Father, Our King, cannot be availed the merits generated by his son's good deeds. It is *middah k'neged middah,* measure for measure. He severed his affiliation with his Father in Heaven; likewise, his son's merits cannot be considered on his behalf. If one has reneged his Father, why should he benefit from the merits that come with fatherhood? Korach denied Hashem. As such, he broke with the Heavenly Family. His payback is a lacuna in his own father/son relationship and the resultant benefits.

We can extrapolate from the words of the *Mashgiach* that one who as severed his relationship with his Father in Heaven can expect no less from his physical son. While the physical relationship may exist, the spiritual benefits follow one's spiritual relationship. What about a father who has abandoned his children, who has terminated his father/son relationship? Will he be protected by his son's merits? I would assume that the father who does not act like a father to his son should be no different than the father who has reneged against his Father. It is a reciprocal relationship. One receives the benefits when he values the relationship. No relationship – no benefits.

If the above would be true, the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud av v'eim,* honoring one's father and mother, would not apply concerning an abusive or derelict parent. Yet, it does. This means that it is not about one's feelings, if one loves or not, if his father/mother treats him appropriately. It is about honor, even when a person does not deserve that honor. We honor flawed people. Why should our parent be any different than some fellow on the street whom we, as Jews, are supposed to treat with respect? Hashem commands us to overlook the abuse, ignore the dereliction of duty, turn our cheek concerning the lack of reciprocity and, instead, show love rather than antagonism. The "worst" that will happen is that one's children who are watching will become better children – better people.

I could go on writing, but that is not the focus of this *dvar Torah*. I think the best summation would be: parents are also people. Some are more perfect than others. Some have much to carry on their shoulders. Some are themselves the products of troubled childhoods, dysfunctional families. We are not here to judge, and perhaps not even to love. The Torah commands us to "honor." That is our obligation. The rest is up to us.

אבינו מת במדבר והוא לא היה בתוך העדה הנועדים על ד' בעדת קרח

Our father died in the wilderness, but he was not among the assembly that was gathering against Hashem in the assembly of Korach. (27:3)

The daughters of Tzlafchad approached Moshe *Rabbeinu* concerning their father's inheritance. Moshe replied that he would present their case to Hashem. Our quintessential leader rarely had an issue with proffering an immediate response to a *Halachic* query. Why was he reluctant to answer *Bnos Tzlafchad*? Furthermore, the women added a caveat to their identity of Tzlafachad, claiming that he had not been a member of Korach's mob of usurpers. Their father was not guilty of impugning Moshe's authority. What did this introduction have to do with the case?

The *Minchas Chinuch*, who asks this question, replies practically by employing an incident in which he was personally involved. Two litigants came to the *Minchas Chinuch* and asked him to adjudicate a dispute they had between one another. During the discussion, one of the litigants mentioned as an aside that the *Minchas Chinuch's* father was his m*esader kedushin*, officiated at his wedding ceremony. Hearing this, the *Minchas Chinuch* turned to the other litigant and asked, "Did my father, likewise, officiate at your wedding?" The man replied that he had not. When the man rendered his negative response, the *Minchas Chinuch* declared that he must recuse himself from the case. He felt that, since he was now aware that his father had officiated at the wedding of one of the litigants, he subconsciously would be predisposed to helping that litigant. Thus, he was no longer fit to render judgment.

With this vignette in mind, we approach the Tzlafchad incident. A judge may not rule in a case if he accepts any form of bribe – money or anything which might in some way alter his line of thinking. The daughters of Tzlafchad mentioned that their fate was not bound to the Korach insurrection. Was this their way of currying a favorable reply from Moshe? Probably not, but, quite possibly, Moshe felt compromised enough to recuse himself. This case required the adjudication of a Higher Authority.

יפקד ד'... איש על העדה אשר יצא לפניהם ואשר יבא לפניהם... ולא תהיה עדת ד' צאן אשר אין להם רעה

May Hashem appoint… a man over the assembly who shall go out before them and come in before them… and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd. (27:16,17)

The text of the *pasuk* appears superfluous. Once Moshe *Rabbeinu* presented his request for a leader who would go out and come in before the nation, it is obvious that he was seeking someone who exemplified caring leadership. If so, why was it necessary to add "the assembly should not be like sheep who have no shepherd"? If they have a leader who cares and worries about them, it goes without saying that they will not be left like sheep without a shepherd. That is the purpose of a leader.

Horav Avraham Yoffen, zl, explains by relating an incident that occurred during the Russo-Japanese war, circa 1904-1905. When countries go to war, their citizens usually suffer economic hardship. This is especially true for the citizens who are struggling just to keep their heads above water. The Jewish communities in Russia suffered greatly. Hunger and deprivation were added challenges to the usual issues that confronted the Jewish community in Russia 120 years ago. This economic adversity was especially rough on the *yeshivah* world, whose students on a "good" day survived on very little nourishment. It reached the point that the *yeshivos* were compelled to send *shluchim,* collectors, to fundraise in areas of Western Europe unaffected by the war. The problem was that it would appear that these fundraisers might be developing a pact with countries not friendly to Mother Russia. When the government sought a scapegoat, they usually looked at the Jewish community. Thus, a number of *Roshei Yeshivah* decided that fundraisers would not pass scrutiny. As a result, the *yeshivos* suffered even more. It became so difficult that the *yeshivos* had no money left to purchase kerosene which provided light during the long winter nights. Learning, however, must continue. Thus, the *yeshivah* students studied in the dark by memory. This is how Torah study was maintained in Russia 120 years ago.

A conference of *Roshei Yeshivah* was convened. They decided that, since they could not take the chance of sending *shluchim* outside of the country, they would send fundraisers throughout the Jewish community to collect whatever scraps were available. Torah study must continue at all costs. The next hurdle was to determine whom to send to collect. Any able-bodied person was working for the war effort. The students had to learn Torah. No one was left but the *Roshei Yeshivah* themselves, who would personally have to go from door to door seeking whatever alms and food was available to sustain their students. The decision was made, and the names of the *Roshei Yeshivah* were entered on a list and divided up according to geographic area. Everything was moving forward to enable the *yeshivos* to continue with their unhindered devotion to Torah study.

Suddenly, *Horav Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, zl,* the *Alter m'Novarodok*, stood up and asked to speak, "Veritably, the *matzav*, situation, in the *yeshivos* is bleak. The students are starving. They are down to existing on crumbs of bread to

sustain them throughout the day. I suspect, however, that, if the honored *Roshei Yeshivah* will leave their institutions to tread from door to door in search of sustenance, they will return with bread, but, by the time they return, their students will be gone! I, for one, am returning to my *yeshivah* to be with my students."

The conference broke up. Everyone was in a state of tumult, regarding what to do. One thing was certain: the issue and its resolution were no longer cut and dry. Each *Rosh Yeshivah* would have to mull over the pros and cons and decide on his own. The *Alter* had painted a grim picture in which the resolution to the problem was worse than the problem. A short while later, the *Alter* of Novarodok received a letter from *Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl*, of Slutzk, saying that the *Alter's* sharp words saved the *yeshivah* world from demise. Without *Roshei Yeshivah* who stand at the helm of their institutions – they would have bread, but no students.

We derive from this vignette that a Torah leader does not leave his ship. His students are his sheep, and he is their shepherd. A shepherd does not abandon his sheep. If a *Rosh Yeshivah* must leave for a very short interval, he must carefully weigh the benefits against the disadvantages that might result.

This is to what Moshe was alluding when he detailed the criteria for a leader. He must go out and come in before them; he must concern himself with the welfare of the people. If their welfare is dependent upon his leaving his post, abandoning his community, however, he must take into consideration that the negative consequences resulting from his departure might far outreach whatever advantages will incur. A leader's place is with his flock. …

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PARSHAT PINCHAS

Should Chumash end with Parshat Pinchas?

Obviously not, yet in the middle of this week's Parsha we find the story of Moshe Rabbeinu's 'death' and the transfer of his leadership to Yehoshua (see 27:12-23).

Furthermore, a careful study of Parshat Pinchas reveals that almost all of its topics seem to belong elsewhere in Chumash.

In this week's shiur, we attempt to understand why.

INTRODUCTION

Up until Parshat Pinchas, the narrative of Sefer Bamidbar has followed in a very logical (chronological) order. However, towards the beginning of Parsha Pinchas, we uncover a serious problem in relation to the story of the war against Midyan.

Even though God's command to avenge the Midyanim is recorded towards the beginning of Parshat Pinchas, the details of that battle are not recorded until several chapters later in the middle of Parshat Matot. In the 'interim', Parshat Pinchas discusses several events that are not only unrelated, but also appear to have taken place at a later time!

After explaining this problem in a bit more detail, our shiur will attempt to explain the reason for what otherwise seems to be a very strange progression of parshiot.

[Before we begin our shiur, a note of convention:

Parsha - with a capital 'P - refers to Parshat HaShavua, parsha (or parshia) - with a small 'p' - refers to 'parshiot' ['ptuchot' or 'stumot'] - the paragraph-like divisions in Chumash, denoted by a wide blank space on the line .]

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Review 25:1-15, noting how Parshat Pinchas begins by completing the story of Bnei Yisrael's sin with the daughters of Midyan (from the end of Parshat Balak). First, Pinchas is rewarded for his zealous act (that saved Bnei Yisrael from a harsher punishment/ 25:10-15); and immediately afterward God commands Moshe to avenge the Midyanites:

"And God spoke to Moshe, saying: Attack the Midyanites and defeat them, for they attacked you by trickery..." (25:16-18).

Logic would dictate that Chumash should continue at this point with the story of that battle. But that's not what happens! Instead, the details of that battle are recorded only some **five** chapters later -in the middle of Parshat Matot:

"And God spoke to Moshe, saying: Avenge the Israelite people on the Midyanites...[then] Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael: Choose men for battle, and let them attack Midyan to avenge God's anger with Midyan..." (see Bamidbar 31:1-2 / compare with 25:16-18).

In the interim (i.e. chapters 26-30), we find several unrelated topics, as summarized in the following table:

Chapter	**Topic**
26:1-65	A census of the entire nation
27:1-11	The story of 'bnot Tzlofchad'
27:12-14	Moshe Rabbeinu's 'final day'
27:12-23	The transfer of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua
28:1-30:1	Laws of korbanot - tmidim and musafim
30:2-17	The laws of nedarim (vows)

This problem usually goes unnoticed for a very simple reason. When the census begins in chapter 26, it appears to be directly connected to this commandment to avenge the Midyanim:

"And God spoke to Moshe, saying: Attack the Midyanites..." (see 25:16-18)

"And it came to pass after the plague, God told Moshe... take a census of Bnei Yisrael from the age twenty and up - by their ancestral houses, all who are able to bear arms" (see 26:1-2).

This juxtaposition leaves us with the impression that this census is necessary as part of the preparation for the ensuing battle against Midyan. However, by the time the details of that census are completed (some 60 verses later) it becomes quite clear that this "mifkad" has nothing to do with that battle. Rather, its purpose is stated explicitly:

"... This is the total number of Bnei Yisrael: 601,730. And God spoke to Moshe saying: **To these [counted people] shall the land be apportioned** - according to the listed names, the larger the group the larger the share..." (see 26:51-54).

In other words, this census will form the basis for the partition of the Land after its conquest. This observation explains why this specific census is conducted "l'beit avotam" [lit. by their ancestral houses / see 26:2] - hence it includes the specific the names of the official family units, as the land will be apportioned according to the size of these family units (see 26:52).

[Note how this detail of "le-beit avotam" is the primary difference between the census here, and the census in Bamidbar chapters 1-2. There, we don't find these individual family unit names!]

Further proof that this census is totally unrelated to the war against Midyan comes from the details of that battle in Parshat Matot. Review 31:4-6, noting how God instructs Moshe to conscript only one thousand soldiers from each tribe. If only 12,000 soldiers are needed to fight Midyan, then there is certainly no need for Moshe to conduct a comprehensive census of over 600,000 soldiers!

Conclusive proof that the census in chapter 26 is taken for the sole purpose of apportioning the land (and has nothing to do with the ensuing battle against Midyan) is found in chapter 27, where we find the story of how the daughters of Tzlofchad complained that they would not receive a 'nachala' [a portion of the land]. Certainly, this has nothing to do with the war against Midyan, but everything to do with inheriting the Land!

[The final topic of chapter 27, i.e. the appointment of Yehoshua to succeed Moshe, also relates to the topic of inheriting the land, as it will become Yehoshua's responsibility to conquer and then oversee the inheritance of the land according the tribal families.]
]

Finally, chapters 28 thru 30 describe numerous laws regarding korbanot and nedarim [vows]. These laws as well certainly have no direct connection to the war against Midyan.

Only in chapter 31, Sefer Bamidbar finally returns to the details of the battle against Midyan that began back in chapter 25.

The following chart summarizes our discussion thus far and illustrates how the natural flow from chapter 25-31 is interrupted by topics A-F:

CHAPTER	**EVENT / TOPIC**
*** 25 ==>**	**GOD'S COMMANDMENT TO ATTACK MIDYAN**
A) 26	The Census of the people who will inherit the Land
B) 27:1-11	The story of bnot Tzlofchad
C) 27:12-14	Moshe Rabbeinu's final day
D) 27:12-23	The transfer of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua
E) 28->29	The laws of korbanot - tmidim and musafim
F) 30	The laws of nedarim (vows)
*** 31 ==>**	**THE BATTLE AGAINST THE MIDYANIM**

Clearly, none of these topics relate directly to 'milchemet Midyan'. Nonetheless, the Torah records them here in Parshat Pinchas.

To understand why, we must first determine where each of these parshiot (i.e. A-F) **does** belong.

A) THE CENSUS - MIFKAD HA-NACHALOT

As we explained above, the census (in chapter 26) was taken to enable the leaders to properly apportion the land Therefore, it's rather easy to identify where this section 'belongs', for the last three chapters of Sefer Bamidbar discuss the topic of inheriting the land (see 33:50 till the end of the book). In fact, we can pretty much pinpoint where this unit belongs by noting a rather obvious textual (and thematic) parallel. Simply review once again the concluding psukim of the census:

"Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names, with larger groups **INCREASE** the share, with smaller groups **REDUCE** the share. Each is to be assigned its share according to its enrollment..." (see 26:52-54).

The note how we find almost the identical commandment in Parshat Mas'ei, when God charges Bnei Yisrael with the mission of conquering the land:

"When you cross the Jordan into the Land of Canaan... you shall take possession of the land and settle it..."

"You shall **apportion** the land among yourselves... with larger groups **INCREASE** the share, with smaller groups **REDUCE** the share... You shall have your portions according to your **ancestral tribes**..." (see 33:50-55)

[Note CAPS in both quotes to highlight parallel]

Review these psukim once again, noting how this commandment in Parshat Mas'ei is almost identical to the commandment recorded at the conclusion of the census in Parshat Pinchas (see above 26:52-54)!

Furthermore, Parshat Mas'ei continues with numerous other commandments concerning inheriting the land. [For example, the borders of Eretz Canaan that are to be conquered (see 34:1-15), the tribal leaders who will apportion the land (see 34:16-29), the cities of the levi'im and the cities of refuge (see chapter 35), etc.]

Hence, we conclude that the census in Parshat Pinchas actually 'belongs 'in Parshat Mas'ei!

B) BNOT TZLOFCHAD

Note how this incident (see 27:1-11) is recorded immediately after the census [read 27:1 carefully], and most probably that is exactly when it took place. After all, the daughters of Tzlofchad's complaint stems from their worry that their father's inheritance (as promised in the census) will be lost, for they have no brothers.

Clearly, this story can be considered a direct continuation of the "mifkad ha-nachalot" (i.e. chapter 26), for it too deals with laws concerning inheriting the Land. Therefore, it too should have been recorded in Parshat Mas'ei. [In fact, the story of bnot Tzlofchad actually continues in Parshat Mas'ei - see chapter 36!]

C) MOSHE RABBEINU'S FINAL DAY

In the next parsha (27:12-14), God commands Moshe to take a final glance of the Promised Land prior to his death:

"And God told Moshe: Ascend Mount Eivarim and view the land which I am giving to Bnei Yisrael, then you will be gathered unto your people, just as Aharon was..." [i.e. the time has come for Moshe to die (see 27:12-13).

Obviously, this commandment should have been recorded at the very end of Sefer Bamidbar, or even at the end of Sefer Devarim - prior to Moshe's death; surely not in the middle of Parshat Pinchas! [To verify this, simply compare it to Devarim 34:1-6.]

Furthermore, even if this story 'belongs' in Sefer Bamidbar, it most definitely should have been recorded **after** "milchemet Midyan", for that story begins -stating explicitly:

"And God spoke to Moshe: Avenge the Midyanites... **afterward** you shall be gathered to your nation" (31:1).]

D) APPOINTING YEHOSHUA AS THE NEW LEADER

The next parshia (27:15-23) is simply Moshe's reaction to this commandment (that he must die). Therefore, Moshe requests that God appoint a leader in his place. Clearly, both of these parshiot [(C) and (D)] form a unit, but it would have made more sense to records this unit somewhere towards the end of Chumash; but definitely **not** in the middle of Parshat Pinchas!

In fact, considering that this story includes the appointment of Yehoshua as the new leader, this unit could have formed a very appropriate conclusion for the entire Sefer.

E) KORBANOT TMIDIM U-MUSAFIM

The next two chapters (28->29) constitute a schedule of the various korbanot **musaf** that are offered on special occasions in 'addition' [= musaf] to the daily **tamid** sacrifice.

Obviously, this entire unit doesn't belong here, for it has nothing to do with the ongoing narrative. Rather, it should have been recorded in Sefer Vayikra, most probably in Parshat Emor, together with the other laws of korbanot and holidays (see Vayikra chapter 23, noting how the phrase: 've-hikravtem isheh la-Hashem..' relates to the complete details found in Bamidbar chapters 28-29]

F) PARSHAT NEDARIM

In chapter 30 we find a commandment regarding the laws of "nedarim" [vows]; yet another parshia of mitzvot (as opposed to narrative). These laws could be understood as a direct continuation of the previous section - because the final pasuk of the "tmidim u'musafim" section states that these korbanot were brought '**in addition** to their **nedarim**...' (see 29:39!).

Based on this analysis, it becomes clear that the Torah has intentionally 'interrupted' the story of the war against Midyan with several unrelated parshiot! The obvious question is: **why**?

DIVIDE & CONQUER

To answer this question, we must first group these six topics (i.e. A-F above) into two basic categories.

I. PREPARATION FOR ENTERING ERETZ CANAAN (26-27)

A. The census for dividing the land - mifkad ha-nachalot
B. The complaint of bnot Tzlofchad re: their inheritance
C. Moshe's death
D. The transfer of his leadership to Yehoshua.

II. MITZVOT THAT BELONG IN SEFER VAYIKRA (28-30)

E. The laws of tmidim u-musafim
F. The laws of nedarim

These two categories can help us pinpoint where each of these two units belong.

The first unit (I.) contains parshiot that detail Bnei Yisrael's preparation for entering the land. As we explained above, these parshiot belong in Parshat Mas'ei. To illustrate this point, the following table shows the progression of parshiot from the story of milchemet Midyan until the end of Sefer Bamidbar:

CHAPTER	**TOPIC**
31:1-54	The war against Midyan
32:1-42	The inheritance of Reuven & Gad in Transjordan
33:1-49	Summary of B.Y.'s journey through the desert
33:50-56	* The commandment to conquer & inherit the Land
34:1-15	* The precise **borders** of Eretz Canaan.
34:16-29	* The tribal leaders who are to apportion the Land
35:1-18	* The cities of the Levites for their inheritance.
35:9-34	* The cities of refuge to be set up in the land.
36:1-13	* Laws of inheritance relating to inter-tribal marriages

This table illustrates how the final topic of Sefer Bamidbar is **preparation for entering Eretz Canaan** (i.e. 33:50-36:13).

Considering that chapters 26-27 in Parshat Pinchas discuss this very same topic, we conclude that they actually 'belong' at the end of Sefer Bamidbar.

The second unit, containing the laws of **tmidim u-musafim** and **nedarim**, clearly belongs in Sefer Vayikra. However, this phenomenon should not surprise us, for there are many other instances in Sefer Bamidbar where we find 'insertions' of a set of laws that seem to belong in Sefer Vayikra.
[See our Introductory shiur to Bamidbar, where this topic was discussed in detail. Later in our shiur, we will suggest a reason why specifically these mitzvot were 'transferred' from Vayikra to Bamidbar.]

CUT AND PASTE?

Based on this distinction, we can now redefine our question: Why does the Torah 'cut' these parshiot (i.e. chapters 26 & 17) from Parshat Mas'ei (where they seem to belong), and 'paste' them instead in Parshat Pinchas - after the story of Bnei Yisrael's sin with bnot Midyan, but before they avenge the Midyanim?

Before we offer a thematic explanation, we should note a small technicality that can support our conclusions thus far.

Using a Tanach Koren (or similar), take a careful look at the opening pasuk of chapter 26, noting how there is a parshia break smack in the middle of this pasuk!
"Va-yehi acharei ha-mageifa" - when the **plague** was over -
SPACE , [i.e. a parshia break in the middle of the pasuk] ...and God told Moshe...Take a census of Bnei Yisrael..." (see 26:1-2)

This strange 'parshia break' in the middle of the pasuk may reflect this 'interruption' of the narrative, which takes place precisely at this point, in the middle of this pasuk!

Now that we have established that the census in chapter 26 'belongs' at the end of the book, we must now search for a reason why the Torah intentionally inserted this unit specifically at this point in Sefer Bamidbar, i.e. after the plague that followed Bnei Yisrael's sin with 'the women of Moav & Midyan'.

We will suggest a reason for this juxtaposition by considering the overall theme and structure of Sefer Bamidbar.

THE LAST PLAGUE

Recall how the narrative of Sefer Bamidbar began as Bnei Yisrael prepare for their journey from Har Sinai towards the Promised Land. Ideally (i.e. had Bnei Yisrael not sinned), Sefer Bamidbar would have continued with the story of the conquest and settlement of the Land.

Even though everything seems to be going fine in the first ten chapters - i.e. up until the psukim of "va'yhi bnsoa ha'aron" (see 10:35-36) - as soon as Bnei Yisrael begin their journey (in chapter 11), everything seems to go wrong. Instead of describing what should have been, Sefer Bamidbar becomes the story of how and why Bnei Yisrael do NOT make it to the land of Israel.

Note how just about every story in Sefer Bamidbar from chapter 11 thru chapter 25 describes a rebellious act of Bnei Yisrael, followed by a terrible punishment.
[For example, the "mitonnim", the "mitavim", the "meraglim", Korach and his followers, "mei meriva", the "nachash nechoshet" incident, and "chet bnot midyan".]

The sin of the "meraglim" (in chapter 13) was so severe that God swore that the first generation must perish in the desert. Then, even in the fortieth year, we find additional incidents where Bnei Yisrael sin (and are punished). For example, note the story of the 'nachash nechoshet' (see 21:4-10) and 'chet bnot Midyan' (see 25:1-6).

Even though chapters 11 thru 25 of Sefer Bamidbar are replete with stories of rebellion, punishment, and death; from chapter 26 and onward, the primary topic of Sefer Bamidbar changes once again. Instead of stories of rebellion, now we find stories of conquest and preparation for entering the land. The following table summarize this division of the narrative of Sefer Bamidbar into three distinct sections:

I. 1->10 Preparation at Har Sinai to travel to Israel
II, 11->25 What went wrong, i.e. why first generation failed
III. 26->36 Preparation for entering the land [new generation]

From this perspective, the act of Pinchas, which stopped the plague in the aftermath of the sin with "bnot Mo'av" constitutes an important milestone in Sefer Bamdbar- for this incident was the **last** punishment in the desert. Hence, those who survived that plague are now destined to become the first **inheritors** of Eretz Canaan!

With this background, we can suggest that the Torah's 'insertion' of the census specifically at this point in the Sefer emphasizes precisely this point - that the tragic events in the desert have finally come to an end. Those who survived this plague are now worthy of inheriting the Land.

This interpretation is supported by the final statement of that census, recorded after the levi'im are counted:
"These are the persons counted by Moshe...Among these there was not one of those counted by Moshe & Aharon in Midbar Sinai (chapters 1-2) ... For God had said of them: They shall die in the wilderness, not one of them survived, except Kalev ben Yefuneh and Yehoshua bin Nun" (26:63-65).

Further support is found in Sefer Devarim, in Moshe Rabbeinu's opening address to the nation. In Moshe's introductory speech (before he begins his main speech that reviews the various laws that Bnei Yisrael must keep once they enter the land / see 5:1, 5:28, 6:1 etc.), note his emphasis on this very same point:
"Your very own eyes have seen what God has done to Ba'al Pe'or, for anyone who had followed Ba'al Pe'or [i.e. chet bnot Mo'av] - God has destroyed him from your midst [via the 'mageifa']. But **you** - who have remained loyal to your God - are standing here alive to today!" (see Devarim 4:3-4).
[Did you realize that this is the context of the pasuk "v'atem ha'dvakim b'Hashem Elokeichem" (that we often quote in our daily tefilla)?]

FROM CENSUS TO LEADERSHIP

In a similar manner, we can explain why this census is followed by God's commandment to Moshe to ascend Har HaEivarim to die, and the story of how his leadership is transferred to Yehoshua. Considering that this census will become the basis for the 'inheritance' of the Land of Israel, we mention immediately afterward this transfer of leadership, for it will become Yehoshua's duty to lead the new generation to conquer and inherit the Land. [See further iyun section for a discussion of how Rashi relates to this point.]

TMIDIM U-MUSAFIM - WHY HERE?

Now that we have explained why the Torah moves the unit of chapters 26-27 from Parshat Mas'ei to Parshat Pinchas, we must also explain why the Torah moves chapters 28-30 (the second category) from Sefer Vayikra to Parshat Pinchas.

As we explained in our introductory shiur, Sefer Bamidbar contains numerous mitzvot that 'could have been' recorded in Sefer Vayikra. Here we find yet another example.

However, as was the case in the other instances, we must look for a thematic connection between those laws and the ongoing narrative. In other words, we must ask - what is the connection between the laws of tmidim u-musafim and Bnei Yisrael's preparation for entering Eretz Canaan?

Once again, we return to the theme of Sefer Bamidbar to suggest an answer.

Recall that the first ten chapters of Sefer Bamidbar describe Bnei Yisrael's **preparation** for their journey from Har Sinai to the

Promised Land. Those chapters emphasize the intrinsic connection between the camp of Bnei Yisrael and the mishkan. Bnei Yisrael must travel with the mishkan, and thus the 'Shchina' (the Divine presence), at the center of the camp (see shiur on Parshat Bamidbar).

Now, forty years later, as the Torah describes Bnei Yisrael's preparation for entering the Promised Land, Chumash may be emphasizing this very same point once again - by recording the laws of tmidim u-musafim in Parshat Pinchas.

One can suggest two thematic reasons:

1) The korban Tamid, the daily collective offering on the **mizbeiach**, together with the additional **musaf** offering on the holidays, is purchased with the 'machatzit ha-shekel', collected from each member of Am Yisrael when taking the yearly **census**!
2) The **tamid** offering is a symbolic daily reminder of Ma'amad Har Sinai. Recall (from our shiur on Parshat Tetzaveh) our definition of the **Shchina** unit in Shmot chapters 25-29 (the commandment to build the mishkan). That unit began with the purpose of the mishkan:

> "And they shall make for Me a mikdash, ve-**shachanti** betocham - that I should **dwell** in their midst" (25:8).

That unit concluded with the commandment to offer the daily korban tamid, whose purpose was to perpetuate the **Shchina** which dwelled on Har Sinai:

"**Olat tamid** for all generations, at the entrance of the ohel mo'ed... for there **I will meet** with Bnei Yisrael... v-**shachanti** - and I will **dwell** among Bnei Yisrael, I will be their God..."
(see Shmot 29:42-45 compare Bamidbar 28:1-6).

A similar phrase is found in the presentation of the korban tamid in Parshat Pinchas:

"**Olat tamid**, which was instituted at **Har Sinai**..." (28:6).

Thus, the korban tamid may symbolize the special connection between God and Bnei Yisrael that must crystallize as Bnei Yisrael prepare to conquer and inherit their Land.

From this perspective, this korban **tamid** may reflect both the collective nature of Am Yisrael's relationship with God ['korban tzibbur'], together with the value of the contribution of each individual [machatzit ha-shekel].

` As Yehoshua prepares to lead Bnei Yisrael into a new era, these principles of the 'avodat tamid' - collective purpose, individual responsibility, and daily routine - must serve as a guiding light for the entire nation.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

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FOR FURTHER IYUN

A. The interpretation presented in the above shiur can explain why Rashi (26:1) quotes **two** Midrashim to explain why this parsha of the census is located here.

1) The first Midrash he quotes, relating to the connection between the plague and the census, explains that Bnei Yisrael are so dear to God that He counts them after every tragedy, just as the shepherd counts his sheep after they have been attacked.

However, this approach is difficult, for it does not take into account the Torah's explicit explanation that this census is to determine who will inherit the land (see 26:53). Furthermore, in the other instances when Bnei Yisrael are smitten by plagues, the Torah never records God's command Moshe to take a census. Why should this plague be any different?

2) Therefore, Rashi quotes a second Midrash comparing Moshe to a shepherd: Moshe, like a shepherd, when he took Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt he counted them, now that he is about to die, he must return the sheep to their owner. Therefore, he must count them once again.

While the first Midrash focuses on the connection between the plague and the census, the second Midrash focuses on the connection between the census and the transfer of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua.]

B. Note the Ramban's explanation why the parsha of Moshe's 'death' is written at this time (in Parshat Pinchas).
What issue led Ramban to this conclusion?

C. The story of Bnei Gad & Reuven (chapter 32) could be considered part of the nachala section.
1. Explain why.
2. Explain why it isn't, and why it actually continues to the story of milchemet Midyan.
Pay attention to the opening words of perek 32.
How does this relate to milchemet Midyan?
3. How does this story relate to other events in the desert, such as chet ha-meraglim for example. (See the Netziv on this issue.)

D. Use our explanation of the importance of the korban tamid to explain why each korban musaf in Parshat Pinchas concludes with the phrase 'milvad olat ha-tamid …'.

E. Compare the names of the family groups in the census in Parshat Pinchas [le-beit avotam...] to the names of the original seventy members of Yaakov's family who went down to Egypt (see Breishit 46:8-27). Can you find the significance of this parallel?
[To whom was this land first promised?]

The CHAGIM in PARSHAT PINCHAS

As you 'should' have noticed, every time that we doven MUSAF (i.e. on shabbat, rosh chodesh, & yom-tovim), we always include a quote from Parshat Pinchas.

Similarly, the Torah reading on every rosh chodesh and yom-tov is either entirely from Parshat Pinchas, or at least the 'maftir' section!

To understand why, the following shiur undertakes a simple analysis of chapters 28->29 in Parshat Pinchas.

INTRODUCTION

Even though we find several presentations of the Jewish Holidays throughout Chumash, their presentation in Parshat Pinchas is quite unique. In fact, our shiur will show how the primary topic of this unit may not even be the holidays!
[It will help us understand why these holidays are 'repeated' in Sefer Bamidbar, even though they were already discussed in Parshat Emor /i.e. Vayikra 23.]

We begin our study by identifying the precise unit under discussion and its structure.

AN ORGANIZED UNIT

Just about every time that Chumash presents a unit of "mitzvot" - it begins with a very short introductory narrative - the most common form being "va'ydaber Hashem el Moshe lay'mor", or something similar.

This standard format allows us to easily identify chapters 28 & 29 as a unit, as it begins with that opening phrase (see 28:1), and the commandments continue until the end of chapter 29.

Note as well 30:1 we find what constitutes the concluding verse of this unit, for it describes Moshe's fulfillment of God's command in 28:2, that Moshe should command these laws to Bnei Yisrael!

In the opening verse God instructs Moshe (see 28:1-2):
"**Command** Bnei Yisrael and tell them - keep the laws of My [daily] offerings..."

In the closing verse (see 30:1):

"And Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael [telling them] everything [all the laws] that God had commanded him."
[Note a very similar structure between Vayikra 23:1 and 23:44.]

This alone already indicates that all of the laws included between these opening and closing verses forms a unit.
[Note how the chapter division of Chumash seems to have made a major mistake here, for 30:1 should really have been 29:40! Note how the 'parshia' break of Chazal is much more accurate (as usual) than the 'King James' chapter division! This 'mistake' probably stems from a misunderstanding of the opening pasuk of Parshat Masei, and how it connects to the last verse of Parshat Pinchas.]

As we browse through the content of chapters 28->29, it seems as though its primary topic is the holidays, for they begin in 28:16 and continue all the way until 29:39. Note as well how these holidays are presented in the order of their lunar dates, i.e. beginning with Pesach and concluding with Succot .

Nonetheless, when we consider that this unit begins in 28:1, we must assume that the first fifteen psukim share the same theme. By taking a closer look, the connection becomes rather obvious, for the first topic is the daily "olah" offering - a lamb - offered once in the morning and once in the evening (see 28:2-8). These laws are followed by the commandment to offer an 'additional' "olah" every Shabbat (see 28:9-10), and more elaborate "olah" on every Rosh Chodesh [first day of the lunar mon

Now, to determine what thematically ties this unit together, we need only list the topic of each of its individual "parshiot" in search of a logical progression:

As we will see, the progression is very logical:

PSUKIM	**TOPIC / The laws of:**
28:1-8	the DAILY korban TAMID
28:9-10	WEEKLY korban MUSAF for SHABBAT
28:11-15	MONTHLY korban MUSAF for ROSH CHODESH
28:16-25	a special korban MUSAF for CHAG HA'MATZOT
28:26-31	a special korban MUSAF for CHAG SHAVUOT
29:1-6	a special korban MUSAF for YOM TRU'AH
29:7-11	a special korban MUSAF for YOM KIPPUR
29:12-34	a special korban MUSAF for each day of SUCCOT
--->	* [note how each day is a separate parshia!]
29:35-38	a special korban MUSAF for SHMINI ATZERET
29:39	the summary pasuk

The progression within this unit is very straightforward. We begin with the DAILY "korban tamid", followed by the WEEKLY "musaf shabbat", followed by the MONTHLY "korban rosh chodesh, followed by the YEARLY schedule of korbanot offered on the chagim, beginning with the first month, etc. It is for this reason that the FIRST pasuk of each of these 'holiday' "parshiot" begins with the precise lunar date.

THE KEY PHRASE: "AL OLAT ha'TAMID..."

As you review these parshiot, note how each parshia relates in some manner to the daily "olat tamid". The opening parshia describes it, while each and every parshia that follows concludes with the statement "al olat ha'tamid" or "milvad olat ha'tamid".

The Torah goes out of its way to emphasize that each of these korbanot are to be offered IN ADDITION to the daily OLAH offering! In fact, that is why we call the offering a 'MUSAF'! - The word "musaf" stems from the verb "l'hosif" = to add on. These special korbanot are offered in ADDITION to the daily korban TAMID, and hence their name - a korban MUSAF.

Therefore, this unit begins with the KORBAN TAMID and then continues with the detail of each korban MUSAF that is offered in addition to the daily "olat tamid". Hence, a more precise definition for this unit would be KORBANOT TMIDIM u'MUSAFIM.

Indeed, each of the holidays are mentioned within this unit, but not because the holidays are its primary topic. Quite the contrary; the holidays are mentioned, for on each holiday an 'additional' korban is to be offered.

BETWEEN EMOR & PINCHAS

With this background, we can better understand the difference between the presentation of the chagim in Parshat Emor (see Vayikra chapter 23) and their presentation here.

In contrast to Parshat Pinchas whose primary topic is korbanot, the primary topic in Parshat Emor is the holidays. In fact, that is precisely its title: "moadei Hashem..." - God's appointed times (23:1,4)! That unit details the nature and specific laws for each holiday. For example, the prohibition to work, the need to gather ("mikraei kodesh"), and special mitzvot for each holiday, such as: offering the "omer", the "shtei ha'lechem", blowing shofar, fasting, succah, lulav & etrog etc. [To verify, review Vayikra 23:1-44.]
[Btw, that parsha **does** include certain korbanot, such as those which come with the "omer" and "shtei ha'lechem". But again, those korbanot are special for that day and hence, relate to the special nature of each of those holidays.]

Notice as well that each holiday in Parshat Emor includes the mitzvah of "v'hikravtem ishe la'Hashem" [you shall bring an offering to God/ see 23:8,25,27,36]. However, this commandment appears quite ambiguous for it doesn't specify which type of korban is to be offered.

Parshat Pinchas solves this ambiguity, by telling us precisely what that offering should be. To prove how, note a key summary pasuk found in Parshat Emor:
"These are God's appointed times set aside for gathering IN ORDER to offer a - ISHE LA'HASHEM -, an OLAH, MINCHA, ZEVACH, & NESACHIM, - on EACH DAY - DVAR YOM B'YOMO." (See Vayikra 23:37, compare with 23:4)

What does "dvar yom b'yomo" refer to? Most likely to the precise details for these korbanot as recorded in Parshat Pinchas! [Note Rashi on that pasuk (23:37), that is exactly what he says!]
[Using computer jargon, we could say that Parshat Emor is 'indexed' to Parshat Pinchas - or, if each "v'hikravtem ishe" in Emor was in 'hyper-text', it would link to its respective URL address in Parshat Pinchas. [e.g. 23:8->28:19, etc.]

Also, if you look carefully at the names of the chagim in the opening pasuk of each parshia in Parshat Pinchas, you'll notice that each specific name reflects the primary aspect of the chag as it had already been described in Parshat Emor! [That comparison is quite straightforward, but beyond the scope of this shiur.]

With this background, the presentation of the holidays in Parshat Pinchas is quite easy to understand. Each holiday is introduced by its lunar date and name (based on its more detailed description in Parshat Emor). This introduction is followed by the complete details of the korban MUSAF for that holiday, including the type of each korban, and the number of animals that are to be offered. Other than those details (of the korban MUSAF), Parshat Pinchas does not add in any new laws for any of the "chagim".

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF PARSHAT HA'MUSAFIM

Let's return now to Parshat Pinchas to take a look at the actual korbanot and what they're all about.

Even though the korban MUSAF of each holiday is presented in a separate parshia, the set of korbanot for each holidays are quite similar. Note how each set contains:

* an OLAH offering of PARIM, AYLIM, & KVASIM;
* the appropriate flour & wine offerings,
[better known as "MINCHATAM V'NISKAM";

* and a CHATAT offering of a SEIR IZIM (a goat).

The following table compares the specific korbanot of each chag. [If you have the time (and patience), I recommend that you try to work it our first on your own.]

As you review this table, note how similar most of the MUSAFIM are. However, note as well where and how they differ!

CHAG / OLAT:	PAR	AYIL	KEVES	/ SEIR CHATAT
ROSH CHODESH	-	2 1	7	1
CHAG HA'MATZOT	2	1	7	1
[same for all 7 days]				
SHAVUOT	- 2	1	7	1
ROSH HA'SHANA		1 1	7	1
YOM KIPPUR	-	1 1	7	1
[same as R.H.]				
SUCCOT (day 1)	-	13 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 2)		12 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 3)	-	11 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 4)	-	10 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 5)	-	9 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 6)	-	8 2	14	1
SUCCOT (day 7)	-	7 2	14	1
SHMINI ATZERET	- 1	1	7	1

As you study this chart, note how one can easily identify certain groups of holidays. Let's organize them as follows:

GROUP ONE: [the 2-1-7-1]

Rosh Chodesh, Chag ha'Matzot, and Shavuot

Note how all three are connected to YETZIAT MITZRAYIM! [Rosh Chodesh - based on Shmot 12:1, and Shavuot can be considered the conclusion of Pesach.]

GROUP TWO: [the 1-1-7-1]

Rosh ha'Shana, Yom Kippur, and Shmini Atzeret

Note, that all three are in Tishrei! Since the first two are 'days of judgement', then we must conclude that Shmini Atzeret must also be a 'day of judgement'!

[e.g. "tfilat geshem" etc.]

GROUP THREE: [the {13->7}-2-14-1]

The seven days of Succot

This is the most interesting group, for (unlike "chag ha'matzot") even though each day of Succot is the same holiday, for some reason the number of PARIM decreases daily.

DOUBLE NATURE

In addition to this obvious division into three groups, there remains another interesting phenomenon in the above chart. For some reason, the OLAH offering on Succot seems to be DOUBLE. On every other holiday we offer one AYIL and seven KVASIM, but on each day of Succot we double that - offering TWO and FOURTEEN instead! Furthermore, in regard to the PARIM, there's an 'explosion'. Instead of either one or two, we find THIRTEEN! More puzzling is the fact that each day we bring one less.

So what's going on with the korbanot on Succot?

One could suggest that Succot should not be considered a separate category, but rather a COMBINATION of the other two. Let's explain why.

On the one hand, Succot could be included in Group One, for that group contains the other two "shalosh regalim" (i.e. Chag ha'Matzot and Shavuot). On the other hand, Succot could also be included in Group Two, for that group contains all of the other holidays that fall out in the seventh month (i.e. "chagei Tishrei"). [Thematically as well, Succot fits into both groups. On the one hand it is a thanksgiving holiday (like the holidays in Group One), where we thank God for our fruit harvest /that's why we recite the Hallel. On the other hand, it is also a time of awe (like the holidays in Group Two), for we anticipate the rainy season which will determine the fate of the forthcoming year/& that's why we recite the "Hoshanot"].

This 'double nature' of Succot can explain why its korbanot are DOUBLE - two AYLIM instead of one; & fourteen KVASIM instead of seven. But what about the PARIM? According to this interpretation, we should only bring THREE on each day of Succot. So why do we bring and 'extra' ten on the first day, an extra nine on the second, etc.

It's rather cute, but if we add up all the 'extras', i.e. 10+9+8+7+6+5+4 we find that we've added 49 [=7x7] PARIM. In relation to the "chagim", finding significance in the number seven (or its multiple) should not surprise us. There are many instances in Chumash when 'seven' relates to our recognition that it God who controls what we perceive as nature (see shiurim on both Parshat Breishit and on Parshat Emor).

Our recognition that God controls nature is most critical on Succot - for it sits at the junction (and 'overlap') of the agricultural year, i.e. at the end of the previous year (the autumn fruit harvest) and beginning of the new year (the upcoming rainy season).

Furthermore, should we add these 49 PARIM to the original 21 PARIM [3x7days], we find that a total of SEVENTY parim are offered during SUCCOT. Chazal point out that these seventy bulls are representative of the seventy nations of mankind. [See shiur on Parshat Noach and the 'Migdal Bavel 'vort'.]

[If you want to find additional meaning to the number 7 or 49 [=7x7] in relation to the 7 days of Succot in the 7th month, ask your local kabbalist. - "v'akmal".]

In summary, we have shown how what appears to be a rather monotonous list of korbanot may actually be hiding some very fundamental aspects of the "chagim". Hopefully, next time you doven MUSAF, it will make your tefilah a bit more meaningful.

shabbat shalom,
Menachem

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FOR FURTHER IYUN

1. If you are not familiar with the structure of tfilat Musaf, after the standard opening three brachot, we recite a "piyut" which describes our sorrow (& our fault) over the fact that the Bet ha'Mikdash not longer stands (e.g. "mpnei chataeinu", or tikanta shabbat..." etc.). That "piyut" concludes with our wish that the Bet ha'Mikdash will be rebuilt so that we can once again offer the korbanot - then we quote the actual korban from Parshat Pinchas and a brief description of its NESACHIM. This is followed by yet another piyut (e.g. "yismchu b'malchutcha" or "melech rachaman...") and then concludes with the bracha of "kedushat ha'yom" (e.g. "mkadesh ha'shabbat", or "yisrael v'hazmanim').

2. Note that in regard to lighting Chanuka candles, Bet Shamai's shita that we begin with eight and conclude with one is based on a comparison to PAREI ha'CHAG - i.e. the PARIM of Succot.

3. The only korban that doesn't change for any holiday is the "seir izim l'CHATAT". This korban serves as atonement for any possible sin of Am Yisrael in the Mikdash. The "seir izim" is chosen as it is symbolic of the sin of the brothers of Yosef when they used a "seir" to 'cover up' their sin. See Ramban! As it purpose is atonement, only one offering is necessary per set, and hence it is not doubled in Succot as are the other korbanot.

4. See previous shiur on Rosh Ha'shana for a more complete explanation of why Tishrei (at the beginning of the rainy season), serves as a time when all mankind is judged.

5. Note machloket between Ramban (and everyone else) concerning whether this korban MUSAF was offered in the desert or only once Bnei Yisrael entered the land. Relate it to his "shita" of "yeish mukdam u'muchar ba'Torah". [Ramban on 28:1 & on Vayikra 3:2.] Relate this to the above shiur.

Parshat Pinchas: Moshe's Mysterious Protégé

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

Parashat Balak, last week's parasha, ends with an act of entrapment: Bnei Yisrael succumb to the sexual entreaties of the enemy, Moav/Midyan, and once ensnared in the grasp of the Moabite/Midyanite women, they are all but helpless when the women invite them to participate in sacrifices to the Moabite/Midyanite gods. By participating in this worship, Bnei Yisrael add the cardinal transgression of idol worship to the lesser sin of illicit sexual union with non-Jews, and God strikes them with a plague. But instead of abating, the problem grows worse, as Zimri ben Saluh, a leader of the tribe of Shimon, publicly fornicates with a Midyanite woman. Outraged at Zimri's act, Pinhas (grandson of Aharon) is gripped by the need to act. He grabs a nearby weapon and takes immediate "vigilante" action, dispatching Zimri and his Midyanite consort to face their Maker.

Parashat Pinhas opens with Hashem's recognition of Pinhas for his act of kana'ut -- zealotry -- by which he calms the divine fury and prevents it from destroying the rest of the idolatrous nation. This story raises questions about the place of violent vigilantism in our lives, an issue often discussed in studying Parashat Pinhas and deeply pondered in the wake of the Rabin assassination. But I prefer to look at what I consider a neglected topic: the succession of Moshe by Yehoshua.

OH, YEAH . . . YEHOSHUA

Most of us are familiar with the basic outline of the Torah, including one particular fact about Moshe: that he loses his privilege to lead the people into Eretz Yisrael. Last week, in discussing Parashat Hukkat, we zeroed in on the event which earns Moshe this punishment -- his disobedience at Mei Meriva. Most of us also know that Yehoshua takes over for Moshe, leading Bnei Yisrael into the Land and leading their conquest of it.

That these two facts are deeply familiar creates a sense that there is not much to be investigated here; these are things we understand well. This assumption always makes me suspicious, however, so we will be looking for the complexity which seems to always lurk under the placid surface of the facts. As usual, we will begin with questions:

1) Who is Yehoshua? What do we know about him prior to his accession to leadership in Moshe's place?

2) In what ways is Yehoshua different from and similar to Moshe?

3) What makes Yehoshua an appropriate successor to Moshe?

4) Why doesn't Moshe himself choose Yehoshua as his successor -- why is it left to Hashem to suggest Yehoshua?

A SHADOW FIGURE:

Earlier on in the Torah, Yehoshua is a minor player. He shows up sporadically, playing roles we would certainly consider odd for inclusion in the Torah if not for our knowledge that he will eventually take Moshe's place. Since we know that Yehoshua will move to center stage once Moshe takes his final bow, we consider it natural that Yehoshua appears now and again in various scenes. Imagine reading Lincoln's biography: if you didn't know he was an important president of the United States, you would probably be bored by the details of his childhood. But with his career in retrospect, these details become significant. The same is true of Yehoshua. Since we know he will one day be "president," his early life becomes important. This means we must mine Yehoshua's "cameo appearances" for what they reveal to us about him as a young man and developing leader. Fragmented, as they appear in the Torah, these episodes do not tell us much, but taken as a portrait, they may sketch a coherent picture.

YEHOSHUA THE GENERAL:

Yehoshua first appears in the Torah as a military commander. In Shemot 17:9, Moshe charges Yehoshua to select men and lead a military force against Amalek. The Torah reports that Yehoshua successfully weakens Amalek in the ensuing battle, but, as we know, Amalek remains a foe with whom later Jewish leaders (Sha'ul, Shmuel, Mordekhai and others) will contend. What is important for our purposes is that Yehoshua's first appearance in the Torah is as a military organizer and leader. Yehoshua will succeed Moshe not only as political leader of Bnei Yisrael, but also as commander-in-chief. Since he will direct the conquest of the Land, he needs to be a capable general. The Torah provides no formal

introduction for Yehoshua, but it is certainly significant that the first time we meet him, he is clad in chain mail and brandishing a sword, to borrow an Arthurian image.

Even this early on, we get what may be a hint that Yehoshua is to succeed Moshe: after the battle with Amalek, Hashem commands Moshe to memorialize in writing and to communicate to Yehoshua that He will conduct war with Amalek throughout the generations, until Amalek has been completely destroyed. The fact that Moshe is commanded to communicate this to Yehoshua may hint that the reins will be passed to him.
Alternatively, however, it could just indicate that Yehoshua, as a military leader, needs to know about Hashem's military plans. Why, after all, does Moshe command Yehoshua to put together a force and go to fight the enemy -- why doesn't he do the job himself? Either he is already too old (also hinted by his difficulty in keeping his arms raised during the battle), or he is not as skillful a general as Yehoshua. Especially if the latter is true, Hashem may want Yehoshua informed of His eternal enmity for Amalek so he will know at whom to aim the arrows as current and future military leader. It should be noted, however, that the grand style in which Hashem delivers His plan of continued aggression against Amalek sounds more like what you would tell tomorrow's leader than tomorrow's general: "For I will certainly wipe out the memory of Amalek from under the heavens . . . war for Hashem with Amalek from generation to generation!"

YEHOSHUA THE SERVANT:

In Shemot 24:13, after the broadcast of the "More-Than-Ten Commandments" at Sinai, Moshe ascends Har Sinai to receive the rest of the Torah from Hashem. Although Bnei Yisrael remain a distance from the mountain, an entourage of VIP's accompanies Moshe on his ascent: Aharon, Nadav, Avihu, and seventy elders. The entourage ascends only so far, however; at a certain point, Moshe is commanded to approach the Divine cloud alone, leaving the others below -- except for Yehoshua: "Moshe arose, and his servant [mesharet] Yehoshua; and Moshe ascended to the mountain of God."

We learn a lot about Yehoshua from this "innocent" pasuk (verse): first, he is not simply a general, he is Moshe's personal servant; second, he seems a spiritual cut above rest of the illustrious entourage, as he accompanies Moshe all the way up to the Divine cloud. Yehoshua does not enter the cloud to join Hashem with Moshe, but he does ascend to a plateau higher than everyone else.

The term "mesharet" also requires some explanation. Was Yehoshua Moshe's valet? Did he choose Moshe's cufflinks and tie, hang up his clothes, answer his tent flap?

"Mesharet" is used in several different ways in the Torah:

1) Bereshit 39:4 -- Yosef finds favor in the eyes of the Egyptian Potifar, who has purchased him from his captors; he becomes Potifar's "mesharet," appointed over his household and all of his possessions (except his wife, of course, who makes herself available to Yosef). This position does not sound much like "valet": Yosef is responsible for everything Potifar owns, not just choosing ties that match his outfits. Although there is a strong connotation of service in "mesharet," it is clearly not menial service in this case. Yosef enjoys a position of responsibility and trust, administering an important household's affairs (while assiduously avoiding othr types of affairs).

2) Bereshit 40:4 -- Yosef, framed by the scorned Madame Potifar and imprisoned, is instructed to be "mesharet" two royal prisoners: Paro's winemaster and bakemaster. Although it is not clear exactly what "service" is to be provided them, Yosef takes on the role of advisor and dream-interpreter. This again seems to indicate that "mesharet," while indicating service, does not indicate menial service.

3) Very often -- Shemot 28:35 is one example -- the service of the kohanim (priests) and leviyyim in the Mishkan (portable Temple) is referred to with the word "le-sharet"; certainly, the avoda (cultic service) is nothing menial. In fact, Moshe specifically uses this word -- "le-shartam" -- to Korah and his crew in arguing that they, as Leviyyim, have enough honor already: "You have been chosen . . . to stand before the congregation to serve them" ["le-shartam"] (BeMidbar 16:9). Certainly, Moshe would not use a word like "sharet" if it would raise in the minds of his listeners associations of butlership and valethood and other menial functions, since he is trying to show them that they have plenty for which to be thankful already and need no further honor.

It should be noted that there are in Tanakh uses of the word "mesharet" (and its close relatives) in contexts which do seem to indicate menial service. My point is that "mesharet Moshe" need not mean "Moshe's valet," and since we are talking about someone who has recently served as a general and who accompanies Moshe not to the bathhouse but to

the summit of Har Sinai, it is difficult to believe that "mesharet Moshe" means anything but "Moshe's protege" or "Moshe's apprentice." Yehoshua 'serves' Moshe as an intern, so to speak; a young man selected by Moshe for future greatness, he accompanies Moshe where others cannot, learning by watching and doing.

One other example in Tanakh of a similar use of "mesharet" as "protege" or "apprentice" is the case of Eliyahu and Elisha, certainly another master/protege relationship. Just after Hashem commands Eliyahu to appoint Elisha as his successor as prophet, we hear that Elisha begins to follow Eliyahu around (as Yehoshua follows Moshe) and "va-ye-shartehu" -- "he served him." Yehoshua 'serves' Moshe the same way Elisha 'serves' Eliyahu. Both are apprentices, proteges who will succeed the master and who now train with him for that day.

Now that we have understood Yehoshua's position as Moshe's servant, one other observation becomes crucial: as Moshe is, in certain ways, separate from his people, Yehoshua shows signs of the same characteristic. The other VIP's remain below, but Yehoshua, training to be the next 'Moshe,' leaves everyone else behind and ascends with his master. Soon the Torah tells us that Moshe's face begins to glow and that he begins to wear a veil in front of his face. This veil symbolizes the disjunction between Moshe and the people: Moshe removes the veil only when speaking to Hashem or when reporting to the people what Hashem has said. At other times, he remains apart from them, veiled. The cloud Moshe enters is a similar structure -- a veil. While Yehoshua does not enter the cloud and does not wear a veil, he is also not with the people. He is in the limbo between leadership of the people and membership among them. He will never achieve Moshe's closeness to Hashem, and therefore will also never achieve Moshe's detachment from the people, but this characteristic is in him to a lesser degree (and we will see it again soon).

YEHOSHUA IN THE DARK:

Back to the scene atop Sinai: Moshe enters the mist and meets with Hashem. The people, far below, become worried at Moshe's prolonged absence and eventually panic. In their insecurity and fear, they build an idol and worship it. Hashem, angered, reports their behavior to Moshe, who breaks off the meeting with Hashem to deal with the people. As he descends the mountain, Luhot (tablets) in hand, he is joined by Yehoshua. Moshe, of course, knows what is going on, but Yehoshua, not privy to Hashem's report of the people's misbehavior, guesses at the noise he hears from the camp: "He said to Moshe, 'The sound of war is in the camp!'" Moshe bitterly responds with a correction: the people are singing in celebration of their idol, not screaming in rage, pain and fear at a military attacker. But this entire scene is strange. Why does the Torah bother including this exchange between Moshe and Yehoshua? The sole purpose of this scene seems to be to show us that Yehoshua doesn't know what's going on.

It is hard to fault Yehoshua for misinterpreting the noise he hears, but perhaps the Torah means to point up his "limbo" status: the reason he doesn't know what is going on is because he is neither here nor there. If he were with the people, he would have witnessed the tragic events (or even played a part in them, as Aharon does); if he were with Moshe, he would have heard Hashem's angry report of the people's activities. But he is in the no-man's-land between the two groups, so he remains clueless until he rejoins the camp. Alternatively, the Torah may be indicating that Yehoshua's dedication to Moshe as his apprentice sometimes leaves him in the dark: he neither observes the people firsthand, nor does he experience the revelations offered to Moshe. As we will see, other incidents seem to confirm the impression that Yehoshua sees nothing but his master Moshe -- until forced to acknowledge the larger picture.

YEHOSHUA IN SECLUSION:

The next time we hear of Yehoshua, he is in seclusion. The people have been punished for their worship of the Egel and Hashem has agreed not to destroy them, but He remains unwilling (so far) to forgive them. The Torah interrupts the extended "forgiveness negotiations" between Hashem and Moshe to describe how Moshe would leave the camp of the people in order to speak to Hashem at a special tent outside the camp. As Moshe would pass by on his way out of the camp, the people would stare after him longingly. Moshe would come to the special tent, the Divine Presence would appear there to meet him, and he would speak to Hashem.

In this context, we hear that once again, Yehoshua is not with the people: "And his protege [mesharto], Yehoshua, a young man, would never leave the tent," Shemot 33:11. Hashem is distant from the sinful people, refusing to meet with even Moshe within their camp. But Yehoshua is not only not with the people in their camp, and not only visits the special tent (like Moshe), he seems to actually live there! He spends his days cocooned in the Divine meeting place, presumably growing in the spiritual qualities which his master Moshe exemplifies. Perhaps he does not merit to enter the cloud atop Sinai with Moshe, but now, in a sort of reversal, he lives in Hashem's presence, while Moshe is only a visitor to the

premises. Moshe is busy shuttling back and forth between the people and Hashem, alternately punishing the people and arguing with Hashem for their forgiveness. But Yehoshua, unsaddled by the responsibilities of leadership, takes advantage of the opportunity to be constantly in the presence of Hashem. Just as the Kohen Gadol is commanded to remain in the Mikdash even when personal tragedy strikes (e.g., a close family member dies), Yehoshua is confined to the Beit HaMikdash no matter what.

(This, by the way, sounds like a very good idea! Everyone should take some time in which he or she ignores other responsibilities and focuses solely on spiritual and religious development. This may appear selfish, but the only way we can continue to provide leadership and inspiration for ourselves and others is by taking some time to strengthen ourselves.)

YEHOSHUA PROTECTS MOSHE:

The next time we encounter Yehoshua, in BeMidbar 11:28, he has emerged from his cocoon as a more mature figure: he is described as "the mesharet of Moshe from his youth," indicating that he is no longer a youth, but that his long service to Moshe began back in his boyhood.

In this episode, Moshe is informed by a messenger that two men, Eldad and Meidad, are prophesying within the camp. Yehoshua responds with panic: "My master, Moshe, stop them/imprison them/destroy them!" [The word is "kela'em," but its meaning is ambiguous]. Yehoshua sees the prophesying of these men as a challenge to Moshe's leadership: it is one thing when Aharon or other "establishment" figures receive prophecy; that is no threat because these people are loyal to Moshe. But, as the rest of Sefer BeMidbar will confirm, Moshe has many enemies who are unhappy with his leadership and ready to challenge him. Yehoshua reads this incident as a challenge: this prophecy is a threat because it is received by people who are not under Moshe's direct control or in his camp of supporters. It is "wild" prophecy and therefore represents what may balloon into a challenge to Moshe's authority.

Despite having outgrown his "youth," it seems that Yehoshua is still less spiritually mature than his master. Moshe turns to him and says, "Are you jealous for me? Would that all of Hashem's nation could be prophets, that Hashem would place His spirit upon them!" Moshe, secure in his position and mature in his understanding of spirituality, knows that the ultimate goal is not to maintain a stranglehold on political or religious leadership, but to facilitate the growth of the nation towards Hashem. What could be a greater success than producing a nation of prophets! Yehoshua, perhaps because he has been Moshe's protege "since his youth," has become distracted from these ultimate goals by his admiration for and loyalty to his master.

But there is another possibility. Yehoshua, no longer a young man, has indeed matured. While Moshe remains focused on spiritual goals alone, Yehoshua is a military officer as well as the protege of a prophet. He has spent time cocooned in the Divine tent, but he has also spent time on the battlefield, and he knows how the common people think. He, too, believes that in a perfect world, it would be ideal for everyone to be a prophet. But in the world he sees before his eyes, he knows that unregulated prophecy will be understood by the people as a challenge to Moshe's leadership. Moshe is their link to Hashem and the source of whatever stability they have. If another prophet appears, the people will immediately question their loyalty to Moshe. Perhaps Moshe is right in the abstract, but as a practitioner of realpolitik, Yehoshua may have already surpassed his master. And indeed, it is after this story that the people begin to challenge Moshe's leadership, leading to the harsh criticism of Miryam, the spies disaster, and the Korah rebellion.

YEHOSHUA THE SPY:

BeMidbar 13 and 14 present the story of the scouts sent to Eretz Yisrael and the report they deliver to the people. Yehoshua, as we know, is one of the spies. And it is fitting that just as Yehoshua tries to protect Moshe in the story of Eldad and Meidad, Moshe seems to be trying to protect Yehoshua in this story of the spies. Just before Yehoshua departs with the others to see the Land, Moshe changes his name from Hoshea to Yehoshua, adding the name of Hashem to his own name: "God shall save him," or "God is salvation." Perhaps Moshe feels a sense of foreboding and danger as he sends the spies off, and he adds a letter to Yehoshua's name as a prayer that he be kept safe. Although one might interpret that Moshe suspected the other spies were corrupt, it is easier to accept that Moshe simply understood that sneaking into enemy territory to spy it out was risky business. Perhaps Moshe was returning the favor to Yehoshua, protecting his protege as Yehoshua tried to protect him earlier.

STRENGTHEN HIM:

We now come to a pattern which many have noticed: Yehoshua, it seems, needs to be strengthened. Hashem commands Moshe to strengthen him; Moshe reminds the people that Yehoshua must be strengthened; the people themselves attempt to strengthen him; and Hashem Himself encourages Yehoshua to be strong (see Devarim 1:38, 3:28, 31:7, 31:23)

This is new: not a leader responsible for his people, but a people who must be responsible for their leader! Moshe, a tower of self-sufficient strength, never seems to need the people's encouragement. But somehow, Yehoshua does need that extra push.

Perhaps, though, Moshe could have used more support as well; perhaps he would not have lost his chance to lead the people into the Land if he had had more support from the people, if he had not been engulfed by criticism from all around. Perhaps he would have found it easier to bear the burden of leadership if he had not been surrounded by those who were trying to tear him down and accusing him of incompetence and arrogance. Perhaps all the talk of strengthening Yehoshua does not reflect any particular weakness in Yehoshua so much as it reflects a bitter lesson that everyone has learned through Moshe. A leader is not a detached tower of strength; a leader maintains a symbiotic relationship with his people. Even someone as great as Moshe needed strength from the people; their attacks eventually wore him down and put him so on the defensive that Hashem had to remove him from leadership. [Eliyahu, similarly, must "retire" when he becomes so bitter, his despair so deep, that he sees the people as completely corrupt and faithless, and himself as the only faithful one left.] A great lesson has been learned, and Yehoshua is told again and again that the people understand that they must strengthen him as he is told that his task is a difficult one and requires that he gird himself with strength.

A LAST MEETING:

In Devarim 31, Hashem summons Moshe and Yehoshua to the Tent so that He can command Yehoshua before Moshe dies. But once Moshe and Yehoshua arrive, Hashem speaks almost exclusively to Moshe, telling him how the people will forsake Him after Moshe's death. Almost casually, Hashem makes a short comment to Yehoshua at the end of this speech. If Hashem wants to 'complain' to Moshe about this people's bottomless capacity for faithlessness, why does He bring Yehoshua into the picture?

Perhaps Yehoshua, still a bit naive, must be inoculated against unrealistic expectations. If he knows that the people are capable of rejecting Hashem utterly, that they may abandon Him in favor of the Cana'anite gods they will soon encounter, then he will be less shocked if such a thing does happen. Also, knowing that the people are likely to stray will make him better able to prevent that straying. Perhaps, then, Hashem's "commiseration" with Moshe in Yehoshua's presence is meant to shake Yehoshua out of whatever naive expectations he might still retain about the people.

NOW BACK TO OUR SHOW:
If we now move back to Parashat Pinhas, we have several questions to address:

1) Why does Hashem tell Moshe that he is now going to die, prompting Moshe to request that Hashem appoint a leader? If a leader is to be appointed, why doesn't Hashem simply command Moshe to appoint a leader?

2) Why doesn't Moshe specifically request that Hashem accept Yehoshua, his protege, as his successor?

In answer to the first question, perhaps Hashem wanted to soften the blow of succession. Simply commanding Moshe to replace himself with another man would have been harsh indeed. Instead, Hashem hints to Moshe -- "Moshe, your death is approaching . . .", allowing Moshe to be the one to bring up the idea of sucession. This also gives Moshe the chance to frame the issue as a manifestation of his concern for the people: "Let not the congregation of Hashem like a flock with no shepherd!" Indeed, it is a manifestation of his love for the people. A direct command from Hashem to replace himself might have marred the issue with the sadness by which he would have been overwhelmed.

In answer to the second question, perhaps Moshe feels too close to Yehoshua to suggest him as a candidate. Yehoshua had been Moshe's protege from his youth, always by his side; Moshe might have suspected that Yehoshua had internalized the same weaknesses which eventually compromised his own leadership. Perhaps he worried that Yehoshua was too much like him.

If so (and this is indeed completely speculation), then Moshe must be deeply gratified when Hashem Himself suggests that Yehoshua be the man: "Yehoshua, a man in whom there is spirit [ru'ah]." Moshe is comforted and relieved to see his protege, the young man on whom he pinned his hopes, take his place as the shepherd.

Shabbat shalom

Pinchas: The Sequence of Bamidbar 26-30

by Rabbi Yitz Etshalom

I. INTRODUCTION: PARASHAT T'MIDIN **UMUSAFIN**

Chapters 28-29 in Bamidbar present the "Mishkan-calendar" of set, public offerings, in the following order:

A. Korban Tamid

B. Musaf: Shabbat

C. Musaf: Rosh Hodesh

D. Musaf : Matzot

E. Musaf : Bikkurim (Shavuot)

F. Musaf : Yom T'ruah (Rosh haShanah)

G. Musaf : Yom haKippurim

H. Musaf: Hag Hashem (Sukkot) day 1

I. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 2

J. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 3

K. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 4

L. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 5

M. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 6

N. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 7

O. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 8

Hence, this section (including its concluding verse, at 30:1) is called "Parashat T'midin uMusafin".

The immediate oddity that strikes the reader is one of location – why is Parashat T'midin uMusafin placed near the end of Sefer Bamidbar; it's natural location would be in the middle of Sefer Vayyikra, either at the conclusion of the "Torat haKorbanot" (chs. 1-7) or in the parallel treatment of the calendar in Ch. 23. Indeed, the calendar so closely approximates that of Vayyikra 23 that it would have been an "easy fit" to integrate the two parashot by including the specific Korban of each day as an expansion of the general command "v'hikravtem isheh l'Hashem" (you shall offer a burnt-offering to Hashem).

The issue of location raises a larger question about the sequence of commands in the latter chapters of Bamidbar. Beginning from ch. 20:

1) Death of Miriam/Mei M'rivah (20:1-13)

2) Edom (20:14-21)

3) Death of Aharon (20:22-29)

4) War with K'na'ani (21:1-3)

5) Travels (complaints, plague, song of the well) (21:4-20)

6) Sichon/Og (21:21-22:1)

7) Balak/Bil'am (22:2-24:25)

8) P'or/Pinchas (25:1-15)

9) Command to Harass the Midianites (25:16-18)

10) Census (26:1-51)

11) Division of the Land (26:52-56)

12) Levite Census (26:57-65)

13) Daughters of Tzlafchad (27:1-11)

14) Imminence of Death of Mosheh (27:12-14)

15) Mosheh's request re: continued leadership (27:15-23)

16) T'midin uMusafin (28:1-30:1)

17) Nedarim (vows) (30:2-17)

18) War with Midian (31)

19) Apportionment of East Bank to Gad and Reuven (32)

Understanding the rhyme behind the sequence here is a challenge; for purposes of this shiur we will confine ourselves to items 8-18. The problem is exacerbated once we note the following conundrum:

Since God commanded B'nei Yisra'el to act with enmity towards Midian (something which, one would assume, is doubly difficult for Mosheh considering that his wife and esteemed father-in-law are Midianites) in the immediate aftermath of the Midinaite-inspired whoring after the Moavites and their god, why is that command interrupted (in text, if not in time), with two censuses, two passages dealing with the division of the land, God's command to Mosheh that he ascend the mountain, Mosheh's "demand" of God that He appoint a successor, T'midin and Musafin and the laws of personal vows?

This question may be asked in two fashions, depending on how strictly we apply chronological fidelity to the text.

If we assume that the events in the Torah are presented in the order in which they happened (except where impossible – compare Bamidbar 1:1 and ibid. 9:1; see Ramban at Sh'mot 18:1), then these commands were given and these interactions took place between God's command to harass the Midianites and the direct command to wage a war of vengeance against them.

If, following Ibn Ezra (Sh'mot 18:1 and elsewhere), Rashi (ibid.) and others, we make no assumption about the relationship between chronos and textus, the question becomes even stronger. Why did the Torah choose to interrupt the command regarding the war against Midian with these other passages, which may have happened at an earlier time?

II. STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVENING SECTIONS

A review of the "interrupting" passages which break up the commands regarding the war against Midian reveals a curious structure, once we utilize the Parashot of the Masoretic text as our guide:

(War against Midian)

****

Census of the army (12 Parashot)

Command to Divide the Land (1 Parashah)

Census of the Levi'im (1 Parashah)

Interaction with B'not Tz'laf'had (2 Parashot)

****

Command regarding impending death of Mosheh (1 Parashah)

Mosheh's "demand" that God appoint a successor (1 Parashah)

****

T'midin uMusafin (15 Parashot)

Nedarim (1 Parashah)

****

(War against Midian)

The “interjection” includes 16 Parashot relating to various aspects of the national census, 2 Parashot which are associated with the transfer of leadership and another 16 which deal with offerings (and vows – see the end of the Ramban’s comments at Bamidbar 30:2).

In other words, squarely placed in the middle of the “interrupting section” are the two Parashot which deal with the end of Mosheh’s leadership and the onset of Yehoshua’s.

Having identified the structure, we can see that this entire section as made up of two sub-sections (Census and T’midin) with the transfer of leadership as the fulcrum around which they revolve. As such, we would expect a single message to emerge from each of the sub-sections, a message which is somehow made clearer by the 14 verses at its axis.

Let’s begin from the inside out – from the command to Mosheh that he ascend the mountain and Mosheh’s response:

12. And Hashem said to Mosheh, Get up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the people of Israel.

13. And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aharon your brother was gathered.

14. For you rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes; that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

15. And Mosheh spoke to Hashem, saying,

16. Let Hashem, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

17. Who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Hashem be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

18. And Hashem said to Mosheh, Take Yehoshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

19. And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

20. And you shall put some of your honor upon him, that the entire congregation of the people of Israel may be obedient.

21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before Hashem; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the people of Israel with him, the entire congregation.

22. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded him; and he took Yehoshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation;

23. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Hashem commanded by the hand of Mosheh.

The first thing for us to note here is that Mosheh is commanded to ascend the mountain at this point, never to return. That would mean that his glorious career has come to an end now, in Moav, just after having conducted a final census and seen to the complete disposition of the Land. This is, however, not the way that matters play out: Mosheh goes on to oversee the war with Midian, the division of the East Bank of the Jordan and to deliver a full farewell speech (Sefer D’varim). As noted above, we might posit that the command given here was given later, towards the end of Mosheh’s farewell speech – but, if that is the case, why does the text insert it here? Either way, there must be something in Mosheh’s response which somehow modifies the Divine decree and allows Mosheh to continue his leadership, if only for a short while.

III. “AS AHARON YOUR BROTHER WAS GATHERED”

Mosheh was told that he would be gathered unto his people “as Aharon your brother was gathered”. This comparison is ambiguous – does it mean that he would die in the same manner? (see Rashi ad loc.) Could it be referring to the single violation in which both Mosheh and Aharon participated that caused their premature removal from the leadership of B’nei Yisra’el?

There is yet another aspect to this comparison which will illuminate our understanding of Mosheh’s response and the evident “extension” he received as a result.

There are two basic models of leadership in T'nakh – dynamic and dynastic.

The entire book of Shoftim deals with a form of dynamic leadership whereby Hashem's response to B'nei Yisra'el's suffering and attendant calling out in pain is to inspire a new leader (invariably a member of the tribe "under fire" at the time). That leader rallies the troops to defeat the oppressor, loosen the bonds of persecution and then retains his position for life. Upon his death, however, the position becomes a void – until the next time when B'nei Yisra'el find themselves in need of salvation.

Dynastic leadership (the focus of Sefer Sh'muel), contradistinctively, establishes a built-in system where the impending death of a leader is accompanied by the appointment of a successor (usually from among the sons of the dying monarch), such that there never need be a void of leadership. See, for instance, the opening chapter of Sefer Melakhim – where the succession of David's throne is being contested while the hoary king is on his death-bed.

What sort of leadership is the lot of Aharon? It is clear that his was dynastic. For example, when he is charged with maintaining the sanctified areas and items:

And Hashem said to Aharon, You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. (Bamdibar 18:1)

Throughout the commands to Aharon, the phrase "Aharon uvanav" (Aharon and his sons – see, e.g. Sh'mot 27:21, Vayyikra 6:9, Bamidbar 4:5) is found with great frequency. Furthermore, in the command regarding the Parah Adumah (Bamidbar 19), given while Aharon is still alive, his son El'azar is mentioned by name as responsible for the sprinkling of the blood (vv. 3- 4).

Ostensibly, Mosheh's leadership was of a dynamic sort; he was selected to lead B'nei Yisra'el out of Mitzrayim (i.e. in response to oppression) and, now that his career was to end, there would not necessarily be a need for another leader until the next "crisis" came about. Much as the leadership operated in a post-Yehoshua Israel, the nation could have been run by a loose federation of the elders until entering the land. In other words, the position of leadership (Navi/Melekh) occupied by Mosheh was not necessarily to be constant, rather in response to need. For example, note the way that the Torah describes the appearance of later prophets:

(in response to the anticipated temptation among B'nei Yisra'el to consult soothsayers)

Hashem your God will raise to you a prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me; to him you shall listen; According to all that you desired of Hashem your God in Horev in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Hashem my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Hashem said to me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them a prophet from among their brothers, like you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. (D'varim 18:15-18)

As such, Hashem's command that Mosheh ascend the mountain – alone – signaled the end of that glorious career and an impending void of leadership.

Although the Divine intent in the phrase "as Aharon your brother died" may have been associated with the manner of death (or the violation, as above), Mosheh extended it to relate to the manner of succession.

What was the manner of succession of Aharon's leadership?

And Hashem spoke to Mosheh and Aharon in Hor haHar, by the border of the land of Edom, saying, Aharon shall be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the water of Merivah. Take Aharon and El'azar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; And strip Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El'azar his son; and Aharon shall be gathered to his people, and shall die there. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded; and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of the entire congregation. And Mosheh stripped Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El'azar his son; and Aharon died there in the top of the mount; and Mosheh and El'azar came down from the mount. And when the entire congregation saw that Aharon was dead, they mourned for Aharon thirty days, all the house of Yisra'el. (Bamidbar 20:23-29)

As Rashi (quoting the Midrash Tanhuma) points out (ad loc. v. 25), Mosheh consoled Aharon that at least he could see his "crown" given to his son while he was alive (that Mosheh would never see). A critical point in this entire scene is the presence of El'azar, whose donning of the garments established an unbroken chain of Kehunah which effectively outlived the person of Aharon.

That is how Mosheh "turned" the phrase "ka'asher meit Aharon ahikhah" – that if I am to die as did my brother Aharon, I should see the inauguration of my successor while I live. Mosheh effectively turned his leadership into a potential quasi-dynasty and "steered" the Divine command from a statement of the type of death he would experience into a statement about his entire career.

As such, Mosheh's reaction is understandable. Since God commanded him to ascend the mountain and die as did his brother, Mosheh "calls Him on it" and insists that the similarity between their deaths be complete: That he see his

successor inaugurated before his death.

Hashem responded to this “request”, indicating Divine acceptance (if not favor) to the Mosaic initiative. Indeed, the mention of El’azar in the context of Yehoshua’s appointment creates the immediate association with Aharon’s death.

Compare:

21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before Hashem; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the people of Israel with him, the entire congregation.

22. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded him; and he took Yehoshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation;

with

And Mosheh stripped Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El’azar his son; and Aharon died there in the top of the mount; and Mosheh and El’azar came down from the mount. And when the entire congregation saw that Aharon was dead…

The two cited passages share the presence of Mosheh, El’azar and “the entire congregation” (kol ha’edah), along with a mention of the priestly garb worn by El’azar, solidifying the association created by the phrase “as did Aharon your brother”.

IV. THE NEW LEADERSHIP

What changed as a result of Mosheh’s insistence on creating a quasi- dynasty?

(I refer to it as a quasi-dynasty because, in spite of the continuity of leadership, the absence of filial ascension renders it something less than a full dynasty. This may be the reason that there was no concern about Yehoshua’s children and their worthiness for the post – if he had any – since the position of “next shepherd of B’nei Yisra’el” would not be filled by a family member but by the man most fit for the job.)

To ask the question more clearly – what would have happened had Mosheh not responded as he did?

First of all, there is no reason to think that Mosheh would have had to lead the people to the point of entry in to the Land; the decree was never stated that he would have to die just before they entered (enhancing the drama and personal frustration). Witness Aharon, whose death was decreed at the same time and for the same purpose (but cf. Abravanel, D’varim 1:37) but who died at some point earlier than “the very last moment of the desert wandering”, before the East Bank of the Jordan was captured from the Emorite kings of Heshbon and Bashan.

Second, the orientation of Mosheh’s farewell would likely have been more “past-oriented”, reflecting on the Exodus and wanderings, without creating the continuity with the next stage of national existence in the Land.

Now that a succession has been established, the “rules” have changed.

Mosheh’s leadership must continue until the point where Yehoshua is ready to take over, since, under the new scheme, that leadership is to be a continuum.

Since the next “crisis” to be faced is entering the Land and disinheriting its people, that is the point at which Yehoshua is to take over; hence, Mosheh will live until that point (unlike Aharon) – taking the decree until the last minute and the final kilometer, so to speak.

As a result of that, any wars to be fought on the East Bank must now be fought under Mosheh’s leadership. Since the war with Midian was not a “crisis” but rather the result of a Divine command in response to the Midianite/Moabite treachery associated with P’or-worship, there is no need for Yehoshua to be installed at that point. In fact, Yehoshua plays no role in that war – rather, Mosheh and El’azar are the central figures in Ch. 31.

It follows, then, that the war against Midian was originally given to be carried out by B’nei Yisra’el after Mosheh’s death. Hence, they were commanded to “harass” them in Ch. 25 but that command was not given a clear form until after Mosheh was told to ascend the mountain. Since Mosheh reoriented the leadership scheme, however, he would remain through that war and, as the text states:

Avenge the people of Yisra’el of the Midianim; afterwards shall you be gathered to your people. (31:2)

V. THE CENSUS AND THE DIV ISION OF THE LAND

The analysis suggested above brings us back to our original question regarding the odd placement of the Parashot of

T’midin uMusafin.

Before directly addressing the question, let’s return to the Parashot of the census. One of the remarkable features of the census is the startling result: 601,730 soldiers counted just before entering the land (Bamidbar 26:51). Compare this number with the census of nearly 39 years previous: 603,550 (ibid. 1:46). Through the wandering, the dying out of an entire adult population and the raising of a new generation, born free in the wilderness – the total adult male population is nearly the same as it was at the Exodus. (Leaving aside the curiosity that the number counted on the 20th day of the 2nd year – Bamidbar 1 – is exactly the same as that some months earlier during the collection for the Mishkan [Sh’mot 38:26 – see Rashi at Sh’mot 30:16 and Ramban ad loc. v. 12]; Rav Elhanan Samet has written a comprehensive article on the problem which can be found in his Iyyunim beParashat haShavua, Parashat Bamidbar).

It might be assumed that the representative participation of each tribe remained constant – but note the changes over the 39 years in the desert:

Tribe 2nd Year 40th Year

Reuven 46,500 43,730

Shim’on 59,300 22,200

Gad 45,650 40,500

Yehudah 74,600 76,500

Yissachar 54,400 64,300

Zevulun 57,400 60,500

Ephraim 40,500 32,500

Menasheh 32,200 52,700

Binyamin 35,400 45,600

Dan 62,700 64,400

Asher 41,500 53,400

Naphtali 53,400 45,400

Total: 603,500 601,730

In spite of the severe depletion of Shim’on’s soldiers (likely as a result of the plague following the P’or-worship), the marked drop-off in Ephraim’s army and the significant diminution of Naphtali’s fighting force, the total remains nearly the same – a bit over the “magic” number of 600,000 (see BT Berakhot 58a).

One message that emerges from the comparison of these two censuses is the consistency of B’nei Yisra’el’s existence and the phenomenon of “making up for losses” accomplished by the corporate whole. To wit, people are born, people die, but corporate Israel lives on.

This message is strengthened by the census of the Levi’im, which totals 23,000 men from one month and up in the 40th year (26:62), and totals 22,000 at the beginning of the second year (3:39).

Thus, the first 12 paragraphs, as well as #14, underscore the basic message of Israelite continuity in spite of the cycle of death and birth which takes its toll on every member.

Paragraph #13 deals with the division of the Land. Note that Mosheh is somewhat excluded from the process and the division will be based not on the households headed by “live” members, rather by those who left Egypt (and are now buried between Kadesh and Moav) – again, the nation that left Egypt lives on, even if the individuals do not.

The final two parashot in this section deal with the daughters of Tz’lafhad – the inclusion here is most appropriate, as it deals with the division of the land and the loophole which needs to be closed in the case of a man who dies, leaving only daughters.

Yet there is a short phrase that is very instructive in the presentation of B’not Tz’lafhad which serves to highlight what is new about this second generation – and what they share with their forebears.

When the young women approach Mosheh with their petition, they use the phrase: Lamah Yigara’ – why should (our

father's name) be left out? (27:4). This word combination appears only one other place in T'nakh. When the men come before Mosheh (at the very beginning of the second year) complaining that due to ritual impurity they are being excluded from the Korban Pesach (Bamidbar 9:7), they state Lamah Nigara' – why should we be left out?

The common phrasing here (which I addressed in the Siyyum on Sefer Bamidbar in a different vein) serves to tie the two generations together, while setting them far apart.

The generation that knew slavery, that experienced the Exodus first hand and that stood, as adults, at the foot of Sinai – continued to use Egypt as their frame of reference. When God "introduces" Himself to B'nei Yisra'el at Sinai (see Sh'mot 20:2 and, specifically, Abravanel and R. Yehudah haLevi [quoted in Ibn Ezra] ad loc. and ibid. 19:1-6), He uses the Exodus as the point of departure (pun intended) for establishing the ongoing B'rit.

The people, as well, continued to refer to Egypt – specifically in their complaints. They longed to return, even to be buried in Egypt (Bamidbar 14:2), waxed nostalgic about the free food and plenty of Egypt (while conveniently forgetting their servitude – ibid. 11:5) and so on.

The impure men of Chapter 7 feel cheated by their exclusion from the offering and ask Mosheh to find them a solution (which turns out to be the Pesach Sheni). These men long to participate in the Korban Pesach – an offering which celebrates the Exodus from Egypt.

When the daughters of Tz'laf'had, raised in the desert without adult memories (if any) of Egypt, express their great desire not to be excluded, it is the Land that they long to inherit. Whereas the last generation felt its identity as "Yotz'ei Mitzrayim", the new generation saw its raison d'etre as entering the land.

The common phrase Lamah Nigara'/Yigara' serves to demonstrate the great change which has taken place over 38 years – along with the consistency which accompanies that change.

What is the nature of the consistency? A great desire to be included with the community (see the Siyyum on Sefer Bamidbar) and to fully partake in the experience of K'lal Yisra'el.

Thus, the entire section bridging the command to harass the Midianites and the command to Mosheh to ascend the mountain is defined by the constant nature of Am Yisra'el throughout the desert – at once affirming Mosheh's success as a leader and teacher, and denying the need for him to remain present, since the nation goes on regardless of the fate of the individual.

VI. T'MIDIN UMUSAFIN

The sixteen paragraphs following the "turn" in leadership are devoted to the calendar of public offerings; following the reasoning outlined above (and noting the neatly balanced number of Parashot bridging the appointment of Yehoshua and the command to wreak vengeance on Midian) we would expect some underlying message to be found in these paragraphs which associates with the common theme.

Each paragraph is imbued with significant concepts and ideas – and perhaps we will address them in a separate essay. For purposes of this analysis, however, we will simply note that which is common throughout the first fifteen – the Korban haTamid.

In 28:1-8, we are commanded to offer up one lamb in the morning and one in the afternoon, parallel or modeled after the offering at Sinai (28:6). This is the "constant Korban" which is brought daily, including Shabbat, holidays and even overriding ritual impurity (BT Menahot 72b). Each Musaf concludes with some form of the statement Al Olat haTamid – accompanying the Olat Tamid.

The constancy of worship – that each special day is framed within the contours of "Tamid" (the morning Tamid is brought before all other Korbanot and the afternoon brought after all others excepting the Korban Pesach), is something which is quite remarkable within the context of Mikdash worship. Normally, that which is special, festive etc. trumps the mundane and regular experience – but the message of the T'midin is the very opposite. The primacy of constancy as emerging from Parashat haTamid is a message which is adopted by Haza"l:

Ben Zoma says: we have found an encompassing verse: "Sh'ma Yisra'el"; Ben Nanas says: we have found an even more encompassing verse: "v'Ahavta l'Re'akha Kamokha". Shim'on ben Pazi says: We have found a yet more encompassing verse, namely: The one lamb you shall offer in the morning…" (Maharal, quoting an otherwise unknown Midrash, Netivot Olam, Netiv Ahavat Re'a Ch. 1).

This message of constancy of worship is the ideal balance to the message identified in the 16 paragraphs dealing with the census and the land.

As such, these parashot of the power of constancy – the constancy of Am Yisra'el as a nation on the one side and the constancy of Am Yisra'el's relationship to haKadosh Barukh Hu on the other, serve to perfectly frame the dialogue between Mosheh and Hashem during which the dynamic leadership of a Shofet/Navi becomes the quasi-dynastic

leadership of a Melekh – constant and seamlessly passing to the next leader, just as his brother did on Hor haHar.