

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT PINCHAS · 14 TAMMUZ 5774 - JULY 12, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 42

PARSHA INSIGHTS

DEALING WITH THE DUMPSTER

“...because he took vengeance for his G-d” (25:13)

It's very easy to be a sheep. Most of the time we do – at best – what everybody else does. We get up in the morning, wash our hands, mutter a few *berachot* and go *daven*. We move our lips, but our hearts are usually silent. We go through the motions. Maybe once or twice a year we rouse ourselves to a higher level of awareness and service of G-d, and then we slump back to the default position. Not that the default position isn't something. After all, we believe in G-d, we do the *mitzvot*. We're doing more than the other 99.9% of humanity, aren't we?

It's very difficult to do more than everyone else. Even a little more.

And that is why it's so precious.

Any little thing that's more than the norm is a sea-change in who we are.

Let's say the next time your nose starts to itch, you resist the desire to scratch it, and the next time, and the next time — eventually you will be a person who can control what he does.

And that's one of the most exciting things in the world.

And if you can control what you do when nothing more than an itchy nose is at stake, eventually you will be able to control yourself when you have an itch to do something much more tempting and disastrous.

Or you walk past the empty garbage dumpster outside your apartment block and see that the dumpster is surrounded by a large pile of bulging black garbage bags, some of which already betray the tentative explorations of the claws of the neighbor-

hood cats.

You could think to yourself, “Why don't parents teach their children to throw the trash *into* the dumpster and not *at* it?” and carry on walking.

Or you could throw the bags into the dumpster.

If you throw enough bags into enough dumpsters, you will become someone who takes responsibility for things regardless of what other people do or don't do.

“...because he took vengeance for his G-d”

The Ten Commandments were all given in the singular so that each one of us should internalize that I am individually commanded to keep the *mitzvot* as though the Torah was given to no one else but me; the failings of others are no excuse for my own lacking.

Pinchas certainly could have looked at Moshe and Aaron and the Seventy Elders who stood around and done nothing to stop a gross act of indecency, and thought, “Well if they aren't going to do anything, why should I be holier than them?”

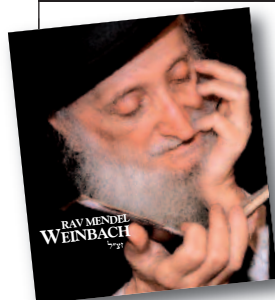
He didn't think this way, but rather did what was necessary to protect the Name of Heaven.

It is for this reason that the verse says, “...because he took vengeance for his G-d.”

At that moment Pinchas acted as though G-d was ‘his G-d’ and no one else's, and that he alone was responsible to preserve the honor of the Kingdom.

• Sources: based on the *Chomat Aish* in *Mayana Shel Torah*

A Memorial Tribute to Rav Weinbach zt”l



The Memorial Tribute Book for Rav Weinbach zt”l is available in print at Ohr Somayach.*

A PDF format is available for free download on www.ohr.edu.

* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt”l.

PARSHA OVERVIEW

G-d tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive G-d's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action - executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. G-d commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites who lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. G-d instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to *Bnei Yisrael*. The number of the Levites' families is recorded. Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with Moshe. In the

absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land. Moshe asks G-d for the ruling, and G-d tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance. G-d tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks G-d to designate the subsequent leader, and G-d selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.

TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

MEGILLA 2 - 8

"Large cities that were surrounded by a wall from the days of Yehoshua bin Nun read the Megilla of the 15th of Adar."

This statement in the first *mishna* of our *mesechta* fixes that the pertinent date for a city to have the status of a "walled city" is from the time of Yehoshua and not from the later and seemingly more logical time of the Purim miracle. Why?

At the time of the Purim miracle the Land of Israel was in a state of destruction as a result of the Babylonian conquest of Israel some 70 years prior. Dating a "walled city" from the time of the miracle would result in a lack of honor to the Land of Israel, since all the walls of the cities in Israel were then in ruins. Therefore, to show honor to Israel, the date for determining a city to be "walled" was from the time when Yehoshua led the Jewish People to inherit the Land of Israel — a time when many of the cities were populated, fortified and walled. In addition, it is appropriate to date from the time of Yehoshua since he was a leader in the first war against Amalek, the ancestor of the evil Haman of the Purim miracle (Rabbeinu Nissim, *Tiferet Yisrael*).

• *Megilla 2a*

"If a person tells you, 'I've worked hard but have not succeeded', don't believe him; if he says, 'I've not worked hard but have succeeded', don't believe him; but if he says 'I've worked hard and succeeded', believe him."

This oft-quoted teaching is taught on our *daf* by Rabbi Yitzchak and is qualified in the *gemara* by two addenda. One is that the statement refers to learning Torah and not to success in worldly and business matters. Secondly, this teaching links one's efforts to his success only regarding sharpening one's *understanding* of the Torah — but *remembering* what one has learned requires special help from Heaven (Rashi).

• *Megilla 6b*

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why was Pinchas not originally a *kohen*?
2. Why was Moav spared the fate of Midian?
3. What does the *yud* and *heh* added to the family names testify?
4. Korach and his congregation became a “sign.” What do they signify?
5. Why did Korach’s children survive?
6. Name six families in this Parsha whose names are changed.
7. Who was Yaakov’s only living granddaughter at the time of the census?
8. How many years did it take to conquer the Land? How many to divide the Land?
9. Two brothers leave Egypt and die in the *midbar*. One brother has three sons. The other brother has only one son. When these four cousins enter the Land, how many portions will the one son get?
10. What do Yocheved, Ard and Na’aman all have in common?
11. Why did the decree to die in the desert not apply to the women?
12. What trait did Tzlofchad’s daughters exhibit that their ancestor Yosef also exhibited?
13. Why does the Torah change the order of Tzlofchad’s daughters’ names?
14. For what transgression did Tzlofchad die?
15. Why did Moshe use the phrase “G-d of the spirits of all flesh”?
16. Moshe “put some of his glory” upon Yehoshua. What does this mean?
17. Where were the daily offerings slaughtered?
18. Goats are brought as *musaf* sin-offerings. For what sin do they atone?
19. Why is Shavuot called *Yom Habikkurim*?
20. What do the 70 bulls offered on Succot symbolize?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 25:13 - *Kehuna* (priesthood) was given to Aharon and his sons (not grandsons), and to any of their descendants born *after* they were anointed. Pinchas, Aharon’s grandson, was born *prior* to the anointing.
2. 25:18 - For the sake of Ruth, a future descendant of Moav.
3. 26:5 - That the families were truly children of their tribe.
4. 26:10 - That *kehuna* was given forever to Aharon and his sons, and that no one should ever dispute this.
5. 26:11 - Because they repented.
6. 26:13,16,24,38,39,42 - Zerach, Ozni, Yashuv, Achiram, Shfufam, Shucham.
7. 26:46 - Serach bat Asher
8. 26:53 - Seven years. Seven years.
9. 26:55 - Two portions. That is, the four cousins merit four portions among them. These four portions are then split among them as if their fathers were inheriting them; *i.e.*, two portions to one father and two portions to the other father.
10. 26:24,56 - They came down to Mitzrayim in their mothers’ wombs.
11. 26:64 - In the incident of the *meraglim*, only the men wished to return to Egypt. The women wanted to enter *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. 27:1 - Love for *Eretz Yisrael*.
13. 27:1 - To teach that they were equal in greatness.
14. 27:3 - Rabbi Akiva says that Tzlofchad gathered sticks on Shabbat. Rabbi Shimon says that Tzlofchad was one who tried to enter *Eretz Yisrael* after the sin of the *meraglim*.
15. 27:16 - He was asking G-d, who knows the multitude of dispositions among the Jewish People, to appoint a leader who can deal with each person on that person’s level.
16. 27:20 - That Yehoshua’s face beamed like the moon.
17. 28:3 - At a spot opposite the sun. The morning offering was slaughtered on the west side of the slaughtering area and the afternoon offering on the east side.
18. 28:15 - For unnoticed ritual impurity of the Sanctuary or its vessels.
19. 28:26 - The Shavuot double-bread offering was the first wheat-offering made from the new crop.
20. 29:18 - The seventy nations.

Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT PINCHAS

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

In this Parsha the Torah speaks briefly about how the Land of Israel is to be divided among the various tribes. Abarbanel explains that the commentators are unsure about the exact nature of this division. Does each tribe receive the same amount of land, determined by Divine lottery and regardless of population, or is the land divided by the people themselves according to population, with the more populous tribes receiving a larger portion of land? The confusion arises from the verses in this Parsha.

First it appears that G-d is instructing Moshe to divide the land according to the populations of the tribes. However, the Torah then immediately states that “only by lot shall the land be divided, according to the names of their fathers’ tribes shall they inherit. According to the lot shall one’s inheritance be divided, between the numerous and the few.” This lottery was conducted through a specific procedure involving a consultation of the Urim V’Tumim which Eliezer the Kohen Gadol wore on his breastplate. This Divinely-directed lottery seems to contradict a division based on population carried out by the people themselves.

After challenging the explanations of Rashi and Ramban, Abarbanel offers his own explanation. He says that there were two stages to the division of the land. First of all, the lottery determined which district within the Land of Israel would be assigned to each tribe. Since the lottery was

Divinely-orchestrated, this would eliminate contention among the tribes. Even though some regions were more fertile or productive than others, everyone would have to recognize that the allotted areas were determined Divinely. However, the exact size of each tribe’s portion within that Divinely-allotted region was to be determined by Yehoshua, Eliezer HaKohen and princes from each of the twelve tribes. They would take into account how much area within each region was required for each of the tribes, based on population. The lottery also insured that each tribe’s area would be contiguous. Members of any one tribe could never be assigned to a region that was separated from the other members of his tribe.

This interpretation is supported by the verses in Parshat Massei further on in the Torah. First the Torah states, “...this is the land that you shall divide as an inheritance *by lot* which G-d has commanded to give....” The Torah then immediately states, “These are the names of the men who are to take possession of the land for you: Eliezer the Kohen, and Yehoshua son of Nun, and one leader from each tribe shall you take to possess the land.” After having commanded the division of the land by lottery the Torah mentions the individuals who will determine the exact boundaries based on population.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

YARCHA – TOMB OF A LOCAL HERO

Chushai Ha’Arki is described in the Book of Shmuel as the loyal supporter of King David who played an instrumental role in foiling the rebellion of Avshalom against his father. By countering the wise counsel of Achitophel with strategic advice that appealed to Avshalom as even wiser, he succeeded in convincing him to take a step



that led to his destruction.

His tomb, which is located in the village of Yarcha, some four miles northeast of the Achihud Junction, was reportedly visited in 1742 by the great Torah commentator and kabbalist Rabbi Chaim ben Attar who studied Torah and prayed together with his disciples at the site.

WHICH WAY TO PRAY?

From: Alex

Dear Rabbi,

I live in Israel where it seems to me that all the shuls face toward Jerusalem. Recently I was in England and the US where it seems all the shuls face east, even though from there, east is not toward Jerusalem. I would have expected the shuls to face south-east in the direction of Israel. When I asked people about it, the basic response was, "That's how we do it." Could you clarify what this is about?

Dear Alex,

It sounds like this was a very disorienting experience for you, but perhaps I can help point you in the right direction.

The source for the practice you are used to, namely facing toward Jerusalem, is the Talmud (Berachot 30a):

"One who stands in Israel should direct his heart to Jerusalem, as it says, 'And they shall pray to G-d towards the city that you have chosen' (I Kings 8:44). One who stands in Jerusalem should direct his heart to the Temple, as it says, 'And they shall pray to this house' (II Chronicles 6:32). One who stands in the Temple should direct his heart to the Holy of Holies, as it says, 'And they shall pray to this place' (I Kings 8:35)."

According to this, wherever a person is in Israel, he should face Jerusalem, the Temple and the Holy of Holies. If, for example, he's in the Golan Heights which are north-east, he should face southwest; if he's in the southwest, like in Ashkelon, he should face northeast; and the same goes for being in Jerusalem itself – he should orient himself in whatever direction would be a straight line toward the Temple Mount, the place of the Temple and Holy of Holies. As you note, most shuls in Israel are built such that the front wall of the shul with the Aron Kodesh, defining the direction of prayer, be in the direction of Jerusalem.

The same teaching prescribes a similar rule for prayer outside the Land of Israel:

"One who stands outside the Land [of Israel] should direct his heart to Israel, as it says, 'And they shall pray to

You by way of their land' (I Kings 8:48)....One west of Israel should turn his face to the east; one south of Israel should turn his face to the north; one north should turn his face to the south, so we find that all of Israel are directing their hearts to the same place."

However, as you mention, many shuls outside of Israel are oriented simply east and not more directly toward Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple.

The explanation of the widespread custom to pray to the east seems to be based on several sources' injunction to pray toward the *Shechina*, or Divine Presence, which is described variably as being concentrated between, or in, both the east and west.

For example, the Talmud (Bava Batra 25a) suggests that whether one is to the north, south or east of Israel, one should pray westward, toward the *Shechina*. The implication of this teaching is that one should pray toward the *Shechina* even if the prayer will not be directed exactly toward Israel.

Conversely, since praying westward toward the *Shechina* in a location significantly west of Israel would result in people's turning their backs to Israel and Jerusalem, communities in those locations pray toward the *Shechina* in the east, which is also in the general direction of Israel, even though the prayer will not be directed exactly toward Israel. However, the same teaching also discourages praying toward the sun, as was done by idolaters of old, so these communities will often have the shul facing slightly away from the direct line of the rising sun.

It is important to note that even when praying in shuls in the west that face east, one may orient himself diagonally to face southeast, even though he'll be turning slightly away from the Aron Kodesh and the direction that the community is facing. In fact, some attempt a compromise by simultaneously orienting their body to the east in the direction of the shul and the *Shechina*, while directing their face and head toward Israel, Jerusalem and the Holy of Holies.

Sources:

- *Shulchan Aruch, Rema and Mishna Berurah, Orach Chaim 94:1-2*
- *Aruch HaShulchan, Orach Chaim, 94:1-14*

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Sons and daughters tell of their devotion, challenges, and successes in honoring their parents

BY RABBI AND MRS. YEHUDA SAMET

Excerpts from the newly-published best-seller "My Father, My Mother and Me", published by ArtScroll-Mesorah

THE INDISPENSABLE "HOW"

"...and it must be given b'seiver panim yafot..." (Shulchan Aruch 240:4)

We cited the six directives of honoring parents in deed, as discussed in the Shulchan Aruch (see Ohrnet Chukat – editor's note). That was what we have to do.

Immediately, the Shulchan Aruch follows with *how* we have to do it: "It must be given *b'seiver panim yafot*."

Harav Avigdor Miller explains:

Seiver (expression) is akin to the word *s'vara*, which denotes thought and interest;

Panim (face): The least one can do is to turn his face when his father or mother enters the room, connoting attention and involvement;

Yafot: In addition, our face should have a pleasant expression.

How? An interested, attentive, and pleasant demonstration of filial devotion. To express externally what we feel internally — that these actions and this service are not a burden, but a privilege.

Here's someone's story that demonstrates this concept:

It was my first Shabbat experience. Some fellow in a black suit approached me at the Western Wall and asked if I wanted to go with some other guys for a Friday night meal. I wasn't doing too much (actually, nothing at all), so I figured I didn't have much to lose.

Little did I know that I had a lot to lose. Luckily, I lost it.

Slowly but surely over the years, I left behind a lot of baggage. It's been a long journey, and it all started that Friday night.

You understand, this Shabbat thing was a first for me, and it hit me hard.

I don't want to underplay the food, which was awesome and abundant. The singing — well, in my crowd, men didn't do too

much singing, but I could see how they were really caught up in it. A lot of philosophical discussion ... and with it all, it was amazing that every kid got a chance to talk. And then they told me that they do this every week!

Mostly, I was impressed with the kids, and the parent-kid connection — real quality time. But of all the things that got me that night, I'll tell you which one did it. It happened so quickly. The family didn't even seem to notice. But for me, it turned my life around.

She was just a little girl. Not being into kids, I can't really give you an age, but I suppose if we round it off to 10 or 11, we'll be somewhere close. They called her Racheli.

Little Racheli did something that made her minute-before-smiley father very serious. Father and mother conferred. Racheli was in the dock, tearful. Judgment was passed: Racheli was informed that she would miss her turn to wash the dishes after the meal!

Racheli pouted. The family continued their meal.

I was speechless. The whole thing blew my mind.

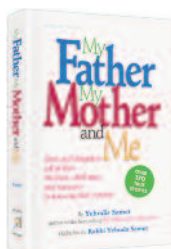
I guess everyone has his own story of what turned him on to his Jewish genes. For me, it was Racheli's "punishment." From where I was coming, it was like landing on a different planet, where they were speaking a language I had never heard, behaving in a way I had never seen.

I had the rest of the meal to chew this over. Dessert was served, and I was still clueless. So, after the meal, I cornered my host.

He smiled at my question. "To our kids, helping out is a privilege."

Was this for real?

I realized that there was something special going on in that house, and that I had better find out about it — fast.



My Father, My Mother & Me

*Sons and daughters tell of their devotion, challenges,
and successes in honoring their parents*

BY RABBI AND MRS. YEHUDA SAMET

PUBLISHED BY ARTSCROLL - MESORAH

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THE SHEMONEH ESREI - THE THIRD BLESSING (2)

“And Holy ones will praise You each day, forever.”

The commentators explain that the “holy ones” referred to in this blessing are both to the nation of Israel and the angels. Although the angels and the Jewish People are both called holy, the nature of their holiness is quite different.

The angels are defined as holy because they are completely removed and exalted above anything physical. They dwell in the upper heavenly realms where the revelation of the Divine will is so intense it is impossible for the angels to do anything other than the will of G-d. Thus, to glimpse at the glory and perfection of the angels leaves us awestruck.

In contrast, man is a creature of this physical and coarse world, where G-d's presence is concealed. This concealment provides man with the freedom to choose whether to do G-d's will or not. Although man was endowed with a Divine soul, for most people the body is the dominant force. Thus it is quite difficult for a person to overpower his physical drives utilizing this world for the sake of fulfilling G-d's will.

Attaining Holiness

Our connection to G-d and His holiness is actualized through our connection to His Torah. For the Torah is the expression of G-d's Divine will and wisdom. Thus, only through Torah learning and observance can a Jew truly sanc-

tify his life and attach himself to G-d. Through the fulfillment of the *mitzvot* man nullifies his human animalistic drives and desires, thereby uniting with G-d in absolute unity. Through Torah man transcends to a higher and more spiritual level of existence, attaining a level of holiness that surpasses even that of the angels.

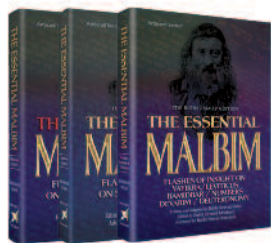
Man's existence in this world, albeit more sophisticated, can on some level be compared to that of an animal. Ultimately, both are creatures that eat, sleep and procreate. When, however, man connects all his actions to G-d, he is able to sanctify even his mundane activities, infusing them with Divine purpose. This is why we are called a “unique” nation in the Land. On the one hand we are “in the Land,” yet we remain separate and exalted above the world, utilizing it as a vehicle through which to connect to G-d and attain holiness. This is the very reason that we were given the Torah instead of the angels.

Yaakov Avinu personified Torah and the attribute of truth, attaining the highest level of holiness of the Forefathers. Unlike Avraham who fathered Yishmael, and Yitzchak who fathered Esav, Yaakov fathered the twelve tribes of Israel, who were all righteous and holy. Accordingly, it is fitting for this blessing which recalls the sanctity of the Jewish people to correspond to Yaakov Avinu.

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