

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת פינחס

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה לבית אבתם כל יצא צבא בישראל

“Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel, from twenty and above, according to their father's houses, all who go out to the legion in Israel” (26:2)

In the context of this posuk, the word "rosh" is taken to refer to a counting of the Jewish people. However, the literal meaning of the word "rosh" is head or leader. Rabbi Friedman suggests that every person has the ability to be a leader of the Jewish people. Each individual is referred to as a "rosh" because the census was held in order to determine the number of individuals and potential leaders in Klal Yisrael.

Every boy is blessed by his parents to be like Ephraim and Menashe and every girl to grow up like Rachel and Leah. We tell our children to aspire to become great because they have the ability to do so. R' Moshe Feinstein asks: Why do we bless our children to be like Menashe and Ephraim? Wouldn't it make more sense to bless them to be like the great people of contemporary generations, someone that they can better relate to? After all, Menashe and Ephraim were such great men who lived a very long time ago and were on a level that we can never hope to attain. He answers that when one aims for a very lofty goal, even if he falls short he will have accomplished a lot. When he sets the bar lower, he will not get very far. Every individual can be a leader in his own way in his own sphere. Many times people underestimate their abilities and their talents and despair of accomplishing anything of importance. One should be aware of the abilities that he has and strive to make the most of them.

ותקרבנה בנות צלפחד בן חפר בן גלעד בן מכיר בן מנשה למשפחת מנשה בן יוסף ואלה שמות בנותיו מחלה נעה וחגלה ומלכה ותרצה

“The daughters of Tzelafchad, son of Chefer, son of Gilad, son of Machir, son of Menashe, of the families of Menashe son of Yosef drew near - and these are the names of his daughters: Machla, Noah, Chagla, Milka and Tirtza” (27:1)

The posuk immediately before the story of the daughters of Tzelafchad mentions that all the men in the wilderness had died throughout the previous thirty-eight years. What is the connection between these two events? The Midrash explains that during the time that the Bnei Yisrael spent in the desert, the women remained faithful where the men failed. While the men donated gold to the golden calf and worshipped it, the women refused to give anything toward its creation. When the men despaired because of the evil report brought by the spies, the women remained steadfast in their love of Eretz Yisrael and their trust in Hashem. Because of this, the decree of death applied only to the men and not to the women. The women who had left Egypt were still alive forty years later and entered Eretz Yisrael. The women had a special love for Eretz Yisrael that the men did not have. The Torah contrasts these two attitudes. While the men died in the wilderness because they believed the spies' report, the daughters of Tzelafchad pleaded with Moshe for a portion in the land, representing the attitude of the women.

Rashi asks: Why does the posuk trace the lineage of these five women all the way back to Yosef? He answers that the posuk is showing us where they got this love of Eretz Yisrael from. They inherited this love of the land from their ancestor, Yosef HaTzadik. Before his death in Egypt, Yosef requested that his remains be transported back to Eretz Yisrael when Hashem

would take them out of Egypt. R' Moshe Feinstein further explains that tracing their lineage back to Yosef and demonstrating that this love of Eretz Yisrael was in their blood shows that their motivation for this request was not for financial gain but for love of the land.

For the daughters of Tzelafchad, it was not enough to love the land and have special feelings for it. Just being there was not enough for them, they wanted to own part of it in order for it to be theirs. Owning land in Eretz Yisrael is a special mitzvah for those who are able to do so. We should appreciate Eretz Yisrael and its importance to our people.

יפקד ה' אלקי הרוחת לכל בשר איש על העדה

“May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly” (27:16)

Rashi asks: Why did Moshe address Hashem as the "G-d of spirits" when discussing who would be the next leader of the Jewish nation? He answers that Moshe said to Hashem: "Master of the world! The personality of each individual is revealed before You; they do not resemble each other. Appoint a leader who can deal with each individual according to his personality." Thus, Moshe addressed Hashem as "G-d of spirits" as a way of asking Hashem to appoint a person with this special quality of being able to understand and appreciate the unique individuality of each person. Hashem acceded to Moshe's request and told him to appoint Yehoshua, describing him as "a man in whom there is spirit," an obvious reference to Moshe's suggestion. Rashi comments on Hashem's description of Yehoshua that He was saying to Moshe: "As you requested, that he be able to act in a manner befitting the personality of each individual."

R' Chaim Shmuelevitz says in the name of Ramban that one may have thought that Kalev should have been the next leader of the Jewish people. After all, Kalev preceded Yehoshua in the listing of the spies, seeming to indicate that he was greater than Yehoshua. However, Yehoshua had the ability to understand each and every individual. Every person is different and has to be dealt with and treated in a different style. A leader has to have patience and understanding like a parent has for a child. Each person should be treated in a style befitting that individual. That was the uniqueness of Yehoshua and that is the sign of a great leader. As such, it was Yehoshua who possessed the necessary qualifications to be the successor to Moshe.

וביום השבת שני כבשים בני שנה תמימים ושני עשרנים סלת מנחה בלולה בשמן ונסכו
“And on the Sabbath day: two male lambs in their first year, unblemished, two tenth-ephahs of fine flour for a meal-offering, mixed with oil, and its libation” (28:9)

In the Shemone Esrei of Mussaf on Shabbos, we say "You, Hashem our G-d, commanded us to sacrifice on it the Musaf sacrifice of Shabbos as is appropriate." What is added by describing the Musaf of Shabbos as "appropriate." The Daas Zekainim explains that the Musaf of Shabbos is just two sheep, smaller than any other Musaf sacrifice. The Shabbos complained to Hashem why this was so. Hashem explained that everything on Shabbos is doubled, most prominently among them the double portion of bread that we have on Shabbos in the form of lechem mishneh. Thus, Hashem also asks for a double portion on Shabbos of two sheep, as is appropriate for the Shabbos day. This is why this is an apt description of the sacrifice brought on Shabbos.

Why do we not read the portion describing the Musaf sacrifice of Shabbos on each Shabbos as we do on Rosh Chodesh and each of the Yomim Tovim? The Daas Zekainim answers that the Torah commands regarding the festivals that "these are the appointed times of Hashem that

you should call them." This refers to the obligation to read the portion in the Torah describing their Musaf sacrifices. However, the Torah makes no such statement with regard to Shabbos and therefore we are not obligated to read the Musaf each week.

Kesharim Baruch College/NYU Parsha Shiur

Shiur given by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

Written by Michael Gutmann