

Home Weekly Parsha PINCHAS

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

The Torah records for us the genealogy of Pinchas, the true and justified zealot of Jewish history. There are many reasons advanced as to why the Torah felt impelled to tell us of the names of his father and grandfather. Many commentators saw in this an explanation to justify Pinchas' behavior, while others emphasized that it was an explanation for Pinchas' reward and of God granting him the blessing of peace.

But aside from these insights there is another more general message that the Torah is recording for us. And that is that a person's behavior affects all of one's family members, even those of previous generations who may no longer be currently numbered among the living.

A great act of sanctification of God's name such as the one performed by Pinchas enhances the reputations and stature of previous generations as well. My rebbe in the yeshiva summed this lesson up in his usual concise and pithy manner: "If both your grandparents and your grandchildren are proud of you and your achievements then you are probably alright in Heaven's judgment as well."

Our idea of immortality is based upon generations of our families, both previous generations and later ones. We find vindication of our lives and efforts in the accomplishments of those that come after us and continue our values and faith. We cannot control what children and grandchildren will do, whom they will marry and what type of life they will lead. But innately, we feel that we have a connection to the development of their lives and the actions that they will take.

The Torah emphasizes for us that Pinchas' zealotry did not come to him in a vacuum. The Torah allows everyone freedom of will and behavior. Neither good behavior nor evil behavior is ever predestined. Yet as medicine has shown us, in the physical world there is an element of physical predestination in our DNA. And this DNA affects our moral behavior as well.

Judaism always envisioned itself not only as a universal faith but as a particular family as well. In our daily prayer service we constantly recall who our founding ancestors were. We name our children in memory of those who have preceded us. We extol a sense of family and a loyalty to the values that our families represent.

One of the most destructive trends in modern society has been the erosion of the sense of family in the world and amongst Jews particularly. Assimilation means abandoning family and abandoning family certainly contributes to intensified assimilation and loss of Jewish feelings and identity. It is ironic that in a time such as now when most children can be privileged to know grandparents and even

great grandparents the relationship between generations in many Jewish families is frayed and weak.

Pinchas comes to reinforce this concept of tying generations – past, present and future – together. It is imperative for us to know Pinchas' genealogy for otherwise we have no clue as to who Pinchas was and why he behaved as he did in those given circumstances.

Shabat shalom.

Rabbi Berel Wein

Moshe's Disappointment PINCHAS

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Hidden beneath the surface of parshat Pinchas, the Sages uncovered a story of great poignancy. Moses, having seen his sister and brother die, knew that his own time on earth was coming to a close. He prayed to God to appoint a successor:

Let the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over this community who will go out before them and come in before them, who will lead them out and bring them home. Let not the Lord's community be like sheep without a shepherd.

Numbers 27:16-17

There is, though, an obvious question. Why does this episode appear here? It should surely have been positioned seven chapters earlier, either at the point at which God told Moses and Aaron that they would die without entering the land, or shortly thereafter when we read of the death of Aaron.

The Sages sensed two clues to the story beneath the story. The first is that it appears immediately after the episode in which the daughters of Tzelophehad sought and were granted their father's share in the land. It was this that triggered Moses' request. A Midrash explains:

What was Moses' reason for making this request after declaring the order of inheritance? Just this, that when the daughters of Tzelophehad inherited from their father, Moses reasoned: the time is right for me to make my own request. If daughters inherit, it is surely right that my sons should inherit my glory.

Numbers Rabbah 21:14

The second clue lies in God's words to Moses immediately before he made his request for the appointment of a successor:

The Lord said to Moses, "Ascend this mountain of Abarim and gaze upon the land that I have given to the Israelites. After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, like Aaron your brother..."

Num. 27:12-13

The italicised words are seemingly redundant. God was telling Moses he would soon die. Why did He need to add, “like Aaron your brother”? On this the Midrash says: This teaches us that Moses wanted to die the way Aaron did. The Ktav Sofer explains: Aaron had the privilege of knowing that his children would follow in his footsteps. Elazar, his son, was appointed as High Priest in his lifetime. To this day kohanim are direct descendants of Aaron. Moses likewise longed to see one of his sons, Gershom or Eliezer, take his place as leader of the people. It was not to be. That is the story beneath the story.

It had an aftermath. In the book of Judges we read of a man named Micah who established an idolatrous cult in the territory of Ephraim and hired a Levite to officiate in the shrine. Some men from the tribe of Dan, moving north to find more suitable land for themselves, came upon Micah’s house and seized both the idolatrous artefacts and the Levite, whom they persuaded to become their priest, saying, “Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn’t it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man’s household?” (Judges 18:19).

Only at the end of the story (v. 30) are we told the name of the idolatrous priest: Jonathan son of Gershom son of Moses. In our texts the letter nun has been inserted into the last of these names, so that it can be read as Menasheh rather than Moses. However, the letter, unusually, is written above the line, as a superscription. The Talmud says that the nun was added to avoid besmirching the name of Moses himself, by disclosing that his grandson had become an idolatrous priest.

How are we to explain Moses’ apparent failure with his own children and grandchildren? One suggestion made by the Sages was that it had to do with the fact that for years he lived in Midian with his father-in-law Jethro, who was at the time an idolatrous priest. Something of the Midianite influence re-appeared in Jonathan three generations later.

Alternatively there are hints here and there that Moses himself was so preoccupied with leading the people that he simply did not have time to attend to the spiritual needs of his children. For instance, when Jethro came to visit his son-in-law after the division of the Red Sea, he brought with him Moses’ wife Tziporah and their two sons. They had not been with him until then.

The rabbis went further in speculating about the reason that Moses’ own sister and brother Aaron and Miriam spoke negatively about him. What they were referring to, said the Sages, is the fact that Moses had physically separated from his wife. He had done so because the nature of his role was such that he had to be in a state of purity the whole time because at any moment he might have to speak – or be spoken to – by God. They were, in short, complaining that he was neglecting his own family.

A third explanation has to do with the nature of leadership itself. Bureaucratic authority – authority in virtue of office

– can be passed down from parent to child. Monarchy is like that. So is aristocracy. So are some forms of religious leadership, like the priesthood. But charismatic authority – in virtue of personal qualities – is never automatically handed on across the generations. Moses was a prophet, and prophecy depends almost entirely on personal qualities. That, incidentally, is why, though kingship and priesthood in Judaism were male prerogatives, prophecy was not. There were prophetesses as well as prophets. In this respect Moses was not unusual. Few charismatic leaders have children who are also charismatic leaders.

A fourth explanation offered by the Sages was quite different. On principle, God did not want the crown of Torah to pass from parent to child in dynastic succession. Kingship and priesthood did. But the crown of Torah, they said, belongs to anyone who chooses to take hold of it and bear its responsibilities. “Moses commanded us the Torah as an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob,” meaning that it belongs to all of us, not just an elite. The Talmud elaborates:

Be careful [not to neglect] the children of the poor, because from them Torah goes forth... Why is it not usual for scholars to give birth to sons who are scholars?

R. Joseph said: so that it should not be said that the Torah is their inheritance.

R. Shisha, son of R. Idi said: so that they should not be arrogant towards the community.

Mar Zutra said: because they act highhandedly against the community.

R. Ashi said: because they call people asses.

Rabina said: because they do not first utter a blessing over the Torah.

Nedarim 81a

In other words, the “crown of Torah” was deliberately not hereditary because it might become the prerogative of the rich. Or because children of great scholars might take their inheritance for granted. Or because it could lead to arrogance and contempt for others. Or because learning itself might become a mere intellectual pursuit rather than a spiritual exercise (“they do not first utter a blessing over the Torah”).

However, there is a fifth factor worthy of consideration. Some of the greatest figures in Jewish history did not succeed with all their children. Abraham fathered Ishmael. Isaac and Rebecca gave birth to Esau. All twelve of Jacob’s children stayed within the fold, but three of them – Reuben, Shimon and Levi – disappointed their father. Of Shimon and Levi he said, “Let my soul not enter their plot; let my spirit not unite with their meeting” (Gen. 49:6). On the face of it, he was dissociating himself from them.[1] Nonetheless, the three great leaders of the Israelites throughout the exodus – Moses, Aaron and Miriam – were all children of Levi.

Solomon gave birth to Rehoboam, whose disastrous leadership divided the kingdom. Hezekiah, one of Judah's greatest kings, was the father of Menasseh, one of the worst. Not all parents succeed with all their children all the time. How could it be otherwise? We each possess freedom. We are each, to some extent, who we chose to become. Neither genes nor upbringing can guarantee that we become the person our parents want us to be. Nor is it right that parents should over-impose their will on children who have reached the age of maturity.

Often this is for the best. Abraham did not become an idolater like his father Terach. Menasseh, the archetypal evil king, was grandfather to Josiah, one of the best. These are important facts. Judaism places parenthood, education and the home at the heart of its values. One of our first duties is to ensure that our children know about and come to love our religious heritage. But sometimes we fail. Children may go their own way, which is not ours. If this happens to us we should not be paralysed with guilt. Not everyone succeeded with all their children, not even Abraham or Moses or David or Solomon. Not even God himself. "I have raised children and brought them up but they have rebelled against Me" (Is. 1:2).

Two things rescued the story of Moses and his children from tragedy. The book of Chronicles (1 Chron. 23:16, 24:20) refers to Gershom's son not as Jonathan but as Shevual or Shuvael, which the rabbis translated as "return to God". In other words, Jonathan eventually repented of his idolatry and became again a faithful Jew. However far a child has drifted, he or she may in the course of time come back.

The other is hinted at in the genealogy in Numbers 3. It begins with the words, "These are the children of Aaron and Moses," but goes on to list only Aaron's children. On this the rabbis say that because Moses taught Aaron's children they were regarded as his own. In general, "disciples" are called "children".[2]

We may not all have children. Even if we do, we may, despite our best endeavours, find them at least temporarily following a different path. But we can all leave something behind us that will live on. Some do so by following Moses' example: teaching, facilitating, or encouraging the next generation. Some do so in line with the rabbinic statement that "the real offspring of the righteous are good deeds." [3]

When our children follow our path we should be grateful. When they go beyond us, we should give special thanks to God. And when they choose another way, we must be patient, knowing that the greatest Jew of all time had the same experience with one of his grandchildren. And we must never give up hope. Moses' grandson returned. In almost the last words of the last of the prophets, Malachi foresaw a time when God "will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to

their fathers" (Mal. 3:24). The estranged will be reunited in faith and love.

[1] Note however that Rashi interprets the curse as limited specifically to Zimri descendant of Shimon, and Korach, descendant of Levi.

[2] See Rashi on Numbers 3:1.

[3] Rashi on Gen. 6:9.

Acts of Kindness, And Revealing the Divine Presence Revivim

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

In acts of kindness to others there is an aspect of revelation of the Shekinah (Divine Presence), sometimes even more than the spiritual achievements people long for * The great affection the Lubavitcher Rebbe had for Rabbi Aryeh Levin, and for the stories of his acts of kindness * Even people who travel for a long period of time on the roads of our country, should not recite the blessing of Birkat Hagomel * Testimonies received indicate that Rabbi Neuwirth was forced to change his rulings in "Shemirat Shabbat Ke'Hilchata" due to the controversy, but in principle, did not retract from the halachic rulings

A story is told of a Chassid who gained wealth and honor, married-off all his children, but nevertheless, was missing one thing – he longed for giluyee Eliyahu ha'Navi – revelation of the prophet Eliyahu. He went to his Rebbe and asked for his assistance in the matter, and even said he would donate a large sum of money for that purpose. The Rebbe replied: "No problem, at the outskirts of the poor neighborhood, lives a widow with four orphaned children – they have no money to buy the necessities of the Passover holiday. Buy them all the necessities of the holiday, and celebrate the Seder night with them, and you will merit the revelation of Eliyahu ha'Navi."

The wealthy man bought all the needs of the holiday for seven days, and a few hours before the Seder night, knocked on the door of the widow's house, and asked to join her for the Seder. The widow replied: "My house is completely empty. We have nothing to eat, how can I host you?" The wealthy man replied: 'I brought with me all the needs of the holiday', and began to remove food from the cart for the entire holiday, and even fine dishes. And thus, he celebrated the Seder night with them. The widow and her four children were exceedingly happy, and they even had food left over, after Passover.

There was only one problem. The rich man did not merit receiving the revelation of Eliyahu. He returned to his Rebbe, and complained about it. The Rebbe replied: "Do it again next year, and with God's help, you will merit the revelation of Eliyahu."

The following year he returned, and arrived at the widow's house about two hours before Seder night. While standing at the door, from inside the house he heard the children

crying about their poverty, that they did not have the needs of the holiday, and did not even have matzah or wine. Their mother comforted them, and said: "Let's be strong in our faith – maybe like last year, when God sent us Eliyahu ha'Navi who brought us all the needs of the holiday, perhaps this year He will send him once again."

The wealthy man knocked on the door, and entered with all the needs of the holiday. The widow and her children were extremely happy, and the rich man was even happier, having realized that Eliyahu ha'Navi had appeared through him.

This is where the story ends, but apparently, after the rich man received the revelation of Eliyahu – understanding everything he needed to understand – he continued to care for the widow, and helped educate and marry-off the orphans, until they were able to stand on their own two feet.

Hospitality toward Guests is Greater than Receiving the Divine Presence

Our Sages said: "Hospitality toward guests is greater than receiving the Shekinah (Divine Presence)" (Shabbat 126b), for we find that God revealed himself to Avraham Avinu in Elon Moreh, but when Avraham saw three people walking towards him in the heat of the day, he asked God, blessed be He, to wait until he received the guests into his tent, and only afterwards, for God to continue to reveal Himself to him. This is because in revelation of the Shekinah, God is above, and man is below. In such a situation, man merits receiving inspiration from God to a certain extent. However, when a person welcomes guests, he himself reveals the word of God in the world, and the Shekinah is revealed through him (see Maharal, Netiv Gemilut Chassidim, 4).

Rabbi Aryeh Levin and the Revelation of Eliyahu

Reb Simcha Raz related the following story: "It once happened that Shai Agnon, the famous author, was walking on a street in Jerusalem and met the writer and linguist Yaakov David Abramsky (son of the gaon, Rabbi Yehezkel Abramsky). Agnon said to him: 'I just came from the house of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, who told me he is certain that Rabbi Aryeh Levin merits having the revelation of Eliyahu. I asked him: Why does Eliyahu ha'Navi need to appear to Rabbi Aryeh, specifically? Rabbi Kook replied: "Eliyahu ha'Navi most definitely needs Rabbi Aryeh... there are times when, from Heaven, a person in need requires assistance, and his salvation comes through Eliyahu ha'Navi, may his memory be for a blessing. However, in order for the salvation to appear natural, and not miraculous – it is presented to him by Rabbi Aryeh"' (Tzaddik Yesod Olam, p. 323)...

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

[CS – I added this which came through after Efraim sent his collection

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Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Inheritance and Dina De'malchusa

About forty years ago, a prominent chassidische rebbe passed away in America. Years earlier he had purchased three cemetery plots on Har Hamenuchos - one for himself, one for his wife, and an extra one. After his death, two of his sons were arguing over which of them would have the privilege to be buried next to their father. The oldest son was in business but felt that since he was the bechor, he should be entitled to the third plot. The younger son took over his father's position as the chassidische rebbe and he felt that because he was his father's mimaleh mokom in the chassidus, he should be entitled to the privilege of burying buried in the third plot. When they finally agreed upon whom they would present the question to, the rov whom they asked paskened that kol ha'kodem zoche. Why should this be the psak?

In Parshas Pinchas, the Torah speaks about yerusha. The monetary assets of an individual are passed on b'yerusha to his closest relative, and only relatives from the father's side of the family are referred to as "mishpacha". The Minchas Chinuch points out, however, that the Gemara speaks of another concept called "kom tachtov" which is not identical with yerusha. When a married man dies leaving children, the surviving almana does not require chalitzta because the children are kom tachtov of the father. An eved kena'ani is considered a monetary asset of his owner, and when the owner passes away, ownership of the eved transfers via yerusha to the closest relative in the mishpacha. An eved Ivri, however, is not considered a monetary asset and therefore should not lend itself to the laws of yerusha, and yet the son does in fact take the place of the father as master of the eved Ivri. This is based on the concept of kom tachtov, and only applies to the master's son and not to his daughter. There is a view in the Yerushalmi that an ama ha'ivriya, upon the death of her owner, is transferred only to the master's daughter and not to his son. These are all details within the concept of "kom tachtov".

The Mishna in Nazir records the following halacha which R' Yochanon explains is a halacha l'Moshe miSinai: if a father and son were each a nazir, and the father set aside animals for the korbanos he must bring upon the completion of his term of nezirus but then dies before he had a chance to bring those korbanos, his son is permitted to bring those animals for his own korbanos at the termination of his period of nezirus. This is a surprising ruling; usually, korbanos have to be designated at the time of their sanctification for a specific purpose, in this case they were designated for the father's nezirus, and yet we allow the son to bring them later for his own nezirus! This halacha is also based on the concept of "kom tachtov". The

Gemara in Nazir discusses a slightly more complicated case than the one in the Mishna: what if the father who was a nazir leaves two sons who are both nezirim - do they divide the korbanos designated by the father equally between the two of them, or do we say that kol ha'kodem zocheh, i.e. whichever son's nezirus ends earlier has the right to use all of the father's korbanos for his nezirus? Apparently in Europe it was an accepted practice that the rule of kol ha'kodem zocheh would be applied in such cases. The psak issued by the rov in the case we described earlier (where two brothers who both wanted to be buried next to their father in the last available plot) was apparently based on these ideas that appear in the Gemara.

The Mishna teaches us that if a woman who is not currently married dies, her children inherit her monetary assets, but if children predecease their mother, their mother does not inherit their assets. The reason for this difference is that the relationship children have with their mother is one of "she'er basar" but is not one of "mishpacha". Only relatives from the father's side have the halachic status of "mishpacha", and yerusha only occurs when there is a relationship of mishpacha. As such, a mother does not inherit her children. Children do inherit their mother only because of the idea of "kom tachtov" - children are kom tachas their mother, but a mother is not kom tachas her children.

The laws of yerusha are very clearly spelled out in the Gemara and in the Shulchan Aruch, but unfortunately are not observed properly. There were Jewish communities in the Middle East where they assumed that even Jews should follow dina de'malchusa ("the law of the land") with respect to yerusha. In the sixteenth century, the rabbonim in Tzat sent a young talmid chacham (Rabbi Yom Tov Tzahalon) to explain to these communities that whenever all the parties involved in a monetary issue are Jewish, we follow the Torah law as opposed to dina de'malchusa. The Rambam records a very interesting concept: we consider yerusha to be a matter of issur v'heter, based on the terminology used in the possuk in Parshas Pinchas which describes yerusha as a "chukas mishpat". As such, we should certainly not follow dina de'malchusa regarding yerusha, since dina de'malchusa only applies in areas of dinei mamanos (monetary matters) and not at all in areas of issur v'heter.]

[CS This also just came out.

From: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>

11:18 PM (16 minutes ago)

By Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Parshas Pinchas

A Paradigm Incident Which Teaches: The Ribono Shel Olam Has a Grand Plan

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: ##1257 – Learning on Tisha B'Av, Should You? Can You? Eating Tisha B'Av Night So You Can Fast on Tisha B'Av Day? This is the last shiur before the summer break. The shiur will resume in Elul. Good Shabbos

The pasuk at the beginning of Parshas Pinchas says: "And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d, and he atoned for the Children of Israel" (Bamidbar 25:13). As we learned in last week's parsha, Pinchas did not tolerate the travesty of a nasi (prince) of a shevet (tribe) in Yisroel brazenly committing a public act of immorality with a Midyanite Princess. He took a spear and killed them both, based on the Halacha of "A person who commits public immorality with a female from Aram, may be smitten down by a kanai (religiously zealous individual)." As a result of that act of zealotry, he was rewarded with an eternal covenant of Kehunah (Priesthood).

Rashi raises the obvious question: As a grandson of Aharon, was Pinchas not already a Kohen? Rashi answers that even though the Kehuna was already granted to Aharon's children, Pinchas was not a Kohen prior to this incident. The reason for that, Rashi says, is that Kehuna was only granted to Aharon and his sons and those descendants of these original Kohanim who would be born later. This did not include the grandchildren of Aharon who were already alive but were not anointed with Aharon and his sons, such as Pinchas son of Elazar. (Zevachim 101b)

This is an example of the exquisiteness of hashgocha (Divine providence). Consider the following: Up until this point in time, Pinchas was just a regular Levi, not a Kohen. Every single day, Pinchas saw his father serve as a Kohen. He saw his grandfather serve as a Kohen. He saw his uncle serve as a Kohen. He even saw his cousins (who were born afterward) serve as Kohanim. Pinchas, however, because of an accident of birth and this quirk in the Halacha of who is a Kohen, was not a Kohen. He could have been asking himself: What did I do wrong? Where is the justice in all this?

Remember, this went on for forty years. Aharon and his four sons became Kohanim at the beginning of the forty years in the Midbar. The incident with Zimri and Kozbi occurred at the end of their time in the Midbar, forty years later. For forty years, day in, day out, Pinchas saw this going on. Perhaps he was stewing in his juices. What is the meaning of this?

The holy Zohar says, "No. This is all part of the Ribono shel Olam's grand plan." If the Ribono shel Olam had let it happen that Pinchas had already been a Kohen—either because he had been born to Elazar after Elazar had received the Kehuna, or because he had been included in the original anointing—he would have lost his Kehuna at

this juncture. When the incident with Zimri and Kozbi occurred and Pinchas picked up his spear and killed them, Pinchas—if he had already been a Kohen—would have invalidated himself from the Kehuna. The Halacha is that a Kohen who has killed someone (even unintentionally) is not allowed to ‘raise his hands’ (to offer the Priestly Blessing). (There is a dispute among the Rishonim as to whether this excludes him from all of the Avodah done by a Kohen, but he is certainly not allowed to ‘Duchen’).

Thus, the Zohar says, the reason the Ribono shel Olam did not make Pinchas a Kohen up until this point is because He wanted Pinchas to be a Kohen for the rest of his life. Not only that, but Tosfos (Zevachim 101) says that there were 80 Kohanim Gedolim in the first Beis HaMikdash and 300 Kohanim Gedolim in the second Beis HaMikdash who were all descendants of Pinchas. All of that was possible because Pinchas did not originally become a Kohen.

Any observer might have asked, “Where is there justice in the world?” and “Why was Pinchas dealt this raw deal and this bad hand?” Now we can understand that it was because the Ribono shel Olam knew what was going to happen. It was all part of His grand plan to specifically make Pinchas and his future descendants Kohanim and Kohanim Gedolim.

The Zohar continues – isn’t it ironic that Moshe Rabbeinu, who knew almost every Halacha without exception, suddenly forgot the Halacha by Zimri and Kozbi, and did not know what to do. Why didn’t Moshe Rabbeinu know what to do? It is for the same reason. If Moshe Rabbeinu knew what to do, Pinchas would not have done what he did. This was all part of the grand plan.

The take-away lesson of this is that it is common in life to be perplexed and not understand why events occur. Things don’t seem to make sense, and they don’t seem fair. Many times, they seem a lot worse than not fair. This incident is a paradigm to demonstrate that the Ribono shel Olam has a plan.

I would like to share three different stories. I have first-hand knowledge regarding two of these stories. I heard the third story from a reliable source. I know the people involved in the first two stories, and I received permission from one of the people to mention his name. I have not been able to verify that the person in the other story would not object to my mentioning his name, so I will relate the story anonymously.

I know a boy who went skiing, had a skiing accident, and received a severe blow to the head. He underwent an X-ray and it was discovered from the X-ray that he had a tumor, which was at the stage where it could be removed by surgery. Had they not discovered this right then, it would have been inoperable.

Someone may think: Why did this happen? That is why it happened!

The second story is even more incredible. The fellow lives at the Yeshiva (Ner Yisroel, Baltimore, MD) and works there as the assistant alumni director. His name is Eli Greengart. Two or three weeks ago, they had a Shabbos Sheva Brochos in the mountains. His family went. On Friday afternoon, they realized they didn’t know where his three-year-old was. Everyone was frantically looking for the toddler. Suddenly, they realized that the toddler fell into an area of the swimming pool that was ten feet deep. The child, who had apparently been in the water for four or five minutes, had already turned blue. They fished him out of the pool and helicoptered him to Westchester Medical Center. Baruch Hashem, they were able to resuscitate the child and he is now perfectly fine. This is amazing, if not a miracle.

Someone told me that both Eli Greengart and his wife are from Silver Spring, MD. Seventeen years ago there was a similar story in Silver Spring involving a two-year-old child who fell into a swimming pool. The outcome was not as fortunate. The child was in a coma for seventeen years. At the time, Eli Greengart was single and still in high school. For the four years that he was in high school, he went over to that family and gave showers to that child who was in a coma. Now, many years later, he had a similar incident and the Ribono shel Olam performed a nes for him!

It is always tricky business to go ahead and assume “cause and effect.” But we can wonder... There seems to be a connection between the act of chessed he did throughout high school with a child who fell into a swimming pool and the miracle that the Ribono shel Olam performed for him.

I heard the last story, which I verified this morning, last year when I was in Europe. I called the person who told me the story to verify the details. This is not a happy ending story, but it is an incredible hashgocha story.

There was a family in Lakewood that was sitting shiva for a little child who ran out into the street and was hit by a car and was killed, lo aleinu. Another family came to be menachem avel and told the parents of this little child the following story:

They were a couple involved in kiruv. They went to some off-the-beaten-path city to do ‘kiruv work.’ The city had no mikveh. They took it upon themselves that they would raise the money and see to it that a mikveh was built there. They did this with great self-sacrifice, to the extent that there were months that they did not eat meat during the week to scrape together the money to finally build the mikveh. One night, when they were doing some work in the mikveh, they had a little child with them. They turned around. They didn’t know where the child was, and to their horror, they discovered that the child fell into the mikveh and drowned.

The wife was inconsolable. No matter what anyone told her, she was inconsolable. They worked so hard, with such

personal sacrifice, to build the mikveh. “This is Torah and this is its reward?” “No matter how many times anyone says that no one understands the ways of Hashem – how could it be?”

The husband had a dream. In the dream, the drowned child came to him and told him that he is the neshama (soul) of a Jew who went through the Spanish Inquisition and was a martyr, who rather than be converted to Christianity was killed and was buried without the benefit of a tahara (ritual bathing performed on a dead Jewish body). He was in a high place in Gan Eden but he needed a tahara in a mikveh that was built al taharas hakodesh (in pristine purity) – the purest mikveh that could be built. His parents built that mikveh. That child with that neshama had that tahara in that mikveh. That is why it had to happen. That was their consolation, and that is what this kiruv couple told the couple in Lakewood.

Does it always work out like that? Do we always find out in our lifetimes why things like that happen? No.

Do we always connect the dots? Is it a smart idea to try to connect the dots? Not necessarily.

But the story of Pinchas—especially in light of what the Zohar and the Rishonim say—demonstrates that the wheels of hashgocha grind extremely slowly but they also grind extremely finely. The Ribono shel Olam has His calculations. “The Rock, perfect is His work, for all His ways are justice; a G-d, faithful without iniquity...” (Devorim 32:4).

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Drasha

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Parshas Pinchas

Daughters-and-Law

There is a fascinating sequence of events in this week’s portion that is analyzed by the Medrash and expounded upon by every major Torah commentator.

At the beginning of Chapter 27, the daughters of Zelophchad appeal to Moshe. Their father died in the desert, but he was not amongst the insurgents who rebelled against Moshe during Korach’s uprising. He died of his

own sin and left no sons. The daughters want an inheritance in the Land of Israel.

Moshe did not remember the law and consulted with Hashem. He advised Moshe that Zelophchad’s daughters had a valid argument. They were entitled to a portion of the land that had been allotted for Zelophchad.

The ensuing section of the weekly Parsha has Hashem reminding Moshe that he will not enter the Land of Israel. Immediately a conversation follows. In verses 15-18 Moshe pleads to Hashem, “the Lord of all spirits and flesh to appoint a man over the assembly who will go out before them and go in before them; so they shall not be like sheep that have no shepherd.”

Rashi quotes a Medrash that links the two episodes. He explains that after Moshe saw that Zelophchad’s daughters were entitled to inherit the Land, he felt that the time had come to ask for the torch of leadership to be passed to his own children. This does not come to pass. Hashem tells Moshe to bestow authority to his own disciple, Joshua, who ultimately leads the Jewish Nation into Israel.

Many Biblical commentators are puzzled by the connection of the request of Zelophchad’s daughters and Moshe’s request. Why did the former prompt the latter?

Second, were Moshe’s sons worthy of leadership or not? It seems that only after Moshe saw that Zelophchad’s daughter’s inherited did he say, “the time has come that I shall ask for my needs.” Why would the episode or conveyance of land to Zelophchad’s kin affect Moshe’s opinion of his own children’s leadership abilities?

The pious and humble Tzadik, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan of Radin, known as the Chofetz Chaim, was once riding a train to Radin. He wore a simple cap and traveled alone, and hardly anyone knew who he was. A middle-aged Jew sat down beside him and asked him where he was going. The Chofetz Chaim answered softly, “to Radin.”

The man was excited. “Do you know the saintly Chofetz Chaim? I am going to Radin just to see him!”

The Chofetz Chaim was unimpressed. “M’nyeh,” he shrugged. “I don’t think he is so saintly.”

The visitor was so appalled that he slapped the old man and left his seat shouting. “How dare you make light of the leader of our generation!” A week later the man came to the humble abode of the great Tzadik. Lo and behold, the old man from the train was sitting by the table in the dining room. The man collapsed in shock.

He could not stop apologizing for the incident on the train when the Chofetz Chaim halted him.

“Do not worry, you taught me a great lesson,” said the sage. “One may not even slander himself.”

R’ Mordechai of Czernobel (d.1837) explains the connection. Moshe was concerned that the very sin that prohibited him entry into the Land of Israel would also prevent his children a chance at inheriting leadership.

When Hashem told Moshe that Zelophchad's daughters shall not suffer for any past misdeeds, he reconsidered his own situation. He realized that his problem and sin had nothing to do with his children. They should not suffer from his humility and self-effacing.

We all may get down on ourselves at one time or another. But our children look up to us. We must show that we have confidence in ourselves. The qualities that they believe we possess are those that we must pass on to them.

Mordechai Kamenetzky – Yeshiva of South Shore

Good Shabbos

Rabbi YY Jacobson

[G-d's Vulnerability

Your Simple Prayer on an Ordinary Wednesday Shakes the Heavens

Two Requests

In this week's portion, Moses, facing his mortality, asks G-d to appoint a successor.

May the Lord, God of the spirits of all flesh, choose a man 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).

G-d responds that Moses should appoint Joshua as his successor; he will be the next leader of the nation.

Following that, the Torah states:

The Lord 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.

And you shall say to them: This is the fire offering which you shall offer to the Lord: two unblemished lambs in their first year each day as a continual burnt offering. The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon.

The juxtaposition is strange. Moses is pleading for a new leader. He is afraid that the flock would be left without a shepherd. G-d responds by instructing the Jewish people to bring a daily offering—one sheep in the morning, one sheep in the afternoon; which since temple times has been substituted with morning and afternoon services, shacharis and mincha, when we “offer” our hearts to G-d.

The Parable

What's the connection? Rashi, quoting the Sifri, explains that G-d said to Moses, “Before you command Me regarding My children, command My children regarding Me.” It is almost as if G-d is saying, do not worry about My responsibilities toward My children; I will take care of them. There is a far more worrisome issue: Tell the children to take care of Me.

This seems perplexing. G-d is upset with Moses that he is asking Him to take care of the children who might be left

as a flock without a shepherd. Instead, G-d says, why don't you instruct the children to offer Me sacrifices?! But how can you compare the two? Moses is beseeching G-d that the nation survives and endures; G-d wants Moses to first tell the nation to bring the appropriate sacrifices!

So Rashi continues to present a fascinating parable, to shed light on the exchange:

רש"י פינחס כה, ב: צו את בני ישראל: מה אמור למעלה (כו, טז) יפקוד ה'. אמר לו הקב"ה עד שאתה מצוני על בני, צוה את בני עלי. משל לבת מלך שהיתה נפטרת מן העולם והיתה מפקדת לבעלה על בניה וכו', כדאיתא בספרי [1]

There was a princess who was about to die. She called in her husband and commanded him to take care of the children after her demise. Her husband, the future widower, responds: “Rather than you commanding Me about My children, command My children about Me.”

Moses, the faithful mother and shepherd of Israel, who led them for more than four decades, is about to die. Now, mom is concerned: In the absence of a mother, who will make sure my kinderlach (children) are fine?

What is G-d's response? Rather than telling Me to take care of them, make sure to tell them to take care of Me! I will now be a widower. I will not have you anymore. I will only have my children—and I am afraid to lose them. I need you to speak to my children that they should take care of their dad after you pass on.

And what does the Father ask for? “Make sure to give me my daily bread; a daily sacrifice of sheep, one in the morning, one in the afternoon.”

Why Is G-d So Lonely?

Which only leaves us scratching our head. The infinite G-d is “crying” to his “wife,” Moses, that He is afraid of remaining a lonely widower after her death? I can understand Moses' wishes. He led the people for forty years, through thick and thin. He knows how disheartening and rebellious they can be. He also knows they can get on their Father's nerves. He comes to G-d and says: I need you to take care of my children and of Your children. They need a great leader.

But G-d? The infinite Creator? The all-powerful one? The omnipotent and the omniscient? G-d, the embodiment of perfection and flawlessness? Why is He comparing Himself to a lost widower? What exactly is He worried about?

The Alteration

Forty-nine years ago, on Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, 24 Tamuz, 5731, July 17, 1971, the Lubavitcher Rebbe presented a most moving insight.[2]

As always, it is intimated in one slight nuance.

In Sifri, the original midrashic text which is the source of Rashi, the parable is about a king and his wife. But Rashi alters the text. He changes one detail in the parable. It is about a princess and her husband. For the Sifri, G-d is the King and Moses is His queen. For Rashi, Moses is the

princess, the daughter of a king, and G-d is her husband, a “regular” husband.

Why would Rashi make this dramatic change? why would Rashi turn Moses into the princess and G-d into the “layman”?[3]

Yet it is this subtle change that sheds light on the very powerful exchange between the Jewish leader and the Creator of the world.

The Lonely Husband

When a king loses his queen, it may be difficult, but the palace does not crumble, and the king's needs are still taken care of. The monarch is surrounded by an entire apparatus of ministers, assistants, advisors, servants who will ensure that the king has his needs met and that the country can continue running.

Not so with a simple widower. When his wife dies, he is often completely lost.[4] All he is left with are his children. If his children abandon him, he will be forlorn in an empty and tough world. So before his wife passes on he asks her to please encourage the children to be there for their father—to make sure his children do not neglect him.

Infinite Love, Infinite Need

It is here we discover the daring and shocking message of our sages here.

G-d is infinite, perfect, and has no “needs.” Needs by definition indicate you are lacking; you are imperfect. How can G-d be lacking anything? A finite being can have needs. An infinite being has no needs.

Yet here lay one of the great ideas of Judaism. G-d, the perfect endless one, the essence and core of all reality, desired a relationship with the human person. G-d created the entire universe. Man is a tiny infinitesimal creature. Yet G-d chose us to be His children. The unlimited Creator chose to make Himself vulnerable. It is a choice that comes from G-d's undefined essence (not defined even by being “perfect” and “unneeded”), and hence it is absolute and infinite.

When you love because you need, the love is as deep as the need. When you have a relationship with someone just because you need them (such as a cleaning lady, or a family doctor) then when that need has been fulfilled the relationship ends. When you need because you love, it is an essential need, intrinsic to yourself. Hashem does not love you because He needs you; He needs me because He loves you, and if the love is limitless and absolute, so is the need. We need G-d; but G-d needs us too.[5] So when G-d knew Moses was about to pass on, He pleads with him: Just as you say to Me that your children need Me, I say to you: I need them with the same equal intensity, maybe more. Children need parents, but parents also need children. One of the most painful experiences for a parent is when a child rejects him or her.

I need them, says G-d, for my “daily bread,” “lachmi l'eishei;” without them I am—so to speak—despondent

and forlorn. Please make sure they remain connected and loyal to Me.

The Protest of Judaism

“I'm NOT needed.” These are familiar words. We hear them from the lips of the young and those who have lived many years.

All of Judaism is a protest against this notion. G-d needs every one of us. We are here because we have something to do for Him and for His world. He has only our hands, feet, hearts, minds, souls, and voices. G-d needs my prayer, my heart, my truth, my mitzvah, my conviction, my commitment, and my passion. G-d needs us just as we need G-d. G-d is looking for ordinary people to do extraordinary work.

The Teenager

Rabbi Mannis Friedman shared with me a personal experience he had.[6]

He was once called to a hospital to see a Jewish teenager who was suicidal. Feeling that he was a good-for-nothing who could not get anything right, the boy had attempted to take his own life. But even his suicide attempt failed. Seeing that he was Jewish, the hospital staff called the rabbi to come and try to lift the boy's dejected spirits.

The rabbi arrived at the hospital not knowing what to expect. He found the boy lying in bed watching TV, a picture of utter misery, black clouds of despair hanging over his head. The boy hardly looked up at the rabbi, and before he could even say hello, the boy said, “If you are here to tell me what the priest just told me, you can leave now.”

Slightly taken aback, the rabbi asked, “What did the priest say?”

“He told me that G-d loves me. That is a load of garbage. Why would G-d love me?”

It was a good point. This kid could see nothing about himself that was worthy of love. He had achieved nothing in his life; he had no redeeming features, nothing that was beautiful or respectable or lovable. So why would G-d love him?

The rabbi needed to touch this boy without patronizing him. He had to say something real. But what do you say to someone who sees himself as worthless?

“You may be right,” said the rabbi. “Maybe G-d doesn't love you.”

This got the boy's attention. He wasn't expecting that from a rabbi.

“Maybe G-d doesn't love you. But one thing's for sure. He needs you.”

This surprised the boy. He hadn't heard that before.

The very fact that you were born means that G-d needs you. He had plenty of people before you, but He added you to the world's population because there is something you can do that no one else can. And if you haven't done it yet, that makes it even more crucial that you continue to live, so

that you are able to fulfill your mission and give your unique gift to the world.

If I can look at all my achievements and be proud, I can believe G-d loves me. But what if I haven't achieved anything? What if I don't have any accomplishments under my belt to be proud of? Now it is time to remember: You are here because G-d needs you. and if you failed to live up to your potential till now, it only means that He needs you even more!

The Essence of Torah

This might explain an enigmatic Midrash which credits an isolated verse in this week's Torah portion, Pinchas, with encapsulating the quintessence of Judaism.

The Talmud and the Midrash[7] quote four opinions as to which biblical verse sums up the ultimate message of Torah. One sage, Ben Azzai, believed it was the verse in Genesis: "This is the book of the chronicles of man; on the day that G-d created man He created him in the image of G-d." [8] Another sage, Ben Zoma, holds a different verse to be more central to Jewish thought: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One." A third Talmudist, Ben Nanas, chooses this verse: "You shall love your fellow man like yourself." [9]

Finally, the fourth sage, Shimon, the son of Pazi, casts his pitch for the epic verse of the Bible. It is culled from the section in this week's portion that deals with the obligation during the time of the Temple to bring each day two lambs as an offering to G-d. "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon." This verse, according to Shimon ben Pazi, is the defining verse of Judaism.

The Midrash concludes: "One of the rabbis stood on his feet and declared, 'The verdict follows the opinion of Shimon the son of Pazi!'"

This is perplexing, to say the least. The notion that all of Judaism can be traced back to the idea that a human being reflects G-d, makes sense. The same can be said about the concept of a single and universal G-d, or the injunction to love our fellow man like ourselves—these ideas, introduced 3300 years ago by the Hebrew Bible, vividly embody the essential weltanschauung of Judaism and its contribution to human civilization.

But how does the verse "One sheep you shall offer in the morning and the second sheep in the afternoon" represent the essence of Torah? How can one even begin to compare the message about offering two lambs with the global and noble ideas contained in the other three opinions?

What is even more astonishing is that the final verdict in the Midrash selects this verse about the sheep as the "winner." The biblical verses dealing with love, monotheism and human dignity, the foundations of morality and civilization, did not "make it" in the contest; it is precisely this verse enjoining us to offer a lamb in the

morning and a lamb in the afternoon -- that was chosen as the "representative" of the Jewish paradigm!

According to the above, we can perhaps understand the words of the Midrash. What this verse conveys more than any other verse is the mind staggering infinite dignity Judaism conferred upon human person and human life.

As Moses is about to die, and is pleading for the welfare of his people, G-d reminds him how much He needs us. He needs us as much as we need Him. Maybe more.

You may view yourself as small and insignificant. But remember: G-d has a burning need for you! G-d's "needs" are infinite, because they are not "coerced," but chosen by an infinite G-d. This means that G-d has an "infinite need" for your goodness, holiness, beauty, commitment, sacrifices, for your "bread," and for your offerings.

The Power of Prayer

Today, as we recall, these two lambs have been replaced by the two and three daily prayers. Sometimes you may think to yourself: What's the big deal if I miss a "mincha" on a simple Wednesday? What's the big deal if I don't pray at all? What's the big deal if during the prayer I am busy texting or checking my email? Don't tell me that G-d Almighty cares about some little guy's prayers, saying every day the same words.

Some people look at their davening (prayers) as valueless. Are you going to tell me that if I missed a "maariv," it really matters?

But this is not how G-d sees it. From G-d's perspective, a "simple mincha on a simple Wednesday," [10] means the world to Him. Without it, He is missing His "bread," His food, His existence. My prayer, or lack of it, affects His essence. (I once heard from my Rebbe these words in Yiddish: "Yede tenuah fun a Yid," every move of a Jew, impacts G-d at His core. [11]) Never think of yourself as tiny and useless. Imagine, the infinite perfect G-d needs you to be here for Him, and to be here for His world. You are the axis upon which the entire universe revolves. [12]

A Simple Mincha

Dr. Yaakov Brawer is Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University. He related a lovely story. [13]

The minchah, or afternoon, prayer is the shortest of the three daily services. Moreover, the time for this prayer often arrives while we are still immersed in our work. People are tired and busy, and it is difficult to divest oneself of the effects of a day at the office in order to generate proper intention and emotional involvement.

It has long been my privilege to speak at the Shabbaton held every year at the end of December in Crown Heights. I would usually arrive in New York on Thursday or Friday, and leave the following Sunday. I always scheduled my return flight to allow me the opportunity to join the Lubavitcher Rebbe's minyan (prayer quorum) for minchah on Sunday afternoon.

On one such occasion many years ago, I had arranged to fly back to Montreal at 4:30 PM. That Sunday morning, I began to worry about my return trip. I am a very nervous traveler, and I generally insist on being at the airport way in advance of my flight. Why had I decided to leave so early? The Rebbe's minyan generally began at 3:15, and usually ended at 3:30. Allowing myself 15 minutes to return to where I was staying, I could leave for LaGuardia no earlier than 3:45. What if traffic was heavy? What if a tire went flat? What if a tree had fallen across the Interboro Parkway, and it being Sunday, the road crews took their sweet time in removing it? I calmed myself with the thought that these possibilities were very unlikely, and that if I left at 3:45 sharp I would probably make my flight to Canada [This was at a time before security was so tight; you could still walk up straight to the plane.]

I then embarked on my yearly nerve-racking ritual of arranging for a ride to LaGuardia Airport. In those days there was only one car service in Crown Heights, and it was run by chassidim, a class of people for whom time means nothing. I walked into the storefront office and told them I wanted a car to take me to LaGuardia at 3:45. I emphasized (several times) that 3:45 does not mean 3:50, or even 3:46. I was not interested in approximations. The proprietor, in soothing tones, assured me of a car at precisely 3:45. They were professionals with considerable experience in this business, and there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

I started to leave, but I remembered something as I got to the door. I turned to the boss and asked him whether he would care to know the address to which the car should be sent. "Oh yes, of course, sorry." You see the sort of people I was dealing with.

By 3:00 PM I was packed into the little synagogue in which the Rebbe prayed minchah. Every student attending one of the two local yeshivahs, as well as numerous neighborhood residents and out-of-town guests, were competing for space in that small room. My bones ached and I couldn't breathe, but this did not trouble me. This was normal. What bothered me was the time. 3:15, 3:16, 3:17. At 3:20 the Rebbe came in, and minchah began. I tried to concentrate on my prayer, reminding myself that I was in the same minyan as my holy Rebbe. However, my overwrought brain simply would not mind. It perversely dwelt on my imminent betrayal by the car service.

In the course of my struggles with myself, I became aware of a soft sobbing sound. I had already raced through my prayer, and I was able to glance sideways at my neighbor. He was a tall, thin, bearded man, dressed in chassidic garb. His eyes were closed and tears streamed down his cheeks. His face was intense with concentration. He prayed slowly and with obvious effort.

In spite of myself, I was touched. I could not imagine what sort of terrible trouble lay behind that heartfelt prayer.

Perhaps he had a sick child at home, or some crushing financial burden. I assumed that he was an out-of-town visitor seeking the Rebbe's aid, and I could not help feeling guilty about my own silly preoccupations with the car service, the airport, etc. I mentally wished him the best and hoped that things would turn out well for him.

Minchah completed, I raced back to my host's home, and by 3:42 I was awaiting the promised car with fire in my eyes, certain that it would not show. At precisely 3:45, a noisy, rusty station wagon, belching blue exhaust, rolled up, and the driver waved me in. I couldn't believe it. I put my suitcase in the back and then climbed in next to the driver.

My second shock came with the realization that the driver was none other than my heartbroken neighbor at minchah. As we drove off, the driver hummed a jolly chassidic melody, and seemed quite happy. We began to talk. Cautiously I asked him about his welfare: his health, the health of his family and the state of his finances. Each question elicited a hearty (if somewhat perplexed) "Thank G-d." Moreover, his wife was soon due to give birth, and he was in a particularly excited and happy mood. Gradually, it began to dawn on me that the remarkable outpouring of the heart that I had witnessed earlier was this man's ordinary, daily minchah.

A Simple Davening

That is a how a Jew davens. Every Mincha is priceless. Every mincha is an intimate one-on-one with the Creator of the universe. Every time you pray to G-d, the world stops. All G-d wants to do is listen to you.

Like two people who love each other infinitely, who meet after five years of separation, when they come together, nothing else can disturb them. That is how G-d feels when you start davening.

Or as the Kotzker Rebbe put it when asked why in Kotzk they called the Passover Seder a "dinner," and Kal Nidrei—Maariv? He said: I teach my students that every supper is a Seder; and every Maariv is a Kal Nidrei.

[1] ספרי פינחס כח, ב: וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר צו את בני ישראל את קרבני לחמי - למה נאמר? לפי שהוא אומר אשר יצא לפניהם ואשר יבוא לפניהם; משל למה הדבר דומה? למלך שהיתה אשתו נפטרת מן העולם, והיתה מפקדתו על בניה. אמרה לו: בבקשה ממך הזהר לי בבני. אמר לה: עד שאת מפקדתני על בני - פקדי בני עלי, שלא ימרדו בי ושלא ינהגו בי מנהג בזיון. כך אמר לו הקב"ה: עד שאתה מפקדני על בני - פקוד בני עלי, שלא ינהגו בי מנהג בזיון, ושלא ימירו את כבודי באלהי הנכר! מהו אומר דברים לא כי אביאם אל האדמה, עד שאתה מפקדני על בני - פקוד בני עלי! לכך נאמר צו את בני ישראל

[2] Sichos Kodesh 5731. Toras Menachem 5731. Most of the talk is published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 Parshas Pinchas p. 99. There are a few moving expressions that are not in Likkutei Sichos, but they are in the original unedited transcript.

[3] Rashi does say, "as it says in Sifri." Obviously then he found such a version of Sifri, even though it is not existent

in any of our Sifri manuscripts. Rashi, of course, would not amend the text and then state that “it says this in Sifri.” The question is, why would Rashi not choose the far more popular version of the text of the Sifri?

[4] See Sanhedrin 22b

[5] There is an expression in Kabbalah, “our service is a Divine need.” (Avodas Hakodesh section 2; Shalah Shaar HaGadol Toldos Adam.)

[6] The story was beautifully written up by Rabbi Aron Moss:

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1853663/jewish/The-Rabbi-and-the-Suicidal-Teenager.htm

[7] The Midrash is quoted in the introduction to Ein Yakov, compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Ben Chaviv. He writes there that he found this information recorded in the name of the Midrash, but could not discover the original source. He proceeds to present his own explanation to the Midrash.

[8] The view of Ben Azai is in Toras Kohanim Kedoshim ch. 19 and in Talmud Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4

[9] This is also the view of Rabbi Akiva, quoted in Toras Kohanim and Yerushalmi ibid.

[10] This was the expression the Rebbe used at the farbrengen.

[11] Sichas 6 Tishrei, 5735, September 22, 1974. See there for a beautiful proof from the words of the Rambam about Yeravan ben Nevat in his Igeres Teiman, and from the story of Miriam bas Bilgah, at the end of Talmud Sukkah.

[12] Mishnah Sanhedrin 37a

[13]

https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/39916/jewish/The-Cabdriver.htm

Rav Kook Torah

Pinchas: Zealotry for the Sake of Heaven

When Pinchas saw a prince from the tribe of Shimon publicly cavorting with a Midianite princess, he took the law into his own hands. Using his spear, Pinchas killed them both. God praised his act of zealotry, rewarding him with the priesthood.

“Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Aaron the kohen, was the one who zealously took up My cause among the Israelites and turned My anger away from them.” (Num. 25:11)

Why does the Torah need to point out Pinchas’ lineage here? This is particularly puzzling considering that the Torah just identified Pinchas a few verses earlier (25:7).

The Midrash (Sanhedrin 82b) explains that the tribal leaders mocked Pinchas: ‘His maternal grandfather [Jethro] fattened up calves for idolatrous sacrifices — and he had the audacity to murder a prince of Israel!’ Therefore, the Torah publicized Pinchas’ lineage through his father’s side, Aaron the High Priest.

This Midrash requires clarification. Why was it so important to respond to these disparaging comments? Furthermore, what does it help if one of Pinchas’ grandfathers was the high priest - his other grandfather was still a reformed idolater!

Pure Motives

Rav Kook explained that the Torah does not ordinarily approve of such acts of zealotry. They are sanctioned only if the zealot acted purely for the sake of Heaven.

Onlookers might have suspected that Pinchas harbored secondary motives. Perhaps he sought to demonstrate his faithfulness to Israel and its monotheistic faith, despite a grandfather who was a convert from paganism.

Therefore, God testified that Pinchas acted as Aaron’s grandson. What qualities characterized Aaron? The Sages wrote: “Be a disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving all people and drawing them near to the Torah” (Avot 1:12). Aaron, legendary for seeking the path of peace and reconciliation, would not have been suspect of ulterior motives.

Pinchas’ action, the Torah emphasizes, was worthy of his illustrious grandfather. He acted as befits the grandson of Aaron the High Priest, with selfless intentions and a pure heart.

Parshas Pinchas

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

This week’s Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Reuven ben Aaron z”l.

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. It is very different in Judaism. 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 in the process must join in the search for 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.

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 twelve 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, which 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.

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 posuk 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.

Since Parshas Pinchas includes all the maftir readings of the holidays, and also the reading of Rosh Chodesh...

Kerias HaTorah

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

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Question #1: Twice on Shabbos!

“Why do we read the Torah twice every Shabbos?”

Question #2: Missed a posuk

“What is the halacha if we began an aliyah a posuk later than the previous aliyah had ended?”

Question #3: Skipped a posuk

“After davening on Shabbos morning, we realized that the baal keriah skipped a posuk during the last aliyah. What do we do now?”

Question #4: Torah or rabbinic?

“Can there be a takanas chachamim that originates in the Torah itself? Isn’t this a contradiction?”

Introduction: The Four R’s

The mitzvah of reading the Torah that we perform regularly during davening in shul incorporates at least four different takanos, two of which were established while the Jews were in the Desert, a third which was created in the days of Ezra, when the Jews returned to Eretz Yisroel to establish the second Beis Hamikdash, and the fourth, which may have the halachic status of “custom” and which has an uncertain history. Answering our opening questions adequately will require that we examine the basic structure of these takanos; we will then be in a position to understand better the issues involved. But first, an overview of the four takanos:

1. Regular reading - The requirement to read the Torah three times a week.
2. Festive reading - Reading on the festivals something that relates to the holiday.
3. Mincha reading - The requirement to read the Torah at mincha every Shabbos.
4. Complete reading - The practice of completing the Torah every year.

Reminder reading

According to Rav Moshe Feinstein, there is another type of kerias haTorah, whose purpose is to make announcements – such as the four parshiyos and maftir on Shabbos Rosh Chodesh (Shu”t Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 1:101:2). Since almost all these applications concern the maftir reading and not the primary Torah reading, I will not discuss them in this article.

1. Regular reading

One of the earliest takanos made by Chazal was the requirement to read the Torah three times a week. The Gemara (Bava Kama 82a) teaches this in an unusual passage that combines both halacha and midrash. In explaining the posuk in parshas Beshalach, And they (the Jewish nation) traveled three days without finding water (Shemos 15:22), the Gemara expounds:

The dorshei reshumos, those who “interpret hidden passages” (Toras Chayim), explain that water can mean only “Torah,” as we find in Scripture, Behold, whoever is thirsty go to the water (Yeshayahu 55:1). Once the Bnei Yisroel had traveled three days without studying Torah, they immediately weakened in their commitment to Hashem. The prophets among them established that they

read the Torah on Shabbos, on Monday, and again on Thursday, so that they should not go three days without studying Torah.

Every Monday and Thursday

Yiddish has a popular expression – yeden Montag und Donnerstag, every Monday and Thursday – which means something that occurs fairly frequently. This expression may originate from the takanah that the Torah is read on these weekdays. But there are other ways that could guarantee that the Jews not go three days without studying Torah. Chazal could have established reading the Torah on Tuesday and Thursday, or on Monday and Wednesday; or, they could have left it up to each community to decide what to do. Why establish that the reading be specifically on Mondays and Thursdays?

Based on a Midrash, Tosafos (Bava Kama 82 s.v. Kedei) explains that Moshe ascended Har Sinai to receive the second luchos on a Thursday and descended with them on a Monday. Since these luchos created a tremendous closeness between Hashem and the Jewish people, these days are called yemei ratzon (literally, days of favor). Therefore, the leaders of that generation felt it most appropriate to establish the mitzvah of reading the Torah on these days. For the same reason, these days are often observed as fasts.

Min HaTorah or not?

Because there is Biblical origin for this mitzvah, one authority, the Bach (Orach Chayim, Chapter 685), considers the requirement to read the Torah three times a week to be min haTorah. However, the consensus of halachic authorities is that this requirement has the status of an early, and perhaps the earliest of, takanos chachomim, obligations established by the Sages.

2. Festive reading

Thus far, we have explained the origin of reading the Torah three times a week. The reading that takes place on a Yom Tov, each of which is about the festival on which it is read, has a different reason. The Mishnah (Megillah 31a) cites a Torah source for this requirement, that we should read on the Yom Tov about its mitzvos and its theme.

The following Mishnah (ibid. 21a) embellishes some of the details of these two mitzvos, the takanah to read the Torah on Monday and Thursday, and the special festival reading on holidays:

“On Mondays, Thursdays and Mincha on Shabbos, three people read the Torah. You may not have either less or more people read... The first person to read and the last one both recite berachos. On Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed, four people read the Torah. You may not have either less or more people read... The first and the last person to read both recite berachos.”

Rashi explains that on Monday and Thursday we limit the reading to three aliyos to avoid inconveniencing people, since it is a workday.

The Gemara (Megillah 21b) explains the Mishnah’s statement that the first person to read and the last one both recite berachos to mean that the first person reading the Torah on any given day recites the beracha before the reading (Asher bochar banu...) and the last person recites the beracha after the reading (Asher nosan lonu... Rashi, in his commentary to the Mishnah, explains this to mean that only the first person and the last person were required to recite berachos, but that the others who read the Torah may recite the berachos, if they want.

Later, Chazal instituted that each person who reads from the Torah recites a beracha, both before and after his own aliyah. This was instituted out of concern that individuals who left shul before the completion of the Torah reading will think that there is no beracha after the reading; similarly, if only the first person recites a beracha before reading, those people who arrive after the reading of the Torah has begun will think that there is no beracha prior to the reading.

It is interesting to note Chazal’s concern for people whose behavior is not optimal. It is forbidden to leave in the middle of kerias haTorah, and we certainly hope that people come to shul on time. Yet, Chazal made new takanos so that these people not err.

Returning to the Mishnah (Megillah 21a), it then explains: “This is the rule: any day on which there is musaf, yet it is not Yom Tov, four people read. On Yom Tov, five (people read the Torah), on Yom Kippur, six, and on Shabbos, seven. You may not have less people read, but you may have more”. We see that the more sanctity the day has, the more people read from the Torah. Musaf demonstrates that the day has some kedusha, and therefore, on Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed, four people read. Yom Tov, which has greater sanctity than Rosh Chodesh or Chol Hamoed, requires that five people read. Since Yom Kippur has greater sanctity than other yomim tovim, it requires that six people read the Torah, and Shabbos, with even greater sanctity, requires that seven people read the Torah. That is why when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbos, we call up seven people for the Yom Kippur reading in parshas Acharei Mos, whereas when it falls on a weekday, we call up only six, not including maftir.

According to Rashi, the statement that you may have more people read applies not only on Shabbos but on Yom Tov and Yom Kippur as well. This means that you may call up to the Torah more than five aliyos on Yom Tov and more than six on Yom Kippur. According to other rishonim (mentioned by the Ran), only on Shabbos may we add extra aliyos. In general, we follow the latter opinion and do not add extra aliyos on Yom Tov, with the exception of Simchas Torah, when most Ashkenazic communities follow Rashi’s opinion and add many aliyos (Rema, Orach Chayim 282:1).

In actuality, there is a dispute among tana'im whether Shabbos has greater sanctity than Yom Kippur, or vice versa. According to the tana who contends that Yom Kippur has greater sanctity, six people read the Torah on Shabbos and seven on Yom Kippur (Megillah 23a). The Turei Even explains that this tana considers Yom Kippur to be holier because of the extra prayer that we daven, tefillas neilah.

The Gemara mentions a dispute whether the maftir aliyah is considered one of the aliyos counted in the Mishnah or not, but this is a topic that we will leave for a future article. Although the Mishnah does not mention how this is applied on fast days, Chanukah and Purim, since there is no musaf on any of these days, we conclude that only three people read.

Rosh Chodesh reading

The discussion of the festivals in parshas Emor does not make overt mention of Rosh Chodesh. Is there indeed a Torah requirement to read the Torah on Rosh Chodesh? This matter is disputed among acharonim, the Penei Moshe ruling that it includes Rosh Chodesh, and Rav Moshe Feinstein ruling that it does not (Shu"t Igros Moshe, Orach Chayim 1:101:2; 2:8).

3. Mincha reading

The Mishnah (Megillah 21a) I quoted above also mentions that we read from the Torah at mincha on Shabbos. The Gemara (Bava Kama 82a) notes that this mitzvah is of later origin than the requirement to read the Torah on Monday, Thursday and Shabbos mornings. Reading the Torah at mincha on Shabbos was instituted by Ezra, at the beginning of the second Beis Hamikdash period. Its purpose was to accommodate the spiritual needs of those individuals whose business enterprises precluded them from making it to shul for kerias haTorah on Monday and Thursday (as explained by Shitah Mekubetzes). This reading provides these individuals with another opportunity to study Torah. A different approach is that this was instituted for people who spend their Shabbos afternoon in wasteful activity, and to provide them with an opportunity to be influenced by Torah to use their "free time" more wisely (Me'iri, Kiryas Sefer, 5:1). According to either interpretation, we see another situation in which Chazal created an obligation for everyone, because of concern for some individuals.

How much, how many?

The Gemara explains (Bava Kama 82a) that, although the original takanah when the Jews were in the Desert required reading the Torah three times a week, on Monday, Thursday and Shabbos, there was no requirement as to how much should be read. When Ezra instituted the additional reading at mincha on Shabbos, he also established several rules germane to that reading and to the reading on Monday and Thursday. He instituted that at least three people must be called to the Torah and that each reading must include at least ten pesukim. The Gemara explains

that three people are called up to represent the Kohanim, Levi'im and Yisroelim, presumably to show that all three sub-groups within Klal Yisroel need to be involved in the fulfillment of this takanah.

With time, the custom developed that, on Shabbos mincha, Monday and Thursday, we read from the beginning of the next parsha (Me'iri, Kiryas Sefer, 5:1). Usually, we read what will be the kohein's aliyah on the next Shabbos morning, but there are weeks when this is not followed precisely, either because the kohein's aliyah is too short to accommodate three aliyos, or because his aliyah is longer than we want to read on Monday and Thursday.

4. Complete reading

The reading on Shabbos morning that was originally established when the Jews were in the Desert eventually included a custom that the entire Torah would be read in a cyclical pattern. Exactly when this was established is unclear; but it is very clear that, initially, there were at least two customs how often the entire Torah was completed in the weekly Shabbos readings. One custom completed the entire Torah as we do, every year, whereas the other approach completed it only every three years (Megillah 29b; Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 13:1). At some point in Jewish history, it became common practice to complete the reading of the Torah every year, and to finish this reading on Simchas Torah (Megillah 31a; Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 13:1). At that time, the division of the Torah into our current weekly parshios occurred, and the system of "double parshios" developed to accommodate the completion of the Torah whether it is a leap year or not.

After the practice to complete the entire Torah annually became universally accepted, the following became an issue: What is the halacha if you mistakenly skipped a posuk while reading the Torah -- or the baal keriah misread something in a way that invalidates the reading -- but it was not realized until later. Must you reread the Torah portion for the week?

Missed a posuk

At this point, we can return to one of our opening questions: "What is the halacha if we began an aliyah a posuk later than the previous aliyah had ended?"

Based on Mesechta Sofrim (11:6) and Hagahos Maimoniyos, the Shulchan Aruch rules as follows:

On Monday, Thursday, Shabbos mincha or Yom Tov, the rule is as follows: Provided each person called to the Torah had an aliyah of at least three pesukim, and the reading of the Torah was at least ten pesukim, there is no need to repeat the reading. However, if this happened on Shabbos morning, even if we already returned the sefer Torah and davened musaf, we must take out the sefer Torah again and read the missed posuk and two more pesukim next to it, to make it into a proper aliyah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 137:3).

Thus, to answer this question, “What is the halacha if we began an aliyah a posuk later than the previous aliyah had ended,” we need the following information:

1. During which keriah did this happen?
2. Did the two aliyos, the ones before and after the skipped posuk, still have three pesukim?
3. Were at least ten pesukim read for the entire kerias haTorah?

Assuming that the answers to questions 2 and 3 were both Yes, and this happened to any keriah other than Shabbos morning, there is no need to do anything. If either of these rules was not observed, meaning that one of the people received an aliyah of less than three pesukim, or the entire reading was less than ten pesukim, then the sefer Torah should be taken out, one person should be called to the Torah, and he should read at least three pesukim (if rule 2 was broken) or four pesukim (if rule 3 was broken).

If this happened during a Shabbos morning keriah, and, as a result, one posuk from the week’s parsha was not read, then they should take out the sefer Torah and read the skipped posuk, together with two other pesukim next to it. There is no need to reread the entire aliyah.

Skipped a posuk

At this point, let us address a different one of our opening questions:

“After davening on Shabbos morning, we realized that the baal keriah skipped a posuk during the last aliyah. What do we do now?”

The brief answer to this question is that it is the subject of a dispute between early acharonim. The Keneses Hagedolah, by Rav Chayim Benveniste of Turkey, one of the most

prominent poskim of the 17th century, rules that we do not take out a new sefer Torah to read the end of the parsha in this instance. He is disputed by the Maharif, Rav Yaakov Feraji Mahmah, who was the rov, av beis din and rosh yeshiva of Alexandria, Egypt, in the early eighteenth century. The Maharif’s contention is that once it is established practice where we stop reading the Torah each Shabbos, which the Levush (Orach Chayim 137:5) calls a takanas chachamim, we are required to complete that reading on Shabbos, even if we need to take out a sefer Torah a second time to fulfill it. The Keneses Hagedolah apparently holds that we are required to call up seven aliyos, but once the baal keriah completed the seventh aliyah and the sefer Torah was returned, we can fulfill the takanah of completing the entire Torah by beginning the next week’s parsha early; thereby making up for the missing pesukim.

Conclusion

In the introduction to Sefer HaChinuch, the author writes that the main mitzvah upon which all the other mitzvos rest is that of Talmud Torah. Through Torah learning, a person will know how to fulfill all of the other mitzvos. That is why Chazal instituted a public reading of a portion of the Torah every Shabbos twice and on Mondays and Thursdays. Knowing that the proper observance of all the mitzvos is contingent on Torah learning, our attention to kerias haTorah will be heightened. According to the Torah reading the great respect it is due should increase our sensitivity to the observance of all the mitzvos

לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה
אנא מלכה בת ישראל ע"ה