

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

After G-d told Moshe to relay His commandments regarding the offerings brought on the holidays to the nation (Bamidbar 28:1-29:39), we are told that Moshe said them over to the nation (30:1). However, the wording of this verse seems a bit peculiar. Obviously, the original Hebrew needs to be read to get all of the nuances, but I would translate it as "and Moshe said [them] (i.e. the commandments he was told to say over) to the Children of Israel, like everything that G-d commanded Moshe." Which leaves us with two questions. First of all, why was Moshe's name mentioned twice? I would have expected the verse to say, "Moshe said all that was commanded to *him*," using the pronoun, rather than repeating the proper noun. Saying, in essence, that Moshe said all that was commanded to Moshe seems as odd as talking about someone in the third person when he is standing right there. Secondly, it doesn't say that Moshe told over "everything" ("kol") Moshe was commanded, but "like everything" ("kechol") Moshe was commanded. Why was the comparative conjugation used rather than telling us straight out that Moshe said everything Moshe was commanded to say over? Was there anything Moshe didn't really say over exactly as Moshe had been commanded?

ArtScroll translates the verse as "Moses said to the Children of Israel according to everything that Hashem had commanded Moses," perhaps trying to address the second issue. Rather than "kechol" meaning "like everything," by translating it as "according to everything" they take note of the word "kechol" being used instead of "kol" while maintaining Moshe's accuracy in transmitting the commandments. Nevertheless, we would still need to explain why the word "kechol" was used rather than the more straightforward (and shorter) "kol." Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan was cognizant of the first issue (while ignoring the second), translating the verse as, "Moses spoke to the Israelites [telling them] all that G-d had commanded him." In a footnote he adds that instead of "him" it actually says "Moses," so he knew the repetition of the proper name was problematic and therefore substituted the pronoun. He also translates "kechol" simply as "all," without explaining why the word "kol" was not used instead.

Although many of the details of the holidays were explained in Parashas Emor, the offerings described in our Parasha weren't taught until now because they would only become relevant once the nation entered the Land of Israel (see Ramban on 28:2). As Moshe's days on this earth, and of being the leader, were coming to an end, the time had come to give over the details of these offerings as well. From the urgency of his prayers asking to be allowed to enter the land, we can safely assume that these final teachings were very painful for Moshe. He had just been told (27:12-14) to ascend Mt. Nevo to see the land that he could not enter, and handed over the mantle of leadership to Yehoshua (27:18-23). Could Moshe give over these commandments with the same enthusiasm, the same importance, as everything else he had taught? Being the great leader he was, we know that he would be less affected (and more effective) than anyone else in this situation would have been. But was he the same Moshe teaching these laws, laws that would not be relevant until he had passed away and the nation arrived at the place he so coveted to go, as when he first taught G-d's commandments in Egypt and at Sinai?

By using his proper name a second time, the Torah is teaching us that it wasn't just "him," who had just received these commandments from G-d, that relayed them to the nation. Rather, it was "Moshe," the objective Moshe, the same Moshe that had taught them G-d's commandments for 40 years, that taught them these laws as well. And he taught them in the same way, with the same exuberance and passion that he always had. "And Moshe said [these commandments] to the Children of Israel, like everything [else] that G-d commanded Moshe." © 2007 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

Pinchas is not an overly popular figure in Jewish life and among his own generation. The people of Israel were angered by his act of violence in killing the head of the tribe of Shimon without giving the matter due judicial process. It is because of this type of murmuring that the Lord Himself, so to speak, blesses Pinchas personally and grants him the gift of priesthood and of peace.

Pinchas' motives are challenged by the people but they are vindicated by G-d. But it takes G-d himself,

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NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL AND THE
WORLD WIDE WEB AT [HTTP://AISHDAS.ORG](http://AISHDAS.ORG).
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so to speak to quiet the objections to Pinchas and his behavior. And it is noteworthy therefore to emphasize that we do not find any other further act of holy zealotry mentioned in the Torah or approved of by Jewish tradition Pinchas and his behavior become the exception and not the rule in Jewish life and tradition. Zealotry is a very difficult characteristic to gauge correctly. How much are personal quirks involved in such zealous behavior? Jewish history and society is littered by the victims of religious zealotry who were felled by personal attacks clothed in the guise of religious piety and zealotry.

The zealot often covers his own weaknesses and self-doubt by attacking others. That is why the people of Israel questioned the motives of Pinchas in killing Zimri. Because of this, it is obvious that only G-d, so to speak, could save Pinchas from unwarranted criticism and public disapproval. But in so doing, G-d, again so to speak, warns us of the dangers of zealotry. He will not step in again to rescue the zealot from public and historical disapproval.

We meet Pinchas again later in Jewish history, again at a moment of personal tragedy. He is the High Priest and head of the Sanhedrin at the time of Yiftach, the judge of Israel. Yiftach has made a foolish vow that whatever or whoever comes forth first from his house to greet him upon his return from the successful war that he waged to save Israel from the oppression of Bnei Ammon will be sacrificed to G-d.

The daughter of Yiftach, not knowing of her father's vow, rushes out of the house to welcome home the returning hero. Eventually Yiftach fulfills his vow and kills her on the altar. This entire horrible story could have been averted.

The rabbis in the Talmud tell us that Yiftach could have had the vow annulled retroactively by appearing before Pinchas and his court and requesting such an annulment. But ego and hubris interfere, even at the cost of the life of one's own child. Yiftach refuses to humble himself-after all he is the leader of Israel-to appear before Pinchas and ask for the annulment.

Even though Pinchas is aware of the vow, he also refuses to lower himself- after all he is the high Priest and the head of the Sanhedrin-to travel to Yiftach to effect the annulment. As the Talmud ruefully observes, because of this display of personal pique and

ego, an innocent person is killed. Pinchas' reputation is therefore tarnished by this incident. Perhaps this is another reason that we do not find the zealotry of Pinchas repeated and complimented again in the Torah. © 2007 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com/jewishhistory.

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

The Talmud records a most glaring and ambiguous statement, which has its roots in a number of verses in this week's Biblical portion, as well as its tangible expression in my City of Efrat. First the Talmudic quote: "In other inheritances of the world, the living inherit the dead; in the Land of Israel, the dead inherit the living" (B.T. Baba Batra 117a). What can this ambiguous comment possibly mean?

Allow me to begin my explanation with a brief history of the Etzion bloc in which our city Efrat is located. In the 1940's there were four settlements in this area on barren, rocky land bought from Arabs in a registered sale by a Jew named Holtzman (holtz is Yiddish for etz or tree). Not only was its location south of Bethlehem strategic, protecting Jerusalem to the north, it was also scenic, for it was verdant with green vineyards, majestic hills and sweeping valleys; most important of all it was historic, geographically poised between Hebron, ancient City of our Patriarchs and Jerusalem, eventual city of Messianic peace. The farmers worked indefatigably to till the unfertile soil, for they were certain that the land worked by Boaz, Naomi and Ruth and the fields in which the shepherd - Psalmist David had grazed his flock, would flourish once again.

When the U.N. partition plan of Nov. 29, 1947 was not accepted by the Arabs, the fighting in this region became ferocious because of the battle for Jerusalem. Whoever controlled the hills of the Gush would ultimately rule the Holy City. The settlements suffered heavy losses, and it was decided in Jerusalem that a supportive group would have to be dispatched to help the besieged area with arms and food.

Setting out by foot, 35 men worked their way through darkness to reach the surrounded settlements. On the way they met an old Arab, captured him, and when he begged for his life they let him go. Legend has it that after he was released, he revealed their position. The 35 were all slaughtered. The remaining settlers - even without their much - needed supplies and manpower, continued to fight bravely, but were ultimately massacred - almost to a man. The date was May 13th, 1948, and on the very next day Ben Gurion, declared the birth of the State of Israel and - in honor of the fallen heroes of the Gush - agreed to include a

reference to G-d in the Declaration of Independence. The few survivors - re-established their settlements in the Ashkelon area - but never stopped dreaming of their eventual return to the Etzion Bloc. After the Six-Day war, when the area was once again in Jewish hands, children whose parents had been forced to evacuate the area or who had been killed by the Jordanian legion now returned. In the hills of Gush Etzion, the heirs to this land reconstructed the shattered dreams of their parents who were no longer alive to see how their vision had borne fruit.

That which occurred between 1948 and 1967 in the Gush is a paradigm for the 1900 years in which the Jews were separated from their national homeland after the Destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. We were scattered to all four corners of the globe, but our forbears never stopped dreaming of our eventual return to the Promised Land of our fore-fathers. Because of their teachings, sacrifices and suffering, the dream of Israel remained vital in the hearts of their children. Among other nations, the living inherit the dead. With us, it's exactly the opposite: the dead inherit the living.

This concept emerges in the course of a legal dispute between Rabbi Yoshiyah and Rabbi Yonatan in the Talmud (Baba Batra, 117a) concerning the meaning of several key verses in this week's portion of Pinchas:

Among those people you shall divide the land as an inheritance according to the number of names. By lot shall the land be distributed, according to the names of your fathers shall they inherit it. (Numbers 26:53-56)

When the 40 years of wandering in the desert ended, should the method of apportioning the land be determined by the number of those who left Egypt or by the number of those who arrived in Israel?

For example, if I left Egypt with two sons, and one of my sons had only one son, while the other had five sons, then if the division is according to those who left Egypt, each one of my sons should get an equal portion. Thus we find that five grandsons must share among themselves the same portion which the grandson of the other son receives. But if we make our determination according to those who enter the land of Israel, we end up with six portions to be divided equally.

Rabbi Yoshiyah stresses verse 53, "According to the names of your fathers you shall inherit it," which to him indicates that the land is divided according to those who left Egypt, while Rabbi Yonatan emphasizes the verse, "Among these people you shall divide the land as an inheritance," and takes 'these people' to mean those who physically enter the land. The dispute is decided that the six grand-sons receive six portions of land - but three portions go to the descendants of the one brother who left Egypt, and the other three are divided between the five sons of the second brother who left Egypt. Therefore, the Talmud declares: "In all

other inheritance of the world, the living inherit the dead, but here the dead [the generation which died out in the desert] inherit the living [the generation which entered the land]." (Baba Batra 117a).

Where did the Jews find the strength to wander for 38 years in the desert, knowing that they would die before entering Israel? Only because they believed even if they wouldn't enter the Promised Land, at least their children would! And this is precisely what R. Yonatan means when he says that the dead inherit the living. We live in this land only because previous generations were willing to devote their lives to a dream that never materialized. But through us, they inherit land.

A famous midrash tells the tale of Hadrian meeting an old Jew after the fall of Judea and Samaria planting a carob tree which, according to tradition takes 70 years to bear fruit. Asked to explain his behavior, the Jew answers that just as his father and grandfather planted for him, he is planting for his child, and grandchildren, oblivious to the flag the Roman eagle flying on Jewish soil.

The emperor then turns to his general and admits that with such resilience and faith, with such willingness to plant in the present that which will be reaped in the future, even the Roman armies don't stand a chance. Hadrian was 100% correct; our parents and grandparents inherit Israel through us!
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RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

One way that people attempt to attain transcendence is by guiding their children on the path they began. Even Moshe (Moses), who was first and foremost committed to the nation of Israel and was the most humble of men, was hopeful that his own children would complete the mission he started and lead the people into Israel.

Hence, the Midrash notes, (See Rashi 27:16) it was after G-d permitted the daughters of Zelofhad to inherit from their father, (27:1-11) that Moshe makes the request of G-d that a successor be appointed in the hope that his sons would be tapped for leadership.

It was not to be. The Talmud points out that Torah leadership is not automatically inherited. (Nedarim 71a) This principle is seen as G-d tells Moshe that none of his children will lead the people, rather Yehoshua (Joshua) will be the next leader of the nation. (Numbers 27:18) Moshe transfers the reigns to Yehoshua. Several lessons can be learned from the way Moshe passes on his position.

First: Although it was not to be transmitted to his sons as he had wished, Moshe transfers the power to Yehoshua with great support and kindness. Whereas G-d told Moshe to "lay your hand (in the singular) on him [Yehoshua]," (27:18) Moshe places both hands on

him. (27:23) Rashi makes this point by maintaining that Moshe laid his hands on Yehoshua "generously, in much greater measure than he was commanded."

Second: Whereas G-d tells Moshe to "put some of his honor upon him [Yehoshua], "(Numbers 27:20) there is no mention that Moshe does so. Perhaps Moshe's humble side felt that he was unworthy to act in such a way-only G-d can give such honor. Alternatively, Moshe wanted Yehoshua to do it his way. While Moshe had given Yehoshua a sound foundation, Moshe understood that every leader is blessed with a unique style. Yehoshua should not become Moshe's clone-he should develop his own way, his own honor.

Third: Moshe genuinely desires that Yehoshua receive a better lot than he did. Hence, Moshe tells G-d that the new leader be able "to lead them out, and...bring them in." (Numbers 27:17) This, according to the Midrash, means that Moshe hoped that unlike himself, the next leader would not only be permitted to begin his task by moving the Jews out, but also be allowed to conclude his mission by taking the people into the land of Israel. (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:16) Even Moshe could not do it all. Yehoshua would complete that which Moshe started, that which even Moshe could not complete.

It's not easy to step back and make space for someone else. This is especially the case vis-à-vis our children. When someone else is given precedence over one's own child it presents an especially challenging situation, especially when one is in a position of power and is as Moshe was, the prophet of prophets.

But Moshe did all of this, and did so nobly. The most humble person ever to live was without envy and graciously transferred power to the other. In doing so he once again showed his great strength and unbridled selflessness. © 2007 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale.

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by Rabbi Amnon Bazak, Yeshivat Har Etzion

In this week's Torah portion, Tzlofchad's daughters turn to Moshe. Since their father died in the desert, they request: "Why should our father's name be removed because he has no son? Give us a plot of land? 'achuzah'- among our father's brothers" [Bamidbar 27:4]. Indeed, after Moshe brings their case to G-d, their request is granted: "Yes, what Tzlofchad's daughters have spoken is true, let them be given a heritage? 'achuzat nachalah'-among their father's brothers. Let their father's inheritance be transferred to them." [27:7]. However, at a deeper level, it seems that the Almighty gave them much more than they asked for at first.

The daughters asked for "a plot of land among our father's brothers." The meaning of "a plot" is a section of land. This can be seen from the description of the place where Yaacov and his sons settled when they came to Egypt. "And Yosef settled his father and his brothers, and he gave them a section in the Land of Egypt." [Bereishit 47:11]. In their modesty, Tzlofchad's daughters requested that their father's name should not be deleted from among the names in the family. Thus, they asked for a plot of land in his name, so that the name would be perpetuated. But in the end G-d promises to give them not a simple plot but "a heritage among their father's brothers." That is, they will be given a full inheritance: "Let their father's inheritance be transferred to them." Tzlofchad's daughters are thus given a full inheritance and not just a plot of land.

The Almighty thus emphasizes that the fact that a daughter receives the inheritance of her father goes beyond the usual limit of the law. In the Talmud (Bava Batra 109b), the sages note that the Torah describes the inheritance of a daughter in an unusual way, "If a man dies and has no son, you shall transfer his heritage to his daughter" [Bamidbar 27:8]. Compare this to the normal law of inheritance, which uses the term to give: "but if he has no daughter give his heritage to his brothers. And if he has no brothers, give his heritage to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, give his heritage to the closest relative in his family, and let him inherit it." [27:9-11]. The meaning of the word "to transfer" in the Torah usually means taking a privilege from one person and passing it on to another one. For example, "To transfer the kingdom from the house of Shaul and to establish the throne of David over Yisrael" [Shmuel II 3:10];

"And the King removed his ring which he had transferred from Haman and gave it to Mordechai" [Esther 8:2]. Thus, the daughters of Tzlofchad were involved in a halachic innovation, a rule that daughters obtain a heritage even though they are not in the natural chain of inheritance. In effect, their heritage is transferred to them from their father's brothers.

Eventually, Tzlofchad's daughters came to Yehoshua to demand what had been promised to them. They did not mention their original request to obtain "a plot" but the full promise by the Almighty: "G-d commanded Moshe to give us an inheritance among our family," and in fact "he gave them an inheritance according to the word of G-d, with their father's brothers" [Yehoshua 17:4].

RABBI ADAM LIEBERMAN

A Life Lesson

In this week's Torah portion, G-d showed Moses the Land of Israel and told him that he wouldn't be allowed to bring the Jewish people into the Land. Moses immediately said:

"May... G-d... appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them... and let the assembly... not be like sheep that have no shepherd." (Numbers 27:16-17)

When Moses was told by G-d that he wouldn't be able to lead the Jewish people into the land of Israel, his knee-jerk response was not focused on his own fate, but rather to make sure that the Jews would still have someone in his absence who would continue to lead them. This is why Moses was one of the greatest leaders ever.

The ability to focus on other people's needs when the "going gets tough" and not on your own wants and desires is the true definition of leadership. Being a leader is not about the recognition or accolades you might receive, but rather it's the constant focus on the specific needs that are most important to those who are following you. Therefore, if for one reason or another you're no longer able to lead them, you will automatically put their fears and concerns as your primary focus.

The world is littered with countless numbers of cases where, once someone was asked to stop doing something, he ceased to care about the people whom his work was effecting. It makes you wonder if he really ever truly cared about them in the first place. The true colors of a leader are on full display when he leaves his leadership position and to see if he ever gives even a passing thought to all those who believed in him, his vision, and his dream.

The powerful message Moses taught us all is to fight the urge to initially take a demotion or firing personally. There will certainly be time to think about the impact of how this decision affects you. But right now your concern must be about those who trusted you.

Make no mistake; it certainly takes a lot of class to have your focus be on others when your ego, self-esteem, and your self-worth are seemingly all on the line. But it's precisely this knee-jerk response which separates a good leader from a great one. © 2007 Rabbi A. Lieberman & aish.org

RABBI ZVI MILLER

The Salant Foundation

After many of the Israelites fell into idol worship, a plague struck the camp. Pinchas brought an end to the plague by killing two of the overt perpetrators. Subsequently, some of people criticized Pinchas, saying, "His mother's father worshipped idols, and he had the audacity to kill a prince of Israel."

In defense of Pinchas and his family, the Torah records that his lineage goes directly to Aaron HaKohen. Additionally, HaShem made a covenant of peace with Pinchas, "and I give him My covenant of peace."

The purpose of the covenant of peace was to insure that peace would emerge eternally from the Kohanic family. In this light, the Torah reveals that all of Pinchas' actions were pure. It was his love of peace that motivated Pinchas to save Klal Yisrael from destruction. Therefore, HaShem granted an eternal blessing of peace to Pinchas and his descendents, who brought peace to his people.

Even at the time, when his people fell to terrible immorality, Pinchas found his heart filled with mercy and compassion. His love of peace was supreme and inspired him to restore peace in the world.

Peace is great for it is the cornerstone and most important element of a healthy society. The essence of the Torah is peace, as per the verse, "Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace." When a person arrives from a journey, we grant him with "peace." Our prayer service begins and concludes with blessings of peace.

Accordingly, regarding Pinchas, the Torah says, "I give him My covenant of peace." Remarkably, "I give him," is written in the present tense. Signifying, that HaShem's covenant of peace with Pinchas endures eternally with all of his descendents, i.e., "And peace and life will be his."

May we awaken the love of peace in our heart and strive to bring peace to our community, family, and friends. In turn, HaShem will bless all of us with peace, joy, and life. [Based on Midrash Tanchuma]

Today: Say a prayer for world peace. © 2007 Rabbi Z. Miller & The Salant Foundation

RABBI BORUCH LEFF

Kol Yaakov

“War is a crime against humanity."
"There is no such thing as a justified war."

These are statements from pacifists. "Pacifism: Opposition to the use of force under any circumstances; refusal for reasons of conscience to participate in war or military action." (Webster's New World Dictionary)

What is the Jewish view of pacifism? What does peace really mean? This week's Torah portion, Pinchas, instructs us concerning all of these issues.

Since Parshat Pinchas begins in the middle of a story, let's re-cap events from last week's portion, Balak. Many Jewish men were seduced by Moabite women and acted promiscuously with them. These women also influenced their victims to worship idols. One of the leaders of the men who were seduced, Zimri, of the tribe of Shimon, desired to publicly declare his support for involvement with the Moabite women. He brazenly committed his lewd, sexual acts in full view of Moshe and the Jewish people. G-d sent a plague, and 24,000 Jewish men, who were seduced, died. Pinchas could not tolerate Zimri's brazenness and promptly killed Zimri and his partner in sin, Kozbi, a

Moabite princess. After Pinchas' zealous act, the plague ceased.

G-d begins this week's portion saying to Moshe, "Pinchas, the son of Elazar, the son of Ahron, the Priest, turned back my fury from the Jewish nation when he zealously avenged my vengeance among them. This is why I did not consume the Jewish nation in My vengeance. Therefore, say: Behold, I give him (Pinchas) My covenant of peace." (Bamidbar 25:10-12)

We know that G-d administers reward and punishment with the device called 'measure for measure.' The punishment or reward must fit the crime or good deed. In this case, Pinchas' act of zealousness is rewarded with peace. Is that measure for measure? Do we usually associate a peaceful person with being a zealot?

G-d is teaching us a fundamental lesson about war and peace. Wars are necessary at times. There is such a thing as a justified war. As Kohelet 3:8 states, "There is a time for war."

G-d is saying to Moshe, "Tell Pinchas that his zealousness is peace." Peace does not mean a passive lack of war. If peace is a passive lack of war there is no way that through Pinchas' violent act of killing he achieves peace. Peace is a state of being in which there is a closeness, a relationship, a way of dealing with each other. It isn't just that I don't bother you and you don't bother me; that's not peace. It's that we live together and work together and have a unity, a commonality that all of us are part of a whole.

In Hebrew, the word for peace, shalom, is derived from the root shalem, which means whole or complete. Peace is a cooperative, symbiotic relationship, where both parties care for each other, help each other, and ultimately perfect each other. Two people who hate each other and never speak to each other, but never fight either, cannot be said to be at peace with each other. Marital harmony and domestic tranquility does not mean the simple lack of screaming and yelling in the house. It is a state of being in which your spouse genuinely shares in your triumphs, strengthens you when you are down, loves, adores, and cherishes you. (This is why it is a misnomer to refer to the 1979 Camp David agreement with Egypt as a 'peace' treaty. At most, it is a ceasefire. The rhetoric of hatred and contempt by Egypt for Israel, and anti-Semitism in the Egyptian press has never ceased. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has never even visited Israel, except to attend Yitzchak Rabin's funeral.)

Since peace is an active force rather than a passive lack of war, ultimately anything that disturbs and destroys this state of true peace must be removed in order for true shalom-peace-to exist. That is why Pinchas, through his zealous act, actually creates peace. Pinchas stops the plague against the Jewish people and through a violent act of war brings peace.

It is very often necessary to create peace only through what seems to be an act of violence. One must remove those things that disturb the harmony and that create tensions between peoples in order for peace to exist. And it is not always possible to remove the items that block peace through non-violent means.

Does anyone seriously think that the Nazis could have been dealt with non-violently? Can Osama bin Laden be dealt with non-violently? Ariel Sharon has always said that the path to peace in the Middle East must begin with decisive military action against the terrorist infrastructure. Only once violence, as an option, is rooted out can peace be achieved. One can even argue similarly for Harry Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki which brought peace in ending WWII. We have seen the famous picture of the mushroom cloud which killed approximately 400,000 people. Was Truman's act of war justified? Consider the following:

"In a meeting on 18 June the Joint War Plans Committee gave Truman projected death rates ranging from a low of 31,000 to a high of 50,000, and a projected American causality rate (deaths, injuries and missing) of 132,500. During fighting in the Pacific, from 1 March 1944 to 1 May 1945, the Japanese were killed at a ratio of 22 to 1. Thus, if we use an estimate of 40,000 American deaths, we can extrapolate 880,000 Japanese deaths-for a combined total of 920,000 deaths. Although death rates for Hiroshima and Nagasaki vary widely, none are even half this high. Thus we can conclude that if an invasion of Kyushu had been necessary, and the Japanese were killed at a rate comparable to previous fighting, then the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki actually SAVED lives." (Barton J. Bernstein, "Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory," Hiroshima in History and Memory, ed. Michael J. Hogan [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996], p.45)

If all people in the world were committed to achieving a real peace, one which involves a cooperative, symbiotic relationship, perhaps pacifism could be a viable movement. Since this is not the case, we must often destroy violently those things that create tensions between peoples in order for peace to exist.

In the real world, wars usually bring ultimate peace, not pacifists. © 2007 Rabbi B. Leff & aish.org

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

Haftorah

This week begins a series of haftorah readings which reflect the inner feelings of the Jewish people during their final months of the year. The series consists of moving visions of the prophets depicting the pending Jewish exile and destruction of the Bais Hamikdash and concludes with an ongoing

exchange between Hashem and the Jewish people expressing a strong desire for reunification. Our haftorah speaks about the introduction of Yirmiyahu into prophecy and shows him somewhat reluctant to serve as the leading prophet of Israel. Yirmiyahu's concern centered around his young age coupled with his lack of experience in speaking to an entire nation. He recognized the painful nature of his catastrophic predictions and feared that his prophetic words would actually endanger his own life. Hashem responded that He would personally direct Yirmiyahu and protect him from all opposing forces. Yirmiyahu consented and received his first prophecy which he described in the following words. "And Hashem sent His hand which touched my mouth and He said to me, 'Behold I've placed my words in your mouth.'" This unique description of prophecy as "words placed in the mouth", rather than words spoken to the prophet, suggest a strong dimension of force. It seems that Yirmiyahu actually felt compelled to speak his words of prophecy at all costs.

In truth, we find special significance given to the prophetic status of Yirmiyahu. Our Chazal (in Yalkut Shimoni 256) take note of the specific expression used by the Torah when introducing prophecy. In Parshas Shoftim (Devorim 18, 18) Hashem said to Moshe, "I shall establish a prophet amongst them likened to yourself. I shall place My words in his mouth and he will convey to the Jewish people everything I command." Chazal reflect upon the words, "prophet likened to yourself (Moshe)" used here which suggest a parallel between Moshe and other prophets. Chazal raise the question that the Torah unequivocally states that no one ever achieved parallel status of prophecy to that of Moshe Rabbeinu. What did Moshe mean by these words "a prophet likened to yourself"? Chazal answer that these words allude to the unique role of the prophet Yirmiyahu. They explain that there was a clear parallel between the role of Yirmiyahu as the prophet of rebuke and the role of Moshe Rabbeinu. They even draw lines between the life of Moshe Rabbeinu and that of Yirmiyahu. They note that Moshe served a full term of forty years and was personally responsible for the ethical conduct of the entire nation. In addition, each of them faced serious opposition from their people for the hard stand they took in defending the name of Hashem. The Maharik in support of this point (see comment to Yirmiyahu 1:9) adds that even the terminology used to describe their prophecy is of exact nature. The Torah refers to the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu and states, "I shall place My words in his mouth." Interestingly, this exact expression "I have placed My words in your mouth" is used when describing the prophecy of Yirmiyahu.

As we have now seen, the introduction of prophecy makes direct reference to the ultimate prophet of doom, Yirmiyahu. One could question the

high priority that Yirmiyahu's prophecy occupies in the Torah. Why did Moshe Rabbeinu make reference to the prophet Yirmiyahu at the inception of prophecy and single him out from the other forty seven leading prophets? What was so significant about Yirmiyahu's dimension of rebuke that made it the prime focus of Moshe Rabbeinu's earliest discussion about prophecy?

In search for clarification of this point it is beneficial to study Moshe Rabbeinu's reflections on the establishment of prophecy. In Parshas Shoftim Moshe says, "Hashem will establish a prophet in response to all that you requested of him at Sinai on the day you received the Torah. You said, 'I can not continue hearing the direct voice of Hashem and will no longer risk perishing when seeing this great fire.'" Hashem responded, 'I will establish a prophet likened to you and will place My words in his mouth.'" (D'vorim 18:16) The Ramban (ad loc.) explains that the Jewish people requested that Hashem transmit His messages to them through words of prophecy. They found it too difficult to listen directly to Hashem because of the intensity of His words and opted to hear them through the prophets. With this request they agreed to hear the clear words of the prophets regardless of the severity of their nature. Hashem, in effect, consented to the Jewish people's request for prophecy, reserving the right to address them in the strongest of terms. The Jewish people readily accepted this alternative in place of hearing Hashem's direct and piercing words.

We now have a clear perspective regarding Moshe Rabbeinu's hidden prediction to the Jews. In truth, during Moshe's era the Jewish people were fully willing to listen to his piercing words of prophecy. This was of course in place of an all too familiar and highly intensified experience of listening to the words of Hashem Himself. Yet in later generations when the Jews would stray from the path of Hashem this task would become extremely difficult. Now that the dreaded alternative of hearing directly from Hashem was far out of sight the Jewish people could be prone to silencing their prophets restricting them from conveying penetrating messages. Moshe, therefore, warned them at the outset that their agreement was eternally binding and that in later years Hashem would send them a prophet whose words of rebuke would be as piercing as those of Moshe Rabbeinu himself.

We can now appreciate the opening words of Yirmiyahu in which he portrayed himself as compelled to speak the word of Hashem. It was the unpleasant role of Yirmiyahu to predict, in the most vivid form, the Jewish exile and the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash. These tidings were so penetrating and dreadful that the Jewish people would react to them as if they had heard direct words from Hashem. Yirmiyahu sensed the intensity of his prophetic mission and felt as if Hashem Himself was speaking directly to the Jewish people. He therefore expressed that Hashem placed

words in the prophets mouth and delivered them directly to the Jewish people. In this regard Yirmiyahu was truly likened to Moshe Rabbeinu through whom Hashem delivered the clearest of messages to His people. © 2007 Rabbi D. Siegel & torah.org

RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

Parshat Pinchas relates a story (27:1-12) about the daughters of Tzafchad, descendants of Yosef (Joseph). These daughters wanted and loved the Land of Israel so much that they wanted a piece of it. As Rav Moshe Feinstein asks, why do they have to have a claim in the land, just because they love it? Wouldn't entering or living in the land be fulfilling enough?

Rav Moshe thus concludes that if a person truly loves something, they'd want it to be theirs, and no one else's. This is why the daughters wanted to actually own a piece of the land, rather than simply living in it. This logic applies to marriages, as well as the Torah's preference that every Jew writes their own Torah (or a portion of it). In our terms, it's not enough to borrow and read Jewish books. We need to love the Torah we read SO much that we feel the need to own it! As this week's Parsha urges, we should not only seek, read and enjoy words of Torah, but we should OWN those books, and live those words! © 2007 Rabbi S. Ressler & LeLamed, Inc.

RABBI SHLOMO KATZ

Hama'ayan

We read in this week's parashah that a man named Tzelofchad had no sons. His daughters therefore approached Moshe and asked that they be allowed to inherit his portion of Eretz Yisrael. Rashi writes that just as Yosef loved Eretz Yisrael and asked to be buried there, so his great-granddaughters loved the Land and wanted a portion of it. Where do we see that Tzelofchad's daughters loved Eretz Yisrael? asks Rav Elya Meir Bloch z"l. Perhaps they just wanted to be land-owners.

When Moshe brought the daughters' request before Hashem, He answered (27:7), "The daughters of Tzelofchad speak properly." The literal translation of Hashem's answer is "Thus have the daughters of Tzelofchad spoken," and the midrash interprets, "Thus it is written before Me." In other words, the Torah itself testifies that the daughters of Tzelofchad spoke precisely what G-d himself had intended to teach. This is the proof that their intentions were proper, for otherwise no person could "read Hashem's mind," so-to-speak.

Chazal say, "Fortunate is a person with whom Hashem agrees." Unless a person has worked on his character, even the simplest things he says and does will be improper in some respect. (Peninei Da'at)

Parashat Pinchas in Halachah

"Pinchas... zealously avenged Me among them." (25:11)

We learn from Pinchas that there is a time when a talmid chacham must become angry, writes Rav Moshe Feinstein z"l (in the name of Rabbenu Yonah). But what is the proper place of anger in a talmid chacham's character? Chazal tell us, "A chassid is hard to anger and easy to placate." Yet Chazal also say, "Any talmid chacham who is not hard (i.e., stubborn) as iron is not a talmid chacham." How can these apparently contradictory statements be reconciled?

Rav Feinstein explains as follows: When a talmid chacham holds that a certain position is halachically correct, but others refuse to accept his view, he must be stubborn about it. If he becomes angry at those who do not listen to him and afterwards is placated easily, people will say that he was placated easily because he did not truly believe in his position. As a result, people will give less credence to his future halachic rulings.

On the other hand, when a talmid chacham has been wronged personally or when it is obvious to all that a wrong has been committed, then he should be hard to anger and easy to placate. Chazal do not say that he should not become angry at all, just that he should not be angry for long. This will cause a kiddush Hashem, for people will see the good character traits of this talmid chacham. And, there is no danger that people will not take his rulings seriously, for it will be obvious to all who was right and who was wrong (just as in Pinchas' case it was obvious that he was right).

Rav Feinstein continues: This distinction is what Rambam means by two apparently contradictory statements in his Code. On the one hand he writes (Hil. De'ot, 1:4): "A person should not become angry except over a great matter that is worthy of anger." On the other hand he writes (ibid 2:3), "Anger is a terrible trait and a person should distance himself from it. One should teach himself not to become angry even over a matter that is worthy of anger." There is no contradiction, as explained above. (Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim I, No. 54)

A similar explanation is given by Rav Yitzchak Attiah z"l. He notes that in one place Rambam refers to "a great matter that is worthy of anger," and in the other place only to "a matter that is worthy of anger." The former refers to spiritual matters and the latter to the talmid chacham's personal affairs. In the former, anger is permitted; in that latter it is not. (Mesharet Moshe, quoted in Otzrot Chachmei Aram Tzovah)

