Overview

Hashem tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive Hashem’s “covenant of peace” as reward for his bold action — executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. Hashem commands Moshe that the people must maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites because they lured the Jewish People into sin. Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People. The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730. Hashem instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to Bnei Yisrael. The number of the Levites’ families is recorded. The daughters of Tzlofchad file a claim with Moshe: In the absence of a brother, they request their late father’s portion in the Land. Moshe asks Hashem for the ruling, and Hashem tells Moshe that the daughters’ claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance. Hashem tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter. Moshe asks Hashem to designate the subsequent leader of the people, and Hashem selects Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation. The Parsha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash.

Insights

STATUS SIMPLE

“My covenant of peace” (25:12)

Everyone wants peace. Every person wants to sit under his fig tree, secure that no one will come and take away his family and his money. Yet almost since the beginning of time, peace has been elusive, and often, illusory.
If there’s one Hebrew word that everyone knows, it’s *shalom*. “Peace.” *Shalom* is the Hebrew form of greeting. Why do we greet others with *shalom*?

The Talmud tells us that it is forbidden to say *shalom* in a bathhouse, because *Shalom* is G-d’s name, and thus not fitting to be uttered in a bathhouse.

What does it mean that G-d’s name is *Shalom*?

Real *shalom* doesn’t exist in this world because *shalom* means perfection, completion. This world was created lacking. That’s the way it’s meant to be. This world strives to arrive somewhere beyond itself for its completion.

The Hebrew word for the “earth” is *aretz*, from the root “*ratz*,” “to run,” because this world is always running, moving towards its completion. However its completion can come only from above, from Heaven. The word “Heaven” in Hebrew is *shamayim*, from the root “*sham*” which means “there.” This world is always “running” to “there” — outside and beyond itself.

This world contains many wonderful things, but perfection isn’t one of them. Perfection is beyond the scope of creation.

This is why G-d’s name is *Shalom*. G-d is the Perfection of all the lacking of this world. Every single thing in this world finds its perfection, its fulfillment, in Him. It’s not here. It’s above. It’s “there.”

**The Peace Connection**

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz greets the harvesters by using the name of G-d. From here we learn that a Jew may use G-d’s Name as a greeting, and it is not considered taking Heaven’s Name in vain. In fact, there is an opinion that we are *obliged* to greet each other with G-d’s name by saying *Shalom*.

**Haftorah: Yirmiyahu 1:1-23**

Divrei Yirmiyahu” is the first haftara of the “Three-of-Affliction” trilogy read between 17 Tammuz and 9 Av. It contains Jeremiah’s ominous vision of Israel’s impending ruin and first exile at the hand of Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar.

Yirmiyahu’s vision of a menacing, almond-wood rod indicates that the time of Israel’s punishment is ripening, like the hardy ripening of an almond; a cauldron boiling at its north lip warns that Israel’s northern neighbor, Babylon, will wield that rod. Yet if they repent, G-d will remember their “youthful kindness” when, as a fledgling nation, they forsook a familiar Egypt and like a starry-eyed bride followed G-d into a frightening wasteland.

**Super Vision**

Malbim, in his introduction to the Book of Yirmiyahu, notes that this book contains more “irregularities” in spelling and grammar than any other book of Tanach. This, explains Malbim, is due to the exalted nature of Yirmiyahu’s vision, which can almost be compared to that of Moshe’s. Just as the Five Books of Moses contain untold layers of meaning, many of them hinted through oddities of spelling and grammar, so too, the book of Yirmiyahu reaches beyond the normal bounds of expression due to Yirmiyahu’s lofty grasp, above that of most other prophets.

The Sages sum up the Book of Yirmiyahu as “entirely destruction.” Even in English “a jeremiah” is short for any predictor of gloom and doom. Why, indeed, did G-d specifically invest such a great Prophet, one of the very greatest, with the vision of Israel’s destruction and exile?

“All G-d does is for the good,” say our Sages. Perhaps Yirmiyahu’s exalted perception was the very reason he was chosen to bring word of the exile; from his lofty vantage point, he — like no other in his generation — could perceive the joy hidden in the tears.
YAM KINNERET (SEA OF GALILEE)

Also referred to in various cultures as the Sea of Galilee and the Sea of Tiberias, this beautiful harp-shaped lake is one of the most beautiful sites of the Land, and one of its most important sources of fresh water and fish.

Some say that its very name comes from its similarity to the kinor (Hebrew for harp), either because of its shape or the musical sound of its waves.

Lying 212 meters below the level of the Mediterranean, this lake is 13 miles long and 8 miles at its greatest width, with a circumference of 33 miles.

The beauty of the area and the swimming and boating that the lake affords have made the Kinneret region a popular resort area for Israeli residents as well as visitors from abroad. The city of Teveria (Tiberias) is the most important of the cities in the area and the site of some famous tombs.