

# OHR NET

SHABBAT PARSHAT PINCHAS · 21 TAMMUZ 5770 · JULY 3, 2010 · VOL. 17 NO. 37

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE LAND OF THE DEER

*“G-d said to Moshe, ‘Go up to this mountain of Avarim and see the Land that I have given to the Children of Yisrael...’ (27:12)*

The prophet Yirmiyahu called the Land of Israel *Eretz HaTzvi* – the Land of the Deer. If you skin a deer, the hide contracts so much that it’s difficult to believe that it contained the carcass of the animal. So it is with the Land of Israel; when the Jewish People live here it expands to accommodate us, and when we are not here it shrinks. (Talmud Bavli, Gittin 56a)

It seems that geographically this is also true. I doubt that there’s another country in the world that contains such diverse topography in such a small space. You can drive from the snow-capped mountains in the Hermon to the baking heat of the Dead Sea, the lowest place on Earth, in just a couple of hours.

And when you approach Jerusalem from the West, the land is fertile and forested; as soon as you leave to the East you immediately enter the Judean Desert and the land of the camel.

But there’s another aspect to this geophysical contraction.

Ohr Somayach/Tanenbaum College in Jerusalem where I teach is just this side of what used to be the Jordanian border and for many years that no-man’s land between West and East Jerusalem remained untouched.

Not much more than a decade ago, an Arab goatherd used to minister to his rather bedraggled flock on that thin strip of land. Remarkable for nothing, it could have been anywhere in the hills of Judea.

I doubt very much that goatherd would recognize the place today. The four lanes of Highway #1 now traverse his grazing field from the Damascus Gate towards the North, and the tracks of the new Jerusalem light railway have just been completed. A sundial stands atop the last hill before the Old City.

It’s completely changed.

As I left Ohr Somayach the other afternoon, I glanced across the gap into East Jerusalem and another world. A group of European tourists were boarding a bus that bore the emblem – “Muhammad’s Tours”.

I thought to myself, it’s amazing how many different realities can exist in the same physical space. This is also the Cultural Land of the Deer.

“Muhammad’s Tours” had no doubt shown its tourists as much of Jerusalem as they could cram into a day; and yet the Jerusalem they had seen was an entirely different reality to the one in which I exist.

They probably visited the Dome of the Rock, which I call Har HaBayit and to which I am forbidden by the Torah to enter until the Mashiach comes.

They probably went to Ramallah, from which I am forbidden to enter by the Israeli Defense Forces for fear of a lynch – probably until the Mashiach comes.

I’m sure they walked the Via Dolorosa, visited the Church of the Sepulcher and the numerous other churches that have been built over the last two millennia and that I have never visited, and will probably continue to be churches – until the Mashiach comes.

On the other hand, there’s another Jerusalem that I’ve never seen. There’s apparently a “night life” here that, while it cannot rival the hedonism of Tel Aviv, probably is amusing enough for your average *tzfon-bon* (upper-class North-Tel Avivian) to check out once in a while.

Yes, Israel is a very small country divided by a vast cultural no-man’s land.

It truly is the Land of the Deer.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

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

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

## ISRAEL Forever

### MAKING PEACE

**W**ho is a peacemaker? The answer to this controversial question can be found in the opening passages of this week's Torah portion.

"Therefore," Moshe was informed by G-d, "I grant him My covenant of peace."

Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon Hakohen, had courageously slain the great public sinner Zimri, head of the Tribe of Shimon, and thus brought an end to the plague that had claimed 24,000 lives as punishment for the orgy of immorality with the Moabite and Midianite women. There

were rumblings amongst the people accusing Pinchas of wanton murder of a tribal head, and it was therefore necessary for G-d to remind everyone that Pinchas, the grandson of Aharon who personified love of his people and the pursuit of peace, was following in his grandfather's footsteps by restoring peace between G-d and His people.

At a time when so much attention is being focused on peacemaking, it is important to remember that only by bringing about peace between Israel and its G-d can we secure Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

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

### TALPIOT – FROM CAMP TO COMMUNITY

**W**hen immigrants began arriving in great numbers following the establishment of the State, there was a need to house them in temporary quarters till they could be settled. One of the *ma'abarot* transit camps created for them was in the Talpiot area of Jerusalem on the site of the



evacuated British army camp "El Alamein" named for the place in Egypt where the British halted the German drive towards what was then called Palestine.

Today modern buildings occupy that site as part of the thriving community of Talpiot.

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

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

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week’s Questions!

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

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

- The atonement achieved by the goat offerings on Festivals and Rosh Chodesh
- When awareness of the sin of entering Sanctuary in state of impurity is missing either before or after
- Is Rosh Chodesh considered a *mo'ed*?
- What is done with a surplus of animals for daily communal sacrifices
- The power of the rabbinical court to deal with the status of sanctified objects
- Redemption of the red heifer dead or alive
- The atonement achieved by Yom Kippur sacrifices
- The different levels of atonement required for sins
- The two goats of Yom Kippur
- Atonement for *kohanim* and for all Jewry
- Variations of forgetting which can obligate one in offering a sacrifice

## ATONEMENT FOR UNAWARENESS

If one entered the *Beit Hamikdash* in an impure state, either because he forgot his impurity or because he was unaware that he was in that sacred place, he is obligated to offer an atonement sacrifice. (*Vayikra* 5:2-3)

The requirement that he be initially aware that there was a *Beit Hamikdash* but unaware of now being in its precinct raises an interesting problem posed by Rabbi Yirmiyahu. What if someone came from Babylon to Yerushalayim and mistakenly entered the *Beit Hamikdash* in an impure state? Is the fact that he was aware that a *Beit Hamikdash* existed sufficient for serving as an initial awareness, or is his total unawareness of where it was located considered as his never having the initial knowledge which is a prerequisite for offering a sacrifice? No resolution is reached regarding this question.

*Tosefot* asks why this immigrant from Babylon is even considered as having no awareness of the location of the *Beit Hamikdash* when he could have made an inquiry to gain this information, for it has already been established that the ability to gain awareness is equivalent to awareness itself.

The answer is that the situation described by Rabbi Yirmiyahu took place after the destruction of the *Beit Hamikdash* when information on its location was not so readily available.

It must be noted that according to this approach Rabbi Yirmiyahu's question was a theoretical one since there is no opportunity to offer a sacrifice when there is no *Beit Hamikdash*. The only application would be the need to record the mistake made and offer a sacrifice when the *Beit Hamikdash* will be rebuilt.

• *Shavuot 14b*

## What the SAGES Say

"If one was guilty of failing to fulfill a positive commandment and he repents he is immediately forgiven."

• *Beraita - Shavuot 12b*

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## SEGREGATION UNITY

**From: Rachel**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I am trying to withhold judgment over the latest controversy in Israel regarding "racial" segregation in the orthodox schools until I hear the "segregationists" point of view, which has been largely ignored by the general media. Would you be able to clarify for me what's going on from your point of view?*

Dear Rachel,

I commend you for refraining from making a judgment based solely on the reports in Israel's general media. As is often the case, in order to deflect public attention from the ills of secular Israel, ranging from severe charges of corruption in the highest echelons of the government to growing drug use, violence and intimate assault among the youth, and including a desire to mask the embarrassment over the recent military debacles, the media bashes the Orthodox, grasping at straws to burn for a smoke screen.

But what's worse, the secular establishment of Israel itself is by no means free of this racism: consider that the very Supreme Court which accused the Orthodox families of racism has itself only one Sefardi judge among 14 (7%). Similarly, the very self-righteous media, guilty of irresponsible and imbalanced coverage of orthodox racism, has itself not even one Sefardi in a prominent position of public exposure. And let's not forget that the Shas party was initiated specifically because the Sefardim were discriminately excluded from the political system.

That does not mean to say that there is no discrimination of Ashkenazim against Sefardim in the religious sector. Admittedly, such an attitude does, unfortunately, exist among some Ashkenazim. This phenomenon has to be addressed and corrected. But in this instance, the courts and the media omitted information and distorted facts while also reporting them out of context and out of proportion of what really happened.

For example, the school claims that the reason the other girls were not accepted is because their parents refused to accept a code designed to uphold a higher standard of religiosity. [Such codes usually address internet and cell phone use, mode of dress, recreational activities, etc.] Those who accepted the code were accepted to the school, those who didn't were not, and it had nothing to do with ethnicity. In fact, a full quarter of the girls that were in the school are Sefardi and their fathers are in jail with the other fathers. [Parenthetically, compare this 25% of girls, which is not far from the percentage of Sefardi families in that

particular town, to the insignificant percentage of Sefardim in prominent positions in the judicial system, media and major political parties in country where over 50% are Sefardim.]

So why are these men in jail? In this particular case, because they demand the right to educate their children in a context consistent with their religious values, even if it means separating from those who don't share those values. (At one point, the parents moved their daughters to another, private school until the court questionably prohibited them from doing so). But also because, even in general, they believe that one is entitled to educate his children in a way that preserves his own family's or group's heritage. So what's this Jewish segregation all about?

As members of the "modern" world, we often ascribe to a melting pot mentality. The idea is to amalgamate disparate peoples and cultures into one united monolithic nation. The advantage is unity, stability and common purpose. The disadvantage is the disregard and disappearance of diversity in all spheres of life.

As in all matters, the Torah recommends a healthy fusion and balance between the two extremes. On the one hand, Judaism obviously dictates conformity of belief and law for a unified and stable national purpose. On the other hand, Judaism also celebrates and encourages the perpetuation of established familial and ethnical diversity and expression.

There are many examples of this in Judaism, but I'll mention several regarding the 12 Tribes of Israel, a motif which is central to the Jewish people's self and national perception and awareness:

The Midrash says that when the Jewish people departed Egypt and crossed the Reed Sea, they did not all cross together in the same path, but rather the sea split into 12 different tunnels for each Tribe who were separated one from the other by walls of water. Interestingly, the Sages note that the Tribes, though traveling separate but parallel routes, could still see each other through the walls of water. From this we see that despite the fact that the Jewish People were sharing a common experience and moving toward a common destiny, they were not merged into one singular mass, but rather maintained their diversity within the joint national venture of Redemption. As long as the Tribes were able to see each other through the walls of water [where water symbolizes Torah] this separation was not segregation but rather the celebration of diversity within the national experience.

Similarly, the Tribes maintained separate sections within the encampments of the Jewish People during their 40-year sojourn in the wilderness. And even after the conquest of the Land, it was divided into distinct, separate geographical areas for each Tribe. Biblical sources indicate that the different Tribes had distinct pronunciations, mannerisms and

*continued on page six*

## A GIFT FOR THE HOSTESS

**Question:** I am a student at a seminary far away from home and often eat Shabbat meals at the homes of generous hostesses. Is it expected of me to bring a gift as an expression of my gratitude? What is the right thing to do?

**Answer:** Our experience in inviting guests like yourself and the experience of other such hosts has taught us that families which invite you for a Shabbat meal do so out of

a desire to fulfill the mitzvah of *hachnasat orchim* hospitality and to enjoy your company. They certainly do not expect a gift but will not be offended if you bring one.

One word of caution. It is forbidden by *halacha* to give a gift on Shabbat itself. So either bring the gift before Shabbat or make sure it is a food item like wine or goodies that you can enjoy together with your hosts at the meal.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY \_\_\_\_\_

### THE STICKER THAT SAVED

In our *Parshat Terumah* issue we related the story of the car driven by an Arab which was stopped at Erez checkpoint and identified by the checkpoint commander as a stolen vehicle because its bumper sticker had three Hebrew words on it: *Ain od milvado*. ("There is no one but Him.")

How that sticker got on to that bumper is a story in itself. Some yeshiva students involved in outreach in the Jerusalem suburb of Maaleh Adumim had approached one of the residents who had just purchased a brand new car and tried to interest him in religious observance. When he stubbornly refused to listen they politely departed but not before asking him if he would mind if they put a sticker on his bumper with

a message of faith in G-d, and to their surprise he consented. Half an hour after the sticker was attached, the car was stolen from in front of the home of its owner who came running to the head of the yeshiva with a complaint of suffering such a loss after consenting to the placing of the sticker.

The rosh hayeshiva assured him that no harm could result from that sticker and even convened a group of students to say *Tehillim* for the distraught fellow to recover his car. An hour later the phone call came that the stolen car had been recovered – because of the identifying bumper sticker.

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*continued from page five*

customs. This is not viewed as being undesirable or detrimental to national unity. On the contrary, each Tribe's particular strengths, talents and characteristics are celebrated within the People's national unity. In fact, according to mystical sources in Judaism, each Tribe had their own form of prayer which had its own unique access and effect on the spiritual realm.

It is in this light that we should view the separation between different groups in Judaism: Ashkenazim, with the sub-groups of Yeshivish and Chasidic and the sub-sub-groups within Chasidic; as well as Sefardim, with their sub-groups; and also the Yemenites. Every effort should be made to preserve the beauty and unique contribution of each of these very important and integral facets of the Jewish People. There is nothing wrong, then, with establishing schools and determining criteria designed to preserve the

distinctiveness of these groups. The Sefardi rabbis also encourage the establishment of "Sefardi" schools in order to preserve and perpetuate their glorious and illustrious tradition.

Obviously, I'm not suggesting there be no contact between groups. On the contrary, on the social, communal, political and economic levels there should be, and is, natural and mutually beneficial interaction. Nor am I saying that there *must* be separation in education. I'm just saying that there is nothing wrong with maintaining institutions designed to preserve a specific community's unique expression of Judaism. As long as the different groups see each other through the lens of Torah – by loving, respecting and celebrating each other's Torah-based traditions, customs and practices – we can cross this divide of exile together toward Redemption.