

PARASHAT PINCHAS

(PHINEHAS)

NUMBERS 25:10-30:1 [29:40]

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

1 Kings 18:46-19:21

B'rit Chadashah

On spiritual and moral purity: **2 Corinthians 11:2**

On spiritual adultery and fornication with the world: **2 Peter 2:14-22**

On meekness (relating to the daughters of Zelophehad) and the spiritual inheritance of the saints: **Matthew 5:5; Revelation 5:10**

On the equality of woman (relating to the daughters of Zelophehad) in Israel: **Galatians 3:28**

On the qualifications of spiritual leaders: **1 Timothy 3:2-7; 5:22**

On daily bringing our spiritual sacrifices (prayer and spiritual service) to YHVH: **Romans 12:1**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

—**25:10** Phinehas Rewarded for His Righteous Zeal

—**25:16** YHVH Commands Israel to Harass Midian

—**26:1** A New Census of Israel Is Taken

—**26:57** The Count of the Levites

—**27:1** The Grievance of Zelophehad's Daughters and the Resulting Laws of Inheritance

—**27:12** YHVH Shows Moses the Promised Land

—**27:15** Moses Asks for a Successor

—**28:1-30:1** The Continual Daily (*Tamid*) Offering; Additional (*Mussaf*) Offerings of the Weekly and Annual Sabbaths and New Moons

Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

1 **25:17**, *Harass ... and smite them*. Midian is symbolic of the immoral pleasures of the society that surrounds the people of YHVH and that will subvert and overtake the righteous if left unchecked. YHVH commanded Israel to constantly harass and attack the Midianites for their subversion of Israel sexually. The best defense is a strong offense. As *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* points out, harassing the Midianites was to be an on-going state of mind (p. 877). Likewise, fighting the sin that would attempt

to gain entrance into our lives must be a constant state of mind. YHVH commanded Israel to *harass* the Midianites and then to *smite* them. When sin arises, because our offensive and defensive positions against sin are secure, we will be ready to *smite* the sin that dogs us. What are you (especially you men) doing to combat the sexual enticements of the surrounding wicked and perverse generation? What do you watch on television including the advertisements? Do you listen to immoral music? Are your conversations with your friends and coworkers always clean and pure? What do you allow your eyes to see that is sexually explicit? Do you vigorously and aggressively confront it for the evil that it is and take a stand against it both in your heart and mind and do so openly? As YHVH commanded Israel to view Midian as the enemy because of their lust for immoral pleasure, so we must despise the world around us as our enemy in this regard for its debauchery and idolatry. (Read 1 Cor 10:3–5.)

2 The rabbis teach that Balaam and Midian co-conspired at engineering the demise of Israel through sensual enticements. Make no mistake about it, sex is a very powerful motivating force in the affairs of humans. Some will do anything (including murder or denying Yeshua) for a few moments of sensual gratification. Are there forces afoot in our society today attempting to corrupt the morally pure by drawing them into unrighteousness and degradation sexually? What are the means by which this is occurring? Discuss the assault of raunchiness and filth and what the saints can do to keep from getting sucked into its cesspool.

3 **25:11**, *In my jealousy*. YHVH is a jealous Elohim. The word *jealous* is the Hebrew word *qanna/קנא* (*Strong's H7067*) meaning “to envy, be jealous, be envious, be zealous.” *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* states, “Jealousy is a person’s reaction when he finds that another is taking something that is rightly his. [Elohim] is jealous when Jews serve idols, because they transfer their allegiance from Him to something else.” p. 876). Torah expresses this same idea elsewhere:

You shall not bow down yourself to [idols], nor serve them, for I YHVH thy Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. (Exod 20:5)

For you shall worship no other god, for YHVH, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous El. (Exod 34:14)

For YHVH your Elohim is a consuming fire, even a jealous El. (Deut 4:24)

You shalt not bow down yourself unto them, nor serve them, for I YHVH your Elohim am a jealous El, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. (Deut 5:9)

For YHVH your Elohim is a jealous El among you lest the anger of YHVH your Elohim be kindled against you, and destroy you from off the face of the earth. (Deut 6:15)

Why is YHVH jealous over his people? Could the answer perhaps lie in why a husband is jealous over his wife? Does YHVH view us in the same way? Read Ezekiel 16, which describes his espousal and marriage to his wife, Israel, and her subsequent adultery. The next time you are tempted to commit the sin of idolatry/spiritual adultery (to place anything in your life—e.g. money, entertainment, hobbies, sensual pleasures, food, television, family and friends, career—higher than your devotion, service and obedience to YHVH) perhaps remembering that YHVH is jealous over you will act as a deterrence to sin.

4 **25:12–13**, *An everlasting priesthood*. YHVH rewarded Phinehas for taking a stand against the wickedness of immorality that threatened to destroy Israel. When was the last time you took an outward and open stand for anything? Are you passive in your convictions preferring not to rock the boat or to say anything that might offend? Are you a closet believer? Are salt and light passive or do they make their presence known? (See Matt 5:13–16.) Are those in the redeemed body of Messiah more likely to “take a stand” against their fellow believers over some minor issue long before they lift up a righteous complaint against the forces of hell bent on destroying our very nation morally and spiritually? Do you take “righteous” stands against your brethren over non-issues, yet let pass the greater evils in society that threaten to destroy us all? When was the last time you wrote a letter, made a phone call, held up a sign in a picket, called a radio talk show, put a controversial bumper sticker or sign on your car, voted or in some other way made your opinion known (let your light shine) in the society? If you’re inactive in this regard, perhaps you are part of the problem and not part of the solution. As the famous proverb states, “All it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

- 5** **Numbers 26** lists 70 clans within Israel. Each clan was given a land apportionment within the land of Israel. There were 70 nations among the sons of Noah (Gen 10), 70 members of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling body which governed Israel) and Yeshua had, in addition to the 12 disciples 70 additional disciples (Luke 10:1). What is the significance of the number 70 (hint: 7 x 10)? Perhaps the 70 clans and 70 disciples were to evangelize the 70 nations with the Word of Elohim? What is your personal vision and role in helping to fulfill this YHVH-ordained mission of Israel? Or are you just content to play the church and religion game making no impact on those around you at all because you are afraid of what others might think? What was said of the leading religionists of Yeshua's day? "For they loved the praises of men more than the praises of Elohim!" (John 12:43)
- 6** **27:15–23**, What aspects of Joshua's character made him qualified to be Moses' successor (and therefore a prophetic shadow-picture of Yeshua) and to lead Israel into the Promised Land? Look in a concordance, Bible dictionary or a Bible search computer program under "Joshua" to see what you find about his character traits. Let us not forget that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews compares Joshua/Yehoshua with Yeshua, which is a shortened form of the name Yehoshua, for both were to give their people "rest" by leading them into the Promised Land. (See Heb 4, specifically verse 8.)
- 7** **28:9**, *On the Sabbath day*. Every Sabbath YHVH required double sacrifices to be offered. This being a foundational principle, shouldn't we spend more time seeking him on Shabbat? What types of activities should fill our Sabbath time that are of a devotional, worshipful nature? Shouldn't all of our Sabbath-day activities somehow point to YHVH, and in some way strengthen our walk with and ties to our Creator, and our ties to others who are of the household of faith? Let's not forget an important truth: Keeping Torah is not about *bondage* (to a legalistic set of do's and don'ts); it's a vehicle to promote *bonding* (building loving relationship between man and his Creator, between man and his fellow man).
- 8** **29:12ff**, YHVH commanded the priests to offer seventy bulls during Sukkot, which was a feast representing the harvest of the nations into YHVH's kingdom. What does this say about YHVH's heart for the Gentiles or *Goyim* (or "people of the nations")? Who was his instrument in reaching them with the message of his Word? Who is his instrument now?
- 9** **29:16ff**, The appointed times or feasts of YHVH were days of great rejoicing and celebration, yet they were also days when YHVH commanded sacrifices to be offered. What does this teach us about our need to never forget about the sin that does so easily beset us as well as about the Kadosh (Set-Apart) One of Israel who took away our sin guilt?

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD & WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Does the Torah Exalt or Denigrate Women?

Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

Hoshana Rabbah Messianic Discipleship Resources

We find an interesting discussion in *A Torah Commentary For Our Times/ATCFOT* (UHAC Press, NY, 1993) regarding the incident involving the daughters of Zelophehad (Num 27:1–11) that may answer some questions that contemporary women have regarding the Torah's view of women. "Modern commentator Jacob Milgrom contrasts ancient Israelite practices of inheritance with those of their neighbors." He notes that the practice of equality of inheritance between sons and daughters was upheld in Egypt and Mesopotamia one thousand years before the codification of the Torah. Later on the Greeks can be added to this list of countries that practiced "equal rights." Milgrom then asks, "In face of such 'equality' of treatment how then are we to explain the fact that the Bible gives women no inheritance rights except in the case where there are no sons?" Does the Torah seem to discriminate against women regarding the inheritance of land and property from the estates of their parents, he asks? (p. 80)

Some believe the Apostle Paul viewed women as second-class citizens, at least regarding their involvement in

the local congregation. Is this a fair assessment?

(To read the entirety of this article about the Bible's view of women in ministry, please go to the article at: http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/daughters_zelophehad.pdf.)

1 KINGS 18:46-19:21

Strength For the Journey: A Touch From YHVH

The connection between the Parashah and the Haftorah portions are the shared traits between Phinehas and Elijah. Both were uncompromising in their zeal for YHVH and stalwart defenders of the faith. As *The ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* points out, Phinehas bravely went after an Israelite prince and a Moabite princess, and Elijah took on King Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel. "Each was unstinting and unflinching in protecting the nation from the inroads that idolatry had been making into the Israelite camp and from the consequences of that idolatry's treachery" (p. 1190).

1 Men of great faith are still mere men, and are thus subject to the vicissitudes of human emotions. They need our prayers and support as they battle against the powers of evil. Within the psalms of David, for example, we find recorded the zenith of human joy as well as the depth of pathos.

2 **19:3-4**, *He arose and went*. What was behind Elijah's flight from the wrath of wicked Jezebel? Did he flee the Northern Kingdom to the safe haven of Beersheba in the kingdom of Judah merely to save his skin in light of Jezebel's threats? When having arrived safely in Judah, who was ruled by the righteous king Jehoshaphat, why then did he feel the need to continue his journey all the way to Mount Sinai? Was this mighty prophet who had just slain the prophets of Baal in Jezebel's backyard in sight of the people of Israel now shaking wimpily in his sandals as the Israelite queen screeched out her threats against him? Did this man of faith not have faith enough to believe that YHVH would preserve him from his enemies as he had until then?

Keil and Delitzsch, in their commentary on this passage, state that it was not for fear of Jezebel that Elijah trekked to Sinai, but rather to pour out to YHVH Elohim his weariness of life and the frustrations of ministry to an obstinate and backslid people. If he fled into the wilderness to save his life, why then did he ask to die there by YHVH's hand (verse 4)?

It seems clear that Elijah went into the wilderness to have his spiritual strength renewed and to hear a fresh word from YHVH that would sharpen his ministry vision and spiritual focus. The Hebrew word for *wilderness* is *midbar* (*Strong's* H4057) and derives from the root word *debar* (*Strong's* H1696) meaning "to speak, declare, converse, command, promise, or warn." The wilderness was the place of solitude and quiet away from the noise and clutter of life where Elijah went to hear a fresh word from YHVH, to commune with his Creator and to have his spirit refreshed.

What other notable biblical character did the same? (See Matt 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 4:1,14; 6:12.) Who do you turn to and what do you do when you become weary in well-doing? (Gal 6:9; 2Thess 3:13). Let those who labor in YHVH's spiritual field not lose hope, for they will reap if they do not faint from weariness in the mean time, and though the sowing may be laborious, painful and bitter at times, bountiful and joyful reaping will eventually come (Ps 126:5-6).

3 **18:8**, *Horeb* is another name for Mount Sinai and means "to lay waste, to slay, to make desolate" (*Strong's* H2722). Elijah had just spent 40 days fasting before arriving at the mount of YHVH. What is the purpose of fasting? In Hebraic thought, fasting is referred to as "afflicting the soul," which is another way of saying, "crucifying the flesh." Fasting involves sublimating the flesh, thus allowing the spirit man to rise up allowing it to become more receptive to hearing the voice of YHVH's Spirit. Did Elijah find what he was seeking in this regard? Did he hear YHVH's voice, become spiritually rejuvenated and receive a new vision for his ministry?

- 4** **19:9**, *The cave*. Some English translations read “a cave,” but the Hebrew uses the definite article *the*, not the indefinite article *a*. This is *the* cave on Mount Sinai, but which cave? This is believed to be the exact spot where Moses hid in the cleft of the rock when YHVH revealed to him his glory and grace (Exod 33:12–34:9, see *Keil and Delitzsch*, vol. 3, p. 180; *The Soncino Pentateuch*, p. 700). Why would Elijah return to this particular spot? What can we learn from Elijah? Are there times in our life when we need to revisit places of great spiritual importance in order to spiritually reconnect with YHVH?
- 5** **19:9**, *What are you doing here?* This question of YHVH was doubtless meant to be a reality check for the prophet. YHVH repeats the question in verse 13. Elijah had fled Israel in discouragement at the apparent failure of his mission to permanently end the apostasy among YHVH’s people. Elijah sought refuge in the cleft of the rock in Mount Sinai where Moses many generations earlier had seen the Presence of YHVH (*The Soncino Pentateuch*, p. 700). Can there be anything wrong with fleeing to Yeshua when in the midst of despair, in seeking his face, and endeavoring to hear a word from him of direction and encouragement? Is this your response to adversity? What was YHVH’s response to Elijah? Did he rebuke him, or lovingly respond to Elijah’s emotional needs? Will not our tender Father in heaven do the same for us in our time of need? What did YHVH show Elijah? That he was not alone in his battle against wickedness, but that there were others who could stand with him (*Ibid.*). YHVH helped Elijah to refocus his spiritual sights, and, in addition, validated his ministry by giving him some new assignments.
- 6** **19:11ff**, What is the deeper meaning behind the earthquake, the fire and finally, the still small voice? What major lesson was YHVH endeavoring to teach the prophet; what deep truth about his method of operation in the affairs of men through the hands of his servants was YHVH trying to convey? The design of the vision was to show to this fiery and zealous prophet, who wanted to reform everything by means of quick action, the gentle way which Elohim pursues, and to proclaim the long-suffering and mildness of his nature, as the voice had already done to Moses on that very spot (*Keil and Delitzsch*, vol. 3, pp. 181–182). In other words, men who are movers and shakers often want to see definable, decisive and quick results for their efforts and despair when such does not occur, yet this is not usually the way of the moving of YHVH’s Spirit. YHVH moves slowly, patiently, almost imperceptibly in the affairs of men changing hearts and minds to jive with his sovereign will and grace, giving men time and space to repent. Recognizing this, YHVH’s servants must minister faithfully and in faith according to their divine callings, while keeping their eyes on YHVH all the while leaving the results to him.
- 7** **19:14**, *I only, am left*. In his moment of rejection and dejection, this feeling was very strong and colored Elijah’s entire outlook. Yet YHVH corrected Elijah informing him of the bigger perspective and the true reality that there was a faithful remnant who had not bowed to Baal. We may suppose that Elijah’s ministry in defending the faith had contributed to these people remaining faithful to YHVH. Like a sower sowing good seed wherever we go, we must have faith that our efforts on behalf of YHVH’s kingdom are yielding results, though we may not yet see them. The just shall walk by faith, not by sight.
- 8** **19:19**, *Elisha ... who was plowing*. Elijah found Elisha not, as Matthew Henry points out in his commentary, in the schools of the prophets—or, in our day, in a seminary or other religious institution—but in the field; not reading, or praying, or sacrificing, but plowing. This is the man YHVH chose to be Elijah’s successor. Beware of those who while eating the bread of idleness are “called” to be in the ministry. Are those who use the social welfare system to support themselves while in the ministry following the biblical model? Think of those biblical personages who were the most influential in advancing the kingdom of YHVH. How were they employed just prior to their being launched into their divinely appointed mission? Among these notable ranks we find a carpenter, fishermen, shepherds, and orchard keepers, to name a few. If YHVH hasn’t chosen you for a special ministry just yet, then make your secular job your ministry, looking for opportunities to be a witness for Yeshua, and see YHVH bless the works of your hands in a special way as you seek first his kingdom and his righteousness in all that you do (Matt 6:33).
- 9** **19:19**, *Twelve yoke of oxen*. Often our secular jobs will be predictive of the spiritual calling that rests on our lives. Elijah’s twelve yoke of oxen may figuratively represent the twelve tribes of Israel (2 Chron 4:15), while the field represents the world (Matt 13:38). Israel was to be the instrument in YHVH’s hands

through which his will and way (the Torah) would be disseminated throughout the world (Deut 4:6; Isa 49:6), yet because of her apostasy she had failed in this mission. YHVH was now calling Elisha to be a prophet who would plow up Israel's spiritual fallow ground in an effort to bring them back to YHVH and back to their calling to be a light of truth to the nations. They were to be a mirror reflecting the light of YHVH's Torah into the darkness of this world as the moon reflects the light of the sun in the night. Instead, Israel, in her idolatrous state, was a mirror reflecting the ways of the world. What is your spiritual calling? If you're not sure, perhaps the career in which you are currently employed, or that which is in your heart to do if you could, is but the shadow pointing to your ministry calling. Pray and meditate about this.

