

Haftarah Weekly

Shabbat Pinchas – Melachim 1 18:46 – 19:21

To understand this weeks Haftarah we have to understand what happened before. Achav was the king of Israel and he and his wife Jezebel was very wicked in the eyes of Hashem. Jezebel previously killed all the true prophets of Hashem, because she wanted only false and Baal (a popular Avodah Zara) prophets to remain. However, Eliyahu Hanavi was the only one who remained alive. This is what Eliyahu Hanavi says later: ‘...they have killed Your prophets with the sword, so that I alone have remained...’ (19:10). After this Eliyahu gathers the people to Mount Carmel, where Achav and the Baal prophets were. There the Baal prophets fail in their attempts to have their own sacrifices accepted. But for Eliyahu Hanavi a great miracle happens that fire comes down and burns his sacrifice and the water around it. The people respond with acknowledging that Hashem is the only G-d, and the people kill all the Baal prophets.

So our Haftarah in the second passuk tells us that Achav told Jezebel, his wife that tried to kill all the prophets of Hashem, the news of what happened at Mount Carmel. Jezebel sends a message to Eiyahu Hanavi that he will be killed tomorrow. Eliyahu Hanavi flees to the wilderness and sits under a rose-bush there, begging Hashem to take his soul. Hashem answers this by sending an angel who brings food to Eliyahu twice. He traveled 40 days and nights, from the strength of the meal, to Mount Chorev which is another name for Mount

Sinai. Eliyahu Hanavi receives a revelation.

“...And behold, Hashem passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks in pieces before Hashem; but Hashem was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but Hashem was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but Hashem was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.” Even though at Mount Sinai there was lightning and thunder when the Jewish people received the Torah, Eliyahu Hanavi sees the repeat scene at Mount Sinai and doesn’t see Hashem in it. He sees Hashem in the kol demema daka it’s the voice that can be heard by those who pay attention to it.

The Malbim explains the message along these lines. Eliyahu Hanavi was known as a zealot, he describes himself as one in passuk 19:10. Eliyahu Hanavi did many ‘loud’ things, at the miracle at Mount Carmel and then the killing all the Baal prophets. But the message here is that now one shouldn’t do these loud things, just as Hashem isn’t found in the loud wind and fire. However, one should bring the people back with love and softer words.

A connection between this week’s Sedra and the Haftarah is the characters of Pinchas and Eliyahu Hanavi. Both of them were zealots, but our Rabbis go further and say that these people were the same person. This explains why it never says about Eliyahu Hanavi that he was the son of anybody. May we see Eliyahu Hanavi come back with the Mashiach speedily.



לעלוי נשמת ר' אליהו רחמים בן מאיר דוד ע"ה ואחיו ר' עבדאללה פרג בן מאיר דוד ע"ה
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Women: Preservers of Jewish Life?

‘And the daughters of Tzelafchod drew near’

Many people seem to think that Judaism is sexist – refusing to give an equal balance of mitzvos to men and women. However there is clear evidence written throughout the torah that demonstrates the antithesis of such a theory.

The Midrash Rabbah comments that in the generations of old, women could repair bridges that were broken with regard to religious observance. At this point it is crucial to acknowledge that these breeches were the fault of men originally. This is evident from the story of the golden calf when Aharon haCohen told the people ‘remove the golden rings that are in the ears of your wives,’ (Shemos 32:2). An idea that the women instantly rejected (as they wouldn’t relinquish their jewellery for anything), as indicated by the next verse ‘and the entire people had the golden rings that were in their ears removed’ (Shemos 32:3). No women agreed to be a part of the worshipping of the golden calf.

The daughters of Tzelafchod were just another

example of this principle. The men did not want to enter the land of Israel as portrayed by the story of the spies, whereas women ‘drew near’ to request land for themselves. For this reason, the story follows the verse concerning the death of the generation of the wilderness, ‘and not a man was left of them except for Calev son of Yiphuneh, and Yehoshua son of Nun’ (Bamidbar 26:65).

Perhaps a further source for equality is when Hashem says to Moshe in Parshas Yisro ‘so you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell to the B’nei Yisrael’ (Shemos 19:3). Rashi states there that the ‘house of Jacob’ refers to the women to whom one should use the lighter method of communication, ‘speaking’ rather than the harsher method of ‘telling’ – a method used by men.

Clearly from here we can see that Judaism is not prejudiced to men or women and it may only be because men are less controlled that the constant focus of the Torah appears to be on them.

Written by James Joseph

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M'lachah of the Week

Memacheik – Smoothing

The hides of the rams had to be scraped and smoothed to process the finished leather needed for the coverings of the Mishkan. Similar to smoothing hides, Memachaik only applies to surfaces that are firm. For example, sanding or smoothing a wooden or leather surface would be Memachaik.

Memarai'ach is a to'l'dah that stems from Memachaik. The prohibition of Memarai'ach applies to the smoothing of substances that can be molded; for example, wax, creams and ointments. It does not apply to completely viscous substances, so things like liquid soap do not even fall under the rabbinic prohibition. The rabbinic prohibition also only refers to smearing. Pressing cream onto the skin, however, may be permitted, providing one is careful only to press and not to smear.

Words of the Wise

Every day the old man would be sitting in the same place in the shul. He always had a sweet in his pocket for any children who were brave enough to walk up to him. He never spoke much after shul to the other members of the community and mainly kept himself to himself.

The only people to notice his absence were these children. After repeated questions to their parents about the 'sweetie man' the kids alerted the community to his absence. The community leaders decided to visit his house and check to see if he was well. They started knocking on the door of his small house, but there was no answer. After a few days of trying they decided to call the police, who broke into the house and found the old man lying on the floor, having passed away.

A thorough search unearthed an address book, which they intended to use to try and contact the man's relatives.

The Rav phoned up the man's son, who had been the only relative that was indicated in the address book.

He became hostile as soon as he learned he was speaking to a Rabbi, and although he was shocked at the news, he refused to attend the levaya. 'Why should I? I haven't spoken to my father in years!'

The Rav was shocked in turn, as he had never heard of a son refusing to turn up for their father's

funeral. He tried to change the son's mind, saying 'At least come for the sake of saying kaddish.'

This had no effect, and even made the son's anger worse, since he perceived the Rabbi to be trying to get him involved in 'Jewish things.'

Following much discussion, the Rav managed to persuade him to come, by telling him that saying Kaddish would also be a merit for him, if he could at least set aside his grievances with his father for a short time.

The next problem facing the Rabbi was to try and set a time suitable for the man's son. He was a high-flying businessman with a Twin Towers office, and therefore had to be exactly on time every day. They decided to fix the date and time for the funeral as September 11 at 8.00 in the morning.

The day of the levaya arrived, and the son recited kaddish, repeating the words after the Rav. After he had said kaddish, during the rest of the funeral service, people started to receive phone calls, and stand up to leave. Word quickly spread about events at the Twin Towers, and soon the son was left alone by his father's grave.

In a stunned tone of voice, he kept muttering the words 'Thank you father, for giving me life, and for saving it.'

Source: *revach.net*

Gematria of the Week

In this week's parsha, Hashem tells Moshe that he too will be gathered into his people – just like Aharon his brother. The gematria of אהרן אחיך, 'your brother Aharon passed away' is the same as that of זהו בנשיקה 'this is with a kiss' showing that Moshe would pass from this world with a kiss from Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

(במדבר כז:ג) - based on the Ba'al Haturim

Pinchas and his Covenant

In this week's Sedrah, Hashem promises Pinchas his 'brisi shalom' (covenant of peace), after Pinchas kills Zimri for his aveirah with Cosbi, a Midyanite woman. The Poskim ask why it was necessary for G-d to give Pinchas a 'covenant', and why it was one of 'shalom'?

Rashi brings the pshat that Hashem was expressing his gratitude and good will towards Pinchas as a result of the great Kiddush Hashem displayed through his actions. The term 'brisi' is therefore used, as it is a word associated with one who is indebted to another, and thus G-d bestowed Pinchas with this great reward of peace.

The Ibn Ezra, however, says that 'shalom' implies 'protection', for Zimri was a prince and a popular leader, so naturally there would be repercussions amongst his followers. By promising him peace, therefore, G-d is vowing to protect Pinchas from any harm which he will encounter at the hands of Zimri's supporters.

The Chizkuni says that Pinchas was worried that he would lose the Kehunah, for it says in Gemarah Brochos that if a Cohen kills someone, he cannot duchen any longer. Therefore, G-d reassures Pinchas that despite this act, he will retain his Kehunah. This begs the question, however, as to why a Cohen should lose the Kehunah if he kills somebody? Though clearly a terrible crime, why should it

necessarily result in losing the ability to duchen, for instance?

The Rambam writes that the reason the Leviim did not receive any one portion of land when Eretz Yisroel was divided is due to the fact that they are a people who are supposed to act as spiritual guides and teachers to the community, detached, in the main, from earthly involvement. Not only is the act of Killing diametrically opposed to this concept, for it is an act 'involved' in worldly matters, but an act of such aggression renders their existence utterly meaningless.

There is a Tosfos in Yevamos which explains that the reason a Cohen can't duchen if he kills is due to the fact that the act completely contradicts the principle of 'ohev shalom ve rodef shalom' which every Cohen in particular should strive to follow.

On a personal level, the act of killing was against Pinchas' very nature, for he was a man naturally inclined towards the pursuit of peace. The Pasuk indicates therefore, that although Pinchas had left the 'bubble' of peace by killing Zimri, G-d nevertheless promised him that he would eventually be able to return to it.

Yoseph Citron

Source: *Chaburah given by David Pruwer*