



Yeshivat Ma'alot

Parashat Pinchas

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ישיבת מעלות

פרשת פנזוס

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The Final Preparations

In this week`s parasha, we find that many of Bnei Yisrael`s past downfalls are mentioned – Korach¹, Nadav and Avihu², the spies³, and Mei Meriva⁴ (where Moshe hit the rock). Chazal also add to this the sin of Tzlophchad, who died of his own sins. Why was it necessary to mention all of these wrongdoings as part of the preparations of entering Eretz Yisrael?

These stories teach a crucial lesson to Bnei Yisrael as they prepare to enter Eretz Yisrael. It is necessary to mention these transgressions of Bnei Yisrael in order to ensure that Bnei Yisrael will not repeat them a second time. By reviewing these past events, Bnei Yisrael is reminded what not to do, and how, by avoiding these downfalls, they can come closer to perfection.

This idea is true both in the days of Moshe, as he prepares Bnei Yisrael to enter the Land, and in our days, as we return to Eretz Yisrael from the four corners of the Galut. Trying to forget the pains and the hardships of two thousand years of exile, and simply begin from a clean slate, can ultimately hurt us. We must take with us the lessons that we have learned, the hardships we have endured, and the downfalls that we have experienced, and by using them as a stepping stool, elevate Am Yisrael's future and ourselves. By learning from the “mistakes” of the Galut, we can try to build our new lives in Eretz Yisrael in a more complete way. The desire to renew must follow a deep introspection of our past.

The majority of the Parasha deals with the preparations for entering Eretz Yisrael: counting the Nation, dividing up the Land, and defining new leadership. There are two other subjects in the Parasha which seem to have no connection to entering the Eretz Yisrael- Pinchas and the detailed description of the Korbanot.

Chazal see a connection between Yehoshua becoming the next leader and the Korbanot as expanded upon in the Sifri⁵. With regard to the Korbanot the pasuk says "And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, command Bnei Yisrael... my offering..." With regard to Yehoshua the pasuk says "And Moshe Spoke to Hashem saying, let

¹ Bamidbar 26: 9-11, 27:3

² Ibid. 26: 61

³ Ibid. 26: 62-65

⁴ Ibid. 27: 14

⁵ Sifri, Pinchas 11

Hashem, the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them and who may lead them..." The Sifri gives a parable to explain the relation between the p'sukim: This can be compared to the wife of a king who was departing from the world. She gave instructions to her husband regarding her children. She said to him " I beseech you, please take care of my children". He said to her "rather than you commanding me about my children, command my children to honor me; that they not disobey me and treat me disrespectfully". So did The Holy One, Blessed is He, say to Moshe, "Rather than you commanding Me about My children, command My children about Me, that they not treat Me disrespectfully, and they not replace My honor with foreign gods".

Moshe wants Hashem to continue caring for Bnei Yisrael as He has been throughout all of the years in the desert- supernaturally. He asks that Yehoshua be a leader who will continue in this path. Yet Hashem tells Moshe "Command Bnei Yisrael"- the leadership in Eretz Yisrael is not above nature rather it comes from within Bnei Yisrael. Bnei Yisrael, and Yehoshua as their leader, will need to bring down Hashem's blessing through their own hard work and efforts.

This comes to show how the other issues in this week's Parasha also revolve around the common theme of the preparations towards entering Eretz Yisrael. They exemplify how Bnei Yisrael prepared for a new type of leadership, one that is rooted in the Nation and not in heavenly miracles.