HADAR Children & Families

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 39

פִּינְחָס Pinhas

Because learning Torah is sweet

DeVAsH

י"ג – י"ט תַּמּוּז תשפ"ו

June 28–July 4, 2026

מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Pinhas saved Benei Yisrael from a plague, and his reward is a בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם (brit shalom, covenant of peace).
- Time for another census! The total number of Benei Yisrael is 601,730, not including the שֵׁבֶט (shevet, tribe) of Levi.
- The information from this census is used to divide Eretz Yisrael fairly. There will be a lottery, but bigger families get more and smaller families get less.
- The five בְּנוֹת צְלָפְחָד (benot Tzelofhad, daughters of Tzelofhad) ask whether they can inherit land from their father, who died. At that time, land was normally inherited by sons; but Tzelofhad had only daughters. God answers: Yes, they can inherit their father's land.
- God tells Moshe to climb Mt. Avarim and look at Eretz Yisrael from a distance because he will not be able to enter. Moshe asks for a good leader to replace him, and God says it will be Yehoshua.
- The parashah closes with the details of the קָרְבְּנוֹת צִבּוּר (korbenot tzibbur), communal sacrifices offered on regular days, Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, and holidays.

פְּשַׁט הַפְּסוּקִים • Understanding the Verses

Here's how the בְּנוֹת צְלָפְחָד (benot Tzelofhad, daughters of Tzelofhad) present their question.

Bemidbar 27:2-4

They stood before Moshe, Elazar the priest, the nesi'im (chiefs), and the whole community, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said:

"Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of Korah's group, which banded together against God. He died for his own sin; and he had no sons.

Why should our father's name be lost to his family just because he had no son? Let us inherit the land together with our father's family!

במדבר כז:ב-ד

וַתַּעֲמֹדְנָה לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְלִפְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר
הַכֹּהֵן וְלִפְנֵי הַנְּשִׂיאִם וְכָל הָעֵדָה
פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר:

אָבִינוּ מֵת בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהוּא לֹא הָיָה בְּתוֹךְ
הָעֵדָה הַנּוֹעָדִים עַל ה' בַּעֲדַת קֹרַח
כִּי בְחֶטְאוֹ מֵת
וּבָנִים לֹא הָיוּ לוֹ:

לָמָּה יִגָּרַע שֵׁם אָבִינוּ מִתּוֹךְ מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ
כִּי אֵין לוֹ בֵּן
תְּנָה לָנוּ אֲחֻזָּה בְּתוֹךְ אֲחֵי אָבִינוּ:

- What do you notice? What do you wonder about?
- What exactly are the benot Tzelofhad asking for? What's the reason for their request?
- How do you think the benot Tzelofhad felt when presenting their question in front of Moshe, Elazar, the nesi'im, and the whole people? How do you feel when you have to ask a question and you don't know what the answer will be? What can you learn about the benot Tzelofhad from the fact that they were able to ask their question with so many people watching?
- What would have happened if they hadn't asked their question? What are the reasons it's important to ask questions? What can make it hard?
- The Talmud (Bavli Sanhedrin 8a) suggests that the benot Tzelofhad get credit for new mitzvot being written in the Torah. How did their question add to the Torah? How can yours?



מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Bemidbar 27:16-17

"Let God, **the Lord of the spirits of all people,** appoint someone over the community,

who will go out before them and come in before them, and who will take them out and bring them in, so that God's community will not be like sheep that have no shepherd."

במדבר כז:טז-יז

יִפְקֹד ה' אֱלֹקֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל בָּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה:

אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא לִפְנֵיהֶם וַאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לִפְנֵיהֶם וַאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וַאֲשֶׁר יְבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֲדַת ה' כַּצֹּאן אֲשֶׁר אֵין לָהֶם רֹעֶה:



In these pesukim, Moshe is asking God to make sure that Benei Yisrael have a good leader after he dies. But why does Moshe describe God as "the Lord of the spirits of all people?" What does רוּחֹת (ruhot, spirits) mean here?

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are **bugged** by something unusual in the Torah text

Tanhuma Pinhas 10

Just as people's faces are unlike one another, so are their personalities unlike one another...

Know that it is so, because of what Moshe asked from the Holy Blessed One, at the time of his death, when he said, "Master of the world, the mind of each and every person is known to You; and none of Your children is similar to any other. When I am taken from them, please... appoint someone who will tolerate each and every one of them according to their mind."

Where is this idea found? As it is written, "Let God, the Lord of the spirits of all people..."

תנחומא פנחס י

כְּשֵׁם שֶׁאֵין פַּרְצוּפֵיהֶם שָׁוִין זֶה לָזֶה, כָּךְ אֵין דַּעְתָּם שָׁוִין זֶה לָזֶה...

תֵּדַע לְךָ שֶׁהוּא כֵן, מֹשֶׁה מְבַקֵּשׁ מִן הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בְּשָׁעַת מִיתָתוֹ, וְאוֹמֵר לְפָנָיו, רִבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנֶיךָ דַּעְתָּם שֶׁל כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, וְאֵין בְּשֶׁל בָּנֶיךָ דּוֹמֶה זֶה לָזֶה. כְּשֶׁאֲנִי מִסְתַּלֵּק מֵהֶן, בְּבַקָּשָׁה מִמְּךָ...מַנֵּה עֲלֵיהֶם אָדָם שֶׁיְּהֵא סוֹבֵל לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד לְפִי דַּעְתּוֹ.

מִנַּיִן...שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "יִפְקֹד ה' אֱלֹקֵי הָרוּחוֹת לְכָל בָּשָׂר."



The midrash explains that Moshe used special language to request that Benei Yisrael would get a leader who would be like God—able to be a leader of a whole nation, but still appreciate and accept each person for who they are, no matter how different they may be.

Content and editing by Yitzhak Bronstein, Elie Kaunfer, Chana Kupetz, Shoshie Lockshin, Jeremy Tabick, Ethan Tucker, Effy Unterman. Illustration by Rivka Tsinman. Design by Jen Klor.

- What does it mean to know someone's mind? What do we learn from the fact that God is able to do this?
- Why is it important to recognize that people have different thoughts and personalities?
- What does it look like to tolerate people who are very different from you? Why is that an important thing for a leader to do? What makes that hard to do?
- Can you think of a teacher or leader that you know who is really good at adapting what they do for all the different personalities that they teach or lead? How does it feel to be in a classroom or community where every person, no matter how different, is noticed and valued?



פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

After Pinhas stops a plague by killing two guilty people with a spear, his reward from God is a בְּרִית שָׁלוֹם (brit shalom, covenant of peace) (Bemidbar 25:12).

What is this brit shalom, and why might it be a fitting reward for Pinhas?

Ibn Ezra (Spain, 950 years ago)

Pinhas' reward was that he and his children after him would have a brit of eternal priesthood in that any future kohen gadol would be descendants of Pinhas, even though Elazar (Pinhas' father) had other children.

אבן עזרא

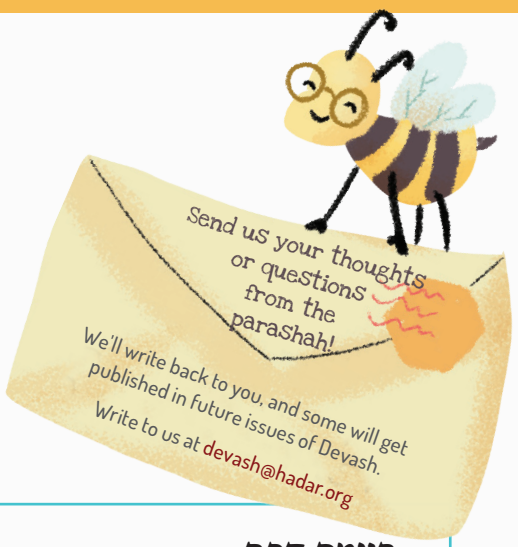
וּשְׂכָרוֹ שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לוֹ וּלְזַרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו בְּרִית כְּהֻנַּת עוֹלָם וְנֶצַח כִּי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַגְּדוֹלִים הָיוּ מִבְּנֵי פִּינְחָס וְיִתָּכֵן שֶׁהָיוּ בָּנִים אֲחֵרִים לְאֶלְעָזָר.

- Take a look at pasuk 13. What evidence can you find there that this brit shalom was a brit giving Pinhas the priesthood?



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- What might it mean that being a kohen is connected to peace? (For one angle, look up Bemidbar 6:23-27.)
- Aharon is famous for "loving peace and pursuing peace" (Mishnah Avot 1:12). In what ways could Pinhas' violent action be understood as creating peace?



Ha'amek Davar
(Eastern Europe, 150 years ago)

The nature of the act that Pinhas did—to kill a person with his hand—is likely to leave behind a harsh feeling in the heart afterwards. But, because he acted for the sake of Heaven, he got this blessing that he should always be in quiet and in peace.

העמק דבר

טֶבַע הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שֶׁעָשָׂה פִּינְחָס לַהֲרֹג נֶפֶשׁ בְּיָדוֹ הָיָה נוֹתֵן לְהַשְׁאִיר בְּלֵב הֶרְגֵּשׁ עָז גַּם אַחַר כָּךְ, אֲבָל בַּאֲשֶׁר הָיָה לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם מְשׁוּם הָכִי בָּאָה הַבְּרָכָה שֶׁיִּהְיֶה תָּמִיד בְּנַחַת וּבְמִדַּת הַשָּׁלוֹם.

There is an idea that doing something violent can have a negative impact on your character—it can actually make you keep wanting to be angry and fight, and make it easier to do more violent things in the future. Still, sometimes violence is necessary to solve some serious problems. Because Pinhas did not truly enjoy or want to be violent, God blessed Pinhas that he would remain at peace and be safe from having this act change his personality in a negative way.

- Why do you think doing something violent can change you on the inside? How does it do that?
- What are some examples of times when it's absolutely necessary to be violent or use force? Are those examples very common? What are ways to reach a solution when it's not absolutely necessary to use force?
- According to the Ha'amek Davar, what does the brit shalom do for Pinhas?



רֶגַע שֶׁל עִבְרִית • A Moment of Hebrew

במדבר כז:יב

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה אֶל הַר הָעֲבָרִים הַזֶּה
וּרְאֵה אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Bemidbar 27:12

God said to Moshe, "Go up the mountain of Avarim **and view** the land that I have given to Benei Yisrael."



aliyot:
1) Bemidbar 25:10 to 26:4
2) 26:5 to 26:51
3) 26:52 to 27:5
4) 27:6 to 27;23
5) 28:1 to 28:15
6) 28:16 to 29:11
7) 29:12 to 30:1

haftarah: Yirmiyahu 1:1–2:3

שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

Good luck!



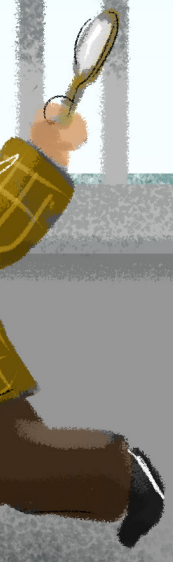
1. Who does God command to count Benei Yisrael?
2. In the tribe of Binyamin, which two family names rhyme with each other?
3. What tribe did the daughters of Tzelofhad come from?
4. What does God tell Moshe to do on Mt. Avarim?
5. When was the קָרְבַּן תָּמִיד (korban tamid, daily sacrifice) offered?
6. What is Rosh Hashanah called?





7. On each day of Sukkot, did the number of bull sacrifices go up or down?
8. How many women's names appear in our parashah?
9. On which three special days was the עֹלָה (olah, burnt offering) supposed to be one bull, one ram, and seven lambs?
10. **From the haftarah:** In Yirmiyahu's vision, why was the steaming pot facing north?

* Look for the answers on page 11!



Find the Word!

- The first example of seeing in the Torah is not through human eyes! Can you find our שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) in Bereishit 1?
- The process of diagnosing the skin disease צָרַעַת (tzara'at) has a lot to do with what the כֹּהֵן (kohen, priest) sees. How many times does our shoresh appear in Vayikra 13? (Hint: It's more than 25 times!)

דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Benei Yisrael used a lottery to divide Eretz Yisrael among the different tribes (Bemidbar 26:53-56).

Debate: Lotteries are a good way to make decisions.

How to play:

Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!

For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.



Agree!

- Sometimes people win arguments or get what they want just because they're stronger or more convincing. When a decision is made by lottery, it can be fair and unbiased.
- Certain decisions need to be made quickly. It's most efficient to draw straws, flip a coin, or play rock-paper-scissors.



Disagree!

- Decisions that are complex need to be weighed carefully. A lottery isn't a thoughtful approach.
- Getting lucky is not the same thing as being fair.
- When God tells you to use a lottery, that's one thing. But without that, it's just random.



הַפְטָרָה • Haftarah

In this week's haftarah, we read about God appointing Yirmiyahu as a prophet. His job will be to warn Benei Yisrael about bad things coming their way.

Here's how Yirmiyahu describes the conversion when God recruits him. What do you notice in these pesukim? What stands out to you?

Yirmiyahu 1:4-6

The word of God came to me saying:

"Before I formed you in the belly I knew you,
Before you left your mother's womb I made you holy.
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

And I said: "Ah, Lord God! I don't know how to speak because I am a child."

ירמיהו א:ד-ו

וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' אֵלַי לֵאמֹר:

בְּטֶרֶם אֶצָרְךָ בַבֶּטֶן יְדַעְתִּיךָ
וּבְטֶרֶם תֵּצֵא מֵרֶחֶם הִקְדַּשְׁתִּיךָ
נָבִיא לַגּוֹיִם נְתַתִּיךָ:

וָאֹמַר אֲהָהּ ה' אֱלֹקִים
הִנֵּה לֹא יָדַעְתִּי דַבֵּר
כִּי נַעַר אָנֹכִי:

- How did Yirmiyahu feel when he heard God's call? What's your evidence?
- How do you understand "because I am a child"? What about being a child would make Yirmiyahu want to turn down the job?
- What does he mean by not knowing how to speak? When do you feel that way? Why?

Our פַּרְשָׁנִים (parshanim, commentators) understand this line in different ways.

According to Abarbanel, Yirmiyahu was saying: "I won't be a successful prophet because I'm a child and so I can't speak really well and convince people."

Rashi thinks he was saying: "People won't listen to me and won't take me seriously because I'm just a kid."

Both of these parshanim believe that Yirmiyahu was worried about the success of his mission.

But a midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 262) suggests that Yirmiyahu was actually concerned about his own safety and well-being, as a child. This midrash describes Yirmiyahu mentioning the ways that prophets before him, like Moshe and Aharon and Eliyahu and Elisha, were all mocked and mistreated. According to this midrash, Yirmiyahu was saying: "I'm a kid! I can't handle such a stressful job!"

- How would you respond to Yirmiyahu's concerns, if they are what Rashi and Abarbanel suggest? How would you respond to Yirmiyahu's concerns as presented in the midrash? What might you tell Yirmiyahu to encourage him?
- Check out God's response to Yirmiyahu in verses 7 and 8. How could this response help Yirmiyahu feel better?
- Why do you think it was important that Yirmiyahu became a prophet while he was still a child? What can we learn from that?



הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



Learn one way the parashah practically impacts our lives

How do you decide what to do first when you have a whole list of things to do?

Our parashah offers one way to decide. We read in Pinhas about lots of קָרְבָּנוֹת (korbanot, sacrifices). Specifically, we learn about two types of korban:

1) תְּמִידִין (temidin): the regular sacrifices offered every day, twice a day.

2) מוּסָפִין (musafin): the additional sacrifices offered on Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, and other holidays.

On Pesah, the Torah tells us to bring a bunch of special korbanot. But every morning of Pesah, we also need to bring the daily korban tamid. Here's how the Torah says it:

Bemidbar 28:23

You must bring these [special Pesah offerings], besides the morning sacrifice, which is part of the regular, daily sacrifice.

במדבר כח:כג

מִלְּבַד עֹלַת הַבֹּקֶר אֲשֶׁר לְעֹלַת הַתָּמִיד תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת אֵלֶּה׃

Notice something repetitive? Why does the Torah need to say "the morning sacrifice, which is part of the regular, daily sacrifice"? We know that the morning sacrifice is part of the regular sacrifice!

The Mishnah (Zevahim 10:1) concludes from this:

כֹּל הַתָּדִיר מֵחֲבֵרוֹ, קוֹדֵם אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ.
Anything that happens more regularly comes first.

Another way to say this is:



frequent and not frequent—the frequent one comes first

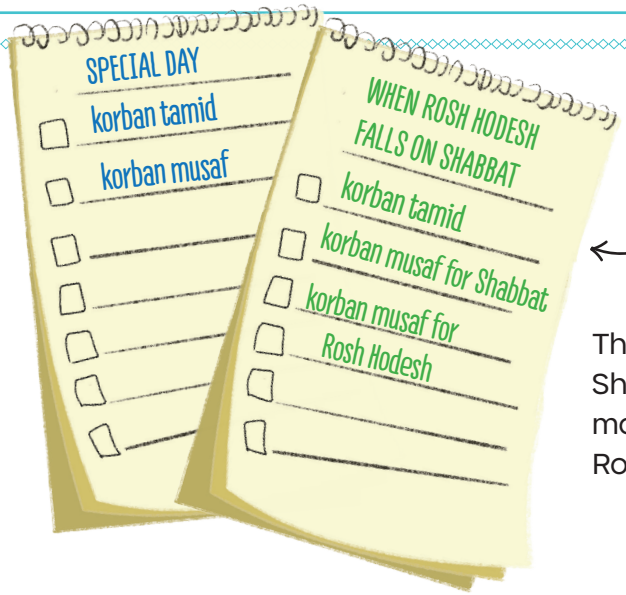
Last year in Devash for Mikeitz we talked about this principle to explain why we make havdalah before lighting Hanukkah candles!



Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. Moshe and Elazar (26:1)
2. The Shufami family and the Hufami family (26:39)
3. Menashe (27:1)
4. Look at the land of Canaan and die (27:12-13)
5. Every day: once in the morning, and once in the afternoon (28:4)
6. יוֹם תְּרוּעָה (yom teru'ah, the day of blasting a horn) (29:1)
7. Down
8. Nine women: Kozbi (25:15); Serah (26:46); Yoheved and Miriam (26:59); Mahlah, Noa, Hogla, Milkhah, and Tirtzah (26:33 and 27:1)
9. The first day of the seventh month (Rosh Hashanah) (29:1-2); the tenth day of the seventh month (Yom Kippur) (29:7-8); the eighth day after the 15th of the seventh month (Shemini Atzeret) (29:35-36)
10. It's a sign that Benei Yisrael's troubles will come from the north (Yirmiyahu 1:14)

So, the Mishnah explains, the order of events on a SPECIAL DAY should be:

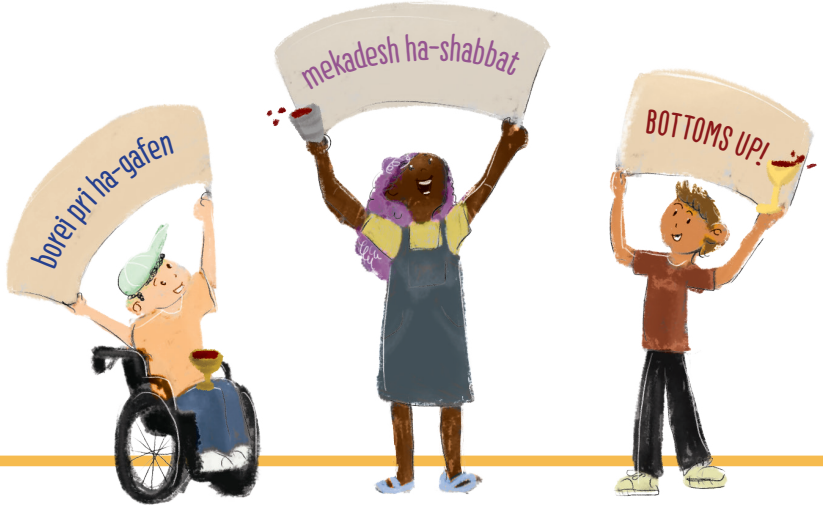


When ROSH HODESH FALLS ON SHABBAT it should be:

This is because Shabbat occurs more regularly than Rosh Hodesh.

Even without a Beit Ha-Mikdash, this rule still comes up in a bunch of places:

- We put on tallit first before tefillin, because tallit is a mitzvah every day but there are some days when tefillin aren't worn (Kitzur Shulhan Arukh 10:2).
- When you have to read from more than one Torah scroll, you start with the parashah of the week, because that is more common and frequent. Then you move on to the maftir reading for the special day.
- When we make Kiddush on Friday night, we say the blessing over wine before the blessing about Shabbat, because drinking wine is more common than making Kiddush on Shabbat. (At least for adults!)



תְּפִלָּה • Prayer in the Parashah

The Gemara (Bavli Berakhot 6b) explains that the verb לַעֲמֹד – which means "to stand" – actually refers to praying. What's their proof? This pasuk from Sefer Tehillim, which describes how Pinhas stopped Benei Yisrael from worshiping idols:

Tehillim 106:30	**תהלים קו:ל**
Pinhas stood, va-yefalel, and the plague stopped.	וַיַּעֲמֹד פִּינְחָס וַיְפַלֵּל וַתֵּעָצַר הַמַּגֵּפָה׃

The word וַיְפַלֵּל (va-yefalel) can mean something to do with judgment—meaning that Pinhas was able to judge who was guilty and stop them. But it also shares a שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) with the word תְּפִלָּה (tefillah, prayer)!

So the Gemara is saying that Pinhas's judgment – which our parashah describes as an act of violence – is also considered a kind of prayer. Why's that? Because the goal of his action was to stop Benei Yisrael from worshiping idols.

The Gemara connects "standing" to prayer, and it also leads us to see that Pinhas' "judgements" connect to prayer.

- How do you think standing and judging connect to prayer?

There's a lesson here about what prayer is. To pray means to turn to God, and to turn away from things that distract us from God (like idolatry, in the case of Pinhas and Benei Yisrael).

- What are some things in life that can distract you and your friends from God? When can it be particularly difficult to turn to God?
- How can you focus more on God during tefillah?



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