

# פִּינְחָס

## PINCHAS/PHINEHAS Bemidbar/Numbers 25:10-30:1

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This week's reading in Bemidbar contains the **final conversation between Moshe and יהוה**. As we continue through the remaining chapters of Torah, we will **not find another instance** where Moshe is **quoted as saying anything to יהוה**. In Devarim, we will read of instances where Moshe will speak of **past conversations** he had with the Almighty, but in our parasha this week, we find **Moshe's final words to His Elohim** as he asks Him to **appoint a successor to lead the people**:

*Bemidbar 27:15 Then Moshe spoke to יהוה, saying: <sup>16</sup> "Let יהוה, the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, <sup>17</sup> "who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of יהוה may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."*

We just read of the **death of Moshe's brother, Aharon**, and saw how he had the **privilege of knowing that his son** would follow in his footsteps as **High Priest**:

*Bemidbar 20:25 "Take Aharon and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; <sup>26</sup> "and strip Aharon of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aharon shall be gathered to his people and die there."*

We are **not told** if Moshe longed to see one of his sons, **Gershom or Eliezer, appointed as leader over Israel**. We wonder, **what happened to Moshe's children? Why is the information about Moshe's children not pertinent to יהוה's Torah message? Who are the inheritors of his legacy?**

**Ancient commentators** speak to us of **two great roles** necessary for **Israel's continuity**:

- הורִים (horim) – **parents**
- מורִים (morim) – **teachers**

**Aharon epitomized** the role of **parent** as his son **inherited his position**. **Moshe** was the great example of a **teacher**; in fact today we call him – **Moshe Rabbenu**, "**Moshe our teacher**". A **teacher sets the example** for his **disciples**. It would be **Moshe's disciple, Yehoshua** (Joshua), who would be **elevated to rule over, care for, and lead Israel**. It would be **incorrect** to say that **Yehoshua replaced Moshe**. **Moshe's most important role as mediator for Israel was not passed on**. יהוה had **direct communication with Moshe**. This would **not be so with Yehoshua**. We would **not see another mediator like Moshe** until several centuries later when **Yeshua** entered the scene. If you read **Bemidbar 27:15-17** again, you will see that the **man Moshe was asking for** was the **Messiah!** **Neither Moshe nor Yeshua were replaced, and both left disciples to continue on with their teaching.**

As a **teacher**, what **Moshe left** for his **disciples to inherit** was **knowledge**. A **disciple never** became **greater than his master**:

*Matthew 10:24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master."<sup>25</sup> "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. ..."*

Moshe was a **great teacher of Torah**, but he was still considered a **servant** of the **Most High**:

*Devarim 34:5 So Moshe the servant of יהוה died there in the land of Moab...*

Yeshua was the **greatest teacher of Torah**, and was often called upon to **expound**:

*Matthew 22:36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Torah?"*

Not only was Yeshua a great Teacher with **disciples**, but He considered **all who DO the will of the Father** to be **His mother, brothers, sisters,....i.e., His family**. Moshe's inheritance did not just pass on to his physical children. In the same way that Aharon passed on his inheritance (his position) to his family, Moshe would pass on his inheritance (Torah) to HIS FAMILY. The only difference is that Moshe's family (as Yeshua said) includes all who DO the will of the Father:

*Mark 3:33 But He (Yeshua) answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?"<sup>34</sup> And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"<sup>35</sup> "For whoever does the will of Yah is My brother and My sister and mother."*

No one was simply handed Torah on a platter as an inheritance. The potential was there for everyone to have a share in the inheritance of Torah....that is, all who would attach themselves to the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Included within the Torah inheritance was the knowledge and expectation of how to live. The sages pointed out that **children and disciples** can be seen as synonymous concepts. Rambam stated:

"A duty rests on every scholar in Israel to teach all disciples who seek instruction from him, even if they are not his children, as it is said, 'And you shall teach them diligently to your children'. According to traditional authority, the term 'your children' includes disciples, for **disciples are called children**, as it is said, 'And the sons of the prophets [meaning, the disciples of the prophets] came forth' (2 Kings 2:3)."

In the Gospel of John, we read that those who received Yeshua became not only "His disciples", but were also seen as "children of Yah":

*John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of Yah, to those who believe in His name:<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of Yah.*

Believing in Yeshua gives us the **right to become "children of Yah"**, and His commission to us is to make "disciples" by continuing to "teach" His commandments:

*Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

**Rambam** made another interesting **comment** concerning “**teaching**” recorded in **Talmud**:

“Just as a person is commanded to honor and revere his father, so he is under an **obligation to honor and revere his teacher**, even to a greater extent than his father, for his father gave him life in this world, while **his teacher who instructs him in wisdom secures for him life in the world to come.**”

**Rambam’s comment** fits in with the **question** of a **rich ruler** who came to **Yeshua** as a **teacher**:

*Luke 18:18* Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “**Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?**”

Over and over again throughout the Gospels, **Yeshua** was **referred to as a teacher** (rabbi). A **teacher** taught his **disciples**, but a **parent** was **also defined** in terms of **teaching** and instruction:

*Devarim 6:6* “**And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.**”<sup>7</sup> “**You shall teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

**Education** of your **children** was such an **important Torah concept** that it is even **given as the reason why Abraham was chosen as the father of the Hebrew faith**:

*Bereshith 18:18* “since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”<sup>19</sup> “**For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of יְיָ, to do righteousness and justice, that יְיָ may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.**”

**Abraham** was therefore **both a father** and a **teacher of righteousness**. We know from reading his story that **he taught more than just his biological children**. He is spoken of by **Shaul (Paul)** as the “**father of all those who believe**” (believe what is **taught by the teacher**):

*Romans 4:11* And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, **that he might be the father of all those who believe**, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,<sup>12</sup> and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

So, **returning to Moshe**, we understand now that Torah does not focus on an **inheritance** for his “**biological children**” because **he was actually passing down** (as a **teacher**) **Torah** to those “**children of the faith**” who would be “**disciples of Torah**”:

*Devarim 33:1* Now this is the blessing with which Moshe the man of Elohim blessed the children of Israel before his death.<sup>2</sup> And he said: “**יְיָ came from Sinai....**”<sup>3</sup> Yes, He loves the people; All His

*saints are in Your hand; They sit down at Your feet; and from you receive instruction.* <sup>4</sup> **Moshe commanded a Torah for us, An inheritance (morashah - מורשת) of the congregation of Jacob.**

In **Devarim 33:4**, Moshe describes Torah as an “inheritance” (morashah - מורשת) passed down to the “*congregation of Jacob*”. To understand this **inheritance**, we will first take a look at the **more common Hebrew word for inheritance** - נַחֲלָה (nachalah). נַחֲלָה is related to נָחַל (nachal), a word for a “**river**” or a “**stream**”. It signifies **something passed down automatically** across the generations, as a river’s water flows downstream.

On the other hand, the word used in **Devarim 33:3** (morashah - מורשת) to describe the **inheritance of Torah**, describes **something to which you have legitimate title**, but which **you need to react to in order to acquire**. The **inherited position** (nachalah - נַחֲלָה) of **High Priest** was handed down from father to son. As a teacher, Moshe was able to **hand down the promise of the inheritance** (morashah - מורשת) to those who **chose to become disciples of Torah**.

The **sages** make a **beautiful observation**. They point out that **by a simple change in pronunciation – turning a shin (“sh” - ש) into a sin (“s” - ש), “inheritance” becomes “betrothal”**. Thus **Devarim 33:4** could be read:

*Moshe commanded a Torah for us, a betrothal (מורשת - morasah) of the congregation of Jacob.*

As a side note, this is **not a change in the ancient Torah scrolls**, as **these markings were added much later**.

Let’s tie this to **Yeshua** who is of the **same essence** as the **Torah**...He is the **Word of יהוה**, made **flesh**. It is to **Him** that we are **betrothed** (מורשת - morasah) and **made ready for the marriage through the acceptance and practice of His Word (Torah)**:

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the assembly and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

And what was the “**physical inheritance**” of Torah? The **acceptance of Torah** included the **acquisition of a Promised Land**. This **promise** also went **all the way back to Abraham**, the father of our faith:

*Bereshith 15:7 Then He said to him, "I am יהוה", who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit (yarash - ירש) it."*

Prophetically, **Obadiah** speaks of the **fulfillment** of this **inheritance** (morashah - מורשת) by **Jacob**:

**Obadiah 1:15** " For the day of **יהוה** upon all the nations is near; As you have done, it shall be done to you; Your reprisal shall return upon your own head. <sup>16</sup> For as you drank on my holy mountain, So shall all the nations drink continually; Yes, they shall drink, and swallow, And they shall be as though they had never been. <sup>17</sup> "But on **Mount Zion** there shall be deliverance, **And there shall be holiness; The house of Jacob shall inherit** (yarash - **יָרָשׁ**) **their inheritance** (morashah - **מְרֹשָׁה**).

So...as Moshe passed on the inheritance to all of Jacob who were willing to be disciples of Torah, **יהוה** answers Moshe's plea and chooses Yehoshua (a shadow of Yeshua) to bring His people into their physical inheritance:

**Bemidbar 27:18** And **יהוה** said to Moshe: "Take Yehoshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;

The physical inheritance has a final fulfillment for the one betrothed:

**Revelation 21:1** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from Yah, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Let's take one more look at Moshe's request for a replacement:

**Bemidbar 27:15** Then Moshe spoke to **יהוה**, saying: <sup>16</sup> "Let **יהוה**, the Elohim of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, <sup>17</sup> "who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of **יהוה** may not be like sheep which have no shepherd."

Remember that when **יהוה** first called Moshe, he was a shepherd "tending the flock":

**Shemot 3:1** Now Moshe was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law... <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of **יהוה** appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush...Elohim called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "**Moshe, Moshe!**" And he said, "**Here I am.**"

**יהוה**'s reason for calling Moshe was to become a military leader (**Bemidbar 27:17** – one who may go out before them and go in before them...) who would rescue Israel from their oppressors and take them to the Promised Land:

**Shemot 3:7** And **יהוה** said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. <sup>8</sup> "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey...<sup>10</sup> "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Now that **Moshe** is **about to die**, he wants to make sure that יהוה will appoint an **appropriate shepherd** to **succeed** him. As mentioned before, the **ultimate answer to Moshe's request** will be **Yeshua**, but for now יהוה will choose a man to **shadow the coming Messiah**. The **Almighty** often saw within the **characteristics of a good shepherd** the **kind of traits** that make for a **good leader of His people**. **Jeremiah** speaks of **bad shepherds**, but also declares that **good shepherds** will be **raised up to feed the flock**:

*Jeremiah 23:1 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says יהוה. <sup>2</sup> Therefore thus says יהוה Elohim of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says יהוה. <sup>3</sup> "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. <sup>4</sup> "I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says יהוה.*

**David** is an example of a **good shepherd**. **Samuel** is sent to **Jesse's family** to **anoint the new king**, and finally it is realized that it is the **one tending sheep** who is יהוה's **chosen one**:

*1 Samuel 16:11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and **there he is, keeping the sheep**." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here."*

Later, when **David** is trying to **convince Saul** that he can **beat Goliath**, he refers to his **excellent shepherding skills** in the context of **military strength**:

*1 Samuel 17:34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. <sup>36</sup> "Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like **one of them**, seeing he has defied the armies of the living Elohim." <sup>37</sup> Moreover David said, "יהוה, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and יהוה be with you!"*

**Ezekiel** prophesied that in the **end times** there would be a **scattered flock** and it would be יהוה **Himself as a shepherd** who would **rescue them** from all the **places** where they are **scattered**:

*Ezekiel 34:11 ' For thus says Adonai יהוה: "Indeed **I Myself** will search for My sheep and seek them out. <sup>12</sup> "As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. <sup>13</sup> "And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. <sup>14</sup> "I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be*

*on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.*

**Yeshua, the Good Shepherd**, picks up on this theme and begins to show how He will solve this problem of the scattered sheep, starting with “teaching” the people:

*Mark 6:34* And Yeshua, when He came out, saw a **great multitude** and was moved with compassion for them, because they were **like sheep not having a shepherd**. So He began to teach them many things.

*Matthew 15:24* But He answered and said, **"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."**

*John 10:14* **"I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own."**<sup>15</sup> "As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and **I lay down My life for the sheep.**"<sup>16</sup> "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and **they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.**"

**Moshe and David** both were **good military leaders** due to their **shepherding skills**. The **Good Shepherd** is also the **Lamb of Elohim** who will return as a **victorious military leader**:

*Revelation 17:14* **"These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."**

**יהוה** appointed **Yehoshua** to lead the people following the death of **Moshe**. He had **walked with** and been **discipled by Moshe** for **40 years** in the **wilderness**. He was **יהוה's** choice of a **shepherd** for the people. He was also **יהוה's** choice for the **military conquest** which was soon to occur. **Like Yeshua**, we never saw **Yehoshua tending actual sheep**, but **Moshe/Torah** had **tutored them** and **prepared them** to be **Shepherds** of people.

**Walking in the Torah** is a **prerequisite** for entering the **Promised Land**. **Yeshua's Kingdom** will be established under the **Torah's authority**. But as we have seen, it is **not Torah (Moshe)** that **takes us all the way home**. **Keeping Torah alone cannot establish the Kingdom**. It was **Yehoshua** who **led them into the Land**, and thus we look forward to that day when **Yeshua** will bring us into our **"inheritance"**!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Ardelle**