



Ohr Yerushalayim News

כ"ד תמוז תשע"ט - פינחס - 27th July 2019 - Volume 12 - Issue 1

News This Week

Kiddushim This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush this Shabbos sponsored by Sammy and Natalie Morhaim to express their sincere Hakoras haTov to the Shul.

Shimon and Lauri Black invite the Kehilla to a kiddush to celebrate the recent birth of their daughter, Ayelet, at 11 Vernon Road from 11.30.

Ashi and Jordanah Rubin invite the Kehilla to a kiddush to welcome their daughter, Chaya, at 18 Sedgley Avenue from 11.15.

Be prepared for your holiday!

The summer holiday halacha series continues this Monday night from 9.15 - 9.45.

29 July - R Avigdor Grossberger - Eruvin in holiday homes part 2
5 August - The Rov - Holiday Sheilos.

Soul Maps

Aaron Gouldman

Why was the division of Eretz Yisroel to each family done by a lottery? Couldn't it have been divided by tribe and the individual family division be done locally? We are all familiar with the idea that we each have a unique portion of Torah that our soul connects to, and we daven to receive it at least three times a day. However the divine lottery shows us that each person has a unique parcel of land to boot. The Arvei Nachal writes that this is no coincidence. The Torah itself is intrinsically mapped to the geography of Eretz Yisroel, such that in the ideal state, every soul can delight in its unique portion of Torah, from its unique plot in the Land.

Many of us have an affinity for a certain mitzvoh in which we try and excel, although not ignoring our responsibilities in other areas. This may well have to do with the spiritual inheritance that we receive. It can be hard to identify where our specialism lies, but one way suggested by the Baalei Mussar is to find and work on the area in which we struggle the most, since the yetzer horah is attracted to the place of greatest potential for kedusha.

The Rambam has a unique way of understanding the famous Mishna we say at the end of each perek of pirkei avos. We normally assume that the benefit of Hashem granting us an 'abundance of Torah and mitzvos' is that we have the opportunity to earn reward at every turn. He understands, however, that the benefit is that with so many options we are bound to do at least one mitzvoh perfectly and with completely pure intentions, at least once in our lifetimes and thereby meriting olam ha'bo!

A further dimension to this is the connection between the soul and the generation in which it finds itself on earth. Everyone individual has their part to play and mission to fulfill in the drama of history. This happens on an individual as well as on a communal level.

Applying this to our generation, the Lubavitcher Rebbe taught that, simply by virtue of finding ourselves towards the end of the allotted time for the exile, our souls are divinely charged with the mission of bringing the final redemption to fruition through our dedication to Torah and mitzvos.

Location, Location, Location

Dani Epstein

For decades now deals have been touted and brokered in an attempt to somehow solve an intractable problem that lends itself to no plausible solution: the Israeli/"Palestinian" conflict. As the seemingly unstoppable Bibi once observed: "If the Arabs lay down their arms there will be no more war, but if Israel lays down its weapons there would be no more Israel." Despite Jared Kushner's well-intended efforts and the oodles of boodle he proffered in Bahrain, there were no takers and no progress has been made.

At the heart of the conflict is, of course, land. Land represents so much more than ideology; it is the prerequisite to prosperity and security as well as providing a vehicle for national unity. The Israelis quite obviously refuse to place themselves in a position that is well nigh impossible to defend while conversely the other side have a simple demand: they want everything.

History is replete with wars fought over slivers of land. Even recently we have observed how Putin simply helped himself to the Crimea with nary a whimper from anyone else. The possession of land is crucial to the existence of a state, it is indeed the raison d'être of a state.

Central to our history is the journey from slavery to nationhood, with a key component being the establishment of our people in a land of our own. Concomitant to that would be the devising of a plan that would ensure an equitable distribution, one that would be regarded by all Shevotim as inherently open and fair. Logic would dictate basing the distribution on a lottery process would be a monumental failure in that goal, and yet this is precisely what we read in this week's sedrah.

"בין רב – אַדְבָּגוֹרְל יִחַלַק אֶת־הָאָרֶץ" – only by lottery shall the land be distributed... בין רב – לְמַעַט – whether for a large or small group".

All is not lost, however, since we have another verse: "לְרַב תִּרְבָּה נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלַמְעַט – לְרַב תִּרְבָּה נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלַמְעַט" – for the large group increase its portion, and for the smaller group decrease its portion".

To the casual observer these are conflicting statements. Either the land will be distributed through sheer chance or prophetic revelation, or it will be allocated by census; they appear to present an intractable dichotomy.

Furthermore, once the Beni Yisroel had finally engaged in the land distribution, we find the Bnei Yosef lodging a strident complaint with Yehoshua regarding their allocation (Yehoshua 17:14):

"מִדֹּעַ נִתְּתָה לִי נַחֲלָה גּוֹרֵל אַחַד וְהַקָּל אַחַד וְאֲנִי עַם־רַב" – why have you apportioned me a single district and lot and I am a very large group?" We would expect the response of Yehoshua to be something along the lines of "Sorry, chaps. This is the divine ordinance, nothing I can do about it, move along nothing to see. Mind the gap."

However, after some negotiation in which Yehoshua attempt to propitiate them with various solutions he finally concludes: "עַם־רַב אַתָּה וְכַח גְּדוּל לָךְ לֹא־יִתְּיָה" – you are a large group, possessed of great strength. You will not receive only one portion". That is to say, Yehoshua finally capitulated to their demands and allocated them more territory than was originally designated.

This would suggest that the lottery aspect of the land distribution was entirely

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת פינחס

Mincha
Candle Lighting
Shacharis
סוף זמן ק"ש
Children's Group
1st Mincha
2nd Mincha
3rd Mincha
Rov's Shiur
Motzei Shabbos
Sun
Mon / Thurs
Tues / Wed
Fri Rosh Chodesh
Mincha & Maariv
Late Maariv

מברכין אב

7.25pm
7.36pm - 7.50pm
9.15am
9.15am
10.45am
2.00pm
6.00pm
9.14pm
Following
10.19pm
7.15am / 8.20am
6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
6.30am / 7.00am / 8.00am
7.45pm
10.10pm

ignored and land was allocated purely by numbers, a apparently impossible position given the explicit requirement of a lottery element by the Torah itself.

This issue is raised in Bovo Basroh (122a) and it would appear from there that the only method of distribution implemented was a lottery, overseen by Elozor who consulted the Urim vTumim in order to determine the lots. This of course raises the obvious question: what about the census element? Where did the headcount disappear to?

This vexing dilemma has been hotly debated amongst the Rishonim, who generally contend that both elements – census and lottery – were employed in the distribution, unlike what was previously observed in the Gemoroh. Assuming that both elements were employed for the distribution, how exactly were they combined in order to effect an allocation that satisfied both requirements and yet remained equitable? If the land was distributed through a lottery, then what role to the numbers of people within a Shevet play, and vice-a-versa?

In order to complicate the matter further, there are an additional two factors to consider: arable value and proximity. With regards to arable value, the Gemoroh points out: "סאה ביהודה שוה חמש סאין בגליל" – a so'oh of land in Yehudoh was worth five so'oh in the Galilee." That is to say, crop yields were five times denser in Yehudoh since it was considerably more fertile than land in the Galilee.

In the retail industry three factors determine the projected success of a venture: location, location, location. Similarly, the value of any tranche of land increased with relation to its proximity to Yerusholayim. Both these attributes had to be factored into the final distribution, the compensation thereof which is the subject of a dispute between Rabi Eliezer and Rabi Yehoshua in the previously mentioned mesichta.

רבי אליעזר אומר בכספים העלוה רבי יהושע אומר בקרקע העלוה - Rabbi Eliezer says: The tribes compensated each other with money. Rabbi Yehoshua says: The tribes compensated each other with land. The latter opinion would seem to indicate that the exact amount of land apportioned was negotiable and not necessarily determined by lot, which once again throws a spanner in the works.

We now have four elements that affected the distribution: lottery, headcount, location and arable value.

Rashi solves the matter quite simply: the lottery, which was performed by consulting the Urim veTumim and hence prophetic, determined the location and area of land for each Shevet. Inherent in the result was an automatic adjustment that included the three other factors. So, for example, if Reuvain was allocated land that had a high arable value, the area allocated was reduced accordingly, and if it was closer to Yerusholayim than Shimon's lot it was further reduced.

There is an obvious problem with this approach: the Bnei Yosef who remonstrated with Yehoshua. If in fact this was the way the land was distributed, their argument holds no water; that is to say, since the land was allocated prophetically, the grounds for the Bnei Yosef's argument were unfounded and Yehoshua was not in a position to say what he in fact did.

Furthermore, the phrase "לְרַב תְּרַבָּה נַחֲלֹתוֹ וְלִמְעַט תִּמְעַט נַחֲלֹתוֹ" – for the large group increase its portion, and for the smaller group decrease its portion" implies that this aspect of the distribution was not an outcome of the lottery but was to be a separate, calculated, process.

The Ramban offers a different approach. In his opinion the land was split into twelve equal portions, after which the lottery took place and each Shevet was allocated a region accordingly. The next stage involved distributing that allocation within that Shevet according to the size of the family, so a small family received smaller tribal portion that a larger one, but the tribe as a whole had an identically sized share to every other tribe.

With this approach the argument of the Bnei Yosef remains a problem as does the order of instructions; in that initially a lottery should have been held, then the distribution take place, but in fact we see the reverse: לְרַב תְּרַבָּה נַחֲלֹתוֹ comes before אֶת־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, suggesting that the census-based distribution should take place prior to the lottery and not the other way round. The other two issues, that of proximity and arable value also fail to be addressed.

As usual, the Abravanel employs his unique analytical skills and scintillating genius to reconcile all the issues here.

Initially there were two stages, as one would expect. First, the area of land each Shevet required was calculated according to a head count. So, a large tribe received a bigger nominal area than a small tribe. This was merely a calculus, with no actual land allocated as such.

Then the lottery was held employing the Urim vTumim, which determined where the calculated portion would be located, a nexus of sorts around which the area determined was situated. So if tribe x was allocated y square

miles, that was situated around point q, the latter being determined by lottery.

Now, this allowed for the Bnei Yosef to protest regarding the area of their lot and be awarded a further measure, since the actual acreage allocated was a calculus, not a prophetic determination.

Following this, a further stage concerning the balancing of arable value as well as proximity could take place either with a financial settlement or a small redistribution of land since that too does not violate any of the conditions of the distribution.

In this way, all four conditions are satisfied.

Taking all of this into account, one very crucial observation can and should be made. The largest landowner in the UK is – quite surprisingly – the Forestry Commission, which holds four times more land than The National Trust, the second contender of the top-ten list. The Crown Estate, with a portfolio worth more than £6.6 billion is only the sixth in actual acreage. The Church of England does not even make it to the top ten.

Within the Torah system, however, the entire country is owned by its people. Certainly the king had rights to land, but this was on a very limited scale, a power that if abused would be objected to by the Sanhedrin and the populace who ultimately the king was beholden to. Other than that, every single man had an entitlement to his own patch of land.

The importance of this cannot be overemphasised. Land ownership represents power; consolidating that power within a small group leaves the people at the mercy of a few powerful individuals. We see today how without any holds or checks on them, the likes of Google, Facebook and Amazon have risen so rapidly to power that lawmakers are now scrambling to figure out how to deal with them. Even though they do not have de-jure monopolies, they practically do de-facto and there is no stopping them. This is what happened centuries ago with the land in this country, and there is no changing that either.

With, however, the land in the hands of the people and an automatic reset every fifty years, there is no possibility of any single or small group of people snapping up property left right and centre and effectively creating a cartel that could manipulate the value of land at whim. Housing no longer becomes an issue. The economy can no longer be driven by property, since the equitable distribution and Yovel acts as a natural brake on the market.

This is the way of the Torah. Power is there to serve the people and not to rule and every possible limitation on that power was created in order to ensure this. Equity and justice balance on a knife edge; within the Torah that balance is maintained by the people, not a small cabal. By ensuring that the overwhelming bulk of the land remained in the hands of individual land owners, there was no way for the anyone to wrest absolute control over the populace.

May we soon be privileged to see the true, equitable and just return of our land to our people, Amen.

Q&A

Kids

1. How many jews were killed in the plague that pinches stopped?
2. What is interesting about the first possuk in פרק כו?
3. How long ago was the previous census?
4. What was the total number of families counted?
5. How many daughters did zelophcad have?

Adults

1. What does the word לאגור teach us at the end of the first possuk in this weeks sedra?
2. Why is there a new paragraph in the middle of the possuk in פרק כו?
3. Why was there a census?
4. How many jews were there fewer in this census than in the census when the jews just left Egypt?
5. Which tribe lost the most amount of people compared to the previous census?

1. This word usually introduces a statement which should be repeated to others shows that Hashem wanted to show to the rest of the Jews that pinches had saved them from disaster. (Ohr Hachaim)
2. This is because the Torah is teaching us that the deaths that had occurred up to this point were the last ones that would be decreed on that generation. From now on those who were to be counted in the next census would all enter Israel. (Chizkuni)
3. As hashem wanted to count the Jews after the plague, like a farmer who counts his flock after they have been attacked by wolves (Rashi)
4. 1820
5. Shimon, they lost 24 000 people a loss from 59 300 to 22 200.

Adults
1. 24 000
2. A new paragraph begins in the middle of a possuk.
3. 39 years.
4. 5.
5. 601 730