

JEWISH STUDY NETWORK

Pinchas

In *Parshat Pinchas*, the Torah relates to the laws of inheritance, which will become quite relevant once the Jewish people settle in Israel and every person owns land. It then talks about Moshe's appointment of Joshua to lead the Jewish people into the land, conquer it and divide it amongst the tribes. The next two chapters, until the end of the *parsha*, delineate all of the communal offerings in the Temple, starting with the ordinary daily sacrifices and ending with the additional *musaf* sacrifices brought only on Shabbat and holidays.

The command to offer the daily sacrifices appeared already in Exodus Chapter 29 after the directives to construct the Tabernacle and its vessels, so why must the Torah repeat this command here in the Book of Numbers? Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin (1817-1893) answers that the first time G-d instructs the Jewish people to bring the daily sacrifices in the Mishkan during their travels in the desert, and this second time He commands them to bring the communal sacrifices in the Temple once they come to Israel. Like the laws of inheritance and the appointment of Joshua, the end of Numbers plans for the future, when the Jewish people will live in Israel and offer daily communal sacrifices.

The Talmud (*Megilla 31b*) tells us that in the absence of the Temple, if we read the Torah verses describing the commands to offer the sacrifices, G-d considers it as if we actually bring these sacrifices. Similarly, the Talmud (*Menachot 110a*) also states that if one studies the laws of the sacrifices, it is as if he has brought those very sacrifices. Therefore, the Code of Jewish Law (*Orach Chaim 1:5*) recommends reading Torah excerpts and discussing the sacrifices every day including the portion from our parsha which discusses the daily communal sacrifice, printed in the beginning of the prayerbook.

The animal sacrifices are also delineated in one other place in the siddur, namely in the middle of the *musaf* (additional) silent standing prayer said on a Shabbat or holiday. There, we ask G-d to build the Temple in Jerusalem and enable us to once again bring sacrifices there, and we read the Torah verses from *Parshat Pinchas* which tell the instructions of what exactly to bring. We also ask G-d in our thrice-daily silent prayer to enable us to perform the sacrifices in the Temple, but there we do not specify the details of the sacrifice. Why do we only delineate the details of particular sacrifices in the *musaf* standing prayer but not in the daily standing prayer?

To answer this question, we must take a step back and explore the origin of both the daily and *musaf* standing silent prayers. The Talmud (*Berachot 26b*) presents two opinions as to the origin of the prayers we say three times a day. R' Yose says Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob instituted these prayers, independent of any sacrifices they brought. Various verses in



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continued ...

Genesis indicate Abraham prayed in the morning, Isaac in the afternoon, and Jacob in the evening, and the Talmud shows that the times for our three prayers coincide with the timing of the patriarchs' prayers.

R' Yehoshua says the Men of the Great Assembly instituted our prayer in the beginning of the Second Temple period, and they set the times of the morning and afternoon prayers respectively to coincide with the times of the morning and afternoon daily sacrifices. They set the evening prayer to coincide with the burning of the limbs and fats of the daytime sacrifices, which could take the whole night. Although they prayed in Temple times during the time frame in which the daily sacrifices were offered, the prayer was not meant to depend on the sacrifices, and they kept those times for prayer even after the destruction of the Temple.

The Talmud there eventually concludes that both R' Yose and R' Yehoshua agree that the forefathers first introduced the notion of praying during the different times of the day, and that later in the beginning of the Second Temple, the Rabbis required us to pray three times a day. The Talmud proves from the requirement to pray *musaf* that everyone must agree the prayers were instituted by the Rabbis and linked to the sacrifices. Since the patriarchs never prayed a special *musaf* prayer on Shabbat and holidays, our *musaf* prayer must have been created by the Rabbis to be said during the same time frame as the *musaf* sacrifice.

If so, it then follows that we do not mention the sacrifices in our daily prayer, since the prayer dates back to the forefathers, who neither prayed in conjunction with sacrifices nor prayed for the rebuilding of a Temple to have the capability of the sacrificial service. So the prayer does not focus solely on the daily sacrifice in the Temple. Rather, it includes a variety of requests in fourteen different blessings, and then has one blessing (“*Retzei*”) containing a plea to be able to bring the sacrifices in the Temple. However, the *musaf* prayer, which was not said by the patriarchs, was instituted solely to go along with the *musaf* sacrifice.

With the destruction of the Temple and the inability to offer this sacrifice, the *musaf* prayer focuses solely on the wish to have the privilege to offer this sacrifice and it delineates the details of this sacrifice. We use the opportunities of Shabbat and the Festivals to focus our attention on this communal aspect of service and strive to recreate the feeling that we are one people serving one G-d.

Shabbat Shalom!

