

PARSHAS PINCHAS

by Gedalia Litke

Rashi notes (27:1) that in the last pasuk of Parshas Mas'ei the Bnos (daughters of) Tzlofchad are listed in a different order than their listing in our Parsha, and that this teaches us that they were 'shkulos zu ka'zu' - equal to one another. See also Rashi in Parshas Mas'ei where Rashi further explains that the listings in Parshas Pinchos follow the order of their wisdom whereas the listing in Parshas Mas'ei follows their age.

It is interesting that Rashi makes a similar comment in Parshas Vo'era regarding an unusual instance where Aharon is listed before Moshe. Rashi's comment there (6:26) is that this teaches us that Moshe and Aharon are 'shkulos k'echad' - equal as one.

Why does Rashi distinguish slightly between the Bnos Tzlofchad (equal 'to one another') and Aharon and Moshe (equal 'as one')? Also, how can it be said that Bnos Tzlofchad were equal if they had different levels of wisdom? (This last question assumes that the Parshas Mas'ei comment of Rashi - that the Bnos Tzlofchad are listed in Parshas Pinchas according to their wisdom - is intended by Rashi to be consistent with the shkulos/equality explanation.)

The M'forschei Rashi seem to assume that these two instances of shkulos/equality - 'to one another' and 'as one' - are intended by Rashi to be perfectly parallel (see, for example, Be'er BaSadeh and Maskil L'Dovid on the last Rashi in Parshas Mas'ei) and that there is no intended distinction inherent in the slightly different versions Rashi articulates.

Nonetheless, perhaps an intended distinction might be that unlike Moshe and Aharon who really were equals (at least at that point) and can be said to be 'as one', the Bnos Tzlofchad in fact were not equals. Rather, they treated each other as equals and behaved toward one another as equals, each giving respect to the other - shkulos zu ka'zu. If correct, this would answer the questions above and also neatly explain why we even need to know that they were 'equals'. Unlike some others who had previously come with complaints to Moshe and were rebuffed, Bnos Tzlofchad came with a complaint and their issue was fully embraced. The Torah is hinting, and Rashi is noting the hint, that this is because they had internal respect for one another and it was therefore (correctly) assumed that they were being sincere and 'agenda-free' in making their request.