**Miller’s Musings** **פרשת פְקוּדֵי**

Be careful what you wish for.  That is one message of the Medrash on this week’s Parsha that recounts the incident of Rebbi Shimon ben Chalifta, an impoverished sage in the era of the Tannaim. One Erev Shabbos when he returned home with a precious gem, his wife inquired from whence it came, to which he replied that he had requested it from Heaven and been duly granted his wish.  Unimpressed with this miraculous occurrence, she demanded that he return the jewel heavenward, for she did not want him to lose some of the reward due to him in the Next World on account of having received partial payment with this wondrous gift.  When told what had transpired, Rebbi Yehuda Hanosi, reassured Rebbi Shimon that if there was any loss, he would provide whatever was lacking in the World to Come.  Upon hearing this Rebbi Shimon’s wife responded that when in the world of rewards, one is entirely alone, and therefore the guarantee was of no use, reiterating her demand to give back the wondrous gift, which he promptly did.

To explain the precise point that Rebbi Shimon’s wife enlightened the two great scholars with, Reb Yisroel Salanter zt’l described the process of receiving reward for our good deeds as a direct and automatic creation of that reward at the moment of performing the deed and as a manifestation of that specific act itself according to its myriad details and nuances.  That being the case, for Rebbi Yehuda Hanasi to say that he would replace the reward with some of his own, was simply an impossibility since his reward for learning, being an affluent person, was completely different to the reward that a penniless man, such as Rebbi Shimon would be conferred for his.

This idea is a powerful thought for us to take with us throughout our lives.  The notion that our actions have delayed consequences that only come into effect at the end of our lives can be used as a buffer for us from having to actually come to terms with the significance of what we do and can dissuade us from doing what we know is right when the reward is so far in the future.  Internalising the idea that the act itself creates the positive or negative consequence at that very instant, exposes us to the magnitude and immediacy of every one of our actions and can be utilised to bring us closer to a life of achievement rather than a life of regrets.  Your every accomplishment creates a world instantaneously that will be yours eternally.

May our Shabbos experience create worlds of perfection.

לעילוי נשמת לאה בת אברהם