

Torah Weekly

21 July – 27 July, 2019
18 Tammuz–24 Tammuz, 5779
Torah: Numbers 25:10–30.1
Haftorah: Jeremiah 1:1 – 2:3
PARSHAT PINCHAS

Calendars
We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

Family Programs
Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

Grape Juice &
We offer free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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ALEPH INSTITUTE
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

WHAT IS YOUR BOTTOM LINE? This week's Parshah (Torah reading) is the Parshah of Pinchas the Zealot: the courageous young priest who stood up against idolatry and immorality and, in the end, saved Israel from a devastating plague. While Pinchas' radical response made him a hero worthy of having a Torah section named after him, we wouldn't necessarily suggest to our children that they emulate his behavior. Those were extraordinary times. Today, violence dare not become our norm. So, Pinchas—hero though he may be—cannot become our role model. At least not when it comes to the details of what he did. Nevertheless, Pinchas does give us something very important to consider. What is it that would arouse our righteous indignation? What, in Jewish life today, would get us emotionally worked up? What would it take to galvanize us into action in defense of that which we consider sacred and inviolate? Is there something that would incense us? Anything? I am reminded of a famous saying attributed to the first Rebbe of Chabad, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. He said, "A Jew is neither willing nor able to allow himself to become divorced from G d." In other words, once a Jew becomes consciously aware that what he is contemplating doing will cause him to be alienated from G d and that which is holy, she or he simply will not—and cannot—do it. Even if s/he is not remotely "religious," it is something which comes from our inner essence, our spiritual DNA. It is in our very being. How many true stories we all know that validate this principle. One that

springs to mind is of a Jewish actor during the Holocaust. In those days especially, the stage was not the place where one would find "nice Jewish boys," at least not nice, Jewish, religious boys. When the Nazis invaded the town, they desecrated the synagogues and—painful as it is to write these words—they unraveled the Torah scrolls and rolled them out in the gutter. To add insult to injury, they ordered this fellow, the actor, to urinate on the Torah. He was not at all religious. He probably hadn't looked into a Torah in many years. Yet, he could not bring himself to commit such sacrilege. He refused. The savage beasts killed him on the spot. He gave his life al Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying the name of G d, and he went down in history as a holy martyr. For the Jewish actor, that was his bottom line. What is ours? Religiously, is it Shabbat, Yom Kippur, Intermarriage? Morally, is it insider trading, fraud, murder? Nationally, is it Gush Katif, Jerusalem or Tel Aviv? Where do we draw the line? Our politically correct rules of etiquette promote such unparalleled tolerance that a person's "democratic right" to do anything he or she wishes has become the defining principle of our generation. The Ten Commandments are obsolete. "Thou shalt not violate my democratic right" is the first & last commandment. Of course, in any democratic country, people may choose their own lifestyles as they wish. But when there is absolutely nothing that arouses our passion, nothing that raises our blood pressure, nothing that sparks any kind of protest, then we have become an

insipid, innocuous, characterless society. The story of Pinchas and his brave stand for G d, Torah and morality gives us cause to consider and an important point to ponder. You don't have to be a zealot to have a bottom line. What is my bottom line? What would I get passionate about? Is there anything in Jewish life that inspires me, excites me or incenses me enough to take a stand?

by Rabbi Yossy Goldman

THE GREATEST SERVANT

It's always interesting, amusing and occasionally gripping to watch the "parade" known as the American presidential elections. This time around with racial division in the United States, growing economic disparity, terrorism rearing its head on a regular basis all over the world, and even the controversial June 23 referendum by British voters to exit the European Union—there is certainly no shortage of issues to address as the politics behind it all gains momentum. Perhaps the most crucial issue—one we try to touch on, but which cannot be captured on news cameras or in speeches—is whether any candidate really possesses what we can call true leadership. It's a tricky issue because, like modesty, leadership is one of those qualities that, as soon as a person begins describing his or her own mastery of it, you can't help but feel that they don't have it. Rather, they have its exact opposite. Real leaders tend to be those who run away from any type of position of power, and they rarely speak about themselves because that just isn't where their thoughts are. A real leader is act-ually the greatest servant.

He doesn't have a personal agenda at hand, but is instead there solely for the needs of the people he is leading. In this week's Torah portion, Parshat Pinchas, we witness the ordination of Joshua bin Nun as the successor to our first national leader, Moses. Like Moses himself, Joshua never wanted to be a leader. Each, instead, wanted from an early age to serve. Moses: by going out into the fields where the Jews were working as slaves, and seeking ways to ease their suffering. Joshua: by devoting himself to Moses. Even as a young man, he was constantly present in the tent that served as a Torah study hall. As an adult, he remained Moses's loyal student and aide. Both had to be persuaded to accept the role of leader. Yet the deepest insights into what makes a real leader are revealed only when the responsibilities are about to change hands from Moses to Joshua. Having just been told by G d that he is about to pass away, it would have been logical and human for Moses to turn his attention to settling his own affairs and giving last instructions to his family and followers. After all, what leader isn't concerned with what his mark will be on history? What parent isn't concerned with how well their wishes will be followed after they pass on? Moses wasn't. He was concerned only about two things—that G d's will be realized, and that the Jewish people not be left alone without someone to understand them, protect them, inspire them and, when need be, comfort them. The words of his plea have forever encapsulated the meaning of what it means to be a Jewish leader: "G d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall take them out and who shall bring them in." (Numbers 27:15–17)

Why is G d being addressed at this point as "G d of the spirits of all flesh"? According to our sages, Moses is acknowledging a basic truth—that the personality of each individual is unique and known to G d—and he is beseeching G d to appoint a leader who can deal with each of these personalities. He is seeking a leader for the Jewish people who will be able to understand and empathize with each person. G d answers him by promising that the man He is appointing as Moses' successor is indeed one "in whom there is spirit," i.e., that he will be able to act in a way befitting the personality of each individual. Joshua was just such a person, establishing a rapport with each individual based on genuine empathy, and not on attempts to curry favor. And true to the second part of Moses' request, he "went before them and came in before them." In other words, he didn't send the nation out to war to fight battles. He went first, and he inspired in them the confidence to be successful and thus come back ("and come in before them"). For centuries, these were the defining characteristics of the army of the Jewish people; unlike other armies, where generals stay comfortably behind the line of fire, the generals of the Jewish army always went first, and with their good deeds, empathy and trust were able to inspire confidence in their soldiers. Victory was the result.

Of course, this was true not only of physical battles, but of our internal spiritual battles as well. Each of us has to find the inspiration in Moses' words to become true leaders in our own sphere of influence. By caring about and genuinely connecting to the souls of people we must influence—for starters, our families—and by relating to their individual personalities. By leading through example, even if it means stretching ourselves to the breaking point; and by strengthening our own trust in the One who is guiding us, whether we see His hand in things or not. It's a kind of leadership that tends to create not followers, but people who are genuine leaders in their own right. And that's something this world could use a little more

By Chana Kroll

REMINDEERS! Please remember to file the paperwork for the Fast of Av (August 10-11). Also, please begin working with your Rabbi/Chaplain to ensure the paperwork is being processed for Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah order forms are due by August 23rd.

July 21, 2019 - 18 Tammuz, 5779

Golden Calf Destroyed (1313 BCE).

Moses destroyed the Golden Calf, and re-ascended Mount Sinai to plead G-d's forgiveness for the Jewish people.

July 22, 2019 – 19 Tammuz, 5779

Passing of Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog (1959).

Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog (1889-1959) was born in Łomża, Poland, and moved to the United Kingdom with his family in 1898. He served as rabbi of Belfast from 1916 to 1919 and was appointed rabbi of Dublin in 1919. He went on to serve as Chief Rabbi of Ireland between 1922 and 1936, after which he immigrated to Israel to succeed the late Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook as Chief Rabbi of Israel. He served as Chief Rabbi until his death in 1959. He authored numerous works including *Divrei Yitzchak*, an anthology of Talmudic discourses, and the halachic work *Hechal Yitzchak*.

July 23, 2019 – 20 Tammuz, 5779

Passing of Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh (1954).

Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh was born in Hebron to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Na'eh, a Lubavitcher chassid & dean of the Magen Avot, a yeshiva founded by the S'dei Chemed. With the outbreak of World War One, the Turks, who controlled the Land of Israel at the time, expelled anyone who was not a Turkish citizen. Most of the exiled Jews, including Rabbi Avraham Chaim, gathered in Alexandria, Egypt. During his time there, Rabbi Avraham Chaim founded *Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael* & wrote the halachic work *Shenot Chaim*, a concise digest of halachah for Sephardic Jews. In 1918, he returned to Palestine to work for the *Edah HaChareidit* (a prominent Orthodox communal organization), under Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld. Rabbi Na'eh best known for his halachic works *Ketzot ha-Shulchan* and *Shiurei Torah* ("measurements of the Torah"), in which he converted archaic halachic measurements into modern terms. Contemporary halachic authorities follow his measurements to this day.

July 23, 2019 – 20 Tammuz, 5779

Baal Shem of Worms (1636).

The noted Kabbalist Rabbi Eliyahu ben Moshe Loanz, known as "Rabbi Eliyahu Baal Shem" of Worms, Germany, passed away on the 21st of Tammuz of the year 5396 from creation (1636 CE). He was a grandson of the famed shtadlan (Jewish activist) R. Joselman of Rosheim, and the author of *Michlal Yofi* commentary on Ecclesiastes.