

Torah Weekly

ת"ס

July 2 - 8, 2023
13-19 Tammuz, 5783

Torah Reading:
Pinchas: Numbers 25:10 - 30:1
Haftarah:
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 & Matzah

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).

Hyman & Martha Rogal Center
5804 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-421-0111
Fax: 412-521-5948
www.alephne.org
info@alephne.org



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

Destiny Beckons

Pinchas, the hero of this week's Parshah, was previously unheard of. Though as a grandson of Aaron he belonged to the "royal family," he was an unseeded young man, who, with a single act of bravery was catapulted to stardom.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 82a) tells the behind the scenes story. Zimri, a prince of the tribe of Shimon, publicly flaunts his intimate relationship with a heathen Midianite princess. Moses is momentarily stymied. Pinchas respectfully reminds Moses that he himself taught the principle that one who behaves as Zimri did may be executed by the zealous. Moses responds that since Pinchas remembered this, he, Pinchas, should be the one to actually carry it out. Pinchas duly does just that and the terrible plague that had taken the lives of thousands is stilled. G-d blesses Pinchas with His Covenant of Peace and Pinchas goes down in history as the hero who saved the day.

But why did Moses forget what he himself had taught? Apparently, Divine Providence saw fit that the great prophet should suffer a temporary memory lapse in order that young Pinchas assume his destined status.

Now Pinchas could have made a simple calculation. Here stand Moses and Aaron, other prominent elders and leaders and they are all silent. In the face of such brazen moral travesty

all these great men stand back. Who, then, am I to step forward? How can I, little old me, a new kid on the block, stand up and say what I believe in their august presence? Surely I must keep quiet and hold my peace.

But Pinchas did not say that. And thank G-d he didn't. Had he kept his silence, the plague might not have been averted and Pinchas would have remained a non-entity.

This, says the Lubavitcher Rebbe, serves a powerful lesson to all of us. If you witness a situation where you feel that you can make a difference, then you must. And the fact that greater people than you seem paralyzed should not necessarily mean that you too should remain idle. Perhaps this is your unique chance to do something historic. Perhaps you are earmarked for greatness and G-d is opening your window of opportunity. Deny yourself this moment and you deny destiny.

Sometimes the moment is yours. Sometimes greater people may vacillate and the responsibility and opportunity rest with you and you alone. Each of us has so much unlocked potential. Rare and precious are those crossroads of life when the chance to unleash that inner calling presents itself. This is your baby, your moment of glory, your own personal calling and you dare not desist from it.

Such was the case with Pinchas and such may be the

scenario that every one of us may find ourselves playing out one day.

In the story of Purim, the Megillah records how Queen Esther is asked by Mordechai to intercede with King Ahasuerus on behalf of her people. She explains that she fears this may be absolutely suicidal for her. Mordechai responds with rather strong words, *Relief and deliverance will come for the Jews from an other place, and you and your father's house will perish.* What Mordechai was telling Esther was that the chance to single handedly save one's entire nation doesn't present itself every day. It is a unique moment and ought to be seized. If you won't do it, someone else will; but this once in a lifetime opportunity may be lost to you forever.

Pinchas reminds us that when opportunity knocks we should open the door quickly. Do not hesitate. Destiny may be beckoning.

a benevolent monarch bearing the reins of political and spiritual power as one, and steering us to our ultimate destination—a time of G-dly perfection.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

The Daughters of Tzelafchad

The biblical word for holiday is *moed*, which means "appointed time" as well as "meeting." Holidays are "appointed times" set aside for us to "meet," for on

the holiday we have the space to meet with G-d and with the parts of ourselves that we sometimes overlook due to the demands and distractions of everyday life. Each of the holidays has a unique theme and energy. Each holiday gives us the opportunity to experience and internalize the inspiration of the time: exodus and freedom on Passover, Torah and spiritual enlightenment on Shavuot, holiness and atonement on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and joy on Sukkot.

Our weekly portion, Pinchas, lists the offerings we are commanded to offer at the Holy Temple on each of these *moadim*. Yet, in what seems to be a departure from the overall theme, the [Torah](#) also describes the daily communal offerings. The daily offerings were mentioned earlier in the Torah, so why are they reiterated here, and more specifically, why are they reiterated in the context of the extraordinary holidays?

We tend to view our lives as divided between the ordinary and extraordinary, between the usual routine and the excitement of the novel experience, between habit and inspiration.

Indeed, there are times that feel like holidays. The hand of [G-d](#) that took our ancestors out of Egypt feels once again present in our life. We feel the light from above shining brightly upon us, the wind of inspiration under our wings, and enthusiasm for life pervading our entire body. Yet there are also days that feel unremarkable and monotonous, times when we feel sapped of energy, devoid of excitement and purpose.

The Torah seeks to teach us that, in truth, every moment is a miracle and every day a holiday. There is no such thing as an ordinary day. The magnificent sunrise, the beautiful sunset, is no less an expression of Divine power than the Exodus from Egypt.

When referring to the daily offerings, the Torah says:

“The L-rd spoke to Moses, saying: Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering, My food for My fire offerings, a spirit of satisfaction for Me, you shall take care to offer to Me at its appointed time. The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon.”

The Torah refers to each and every day as a *moed*, a unique appointed time. As Rashiputs it:

At its appointed time: Each day is the appointed time prescribed for the continual offerings.

[Rashi](#) is telling us that each and every ordinary day can indeed become a *moed*, a holiday, a day filled with enthusiasm, holiness and joy. If we take the time to experience the blessing of life G-d gifted us with, if we designate a portion of each day to fulfill the purpose of our creation, then, indeed, each and every day is a holiday.

By Rabbi Menachem Feldamn

IN JEWISH HISTORY

Sunday, July 2, 2023 --- 13 Tammuz, 5783

R. Yosef Yitzchak Freed (1927)

On the 13th of Tammuz of 1927, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, received the documents authorizing his release from a sentence of exile to Kastroma in the interior of Russia. The Rebbe was actually notified of his release on Tammuz 12, but since that day was a legal holiday, the Certificate of Release freeing him to travel home was issued only the next day. Thus both the 12th and 13th of Tammuz are celebrated as a "festival of liberation" by the Chabad-Lubavitch community.

Tuesday, July 4, 2023 --- 15 Tammuz, 5783

Passing of R. Chayim ben Attar (1743)

Passing of the famed Torah scholar and mystic Rabbi Chayim ben Attar (1696-1743), author of the *Ohr HaChayim* commentary on the Torah. Born in Morocco, he also lived and taught in Algiers, Italy, Acco and Jerusalem, where he settled a year before his passing. Many stories are told of his holiness and greatness, and of the repeated unsuccessful attempts by [Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov](#) to reach the Holy Land and meet with him in the belief that together they could bring the [Moshiach](#) and the final redemption.

Wednesday, July 5, 2023 --- 16 Tammuz, 5783

Golden Calf Made; Hur Killed (1313 BCE)

In the year 2448 from Creation (1313 BCE), Tammuz 16 was the 40th day following the Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, and the people of Israel wrongly expected Moses' return from the mountain (he would actually return on the following day). When their leader failed to return, they demanded from Aaron: "Make us a god that shall go before us". Hur (Moses' nephew, the son of Miriam and Caleb) tried to stop them and was killed by the mob. Aaron fashioned a calf of molten gold.

Thursday, July 6, 2023 --- 17 Tammuz, 5783

Moses Breaks Tablets (1313 BCE)

The Talmud (Taanit 28b) lists five tragic events in Jewish history that occurred on Tammuz 17, on account of which a fast was instituted on this day (see [Laws & Customs](#)).

The first of these occurred in 1313 BCE, forty days after the [Giving of the Torah](#) on Sivan 6. Upon descending Mount Sinai and witnessing Israel's worship of the Golden Calf (see "[Today in Jewish History](#)" for yesterday, Tammuz 16), Moses smashed the Tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments which he was carrying down from the mountain.

Temple Service Disrupted (423 BCE)

The daily sacrificial [offerings](#) (*Korban Tamid*) in the [Holy Temple](#) were discontinued, [three weeks](#) before the Babylonians' [destruction](#) of the First Temple in 423 BCE.

Jerusalem Walls Breached (69 CE)

The other three national tragedies mourned on Tammuz 17 are connected with the Roman conquest of Jerusalem and their destruction of the Second Temple in the year 69 CE:

--The walls of the besieged city of Jerusalem were breached.

--The Roman general Apostomus burned the Torah and,

--placed an [idol](#) in the Holy Temple.

The fighting in Jerusalem continued for three weeks until the [9th of Av](#), when the [Holy Temple](#) was set aflame.