

JULY 3, 2010 21 Tammuz 5770 Parshat Pincha

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The Blessing of Peace

After Pinchas successfully stayed the plague in last week's parsha by killing Zimri and Kozbi -- the Jewish tribal prince and the Midianite princess who brazenly sinned in the presence of Moshe and the elders -- Hashem said to Moshe, "Therefore, say, 'Behold, I am giving to him my covenant of *peace*'" (25:12). Why was Pinchas blessed specifically with "*peace*?"

The Gemara's (Sanhedrin 106a) account of the Pinchas story teaches us that the Jewish people did not sin with the Midianite women because they were inherently a depraved people; rather, there was a deliberate and diabolical effort made by the nations around them to erode their holiness by seducing the Jewish men to sin. A very good argument could have been presented that B'nai Israel weren't responsible. They were pure, minding their own business, and were not looking to sin. The Moabites and Midianites were the ones who actively sought them out and seduced them. Perhaps this is why, when Zimri brought Kozbi before Moshe and the elders and challenged their authority, the Torah records that "they were crying at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting" (25:6). Why were they just standing there crying instead of incarcerating this sinner? Perhaps it was because they felt, "*nebach*," these poor men, are *victims* of a concerted, evil effort to make them sin -- how can we take violent action against them, when they act out of no fault of their own?

And this is where Pinchas comes in. Pinchas, the Torah says, "saw" (25:7). What did he see? He viewed everything with a different perspective. True, the Jewish men were being preyed upon and victimized by an immoral environment. And yet, the Torah's laws are static. Pinchas realized that this was a trial for B'nai Israel, and that even though it was a very difficult trial, every Jew was accountable for his own behavior, regardless of the oppressive circumstances. He understood what the pasuk says about the Torah: "Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all of its paths are peaceful" (Mishlei 3:17). One can and must be at peace with the Torah at all times, because Hashem devised the Torah so that it can be fulfilled by any Jew without impossible conflict. With this in mind, Pinchas took a *romach* in his hand (25:7). "*Romach*" is Hebrew for "spear," but in gematria it equals 248 -- the number of positive mitzvos in the Torah. Pinchas took the ammunition of the Torah's mitzvos as assurance that what he was about to do was correct. This was his justification in executing Zimri -- he knew that the ways of the Torah are harmonious, and if so, Zimri was not a victim. He had only himself to blame for violating its law.

Hashem rewarded Pinchas with His covenant of *peace* -- Pinchas was able to demonstrate the fact that the Torah is a Torah of peace, which never seeks to create conflict or overbearing difficulty for the individual. He did this by demonstrating that the people were capable of resisting the seduction of their surroundings, despite the challenge. He could do it, and so could they.

We live in an age of "co-dependencies" and sundry "addictions." People sometimes inappropriately use their environments, their childhood, etc., to excuse their behavior. It's easy to place the blame for our poor choices on an addiction. It takes a Pinchas to demonstrate that these excuses are just that -- excuses to remove the blame from ourselves. But in reality Hashem never presents a test too difficult to pass, no trial too difficult to endure, no mitzva too difficult to fulfill. If we accept this and internalize the message, G-d will increase our strength to help us pass the tests of our lives. This is what the pasuk means in saying, "Hashem will grant strength to His nation; Hashem will bless His nation with peace" (Tehillim 29:11). By receiving the strength from Hashem to pass our trials, we will come to recognize that we are at peace with Him and that His Torah is a Torah of peace.

Rabbi Daniel Korobkin
Rosh Kehilla, Yavneh, LA
Synagogue Services, OU West Coast

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Issue: A limited quantity mistakenly bear an OU symbol. The OU does not certify this product because of *bedikas tolayim* concerns. For info: 212-563-4000

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UPCOMING EVENTS @ OU WEST COAST

► **THIS Shabbat**
JULY 3, 6:15pm

Hosted at
Young Israel of Century City

**"The Future of Orthodox
Jewish Life in North America"**

Moderated by

OU National President,

Steve Savitsky

with Panelists:

Seth Berkowitz

Julie Gruenbaum Fax

Rabbi Elazar Muskin

October 22-24

Come join us for an

OU Weekend in La Jolla, CA

Sheraton Hotel--La Jolla

Meals at Adat Yeshurun

\$350 per/couple

Info: EstherR@ou.org

RABBIS WEIL AND WEINREB OF THE ORTHODOX UNION TEAM UP FOR TISHA B'AV ALL-DAY WEBCAST

An OU tradition continues again this year with OU Executive Vice President Emeritus **Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb's** annual four-hour Tisha b'Av webcast on www.ou.org and www.ouradio.org, to be immediately followed by OU Executive Vice President **Rabbi Steven Weil's** Tisha b'Av presentation.

Rabbi Weinreb's live webcast will take place at 9am EDT from the **Young Israel of Woodmere on Long Island, NY.**

Rabbi Weil's will begin at 1pm EDT, 10am PDT, 3,000 miles away at **Shaarey Zedek Congregation in Valley Village, CA.**

**Tisha b'Av is observed on
Tuesday, July 20 this year.**

OU SYNAGOGUES AROUND THE REGION

Beverly Hills: Cong. Beth Jacob (310) 278-1911

- **Women's Seudah Shlishit Series with the Rebbetzins:**
JULY 10, 6pm: Rebbetzin/Dr. Hindy Posy @1531 Glenville

Beverly Hills: Young Israel-North BH: (310) 276-7650 info@YINBH.org

- **Shabbat JULY 10:** Guest – Rabbi David Mahler, Maimonides Academy
 - **Shabbat JULY 16-17:** S-I-R Rabbi Natan Slifkin, 'The Zoo Rabbi'
 - **Shabbat JULY 31:** Guest Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz, Jews4Judaism
 - **Shabbat AUG 14:** Guest Ofir Fisher, of The OR Movement
 - **Shabbat AUG 21:** Guest Rabbi Baruch Sufrin, Harkham-Hillel Acad
 - **Shabbat AUG 28:** Guest Rabbi Zvi Schindel, Maimonides Academy faculty
- Calabasas Shul: (818) 591-7485

Canada-Calgary: House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel (403) 259-3230

Canada-Edmonton: Beth Israel (780) 488-2840

- **Shabbat JUL 3-4:** S-I-R Rabbi Daniel Korobkin
- Canada-Vancouver: Schara Tzedek (604) 736-7607

Denver, CO : BMH-BJ Cong (303) 388-4203

Denver, CO: EDOS (303) 322-7943

Irvine, CA: Beth Jacob (949) 786-5230

LA: Adas Torah (310) 203-9659 www.adastorah.com

LA: Aish Hatorah (310) 278-8672 x 305 or tsullivan@aishla.com

LA: B'nai David-Judea (310)-276-9269 or amram@bnaidavid.com

LA: Etz Jacob (323) 938-2619

LA: Mogen David Cong. (310) 556-5609

LA: Young Israel of Century City: (310) 273-6954

- **Shabbat JULY 3, 6:15pm:** OU sponsored event: *The Future of Orthodox Jewish Life in North America* w/Steve Savitsky, Julie Fax, Rabbi Elazar Muskin, Seth Berkowitz

LA: Young Israel of Hancock Park: (323) 931-4030

LA: Yeshiva of LA (YOLA) 310-203-3197 yeshivavarabbi@juno.com

- MINCHA/MAARIV: SUN-THURS, 15 minutes before Shkiah;
- LATE MAARIV: SUN-THUR 10pm. M-TH am/pm: adults/students chavrusas

Laguna Woods, CA: Beth Torah (949) 587-1967 (a retirement community)

La Jolla: Adat Yeshurun (858) 535-1196

- **OCT 22-24: OU Shabbaton in La Jolla.** Info EstherR@ou.org

Las Vegas, NV: Shaarei Tefila (702) 384-3565 (Mikva 384-3317)

Oakland, CA: Beth Jacob (510) 482-1147

Palm Springs, CA: The Desert Synagogue (760) 327-4848

Palo Alto, CA: Emek Beracha (650) 857-1800 (Mikva 493-5555)

Phoenix, AZ: Beth Joseph (602) 277-8858

Portland, OR: Kesser Israel (503) 222-1239

Sacramento, CA: Keneset Israel Torah Center (916) 481-1159

San Diego, CA: Cong. Beth Jacob (619) 287-9890

San Diego, CA: Kehillat Ahavat Yisrael-KAY (858) 633-0181

San Francisco, CA: Adath Israel (415) 564-5665

Seattle: Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath (206) 721-0970

Seattle: Ezra Bessaro (206) 722-5500

Seattle: Sephardic Bikur Holim (206) 723-3028

Valley Village, CA: Shaarey Zedek Cong. (818) 763-0560

Venice, Pacific Jewish Center-The Shul on the Beach:(310)392-8749

Washington-Mercer Island: Shevet Achim (206) 275-1539

Woodland Hills: Beit HaMidrash (818) 999-2059 (5850 Fallbrook Ave.)

- **SUNs @ 8:30am:** following 8am minyan-Shiur-Baba Kama w/Rabbi Yaakov Rechinzt

West LA: Westwood Kehilla (310) 441-5288x2 director@kehilla.org

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ▶ **ONGOING: OU'S WOMEN'S TORAH NETWORK (WTN)**
Classes with Geri Wiener—Summer sessions start June 21 & 23
→ **MONs-Valley (private home):** → **WEDs-City (OU Hdqtrs):**

PLEASE HELP THE OU JOB BOARD IMPROVE ITS SERVICES

The OU Job Board, in its continuing quest to help the communities we serve needs your help. Can you make this happen?

Please help the OU Job Board improve its services. Would you like the OU Job Board to offer you more services? We need you to give the OU Job Board feedback to the services it currently provides? We encourage you to fill out the OU Job Board Survey. It will take a minute of your time and will ultimately help you and K'lal Yisroel as we fine tune our services. Please follow this link to take our survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PQ6JZ8F>

The OU Job Board is asking our entire membership to please go to the OU Job Board at www.oujobs.org and register FREE OF CHARGE to become a member. Even if you have registered with us in the past, we are asking you to re-register now so we can update our current information and help us help you pinpoint jobs and services in your area.

Beginning July 19, courses will be available online via WebEx.

NCSY-JSU-YACHAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS



Office contact: 310-229-9000 x 209 www.westcoastncsy.com

Want to help run a chesed project? call Solly at 310-557-6582

For more info on CITY NCSY or JSU call Solly 310-557-6582

CITY NCSY: Call Solly @ 310-557-6582 or Shess@westcoastncsy.com

Congrats to City Chapter on their CHAPTER EXCELLENCE AWARD!

Bonfire and Kumzitz this Sunday night at 7pm at Dockweiler Beach

Latte&Learning-is going strong!-**TUES 7:30pm:** @CB&T-233 S. Beverly Dr.

with **Rabbi Josh Horwitz**

DNL is on break for the summer - have a great summer!

JR. NCSY: (6-8 grade) Call Josh 310-694-2976 or ncsyjosh@gmail.com

... **NCSY Bar/Bat Mitzvah** tutoring available. Talmud Torah classes.

***Jr. NCSY Dodger Baseball Event:** call Josh for details 310-694-2976

YACHAD: Call Perri @323-228-4191.

Check out pics from Spring Regional at www.westcoastncsy.com

B'NEI AKIVA OF LA ANNOUNCEMENTS

→ **Office:** 310-248-2450 bneiakivaLA@gmail.com

→ **Upcoming Events:**

Have a great Summer!



ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

Mending military minds

Israeli-American psychologist Dr. Edna Foa, honored by **Time Magazine** as one of the most influential people in 2010, is healing traumatized war veterans in the US and Israel.

Protection from underwater threats

An Israeli company is at the forefront of technology taking on the challenge of safeguarding us from threats that originate at sea. Sharks and jellyfish aren't the only dangerous creatures in the sea. There are other frightening elements out there, like terrorists, pirates and industrial spies - nefarious seafarers who are bent on bringing their particular brand of trouble to land-dwellers all over the world. Israel's **DSIT Solutions** is at the forefront of technology to detect trouble coming from the sea - especially the kind that comes from beneath the ocean's surface.

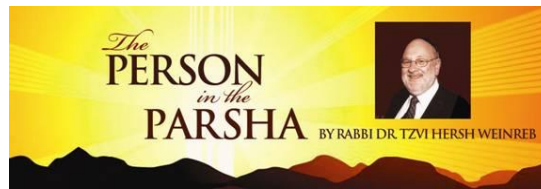
Smart cartoons for kids

An Israeli animation company for pre-schoolers is attracting networks in the US, Canada, Europe and even Qatar with content that is aimed to expand creativity, knowledge and fun.

Did You Know?

A breakthrough finding by an Israeli professor could lead to earlier diagnosis, more effective treatment, and possibly even a cure for the debilitating autoimmune disease multiple sclerosis.

www.Israel21c.org



Parshat Pinchas

July 3, 2010 – 21 Tammuz 5770

To read more articles and essays by Rabbi Weinreb, visit his blog at www.ou.org/rabbi_weinreb

"Lessons in Leadership"

Too often leaders cling to power. They are so intoxicated by the privileges of their position that they become blinded to their own vulnerabilities and even oblivious of their own mortality.

Even our own Jewish history has many examples, some comparatively recent, of great leaders who failed to provide for their succession. Their deaths left a vacuum since they failed to designate their choice of a successor in a clear and unambiguous fashion. In some cases, chaos and strife ensued.

Such was not the case with the greatest of all Jewish leaders, Moses. In fact, one of the defining factors of his greatness was his concern that a proper successor to him be named.

And it is in this week's Torah portion, *Pinchas*, that the story of Moses' search for an appropriate successor is narrated.

"Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 'Let the Lord, source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community who shall go out before them and come in before them... so that the Lord's community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd.'" (*Numbers 27:15-17*)

Rashi draws our attention to the peculiar way in which Moses addresses the Almighty, "Source of breath of all flesh". Whatever can that mean? Why does not Moses address Him as "God of the heavens and earth", or some similar familiar appellation?

Rashi's answer yields a very important insight into Moses' concept of the nature of leadership. A leader must be able to tolerate the great differences that exist among individuals. Every human being is different from every other, and a leader must be able to inspire diverse individuals, even individuals with contradictory ideologies and objectives. Only the Lord Almighty, "Source of the breath of all flesh", can identify a leader with the capacity of relating to "each and every person according to his personality."

So Moses was not only exemplary in taking the responsibility to find and to name a successor, but he was also careful to ask for divine assistance in locating a new leader with the capacity to deal with human uniqueness and individual differences. Moses knew from his long experience that a leader who expected uniformity and conformity was doomed to failure.

But there is another aspect to leadership that Moses did not seem to ask for, but which God provided for.

God does not only respond to Moses' request by naming Joshua as his successor. Rather, He insists that Joshua himself stand before and consult Elazar the Priest. The effective leader, nay the great leader, dare not think of himself as infallible, as the only source of intelligent leadership. Rather, he too must bow to a higher authority.

Hence "...he shall present himself to Elazar the Priest, who shall, on his behalf, seek the decision of the Urim before the Lord. By such instruction, they shall go out, and by such instruction, they shall come in... Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Elazar the Priest..." (*Numbers 27:21-22*)

Joshua was to be the undisputed leader of the Jewish people. Indeed, our sages see him as fulfilling the role of king. And he was chosen not just because he was a faithful disciple to his master, Moses, but because of the amazing skill he possessed to deal with a people as diverse and as fractious as the Israelites. Yet he too, from the very beginning, was made to realize that he had limitations, that he needed to depend upon others, and that, ultimately, he had to bow before "the Source of the breath of all flesh."

Whenever I read these key passages of our Torah portion this week, I cannot help but apply their lessons to the very many leaders across a span of history who began their careers with talents equal or perhaps even superior to Joshua's, but who ultimately failed utterly because they tried to "go at it alone." They yielded in their hubris to their inner conviction that they knew best, and that consultation with others was a waste of time.

Failed leaders, leaders who do not look to the Elazars of their own times, are not just historical figures. *B'chol dor vador*, in each and every generation, ours too, leaders arise with God-given personal gifts and with great promise, but to our disappointment, they fail dismally. And, almost without exception, their failures can be traced back to their attempts to be a Joshua without an Elazar, a king without a conscience, an expert without a consultant, a wise man without an Urim, a human without God.