

- \* This week's speaker after davening in the Youth Minyan, will be Eliezer Lebovits.
- \* There will be a shiur at Mark Franck's house (Gemorah Brachos) @ 4:00pm on Shabbos afternoon.
- \* This week is Shabbos Mevorchim as we bless the coming month of Av. Rosh Chodesh is next shabbos.

Katanga

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Caulfield  
Beth Hamedrash Weekly Newsletter

D'var Torah

## THE 'CRISIS' CRISIS

by Rabbi Stephen Baars

Pinchas is one of the few parshas named after an individual Jew. To appreciate how unusual this is, there is no parsha named Abraham. Nor is there one named Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Joseph, Moses or Aaron.

Clearly, Pinchas was one of the all-time heroes of Jewish history. What was his claim to fame? In an act of tremendous self sacrifice (and at great personal danger), Pinchas acted to stop a public display of immorality which had triggered a plague that was killing thousands. Pinchas had stepped forward at a time when everyone else had given up, and for this he was rewarded by God with the "Covenant of Peace." It is hard to find such a Jewish champion in the Torah.

It is therefore surprising that later in the parsha, Joshua - a 'secondary' figure in the Bible - is appointed to inherit Jewish leadership after Moses' death!

As the commentators explain, the appointment of Joshua is juxtaposed next to Pinchas' heroics to contrast what a real leader should be (Joshua), as opposed to what we think he should be (Pinchas). Though the "Pinchas" of the world typically get the most media attention, it is the quiet qualities of a "Joshua" which are most essential for leadership.

What leadership skills and talents does Joshua possess that Pinchas lacks?

Joshua's greatness is that when it came to Torah, he was reliable, dependable and consistent. Day in and day out, he would arrive first to the study hall to set up the chairs, and he would stay to sweep up after. When Moses went up Mount Sinai for 40 days, Joshua faithfully waited below.

This was Joshua's strength. He learned as much as he could from the Torah, the instruction book of life. If you want a leader, then pick the one who has studied the instructions first.

What if you have the choice between a person who consistently makes good decisions, or someone who blooms in a crisis? The Torah says to choose the former.

Why? A crisis is, by its very nature, a unique and passing event. Most of the time, society is not in crises. Therefore, the best leader is one who can be

steady and consistent through the routine of day-to-day reality.

In his quiet, unassuming way, Joshua was a rock of stability. This may seem slight when compared to the exciting bravery of Pinchas. Yet, the Torah teaches, it characterizes the essence of a good leader.

We've all heard questions such as, "What would you do if your child came home and told you X or Y problem?" Or, "What would you do if you found out you had A or B disease?" These make great talk-show topics and bar-room discussions. We watch crisis-laden soap operas, pay to view crisis-packed movies, and read crisis-covered newspapers. Our perspective is so skewed that normal everyday activity seems mundane, boring, and unworthy of attention. We've turned our lives into a constant quest for crisis.

But what about the "non-crisis?" Are we prepared to sit at the dinner table and discuss how to make the act of eating more meaningful? Would we watch a talk show that raises the question, "Is day-to-day life meaningful when there isn't a crisis?"

If we were more adequately equipped to face the non-crisis situations, there would be far less likelihood of problems accumulating to the point where they actually do reach crisis proportions!

For this reason, Joshua was the best choice for leader. It is only our modern-day pre-occupation with crisis that could make us think Pinchas was more qualified.

From where will we learn to enjoy life if we do not spend time to understand the inherent value of the "mundane"? How will our children learn to make their days meaningful if our only concern is the crisis in life, the crisis in the world?

We may know the right response if our children came home and told us X or Y. We may know how to handle the knowledge that we have A or B. We may be ably prepared for most of life's crises and disasters. But the non-crisis arena is the one that holds the real challenge for us today. Because what a disaster life will be... if we don't learn how to deal with the consistent reality of daily routine!



Thoughts for the week:

"It's difficult to keep an open mind and an open mouth at the same time."

"The praise of a woman is not when she is extolled by her friends, but when she is extolled by her rivals." (Chiyya bar Abba)

"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost." (John Adams)

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." (Michelangelo)

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine."

Other Developments

\* Last shabbos after shule, Rafi Goodman, spoke about the incident at the end of Balak when the Jewish people sinned with the Midianite women. He related the story of Pinchas who 'zealously' acted to quell the sinners by taking the life of Zimri and Cozbi. Rafi spoke about the halachic principles and implications of the varying views on Pinchas' action, with specific reference to the argument between the Ran and the Rashbam. Yasher Koach.

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MAZAL TOV!

- Y A very hearty Mazal Tov to Yisroel Alter & Miriam Pacanowski on the occasion of the birth of a son this week.
- Y Katanga would like to wish the parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters and extended families much naches and simchas in the future.
- Y Isi and Miriam have much pleasure in inviting everyone to celebrate the Shalom Zocher this Friday night (12 July), which will be held in their home at 8 Loch Avenue, East St Kilda. The Bris will IY"H be held on Sunday morning following Shachris at 8:00am.

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The Three Weeks

by Rabbi Moshe Lazarus

We might think the Second Temple was destroyed because of a combination of complex reasons, a series of events out of our control. Not so. It is simply due to the sin of unwarranted hatred between Jews.

When we desire and await the rebuilding of the Temple, the key is to focus on fixing what we have ruined. The way of repair is that everyone must make a maximum effort to love every member of the Jewish People.



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Announcements

- During the three weeks we read a series of Haftorot which deal with punishment. The first, which will be read this shabbos, is taken from the beginning of Yirmiyahu. A reminder concerning the laws of the three weeks, including prohibitions against: weddings, music, public celebrations, haircuts or shaving and the blessing "She-hechianu" (except on Shabbos).

- Shalom Aleichem to ex-pat Harry Reicher, who arrived in Australia this week. Baruch atah Bevoiecha, wishing you a pleasant stay.

- This week is Shabbos Mevorchim as we bless the coming month of Av. Rosh Chodesh is next shabbos (12 July). Chodesh Tov Umevorach.

- Want to join the roster for presenting shiurim in the Youth Minyan? Speak to Ezra May, or email us.

- Please join us for our Katanga weekly Squash game on Sundays @ 6pm and 7pm at Albert Park. If you are interested in attending, please let Yirmie Elkus know.

- Minyanim times for this coming week are: Mornings: 6:40am and 7am. Mincha at 4:45pm followed by a shiur and Ma'ariv.

Suggestions or comments regarding our website or newsletter? Email us - we would love to hear from you.

See us on the web at: <http://come.to/katanga>

Shabbat Shalom & Gut Shabbos to all!

"The Editors"