

## PARSHAT PINCHAS

15-21 Tammuz 5784  
21-27 July 2024

*Torah:* Numbers 25:10-30:1  
*Haftorah:* Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

### Calendar

Chaplains have monthly calendars available.

### Psalms for our brethren in the Holy Land

*Psalm 117*

1. Praise the Lord, all nations, laud Him, all peoples.  
2. For His kindness has overwhelmed us, and the truth of the Lord is eternal. Hallelujah!

(Please say Chapter 20 daily)

### Psalms Daily

### Pirkei Avot (1:14)

*Hillel would say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?*

## The Talking Lottery

The twelve tribes of Israel were such mighty warriors that one shudders at the thought of them bickering over a piece of beachfront real estate. Fortunately, such a possibility is precluded by the passage in this week's Torah reading (Numbers 26:55-56) which describes the procedure for the division of the Holy Land. The land was divided by lottery: the names of the twelve tribes were written down and placed in one box, and the coordinates of the twelve territories into which the land was divided was placed in a second box. Then, pairs of lots—one from each box—were drawn. A Temple priest was there to prophesy each pick, ensuring faith in the lottery's divine accuracy. To top it off, the lottery tickets themselves miraculously announced each pairing. No one questioned the results. Secure in their mission, the tribes set forth to settle the land with gusto. The Jew destined for the mountains climbed to great heights; the Jew in the forest felled mighty trees; the Jew in the valley brought forth fine fruit; the Jew near the sea sailed in search of distant trade. A similar lottery is administered to the soul before leaving heaven and coming down to this world. Each soul is paired with a particular "parcel of land," a unique destiny, a lot in life. The match is divinely ordained. Sometimes (particularly when we hit the rough spots in our lives) we may lose faith in the lottery's divine accuracy. Our gusto may

flag. This week's Torah portion reminds us that our soul is on a divine mission with a unique destiny to fulfill—to settle and develop a particular "parcel of land" with acts of goodness and kindness. The knowledge that this is a match made in heaven fuels our confidence, commitment, and excitement in tackling our portion in life.

*By Boruch Cohen*

## The Greatest Servant

### A JEWISH UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP

It's always interesting and often gripping to watch the "parade" known as the American presidential elections. 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 actually 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 must 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, 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 of.

*By Chana Kroll*

## IN JEWISH HISTORY

**Sunday, July 21, 2024-15  
Tammuz, 5784**

**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

**Tuesday, July 23, 2024-17  
Tammuz, 5784**

**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.

**Thursday, July 25, 2024-19  
Tammuz, 5784**

**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.

**Friday, July 26, 2024-20  
Tammuz, 5784**

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

Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh (1890-1954) was born in Hebron to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Na'eh, a Lubavitcher chassid and dean of the Magen Avot, a yeshiva founded by the S'dei Chemed. With the outbreak of

World War One, the Ottomans, who controlled the Land of Israel at the time, expelled anyone who was not a citizen of the empire. Most of the exiled Jews, including Rabbi Avraham Chaim, gathered in Alexandria, Egypt. During his time there, Rabbi Avraham Chaim founded Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael and 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.

**Shabbat, July 27, 2024-21  
Tammuz, 5784**

**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.