

Ha Shavuah B' Sha'arey Israel

July 1 – July 7, 2010

19 Tammuz – 25 Tammuz 5770



Candle lighting time 8:28 pm
Friday July 2

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Services begin at 6:15 pm
Saturday morning Shabbat Services begin at 9:30 am

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**PARASHAT PINHAS** (Commentary on Page 2)

Annual (Num. 25:10-30:1): Etz Hayim p. 918

Triennial (Num. 28:16-30:1): Etz Hayim p. 931

Haftarah (1 Kings 18:46-19:21): Etz Hayim p. 968  
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Best Wishes for a Speedy Recovery to:

Elaine Dreizin, Carol Besser, Paul Kruger, Doris Rabinowitz and Paul Adler

We wish a Happy Birthday this week to:

Robert Chanin, Laura Carter Piers, Jennifer Bernstein and Anna Lipson

We wish a Happy Anniversary this week to:

Deborah & Paul Adler

This week we remember the Yahrzeit of:

Sophie Coolik, Mollie Wall, Julius Davidson, Irene Hirsh, Rose Levine, Florence Besser, Nora Koplin, Morris Rosen

Please Note ~

The CSI Office will be closed on Monday, July 5 in observance of Independence Day. It will also be closed on Monday, July 12 and Monday, July 19 for vacation.

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**The New High Holiday Mahzor Lev Shalem  
Prayer Books Have Arrived at CSI**

**If you would like to plate a prayer book  
for a life cycle event, the cost is \$35.00**  
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Tisha B'Av
Service on Monday Evening
July 19 at 7:00pm

Save the Date!

Marc Rosengart's Bar Mitzvah
August 6-7

The CSI Gift Shop

Birthdays - Anniversaries - Weddings
Bar/Bat Mitzvahs - Graduations
House Warming Gifts



Call Terri 477-8597 or Deborah 474-0505 for an Appointment

PARASHAT PINHAS

Numbers 25:10-30:1

This week's Torah commentary is by Rabbi Reuven Spolter, the rabbi of Agudas Achim Congregation in West Hartford, Connecticut.

A Count Of Love - The census that occurs immediately after the plague for the sin with Midian reassures the Children of Israel that they are still God's partners in the covenant.

After outlining the reward that Pinhas was to receive for his zealotry, God commands Moshe to attack and punish the nation of Midyan for enticing the Jewish people to sin and for causing the plague that nearly consumed them. Yet, immediately following this command, the Torah abruptly changes direction, stopping in mid-sentence to begin a new count of the people. Several questions arise from this strange turn in the text. Why does the Torah end the story of the strife with Midyan so abruptly? What is the function of the new census? And why is it connected to (and then disconnected from) the story of Pinhas?

The answer to these questions lies in the curious language Moshe and Elazar utilize when initiating God's command to count every male above age 20. Moshe and Elazar say, "Take the sum of the people from 20 years old and upward, as the Lord commanded Moshe and children of Israel who went forth from the Land of Egypt." (26:4) After the miraculous excitement of the Exodus and the glorious revelation at Sinai, the nation of Israel suffered setbacks of ever-increasing magnitude, culminating in the punishment following the sin of the *meraglim* (spies), when God banished every male over age 20 from entering the Promised Land.

After 40 long years of wandering in the desert, the people were understandably full of doubt. Would God retain His relationship with them or instead move on? Would He maintain the closeness that began at Sinai or would He view the descendants of the original *Am Hanivchar* (chosen people) with disdain?

By counting the people anew, God aims to allay their fears and refresh their spirit by adding a sense of newness and distinction to their mission. He wishes to give them the same purity of spirit that was present in the Jewish nation after they had left Egypt. Therefore, God counts the nation again. The purpose of this count serves not as a census or military count so much as a reestablishment of their old identity as the *Am Hameyuhad* that would forever keep and guard God's covenant.

The unique nature of the count becomes more apparent when we scrutinize the text of the counting itself. As opposed to the count taken at the beginning of *B'midbar*, which focused on a military structure, here the count focuses on history, concentrating on the roots and families of each particular tribe and their connection to the original children of Israel. While their parents needed no family history in the earlier counting, their children, an entirely new nation, required reassurance that they indeed also constituted *Klal Yisrael* (congregation of Israel).

It is precisely for this reason that the Torah connects and then disconnects this counting from the plague at Shittim. After enduring the punishment of wandering in the desert for so many years, the Jews seem to immediately revert to their sinful ways when they engage the women of Midyan. Had they broken the camel's back? Had their sin pushed them over the edge, causing God to abandon them for eternity?

God immediately answers their doubts by counting them once again, "as a shepherd counts his flock." By cherishing each member of *Klal Yisrael*, God reestablishes a covenant with them and ensures that they would forever be the *Am Hanivhar*, God's chosen people.

For other commentaries on this week's Torah portion check out these sites:

Aish.com

ISJL Taste of Torah

JTS

MyJewishLearning.com

USCJ Torah Sparks

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Quick links:

CSI Macon Online

[United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism \(USCJ\)](http://United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ))

JTS Podcast - this week's Parsha

Audio Siddur

[Jewish Telegraphic Agency \(JTA\)](http://Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA))

Israeli News Broadcast – in English

The Jewish Ethicist

Synagogue 3000

Learn through USCJ online

The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum

[United Jewish Communities \(UJC\)](http://United Jewish Communities (UJC))

American Jewish University

For the children (or the young at heart):

Torah Portion Coloring Pages

Babaganews Torah Parasha of the week movie