

Remarks at Isidore Katzenstein Operation Levi Unveiling

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Under the Auspices of Operation Project Benjamin

Dvar Torah – Pinchas: Zeal, Legacy, and the Future

In Parashat Pinchas, we encounter one of the most complex and challenging moments in the Torah.

Pinchas acts with zeal-real bold, decisive, even controversial-and in response, Hashem grants him something unexpected: a **brit shalom, a covenant of peace.**

It's a paradox.

Out of intensity comes peace.

Out of crisis comes continuity.

And that tension runs through the entire parsha.

There are two Paths: Zeal and Voice

On one side, we have Pinchas-urgent, reactive, willing to risk everything to protect the people.

On the other side, we have the daughters of Zelophehad-calm, thoughtful, persistent-who stand before Moshe and respectfully argue for justice.

And remarkably, Hashem says **“Kein”-they are right**, and the law itself changes.

This is one of the Torah's most powerful messages:

- There is a time for decisive action
- And there is a time for principled dialogue
- But ultimately, the goal is the same: **to build a just and lasting future**

The Parsha is About Continuity

After the crisis, the Torah turns to the future:

- A **new census**-a new generation preparing to enter the Land.
- A new leader-**Yehoshua replaces Moshe.**

The message could not be clearer:

Judaism is not just about moments of heroism-it is about **continuity.**

Who will come next?

Who will carry the mission forward?

Now the Story of the Katzenstein Family

And this where the parsha comes alive in modern history.

Isidore Katzenstein was a proud German Jew who served as a soldier in World War I.

He gave his life defending his country at a young age.

Like Pinchas, he acted with courage and commitment-standing up for something greater than himself.

But history took a tragic turn.

The same nation he defended would soon turn against his people.

Yet the story does not end there.

His brother, Julius Katzenstein, survived Nazi Germany and was able to leave.

He came to the United States, where the Katzenstein family continued to grow and flourish.

From Sacrifice to Survival

If we step back, we see something remarkable:

- Isidor represents **sacrifice and courage in the moment**
- Julius represents **continuity, resilience, and the future.**

And together, they reflect the same dual message of our parsha:

- Action matters
- But what matters even more is **what endures**

Because had the story ended with Isidore, the legacy might have ended.

But through Julius, the family continues, children, grandchildren, a future that lives on.

The Deeper Message

Parashat Pinchas reminds us:

- It is not enough to act heroically
- We must also endure **continuity and transmission**

Moshe does not enter the land-but he appoints Yehoshua.

The daughters of Zelophehad are not just asking for land-they are **ensuring their father's name is not lost.**

And the Jewish people are counted again, not for numbers, but for **the next chapter.**

Closing Thought

We live in a world that often celebrates dramatic moments-bold action, quick decisions, heroic stands.

But the Torah teaches something deeper.

The greatest legacy is not what we do once-it is what continues after us.

Isidore Katzenstein stood with courage in his time.

Julies ensured that courage would not be forgotten.

And that is the lesson of Pinchas:

True greatness is not only in zeal-it is in building something that lasts.

Thank you