

Torah Portion Pinchas

Shabbat beginning July 22, 2022

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The Torah gives us useful puzzles. We can enrich our lives each week by searching for our own meanings. This week's Torah portion provides four dramatic stories. We read about the bad influence of foreign women and war with the Midianites, a census as a land distribution method, Joshua as Moses' replacement, and how to do rituals. We can turn the readings into important questions that the stories help us to remember.

1. What roles do foreigners and war play in our lives?
2. What numbers do we use to allocate resources?
3. How do we choose who to follow?
4. How do we maintain our relation to God?

Picking one or any combination of these questions can give us a new direction. Each story presents a dilemma that may start us on the path to new learning. When this happens, it helps to reflect on our old habits. We discover how others deal with them by listening to the Friday night d'var Torah and using the questions to enliven conversations with friends during the week. Ultimately, we solve Torah puzzles when we decide what they mean for our lives.