

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT KORACH · 23 SIVAN 5774 - JUNE 21, 2014 · VOL. 21 NO. 39

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### THE G'SHMAK OF GOSSIP

*"And Korach took..." (15:1)*

**W**hy do people talk about a "juicy" piece of gossip? What does gossip taste like? Gossip is very low in nutrition. It contains neither vitamins nor minerals. It doesn't do the consumer any good in this world (and certainly not in the next).

Quite recently there was a serious difference of opinion between two great Torah leaders. There is no doubt in my mind that their differences were totally for "the sake of Heaven" – altruistic and without personal interest of gain or prestige.

It amazed me, however, how every Tom, Dick, and Chaim suddenly started pontificating and vilifying the other side's Torah leader based on his own righteous indignation.

Gossip is so delicious, so juicy, because it allows us to feel that we — the tiny foot-soldiers of Judaism — too are "players". We're also in the Big League. Suddenly we become world-arbiters of both halacha and *hashkafa* (Torah law and philosophy).

Isn't that *g'shmak*? Isn't that juicy?

"And Korach took..." Targum Onkelos translates this phrase as, "He removed himself." "He removed himself from the rest of the congregation by sustaining a dispute." (Rashi)

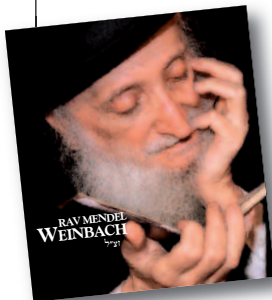
The Mishna in Avot (5:17) comments, "What is a dispute that is for the sake of Heaven? The dispute of Hillel and Shammai."

Only the giants of each generation, like Hillel and Shammai, may allow themselves a dispute for the sake of Heaven. We, small beings that we are, must distance ourselves not only from selfish and sordid rows, but also from those disagreements that seem to us pure and altruistic.

For, without doubt, we will not be able to resist the *g'shmak* of gossip and slander.

*Sources: Based on Rabbi Chaim M'Volozhin as quoted in Iturei Torah*

## A Memorial Tribute to Rav Weinbach zt"l



The Memorial Tribute Book for Rav Weinbach zt"l is available in print at Ohr Somayach.\*

A PDF format is available for free download on [www.ohr.edu](http://www.ohr.edu).

\* Suggested minimum donation for the printed version is 36 nis.

Proceeds will be used for the Gemach Charity Fund established by Rav Weinbach, zt"l.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**K**orach, Datan and Aviram and 250 leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. The rebellion results in their being swallowed by the earth. Many resent their death and blame Moshe. G-d's "anger" is manifest by a plague which besets the nation, and many thousands perish. Moshe intercedes once again for the people. He instructs Aharon to atone for them and the plague stops. Then G-d commands that staffs, each inscribed with the name of one of the tribes, be placed in the Mishkan. In the morning the staff of Levi, bearing Aharon's name, sprouts,

buds, blossoms and yields ripe almonds. This provides Divine confirmation that Levi's tribe is chosen for priesthood and verifies Aharon's position as Kohen Gadol, High Priest. The specific duties of the Levi'im and Kohanim are stated. The Kohanim were not to be landowners, but were to receive their sustenance from the tithes and other mandated gifts brought by the people. Also taught in this week's Parsha are laws of the first fruits, redemption of the first-born, and other offerings.

## TALMUD Tips

ADVICE FOR LIFE

Based on the Talmudic Sages found in the seven pages of the Talmud studied each week in the Daf Yomi cycle

## TAANIT 9 - 15

*"Give a tenth so that you will be wealthy."*

This statement by Rabbi Yochanan on our *daf* is based on a seeming repetition of words: "*aser ta'aser*". Rabbi Yochanan explains that this comes to teach, "*Aser* (give a tenth) so that you will be rich ("*titasher*").

Although in general we are prohibited from testing G-d to see if we will receive reward for fulfillment of a mitzvah — Do not test G-d" (Dev. 6) — Rabbi Hoshiya is cited in our *gemara* as teaching that this is an exception to the rule, as we see from a verse in Sefer Malachi, ch. 3.

While this teaching does not appear to be the ruling of the *Mechaber* in the Shulchan Aruch in Yoreh De'ah 247:4, the *Rema* writes there that "giving *tzedaka* (i.e. *ma'aser kesafim* money) makes one rich; one may not test G-d except in this matter; and some say that one may test G-d only by giving the *agricultural* tithe, but not with monetary charity." (See *Pitchei Teshuva* there for further discussion.)

• *Ta'anit 9a*

*"A large step (p'siya gasa) takes away one part in 500 of one's vision."*

Based on this, if a person would take 500 large steps he would go blind, and we see this is not so! Tosefot points this out and explains that each step takes away one part in 500 of what *remains*, but not from the total amount which one began with. Another explanation offered by Tosefot is that only the first large step does the damage, but subsequent large steps do not add to the problem — "since once he did it, he already did it".

The *gemara* in *Masechta Shabbat* (113b) adds that if a person drinks the Kiddush wine on Friday night this diminished vision returns to him.

• *Ta'anit 10b*

*All of Klal Yisrael is deeply shocked about the three yeshiva students in Israel that have been kidnapped by terrorists.*

PLEASE ADD A PRAYER FOR THEIR SAFETY AND SPEEDY RETURN.

**Their names are:**

**Yaakov Naftali ben Rachel Devorah - Gilad Michael ben Bat Galim - Ayal ben Iris Teshura**

*May we hear beserot tovot.*

## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Why did Datan and Aviram join Korach?
2. Why is Yaakov's name not mentioned in Korach's genealogy?
3. What motivated Korach to rebel?
4. What did Korach and company do when Moshe said that a *techelet* garment needs *tzizit*?
5. What warning did Moshe give the rebels regarding the offering of the incense?
6. Did Moshe want to be the *kohen gadol*?
7. What event did Korach not foresee?
8. What does the phrase *rav lachem* mean in this week's Parsha? (Give two answers.)
9. What lands are described in this week's Parsha as "flowing with milk and honey"?
10. When did Moshe have the right to take a donkey from the Jewish community?
11. What did Korach do the night before the final confrontation?
12. What sin did Datan and Aviram have in common specifically with Goliath?
13. Before what age is a person not punished by the Heavenly Court for his sins?
14. What happens to one who rebels against the institution of *kehuna*? Who suffered such a fate?
15. Why specifically was incense used to stop the plague?
16. Why was Aharon's staff placed in the middle of the other 11 staffs?
17. Aharon's staff was kept as a sign. What did it signify?
18. Why are the 24 gifts for the *kohanim* taught in this week's Parsha?
19. Who may eat the *kodshei kodashim* (most holy sacrifices) and where must they be eaten?
20. Why is G-d's covenant with the *kohanim* called "a covenant of salt"?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to This Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 16:1 - Because they were his neighbors.
2. 16:1 - Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach's rebellion (*Bereishet* 49:6).
3. 16:1 - Korach was jealous that Elizafan ben Uziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehat instead of himself.
4. 16:1 - They laughed.
5. 16:6 - Only one person would survive.
6. 16:6 - Yes.
7. 16:7 - That his sons would repent.
8. 16:7,3 - *Rav lachem* appears twice in this week's Parsha. It means "much more than enough greatness have you taken for yourself (16:3)" and "It is a great thing I have said to you (16:17)."
9. 16:12 - Egypt and Canaan.
10. 16:15 - When he traveled from Midian to Egypt.
11. 16:19 - Korach went from tribe to tribe in order to rally support for himself.
12. 16:27 - They all blasphemed.
13. 16:27 - Twenty years old.
14. 17:5 - He is stricken with *tzara'at*, as was King Uziyahu (*Divrei HaYamim* II 26:16-19).
15. 17:13 - Because the people were deprecating the incense offering, saying that it caused the death of two of Aharon's sons and also the death of 250 of Korach's followers. Therefore G-d demonstrated that the incense offering was able to avert death, and it is sin, not incense, which causes death.
16. 17:21 - So people would not say that Aharon's staff bloomed because Moshe placed it closer to the *Shechina*.
17. 17:25 - That only Aharon and his children were selected for the *kehuna*.
18. 18:8 - Since Korach claimed the *kehuna*, the Torah emphasizes Aharon's and his descendants' rights to *kehuna* by recording the gifts given to them.
19. 18:10 - Male *kohanim* may eat them and only in the *azara* (forecourt of the *Beit Hamikdash*).
20. 18:19 - Just as salt never spoils, so this covenant will never be rescinded.

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# Abarbanel

## ON PARSHAT KORACH

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

**A**barbanel is puzzled by the nature of the Torah's description of Korach's dispute with Moshe at the beginning of the Parsha. First the Torah states that Korach, along with Datan, Abiram and On from the tribe of Reuven, separated himself. The Torah then states, in a seemingly repetitious manner, that they stood before Moshe with two hundred and fifty men and that they gathered again together before Moshe and Aharon. The whole confrontation could have been reported in one sentence.

Abarbanel explains that there were actually *three* separate disputes. First, Korach claimed that the office of the *Kohen Gadol* should have gone to himself, not Aharon. Leadership went to Moshe, as he was the son of Levi's first-born, Amram. The office of *Kohen Gadol* should have then gone to Korach, the son of Levi's second-born, Yitzhar. The second dispute was between the first-born from all the tribes and the tribe of Levi. At least some of them were angered by the fact that the privilege of serving in the Tabernacle was taken away from the first-born and given to the tribe of Levi. The third dispute involved the tribe of Reuven, as represented by Datan, Abiram and On who claimed that the privilege of royalty should have gone to them as offspring of Yaakov's first-born, and not to the tribe of Yehuda. This analysis explains a difficulty in the simple translation of the opening verse of the Parsha which states simply, "And Korach took", without explaining just exactly what he took. The Aramaic translation of Onkelos takes this to mean that he separated himself. However, with

Abarbanel's analysis we can now understand the simple meaning as well — that Korach took along with him representatives from the tribe of Levi and the first-born from the rest of the tribes to strengthen his own challenge by demonstrating that others had a problem with Moshe and Aharon as well.

Abarbanel is also puzzled by Moshe's immediate response to the challenge. Rather than admonishing them first for their brazen disrespect, he tells them that G-d will be the one to choose who is correct. He tells them to take the special utensils known as 'fire-pans', place incense in them and bring them the following morning. Either G-d will accept their offering or the offering of the Levites by bringing down a fire to ignite the incense. Abarbanel points out that they were coming to Moshe with their challenge in the afternoon at the time of the *Mincha* offering and that their irrational behavior could be attributed to intoxication. Perhaps by the following morning they would realize the folly of challenging what Moshe knew was G-d's will. Moshe also realized that it would be useless and even counter-productive to immediately criticize them at a time when they were clearly angry. He would probably only make the situation worse. Only after deflecting the challenge away from himself and Aharon and making it clear that G-d would be the one to decide, does Moshe go on to admonish directly by telling them, "You and your entire assembly that are joining together are against G-d!"

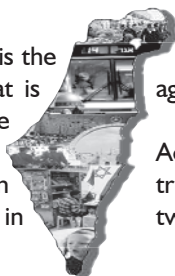
### LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

## BAR'AM – TOMB OF THE PROPHET OVADIA

**I**n the north of Israel near the Hiram Junction is the village of Bar'am where there is a tomb that is believed by many to contain the remains of the Prophet Ovadiah.

Our Talmudic Sages describe Ovadiah as an Edomite proselyte whose prophecy, recorded in



the Book of the 12 "Minor Prophets", is entirely directed against Edom.

He managed the household of the idol-worshipping King Achav and Queen Izevel and managed to save a hundred true prophets from their murderous hands by hiding them in two caves and supplying all their needs.

## TEFILLIN TO GO

**From: Marty**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I have had a problem while traveling of what to do with my tefillin when needing the restroom. I can't leave them outside of the bathroom unattended; but I can't bring myself to taking them inside the bathroom either. What do people do about this, and what should be done?*

Dear Marty,

This is a very common dilemma, and certainly worth clarifying.

Certainly, if you can leave your tefillin outside the bathroom with someone you know and trust without causing an imposition — that would be best.

The problem is when you don't know anyone – should you leave them unattended outside the bathroom, or alternatively, leave them in the hands of a stranger to avoid disrespecting them by taking them in? Or somehow take them inside the bathroom despite the obvious slight to the tefillin by doing so?

The Talmud (Berachot 23a) addresses this very question. It states that initially people were required to leave their tefillin outside the bathroom in the public area to avoid disgracing the tefillin by bringing them in. But since passersby were abusing the tefillin it was decreed to bring the tefillin into the bathroom and leave them near the inner side of the partition wall, at a distance from the inside. But even there the tefillin came to harm through vermin, so it was permitted to actually carry in and hold the tefillin while taking care of one's needs.

The Talmud then goes on to clarify that that's even if

the tefillin are only temporarily covered by one's clothing, but if they are in a specially made cover, and all the more so if they are in an additional covering like a bag or suitcase, there is no problem.

Accordingly, leaving the tefillin outside and unattended is certainly not an option. Firstly, out of concern for the tefillin themselves; and secondly, because of the security concern of leaving potentially suspicious objects in public.

Leaving them with a stranger is also not a good idea, because you have no idea what he may do to them. And even if he's an honest person, it would be wrong to leave the tefillin with him because, for one, it's an imposition; and two, out of security concerns you shouldn't be asking someone to receive something from someone they don't know.

If leaving them outside the bathroom is not an option, one might be inclined to bring them inside, but to leave them in the entrance area where there are no toilets and away from the stalls. However, we see from the Talmud, that even this should be avoided where the tefillin might come to harm. In this case, even inside the bathroom, to protect the tefillin, and for security concerns, the tefillin should not be left unattended.

So, despite the awkward feeling, for the protection of the tefillin and for security concerns, what really should be done is that the tefillin should be taken into the bathroom and be kept near to oneself, even into the stall, regardless of the particular need that's being attended to. And based on the conclusion of the Talmud mentioned above, this is certainly the case where, as in most scenarios, we travel with the tefillin in their special bag, which itself is stored inside luggage.

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## THE SHEMONEH ESREI - THE SECOND BLESSING (2)

**“G-d, You are mighty forever, You resurrect the dead.”**

One of the names of this blessing is *Techi'at Hameitim* (the resurrection of the dead). This topic is its main theme — it is mentioned several times throughout the blessing — and is explained by the commentators in a number of different ways.

### The different explanations of *Techi'at Hameitim*

1) In the purest (simplest) sense, the resurrection of the dead refers to an event that will take place in the end of days after the Mashiach's arrival. The belief in this idea is, accordingly, one of the principles of our faith, with its source in the Torah as well as the other books of the Prophets.

2) One who is miraculously healed from a sure-death situation can also be compared to being revived from the dead, although not in the purest sense.

3) Sleep is considered a “mini-death.” Therefore, when one awakes from sleep it is considered a mini-resurrection. This comparison should not be looked at as trivial, for if it were not for the fact that G-d restores our souls to us each morning we would not wake up at all! The fact that this great miracle happens day after day makes us desensitized, and we therefore take it for granted. The truth is that every morn-

ing we are considered to be a new creation, as it is written (Eicha 3:23): “(We are) new every morning.” (See Midrash Rabba 3, section 8, on this verse.)

4) Our Sages have taught that a wicked person (*rasha*), who disconnects himself from G-d through his negative actions, is considered as “dead” even during his lifetime. When, however, he repents of his evil ways - i.e., he does *teshuva* - it's as though he has been brought back to life since the righteous who cling to G-d are alive in this world as well as in the next.

5) The resurrection of the dead can also be a reference to reincarnation, a concept which is taught in Kabbala. When the soul of someone who has died has not fulfilled its mission, because of sins committed or because of a lack of performance of positive commands, it may be given another chance to earn its true place in the World-to-Come by descending into this world in another body.

6) Rainfall is compared to the resurrection of the dead since rain gives life to the world. Without it, all of existence would perish.

7) A poor person is likened to a dead person (Talmud). When G-d raises him up to a position of wealth it is as if he has been revived.

@ OHR *Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students*

## MAKING THE FIRST MINYAN

Rabbi Shmuel Rothman

Shmuel was one of the first ten students at Ohr Somayach, arriving in Israel in the spring of 1972 fresh out of Yeshiva University High School. Since that time Shmuel has proven to be the quintessential Ohr Somayach alumnus. After a few years of intensive learning at Ohr Somayach, Shmuel married in the States and returned to Israel for two more years of Kollel study. When he returned to the States he maintained his connection to Ohr Somayach and particularly to Rabbi Schiller by raising funds for the yeshiva. After a short while, however, Shmuel realized that he would be of much greater value to Ohr Somayach in the long run by employing his business acumen and motivation for the benefit of Ohr Somayach. His various business ventures have included

investments and real estate, and he is currently president of a highly successful chemical engineering firm. In the midst of the demands of a consistent learning schedule, raising a large family and running his business, Shmuel has never wavered from his generous financial commitment to the solvency of Ohr Somayach.



As a dedicated *talmid* of Rabbi Schiller, Shmuel has not only adopted the Rosh Yeshiva's passionate devotion to Torah learning, Ohr Somayach and the Jewish People, but he has extended his horizons to include fine red wine and aged single-malt scotch. With all these excellent accomplishments, we are nevertheless still waiting for Shmuel to catch up to Rabbi Schiller's erudition as a giant of English literature!