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SHABBAT PARSHAT KORACH · 26 SIVAN 5776 - JUL. 2, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 39 EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS WEEK KORACH IS READ IN ISRAEL AND SHLACH IS READ OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

PARSHA INSIGHTS

A TRUESOME END

"...and they shall descend into the pit alive" (16:30)

f all the ways that a person can die, being swallowed by the earth, either by quicksand or by falling into a seismic fissure opening and closing over his head, must rate as one of the more horrific.

Thus, Moshe's prayer to G-d that Korach and his followers should suffer such a gruesome end by the earth opening its mouth and consuming them alive seems out of character.

Really, the reverse is true. Because of the severity of Korach's rebellion, Moshe was concerned that Korach and his cohorts had totally written themselves out of the script of the World-to-Come, and he wanted to give them time to be able to repent before they died — something difficult to do if you're suddenly struck by a bolt out of the blue.

Rabbi Eliezer says in Sanhedrin 105: "And the earth covered them." Concerning them (Korach and his followers) it says (Shmuel I) "G-d brings death and gives life, lowers to the pit and raises up" — for also to the congregation of Korach there is a portion in the World-to-Come — for life remained in them so they could repent.

· Source: In the name of Rabbi Yissocher Dov of Belz

PARSHA OVERVIEW

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 firstborn, and other offerings.

The Ohr Somayach Family Extends Mazel Tov Wishes to MR. & MRS. YAAKOV KAPLAN & FAMILY

on the Bar Mitzvah of their son

Sholom Tzvi

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

Bava Kama 30 - 36

A beraita teaches: "The very early pious ones would hide and discard their sharp objects by burying them in their fields at a depth of at least three tefachim so that they would not obstruct the plow."

Our Sages teach here that it is characteristic of righteous and pious people to be extremely careful to take special precautions so that their property would not pose a risk to others or their property. As the *gemara* states afterwards: Rav Yehuda said, "One who wants to be pious should fulfill (be careful in) matters regarding damages."

In addition to the example stated in the *beraita* to bury the potential damagers in the field, the *gemara* quotes two other methods that our Sages employed to dispose of these items. "Rav Chisda would throw them into a fire. Rava would throw them into the Diglot River (Chidekel River — Rashi)." This halacha of responsibly disposing of sharp objects is codified in Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 415:3, and the latter two scenarios are mentioned as examples of proper disposal.

I once wondered why the gemara mentions, and Rashi explains, that Rava disposed of his sharp items in the Chidekel River, also known as the Tigris. Why is it important to know which river it was? Also, why did he throw it there and not into a different river? After recalling the commentary of Rashi on Chumash regarding the "Four Rivers" that branched from the river that went out from Eden (Ber. 2:10-14) to water the Garden, I'd like to suggest a possible answer. Rashi describes the names of each of the four rivers, and the nature of each one. While the nature of the other three rivers was to "overflow", the Chidekel's nature was "kal" — "flowing lightly and gently". Therefore it was important for the gemara to note that he disposed of his dangerous items specifically in that river, where they would be safely carried away and not wash up onto land where they could be dangerous.

Bava Kama 30a

Rabbi Chanina had the custom of announcing, "Let us go out to meet the queenly bride". Rabbi Yannai would wear a special garment, and stand in his place, saying: "Come to me, my bride, come to me, my bride."

The manner in which our great Torah Sages would welcome the beginning of Shabbat are the source of central words and themes that are incorporated into the prayer/song of "Lecha Dodi", which is part of the Kabbalat Shabbat prayer service on Shabbat eve.

The Maharsha explains a number of key lessons that we learn from these Sages: Why Shabbat is called our "bride", why it is called a "*malka*" (queen), why did Rabbi Chanina "go out" (*quickly*, in the context of the *gemara*) to greet the Shabbat bridal queen, whereas Rabbi Yannai called to "her" to come to him, and why did Rabbi Yannai *repeat* his call to the Shabbat bride.

Shabbat is the bride of the Jewish People. The Midrash states that when G-d created the world and established seven days in a week, "Shabbat" complained that each day of the week had a "mate" (the next day), but Shabbat was without a mate. G-d replied that Shabbat would be the mate and "bride" of the Jewish People, her "groom". And since all Jews are considered "royalty", our "bride" is a "queen". Rabbi Chanina felt that just as it is customary for a groom to go out to greet his bride at the marriage ceremony, so too we should "go" to greet and welcome our Shabbat bride.

Rabbi Yanai, however, thought and taught otherwise. From the place where he stood he called out with an invitation to the Shabbat bride to come to the wedding *chupa*, and then afterwards to come to his home. And just as every bride is welcomed twice in this manner to complete the marriage, likewise Rabbi Yannai would say twice say to the Shabbat bride "to come" — "Come to the *chupa* and then come to our home".

• Bava Kama 32 a, b

PARSHA Q&A ?

- I. 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 con-

PARSHA Q&A! _

frontation?

- 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"?

Answers to this week's Questions!

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

- I. 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.
- 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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BY RABBI PINCHAS KASNETT

Korach

The Three Disputes with Korach

barbanel is puzzled by the nature of the Torah's description of Korach's dispute with Moshe at the beginning of this Torah portion. 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 entire confrontation seemingly 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 exactly what he took. The Aramaic translation of Onkelos explains 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 decide 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 Aharon 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 who are joining together are against G-d!"



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BY RABBI YIRMIYAHU ULLMAN

STONES OF SINAI

From: Mordechai

Dear Rabbi,

Is there such a thing as special rocks from Mount Sinai? I heard that there is an image of a bush ingrained in the stones of Sinai that is supposed to be reminiscent of the burning bush. Is there such a connection between Sinai and the bush? Have you actually seen these stones?

Dear Mordechai,

Even though we do not know the exact location of Mount Sinai, there are in fact stones from that general area whose grain does resemble a bush with a single stem from which sprout what looks like thin, dry branches dotted with small spots that look like leaves on the branches.

I have seen these stones, and another interesting aspect is that no matter how you break them, the same bush-like pattern appears on the newly-exposed facets of the stone. It's as if the bush is ingrained entirely throughout the stone.

Whether or not there is a direct connection between the rock and the event I don't know. However, there is a direct relationship between Sinai and the burning bush of Moshe which in Hebrew is called the "sneh". The Torah relates that the revelation of G-d to Moshe in the bush actually occurred at Mount Sinai, where G-d in the future would give the Torah to the Jewish People through Moshe: "Moshe…came to the mountain of G-d, to Horeb. An angel of the L-rd appeared to him in a flame of fire from within the bush, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not being consumed" (Ex. 3:1-2).

Rashi explains that this mountain was Mount Sinai, and it was referred to as "the mountain of G-d" based on its being designated for the giving of the Torah in the future. Ramban adds that the burning bush was actually at the peak of the Mount, and was infused with fire just as the top of the Mount Sinai was enveloped with fire when the Torah was given.

In fact, the relationship between Sinai and the burning bush is so direct that certain commentaries explain that Mount Sinai was so called because of the *sneh*. And together with Moshe, all three are singled out for their humility. The Midrash says that Mount Sinai was designated for receiving the Torah not because of its beauty or grandeur but because it was the lowest of mountains. So too is the bush, in which G-d was revealed, the lowest of trees. And Moshe, the man of G-d who received the Torah for the Jewish People, was the most humble of men. And it was because of this great humility that the fire of G-d burned in all three: Sinai, Moshe and the *sneh*.

In light of this, it makes sense that the qualities of the *sneh* should be ingrained within the very essence of Sinai, and thus suggests an explanation for the image of the bush in the stones of that place. This correlation is made by the following commentaries:

Rabbi Yaakov Emden writes in Migdal Oz (Zitamar 220b), "The stones of Mount Sinai have on them an image of the *sneh*; therefore this mountain is called *Sinai* because of the *sneh* in which G-d revealed Himself to Moshe. One of the distinguished members of Barcelona brought to me some of these stones and I saw on them the *sneh* in perfect detail. This is a Heavenly phenomenon, for when I broke the stone in pieces I found the image of the *sneh* on every side and inner part of the stone, and I marveled at this."

Similarly, the kabbalistic work Arvei Nachal (Parshat Shemot) notes, "It is known that the image of this *sneh* appears on all the stones of Mount Sinai, and it is a wondrous sign that this is so, since when any such stone is broken into fragments, each will have an image of the *sneh*. Indeed these stones from Mount Sinai are a *segula* for the revelation of the Torah."

 Sources: Citations of the Migdal Oz and Arvei Nachal and their translations, provided by Rabbi, and tour-guide of Israel, Pesach Levi

With sorrow the Ohr Somayach family shares in mourning the passing of a great man, beloved friend and talmid

REB DOV REISS zt"

May Hashem comfort his family along with the mourners of Tzion and Yerushalayim.

PRAYER Essentials

ONE STRAIGHT FOOT

Your feet should be placed next to each other, appearing as though they are as one foot. In this way one resembles the angels, of whom it is said: "And their feet were a straight foot." Meaning, their feet appeared as one foot... One should also say Kedushah together with the prayer leader with his feet together. (Shulchan Aruch 95:1,4)

The Aruch HaShulchan explains why we also say "Kedushah" with our feet together: We sanctify G-d's name like the angels do, a fact that is stated in the Kedushah itself, "We will sanctify Your Name in this world just as they (the angels) sanctify it in Heaven above."

There are several reasons for why we pray with our feet together. Firstly, since a person is approaching to speak to the Shechina (Divine presence), he must remove physical thoughts from his mind and see himself like a Heavenly angel (Beit Yosef). Secondly, one's feet are together in order to seem as though one is not able to move at all, not to run away or to reach for any item. Instead, one's full concentration should be on G-d (Rabbi Yitzchak Abuhav, cited by the Beit Yosef). Thirdly, the Lavush writes that when one stands with his feet together he is not able to stand firmly. This gives the appearance of someone standing with fear and trepidation, standing humbly before his Creator. The Kaf HaChaim adds a fourth reason: When one stands with his feet together he stands as though his feet are tied up, unable to walk away. This will remind a person that he should pray slowly, word by word, with his thoughts focused on the proper ideas.

Though the *poskim* comment that women generally do not follow customs based on copying the angels, such as wearing a *kittel* garment on Yom Kippur or standing throughout the entire Yon Kippur prayers (Be'er Heitev Orach Chaim 619), women do indeed follow the custom to pray the Shemoneh Esrei with their feet together.

The reason given for why women follow this practice is based on the second reason mentioned written by the Tur, one that is based on the service of the *kohanim* in the Beit Hamikdash. Since prayer in general is in place of the service of the *kohanim*, the custom is also relevant to women, since they are obligated to pray.

Although one should ideally pray with his feet together, if one did not do so he does not need to repeat his prayers. (Rambam, and the conclusion of the later *poskim*)

LOVE OF THE LAND

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

Tsefat — Tomb of Binyamin Hatzadik

B inyamin Hatzadik (a great Talmudic Sage, not Binyamin the son of Yaakov who was also a *tzadik* — i.e. righteous), whose grave is in Tsefat according to Rabbi Chaim Vital in the name of the Arizal, is mentioned only one time in our sources.

The gemara tells of the time that a woman came to him as manager of a charity fund for help during a drought. When he informed her that there were no charity funds left she cried, "Rabbi, if you and don't help me a woman and her seven sons will die!"

This tzadik was so moved by her plight that he gave her his own funds. Soon afterwards he became deathly ill. In his behalf interceded angels who said to G-d: "Master of the Universe, You said that whoever sustains one life in Israel is considered as if he has saved the entire world. Binyamin Hatzadik supported a woman and her seven sons. Must he die at a young age?"

The decree of death was rescinded and twenty-two years were added to his life.

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OHR Profiles of Ohr Somayach Staff, Alumni and Students

Rabbi Natan Gamedze

Swaziland - University of Oxford, UK Beit Midrash Program Alumnus

rom a scion of the royal family of Swaziland to a Rabbi in Israel. That is the unlikely story of Rabbi Natan Gamedze.

Rabbi Gamedze's journey of self-discovery began while he was in college in Oxford. He was intrigued

was in college in Oxford. He was intrigued when he noticed a fellow student writing from right to left in strange letters. Having learned that the language was Hebrew, Rabbi Gamedze, who always welcomed a new challenge, decided to add Hebrew to the other eleven languages he already knew. He mastered basic Hebrew in a very short time, and was able to move on to Rambam's Mishneh Torah. He was so enthused by the *sefer* that he began expounding on it to his Jewish friends, who were secular and mostly ignorant of their own religion.

Apparently his exceptional aptitude for

languages had reached the ears of academics in Israel, who offered him a full scholarship to the Hebrew University, which he gratefully accepted. Since Rabbi Gamedze's family had converted to Christianity, he was well versed in the Five Books of Moses, and so Israeli culture was not totally foreign to him. In fact he felt very much at home in Israel!

As much as Rabbi Gamedze enjoyed his classes in Biblical Hebrew, modern Hebrew and Aramaic, he felt a certain "Higher dimension" was missing. Paradoxically, the very

> same Jewish friends to whom he had exalted the wisdom of Mishneh Torah years before, and who had since become religiously observant, suggested that Natan try out Ohr Somayach, where they were learning. And it was indeed at Ohr Somayach that he felt in his element. He stayed for five years, thriving under the tutelage of Rabbi Yehuda Samet *shlita*, and Rabbi Nachman Bulman *zatzal*. It was in 2000, after a period of study at the prestigious Brisk Yeshiva, that Rabbi Gamedze received *semicha* (Rabbinical ordination), dazzling the examining Rabbis with his brilliance.

Since then Rabbi Gamedze has settled with his family in the spiritual city of Tzefat, where he continues to teach and give inspiring lectures. He has said that he has the distinct feeling that it was G-d's will that he convert and by so doing "give additional glory to the Creator".

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

"Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon."



What's in a Word? Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

BY RABBI REUVEN CHAIM KLEIN

A VARIETY OF ENEMIES

The Torah mentions a special prayer which Moshe would say when the Ark of the Covenant would begin to travel (we say this prayer when taking a Torah Scroll out of its holy ark). He would say, "Arise G-d, and let Your enemies (*oyvecha*) be scattered, and Your enemies (*sonecha*) shall flee from before You" (Num. 10:35). In this passage the Torah uses two different words to mean enemy: *oyev* and *soneh*. As we know, the Hebrew language is intrinsically holy, and each word carries its own nuanced explanation. No two words can mean the exact same thing. What, then, is the difference between these two words which both seem to mean "enemy"?

The word oyev denotes an enemy who actively tries to harm his victim — or at least contemplates doing so. The Malbim explains that even if the oyev does not attempt to actively damage the victim of his hatred, he will not withhold his joy if such misfortune would befall him, because he has already at least actively imagined causing such harm to the object of his enmity.

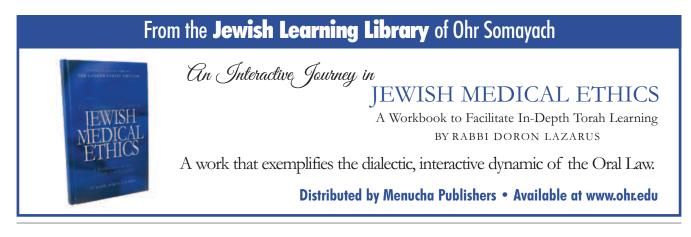
The word soneh, on the other hand, is derived from the root sinah, which means "hatred". Instead of "enemy", a more accurate translation of soneh can be "a hater". His hatred remains internal, and is not outwardly expressed. This word appears in another context: "Do not hate (soneh) your brother in your heart" (Lev. 19:17). Even sheer hatred of a fellow Jew is forbidden, whether or not that static hatred turns kinetic. The hater's attitude cannot be discerned by what he does, rather by what he does not do. Accordingly, when the Mishna (Sanhedrin 3:5) rules that a "hater" is disqualified from giving testimony about someone whom he hates, it defines a "hater" as someone who has not spoken to his friend out of spite for three days. His hatred is

manifested outwards by his *lack* of action, not by a proactive negative deed. Thus, the *soneh* is an enemy whose hatred remains in the realm of the theoretical, while an *oyev* is an enemy who tries to act upon his hatred.

The Vilna Gaon offers a slightly different approach. He explains that an oyev is an enemy who wishes to hurt his victim's physical existence (e.g., to physically damage his body or cause him to lose his money), while a *soneh* is one who wishes to hurt his victim's spiritual existence (e.g., he wishes to cause his victim to stray from the path of G-d). While it might seem counterintuitive, the Vilna Gaon teaches that the *soneh* is a more dangerous enemy than an oyev because he poses a risk to one's spiritual well-being.

There is a third word for enemy: *tzar*. The commentators explain that while an oyev is an enemy who tries to harm his victim, he still attempts to hide his hatred beneath a façade of empathy. So, the oyev, like the *soneh*, is not an overt enemy, but a clandestine enemy. Conversely, the *tzar* hates his victim with such great passion that he overtly tries to harm him, and is even willing to sacrifice his own reputation or exhaust his own resources in doing so. For example, Haman, the infamous villain of the book of Esther, is described as a *tzorer* of the Jews (Est. 9:10).

Malbim explains that the over of G-d is one who actively denies His existence and opposes His G-dliness. A soneh of G-d, it would seem, does so only in heart, but not in practice. Thus, in his special prayer at the time that the Ark would travel, Moshe would pray that G-d vanquish both types of His enemies, and allow His glory to continue spreading unimpeded.



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