

OHRNET

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OUTSIDE ISRAEL - SAVE THIS FOR NEXT WEEK

PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

A Eulogy for Rabbi Uri Zohar, *zatzal*

“...as most holy it shall be yours (Aharon’s) and your sons” (18:9)

It is difficult for a non-Israeli to understand who Uri Zohar was, and the enormity of what he did. Uri Zohar was a combination of the leading actor of his generation, the leading film producer and the leading stage producer rolled up into one person. In 1976 he was awarded Israel’s highest civilian award, the Israel Prize for cinema, which he declined. In 2012, Cinémathèque Française in Paris held a retrospective of all his major films, where he was described as “one of Israel’s most interesting film directors.”

The shock tremor that secular Israel felt when Uri Zohar became religiously observant was a mixture of disbelief and a sense of betrayal. His life-change was a beacon for many Israelis who followed his lead. Secular Israeli society never really forgave him. Even now, on the 10th of June, Haaretz, a leading left-wing Israeli newspaper, ran the following article: “Uri Zohar Didn’t Die Now. He Passed in 1978, When He Began to Repent.”

“He (Moshe) said, (to Yitro), ‘Please do not leave us inasmuch as... you have been as eyes for us.’” (10:31)

In the Torah portion of Beha’alotcha, Yitro seeks to return to his home in Midian. Moshe doesn’t want to let him go. The reason? Yitro was “as eyes for us.” This is difficult to understand. Who had clearer sight into the workings of this world than Moshe, to whom Hashem spoke “mouth to mouth?” Who was more holy than Aharon? What could Yitro, the convert, contribute to the Jewish People in the desert, surrounded as they were by the Clouds of Glory, having the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) resting on them?

A person’s success in building himself comes in large part from the example and the encouragement of his teachers and mentors. The Jewish People had no better role models or teachers than Moshe, Aharon and the Seventy Elders, nor a more conducive environment for spirituality than the resting on them of the Divine Presence. But spiritual growth also needs the inspiration of someone who has taken hold of his own life, of his own destiny, and has shaped it with his own hands. Growth requires the inspiration of someone who has pulled himself out of a spiritual wasteland with the pure toil of the soul and with a burning desire for the truth to seek and become close to Hashem.

Such a man was Rabbi Uri Zohar, *zatzal*.

Q & A

Questions

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 tzitzit?
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"?

Answers

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.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

THE AMIDAH (PART 15) – BLESSING AGAINST HERETICS (PART 1)

“Prayer is not a miracle. It is a tool, man’s paintbrush in the art of life. Prayer is man’s weapon to defend himself in the struggle of life. It is a reality. A fact of life.”

(Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer)

The twelfth blessing reads: “And for slanderers let there be no hope; and may all enemies be cut down speedily. May You speedily uproot, smash, cast down and humble the wanton sinners, speedily in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who breaks enemies and humbles wanton sinners.”

The twelfth blessing has an intriguing history. Originally, the everyday *Amidah* comprised eighteen blessings: the three opening blessings, twelve requests, and three closing blessings. The number eighteen is so integral to the *Amidah*’s identity that its main prayer was, and still is referred to as the *Shmoneh Esrei*, which means eighteen. In its initial arrangement, this twelfth blessing did not appear, and the *Amidah* went from the previous blessing, for the restoration of justice, straight to the next blessing for the righteous. In fact, our blessing was composed and introduced into the *Amidah* only some five hundred years later, after the destruction of the Second Temple.

What was the cause of adding another blessing and why is the blessing worded in such an uncompromising way? After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jewish People found themselves in an almost untenable situation. They had lost their autonomy and were subject to the cruel whims of the conquering Roman Empire. To compound matters, there were powerfully connected Jews who had not only forsaken their heritage for other beliefs but who had a vested interest in converting others to their dogmas, which, for the most part, meant denying the Divinity of the Oral Torah and the symbiotic relationship between it and the Written Torah.

Whether it was the Sadducees, Boethusians, Essenes or the early Christians, they pushed their agenda aggressively, and, when realizing they would succeed

in persuading their fellow Jews with theological arguments, they resorted to harassment and persecution by exploiting their excellent connections within the Roman governor’s inner circle. The situation became quite dire and Rabban Gamliel II, the Nasi (spiritual head) of the Sanhedrin based in Yavneh immediately after the destruction became concerned about the spiritual future of the Jewish nation. This led him to request for a special prayer to be composed, specifically against the heretics and the informers who were “flourishing” at that time. This was not a decision that Rabban Gamliel took lightly.

But Rabban Gamliel felt that the spiritual future of the Jewish People was so fragile, and that the situation was so fraught. He knew that dealing with it took precedence over all other considerations despite the fact that the Torah commands us to do everything we can to maintain peaceful relationships with all those around us (see *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefillah 2:1*).

The Talmud recounts (*Berachot 28b*) that from all of the members of the Sanhedrin, *Shmuel HaKatan* (“Shmuel the Small”) was the only one qualified to compose such a complex blessing with the correct sensitivity and intent. Rabbi Yaakov Yehoshua Falk (1680-1756) was one of the most brilliant Rabbinical leaders of his generation. His magnum opus called *Pnei Yehoshua* has always been regarded as a benchmark for Talmudic scholarship. He writes that *Shmuel HaKatan*’s understanding of the esoteric dimensions was such that he was the only Sage who was able to combine the Hebrew letters in such a way that their impact would be felt throughout all the physical and spiritual realms. But, it was not just his insight into the holy letters that qualified him for the task. Our Sages teach that *Shmuel HaKatan* was humble and self-effacing, bearing no animosity to

anyone. Hence his designation was *HaKatan* – “the small” – because he regarded himself as insignificant compared to his peers. Only such a selfless individual was capable of composing a blessing that could be incorporated into the *Amidah* for posterity. In fact, *Shmuel HaKatan* was so exceptional that the Talmud relates (*Sanhedrin* 11a) that a Heavenly voice was heard proclaiming that he was worthy of having the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) rest upon him.

What remains to be understood is why our blessing has remained a part of the *Amidah* now that the belief systems of those days no longer pose the danger they once did. The Talmud seems to be describing a particular period in our national history that necessitated such a drastic reaction. But the moment passed, and so why is the blessing still with us? One of the saddest aspects of Jewish history is

how, over the generations, we have been our own worst enemy, in a sense. There is a pithy maxim that Jews have been at the forefront of every “ism” throughout history except for one: Judaism. Or, as a wise Rabbi once commented about Leon Trotsky, whose original name was Lev Bronstein and was the Marxist revolutionary who was one of the most influential ideologues before, during and after the Russian revolution: “The Trotskys made the revolution, and the Bronsteins paid the bill.”

It seems that the unfortunate truth is that the blessing composed by *Shmuel HaKatan* some two thousand years ago has never lost its relevance, which is why it is still an integral part of our *Amidah* today.

To be continued...

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

The Gorgeous Windpipe

As every student of anatomy knows, humans (and many animals) have two pipes in their neck that serve two different functions: The “windpipe” (also known as the *trachea*) is used for breathing air, while the “food pipe” (also known as the *esophagus*) is used for swallowing food. In this essay, we focus on the “windpipe” and the three Hebrew words used to refer to that pipeline of life: *garon*, *gargeret*, and *kaneh*. In doing so, we will explore the respective etymologies of these words and consider whether or not they are truly synonymous.

The word *garon* appears eight times in the Bible. In five of those cases, the word *garon* is associated with speech, so it is clearly talking about the “windpipe” through which speech exits one’s mouth (*Isa.* 58:1, *Ps.* 5:10, 69:4, 115:7, 149:6). In two cases, the word *garon* refers to the “throat/neck” in general, without regard for a specific pipe within the neck (*Isa.* 3:16, *Yechezkel* 16:11). And in one instance, *garon* is associated with eating and drinking, so it seems to refer to the “food pipe” (*Jer.* 2:25). Possibly based on this break-down, Malbim maintains that the word *garon* primarily refers to the “windpipe,” which is

inside a person’s neck. From that, it was expanded in a general sense to mean the entire “throat/neck” as it is visible to the onlooker, and from that to even mean “food pipe” (which, in a way, is actually an antonym of its primary meaning).

The word *gargeret* appears four times in the Bible, all of which are in the Book of Proverbs (1:9, 3:3, 3:22, 6:21). When examined in context, one will realize that the Biblical term *gargeret* seems to refer to one’s “throat/neck” in a general sense, as in all four cases it is associated with adorning oneself on the outside (i.e., wearing a necklace on one’s *gargeret*). When the word *gargeret* appears in the Mishnah, it is more obviously a reference to the “windpipe”: In order to properly slaughter an animal, one must sever most of both pipes within its neck (or most of one pipe, in the case of a bird). In that context, the Mishna (*Chullin* 2:4, 3:1-4) constantly references the *veshet* (“food pipe”) vis-à-vis the *gargeret* (obviously, the “windpipe”). Moreover, the Mishna (*Chullin* 10:4, *Negaim* 10:9) also uses the term *gargeret* when discussing the so-called Adam’s Apple, which is clearly a feature of the windpipe.

The truth is that every time that *gargeret* appears in the Bible, it is always written in the plural form: *gargerot*. Rashi (to Prov. 1:9) accounts for this by explaining that the exterior of the internal windpipe consists of various “rings” along the length of the trachea. Because of this multiplicity of “rings,” the very word for “windpipe” always appears in the plural.

The words *garon* and *gargeret* seem to be etymologically related, as both words are based on the GIMMEL-REISH string, but what is the core difference between these two terms? Menachem Ibn Saruk (920-970) in *Machberet Menachem* does not seem to posit any difference between the two words, instead categorizing both of them within the seventh category of words derived from the biliteral root GIMMEL-REISH. However, in explaining the difference between *garon* and *gargeret*, Ibn Ezra (to Prov. 1:9) and Rabbi Moshe Kimchi (to Iyov 40:16) write that the latter “surrounds” the former, without further elaborating on what exactly he means by that.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim (1740-1814) has a totally different way of understanding the words *garon* and *gargeret*. Contrary to what we wrote above, he understands the core meaning of *garon* to be “food pipe,” but maintains that since the “windpipe” is attached to the “food pipe,” the term also expanded to include the “windpipe” and the entire neck. He further notes that because when one looks at the exterior of a person, the most prominent feature of the neck is the bulging Adam’s Apple on the “windpipe,” so the term *gargeret* (used to denote the spot along the neck that necklaces were worn) came to refer specifically to the “windpipe.”

The context in which Rabbi Pappenheim offered this discussion is his excurses on the biliteral root GIMMEL-REISH (“dragging/temporary domiciliation”). Words derived from this root include *ger* (“sojourner” in Biblical Hebrew), *goren* (“granary,” which is the grain’s temporary home while being processed), *nigar* (“gathering of water”), *gerem* (“bone,” which houses marrow and other moist liquids), and *garger* (“grape,” which houses grape juice/wine). Following that theme, Rabbi Pappenheim understands *garon* to primarily denote the esophagus, which is the temporary home for food on its way towards the stomach.

The rabbis (*Taharot* 7:9, Targum to Lam. 1:11) use the term *gargaran* to refer to a “gluttonous person” who gorges his or herself with food, and in a borrowed sense to any epicurean hedonist who over indulges his or her desires (*Niddah* 10:8). This terminology is somewhat problematic, because the word *gargaran* is clearly derived from *gargeret*, yet it describes something done with the *veshet*. Similarly, the rabbis (*Chullin* 103b) refer to somebody eating food as though his “*garon* derived benefit” (*hana’at grono*) from what he ate; this too is problematic because as mentioned earlier, *garon* primarily refers to the “windpipe,” not the “food pipe.”

Of course, if we accepted Rabbi Pappenheim’s explanation that *garon/gargeret* primarily refers to the “food pipe,” then these difficulties disappear. However, the fact remains that in rabbinic literature the *gargeret* is always juxtaposed to the *veshet*, so it must refer to the “windpipe.” Why then is the ravenous binge-eater called a *gargaran* and not something related to *veshet*?

Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (1578-1654) in *Tosafot Yom Tov* (to *Taharot* 7:9) explains that the foodie is so “into” his food that he wishes that he could not only eat from just his *veshet*, but also from his *gargeret* as well. Because of this, he is called a *gargaran*. Rabbi Binyamin Mussafia (1606-1675) explains that the hefty eater is called a *gargaran* because in his great zeal to consume as much as possible, he is liable to choke on his food and cause the food “to go down the wrong pipe” by entering his windpipe.

Alternatively, we may explain that the *gargaran* constantly indulges his food pipe as though he treated it like his windpipe which he constantly uses to breathe. Alternatively, Rabbi Meir Batzri of Beitar Illit explains that when the gastrophile is busy swallowing food, he cannot breathe, so he negates his *gargeret* and is thus called a *gargaran*. This last explanation may be alluded to in Maimonides’ commentary to the Mishna (*Taharot* 7:9), in which he seemingly mentions the epiglottis (*shipui kova* – “the tilted cap” that covers the *gargeret* when one eats) in conjunction with the *gargaran* (see also *Tosafot Yom Tov* and Rabbi Yaakov Emden’s *Lechem Shamayim* there)

The third Hebrew word for “windpipe” is *kaneh*. The word *kaneh* appears more than fifty times in the Bible, where it typically means “reed,” “stem,” “branch,” or “measuring stick,” but never “windpipe.” All of these meanings represent long pipe-like items with a typically hollow middle, so it is no wonder that in Rabbinic Hebrew, the term *kaneh* came to refer to the “windpipe” – a round, tubular pipe – which also fits that description. We may add that the Biblical term *kinamon* (“cinnamon”) might be another related word, because that spice grows in the form of pipe-like sticks. (Rabbi Pappenheim has a different way of explaining the connection between all of these Biblical words and the biliteral root KUF-NUN, but we will leave that discussion for another time.)

The word *kaneh* appears in the Mishna (*Tamid* 4:3) when explaining how the various parts of the daily animal sacrifice in the Temple were divided up amongst the Kohanim who would bring those limbs to the altar. One lucky Kohen would merit to bring the heart, lungs, and *kaneh* to the altar. In this case, it is clear that the *kaneh* refers to the “windpipe,” because it is a body part attached to the heart and lungs. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Chullin* 18a-19a, 21a, 28a-29a, 30b, 32b, 40b, 45a, 50a, 54a, 57b, 85b), *kaneh* becomes the standard word for what the Mishna calls the *gargeret* and is typically juxtaposed to *veshet* (instead of the Mishnaic *gargeret*).

In rabbinic idiom, the fear of choking is expressed as not wanting “the *kaneh* to precede the *veshet*” (*Pesachim* 108a, *Taanit* 5b) by having the food go down the wrong pipe. This phrase comes up when discussing the prohibition of speaking while eating and the rabbinic requirement to recline towards the left at the Passover Seder.

Rabbi Yaakov Emden (1697-1776) explains the relationship between *garon*, *gargeret* and *kaneh* by explaining that what is called *garon* in Biblical Hebrew is called *gargeret* in Mishnaic Hebrew and *kaneh* in Talmudic Hebrew. Rabbi Tanchum HaYerushalmi (a 13th century exegete who lived in the Holy Land) similarly writes that *gargeret* and *kaneh* are simply two different words for the same thing. According to this, the three terms in question are indeed synonymous, but reflect different stages of the Hebrew language.

Rabbi Yaakov Weil (circa. 1380-1460) explains in his classical work on ritual slaughtering that while the terms *kaneh* and *gargeret* both refer to the “windpipe,” the two terms are not actually synonyms. Rather, he explains, they refer to two different anatomical parts of the windpipe. The term *gargeret* refers to the ring-like structure that comprises the exterior of the windpipe, while *kaneh* refers to the inner membrane of the windpipe. Rabbi Amitai Ben-David (*Sichat Chullin* to *Chullin* 18a, 44a, 45a) finds precedent for this explanation in Rashi (to *Chullin* 18a), who seems to explain that *kaneh* refers specifically to the inner membrane of the windpipe.

The Mishna (*Chullin* 2:1) rules that even if one slaughtered only a *majority* of the windpipe, the windpipe is considered to have been properly slaughtered. In light of the above, Rabbi Weil maintains that in measuring the “majority of the windpipe,” one may only take into account the circumference of the interior *kaneh*, and not that of the exterior *gargeret* (see also *Shach* to *Yoreh Deah* §21:1 and *Pri Megadim Siftei Daat* there).

Based on Rabi Weil’s differentiation of these terms, Rabbi Yosef de Bonne of Stadthagen (1640-1715) writes that the *gargeret* represents the forces of nature, especially because the Hebrew word for “rings” (*taba'ot*) has the same root as the Hebrew word for “nature” (*teva*). He sees the *gargeret* as representative of the various forces that can negatively influence a person and sway him towards worldly desires (i.e., turn him into a *gargaran*). Such carnal factors that influence a person include his geography and the people who surround him, his personal temperament, his food and other intake, his genetics, and the like. In contrast, the *kaneh* denotes the inside layer of the windpipe – wherein these different “rings” are joined together to fashion one pipe. This unified pipe represents the supernal way of life, that is, one characterized by a life devoted to Torah Study and prayer with the unitary goal of sanctifying Hashem’s name.

What’s fascinating about the Hebrew *garon/gargeret* is that it bears an uncanny resemblance to the Old French word *gorge* (“throat”), which, in turn, may come from the Latin *gurgus* (“whirlpool/sea”). Those words are the etymological ancestors to many other related words in English, like *gorge* (“to eat greedily”), *engorge* (“to fill/expand/swell”) *regurgitate*

("vomit/puke"), *garget/gargil* ("inflammation of the throat"), *gargle/gurgle* ("to make a bubbling sound in one's throat"), *gargoyle* ("a humanoid or animal-shaped statuette often featuring an exaggerated throat"), *gargantuan* ("huge/giant," derived from the Spanish word *garganta*, "throat"), *gorget* ("an armored orn/ament worn on the neck that defended the throat and accentuated its features"), and *gorgeous* ("aesthetically appealing, ostentatiously adorned").

Although it is tempting to posit an etymological connection between the Hebrew words for "throat" and these Indo-European words, it may be that there is also onomatopoeia in play as well. Meaning, the words for the throat and things throat-related contain some combination of the GIMMEL and REISH sounds because those are the sounds one

makes when gargling (see Rabbi Mussafia's *Mussaf HaAruch* who expressly links the Greek/Latin words for "throat" to the Hebrew *gargeret*).

Another ancient word for "throat" is the Latin *gula*. Keeping in mind the interchangeability of the letters LAMMED and REISH, this word also bears something of a resemblance to the words discussed above. It is the ultimate etymon of the English word *gullet* ("the passageway from an animal's mouth to its stomach) and *gluttony* ("excessive eating and drinking"). In fact, the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 18:1, *Kohelet Rabbah* 12:6) interprets the word *gulat* in the verse "the *gulat* runs after gold" (Ecc. 12:6) as referring to the *gargeret* (again invoking that interchangeability of LAMMED and REISH), with the verse referring to overindulging one's appetite as something that leads to wasting "gold" (i.e., money).

LETTER AND SPIRIT

Insights based on the writings of Rav S.R. Hirsch by Rabbi Yosef Herschman

Divinely Ordained

Korach and his followers attack Moshe and Aharon, accusing them of misappropriating the leadership for themselves, when, in reality, "the entire community, all of them are holy." Moshe does not respond with a refutation, but rather *Moshe heard, and he fell upon his face*. Aharon, too, does not directly respond. Instead, Moshe challenges Korach and the 250 princes of the community who joined the rebellion to perform the priestly *ketoret* service, and allow Hashem to publicly acknowledge the priest of His choosing.

Why is Korach wrong? Are the people not all holy? And why does neither Moshe nor Aharon point out the rebels' error?

Moshe *heard*. He understood the motive of the claims made against him. It was a denial of the Divine basis of his mission, born in the seething jealousy of one Korach. Had they arrived at this opinion by way of erroneous thinking it would have been possible to correct their error. But because it was the outcome of

jealousy and honor-seeking, and amounted to dazzling sophisms to galvanize the masses through flattery, no direct response could have been successful.

While it is true that the people are *men of a holy calling* (Shemot 22:3), and were commanded to live up to this holy calling and *be holy* (Vayikra 19:2), they were not yet holy. The people were sanctified to Hashem, and are charged to uplift themselves to their holy calling. That is their destiny, but it was not yet their reality. In fact, the entire structure of the camp of Israel – its rank divisions of Israelites, Levites, Kohanim, and the Sanctuary fenced off in the center – was to serve as a reminder that holiness is a *goal* to be sought, not a laurel to rest on.

When it comes to matters originated or done by the people, there is a need for elected representatives, men of outstanding character. But when the initiative does not lie with the people or in any human sphere, the choice is Hashem's alone. The

brazeness of one who would direct Hashem to “choose this one and no other” cannot be overstated. An authentic messenger of Hashem, by contrast, is the first to admit that he is unworthy of the task. It was only after protesting his worthiness that Moshe was appointed.

The truth of Divine appointment cannot be confirmed by reasoning; the authenticity of Moshe’s mission can be confirmed only by Hashem Himself. For this reason, neither Moshe nor Aharon utter a word to counter Korach’s accusations. Neither one will defend his office and honor, because neither one

thought himself worthy of it. To try explaining that the people are not yet holy, but are called on to be holy, would be a futile attempt to defuse arguments born of raging jealousy. And if Hashem Himself would not confirm Moshe’s appointment and mission, then indeed, his mission is over – he falls on his face.

In the end, the rebels and the rest of the people learn the lesson well. The rebels meet their end through miraculous intervention foretold by Moshe, teaching the people that Moshe’s mission, too, is a product of Divine intervention.

▪ Source: Commentary, Bamidbar 16:3-4

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Yevamot 86-92

Marriage Outside of the Levirate Marriage

The Torah states, “If brothers reside together, and one of them dies having no son, the dead man's wife shall not marry an outsider.” (Devarim 25:5)

The words “shall not marry an outsider” appear to be open to more than one interpretation, as we learn in our *sugya*.

In the section of the Torah teaching the laws of a the levirate marriage, we learn that a woman whose husband died without children is not viewed as a widow. Rather, she is still “connected” to her late husband’s family, with a connection known as *zika*. Therefore, there is a mitzvah for her husband’s brother to marry her (known as *yibum*), or have this special connection broken by completing the process of *chalitzah*. Then she may marry a man who is from outside of the family.

But what if she marries an outsider before *yibum* or *chalitzah*, while the special family connection is still intact? This question is the subject of this somewhat enigmatic phrase: “the dead man's wife shall not marry an outsider.”

Rav explains that her marriage to an outsider does not have halachic standing. In the words of the *gemara*: “*Ein kiddushin tofsin* – the marriage does not ‘take hold.’” When the Torah says that she shall not marry an outsider, it is not a statement of a prohibited marriage. Rather, the verb indicates that any such marriage

between her and an outsider is just not a marriage and has no halachic validity. Therefore, she does not require a divorce document from him.

Shmuel, however, expresses a doubt as to whether Rav's interpretation is correct. Another interpretation that he considers equally valid is that there is a prohibition for her to marry an outsider, but if she does, the marriage takes effect as a marriage. The marriage "takes hold." This interpretation understands the phrase "the dead man's wife shall not marry an outsider" to mean that the marriage is in violation of Torah law, but the marriage is nevertheless a marriage and she would require a divorce document.

In the *gemara's* conclusion, the Sage Ameimar says that the halacha is according to the view of Shmuel. We therefore find in Shulchan Aruch (*Even Ha'Ezer 159*) that in the event of this "outsider marriage," a divorce document is required from the outsider. (A number of fascinating, practical considerations and consequences, both for the brother and for the outsider, are discussed in detail in the *gemara* and *Poskim*.)

An important note: It would seem from learning our *gemara* with Rashi's commentary that the although the (attempted) marriage does not take hold, the parties involved have not transgressed a directive of the Torah. However, in the writings of Tosefot we find that that Rav indeed agrees that there is a prohibition against her marrying an outsider. This prohibition, according to Rav, is in addition to the total lack of the marriage's halachic validity.

▪ *Yevamot 92b*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Korach, 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 that 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 Torah portion are the laws of the first fruits, redemption of the firstborn and various laws of offerings.

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PARSHA PONDERERS

by Rabbi Rafi Wolfe

Eyes To See

“Korach...and Dasan and Aviram...and Ohn... they and two-hundred and fifty men from the Jewish People confronted Moshe...” (Bamidbar 16:1-2)

This week’s Torah portion details the rebellion of Korach. He challenged the leadership of Moshe and Aharon, convincing a group of the greatest sages of Israel to join his cause. Rashi asks: How could Korach think that his rebellion would be successful? Moshe clearly was a miracle performer. He played a role in the Ten Plagues, and split the sea. He obviously had a very close relationship with Hashem. Rashi says that “Korach’s eye misled him.” Korach saw in a prophecy that his future descendant would be the prophet Shmuel, who our Sages say was of equal prominence to Moshe and Aharon. Korach figured there was no way he would merit this great descendant unless he took action. He would have to rebel against Moshe and Aharon and become the leader. In the end, his rebellion proved unsuccessful, removing all doubt about Moshe’s rightful authority. The commentaries are bothered with Rashi’s phraseology. Why did Rashi say that Korach’s *eye* (singular) misled him, instead of the more normal expression that Korach’s *eyes* misled him?

The Shem MiShmuel suggests an answer based on an innovation of the Noam Elimelech. There is a mitzvah for all men to go to the Temple during the three pilgrimage festivals as in Deuteronomy 16:16.

Our Sages derive that only someone who is able to see with both of their eyes is obligated (Chagigah 2a),

but someone who is blind in one eye is exempt. The Noam Elimelech suggests that the reason is related to the rationale behind the mitzvah. A person has two eyes, each with its own purpose. One eye is to be able to see the loftiness of Hashem, to see His majesty. The other is to see one’s own lowliness. The purpose of going to the Temple, where Hashem’s presence is the most potent, was to be inspired by Hashem’s exaltedness. This could only be truly appreciated by someone with both of their eyes. The contrast of experiencing the grandeur of Hashem’s presence with an understanding of one’s own lowliness was tremendous. Someone with only one eye would miss out on that contrast, and is thus exempt from the mitzvah.

The Shem MiShmuel suggests that this is why Rashi mentions that Korach’s *eye* misled him. Korach was able to see the grandeur of Hashem. He had one eye. However, he was unable to see his own faults. He was extremely arrogant since he did not see his own lowliness. As a result, although he knew how important it was to serve Hashem, he thought that only he was the perfect person to lead the pack. He felt his rebellion was justified, and also felt it was destined for success. His eye misled him, because knowing Hashem’s greatness is not enough. One also has to realize they are not in charge. Having a healthy dose of humility is the only way not to be led astray.

- Sources: based on *Pardes Yosef HaChadash*, Korach 58

PEREK SHIRA

by Rabbi Shmuel Kraines

THE SONG OF THE GRASSES

The grasses say: "Let the glory of Hashem be forever, let Hashem rejoice over His handiwork." (Tehillim 104:31)

When Hashem beautified the face of His world with a diversity of grass species, each sprouted individually and distinctively, even though they had not been commanded to not intermingle. From then on, each species would reproduce of its own distinguished kind, as inedible foliage or edible herbage, in various shades of color and with different qualities, for the benefit of all the living. Thereupon, the ministering angel sang, "Let the glory of Hashem be forever, let Hashem rejoice in His handiwork."

Each person should to live his life without comparing it with others. Simply by fulfilling the unique role Hashem has designed for you, Hashem's glory is revealed and He rejoices in His handiwork. Each Jew is a player in our national symphony orchestra, a singer of praise to the Creator. Each has to read the notes and play the part that nobody else is going to play for him.

▪ Sources: Ber. 1:12 and Yalkut Shimoni (S8)

**In loving memory of Harav Zeev Shlomo ben Zecharia Leib*

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