

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHAT KORACH · 25 SIVAN 5765 · JULY 2, 2005 · VOL. 12 NO. 39

PARSHA INSIGHTS

THE COMMISSAR'S CAR

"Why do you exalt yourselves up over the congregation of Hashem?" (15:3)

There are two kinds of jealousy in this world. Capitalism embodies one and Communism the other.

The first kind of jealousy goes like this: "Look at the car you have! It's huge! It's so shiny! So nice! I'm going to get me a huger, shinier, nicer car than you!! Just you wait and see!"

That's the jealousy on which Capitalism is based.

The jealousy of Communism goes like this: "Look at the car you have! It's huge! It's so shiny! So nice! I'm going to make sure that your car is smaller, duller, and ordinarier than mine! In fact I won't rest till your car is so small and dull and ordinary that it ceases to exist!! Just you wait and see!" That's the jealousy of Communism.

Of the two, the jealousy of Communism is infinitely worse, which is possibly why Communism is a political fossil today while Capitalism is still as rampant and rapacious as ever.

In this week's parsha, the Ibn Ezra says Korach rebelled immediately after the inauguration of the

Mishkan. Why? Originally, the first-born were designated to serve in the *Mishkan*. When the first-born lost this merit Aharon and his sons received the honor. Korach was jealous of Aharon and his sons because they were the only ones designated to replace the first-born. Korach himself was a first-born and felt that he had as much right and more to perform the service. Thus, he enlisted "two hundred and fifty...leaders of the assembly (16:2) who were also first-borns. In addition, Datan, Aviram and On joined the rebellion for their own reasons of jealousy. They were from the tribe of Reuven which lost its first-born status to Yosef's children (*Bereshet* 48:5).

Korach said to Moshe, "Why do you exalt yourselves up over the congregation of Hashem?" Rashi explains, "You have taken much too much greatness for yourselves."

In other words, Korach didn't complain that he hadn't been elevated along with them. He wanted to bring them down to his level.

Jealousy is one of the most serious character flaws and we should do our utmost to distance ourselves from it. Jealousy rots the bones. However, a jealousy that seeks to bring others down rather than raising ourselves up is the worst jealousy of all.

• Based on the Chafetz Chaim

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. Hashem'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 Hashem 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.

NO TO CIVIL WAR

Civil war in Israel? This is the ugly specter hovering above the Jewish Homeland ever since the government announced its plan to evacuate Jewish settlers from their homes in the areas being returned to the Palestinians.

With all due empathy with the suffering of Jews who are compelled to abandon the homes and communities they built as pioneers on behalf of an Israeli government, the thought of Jew fighting Jew is totally unacceptable. The police and army are doing their utmost to carry out this

evacuation in the most sensitive way, and it is hoped that the settlers will not resort to the violence which some extremists in their ranks are calling for.

This week's Torah portion reminds us of the bitter fruits of unrelenting dissension. Korach and his company were swallowed up by the earth because they refused to meet with Moshe in an effort to achieve conciliation. Both sides in this sad conflict between the government and the settlers will hopefully keep up the lines of communication to prevent the tragedy of a civil war and to guarantee a united Israel forever.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

FURNITURE AFTER THE FIRE

A couple of months ago a fire destroyed the home of the Ochana family in the northern city of Kiryat Ata, claiming the life of one of the children and seriously wounding the other.

This tragedy pulled at the heartstrings of everyone in Israel. While nothing could be done in regard to the bereavement and physical suffering, there was something that could be done to enable the surviving family members to return to their apartment after all their belongings had been reduced

to ashes.

The Association of Furniture Manufacturers sent out an SOS appeal to its members asking them to contribute some of their products to the Ochana home. One company quickly responded with new beds, another with closets and others with complete kitchen and dining room sets. The Ochanas were able to leave the hospital and enter a newly furnished home which offered some important relief from their agony.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE LEGENDS Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

FIREFLIES OF TSEFAT

Fireflies abound in the beautiful city of Tsefat during the summer. Veteran Jews warn the younger generation to refrain from doing them any harm. What is the reason for this attitude towards fireflies?

Legend has it that in ancient times the city was ruled by a cruel despot who persecuted its Jewish inhabitants. One of his wicked decrees was to ban Jews from having any light in their homes and synagogues at night, and he even ordered them to bring him all their lamps.



This meant that Jews would not be able to study Torah at night. They came in desperation to their rabbi and complained that there was no value in a life without an opportunity for Torah study at night. "Go out en masse to the fields," he advised them, "and gather the fireflies. Bring them to the Beit Midrash and study Torah by their light."

The suggestion was followed and ever since then the Jews of Tsefat have a special appreciation of the fireflies in their midst.

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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.

- Badge and bell of the slave and animal
- When a vessel loses its status regarding spiritual impurity
- Many uses of a horseshoe
- “Jerusalem of Gold”
- Headbands and other adornments
- The hobnailed shoe and its history
- Which shoe you put on first
- Tefillin and *kameia* charms
- What a woman cannot carry in the street
- Causes of exile and of poverty
- Weapons and the future of war
- Advice for successful study of Torah
- Beware of dogs
- Headband of the *Kohen Gadol*
- Ritual impurity of garments
- Feminine headdress
- The vessels of the Midianites

THE BEST WAY TO HELP

What is the best way to help someone in need? Some very sage advice on this subject was provided by Rabbi Abba in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish:

One who lends money to a needy person performs a greater kindness than one who simply gives him charity. Rashi explains that this is so because the recipient does not suffer the shame which accompanies taking a hand-out.

An even greater kindness is performed by providing the needy person with funds or goods with which to do business and split the profits. As Maharsha explains, this eliminates the danger of embarrassment which can arise when the receiver of the loan is incapable of repaying it when it comes due. By making him a business partner the philanthropic investor provides him with an opportunity to both repay the loan and to support himself.

• *Shabbat 63a*

WHAT THE SAGES SAY

“If someone planned to do a mitzvah but was prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond his control, he will get credit as if he did it.”

• *Rabbi Ami*

WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

A PROMISE FOR PARTNERSHIP

Question: I promised a friend of mine to form a *chavruta* partnership for learning Daf Yomi together. In the meantime a more suitable partner approached me. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: A similar question was presented to Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein, the rav of the Ramat Elchanan community in Bnei Brak, who laid down the following guidelines:

If your friend did not seek another partner because he was relying on you and will remain without any partner if you desert him, it would be considered a lack of faithfulness for you to abandon him. Some support for this can be found in the *gemara* (*Mesechta Kiddushin 45*) which states that a

Jew is not suspected of backing out of his promise because the Prophet Tzefania describes the Jewish people as ones who keep their word.

Should your intention to abandon the partner you planned to study with be based on a discovery that there are substantial problems with being his *chavruta*, your promise was then based on an error and is not binding in any way.

If the learning partner you now wish to join is not merely preferable to the first, but one who is an outstanding scholar offering a rare opportunity for your growth, there are grounds for going with him since anyone in such a situation would do the same.

FAR AWAY FUDGE

From: Earnest Allen in AK

Dear Rabbi,

Hello, I am Earnest Allen and I own Stone Brook Fudge Company. We supply fudge for Candy Bouquet franchisees and many of them need kosher fudge and your blessing. My question is this: I live approximately 2 hours from Little Rock, Arkansas (Mt. View, Arkansas). How do I have a priest bless us and how often do we do this? Can we do this online, since we are so remote? We want to make sure we have things done correctly for our Jewish community of Franchisees. Thank you so much! Earnest Allen.

Dear Mr. Allen,

Thank you for your earnest inquiry and sincere interest in providing kosher Stone Brook Fudge for your Jewish franchisees. First, allow me to orient our readers as to your whereabouts: Mt. View, Arkansas is north of Little Rock, off State Highway 9, just south of Blanchard Springs Caverns, on the western bank of the Buffalo River, in eastern Ozark territory – that's remote.

Now for my response: I have good news and not-so-good news. The good news is that on behalf of all the rab-

bis here, I bless your success in providing truly kosher fudge for your franchisees. The not-so-good news is that's not enough to make the fudge kosher.

You see, it is not the blessing of a "priest", rabbi or holy man that makes food kosher, but rather the source of the food, its ingredients and the way it's prepared. Since the laws regarding all this are quite involved, it is necessary to have rabbinic supervision throughout all processes of manufacture. Only after the fudge is determined to be kosher by an Orthodox Kashrut Organization can it receive a seal of certification relied upon by kosher consumers.

To get started, you can contact an Orthodox rabbi in Little Rock for details on kashrut organizations. Once you find one, a representative will visit your plant, make a thorough study of your ingredients and determine whether it's possible to make Stone Brook fudge kosher, and under what conditions. You'll have to decide if that's what you want. If it works out, kosher supervision may require the attendance of a rabbi anywhere from periodic visits to full-time presence, according to the discretion of the organization.

Seeing as you want things done correctly, you understand that this can't be done online. It is not a matter of a hocus-pocus pronouncement from a priest, but rather a thorough, cooperative study with a rabbi. May your obvious sensitivity to Jewish law be a source of blessing for the Stone Brook Fudge Company, and if it's ever kosher send us a sample!

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