MEN AT WORK

“Why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem?” (16:3) You’re driving home after a long week’s absence. A week before, you’d had a long delay on the highway due to construction, and you sigh as you wonder how long it will take to get back through it. You turn the bend, and to your delight, the traffic is flowing like money at a casino. The road repair crew has already finished their work. Sailing over the new tarmac, you notice that it has already lost its pristine blackness. In a few short days, it will be indistinguishable from the thousands of other dusty gray miles of pavement.

Around the end of the 19th century, a saintly Jew in Russia authored a work which changed the course of Judaism. The book was called Chafetz Chaim — “The Desirer of Life.” Its subject matter, the laws of proper speech. In clear language, the Chafetz Chaim led his readers through the sometimes tortuous laws of permitted and forbidden speech. The Chafetz Chaim’s author was famous for guarding his tongue with such care that his name became synonymous with that of his creation. He became known as the Chafetz Chaim.

One might have expected the Chafetz Chaim to be extremely taciturn, visibly guarding every syllable that left his lips. The opposite was, in fact, true.

The Chafetz Chaim’s son-in-law was Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Levinson (rosh yeshiva of Radin). A visitor once noted the striking difference between the two men: Rabbi Levinson was a man of few words, who seemed to almost police their exit from his mouth. By comparison, the Chafetz Chaim was almost verbose, his conversation flowing with ease.

In this week’s Parsha, it’s difficult to understand how Korach could have hoodwinked so many of the Jewish People into suspecting Moshe of “lording it up” over the congregation. Just a few chapters previously, the Torah testifies that Moshe was the “humblest of all men.” How could there have existed even a suspicion that Moshe was pumped up with his own self-image? When we master a certain character trait, it becomes an indivisible part of who we are. However, when we are still doing “road work” on part of our character, the signs of digging and construction are everywhere. It’s clear to all that there are still “men at work.”

To the untrained eye, Moshe might have seemed lofty and removed. He was, after all, the king of the Jewish People. And he behaved in the manner of a king. But in his heart, Moshe understood, as no one before or since, exactly how small he was compared to G-d. Moshe didn’t need to trumpet his humility. It was already integrated into his personality as seamlessly as the tarmac of last year’s road repair.

THE RIGHT THING FOR THE WRONG REASON

“The man whom Hashem will choose — he is the holy one.” (16:7)

It’s not what you say, it’s why you say it. The mishna in Pirkei Avot says, “Any dispute which is for the sake of Heaven will have a constructive outcome.” However, says the mishna, any disagreement that is not for the

continued on page three
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 the people for requesting a king, as it indicates deterioration of the unique spiritual level of the nation that needed no king to live in harmony. His rebuke ends with a miracle where he calls out to G-d for rain in a mid-summer day and a rainstorm begins.

THUNDERSTORM

To demonstrate G-d’s “displeasure” at their desire for a king, Shmuel performs a miracle, bringing a thunderstorm in the middle of the wheat harvest. Why this particular sign?

The people didn’t see anything wrong in requesting a king, as the Torah itself commands the appointing of a monarch (Deuteronomy 17:15). Yet, the Torah commands appointing a king because a king has power to enforce law and order, and to maintain observance of Jewish law. Shmuel reproached them as they were then on a very high spiritual plane, and thus they didn’t need a king. On the contrary, appointing a king now might bring the secular influence of neighboring nations, as it would change Israel’s unique legislative and social structure to be like that of any regular nation in the land. Appointing a king should be put off until Torah observance is lax and needs enforcement; then it is acceptable despite its negative ramifications. This Shmuel demonstrated by the rainstorm, as rain is a blessing only when it falls in season; but not in the middle of the harvest.

I DIDN’T KNOW THAT!

Aharon was silent throughout the whole incident with Korach. Aharon accepted the kehuna only because Hashem commanded it; however, Aharon believed that Korach was actually greater than he and more deserving of being the kohen gadol.

• Ramban
For Jewish settlers and visitors during the last five hundred years, Tsefat has been one of Eretz Yisrael’s “sacred cities.” A visit to its ancient synagogues and cemetery takes one back to the golden days of the city when Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (“Arizal”) and his disciples established it as the center of Kabbalistic learning. Here too lived and died Rabbi Yosef Caro, author of the Shulchan Aruch, Rabbi Shlomo Alkebetz, author of the “Lecha Dodi” sung on Shabbat eve, and Rabbi Yaakov Berav, who made an abortive attempt to reestablish the Sanhedrin, and many other famous saints and scholars.

The cool air and beautiful surroundings of Tsefat attract many people from the entire country during the summer, but the year-long population remains small. A curious blend of art, music and mysticism endows this city with a unique personality during peak season. Among the Torah institutions functioning in Tsefat is “Shalom Rav,” a yeshiva for students with limited backgrounds, headed by American-born Rabbi Rafael Weingot and a similar seminary for women, Sharei Bina, run by his wife.

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

TSEFAT

Sources:
Men at Work - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman
The Right Thing for the Wrong Reason - Sfat Emet as heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

continued from page one

sake of Heaven will not have a constructive outcome. It cites the argument of Korach and his cohorts with Moshe as an “argument not for the sake of Heaven.”

If you think about it, the mishna is problematic: The implication is that if Korach’s intentions would have been correct, his dispute with Moshe would have had a positive outcome. In other words, what Korach said was, in essence, correct. It was why he said it, not what he said, that was at fault.

How could it be that both Moshe and Korach were right? Korach claimed “all the people are holy;” whereas Moshe said: “He who Hashem chooses is holy.”

Korach dressed his followers in garments which were entirely techelet, the blue color of the thread of tzitzit, and asked Moshe, “Does an all-techelet garment require tzitzit?” Moshe replied “Yes.” To which Korach scoffed and said, “If one thread of techelet is enough to exempt a garment made from a different color, isn’t it logical that an all-techelet garment should be exempt?”

Behind Moshe’s monosyllabic reply lies a fascinating concept. An entire garment can be of techelet. Korach was right: The entire people can be holy. But just as a garment which is entirely techelet requires tzitzit, so a holy people need a source for their holiness. Holiness doesn’t just exist by itself, it comes from the Holy One and is channeled through His tzaddikim. Just as tzitzit are a life-line joining a holy people to their Source, so it takes a Moshe to connect the Jewish People to its Source.

It’s not what you say, it’s why you say it.

Sources:
Men at Work - Rabbi Mordechai Perlman
The Right Thing for the Wrong Reason - Sfat Emet as heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

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THAT “EXTRA” SOUL

“Neshama yeteira” (extra soul) is what our Sages call that extra dimension of spirituality which Heaven instills in a Jew before Shabbat. The practical expression of this extra dimension of soul, explains Rashi, is that the Jew has a greater capacity for relaxation and joy, and is capable of eating and drinking in abundance without becoming engorged.

When Shabbat ends, the neshama yeteira is taken away. The spiritual trauma which the Jew may feel at this loss is subtly indicated in the word “vayinafash” (Shmot 31:17) which describes G-d’s rest following the six days of creation. This can be read as a combination of two words, “vay nefesh,” meaning “woe to the soul which has been lost.”

To ease this loss, our Sages instituted the practice of smelling “besamim” (fragrant spices) during the havdalah service at the Shabbat conclusion. Fragrance is the only earthly thing which the soul enjoys, and it is this nourishment which enables the remaining soul to overcome the shock of losing its Shabbat companion.

What about the holidays — does one get a neshama yeteira on those days as well?

Yes, contends Rashbam (Pesachim 102b), and his proof is that we do not include the blessing on besamim in the combination kiddush-havdalah we recite when the Shabbat conclusion is also the eve of a holiday. The reason, he concludes, must be that the neshama yeteira is present on the holiday as well.

Tosefot (Beitza 33b) challenges this conclusion: If a neshama yeteira is present on a holiday, then we should include besamim in our havdalah at the conclusion of every holiday. Since we do not do so, there must be no neshama yeteira on a holiday. Rather, we are compelled to find another reason for not including besamim in the kiddush-havdalah recited on a holiday eve following Shabbat.

After rejecting some other approaches to this problem, Tosefot concludes that the luxurious eating and drinking which bring joy to a Jew on a holiday have the same spiritually therapeutic effect as besamim, and therefore render them unnecessary.

• Beitza 16a

THE DANGER OF DECEPTION

On a holiday preceding Shabbat, it is only permissible to cook or bake the Shabbat food if one has made an “eruv tavshilin.” One does so by preparing, on the day preceding the holiday, a baked item and a cooked item (such as challah and fish or meat) which will be eaten on Shabbat. This lets us view the cooking on the holiday as only an extension of the cooking done before the holiday, and will not lead to the mistaken notion that one may cook on a holiday for consumption the next day when the next day is not Shabbat.

If someone forgot to make an eruv tavshilin, and no one made one on his behalf, he must transfer ownership of his food supplies to a Jew who has made an eruv tavshilin, and that person may do the cooking on his behalf.

Should the one who forgot to make the eruv ignore this restriction and proceed to cook, our Sages make an interesting distinction as to when we penalize him by prohibiting consumption of this food and when we do not:

If he intentionally violated the halacha, cooking despite his lack of an eruv, we allow him to eat that food on Shabbat. But if he does this cooking in a deceptive fashion — such as cooking more than he needs for the holiday meals by falsely declaring that he expects guests, when his real intention is to prepare food for Shabbat — he is forbidden to eat that food on Shabbat.

Why did the Sages penalize the one who cooks for Shabbat through deception and not the one who willfully violates the halacha?

The explanation, says Rashi, is that there is no danger that other people will follow in the path of the sinful person who willfully violated halacha; and, he too will realize the error of his ways and repent. There is thus no threat to the institution of eruv tavshilin. In the case of deception, however, he fools himself into thinking that he acted properly, and others may learn from his will to get around the law. Since this threatens the very survival of eruv tavshilin, our Sages penalized him such that the food cannot be eaten on Shabbat.

• Beitza 17b
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 did Datan and Aviram have in common 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 eleven 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 Hashem’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 Elitzafan ben Uziel was appointed leader of the Kehat family.
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. 16:3,7 - “Too much greatness have you taken for yourself” and “You’ve undertaken a big undertaking to argue against G-d .”
9. 16:12 - Egypt and Canaan.
10. 16:15 - When he traveled from Midian to Egypt.
11. 16:19 - He went from tribe to tribe 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, Hashem 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 chosen for 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 broken.

KASHA! (KASHA MEANS “QUESTION”)

Farrel Werner <fwernieone@aol.com> asked:

Dear Ohrnet,

What did the people mean when they told Moshe, “You killed Hashem’s People?” (17:6) Obviously, Moshe didn’t kill them. Korach’s followers died by Divine decree: The ground swallowed some and fire from Heaven killed the others.

Answer on page eight

Do you have a KASHA? Write to kasha@ohr.org.il with your questions on any Parsha!
Was Korach Revolting?

Sarah Walsh from New York, NY <Wainc@aol.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My name is Sarah, and my bat mitzvah portion is Korach from the book of Numbers, and I am having trouble understanding why Korach is a villain, if he was by birthright a priest? Does Korach have the right to question the leadership authority of Moses? If not, why not? Is rebellion necessarily bad?

Dear Sarah Walsh,

Actually Korach was by birth a Levite, and he was not content with that. He felt that he should get more honor and prestige. He created an entire rebellion, created hatred and arguments and divided the Jewish people — all for the sake of his honor, and his ego.

In addition, think of what Korach had witnessed in his life. He saw Moses lead the Jews out of Egypt, cross the Red Sea, bring down the mannah in the desert, and then Korach perceived/prophesied G-d speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. So rebellion is bad when:

- It is for the sake of ego and personal honor
- It contravenes facts
- It ignores basic moral ideas like gratitude

For further study may I suggest the commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on Korach.

Dear Name@Withheld,

I warmly applaud your efforts to observe kashrut, and I’m sorry to hear about your ordeal.

Regarding shrimp and non-kosher chicken, both are equally forbidden to eat; that is, you’re not allowed to eat shrimp just as much as you’re not allowed to eat unkosher chicken. After the fact, however, eating shrimp is worse, because shrimp comes under several categories of prohibitions. So, by eating shrimp one transgresses more prohibitions.

Kosher food purifies our soul, making it receptive to spirituality. So, just because you messed up one time, don’t “chicken” out! No little “shrimp” can stop you from becoming a spiritual giant!

Chickenshrimp

Name@Withheld from Buffalo, NY wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

Can one food be more non-kosher than another? Last week, a friend’s family who eats a lot of pork and beef invited me over for dinner. They spent a great deal of time avoiding all pork products just for me. However, they didn’t realize that I don’t eat shellfish. I didn’t have the heart to tell them, since they were being so kind to me, so I ate the food. My question is, is for example shrimp worse than non-koshered chicken, or is it just all or nothing?

Dear Name@Withheld,

I warmly applaud your efforts to observe kashrut, and I’m sorry to hear about your ordeal.

Regarding shrimp and non-kosher chicken, both are equally forbidden to eat; that is, you’re not allowed to eat shrimp just as much as you’re not allowed to eat unkosher chicken. After the fact, however, eating shrimp is worse, because shrimp comes under several categories of prohibitions. So, by eating shrimp one transgresses more prohibitions.

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Wet Stone

Yitzchak Muskal <yitzchak.muskal@telrad.co.il> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

I heard, lately, that water is pouring from the “Foundation Stone” on the Temple Mount. What is that all about? What can we learn from it? Is there any mention of this in our sources? By the way, a friend of mine from Kochav Yaakov told me of an Arab in preparation for conversion who went to see what it’s all about — and confirmed it.
Aaron from Hebron, Kentucky
<crossdraw6@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

First, let me say that I am grateful to you for providing this forum for questions and answers. I understand that recently water has begun to spring up under the Temple Mount. What might be the possible significance of such an event?

Dear Yitzchak Muskal and Aaron,

In the Messianic era, says the Talmud, a trickle of water will begin flowing from the Holy Temple. This trickle will grow and grow until it becomes a gushing river. The Talmud cites a verse in Zechariah: “On that day a spring will be opened for the House of David and for the residents of Jerusalem.” See also the book of Joel that: “And it will be on that day…a fountain shall issue from the House of the L-rd.”

Maharsha explains that this river symbolizes King David’s dynasty: Like a river flowing on and on, David’s kingship will continue forever.

Now, according to recent reports, a “mysterious” trickle of water is rumored to have begun from under “the rock” in the Moslem “Dome of the Rock” mosque on the Temple Mount.

Even if true, this may or may not be significant.

For one, the Talmud very specifically details how the trickle will emerge from the Temple, yet it’s doubtful that “the Dome of the Rock” is indeed built upon the Temple site. In “Beit Hamikdash Hashlishi,” Rabbi Shalom Dov Steinberg brings strong evidence that it is not. Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch, a leading Torah scholar of our day, agrees. Among other indications, electro-magnetic scans under the Temple mount reveal very deep hollows consistent with those described as having been under the Temple — these hollows however are not under the Dome of the Rock; rather they are under the clear, unbuilt section opposite the Western Wall. Interestingly, this fits with our tradition, recorded almost 2000 years ago in the Zohar, that no building will ever be built on the site of the Sanctuary except for the Temple!

Sources:
• Yoma 77b, 78a; Maharsha, ibid.
• Zechariah 13:1; Yoel 4:18; see also Ezekiel 47:1-12; Zechariah 14:8
• Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch 3:39

Re: Marriage:

A few weeks ago, I asked about Jewish wedding customs, their origin and meaning. I thanked you for your response, but had not had a chance to read the information that you sent to me. I have since read the information and I find the wedding ceremony to be very beautiful. I have made copies to give to the members of the wedding party and they were grateful to have a better understanding of what is going to happen. Thank you again so very much for adding understanding and beauty to this day.

• Meghan Sweet, Hastings College of the Law <sweetm@uchastings.edu>

Ohrnet responds:

Thanks Meghan! Others who want to see what Meghan saw, go to: http://www.ohrnet.org/judaism/articles/wedding.htm

Re: Taam Elyon (Ohrnet Shavuot Special):

You wrote that the special trop called ta’am elyon “breaks up the sentences in a different way, joining all Ten Commandments into one long sentence.” Perhaps you meant to say “joining each of the Ten Commandments into one sentence?”

• Stanley Nachamie, JLE Israel Summer <stnbh@cunyvm.cuny.edu>

Ohrnet responds:

You are correct. We should have said that ta’am elyon makes each commandment into one verse. (See Chizkuni Shmot 20:2, see also Mosat Binyamin chapter 6, Elya Rabbah 142:1, and Shulchan Aruch Harav 494:8.)

Re: One and Only:

Thank you, Ohrnet, for answering my past questions. Ohr Somayach is the only one of many “Ask the Rabbi” forums I have tried on the internet to consistently provide me with responses. Thank you again.

• Eli Lee, Bayport, New York <EResearch@worldnet.att.net>
If you crash during the test of judging others favorably, you might feel like a... 

**CRASH TEST DUMMY**

Hi, I’m sure that it was on the Ohr Somayach site that I saw that you were asking for nice stories on judging favorably. Well I have a nice story for you:

A friend of mine agreed to meet with some girls and help them study for their upcoming exam. She arranged with them to meet one Sunday morning for two and a half hours of study. The night before, even though she was feeling sick, my friend stayed up the whole night preparing and making notes.

On Sunday around 1:30, my friend phoned me to say that her “students” didn’t show up, and that she is really hurt and put out after all she did for the lesson she was supposed to give them. She added they are very inconsiderate not to even have the courtesy to phone and tell her they wouldn’t be coming.

At about 5:30 pm she phoned me again: The girls had been in a car crash on the way to her house. They had just come home and phoned her to tell her what had happened! What a lesson this was for us!

* An Ohrnet reader in South Africa

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**YIDDLE RIDDLE**

I have before me two identical pots of milk. The pots contain identical amounts of pure, unadulterated milk from one animal. Yet, if two exactly identical pieces of meat from one animal fall, one into each pot, and accidentally get cooked, one mixture becomes forbidden to eat and to sell, while the other mixture becomes forbidden only to eat, but it remains permitted to sell. Why is this?

**Answer Next Week...**

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**KASHA! (ANSWER)**

Dear Farrel Werner,

Those who complained reasoned as follows: Although the first-born lost their rights as kohanim (priests), they should retain the right to serve as levi'im. Thus, they felt the test Moshe had proposed, that his detractors offer incense, was unfair. The incense offering was designated specifically for kohanim, so it wasn’t a true test for those who deserved at least to serve in the lesser capacity of levi.

* Based on Ramban

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**derech**

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