

# THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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**Wishing Lara Benjamin & Alex Shamash much Hatslacha on their upcoming wedding. Shetizku livnot Bayit Neeman BeYisrael!**

## RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR  
TAL



### DON'T BE SO STUBBORN!

In a very small alley in Jerusalem, two taxis driving in opposite directions meet. As the drivers are equally stubborn, neither of them wants to reverse. They angrily look one at the other. Finally, one of them picks up a newspaper and starts reading. The other one politely asks, "When you've finished the paper, please bring it over, and let me read it?"

Am Yisrael are known as a Stiff Necked People – we have our times when we are stubborn. Yet in this week's Parasha stubbornness seems to take on a new meaning.

Korach disputes the Kehuna (High Priest) of Aharon. By the end of the dispute he is lost forever as the earth consumes him and his followers. The two hundred and fifty heads of Sanhedrin also disputed Aharon's legitimacy. They too paid with their lives. Still the complaints were not silenced. The people were not convinced. They needed one more sign from Hashem that Aharon was the chosen Kohen Gadol.

The princes of the tribes were asked to bring 'Ish Matehu – each man his staff' and to write on them their names. The staffs were placed together with Aharon's staff inside the Holy of Holies by the Aron Hakodesh. (Whoever's staff would sprout forth would be the chosen one.) Moshe wanted to fend off any conspiracy theories. He wanted to ensure that there would be no doubt with this test. Lest the people claim that one end of the Aron Hakodesh was holier than the other end, or that Moshe knew the best place to put the stick

of Aharon, he placed the staff of Aharon in the middle, surrounded by the others staffs.

"And it came to pass, on the morrow, that Moshe came into the Tent of Testimony, and behold the staff of Aaron, of the house of Levi, blossomed, yielded a flower and brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms and ripened into almonds" (17:23).

Moshe brought out the staffs and we are told that the staff of Aharon flourished. The Abarbanel writes that the name of each tribe was written on each staff. However on Aharon's staff – Moshe wrote on one side Levi and on the other side of the staff – 'Aharon'. Eventually when the staff flowered, Parach Mateh Aharon – it flowered on the side of Aharon, thus proving two things in one go – Levi was the chosen tribe to serve in the Mishkan and Aharon was the chosen leader of that tribe. Furthermore, the Rashbam (17:23) states that when Moshe took the staff of Aharon out it already had flowers. Then in front of the people, it started to sprout and bring out almonds. Now it was clear to all that Aharon was the chosen Kohen Gadol.

The Torah states Vayiru Vayikchu Ish Matehu – and they saw and each one took his staff.

The Seforno asks what the purpose of them taking their staffs was. Normally in a contest when one is proven wrong through an object, they no longer require that object. They have lost the dispute, why take their staffs back?

The Seforno explains that the Princes of the tribes still didn't believe in the signs! They thought, it can't be that only Aharon's staff flowered; ours must have flowered too. What must have happened is that Moshe came into the Kodosh Kodashim and saw all staffs flowering. Perhaps he exchanged our staffs with dry ones and kept Aharon's staff. They asked for their staffs back, because they had special secret signs on them that only they knew they had put, and they wanted to check whether Moshe was really giving them back their real staffs. ►

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**THE WEEKLY QUOTE**  
"The task ahead is  
never greater than the  
strength that lies within you"

## > UPCOMING EVENTS

9TH JULY - YMC BBQ (see more info online)



### DVAR TORAH

Don't be so stubborn!  
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

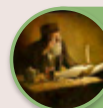
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### DVAR TORAH

Making a name for yourself  
RABBI ALEX CHAPPELL

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### HALACHOT

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### Q&A AND CARTOON

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When we read this episode in the Torah we are left shocked. Surely these are Nesiim – Princes of tribes, knowledgeable people?!

They had witnessed what happened with Korach, with all his followers, they had witnessed the miracle of the staffs, and they still think something dubious is occurring?!? What are they thinking?!

Every Jew is unique. Each mitzvah we do is special and has ramifications on high. Hashem values each and every one of our prayers. Our pleasant deeds and Mitzvot give much Nachat (so to speak) to our Creator.

The Princes understood this more than anyone. They knew the power and holiness of each Jew. What they couldn't believe is how it would be possible for our Creator to command that only the Kohen Gadol can enter the Holy of Holies. Surely every Jew is special and must have close access to Hashem?

They saw the signs from Korach and his followers, they saw the signs of the staff of Aharon, but they couldn't comprehend and found it difficult to accept that only one man can enter the Holy of Holies. In actual fact - they were right!

Each Mitzva we perform is cherished by Hashem. Hashem loves and values each and every Jew.

The one mistake they made is that even with that love existing it is still possible that Hashem chose the tribe of Levi and the Kohen Gadol to perform certain acts in the Temple.

We serve Hashem in many ways. It is only in the service of the temple that the Kohanim are both the Sheluchim (messengers) of G-d and at the same time our messengers. (Nedarim 34)

With regards to prayer which is compared to Korbanot – all of Israel are the same. Similarly the study of Torah is open to all. You don't need to be a Kohen Gadol to learn Torah. When it comes to learning Torah, we all have the same access. The wisdom gained depends on our efforts. The

Torah is related to as – Yekara Mipinimim – more cherished than the Kohen Gadol when he goes into the inner chambers on Yom Kippur!

Once the staff had flourished in front of them and they had checked all other possibilities they happily accepted the sign and came to the understanding that the tribe of Levi (with Aharon as the Kohen Gadol) would serve in the Bet Hamikdash.

This in no way took away the importance of each Jew. Hashem informed us that His love extends to each and every one of us. Through our actions and learning we are able to achieve the highest of peaks (even closer than the Kohen Gadol).

Let us cherish this – each one of us is a jewel, and has the power to shine and give light to all around. ■

## RABBI ALEX CHAPPER - COMMUNITY RABBI AT BOREHAMWOOD & ELSTREE SYNAGOGUE

DVAR  
TORAH



### MAKING A NAME FOR YOURSELF – LESSONS FROM KORACH

Out of the fifty-four sidrot in the entire Torah, only six are named after people – Noach, Sarah, Yitro, Korach, Balak and Pinchas and all of them except for Korach are worthy of their moniker being singled out. We can discuss Balak another time.

So how can this week's sedra be called Korach especially if we note that it says in Mishlei: 'The name of the wicked shall rot' which the Gemara explains that their names shall decay for we do not mention the wicked by name.

If we should not mention the wicked by name in ordinary conversation, surely

a sedra of the Torah should not be named after one of them, for this is certainly a way of perpetuating a name. Not even Moshe, the greatest leader of the Jewish people, whose name is inextricably linked to the Five Books of Moses, has a sedra that bears his name, so why should Korach?

And there is no saving grace in Korach, for though, as Rashi tells us, his sons repented, he himself did not and even the name itself has no hint of righteousness in it as it means a bald spot.

Korach was nothing more than an egotistical rebel, so what message does the Torah, which the Rambam says was given to make peace in the world, convey by perpetuating the name of someone associated with complaint and rebellion?

I believe the answer is actually very simple.

Although there are many ways in which to make a name for ourselves in life, they basically fall into one of two categories – the right way and the

wrong way. The right way is by making a positive contribution, being a doer not a talker, growing personally and enhancing the lives of others. The wrong way was best summed up by Benjamin Franklin: 'It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it.'

Korach came from an illustrious family and although he may have had a compelling argument against Moshe, the Mishna tells us that it was not 'for the sake of Heaven' – it was negatively motivated, not for the purposes of truth or to benefit others but for self-aggrandisement. As the Mishna continues, such a dispute has no lasting value because it is based, not on altruism, but narcissism.

G-d wants us to be happy and successful and to choose the correct course to achieve these goals and so Korach remains as a perpetual example of the consequences of following the wrong way to make a name for yourself. ■

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## OUR CHACHAMIM

### RABBI MOSHE BIDERMAN – THE LELOVER REBBE

Rabbi Moshe Biderman was born in the Polish town of Lelov in 5535 to the saintly Rabbi David, may his merit protect us. His father was the founder of the outstanding Lelover dynasty and one of the greatest disciples of the Chozeh of Lublin. From his youth, Rabbi Moshe acquired Torah and Chassidut from his holy father, as well as from his father's Rav, the Chozeh of Lublin, who spoke enthusiastically of him.

After his marriage to the daughter of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak, the Yid Hakadosh (holy Jew) of Pshischa, Rabbi Moshe did not want to accept any official positions. Instead, he placed himself in the shadow of the other tzaddikim. When Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl learned of him, Rabbi Moshe did not want to remain living in Chernobyl. He therefore moved to Pshischa and placed himself in the shadow of his father-in-law. There in Pshischa he grew in Torah and Chassidut, in holiness and purity. Like his father, Rabbi Moshe was known for his great love of Jews. He was a hidden tzaddik, a man who did not want to officially become a Rebbe. Instead he went to acquire Torah and Chassidut among the tzaddikim of the generation. He was famous for his longing for Eretz Israel, which he loved with all his heart and soul. In fact it did not take him long for his love of the land to translate into action. Thus in the year 5610, Rabbi Moshe traveled to the Holy Land and settled in Jerusalem. When he left the Diaspora, those close to him wanted to know to whom he was leaving them. Rabbi Moshe answered that in Poland there remained the Rebbe of Radomsk, the Tiferet Shlomo. Unfortunately, Rabbi Moshe did not live long in Jerusalem, for within a year, on Tevet 11, 5611, he was summoned to Heaven. Rabbi Moshe Biderman is buried on the Mount of Olives. May his merit protect us all. ■



## HALACHOT

### RABBI ELI MANSOUR

#### MAY ONE ADD WATER TO THE OIL CUPS OF THE SHABBAT CANDLES?

Many people use olive oil for Shabbat candles (which is, indeed, the preferred manner of observing the Misva), pouring the oil into glass cups and then placing a wick. The question was raised concerning the permissibility of adding some water to the bottom of the glass cup. For example, if a woman does not have a large amount of oil to use, she might want to pour some water to lift the oil and wick so that the wick protrudes above the rim of the cup, making it easier for her to light it. Assuming, of course, that this is done before Shabbat, would this be permissible?

This issue is discussed by the Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 265:4), who writes that if one's intention when pouring the water into the oil cup is not to cause the flame to be extinguished sooner, then this is permissible. As long as one does not pour the water for the purpose of hastening the extinguishing of the flame, he may add the water, and thus it would be permissible to add water for the sake of lifting the wick. The Rama (Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1525-1572) disagrees, citing authorities who allow adding water even for the purpose of having the fire extinguish sooner, since the extinguishing is done indirectly. Regardless, even according to the Shulhan Aruch, it would certainly be permissible to add water to the oil cup for the sake of elevating the wick.

Hacham Ben Sion Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998), in his work Or Le'sion (vol. 2, 18:17), addresses the question of whether this Halacha applies also to one who adds water in order to prevent the glass cup from becoming very hot and cracking. He cites some authorities who claimed that adding water for this purpose is akin to adding water for the purpose of causing the flame to extinguish, and is thus forbidden. Hacham Ben Sion, however, disagrees, arguing that these cases are very different from one another. In his view, as long as the intent is not for the candle to extinguish sooner, one may add water, even for the purpose of maintaining the glass' temperature. He adds that we may also take into account the Rama's ruling, that regardless of one's intent it is permissible to add water to the cups. The final Halacha, then, is that one may add water before Shabbat to the oil cup in order to avoid cracking. By the same token, it would be permissible to add water in order to prevent the glass from blackening.

**Summary:** One may add water before Shabbat to the glass oil cups of the Shabbat candles, such as to prevent the cups from cracking or blackening, as long as this is not done for the purpose of having the candles go out sooner. ■

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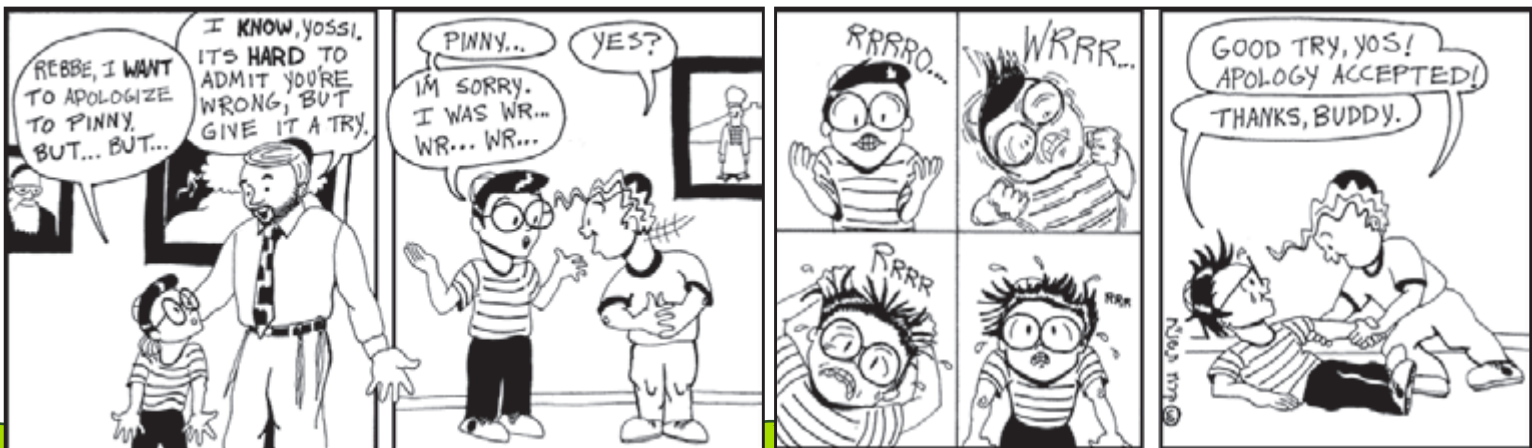


- ❶ What motivated Korach to rebel?
- ❷ What did Korach and company do when Moshe said that a techelet garment needs tzitzit?
- ❸ What warning did Moshe give the rebels regarding the offering of the incense?
- ❹ Did Moshe want to be the kohen gadol?
- ❺ What event did Korach not foresee?

### Answer

❶ 16:1 - Korach was jealous that Elitzafan ben Uziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehat instead of himself.  
 ❷ 16:1 - They laughed. ❸ 16:6 - Only one person would survive. ❹ 16:6 - Yes. ❺ 16:7 - That his sons would repent.

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