



Ohr Yerushalayim News

א"ר תמוז תשפ"א – 12th June 2021 - Volume 13 - Issue 47

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the recent Bar Mitzvah of their grandson Ezriel Mosbacher, son of Mr and Mrs Nafti Mosbacher, Zurich.

Mazel Tov to Henry and Fiona Brownson on the birth of a grandson to Yoss and Daniella Brownson.

Mazel Tov to Yehuda and Bernice Issler on the engagement of Tzippi to Avrumi Krawczynski. Mazel Tov also to grandparents David and Vera Issler.

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this Shabbos, 2nd Tammuz:

Rafi Green for his father

Michael Freedman for his father

Blind Ambition

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

Love is blind. So is hate and any principle that begins to shade the intellect with emotion. This week, in what appears to be the worst ideological division of the Jewish people after the Exodus, a litmus test of human nature proved that the great divide bordered more on ego than on principle.

Korach, a cousin of Moshe and a brilliant man in his own right, began a rebellion that challenged the leadership and divine appointment of both Moshe and Ahron. In addition to his own family, Korach's iconoclastic actions inspired 250 Jewish leaders to denounce publicly the leadership of Moshe and Ahron. Foremost among the self-appointed detractors were two men with a history of vindictive activities toward Moshe – Dassan and Aviram. Back in Egypt, when Moshe killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating an innocent Jew, these men threatened to inform the Egyptian authorities.

But Moshe wanted to deal with them. As leader of two million people, he could have laughed at the complaints of a minute fraction of the population, but he didn't. He reached out to Dassan and Aviram and asked them to come and discuss their qualms with him. His request was met with a barrage of insults.

"Even if you gouge out our eyes – we shall not meet!" they responded (Numbers 16:14)

I was always amazed at this most arrogant response. Why did these men, who obviously were stubborn, arrogant, and supercilious, respond in a self-deprecating manner? Why did they suggest the horrific infliction of eye-gouging upon themselves? Would it not be enough to respond, even to the worst of enemies, "we will not come?" What connection does the loss of vision have with their refusal?

Reb Gimpel, a travelling salesman, developed an illness in a small village far from his home and was prescribed with a cure that entailed eating of non-kosher food. A foreigner in that town, he decided to ask the local rabbi if he was permitted to eat the medicine.

The gentile doctor did not know where the rabbi lived and suggested that Reb Gimpel ask the local butcher. Reb Gimpel went into the butcher shop. "Excuse me," he asked the burly meat vendor, "do you know where I can find your rabbi?" "The rabbi!" sneered the butcher,

"why would a respectable-looking man like yourself need our rabbi?" The man was puzzled but continued to explain. "I'd like to ask him something. "Ask him something!" mocked the butcher. "Our rabbi doesn't know the difference between a horse and a cow! You're wasting your time! Ask the chazzan where he lives, I have no reason to tell you."

The shocked man went to the chazzan's home. "Excuse me," he asked. Do you know where the rabbi lives?"

"The rabbi?" asked the cantor in horror. "Why in the world would you want to meet that ignoramus? Surely you don't want to ask him a question! I wouldn't want to be party to your misfortune. Better ask the mohel."

Frustrated the poor man went to the home of the mohel where once again he was accosted with a barrage of insults and put-downs. Finally, however, the mohel acquiesced and directed the man to the rabbi's home. The man entered the threshold and before he even shook the rabbi's hand he exclaimed, "Listen, I don't know you, and you don't me. I came here to ask one question, but I will ask you something totally different. Why are you the rabbi here? The butcher thinks you're a thief, the chazzan thinks you're an ignoramus, and the mohel loathes you. Why in the world do you remain the rabbi of this town?"

The rabbi looked up from his bifocals and smiled. "Ah! The insults, the abuse and the criticism. But you know what: for a little honor it's all worth it!"

As the proverbial rabble-rousers of all time, Dassan and Aviram were preaching profound insight into the laws of arrogance. When one is set on a self-fulfilling mission of squabbling, as corrupt and perverted as his judgement is, so is his vision. He is blind to the critics, blind to the world, and worst of all, blind to his own self. Once a man is blind, you can gouge his eyes and he will not notice. Only those with a pure sense of mission, cherish the vision that lets them see a situation from every angle. Even if it is not their own. While Moshe, the leader of the entire nation asks to meet his worst enemies and discuss their gripes, they refuse and would rather be blind to any criticism.

Being a Parent is Not Easy

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Korach. "Va'yikach Korach ben

Davening Times

פרשת קרח

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.52pm-8.00pm
Shacharis - Hashkomo	7.30am
2nd Shacharis	9.30am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.54am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.51pm
Motzei Shabbos	10.56pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.50pm

Yitzhar ben K'has ben Levi {And Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of K'has, the son of Levi took}.[16:1]"

The immediate questions that one is struck with are: Why did the passuk spell out his lineage all the way up to the tribe of Levi but stop short of Yaakov? Furthermore, what did Korach actually take?

Korach was jealous of having been passed by for a position that he felt he was deserving of. Moshe had appointed Elitzafon the son of Uziel to be the Nasi {prince/leader} of K'has. Elitzafon's father, Uziel, was younger than Korach's father, Yitzhar. Korach therefore felt that the position of Nasi should have gone to him. He persuaded two hundred and fifty men to rebel against the validity of all of Moshe's appointments, including Aharon's appointment as the Kohen. With this we understand why Korach's father, Yitzhar was mentioned. The start of Korach's uprising was his claim to the Nasi position as the son of Yitzhar.

Rashi writes that when Yaakov was blessing his sons before his death, he placed a personal plea into the blessing bestowed upon Levi. "In their assembly (referring to Levi's descendant, Korach and his cohorts) do not mention my name."

The Kli Yakar explains that a forefather's name mentioned in the lineage implies that the root of the descendant's actions can be found in that predecessor. Yaakov foresaw what Korach would do and was afraid that Korach's actions might be traced back to him. Originally the Divine Service was to be performed by the b'choros {first born males} but was later switched to the Kohanim. Yaakov was afraid that Korach's contesting Aharon's appointment to Kehunah was rooted back in his own taking of the b'chorah {birthright of the first-born} from Esav. He prayed that he had purified his intentions to the point that there were no thoughts of personal gain involved in his actions and his actions were therefore worlds apart from that of Korach. Hashem showed this to be the case by leaving Yaakov's name out of Korach's lineage. The lineage did however extend to Levi who was a co-conspirator with Shimon in their jealousy-prompted plan to harm Yosef. The lineage therefore extended to him.

The effects that parents have on later generations can't be underestimated. The Talmud [Kiddushin 30A] reveals that one who teaches his son Torah, is considered as if he taught his son and his grandchildren until the end of all generations.

As I was teaching my son to ride a bicycle I gained an understanding in this. I was running behind him, holding onto the back of his seat. As he picked up speed and steadied his balance, I, in the great tradition of fathers teaching their sons to ride bikes, let go of his seat. As he continued to ride beautifully, I suddenly heard this deep voice emanating from my mouth, saying "atta boy, son, atta boy." Now, I never say "atta boy, son" and neither does anyone within a twenty five year radius of my age! But, as if on automatic pilot, the exact words that I heard my father say when he let go of the seat that I was sitting on, came out of my mouth. I imagine that when my son will BE"H teach his son to ride a bike, just as he lets go of the seat he'll find himself saying "atta boy, son, atta boy" even though by then, no one within fifty years of his age will have ever used that expression. And so it will continue, until the end of all generations.

Our initial, automatic reaction as parents is the parental reaction that we encountered as children. That then becomes the initial, automatic reaction of our children throughout the generations. The views we espouse and live by become incorporated into our children's views. Parents carry a tremendous responsibility.

However, the effects of a parents actions can also work in a totally different way. We asked earlier: What did Korach take? Raish Lakish [Sanhedrin 109B] teaches that Korach 'lakach mekach ra l'atzmo'—Korach 'took' a bad acquisition for himself.

The B'er Yosef asks that this seems to be a very strange term. When someone acquires something but it was a lousy deal then we can say that he made a bad acquisition. But here, where he and everything he owned was swallowed up into the ground, how can it be called any sort of an acquisition?!

Rashi explains that Korach saw a great chain of descendants coming from him—the prophet Shmuel—and he thought that he'd be saved in Shmuel's merit. He heard from Moshe that of all the people offering the incense, only one would remain alive and he was sure that he was the one. What Korach didn't realize was that his sons would repent and the descendants would come from them, not from him.

The question was asked, why didn't the merit of those future generations protect Korach from this grievous sin and punishment?

They explain that Korach only merited such a chain of descendants because of his sin! His rebellion against Moshe caused him to be swallowed up by the earth—an extraordinary, earth-shattering (sorry) occurrence which caused a tremendous strengthening of Bnei Yisroel's faith in Moshe and his teachings. Hashem doesn't withhold the reward of any creation and Korach therefore deserved and earned these lofty descendants by having caused such a sanctification of Hashem's name!

Whereas Korach thought that he'd be saved from punishment in their merit, their greatness only came about as a result of his punishment.

With this we can understand why it was described as a bum deal for Korach. It was an acquisition—he acquired that chain of descendants coming out from him— but it was a lousy deal. He had to pay an exorbitant price for that—he would never enter olam habah {the World to Come}.

Parents. Sure ain't an easy job.

From Behind the Furnace

Torah.org

Korach was a descendant of Levi, a member of the Levite family charged with the honor of transporting the vessels of the Holy Tabernacle. Korach himself was among those honored with carrying the holiest vessel, the Ark of the Covenant, containing the tablets from Mt. Sinai.

Yet rather than being satisfied with this great honor, Korach was upset that he was not given the highest office of all, the High Priesthood. His cousin Aharon was given this honor instead, and Korach, in his jealousy, claimed that Aharon was only given his esteemed position because his brother was Moshe (Moses). Korach initiated a rebellion against Moshe and the laws of the Torah, and Korach was met with severe and tragic Divine retribution.

In the synagogues of old Europe, there used to be a furnace in the middle of the sanctuary to provide heat to the congregation during prayers. The seats up by the front, eastern wall of the synagogue were reserved for the wealthier and more esteemed members of the community, while those in the back, especially those behind the furnace, were filled by the simpler, lower class folk. "If only Korach knew," said the holy Rabbi Bunim of P'shischa, one of the early pioneers of the Chassidic movement, "that you could faithfully serve G-d even from behind the furnace, and it is as valuable to Him as the service of the High Priest in the holiest chambers of the Temple, he would never have waged his opposition to Moshe." Korach's mistaken thought that his service, as honorable as it was, was of lesser quality, is what drove Korach to rebel against Moshe and ultimately against G-d Himself. (Based on Ba'er HaParsha, Rav Melech Biderman)

Throughout this pandemic, we've all been challenged by the disruption of our travels, our family life, our service to others, and our religious service both at home and in the synagogue. Many of us have lost jobs or even loved ones, or are suffering from the complications of the virus itself. These are challenging times for all of us. As a result, everything else has likely been compromised. We may ask ourselves, "Is this what's become of me? I have no job. I can't fulfill my obligations to my family. I can't pray or study Torah like I used to. I'm a lost cause!"

Don't make Korach's tragic mistake. Your service, with your circumstances right now, is as valuable to G-d as that of the High Priest. What you are able to do at this moment in time is exactly what G-d wants from you. Your best effort to do that is the most honorable and most holy service in the world, even from behind the furnace.