



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Dovi Douek and his parents, Yitzchok and Miri, on the occasion of his Bar Mitzva this Shabbos. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening in the Shul hall

Mazel tov to David and Deborah Levine on the occasion of Natan's Aufruf this Shabbos in Shul and for his wedding on Wednesday to Ayelet Kruskal, Hendon. The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davening in their home, 4 Mayfield Road. Mazel Tov also to grandparents Miles and Linda Levine.

Mazel Tov to Noach & Shoshi Fletcher on Sari's engagement to Yair Aronstam from RBS

Mazel Tov to Dean and Susan Kaye on the Bar Mitzva of their grandson, Tani Kaye, this Shabbos. The Kiddush takes place from 11.30 in Beis Yisroel

Mazel Tov to Laurence and Linda Ross on the occasion of the Bas Mitzva of their granddaughter, Soroh Ross

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.

The Unmentionable

Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)

This week we read the parsha of Korach's uprising against Moshe. "And Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of K'has, the son of Levi.[16:1]"

Why did the Torah spell out his lineage all the way up to the tribe of Levi but stop short of Yaakov?

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.

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.30pm
Candle Lighting	7.56pm-8.00pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	8.55am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 9.55pm
Motzei Shabbos	11.00pm
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

Korach was jealous of having been passed by for a position that he felt he deserved. 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 star of Korach's uprising was his claim to the Nasi position as the son of Yitzhar. Korach's lineage also extended to Levi, as it was an aspect inherited from Levi that played a role in his jealous uprising. Levi was a co-conspirator with Shimon in their jealousy-prompted plan to harm Yosef. The lineage therefore extended to him.

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 seizure of the b'chorah {birthright of the first-born} from Esav. He prayed that he had purified his intentions to the point that personal gain had not played a role and Korach's actions were not attributed to him in any way. Hashem showed this to be the case by leaving Yaakov's name out of Korach's lineage.

This concept can also be used to explain another intriguing aspect of Korach's rebellion. Korach and his entire family were swallowed up by the earth—even the infants. Rashi [16:27] points out that from here we can see the awesome power of machlokes {strife}. The court system would only punish once a person entered manhood at the age of thirteen. Yet here, when the issue was machlokes, even young children perished.

But why, in fact, did these innocent children die?

Rav Chaim Shmuelovitz zt"l compares this to a 'ben sorer umoreh'—a very wayward young boy—who, if he does certain very specific and horrific acts, is put to death by the court. The explanation given is that the Torah foresaw where such actions would lead him. It's therefore better for him to die as an unaccountable youth rather than to continue this lifestyle and ultimately die as a very accountable and guilty adult. The same can be applied to Korach's young children. As only Hashem can foresee the true effects of a parent's ways on the children, Hashem saw it fit and beneficial for even the children to die at that early point in their lives.

This places a tremendous responsibility on us as (present or future) parents. It also allows a person to recognize and appreciate how one's parents impacted on him.

After my father, hk"m, passed away, his tefillin were misplaced. With two grandsons approaching the age of bar mitzvah, it was especially frustrating. All plans went ahead and I ordered a new pair of tefillin for my son.

When the tefillin were finally located, my brother and I spoke and the issue of whose son would use the tefillin came up. As close as we are, it was a bit awkward as it was really a toss up and we each wanted our son to have them.

During a short break in the conversation, my thoughts turned to what my father must be thinking while observing this conversation. It became so clear to me how he had always done everything possible to avoid machlokes—especially between his children. How the last thing he'd ever want was that something of his would be the cause of any tension between two sons.

I quickly told my brother, "You are older, Dad a"h, already chipped in toward the tefillin that I already ordered, I think your son should use them."

Those who have merited a legacy must live up to it—those who haven't need to start one for their children.

Fungible Rocks

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)

Listen now, you rebels! Shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?

Why does Moshe emphasize "this" rock? Was there something that distinguished the rock right in front of him from any other rock? Shouldn't his question have been different? "Lots of rocks around here. No water in sight. Think I can convince one of the rocks to give you water?"

Rashi provides a curious part of the background. The specific rock that was intended to provide water moved out of position, and blended in with all the surrounding rocks. Moshe was stymied. The people said, "What's the big deal? This rock; that rock. It's all the same. Moshe therefore responded, "Shall we bring forth water for you from this rock?"

In regard to the non-miraculous, different items of the same kind should more or less share the same properties. You would not get hung up about your failure to pluck an apple in season from a specific tree in an orchard. Move on – there are plenty more trees where that one came from. If an oak tree provided apples, however, it would be miraculous. There would be no expectation that some other nearby oak tree would also provide them.

This might explain Moshe's anger at the people. By claiming that any rock ought to be able to quench their thirst, they clearly were minimizing the miraculous nature of the water. They cut it down to smaller size, as if it were an expected and natural event. Moshe was deeply troubled by this attitude. He immediately corrected them. "Rebels! You speak of water in the wilderness as if it were a natural event for you! Don't you understand that Hashem provides you through clear miracles? Only one of these rocks was endowed with a miraculous capacity to produce water. Would you like me to bring water forth from this rock – to the exclusion of all others?"

Moshe was quite right in immediately zeroing in on this lesson. But it was also a mistake. If the people were downplaying the miraculous, he should have used the opportunity to showcase the miraculous. He should have asked them, "Which of these rocks would you like Hashem to transform into a flowing stream? Pick one, and He will do it!"

Analogous to this is a candidate for a rabbinic position who arrives for a tryout. He can give some great shiur, but he knows that this will prove little. With adequate prep time, many people can come up with a presentation, by "borrowing" one from some collection, or utilizing something they have heard elsewhere. Eager to establish his bona fides, the candidate challenges the crowd. "You name the topic; I will instantly come up with an edifying lecture. Just try me." That provides striking evidence of his scholarship.

Moshe should have acted similarly. He should have asked the crowd to decide on a particular rock, and brought forth water from it. That would have led to a far greater kiddush Hashem. The Torah faults him for not doing so.

The Alshich observes that the word hamin is used only three times in Tanach. Once occurs in our pasuk. Another is in Bereishis.[3] "Have you eaten from the tree (hamin ha-etz) of the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" The third is "If Hashem does not help you, how shall I help you? From (hamin) the threshing floor, or from the winepress?"

According to our approach, we can understand the connection. All three share the notion that a specific object has no special potential unless Hashem ordered it that way. Moshe makes this point about a water-giving rock. It had to be a specific rock, not any random one.

Ramban comments that from the very time of Creation, Hashem made certain plants appropriate for humans, and others for animals. In other words, without that designation, what we take for granted as human food would offer no sustenance and no pleasure to the person who eats them. When Adam and Chava ate from the etz ha-daas, G-d chides them. "Did you really think that you eating from that tree would give you any satisfaction? Did you not believe that unless I designated it for human consumption, it would offer you nothing at all? (Now, in fact the fruit of the etz ha-daas was delicious – but Hashem's point was that they properly should have assumed the opposite, and balked at eating it, regardless of its tempting appearance.)

When the king of Yisrael responded to the woman clamoring for food during the severe famine, he said, "Where is it supposed to come from? Do you still look to the threshing floor and the winepress? They are both empty. There is nothing special about either of those places, when they are devoid of contents. Unless they are blessed with the bounty they are expected to hold, they are no different from any other place."

Miracles do not work like a bank account, from which we can make withdrawals, and use the funds as we like. They are highly specific. Really, so are all of Hashem's brachos. Seeing them as fungible diminishes their value.