



TOERAH

חומש

במדבר

∞
TORAH

CHUMASH BEMIDBAR
The Book of Numbers

Parshat Korach

*A free excerpt from the Kehot Publication Society's
Chumash Bemidbar/Book of Numbers with commentary
based on the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe,
produced by Chabad of California.*

The full volume is available for purchase at www.kehot.com.

*For personal use only. All rights reserved.
The right to reproduce this book or portions thereof,
in any form, requires permission in writing from
Chabad of California, Inc.*

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe*

THE TORAH - CHUMASH BEMIDBAR

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Copyright © 2006-2009
by
Chabad of California

Second, revised printing 2009

A project of
Chabad of California

741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718
editor@kehot.com

Order Department:

291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof, in any form, without permission,
in writing, from Chabad of California, Inc.

The Kehot logo is a trademark
of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-8266-0193-3
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America



TORAH



חומש במדבר

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*
וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

CHUMASH BEMIDBAR
The Book of Numbers

Parshat Korach



Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213
5769/2009



GENESIS

Bereishit
Noach
Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot
Vayitzei
Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayeichi

EXODUS

Shemot
Vaeira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS

Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria
Metzora
Acharei Mot
Kedoshim
Emor
Behar
Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach

Korach 38 קרח

Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Teitzei
Tavo
Netzavim
Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



קֹרַח Korach

Overview

This *parashah* is named after its central character, Korach, Moses' first cousin. Not long after the events of the previous *parashah*, the episode of the spies and its aftermath, Korach led a rebellion against Moses' leadership. This *parashah* is devoted entirely to narrating this rebellion and God's reaction to it.

One of the curious aspects of this revolt is its timing. After all, Moses led the people out of Egypt over a year earlier. Certainly, if Korach and the other instigators of this mutiny had grievances against Moses there was ample time to voice them before this. Furthermore, God had just unquestionably endorsed Moses' leadership by supporting him against the arguments of the spies and refusing to aid any attempt at conquering the land without Moses' involvement. Now, of all times, would seem the least opportune to try to foment a rebellion against Moses.

In fact, however, it was not *despite* the events of the previous *parashah* that Korach chose to rebel now, but precisely *because* of them.

In essence, Korach disagreed with Moses' and Aaron's definition of the relationship between the layman and the priest, between the mundane and the holy aspects of creation. In Korach's view, the man on the street who spends the majority of his day in the mundane activities of life is just as holy as the priest whose entire day is spent in the Holy Temple.

Korach noted God's reaction to the spies' desire to remain in the desert. In the desert, the Jews lived a purely spiritual lifestyle, protected by the clouds of glory and nourished by the manna and the well. The spies did not wish to enter "a land that consumes its inhabitants" with its earthly distractions. Moses then made it clear that it was God's will that the Israelites should enter the land and make it holy. God wanted them to enter the mundane realities of a natural human existence even at the expense of losing the spiritual clarity and vision they enjoyed in the desert. To uplift the mundane was in fact the purpose of all of creation.

If so, argued Korach—and this is where he erred—why must the layman look up to the priest? Why must he look upon the portion of his produce that he sets aside for the priest as the apex of his labor? Why must he look upon the few hours during his day that he spends in priest-like activity—study and prayer—as the highlight of his day? Should they not be considered equal and separate activities, neither one better or holier than the other?

OVERVIEW OF KORACH

If anything, the simple Jew and his consecrated mundane life are holier than the priest and his, since it is he that fulfills God's purpose in creation.

The different roles of priest and layman, Korach insisted, are separate but equal. God desires them both, and who is to say that the priest's role is any holier than the layman's, that the layman needs spiritual nourishment from the priest?

Hence, Korach, who decried Aaron's "raising himself" above the congregation, wanted to become high priest himself in order to set things right. He wanted to redefine the status of high priest as being only *different* than the rest of the people, not better. "All of the congregation is holy, God is within them—so why do you raise yourselves above God's congregation?" And furthermore, why must the congregation "raise" itself and yearn to be like you even while involved in their mundane activities?

To this Moses answered: "In the morning, God will make known...." True, when the layman fulfills God's commandments in the most mundane aspects of life, he consummates God's desire for creation, a desire that the lofty activities of the priest cannot achieve. But even though he is told to enter the land and work it, he is also told to keep his eyes on the priest, on transcendence, on the perceptibly holy moments of his day, so that his life will be filled with light like the "morning," so that in performing God's commandments he enhances his awareness of God in his heart and mind.

So, from the spies we learn that God's goal for creation can only be realized when we enter the land, when Judaism is more than an intellectual or emotional affair and finds expressions in action. And from Korach we learn that the emphasis on deed should not translate into a dry and mechanical Judaism. Physical performance of the commandments energized by awareness and love of God shines with the light of morning.

After the rebellion had been quelled, God re-endorsed the distinction of the tribe of Levi and the priestly caste by summarizing the priests' and Levites' responsibilities toward the laymen and the laymen's dues they must give the Levites and priests. Although the thematic connection between this ratification and Korach's rebellion is clear, it still seems strange that it is placed in a *parashah* named after the person who challenged the justice of this distinction most vocally.

In light of what we have said, however, the inclusion of these marks of distinction under the title "Korach" is in fact appropriate. For all along, Korach yearned to be the high priest himself, to experience transcendence and the feeling of closeness to God. In this we must emulate Korach. Indeed, this is the central message of the *parashah*—to yearn for transcendence even while immersed in the mundane.¹

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 4, pp. 1048 ff; vol. 8, pp. 114 ff.

ONKELOS

16:1 ואתפּלג קרח בר יצְהר בר קהת בר לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אֱלִיאָב ואון בר פֶּלֶת בני ראובן; 2 וקמו לאפי משה וגבריא מבני ישראל מאתן וחמשין דברבי כנשתא מערעי זמן אגשין דשמא:

16:1 ויקח קרח בן יצְהר בן קהת בן לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אֱלִיאָב ואון בן פֶּלֶת בני ראובן; 2 וקמו לאפי משה ואנשים מבני ישראל חמשים ומאתים נשיאי עדה קראי מועד אנשי-שם:

RASHI

נשיאותו של אליצפן בן עזיאל, שמנהו משה נשיא על בני קהת על פי הדבור. אמר קרח: "אחי אבא ארבעה היו, שנאמר: 'ובני קהת וגו'". עמדם הבכור נטלו שני בניו גדלה: אחד מלך ואחד בהן גדול, מי ראוי לטל את השניה, לא אני, שאני בן יצְהר, שהוא שני לעמרם? והוא מנה נשיא את בן אחיו הקטן מכלם, הריני חולק עליו ומבטל את דבריו". מה עשה? עמד וכנס מאתים וחמשים ראשי סנהדראות, רבן משבט ראובן שכניו, והם אליצור בן שדיאור וחבריו וכיוצא בו — שנאמר: "נשיאי עדה קראי מועד", ולהלן הוא אומר: "אלה קראי העדה" — והלבישו טליתות שפקן תכלת. באו ועמדו לפני משה, אמרו לו: "טלית שפקלה של תכלת חקבת בציצית, או פטורה?" אמר להם: "חקבת". התחילו לשחק עליו: "אפשר טלית של מין אחר, חוט אחד של תכלת פוטרך, זו שפקלה תכלת לא תפטר את עצמך?": **בני ראובן.** דתן ואבירם ואון בן פֶּלֶת:

1 ויקח קרח. פרשה זו יפה נדרשת במדרש רבי תנחומא: ויקח קרח. לקח את עצמו לצד אחד להיות נחלק מתוך העדה לעורר על הנהגה, וזהו שתרגם אנקלוס: "ואתפּלג" — נחלק משאר העדה להחזיק במחלוקת. וכן: "מה יקחה לכה", לוקח אותה להפליגה משאר בני אדם. דבר אחר: "ויקח קרח", משך ראשי סנהדראות שבהם בדברים, כמו שנאמר: "קח את אהרן", "קחו עמכם דברים" — **בן יצְהר בן קהת בן לוי.** ולא הזכיר "בן יעקב", שבקש רחמים על עצמו, שלא יזכר שמו על מחלוקתם, שנאמר: "בקהלם אל תחד כבדי". והיכן נזכר שמו על קרח? בהתייחס על הדיוכן בדברי הימים, שנאמר: "בן אביסף, בן קרח, בן יצְהר, בן קהת, בן לוי, בן ישראל". **ודתן ואבירם.** בשביל שהיה שבט ראובן שרוי בחנייתם תימנה, שכן לקהת ובניו החונים תימנה, נשתתפו עם קרח במחלוקתו — "אוי לרשע, אוי לשכנו". ומה ראה קרח לחלק עם משה? נתקנא על

1. איוב טו, יב. 2. במדבר כ, כה. 3. הושע יד, ג. 4. בראשית מט, ו. 5. דב"ח"ו, כביכ. 6. שמות ו, יח. 7. במדבר א, טו.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

the world has no need to aspire to moments of "re-connection" to spirituality. This is reflected in the *chet* of his name.

Continuing this line of thought, he reasoned that since fulfilling God's purpose by bringing Divine consciousness into the physical world has its own intrinsic value and need not be refreshed by purely spiritual moments, it follows that if we are involved in this mission, there are no limits to how much of our lives and what aspects of our lives we engage in this pursuit. This is reflected in the *kuf* of his name.

When Moses told him that this is not the case, that spiritual pursuits and the Divine consciousness they provide are superior to the performance of the commandments—because the renewed inspiration they provide ensure that we remain true to our ideals—Korach countered, "if so, then let there be no need for fulfilling the commandments altogether." This is reflected in the *reish* of his name.

These three conclusions were expressed in the three arguments he presented to Moses:

- *Chet*: "You take too much upon yourselves"—he argued against the exclusivity of the high priesthood, since he felt that there is no need for a spiritual elite that affords the common man an opportunity to renew his inspiration.
- *Kuf*: A robe dyed with blue dye (*techelet*) does not require tassels. The *talit* signifies the commandments, and the *techelet* signifies self-effacement in Divine consciousness. If a person's performance of the commandments is already suffused with Divine consciousness, what need is there for time off to renew this Divine consciousness?
- *Reish*: Korach also argued that a house full of Torah scrolls should be exempt from a *mezuzah*. If Torah study is superior and a person is full of Torah, what need is there of commandments?⁹

And On, the son of Pelet: Korach, besides being a member of one of the Jewish people's most distinguished families, was also learned, wise, wealthy, and among the inner circle of Moses' and Aaron's closest confidants.

9. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 8, pp. 108 ff.

The Rebellion

16:1 After the episode of the spies, **Korach** figuratively **betook** himself aside, breaking away from Moses' authority. Korach's lineage was impressive: he was Moses' first cousin, **the eldest son of Yitzhar**, who was **the second son of Kehat** (after Amram), who was in turn **the second son of Levi**.¹ His lineage back to Jacob is not mentioned here because Jacob prophetically saw that this rebellion would occur and prayed that his name not be mentioned in it.² Korach felt that since the two sons of Amram (Moses and Aaron) assumed the highest offices of the people (leader and high priest), he should be the next in line for honor, since he was the son of Amram's next brother in line, Yitzhar. When Moses, acting on God's orders, appointed a son of Uziel, Amram's *youngest* brother, to the position of prince of the Kehat clan,³ Korach was incensed. He led his rebellion with his own sons,⁴ **together with his neighbors Dathan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav,⁵ and On the son of Pelet**. The latter three were all **descendants of Reuben**, who camped south of the Tabernacle,⁶ next to the clan of Kehat, who also camped south of the Tabernacle.⁷

2 They confronted Moses together with 250 men from the Israelites. The group included the 12 **princes of the congregation, summoned for the assembly**, but it was made up chiefly of the heads of the courts, **men of repute**, most of whom were from the tribe of Reuben.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

1 Korach: The three Hebrew letters that spell *Korach* are similar to the letter *hei*, but each in a slightly different way. The *hei* (ה) is composed of three strokes: one to the right, another on top, and a shorter one to the left that is disconnected from the other two. In the first letter of *Korach* (*kuf*, כ), the left stroke is drawn further down, continuing past the bottom of the line. In the second letter (*reish*, ר), there is no stroke on the left at all. In the third letter (*chet*, ח), the left stroke is equal to the other two, leaving no space between it and the top stroke.

These three deviations from the letter *hei* in the name Korach are a reflection of his mistakes. As explained in the overview, Korach did not appreciate the proper balance and synthesis that is supposed to exist between the physical and the spiritual. This balance and synthesis is alluded to by the form of the *hei*; Korach's distorted approach to this balance is reflected in the three distortions of the *hei* that make up his name.

We are taught that the three strokes of the *hei* allude to our three means of expression: the top stroke alludes to thought, the right stroke to speech, and the left stroke to action.⁸ In terms of our relationship with God, these three modes of expression are (1) thinking about the ideas of the Torah, (2) articulating them, and (3) actively performing the Torah's commandments. The fact that the left stroke of the

hei is present altogether alludes to the necessity of action; the fact that it does not descend below the line indicates that active involvement in the physical world must not extend into realms not mandated by the Torah; and the fact that it is disconnected from the other two strokes indicates that when we are engaged in action, we must realize we are thereby disconnected from the world of Torah study and must yearn to return to it.

The extended left stroke of the *kuf*, in contrast, expresses the sentiment that action has its own, independent merits, and can therefore venture into realms of life the Torah would define as off-limits. On the other hand, the absence of the left stroke in the *reish* expresses a disdain for action altogether. The connection of the left stroke to the other two in the *chet* expresses the feeling that involvement in the world of action does not adversely affect our consciousness, and that we therefore need not entertain any desire to refresh our inspiration with pauses for Torah study.

As stated above, Korach inferred from the incident of the spies—in which God affirmed that the purpose of creation is for us to make a home for Him in this world of physical action—that there is no intrinsic superiority of Torah study over the performance of the commandments, and that a person to whom Providence assigns the task of working in

1. Exodus 6:21. 2. See Genesis 49:6. 3. Above, 3:30. 4. Below, on 26:11. 5. Below, 26:8. 6. Above, 2:10. 7. Above, 3:29. 8. *Torah Or* 95b, et al.

ONKELOS

3 וַתִּכְנָשׁוּ עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהֶוּן סָגִי לָכֵן אָרִי כָל
כְּנֻשָׁתָא בְּלָהֶוּן קְדִישִׁין וּבִינֵיהֶוּן
שְׂרָיָא שְׂכִינָתָא דִּי וּמָא דִּין אַתּוּן
מִתְרַבְּרִין עַל קַהֲלָא דִּי: 4 וְשָׁמַע
מֹשֶׁה וּנְפֵל עַל אַפּוּהֵי:

3 וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֵיהֶם רַב־לָכֶם פִּי
כָל־הָעֵדָה כָּלֶם קְדִישִׁים וּבְתוֹכֶם יְהוָה וּמִדַּע הַתַּתְּנִישָׂאוּ
עַל־קַהֲלֵי יְהוָה: 4 וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו:

RASHI

בַּעֲגָל — “וַיִּחַל מֹשֶׁה”¹⁰. בְּמִתְאוֹנְנִים — “וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל מֹשֶׁה”¹⁰.
בְּמִרְגָּלִים — “וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֵל ה’ וְשָׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם”¹¹.
בְּמַחְלָקָתוֹ שֶׁל קִרְחַן נִתְרַשְׁלוּ יְדֵיו. מִשָּׁל לָכֵן מָלַךְ שְׂפָרַח
עַל אֲבָיו וּפָּיֵס עָלָיו אוֹהֵבוֹ פַּעַם וּשְׂתִימִים וְשָׁלַשׁ, כְּשִׁפְרָח
רְבִיעִית — נִתְרַשְׁלוּ יְדֵי הָאוֹהֵב הַהוּא, אָמַר: “עַד מָתִי
אֶטְרִיחַ עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ, שָׁמָּא לֹא יִקְבַּל עוֹד מִמֶּנִּי”:

3 רַב לָכֶם. הַרְבֵּה יוֹתֵר מִדָּאִי לְקַחְתֶּם לְעַצְמְכֶם גְּדֻלָּה:
כָּלֶם קְדִישִׁים. כָּלֶם שָׁמְעוּ דְּכָרִים בְּסִינֵי מִפֵּי הַגְּבוּרָה:
וּמִדַּע הַתַּתְּנִישָׂאוּ. אִם לְקַחְתָּ אֶתְהָ מַלְכוּת, לֹא הִיָּה לָךְ
לְבָרֵךְ לְאַחִיךָ כְּהֵנָּה, לֹא אַתָּם לְבַדְכֶם שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּסִינֵי
”אֲנֹכִי ה’ אֱלֹהֵיךָ”¹², כָּל הָעֵדָה שָׁמְעוּ: 4 וַיִּפֹּל עַל פָּנָיו.
מִפְּנֵי הַמַּחְלָקָת, שֶׁכָּבַר זֶה בְּדָם סָרְחוֹן רְבִיעִי: חֲטָאוּ

8. שמות כ, ב. 9. שמות לב, יא. 10. במדבר יא, ב. 11. במדבר יז, יג.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

Sinai.¹³ Furthermore, God had promised Moses that “they will believe in you forever!”¹⁴ (Only Moses, in his immense humility, assumed that their rebellion stemmed from their lack of belief in him.)¹⁵

But although they trusted that Moses spoke the word of God, they believed that certain aspects of God’s instructions were subject to change. They had seen God “change His mind” when Moses prayed for his people after the sins of the Golden Calf and the spies. Indeed, the priesthood itself had originally been the domain of the firstborn and was later transferred to the descendants of Aaron. Hence, they felt that changes could be made regarding Aaron’s status, especially since, unlike the Levites, Aaron had been involved in the sin of the Golden Calf.¹⁶

Against Moses and against Aaron: The sages labeled Korach and his faction as the archetype of strife and conflict. “What is a controversy...that is not for the sake of Heaven? It is [one like] the controversy of Korach and his whole faction.”¹⁷

The sages here do not describe this controversy as one between Korach and Moses. Indeed, Moses did not quarrel with them; “they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.” The sages rather imply that the controversy raged between “Korach and his whole faction,” that is, between themselves. An endeavor against God (or Moses) always becomes strife-ridden, for it attacks the essence of unity and seeks selfish concerns and personal gratification.

Korach felt that it is enough to acquire spirituality. Once all the books are sitting on our shelves and we have become knowledgeable and well-read, there is no need for anything more. The *mezuzah* is no longer necessary.

Moses insisted, however, that a *mezuzah* is still needed. The *mezuzah* contains the first two passages of the *Shema*. The first passage describes the requirement to constantly remember, wherever one may be, that everything is God’s—that God is always in control. The second describes the result of the first: a complete adherence to all of God’s commandments and directions.

We affix the *mezuzah* in the doorway between the home and the street. In this way, the teachings of the Torah are not confined to the dusty bookshelf. Our declaration of devotion to the Torah’s teachings accompanies us out into the world and becomes a part of our everyday lives.

It is not enough to be filled with holy books, ideas, and thoughts. We must affix a *mezuzah* upon the “gates” of our minds and hearts, reminding us to live up to our ideals, motivated by the threefold love of God, the Torah, and our fellow Jew. This love must permeate all that we do, so that it is immediately noticeable that we are people with *mezuzah*’s on our “doors.” When this *mezuzah* is in place, we are assured of the blessings contained further in that same passage: i.e., that God will provide all our physical and spiritual needs.¹⁸

So why do you raise yourselves above God’s community? Although every society has leaders who assume more responsibility and have more privileges than the rest of the people, Korach claimed that the generation of the desert, the “generation of knowledge,” was different. Having all witnessed God’s miracles and the revelation at Mount Sinai, they were all of a very lofty spiritual nature, above the need for a leader like Moses. In this, Korach erred.¹⁹

13. See *Mishneh Torah, Yesodei HaTorah* 8:1. 14. Exodus 19:9. 15. See below, verse 28. Despite God’s guarantee to the contrary, Moses thought—as Jacob did (Rashi on Genesis 32:11)—that he was not protected by God’s guarantee because of his perceived sins. 16. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 18, pp. 188-189. 17. *Avot* 5:17. 18. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 4, pp. 1316-1318; vol. 13, pp. 203-204. 19. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, p. 329.

3 They all assembled against Moses and Aaron, dressed in wool robes dyed with *techelet* and asked if such a garment requires tassels. Moses answered in the affirmative. They mocked this answer, saying that if attaching a tassel with a single thread of *techelet* to a garment not dyed with *techelet* makes the garment permissible, shouldn't a garment made itself of wool dyed with *techelet* be permitted to be worn without a tassel? By this, they meant to imply that since all the people are holy, there is no need for special leaders. **They said to Moses and Aaron, "You take too much honor upon yourselves, for the entire congregation is all holy, as evidenced by the fact that they all heard God's voice at Mount Sinai, and God is in their midst. So why do you raise yourselves above God's community?"**

4 When Moses heard this, he fell on his face. When the people committed the sins of the Golden Calf and the spies' rebellion, God had threatened to wipe the people out and Moses had interceded successfully on their behalf. When they complained at Taveirah, God had actually started to burn up the people in order to prevent the rebellion from spreading, but the offenders quickly repented and Moses could then pray to God to halt the flames. Now, however, Moses was afraid that Korach's rebellion would spread and God would threaten to wipe out the people, or that God would punish the offenders in order to prevent the rebellion from spreading. But this time, he was at a loss as to how to convince God to forgive them. At the sins of the Golden Calf and the spies, he had argued that wiping out the whole people would lead to God's disrepute, but here, Korach's rebellion had not yet spread to the whole people. At Taveirah, the offenders had repented, so Moses could pray for them, but here, they had not. God, however, told Moses that in this case, it was possible to conduct a test that would demonstrate the error of Korach and his followers and to punish only *them*.

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

On, the son of Pelet, by contrast, was not at all exceptional. His appearance here is the only time he is mentioned in Jewish history. Both his intellectual capabilities and his lineage were quite ordinary.

Yet, both their fates took an unexpected turn, each leading to just the opposite of where logic would have predicted. Korach came to a bad end and dragged hundreds of other people down with him. On, on the other hand, was the only one of Korach's entire assembly who was saved and emerged completely unscathed.

What was the difference? The behavior of their wives!

We are told in the Midrash¹⁰ that On's wife attempted to dissuade him. "What are you getting involved for?" she asked. "What difference does it make to you? If Aaron is the high priest you will be a student, and if Korach becomes the high priest you will still be a student." Since her arguments did not dissuade him, she gave him wine until he was

drunk, and put him to bed. Then she sat, together with her daughter, at the opening of their tent with her hair uncovered. When Korach and his friends came to call On, they saw her and turned away, and so On was saved.

So On's wife saved him and their entire family, albeit only in the final hours. Korach's wife, on the other hand, encouraged him in his rebellion and thus led to the downfall of her husband and all of his followers.

This demonstrates the great responsibility of the wife and mother in every home. Her own destiny, her husband's, and her entire family's is entirely in her hands.¹¹

3 And Aaron: It appears that Korach himself wished to replace Aaron as high priest, while his followers wished to be high priests in addition to Aaron.¹²

They did not doubt that all that Moses had instructed came from God. After all, they had seen with their own eyes that God spoke to him at Mt.

10. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 18:20. 11. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, pp. 689-690. 12. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 18, p. 190; see Rashi; cf. *Panim Yafot* 16:1.

ONKELOS

5 ומליל עם קרח ועם כל בנשתיא למימרי בצפרא ויהודע?? ית דכשר לה ית דקדיש ויקרב לקדמוהי וית דיתרעי בה יקרב לשמושה: 6 דא עבידו סבו לכוון מחתין קרח וכל בנשתיא: 7 והבו בהן אשא ושויו עליהן קטרת בסמין קדם?? מחר ויהי גברא דיתרעי?? הוא דקדיש סגי לכוון בני לוי: 8 ואמר משה לקרח שמעו כען בני לוי: 9 הוצר לכוון ארי אפרש אלהא דישראל יתכוון מבנשתיא דישראל לקרבא יתכוון קדמוהי למפלא ית פלחן משכנא דיי ולמקם קדם בנשתיא לשמשותהון:

5 וַיִּדְבֹר אֶל-קָרַח וְאֶל-כָּל-עֲדַתוֹ לֵאמֹר בִּקֶּר וַיֵּדַע יְהוָה אֶת-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ וְאֶת-הַקְּדוֹשׁ וְהַקְּרִיב אֵלָיו וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר-בוּ יִקְרִיב אֵלָיו: 6 וְאֵת עֲשׂוֹ קְחוּ-לָכֶם מַחְתֹּת קָרַח וְכָל-עֲדַתוֹ: 7 וּתְנוּ-בָהֶן אֵשׁ וְשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן אֶת-קַטְרֵת הַלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה מִחֵר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה הוּא הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַב-לָכֶם בְּנֵי לְוִי: 8 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-קָרַח שְׁמַעוּנָא בְנֵי לְוִי: 9 הֲמַעַט מִכֶּם כִּי-יִבְדֹּל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעַדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַקְרִיב אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו לְעַבֹד אֶת-עַבְדַת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְלַעֲמֹד לְפָנֵי הָעֵדָה לְשִׁרְתָם:

RASHI

גחלים ויש להם בית יד: 7 רב לכם בני לוי. דבך גדול אמרתי לכם. ולא טפשים היו, שפך התרה בהם וקבלו עליהם לקרב? אלא הם חטאו על נפשותם, שגאמרו: "את מחתות החטאים האלה בנפשתם". וקרח שפך היה, מה ראה לשטות זה? עינו הטעתו, ראה שלשלת גדולה יוצאה ממנו, שמואל ששקול כנגד משה ואהרן, אמר: "בשבילו אני נמלט". ועשרים וארבע משמרות עומדות לבני בניו, כלם מתנבאים ברוח הקדש, שגאמרו: "כל אלה בנים להימין". אמר: "אפשר כל הגדלה הזאת עתידה לעמד ממני ואני אדם?" לכך נשתתף לבא לאותה חוקה ששמע מפי משה שכלם אובדים ואחד נמלט, "אשר יבחר ה' הוא הקדוש", טעה ותלה בעצמו. ולא ראה פה, לפי שבניו עשו תשובה, ומשה היה רואה. תנחומא: רב לכם. דבך גדול נטלתם בעצמכם לחלק על הקדוש ברוך הוא: 8 ויאמר משה אל קרח שמעו נא בני לוי. התחיל לדבר עמו דברים רבים. כיון שראוהו קשה ערף, אמר: "עד שלא ישתתפו שאר השבטים ויאבדו עמו אדרב גס אל כלם", התחיל לרוץ בהם: "שמעו נא בני לוי": 9 ולעמד לפני העדה. לשיר על הדוכן:

5 בקר וידע וגו'. עתה עת שכרות היא לנו, ולא נכון להראות לפניו. והוא היה מתכוון לחחותם, שמא יחזרו בהם: בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו. לעבודת לוי: ואת הקדוש. לכהנה: והקריב. אותם אליו, והתרגום מוכיח כן: ויקרב לקדמוהי, "יקרב לשמושה". ומדרשו: "בקר", אמר להם משה: "גבולות חלק הקדוש ברוך הוא בעולמו, יכולים אתם להפך בקר לערב? כן תוכלו לבטל את זו, שגאמרו: ויהי ערב ויהי בקר ויבדל", כה: ויבדל אהרן להקדישו וגו'": 6 זאת עשו קחו לכם מחתות. מה ראה לומר להם כה? אמר להם: "בדרכי הגוים יש נימוסים הרבה וכמרים הרבה, ואין כלם מתקבצים בבית אחד. אנו אין לנו אלא ה' אחד, ארון אחד, ותורה אחת, ומזבח אחד, וכהן גדול אחד, ואתם מאתים וחמשים איש מבקשים כהנה גדולה? אף אני רוצה ככה. הא לכם תשמיש חביב מכל, היא הקטרת החביבה מכל הקרבנות, וסם המנות נתון בתוכו שבו נשרפו נדב ואביהוא". לפיכך התרה בהם: "והיה האיש אשר יבחר ה' הוא הקדוש", כבר הוא בקדשתו. וכי אין אנו יודעים, שמי שיבחר הוא הקדוש? אלא, אמר להם משה: "הריני אומר לכם, שלא תתחילו, מי שיבחר בו יצא חי וכלכם אובדים": מחתות. כלים שחותרין בהם

12. תנחומא. 13. בראשית א, ה. 14. דב"א כג, יג. 15. דב"א כה, ה.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

pur service in the Holy of Holies.²³ Even with the knowledge that their predecessors had died, they were impelled by their great desire to become high priests in order to experience the sublime.

Where did this yearning come from? The answer can be found in Korach's original words: "for the entire congregation are all holy, as evidenced by the fact that they all heard God's voice at Mt. Sinai. So

why do raise yourselves above God's community?" At Mount Sinai, God gave all the people the title of "kingdom of priests";²⁴ at that moment, every one of them was on the level of the high priest.²⁵ It was there that they acquired a taste of that sublimity and learned to crave such a state. Indeed, every soul that was present at Sinai should crave to relive those moments.²⁶

23. Yoma 9a. 24. Exodus 19:6. 25. Ba'al HaTurim ad loc. 26. Likutei Sichot, vol. 18, pp. 190-191.

5 So Moses stood up and **spoke to Korach and to all his company, saying**, “Right now, everyone is too excited. God has instructed me to conduct a test, which we will perform **in the morning, and** through this test **God will make it known who are** to act as the Levites, **His servants, and who** He has made **holy** enough to act as priests, and **He will draw** these two groups **near to Him. He will allow only the one He chooses**, the priests, **to sacrifice to Him.**” Moses put off the trial until the morning hoping that Korach and his people would reconsider in the meantime. He also hinted to them that God’s division between the Levites, the priesthood, and the laity was as fixed as His division between day and night, and they had as little chance of obliterating the former as they had of obliterating the latter.

6 Moses declared, “It is very noble to want to be a high priest; I would also like to be a high priest. But this cannot be, for unlike the pagans, who recognize many forces at work in the world and designate many priests, rites, and temples to serve them, our nation serves the one God as one body, and therefore requires only one high priest. Therefore, perform the following test, as God has instructed me. **Do this, Korach and company:** go and play the part of priests. **Take for yourselves censers,**

7 place fire into them, and put incense upon them before God tomorrow. Although the incense is the most sublime of the Temple rites,²⁰ it is also potentially lethal—Nadav and Avihu were in fact killed by unauthorized use of it²¹—so I am therefore warning you: since you are in error, you may expect the same fate. **The man whom God will choose is Aaron**, who is already **the holy one**, and he will remain alive, not you. I have given **you a serious warning, sons of Levi, and you have taken too great a responsibility upon yourselves.**” But despite Moses’ established credibility, the rebels did not heed his warning. Korach thought he would survive no matter what, because he saw prophetically that he would have illustrious descendants. This prophecy was indeed correct, but only because his sons, who at that point were on his side, subsequently repented and thus preserved his line.

8 **Moses** therefore tried to reason with Korach, addressing him in a conciliatory manner. He **said to Korach, “Please listen,”** but Korach refused to listen, so before the rebellion spread any further, Moses addressed the entire tribe of Levi. He said, “Listen, **sons of Levi!**

9 **Is it not enough that the God of Israel has distinguished you from the congregation of Israel to draw you near to Him, to perform the service in the Tabernacle of God, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them** by singing while the sacrifices are being offered?”

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

6-10 **Then the man whom God chooses, he shall be the holy one:** but the rest would die, since unauthorized use of the incense would cause death, as the Israelites had seen in the case of the two sons of Aaron.²² Still, Korach’s band took up the challenge—not because they thought they would live, but be-

cause they wished to experience the lofty service of the high priest even at the cost of their own lives.

This phenomenon reoccurred during the era of the second Temple. Dozens of unworthy individuals lost their lives because they bought off the office of the high priest and performed the Yom Kip-

20. See Overview to *parashat Tetzaveh*. 21. Leviticus 10:2. 22. Leviticus 10.

10 Addressing Korach, he said, “**He drew you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you,** to the distinction from which He excluded the rest of the people,” and addressing the entire tribe, he continued, “**shall you all now seek the priesthood as well?**”

11 Speaking again to Korach, Moses concluded, “**Therefore,** for all these reasons, **you and your entire company who are assembled** with you **are** rebelling not against me but **against God,** for it is by His word that I have given the priesthood to Aaron and his descendants. **What is Aaron, that you should complain against him?**”

12 Having addressed Korach, **Moses sent to call Dathan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav,** to conciliate them. (On, the son of Pelet, although one of the original instigators, had by now repented.) **But Dathan and Aviram said, “We will not go up.”** Unwittingly, they prophesied their own doom, for indeed, as shall be described further on, they died by falling into the depths of the earth.

13 They continued, “**Is it not enough that you** promised to bring us into a land flowing with milk and honey, but in fact **have brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey,** i.e., Egypt, **to kill us in the desert, that you should also exercise authority over us?**”

- ◆ *Second Reading* 14 Not only have you taken us out of a luxurious land, **you have also not brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards,** as you promised. **Even if you send someone to gouge out the eyes of those men** [—euphemistically meaning, ‘our eyes’—] **we will not go up.”**

15 After these discussions, it became clear to Moses that the 250 rebels were not merely aspiring to the high priesthood, as he originally thought, but that they were rebelling, like Korach, against Moses’ leadership and Aaron’s appointment. Had they been merely aspiring to the high priesthood, the incense test would have been enough to silence their arguments. But now that it became clear that they were contesting Moses’ leadership and Aaron’s appointment as high priest, **Moses became exceedingly distressed, and he said to God, “Do not regard the offering** they are going to offer tomorrow morning at all—do not consider it a sacrificial rite, and therefore do not punish them for offering it. They are not simply aspiring to the high priesthood: they are rebelling against Your directives in general. Therefore, do not even consume their portion in the daily communal sacrifices. Punish them in a way that will demonstrate that they are being punished for rebelling against the authority You have vested in me. How can they accuse me of abusing my office? **I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them,** not even reimbursement for the donkey I used for my wife and children when I returned to Egypt on behalf of the people. **And I have not harmed a single one of them.”** God agreed to Moses’ request not to consider the rebels’ incense a sacrificial rite that would make them liable to the death penalty. It would only serve as a test that would demonstrate who indeed is a true priest and who is not.²⁷

27. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 33, pp. 105-111.

— ONKELOS —

18 וניסבו גבר מחיתתה ויהבו עליהון אִשָּׁא וְשׂוֹאוּ עֲלֵיהוֹן קטרת בְּסִמִּין וְקָמוּ בְּתַרְע מִשְׁפָּן זְמַנָּא וּמִשָּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן: 19 וְאֶבְנֵשׁ עֲלֵיהוֹן קֶרַח ית כָּל בְּנֵשְׁתָּא לְתַרְע מִשְׁפָּן זְמַנָּא וְאַתְגְּלִי יְקָרָא דִּי לְכָל בְּנֵשְׁתָּא: 20 וּמְלִיל יי עם מִשָּׁה וְעַם אַהֲרֹן לְמִימְרֵי: 21 אֲתַפְּרִשׁוּ מִגּוּ בְּנֵשְׁתָּא הֲדָא וְאַשְׁיִצִי יְתֵהוֹן בְּשַׁעֲדָה: 22 וּנְפְלוּ עַל אֶפִּיָהוֹן וְאַמְרוּ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי רוּחֵינָא לְכָל בְּשָׂרָא גְבֻרָא חַד יְחֹבֵב וְעַל כָּל בְּנֵשְׁתָּא יְהִי רְגֹזָא: 23 וּמְלִיל יי עם מִשָּׁה לְמִימְרֵי: 24 מְלִיל עַם בְּנֵשְׁתָּא לְמִימְרֵי אֶסְתַּלְקוּ מִסְחֹרֵי סְחֹרֵי לְמִשְׁבְּנָא דְקֶרַח דְתַן וְאַבִּירִים: 25 וְקַם מִשָּׁה וְאַזְלוּ לֹת וְתַן וְאַבִּירִים וְאַזְלוּ בְּתִרְוּחֵי סְבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 26 וּמְלִיל עַם בְּנֵשְׁתָּא לְמִימְרֵי זִוְרוּ כְעַן מַעֲלֵי מִשְׁבְּנֵי גְבֻרָא חִיבִיא הָאֵלִין וְלֹא תִקְרְבוּן בְּכָל דִּי לְהוֹן דְלִמָּא תִלְקֹן בְּכָל חֻבִּיָּהוֹן: 27 וְאַסְתַּלְקוּ מַעֲלֵי מִשְׁבְּנָא דְקֶרַח דְתַן וְאַבִּירִים מִסְחֹרֵי סְחֹרֵי וְתַן וְאַבִּירִים נִפְקוּ קְרָמִין בְּתַרְע מִשְׁבְּנֵיהוֹן וּנְשִׁיָּהוֹן וּבְנֵיהוֹן וְטַפְלֵיהוֹן:

18 וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִחֵתָתוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עֲלֵיהֶם קִטְרֶת וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּמִשָּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן: 19 וַיִּקְהַל עֲלֵיהֶם לְקַרֵּחַ אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־הָעֵדָה: 20

שְׁלִישִׁי 20 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: 21 הַבְּדִלּוּ מֵתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאַכְלֶהָ אֶתֶּם בְּרַגְעַ: 22 וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יִחַטָּא וְעַל כָּל־הָעֵדָה תִּקְצָף: 23 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 24 דַּבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר הֲעֵלוּ מִסְבֵּיב לְמִשְׁפַּחַת קֶרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם: 25 וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרָיו וְקָנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 26 וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר סוּרוּ זָא מַעַל אֶהְיִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַרְשָׁעִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאַל־תִּגְעוּ בְּכָל־אִשֶּׁר לָהֶם פֶּן־תִּסְפּוּ בְּכָל־חַטָּאתָם: 27 וַיַּעֲלוּ מַעַל מִשְׁפַּחַת קֶרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם מִסְבֵּיב וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם יֵצְאוּ נֹצְצִים פֶּתַח אֹהֲלֵיהֶם וּנְשִׁיָּהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם:

— RASHI —

וְאֵתָה עַל כָּל הָעֵדָה תִּקְצָף? אָמַר הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: "יָפָה אֲמַרְתָּ, אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ וּמוֹדִיעַ מִי חָטָא וּמִי לֹא חָטָא": 24 הֲעֵלוּ וְגו'. בְּתַרְגוּמוֹ: "אֶסְתַּלְקוּ" מִסְבִּיבוֹת מִשְׁפָּן קֶרַח: 25 וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה. כְּסֹבֵר שִׂישָׂאוּ לוֹ פְּנִים, וְלֹא עָשׂוּ: 27 יֵצְאוּ נֹצְצִים. בְּקוּמָה וְקוּפָה, לְחַרֵּךְ וּלְגַדֵּף, כְּמוֹ: "וַיִּתְּצַב אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם" דְּגִלְתָּ: וּנְשִׁיָּהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם. בֹּא וּרְאֵה כְּמָה קֶשֶׁה הַמַּחְלֶקֶת: שֶׁהָרִי בֵּית דִּין שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה אֵין עוֹנֵשִׁין אֶלְּא עַד שֶׁיָּבִיא שְׁתֵּי שְׁעָרוֹת, וּבֵית דִּין שֶׁל מַעֲלָה עַד עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה, וְכֵאן אֶבְדוּ אֵף יוֹנְקֵי שְׂדִים:

19 וַיִּקְהַל עֲלֵיהֶם קֶרַח. בְּדַבְרֵי לְצַנּוּת. כָּל הַלְלָה הַהוּא הֵלֶךְ אֶצְל הַשְּׂבָטִים וּפְתָה אוֹתָם: "כְּסֹבֵרִין אַתֶּם שְׁעָלֵי לְבָדֵי אֲנִי מִקְפִּיד? אֵינִי מִקְפִּיד אֲלֵא בְּשִׁבִיל כְּלָכֶם, אֵלּוּ בְּאֵין וְנוֹטְלִין כָּל הַגְּדֻלוֹת — לוֹ הַמְּלָכוֹת, וְלֹאֲחִיו הַכְּהֻנָּה", עַד שֶׁנִּתְּפַתוּ כָּלֶם: וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד ה', בֹּא בְעַמּוּד עָנָן: 22 אֵל אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת. יוֹדֵעַ מַחְשְׁבוֹת. אֵין מִדְתָּךְ כְּמִדַּת בָּשָׂר וְדָם: מִלֶּךְ בָּשָׂר וְדָם שֶׁסְרָחָה עָלָיו מִקְצַת מִדִּינָה, אֵינִי יוֹדֵעַ מִי הַחוּטָא, לְפִיכָךְ כְּשֶׁהוּא כּוֹעֵס נִפְרַע מִכָּלֶם, אֶבֶל אַתָּה לְפָנֶיךָ גְּלוּיּוֹת כָּל הַמַּחְשְׁבוֹת וַיּוֹדֵעַ אַתָּה מִי הַחוּטָא: הָאִישׁ אֶחָד. הוּא הַחוּטָא,

19. שמואלא ז', טו.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

25 He took an impressive entourage with him... hoping this would encourage them to defer: Dathan and Aviram had openly demonstrated their animosity toward Moses, charging him with being a despot and an imposter. Moreover, God Himself had already sealed their punishment, instructing Moses only to save the others from their impending fate. Still, Moses did not give up hope that his "enemies" would repent, and did whatever he could to

influence them to reconsider.

We must learn from Moses' attitude and always do whatever we can save our brethren's lives and bring them back to the fold—even when it seems that all hope is lost. This applies even when our brethren are acting as if they are our "enemies," and all the more so when they are acting simply out of ignorance.³¹

31. Likutei Sichot, vol. 28, pp. 102-103.

18 So, the following morning, each man took his censer, and they put fire upon it and placed incense upon it, and they stood at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron.

19 Korach assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the whole night he had circulated among the people, convincing them that he was acting on their behalf, as well. Korach and the 250 men offered their incense, and Aaron offered his. As Moses had requested, God did not respond now to this unauthorized offering. At some point during the rebellion, Korach's sons regretted their involvement, but nonetheless continued to participate in it.²⁸ At this point, **the glory of God appeared before the entire congregation** in the form of a pillar of cloud.

◆ *Third Reading* 20 Since Korach had enticed the entire people to take his side, **God spoke to Moses and Aaron saying,**

21 “Dissociate yourselves from this congregation, and I will consume them in an instant.”

22 They fell on their faces and said, “O God, the God who knows the spirits of all flesh, and can probe everyone's thoughts: if one man sins, shall You be angry with the whole congregation? A mortal king has to punish all his subjects if he does not know which of them sinned against him. You, however, know exactly which of Your subjects sinned—Korach, who instigated all this—and which ones were merely swept along by the spirit of the moment—everyone else. Why should you wipe out everyone?”

23 God accepted this argument. He spoke to Moses, saying,

24 “You are right that those who were swept up by the instigators' rhetoric should not suffer as severe a punishment as the instigator himself should. But you are wrong in thinking that only Korach was an instigator. **Speak to the congregation saying, ‘Withdraw from the dwellings of all three instigators: Korach, Dathan, and Aviram.’**”²⁹

25 After the cloud departed, the crowd dispersed and everyone went back to their tents. Moses, following God's instructions, went to Korach's tent, which was in the Levite camp, not far from the Tent of Meeting, and told everyone nearby to withdraw. He then **arose and went to the tents of Dathan and Aviram**, which were much further away, in the camp of Reuben, in order to warn everyone near them to withdraw from their vicinity, as well. He took an impressive entourage with him—the elders of Israel followed him—hoping this would encourage Dathan and Aviram to defer.³⁰

26 But Dathan and Aviram remained adamant, so Moses spoke to the congregation saying, “Please get away from the tents of these wicked men, and do not touch anything of theirs, lest you perish in the debacle that is about to befall them because of all their sins.”

27 So most of the people withdrew from around the dwellings of Korach, Dathan, and Aviram, indicating that they had abandoned Korach and returned to follow Moses. **But Dathan and Aviram came out of their tents, standing defiantly upright at the entrance of their tents, together with their wives, their children, and their infants.**

28. Below, on 26:11. 29. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 13, pp. 51-55. 30. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, pp. 98-102.

— ONKELOS —

28 ואמר משה בְּדֵא תִדְעוּן אָרִי
 יי שלחני למעבד ית כל עובדיא
 האלין ארי לא מרעותי: 29 אם
 כמותא דכל אנשא ימותון אלין
 וסערא דכל אנשא יסתער עליהון
 לא יי שלחני: 30 ואם בריאה יברי
 יי ותפתח ארעא ית פמה ותבלע
 יתהון וית כל די להון ויחטון כד
 חייז לשאל ותדעון ארי ארגיזו
 גבריא האלין קדם יי: 31 והנה כד
 שיצי למקלא ית כל פתגמיא האלין
 ואתבונעת ארעא די תחתייהון:
 32 ופתחת ארעא ית פמה ובלעת
 יתהון וית אנש במיהון וית כל
 אנשא די לקרח וית כל קנינא:
 33 ונחתו אנון וכל די להון כד
 חייז לשאל וחתת עליהון ארעא
 ואבדו מגו קהלא: 34 וכל ישראל
 די בסחריהון ערקו לקלהון ארי
 אמרו דלמא תבלענא ארעא:
 35 ואשא נפקת מן קדם יי ואבלת
 ית מאתן וחמשיז גברא מקרבי
 קטרת בוסמיא: 17 ומליל יי עם
 משה למימר:

28 ויאמר משה בזאת תדעון כִּי־יהוה שלחני לעשות
 את כל־המעשים האלה כִּי־לא מלבי: 29 אם־כמות
 כל־האדם ימתון אלה ופקדת כל־האדם יפקד עליהם
 לא יהוה שלחני: 30 ואם־בריא יברא יהוה ופצתה
 האדמה את־פיה ובלעה אתם ואת־כל־אשר להם
 וירדו חיים שאלה וידעתם כִּי נאעו האנשים האלה
 את־יהוה: 31 ויהי ככלתו לדבר את כל־הדברים האלה
 ותבקע האדמה אשר תחתייהם: 32 ותפתח הארץ את־
 פיה ותבלע אתם ואת־בתייהם ואת כל־האדם אשר
 לקרח ואת כל־הרכושי: 33 וירדו הם וכל־אשר להם
 חיים שאלה ותכס עליהם הארץ ויאבדו מתוך הקהל:
 34 וכל־ישראל אשר סביבתייהם נסו לקלם כִּי אמרו
 פן־תבלענו הארץ: 35 ואש יצאה מאת יהוה ותאכל
 את החמשים ומאתים איש מקרבי הקמרת: 17:1
 וידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמר:

— RASHI —

האדמה את פיה ותבלעם. אז — וידעתם כי נאצו הם
 את ה', ואני מפי הגבורה אמרתי ורבותינו פשוטו:
 "אם בריאה" פה לארץ מששת ימי בראשית — מוטב,
 ואם לאו — "יברא ה'": 34 נסו לקלם. בשביל הקול
 היוצא על בליעתן:

28 לעשות את כל המעשים האלה. שעשיתי על פי
 הדבור: לתת לאהרן בהנה גדולה, ובניו סגני בהנה,
 ואליצפן נשיא הקהתי: 29 לא ה' שלחני. אלא אני
 עשיתי הכל מדעתי, ובדין הוא חולק עלי: 30 ואם
 בריאה. חדשה: יברא ה'. להמית אותם במיתה שלא
 מת בה אדם עד הנה. ומה היא הבריאה? ופצתה

20. במדבר רבה יח, יב.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

sons drags down their inherently uplifting vitality into the depths of mundane reality and earthly existence. When the focus is reoriented from God above to the individual below, the Torah of life descends to the depths.

Thus, although Korach and his cohorts were eminent Torah scholars and observant Jews, their self-orientation doomed them to descend to death together with their learning and piety.³⁹

To the depths alive: Similarly, it is possible for a

person to be "in the depths," in a state of spiritual decadence, and still be so oblivious to his predicament that he feels "alive." However, there is a blessing hidden in this seemingly lost state. If a person feels alive, he can change for the better.

This is why Korach's sons did not die. Because they were *allegorically* "alive"—that is, open-minded enough to change, to repent—they remained *literally* alive as well, and indeed returned to the community later.⁴⁰

39. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, p. 329. 40. *HaYom Yom*, p. 65.

28 Moses said, “With this you shall know that God sent me to do all these deeds, appointing Aaron as the high priest, his sons as regular priests, and Elitzafan as the prince of the clan of Kehat, and that I did not devise this myself.

29 If these men die as all men die and the fate of all men be visited upon them, then God has not sent me.

30 But if God creates a new creation, namely, that the earth opens its mouth, swallows them and all that is theirs, and they descend alive into the grave, you will know that these men have provoked God, and that I have spoken only on His authority. **If God created the earth with the potential to open its mouth, let this potential be manifest now. If He did not, let Him create it anew!”**

31 As soon as he finished speaking all these words, the earth beneath them split open.

32 The earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed Korach, Dathan, and Aviram³² and their households, even their little children, and all the men who were with Korach—other than the 250 men who were offering incense—**and all their property.** (Thus we see how serious contention is, for although children are generally not punished for their errors, here they were punished and actually perished.³³)

33 They, and all they possessed, descended alive into the grave; the earth covered them up, and they were lost to the community. (Korach’s sons were also swallowed up, but because they had repented mentally³⁴ they were not killed; God provided them with a place to live underground and allowed them to emerge 38 years later.³⁵)

34 All the Israelites who were around them fled from the sound of their cries, for they said, “Let us flee, lest the earth swallow us up, too!”

35 At the same time as Korach, Dathan, Aviram, and their supporters’ households were being swallowed by the earth, a fire came forth from God and consumed the 250 men who had offered up the incense. By punishing the 250 rebels together with Korach, God demonstrated that they were indeed guilty of his sin of general insurrection and not only of the error of aspiring to the high priesthood.³⁶

17:1 God spoke to Moses, saying:

— ❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧ —

31 The earth beneath them split open: God did not punish Korach and his supporters until they had acted on their beliefs. Even when Korach convinced the rest of the people to side with him, God did not punish the offenders until He had duly warned them not to commit their crime and they nonetheless did so.

We must learn from God’s example here, and wherever possible give people who offend us or disobey

God’s laws the benefit of the doubt, and patiently and lovingly encourage them to better themselves.³⁷

33 And they descend to the depths alive: Being truly “alive” is possible only by being connected to God through learning His Torah and performing His commandments. This is why the Torah is called “the Torah of life.”³⁸ Nonetheless, learning Torah and performing the commandments for selfish rea-

32. Cf. Deuteronomy 11:6. 33. Rashi on v. 27. 34. Above, on. v. 19. 35. Below, on 26:11. 36. See above, on 16:15. 37. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, p. 6. 38. Liturgy, daily *Amidah*.

— ONKELOS —

2 אָמַר לְאַלְעָזָר בַּר אַהֲרֹן בְּהִנָּא וַיִּפְרִישׁ יָת מַחְתֵּיתָא מִבֵּין קַדְשׁוֹ וְיָת אִשָּׁא יִרְחַק לְהֵלֵא אָרִי אַתְקַדְשׁוּ: 3 יָת מַחְתֵּית חִבְיָא הָאֵלִין דְּאַתְחִיבּוּ בְּנַפְשֵׁיתִיהוֹן וַיַּעֲבְדוּן יִתְהוּן טְסִין רַדִּידִין חוֹפָאָה לְמִדְבָּחָא אָרִי קַרְבָּנִין קָדִם וְ? וְאַתְקַדְשָׁא וַיְהִיֹן לְאַת לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 4 וְנָסִיב אֲלַעָזָר בְּהִנָּא יָת מַחְתֵּיתָא דְנִחָשָׁא דְקָרִיבּוּ יוֹקִידִיא וְרַדִּידִין חוֹפָאָה לְמִדְבָּחָא: 5 דּוֹכְרָנָא לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדִיל דִּי לֹא יִקְרַב גְּבַר חִלוּנֵי דִּי לֹא מוֹרְעָא דְאַהֲרֹן הוּא לְאַסְקָא קְטֹרֶת בְּסִמִּין קָדִם וְ? וְלֹא יְהִי כְּקֹרַח וּכְכֹהֵן שֶׁמֶה בְּמֵא דִּי מְלִיל וְ? בִּידָא דְמִשָּׁה לַה: 6 וְאַתְרַעְמוּ כָּל בְּנֵי־שָׂתָא דְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיוֹמָא דְבִתְרוּהִי עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן לְמִימַר אַתּוֹן גְּרַמְתּוֹן דְּמִית עִמָּא דִּי: 7 וְהָיָה בְּאַתְכַּנְשׁוֹת בְּנֵי־שָׂתָא עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן וְאַתְפְּנִיאָו לְמִשְׁכַּן זְמָנָא וְהָא חֲפָהִי עֲנָנָא וְאַתְגְּלִי יִקְרָא דִּי: 8 וְעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן לְקָדִם מִשְׁכַּן זְמָנָא: 9 וּמְלִיל וְ? עִם מֹשֶׁה לְמִימַר: 10 אַתְפְּרִישׁוּ מִגּוּ בְּנֵי־שָׂתָא הָדָא וְאַשְׁיִצִי יִתְהוֹן בְּשַׁעָה וְנִפְלוּ עַל אֲפִיהוֹן: 11 וְאָמַר מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן סַב יָת מַחְתֵּיתָא וְהִבַּ עֲלֵה אִשָּׁא מִעֲלֵינוּ מִדְּבָחָא וְשׁוּ קְטֹרֶת בּוֹסְמִין וְאוּבַל בְּפִרְיעַ לְכַנְשָׂתָא וְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהוֹן אָרִי נִפְק רְגָזָא מִן קָדִם וְ? שְׂרֵי מוֹתָנָא:

2 אָמַר אֶל־אַלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּרֶם אֶת־הַמַּחֲתֹת מִבֵּין הַשְּׂרָפָה וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרַה־הַלֵּאָה כִּי קָדְשׁוֹ: 3 אֵת מַחֲתוֹת הַחֲטָאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתָם רִקְעֵי פָחִים צַפּוּי לְמוֹזְבַּח כִּי־הִקְרִיבְם לַפְּנֵי־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיְהִיו לְאוֹת לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 4 וַיִּקַּח אֲלַעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת מַחֲתוֹת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבוּ הַשְּׂרָפִים וַיִּרְקְעוּם צַפּוּי לְמוֹזְבַּח: 5 וּפְרוֹן לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרַב אִישׁ זֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מוֹרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לְהִקְטִיר קְטֹרֶת לַפְּנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא־יְהִי־הַכֹּרֵחַ וְכַעֲדָתוֹ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: 6 וַיִּלְנֹו כָּל־עַדָּת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמַּחֲתֹת עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם הַמֹּתֵם אֶת־עַם יְהוָה: 7 וַיְהִי בְּהִקְהַל הָעֵדָה עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיִּפְּנוּ אֶל־אַהֲלֵ מוֹעֵד וְהִנֵּה כִסֵּהוּ הָעֲנָן וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד יְהוָה: 8 וַיָּבֵא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: 8

◆ רביעי 9 וידבר יהוה אל־משה לאמר: 10 הרפו מתוך העדה הזאת ואכלה אתם כרנע ויפלו על־פניהם: 11 ויאמר משה אל־אהרן קח את־המחטה ותן־עליה אש מעל המזבח ושים קטרת והולך מהרה אל־העדה וכפר עליהם כִּי־יֵצֵא הַקֶּצֶף מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה הַחַל הַנִּגְנָף:

— RASHI —

הוא ובניו פְּהִינִים, לְפִיכָּה "לֹא יִקְרַב אִישׁ זֶר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מוֹרַע אַהֲרֹן וְגו'". וְכֵן כָּל "לִי" וְ"לוֹ" וְ"לָהֶם" הַסְמוּכִים אֲצֵל "דְּבוּר", פְּתוּרִים כְּמוֹ "עַל". וּמְדַרְשׁוֹ: 23. עַל קֶרַח. וּמֵהוּ "בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה", וְלֹא כְּתִב "אֵל מֹשֶׁה"? רָמֵן לְחֻלְקִים עַל הַכְּהֻנָּה, שְׁלוּקִין בְּצִרְעַת, כְּמוֹ שְׁלֻקָּה מֹשֶׁה בְּיָדוֹ, שְׁנָאֲמַר: "וַיּוֹצֵאָה וְהִנֵּה יָדוֹ מִצְרַעַת בְּשַׁלְגִי". וְעַל כֵּן לָקַח עֲזִיָּהוּ בְּצִרְעַת: 11 וְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם. רַו זֶה מִסַּר לֹא מְלֵאָף הַמֶּתֶן בְּשַׁעֲלָה לְרִקְעֵי, שֶׁהַקְטֹרֶת עוֹצֵר הַמְּגַפָּה, כְּדֹאִיתָא בְּמַסְכַּת שַׁבָּת: 25.

2 וְאֵת הָאֵשׁ. שְׁבוּתוֹךְ הַמַּחֲתוֹת: זָרַה הַלֵּאָה. לְאַרְץ מִעַל הַמַּחֲתוֹת: כִּי קָדְשׁוֹ. הַמַּחֲתוֹת וְאַסוּרִין בְּהִנָּאָה, שְׁהָרִי עֲשָׂאוּם כְּלֵי שְׂרָת: 3 הַחֲטָאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם. שְׁנַעֲשׂוּ פוֹשְׁעִים בְּנַפְשׁוֹתָם, שְׁנַחֲלְקוּ עַל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: רִקְעֵי. רַדִּידִין: פָּחִים. טְסִין מְרַדִּדִין. טִינָבִי"שׁ בְּלַעֲזוֹ: צַפּוּי לְמוֹזְבַּח. לְמוֹזְבַּח הַנְּחֹשֶׁת: וַיְהִיו לְאוֹת. לְזַכְרוֹן, שִׁיאֲמַרוּ: "אֵלֹהִים הֵיוּ מֵאוֹתָן שְׁנַחֲלְקוּ עַל הַכְּהֻנָּה וְנִשְׂרָפוּ": 4 וַיִּרְקְעוּם. אִטינְבִירִינ"ט בְּלַעֲזוֹ: 22. 5 וְלֹא יְהִי־הַכֹּרֵחַ. כְּדִי שְׁלֵא יְהִי־הַכֹּרֵחַ: כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר ה' בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה לֹא. כְּמוֹ "עֲלִיו" — עַל אַהֲרֹן דְּבַר אֵל מֹשֶׁה, שְׁיִהִיו

21. דְּקִים. 22. תְּדַק. 23. תְּחוּמָא צו יא. 24. שְׁמוֹת ד, ו. 25. פט, א.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

the opposite. It is possible to unite fire and water (by heating the water with the fire) only if they are separated by a pot. So, too, it is often the imposition

of boundaries that allows for the truest expression of unity and harmony amongst people.⁴⁷

47. Likutei Sichot, vol. 18, p. 204.

2 “Even though I agreed not to consider the rebels’ incense a sacrificial rite that would make them liable to the death penalty, their incense was still offered to Me. Therefore,⁴¹ **say to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest that he should pick up the censers from the burned area and throw the fire (i.e., coals) in them away, because they have become sanctified** by having been used to offer incense to God and are therefore forbidden from now on for profane use.

3 These are **the censers of those who sinned** knowing that it would cost them **their lives**. The artisans **shall make them into flattened-out plates as an overlay for the Outer Altar, for they brought them before God, and they have therefore become sanctified. They shall serve as a reminder of this rebellion for the Israelites.**”

4 **So Eleazar the priest took the copper censers which the fire victims had brought, and the artisans hammered them out as an overlay for the Altar,**

5 **as a reminder for the Israelites, so that no layman, who is not descended from Aaron, shall approach to burn incense before God, so as not to be like Korach and his company, as God spoke through Moses regarding Aaron.**

6 **The following day, the entire congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron saying, “You have killed the people of God. This incense is evidently a lethal potion. It killed Nadav and Avihu, and now the 250 judges.”**

7 **But while the congregation was assembled against Moses and Aaron, they turned to the Tent of Meeting, and behold, the cloud had covered it, and the glory of God appeared.**

8 **Moses and Aaron, understanding this as a sign that God wanted to address them, came to the front of the Tent of Meeting.**

◆ **Fourth Reading** 9 **God spoke to Moses, saying:**

10 “The fact that the people are complaining about the fate that befell Korach and his supporters—and still insinuating that *all* the people are equally holy, ‘the people of God’⁴²—indicates that they have, in fact, subscribed to his views. You can no longer argue that only Korach is guilty and they have merely been swept along by the spirit of the moment.⁴³ Therefore, I have no choice: **remove yourselves from this congregation, and I shall consume them in an instant.**” Moses and Aaron **fell on their faces**, for they were now at a complete loss as to how to pray for the people.⁴⁴

11 As God has said would happen when the boundaries between the spiritual classes of the people are breached,⁴⁵ the people began to perish from the plague. But fortunately, Moses remembered that when he was in heaven receiving the Torah, the Angel of Death had told him that incense wards off the plague. Moses now asked God if this is how he should stop the plague, and God concurred. So **Moses said to Aaron, “Take the censer, put fire from the top of the Altar into it, and take it quickly to the congregation and atone for them, for the Angel of Death, the instrument of Divine wrath has gone forth from God, and the plague has begun.”**

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

5 **Do not be like Korach and his party:** This verse serves as the source for the law to avoid involvement in divisive arguments and contentious disagreements.⁴⁶ It is indeed ironic that the same

Korach who called for abolishing the distinctions between different groups of Jews became the paradigm of division. Abolishing boundaries does not always produce unity; in fact, it can produce exactly

41. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 33, pp. 105-111. 42. Cf. above, 16:3. 43. See above, 16:22. 44. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, pp. 1-6. 45. Above, 1:53. 46. *Sanhedrin* 110a

— ONKELOS —

12 ונסים אהרן כמה די מליל משה ורהט לגו קהלא והא שרי מותנא בעמא ויהב ית קטרת בוסמיא וכפר על עמא: 13 וקם בין מיתא ובין חייא ואתבלי מותנא: 14 והוה דמיתו במותנא ארבעת עשר אלפין ושבע מאה בר מדמיתו על פלגתא דקרח: 15 ותב אהרן לות משה לתרע משכן זמנא ומותנא אתבלי: 16 ומליל יי עם משה למימר: 17 מלל עם בני ישראל וסב מנהון חטרא חטרא לבית אבא מן כל רברבניהון לבית אבהתהון תרי עשר חטרין גבר ית שמה תכתוב על חטרה: 18 וית שמא דאהרן תכתוב על חטרא דלוי ארי חטרא חד לריש בית אבהתהון: 19 ותצנעונו במשכן זמנא קדם סהדותא די אומן מימרי לבון תמן: 20 ויהי גברא דאתרעי בה חטרה ינעי ואניח מן קדמי ית תרעמת בני ישראל די אנון מתרעמין עליכון: 21 ומליל משה עם בני ישראל ויהבו לה כל רברבניהון חטרא לרבא חד חטרא לרבא חד לבית אבהתהון תרי עשר חטרין וחטרא דאהרן בגו חטריהון: 22 ואצנע משה ית חטריא קדם יי במשכנא דסהדותא: 23 והוה ביימא דבתרוהי ועל משה למשכנא דסהדותא והא נעא חטרא דאהרן לבית לוי ואפס לבלבין ואנין נין וכפת שגדיו:

12 ויקח אהרן באשור | דבר משה וירין אל-תוך הקהל והנה החל הנוגף בעם ויתן את-הקמרת וכפר על-העם: 13 ויעמד בין-המתים ובין החיים ותעצר המנופה: 14 ויהיו המתים במנופה ארבעה עשר אלף ושבע מאות מלבד המתים על-דבר-קרח: 15 וישב אהרן אל-משה אל-פתח אהל מועד והמנופה נעצרה: פ חמישי 16 וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: 17 דבר | אל-בני ישראל וקח מאתם מטה מטה לבית אב מאת כל-נשיאיהם לבית אבתם שנים עשר מטות איש את-שמו תכתוב על-מטהו: 18 ואת שם אהרן תכתוב על-מטה לוי כי מטה אחד לראש בית אבותם: 19 והנחתם באהל מועד לפני העדות אשר אועד לכם שמה: 20 והיה האיש אשר אבחר-בו מטהו יפרח והשפתי מעלי את-תלנות בני ישראל אשר הם מלינם עליכם: 21 וידבר משה אל-בני ישראל ויתנו אליו | כל-נשיאיהם מטה לנשיא אחד מטה לנשיא אחד לבית אבתם שנים עשר מטות ומטה אהרן בתוך מטותם: 22 וינה משה את-המטות לפני יהוה באהל העדת: 23 והי ממחרת וכא משה אל-אהל העדות והנה פרח מטה-אהרן לבית לוי ויצא פרח ויצין ויצין ויגמל שקדים:

— RASHI —

ולויה לבד, מכל מקום שגט אחד הוא: 20 והשפתי. כמו: "וישכו המים"²⁶, "וחמת הפולחן שגכה"²⁷: 21 בתוך מטותם. הניחו באמצע, שלא יאמרו: "מפני שהניחו בצד שכניה, פרח": 23 ויצא פרח. כמשמעו: ציץ. הוא חנטת הפרי כשהפרח נופל: ויגמל שקדים. כשהכר הפרי, הכר שהן שקדים, לשון "ויגדל היכל ויגמל"²⁸, ולשון זה מצוי בפרי האילן, כמו: "ובכר גמל יהיה נצה"²⁹. ולמה שקדים? הוא הפרי הממהר להפריח מכל הפרות, אף המעורר על ההקנה פרענותו ממחרת לבא, כמו שמצינו בעזיהו: "והצרעת ורחה במצחו"³⁰. ותרומו: "וכפת שגדיו", כמין אשכול שקדים יחד כפותים זה על זה:

13 ויעמד בין המתים וגו'. אחז את המלאך והעמידו על פרוח. אמר לו המלאך: "הנח לי לעשות שליחותי", אמר לו: "משה צוני לעבד על ידך", אמר לו: "אני שלוחו של מקום, ואתה שלוחו של משה". אמר לו: "אין משה אומר כלום מלבד, אלא מפי הגבורה, אם אין אתה מאמין, הרי הקדוש ברוך הוא ומשה אל פתח אהל מועד, בא עמי ושאל". והוה שנאמר: "וישב אהרן אל משה". דבר אחר: למה בקטרת? לפי שהיו ישראל מליצין ומרננים אחר הקטרת לומר: "סם המוות הוא, על ידו מתו נדב ואביהוא, על ידו נשרפו חמשים ומאתים איש". אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: "תראו שעוצר מגפה הוא, והחטא הוא הפמית": 18 כי מטה אחד. אף על פי שחלקתים לשתי משפחות — משפחת כהנה לבד

26. בראשית ח, א. 27. אסתר ז, י. 28. בראשית כא, ת. 29. ישעיה יח, ה. 30. דבה"ב כו, ט.

12 Aaron took the censer, just as Moses had said, and he ran into the midst of the community, and indeed, the plague had begun among the people. He placed the incense on it and atoned for the people.

13 He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague ceased.

14 The number of dead in the plague was 14,700; this was besides those who died because of the matter of Korach.

15 But the Angel of Death protested that Aaron was preventing him from carrying out God's command. Aaron replied that he was acting on Moses' orders, and Moses only does what God tells him to. Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting together with the Angel of Death, and there they asked God who was right. God said that Aaron was right, and thus the plague was stopped. God thus demonstrated to the people that just as the incense can kill, it can also save from death, and that it is only sin that brings punishment.

◆ *Fifth Reading* 16 By having the earth swallow some of the rebels, God proved conclusively that He selected Moses to be His emissary; by burning the rebels who offered the incense, God proved that He wanted Aaron to be the high priest. But beyond this, God also wanted to demonstrate that Aaron deserved this distinction on his own merits—not because of Moses' merits, and despite his role in the incident of the Golden Calf. Therefore,⁴⁸ God spoke to Moses, saying:

17 "Speak to the Israelites and take from them a staff for each paternal house—that is, one from each of their tribal princes according to their fathers' houses, a total of 12 staffs—and inscribe each man's name on his staff.

18 In addition,⁴⁹ take Aaron's staff and inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of Levi, for even though the tribe of Levi is divided into priests and Levites, there is nonetheless only one staff for the head of their fathers' house.

19 You shall place these 13 staffs in the Tent of Meeting before the Ark of the Testimony where I commune with you.

20 The staff of the man whom I will choose will blossom, and I will thus calm the Israelites' complaints that they complain against you, ridding Myself of them."

21 Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their princes gave him a staff, one for each prince according to their fathers' houses, a total of 12 staffs, and together with them, Moses put Aaron's staff amidst their staffs in the middle, so they could not say that it blossomed because it was closer to the ark.

22 Moses placed the staffs before God in the Tent of Meeting, which housed the Ark of the Testimony.

23 On the following day, Moses came to the Tent of the Testimony, and behold, Aaron's staff for the house of Levi had blossomed. Specifically, it gave forth blossoms, these flowers dropped off, and the staff sprouted buds, and then produced ripe almonds. This signified that just as almonds ripen quickly, so will someone who opposes the selection of the priesthood be punished quickly.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

23 Ripe almonds: Almonds are the quickest fruit to blossom, ripen, and be ready for human consump-

tion.⁵⁰ Among the connections between that alacrity and the priesthood:

48. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, p. 119. 49. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, p. 131, note 69. 50. *Bemidbar Rabbah*, *Korach*, end.

— ONKELOS —

24 ואפק משה ית כל חטריא
מן קדם יי לות כל בני ישראל
ואשתמודעו ונסיבו גבר חטריא:
25 ואמר יי למשה אתב ית
חטריא דאהרן לקדם סהדותא
למטרא לאת לעמא סרבנא ויטפון
תרעמתהון מן קדמי ולא ימותון:
26 ועבד משה כמא די פקיד
יי יתה בן עבד: 27 ואמרו בני
ישראל למשה למימר הא מננא
קטלת חרבא הא מננא בלעת
ארעא והא מננא דמיתו במוותנא:
28 כל דקרב מקרב למשכנא די
מאית הא אנחנא סיפין לממת:
18:1 ואמר יי לאהרן את ובניך
ובית אבוך עמך תסלחון על חובי
מקדשא ואת ובניך עמך תסלחון
על חובי כהנתכון: 2 ואף ית אחיך
שבטא דלוי שבטא דאבוך קרב
לותר ויתוספון עלך וישמשוך
ואת ובניך עמך קדם משכנא
דסהדותא:

24 ויצא משה את כל המטות מלפני יהוה אל כל בני
ישראל ויראו ויקחו איש מטהו: פ

◆ שישי 25 ויאמר יהוה אל משה השב את מטה אהרן
לפני העדות למשמרת לאות לבני מרי ותכל תלונתם
מעלי ולא ימותו: 26 ועש משה כאשר צוה יהוה אתו
בן עשה: פ

27 ויאמרו בני ישראל אל משה לאמר הן גוענו אבדנו
בלנו אבדנו: 28 כל הקרב | הקרב אל משכן יהוה ימות
האם תמנו לגוע: ס

18:1 ויאמר יהוה אל אהרן אתה ובניך ובית אביך
אתך תשאו את עון המקדש ואתה ובניך אתך תשאו
את עון כהנתכם: 2 וגם את אחיך מטה לוי שבט אביך
הקרב אתך וילוו עליך וישרתוך ואתה ובניך אתך לפני
אהל העדת:

— RASHI —

תקנת ישראל שלא יכנסו למקדש: אתה ובניך ובית
אביך. הם בני קהת אבי עמרם: תשאו את עון המקדש.
עליכם אני מטיל ענש הזרים שייחטאו בעסקי הדברים
המקדשים המסורים לכם, הוא האהל והארון והשלחן
וכלי הקדש, אתם תשבו ותזהירו על כל זר הבא לגע:
ואתה ובניך. הכהנים: תשאו את עון כהנתכם. שאינה
מסורה ללויים ותזהירו הלוים השוגגים, שלא יגעו
אליכם בעבודתכם: 2 וגם את אחיך. בני גרשון ובני
ומרי: וילוו. ויתחברו אליכם להזהיר גם את הזרים
מלקרב אליהם: וישרתוך. בשמירת השערים, ולמנות
מהם גזברין ואמרכלין:

25 למשמרת לאות. לזכרון שבחרתי באהרן הכהן,
ולא ילונו עוד על הכהנה: ותכל תלונתם. כמו
"ותכלה תלנתם", לשון שם מפעל יחיד לנקבה, כמו
"תלנתם" מורמורד"ץ בלעזי". ויש חלוק בין "תלונתם"
ל"תלנתם": "תלנתם" — תלונה אחת, "תלונתם" — שם
דבר בלשון יחיד, ואפלו הם תלנות הרבה: 28 כל
הקרב הקרב וגו'. אין אנו יכולין להיות זהירין בקרב,
כלנו רשאים להכנס לחצר אהל מועד, ואחד שיקריב
עצמו יותר מחבריו ויכנס לתוך אהל מועד ימות:
האם תמנו לגוע. שמא הפקרנו למיתה: 1 ויאמר ה'
אל אהרן. למשה אמר שיאמר לאהרן, להזהירו על

.31 קול תלנות.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

2 Enlist also your brethren, the tribe of Levi... and they shall join you and minister to you: The name Levi means "accompany," in the sense of sharing a close relationship,⁵⁸ implying that the Levites' status gives them a direct connection with God. In fact, however, the role of the Levites in the Temple was not to serve or approach God directly, but only to assist the priests in their Godly service.

Furthermore, as we will see,⁵⁹ all the Jewish people are granted a portion on the Land of Israel except the tribe of Levi. On the other hand, God tells the

priests that although they will receive no portion of the land, "God is their portion and inheritance."⁶⁰ Thus, the regular Levites (those that are not priests) are left out of both the physical inheritance of the land and the spiritual inheritance given specifically to the priests.

It is precisely this subservience and "homelessness" that propels the tribe of Levi to such great spiritual heights. Their secondary role keeps them humble and unimpressed with their own station on life, and this humility brings them so close to God.⁶¹

58. See Genesis 29:34. 59. Below, chapter 26. 60. Numbers 18:20. 61. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, p. 122

24 Moses took out all the staffs from before God and showed them to the Israelites, together with the flowers that fell off Aaron's staff before it sprouted almonds. **They saw, and each man took his staff.** By showing them the fallen flowers as well as the sprouted staff, Moses showed them that God had miraculously made the staff flower and produce fruit, but did so following a plant's *natural* progression of growth. This indicated that God had chosen Aaron for the priesthood of His own volition, but that the priesthood thereby had become Aaron's own *nature*, and he was therefore suited for the priesthood by virtue of his own, intrinsic merits.⁵¹

- ◆ *Sixth Reading* **25** To further indicate that Aaron's priesthood was intrinsic,⁵² **God said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front of the Ark of the Testimony as a remembrance and a sign for rebellious ones** that I have chosen Aaron's descendants to be priests, and that this decision will never be revoked. This will **put an end to their complaints against Me.** I will then not have to punish them **and they will not have to die."**

26 Moses did so. He did just as God had commanded him.

27 The lay Israelites finally accepted the distinction between themselves and the priests, but they still **spoke to Moses, saying, "Behold,** because of this distinction **we are in constant danger of dying, we will perish, we are all lost!**

28 We are freely allowed into the courtyard of the Tabernacle, but **whoever comes too close** and even mistakenly enters **the Tabernacle of God will die! Have we been consigned to** being constantly afraid that we might **perish** in this way?"

18:1 God therefore reiterated His commands to the tribe of Levi to guard the Sanctuary precincts from encroachment by the laity, this time making the Levites accountable if they fail to prevent it. **God said to Moses to tell Aaron, "You, your sons—that is, the priests—and your paternal house—that is, the Levite clan of Kehat—shall bear the iniquity associated with the Sanctuary.** *You* will be punished if any layperson inadvertently touches what is entrusted to you—the furnishings of the Tabernacle and their utensils⁵³—so keep watch that they stay away from them. In addition, **you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity associated with your priesthood,** that is, you will be punished if any Levite tries to do anything only a priest may do, so make sure they do not try to.

2 Enlist also your other brethren from the tribe of Levi, your fathers' tribe—i.e., the clans of Gershon and Merari—and they shall join you in guarding the Sanctuary precincts from encroachment by the laity by preventing laypeople from touching what is entrusted to *their* clans, **and they shall also minister to you** by serving as entrance guards, treasurers, and supervisors. But again, only **you and your sons with you** may serve as priests **before the Tent of Testimony.**

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

- One of the main functions of the priest is to bless the people.⁵⁴ But his blessings are not only fulfilled; they are granted speedily and without difficulty.⁵⁵
- The priests by nature fulfill their duties in the Temple with alacrity and liveliness.⁵⁶

These two attributes combine to provide a lesson to us all. Our approach to our Divine mission in life cannot be attempted halfheartedly or resignedly. We must respond to every opportunity with energy and alacrity. When we do so, we are assured that God's blessings and the success of our efforts will not delay in coming.⁵⁷

^{51.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, pp. 113-122. ^{52.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, pp. 113-122. ^{53.} Above, 4:4-15. ^{54.} See above, 6:22-27. ^{55.} *Likutei Torah, Korach* end. ^{56.} *Shabbat* 20a. ^{57.} *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 4, pp. 1318-1320.

— ONKELOS —

3 וַיִּטְרוּן מִשְׁמֶרֶתְךָ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת כָּל מִשְׁכַּנָּא בְרַם לְמִנֵּי קֹדֶשׁא וּלְמִדְבָּחָא לֹא יִקְרְבוּן וְלֹא יָמוּתוּן אִף אֲנֹן אִף אַתּוּן: 4 וַיִּתּוּסְפוּן עֲלֶיךָ וַיִּטְרוּן יְת מִשְׁרֵת מִשְׁכַּן זְמַנָּא לְכָל פְּלָחוֹן מִשְׁכַּנָּא וְחִלוּנֵי לֹא יִקְרַב לְוַתְּכוּן: 5 וַיִּטְרוּן יְת מִשְׁרֵת קֹדֶשׁא וַיְת מִשְׁרֵת מִדְּבָחָא וְלֹא יְהִי עוֹד רְגֹזָא עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 6 וְאַנָּא הָא קְרִבִּית יְת אַחִיכֹן לְזַאי מְגוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכוּן מִתְּנָא יְהִיבִין קָדָם יְיָ לְמַפְלַח יְת פְּלָחוֹן מִשְׁכַּן זְמַנָּא: 7 וְאַתְּ וּבְנֵיךָ עִמָּךְ תִּטְרוּן יְת כְּהֻנְתְּכוּן לְכָל פְּתָגָם מִדְּבָחָא וּלְמִנֵּי לְפָרְכֵתָא וְתַפְלָחוֹן פְּלָחוֹן מִתְּנָא אִיְהִיב יְת כְּהֻנְתְּהוֹן וְחִלוּנֵי דִיקְרַב יִתְקַטֵּל: 8 וּמְלִיל יְיָ עִם אַהֲרֹן וְאַנָּא הָא יְהִיבִית לָךְ יְת מִשְׁרֵת אִפְרָשׁוּתֵי לְכָל קֹדֶשׁאֵי דְבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ יִהְיֶהנֹן לְרַבּוּ וּלְבְנֵיךָ לְקִים עֲלֵם: 9 דִּין יְהִי לָךְ מִקְדָּשׁ קֹדֶשׁאֵי מוֹתֵר מִן אֲשָׁא בַל קְרַבְנֵהוֹן לְכָל מִנְחָתְהוֹן וּלְכָל חֲטוּתְהוֹן וּלְכָל אֲשַׁמְהוֹן דִּי יִתִּיבוּן קְדָמֵי קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁין דִּילָךְ הוּא וּלְבְנֵיךָ:

3 וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁמֶרֶתְךָ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת כָּל־הָאֹהֶל אַךְ אֶל־כְּלֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא יִקְרְבוּ וְלֹא־יָמוּתוּ גַם־הֵם גַּם־אַתֶּם: 4 וְנָלוּן עֲלֶיךָ וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לְכָל עֲבֹדַת הָאֹהֶל וְזָר לֹא־יִקְרַב אֲלֵיכֶם: 5 וַיִּשְׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד קֶצֶף עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: 6 וְאַנִּי הִנֵּה לְקַחְתִּי אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֶם מִתְּנָה נְתֻנִים לִיהוָה לְעֹבֵד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: 7 וְאַתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ אֲתָךְ תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־כְּהֻנַּתְכֶם לְכָל־דְּבַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּלְמִבֵּית לְפָרְכַת וְעֲבֹדַתְּם עֲבֹדַת מִתְּנָה אֲתָן אֶת־כְּהֻנַּתְכֶם וְהָזָר הַקָּרֵב יוּמָת: פ

8 וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאַנִּי הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָךְ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת תְּרוּמָתִי לְכָל־קֹדֶשִׁי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ נְתַתִּים לְמִשְׁחָה וּלְבְנֵיךָ לְחֶק־עוֹלָם: 9 זֶה יְהִיָּה לָךְ מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים מִן־הָאֵשׁ כָּל־קְרַבָּנָם לְכָל־מִנְחָתָם וּלְכָל־חַטָּאתָם וּלְכָל־אֲשָׁמָם אֲשֶׁר יָשִׁיבוּ לִי קֹדֶשׁ קֹדֶשִׁים לָךְ הוּא וּלְבְנֵיךָ:

— RASHI —

וערער על השדה, אָמַר לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ: "כָּל מִי שִׁירְצָה יָבֵא וְיַעֲרַעַר לְנִגְדָה, הַרִינִי כּוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם לָךְ וּמַעֲלָה בְּעַרְכָּאִין". אִף כָּאֵן, לְפִי שְׂבָא קֶרַח וְעַרְעַר כְּנִגַּד אַהֲרֹן עַל הַכְּהֻנָּה, בָּא הַכְּתוּב וַתֵּן לוֹ עֲשָׂרִים וְאַרְבַּע מִתְּנוֹת כְּהֻנָּה בְּבְרִית מְלַח עוֹלָם. וּלְכָךְ נִסְמְכָה פְּרָשָׁה זוֹ לְכָאן: מִשְׁמֶרֶת תְּרוּמָתִי. שְׂאֵתָה צְרִיף לְשִׁמְרוֹן בְּטָהֳרָה: לְמִשְׁחָה. לְגִדְלָה: 9 מִן הָאֵשׁ. לְאַחַר הַקִּטְרֵת הָאֲשִׁים: כָּל קְרַבָּנָם. כְּגוֹן זֹבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵי צְבוּר: מִנְחָתָם חַטָּאתָם וְאֲשָׁמָם. כְּמִשְׁמְעוּ: אֲשֶׁר יָשִׁיבוּ לִי. זֶה גֹזֵל הַגֵּר:

4 וְזָר לֹא יִקְרַב אֲלֵיכֶם. אֲתַכֶּם אָנִי מוֹהִיר עַל כָּף: 5 וְלֹא יִהְיֶה עוֹד קֶצֶף. כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה כְּבָר, שְׁנֵאָמַר: "כִּי יֵצֵא הַקֶּצֶף"³²: 6 לָכֶם מִתְּנָה נְתֻנִים. יְכוּל לְעֲבוֹדַתְכֶם שֶׁל הַדְּיוּטָא תְלַמוּד לֹמַר: "לֹה", כְּמוֹ שֶׁמִּפְרָשׁ לְמַעֲלָה — לְשֹׁמֵר מִשְׁמֶרֶת גּוֹזְרִין וְאַמְרָכֵינִן: 7 עֲבֹדַת מִתְּנָה. בְּמִתְּנָה נְתַתִּיהָ לָכֶם: 8 וְאַנִּי הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָךְ. בְּשִׁמְחָה. לְשׁוֹן שִׁמְחָה הוּא זֶה, כְּמוֹ: "הִנֵּה הוּא יֵצֵא לְקֶרְאֵתְךָ, וְרָאָה וְשִׂמַח בְּלִבּוֹ"³³. מִשֶּׁל לְמַלְךְ שֶׁנֶּתֶן שָׂדֶה לְאוֹהֲבוֹ, וְלֹא כְּתַב וְלֹא חָתַם וְלֹא הֶעֱלָה בְּעַרְכָּאִין. בָּא אַחַד

32. במדבר יז, יא. 33. שמות ד, יד.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

7 The gift of service I have given you as your priesthood: The "gift of service" denotes the level of love for God called "the love of delights."⁶⁹ This is a state where a person experiences a wondrous pleasure of

Godly revelation akin to that of the World to Come. It is referred to as a "gift" since it is impossible to reach this degree of love through our own effort; it can only be given as a present from Above.⁷⁰

69. Song of Songs 7:7. 70. *Tanya*, chapter 14.

3 The Levites shall keep your charge and the charge of the Tent of Meeting, but they shall not approach the holy vessels or the Altar, so that neither they nor you will die.

4 They shall join you, and they shall keep the charge of the Tent of Meeting for all the service of the Tent, taking care that no layperson come near you when you are performing your duties.

5 You shall keep the charge of the Sanctuary and the charge of the Altar, so that there be no more Divine wrath directed against the Israelites, as there was after the people complained that Moses and Aaron killed God's people.⁶²

6 I have therefore taken your brethren, the Levites, from among the Israelites; they are given to you as a gift for use in the service given to God, that is, to perform the service of the Tent of Meeting, serving as entrance guards, treasurers, and supervisors.

7 And you and your sons shall guard your priesthood in all matters concerning anyone else touching the Altar outside the Tent of Meeting, and concerning anyone else touching what is within the veil at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, and you must make sure that only you serve as priests. I have given your priesthood to you as a gift of service, and you will bear the responsibility for any layperson who approaches inadvertently; but any layperson who approaches on purpose shall die."

Donations to be Given to the Priests

8 God now listed the donations the people must give Him and that are to be given to the priests in exchange for their responsibilities (See Figure 1, p. 114). We would have expected these laws to have been given in the Book of Leviticus, in the context of the other laws pertaining to the priesthood, but God gave them here in order to indicate the irrevocability of Aaron's appointment—even beyond that which was indicated by having Aaron's staff blossom and give fruit. The fact that some of these gifts are given to the priests even outside the context of their Temple service proves that the priesthood is theirs even when they are not serving as priests.⁶³

God told Aaron, "Behold, I have joyfully given you the charge of safeguarding My raised-offerings from defilement. By giving you this responsibility I have thus given you all the holy things that the Israelites give to Me. I give them to you as a sign of eminence and as an eternal portion for your descendants.

9 Specifically, these shall be yours from the sacrifices classed as holiest of the holy, from the time the fire begins to consume the portions of them placed on the Altar: the flesh of all the Israelites' communal peace-offerings (i.e., the two lambs that accompany the two loaves offered on Shavuot),⁶⁴ their grain-offerings,⁶⁵ the flesh of their sin-offerings,⁶⁶ the flesh of their guilt-offerings,⁶⁷ and goods that were robbed from an heirless convert who has since died, which they return to Me because there is no one else to return them to.⁶⁸ The sacrifices just mentioned shall be treated as holiest of the holy by you and by your sons:

62. Above, 17:11. 63. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, pp. 123-132. See also below, on v. 19. 64. Leviticus 23:17-20. 65. Leviticus 2:3,10, 6:9-11. 66. *Ibid.* 6:19. 67. *Ibid.* 7:6-7. 68. See above, 5:8.

ONKELOS

10 בקדש קדשין תיכלנה כל בכורא ייכול יתה קדשא יהי לה: 11 ודין לך אפרשות מתנתהון לכל ארמות בני ישראל לך יהבתהון ולבניך ולבנתך עמך לקים עלם כל דדכי בביתך ייכול יתה: 12 כל טוב משח וכל טוב חמר ועבור ראשיתהון די יתנון קדם יי לך יהבתהון: 13 בכורי כל די בארעהון די יתנון קדם יי דילך יהי כל דדכי בביתך ייכלנה: 14 כל חרמא בישראל דילך יהי: 15 כל פתח ולדא לכל בשרא די יקרבו קדם יי באנשא ובבעיאר יהי לך ברם מפרק תפרוק ית בכרא דאנשא וית בכרא דבעיאר מסאבתא תפרוק: 16 ופרקנה מבר יתחא תפרוק בפרסנה בסף חמש סלעין בסלעי קדשא עשרין מעין הוא: 17 ברם בכרא דתורא או בכרא דאמרא או בכרא דעזא לא תפרוק קדשא אנון ית דמהון תורוק על מדבחא וית תרבהון תסק קרבן לאתקבלא ברענא קדם יי: 18 ובשרהון יהי לך בחדיאי דאכמותא וכשקא דימינא לך יהי: 19 כל אפרשות קדשיא די יפרשו בני ישראל קדם יי יהבית לך ולבניך ולבנתך עמך לקים עלם קים מלח עלם הוא קדם יי לך ולבניך עמך:

10 בקדש הקדשים תאכלנו כל־זכר יאכל אתו קדש יהיה־לך: 11 וזה־לך תרומת מתנם לכל־תנופת בני ישראל לך נתתים ולבניך ולבנתך אתה לחק־עולם כל־טהור בביתך יאכל אתו: 12 כל חלב יצוה וכל־חלב תירוש ודגן ראשיתם אשר־יתנו ליהוה לך נתתים: 13 בפורי כל־אשר בארצם אשר־יביאו ליהוה לך יהיה כל־טהור בביתך יאכלנו: 14 כל־חרם בישראל לך יהיה: 15 כל־פטר רחם לכל־בשר אשר־יקריבו ליהוה באדם ובבהמה יהיה־לך אף א פדה תפדה את בכור האדם ואת בכור־הבהמה הטמאה תפדה: 16 ופרויו מבו־ח־דש תפדה בערבך כסף חמשת שקלים בשקל הקדש עשרים גרה הוא: 17 אף בכור־שור או־בכור פֶּשֶׁב או־בכור עז לא תפדה קדש הם את־דמם תזרק על־המזבח ואת־חלבם תקטיר אִשֶׁה לריח ניחח ליהוה: 18 ובשרם יהיה־לך פחזה התנופה וכשוק הימין לך יהיה: 19 כל א תרומת הקדשים אשר ירימו בני־ישראל ליהוה נתתי לך ולבניך ולבנתך אתה לחק־עולם ברית מלח עולם הוא לפני יהוה לך ולזרעך אתה:

RASHI

אף הבכור נאכל לשני ימים ולילה אחד: לך יהיה. בא רבי עקיבא ולמד: הוסיף לך הכתוב "הויה" אחרת, שלא תאמר: פחזה ושוק של תודה, שאינו נאכל אלא ליום ולילה: 19 כל תרומת הקדשים. מחבתה של פרשה זו — כללה בתחלה, וכללה בשוף, ופרט באמצע: ברית מלח עולם. כרת ברית עם אהרן בדבר הבריא ומתקים ומבריא את אחרים: ברית מלח. בברית הברויה למלח, שאינו מסריח לעולם:

10 בקדש הקדשים תאכלנו וגו'. למד על קדשי קדשים, שאין נאכלין אלא בעזרה ולזכרי כהנה: 11 תרומת מתנם. המורם מן התודה, ומהשקמים, ומאיל נזיר: לכל תנופת. שהרי אלו טעונין תנופה: כל טהור. ולא טמאים. דבר אחר: "כל טהור", לרבות אשתו: 12 ראשיתם. היא תרומה גדולה: 18 פחזה התנופה וכשוק הימין. של שקמים, שנאכלים לפניהם לנשיהם ולבניהם ולעבדיהם לשני ימים ולילה אחד,

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

19 An eternal covenant of salt: The revealed aspects of the Torah are compared to bread and meat, the staples of a healthy diet. The inner dimension of the Torah, Kabbalah and Chasidic teachings, is

compared to salt. Just as salt enhances the taste of the food it touches, so, too, the learning of the inner meaning of the Torah reveals the sweetest aspects of the revealed Torah.⁸²

82. Likutei Torah 2:5c.

10 **you shall eat it** only in the place where **the holiest of the holy** sacrifices may be eaten, the courtyard of the Tabernacle. **Any male priest may eat of it**; this is how it **shall be** treated as **holy by you**.

11 **This shall also be yours: what is separated as the Israelite's gifts to Me from all their wave-offerings**—i.e., one from each of the three sets of 10 loaves accompanying thanksgiving-offerings;⁷¹ the breast and right thigh of personal peace-offerings;⁷² and the breast, right thigh, and foreleg of the peace-offering of the Nazirite and two of its 20 accompanying loaves.⁷³ These offerings are classed as less holy, so **I have given them not only to you and to your sons but also to your daughters with you, as an eternal portion. Any ritually clean member of your household**—including your wives—**may eat it** anywhere in the camp.

12 **The choice portion of the olive oil and the choice portions of the wine and grain, the first of which** the Israelites must give to God⁷⁴—**I have given them to you**.

13 **The first fruit of all that grows in their land, which they must bring to God**⁷⁵—**it shall be yours; any ritually clean member of your household may eat of it**.

14 **Any dedicated entity**⁷⁶ in Israel shall be yours.

15 **Every first issue of the womb of any creature** whose first issue they are required to **present to God**,⁷⁷ **whether of human or beast, shall be yours. However, you must have the firstborn son of a human redeemed, and you may have the firstborn male of the unclean animal** to which this law applies—the donkey⁷⁸—redeemed.

16 **The redemption of the firstborn male human shall be performed from the age of a month, according to the endowment** stated elsewhere,⁷⁹ i.e., **five shekels of silver according to the Sanctuary shekel, which is 20 gerah**.⁸⁰

17 **However, you shall not have a firstborn ox or a firstborn sheep or a firstborn goat redeemed, for they are to be treated as holy sacrifices: their blood shall be sprinkled on the Altar and their fats shall be burned as a fire-offering to please God,**

18 **but their flesh shall be yours.** It is classed as less holy, just **like the waved breast and the right thigh** of personal peace-offerings, and therefore **it shall be yours** to be eaten by yourselves, your wives, your children, and your households, during the two days and intervening night after it is slaughtered.

19 In summary: **I have given all the separated portions of the animals sanctified as offerings that the Israelites set aside for God to you and to your sons and daughters with you, as an eternal portion.** Finally, in order to indicate that the priesthood will remain with Aaron's descendants even after the Temple is destroyed, when they cannot serve actively as priests at all,⁸¹ God said that **"it is an eternal covenant before God** similar to the one He made with salt, that not only never decays but even acts as a preservative, **for you and your descendants with you.** You will retain the priesthood forever, and by guarding the Sanctuary you will preserve the lives of your fellow Jews."

71. Leviticus 7:12-14. 72. Ibid. 7:30-34. 73. Above, 6:19-20. 74. Deuteronomy 18:4. 75. Deuteronomy 26:1-11. 76. Leviticus 27:28. 77. Exodus 13:2, 11-13, 34:19-20. 78. Exodus 13:13, 34:20. 79. Leviticus 27:6. 80. Exodus 30:13. 81. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 23, pp. 123-132.

— ONKELOS —

20 ואמר יי לאהרן בארעהון לא תחסן וחלק לא יהי לך ביניהון מתנן די יקבית לך אנון חלקך ואחסנתך בגו בני ישראל: 21 ולבני לוי הא יקבית כל מעשרא בישראל לאחסנא חלף פלחנהון די אנון פלחין ית פלחן משפן ומנא: 22 ולא יקרבון עוד בני ישראל למשפן ומנא לקבלא חובא לממת: 23 ויפלחון לנאי אנון ית פלחן משפן ומנא ואנון יקבלון חוביהון קים עלם לדריכון ובגו בני ישראל לא יחסנון אחסנא: 24 ארי ית מעשרא דבני ישראל די יפרשון קדם יי אפרשותא יקבית לנאי לאחסנא על כן אמרית להון בגו בני ישראל לא יחסנון אחסנא: 25 ומליל יי עם משה למימר: 26 ועם לנאי תמלל ותימר להון ארי תסבון מן בני ישראל ית מעשרא די יקבית לכון מנהון באחסנתכון ותפרשון מנה אפרשותא קדם יי מעשרא מן מעשרא: 27 ותתחשב לכון אפרשותכון בעבורא מן אדרא וכמלאתא מן מעצרתא: 28 כן תפרשון אף אתון אפרשותא קדם יי מכל מעשרתיכון די תסבון מן בני ישראל ותתנון מנה ית אפרשותא קדם יי לאהרן כדנא: 29 מכל מתנתיכון תפרשון ית כל אפרשותא קדם יי מכל שופרה ית מקדשה מנה:

20 ויאמר יהוה אל-אהרן בארצם לא תנחל וחלק לא-יהיה לך בתוכם אני חלקך ונחלתך בתוך בני ישראל: ם

◆ שביעי 21 ולבני לוי הנה נתתי כל-מעשר בישראל לנחלה חלף עבדתם אשר-הם עבדים את-עבדת אהל מועד: 22 ולא יקרבון עוד בני ישראל אל-אהל מועד לשאת חטא למות: 23 ועבד הלוי הוא את-עבדת אהל מועד והם ישאו עונם חקת עולם לדרתיכם ובתוך בני ישראל לא ינחלו נחלה: 24 כי את-מעשר בני-ישראל אשר ירימו ליהוה תרומה נתתי ללויים לנחלה על-כן אמרתי להם בתוך בני ישראל לא ינחלו נחלה: פ

25 וידבר יהוה אל-משה לאמר: 26 ואל-הלויים תדבר ואמרת אליהם פי-תקחו מאת בני-ישראל את-המעשר אשר נתתי לכם מאתם לנחלתכם והרמתם ממנו תרומת יהוה מעשר מן-המעשר: 27 ונחשב לכם תרומתכם כדגן מן-הגרון וכמלאה מן-היקב: 28 כן תרימו גם-אתם תרומת יהוה מכל מעשרתיכם אשר תקחו מאת בני ישראל ונתתם ממנו את-תרומת יהוה לאהרן הכהן: 29 מכל מתנתיכם תרימו את כל-תרומת יהוה מכל-חלבן את-מקדשו ממנו:

— RASHI —

לתוכו, וכל לשון "יקב" חפירת קרקע הוא, וכן: "יקבי המלך"³⁴, הוא ים אוקיינוס, חפירה שחפר מלכו של עולם: 28 כן תרימו גם אתם. כמו שישראל מרימים מגרנס ומיקביהם, תרימו גם אתם ממעשר שלכם, כי הוא נחלתכם: 29 מכל מתנתיכם תרימו את כל תרומת ה'. בתרומה גדולה הכתוב מדבר, שאם הקדים לוי את הכהן בפרי, וקבל מעשרותיו קדם שיטל כהן תרומה גדולה מן הכרי, צריך להפריש הלוי מן המעשר תחלה אחר מחמשים לתרומה גדולה, ויחזיר ויפריש תרומת מעשר:

20 וחלק לא יהיה לך בתוכם. אף בבזה: 23 והם הלויים ישאו עונם של ישראל, שעליהם להזהיר הזרים מגשת אליהם: 24 אשר ירימו לה' תרומה. הכתוב קראו "תרומה" עד שיפריש ממנו תרומת מעשר: 27 ונחשב לכם תרומתכם כדגן מן הגרון. תרומת מעשר שלכם אסורה לזרים ולטמאין, והיבין עליה מיתה וחמש, בתרומה גדולה שנקראת "ראשית דגן" מן הגרון; וכמלאה מן היקב. בתרומת תירוש ויצהר הנשלת מן היקבים: מלאה. לשון בשול תבואה שנתמלאת: יקב. הוא הבור שלפני הגת, שהיין יורד

34. זכריה יז, י.

20 **GOD** said to Aaron, "I have given you all these gifts in order to relieve you from the burden of farming the land in order to make a living, so that you can devote yourselves to My service on behalf of the people. Therefore, **you shall not inherit any portion of their land, and you shall have no portion among them** in the spoils of war. **I am your inheritance and portion among the Israelites.**

Donations to be Given to the Levites

◆ *Seventh Reading* 21 "And to the Levites I have given all agricultural tithes of Israel⁸³ as an inheritance, in exchange for their service which they perform—the service of the Tent of Meeting.

22 The Levites must ensure that **the lay Israelites no longer approach the Tent of Meeting, lest they become guilty of sin and die.**

23 **The Levites shall perform the service of the Tent of Meeting** on behalf of the people,⁸⁴ **and they will bear the guilt of the people's iniquity** if they enter the Tent; **this is an eternal rule for all generations.** Like the priests, **they shall have no land-inheritance among the Israelites,**

24 **for I have given the tithes of the Israelites to the Levites as an inheritance.** These tithes are not holy (and may be eaten anywhere and in any state of purity), but until the Levites separate the priests' portion (as will be described), this tithe is considered as holy as any other **elevation-offering that any Israelite sets aside for GOD** by virtue of the priests' portion still within it, and the Levites may not eat it. **This is why I have said to them that they shall have no land-inheritance among the lay Israelites."**

The Levites' Donations to the Priests

25 God thus finished addressing Aaron regarding the gifts given to the priests and Levites in exchange for their responsibilities. **GOD** now **spoke to Moses** regarding the Levites' obligation to give a portion of their gifts to the priests, **saying:**

26 "Speak to the Levites and tell them, 'When you take the tithe from the Israelites which I have given you from them as your inheritance, you shall set aside from it a gift for **GOD**, a tithe of the tithe.

27 **Your gift shall be considered for you as holy as the priestly portions** that the laity separate from their agricultural produce, **the grain from the threshing-floor and the produce of the vat**—that is, wine and olive oil—and all the laws that apply to their priestly portion apply to yours.

28 **So shall you too set aside a gift for GOD from all your food supply, which in your case is the tithes you take from the Israelites, and you shall give therefrom GOD's gift to Aaron the priest.**

29 If you receive your tithe from the layperson before he has set aside the priest's portion from his produce, then **from all such gifts, you must set aside all the gifts due to GOD**, i.e., both the priest's portion he has to set aside and the 10 percent of what you have received from him. The priest's portion, **that part of it which is to be consecrated, must be set aside from its choicest portion.'**

83. Leviticus 27:30-31. 84. See above, 3:8.

— ONKELOS —

30 וְתִימַר לְהוֹן בְּאַפְרָשׁוֹתֶיכוֹן
 יֵת שׁוֹפְרָה מִנֶּה וַיִּתְחַשֵּׁב לְלוֹאֵי
 כְּעֵלֶלֶת אֲדָרָא וְכַעֲלֵלֶת מַעֲצָרְתָּא:
 31 וְתִכְלוּן יְתֵהּ בְּכָל אֶתְרָא אֲתוֹן
 וְאַנֶּשׁ בְּתִיכּוֹן אֲרִי אֲנֶרָא הוּא
 לְכוּן חֲלָף פִּלְחִיכּוֹן בְּמִשְׁכּוֹן זְמַנָּא:
 32 וְלֹא תִקְבְּלוּן עֲלוֹהֵי חוֹבָא
 בְּאַפְרָשׁוֹתֶיכוֹן יֵת שׁוֹפְרָה מִנֶּה וַיֵּת
 קִדְשָׁא דְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תַחֲלוּן
 וְלֹא תִמּוֹתוּן:

◆ מַפְטִיר 30 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֱלֹהִים בְּהַרְיִמְכֶם אֶת־חֲלָבּוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ
 וְנִחְשֵׁב לְלוֹיִם כְּתִבּוֹאתָ גֵרְוֹן וְכְתִבּוֹאת יֶקֶב: 31 וְאִכְלֵתֶם
 אֹתוֹ בְּכָל־מְקוֹם אֲתֶם וּבֵיתְכֶם כִּי־שָׁכַר הוּא לָכֶם
 חֲלָף עֲבַדְתֶּם בְּאֶהָל מוֹעֵד: 32 וְלֹא־תִשְׂאוּ עָלָיו חֲטָא
 בְּהַרְיִמְכֶם אֶת־חֲלָבּוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ וְאֶת־קִדְשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא
 תַחֲלִלוּ וְלֹא תִמּוֹתוּ:

צ"ה פסוקים. דניאל סימן.

— RASHI —

חֲלִין, אֶף שֶׁל לִוי חֲלִין: 31 בְּכָל מְקוֹם. אֶפְלוּ בְבֵית
 הַקְּבָרוֹת: 32 וְלֹא תִשְׂאוּ עָלָיו חֲטָא וְגו'. הָא אִם לֹא
 תִרְיִמוּ — תִשְׂאוּ חֲטָא: וְלֹא תִמּוֹתוּ. הָא אִם תַּחֲלִלוּ —
 תִּמּוֹתוּ:

חסלת פרשת קרח

30 בְּהַרְיִמְכֶם אֶת חֲלָבּוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ. לֹא־חָר שְׁתִּרְיִמוּ תְרוּמַת
 מַעֲשֵׂר מִמֶּנּוּ: וְנִחְשֵׁב. הַמּוֹתֵר לְלוֹיִם, חֲלִין גְּמוּרִין:
 כְּתִבּוֹאת גֵרְוֹן. לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁלֹא תֹאמַר: הוֹאִיל וְקִרְאוּ
 הַכְּתוּב "תְרוּמָה", שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "כִּי אֶת מַעֲשֵׂר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲשֶׁר יִרְיִמוּ לְה' תְרוּמָה"³⁵, יְכוּל יֵהָא כְּלוּ אֲסוּר, תִּלְמוּד
 לוֹמַר: "וְנִחְשֵׁב לְלוֹיִם כְּתִבּוֹאת גֵרְוֹן"; מַה שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל

.35. לעיל פסוק כד.

	In Parashat Korach	Gift	Cross References
10	18:13	The first fruits (of wheat, barley, wine, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates)	Deuteronomy 26:1-11
11	18:14	All property dedicated by an individual to the priests	Leviticus 27:28
12	18:15	The redemption money for firstborn Israelites	Exodus 13:2, 11-13; 34:19-20
13	18:15	The firstborn cow, sheep, or goat	Exodus 13:2, 11-13; 34:19-20
14	18:15	The sheep used to redeem the firstborn donkey	Exodus 13:13, 34:20
15	not listed	The skins of ascent-offerings	Leviticus 7:8
16	not listed	The remainder of the <i>log</i> of oil brought by the healed <i>metzora</i> after its prescribed applications	Leviticus 14:10, 21
17	not listed	The remainder of the <i>Omer</i> grain-offering after a fistful of it is offered up on the altar	Leviticus 23:13
18	not listed	The two loaves of <i>Shaavot</i>	Leviticus 23:17, 20
19	not listed	The showbread	Leviticus 24:5-9
20	not listed	One tenth of the tithes that Israelites must give to Levites	Numbers 18:25-32
21	not listed	The first of the dough	Numbers 15:17-21
22	not listed	The first wool shorn from sheep	Deuteronomy 18:4
23	not listed	The shoulder, cheeks, and stomach of every cow, sheep, or goat slaughtered for personal use	Deuteronomy 18:3
24	not listed	The right to purchase an inherited field that has been dedicated to the Temple and has not been redeemed by the Jubilee year	Leviticus 27:21

- ◆ **Maftir 30** Say further to them, regarding the priest's portion they must set aside from their tithes: 'After you set aside its choicest part, the remainder shall be considered for the Levites as non-holy produce from the threshing-floor and as produce from the vat.

31 You and your household may eat it anywhere, for it is your wage in exchange for your service in the Tent of Meeting.

32 After you separate the choicest part from it for the priest, you shall not be guilty of any sin on account of eating or defiling the rest of it. But before that, you will incur guilt by eating or defiling it; you will have stolen the property of the priests, and you will have to pay for it. Similarly, you shall not profane the sanctified produce of the Israelites—their tithes that they have given you but from which you have not yet set aside the priests' portion—by eating them, so that you shall not die.'⁸⁵

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Korach* may be found on p. 241.

The *Haftarah* for *Rosh Chodesh* may be found on p. 263.



	In <i>Parashat Korach</i>	Gift	Cross References
1	18:9	The flesh of the communal peace-offerings of Shavuot	Leviticus 23:19-20
2	18:9	The remainder of Israelites' grain-offerings after a fistful is offered up on the altar	Leviticus 2:3,10, 6:9-11
3	18:9	The flesh of sin-offerings	Leviticus 6:19, 22
4	18:9	The flesh of guilt-offerings	Leviticus 7:6
5	18:9	Property stolen from a convert who died in the interim and left no heirs	Numbers 5:8
6	18:11	One from each of the three sets of ten loaves accompanying thanksgiving offerings	Leviticus 7:12-14
7	18:11	The breast and right thigh of personal peace-offerings	Leviticus 7:30-34
8	18:11	The breast, right thigh, and foreleg of the peace-offering of the Nazirite and two of its twenty accompanying loaves	Numbers 6:19-20
9	18:12	<i>Terumah</i> : a portion of every Israelite's olive oil, wine, and grain	Deuteronomy 18:4

Figure 1: The Twenty-four Priestly Gifts

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

30 The Priestly Gifts: Although the physical priesthood in the Temple was reserved for the descendants of Aaron, the spiritual priesthood is open to all. God called the Jewish people as a whole "a kingdom of priests." As Maimonides⁸⁶ explains, "Anybody who dedicates himself and understands the intellectual imperative to separate himself—to stand before God and serve Him, and to know

God—has become sanctified like the Holy of Holies...and will be granted all of his physical needs, just as they were provided for the priests and Levites."

In other words, if we recognize the purpose of our creation, which is to serve God,⁸⁷ and dedicate ourselves to accomplishing that purpose, we are assured of the best of everything at all times.⁸⁸

85. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 38, pp. 65-71. 86. *Mishneh Torah, Shemittah VeYovel* 13:13. 87. *Kidushin* 4:14. 88. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, pp. 690-691.



Korach

הפטרות
Haftarot



Haftarah for Korach

1 Samuel 11:14–12:22

In *parashat Korach*, the people challenge Moses' authority, which God then defends dramatically. This demonstrates the Moses' authority is derived solely from his subjection to God. In the *haftarah*, Samuel anoints Saul, the people's first king, but reminds them that his authority, too, is legitimate only insofar as it is derived from his subjection to God.

11:14 After being governed by the judges, the Jewish people asked for a king. Although the Torah provided for the institution of kingship,¹¹ the people's motivation was not totally pure. Nonetheless, God told the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king of the Jewish people. Samuel did so, but it was only after the people were united in their support of Saul that Samuel said to the people, "Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew there the kingdom publicly." 15 All the people went to Gilgal, and they made Saul king there before God in Gilgal, and they slaughtered peace-offerings there before God, and Saul and all the people rejoiced greatly. 12:1 Samuel then said to all Israel, "Behold, I have hearkened to your voice, to everything which you have said to me, and I have made a king to reign over you. 2 Now, behold the king is walking before you. As for me, although I am only fifty, I have aged prematurely and become old and hoary, and my sons are here with you to take over for me after I die.¹² I have walked before you, leading you from my youth and until this day. 3 Now, here I am. Bear witness against me before God and before His anointed king: Whose ox did I take to perform my personal work? Whose

11:14 וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־הָעָם לְכוּ וְנִלְכְּהָ הַגִּלְגָּל וְנִחַדְשׁ שָׁם הַמְּלוּכָה: 15 וַיֵּלְכוּ כָּל־הָעָם הַגִּלְגָּל וַיַּמְלִכוּ שָׁם אֶת־שָׁאוּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּגִלְגָּל וַיִּזְבְּחוּ שָׁם זִבְחִים שְׁלָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׂמַח שָׁם שָׁאוּל וְכָל־אֲנָשָׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד־מְאֹד: 12:1 וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְתִּי בְקוֹלְכֶם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־אָמַרְתֶּם לִי וְאִמְלִיךְ עֲלֵיכֶם מֶלֶךְ: 2 וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ | מִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם וְאֲנִי זָקֵנִי וְיֹשְׁבֵתִי וּבְנֵי הַחֵם אֵתְכֶם וְאֲנִי הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לִפְנֵיכֶם מִנְעָרֵי עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 3 הֲנִנִי עֲנּוּ בִי נָגֵד יְהוָה וְנָגֵד מְשִׁיחוֹ אֶת־שׁוּר | מִי לְקַחְתִּי וְחִמּוֹר מִי לְקַחְתִּי וְאֵת־מִי עֲשִׂקְתִּי אֶת־מִי רְצוֹתִי וּמִי־דָמִי לְקַחְתִּי כִּפֹּר וְאֲעֲלִים עֵינֵי בּוֹ וְאָשִׁיב לָכֶם: 4 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא עֲשִׂקְתָּנוּ וְלֹא רְצוֹתָנוּ וְלֹא־לְקַחְתָּ מִי־דָם אִישׁ מֵאוֹמָה: 5 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם עַד יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעַד מְשִׁיחוֹ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי לֹא מְצַאתֶם בְּיָדִי מְאוֹמָה וַיֹּאמֶר עַד:

donkey did I take to travel from town to town when serving you? Although I should have purchased a donkey for this purpose from public funds, I used my own personal donkey. Whom did I rob? Whom did I oppress? From whose hand did I take a ransom in order that I hide my eyes from the truth when passing judgment? If I did any of these things, tell me, and I shall restore to you." 4 They said, "You did not rob us, nor did you oppress us, neither did you take anything from anyone's hand." 5 He said to them, "God is a witness against you, and His anointed king is witness this day, that you have not found anything untoward in my hand." A voice issued from heaven, and it said, "I bear witness."

11. Deuteronomy 17:14-20. 12. See Judges 8:1-5; *Shabbat* 56a; *Bemidbar Rabbah* 10:5.

6 Samuel said to the people, "It is God who prepared Moses and Aaron for their mission, and who brought your forefathers up from the Land of Egypt. 7 Now, stand and I shall reason with you before God, and I shall reason with you before God, concerning all the righteous acts which He did to you and to your forefathers. 8 When Jacob came to Egypt, and your forefathers cried out to God, God sent Moses and Aaron, and they brought your forefathers out of Egypt, and they settled them in this place. 9 But your forefathers forgot God, their God, and He delivered them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Chatzor,¹³ and into the hand of the Philistines,¹⁴ and into the hand of the king of Moab,¹⁵ and they waged war with them. 10 They cried out to God, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have forsaken God, and have served idols, such as the Baal-idols and Ashtarot-idols. Now, save us from the hand of our enemies, and we shall serve You.' 11 God sent Gideon,¹⁶ also known as Yerubaal;¹⁷ Samson,¹⁸ also known as Bedan, for he was from the tribe of Dan;¹⁹ Yiftach;²⁰ and myself, Samuel,²¹ and through these judges He saved you from the hand of your enemies round about, and you dwelt in safety. 12 When you saw that Nachash, the king of Ammon, came upon you, you said to me, 'No, judges and prophets are not enough. Rather, a king shall rule over us.'²² But God, your God, is your king. 13 So now, behold the king whom you have chosen, whom you have requested. Behold, God has appointed a king over you. 14 If you will fear God, serve Him, listen to His voice, and not rebel against the commandments of God, both you and the king who reigns over you will be granted long lives to follow God, your God. 15 But if you will not listen to the voice of God and rebel against the commandments of God, God's hand will be against you as it was against your fathers. And your fathers will have to suffer the disgrace of their graves being dug up.

6 וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל־הָעָם יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלָה אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: 7 וְעַתָּה הִתְיַצְבוּ וְאִשְׁפָּטָה אֶתְכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֵת כָּל־עֲדוּקוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: 8 כַּאֲשֶׁר־בָּא יַעֲקֹב מִצְרַיִם וַיִּזְעֲקוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּצִיאוּ אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁבוּם בְּמִקְוֹם הַזֶּה: 9 וַיִּשְׁכְּחוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם וַיִּמְכְּרוּ אֶתְּם בְּיַד סִיסְרָא שַׂר־צֹבָא הַצּוּר וּבְיַד־פְּלִשְׁתִּים וּבְיַד מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב וַיִּלְחֲמוּ בָּם: 10 וַיִּזְעֲקוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲטֹאֲנוּ כִּי עֲזַבְנוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וְנַעֲבֹד אֶת־הַבְּעֻלִים וְאֶת־הָעִשְׂתָרוֹת וְעַתָּה הִצִּילְנוּ מִיַּד אֹיְבֵינוּ וְנַעֲבֹדְךָ: 11 וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת־יִרְבֶּעֵל וְאֶת־בֶּרֶךְ וְאֶת־יִפְתָּח וְאֶת־שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּצַּל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסָּבִיב וַתִּשְׁבוּ בְּטָח: 12 וַתִּרְאוּ כִּי נָחָשׁ מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹן בָּא עֲלֵיכֶם וַתֹּאמְרוּ לִי לֹא כִּי־מֶלֶךְ יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ וַיְהוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִלְּכֶכֶם: 13 וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתֶּם אֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלְתֶּם וְהִנֵּה נָתַן יְהוָה עֲלֵיכֶם מֶלֶךְ: 14 אִם־תִּירְאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֹתוֹ וַיִּשְׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלוֹ וְלֹא תִמְרוּ אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וְהִיתֶם גַּם־אַתֶּם וְגַם־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ עֲלֵיכֶם אַחֵר יְהוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 15 וְאִם־לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וּמְרִיתֶם אֶת־פִּי יְהוָה וְהִיתָה יַד־יְהוָה בָּכֶם וּבְאֲבוֹתֵיכֶם:

13. Judges 4:1-4. 14. Judges 10:6-8. 15. Judges 3:12-14. 16. Judges 6:11-8:32. 17. Judges 6:32. 18. Judges 14-16. 19. Bedan is seen as contraction of ben-Dan, "a son of Dan." 20. Judges 11:1-12:7. 21. 1 Samuel 1-11. 22. 1 Samuel 11:1-12.

16 Even now, stand and see this great thing which God will do before your eyes. 17 Is it not today the summer, the season of the wheat harvest? Nonetheless, I shall call to God, and He will send thunder and rain, notwithstanding that rain at this time of year is a bad sign and God does not punish people for no reason. Thus, you shall know and see that God answers me, and it was therefore unnecessary to ask God for a king. Therefore, the evil that you have done in the eyes of God is great, namely, to request a king for yourselves.” 18 Samuel then called to God, and God sent thunder and rain on that day, and all the people greatly feared God and Samuel. 19 All the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to God, your God, and let us not die. For we have added evil to all our sins, namely, to request a king for ourselves.” 20 Samuel said to the people, “Fear not. You have done all this evil, but do not turn aside from following God, and serve God with all your heart. 21 Do not turn aside, for then you will go after vain things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are vain. 22 Do not worry, for God will not forsake His people for His great name’s sake; to do so would tarnish His reputation amongst the nations of the earth. For God has sworn to make you a people for Himself.”

16 גַּם-עַתָּה הִתְיַצְבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת-הַדָּבָר
הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה לְעֵינֵיכֶם:
17 הַלֹּא קִצְרֵי-חַטִּיִּים הַיּוֹם אֶקְרָא אֶל-
יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן קָלוֹת וּמָטָר וַדַּעוּ וּרְאוּ כִּי-
רַעַתְכֶם רַבָּה אֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה
לְשֹׂאֵל לָכֶם מֶלֶךְ: 18 וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוּאֵל
אֶל-יְהוָה וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה קָלוֹת וּמָטָר בַּיּוֹם
הַהוּא וַיִּירָא כָּל-הָעָם מְאֹד אֶת-יְהוָה
וְאֶת-שְׁמוּאֵל: 19 וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל-הָעָם אֶל-
שְׁמוּאֵל הַתְּפִלָּל בְּעַד-עַבְדֶּיךָ אֶל-
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְאֶל-נַמְוֹת כִּי-יִסְפְּנוּ עַל-
כָּל-חַטֹּאתֵינוּ רַעַה לְשֹׂאֵל לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ:
20 וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ
אִתְּכֶם עֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל-הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת אִךְ
אֶל-תִּסּוּרוּ מֵאַחֲרֵי יְהוָה וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת-
יְהוָה בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם: 21 וְלֹא תִסּוּרוּ כִּי
אַחֲרֵי הַתְּהוּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יוֹעִילוּ וְלֹא יַעֲלוּ
כִּי-תְהוּ הַמָּה: 22 כִּי לֹא יִפְּשׂ יְהוָה אֶת-
עַמּוֹ בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל כִּי הוֹאִיל יְהוָה
לַעֲשׂוֹת אִתְּכֶם לוֹ לְעָם:



Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

