

# OHRNET

THE OHR SOMAYACH TORAH MAGAZINE ON THE INTERNET

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### TAKE ONE

*“And Korach took” (16:1)*

**M**y father, *kayn ayin hara*, is one of the most generous people in the world. He loves to give. Once I mentioned to him that I was interested in buying a camera. He said to me “Which one do you want? You can have any camera you like.” “Any one?” I asked. “Yes,” he said.

During the next couple of weeks I scrutinized camera advertisements, agonizing over my choice. Finally, I made my decision and my father promptly went out and bought it for me. I was overjoyed with it. I used to take it out of the box and just polish it and then put it back again.

At the time a friend said to me “You know, your father is going to get much more than you ever will from that camera, because he’s never going to take a bad picture with it.”

Giving is a spiritual thing. When we give, whatever we give, we are giving a piece of ourselves. Taking, however, always relates to the physical. It centers around the gift itself. How big is it? What make is it? Does it have Dolby®? Surround-Sound®? But there’s another side to taking which is more insidious.

Actions habituate our personality. Actions turn us into who we are. Taking leads to wanting to take. And the desire to take is insatiable.

Unlike a bodily appetite such as hunger which can be satiated, the desire to take is a beast which demands constant feeding. In

essence, this is because the nature of taking is always focused on what is outside myself, wanting what I don’t have. The desire to take is to enlarge my borders, to enlarge who I am. As soon as I have taken something, it’s part of me; therefore, I’m not interested in it anymore. It becomes part of the furniture, part of the landscape. Taking focuses on engulfing what’s outside. Thus, as soon as I swallow up what was outside myself, it ceases to interest me

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“Giving is a spiritual thing. When we give, whatever we give, we are giving a piece of ourselves.”

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— I already have it. What I’m really interested in is what’s still out there. It’s a never ending, self-perpetuating treadmill.

At the beginning of this week’s Parsha, the Torah says, “And Korach took...” The sentence has no object. The Torah never tells us what it was that Korach took. Rather, Korach was the archetypal taker, hooked on

a drug which requires bigger and bigger doses — the desire to engulf and devour. Seeing as this was his nature, it was inevitable that sooner or later he would want everything. For taking is insatiable.

### A CHOLENT OF EMBARRASSMENT

*“And On ben Peles...” (16:1)*

**R**eb Avigdor was known to be a man who ate the bare minimum. Such was his control over his physical desires that his diet consisted of a few dry pieces of coarse black bread dipped in salt and small quantities of water.

Only on Shabbos did he allow himself the gastronomic excess of a single potato from the cholent.

One Shabbos Reb Avigdor was sitting as an honored guest at the table of a wealthy businessman. The cholent was brought to the table and placed in front of the host. As a mark of respect, the businessman took the cholent and placed it in front of Reb Avigdor. Reb Avigdor removed his customary solitary potato from the cholent. He then passed the cholent back to the businessman, and raised the potato to his mouth. He bit into the potato, his eyes narrowing slightly. Suddenly, he grabbed the cholent from the businessman’s hands and put it back on the table in front of him. He proceeded to ladle vast amounts of cholent onto his plate. Higher and higher grew the pile until

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

**K**orach, Dasan and Aviram, and 250 of the leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. The rebellion results in their being swallowed up by the earth. Many people of the nation resent the death of Korach and his followers, holding Moshe responsible. Hashem's "anger" is manifest by a plague which besets the nation, and many thousands perish. Moshe intercedes once again for the people, instructs Aharon to make atonement for them, and the plague is halted. Hashem then commands that staffs, each inscribed with the name of a different tribe, be placed in the

*Mishkan*, the Tabernacle. In the morning, the staff of Levi, bearing Aharon's name, sprouts, buds, blossoms and yields ripe almonds. This provides Divine confirmation that the Tribe of Levi is selected for the Priesthood, and also verifies Aharon's position as the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest. The specific duties of the *levi'im* and *kohanim* are stated. The *kohanim* were not to be landowners, but were to receive their sustenance from the tithes and other mandated gifts brought by the people. Also taught in this week's Parsha are laws concerning the first fruits, the redemption of the firstborn, and other offerings.

## HAFTORAH: SHMUEL I 1:14-12:22

### OF KINGS & KINGDOMS

**"Then Samuel said to the people 'Come, let us go to Gilgal, and let us renew the kingdom there.'"**

**R**osh Hashana is a coronation. On Rosh Hashana, we crown Hashem as our King. But isn't it our duty to acknowledge Hashem's kingship every single day of the year? What is special when we "crown" Hashem on Rosh Hashana?

In this week's Haftorah, as Rashi tells us, Shaul had to "renew" the

kingdom — revitalize and re-secure it — because people were making claims against it.

Similarly on Rosh Hashana, arraigned against us are the accusing angels which we have created by our own transgressions. They accuse us, as it were, of being disloyal to the King by failing to observe His commands; and as the Sages say, "there is no king without a people." Hashem runs the world whether we acknowledge it or not. But Hashem is only a King to the extent that we make our-

selves subjects. When we transgress the orders of the King we "diminish" Hashem's Kingship. By our sins, Hashem's Kingship is, as it were, threatened.

This accusation of our disloyalty forces us to re-new our commitment to Hashem as our King and we re-dedicate ourselves to Him. We loyally accept upon ourselves His dominion, and thereby we renew Hashem's Kingdom.

• Based on Admor MiGur, zatzal, in *Mayana shel Torah*

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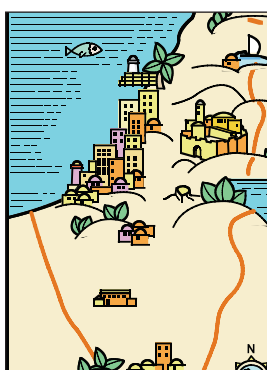
## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

"...and My eyes and My heart will be there all of the days."  
(Melachim I 9:3)

**T**his Divine promise in regard to the Beis Hamikdash which King Solomon built in



Jerusalem is understood by outstanding commentators as a signal to all Jews to constantly turn their eyes and hearts to Eretz Yisrael and to always desire to return there.

• Rabbi Yonasan Eybshutz in "Ya'aros Devash"

לע"נ  
הרב אליהו שרגא בן הרב אברהם ז"ל  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Reb Avigdor could barely be seen behind the mountain of cholent.

Then, with a look of rare relish on his face, he ate his way through the entire cholent. The entire table was aghast. They sat there transfixed, like a picture. Eventually, he finished the cholent.

“That was delicious. Thank you very much.”

Afterwards, when they were alone, his wife asked Reb Avigdor what had possessed him at the meal. He replied to her: “As soon as I tasted the potato, I realized that something was very wrong with the cholent. The potato had an overpowering taste of kerosene. If the businessman had tasted the cholent he would have been very embarrassed that he had fed his guest something that was impossible to eat. So I decided rather than let him be embarrassed, it was better to embarrass myself.”

As part of the investiture of the *levi'im*, their entire bodies required shaving. When Korach returned home bald from top to toe, his wife took one look at him and roared with laughter. She told him, in no uncertain terms, that he looked ridiculous. Korach was deeply embarrassed. He reflected on the ceremony: It was Moshe who had commanded the shaving of the *levi'im*. Korach decided that Moshe had invented the entire shaving ceremony just to embarrass him. The fact that there were 21,999 other *levi'im* who had also been shaved, made no difference to him. As far as

Korach was concerned, Moshe was prepared to go to any lengths to embarrass him and make him look ridiculous in the eyes of the Jewish People. This embarrassment was the last straw for Korach. He decided to mount an overt rebellion against Moshe.

Contrast the behavior of Korach's wife with another wife in this week's parsha: The wife of On ben Peles. On ben Peles was one of the original conspirators with Korach. However, after the first verse of the Parsha, his name disappears from the story. Our Sages teach us that his wife was a wise woman who dissuaded him from involvement in the rebellion. Not only this, but to ward off the other conspirators she deliberately embarrassed herself by sitting at the opening of their tent with her hair uncovered so that the conspirators would not come close to them.

Some people will do anything to avoid embarrassment. The question is, whose embarrassment are you avoiding — your own, or someone else's?

## FOUNDATION

“Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi...” (16:1)

**B**uilding skyscrapers is a taxing job. When you cast the foundations of a tower, they have to be true and square. Every step in the initial building of a high-rise block has to be precise. If the building is out of alignment at this point, even by a couple of centimeters, then by

the time it reaches the ninety-eighth floor, that discrepancy will have multiplied to meters.

At the beginning of this week's Parsha, the Torah traces Korach's lineage: “Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi.” Why doesn't it trace Korach back to Yaakov? Why does the Torah stop at Levi?

Rashi tells us that Yaakov pleaded that his name would not be connected with Korach's insurrection, and that is why Yaakov's name is not mentioned here. But essentially, what did this achieve? Doesn't everyone know who Levi's father is? The book of Bereishis is replete with references to Levi being Yaakov's son. You don't have to be a genealogical sleuth to work out that Korach was descended from Yaakov.

So what was Yaakov's plea all about?

Yaakov prayed that the flaw of divisiveness that was manifested in Korach should not stem from him. Yaakov was founding the towering edifice called the Jewish People. He prayed that he should be free of the blemish of divisiveness, so that his progeny would reach their appointed task without deviation; that they would go right to the top of the skyscraper of history.

Sources:

- **Take One** - Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Rabbi C.Z. Senter, Reb Simcha Rosen
- **A Cholent Of Embarrassment** - heard from Rabbi Reuven Lauffer
- **Foundation** - Rabbi C.Z. Senter in the name of Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz

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## WEEKLY DAF

ERUVIN 49 - 55

### WHAT MAKES AN ERUV TICK

When more than one house opens into a courtyard, it is forbidden to carry anything from these houses into the courtyard on Shabbos even if it is completely enclosed. This rabbinical ban is based on the similarity this situation bears to carrying from a private domain to a public one, which is forbidden by Torah Law. The shared courtyard has the appearance of a public domain, while each separate house is similar to a private one. If carrying will be done from house to courtyard, there is a concern that people will mistakenly extend this carrying into the street as well.

The Sages, therefore, insisted that an *eruv chatzeiros* be made. To do this, each householder contributes some bread (or the flour or money which will be used to create the bread) which is placed before Shabbos in one of the houses. This symbolically makes that house the residence of all the householders for this Shabbos. Since they are now considered as sharing the same home and courtyard, there is no longer a danger that carrying from one to the other will be confused with carrying from a private domain to a public one.

But what is the legal mechanism for each of the householders becoming a virtual partner in the house where the *eruv* bread is placed?

The Sage Shmuel views it as an act of acquisition by which each householder gains a share of the house through his contribution. Why did the Sages insist on bread rather than money as an instrument of transaction? Because money is not readily available on *erev Shabbos*, while bread is.

Another approach is taken by the Sage Rabbah who sees the *eruv* as an expression of residence. Since a person's mind is focused on where his food is, we consider every contributor of food as actually living in the house where this food is located.

The *gemara* lists several halachic ramifications of the differing views. According to Shmuel, the *eruv* must have the minimal monetary value of a *prutah* to be valid as an instrument of transaction, and a non-food item may be used. According to Rabbah — and this is the ruling of the *Shulchan*

*Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 366:3) — the *eruv* must consist of bread, because only the location of a person's meal determines what he considers his residence. And there is no need for this food to have any minimal monetary value in order to achieve this goal.

• *Eruvin* 49a

### THE SLOW LEARNER

Rabbi Preida had a student to whom he had to teach the same material 400 times before the student grasped it. One day he informed his student that he would be leaving earlier than usual in order to take care of a certain mitzvah. Although Rabbi Preida still managed to teach him the day's lesson 400 times, the student failed to understand.

"What happened?" asked Rabbi Preida?

"Ever since you, my master, told me you would be leaving early," replied the disciple, "I kept thinking you were about to leave and I could not concentrate."

"Set your mind to your study," said Rabbi Preida, "and I will teach you another 400 times."

A voice from Heaven, expressing Divine pleasure with Rabbi Preida's act, made him an unusual offer:

"What do you prefer as a reward — an additional 400 years of life, or a guarantee of a place in the World to Come for you and your entire generation?"

"If it is my choice," he replied, "I prefer that I and my entire generation merit the World to Come."

Then Hashem spoke and commanded His angels:

"Give him another 400 years of life and the World to Come for him and his generation."

This touching Talmudic tale provides an important lesson in how educators should view the challenge of teaching a slow learner: A student with the tenacity to study something 400 times, and even 800 times if necessary, will achieve his goal despite his handicap, if he has a teacher with the patience to teach the same material over and over again. Such patience in transmitting Hashem's Torah to even the slowest learner gains a reward of long life in this world while the principle credit remains for the World to Come.

• *Eruvin* 54b

### BONUS QUESTION?

#### SHERLOX HOLMES AND THE INSURRECTION MYSTERY

"I'm baffled!" said Watstein. "The text says: **'And Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi, rebelled (literally 'took'), and Dasan and Aviram... (Numbers 16:1).'**' Rashi explains that Dasan and Aviram joined Korach because they lived near him, and therefore they were influenced to join in his rebellion."

"Is that surprising?" asked world famous detextive Sherlock Holmes.

"Do Dasan and Aviram need an excuse for their rebellion against Moshe? Dasan and Aviram were Moshe's mortal enemies! They informed against him to Pharaoh in Egypt. They challenged him when Pharaoh increased the workload. And they were the very ones who tried to discredit him by leaving

the manna overnight! Why does Rashi insist that they joined Korach because they lived near him?"

Sherlock raised an eyebrow. "Why dwell on the past, Dr. Watstein? At Mount Sinai, the entire nation, including Dasan and Aviram, united in unparalleled oneness and brotherly love. Perhaps, if not for Korach, Dasan and Aviram would have retained this feeling. If not for their proximity to Korach, perhaps they would never have joined him."

"Perhaps! And perhaps not!" cried Watstein. "Rashi, however, is not in the business of speculating! Rashi is informing us of a fact: Dasan and Aviram's involvement resulted from their proximity to Korach, and not brought about by their own initiative. How does Rashi know this? What hint is there in the verse itself?"

"You're in a singular mood today Dr. Watstein. Why can't you figure it out..."

answer on page eight



## PARSHA Q&A ?

1. According to Rashi, where can you look to find a nice explanation of this week's *Parsha*?
2. What did Korach "take"?
3. Why is Yaakov's name not mentioned in Korach's genealogy?
4. What motivated Korach to rebel?
5. What warning did Moshe give the rebels regarding the offering of the incense?
6. Who was as great as Moshe and Aharon?
7. What event did Korach not foresee?
8. What does the phrase *rav lachem* mean in this week's *Parsha*? (Give two answers.)
9. What lands are described in this week's *Parsha* as "flowing with milk and honey"?
10. What did Korach do the night before the final confrontation?
11. Before what age is a person not punished by the Heavenly Tribunal for his sins?
12. The censers used by Korach's assembly were made into an overlay for the *mizbe'ach*. This was to serve as a warning. What was the purpose of the sign?
13. What happens to one who rebels against the institution of *kehuna*? Who suffered such a fate?
14. Why *specifically* was incense used to stop the plague?
15. Why was Aharon's staff placed in the middle of the other eleven staffs?
16. Aharon's staff was kept as a sign. What did it signify?
17. Why are the 24 gifts for the *kohanim* taught in this week's *Parsha*?
18. Who may eat the *kodshei kodashim* (most holy sacrifices) and where must they be eaten?
19. Why is Hashem's covenant with the *kohanim* called "a covenant of salt"?
20. What is a "yekev"?

## I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

Korach's followers attacked Moshe with their mouths, making fun and provoking rebellion. Their sin was compounded by their lowly spiritual stature compared to that of Moshe. They were punished measure for measure: The ground — the "lowly of lowlies" — opened its "mouth" and swallowed them.

• Abarbanel

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 16:1 - Midrash Rabbi Tanchuma.
2. 16:1 - Korach "took himself" out of the community in order to incite dissension.
3. 16:1 - Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach's rebellion (*Bereishis* 49:6).
4. 16:1 - Korach was jealous that Elizafan ben Uziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehas instead of himself.
5. 16:6 - Only one person would survive.
6. 16:7 - Shmuel *Hanavi*.
7. 16:7 - That his sons would repent. (Shmuel and the 24 groups of *levi'im* were their descendants.)
8. 16:7,3 - *Rav lachem* appears twice in this week's *Parsha*. It means "much more than enough greatness have you taken for yourself (16:3)" and "It is a great thing I have said to you (16:17)."
9. 16:12 - Egypt and Canaan.
10. 16:19 - Korach went from tribe to tribe in order to rally support for himself.
11. 16:27 - Twenty years old.
12. 17:3 - To serve as a remembrance of the challenge to the *kehuna* and that the rebels were burned.
13. 17:5 - He is stricken with *tzara'as*, as was King Uziyahu (*Divrei HaYamim* II 26:16-19).
14. 17:13 - Because the people were deprecating the incense offering, saying that it caused the death of two of Aharon's sons and also the death of 250 of Korach's followers. Therefore, Hashem demonstrated that the incense offering was able to avert death, and it is sin, not incense, which causes death.
15. 17:21 - So people would not say that Aharon's staff bloomed because Moshe placed it closer to the *Shechina*.
16. 17:25 - That only Aharon and his children were selected for the *kehuna*.
17. 18:8 - Since Korach claimed the *kehuna*, the Torah emphasizes Aharon's and his descendants' rights to *kehuna* by recording the gifts given to them.
18. 18:10 - Male *kohanim* may eat them and only in the *azara* (fore-court of the *Beis Hamikdash*).
19. 18:19 - Just as salt never spoils, so this covenant will never be rescinded.
20. 18:27 - The vat in front of the wine press into which the wine flows.

## RABBI BEN E. DICTION

**Name@Withheld from Thornhill, Ontario** wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
I recently got a blessing from a Chassidic Rabbi. This blessing was quite astonishing (in a good way). What is the significance of a blessing from a Chassidic Rabbi?

Dear Name@Withheld,

In our prayers we say G-d “does the will of those who fear Him.” As our Sages teach: A tzaddik (righteous person) decrees, and Hashem fulfills. Also: “Anyone who has a sick person in his household should go to a *chacham* (a wise person) to pray for him.”

Grand Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Horowitz (the “Bostoner Rebbe”) says that a Chassidic Rabbi is in many respects like a plumber. Hashem wants only to bestow goodness upon us, and all a person needs to do is make himself into a vessel to receive the good. But our bad deeds “jam up” the pipes through which Divine goodness flows. A Chassidic Rabbi “unclogs” these pipes for the person.

A righteous person has a power of prayer more than most of us. Torah scholars (Chassidic or not) who have virtually perfected their character are known to have such powers. Until his passing several years ago, tens of thousands flocked to Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky (the “Steipler”) for his blessing.

It’s known that prior to their highly dangerous but successful air strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1980, the Israeli pilots appeared before the Steipler and asked for his blessing. He told them “go in peace and return in peace.”

Sources:

- Bava Batra 116a
- Ta’anit 23a

## SURVIVAL OF THE JEWS

**Sam Sherman from Brantford, Ontario <trapro@execulink.com>** wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
I go to a private high school and I’m the only Jew. I always answer my friends’ questions about Judaism, but I couldn’t answer this one that they had asked me the other day and I was wondering if you could help me out. The question was “How come the Jewish people are still around after the thousands of years of persecution, enslavement, mass murder and all.” I was stumped.

Dear Sam Sherman,

The Torah has kept us together, giving us a moral, intellectual and social structure, and giving us purpose and meaning in life. But more importantly, G-d has helped us survive, in order for us to accomplish our purpose, which is the propagation of ethical monotheism.

I suggest downloading a book from our website (it’s free) called “Living Up to the Truth” by Rabbi Dr. Dovid Gottlieb:

[www.ohr.org.il/special/books/gott/truth.htm](http://www.ohr.org.il/special/books/gott/truth.htm)

## UNVEILING

**Name@Withheld from Merrick, NY <NameWithheld@aol.com>** wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Please excuse me if I in any way insult or embarrass you or myself. I am of little means and have had no formal instruction in the Jewish ways. As a child I attended religious instruction in the Bronx, New York. For my Bar-Mitzvah I received some private instruction in the reading of the necessary prayers and portion of the Torah I

was to read. That is the extent of my religious instruction.

The problem my brother and I face is that my mother died a year ago and we will be holding the unveiling of her stone soon. Neither of us are members of any congregation and have no access to a Rabbi. Equally important, after the cost of the burial and the cost of the stone we do not have \$500 to “hire” a Rabbi for the unveiling ceremony. Are there some prayers we can read aloud at the unveiling so that we do not disgrace the honor of our mother? Please be so kind as to advise what we can do? I would be so very grateful.

Dear Name@Withheld,

There is no need for the services to be conducted by a Rabbi. You and your brother will do perfectly. Go to a Jewish book store and buy a small prayer-book containing the appropriate prayers and the proper instructions.

It would be good to bring to the ceremony another few friends (10 Jewish male adults including you and your brother). May G-d console you both, together with the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

## SILVER WHERE?

**Yaakov Bock from Brooklyn, NY <ilduce@panix.com>** wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
I hear stories about people accidentally using a dairy fork with a meat meal, or vice versa, and sticking it in a flower pot to render it kosher. What’s the story with planting silverware for kashrut?

Dear Yaakov Bock,

The idea you heard about is often misunderstood. It is called *ne’itza* (plunging).

*Ne’itza* is sometimes necessary to

cleanse knives of tiny particles of oily residue. This is more true of knives, since people tend to scrub them more gingerly than other silverware. If the knife is plunged into firm earth ten times it is assumed to be clean.

This only cleans the surface. It does not, however, expunge an absorbed flavor. For instance, if a milk knife cuts hot meat, the knife absorbs meat flavor. Plunging it into firm earth doesn't help in this case; rather, the knife must be cleaned and immersed in boiling water.

Source:

• Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 89

## NAME THAT TUNE

**Peter Fröhlich from Switzerland**  
<pfroehlich@paus.ch> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,  
Shalom. As a harpist I am interested in those psalms, which David once played before King Saul. Do you know if some of these original psalms in the original tunes are still known? Three years ago I was there in Israel. I got some psalm-songs in a museum in Jerusalem, but I am not sure if

they are original. Many greetings.

Dear Peter Fröhlich,

I don't know what songs or melodies David sang for King Saul.

In a traditional book of the Bible in Hebrew, you will find markings on most of the words. These markings are the cantillation symbols which indicate the melody.

There are four different groups of melodies indicated by these symbols:

- The Pentateuch
- The Prophets
- The Five Scrolls
- The Books of Job, Proverbs, and Psalms

The melodies of the first three groups are well known and used. There are various customs regarding these melodies.

The melody for Job, Proverbs and Psalms has unfortunately been forgotten by most of Jewry. Yemenite Jews, however, have a traditional melody for these books as well.

Ever heard the expression "soul music?" It's a Jewish idea: Our sources say that the melody is to the written words of Torah what the soul is to the body.

**PUBLIC DOMAIN**  
Comments, quibbles and reactions concerning previous "Ohrnet" features

**Re: Salt In Bread (Ohrnet Behar):**

Another reason I have heard for why salt was offered with each offering: The world is composed of three parts: sea, *midbar* (desert) and arable, inhabited land. The Torah was given in the *midbar* and all of the sacrifices come from the land (in addition, the *Beit Hamikdash* was built in an inhabited place). So the sea came to Hashem and complained that it was being left out. To placate the sea (or to ensure the completeness that the offerings are supposed to create) salt was offered with the offerings in the *Beit Hamikdash* according to the Torah given in the *Midbar*.

Another explanation that comes to mind is: salty tears as in sowing with tears and reaping with joy. So we offer the tears with the fruit of our labors acknowledging that it all comes from Hashem. Thanks for an entertaining and informative email publication.

• Nancy Wells <nwells@objs.com>

**Re: Dove Peace Symbol (Ohrnet Bechukosai):**

Regarding the dove as a symbol of peace, I draw attention to the fact that Jeremiah utilizes the phrase "the sword

of the dove" (46:16 and 50:16). Our commentators write that the Hebrew root for "yonah" (dove) actually indicates either "oppression" (*ona'ah*) or "wine" (*ya'in*) [indicating a sword, blood-red as if from wine], or even refers to the fact that the Babylonian kings employed the dove as one of their symbols of rule.

• Yisrael Medad <isrmedia@netvision.net.il>

**Re: Olden Day Cleansers (Ohrnet Beha'aloscha):**

A friend who visited Cape Cod attended a lecture about the Mayflower. She learned about "fuller's earth" which the pilgrims used to remove oil from cloth. Apparently, it is a great absorber. I find it fascinating that soiled/stained priestly garments were used as wicks of the menorah! I have never heard of this before. It seems very practical to me.

• Sandra Block, Scottsdale, Arizona  
<rancher@phnx.uswest.net>

**Re: Help me Grow!**

My name is Saritt; I studied in Israel and am now in Monterrey, a city in Mexico that only has 120 Jewish families and none is religious. Because of this, I feel somewhat lonely and I can't keep growing in Torah because I have nothing here, so please, please send me all the shiurim and Parashat Hashavua that you can. Thank's alot! *Tizku L'mitzvot!*

• Saritt Back <abrahamb@acnet.net>

## GIVING PEOPLE THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

Our eyes see, our ears hear, our brains register, and we draw conclusions. These conclusions often explain events accurately. Yet, sometimes, through our senses, we are...

### TAKEN FOR A RIDE

Our good friends the Steins were making a wedding Monday night. Since the wedding hall was in a remote area, I decided the cheapest and most convenient way to get there would be to organize a van. I called a van company and they quoted me a price of 200 shekels for a 10-seater van. Even though we only had 8 people, I decided to reserve the 10 seater. I would try to find two more people to go with us, or at least to return home with us from the wedding. Monday evening all 8 of us gathered,

and what pulls up but a van for 18! "What's going on?" I asked the driver. "We ordered a van for 10." He explained that there were no 10-seater vans available, so they sent a van for 18. But we could only use 10 places at the special price of 200 shekels.

At the wedding I found another couple, the Katz's, who wanted to return with us. They boarded with us and took their seats. As we were pulling out of the parking lot, Mr. Katz started yelling at the driver: "Why are you pulling out with eight empty seats? There are so many people here who would want to be included. What an absolute waste of space!" Then he started yelling at all the passengers: "And why aren't any of you doing anything about this? Why are you letting him get away with this?" Someone tried to explain, but Mr. Katz was so

annoyed that he wasn't even listening.

Our senses trick us time and again, yet we continue to take them at face value. Although we need to rely on our senses for information about the world, however, our Creator has commanded us to doubt their infallibility.

• Written exclusively for OHRNET  
by Yehudis Samet, author of  
"The Other Side of the Story" ArtScroll Series

### DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Were you ever in a situation with potential to judge negatively, but there really was a valid explanation? Has a friend or a relative ever told you how they were in such a situation? Share your stories with us for inclusion in future columns of *The Other Side of the Story*. To submit your story, send it to <info@ohr.org.il> Or write to Ohrnet POB 18103 Jerusalem or Fax 02-581-2890.

## YIDDLE RIDDLE

**Last week we asked:** This morning in *shul*, I noticed that during *chazarat hashatz* (cantor's repetition of the silent prayer) I responded "amen" 26 times. However, my one friend responded "amen" only 22 times, and my other friend only three times! Can you explain why? (By the way, we all had finished our silent prayer completely, we all paid attention during the entire repetition, and we all responded properly.)

**Answer:** It was Rosh Chodesh, and we were in Jerusalem where *kohanim* bless the people every day by saying *birkas*

*kohanim*. Therefore, I answered 26 times: 19 blessings of *she-moneh esrei*, 4 during *birkat kohanim* and 3 during *ya'ale v'yavo*. My one friend was a *kohen*, and therefore didn't say *amen* to the *birkat kohanim*, so he answered just 22 times. My other friend was the *chazan*, and he answered *amen* only to the 3 priestly blessings. (See *Mishna Berura O.C. 128:17 Shaar Hatzion 61* that a *chazan* using a *siddur* can respond to the 3 blessings of *birkat kohanim* but not to the actual blessing of the *kohen*.)

• Submitted by Rabbi Avraham Connack, Jerusalem

continued from page four

## BONUS ANSWER!

"The word 'vayikach' — rebelled — is singular," said Sherlock. "Plural would be 'vayikchu.' If the verse had wanted to indicate merely that Korach, Dasan and Aviram rebelled, it should have written it in the normal way, using the plural word 'vayikchu'."

"What is indicated by the use of the singular?" asked Watstein.

"By use of the singular word 'vayikach,' the verse seems to say as follows: 'Korach rebelled. And Dasan and Aviram.'"

"It doesn't tell us straight out what Dasan and Aviram did," said Watstein.

"Exactly. And only by association with the phrase 'Korach

rebelled' do we understand that "Dasan and Aviram" also rebelled. It's as if the verse is subordinating their involvement to that of Korach."

"But why the need for all this. Don't we see Korach's primacy by the fact that he's listed first?"

"No. That could simply mean he was the instigator, but that the others joined quite of their own accord. The use of the singular, as I've explained, indicates an added measure of Korach's primacy. Namely, that the others would never have joined if not for his neighborly influence.

• Based on *Devek Tov*

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

16:21	<b>RAMBAN</b> The Sin of the Congregation	18:20	Inheritance of the <i>Kehuna</i>	395	<i>Ma'aser Rishon</i> (The First Tithe)
16:29	The Sin of Dasan and Aviram		<b>SEFER HACHINUCH</b>		<b>SFORNO</b>
16:30	A New Creation	389	Defined Roles	16:15	Nullifying Atonement
18:7	The Gifts of the <i>Kehuna</i>	394	Service of the <i>Levi'im</i>	16:32	Why Also Their Possessions