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WHAT'S IN A NAME

“...men of name.” (16:2)

According to the religions of the East ‘when you define a thing you destroy it.’ From the Jewish perspective however, definition, far from being destructive, can put us in contact with the essence of a thing, with its interior reality.

The Torah tells that Adam gave names to all the animals. Adam didn’t just pick arbitrary titles. He was able to express the essence of each life-force in words. This is because the holy tongue is like no other language. In all other languages names are merely conventional — a table is called ‘a table’ purely as a means of communication. The word ‘table’ itself however, has no intrinsic connection to ‘tableness.’ It is only in the Hebrew of the Bible that names express essence.

This expression ‘men of name’ is extremely rare in the Torah. There are only two places where the phrase appears — once in the generation of the Flood, referring to the Nephilim: “They were the mighty, who, from old, were men of devastation” (literally — ‘men of name’). The other place is in this week’s Parsha referring to the cohorts of Korach who assembled themselves in opposition to Moshe.

The holy Zohar explains that when the generation who built the Tower of Bavel said “Let us make ourselves a name,” their whole motivation was to glorify and amplify themselves. To distort their name. To assume a name which did not define their essence.

Possibly this is why the Torah uses this expression here as well in connection with the rebellion of Korach. “They were men of name” — only in name. They tried to usurp the name

INSIGHTS

of Moshe and Aaron, to usurp the name ‘Kohen.’ By stealing the name, maybe they could steal the essence...

But you can never be something you’re not. All you can ever be is the best version of *yourself* that you can be. And live up to *your own* name.

• Based on *Korban HaOni*

KOSHER STYLE

“And Korach took...” (16:1)

“\$500 for a pair of tefillin! You must be joking! \$500 for a couple of leather boxes with some Hebrew writing in them! Why, for a fraction of the price I could get something almost identical! If the whole point of tefillin is to be a reminder, what do I need all this crazy quasi-scientific precision for. What does it matter if there’s a hairline crack in one letter. It’s so small you can hardly see it! It’s a typical example of the sort of nit-picking legalism that I hate in organized religion!”

“Open up your computer. What would happen if I took a very sharp *x-acto* blade and cut one of the wires here in the modem?”

“Well of course — it wouldn’t work — the modem won’t receive anything.”

“It’s exactly the same with tefillin — if there’s the tiniest break in a letter, then the *spiritual modem* called tefillin won’t receive anything.”

Korach asked Moshe if a house full of Sifrei Torah still needed a mezuzah on the door frame. Said Moshe “Yes.” Korach started to mock him saying “If a single mezuzah affixed to the door

frame of a house is enough to remind us of Hashem, surely a house full of Sifrei Torah will do the job!” (Midrash)

In a way, Korach was the first ‘non-halachic Rabbi’ — the first proponent of ‘Kosher Style Glatt Treif.’ “As long as it looks Jewish from the outside it’s fine.” In other words according to Korach the mitzvos are only symbolic, devoid of absolute performance parameters. Moshe Rabbeinu’s answer was that the mitzvos of the Torah function within strict operational criteria: One mezuzah on the door is what the Torah requires, nor more and no less, even if a house full of *Sifrei Torah* may look more Jewish...

• Based on a story heard from Rabbi Mordechai Perlman about Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz zt”l

DOWN ON THE FARM

“...for the entire congregation, all of them, are holy.” (16:3)

“All animals are equal except for some animals who are more equal than others.”
(Animal Farm)

The Talmud in Tractate Sanhedrin (109) states:

“Rav said: It was the wife of *Ohn Ben Peles* (one of Korach’s co-conspirators) who saved him. She said to him “What’s the difference who’s in charge, whether it’s Moshe or Korach, either way — **it won’t be you!**”

The way of all autocratic tyranny is to start by preaching grass-roots equality. Only when the new regime has replaced the old, does it emerge that dictatorship has been replaced, not by democracy, but by just another dictatorship.

Korach, Dasan and Aviram, and 250 of the leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aaron. 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 manifested by a plague which besets the nation, and many thousands perish. Moshe intercedes once again for the people, instructs Aaron to make atonement for them, and the plague is halted. Hashem then commands that a staff inscribed with the name of each Tribe be placed in the

Mishkan, the Tabernacle. In the morning, the staff of Levi, bearing Aaron’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 Aaron’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.

OVERVIEW



Insights into the Shabbos Zemiros

מנוחה ושמחה

“CONTENTMENT AND GLADNESS...”

“With double loaves and a great kiddush With lavish delicacies and a spirit of generosity.”

Three levels of celebrating Shabbos are mentioned. “Double loaves” refers to the Jew who cannot even afford wine for kiddush and must recite it over the “double loaves of challah.” The more comfortable Jew has the means for a “great kiddush” while the more affluent one can indulge in “lavish delicacies” to honor Shabbos. The common denominator, points out the *Divrei Yechezkel*, is the spirit of generosity which each type of Jew brings to the honoring of this holy day according to the best of his ability.



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RUNNING PRAYER

MICHAEL S. SULTAN

<104201.11@compuserve.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

What would be an appropriate prayer to say upon the completion of exercise (i.e. jogging)? The Shehekianu is the only prayer I could think of. Is there one that is more appropriate? [See Ask the Rabbi #53 re: Why don't we make a blessing before exercise. ed.]

Dear Michael S. Sultan,

The Talmud says that someone who lets blood for health reasons should say a special prayer before and after. Before the procedure he should say “May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d, that this procedure have a healing effect, for You are the free healer.” Afterwards he should say, “Blessed are You, Who heals the sick.”

The purpose of this prayer is to remind a person that it is Hashem who heals, not the medicine. So whether ‘letting-blood’, taking medicine or undergoing any medical treatment, one should say this prayer.

Similarly, if you jog for health reasons you can say a prayer such as: “It should be the will of Hashem that my exercise help me have good health.” But one shouldn't say the version mentioned in the Talmud unless he is actually sick.

I don't know if the following story is true, but I'll let you decide. Kenya's star soccer player used to offer a prayer for victory before every game. When facing Israel in the World Cup elimination matches, however, he didn't offer his usual prayer. When asked why not, he replied, “Well, I don't suppose it would help much seeing as He's on *their* team.”

Sources:

- Tractate Berachot 60a
- Chayei Adam, Klal 65:1
- Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 230:4, Mishna Berura 6

PRAYER - WEAR, WHERE?

MICHAEL TURNIANSKY

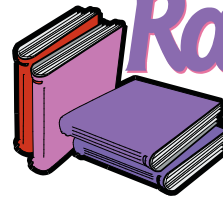
<mt0013@epfl2.epflbalto.org> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

How come one takes off the talit gadol [large talit] when entering the bathroom, but not the talit katan [small talit worn under the shirt]? Is there an essential kedusha [holiness] difference between them? If so, why?

Dear Michael Turniansky,

Ask the Rabbi



It's improper to enter the bathroom wearing a garment that's designated for prayer. The large *talit* is such a garment — it's made to be worn specifically during prayer (hence the term ‘prayer shawl’). Therefore, it's improper to go into the bathroom wearing it.

The *talit katan*, on the other hand, is worn all day long; during work, play ... some people even sleep wearing one. Since it isn't a garment designated specially for prayer, it may therefore be worn in the bathroom.

Which reminds me: One Shabbat a man spilled grape juice on his *talit*. The very next day he brought it to the cleaners. When the time came to pick it up, he was stunned to see the bill for \$50.

“Fifty dollars!” he shouted. “To clean one *talit*?”

“Do you have any idea how long it took me to get out all those little knots!” the dry-cleaner replied.

Sources:

- Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 21:3, Mishna Berura 14

YIDDLE RIDDLE

Last week we asked: At the end of Moshe's life, Hashem shows Moshe the entire land of Israel. But where does the Torah indicate that Moshe saw *Chevron* long before that?

Answer: In Parshat Bamidbar (3:19) the Torah says “And the children of Kehat were ... Amram (*he was Moshe's father*) and Yitzhar, *Chevron* and Uziel.” Moshe's uncle was named *Chevron*! Don't you think Moshe saw his uncle!

Thanks to Efraim Yawitz.

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ARE TWO HEADS BETTER THAN ONE?

“If a person has two heads — on which does he put *tefillin*?”

When this question was put to Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi (Rebbie) by the Sage Phlimo, it drew an angry rebuke for suggesting an impossible situation.

Suddenly a man came along and asked: “My wife gave birth to our first-born boy with two heads! How much must I give to the *kohen* for redemption of the first-born?”

(This case, from this week’s section of Daf Hayomi, was mentioned in the “Ask the Rabbi” column of Parshas Behar-Bechukosai and dealt with at length along with the issue of conjoined twins. We will merely concentrate on the halachic conclusions of the Talmud regarding the two-headed baby.)

The ruling given to the father of the two-headed first-born was that he must give double the normal amount since the Torah commanded that the *kohen* be given “five selaim per head” and here there were two heads. Rashi explains that in the case of normal twins the father must give only five selaim because

it is impossible for both babies to come forth from the womb simultaneously so that only one of them is considered “*petter rechem*” — the first fruit of the womb. In this case, however, it was possible for both heads of the baby to come out together and both therefore qualify for redemption.

This is not a contradiction to Rebbie’s outraged reaction to Phlimo’s question. The Talmudic guideline of “any organ which appears in excess is considered as non-existent” compels us to consider a two-



Insights, explanations and comments for the seven pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

headed baby as one without a head at all and therefore a “*treifah*” not capable of living out the year. Since the two-headed baby was still alive when the thirty-day period set for redemption was concluded he must be redeemed with a double amount. But no child of such a nature would survive till the age where *tefillin* become relevant and Rebbie rebuked his disciple for suggesting such a possibility.

• *Menachos 37a*

THE CONSTANT COMPANION

Beloved is Israel for Hashem has surrounded them with mitzvos: 1) *tefillin* on their heads; 2) *tefillin* on their arms; 3-6) *tzitzis* on the four corners of their garments; and 7) *mezuzos* on their doorposts. In reference to this David declared (*Tehillim 119:164*) “Seven in a day do I sing praise to You about Your righteous commandments.”

When David entered the bathhouse where there is no *mezuzah* and one is without *tefillin* and *tzitzis*, he sighed to himself: “Woe to me for I am naked without any mitzvah!” But as soon as he reflected on the sign of *bris milah* on his body he was reconciled and when he came out of the bathhouse he sang a song of praise about the mitzvah of *milah* which he titled a “Song to the Eighth” (*Tehillim 12*).

Three explanations of this title are offered by Maharsha:

This eighth mitzvah which constantly surrounds the Jew proved a more reliable companion than the aforementioned seven.

The mitzvah of *milah* is on the eighth day of the child’s life.

Milah was the eighth mitzvah commanded to Avraham who was already bound by the seven mitzvos commanded to all the sons of Noach.

• *Menachos 43b*

1. What did Korach “take”?
2. Why is Yaakov’s name not mentioned in Korach’s genealogy?
3. What motivated Korach to rebel?
4. Why did Moshe delay the confrontation with Korach’s congregation until the next day?
5. What warning did Moshe give the rebels regarding the offering of the incense?
6. Korach knew prophetically that great men would descend from him. Who were the descendants of Korach?
7. What event did Korach not foresee?
8. What did Korach do the night before the final confrontation?
9. In verse 16:25, why did Moshe approach Dasan and Aviram?
10. Before what age is a person not punished by the Heavenly Tribunal for his sins?
11. The censers used by Korach’s assembly were made into an overlay for the *Mizbe’ach*. This was to serve as a warning. What

12. What happens to one who rebels against the institution of *Kehuna*? Who suffered such a fate?
13. How did Moshe know that burning incense would stop the plague?

14. Which tribe was divided into two families?
15. Why was Aaron’s staff placed in the middle of the other eleven staffs?
16. Aaron’s staff was kept as a sign. What did it signify?
17. After Aaron’s *Kehuna* was firmly established, what fear did the Jewish People express to Moshe?
18. Why are the 24 gifts for the

19. Who may eat the *Kodshei Kodashim* (most holy sacrifices), and where must they be eaten?
20. If a *Levi* comes to the pile of grain on the threshing floor before *terumah gedolah* has been separated, what must he do before receiving his own tithe?



I Didn’t Know That!

Among the members of Korach’s congregation were the 12 *Nesi'im* (Princes of the Tribes) who offered their gifts at the dedication of the *Mishkan*.

• *Rabbeinu Bachaye*

Bonus Question ?

In verse 16:1 the Torah mentions that *Ohn ben Peles* as one of the leaders of Korach’s rebellion. But, *Ohn ben Peles* is not mentioned even one more time in the Parsha after this incident. What happened to *Ohn ben Peles*?

Answers on back page

Answers to this Week's Questions!

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

1. 16:1 - He 'took himself' out of the community in order to incite dissension.
2. 16:1 - Yaakov prayed that his name would not be mentioned in connection with Korach's rebellion (*Bereshis* 49:6).
3. 16:1 - He was jealous that Elzaphan ben Uziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehas instead of himself.
4. 16:5 - In order that they might repent.
5. 16:6 - Only one person would survive.
6. 16:7 - Shmuel *HaNavi*, and 24 groups of *Levi'im* who served in the *Beis Hamikdash*, all of whom were *Nevi'im*.
7. 16:7 - That his sons would repent. (Shmuel and the 24 groups of *Levi'im* descended from them).
8. 16:19 - He went from tribe to tribe in order to rally support for himself.
9. 16:25 - He felt that if he himself approached them, they might back down.
10. 16:27 - 20 years old.
11. 17:3 - To serve as remembrance of the challenge to the *Kehuna* and that the rebels were burned.
12. 17:5 - He is stricken with *tzara'as*, as was King Uziyahu (*Divrei HaYamim* II 26:16-19).
13. 17:11 - He was told on *Har Sinai* by the Angel of Death that the *ketores* (incense) has the power to stop plagues.
14. 17:18 - Levi. It was divided into the family of *Kohanim*, and the family of *Levi'im*.
15. 17:21 - So that people would not say that Aaron's staff bloomed because Moshe placed it closer to the *Shechina*.
16. 17:25 - That only Aaron and his children were selected for the *Kehuna*.
17. 17:28 - Since they were permitted in the courtyard of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, they feared that they might accidentally enter the *Ohel Mo'ed* itself and be punished.
18. 18:8 - Since Korach claimed the *Kehuna*, the Torah emphasizes Aaron's and his descendants' rights to *Kehuna* by recording the gifts given to them.
19. 18:10 - Male *Kohanim* may eat them and only in the *Azara* (fore-court of the *Beis Hamikdash*).
20. 18:29 - He must first set aside 1/50 of the pile the average amount given as *teruma gedolah* before taking his tenth from the pile.



Recommended Reading List

RAMBAN

16:21 The Sin of the Congregation
16:29 The Sin of Dasan and Aviram
16:30 A New Creation
18:7 The Gifts of the *Kehuna*
18:20 Inheritance of the *Kehuna*

SEFER HACHINUCH

389 Defined Roles
394 Service of the *Levi'im*
395 *Ma'aser Rishon* (The First Tithe)
SFORNO
16:15 Nullifying Atonement
16:32 Why Also Their Possessions

Bonus Answer!

When *Ohn ben Peles* told his wife of his role in the rebellion, she realized that he was behaving foolishly. That night she gave him strong wine to drink and he fell asleep. She and her daughter sat in front of the family tent. When Korach's messengers came to summon *Ohn* they were forced to turn back by his wife and his daughter. When the earth swallowed Korach's assembly, *Ohn ben Peles* was sleeping peacefully in his bed, saved by his wife's great wisdom.
• *Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:15

HAFTORAH: Shmuel II 11:14-12:22

**“Then Samuel said to the people
‘Come, let us go to Gilgal, and let us
renew the kingdom there.’”**

Rashi: “Because they were making claims against it.”

Rosh Hashana is a coronation. We crown Hashem as our King. But really, isn't 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 have been 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 it says 'there is no king without a people.' So 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 thus we 'renew the Kingdom.'

• *Based on Admor M'Gur zt"l in Mayana shel Torah*

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