

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Korach

For the week ending 3 Tamuz 5758
26 & 27 June 1998

Parsha Questions

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 l'chem* 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"?

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 detective 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?"

Sherlox 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 was contingent upon 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..."

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Parshas **Korach** — 3 Tamuz 5758, 26 & 27 June 1998

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Answer

“The word ‘vayikach’ — rebelled — is singular,” said Sherlox. Plural would be ‘vayikchu.’ “Therefore?” asked Watstein

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

I Did Not 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

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

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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 (*Bereshis* 49:6).
4. 16:1 - Korach was jealous that Elzafan 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 l'chem* 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.

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