CAPTURING A HISTORIC MOMENT

Across our city, and throughout the entire world, the Jewish people are reentering our cherished batei knesses and batei midrash. We are hopefully beginning to see the end of an unprecedented period of a world-wide banishment from our sacred halls of prayer and study. We now have a renewed appreciation for Torah study and tefilah b’tzibur which we must maintain. This is a moment for which we dreamed during these past several months, and about which we will relate to future generations.

Let us experience it with a full heart, with a renewed vigor, having grown from the experience.

I am reminded of an incident which took place in Chicago about two years ago. Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau, the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, was in Chicago, leading a tour and lecture at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Skokie. He eloquently shared with the group his indelible memories and vivid recollections, being one of the youngest Holocaust survivors. As the event concluded, some men among the crowd noted that the time for Minchah had come, and perhaps the Rav would wish to join with them to daven Minchah before they disbanded. In order not to burden him with a lengthier delay than necessary, one of the men mentioned that they could daven a “Heiche Kedushah” and thereby not need to wait for a full repetition of the Shemoneh Esrei. Rabbi Lau immediately responded and said, “I would certainly join you for Minchah, but I will not participate in a minyan where the Shemoneh Esrei is not fully repeated.”

Before anyone could ask, Rabbi Lau made a statement which was perhaps as powerful as was his entire Holocaust lecture. “You see, in my life I have overcome much. I have seen the hand of Hashem as He performed open miracles before my eyes. But, more so, I have learned to see Hashem’s hand in small, but significant ways in everyday life. Twice a day, as the Shemoneh Esrei is repeated, we have an opportunity to say Modim d’Rabbanan. In it we thank Hashem – that He provides us with life and He sustains us. Did you hear that! We say the equivalent of the blessing of Modim twice a day! I cannot pass up the great opportunity to declare this berachah after all I have experienced.”

Rabbi Lau’s great insight can strengthen us in our current situation. Our current ordeal does not compare with the travails of the Holocaust. Yet, we are living in uncertain times, with much concern for our health and livelihoods. We must appreciate all of the kindness Hashem bestows upon us each day, and not take these chasodim for granted. We must appreciate waking up healthy and strong, having adequate sustenance, and the value of family and friends. Sharing each other’s smachos and sending our children to school are much more meaningful now. The gift that we must cherish and keep vibrant is our appreciation of being able to enter a shul and daven tefilah b’tzibur. It is a great privilege to join together to daven, to call out And now, we can also appreciate saying Modim every day – twice!

As has been said by others, it would be a pity to let a pandemic go to waste and not be different as Jews, who are trained to see beyond the superficial events as they transpire. Let us all take a moment as we enter past the threshold of the shul, and, perhaps with a joyful tear, embrace these holy chambers with the proper emotion.

We are honored and privileged to be an integral part of the Shabbos and general Torah landscape in Chicago for many years. With clear siya’ata dishmaya, we have not had to miss a single week in well over 30 years. We proudly re-introduce the print copy of Likutei Peshatim once again, to enhance and serve the community, and to contribute to the achdus among us.

Rabbi Ben-Zion Rand, Editor
Because the tribe of Reuven would settle on the south when they encamped, a neighbor to Kehas and his sons who also encamped on the south, they joined with Korach in his dispute. Woe to the wicked one and woe to his neighbor. -- Rashi

Peninei Da’as, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Blech, notes that Dasan and Aviram were well-known as being wicked well before this incident of Korach. According to the Midrash, it was they who fought with each other in Egypt (see Shemos 16:20, Rashi). They did not need the prodding of Korach to provoke their evil nature to action. It would seem, therefore, that the reason they rose up with Korach in rebellion against Moshe and Aharon was not due to their living in the proximity of the conspirators of the family of Kehas. Why, then, does Rashi attribute their sinful conduct in our parashah to their being neighbors of Korach and his fellow Kehas family members of Levi?

Nevertheless, it could be that Dasan and Aviram would not have participated in this particular uprising had they not been closely situated to the rebellious Leviim. After all, they had practically nothing personal to gain from this argument. It could also be that the comment of Rashi which attributes the association to evil due to these people being neighbors refers not to Dasan and Aviram specifically, but to the other two hundred and fifty men who joined the ranks of the rebels. As Rashi explains, the two hundred and fifty men were mostly from the tribe of Reuven (such as Elitzur ben Shedeur), the neighbors of Korach. Although these people could have been influenced to act improperly by Dasan and Aviram, their fellow tribesmen, Rashi attributes the corruption to Korach. Perhaps the members of Reuven knew that Dasan and Aviram were unworthy, and no one really listened to them. However, Korach was prominent and apparently quite charismatic. This is why Rashi determined that the effect here was one of “Woe to the wicked one and woe to his neighbor.”

YOU ARE SPECIAL

Meshech Chochmah explains the argument of Moshe Rabbeinu. The members of the tribe of Levi were treated differently than the rest of the nation while they were still in Egypt. According to the Midrash, the Leviim were not enslaved by the Egyptians and were therefore able to fulfill the mitzvos which they had been taught by their forefathers. Also, because they were not overwhelmed with the torture of physical labor, they did not involve themselves in the idolatrous pursuits of the Egyptian culture. Thus, the Leviim remained pure of mind and steadfastly rooted in the realm of the intellect and spirit. They were therefore most fit for the role as leaders in the worship of God, which entails devoting one’s heart and mind in the discipline of one’s thoughts and actions. For example, the service of God in the Beis HaMikdash disallows an offering even where the blood of the animal is accidentally sprinkled improperly. This certainly demands those involved in officiating to be focused and in control. The members of the Jewish nation at large, who were enslaved in Egypt and who did participate in idol worship, were not eligible for this role, nor were the firstborns who later sinned at the incident with the Golden Calf.

When Moshe addressed the crowd of Leviim who assembled with Korach, he warned them. “Is it such a small thing for you?” You should appreciate the privilege which has already been afforded to you, in that “you have been separate and distinct from the rest of the nation [while we were still in Egypt].” Your having been relieved from slavery was in order for you to be involved in spiritual endeavors, and you are now especially qualified to serve in your elevated position. Is this not enough of a distinction, that “you also now seek the priesthood”?”
“And Moshe sent forth to summon Dasan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav, but they said: ‘We shall not go up.’” BeMidbar 16:12

“ Moshe had no obligation to approach Dasan and Aviram. They were established and habitual rebels.

Chasam Sofer explains that the truth is that in this case, Moshe had no obligation to approach Dasan and Aviram. They were established and habitual rebels. In Egypt, according to the Midrash, it was they who informed the authorities that Moshe had struck the cruel Egyptian taskmaster, and, as a result, Moshe was forced to escape to Midian for many years. When Moshe first returned and approached Pharoah to plead on behalf of the Jews, it was Dasan and Aviram who, according to Rashi, confronted Moshe and Aharon and accused them of making things worse for the Jews. And now, for the third time, it was they who joined forces with Korach to undermine and attack the credibility of Moshe. It was clear and obvious that Dasan and Aviram were troublemakers, and, accordingly, it might seem inappropriate and unnecessary for Moshe to deal with these rebels.

In this context, the words of Rashi ring loudly. That Moshe chose to deal with Dasan and Aviram was noteworthy, for they were undeserving of his attention. Yet, that Moshe decided to offer peace even to such troublemakers shows us the great lesson that it is always appropriate to make an effort to dispel conflict.

Ten things were created on the eve of the first Shabbos at twilight, and they are: “The mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the donkey, the rainbow...” -- Avos 5:8

Why was it necessary for these things to be created specifically during the week of Creation? HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky explains that after the world was created with divine natural order and exact physical precision, the laws of nature were set into motion in a manner which could have led people to believe that there is no longer any element of divine intervention in the world. Superficially, it might seem as if the world continues to exist on its own, without Hashem’s hand present to guide its minute-to-minute functions. Therefore, to counter this mistake, at the end of the process of the Creation, Hashem arranged that there be several events that would occur throughout the generations that defy the laws of nature. In this way, the scoffers would be silenced. For example, let us consider the rainbow that appears in the clouds. Although it can be explained as a natural phenomenon, and we can calculate precisely when and where it should appear, we know that there have been generations during which it did not appear at all (see Kesubos 77b). And so it is with regard to the other items listed in the Mishnah in Avos, for each of them was set to take place in order to remind man that the natural order of the natural universe is itself guided and directed by Hashem, and it is only His precise and providential will that provides and enables the existence of everything at every moment.

“The mouth of the earth” served its role precisely as Korach stood up against Moshe and questioned the prophetic nature of Moshe’s leadership. Moshe used this device to demonstrate that it was not only the appointments of the various people to particular positions which were authorized and determined by divine decree, but in fact it is the entire world and every aspect of it which is under the control of Heaven. The opening of the ground as an aberration of the laws of nature served to demonstrate this lesson.
When the pans used by the 250 leaders of the assembly had to be retrieved, the job was given to Elazar, the son of Aharon. Meiri notes that Hashem did not instruct Aharon himself to be the one to collect the pans, because the controversy had taken place between Korach and Moshe and Aharon directly. This was a demonstration of derech eretz, in that it is more appropriate for a different person to be selected to assume responsibility after an argument is settled, rather than the victorious party himself.

We do not want the victor to become too arrogant in his triumph.

STRATEGIC USAGE OF THE INCENSE

The Torah tells us that Aharon ran within the community, “and behold, the plague had begun”. The wording seems to suggest that Aharon only realized that there was a problem at that point. Yet, Moshe had clearly told him that there was a plague, and that is the reason Aharon had gone to the people. What was it that Aharon only noticed when he finally emerged among the people? Furthermore, Moshe had instructed Aharon to put fire from the altar on the ketores – the incense – while still in the Mishkan, and only then to go out to the people. Yet, we find that Aharon did the reverse. First, he ran among the masses, and only then does the verse tell us that he offered the incense and atoned for the people. What can we learn from this?

The Netziyv explains that this offering of incense was not part of a routine procedure or daily rite. This was a one-time command of Moshe to Aharon to light the incense, for Moshe had learned from Satan himself that the power of the incense could arrest a plague in progress (see Rashi on v. 13). Moshe used this method as a means to save lives – for it would otherwise have been an abrogation of the halachah to use incense outside of its prescribed times and place. Aharon and Moshe both wanted to minimize the deviant use of the incense, but they differed on how it could be limited. Moshe knew that bringing the lit ketores outside the Mishkan was prohibited, and lighting the ketores outside the Mishkan was even worse, for its punishment is καθαριστήριον – spiritual excision from the nation (see Shemos 30:38). Therefore Moshe told Aharon to first light the incense in the Mishkan, and to then take it out among the people due to the extenuating circumstances. Aharon understood Moshe’s concern, but he felt that the plague may have already slowed or stopped due to the prayers of the people. He was hoping that there would be no need to compromise the laws of the ketores at all. He went out among the people to see whether the situation had improved, but unfortunately, “and behold, the plague had already begun”. Seeing that he had no choice, he then lit the incense. This involved a more serious violation of halachah than had he lit it in the Mishkan. Nevertheless, he was willing to take this risk, hoping that the situation would have improved and that there would therefore not have been a condition of pikuach nefesh, which would have enabled him to avoid the situation completely.
Halachic Corner

According to the Gaon of Vilna
According to the Magen Avraham

If a man davened Maariv before night, he must recite Krias Shema again after it gets dark to fulfill the mitzvah of Krias Shema. In such a case, he should not say it lying down, and not even on his side. Some poskim, however, are stringent and say that even if a person davened Maariv at the right time and is saying Krias Shema now in bed only as a protection as he sleeps, it is still better to be stringent and say it standing or sitting. If, however, he is already lying down, it is permitted to lie on one's side and recite Krias Shema. Another reason to say Krias Shema sitting or standing rather than lying down is that one might fall asleep in the middle of Krias Shema and might not say it. (M.B. 239:6, Shaar Tzion 239:10) The Aruch HaShulchan says that if one is saying Krias Shema just for protection he can say it lying down. (239:6)

If a person said Krias Shema and cannot fall asleep right away, he should say Krias Shema many times until he falls asleep. In such a case he can say it lying down. However, he should not repeat the first pasuk of Shema. He can also recite other pesukim of prayer, and should think about Torah. (Shaar Tzion 239:11, M.B. 239:7)

Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman. May his memory be for a blessing.

Questions for Thought and Study

1. How do we know that after his wife prevented him from staying with Korach, Yaakov regretted his affiliation with Korach?

2. What idea did Moshe present to indicate that he wanted the position of Kohen Gadol to be divided among all of the tribes?

3. How did Moshe indicating the greatness of Aharon by pushing off the confrontation with Korach until morning?

4. Which idea did Korach present to indicate that he wanted to be the means for stopping the plague after the rebellion of Korach?

5. Why was the burning of the Beis HaMikdash the means for stopping the plague after the rebellion of Korach?

6. What allusion is there to the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash in almonds blossoming from the staff of Aharon?

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

- By Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Avraham Friedmann and his wife Tamar on the upcoming marriage of their granddaughter, Hadasa Rubin to Moshe Nath; to Rabbi & Mrs. Tsvi Haskell on the engagement of their daughter Rochel Breina to Mordechai Shnitzer; to HTC Board of Governors member Jeremy Amster and his wife Rebecca on the Bar Mitzvah of their son Adir, and to grandparents, Dr. Steve & Cheryl Karesh; and to HTC Board of Regents member Joe Zimmerman and his wife Becky on the birth of a grandson, born to Amy & Rivka Zimmerman.

- Blitstein Institute is setting up meetings with interested young women to review the innovative opportunities offered at Blitstein Institute. Start your future and call Mrs. Rita Lipshitz at 773-973-0241.

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- The eCRe welcomes the community back to our Batei Kneset, and salutes the dedicated efforts of our community, rabbanim and poskim, who have worked together during this crisis for our protection. We must continue to be diligent and careful, and look forward to the complete resolution of the situation ר"ש.
Gourmet Torah at Shallotts Bistro is not meeting in the restaurant, so we are bringing Torah to you. Please join Rabbi Zvi Zimmerman over Zoom on Thursday, July 2, at 12:30 PM. Zoom info: https://zoom.us/j/99921240863 or call in +1 312-626-6799. Zoom ID 999 2124 0863.

JBTYT is seeking an administrative assistant for our very busy business office. Staff is currently working remotely. The ideal candidate will possess a passion for organization, ability to multitask, excellent verbal and written communication skills, and advanced computer skills, including complete familiarity with Microsoft Office.

JBTYT administrative assistant candidates should be able to manage areas of responsibility and assist others in a variety of projects. Graphic design experience a plus. If you would like to join the staff of a fast-growing school and assist in the chinuch habanim v’habanos of nearly 1300 children, please submit a résumé by email only to hr@jubyyt.org with “Administrative Assistant” in the subject line. Please include several references.

JBTYT is seeking an Assistant to our incoming CEO. The ideal candidate will possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, organizational and computer skills, and the ability to multitask. If you would like to join the staff of a fast-growing school and assist in the chinuch habanim v’habanos of nearly 1300 children, please submit a résumé by email only to hr@jubyyt.org with “Assistant to CEO” in the subject line. Please include several references.

Are you living in the same household with, or are you a First Responder or Front-Line Health Care Worker? A free phone Support Line has been created for you. 773-657-4665. Clinician on-call calendar and hours of operation and FAQs at www.nefeshchicago.org/support-line, or contact: nefeshchicago18@gmail.com.

Girls’ high school is seeking an experienced math teacher who is proficient in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. Proficiency in educational technology is a plus. Please send a résumé to highschooljobopportunity@gmail.com. Include “math teacher” in the subject line and provide at least two current references.

Girls’ high school is seeking an experienced and innovative science teacher. The candidate is skilled in integrating technology and labs into the lessons. Please send a résumé to highschooljobopportunity@gmail.com and include “science teacher” in the subject line and provide at least two current references.

Pop by our “pop up” food truck! Glatt Chicago is open Thursday nights, parked in the parking lot of the Wi-Fi Building, 8170 McCormick Blvd. Order on the “curb and go app” or on our website, www.glattchicago.com. Can’t wait to serve you all! Make sure to try our famous Yapchik!!!

Emma’s Bagel Café is thrilled to welcome back our customers for limited indoor seating. We also enjoyed their new covered outdoor area, pleasant in any weather. We are looking forward to their extended Mexican Menu, including a New Mexican Pizza, Fish Tacos, Burritos and Tuna Tapas, which will begin for the Nine Days. - EM and NG.

Mazal tov to my Aishes Chayal, Anne, of 40 years on June 29th. May Hashem bless us with many many more happy and healthy years to come. Love you always! - Eddie Galster.

Wishing mazel tov to Rebecca and Jeremy Amster on the Bar Mitzvah of Avraham Adir on 21 days after the breach of the Beis HaMikdash (17 Tamuz until Tisha B’Av) with destruction. Almonds ripen twenty-one days after they blossom. Similarly, Bnei Yisrael were quickly punished by the fire of the parnassah for twenty-one days by Hashem. 

Korach suggested that since there are twelve tribes and twelve months, each tribe should be represented throughout the year.

The people had complained that the death of those who rebelled came from the fire of the parnassah and that it was harmful. Moshe showed them that Hashem caused punishments and the parnassah was an instrument of good or bad depending on Hashem’s will. Another explanation is that the Satan had represented throughout the year.

2. The people had complained that the death of those who rebelled came from the fire of the parnassah and that it was harmful. Moshe showed them that Hashem caused punishments and the parnassah was an instrument of good or bad depending on Hashem’s will. Another explanation is that the Satan had taught Moshe that the parnassah was the secret to stopping death.

3. Moshe was so saddened by Korach’s rebellion that he lost his power of inyanei haminuch and his power to answer Korach based on Hashem’s will. This is alluded to by his mentioning “morning” to indicate Aharon’s greatness falling on his face he hoped to gain it back in order to answer Korach based on Hashem’s will.

4. Korach suggested that since there are twelve tribes and twelve months, each tribe should be represented throughout the year.

5. Moshe was indicating that Aharon had proven himself to be worthy as the Kohen Gadol from the time he was born. This is alluded to by his mentioning “morning” to indicate Aharon’s greatness from the beginning of his life.

6. In loving memory of our dear husband, father and zaide, Don Kirshner, on the occasion of his 27th yahrtzeit on 10 Tammuz - July 2, 2020. His wisdom and loving-kindness was known by all who knew him. (Anshe Motele, Highland Park, IL, and Beit Shemesh, Israel)

7. Are you living in the same household with, or are you a First Responder or Front-Line Health Care Worker? A free phone Support Line has been created for you. 773-657-4665. Clinician on-call calendar and hours of operation and FAQs at www.nefeshchicago.org/support-line, or contact: nefeshchicago18@gmail.com. Include “mourners” in the subject line. Please include several references.

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