

Parshah Korach

in a Nutshell

(Numbers 16:1–18:32)

Korach incites a mutiny challenging Moses' leadership and the granting of the kehunah (priesthood) to Aaron. He is accompanied by Moses' inveterate foes, Dathan and Abiram. Joining them are 250 distinguished members of the community, who offer the sacrosanct ketoret (incense) to prove their worthiness for the priesthood. The earth opens up and swallows the mutineers, and a fire consumes the ketoret-offers.

A subsequent plague is stopped by Aaron's offering of ketoret. Aaron's staff miraculously blossoms and brings forth almonds, to prove that his designation as high priest is divinely ordained.

G-d commands that a terumah ("uplifting") from each crop of grain, wine and oil, as well as all firstborn sheep and cattle, and other specified gifts, be given to the kohanim (priests). ❖

By the grace of Hashem, following all CDC Guidelines, our Shul is now able to offer Minyanim at this time. See new schedule to the left, or contact one of the rabbis for details.

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos Schedule

Erev Shabbos – June 26 / Tammuz 4

Candle Lighting 8:15 pm

Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – June 27 / Tammuz 5

Shacharis..... 10:00 am*

Torah Reading..... 10:55 am

Rabbi Neubort's Drasha..... 11:30 am

Kiddush Postponed

Mincha 8:25 pm

Rabbi's Drasha 8:40 pm

Shabbos Ends..... 9:23 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:10 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri) 6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha / Maariv 8:20 pm

Classes

Chassidus, Mon-Fri 5:50 am

Halachah, Mon-Fri Postponed

Monday Torah Studies.... Online only

Tuesday Talmud..... Online only

Wednesday Mishna Online only

Thursday B'lyun 9:30-10:00 pm

Eruv website:
www.fairlawneruv.com
Eruv Hotline: 201-254-9190.



"Faith is our most powerful resource. It enables your spirit to soar above and beyond the pains and difficulties of life below"
— The Rebbe

Bulletin

This week's Bulletin is sponsored by the Shul.

Join us each weekday morning Mon-Fri as we delve into the mysteries of Chassidic concepts. 5:50 am followed immediately by Shacharis.

The Talmud teaches that the best vaccine against all illness is a healthy confidence in the Director of the Universe.

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, June 27
Eastern Daylight Time

Earliest Tallis 4:15 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:10 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:38 PM
Plag Hamincha 7:02 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 9:06 PM

Chassidic Masters

Three Natural Miracles

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

The story of Aaron's blossoming staff is told in our Parshah. Korach and his rebellious faction had contested Aaron's right to the kehunah gedolah (high priesthood). In order to reiterate His choice of Aaron to serve Him in the Sanctuary as the representative of the Jewish nation, G-d instructed Moses:

"Take . . . a staff from each of [the tribes'] leaders . . . and write each one's name on his staff. Write the name of Aaron on the staff of Levi . . . and the man whom I shall choose, his staff will blossom . . ."

Moses placed each staff before G-d in the Sanctuary. On the next day . . . behold, the staff of Aaron was blossoming: it brought forth blossoms, produced fruit and bore ripe almonds. (Numbers 17:16–24)

In a talk delivered by the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Shabbat Korach (the Shabbat on which the Torah section of Korach is read) of 1991, the Rebbe cited the above incident as a classic example of what he called a "natural miracle." G-d did not simply make almonds appear on Aaron's staff. Rather, He stimulated in it the full natural process of budding, blossoming, and the emergence and the ripening of the fruit—as the above verses relate, signs of all these stages were seen on Aaron's staff.

Aaron's staff defied nature's laws and restrictions, yet it conformed to the phases of growth that the almond naturally undergoes. It transcended nature, but did so on nature's own terms.

In other words, said the Rebbe, there are two types of miracles:

1. A confrontational miracle, which overpowers and displaces the natural norm, creating a reality that is completely contrary nature's laws.
2. A natural miracle, which, though it may be no less "impossible" by the standard norms, and no less obvious a display of the hand of G-d, nevertheless occurs by natural means, employing natural phenomena and processes to achieve its end.

To understand the difference between these two types of miracles, we need to examine the purpose of miracles in general.

The Hebrew word for miracle, *nes*, means "aloft" and "elevated." The regularity and predictability of nature creates so-called "laws": this is the way it is, says the natural order, and you cannot but conform to this defined and bounded reality. The truth, however, is otherwise—that man and his world have been imbued by their Creator with the potential to raise and elevate their existence, to go beyond what is dictated by the "way things are." A miracle, with its open display of divine power, has an uplifting effect on those who experience it, enabling them

to see through the façade of nature, and inspiring them to transcend the perceived limitations of their own nature and the accepted norms of their society.

At first glance, it might seem that the natural miracle's "need" to resort to natural processes makes it less of a miracle. In truth, however, a miracle that works through nature is even more elevating (i.e., more "miraculous") than a miracle that supersedes it. A sudden, shattering change has not transformed nature, but only gone beyond it; but when a miracle is integrated into the workings of nature, nature itself is elevated. A supra-natural miracle liberates the person who experiences it from the natural order; a natural miracle liberates the very substance of the natural order itself.

The Day the Sun Stood Still

The Parshah of Korach is usually read in the first week of the month of Tammuz. The Shabbat on which the Rebbe spoke about the miracle of Aaron's staff was the 3rd of Tammuz, and the Rebbe found two more historical examples of "natural miracles," both occurring on that date.

On the third of Tammuz of the year 2488 from creation (1273 BCE), Joshua was leading the Jewish people in one of the battles to conquer the Land of Israel. Victory was imminent, but darkness was about to fall. "Sun," proclaimed Joshua, "be still at Giv'on; moon, at the Ayalon Valley" (Joshua 10:12).

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The heavenly bodies acquiesced, halting their progress through the sky until Israel's armies brought the battle to its successful conclusion.

Our sages have said that "G-d does not perform a miracle in vain." Why, then, the drastic astronomical changes effected at Joshua's behest? Would it not have sufficed to perform a more limited miracle, such as merely illuminating the battle site at Giv'on by some other supra-natural means?

But a miraculous engineering of "artificial" light would have meant that the laws of nature were merely superseded, not transformed. To inspire the people of Israel to not only transcend their natural self but also to transform and sublimate it, G-d insisted that the miraculous light provided them should be natural sunlight — even if this meant creating a new natural order in the heavens.

A Miracle in Phases

The second natural miracle associated with the 3rd of Tammuz occurred on that date 3,199 years later — this time in even more natural (and thus, even more miraculous) terms.

The 3rd of Tammuz, in the Jewish year 5687 (1927), was the day on which the sixth Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880–1950), was released from the Spalerna prison in Leningrad (today Petersburg).

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was arrested by agents of the GPU (Soviet secret police, forerunner of the KGB) and the Yevsektzia ("Jewish section" of the Communist Party) because of his efforts to sustain and promote Jewish life under communist rule. He was sentenced to death, G-d forbid, but international pressure compelled the Soviet regime to commute this first to a sentence of ten years of hard labor in Siberia, and then to a three-year term of exile in Kostroma, a town in the interior of Russia. On the 3rd of Tammuz he was released from prison and sent to exile. (See *The Rebbe's Prison Diary*.)

Nine days later, on the 12th of Tammuz, came a further phase of the Rebbe's liberation—an order

freeing him to return to his home in Leningrad. Several months later, he was allowed to leave the country. From outside Russia's borders, the rebbe continued to direct his underground network of emissaries and activists who provided, and provide to this very day (though no longer clandestinely), spiritual and material support to Jews in every corner of the former Soviet empire.

In a letter written for the first anniversary of his release, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak states: "Not only myself did G-d redeem on this day . . . but also every one who goes by the name 'Israel.'" Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak had taken on the all-powerful Party, and had prevailed. Those who sought to destroy Jewish life in the Soviet Union were themselves forced to concede that they had no right to prevent a Jew's practice of his faith.

Now — concluded the Rebbe in his 1991 address — after more than six decades, we have been privileged to witness a further realization of the rebbe's, and Russian Jewry's, victory. The miraculous transformation now underway in that country is the continued unfolding of the miracle we saw on the 3rd of Tammuz of 1927.

Here we have a "natural miracle" of the highest order. On the one hand, this is a chain of events that transcended all natural laws and norms. To suggest, in the darkest years of Stalinism, that a single individual could contest the all-powerful Party's "right" to uproot Judaism in the Soviet Union, and persevere; to suggest that Communism's stranglehold over hundreds of millions of souls would shrivel away; in other words, to have predicted 1991 in 1927—would have been tantamount to saying the sun would change its course. At the same time, however, this was a "natural miracle," as emphasized by the fact that: a) the rebbe's salvation involved the acquiescence of those who first arrested and sentenced him (a change from within, as in the recent events in that country); and b) that the victory was not immediate and complete, but came about in phases, and continued to unfold over the course of many years.

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The 3rd of Tammuz was the day that a new reality supplanted the old. Yet this new reality came into being by wholly “conventional” means, in the gradual and incremental manner that is the hallmark of a natural development.

Lofty and Lesser Examples

This, said the Rebbe, is the lesson of the 3rd of Tammuz: not to be intimidated by the limits of natural norms, but also not to disavow them. Instead, we should work within them to broaden and expand them. Rather than seeking to liberate ourselves of the circumstances of nature, we should seek to liberate and elevate the nature of nature itself.

The story is told of a chassid who was walking home from a late-night farbrengen (chassidic gathering) many hours after the curfew imposed on his war-torn region of Eastern Europe. A policeman, noticing the solitary Jew, shouted, “Halt! Who goes there?!” The chassid, immersed in his farbrengen-induced thoughts, replied: “Bittul goes!” This chassid had so completely internalized the chassidic doctrine of bittul

(self-abnegation) that this was his instinctive reaction to a demand that he identify himself.

Man’s most basic instinct is the preservation and fulfillment of self. So bittul, which is the negation of self before a greater reality, goes against the very grain of human nature: the attainment of bittul is a “miracle,” a supernatural transformation. Nevertheless, for this chassid, bittul did not imply the obliteration of identity; rather, it was the slow, gradual divestment of the “I” of its egocentric tendencies and its reorientation toward a higher, bittul-suffused identity. In the “supernatural miracle” mode, bittul means lack of identity; as a “natural miracle,” bittul is the person’s identity.

But the same lesson can be applied to our “lesser” miracles as well. We must never accept the invincibility of any status quo; at the same time, our norm-transcending approach should not result in accomplishments which remain outside of who and what we are. Rather, we should strive to make miraculous the very nature of life. ❖

From Our Sages

And Ohn the son of Peleth (Numbers 16:1)

Said Rav: Ohn the son of Peleth was saved by his wife. She said to him, “What matters it to you? Whether the one remains leader or the other becomes leader, you will be but a follower.” Said he: “But what can I do? I have taken part in their counsel, and they have sworn me to be with them.” . . . She said: “Sit here, and I will save you.” She gave him wine to drink, intoxicated him, and put him to bed within [the tent]. Then she sat down at the entrance and loosened her hair. Whoever came [to summon him] saw her and retreated.

Meanwhile, Korach’s wife joined in and said to him: “See what Moses has done! He himself has become king; his brother he appointed high priest; his brother’s sons he has made the vice-high priests. If terumah is brought, he decrees: Let it be for the priest. If the tithe is brought, which belongs to you [i.e., to the Levite], he orders: Give a tenth part thereof to the priest. Moreover, he has had your hair cut off (cf. Numbers 8:7) and makes sport of you as though you were dirt . . . for he was jealous of your hair.” Said he to her, “But he has done likewise!” She replied, “Since all the greatness was his, he said also, ‘Let me die with the Philistines’ . . .”

Thus it is written, “A wise woman builds her house” (Proverbs 14:1) — **this refers to the wife of Ohn** the son of Peleth; “but the foolish woman destroys it with her hands” (ibid.) — **this refers to Korach’s wife.**

-- (Talmud, Sanhedrin 109b)

Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Aviram (Numbers 16:25)

Resh Lakish said: This teaches that one must not be obdurate in a dispute.

-- (Talmud, Sanhedrin 110a)

Haftarah for Korach in a Nutshell

I Samuel 11:14-12:22

The prophet Samuel (a descendant of Korach, the protagonist of this week's Torah portion) gathers the Jews to firmly install Saul as king of Israel. During the course of his address to the Jews he called out, "Here I am; bear witness against me before G-d and before His anointed; whose ox did I take, or whose donkey did I take, or whom did I rob; or whom did I oppress, or from whose hand did I take a bribe..." This echoes Moses' statement in this week's Torah reading: "I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them, and I have not harmed a single one of them."

The nation gathers at Gilgal for a second coronation of King Saul—the first one having lacked a convincing consensus. They offer sacrifices and rejoice together. The prophet Samuel then delivers a talk: he asks the people to testify that he never committed crimes against the people, and they confirm. He discusses how G-d saved and aided them every step of the way and chastises them for wanting a flesh and blood king. He assures them that G-d will be with them if they follow in His ways, and of the consequences they will face if they do not follow G-d's word.

To underscore the seriousness of his words, Samuel asks G-d to send a thunderstorm, although it was not the rainy season. The Jewish people got the message and asked Samuel to intercede on their behalf and to have the thunderstorm cease. The haftarah ends with a reassurance: "For G-d will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; for G-d has sworn to make you a people for Himself." ❖

From all of us at Anshei-Lubavitch, we hope and pray for the safety and health of you and your loved ones. May the Almighty protect us all and send complete healing to those who need healing. And may our world very soon find the ultimate cure to all diseases with the coming of Moshiach, sooner than we can imagine.

"It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few kapitlach — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual."

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe

16 Iyar, 5711

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

