

# KRIYAT HaTORAH COMPANION

EVERY ALIYA. A QUESTION (OR TWO).

## KORACH

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## Aliya 1 | 16:1-13

Examine verse 16:1.

What was the claim of Korach? What events caused him to have these claims?

**Rashi** suggests that Korach felt passed over when Moshe appointed Elitzafan Ben Uziel as the head of the family of Kehat, Korach's family. The **Da'at Zkenim** references a number of reasons for Korach's rebellion but interestingly he invokes a *Medrash* that states one of Korach's issues was the requirement that the *Levi'im* shave the hair off their bodies. They were no longer recognizable and had lost a sense of identity through that process. The **Ibn Ezra** states that this entire incident took place in the Sinai desert, in close time proximity to the first-born losing their special status. Korach, being first-born, again felt passed over.

## Aliya 2 | 16:14-19

Examine verse 16:14.

How do we understand this verse? What claim were Datan & Aviram making?

**Rashi** understands this verse as stating in the negative that Moshe did not and will not bring them to the Promised Land. The **Sforno** suggests that the way Moshe was speaking about the land of Israel (**Vayikra 19:9-10**) was as if the Jewish people had arrived there, and that their situation would be better than it was in Egypt. Datan & Aviram felt that Moshe was misrepresenting the future of the Jewish people and perhaps even manipulating the hopes of the Jewish people for what lay ahead.

## Aliya 3 | 16:20-17:8

Examine verses 16:20-21.

Why did they fall on their faces? What role does this symbolic act play in the prayer process?

The **Ibn Ezra** suggests that the Jewish people fell on their faces so that they would be able to pray to God in that moment. **Rabbeinu Bahya** also suggests that they fell on their faces in prayer and that this is in fact the source for our practice to do so. He suggests that there are three reasons for this practice: **1.** Out of respect for the presence of God **2.** To express a sense of sorrow and submission **3.** To show a sense of nothingness. Our very existence is futile when in the presence of the Divine.

## Aliya 4 | 17:9-15

Examine verse 17:10.

Why does Moshe instruct Aharon to use the *Ketoret*, incense, as the intervention in the devastating plague?

**Rashi** suggests that the Jewish people had just witnessed the *Ketoret* deliver a death-blow to the 250 men who had attempted to bring it. They viewed the *Ketoret* as a tool with fatal consequences but they needed to view it as a tool, when used correctly, with life-enforcing consequences. The **Ohr HaChaim** adds that this also teaches us that the *Ketoret* could be used even outside the prescribed time and place, as long as the carrier was worthy.

## Aliya 5 | 17:16-24

Examine verses 17:16-20

What does this miracle illustrate to the Jewish people that has not already been illustrated? What does the flowering stick change?

The **Rashbam** suggests that the proof of *Kehuna* up until this point was a source of stress for the Jewish people. A sign of peace related to the priesthood was necessary. The **Ohr HaChaim** suggests that all of the lessons learned thus far related to the leadership of Moshe. It was thus now necessary to prove the priestly leadership through a positive expression, the blossoming of what seemed to be a dead stick.

## Aliya 6 | 17:25-18:20

Examine verse 17:25.

Who is this sign intended for? What is it trying to prevent?

**Rashi** suggests that this blossomed stick becomes a sign for the selection of Aharon as the High Priest. **Ramban** suggests that **Rashi's** limitation to just Aharon is incorrect. This staff is a symbol of the selection of the entire tribe of Levi. It was not required to bring further proof of the selection of Aharon since every time we brought a sacrifice, and fire would descend from Heaven, proof would be offered. If you read the verse **17:23** closely it states that the staff of Aharon of the house of Levi blossomed, bolstering the opinion of the **Ramban**.

## Aliya 7 | 18:21-32

Examine verses 18:31-32.

What does it mean that this food can be consumed in any place? What do these verses come to add?

**Rashi** suggests that one can even consume this food in a cemetery. The **Netziv** suggests that the variety in which one is allowed to consume this food shows it should be treated as a gift and not as wages. The **Ohr HaChaim** points out that this gift was void of sanctity, it is perhaps for this reason that **Rashi** suggests that it could even be eaten in a cemetery. It also perhaps for this reason the **Netziv** suggests that it was not wages but a gift. Wages would create a bond between the giver and receiver that would be sanctified, a gift is different.

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Shabbat  
Shalom