

**Parsha Plug: Parshat Korach**

Bamidbar 17:1-6, 25-28	במדבר יז:א-ו, כה-כח
<p><b>1</b> The Lord spoke to Moses saying: <b>2</b> Say to Eleazar the son of Aaron the kohen that he should pick up the censers from the burned area (but throw the fire away), because they have become sanctified, <b>3</b> the censers of these who sinned at the cost of their lives, and they shall make them into flattened out plates as an overlay for the altar, for they brought them before the Lord, and have [therefore] become sanctified, and they shall be as a reminder for the children of Israel. <b>4</b> So Eleazar the kohen took the copper censers which the fire victims had brought, and they hammered them out as an overlay for the altar, <b>5</b> as a reminder for the children of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the seed of Aaron, shall approach to burn incense before the Lord, so as not to be like Korah and his company, as the Lord spoke regarding him through the hand of Moses. <b>6</b> The following day, the entire congregation of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord"... <b>25</b> The Lord said to Moses: Put Aaron's staff back in front of the Testimony as a keepsake [and] a sign for rebellious ones. Then their complaints against Me will end and they will not die. <b>26</b> Moses did so. He did just as the Lord had commanded him. <b>27</b> The children of Israel spoke to Moses saying, "Behold, we are dying, we will perish, we are all lost! <b>28</b> Whoever comes the closest to the Mishkan of the Lord dies! Have we been consigned to die?</p>	<p>(א) וַיְדַבֵּר יְקֹנֶק אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: (ב) אָמַר אֶל־אֱלֶעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּרְבֵּם אֶת־הַמַּחֲתָת מִבְּיַן הַשְּׂרִפָּה וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרַה־הִלָּאָה כִּי קִדְּשׁוּ: (ג) אֵת מַחֲתוֹת הַחַטָּאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנִפְשֹׁתָם וַעֲשׂוּ אֹתָם רִקְעֵי פַחִים צְפוּי לְמִזְבֵּחַ כִּי־הִקְרִיבִם לִפְנֵי־יְקֹנֶק וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיְהִי לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ד) וַיִּקַּח אֱלֶעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת מַחֲתוֹת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבוּ הַשְּׂרִפִּים וַיִּרְקְעוּם צְפוּי לְמִזְבֵּחַ: (ה) זָכָרוֹן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרַב אִישׁ זָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לְהִקְטִיר קִטְרֹת לִפְנֵי יְקֹנֶק וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדוֹתוֹ כִּי־אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְקֹנֶק בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לוֹ: (ו) וַיִּלְנוּ כָּל־עַדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמַּחֲרַת עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם הַמֵּתִים אֶת־עַם יְקֹנֶק: ... (כה) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֶק אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הֲשֵׁב אֶת־מַטֵּה אַהֲרֹן לִפְנֵי הַעֵדוּת לְמִשְׁמַרְתָּ לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי־מֹרֵי וְתִכַּל תִּלְוַנְתֶּם מֵעָלַי וְלֹא יִמָּתוּ: (כו) וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְקֹנֶק אֹתוֹ כֵּן עָשָׂה: (כז) וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר הֵן גּוֹעַנּוּ אַבְדְּנוּ כָּלֵנוּ אַבְדְּנוּ: (כח) כָּל הַקְּרָבִי הַקְּרָב אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחַת יְקֹנֶק יָמוּת הָאֵם תִּמְנוּ לְגֹזַע:</p>

Rashi on Bamidbar 16:6	חזקוני טז:ו
<p>Take for yourselves censers: Why did he speak to them thus? He said to them, "Among the nations, there are various forms of worship and many priests, and they do not all gather in one temple. We, however, have only one God, one ark, one Torah, one altar, and one kohen gadol, but you 250 men are all seeking the kehunah gedolah! I too would prefer that. Here, take for yourselves the service most dear, the incense, more cherished than any other sacrifice, but it contains deadly poison, by which Nadav and Avihu were burnt.</p>	<p>זאת עשו קחו לכם מחתות: מה ראה לומר להם כך, אמר להם בדרכי הגוים יש נימוסים הרבה וכומרים הרבה ואין כולם מתקבצים בבית אחד, אנו אין לנו אלא ה' אחד, ארון אחד ותורה אחת ומזבח אחד וכהן גדול אחד ואתם מאתים וחמישים איש מבקשים כהונה גדולה, אף אני רוצה בכך, הא לכם תשמיש חביב מכל, היא הקטרת החביבה מכל הקרבנות וסם המות נתון בתוכו שבו נשרפו נדב ואביהוא.</p>

Chizkuni on Bamidbar 17:6	חזקוני יז:ו
<p>"You are killing God's people!" By their hands, 250 firstborns, who had been sanctified to serve from the Exodus, were removed. And it was not for them to invalidate the first borns and to replace them with the Levites (by suggesting that they offer incense, something non-priests were forbidden to do, and in a location where incense was not to be offered, they caused their death).</p>	<p>אתם המתם את עם ה': על ידם נטרדו חמישים ומאתים בכורים המקודשים לעבודה מיציאת מצרים ולא היה לכם לפסול הבכורות ולהכניס הלויים במקומם.</p>

<b>Haamek Davar on Bamidbar 17:6</b>	<b>העמק דבר יז:ו</b>
The next day: They saw that the mizbeach was covered with the pans of the 250 men. And so they thought that they were valued by God, and therefore they complained saying, "You have killed the people of God".	ממחרת. שראו המזבח מצופה בנחשת של המחנות של ר"ן איש. והבינו כי היו חשובים לפני ה'. ע"כ התלוננו לאמר אתם המתם את עם ה'.

<b>Ramban on Bamidbar 17:6</b>	<b>רמב"ן במדבר יז:ו</b>
By now, I think that the people believed in the kehunah of Aharon...But they still wanted all of the tribes to have a part in the service of God...This is the reason why the rod of Aharon flowered representing the house of Levi.	והנכון בעיני שהיו העם מאמינים עתה בכהונת אהרן שכבר יצאה אש מלפני ה' ותאכל את קרבנותיו אבל...היו הפצים שיהיה לכל השבטים חלק בעבודת בית ה'...וזה טעם פרח מטה אהרן לבית לוי

<b>Malbim on Bamidbar 17:27</b>	<b>מלבים במדבר יז:כז</b>
Now that they saw this wonder, fear and awe for the Mishkan and He Who dwells in it entered into their hearts...	עתה שראו הפלא הזה נכנס בלבם האימה והפחד ממשכן ה' והשוכן בו...

<b>Ibn Ezra on Bamidbar 17:27</b>	<b>אבן עזרא במדבר יז:כז</b>
Israel said: Woe that we perish, and whoever draws close to the Mishkan will die like those who have been burnt...And so God said to Aharon that he would be in charge of the tribe of Levi to cause them to caution them that the Levites should not cause Israel to stumble.	ויאמרו בני ישראל. די לנו שגוענו ואבדנו והנה עוד כל הקרב אל המשכן ה' ימות כמות השרופים...אז אמר השם לאהרן שהוא הנגיד על שבט לוי להזהירו שלא יכשילו הלויים את ישראל.

<b>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, <i>Parshat Korach: A Lesson in Conflict Resolution</i></b>	
Even the miracle of the ground opening up and swallowing his opponents did not secure for Moses the vindication he sought. What ended the conflict was something else altogether: the visible symbol that Aaron was the chosen vehicle of the God of life. [It is] the gentle miracle of the dead wood that came to life again, flowering and bearing fruit...Moses and Aaron stood accused of failing in their mission. They had brought the people out of Egypt to bring them to the land of Israel. After the debacle of the spies, that hope had died. The stick that came to life again (like Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones) symbolised that hope was not dead, merely deferred. The next generation would live and reach the destination. God is a God of life. What He touches does not die. The episode of Korach teaches us that there are two ways of resolving conflict: by force and by persuasion. The first negates your opponent. The second enlists your opponent, taking his /her challenge seriously and addressing it. Force never ends conflict – not even in the case of Moses, not even when the force is miraculous...[Instead] it deepened it. After it had taken place, the whole Israelite community – the ones that had not been part of the rebellion – complained, "You have killed the Lord's people." What ended it was the quiet, gentle miracle that showed that Aaron was the true emissary of the God of life.	

