

At the end of last week's portion we are commanded to wear the tzitzits on the corners of our garments. We are told in Numbers 15:39 that this is so "that you may see it and remember all the commandments of YHWH and perform them; and not explore after your heart and after your eyes which you stray". The commandment was to include a thread of *techeiles* (a blue color the sages say is similar to the color of the sea and the sea to the sky and the sky to the Throne of Glory). It is said in the Midrash that Korach had his followers to dress in garments made of all *techeiles* and confronted Moses publicly with the question, "Does an all-*techeiles* garment require a single strand of *techeiles* thread in its tzitzits?" Moses said "yes" to which Korach replied "If a single strand is enough for an entire garment made of a different color of wool, does it not stand to reason that an all-*techeiles* garment would not require one more strand?" By these kinds of challenges Korach sought to convince the people that such illogical laws were the invention of Moses' own imagination. This coming right after YHWH telling the people to wear the tzitzits so that they would remember HIS commandments and not explore after their heart and eyes?

So in this portion we begin with the rebellion of Korach and 250 other men who joined with him. What we have not been told in the scriptures about the surrounding circumstances have been graciously filled in by the sages of old. It seems as the men Dathan and Abiram were the two men that Moses found fighting (Exodus 2:11) the day after he had went to the rescue of a Hebrew man that was being beaten and Moses kills the Egyptian. The Hebrew that Moses saved was none other than Dathan. As the story goes the Egyptian had defiled Dathan's wife who was also Abiram's sister, and Dathan was trying to avenge his wife and was being beaten by the Egyptian because of it. You would think that Dathan would have been grateful to Moses, right? The very next day Moses sees Dathan and Abiram arguing with each other (Ex. 2:13). It seems that Dathan wanted to

divorce his wife and Abiram disagreed because she had been violated unwillingly. Moses interrupts and in verse 14 we read:

Exod 2:14

14 Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

(NKJ)

You can read in this verse the gratitude (attitude) that Dathan had. According to the sages these two are the very ones that reported that Moses had murdered the Egyptian to the Pharaoh. Well even after the exodus from Egypt the plot thickens. In Ex. 14:10-12 Dathan and Abiram were the ones who criticized Moses saying it would be better for them to have stayed in Egypt. We go on in the book of Exodus to Chapter 16 and read about an account of some who tried to keep manna over until the next day and worms had gotten into it. The sages say that this was Dathan and Abiram as well. Not only that but on the Sabbath these two went out and spread some manna on the ground making Moses look like a liar but YHWH sends birds to eat it! As you can see there was a major struggle between these two and Moses from the beginning, but how did Korach become the leader of this rebellious group?

"Woe to the evil doer and woe to his neighbor"—Negaim 12:6.

The tribe of Reuben was encamped next to the Kohathites (Korach's family) in the wilderness. According to the sages, the tribe of Reuben supplied most of the followers for Korach's rebellion. Dathan, Aviram and On were from the tribe of Reuben. According to Ex. 6:21, Korach was the firstborn of Izhar. Reuben was also the firstborn of Jacob and had lost his birthrights as a result of defiling his father's bed. Remember that YHWH has chosen the tribe of Levi as His for service of the Israelites:

Num 8:14

14 "Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine.

Num 8:16-18

16 "For they are wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel.

17 "For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to Myself.

18 "I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel.
(NKJ)

YHWH, not Moses, made these declarations concerning the Levites. But even so, it seems that some had not agreed with these appointments. It is said that Korach was also very wealthy and older than Moses. Remember, he and the 250 people were all "men of renown". They were leaders in their families and well respected. It was easy to persuade the others to join in with them, especially since the spy incident had just taken place and the people over 20 had been told that they would not see the Promised Land. We can only imagine the heartache and resentment that this people had. Korach used these things to his advantage in mustering up support to lead a rebellion against Moses' and Aaron's authority. Even though Korach was an intelligent man, he must not have been thinking too intelligently when he and the others took the challenge of bringing the fire pans of incense before YHWH. One would have to realize that YHWH was only going to choose ONE person not 250 or so men!! Here again in this incident we see YHWH's mercy. He gives them a chance to back down and repent by giving them till the morning to act. YHWH also gives the people time to flee from Korach before He destroyed him and all his followers and belongings. He was even gracious enough not to destroy ALL his descendants allowing the great prophet Samuel to come along later. And later when the people began to murmur and complain against Aaron and Moses and YHWH had set a plague on the people, He allowed Aaron to walk through the multitude with a fire pan and save the people, but not until 14,700 people died. YHWH used these things and the incident of the budding rod of Aaron to establish once and for all the lineage of the priesthood, and the authority of Moses and Aaron. These scriptures should make us stop and think before we speak against the authorities that the Father has placed over us. Selah.

One last observation that I would like to make concerns the meaning of Korach's name. Korach means bald. I was meditating upon this and what significance it has to this story of rebellion. Back in the portion of "Beha'aloscha" in Numbers 7 we find the instructions being given for the consecration of the Levites. We also find that as part of that consecration that the Levites were commanded to pass a razor over their entire flesh which would include of course, the head. Korach being of the tribe of Kohath, a descendant of Levi would have been included in this ritual, thereby making him "bald" in a sense. We could look at this from another angle and say that when he chose to rebel against his authorities that YHWH had placed over him, he lost his spiritual covering so-to-speak. Because of this he left himself vulnerable to YHWH's judgment. Again we should pause and reflect upon that thought and possibly examine ourselves and repent if necessary. We should also praise YHWH that Yahshua is interceding for us!! Baruch HaShem Yahweh!!!

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