

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON KORACH - 5758

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Ravfrand@torah.org "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach

Flower Power: G-d Gives An "A" for Effort This week's parsha contains the story of Korach and his followers, who contested the legitimate rights of Aharon and his sons to be the Kohanim [Priests]. We know that the result of this was a terrible plague, while the earth swallowed up the rebels.

At the end of the parsha we again learn of the Jews complaining about the priesthood of Aharon. The verse says "Speak to the children of Israel and take from them one staff from each father's house, from all their leaders according to their fathers' house, twelve staffs; each man's name shall you inscribe on his staff." [Bamidbar 17:17]. G-d is trying to settle this once and for all. G-d is going to prove, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that Aharon is the one He intends to be the Kohain. The Princes of each tribe had to give over their walking sticks and the proof would come through these staffs. The Tribe of Levi was to be represented by Aharon and his name would be written on the staff from that tribe. The person's staff which miraculously sprouts will be the one chosen by G-d to be the priest. Aharon's staff was the one that flowered, and it gave forth almonds. The commentaries ask an interesting question. Normally, when fruits grow, the flower or bud that preceded the fruit falls away. Why are both the flower and the fruit simultaneously present on Aharon's staff? The Talmud [Yoma 52], in fact, explicitly mentions that the staff was hidden for Eternity -- together with its flowers and its almonds. How did this happen? Obviously it was a miracle -- the same G-d who made the walking stick sprout can make it sprout and have flowers and fruit simultaneously. But, why? What is the significance of the flower remaining? Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, offers a beautiful insight. What is the flower to the fruit? It is a preparation -- first the plant blossoms, and then fruit emerges. In spirituality and in mitzvos, preparations are important. In the secular world, people are only interested in the final product -- the bottom line -- the fruit. The effort, the time, the preparations are all wasted if one does not produce. When it comes to matters of holiness, when it comes to learning -- the exact opposite is true. G-d wants the effort. The preparations that a person performs before doing a mitzvah are important to G-d like the mitzvah itself. That is why the flowers remained. G-d is sending us a message: "The fruits developed and came about, but that which preceded them is also important to Me." That is the groundwork. In every other endeavor in life the groundwork and the preparation and the toil do not count, but by spirituality they do count. Therefore, when the staff was hidden for Eternity it was hidden with its flowers and with its fruit, because to us, preparation is significant.

Being A Loser -- And Proud of It! How does this incident end? "And Moses brought out all the staffs from before Hashem to all the Children of Israel; they saw and they took, each man his staff". [17:24] The point was driven home; everyone was impressed; and everyone took back his staff. We know that sometimes the most intricate of laws is learned from a single extra letter in the Torah. Why does the Torah here go through the trouble of telling us that every man took his staff back home? Who cares? The point was made -- what difference does it make whether they took their staffs back home or not? The "Min HaBe'er", suggests the following speculation in the name of "Chassidic Greats" about these apparently

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non-essential words: Each Prince took back his staff and went around the entire Jewish camp telling everyone "See this is the staff that didn't sprout!" What is the point of showing off the staff that did not sprout? Why would a person brag about being a loser? The point is that in this instance everyone was proud to be a loser. Each person was proud to say, "I was involved in a greater good." Because of the competition with the staffs, Aharon's leadership was finally established once and for all. The plagues were over; the complaints and jealousies were over; now the dispute was finished. "OK, I wasn't chosen. But there is something that is bigger than us all and that transcends my own personal interests." Here everyone was willing to sublimate themselves to the greater good. "I do not need to be the star. I do not need to be the winner. There is a winner and I was part of the process and I am proud of that." That is what the Torah is telling us through the words "and they took their staffs home". There is an important lesson in that for us. We can not always all be stars. But many times we can attach ourselves to a greater cause, something that is bigger than ourselves as individuals, but which is important for the community. Finally the Jewish people had reached the level where they could say "Enough of this business of 'Who is Leading' -- I don't care who is leading! I am proud to be a personal loser, because as a member of the congregation, I am a tremendous winner." Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington twerskyd@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@clark.net RavFrand, Copyright (c) 1998 by Rabbi Y. Frand and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 6810 Park Heights Ave. <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21215

weekly@virtual.co.il * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshas Korach <http://www.ohr.org.il/tw/5758/bamidbar/Korach.htm>

Cholent of Embarrassment "And On ben Peles... (16:1) Reb Avigdor was known to be a man who ate the bare minimum. Such was his control over his physical desires that his diet consisted of a few dry pieces of coarse black bread dipped in salt and small quantities of water. Only on Shabbos did he allow himself the gastronomic excess of a single potato from the cholent. One Shabbos Reb Avigdor was sitting as an honored guest at the table of a wealthy businessman. The cholent was brought to the table and placed in front of the host. As a mark of respect, the businessman took the cholent and placed it in front of Reb Avigdor. Reb Avigdor removed his customary solitary potato from the cholent. He then passed the cholent back to the businessman, and raised the potato to his mouth. He bit into the potato, his eyes narrowing slightly. Suddenly, he grabbed the cholent from the businessman's hands and put it back on the table in front of him. He proceeded to ladle vast amounts of cholent onto his plate. Higher and higher grew the pile until Reb Avigdor could barely be seen behind the mountain of cholent. Then, with a look of rare relish on his face, he ate his way through the entire cholent. The entire table was aghast. They sat there transfixed, like a picture. Eventually, he finished the cholent.

"That was delicious. Thank you very much." Afterwards, when they were alone, his wife asked Reb Avigdor what had possessed him at the meal. He replied to her: "As soon as I tasted the potato, I realized that something was very wrong with the cholent. The potato had an overpowering taste of kerosene. If the businessman had tasted the cholent he would have been very embarrassed that he had fed his guest something that was impossible to eat. So I decided rather than let him be embarrassed, it was better to embarrass myself." As part of the investiture of the levi'im, their entire bodies required shaving. When Korach returned home bald from top to toe, his wife took one look at him and roared with laughter. She told him, in no uncertain terms, that he looked ridiculous. Korach was deeply embarrassed. He reflected on the ceremony: It was Moshe who had commanded the shaving of the levi'im. Korach decided that Moshe had invented the entire shaving ceremony just to embarrass him. The fact that there were 21,999 other levi'im who had also been shaved, made no difference to him. As far

as Korach was concerned, Moshe was prepared to go to any lengths to embarrass him and make him look ridiculous in the eyes of the Jewish People. This embarrassment was the last straw for Korach. He decided to mount an overt rebellion against Moshe. Contrast the behavior of Korach's wife with another wife in this week's parsha: The wife of On ben Peles. On ben Peles was one of the original conspirators with Korach. However, after the first verse of the Parsha, his name disappears from the story. Our Sages teach us that his wife was a wise woman who dissuaded him from involvement in the rebellion. Not only this, but to ward off the other conspirators she deliberately embarrassed herself by sitting at the opening of their tent with her hair uncovered so that the conspirators would not come close to them. Some people will do anything to avoid embarrassment. The question is, whose embarrassment are you avoiding -- your own, or someone else's?

Foundation "Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi..." (16:1) Building skyscrapers is a taxing job. When you cast the foundations of a tower, they have to be true and square. Every step in the initial building of a high-rise block has to be precise. If the building is out of alignment at this point, even by a couple of centimeters, then by the time it reaches the ninety-eighth floor, that discrepancy will have multiplied to meters. At the beginning of this week's Parsha, the Torah traces Korach's lineage: "Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi." Why doesn't it trace Korach back to Yaakov? Why does the Torah stop at Levi? Rashi tells us that Yaakov pleaded that his name would not be connected with Korach's insurrection, and that is why Yaakov's name is not mentioned here. But essentially, what did this achieve? Doesn't everyone know who Levi's father is? The book of Bereishis is replete with references to Levi being Yaakov's son. You don't have to be a genealogical sleuth to work out that Korach was descended from Yaakov. So what was Yaakov's plea all about? Yaakov prayed that the flaw of divisiveness that was manifested in Korach should not stem from him. Yaakov was founding the towering edifice called the Jewish People. He prayed that he should be free of the blemish of divisiveness, so that his progeny would reach their appointed task without deviation; that they would go right to the top of the skyscraper of history.

Sources: * A Cholent Of Embarrassment - heard from Rabbi Reuven Lauffer * Foundation - Rabbi C.Z. Senter in the name of Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz Written and Compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel <http://www.ohr.org.il>

yated-usa@ttec.com Peninim Ahl HaTorah Parshas Korach by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum Hebrew Academy of Cleveland

"It is too much for you. For the entire assembly, all of them are holy and Hashem is among them; why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem?" (16:3) Korach and his followers justified their actions in a self-serving manner. It is not unusual for the individuals who instigate conflict, who attempt to undermine every holy endeavor, to paint themselves as paragons of virtue and righteousness. In a departure from the standard interpretation, the Ksav Sofer takes a satirical approach to this pasuk. Lay people commonly assess that the rav or spiritual professional who serves his community is fortunate to live in a city such as theirs, with community members who are as righteous and decent as they are. Indeed, if the rav had not been serving in a community populated with such "fine, moral and upstanding" lay people, he might have been asked to leave. It is a tribute to their "decency and patience" that they have tolerated him thus far, despite his "many" shortcomings. This self-righteous attitude towards our spiritual leaders is as common as it is revolting. This same attitude, comments the Ksav Sofer, dominated the discussion between Korach and Moshe and Aharon. Korach said "Rav lachem," the reality that you still have a position of leadership, that you continue to function in a prominent role, is only due to the fact that "the entire assembly are holy" and "Hashem reposes among

them." Consequently, "Why do you exalt yourselves?" Why do you act as if you are so great? If you maintain a low profile and refrain from hassling anyone, your tenure as "leader" will be extended. Is it really a wonder that the message of Parashas Korach is so timeless and its narrative so relative to contemporary Jewish life?

"And the earth covered them over, and they were lost from among the congregation." (16:33) The commentators offer various explanations for Korach's bizarre punishment. The Kol Yehudah gives a rationale based upon an incident that occurred with the Ohr Same'ach. Once, two litigants came before the Ohr Same'ach with a din Torah, dispute, regarding a piece of land. Each one claimed that the entire parcel of land belonged to him. Of course, neither one had witnesses to attest to the veracity of his claim. The rav was having a difficult time resolving the dispute. Finally, he said to both people, "You will each have to compromise in order to resolve the issue." They were extremely obstinate and each refused to budge from his position regarding total ownership of the land. Rav Meir Simcha decided that he would like to see the land in question before he rendered a decision. When they arrived at the place, Rav Meir Simcha went to a side, bent over to the ground and began whispering to the ground! The two men were shocked to see their rav having a conversation with the ground! After he was finished, they asked him what had transpired. He replied, "I told the ground that each one of you claims ownership over the land. What should I do? The land responded, 'It does not belong to them, it belongs to me, since ultimately they will both end up here.'" When the two men heard what the rav said they understood that he had intimated that they were both destined to die and end up in the ground. Is it truly worth fighting over something so transitory as ownership over a small piece of land? This is the reason that Korach was swallowed alive into the earth. Had he used his mind, had he reflected upon his ultimate end, death and burial in the ground, he would not have been so utterly foolish as to ruin everything just so that he could be "king for a day." Life consists of more than fleeting kavod, honor. One gains no value from involvement in a dispute that is perfidious and destructive. Korach's last conscious lessons addressed the importance of setting one's priorities and the ethics of dispute.

<http://www.jpost.com/Columns/Article-2.html> SHABBAT SHALOM: Dissent into chaos By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN (June 25) "And they rose up in the face of Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, 250 men, princes of the congregation, the elect men of the assembly, men of renown." (Num. 16:2) When is dissension and argument positive and when is it a cancer that can destroy the very underpinning of our nation? Apparently Korah's dissent is negative, as the Talmud maintains: "Rav said: He who is unyielding in a dispute violates a negative command, as it is written: 'And let him not be as Korah and his company.'" [B.T. Sanhedrin 110a] We all know the story of Korah, the rebel against Mosaic authority and Aaronic priesthood who influenced 250 leading Israelites to stand up against the Divinely ordained leadership. After a contest with Moses involving the offering of fire-pans of incense which concludes with Korah and his cohorts being swallowed by the earth, God commands that the rebels' 250 pans be pounded into plates to cover the altar: "to be a memorial to the children of Israel, that no stranger who is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before God; do not be as Korah and his company." (Num.17:5) Rav's proof-text regarding an unyielding disputant comes from this verse. Other important scholars have also turned to this verse as a way of emphasizing the biblical antipathy toward a certain type of dissenter. Maimonides sidesteps our investigation. In his Sefer HaMitzvot, the latter part of the verse, "...do not be like Korah and his company, as God said by the hands of Moses to him," is the Torah's way of informing us that if someone usurps the priestly privilege, his punishment will not be what was meted out to Korah; he will rather suffer the punishment of leprosy, alluded to by the term "hand of Moses," which recalls how the hand of Moses briefly turned leprous when he argued with God. Nachmanides disagrees with Maimonides, claiming that this verse come to teach that it is forbidden to rebel against the established religious leadership. From this perspective, what

is an objectionable debate, a rebellion against Aaron's priestly tribe? Rav Isaac Bernstein of London, of blessed memory, in a masterful lecture, cited the Hatam Sofer, who claims that it is the attitude of the dissenter - and not the subject of his dissent - which makes the difference. This Sage bemoans the fact that all too often, when two people argue, one (or both) will claim that only he has a direct pipeline to God; consequently his is the only right opinion. Such individuals claim to be arguing "in the name of God and Torah," acknowledging no similarity between their "defense of the faith" and the biblical rebel's denial of that faith. Rabbi Bernstein directs us to two fascinating sources. We have a mishna in Tractate Succa with the following law: "If a man's head and the greater part of his body were within the succa, and his table [outside] and within the house, Bet Shammai declares it invalid and Bet Hillel declares it valid... Bet Hillel says to Bet Shammai: 'Was not the incident thus, that the elders of Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel went to visit R. Yohanan the son of the Hurani, and found him sitting in a succa with his head and the greater part of his body within, and the table inside the house, and they did not make any comment about it, implying that the academy of Shammai had acquiesced in this case to the academy of Hillel!?' "Bet Shammai said to them: 'Here is the proof: 'If it is in such a way that you always perform [the mitzvah of Succa], then you never [successfully] performed the commandment in your life' (Mishna Succa 2:7)." Does there not seem to be a contradiction as to whether or not the elders of Shammai commented to R. Yohanan about his performance of the commandment, or lack thereof? This issue is addressed in the work of R. Naftali of Vermaiser, author of the commentary *Maleh Ratzon*, that deals with seemingly contradictory statements in the Talmud. He explained that the elders of Bet Shammai and the elders of Bet Hillel had indeed been present at the succa of R. Yohanan, and all saw that their host conducted himself in accordance with the law of Bet Hillel. Bet Shammai, although of a different opinion, said nothing - because of their respect for Bet Hillel and because they understood the validity of a dissenting opinion. Only after the elders of Bet Hillel left the succa did the elders of Bet Shammai clarify their position.

This sensitivity displayed by the representatives of the two opposing academies in Mishnaic times emphasizes the fundamental pluralism in the Talmud: all views must be respected and learned from. And two opposing sides in a debate can and must respect and socialize with each other! The second source that Rabbi Bernstein cites is the *Lehmann Haggadah*, composed in the 19th century. Commenting on the Four Questions, Rabbi Marcus Lehmann cites Rabbi Ephraim Lintschutz, who interprets the question of "why is this night different from all other nights" in terms of "why is this exile longer than any other exile." His answer is because this is the night of matza, or dissension! Rabbi Lehmann continues: "There has been no lack of pious and holy men and women in the many centuries of exile, but salvation could not appear because of the innumerable conflicts dividing the people." As we approach the 21st century, can we say that we have adequately absorbed the lessons of the dangers of dissension? Would that it were so! *Shabbat Shalom*

Weekly-halacha WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5758 By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav. [Shelach] When you will eat of the bread of the Land... (15:19)

WASHING BEFORE A MEAL: PROBLEMATIC SITUATIONS

QUESTION: Visitors to amusement parks, etc., are often stamped on the back of their hand so that they can freely exit and re-enter the park. May one wash his hands for a meal while the stamp is visible, or does the stamp constitute a chatzitzah (an halachical obstruction) that invalidates the netilas yadayim? ANSWER: Yes, one may wash his hands. There are two reasons why this may be permitted: Shulchan Aruch(1) rules that dried ink is considered a chatzitzah. He is referring, however, only to dried ink which can actually be felt when touched, such as ink from an inkwell. If there is only an inky smudge but the ink has no substance and cannot be felt, it is not considered a chatzitzah(2). An additional argument for leniency in this case

is that the basic halachah follows the opinion of the poskim who rule that one is required to wash his hands only until the knuckles. Although under normal circumstances one should be stringent and wash his hands until the wrist(3), in this situation [when the stamp is needed for re-entry and there is no other choice] we may rely on the basic view that washing the hands until the knuckles is sufficient. Accordingly, even if the stamp on the back of the hand would constitute a chatzitzah, the washing itself is still valid.

QUESTION: Is a woman's nail polish considered a chatzitzah? ANSWER: Generally, no. Since women paint their fingernails for the sake of beauty, the polish is considered as if it is part of their body and is not considered a chatzitzah(4). If, however, the nail polish has become chipped and the woman would be embarrassed to be seen in public in that state, it is possible that the nail polish would no longer be considered as part of her body(5). She should, therefore, remove the chipped polish before washing her hands.

QUESTION: Are men or women required to remove their rings before washing their hands for a meal? ANSWER: Generally, yes. A ring is considered a chatzitzah since the water cannot easily reach all parts of the finger while it is worn. Even though a loose-fitting ring does allow the water to reach the entire finger, the poskim maintain that it is difficult to assess what exactly is considered loose and what is considered tight. L'chatchilah, therefore, all rings should be removed before washing(6). B'dieved, though, one who forgot to remove his ring and has already washed, need not wash his hands over, as long as the ring fits loosely around the finger(7). [When in doubt if the ring is loose or not, the washing should be repeated but the blessing should not.]

The rule that an object such as a ring is considered a chatzitzah applies only to men or women who sometimes, even on rare occasions, remove their ring from their finger. The occasional removal signifies that the person is sometimes particular about having the ring on his finger, rendering it a chatzitzah. It follows, therefore, that men or women who never take their ring off, even when kneading dough or performing manual labor, may wash their hands for a meal while wearing a ring(8).

QUESTION: Is a band-aid protecting an open wound [from bleeding, infection or pain] considered a chatzitzah? ANSWER: No. Indeed, the area which the band-aid is protecting does not need not to be washed at all. Care should be taken, however, that at least 3.3 fl. oz. of water is poured over the rest of the hand(9).

It frequently happens, however, that the wound which was originally protected by the band-aid has healed and the band-aid no longer serves as protection. In such a case, the band aid must be removed before the washing. If it was not, the washing may be invalid(10).

QUESTION: Is it permitted to wash for a meal in the bathroom?

ANSWER: L'chatchilah this should not be done, even if the hands will be dried outside the bathroom(11). It is proper, therefore, to fill a cup with water and wash one's hands outside the bathroom. Under extenuating circumstances, however, there are several poskim who are lenient and allow washing in a modern day bathroom, since they are in several ways different from the olden-day bathroom which the Shulchan Aruch was referring to(12).

In addition, several poskim are lenient concerning a bathroom which is also used for personal grooming, e.g., tooth brushing or hair combing (a full bathroom). In their opinion, such a bathroom may be used for washing hands as well(13).

QUESTION: What is the proper procedure to follow when using the bathroom immediately before washing for a meal? ANSWER: This presents an halachic problem since it would be improper to wash the hands twice in a row, nor is it proper to delay the recital of asher yatzar until the meal has begun. After debating the various possibilities, the poskim recommend one of the following two methods(14): Wash your hands with water but without using a vessel(15), dry your hands and recite asher yatzar, and then rewash your hands with a vessel as usual and recite al netilas yadayim and ha-motzi(16); Wash your hands with a vessel as usual, recite al netilas yadayim, dry the hands, recite asher yatzar and then recite ha-motzi(17).

FOOTNOTES: 1 O.C. 161:2. 2 Mishnah Berurah 161:14. See also Machatzis ha -Shekel 8. There is a minority view that holds [concerning tevillah] that a mere appearance may also be considered a chatzitzah (see Sidrei Taharah Y.D. 198:17). See following paragraph as to why the

stamp will not be a chatzitzah even according to that view. 3 Mishnah Berurah 161:21 and Beur Halachah. 4 Mishnah Berurah 161:12. 5 Halichos Bas Yisrael 3:2 and other contemporary poskim. See possible source in Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:62 [concerning artificial eyelashes]. 6 Rama O.C. 161:3. 7 Mishnah Berurah 161:18. This is valid, however, only if he poured at least 3.3 fl. oz. of water over his hand. 8 Mishnah Berurah 161:19; Aruch ha-Shulchan 161:6. [A woman who removes her ring only when immersing in a mikveh, may still wash for a meal while wearing a ring.] 9 O.C. 162:10. 10 Mishnah Berurah 161:4. If the band-aid is on the back of the hand past the knuckles, the washing is valid b'dieved. 11 Chazon Ish O.C. 24:26; Igros Moshe E.H. 1:114. 12 Eretz Tzvi 110-111; Zekan Aharon 1:1; Harav Y.Y. Henkin (Eidus l'Yisrael); Minchas Yitzchak 1:60. 13 Eretz Tzvi 110:111; Chelkas Yaakov 1:205; 2:174; Minchas Yitzchak 1:60; Harav E.M. Shach (Hashkafaseinu, vol. 4, pg. 5). 14 There are also some other suggestions, see Kaf ha-Chayim 165:1 and Ketzos ha-Shulchan 33:14. 15 As explained in Minchas Yitzchak 5:96 that it is not required to use a vessel when washing one's hands upon leaving the bathroom. Those who are particular to wash their hands from a vessel upon leaving the bathroom, should not use this method. 16 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 40:15; Mishnah Berurah 165:2. If not enough water is available for two washings, all agree that the second method is followed. 17 Aruch ha-Shulchan 165:2 and Chazon Ish O.C. 24:30, who testify that our custom is to follow this method. If the hands are very dirty, this method cannot be used, since the dirt may be considered a chatzitzah.

WASHING HANDS FOR BREAD(PART 2)

QUESTION: Is it important to make sure that one's hands are completely dry before washing? Is it important to make sure that the handle of the vessel is completely dry? **ANSWER:** According to the Mishnah Berurah, neither of these is a concern. It is permitted to wash one's hands even though they were just wet(1), and it does not matter if the handle of the vessel is wet or not(2). The Chazon Ish(3), however, disagrees on both counts and requires that the hands be totally dry before the washing takes place. In his opinion, even b'dieved the washing may not be valid if the hands were not completely dry before being washed. It has become customary for G-d fearing people to carefully dry their hands completely before washing for a meal(4).

QUESTION: Is it permitted to wash hands for a meal directly from the sink [without using a vessel] by turning the faucet on and off directly over each hand? **ANSWER:** No. There are two basic requirements for how the water must reach the hands: a) from a utensil, a keli; b) manually, koach gavra (lit., "by human force"). Although turning the faucet on and off satisfies the requirement of koach gavra, since a "human force" allows the water to be poured over the hand by turning the faucet on, it still does not satisfy the requirement that the water must come from a keli. Since the water comes from the pipe directly on to the hands, it is not considered as if one washed from a keli, for a pipe is not a keli(5). In a case where the water for netilas yadayim is coming from a keli such as an urn, and a vessel with which to wash the hands is not available, then it is permitted to place the hand directly underneath the spigot, press the spigot and allow the first flow of water to fall directly on the hand. The procedure is then repeated for the second hand(6).

QUESTION: What should one do if he is traveling on the highway and has no water with which to wash his hands? **ANSWER:** He can use any other beverage, such as soda or fruit juice, except wine. No blessing, however, is recited(7). If no other beverage is available, he must travel 72 minutes ahead [or back up for 18 minutes] to look for water(8). If still no water can be found, one may wear gloves or wrap his hands in a plastic bag, etc. If he cannot find something which will keep his hands covered, he may eat the bread with a fork, being very careful not to allow his hands to touch the bread(9). **QUESTION:** Is it permitted to dry the hands with an electric dryer? **ANSWER:** Yes. Although the hands must be dried before the bread is eaten(10), our main concern is that the hands will be dried, not the manner which is used to dry them. It is also permitted, therefore, to let the hands drip dry(11).

QUESTION: Can the obligation of netilas yadayim be discharged by dipping the hands in water? **ANSWER:** Dipping the hands in water is valid only if the hands are dipped. In a wellspring, hot or cold. There must be enough water in the spring to cover both hands at one time(12); A running river or a natural lake. If the water is discolored because of smoke, pollution or debris, it is invalid. If it is discolored because of sand or other natural particles, it is valid(13). A sea. Even if the water is too salty for a dog to drink from, it is still valid(14). The water, however, may not be discolored, as stated above. A man-made lake or swimming pool(15) with a volume of 40 se'ah of water [approximately 180-190(16) U.S. gallons]. The water must be piped into the lake through pipes which are built on or under the ground.

If the lake or pool is filled in some other way, it is invalid(17). A kosher mikveh. The hands could be dipped one at a time or both together(18). They need to be dipped in one time only. Drying the hands is not required, unless the residual wetness will make the food unappetizing(19). The regular blessing of Al netilas yadayim is then recited(20).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Beur Halachah 162:2. 2 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 162:41. 3 O.C. 24:20. [Shulchan Aruch Harav agrees with this view in his Siddur but not in his Shulchan Aruch.] 4 Ketzos ha-Shulchan 33:13. 5 Teshuvos Zekan Aharon 1 (quoted in She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 40:5) and Minchas Yitzchak 4:21 based on Magen Avraham 159:4 and Mishnah Berurah 47. See also Taharas Mayim, pg. 319-320. See, however, Yaskil Avdi 5:26 and Tzitz Eliezer 8:7 who rule that under extenuating circumstances, we may consider the pipe a keli and it would be permitted to wash from it. 6 Mishnah Berurah 159:64; 162:30. 7 Mishnah Berurah 160: 64 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 69. 8 Beur Halachah 163:1. 9 Mishnah Berurah 163:7. 10 O.C. 158:12. 11 Chazon Ish O.C. 25:10. See She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 40:5. 12 O.C. 159:14. 13 Mishnah Berurah 160:3. 14 Mishnah Berurah 160:38, 40. Salty water, however, may not be used when washing hands with a vessel. 15 The filter must be turned off. 16 See Siddur Minchas Yerushalayim and Taharas Mayim, pg. 22. 17 O.C. 159:16 and Beur Halachah. 18 Mishnah Berurah 159:80. 19 Ibid. 158:46. 20 Ibid. 159:97 and Chazon Ish O.C. 23:13.

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dafyomi@virtual.co.il The Weekly Daf #228 Eiruvim 49-55 http://www.ohr.org.il/yomi

The Slow Learner Rabbi Preida had a student to whom he had to teach the same material 400 times before the student grasped it. One day he informed his student that he would be leaving earlier than usual in order to take care of a certain mitzvah. Although Rabbi Preida still managed to teach him the day's lesson 400 times, the student failed to understand. "What happened?" asked Rabbi Preida? "Ever since you, my master, told me you would be leaving early," replied the disciple, "I kept thinking you were about to leave and I could not concentrate." "Set your mind to your study," said Rabbi Preida, "and I will teach you another 400 times." A voice from Heaven, expressing Divine pleasure with Rabbi Preida's act, made him an unusual offer: "What do you prefer as a reward -- an additional 400 years of life, or a guarantee of a place in the World to Come for you and your entire generation?" "If it is my choice," he replied, "I prefer that I and my entire generation merit the World to Come." Then Hashem spoke and commanded His angels: "Give him another 400 years of life and the World to Come for him and his generation." This touching Talmudic tale provides an important lesson in how educators should view the challenge of teaching a slow learner: A student with the tenacity to study something 400 times, and even 800 times if necessary, will achieve his goal despite his handicap, if he has a teacher with the patience to teach the same material over and over again. Such patience in transmitting Hashem's Torah to even the slowest learner gains a reward of long life in this world while the principle credit remains for the World to Come. Eruvin 54b Written and Compiled by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman Production Design: Eli Ballon Prepared by the Jewish Learning Exchange of Ohr Somayach International 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103 Jerusalem 91180, Israel E-Mail: info@ohr.org.il Home Page: http://www.ohr.org.il (C) 1998 Ohr Somayach International

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Eruvin 46b THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "HALACHAH," "MATIN," AND "NIRIN" OPINIONS: Rabbi Yakov and Rabbi Zereika said that the Halachah follows Rabbi Akiva when he argues with one of his colleagues, Rabbi Yosi even when he argues with a number of Rabanan, and Rabbi when he argues with one of his colleagues. Rav Asi said that these rules are the "Halachah," Rabbi Chiya bar Aba said "Matin," and Rabbi Yosi bar Rabbi Chanina said "Nir'in." What is the difference between these three applications of the rule? (We find a similar argument in Berachos 33b.) (a) According to RASHI, "Halachah" means that this rule or opinion is taught in the public lecture. "Matin" means that although it is not taught publicly, the rabbi should instruct individuals according to this opinion when they ask what they should do. "Nir'in" means that one should not even instruct individuals what to do, but nevertheless if does make such a ruling, we do not stop him from enacting it (and we do not revoke whatever was done in accordance with his ruling). (b) TOSFOS (DH Rabbi Asi) explains that all three expressions mean that this opinion is taught publicly; the difference between them lies in what happens if one accidentally rules otherwise. "Halachah" means not only is this opinion taught publicly, but if one did *not* act in accordance with this opinion, then b'Di'eved we revoke the ruling (for instance, if it involves the performance of a Mitzvah, one must go back and do the Mitzvah again). "Matin" means that this opinion is taught publicly, but if someone ruled otherwise we do *not* revoke his ruling. However, if the ruling has not yet been acted upon we do not let them act upon it. "Nir'in" means that although it is taught publicly, if someone rules otherwise we allow him to act upon his ruling. Eruvin 47 THE RULES OF HOW TO RULE QUESTIONS: The Gemara searches for the source for Rav Mesharshya's opinion that there is no such rule of "[wherever] Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon

[argue], the Halachah follows Rabbi Yehudah." The Gemara cites several places where the Halachah was decided in favor of the opinion of Rabbi Shimon. Each time, the Gemara answers that that particular place is an exception to the rule. (a) Once the Gemara has given that answer to the first attempted proof, why does the Gemara continue asking from other places, to which the Gemara gives the same answer? (RITVA) (b) Second, the first three cases that the Gemara cites are all cases of Halachos of Eruvin in which Rabbi Shimon's opinion is the more lenient one. Perhaps the reason the Halachah follows Rabbi Shimon in those cases is because of the rule that in the laws of Eruvin, the Halachah follows the lenient opinion! (MAHARSHA) ANSWERS: (a) The RITVA explains that the when the Gemara keeps asking from other cases, it knows that those cases might also be exceptions. However, the Gemara thought that if we find *three* places where an exception is made and the Halachah follows Rabbi Shimon, then perhaps that creates a "Chazakah" that the rule that the Halachah is not like Rabbi Shimon is not true at all. (b) The RITVA (see also RAMBAN) answers the second question by saying that if the reason the Halachah follows Rabbi Shimon is because his opinion is the lenient one, then Rav should have simply ruled, "The Halachah follows the lenient opinion," and we would know that the Halachah is like Rabbi Shimon in those cases. The fact that he specifically said that the Halachah is like "Rebbi Shimon" shows that he was not ruling like him just because his opinion is the lenient one. Rather, Rav apparently does not accept the rule that the Halachah follows the lenient opinion in the laws of Eruvin -- yet he still rules like Rebbi Shimon. (Alternatively, the Ritva answers that the Gemara indeed could have given that as an answer and said that the reason why the Halachah is like Rebbi Shimon in those cases is because his is the lenient opinion.)

Eruvin 50 1) "KOL SHE'EINO BAZEH ACHAR ZEH..." SUMMARY: Rav says that if one attempts to make his Makom Shevisah underneath a tree without specifying in exactly which four Amos his Shevisah will be, he is not Koneh Shevisah anywhere, not underneath the tree nor in his present location. Rabah explains that Rav's reason is because of the principle, "Kol she'Eino baZeh Achar Zeh, Afilu be'Bas Achas Eino" -- two actions which do not take effect when done consecutively, one after the other, also do not take effect when done at one time. Since one cannot make an additional Makom Shevisah of four Amos if one already made a Makom Shevisah, he also cannot make his Makom Shevisah underneath the tree because of that principle. The Gemara explains that Ma'aser, though, is different. When one attempts to separate 20% (instead of the prescribed 10%), nevertheless 10% becomes Ma'aser, even though if one first separated 10%, he cannot separate another 10%. The Gemara explains that the reason is because since Ma'aser can be separated from half of each grain, when one separates 20% it is as if he intends to separate one out of every two grains that he designated. What does the concept of "Kol she'Eino baZeh Achar Zeh..." have to do with our Mishnah? The person making his Eruv Techumin does not want *all* eight Amos underneath the tree to be his Makom Shevisah; he only wants four of those eight to be his Makom Shevisah! If so, how can it be called, "be'Bas Achas," as if he wanted to make *two* Shevisos? Furthermore, what is the logic of the Gemara when it says that since one can separate Ma'aser by separating halves of grains, the concept of "Kol she'Eino baZeh Achar Zeh..." does not apply? ANSWER: When one does not specify where his Makom Shevisah should be but instead designates that four out of a certain eight Amos should be his Makom Shevisah, it is not possible for the 'Techum itself' to choose any specific four Amos out of the eight because there is no criteria by which it should choose. Therefore, the Makom Shevisah automatically tries to take effect on all eight Amos. Moreover, when a person says "four *out of eight*," as opposed to "four," it is clear that he wanted *some* element of Shevisah to exist in *all* of the eight Amos. (It is not possible to split a Makom Shevisah into two non-contiguous areas.) Since a Makom Shevisah cannot take effect on four Amos after it has already taken effect on a different four Amos, it cannot take effect on eight Amos together at one time either. In the case of Ma'aser, when one separates 20% as Ma'aser, he obviously did so because he wanted the Ma'aser to take effect on part of *all* 20% -- that is, half of each particle of grain. Since that *is* possible (i.e., it can take effect on non-contiguous grains), it does take effect.

Eruvin 51 SQUARING CIRCLES OPINIONS: The Gemara derives from the dimensions of the non-settled area surrounding the cities of the Leviyim that the 2,000 Amah Techum for Shabbos is in the form of a *square*. How exactly do we draw the Techum Shabbos? And how do we draw the four Amos in which one may carry in Reshus ha'Rabim, and the four Tefachim minimum width of a Reshus ha'Yachid? Are those distances measured by making simple lines, or are they "squared?" (a) RASHI says that the area of one's Shabbos Techum is drawn in the shape of a square, with the northern side drawn parallel with the north of the earth. Concerning carrying in Reshus ha'Rabim, one is Chayav only if he carries more than four Amos, which is drawn as a circle around the person with a radius that is equal to the *diagonal* of a square* of 4 X 4 Amos (i.e. 5 3/5 Amos). Thus, one is not Chayav until one carries a distance of 5 3/5 Amos in Reshus ha'Rabim. Regarding the width of a pillar, in order to be considered a Reshus ha'Yachid it must contain at least two diagonals of 5 3/5 Amos (that is, if it is square 4x4 will suffice; if it is circular, it must have a diameter of 5 3/5 Amos). (b) RABEINU TAM says that *all* of the measures are drawn as circles. That is, even for Techum Shabbos the Techum is *not* drawn as a square, but as a circle with a 2000-Amah radius. Similarly, it is prohibited to carry in Reshus ha'Rabim a length of 5 3/5 Amos (like Rashi). The width of a pillar, though, *must* be able to contain a circle with a diameter 5 3/5 Amos. A square of 4x4 is not enough (not like Rashi). (c) The RASHBAM says exactly the opposite. *All* of the measures are drawn as a square, with one side of the square parallel with the north of the earth. For carrying in Reshus ha'Rabim and for determining whether the top of a pillar is a Reshus ha'Yachid, the measurements must be square areas of 4 x 4 Amos. (See graphic)

Eruvin 53 THE CAVE OF "MACHPELAH" [I] QUESTION: Rav and Shmuel argue about the meaning of the word "Machpelah" ("doubled"). One says that it means that the Cave of Machpelah was one room *on top* of another, and the other opinion says that it means that there were two rooms, one *behind* the other. The Gemara says that the word "Machpelah" implies that it was one room on top of another (that is, it was *discernibly* doubled when viewed from the outside). If so, how does the other opinion understand the word "Machpelah?" The Gemara answers that the other opinion holds that "Machpelah" means that it was the burial place for "doubled" couples. How, then, does that opinion know that the cave of Machpelah was one room behind another, if the word "Machpelah" does not mean that (MAHARSHA)? ANSWERS: (a) RAV ELIEZER MOSHE HA'LEVI HOROWITZ answers that the one who says that the Cave of Machpelah was one room behind another *rescinded* his opinion, and instead maintains that

"Machpelah" means that it was a cave for couples. He adds that the word "Ela" -- "rather" -- should be inserted into the text of the Gemara, to indicate a change of opinion. (The TORAS CHAIM also says that this opinion changed its mind, but he does not require the word "Ela" to be added to the Gemara, since the word Ela is often omitted when no question was asked by an Amora.) RASHI on the Chumash (Bereishis 23:9) gives two explanations for the word "Machpelah," which seem to be the two opinions in our Gemara. First, he says that it means one room on top of another. Alternatively, it means a burial place for couples. Rashi seems to understand the Gemara like Rav Eliezer Moshe ha'Levi Horowitz, that one opinion changed its mind (this is how the SIFSEI CHACHAMIM understands Rashi). (b) The SEFAS EMES answers that this opinion did not change its mind. Rather, he knew from a *tradition* that the Cave of Machpelah was one room behind another room, and he therefore interpreted the word "Machpelah" to mean a burial place for couples. (Accordingly, the Sefas Emes explains that Rashi on the Chumash did not learn that one opinion changed its mind. Rather, the two opinions had different traditions what the Cave of Machpelah looked like. They both agree, though, that the word "Machpelah" means a burial place for couples, but according to the first opinion the word "Machpelah" has another connotation as well, that it was one room on top of another.) (c) Perhaps it was ordinary practice to bury each group in separate rooms. If there were many pairs buried in the Me'arah, then they were obviously buried in different rooms; hence, "one room within another room." (d) It is interesting to note that there are other ways entirely of understanding the words "Me'aras ha'Machpelah." The RAMBAN (ad loc.) says that "Machpelah" must be the name of the area where the field and cave were located, as is clear from the verse later on ("Me'aras Se deh ha'Machpelah." v. 17), and there is no need to search for deeper meanings of the word to understand the simple intention of the verse. (According to the Ramban, our Gemara is perhaps explaining why the Torah found it necessary to tell us the name of the cave.) Secondly, RAV ELIE MUNK zt'l (in "Call to the Torah") cites the Zohar (I:129a) which implies that "Machpelah" means the *counterpart* burial place of the body in this world. That is, just as the *Neshamah* ascends to its final place beneath the Divine throne, so, too, the *bodies* of the Avos are buried in a corresponding place -- the Cave of Machpelah. Mordecai Kornfeld [Email: kornfeld@netmedia.co.il] Tel:(02)6522633 P.O.B. 43087 kornfeld@virtual.co.il/Fax:9722-6536017 Har Nof, Jerusalem, ISRAEL