

<sup>26:1</sup>After the plague the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, <sup>27</sup>"Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel." <sup>28</sup>So on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them and said, <sup>29</sup>"Take a census of the men twenty years old or more, as the LORD commanded Moses." These were the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

<sup>30</sup>The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were: through Hanok, the Hanokite clan; through Pallu, the Palluite clan; <sup>31</sup>through Hezron, the Hezronite clan; through Karmi, the Karmite clan. <sup>32</sup>These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730. <sup>33</sup>The son of Pallu was Eliab, <sup>34</sup>and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, **Dathan and Abiram. The same Dathan and Abiram were the community officials who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were among Korah's followers when they rebelled against the LORD.** <sup>35</sup>**The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign.** <sup>36</sup>**The line of Korah, however, did not die out.**

1. *Rashi*<sup>1</sup> observes that the sons of Korach were part of the original conspiracy but relented at the time of the actual confrontation. Accordingly, **their punishment in the World to Come was reduced.**

Korach had three sons (*Exodus* 6:24) who constituted the family of Korachites, named later. Their descendants are mentioned several times in the Book of Chronicles, and eleven Psalms are attributed to them. According to a tradition, one of the Psalms deals with their miraculous rescue (*Psalms* 42).<sup>2</sup>

a. Exodus 6:16-25

<sup>24</sup>**The sons of Korah ("Bald") were Assir ("Bound"), Elkanah ("God has created") and Abiasaph ("My father has gathered"). These were the Korahite clans.**

b. Numbers 16:1-3

<sup>1</sup>**Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent** <sup>2</sup>**and rose up against Moses.**

c. Psalms 42:1-11

<sup>1</sup>For the director of music. A *maskil* ("poem" or "song") **of the Sons of Korah.** As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. <sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? <sup>3</sup>My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" <sup>4</sup>These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. <sup>5</sup>Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. <sup>6</sup>My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. <sup>7</sup>Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. <sup>8</sup>By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life. <sup>9</sup>I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?" <sup>10</sup>My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" <sup>11</sup>Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.**

- d. ... *the sons of Korach were part of the original conspiracy but relented at the time of the actual confrontation.*

1) Ezekiel 18:1-21

<sup>4</sup>For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. **The one who sins is the one who will die.**

<sup>5</sup>"Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right ... <sup>9</sup> He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; **he will surely live**, declares the Sovereign LORD.

<sup>10</sup>"Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things <sup>11</sup>(though the father has done none of them) ... <sup>13</sup> He lends at interest and takes a profit. Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, **he is to be put to death**; his blood will be on his own head.

<sup>14</sup>"But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things ... <sup>17</sup>He keeps my laws and follows my decrees. **He will not die for his father's sin; he will surely live.** <sup>18</sup>**But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.**

1 Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), known by the acronym Rashi, was a medieval French rabbi and author of a comprehensive commentary on the Talmud and commentary on the Tanakh.

2 Rabbi Ellie Munk, *The Call of the Torah, B'Midbar*, (Mesorah Publications, Ltd.), pp. 322-323.

<sup>19</sup>"Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. <sup>20</sup>**The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.**

e. ... *their punishment in the World to Come was reduced.*

1) 1Corinthians 3:10-15

<sup>12</sup>If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup>**their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.** <sup>14</sup>**If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.** <sup>15</sup>**If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.**

2) Revelation 20:11-15

<sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. **The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.**

<sup>26:57</sup>These were the Levites who were counted by their clans: through Gershon, the Gershonite clan; through Kohath, the Kohathite clan; through Merari, the Merarite clan. <sup>58</sup>These also were Levite clans: the Libnite clan, the Hebronite clan, the Mahlite clan, the Mushite clan, the Korahite clan. (Kohath was the forefather of Amram; <sup>59</sup>**the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, who was born to the Levites in Egypt.** To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam. <sup>60</sup>Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. <sup>61</sup>But Nadab and Abihu died when they made an offering before the LORD with unauthorized fire.) <sup>62</sup>All the male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000. They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.

1. Jocheved was not conceived in Egypt **and so was counted among the seventy who went down to Egypt** (*Exodus* 1:5) even though she was not explicitly listed (*Rashi*).

This woman had a exceptional destiny. It is not surprising to find her at the heart of this genealogy. She married her nephew Amram, which was legitimate only because the Torah had not yet been given ...

When Pharaoh decreed that new-born Jewish males were to be killed, her husband divorced her, although she was three months pregnant with Moses. But her daughter Miriam, **already inspired by the Divine Spirit**, insisted that her husband take her back. This would insure that the child she was expecting not come into the world as the child of a broken home (*Sotah* 12b).

Jocheved knew all the tribulations of parenthood. Alas, she outlived all her children and died at the age of two hundred fifty (*Seder Olam*<sup>3</sup>), shortly after Moses' death, but she had the satisfaction of entering the Promised Land. She had the great merit of founding dynasties of *Kohanim* and kings. In the Book of Exodus (1:21) we read that Hashem bestowed these prerogatives upon her because of her devotion to her people when she and her daughter Miriam served so courageously as midwives at the time of Pharaoh's barbarous decrees.<sup>4</sup>

a. Matthew 1:1-25

<sup>3</sup>Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, **whose mother was Tamar** ... <sup>5</sup>Salmon the father of Boaz, **whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, **whose mother was Ruth**, Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup>and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, **whose mother had been Uriah's wife** ... <sup>16</sup>and Jacob the father of Joseph, **the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Yeshua who is called the Messiah.**

<sup>27:1</sup>The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They approached <sup>2</sup>the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly, and said, <sup>3</sup>**"Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. <sup>4</sup>Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."**

<sup>5</sup>So Moses brought their case before the LORD <sup>6</sup>and the LORD said to him, <sup>7</sup>**"What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right.** You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and turn their father's inheritance over to them. <sup>8</sup>"Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter.

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3 There are two midrashic chronological works known as "Seder Olam". They are known as "Seder Olam Rabbah" ("The Great Seder Olam") and as "Seder Olam Zuta" ("The Small Seder Olam"). The Seder Olam Rabbah is the earlier one (2<sup>nd</sup>-cent. CE) and the one on which the later Seder Olam Zuta (6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>-cent. CE) is based.

4 R. Ellie Munk, *The Call*—, pp. 331-332.

<sup>9</sup>If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. <sup>10</sup>If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. <sup>11</sup>If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to be a **legal requirement** for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses."

1. <sup>11</sup>*legal requirement* ... (Heb. *mishpat*—judgment).
2. *The daughters of Zelaphechad* ... were motivated to seek justice by their confidence that Hashem's love is not like a father's love. **A father may prefer his sons to his daughters, but the Creator loves us all equally.** His mercy extends to all of His creatures.<sup>5</sup>
  - a. Genesis 37:2-4  
<sup>3</sup>Now **Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons**, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate robe for him.
  - b. 2Chronicles. 19:4-7  
Judge carefully, **for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.**"
  - c. Acts 10:34-35  
<sup>34</sup>Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that **God does not show favoritism** <sup>35</sup>**but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.**
  - d. Romans 2:1-11  
<sup>5</sup>But **because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.** <sup>6</sup>God "will repay each person according to what they have done ... <sup>11</sup>**For God does not show favoritism.**

<sup>27:12</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim range and see the land I have given the Israelites. <sup>13</sup>**After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was,** <sup>14</sup>for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, **both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes**" ... <sup>15</sup>Moses said to the LORD, <sup>16</sup>"May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community <sup>17</sup>to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd." <sup>18</sup>So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and **lay your hand on him.** <sup>19</sup>Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. <sup>20</sup>**Give him some**

**of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him.** <sup>21</sup>He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. **At his command** he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and **at his command** they will come in." <sup>22</sup>Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. <sup>23</sup>Then **he laid his hands on him and commissioned him**, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

1. <sup>13</sup>*you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was* ...
  - a. Numbers 20:24; b. Deuteronomy 32:50; c. Genesis 25:8
  - d. Genesis 35:29; e. Genesis 23:17-19  
<sup>17</sup>So Ephron's field in **Machpelah** ... both the field and the cave in it **was deeded** <sup>18</sup>**to Abraham as his property** in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. <sup>19</sup>Afterward **Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah** ...
    - 1) *Machpelah* means "double"—according to scripture, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob all rest in the cave at *Machpelah*.
      - a) A strong tradition has it that Rebekah, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are buried there as well.
      - b) And, an early rabbinic legend has it that Adam and Chava are buried there too.
    - 2) In Jewish literature, **Abraham chose Machpelah because it marked the entrance to the Garden of Eden.**
      - a) The term "Garden of Eden" is the common Jewish term for paradise—and **why we refer to "paradise" as "Abraham's Bosom."**
      - b) Luke 16:19-31  
<sup>22</sup>**"The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side (lit., "Abraham's bosom"). The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup>In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.**
    - 3) **Our "forefathers" (and "foremothers") are often referred to as "those who sleep in Hebron" or "those who sleep in Machpelah."**
    - 4) And, it is sometimes said that the resurrection of the dead will begin in *Machpelah*.
      - a) Pirque Mashiach, BbM 3:73-74  
**In that hour, [Messiah] goes up and brings glad tidings to those who sleep in Machpelah**, and says to them: "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, rise! Enough have you slept!" And they reply and say: "Who is this who removes the dust from over us?" And he says to them: "I am the Messiah of the LORD. Salva-

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 333.

tion is near, the hour is near." And they answer: "If it is really so, go and bring the tidings to Adam the first man, so that he should rise first." In that hour they say to Adam the first man: Enough have you slept!"

2. <sup>14</sup>*when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes"*
  - a. **"Rashi asks why the Torah finds it necessary to repeat here the sin that brought about the death of Moses and Aaron** (v. 14). He explains that it was important to distinguish them from the rest of the Israelites who were destined to die in the Wilderness because they had rebelled against Hashem. In comparison to that, the sin of Moses and Aaron was a minor one. *Rashi* sees this as an instance of a general principle requiring a person's sins to be publicized so that people should not think they are worse than they actually are. The *Sifrei*, on the other hand takes the position that sins should generally not be revealed. It quotes King David's opinion (Psa 32:1): *Happy is he whose sins are forgiven, whose transgressions are covered*. If the sins of Moses and Aaron were revealed here, it ... was done in order to demonstrate that even in His anger, Hashem is concerned about the reputation of the righteous."<sup>6</sup>
3. <sup>18</sup>*So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, **a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.***
  - a. When Moses was informed that the day of his death was drawing near, he requests:

<sup>16</sup>"May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over this community <sup>17</sup>to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd" (Num 27:16:17).

    - 1) Conventional thinking holds that as the generations become progressively lower and more degraded, mediocrity in leadership becomes more acceptable.
    - 2) However, the Torah tells us that the opposite is true: the more inferior the generation, the more it needs the guidance of superior leaders.
    - 3) **The more ill the patient, the more he needs a specialist.**
      - a) Matthew 9:10-13

<sup>12</sup>On hearing this, Yeshua said, "**It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.**

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.338.