



June 27, 2020

ה תמוז תש"פ

**Parashat Korach** – Numbers 16:1-18:32 קרה  
Stone – p 820 Hertz – p 639 Etz Hayim – p 860

**Hafarah** – I Samuel 11:14-12:22  
Stone – p 1186 Hertz – p 649 Etz Hayim – p 877

**Talmud Class**—cancelled  
**Minchah** – cancelled  
**Seudah Sh'lishit**—cancelled  
**Shabbat Ends** – 9:11 PM

## **TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION**

Rabbi Seth D Gordon – Rabbi.Gordon@yahoo.com

Rabbi Ephraim Zimand z"l, Emeritus

Marian S. Gordon, Executive Director – tradcong@sbcglobal.net

### **DAILY SERVICE TIMES—all cancelled until further notice**

*Shabbat*—9:00 AM & 7:00 PM

Sunday—8:30 AM

Monday—Thursday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

Friday—7:00 AM & 6:30 PM

### **Board of Directors:**

Elaine Farkas, President

Paul Tesser, Executive Vice President

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Jerry Chervitz, Alan Rosenberg, Phil Brick, Boaz Roth, Cyndee Levy, Kenneth Bohm

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Steve Bell

Stanley Estrin

Shelah Feldman

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Gary Golden

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*Traditional Congregation welcomes new members. If someone you know would like to receive membership information, please contact  
Chris Brown, Membership VP, at 636-288-5356*

This week's *parashah* describes Korach's rebellion against Moshe and Aharon:

**BeMidbar 16:3** They combined against Moshe and Aharon and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and God is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above God's congregation?"

In response, Moshe proposes a ceremonial face-off that will clarify the divinely-sanctioned election of him and his brother: 4When Moshe heard this, he fell on his face. 5Then he spoke to Korach and all his company, saying, "Come morning, God will make known who is His and who is holy, and will grant him access to Himself; He will grant access to the one He has chosen. 6Do this: You, Korach and all your band, take fire pans, 7and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before God. Then the man whom God chooses, he shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!"

But the proposed test of the firepans is not the end of the story here. The nature of the punishment that Korach will suffer is also a key element in vindicating the leadership of Moshe and Aharon, while vitiating their rival's claims:

28And Moshe said, "By this you shall know that it was God who sent me to do all these things; that they are not of my own devising: 29if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all people, it was not God who sent me. 30But if God brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned God."

In these verses, Moshe adds a dimension to his proposed test: The community will know that he, Moshe, was not sent by God, "if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all people." In other words, if "these men," Korach and his band, die a natural death, such a death will serve as proof that Moshe is not truly the legitimate leader. On the other hand, "if God brings about something unheard-of... and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned God" (vv. 29-30). Not merely the death of Korach itself shall serve as proof of his sin, but rather how it unfolds.

**Illness and visitation—The way of the world** The story of the death of Korach is appropriated by the Talmud for a surprising purpose, in the context of a discussion about the *mitzvah* to visit the sick. In Tractate Nedarim, Reish Lakish inquires after a biblical source for this central Jewish expectation. Unexpectedly, he points us to verses from our *parashah*! And the later Sage Rava unpacks for us what this all means:

**Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 39b** Said Reish Lakish: Where do we have a hint at the requirement to visit the sick in the Torah? When it says: "If these men die like all men die, and if they are visited with what is visited upon all men..." (v. 29). How precisely does Reish Lakish's teaching work? Said Rava: "If these men die like all men die"—they become ill and bed-ridden and people come to visit them, what will people say? "God did not send me to this."

Many *midrashim* are based on extraneous or opaque words in a verse and Rava's is no exception. A surface reading of the verse reveals a doublet, a seeming superfluity. "If these men die like all men die" (v. 29) is the first mention of natural, normal death, and "if they are visited with what is visited upon all people" (v. 30) is the second. Rava suggests that the second phrase here should be understood differently: The "visitation" spoken of here is not that of the angel of death, but rather that of fellow human beings offering their comforting presence to one who is ill.

According to this reading, there are few worse punishments than sudden death, death without warning and without the opportunity to be sick, a death without any prologue and that invites no prior visits. According to Rava, the normal process of life includes illness, which offers the possibility for visitation; there is nothing negative about this. The sickness that comes before death is understood here as the way of the world, personally, socially and theologically.

**Illness and visitation—Uprooting the way of the world** Nonetheless, the passage in Nedarim continues its engagement with this topic by clarifying just how much illness dramatically transforms our life experience. After Rava's teaching, we are presented with a *baraita*—a Tannaitic source hailing from the time of the Mishnah—that communicates just how much the sick and those who visit them live in a disorderly world.

The *baraita* begins with the following heading: "Visiting the sick has no quantifiable measure." This sort of heading invites many questions: In what sense does it have no quantifiable measure? Does this mean that there is no defined number of required visits? Perhaps that the length of each visit is unspecified? Maybe there is no prescribed frequency for visits? Yet while this heading is vague, it makes one very clear, general claim: When one visits the sick, one has entered a world without measures, quantities, or quotas. When one visits the sick, one enters into a world that is shady, unclear, even disorderly and chaotic.

The Talmud attempts to pin down the force of this enigmatic opening of the *baraita*. "What is the meaning of 'has no quantifiable measure'?" the Talmud asks. Different answers are offered, all of which reveal that when sick people are present, theological, social, and personal order is upended.

"Rav Yosef suggested [that this opening phrase means]: There is no quantifiable measure for the reward one receives for performing it." (This, of course, literally read, could mean that those who visit the sick receive unspeakably large reward or that no reward is received at all!) This turn to a discussion of reward is surprising, an angle we might not have originally considered. But this framing may telegraph deep awareness of just how much energy is invested in coping with and responding to illness, both by sick people themselves and those who surround and care for them. The discourse of reward is a way of reinforcing and encouraging the holy (and costly) work of caring for the sick.

A second explanation follows: "Abaye says: Even a 'big' person with a 'smaller' one." The terms of this statement are far from clear—are they referring to age, social standing or some other scale? Is the normal state of affairs for a "big" person to visit a "small" one, or vice-versa? However we read Abaye, though, it is clear that illness and the *mitzvah* to visit the sick upend the normal order of things; visiting the sick is appropriate and necessary even when it crosses social boundaries and destabilizes conventional hierarchies, whatever they may be.

A final answer is suggested: "Rava says: Even a hundred times a day." It is not clear if this explanation refers to a number of visits to a single person or the number of times that one might visit any number of sick people in a given day. But whatever it means, we get a picture here of virtually unlimited time that people could/should spend on this *mitzvah* when there are sick people in their community.

**Summary** The Talmudic discussion on visiting the sick anchors the *mitzvah* in the story of Korach and teaches us about the complex reality of illness and caring for the sick. On the one hand, illness is the way of the world, and death in the wake of illness is entirely natural. Unlike the unnatural case of Korach, the normal death that follows illness is a sign of routine divine involvement as opposed to divine punishment. Nonetheless, both illness and the practice of visiting the sick create confusion. When we think about theological reward, social hierarchies or the daily routines of the ill and those who visit them, illness and the obligation to visit land us in a world of "no quantifiable measure."

**Shabbat Shalom.**  
Rabbi Avital Hochstein

**Join Rabbi Gordon on Zoom!  
Something for everyone!**



**Mondays, 9:00 - 10:00 AM**

The history of the Jewish people. Newcomers are welcome to join us!

[Register here](#)

**Wednesdays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

A look at the weekly Parashah from both traditional rabbinic and midrashic points of view as well as modern historians.

Although we would love you to join us for all classes, you can join the lesson for that week's reading. Recommended: the New JPS translation, but feel free to use any translation.

[Register here](#)



# The 613 Mitzvot

**Thursdays, 12 - 1:00 PM. Bring your lunch!**

More than a "good deed," mitzvah in a deeper and truer sense means, literally, command.

Teachings from Sefer ha-Chinuch will be provided; this work numbers the mitzvot as they appear in the Torah, adding rabbinic teachings and the author's own insights. Recommended:

Have a translation of the Torah with you.

[Register here](#)

**Fridays, 6:30 - 7:00 PM.**

Abbreviated services (including L'cha Dodi; though not Shabbat evening services) and the singing of Zemirot. Benefits include spiritual ones as we enter Shabbat, congregational togetherness before Shabbat, and learning about what we are singing.

[Register here](#)



## What'cha been up to? Inquiring minds want to know!

Send us your photos, stories, poems, drawings, doodles of your life during COVID. Knitting like a fiend? Send pics of your projects! Learned some new computer skills? Tell us all about!

Ask your kids and grandkids to contribute, too!

TRADITIONAL CONGREGATION

FROM THE DESK OF MARIAN GORDON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

314-576-5230 TRADCONG@SBCGLOBAL.NET

# WE'RE TAKING YOUR TEMPERATURE!

YOUR EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE, THAT IS!

Hello, everyone,

I'm excited to announce the launch of a new Traditional Congregation project. We're rolling it out now, with plans to complete it before Rosh HaShanah. And we're asking you to contribute - no money required!

In this crazy time we're all experiencing, we'd like to compile a digital Book of Reflections - and you, your children and your grandchildren are all invited to participate!

We hope you'll contribute!!! Please send us your thoughts, your scribbles, your artwork - through writings, photos of your drawings, paintings, needlework, mask-making, or home projects, poetry, family photos, songs, etc. - whatever medium you prefer! We'll compile them into a digital book that we'll send out to our member families in time for the High Holydays.



You are welcome to submit as many entries as you'd like.\* They can be mailed to our office, or emailed to me at tradcong@sbcglobal.net. You can start sending in submissions immediately; the final date we can accept them is July 24.

I look forward to hearing from you!

*Marian*

\*By submitting your work, you give permission to Traditional Congregation to publish it.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS JULY 24!

		<b>Candle lighting (18 mins before sunset)</b>	<b>Kabbalat Shabbat</b>	<b>Talmud Class</b>	<b>Minchah/ Arvit</b>	<b>Shabbat Ends</b>
<b>July</b>	3/4	8:11	6:30	6:30	7:45	9:11
	10/11	8:09	6:30	6:30	7:45	9:09
	17/18	8:06	6:30	6:30	7:45	9:06
	24/25	8:01	6:30	6:30	7:45	9:01
	31/1	7:55	6:30	6:15	7:30	8:55
<b>August</b>	7/8	7:47	tbd	6:15	7:30	8:47
	14/15	7:39	tbd	6:00	7:15	8:39
	21/22	7:29	tbd	6:00	7:15	8:29
	28/29	7:19	tbd	5:45	7:00	8:19
<b>Sept</b>	4/5	7:09	tbd	5:30	6:45	8:09
	11/12	6:58	tbd	5:30	6:45	7:58
<b>Erev RH</b>	18/19	6:47	tbd	5:15	6:30	7:47
	25/26	6:36	tbd	5:00	6:15	7:36

<b>Happy</b>		<b>Birthday!</b>	
Doug Berson	July 2	Adina Levy	July 14
Peggy Rosen	July 3	Joanne Schuver	July 14
Diann Bank	July 4	Alberta Berger	July 15
Spencer Levison	July 4	Mel Weinberg	July 16
Richard Becker	July 5	Arlene Fox	July 20
Jules Stiber	July 5	Daniel Kweskin	July 22
Stanley Greenberg	July 6	Pamela Neuman	July 23
Stephen Rosenberg	July 6	Sherri Lopatin	July 26
Anne Brown	July 10	Esther Abramson-Krut	July 27
Sam Ockner	July 10	Ruth Tockman	July 27
Sela Roth	July 11	Bettina Weinberg	July 27
Jerry Chervitz	July 12	Muriel Zimring	July 30
Deborah Matson	July 13	Shelby Kopp	July 31
Herb Gilden	July 14	Joan Stiber	July 31
<b>Happy Anniversary!</b>			
Cyndee & Ken Levy	July 2	31st	
Dina & Morty Rinder	July 2	31st	
Michelle & Mike Rosch	July 3	15th	
Nancye & Allen Gliner	July 5	50th	
Florence & Joe Schachter	July 16	42nd	
Lori & Paul Tesser	July 24	37th	

## **PRAYER**

Rabbi Eleazer on concluding his worship used to say the following:

*May it be Your will, Almighty God,  
to cause to dwell on our lot love and harmony,  
peace and friendship.*

May You make our borders rich in disciples and  
prosper in our latter end  
with good prospect and hope,  
and set our portion in Paradise.

*Confirm us with a good companion and  
a good impulse in Your world.*

May we rise early and obtain the yearning of our heart  
to revere Your name.

*And may You be pleased to grant  
the satisfaction of our desires!*

*Talmud*

## **THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE**

We find comfort among those who agree with us – growth among those who don't.

*Frank A. Clark*