The Sin of Korach as the Low Point of

of The Book of Bemidbar

So what is Sefer Bemidbar about?

How does the rebellion of Korach fit into that?

It's a book of leadership.

What is the main idea of Bemidbar?

The Key words: Nasi, Nesiim

Nesiim, leaders, of tribes listed 4 times

Shelach: Spies: כל נשיא בהם

Korach: נשיאי עדה קריאי מועד אנשי שם

Zimri: Nesi beit av נשיא בית אב לשמעוני

Benot Zlofchad approach Moshe and the Nesiim

Rashei Hamatot have a parasha

Midyan adjudicated by Moshe and the Nesiim

Reuven and Gad approach Moshe and the Nesiim

Masai: New Nesiim listed

The case of Menashe vs. Benot Tzlofchad adjudicated by Moshe and...

Cases approach Moshe and the Nesiim

Bnot Tzlofchad

ָוַתַּעֲמֹדְנָה לִפְנֵי משָּׁה וְלִפְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּּהֵׁן וְלִפְנֵי הַנְּשִׂיאָם וְכָל־הָעֵדֶה פֶּתַח אְהֶל־מוֹעֵד לֵאמְר:

They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said,

Midian

וַנִּצְאוּ מֹשֶּׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְכָל־נְשִּׁיאֵי הָעֵדָה לִקְרָאתָם אֶל־מִחַוּץ לְמַחֲנֶה:

Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the chieftains of the community came out to meet them outside the camp.

וַיִּקְצִף מֹשֶּׁה עַל פָּקוּדֵי הֶחָיַל שָׂרֵי הָאֵלַפִים וְשָׂרֵי הַמֵּאוֹת הַבַּאִים מִצְבָא הַמַּלְחַמָּה:

Reuven and Gad approach Moshe and the Nesiim

ַוַיִּבְאוּ בְנֵי־גָד וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרָוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה ׁ וְאֶל־אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵׁן וְאֶל־נְשִּׂיאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמְר:

the Gadites and the Reubenites came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the chieftains of the community, and said...

ַוִיּאמְרֹוּ אִם־מָצָאנוּ חֵן בְּעֵינֶּיךְ יֻתַּן אֶת־הָאָגֶרץ הַזְּאת לַעֲבָדֶיךְ לַאֲחֻזָּה אַל־תַּעֲבִרָנוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן:

It would be a favor to us," they continued, "if this land were given to your servants as a holding; do not move us across the Jordan."

Menashe tribe vs. Benot Tzlofchad

ַי גלְעָד בֶּן־מָכִיר בֶּן־מְנַשֶּׁה מְמִּשְׁפְּחֻת בְּנִי יוֹסֵף וַיְדַבְּרוּ לִפְנַי מֹשֶׁה וְלִפְנַי הַנְּשִׂאִים רָאשֵׁי אָבָוֹת לִבְנַי יִשְׂרָאֵל:י־

The family heads in the clan of the descendants of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh, one of the Josephite clans, came forward and appealed to Moses and the chieftains, family heads of the Israelites.

ֿןהָיוּ לְאֶחָׁד מַ

ל ּלְנָשִׁיםֹ וְנִגְרְעָה נַחֲלָתָן מִנַּחֲלַת אֲבֹתֵׁינוּ וְנוֹסֵּף עֵל נַחֲלַת הַמֵּטֶּה אֲשֶׁר תִּהְיֶינָה לָהֶם וּמִגֹּרֵל נַחֲלָתֵנוּ יִגְּרְעַ:ב Now, if they marry persons from another Israelite tribe, their share will be cut off

from our ancestral portion and be added to the portion of the tribe into which they

Communal, Grassroots Involvement Book

ָוְאִתְּכֶם יִהְיֹוּ אָישׁ אַישׁ לַמַּטֶּה אָישׁ רָאשׁ לְבֵית־אֲבֹתָיו הְוּא:

Associated with you shall be a man from each tribe, each one the head of his ancestral house.

So, did Moshe fail?

וַיּאמְרָוּ אַישׁ אֶל־אָחֻיו נִתְּנָה רָאשׁ וְנָשׁוּבָה מִצְרְיְמָה:

And they said to one another, "Let us head back for Egypt."

וַיִּפָּל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרָן עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם לִפְנֵּי כָּל־קְהַל עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembled congregation of the Israelites.

When is the book at its best?

Pesach Sheni, Pinechas, Benot Tzlofchad, Nesiim

It's a book of Levites

Bemidbar: Count the Israelites and count the Leviim

Exchange the Levites for the first born ('cuz they were so good?)

Lay out the role of the 1/3 Levite families

Naso The role of other Levite families

B'halotecha Cohen, Dedication of the Levites

Shlach No role of the Levites??

Korach Rebellion of the Levites

Leviim after the story of Korach...

The story of the choice of Levi's rod

```
ַוְגַם אֶת־
אַסֶירָ מַטֵּה לֵוִי שֵׁבָט אָבִירָ הַקְרָב אִתָּר וְיִלָּווּ עָלֶירָ וְיִשְּׁרְתִוּרָ וְאַתָּה וּבָנָיךָ אִתָּרְ לִפְנֵי אָכֶּל הָעֵדְת:
אַסֶירָ מַטֵּה לֵוִי שֵׁבָט אָבִירָ הַקְרָב אִתָּרְ וְיִלָּווּ עָלֶירָ וְיִשְׁרְתִוּרָ וְאַתָּה וּבָנָיךָ אִתָּרְ
```

You shall also associate with yourself your kinsmen the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, to be attached to you and to minister to you, while you and your sons under your charge are before the Tent of the Pact....

They shall be attached to you and discharge the duties of the Tent of Meeting, all the service of the Tent; but no outsider shall intrude upon you

וְלָבְנֵי לֵוֹי ָהָנָּה נָתַתִּי כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְנַחֲלֶה חֱלֶף עֲבְדָתָם אֲשֶׁר־הֵם עֹבְדִּים אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אְהֵל מוֹעֵד:

And to the Levites I hereby give all the tithes in Israel as their share in return for the services that they perform, the services of the Tent of Meeting.

I hereby take your fellow Levites from among the Israelites; they are assigned to

וַאֲנִי

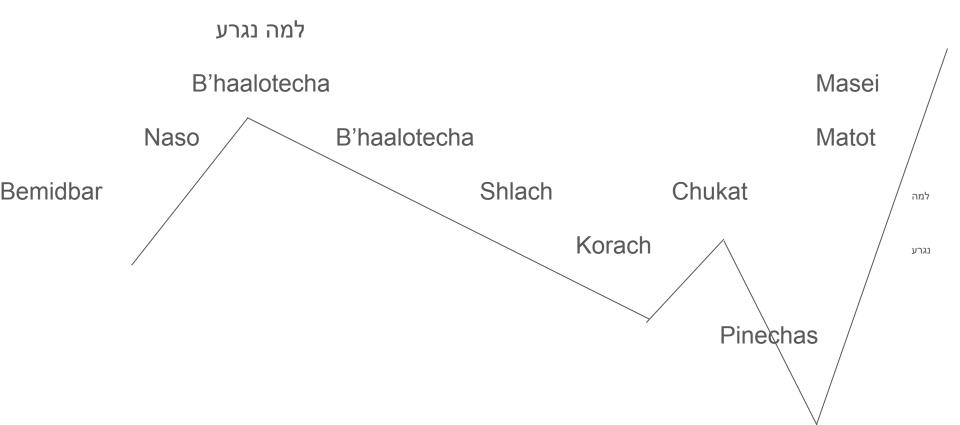
Cohen laws and...

ה

you in dedication to the LORD, to do the work of the Tent of Meeting;

ָה לַקַּחְתִּי אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם הַלְוִיָּם מִתָּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֶּם מַתָּנָה נְתָנִים לַיהוָה לַעֲבֶּד אֶת־עֲבַדָּת אָהֶל מוֹעֲד:נ

The trends, overall look...



What is the low point?

After the 250 were killed and Korach swallowed...

The showdown showed that Levi was chosen once and for all.. Well...

ז כ לֵא מָזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הֹוּא לְהַקְּטִיר קְטָׂרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוֶה וְלְא־יִהְיֶה כְקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבָּר יְהוֶה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לְוֹ:כ י לֵא מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לְהַקְטִיר קְטָׂרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוֶה וְלְא־יִהְיֶה כְקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׂר דִּ

as the LORD had ordered him through Moses. It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider—one not of Aaron's offspring—should presume to offer incense before the LORD and suffer the fate of Korah and his band.

And then...

ַוִיּלֹנוּ כָּל־עֲדָת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל ֹמְמָּחֶלָת עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרָן לֵאמֹר אַתָּם הַמִּתָּם אֶת־עַם יְהוֶה:

Next day the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You two have brought death upon the LORD's people!"

Hashem reacts:

ָבָרָמוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֶדָה הַזֹּאת וַאֲכַלָּה אֹתָם כְּרֻגַע וַיִּפְּלָוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם:

"Remove yourselves from this community, that I may annihilate them in an instant." They fell on their faces.

In fact over 14,700 would die. G-d was serious.

How did Moshe stop the plague?

ַי יִשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּ'חַ וְשִּׂים קְטֹׂרֶת וְהוֹלָךְ מְהֵרָָה אֶל־הָעֵדָה וְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי־יֵצָא הַאֶּצֶף מִלְּפְנֵי יְהוָה הֵחֵל הַנְּגֶף:י

Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire pan, and put on it fire from the altar. Add incense and take it quickly to the community and make expiation for them. For wrath has gone forth from the LORD: the plague has begun!"

Why ketoret? Rashi:

This secret the Angel of Death communicated to him (Moses) when he went up unto heaven to receive the Torah, viz., that the incense holds back the plague — as is related in Treatise Shabbat 89a.

Why such a strange secret and why was it used now?

So now everyone is happy, right?

They had a staff showdown and Aharon/Levi won

```
ַ
ָּה אֶל־מֹשֶּׁה הָשֵּׁב אֶת־מַפֵּה אַהֲרֹן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדֹּוּת לְמִשְׁמֶּרֶת לְאִוֹת לִבְנֵי־מֶּרִי וּתְכַּל הְּלוּנֹתֶם מֵעָלַי וְלָא יָמֶתוּ:י
```

The LORD said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back before the Pact, to be kept as a lesson to rebels, so that their mutterings against Me may cease, lest they die."

So it's all good now, right?

One more complaint!

ָוּיִאמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵׁל אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמִר הַן גָּוַעְנוּ אָבַדְנוּ כֵּלָנוּ אָבָדְנוּ:

But the Israelites said to Moses, "Lo, we perish! We are lost, all of us lost!

(כְּל הַקָּרֶב וּ הַקָּרֶב אֶל־מִשְׁכַּן יְהוֻה יָמְוּת הַאָם תַּמְנוּ לִגְוְעַ: (ס

Everyone who so much as ventures near the LORD's Tabernacle must die. Alas, we are doomed to perish!"

So this is the low point. Or.. Tzror Hamor...

צרור המור במדבר פרשת קרח

ולפי שהשם ראה קושט דבריהם. השם חשבה לטובה ולא לתלונה

Netziv

They were holy...

הרי כל איש ישראל לא נפלא ממנו להשיג באיזה שעה רצון ותשוקה לאהבת ה', וכמו שהעיד משה רבינו בספר דברים (ד,ד. ד,כד), עיין שם שהיו אותו הדור כולם יודעים מזה העונג הנפלא, וא"כ אין איש ממנו בטוח.

Shaar Bat Rabim

You should have been mochel, to waive your honor...

Ibn Ezra

ומי יתן ותמנו לגוע אז אמר השם לאהרן שהוא הנגיד על שבט לוי להזהירו שלא יכשילו הלוים את ישראל

Rashbam

כל איש ואיש אשר יקרב **אל המשכן** לשומרו או אל כלי המשכן עם הלוים, **ימות**, שעדיין לא התרה בם הקב"ה, שעדיין לא נכתב והזר הקרב יומת (במדבר י"ח:ז'). ולכך הוא מזהירם בפרשה זו: וזר לא יקרב אליכם (במדבר י"ח:ד'), והזר הקרב יומת, שמכאן ואילך לא יקרבו כלל ולא ימותו.

Or no, this is the worst

Midrash Lekach Tov

לקח טוב במדבר י"ז:כ"ז

היו אומרים על עצמם ולא היו מבינים מה הם אומרים מתו במעשה העגל בחרב ובמגפה ובתבערה באש ובמעשה קרח נבלעו ונשרפו ונפלו י"ד אלף ושבע מאות בכל זאת לא שמו אל לבם להאמין בבוראם. כל הקרב הקרב. שתי קריבות. ומה לויים קורבים על קרובתם אל משכן ה' כל שכן שאר שבטים:

Korach complains

The showdown of firepan

Earthquake, fire vs. the 250

You killed the people of G-d

I will wipe them out

The Ketoret solution

The death of 14,700

The staff showdown

We are all lost. Have we stopped dying?

What comes after this? What happened to all the sins?

Laws of cohanim and Leviim, guard the Mishkan, benefits of Cohen, Levi

Chukat, laws of death

The death of Miriam, Aharon

Conquest of Sichon and Og

Balak tries to curse us

Zimri almost does us in

Pinechas saves the day

What happened to all of the sins?

Crime

Punishment

Mitonenim

Fire at the edges (grass roots/ desire problem)

Makah rabba meod (desire problem)

Miriam

Asafsuf

Leprosy (leadership problem)

Spies

National condemnation, 40 years

Korach

Swallowed up and burnt (Leadership problem)

Post Korach

14,700 dead (grass roots problem)

Zimri

24,000 (eye/desire problem)

What is this book?

What is the sin of Korach?
The antidote

A leadership Book

The leaders failed/rebelled They took the lead

A book of Grassroots Work

The masses rebelled,

They demand a role

Pinchas saves the day

A book of Levites

The Levites rebel

Pinechas saves the day

So what is the message of Korach within Bemidbar?

Musar Haskel, Lessons Learned

- 1. We cannot deny the leadership and prophecy of Moshe.
- 2. G-d is with us even if we are sinful (see Balak)
- 3. Leaders must learn to lead and to sublimate themselves to other leaders
- 4. The masses must speak up

When there is bad leadership we are expected to know the difference between the good and bad.