



## Elana Stein Hain and Yonah Hain

Critiquing Power  
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<b>I. The Narrative and Outlook of Ohn's wife</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a	1
<b>II. The Narrative and Outlook of Korach's Wife</b>	<b>2</b>
2. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a	2
<b>III. About the Larger Group</b>	<b>3</b>
3. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a	3
<b>IV. Korach's Rebellion, discussed in the Talmud passage</b>	<b>4</b>
4. Numbers 16:1-4 (continues through 16:35)	4

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## I. The Narrative and Outlook of Ohn's wife

### 1. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a

אמר רב און בן פלת אשתו הצילתו אמרה ליה מאי נפקא לך מינה אי מר רבה אנת תלמידא ואי מר רבה אנת תלמידא

Rav says: Ohn, son of Pelet - his wife saved him. She said to him: "What is the difference to you? If this one (Moses) is master, you'll just be a student. And if this one (Korah) is master, you just be a student."

אמר לה מאי אעביד? הואי בעצה ואשתבעי לי בהדיהו אמרה ליה ידענא דכולה כנישתא קדישתא נינהו דכתיב (במדבר טז, ג) כי כל העדה כולם קדושים. אמרה ליה תוב דאנא מצילנא לך אשקיתיה חמרא וארויתיה ואגניתיה גואי אותבה על בבא וסתרתה למזיה כל דאתא חזיה הדר

Ohn said to her: "What should I do? I part of the plan and I took an oath with them that I would be with them?" She said to him: "I know that the entire assembly is holy, as it is written: "For all the assembly is holy" (Numbers 16:3) (meaning that they observe restrictions of modesty). She said to him: "Sit, for I will save you." She gave him wine to drink and got him drunk and laid him down inside their tent. She sat at the entrance of the tent and exposed her hair. Anyone who came and saw her stepped back.

אדהכי והכי אבלעו להו

In the meantime, the assembly of Korah was swallowed into the ground.

## II. The Narrative and Outlook of Korach's Wife

### 2. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a

איתתיה דקרח אמרה ליה חזי מאי קעביד משה איהו הוה מלכא לאחווה שווייה כהנא רבא לבני אחוהי שוינהו סגני דכהנא אי אתיא תרומה אמר תיהוי לכהן אי אתו מעשר דשקילתו אתון אמר הבו חד מי לכהן ועוד דגייז ליה למזייכו ומיטלל לכו כי כופתא עינא יהב במזייכו

Korah's wife said to him: "See what Moses is doing. He is the king, he appointed his brother High Priest, and he appointed his brother's sons deputy priests. If terumah comes, he says: 'Let it be for the priest;' if the first tithe comes, which you as Levites take, he says: 'Give one tenth to the priest.' And furthermore, he shears your hair and waves you as if you are as insignificant as excrement (see Numbers 8:5–11), as though he set his sights on your hair."

אמר לה הא איהו נמי קא עביד אמרה ליה כיון דכולהו רבותא דידיה אמר איהו נמי (שופטים טז, ל) תמות נפשי עם פלשתים

Korah said to her: But didn't he shave his hair like the rest of the Levites? She said to him: "Since it is all done for his own prominence, he also said metaphorically: 'Let me die with the Philistines' (Judges 16:30) (i.e., he was willing to humiliate himself in order to humiliate you).

ועוד דקאמר לכו עבדיתו תכלתא אי ס"ד תכלתא חשיבא [מצוה] אפיק גלימי דתכלתא וכסינהו לכולהו מתיבתך

And furthermore, he told you to make a fringe of sky blue color; but if sky-blue dye is considered a mitzva, take out robes that are made entirely of material colored with sky-blue dye, and dress all the students of your academy in sky-blue robes!"

היינו דכתיב (משלי יד, א) חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה זו אשתו של און בן פלת ואולת בידה תהרסנה זו אשתו של קרח

This is the meaning of that which is written: "The wisdom of women builds her house" (Proverbs 14:1); this is referring to the wife of Ohn, son of Peleth. And: "Folly plucks it down with her hands" (Proverbs 14:1); this is referring to the wife of Korah.

### III. About the Larger Group

#### 3. Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 109b-110a

”ויקומו לפני משה ואנשים מבני ישראל חמשים ומאתים” מיוחדים שבעדה ”קריאי מועד” שהיו יודעים לעבר שנים ולקבוע חדשים ”אנשי שם” שהיה להם שם בכל העולם (במדבר טז, ב)

It is written: “And they arose before Moses, with men from the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation,” that is, distinctive members of the congregation; “the elect men of the assembly [*keri’ei moed*]” who knew how to intercalate the years and establish the months in order to determine the time for each Festival [*moed*]; “men of renown [*shem*],” who had a reputation [*shem*] throughout the world (Numbers 16:2).

וישמע משה ויפול על פניו (במדבר טו, ד) מה שמועה שמע? אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אי”ר יונתן שחשדוהו מאשת איש שנאמר (תהלים קו, טז) ויקנאו למשה במחנה אי”ר שמואל בר יצחק מלמד שכל אחד ואחד קנא את אשתו ממשה שנאמר (שמות לג, ז) ומשה יקח את האהל ונטה לו מחוץ למחנה

“And Moses heard and he fell on his face” (Numbers 16:4): What rumor/report did he hear that elicited that reaction? Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: He heard that they suspected him of adultery with a married woman, as it is stated: “And they were jealous of Moses in the camp (jealousy being a formal term used when someone suspects their wife of adultery)” (Psalms 106:16). Rabbi Shmuel bar Yitzḥak says: This teaches that each and every man warned his wife to distance herself from Moses and not enter into seclusion with him (the term used for this is קנא, the same word as jealousy), as it is stated: “And Moses would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp” (Exodus 33:7).

ויקם משה וילך אל דתן ואבירם (במדבר טז, כה) אמר ר”ל מכאן שאין מחזיקין במחלוקת דאמר רב כל המחזיק במחלוקת עובר בלאו שנאמר (במדבר יז, ה) ולא יהיה כקרח וכעדתו

“And Moses arose and went to Dathan and Aviram” (Numbers 16:25), Reish Lakish says: From here we derive that one may not perpetuate a dispute, as Rav says: Anyone who perpetuates a dispute violates a prohibition, as it is stated: “And he should not be like Korah and his assembly,” (Numbers 17:5).

#### IV. Korach's Rebellion, discussed in the Talmud passage

##### 4. Numbers 16:1-4 (continues through 16:35)

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִזְחָר בֶּן־קֹהַת בְּלוֹי וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פִּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן :

Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—descendants of Reuben—

וַיִּקְמוּ לְפָנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַנְשֵׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמֵשִׁים וּמְאַתָּים נְשִׂאֵי עֲדָה קְרָאִי מוֹעֵד אַנְשֵׁי־שָׁם :

to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute.

וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב־לָכֶם כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קֳדָשִׁים וּבְתוֹכְכֶם יְהוָה וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהַל ה' :

They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the LORD is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the LORD’s congregation?”

וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו :

When Moses heard this, he fell on his face.