

Of Sticks and Stones

— based on a shiur by Rav Chanoch Waxman

Source 1: AlHatorah.org regarding the timing of Parshat Korach:

Our chapter provides no background as to what prompted Korach's rebellion, and why it was specifically now that the nation voiced their concerns. The story, like many others, is undated, making it hard to set in a specific context. Since the previously dated event (the Sin of the Spies) takes place in the second year and the next dated event (Aharon's death) occurs in the fortieth, the rebellion could have erupted at any point during the thirty-eight intervening years in the Wilderness!¹ If the episode closely followed the sending of the Spies, might the aftermath of that event have spurred the rebellion? If, on the other hand, the revolt broke out only years later, why would the nation first challenge the priesthood only after Aharon's position had long been established?

Source 2: Commentary of Ramban on Parshat Korach

Rabbi Avraham (Ibn Ezra) wrote. “This event took place in the Sinai desert when the firstborn were exchanged for the Levites. The Bnei Yisroel thought that Moshe did this on his own accord, because he wanted to uplift his bother Aharon, the sons of Kehos, his relatives, and all the sons of Levi, his family. The Levites rose up against him because they were slated to be under the authority of Aharon and his sons. Dasan and Aviram rebelled because Moshe took away the rights of the firstborn from their father Reuven and gave them to Yosef. Korach was a firstborn as well.”

In this, Rabbi Avraham follows his view that the Torah was written without regard to chronological order. However, I wrote (at the beginning of Parshas Acharei Mos) that in my opinion the entire Torah is written in chronological order, except for the places in which Scripture notes explicitly that it is out of order. In those places it is because of a certain need or suitable reason. Consequently, the correct explanation here is that this event occurred in the Paran desert, at Kodeish Barnea, after the incident of the

spies. The real reason for Korach's rebellion is as explained in Midrash Rabbah and Tanchuma — Korach was angry about the appointment of Elitzafan to leadership. He was also envious of Aharon, as it says (v. 10), "And yet you ask to be kohanim as well?" Dasan and Aviram did not join with Korach because Moshe took away the right of the firstborn from the tribe of Reuven, for it was their forefather Yaakov who took it away from Reuven and gave it to Yosef. Rather, they stated their complaint (v. 13): "To kill us in the desert" and (v. 14), "Even into a land flowing with milk and honey you have not brought us." As long as the Bnei Yisroel were in the Sinai desert, no bad event occurred, for even the very severe Sin of the Golden Calf resulted in relatively few deaths. The rest of the people were saved through Moshe's prayers, which lasted forty days and forty nights (Devorim 9:28). **Consequently, the nation loved Moshe with all their soul, and obeyed him. If someone would have rebelled at that time he would have been stoned by the people. Therefore, Korach bided his time and refrained from reacting to Aharon's appointment as Kohein Gadol. In the same way, the firstborn refrained from reacting to the elevation of the Levites and all of Moshe's actions. However, when they arrived in the Paran desert many were burnt in Taveirah (11:1) and died in Kivros Hataavoh (11:33). When they sinned with the spies, Moshe did not succeed in annulling the decree with his prayer, and the leaders of the tribes died in a plague before Hashem. It was decreed upon the entire people to die in the wilderness. As a result, the people were embittered, and they began to feel that all their failures came as a result of Moshe's leadership. Korach saw his opportunity now to dispute with Moshe, and he reasoned the people would listen to him. Thus, this is the explanation of Dasan and Aviram's statement: "To kill us in the desert." They claimed: You have brought us to this place, and you have not fulfilled the promise to bring us to a land flowing with milk and honey. You have not given us any inheritance at all. We will die in this desert and be annihilated here, and even our children will never leave this desert, for just as you have not fulfilled your promise to us, you will never fulfill your promise to our children.**

Question: Is there a third possibility?

Source 3: Bamidbar Ch. 20: 11-13

וַיָּרִם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַסֶּלַע בְּמַטְּהוֹ פַּעַמַּיִם וַיֵּצְאוּ מֵיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשָּׂא
הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: (ס)

And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod.
Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts
drank.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן יֵעַן לֹא־הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תָבִיאוּ אֶת־הַקָּהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people**, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them.”

הַמָּה מֵי מְרִיבָה אֲשֶׁר־רָבוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדָּשׁ בָּם: (ס)

Those are the Waters of Meribah—meaning that the Israelites
quarreled with the LORD—through which He affirmed His
sanctity.

But what is the Kiddush Hashem that they should have made possible, and how does Moshe's behavior fall so short of the standard that Hashem expected? Why the harsh punishment?

Focusing on the language:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן יֵעַן לֹא־הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֵן לֹא תְבִיאוּ אֶת־הַקְהָל הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַתִּי לָהֶם:

But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people**, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them.”

This translation fits in with how Hashem refers to Moshe when Miriam and Aharon speak disparagingly about Moshe earlier:

Source 4: Bamidbar 12:6-8

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּ־נָא דְבָרַי אִם־יִהְיֶה נְבִיאֲכֶם יְהוָה בְּמִרְאָה אֵלָיו אֶתְוַדַּע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר־בּוֹ:

and He said, “Hear these My words: When a prophet of the LORD arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream.

לֹא־כֵן עַבְדִּי מֹשֶׁה בְּכָל־בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמָן הוּא:

Not so with My servant Moses; **he is trusted throughout My household.**

כִּי אֵל־פֶּה אֲדַבֵּר־בּוֹ וּמִרְאָה וְלֹא בְחִידוֹת וּתְמִנַּת יְהוָה יִבִּיט וּמִדּוּעַ לֹא יֵרָאֶתֶם לְדַבֵּר
בְּעַבְדִּי בְּמֹשֶׁה:

With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the LORD. How then did you not shrink from speaking against My servant Moses!”

Source 5: Devarim Ch. 32:48-52

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר:

That very day the LORD spoke to Moses:

עֲלֵה אֶל־הָרֵ הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הָרֹ-נְבוֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי יְרִיחוֹ וּרְאֵה
אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֻחֻזָּה:

Ascend these heights of Abarim to Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab facing Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving the Israelites as their holding.

וּמֵת בְּהָרֵ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹלֶה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסַף אֶל־עַמִּיךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר־מֵת אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ בְּהָרֵ
הַהוּא וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל־עַמּוֹ:

You shall die on the mountain that you are about to ascend, and shall be gathered to your kin, as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his kin;

עַל אֲשֶׁר מָעַלְתֶּם בִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִי־מְרִיבַת קֹדֶשׁ מִדְּבָר־צֵן עַל אֲשֶׁר
לֹא־קִדַּשְׁתֶּם אוֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

for you both broke faith with Me among the Israelite people, at the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, by failing to uphold My sanctity among the Israelite people.

Source 6: Bamidbar 27:12-14

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה עֲלֵה הָרֵ הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה וּרְאֵה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

The LORD said to Moses, “Ascend these heights of Abarim and view the land that I have given to the Israelite people.

וּרְאִיתָה אֹתָהּ וְנֶאֱסַפְתָּ אֶל־עַמִּיךָ גַּם־אַתָּה כְּאֲשֶׁר נֶאֱסַף אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ:

When you have seen it, you too shall be gathered to your kin, just as your brother Aaron was.

כַּאֲשֶׁר מָרִיתֶם פִּי בַּמִּדְבָּר-צִן בְּמַרִיבַת הָעֵדָה לְהַקְדִּישְׁנִי בַּמַּיִם לְעֵינֵיהֶם הֵם
מִי־מַרִיבַת קֹדֶשׁ מִדְבָּר-צִן: (פ)

For, in the wilderness of Zin, when the community was contentious, **you disobeyed My command** to uphold My sanctity in their sight by means of the water.” Those are the Waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.

This is an echo of what Moshe said to Bnai Yisrael in Parshat Chukat:

וַיִּקְהֲלוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶת־הַקָּהָל אֶל־פְּנֵי הַסֹּלֶל וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמַעוּ־נָא
הַמַּרְיָם הַמִּן־הַסֹּלֶל הַזֶּה נֹוצִיא לָכֶם מַיִם:

Moses and Aaron assembled the congregation in front of the rock; and he said to them, “**Listen, you rebels**, shall we get water for you out of this rock?”

Were they rebels? Source 7: Bamidbar 20:3-5

וַיִּרֶב הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר וְלֹא גִנַּעְנוּ בְּגֹנֹעַ אֲחֵינוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

The people quarreled with Moses, saying, “If only we had perished when our brothers perished at the instance of the LORD!

וְלָמָּה הֵבֵאתֶם אֶת־קָהָל יְהוָה אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לָמוֹת שָׁם אֲנָחְנוּ וּבְעִירָנוּ:

Why have you brought the LORD’s congregation into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die there?

וְלָמָּה הָעֲלִיתֵנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לְהַבִּיא אֲתָנוּ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַרָע הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר לֹא מָקוֹם זֶרַע
וַתֵּאֱנָה וְגִפְּן וְרִמּוֹן וּמִיָּם אֵין לַשְּׁתוּת:

Why did you make us leave Egypt to bring us to this wretched place, a place with no grain or figs or vines or pomegranates?
There is not even water to drink!

Command – 20:7-8	Accomplishment – 20:9-11
Take the stick	And Moshe took the stick from in front of the Lord as God commanded him
And gather the congregation together you and Aharon your brother,	And Moshe and Aharon gathered the congregation together before the rock
And speak to the rock before their eyes, it shall give its water	And Moshe said to the people: Hear you rebels.
You shall bring forth water for them (<i>ve-hotzaita lahem</i>) from the rock	Should we bring forth water for you (<i>notzi lachem</i>) from the rock? And Moshe lifted up his hand, and he hit the rock twice with the stick The water came out (<i>va-yotzei</i>) abundantly
And you shall give (<i>ve-hishkita</i>) the congregation and their cattle water	And the congregation drank (<i>va-teisht</i>) and their cattle as well.

Echoes of an earlier incident...

Source 8: Bamidbar 14:2

וַתִּשָּׂא כָּל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא:

The whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night.

וַיִּלְנוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל־הָעֵדָה לֹא־מָתָנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
אִךְ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לֹא־מָתָנוּ:

All the Israelites railed against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in the land of Egypt," the whole community shouted at them, "or if only we might die in this wilderness!"

וַיִּרְבּוּ הָעָם עִם־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר וְלֹא גִנַּעְנוּ בְּגֹנֹעַ אֶחָיו לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

The people quarreled with Moses, saying,
 “If only we had perished when our brothers perished at the
 instance of the LORD!

Source 9: Excerpts from Parshat Korach Bamidbar Ch. 16

וַתֵּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וְשִׁימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן קִטְרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מָחָר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה הוּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי:

and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them
 before the LORD. Then the man whom the LORD chooses,
 he shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of
 Levi!”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קָרַח אַתָּה וְכָל־עַדְתְּךָ הֵיוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אַתָּה וְהֵם
 וְאַהֲרֹן מָחָר:

And Moses said to Korah, “Tomorrow, you and all your
 company appear before the LORD, you and they and
 Aaron.

וְקָחוּ אִישׁ מִחֻתָּתוֹ וְנָתַתֶּם עֲלֵיהֶם קִטְרֶת וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אִישׁ
 מִחֻתָּתוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאתַיִם מִחֻתָּת וְאַתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן אִישׁ מִחֻתָּתוֹ:

Each of you take his fire pan and lay incense on it, and
 each of you bring his fire pan before the LORD, two
 hundred and fifty fire pans; you and Aaron also [bring]
 your fire pans.”

וַאֲשׁ יֵצְאָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אֶת הַחֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתַיִם אִישׁ מִקְרִיבֵי
הַקֶּטֶר: (פ)

And a fire went forth from the LORD and consumed the
two hundred and fifty men offering the incense.

וְלָמָּה הֵעֵלִיתֶנּוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם לְהַבִּיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה לֹא מָקוֹם זֶרַע
וְתַאֲנָה וְגִפֶּן וְרִמּוֹן וּמִים אֵין לִשְׁתּוֹת:

Why did you make us leave Egypt to bring us to this wretched
place, a place with no grain or figs or vines or pomegranates?
There is not even water to drink!

*More Echoes from Parshat Korach,
Source 10: Bamidbar 16:13-14; Datan and Aviram*

הַמַּעֲט כִּי הֵעֵלִיתֶנּוּ מֵאֶרֶץ זֶבֶת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ לְהַמִּיתֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר
כִּי-תִשְׁתָּרֵר עָלֵינוּ גַם-הַשְׁתָּרֵר:

Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing
with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, that
you would also lord it over us?

אִף לֹא אֶל-אֶרֶץ זֶבֶת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ הֵבִיאָתָנוּ וַתִּתֵּן-לָנוּ נַחֲלַת שָׂדֵה וְכַרְם
הֵעֵינִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם תִּנָּקֵר לֹא נַעֲלָה:

“Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk
and honey, and given us possession of fields and
vineyards, should you gouge out those men’s eyes? We
will not come!”

Source 11: Rav Chanoch Waxman:

The story recounted in *Sefer Shemot* (17:1-7) parallels the events of Mei Meriva in many ways. In both cases the people lack water (*Shemot* 17:1, *Bamidbar* 20:2). In both cases the Torah describes the people as "striving with Moshe" (*Shemot* 17:2, *Bamidbar* 20:3), complaining as to "lama he'elitanu," why have you brought us up (*Shemot* 17:3, *Bamidbar* 20:5), and bemoaning their impending death (*Shemot* 17:3, *Bamidbar* 20:4). Moreover, and most crucially, the solution in both cases involves a rock and a stick. At Masa U-meriva, God commanded Moshe to take his stick and smite a rock located at Chorev (17:6). As we should remember, in the story of *Sefer Bamidbar*, the events of Mei Meriva, God commands Moshe to take "the stick" and speak to the rock (20:8). While the commands certainly differ, the common denominator seems to outweigh the differences. Both resolutions involve a stick and a rock.

After Hashem's command, Moshe questions; instead of being active ויוצא it's והוצאת

Source 12: *Bamidbar* 20:8

קח את המטה והקהל את העדה אתה ואהרן אחיך ודברתם אל הסלע
לעיניהם ונתן מימיו והוצאת להם מים מן הסלע והשקית את העדה
ואת בעירם:

“You and your brother Aaron take the rod and assemble the community, and before their very eyes order the rock to yield its water. Thus you shall produce water for them from the rock and provide drink for the congregation and their beasts.”

Source 13: Shemot 2:17

וַיָּבֹאוּ הָרֹעִים וַיִּגְרְשׁוּם וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיִּנְשָׁעַן וַיִּשְׁקֵן אֶת־צֹאֲנָם:

but shepherds came and drove them off. Moses rose to their defense, and he watered their flock.

Source 14: Shemot 3:1

וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת־צֹאֵן יִתְרוֹ חֹתֶנִּי כֹהֵן מִדְיָן וַיִּנְהֹג אֶת־הַצֹּאֵן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הָר הָאֱלֹהִים חֹרֵב:

Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Source 15: Midrash Shemot Rabba

וַיִּנְהֹג אֶת הַצֹּאֵן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר, בִּישְׁרוֹ, שִׁישְׁרָאֵל הַקְרוּיִים צֹאן, יְמוֹתוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר.

Source 16: Bamidbar 27:17

וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר:

Moses spoke to the LORD, saying,

יִפְקֹד יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחַת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל־הָעֵדָה:

“Let the LORD, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community

אֲשֶׁר־יֵצֵא לַפְּנִיָּהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יָבֹא לַפְּנִיָּהֶם וְאֲשֶׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאֲשֶׁר יְבִיאֵם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה עֵדוּת יְהוָה כִּצְאֵן אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לָהֶם רֹעֶה:

who shall go out before them and come in before them,
and who shall take them out and bring them in, so that
the LORD's community may not be like sheep that have no
shepherd."

Source 17: Bamidbar 20:11

וַיָּרֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַסֶּלַע בְּמַטְּהוֹ פַּעַמַּיִם וַיֵּצְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים וַתִּשְׁתְּ
הָעֵדָה וּבְעִירָם: (ט)

And Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod.
Out came copious water, and the community **and their beasts**
drank.

Source 18: Bamidbar 20:8-9

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמַּטֶּה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ:

Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as He had commanded
him.

Source 19: Commentary of Rashbam

ודברתם אל הסלע - לא צוה הקדוש ברוך הוא לקחת את המטה להכות בו
הסלע כמו שעשה ברפידים, שכתוב שם: והכית בצור ויצאו ממנו מים -
אלא המטה צוה לקחת להראות בו קושי מרי שלהם, בדכתיב: למשמרת
לאות לבני מרי - אפס בדבור ידבר עם הסלע לתת מימיו.

Source 20: Back in Parshat Korach

וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרֶת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מִטֶּה-אֹהֶרֶן לְבֵית
לֹוִי וַיֵּצֵא פָּרַח וַיִּצָּץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמַל שְׁקָדִים:

The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Pact, and there the staff of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted: it had brought forth sprouts, produced blossoms, and borne almonds.

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-הַמַּטֵּת מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל-כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּרְאוּ
וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מַטְהוּ: (ס)

Moses then brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the Israelites; each identified and recovered his staff.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁב אֶת-מִטֶּה אֹהֶרֶן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת לְמַשְׁמֶרֶת
לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי-מִרְי וְתִכַּל תִּלְוֹנָתָם מֵעַלִּי וְלֹא יָמָתוּ:

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.”

Source 21: Rav Chanoch Waxman

The miracle of the staff is in some sense the opposite of the miracles of divine fire, the opening of the earth and the plague. As opposed to turning life into death, it turns death into life. The dry wood of the staff springs back to life, it flowers, buds and blossoms, giving forth almonds, where before only lifeless wood had been present. Along with Moshe and Aharon's quelling of the plague, it symbolizes the life giving quality of their leadership. It is meant to show that God's leadership, as

manifested through Moshe and Aharon, is in fact meant to lead to life.....Similarly, the story of the manna, the sustenance provided by God, which comprises the centerpiece of the "complaint" narrative of *Shemot*, contains the term "*mishmeret*" (*Shemot* 16:32-34). Like the "rebellion" narrative of *Sefer Bamidbar*, the story of the manna ends with the placing of an object "in front of the testimony" (16:34), as something guarded or watched. God orders Moshe to place a measure of manna in front of the Lord, so that the people will see the bread that God fed them in the desert (16:32). The dual parallel between the measure of manna and the staff of Aharon suggests that the two placements serve similar purposes and the two objects embody similar messages. Just as the miracle of the flowering staff was intended to put an end to the people's complaints regarding leadership in the "rebellion" narrative, so too the miracle of the manna was intended to put an end to the people's complaints for food and water, for sustenance in the *Shemot* "complaint" narrative. Just as the measure of manna, the first object placed before the testimony, i.e. near the ark, symbolizes the miracle of life in the desert, of God's caring, provision and sustenance so too the second object, the staff of Aharon symbolizes the miracle of life, the life giving leadership of God as manifested through Moshe and Aharon. By this means, not through force and power is the rebellion quelled. It is this stick, the flowering stick, that Moshe is meant to take from "before the Lord" and hold in his hand while speaking to the rock.