

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KORACH - 5760

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"RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 244, Tachanun. Good Shabbos!

### A Tale of Two Wives

Korach (from the tribe of Levi), along with Dassan, Aviram, On ben Peles (all from the tribe of Reuven) and 250 other men, rebelled against Moshe and Aharon's leadership. G-d divinely confirmed Moshe and Aharon's leadership when the earth swallowed up Korach, Dattan and Aviram, and their entire families, and a heavenly fire consumed the 250 men.

The obvious question is, what happened to On ben Peles? While On ben Peles and Korach started out in the same clique, they met very different ends. Korach suffered an ignominious death, while On ben Peles escaped.

The Talmud [Sanhedrin 109b] explains how they wound up going their separate ways. The Gemara says that the wife of On ben Peles saved him. She saw that he was getting all fired up about Korach's rebellion. She told him, "What difference does it make to you? If Moshe is the leader, you will be his disciple and if Korach is the leader, you will be his disciple. Either way, your station in life will not change. Why are you getting all excited?"

On ben Peles told his wife that since he had already sworn allegiance to Korach, there was no way he could now remove himself from the group. His wife gave him alcoholic beverages to drink until he fell asleep. She then went outside the tent as the 'mob' passed by, and did not allow them to come in and wake her husband. They ultimately left without him. Because of her, On ben Peles was saved.

On the other hand, the Talmud tells us that Korach's wife egged him on. It was her teasing which angered him against Moshe and fired him up to start his rebellion. We know the rest of the story.

The point of this Rabbinic teaching is to teach us what a difference a wife can make. Every once in a while, we need to hear words from our wives that set us straight and put us in our place. On the other hand, if a person does not merit a good wife, she and her urgings can be his undoing and the cause of his destruction.

This is the interpretation that Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (The Netziv) gave to explain the expression "Ezer k'negdo" (a helpmate, opposite him) [Bereshis 2:18]. Sometimes she can help by helping, and sometimes she can help by opposing, standing up and protesting -- putting the husband, respectfully, in his right place [Yevamos 63a].

The divergent fate of Korach on the one hand and that of On ben Peles on the other, was the tale of two men, and even more, the tale of two wives.

### The Argument of Korach and His Community

The Mishneh [Avos 5:17] says that any argument that is for the sake of Heaven is destined to have lasting, positive results, and any argument that is not for the sake of Heaven (in which people only serve their self

B'S'Dinterests) will never have positive results. As the classic example of an argument for the sake of Heaven, the Mishneh cites the disciples of Hillel and Shammai. The paradigm of an argument not for the sake of Heaven is that of "Korach and his community." Many have commented that in order to use appropriate, parallel language in the Mishneh, the example should be "the argument of Korach and Moshe" (the two adversaries), not "of Korach and his community."

Rav Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) offers the following insight. What does the Mishneh mean when it says that the argument of Korach and his community is an argument that is not for the sake of Heaven? Rav Schwab says that when there is an argument for the sake of Heaven, both parties realize that there is another side to the argument. Beis Shammai may say 'Guilty' and Beis Hillel may say 'Innocent', but they are both interested in arriving at the truth. In order to get to the truth, I must hear the other side. I agree that there is another side to the argument. I may happen to think that the other side is wrong, but I admit that there is another side.

An argument that is not for the sake of Heaven is that of Korach and his followers. These individuals all believed that there was only their side of the argument. There was nothing to talk about. They were not even willing to listen to the other side. They were not interested in finding the truth. They were only interested in promoting their side. It was not the argument of Korach and Moshe. To this community, Moshe did not even exist. He had no 'side' in the dispute.

We must be tolerant enough and understanding enough to realize that there can perhaps be two sides to an issue. We must at least be willing to listen to and willing to consider the other side. We do not need to be willing to agree to the other side, but we must at least admit that the other side exists. Sometimes people become so intolerant and so closed-minded that they are not even willing to admit this.

The Talmud tells us, "Just as the faces of people do not exactly resemble one another, so too their opinions do not exactly resemble one another" [Brochos 58a]. Just as no two people look exactly alike, so too, no two people think exactly alike.

I once heard an insight into this Rabbinical comment, in the name of Rav Shlomo Eiger (1786-1852). The meaning of the Talmud's statement is that just as it should not bother me when someone does not look like me, so too, the fact that someone does not think like me should not bother me.

A person is considered among the disciples of Hillel and Shammai when he is tolerant and is not bothered by someone disagreeing with him. However, when a person can not tolerate disagreement with his own opinion and feels that 'there is no other side', he is unfortunately considered a disciple of Korach and his congregation.

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BELOVED COMPANIONS  
by RABBI YISROEL PESACH FEINHANDLER  
Parshas Korach  
Quarreling Poisons Marriage

And the land opened its mouth, and swallowed them (, Dassan, and Aviram and their families), along with their houses, and all the men that were aligned with Korach, and all their goods. (Bemidar 16:32)

Rabbi Menashe ben Porat of Illiya was in great demand as a teacher, because of his wonderful drashos. And so he used to travel regularly to

the city of Mohilov to lecture.

Once when he was giving one of these lectures, he happened to refer to something from the books of the famous philosophers Aristotle and Plato. On hearing this, one of the young married men in the congregation interrupted Rabbi Menashe by calling out rudely, It is a great sin to mention the wise people of the gentiles here in the Shul in front of the Aron Kodesh.

A tumult arose in the Shul, and many people rebuked the young man for his arrogance in interrupting such a great teacher as Rabbi Menashe.

Rabbi Menashe did not say a word about the interruption however, and he continued his lecture as if nothing had happened, and when he had finished he sat down. Not only did the young man who had disturbed him not come to ask his forgiveness for his brazen behavior, but he even went on to warn Rabbi Menashe that he dare not lecture on the same topics again. Once again Rabbi Menashe acted as if he were deaf and dumb and did not reply or react.

One of the wealthy people in Mohilov was Rabbi Shemaryahu Luria, and it was he who had brought Rabbi Menashe to Mohilov to lecture. After the lecture, Rabbi Shemaryahu went up to Rabbi Menashe and asked him, How can you stand the chutzpah of that young man? Once again Rabbi Menashe did not reply.

As Rabbi Shemaryahu was escorting Rabbi Menashe to his house, a calf approached them suddenly and jumped upon Rabbi Shemaryahu causing his coat to fall on the ground. Only then did Rabbi Menashe finally reply, Why are you silent and not rebuking the calf for its chutzpah? Does the calf have any sense? Does it even know what it is doing? The answer to these questions will also answer your questions about that young man. (KETzes Ha-Shemesh BiEGvuraso, p.152)

Rabbi Menashe reveals some excellent advice which can help us avoid quarreling with another person: if you begin to feel agitated, judge the other favorably, and simply realize that at this time he lacks the good sense to know how to behave and what to say. This is a valuable lesson in marriage, where quarreling can cause great harm.

And the land opened its mouth. Rabbi Yehudah said, At that time the land opened many mouths, as it is written, In the midst of all the land. 2

Rabbi Nechemia said (of Rabbi YehudahEs words), But it is already written, And the land opened its mouth, so how then can I explain the verse, in the midst of all the land? The answer is that the entire ground became like a sieve so that any place where there were some of them (KorachEs followers), or their money, they would be made to roll over to the pit and fall in. So the verses: And the land opened its mouth and in the midst of all the land are not mutually exclusive.

And all the established things at their (Korach and his followers) feet. 3 This is a reference to money, which puts a person on his feet.

Our Rabbis have taught, Even if someone in the party of Korach had lent something to another person, it rolled away and was swallowed by the pit. Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachman said, Even a needle that was lent to someone from the followers of Korach went rolling away and was swallowed by the pit along with them, as it is written, And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with their houses, and all the men that were aligned with Korach, and all their goods. 4 (Yalkut 752 par. Vayiftach)

Why did the ground have many mouths for the people of Korach to fall into? Why did the possessions of Korach also fall into the pit, when the possessions did not sin? Why did the Torah call money something that puts you on your feet and why is this lesson taught here?

The problem with Korach was that he was looking for arguments. Instead of being satisfied with what he had as a Levi, he also wanted to have the portions of the kohanim. He envied the presents and the honor which they received. To get what he wanted he tried to override the authority of Moshe, since it was through Moshe that all the revelations

of these matters took place.

Because of KorachEs selfish cravings, he was willing to go against the whole Torah, which is what Moshe represented. This greed was the basis for his quarrel against Moshe. He knew that only by quarreling and questioning MosheEs authority did he stand a chance of gaining his ends.

Unjustified dissent is very dangerous, because it can undermine the structure of a society and could make many other people insecure regarding their tasks in life. If Korach would have been allowed to continue his quarrel, he would have tried to prove Moshe a liar. He thought that if he could show Moshe was, G-d forbid, a liar, there would have been no reason to keep the Torah, since it came from a liar. Thus Korach was attacking the very essence of the Jewish people and their way of life.

That is the reason why many mouths were opened in the ground, so that the people who had made this horrible rebellion would disappear instantaneously. Someone who seeks quarrels and undermines the values of other people is so dangerous that he deserves to be removed from society as quickly as possible.

The miracle of the earth swallowing up the rebels was necessary because if these people had died naturally, there would still be their bodies to bury, and that would mean a reminder of them would linger on. We learn from here that quarreling is so dangerous, that even looking at the dead body of a person who argues can spark another dispute. For example, someone might say, Remember what that person used to say about... Then the same argument would start all over again. Therefore G-d did not allow the possibility of there being any burial for them, and they simply vanished from the face of the earth.

This is the reason why even the possessions of these people went into the ground. Someone might pick up a needle that belonged to someone from KorachEs party and say, That needle did a good job. I appreciate that person who gave me the needle. Perhaps he was right when he said ... Quarrels people are so dangerous that we are not even allowed to have minimal contact with anything that belongs to them. There possessions must all vanish just as the people themselves vanished.

Why did the Torah call money something that puts you on your feet, and why is this lesson taught in this specific midrash rather than someplace else? We can give an answer to this based on the fact that our Sages say that Korach was rich.<sup>5</sup> It is apparent that they are telling us this fact to point out the dangers of wealth. A person with lots of money at his disposal, may come to feel that he has limitless power. The verse says, And a rich man speaks with brazenness. <sup>6</sup> The brazenness comes from the influence that he wields because of his wealth.

This power can be a dangerous weapon if not used correctly. If a rich person has the wrong values, and he wishes to force them on others, it can lead to catastrophe. That is what happened in the case of Korach. He used his wealth to influence people to be on his side, and this was extremely perilous to the moral values of the Jewish nation.

Now it is understood why the lesson that money puts you on your feet is taught here. It comes to point out that the wealth of Korach was his pitfall, since it gave him a sense of limitless power and strengthened his brazenness. Using his money for wrong purposes brought him to jeopardize the future of the Jewish people, and ultimately cause his own death.

It Takes Two to Quarrel

To quarrel is one of the worst things that can happen in marriage. It shows that there is a desire in both partners to rule over the other spouse. Each one thinks that he is unquestionably right and the other person is wrong.

Our Sages say, A quarrel that is not for HeavenEs sake will not last. <sup>7</sup> By this they mean, that there is no room for quarrels unless they are for genuine spiritual purposes, things which concern Heaven. You can quarrel like Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel, whose arguments were

about how to understand the Torah and how to derive precisely what it expects from us. Any other quarrel, such as those that concern material possessions, can only be harmful.

Arguments usually come about when a person criticizes his or her spouse. ⊥You spent too much money! ⊥You left the house a mess! ⊥You came home late! ⊥You never have time for me! Even though criticism can be constructive, it all depends on how it is presented. When it is said in a kind, concerned tone, it is more readily accepted than if it were to be voiced in a harsh manner. Aggressive or angry intonations alone could easily be the beginning of a quarrel.

It takes two to argue; one person simply cannot quarrel by himself. Therefore, if you see that your spouse is criticizing you harshly, do not answer with harshness. Instead answer in a quiet friendly voice, or just keep quiet. Don't let anger take hold of you. By speaking quietly and softly, you can calm your anger, as the verse says, ⊥A soft reply turns away anger. 8

The trick is not to win a quarrel but to avoid it altogether, since there are never winners in a quarrel. Both sides lose, since each one experiences internal tumult before the quarrel is over. So why begin something that will only cause you suffering? Everyone knows that only fools get themselves into trouble, so don't be a fool. You should realize that a person who quarrels with his spouse all the time, lacks common sense and self-restraint.

Being humble is another trait that can save you from needless arguments. Who does not have faults? When you internalize that you are not perfect, you will not want to criticize or attack another person verbally. As our Sages say, ⊥Decorate yourself first, then decorate others. 9 First you must repair your own faults, and only then can you go on to correct the faults of others. When you do wish to criticize your spouse, wrap your criticism in many layers of cushioning. ⊥I just love the things you buy for the house, but ... , ⊥You are such a great cook, but ... , ⊥I appreciate so much your helping out a home, but ... Yet if it becomes evident that, despite all the sugar coating and the flattery, your words are not going to help correct the situation, do not pursue your criticism. Even if you think it is important, if it will cause a quarrel, it is not worth mentioning.

We see that every memory of Korach vanished into the earth, so that no trace would remain of his quarrels. In marriage too, we must do everything in our power to eliminate any words or actions that may spark a quarrel.

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Parshat Korach  
All Are Holy  
Rosh Hayeshiva HARAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG, shlita  
Rashi (Bamidbar 16:1) quotes the famous midrash regarding the quandary which Korach presented to Moshe: Does a talit which is made entirely of "techelet" (blue-dyed wool, a single string of which forms the essence of the tzitzit) require tzitzit? Does a house full of Torah scrolls require a mezuzah? These questions are perplexing, for there seems to be no correlation between Korach's questions and his challenge to Moshe and Aharon's authority. However, through this midrash, Chazal express the philosophy and world outlook of Korach.

The natural order of the world, in both the spiritual and physical realms, is to have a focal center which binds the vast space which surrounds it, from the minuscule nucleus of an atom until the infinite

intergalactic expanse. In each system, there is a single center or nucleus which unifies and grants life to the entire infrastructure which surrounds it. Thus, Israel stands in the center of humanity; the tribe of Levi stands in the center of Israel; kehunah (priesthood) is the central nucleus of the tribe of Levi; the kohen gadol (high priest) represents the innermost level. When there is a center, there exists a point towards which the entire unit can aspire. Remove the center, and you have removed the aspiration of the entire circle, thereby leaving everyone at the lowest level.

Korach claimed that there was no need for a center. "For the entire assembly - all of them are holy." (Bamidbar 16:3) But he erred. If everyone is equal, then everyone must be on the lowest level, for if anyone were at a higher level, there would no longer be perfect equality. There must always be a strand of techelet outside the garment, that will resemble the kisei hakavod (G-d's Throne of Glory), and will motivate everyone to grow towards its level. Likewise, a mezuzah outside the house serves as a focal point and model. If the entire garment is techelet, and the entire house is full of Torah scrolls, but there is no tzitzit or mezuzah, there is nothing elevated which serves as a model for growth.

"In the morning the Lord will make known the one whom is His and the holy one, and will draw him close to Himself; and whomever he will choose, he will draw close to Himself." (Bamidbar 16:5) This pasuk describes three separate levels of choosing: Israel among mankind, the tribe of Levi among Israel, and the kohanim among the tribe of Levi. This theme of centrality is represented by the name of Aharon [spelled Alef, Hey, Resh, Nun], the Kohen Gadol. Hey (five), is the middle of the letters whose numerical value is in the units, Nun (fifty) is the middle of the tens, and Resh (two hundred), is the middle value of the letters of the hundreds [the last numerical value is 400, as there are only four Hebrew letters in the hundreds.] The Alef (one) represents the singularity of Aharon, the Kohen Gadol.

Rav Kook claims that Korach's skewed outlook had already become rooted in humanity during the days of Kayin. The implication of such an outlook is that there is no need for spiritual exertion in order to grow, as everyone is on an equal level. Therefore, Kayin reasoned, there is no difference between himself and Hevel. Kayin failed to understand why his sacrifice was not accepted, for in his eyes everyone was equal. He did not know that there is a need for extraordinary effort in order to be elevated from the periphery to the center. As long as his ethics were defective, it was impossible for him to become close to G-d and to bring a sacrifice. This is also the mistake of Christianity, which pretends it does not comprehend the difference between itself and Judaism. "Why does Israel claim to be the chosen nation," they ask, "for all nations are equal in their spirituality?" The result of such a world view is a lack of effort to perfect one's self, since whether we try hard or not, we still remain equal.

Moshe Rabeinu is the center of Torah, and Aharon is the center of avoda (service). Korach, in his rebellion against these two centers, brought as examples a house full of Torah scrolls and a garment made of techelet. If there is no need for a center in Torah, a mezuzah is unnecessary. Likewise, if there is no need for a center in Avoda, then the tzitzit, whose purpose is to remind Jews of the 613 Mitzvot (Numbers 16:39-40), also becomes superfluous. Korach had to be swallowed up by the earth and descend alive into the pit in order to establish the perspective of Judaism -- that there is no hope for humanity other than through the existence of centers, and through the aspirations and supreme efforts of those on the periphery to approach the center and to emulate it as much as possible. Yet, Moshe and Aharon will always remain above the others, allowing anyone in Israel to ask, "When will my deeds reach the level of the deeds of my forefathers?" In our ears will echo the words of Korach and his followers, "Moshe is emet (true) and his Torah is emet."

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RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER

Praying for a Miracle

If one eats a meal on Chanukah, minhag has it that ve-al ha-nissim is included in the Birkat Ha-mazon, though the Talmud clarifies that this is not a halachah. Because it is minhag if one forgets to recite ve-al ha-nissim one is neither required nor permitted to repeat the Birkat Ha-mazon. The Rema comments that in such a case, the minhag dictates that one add on among the various Harachaman prayers, "Harachaman yaaseh lanu nissim veniflaot keshem sheasita la-avoteinu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh," and then continue to recite "Beyemei Matityahu.."

The commentaries on the Shulchan Aruch raise a question: how is it permissible to ask for a miracle to occur? Doesn't the Mishna in Berachot state that if a pregnant woman is already past the first forty days of her pregnancy, and the sex of the baby has already been determined, that one may not pray for a miracle and ask for a baby of a specific gender?

The Shaarei Teshuvah quotes the three exceptions to the rule as stated by the Acharonim, as to when one is permitted to ask for a nes: 1) One may ask for a nes nistar. For this is what hashgacha is all about - God controls the world from behind the scenes, without openly violating any of the rules of nature. 2) Since we believe that, "ein mazal le-yisrael," that the Jewish people are, "lemala min hateva," there is nothing at all improper about requesting a nes nigleh on their behalf. 3) Even if the nes is not for Klal Yisrael, but only on behalf of an unusual tzadik, this too is allowed, as is evidenced from the various stories related in the Gemara Taanit regarding several tzadikim who prayed for miracles. The great tzadik is also "lemala min hateva."

In Parshat Korach we find Moshe Rabbeinu requesting of God that even if the opening of Gehennom not be here, that He make a nes and "yivra Hashem" - let it move to here. Because the miracle was needed - either for klal yisrael or the unusual tzadik - Moshe was allowed to pray for it.

A similar situation appears in the Haftarah. Shmuel Ha-navi calls upon God to bring about a miracle on Shmuel's personal behalf, to indicate his righteousness. This appears to be the thematic similarity between the sedra and the Haftarah: the exceptions to the rule i.e. when one is permitted to pray for a miracle.

To illustrate this point, I remember many years ago, when I visited the Ponovez Yeshiva in Benai Brak, the tzibbur was reciting tehillim on behalf of a cancer patient on whom the doctors had given up hope. The Mashgiach, Rav Yechezkel Levenstein - refused to participate in the prayers because in effect they were praying for a miracle.

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash: [yhe@vbm-torah.org](mailto:yhe@vbm-torah.org) Student Summaries of Sichot by the Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Korach

SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT" A

"He Shall Not Be Like Korach and his Congregation"

Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

Various explanations have been offered for Korach's rebellion  $\phi$  where exactly his mistake lay; how he dared to speak out against Moshe, the most humble of men, claiming that Moshe was elevating himself, etc. Rashi, for example, writes (16:7), "Korach was clever. Why did he perform this foolish act? His eye led him astray. He saw a great dynasty that would rise up from him (Korach)  $\phi$  the prophet Shemuel, who was compared to Moshe and Aharon..." But all of the explanations offered are only partial solutions, since they fail to explain one thing: Moshe informed Korach and his gang that if it turned out that he (Moshe) was right, and that God had chosen him and Aharon,

then Korach's whole congregation would die (Rashi 16:6). How, then, could Korach and his followers not have given up their fight? All the various explanations can perhaps explain the creation of the rebellion in its early stages, but it is difficult to believe that any of these reasons so convinced Korach and his men of their own case that even the threat of death had no effect on them.

The reason for this is simple: dispute and a disputational bent can bring about a situation in which a person loses all sense of logic and clear-headedness. He can believe in his argument so strongly that neither reasoning nor any threat will budge him. As an argument becomes more and more heated, a person believes with increasing intensity that he is correct that everyone else is wrong. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 6b) explains the verse in Mishlei (14:14), "Before it flares up the fight is abandoned," as follows: "Before the argument flares up, you are still able to abandon it. Once it flares up, you are unable to abandon it." Yaakov declared on his deathbed: "Shimon and Levi are brothers; swords are their instruments of cruelty. Let my soul not enter their counsel; let my honor not be attached to their assembly, for they killed a man in their anger..." (Bereishit 49:5-6). Rashi connects the words "Let my honor not be attached to their assembly" with Korach's rebellion, according to which Yaakov links the rebellion to the slaying of the men of Shekhem by Shimon and Levi. Dispute can bring a person to such a loss of clear-headedness that he becomes capable of killing someone who thinks differently from him. The Gemara (Chullin 89a) explains the verse from Iyov (26:7), "He hangs the earth upon nothingness (belima)" as teaching that "The world exists only for the sake of one who restrains himself (bolem et atzmo) during a dispute."

The Mishna in Avot (5:17) teaches, "Any dispute which is conducted for the sake of Heaven is destined to last, and one which is not for the sake of Heaven will not last. Which dispute was for the sake of Heaven? The dispute between (the schools of) Hillel and Shamai. Which was not for the sake of Heaven? The dispute of Korach and all his congregation."

When there is a dispute that is not for the sake of Heaven, one may reach a situation of heated argument, creating great animosity and hatred between two groups, to the extent that even the reason for the dispute is forgotten. After a few years, when those concerned think back on it they discover that the entire dispute revolved around a childish and unimportant matter, and they cannot understand what all the fuss was about for all that time. The dispute between Hillel and Shamai is an example of a genuine dispute, with each side listening to the other and not losing a sense of logic because of the argument. This is a dispute for the sake of Heaven, which lasts for a long time.

Korach's dispute thus remains the paradigm of a dispute which is not for the sake of Heaven. This rebellion even has halakhic ramifications which are relevant for all generations. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 2a) warns, "Anyone who maintains a dispute transgresses a negative commandment, as it is written, 'And he shall not be like Korach and his congregation' (Bamidbar 17:5)."

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Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Parashat Hashavua

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OU Torah Insights Project  
Parshat Korach July 8, 2000  
RABBI YAAKOV BENAMOU

Pirkei Avot states, "Any argument that is for the sake of Heaven will last; but one that is not for the sake of Heaven will not last." The mishnah offers Hillel and Shammai as the example of Heavenly opponents - and their debates are relevant to this day. Korach and his followers, on the other hand, are the prototypical example of those whose conflict arose from egotistical motivations. Those types of disputes, the mishnah guarantees, are doomed to fail.

Elsewhere in the Torah, Kayin and Hevel had a dispute in which Kayin killed Hevel. The Torah is very short on detail in describing the argument: "Kayin spoke with his brother Hevel, and it happened when they were in the field that Kayin rose up against his brother Hevel and killed him."

According to Bereishit Rabbah, the argument was about dividing the world between the two of them. Kayin's disagreement with the proposed division led him to kill his own brother. G-d confronted Kayin, who was sincerely remorseful and begged forgiveness.

The first thing we notice when taking a look at Korach's tragic story is that the story is depicted in much detail. Korach, a cousin of Moshe, gathers two hundred fifty followers and openly rebels against Moshe and Aharon, claiming that Moshe took the leadership for himself, and reserved the priesthood exclusively for his brother, Aharon.

Moshe, the most humble of all people, offers a Divine solution. He suggests that they all gather the next morning in the same place and G-d will identify the true leader. The following morning the truth is brought forth - Korach and his men are swallowed into the earth.

Why did Kayin, who took a life, merit repentance, when Korach did not? What was so terrible about his deed?

The Talmud teaches that "the congregation of Korach and his followers have no share in the World to Come." In disputing Moshe, he disputed G-d. He also felt no remorse. Even when he knew that his family, including babies, would pay the price of his rebellion, he didn't cease to oppose Moshe.

Kayin, on the other hand, stopped after he realized the severity of his dispute, and he expressed his remorse by saying, "My iniquity is too great to be forgiven."

So how do we know when an argument is for the sake of Heaven? The arguments of Shammai and Hillel last until today, in yeshivot and batei midrash across the world. Each of their views was given not for personal gain, but for the sake of Heaven.

Korach's battle with Moshe, however, was based on personal gain. Korach and his cohorts each had a completely different motivation - himself. Thus, their battle did not last. Only a battle with Divine intent remains forever.

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OU LUACH LIMUD KORACH luach@yerushalayim.net  
DEVAR TORAH/PARSHAS KORACH

Now took Korach, the son of Yitzhar, son of K'hos, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliav and Or, the son of Peles, the offspring of Reuven." Numbers 16:1

Rashi comments: This section is well explained in the Midrash Tanchuma: And Korach took: he took himself to one side to be set apart from the congrega-tion to contend against the priesthood". Onkeles also

translates, and he set himself apart as he separated himself from the rest of the congregation to establish a rebellion.

Said Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, as quoted by the Otzar Chaim: Our sages say, 'Any dispute that is for the sake of heaven will have a constructive outcome.' What sort of dispute was for the sake of heaven? The dispute between Hillel and Shammai. (Pirkei Avos 5:20). Only Hillel and Shammai permitted themselves to engage in a dispute for the sake of Heaven. However, people like we, who are of small stature must distance ourselves even from disputes like these.

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From: Kenneth Block [SMTP:kenblock@att.net] Subject: NCYI  
Weekly Divrei Torah - Parshat Korach

RABBI ZVI BORUCH HOLLANDER

Young Israel Torah Learning Center of Venice, CA  
5 Tammuz 5760 Daf Yomi: Ketuvot 100

"And Korach gathered against them (Moshe and Aharon) the entire congregation, to the Tent of Meeting..." (Bamidbar 16:19)

"(He gathered them together through) words of scorn and mockery ("divrei laitzanut"); throughout that night he went to the individual tribes and seduced them..." (Rashi, ibid.)

What was Korach's force of argument that convinced so many leaders of the Jewish people to rebel against their leaders, Moshe and Aharon?

Even though we must say that these august individuals had to have been persuaded by significant rationale and detailed logical arguments, nonetheless, from these words of Rashi we learn a major insight into the human psyche. When we try to plumb the depths of the causes for Korach's rebellion, we find that the fundamental reason for the lack of loyalty was his incitement through words of scorn and mockery.

Our Sages tell us that "one single mocking remark can overpower the effect of one hundred rebukes." Thus is stated the true influence of a lack of seriousness on positive ethical behavior. Yet, in the Talmud Yerushalmi, we find an astonishing alternative text: "one single mocking remark can overpower the effect of one hundred 'Torah arguments'!"

The effect of mockery is not simply one which pushes away moral seriousness; it also causes a lack of intellectual clarity. Thus, even though Korach must have used rational arguments, they were only successful as a result of his mockery. For through the terrible power of scorn, of laitzanut, the mantle of greatness of the leadership of Moshe and Aharon was stripped away, and the mental clarity necessary to see the inaccuracy of Korach's arguments was lost.

What is secret to maintaining that mental clarity? We can find the answer to this question at the end of the parsha. "And the individual whom I shall choose, his staff shall bring forth blossoms." (Bamidbar 17:20)

This entire episode of the staffs is very puzzling, to say the least. After the miraculous death of Korach and his followers, what lesson does the Torah wish to teach us here? After we have learned that which was the nature of Korach's power to foment rebellion against the Al\_Mighty and His chosen leader, we learn the nature of that leadership itself.

The nature of a stick of wood is that as long as it is planted in the earth it can bring forth fruit. However, if the branch is removed from the ground, its source of nutrients, and it is no longer connected to its roots, it will no longer produce fruit or flowers. This expresses to us that the path to success for most spiritual aspirants is one firmly rooted in the ground of tradition, clearly receiving Divine favor.

Symbolically, the state of being removed from the ground represents the state of homelessness, of wandering (where such a "walking stick" out of the earth\_\_ is the tool of the wanderer), of being removed from explicit manifestations of Divine will. Yet, the holy person, who conducts his entire life according to the dictates of holiness before the Al\_Mighty, can transcend the limitations of the natural world and can

"bear fruit", so to speak, even as a wanderer; his wandering stick\_\_staff gives forth blossoms without roots and without its covering of earth.

A lesson of this section of our parsha is simply that HaShem's chosen one, His holy messenger can lead even in the "Wilderness of the Nations." His staff can bear fruit without roots, without earth, for he has established it firmly in the holiness of closeness to the Al\_Mighty and His Torah.

Rabbi Eliahu Meir Bloch, zt"l, the Rosh HaYeshiva of Telshe, Cleveland, as described by his talmid, Rabbi Chaim Dov Keller, shlita (The Torah World, "He Brought Telshe to Cleveland", pp. 262\_276, Artsroll Judaiscope series, 1988), was one such leader. Even when severe illness removed him from "the roots of this earth", so to speak, he was still fruitful. As Rabbi Keller writes, I realized his boundless love of Torah from my last visit with him... my last impression of my Rebbi was not of the helpless terminally ill man I encountered. After some conversation, I mentioned a he'ora, an observation I had made on a passage in the Ketzos Hachoshen. As soon as I mentioned the Ketzos, the Rosh Yeshiva underwent a remarkable change. His eyes lit up, his face evinced its old warmth, a smile crossed his face, and his voice became strong and clear, as if the old Reb Elya Meir had been revived. "I made the same observation in one of my shiurim," he said, and proceeded to discuss the Ketzot with a leibedigkeit (liveliness) which so entranced me that, to my everlasting regret, I could not concentrate on his words... That is the way I remember Reb Elya Meir, who passed away two days later, enthusiastic and alive."

This was the strength and clarity of Moshe, our leader, "his eye had not dimmed, and his vigor had not diminished." (Deuteronomy 34:7)

(This d'var Torah is based on insights from the work Peninei Daat, the essays of the Telsher Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zt"l, edited by Rabbi Noson Tzvi Baron, shlita, and Rabbi Avraham Chaim Levin, shlita, vol. 2, pp. 95\_6)

A Project of the National Council of Young Israel  
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From: Yated USA[SMTP:yated-usa@ttec.com]

A DISHWASHER OR VACUUM CLEANER ON SHABBOS  
BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

Question: Is it permitted on Shabbos to ask a non-Jew to wash dirty dishes knowing full well that he will use a dishwasher? Is it permitted to ask a non-Jew to sweep the floor knowing that he will use a vacuum cleaner? Discussion: It is Rabbinically(1) prohibited(2) to instruct a non-Jew to perform a forbidden-either Biblical or Rabbinic-Shabbos Labor. It makes no difference if the instructions are given on Shabbos or before Shabbos(3). This strict prohibition is known as amirah l'akum(4). It should follow, therefore, that a non-Jew may not be instructed to wash the dishes or sweep the floor, since a forbidden Shabbos Labor will result from this command. In our specific case, though, an argument for leniency can be made based on the ruling of the Taz(5). The Taz rules that one may instruct a non-Jewish maid to wash the dishes on Friday night even if he knows that she will turn on the lights(6) in order to be able to wash the dishes. He explains that the Jew gains no benefit from the light, since the Jew's only concern is that the dishes be washed. The light is being turned on not for the Jew, but for the sake of the maid. This is not amirah l'akum, since a non-Jew may perform a Shabbos Labor for himself on Shabbos. Based on this principle, we find several cases where the poskim were lenient concerning amirah l'akum: It is permitted to instruct a non-Jew to "clean the floor," even though he will use a mop and do so in a prohibited manner (transgressing the Labor of Squeezing). This is because it is possible for him to "clean the floor" in a permissible manner-by pouring water on the floor and then pushing it aside(7). He is

performing forbidden Shabbos Labors only in order to make it easier for himself. This is not amirah l'akum(8). Using makeup remover on Shabbos may be prohibited because of the prohibition of Smoothing, memareiach. It is permitted, though, to instruct a non-Jew to "cleanse my face" even though the non-Jew will use makeup remover to do so. This is permitted because the face can be cleansed by scrubbing it with water, which is permitted. The decision to use makeup remover rather than water is made by the non-Jew, for his benefit, and it is not based on the instructions of the Jew(9). In the cases cited above, the Jew's orders, which could be filled in a permissible manner, will actually be filled in a prohibited manner. Still, it is apparent that the poskim were lenient and did not view this as amirah l'akum. Accordingly, it is permissible to instruct a non-Jew to wash dishes or sweep the floor even though he will use a dishwasher or a vacuum cleaner to do the job. This is because the dishes can be washed on Shabbos in a halachically permissible fashion, and using the dishwasher benefits the non-Jew by making his job quicker and easier(Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 30:23. See, however, Melachim O'mneich 9:20 who makes a distinction between the case of the Taz and our case, since in the Taz's case, turning on the light is not directly connected to the washing of the dishes, while here the dishes themselves are being washed while transgressing a prohibited Shabbos Labor.). Zilzul Shabbos As practical halachah, though, there is another issue to consider before we may permit using a dishwasher or vacuum cleaner on Shabbos by a non-Jew. The objection is based on a ruling of the Rama(10) that preferably a Jew should not allow his windmill-or any other noisy machine-to be operated on Shabbos because of zilzul Shabbos, degradation of the Shabbos. The Rama is concerned(11) that running a noisy machine on Jewish owned premises on Shabbos casts suspicion on the owner of the premises: Is he operating the machine? [It is permitted to have a machine running in one's home only when it is clearly evident that the machine making the noise was set or turned on before Shabbos; e.g., a grandfather clock; or when it is common knowledge that such a machine is usually activated by a Shabbos clock, e.g., electric lights, or by a thermostat, e.g., an air conditioner(12). In these instances, no suspicion will be cast on the owner of the premises and they are, therefore, permitted(13).] For this reason some poskim(14) forbid a non-Jewish maid to operate a dishwasher or a vacuum cleaner inside a Jew's home, since the noise might cause people to suspect the homeowner of violating the Shabbos(15). The fact of the matter is, however, that many yeshivos and camps allow non-Jews to operate dishwashers on their premises on Shabbos. While this practice seems to contradict the aforementioned ruling of the Rama, it is nevertheless permitted since the Rama himself adds that where a monetary loss would be incurred, one may be lenient and not concern himself with zilzul Shabbos. Since it would otherwise be impossible for the yeshiva or camp to have clean dishes, they view their situation as a case of "avoiding a loss" and they are lenient. Nevertheless, individuals in their private homes should not rely on this leniency.

1A minority view maintains that amirah l'akum is Biblically forbidden. While the poskim generally reject this approach, it is an indication of the severity of the prohibition; see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 253:7. 2There are several reasons given for this prohibition; see Rambam Hilchos Shabbos 6:1; Rashi, Avoda Zarah 15a and 22a. 3O.C. 307:2. 4To reinforce this prohibition, the Rabbis went so far as to forbid one to derive direct benefit from a non-Jew on Shabbos even if the non-Jew performed the Labor on his own without being told; O.C. 276:1. 5Quoted by Mishnah Berurah 276:27. 6Or use hot water - Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 30:23. 7Although there is no permissible method for a Jew to wash a floor on Shabbos, see O.C. 337:4, there are permissible ways for a non-Jew to do so; see Rama 337:2 and Mishnah Berurah 10. 8Birkei Yosef O.C. 333:2, quoted in Kaf ha-Chayim 337:21. Harav M. Feinstein is also quoted (The Sanctity of Shabbos, pg. 93) as allowing this. 9Igras Moshe O.C. 2:79. 10O.C. 252:5. See Pri Megadim 21 that this is only a chumrah. 11As explained in Darkei Moshe and Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav. This explanation is also evident from the Rama himself who permits a clock to chime on the hour since everybody knows that it can be set before Shabbos. 12See Ram a.O.C. 252:5, Igras Moshe O.C. 4:60 and Shulchan Shelomo 252:14. Shulchan Shelomo adds that concerning electric lights there is no problem of zilzul Shabbos in any case since there is no noise involved. 13Similarly, one is not required to shut off his telephone ringer since a ringing phone does not cast suspicion on the homeowner that he is violating the Shabbos. It is also permitted to leave

the phone attached to an answering machine or to a fax machine, as it is well known that these machines are set to operate before Shabbos. 14See Kol ha-Torah # 42, pg. 255 where Harav Y.Y. Neuwirth amends that if the noise of the dishwasher is heard by others it may be prohibited because of zilzul Shabbos. Harav M. Feinstein is also quoted (The Sanctity of Shabbos, pg. 89) as prohibiting the use of a dishwasher because of zilzul Shabbos. See also Shulchan Shelomo 252:13 who prohibits setting a time clock to turn on a dishwasher because of zilzul Shabbos. See Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 12:35 who adds another reason why a dishwasher may not be used with a time clock. 15See Igros Moshe O.C. 4:70-6 who prohibits setting an alarm clock - which is normally set on the previous evening - before Shabbos if the ringing noise will be heard outside the room on Shabbos. See Minchas Shelomo, pg. 81 who prohibits allowing a non-Jew to use a washing machine on a Jew's premises because of zilzul Shabbos. See Minchas Yitzchak 1:107 who prohibits leaving a radio or a tape recorder on from before Shabbos because of this concern.

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\* TORAH WEEKLY \* Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion

Parshat Korach

AN ARGUMENT FULL OF HOLIES

"Because the entire congregation is holy" (16:3)

Korach's rebellion is the first movement in the history of our people to attempt to reform the Torah of Moshe. Korach and his followers did not deny that the Torah was Divine. How could they?! They also had stood at Sinai! Instead, they tried to cripple Moshe's authority by claiming that "since the entire nation heard Hashem speak at Sinai, we are all holy and capable of interpreting the Torah ourselves." Korach's view that each individual has the ability to determine how the Torah should apply to him became the precedent for attack by many groups that deviated from the Torah throughout history.

This is a grave error. We need to follow the path of Torah as transmitted from Sage to Sage in each generation. The Torah is so complex that those who are not fully immersed in its teachings can easily distort it. We must always rely on the Sages in each generation to explain and apply the Torah in our era.

Adapted from Rav Moshe Feinstein

Written and Compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

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<http://www.jpost.com/Editions/2000/06/29/Columns/Columns.8920.html>  
SHABBAT SHALOM: What Korah really wanted

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

(June 29) "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Avirah, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuven, took men." (Num. 16:1)

Disputes and differences of opinion are the hallmarks of a democratic society - but they can also presage brutal destructiveness.

The Mishna, Ethics of Our Fathers, identifies two kinds of controversy, those that are for the sake of heaven, and those that are not: "Any controversy that is for the sake of heaven will result in something constructive, but one that is not for the sake of heaven will not result in anything constructive. Which is an example of a controversy for the sake of heaven? The controversy between Hillel and Shammai. And which was not for the sake of heaven? The controversy of Korah and his entire company." (Avot 5:17)

On what basis does the Mishna decide that Korah did not have the best of intentions, that his controversy was for his own aggrandizement, and not for the sake of heaven? After all, the logical argument which Korah sets forth seems to be the precursor of the American Bill of Rights: "You upon yourselves, seeing that all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and that God is among them! Why do you lift yourself up above the assembly of God?" (Num. 16:3)

Is not Korah defending the democratic process, denying those systems which hint at the divine right of kings or prophets? He seems to

have internalized the true significance of the revelation at Sinai, at which the Almighty spoke equality to all of the assembled - affirming the truth all humans stand equal before God, and all inherited positions of authority are an anachronistic holdover from the despotic days in Egypt!

Indeed, only a few generations later, when Gideon, one of the greatest of the military leaders, refused the people's request that he rule over them as king, saying: "I shall not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; only God shall rule over you." (Judges 8:23)

Isn't Gideon merely rephrasing the position of Korah? A careful reading of the Mishna, as well as of the biblical text, will reveal the underlying reason for our negative assessment of Korah and the reason why he and his cohorts are punished by being swallowed up by the earth.

A dispute for the sake of heaven is a clash between two ideologies, each position entitled to articulation and defense. Indeed, it is only as a result of such vigorous debate that healthy consensus, as a result of necessary checks and balances, has a chance to emerge.

A dispute which is not for the sake of heaven is a clash between two personalities, each interested in demonstrating his power over the other.

Hillel and Shammai represented two conflicting ideologies, the strict constructionalist or the looser constructionalist, the ideal of mediation against the ideal of absolutism. Had the Mishna - in parallel structure - pitted Korah against Moses, it may have been argued that each represented a different ideology.

BUT WHEN the Mishna switches protagonists and pits Korah against his own cohorts, it is clear that our Sages are suggesting that for Korah, ideology was a pretext; Korah is merely interested in his own advancement, and so his conflict continued even within the ranks of his supposed allies.

An example of a dispute for the sake of heaven is the ideological differences between Hillel and Shammai; an example of a dispute not for the sake of heaven is the power conflict between Korah and his cohorts.

Reading between the lines of the biblical text firmly supports the view of the Mishna. Our Torah portion, quoted above, opens with the words, Vayikach Korah... (and Korah took...) seemingly violating the grammatical principle that every subject must have an object. Who or what did Korah take? The Midrash fills in the missing object by teaching that Korah took "himself" to one side, removed himself from the community.

The individual who is desirous of separating himself from the people can hardly be presenting a credible argument for the sake of democracy. Moreover, the simple interpretation of the text would suggest that Korah is a "taker" - interested in taking power for himself more than anything else!

Secondly, Korah's argument emphasizes that all the congregation are holy (kol ha'edah kulam kedoshim). But the word for congregation (edah) is given in its singular form, while the word for holy (kedoshim) is plural: the entire congregation are all "holies," are all defending different definitions of holinesses, ideals and lifestyle.

Such fractious functionalism hardly seems to be expressing a united ideal opposing Mosaic elitocracy (the rule of the best); it seems rather to portend a covenant of malcontents, each coveting power for himself and banded together against the present ruling class.

Moses' response to Korah and his cohorts also demonstrates that he realizes the rebels' true motivation - and it has nothing to do with democracy. After first falling on his face as an expression of his own commitment to God - as opposed to Korah's commitment to himself - Moses issues the following challenge: "This is what you must do: Let Korah and his entire party take fire pans. Tomorrow place fire on them, and offer incense on them before God. The man whom God chooses shall then be the holy one..." (Num. 16:7)

Obviously Moses is laying a trap, setting Korah up to be rejected by

God. But how does Moses know that Korah will fall into the trap? Would it not have been more logical for Korah to refuse to participate, to have responded as do Datan and Aviram later on, (Num. 16:12): "We will not listen to you, Moses, or take up any of your suggestions."

The obvious answer is that, since Moses realizes that it is the priesthood for which Korah is hankering, he knows that Korah will not refuse any ritual which appears to be making a priest-kohen out of him. And it is fascinating to note that, although Korah's stated argument is one of democracy, when Moses continues to charge him with "you are now also demanding the priesthood!" Korah stands silent, giving credence to the true reason for his rebellion.

And it is precisely because Moses understands that Korah's goal is power that his defense is not the logical response - that the people are not yet ready for self-leadership; after all, they have just rejected God, Moses, Joshua and Caleb by their refusal to conquer Israel.

Moses rather argues another tack: he never took a single donkey from them (Num. 16:15). Leadership in Israel brings with it neither power nor glory, but ingratitude and condemnation. If they think that the priesthood - kehuna, or whatever it is that Korah has promised them, will bring them a surge of milk and honey, then they better think twice; there are no perks. It's a hard and long job - and nasty rebellions come with the territory!

Shabbat Shalom

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<http://www.yhol.org.il/parsha/rcbparsha.htm>

RABBI CHAIM BROVENDER

Parashat Korach

"The Levites Disaster"

Parashat Korach is about a confrontation. However, this confrontation did not occur on a battlefield or on the street, it occurred under the shadow of Har Sinai! That, as we will see, makes a difference.

In the fifth verse (chapter 16), Moshe seems to finally take the initiative and says,

"...In the morning, Hashem will make known who is His, and who is holy, and He will bring close to him, And whomever He will choose, He will bring close to Him." Korach and his assembly did not have faith in the order of things as presented by Moshe; they felt that there was another possible list of honorees, and they disputed Moshe's right to determine the hierarchy within Jewish leadership. Moshe explains that Hashem will intervene and that everyone will know whose position is consistent with the Divine will. Korach's argument was based on the assumption that Moshe decide independently, and that he used some form of logic in order to arrive at his conclusion. Moshe's response is that the appointment of Aharon as kohen (for example), was not done by Moshe in a logical or analytical manner but was, in fact, G-d's choice. Once this becomes known then the argument of Korach and his gang ceases to have validity (see my comments last year). Rashi makes the following comment: "Now we are intoxicated. It would be improper for us to appear before Hashem. Moshe intended this as a delay in the hope that Korach would turn away from confrontation."

Moshe's First Tactic

Clearly, Rashi is concerned about the word boker "morning." Why wait? Why not carry out the trial immediately? What possible advantage was there to postponing the test? The opposition was gathered against Moshe and Aharon and all the people were able to see what was going on; that was the time to act! Instead, Moshe calls off the confrontation and asks that the two sides be reconvened in the "morning."

Moshe said (as a ruse, perhaps, a way of postponing the determination), that we are drunk. We are unable to approach Hashem. We have no way of knowing whether Moshe and Aharon were really drunk, or that this was a way of putting off the divine determination. It is prohibited for anyone to perform the Temple service or render Halachic rulings while intoxicated.

For Rashi, Moshe had to explain himself. It was inconceivable that Moshe would have simply said that he and Aharon were simply taking a time out. He had to provide an argument that would be easily understood by the people who were watching these events. The drunkenness gambit seems to be a reasonable one (though not supported by as much as a hint in the text).

The medrash states that it was Korach and his assembly that might have been drunk:

"Perhaps excessive food and drink brought them to say these things. Let us wait until morning. Perhaps between now and then they will do tshuva. This is the meaning of the words 'in the morning Hashem will make known...,' it will be known whether or not they have done tshuva..." (Tanchuma, paragraph 8). To understand the position which Rashi takes here we will have to study a verse in Tehillim: "Like profane men, scornful mockers, they grind their teeth against me..." (35: 17). The gemara (Sanhedrin, 52a), explains this verse as follows: [It will be convenient if you are also looking at the Hebrew text upon which this talmudic interpretation is closely based.] Resh Lakish explained, "they humbled themselves before Korach because of the drink they received; the ruler of Hell ground his teeth against them..." The difficult word is the word maog, as well as, laagei maog! Rashi explains that the word maog means an edible substance. That is its meaning in another verse, "...she said...I have nothing baked (maog)..." (The first Book of Mlachim, 17: 12). Thus, the medrash is understood. Rashi adds, "Because of the food that Korach fed them and the drink that he supplied, they joined him." Clearly, the gemara says that the source of Korach's strength was the food and drink that he supplied.

Rashi in his commentary to Tehillim explains the verse in the same way but does not mention the Korach. The medrash is giving a particular example of what the verse obviously implies: that food and drink can turn one's head.

This position that Rashi reflects comes from a gemara (Sanhedrin, 110a), which explains that the assembly of Korach was made up of extremely wise men. They knew the secrets of the months and the laws of adding a month in those years when the aviv "spring" came in early. How could Korach have convinced so many wise men to join him in this folly? He must have turned their heads by giving them food and drink. The memory of this event is, according to Resh Lakish, found imbedded in the verse in Tehillim.

Remember, Rashi in a gemara (Chullin 4b, s.v. lemaala) says that eating and drinking can sway a person in negative directions.

Also we find in another Gemara (Shabbat, 17b): "They prohibited the bread and oil of the non-Jew because of their wine. They prohibited drinking their wine because of their daughters; their daughters [they prohibited] because of something even more terrible (Rashi explains that it is idolatry that is being referred to). It is not that the food which is prepared by non-Jews is forbidden per say. However, eating together (the Jew and the non-Jew) is what creates the relationship, and even a legitimate relationship leads to other kinds of liaisons, often more problematic.

Now, the Tanchuma becomes clearer: Korach corrupted the assembly through food and drink. This corruption can lead to other relationships, which do not make any sense, such as idolatry. Moshe hoped that by waiting the night, the men assembled might sober up and decide that the relationship with Korach was misguided.

Though Rashi says in our verse "it is a time of drunkenness for us..." Moshe doesn't mean that he and Aharon were drunk: only the group around Korach was inebriated.

There is a verse in Yishayahu that may be useful for understanding Rashi's position: "the watchman said, the morning comes and also the night: If you will inquire, inquire, return, and come..." (21: 12). Rashi in the gemara (Bava Kama, 3b) explains that the word boker "morning" means redemption for the righteous.

Perhaps another allusion to the intention of Moshe to encourage them to do Tshuva, the word boker refers to the new light, the redemption, and that is why Moshe waited until morning.

Moshe's Second Point

The second part of our verse reads, "He will bring close to Him."

Rashi again quotes a medrash: "Hashem created the world with clear boundaries. Can you turn the morning into the evening? [Similarly] You will not be able to nullify this designated priesthood for Aharon. Just as Hashem make certain divisions in the creation of the world so was Aharon set apart and sanctified..." (Tanchuma, paragraph 5).

If the process of sobering the assembly doesn't work, if for some reason Korach and his followers continue to think that their position is credible, then Moshe adds (a second interpretation) that the word of Hashem is as strong as the creation itself. Just as no one would imagine that the day and the night can be changed, it is impossible to imagine that Hashem's position/opinion will be changed.

This is surely the question. How did they imagine? Rashi is trying to convince us that the antagonists were superior personalities who had gone astray, who had made a serious mistake. Moshe was trying to save them and return them to their senses. But how did they make the mistake? How did they imagine that the truth of the divine position was not as Moshe had presented it? How did they agree to take a stand against the creation, so to speak?

One last point. Rashi emphasizes in his comment that in the "morning" Hashem will indicate who is chosen for the Levites. Also, it will be known who is

holy enough to be included in the priesthood.

The Torat Emet

I would like to share a Chassidic comment with you. This is taken from the Torat Emet, and is an approximate summary of his words. If you are able you should not miss out on checking the original.

The Rebbe says: "We must remember that the Levites never participated in any of the terrible events that overwhelmed the people in the desert. After the people built the golden calf Moshe returned and said "whoever is for Hashem to me" and all the tribe of Levi came to be with Moshe. The Levites never wavered and did not participate in the communal sins that are reported in the Torah. This was the reason that they were chosen. They were special. They did not deviate from Hashem's path and His Torah; they deserved to be chosen. In this parsha they seem to have gone haywire. The sin seems to be primarily theirs and the others just join in at the end. The tribe of Kehat, Korach himself, these people were the pride of the tribe of Levi.

We have to understand the history of the people in the desert in a different way. All the events, especially the ones connected to sin, happened for a particular purpose. In every case there is a question about what the Torah really wants from us and the events in the desert, the disastrous events, at times, clarify that question.

This is the intention of Chazal in their saying: "a person does not really understand the Halacha of a particular matter, until he missteps in that area". Apparently, only transgression can clarify the nature of the prohibition. He has to veer away from the desired result in order to fathom the wisdom of the Divine decree.

This could only be done by the generation of the Desert. No other group of Jews could take such an awesome chance. No other Jews could enter into the arena of transgression in order to understand more clearly what the Torah wanted of them.

Those who stood at Sinai were able to perform this service for the entirety of Jewish history. They were the ones who were capable of "going down in order to go up."

In this particular case the Torah principle that was to be clarified was the notion of kedusha "sanctity."

Everyone understood that there are sometimes negative responses to "sanctity." Sometimes there is the anger caused by individuals who confront "sanctity" in others. At times a person thinks, "I am also involved in serving Hashem, as much as the other person. How is it that the other person has achievements that I do not?" As a result, one begins to feel jealous about the portion that his friend has achieved. This was the direct cause of the dispute between Moshe and Korach: "the entire assembly was sacred..." Korach was consumed by a passion to serve Hashem as a kohen. This passion attracted others who felt a similar need. Korach was even able to attract the heads of the Sanhedrin to his camp. It is inconceivable that he was able to attract these great people with base kinds of considerations. They were overwhelmed by the sweetness of the kedusha. He led them in this direction until all that they desired was the "sanctity." Then they joined his camp.

"In the morning..." seems to indicate a certain concern, even sympathy, for the act of Korach and those who followed him. But sympathy does not imply agreement. They were mistaken in thinking that the decisions handed down by Moshe were given to review by the other scholars in the camp. We understand that they were driven by a combination of negative impulses and some positive ones. Rashi stresses the fact that they were given food and drink and were in some way incapable of making the correct determination. The Torat Emet, on the other hand, understood the rebellion as deriving from a need to be more involved in kedusha even when that motive overstepped acceptable action.

Who Comes Close?

There is one more point that Rashi makes in his comment to this verse; it concerns the sentence structure of the verse. The verse reads: "Hashem will make known who is His, and he will bring close to Him, and whom He will choose, He will bring close to Him." The structure is clumsy in the English translation and that reflects the strange word order of the Hebrew. Who is being referred to? Who is His, and who will He choose? What does bring "close" mean and why should it appear twice in the verse?

Rashi deals with these questions. The verse should read and He "...will bring them close to Him."

This is clearly indicated in the Onkelos Targum which reads: "He will bring close before Him." However, Onkelos renders the words at the end of the verse: "He will bring close to his service." For Rashi, this justifies adding the word "them" to the first part of the verse.

Let us try to clarify.

The first part of the verse is translated by Onkelos as *viykarev lekademohi*

"bring close to Him," and the second part is translated *yekarev leshimushei*, "He will bring close to Him."

The Aramaic word, *lekademohi* (Hebrew *vehikriv elav*), means to come forth, to stand before Him. Another example is found in a latter verse (16 :9), *lehakriv etchem elav*. In Aramaic, it is rendered *lekademohi* (in some texts).

However, the words (Bamidbar 28:2) *lehakriv li bemoado* are translated by Onkelos as *likrava kodomai bezimne* and mean "to offer to Me in its appointed time." This refers to the bringing of a sacrifice.

Therefore, Rashi points to the translation of Onkelos as a source for his own interpretation. According to Onkelos, the verse is not referring to the act of sacrifice, but to bringing the chosen persons, the kohanim and the Levites, close to Him.

Rashi says that the verse emphasizes another salient point that Korach and his band did not realize. The job of priest is not simply an appointment but reflects the closeness between Hashem and the person chosen for the job. Korach did not claim that he or any of the others were "closer" to Hashem, only that they were present at Sinai. This was his mistake. The choice was not made because of familial ties but only as a result of closeness. The Levites had been consistent (until this time), they had never wavered, and deserved to be allowed to come closer to Hashem.

Gut Shabbos,

Chaim Brovender

As always, I am happy to respond to (possibly to post) questions or comments that you have on the parasha. Let me know what you think.