

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Korach 5770

Mazel Tov to our friends Norman and Sandy Nissel Horowitz on the engagement of Tamar & JZ Spier. Mazel Tov as well to Etan, Leora, grandma Molly & all the uncles & aunts

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SHAME AND SHAMEFUL :: Rabbi Berel Wein

One of the positive moral qualities that the rabbis of the Talmud used to identify the Jewish people is that of having a sense of shame and embarrassment. In fact the rabbis went so far as to say that one who possesses no proper sense of shame “did not have his feet present at Mount Sinai.”

Without a sense of shame there can be no proper remorse for unjust and illegal behavior, nor can there be any hope for repentance and redressing wrongful behavior. The Hebrew words for shame and embarrassment appear often in our prayers and play a central role in our entreaties for Heaven’s forgiveness, especially on Yom Kippur. The sense of shame also appears throughout the words of the prophets of Israel and in the Psalms of David.

Brazen behavior and attitudes are counted as being some of the worst character traits that can afflict a Jew. King David never allowed himself the luxury of simply forgetting about his mistakes but rather his innate sense of shame kept his previous errors omnipresent in his mind and heart. In fact, it was this sense of continuing shame before God that was the hallmark of David’s spiritual being and accomplishments.

So, shame is a positive trait, spiritually and morally speaking. The only question that truly arises is what one should be ashamed about. And here the line between shame and shameful is unfortunately often crossed in mock piety and hypocritical crocodile tears. Criminal and guilty behavior should leave one with a permanent sense of shame throughout one’s life. Unfortunately, this is often not the case – and later life retains just a slight stain.

A Jewish member of the United States Congress declared after the Gaza flotilla incident, that he was now ashamed of being Jewish. Of course like unfortunately many other Jews, has no real connection to Jewish practice, tradition or behavior. He is ashamed of being Jewish because being Jewish in our “modern, progressive, humanistic” and intensely false and hypocritical society makes him very uncomfortable.

Those who are ashamed of being Jewish, and who view the State of Israel as a “mistake” waiting to be undone, have no true sense of shame but rather are simply engaging in shameful behavior and suicidal statements. Many Jews are not ashamed to openly violate the written principles of moral behavior found in the Torah but claim to be ashamed because of the fact that the UN, Europe, the State Department and the liberal media do not like us.

We Jews are a proud and resilient people who have survived all persecutions and all attempts to annihilate us. Jews who are ashamed of Judaism, the Jewish state, the edicts of the Torah, of the public appearance of other Jews looking Jewish, engage in hateful and shameful behavior. One can feel demeaned and shamed by the acts of individual Jews – unfortunately, lately, highlighted in many a financial and tax scandal. But that is no justification for being ashamed of Judaism and its Torah and of the privilege of being a Jew.

One should never confuse Jews with Judaism or rabbis with religion. A sophisticated view of things will enable one to differentiate correctly between the necessary sense of shame and sinking into the abyss of shamefulness.

I think that this is what the rabbis had in mind when they said that the lack of a proper and proportionate sense of shame shows that the Jew’s

connection to Sinai has somehow been severed. There is much shameful behavior that abounds in our society today. There are no permanent stigmas left in society any longer.

The Talmud advised that people who were found guilty of wrongful behavior should adopt a low profile – leave town, so to speak - and not continue in a brazen manner to live on as though nothing occurred. A healthy dose of shame can be most redemptive. Not having such a sense of shame turns all later behavior into being shameful.

Not allowing our society to have any legitimate standard of behavior – the Torah – as the measure of one’s actions completely atrophies the ability to have a healthy sense of shame. In its stead, false shame creates shameful statements and behavior. Self-pride and self-identity forms the key ingredients of being a Jew. And paradoxically enough such pride and identity allow one the necessary strength and honesty that will create the trait of positive shame by which one can improve one’s life morally and spiritually.

Shabat shalom.

Weekly Parsha :: KORACH :: Rabbi Berel Wein

Tragedy follows tragedy in the book of Bamidbar. The unwarranted complaints of the people regarding the food in the desert and the false report regarding the Land of Israel that was discussed in last week’s parsha end in plague, punishment and disaster. This week’s parsha describes the rebellion of Korach and his cohorts against Moshe and the supremacy of Torah within Jewish society.

It seems that there is a latent death wish that lurks within Jewish society that does not allow it to free itself from repeating terrible mistakes over and over again. The generation of the desert saw miracles, even God’s presence, so to speak, on a regular basis and nevertheless constantly escalates its defiance and rebellion against its special role in human civilization.

It really is a form of regret on the part of many Jews in the desert to having accepted the Torah carte blanche at Sinai. This group did not intend to be a chosen people. The plaintive cry of “let us just return to Egypt” is really a cry that “we wish to be just like all other peoples!” And it is a situation that repeats itself in almost every generation of Jewish life.

The struggle within Jews and Jewish society in all ages is whether to accept its God-given role as a “treasure amongst all nations” or to somehow renounce all pretense of being a special people. The choices are not really portrayed as being that stark. Rather, it reflects itself in a continuum of Jewish observance, adherence to Jewish values and the willingness to remain proudly Jewish in a world that is hostile to Jews, a Jewish state and Judaism itself.

Korach wraps his personal animosity towards Moshe and his frustration of not achieving the recognition that he feels is due him within a cloak of holiness and altruism. Hypocrisy always abounds, especially amongst those that judge others. The self-righteous give righteousness itself a bad name.

The claims of Korach which he speaks in the name of democracy, that all the people are holy and worthy of leadership, resound in classical correctness. They are hard to argue against and certainly have great public resonance and appeal. The problem with Korach’s appeal and words is that they are basically fraudulent.

Moshe’s stature is determined by God and has been vindicated throughout the ages of Jewish history. There are no truly unbiased people in the world. But there are those that, at the very least, recognize their bias and attempt

to deal with it honestly and intelligently. Hypocrisy is the attempt to cover up the bias with false nobility of purpose and affected altruism. It is a reprehensible character trait, far greater in potential destructiveness than is open enmity itself. This is what made Korach so dangerous and why Moshe's determination to publicly expose and punish him so strident and insistent. The tragedy of Korach lies not only his own personal downfall but rather in the havoc and confusion that it created in the Jewish society. It is a situation that repeats itself today as well. Shabat shalom.

**Ohr Somayach Torah Weekly Parshat Korach
by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com**

Overview

Korach, Datan and Aviram, and 250 leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. The rebellion results in their being swallowed by the earth. Many resent their death and blame Moshe. G-d's "anger" is manifest by a plague that besets the nation, and many thousands perish. Moshe intercedes once again for the people. He instructs Aharon to atone for them and the plague stops. Then G-d commands that staffs, each inscribed with the name of one of the tribes, be placed in the Mishkan. In the morning the staff of Levi, bearing Aharon's name, sprouts, buds, blossoms and yields ripe almonds. This provides Divine confirmation that Levi's tribe is chosen for priesthood and verifies Aharon's position as Kohen Gadol, High Priest. The specific duties of the levi'im and kohanim are stated. The kohanim were not to be landowners, but were to receive their sustenance from the tithes and other mandated gifts brought by the people. Also taught in this week's Parsha are laws of the first fruits, redemption of the firstborn, and other offerings.

Insights

War On Peace

"And Korach took..."

Everyone wants peace.

Everyone wants to sit under his fig tree, secure that no one will come and take away his family and his money. Yet almost since the beginning of time, peace has been elusive and often illusory.

If there's one Hebrew word that everyone knows, it's "Shalom", "Peace."

The Zohar tells us in this week's Torah Portion that Korach's rebellion was a rebellion against Shalom — a war on peace.

What does this mean?

If you meet someone in a bathhouse, you may not greet him with "Shalom!" because Shalom is the name of G-d, and it's not fitting to utter G-d's name in a bathhouse.

Shalom means perfection, completion. G-d is the only true perfection.

This world is a creation which lacks perfection. That's the way it is meant to be. The world is a place which strives to arrive somewhere beyond this world. The word for "earth" in Hebrew is "aretz", which comes from the same root as ratzon, which means "want" or "will". What someone wants, by definition, is something he doesn't have now. It's not here — it's there. You can also read the word aretz as aratz, "I will run". This is a world that is running, moving towards its completion.

But its completion can only come from Above.

The word for "Heaven" in Hebrew is Shamayim, from the root "sham" which means "there." This world is always "running" to "there" — outside and beyond itself. In fact Shamayim can also be read as sham-im, the plural of 'there' — the Heavens are the sum total of all the "theres" that can be.

This is why G-d's name is Shalom. G-d is the perfection of all the lacking of this world. Every single thing in this world finds its fulfillment, its completion, in Him. It's not here. It's above. It's "there."

"And Korach took..."

This sentence doesn't say what he took. It just says that Korach took. Onkelos translates the sentence as "And Korach separated..."

Korach wanted to separate this world from the world above.

He wanted a world in which everyone is holy, meaning we don't need anything from the outside. We don't need a Shalom that comes from above, from beyond ourselves. We have the technology! We have everything we need. This world runs to nowhere but to itself.

Korach challenged Moshe using two mitzvot: tzitzit and mezuzah. Why these two?

Tzitzit are connected — literally - to clothing. The word beged, garment, comes from a root that means rebellion— boged. Similarly, the word me'il, an over-garment, is connected to the word for misappropriation of Temple property — me'ila — another kind of rebellion.

Clothing hides, clothing disguises. All rebellion is born of disguising the true self, covering the disconnection between how we really are and how we appear to others. Clothing makes rebellion possible; it enables us to appear one way and be another. A garment has the potential to hide who we are; it encourages our natural tendency to feel free of obligations, to rebel. Tzitzit, fringes have no function in covering. Rather they are threads that connect us outwards to the world, reminding us that even when we are hidden under a garment we are still connected to a system that obligates us. The home is another means through which we can hide and act duplicitously. At home, we feel we can do as we please. In public we have to behave ourselves.

When we enter and leave our homes, the mezuzah on our door reminds us that our behavior in our homes must mirror the way we act outside to the world.

Clothing and the home, therefore, need the special commandments of tzitzit and mezuzah.

Korach challenged Moshe with tzitzit. He claimed that the garment of techelet blue sufficiently reminds us of our obligations. Korach was saying that a person requires no completion from Above to be whole. Nothing external is required. There is no need to connect.

Similarly, he claimed, a house full of Torah Scrolls needs no mezuzah. The house is all we need to remind us of obligations. We can create our own perfection from ourselves. We need nothing from the outside.

This glorification of self-sufficiency is what lay behind Korach's challenge. Korach separated himself from external reminders and external leadership. Korach fought against a creation where the aretz — this world — is inextricably linked to its fulfillment in Shamayim — in that which is outside and beyond.

He fought against the Shalom that makes everything whole.

Korach was the true enemy of the Peace Process.

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**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum
Parshas Korach**

Korach... separated himself They stood before Moshe with two hundred and fifty men from Bnei Yisrael, leaders of the assembly. (16:1,2)

The nature of a person is that the "eye sees and the heart desires." We tend to focus on the negative, the harmful, the desirous, despite all of the warning signs to stay away. Chazal laud the sons of Korach who repented and did not follow their father on the road to infamy. Originally, they were swayed by his words, but when the final decision had to be made, they knew that they could not rebel against their rebbe, Moshe Rabbeinu. What is so praiseworthy about their actions? Why would anyone think that saying "no" to Korach was impressive? The man was a scoundrel, bent on disputing and destroying Moshe's leadership of Klal Yisrael. What good reason could there have been to listen to his demagoguery?

Apparently, Korach was very convincing, because he had an impressive following. An audience of two hundred fifty heads of the Sanhedrin is not to be dismissed. He knew how to present his arguments in a credible manner that would persuade such an august group of individuals. He did it

with leitzanos, ridiculing, contempt, in a most presumptive and believable manner. He made it all sound reasonable and right: "Moshe had no right to take it all for himself. We also want to achieve a lofty plateau of leadership. We would also like to be closer to Hashem." When a son hears his father emphasizing the need to grow spiritually, presenting himself in the most convincing manner as seriously wanting spiritual distinction for no ulterior motive other than a greater and closer relationship with the Almighty - what should the son do? Why should he not believe his father? What father would mislead his son?

Korach's sons originally followed their father's directive because it all made sense to them. They had no reason to doubt their father's motives. How does one protect himself in such a case? How did Korach's sons ultimately save themselves from certain death in both worlds? Horav Gershon Liebman, zl, explains that the key is *birur ha'middos*, identifying the character traits, that are behind one's own actions, introspecting to find the true motive for his behavior. Was it *kinaas sofrim*, the envy of Torah scholars, each vying for greater spiritual ascendancy, or was it plain old envy, the most destructive of character traits, the *middah* that is the cause for so many other negative traits within a person?

Being able to discern what makes a person "tick," what is truly behind the veneer of his actions requires a unique, perceptive individual. The Rosh Yeshivah relates that the Alter, zl, m'Novardok, was once visited by a distinguished rav who was a well-known talmid chacham, Torah scholar. During their conversation the rav intimated that some of the works of the contemporary "enlightened" scholars of the day, members of the infamous Haskalah movement, should be considered required reading by yeshivah students. It would give them a greater, more global focus on life, allowing them to grasp the issues confronting society from a more progressive perspective. Hearing this, the Alter began to scream, "Galach! Priest! Get out!" When the Alter screamed, his students came running and immediately "escorted" the "rav" from the room. The Alter explained that the man's flowing beard had concealed his true identity.

Rav Liebman quotes the often expressed phrase, *V'taheir libeinu l'avdecha b'emes*, "Purify our hearts (so that) (to) serve You with truth." The emphasis must be on the "truth." We serve Hashem often by going through the motions, without really applying ourselves to understanding what we are doing, and why we are doing it. Horav Yosef Leib Bloch, zl, would interpret the *pasuk*, *Ki adam ein tzaddik b'aretz asher yaase tov v'lo yecheta*, "There is no man so wholly righteous on earth that he (always) does good and never sins" (Koheles 7:20), to mean that even when he does good, when he performs a mitzvah or carries out a good deed, he is missing the proper *kavanah*, intention. His sin lays in the fact that he did not identify his motivation so that he could have the correct *kavanah*.

With all this in mind, the question becomes increasingly strong: Who would have been able to tell Korach, "You are not concerned about spiritual ascendancy. You are simply jealous of Moshe?" Who was going to identify the motivations of Korach? His following had already been shlepped, sucked in. They had themselves lost all focus and were now following blindly. This made it even more difficult for Korach's sons. They were caught up in the maelstrom of the rebellion. They were fighting a "cause," surrounded by the most distinguished leaders of the judicial system of the Jewish People. The question now becomes: How did they get out? What brought them to their senses, to *teshuvah*?

I think the answer lies in the *b'emes*, "with truth." Perhaps when Korach's sons compared their father to their exalted rebbe, they perceived a glaring difference. They saw the truth. They did not see the envy of a Torah scholar. What appeared on their radar screen when they contrasted Korach with Moshe was: deceit, envy, insecurity, manipulation and all the other "good things" that scoundrels who act with demagoguery employ in their attempt to garner a following. When they saw that their father's motivations were not noble, they immediately applied the brakes to their rebellion and sided with their rebbe. It is very difficult for a student to side with his mentor when his own father is in disagreement. Sometimes,

however, one must make a choice. He must choose the truth. It is not an easy choice to make, but then nothing worthwhile is easy to obtain.

For the entire assembly - all of them - are holy and Hashem is among them. (16:3)

Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, the venerable Rosh Yeshivah of Baranowitz, presented the following question to the Gerrer Rebbe, zl, the Imrei Emes: In his commentary to *Sefer Yechezkel* 18:6, the Radak writes that any Jew throughout the generations who abandons the faith of his ancestors indicates by his actions that he is not of the Patriarchal seed of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. He is the offspring of those who converted to our nation for ulterior motives. This is a powerful statement, corroborated by the Rambam in his *Igeres Taiman*, where he writes: "The Creator has ensured us as a guarantor assures his friend that, concerning anyone who stood at Har Sinai and witnessed Revelation, he and his descendants will never renege their belief in Moshe Rabbeinu and his prophecy. This is consistent with Hashem's statement in *Shemos* 19:9, "Behold! I come to you in the thickness of the cloud, so that the people will hear as I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever. Therefore, anyone who turns away from the faith that was established by this holy convocation is not from the progeny of these people."

Bearing the above in mind, how is it that Korach denied Divine authority? The *Yerushalmi Sanhedrin*, *Perek Chelek*, *Halacha 1*, states that when Korach impugned Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership, he said, "Torah is not from Heaven; Moshe is not a Navi; Aharon is not a Kohen Gadol." He was attributing the concept of Divine Authorship of the Torah to a ruse thought up by Moshe. How is this possible? Korach surely was pedigreed, descending from a most illustrious lineage. According to Radak and Rambam, individuals whose ancestors stood at the foot of Har Sinai and witnessed Revelation and the Giving of the Torah cannot possibly be guilty of denying Hashem. Korach's behavior seems to dispute this hypothesis.

The Imrei Emes explained to Rav Elchanan that indeed Korach did believe that Moshe was Hashem's chosen Navi. Korach knew and fully understood what he was doing. This was no error on the part of some lost, wandering individual with no ties to the Jewish community. This was Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehas ben Levi! And we all know who was the father of Levi. Korach knew fully well what he was doing. He had no excuses. He simply did not care. With malice and forethought, Korach blatantly denied Hashem as G-d.

What we derive from the Gerrer Rebbe's reply is that all of those pedigreed Jews, leaders of movements that denied *Torah min Ha'Shomayim*, Divine Authorship of the Torah, were like Korach: rebels and sinners, who broke with our People and rejected Hashem as G-d.

In 1975, this question was presented to the Steipler Rav, zl, and Horav Eliezer M. Shach, zl. They each issued their individual response. The Steipler explained that the Rambam's statement that one who doubts Hashem's existence is not of Jewish lineage is applied under specific circumstances. This is only if the person has no external reason, nothing that might sway his belief. Such an individual is like the philosophers of old, who established their beliefs upon perverted logic. They "determined" that Hashem had not caused all of the miracles that have been transmitted to us through the generations, and they repudiated the *Mesorah*, tradition, of generations of believing Jews heralding back to Sinai. Such a person has no excuse for his behavior. Such unmitigated behavior indicates that this individual is not of Jewish extraction. His ancestors did not stand at Har Sinai.

An individual whose actions are nothing more than an excuse to justify an overactive and insatiable *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination, whose life is one long chain of sinful behavior and moral bankruptcy, is not considered an *apikores*, apostate. He is a *baal taaveh*, morally repugnant person, seeking a way to qualify a life of abandon. This was Korach. A morally weak person, he was plagued by jealousy. His money, pedigree and distinction were not sufficient. He had to undermine Moshe and Aharon's leadership. In order to achieve this goal, he misled himself and others, all as a way to

validate his mutiny. Korach was a scoundrel, a sinner who was a smart man who made a total fool out of himself. He was all these, but he was not a kofer. He was well aware of his actions. He just did not care.

Rav Shach took a different approach. Although Hashem gave His "word" that a Jew remains a Jew with conviction, it does not preclude his freedom of choice. The promise was that, under normal circumstances, a Jew will continue to retain his convictions. Those, however, such as Korach and his followers, who decide to renege Sinai, to repudiate Torah and the Mesorah - it is their choice. Indeed, it is specifically because they stood at Sinai that their yetzer hora to sin is greater. The greater an individual, the stronger is his inclination to sin. Thus, his battle to conquer the yetzer hora increases in difficulty and intensity.

After all is said and done, we see one thing: those who sin do so out of weakness. Their perverted philosophies are the result of this deficiency and are employed only to validate their actions and conceal their imperfections.

Do this: Take for yourself firepans - Korach and his entire assembly... then the man whom Hashem will choose - he is the holy one. (15:6,7)

Korach was nobody's fool. In fact, the Midrash calls him a pikeach, a wise and astute man. Moshe Rabbeimu implied to him that only one will emerge alive from the "debate" of the firepans. Yet, Korach continued down his path of rebellion. Did he really think that he would emerge victorious over Aharon HaKohen? Could he really have thought that he would succeed and live? The Midrash asks this question and replies: Eino hi'taaso, "His eye misled them." He saw prophetically that among his future descendants would be Shmuel HaNavi, who was as great in his time as Moshe and Aharon combined, and twenty-four groups of Leviim who would prophecy with the spirit of holiness. Seeing all of this greatness descending from him, Korach was certain that he would triumph over Moshe and Aharon. So, where did he go wrong? After all, one cannot ignore such impressive offspring. He did not see, however, that his own sons would repent at the very last moment and survive. He disappeared into oblivion, but his children lived on.

The first lesson from the above Midrash is quite clear: one sees what one wants to see. Korach was looking for a reason to proceed, something that would tell him that he would succeed. Once he had that, he did not look any further. Like so many others after him: eino hitaaso, his eye misleads him. There has to be a deeper lesson to Chazal's words. Korach was no fool. Surely, he must have thought something was amiss. Shmuel HaNavi would descend from him? How could that be? Perhaps his children would repent? Is it possible? Not in Korach's eyes. He did not believe that teshuvah, repentance, could bring one to such a lofty plateau to become the progenitor of Shmuel and twenty-four groups of Leviim. This, explains Sichos Mussar/Bais Sholom Mordechai, was Korach's mistake. He underestimated the power of teshuvah. Moshe had declared that all of the dissenters in Korach's assembly would die. This was the prophecy of Klal Yisrael's leader. Korach did not believe that teshuvah had the capacity to contradict Moshe's prophecy. Therefore, how could his children live - even if they repented? Obviously, he would be the victor. This was his error.

A similar concept may be derived from a passage in the Talmud Taanis 30b. Chazal state that there were not festive days for the Jewish People like Yom Kippur and the Tu B'Av, the fifteenth day of Av. Yom Kippur is understandably a day of joy because of its atonement powers that are effected on that day. In addition, it was the day that Hashem gave Klal Yisrael the second set of Luchos, Tablets, containing the Ten Commandments. Chazal go on to enumerate a number of reasons for Tu B'Av achieving such joyful significance. One of these reasons is that on Tu B'Av of the fortieth year of the Jews' sojourn in the wilderness, the decree heralding back to the ill-fated night when the spies returned from their reconnoiter of Eretz Yisrael was annulled. Hashem had said that all males who were over the age of twenty when they left Egypt would die in the desert, and they did - for thirty-nine years. Every year, on Erev Tisha B'Av, the men would dig their graves and lie down in them. The next morning, the call would go out, "All those alive, rise up!" This went on every year,

until the fortieth year, when the last group lay down in what was supposed to be their graves. The next morning, lo and behold, they were alive! They could not understand why, unless they had erred in calculating the day of the month. This continued on until the fifteenth of the month when they saw the moon in its fullness. They now knew that the date had been correct. Hashem had revoked His decree.

What happened? The decree was for all of the yotzei Mitzrayim, Jews who left Egypt. Why were these remaining fifteen thousand Jews not part of that decree? Why were they permitted to live? Hashem keeps His word. For thirty-nine years, fifteen thousand Jews died each and every year. Now, on the fortieth year, suddenly the "rules" changed. What effected this change?

Sichos Mussar explains that while every year when the Jews would lay down in their grave they repented for their sins, this year it was a different form of teshuvah. It was a perfect teshuvah. Every year, when they repented, they figured that they might die. What does a person do when he is lying on his bed on the night before he might die? He repents. He harbors a slight hope, however, that he might live. Thus, his teshuvah is not perfect. He might live another year. He still has a chance that he is not yet going to meet his Maker.

On the fortieth year, the scenario changed drastically. This was the last group of fifteen thousand Jews. They had to die. They had no way out. When they repented, it was for real. Tomorrow their neshamos, souls, were going to stand before the Heavenly Tribunal to answer for their sins. They cried out to Hashem with perfect faith from the depths of their heart, expressing remorse and asking for forgiveness. This teshuvah was unlike any other repentance from earlier years. Previously, Klal Yisrael had always held that glimmer of hope: maybe not this year; maybe I will live one more year. This time, it was the year. Their repentance was so pristine that it was accepted, and Hashem revoked the decree against them. This is the power of teshuvah.

A pikeach is a wise man. A wise man is not supposed to err. How did it happen that a pikeach, such as Korach, made a mistake that cost him his life, his everlasting reputation, and had a similar deleterious effect on his two hundred and fifty followers? He underestimated the power of teshuvah. A wise man has the ability to understand concepts that are within the realm of human cognition. Teshuvah is l'maalah min ha'seichal, above the realm of logic. It simply does not make sense. How is it possible for one to correct a sin after the fact? How can one cause the act of murder, adultery, etc, to vanish as if it never occurred? That is the power of teshuvah.

In his magnum opus, Mesillas Yesharim, the Ramchal writes that teshuvah was given to sinners as a complete act of Divine chesed, loving-kindness. "Through the act of teshuvah, one recognizes his sin, admits it, reflects on the wrong that he committed, sincerely wishes that he had never committed the act, genuinely agonizes over it, and takes steps to prevent its recurrence. Then the sin is totally erased... This is clearly a function of G-d's loving-kindness, since absolute justice does not provide for this." The will to sin that had existed within the sinner is now replaced with the will to erase, to abrogate his original actions. Teshuvah creates this opportunity. It applies restitution in a situation in which it could not logically occur. Genuine teshuvah extirpates the sin. This is a concept that the wisest of men cannot fathom, because it transcends logic.

Korach viewed everything through the perspective of logic. If it made sense, it was right. He saw his future descendants. There was only one logical explanation for this phenomenon. He refused to think "outside the box." He saw things from one dimension. This was his fatal mistake.

And Behold! The staff of Aharon... had blossomed; it brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and almonds ripened. (17:23)

When we peruse the text, we may note that the blossoms on Aharon's staff also remained. Otherwise, it would not have been known that there had previously been blossoms and small fruit. Furthermore, in the Talmud Yoma 52b, Chazal state that Aharon's staff-- with its almonds and its

blossoms-- was later concealed with the Aron HaKodesh. Clearly, there is some significance to this. Indeed, in their commentary to the Talmud, Tosfos Yeshanim assert that, usually, once the fruit is evident, no blossoms remain. Apparently, an important lesson is to be derived from the miracle of Aharon's staff.

Horav Moshe Feinstein, zl, suggests a powerful lesson to be derived from here: the blossoms of kedushah, sanctity, do not decompose. The fruit of a mitzvah is the mitzvah itself. The preparations leading up to the kiyum ha'mitzvah, fulfillment of the mitzvah; the labor and toil involved; the angst of making sure everything works out properly - these are the blossoms. The preparations and everything involved in the mitzvah, all remain etched in the Heavenly scroll of mitzvah performance. All that a person must endure in his quest to achieve proficiency in Torah knowledge is recorded. No effort is wasted. It all counts, unlike material objects for which a person only pays for the actual fruit or whatever he is purchasing. The toil involved in preparing it and bringing it to market is not included in the price. Not so in the realm of the spirit. Everything is calculated on the Heavenly computer. The blossoms are an inherent part of the fruit.

The Rosh Yeshivah quotes the Talmud Berachos 17a, "Fortunate is he whose toil is in Torah." The reason for this is as mentioned: toil is of greatest significance. Effort exerted in mundane matters does not earn one rewards. It is the final achievement, the finished product, that counts. How it arrived there has no effect on the reward. People work hard to earn a livelihood and often accumulate great wealth from the labor they expended, but is it a source of pleasure to them? Surely, if they could earn a living without toil, they would be most happy to oblige. Who wants to struggle?

The toil involved in Torah study and mitzvah performance is inherently good and provides good fortune for the person. Thus, the blossoms were concealed together with the fruit, because they are all important. Aharon HaKohen expended effort in achieving success with the fruits of the staff. This success, however, did not occur overnight. Aharon merited Kehunah because of all of his good deeds. All of his toil and labor were tallied, and nothing was superfluous. It was all needed to create the finished fruit. As it did for Aharon, it applies for anyone who studies Torah. Every bit of toil will be counted as they enable him to enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Let us take this idea to the next level. In a comparison between Torah knowledge and secular knowledge, effort quite possibly stands out most prominently as a point of divergence. Secular knowledge does not concern itself with how one acquires the knowledge. Effort and means are irrelevant. It is the finished product which counts. In Torah knowledge, cardinal significance is given to the effort expended, the strain, toil, and even pain exerted in achieving the end result. Indeed, the actual accumulation is secondary. Some of our most brilliant Torah leaders, such as Horav Aharon Kotler, were known for their legendary *ameilus*, toil, in studying Torah. Their effort was the result of an almost unquenchable thirst and extraordinary love for Torah.

While this is clearly an indication of one's love for the Torah, we also acknowledge a practical aspect to the importance of effort in Torah study. Prior to the birth of a child, an angel teaches the fetus the entire Torah. Then, as he is about to emerge in the world, that same angel causes him to forget it all. Thus, one goes through life "relearning" what he once knew, with his previous Torah knowledge serving as a sort of support and foundation to facilitate the eventual acquisition of Torah knowledge through study. Knowledge was the primary objective; the angel could have spared us all the effort and not have made us forget what we had originally learned. While we have many opportunities available today for studying Torah, from the simple aids to the most advanced online teaching adjuncts, they cannot replace simple effort. It is the effort which Hashem wants from us, and it is that effort that is so much a part of Torah wisdom.

The Sochatchover Rebbe, zl, was an illui, brilliant child prodigy. The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, was concerned lest the child's incredible power of prayer might affect his Torah study. We should all be blessed with such a

problem, but the Kotzker felt that there was reason for concern. He explained that the young boy once had a watch that had stopped working. Today, we either replace the battery or purchase a new one. It was difficult in "those" days. Since the child had no idea where to go to have it repaired, he tearfully prayed to Hashem to please fix the watch. Hashem listened, and the watch came back to life! When the boy saw how effective his prayers were, he began to implement them to Torah study. Whenever he came across a difficult passage in the Talmud, he turned to Hashem and prayed. Therefore, instead of exerting himself in Torah study, he was praying to Hashem for the answers. The Kotzker disapproved of this "method" of Torah study, since Torah knowledge must be the result of one's expended effort, rather than of Divine illumination. If I may add, the end result is always derived through Divine enlightenment, but it should be the result of effort - not prayer. The mitzvah is to study Torah - not, merely, to know Torah. Knowledge is the end result -- or byproduct-- of a Jew's effort in the field of Torah.

V'ha'osher v'ha'kavod milfanecha v'atah mosheil ba'kol.

Wealth and honor come from You. And You rule everything.

The Raaavan explains the use of kavod, honor, in connection with osher, wealth. Indeed, there are those who gain wealth in an unscrupulous manner. This is certainly not b'kavodick, honorable. Osher v'kavod refers to wealth gained honorably. I think that the emphasis is on the "wealth and honor," indicating that these are two very distinct attributes. This is unlike those whose honor is derived exclusively from their wealth. Perhaps they derive their wealth scrupulously, but this is all they have.

The Arizal had the custom to give tzedakah when he recited the words V'atah mosheil ba'kol, "And You rule everything." V'yifgah Ba'makom explains that these pesukim detail the great contributions that David Hamelech and Klal Yisrael gave towards the building of the Bais Hamikdash. Those contributions exemplify the essence of lishmah, for its sake, charity given selflessly for no other reason other than to build the Bais Hamikdash. David knew that he would not see the finished edifice. What greater example of lishmah can there be? This is why it is an appropriate time to give tzedakah. In addition, the Ozrover Rebbe, zl, explains that when one declares, "And You rule everything," he is intimating that the tzedakah he is giving actually belongs to Hashem, Who has "deposited" it with him, so that he can have the wherewithal to support the poor. He is just executing his function for Hashem.

Mazel tov and best wishes to Rabbi and Mrs. Simcha Z. Dessler and Rabbi and Mrs. Aaron Kotler upon the marriage of their children, Gitty To Shneur With a special Mazel Tov to the distinguished grandparents shlita May the union of these two families continue the legacy of their illustrious lineage.

Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Korach

The Symbolism Behind Keeping Hands and Feet Together During Prayer

Rabbeinu Bechaye writes in his commentary on this week's parsha that when Gentiles pray, they hold their palms together with their fingers pointed upward. He says they themselves do not know why they hold their hands in that position while praying. He asserts they got it from the Jews and the reason for this is reminiscent of the expression "I'm sorry I can't do anything my hands are tied." (In other words "I am powerless to do anything" therefore I pray to G-d to help me).

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that this used to be a Jewish custom and the Gentiles took it from us. Once it became their custom, the Jews refrained from doing it any longer. However, he says, a remnant of the Jewish custom still remains by the fact that we still keep our feet together when davening. This too indicates that we are bound up, not able to move at all, without G-d's intervention.

Moshe Teaches The Importance of Trying To Make Peace

The main topic of Parshas Korach is inner-communal squabbling amongst the Jewish people (machlokes). Unfortunately, machlokes has been around from the beginning of time (going back to Kayin and Hevel in Parshas Bereshis). There were only 4 people in the universe at that time and they could not get along. The two who argued were brothers. It is no surprise, then, that machlokes is still around until this very day in our very diverse world and in our very diverse communities.

Parshas Korach is the paradigm parsha for teaching what to do to avoid prolonging machlokes. The Gemara [Sanhedrin 110a] derives from the fact that Moshe sought out Dasan and Aviram to try to bring the dispute to an end that one should not persist in an argument. Rashi says that we learn this from the fact that Moshe was willing to forgo his honor and protocol and personally seek out those who started the rebellion against him - to try to make peace. Some enumerators of the commandments actually count "And there shall no longer be like Korach and his followers" [Bamidbar 17:5] as one of the 365 forbidden actions (Lavim) in the Torah - namely that one should not persist in a machlokes.

There is some irony in the fact that the Torah just told us that Moshe was the most humble man on the face of the earth [Bamidbar 12:3] and the fact that Korach and his followers claimed that Moshe was "exalting himself over the congregation of Hashem" [Bamidbar 16:3]. Despite the fact that these other people started the fight and they hurled the most absurd and inflammatory charge against Moshe, Moshe himself (who was the prophet of G-d and the King of Israel) went to seek peace with these two obnoxious people (the same two people who slandered him in the past to Pharaoh and almost cost him his life in Egypt). Moshe swallowed his pride and his honor and tried to take Dasan and Aviram aside and reason with them logically against the folly of their rebellion. The Talmud derives from here that one should not persist in an argument, but should take the initiative to bring it to an end.

When two people get into a fight and someone goes to one of the parties and asks him to "make shalom", typically the response is "Why should I sue for peace? I am right. He wronged me. Let him come ask me for peace!" Moshe Rabbeinu's actions here teach us the impropriety of such a response. One will never be more "right" in a machlokes than Moshe was in his dispute with Korach. Despite that fact, it was Moshe who tried to end the argument and make peace.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz once explained that the pasuk "And there shall no more be like Korach and his followers" is not only a negative transgression, but it is a prediction as well. There will never again be such a one sided argument, where one party was so clearly right and the other party so clearly wrong as in this case of Korach and his followers arguing with Moshe Rabbeinu. This was a case where one side was 100% right and the other side 100% wrong. Never again would there be such a morally lopsided argument.

The following story illustrates this concept. (The names in the following true story have been changed to protect the innocent.)

Reuven had a subscription to the NY Times. His neighbor Shimon did not subscribe to the Times. However, Reuven noticed every morning that his NY Times had already been read before he brought it in the house. Shimon had known that Reuven would pick the paper up from his porch at 7:00 AM, so he came by at 6:00 AM, brought the paper into his own house, read it for 45 minutes and then re-folded it up and returned it to Reuven's porch. Reuven suspected this and woke up early one morning and caught Shimon in the act. He challenged him, "How dare you take my paper before I read it!" Shimon responded back "What are you getting so excited about? You're acting like a Sodomite. I get benefit and you lose nothing. You have no right to complain about what I'm doing."

Reuven was at his wits end. He did not know what to do, so he consulted his Rabbi. He wanted to take Shimon to a Din Torah. The Rabbi told Reuven he had good advice for him: Buy your neighbor a subscription to the NY Times. Reuven could not believe his ears. "What? My neighbor

steals my paper and I should buy him a subscription to the NY Times? Rabbi, Are you out of your mind?"

Ultimately, however, Reuven listened to his Rabbi's advice and years later he admitted that his purchase of the NY Times subscription for his neighbor was the best investment he ever made! He now not only can read a clean newspaper in the morning without coffee stains, but he also still has good relations with his neighbor!

Reuven was certainly not obligated to buy his neighbor a subscription to the paper. Perhaps Reuven was not even obligated to forgive his neighbor for taking his own paper without offering to pay something. But, sometimes that which is ethically appropriate to do should take precedence over what one is legally entitled to do.

But, one may ask: It cost Reuven money to buy that subscription for his neighbor. Why should he have to do that? The answer, the Chofetz Chaim says, is as follows: An Esrog and lulav costs money. Matzos costs money. Making Pesach costs money. Kosher meat costs money. Every year a person has to make a calculation that he needs X amount of money for mitzvos. The Chofetz Chaim says a person should put away money at the beginning of the year in a "machlokes fund". This is the money earmarked to forgo or to layout to avoid machlokes, to preserve peace among family and community members.

The Medrash at the end of Parshas Tzav states: Chizkiya stated "Great is peace, for by all other mitzvos the Torah specifies 'If' - If you happened to see your friend's item is lost; If you happen to see your friend's donkey straining under its load; If you happen to see a bird's nest. Meaning if the mitzvah happens to come to your hand, you do it, otherwise you do not need to do it. However, in connection with peace the Torah teaches "Seek out peace, and chase after it" [Tehillim 34:15].

If we need to pay for matzah and for lulav and for tephillin and for everything else, we need to pay for Shalom as well. Where did that money for the subscription to the NY Times come from? It came from Reuven's "Shalom fund". Money from that account is the best money a person spends the entire year!

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD.

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V'Haamidu Talmidim Harbeh Rabbi Yonason Sacks (The TorahWeb Foundation)

The Avos D'Rebbe Nosson teaches that while Beis Shammai would only teach students who were fitting, modest, and G-d fearing, Beis Hillel believed in teaching every student. Similarly, the Gemarah in Masseches Berachos (28a) records that Rabban Gamliel denied access to the study hall to any student who was "ein tocho k'baro - his external behavior does not reflect his inner essence", but R' Elazar Ben Azaryah opened access to all who wished to learn. According to R' Shimon B'R Tzemach Doran, the Mishnah's imperative of "v'ha'amidu talmidim harbeh" instructs us to follow the examples of Beis Hillel and R' Elazar ben Azarya, teaching all students, regardless of intellectual or personal aptitude. R' Shimon adds that the scope of this command is two-fold. Firstly, one is commanded to teach many students at a single sitting, to ensure the proliferation of talmidei chachamim. Secondly, one must teach students in one's youth, and continue to do so in one's old age, as the Gemarah (Yevamos 62b) relates regarding R' Akiva. Although all 24,000 of R' Akiva's original students perished during the period of Sefiras HaOmer (since they did not show proper respect to one another), R' Akiva continued to teach in his old age, and established some of the greatest scholars our nation has ever known: R' Meir, R' Nechemia, R' Yehuda, R' Shimon, R' Elazar.

The devastating loss and subsequent replacement of R' Akiva's students may further shed light on our Mishnah. R' Asher Weiss (Sichos al HaTorah, Parshas Kedoshim) questions the seemingly draconian

punishment of R' Akiva's students; granted that one is obligated to show honor to respect to another, but does the failure to do so warrant death? R' Weiss explains that perhaps R' Akiva's students were held to a higher standard, as they were expected to be "ma'atikei hashamua" - promulgators of the teachings of R' Akiva to future generations. R' Akiva himself both exemplified and taught the highest standard of interpersonal conduct. For example, later in Massechet Avos (3:14), R' Akiva teaches, "chaviv adam shenivra b'tzelem - Dear is man, for he was created in the image (of G-d)." Similarly, R' Akiva's statement from the Toras Kohanim, "v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho zeh klal gadol baTorah - Love your neighbor as yourself" - this is a great principle in the Torah" - is often cited. R' Akiva's entire essence pertained to interpersonal love and respect. Because his students failed to follow their Rebbe's example, and perhaps more significantly, to transmit his teachings in a pure, unadulterated fashion, they received a harsh punishment.

R' Weiss continues that although the early students of R' Akiva met an untimely end bereft of any lasting legacy, R' Akiva's later students, "raboseinu shebadarom - our rabbis from the South," rose to unparalleled heights under the tutelage of their teacher. In fact, the Gemarah (Sanhedrin 86a) teaches that the majority of the corpus of the Oral Law consists of these students' teachings: an anonymous Mishnah is attributed to R' Meir; an anonymous Sifra to R' Yehudah; an anonymous Sifrei to R' Shimon; and an anonymous Tosefta to R' Nechemia. Thus, these students clearly succeeded.

In fact, R' Weiss notes, if one looks further, the teachings of each one of "raboseinu shebadarom" exemplified interpersonal traits, echoing the words of their teacher R' Akiva. For example, R' Meir teaches (Tanchuma Vayeichi 2) "kol hamevarech es Yisroel k'ilu mevarech es Hashechinah - one who blesses Israel is like one who blesses the Divine Presence", and (Avos 4:10) "hevei shfal ruach bifnei kola dam - be lowly of spirit before every person. Moreover, the Yerushalmi (Sota 1:2) relates R' Meir's own personal stellar interpersonal character traits.

Similarly, R' Yehuda teaches (Shir HaShirim Rabbah 2:15) that "kol hamekabel pnei chaveirav k'ilu mekabel pnei Hashechinah - one who greets one's fellow is like one who greets the Divine Presence". R' Yosei ben Chalafta, who was also among the final students of R' Akiva, teaches (Shabbos 118a), "miyomai lo avarti al divrei chaverai, yodeah ani b'atzmi she'eini kohein, v'af al pi kein im omrim li chaverai aleh laduchan hayisi oleh - all my days, I never violated the words of my friend; I know that I am not a Kohen, but if my friend instructed me to ascend to the platform (upon which the Kohanim bless the nation), I would do so". Similarly, (Bava Metzia 33a) "d'adilu lo hey'ir (chaveiro) einav ela b'mishna achas hu rabbo - even if one's friend merely helped one understand a single Mishnah, (one's friend) is considered one's Rebbe (worthy of honor)". R' Shimon also underscored the importance of interpersonal conduct, teaching (Berachos 43b) "noach lo la'adam sheyapeel atzmo l'kivshan hoeish v'al yalbin penei chaveiro borabbim - better that one throw oneself into a fiery furnace rather than whiten the face of (i.e., embarrass) one's friend in public". R' Elazar ben Shamoah also stressed these aspects, teaching (Avos 4:15), "yehi kvod talmidcha chaviv alecha k'shelach ukvod chavercha k'morah rabboch umorah rabboch k'morah shomayim - let the honor of your friend be as dear to you as your own honor, and the honor of your friend like the honor of your Rabbi, and the honor of your Rabbi like the honor of Heaven". Finally, R' Nechemia stressed (Shabbos 32b) that through the sin of baseless hatred, strife emerges in one's home.

What emerges from all of these sources is that, like their Rebbe, R' Akiva's later students exemplified the importance of interpersonal conduct. Perhaps it was specifically through this emphasis - not their brilliance or intellectual acumen - that they merited to become the progenitors of our Oral Tradition. It is in the merit of these giants that our Torah is still transmitted to this very day.

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פרשת השבוע - פרשת קורח

אמרו של הגאון רבי זבדיה הכהן שליט"א, חבר בית הדין הרבני בתל אביב, עבור הלכה יומית
גליון זה קדוש כדון שאר דברי תורה המודפסים, נא לנהוג בו בקדושה ואחר מכן להניחו בגיזה

השבת נקרא על קורח, דתן ואבירם, ואון בן פלת, שעמדו יחד, עם מאתיים וחמשים איש נשיאי עדה, קריאי מועד אנשי שם, שנקהלו על משה ואהרן בקריאה: "כל העדה כולם קדושים! ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה'?" משה נבהל ונפול על פניו, דתן ואבירם עונים בחוצפה למשה, משה קם והולך לביתם של דתן ואבירם ואתו כל זקני ישראל, ומשה מרזיז הכרזה דרמטית, "בזאת תדעון כי ה' שלחני לעשות את כל המעשים האלה כי לא מליבי, אם כמות כל האדם ימותון אלה, ופקודת כל האדם יפקד עליהם, לא ה' שלחני, ואם בריאה יברא ה' ופצתה האדמה את פיה ובלעה אותם ואת כל אשר להם וירדו חיים שאולה, וידעתם כי ניאצו האנשים האלה את ה'". ואז העם רואה מחזה מזעזע ביותר, "ויהי ככלותו לדבר את כל הדברים האלה, ותבקע האדמה אשר תחתיהם, ותפתח הארץ את פיה, ותבלע אותם ואת בתיהם, ואת כל האדם אשר לקורח ואת כל הרכוש, וירדו הם וכל אשר להם חיים שאולה, ותכס עליהם הארץ, ויאבדו מתוך הקהל, וכל ישראל אשר סביבותיהם נסו לקולם, כי אמרו פן תבלענו הארץ, ואש יצאה מאת ה' ותאכל את חמישים ומאתיים איש מקריבי הקטורת

אנו רואים את העונש החמור שניתן על המחלוקת בעם ישראל. קורח ועדתו נבלעו באדמה חיים, הם ומשפחותם, עם בתיהם ורכושם, ומאתיים וחמישים איש מקריבי הקטורת נשרפו חיים

אך אם נתבונן היטב נראה, כי בתחילת הפרשה, בין מובילי המחלוקת, היה גם און בן פלת, ואילו בהמשך הפרשה הוא נעלם. רק קורח, דתן ואבירם היו בפרשה, וקיבלו את העונש. והשאלה נשאלת, לאן נעלם און בן פלת

במדרש תנחומא על הפרשה, (פרק י') נאמר: "חכמת נשים בנתה ביתה ואוולת בידה תיהרסנה", אמר רב, חכמת נשים בנתה ביתה, זוהי אשתו של און בן פלת, כשחזר און מהאסיפה הראשונה של קורח ועדתו סיפר לה כי הוא חבר בכיר בוועדה למינוי קורח, וכי בתכניתם להוריד את אהרון הכהן ולמנות את קורח, וכי עוד מעט, הוא יזמן, לאסיפה שנייה. אמרה לו אשתו, מה לך ולזה? הרי אם אהרון יהיה כהן אתה תישאר תלמיד, ואם קורח יהיה כהן אתה תישאר תלמיד, אם כן, מה לך ולמחלוקת זו? אמר לה, אבל הבטחתי להם שאבוא לאסיפה הבאה, אמרה לו אשתו, שמע בקולי ואני אציל אותך, מיד נתנה לו לשתות יין ישן חזק, עד שנפלה עליו שינה, ושמה אותו לישון, אחר כך, סתרה את שערותיה וישבה בפתח ביתה, כך שכל מי שהגיע לביתו של און להזמין, מיד שב על עקבותיו, (שכן אשתו ישבה שם בגלוי שיער), עד שהחליטו לוותר עליו. בינתיים, פתחה האדמה את פיה ונבלעו כולם באדמה, ואון בן פלת ניצל בזכות אשתו. ללמדנו, כי במחלוקת צריך זהירות יתירה, והחכם נזהר שלא להיכנס בכלל למחלוקת, ולא יאמר אדם, חכם ככל שיהיה, אני אכנס למחלוקת ואדע להיזהר ולצאת מזה בזמן, דבר זה לא יעמוד במבחן המציאות, וברור הוא שכל מי שנכנס לוויכוחים ומחלוקת לא ינקה, ומובטח לו שינקה, אבל החכם עיניו בראשו, שומר על עצמו ונזהר שלא להיכנס בכלל למחלוקת

מסופר, על עגלון בעיר קטנה ברוסיה, שהיה העגלון היחיד בעיר, וכל הנסיעות וההובלות שהיו לאנשי העיר היו נעשות דרכו, עגלון זה היה חרוץ, ועבד מבוקר עד ערב, וכולם היו מרוצים. לימים, הגיע עגלון חדש צעיר לימים לעיר, והחל אף הוא לעבוד בנסיעות והובלות, דבר שבא על חשבוננו של העגלון הוותיק

כעס העגלון הוותיק, וקרא את העגלון החדש אליו, והתרעם בפניו כי הוא גוזל את פרנסתו, לעומתו טען העגלון הצעיר, כי עבודה רבה יש בעיר, ולשניהם יש מקום לפרנסה בעבודה בעיר הזו. ישבו והתווכחו עד שהגיעו להסכמה, כי העגלון

הוֹוֹתִיק יִשְׁאֵל אֶת הָעֵגְלוֹן הַצַּעִיר שְׂאֵלָה בְּהִלְכוֹת עֵגְלוֹנִים, וְהִיא אִם יָדַע לְעִנּוֹת, יִשְׂאֵר בְּעִיר, וְאִם לֹא יָדַע לְעִנּוֹת, יִצְטָרֵךְ לְעִזּוֹב אֶת הָעִיר. הַסִּכִּים הָעֵגְלוֹן הַצַּעִיר, וּמִיָּד הַקְּשִׁיב לְשֵׂאֵלָה, הַרְצִינוּ פְּנֵיו שֶׁל הָעֵגְלוֹן הוֹוֹתִיק, וּפְנָה בְּשֵׂאֵלָה לְעִמּוֹתָיו, אִמּוֹר לִי! מִה תַּעֲשֶׂה אִם אֵתָּה מְסִיעַ בְּעֵגְלָה מִשְׁפַּחָה גְּדוּלָה עִם הַרְבֵּה מְזוּדוֹת וְחִבְלֵי־וַיּוֹם חוֹרְפֵי נִכְנַסְתָּ בְּטַעוֹת, לְדֶרֶךְ שִׁישׁ בַּהּ בּוֹץ רַב, וְהוֹסִסִים וְאֹפְנֵי הָעֵגְלָה נִתְקַעוּ בְּבוֹץ וְלֹא מְצַלְחִים לְצַאתָּ, מִה תַּעֲשֶׂה? מִיָּד עֵנָה הָעֵגְלוֹן, אַכֵּה אֶת הַסִּסּוֹסִים חֶזֶק בְּשׁוֹט, עַד שִׁיתַּמְצוּ וַיִּצְאוּ מֵהַבּוֹץ! אִמְרָ לּוֹ הָעֵגְלוֹן הוֹוֹתִיק, הֲכִיתָ, וְלֹא עָזַר, מִה תַּעֲשֶׂה עוֹד? עֵנָה הַצַּעִיר, אֹרִיד אֶת הַמְּזוּדוֹת וְהַחִבְלֵי־וַיּוֹם, וְלֵעֵגְלָה יִהְיֶה יוֹתֵר קָל לְהִיחֹלֵץ. אִמְרָ לּוֹ הוֹוֹתִיק, עֲשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְלֹא עָזַר מִה תַּעֲשֶׂה אֵז? מִיָּד עֵנָה הַצַּעִיר, אֹרִיד אֶת כָּל הַנּוֹסְעִים וְאֵבֶקֶשׁ מֵהֶם לְדַחֹף אֶת הָעֵגְלָה. אִמְרָ לּוֹ הָעֵגְלוֹן הוֹוֹתִיק, עֲשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְלֹא עָזַר, מִה עוֹד תַּעֲשֶׂה? נְבוֹךְ הָעֵגְלוֹן הַצַּעִיר וְאִמְרָ, יוֹתֵר, אִין לִי מִה לְעִשׂוֹת! וְהַסִּכִּים לְעִזּוֹב אֶת הָעִיר, אֲךָ בְּטֶרֶם יַעֲשֶׂה זֹאת, דַּרְשׁ לְדַעַת מִהֶעֱגְלוֹן הוֹוֹתִיק, מִה בְּאֵמֶת עוֹשִׂים בְּמִקְרָה כְּזֶה, מִיָּד עֵנָה לּוֹ הָעֵגְלוֹן הוֹוֹתִיק, "עֵגְלוֹן חֶכֶם לֹא נִכְנַס לְבוֹץ"

אָף אֲנִי, נִלְמַד מוֹסֵר הַשֶּׁכֶל מִמַּעֲשֵׂה זֶה וְנֹאמֵר "אִדָּם חֶכֶם לֹא נִכְנַס לְמַחְלוּקָתָּ". אֲבָל טִיפֵשׁ שֶׁלֹּא שָׂם לְבוֹ לְזֹאת וְנִכְנַס לְמַחְלוּקָתָּ, סִפֵּק רַב אִם יִצְלִיחַ לְצַאת מִמֶּנּוּ, וְאִם בְּסוּפוֹ שֶׁל דְּבַר יֵצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ, הֲרִי שִׂיֵּאֵר מִמַּחְלוּקָתָּ זֶה בְּשֵׁן וְעֵין. יִשְׁמַע חֶכֶם וְיוֹסֵף לְקַח, אֲמֵן

שבת שלום

Rav Kook List

Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Korach: The Secret of the Incense

"Aaron took [the fire-pan] as Moses had told him... He put the incense in it, and it atoned for the people. He stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was checked." (Num. 17:12-13)

From where did Moses learn the secret power of incense to arrest plagues?

The Gift of the Angel of Death

According to the Midrash (Shabbat 89a), when Moses went up to accept the Torah, the angels bestowed him with various presents. "You ascended on high, taking a captive [the Torah], receiving gifts among men" (Psalms 68:19). Even the Angel of Death presented Moses with a gift: the secret of the incense.

What is special about incense that it has the power to stay death? And why not take advantage of this capability to permanently rescind death?

Binding Together All Forces

All forces in the world, even the forces of death and destruction, contribute to the development and perfection of the universe. When all the realms and their forces, both spiritual and physical, draw together, each one provides a unique function. From this standpoint, the force of death also serves as a force of life.

The unique character of the incense reflects this message of harmony and inter-connectivity. The Hebrew word for incense, ketoret, is related to the word kasher, meaning a 'bind' or 'knot.' The incense unites together the core essence of all forces - life, matter, and spirit - according to the extraordinary recipe that God prescribed in the Torah.

The ability to overcome destructive forces, at a time when they rule freely and have not yet been converted into constructive and preserving forces, was an exceptional phenomenon. This hidden knowledge was granted only to Moses. This gift from the Angel of Death demonstrated the surrender of the forces of death to the pure splendor illuminating that faithful messenger, as he revealed the light of the Torah of life.

What is the root of the incense's secret power? The ketoret also encompasses the forces of destruction, so that they may contribute to building and perfecting the universe. Thus, we find that the ketoret bound together many fragrances, including galbanum (chelbenah), which was an essential ingredient, despite its pungent, unpleasant odor. In this way, these

forces fulfill their ultimate purpose, to build and complete. True realization of this transformation, however, will only occur in the distant future, as the path for sweetening the bitterness of the universe is hidden deeply within the divine secrets of Creation.

Only as a temporary measure for the need of that hour, the harmonious quality of the incense was able to stay the power of death. The secret given to Moses demonstrated the comprehensiveness of the Torah, and the unique splendor of those who study Torah - the source of peace, life, and rectification for all worlds and their myriad inhabitants.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 256-257. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, p. 213) Comments and inquiries may be sent to: mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com

Edutainment Weekly - Parshas Korach

"Out of this World – to Die For?"

(Insights from this week's Portion: Korach)

By Jon Erlbaum (torah.org)

- This Week's RRR (Relevant Religious Reference):
"Three things take a person out of this world: jealousy, lust, and honor-seeking" – Pirkei Avos (Ethics of the Fathers), 4:21
- This Week's SSC's (Suitable Secular Citations):
 - o SSC #1: "I've spent most of my life walking under that hovering cloud, jealousy, whose acid raindrops blurred my vision and burned holes in my heart" – Astrid Alauda
 - o SSC #2: "... But clouds got in my way! I've looked at clouds from both sides now..." – Joni Mitchell, also recorded by Judy Collins

OUT OF THIS WORLD

"Out of this world"! Why do our Sages (who authored the "RRR quote" above) opt for this language in describing the potential impact of "jealousy, lust, and honor-seeking"? It's safe to assume that they weren't using "out of this world" in accordance with the hippie slang, as if to say that these drives take a person to a place that is "out of sight, groovy, or psychedelic" (just as when the Sages use the term "awesome", they are generally referring to a somewhat different concept). Perhaps they said it in the context of an uptown, high society conversation: "dahling, these three things are absolutely out of this world – simply to die for!" Also doubtful! But then again, "to die for" may not be so far off...

I'VE LOOKED AT CLOUDS FROM BOTH SIDES NOW

Let's hone in on the issue of jealousy: in what way does the phrase "out of THIS WORLD" aptly characterize the experience of being jealous? Here are a few possible ways to understand this linguistic phrase of choice:

Allowing our attitudes and behaviors to be driven by jealousy...

· ...Takes us away from being able to perceive the realities of THIS WORLD clearly and objectively. We become so single-mindedly consumed by our need to follow our drive for jealousy that we end up losing access to our natural sensibilities and sensitivities. The results? Becoming oblivious, inconsiderate, or even callously cruel to others who interfere with our agenda!

o Example of the extreme: in "The Matrix", the character Siefer eventually justifies and pursues the betrayal of his allies. Rabbi Nachum Amsel points out that leading up to the betrayal, there are three telling scenes in which he is shown to exhibit jealousy, lust, and honor-seeking respectively! From the perspective of our Sages, the resulting betrayal would come as no surprise.

· ...Causes us to experience anguishing, death-like departures from THIS WORLD, during which enjoyment of life all but disappears and is replaced by an overshadowing disgust for living. As the Spanish Writer Baltasar Gracian eloquently said, "The envious die not once, but as oft as

the envied win applause.” These experiences make the jealous feel that they are living under a constant cloud (as in the “SSC” quote above).
· ...Makes us believe we are above THIS WORLD. Speaking of clouds, we can become so wrapped up in self-importance – so “elevated” in our own minds – that we come to find our “head in the clouds”. And as anyone who has passed through clouds by plane can tell you, you lose sight of the world below as you’re in the midst of them.

TO DIE FOR

In this week’s Parsha, a prominent member of the Jewish people, named Korach, ultimately allows jealousy to take him out of the world in a unique way that we haven’t discussed: the Torah testifies that the earth miraculously swallowed him alive along with his followers. While Korach was a great scholar with tremendous virtues, he coveted his Cousin Aaron’s priestly position: and if he couldn’t occupy that position himself, he wanted to make sure that no one did. So he constructed “cogent” arguments as to why such leadership positions shouldn’t even exist. What was the result? His jealousy proved so toxic that it became potent enough “to die for”.

WHERE AM I NEEDED? AM I NEEDED

In Ethics of the Fathers (Pirkei Avos), the great Sage Hillel teaches us that “in a place where there are no leaders, strive to be a leader”. Since statements in Pirkei Avos were composed using a precise economy of language, we can derive logical inferences from them. Thus, in the above quote, we can infer that in a place where there are already leaders, we may not be needed as leaders, in which case we should shun the spotlight instead. Therefore, we need to examine our motivations and not just seek leadership for our own personal glory. Similarly, in every day situations, we should generally avoid speaking just to be noticed or to show off our brilliance!

But we can rest assured that even if we are not meant to be a leader of one specific cause, every person born into this world must step up and be a leader in some capacity. As Elizabeth O’Connor eloquently put it, “Envy is a symptom of lack of appreciation of our own uniqueness and self worth. Each of us has something to give that no one else has.” Indeed, it is axiomatic in Jewish thought that every human being our Creator placed into this world is sorely needed – it is only upon us to figure out where and when to step up!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos! Love, Jon & The Chevra

Weekly Halachah

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

Honor and Respect for a Sefer Torah

A three-part series

A Sefer Torah, which is the living testimonial of God’s covenant with the Jewish people, must be treated with the highest degree of respect and dignity. Accordingly, there are special halachos which are associated with the removal and returning of the Sefer Torah when it is taken out of the Aron ha-Kodesh for Kerias ha-Torah, the Reading of the Torah. The following is the proper procedure:

The chazan should not be the one to take the Torah out of the aron. To accord the Torah due respect, another person is appointed to open the aron,¹ take out the Torah and hand it to the chazan to carry to the bimah.² If no one was appointed to the task, the chazan may “rush to grab this mitzvah for himself.”³

The Torah is taken out of the aron with one’s right hand although the left hand may be used to help. A left-handed person may take out the Torah with his left hand.⁴ But the Torah is always handed, received and

held with one’s right hand⁵ even if its being given, received or held by a person who is left-handed.⁶

At the time that the Torah is being taken out of the aron, it is customary⁷ to recite Berich Shmei,⁸ which is a section of Zohar written in Aramaic.⁹ Some recite Berich Shmei before the Torah is removed from the aron,¹⁰ while others insist that Berich Shmei be said only after it has been taken out.¹¹ One who neglected to recite Berich Shmei at the proper time may recite it until the Torah is unrolled.¹²

When the chazan recites Shema and Echad he should face the congregation. When he recites Gadlu, he turns to face the aron.¹³ He should raise the Torah slightly when reciting each of these verses.¹⁴

One is required to stand,¹⁵ without leaning, anytime the Torah is “in motion.” [Many poskim attempt to give the benefit of the doubt to those who sit on Simchas Torah during the hakafos even though the Torah is in motion.¹⁶ Still, it is proper for a God-fearing person to stand during the hakafos unless he himself is holding a Torah.¹⁷] Thus when the Torah is being carried from the aron or being raised for hagbahah, one is obligated to stand until it is placed on the bimah or until it is no longer within view.¹⁸

[When the Torah is not “in motion” the following rules apply:¹⁹
1) If the Torah is in the aron and the aron is closed, if it is placed on the bimah or is being held by someone who is sitting down, there is no reason to stand. 2) If it is being held by someone who is standing up (e.g., during Keil maleh rachamim), or it is standing upright in the aron and the door of the aron is open, it has become standard practice to honor the Torah by standing – even though one is not required to do so.²⁰ 3) If, while being carried, the person carrying the Torah stops to rest, one is required to remain standing, as this is considered “in motion”.]

As the Torah makes its way through the right-hand side of the shul towards the bimah, it is considered proper for the congregants to honor it by following behind²¹ as it passes by them.²² Others hold that it is considered “haughty” to do so and it should not be done.²³ All agree that there is no point for those who are not in the path of the Torah (e.g., their seat is behind the bimah) to come to the front of the shul so that they can follow the Torah.

It is customary and considered correct chinuch for people to bring their young children forward so that they can respectfully kiss the Torah mantle.²⁴ Some have the custom that adults also kiss the Torah when it passes,²⁵ while others frown upon this custom and allow only touching or pointing at the Torah and then kissing that hand.²⁶

When some people carry the Torah to the bimah, they detour or bend down to allow those who are not within reach of the Torah to kiss it or touch it. Some poskim refer to this as an act of degradation, and those who do so should be strongly reprimanded.²⁷

[End part I]

When two or more Sifrei Torah are taken out of the aron, the ones that are not currently being used are entrusted to a responsible individual to hold until they are to be used. It is improper to allow a child to hold the Torah,²⁸ and it is prohibited to leave a Torah unattended even if it is left in a safe place.²⁹

It is prohibited to turn one’s back to a Torah.³⁰ Accordingly, those who sit in front of the shul directly in front of the Torah must turn around during Kerias ha-Torah. When, however, the Torah is read from a bimah³¹ [or from a table which is over forty inches high³²], this prohibition does not apply.

Often, those holding a second or a third Sefer Torah (e.g., on Yom Tov) sit behind the Torah reader or the person being called to the Torah, who are then turning their backs towards those Sifrei Torah. While some poskim disapproved of this,³³ the custom to do so is widely accepted.³⁴ Others hold that this is only permitted during Kerias ha-Torah or during haftarah that is read from a klaf. But during a haftarah that is read from a Chumash or during Ashrei, etc., the reader or the chazan should move to the side so that his back is not directly facing the Torah.³⁵

Question: If, mistakenly, the “wrong” Sefer Torah was removed from the Ark, may it be returned and exchanged for the “correct” Torah?

Discussion: Most poskim maintain that it is improper to return a Torah to the Ark once it has been removed.³⁶ Although using the “wrong” Torah will cause a delay (tircha d’tzibbura) since it will have to be rolled to the correct place, it is still considered degrading to a Torah to be put back once it was taken out of the Ark. There are two notable exceptions to this basic rule:

1. If the Torah was lifted up by the person removing it, but not actually taken out of the Ark, it is permitted to set it back down and remove the correct Torah from the Ark.³⁷

On a day when two (or three) Sifrei Torah are taken out of the Ark, and the “wrong” one was laid on the bimah mistakenly, it is permitted to pick up the “wrong” Torah from the bimah and replace it with the correct one.³⁸

Conclusion

At the conclusion of Kerias ha-Torah, the Sefer Torah is returned to the aron, there to remain until the next time it will be used. Returning the Torah to the aron, however, is a procedure unto itself involving the following steps:

After the keriah is over, a half-kaddish is recited. Whenever there is a maftir aliyah the kaddish is recited before maftir; when there is no maftir the kaddish is recited after the last aliyah.³⁹ This kaddish should be recited by the Reader.⁴⁰ If a mourner or one who has a yahrtzeit received the last aliyah (shelishi on a weekday or the last aliyah on Shabbos or Yom Tov) he may recite this kaddish.⁴¹ Other poskim maintain that this kaddish belongs to a mourner or one who has a yahrtzeit even if he was not called up for the last aliyah,⁴² and some congregations follow this opinion.⁴³

If, by mistake, the kaddish was omitted before maftir, it is recited after the final blessing after the haftarah.⁴⁴ If, on a day that three Sifrei Torah are used, the kaddish was mistakenly recited after the keriah of the first sefer, the kaddish is repeated before maftir.⁴⁵

Hagbahah

When the keriah is over, the Torah is raised so that it can be viewed by the entire congregation. Since the entire congregation must be able to see the writing, the Torah should be rotated slowly to face both sides of the shul, first to the right and then to the left.⁴⁶ One who merely raises the Torah but does not display it to the entire shul commits a grave sin.⁴⁷

Even though receiving hagbahah is considered a greater honor than gelilah,⁴⁸ one who is honored with hagbahah but feels that he does not have the strength to lift the Torah and hold it up long enough for the entire congregation to see, should decline the honor.⁴⁹

The magbiah should maneuver the Torah so that the connecting stitches show in the center. This is done in case the Torah tears during the gelilah process – the stitches will tear and not the panels themselves.⁵⁰

Before the Torah is lifted, it is unrolled⁵¹ so that at least three columns⁵² are visible when it is raised.

As the Torah is lifted up high, it is a mitzvah for all of the men and women⁵³ in shul to direct their gaze⁵⁴ at the “face” of the written parchment⁵⁵ and to recite the verse⁵⁶ Vezos ha-Torah.⁵⁷ One who is not facing the Torah as it is lifted is not allowed to recite Vezos ha-Torah.⁵⁸

[End part II]

Gelilah

The Torah is rolled up by a person chosen for this honor; often, a minor. This is considered proper chinuch for mitzvos.⁵⁹

It is common practice to set the Bereishis side of the Torah above the Devarim side.

The Torah is bound with its special sash (the gartel) around its upper half. The knot should be tied on the side of the Torah facing “up” so that when it is used next, it is ready to be unrolled without turning it over.

When the Torah is rolled up, care should be taken that the parchment is not touched with one’s bare hands. Similarly, if the panels

need to be adjusted or tightened, they may not be touched with bare hands even if one washed his hands before. If any adjustment needs to be made, a tallis or the mantle should be used.⁶⁰ [Other scrolls, such as Megillas Esther or a scroll used for the haftarah, may be touched with bare hands only if one previously washed his hands.⁶¹]

Some poskim⁶² rule that it is prohibited to make a single knot and a bow [or a single knot with the ends tucked in under the sash] when putting away the Sefer Torah on Shabbos at Minchah. Since this knot will remain intact for over twenty-four hours, it should not be made on Shabbos. The custom in most places, however, is to be lenient, and many poskim accept this leniency.⁶³ Another option is to wind the sash around the Sefer Torah without making any knot at all, and then to tuck the ends underneath.⁶⁴ [Those congregations that use a band with metal clasps or a special band called a wimple⁶⁵ avoid this potential problem altogether.]

Whoever chants the haftarah should not begin until after gelilah is finished. But on Monday and Thursday when Yehi ratzon is recited, there is no need to wait for gelilah to be over before beginning the Yehi ratzon.⁶⁶

Returning the Sefer Torah

When returning the Torah to the aron, one must approach the aron from the right side of the shul facing the aron. The magbiah and the gollel, as well as those by whom the Torah passes, should follow along as the Torah makes its way through the shul towards the aron.⁶⁷ On Shabbos the congregation recites Mizmor l’David as the Torah is carried to the aron, while during the week [even on Yom Tov] l’David Mizmor is recited.⁶⁸

Once the Torah is back in the aron, it is prohibited to remove it for any other purpose⁶⁹ except for Kerias ha-Torah in the same shul.⁷⁰ According to some poskim⁷¹ it is even prohibited to take it to another room in the same building, even for Kerias ha-Torah. The custom, however, seems to follow the lenient opinions who allow transferring a Torah to another room in the same building.⁷²

It is permitted to temporarily move a Torah to another location,⁷³ such as a house of a mourner or a groom, if the Torah is brought to the other location in advance, placed in a spot prepared for it especially, and will be returned to that spot after the keriah is over. It is common practice to transfer a Torah to another place only if it will be used at least three times at the temporary location.⁷⁴ While this is a proper custom that should be upheld, it is not mandatory and can be disregarded when difficult to fulfill.⁷⁵

There are some exceptions to the above rule about transferring a Torah to a temporary location even if a place for it was not prepared in advance:

* If an important Torah sage needs a Torah for Kerias ha-Torah, it is permitted to bring the Torah to him.

* If ten or more people are unable to come to where the Torah is housed, e.g., they are in a hospital, it is permitted to bring the Torah to them.⁷⁶

* For the reading of Parashas Zachor it is permitted to bring a Torah to a sick or elderly person or to anyone who cannot make it to shul.⁷⁷

* On Simchas Torah it is permitted to bring a Torah to shul just for the hakafos.⁷⁸

* A privately owned Torah may be taken from the owner’s home to shul even for one time and then returned.⁷⁹

1 It is considered a segulah bedukah for an easy labor, for the husband of a woman in her ninth month of pregnancy to receive the honor of opening the aron; Chida, Avodas ha-Kodesh, Moreh B’etzba 3:4.

2 Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:1, based on Mishnah Yuma 68b.

3 Sha’arei Efrayim 10:2.

4 Sha’arei Efrayim 10:2.

5 Rama O.C. 134:2.

6 Mishnah Berurah 282:1. The Chazon Ish held that the “face” of the Torah should be towards the person who is holding it (Tefilah

<p>7 German communities do not recite Berich Shmei; Siddur Avodas Yisrael, pg. 122. Many Sephardim recite it only on Shabbos; Ben Ish Chai, Toldos 15.</p> <p>8 Several Kabbalists attach great importance to the recital of Berich Shmei, since the time when the Torah is removed from the aron is considered an eis ratzon (auspicious time) in which one's prayers are more readily answered; see Yeshurun Torah Journal, vol. 2, pg. 579.</p> <p>9 Since Aramaic prayers may be recited only b'tzibur, it is important to recite Berich Shmei together with the congregation; See Mishnah Berurah 101:19. See also Yesod v'Shoreish ha-Avodah 5:8 who says that an individual should recite Berich Shmei even in middle of Ve'hu rachum (during the week). During Pesukei d'Zimrah, however, one should not stop to recite Berich Shmei; Teshuvos Maharshag 1:52.</p> <p>10 Darchei Chayim v'Shalom 196. This also seems to be the view of Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:1, and is the custom in many places.</p> <p>11 Mateh Efrayim 619:48; Rav Pealim 3:8; Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:70-9, based on Sha'arei Efrayim 10:1; Az Nidberu 8:48. Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo 12:9) maintains that either way is acceptable.</p> <p>12 Mishnah Berurah 134:13. Pischei She'arim to Sha'arei Efrayim 10:1 maintains that it may be said during hagbahah as well.</p> <p>13 Aruch ha-Shulchan 282:1.</p> <p>14 Mishnah Berurah 134:13.</p> <p>15 "Stand" means that if one is sitting he must stand up and if one is walking he must stand still (until the Torah passes by); Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 282:3.</p> <p>16 See Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 282:5; Shulchan ha-Tahor 149:2; Minchas Shlomo 1:33; Halichos Shlomo 12:13; B'tzeil ha-Chochmah 5:139; Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:319 and Tzedakah u'Mishpat 16, note 37.</p> <p>17 Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 2, pg. 308.</p> <p>18 Mishnah Berurah 146:17, based on Y.D. 282:2. According to some opinions, the requirement is to stand as long as one can sense that the Torah is being carried, even if it is not visible to him.</p> <p>19 Based on Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 146:18; Igros Moshe, O.C. 5:38-4; Minchas Shlomo 1:33.</p> <p>20 Accordingly, a weak or ill person may sit; Meishiv Halachah, O.C. 248.</p> <p>21 Some poskim mention that it is proper to follow until it reaches the bimah (Chayei Adam 31:42), while others write that it is sufficient to follow along "a bit" (Sha'arei Efrayim 10:4; Halichos Shlomo 12, note 17).</p> <p>22 Mishnah Berurah 149:7.</p> <p>23 Aruch ha-Shulchan 149:3; 282:1.</p> <p>24 Rama, O.C. 149:1.</p> <p>25 Sha'arei Efrayim 10:4; Kaf ha-Chayim 134:10; 149:10.</p> <p>26 Pischei She'arim 10:4 quoting Kitzur Shelah; Siddur Tzelosa d'Avraham, pg. 375; Rav Y.E. Henkin (Eidus l'Yisrael 63).</p> <p>27 Teshuvos Yad Yitzchak, quoted by Beis Baruch 31:171; Teshuvos Rivam Shneituch, quoted in Tzitz Eliezer 12:40. [Possibly, if the detour is for the sake of a person who is unable to come to the Torah, i.e., a handicapped person, it would be permissible.]</p> <p>28 Mishnah Berurah 147:29.</p> <p>29 Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:38.</p> <p>30 Y.D. 282:1.</p> <p>31 Rama, Y.D. 242:18; Mishnah Berurah 150:14.</p> <p>32 Taz, Y.D. 242:13. See, however, Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 282:2, who seems to imply otherwise. See also Minchas Yitzchak 5:78.</p> <p>33 Mishnah Berurah 147:29.</p> <p>34 Halichos Shlomo 12, note 21.</p> <p>35 Emek Berachah, pg. 43.</p> <p>36 See Yabia Omer 8:15-4, who quotes the various views who rule stringently. See, however, Igros Moshe 2:37, who rules that one may not object if a member of the congregation instructs the chazan to return the "wrong" Torah to the Ark.</p> <p>37 Eishel Avraham, O.C. 144.</p> <p>38 Peri Megadim (Mishbetzos) 140:4; Beur Halachah 684:3, s.v. ve'im ta'ah, quoting Acharonim. Even if the "wrong" Torah was already unrolled to the Torah reading of the day (and even if the one called up for the aliyah already recited Baruch Atah but did not yet say Hashem), it is permitted to roll it up and exchange it for the correct one.</p>	<p>39</p> <p>40</p> <p>41</p> <p>42</p> <p>43</p> <p>44</p> <p>45</p> <p>46</p> <p>47</p> <p>48</p> <p>49</p> <p>50</p> <p>51</p> <p>52</p> <p>53</p> <p>54</p> <p>55</p> <p>56</p> <p>57</p> <p>58</p> <p>59</p> <p>60</p> <p>61</p> <p>62</p> <p>63</p> <p>64</p> <p>65</p> <p>66</p> <p>67</p> <p>68</p> <p>69</p> <p>70</p> <p>71</p> <p>72</p>	<p>Whenever a keriah takes place before Shemoneh Esrei, the kaddish is delayed until after the Torah is returned to the aron.</p> <p>Mateh Efrayim (Kaddish 3:1); Sha'arei Efrayim 10:9.</p> <p>Ibid. Rav S.Z. Auerbach explains that this kaddish was specifically reserved for those who passed away and do not have a relative to say kaddish for them. This kaddish, therefore, is not recited by an individual mourner or someone who has a yahrtzeit, unless he was called for the last aliyah (Halichos Shlomo 12:27). See Sdei Chemed (Aveilus, 163).</p> <p>Elef ha-Magen (Kaddish 3:3).</p> <p>Orchos Rabbeinu, vol. 1, pg. 72; Shevet ha-Levi 8:163-3.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 282:29.</p> <p>Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:101.</p> <p>If the congregation surrounds the bimah from all four sides, then the Torah should be rotated in a complete circle starting from the right side; Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo 12:28).</p> <p>See Ramban, Devarim 27:26, based on Yerushalmi Sotah 7:4.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 147:19.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 147:7.</p> <p>O.C. 147:3. See Sha'arei Efrayim 10:17.</p> <p>It is also permitted to raise the Torah while it is closed and then unroll it while raising it, but this should only be attempted by one who is strong enough to do so; Sha'arei Efrayim 10:14.</p> <p>A stronger person should unroll the Torah more widely than three columns' width; Mishnah Berurah 134:8.</p> <p>When a woman is a niddah, however, she should not gaze upon the Torah during hagbahah; Mishnah Berurah 88:7.</p> <p>Although not recorded in any of the classical sources, it is customary in many shuls to point at the Torah during hagbahah; see Teshuvos Lev Chayim 2:167. Conversely, while Shulchan Aruch rules that one ought to bow during hagbahah, it is not customary to do so; see Har Tzvi, O.C. 64.</p> <p>The Kabbalists recommend that one place himself close enough to the Torah so that he can actually make out the letters; Mishnah Berurah 134:11. But this should be done only by one who is recognized as a person whose actions are l'shem Shamayim; Sha'arei Efrayim 10:13.</p> <p>In most siddurim the wording is: VeZos ha-Torah asher sam Moshe lifnei Bnei Yisrael al pi Hashem b'yad Moshe. Several poskim note that such a verse does not exist; see Siddur ha-Gra and Aruch ha-Shulchan 134:3.</p> <p>Although some poskim consider the recital of VeZos ha-Torah to be so vital that an individual interrupts his Birchos Kerias Shema in order to recite it (Birkei Yosef 134:4; Sha'arei Teshuvah 134:2), many other poskim disagree and hold that it should not be recited even during Pesukei d'Zimrah ;see Chayim Sha'al 68; Tehillah l'David 66:8; Kaf ha-Chayim 134:20.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 134:12.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 147:7.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 147:2.</p> <p>Rama, O.C. 147:1 and Beur Halachah (s.v. v'tov).</p> <p>Minchas Shabbos 80:155. According to this view, it is also prohibited to tie a knot on a sash of a Sefer Torah in this fashion on Thursday, since it has been untied on Shabbos morning.</p> <p>Ketzos ha-Shulchan 123:9; Tzitz Eliezer 7:29; Rav S.Z. Auerbach quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 15, note 178 and Halichos Shlomo 12, note 91.</p> <p>See explanation in The Weekly Halachah Discussion, pg. 173.</p> <p>Used mainly in German congregations. According to Rav S. Schwab (quoted in Knots on Shabbos), this type of band was introduced in order to avoid the issue of knotting on Shabbos.</p> <p>O.C. 147:7.</p> <p>Rama O.C. 149:1.</p> <p>Mishnah Berurah 147:8.</p> <p>It is permitted, however, to remove a Torah from its place for repairs or to air it out. According to some opinions, it is even permitted to remove a Torah in order to display its beauty, as this is considered an honor to the Torah; see Kaf ha-Chayim 135:79.</p> <p>It is also permitted to read Shnayim mikra from a Sefer Torah; Mishnah Berurah 285:1.</p> <p>Ma'asei Rav 129; Sha'arei Rachamim quoting several opinions.</p> <p>Da'as Kedoshim, Y.D. 282; Beis Shlomo, O.C. 34.</p>
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- 73 It is customary that when a Torah is moved it is wrapped in a tallis. The source for this custom is unknown; Tzedakah u'Mishpat 16, note 3. When a Torah is temporarily relocated, ten people should accompany it (Kaf ha-Chayim 135:74), but this does not seem to be common practice.
- 74 Aruch ha-Shulchan 135:32.
- 75 Igros Moshe, Y.D. 4:61-13. See Sha'arei Rachamim 22 who refers to this custom as a "minhag ta'us." See also Emes l'Yaakov, O.C. 135:14; Halichos Shlomo 12:38 and Kinyan Torah 4:18.
- 76 Beir Halachah 135:14.
- 77 Mishnah Berurah 135:14.
- 78 Mishnah Berurah 669:9.
- 79 Kaf ha-Chayim 135:82.

Parshas Korach - Redeeming a Firstborn Donkey! By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

I am absolutely certain that I was never before asked to participate in the redemption of a firstborn donkey. As a cohen, I often participate in the mitzvah of Pidyon Haben, redeeming a firstborn male child, a bechor, but I have never before been asked to participate in redeeming a firstborn donkey, in Hebrew called peter chamor.

The Torah mentions this mitzvah in three different places. (1) In Parshas Bo, the pasuk says: Every firstborn donkey you shall redeem with a "seh," and if you do not redeem it, you should break its neck. Furthermore, the firstborn of your children you shall also redeem (Shemos 13:13). (I will explain later why I did not translate the word "seh.") (2) The pasuk repeats the same commandment almost verbatim in Parshas Ki Sissa (Shemos 34:20). (3) In Parshas Korach, the Torah states: And the firstborn of a non-kosher animal you shall redeem (Bamidbar 18:15). Although the last verse does not mention specifically that it refers to a donkey, the halacha is that it refer exclusively to donkeys. There is no mitzvah to redeem a firstborn colt, camel, or puppy (Tosefta, Bechoros 1:2).

Why was the donkey an exception? It is the only non-kosher species of animal whose firstborn carries kedusha! The Gemara teaches that this is a reward for the donkey. When the Bnei Yisroel exited Egypt, the Egyptians gave us many gifts (see Shemos 11:2-3; 12:35-36). The Bnei Yisroel needed to somehow transport all these gifts out of Egypt and through the Desert unto Eretz Yisroel. The Jews could not simply call Allied Van Lines to ship their belongings through the Desert. Instead they contacted Donkey Lines who performed this service for forty years without complaint or fanfare! In reward for the donkey providing the Bnei Yisroel with a very necessary shipping service, the Torah endowed the firstborn of this species with sanctity (Gemara Bechoros 5b). In essence, Hashem rewarded the donkey with its very own special mitzvah. Thus, this mitzvah teaches us the importance of acknowledging when someone else helps us, hakaras hatov, for we appreciate the species of donkeys because their ancestors performed kindness for us. If we are required to appreciate the help given to our ancestors thousands of years ago, how much more do we need to exhibit hakaras hatov to our parents, teachers, and spouses for all that they have helped us!

WITH WHAT DO WE REDEEM?

As mentioned above, the Torah commands the owner of a firstborn male donkey to redeem him by giving a cohen a seh, a word we usually translate as lamb. However, we should be aware that the word seh in the Torah does not mean only a lamb, but also includes a kid goat (Mishnah Bechoros 9a). (See mitzvas Korban Pesach, Shemos 12:5, where the Torah mentions this explicitly.) In actuality, the halacha is that one fulfills this mitzvah by giving the cohen either a sheep or a goat to redeem the donkey. The redemption seh does not need to be a lamb or kid – it may also be a mature adult and it may be either male or female (Mishnah Bechoros 9a). Furthermore, using a sheep or goat to redeem the donkey is merely a less expensive way of fulfilling the mitzvah since one may redeem an expensive donkey with an inexpensive lamb or kid (Rambam, Hilchos

Bikkurim 12:11). There is an alternative way to fulfill the mitzvah -- by redeeming the donkey with anything that is worth at least as much as the donkey (Gemara Bechoros 11a). However, if the owner redeems the donkey with a sheep or goat, he fulfills the mitzvah even if the sheep or goat is worth far less than the donkey. Thus by giving a lamb or kid to the cohen, the owner saves money.

As we saw above, the Torah mentions the mitzvah of pidyon haben immediately after discussing the mitzvah of redeeming the firstborn donkey. Based on this juxtaposition of the two mitzvos, Chazal made several comparisons between them. For example, just as the mitzvah of pidyon haben applies only to a male child, so to the mitzvah of peter chamor applies only to a firstborn male donkey and not to a female. Similarly, just as the child of a cohen or levi is exempt from the mitzvah of pidyon haben, so too a donkey that is owned (or even partially owned) by a cohen or levi is exempt from the mitzvah of peter chamor (see Mishnah Bechoros 3b). And just as a newborn child whose mother is the daughter of a cohen or a levi is exempt from the mitzvah of pidyon haben, so too a donkey that is owned or even partially owned by the daughter of a cohen or a levi is exempt from the mitzvah of peter chamor (Teshuvos HaRashba 1:366). This is true even if the bas cohen or bas levi is married to a yisroel (Rama, Yoreh Deah 321:19). Thus, a yisroel who owns a donkey that is pregnant for the first time could avoid performing the mitzvah of peter chamor by selling a percentage of the pregnant donkey or a percentage of her fetus to a cohen or a levi or even to a bas cohen or a bas levi. He could even avoid the mitzvah by selling a percentage to his own wife. However, in order to perform this transaction in a halachically correct fashion, he should consult with a Rav.

This is assuming that he wants to avoid the opportunity to perform a mitzvah by saving himself a few dollars. However, a Torah-observant Jew welcomes the opportunity to observe every mitzvah he can, and certainly a rare one. (How many people do you know have fulfilled the mitzvah of peter chamor? Wouldn't you want to be the first one on your block to have done so!) Thus, he will try to create a chiyuv of peter chamor, not try to avoid it. However, in the case of a different, but similar, mitzvah we try to avoid the mitzvah for very good reason, as we will explain.

BECHOR OF A KOSHER SPECIES

A firstborn male calf, kid, or lamb has kedusha, sanctity, that requires that we treat this animal as a korban. When the Beis HaMikdash stood, the owner gave this animal to a cohen of his choice who offered it as a korban and ate its meat. Today, when unfortunately we have no Beis HaMikdash, this animal has the kedusha of a korban, but we cannot offer it. Furthermore, as opposed to the firstborn donkey that the owner redeems, the firstborn calf, kid, or lamb cannot be redeemed.

This presents a serious problem. Many Jews are cattle farmers, raising beef or dairy cattle. If a Jew owns a heifer (an adult female that has not yet calved) that calves for the first time, the male offspring has the sanctity of a korban. Using it in any way is prohibited min haTorah and is therefore a serious offence. One must wait until the animal becomes so severely damaged that it will never be serviceable as a korban, and then the animal may be slaughtered and eaten. Until the animal becomes this severely damaged, anyone who benefits from this animal in any way will violate a serious Torah prohibition. Furthermore, one may not attempt to damage this animal in any way or to cause it to become blemished or damaged.

The solution to this problem is to sell a percentage of the mother or its fetus to a non-Jew before the calf is born. If a non-Jew owns any part of either the mother of the firstborn or the firstborn himself, there is no sanctity on the offspring. In this instance, we deliberately avoid creating the kedusha on the offspring in order to avoid creating a situation that likely will lead to bad results. Since the animal has kedusha that can be violated, and we cannot remove its kedusha, we want to avoid creating this situation.

DOES A PETER CHAMOR HAVE KEDUSHA?

Prior to its being redeemed, a firstborn donkey has kedusha similar to that of a korban. It is prohibited min haTorah to use it- one may not ride on it, have it carry for you, or even use its hair. The hair that falls off it must be burnt and may not be used. Someone who uses this donkey violates a prohibition approximately equivalent to wearing shatnez or eating non-kosher (Rashi, Pesachim 47a s.v. ve'hein; Rivan, Makkos 21b s.v. ve'hein; cf., however, Tosafos, Makkos 21b s.v. HaChoshesh).

Until the donkey is redeemed, one may not sell it, although some poskim permit selling it for the difference between the value of the donkey and a sheep (Rosh, Bechoros 1:11; Tur and Rama, Yoreh Deah 321:8). Many poskim contend that if the donkey is sold, the money may not be used (Rambam, Hilchos Bikkurim 12:4; Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 321:8)).

WHAT IF THE PETER CHAMOR WAS NEVER REDEEMED?

If the donkey is unredeemed, it maintains its kedusha its entire life! Thus, if it dies unredeemed, the carcass must be buried to make sure that no one ever uses it. We may not even burn it, because of concern that someone might use its ashes, which remain prohibited (Mishnah Temurah 33b-34a). Furthermore, by not redeeming it the owner violated the mitzvah that requires him to redeem it.

Have you ever ridden a donkey? Although it is uncommon to ride them in North America, in Eretz Yisroel this is a fairly common form of entertainment. Did you stop to wonder whether the donkey might be firstborn and one is prohibited to ride it?

One need not be concerned. Since most of the donkeys of the world are not firstborn, one need not assume that this donkey is. Truthfully, the likelihood of a donkey being holy is very slim for another reason- most donkeys are owned by non-Jews, and a non-Jew's firstborn donkey has no sanctity at all as we explained before.

VANISHING KEDUSHA!!

However, once the firstborn donkey is redeemed, both he and the lamb used to redeem him have no kedusha at all. In this halacha, peter chamor is an anomalous mitzvah. In all other cases when we redeem an item that one may not use, the kedusha that prohibits its use transfers onto the redeeming item. Only in the mitzvah of peter chamor does the kedusha disappear, never to return. It is almost as if the kedusha that was on the donkey vanished into thin air! It is the only case in which something has sanctity before redemption and after redemption the sanctity completely disappears and does not transfer onto the redeeming item.

What happens if the owner refuses to redeem his donkey?

As we know from the Torah, there is another option. If the owner chooses not to redeem his firstborn donkey, he could instead perform the arifah, in which he kills the firstborn donkey in a very specific prescribed way. The Torah does not want the owner to follow this approach- he is supposed to redeem the donkey, rather than kill it (Mishnah Bechoros 13a). The Rishonim dispute whether performing the arifah fulfills a mitzvah or instead is considered an aveirah (see dispute between Rambam and Raavad in Hilchos Bikkurim 12:1).

WHEN SHOULD THE OWNER PERFORM THE REDEMPTION?

In this halacha, there is a major difference in halacha between the mitzvah of pidyon haben and the mitzvah of peter chamor. The father of a newborn bechor does not perform the mitzvah of pidyon haben until his son is at least thirty days old. However, the owner of the firstborn donkey should redeem him within the first 30 days of its birth and should preferably perform the mitzvah as soon as possible (Rambam, Hilchos Bikkurim 12:6; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 321:1).

PERFORMING THE MITZVAH

There are actually two stages in performing the mitzvah of peter chamor, although the two can be performed simultaneously. For our purposes, we

will call the two steps, (a) the redeeming and (b) the giving. In the redeeming step, the owner takes a lamb or kid (or other item worth as much as the donkey) and states that he is redeeming the donkey in exchange for the lamb, kid, or other item of value. Prior to making this statement, the owner recites a bracha, Asher kidishanu bimitzvosav vitzivanu al pidyon peter chamor (Tosafos, Bechoros 11a; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 321:6). The owner has the right to decide which cohen he gives the gift to (see Rambam, Hil. Bechoros 1:15).

He then states that he is exchanging the lamb or other item for the kedusha of the donkey. As soon as he performs this exchange the sanctity is removed from the peter chamor and one may use the donkey (Mishnah Bechoros 12b).

In the giving step, the owner gives the lamb (or the item exchanged for the donkey) to the cohen as a gift. No bracha is recited on this step of the mitzvah, and there is much discussion in poskim regarding why (Taz, Yoreh Deah 321:7).

Although there are two different parts of this mitzvah, redeeming the kedusha from the firstborn, and giving the gift to the cohen, both parts of this mitzvah can be performed simultaneously, by giving the lamb (or items of value) to the cohen and telling him that this is redemption for the donkey. When redeeming the donkey this way, the owner does recite a bracha, for although the cohen could theoretically refuse the gift, he cannot prevent the removal of the kedusha from the peter chamor.

Now everyone wants to know what I did with the lamb! No, I did not leave it tied to a bedpost in my apartment, nor is it grazing in my backyard. But the lamb chops were really delicious!

Boy, am I glad that he decided to redeem it with a sheep rather than a goat!

Ohr Somayach TalmuDigest Makkot 9 - 16

by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

Undeserved Honor Makkot 12b

The moral demand for a person to refuse honor he does not deserve is pointed out in the final mishneh of the second perek of this mesechta.

One who committed an accidental murder and flees to one of the cities of refuge may not be known to the residents of that city. If they wish to honor him in any way he has the duty of informing them that he committed an act of murder.

This is based on the word "devar" that appears in the Torah's discussion of the exile of the accidental murderer (Devarim 19:4). Although in its context the term means "the matter", our Sages saw in its similarity to the word for speech (daber) a hint to the above-mentioned declaration the exiled one must make when he is being honored.

This mishneh is actually a partial quote of a mishneh in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Mesechta Shevi'it 10:3). There it teaches the need for one who is repaid a loan that has been canceled by the Shemitah year to declare to the payer that he considers the loan canceled. The case of the exiled person being honored is mentioned there as a parallel.

In the Yerushalmi we find an interesting extension of this principle by Rabbi Yossi who says that if one has mastered one tractate of the Talmud and comes to a place where they honor him as one who has mastered two, he must declare that he does not deserve that greater honor.

What the Sages Say

"I have learned much Torah from my teachers, more from my colleagues and even more from my students."

Rebbie (Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi) - Makkot 10a

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