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ON **KORACH** - Rosh Chodesh Tamuz - 5777

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date: Thu, Jun 22, 2017 at 4:42 PM
subject: Rav Frand - Korach Got A Bad Deal
Korach Got A Bad Deal

The first two words of the parsha — Vayikach Korach [and Korach took] — are problematic. There is no indication whatsoever throughout the entire parsha of what exactly Korach took. It is a strange way to begin a story with an ambiguous action by the main "actor" in the narrative. Chazal themselves struggle to interpret the meaning of this phrase. The Talmud [Sanhedrin 109b] elaborates: Reish Lakish interprets "Korach took a bad deal for himself" (Korach lakach mekach rah l'atzmo).

This begs the question. If someone purchases a car which turns out to be a lemon, that is a bad purchase (mekach rah). If someone purchases real estate that has just been flooded, that is a bad deal. In these cases, at least a person received something in exchange for his money — a car that is always at the mechanic or a piece of land that is under water, so we can call it a "bad deal." However, Korach did not receive anything here. He did not wind up with a bad purchase or a bad deal. He lost everything he had and received nothing in exchange!

The sefer Be'er Yosef cites an idea from a sefer Zayis Ra'an'an, which attempts to explain the teaching of Reish Lakish. Rashi here quotes a Medrash: "Korach, who was a clever individual, what did he see in this foolish scheme?" Korach was not a fool. Far from it — he was a very intelligent individual. Why did he agree to this deal? There were 250 people, only one of which could be Kohen Gadol. Those are terrible odds. It is the worse than playing Russian roulette. Russian roulette is a "game" involving a gun with six slots for bullets. The person puts in one bullet and spins the cylinder. He puts the pistol to his head and pulls the trigger. There are at least five chances out of six that he will walk

away alive. Even so, someone who plays the game is foolhardy, to put it mildly. Even more so, if someone changes the odds such that instead of having a 5 out of 6 chance of surviving the competition, the person has a 250 to 1 chance against surviving the competition, certainly the person must be suicidal to participate in such an endeavor. What did the wise Korach see that tempted him to take part in this crazy experiment?

The Medrash continues, "His eyes mislead him. He saw a chain of great lineage descending from him. He prophetically saw that the great Shmuel HaNavi would descend from him, about whom the Torah writes, 'Moshe and Aharon among his priests, and Shmuel among those who invoke His Name.' [Tehillim 99:6] Korach assumed 'In his (Shmuel's) merit I will escape.'" The Medrash says that Korach further foresaw through Ruach HaKodesh [Divine spirit] that he would have among his descendants 24 families (mishmaros) of descendants who would participate in the Bais Hamikdash service, all of whom would possess Ruach HaKodesh.

Korach concluded from this prophetic vision that he himself was a world class righteous individual (Tzadik yesod olam) and therefore he was willing to take his chances with the "Ketores challenge." He went ahead with the wager and lost his life.

The Medrash said that his prophetic vision was imperfect. The Zayis Ra'an'an asks — why in fact did the merit of having such great descendants not save Korach?

Before sharing his very interesting answer, I would like to preface it with the following thought. The Alter of Kelm once asked why is there such a thing as "the sanctity of the first born?" What is the source of this sanctity? The Alter explains that the source is the fact that the first-born participated in one of the greatest manifestations of Kiddush HaShem in the history of mankind. The Ribono shel Olam came down to Egypt, saved the first-born Jews, and killed out the first-born Egyptians. This was a sanctification of G-d's Name. The Almighty rewards participation in a Kiddush HaShem. He does not withhold reward from any creature. Although they were completely passive, the Jewish firstborn were the vehicles for accomplishing a Kiddush HaShem and even passive participation in a Kiddush HaShem generates reward.

The Zayis Ra'an'an explains Korach's mistake. Korach saw that Shmuel was going to come out from him. He saw that 24 mishmaros were going to come out from him. However, his mistake was that he did not realize that he merited the reward of having such great descendants because he created a Kiddush HaShem. Korach's Kiddush HaShem was that he challenged the authority of Moshe Rabbeinu and caused a public validation of Moshe Rabbeinu's authenticity through a miracle from Heaven such that the entire nation arose to proclaim, "Moshe is true and his Torah is true." Korach caused all this to happen.

Korach's mistake was that he did not know which came first — the chicken or the egg. He thought, "I must be special, because Shmuel will be my great grandson." However, the only reason Korach merited having Shmuel as a descendant is because he caused a Kiddush HaShem (albeit not the way he intended). Never again would anyone question the authenticity of Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership. Korach's intentions were malevolent and he did what he did for the worst reasons in the world but the bottom line is that a Kiddush HaShem is a Kiddush HaShem and the Almighty does not withhold reward from anyone who participates in the sanctification of His Name.

Korach thought, "I earned this reward (of great descendants) because of who I am." He was wrong. He earned the reward because of what he (unexpectedly) did. This is what Rashi means when he says, "his eyes deceived him." A person sometimes sees cause and effect, but he mistakes effect for cause and cause for effect because "his eyes deceive him."

Thus far, we have quoted the idea of the Zayis Ra'an'an. Based on this teaching, the Be'er Yosef says, we can understand the words of Reish Lakish ("Korach took a bad deal for himself.") We asked, "What kind of deal did Korach make, he was left with nothing?" The answer is, no — he made a deal. The deal was "Shmuel haNavi comes from me; 24 families of descendants of Kohanim who possess Ruach HaKodesh come from me." It was a great deal. Would we not all love to have a grandson like Shmuel haNavi?

Sure. It was a great deal. However, what price did he pay for this deal? The price is that he stews in Gehinnom [Hell] and every thirty days they reissue his

sentence. He gave up his “This World”. He gave up his “Next World”. He burns in Gehinnom. Was it worth the price? No. It was not worth the price. Losing all of your material and spiritual wealth in this life and in the afterlife is a bad deal regardless of what the person receives in exchange.

[From Rav Frand 5764

The Mishna teaches that a machlokes [argument] that is for the sake of Heaven, will yield lasting results (sofah l’hiskayem) while an argument that is not for the sake of Heaven will not yield lasting results (ayn sofah l’hiskayem) [Avos 5:20]. The classic examples of noble disputes are the arguments between Hillel and Shammai. The classic example of a non-noble argument is that of Korach and his followers.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz asks: how do we even ‘honor’ the dispute of Korach and his followers by mentioning it in the same breath with the disputes of Hillel and Shammai? Would we contrast the machlokes of Hillel and Shammai with that of a ball player with the umpire or the Hatfields and the McCoys? It is inappropriate to make any kind of comparison between sublime differences of alternate Torah exegesis and petty feuding of egocentric commoners. Why should we even give such credibility to Korach and his followers by mentioning them in one Mishna with Hillel and Shammai?

Rav Yeruchem explains that we learn from the fact that the two are mentioned together in one Mishna, that Heaven forbid should we consider Korach and his followers to be in the league of the Hatfields and the McCoys. The dispute of Korach and his followers is in fact extremely close to the machlokes of Hillel and Shammai. Their dispute had all the trappings of an argument for the sake of Heaven. It involved the most noble of causes.

Korach and his followers were arguing that they were not satisfied with their spiritual position in life. “We want to have more Kedusha [personal holiness]; we want to have a closer relationship with the Almighty; we want to have the closeness of a priest to the Divine Service.” Hillel and Shammai had legitimate and passionate disputes regarding the most noble of matters. This too was the nature of the dispute of Korach and his followers — at least that is the way it started out.

But then their dispute became tinged with the non-altruistic motives of personal honor and aggrandizement — causing it to be categorized as a machlokes which was not for the sake of Heaven. The two sets of cases in the Mishna began as parallel disputes. However, Korach and his followers “just missed the turnoff” when it became an altruistic machlokes.

Hillel and Shammai were able to keep the dispute on an altruistic level. It never became a matter of “me right” and “you wrong”. It was never a matter of “I want to come out on top because I want to win”. It was strictly an argument for the sake of Heaven. The Talmud teaches us that Beis Hillel would always quote the opinion of Beis Shammai before their own opinion in reciting the disputed positions. Their intent was to arrive at the truth, not to necessarily be the winner.

Korach and his followers also started with the noblest of intentions. But once a person becomes tinged with motivations that are not for the sake of Heaven, disputes can dissipate and deteriorate into the worst type of activity.

Rav Yeruchem stated that sometimes it is a mitzvah to be engaged in a dispute. There are times when it is necessary to stand up for what is right. However this ‘mitzvah’ is an exception to the rule. Normally a person should engage in Torah and Mitzvos even in a manner that is not for the sake of Heaven, because ultimately the person will come to do the mitzvah for the sake of Heaven [Sanhedrin 105b]. In other words, it is not ideal behavior for a person to spend a significant amount of money on the best Tephillin or the nicest Esrog, so that people will admire his nice pair of Tephillin or his beautiful Esrog. Nevertheless, we tell him, “Go ahead and buy the best pair of Tephillin and the best Esrog.” Ultimately, he will come to appreciate the true value of the mitzvah of Tephillin and Esrog. In the meantime at least he is fulfilling these mitzvos in an appropriate fashion.

There is one mitzvah in the Torah, however, regarding which a person either one does it 100% l’Shma [for the sake of Heaven] or he is better off not doing it at all. That, says Rav Yeruchem, is the Mitzvah of making a machlokes. The lesson of the Congregation of Korach is that a dispute must be 100% for the

sake of Heaven. It must be that way at the beginning in the middle and at the end. Otherwise it becomes disgusting!

There are very few of us who are capable of saying “MY machlokes is a dispute which is 100% for the sake of Heaven”. Hillel and Shammai could pull that off. Most of us cannot. It is for this reason that the Mishna in Avos links the machlokes of Hillel and Shammai with that of Korach and his followers in the same breath. They were extremely similar in nature, at least in the initial stages.]

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. . .A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. To Support Project Genesis- Torah.org Rav Frand © 2017 by Torah.org. Do you have a question or comment? Feel free to contact us on our website. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> to get your own free copy of this mailing or subscribe to the series of your choice. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> date: Thu, Jun 22, 2017 at 9:21 PM

A Lesson in Conflict Resolution

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The Korach rebellion was the single most dangerous challenge to Moses’ leadership during the forty years that he led the people through the wilderness. The precise outline of events is difficult to follow, probably because the events themselves were tumultuous and disorderly. The narrative makes it clear, however, that the rebels came from different groups, each of whom had different reasons for resentment:

Now Korach, son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth – descendants of Reuben – to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute. They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourself above the Lord’s congregation?” (Num. 16:1-3) Disentangling the various factions, Rashi suggests that Korach, prime mover of the uprising, was aggrieved that Moses had appointed Aaron as High Priest. Moses was the child of Amram, Kohath’s eldest son. Korach was the firstborn of Kohath’s second son, Yizhar, and felt that he should have been made High Priest. The fact that Moses had appointed his own brother to the role struck Korach as unacceptable favoritism.

The Reubenites, suggests Ibn Ezra, felt that as descendants of Jacob’s firstborn, they were entitled to leadership positions. Ibn Ezra adds that the final straw may have been Moses’ appointment of Joshua as his successor. Joshua came from the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph. This may have revived memories of the old conflict between the children of Leah (of whom Reuben was the firstborn) and those of Rachel, whose first child was Joseph.

The 250 other rebels, Ibn Ezra conjectures, were firstborns, still unreconciled to the fact that after the sin of the golden calf, the role of special service to God passed from the firstborn to the tribe of Levi.

Each faction had grounds for feeling that they had been passed over in the allocation of leadership positions. The irony of their challenge is unmistakable. They pose as democrats, egalitarians: “All the community are holy, all of them . . . Why then do you raise yourself above the Lord’s congregation?” What they say is that everyone should be a leader. What they mean is: I should be a leader. As for the timing of the revolt, Ramban is surely right in dating it to the period immediately following the debacle of the spies, and the ensuing decree that the people would not enter the land until the next generation. As long as the Israelites, despite their complaints, felt that they were moving toward their destination, Korach and the other malcontents had no realistic chance of rousing the people in revolt. Once they realised that they would not live to cross the

Jordan, Korach knew that rebellion was possible. The people were disillusioned, and they had nothing to lose.

Thus far, the story of Korach is intensely realistic. A leader is able to mobilise a people by articulating a vision. But the journey from the real to the ideal, from starting point to destination, is fraught with setbacks and disappointments. That is when leaders are in danger of being deposed or assassinated. Korach is the eternal symbol of a perennial type: the coldly calculating man of ambition who foments discontent against a leader, accusing him of being a self-seeking tyrant. He opposes him in the name of freedom, but what he really wants is to become a tyrant himself.

What is exceptionally unusual is how the story ends. Moses had initially proposed a simple test. The rebels, and Aaron, were to prepare incense the next day. God would then signal whose offering He chose. Before this could happen, however, Moses found himself unbearably provoked by the contemptuous attitude of Dathan and Abiram. Sensing that the situation might be getting out of control, he sought an immediate and dramatic resolution:

Moses said, "By this you shall know that it was the Lord who sent me to do all these things; that they are not of my own devising: if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all mankind, it was not the Lord who sent me. But if the Lord brings about something unheard of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned the Lord." (Num. 16:28-30)

No sooner had he finished speaking, than the ground opened up and swallowed the rebels. The miracle Moses had counted on, happened. By any narrative convention we would expect that this would end the rebellion and vindicate Moses. Heaven had answered his call in the most dramatic way. He had been proved right. End of revolt. End of story.

This is precisely what does not happen – a powerful example of what makes the Torah so challenging, its message so unexpected. Instead of quelling the revolt, we read the following:

The next day, the whole Israelites community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the Lord's people," they said.

This time, it is God himself who intervenes. He tells Moses to take twelve staffs, one for each tribe, and deposit them overnight in the Tent of Meeting. The next morning, the staff bearing the name of Aaron and the tribe of Levi had sprouted, budded, blossomed and borne almonds. Only then did the rebellion end.

This is an astonishing denouement – and what it tells us is profound. The use of force never ends a conflict. It merely adds grievance to injury. Even the miracle of the ground opening up and swallowing his opponents did not secure for Moses the vindication he sought.

What ended the conflict was something else altogether: the visible symbol that Aaron was the chosen vehicle of the God of life. The gentle miracle of the dead wood that came to life again, flowering and bearing fruit, anticipates the famous words of the book of Proverbs about the Torah:

It is a tree of life to those who embrace her;

Those who lay hold of her will be blessed. (Proverbs 3:18)

Moses and Aaron stood accused of failing in their mission. They had brought the people out of Egypt to bring them to the land of Israel. After the debacle of the spies, that hope had died. The stick that came to life again (like Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones) symbolised that hope was not dead, merely deferred. The next generation would live and reach the destination. God is a God of life. What He touches does not die.

The episode of Korach teaches us that there are two ways of resolving conflict: by force and by persuasion. The first negates your opponent. The second enlists your opponent, taking his / her challenge seriously and addressing it. Force never ends conflict – not even in the case of Moses, not even when the force is miraculous. There never was a more decisive intervention than the miracle that swallowed up Korach and his fellow rebels. Yet it did not end the conflict. It deepened it. After it had taken place, the whole Israelite community – the ones that had not been part of the rebellion – complained, "You have killed the Lord's people." What ended it was the quiet, gentle miracle that showed that Aaron was the true emissary of the God of life. Not by accident is the verse that calls Torah a "tree of life" preceded by these words:

Its ways are ways of pleasantness,

And all its paths are peace. (Prov. 3:17)

That is conflict resolution in Judaism – not by force, but by pleasantness and peace.

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com

from: **Rabbi Pinchas Winston** <winston@torah.org>

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date: Tue, Jun 20, 2017 at 3:12 PM

subject: Perceptions - Not SO Innocent

Perceptions

Not SO Innocent – Rabbi Pinchas Winston

I do not recall, at least in my lifetime, the United States of America being so divided. Though people tell me that it is President Trump's fault, the truth is that it goes back to the Obama Presidency. It was just that unlike the Left today, the Right then was more civil and restrained in its objection to President Obama's policies.

If anything, Trump just caused the division to become more pronounced, and faster. In fact, he is in response to it, and he wouldn't have even been elected had the division not already existed. The political schism put him into office. The question is, is there are a right and wrong here, or just a right and a left? People who believe in relative morality and not in God would argue against the latter. God-believers would say just the opposite, that the side that advocates the highest level of Divine morality would have God's vote.

Another question would be, assuming that there is a wrong, how responsible are all the members of the respective parties guilty because of it? Surely each party has its extremists AND mildly involved contingents. Will God take only the extremists to task, and overlook the "sins" of the more innocent?

One might have thought so, until this week's parsha. Embedded in the argument between Korach and his followers and Moshe Rabbeinu is one of the scariest and most important lessons of life, as Rashi quotes: So they withdrew from around the dwelling of Korach, Dasan, and Aviram. Dasan and Aviram went out standing upright at the entrance of their tents together with their wives, their children, and their infants. (Bamidbar 16:27)

Come and see the severity of dispute. The earthly courts do not punish until [an accused] has two [pubic] hairs, and the Heavenly court does not punish until one reaches the age of 20. Here even nursing babies were punished. (Rashi)

The fact that the wives of Korach and his followers were included in their punishments is not surprising. As the Talmud points out, it is the role of the wife to at least try and encourage her husband to do the right thing, or to dissuade him from doing the wrong thing. If she doesn't try, then she is guilty by association.

But the children, and especially the babies? What culpability could they possible share with their parents, who have become part of a machlokes—a disagreement? Why should their innocence be ignored and they be treated as guilty just by association with the perpetrators? Rashi, quoting the Midrash, points out that machlokes is powerfully incriminating, but he doesn't say why. Even Korach's sons, who actually do teshuvah before God lowers the boom, are included in the punishment, albeit to a lesser extent. Usually sincere teshuvah is enough to spare a person punishment if done on time, but that was not the case here. It shows once again the negative power of machlokes.

Of course, not all machlokes is bad. The rabbis in Pirkei Avos make this distinction quite clearly:

Any dispute which is for the sake of Heaven will ultimately endure, and one which is not for the sake of Heaven will not ultimately endure. What is a dispute for the sake of Heaven? This is a debate between Hillel and Shammai. What is a dispute not for the sake of Heaven? This is the dispute of Korach and his assembly. (Pirkei Avos 5:20)

This is clear from the Talmud which is FILLED with disagreements. All of them however are for the sake of Heaven, that is, in order to establish the law as God commanded it. No one is arguing for their own sake or for personal benefit.

The only problem with this explanation is that the sons of Korach, and certainly the younger children and babies, did not argue for personal benefit.

Nevertheless, they went down with their families which apparently, had argued for personal gain. The question remains.

Perhaps the answer has to do with a different halachah. The law is that once every last Amaleki is killed, all of their property must be destroyed as well. There is no such thing as booty from an existential war against Amalek, and the question is, why not?

The answer given is that no reminder of Amalek's existence can exist after he is completely gone. If victory over Amalek is only partial, then the survivors themselves are the reminder of Amalek. If there are no survivors, then we don't want someone to be able to say, "That belt belonged to an Amaleki," or "That was an Amaleki cow."

Perhaps the same answer can be used here. Machlokes NOT FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN, which is easy to be a part of if you don't know what Heaven wants, is EVIL. It's not just bad from God's point of view, but REALLY bad. It reverses the good of Creation to such an extent that it must, like Amalek himself, be completely obliterated.

This means that every last trace of such machlokes must be removed from future history. You can't change the Past, but you can protect the future. This means removing all reminders of evil, even the "innocent" ones, including the children who were not yet old enough to choose sides.

Like it or hate it, it is an important message to keep in mind when choosing sides in any argument. Your intentions may be pure, but you must come to the same conclusion, BASED UPON TORAH, about the main proponents of your side. Your innocence will NOT be enough to protect you if theirs is lacking.

from: news@israelnationalnews.com via thejmg.com

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subject: A7News:

Dr. Joseph Frager?

Parshat Shlach: The spies have not left us Of all the failures of Man, the error of the Meraglim (Spies) ranks high on the list.

Unfortunately, the Spies have not left us and live on in many forms. Parshat Shlach offers many insights and lessons for modern Israel. The bottom line is very simple; strive to be like Caleb Ben Yephuneh and Yehoshua Bin Nun and our future is secure.

If our Leaders were like Caleb and Yehoshua then there would be no problems and it would not matter who was President of the United States or Secretary of State. Had all the Meraglim been aligned with Yehoshua and Caleb the Jews would have entered into Eretz Yisrael immediately and not wandered in the Desert for 39 years (the incident with the Spies took place on the 9th of Av in the second year since leaving Egypt-Taanit 29a). Unfortunately, the Spies caused the Nation to err. The Ramban delves deeply into the actual mistakes the Spies made. Essentially, they had a job to do and did not do it. Parshat Shlach opens, "Hashem spoke to Moshe saying, "Send forth for yourself men and let them investigate the Land of Canaan that I give to the Children of Israel; one man each from his father's tribe shall you send every one a leader among them." The Ramban intimates that Moshe himself might have seen the Land of Canaan as Prince of Egypt since "Hebron is only a seven day journey from Egypt"(these are the Ramban's words in quotation marks). Moshe knew that the Land was a land "flowing with Milk and Honey". The only reason he sent distinguished men from each tribe was, "to gladden the people about the Land for it is "a splendor of all Lands, and then they would ascend to it with great enthusiasm." Moshe was trying to delegate responsibility. He was interested at this point in Nation Building. Otherwise he could have led Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael himself as he had taken them out of Egypt. The Ramban makes it clear that Moshe did not think the Spies would turn on him. He thought they would see exactly what he had seen when he visited the Land of Canaan and give a similar assessment. The Ramban further elucidates that the mission of the Spies was a military one as well. Any Nation that was about to invade another had to gather intelligence in order to figure out the best way to achieve a quick and efficient victory. Should they invade via the South? Should they invade via the East? The answers the Spies gave were not constructive. They did not say for example that it would be best to invade via Jericho as Yehoshua did 39 years later. The Spies said, "Ephes" (everything pivots on this word-it is commonly translated as "however" but it means so much more-it has a very negative connotation), "the people that dwell in the Land are powerful, the cities are fortified and very large and we also saw the offspring of the Giant." They

basically put the Kabash on an invasion. Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshat Shlach (Tape#685-June 3, 2010) brings down the Baal HaAkeida who said that the sin of the Spies was that they added editorial comment to their assessment. Their use of the word "Ephes" deviated from the facts.

They said in essence that all of this is for naught for the people of Canaan are too strong. I would go further and like the Ramban, the sin of the Spies was that not only did they editorialize but failed at making constructive statements. They did not offer a Plan A, a plan B or a Plan C. They failed to state what was obvious to Caleb and Yehoshua ,that invasion could be undertaken despite the fortifications. Rabbi Frand brings down the Shalo"h who rejects the notion that the sin of the Spies was their "editorial opinion". The Shalo"h says that Moshe Rabeinu indeed wanted not only a military opinion but wanted their opinion based upon Torah philosophy. The appropriate report by the Spies would have sounded more like, "Yes, they are strong and yes they are mighty and maybe even by ways of nature we would not be successful against their armies, but we have the Master of the World on our side". Indeed, Caleb used this approach when contending with the Spies, "Caleb silenced the people toward Moshe and said, "We shall surely ascend and conquer it, for we can subdue it". (13:30) Moshe had hoped all of those he sent would be unanimous in using Caleb's approach. After all, these were distinguished Men who had a proven track record of being on the right side of History. Modern Day Israel is testimony of how not to be like the Meraglim. Modern Israel would not have not come into existence if one used the approach of the Spies. Every Israeli Leader knows well that Israel is dependent on miracles to survive. Ben Gurion said it best: "In Israel in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles". The movement to secure, to grow, and expand Judea and Samaria follows the precepts set out by both Caleb and Yehoshua. Unfortunately, modern-day Israel has its share of Spies. They did not learn the lesson of the story of the Meraglim. Thank G-d there are more like Caleb and Yehoshua today than Shammua Ben Zaccur or Shaphat Ben Hori and the rest of the Spies. The Peace Now Movement, J Street, the New Israel Fund, Jewish Voice for Peace, and the architects of the Oslo Accords are still around fomenting trouble. They are outnumbered today but they are causing many problems. They would do well to review Parshat Shlach and finally understand the Sin of the Spies. Our People would have an easier time meeting the challenges ahead if they did. Shabbat Shalom. © Arutz Sheva, ????? ???? 7

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from: Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com subject: Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog KORACH

It is always astounding to see and realize how ego, turf and ambition can blind even great people who are otherwise wise and even pious personalities. Human society suffers greatly from this phenomenon and religious society is not exempt from its erroneous consequences. In fact, religious society is more susceptible to these ills simply because character failings can be wrapped in piety with the excuse that one is doing God's will. A holy cause that is contaminated by human weaknesses, political ambition, monetary gain and smug self-righteousness is no longer a holy cause. The problem with so-called holy causes is that those who support them feel justified to use any means whatsoever to attempt to gain their ends. Forgery, violence and all sorts of zealotry are all permissible in order to advance the cause being espoused. And the irony and tragedy of the situation is that those who resort to these means cannot in any way see the desecration of the very holiness that they are attempting to represent, that their behavior and tactics always engender. While allegedly speaking in the name of God, their actions and behavior blacken his holy name, so to speak, in the eyes and minds of the general population. Korach is convinced that God is on his side and therefore his behavior towards Moshe, reprehensible as it may be, is justified and even necessary. In his hubris of imagined holiness he mistakes in his own personal ambition for somehow being the will of God. This leads to his eventual destruction and demise. One of the inner plagues of religious Jewish society today, as in the past, is that religious zealotry knows no limits. It can defame Moshe with impunity, undermine legitimate religious and halachic authority, and justify any and all behavior no matter how tawdry and even illegitimate it may be. Unfortunately there are

many examples of this attitude exhibited daily in our broader community. There are issues and policies that are clearly outside the realm of Jewish law that are elevated immediately into being regarded as pillars of faith and issues of halacha. And once so elevated, then there is no room for rational reasoning or the wisdom of compromise and harmony. In a Jewish world that faces so many vital issues of overwhelming importance, most of the controversies that spark so much divisiveness in today's religious Jewish society are not those upon which the eternity of Torah and Israel depend. This was also one of the failings of Korach, who took a personal and certainly secondary issue of station and leadership and elevated it into a dispute that involved all of the Jewish people wrongly and unnecessarily. These types of troublemakers amongst us should be shunned and ignored. Even arguing with them feeds their egos and in their eyes, advances their cause. Perhaps that is the reason that Korach and his crew were swallowed up by the earth so that no martyrdom or memorial would remain for others to emulate or imitate. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

<http://www.meaningfulmoadim.com/rosh-chodesh-and-korach.html>

Rabbi Eliyahu Zukierman

ROSH CHODESH TAMMUZ

KORACH AND ROSH CHODESH

Very often, Rosh Chodesh Tammuz falls out in the week that Parshas Korach is read. Perhaps there is a connection between Rosh Chodesh and Korach.

Sefer Shraga Hameir (Rav Shraga Feivel Schneelbalg, zt"l) asks, Why did Moshe Rabbeinu specifically pray that Korach and the men of his rebellion be punished by being swallowed alive by the earth? "This is how you will know that Ad-nyoy has sent me to perform all of these deeds, for, I did not devise them myself. If as all men die will these men meet their deaths, and the reckoning (fate) of all men will be reckoned upon them, then Ad-nyoy has not sent me. If Ad-nyoy will create a [new] creation and the ground will open its mouth and swallow them along with all of their belongings, and they will go down alive to the grave, then you will know that these men have angered Ad-nyoy." What was the Middah Keneged Middah, measure for measure here?

The Gemara relates in Bava Basra (71a) the following incident: An Arab merchant... He said: 'Come, I will show you the men of Korach that were swallowed up. I saw two cracks that emitted smoke. I took a piece of clipped wool, dipped it in water, attached it to the point of a spear and put it in there. And when I took it out it was charred. [Thereupon] he said to me: 'Listen attentively [to] what you [are about to] hear.' And I heard them say: 'Moshe is true, and his Torah is true, and we are liars.' He said to me: 'Every thirty days Gehenim causes them to turn back here as [one turns] flesh in a pot, and they say: "Moses and his law are truth, and we are liars."'

Rashi comments on the words, "Every thirty days", that this means "on Rosh Chodesh". Why do they return every Rosh Chodesh and make that declaration? Perhaps, we can explain it thus. Korach believed in Aseres Hadibros (the Ten Commandments) since they were pronounced by H-shem Himself. The verses state that Korach claimed, "You have [taken] too much for yourselves [and] since the entire congregation are all holy, and Ad-nyoy is in their midst, why do you raise yourselves above the assembly of Ad-nyoy?" On the words, "Are all holy", Rashi explains: They all heard the Word, at Sinai, from the mouth of the Almighty. Indicating that Korach believed in Torah Shebiksav, the Written Law, but rejected Moshe's teachings and Torah Sheba'al Peh, the Oral Tradition. This also seems to be the opinion of Onkelos, who translates, "And Korach took" as "And Korach disagreed {with Moshe}" connoting split or divided the Torah into two; the Written Law and the Oral Tradition, thereby separating the two. We know and believe that the Written and Oral Torah are one and the same; without the Oral Tradition, we cannot understand the Written Torah. With this explanation, we can understand the Gemara in Shabbos (85a) that teaches that by Mattan Torah, H-shem uprooted the mountain and declared, "If you accept the Torah, good; and if not, here you will be buried!" Tosafos asks on that Gemara "but hadn't they already accepted the Torah?" The Tanchuma asks the same question and answers that "accepting the Torah" includes Torah Sheba'al Peh. If the Bnei Yisroel did not accept the Oral Tradition with the Written Law, they would have been punished by being buried under the mountain. Since Korach rejected the Oral Tradition, he was liable to death by being buried alive.

Perhaps, this is why Moshe Rabbeinu wanted Korach to be punished by being buried alive. Since his sin was because he didn't believe in Torah Sheba'al Peh, which is essential to Torah Shebiksav.

This can also explain the strange occurrence of the voices declaring, "Moshe and the Torah," meaning, the entire Torah; Written, and Oral, 'is the truth,'

Therefore they had to concede to that fact, that the Oral Tradition is just like the Written Law. This is why Rashi explained "every thirty days" in the story of the Arab merchant to refer to "Every Rosh Chodesh." Being that Rosh Chodesh is determined by Beis Din, and their decision has the power to affect nature. (In the case of a girl who loses her virginity; until three years of age, it will grow back. Once she turns three years old and one day, she does not return to the status of being a virgin. However, if Beis Din proclaimed Rosh Chodesh a day later, she retains her status of a virgin an extra day.) Since the Beis Din's proclamation actually determines the day and can convert the day they proclaim as the First day of the month, which in effect determines the year.

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Rav Kook Torah

Korach: Holiness in the Midst of the Community

The Need For a Minyan

Judaism has an interesting concept called a minyan, a prayer quorum. Special prayers sanctifying God's name (such as the kedushah and kaddish prayers) may only be said when ten men are present. An individual may pray in solitude, but without a minyan, certain parts of the liturgy must be omitted.

The Talmud derives the requirement for a prayer quorum from God's declaration, "I will be sanctified in the midst of the Israelites" (Lev. 22:32).

What exactly does the word 'midst' mean?

We find the word 'midst' used again when God warned the people living nearby the dissenters in Korach's rebellion: "Separate yourselves from the midst of this eidah (community)" (Num. 16:20). From here, the Sages learned that God is sanctified within an eidah.

And what is the definition of eidah? The Torah refers to the ten spies who brought a negative report of the Land of Israel as an eidah ra'ah, an evil community (Num. 14:26). So we see that God is sanctified in a community of at least ten members.

The requirement for a prayer quorum, and the way it is derived, raises two issues that need to be addressed:

Prayer appears to be a private matter between the soul and its Maker. Why should we need a minyan of ten participants in order to pray the complete service?

Why is the requirement for a minyan derived precisely from two classic examples of rebellion and infamy — the spies and Korach?

Perfecting the Community

Holiness is based on our natural aspirations for spiritual growth and perfection. However, the desire to perfect ourselves — even spiritually — is not true holiness. Our goal should not be the fulfillment of our own personal needs, but rather to honor and sanctify our Maker. Genuine holiness is an altruistic striving for good for its own sake, not out of self-interest.

The core of an elevated service of God is when we fulfill His will by helping and uplifting society. Therefore, the kedushah (sanctification) prayer may not be said in private. Without a community to benefit and elevate, the individual cannot truly attain higher levels of holiness.

This special connection between the individual and society is signified by the number ten. Ten is the first number that is also a group, a collection of units forming a new unit. Therefore, the minimum number of members for a quorum is ten.

Learning from Villains

Why do we learn this lesson from the wicked? It is precisely the punishment of the wicked that sheds light on the reward of the righteous. If the only result of

evil was that the wicked corrupt themselves, it would be unnecessary for the law to be so severe with one who is only hurting himself. However, it is part of human nature that we influence others and are influenced by our surroundings. Unfortunately, evil people have a negative influence on the entire community, and it is for this reason that they are punished so severely.

Understanding why the wicked are punished clarifies why the righteous are rewarded. Just as the former are punished principally due to their negative influence on the community, so too, the reward of the righteous is due primarily to their positive influence. Now it becomes clear that true holiness is in the context of the organic whole. And the kedushah prayer sanctifying God's Name may only be recited in a minyan, with a representative community of ten members.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 258-260. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 104.) Copyright © 2006 by Chanan Morrison

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by Rabbi Ozer Alport
Parsha Potpuurri

Korach (Numbers 16-18) Never Again! After Korach's rebellion was quashed and the doubts that he raised about the legitimacy of the leadership of Moshe and Aharon were erased, the Torah teaches that there will never again be an episode like Korach and his assembly (Numbers 17:5). How is this to be understood? Although in a literal sense many commentators understand this verse as a biblical prohibition against engaging in disputes, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik offers a homiletic interpretation with a lesson that we would do well to internalize. In the rebellion led by Korach and his followers, their position was 100% wrong, without any legitimacy whatsoever. The position of Moshe and Aharon, against whom they were fighting, was revealed by God to be 100% correct. Rav Chaim suggested that this verse may be understood as a Divine guarantee that there will never again be a dispute in which one side is completely correct and the other is absolutely in error. When we disagree with our families, friends, and coworkers, each side all too often falls into the trap of assuming that his position is completely justified and engages in a campaign of "proving" to the other side the absolute absurdity of their opinion. If we remember the promise of the Torah that there will never again be such a one-sided disagreement as that of Moshe and Korach, it will be much easier for us to see and understand the logic of our spouses, children, coworkers, and neighbors, which will naturally result in much happier and more peaceful resolutions for all parties involved.

VULNERABLE LEADERSHIP

Rashi writes (Numbers 16:1) that Korach argued that his father was one of four siblings. The oldest of them was Amram, so his children Moshe and Aharon took the positions of king and Kohen Gadol, respectively. However, Korach felt that as the son of Yitzhar, the second oldest of the siblings, he deserved to be appointed leader of the tribe, yet Moshe gave the position to the son of the youngest of the brothers, which inspired Korach's rebellion. If this was the basis for his rebellion against Moshe, why didn't he attack Moshe immediately when these appointments were made, and what inspired his wrath specifically at this time? Nachmanides explains that at the time of the appointments of the tribal leaders, Moshe was immensely popular. Even when the Jews committed the unparalleled sin of the golden calf, only a relatively small number died, as Moshe spent 40 days and nights praying for forgiveness on their behalf. At that time, all of the Jews loved Moshe, and anybody who attempted to challenge his leadership would be killed by his supporters, so Korach had no choice but to wait patiently. Now, however, many Jews had been killed for complaining, first through a Heavenly fire (Numbers 11:3) and then through the meat that they demanded (Numbers 11:33). Additionally, after the sin of the spies, Moshe's prayers on their behalf did not succeed in annulling the decree against them. Now that many people were angry at Moshe and questioned his effectiveness, Korach thought that they would be more willing to listen to his arguments and join his rebellion.

SYMBOLISM OF THE SWALLOWING GROUND Parshas Korach revolves around Korach's challenge to the authority and leadership of Moshe and Aharon.

Korach ultimately leads a full-fledged rebellion against them, one which ends in disastrous and tragic results as he and his followers and all of their possessions were swallowed up by the ground (Numbers 16:32-33). Judaism teaches that people are punished for their sins measure-for-measure. In what way was Korach's punishment of being swallowed alive by the earth for rebelling against Moshe and Aharon specifically appropriate for his crime? Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that Korach erred in seeking to rise to a lofty position for which he was unfit. Therefore, he was punished by being swallowed up by the ground and sent down to the lowest level of Gehinnom (Numbers 16:33). Rabbi Wolf Strickover answers that Korach challenged Moshe and Aharon (Numbers 16:3), "Why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of God," accusing them of arrogance. In reality, the Torah testifies (Numbers 12:3) that Moshe was the most humble man on Earth and viewed himself as no greater than the ground itself. In order to punish him, Korach had to be lowered below Moshe. Since Moshe considered himself equal to the ground, the only choice was for the earth to swallow him up. Alternatively, the Mishnah (Avos 3:2) teaches that without a leader to make and enforce laws, people would consume and devour one another. Since Korach argued that the entire nation was holy and didn't need a leader, he was punished by being swallowed up by the ground to hint to the natural consequence of his proposal.

THE WISE WOMAN The Talmud (Sanhedrin 109b) teaches that although On Ben Peles was originally one of the leaders of Korach's rebellion, his sagacious wife convinced him to withdraw from the dispute. She pointed out that he had nothing to gain from the fight, as even if Korach won, he would be just as subservient to Korach as he currently was to Moshe and Aharon. In what way was her argument considered wise and eye-opening, as it seems to be simply telling him things that were self-evident and that he knew already? Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that when a person is involved in the heat of an intense conflict, his emotions are so strong that they overpower his rational thinking process. Under such circumstances, insights which would normally be considered straightforward and self-evident must often be provided by an objective and uninvolved party, in this case On's wife.

MEASURING THE MANNA The Talmud (Yoma 75a) teaches that the Manna fell at the doorsteps of the righteous, far away from the tents of the wicked, and somewhere in-between for the average. Why wasn't Moshe able to answer Korach's argument that he was as righteous as Moshe and Aharon by publicly pointing out that Korach's Manna fell far from his tent, revealing his true wicked core? The Shevet Mussar (37:22) cites a Midrash which teaches that fighting and discord is such a severe sin that on the day of Korach's rebellion the Manna didn't fall, whereas on the day of the sin of the golden calf, which was presumably a greater sin, the Manna did fall because there was peace and unity among the people. This explains why Moshe was unable to demonstrate Korach's true spiritual status based on the location of his Manna. As far as what the people ate on that day, Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman (Exodus 16:4) suggests that they had to purchase food from nomadic merchants in the area.

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This is the way we salt our meat

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In parshas Korach, the kodoshim part given to the kohanim is referred to as a "covenant of salt," thus providing an opportunity to explain:

Question "When I shopped in Israel, I noticed that all the chickens were split open. I like to roast my chicken whole and stuff the inside, but you can't do this once the chicken is split open. When I asked the butcher for an explanation, he told me that all the mehadrin hechsherim split the chicken open before koshering. What does a split chicken have anything to do with kashrus?"

Introduction to Meat Preparation In several places, the Torah proscribes eating blood. Blood is the transporter of nutrients to the entire body, and therefore blood must flow through all parts on an animal. If so, how can we possibly extract the prohibited blood from meat and still have edible meat?

The Gemara and the halachic authorities provide the guidelines how to properly remove the forbidden blood from the allowed meat. The process begins during the butchering, when one is required to remove certain veins to guarantee that the blood is properly removed (Chullin 93a; Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 65:1). After these veins are removed, there are two methods of extracting the blood from the meat. One is by soaking and salting the meat, which is what we will discuss in this article. In practical terms, the first approach, usually referred to as kashering meat, involves soaking the meat for thirty minutes, shaking off the excess water, salting the meat thoroughly on all sides, and then placing it for an hour in a way that the blood can drain freely. A bird should be placed with its open cavity downward so that the liquid drains off as it is koshering, and similarly, a piece of meat with a cavity, such as an unboned brisket, should be placed with its cavity draining downward. One may stack meat that one is koshering as high as one wants, as long as the liquid can drain off the meat properly. After the salting is complete, the meat is rinsed thoroughly in order to wash away all the blood and salt. The poskim instruct that one should rinse the meat three times (Rama, Yoreh Deah 69:7). Until fairly recently, every Jewish daughter and housewife soaked and salted meat as part of regular meal preparation. Today, the koshering of meat is usually performed either in the meat processing plant or by the butcher. Still every housewife should know how to kasher meat before it becomes a forgotten skill, reserved only for the specialist!

Case in point: A talmid of mine is doing kiruv in a community that does not have a lot of kashrus amenities, but happens to be near a kosher abattoir. Because of necessity, he and his wife are now proficient in the practical aspects of koshering their own meat, a skill that they were fortunate to learn.

Another case in point: I know a very fine Jew who, following guidance of gedolei Yisrael, accepted a kabbalah before he married that he would eat meat only that was koshered at home. Someone wanted to invite him for a sheva berachos and serve him what she prepared for all her guests, but was unable to do so because she never learned how to kasher meat. (Instead, she prepared him fish.)

For these reasons, when I taught in Beis Yaakov, I made sure that the girls knew how to kasher meat, although, frankly, I was quite appalled to find out how little they knew about the process. In those days, most of their mothers still knew how to kasher meat, but today, even the mothers and teachers of Beis Yaakov students no longer necessarily know how.

On the other hand, I am reminded of the time some Iranian talmidim of Ner Yisrael spent Pesach at a university in Oklahoma to be mekareiv Jewish students. Although the students, natives of Shiraz, Tehran and other Iranian cities, were no longer observant, they all assisted in the koshering of the chickens for the Seder. Every one of them remembered exactly how to kasher meat!

Why do we Soak our Meat? Before addressing the question that I shared in the beginning of our article, we need to understand more thoroughly the process of koshering meat. The Gemara (Chullin 113a) teaches:

"Shmuel said: The meat does not rid itself of its blood unless it is well salted and well rinsed." The Gemara subsequently explains that the meat must be rinsed both before the salting and afterwards. We well understand why we must rinse away the salt after koshering the meat, since it is now full of forbidden blood. But why does one need to rinse the meat before koshering the meat? And why emphasize that it must be "well rinsed"?

There are actually many different explanations for this law. Here are some approaches mentioned by the Rishonim, as explained by the master of practical kashrus, the Pri Megadim (in his introduction to the laws of salting meat, Second Ikar, s.v. VaAtah):

(1) Soften the Meat Soaking the meat softens it so that the salt can now remove the blood. If the meat is not saturated thoroughly with water, the salt will not successfully extract the blood from the hard meat, and the meat remains prohibited (Ran). According to this reason, the Gemara's instruction that the meat is "well rinsed" requires not simply rinsing the surface of the meat, but submerging the meat. The later authorities interpret that one should soak the entire meat for a half hour to guarantee that it is soft enough for the salt to extract the blood (see Darhei Moshe 69:1, as explained by Gr"a, 69:4).

The authorities dispute whether one is required to submerge the entire piece of meat. Some contend that if part of the meat remained above the water, it will become softened by the water absorption of the lower part of the meat (Pischei Teshuvah 69:5). Others maintain that the upper part will not soften this way and one must submerge the piece of meat entirely (Yad Yehudah, Peirush HaAruch end of 69:10; Darkei Teshuvah 69:20).

(2) Remove the Surface Blood A second approach why the meat must be rinsed well before salting contends that one must rinse blood off the surface of the meat because otherwise this blood will impede the ability of the salt to remove the blood that is inside the meat (Mordechai). This approach, as well as all the others that the Pri Megadim quotes, does not require submerging the meat, but merely rinsing the surface well. However, according to this approach, if the meat was submerged for half an hour and then afterwards someone sliced into the meat, one must rerinse the area that was now cut. Failure to rerinse the newly cut area will result in the salt not removing the blood properly (Pri Megadim) Case in point: Once, when I was inspecting a butcher shop, I observed that after the meat was completely soaked, the mashgiach noticed that one piece had not been properly butchered – the butcher had failed to remove a vein that one is required to remove. The mashgiach took out his knife and sliced away the offending vein. Was the butcher now required to soak the meat for an additional half hour or was it sufficient to rinse the meat before kashering it?

The answer is that one must rinse the newly sliced area well to remove any blood, but one is not required to soak the meat for an additional half an hour since the meat is now nice and soft and its blood will drain out freely.

(3) The Blood will Absorb into the Meat A third opinion contends that one must rinse the meat before salting it because salting meat when there is blood on its surface will cause the blood to absorb into the meat. Like the second approach, this opinion also believes that the reason meat is rinsed before salting is to remove the blood on the surface. However, this opinion holds that not rinsing blood off the surface entails a more serious concern. If blood remains on the surface of the meat when it is salted, this blood will absorb into the meat and prohibit it. Therefore, if someone salted the meat without rinsing it off, the meat is now prohibited, and re-soaking and resalting it will not make it kosher.

According to the other reasons we have mentioned, one who failed to soak or rinse the meat before salting it may rinse off the salt, soak (or rinse) the meat properly and then salt it.

The Shulchan Aruch (69:2) rules that if one salts meat without rinsing it first, he may rinse off the salt and resalt the meat. The Rama rules that one should not use the meat unless it is a case of major financial loss.

(4) Moisten the Surface Another Rishon, the Rosh, contends that the reason why one must rinse the meat before salting it is because the salt does not remove the blood properly unless the meat surface is moist (Rosh). Although this approach may appear similar to the Ran's approach that I mentioned first, the Ran contends that the entire piece of meat must be soaked in order to soften it so that its blood will be readily extracted, whereas the Rosh requires only that the surface be moist at the time of the salting. Therefore, the Rosh does not require that the meat be soaked at all, certainly not for half an hour. On the other hand, if the meat soaked for a half-hour and then was dried or sliced, the Rosh would require one to moisten the dry surface so that the salt will work. In this last case, the Ran would not require re-rinsing the surface since the meat already soaked for half an hour.

In practical halacha, we lechatchilah prepare meat according to all opinions, and for this reason we soak all meat for half an hour before salting. We then drain off some of the water before salting so that the meat is moist but not dripping (Rama 69:1). If the meat is too wet, the salt will not do its job.

How thick must I salt the meat? The Gemara states that one must salt the meat well, just as it mentions that one must wash it well. What does this mean that I must salt it well?

Some authorities require that the meat be covered with salt, whereas others rule that it is satisfactory to salt it sufficiently that one would not be able to eat the meat without rinsing it off.

The Rishonim debate whether salting meat well means that it must be salted on all sides, or whether it is sufficient to salt the meat on one side. There are actually three different opinions on the matter:

(1) The meat needs to be salted on only one side, and this satisfactorily removes the blood (Tur's interpretation of Rashba). (2) One should preferably salt the meat on both sides, but if one failed to do so, the meat is kosher (Beis Yosef's interpretation of Rashba). (3) If the meat is not salted on opposite sides, one will not remove all the blood and the meat is prohibited for consumption (Rama). The Shulchan Aruch concludes that one should preferably salt the meat on both sides, but if one failed to do so, the meat is kosher. However, the Rama rules that under normal circumstances one should consider the meat non-kosher. Under extenuating circumstances, or in case of great loss, the meat is kosher (Taz).

Stacking the Meat According to all opinions, if one stacks two pieces of meat, one atop another, and salts only one of the pieces, the blood was not removed from unsalted piece. Even if one contends that salting meat on one side of a piece will draw out all the blood in that piece, it does not draw out the blood from a different piece that the salted piece is lying on.

Similarly, if one is koshering two organs, such as the heart and the lung, salting one piece does not draw the blood out of the other piece. This is true even if the two organs are still connected together (see Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos Zahav end of 15).

Salting a bird only on the outside is similar to salting a piece of meat on only one side, because there is an open cavity in the middle. For this reason, one is required to salt a bird on the inside of the open cavity also and cannot simply salt the outside of the bird.

Splitting a Bird At this point, we have enough information to address our opening question:

"When I shopped in Israel, I noticed that all the chickens were split open. I like to roast my chicken whole and stuff the inside, but you can't do this once the chicken is split open. When I asked the butcher for an explanation, he told me that all the mehadrin hechsherim split the chicken open before koshering. What does a split chicken have anything to do with kashrus?"

How does one kasher a chicken or any other bird? If one salts the outside of the chicken, one has salted the bird on only one side, since the inside cavity was not salted. The Shulchan Aruch answers that one places salt on the inside cavity of the chicken.

The Pri Megadim records a dispute among earlier authorities whether one is required to cut through the breast bone of a bird before koshering it. The Shulchan Aruch rules that one is not required to cut through the breast bone of a bird before koshering it, but can rely on placing salt inside the cavity. The Beis Hillel adds that cutting through the breast bone of the bird to make the cavity most accessible is not even considered a chumrah that one should try to observe. However, the Beis Lechem Yehudah rules that one is required to cut through the breast bone before koshering. His reasoning is that one who does not cut through the bone must rely on pushing salt into the cavity and that people tend to not push the salt sufficiently deep into the cavity. The Pri Megadim agrees with the Beis Lechem Yehudah, and mentions that he required his family members to cut through the breast bone to open the cavity before salting poultry, because it is impossible to salt properly all the places in the internal cavity without splitting the chicken open. (Although the Pri Megadim uses the term "split in half,"

I presume that he means to open the chicken's cavity. There seems no reason to require one to cut the entire chicken into two pieces.) Furthermore, several of the internal organs – including the lungs, kidneys, and spleen -- are often not salted properly when salting without splitting open the cavity. It is for this reason that mehadrin shechitos in Eretz Yisrael all cut through the bone before salting the chickens, although one can note from the Pri Megadim's own comments that this was not standard practice.

Most hechsherim in the United States follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch and Beis Hillel and do not insist on splitting the chicken open before salting it. One hechsher I know requires that the kidneys be removed and discarded before sale because of the concern raised by the Pri Megadim that they cannot be salted properly without opening the chicken. (In our large scale manufacturing today, the lungs, heart and spleen are always removed anyway, and usually not sold for food.)

By the way, we can also understand some of the reasons why someone would take on a personal chumrah to eat meat or chicken only if it was koshered at

home. Among the reasons that he would be makpid is better control of the koshering, guaranteeing that the chickens are split before they are salted, and making certain that the chickens are placed with their cavities down. Conclusion At this point, I would like to return to our opening explanation, when I mentioned the mitzvah of salting korbanos that are burnt on the mizbeiach. As I alluded to above, although both items are salted in a similar manner, the purpose is very different. The salting of our meat is to remove the blood, this blood and salt is then washed away, whereas the salted offerings are burnt completely with their salt. Several commentaries note that salt represents that which exists forever, and can therefore represent the mitzvos of the Torah, which are never changed. In addition, the salt used for the korbanos must be purchased from public funds, from the machatzis hashekel collection, demonstrating that this responsibility to observe the mitzvos forever is communal and collective (Rav Hirsch).

<http://www.yna.edu/emails/newsletter/5773/Korach/newsletter.pdf>

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Korach

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon.

MOSHE RABENU - A SYMBOL OF UNITY

Parshat Korach

The opening portion of Parsha describes the dispute between Korach and Moshe Rabenu. Rashi wonders how it was possible for such a clever man to be drawn into such nonsense. Rashi explains that "his eyes mislead him". He saw with this ruach hakodesh that Shmuel HaNavi was destined to descend from him, the prophet who in a certain sense was the equivalent of Moshe and Aharon. If so, he was certain that he would be the one to survive. Did he not see with the same ruach hakodesh that great people such as Matisyahu and other great leaders were destined to descend from Aharon?

It appears Korach, although clever, was not clever enough - he only saw what he wanted to see and did not see what he did not want to see. We are not on the level to judge Korach, after all he had ruach hakodesh, we can only interpret events based on our limited understanding of what is written in the Torah. It appears that his desire for kavod is what led to his downfall. His 250 cohorts were also great men, Rashi explains that they were heads of the Sanhedrin. The Torah calls them anshei shem which means men of importance. Why did they follow Korach? Chazal say that he gave them good food as an enticement. There was certainly no lack of food in those days, they lived on the manna. What could he possibly have given them - manna which he made taste like the kugel of Shabbos?

This slight amount of olam hazeh removed them from this world and the next world. Did they not realize that Moshe is truth and his Torah is truth? Did they not witness less than two years ago in Egypt that Moshe was Hashem's messenger to bring about all the miracles of Egypt and in the desert - the ten plagues, the splitting of the sea, the war with Amalek where Moshe needed only lift his arms to secure a Jewish victory while lowering his arms spelled defeat? What about the two sets of luchos which Moshe brought down, was that not sufficient? Furthermore Hashem had promised Moshe "and they will believe in you forever" (Shemos 19:9) - certainly they believed in the prophecy of Moshe Rabenu! What did they ask for - to serve in the Mishkan? How did they know that there was a Mishkan, was it not from Moshe Rabenu? Did Moshe not build it according to Hashem's specifications - we do not hear them questioning the details of the construction of the Mishkan. If there is no significance to Moshe Rabenu's word then there should be no significance to the Mishkan. But there was question that the Mishkan was the right one, after all the fire which descended from Heaven attested to that. Certainly they believed in Moshe Rabenu as a prophet.

Perhaps here they felt that Hashem commanded Moshe to choose a Kohen Gadol who would be the "best man for the job" without specifying whom and Moshe gave the job to his brother - should he not have chosen one of the? This perhaps was their machlokes with Moshe, it was not that they did not believe in his ability as a prophet of Hashem. Further proof is that when Moshe asked each of them to offer a ketores and see who will survive while the others will be burned - they believed him and they cooperated. However, they tried to deny

that HaKadosh Baruch Hu instructed Moshe to appoint Aharon to the position of Kohen Gadol - this he did out of his own choice. You say he is humble - we too are humble!

The Mishna in Pirke Avos cites as an example of machlokes leShem Shamayim, a dispute for Heaven's sake, the dispute between Hillel and Shammai. On the other hand, the example of machlokes shelo leShem Shamayim, dispute not for heaven's sake, is the dispute between Korach and his assembly. The differences between these two examples are striking - firstly regarding the dispute for Heaven's sake we find two real opponents - Hillel and Shammai were on opposite sides of many disputes. However, regarding the dispute not for Heaven's sake should it not have said Korach versus Moshe, not Korach and his assembly who were all on the same side against Moshe Rabenu.

The answer is Moshe cannot be viewed as being involved in a machlokes shelo leShem Shamayim, Korach perhaps was insincere, but Moshe was purely leShem Shamayim. Furthermore, there was infighting in Korach's assembly - there were 250 opinions as to who should be appointed as the Kohen Gadol and who will survive the offering of the ketores. Each believed that he would be chosen. I would like to suggest that Korach was responsible for much more than this dispute. If he truly saw with his ruach hakodesh that Shmuel HaNavi would descend from him and therefore he would survive the ketores, how could he ask his cohorts to bring the ketores as well? He was well aware that only one would survive, he mistakenly thought it would be him but if it were him how could he willfully place his cohorts in a situation of certain death?

There are two leading players in this incident whom are not explicitly mentioned in the parsha but are discussed in Chazal - they are the wife of Korach and the wife of On ben Peles. It was Korach's wife who enticed him into this dispute - she first said to Korach: look Moshe Rabenu is making a mockery of you by asking you and your fellow Leviim to shave their hair. Korach responded - but he too is a Levi and shaved his own hair as well. She responded - see to what great lengths he will go in order to laugh at you, he will even shave his own hair. It was she who put the questions cited by Rashi into Korach's head: Moshe has taught us about the importance of placing a string of tcheles on the corner of our garment, what about an article of clothing which is totally tcheles - does that still require a string of tcheles on the corner? After all, she reasoned, if a small string is enough then an entire garment should certainly be enough. The next question she asked was regarding the laws of mezuzah - if one simple parchment is sufficient then a house full of holy books and sifrei Torah should certainly be sufficient and there should be no requirement of that small parchment in that instance. They presented the questions to Moshe Rabenu who, of course, responded that tcheles in the corners and a mezuzah on the door were still required. She thought the "whole thing was ridiculous" and enticed Korach to fight against Moshe Rabenu.

On the other side, we learn of a righteous woman in the midst of this entire dispute. The parsha opens with the name On ben Peles mentioned as one of those who fought against Moshe Rabenu, his name does not appear again throughout the entire episode. Chazal explain that his wife saved his life. She first said to him - what do you stand to gain by joining Korach? If Moshe will emerge as leader then you will have no important position and if Korach emerges leader you will have no important position - why get involved? As an aside there is a lesson here for us as well, when we hear of two gedolim involved in a difference of opinion, it is not up to us to decide who is right - if one gadol is right or the other, we will remain who we are.

What did she then do? She gave him to drink until he fell asleep, she then sat by the entrance of the tent knowing that the rest of the assembly was scheduled to pick him up. As she saw them approaching she removed her head covering. Whatever you may say about Korach and his cohorts, tznius was strictly observed and they would not enter a house in which the woman did not have her hair covered. On ben Peles remained in the security of his home and as a result his wife was responsible for saving his life. Korach's wife caused her husband to lose everything while Chazal attribute the pasuk: 'the wise among women, each builds her house' (Mishle 14:1) to the wife of On ben Peles. Chazal teach us: 'the grouping of the wicked is of no significance' (Sanhedrin 26a) - a group of many evil people cannot constitute a majority. This means that a few tzaddikim are of greater importance than many more resham. We can explain based on what we have said above. Korach's assembly of 250

constituted 250 distinct and separate opinions. This cannot combine to form any sort of majority. On the other hand, tzaddikim such as Moshe and Aharon are united behind serving Hashem. Thus those who joined Korach because they were not unified could not be considered the majority opinion over Moshe and Aharon.

There are two other resham whose names appear throughout the Torah and this is no exception - they are Dossan and Aviram. They went so far as to misrepresent facts - they said to Moshe 'is it not enough that you have brought us up from a land flowing with milk and honey' (Bamidbar 16:13). Are they being serious - Egypt was a land flowing with milk and honey? Did not all the cattle die in either the plagues of dever or barad and were the trees not all cut down during barad? From where are they expected to produce milk and honey? It was simply a brazen act meant at convincing everyone to rebel against Moshe Rabenu. In fact, unlike the 250 men of the assembly, they had no interest in becoming kohen gadol we do not hear of them offering the ketores to determine which of the people was the true choice for kohen gadol. Their only interest was to cause a fight against Moshe Rabenu - nothing else. Moshe instructed Korach and the assembly to offer a ketores. The word ketores can be viewed as having two roots. Firstly from the word kitor which implies the smoke going up with a pleasant fragrance. Another perspective is that it is from the Aramaic word kitra meaning a knot - it binds together Hashem with the Jewish people and also ties together Jew with his fellow Jew. Chazal teach us that the ketores atones for the sin of loshon hara - how? Because loshon hara causes a rift therefore the ketores should be offered which binds everyone together. By asking Korach to offer the ketores, Moshe hoped that the power of serving Hashem would serve to unite everyone. However, they brought the ketores with no intention of any sort of unity and it therefore led to their downfall and death.

The Targum opens the parsha of vayikach Korach with veispeleig Korach from the word pilug meaning something divisive. Machlokes divides. Had Korach been worthy perhaps he would have been one of those removing the bodies of Nadav and Avihu from the mishkan and in whose merit we would have the mitzvah of Pesach Sheni. Instead he will be forever remembered for the dispute he caused and the associated punishment.

Moshe is purely leShem Shamayim, his only interest is for unity among the Jewish people around serving Hashem. Moshe had no will of his own - Korach and his cohorts each had their own ideas of what they wanted, only what was good for them.