

BS"D

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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KORACH - 5762

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 8:17 AM To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach
"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach

The Measure of A Person Is How He Acts When He Is Right
When Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to demonstrate that he was correct and that Korach was wrong, he made the following challenge: "If these men die a natural death, that means G-d did not send me. But if G-d will make a new creation such that the earth opens its mouth and swallows them alive, then this will prove that G-d did send me." [Bamidbar 16:29] Let us analyze Moshe's statement. 250 people challenged Moshe.

They questioned his leadership. Moshe maintained that he was the G-d chosen leader and that these challengers were phonies. Let us suppose that the next day, all 250 challengers had not woken up from their sleep. Wouldn't such an occurrence, in and of itself, be a strong proof as to who was right and who was wrong? Would we not have seen their death as Divine Retribution?

Moshe was not satisfied with that level of proof. He explicitly said that if they die in their sleep or of other natural causes, then that indicates that "G-d did not send me." Why did Moshe specifically need the creation of a miracle and an unnatural death to prove his legitimacy? The Belzer Rebbe, zt"l, explained: Had they all died in their sleep or by some natural means of death, it would still have been possible to conjecture that Korach was right. Perhaps we would have said that they did not receive the punishment because they were wrong but rather because they acted improperly in shaming a Talmid Chachomim (Torah scholar). [One who shames another publicly is compared to a murderer (Talmud B.Metz. 58b); all the more so when the victim is a Torah scholar.]

Conceivably, Korach and his followers could have been 100 percent correct that Moshe was a power hungry nepotist who was appointing 'his people' and taking everything for himself. But even so, they would have been deserving of death for the disrespectful way that they presented their argument. They humiliated the greatest man of the generation and the leader of Israel.

A person can be 100 percent right and still be deserving of death for other reasons, such as shaming a scholar. Therefore, Moshe insisted upon ironclad proof that he was right -- a miracle to cause their death. Natural deaths would not have proven Moshe's legitimacy since they already deserved death -- right or wrong -- because of the way they presented their claim.

The mussar [ethical teaching] that we must learn from this insight is that even if one is right, he must know how to fight! A person must present arguments with tact and sensitivity, regardless of the cogency of those arguments.

A person can have a complaint about a friend, a spouse, sometimes even a Rabbi, but that does not give him the right to fight or argue or act improperly.

Suppose a Rabbi made a mistake. Perhaps he did not treat someone properly. Does that permit a congregant to chastise his Rabbi in the middle of shul? Heaven forbid! That would be shaming a Torah

scholar. The congregant's complaint may be 100 percent valid, but that does not justify improper behavior on his part against his Rabbi. Sometimes a person may have an argument with his wife. He might be 100 percent right. But nevertheless he must confront her in a proper manner. If he does not, he can be right on the merits, but all can be lost if his argument is not presented in the proper manner.

Sometimes we may be right regarding an issue with our children. But there is a way to talk to a child and a way not to talk to a child. Sometimes a child may owe his parent an apology. But the parent's reaction can be so bad that it makes the parent's sin worse than the child's sin.

The Belzer Rebbe says that the true measure of a person is to see how he acts when he is RIGHT -- not when he is wrong. If when he thinks he is right, he feels that he has license to act like an animal -- to yell what he wants and to act however he wants to act -- then he is in fact quite wrong! Even if Korach had been right in his original argument, he was already a 'dead man' because of the way he acted towards his teacher.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 334, Leaving a Chasunah Before Benching. Tapes or 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. RavFrاند, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 Baltimore, MD 21208

From: torahweb@zeus.host4u.net Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 8:53 PM To: weekly1@torahweb.org Subject: Rabbi Yaakov Haber - On Blossoms, Almonds, and Spiritual Accomplishments
http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2002/parsha/rhab_korach.html
RABBI YAAKOV HABER

ON BLOSSOMS, ALMONDS, AND SPIRITUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS
After the miraculous destruction of Korach and his followers, Hashem instructs Moshe to demonstrate for all time His choice of Aharon as kohen gadol (high priest) and his descendants as kohanim (priests). After the leaders of the tribes along with Aharon provided their staffs which were placed in the Kodesh haKodoshim (holy of holies), Aaron's staff miraculously blooms and produces fruit while the others remain the same. The Torah describes this event in the following manner: "And it (Aaron's rod) brought forth blossoms, and sprouted buds, and almonds ripened (17:23)." Da'as Z'keinim miBa'alei HaTosfos comment, basing themselves on a Talmudic passage in Yoma (52b), that at the same time that almonds were produced on one side of the staff, blossoms remained on the other side. What might be the symbolism behind this dual-natured blossoming of Aaron's rod? The root of Korach's rebellion as stated by Rashi, Ramban, and expanded upon at length by R. Soloveitchik zt"l was a private jealousy of the positions of leadership of Aharon, Elitzaphan (the leader of the Levitic family of K'hos) and Moshe. In order to advance his private agenda, Korach develops a popular philosophy questioning the very need for leadership in the hope of rallying the masses for the ultimate, hypocritical goal of achieving his personal desire, attaining a leadership role for himself. His jealousy is rooted in the pursuit of the glorious aspects of leadership, as opposed to a desire for greater accomplishment. Moshe Rabbeinu, by stark contrast, in Parshas B'ha'alos'cha acts in the exact opposite manner. When Eldad and Meidad prophesy the end of Moshe's leadership, instead of agreeing to Yehoshua's request to stop them, Moshe expresses his fervent wish: "umi yitein kol'am Hashem n'vi'im" -- may the entire nation merit to be prophets, without concern for the loss of his personal honor. A true leader views his role not as a means to individual aggrandizement but as a forum for immense service to the community which he leads, that which would not be possible for a private individual. Indeed, Moshe Rabbeinu and his brother Aharon HaKohen are never satisfied by their past missions but constantly strive for additional achievements for the

sake of G-d and Klal Yisrael. The Talmud Sotah (14a) records a conversation which takes place between Hashem and Moshe as the latter pleads to enter the Promised Land. "Do you desire to fulfill the mitzvot which only apply in Eretz Yisrael? I will view it as if you already performed them," the Almighty tells Moshe. Now, Moshe had certainly spent his life in the performance of the Divine commandments; why was it so crucial for him to fulfill the additional mitzvot hat'lu'ot ba'aretz (Israel-bound mitzvot)? A tzaddik is never satisfied with his past achievements; he always strives for more. The Gemara Makkos (10a) applies to Moshe the verse in Koheles: "Ohev kesef lo yisba kesef" which is homiletically translated as, "one who loves mitzvot will never be satiated by them." (See Purim: the Holiday of Giving Section I by mori v'Rabi, Rav Mordechai Willig for a further elaboration on this theme.)

R. Moshe Eisemann once commented on the life of Boaz, one of the heroes in the narrative of Ruth. The Midrash identifies Boaz with the Judge Ivtzan mentioned in Shoftim (12:8-10), who fathers 30 sons and 30 daughters. Yalkut Shimoni (Shoftim 68) relates that all of Boaz's children died during his lifetime leaving him childless in his old age. Then, toward the end of his life, the aging Boaz, marries Ruth, and they have a child who is the ancestor of King David and eventually the Melech HaMashiach! Boaz could certainly have taken the "easy route" and given up after living such a tragic life. Instead, he followed the directive of Kohelet "Baboker z'ra et zar'echa, v'la'erev 'al tanach yadecha ki 'eincha yodei'a eize yichshar hazeh 'o zeh (11:6)" -- "in the morning plant your seed, and in the evening do not stay your hand, for you do not know which (accomplishment) will be successful." Everyone in their life has their "Ivtzan" stage -- time periods when their efforts seemingly meet no success. But one cannot be discouraged by previous failures; one must constantly attempt new achievements until one finds one's "Boaz" stage, and even then to strive for ever greater accomplishments.

Aharon HaKohein's most prominent responsibility was the lighting of the menorah (see B'ha'alos'cha 8:2-3). Interestingly, the actual lighting of the menorah does not require a Kohein and can be performed by a Yisrael as well (Yad HaChazaka Hilchos Bi'at Mikdash 1:7). The hatavas hamenorah, the evening cleaning of the menorah in preparation for the lighting, does need a kohein. R. Noach Isaac Oelbaum once explained this halacha in a manner similar to the above-mentioned theme. The greater achievement is the ability to "clean out" former, failed attempts and start anew, never to fall into despair and never to be satisfied with the past achievements. This is what Aharon haKohein, once again in contrast to Korach, teaches us. Leadership is a means for 'avodas Hashem, Divine service, not personal glory. The very word kohein, in its verb form l'chahein, means "to serve."

This is perhaps the deeper significance of the double-blossomed staff. Even after one sees "fruits" for his efforts, one should constantly strive to "blossom" again with new missions, new mitzvot, new venues for increasing the Glory of G-d in this world. It is this lesson that the lives of Moshe and Aharon and of all true Jewish leaders teach us, and it is this model that we must follow.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/ryud_korach.html

[TorahWeb from last year]

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

THINGS ARE GOOD, LET'S MAKE THEM BETTER

The Medrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 18:2) understands the opening phrase of Parshas Korach, "Vayikach Korach" as not only to mean take or separate, but rather to persuade.

In Bereishis (2:15) where Hashem "takes" Adam and places him in Gan Eden, Rashi understands the He persuades Adam to enter the garden. Adam, a man who was created outside of Gan Eden resists change until Hashem convinces him. Similarly when Sarai "takes" Hagar as a wife for Avraham (Bereishis 16:3), Rashi again informs us that Sarai has convinced her maidservant, who was clearly afraid of becoming Avraham's wife, of the great privilege and opportunity that the position would afford. Finally, when Avraham "takes" Yishmael

(Bereishis 17:23) to be circumcised, the Ohr HaChaim understands the phrase to mean that Avraham convinced him to undergo the significant operation. In Parshas Korach, Korach also "takes", i.e. persuades, many individuals to rebel against the establishment and leadership of Moshe and Aaron.

What was it that Korach used to draw the 250, "Leaders of the Assembly, those summoned for meeting, men of renown?" The Gemara (Sotah 13b) commenting on the phrase, "Rav lachem benei levi," (Bamidbar 16:7)- It is too much for you what you are asking-states that as Moshe responds to Korach's group "rav lachem" Hashem says to Moshe, "Rav lach." Moshe, we know, wanted more mitzvot to fulfill, which is why he yearned to enter Eretz Yisroel. Similarly, those who joined Korach wanted an even closer personal relationship with Hashem. The Eben Ezra maintains that this position was in reaction to the loss of sanctity and privilege that was taken from the Bechorim – first born of all the tribes- and given to the Leviim. That these 250 men wanted more spirituality may be seen by the fact that whereas the korban offering of a wicked person is rejected, "Zevach reshaim toevah" – the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination- (Proverbs 21:27), here the 250 pans used for offering the ketores – incense- was treated with sanctity and used as a cover for the mizbeach.

Why then did Korach and his group fail? The answer we are taught in the medrash is that Korach was motivated and prompted by jealousy. Feeling personally slighted by the fact that his cousin, the son of his uncle Uziel, was chosen as the head of the head of the family of Kehas, when Korach believed himself to be the more eligible and natural candidate, led Korach to rebel. However, once Korach's motivation was for personal gain and honor, though cloaked in a quest for holiness, his mission could not succeed.

The very significant lesson that emerges from the Korach story is that one must examine his mitzvot. The Gemara (Eruvin 13b) teaches that for two and a half years the schools of Shammai and Hillel disputed and finally concluded, "it were better for man not to have been created, but now that he has been created, let him be yifashfaish b'maasav (investigate his deeds) and yimashmaish b'maasav (examine his deeds)". In Chapter three of Mesilas Yesharim Rav Moshe Chaim Luzatto zt"l explain the former, yifashfaish, to be to investigate one's wrongdoings and transgressions, and the latter, yimashmaish, to scrutinize one's mitzvot and good deeds to make sure they are as perfect and wholesome as possible without personal negias (agendas). It is interesting to note that the Gemara (Sukah 49b) understands the passage in Micha (6:8) which states, "What Hashem seeks from you: only your performance of justice, the love of kindness, and walking humbly with G-d" to refer to one's conduct at a funeral and wedding. Both the one eulogizing the dead and making merry before the chosson and kallah (groom and bride) need to be cautioned that their motives must be pure, and personal attention not be a conscious aspect of the performance of the mitzvah.

One has to scrutinize one's mitzvot – they are good, but are they good enough? The Medrash Rus Rabba notes that the Torah (Bereishis 37:22) informs us of Reuven's positive motivation for suggesting that Yosef be thrown into the pit, i.e., that Reuven was "intending to rescue him from their hand, to return him to his father". Had Reuven known that scripture would record this incident, he would have personally carried Yosef on his back in order to return him to Yaakov. Had Aaron known that the Torah would record his selfless acceptance of his brother Moshe's position of leadership, instead of "Behold he is going out to meet you," (Shmos 4:14) he would have orchestrated a brass band. And, had Boaz only known that his lunch of bread dipped in vinegar would be inscribed in Megillas Rus he would have served a steak dinner. All of the above were involved with mitzvot, but there is room for improvement.

Finally, just as "mitzvot require kavannah" – intent and awareness - is understood in the realm of mitzvot between man and Hashem, such as prayer, lulav or shofar, (as recorded in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, Ch. 60:4), similarly, in performing a mitzva towards another man, prior to the action one should focus on the fact that they are about to perform a mitzva. The Rav miBartenura, in his opening commentary to

Avos, asks why it is that Pirkei Avos begins with "Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Johua." He explains that lest one think that only the legal aspects of Torah are Divine, but the character ethics and morals of the Jew are human in origin, Avos teaches us that nichum aveilim is not simply a social obligation known as a "shiva call," and bikkur cholim is not only a good thing to do. Prior to entering a shiva house or hospital, we should say to ourselves, "I am about to perform a mitzva." Every morning Jews recite, "we are fortunate (ashreinu), how good is our position, how pleasant is our lot." Things are good, let us make them better! We are surrounded by mitzvos, and Parshas Korach beckons our scrutiny thereof.

MessageFrom: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org] Sent: Friday, June 07, 2002 7:45 PM To: Parsha English Subject: Parshat Korach

A FLAME CAME FORTH FROM HASHEM

ROSH HAYESHIVA RAV MORDECHAI GREENBERG SHLITA

The Torah talks of "Korach and his assembly," and it seems as if they were all united as one group -- but this is not true! Chazal relate that Korach he was jealous of Elizaphan b. Uziel, whom Moshe appointed over the family of Kehat (see Rashi at the beginning of the parsha), whereas the other leaders of Israel who were with Korach had a different agenda. They wanted to serve in the Mishkan like the Levites and priests, and had a burning desire for closeness to G-d, a love as strong as death. They were willing to sacrifice their lives, so long as they would have the opportunity for extra closeness. Therefore, their respective punishments were different -- Korach was swallowed by the earth, whereas the others were burned while offering the ketoret (incense). The ketoret, which is similar to the Aramaic word "kitra" (knot), is the highest expression of closeness to G-d. Just as the ketoret ascends, so, too, the two hundred and fifty people desired to ascend and to connect with G-d.

Their sin was that they deviated from the guidelines of the Torah, and did not follow the path of the mitzvot. This principle, that spiritual aspiration must be in its proper measure, is found in the parsha of the nazir. The nazir brings a sacrifice, "for having sinned regarding the soul" (Bamidbar 6:11), as R. Elazar Hakapar explains, "because he restricted himself from wine." However, this pasuk is said in the context of a nazir who suddenly becomes defiled in the tent of a corpse. Thus, not every nazir is considered a sinner, even though every nazir restricts himself from wine.

The Netziv explains that it is worthwhile to abstain from physical enjoyment in order to achieve the spiritual enjoyment of closeness to G-d. However, the fact that the incident of defilement occurred is a sign that this nazir is not fit for such closeness. Thus, he restricted himself from wine for naught, and sought something above his level, and thus must bring a sacrifice for having restricted himself from wine. On the other hand, when a nazir successfully completes his nezirut in purity -- this indicates that he was worthy of this level.

This was the sin of the two hundred and fifty men who offered the ketoret; they sought to offer the ketoret and ascend improperly.

Therefore it says, "the firepans of these sinners against their souls," (Bamidbar 17:3), just as it says regarding the nazir, "for having sinned against the soul," for having sought a level above himself.

We find a similar sin regarding Nadav and Avihu, "when they approached before Hashem and they died." (Vayikra 16:1) They also did not suffice with the way that the Torah instructs, but rather sought to draw closer, above their level. They, as well, offered, "an alien fire that He had not commanded them." (Vayikra 10:2)

Even before Nadav and Avihu we find something similar regarding the elders of Israel: "Against the great men of Bnei Yisrael, He did not stretch out His hand -- they gazed at G-d, yet they ate and drank." (Shemot 24:11) Moshe Rabbeinu ascended the mountain, and for "forty days and forty nights he did not eat bread and he did not drink water" (Shemot 34:28), and therefore he merited to gaze at the image of G-d. (Cf. Bamidbar 12:8) They, however, ate and drank, "and gazed at G-d," while still connected to the physical world, and were not worthy of this level. Therefore, according to Chazal, they deserved to be

punished. "Where did He punish them? With Nadav and Avihu, and the officers of the camp." (See Rashi Mishpatim 24:4)

This is why there was a common punishment for them all -- Nadav and Avihu, the officers in the camp, and the 250 men who offered the incense -- "A fire came forth from before Hashem and consumed them." (Vayikra 10:2). The Gemara in Sanhedrin explains that this fire burned their soul, while their bodies remained intact. The flame is the result of the sin -- self-elevation and closeness without proper preparation -- and this great closeness not in its place led to burning the soul.

This is a lesson for every Jewish person who aspires for spiritual greatness. The way for spiritual advance is already laid out in the Torah, and one may not invent a new way that is not according to the Torah's arrangement.

From: RABBI RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM LIST

[parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 2:05 AM To: Shabbat_Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Korach (Diaspora) by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Dear Subscriber,

Following is Rabbi Riskin's commentary on Parshat Korach, which is being read this Shabbat in communities throughout the Diaspora. His commentary on Chukat, which is being read in Israel, is unavailable (but will be part of a double-parsha article next week, Chukat-Balak). Our apologies for any inconveniences. -Listmaster

Parshat KORACH (Numbers 16:1-18:32)

Efrat, Israel - "What's in a name?", wryly asked the great English playwright William Shakespeare, denying any connection between the appellation and the essence "one's name defines one's persona" (k'shmo ken hu- literally as is his/her name, so is he/she), declared the Talmudic Sages, insisting that externals - and most certainly the term to which one is expected to answer and by which one is identified to the outside world - must influence one's internal state of being. The Biblical names certainly contained profound symbolic significance, with Moshe meaning he takes out, or he liberates and Yehoshua - one scout in the minority of two who was in favor of conquering Israel - meaning G-d will save. From this perspective, it is productive to query the meaning of the name Korach, an uncommon name which only appears in the Bible in the context of this week's Torah reading. Moreover, a great deal seems to be made of the name Korach both in the more esoteric Kabbalistic - hassidic interpretations as well as in the more accessible midrashic commentaries. Rabbi Isaac Luria (known as the Holy Lion, who taught a path-breaking commentary to the sacred Zohar in 16th century Safed) cited the verse from the (Psalms 92:13), "The righteous blossom as the palm tree" (Zadik Katamar Yifrah), noting that the last letter of these three words spell the name KRH (Korach) and insisting that the Biblical Tamar (lit. palm tree) is the antithesis - and repair (tikkun) - of Korach. What is the significance of such last-letter acronym word-play on the name Korach? No less strange is the midrashic name-play in its interpretation of an ambiguous Biblical phrase "lo titgodedu v'lvo tasimu korhah" (Deuteronomy 14:1), taking the words to mean either "you shall not scratch (your skin) and you shall not make yourself bald." (In excessive mourning over the dead), or alternatively "you shall not create divisiveness or make an argument (which is not for the sake of heaven but rather for egoistic motivations) as did Korach." What does the name Korach actually mean and what does it symbolize?

The Hebrew word Karah means bald - there is a charming midrash about the frustrations of a man who had two wives, one older and one younger, with the older removing the black hairs from his head and the younger removing the white hairs, so that he was left completely bald (Kareah) from this one and from that one - as well as ice (in modern Hebrew, a Karhon is an ice pop. Both words have one idea in common: neither provides fertile soil for growth and development; hair does not grow on a bald head, and grass or flowers do not emanate from ground covered with ice (witness the devastation of plant life during the Ice-Age).

Rabbi Isaac Luria joined Korach to Tamar because the Biblical heroine had been twice married without her womb bearing fruit; in order for her to merit progeny in Israel and to develop Jewish destiny, she had to take matters in her own hands and become impregnated (fertilized, seeded) by Judah. As in every case of yibum, individuals must sacrifice themselves to a certain degree in order to be linked to Jewish eternity. The midrash understands that an argument which is based on egoistic motivations will not allow for compromise and will never bear the fruit of resolution; such a dispute can only lead to devastation and destruction (karhah).

An analysis of Korach's argument will quickly demonstrate the symbolic significance of his name. At first glance he seems to be a populist democrat, arguing in favor of the exalted qualities of every single Israelite who stood at Sinai: "The entire congregation are all holy and G-d is in their midst; why need you (Moses and Aaron) lift yourselves up above the community of G-d?" (Numbers 16:3). But when we remember that the Almighty never describes the Israelites as a holy nation as they are, by right and by privilege without striving and even suffering to achieve holiness, we begin to realize that Korach is more demagogue than democrat, more flatterer than educator. "You shall become holy," commands and demands our Torah (Leviticus 19:2); Moses and Aaron worked for and achieved their holiness not by right but by righteousness! Holiness is the result of a process, a growth, a development; it is not a gift bestowed automatically.

Indeed, the antithesis of the hairless bald head and the grass-less icy-ground is the palm tree, the Tamar, which - with proper nurture - will produce dates; so, teaches the Psalmist, will the righteous individual develop, just as the palm tree flourishes as a result of painstaking care and development - Korach is impatient; he wishes to usurp Aaron's (and perhaps Moses') place - without the concomitant effort which must be expended before one can be worthy of leadership. He is punished by being swallowed up by the earth - perhaps in order to teach him that before a seed develops into a fruit-bearing tree, it must first rot beneath the ground as a necessary part of the process of growth and fructification and our portion vindicates Aaron as the true leader chosen by the Divine; the staff of Aaron, the very antithesis of arid Korach, "brings forth flowers, develops blossoms, and bears almonds" (Numbers 17:23). True leadership can only emerge after a long and arduous process of selfless and sustained nurture and hard work.

Shabbat Shalom

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:

<http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm>

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http://www.ou.org/torah/tt/5762/korach62/specialfeatures_mitzvot.htm

MEANING IN MITZVOT

BY RABBI ASHER MEIR

Each week we discuss one familiar halakhic practice and try to show its beauty and meaning. The columns are based on Rabbi Meir's Meaning in Mitzvot on Kitzur Shulchan Arukh.

Tzitzit of Tekhelet

"Meaning in Mitzvot" generally discusses only mitzvot that are practically carried out in our day. Today we will discuss a mitzva that many, though not most, authorities believe that we can try to fulfill: the mitzva of a tekhelet thread on the tzitzit. Let us see what our tradition tells us about this commandment. (see last week's TT, specifically the Meet Murex Trunculus piece for a very different presentation of this mitzva)

In Scripture, tekhelet in garments is often identified with wealth and royalty. Yirmiyahu counts it along with silver and gold among the treasures of the world (Yirmiyahu 10:9), while Mordekhai's ascent to power is marked by his wearing tekhelet garments (Esther 8:15). The Talmud also emphasizes its expense. One Midrash compares the white threads to a clay vessel and the tekhelet ones to gold (Yalkut Shimoni Shelakh).

Yet regarding the mitzva of tekhelet, we find the exact opposite theme: in several places we find it connected to modesty and simplicity. For example, the Talmud tells us that the Jewish people merited the thread of tekhelet because of Avram's refusal (Bereshit 14:23) to accept even a shoelace from the King of Sodom (Sota 17a).

And our Sages tell us that the story of Korach immediately follows the mitzva of tekhelet to hint to us that the wealthy Korach rejected this commandment. "Rav said, Korach was immensely wealthy; Pharaoh's treasure was exposed to him between Migdol and the sea. Rav said, Korach was a denier; he made a talit which was entirely tekhelet, and came to Moshe. He asked, is a talit which is entirely tekhelet obligated in tzitzit? He said, it is obligated" (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:1).

Korach claimed to be a democrat, complaining that Moshe and Aharon raised themselves up above the common people. But in reality he was a plutocrat; we see in his claims that money should be able to substitute for mitzvot.

The average person could never afford a talit dyed throughout with tekhelet, but Korach could and his claim was that this should exempt him from the mitzva of tekhelet.

We can discern a similar paradox in the gemara in Sota. The passage continues by asking, what is so special about the mitzva of tekhelet? The answer is that the tekhelet resembles the sea, which resembles the firmament, which resembles G-d's Seat of Glory. "And they saw the G-d of Israel, and under His feet was the likeness of bricks of sapphire, pure like the essence of the sky." (Shemot 24:10) This was the vision of the leaders of Israel who approached Har Sinai together with Moshe and Aharon. The Torah then tells us that they were worthy of punishment for their behavior when seeing this vision; Rashi explains that they related to this vision as something familiar, without the appropriate awe.

We can understand this in a similar fashion. The bricks of sapphire seem to represent wealth, something which would have been familiar to the princes of Israel. But Rashi explains that they actually represent the crushing labor of Jewish slaves in Egypt who struggled to make their daily toll of bricks. To Korach, tekhelet symbolized wealth; it also reminds us of the heavenly firmament, which may also seem to represent wealth. But Chazal show that there is an exact opposite symbolism of simplicity and equality. Even a tekhelet which is all tekhelet is forbidden if it doesn't have the same single strand of tekhelet which exempts a simple person's garment. And it was Avram's lack of greed which brought us this mitzva, which reminds us of the Throne of Glory which surveys not only the "purity of the sky" but also the crushing labor of simple people.

It is precisely the single thread of priceless tekhelet which reminds us that each Jew has before G-d a status like kings and princes, which money can never buy. The Torah explicitly tells us that the tzitzit reminds us of all the commandments; and indeed, it is the sanctity of the commandments which gives us our unique status.

May it be His will to reveal to us soon, by natural or miraculous means, the certain way to perform this important mitzva so that we may all bear this important reminder of the entire Torah.

Rabbi Meir has completed writing a monumental companion to Kitzur Shulchan Aruch which beautifully presents the meanings in our mitzvot and halacha. It will hopefully be published in the near future.

Rabbi Meir authors a popular weekly on-line Q&A column, "The Jewish Ethicist", which gives Jewish guidance on everyday ethical dilemmas in the workplace. The column is a joint project of the JCT Center for Business Ethics, Jerusalem College of Technology - Machon Lev; and Aish HaTorah. You can see the Jewish Ethicist, and submit your own questions, at www.jewishethicist.com or at www.aish.com.

From: Ohr Somayach [ohr@ohr.edu] Sent: Thursday, June 06, 2002 12:47 PM To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Korach * TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Parshat Korach For the week 28 Sivan 5762 / June 7 & 8, 2002 - in Israel and 5 Tammuz 5762 / June 14 & 15, 2002 - outside Israel Sponsored by Kof-K Kosher Supervision www.kof-k.org | info@kof-k.org

If You Can't Play Well - Play Loud "They stood before Moshe with two hundred and fifty men..." (16:2) Imagine the scene. Two hundred and fifty heads of the Sanhedrin all garbed in the same color blue being marched out in front of Moshe Rabbeinu. And all to prove a point. Korach asks Moshe whether a garment all of tachelet blue still requires tzitzit. Moshe replies that it does. They all start to laugh at him. Korach says, "If one thread of blue can exempt a garment of a different color, surely a garment all of blue can exempt itself!" Why was it necessary for Korach to parade two hundred and fifty of the elite of the Jewish People in specially tailored garb to prove a point of law? How did this strengthen his contention? How did this physical demonstration lend credence to an intellectual dispute? There's an old adage amongst musicians: "If you can't play well - play loud!" Quantity is frequently made to masquerade as quality. Korach's real argument with Moshe was nothing to do with how to interpret the mitzvah of tzitzit. It was everything to do with the struggle for power. The intellectual dispute was merely a smokescreen, a vehicle for insurrection. To mask the fallacy of his claims, Korach "dressed them up" in a veneer of conviction.

Funny, You Don't Look Bluish "...all of them are holy..." (16:3) The three paragraphs of the Shema correspond to three kinds of Jews. The first paragraph represents the tzaddik righteous one who loves Hashem with all his heart and with all soul and all his worldly gifts. The second paragraph corresponds to those of us who need a little encouragement. We need to know that if we listen to Hashem's commandments He will bring rain to our land at the correct time and we will be able to gather our crops; that if we follow the mitzvot, He will bring blessing to our endeavors. The third paragraph of the Shema represents those of us who already have big eyes for things we shouldn't. We have to be warned not to go after the illicit desires of our hearts. For this reason we are commanded to wear tzitzit so that we will remember all of Hashem's commandments and not stray after our hearts and eyes. The Torah mandates that one of the threads of the tzitzit should be a tachelet blue. The blue of the tzitzit is a reflection of the blue of the sea. And the blue of the sea is a reflection of the blue of the sky. And the blue of the sky is a reflection of the Heavenly throne. Blue is the color of the heavens. Blue is the color of holiness. By stating that a garment all of tachelet blue didn't need tzitzit, Korach was saying to Moshe that the Jewish People "are all holy." He was saying that the Jewish People are like a garment of all of blue that doesn't need tzitzit. He was telling Moshe, "Moshe we don't need you. We don't need leaders to make us holy, because we're all holy already. We don't need you to be a constant visual reminder for us not to go after our hearts and our eyes, because we are all holy already. The Shema, however, reminds us that Korach was wrong. There are three kinds of Jews: The tzaddikim, the ones in the middle and those of us who need a special dose of help. Because not all of us can be "Blue-ish."

Sources: Funny, You Don't Look Bluish - The Ostrovzer Gaon as heard from Rabbi C. Z. Senter

Written and compiled by RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR At Ohr Somayach/Tanenbaum College in Jerusalem, students explore their heritage under the guidance of today's top Jewish educators. For information, please write to info@ohr.edu

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Sent: Thursday, June 06, 2002 5:11 AM To: yhe-sichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT62 -38: Parashat Korach Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash Project (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Delivered By The Roshei Yeshiva SICHOF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A DISPUTE AND HARMONY Summarized by Dvir Tchelet

"Vayikach Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehat ben Levi..."(Bamidbar 16:1)

Rashi points out to us that in the genealogy of Korach, Yaakov is left out, since he prayed that his name not be mentioned in connection with the Korachites' quarrel. His name is, however, mentioned as Korach's ancestor in the list of meshorerim (singers) which appears in Divrei Ha-yamim I (6:23).

If we are told that Korach was a Levi, then obviously we know that he was a direct descendant of Yaakov! Is there really such a difference if Yaakov is mentioned or not? In order to answer this question, we must briefly examine some of the characteristics of Am Yisrael.

The three most basic traits we know of are being rachmanim, bayshanim and gomlei chasadim (merciful, bashful, and benevolent). In a more amusing sense, another well-known trait is our great ability to argue with each other!

The story is told of a ship-wrecked Jew who is finally saved by a ship sailing to his island. Upon coming ashore, the crew is treated to a scenic tour by the Jew of all the things he had built while on the island. He points out two structures and explains, "This is the shul where I pray and that other building - that is the shul I don't go to!"

Of course, it's true that Am Yisrael has not had a shortage of machloket (dispute) over the years, but this can be understood. There are two main causes of machloket: concern for one another, and the need for absolute truth. Once every Jew feels a responsibility towards his fellow, he is inevitably caught up in his friend's affairs.

In the Western world today and especially in the United States, these values are played down by pluralism - everyone is an individual and everyone is right. Instead of respecting each others' views, people are indifferent to their fellow - "You do it your way and I'll do it mine!" Objective truth is lost. Too many truths eventually lead to a confused and contentious society. Judaism's search for absolute truth leads us to a point of achdut, a state where one accepted truth prevails. Rav Kook in Orot Ha-kodesh (Ma'amar Ha-shalom Ch. 11), explains that Am Yisrael cannot stand to be in a state of confrontation and disharmony since our nature is one of peace and unity. Therefore all our arguments are temporary, our goal being complete harmony - to become a "goy echad ba-aretz."

The midrash speaks of Avraham, whose distinguishing trait was chesed (lovingkindness), as being like a mountain, overlooking and open to the whole world. Yitzchak, representing gevura (self-conquest), was more concerned with personal achievements; he was likened to the sadeh, a flat field unseen by others. If Avraham was the thesis and Yitzchak the antithesis, then Yaakov, who according to Kabbala has the trait of tiferet (splendor, harmony), was the synthesis. Yaakov is called bayit, a house which can be seen by those sensitive to such harmony.

It is obvious to us that Korach, being a Levi, was a descendant of Yaakov, but Yaakov specifically asked not to be mentioned here since he realized that Korach's intention was in fact to cause machloket among Benei Yisrael. Korach's interest in argument was not based on a genuine search for truth but rather a desire to cause disharmony and divide the nation.

In Divrei Ha-yamim, when Yaakov is mentioned in connection with Korach, the reason is clear: here we are talking about the duties of the Levi'im - one of these duties being the "shir," the song which they would sing in the Temple. Here a sensitivity to harmony is indeed necessary. The ability to pick out the wrong notes from within the tune brings the song to a point of refinement.

With regard to learning Torah, one must also realize the necessity for argument. The most constructive form of learning is opposition. If you don't agree, argue! Don't just accept, otherwise you will never understand the 'din' from all its perspectives.

The previous Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron once remarked: "The tzadikim are ruining my yeshiva!" Those "tzadikim" who refuse to argue with their colleagues because they feel "He is greater than me - after all who am I?!", lose sight of the deeper meaning to the machloket - combining and sifting all the differing opinions to form one harmonious truth.

The mishna in Avot tells us that the machloket of the Korachites was not an argument for the sake of Heaven, since it was rooted in the desire to cause disharmony. On the other hand, the machloket of Hillel and Shamai is called an argument for the sake of Heaven since its goal was harmony, unity, and absolute truth. A rabbi and a student can argue fiercely over a gemara, but they dare not close their books until they reinstate their love and respect for one another, until they transform their machloket into a point of meeting, a point of truth.
(Originally delivered at Seuda Shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Korach 5755.)

From: elaine@jewishdestiny.com Sent: Wednesday, June 12, 2002
Subject: RABBI WEIN'S WEEKLY COLUMNS
Parsha Archive June 14 2002 KORACH The great rebellion against Moshe, fomented by his jealous kinsman, Korach, turned into a disaster for Korach and his family. The earth opened under their feet and swallowed them - men, women and children - and their dwelling places. The fires of dispute are always so great that they scorch even the otherwise innocent. Because of his venomous divisiveness, Korach and his family were doomed to destruction and to disappearance. But were they? In the book of Psalms, chapters of immortal poetry and comfort are attributed to "Bnei Korach" as well as other chapters authored by Assaf, who was also a descendant of Korach. So it seems, that Korach's family was not obliterated, even when the ground swallowed them whole. In fact, the Torah itself tells us in the Book of Dvarim that "the sons of Korach did not die." What are we to make of their survival? How did they extricate themselves from their doomed position?
The Midrash and the Talmud tell us that the sons of Korach did not fall all the way down into the bowels of the earth. The elegant phrase used to describe their rescue from oblivion is that "a place was fortified for them above Gehenom" where they were able to survive. And in that place, in the ruins of their lives and former beliefs, they rethought their father's erroneous and unfair rebellion against Moshe and admitted the truth to themselves and to others. Again, Midrash tells us that their voices could be heard proclaiming: "Moshe is true and his Torah is true." It is this act of honesty, of the ability to rethink and review positions and prejudices that saved the descendants of Korach from death and oblivion and even brought them to immortality and piety. They were able to climb out of the pit when they realized how wrong and suicidal the path of their father had been. They stated loud and honestly that Moshe was right and true and that they and their ancestor were false and wrong. It is not easy to do so, even when the facts of the matter fly in your face and debunk your previously held theory and belief. It was therefore this act of moral courage and searing honesty that allowed the Torah to say, "that the sons of Korach did not die." The twentieth century has been to a large extent, the century of Korach. Rebellion against tradition and the old and the veneration of new theories of social engineering, morality and religion have been the unfortunate hallmark of this, the bloodiest of all centuries. Nowhere has this been more noticeable than in Jewish life. Socialism, Communism, Secularism, Nationalism, atheistic Zionism, Reform, Conservatism, Reconstructionism, Feminism and other assorted theories and movements arose in this century to claim the place of prominence in fashioning the Jewish people and its future. All of them have proven themselves to be woefully inadequate for the task set forth. Much of the ruin currently visible in the Jewish world is directly traceable to the rebellion against Moshe and his Torah, which marks every one of these theories and movements and is in fact their common denominator. From our perch just above the abyss of Jewish destruction and assimilation, there are determined Jews who shout out loudly that "Moshe is true and his Torah is true." But there are many sons of Korach who still maintain the belief in the false shibboleths of this past century. With intermarriage approaching seventy percent in America, one strains to hear the admission of error from these groups. Unless there is an honest reappraisal of theory and belief on the part of these groups, these sons of Korach will not survive. An admission of

change of policy would be most helpful on their part and a boon to the Jewish world at large.
Shabat Shalom. Berel Wein

From: Yated USA [yated-usa@ttec.com] Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 5:31 PM Subject: Yated USA, 06-13-2002
Parshas Korach: THE SELF-CENTEREDNESS OF MACHLOKES BY RAV AHRON RAPPS
The Parsha of Korach deals with the uprising of Korach and the people that were with him against Moshe and ultimately against Hashem. The Torah tells us, "They gathered against Moshe and Aharon, and they said to them: 'You have taken too much for yourselves and since the entire congregation are all holy and Hashem is in their midst, why do you raise yourselves above the assembly of Hashem?'" Rashi explains that Korach told Moshe that the entire nation heard the Word of Hashem at Sinai, and if you took the Melucha-monarchy for yourself, you should not have chosen the Kehuna-priesthood for your brother Aharon. With regard to this Machlokes-dispute the Mishna in Pirkei Avos states, "Any dispute that is for the sake of Heaven will have a constructive outcome; but one that is not for the sake of Heaven will not have a constructive outcome. What sort of dispute was for the sake of Heaven?-The dispute between Hillel and Shammai. And which was not for the sake of Heaven?-The dispute of Korach and his entire company." Korach and his assemblage suffered a drastic death for their dispute against Hashem. How are we to somewhat understand the difference between the Machlokes of Korach, and the Machlokes of Hillel and Shammai that the Mishna considers one which is for the "Sake of Heaven". Upon learning Torah She' bal peh-the Oral Law, one is constantly faced with disputes between the Tannaim-the Rabbonim of the Mishna, or between the Amara'im-the Rabbanim of the Gemara. It is with regard to these disputes, that the Mishna states that it is "Lesheim Shamayim"-for the sake of Heaven. The Maharal in Derech Chaim explains the quality that differentiates between these disputes and those that are not "Lesheim Shamayim". The Gemara in Mesechta Gittin teaches us the reality of "Eilu Ve'eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim," that both sides of the dispute are the words of Hashem. Superficially this concept would seem difficult to comprehend. How is it possible for both sides of the dispute to be considered valid? It would seem that only one right way exists, hence the other side should be considered a distortion of Truth. But the Maharal teaches us, that as long as the parties of the Machlokes are learning the Torah according to the rules established by Hashem at Sinai, both have an expression in Torah. When the Yetzer Hara to serve Avodah Zarah-idol worship existed, this represented the distorted capacity to "See" and physically relate to G-d. The spiritual counterpart was Nevuah-prophecy, where the Navi experienced a vision and was Zoche to "See" a realm beyond. Both abilities must exist, for in our world of Bechira-freedom of choice, if one side would dominate, then the scales would be tipped to that realm and the Will of Hashem would not be accomplished. When the members of the Great Assembly abolished the evil inclination for idol worship, the era of Nevuah came to an end. In place of Man seeing wisdom external to himself, Man now became the source of wisdom. Torah She'bal peh is the spiritual and holy counterpart to the secular wisdom of mankind. In a sense, Hashem handed over the Chochma of the Written Law to the Binah of the Talmudei Chachomim who are involved in the pursuit of Torah She'bal peh. Torah She'bichsav is thus to be defined according to the intellect of the Rabbanim of the Mishna and the Gemara. If during the course of their learning, which must be done exactly according to the rules established by Hashem for learning Torah She'bal peh, there develops a Machlokes, there is no problem. Both have an expression in Torah. Perhaps the Avodah of one generation will have a certain flavor and the Psak will be according to one of the sides, while in a different generation the Halacha would follow the other. We generally follow the decisions of Bais Hillel, but during the End of Days, it will be to the words of Bais Shammai that we will adhere to. The spiritual destiny of Klal Yisrael is to be considered a large tapestry composed of different eras and their specific decisions. But it is in the foundation of Torah She'bal peh which differentiates its

disputes, with the other arguments in the history of Klal Yisrael. The foundation for this aspect of Torah She'bal peh lies in its inherent pursuit of the Absolute Truth of the Will of Hashem. There are no personalities involved, but rather an intellectual honesty that will legitimately carry the seeker to whatever conclusion it might be. There is no sense of agenda, and therefore both Hillel and Shammai are holy, and both are an integral Chelek of Torah. It is here where we can begin to understand the distortion of Korach. The passuk teaches us that Moshe told Korach, "Please listen sons of Levi, is it but a pittance for yourselves that the G-d of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel to bring you closer to Him to perform the services of the Mishkan of Hashem. He brought you near with all of your brethren the sons of Levi with you, and yet you ask to be Kohanim as well?" Korach wanted something for himself, and thus there existed an element of self-centeredness in his Machlokes. It wasn't the holy pursuit to ascertain the True Will of Hashem, but rather the desire of an individual to attain a measure of glory and self-aggrandizement. It was therefore condemned to failure. In our complex world, there are many causes deemed virtuous that are trumpeted by seemingly worthy proponents. There are differences of opinion which could develop into Machlokes. The measure of a dispute Lesheim Shamayim lies in the total absence of the quality of "Self," with regard to the players involved. May we be Zoche to appreciate the difference between the holy dispute of Hillel and Shammai with the virulent Machlokes of Korach against Hashem.

From: Yated USA [yated-usa@ttec.com] Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 5:31 PM Subject: Yated USA, 06-13-2002
PARSHA PERSPECTIVES-PARSHAS KORACH: BLIND AMBITION
BY RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Ahava Mekalkeles es HaShurah. Love is blind. So is hate. And so is any principle that begins to blur the intellect with skewed emotion. In what appears to be the worst ideological division of the Jewish people after the yetzias mitzrayim, a litmus test of human nature proved that the great divide bordered more on ego than on principle. Korach, a cousin of Moshe and a brilliant man in his own right, began a rebellion that challenged the leadership and Divine appointment of both Moshe and Aharon. In addition to his own family, Korach's iconoclastic actions inspired 250 Jewish leaders to publicly denounce the leadership of Moshe and Aharon. Foremost among the self-appointed detractors were two men with a history of vindictive activities toward Moshe-Dassan and Aviram. Back in Mitzrayim, when Moshe killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating an innocent Jew, these men threatened to inform the Egyptian authorities. But Moshe wanted to deal with them. As leader of two million people, he could have laughed at the complaints of a minute fraction of the population, but he didn't. He reached out to Dassan and Aviram and asked them to come and discuss their qualms with him. His request was met with a barrage of insults. "Even if you gouge out our eyes-we shall not meet!" they responded (Bamidbar 16:14) I was always amazed at this most arrogant response. Why did these men, who obviously were stubborn, arrogant, and supercilious, respond in a self-deprecating manner? Why did they suggest the horrific infliction of eye-gouging upon themselves? Would it not be enough to respond, even to the worst of enemies, "we will not come?" What connection does the loss of vision have with their refusal?

Reb Gimpel, a traveling salesman, developed an illness in a small village far from his home and was prescribed with a cure that required the eating of non-kosher food. A foreigner in that town, he decided to ask the local rabbi if he was permitted to eat the medicine. The gentle doctor did not know where the rabbi lived and suggested that Reb Gimpel ask the local butcher. Reb Gimpel went into the butcher shop. "Excuse me," he asked the burly meat vendor, "do you know where I can find your rabbi?" "The rabbi!" sneered the butcher, "why would a respectable-looking man like yourself need our rabbi?" The man was puzzled but continued to explain. "I'd like to ask him something. "Ask him something!" mocked the butcher. "Our rabbi doesn't know the difference between a horse and a cow! You're wasting your time! Ask

the chazzan where he lives, I have no reason to tell you." The shocked man went to the chazzan's home. "Excuse me," he asked. Do you know where the rabbi lives?" "The rabbi?" asked the cantor in horror. "Why in the world would you want to meet that ignoramus? Surely you don't want to ask him a question! I wouldn't want to be party to your misfortune. Better ask the mohel." Frustrated the poor man went to the home of the mohel where once again he was accosted with a barrage of insults and put-downs. Finally, however, the mohel acquiesced and directed the man to the rabbi's home. The man crossed the threshold and before he even shook the rabbi's hand he exclaimed, "Listen, I don't know you, and you don't me. I came here to ask one question, but I will ask you something totally different. Why are you the rabbi here? The butcher thinks you're a thief, the chazzan thinks you're an ignoramus, and the mohel loathes you. Why in the world do you remain the rabbi of this town?" The rabbi looked up from his bifocals and smiled. "Ah! The insults, the abuse and the criticism. But you know what: for a little kavod it's all worth it!" As the proverbial rabble-rousers of all time, Dassan and Aviram were preaching profound insight into the laws of arrogance. When one is set on a self-fulfilling mission of squabbling, as corrupt and perverted as his judgement is, so is his vision. He is blind to the critics, blind to the world, and worst of all, blind to his own self. Once a man is blind, you can gouge his eyes and he will not notice. Only those with a pure sense of mission possess the vision to see a situation from every aspect-even if it differs from their own. Moshe asked to meet his worst enemies and try to see their point of view. His myopic enemies, however, would rather be blinded. But I guess for a little bit of principle, it's worth it. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Associate Dean of Yeshiva South Shore and the author of the Parsha Parable series.

From: Yated USA [yated-usa@ttec.com] Sent: Thursday, June 13, 2002 5:31 PM
To: Yated Subscribers
FLOWERS AND ALMONDS
BY RAV NOCHUM EISENSTEIN LAKEWOOD, NJ
Vayotzei ferach vayatzeit tzitz vayigmol shkeidim, "Aharon's rod budded and blossomed and bore ripe almonds" (Bamidbar 17:23). After Korach's rebellion was crushed, Hashem provided a sign to strengthen Moshe's authority. Each shevet provided a stick, which was placed in the Mishkan. The next morning, Aharon's stick alone had blossomed with flowers and ripe almonds. The Jews, who had witnessed the miracles that occurred during Korach's rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership, still harbored ill feelings. This nes of the almonds placed a moratorium on the issue. The question is how and why. There certainly was no shortage of nissim at that time. Bnei Yisrael experienced the makkos in Mitzrayim. They lived through the splitting of the sea (yam suf). They ate manna. They saw the earth open up and swallow Korach and his entire crew. So what was so spectacular about the rod of Aharon blooming and bearing ripe almonds that allayed everyone's concerns? What initially prompted Korach's rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu? Rashi (16:1) quotes a Midrash that suggests that Korach became envious of the appointment of his cousin, Elizaphan ben Uziel. Korach argued that his father, Yitzhar, was one of four brothers, all sons of Kehas. Amram, the oldest, saw two of his children, Moshe and Aharon, receive high positions. Next in line should have been the children of Yizhar, the second oldest. Moshe, however, skipped Yitzhar's son, Korach, and appointed Elizaphan the son of Uziel, the youngest of the four brothers. Korach thus reasoned that Moshe was being unfair and rebelled against him. The foregoing, though, requires a shift in our attitude for understanding great people, of whom Korach was one. Great people, especially those of whom the Torah makes mention, did not commit simple crimes as we understand them. These individuals were well above such activity. Korach's opening salvo against Moshe Rabbeinu provides the background for his position. Korach contested Moshe's regime on the grounds that "kol haedah kulam kedoshim," "The entire community is holy" (16:3). All of Klal Yisrael were princely and deserved the right to do the avodah; it should not be limited to a few elite or special people. Each Jew should have an equal opportunity. After all, the Jews were all great people had they not all witnessed the giving of the Torah? The entire Jewish Nation had achieved a very high level. Indeed, the Mechilta informs us that during the splitting of theyam suf simple servants perceived a level of prophecy far greater than that of the Navi Yechezkel. Korach therefore did not understand why it was necessary for Moshe Rabbeinu to act as leader of the Jews. Korach's notion definitely had crossed the minds of many people. They, however, unlike Korach, reasoned that because Hashem had chosen Moshe as their leader, had appointed Aharon to do the avodah, and had provided the rest of the family with various positions, there must be due cause. Having a strong sense of emunah, they let the matter go.

Even Korach would have relented had it not been for his personal agenda. Logically, the question was a valid one. Korach, however, allowed himself to read into his youngest cousin's appointment a fulfillment of Moshe Rabbeinu's personal agenda rather than its deriving from a divine directive. Although at first glance Korach's idea was not totally preposterous, he ultimately would have judged it as a directive of Hashem had it not been for the interference of his personal attitude. The strong feeling that everyone should have been allowed to perform the avodah certainly conditioned everyone to think and expect that to be the case. The appointment of Bnei Levi was a letdown for all of them. Under such circumstances, a person needs to exercise an extra ounce of strength and caution to disallow these emotions from taking hold and cause an irrational reaction. Korach seemingly did not take this step and fell into the trap. In the course of his rebellion Korach managed to rile up a lot of people. They all did not necessarily agree in full with his position, but became upset enough to allow their emotions to rule over rational thinking and joined him, a sort of mob psychology. Acceding to Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership only minimized the open rebellion, but deep down in their hearts they harbored ill feelings. True, they saw many nissim, but somehow they felt that Moshe Rabbeinu-not Korach-was the cause of the rift. Although Moshe's position was at Hashem's directive, they still felt that perhaps Moshe lobbied for his extended family to receive special attention and overlooked the rest of Klal Yisrael. These thoughts and feelings were certainly in the air. When Hashem first appeared to Moshe Rabbeinu in Midyan and suggested he lead the Jews out of Mitzrayim, Moshe initially refused the offer. Not because he did not want to help, but because he felt that this would cause anguish to his older brother Aharon. Aharon had enjoyed the privilege of being the manhig (leader) of the Jews for eighty years, and to turn it over willingly to another person, especially a younger brother who had been absent for so long, certainly would cause him anguish. Although Aharon would readily have done so because it was for the benefit of the Jews, nevertheless, Moshe felt, that deep down there would be feelings of hurt. On this basis, Moshe refused the offer. Hashem convinced Moshe that his assumption was incorrect. Aharon was above such feelings and emotions. He would not only readily hand over the mantle of leadership to Moshe, but would do so with a happy heart. As the pasuk states: "He will come out to greet you with a happy heart" (Shemos 4:14). Imagine the effort that Aharon exerted to have such self-control. Who else could have handed over with joy his position to his younger brother? Rashi informs us that because of this trait, Aharon merited becoming the Kohan who carried the Urim V'tumim on his heart. He was able to feel for his brother's "klal Yisrael." He was the appropriate one to be able to seek forgiveness for the People. His heart was full of love for everyone. This is how Aharon earned the kehunah. Aharon's appointment as Kohen Gadol was not coincidental; he had proved himself worthy for this position. Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l, the revered Lakewood Mashgiach, explained that this was the meaning of the almonds that grew from Aharon's rod. And this ended all misgivings about Moshe's "appointments." There were no "appointments;" everyone had earned his position. If you seed and plant you can expect growth. If you don't, nothing will grow. The growth from Aharon's stick was a metaphor for the seeding and planting that Aharon had done. He had exercised great effort to refine his character and develop such sterling traits. He was not appointed in the sense of an "automatic" job; he had fully earned his position. No one else had expended or exerted himself to this degree. After seeing this, everyone clearly understood exactly what had transpired. It was thus not the nes of the almonds but rather the lesson that they portrayed: if you exert yourself and develop the proper middos, then you merit your position. It is not by chance that people obtain greatness; it takes hard work.

Ish The awful midda of jealousy.

"Vayikach Korach ben Yitzhar-And Korach ben Yitzhar took himself...(16:1) Much has been written by chazal about the nobility of Korach and his followers. In fact, according to some meforshim, the Torah testifies to this saying, "for the entire assembly is holy" (16:3). Nevertheless, in this article we will focus on the negative aspect of Korach's revolt. Rashi: Korach separated himself from the assembly to challenge the validity of the Jewish hierarchy that Moshe had laid down. What prompted Korach to challenge Moshe? Rashi explains that Korach was jealous because Moshe had appointed Elitzafan ben Uziel as the leader of the Kehas family. Although Moshe was simply following Hashem's orders, Korach felt that the position should have been his. Korach's envy of Elitzafan ben Uziel was so great that he decided to rebel against Moshe's authority. The lesson we must take from Korach's awful behavior is an important one: jealousy inevitably leads to dissention. Through his jealousy Korach managed to light the fire of one of the fiercest attacks against Jewish authority. Moreover, Korach was also able to recruit two hundred and fifty men to join his rebellion and ridicule Moshe in an effort to undermine the latter's leadership. He led his followers to believe that Moshe was not necessarily a messenger of HaKadosh Boruch Hu but perhaps just a power-hungry individual. In essence, Korach caused doubt as to the divinity of the Torah as well, since, in his view, Moshe may not have received the Torah from HaShem. Korach's end must also serve as a lesson. The Torah tells us that, along with the members of his household, Korach was swallowed up in the ground while the two hundred and fifty men who joined him

were consumed by fire. This is because, as R' Elazar HaKappor said, "Jealousy, lust and seeking honor remove a person from this world." (Avos 4:21) This lesson is also expressed in the Zohar in the opening pasuk of our parsha: "One who seeks what is not his, in effect, chases himself away from it, as well as from what is his already." While all the evil character traits are manifestations of self-centeredness and stem from the desire for personal gain, jealousy is even worse, for a jealous person also desires his friend's downfall. The envious man is angry that others have what he does not. His own shortcomings would not be such a great source of anguish for him were it not that his friend has found success. Some meforshim suggest that this is the meaning of the pasuk in Koheles: "Sweet is the sleep of the laborer, whether he eats little or much; the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep." (5:11) In other words, were it not for the satiety of the rich, the laborer would sleep peacefully regardless of whether he has much or little. That said, we can now understand the pasuk in parshas Bereishis where HaKadosh Boruch Hu asks Kayin "Why are you annoyed, and why has your countenance fallen?" (4:6) What did HaShem mean by this question? Was it not natural for Kayin to be upset after his offering was refused? Rather, HaKadosh Boruch Hu was asking Kayin to admit the true reason for his sorrow. "Is it because your offering was refused or because your brother's was accepted? If you are annoyed because you were unable to reach your goals, fine, but if it is due to Hevel's success, that is unacceptable." According to the Orchos Tzaddikim a jealous person robs himself of life. "He is perpetually annoyed and his jealousy distorts his ability to think in a rational manner. This, in turn, deprives him of the peace of mind necessary to learn Torah, pray or perform good deeds. Every man takes pleasure in his food except for the envious one who cannot enjoy his food until it is taken away from his friend." How does one combat jealousy? Through the realization that HaKadosh Boruch Hu is the sole Provider. An individual must understand that Hashem provided him with whatever he has and that he will never have more than he is supposed to have. If he considers this, he will not have the impulse to compare his lot to that of others, as he knows full well that one has no impact on the other. Although it may not feel that way all the time, Hashem gives each person whatever is necessary for him to properly serve his Creator and that this, after all, is the reason why he was put into this world. If one were to focus on the purpose of life instead of on the tools given him for that purpose, he would free himself of any feelings of jealousy. This is the message that Moshe conveyed to Korach and his assembly when he said, "In the morning Hashem will make known..." (16:5) The Midrash teaches that Moshe was stressing to Korach that Hashem made the world with borders and limitations which are unchangeable. We should not concern ourselves with how our situation compares to that of others, for this is something we cannot change. Rather, we should emulate the sun and the moon that do their jobs happily while staying within their respective borders of night and day.

Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshitz was once a guest in a certain shul on Yom Kippur evening and was honored with a seat in the front of the shul beside a very respectable-looking man. The man prayed very intently. R' Yonasan could hear him crying as he uttered the words "I am but dust during my lifetime and will surely be so in my death..." He continued that way for a while even after the rest of the congregation had concluded the prayer. After davening, the gabbai approached the man to inform him as to which aliyah he would receive the next morning. R' Yonasan could hear that the man was incensed. "Are you out of your mind?" he said. "I deserve to get shlishi or shishi at least! Who in this shul is more important than I?" R' Yonasan was utterly shocked. He went over to the man and said, "I don't understand. Just a few moments ago I heard you crying bitterly that you were but dust and ash and now you are trying to convince the gabbai that you are the most important person in the congregation!" "What I said to the Ribono Shel Olam does not concern the gabbai," the man retorted. "I said what I said, but that doesn't make anyone here deserve shlishi more than I do!" The message is self-explanatory.

Distancing oneself from controversy. "Vayikach Korach ben Yitzhar-And Korach ben Yitzhar took himself...(16:1) Rashi: Korach separated himself from the assembly to challenge the validity of the Jewish hierarchy that Moshe had laid down.

Like Rashi, Targum Unkelos interprets the opening word of our parsha, "vayikach" as "he divided." Korach divorced himself from the rest of the assembly in order to enter into a dispute. "See how terrible dissension is!" says the Midrash, "If one promotes conflict, Hashem will erase his memory. As the pasuk says, 'And a flame came forward from Hashem and consumed the two hundred and fifty men...'" R' Brachia says that the sin of divisiveness is so dreadful that even young children-punishable neither by a human court (prior to bar mitzvah) nor the heavenly one (until age twenty)-are sentenced to die if they are involved in it. Even the newborn babies of parents who took part in Korach's rebellion were swallowed up when the ground opened. (Midrash Rabba 18:4) The story of Korach and his assembly serves as an important lesson in terms of the dreadfulness of controversy and disunity. The Shla"h HaKadosh points out that neither the righteousness of Korach's offspring nor his own prominence as one of the bearers of the Aron HaKodesh made him immune to the full

punishment that he deserved. As soon as he and Dasan and Aviram argued with Moshe and Aron, they brought about not only their own end but the demise of all their followers as well. Why is it that the young babies who played no part in the conflict deserved to die? To explain this, Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz quotes the Ramban's comments on the pasuk in parshas Netzavim: "Perhaps there is among you a root flourishing with gall and wormwood." (29:17) The Ramban explains that when a bad root flourishes it grows into a bad plant. A problem that stems from the root cannot be corrected at a later time; it must be removed immediately. A child's roots are his parents and a child from bad roots will grow up to be like his parents. It is for this reason that *bais din* is commanded to put the ben sorer u'moreh to death as soon as he shows signs of rebelliousness. The ben sorer u'moreh inherited his evil characteristics from his parents and the chances of improving innate attributes are close to none. Thus, the Torah dictates that "it is preferable that he die while not guilty rather than when liable." (Sanhedrin 70B). Likewise, explains R' Chaim Shmulevitz, the infant children of Dasan and Aviram had to die because they stemmed from dissident and contentious roots. Had they been allowed to live, these young children would have grown to be like their parents, or worse, since they would also have been nurtured in a dissenting environment. Thus, like the ben sorer u'moreh, it was preferable that they die innocent rather than grow into instigators of conflict. "See how terrible dissension is-see how dissenting roots can flourish into entire families of contentious people such that HaKadosh Boruch Hu has no choice but to wipe out their memory from the very start. (Sichos Mussar vol.2, 33rd discourse) Another indication of the degree to which discord is to be avoided is the absence of the words "ki tov-it was good" in the Torah's description of the second day of creation. In contrast to the other six days of creation, HaKadosh Boruch Hu did not see complete goodness on the second day since "there was a separation between water and water." (Breishis 4:6) The division of waters symbolized strife, and, regardless of the advantages of this separation, it could not be called good. "If a division which benefited the entire universe cannot be considered good, how much worse is a conflict whose objective is to cause turmoil in the world! (Midrash Rabba 4:6) Finally, sefer Shay'l Torah quotes Rabbi E. England, zt"l, who suggests that the negative aspects of Monday may be the reason why we recite the psalm composed by the sons of Korach on that day. Monday, the second day of creation, is the day of the week that strife was put into this world and that ultimately led to Korach's rebellion. In an effort to correct the harm caused by Korach's rebellion we recite this psalm to stress the fact Korach's sons distanced themselves from controversy. They followed Moshe Rabbeinu and said, "Great is Hashem..." (Tehillim 48:2) It is told that the Ponivezher Rov, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahanamen, went to great lengths to avoid disputes. During one of his trips to England for the benefit of his yeshiva, a certain individual got out of control and began to curse and insult the Rov in public. The observers were utterly shocked; they did not know how to react. The local rabbis wanted to excommunicate the man as halacha dictates, but the Rov beseeched them to simply forget the entire incident rather than punish him. The rabbis were surprised. They understood that the Ponivezher Rov was a humble man, but, why should a man who disparages a talmid chacham not be punished according to halacha? "Please understand my situation," the Rov started to explain. "Years ago the Chofetz Chaim told me that I would be successful in virtually all of my endeavors except in disputes that might arise. He assured me that, however hard I tried, I would never win an argument. Therefore, it is my practice never to allow myself to even get involved in one..." (The Ponivezher Rov) R' Shnier Zalmon of Liadi (the Ba'al Hatanya) and R' Boruch of mezhbezh, (the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov), were involved in an ongoing ideological dispute. There were those who tried desperately to make peace between the two parties, but their efforts proved futile. R' Boruch once commented on his dispute with the Ba'al HaTanya, saying that when Yaakov Avinu tried to assuage his brother Esav, he sent messengers ahead of him to speak to Esav but they achieved nothing. The messengers returned to inform Yaakov that Esav was coming with four hundred troops to wage war against him. However, surprisingly enough, once Yaakov and Esav met they managed to make peace between themselves. "This teaches us," said R' Boruch, "that if one truly wants to make peace with his adversaries he must meet with them face to face and both must commit themselves to change." (Iturei Torah) Before moving to Eretz Yisroel, R' Aron HaKohein, zt"l, was warned by his father-in-law, the Chofetz Chaim, not to sleep even a single night in a particular city which was ridden with controversy. R' Aron was well aware of his father-in-law's caution in these matters and promised the Chofetz Chaim that he would never stay in that city. Years later R' Aron visited the city in question and met an old friend from the Radin Yeshiva who was overjoyed to see him. "Please come to my home; I can put you up for a few days," he said. R' Aron explained to the man that he would love to spend some time with him but had promised his father-in-law that he would never spend a night in that city. (Meir Einey Yisroel)

The mitzvah of bikur cholim-visiting the sick.
 "Im k'mos kol ha'adam yemusun eileh ufkudas kol ha'adam yipaked aleyhem lo HaShem shlochoni-If these men die like the death of all men, and the destiny of all men is visited upon them, then it is not Hashem Who has sent me." (16:29)

Raish Lakish finds a hint regarding the mitzvah of visiting the sick in the pasuk above were it to be read as follows: If these men will die an ordinary death, namely, they will be sick and bedridden, and if they are visited by others, then what will the visitors say? "It is not Hashem who has sent me!" Rava explains that this was the expression Moshe used to describe a natural death. Likewise, given that the visitors visited the people while they were still sick, they would be able to declare that they died "the death of all men." (Nedarim 39B) Chazzal teach us that the mitzvah of bikur cholim has no fixed measure. There is some discussion in the gemara as to which aspect of bikur cholim is limitless. Abayei maintains that chazzal mean to convey that there are no restrictions or exemptions to the mitzvah of bikur cholim. A distinguished individual has the mitzvah to visit someone who has less social status than he just as he is obligated to visit his peers. Rava is of the opinion that the mitzvah of bikur cholim is limitless because one can fulfill this mitzvah even a hundred times a day. The gemara in Nedarim teaches that one should not visit a person who has an intestinal illness lest he feel the need to excuse himself in the middle of the visit but would be too embarrassed to do so. Visiting a person with a headache or an eye problem is also not recommended since talking will increase the sick person's pain. The gemara also says that one should not visit a sick person during the first three hours of the day, when he usually feels a little better, or during the last three hours of the day, when his pain is heightened. (40A & 41A)

The guidelines that chazzal set down for us teach us that when trying to perform the mitzvah of bikur cholim our primary consideration must be the feelings of the sick person. Before setting out to do the mitzvah we must take a moment to think about whether or not the person who is unwell would appreciate the visit rather than let ourselves get carried away with our own desire to perform the mitzvah. A visit to a sick person should absolutely not be a burden to him as that would obviously defeat the purpose. In his will, R' Eliezer HaGadol writes to his children that, when visiting the sick, they should "never allow their presence to inconvenience the sick person as the illness is stressful enough. Likewise, the Rambam writes that it is a mitzvah to visit the sick even numerous times a day the more often the better-as long as it is not an inconvenience to the one who is ill. The Rambam's words seem to imply that it is preferable to make frequent short visits rather than a few lengthy ones. As well, this might be what Rava meant when he said "even a hundred times a day...". While it is not certain that this was the intention of the Rambam, many have observed that the practice of our gedolim was just that. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, for example, used to keep his visits between three and four minutes long. He explained to his disciples that, in light of the gemara's instructions not to visit the sick during the first and last three hours of the day, there remains only six hours, or 360 minutes, during which visits can be made. If we were to follow the opinion of Rava, who says that bikur cholim can be performed even a hundred times a day, that leaves 3.6 minutes for each visit. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman saw this as an indication as to how long a standard visit should be. One Yom Kippur morning, in the *bais medrash* of the rebbe, R' Sholom Belzer, zt"l, the *shliach tzibbur* for shacharis came to shul very late. By the time he arrived, the congregation had already completed *psukei d'zimra* and was waiting for him to begin "HaMelech." The *shliach tzibbur* went straight to the *amud* and began "HaMelech" without reciting *psukei d'zimra*. This surprised the congregants since, as we know, the gemara says clearly that it is highly inappropriate to begin praying without reciting *psukei d'zimra*. "It is as though the Ribono Shel Olam says, 'If I am indeed the King, where have you been until now?' " (Gittin 56A) When shacharis was over, the rebbe approached the *shliach tzibbur* and said to him, "What was it about your shacharis today?" Under the impression that the rebbe was about to reprimand him for his tardiness and for beginning his prayer at "Hamelech," the *shliach tzibbur* became flustered and tried to explain the reason for his lateness. "A guest in my home became very ill and desperately needed my help," he said. "I had to prepare some hot water for him and feed him some medicine but then I came here as soon as I could..." Hearing this, the rebbe smiled and said, "I could sense that you had done something very special today because your *tefila* was unusually moving." (Sippurei Chassidim, Moadim) There was a time when Rabbi Moshe Feinstein used to make a detour on his way home from shul on shabbos mornings in order to visit a chronically ill man. R' Moshe once explained to the man who accompanied him that visiting this person was a very special mitzvah since, over time, people tend to forget about the chronically ill. There was another man in a New York hospital who was shocked when he saw R' Moshe come into his room. He obviously recognized R' Moshe, but he also knew that R' Moshe did not know him. The man asked R' Moshe why he had come, and R' Moshe explained, "I had heard about an elderly man in this hospital who had absolutely no visitors, so I came to see him. Now that I am here, I decided to visit the others who are hospitalized here." A son of one of the first Israeli police officers became very ill and the family feared that his life would soon end. The police officer, who had a personal relationship with R' Aryeh Levin, went to ask the latter to pray for his son's recovery and R' Aryeh encouraged the man, telling him, "Don't you worry, there is a terrific Doctor up in heaven!" A few days later, when the man went to see his son, the nurse on duty said to him, "Tell me, who is that man with the white beard who comes to visit your son at five o'clock every morning?" The identity of the man with the white beard was a mystery to the

police officer as well, until he finally discovered that R' Aryeh was making daily visits to the hospital. (A Tzaddik in Our Time)

From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] o: weekly-halacha@torah.org
Subject: Parshas Korach
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5762 By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

THE MITZVAH OF MEZUZAH: THE BASIC OBLIGATION

THE OBLIGATION It is a Biblical obligation for all adults, men and women(1), to affix a mezuzah to the right post of each doorway of their home. One who fails to do so transgresses a positive command(2). Although a mezuzah also protects a home(3) and safeguards the well-being of one's little children(4), this is by no means the primary reason for the mezuzah. The intention that one must have when affixing the mezuzah to the doorpost must be "for the sake of the mitzvah of mezuzah(5)." Indeed, some poskim mention that it is prohibited to consciously have in mind that the mezuzah is for the purpose of protection. Such an intention detracts from the essential character of a mitzvah, which is to fulfill Hashem's will with no other considerations(6). Many poskim hold that it is Rabbinically prohibited to live in a home which does not have proper mezuzos, just as it is prohibited to wear a four-cornered garment without tzitzit(7). These poskim rule that if another house is available, one must move out of his home as soon as he realizes that it is lacking proper mezuzos(8). He is permitted to temporarily remain in his home only if he is unable to obtain a mezuzah immediately, or if he found out on Shabbos that his home has no mezuzah(9). Other poskim are somewhat more lenient and do not require the residents to move out if they have already moved in(10). All agree that the problem must be rectified immediately. There is absolutely no excuse for delaying the purchase and placement of a mezuzah for several days or weeks. One may enter another Jew's home even though there are no mezuzos on his door(11). It is clearly prohibited to nail a mezuzah case to a door-post on Shabbos and Yom Tov(12). If the mezuzah case was nailed in before Shabbos or Yom Tov and remains intact, but the mezuzah parchment fell out, some poskim permit replacing the mezuzah in the case while others prohibit it(13). In any event, the mezuzah parchment does not become muktzeh and it may be picked up so that it does not lie on the floor in disgrace(14).

WHEN DOES THE OBLIGATION OF MEZUZAH BEGIN? Contrary to what is commonly believed, the obligation begins as soon as one moves into his own home. By the first day or night that a home will be occupied, or by the first day or night that an addition to a home will be used, every doorway must have a mezuzah. [Indeed, many poskim hold that one should not affix a mezuzah before actually moving into a house(15) (even though he owns it and plans to move in in the near future), and certainly the blessing should not be recited until the actual move(16). Other poskim hold that once he has moved his belongings into the house, the mezuzah may be affixed with a blessing(17).] It is only when one rents [or borrows] a home from another person [outside of Eretz Yisrael] that a thirty-day(18) waiting period is allowed until one becomes obligated to affix a mezuzah(19). The Rishonim argue as to the reason for this exemption. Rashi(20) explains that until thirty days have elapsed, one can easily change his mind about the rental; thus the house is not really "his" until thirty days are over. Tosfos explains that the first thirty days of residence are considered as "temporary dwelling," and temporary dwelling does not obligate one to affix a mezuzah. Based on Rashi's explanation, it follows that when a long-term contract is signed which legally obligates the renter for an extended period of time, then the obligation of mezuzah takes effect immediately(21). Moreover, if upon moving into the house, the renter fixes it up in a manner which shows that he is planning to remain there for a long while, logic dictates that a mezuzah be put up and the proper blessing recited. This, indeed, is the view of some poskim(22), and one may conduct himself in accordance with this view(23). But many poskim advise that although the mezuzah should be affixed immediately upon moving in, the blessing should not be recited until the thirty-day period is up(24). At that time, it is proper to remove one mezuzah, recite the blessing, and return the mezuzah to its proper place. If it is difficult or bothersome to do so, then the mezuzah need not be removed; merely touching it is sufficient for the blessing to be recited(25). [An exception to this is when one rents a bungalow or a summer home for a short stay. In such a case, the poskim agree that thirty days should elapse before a mezuzah is affixed(26).] If the thirty-day period is up on Shabbos or Yom Tov, the mezuzah should be

affixed on erev Shabbos or erev Yom Tov before lighting candles. The blessing should be recited at that time(27).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Y.D. 291:3. 2 Sefer ha-Chinuch 423. See Menachos 44a where it states that two positive commands are transgressed. See also Teshuvos Binyan Tziyon 7. 3 Tur Y.D. 285 based on Avodah Zarah 11a. 4 Shabbos 32b. 5 Tur Y.D. 285; Aruch ha-Shulchan 285:3. 6 Sdei Chemed (Mem, 114) quoting Derech ha-Melech, based on Rambam (Hilchos Mezuzah 5:4) and Kesef Mishneh, ibid. See also Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:141 who explains this issue at length. 7 Magen Avraham O.C. 13:8 as explained by Pri Megadim O.C. 38:15; Avnei Nezer Y.D. 381. 8 It remains unclear if in the opinion of these poskim one needs to move to a friend's home or to rent a hotel room in order to avoid this prohibition. 9 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 285:1 quoting Pri Megadim; Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 285:5; Ben Ish Chai (Ki Savo). 10 See Sdei Chemed (Mem, 115), Kuntres ha-Mezuzah (pg. 6 and pg. 128) and Tzitz Eliezer 13:53 who quote several poskim who hold that the Rabbis did not prohibit entering a house that has no mezuzah nor did they require one to move out of his dwelling when he realizes that there is a problem with the mezuzah. 11 Sdei Chemed (Mem, 115) quoting Ruach Chayim. 12 Mishnah Berurah 313:41; 314:8. 13 Sdei Chemed (Mem, 115) quotes both views. See Binyan Shabbos, pg. 27 for an explanation. Tzitz Eliezer 13:53 rules leniently, while Mezuzas Melachim 286:19 is stringent. 14 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Shalmei Yehudah, pg. 28). 15 See Chovas ha-Dar 9:1. 16 Mishnah Berurah 19:4. This is the proper way; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfei 2:80). 17 Harav C. Kaniewsky (Mezuzos Bei'secha 276:78) quoting the Chazon Ish. This also seems to be the view of the Aruch ha-Shulchan O.C. 19:2. 18 Moving day, even if it is close to night, is counted as day number 1. Thus 29 days later, the obligation takes effect. 19 Y.D. 286:22 20 Menachos 44a. 21 Siddur Derech ha-Chayim quoted in Pischei Teshuvah 286:18. 22 Several poskim quoted in Sdei Chemed (Mem, 115) and Chovas ha-Dar, pg. 31. 23 Aruch ha-Shulchan 286:49. See also Chayei Adam 15:22. 24 Pischei Teshuvah 286:18; Nachalas Tzvi; Sdei Chemed (Mem, 115); Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:179. 25 Igros Moshe, ibid. 26 Igros Moshe, ibid. 27 Kuntres ha-Mezuzah, pg. 82. Another option is to nail the mezuzah case to the post before Shabbos and insert the mezuzah on Shabbos (Chikrei Leiv Y.D. 128). But, as stated earlier, some poskim do not allow this on Shabbos. Weekly-Halacha, Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. The author, Rabbi Neustadt, is the principal of Yavne Teachers' College in Cleveland, Ohio. He is also the Magid Shiur of a daily Mishna Berurah class at Congregation Shomre Shabbos. The Weekly-Halacha Series is distributed L'zchus Doniel Meir ben Hinda. Weekly sponsorships are available - please mail to jgross+@torah.org . Torah.org depends upon your support. Please visit <http://torah.org/support/> or write to dedications@torah.org or donations@torah.org . Thank you! Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 203 Baltimore, MD 21208