

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KORACH - 5764

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org]
"RavFrاند" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach

The Mitzvah of Machlokes Is The Exception To The Rule
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.

The Symbolism of the Almonds

Toward the end of the parsha we learn of the incident whereby Moshe Rabbeinu collected staffs from the leaders of each of the Tribes, in order to demonstrate which leader was chosen by G-d to be the High Priest. "It shall be that the man whom I shall choose - his staff will blossom; and I shall cause to subside from upon Me the complaints of the Children of Israel, which they complain against you" [Bamidbar 17:20].

"It was the next day, Moses came to the Tent of the Testimony and behold! The staff of Aaron of the house of Levi had blossomed. It brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and developed almonds" [Bamidbar 17:23]. The Chumash commentators wonder about the symbolism of almonds. Why of all the fruits in the world did Aaron's staff specifically grow almonds?

I saw the following insight given by Rav Shlomo Zalman HaKohen Kook:

The Talmud in Brochos discusses whether the appropriate blessing for bitter almonds is "She'hakol" or "Borei Peri haEtz." The Rishonim there comment that there are two types of almonds. There are certain almonds that are sweet when they are small and have just begun to ripen. However these same almonds become bitter when left on the tree to fully ripen. Another type of almond is just the opposite. They are bitter when they begin to ripen, however they turn sweet when they are fully ripened. These variant almonds represent the difference between machlokes and shalom [peace]. It is unfortunate to say this, but when a machlokes begins, it generates a certain excitement (geshmak!). However, when it persists and more and more people become involved and more and more people get hurt, the machlokes becomes extremely bitter. This is the end of every machlokes: everyone is hurt. Machlokes can be compared to those almonds that start out sweet but eventually turn bitter.

Shalom, on the other hand, is just the reverse. Making peace between warring factions is very difficult. Both sides have to compromise and bury the hatchet. Initially, this is not easy at all. It is hard to say "I'm

sorry". It is hard to forgive perceived wrongs. It is bitter. But, once the peace is established, things turn out to be sweet in the end.

This is the symbolism of almonds on Aaron's staff. There are two types. The type that starts sweet and becomes bitter is characteristic of every dispute. Peace is symbolized by the other type of almond - the kind that is very bitter at the beginning, but yields very sweet fruit in the end.

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SALT!! ("Surf A Little Torah")

RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Sunday, 24 Sivan 5764 – June 13, 2004

The opening verse of Parashat Korach introduces us to On ben Pelet, a man from the tribe of Reuven who is said to have joined Korach in his revolt against Moshe's authority. Curiously, however, On is never mentioned again after this first verse. The Gemara (Masekhet Sanhedrin 109b-110a) explains that though On initially participated in the uprising, he ultimately withdrew, thanks to his wife. On's wife cogently argued that his involvement in Korach's movement will yield him no benefit. Even if Korach and his following succeed, she pointed out, On will still remain a commoner. He will enjoy no more honor and prestige under Korach's authority than he did under Moshe and Aharon.

The Gemara concludes its account of this woman's efforts by citing a verse in Sefer Mishlei (14:1), "The wisest of women builds her house." This verse, the Gemara declares, accurately describes the wisdom of On's wife, through which she managed to save him from the doom that befell Korach and his following.

The obvious question arises, why does the Gemara ascribe to On's wife the particular quality of "wisdom"? On's wife undoubtedly acted nobly, with conviction, out of genuine love and concern for her husband. All these qualities are worthy of note and render her deserving of praise and admiration. But the Gemara lauds On's wife specifically for her "wisdom." What was so "wise" about the way she helped her husband? What extraordinary brilliance did she display by pointing out to On that he will fare no better under Korach than under Moshe?

Rav Chayim Shmuelevitz (as cited by Rav Yissachar Frand) explains that it is indeed a sign of wisdom when somebody manages to maintain a sense of reason and rational thinking during a heated controversy. One can easily imagine the widespread spirit of contention that swept through Benei Yisrael during the time of Korach's rebellion. In fact, the Gemara in Sanhedrin tells that all the men suspected Moshe of engaging in illicit relationships with their wives. A frenzy of anti-Moshe sentiment erupted and gripped the nation. The wisdom of On's wife is manifest in her ability to think rationally and keep calm during this nationwide rush of anger and resentment. People generally have the tendency to be taken in by popular fads and widespread emotional trends. Often it is only the exceptionally wise person who can think intelligently and logically and see the obvious realities that others overlook.

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SALT!! ("Surf A Little Torah")

RABBI DAVID SILVERBERG

Monday, 25 Sivan 5764 – June 14, 2004

Parashat Korach tells of the death and destruction that resulted from the revolt led by Korach against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. Korach's campaign included two hundred and fifty followers who petition for the right to offer the ketoret (incense) in the Mishkan. Moshe instructs them to bring the offering together with Aharon, and the one whose incense is accepted by G-d will have proven his right to the role of kohen gadol. They accept the challenge, bring ketoret, and are burned to death by a divine fire (16:35). In the aftermath of this tragedy, G-d has Moshe instruct Elazar (Aharon's son) to take the firepans used by the two hundred and fifty insurrectionists and make from them a metal covering for the altar. This covering was to serve as an eternal reminder to Benei Yisrael: "It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider – one not of Aharon's offspring – should presume to offer incense before the Lord and should not be like Korach and his band – as the Lord ordered him through Moshe" (17:5).

On the simple level of interpretation, the phrase in this verse, "and should not be like Korach and his band" ("ve-lo yihyeh khe-Korach ve-kha-adato") serves as a warning to anyone planning to again "presume to offer incense before the Lord," as Korach's followers did. The verse warns that a non-kohen who offers incense will suffer the same fate as Korach and his following.

Two Midrashic sources, however, read this verse differently. Rashi, in his commentary to Sefer Yeshayahu (6:4), and the Rambam, in the eighth "shoresh" of his introduction to Sefer Ha-mitzvot, cite a Midrash that explains this verse to mean the exact opposite – that future non-kohanim who offer ketoret will suffer a different fate from Korach. Such a person, the Midrash explains, will "not be like Korach and his band." Korach was devoured by the ground, and his band was consumed by a divine fire. Subsequent ketoret violators, by contrast, will be punished differently, as suggested by the conclusion of this verse: "ka'asher diber Hashem be-yad Moshe lo." Literally, this verse translates, "as the Lord spoke to him in the hand of Moshe." The Midrash interprets this clause as an allusion to Moshe's hand, which was stricken with tzara'at (a leprosy-type infection) when G-d appeared to him at the burning bush (Shemot 4:6). (This infection was to serve as a sign to Benei Yisrael that G-d had sent him to free them from slavery.) Here G-d tells Moshe that unlike Korach and his followers, a non-kohen in future generations who ventures into the Sanctuary to offer incense will be punished with tzara'at. Indeed, a famous narrative in Sefer Divrei Hayamim II (26) tells that the otherwise righteous King Uziyahu brought an incense offering in the Beit Ha-mikdash, stubbornly ignoring the kohanim's warnings. The king was stricken with tzara'at on his forehead, an illness from which he suffered for the rest of his life.

The Gemara in Masekhet Sanhedrin (110a) advances another, seemingly Halakhic, interpretation of the clause, "and should not be like Korach and his band." Citing this verse, the Gemara establishes that "whoever takes hold of an argument transgresses a 'lav' [Torah prohibition]." According to the Gemara, this verse introduces a prohibition against initiating argument and contention. The Torah here presents not a warning, but a law: one may not act like Korach, who led a campaign to fracture the nation and generate animosity and hostility among the people.

The Rishonim disagree as to how this statement should be understood. The Rambam, in the aforementioned passage, explains why he does not include this prohibition in his list of the 613 commandments. He claims that the Gemara's reading of the verse constitutes an "asmakhta" (secondary reading, an allusion in the text), and does not reflect the straightforward meaning. Clearly, as we mentioned earlier, the primary interpretation of the verse is that it warns potential violators that unlawful offering of the ketoret will bring upon the same fate suffered by Korach's followers. The Gemara simply suggests a secondary reading of the verse in an effort to reinforce within us the gravity of instigating machloket (controversy and disharmony).

The Ramban, by contrast, in his critique of the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvot, argues that the Gemara's interpretation is intended as a bona fide extrapolation of the verse, rather than an asmakhta, and he therefore indeed lists this prohibition as one of the 613 Biblical commandments. He does, however, modify the Gemara's reading considerably. Whereas the Gemara indicates that any instigation of controversy violates this prohibition, the Ramban claims that this verse forbids specifically the kind of controversy waged by Korach – a challenge to the rights of Aharon and his descendants to the kehuna (priesthood).

The Sefer Yerei'im (345) follows the general approach of the Ramban, only with one slight variation. Like the Ramban, he, too, counts this prohibition as one of the 613 mitzvot, and he also limits it to certain kinds of controversies. Only whereas the Ramban claimed that the prohibition applies only to challenging the kehuna, the Yerei'im writes that it forbids campaigning against anybody upon whom G-d has bestowed honor and authority.

Yet another perspective appears to emerge from the She'iltot (131), who explains this verse as follows: "It is forbidden for a Jew to instigate a fight, for people will thereby come to hate one another, and the Torah says (Vayikra 19:17), 'You shall not despise your brother in your heart.'" Rav Yosef Engel, in his "Gilyonei Ha-Shas," as well as Rav Reuven Margaliyot, in his "Margaliyot Ha-yam," point out that the She'iltot understands this violation as a means to protect against hatred. It does not constitute an independent prohibition, but rather the Torah's own "seyag" – protective fence – around the prohibition against despising other Jews.

From: Kerem B'Yavneh Online [feedback@kby.org]
Parshat Korach A TALIT THAT IS COMPLETELY TECHELET
RAV ZECHARIAH TUBI SHLITA

It says in the writings of the AR"i Hakadosh that the concluding letters in the verse "tzadik katamar yifrach" ("A righteous man will flourish like a date palm") (Tehillim 92:13) spell out the name Korach. How can it be said about Korach that he was righteous, and what is the significance of the concluding letters?

It says in Midrash Tanchuma:

"Korach separated" (Bamidbar 16:1) – What is written prior to this passage? "Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them that they shall make themselves tzitzit." (Bamidbar 15:38) Korach jumped up and said to Moshe: You say, "They shall place upon the tzitzit [of each corner a thread of techelet]." A talit that is completely techelet – is it exempt from tzitzit? Moshe responded: It requires tzitzit. Korach said: A talit that is completely techelet cannot exempt itself, yet four threads exempt it?!

Why did Korach specifically refer to the example of a "talit that is completely techelet?" The Gemara in Menachot 43a states:

R. Meir says: Why was techelet singled out from all the various colors? Techelet is similar to the sea, and the sea is similar to the heavens, and heavens to the Heavenly Throne, as it says: "Under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork, and it was like the essence of heaven in purity." (Shemot 24:10)

Why did R. Meir need to mention the entire chain from techelet to sea, and from sea to heaven, and only then to the Heavenly Throne? It would have been enough to say that techelet reminds of the Heavenly Throne, for that is the purpose – to achieve by this closeness to Hashem.

The Sfat Emet explains that techelet shares the same root as "tachlit," and connotes perfection. There are three kinds of perfection in Creation:

1. Material perfection, which is expressed through the sea. The Maharal explains in several places in his writings that water is the fundamental matter of Creation, because it has neither color nor taste, and it cannot stand on its own and is the basis for all matter in Creation. Therefore, the sea symbolizes material perfection.

2. Spiritual perfection, which is expressed through the heavens, as it says: "The heavens, the heavens are Hashem's." (Tehillim 115:16) Therefore, they symbolize the spiritual perfection of Creation.

3. Closeness to Hashem ("d'veikut"), which is the highest level of perfection, and is expressed through the Heavenly Throne. It is impossible to skip steps. In order to ascend spiritually, one must pass from material perfection to spiritual perfection, and only then can one reach the level of closeness. This is what R. Meir is saying in Menachot: "Techelet" – i.e. perfection, "is similar to the sea" – material perfection, "and the sea is similar to the heavens" – spiritual perfection, "and the heavens is similar to the Heavenly Throne" – which is closeness to Hashem.

These three levels are also reflected in the three holidays that we celebrate throughout the year:

- Pesach represents the material redemption of Am Yisrael.

- Shavuot commemorates the Torah that was received from heaven – spiritual redemption

- Succot commemorates the Divine Protection, the dwelling of the Shechina – closeness to Hashem.

The Gemara (Ta'anit 9a) says, "Three excellent leaders arose for Israel: Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, and three excellent gifts were bestowed on their behalf. They are: the well, the cloud and the manna."

If we study these three gifts and associate them to the perfections that were mentioned previously:

- Miriam – Due to her merits the well was bestowed, which is material perfection that corresponds to the sea.

- Moshe – Due to his merits the manna was bestowed, bread from heaven, which is spiritual perfection.

- Aharon – Due to his merits the Clouds of Glory were bestowed, which symbolize the Heavenly Throne. Even though Moshe was greater than Aharon, Aharon merited a greater gift because he dealt with bringing people to teshuva, and "Teshuva is greater for it reaches until the Heavenly Throne."

Korach argues: "A talit that is completely techelet" should be exempt from tzitzit. There is no need for steps, no need for means, "For the entire assembly – all of them are holy." (Bamidbar 16:3) In the future, Korach's claim will be valid, as it says: "You shall be to me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation." (Shemot 19:6) Everyone will be like priests, and they will all be a holy nation. However, nowadays perfection is achieved through steps, from the material level until closeness to Hashem.

Therefore, the concluding letters of "tzadik katamar yifrach" spell out Korach, because in the future, which is symbolized by the concluding letters, he is righteous. Regarding this world, though, Korach is wrong. The method is a "techelet thread," to bind the white strings, which symbolize materialism, with the techelet, which is the symbol of spirituality, and to sanctify daily life. Only in this manner can we reach spiritual achievements and spiritual perfection.

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

RABBI DR. JONATHAN SACKS

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

Korach [from last year]

THE KORACH REBELLION WAS AN UNHOLY ALLIANCE OF INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS unhappy with Moses' leadership. There was Korach himself, a member of the tribe of Levi, angry (according to Rashi) that he had not been given a more prominent role. There were the

Reubenites, Datan and Aviram, who resented the fact that the key leadership positions were taken by Levites rather than members of their own tribe. Reuben had been Jacob's firstborn, and some of his descendants felt that they should have been accorded seniority. Then there were the two hundred and fifty "princes of the congregation, elect men of the assembly, men of renown" who felt aggrieved (according to Ibn Ezra) that after the sin of the golden calf, leadership had passed from the firstborn to a single tribe, the Levites. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The Korach story is an all too familiar tale of frustrated ambition and petty jealousy -- what the sages called "an argument not for the sake of heaven."

What is most extraordinary about the episode, however, is Moses' reaction. For the first and only time, he invokes a miracle to prove the authenticity of his mission:

Then Moses said: "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea. If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt."

In effect, Moses uses his power to eliminate the opposition. What a contrast this is to the generosity of spirit he showed just a few chapters earlier, when Joshua came to tell him that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, away from Moses and the seventy elders. Joshua regarded this as a potentially dangerous threat to Moses' leadership and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" Moses' reply is one of the most majestic in the whole of Tenakh:

"Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them."

What was the difference between Eldad and Medad on the one hand, and Korach and his co-conspirators on the other? What is the difference between Moses saying, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets," and Korach's claim that "The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them"? Why was the first, but not the second, a legitimate sentiment? Is Moses simply being inconsistent? Hardly. There never was a religious leader more clear-sighted. There is a distinction here which goes to the very core of the two narratives.

The sages, in one of their most profound methodological observations, said that "the words of the Torah may be poor in one place but rich in another." 4 By this they meant that, if we seek to understand a perplexing passage, we may need to look elsewhere in the Torah for the clue. A similar idea is expressed in the last of Rabbi Ishmael's thirteen rules of biblical interpretation: "Where there are two passages which contradict each other, the meaning can be determined only when a third passage is found which harmonises them."

In this case, the answer is to be found later in the book of Bemidbar, when Moses asks G-d to choose the next leader of the Israelites. G-d tells him to take Joshua and appoint him as his successor:

So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand [vesamakhta et yadekha] on him. Make him stand before Elazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your splendour [venatatekha mehodekha] so that the whole Israelite community will obey him."

Moses is commanded to perform two acts over and above presenting Joshua to the priest and people. First he is to "lay his hand" on Joshua. Then he is to give him "some of your splendour." What is the significance of these two gestures? How did they differ from one another? Which of them constituted induction into office? The sages, in Midrash Rabbah, added a commentary which at first sight only deepens the mystery:

"Lay your hand on him" - this is like lighting one light from another. "Give him some of your splendour" - this is like pouring from one vessel to another.

It is this statement that will enable us to decode the mystery.

There are two forms or dimensions of leadership. One is power, the other, influence. Often we confuse the two. After all, those who have power often have influence, and those who have influence have a certain kind of power. In fact, however, the two are quite different, even opposites.

We can see this by a simple thought-experiment. Imagine you have total power, and then you decide to share it with nine others. You now have one-tenth of the power with which you began. Imagine, by contrast, that you have a certain measure of influence, and now you share it with nine others. How much do you have left? Not less. In fact, more. Initially there was only one of you; now there are ten. Your influence has spread. Power operates by division, influence by multiplication. With power, the more we share, the less we have. With influence, the more we share, the more we have.

So deep is the difference that the Torah allocates them to two distinct leadership roles: king and prophet. Kings had power. They could levy taxes, conscript people to serve in the army, and decide when and against whom to wage war. They could impose non-judicial punishments to preserve social order. Hobbes famously called kingship a "Leviathan" and defined it in terms of power. The very nature of the social contract, he argued, was the transfer of power from individuals to a central authority. Without this, there could be no government, no defence of a country and no safeguard against lawlessness and anarchy.

Prophets, by contrast, had no power at all. They commanded no armies. They levied no taxes. They spoke G-d's word, but had no means of enforcing it. All they had was influence - but what influence! To this day, Elijah's fight against corruption, Amos' call to social justice, Isaiah's vision of the end of days, are still capable of moving us by the sheer force of their inspiration. Who, today, is swayed by the lives of Ahab or Jehoshaphat or Jehu? When a king dies, his power ends. When a prophet dies, his influence begins.

Returning to Moses: he occupied two leadership roles, not one. On the one hand, though monarchy was not yet in existence, he had the power and was the functional equivalent of a king. He led the Israelites out of Egypt, commanded them in battle, appointed leaders, judges and elders, and directed the conduct of the people. He had power.

But Moses was also a prophet, the greatest and most authoritative of all. He was a man of vision. He heard and spoke the word of G-d. His influence is incalculable. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, in a manuscript discovered after his death:

. . . an astonishing and truly unique spectacle is to see an expatriated people, who have had neither place nor land for nearly two thousand years . . . a scattered people, dispersed over the world, enslaved, persecuted, scorned by all nations, nonetheless preserving its characteristics, its laws, its customs, its patriotic love of the early social union, when all ties with it seem broken. The Jews provide us with an astonishing spectacle: the laws of Numa, Lycurgus, Solon are dead; the very much older laws of Moses are still alive. Athens, Sparta, Rome have perished and no longer have children left on earth; Zion, destroyed, has not lost its children.

The mystery of Moses' double investiture of Joshua is now solved. First, he was told to give Joshua his authority as a prophet. The very phrase used by the Torah - vesamakhta et yadekha, 'lay your hand' on him - is still used today to describe rabbinic ordination: semikhah, meaning, the 'laying on of hands' by master to disciple. Second, he was commanded to give Joshua the power of kingship, which the Torah calls 'splendour' (perhaps majesty would be a better translation). The nature of this role as head of state and commander of the army is made quite clear in the text. G-d says to Moses: "Give him some of your splendour so that the whole

Israelite community will obey him . . . At his command, he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out [to battle], and at his command they will come in." This is the language not of influence but of power.

The meaning of the midrash, too, is now clear and elegantly precise. The transfer of influence ("Lay your hand on him") is "like lighting one light from another." When we take a candle to light another candle, the light of the first is not diminished. Likewise, when we share our influence with others, we do not have less than before. Instead, the sum total of light is increased. Power, however, is different. It is like "pouring from one vessel to another." The more we pour into the second, the less is left in the first. Power is a zero-sum game. The more we give away, the less we have.

This, then is the solution to the mystery of why, when Joshua feared that Eldad and Medad (who "prophesied within the camp") were threatening Moses' authority, Moses replied, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets." Joshua had confused influence with power. Eldad and Medad neither sought nor gained power. Instead, for a while, they were given a share of the prophetic "spirit" that was on Moses. They participated in his influence. That is never a threat to prophetic authority. To the contrary, the more widely it is shared, the more there is.

Power, however, is precisely what Korach and his followers sought - and in the case of power, rivalry is a threat to authority. "There is one leader for a generation," said the sages, "not two." 7 Or, as they put it elsewhere, "Can two kings share a single crown?" 8 There are many forms of government -- monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy - but what they have in common is the concentration of power within a single body, whether person, group or institution (such as a parliament). Without this monopoly of the legitimate use of coercive force, there is no such thing as government. That is why in Jewish law "a king is not allowed to renounce the honour due to him."

Moses' request that Korach and his followers be swallowed up by the ground was neither anger nor fear. It was not motivated by any personal consideration. It was a simple realisation that whereas prophecy can be shared, kingship cannot. If there are two or more competing sources of power within a single domain, there is no leadership. Had Moses not taken decisive action against Korach, he would have fatally compromised the office with which he had been charged.

Rarely do we see more clearly the stark difference between influence and power than in these two episodes: Eldad and Medad on the one hand, Korach and his fellow rebels on the other. The latter represented a conflict that had to be resolved. Either Moses or Korach would emerge the victor; they could not both win. The former did not represent a conflict at all. Knowledge, inspiration, vision - these are things that can be shared without loss. Those who share them with others add to spiritual wealth of a community without losing any of their own.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, "The influence we have lives after us; the power is oft interred with our bones." Much of Judaism is an extended essay on the supremacy of prophets over kings, right over might, teaching rather than coercion, influence in place of power. For only a small fraction of our history have Jews had power, but at all times they have had an influence over the civilization of the West. People still contend for power. If only we would realize how narrow its limits are. It is one thing to force people to behave in a certain way; quite another to teach them to see the world differently so that, of their own accord, they act in a new way. The use of power diminishes others; the exercise of influence enlarges them. That is one of Judaism's most humanizing truths. Not all of us have power, but we are all capable of being an influence for good.

From: RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN'S SHABBAT SHALOM Parsha Column [parshat_hashavua@ohrtorahstone.org.il]

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Korah (Numbers 16:1-18:32) By Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel - "And Korah the son of Yitzhar the son of Kehat the son of Levi and Datan and Aviram the sons of Eliav and On son of Pelet the sons of Reuven rose up before Moses.. And they gathered against Moses..." (Numbers 16:1-3).

What was the precise content of the rebellion of Korah and his cohorts against Moses? Rashi (ad loc) cites a midrash which defines the rebels' claim and at the same time connects our Torah portion with the conclusion of last week's reading, the segment which deals with the ritual fringes: "Behold (said Korah, Datan and Aviram), I argue against (Moses) and nullify (by means of logic) his words (of Torah) ... What did they (these rebels) do? They stood up and assembled 250 heads of court, mainly from the tribe of Reuven and clothed them in garments which were completely colored royal blue (tehelet). They came and stood before Moses. They said to him: is a garment which is wholly royal blue obligated to have ritual fringes or not? Moses said to them, 'Such a garment is obligated.' They began to mock him, Is it possible that a garment of another color be freed from the obligation of ritual fringes with but one fringe of royal blue, and this garment, which is wholly royal blue, not be freed of the obligation?..'

Korah and his cohorts were scoffing at Moses' message of Torah on the basis of analytical logic, a logic which threatened to destroy the very premise of the commandments. Were they justified in their argument?

In order to understand the proper response to their claim, let us examine an interesting custom surrounding the commandment of the ritual fringes. Apparently, there was an old custom in the land of Israel to touch one's ritual fringes during the recitation of the Shema each morning, to hold them in one's hands, to pass them over one's eyes, and to kiss them. The tenth century Babylonian scholars, Rav Hai Gaon and Rav Natronai Gaon, attempted to uproot this custom, arguing: "why handle the ritual fringes at all after one looked at them at the time of putting them on, and made a blessing over them? When we reach "you shall bind them.." in the recitation of the Shema, do we then have to touch the tefilin (phylacteries)? When we reach "You shall write them..", must we then go home and place our hands on the mezuzah..?" And in Orhot Haim (Part 1, Page 3) Moshe Gaon is cited as saying, "one who does such things (with the ritual fringes) must be taught and adjured not to do them any more..."

Nevertheless, not only did the custom refuse to fall into oblivion, but it even became more pronounced in succeeding generations. The Sixteenth Century Shulhan Arukh (Set Table) codifies: "There is a commandment (sic) to grasp the ritual fringes in the left hand corresponding to the heart at the time of the recitation of the Shema, an action suggested by the Biblical words, 'these words shall be placed upon your heart.' There are those who follow the custom of looking at the ritual fringes when they reach the words, 'You shall look upon them' and to pass them over their eyes. This is a worthy custom and expresses love for the commandments." (Orah Haim 24, 2-4).

Rav Moshe Isserles adds: "There are also some who follow the custom to kiss the ritual fringes when they gaze upon them, and all of this demonstrates love for the commandments." (See Magen Avraham, Be'er Hetev and Mishna Brurah ad loc, who all concur).

Why is the commandment of ritual fringes singled out from all of the others to be fondled and kissed-and this, despite Gaonic condemnation of the practice?

For insight, let us review a most novel and striking interpretation of the "sin of the scouts" offered by my rebbe and mentor, Rav Joseph B. Soleveitchik ztz"l, in response to a problematic opening of last week's portion of Shelach: "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Send forth for yourselves men who will scout out (lit. tour) the Land of Canaan ..'" (Numbers 13:1, 2).

Why would G-d possibly suggest a reconnaissance mission to look over the land, to decide whether or not its conquest would be a realistic achievement? Why place Divine will into the hands of a "committee"?

The Rav maintains that the verb *latur* does not mean to "scout out" in terms of "to evaluate", but rather "to seek out with passion," just as the end of the Torah reading uses the same verb - in the context of the commandment of ritual fringes - to instruct that we not "seek out with passion after the stirring of "our hearts and our eyes" (Numbers 15:40). Hence the Rav Soloveitchik insists that just as our Talmudic Sages enjoin that an individual dare not become engaged without first "seeing with passion" his/her spouse-to-be, so the Almighty wanted a mission of Israelites to bring back a verbal picture of the land to inspire the nation with passionate zeal for the conquest which lay ahead. Tragically, Moses did not properly understand the Divine word of instruction, dispatched an investigative reconnaissance mission, and forestalled redemption for thousands of years...

The land of Israel and the Torah of Israel are both Biblically called *morasha* (Exodus 6:8, Deuteronomy 33:4), a word which literally means heritage but which the Sages of the Talmud link to "me'orasa," (eros, love), or fiancée'. A successful marriage, a proper conquest of and inhabitation in the land of Israel, the knowledge and performance of Torah are each fraught with unsuspected road-blocks and tantalizing temptations along the way; only the passion of love which defies logic, romance which supersedes reason, can provide one with the requisite strength to overcome all obstacles in pursuit of these worthwhile and critical goals.

In the novel *Remember Me to G-d* by Myron Kaufman, an assimilated German-Jewish patriarch is unsuccessfully attempting to dissuade his son at Harvard from marrying a Radcliffe gentile. "But you never taught me to love Judaism," admonishes the son. "Why should I not embrace the Christian woman?"

In the commandment of ritual fringes, the white represents clear logic while the royal blue is reminiscent of the eternal mystery of sea and sky, the blue-white sapphire visible at the mystical moment of glimpsing the Divine (Exodus 24:10,11). The sin of the scouts and the command of the ritual fringes - united by a verb which means passionate love - come to teach that there must be an emotion which supersedes intellect, a love which overcomes logic, in the realms of Torah and Israel. And Torah must be passionately pursued if the commandments will prove more powerful than other sensuous seductions. Hence the ritual fringes, reminding us of beloved commandments which come from heaven, must be fondled by our left hand (corresponding to the heart) and kissed by our mouths. Only a beloved and passionate fruitful Torah has the capacity to overcome a bald and arid, cold and dry logical Korach.

Shabbat Shalom.

From: RABBI BEREL WEIN [rbwein@torah.org] To: rabbiwein@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Wein - Korach Weekly Parsha KORACH

Korach is really a man of our times. In my opinion, he is the archetypical modern revolutionary that we have become so unfortunately familiar with over the past two centuries. He cloaks himself in self-righteousness, spouts populist and appealing slogans, burns with envy of those who have something that he does not possess, hungers for power and has little respect or care for human life. The Talmud pointedly tells us that Ohn ben Peles, originally one of Korach's enthusiastic supporters, is saved from destruction by his wife's intuitively wise observation: "If Korach triumphs he will be a dictator over you just as you claim that Moshe is. So what gain is there in this for you?" With the blessed exception of the American revolution (and George Washington's adamant refusal to become king or dictator) all of the revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - France,

Germany, Russia, China, Cambodia, Turkey, the states of Africa, etc.- soon degenerated into tyrannies and killing fields. Lenin's gruesome statement, "There can be no successful revolution without a firing squad," became the reality for all of these uprisings. And all of this killing and destruction was justified in the name of the popular slogans that Korach used in his rebellion against Moshe.

Korach proclaims, "The entire people are holy beings," an ancient version of, "All power to the people." He creates imaginary heartrending cases of the plight of those who are allegedly burdened by the Torah laws taught by Moshe and Aharon. He ignores Moshe's warnings that continuing the revolt will end in death and disappointment and instead incites others to come and die on the barricades for what in reality is his own personal cause. Blinded by his ambition, Korach convinces himself and many others that not only is his cause just but that in pursuing that cause they are doing holy work. Even as the ground opens beneath his feet to swallow him, and as the entire revolutionary system that he advocated collapses around him, Korach remains adamant in the belief that he alone is correct. The rabbis in the Talmud stated "one should not destroy the old until the new is built." The revolutionaries of the past centuries have always been successful in destroying the old. They have had much less success in building the new.

The descendants of Korach did not follow their ancestor into oblivion. They saw how mistaken he was and they repented in time. They were Levites in the Temple and authors of sublime works included in our book of Psalms. Moshe's holiness was of a disciplined, daily, challenging but gentle nature. Korach's was exciting, utopian, solving all problems in one fell swoop. Moshe's was sincere and true, humble and eternal. Korach's "holiness of the people" was self-serving, a sham and a source of destruction for Korach and those unwise enough to follow him and believe in his slogans. All new ideas and slogans, movements and revolutions, must be subject to great scrutiny before being accepted and followed. Most of the time they lead to sadness and ultimate oblivion. Witness Korach and his followers.

Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] To: yhesichot@etzion.org.il Subject: SICHOT -31: Parashat Korach Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot By The Roshei Yeshiva PARASHAT KORACH SICHAT OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A

"He Shall Not Be Like Korach and his Congregation"

Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

Various explanations have been offered for Korach's rebellion - where exactly his mistake lay; how he dared to speak out against Moshe, the most humble of men, claiming that Moshe was elevating himself, etc. Rashi, for example, writes (16:7), "Korach was clever. Why did he perform this foolish act? His eye led him astray. He saw a great dynasty that would rise up from him (Korach) - the prophet Shemuel, who was compared to Moshe and Aharon..." But all of the explanations offered are only partial solutions, since they fail to explain one thing: Moshe informed Korach and his gang that if it turned out that he (Moshe) was right, and that G-d had chosen him and Aharon, then Korach's whole congregation would die (Rashi 16:6). How, then, could Korach and his followers not have given up their fight? All the various explanations can perhaps explain the creation of the

rebellion in its early stages, but it is difficult to believe that any of these reasons so convinced Korach and his men of their own case that even the threat of death had no effect on them.

The reason for this is simple: dispute and a disputational bent can bring about a situation in which a person loses all sense of logic and clear-headedness. He can believe in his argument so strongly that neither reasoning nor any threat will budge him. As an argument becomes more and more heated, a person believes with increasing intensity that he is correct that everyone else is wrong. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 6b) explains the verse in Mishlei (14:14), "Before it flares up the fight is abandoned," as follows: "Before the argument flares up, you are still able to abandon it. Once it flares up, you are unable to abandon it."

Yaakov declared on his deathbed: "Shimon and Levi are brothers; swords are their instruments of cruelty. Let my soul not enter their counsel; let my honor not be attached to their assembly, for they killed a man in their anger..." (Bereishit 49:5-6). Rashi connects the words "Let my honor not be attached to their assembly" with Korach's rebellion, according to which Yaakov links the rebellion to the slaying of the men of Shekhem by Shimon and Levi. Dispute can bring a person to such a loss of clear-headedness that he becomes capable of killing someone who thinks differently from him. The Gemara (Chullin 89a) explains the verse from Iyov (26:7), "He hangs the earth upon nothingness (belima)" as teaching that "The world exists only for the sake of one who restrains himself (bolem et atzmo) during a dispute."

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

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

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

(Originally delivered at seuda shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Korach 5756 [1996].)

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MIDEI SHABBOS BY RABBI ELIEZER CHRYSLER - Parshas Korach
Vol. 11 No. 35 This issue is sponsored L'Ily Nishmas Ruchamah Ela Le'ah Bas
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Parshas Korach Two Kinds of Women Two Kinds of Tongues The Medrash in this week's Parshah tells the story of a righteous couple who were married for many years without having children, so they decided to divorce. Both remarried, each one, strangely enough, to a wicked spouse. The Chasid became influenced by his wicked wife, and he too, quickly emulated her example. The Chasidah on the other

hand, influenced her wicked husband, and it was not long before he was following in her righteous footsteps.

This Medrash is often quoted to demonstrate the vital role that a woman plays in building a Torah home. The man may well be the one who learns all day, yet it is the woman's inner wisdom (the 'binah yeseirah', from a lashon 'binyan') that builds the home. The importance of marrying a bas Torah cannot be overstressed. Because at the end of the day, quite apart from the influence she will have on their children, she is also likely to have a far greater influence on him than he will have on her.

* And the most powerful example we have in the Torah of this phenomenon, is described by the Gemara in Sanhedrin (109b). Citing the Pasuk in Mishlei "The wise woman builds her house, whilst the foolish one demolishes it with her hands" (14:1), the Gemara presents the wife of On ben Pelles as the woman referred to in the first half of the Pasuk, and the wife of Korach as the woman in the second half. On ben Pelles was originally part of Korach's rebellion, until his clever wife pointed out to him that since being an underling of Korach was no advantage to being an underling of Moshe (neither financially nor status-wise), what was the point in rebelling?

So she convinced him to remain indoors whilst she dealt with the messengers who would come to fetch him. Playing safe, she gave him to drink a dose of strong wine, which put him to sleep until it was all over, and she sat outside her tent doing her hair. The messengers arrived to pick up On, saw his wife with her hair uncovered, and promptly fled.

Applying various feminine traits for the good, she caused her husband to do Teshuvah and saved him from death.

* The wife of Korach on the other hand, inspired her husband to rebel against Moshe. She said to her husband "See what Moshe has done! He appointed himself king, his brother, Kohen Gadol, and the latter's children, deputy Kohanim Gedolim. When someone brings Terumah, he says to give it to the Kohen, and the same goes for Bikurim. Even Ma'aser Rishon, which is given to the Levi, he tells the Levi to give one tenth of it to the Kohen. And now look what he's done! He's shaved off all your (the Levi'im's) hair and has had you all waved around like a block of wood! No matter that he had it all done to him too. After all, he is the leader, and his prestige won't suffer too much if he suffers along with you for a bit. And besides, there is the principle 'Tomos Nafshi im P'lishtim' (Let me die with the P'lishtim), as Shimshon said, before bringing down the house on the P'lishtim and on himself.

And what's more, he commanded you to wear a T'cheiles (a dark-blue thread of Tzitzis). If T'cheiles is so important, why don't you dress your men in T'cheiles and stand before Moshe and challenge him ... '.

She used her femininity too, with just as powerful an effect as the wife of On ben Pelles, only she caused her husband, plus two-hundred and fifty-two men to sin, and brought about all their premature deaths.

The above episode is also reminiscent of the other Pasuk in Mishlei "Death and life lie in the hand of the tongue" (18:21). A potent combination indeed - two women, two tongues, the one brought death and destruction, the other, life and salvation.

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From: Jeffrey Gross [jgross@torah.org] Sent: June 16, 2004 Subject:
Weekly Halacha - Parshas Korach
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5764

By RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights A discussion of Halachic topics. For final rulings, consult your Rav

SHABBOS CANDLES: QUESTIONS and ANSWERS By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

QUESTION: How many candles should a woman light on erev Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: This depends on family custom. While the basic halachah mandates that a minimum of one candle be lit,(1) it is universally accepted that no one lights fewer than two candles, representing the dual aspects of Shabbos - Zachor and Shamor.(2) Some women light seven candles, others ten,(3) while others light the number of candles corresponding to the number of people (parents plus children) in the family.(4) All customs are halachically acceptable, and each lady should follow her custom and not vary from week to week.(5) Should a lady, however, find herself away from home on Shabbos or

Yom Tov, she may light just two candles even though she lights more when she is home.(6)

QUESTION: Some women do not blow out the flame of the match, lighter, etc. after lighting candles on erev Shabbos; instead they allow the flame to extinguish on its own. They do this in order to avoid transgressing a Shabbos Labor - "extinguishing" - once they have accepted Shabbos with the kindling of the candles. Should all women observe this custom?

DISCUSSION: No, they need not do so. It is permitted to extinguish the flame after lighting candles as long as one does so before reciting the blessing of le-hadlik ner shel Shabbos. Although Shulchan Aruch does note the custom of "some" women who are careful not to put out the flame after lighting candles,(7) this custom no longer applies today when all women(8) recite the blessing over the candles after kindling them. Since Shabbos does not begin until after the blessing is recited, there is ample time to blow out the flame before reciting the blessing.(9)

On Yom Tov, however, when many women follow the custom of reciting the blessing before lighting candles,(10) care should be taken not to put out the flame after lighting the candles. This is because once Yom Tov has begun, it is forbidden to extinguish a fire. The match, therefore, should be carefully put aside and allowed to extinguish on its own.(11)[A lady who is afraid to allow a match to extinguish on its own should light her candles first, blow out the match, and then recite the blessing, as she does on a regular erev Shabbos.(12) Of course, she may do this only if she lit candles before sunset. If she is lighting after Yom Tov has begun, she may not put out the flame.]

QUESTION: Who should light the candles if the wife is unavailable to kindle them?

DISCUSSION: The obligation to light Shabbos candles rests equally on all members of a household. Nevertheless, our Sages established that it is the wife's responsibility to do the actual lighting. One of the reasons given (13) is that candle-lighting atones for Chavah's part in the sin of the eitz ha-da'as (Tree of Knowledge). Chavah caused Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit for which mankind was punished by losing its immortality. Since Chavah "extinguished the candle of the world,"(14) it is the woman who sets aright Chavah's misdeed by assuming the obligation of lighting candles for her household.(15) Consequently:

Even if a husband demands that he lights the candles, the wife has the right to protest and prevent him from doing so.(16) It is recommended, though, that the husband take part in the mitzvah by lighting and quickly extinguishing the candle wicks, which makes them easier to light.(17) If candles - or electric lights - are lit in other rooms in addition to the eating area,(18) it is the husband who lights them.(19)

If one has no wife, or if he sees that his wife is running late and will be unable to light on time, then he should light the candles with the blessing.(20)

If one's wife is not home for Shabbos, it is preferable that the husband himself light candles and not one of the daughters.(21) If, however, a daughter who is over twelve years old lights for him, he fulfills the mitzvah through her lighting. One cannot, however, fulfill his obligation by having a daughter under twelve light candles for him.(22)

In the event that a brother and sister are at home without their parents, it is preferable that the sister light the candles.(23)

Years ago, it was customary for a woman who gave birth not to light candles on the first Friday night after giving birth. For that one Shabbos, candles were lit by the husband.(24) Several reasons are offered in explanation of this custom, but apparently the main concern was that women were too weak after childbirth to get out of bed and light candles. (25) In view of the improved health conditions prevalent nowadays, many poskim agree that the custom is no longer valid and the wife should light candles as she does every Friday night.(26)

QUESTION: May a woman daven Minchah after she has lit candles on Friday night?

DISCUSSION: L'chatchilah, all poskim agree that one must recite Minchah before lighting candles. When a woman lights candles, she automatically accepts upon herself the restrictions and obligations of the Shabbos day. This precludes her davening the previous day's Minchah. If, however, a woman is running late and has not davened Minchah by candle-lighting time, the poskim differ as to what she should do. There are three views:

1) She should go ahead and light candles. She should then daven the Shemoneh Esrei of the Shabbos Ma'ariv twice to compensate for the lost Minchah(27.) Even though women do not usually daven Ma'ariv, she may do so in this case in order to make up the lost Minchah(28;)

2) Before lighting, she should stipulate that she is not accepting the Shabbos until after she has davened Minchah(29.) This should not be done on Yom Tov if she recited shehecheyanu at the candle-lighting(30;)

3) A minority view rules that she may daven Minchah after lighting candles even if she did not stipulate that she was not accepting the Shabbos(31.)

Note that when men light candles, they do not automatically accept the Shabbos with their candle-lighting(32.) They may daven Minchah after lighting candles.

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FOOTNOTES: 1 And, indeed, under extenuating circumstances, one may light only one candle and recite the blessing over it; Mishnah Berurah 263:9. 2 Based on Rama O.C. 263:1. 3 Mishnah Berurah 263:6. 4 This custom, although widespread, is not mentioned in any of the classical sources. 5 Based on Beir Halachah 263:1 (s.v. sheshachecha). 6 She'arim Metzuyanim B'halachah 75:13. 7 O.C. 263:10. 8 Of Ashkenazic descent. Most Sefaradim, however, recite the blessing before kindling; Yechaveh Da'as 2:33. 9 Aruch ha-Shulchan 263:14; Yechaveh Da'as 2:33 quoting Mateh Yehudah 263:2. [Note that Mishnah Berurah does not disagree with this; indeed, he repeatedly rules that Shabbos begins after the blessing is recited; see 263:21 and 27. See also Da'as Torah 263:5 (s.v. v'yesh).] Chayei Adam and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, too, do not mention the custom of allowing the flame to extinguish by itself. 10 As ruled by Mishnah Berurah 263:27. 11 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43, note 179). 12 Based on the ruling of the Magen Avraham (263:12) and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (75:4) who rule that women should light on erev Yom Tov exactly as they do on erev Shabbos: first light the candles and then recite the blessing. 13 Tur O.C. 263. 14 This is how the Midrash (Tanchumah, Metzora 9) refers to Adam. 15 Some families have the custom that all the women in the household light candles and recite a blessing over them - Aruch ha-Shulchan 263:7. This was also the custom in the home of the Brisker Rav, as reported by his son Harav D. Soloveitchik (quoted in Az Nidberu 6:68). 16 Aruch ha-Shulchan 263:7. 17 Mishnah Berurah 263:12; 264:28. 18 See follow-up DISCUSSION for explanation of why candles [or electric lights] need to be lit in other rooms. 19 Shulchan Aruch Harav 263:5; Ketzos ha-Shulchan 74 (Badei ha-Shulchan 11). See also Beir Halachah 263:6 (s.v. bachurim). 20 Mishnah Berurah 262:11. 21 Oral ruling by Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in The Radiance of Shabbos, pg. 7); Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43, note 46. 22 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:7. 23 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 45 note 34). 24 Mishnah Berurah 263:11. 25 See Toras Shabbos 263:4; Tehilah l'David 88:3; Aruch ha-Shulchan 263:7; Hagahos Imrei Baruch 263:6. 26 Oral ruling by Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in The Radiance of Shabbos, pg. 7) Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:9. 27 This is the view of the Mishnah Berurah 263:43. 28 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:110). 29 Eishel Avraham 263:10; Kaf ha-Chayim 263:35; Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (oral ruling quoted in Avnei Yashfe on Tefillah, 2nd edition, pg. 201). 30 Tzitz Eliezer 10:19-5. This is because several poskim hold that one cannot recite shehecheyanu, which celebrates the arrival of the Yom Tov, and at the same time stipulate that he is not accepting Yom Tov's arrival. 31 Several poskim quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:128. 32 Mishnah Berurah 263:42. It is still, however, preferable even for men to stipulate that they are not mekabel Shabbos when lighting candles.

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PENINIM ON THE TORAH

BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM

Parshas Korach

And Korach...(took)(separated) himself and Dasan and Aviram and On ben Peles sons of Reuven. (16:1)

The Rebbe of a group of chassidim, who were also followers of Horav Chaim Soloveitchik, zl, passed away. His son, who was the designated heir, was not able to assume the mantle of leadership. It was just too much for him, both physically and emotionally. There were two grandsons who were prepared to take the position, but their personalities were different from one another. One of the grandsons was particularly extreme in one area. Although the majority of the Rebbe's followers were inclined to accept him, some chassidim were not prepared to accept his extreme nature. They were in a quandary as to whom to accept as the new Rebbe. Being close to Rav Chaim, they turned to him for advice. The question was: Do they accept the grandson, who - for the most part - seemed agreeable to everyone, except for his one area of extremism, or do they follow the other grandson?

Rav Chaim listened to their query, went over to his bookcase and removed a Chumash. He turned to Parshas Korach and asked, "The parshah begins by mentioning On ben Peles at the onset of the rebellion and then, suddenly, his name disappears. What happened to him?" Chazal tell us that On's wife saved him with some practical advice. She said, "What difference does it make if Moshe is the leader or Korach is the leader? You are still nothing more than the student, a nondescript insignificant aide."

Now, let us analyze this assertion. Korach and Moshe Rabbeinu were not in a dispute over who would be Klal Yisrael's leader. There was a much deeper question. Korach claimed that Hashem listened to Moshe because of his righteousness: Tzaddik gozer v'Hakadosh Baruch Hu mekayem; "The righteous decree and Hashem fulfills their demand." Moshe was running the show according to his vested interests. Moshe countered that this claim was ludicrous and could not be further from the truth. Everything that he did was consistent with the dvar, word, of Hashem. He was merely Hashem's agent. A controversy of such a critical nature cannot and should not be discredited with a mere statement, however practical, from On's wife. This was no simple dispute.

Rav Chaim explained that On's wife had a very compelling declaration. She countered, "How do you know that if Moshe was deposed and Korach became the Kohen Gadol, so that there was a new leader, that this new leader would not have his own agenda? You forget that when one sits in the seat of power, he sees things differently. His perspective is not the same as that of the fellow on the street. You might be surprised to discover that Moshe actually knew what he was doing!" When people do not see the entire picture, they cannot develop a clear plan of action. It is always easy to decide world events from the vantage point of the kitchen table. On's wife understood that it is easy to question a leader's decision as long as one does not see the larger picture, the perspective as viewed from behind his desk.

Rav Chaim turned to the chassidim and said, "You are not in favor of one grandson because you do not agree with the way he acts in a certain area, while the other grandson does not seem to have this view. How do you know, however, that once the second grandson becomes Rebbe, he will not change his position. I suggest that you desist from the controversy and allow the majority to rule."

Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehas ben Levi (took) (separated) himself. (16:1)

Rashi explains that Korach's genealogy stops with Levi and does not list Yaakov Avinu as the Patriarch of the family, because Yaakov prayed on his deathbed that his name be omitted, so as not to be associated with Korach's assembly. Actually, what difference does it make if Yaakov's name is mentioned or not? Is it really a taint on his honor to be listed together with a descendant who became corrupt? Are we to believe that Yaakov was so concerned with his honor? Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, derives from here that the Heavenly Tribunal has a much different way of reckoning than we do in the earthly domain. We will have to answer for areas of neglect that under normal circumstances we would otherwise overlook.

The Rambam in Hilchos Teshuvah 3:2 asserts that we do not necessarily understand the balance of sins and merits. In Heaven, the total is adjudicated and deciphered in a manner that does not coincide with the earthly domain. Thus, we should be meticulous to apply ourselves to every detail in our life's endeavor. What we might view as miniscule might be viewed in the Heavenly domain as significant, having great bearing on our ultimate judgment. Hashem might judge one individual for his grandson's negative activity because, had he been more circumspect with his son's education, his grandson might have demonstrated a more positive attitude towards them. If the grandfather neglects his son's Torah education, what can we already expect from the third generation?

Yaakov Avinu was concerned that history might hold him responsible for his grandson's rebellion. He, therefore, requested that his name be omitted from Korach's genealogy as a way of declaring that he had nothing whatsoever to do with Korach's dastardly act. His chinuch was pure and untainted. Whatever character flaws contributed to Korach's malevolence originated in the subsequent generation.

They stood before Moshe. (16:2)

One would think that they arose with derech erez, respect. The Targum Yonasan says kamu b'chuzpah, they arose with audacity, calling attention to the fact that they were getting up for Moshe. Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, relates that once the two geonei hador, preeminent Torah leaders of their generation, Horav Akiva Eiger, zl, and Horav Yaakov, zl, m'Lisa, the Nesivos Hamishpat, were taking a stroll. They walked by a group of uncouth ruffians who were sitting on a bench. The young delinquents demonstrated their lack of respect by not rising up when the two gedolim walked by. Rav Yaakov turned to Rav Akiva Eiger and said, "It seems that we have reached the Ikvesa D'Moshiach, the period preceding the advent of Moshiach, about which Chazal say, chutzpah yasgi, "the people will be filled with audacity." Rav Akiva Eiger countered, "They are still far removed from the type of chutzpah which will plague the generations preceding Moshiach. Now we walk by, and those derelicts do not get up. During the period prior to Moshiach, we will be sitting on stools, they will go by and if we do not rise for them, they will say about us that we have chutzpah!"

We must take into consideration that Rav Akiva Eiger said this quite some time ago - and his perspective was apparently very realistic, seeing into the future what seems to have become true. Regrettably, there are those who think that chutzpah yasgi is a mitzvah that has to be fulfilled with all the hidurim. They forget it is only a condition which mirrors the society in which we live.

I have not taken even a single donkey of theirs, nor have I wronged even one of them. (16:15)

Maase avos siman l'banim, "the actions of the fathers are a portent for the children." This axiom applies to machlokes, controversy, as well. Korach may well have been the first to undermine and rebel against a Jewish leader. He certainly was not the last. The Bostoner Rebbe, Shlita, notes that Shmuel HaNavi, as he turned over the kingdom to Shaul

HaMelech, used the same words that Moshe used: "Bear witness against me...whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Who have I defrauded and oppressed? (Shmuel I 13:3)" The people replied that Shmuel had not deprived or oppressed them.

Imagine after a lifetime of service to Klal Yisrael, the best Shmuel Hanavi could ask for was not gratitude, not praise, but, "Yes - you were not a thief Yes - you did not oppress us." With this in mind, communal leaders go to the fore, perform their function, whether it is teaching, leading, advising or guiding, knowing fully well that gratitude is something they can only hope for from a unique minority. They do not expect much in the way of praise. Instead, they become quite used to the complaints, high expectations and subtle abuse. It is worse when the aggressor is someone to whom they have been especially beneficial. That is life and this attitude goes with the territory. Why should we expect to be different than Moshe Rabbeinu?

What really is the cause of dissent? Why do we find that the same people who benefit the most by their leadership are the individuals who go out of their way to sabotage everything that leader does? The answer lies in the fact that they cannot tolerate the fact that they had been helped by someone, that they were weak and they had to come on to someone else's assistance. For some people, gratitude is an overwhelming debt. One who is weak is not hated. One who is poor is not vilified. It is the powerful and mighty that are disparaged. Those who are in a position of supremacy - who are popular because of the wonderful things they do for others - they are slandered. Why? What did they do to deserve such a malignant reaction? Why did Moshe Rabbeinu, the Adon HaNeviim, master of prophets, Klal Yisrael's quintessential leader, a person whose every moment was devoted to his flock, deserve to have a Korach impugn his leadership?

The answer is that he did not deserve it, but, regrettably, it was a natural reaction of simple people. Their disagreement with Moshe was perhaps a small percentage genuine, but mostly envy and insecurity. No one can forgive his protector. There is no loathing that any man harbors more intensely than that toward his benefactor. It may sound cynical, but one only has to peruse history to note a constant languid hatred towards one's sponsor. No one likes to be on the receiving end, but then, they are not waiting in line to dispense aid to others, either.

Sponsored in loving memory of my grandparents Shelton and Ruthi Kasnett AND Jerome Jick by Daniel Kasnett Peninim mailing list Peninim@shemayisrael.com http://mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim_shemayisrael.com

From: Shlomo Katz [skatz@torah.org] To: hamaayan@torah.org Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Korach
Edited by Shlomo Katz

Korach: Don't Fight!

Sponsored by Rikki and Nat Lewin on the 63rd yearzeit of Nat's grandfather, the "Reisher Rav" Harav Aharon ben Harav Noson Lewin z"l hy"d

In this week's parashah, we read of Korach's uprising against Moshe and Aharon. In Pirkei Avot (chapter 5) we learn: "Any machloket / dispute that is for the sake of Heaven will stand. Any machloket that is not for the sake of Heaven will not stand. What is a machloket that is for the sake of Heaven? The halachic disagreements in the Talmud between Hillel and Shammai. What is a machloket that is not for the sake of Heaven? The dispute of Korach and his cohorts."

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l observes: This Mishnah seems to imply that the disputes between Hillel and Shammai are fundamentally comparable to the machloket of Korach and his cohorts, except that the former were for the sake of Heaven and the latter was not. Is that really true?

R' Auerbach explains: All machloket is inherently bad (hence the similarity between the disputes of Hillel and Shammai and the dispute of Korach and his band). Thus, our Sages have taught (in the very last teaching in all of Mishnah): "Hashem found no better vessel for holding blessing than peace." Indeed, Bnei Yisrael merited to receive the Torah only because they were: "As one man, with one heart." (See Shemot 19:2 and Rashi.)

However, if a machloket is for the sake of Heaven, then it has the potential to ultimately increase unity. Specifically through this machloket, each participant's attachment to the Torah is revealed and is strengthened. And, that attachment forges a common bond between the disputants, thus leaving them as closer friends. (Quoted in Avot Mi'Shulchan Rabbotainu)

"Moshe said, Through this you shall know that Hashem sent me to perform these acts, that it was not from my heart!" (16:28) R' Yaakov Kaminetsky z"l (died 1986) writes: Moshe said these words on his own, without consulting with Hashem. By doing so, he placed the entire Torah at risk. If Hashem had not caused a miracle to happen (i.e., the earth swallowing Korach), the implication would be that Moshe was not Hashem's agent. How could Moshe take this risk? He had no choice! If his own contemporaries could question his authority and not be dealt with decisively, how could later generations be sure that Moshe spoke for G-d? If Moshe had not risked his own reputation (and the Torah's) to impress his own generation, he would have lost future generations. (Emet LeYaakov)

"The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all the people who were with Korach, and the entire wealth." (16:32) The Gemara relates that the sage Rabbah Bar Bar-Chanah once was traveling in the desert when an Arab offered to show him the hole into which Korach had been swallowed. Rabbah saw a fissure from which smoke was rising. He took a ball of wool, soaked it in water, and stuck in on the end of a romach / spear, and then lowered it into the hole. When he removed it, he saw that the wool had been singed by fire. The Arab told him, "Put your ear to the ground and hear what they are saying." Rabbah did so and he heard, "Moshe is true, his Torah is true, and we are liars." What was Rabbah teaching by this story? R' Yitzchak Shmelkes z"l (19th century rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) explains that Rabbah wanted to indicate the seriousness of fomenting in machloket / strife. First, he took wool, which represents tzitzit in particular and mitzvot in general. (Tzitzit, through their blue color, also remind us of the heavens, and therefore of G-d's "Throne.") Next, he dipped the wool in water, which is frequently used by our Sages as a metaphor for Torah. Then, he stuck the water-logged wool on the end of a romach / spear, alluding to the 248 limbs and organs of the human body. (The gematria of "romach" is 248.) By this, he represented a person whose entire being, all 248 limbs and organs, are steeped in Torah and mitzvot. Finally, he lowered the spear into Korach's hole and, when he removed it, it was singed by fire. This demonstrates that even if a person is entirely devoted to Torah and mitzvot, once he becomes involved in machloket, it is impossible to emerge unscathed. (Bet Yitzchak Al HaTorah)

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