

BS"D



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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KORACH - 5765

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [[ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org)] Sent: July 01, 2005 To: [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org) Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach "RavFrand" List - Rabbi Frand on Parshas Korach -

Korach Cashes In On The "It's Not My Fault" Syndrome

There is an interesting Ramba"n at the beginning of this week's parsha. The Ramba"n writes that Korach's jealousy towards Elitzaphon ben Uziel's appointment as prince of the Tribe of Levi, already existed at the time that the Children of Israel were in the Wilderness of Sinai. The Ramba"n is elaborating on Rashi's comment that Korach's complaint against Moshe Rabbeinu was due to the fact that Korach felt Moshe was guilty of nepotism for denying him his due honor. Moshe took for himself the role of leader, he assigned his brother the role of High Priest, and he made Elitzaphon -- also a close relative -- prince of the Tribe of Levi.

The Ramba"n notes, however, that the appointment of Elitzaphon occurred much earlier than Korach's rebellion. Why did Korach suddenly 'wake up' now? The Ramba"n therefore comments that this plan had been percolating with Korach for a long time already. But as long as things were going well with the Jewish people, and Moshe's popularity was high, Korach had to bide his time.

Up to this point, things were going well. Moshe Rabbeinu's ratings in the polls were way up there! No one starts up with the President when he has an 85% approval rating. Even in the case of the sin of the Golden Calf, the number of people who died as a result of punishment therein was relatively small -- in no small measure as a result of Moshe's heroic plea to G-d for mercy in their defense. The Ramba"n suggests that had Korach tried to start a revolt against Moshe when his jealousy was first aroused, he would have been stoned by the people in outrage.

However, in the more recent narrative in the Torah, things have been going 'down hill' for the Jewish people. In Parshas Be'ha'aloscha, we read of the Complainers (mis-onenim) and the Graves of the Lustful (Kivros HaTavah). In Parshas Shlach, we read about the sin of the Spies and the decree that everyone would die in the dessert. In this case, Moshe did not pray on their behalf and was unable to nullify the decree.

This was a watershed event that marked the people's disenchantment with Moshe Rabbeinu. "Moshe, what kind of leader are you? What have you done for us lately?" Korach saw that this was his moment. He was now ready to make his move and implement the plan that he had been waiting to unleash for all these many months of stifled jealousy.

Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (1874-1936) points out that this is human nature. The Jewish People were upset at Moshe Rabbeinu because G-d was punishing them and Moshe "didn't do anything about it." Wait a minute! Why blame Moshe? He only sent out the Spies because the people pressured him to send out spies. It wasn't Moshe Rabbeinu who started complaining when the Spies gave their report; it was the Jewish People who were weeping for no reason. Who is really at fault here? Moshe Rabbeinu could certainly argue "It is not my fault! It is your fault!"

But the Jewish people are doing what we all do -- transferring the blame to someone else. If this was true in Biblical times and it was true when the Ramban wrote about it in medieval times, and it was true when Rav Yeruchem pointed it out two generations ago -- what should we say in modern day America where everybody and his uncle is a 'victim'?

It is impossible to do anything wrong in America today. Everyone is a 'victim'. My mother didn't treat me right; my father didn't treat me right; I was abused; my father was an alcoholic; I was raised in the streets. "It is not my fault" -- for all the reasons in the world.

Nothing is "my" fault today. It is always "somebody else's" fault. The refrain today is "mistakes were made". Who made the mistakes? An anonymous person always makes the mistakes. Today, no one gets up and says, "I made a mistake. I blew it! It is my fault!"

The "Victim Syndrome" can be traced back to Biblical times -- back to the days of Kayin and Hevel. Korach recognized it and he attempted to use the opportunity to cash in on it. This is why only now does he first begin to register his complaints against Moshe Rabbeinu.

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RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY

THE JOB OF A LEVI

The Leviim are singled out from the rest of the Jewish people to have a unique role. Unlike most of the Jewish people who would receive a share in Eretz Yisroel, the Leviim would not be involved in agricultural work. The Leviim would dedicate themselves to the service of Hashem and be supported by the other tribes. Although one becomes a Levi by birth, the Rambam in the end of Hilchos Shemittah V'yovel describes a different kind of Levi. Any person who decides to dedicate his life to Hashem and separate himself from worldly pursuits is a spiritual heir to the Leviim of old.

This second type of Levi spends his time in service of Hashem primarily through the study of Torah. How did the Rambam see in the individual who commits himself wholeheartedly to the study of Torah as continuing the legacy of the Leviim? The Leviim were involved in the service of the mishkan and later the beis hamikdash. How is the study of Torah a continuation of the beis hamikdash?

Although the avodas hamikdash was a primary task of the Leviim, there was another role they fulfilled. The sanherdin is described in Devarim as being comprised of Kohanim and Leviim. In the bracha that shevet Levi receives from Moshe Rabbeinu they are blessed to be the teachers of Torah as well as those who serve in the beis hamikdash.

This dual role of the Leviim stems from the dual role of the beis hamikdash itself. Although we usually associate the beis hamikdash with the offering of korbanos, there was another dimension to the beis hamikdash. The sanherdin sat in the beis hamikdash and the aron with the luchos was at its center. The Leviim guarded over both aspects of the beis hamikdash; they assisted the Kohanim in avodas hakorbanos and also were the teachers of Torah.

These two aspects of the beis hamikdash and the Leviim who watched over it complement each other. The beis hamikdash was the meeting point between Hashem and Bnai Yisroel. We reach out to Hashem through offering korbanos, and He reaches us by teaching us His Torah. The Leviim who assisted in the offering of korbanos and taught Torah enabled this bonding between Hashem and His people to occur.

Chazal teach us that after the beis hamikdash was destroyed, all Hashem has left in this world is the study of Torah. Even though we can no longer reach out to Hashem by offering korbanos, we can still come closer via Hashem sharing His Torah with us.

Although the role of a Levi as part of the avodas hakorbanos no longer exists, the role of a teacher of Torah endures. It is this role of the Levi that can be assumed by anyone. Anyone who decides to dedicate his life to the study and teaching of Torah is following in the footsteps of the Leviim. Through the study of Torah Hashem is able to reach out to us even in the temporary absence of the beis hamikdash. May we merit to see the rebuilding of the beis hamikdash and witness the return of "Kohanim la'avodasam u'Leviim l'shiram u'zimram" - the return of the Kohanim and Leviim to their service of Hashem and His people.

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Parshas Korach 5761

RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN

[Rabbi, Young Israel of Midwood; Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS]

ובני קרח לא מתו (parshas Pinchas 28:11). Chazal tell us:

הם היו בעצה תחילה. But then, at the time of the מחלוקת, they had second thoughts, תשובה הרהורי. And so when the earth opened up and swallowed קורח and his followers, they also fell into גיהנום, but a platform formed in גיהנום itself, on which they stood and said שירה - song to Hashem. And apparently they survived this experience, because later their descendants are found among the Leviim who served in the המקדש בית, and - indeed - among the composers of תהלים ספר. For among the 150 chapters of תהלים, ten begin with the words: לבני קרח, a psalm of the children of קרח.

It is interesting to consider whether any mention of these amazing events that befell their ancestors can be found among these בני קרח of מזמורים. Certainly not on the surface. But one of my rebbeim, R' Shneur Kotler zt"l, used to point out one passage in these מזמורים which, if we look closely, we can find an echo of these events.

In Perek 48 which we say every Monday in the שיר של יום we read as follows:

דימינו אלקים חסדך בקרב היכלך כשמך אלקים כן תהלתך על קצוי ארץ. Which is usually translated as follows: We hoped, O G-d, for your kindness in the midst of your Sanctuary. Like your Name, O G-d, so is your praise; to the ends of the earth.

However, the word דימינו comes from דמיון, imagination; and it does not mean to hope, but to mistake, to imagine - as in:

. And so we might better translate these פסוקים as follows: We mistakenly imagined, O G-d, that your kindness is in the midst of your Sanctuary. But - in fact - your praise, like your Name, reaches to the ends of the earth.

And R' Shneur explained the meaning of these pesukim, and their connection to the parsha, as follows: Korach and his followers, as we know, were up in arms because the כהונה had been given to אהרן. It's not fair, they said, that אהרן should monopolize the כהונה - that only he should be the one allowed into the קדש קדשים, the Holy of Holies. After all, כול העדה כולם קדושים, the entire people is holy; how can you deprive us of the opportunity to be close to Hashem, to have that feeling of intimacy, of closeness, to bask in the radiance of Hashem's goodness; how can אהרן monopolize that?

But קורח made a fundamental error. Because the fact is that Hashem's closeness is not limited to any one geographical location; not even to the קדש קדשים. Because Hashem reveals Himself primarily not through a place, but through His word, through Torah. And therefore Chazal tell us: יקרה היא מפנינים מכה"ג שנכנס לפני ולפנים, that Torah is more precious even than the experience of the גדול he enters the Holy of Holies. Because through Torah Hashem allows us to come closer to Him than through any other means.

And therefore wherever Torah is learned Hashem is near.

wherever my Name is mentioned - and the entire Torah, the Ramban teaches us, is the name of G-d - I will be there.

It was Korach's children who first understood that lesson. And they showed that by singing שירה in גהנום. גהנום always an expression of the sensation of Hashem's nearness. And there is no place where Hashem seems so far away as in גהנום. Because גהנום, by definition, is a place where Hashem's goodness is not felt at all. And yet even in גהנום - Korach's children realized - שירה can be said; because there is no place where Torah cannot reach. And that is the meaning of the song of the children of קרח:

דמינו, we imagined - we mistook. We thought that Hashem's חסד, the sense of His goodness and closeness, can be had only בקרב היכלך, in the משכן, in the קדש קדשים. But that is not the case. כשמך אלקים כן תהלתך על קצוי ארץ. Your praise is like Your Name, to the ends of the earth. Just as your Name, your Torah, reaches to the ends of the earth. so too your praise, your שירה, can be sung even at the ends of the earth, even in גהנום itself.

Korach's mistake did not perish with him. We also sometimes think that Hashem is to be found only בקרב היכלך, only in the sanctuary, only in shul.

Rabbi Emannuel Feldman writes about one of his congregants who, upon leaving shul each Shabbos after the service, would say: Goodbye, G-d; I'm going home now. That is to imagine that הכלך בקרב היכלך.

G-d's closeness and His Torah permeate every aspect of life; the shul, the home, and the workplace. Each one can be informed by Torah, and infused with קדושה. For כשמך אלקים כן תהלתך על קצוי ארץ

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

SIR JONATHAN SACKS

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth [From last year] <http://www.chiefrabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Korach - Arguments for the Sake of Heaven

The Korach rebellion was the worst of many in the wilderness years. It involved senior figures - Korach himself, a member of Moses' tribe, together with leading Reubenites, and 250 others, "well known community leaders." So grave was it that it became, for the sages, a paradigm of the wrong kind of disagreement:

Every argument for the sake of heaven will in the end be of permanent value, but every argument not for the sake of heaven will not endure. Which is an argument for the sake of heaven? The argument between Hillel and Shammai. Which is an argument not for the sake of heaven? The argument of Korach and his company. Meiri explains this teaching in the following terms:

The arguments between Hillel and Shammai: In their debates, one of them would render a decision and the other would argue against it, out of a desire to discover the truth, not out of cantankerousness or a wish to prevail over his fellow. That is why when he was right, the words of the person who disagreed, endured. An argument not for the sake of heaven was that of Korach and his company, for they came to undermine Moses, our master, may he rest in peace, and his position, out of envy and contentiousness and ambition for victory. The sages are here drawing a fundamental distinction between two kinds of conflict: argument for the sake of truth and argument for the sake of victory.

The narrative of the Korach conflict is complex and difficult to disentangle. There were several factions, each with their own grievance. Firstly there was Korach himself. The genealogy given in the opening verse of the sedra - "Korach, son of

Yitzhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi" - suggested to the sages the nature of his discontent:

My father was one of four brothers . . . Amram was the firstborn. Of his sons, Aaron was awarded the priesthood and Moses was given kingship. Who is worthy of receiving the next honour if not the second [brother, Yitzhar]? I, Yitzhar's son should have been made prince of the clan, but instead Moses appointed Elizaphan, son of Uzziel [the fourth and youngest brother]. Should the youngest of father's brothers be greater than I? I will dispute with him and undo whatever he does. Korach was aggrieved that he had been passed over when leaders were appointed for the various clans. In Numbers 3: 30 we read that "The leader of the families of the clans of Kohath was Elizaphan, son of Uzziel." 3 Elizaphan was the youngest of the four sons of Kohath. Korach was the son of Yitzhar, the second eldest of the brothers. Having already felt slighted that his father's elder brother, Amram, had provided the Israelites with their two supreme leaders, Moses and Aaron, this further rejection was the final insult. He felt humiliated, and was determined to bring Moses and Aaron down.

Frustrated ambition lay behind the involvement of two other groups as well, the Reubenites and the 250 "leaders" from the other tribes. Here is Malbim's analysis:

The grievance [of Dathan and Abiram and On ben Peleth] lay in the fact that they belonged to the tribe of Reuben who, as the first born son of Jacob, was entitled to the highest offices of spiritual and political leadership. Instead, they complained, the priesthood and divine service had been given to the tribe of Levi and leadership of the tribes to Judah and Joseph. Similarly, the 250 men contended that, as "princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown," they should have been accorded the priesthood. They were against conferring a hereditary title on a tribe, but asserted that individual prestige and distinction should be considered. Ibn Ezra suggests that these 250 rebels were in fact firstborn who considered that the priesthood was their natural prerogative.

Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, yet his tribe was systematically passed over when it came to leadership roles, leaving its members with a sense of grievance. In the case of the firstborn of other tribes and families, there was a different resentment, namely that after the sin of the Golden Calf the office of priesthood had been taken from the firstborn and passed to the Cohanim of the tribe of Levi.

In short, each of the three groups was motivated by malice, envy and a desire for revenge against the two men, Moses and Aaron, who seemed to have arrogated leadership to themselves, and then arbitrarily distributed it among the people.

The passage must be read this way, because of the glaring discrepancy between the reported words of the rebels, and Moses' response. Initially the claim they make has a certain moral dignity to it:

They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?" On the face of it, they are arguing for complete equality among the people. They are all holy. They have all heard the word of G-d. There should be no distinction of rank, no hierarchy of holiness, within Israel. Did not Moses himself say, on an earlier occasion, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets"? Yet from Moses' reply, it is clear that he has heard something altogether different behind their words:

Moses also said to Korah, "Now listen, you Levites! Isn't it enough for you that the G-d of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too . . ."

The rebels' rhetoric was pure incitement. They did not mean it, and he knew they did not mean it. Like the Russian revolutionaries in 1917, though they spoke the language of equality, what they wanted was power. This was argument not for the sake of truth but for the sake of victory.

What is extraordinary is the sequence of events that follows. First, for the one and only time in his life, Moses asks for a miracle - indeed stakes his leadership upon it:

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." He is immediately answered:

As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions. They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community.

It is impossible to imagine a more dramatic vindication. Korach and his followers have been swallowed up by the ground. G-d has answered Moses and demonstrated

that He is with him and against the rebels. Yet this did not end the argument. That is what is extraordinary. Far from being intimidated, cowed, apologetic and repentant, the Israelites return the next morning still complaining - this time, not about who should lead whom but about the way Moses had chosen to end the dispute:

The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the LORD's people," they said. You may be right, they imply, and Korach may have been wrong. But is this a way to win an argument? To cause your opponents to be swallowed up alive? This time, G-d suggests an entirely different way of resolving the dispute:

The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you. The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites." So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their leaders gave him twelve staffs, one for the leader of each of their ancestral tribes, and Aaron's staff was among them. Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the Tent of the Testimony.

The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff.

The LORD said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die." Moses did just as the LORD commanded him. What ends the dispute is not a show of power but something quite different - a demonstration of the gift of G-d to make what is dead come to life again. Aaron's rod became the symbol of priesthood and of spiritual leadership generally. The priest does not rule the people; he blesses them. He is the conduit through which G-d's life-giving energies flow. He connects the nation to the Divine presence. What makes a spiritual leader is not ambition but humility. Moses answered Korach in Korach's terms, by a show of force. G-d answers in His terms, showing that leadership is not self-assertion but self-effacement.

What the entire episode shows is the destructive nature of argument not for the sake of heaven - that is, argument for the sake of victory. In such a conflict what is at stake is not truth but power, and the result is that both sides suffer. If you win, I lose. But if I win, I also lose, because in diminishing you, I diminish myself. Even a Moses is brought low, laying himself open to the charge that "You have killed the Lord's people."

The opposite is the case when the argument is for the sake of truth. If I win, I win. But if I lose I also win - because being defeated by the truth is the only form of defeat that is also a victory. There is a magnificent passage in the Talmud that gives expression to this idea:

Shimon the Imsonite - others state, Nehemiah the Imsonite - used to interpret every eth in the Torah, but when he came to the verse You shall fear [eth] the Lord your G-d, he retracted. His disciples said to him: "Master, what is to become of all the ethin you have interpreted?" He replied, "Just as I received reward for the exposition, so I will receive reward for the retraction." When R. Akiba, however, came, he taught: "Thou shalt fear eth the Lord thy G-d" implies that the scholarly disciples are also to be feared. Shimon, a contemporary of Rabbi Akiva, held that no word in the Torah is superfluous. What then of the word eth, whose only function is to indicate the object of a verb, but which has no meaning in and of itself? Shimon's answer was simple. In each case, eth came to include something not explicitly stated in the text. He used this principle successfully in a long series of interpretations - until he came to the command, "You shall fear [eth] the Lord your G-d." Here, he suddenly realized, the principle broke down. What else could one include in this verse? To place the fear of something else alongside the fear of G-d was surely blasphemy.

Like a true scientist, Shimon realized that a single counter-example refutes a rule. Not only did he admit defeat in this case, but drew the logical conclusion that if the rule was refuted, he would have to retract all other interpretations based on it. In effect, he jettisoned his entire life's work. [As it happens, his decision was premature. Rabbi Akiva later solved the problem. You shall fear [eth] the Lord your G-d, he said, includes scholars. "The reverence one should have for one's teachers should be like the reverence one has for G-d himself."]

Here, almost two thousand years ago, is the first articulation of a principle made famous in the 20th century by the late Sir Karl Popper in his work on scientific methodology, Conjectures and Refutations. A scientific theory, Popper argued, can never be conclusively verified. However many times the sun has risen in the morning, it is always possible that tomorrow it will not. But a scientific theory can be conclusively refuted. Therefore it is refutation that advances scientific knowledge - or as Shimon the Imsonite put it: "Just as I received reward for the exposition, so I will

receive reward for the retraction." To be defeated by the truth is the only defeat that is also a victory.

In another famous passage, the Talmud explains why Jewish law usually follows the view of the school of Hillel as against their opponents, the school of Shammai:

[The law is in accord with the school of Hillel] because they were kindly and modest, because they studied not only their own rulings but also those of the school of Shammai, and because they taught the words of the school of Shammai before their own. They sought truth, not victory. That is why they listened to the views of their opponents, and indeed taught them before they taught their own traditions. In the eloquent words of a contemporary scientist, Timothy Ferris:

All who genuinely seek to learn, whether atheist or believer, scientist or mystic, are united in having not a faith, but faith itself. Its token is reverence, its habit to respect the eloquence of silence. For G-d's hand may be a human hand, if you reach out in loving kindness, and G-d's voice your voice, if you but speak the truth. Judaism has sometimes been called a "culture of argument." It is the only religious literature known to me whose key texts - the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud, the codes of Jewish law and compendia of biblical interpretation - are anthologies of arguments. That is the glory of Judaism. The Divine presence is to be found not in this voice as against that, but in the totality of the conversation. Yet Jewry has been debilitated, time and again in its history, by disagreement, dissension, fractiousness and conflict. That is not its glory but its disgrace.

How can the very attribute that is the virtue of its texts be the vice of its people? The answer lies in the teaching with which we began. It depends on the nature of the argument. Is it, or is it not, "for the sake of heaven"? Is it a battle for truth or for victory? In the battle for truth, both sides win. In the struggle for victory, both sides lose.

The difference is not mysterious or elusive. In an argument for the sake of truth, each side is willing to listen to the views of its opponents and take them seriously. Each uses reason, logic, shared texts and shared reverence for texts. Neither uses ad hominem arguments, abuse, contempt, or disingenuous appeals to emotion. Each is willing, if refuted, to say, "I was wrong." There is no triumphalism in victory, no anger or anguish in defeat. The story of Korach remains the classic example of how argument can be dishonoured. The schools of Hillel and Shammai remind us that there is another way. "Argument for the sake of heaven" is one of Judaism's noblest ideals - conflict resolution by honouring both sides of the conflict and by humility in the pursuit of truth.

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SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL, SHLIT"A  
KORACH: DISPUTE FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN?  
Adapted by Dov Karoll

Now Korach, the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehat, the son of Levi, and Datan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav, and On, the son of Pelet, sons of Re'uven, took men; and they rose up before Moshe, with certain of the people of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, regularly summoned to the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moshe and against Aharon, and said to them, You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? (Bemidbar 16:1-3)

There were different parties to Korach's rebellion. The sons of Re'uven were upset because they felt they should have the birthright, and how did the tribe of Levi come to get all the important positions? After Ya'akov's rebuke of Shim'on and Levi, how could it be that Levi assumed such positions of leadership?

Korach had a different claim, and seems to have won widespread sympathy, as we see from the fact that after G-d intervened and destroyed Korach and his cohorts, "All the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moshe and Aharon, saying: You have killed the

people of the Lord" (17:6). Apparently, the sympathy for Korach's claim transcended his particular arguments.

What was Korach's claim? He speaks in very lofty terms: "Seeing that all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them, why then do you lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" (16:3). His claim seems to be purely motivated, "le-shem shamayim, for the sake of Heaven." He asserts that the entire Jewish people has a share in relating to G-d directly. Unlike other religions, where only the prophet speaks to the god, G-d revealed Himself to all of the Jewish people.

Although the content of his claim seems to be "for the sake of Heaven," the Mishna (Avot 5:17) cites the dispute of Korach and his group as the paradigm of a dispute that is "NOT for the sake of Heaven." Is there any shortage of disputes not purely motivated? Why did the Mishna choose specifically this dispute, when it seems to be motivated "for the sake of Heaven"?

Apparently, the Mishna is teaching us that we need to be wary precisely when people make claims that G-d is on their side. It is for this reason that the Mishna characterizes precisely this dispute as the prototype of the dispute that is not for the sake of Heaven, to emphasize that this type of superficial religiosity is problematic and unacceptable.

Along these lines, I would like to share three stories with you.

My wife had an uncle who was a dayyan (judge) on the Rabbinic Court of Yerushalayim. When that Beit Din was first founded, Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik zt"l, the Brisker Rav, came out very strongly against it, as he was concerned about reforms they would make. Accordingly, it was not so accepted at the time in the Charedi world.

After my wife's grandfather, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l, passed away, this uncle became a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivat Etz Chaim. When this uncle passed away, the following story took place. Rav M.M. Shakh zt"l, whose wife was a cousin, came in to Yerushalayim to eulogize him, and about forty-five minutes before we were supposed to go to the Yeshiva for the funeral, the phone rang with a message that Rav Shakh's wife had suffered a heart attack and he should return to Bnei Brak immediately.

He was obviously shaken, but the family, after clarifying that the rebbetzin had been fine before he left, was convinced that it was probably a zealous student trying to prevent Rav Shakh from delivering the eulogy. In those days, there were about two phones in Bnei Brak, so it was difficult to ascertain what was really happening with the rebbetzin. A compromise was reached, whereby Rav Shakh delivered the first eulogy, spoke briefly, and immediately left for Bnei Brak to join his wife. Thank God, he found her in perfect health.

After looking into what happened, it was found that a zealously anti-Zionist kollel student had fabricated the horrible story, as the family had suspected. What could that man possibly have been thinking? Did he think for a second that he was greater than Rav Shakh, and should dictate to Rav Shakh what to do?

Presumably, he would have said that, of course, Rav Shakh was a great Torah scholar and leader, and he generally would have yielded to his judgment. However, Rav Shakh was biased toward his own family and was unable to properly judge their faults. Therefore, this man took upon himself to try to trick the rabbi, in order to prevent him from, Heaven forefend, eulogizing a Zionist relative.

That story happened on the week of Parashat Korach. Only after that story did I understand how Korach could have said such horrible things about Moshe Rabbeinu. Yes, of course, it is true that Moshe spoke to G-d "face to face" (Shemot 33:11, Devarim 34:11); nonetheless, he was unable to judge his own relatives in an unbiased manner, and gave the plum job to his brother Aharon. This trait, of undermining Moshe and impugning his judgment, is one of Korach's major shortcomings.

A second story is from my grandfather. He was a Torah scholar who lived in Yerushalayim at the end of his life, having moved here before the Shoah. After my parents and siblings were murdered by the Nazis, I merited to be reunited with my grandfather in Yerushalayim. He passed away a short time after bringing me to the chuppa, and I inherited many of his writings, including original Torah thoughts and sermons.

One time he wrote up a speech he planned to give at a siyyum, upon completing Massekhet Ta'anit with his Chevra Shas. He wrote of a certain Chasidic rebbe who was insulted by some Misnagdim in the town. When asked to excommunicate these men in order to preserve kavod ha-Torah, the Torah's honor, the rebbe at first consented, and then he reconsidered. When he asked why he retracted, the rebbe responded that he was not sure if his motivation was purely to defend the Torah's honor, or perhaps he also harbored some ulterior motive.

My grandfather did not end up telling this story, as apparently some event had transpired in his vicinity that made it imprudent. In any case, this story emphasizes a different aspect: the scrutiny to which one must subject himself before speaking out against another, particularly when speaking out against a great person.

Finally, I will share a personal story with you. I have said in the Yeshiva on more than one occasion that one should avoid disputes (perhaps specifically the aforementioned kind), and if one's job requires getting involved in some dispute, one should prefer to suffer the consequences than to get involved. Once I got a phone call from an alumnus of the Yeshiva, who asked me if I remembered the sicha I had given at Parshat Korach about ten years before. I told him that I did. He then told me that he had encountered precisely the scenario I had described, where he was asked to take part in just such a dispute.

He described the scenario, and he also made clear that he remembered what I had said at the time. Then he said to me, "But I have a wife and children; how can I take that chance?" I told him to take it anyway and he would be OK. It's not my word; the Torah teaches us to avoid this kind of dispute, regardless of the cost. I am happy to report that his situation did turn out well in the end.

Thus, Korach's dispute teaches important lessons about the ethics of dispute, and the need for special care in religious disputes. The Torah's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace.

[This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Korach 5762 (20.)  
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From: Rabbi Goldwicht [[rgoldwicht@yutorah.org](mailto:rgoldwicht@yutorah.org)] Sent: June 30, 2005 11:40 AM To: Subject: Parashat Korach WEEKLY INSIGHTS BY RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT

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#### Parashat Shelach

Our parasha opens with Korach's machloket against Moshe. Rashi writes, quoting Chazal, that Korach challenged Moshe by asking why a tallit made entirely of techeilet requires a ptil techeilet and why a house full of sifrei kodesh requires a mezuzah. There is no question that Korach was an intelligent individual. Clearly what stands behind these questions and what stands behind Korach's machloket is a worldview drastically different from that of Moshe. What exactly is the worldview that stands behind these questions?

The Torah tells us that Dan and Aviram joined Korach in his machloket. How did they come to join forces with Korach? Rashi explains that their shevatim camped next to each other – "Oy la'rasha, oy lishcheino." In other words, the rasha here is Korach, and the "neighbors" are Dan and Aviram. Yet in Tehillim 106, where David HaMelech recaps B'nei Yisrael's

journey through the desert, we find very interestingly that in describing Korach's machloket, David HaMelech doesn't mention Korach at all! He mentions only Dan and Aviram, saying, "Tiftach ertz vativla Dan, vatechas al adat Aviram, The earth opened and swallowed up Dan, and covered the congregation of Aviram" (v. 17). Why does David HaMelech ignore the rasha himself, Korach, and focus only on the "neighbors"?

The mishnah in Avot (5:17) teaches: "Every machloket that is l'sheim shamayim is destined to survive; every machloket that is not l'sheim shamayim is not destined to survive. What is a machloket l'sheim shamayim? Like the machloket of Hillel and Shammai. What is a machloket not l'sheim shamayim? Like the machloket of Korach and his congregation." Our third and final question is that asked by many of the meforshim of that mishnah: How can you tell if a machloket is l'sheim shamayim or not? After all, everyone who starts a machloket is certain that what he's doing is l'sheim shamayim!

The answers to these questions enter us into the sugya of machloket in general. The first time we find machloket in the world is on the second day of Creation, on which Hashem divided between the upper waters and the lower waters. Therefore, Gehinnom was created on this day as well, teaching us that Gehinnom does not exist only in shamayim, but on Earth as well, brought here through machloket.

The next time we find machloket is on the sixth day of Creation. Chazal teach in Bereishit Rabbah that when Hashem wanted to create Man, some of the angels were in favor and some were opposed. Chesed and Tzedakah were in favor; Emet and Shalom were opposed, because Man would be full of sheker and ketatah, conflict. HaKadosh Baruch Hu answered Emet, explaining that even though Man is full of sheker, in the end the truth would shine forth from the sheker with unique intensity. To Shalom, however, HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave no answer, because peace is in the Heavens, not on Earth – "Oseh shalom bimromav." The nature of our world is to be full of dispute. How can we live in peace in a world whose nature is ketatah? The only way to do this is to connect with that which is above us.

In all of Creation, the Torah says, "Ki tov." Ramban explains that "ki tov" means "Hashem desired that it last forever." How can something that Hashem wants to last forever be referred to as just tov? It should be metzuyan, nifla, outstanding, amazing! Tov is like a B-! The answer is that tov is not a grade, but much more. Tov indicates chibur, a connection between two things. This is what Shlomo HaMelech means when he says, "Matza isha, matza tov, One who has found a wife has found good" (Mishlei 18:22)? One who has found a wife has found more than good – he has found the greatest thing one can find! Rather, tov indicates a natural and genuine connection between two things. One who has found a wife has found this connection. We find tov as a result of chibur again by the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu. Amram had divorced Yocheved, but remarried her at the behest of Miriam. As a result of this connection, a baby was born – Moshe – about whom it says, "Vateire oto ki tov hu, And she saw that he was good" (Shemot 2:2).

Korach's mistake was thinking that yahadut is about what a person thinks and feels is right, when the truth is that yahadut is, first and foremost, what a person must do. When a person does what he must, afterwards he feels that what he did was the right thing. This is essentially what stands behind Korach's claim – if the tallit is entirely of techeilet, there is no need for an additional ptil techeilet, because the techeilet represents the greater picture, what I feel, whereas the lavan represents the details, what I must do. Korach saw only the greater picture, the techeilet, without seeing the details. This is the first sign that a machloket is not l'sheim shamayim. One who sees the greater picture, oblivious to the details, does only what he feels, not what he needs to do. The trick is to be able to integrate the details into the greater picture. Korach lacked the ability to find the chibur between the two, and therefore his machloket was not tov. A machloket that is not

tov, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not desire to last forever, will not survive, as the mishnah in Avot says.

The gemara in Yevamot says that even though Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai argued, they still married between each other, fulfilling the passuk, "V'ha'emet v'hashalom ehavu, Love truth and peace" (Zechariah 8:18). This passuk is perplexing, however, because Emet and Shalom seem to contradict each other – there is only one truth, whereas peace indicates compromise, even at the expense of truth. Rather, Shalom – shleimut – is the greater picture, the techeilet, while Emet is the details. Unlike Korach, Hillel and Shammai were able to combine the greater picture and the details without any contradiction or tension. They were able to find the chibur, and therefore their machloket was tov, and destined to survive.

The next sign that a machloket is not l'sheim shamayim is involving outside parties, looking for support from one's neighbors. Had Korach intended his machloket against Moshe for the sake of Heaven, he would have discussed his issues one-on-one with Moshe, not gone around trying to spark a rebellion. This is the reason David HaMelech emphasizes the neighbors in Tehillim, to demonstrate that Korach's machloket was not l'sheim shamayim.

Chazal in Midrash Rabbah say that all the blessings and kindnesses HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives to Am Yisrael, he seals with Shalom. Keriat Shema concludes with the bracha of "HaPoreis Shalom." Birkat kohanim concludes with Shalom. The midrash brings many more examples. Sefer HaMiddot writes: "Bakesh shalom v'rodfeihu, Seek out peace and chase after it' – seek it with your friends, chase after it with others. Don't ever give up, rather chase after it until you find it." The period in which we find ourselves right now, between Kabbalat HaTorah and 17 Tammuz, is a period in our past during which we were k'ish echad b'leiv echad around Har Sinai, until the Cheit HaEigel. If we make an effort to create peace with all who surround us, near and far, we will merit the fulfillment of the words of Yeshayahu HaNavi, speaking about Melech HaMashiach, "Mah navu al heharim raglei mevaser, mashmia shalom, mevaser tov, How beautiful upon the mountains the feet of the messenger, the announcer of peace and bearer of good tidings" (52:7).

Shabbat Shalom! Meir Goldwicht

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RABBI MAYER TWERSKY  
KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

"Carry out my mishpatim" - [mishpatim are] commandments which even if they had not been written [in the Torah] [human] reason dictates that they be written, such as idolatry, gilui arayos, murder, etc. "and safeguard my chukim" - [chukim are] commandments which the Satan challenges, such as consumption of pork, wearing wool and linen together, etc. And lest you say that [chukim are] empty prescriptions, the Torah teaches "I am Hashem" and you have no right to doubt [the chukim]. (Yoma 67b)

This passage in the Gemara introduces a fundamental distinction. Mishpatim are mitzvos which are intuitive, they correspond with out G-d

given innate moral sense. Chukim, on the other hand, are entirely unintuitive. We do not intuitively discern the justification or rational of chukim. We simply surrender to and accept ratzon Hashem. A knowledge-faith dialectic characterizes our experience of mitzvos.

The dialectic of faith-knowledge characterizes our relationships with Hakadosh Baruch Hu as well. On the one hand, as Rambam clarifies in Mishneh Torah, we are commanded to know that Hashem exists. The world in all its complexity and beauty points to Hashem, the Borei Olam. The incomparably deep, inexhaustible wells of Torah point to Hashem, the Nosein haTorah. The "turbulent and majestic saga of Jewish history"[1] points to Hashem "whose eyes are cognizant to all the ways of mankind to grant each man according to his ways and the consequences of his deeds"[2]. We know Hashem, and yet we can not know Him. The human mind thinks in terms of time and place, while Hashem exists outside of time and place. Hence, we can not know Him, We can not grasp His essence. We believe in Hashem. We know and we believe, the twin foci of religious existence.[3]

Within religious life, knowledge and faith co-exist reciprocally. They nurture each other. Knowledge nurtures faith in that knowledge is the foundation of faith. We believe in Hashem though His essence is beyond human comprehension because of what we do know about Him (as explained above). We know of Hashem's eternal love of the Jewish people - "He who chose us from amongst all of the nations and gave us His Torah" - and thus we believe in Him even when His will in history is inscrutable. Clearly knowledge fosters and nurtures faith.

But faith also fosters and nurtures knowledge. Consider the following example from the world of learning. Tosafos raises a difficulty with Rashi's explanation, Ra'avad with Rambam's p'sak. Often, at first glance, the question is so compelling that Rashi or Rambam simply appear to be wrong. If one lacks confidence and trust in Rashi and Rambam. He will be complacently content to think that Rashi failed to notice nuances in the text and Rambam forgot a relevant Gemara. If alternatively one operates with the knowledge that the chachmei haMasorah displayed a profound and remarkable mastery of Torah and benefited from siyata d'shmaya, one will re-think and re-examine that relevant sugyos. The answer for Rashi or Rambam which ultimately emerges will, upon discovery, turn out to be totally natural; the approach of Rashi or Rambam runs out to be as internally consistent and compelling as that of Tosafos or Ra'avad. Without emunas chachamim in Rashi and Rambam, their approaches, brilliant and subtle, would have gone unnoticed. With emunas chachamim, however, our appreciation and knowledge of Rashi and Rambam's Torah and greatness is enhanced.

Thus we see that our belief in Torah and the chachmei haTorah allows us to discern the depth and profundity of Torah, thus adding to our knowledge of Torah.

Our appreciation and understanding of hashgachas Hashem is also rooted in the reciprocity of faith and knowledge. The pattern of divine providence, at times, protrudes from the tapestry of history. We witness open miracles. We know of Hashem's involvement, guiding the course of history. More often, however, Hashem camouflages His involvement. The skeptic sees no trace of providence. The man of faith searches and, at times, will succeed in uncovering the camouflaged pattern of hashgachas Hashem. Acting out of faith, he increases his knowledge.

As we have seen, the twin foci of a Torah life are faith and knowledge. The faith which the Torah expects from us is the antithesis of the Tertullian variety ("I believe because it is absurd"). It is a faith anchored in and fastened by knowledge. We are called upon to cultivate such faith.[4]

Modern man, buoyed by the explosion of scientific knowledge and the previously unimaginable advances of scientific technology, wants to know, but does not want to believe. Man's understanding is the measure of everything. Mishpatim sit well with us; chukim are grating. We are too often unwilling to surrender and acknowledge our limitations. In truth, we

are limited not only vis-à-vis Hakadosh Baruch Hu, but also l'havdil with regard to our chachamei hamasorah. We know of their wisdom. There is much in the words of Chazal that we are privileged to understand and appreciate. But at times we encounter "chukim" in the words of Chazal. We do not understand that what or why of certain ma'amarei Chazal. At such times, we are called upon to surrender and believe. Our acceptance for all halachos and hashkafos haTorah must be unconditional.

In our times, we also witness the profound and tragic truth of an insight provided by the Rov zt"l. The Rov explains that without the absolute, unconditional acceptance of and submission to chukim, our commitment to mishpatim will also erode. In his day, the Rov cited the prohibition against murder. This is the ultimate mishpat. And yet if our acceptance of lo tirtsach is rooted only in our intuitive moral sense and not in unconditional surrender to ratzon Hashem, ultimately even lo tirtsach is rationalized away as our exigencies and predilections dictate. The Rov decried how euthanasia and abortion, acts of murder, are construed as acts of compassion.

In our own day the nightmare of a society which "accepts" mishpatim but does not surrender to chukim has grown even darker. We are witness to shameless attempts to legitimize homosexuality - which the Torah brands an abomination[5] - within Orthodox Judaism.

As evidenced by these examples, the reciprocity of faith and knowledge is more vital than was hitherto described. They simply cannot exist without each other. Authentic faith requires a foundation of knowledge, but knowledge also requires the support of faith and the act of intellectual surrender inherent within faith. Otherwise knowledge is susceptible to being relativized and rationalized away.[6]

[1]This phrase is my father's, zt"l [2]Yirmiyahu 32 [3]This paragraph is based upon the comments of Reb Chayim with Reb Velvel, as recorded in Avi Ha-Ezri on Hilchos Teshuva [4]See the Rov's essay U'bikashtem Misham [5]Vayikra 18:22 [6]This last point deserves much elaboration which is not possible presently

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RABBI WEIN -

PARSHAS KORACH

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MESSIAHS AND MESSIANISM <http://rabiwein.com/column-933.html>

One of the central tenets of Judaism is the belief in the coming of the Messiah and the betterment of the human condition through his efforts and presence. The biblical prophets of Israel foretold the coming of this great messianic era. Over the long exile of Israel from its homeland and the terrible persecutions visited upon the Jewish people, the Messiah came to represent the deliverance of Israel from its enemies and its proper restoration to its sovereignty and nationhood in the Land of Israel. Through the centuries, this messianic belief has cut two ways in Jewish life. Without this hope and faith in the coming of a Messiah that would redeem Israel and right the injustices done to the Jewish people, there is grave doubt that the Jews could have survived the terrible tests of exile and persecution. In the darkest hours of our history, Jews always saw the ray of light that the Messiah represented shining through the abject darkness of hatred and discrimination that surrounded it. Yet, on the other hand, this firm belief in the coming of the Messiah spawned many grave crises and disasters in Jewish history. Charlatans, misguided fanatics and other assorted characters spawned a host of false messiahs over the ages, and always with damaging consequences to Judaism and Jews. Thus messianism became at one and the same time the symbol of Jewish hope and of abject disappointment. As the exile lengthened and the troubles persisted and increased, this

ambivalent feeling regarding the coming of the Messiah deepened. We needed and longed for a messiah but were now very cautious in believing anyone who claimed messianic qualities.

The Talmud, sixteen centuries ago, was already wary of the subject. "Let the Messiah come, but I do not want to live to see him" was the statement of many of the great scholars of the Talmud. In fact, the Talmud according to the opinion of Mar Shmuel (third century scholar and leader of Babylonian Jewry) painted a very bland picture of the messianic era. The only difference between the pre-messianic era and the post-messianic time would be that Jewish sovereignty would be established in the Land of Israel, free from influence and obligation to other nations. In short, true independence. We would not have to quake every time Condoleeza Rice or Jack Straw deigned to visit us here in our homeland. Rambam, in his discussion of the messianic era, follows the opinion of Mar Shmuel. He envisions a post-messianic world little different from our current world and interprets all of the prophecies of "the lion lying down with the lamb" in a purely allegorical sense. He does posit a time of prosperity and time for study of Torah and spiritual development in the messianic era but he specifically rejects the idea that "apples made of gold will fall from the trees." In his days there were a number of false messiahs that appeared in the Jewish world and this fact undoubtedly influenced him when he stated that we cannot know anything about the Messiah and that era until the event finally actually occurs. Yet, history and the troubles of the Jews negated the Rambam's opinion amongst the masses of Israel.

After the Crusades, the expulsion from Spain, the pogroms of 1648-9, World War I and then the Holocaust, it became very difficult for Jews to accept a bland, completely natural messianic era. The investment, so to speak, over the ages in the struggle to survive and remain Jewish, was so great that only a supernatural extraordinary messianic era could justify it.

Therefore every twist in the Jewish road over the past decades and even centuries was seen as being a forerunner to the messianic era. Certainly the return of the Jews to sovereignty in their own state in the Land of Israel was viewed by many as being messianic in nature. Great religious leaders viewed this process of Jewish independence as the "footsteps of the Messiah." But other great Jewish scholars denied that any messianism at all was involved in the creation of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel. And other sections of the Jewish people "secularized" themselves away completely from any form of religious belief in messianism and created for themselves a secular messiah that invariably proved to be false and misleading. We apparently therefore will just have to follow the wise counsel of Maimonides and just wait to see what happens when the Messiah does arrive. How we will recognize him may be debatable but that we will recognize him somehow remains a core belief of Judaism and the Jewish people.

Parsha July 01, 2005 <http://www.rabiwein.com/parsha-index.html>

KORACH <http://rabiwein.com/column-934.html>

The story related in parshat Korach about the aborted rebellion against Moshe has great relevance in all generations and all societies. For it is not so much a story of an historical event that happened over three millennia ago as it is a story about human failings and personality faults. Korach is the paradigm for the ambitious, talented, self-confident and aggressive person who feels that the society does not appreciate his talents and abilities. He is slighted because his position in society, according to his own lights, is unworthy of his own true stature. Naturally, Korach cloaks his personal frustration in the mantle of lofty ideas and purposes. He becomes a populist, someone who is interested in bringing democracy to the people of Israel and freeing them from the autocratic rule of Moshe. As do all such ambitious, unscrupulous people, he gathers to himself all of the malcontents of the society, united only in their hatred and disrespect towards Moshe and his leadership. His slogan is "All the people are holy" but his real meaning is "How come I can't be the High Priest?" The torah warns us that many



times high-sounding principles proclaimed for the general good of society only mask personal ambitions and agendas. It is regarding this frequent occurrence in human affairs that Rabbi Yisrael Salanter coined the ironic phrase: "One's actions on behalf of the sake of Heaven also must in themselves be for the sake of Heaven."

Demagoguery and simplistic populism have always posed a problem in Jewish society. Especially so, in a situation that cries out for solutions, with apparently none on the horizon. Korach is in essence a type of false messiah, someone who offers platitudes and panaceas to a generation that sees no bright future for itself. It is no mere coincidence that Korach appears on the scene and attempts his putsch against Moshe after Moshe has informed that generation of Jews that they are doomed to die in the desert and will not enter the Land of Israel. Seeing no way out of their problems, clutching at straws and illusions, there are many Jews of that generation who are willing to listen to and support Korach. Moshe offers them no easy solutions and does not raise their hopes and spirits. In such a situation, a charlatan such as Korach has a golden opportunity to ply his false wares.

Moshe's reaction to the rebellion of Korach is to demand that an exemplary punishment be visited from Heaven upon the rebels. It is not a measure of revenge – certainly not personal revenge – that motivates Moshe in this request. Rather, it is the realization that this situation of Korach will recur often in the long story of Israel and mankind generally and therefore something dramatic must happen to remind later generations of the dangers of being misled by false prophets and scheming egotists. The final admission of the followers of Korach that "Moshe is true and his Torah is true" rings down through the ages as a vital lesson that reality and faith, logic and thought, will always trump demagoguery and unbridled egotism.

Shabat shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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From: [Peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com](mailto:Peninim-bounces@shemayisrael.com) on behalf of Shema Yisrael Torah Network [[shemalist@shemayisrael.com](mailto:shemalist@shemayisrael.com)] Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2005 6:29 AM  
To: Peninim Parsha Subject: Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Lieb Scheinbaum - Parshas Korach

PARSHAS KORACH Korach took (separated himself). (16:1) Machlokes, controversy/dispute, is an extremely destructive force that has undermined our people's growth throughout the generations. Every community is plagued by it in one form or another. It usually begins with a desire for kavod, honor, and mushrooms into all-out war. Jewish unity has been the mainstay of our People, and the foundation of our strength and continued existence. Does this mean that we should avoid machlokes at all costs - under all circumstances? Yes. It is true that at times we must take a stand, particularly when the Torah is being degraded by usurpers whose goal it is to destroy everything the Jewish People stand for. Even then, however, there is an appropriate way to take a stand.

Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, the architect of Torah Judaism for the modern world, lived in Germany in an era in which secularism was a way of life and Orthodoxy represented a tradition that was an obstacle to the fruits of a gentile society. Jewish pride was at an all-time low, and assimilation meant much more than maintaining a simple, overt lifestyle which mimicked the gentile world. It meant shunning Bris Milah, Torah, Shabbos and anything that was reminiscent of Yiddishkeit. Inter-marriage was encouraged and almost expected. Yet, Rav Hirsch made every effort to pronounce his opposition without anger or invective. He preferred to emphasize the positive aspects of his Orthodox kehillah, congregation, not focusing on the sins of the others. Indeed, when he advised a rav in Frankfurt to expel from the community those individuals who refused to circumcise their sons, he added that the expulsion be made in a strong, unambiguous, yet calm, manner - without anger or invective. He wrote that while expulsion would not turn these people around - because, regrettably, they were too far-gone - it must be made clear to them that this expulsion was meted neither as a punishment nor as a means to humiliate them, but only in order to rescue pure Judaism.

On the other hand, Rav Hirsch did not fall prey to counter-productive dialogue. Whenever discord arises between factions of the Jewish camp, between observant and secular Jews, there are always those who argue for tolerance. First, we must understand that the term secular in Rav Hirsch's day, represented something much

different than today. Then it defined a group of Jews whose goal was to undermine everything that bespoke of tradition, Hashem, and Torah. These were not simply tinokos she'nishbu, children who were taken captive, a term applied to Jews who did not have the opportunity to study or be exposed to Torah-true Judaism. These were people, many of whom were shanah u'pireish, had once studied Torah and later rejected it. In other words, they knew better; they knew the truth. They just rejected it. Rav Hirsch considered them apostates, people guilty of heresy with whom dialogue - or even argument - was counter-productive and wrong.

He writes, "What should be said to the members of the fallen generation who, in their apostasy, fancy themselves as 'progressives,' and deride the loyal elders as 'backward'?" To them, nothing should be said! The Divine Word teaches in relation to the wandering child, the inquiring boy, and the searching youth, V'Amartem le'bincha, V'higadeta l'bincha, V'amartem eilav, 'Tell your son, Say to him, Say to your son. In relation to the scornful generation, however, it does not say eilav - "to him," but simply, v'amartem, 'because to him you have nothing to say.' They wish to instruct you. They do not seek your instruction."

Rav Hirsch contends that the key to the hearts of these estranged Jews rests in the hands of Hashem. Only experience can bring them back. When they experience the hollowness and vacuousness of their lives, the bleakness and emptiness of their decisions, they will return. We have nothing to say to them - only to wait until the time in which they are ready to return. Then we will embrace them with open arms.

We may not, however, be totally silent. While we do not talk theology directly to them, we must resolutely and clearly express the Divine precepts - to ourselves. We must review and cherish them. We must attest to the bliss and joy inherent in keeping Hashem's mitzvos. We must set our conviction clearly against the doubts which they might raise - and our fidelity unambiguously in opposition to their heresy. We must take pride in the vitality which our way of life expounds, as opposed to the degeneracy and debauchery which epitomize their way of life. We accentuate our positive and ignore their negative.

Unity is all-important as long as the focus is on the li, "to Me," to Hashem. The call to Divine judgment is phrased in the words isfu li, "Gather to Me." The word esof denotes a gathering into one spiritual unit, withdrawing from any group that maintains a view contrary of the Torah view. The spiritual unity must be li, "to Me," bonded to Hashem and subordinated to His will. As Rav Hirsch explains, this is all included in the word chasidai, My devoted ones: "those who, in complete selflessness, devote themselves to the fulfillment of Hashem's will." Anything else is simply not unity.

Korach took (separated himself). (16:1)

Horav Chaim Plagi, zl, writes about the ill effects of machlokes, controversy. He attests that in every situation in which a person, a community or a city has ever been embroiled in a dispute, regardless of who was right or wrong, ultimately, everyone suffered both physically and financially. He exhorts every one to be tolerant and overlook what may come his way entailing controversy. Otherwise, whatever he might gain will be short-lived, as he will eventually lose out. Additionally, he notes that in every home that is the scene of a dispute on Erev Shabbos, close to Shabbos, or on Friday night, they can regrettably be assured that the week will not go by without some unfortunate occurrence.

Horav Chaim Shmuelewitz, zl, relates that a number of yeshivos which were able to withstand external and financial pressures, managing to maintain their spiritual stamina under the most difficult circumstances, fell prey to machlokes, and, as a result, eventually went under.

The Chida, zl, writes that the sin of machlokes is the cause of great casualty in the world. It can catalyze the premature passing of a tzaddik, righteous Jew, and other serious calamities that plague the Jewish community. Furthermore, the individuals who participate in the controversy and are the indirect cause of these collective consequences are doubly responsible for their actions in the dispute and for the catastrophic results.

The Alter, zl, m'Novordhok was an individual who abhorred machlokes. He would distance himself from any vestige of machlokes, even if it meant incurring a great financial loss. He felt that the momentary financial gain was not worth the ultimate eventual loss, both financially and spiritually. The story is told concerning a wealthy German Jew who passed away and left in his will that a large office building that he owned be endowed to the Novordhoker Yeshivah. The Alter quickly left by train for Germany to settle the estate. While enroute, it came to his attention that another Rosh Yeshivah was also on the way to "settle" the estate and take the building for his yeshivah. The Alter immediately decided that nothing was worth involving himself in a machlokes. He left the train at the next stop, refusing to entertain the reality that this meant losing his rights to the building.

Many years later, in Yerushalayim, after washing the family's clothes, a woman hung them up to dry on the clothesline in the complex where she lived. Her neighbor passed by and, for some reason, she just could not tolerate that the clothes were



hanging publicly. She proceeded to cut the clothesline, causing all the clothes to fall to the ground and become soiled. The woman, whose wash was ruined, swallowed her pride and hurt, picked up her clothes, and washed them again. We must remember that washing clothes in those days was a backbreaking process, since there were no washing machines. Afterwards, she went to the next courtyard to hang her wash. That evening, when her husband returned from the bais ha'medrash, the woman was about to relate to him what had transpired that day and how she was hurt and humiliated. She decided to refrain and not speak lashon hora. Suddenly, the woman who had lost it during the day knocked on the door and asked if she could come in. "I am terribly sorry for what I did today. I do not know what overcame me. I just lost it. Hashem has already punished me for my actions. My young son is presently laying in the hospital suffering from a high fever. Please forgive me," she pleaded. The other woman replied, "I forgive you wholeheartedly. Indeed, let me recite Tehillim on behalf of your son."

One year later, this righteous woman was blessed with a son whose scholarship was to illuminate the Torah world. He is today's posek hador, Horav Yosef Shalom Eliyashuv, Shlita.

In honor of the marriage of our children Bentzion n"y and Chana shetichye daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Yisroel Lederberger Melbourne, Australia 'yehi ratzon shtizkeh l'vno bayis ne'eman b'yisrael' Harry and Perl Brown  
Peninim mailing list [Peninim@shemayisrael.com](mailto:Peninim@shemayisrael.com)  
[http://mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim\\_shemayisrael.com](http://mail.shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim_shemayisrael.com)

From: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column [Shabbat Shalom@ohrtorahstone.org.il] on behalf of Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column [parshat\_hashavua@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2005 9:50 AM To: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin's Shabbat Shalom Parsha Column Subject: Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Korah by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin New! "TORAH LIGHTS" WEBCASTS Streaming VIDEO of Rabbi Riskin's insights on the Parsha now online @ [www.ots.org.il](http://www.ots.org.il) <<http://www.ots.org.il>>  
Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Korah (Numbers 16:1-18:32)

By RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Efrat, Israel - How to Argue and How not to Argue?

"And Korah took...." (Numbers: 16:1) Is controversy a positive or a negative occurrence? Since the ideal of peace is so fundamental to the Jewish ideal- to such an extent that we even greet and bid farewell to each other with the Hebrew word shalom, peace - I would expect that controversy would be universally condemned by our classical sources. However, the Mishnah in Avot (Ethics of the Fathers 5:20) distinguishes between two types of controversy: "A controversy which is for the sake of heaven, like that of Hillel and Shammai, will ultimately continue to exist; a controversy which is not for the sake of heaven, like that of Korah and his cohorts, will not continue to exist". In addition to the problematic issue of the positive description of a "controversy for the sake of heaven", it is difficult to understand why the Mishnah refers to one type of controversy as that of Hillel and Shammai, the two antagonists, and the other as that of Korah and his cohorts, rather than Korah and Moses, a parallel structure which we would have expected.

I believe that the answer to our questions lies in the two legitimate definitions of the Hebrew word for controversy, mahlokot: does it mean to divide, (lehalek) or to distinguish (la'asot hiluk), to make a separation or a distinction; the former suggests an unbridgeable chasm, a great divide which separates out, nullifies, the view of the other, whereas the latter suggests an analysis of each side in order to give a greater understanding of each view and perhaps even in order to eventually arrive at a synthesis or a dialectic of both positions together!

With this understanding, the initial comment of Rashi on the opening words of this week's Torah portion, "And Korah took," becomes indubitably clear: "He took himself to the other side to become separated out from the midst of the congregation." Since Korah made a great divide between himself and Moses, the Mishnah in Avot defines his controversy as that of Korah and his cohorts; he was interested in nullifying rather than in attempting to understand the side of Moses. On the other hand, when the Talmud (B.T. Eruvin 13b) describes the disputes between Hillel and Shammai, it decides that "Those and those (both schools) are the words of the living G-d. If so, then why is the normative law decided in accord with the school of Hillel? Because they are pleasant and accepting, always teaching their view together with the view of the school of Shammai and even citing the position of Shammai before citing their own position."

According to this view, that "those and those (conflicting opinions) are the words of the living G-d", the Almighty initially and purposefully left many issues of the oral tradition open-ended in order to allow for different opinions, each of which may well be correct when viewed from the perspective of the Divine. Indeed, the Mishnah in Eduyot teaches that the reason why our oral tradition records the minority as well as

the majority opinion is because a later Sanhedrin (Great Jewish Court) can overrule the decision of an earlier Sanhedrin, even though it is not greater than the earlier one in wisdom or in number, as long as there had been a minority view recorded on which the later Sanhedrin may rely for its reversal of the earlier decision; and most halakhic decisions rely on a minority decision in cases of stress (Mishnah, Eduyot 1,5, Rambam and Raavad ad loc). In the world of halakhah, minority dissenting views are never nullified; these opinions are also part of the religio-legal landscape, and can become the normative law of the majority at another period in time or for a different and difficult individual situation. The Talmud likewise powerfully and poignantly confirms the importance of dissenting views in order to challenge and help clarify the alternate opinion. R. Yohanan and Resh Lakish were brothers-in-law and study partners, who debated their conflicting opinions on almost every branch of Talmudic law. When Resh Lakish died, R. Yohanan was left distraught and bereft. R. Elazar b. Pedat, a great scholar, tried to comfort R. Yohanan by substituting for Resh Lakish as his learning companion. "Every opinion that R. Yohanan would offer, R. Elazar would confirm with a Tannaic source. R. Yohanan lashed out, 'You are like the son of Lakish? Previously, whenever I would give an opinion, the son of Lakish would ask 24 questions and I would answer him with 24 responses; in such a fashion, the legal discussion became enlarged and enhanced. But you only provide me with supporting proofs. Don't I know that my opinions have merit?' R. Yohanan walked aimlessly, tore his garments and wept without cease. He cried out, 'where are you, son of Lakish, where are you, son of Lakish:' until he lost his mind. The other sages requested Divine mercy, and R. Yohanan died" (B.T. Baba Metzia 84a).

This fundamental respect for the challenge of alternative opinions - so basic to the Talmudic mind - is rooted in another Mishnah (B.T. Sanhedrin, Chapter 4, 37a), which sees the greatness of G-d in the differences among individuals and the pluralism of ideas. "Unlike an individual who mints coins from one model and every coin is exactly alike, the Holy One Blessed Be He has fashioned every human being in the likeness of Adam, and yet no human being is exactly like his fellow!...And just as human forms differ, so do human ideas differ." It is precisely in everyone's uniqueness that we see the greatness of the Creator.

And this was one of the great teachings of Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook: "only through a multiplicity of ideas and views can we eventually reach the one great truth which encompasses them all".

Shabbat Shalom.

Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2005 8:57 PM To: Subject: Rabbi Breitowitz From: Shabbat Shalom [<mailto:shabbatshalom@ou.org>] Sent: Thursday, June 30, 2005 7:25 PM Subject: Rabbi Breitowitz - Keeping Holy 9 to 5 - Shabbat Shalom from the OU - Shabbat Parshat Korach  
Parshat Korach - 25 Sivan 5765 / July 1-2, 2005  
??From the pages of Jewish Action - Spring 2002

ORTHODOX AT WORK

Keeping Holy 9 to 5 The Spiritual Challenges of the Workplace

by RABBI YITZCHOK A. BREITOWITZ

So much of our lives and our energies are wrapped up in our professional and vocational identities. And yet, even the most observant among us often lives a somewhat schizophrenic, fragmented existence. While we meticulously observe the highest standards of Shabbat and kashrut, we conduct our professional lives blithely unaware of, or perhaps even indifferent to, the tremendous and indeed frightening spiritual challenges we face. Our motto seems to be "Man/Woman of the world from 9 to 5; Torah Jew on evenings and weekends." Our greatest leaders, however, were well aware of these pitfalls. The story is told that Rabbi Yisrael Salanter did not want to make a living teaching Torah and decided to try to earn money in the stock market. Eventually, he left that line of work because he felt that the nisyonot (trials) of the marketplace were simply too great.1 If this was true for such a gaon, what can we possibly say? Nevertheless, since this is the reality that most of us face, it is imperative that we at least be sensitive to the grave dangers of the working world as well as the magnificent opportunities this world presents.

Facing Halachic Challenges

Historically, the primary obstacles encountered by the Orthodox Jew in the workplace were issues related to Shabbat and Yom Tov observance and, to a lesser degree, the availability of kosher food. While these problems have certainly not gone away, it is fair to state that at least in major metropolitan areas, the incidence of these problems has been significantly reduced.2 Indeed, even wearing a kippah has become socially acceptable. Nevertheless, even today—or perhaps especially today—there are serious halachic issues with which one must continue to struggle. Some are specific to particular professions and cannot be addressed here, 3 others are more generic in nature, applicable to virtually all endeavors.

The Gemara in Bava Batra (165a) tells us that a minority of people commit sins involving arayot (sexual impropriety); most people commit crimes involving gezel (theft); and everybody commits sins involving lashon hara (gossip). At a minimum, in the workplace that exists today, one is confronted with all three sins. Provocative speech, lascivious dress and immodesty are commonplace in many jobs; indeed, the proliferation of sexual harassment claims clearly indicates the dangers that men and women face in the modern workplace.

Without wanting to sound excessively alarmist, I must state that even Orthodox Jews have occasionally succumbed to serious temptations with tragic and devastating consequences to their lives and the lives of their families. Thus, even from a secular psychological perspective, the Torah's tremendous wisdom in erecting appropriate barriers and safeguards between the sexes is readily apparent.

In the corporate world, gezel is something which we must contend with all the time. Not limited to robbing a bank, gezel is taking an employer's time, using office supplies for personal use without permission, making personal phone calls— either long distance or local— or overcharging and inflating time sheets in order to increase the number of billable hours. Geneivat da'at, misrepresentation, where one sells things without necessarily revealing all the defects that may exist, is yet another form of gezel.<sup>4</sup>

At times, people may justify such dissembling on the grounds that the customer is a non-Jew. Yet, without even considering the intricacies of taut akum (mistakes made by a Gentile), the awesome sin of chillul Hashem (desecration of God's name) and the possible application of dina demalchuta dina (the law of the land is the law) we should heed the admonition of Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, zt"l, who cautioned that if one acquires the habit of being a liar and a cheat, this will inevitably spill over into other areas of his life.<sup>5</sup>

Needless to say, lashon hara is rampant in the business world, whether it is describing one's business competitors or gossiping around the water cooler. What can one say about competitors when trying to get a share of the business? When is disclosing negative information prohibited and when is it in fact required? The halachot of lashon hara are intricate and complex and require considerable study and review as well as frequent consultation with a posek (halachic authority).<sup>6</sup>

Living by these rules is not easy. What if you're the young associate in a law firm whose boss demands that certain things be done: Do you lose your job? Do you lose your standing in the firm? What are you willing to give up? Money? Power? Influence? Advancement? Although not quite as dramatic as Avraham Avinu's willingness to sacrifice Yitzchak, those of us in the working world face mini akeidot (sacrifices) every day. Similar to Avraham, we grow stronger from the challenge if we have the courage to meet it.<sup>7</sup>

#### Maintaining Values on the Job – No Matter What

Wholly apart from these serious halachic infractions mentioned above, the work environment can adversely affect one's values and attitudes. Some individuals relegate their work life to insignificance, where their attitude is "What I do from 9 to 5 is nothing. I live for Shabbat...for my shiur." While at first glance, this may seem to be a praiseworthy attitude since one recognizes that life's primary purpose is avodat Hashem, eventually this kind of thinking can be very destructive. If one thinks that what he does eight to ten hours a day is worthless and not a way of connecting to God, that could easily destroy him from within. How can a person spend so many hours a day in worthless pursuits? Indeed, this kind of thinking can lead to depression, despondency and hopelessness. There is also the opposite problem—that one gets so invested in professionalism as the mark of his importance that he loses his sense of priorities in life. Thus, how we relate to our work involves a very delicate balance. We must place our work lives in proper perspective—our jobs are essentially vehicles to support ourselves and raise Jewish families; means to give tzedakah and strengthen Torah; opportunities for productivity and tikkun olam (improvement of society); and enablers of kiddush Hashem and gemilut chesed. Our jobs are useful, important and significant, but not ends in themselves.

Yet another pernicious problem is simply the lack of time and energy needed to think. All human beings need time to reflect, and bnei and bnot Torah in particular need time to be able to answer questions such as where are their lives going and why. Yet we are on treadmills all the time. We are part of the rat race and we begin to feel like beleaguered red rats. After all, take the typical lawyer in a major Wall Street law firm who might work 60-65 hours a week. Why isn't such a heavy work schedule slavery? A slavery that asserts its mastery not just over our time but over our hearts, our souls, our concentration and our kochot hanefesh (energies). If, as Thomas Paine remarked, "The price of [political] liberty is eternal vigilance," this is even truer for spiritual liberty and freedom. It is so easy to lose sight of life's ultimate purpose when we are so preoccupied with our daily routine. Indeed, according to a recent survey, the amount of time that husbands and wives spend talking to each other about matters other than housekeeping is less than 20 minutes per week. Look at what the work culture has done to us. In contrast to the prototypical ba'al habayit of the Rambam who earns enough for his daily bread in three hours and can utilize the

remaining nine hours of daylight for Torah study, 8 our work seems to have taken over our entire lives. In short, we are slaves; we are slaves both to our work and to the negative emotions that work engenders within us including envy, possessiveness, materialism, arrogance and the like.

#### Keeping an Eye on the Ultimate Destination

A modern adaptation of a parable by the Dubnow Maggid brings out this point forcefully. The story involves an obsessive-compulsive individual who always had to be fully prepared for whatever life threw his way. When he was making his first trip to Israel, he was told there would be a seven-hour stopover in France. He decided that he would prepare for the trip by learning French so that he would be able to order a Coke in the proper language. He studied hard for an entire year. By the time he got to the airport, he had mastered the language. He was proud of himself and he impressed a lot of people. But seven hours later, when he got back on the plane, he realized with a sickening feeling that he never bothered to learn Hebrew. He was so preoccupied with the stopover that he never gave thought to the ultimate destination. This world is a prozdor, an entry way and a hallway to the World to Come. There are certain skills necessary for navigating the hallway: we have to make a living, learn how to drive, etc. but if we put all of our energies into navigating this world, and never give thought to the ultimate currency we take with us to the Olam Haemet (the World of Truth), we are as misguided and short-sighted as that gentleman. It would do us well to remember that nobody ever leaves this world wishing he had made one more big deal.

But the dangers go beyond the simple inability to think. There is a subtle, and not-so-subtle, reprogramming of thought that occurs as well. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that a major component of how we are judged in the eyes of Hashem is what we truly regard as important<sup>9</sup> in the innermost depths of our hearts, what is it that we really admire?

Very often because of the all-consuming energy we have to put into our work, we do mitzvot perfunctorily. Theoretically, every Shabbat must be a new Shabbat, every tefillah, a renewed conversation with the Creator, every holiday, a unique encounter with the Divine. But drained of our energies and buffeted by competing and inconsistent versions of the "good life," our spiritual selves often atrophy into something arid, mechanical, unfeeling and superficial.

The problem of stagnation is, of course, a general problem in the life of the religious Jew. The prophets identified this as mitzvot anashim melumadah,<sup>10</sup> doing mitzvot habitually. And yet, while this problem is relevant to every Jew and not just the working population, the lack of time, energy and yishuv hada'at (peace of mind) make the working person exceptionally prone to the notion of not growing in avodat Hashem. The Torah compares a person to a tree. Just as a tree grows when it is rooted in the ground and receives adequate sun, water and nutrients, a person can grow spiritually if he receives adequate nourishment for his soul. If our religion doesn't provide us with adequate nourishment, we die within. And this deterioration can happen very slowly. A tree can be dead while all the leaves are still green and intact. Similarly, a person can spiritually die even while appearing vibrant and alive. And there is perhaps no greater tragedy than this.

#### Making Spirituality Vibrant and Personal

How can we infuse our work days with spirituality? We must keep a life-line to a rebbe, a posek, a yeshivah, a shul and a kehillah. It is important not to be alone, to surround ourselves with friends who have spiritual aspirations and with people who consciously strive to work on themselves spiritually and grow in avodat Hashem. For men, it's important to daven with a minyan three times a day. For men and women, it is especially important to ensure that Shabbat and Yom Tov are seen not just as days of rest (though that has a place too) but as days of sanctity, love and joy, days dedicated to spending time with family, to engaging in fervent and meaningful prayer as well as challenging Torah study. For it is these days above all that can provide the fuel that will continue to warm the heart and inspire the soul throughout the work week.

Virtually every working environment needs the equivalent of a neon sign that says, "Proceed with caution," and yet amidst the risks, there are many positive opportunities for growth. In Hilchot Deot (3:3), the Rambam lays down a very fundamental idea based on the verse in Proverbs (3:6) "Bechal derachecha da'eihu, Know G-d in all your ways." Da'eihu is derived from the verb da'at, which refers to more than knowing; it implies an intimate sense of being connected. The Rambam explains that if one works with the intention to earn money to serve Hashem, give tzedakah and support one's family, then one's working hours are not just a vehicle for those noble goals but actually constitute avodat Hashem. I would suggest that the same way before one performs a mitzvah, one says "Hineni muchan umezuman, I am readying myself," perhaps every day one should start off with a silent or verbalized tefillah to Hashem, that "what I'm going to do for the next eight hours is with the intention of serving You." If you start off with that orientation, then your entire workday constitutes avodat Hashem.

Furthermore, the workplace can be the very arena in which one is mekadesh Shem Shamayim (sanctifies the name of Heaven). In my own community, we suffered a great tragedy several years ago with the sudden death of an attorney in his thirties. While this young man spent his time in law, he lived a life of genuine kiddush Hashem by virtue of his honesty and the gracious way in which he dealt with all of his colleagues including secretaries, janitors and other “run-of-the mill” people who were not important business associates or clients. He was the type of person that after meeting him you would say, as Chazal say, “Kamah naim derachav, How beautiful are his ways.” If that’s what a Jew is, a Jew is a good thing. That’s the definition of kiddush Hashem: “Veahavata et Hashem Elokecha 11— you make the name of G-d beloved by the way you live your life.”

Tomorrow is another day... In truth, there are wonderful opportunities for kiddush Hashem that people in the workplace have that others in more cloistered environments do not necessarily have. Everyone of us— whether we are in the workforce or not—has our own avodah. The challenge is not to spend our lives looking at others saying, “why don’t I have that,” but to see the potential in the place where we are. The Chofetz Chaim used to explain that when Hashem told Moshe at the burning bush, “Take off your shoes because the place where you are standing is holy,” He was speaking to all of us—that no matter where we live or what we do, there is the potential for holiness and sanctification. It is incumbent upon us to find it.

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Notes 1. See Rav Dov Katz, *Tenuat HaMusar*, vol. 1, p. 352. 2. One exception is medicine where Shabbat issues continue to be of major importance. 3. See, e.g. Michael J. Broyde, *The Pursuit of Justice and Jewish Law* (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1996), and the many books by Dr. Fred Rosner on medical ethics. 4. See generally *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* 228 and 231. 5. See also the powerful words of Rabbeinu Moshe of Coucy in *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, *Mitzvot Aseh* 74, where he states that Jews who behave as thieves, cheats and liars towards non-Jews prolong the galut and cast aspersions, as it were, on the Ribbono Shel Olam who has chosen such evil-doers as His people. 6. The classic written work on these laws is *Sefer Chofetz Chaim* and the most popular English adaptation is Rabbi Zelig Pliskin’s *Guard Your Tongue*. The Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation also operates a halachic hotline where people can call to consult with a rav. It should be noted that there may be other prohibitions besides lashon hara in attempting to lure away a competitor’s customers. See *Choshen Mishpat* 156 and 237. 7. See commentary of the Ramban, *Genesis* 22:1. 8. See Rambam, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 1:12. I do not intend to suggest that the Rambam’s picture of a ba’al habayit was ever historically accurate— indeed, Rambam’s own schedule as court physician in Cairo shows that it was not—but it does represent an idealized picture of productive work being placed in a proper perspective. 9. *Proverbs* 27:21, Commentary of Rabbeinu Yonah. 10. *Isaiah* 29:13. 11. See *Yoma* 86a and Rambam, *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah* 5:11. 12. See Chofetz Chaim al HaTorah, *Shemot* 3:5.

?Rabbi Breitowitz is the rabbi of the Woodside Synagogue in Silver Spring, Maryland and an associate professor of law at the University of Maryland. This article is an abridgement of a speech given at a young professionals’ group.