



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net
From: cshulman@gmail.com

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON KORACH - 5775

In our 20th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoo.com. Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net>. It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

Sponsored by **Chaim and Rena Shulman** in honor of the upcoming marriage of their son **Moshe Shulman** and **Henny Gulkowitz**

To sponsor a parsha sheet (proceeds to tzedaka) contact
cshulman@parsha.net

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> to:
ravfrand@torah.org date: Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 7:05 PM subject: Rabbi
Yissocher Frand - Parshas Korach

Parshas Korach

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah CDs on the weekly portion: CD #906 - Tachanun Without a Sefer Torah? Good Shabbos!

Flowering Initially "Lifnei Hashem"

A very interesting event followed the suppression of the Korach rebellion. Hashem gave Moshe the following commandment:

"Speak to the Children of Israel and take from them one staff for each father's house, from all their leaders according to their fathers' house, twelve staffs; each man's name shall you inscribe on his staff. And the name of Aharon shall you inscribe on the staff of Levi, for there shall be one staff for the head of their fathers' house. You shall lay them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. It shall be that the man whom I shall choose – his staff will blossom; thus I shall cause to subside from upon Me the complaints of the Children of Israel, which they complain against you." [Bamidbar 17:17-20]

Moshe did as he was instructed. Every tribal leader gave a staff, including Aaron who gave his staff to represent the Tribe of Kohen-Levi. Moshe placed the 12 staffs in the Ohel Moed, before the Aron [Ark], as he was commanded.

By the next morning, the staff of Aharon, representing the Tribe of Levi, had indeed blossomed: "...It brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and almonds ripened." [Bamidbar 17:23]

On a fruit bearing tree, first a little flower blossoms, then there is a little bud and then the fruit grows from that bud. This is what happened with Aharon's staff. Aharon was the "winner", so to speak, in the "Contest of Staffs".

From reading the pasukim [verses] superficially, you would assume that all three things – the blossom, the bud, and the almonds – occurred within the Ohel Moed. However, the Rashba"m, in his Torah commentary, interprets differently. The Rashba"m says that the next morning, when Moshe removed

the staffs from the Ohel Moed, the only thing unique about Aharon's staff was that it contained flower blossoms. ("And it was on the morrow and Moshe came into the Tent of the Testimony and behold Aharon's staff from the House of Levi gave forth a flower..." [Bamidbar 17:23])

According to the Rashbam, the blossoming of the bud and the appearance of the almonds happened in public "before the eyes of all of Israel" after Moshe removed it from the Ohel Moed. The Rashba"m argues that if all three stages occurred at once in the Ohel Moed, out of sight of the people, then no one would have been aware of the stages of flowering and of blossoming. They would have only seen the final product – the almonds – and there would be no point for the Torah to mention the first two stages.

The Rosh Yeshiva of Gateshead asks – according to the Rashbam – why was it necessary to put the staff of Aharon in the Ohel Moed in the first place? Leave all the staffs out in the open, visible to everyone, and let them all watch the whole process transpire: The flower, the budding, and finally the almonds. The Gateshead Rosh Yeshiva answers that it is important for any living thing to come from the best possible source. In spirituality, the holier an item is in its original genesis, the holier the subsequent item will be.

The reason the original flower had to bloom in the Ohel Moed is that a flower that begins to grow "Lifnei Hashem" [before G-d] has an impact on all the subsequent fruit. If the environment in which it got its start is "Lifnei Hashem" then all subsequent growth will be a different type of growth.

This is a profound lesson. It is a lesson in terms of having children. It is a lesson in terms of raising children. It is a lesson in terms of making sure the foundation and the original structure of a child's education is set up under the best of all possible circumstances. To buttress his point, he cites a Talmudic passage in Tractate Gittin. The Gemara discusses a tree in which the roots grow in Eretz Yisrael and the branches are in Chutz L'Aretz [outside of the Land of Israel]. The fruit of the tree are actually over the border but the original roots grow in Israel. The Gemara wants to know whether the status of the fruit is that of "fruits of the Land of Israel" or "fruits from outside the Land of Israel." The ruling is that as long as the roots were planted in holy soil, the fruits – wherever they grow – are "holy," requiring separation of Terumos and Ma'asros [Gifts to the Kohen and Levi]. When the roots are holy, the fruit is holy.

We learn from this Gemara that beginnings are crucial in determining spiritual identity. This is why it was so crucial that the original budding of the flower -- which was symbolic of the seed of Aharon for all future generations -- took place within the confines of the Ohel Moed, "Lifnei Hashem". This makes people into different people and fruit into different fruit, because they blossomed initially in the Ohel Moed, before the L-rd.

Giving Up Everything For The Chance To Work In The Beis HaMikdash

The Torah's narration of the above referenced story with the twelve tribal staffs concludes with the following pasuk: "Moshe brought out all the staffs from before Hashem to all the Children of Israel; they saw and they took each man his staff." [Bamidbar 17:24]

Rav Zalman Sortzkin asks an interesting question: Why did everyone come back and take their staff? There was a "competition" between 12 tribal leaders. Aharon "won". The rest "lost". What further need did they have for their staffs? To what can we compare this? A person buys a Power Ball lottery ticket. The grand prize is \$350,000,000. The winning numbers are announced. Everyone looks at their tickets. "Did I win?" The person who wins is ecstatic. However, the other millions of "losers" take their lottery ticket, rip it up, and throw it away. That is what happened here. Aharon won; they lost. Their staffs were now worthless pieces of wood. Nevertheless, the pasuk makes the point that each man took back his staff. Why?

Rav Sorotzkin offers a beautiful idea. Everyone wanted to become "The Chosen Tribe". Consider, is it really such a great thing to be a Kohen or a Levi? It was the poorest life amongst all the tribes. They do not own property. They work a couple of weeks a year in the Basi HaMkidash [Temple] and are supported by the good graces of people's Terumos and

Maasros, the first shearing of the sheep, and the priestly portions of the slaughtered animals (Zeraa, Lechayayim, and Keivah). Essentially, they were given the scraps. It was a poor life. The Leviim had it hard. The Kohanim had it hard. However, everyone wanted to become the "Chosen Tribe". They want poverty! They want this hard life!

Why did everybody want it? They wanted it because of the concept that this is the "Chosen Tribe". This is the Tribe chosen by G-d. They are the "Chosen of the Chosen". This status had special merit and it was worth more than all the property and all the real estate in the world. When the other tribes "lost", they did not toss away their staffs. They came home and they mounted them over the fireplace. They told their children and grandchildren "My sweet children, you see this staff? I was willing to become a Levi! I was willing to give up everything to become the Chosen Tribe! Do you see this beautiful house? Do you see all the beautiful furniture? I was willing to give this all up for the chance to work in the Beis HaMikdash. My proudest possession is this staff, the staff that lost. It is because that staff says everything. The staff says that I know what is important and what is trivial. I know that all the real estate in the world is not worth anything compared to the merit of participating in the Divine Service in the Holy Beis HaMikdash."

The staff was not a worthless lottery ticket that one rips up, throws to the ground, and lets the wind scatter. This was something to be proud of. It shows who the owner was. It shows his values. It is something to show off, to treasure, and to show one's grandchildren and great grandchildren: "I was willing to give up everything to become the Chosen Tribe."

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah CDs on the weekly Torah portion. CDs or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> To Support Project Genesis- Torah.org Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com to: internetparshasheet@gmail.com date: Wed, Jun 17, 2015 at 4:18 PM subject: Parshat Korach 5775- Rabbi Berel Wein Weekly Parsha KORACH Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog

KORACH In last week's parsha Rashi commented that when the Jewish people stated that they wanted to return to Egypt rather than proceeding to the Land of Israel they thereby intimated that they wanted to replace Moshe as their leader and crown a new king over them. In this week's parsha, that earlier murmur of dissatisfaction with Moshe and his leadership becomes a full-throated shout. Korach pounces on the opportunity to attempt to replace Moshe, who has been weakened by the debacle of the spies and the resultant decree of death on the Jewish people of that generation. Korach undoubtedly harbored such ambitions for himself and his family for a long period of time. He was disappointed and frustrated by not being appointed to the priesthood of Israel when Aharon and his sons were so chosen. He deemed himself to be the equal of Moshe and Aharon in every way and waits for what he will deem to be the proper moment to assert his claim. In his mind, the proper moment is the one when Moshe appears to be most vulnerable. Moshe's popularity with the people is at a low ebb after the disastrous occurrences that most recently occurred to the Jewish people in the desert of Sinai. Korach senses an opportunity to topple Moshe and has great ambitions for himself to be the replacement leader for the Jewish people. It could very well have been that if there were an election held at that moment to choose the leader of the Jewish people; Moshe would be hard-pressed to win the favor of the majority of the voters. Yet, as the parsha makes abundantly clear, the Lord is not necessarily democratically inclined and strongly supports Moshe against His competitors and enemies. One of the facets of human nature is that it always is looking for new leadership and new personalities to rule over them. To a great effect, the day after winning

an election, the victor becomes a lame duck. While campaigning for office, promising everything to everybody and demanding a new vision and political and social change, the candidate is seen as being dynamic, charismatic and a person of vision. Since it is the nature of human beings is to be eternally dissatisfied, the present is never sufficient to make us happy. It is always the future and the promises made to us by others regarding that future that holds our interest and initially even our loyalty. Korach effectively capitalizes on this all too common human trait. He finds a ready ear amongst sections of the Jewish people in his attempt to discredit Moshe and Aharon and promotes himself to become the leader of the Jewish people. Moshe realizes the falseness of Korach's claims and the hypocrisy of his superficial piety and apparent public interest. But Moshe is also aware that no public debate with Korach and his supporters will sway them and prevent the open split within the Jewish people that they wish to promulgate. Moshe has no recourse but to leave the matter to the judgment of Heaven, no matter what consequences may follow. There are many lessons in this story for us as well, if we look at ourselves and our society and leadership honestly and ignore the often-false visions of change for the sake of change itself. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 5:02 PM subject: [Parshapotpourri] **Parsha Potourri by Oizer Alport - Parshas Korach**

arshas Korach - Vol. 10, Issue 35 Compiled by Oizer Alport

Vayikach Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehas ben Levi (16:1) Parshas Korach revolves around Korach's challenge to the authority and leadership of Moshe and Aharon. Korach ultimately leads a full-fledged rebellion against them, one which ends in disastrous and tragic results. The Torah refers to Korach as the son of Yitzhar, who was the son of Kehas, who was the son of Levi. Rashi explains that the Torah doesn't continue the family tree by stating that Levi was the son of Yaakov because Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in association with Korach's rebellion. As Korach was four generations removed from Yaakov, who wasn't even alive at the time of this episode, what difference did it make to Yaakov whether his name was used in conjunction with Korach's ancestry?

The Shemen HaTov explains that Yaakov's life was full of difficulties and struggles. Even in the womb, he fought with his wicked twin Eisav to emerge first and claim the birthright. When he subsequently purchased the birthright from Eisav and used it to receive their father Yitzchok's blessings, Eisav wanted to kill him and Yaakov had to flee for his life. He spent the next 20 years with his wicked uncle Lavan, with whom he also struggled as Lavan repeatedly tricked and deceived him. He returned to Canaan and again had to pacify Eisav, only to be confronted with the attack on his daughter Dina by Shechem and the jealousy of his sons toward his beloved Yosef.

In short, Yaakov's was a life fraught with strife and conflict. He accepted this as his Divinely-ordained lot and engaged in these disputes solely for the sake of Heaven. Yet when Yaakov prophetically saw that his great-great-grandson would engage in an argument purely for the sake of his personal honor, he feared that people would assume that Korach was merely continuing in the aggressive, confrontational path that he inherited from Yaakov. Since nothing could be further from the truth, Yaakov prayed that his name not be used in association with Korach's genealogy in order to emphasize that Korach's selfish rebellion had no origins in the struggles engaged in by his ancestor Yaakov for the sake of Heaven.

Hibadlu mitoch ha'eida ha'zos v'achale osam k'raga (16:21) In order to publicly say certain parts of the prayer service, a quorum must be gathered, as the Torah commands (Vayikra 22:32) v'nikdashti b'soch B'nei Yisroel - I shall be sanctified amongst the Jewish people. The Mishnah (Megillah 4:3) rules that the minimum quorum necessary is ten adult Jewish males. The Gemora (Megillah 23b) presents a somewhat convoluted derivation for this requirement, connecting the word b'soch (in the midst of) to the word

mi'toch (from the midst of) in our verse, in which Hashem commands Moshe and Aharon to separate themselves from the evildoers so that He can destroy them. The Gemora then compares the word eida (assembly) in our verse to a verse in Parshas Shelach, in which the spies who slandered the land of Israel are referred to (14:27) as an eida ra'ah - wicked assembly. Since there were ten spies who slandered Eretz Yisroel, this teaches us that the minimum prayer quorum required to constitute an assembly in which Hashem's name may be sanctified is ten.

Rav Yissocher Frand points out the irony in deriving the concept of publicly sanctifying Hashem's name from a combination of the spies and the supporters of Korach's rebellion against Moshe and Aharon, all of whom were guilty of terrible sins and whose conduct seems like the diametric opposite of a public sanctification of Hashem's name.

Additionally, after Korach challenged Moshe's authority and leadership, Moshe suggested that the dispute be resolved by challenging Korach and his 250 followers to prepare incense offerings, which they would offer to Hashem. Aharon would do so as well, and the person whom Hashem selected to serve Him would survive, while all of the others would perish. As Moshe had warned, Korach and all of his followers were killed, while the offering of Aharon was accepted. At that point, Hashem told Moshe to instruct Elozar to take the fire-pans in which Korach's supporters offered their incense and make them into hammered-out sheets to cover the Altar. This is also difficult to understand. Why would Hashem permit these fire-pans, which were used as part of an attempt to discredit the legitimacy of Moshe and Aharon, to be used for such a holy purpose?

Rav Yaakov Luban of Edison, New Jersey explains that human nature is to view events as either black or white, with no middle ground. Therefore, we view the spies and Korach's followers as completely evil, with no redeeming qualities. However, Hashem in His infinite wisdom is capable of handling two contradictory concepts simultaneously, and at the same time that He punishes evildoers, He also discerns the positive motivations behind their misguided actions.

Although the spies sinned grievously in delivering their scurrilous report, their motivations for doing were multifaceted and quite complex. Although they were certainly guilty of a lack of proper trust in Hashem and a deficiency in their love for Eretz Yisroel, they were also motivated by a desire to remain in the idyllic spiritual existence that they enjoyed in the wilderness, and by a concern that the nation would not be able to maintain the lofty spiritual level required to thrive in the land of Israel.

In the case of Korach, although his primary motivation was a jealous lust for power, there was also a component of his rebellion that emanated from a sincere desire for more opportunities to serve Hashem through greater participation in the Divine Service in the Mishkan. Although Korach and the spies were sorely misguided in their execution, Hashem nevertheless recognized that their underlying yearning for closeness to Hashem was indeed holy, and they therefore play a central role in deriving the laws for a prayer quorum to publicly sanctify Hashem.

Similarly, Korach's followers were killed for supporting his heretical insurrection against Moshe and Aharon. Nevertheless, in risking their lives for a 1-in-250 chance to become even closer to Hashem, they demonstrated a tremendous craving for kedusha (holiness). Although we would be inclined to reject their pans as invalid and impure, Hashem saw the desire for spirituality latent within them and instructed Moshe to utilize their pans to fashion a covering for the Altar.

The Satmar Rebbe, Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, related that his great-great-grandfather, Rav Moshe Teitelbaum, known as the Yismach Moshe, said that his soul had already been in the world in three previous incarnations, the first of which was during the time that the Jewish people were in the wilderness. The Yismach Moshe's grandson, Rav Yekusiel Yehuda Teitelbaum, known as the Yetev Lev, asked him what he remembered about Korach's rebellion.

The Yismach Moshe told his grandson that the leaders of the Sanhedrin supported Korach, while the common people sided with Moshe. The Yetev

Lev pressed him, "And whose side did you take?" The Yismach Moshe responded that he remained neutral. His incredulous grandson asked, "How could you refuse to clearly support Moshe Rabbeinu against Korach's heretical rebellion?" The Yismach Moshe replied, "You obviously have no idea who Korach was. If you would have been there and seen his greatness with your own eyes, you wouldn't be surprised that I elected to remain neutral." As we have seen, misguided as he was, Korach was in search of kedusha and spirituality, and although human nature is to view events as black or white, most situations are far more nuanced and contain many shades of gray. Parshapotpourri mailing list Parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com http://shemayisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/parshapotpourri_shemayisrael.com

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 6:40 PM

When Truth is Sacrificed to Power

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

What was wrong with Korach and his fellow rebels? On the face of it, what they said was both true and principled. "You have gone too far," they said to Moses and Aaron. "The whole community is holy, every one of them, and God is with them. Why then are you setting yourselves above God's congregation?"

They had a point. God had summoned the people to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," (Ex. 19: 6), that is, a kingdom every one of whose members was in some sense a priest, and a nation every one of whom was holy. Moses himself had said, "Would that all God's people were prophets, that He would place His spirit upon them" (Num. 11: 29). These are radically egalitarian sentiments. Why then was there a hierarchy, with Moses as leader and Aaron as High Priest?

What was wrong was that even at the outset it was obvious that Korach was duplicitous. There was a clear disconnection between what he claimed to want and what he really sought. Korach did not seek a society in which everyone was the same, everyone a priest. He was not, as he sounded, a utopian anarchist, seeking to abolish hierarchy altogether. He was, instead, mounting a leadership challenge. As Moses' later words to him indicate, he wanted to be High Priest himself. He was Moses' and Aaron's cousin, son of Yitzhar, the brother of Moses' and Aaron's father Amram. He felt it unfair that both leadership positions had gone to a single family within the clan. He claimed to want equality. In fact what he wanted was power.

That was Korach the Levite. But what was happening was more complex than that. There were two other groups involved: the Reubenites, Datham and Aviram, and "250 Israelites who were men of rank within the community, representatives at the assembly, and famous." They too had their grievances. The Reubenites were aggrieved that as descendants of Jacob's firstborn, they had no special leadership roles. According to Ibn Ezra, the 250 "men of rank" were upset that, after the sin of the Golden Calf, leadership had passed from the firstborn within each tribe to the single tribe of Levi.

This was an unholy alliance, and bound to fail, since their claims conflicted. If Korach achieved his ambition of becoming High Priest, the Reubenites and "men of rank" would have been disappointed. Had the Reubenites won, Korach and the "men of rank" would have been disappointed. Had the "men of rank" achieved their ambition, Korach and the Reubenites would be left dissatisfied. The disordered, fragmented narrative sequence in this chapter is a case of style mirroring substance. This was a disordered, confused rebellion, whose protagonists were united only in their desire to overthrow the existing leadership.

None of this, however, unsettled Moses. What caused him to become angry was something else altogether: the words of Datan and Aviram: "Isn't it enough that you brought us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert! And now you want to lord it over us! What is more: you have not brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey or given us a inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you think that you can pull

something over our eyes? We will definitely not come!" The monumental untruth of their claim – Egypt, where the Israelites were slaves and cried out to God to be saved, was not "a land flowing with milk and honey" – is what finally made Moses angry.

What is going on here? The sages defined it in one of their most famous statements: "Any dispute for the sake of heaven will have enduring value, but every dispute not for the sake of Heaven will not have enduring value. What is an example of a dispute for the sake of heaven? The dispute between Hillel and Shammai. What is an example of one not for the sake of heaven? The dispute of Korach and all his company" (Mishnah Avot 5: 21).

The rabbis did not conclude from the Korach rebellion that argument is wrong, that leaders are entitled to unquestioning obedience, that the supreme value in Judaism should be – as it is in some faiths – submission. To the contrary: argument is the lifeblood of Judaism, so long as it is rightly motivated and essentially constructive in its aims.

Judaism is a unique phenomenon: a civilization all of whose canonical texts are anthologies of argument. In Tanakh, the heroes of faith – Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Job – argue with God. Midrash is founded on the premise that there are "seventy faces" – seventy legitimate interpretations – of Torah. The Mishnah is largely constructed on the model of "Rabbi X says this, Rabbi Y says that." The Talmud, far from resolving these arguments, usually deepens them considerably. Argument in Judaism is a holy activity, the ongoing internal dialogue of the Jewish people as it reflects on the terms of its destiny and the demands of its faith.

What then made the argument of Korach and his co-conspirators different from that of the schools of Hillel and Shammai. Rabbenu Yona offered a simple explanation. An argument for the sake of Heaven is one that is about truth. An argument not for the sake of Heaven is about power. The difference is immense. If I argue for the sake of truth, then if I win, I win. But if I lose, I also win, because being defeated by the truth is the only defeat that is also a victory. I am enlarged. I learn something I did not know before.

In a contest for power, if I lose, I lose. But if I win, I also lose, because in diminishing my opponents I have diminished myself. Moses could not have had a more decisive vindication than the miracle for which he asked and was granted: that the ground open up and swallow his opponents. Yet not only did this not end the argument, it diminished the respect in which Moses was held: "The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 'You have killed the Lord's people,' they said." (Num. 17: 41). That Moses needed to resort to force was itself a sign that he had been dragged down to the level of the rebels. That is what happens when power, not truth, is at stake.

One of the aftermaths of Marxism, persisting in such movements as postmodernism and post-colonialism, is the idea that there is no such thing as truth. There is only power. The prevailing "discourse" in a society represents, not the way things are, but the way the ruling power (the hegemon) wants things to be. All reality is "socially constructed" to advance the interests of one group or another. The result is a "hermeneutics of suspicion," in which we no longer listen to what anyone says; we merely ask, what interest are they trying to advance? Truth, they say, is merely the mask worn to disguise the pursuit of power. To overthrow a "colonial" power, you have to invent your own "discourse," your own "narrative," and it does not matter whether it is true or false. All that matters is that people believe it.

That is what is now happening in the campaign against Israel on campuses throughout the world, and in the BDS movement in particular. Like the Korach rebellion it brings together people who have nothing else in common. Some belong to the far left, a few to the far right, some are anti-globalists, while some are genuinely concerned with the plight of the Palestinians. Driving it all, however, are people who on theological and political grounds are opposed to the existence of Israel within any boundaries whatsoever, and are equally opposed to democracy, free speech, freedom of information, religious liberty, human rights and the sanctity of life. What they have in common is a refusal to give the supporters of Israel a

fair hearing – thus flouting the fundamental principle of justice, expressed in Roman law in the phrase *Aude alteram partem*, "Hear the other side."

The flagrant falsehoods it sometimes utters – that Israel was not the birthplace of the Jewish people, that there never was a Temple in Jerusalem, that Israel is a "colonial" power, a foreign transplant alien to the Middle East – rival the claims of Dan and Aviram that Egypt was a land flowing with milk and honey and that Moses brought the people out solely in order to kill them in the desert. Why bother with truth when all that matters is power? Thus the spirit of Korach lives on.

All this is very sad indeed, since it is opposed to the fundamental principle of the university as a home for the collaborative search for truth. It also does little for the cause of peace in the Middle East, for the future of the Palestinians, or for freedom, democracy, religious liberty and human rights. There are real and substantive issues at stake, which need to be faced by both sides with honesty and courage. Nothing is achieved by sacrificing truth to the pursuit of power: the way of Korach through the ages.

from: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com> reply-to: rav-kooklist+owners@googlegroups.com to: **Rav Kook List** <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Wed, Jun 17, 2015 at 5:58 AM subject: [Rav Kook List] **Korach: Separation and Connection**

Korach: Separation and Connection

"The entire congregation is holy, and God is with them. Why do you raise yourselves over God's community?" (Num. 16:3) This was the battle cry of Korach's rebellion - a complaint that, at first glance, seems perfectly justified. Did not the entire people hear God speak at Sinai? It would seem that Korach was only paraphrasing what God Himself told Moses: "Speak to the entire community of Israel and tell them: you shall be holy, for I, your God, am holy" (Lev. 19:2). Why indeed should only the Levites and the kohanim serve in the Temple? Why not open up the service of God to the entire nation?

Havdalah and Chibur

In our individual lives, and in society and the nation as a whole, we find two general principles at work. This first is havdalah, meaning 'withdrawal' or 'separation.' The second is chibur, meaning 'connection' or 'belonging.'

These are contradictory traits, yet we need both. This is most evident on the individual level. In order to reflect on our thoughts and feelings, we need privacy. To develop and clarify ideas, we need solitude. To attain our spiritual aspirations, we need to withdraw within our inner selves.

Only by separating from society can we achieve these goals. The distracting company of others robs us of seclusion's lofty gifts. It restricts and diminishes the creative flow from our inner wellspring of purity and joy.

This same principle applies to the nation as a whole. In order for the Jewish people to actualize their spiritual potential, they require havdalah from the other nations - as 'a nation that dwells alone' (Num. 23:9).

Similarly, within the Jewish people it is necessary to separate the tribe of Levi - and within Levi, the kohanim - from the rest of the nation. These groups have special obligations and responsibilities, a reflection of their inner character and purpose.

Separation in Order to Connect

Yet separation is not a goal in and of itself. Within the depths of havdalah lies the hidden objective of chibur: being part of the whole and influencing it. The isolated forces will provide a positive impact on the whole, enabling a qualitative advance in holiness. These forces specialize in developing talents and ideas that, as they spread, become a source of blessing for all. As they establish their unique traits and paths, life itself progresses and acquires purpose.

We find this theme of havdalah/chibur on many levels. The human race is separate from all other species of life. Through this havdalah, humanity is able to elevate itself and attain a comprehensive quality that encompasses the elevation of the entire world. The Jewish people are separate from the other

nations; this separateness enables them to act as a catalyst to elevate all of humanity, to function as a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6).

The tribe of Levi is separated from the rest of the nation through their special responsibilities; this distinction ennoble the members of the tribe to fulfill their unique role. The Levites sanctify themselves and become a blessing for the entire nation. And the kohanim, with their special holiness, are elevated until they draw forth ruach hakodesh (prophetic inspiration) for the benefit of the entire nation, thus actualizing the nation’s highest spiritual abilities.

The Correct Order

Now we may understand the source of Korach’s error. The Zohar (Mishpatim 95a) teaches:

“The Sitra Achra [literally, the ‘Other Side’ - the forces of evil] begins with chibur [connection] and ends with pirud [division]. But the Sitra deKedushah (‘Side of Holiness’) begins with pirud and ends with chibur. “The correct path, the path of holiness, follows the order of first separating and then connecting. In other words, the separation is for the sake of connection. But Korach’s philosophy (and similar ideologies, such as communism) took the opposite approach. He sought a simplistic inclusiveness of all, binding all people into one uniform group from the outset. He boastfully claimed to unite all together - “The entire congregation is holy.” This approach, however, replaces the splendor of diversity with dull uniformity. In the end, this totalitarian approach leads to disunity, as all parts yearn to break apart in order to express their unique individuality. “The Sitra Achra begins with chibur and ends with pirud.” (Sapphire from the Land of Israel. Adapted from **Orot HaKodesh** vol. II, p. 439)

From **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein** <ravadlerstein@torah.org> to beeros Torah.org Be’eros by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein Parshas Korach Pumping Up the Sitra Achra

[Moshe] spoke to Korach and to his entire assembly, saying, “In the morning Hashem will make known the one who is His own and [who is] the holy one. He will be able to draw close to Him. And whomever he will choose, He will draw close to Him.

Be’er Mayim Chaim: Korach’s claim had been egalitarian. Other groups may have needed leadership to preside over people of different accomplishments, talents, and resources. The Jewish mission statement, however, focused on kedushah – and there was so much of that to go around, that no leader was required. Korach thus argued that “the entire assembly – all of them! – are holy.”[2] There was no need for a top-down power arrangement.

Not so, responded Moshe. There is kedushah, and there is kedushah. You are correct in sensing the kedushah shared by all of this magic generation of Bnei Yisroel, said Moshe. But that level is insufficient for the kind of relationship and closeness that we should seek to develop. Firstly, we need to find people who are truly given over to Hashem in their entirety. The greater levels of kedushah are reserved for those who hold nothing back from Him.

Furthermore, even those special enough to have been chosen as those drawing closer to Him need further elevation. The ascent to kedushah is so steep, that there are peaks that you have not yet imagined. Those who want to draw closest – and have been chosen to be in range for it, having acquired great kedushah as a precursor – will need for Hashem to draw them closer. Only that way can they achieve complete shedding of their material selves, and negate themselves to Him entirely. (Note that this is born out by the subtle difference between the two instances of drawing close in our pasuk. The first verb is hikriv, while the second is the more direct yakriv. The sense of this is that some people achieved exemplary levels of kedushah – beyond that of the rest of the nation. Moshe’s work succeeded in bringing people to those levels. They, chosen by G-d, would be able to fit into the role of those drawing close. Impressive as this is, it remains insufficient. Hashem wants to propel people to even higher levels. Thus, some of the special ones who

are chosen to have His Name associated with them require further elevation. This would come from Hashem actively drawing them closer yet, to the point of full self-negation.)

When the people absorbed this message, they understood that Moshe’s leadership had nothing to do with his ego needs. Those didn’t exist. They understood what made Moshe unique – how he renounced every purpose on earth other than rising level after level.

“They would gaze after Moshe.”[3] Remarkably, Chazal[4] explain this as meaning that they all suspected their wives of liaisons with Moshe. Having come to a deeper understanding of the specialness of Moshe’s madregah, we can explain what they meant.

All the neshamos of Klal Yisroel are interconnected; what people do affects all others. The role of the very greatest tzadikim is categorically different from others. Their kedushah is so intense, that the opposing forces are specially drawn to it. Ordinarily, they cannot gain any foothold. But the slightest aveirah of the tzadik affords an opportunity for the forces of tumah to establish a beachhead in his neshamah. From there, they are able to cause much greater damage in the more vulnerable souls of the common people. The slightest sin of the tzadik can thus lead to more major failing on the part of the rest of the people.

The inverse is also true. Lots of serious aveiros on the part of ordinary people will lead to small imperfections in the luster of the neshamah of the tzadik. This is the idea behind Chazal’s comment on Hashem’s terse instruction to Moshe informing him of the aveirah of the Golden Calf: “Go, descend.”[5] They explain[6] that Hashem meant, “Both you and they are part of a precipitous descent from a previously high spiritual plateau.”

With this understanding in mind, we can understand an entire genre of statements Chazal make, comparing a smaller aveirah with a major offense: Whoever does X is as if he worshipped idols, or consorted with a married woman, etc. We often have a hard time comprehending what X has to do with much more serious offenses! Our approach offers us a novel solution. When a great person commits aveirah X, it allows the Sitra Achra to gain traction in the rest of the nation. This leads to the most serious of transgressions – with the tzadik partially to blame for offering the welcome mat to the forces of evil! When the Bnei Yisrael “gazed after Moshe,” they believed that his position of authority over the people was fueled in part by his growing ego. This perceived ga’avah opened the door to the Sitra Achra, which was able to infuse the people with a spirit of arayos/ forbidden relations. That spirit was just sufficient to make men jealous of their wives. (The proper understanding of the words of Chazal is that each person became suspicious of his wife consorting with other men – and this suspicion all came “from Moshe,” i.e. from the ga’avah they perceived in him.

In truth, of course, there was no pride. The Torah tells us[7] that Moshe was the most humble of men. His ruling over the people had nothing to do with his own ego, and everything to do with the need for a strong leader to bring people closer to Hashem. Moshe, in his humility, thought that the people had been correct! He therefore assumed some of the blame, and asked Hashem to blot out his name from the Torah.[8]

The same dynamic plays out in our parshah. Confronted by the rebels, Moshe initially thinks that they were justified! Perhaps his ego really was involved in the discharge of his responsibilities. For this reason, he falls on his face[9] - in prayer for forgiveness for his role in this episode. Only after Hashem commands him to leave the assembly so that He can destroy them[10] does Moshe come to grips with his absolute innocence in the matter. He then asks to make this clear to everyone else: “Through this shall you know that Hashem sent me to perform all these acts.”[11]

[1] Based on Be’er Mayim Chaim, Bamidbar 16:5 [2] Bamidbar 16:3 [3] Shemos 33:8 [4] Sanhedrin 110A [5] Shemos 32:7 [6] Shemos Rabbah 42:2 [7] Bamidbar 12:3 [8] Shemos 32:32 [9] Bamidbar 16:4 [10] Bamidbar 16:21 [11] Bamidbar 16:28

<http://5tjt.com/the-ou-and-the-temple-institute/>

The OU and the Temple Institute

By Rabbi Yair Hoffman

Thursday June 18, 2015

Yesterday, the Orthodox Union released a statement supporting the campaign of the Temple Institute Organization in their demands of the Knesset regarding the Temple Mount. UPDATE: THE OU ISSUED A CLARIFICATION: “The OU was neither endorsing entry upon the Har Habayit nor addressing the dispute surrounding the halachic permissibility of ascending the Har Habayit.” Respectfully, and to be clear, there wasn’t a “halachic position taken by the organization’s leadership” and the OU didn’t release “a statement supporting the campaign of the Temple Institute Organization.” The Temple Institute has been demanding equal freedom of prayer and visitation rights for Jewish visitors at the Temple Mount.

While the sentiment that lies behind the OU statement is certainly laudable, the halachic position taken by the organization’s leadership lies in stark contrast to the position of the great Poskim of the generation, both who are still living and those who have passed on. The OU’s statement follows a similar statement released by the RCA approximately one year ago.

With due respect, it is this author’s opinion that the OU statement should be rescinded. The Temple Institute’s platform, which certainly l’shaim shamayim, is a position that is against what most of Poskim, Roshei Yeshiva and Gedolim hold.

What follows is a Halachic analysis of why we should not, at this point, be praying on Har HaBayis. It is written with due respect for the Rabbis who feel that it is permitted to go up on Har HaBayis. Nonetheless, we cannot allow our ahavah for Eretz Yisroel obscure our thinking. The greatest of our Gedolim have forbidden treading upon Har HaBayis and we must endeavor to understand the reasoning behind it.

WHY IS IT CALLED HAR HABAYIS?

Har HaBayis is certainly the holiest place in our physical universe. Its name is not, however, a recent appellation. Where then does the name actually come from?

The Rash in his commentary on the Mishnah (Midos 2:1) presents the most likely answer. He writes that the name “Har HaBayis” is based upon a verse in Isaiah (2:2). The verse states, “Nachon yiheyeh har bais hashem b’rosh heharim – The mountain of Hashem will be on mountaintops.”

WHERE IS IT LOCATED?

In order to determine whether we may enter Har HaBayis, we must first get a background in the geography of the area and where Har HaBayis is located, and then some of the history.

THE GEOGRAPHY

The Kidron Valley, Nachal Kidron, is the valley on the eastern side of the Old City of Jerusalem. It is a key valley. The Kidron Valley separates Har HaBayis from Har HaZeisim.

This valley continues eastward through the Judean Desert, toward the Dead Sea. It travels some 20 miles. It also descends a total of 4000 feet along the way.

In TaNach, the Kidron Valley is called “Emek Yehoshafat” or Valley of Jehoshafat. It appears in the prophecies of Klal Yisroel regarding Moshiach, which include the return of Eliyahu HaNavi, followed by the arrival of Mashiach, and Milchemes Gog uMagog, and Judgment Day.

The Tyropoeon Valley (also known as the “Valley of the Cheesemakers”) is the name given by Josephus the historian (Wars of the Jews 5:140) to the valley within the Old City of Jerusalem. Once, this valley separated Har haBayis from Har Tzion and emptied into the valley of Hinnom. The Tyropoeon Valley is now completely filled up with debris, and a plain of sorts. It is spanned by bridges including Zion Bridge. The bridges were the method of communication between Herod’s palace on Har Tzion and the Bais HaMikdash.

So where is Har HaBayis? It is what forms the northern portion of the narrow part of that hill that slopes from the north to the south. It rises above the Kidron Valley to the east and Tyropoeon Valley to the west. The slope from north to south is very sharp.

The peak of Har HaBayis reaches a height of 2,428 feet above sea level.

THE HISTORY

In around the year 19 BCE, Herod the Great extended the natural plateau of Har HaBayis by enclosing the area with four massive retaining walls and filling up the areas with earth and rocks.

THE TRAPEZOID PLATFORM

This artificial expansion resulted in a large flat area. This flat area is now what makes up the eastern section of the Old City of Jerusalem. The trapezoid shaped platform measures a total of 37 acres. Its dimensions are 488 meters on the west side, 470 meters on the east side, 315 meters on the north and 280 meters on the south side. In total it is approximately 150,000 square meters.

The northern wall of the Temple Mount, together with the northern section of the Kosel, is hidden behind buildings.

The southern section of the western side is open and is the Kosel as we know it. The plaza behind the Kosel was made by the Jerusalem city planners, after we had recaptured eastern Yerushalayim after the 1967 war.

THE RETAINING WALLS

The retaining walls on these northern and western sides go down many meters below the ground. A northern portion of wall on the west may be seen from within the Western Wall Tunnel, which was recently excavated through some of the buildings.

On the southern and eastern sides the retaining walls are almost completely visible to their full original height. The platform itself was separated from the rest of the Old City by the Tyropoeon Valley. This valley is no longer the deep valley it was, however.

THE PLATFORM

The platform can be reached through a street in the Muslim Quarter called “Bridge Street” – a funny name. Presumably it is called that because it is a street on a huge bridge but the area that was below the bridge was filled up. However, you can still see that it was once a bridge from the view in the Western Wall Tunnel.

Now let’s get to the Halachic part.

WHY MOST POSKIM FORBID

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, most major poskim forbid walking on Har HaBayis nowadays. Some Rabbis disagree with them, however. Those Rabbis who permit it draw a distinction between the current area of the Temple Mount and the dimensions of Har HaBayis that are discussed in the mishnah in Midos (2:1).

DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE MISHNA AND NOW

The mishnah tells us that Har HaBayis is 500 amos by 500 amos. The current area of Har HaBayit is 1,601 feet by 1,542 feet. On the north–south side, it is less (1,033 and 919 feet).

The first supposition that those who permit it make is that the current state of Har HaBayis is that it is double the size of what is mentioned in the mishnah.

TWO PROBLEMS

There are two problems with this:

Firstly, Torah sources sometimes round off or approximate measurements. The number 500 by 500 can certainly be an approximation. It also may be a total square ammahage, so to speak.

The second problem is that we do not know the exact dimensions of an amah. Some say it is 18 inches; others say 21.25 inches or 23 inches; and a good argument can be made that it is less than 18 inches as well.

For 18 inches

1067 Amos by 1028 688 by 612

For 21.25 Rav Moshe 1.77 feet

904.5 Amos by 871 amos 583 by 519

For 23 inches chazon ish 1.92

833 Amos by 803 538 by 479

Another issue is that the midos discussed in the Mishna may not have included the thickness of the wall either which may have been 27 feet thick according to some sources – this could make it better or make it worse.

RAV RIKKI’S VIEW

There is also the view of Rav Emanuel Rikki in his Aderes Eliyahu in a Kuntrus Mei Niddah #37 that for Kodesh an Ammah is different – it is an Ammah and 2/3. Now we may think that this ridiculous, but Rav Rikki is one of the fundamental sfarim in Kabbalah. The Gra held very very much of him. If Rav Rikki is correct then we have to re-analyze what Herod did exactly and the expansions that he made.

A NEW ISSUR

The second supposition made by those who permit entry onto Har HaBayit is that Rashi’s p’shat in the Gemara in Yevamos (7b) is in error. Most Poskim contend, however, that Rashi’s p’shat is the authoritative understanding of the underlying issue, and has been the normative halachah for many centuries.

But let’s give a brief background.

Yehoshafat, the king of Yehudah, was under intense pressure. The powerful armies of Ammon, Moav, and Seir had combined forces to attack Eretz Yisrael (see Divrei HaYamim II 20:5).

WHAT IS CHATZER CHADASH?

Frightened, Yehoshafat turned to Hashem, declared a fast, and gathered the people to Yerushalayim to the Beis HaMikdash to daven fervently to Hashem. He davened in the “new courtyard.”

There are three interpretations to the term “new courtyard.”

The RaDak and Metzudas Dovid both suggest that it is possible that some sort of improvement was made in the courtyard.

The Gemara in several places, according to Rashi, tells us that there was a new enactment involving the Beis HaMikdash, promulgated at that very time, forbidding a t’vul yom from entering into the Camp of the Levi’im—the Temple Mount. This additional enactment endowed the entire Makom HaMikdash with a higher level of

sanctity. The term “new courtyard” refers to this new enactment, and the courtyard that is referenced is the entire area.

The third interpretation is that the “new courtyard” refers to the ezras nashim only.
AUTHORITATIVE PSHAT

The Kaftor Vaferach (a Rishon who tells us the minhagim of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael and the Makom HaMikdash) in chapter six tells us that Jews observe the second definition of “new courtyard” as being the exact walls of the then current Har HaBayit. Since he lived in the 1300s, the reference is to our contemporary wall dimensions.

The Teshuvos Ramoh (#25) cites this ruling as authoritative and, until very recently, it has always been observed.

The Sefer HaManhig (s.v. “Baal kerit”), citing the rulings of the Geonim, explains that it was only during the Temple times that a t’vul yom could immerse and wait a day. However, nowadays, when it is impossible to rid ourselves of the impurity of the dead, removing the tumah of baal kerit is impossible while we still retain the impurity of the dead.

Why?

Because regarding a t’vul yom it says uvah hashemesh v’taher – he needs to be completely tahor and on account of the fact that nowadays we have no way to purify, this person cannot, because he is still tamei mais. Let’s not forget, however, that in the times of the Mishna and the early Yerushalmi there was still a way to be metahair. It was only lost much later.

So even though the mishnah in Keilim indicates that the impurity of the dead does not necessarily directly impinge upon going onto Har HaBayit itself, it does do so by not allowing our tumas kerit to be completely removed.

THE SEFER HAMANHIG AND THOSE THAT ADVOCATE TREADING UPON HAR HABAYIS

Those that advocate treading upon Har HaBayit either disagree with this Sefer HaManhig, with the Geonim he cites, or have figured some other reading of this Sefer HaManhig.

This position fits the normative practice cited in Rav Ovadiah Bartenura’s letter to his father that Jews would not go up to Har HaBayit even if the Muslims would have allowed them (the letter is cited in the responsa by Dayan Weiss).

[It should be noted that Rav Moshe Feinstein I.M. O.C. vol. II #113 does seem to disagree with the Sefer HaManhig’s understanding of undoing impurity, but the other issues are still relevant. Also, most of the other poskim seem to abide by the Sefer HaManhig.]

HIGHER THAN IT WAS

A third supposition that is made is that the area of Har haBayis has placed layer after layer and it is much higher than it was originally. The gemorah in Psachim 85b cites Rav as ruling that Gagin v’aliyos lo niskadshu. Rashi explains that this refers to the roofs of Yerushalayim regarding kedushas yerushalayim for kadshim kalim or to the lishkos of the azarah roofs. In Shavuos 17b Rashi writes that the gagin and alitos were never sanctified just the floors up to the roofs.

There are a number of answers to this. The first is that this concept is misunderstood because this refers to the original buildings. However, after the buildings are gone, the floored area still has kedusha and therefore when a building is built afterward the kedusha is not blocked. This is clear in the Radbaz itself siman 691. Furthermore Rav Zelig Reuvain Bengis in liflagos Reuvain volume 6 (bio) writes that this is only when there was a space, but if it is made of solid material there is still kedusha there.

Some, believe it or not, question the whole archaeology of it because it says, “aru aru ad hayesod bah – destroy it, destroy it until its very foundation.” They suggest that it is not higher than it was originally.

THE AL SAKARA AND THE EVEN SHESIYA

Another supposition made by those who advocate going onto Har HaBayit is that their measurements are accurate based upon the idea that the current rock known as the al Sakara is one and the same as the Even Shesiya discussed in the mishnah in Yuma. Many Torah authorities as well as secular archaeologists question this identification.

Some say that it is the Makom HaMizbeach (Rav Goren). Others say that it is the Even shesiya.

When the second Bais HaMikdash was built, why did they need neviim to establish it? Why couldn’t they calculate based upon the Even shesiya? This question is brought down in the Sefer Avodah Tamah.

But even if it is the Even shesiya, where was the even shesiya in terms of the Beis HaMikdash? Was it in the center, the west side of it or the east side of it? Perhaps this was the safaik that they had when they built the second bais haMikdash and now it is known. The problem with this is that the debate is still after Bais HaMikdash #2.

Another problem is that the water coming in, which was used as a mikvah for purifying does not match this place as the even shesiya and drawing from it would produce the problem of drawn water.- mayim she-uvim. There are a few solutions to this but who knows which one is true.

While some of those who advocate going onto the Temple Mount cite the Radbaz (responsa #691), who does make this identification with the even shesiya, there are some very serious discrepancies in the responsa of the Radbaz that have been pointed out by the leading poskim of the generation, including Rav Ovadiah Yoseph, Rav Waldenberg, zt”l (Tzitz Eliezer vol. X #1), and Dayan Weiss (vol. V #1).

When dealing with an issue of Kareis the custom in K’lal Yisrael has always been to be stringent. Here we have three leading poskim who tell us with very stern warnings, “Stay Away!” Also, when it was first recaptured in 1967, a letter went out signed by 52 of the top Poskim in eretz Yisroel. Why ignore them?

A fourth assumption made by those who advocate treading upon Har HaBayit is based upon an old picture that was found of Har HaBayit. The assumption is that the raised platform in the photo is the actual Har HaBayit referred to in the mishnah.

There are further indications from various sources in the Acharonim that the walls extend past the areas pointed to in the picture (Pe’as HaShulchan by a student of the Vilna Gaon, Rav Yisroel of Shklov, Eretz Yisrael 3; addendum to Kaftor Vaferach).

Many of those whose opinions promote going onto Har HaBayit do rely to some degree on the opinion of the Raavad, who rules that the sanctity of the Temple Mount is not as in force as it was when the Temple stood. Rambam, of course, disagrees, and the Mishnah Berurah and magain avrohom 561:2 rule fully in accordance with the Rambam.

This is also the overwhelming opinion of the Rishonim – I will list them: Sefer HaTruma in his Hilchos eretz yisroel, SMag mitzvas assei 163 – he writes that what made it kadosh was the shechina and that never gets undone, whereas other issues were kadsh only lesheasa – a kivush for example regarding trumos and maasros Rashi avoda zara 13a venishchatai mishchat – we are obligated on shechutei chutz mideoraisa nowadays – like the rambam, Rash miShantz shviis 6:1, Tosfos Yuma 44a, shvuos 14b, Tosfos HaRosh yevamos 82b – gives a reason because it is called a nachalah which can never be undone, Yereim siman 277, Chinuch in ten different places 284, Tashbatz vol III #201, Rashba megillah daf yud, Ramban shavuos 14b, Ritvah Megillah 10b, and Kaftor vaferach. Plus, we have the opinion that the Raavad was only referring to the deoraisa aspect of things but miderabanan he was machmir.

Who, among the Rishonim, says like the Raavad? There is one tzad in the meiri like this, but elsewhere he says that the psak is like the Rambam.

There is also the notion found in Rav Chaim Soloveitchik that there are, two dinim in the kedusha and the Raavad was only referring to the kareis din but the other din of kedusha is still in effect even though there is no karais.

There is also the issue of whether everyone in contemporary times has the halachic status of a zav. Both Dayan Weiss and the Tzitz Eliezer rule that everyone does. Those who advocate for treading on Har HaBayit disagree with this contention.

Finally, Rav Kook (Mishpat HaKohein #96) himself writes that even according to the view of the Raavad, there is still a Rabbinic prohibition of entering the Temple Mount. He explains that Chazal felt that the reverence and respect for the Makom HaMikdash is greater in not going there, than in visiting it. Modern advocates of treading on Har HaBayit indicate that Rav Kook would have changed his mind if he had been given their new evidence. But intellectual honesty would yield quite a different theory.

In short, the overwhelming view of poskim, chareidi and otherwise, simply do not agree that Jews may, or should, go up to Har HaBayit. While the sentiment is certainly understood, and one cannot fault those who genuinely believe that it is halachically permitted, it is still a very serious issue.

The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com

from: Rabbi Kaganoff <ymkaganoff@gmail.com> reply-to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com to: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com date: Sun, Jun 14, 2015 at 3:58 PM subject: this is the way we salt our meat

**This is the Way We Salt our Meat
By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

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

Introduction to Meat Preparation In parshas Korach, the Torah calls the covenant of the kohanim a bris melach, a covenant of salt. In parshas Tzav, the Torah presents both a positive and a negative mitzvah requiring that we salt meat and all other offerings that are placed on the fire of the mizbeiach. These must be salted on all sides (Menachos 21a). Someone who places any offering on the mizbeiach without salting it first abrogates a mitzvas asech, and furthermore is subject to Malkus for violating a lo saaseh.

As long as our Beis Hamikdash remains destroyed, we unfortunately cannot fulfill this mitzvah. Nevertheless, I will use these opportunities to discuss the basic laws of

kashering meat, notwithstanding that the salting of kosher meat accomplishes a completely different purpose than does salting korbanos.

In several places, the Torah proscribes eating blood. Blood is the efficient transporter of nutrients to the entire body and permeates the animal's flesh while it is still alive. Thus, blood is absorbed throughout the meat. If so, how can we possibly extract the prohibited blood from the permitted meat? The Gemara and the halachic authorities provide the guidelines how to properly remove the forbidden blood. The process begins during the butchering, when one is required to remove certain veins to guarantee that the blood is properly removed (Chullin 93a; Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah 65:1). After these veins are removed, there are two methods of extracting the blood from the meat. One is by soaking and salting the meat, which is what we will discuss in this article. In practical terms, the first approach, usually referred to as kashering meat, involves soaking the meat for thirty minutes, shaking off the excess water, salting the meat thoroughly on all sides, and then placing it for an hour in a way that the blood can drain freely. A bird should be placed with its open cavity downward so that the liquid drains off as it is kashering; similarly, a piece of meat with a cavity, such as an un-boned brisket, should be placed with its cavity draining downward. One may stack meat that is being kashered high as one wants, as long as the liquid is able to drain off the meat properly. After the salting is complete, we rinse the meat thoroughly, in order to wash away all the blood and salt. The poskim instruct that one should rinse the meat three times (Rama, Yoreh Deah 69:7). Until fairly recently, every Jewish daughter and housewife soaked and salted meat as part of regular meal preparation. Today, the kashering of meat is usually performed either in the factory or by the butcher. Still, every housewife should know how to kasher meat, before it becomes a forgotten skill, reserved only for the specialist! Case in point: A talmid of mine is doing kiruv in a community without a lot of kashrus amenities, but that happens to be very near a kosher abattoir. Because of necessity, they are now proficient in the practical aspects of kashering their own meat, a skill that they were fortunate to learn. Thus, we see another example of the importance of being able to kasher meat yourself. Another case in point: I know a very fine Jew who, following the guidance of gedolei Yisrael, accepted a kabbalah before he married that he would only eat meat that was kashered at home. Someone wanted to invite him for a sheva berachos and wanted to be able to serve him what she prepared for all her guests, but was unable to do so because she never learned how to kasher meat. (Instead, she prepared him fish, but had to find out what brand and type of fish he would use.) For these reasons, when I taught in Beis Yaakov, I made sure that the girls knew how to kasher meat, although frankly I was quite appalled to find out how little they knew about the process. In those days, most of their mothers still knew how to kasher meat, but today, even the mothers and teachers of Beis Yaakov students no longer know how to do so. On the other hand, I am reminded of the time some Iranian talmidim of Ner Yisrael spent Pesach at a university in Oklahoma to be mekareiv Jewish students. Although the students, natives of Shiraz and Tehran, were no longer observing many mitzvos, they all assisted in the kashering of the chickens for the Seder. Every one of them remembered exactly how to kasher meat!

Why do we Soak our Meat? Before addressing the question that I shared at the beginning of our article, we need to understand more thoroughly the process of kashering meat. The Gemara (Chullin 113a) teaches: "Shmuel said: The meat does not rid itself of its blood unless it is well salted and well rinsed." The Gemara subsequently explains that the meat must be rinsed both before the salting and afterwards. We well understand why we must rinse away the salt after kashering the meat, since it is now full of forbidden blood. But why does one need to rinse the meat before kashering the meat? And why emphasize that it must be "well rinsed"? There are actually many different explanations for this law. Here are some approaches mentioned by the rishonim, as explained by the master of practical kashrus, the Pri Megadim (in his introduction to the laws of salting meat, Second Ikar, s.v. Va'atah):

(1) Soften the Meat Soaking the meat softens it, so that the salt can now remove the blood, but if the meat is not saturated thoroughly with water, the salt will not successfully extract the blood from the hard meat, and the meat remains prohibited (Ran). According to this reason, the Gemara's instruction that the meat is "well rinsed," requires not simply rinsing the surface of the meat, but submerging the meat. The later authorities interpret that one should soak the entire piece of meat to be kashered for half an hour, to guarantee that it is soft enough for the salt to extract the blood (see Darchei Moshe 69:1; as explained by Gra, 69:4). The authorities dispute whether one is required to submerge the entire piece of meat. Some contend that if part of the meat remained above the water, one is not required to submerge the meat that remained above the water line, since it will become softened by the water absorption of the lower part of the meat (Pischei Teshuvah 69:5). Others maintain that the upper part will not soften this way, and one must submerge it for half an hour before salting the meat (Yad Yehudah, Peirush HaAruch end of 69:10; Darkei Teshuvah 69:20).

(2) Remove the Surface Blood A second approach to why the meat must be rinsed well contends that one must rinse blood off the surface of the meat, because, otherwise,

this blood will impede the ability of the salt to remove the blood that is inside the meat (Mordechai). This approach, as well as all the others that the Pri Megadim quotes, does not require submerging the meat, but merely rinsing the surface well. However, according to this approach, if the meat was submerged for half an hour and then afterwards someone sliced into the meat, one must rerinse the area that was now cut. Failure to rerinse the newly cut area will result in making it impossible for the salt to remove the blood properly (Pri Megadim). Case in point: Once, when I was inspecting a butcher shop, I observed that after the meat was completely soaked, the mashgiach noticed that one piece had not been properly butchered – the butcher had failed to remove a vein that one is required to remove. The mashgiach took out his knife and sliced away the offending vein. But, is one now required to soak the meat for an additional half hour or to rinse it before kashering it? The answer is that one must rinse the newly sliced area well to remove any blood, but one is not required to soak the meat for an additional half an hour, since the meat is now nice and soft and its blood will drain out freely.

(3) The Blood will Absorb into the Meat A third opinion why the meat must be rinsed well before salting contends that salting meat when there is blood on its surface will cause the blood to absorb into the meat, thus prohibiting it. This approach also believes that the purpose for rinsing the meat before salting is to remove the blood on the surface. However, this opinion holds that not rinsing blood off the surface entails a more serious concern. If blood remains on the surface of the meat when it is salted, this blood will absorb into the meat and prohibit it. According to this reason, if someone salted the meat without rinsing it off, the meat is now prohibited, and re-soaking it and salting it will not make it kosher. According to the other reasons we have mentioned, one who failed to soak or rinse the meat before salting it may rinse off the salt, soak (or rinse) the meat properly and then salt it. The Shulchan Aruch (69:2) rules that if one salts meat without rinsing it first, he may rinse the salt off the meat and re-salt the meat. The Rama rules that one should not use the meat, unless it is a case of major financial loss.

(4) Moisten the Surface Another Rishon, the Rosh, contends that the reason why one must rinse the meat before salting it is because the salt does not remove the blood properly unless the meat surface is moist. Although this approach may appear similar to the Ran's approach that I mentioned first, the Ran contends that the entire piece of meat be soaked in order to soften it so that its blood will readily extract, whereas the Rosh requires only that the surface be moist at the time of the salting. Therefore, the Rosh does not require that the meat be soaked at all, certainly not for half an hour. On the other hand, if the meat soaked for a half-hour, and then was dried or sliced, the Rosh requires one to moisten the dry surface so that the salt will work. In this last case, the Ran does not require re-rinsing the surface, since the meat already soaked for half an hour. In practical halacha, we, lechatchilah, prepare meat according to all opinions, and for this reason we soak all meat for half an hour before salting, but we drain off some of the water before salting it, so that the meat is moist but not dripping (Rama 69:1). If the meat is too wet, the salt will not do its job.

How thick must I salt the meat? The Gemara quoted above states that one must salt the meat well, just as it mentions that one must wash it well. What does this mean, that I must salt it well? Some authorities require that the meat be covered with salt, whereas others rule that it is satisfactory to salt it sufficiently that one would not be able to eat the meat without rinsing it off. The Rishonim debate whether salting meat well means that it must be salted on all sides, or whether it is sufficient to salt the meat on one side. There are actually three different opinions on the matter: (1) The meat needs to be salted on only one side, and this satisfactorily removes the blood (Tur's interpretation of Rashba). (2) One should preferably salt the meat on both sides, but if one failed to do so, the meat is kosher (Beis Yosef's interpretation of Rashba). (3) If the meat is not salted on opposite sides, one will not remove all the blood and the meat is prohibited for consumption (Rama). The Shulchan Aruch concludes that one should preferably salt the meat on both sides, but if one failed to do so, the meat is kosher. However, the Rama rules that under normal circumstances, one should consider the meat non-kosher. Under extenuating circumstances, or in case of great loss, the meat is kosher (Taz).

Stacking the Meat According to all opinions, if one stacks two pieces of meat, one atop another, and salts only one of the pieces, the blood was not removed from unsalted piece. Even if one contends that salting meat on one side of a piece will draw out all the blood in that piece, it does not draw out the blood from a different piece that the salted piece is lying on. Similarly, if one is kashering two organs, such as the heart and the lung, salting one piece does not draw the blood out of the other piece. This is true, even if the two organs are still connected together (see Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos Zahav end of 15). Salting a bird only on the outside is similar to salting a piece of meat on only one side, because there is an open cavity in the middle. For this reason, one is required to salt a bird on the inside of the open cavity, also, and cannot simply salt the outside of the bird.

Splitting a Bird At this point, we have enough information to address our opening question: "When I shopped in Israel, I noticed that all the chickens were split open. I like to roast my chicken whole and stuff the inside, but you can't do this once the chicken is split open. When I asked the butcher for an explanation, he told me that all the mehadrin hechsherim split the chicken open before kashering. What does a split chicken have to do with kashrus?" How does one kasher a chicken or other bird? If one salts the outside of the chicken, one has salted the bird on only one side, since the inside cavity was not salted. The Shulchan Aruch answers that one places salt on the inside cavity of the chicken. The Pri Megadim records a dispute among earlier authorities whether one is required to cut through the breast bone of a bird before kashering it. The Shulchan Aruch rules that one is not required to cut through the breast bone of a bird before kashering it, but can rely on placing salt inside the cavity. The Beis Hillel adds that cutting through the breast bone of the bird to make the cavity most accessible is not even considered a chumrah that one should try to observe. However, the Beis Lechem Yehudah rules that one is required to cut through the breast bone before kashering. His reasoning is that one who does not cut through the bone must rely on pushing salt into the cavity and that people tend not to push the salt sufficiently deep into the cavity. The Pri Megadim agrees with the Beis Lechem Yehudah, and mentions that he required his family members to cut through the breast bone to open the cavity before salting poultry, because it is impossible to salt properly all the places in the internal cavity without splitting the chicken open. (Although the Pri Megadim uses the term "split in half," I presume that he means to open the chicken's cavity. There seems no reason to require one to cut the entire chicken into two pieces.) Furthermore, several of the internal organs – including the lungs, kidneys, and spleen -- are often not salted properly without splitting open the cavity. It is for this reason that mehadrin shechitos in Eretz Yisrael all cut through the bone before salting the chickens, although one can note from the Pri Megadim's own comments that this was not standard practice. Most hechsherim in the United States follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch and the Beis Hillel and do not insist on splitting the chicken open before salting it. One hechsher I know requires that the kidneys be removed and discarded before sale, because of the concern raised by the Pri Megadim that they cannot be salted properly without opening the chicken. (In our large scale manufacturing today, the lungs, heart and spleen are always removed anyway, and usually not sold for food.) By the way, we can also understand some of the reasons why someone would take on a personal chumrah to eat meat only if it was kashered at home. Among the reasons that he would be makpid is better control of the kashering, guaranteeing that the chickens are split before they are salted, and making certain that the chickens are placed with their cavities down.

Conclusion At this point, I would like to return to our opening explanation, when I mentioned the mitzvah of salting korbanos that are burnt on the mizbeich. As I alluded to above, although both items are salted in a similar manner, the purpose is very different. Whereas the salting of our meat is to remove the blood, this blood and salt is washed away. The salted offerings, on the other hand, are burnt completely with their salt. Several commentaries note that salt represents that which exists forever, and can therefore represent the mitzvos of the Torah, which are never changed. In addition, the salt used for the korbanos must be purchased from public funds, from the machatzis hashekel collection, demonstrating that this responsibility to observe the mitzvos forever is communal and collective (Rav Hirsch).

Aish.com <http://www.aish.com/tp/i/reflections/307292471.html>

Korach (Numbers 16-18)

Keep Yourself In Check

by Rabbi Yehoshua Berman

One of the central events in the parsha is the attempted rebellion of Korach and his cohorts against Moshe and Aharon. Korach claimed that Moshe and Aharon were deliberately taking up all the positions of honor and glory for themselves and their closest family members, and he "indignantly" demanded that the "honor" of all the Jewish People be upheld by stopping this "violation." [1]

Rashi explains that there was a certain position of honor that Korach coveted and someone else received it. His jealousy induced him to conduct his rebellion. As could be expected, Korach's rebellion ended in him and all of his cohorts being terribly punished through special miracles that God performed [2] to prove that indeed Moshe was only doing precisely what he was commanded to do. [3]

Rashi explains that what emotionally fortified Korach in his attempt at what would otherwise be considered absolute lunacy, was a divinely inspired vision he saw that very great people were to descend from him. Korach thought, "Is it possible that I could be the forebear of such wondrous offspring and not be saved and emerge victorious?" Rashi makes it clear that Korach was indeed a highly intelligent person, and that he nevertheless engaged in this lunacy because of this "reasoning". Of course, as Rashi explains, what Korach failed to realize is that his sons ended up doing teshuvah and thus enabled the future, great offspring to eventually come into the world.

It would seem very reasonable that in order to have such great people descend from him - and to have succeeded in getting so many great people to follow him, [4] Korach himself must have indeed been inherently great - just that he ruined everything by losing himself in his drive for glory. This would be in line with the saying "the bigger they are the harder they fall." Chazal indeed teach us, "Anyone who is greater than his fellow, so too is his yetzer hara (evil inclination) greater." The higher the spiritual level one attains, the greater his life-tests become, and thus the harder he can fall if he fails to persevere through those tests.

Later in Jewish history we find a very similar such occurrence. Yaravam ben Nevat split off from Rechavam (who was the son and successor of Shlomo Ha'Melech) and became the king of the ten Shevatim. In order to discourage his subjects from being oleh l'regel, he set up two places of worship in other areas and erected golden calves there, [5] thereby becoming the quintessential chotei u'machti for all time. [6]

This is so even though Yaravam was one of the absolute greatest talmidei chachamim of his time; or, perhaps, specifically because he was the greatest. His being the greatest may well have contributed to his ultimate downfall because his tests were that much greater and he did not keep the natural drive for honor in check.

Knowing all this, then, it becomes very understandable that the greatest figure of all human history, Moshe Rabbeinu, was the quintessential embodiment of humility, as the Torah says explicitly about him that he was the most humble person to ever walk the face of the earth. If one is to achieve greatness, then he absolutely must develop and cultivate the trait of humility, because if not, the very greatness that he attains may ultimately cause him to lose everything.

The Orchos Tzadikim says that one who has amassed great Torah knowledge but has the character flaw of arrogantly tooting his own horn and always emphasizing how he is so much greater than others is like a barrel that is filled with the finest vintage wine, just that it has a small hole in the bottom. Ultimately, he will be left with nothing. [7]

Korach was not some wild aberration. He was a completely normal person - actually an incredibly great individual - who fell prey to the completely normal lure of honor and glory. Even great, intelligent people - and perhaps particularly the great and intelligent people - are prone to stumbling into frightening pitfalls from folly. The drive for recognition and honor can cause one to violate the mandates of morality and justice and put one on a path of extremely destructive behavior, a path that one would otherwise consider totally nonsensical. Conversely, one who follows in the path of Moshe Rabbeinu by cultivating and maintaining a healthy sense of one's standing and not falling into the trap of exaggerated self-importance - such an individual is demonstrating a true recognition of the fact that as much as we may do it is as nothing compared to the infinite goodness that Hashem bestows upon us. [8] Such a path brings one to flourish and progress along the straight, logical path of moral deeds and just undertakings.

NOTES

1. 16:1-3, 19. 2. 16:32-35. 3. 16:29-30. Of course, we must understand that the "proof" was for the emotions of the People; for on the intellectual level it is utterly preposterous - after having witnessed the Eser Makos, Krias Yam Suf, and of course chieftain having experienced Maamad Har Sinai - to question the reliability of Moshe as the true and greatest Navi. 4. 16:2. 5. For more about this episode see the D'var Torah on parshas Ki Sisah. 6. Avos 5:18. 7. In the introduction. 8. Rashi (16:1) emphasizes that Korach was upset that he did not receive the appointment that his cousin Elitzafan ben Uziel received as Nasi over the Bnei K'has. In stark contrast, Moshe Rabbeinu tried so hard to get out of being appointed the redeemer of the Jewish People so that his brother Aharon could fill that role instead (Rashi in Shmos 4:10). This, then, is a good barometer of the issue at hand: if you find yourself feeling happy at others' honorable appointments and the like, then you're in good shape. If, on the other hand, you find yourself resenting or feeling threatened by others' receiving honor, then it is time to take serious stock of yourself and work hard to try and root out that negative middah.

This article can also be read at: <http://www.aish.com/tp/i/reflections/307292471.html>

Like what you read? As a non-profit organization, Aish.com relies on readers like you to enable us to provide meaningful and relevant articles. Join Aish.com and help us continue to give daily inspiration to people like you around the world.

Make a secure donation at: <https://secure.aish.com/secure/pledge.php> or mail a check to Aish.com, c/o The Jerusalem Aish HaTorah Fund PO Box 1259 Lakewood, NJ 08701 Copyright © 1995 - 2015 Aish.com - <http://www.aish.com>

from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Jun 18, 2015 at 5:39 AM subject:

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

And Korach took. (16:1)

Was Korach a fool? Absolutely not. Did he lack yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven? No. indeed, Chazal teach that Korach was a chacham gadol, very wise man, a pikeach, clever and astute person. He was among those Leviim who carried the Aron HaKodesh, Holy Ark. What happened to all of this chochmah, pikchus and yiraas Shomayim? His eye deceived him. He saw a great and distinguished lineage descending from him. Shmuel HaNavi, the great prophet, was one of his descendants. Such lineage can turn anyone's head.

First of all, Korach was correct in what he saw. He was the progenitor of an illustrious lineage. His mistake was in not noticing what should have been the most salient point of this image - that his sons would repent and reject their father's miscreant ways. Otherwise, Korach's picture would have been quite definitive. So, if Korach was wise, smart and basically a yarei Shomayim, G-d-fearing person, how did he have the audacity to confront Moshe Rabbeinu, and to entice Klal Yisrael's spiritual elite to join him in rebellion and slander of Moshe, Aharon and ultimately Hashem? Chazal say eino hitso, his eye deceived him. He figured, if Shmuel could be his grandson, how could he go wrong? He was dead wrong.

Horav Nissan Alpert, zl, offers an alternative explanation which has great practical meaning. Korach, indeed, had the qualities that under most circumstances should have stimulated his development as a righteous, upstanding, and virtuous person. Like all men, however, he was drawn to arrogance and petty jealousy. These two character traits have destroyed many a potential leader among men.

Rav Shimon ben Lakish says (Sukkah 52b): "Man's yetzer (inclination) tries to overpower him, trying to kill him, as it says, 'The evil one gazes upon the tzaddik and attempts to kill him'" (Tehillim 37:32). Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl, comments that the "evil one" referenced in the pasuk is not some sinister person, some evil individual who attempts to kill the tzaddik; rather, the "evil one" is actually man's subconscious. Thus, for all outward appearances, a person could portray himself as a tzaddik, but, within him, he is a rasha, evil person. If it were not for Hashem's help, we would all succumb to the yetzer hora's evil manipulation of our lives.

Hashem's help is not guaranteed. It is accessible to the individual who seeks to move in a positive direction. On the other hand, Haba l'tamei poschin lo, "One who wishes to contaminate himself will be granted the opportunity to do so." What is the line of demarcation which divides tumah, spiritual defilement, from taharah, spiritual purity? One who acts inadvertently, who acts like a human being with his foibles and urges, will not deliberately cross the line. He is only acting human, and human beings are imperfect. When one acts audaciously, however, with malice aforethought, then his actions place him beyond the pale, beyond the parameters of human imperfection. It is then that he has declared that he is haba l'tamei, seeks to contaminate himself. Sadly, he, too, will be assisted along the path of infamy which he has chosen for himself.

Korach crossed that line of demarcation. This occurred when he impugned the integrity of Moshe's leadership. By challenging our quintessential Rebbe and leader, he indicated that the rasha, evil one, from within had taken over and was now in charge. The external tzaddik was now an external rasha. Chazal present us with ammunition for dealing with the "evil one" which resides within us. "Should that disgusting one meet up with you, drag him into the bais hamedrash" (Sukkah 52b). How does studying Torah serve as the antidote to protect from the effects of the yetzer hora? Rav Alpert explains that this occurs when one studies Torah analytically, with sincerity, ruminating over every word, carefully examining everything that he learns, turning it over and over, to be certain that he has viewed all sides and aspects fairly and honestly. He questions himself: "Is this side correct? Perhaps the other side makes greater sense? Do I really understand what the sage says, or could I have misunderstood his position?"

One who takes such an approach, questioning back and forth, clarifying the issue until he has removed as much ambiguity as he can, such an individual can be called ha'ba l'taheir, one who wishes to purify himself. He has an open mind in the sense that he seeks only the truth. He is assisted from Above. Honesty is a prerequisite for religious life. While it is imperative that one deal honestly with others, it is especially vital that he does so with himself. He must acknowledge the three avos ha'tumah, primary categories of spiritual defilement: excessive pride, excessive drive for honor, petty jealousy. These are the very same forces that took down Korach, and they are, indeed, a part of himself - as well.

One must question his personal motives: Why am I doing this? What is motivating me to perform the chesed, kindness? Do I want attention, acclaim, honor? Am I jealous of others? Are my actions the result of yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven, or the consequence of seeking aggrandizement?

Rav Alpert presents us with a litmus test for determining the source which is motivating our actions. Does he have any doubt, any misgiving concerning his actions, or is he totally convinced that what he is doing is correct? One who commences a project or endeavor with absolutely no self-doubt should be acutely aware that he is probably acting on behalf of the yetzer hora, which has caused him to delude himself.

This is what happened with Korach. Vayikach Korach - "and Korach took." What did he take? He took himself - lock, stock and barrel. He convinced himself that what he was doing was appropriate, even laudatory. He did not humbly deliberate and analyze whether his intentions were l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven. He believed in the lie that the "evil one" helped him to conjure up in his mind. He told himself that everything was fine. By crossing the line, he was no longer a candidate for Divine assistance. He had chosen the path leading towards tumah.

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

Rashi observes that the name of the family Patriarch, Yaakov Avinu, is not mentioned. He quotes the Midrash Tanchuma that explains that Yaakov pleaded that his name not be associated with Korach's controversy. While this may be laudable, it is not as if his name is never associated with Korach. Indeed, in Sefer Divrei Hayamim (I: 6:23), where the service in the Bais Hamikdash is detailed, the entire yichus, pedigree, is detailed, and the Patriarch's name is mentioned. The question is obvious: The fact that Yaakov's name is not mentioned does not detract from reality that he was Korach's ancestor; so, why not mention it?

Veritably, questions abound concerning the entire Korach debacle. Each one has merit, with the explanations that are derived, thereby imparting critical lessons concerning interpersonal relationships and the tragic consequences of controversy. For our purpose, I will focus on a difficult lesson to be gleaned from the parsha of Korach, a tragic encounter between Jewish leadership which seems to plague us throughout the generations. Sadly, when people with deficient character traits are involved, there will be machlokes, controversy, and it will take its toll on the Jewish community. The only way to prevent it from occurring is to ignore the rabble rousers. It takes two to maintain a dispute. When the wicked one initiates the controversy, our function is to ignore him. If he has no one with whom to contend, he will go away. If we respond to him, we become partners in a machlokes.

When Moshe Rabbeinu was confronted with the tragedy of a rift within Klal Yisrael, he understood that this was a transgression that would not go away. The people must learn the egregious nature of controversy and acknowledge the seriousness of its consequences. While Moshe was not going to respond to the rabble rousers, he could not allow this infraction to go unabated. The punishment sustained by the would-be usurpers of Klal Yisrael's Heaven-picked leadership must be one that would be remembered throughout the generations. Moshe prayed to Hashem, "If these (men) die like the death of all men, and the destiny of all men is visited upon them, then it is not Hashem who sent me..." As soon as Moshe concluded this prayer, the ground opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households and all the people who were with Korach and all their possessions. They and all that was theirs descended alive to the realm of the dead.

For all appearances, Moshe wanted an "earth-shattering" punishment that would send a reverberating message concerning the evil of machlokes. If this is the case, what prompted him to choose this particular punishment? Why did the earth have to open its "mouth"? What "mouth" does the earth have? It does not speak, and, if it had, what words would have emerged from the earth's mouth as it consumed Korach and his followers?

Horav Pinchas Freidman, Shlita, quotes the Talmud Sanhedrin 11a, which teaches that from the very depths of the earth, Korach and his assembly actually do justify and acknowledge Hashem's verdict, by their declaration, Moshe v'Toraso emes, "Moshe and his Torah are true." The Talmud relates that Rabbah bar bar Chanah met an Arab merchant who indicated to him the exact spot at which Korach and his assembly were swallowed up. He pointed to two cracks in the ground which were emitting smoke. The Arab then instructed him to bend his ear to the ground in order to listen to the sounds/voices emanating from deep within the earth's recesses. This is where he heard, Moshe v'Toraso emes. Apparently, every thirty days Korach and his assembly are returned to that exact place where they make this declaration.

Rav Friedman now introduces us to a novel idea, presented by the R'ma m'Panu in his Asarah Maamaros. He quotes the Arizal who observes that the last letters of the words, Tzaddik katamar yifrach - kuf, raish, ches - (the righteous) [person] will bloom like a date palm) (Tehillim 92:13), is, indeed, a reference to Korach who, from the moment that he entered the bowels of Gehinom, began justifying the Heavenly decree issued against him and his assembly. Thus, they chant Moshe emes v'Toraso emes. Thus, when the world as a whole will achieve its tikkun, spiritual rectification, so, too, will they.

The Shlah HaKadosh reiterates this thought, but adds that this is possible only because Moshe Rabbeinu prayed that Korach and his followers be swallowed alive. Since they entered Gehinom alive, they were able to repent, and one day will achieve their ultimate repair. Had Korach actually died, he could not repent, since there is no teshuvah, repentance, after death. The efficacy of teshuvah is only as long as one is in control of his faculties. Therefore, although Korach was taken down to the realm of the dead, he will one day be allowed to rise and flourish like a date palm.

Having said this, we conclude that Moshe's decree that Korach be swallowed up alive served a dual purpose. On the one hand, it provided the nation with living proof of the glory of G-d. When one witnesses a terrifying punishment being meted out to one who rebels against Hashem, the Almighty is glorified. The horrible sounds/screams and the devastating sight which they witnessed encouraged the people to run far and fast from a dispute and also to believe that everything Moshe did was in accordance with the will of Hashem.

On the other hand, Korach benefitted exponentially from Moshe's decree, since he now was availed the opportunity to repent. It allowed him/them to achieve their tikkun, through their confession that "Moshe is true and his Torah is true (and we are liars)."

Having explained Moshe's actions, we gain a new perspective concerning our quintessential leader's inordinate and atypical prayer that such a horrible punishment be administered to Korach. Moshe had always demonstrated incredible forbearance and compassion, begging forgiveness on behalf of the Jews a number of times. Yet, this time, he seems to have been acting in a manner totally out of character. We now realize that Moshe actually did Korach an everlasting favor by allowing him the opportunity to be spared from eternal ostracism.

We turn to our Patriarch's prayer that his name not be associated with Korach's dispute. We know that he was Korach's ancestor; how does deleting his name from Korach's lineage make such a difference? The Or HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Yaakov did not want his name associated with Korach, because he did not want the element of "Yaakov," the origin of Klal Yisrael's neshamos, souls, to become tainted. He explains this esoterically: When Hashem created mankind, He created a tree that contained all of the branches of kedushah, holiness. When Adam HaRishon sinned and became personally blemished, all the souls associated with him also became affected by this spiritual taint. When Avraham successfully passed the Asarah Nisyonos, Ten Trials, the spiritual stigma was expunged, leaving the contamination on the branch of Yishmael. When Yitzchak Avinu withstood the trial at the Akeidah, Binding of Yitzchak, his neshamah was cleansed, leaving the taint on Eisav, thus allowing for Yaakov's neshamah to emerge unsullied of any spiritual contaminant.

Yaakov was similar to Adam prior to his sin, allowing him to become the tree, which now had twelve branches. One of these branches was Levi, which was divided into three: Gershon, Kehas, Merari. Kehas' branch divided into four: Amram, Yitzhar, Chevron and Uziel, with Korach branching off from Yitzhar. When Korach sought to alter the branches of Kehunah, Priesthood, he blemished the branches of kedushah from which he descended. Until now, all of these branches had been holy at their roots, which were connected to the tree. Korach negatively affected the branch of Yitzhar and Kehas, since they comprised his roots. Indeed, this spiritual defilement went all the way back to Levi's branch. By not mentioning Yaakov's name, the original source, the basic essence of the "tree" was left unimpaired. This was the essence of Yaakov's prayer: Do not allow the spiritual disease to reach the original source/Yaakov, of the tree. Thus, the tree could one day rejuvenate itself, since the scourge that affected the rest of it had not affected its origin.

The Sfas Emes takes this idea a bit further, claiming that Yaakov Avinu symbolized the middah, attribute, of emes, truth. When Yaakov prayed to Hashem that his name not be included b'adas Korach, in Korach's mutinous assembly, he was asking that his attribute of emes not become tainted. This nekudah, internal point, this Divine spark of emes, is the source of the neshamah within us. Despite the various transgressions committed by a person, he will not become sullied. It is connected to the source of all purity, the tree of Yaakov. Only because of Yaakov's prayer the Korach dispute not blemish the "tree's" root of emes. When Korach and his followers recite vidui, confession, in Gehinom, they declare, Moshe emes v'Toraso emes; they are granted Tikkun, spiritual emendation, since the internal spot of emes within them, their neshamos, did not become affected. Yaakov did not merely pray for his dignity. His prayer saved not only Korach and his followers; it also spared us from having our nekudas ha'emes sullied. Thus, once a person confesses his transgressions, he becomes worthy of achieving his tikkun.

And On ben Peles. (16:1)

On ben Peles was one of the original leaders of the Korach dispute. Yet, he was ultimately absent from the end confrontation; thus, he was spared the horrible punishment meted out to Korach and his followers. In the Talmud Sanhedrin 109a, Chazal teach that On was blessed with a wise and righteous wife, who saw when this confrontation was going and devised a plan, a logical argument, by which she was able to convince her husband to stay "home." She said to him, "What do you (personally) have to benefit from this folly? Regardless who emerges the winner, Moshe or Korach, you will still be the stooge. You will never achieve leadership status; so, why not stay home and let the others fight with Moshe?"

As a result of the argument which she presented, Chazal refer to her in the pasuk in Mishlei 14:1, Chochmas nashim bansah beisah, "The wise among women, each builds her house."

When we analyze the argument which On's wife presented, we wonder if it really demonstrates such unusual wisdom on her part. It is not as if she argued that Moshe Rabbeinu was the nation's quintessential leader, who was chosen by G-d. He was the Adon HaNeviim, master of all prophets, whose integrity one may not impugn. Furthermore, she claimed that, regardless who emerged successful, he - On - would continue as the subservient one, the "loser." Why did she simply not say that Korach was an apikores, heretic, who was subverting the nation? This would have indicated true wisdom on her part!

Horav Eliyahu Baruch Finkel, zl, explains that wisdom connotes knowing what to say and what will be effective. Korach was trying to precipitate an argument concerning Moshe's suitability and right to lead. On ben Peles' mind was made up. He believed in Korach and resented Moshe. When two sides argue philosophically, supporting one side against the other only lands the supporter right in the middle of the argument. Hence, On's wife was compelled to come up with an argument that would keep her husband's mind away from the fray. She also knew the true reason that Korach and his followers were in contention with Moshe. It had nothing whatsoever to do with who was a better leader. It was all about kavod, glory, and kinaah, envy. As a wise woman, she had to play on the kavod and kinaah that was driving this machlokes.

She saw that whoever won, her husband would be subservient. He would never become a leader - because he was not destined for leadership. A smart person analyzes a situation and determines the proper course of action. This is what she did. She addressed the yetzer hora, evil inclination, within her husband. "Even if you are correct that Moshe is not as qualified to lead as is Korach, where does that put you?" She understood the perverted psyche of these men. They had no problem impugning Moshe's leadership, denying Hashem as the nation's Divine leader, and undermining the Torah, but Heaven forbid should they gaze on a woman whose hair was uncovered! She was acutely aware of the double-standard that governed the lives of these men. Wisdom does not mean that one presents a better argument; rather, it is the one whose argument has greater efficacy that makes the difference.

And Dasan and Aviram came out and stood at the door of their tents. (16:27)

Rashi explains that these two reshaim, miscreants, who acted as Moshe Rabbeinu's nemeses, going back to Egypt, were here again to do what they were good at: harassing and undermining our nation's leader. When Moshe came by, they remained firm and resolute in their commitment to degrade and humiliate Moshe in every way. One wonders how these individuals survived so long. Eighty percent of the Jewish People who were in Egypt died during the three days of the plague of darkness. Dasan and Aviram did not. They continued their subversive activities at every juncture of Klal Yisrael's journey. Yet, they were still here to join Korach, fueling his dispute. What merit allowed them to leave Egypt with the twenty percent who were worthy of the geulah, redemption?

There were a number of reasons to keep Dasan and Aviram on the scene, despite the many challenges they created as a result of their wicked nature. The Melitzer Rebbe, Shlita, explains that, at times, Hashem maintains the wicked person, so that others will derive a lesson from his bad example. Dasan and Aviram taught us the evil consequences of slander, when they slandered Moshe after he killed the Egyptian man that was harassing them. When they searched on Shabbos for the manna which Moshe had warned would not descend, they demonstrated the extent to which one who lacks faith in Hashem and whose desire for wealth is overwhelming, can descend.

Second, the positive actions of the righteous have greater radiance when compared to the negative actions of the wicked. Moshe and Aharon's humility and quest for harmony among men becomes much more luminous when compared with the arrogance and controversy prone nature of Dasan and Aviram. Light is much brighter when held up against a dark background.

Next, if there would be no reshaim, wicked people, one's bechirah chafshis, free will, would become stunted. Everyone is availed the opportunity to gravitate towards the tzaddik, righteous person, instead of the rasha or vice versa. No one is compelled to do so.

Last, the Kedushas Levi writes that Hashem allows reshaim to exist, so that they can serve as the vehicle for glorifying His Name in the world. When we think about it, had there not been an evil Pharaoh, there most likely would not have been ten plagues, which brought about an unprecedented Kiddush Shem Shomayim, sanctification of Hashem's Name. We can thank Dasan and Aviram for the earth opening its "mouth" and swallowing up these miscreants. Every person during his lifetime has the opportunity to become the vehicle for sanctifying Hashem's Name. It is his decision, however, whether he wants to do this as a rasha or as a tzaddik. It is his own choice.

Dedicated in memory of Moshe ben Shmuel z:l Krilov