Torah Treats

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry



קרח

לעילוי נשמת



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Hamaayan -The Torah Spring ~ Edited by Shlomo Katz



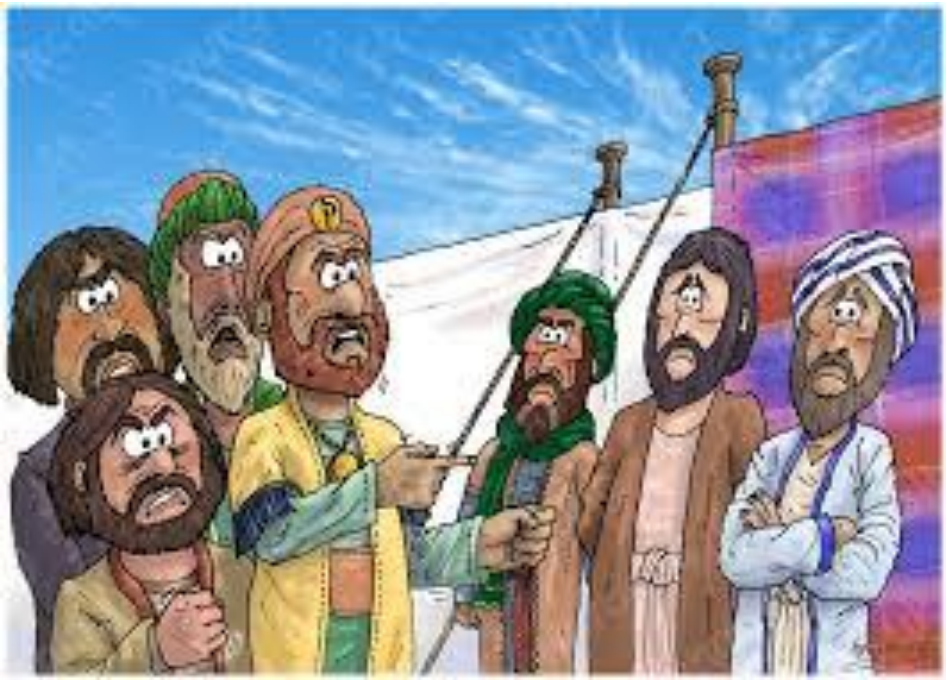
וַיַּהַס כָּלֵב אֶת־הָעָם - "***Kalev silenced the people . . .***" (13:30)

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּזֹאת תֵּדְעוּן כִּי־ה' שְׁלָחַנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי־לֹא מִלִּבִּי - "***Moshe said, 'Through this you shall know that Hashem sent me to perform these acts, that it was not from my heart'.***" (16:28)

R' Yaakov Kaminetsky z"l (died 1986) writes: Moshe said these words on his own, without consulting with Hashem. By doing so, he placed the entire Torah at risk. If Hashem had not caused a miracle to happen (i.e., the earth swallowing Korach), the implication would be that Moshe was not Hashem's agent. - How could Moshe take this risk?

He had no choice! If his own contemporaries could question his authority and not be dealt with decisively, how could later generations be sure that Moshe spoke for G-d? If Moshe had not risked his own reputation (and the Torah's) to impress his own generation, he would have lost future generations. (Emet Le'Yaakov)

וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־קֹרַח וְאֶל־כָּל־עֲדָתוֹ לֵאמֹר בֹּקֶר וְיֹדַע ה׳ אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְאֶת־הַקָּדוֹשׁ וְהִקְרִיב אֵלָיו וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר־בּוֹ יַקְרִיב אֵלָיו - "[Moshe] spoke to Korach and to his entire assembly, saying, 'In the morning, Hashem will make known the one who is His own and the holy one, and He will draw him close to Himself, and whomever He will choose, He will draw close to Himself'." (16:5)



Why "in the morning?"

R' Yehuda Ze'ev Lebovitz z"l (1921-2010; Tel Aviv, Israel) explains: It is written in earlier works that Tzaddikim "wash"–i.e., purify–the souls of Bnei Yisrael while the latter sleep. Certainly, writes R' Lebovitz, Moshe Rabbeinu must have known how to do this, and that is why he pushed Korach off until the morning.

Why, in fact, was Moshe not able to rehabilitate Korach's soul overnight?

We read (verse 19), **וַיַּקְהֵל עֲלֵיהֶם קֹרַח אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד** "Korach gathered the entire assembly to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting," and Rashi z"l comments **בְּדִבְרֵי לֵצָנוּת, כָּל הַלַּיְלָה הַהוּא הָלַךְ אֵצֶל הַשְּׁבָטִים וּפִתָּה אוֹתָם** -that Korach spent the whole night circulating among all the tribes, trying to win them over with scoffing language. - This means, writes R' Lebovitz, that Korach did not sleep that night. As such, his soul did not ascend to the "place" where Moshe Rabbeinu could have cleansed it. (*Ohr Levi*)

וַיֵּרְדוּ הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה וַתְּכַס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל – '***They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit..' (16:33)***

R' Chaim Tirer z"l (1760-1818; rabbi of Czernowitz, Bukovina) writes: The verse is informing us that not only did Korach and those associated with him descend to the depths of Gehinnom alive, even their belongings fell that great distance without breaking – contrary to what one would expect consistent with the laws of nature. In this way, Hashem demonstrated that not only does He have great power, He also is great in his ability to restrain His power.

This was Middah-K'negged-Middah / a measure-for-measure response to Korach. [Apparently, R' Tirer means that Hashem restrained His power in response to Korach's argument that all of the Jewish People are holy and, therefore, they do not need a leader such as Moshe. Middah-K'negged-Middah Hashem taught them a lesson about reining in their potential–in this case, by accepting a leader even when they think they do not need one.] (*Be'er Mayim Chaim*)

זֹאת עֲשׂוּ קְחוּ־לָכֶם מַחְתּוֹת קֹרַח וְכָל־עֲדָתוֹ. וּתְנוּ־בָהֵן אֵשׁ וְשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן קְטֹרֶת לִפְנֵי ה' מָחָר - "***Do this! Take for yourselves fire-pans — Korach and his entire assembly – and put fire in them and place incense upon them before Hashem tomorrow.***" (16:6-7)

R' Avraham Moshe Rabinowitz shlita (the "Skolye Rebbe" in Brooklyn, New York) asks: Why did Moshe choose incense as the means of testing Korach's claim?

He answers: We read in Shmot (30:35), "You shall make it into a spice-compound, **רֹקַח מַעֲשֵׂה רוֹקֵחַ** / the handiwork of a perfumer, thoroughly mixed, pure and holy." Rashi comments (on Shmot 30:25): "Anything which is mixed with another so thoroughly that one becomes impregnated with the smell or the taste of the other is called a `**מְרֻקָּחַת**' [from the root rokach]."

It was this **מִרְקַחַת** that Moshe was alluding to in his words to Korach. "If you are correct, Hashem will accept your sweet- smelling mixture of spices. But be warned! The very letters that spell mirkachat can be rearranged to spell "**קרח מת**" / "Korach shall die!" (Chakima Be'remiza)

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי - "***Korach, son of Yitzhar son of Kehat son of Levi, took*** . . ." (16:1)

Rashi z"l writes that Korach took his cohorts and attired them in robes of pure techelet wool (i.e., the color found in tzitzit according to Torah law). They then came and stood before Moshe and said to him, "Is a garment that is entirely of techelet subject to the law of tzitzit, or is it exempt?"

Moshe replied to them, "It is subject to that law." Upon hearing this, Korach and his cohorts began to jeer at him, "Is this possible? On a robe of any different colored material, one thread of techelet attached to it exempts it. Should not this robe made entirely of techelet exempt itself from the law of tzitzit?"

R' David Hanania Pinto shlita (a contemporary French rabbi) observes that Korach's troubles started when he attempted to delve into the logic of the mitzvot. Indeed, his name "Korach" the same Hebrew letters as the word "choker" / "philosopher." Korach could not accept the fact that some mitzvot are decrees. Thus, the first word of the parashah-"Va'yikach"-has the same Hebrew letters as the expression "Vay chok" / "Woe to us from a decree."

What was Korach's end? He caused "machloket" / "dissension" which has the same Hebrew letters as "lakach mavvet" / "He took death." (Pachad David)

וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֹרַח וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ - ***"The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all the people who were with Korach, and the entire wealth."*** *(16:32)*

The Gemara (Bava Batra 74a) relates that the sage Rabbah Bar Bar-Chanah once was traveling in the desert when an Arab offered to show him the hole into which Korach had been swallowed. Rabbah saw a fissure from which smoke was rising. He took a ball of wool, soaked it in water, stuck it on the end of a romach / spear, and then lowered it into the hole. When he removed it, he saw that the wool had been singed by fire. The Arab told him, "Put your ear to the ground and hear what they are saying." Rabbah did so, and he heard, "Moshe is true, his Torah is true, and we are liars."

What was Rabbah teaching by telling this story?

R' Yitzchak Shmelkes z"l (19th century rabbi of Lvov, Galicia) explains that Rabbah wanted to indicate the seriousness of fomenting in machloket / strife. First, he took wool, which represents tzitzit in particular and mitzvot in general. (Tzitzit, through their blue color, also remind us of the heavens, and therefore of G-d's "Throne.") Next, he dipped the wool in water, which is frequently used by our Sages as a metaphor for Torah. Then, he stuck the water-logged wool on the end of a romach / spear, alluding to the 248 limbs and organs of the human body. (The gematria of "romach" is 248.) By this, he represented a person whose entire being, all 248 limbs and organs, are steeped in Torah and mitzvot.

Finally, he lowered the spear into Korach's hole and, when he removed it, it was singed by fire. This demonstrates that even if a person is entirely devoted to Torah and mitzvot, once he becomes involved in machloket, it is impossible to emerge unscathed. (Bet Yitzchak Al Ha'Torah)

וְאֵשׁ יָצְאָה מֵאֵת ה' וַתֹּאכַל אֶת הַחֲמִשִּׁים וּמָאתַיִם אִישׁ מַקְרִיבֵי הַקְּטֹרֶת - "***A flame came forth from Hashem and consumed the two hundred fifty men who were offering the incense.***" *(16:35)*

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 110a) teaches that Korach himself was both burnt with his followers and swallowed up by the earth. Why?

R' Yisrael Meir Lau shlita (former Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of Israel) explains based on the answer to another question: Why did Moshe, the humblest of all men, react so harshly to Korach's attack on him?

The answer is that Korach's claim that Moshe had usurped power undermined the validity of Moshe's prophecy and, with it, the validity of the entire Torah. By calling on G-d to deal harshly with Korach, Moshe was not standing up for his own honor but rather for the Divine origin of the Torah.

We read in a number of verses that the heaven and the earth were designated as witnesses to the covenant between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. For example, Devarim 4:26 states, "I appoint heaven and earth this day to bear witness against you . . . ." Likewise, we read in Devarim 32:1, "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth." - Accordingly, when Korach challenged the validity of the Torah, it was fitting that a fire should descend from heaven to consume him and that he should be swallowed by the earth. (Yachel Yisrael Vol. V. p.285)

When a person has a friend, the more the friend asks for things and burdens him, the more irritated he will become. But this is not true of Hashem. The more a person seeks his needs from Hashem, the more Hashem loves him. It is thus written, "Call me, and I will answer you" (Yirmiyahu 33:3). ~ Rabbi Zeira, Midrash Tehillim 4:3



The midrash says, "What led Korach to rebel? The laws of Parah Adumah / the red heifer led him to rebel." What does this mean?

R' Chaim Yehuda Meir Hager z"l (died 1968; the "Vishever Rebbe") explains that Korach was specifically misled by the law that the ashes of the Parah Adumah purify one who is impure, but temporarily defile the pure person who prepares them. Korach reasoned: "I know that 'machloket' / strife can defile a person, but isn't it worth becoming temporarily defiled in order to bring about the pure results which I seek?"

Why was Korach wrong?

Because one can never guarantee that the impurity of machloket will be only temporary. As the gemara (Sanhedrin 7a) states: machloket is like an overflowing canal — once the dike is breached, the opening gets wider and wider. (Zecher Chaim)

וּבְנֵי־קֹרַח לֹא־מֵתוּ - "***And the sons of Korach did not die.***" (26:11 in Parashat Pinchas)

Chazal say that as Korach's sons were falling into Gehinom with their father, they repented. Hashem therefore created a ledge above Gehinom where Korach's sons were saved.

Imagine that! Says **R' Yechezkel Levenstein z"l.** This whole process could not have lasted more than a few seconds, yet even a single brief, but sincere, thought of repentance can save a person. (Quoted in Nedivut Lev p.241)



רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי – '***There is much to you, Bnei Levi.***' (16:7)

Rashi asks: Korach was a pikeach, clever person. What is it that he saw which led him to this shtus, folly? (What did he think? He obviously knew that what he was undertaking was mutinous. Did he think that he would emerge unscathed?)

עֵינוֹ הִטְעַתּוּ – His eye led him to error. He saw a great chain of descendants emerging from him (referring to Shmuel HaNavi, the twenty-four mishmaros, watches, which officiated in the Bais Hamikdash. Among them were included Neviim, prophets, who possessed Ruach HaKodesh, Divine inspiration).

Korach ruminated to himself, "Is it possible that all of this greatness is destined to be established from me, even if I will remain silent?" He joined in partnership with others, assuring that, even if the others would perish, one could live – and that would be him. (It was Aharon, but Korach was so drunk with power, seeking glory that he failed to realize that it might be Aharon that would live, and they would all die.)

Korach did not see well (this was his error), for his sons repented from their original complicity in the mutiny and lived. It was their illustrious descendants whom Korach had seen – only he did not realize that the lineage was made possible by his sons' last-minute repentance.

The Midrash Tanchuma is the source of this remarkable, 'eye-opening' understanding of Korach's actions. A clever man made a foolish decision based on short-sightedness, an error in judgment based on the premise that if he took a position antagonistic of

Moshe Rabbeinu, his sons, whom he had raised, would follow suit. Apparently, he did not think that his sons had minds of their own. He had educated them to follow their father (which, under normal circumstances, is a good thing). - Wherein lay his mistake? Why did his sons not follow in their father's path?

(Veritably, they did, but, at the last moment, they repented.) - I think that Korach (as all parents should realize) should have understood that, while education is important and certainly sets the tone for children to be made aware of their parents' principles and guidelines, personal example is also a major factor in education.

Korach's sons saw their father break the rules by rebelling against Moshe, impugning the integrity of his leadership, thereby questioning the Almighty's decision to establish Moshe as His agent to lead the nation.

When children see a father break the rules (whenever he sees fit), they have no qualms about doing the same when it suits them. Korach's sons respected their father and followed him to infamy – until they realized that this was not the way to go. One does not rebel against Moshe; one does not question Hashem. How does a son, however, rebel against his father? He does not – usually – unless he sees his father rebelling!

When Korach decided to dispute Moshe, he was, by his personal example, teaching his sons: when it suits "me", I can do what I want, and I will even rebel against Moshe.

This being the case, we understand why Korach's sons broke ranks with their father and repented. After all, this is what he had taught them to do.

"Everything a person sees in life is a message to him from Above." ~ The Baal Shem Tov.

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח – '*Korach took/separated himself*.' (16:1)

Korach did not wake up one morning and decide that "today" he was going to dispute Moshe's leadership, thinking: "Today, I will mutiny against Hashem; today, I will demand that Aharon's position as Kohen Gadol be transferred to me". It certainly did not happen that way. Korach's dissent had been festering for some time. He was biding his time, waiting for the most propitious opportunity in which he would have the greatest success.

What was there about "now" that provided Korach with the fortuity for fomenting a successful revolt against our nation's leadership?

Horav Bentzion Firer, zl, suggests that it was following the sin of the meraglim, spies, and the punishment which sealed the nation's fate, that created the fertile environment for Korach to add the seeds of discontent which would germinate into an all-out revolt against Moshe Rabbeinu.

Moshe sent the meraglim to Eretz Yisrael on a mission to reconnoiter the land. Instead of returning with a positive report, they slandered the land, due to their jaundiced perspective concerning everything that they saw. The nation reacted as the meraglim expected them to -- with uncontrolled, unwarranted weeping and complaining. Hashem saw that these people were not prepared to enter the Holy Land, and He removed the opportunity from the table. They were all going to die in the wilderness.

Against this backdrop of a nation smitten by loss of a goal, Korach saw a nation ripe for revolt: no longer aspiring to enter Eretz Yisrael; no ambition; nothing to look forward to. They would be putty in his hands, to be manipulated at will.

When one has no ambition, no goals and objectives, nothing to do, he gets into trouble. He argues with people, finds reason to dispute everything, anything and anyone. When one has no goals, he becomes discontented and miserable. With nothing to do, he joins with other

miserable people to sow the seeds of discontent, to reap the fruits of their misery.

This was one advantage of receiving the Torah in the desert, rather than waiting until Klal Yisrael entered the Holy Land. What would they do for forty years? Sit around all day fighting with one another? This way, they would learn all day and be occupied with spiritual endeavors. They did not have the excuse that they had to earn a living, since the manna was brought to their doorstep every day. Instead, now they had the Torah with its 613 mitzvos, a guide for life, a program for living every day – all day.

Korach understood this. A nation that was actively involved in Torah study would have little time and less desire to listen to his diatribe. Thus, he disputed the Divine Authorship of the Torah. He employed the medium of letzanos, scepticism, to poke fun at and undermine the Torah. - Why would a house filled with seforim require the protection of a Mezuzah? Why would a Tallis made of techeiles require Tzitzis? The people began to listen. Perhaps it was true, they thought – maybe Moshe wrote the Torah; it was not infallible. There could be errors -- surely areas of concern.

Once this type of deviation begins, there is no end to where it can lead. - Korach knew this, so he waited; he plotted. He thought that he had succeeded; he was wrong.

וַיָּקֻמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וַאֲנָשִׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים וּמָאתָיִם נְשִׂיאֵי עֵדָה קְרִאֵי מוֹעֵד אַנְשֵׁי־שֵׁם – '***They stood before Moshe with two hundred and fifty men from Bnei Yisrael, leaders of the assembly, those summoned for meeting, men of renown***.' (16:2)

The two hundred and fifty men that rallied with Korach were not ordinary people. They were from among Klal Yisrael's spiritual elite. This, of course, did not prevent them from making the mistake of their lives. Perhaps their distinguished position, thinking themselves infallible, might have led to the error which cost them their lives. -

- No one should think that he is above reproach. One who does is in serious trouble. Who were these two hundred and fifty men?

Rashi claims that they were all from the Tribe of Reuven. Ibn Ezra, however, contends that they were representatives of all of the tribes. He posits that when the bechorim, firstborn, were demoted and exchanged for Shevet Levi, some among them felt slighted. They were the ones who joined Korach's rebellion.

The numbers, however, do not seem to correspond. Certainly, there were more than two hundred and fifty misplaced bechorim.

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh says that during the sin of the Golden Calf, when Moshe Rabbeinu called Mi l'Hashem eilai, "Who is for Hashem, should stand by me!" all of Shevet Levi joined, and individual members of the other tribes also came forth.

Applying the interpretation of the Ohr HaChaim, the nation understands why such a small group of bechorim joined the fray. Those who did not stand by Moshe felt that they did not deserve preferential treatment. They had been given their chance, and they chose to ignore it.

The two hundred and fifty were those who had joined Shevet Levi in support of Moshe. They now wanted recognition for their valiant and dedicated efforts to stand up to the Golden Calf sinners. They were not a large group, but ones who felt they deserved a position of spiritual leadership.

Regardless of their earlier allegiance, their present support of Korach over Moshe cost them their lives. Where did they go wrong?

Horav Moshe Tzvi Nariyah, zl, explains that it all reverts back to their attitude when they responded to Moshe's call. Mi l'Hashem – elai represents two statements: "Who is for Hashem?"; "should stand by me." - These bechorim accepted the Mi l'Hashem; they were one with the Almighty. They were, however, not prepared to commit to the eilai, to "me." They were prepared to die for Hashem,

to sacrifice their lives in order to demonstrate their devotion to Him. They were not yet prepared to accept Moshe as their leader.

At that point, it did not present a glaring problem. At the nadir of the dispute, however, it revealed itself in all of its repugnance.

When one makes a commitment, he must do so wholeheartedly; when he is "in," he should be completely in. Otherwise, later on, when challenges present themselves and the "going gets tough," his lack of full commitment will manifest itself in his downfall.



וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו – '***And Moshe heard and fell on his face***.' (16:4)

Moshe Rabbeinu had heard it all. This was the final straw. As Rashi explains, **שֶׁכְּבָר זֶה בְּיָדָם סִרְחוֹן רְבִיעִי**, "*This was already the fourth foulness that the Jews had committed*." They had worshipped the Golden Calf – after which Moshe prayed for them. They were misonenim, complained for no good reason, just for the sake of complaining; again, Moshe prayed for them. They heeded the false and slanderous reports of the meraglim, spies, and wept bitterly for no reason; Moshe again prayed for them.

This was the fourth time that the nation had defied Hashem. It was too much. Moshe felt that he could no longer plead their case. They had gone too far.

This can be compared to the son of the king who acted contemptuously, once, twice, and a third time. When the son disgraced himself and the king for a fourth time, the king's close friend who had interceded the previous three times felt that his ability had weakened: "How many times could he trouble the king? Perhaps he will no longer accept my placation?"

This all might be fine and well if there were no rhyme or reason to somehow justify the first three episodes of disgrace.

As Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl, observes, however, each sinful event presented itself with what Klal Yisrael might excuse as mitigating or extenuating circumstances. During the episode of the Golden Calf, the Satan played a leading role in confusing the nation, attempting to convince them by employing a convincing imagery of darkness and cloud, with Moshe's bier being carried through Heaven by the Angels.

The complainers were victims of the eirav rav, mixed multitude, who joined the Jewish nation as they left Egypt. They were nothing but trouble. Once again, they succeeded in wrongly influencing the nation to complain for no reason.

The spies were powerful leaders who had an overriding negative influence on an anxious and troubled nation. If they had an excuse for every episode, why should they now be censured because it is the fourth time? Why count the preceding three?

In his inimitable manner, Rav Galinsky takes a practical approach toward resolving this question. He recalls being Mashgiach in a yeshivah and questioning a student concerning his lack of attendance at davening, morning prayers. "Why were you not at davening this morning?" was his opening question.

"I attended a wedding last night and returned quite late. I was exhausted, so I slept in," the student responded.

"That explains today – what happened yesterday that prevented you from joining us at davening?" Rav Galinsky asked.

"Interestingly, yesterday I arose early and would surely have been on time, had I not been delayed by my stomach. I must have eaten something that disagreed with me" was the young man's reply.

"What about the day before yesterday?" he asked somewhat impatiently.

"Yesterday is a different story. I woke up on time, but I noticed that my negel vasser, water for washing my hands upon arising, had

been moved from my bed. Aware of the halachah that prohibits one from walking daled amos, four cubits, without removing the spiritual impurities caused by sleep, I felt that I should wait in bed until someone returning from davening would move the water to my bed."

This was truly a creative excuse – but an excuse nonetheless.

Rav Galinsky told the young man, "Let us together study a passage in the Talmud Chagigah 3b. Perhaps we might gain insight into your davening issue and how your lack of attendance should be addressed.

Chazal explain that the shoteh, imbecile, about whom halachah rules that he is patur, exempt from mitzvah performance, is defined by specific actions. To rule that one is a shoteh has strong ramifications: no mitzvos, no punishment for transgressions; his kinyan, acquisition, is not acceptable; what he sells is null and void.

Thus, Chazal were specific in delineating the criteria for declaring one a shoteh. They are: he goes out alone at night, with no concern for his well-being; he sleeps alone in the cemetery; he tears his clothes. In other words, he exhibits strange behavior which indicates that he cares about neither himself nor his possessions.

"The Talmud explains that one who sleeps in the cemetery might actually be seeking an opportunity for a ruach ha'tumah, spirit of impurity, to rest upon him granting him the ability to practice witchcraft or other practices of the occult. One who goes out alone at night might need to get some cool air. Last, tearing clothes could suggest absentmindedness.

Each one alone does not irrevocably indicate that one is a shoteh. All three together, however, demonstrate that this person has serious issues."

Chazal seem to imply that three occurrences, regardless of the excuses one presents, are an indication which connotes chazakah, status quo. Likewise, imagine a man who goes to the doctor complaining of a headache, high fever, and blisters all over his body.

A foolish doctor will treat each symptom exclusive of the other, while an astute doctor will realize immediately that one illness, an infection, manifests all three symptoms.

Returning to Moshe Rabbeinu: True, each infraction could be justified, but three, one after another, constitutes a chazakah, indicating a deeper sickness, one which cannot be ignored.

This was no longer opportunity for prayer. They had shown that their spiritual illness was of an extremely serious nature. It had to be expunged in such a manner that radical punishment was the only way to eradicate the spiritual infection that was destroying the nation.



וּתְנוּ־בָהֶן אֵשׁ וְשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן קְטֹרֶת לִפְנֵי ה' מָחָר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר ה' הוּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי – *'And put fire in them and place incense upon them. Then the man whom Hashem will choose – he is the holy one. It is too much for you, O offspring of Levi.'* (16:7)

Rashi asks a simple, but piercing, question: Korach was far from a fool. Indeed, he was well-known as a pikeach, wise, intelligent man. If so, what did he see that motivated him to commit to such a foolish act? He knew that there could be only one winner. - Offering Ketores, incense, was not child's play. It had to be done correctly by the right person, or else the person who offered it became history.

Only a fool would risk so much. Korach certainly was no fool. We wonder why Rashi asks this question with regard to the Ketores. Why not raise the issue of what prompted Korach to take on Moshe Rabbeinu immediately, at the beginning of the parsha when Korach initiated the dispute?

What motivated Korach to act this way? He was numbered among the ones who carried the holy Aron HaKodesh. He was one of the most prominent citizens of Klal Yisrael. To act in this manner runs counter to everything that Korach represented and stood for. Indeed, it would make sense to ask the question of Korach right from

the beginning, when a member of the nation's spiritual elite chose to defile himself by impugning Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen's leadership.

Horav Elazar M. Shach, zl, explains with a simple answer, expressing a profound verity which sadly holds true today – more often than we care to admit. A tzaddik, righteous person, is not perfect. It is possible for a tzaddik to err. To err is human; to ignore one's error is unforgivable and indicates that one is witless.

Korach could have made a mistake. He was envious of Moshe, and envy causes a person to do strange things – even sin reprehensibly. As long as Korach's actions could be defined as sinful, it could be "understood." It was when he acted insensate, like a fool driven by idiocy, that we ask, "How could he commit such shtus, foolishness?" He knew that all but one of the two hundred and fifty incense renderers would die; yet he committed himself to the test anyway. This shows that Korach had become unhinged. He was acting without seichel, common sense. - That is inexcusable!

To paraphrase the Rosh Yeshivah, *Veil di greste aveirah iz tzu zein a naar*, "Because the greatest sin is to be a fool."

Now, some people cannot help themselves. They are born that way. When one is born with the gift of common sense, yet refuses to apply it, then his actions are unpardonable.

We are blessed with a working mind for the purpose of using it. To act foolishly, ignoring the directive of common sense, may not be condoned.

A Torah leader, or anyone, for that matter, who possesses seichal hayashar, straight, common sense, has no excuse for making nonsensical mistakes – especially if his mindlessness hurts others.

Torah scholarship is important, commendable and is to be respected. If one possesses everything but common sense, however, he – and everyone connected with him – is in serious trouble.

To put it in the simple vernacular: common sense is a critical, indispensable requisite for life, without which one is incapable of rendering a decision. A leader who is lacking in this most basic quality is not only personally in a precarious position, but he may also present a serious danger to all.



וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח – '***Korach took/separated himself***.' (16:1)

Korach was no fool. Yet, he acted in a manner unbecoming a person who possesses even a modicum of common sense. He had it all. Why did he throw it all away for a chance at a moment of glory? Did he not realize that he had no prospects of succeeding in this ill-fated endeavor?

Rashi explains that his "eye" threw him off. He saw a succession of distinguished offspring descending from him. The illustrious Shmuel HaNavi, who was to succeed Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon HaKohen as the nation's spiritual leader, stood at the helm of this revered lineage. - How could he be wrong? His descendants would save him.

Korach was 'dead wrong'. His sons repented at the very last moment, resulting in their being spared the gruesome death of the other mutineers.

Rashi refers to Korach as a pikeach, a clever, shrewd person. Why is he referred to as clever – as opposed to chacham, wise?

Horav Naphtali, zl, m'Ropshitz distinguishes between a pikeach and a chacham, in that a pikeach is not only astute, but he also knows how to "play the game." A pikeach never officially takes sides. In fact, when two people are in dispute with one another, the clever person knows exactly what to do and what to say, in such a manner that each side thinks he is supportive of his individual cause/opinion, etc. This is alluded to by the gimatriya, numerical equivalent, of pikeach, which is 188, double the gimatriya of tzad, side. The pikeach takes "both" sides.

This is what Rashi means when he says, **לָקַח אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְצַד אֶחָד** - "He took /separated himself to one side."

Then Rashi asks, "Korach was a pikeach; what did he see that provoked him to do this foolishness, to take himself to one side?"

Rashi intimates that a clever person never takes sides. What made Korach lose perspective of what he was about to do?

He explains that he saw his future descendants. He thought that he could not possibly go wrong. This time he would not hedge his bets. He would take sides. This might explain why Korach acted foolishly, but what motivated his two-hundred and fifty henchmen? These were learned men, scholars who were heads of the Sanhedrin. Clearly, one does not achieve such distinction unless he is blessed with an astute mind and possesses amazing diligence. They had no chance of becoming leaders. It was going to be a toss-up between Moshe Rabbeinu and Korach. They were completely out of the picture. Furthermore, they did not have Korach's excuse, looking into the future and seeing an illustrious lineage originating from them. Why did they act so foolishly?

Horav Meir Chodosh, zl, cites the Talmud Sanhedrin 52b, where Chazal present an analogy concerning the way in which an am ha'aretz, unschooled, ignorant Jew, views a talmid chacham, Torah scholar. At first, the scholar is unapproachable, similar to a jug made of pure gold. He is regarded as precious and highly revered. Once the scholar converses idly with the am ha'aretz, his standing in the eyes of the ignorant man plummets to that of a silver jug. His value has decreased considerably, but he is still considered to be precious.

Once the talmid chacham accepts gifts from the am ha'aretz, it is all over. The scholar now appears as nothing more than an earthenware jug which, once broken, can never be repaired.

In his commentary, Rashi states that this analogy applies to Korach and the way he was able to ensnare the heads of the Sanhedrin in

his web of deceit. Interestingly, these men were not ignorant. They were the primary scholars of the nation. Once they were the beneficiaries of Korach's wealth, however, he neither respected them, nor did they have any self-respect.

A talmid chacham must maintain an aura of respectability. Taking money from an am ha'aretz – or even a scholar, but a despot such as Korach – diminishes one's standing.

The Mashgiach explains that once the two-hundred fifty heads of the Sanhedrin benefitted from Korach's wealth, they had been bribed. It was a done deal; they were in Korach's pocket. Korach, on the other hand, knew the score; he had not been bribed. - Chazal wonder how such an astute person could act so foolishly.



הַמְעַט כִּי הֶעֱלִיתָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבַשׁ לַהֲמִיתֵנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר - "***Is it not enough that you have brought us up from a land flowing with milk and honey to cause us to die in the wilderness?***" (16:13)

Korach was not a fool. Yet, everything that he asserted could not be the words of a smart man. To attempt to usurp Klal Yisrael's leadership – is audacious and foolish. To malign Moshe and Aharon – constitutes brazen disrespect. To refer to a land that was the source of so much suffering, persecution and death as a land flowing with milk and honey – is downright insane!

Korach was neither foolish nor insane. He was mistaken. He misled himself. Where did he go wrong? What led him to act in a way so inconsistent with his own character?

Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, z.l., explains that the stimulus for his behavior was negios, personal, vested interests. When someone is subject to negios, he neither perceives accurately nor acts normally. Indeed, as **Horav Aharon Kotler, z.l.**, observes, Korach was an enigma, his behavior paradoxical. On the one hand, he sought to ascend to a loftier spiritual plateau, to become closer to Hashem.

On the other hand, he did not care how he achieved his goal. He did not care whom he stepped on, whom he destroyed – even himself – so great was his obsession to perform a greater spiritual service for the Almighty.

Horav Dessler cites a powerful, penetrating analogy which is related by Rav Hai Gaon that clearly demonstrates this idea:



It once happened that a lion who was hunting for food came upon a fox. As the lion was about to eat the fox for dinner, the fox spoke up, "Why would you want to eat me? I am nothing more that skin and bones. Let me show you a hefty man whose flesh is more than sufficient to provide a satisfying meal for you."

The lion listened and proceeded to follow the fox to a place where there was a man sitting in a clearing, right next to a hole in the ground, which was covered with branches and leaves. This trap was there to protect the man from any harmful animals that might strike him – like the lion.

When the lion saw the man, he turned to the fox and said, "I am afraid to attack the man because of his ability to pray. His prayers will prevent my successful attack and will probably harm me."

"Do not worry," said the fox. "His prayers will have no immediate effect on you. They will, however, affect your descendants two generations in the future."

The lion listened to the fox and made a running leap for the unsuspecting man sitting peacefully in front of him. As expected, the lion fell into the trap and was severely injured. He looked at the fox and exclaimed, "You told me that the man's prayers would have no effect on me. They would only affect my grandchildren but look what happened. Apparently, you were wrong."

The fox, using his natural guile, responded, "It appears to me, my dear lion, that you are being punished for your grandfather's sin. You forget that you are someone's grandson."

The lion looked at the fox with questioning eyes and exclaimed, "Why should I be held responsible for the sins of my ancestors?"

The fox turned to the lion and with a dead-pan look said to him, "Why did you not care about your descendants?"

This narrative's message is clear and simple: when the lion was not personally involved, when he had no negios, he did not care if others would pay for his sins. Now that he is the one that is paying, the entire perspective is altered.

Korach was a wise, erudite man until it affected him personally. He then became a fool. When someone wears blue glasses, everything he sees is blue. The spectacles of vested interests distort a person's vision – regardless of the individual's stature. - A truly great person is able to transcend his personal negios in order to avoid becoming a victim of the resulting myopia.

Horav A. A. Mishkovsky, z.l., Rosh HaYeshiva of Knesses Chizkiyahu, was such a unique individual. He distinguished himself in his ability to see beyond himself and maintain the lucidity needed to advise others, even if the decision would have an adverse effect upon him personally.

There was once a student in the yeshivah whom the administration had decided was not living up to the standard of the institution. They decided that it would be best to ask him to leave. They elected to

allow him to complete the zman, term, before notifying him of their decision.

Meanwhile, unknowingly, this student made an appointment with the Rosh HaYeshivah to determine if it was best for him to remain in the yeshivah, suggesting that perhaps it would be better for him to pursue other areas of endeavor. - The Rosh HaYeshivah, being a man of uncompromising integrity, told him that it was best for him to remain within the yeshivah environment.

When his colleagues in the administration heard of this incident, they were taken aback. "Why didn't you tell him to leave? It would have saved us a big headache if he had left on his own," they remarked.

"He asked me what was best for him – not what was best for the yeshivah," said Horav Mishkovsky, "and I gave him the correct advice."

This is an example of why he was a gadol – a Torah giant. - It is the small people who are restrained as a result of their vested interests. Greatness is determined by one's ability to rise over one's pettiness.

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח – '***Korach took/separated himself***.' (16:1)

What caused Korach, a distinguished leader in Klal Yisrael, to alienate himself to the degree that he fell to such a nadir of iniquity?

The Bais Yisrael comments that these two words, **וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח**, "Korach took," says it all. Korach's approach to life was defined by "taking." It was his goal; it was his raison d'etre. He took in gashmiyus, materialism, becoming one of Klal Yisrael's wealthiest men. He also wanted to take in ruchniyus, spirituality. He was an oveid Hashem, one who serves Hashem, with great diligence. Among the carriers of the Aron Ha'kodesh, he represented the spiritual elite of Klal

Yisrael. He was, nonetheless, a "taker" – whatever he did was for himself. He did not serve Hashem – he served himself!

In this area, Korach was exactly the opposite of Moshe Rabbeinu. The quintessential leader of Klal Yisrael never took a thing for himself. Indeed, he was prepared to give up everything – both physically and spiritually – for his people's future. Korach saw himself in every endeavor. Moshe saw Klal Yisrael.

This is underscored by Rashi in his commentary to the pasuk, "Is it too much for you, O offspring of Levi?" (16:7). Korach was a wise man. How could he have acted so foolishly?

Rashi explains that his "eye" caused him to err. He saw prophetically that among his offspring would be Shmuel HaNavi, who, during his tenure, was as great as Moshe and Aharon combined, as well as twenty-four groups of Leviim who would prophesize with the spirit of holiness. Seeing this, he was certain that he would triumph over Moshe and Aharon.

How did his "eye" cause his downfall? One who serves Hashem with fidelity, abrogating his personal interests and subordinating "himself" only to Hashem, merits that Ein Hashem el yireiav, "Hashem's eye/looks out for those who fear Him" (Tehillim 33:18). He becomes worthy of Hashem's perspective. He does not err because he views everything through a different spectrum.

Korach took everything for himself. He, therefore, did not merit the ability to see with a spiritual perspective reserved only for the truly faithful. His eye misled him, just as he misled himself.

"Bitachon means recognizing that even when we don't understand Hashem's ways, we can still trust that He is doing what is best for us." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.

וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת - "*And On ben Peles*." (16:1)

The Midrash teaches us that On ben Peles was saved as a result of listening to his wife. She asked him, "What do you gain by being involved in this dispute? Regardless of who triumphs, you still emerge as the loser. If Aharon is selected as Kohen Gadol – you will be his student. If Korach becomes the Kohen Gadol – you are still nothing more than a student. - Why involve yourself in a 'no win' situation?"

On's wife spoke with seichel, common sense. Is this a reason to praise her? Basically, she only did what any level-headed person would do.



Horav Nosson Vachtfogel, z.l., offers a penetrating insight into the matter. He cites the Talmud in Megillah 13b where Rabbi Elazar claims that as reward for Rachel Imeinu's tznius, modesty, she merited that Shaul Ha'melech was descended from her.

When did she demonstrate such exemplary tznius?

Chazal explain that when she gave her sister, Leah, the simanim, special signs, that Yaakov Avinu had given her, she acted with exemplary modesty. Rashi explains that her tznius lay in the fact that she never publicized her selfless act of devotion to her sister. She never divulged to Yaakov what she had done. She was prepared to give up that for which she had strived for so much – the opportunity to be the progenitor of the Shivtei Kah, tribes of Klal Yisrael. She did not once call attention to her exemplary act of kindness. - This is tznius at its zenith.

Rav Nosson posits that included in the middah of tznius is the ability to maintain a shev v'al taaseh, status quo, attitude in regard to a situation in which one is unsure of what to do. He does not take a chance and plunge forward regardless of the consequences. No – tznius demands that one sit back and not act, rather than act rashly. Likewise, one who is a tzanua will not divulge a secret. If one is asked for information about someone and he does not know the person, it takes tznius to say, "I do not know."

Regrettably, there are those who are quick to conjecture and state their own opinions about someone, even though they are baseless.

Rav Nosson remembers that, prior to being asked by **Horav Aharon Kotler, z.l.**, to become the first Mashgiach of the Beth Medrash Govohah, he was asked by a talmid, close student, of Rav Aharon regarding a controversial sefer that was on the table in one of the yeshivah's classrooms.

The Mashgiach responded, "I do not know." This response prompted the talmid to approach Rav Aharon and suggest that Rav Nosson be appointed as Mashgiach of the yeshivah. - It takes someone who possesses the strength of character to assert "I do not know" to be the Mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshivah.

This was the power of On ben Peles' wife. She had the ability to see and stress the shev v'al taaseh attitude: "If either way you will not be the victor, why bother involving yourself in the fray of the controversy? Stay at home and stay out of trouble."

It takes tznius to act in such a manner. On was fortunate that his wife had this necessary character trait – and he had the wisdom to listen to her.

"Having trust in Hashem is greater than all the praises we can offer Him." ~ Rabbi Yosef Albo (1380-1444).

וַיָּקֻמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה - "***They stood/confronted before Moshe.***" (16:2)

Targum Yonasan adds, **וְקָמוּ בְּחוּצְפָּא** - "*They arose with insolence.*"

How does the pasuk imply that they acted with chutzpah, impudence, towards Moshe Rabbeinu? On the contrary, the pasuk clearly states that they arose for him.

Maharitz gives a pragmatic explanation, one that teaches us a profound lesson of the definition of chutzpah. He explains that knowing that Moshe was coming, they arose before he came, so that they would not have to get up for him. They refused to demonstrate any derech eretz, respect, for Moshe, so they were already standing when Moshe came. This is considered standing up with chutzpah.

In an alternative explanation, they looked directly at Moshe's face, indicating that they were neither in awe of him, nor of the Karnei Hod, Rays of Glory, that shone from Moshe.

This is the meaning of **וַיָּקֻמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה**, the word lifnei being derived from panim, face. They did not fear facing Moshe. It was this chutzpah that defined their dispute.

It "happens" that people do not see eye to eye on an issue. There is a way, however, to discuss the area of controversy. When the dialogue becomes a forum for insolence and disparaging remarks, it is indicative of a machlokes, dispute, shelo l'shem Shomayim, not for the sake of Heaven.

What reveals a person's real values?

"That which excites a man, serves as a test by which his worth is recognized. When after a banquet one man is enthusiastic over the words of Torah which had been spoken, another praises the songs, and a third lauds the food. - Each one's praise indicates his worth." ~ R' Avigdor Miller zt"l

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי – '*And Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehas ben Levi separated himself*.' (16:1)



Korach was not simply another hatemonger who sought to usurp Moshe and Aharon as a result of intense feelings of envy. Korach was among those who "carried" the Aron Ha'kodesh. He was obviously sensitive to the fact that the Aron was in reality carrying those who attempted to carry it. It would be unrealistic to think that an individual who was so aware of Hashem should stoop to such machlokes, controversy, unless something "noble" motivated him.

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, explains that Korach sought Kehunah, He felt that he could serve Hashem better if he were a Kohen. His complete devotion to serve Hashem drove him to act the way that he did.

Let us analyze this further. Korach knew that Moshe was chosen by Hashem to lead Klal Yisrael. He was also acutely aware that Hashem implemented the many miracles connected with Yetzias Mitzrayim, the exodus from Egypt, and the daily existence in the desert through Moshe's agency.

The Agrah D'Kalah claims that while Korach was exempt from the service of offering korbanos because he was not a Kohen, he was nonetheless troubled about his lack of participation in this lofty service. Korach agonized over his lack of inclusion in the Kehunah to the point that he was driven to machlokes.

What went wrong with Korach? His intentions were noble. How did he become the paradigm of conflict?

The answer, claims the Agra D'Kallah, lies in Korach's approach towards effecting his goal. The most noble mitzvah loses its sanctity if it is involved with strife. No position, regardless of its distinction, has value if it was stimulated by strife. If divisiveness is the means, if contention coupled with slander are the tools for erecting the edifice, then it has no meaning. It is not a mitzvah; it is transformed into a contemptible aveirah.

Korach thought his yetzer tov, good inclination, had inspired him to challenge Moshe. He did not realize that his "frumer" yetzer hora, evil inclination, was spurring him on.

The yetzer hora is very clever. Why should it attempt to convince us to sin if it can convince us that the aveirah we are about to perform is a mitzvah; the individual we are about to disparage is an obstacle in the way of our spiritual progress. A mitzvah that is created through an aveirah is not in fact a mitzvah.

This represents the yetzer hora's ultimate triumph: distorting a person's mitzvos, for then he has nothing. While contentiousness and strife have been with us for a long time, nothing is as reprehensible as the self-righteous type of machlokes that some justify in the name of a mitzvah.

Perhaps, people who behave in this manner should evaluate their idea of what constitutes a mitzvah.

"Constantly giving to another will increase one's love for that person. A stranger is someone you have not yet helped. Doing acts of chesed for everyone fills your world with friends and loved ones." ~ R' Eliyahu Dessler zt"l.

וַיַּקְהֵל עֲלֵיהֶם קֹרַח אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה – *'And Korach gathered the entire assembly.'* (16:19)



Korach is recorded in history as the archetype of the baal machlokes, one who generates strife and contention. We may wonder what distinguished Korach in this area. After all, he was not the first person in the Torah who was involved in strife. Did not Kayin fight with his brother? And the list goes on from there.

We suggest that while Korach was not the first person to argue with others, he was the first to start a movement founded in contention, whose goal was to usurp the leadership of Klal Yisrael. It is one thing to disagree, even to argue publicly. To gather people, however, for the sake of convincing them to join him in a "holy war" against the Torah leadership of that generation is reprehensible. This type of deplorable behavior earned Korach his infamous reputation.

Are things really that much different today? Frequently when people do not see eye to eye, rather than resorting to "healthy" disagreement, they resort to malicious slander, encouraging others to join them in their battle for "justice."

No, we have not veered very far from the course that Korach charted. In fact, he would take pride in the character of machlokes that exists today.

"Nature" is simply miracles that happen more often. ~ Rav Yeruchom Levovitz (1873-1936)

וַתְּכַס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל - "***And the earth covered them over, and they were lost from among the congregation.***" (16:33)



The commentators offer various explanations for Korach's bizarre punishment. **The Kol Yehudah** gives a rationale based upon an incident that occurred with the **Ohr Same'ach**:

Once, two litigants came before the Ohr Same'ach with a din Torah, dispute, regarding a piece of land. Each one claimed that the entire parcel of land belonged to him. Of course, neither one had witnesses to attest to the veracity of his claim.

The rav was having a difficult time resolving the dispute. Finally, he said to both people, "You will each have to compromise in order to resolve the issue."

They were extremely obstinate and each refused to budge from his position regarding total ownership of the land.

Rav Meir Simcha decided that he would like to see the land in question before he rendered a decision. When they arrived at the place, Rav Meir Simcha went to a side, bent over to the ground and began whispering to the ground!

The two men were shocked to see their rav having a conversation with the ground!

After he was finished, they asked him what had transpired. He replied, "I told the ground that each one of you claims ownership over the land. What should I do? - The land responded, 'It does not

belong to them, it belongs to me, since ultimately they will both end up here.'"

When the two men heard what the rav said they understood that he had intimated that they were both destined to die and end up in the ground. - Is it truly worth fighting over something so transitory as ownership over a small piece of land?

This is the reason that Korach was swallowed alive into the earth. Had he used his mind, had he reflected upon his ultimate end, death and burial in the ground, he would not have been so utterly foolish as to ruin everything just so that he could be "king for a day."

Life consists of more than fleeting kavod, honor. One gains no value from involvement in a dispute that is perfidious and destructive. Korach's last conscious lessons addressed the importance of setting one's priorities and the ethics of dispute.

רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי - "***You take too much upon you, o' Bnei Levi.***" (16:7)



Rashi asks, "Korach was a wise and prudent fellow. Why did he commit this folly? His eye deceived him, for he foresaw that great progeny was destined to descend from him, namely Shmuel Ha'Navi. - Korach said, 'In his merit, I will be saved.'"

We may question Rashi's use of the use of the singular nouns "his eye deceived him." Didn't Korach have two eyes?

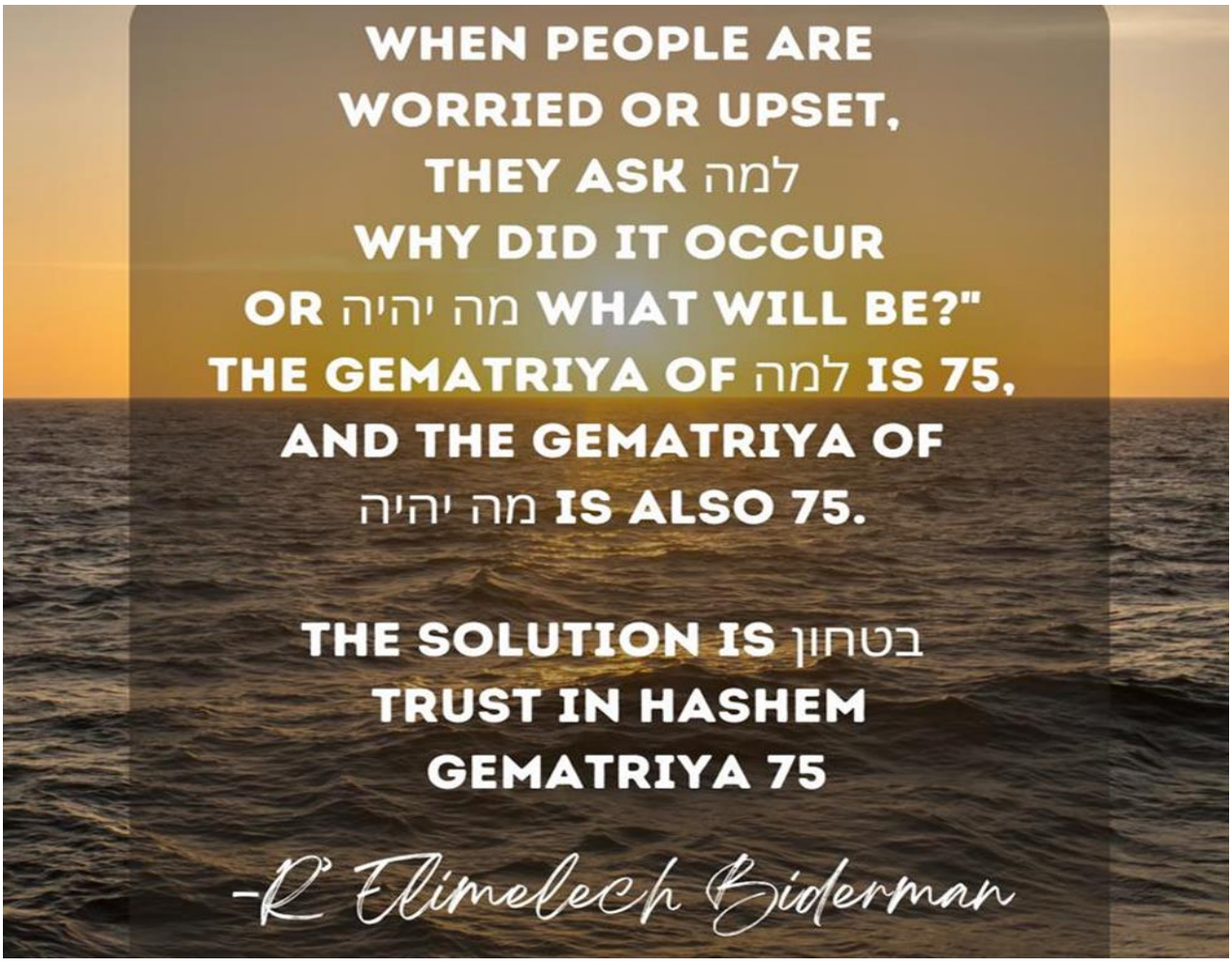
Horav Boruch Sorotzkin z.l. explains that when one "looks" at something, he should perceive it from all angles. He should examine

it with both eyes, rather than glance at it perfunctorily. This is the meaning of the dictum in Pirkei Avos 1:6, "and judge all men favorably. "

Horav Sorotzkin interprets, all men, to mean, "all of man." One should look at the whole individual at all times, not simply react to an isolated situation.

Essentially, this was Korach's fatal flaw. He looked at the situation with only "one" eye. - This constitutes a metaphor for one who saw only what he wanted to see. Had he been more thoughtful in his "looking" he would have realized that the greatness that emanated from him was due to his children, who later repented.

It was Korach's "one" eye, his superficial and prejudicial outlook, which was the origin of his downfall.







When things don't go the way I planned, how do I avoid getting angry about it?

If things turn out not the way you wanted, how can you prevent being disappointed and bitter? Listen to me. The **הלבבות חובות** in **שער הבטחון** says that **הקדוש ברוך הוא** sometimes does that to you, to teach you a lesson. Sometimes Hashem chooses to teach you the lesson that you are not the one who is the author of your fate. To let you know that He's in charge.

So although you made a certain arrangement, and you planned, and you hoped that it would turn out a certain way, **הקדוש ברוך הוא** is teaching you a very valuable lesson. That, "I am the **מלך**". Hashem is letting you know, "I am in charge, not you."

So, instead of being disappointed, you should say, "I thank you, Hashem, for that lesson. It's worth money, that lesson. I really should have to pay for that lesson. Thank you, Hashem." Because otherwise, you think that you're the boss. You think that you're the whole boss. You're the whole **מאכער** here. So, **הקדוש ברוך הוא** says, "No, no. You're not the **מאכער** at all. I'm the **מאכער**. And that's why things turn out the other way. Not the way you planned. - So you're getting a free lesson. And **הוא ברוך הקדוש** is not charging you for it, so be happy.



There is a gemara that says that the entire Torah is taught to a child just before he is born. My question is, suppose it's a girl, does she also learn the Torah?

And the answer is that she is taught the Torah of a girl. There is a big Torah for a girl to learn, a tremendous Torah. A girl doesn't learn technicalities of the Torah that are not l'maaseh but the things that she has to know are endless.

She has to know the Torah of good character; middos tovos is a tremendous subject. The Torah of emunah and daas Hashem is an endless subject.

You know, the malachim are never finished speaking the praises of Hashem: They are always speaking about the glory of Hashem.

Now, malachim have very good heads; in one minute they can see more than we see in a whole lifetime. And they are always busy talking about the glory of Hashem! They never run out of what to say! So that's something that everybody has to study.

Men and woman have to know that one of the most important of their life functions is to recognize Hakodosh Boruch Hu in this world. There is so much to learn about that; so much to study, so many things to learn. Like the Gra used to say to his daughters; he told them that they should always learn mussar seforim – all the mussar seforim are available to girls. And so, if a girl learns all these things then she's a gaon; she's considered the same as if she became a gadol hador; she has learnt her Torah, she has achieved success.

And therefore, absolutely the Torah is taught to girls just like to boys, each one according to what he or she needs to know.



Can a Jew ever be a rasha?

Well, we must look in the Chumash and ask Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe said about Korach - סְוּרוּ נָ֣א מֵעַ֔ל אָהֳלֵ֖י הָאֲנָשִׁ֣ים הָרְשָׁעִ֑ים. "***Please get away from the tents of these reshaim and do not touch anything of theirs, lest you perish because of all their sins***.' (Bamidbar 16:26).

So he called them resha'im. So we see that sometimes a Jew could be a rasha. There's no such thing as saying "There's no reshaim". This liberal attitude that everything is excusable cannot be accepted by us. We have our principles and sometimes you have to call a thing by its name.

And a person who is disloyal to the Torah certainly deserves a certain rebuke. And if he deserves the name of rasha – it doesn't mean you have to say it – but you could certainly categorize him in the category of rasha.



Should we say that all is good even though we don't feel it?

And the answer is yes! Because vehalachta bedrachav – you have to walk in the ways of Hashem, and Hashem says in the Torah: Vayar Elokim es kol asher asah – Hashem saw all that He had made, v'hinei tov meod – and behold the whole thing is very good.

Hashem said this is a very good world! And so, instead of walking around and grouching, "It's too hot. It's so humid," or "It's too cold – it's nasty; it's raining;" instead of that, we should always speak well of Hashem's world. It's hot? Wonderful! The apples are getting red

on the trees. The pears are becoming sweet on the trees. If it wasn't hot, they wouldn't become sweet.

If it's cold, that's also wonderful! The earth now is taking a rest from producing and while it's taking a rest it's recuperating all the minerals it lost, all the materials it lost during the summertime. Without the winter, there can't be a summer. If it was summer all year, the earth would keep on producing and it would become arid and infertile. That's why the earth takes vacation in the wintertime.

Cold is wonderful. Cold forces the earth to stop producing. Rain is wonderful. Without rain, we're nothing. When it rains, we're coming down from the sky. You came down in the rain once upon a time! We're 80% rain. We came down from the sky once. And people are grouching and complaining about the rain. Here we were coming down from the clouds and they were complaining against us. That's our chance to come to this world! That's rain! And therefore when rain comes down, all the boys of the yeshivos are coming down and their future brides, the kallos from Bais Yaakov, are coming down. They're all coming down together from the sky. So rain is wonderful.

So Hashem says it's a very good world, and He wants us to keep on saying that all the time. Hodu laHashem ki tov, that He gave a very good world; and if you keep on saying it, after a while, after some time, you'll begin to feel it.

"It is the nature of man that he never attains half his goal. When he hits the 100 mark, he must make 200. And when he attains 200, he demands of himself 400. So, too, must you always be growing in your acts of kindness." ~ Lubavitcher Rebbe

"Having trust in Hashem is greater than all the praises we can offer Him." ~ Rabbi Yosef Albo (1380-1444)

'Holy Shoes' - Rabbi Shlomo Landau



The noted mashgiach - **Rav Chazkal Levenstein Zt'l** had two pairs of shoes. A weekday pair of shoes, and a Shabbos pair of shoes. - One morning he walks into the beis hamedrash, and he notices that one of his talmidim has shoes that have many holes in them and were worn out and the soles were coming apart.

After davening, he goes over to the bachur and he says, "Please walk me home and come to my house."

When the student arrived, Rav Chazkel said to him, "I have an extra pair of shoes. If they fit you, I would love you to have them."

The talmid tried them on, and they were a perfect fit!

Now I want you to think about a few things:-

1. How many of us who are in educational positions would have noticed a student that had torn shoes?
2. How many of us would notice if a student would get new sneakers, and compliment them?
3. How many of us would be willing to give away one of our pairs of shoes? (We are not talking about having 10 pairs,- we have only two pairs of shoes.)
4. I don't know that Rav Chazkal bought himself a replacement pair of shoes - perhaps he couldn't afford it. But one thing is clear. That if he wore his weekday shoes on Shabbos, there is no greater

respect to honour Shabbos than by giving away your Shabbos shoes to somebody needy and to wear your weekday shoes.

This story needs to give us pause:

People ask us for tzedakah and for help all the time. – How far are we willing to go?

The Miraculous Letter - Rabbi Shlomo Landau


בה"י

לאחינו בני ישראל פליטי חרב
בכל מקום שהם ה' עליהם יחיו.

עם ה' חזקו והתחזקו, והעיקר לדעת שהכל מהשי"ת, ומאתו
לא תצא הרעות, וצריכים לקבל רצונו והכל לטובתנו, כדאיתא
בספרים ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד הן בחשכות הן החסדים
התכלית אחד להאיר לנו אח"כ, ולהאמין כי כמו שנתקיימו כל
התוכחות שבתורה כן יתקיימו כל היעודים והנחמות כדאיתא
ברבי עקיבא שהיה שמח מטעם זה בשראה שועל יוצא מסית
קדשי הקדשים, וההסתר הוא רק נסיון להטיבו באחריתו ותתלו
בטחוניכם בהקב"ה ותתחזקו בתורה ובתפלה ויחזקכם ה'.

Reb Sender is a holy Yid from Canada, and he also happens to have a 'golden pen'. He's an excellent writer. It happened recently, that he heard about a Yid in the community who was going through a terrible struggle. He was having many challenges, and he was in a really bad state. He had sort of heard of the person by name, but he didn't know him personally.

Part of him wished that he could give this fellow chizuk, strength and inspiration to keep going and fighting, encouraging him to persevere, but it felt weird and strange to pick up the phone to somebody who he didn't really know. Maybe the fellow would feel bad.

And then he had a brilliant idea. He would write the fellow a letter of chizuk. And that's what he did. He sat down, and he put his whole heart and soul into writing a beautiful letter of chizuk.

He then thought to himself, "You know, I'm not just going to hand write it – I will get it typeset and printed nicely. This will give the

letter more impact and show that I mean well even though we don't know each other. And he can retain it and read it when necessary."

He went to the printers and submitted it. They typeset it and laid it out beautifully. – But then he copped out. He felt stupid doing all this elaborate stuff for someone that he doesn't even know. So, he didn't send it to the fellow.

A few months passed. Reb Sender is at a wedding, when a man approached him who he doesn't know.

"Are you Reb Sender…?"

"Yes."

"You *mamash* saved my life!"

Reb Sender said, "but I don't know who you are. What do you mean?"

"For a short period of time, I was on the typeface layout staff for a particular printers, and your letter that you wrote to somebody ended up on my desk. I was the one who was tasked with laying it out and setting it up nicely. As I read through the letter it filled me with chizuk and strength to address my own issues."

"I want you to know something – I printed the letter even though you cancelled it. I hung it up in my house, and periodically, when I'm feeling down, I read it, and it keeps on giving me strength. – thank you so much."

When we try to give chizuk to other people, Hakadosh Baruch Hu sees it, and helps it get to the right address.

Let's look for opportunities to give chizuk to others, and IYH we will change the world around us.

"An insincere peace is still better than a sincere quarrel!" ~ The Chozeh of Lublin.

The Weekly Vort

● But Everyone Does It…

On one of **R' Chaim Brisker's** trips to Warsaw, he observed small children carrying their father's *talleisim* in a public domain on Shabbos. There was no *eiruv*, so R' Chaim stopped the children and told them that carrying was prohibited.

Someone else came over and attempted to justify the children's act, claiming that children are allowed to carry on Shabbos. "How can you say that?" exclaimed R' Chaim. "Does the Torah not tell us, 'Do not perform *melachah*, you and your ***son'?***!"

The man argued that "your son" here refers to one who is already a bar mitzvah, but R' Chaim proved to him that if that were the case, just saying "you" would be enough. - Once a boy becomes bar mitzvah, he is no longer different from any other adult. "Your son," therefore, refers to children younger than bar mitzvah who are also commanded to rest on Shabbos.

The man could not refute this proof. "But," he said, "everyone does it! All of Warsaw carries!"

R' Chaim had an answer to this claim as well: "You may be sure, *reb Yid*, that Gehinnom is big enough for all of Warsaw!" (The Brisker Rav)

Hashem tells us through the prophet, לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם – the human mind is not capable of understanding His ways in this world. Part of being a Jew is knowing that we do not have to know the answers to all questions. Emuna means that we do not understand everything. It is belief – belief that Hashem is צדיק וישר, everything He does is correct and just. ~ Divrei Chizuk

Parsha Pearls

● What's in a Name

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי - *"And Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of K'has, the son of Levi took* … " (16:1).

What entered Korach's head, asks the **Rosh**, to raise himself above the community in an attempt to usurp the leadership from Moshe and Aharon?

And he ascribes his madness to his name, as we will now explain.

His name was ben Yitzhar, says the Rosh. Now 'Yitzhar' means oil, and as is well- known, whenever one pours a drop of oil into any other liquid, it will always go to the top. So Korach figured that if that was what lay behind his name, then the top was where he belonged.

Korach was right in one respect. The name of a person does foretell his future. Only Chazal had a different interpretation of his name. This is how the **Da'as Zekeinim mi'Ba'alei Tosfos**, explains it …

"Korach" … who made a bald patch in Yisrael or … "Korach" … which has the same numerical value as 'shodad', to devastate, or to despoil, a hint to his throwing off the yoke of Mitzvos.

"Ben Yitzhar" … he heated up the world like in the middle of the day (Tzohorayim=midday).

"Ben K'has" … a son who blunted the teeth of those who bore him (like 'Hakheh es shinav' in the Haggadah).

"Ben Levi" … who made an escort to Gehinom.

Does that mean that Korach erred in the meaning of his name?

Not at all! Korach may have been basically right. The potential to become one of the greats of K'lal Yisrael was there, and had he not gone for the Kavod, he may well have attained it.

The trouble was that, having foreseen that he was destined for greatness, he opted to attain it by hook or by crook. And Chazal have

said that somebody who runs after Kavod will find that Kavod eludes him. Ironically, it was his own reaction to what he saw that rendered the prediction unattainable.

● **To Overlay the Mizbei'ach**

וַיִּקַּח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת מַחְתְּוֹת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבוּ הַשְּׂרֻפִים וַיְרַקְּעוּם צִפּוּי לַמִּזְבֵּחַ. זִכָּרוֹן לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - *"And Elazar the Kohen took the copper pans … and he beat them as a covering for the Mizbei'ach. A remembrance for B'nei Yisrael* … " (17:4,5).

The Torah (at the end of Yisro) calls the Mizbei'ach 'Mizbach Adamah', because it was filled with earth and had no roof. When Elazar used the copper pans to overlay the Mizbei'ach, he actually made it a roof for the first time, the **Chizkuni** explains. - So, when the people would see the new-look Mizbei'ach, they would be sure to remember the episode of Korach.



Parshah Thoughts – Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח – '*Korach initiated a dispute with Moshe*.' (16:1).

The Chidushei HaRim (Likutei Yehuda) explains that Korach's point of contention was that he believed that each person functioned on his own, and that there was no need for leaders. His mistake was that the Jewish community is all about the unity of individuals joined together under leadership. - Having a leader is an essential aspect of the community.

Working on our Middos

A poor man once came to the home of **Rav Boruch Ber Leibowitz, zt"l**, the Rosh Yeshivah of the Kaminetz Yeshivah, and asked for a donation. Rav Boruch Ber could only find a small amount of money to give, and he gave it to the man with his apologies for giving such a small sum.

Rav Boruch Ber then asked the man if he was going to go home, and the poor man responded, "Yes, Rebbe, this is my last stop today." Rav Boruch Ber, together with two of his students, insisted on accompanying this man home.

All along the way, Rav Boruch Ber gave him a lot of Chizuk with words of encouragement. The man was delighted with this honor.

Later, when his students asked why he had given this man such Kavod, Rav Boruch Ber replied, "Who can understand the depths of a poor man's shame when he comes to ask for a donation? He loses part of his health and calmness when he stretches out his hand to beg for help. Yet, when he receives a nice donation, he not only receives some money to help support his family, but he also feels encouraged by the compassion that is shown to him. Therefore, the health he lost returns to him.

Today, I did not have a lot of money to give him, and the Halachah is that if I don't have, I am not obligated to give. However, I was still obligated to replace the health he lost when he approached me for a donation, because I had a small part in his shame. Therefore, I decided to escort him and give him honor and Chizuk, because this would also serve to restore his health!"

"The greatest gift you can give yourself is to cultivate a deep trust in Hashem, for it will bring you peace and joy in every situation." ~ Rabbi Avigdor Miller.



Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Rav Yosef Yoizel Hurvitz, zt"l, the Alter of Novardok, used a Shtender that was so high, it reached his nose. This way, while he was learning at night, the effort he put in to standing on his tiptoes kept him awake so he could learn more!

Happy to be a Jew!

Rav Dovid Orlofsky said in a Drashah, that in Parashas Vayechi (47:8,9), when Yaakov went down to Mitzrayim and met Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked him, "How many are the years of your life?" Yaakov answered, "The years of my journey in life have been one hundred and thirty, which is not the age my fathers have reached, and they have been few and bad."

The Da'as Zekeinim writes that Yaakov must have looked very old if the first thing Pharaoh asked when he saw him was how old he was. Yaakov responded that he was one hundred and thirty years old, which is young for his family, but because he had endured so much hardship, old age had taken over him.

The Medrash explains that when Hashem heard Yaakov complain about the difficulties in his life, Hashem said to him, "I saved you from Eisav and Lavan, and I returned Dina and Yosef to you, and you are complaining about your life that your years have been few and bad? I will take off a year in your life for every word that was said. You will not live to the years your father Yitzchok lived to, which is one hundred and eighty. I will take off thirty-three years for the

thirty three words," and we see that Yaakov lived until the age of one hundred and forty seven.

Rabbi Orlofsky quotes **Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz**, who says that the only way to get to thirty-three words is if you also count the question of Pharaoh. But how is this fair? What did Yaakov do that he should be punished for Pharaoh's question? He only responded!

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz answers that Yaakov looked like his trials had affected him, so much so that it prompted Pharaoh to ask him how old he was. - We learn from this that if we have a look on our faces that shows that we are miserable or that we are suffering, and we don't have a look like we are happy, it is a condemnation of us as Frum Jews, Hashem, and the Torah.

As the Da'as Zekeinim said, Yaakov had to look at all the good Hashem did for him, and we too must look at all the good Hashem does for us and gives us, and if we don't, people will pass judgement on us, the Torah, and Hashem, and say there must not be anything special to being a Frum Jew.

Rabbi Orlofsky said that he used to teach in the Discovery program in Yeshivah Aish HaTorah, and on more than one occasion, a guy would come over to him and say, "You know, Rabbi, you're the biggest challenge to my secular lifestyle."

I would reply, "Really? What class did I give that affected you the most?" and he would say, "No, Rabbi, I don't listen when you talk."

Okay, so then I ask, "So what is it about me that is challenging you?" The guy responded, "I know that you are living this restrictive lifestyle, and I'm living this secular lifestyle. I can do anything I want to, and I do, but I feel that you are having more fun in life than I am."

I would answer to this, "It kills you, doesn't it?"

He would agree that it does. Then I said, "You're right. Frum Jews have the fun!"

Rabbi Orlofsky said that when a person goes over to someone and gives them a smile, it changes the way they feel. But not just the way they feel about you, but about themselves, about HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and about life itself.

Hashem was saying to Yaakov Avinu, that when someone sees you, they should see a look of Divinity, they should see Chesed, and how unbelievably great and happy life is.

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz says that looking sad is a condemnation of us as Frum Jews. How could people look at us and not see that we are so happy we were chosen by Hashem to be His people? As we say in Birchas HaShachar, Hashem chose us from all the nations, and gave us His Torah!

People should look at us and see the Simchah coming off of us, and if it doesn't come natural to you, then make an effort. We have to show the world that we have the best thing in the world, and if we don't, it's a condemnation of us as Frum Jews.

Rabbi Orlofsky continued: Yaakov Avinu said he had a long, hard life, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu said, "But that's no excuse for anyone to look at you and say anything but, 'Wow! This is one of the Avos! This is one of the people Hashem has chosen! You are the Chosen People!'" What a Brachah it is to be a Jew. What a Brachah!

When we look at all the Brachah Hashem does for us, and we appreciate and understand all the Chesed Hashem does for us, constantly, each and every second, then that alone should put a smile on our face. People should look at us and be inspired and say, "That's what I want too!"

May Hashem give us the strength to have the Simchah, and people should be able to see the Simchah on us!



Short And Sweet Story of The Week By Yoni Schwartz

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, ZT"L, the Av Beis Din of Vilna, was known for his outstanding scholarship, and even greater kindness, loving each Jew no matter how religious or who they were.

In the tumultuous times before World War II, most of the money sent to Europe to help the Jews was sent to him. As a result, he oversaw massive sums of money. When distributing the funds, he was very careful to never discriminate between religious or non-religious Jews.

Once, he was meeting with the head of the Joint Distribution Committee, Dr. Samuel Schmidt, who was not a Shabbos-observant Jew. At one point, the Rav stopped and asked him, "Is it okay if I call you Reb Shmuel?" (a title of great respect)

When Dr. Schmidt heard this, he began crying and said, "Rebbe, I do not keep Shabbos, Daven, or wear Tefillin, I do not deserve to be called 'Reb'."

Dr. Schmidt wrote that when the Rav heard him say this, Rav Grodzinsky gently embraced his hand and said, "What do you mean? You came from America to a dangerous war zone to help Jews. Do you think you are not worthy of respect? Do you think you are not worthy of being called 'Reb'?"

Dr. Schmidt said that on that day, when he came home, he put on Tefillin and became Orthodox. The respect Rav Chaim Ozer had for each Jew - and his appreciation for the good in them - is inspiring.



משל למה הדבר דומה

ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן ויאמרו אלהם רב לכם ... (טז-ג)

Being the Rabbi of a community comes with a lot of responsibility, and often, not very easy ones. Once, **R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik *zt"l*** of Brest-Litovsk, better known by his magnum opus *"Beis Halevi"*, was once sitting in a conference with the rich dignitaries of his community. After much discussion, and despite the importance those particular communal affairs, the conference was at a standstill as the dignitaries seemed to feel they knew better than their Rabbi.

Suddenly, a woman came in with considerable perturbation, and pleaded to ask the Rabbi for his advice. She said it was of utmost importance. R' Yosef Dov acceded, and she asked about the interpretation of a dream.

"I had an awful dream, Rabbi," she cried. "In my dream my only son was demented!"

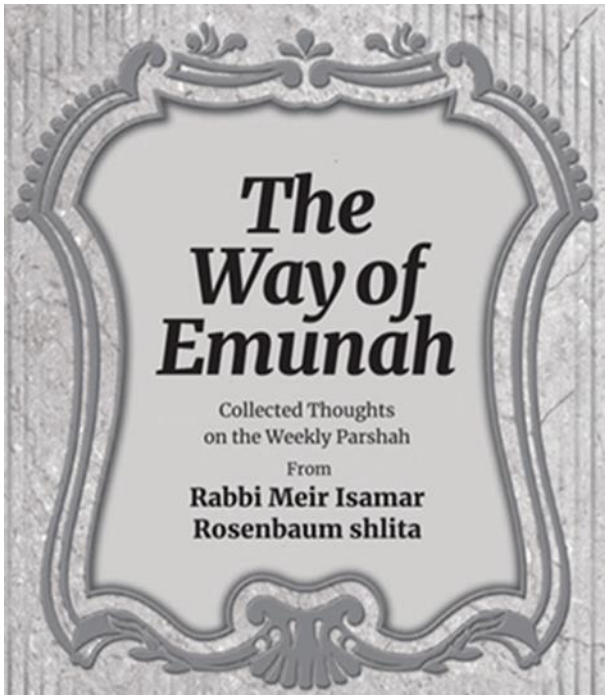
"That is a good dream," R' Yosef Ber replied. "If he was actually crazy, then it is a sign that he will become rich. Go in peace, and may *Hashem* bless you."

After the woman left, one of the dignitaries asked the Rabbi curiously, "Honored Rabbi, how do you infer that her dream is of a good nature?"

"Easily enough," he replied. "Something about the participants of this conference suggested it...."

The conference ended - all in agreement with R' Yosef Dov!

Amongst the many lessons gleaned from the story of Korach and his followers, something profound is noted right at the beginning of the story. One of the first things the *Torah* mentions, is Korach's inability to humble himself to someone greater than himself. He and the rest of the group "ganged up" on Moshe and Aharon with concocted accusations. It was clear that this issue lies at the root of the disastrous tale that followed thereafter.



וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן - *Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kohas, the son of Levi took [himself to one side] along with Dasan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav, and On the son of Peles, descendants of Reuven.* (16:1)

● If One Flees Honor, It Reaches Him When He Gets Old

Chazal say (Avos) that if one pursues honor, honor runs away from him, but if one flees from honor, honor chases after him.

One of the Gedolei Yisroel asked what the ultimate difference is. In both cases, the individual does not receive honor – the one who pursues it cannot reach it and the one who runs away from it doesn't allow it to reach him. If so, how are they different?

He answered that the difference is when they get old and no longer have the strength to run. At that stage in life, the one who pursued honor will have never attained any, but the one who fled from honor will no longer be able to avoid it, and it will finally catch up to him.

● Korach's Wealth Was Not Earned Honestly

Dishonesty with money was the cause of Korach's machlokes. This is seen in the Medrash (Bamidbor Rabbah 18:15) that relates that Korach was in charge of Pharaoh's treasure houses while the Jews were in Egypt, and he had the keys to all of the treasures. When the nation left Mitzrayim, he took all these treasures with him, which Hashem disproved of and said would not last.

The Dubno Magid zt"l (Sefer Mishlei Yaakov) asks what Korach did wrong by taking the treasures from Pharaoh. Pharaoh was a terrible rasha, so why was it wrong for Korach to take his property?

An innkeeper who sold alcoholic beverages to non-Jews. One day, many drunk peasants came to his inn to drink. One thief came in with them, and he tried to steal the money out of the drunkards' pockets. When the innkeeper saw this, he grabbed the thief and dragged him out. The thief began to beg him to let him go, saying, "I would never steal from you. I have never stolen a penny from a Jew in my life. I only steal from gentiles." - The innkeeper replied, "You idiot. If you steal from my customers, you are stealing from me. If they have no money to pay me, I'm the one who loses out."

The nimshol is that even though it's true that Korach stole from Pharaoh, he was actually stealing form Klal Yisroel. Hashem had promised that the nation would leave Egypt with great wealth, and if Korach hadn't taken this money, it would have been part of the booty that the nation took from Mitzrayim and from the sea. Thus, Korach was actually stealing from his fellow Jews.

In this vein, the Zohar Hakadosh (176A) states: "And Korach took. He took a bad idea for himself. Anyone who chases after what isn't his will have the thing he is chasing run away from him. Furthermore, he will even lose what he had before. Korach pursued what wasn't his, and he also lost what was his, without gaining anything."

● One Who Opposes Peace Will be Destroyed

The Zohar Hakadosh goes on to speak about the destruction caused by those who engage in machlokes like Korach did. It says that anyone who causes a split in the world, will be lost from both this world and the next world.

It explains that engaging in machlokes is the same thing as opposing peace, and one who opposes peace is the same as one who opposed Hashem's name, as His name is Shalom (peace). - Furthermore, the world exists in the merit of peace; therefore, one who opposes peace will be lost from the world.

● Yichus

Sefarim Hakedoshim write that the reason the pasuk delineates Korach's lineage by saying that he was the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehos, the son of Levi, is to teach us that a person should not rely on the yichus he inherited from his forbearers. Rather, one should realize that, in addition to the yichus of his fathers, he also needs to make his own yichus.

They compare a person who is proud of his fathers' yichus without doing anything to add to it to a villager who had a pet dog as his constant companion. When the dog got old and sick, he didn't know what to do. He didn't want to kill the dog after it had served him faithfully for so many years but, on the other hand, he didn't want to keep paying for its food now that it served him no purpose. So, he came up with a solution. He took a bearskin and put it on one half of the dog. He then took a lionskin and put it on the other half and sent the dog out into the forest.

At that exact time, all the animals of the forest were having a big party, with the mighty lion leading the party. Suddenly, the lion saw the other animals running excitedly to see the new beast that had

appeared in the forest. They were all scared of the strange animal and wondered what it was.

The lion sent the fox to check out what was going, and the fox came back and said, "My king, your leadership is in jeopardy. A new beast has entered the jungle that is half lion and half bear, and all the other animals are ready to accept it as their new king."

The lion called to his advisor, the owl, and asked it to find out if his rulership was really in danger. The owl flew off and met the old dog. It asked him, "Tell me, who are you?"

The dog answered, "What do you mean by that? My grandfather was a lion!" As he said this, the dog roared like a lion that is about to pounce on its prey.

The owl then asked, "Okay, but who are you?" The dog then reared up on its hind legs like a bear and said, "My father was a bear!"

The owl then screamed at him, "I get it, but who are you?"

The dog replied, "Me? I'm just a dog."

One should only be proud of his yichus if he is following in the ways of his fathers. However, if he isn't doing anything good on his own, he is adding nothing to his yichus and has nothing to be proud of. This is as Chazal say (Tana D'bei Eliyahu 25): "One is obligated to say: When will my actions touch the actions of my fathers."

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a explains this to mean that even if one cannot be as great as his forefathers, he should at least try to "touch" their ways.

It is related that when the **Minchas Elazar of Munkatch zy"a** was a young man, he once traveled to Poland dressed in the garb of a "*binshak*" (the son of a Rebbe). One man whom he met asked him in a mocking way, "Who are you? Who is your father? Who was your zaida?" - The Minchas Elazar answered, "I am the zaida!"

וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר ה׳ הוּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי – '***And the man whom Hashem chooses he is the holy one; it is enough for you, sons of Levi.***' (16:7)

● Never Questioning Hashem

Rashi states: "Korach was a very smart man. What led him to do such a foolish thing? - His eyes fooled him. He saw a great chain (of descendants) coming out of him, including Shmuel who was equal to Moshe and Aharon. He said, 'I will be saved in his merit'."

Rav Meir of Premishlan zy"a asks why this is called "foolish". He answers that making "cheshbonos" and thinking one understands the ways of Hashem is foolish in and of itself. When one serves Hashem, he should do so with no questions and no calculations of his own. Rather, he should completely annul himself to Hashem's will and obey His commands with simplicity. Doing anything else is simply foolish.

● One Who Considers Himself Extremely Intelligent is Blemished

The Chidushei Harim zy"a discerns a similar lesson from the pasuk (Shemos 4:11): "And Hashem said to him, 'Who gave man a mouth, or who makes him mute or deaf or smart or blind? Is it not I, Hashem?"

He notes that the verse is saying a list of disabilities – mute, deaf, blind – but, in the middle, it says "smart". Why is this word found in the middle of a list of blemishes?

He answers that a person who thinks he is of superior intellect is a ba'al mum (a blemished person).

"Every word that we speak in prayer is a priceless seed entrusted in the hands of Hashem for safekeeping. The day will come when it will bring forth a generous harvest." ~ Rabbi Shimshon Pincus.

● The Reward for Making a Kiddush Hashem

Sefer Yalkut Hagershoni quotes the Kol Aryeh zt"l as explaining the Rashi that describes Korach's mistake by saying that, in truth, Korach only merited having Shmuel Hanavi as a descendant because of the Kiddush Hashem that came about as a result of his aveirah. - Since his downfall led to everyone recognizing Hashem's greatness, he merited having a great man descend from him.

This is similar to Chazal's statement (Sanhedrin 96B) that the descendants of Sancheriv – Shmaya and Avtalyon – taught Torah in public, and the descendants of Haman learned Torah in Bnei Brak, because they had the zechus of causing a Kiddush Hashem to occur as a result of their downfall.

Thus, Korach's mistake was that he didn't realize that his downfall is what led to Shmuel descending from him.

● He Did Not See His Own Lowliness

Rav Yisroel of Husyatin zy"a was seven-years-old when he learned this Rashi with his teacher, **R' Yochanan of Skolet**. He asked him why it says that Korach's "eye tricked him" in the singular tense, rather than saying that his "eyes" tricked him.

The teacher replied, "Do you have an answer?" The boy answered by saying that the reason a person is born with two eyes is because he needs to use one eye to look up to the greatness of Hashem, and the second eye to look down on his own lowliness.

Korach, who had the important position of carrying the Aron, certainly used one eye to look up to Hashem. However, he did not make use of the eye that was meant for him to see his own lowliness. He was fooled by this eye, as he used it to see the greatness that would come out of him, rather than to see his own lowliness.

וַיַּקְהֵל עֲלֵיהֶם קֹרַח אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד – '***And Korach assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance to the Ohel Moed***…' (16:19)

● **Machlokes L'Sheim Shomayim**



The Ye'aros Devash (Chelek 2, Drush 8) discusses the concept of machlokes l'sheim shomayim and says that the yeitzer hara tries to convince us that every fight is with pure intentions for the sake of Hashem, and that it is a mitzvah to battle against those we view as being in the wrong.

So how can we know if a machlokes really is l'sheim shomayim?

He writes that if the two parties in the machlokes love each other and get along in every way besides for the one area they disagree about, that is a sign that it is a machlokes l'sheim shomayim. - However, if they hate each other and don't get along in general, that is a clear sign that the machlokes is not l'sheim shomayim.

Accordingly, the Mishnah gives the disagreement between Hillel and Shamai as an example of a machlokes l'sheim shomayim. Hillel and Shamai loved and respected each other in every way; thus, the Mishnah is saying that only a machlokes like this could be l'sheim shomayim.

However, if a party in a machlokes is like Korach and his assemblage, who were full of hatred, it is a sign that it is not l'sheim shomayim.

● **The Result of Machlokes**

The Baal Hatanya zy"a (quoted in Sefer Michtavei Admor Hazakein) writes that all harsh decrees and massacres that have occurred to Klal Yisroel since the time of the second Bais Hamikdosh are a result of machlokes, even if it is l'sheim shomayim.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KORACH

Teaching the Doctor a Lesson

An amazing story happened to the to the Sklarz family: Seven years ago, Mr. Yossi Sklarz's thirteen-year-old son was crossing Route 59 a little after 8pm when he was hit by a driver who did not have their headlights on. His son went flying forty feet in the air and landed directly on his skull. The doctors said there is no chance of survival.

After a risky operation, the boy was left in a coma for 18 months. At one point, the doctor came into the room, put his hand on the father and said, "You should treat your son like a 95-year-old man. He is done. He will not make it more than a couple of days. Just try to keep him comfortable."

Yossi looked at the doctor and said, "Can we please have this conversation outside the room, not in front of my son, the patient." The doctor looks at the father with a smile and says, "Your son cannot hear anything. There is no reason for us to go outside."

Mr. Sklarz looked at the doctor, with complete emunah in Hashem, the true healer of the sick, and says, "I will not tell you how to practice medicine, you do not tell me how to practice my faith."

Fast forward four years after the accident, Yossi brings his son, who Baruch Hashem has had a major recovery, to the hospital for testing. The doctor from years earlier, now promoted to an even more senior position, walks in with the interns. When he sees Yossi,

he can't even look at him. He does not greet him and does not shake his hand.

He just says to the people in the room, "This boy is a miracle. I'm humbled to say, I stand corrected, this boy is a pure living miracle. Faith works. Yossi was right when he said, 'I won't tell you how to practice medicine, you do not tell me how to practice faith.' Wow. Yes, there is an Aibishter—One Above in this world."

Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev

וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ - '*And you will only be happy*.'

The great elderly Rebbe, **Reb Yisroel of Aleksander ZT"L**, said in his holiness, the Roshei Teivos (first letters acronym) of **וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ** (Devarim 16:15) composes **שוא** – False. Meaning to say, it is better a false Simcha (happiness), than a pious bitterness. • Sefer Me'oron Shel Yisroel – Parshas Re'eh – Sefer Ohz Tischazeik

צָהֳלָה וְרִנָּה לְזֵכֶר מַלְכוּתוֹ. - סדר שחרית ליום שבת

A Yid, in whatever situation he finds himself, must be full of Simcha (happiness) that he is privileged to be that merited, to be a 'Lizeicher Malchusoy' (Mention of His reign) of Hashem. Meaning to be able to mention, that there is a creator of all the worlds. • Sefer Divrei Shmuel – Slonim

Once at a Chasunoh my uncle **Rav Gavriel Finkel ZT"L** (who was then a Kollel Yungerman in Beth Medrash Govoha – Lakewood NJ), had the privilege to drive the Rosh HaYeshiva **Rav Schneur Kotler ZT"L** to a Chasunoh. The Rosh Yeshiva's intention was to return to Lakewood immediately after the Chuppoh.

The Chuppah was over, and the Rosh Yeshiva spent more time at the Chasunoh, and after some time they left the Chasunoh. Afterwards

the Rosh Yeshiva related to Rav Finkel his actions. As there were many other Roshei Yeshiva and Rabbonim at the Chasunoh and Rav Schneur was not given a Kibbud (honor), an immediate departure may be interpreted as a feeling of being slighted. - The Rosh Yeshiva therefore stayed longer so as not to hurt the feelings of the Ba'aley Simcha. • Mipie Hashmuoh



וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם – *'And Dathan and Aviram.' (16:1)*

They were the ones who forced Moses to flee from Egypt (by informing on him to Pharaoh that he killed an Egyptian overseer—Exodus 2:13–15). They were the ones who hurled harsh words at Moses and Aaron in Egypt (ibid. 5:20–21). They were the ones who left over from the manna (in defiance of Moses' instructions—ibid. 16:20) and went out to gather the manna on Shabbat (ibid. v. 27). And they joined in Korach's mutiny. (**Torah Sheleimah**)

וְאֶת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ – *'And all their goods.' (16:32)*

Rabbi Levi said: The keys to Korach's treasure houses were a load for three hundred white mules, though all the keys and locks were of leather.

Rabbi Chama son of Rabbi Chanina said: Three treasures did Joseph hide in Egypt: one was discovered by Korach; one by Antoninus the son of Severus; and the third is stored away for the righteous in the world to come. (**Midrash**)

וַיֵּרְדוּ הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה – *'They, and all that was theirs, descended into the abyss.'* (16:33)

Rabbi Berechiah said in the name of Rabbi Chelbo: Even their names flew off all written documents.

Rabbi Yossei bar Chanina said: Even a needle of theirs on loan in the hands of another man was swallowed up with them. (**Jerusalem Talmud**)



◣ Clear Distinction - Reb Meir Shapiro Of Lublin

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי - *"And Korach, the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehas, the son of Levi, took…"* (16:1)

Right at the beginning of the Sidra we notice the difference between Moshe and Korach. Korach did not have any good qualities of his own. He had to depend upon his ancestry, which is why the verse states: "Son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehas, son of Levi."

The ancestry of Moshe is not mentioned; he was able to stand on his own merits.

"When I see a man of many sins, I think, "how I envy him!" When he will do teshuvah and convert his sins, he will have many more merits than I do!" ~ Kedushas Levi.

◣ Falling In Awe - Reb Alexander Zusia Friedman

וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו - "***When Moshe heard, he fell on his face...***" (16:4)

On none of the other occasions when the Jews rebelled had Moshe ever fallen on his face. What made him do so at this time?

Hearing the statement of Korach and his company that the entire Jewish nation was holy and that every single Jew was therefore holy in his own right, Moshe immediately fell on his face in awe, for no one knew better than he how difficult it is to achieve holiness.

◣ Measure For Measure - Reb Simcha Bunim Of Pshischah

וַתִּבְקַע הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם - "***The earth beneath them split open.***" (16:31)

What was the Midah Keneged Midah (measure for measure) of the punishment of Korach and his cohorts?

Since Korach and his assembly could not wait patiently to be crowned as the future leaders of the people, so too, the ground did not wait patiently for the natural time when people are laid to rest within her bowels - after 120 years of life. Thus, they sunk down "alive within the pit."

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

The battles waged by the **Chazon Ish zz"l** for *shemiras Shabbos* is well known, specifically in regard to electricity. Those who follow the Chason Ish's opinion use generators on Shabbos since they consider it *chillul Shabbos* to benefit from the national power grid, because they work on Shabbos. But a lesser-known incident shows that desecration of the holy day distressed the great *tzaddik* no matter how or where it happened.



The concept behind the Nesher cement factory dates back to the turn of the 20th century, when early Zionist leaders proclaimed, "The plan for building a homeland for the Jewish people must take into consideration the founding of a Hebrew cement factory as well."

The Palestine Portland Cement Syndicate was founded in London in 1919 after samples collected from Mount Carmel and Kishon Valley region were found suitable to produce high-quality cement. The first bags rolled out of the Nesher factory near Haifa Bay in 1925.

The cement was just as good as the European product, and as immigration to Eretz Yisroel rose, the need for construction rose, too. Nesher supplied all the cement for new building projects; after all, it was the only cement factory in the country.

In 1937, when construction of the neighbourhood of Zichron Meir in Bnei Brak was underway, a disturbing fact came to light: The Nesher factory was open seven days a week. This greatly bothered the Chazon Ish, and he instructed Reb Yaakov Halperin – who was behind the construction of the new neighbourhood – to approach the leading *Rabbonim* in Eretz Yisroel and ask them for a *psak* regarding the use of cement produced on Shabbos.

Reb Yaakov made the rounds and received unanimous *issurim* from Rav Isser Zalman Melzer, Rev Moshe Avigdor Amiel and Rab Benzion Meir Chai Uziel of Tel Aviv, Rav Reuven Katz of Petach Tikvah, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, and Rav Boruch Marcus of Haifa, *ZT"L* – all of whom ruled that the product was forbidden.

The Chazon Ish then recommended that Reb Yaakov consult with his brother-in-law, the **Steipler Gaon, Rav Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky**. In a letter addressing Reb Yaakov's [Halperin] concerns, the Steipler did not mention the factory by name, but he made it clear

that any cement produced on Shabbos was forbidden for several reasons. Two of them, *lifnei iver* (misleading people) and *mesayei'a lidvar aveirah* (accomplice to another's wrongful deed), meant that even material produced during the week was prohibited.

Armed with the letter, Reb Yaakov organised a delegation of *Rabbonim*, including Rav Amiel, Rav Katz and Rav Marcus, and they travelled to meet with the owners of Nesher, begging them to close the factory on Shabbos. Despite the group's entreaties, the owners stubbornly refused – until Reb Yaakov pulled out his trump card.

"If you do not close the factory on Shabbos, "I will open my own factory in Eretz Yisroel. The *psak* of the Steipler will be publicised, and no religious Jew will ever buy cement from you. Until my factory is ready to deliver, we will import cement from Yugoslavia."

Twenty years later, in a letter to *Ma'ariv* on October 25, 1957, amid a similar outcry over paper and other factories that operated on Shabbos, Reb Yaakov Halperin detailed his experiences. He wrote that just a few days after his meeting with Nesher, the Beis Din of Tel Aviv received a letter from the owners of Nesher.

"We hereby notify you that after lengthy dialogue with our workers, we, successfully, convinced them to accept your demand with regard to the cessation of work on Fridays -from next Friday, work will stop at the Nesher factory in accordance with the schedule (no work for 25 hours) presented to us by the Rabbis during their visit with us."

Bnei Brak was not only built on solid spiritual foundations of Torah, but also physically too.

Nesher Company have had a monopoly to supply the cement market until 2016, when new competition rules started to apply. Today, they still enjoy 80% of the market, with the balance being imported.

May the *zechus* of keeping Shabbos in all its many facets, be *meigin* on all *klal Yisroel.* - Good Shabbos

Parsha Knowledge

STORIES & INSPIRATION ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA

How to Have Successful Relationships

In this week's Parsha, the Torah starts, **וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־ לֵוִי** – Korach, the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehas, the son of Levi took." There is a question here – what did Korach take? The Torah doesn't specify that Korach took anything!

The Meforshim say, **לָקַח אֶת עַצְמוֹ** – Korach took himself. - What does this mean? How does this explain what ensued?

I would like to share with you something incredible that I heard from my father, Rav Yitzchok Fingerer shlita: **Rav Simcha Bunim** says that **לָקַח אֶת עַצְמוֹ** means that Korach got taken by himself. Korach had grandiosity – he suffered from arrogance. He suffered from being bombastic and conceited. Korach wanted fame and glory so much that he got taken by himself and he ruined his entire life. He eventually got swallowed up by the earth and died.

The lesson to us is that we must never get taken by ourselves. So many people unfortunately ruin their lives, relationships, or careers because they get taken by themselves. We must make sure that we have the right priorities and advisors and surround ourselves with mentors who keep us balanced, centered, and humble.

Every night, when no one was around, the **Chofetz Chaim** would secretly enter the Beis Medrash. No one knew what the great Tzaddik did at that time. One day, a student of the Chafetz Chaim decided to sneak into the Beis Medrash and see what went on. The next night, the student quietly entered the Beis Medrash and hid in the women's section. The room was dark and quiet.

A few minutes later, the Chafetz Chaim entered the room and walked toward the front of the Beis Medrash. The Chofetz Chaim opened the Aron Kodesh and started pleading to Hashem. He said:

"Hashem, Master of the World, Yisroel Meir (referring to himself) is a Kohen and the Gemara says that Kohanim may have a propensity for anger. Please Hashem help me – give me the courage to not lose my temper."

The Chofetz Chaim was afraid of being taken by himself. How much more so should we work on ourselves and pray to Hashem to help us in our pursuit of not getting taken by ourselves.

Toras Avigdor Snippets

A sampling of previous Toras Avigdor booklets



● Earth Opens Its Big Mouth

Everyone knows the story of how the earth opened its mouth wide and Korach and his fellow agitators in the rebellion against Moshe Rabeinu were swallowed alive and went lost forever from the Am Yisroel. **וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת פִּיהָ** – *The earth opened its mouth,* **וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם** – *and swallowed them,* **וַיֹּאבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל** – *and they went lost from among the congregation"* (Bamidbar 16:32-33).

And as Korach and his chaveirim fell into the deep hole, the pit leading them into Gehenom, they were crying out in terror. And the cries were so loud, so terrifying, that all in the vicinity fled at the sound of the screams: **וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם** – "*And all of Yisroel who were around,* **נָסוּ לְקֹלָם** – *took flight, they beat a hasty retreat*

when they heard the loud wails" (ibid. 34). And for those who read Parshas Korach, that's the last we ever heard of Korach.

● Ruach Hakodesh Replaces Nevuah

But was that really our last glimpse of Korach? Is it true that the last we ever heard from Korach is his cries of terror as he tumbled into the bowels of the earth? No, it's far from the truth. The Gemara (Bava Basra 74a) tells us that there was a Torah sage, Rabbah bar bar Chana, who was once traveling through a desolate place in the *midbar* and he saw a vision – a vision of Gehenom.

Now, we must know that the *kadmonim* in the days of the *chachmei hashas* were not *nevi'im*. Prophecy had come to an end, and already in the days of the Bayis Sheini there was no *nevuah* anymore. But there was still enough greatness, there was still enough *kedusha*, that one could merit *ruach hakodesh*. Now what that is? It's a certain influence from Above on the minds of great men – men who have purified their minds enough to deserve it.

And so at this time, Rabbah bar bar Chana was granted an insight, a glimpse into something that looked liked the *pischo shel Gehenom*, the entrance of Gehenom.

Actually nobody ever saw Gehenom – the Next World is an entirely different form of existence, too ethereal, too otherworldly for the physical eyes to see while still alive. But what Rabbah bar bar Chana saw in that vision was a drama, a performance of sorts, that was put on for the purpose of teaching a lesson. And so, we'll spend some time studying the gemara and gleaning the lessons intended from Rabbah bar bar Chana's peek into the Next Word.

● Meat, Potatoes and Korach

When Rabbah bar bar Chana looked into the pit that had appeared in the desert, he saw that it was full of boiling water and there was smoke billowing forth from the water. And as he stood at the edge of the hole looking in, he saw that in the boiling water there were

human bodies floating around. **כְּבָשָׂר בְּקַלַּחַת**, *Like meat in a pot,* is how the gemara describes it. And like any pot in which potatoes and meat are boiling – sometimes the food sinks to the bottom and sometimes it rises to the top, depending on the movement of the waters. It was bubbling and the water was in flux; everything was moving. And as the bodies eventually rose to the top, he heard a tormented outcry from the mouth of the people who were being cooked in the pit.

Screaming from Gehenom! That's not something you hear every day. And so Rabbah bar bar Chana leaned in to hear what they were shouting. And he heard Korach and his chaveirim crying out in despair: **מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת וַאֲנַחְנוּ בַּדָּאִין** – "Moshe is true, his Torah is true, and we are falsifiers." It was only when they rose to the top of the boiling caldron that you could hear the shouting. But even when they sunk to the bottom, they were still shouting with tortured cries – he heard the voice of Korach "I was wrong! Moshe was right and I was the liar!"

● Bilam's Version of Climate Change

Now, Bilam was in Gehenom for a very long time. We can easily calculate that it was almost 1400 years already that Bilam was in Gehenom. It was a long time since he was shipped off to the warmer climates, and the fires were still going strong.

And he told Unkelos that it was no good at all where he was. "It's terrible," said Bilam. "I'm suffering terribly!" You know that in the warmer climates it can get very hot, and Bilam described what they did to him every day. Take a look there and you'll see the details of how Bilam described it.

And then he asked Bilam, **מַאן חֲשִׁיב בְּהַהוּא עָלְמָא** – "Who is important in the Next World?" In the *olam ha'emes* – not in this false world in which we live here – but in the world of truth, who is really important? So Bilam said the only thing he could say: "Here, it's Yisroel that is *chashuv*." He couldn't deny that. In the Next World, everything is clear.

And now Unkelos asked his most important question – this was the reason he had brought up the spirit of Bilam: **מַהוּ לְאִיתְדַּבּוּקֵי בְּהוּ** – "What would you say to me if I tell you I'm considering joining the Am Yisroel? Should I become one of them?" So what advice did Bilam give him? Listen to what Bilam said, and he said it emphatically: **לָא תִדְרֹשׁ שְׁלָמָם וְטֹבָתָם כָּל יָמֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם** – "You should never seek the welfare of the Jewish people in any way." "Don't join them, said Bilam, "Have nothing to do with them!"

● Strange Advice

Now this is a big puzzle. Because here's a man who admitted that he was suffering terribly. He realized now the truth, that he had lived a life of error, and it's the Am Yisroel who are most important. So when he was asked the question, "What should I do? Should I join them or not?" he should have said, "What's the question?! Certainly you should become a Jew!" He was now in the world of Truth and he was suffering for his hostility to the Am Yisroel, so he should have said, "Look at what I'm suffering here! Don't imitate me – don't make the same mistake I did. Become a Jew!"

But he didn't say that – in fact he said the exact opposite. "Don't join them in any way – keep fighting the 'good fight' against the nation of Hashem." And that's very queer because we're seeing here that when it comes to giving advice, Bilam is exactly the same today as he was in this life – he's not speaking any other language except hostility to the nation of Hashem. And that's something that's difficult to understand; it's a puzzle that needs to be resolved.

● Is Gehenom a Physical Fire?

And the answer to our puzzle is that he *couldn't* say it. You know why he couldn't say it? Because when a person gains certain mental attitudes in this world, that's what he takes with him into the Next World. The attitudes, the ideals, the *dei'os* that you acquire in this world are what you take with you forever – you'll never be able to

shake loose of them! And it's those attitudes that are going to be your punishment or your reward forever.

Bilam isn't suffering in Gehenom from fires; he's suffering from his attitude. In his mind there is a fire that is burning without end – a fire of wrong ideas that he can't get rid of. It's a fire he lit while still in this world, a fire that will forever be impossible to put out.

● Too Late For Korach

And that brings us back to the vision of Korach boiling in the cauldron. He's shouting at the top of his lungs: **מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת וַאֲנַחְנוּ בַּדָּאִין** because he is now in Gehenom trying to recoup his loss, to make amends. What he should have said when he was alive, **מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת**, he's trying to say it now. But it's too late and that's his suffering. He's being tortured by recognizing the truth and not being able to make that truth a part of him. That's his torture. Not having the truth in the world of truth, is a tremendous suffering, a suffering with no relief.

There's no suffering that you can imagine that's more torture than the regret you'll feel in the Next World for having missed the truth. You'll never be able to put it out that fire – and that's the worst punishment. The wickedness that a man brings into his mind in this world doesn't die with him. It's not buried in the grave; instead it follows him forever and ever.

If Korach could have rid himself of his jealousy of Moshe Rabeinu, if he could have achieved the perfection of mind that includes knowing that **מֹשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת**, he could have climbed out of Gehenom. All he needed was to change his ways, and he would have been redeemed. But he couldn't because the thought that a person acquires in this world become part of him forever and ever. And so Korach is forever being consumed by this fire of wrong dei'os that he had kindled!



Machlokes by Rabbi Moshe Krieger

From this week's Parsha, we see how damaging "Machlokes" can be and how much destruction a quarrel can precipitate. We see the bitter end of Korach, Dasan, Aviram, and the other 250 individuals who joined their side in this dispute.

The Torah is so emphatic about the importance of staying away from strife, that it commands us not to emulate Korach in any way for the rest of history. The Torah is teaching us, with this commandment, how far we have to go to extinguish any arguments in the Jewish people, and all the more so to never be the instigator of any discord. We also learn from Korach that even when it comes to matters which are spiritual, we must attempt to never become embroiled in any Machlokes, even for the sake of Heaven.

This can be seen clearly from the fact that Korach's goal was to enhance his spiritual pursuits, not his physical ones. He wanted to serve in the Kehuna. Furthermore, Korach himself was a Gadol who served at the head of the Sanhedrin and had actually reached the level of Ruach Hakodesh. Yet with all that, he was incorrect in his decision to fight for his cause as is evidenced by what happened to him!

The Maharal adds a haunting point. The Maharal quoting Rashi points out that even the little children of the individuals who were involved with Korach were punished and were swallowed up by the earth. But the Maharal asks, we know that a child is only eligible to be punished from the age of twenty and onward. Why then were the children punished?

The Maharal explains that strife actually is Gehenom. He proves this from the fact that both discord and Gehenom were created on the second day of creation. So what happened to the children was not a punishment, but merely a result of the involvement with that strife which is like fire – one is burnt regardless of his age.

Perhaps we could conclude with the powerful words of **R' Moshe Feinstein**. Someone in the community once approached R' Moshe and asked him whether or not it was a good idea to take sides in a skirmish that was going on in the local Shul.

R' Moshe responded by saying that since getting involved with the quarrel would put lives in jeopardy, because if he makes a mistake he will probably cause death, he would need to consult with the Sanhedrin of the 71 elders who are the only judicial body permitted to answer such weighty questions. And since they are not around, it would probably be a good idea not to get involved.

From R' Moshe's severe words, we see how careful we must be when we get involved with any sort of disagreement.

May Hashem help us to always act for the sake of Heaven and bring peace onto this earth!

Jealousy

The Torah tells us about the dreadful mistake Korach and his followers made. Because of this terrible mistake, Korach and all of his followers were violently and miraculously terminated.

Chazal teach us that Korach's sin emanated from the trait of jealousy. Korach envied all of Moshe's relatives who received important positions. Chazal further explain how the trap of jealousy is so dangerous that when a person falls in, no matter how smart he is, he can never escape. We find that Korach was extremely intelligent and a powerful prophet as well, yet all this did not help him when he was overtaken by the pangs of jealousy. Korach's bad

middos led him to the depths of stupidity, and he even reached the point where he seemed to deny the truth of the Torah.

Chazal in their wisdom taught us that jealousy, lust, and honor take a person out of this world. According to most commentaries, Chazal are not only referring to the next world, but to this world as well.

The Rambam says that a person who possesses this dangerous trait, can never grow spiritually because he will always be obsessed with his unquenchable thirst for other peoples' belongings or good attributes and never have the presence of mind to concentrate on his own spiritual growth. But even in this world, jealousy is a guaranteed recipe for a person to remain miserable as the verse in Mishle says, **וּרְקָב עֲצָמוֹת קִנְאָה** –"Jealousy rots a person's bones". This poisonous trait causes a person to physically decay by giving him no peace and therefore causes his very health to wane.

The Orchos Tzadikim adds that a person becomes so embittered by focusing on all the things that he doesn't have, that he abandons the ability to enjoy the simple pleasures of this world and even his food loses all of its taste!

I would just like to conclude with the haunting words of the **Maharal**. Just as a person's bones are the very core of his being, similarly jealousy, which is such a fundamentally evil trait, physically rots his bones. However the word "Atzamos" also means personality. When a person spends his life resenting other peoples' successes, he actually rots his personality. He completely abandons his own sense of self and his own accomplishments by spending a lifetime measuring himself against his peers. He thus succeeds in "rotting" his sense of self completely to the point that he eradicates himself from existence, both physically and metaphysically!

May we all merit to successfully purge this evil trait from our hearts!

Pride & Haughtiness

This week's Parsha tells us about how Korach rose up against Moshe Rabenu and attempted to usurp some of the honors delegated by Hashem to the Kohanim and the Leviim for himself. Chazal teach us that Korach was capable of an extremely high level of prophecy, and was one of the leaders of that generation in Torah and spirituality, and they therefore go through great lengths to understand exactly how somebody as big as Korach could have been so misled by his Yetzer Hara, that he was willing to fight with Moshe who was the uncontested leader up until that point. - Chazal even say that when he fought with Moshe Rabenu, he was essentially fighting with Hashem, and he was aware of that. Rashi comments that Korach's primary error was in that fact that he was jealous. His jealousy over Moshe's prestige blinded him to the fallacy of his arguments and convinced him that he was in fact to be the true leader of the Jewish people. Indeed, Chazal warn us about the extreme danger that jealousy can inflict on a person if he is not careful, and it has the power to remove him from the world.

However, **R' Chazkal Levinstein** points out that the underlying trait which fuels jealousy is pride. Korach came upon a large sum of money during his travels, and became extraordinarily wealthy, upon which he began feeling haughty, and that led to the events recorded in this week's Parsha. Conversely, the verse in Psalms (45) says, "And favor will be granted to the humble." The Midrash comments that this is referring to the sons of Korach, who were spared specifically because of their humility, in contrast with their father.

Although the **Rambam** says that humility is the one trait which must be eradicated completely, and there is not room for even a smidgeon of arrogance in a person's heart, R' Chazkal explains in the name of the Tomer Devora, that the only way to acquire this precious trait is through daily work in small strides.



I would like to share with you a story about a Jew who passed away around 15 years ago, who epitomized the work which needs to be done in this arena. **R' Moshe Mandel** was a Jew in Bnei Brak, who became very well-known toward the end of his life. He was always very humble, and nobody knew who he was, but when he was "discovered" as a miracle worker, people began flocking to him in droves.

R' Shach himself would tell people, "Why would you come to me for a blessing when you can visit R' Moshe Mandel, whose blessings always seem to come true?" - However, R' Moshe was very concerned when people started coming to him, lest he get trapped in the conundrum of haughtiness, so he took certain measures to ensure that this wouldn't happen.

A lady once came to him and referred to him in the third person and said, "Could the Tzadik give me a blessing?" He became very upset when he heard this and he kept murmuring under his breath, "I'm not a Tzadik, I'm not a Tzadik". Indeed, people would often hear him repeating the verse to himself, "**עקב ענוה, יראת ה'**".

Whenever he would speak, he was careful to always look inside of a book in order that people shouldn't think he knows things by heart, even though he knew most of the Shas by heart.

He always kept an old pair of shoes by the entrance to his Beis Midrash, and the students attempted to through them out numerous times, but he emphatically refused. They finally found out that whenever he would speak in front of the Gedolim like R' Shach and other Rabbis, he would stare at his shoes while he was delivering his

speech in order to continually humble himself and remind himself of the fragile nature of the human body and his vestiges.

At his granddaughter's wedding, they gave him the honor of reciting one of the blessings under the Chuppah. When they handed him the microphone, he held it up to his ear like a telephone and recited the blessing. People couldn't contain their laughter at the site of a Rabbi with a microphone to his ear.

After the Chuppah, his grandchildren asked him if he really didn't know how to use a microphone. He responded, "Of course I do, but I was afraid that if I did, my Yetzer Hara for pride and honor would take hold of me, so I held it like that".

Although some of these actions may seem a bit extreme to us, R' Moshe reached the level of Ruach Hakodesh, and I'm certain that his work in this field was a major factor in his incredible accomplishments.

May we all merit to learn from Korach's mistake and humble our hearts at all times!

Shalom And Machlokess

This week's parsha talks about the machlokess Korach led against Moshe and Aharon and the destruction that resulted. Klal Yisrael to this day has the negative commandment: Do not be like Korach and his group. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 110) states that this is a *lav d'Oraisa*. Indeed, it was so important to recall the danger of this machlokess that the *machtos* used to offer the ketores by the 250 men who sought to become kohanim gedolim were later used as a covering for the mizbe'ach, so that the memory of this machlokess and its harm never be forgotten.

Since there is such a severe admonition to avoid Korach's sin, let's try to understand exactly what Korach's motivation was and how it might apply to us, so we can better identify and avoid it.

The Zohar (3:176) states that Korach "argued against shalom, and one who argues against shalom is as if he is arguing against Hakadosh Baruch Hu." At first glance, what could the Zohar be talking about? In what way did Korach argue against shalom, and what argument can one possibly make against shalom? Did Korach find something wrong with shalom?

The Slonimer Rebbe writes that both shalom and machlokess are middos that have deep roots within a person. The root that leads a person to being a baal machlokess is self-centeredness. The first step is usually that a person becomes jealous. Why do people feel jealousy? When someone has something that we lack and we feel jealousy, it means that our initial assumption is that what he has should really be mine, and he in effect has taken it away from me. If I take any steps against him, that is called being a baal machlokess.

Shalom is the opposite of self-centeredness. A man of shalom feels that 1) Hashem owes him nothing, and 2) all he has is a gift from G-d. If such a person sees that someone else got a different sort of gift from Hashem, this does not upset him, because he knows that even what he does have is nothing that he in fact deserved. What logic is there in complaining about gifts?

Just as one never hears today of a Yisrael being jealous of a Levi because he receives the second aliya in shul, so too a man of shalom feels no jealousy when others have things that he might like to have but does not.

Rashi explains that Korach began moving in the direction of machlokess when he saw that he had not been appointed Nassi of the Bnei Kehas, even though his yichus seemingly placed him in line for this role. In light of the fact that Korach was a *gadol b'Yisrael* — he was one of the *nossei ha'aron* (Bamidbar Rabba 16:11), had reached a level of spirituality equal to that of Aharon (ibid. 16:18) and was one of the wealthiest men in the world (Sanhedrin 110) — it

seems surprising that such a turn of events would upset him. Our impression of *gedolei Yisrael*is that they prefer to avoid the limelight so they can better pursue spiritual growth. Only, within Korach was a root of self-centeredness, and once agitated this root of self-centeredness eventually led him to an irrational demand, namely, that Hashem should reverse his appointment of Aharon as kohen gadol and appoint him instead.

Korach stands out as a lesson of the bitter fruits that can stem from the root of self-centeredness. Aharon, on the other hand, provides us with an eternal example of the midda of shalom. The Ramban (16:4) notes that Aharon did not argue with Korach. On the contrary, he agreed with him! "Yes, you are better and deserve this, but what can I do, Hashem put me here!"

Elsewhere, the Slonimer Rebbe says that the midda of self-centeredness is the source for all bad middos. We can easily understand how self-centeredness causes gaava, kina and sinah, but he adds that it causes sadness (a person irrationally feels "bereft" of what was never supposed to be his, or when things do not go his way), laziness (a person feels he deserves something and therefore does not work for it, as in his mind it should already be his) and anger. Anger, the rebbe describes, is an "explosion of self-centeredness." When things don't go the way one wants and one explodes, why is he exploding? Because at that moment he does not recognize that Hashem is running the world and that what happened is part of Hashem's direction. His irrational conclusion is that since what happened violates his will, it is therefore "wrong." Without realizing it, an angry person unconsciously becomes a baal machlokess against Hashem, as the Zohar (Zohar I, page 27b) states: One who becomes angry is a *kofer b'ikar* (a heretic).

In our generation lived an outstanding talmid chacham named **Rav Avraham Chaim Brim**, who exemplified what it means to overcome the midda of self-centeredness. Whenever he was offered a

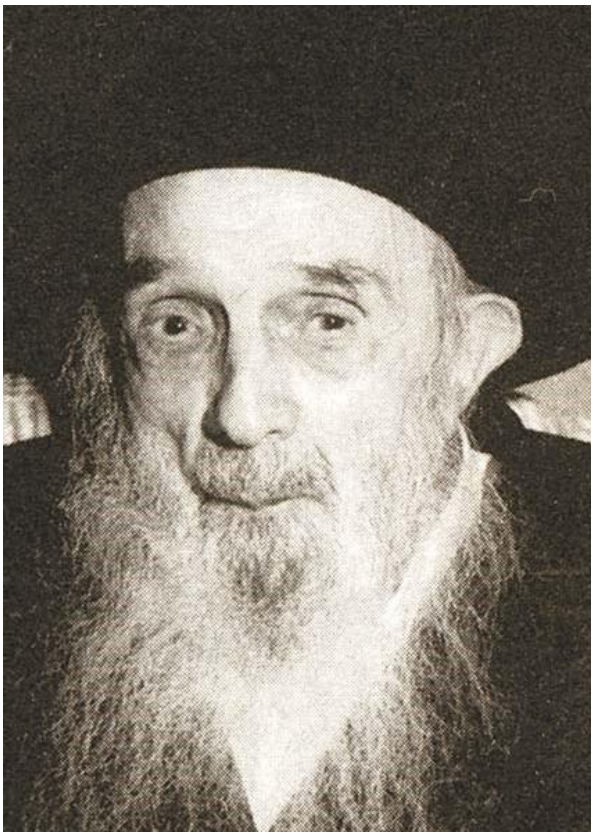
position, his first step was to examine it from the vantage point of how it affected other people. "Maybe there's another person who could do this job better?" Or, "perhaps there's another person who's in need of this position more than I am?" he would ask.

He told his talmidim that when it comes to dealings with one's fellow man, to strive to be like a *malach* — acting only in service of Hashem, without motivations of personal gain, jealousy and the like. Even in his chinuch of young children, he would admonish them to focus on what others need and what Hashem wants from us, not about ourselves and what we want.

May we be zoche to detect and overcome the roots of self-centeredness within us!

Rav Chaim Moshe Mandel zt"l Tammuz 4 5756

הרב חיים משה בן מאיר יוסף מנדל זצ"ל



Rav Chaim Moshe Mandel *ztz"l,* a venerated *mekubal* known as the "*poel yeshuos"* of Bnei Brak. Rav Mandel was considered a holy man who performed wonders that healed thousands. People say he had only to utter the words "*ye'alem, ye'alem* [disappear]" and the illness would disappear.

On one hand Rav Mandel was a fire, but he was also extremely gentle and concerned for the *kavod* of everyone, even a young child. When both he and his *rebbetzin* were old and couldn't move about easily, one of the grandchildren would sleep over just in case Rav Mandel needed assistance during the night.

One night the child woke up to the loud whispering of his grandparents in their bedroom, and concerned for their welfare, quietly opened the door. To his shock, he saw Rav Mandel lying on the cold floor of their tiny bedroom, unable to pick himself up, having fallen in such a way that his wife couldn't get off her bed to help him without stepping on him. The obvious solution, said Rebbetzin Mandel, was to call the grandchild — that's why he was sleeping there in the first place. But Rav Mandel objected. "G-d forbid to wake a sleeping child!" the Rav insisted.



Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Korach Should Have Known Better

The Medrash says **אמרו חכמים, חכם גדול היה קרח ומטועני הארון ... מה ראה לשטות הזה** – Korach was a very intelligent person, and he was one of the people who carried the Aron Hakodesh. What did he see to get involved in this folly? (במדבר רבה פרשת קרח פרשה יח סימן ג וסימן ח)

Rabbi Pinchos Roberts (Prism of Torah p188) asks – 'I can understand why the Medrash says that Korach was a **חכם גדול** and therefore why did he do this. But what is the relevance of the fact that he carried the Aron Hakodesh? Why should the fact that he carried the Aron have prevented him from this error?'

So, Rabbi Roberts quotes another Medrash - ר' חיים פלטיאל במדבר פרשת קרח פרק טז פסוק א. 'Moshe Rabbeinu was the leader of Klal Yisrael. Korach was very jealous of him; therefore he wanted to revolt against him. He was trying to show everyone how ridiculous in his eyes, some of the mitzvos were, therefore they couldn't come from a Divine source. So, Korach went around telling various stories, in order to rouse the rabble against Moshe Rabbeinu.'

One lesser known story goes as follows: Korach would say, " There was once a very poor widow who only had a very small plot of land.

When she came to plough, Moshe said to her: "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together; (Deut. 22:10)." When she came to sow, he said to her "Thou shalt not sow thy field with divers seeds;" (Leviticus 19, 19). When she came to reap and stack the corn, he said to her, "Leave gleanings (*leket*) the forgotten sheaf (*shikhehah*) and the corner of the field (*pe'ah*) for the poor." When she came to thresh, he said to her, "Give tithes, priestly dues, the first and second tithes." She justified heaven's pronouncement and gave him.

What did this poor women do? She went and sold her field, and purchased with the proceeds two lambs, to clothe herself from its shearing and enjoy its products. As soon as they gave birth, Aaron came and said to her: "Give me the firstborn, since the Holy One blessed be He hath said: Every firstborn that shall be born of thy herd and flock, the male one, shalt thou consecrate to Hashem". She justified heaven's pronouncement and gave him the offspring.

The time came for shearing and she sheared them - came Aaron and said to her, "Give me the first of the shearing since the Holy One blessed be He said (Deut. 18:3): The first of thy grain, thy wine and oil and the first of the shearing of thy flock shalt thou give to him". Thereupon she said: "Since I have no more strength to withstand this man, I shall slaughter them and eat them." As soon as she had slaughtered them, Aaron came and said to her: "Give me the shoulder, two cheeks and maw." (Deut. 18:3)

Whereupon she said: "Even after I have slaughtered them, I am not delivered from his hand. Let them then be forbidden (*herem*) my use." Said Aaron to her: "In that case it is all mine since the Holy One said: 'Every devoted thing (*herem* - expression of prohibition, exclusion from ordinary usage) in Israel shall be thine.'" (Num. 18:14)

He took them, departed and left her weeping.

Such was the lot that befell this unfortunate woman!

In the above excerpt, the Torah, whose ways are the ways of peace is seen through distorted spectacles. All Korach's ranting contains the familiar rabble-rousing ingredients of demagogy.

Like any demagogue, Korach stresses the obligations rather than the privileges. Just as the taxpayer only sees the burden imposed on him and not the benefits in the way of health, education, public security and other public services that he enjoys in return, so Korach depicts the Torah to the malcontents as demanding, extorting and giving nothing in return.

Says the Medrash - **חכם גדול היה** – He was a clever man but **ומטועני הארון** – He carried the Aron. Of all the people, Korach should have known better, as the Gemarah says **נשא ארון את נושאיו (סוטה לה.)** – The Aron carries those people who carry it.

The message is that Hashem supports us when we keep a life of Torah and Mitzvos. It doesn't harm our livelihood.

Rabbi Roberts finishes with a postscript, and says that when the pasuk says **ובְּנֵי קֹרַח לֹא מֵתוּ (במדבר כו,יא)** – '*Korah's sons, however, did not die.*' - Many people today still carry that philosophy and still think Shabbos and kashrus harms our livelihood. - We know that is not true, because **נשא ארון את נושאיו**.

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar - The Mortgage Payment

The registered letter that arrived at the Katz home (not their real name) on a rainy day in Boro Park wasn't a surprise. For several months now, Rabbi Katz had failed to make his mortgage payments, and he knew the bank wouldn't remain silent for much longer. Though he had been preparing himself for it, his hands shook as he opened the letter, and his heart fluttered when he read the words. If he didn't settle his debt within ninety days, the bank would initiate the

foreclosure process, taking possession of his house and evicting them from the property.

The days seemed to fly by. Despite immense effort, Rabbi Katz didn't manage to raise even half the amount needed. He was under constant tension, his brow permanently furrowed with worry. It was difficult enough to cover the monthly expenses to provide for his large family, and all his resources for income were already exhausted. No one he knew would lend him another penny. How would he manage to pay off debt of tens of thousands of dollars? Were he and his family destined to be thrown onto the street?

Several sleepless nights passed until finally he mustered the courage to pour out his troubles to one of his close friends. He recounted what was going on, how he owed a lot of money to the bank and had no way to pay the debt. His friend listened. His heart was breaking for Rabbi Katz.

A long silence fell when Rabbi Katz finished his tale of woe, until his friend stirred himself and stood up. He went over to his bookcase and took out a volume of Mishnah Berurah, flipping through the pages until he came to siman 185: **כתב בספר החינוך כל הזהיר בבהמ"ז מזונותיו מצויות לו כל ימיו בכבוד. והמדקדק יזהר לברך לכתחלה תוך הספר ולא בע"פ** - "It is written in the Sefer Hachinuch that whoever is conscientious about the recitation of Birkas Hamazon will be provided his livelihood in comfort all his life. Optimally, one should be scrupulous to recite [Birkas Hamazon] using a bentcher and not by heart."

"My friend," he said to Rabbi Katz, "I wish I could lend you the money, but I just don't have the means. I can only recommend that you take the advice of the author of the Chinuch. And try to get your family to do so as well. I'm certain the emphatic promise of the Chinuch will prove fruitful for you."

Rabbi Katz took the advice to heart. When he went home, he gathered his family together and read them the words of the

Chinuch, requesting that they join him in strengthening themselves in this area and resolving to say Birkas Hamazon from a bentcher. They all agreed, and from that day onward the Katz family was careful to bentch inside without fail.

Around this time, in a town on the outskirts of Denver, Colorado, the police chief decided that he needed to expand the building where the town's police station was situated. To this end, he sought to purchase the land right next to the police station. He made some inquiries and found out that it had been purchased many years before by a man from New York, and upon his death his son had inherited it.

The property in question was a rocky piece of land in a desolated area that the New Yorker had purchased for a steal, and because the property wasn't in demand, its value hadn't increased much since then. The police chief picked up the phone and called the son who had inherited the property, to find out how much he wanted for it. This property owner was none other than Rabbi Katz, who needed an influx of money sooner than yesterday.

When he realized who was interested in his property, a wave of excitement rippled through Rabbi Katz. So began the negotiations in which Rabbi Katz demanded a high price for his land. The police chief tried to get the price down, but knowing the money wasn't coming out of his own pocket, he finally agreed to Rabbi Katz's asking price and the deal was closed to the satisfaction of both parties.

Several days later, the police department transferred the funds to Rabbi Katz's account, and overnight he became a millionaire. He had what he needed, and much more, to pay off his mortgage once and for all.

Now the house belonged to the Katz family outright, and they no longer had to worry about the bank. Nor did Rabbi Katz have to about parnassah any longer. He invested some of the money that remained, and the profits made him a very wealthy man.

And even today, if you visit the Katz family while they are bentching, you will find them reciting Birkas Hamazon from inside their bentchers with intense concentration, each word uttered precisely and carefully. You shouldn't be too amazed. After all, it was due to this practice that they merited a miraculous yeshuah.

A forsaken piece of property on the outskirts of Denver turned out to be a valuable asset. At the exact moment that the Katz family resolved to be scrupulous about their bentching, police chief of some far-off police department decided to expand the police station in that remote town and was willing to pay well for it.

This story was recounted by Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz, the rosh yeshivah of Sha'ar HaShamayim in Yerushalayim, who heard it from Rabbi Katz himself. Rav Gamliel says we can apply the lesson of this story to our own lives. How much time are we asked to devote each day to thanking Hashem for the boundless good He showers on us? When we dedicate those minutes to showing our appreciation properly, we merit even more of His good and favors.

Short And Sweet Story of The Week by Yoni Schwartz



Rav Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi once visited a modern high school. As the boys were learning Gemara, one 12th grader's intellectual abilities stood out. Hoping to recruit this boy to his Yeshiva, Rav Ezrachi approached him with the offer. The boy politely declined.

Shortly after, Rav Ezrachi discovered that this boy was on his way to become an Olympic swimmer and challenged him to contest on

condition that if he wins, the boy will learn in his Yeshiva. The boy accepted for 3 o'clock the next day.

Word about the competition spread like wildfire. Everybody in the town showed up. 3:00 PM came and the race was supposed to start but the Rav was a no-show. 3:15… 3:30… 3:40… still nobody. Finally, 3:45, the doors opened with the Rav in his full-body swimsuit. The race began. To everybody's surprise, it was neck and neck. It was a real nailbiter wondering who would win. Rolling over, everybody was shocked when the Rav beat the future Olympiad. Elul Zman came, and the boy began yeshiva and learned with incredible diligence.

Shortly after, the boy asked Rav Ezrachi, "K'vod HaRav, I have two questions. How did you beat me and why did you come forty-five minutes late?"

Rav Mizrachi took his hand and responded, "I had no hope of beating you. For forty-five minutes I davened my heart out to Hashem: 'Hashem! Please help me save a Jewish soul and bring your child closer to You.' - That was the only way I could beat you!"



Tiny Sparks of Light

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein (in his sefer Barchi Nafshi) shares parked car while driving to Meron. The man left a note on the windshield of the damaged car with his contact information, promising to pay for the repairs, and proceeded on his way.

Several hours after he returned home, someone knocked at the door. He opened the door and was startled when the visitor, a complete stranger and obviously irreligious Jew, held up a camera and snapped a picture of him. "I am the owner of the car you hit," the stranger said. "I was so astonished by your

actions that I simply had to come and take a picture of you. You must be the only person in the world who would leave a note so he could pay for damages when he could easily have avoided doing so!"

Several weeks later, the man showed up at the talmid chacham's doorstep again. This time, he said, "My wife and I have decided that if this is the way a religious person behaves, we want to be part of your community!"



Not long ago, a religious Jew by the name of Isaac Theil became a worldwide sensation as a result of the smallest, simplest act: He was riding home on the subway when the man sitting next to him fell asleep and leaned his head on Theil's shoulder. Rather than wake his slumbering seatmate, Theil sat quietly and allowed the man to continue sleeping.

An onlooker snapped a picture, which was posted on social media and quickly attracted the attention of over a million people, making a profound impact on thousands.

To create a kiddush Hashem, we do not have to be extraordinary people or Torah giants. In this time of overwhelming spiritual darkness, let us do our best to create as many sparks of light as we can, as small as they may be, and we will surely reap the benefits.

"Things can go from the very worst to the very best in the blink of an eye." ~ Rebbe Nachman Of Breslov (1772-1810)

Pirkei Avos #4



מאד מאד הוי שפל רוח שתקות אנוש רמה – ***Be exceedingly humble in spirit for the anticipated end of mortal man is worms*** (4:4). **The Tosfos Yom Tov** explains **שתקות אנוש רמה** – "*for the anticipated end of mortal man is worms*" as "- a person's measuring stick should be the worm."

The Tosfos Yom Tov explains that a person should measure his own standing against the performance of the lowly worm. Worms play a significant role in softening the earth so that roots can spread and allow the rainwater to reach them, and in turning fallen leaves into rich earth which fertilizes the plants. Yet the worm remains silent, never boasting of its importance. Man should measure himself against the worm to see whether he too goes about his business without fanfare and arrogance. (The Pirkei Avos Treasury)

Rabbi Jeremy Golker – Fulfil Your Potential

Rabbi Shneur Kotler says in sefer **בי חייא** that the source of Korach's jealousy ultimately came from a good place. [**קנאת סופרים רוחנית**] He felt that his role was from the outside, and therefore he couldn't achieve the same **קרבת אלקים** as Aharon, who achieved his closeness to Hashem from the inside.

Korach's mistake was that he didn't understand that if a person fulfils his own potential perfectly, it doesn't matter who or where you are, you still have the same **קרבת אלקים** as any other person. Because at the end of the day, if it is **לכבוד מלכו של עולם**, then we are all on equal terms.

Succulent Short Bites by Rabbi Meyer Friedman

וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֹרַח וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ - "*The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all the people who were with Korach, and the entire wealth.*" (16:32)

Later on, the Torah informs us that Korach's sons did not die along with the rest of their family because they repented. What made them see the light and repent before the punishment was meted out?

Moshe tried his best to reach a peaceful settlement with those who were fighting against him. He failed in winning Korach over. However, his words had an impact on his sons, and they abandoned their father's rebellion.

Sometimes, the target of a person's rebuke may not be influenced right away but some others will be. No action ever goes for naught. Everything has ramifications even though we don't always see it.

R' Tzadok Hakohen writes that if someone has fear of Hashem, his words never go unheard. Even though his words may not be listened to right now, it might have an impact on the person later. The results may not be apparent immediately, but the seeds are planted for a future turnaround. Meaningful words penetrate the soul and stay there until they surface later. You can never know how far your words can go. At times, one may try to inspire other people but is unsuccessful. He should not be depressed because he did not bring about any change. The effect is there, and it could manifest itself later in life or in his children.

One should not be afraid to try to influence other people because he will not be able to accomplish anything. The results of one's efforts are not always tangible.

Insightful Torah Thoughts by Rabbi Moshe Gelb

כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קְדֹשִׁים וּבְתוֹכָם ה' וּמַדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהַל ה' – 16:3

The *posuk* relates how Korach argued against Moshe, saying: "Why do you get to be the leader, the king, and Aharon the *Kohen Gadol*? Isn't every *Yid* holy? Didn't all of us hear *Hashem* speak at *Har Sinai*? Why do you think you're better than everyone else?"

Although Korach said this as part of a heretical argument against *Moshe Rabbeinu*, the *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (109b) is clear that when Korach said that every *yid* is holy, he was not lying! "**וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים**" - indeed, everyone in *Klal Yisroel* at the time was *taka* a big and holy *tzaddik*. In our times as well, the *sefarim* tell us that every *yid* has at least some aspect to him in which he is a *tzaddik*; by some, it might be more obvious, and by others perhaps less so. But every *yid* has a little *tzaddik* inside of him which, if he digs deep and finds it, can develop and strengthen until everything else simply falls away.

R' Meir Soloveitchik *zt"l* used to relate how his holy *Zaida*, **R' Chaim (Brisker) Soloveitchik *zt"l*** once noticed that several *chassidishe* fellows were staring intently at his visage, and so, he turned to them and asked, "Please tell me. What are you looking at?"

The *chassidim* replied that there is a big *inyan* to look at and contemplate the face of one who is a *tzaddik*, and therefore, they took the opportunity to come and gaze upon his countenance.

R' Chaim said, "If that's the reason, well, the *posuk* says (*Yeshayah* 60:21) **וְעַמֵּךְ כֻּלָּם צַדִּיקִים**, that every *yid* is a *tzaddik*; indeed, it would do you a whole lot better if every one of you took a good look at yourself and your own deeds, than if you just stare at me ..."

Each one of us must look deep inside of himself and recognize where his assets and strengths lie, and how he, too, can develop his hidden "*tzaddik*," - the great and latent potential that resides within him.

Something you won't see in the secular press!



In one of the buildings that was directly damaged in the city of grace and Torah, Bnei Brak, lived the grandson of the Adman from Grodnitsa, a Hasidism that almost does not exist today after the Holocaust. It was a Hasidic custom not to dismantle the sukkah every day of the year, but only to renew the thatch and bless it for its life. Of course, this raised doubts and even suspicions about the laziness of the owner of the sukkah, but those who knew him and the custom knew that it was a tradition that the grandson had preserved along with several other members of his family who do not live in the country.

On the night of the attack on Bnei Brak, the grandson was in his room and refused to join his family, which was in the middle of nowhere, since he was bent over the Gemara and did not hear the alarm at all. When the family members woke him up, he insisted on continuing to study, and they knew that he would insist on this and that there was no point and locked themselves alone in the Mamad.

When the grandson heard knocking from the sukkah, he was surprised because there was nothing in it beyond a picture of his great-grandfather. He entered the sukkah and discovered that the picture was swaying and that it was the one that was knocking. When

he approached to fix it, a huge explosion was heard that destroyed the room where he had sat and studied earlier. His family members, who were sure that he had been killed, came out in panic and discovered him coughing slightly from the dust.

If this is not a miracle, tell me!

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

The Gemarah Bava Basra 74a tells us that every 30 days Korach and his community come out of Gehinnom, and they say, **משה אמת ותורתו אמת**. **The Rashbam** says that this occurs every Rosh Chodesh.

The Bobover Rebbe asks, "Why specifically on Rosh Chodesh?"

He says, because that is the beginning of the new moon. The moon was also afflicted with gaavoh. The pasuk in Beraishis 1:16 tells us that Hashem created the two luminaires. **וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹקִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטֹן לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה**. Rashi comments: The moon was struck with haughtiness. They were created equal, but the moon was made smaller because it brought charges and said, "It is impossible for two kings to use the same crown."

The pasuk tells us in Mishlei 16:5 **תּוֹעֲבַת ה' כָּל־גְּבַהּ־לֵב** - that it's an abomination to be haughty. – Let us be humble people.

It is fascinating that every letter of the word **ממון** has the same letter twice in each letter. Mem is spelled **מ״מ**. The vov is spelled **ו״ו** and the nun is spelled **נ״נ**.

The Chidah says that in the word "**ממון**" we can already see the idea that a person always wants more of whatever he has already, as Chazal tell us, "one who has 100 wants 200!"

Jealousy

Rabbi Berel Wein Shlit"a told a story about a fellow who had a store, and he always watched in envy how his competitor was so successful, and he was not. One day he gathered up the courage and asked his competitor his secret for success.

He answered wisely as follows, "You are busy looking at my business and yours, I am **only** busy paying attention to my business.

Jealousy is a very sad life. Who is rich? One is happy with his lot.



וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן... וַיֵּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצ֘ץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים - '***And behold, Aaron's staff for the house of Levi had blossomed! It gave forth blossoms, sprouted buds, and produced ripe almonds***.' 17:23

Why Almonds? Why not strawberries or peaches?

Rashi explains that almond is the fruit that blossoms quicker than other fruits. Likewise, he who opposes the *kehunah;* his punishment comes quickly.

Chazal say that the word **שקדים** is an anagram of **מי קדש**. Korach said **כֻּלָּם קְדוֹשִׁים** – 'the entire congregation are all holy.' So Hashem says, "No- **מי קדש**.

Rabbeinu Bachya adds that almonds are also bitter when unripe and therefore represent Divine judgment.

Ibn Ezra focuses on the word *shaked* (almond), which also means to be watchful. The almond on Aaron's staff represents G-d's active vigilance in upholding His choice of Kohanim.

Chizkuni assigns meaning to the distinct language the Torah uses to describe each stage of the miracle—"*vayotzei perach*" (it gave forth blossoms), "*vayatzetz tzitz*" (sprouted buds), and "*vayigmol shekeidim*" (and produced ripe almonds):

Vayotzei perach (it gave forth blossoms) — uses the root "yatzah" (to go out), suggesting the emergence of something new. This hints at the *pirchei kehunah*—the young priests who would one day "emerge" from Aaron and begin their sacred service.

Vayatzetz tzitz (sprouted buds) — uses the rare verb *tzitz*, which shares a root with the Tzitz, the gold forehead plate worn by the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest. This stage symbolizes the priestly garments and dignity that would be uniquely Aaron's.

Vayigmol shekeidim (and produced ripe almonds) — uses the term "gamal" (to ripen or complete), alluding to maturity and diligence. The ripe almonds represent priests who are watchful and dedicated in their Divine service, echoing the saying: "Kohanim are zealous."

Abarbanel adds that the almonds symbolize the eternal nature of the priesthood, as they ripen and remain fresh longer than most other fruits. He sees these signs as validating Aaron's exclusive appointment to the High Priesthood, along with his descendants' perpetual priestly status.

Similar to Abarbanel, **Da'at Zekeinim** notes that some of the blossoms remained even after the almonds ripened, an unnatural phenomenon, symbolizing that Aaron's staff – and by extension, his priesthood – would never wither.

"Bitachon is not the absence of fear, but rather the belief that Hashem is bigger than our fears and can help us overcome them." – Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.



Wisdom Is Required To See the Obvious in Times of Passion

The *pasuk* lists Korach's co-conspirators: Dassan, Aviram, and Ohn ben Peles of Shevet Reuven. We know what happened to Korach and we know what happened to Dasan and Aviram. But what ever happened to " Ohn ben Peles"? The famous Gemara in Sanhedrin (110a) states that Ohn was saved by his wife. She told him that he had nothing to gain from the fight. Either Moshe would end up remaining as the leader or Korach would become the leader. Either way, Ohn would remain a powerless and uninfluential follower.



Ohn accepted her logic but was hesitant to abandon his promise to join the rebellion. According to the famous Gemara, Mrs. Ohn gave her husband wine to drink, causing him to sleep through the whole "call to battle." The Korach mob came to Ohn's door to summon him to take part in their rebellion. Mrs. Ohn sat in front of the house with her hair uncovered. The mob didn't want to intrude on her privacy, they left and, consequently, she is credited with having saved her husband.

The Talmud relates this incident to the *pasuk* in Mishlei (14:1) "The wisdom of women built her house…" But, isn't this Gemara being overly generous with the praise it lavishes on the wife of

Ohn ben Peles? What type of outstanding "wisdom" did she demonstrate here? She basically just told it to her husband like it is: "It is either Korach or Moshe. You have absolutely nothing to gain in this fight." Where is the great wisdom here?

The answer is that to keep cool and think straight in the time of *machlokes*, when passions are elevated, requires wisdom. In a time of *machlokes*, everybody loses it. In argumentative times, everyone becomes emotional. When people are emotional, they don't think straight. A logical thinker with a cool mind, who can overcome the passion of the moment, has great wisdom. Ohn's wife could see the truth in the context of the mob's passion. That is the "*Chachmas nashim bansa beisa*."

"Fake News" Is Not a Modern-Day Invention

Over the years, we have spoken about certain Gemaras very many times, always trying to find new insights. Ohn ben Peles of Shevet Reuven is initially enumerated as one of the main protagonists of the Korach rebellion. Later on, he is not mentioned. A famous Gemara (Sanhedrin 109b) says that his wife saved him.

How did she save him? She argued to him that it does not make any difference to him whether Moshe is the leader or Korach is the leader. Either way, he is just a follower, with no power of his own. "You have nothing to gain from this dispute. You will always remain just an Indian and not a Chief." Ohn ben Peles conceded that his wife was right, but said that at that point he had no choice in the matter. He had already agreed to join the rebellion. Korach and his followers were on their way to pick him up to join the fight with Moshe.

The Gemara relates that Ohn's wife came up with a great plan: She got her husband drunk. He was sleeping. She sat herself in the front of the tent, removed her hair covering, messed up her hair, and basically "scared away" the "very *frum*" rabble-rousers who came to

pick up her husband. They did not want to look at a woman whose hair was uncovered! They just left the tent, and that is how Ohn ben Peles was saved. About this incident, the Gemara cites the *pasuk*, "The wisdom of women saved the house…" (Mishlei 14:1).

The *ba'alei mussar* ask the following question:

Korach had a whole litany of complaints against Moshe Rabbeinu: Moshe practices nepotism. He gave his close family members all the important jobs. Look at the embarrassment he causes to the Leviim – he shaved them, leaving them bald from head to toe. Then he picked them up and shook them like a*lulav*. Then, Korach related, there was this poor widow with two daughters. Moshe forced her to leave *leket*, *shikcha*, and *peah* from her crops, reducing her harvest yield. Then he made her give *terumos* and *ma'asros* . The *Kohanim* took her first born animals. Then they took the *zeroa, lechayayim*, and *keivah* (the parts of slaughtered animals that are given to the *Kohanim*). After leaving her penniless, she and her two daughters died in famine.

Ohn ben Peles must have bought into this litany of complaints. He was one of the chief antagonists. So, the *ba'alei mussar* ask, how was his wife able to convince him to abandon his rebellion? Granted, he would never become the leader of the people. But how does that answer all the complaints against Moshe Rabbeinu? How does that answer the fact that Moshe practiced nepotism? That he embarrassed the Leviim? That he caused the poor woman and her daughters to die?

The answer is that the list of ostensible complaints is never the real issue. When people get into a *machlokes*, it is not about the laundry list of "It's not right! / It's not fair!" issues that the antagonists come up with. People get into *machlokes* for one reason – because of personalities! They get into arguments because they want money or they want *kavod* or they want power. That is always the fuel that feeds *machlokes*.

When Ohn's wife explained to him that he was not going to get any money or honor or power out of his participation in the Korach-Moshe contest, all the arguments and taynas against Moshe Rabbeinu became irrelevant. Who cares whether a garment that is entirely techeiles is obligated in tzitsis or whether a house filled with sefarim is obligated inmezuzaor not? Those are academic discussions. What about the poor woman and her daughters? That story never happened. There was no planting in the midbar. There was no leket, shikcha, or peah. There was no zeroa, lechayayim, or keivah. It was all 'fake news.' Fake news did not start with Donald Trump. It went back to Korach. They made it up. There was no such thing. It all became irrelevant once Ohn ben Peles realized that there was nothing for him in joining the machlokes.

That is what the Gemara means when it cites the *pasuk,* "The wisdom of women saved the house." The great wisdom of the wife of Ohn ben Peles was that she could tap into that crucial point of showing her husband that he had nothing to gain from joining the rebellion. She didn't get into a polemic with him to convince him about a garment that was entirely *techeiles*. She said, "I know what this about – this is about *kavod*." So she told her husband: Listen here, you will not get an iota more of *kavod,* whether Moshe is the leader or Korach is the leader. That was her *chochma* – to see the real reason behind the *machlokes*. That is the case with every *machlokes,* ninety percent or more of the time. No matter how it starts out (perhaps for the noblest of reasons), in the end, it devolves into an argument over *kavod* and power. One of the greatest forces in human nature is the urge to win.

Forget all the high-sounding arguments, "*Kavod haTorah! Kavod Shem Shamayim*!" In the end, the major motivation is "I need to win." In the end, it is "all about me." That was the wisdom of the wife of Ohn ben Peles.

A Tale Of Two Evil Character Traits: Jealousy & Machlokes

This week's parsha – Parshas Korach – highlights the evil of two terrible character traits: Jealousy and Argumentativeness. The first destructive character trait we encounter is that of jealousy. Rashi spells out Korach's motivation for starting his rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu: He was jealous that a younger cousin became the prince of the descendants of Korach.

"What was it that Korach saw that led him to dispute with Moshe? He was jealous of the princely position of Elizaphan son of Uziel, for Moshe had appointed him prince over the sons of Kehus by the word of G-d.

The second negative character trait illustrated in our parsha is the destructive power of machlokes [argumentativeness]. This is no doubt the prime example of this destructive character trait in the entire Torah. People lost their lives, their possessions, and even their children because of machlokes. Rashi notes that machlokes is the only aveyra for which the Almighty punishes women, children, even innocent babies. Machlokes is like a fire – it consumes everything in its path – guilty or not. Fire does not discriminate – it burns everything in its path.

Just think how crazy these people were. Moshe Rabbeinu in effect challenged these people to a duel. The odds were 250:1 that any of them who offered the Ketores would not be chosen. Nobody plays with those kinds of odds. However, they did it anyway because machlokes consumed them.

I once read the following incident involving the **Chofetz Chaim**: A Jew once lived in a little village and was neighbors with the (Jewish) "Mayor" of the town. They got into a fight and as is the tendency with machlokes it grew and grew and grew until the point where they were at each other's throats. The neighbor told the Mayor that he

was going to go to the Russian authorities and squeal on him that he used his influence to get kids out of the Czarist draft. (Being drafted into the Czarist army was a virtual death sentence – certainly a spiritual death – and people tried all sorts of means – bribery and the like – to get out of being drafted). This Mayor had apparently illegally used his influence in the community to prevent certain boys from being drafted.

This neighbor told his wife what he was going to do. His wife said to him, "Are you crazy? One of the boys the Mayor illegally freed from the draft was our son! If you squeal on him to the authorities, our son might get drafted!" She told him that what he was contemplating doing was like drilling a hole in a boat under the seat of a companion you dislike. The entire boat will sink with all passengers on board!

The man, in his anger against his neighbor, told his wife "I don't care if they arrest my son, I don't care if they arrest me. I don't care if they arrest you – as long as they punish him!" Human beings always act in their own self-interest. The urge to survive is perhaps the most basic of human emotions. However, a person may be willing to sacrifice himself and sacrifice his own child just so that "I should win and defeat the other person". This is the power of machlokes.

Parshas Shlach demonstrates what desire for Kavod [pursuit of honor) can do to a person. Parshas Korach demonstrates what Kinah [jealousy] and Machlokes [argumentativeness] can do to a person. This is why the Torah records these stories. They should make an impression on us. If we do not keep these evil character traits in check and fix them when we need to, then — Heaven Forbid — we will pay the price later on.

Always choose love; it's one of the few things that multiply when shared. ~ Rabbi Avraham Twerski (1930-2021)

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?

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 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. Essentially, they were given the scraps. It was a poor life. The Leviim and 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."

Korach Got A Bad Deal

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

This begs the question. If someone purchases a car which turns out to be a lemon, that is a bad purchase (*mekach rah*). If someone purchases real estate that has just been flooded, that is a bad deal. In these cases, at least a person received something in exchange for

his money — a car that is always at the mechanic or a piece of land that is under water, so we can call it a "bad deal." However, Korach did not receive anything here. He did not wind up with a bad purchase or a bad deal. He lost everything he had and received nothing in exchange!

The sefer Be'er Yosef cites an idea from a sefer Zayis Ra'anan, which attempts to explain the teaching of Reish Lakish. Rashi here quotes a Medrash: "Korach, who was a clever individual, what did he see in this foolish scheme?" Korach was not a fool. Far from it — he was a very intelligent individual. Why did he agree to this deal? There were 250 people, only one of which could be Kohen Gadol. Those are terrible odds. It is the worse than playing Russian roulette. Russian roulette is a "game" involving a gun with six slots for bullets. The person puts in one bullet and spins the cylinder. He puts the pistol to his head and pulls the trigger. There are at least five chances out of six that he will walk away alive. Even so, someone who plays the game is foolhardy, to put it mildly. Even more so, if someone changes the odds such that instead of having a 5 out of 6 chance of surviving the competition, the person has a 250 to 1 chance <u>against</u> surviving the competition, certainly the person must be suicidal to participate in such an endeavor. What did the wise Korach see that tempted him to take part in this crazy experiment?

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

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

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

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

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

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

effect, but he mistakes effect for cause and cause for effect because "his eyes deceive him."

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

Sure. It was a great deal. However, what price did he pay for this deal? The price is that he stews in *Gehinnom* [Hell] and every thirty days they reissue his sentence. He gave up his "This World". He gave up his "Next World". He burns in *Gehinnom*. Was it worth the price? No. It was not worth the price. Losing all of your material and spiritual wealth in this life and in the afterlife is a bad deal regardless of what the person receives in exchange.

Machlokes

Parshas Korach is the *parsha* of *machlokes* (argumentation) and unfortunately, we all know that this topic is more relevant than many other *parshas* in the Torah because unfortunately people are always getting into *machlokes*.

I saw written in the name of **Rav Chaim Palagi** (1788-1868; Smyrna, Turkey) "From the time I started having a modicum of intelligence, I noticed that man or woman, regardless of family, regardless of country – any party that was involved in *machlokes* – suffered from it. Neither side ever emerges unscathed and unhurt from *machlokes*." Rav Palagi lived to a ripe old age and said that he saw in his lifetime that when people get into protracted arguments—be it inter-family, inter-community, inter-city or intra-city—neither

side ever wins. Both sides suffer, physically and financially. He says that any person with *sechel* (clarity of understanding) should walk away from *machlokes* even if they are right, whether it will cost them physically, financially, or in terms of their honor. Whatever one loses by walking away from *machlokes*, he will eventually get back. One will ultimately profit in this world and the next by virtue of the fact that he was a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace.

I further once heard in the name of **Rav (Elazar) Shach** (1899-2001; Bnei Brak), zt"l, that he never saw anyone who lost by walking away from *machlokes*. This means when a person faces a choice of losing money or making a *machlokes*, Rav Shach advised people to be *mevater* (to pass up the opportunity to "fight for what is rightly his"). He said that in his long lifetime, he never witnessed anyone who ultimately lost because he was *mevater*.

Finally, I received an email written by students of **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman** [1914-2017; Bnei Brak] zt"l. It is written there, "We once asked our Rebbe (Rav Shteinman), "When the *machlokes* between Korach and Moshe began, how were the innocent bystanders supposed to know who was right?" On the one hand there was Moshe Rabbeinu—he certainly had credentials of his own. But on the other hand, there were 250 people. These were not 250 peasants. These were 250 *Roshei Sanhedraos* (distinguished people) and they were presenting reasonable complaints. How should they have known with which side the truth resided?

Rav Shteinman answered (in rhyming Hebrew) *Mi she'Shosek hu ha'Tzodek*. He who keeps quiet—he is the one who is right. That is the sign.

"Man says… Show me and I will trust you: Hashem says… Trust Me and I will show you." ~ The Chiddushei Harim.

The Symbolism of the Almonds

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

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

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

The Talmud in Brochos discusses whether the appropriate blessing for bitter almonds is "She'hakol" or "Borei Peri haEtz." The Rishonim there comment that there are two types of almonds. There are certain almonds that are sweet when they are small and have just begun to ripen. However these same almonds become bitter when left on the tree to fully ripen. Another type of almond is just the opposite. They are bitter when they begin to ripen, however they turn sweet when they are fully ripened.

These variant almonds represent the difference between machlokes and shalom [peace]. It is unfortunate to say this, but when a machlokes begins, it generates a certain excitement (geshmak!). However, when it persists and more and more people become involved and more and more people get hurt, the machlokes becomes extremely bitter. This is the end of every machlokes: everyone is hurt. Machlokes can be compared to those almonds that start out sweet but eventually turn bitter.

Shalom, on the other hand, is just the reverse. Making peace between warring factions is very difficult. Both sides have to compromise and bury the hatchet. Initially, this is not easy at all. It is hard to say "I'm sorry". It is hard to forgive perceived wrongs. It is bitter. But, once the peace is established, things turn out to be sweet in the end.

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

The Most Effective Way of Avoiding Disputes

Parshas Korach is the parsha in the Torah of "machlokes" [disputes], which all too often is a very practical topic. It would be pleasant if we would be able to say "This is an esoteric topic. When will we ever be involved in disputes in our lives?"

Unfortunately, for those of us who do not live in caves but have to deal with people – and all too often with family members – the topic of "machlokes" is all too relevant. I would like to share two insights into how a person should react when he is involved in "machlokes".

The Torah teaches "and he fell on his face" [16:4]. The Gemara [Sanhedrin 110a] asks "What was it that Moshe heard?" Moshe was a person who had experience dealing with Klal Yisrael. This goes all the way back to Egypt. Clearly, Moshe was not a thin-skinned individual who was not accustomed to the rough and tumble of dealing with the Jewish people. What could Moshe have heard that made him fall on his face?

The Gemara says Moshe heard that they suspected him of having a forbidden relationship – or at least allowing himself to be secluded privately — with married women!

This is what Moshe was accused of – something that is literally mind-boggling! Truly incredible! It would have been totally understandable if Moshe's reaction would have been "You ungrateful, disgusting people! After all I have done for you!" He would have been 100% in the right to let them have it in the starkest of terms.

What was Moshe's reaction? The Talmud says his reaction was "He took his tent and pitched it outside the camp." [Shemos 33:7] His reaction was he walked away from the machlokes without saying a word! This is a difficult lesson to practice, but it is the most effective way of avoiding machlokes. Be quiet, do not say anything, and walk away! This method is guaranteed to nip machlokes in the bud.

I have a friend who is a very successful Rabbi. He told me he has one rule which he has never violated in all his years in the rabbinate: Whenever a congregant accuses him of something or says something inflammatory or disrespectful – situations in which he has every right to put the congregant in his place, his rule is that he does not say anything. Invariably, the next Yom Kippur or 5 or 10 Yom Kippurs down the road, the person will come to him and say "I apologize for talking that way to you." This takes tremendous strength of character, especially when the charges are so outrageous!

This is the Torah's lesson when it says that "Moshe fell on his face": The best way to deal with machlokes is to avoid it.

Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the "Ponevezher Rav", was not only a genius and a pious person; he was a loveable individual as well. He was perhaps the most effective fund-raiser among all Roshei Yeshiva in the 20th century. A person is not an effective fund-raiser if he is not a likeable individual. People do not like to give money to people they can't stand. This is Rule Number 1 that is taught in fund-raising school. Rav Kahaneman was an outstanding fund-raiser. He could get money out of a stone!

Rav Kahaneman tells the story that once when he went to London, a member of the community started yelling at him and hurling accusations at him. The London Rabbinate was appalled at what happened and they wanted to put the person in Cherem [excommunication]. The Ponevezher Rav told the Rabbis that he has a tradition from the Chofetz Chaim which precluded that option. **The Chofetz Chaim** gave Rav Kahaneman a blessing that he would be successful in all his endeavors except one: He will never be successful in any machlokes he takes part in! "Everything you touch will be gold. You will be tremendously successful. But you will lose badly every dispute in which you take part."

He urged the Rabbinate to take no action against the person who insulted him. This attitude takes a tremendous amount of self-discipline.

I saw a story in which a family who was involved in a machlokes came to **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** for guidance. Rav Shlomo Zalman expounded for them the pasuk in Tehillim [38:14] "And I am like a deaf person, I don't hear and like a mute person who will not open his mouth." Rav Shlomo Zalman notes that the beginning of the pasuk is in first person (Lo Eshma) while the end of the pasuk is in third person (Lo Yiftach Piv). This is grammatically inconsistent.

Rav Shlomo Zalman explained that the pasuk is emphasizing the proper way to deal with machlokes: If the person who is insulted can say "I will be like a deaf person and not listen to what was said against me" then he – the other party to the machlokes – will have no one to argue with and he will therefore also not open his mouth any further in the future! It takes two to fight!

"The biggest mistake we can make in life is forgetting how much Hashem loves us." ~ Rabbi Yaakov Mizrahi

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לעילוי נשמת שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע״ה]

We are taught **ברא כרעיה דאבוה**- a son is the *leg* (extension) of his father [Eruvin 70b,Kesubos 92a]

The **Pachad Yitzchok** wonders why this term is used? Why isn't a son called the *hand* of his father?



There is a concept of **הולך** and an **עומד**. A **הולך** is one who has the power to keep growing spiritually- like us in this world. Contrary to this is an **עומד** which is stationary. For this reason, a **מלאך** is called an **עומד**. [Beraishis 32:26]

Korach said **כלם קדשים**- all of them are holy. This is in the present tense, meaning that we are content with who we are and there is no need for growth. This is contrary to the Torah as it says- **קדשים תהיו** [Vayikra 19:2]- future tense, meaning that we always need to be growing.

When a person dies, they no longer have the ability to be a **הולך** and as Chazal expound on **במתים חפשי** that the dead are free from Torah and Mitzvos.[Tehillim 88:6, Shabbos 30a] Indeed the term **נפטר** is rooted in **פטור** as a dead person is exempt from the Mitzvos. This inability for a deceased to become greater is only in that he himself can't. However, his children can elevate him. The term "*leg*" is used because the child has the ability to elevate their father even after he has passed away- the *leg* has is the limb that makes one into a **הולך**.

In the Bracha said before entering a cemetery, we say **מספר כלחם**- Hashem can count the number of bodies in the cemetery. The **Ksav**

Sofer asks that we can also count the number of bodies there? So, what is it that we are attributing to Hashem?

There are those individuals that accomplish so much in their life that is the equivalent of what many people achieve in their lifetime. As a result, they are considered as more than one person. Only Hashem knows how to count that. Similarly, there are those who affected many people with what they did in this world, the Chesed they did etc. Consequently, they have a part in many people's lives. Hashem is the only one who knows how to count that!

The word **בן** is rooted in **בנין** as he builds and continues his father's existence after he passes away. **בת** is also associated to building as in **חכמות נשים בנתה ביתה**- The wise among women, each builds her house [Mishlei 14:1]. Additionally, **אב** and **אם** each begin with an **א** whereas **בן** and **בת** begin with a **ב**. This alludes to the idea that one's children continue the existence of their parents as the **ב** follows the **א** in the **א"ב**.

The **Biur Halacha** states that saying **קדיש** on the Yartzheit, brings **נחת רוח** to his parents, protects them and atones for their souls and elevates the Neshama to a very high level.

What if the **נפטר** only has daughters? How can they continue the legacy of their parents? **The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch** writes that the main thing is to go in the proper path and in this way, one brings merit to their parents. This is even greater than saying **קדיש**.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- The Name קרח

Korach's full name was **קרח בן יצהר בן קהת**. **יצהר** means oil as in **ותירשך ויצהרך** – your wine and oil. Oil has the unique quality in that it rises to the top. This is what Korach attempted to do.

The Approach of The Chosson



During the week we say the same Shemona Esrei 3 times daily. The **Siach Yitzchok** wonders why is it that when Shabbos comes, we have a different Shemona Esrei for each of the 4 Tefilos- Maariv, Shacharis, Mussaf and Mincha?

The Midrash [Beraishis Raba 11:8] tells us that the six days of the week had a partner. Sunday was paired with Monday, Tuesday with Wednesday, and Thursday with Friday. Shabbos was on its own. It was eventually paired with the Yidden. So, Shabbos is a marriage. This is why we say **לכה דודי לקראת כלה** - Likewise we say **בואי בשלום עטרת בעלה**- ***enter in peace O crown of her husband*** [Mishlei 12:4]. It comes as no surprise that **פני שבת נקבלה** are the initials **נפש** since now we are complete as without this unification, we would only be half, just as one who is not married.

This is why why we light two candles by **הדלקת נרות** before Shabbos, since Shabbos is like a wedding where we walk down to the Chupa with two candles.

[The Gematria of **נר** is 250. Doubling that since we light two candles, we get 500. This is the number of limbs that there are in a man and woman combined as a man has 248 and a woman 252. Additionally, **פרו ורבו** is also Gematria 500].

The four different Shemona Esreis that we recite on Shabbos represent the different parts of marriage. **אתה קדשת** which we say on Friday night, refers to Kiddushin- the first part of marriage.

At Shacharis, **ישמח משה** is said, which is the idea of **שמחת חתן וכלה** [R' Chananel writes that R'Chanina would dance when bringing in Shabbos][Baba Kamma 32a].

Next is Mussaf where we say **תקנת שבת** which is about Korbonos. This signifies the meal of the wedding.

Lastly , in Mincha, we say **אתה אחד** representing Yichud, as it is a time of becoming one with Hashem just as with a Choson and Kalla.



The power of women

A woman has the power to build her husband as illustrated in the following:

We are taught that Dina had the ability to bring Esav to virtuous conduct.[Bereshis 32:23 Rashi]. The Pasuk says **לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו** -it is not good that man be alone….[Bereshis 2:18].

One way women merit eternal life is through sending off their husbands to learn Torah. .[Brachos 17a].

This idea is also implied from that which Avraham was told- **שמע בקלה** listen to Sarah's voice. [Bereshis 21:12].

The Gemara tells us that 9/10 of speech were taken by women. [Kiddushin 49b]. With this ability they can empower their husbands to learn. This is a deeper meaning of that which it states by Matan Torah.[Shemos 19.3] **כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל** – tell the women to tell the men to learn Torah. This is what is meant in **עזר כנגדו** [Bereshis 2:18]. as she can be a helper- **עזר** in his spirituality or the opposite- **כנגדו**. This contrast is displayed in the episode of Korach. While the wife of **און בן פלת** saved him, the wife of Korach brought about his downfall. [Sanhdrin 109a-110a].

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- The effects of jealousy



Why was such a seemingly bizarre punishment given -being swallowed by the earth?

The Midrash [Bereshis Rabba19:2] tells us that there are four who were ruined by **אף**- (anger). They were the Nachash, Sar Haofim, assembly of Korach and Haman. [**המן** is the Gematria of 95- the number of Pesukim in Parshas Korach). Anger is related to **קנאה** [Bereshis Rabba19:2]. Thus, **קנאה** are the initials of **קֹרח נַחש, אֲופים, הָמן**. Each of these four were punished because of Kinah- the Nachash with Adam, Sar Haofim with regard to Yosef since he interpreted for the Sar Hamashkim well, Korach with Moishe and Aharon, and Haman with Mordechai.

The Pasuk says [Mishlei 14:30] **ורקב עצמות קנאה** – "envy brings rotting of the bones", meaning there is nothing left of the person. (**ורקב** has the same Gematria as **קרח**-308) .This explains **קנאה...** **מוציאין את האדם** [Avos 4:21]. Since jealousy removes even the bones of a person since nothing of him remains.

We are taught that Korach acted because of **קנאה**. Now we can see the measure for measure in his punishment- since Korach was jealous, there was nothing left of him as he was swallowed up by the earth."

Korach caused **מחלוקת** – rearranging the letters we get **חלק מות** as this is what his end was.



A religious Jew by the name of David Gellis was on a business trip to Chicago. He spent an entire week involved in business and upon its conclusion, he grabbed an afternoon flight on Friday back to New York. Shabbos was late and he figured he had enough time to make it home once he landed in New York before the zman.

Unfortunately, right from the start, he realized there was a problem with the flight. Although all the passengers had boarded, the plane had still not budged from the terminal. A half hour went by and suddenly the plane began to move. David relaxed a bit as he wasn't too far behind schedule. But then, he looked out the window and saw that his plane, which had begun to taxi toward the runway, was now headed right back to the terminal, right back to where it had started. The minutes ticked by and soon, the flight was a full hour behind schedule. David was beginning to sweat as he realized he might not make it back home in time for Shabbos.

The captain came on the loudspeaker and announced that the delay was due to the fact that the President of the United States had just arrived in Chicago and for security purposes, no one was permitted to move until the President and his entourage had cleared out. He apologized for the delay and anticipated that they should be moving in about another hour. Now David really began to panic. There was no way he'd make it home on time and his only option was to get off the plane now and stay by a friend of his in Chicago.

He motioned to a flight attendant and explained that he must get off the plane but she responded politely, yet firmly, that it was impossible as no one was allowed to come or go until the President had left. David sat back in his seat and thought about it. He was stuck - it was crazy! He might not even make it to his friend's house in Chicago.



But what would happen ..... if he got sick and required medical attention? All at once, David began to shake and clutched his chest, gasping and choking at the same time. His alarmed seatmate hastily called over the stewardess who recognized the seriousness of the situation.

"Is there a doctor on board?" she called out in a shrill, pleading voice. Seconds later, a middle-aged woman came bounding down the aisle clutching a stethoscope. "I'm a doctor," she said loudly, "let me see the patient."

The stewardess pointed to David and she began to listen to his chest. "He's having a heart attack!" she screamed and demanded that they call an ambulance and have it ready to go to take him to a nearby hospital. A wheelchair was found, and David sat down in it, still clutching his heart. He was shocked and began to think that maybe he really was having a heart attack! Within seconds, the doctor was pushing him to the door of the aircraft, where they were both permitted to deplane due to the seriousness of the situation.

She continued to push the wheelchair out into the terminal and headed for the airport exit. Suddenly, David held up his hand and she stopped pushing him. "You know what?" he said, with a relieved smile on his face, "I feel so much better. I don't need to go to the hospital. Thank you for your help!"

David jumped out of the wheelchair, grabbed his small overnight bag, and ran to the nearest exit. He grabbed the first taxi he found and arrived at his friend's house with just a few minutes to spare. He spent a wonderful Shabbos in Chicago and told his friend about the

fiasco on the plane and how he managed to get off and get back here right before Shabbos.

On Motzei Shabbos, David took the first flight back to New York, and later on Sunday, when he went to daven Mincha, he told his Rav the amazing plane story. The Rav smiled as he listened and said he was collecting great Hashgacha Pratis stories.

It was a few weeks later, when his Rav called him and told him ... the rest of the story! He had just come back from a simcha in Chicago, and he overheard a woman talking to a few people. She was saying, "…. I didn't know what to do! The plane was stranded on the tarmac and not moving, and I realized I wasn't going to get to NY on time. Suddenly, they called out for a doctor and I came running. I saw a religious man in distress but when I checked his heart, he was fine. Then, I realized that this was my chance to get off the plane. I yelled that the man was having a heart attack and I needed to take him to the hospital. They let us off the plane and I was looking for a paramedic to give him over to, when the man just stood up and said he was fine. Then, he ran out one exit and I ran out another! Made it home for Shabbos with seconds to spare!"

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- Keep A Distance

The **אגרא דכלה** [Bamidbar 26:11] says that in every generation we have **בני קרח** who cause **מחלוקת**. We are instructed [Bamidbar 17:5] **ולא יהיה כקרח וכעדתו** - don't be like Korach and his assembly.

Our Parsha begins **ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי** – why doesn't the Pasuk continue and mention Yaakov's name? The **Toras Avos** explains that Korach took the aspects of Kedusha from Yitzhar, Kehas and Levi, however, the trait of Yaakov-Humility- he didn't take. This lack of humility led to his downfall.

Humility leads to **שלום**. The importance of **שלום** is shown in that many Brachos and Tefilos conclude with **שלום**. Among them are **ברכת כהנים**

(וישם לך שלום), the conclusion of Shemone Esrei **(השכיבנו,עושה שלום)** in Maariv, the last Bracha of Shemone Esrei **(שים שלום)**, Kaddish **(עושה שלום)**, Birchas Hamazon **(ה'' יברך את עמו בשלום)**.

In the year 1760, there was an earthquake in Tzefas in which 165 Jews were killed. **ר' רפאל מיוחס** (1695-1771) writes that it came because of **מחלקת** – [rearranging the letters we get **חלק מות**] With this he explains **ונתנו שלום בארץ** [Vayikra 26:6]- where there is peace in the land, without **מחלקת** then **ושכבתם ואין מחריד** there won't be any fear and noise from an earthquake.

The **Noda Biyehuda**[1713-1793] writes **אין לך מצוה גדולה מן השלום...ואין לך גרוע מהמחלקת** There is no greater Mitzva than peace… and nothing worse than **מחלקת**.



Pardas Yehuda- Rabbi Yehuda Z. Klitnick

''ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אתם ואת בתיהם... ''[טז:לב] ***"The earth beneath them opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses"***

What is the reason of this strange punishment? **Rabbeinu Bechaye** explains that Korach erred in seeking to rise to a lofty position for which he was unfit. Therefore, he was punished by being swallowed up by the ground and sent to the lowest level of Gehinnom.

The great tzaddik, **Rabbi Volf Strickover** answers that Korach challenged Moishe and Aharon accusing them of arrogance. In reality, the Torah testifies that Moishe was the most humble man

on Earth and viewed himself as no greater than the ground itself. In order to punish him, Korach had to be lowered below Moishe. Since Moishe considered himself equal to the ground, the only choice was for the earth to swallow him up.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba 11:7) says: Why did they deserve such a terrible punishment? Hashem regards quarrelling as one of the gravest sins.

Divisiveness contradicts the essential unity of Hashem. A flower has perfect form and symmetry, the ecosystem functions harmoniously, the colours of a sunset blend perfectly. Quarrelling – with its tension, allegations and incriminations – undermines the harmony of creation. The **Shevet Mussar** (37:22) cites a Midrash which teaches that fighting and discord is such a severe sin that on the day of Korach's rebellion the Manna didn't fall, whereas on the day of the sin of the golden calf, which was presumably a greater sin, the Manna did fall because there was peace and unity among the people.

Torah Treats- Rabbi Y Richtman- Unstoppable

Harav Moshe Landensky, the Rosh Yeshivah of Radin, asks a mind-blowing question on the first pasuk of this week's parsha. Korach's genealogy stops with Levi, and omits the name of Yaakov, because he davened on his deathbed (Bereishis 49:6) that his name not be associated with Korach's assembly.

While his teffilah was answered, if Yaakov foresaw such a terrible and bitter battle, why would he daven just for his own sake? Why not daven that none of this should have happened in the first place? He answers that Yaakov knew that this machlokes would be so bad that him praying wouldn't even help. Therefore, he tried to save, at the very least, his name.

Torah Treats- Rabbi Y Richtman- Cloudy Message



As the machlokes between Moshe and Korach intensified, so did the confusion in Klal Yisroel. Moshe tried to restore calm and order amongst the Jewish people so he told Korach and his followers, let's leave the decision up to Hashem. He said (16:5) "in the morning Hashem will make it known who is right". Why does the pasuk emphasize "the morning"?

One reason given is because in the morning the manna falls. It was known that the greater a person was the manna would fall closer to his homes, and if he was wicked it would fall far from him. The morning would prove who was righteous and who was wicked. If this is true, why didn't Korach get the message from Hashem that he was wrong?

The **Shevet Mussar** explains that, on that day, the manna didn't fall due to the machlokes. This is in and of itself a powerful lesson of the destructive nature of arguments. Machlokes has the power to stop shefah and bracha from coming into the world.

R'Areyeh Leib Shteinman zt"l, explains that the manna fell and indeed it fell far from Korach. However, Korach took the message and misinterpreted it according to his defence. He thought that Hashem was telling him that the wrong was in not making the fight earlier, and that he should really fight with more conviction. Here we see another powerful lesson in the danger of machlokes. It will let a person think that his mistake is actually a mitzvah.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt- Both Sides



The pasuk says **וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח**. Rashi [16:1] tells us that Korach took himself to one side by separating himself and raising questions regarding the Kehuna. An astute person (a **פקח**) would realise that there are always two sides to every disagreement. We are told that Korach was a **פקח** ! [Rashi 16:7]

צד is Gematria 94. Multiplied by 2 = 188 = **פקח**. However, each side has to be a **פקח** -therefore 2 times 188 =376 = **שלום** . True peace will prevail. (**R' Naftoli Tzvi Hurvitz of Ropshitz zt"l** (Zera Kodesh and The Sefer Ohr L'tzadikim)

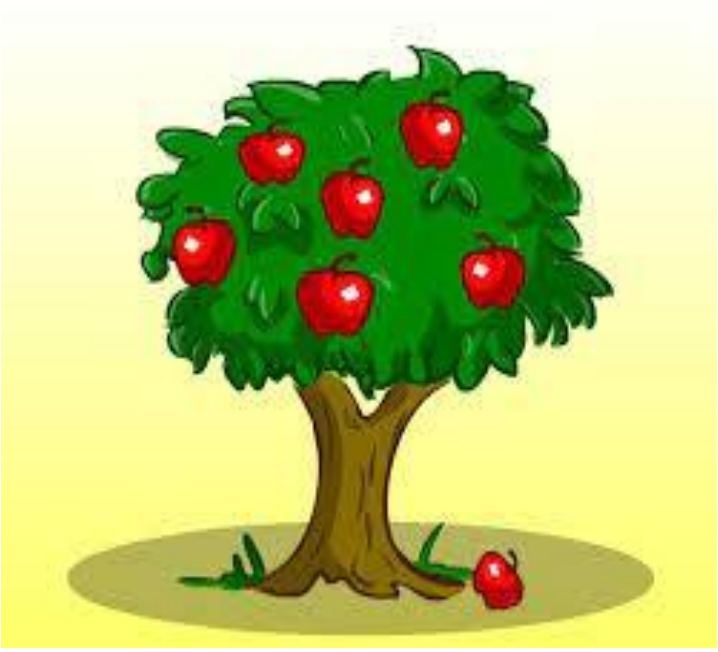
This is what Rashi meant that Korach was a pikeach, he wasn't looking at both sides like a true pekach should. This would have prevented the machlokes from starting. Instead, he took only one side, as Rashi says, and this was the cause of his mistake.

Reish Lakish tells us that Korach took a **מקח רע** for himself [Sanhedrin 109b]. Adding up **רע** and **קרח** the Gematria is 578 which equals **מחלקת** .We should all merit to have peace with everyone.

A Wise Man would say:

"Do not educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy. So that when they grow up and enter the real world, they will know the value of everything in life - not just the price tag."

Torah Treats- Rabbi Y Richtman- The Apple Doesn't Fall Far From the Tree



Rashi points out the damaging effect of machlokes by citing the fact that amongst the people killed in the destruction of Korach and his followers were the women and children of the families that were involved. This is a hard concept to understand, how small children could be punished for the actions of their fathers. Any teacher of students will tell you a child just mimics what he or she hears at home. Not only is their speech learned from their parents but also their middos and overall conduct.

Therefore, when the children of Dasan and Aviram saw how their fathers were acting and the chutzpah they displayed towards Moshe, it was almost a foregone conclusion that they would display similar traits.

We see from here the tremendous responsibility that rests on the shoulders of parents in not only preaching good middos but, more importantly, practicing those good middos.

Did You Know?

Torah and mockery cannot coexist. The more Torah enters one's heart, the more mockery leaves it. Conversely, the more one strengthens the trait of mockery, the more one's Torah becomes weakened. [Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:3]

Dry Sticks-



Aharon's staff sprouted flowers, buds and almonds (17:23).The **Kli Yakar** suggests that the lesson of a dry stick sprouting fruits is that we can never underestimate others. Even a person who seems to be unsuccessful in everything they do—can become great, through the grace of Hashem. On the other hand, someone who seems destined for greatness, without Divine support, can just dry up and never succeed.

Torah Tavlin

R' Aryeh Leib Tzintz zt"l (Melo Haomer) would say: **ופקדת כל האדם יפקד עליהם לא ה' שלחני**



Chazal learn from here (Nedarim 39) the mitzvah of visiting the sick. Why here? Because from the time of Yaakov Avinu, Hashem initiated the natural progression of a person's life, and that before he dies, he will get sick. This allows a person to do Teshuva before he passes away and those who visit the sick can learn Mussar.

However, Korach and his men were not interested in Teshuva; thus, there was no point for them to get sick. For this reason, the ground swallowed them up suddenly and without warning. Moshe thus said, 'If the fate of all men were upon them' – if they got sick like everyone else, this means they were correct, and I was not sent by Hashem. But if they die suddenly, then it is clear that they were wicked individuals who had no interest in Teshuva, and they deserve such a sudden death."

Torah Tavlin



R' Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l (quoted in sefer Derech Sicha) would say: - The Gemara (Sanhedrin 109b) tells us that *On ben Peles* was saved from certain death, thanks to his wife's wisdom. What was her great 'chochma' that the Gemara refers to?

She told her husband that it makes no difference to him who leads the people, so why get involved? Does that take such a big genius? The answer is that a genius is not needed. During a Machlokes when people are all emotionally entangled, no one speaks with a great deal of intelligence. Merely speaking logically and rationally during these times qualifies your words as 'chochma.'"

A lack of accomplishment is the greatest suffering. – The Chofetz Chaim

Torah Tavlin

As the earth trembled and shook with mighty heaves, amid thunderous ear-splitting claps, the ground beneath Korach and his companions opened up and swallowed them entirely within. Instantly, the people "who were all around them fled from the cries for they said, 'Lest the earth swallow us up too!'"

The Re'em (R' Eliyahu Mizrachi) explains that "לקולם" does not refer to the noise made by the people who were overwhelmed in the earth's convulsion. On the contrary, such human cries cause people to come and observe, often to gawk, and even to help if possible. Here, though, people ran in the opposite direction because the sounds they heard were unearthly terrifying, like deafening thunder which made people panic and flee.

It was clear to all those nearby that the wicked one's were being punished and they fled as far away as possible to ensure that they were not amongst those wicked sinners, that they were righteous and took no part in Korach's plot.

The Rosh Yeshivah of Torah Vodaath, **R' Yisroel Reisman shlit'a** tells a story of a Russian Jew who began a distinct interest in Judaism in the late 1960's, after the State of Israel's stunning victory in the Six-Day-War. He joined a small group of fellow Jews who met in the basement of a refusenik to study Talmud with a well-educated Talmid Chacham, a rarity in the Soviet Union in that era. The lectures were inspiring and eye-opening, and the man was excited to be part of something bigger than himself.

The problem was that this man did not have a head for the class and rarely understood what was being studied. He would sit on a bench in the crowded basement, among dozens of other newly inspired Russian Jews and fall asleep, his audible snores evoking displeasure from the others who were cramped and straining to hear the whispered words of the rabbi. Interest in the secret class grew amongst the burgeoning refusenik community and in very short time

there was no space left in the basement. To move out of their cramped accommodations, however, was out of the question due to the fear of being caught by the Russian secret police.

A few younger members grumbled that this man was sleeping through most of the shiurim, taking up a valuable seat that could go to someone who would obviously benefit from it more. A small group of these members approached the older Russian man and got straight to the point.

"Look, we know that you like coming here and you are proud of your Judaism," they said. "But frankly, you sleep here each day, and you take away valuable space from others who want to join the class. They cannot join the class because there is no room. Perhaps "you could give up your seat so that someone else could come?"

The people did not know what to expect. Would he get upset at them? Would he start yelling and screaming that he had earned the right to be here just like them and they had no right to ask him to leave! Or would he agree to their request and meekly walk away, giving up his coveted spot?

What they weren't prepared for was the response he actually gave them. The man did not get upset. He simply smiled at the well-meaning young men and spoke softly. "Let me tell you a story," he began.

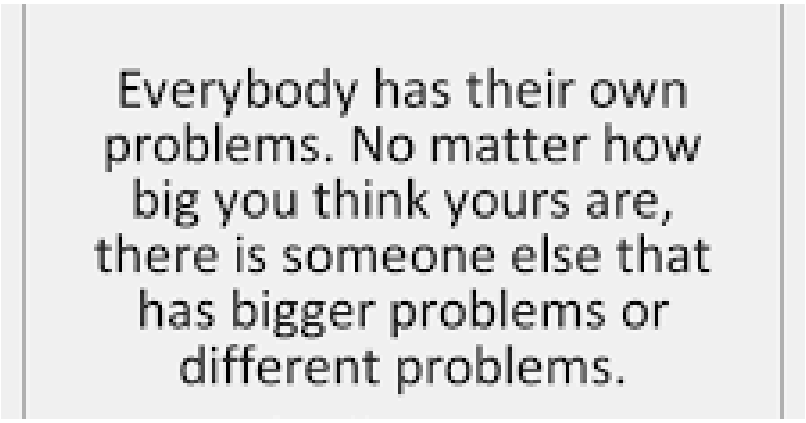
"During the Stalinist purges of 1937 and 1938, I was sitting in a cafe not far from a group of young men who were huddled together. Suddenly, agents of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), burst in and began beating them mercilessly. Chaos ensued and other secret policemen quickly barged in, arrested them and hauled them away.

But they were not done. They suddenly charged towards me and began striking me with their truncheons as well. I was down on the floor and pleading, 'I am not with them! I don't know them! I am a

loyal member of the Communist party and a servant of Comrade Stalin! I have nothing to do with them! Why are you beating me?' "They finally backed off. But before leaving, one of the NKVD agents turned towards me and shouted, with rage in his eyes, 'Let me tell you something. We are beating you because if you sit with them, you are one of them!'"

The older man turned to the young refuseniks and said, "I sit here every day even though I do not understand the shiur, I sit here for one simple reason: If I sit with them, I am one of them!" *(Parsha Parables)*

R' Baruch HaLevi Epstein zt"l (Mekor Boruch) would say: ויצא משה את כל המטת ... ויראו ויקחו איש מטהו

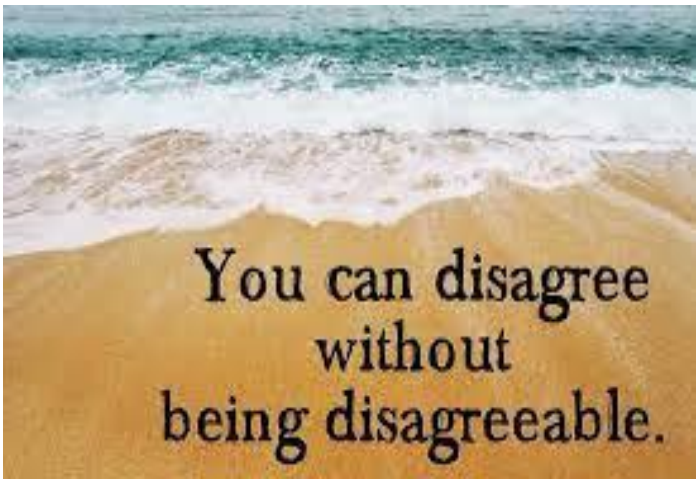


There is a well-known expression that if a person had the option to trade in his troubles for someone else's problems, he would quickly take back his own problems rather than deal with another person's issues.

A 'Mateh' (stick) alludes to a person's troubles which tend to 'hit' him hard and cause him anguish. Thus, when Moshe Rabbeinu removed all the sticks from the Ohel Moed, each person 'saw and took back his stick' - each one recognized that he'd rather deal with his own troubles than take someone else's."

"Emunah is not a leap in the dark – it is a leap into the light of Hashem's love and providence." – Rabbi Dovid Ashear.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l



By every chasuna, we give a beracha to the chosson and kallah that their zivug should be "עולה יפה" we can learn a lesson from the first Rashi in Parshas Korach, when he says: **פרשה זו יפה נדרשת** - "This parsha is expounded well."

Just as we learn a beautiful lesson on how to value the opinion of another, it is so important in a marriage to always listen to the opinion of the other spouse first and seek the truth, even if it means disregarding your own opinion.

R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l always said that the key to a good marriage is that even when you disagree, you should not be disagreeable! Furthermore, the amount of posukim in this parsha is 95 - the gematria of **יפה** further reminding us of the very important concept of shalom bayis and avoiding machlokes!

The **Satmar Rebbe zt"l** adds that the 95th mitzvah in the Torah is "ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם" the mitzvah to build a **מקדש מעט**, a home in which the shechina will be happy to reside.

Living Jewish – From Our Sages

How is it possible that a portion of the Torah is named after a sinner as great as Korach?

The Torah wants to emphasize that we can learn something constructive even from Korach's bitter controversy. Just as Korach wanted to be a High Priest, every Jew should similarly desire to draw near to G-d. (*Likutei Sichot of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

At the end of Parshas Korach the Torah tells us about a covenant a bris that the Ribono Shel Olem made with the Kohanim, it's called '**בְּרִיתְ מֶלַח עוֹלָם**'. The covenant of salt which lasts forever. In other words, this agreement that the kohanim will always be special is like salt. Salt doesn't spoil.

In **וַיִּקְרָא** [2:13] it tells us "**עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנְךָ תַּקְרִיב מֶלַח**"... on every korban you are supposed to put salt and that's why we have salt at the table when we eat bread, because our tables are like a mizbeach and bread is like a karbon and therefore you have salt.



Some people are very makpid every single time that you eat bread that you use salt, whether its Shabbos or the middle of the week.

Salt shows the connection that the Ribono Shel Olem has with Klal Yisroel. Just like Rashi tells us here in Korach, that salt never spoils 'The love that Hashem has for klal Yisroel never spoils'. It is preserved and it helps contain things the way they are. It preserves things and the love that Hashem has for Klal Yisroel is preserved for all time.

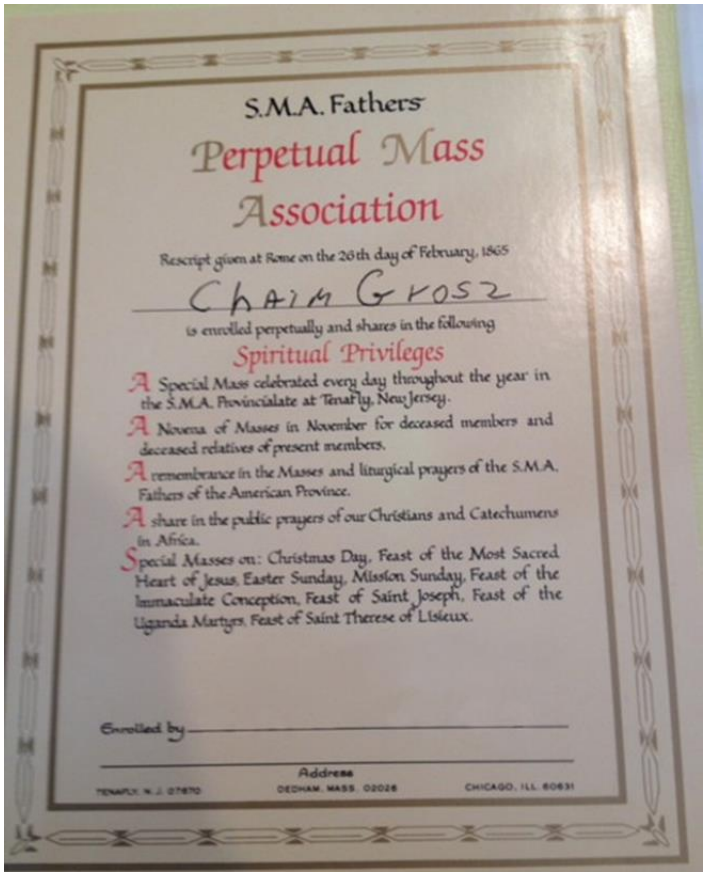
Especially during this time when so many of Klal Yisroel and in the world, are going through difficult times, it is important to remember that "**עַל כָּל־קָרְבָּנְךָ תַּקְרִיב מֶלַח**"

We should use salt every time we make Hamotzi because we want to be reminded of the love, the unchanging, unspoiling love that the Ribono Shel Olem has for us in all situations. When people go through difficult times it is important to remember that Hashem loves us and cares for us and will never change his commitment to us as Klal

Yisroel. Therefore, everyone should be careful to use salt every time that you make Hamotzi.

It's the בְּרִיתְ מֶלַח that Hashem made not only with the Kohanim but with Klal Yisroel that at every table which is like a mizbeach that we should use the salt to remember the love that Hashem has for us.

The Chasid who Built a Church by Tobi Ash


S.M.A. Fathers
Perpetual Mass Association
Rescript given at Rome on the 26th day of February, 1865
Chaim Grosz
is enrolled perpetually and shares in the following
Spiritual Privileges
A Special Mass celebrated every day throughout the year in the S.M.A. Provincialate at Tenafly, New Jersey.
A Novena of Masses in November for deceased members and deceased relatives of present members.
A remembrance in the Masses and liturgical prayers of the S.M.A. Fathers of the American Province.
A share in the public prayers of our Christians and Catechumens in Africa.
Special Masses on: Christmas Day, Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Easter Sunday, Mission Sunday, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Feast of Saint Joseph, Feast of the Uganda Martyrs, Feast of Saint Therese of Lisieux.
Enrolled by
Address
TENAFLY, N.J. 07670 DEDHAM, MASS. 02026 CHICAGO, ILL. 60631

The card with my father's name

Ten days after my father, Rabbi Chaim Grosz, of blessed memory, passed away, I received a large manila envelope with a beautiful card inside from a Catholic church in New Jersey. The front of the card had a woman named "Mary Queen of the Missions". The inside had a preprinted form in which the church was going to say a Perpetual Mass for the soul of Chaim Grosz, his name carefully handwritten.

How could a Perpetual Mass be said for him? My father, a prominent Chasidic rabbi, was born in January 1944 in Hungary. Miraculously, he survived being deported to Bergen Belsen, and when it was liberated 18 months later in April 1945, my father still weighed little more than a newborn. His mother, father, and siblings survived the camps, but they were physically and emotionally broken. Like most of the survivors of the Holocaust, they were unable to return to their homes, and while waiting for legal permission to emigrate, were sent en masse to DP camps (Displaced Persons camps.)

My father and his family sojourned briefly to a DP camp in Italy just before they came to the United States. My father's father was a well-known Rabbi. Like most Chasidic Hungarian Rabbis, my grandfather wore a long black caftan and a round short hat made of beaver, and as was the custom for a "man of G-d," he walked with his hands clasped behind his back. And so, confusing my grandfather for a priest, the old Italian women would rush at him and attempt to kiss him in their religious fervor.

My grandfather went to great lengths to avoid this situation, going so far as to change his clothes and to do everything he could to rush his emigration out of Italy. What would he think of this Perpetual Mass card that was sent on behalf of my father, a scion of a Chasidic dynasty?

As the "next of kin" and the executrix of his estate, I was sent the card. But I didn't tell anyone about it; it didn't make sense! I called the church looking for answers. The secretary who answered the phone had a flat Boston accent. She didn't know anything about it but promised that she would get the "Father himself" to call me. O Father who art in Heaven? What did my father do?

Ten days later, I got the call. The priest explained that the church had had some legal problems and when they went to court, they used my father's case as legal precedence – and they won! *My father's case…*

My throat closed up and my eyes got wet thinking about "The Case." In the mid-1970's, my grandfather had a heart attack, and he could no longer walk to shul. Jewish law prohibits driving on Shabbos and there was no "*eruv*," the aerial demarcation line that would have allowed him to be pushed in a wheelchair where he lived. There was simply no way he could get to shul on the holy Shabbos and his pitiful cries were heartbreaking.

So, my father solved the problem by transforming our family room into an ersatz synagogue, a *shteibel* which is Yiddish for "room."



My father, of blessed memory

One day a week, we lost out on the room that symbolized that we were a nice American family. Other Holocaust survivors, longing for Chasidic style prayers as well as the customary Slivovitz and herring also came. All told, there were maybe 15 old men, some with numbers tattood on their arms and some without, but all were scarred in some way by the war. They would come on Friday nights and Shabbos mornings to pray to Hashem, and to see each other, clinging to each other in their reminiscences about a way of life that no longer existed.

But this was not to last. After three weeks of these weekend gatherings, the neighbors decided to put a stop to it and they called Code Enforcement.

The city of Miami Beach wanted to close down these Friday night and Shabbos day prayer groups. To the city officials, this was purely a zoning issue. We lived in a single-family residential area – the law clearly stated that we could not hold prayer services in our home – case closed.

The fearlessness that had fueled his entire existence clicked into gear and he was not going to back down.

My father, who spent his first two years of life with a rag stuffed in his mouth so that no one could hear him cry or make any sort of sound, had only one volume once it was removed: Bellowing. The fiery

fearlessness that had fueled his entire existence clicked into gear and he was not going to back down. He was bombastic. Furious. This was America! This was his beloved father! This was just a room in his house where he was hosting once a week prayer gatherings with 15 old men!

No lawyer would take his case. This was against the City of Miami Beach zoning rules and the old saying "You can't fight City Hall" appeared to be true. Except Chaim Grosz didn't get the message.

As the son of a rabbi, my father was only allowed to go up to the fourth grade in English or secular studies. At the tender age of 17, his brilliance was recognized, and he received his rabbinical ordination from one of the most revered Chasidic Rabbis in the world. Fearless as well, he decided that if no lawyers would take his case, he would do it himself and rely on his prodigious background in Talmudic law.

With the purchase of an IBM Selectric typewriter with the drop-in ball in Times New Roman along with three packages of legal-size paper, I became my father's legal assistant. I learned words like "heretofore," "plaintiff," "defendant," how to type in justified margins, and we relied on a legal dictionary for authority.

My father was going to square off against Janet Reno (*the State Attorney who became the Attorney General of the United States* in the Supreme Court of the State of Florida).

My father lost the first round because of the zoning laws that prohibited a synagogue in a residential area. Filled with fury at what he perceived to be an anti-G-d and anti-Jewish action, he provoked the judge and got a 60-day suspended sentence.

In 1979, representing himself, armed with conviction, two religious books (a massive Code of Jewish Law and Talmud), his nephew Hershy and my carefully worded and typed briefs, he squared off against Janet Reno in the Supreme Court of the State of Florida.

Lawyers do not like "common people" representing themselves. My father came prepared to the high court dressed in suit and tie – clothes he did not normally wear. He was a short round man, no more than 5'3" in black pants that were poorly hemmed. He looked like a child next to the over 6-foot Janet Reno.

The State asserted the claim that my father created a house of worship in an area that was prohibited by the zoning code – a mere ordinance. In return, he decided to fight them with Constitutional law. He laid out his strategy stating that the First Amendment had both freedom of religion and the right to assemble peacefully. He then quoted the 14th Amendment which ratified the States to allow peaceful assembly. The State called up their expert witness who would explain to the court what a synagogue looks like.

When it was my father's turn to cross-examine, he hoisted up the two large Hebrew books onto the witness stand. He asked the expert to read in Hebrew the requirements for a synagogue, but the expert could not read Hebrew!

My father then turned to the judge and said, "Your Excellency, there is no way that this could be an expert on Jewish synagogues. He cannot read Hebrew, the original language of the Jewish people."

He continued, "Even the Founding Fathers spoke Hebrew! They even spoke Hebrew at Harvard! How could a Jewish expert on Jewish law not know the language in the original?"

Perhaps the judge was charmed by the "Your Excellency," but despite vigorous objections from the State Attorney, he removed the expert. My father explained how a synagogue operates versus a prayer group meeting: There were no dues; he made no money; it occurred only on the weekend. Furthermore, no one drove, as it was the holy Shabbos, and so no cars were clogging up the swales. Finally, there were never more than 15 men. It was a religious meeting, pure and simple, protected under both the first and fourteenth amendments.

He won the appeal and was featured on all the major news channels.

He not only won the appeal, but he was also featured in the Miami Herald, and on the three news channels (ABC, NBC, and CBS) that existed then. It was a tremendous victory. He went up against City Hall, the State of Florida, the State Attorney who became the Attorney General of the United States and the Supreme Court of Florida.

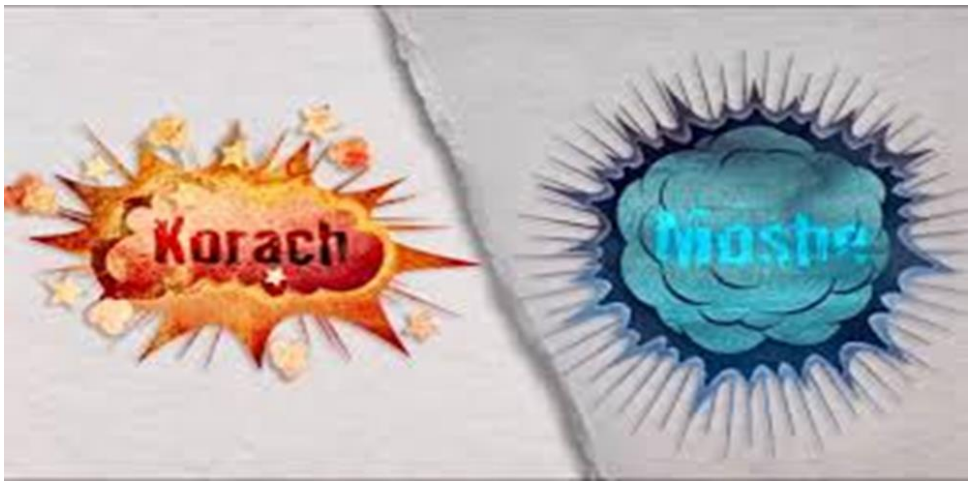
His case set a precedent. And this Catholic church in New Jersey, a Korean temple in Hawaii, a Santeria church in Hialeah, and hundreds of others used his case as precedence to fight their own religious and zoning battles.

I still have the Perpetual Mass card along with his papers and his wallet in my safety deposit box. It's a testament to a man who once born, wasn't allowed to speak, who built a small shul to please his father, and ended bringing G-d everywhere.



Rabbeinu Don Yitzchok Abarbanel ZT"L would say: "Elazar the son of Aharon Hakohen was commanded to remove the fire pans of the 250 men who tested Hashem, and not Aharon himself. We must learn from here that if one is victorious in his claim against another, he should not gloat nor 'rub it in' and add to the embarrassment of the loser."

Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l - Don't Turn a Blind Eye



This week, the Torah tells us the sad story of Korach and his failed rebellion against Moshe and Ahron. A rabble-rouser and haughty narcissist, Korach convinced the masses that he was the people's leader, and Moshe and Ahron were power-hungry dictators, who grabbed all of the benefits of priesthood and leadership for themselves and their immediate family.

Indeed, it only took one split second for G-d to show who was right, as the ground opened and swallowed Korach and his followers alive.

What sparked Korach to travel down this road? Rashi (16:7) tells us, "Why did Korach, a smart man, do this nonsense? His eye tricked him. He saw that his descendants will be great men, equal to Moshe and Ahron. He said, "Can it be that they will be so great and I will remain silent?..."

However Rashi uses a troubling word. "Eino hit'aso -his eye tricked him" Humans have two eyes. Why did Rashi use the singular term, "his eye"?

Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz zt"l, "the Chazon Ish," was a giant in Torah, known throughout the world for his saintly and simple lifestyle. The story is told that as the village of Bnei Brak, the home of the Chazon Ish, slowly transformed from a village to a small city, the municipality began installing street lights for the first time. A certain influential individual arranged that they install a light one directly in front of the Chazon Ish's building, in order that the great sage benefit from the light.



After a few days, this individual approached Rav Karelitz and asked him how he is enjoying the light in front of his building. "I learned a great lesson from the light," he replied. "When one is far from the light, his shadow is big - he himself thinks that he is great. But as one get closer to the light, the shadow gets smaller, as one should realize how little he is. But when one is directly under the light, one realizes that he is so insignificant, that one hardly has his own existence at all!"

My grandfather, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l would explain in the name of **Rav Yisroel from Ruzhyn zt"l**. Chazal tell us that a person has two eyes for a purpose. One eye to look up heavenward, and see the vastness and greatness of our Creator. One should be inspired to emulate the ways of the righteous, and grow to be closer to Hashem. The other eye is to look downward, towards the Earth, to remind ourselves that we come from the ground after all, and we should remain humble and loyal to Hashem.

This is precisely where Korach went wrong. Yes, he used one eye to see the greatness of Hashem, as he was from the elite group of Levi'ites who actually carried the Aron! But his mistake was with his second eye. He did not use that eye correctly. He forgot to look downward and remain humble. He became haughty, letting his first eye, still looking upward, lead him to think that he was worthy of leading the Jewish Nation.

Parshah Pearls (*Adapted from the Ma'ayanah shel Torah*) - Always Finding Fault

וּמַדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהַל ה׳ –*"And why do you raise yourselves above the congregation of Hashem?*" (16:3).

This was Korach's complaint against Moshe and Aharon, the two most humble men who ever lived.

R. Naftali me'Ropshitz cites the Pasuk in Tehilim (106:16) **וַיְקַנְאוּ לְמֹשֶׁה בַּמַּחֲנֶה לְאַהֲרֹן קְדוֹשׁ ה׳** "And they (Dasan and Aviram) were jealous of Moshe in the camp, of Aharon the holy man of G-d".

No matter what a Tzadik does, there are always people who will find fault with his actions. If they see a Tzadik who sits and learns Torah day and night, they will castigate him for separating himself from the community, and for not involving himself more in its affairs; whereas when a Tzadik does work for the community, they accuse him of meddling in affairs that do not concern him, because his place is in the Beis-Hamedrash, where he should be learning full-time.

And that is precisely what the above Pasuk in Tehilim means. "They were jealous of Moshe in the camp", he explains, refers to their complaint that Moshe was so busy learning that they never saw him in the camp, where he was sorely needed; whilst when it came to Aharon, they complained that he was a holy man, whose place was in the Beis-Hamedrash, learning Torah, and not running round the camp making peace between every couple that had fallen out.

The Glass is Half Full

"Even if the chances of success and failure are equal, why worry about failure when you can just as easily hope for success?" ~ **Rambam.**

Internal Combustion, by Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky



"Any quarrel," says the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos (5:20) "that is made for the sake of heaven shall, in conclusion, last. However, if the argument has selfish motivation it shall not last."

Korach and his congregation are the examples given for those whose debate stemmed from egotistical motivations. "Those types of disputes," says the Mishnah, "are doomed to fail."

On the week following Pesach 1985, I began my first pulpit in an old small shul in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The scent of herring juice permeated the building, and the benches did not creak as they swayed, they krechtsed. As old as the furnishings were, the membership was older. But the Congregation's spirit of tradition of was feistier than its physical appearance.

My first week, I was asked to bless the new month of Iyar, Mevarchim HaChodesh. **Then the trouble began.**

Every Shabbos, a sombre prayer, Av HaRachamim, which memorializes Jewish martyrs during the era of the crusades is recited. On holidays or other festive occasions such as Shabbos Mevarchim, in deference to the spirit of celebration, the prayer is omitted. However, the month of Iyar is considered a sad time for Jews. 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva perished in that period. Many congregations recite Av HaRachamim on Shabbos Mevarchim for the month of Iyar. I assumed my new congregation did the same and began reciting, " Av HaRachamim." Immediately I heard a shout, and an uproar began.

"We don't say Av HaRachamim today. We just blessed the new month," announced the President.

"We say it this month! It's sefirah, a period of mourning," yelled back the Vice-President.

" You know nothin'. We never ever say it when we bench Rosh Chodesh," yelled the Treasurer.

"We always did!" asserted the Gabbai.

The argument was brewing for five minutes when they all began to smile and instructed me to say the prayer as I had planned. Before I continued the service, I sauntered over to the old Shammash who was sitting quietly through the tumult and asked, "what is the minhag of this shul?"

He surveyed the scene and beamed. ***"This shul is 100 years old. Arguing over this is our minhag!"***

The Mishnah gives us a litmus test. How does one know when there is validity to an argument? Only when it is an argument that envelops eternity. The arguments of Shamai and Hillel last until today, in the halls and classrooms of Yeshivos and synagogues across the world. Each one's view was not given for his own personal gain, it was argued for the sake of heaven. However, Korach's battle with Moshe was one of personal gain. Moshe had no issue with them. It was a battle of Korach and his cohorts. Each with a completely different motivation — himself. It did not last.

A battle with divine intent remains eternal. In a healthy environment there is room for healthy differences. And those differences will wax eternal.

Among the things you can give and still keep are… Your word, a smile and a grateful heart

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

I Don't Agree With You! Let's Fight!

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נַעֲלֶה "Moshe sent for Dosson and Aviram, sons of Eliav, and they said, "'We will not come!'" (Bamidbar 16:12)

I recently heard a story from **Rabbi Dovid Ashear**. A woman walked into a bakery in Israel, one erev Shabbos. As she was thinking about what to buy, the salesman told her that there was a special sale, and she could get two cakes for the price of one. She liked the idea but said that she only needed one cake. He suggested that she give the second cake to someone else. She said she could give one to her sister, but she did not have the time to bring it to her. When the salesman heard where her sister lived, he said that he lived only a few blocks away and could deliver it for her. He wrote the name and the address. She wrote a note saying, "From your sister. Have a great Shabbos!"

After Shabbos, she was surprised that her sister did not call her to thank her for the cake. She called her sister and was surprised to hear that the cake had not been delivered. The next morning, she called the bakery to find out what had happened. The salesman said that he had delivered the cake to the address she had given him, to her sister on the first floor. She said, "But my sister lives on the third floor!" Apparently, there were two people at that address with the same last name and the cake was delivered to the "wrong" person.

This woman got very curious and looked in the phone book for the phone number of the person who did get the cake. She called and asked the woman who answered the phone if she had a received a cake that erev Shabbos. There was a long pause and the sound of crying could be heard. When the woman composed herself, she said that what they got was more than just a cake. Apparently, her

husband had not spoken to his sister for over 10 years because of a petty argument. When he saw the cake from "his" sister, he thought she wanted to make peace and renew the relationship. He called his sister to thank her. That phone call was the catalyst in bringing her husband and his sister back to a peaceful and loving relationship.

Machlokes, arguments are terrible. It can break apart friendships and loving relationships.

The verdict was in. He was guilty of murder. The judge ordered that he be hung, together with his children, ages 8, 6, 2, and 5 months.

We would be astonished if we heard such a verdict. Why were the guilty man's children also punished? They did not do anything! Yet, this is what occurred in this week's Parsha. Korach instigated a machlokes, a dispute, against Moshe Rabbeinu. The catalyst of the dispute was jealousy. Korach wanted a prestigious position. He did not receive it because Hashem had told Moshe to give the position to someone else. Korach was very upset and rallied followers against Moshe. Korach claimed that since the entire Jewish People were holy, all had equal rights to get positions of leadership. Moshe had no right to give all the leadership positions to those whom he chose. Korach denied that Hashem had told Moshe whom to appoint. Korach also mocked Moshe, falsely claiming that Moshe had made up certain mitzvos (see Rashi 16:1). This machlokes was exceedingly serious because it was more than an attack on Moshe. It was an attack on Hashem and disputed the validity of the Torah.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l (Sefer Shmiras Halashon, Shar Hazchira perek 15) discusses the severity of machlokes. It is destructive in terms of relationships as well as being spiritually destructive. It can lead to such serious sins as slander, jealousy, hatred, and even embarrassing a person in public. It is so serious that even young children are punished for their parent's misdeeds.

The Chofetz Chaim quotes the Midrash Tanchuma on this parsha showing how severe machlokes is. The Midrash points out that that

the Heavenly Court does not punish a child until he is 20 years old. The Jewish courts do not punish a child until the age of bar or bas mitzvah. Yet, even babies that are one day old, are punished due to machlokes.

Dosson and Aviram, the other leaders of this dispute, stood outside their tents with their wives, children, and infants. They were arrogant and steadfast not to give-in to Moshe. Previously, they had told Moshe that they would not meet with Moshe to discuss their position. They said (Bamidbar 15:16), "…Even if you gouge out our eyes [and blind us], we will not come!" Their refusal to end the machlokes resulted in their entire families – even the babies, being punished by being swallowed up by the earth.

The Chofetz Chaim says, we see that being involved in a machlokes harms one's own children. Unfortunately, there are people who ignore that fact.



A most unbelievable story about this occurred in the Chofetz Chaim's own town of Radin (as quoted in Rabbi Frand on the Parshah). Two people got into a very heated argument, which got worse and worse. The children of those two people started mysteriously dying. The Chofetz Chaim approached one of the disputants, pleading with him to stop this machlokes. The Chofetz Chaim told the man that his involvement in the machlokes was causing the death of his children! Incredulously, the man refused to back down. He said that he was going to win the argument even if it meant that all his children would die as punishment!!

The Chofetz Chaim continues (Sefer Shmiras Halashon, Shar Hazchira perek 17) that you should not join a machlokes even to side with a close relative or even to side with your father! Even if your father is correct and the other person is in error, you should still not join the machlokes. [Obviously, if you are able, you should try to peacefully resolve and stop the machlokes.]

The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni says that this is what saved Korach's children from being punished and being swallowed up by the earth. They had initially joined their father in the machlokes against Moshe. They were sitting with their father when Moshe approached. They thought to themselves that if they would stand to show honour to Moshe it would be a disgrace to their father. That would be a problem since they had the mitzvah to honour their father.

On the other hand, there was a mitzvah to stand for an elder and a Torah scholar. They decided to stand to show honour to Moshe. At that moment they felt repentance in their hearts. They felt that this machlokes was wrong. Those feelings of repentance saved their lives.

Imagine the tremendous reward in store for one who ends strife and brings peace. Imagine if one of the people involved in the dispute will swallow his pride and apologize, even though he feels he is totally correct. The reward in store for him will be incalculable. He will also become a happier person when the dispute ends.

Rav Altar Henach Leibowitz zt"l highlights the obligation to try to stop a feud. Moshe tried to end the feud by asking Dosson and Aviram, two of the leaders of the feud, to come to him (Bamidbar 16:12). They refused to come. So, Moshe went to them. Rashi quotes the Gemora (Sanhedrin page 110A) that Moshe's actions teach us not to perpetuate a machlokes. Rashi in Sanhedrin adds that Moshe put aside his own honour, in his attempt to foster peace, by going to the home of the instigators. Rav Altar Henach Leibowitz explains that Moshe's actions were not merely a praiseworthy action. Rather, he

was fulfilling a halachic obligation! Had Moshe not gone, every second of delay would have been considered as if he had perpetuated the machlokes! He would have been going against the Torah that states "…One should not act like Korach and his company" (Bamidbar 17:5. See Rashi).

One might have thought that it was beneath the dignity of Moshe, the leader of Klal Yisroel, to go seek out those had started a machlokes with him. We learn from this that Moshe acted properly and was even obligated to do what he had done.

No one benefits from machlokes. Often, machlokes starts from a minor and unimportant disagreement that grows and grows into a full-fledged feud. It adds physical stress which is not healthy for a person's heart. It causes separation between loved ones. It can bring serious harm to one's children. Furthermore, it is a sin to perpetuate a machlokes.

In a machlokes, both sides share some of the blame. However, this machlokes was unique. Moshe was 100% correct! Korach was 100% wrong! If one who was totally right, could initiate an attempt to bring peace then certainly we, who are not 100% right, can initiate the attempt to bring peace.

Initiating peace is more than being nice; it is the halacha!

Peace at All Costs!

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נַעֲלֶה ***"Moshe sent for Dosson and Aviram, sons of Eliav, and they said, '"We will not come!"'*** (Bamidbar 16:12)

Korach started a major dispute against Moshe. It showed a lack of belief in Moshe and ultimately a lack of belief that the Torah was from Hashem. Korach encouraged others to join with him against Moshe. Moshe unsuccessfully tried to reason with Korach. When Moshe saw the rebellion spreading, he tried to minimize it as much

as possible. Moshe sent a message that he wanted to speak to Dasan and Aviram, two of the leaders of this argument against Moshe. Dasan and Aviram arrogantly refused to come. Immediately before Korach and his followers were to be punished, Moshe tried **again** to curb this rebellion. He went to the tents of Dasan and Aviram with a plea to leave the rebellion. Moshe also indicated that if they wouldn't change their minds then Hashem would punish them severely. Dasan and Aviram responded arrogantly, refused to budge, and cursed Moshe (see ***Rashi*** on pasuk 27). Hashem punished the rebels with death; Hashem caused the earth to swallow them up.

In analysing Moshe's actions, we would be apt to focus solely on Moshe's sterling Middos. A prestigious and influential group started an argument, questioning Moshe's honesty in his appointment of others to leadership positions. They approached him in a very demeaning way. They used logical arguments to try to prove that Moshe made up (without Hashem's directive) leadership appointments as well as making up laws by himself. They asked Moshe, if a tallis was totally dyed with techeiles (a special blue dye) would it require tzitzis. Moshe said that of course it would. They laughed at Moshe saying that this law was senseless (see ***Rashi*** on pasuk 3).



Despite all this, Moshe tried to peacefully end the rebellion. When he wasn't successful, Moshe still tried to bring peace by personally calling for two of the leaders of the rebellion. Moshe was rudely rebuffed. Yet, he tried **again** to bring peace by personally going to the homes of Dasan and Aviram.

Moshe exhibited extreme humbleness and was willing to forgo his honour despite the strong accusations and the humiliation.

We see a further degree of humility when we realize who it was that Moshe swallowed his pride to save. They were two people who had caused much suffering to Moshe! Dasan and Aviram were the two Jews who had tattled on Moshe to Pharaoh. They said that that Moshe had killed an Egyptian taskmaster who had been beating a Jew. Moshe would have been beheaded, as a result, if not for a miracle by Hashem. Moshe, then, had to run away for his life. Dasan and Aviram had also incited their followers to clamour about wanting to return to Egypt.

This occurred when the Jews were at the bank of the Yam Suf with the Egyptian army behind them. Dasan and Aviram also disobeyed Moshe. They had saved their Mann and had secretly put it out on Shabbos morning. They tried to show that Moshe was a liar by pretending that the Mann did indeed rain down on the holy Shabbos. These are the type of people that Moshe swallowed his pride in order to save?

It seems that Moshe was so special; he acted above and beyond what was required of him. Not so! Moshe was **required** by the Torah to do what he did! Even though he was the leader, he was **OBLIGATED** to humble himself before such people. If he had not gone out of his way to try to bring peace, it would have been considered as if Moshe had strengthened the dispute and made it worse (***Rashi*** quoting the ***Talmud, Meseches Sanhedrin*** 110A). Had Moshe not gone to try to make peace, **HE** would have been considered a sinner!

Machlokes, strife, is very serious. Even if one is in the right, the Torah obligates him to do whatever he can to end the argument. Even if one must humble oneself to make peace, he must do so. If he doesn't, he is considered a sinner, like Korach and his followers.

Change of Identity

"If these people die in the same way as everybody else, then Hashem did not send me" (16:29).

אִם־כְּמוֹת כָּל־הָאָדָם יְמֻתוּן אֵלֶּה וּפְקֻדַּת כָּל־הָאָדָם יִפָּקֵד עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא ה' שְׁלָחָנִי



Imagine if Korach's men had done Teshuvah and ended up dying a natural death. How could Moshe Rabeinu jeopardize faith in his own prophesy, and the belief in Torah min ha'Shamayim?

Asks the **Sochatchover Ga'on?** How could he not contend with the possibility that they would indeed do Teshuvah, and no longer be deserving of the death that he had decreed?

Indeed, he did, he answers! Moshe was fully aware of such a possibility, and that G-d is always ready to accept Teshuvah, even at the last minute. That in fact, explains why he added the word "Eileh" (these people, which otherwise seems superfluous).

The Rambam defines a Ba'al-Teshuvah as a new-born baby, as if he was a different person. In that case, Moshe was referring specifically to these people, provided they remained unrepentant. Should they do Teshuvah and become different people, well, that would be a different matter, and his decree would be automatically annulled.

Hope for a miracle, but don't depend on one.

Not Too Smart



The Gemara in Berachos (31b) informs us that Chanah prayed for her son (Shmuel) to be neither wise nor stupid.

We can understand why she did not want a stupid son. But a wise one?

A certain Gadol once explained that Chanah saw her ancestor Korach, whose smartness proved to be his undoing. So she decided that she didn't want a son who took after his great great-grandfather. Better a bit less smart and a bit more ehrlich!

Do Nothing and Get Everything!

וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֹרַח וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ *"The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them… and their entire wealth." (Bamidbar 16:32)*

Dan loved money. His entire goal in life was to make money. He worked very hard in life and achieved his dream. He made lots and lots of money. Many worthy organizations approached Dan for a donation. The response was always the same- "I worked hard for my money. You should work hard for yours". Dan never gave a donation- not even a penny.

Dan had no living relatives. When he died, his neighbours wondered if his will designated money for any charitable cause. When they heard about the will, they were in a state of shock! Dan did not leave any money for charity. What was worse, was that Dan's instructions were to burn all his money! Not a cent for anyone. "What a waste",

they said to each other. "Think of the numerous people and organizations that could have benefited".

Hashem's actions were as unusual as Dan's. One of the richest people who ever lived was Korach. He had found part of the treasure that Yosef had collected and concealed in Egypt. He had become fabulously wealthy from it. Korach was also brilliant and had a distinguished job (to help carry the holy aron). However, it wasn't enough for Korach. His jealousy led him to the worst argument in history. He disputed Moshe's honesty and claimed that the Torah Moshe taught was not from Hashem.

Korach's punishment was severe. The earth opened and Korach was swallowed into it.



Some say he was burned as well. Korach's followers were also swallowed, as well as their houses and all their possessions. The Midrash tells us, even small items that had been lent to other people, were miraculously drawn into that hole. Korach's name was miraculously erased from any legal document that he had signed. Hashem didn't want any trace of Korach remaining.

The Sforno asks the obvious question- Wouldn't Korach's vast wealth have been useful and helpful to others (as Dan's could have been)? Why did it have to get swallowed? The Sforno answers that if a righteous person would have benefited from Korach's wealth, it would have been a merit for Korach. Clearly, that was a merit that Korach didn't deserve. Even though Korach would not have actively given it, it would still have been a credit for him. That would have

been a merit that Hashem did not want him to have. Similarly, the Sforno continues, if a person loses money and a poor person finds it and benefits from it, the original owner of the money gets the mitzvah for giving tzedakah. The owner of the money did absolutely **nothing** and did not even intend to do anything good. Hashem, in His kindness credits him for doing a mitzvah.

Hashem gives us credit for any positive deed that results that comes-about from our actions.



Rabbi Krohn tells a story about an irreligious Jew who visited the Western Wall for the very first time. He watched a Yerushalmi Jew daven with such intensity, as if Hashem was standing in front of him. The visitor was so moved by this that it led him on the road to becoming observant and becoming an active member of an Orthodox shul. The Yerushalmi Jew will be credited by Hashem for all the mitzvos done by this newly observant Jew and all the mitzvos done by his future descendants. The Yerushalmi Jew did not go out of his way to influence the irreligious Jew, yet the Yerushalmi also gets credit for his actions.

Whatever you do, make sure to make a kiddush Hashem; you don't know who's watching you! If you facilitate a mitzvah, even unknowingly, you get a share in the reward.

"When you walk with Hashem, the impossible becomes possible!"

Follow The Leader

וַיֵּרְדוּ הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה "They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit" (Bemidbar 16:33)

Why did Korah and his people receive such a strange punishment?



Korah opposed the leadership of Moshe and Aharon. He argued, "The entire community is holy; why rise above the assembly of G-d?" (16:3). Korah, in effect, was advocating a government of anarchy.

Rabbi Hanina says, **הֱוֵי מִתְפַּלֵּל בִּשְׁלוֹמָהּ שֶׁל מַלְכוּת, שֶׁאִלְמָלֵא מוֹרָאָהּ, אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ חַיִּים בָּלָעוּ**. "Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear of it, men would swallow one another alive" (Pirkei Avos 3:2).

The punishment that Korah received was a message to him and to all future generations that without leadership, eventually one gets swallowed up alive. *(Vedibarta Bam)*

Two Pockets

"A man should have two pockets. In one he should put the concept of 'I am but dust and ashes,' and in the other, 'For me the world was created." ~ **R' Menachem Mendel of Kotzk zt"l**

Parsha Potpourri, by Rav Ozer Alport - Vulnerable Leadership

Rashi writes (Numbers 16:1) **אמר קרח, אחי אבא ארבעה היו, שנאמר ובני קהת וגו' עמרם הבכור.** Korach argued that his father was one of four siblings. The oldest of them was Amram, so his children Moshe and Aharon took the positions of king and Kohen Gadol, respectively. However, Korach felt that as the son of Yitzhar, the second oldest of the siblings, he deserved to be appointed leader of the tribe, yet Moshe gave the position to the son of the youngest of the brothers, which inspired Korach's rebellion.



If this was the basis for his rebellion against Moshe, why didn't he attack Moshe immediately when these appointments were made, and what inspired his wrath specifically at this time?

Ramban explains that at the time of the appointments of the tribal leaders, Moshe was immensely popular. Even when the Jews committed the unparalleled sin of the golden calf, only a relatively small number died, as Moshe spent 40 days and nights praying for forgiveness on their behalf.

At that time, all of the Jews loved Moshe, and anybody who attempted to challenge his leadership would be killed by his supporters, so Korach had no choice but to wait patiently. Now, however, many Jews had been killed for complaining, first through a

Heavenly fire (Numbers 11:3) and then through the meat that they demanded (Numbers 11:33).

Additionally, after the sin of the spies, Moshe's prayers on their behalf did not succeed in annulling the decree against them. Now that many people were angry at Moshe and questioned his effectiveness, Korach thought that they would be more willing to listen to his arguments and join his rebellion.

Symbolism of "The Swallowing Ground"



Parshas Korach revolves around Korach's challenge to the authority and leadership of Moshe and Aharon. Korach ultimately leads a full-fledged rebellion against them, one which ends in disastrous and tragic results as he and his followers and all of their possessions were swallowed up by the ground (Numbers 16:32-33). Judaism teaches that people are punished for their sins measure-for-measure. In what way was Korach's punishment of being swallowed alive by the earth for rebelling against Moshe and Aharon specifically appropriate for his crime?

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that Korach erred in seeking to rise to a lofty position for which he was unfit. Therefore, he was punished by being swallowed up by the ground and sent down to the lowest level of Gehinnom (Numbers 16:33).

Rabbi Wolf Strickover answers that Korach challenged Moshe and Aharon (Numbers 16:3), **וּמַדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהַל ה׳** *"Why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of G-d,"* accusing them of arrogance.

In reality, the Torah testifies (Numbers 12:3) that Moshe was the most humble man on Earth and viewed himself as no greater than the ground itself. In order to punish him, Korach had to be lowered below Moshe. Since Moshe considered himself equal to the ground, the only choice was for the earth to swallow him up.

Never Again



After Korach's rebellion was quashed and the doubts that he raised about the legitimacy of the leadership of Moshe and Aharon were erased, the Torah teaches that there will never again be an episode like Korach and his assembly (Numbers 17:5). How is this to be understood?

Although in a literal sense many commentators understand this verse as a biblical prohibition against engaging in disputes, **Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik** offers a homiletic interpretation with a lesson that we would do well to internalize.

In the rebellion led by Korach and his followers, their position was 100% wrong, without any legitimacy whatsoever. The position of

Moshe and Aharon, against whom they were fighting, was revealed by God to be 100% correct.

Rav Chaim suggested that this verse may be understood as a Divine guarantee that there will never again be a dispute in which one side is completely correct and the other is absolutely in error.

When we disagree with our families, friends, and co-workers, each side all too often falls into the trap of assuming that his position is completely justified and engages in a campaign of "proving" to the other side the absolute absurdity of their opinion.

If we remember the promise of the Torah that there will never again be such a one-sided disagreement as that of Moshe and Korach, it will be much easier for us to see and understand the logic of our spouses, children, co-workers, and neighbours, which will naturally result in much happier and more peaceful resolutions for all parties involved.

Torah Tavlin

וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אֶבְחַר־בּוֹ מַטֵּהוּ יִפְרָח וְהַשְׁכֹּתִי מֵעָלַי אֶת־תְּלֻנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵם מַלִּינִם עֲלֵיכֶם 17:20

A rich merchant had many servants in his house. One day, his wife's necklace went missing from her vault. Soon, precious things in the house started disappearing one by one.

The merchant suspected one of his many servants to be the thief. But it was difficult to identify and catch the thief among all the many servants in his huge house.

He contacted the local police and told them about the recent incidents. After listening to the merchant, a detective agreed to help the merchant and came to his home. He summoned all the merchant's servants and began interrogating them one by one. He received nothing but absolute denial from every one of them.



Finally, he handed a stick to every servant, all the same length. He told them that the stick had a special power and by the next day, the thief's stick would grow by 2 inches. They were ordered to present the stick to him the next day. The next day, as ordered, the servants assembled at the merchant's house with their sticks. As the detective examined each stick, he noticed that one of the servants was holding a stick that was two inches shorter. "This is your thief," he said. "Honest men never feared about the growth of their stick. The thief had already cut his stick shorter by two inches fearing that his stick will be long by two inches next morning!"

The lesson of the "magic stick" is the same lesson that the 12 princes learned when they each put their stick in the Mishkan, awaiting to see who's would be chosen. Moshe and Aharon already knew the outcome; Aharon was chosen by Hashem and there was no doubt about this, but the others needed a miracle to remind them. We often kid ourselves and remain blind to the obvious that is right in front of our eyes. It takes a "magic stick" to make us come to our senses!

Closer Than We Think

No matter how far a person feels, Hashem is closer than his own breath. ~ Based on the Sar Shalom of Belz.

17:23-24 וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן... וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מַטֵּהוּ



After Korach and his followers died, Hashem instructed Moshe to collect a mateh (staff) from every tribe and place them all in the Mishkan. The following day, Moshe returned to the Mishkan, where he found that Aharon's mateh, which represented the tribe of Levi, had blossomed and sprouted almonds, while the others all remained unchanged.

Moshe showed all the staffs to the Jewish people to cement Aharon's status as the Divinely chosen Kohen Gadol, at which point each of the tribes retrieved their respective staffs.

Although it is understandable why Aharon would want to preserve his mateh that miraculously blossomed, why were the other tribes interested in keeping their nondescript sticks?

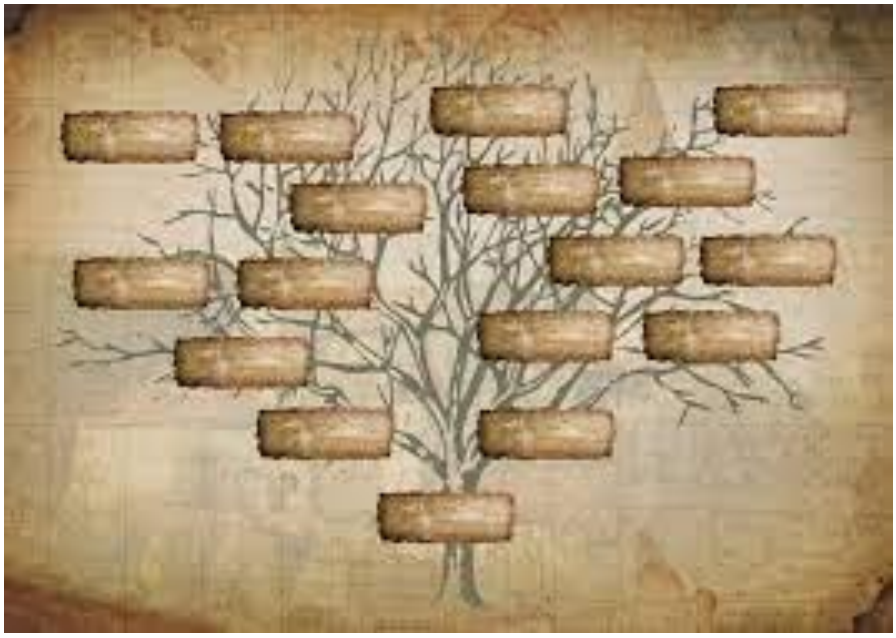
Rav Avrohom Gurewitz explains that at this point in time, every Jew craved to be the Kohen Gadol. However, when they subsequently entered Eretz Yisroel, the tribe of Levi did not receive any share in the land so that they could dedicate their lives to Hashem, leaving them to live off the tithes that they received from others.

At that point, there may have been people who would view the Kohanim and the extended tribe of Levi, which according to the Rambam (Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel 13:13) includes any person who chooses to devote himself to serving Hashem regardless of his actual lineage, and think to themselves, "Thank G-d that I'm blessed to live such a comfortable life, but nebach, look at poor Shevet Levi sitting and learning all day. What kind of life do they have?"

Therefore, the staffs of the other tribes were preserved to serve as a tangible reminder that once upon a time, everybody was vying to be Shevet Levi, and our ancestors would have done anything for the privilege to forego the temporal pleasures of this world if only their tribe had been selected to serve Hashem. By keeping their sticks around, the other tribes wanted to ensure that they and their future descendants would always remember their true priorities and aspirations.

R' Shlomo Katz

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי "Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehat son of Levi . . ." (16:1)



Rashi writes **לא הזכיר בן יעקב, שבקש רחמים על עצמו שלא יזכר שמו על מחלוקתם** *It does not, however, mention Levi's being `the son of Yaakov,' because Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach's quarrels.*

It is told that two litigants once came before **R' Eliyahu Kletzkin z"l**, the 19th century rabbi of Lublin, for a din Torah. One of the litigants began his presentation by relating his yichus / pedigree to the rabbi.

The rabbi replied: Rashi writes that Yaakov prayed for himself so that he would not be mentioned together with Korach. Why? Shouldn't Yaakov have prayed that Korach's yichus would save him from punishment?

The answer, said R' Kletzkin, is that when a person has yichus and he nevertheless behaves improperly, his punishment is even greater. *(Quoted in Ve'karata La'Shabbat Oneg)*

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

17:23 וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים



The Ribono shel Olam told Moshe Rabbeinu to take the staff of Aharon and place it in the Aron Kodesh together with a flask of mann. When the Holy Ark was hidden, the jar of mann and Aharon's staff were also hidden away for safekeeping.

R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l quotes the Gemara (Yomah 52) that the matteh of Aharon was hidden with the flowers and almonds that miraculously blossomed on it when it was placed in the Ohel Moed in order to prove that Aharon was the truly chosen Kohen Gadol. This in itself was a miracle since normally, when fruits grow, the leaves and blossoms disappear immediately. Here, though, they miraculously remained on the matteh forever.

R' Moshe writes allegorically, that the fruit of a mitzvah represents the actual performance of the mitzvah, while the blossoms represent the hard work and preparation leading up to the mitzvah. Thus, he says, in this world of gashmiyus, once the almonds begin growing, the blossoms are generally forgotten. But in heaven, the blossoms - the reward for the effort one invests in Torah, mitzvos

and chinuch of his children - are never lost once the results are achieved. This is symbolized by the safekeeping of Aharon's matteh, since it was he who invested all his efforts in avodas Hashem and always pursuing peace. Therefore, the blossoms - the flowers and the almonds - all became holy together with the staff of Aharon and remain living forever.

My machshava here is that it was for this reason that each Nasi, who had also placed his mateh in the Ohel Moed, took his "losing" stick back. He did not lose. His matteh was not a worthless lottery ticket to be ripped up and thrown away. No, it was something to be proud of, and displayed at home. It shows that each Nasi was ready to give up a life of gashmiyus in order to serve the Ribono shel Olam in the Mishkan. It is something to treasure, for his children and grandchildren to see and recognize the strong roots of their ancestors. May all of our **עמלות** in mitzvos and chinuch habanim be a zechus for yeshuos and refuos.

Essential Rabbi Nachman - Attachment to The Tzaddik

It is very good to attach yourself to a true Tzaddik. In the upheavals at the time of the coming of the Mashiach, Hashem will *"grasp the ends of the earth and shake the wicked from it"* (Job 38:13) . But one who is attached to a true Tzaddik will be able to cling to him so as not to be cast off with the wicked. By holding onto the Tzaddik he will remain firm. (Sichot Haran #22 II) Those who draw close to a true Tzaddik have a taste of Gan Eden. For "the Tzaddik is the gardener of the garden" (Zohar II, 166b) . (*Sichot Haran #252)*

A Wise Man would say: "Integrity is doing the right thing even if nobody is watching."

Drush V'Chiddush

וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקֹרַח וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ 16:32



Somebody once asked **R' Avigdor Miller zt"l** why the posuk refers to the **פי הארץ** - the "mouth" of the earth that swallowed up Korach and his company. In a heartbeat, he responded sharply, "Because he opened up his mouth (and spoke against Moshe), the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed him up!"

The severity of Korach's words and deeds were so overpowering, that even those around him - wives, children, babies, and all of their possessions - were swallowed up into the ground and lost forever. Korach was one of the wealthiest men in the camp of Bnei Yisroel. The Sages tell us that Korach was so rich that it took 300 animals to carry the keys for his chests of gold and silver. The offspring of Korach dedicated an entire psalm to the subject of wealth: **למנצח לבני קרח מזמור...** - *"They who trust their riches and are proud of their wealth."* (Tehillim 49:7).

The Seforno explains that Korach's property was destroyed so that he should not gain zechusim if righteous people benefited from his property. As the Sages state: "If a sela (coin) fell from someone's pocket and a poor person found it and was sustained by it, (the loser) has the mitzvah of charity."

R' Moshe Sternbuch shlit'a (Taam V'Daas) offers an interpretation that Korach's property was destroyed for the opposite reason - so that no righteous person should benefit from his money because the money of the wicked has its source in evil. Because of this rationale, certain Gedolim refuse to accept money from Shabbos desecrators to support Torah institutions, as such money has no blessing. And yet, we find that some do take money. Why? Because in places where it is difficult to establish Torah and where most of the Jews have the status of **תינוקות שנשבו** - i.e., they are like captured children who know nothing of the Torah, we do accept donations from them, but not from people who hate the Torah or transgress its commands intentionally.

R' Gershon Edelstein shlit'a (Darchei HaChizuk)

"From Korach, we see the lofty power of the yetzer hara. It has power over great people who have attained the level of ruach hakodesh. Even at a moment of Divine inspiration, when Korach saw that Shmuel HaNavi would come from his lineage, the yetzer hara was still capable of controlling him. It was thus possible for Korach to clash with Moshe Rabbeinu even while receiving a vision through ruach hakodesh!

The very moment that Korach saw that Shmuel would descend from him provided, ironically, the incentive he needed to clash with Moshe. This is the power of the yetzer hara!"

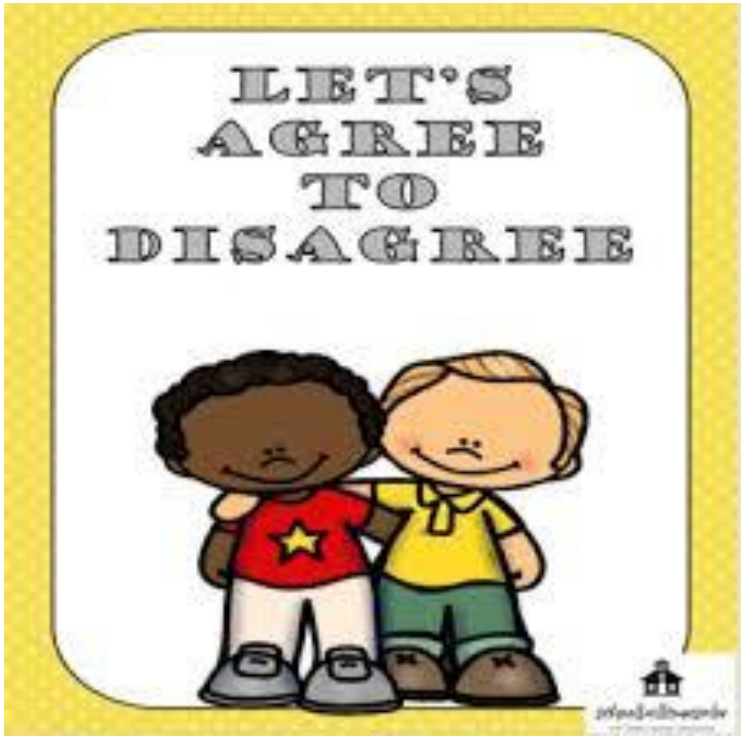
Convert Sins into Merits

"When I see a man of many sins, I think, 'How I envy him! When he will do teshuvah and convert his sins, he will have many more merits than I do!" ~ **R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev.**

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

16:11 לָכֵן אַתָּה֙ וְכָל־עֲדָתְךָ֔ הַנֹּעָדִ֖ים עַל־ה׳

The word **מחלוקת** means argument or fight. It comes from the root **חלק** which means piece and gives us insight into why we fight. When a person doesn't see the entire picture, but rather just a PIECE of the puzzle, it causes machlokes. The root of a fight is seeing only one side of the story. This causes people to be fragmented; it separates us from each other and causes many individual PIECES to form in Am Yisroel. From Korach we learn that NO ONE is exempt from this ugly phenomenon. You can be a great Talmid Chacham, like Korach; you can be smart, powerful, rich and respected like Korach - and you can be blinded by your own greatness to create such terrible separation that you wind up being swallowed up by the earth!



So how can one avoid machlokes? There are two ways. One involves the brain and one involves the mouth. Indeed, the Torah teaches us that the soul of man is **דעה** - thought and **דבור** - speech. The first thing we have to know is that it is okay for people to think differently than we do! We can agree to disagree, and we don't have to get angry and disturbed if people don't think the way we do! It is actually a good thing! Instead of thinking in terms of good and bad, or right and wrong, try to tell yourself that it is just different! It is not bad, and it is not wrong - just different!

The second idea involves our speech. In fact the best way to stop a fight is to avoid one! The **Aishel Avraham of Buchatch** explains that

it is not the one who starts the argument who is at fault - it is the one who answers back! If someone remains quiet or acknowledges another person's pain when they get angry, they are in fact stopping a machlokes!

So try not to be the one who starts up, but if someone starts up with you, be sure not to be the one to continue and thus create a machlokes. Let us use our דעה and דבור to avoid tragedy at all costs.

The Gift of Love



A man found his three-year old daughter playing with fancy wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became infuriated when the child tried to decorate a box with the paper. Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift to her father the next morning and said, "This is for you, Daddy." The man was embarrassed by his over-reaction, but his annoyance flared again when he opened the box and found it was empty. He took his little girl by the hand and said to her, "What is this? Don't you know, when you give someone a present, there is supposed to be something inside?" The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and cried, "Oh, Daddy, it's not empty at all. I blew kisses into the box. They're all for you, Daddy."

The father was crushed. He put his arms around his little girl, and he begged for her forgiveness. What better gift can a father get from his child than a box of kisses, true unadulterated love?

The child grew up, moved away and began a family of her own. The father kept that gold box by his bed for many, many years and

whenever he was discouraged, he would take out an invisible kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

Love and responsibility are inextricably intertwined. The word **אהבה** is based on the Aramaic word for giving, **הב**.

The Kohen, who is a Jewish teacher and leader, simultaneously functions as the agent of the Almighty and of the Nation. He must love his people and take responsibility for them and represent them before Hashem. In return, the people shower "gifts" on the Kohen and support him in his holy work. Every Jew must realize that if we wish to benefit from Hashem's love, support and Divine gifts, we need to see to it that His chosen leaders – the Kohanim – are taken care of and supported with love and devotion.

Eretz Yisrael – The Promised Land

It was another dark day during the Second World War. A hungry Jewish boy named Binyamin Wertzberger was hard at work dragging heavy train tracks with his bare thin hands. When it came time to eat, he hurried to secure his gruel with whatever strength he had left, although the food served was minimal and bland. He needed it to get through another day in the slave labour camp.

One day, while standing in the food line, a Nazi officer gave him and his fellow inmates a dirty look. "Do you dream of getting out of here?" he asked with a sneer. "Perhaps going to your Jewish land, to your Jerusalem?"

Nobody spoke. They just wanted their dollop of nourishment. And besides, what was there to say?

The Nazi beast wasn't finished. "I doubt you will ever get there. Maybe your ashes will get there, though, through the chimneys of the crematoria." His taunts and barbs were unceasing. Many years later, Binyamin Wertzberger recalls being "beaten, humiliated, starved and forced to work in the most difficult of circumstances."

But he never forgot the cruel Nazi's words while waiting in line that day.

He vowed that were he to survive, he would make it to Jerusalem. Towards the end of the war, he was forced into an infamous death march. He and thousands of others trudged for weeks to the Austro-Hungarian border.

He recalls: "We walked for days without food or drink. Whoever was tired or drifted off was shot to death. Bodies were piling up as we walked." He shivers from the memory. After weeks that seemed to drag on forever, the group - now much smaller in size due to attrition - arrived at the Mauthausen concentration camp in the Austrian Alps, a camp with the sinister label of "Grade III" (intended to be the toughest camps for the "Incorrigible Political Enemies of the Reich").

Binyamin Wertzberger was only seventeen at the time. He suffered greatly in that inferno where the expected life span of an inmate was no more than a few weeks. On May 5, 1945, the camp was taken over by soldiers of the Forty-First Recon Squad of the U.S. Eleventh Armored Division, who liberated it after they disarmed the S.S. gendarmes.

The teenager, seasoned well beyond his seventeen years, was thankful to be alive, but quickly learned that he was the only member in his family to have survived. "I had a brother and two sisters and they were all murdered by the Nazis," he says, eyes pinched shut to hold back the tears. His family was gone - he had lost them all.

He never forgot the promise he made. After a long journey, he made it to the Land of Israel where he married and raised a family. "Baruch Hashem, they all learned in yeshivos and lead a life of Torah and mitzvos," he says proudly. When he retired from work, the family hoped he would spend more time at home with them, but Binyamin Wertzberger had one more mission in life.

One bright day, he walked into the offices of the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, the Jerusalem organization involved in physically maintaining and renovating the area surrounding the Kosel Hama'aravi.



At first, nobody paid him any attention. Finally, he spoke up. "I want to work for you," he told a young man at a desk. A manager walked over, and he reiterated his request. The manager looked at him strangely. "With all due respect, you are an elderly man. We don't have a job to offer you."

But Binyamin was not one to give up. If he was, who knows if he ever would have made it out of the numerous camps he laboured in? With a shrill insistence evident in his voice, he said, "Sir, I will do anything you ask. Just let me work here - you won't be disappointed."

Binyamin Wertzberger was given the task of cleaning the stones of the Kosel, and he wakes up at 5:00 a.m. every day to do so. "I never look at the watch when I am at work," he says. "When I stand near the holy stones, I feel like I'm taking נקמה - revenge, on that Nazi officer. This is my Jewish revenge."

The Chofetz Chaim teaches us that when a person speaks loshon hora, he is wasting one of the most precious commodities this world has to offer — time.

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי



When he was a very young child, **R' Nochum Twerski zt"l** of Chernobyl lost his mother. His father remarried but his stepmother had little time and patience for him and treated him harshly. On one occasion, young Nochum came home from cheder to eat lunch but no one was home. On the stove were fried eggs and the boy was quite famished. Knowing the size of the portion his stepmother would usually give him was not big, he took a somewhat smaller portion for himself and ate alone. Suddenly, his stepmother came home while he was eating and became enraged. She walked over and slapped the child.

The boy was perplexed and in tears. "What have I done?" he asked. "You were not home, and I took less than what you would normally have given me." She looked at him and said loudly, "Alein nemt men nisht." (You do not take by yourself)

R' Nochum recalled this story years later and said, "This episode taught me a lesson which remained with me throughout my entire life. Whenever I have a question regarding any issue, I go to the **Maggid of Mezeritch** for his wisdom and advice. Why? Because regardless of what, when and how I want it, *'Alein nemt men nisht.'"*

Rashi tells us: "Korach took himself off to one side to separate himself from the congregation." With the word **וַיִּקַּח** the Torah is emphasizing Korach's fatal error. Though he was a wise person, and according to all calculations, he believed he was correct, in fact what he did was wrong in more ways than one. Yes, he spoke against Moshe's leadership, but for a **פיקח** like Korach, he unwisely wished to take something on his own – and ***"alein nemt men nisht."***

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן

I was once sitting at a sheva brachos with a Rosh Yeshivah who was asked to say a few words. When he arose to speak, he said, "Rabbosai, it is difficult to speak about Parshas Korach at a sheva brachos as it is full of machlokes - not a good lesson for a chosson and kallah." He then went on to speak about lighting the Menorah (from Parshas Behaloscha) and how it can illuminate a young couple's home, etc.

When he finished speaking, the Baal Simcha asked me to say a few words. I began as follows: "Rosh Yeshivah, please forgive me, but I beg to differ with your opinion. I'd like to say that the best lesson for a new couple can be learned from Parshas Korach. There is a famous novel called 'A Tale Of Two Cities.' L'havdil, in this parsha, there is 'A Tale of Two Wives.'

Shlomo Hamelech writes in Mishlei, **חכמת נשים בנתה ביתה ואולת בידיה תהרסנו** . Chazal tell us: **חכמת נשים זו אשתו של און ואולת זו אשתו של קרח**. Korach and On were partners but On was saved and Korach was killed. Why?

On's wife said to him, 'Why are you with Korach? Even if he wins, you will only be his talmid. I'd rather you remain the talmid of Moshe Rabbeinu!'

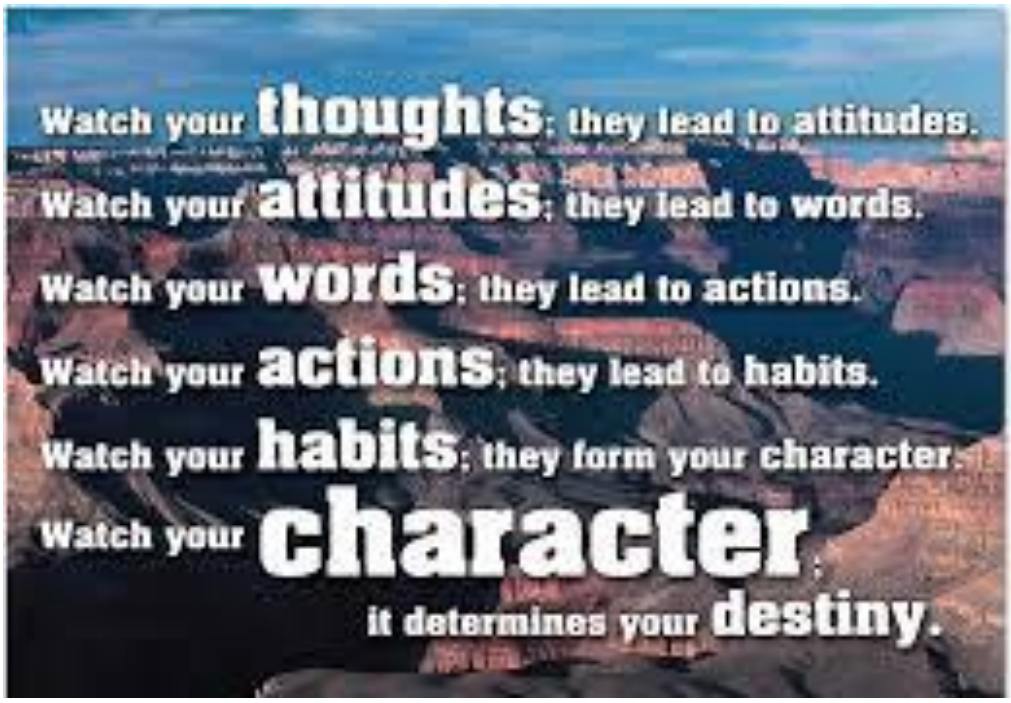
The Daas Zekainim says that she gave him wine, put him to sleep, sat on the steps and uncovered her hair. When Korach's people came to get him, they saw her and moved on. On's wife was a true **עזר כנגדו** because by being his **כנגדו** and sticking to her opposite opinion, she was his **עזר** - the one who saved him. Korach, on the other hand, had a wife who destroyed him. She told him, 'Korach, you are a nobody. Look at Moshe. He is a king, his brother is the Kohen Gadol. Do something with your life.' She was the opposite of an **עזר כנגדו** and she got him killed!



Look at the difference a wife can make in life! Each husband and wife can be the GPS who leads the other on the proper derech ... but sometimes one needs to tell the other, 'Recalculate!' in order to build a home of Torah. So, you see, 'A Tale of Two Wives' is a Tale of Two Men!"

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

16:3 :וּמַדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהַל ה׳



What a shame, what happened to Korach! Korach had it all. He was from an illustrious family, he was a great Torah scholar, he was wealthy, dynamic, and looked up to. But it wasn't enough: he turned his gains into pains!

The wicked Haman was no different. He, too, had it all. He was rich, powerful and respected by the King. He had the entire world bowing down to him - everyone, that is, except for one Jew named Mordechai. What did Haman say? **וכל זה איננו שוה לי** - "Everything I have is worthless," if I don't have the ONE thing that I want. Haman

did not see that everyone else was bowing down to him; all he saw was that Mordechai was NOT!

Very often this kind of behaviour stems from **קנאה** (jealousy), **תאוה** (lust) and **כבוד** (honour). These three negative traits are so terrible that they can cause a person to not only go out of his mind, but even go out of his world! In other words, the person does not even see all the good things in his life and in the world around him. Perhaps, though, the underlying root of all three issues is really one, and we can suggest a simple and practical solution for all three.

There is a well-known segula of saying Perek Shira. It is a beautiful tefilla that quotes posukim, from all over Tanach, which are proclaimed by the animals, the birds, fish and the entire creation including the sky, earth, and everything in it. Each creation sings a song of praise to Hashem with its own unique verse.



Why is this so effective? What is it all about? **R' Gamliel Rabinowitz Shlit'a** explains that it is about ***appreciation.*** It is to think to oneself, "The mountains and oceans are praising Hashem - am I? What is MY special shira, MY unique gratitude to Hashem for all that He has given me?"

The segula is not in Perek Shira; the segula is in the heightened awareness of hakaras hatov, gratitude and appreciation to Hashem for what we have - not focusing on the things that we don't! The greatest way to truly be "in this world" is by working on appreciation.

Heaven

An anti-Semitic priest once met a rabbi in the street and with a sinister smile remarked, "What a coincidence! Just last night, I dreamed I was in Jewish heaven. The streets were filled with Jews. Children with dirty faces, shirts untucked, clothes unpressed, playing in the dirt. Women were haggling with fish-vendors, as Jewish beggars tried to interrupt, asking for handouts. And of course," the minister added with a vicious laugh, "rabbis were running back and forth with large Talmudic volumes tucked under their arms!" The rabbi pursed his lips and then replied, "That is truly amazing. You see, I dreamed last night that I was in Episcopalian heaven." "Really?" the minister asked. "And pray tell me what it was like in this heaven?"



"It was magnificent," the rabbi smiled. "The streets shone as if they had recently been washed. The homes were lined up just right, each with a small garden, beautiful flowers and a perfectly manicured lawn. The buildings were all freshly painted, and they sparkled in the gleaming sunlight!" The minister beamed. "And what about the people?" he questioned. The rabbi smiled, looked the minister right in the eye and tersely replied,……. **"People? There were no people!"**

Korach's dream was to be the leader of the Nation, and his 250 "associates" would carry out his every demand. He instigated a rebellion that almost tore apart the very fabric of Klal Yisroel, asking people to take sides and choose for themselves who they

would rather have in power. But his arrogance caught up to him and instead of ruling his people, the earth swallowed him up, as well as his people. Now, instead of honour, respect and the adoration of sinful people, he was dead and (after the fire) there were no people left!

The Koznitzer Maggid, R' Yisroel Hopstein ZT"L (Avodas Yisroel) would say:



Chazal tell us: 'Any quarrel that is waged with proper intentions (for the sake of Heaven) will endure; if it is done without proper intentions (for the sake of fighting)it will not endure.'

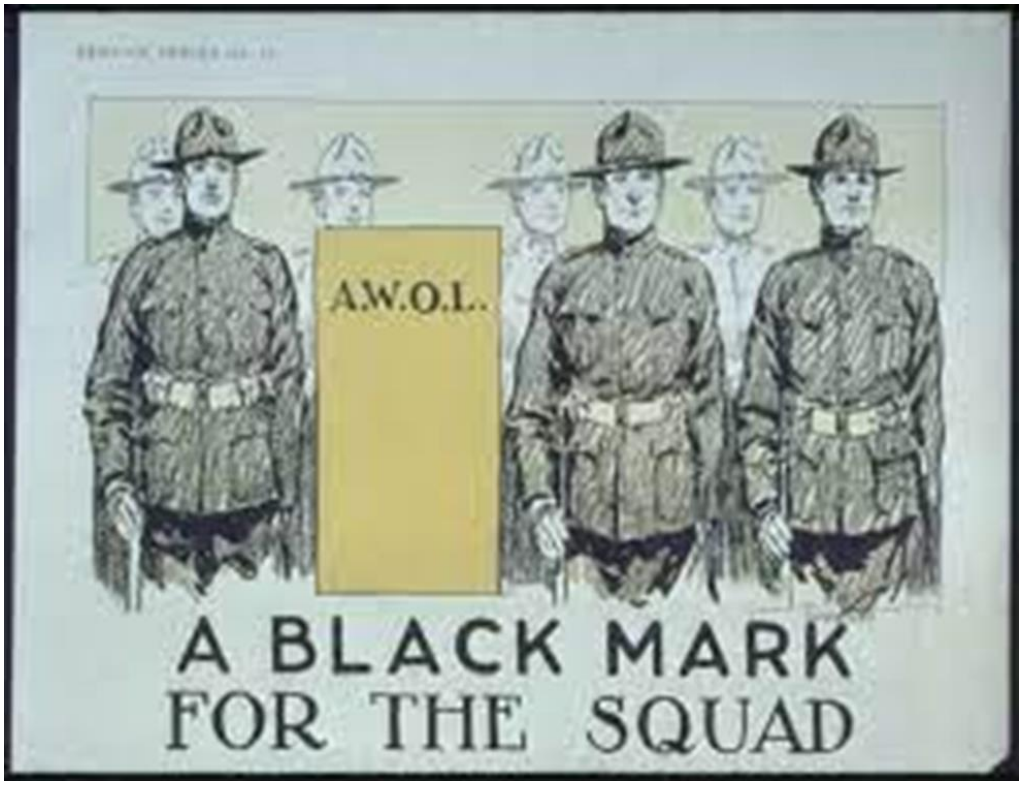
After all is said and done, though, 'Shalom' - peace, even not for the sake of Heaven is still better than any conflict or machlokes !

Deserter

Once, at a sheva berachos celebration in California, hosted by a family belonging to a particular group of Chassidim, **R' Simcha Wasserman ZT"L** was seated next to a man who claimed to be a rabbi from a non-Orthodox denominational Jewish movement. The man relished the opportunity to attack a prominent Orthodox rabbi and at a pause in the speeches, he addressed R' Simcha. "Rabbi Wasserman," he began looking surprised, "what are you doing here? I thought you disapproved of this particular Chassidic group!"

Replied R' Simcha, "Disapproved? No, not at all. An army has various parts; an Air Force, a Navy, infantry, and so on. Each has its own task and methods, but all are necessary for the army to function. These Chassidim are but one part of the army of the Jewish nation."

The man nodded thoughtfully. Then, in an obvious reference to his own brand of non-Torah ideology, he asked, "And what part of the army do I fit into?" Without hesitation, R' Simcha turned to the man and replied, **"You are the deserters!"**



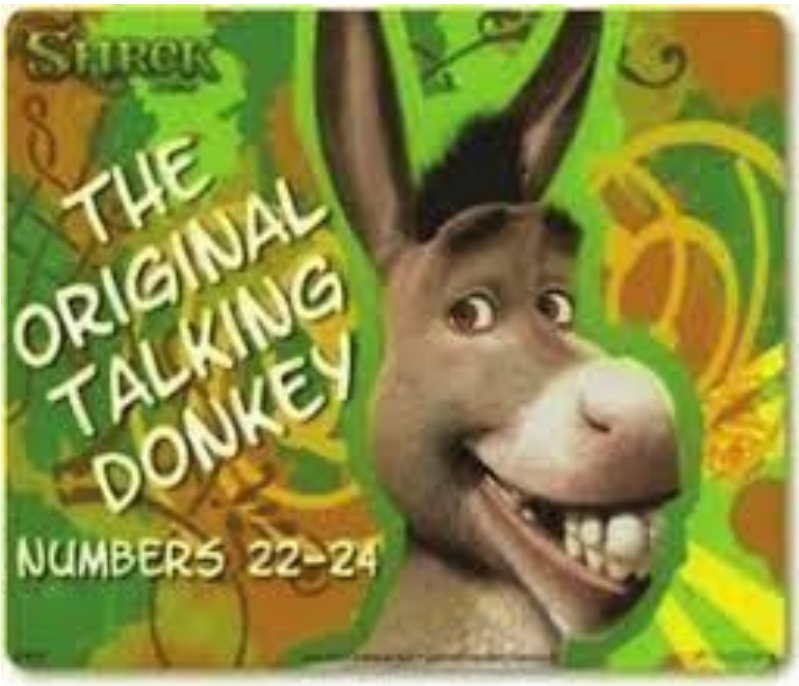
When a seasoned soldier deserts his unit, especially in the midst of battle, his punishment is very severe. He has lost his will, or worse, lost his faith in what he is fighting for.

Dasan and Aviram were prominent members of Bnei Yisroel in Egypt and all throughout their travails in the desert. They saw it all – the high points and low points. But they were non-believers, deserters of the faith, who brought strife and rancour amongst the ranks, and suffered a severe punishment.

"The more we acknowledge and appreciate Hashem's blessings, the greater our love for Him will be." – The Chovos Halvavos.

R' Tzvi Elimelech Shapira ZT"L of Dinov (Bnei Yissaschar) would say:

"There is a segulah brought by the Kadmonim (early Kabbalists) to ward off evil thoughts while in the midst of davening, by saying, 'Pi Pi Pi' three times in a row.



My Mechutan (Zhiditchover Rav) has said that this is based on the three 'mouths' (**פי**) that Hashem created on Erev Shabbos Bein Hashmashos (during twilight), as recounted in the Mishna in Avos (**ה-ח**): '(The) mouth of the earth **פי הארץ**, mouth of the well **פי הבאר** and mouth of the donkey **פי האתון** . Because these three mouths were created in a row and their purposes were utilized in these three parshiyos - Korach, Chukas and Balak - therefore we say these three words in a row.

(Sefer Nachlas Yaakov explains that **פי** equals the gematria of **צ** [90] and three times **צ** is equivalent of **רע** [evil]. Thus, a Tzaddik has the ability to combat all manners of **רע** - evil.)"

A Wise Man would say: "If you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way."

A wise person said, *"Before I speak, I rule over my words. After I speak, my words rule over me."*

Torah Gems - וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי



The Medrash tells us an amazing story. The wife of Korach instigated her husband against Moshe Rabbeinu because she was angry that Moshe shaved her husband's head entirely bald! This was the command of Hashem a few parshiyos earlier: "Pass a razor (and shave) their entire flesh," to shave and remove all bodily hair from the Leviim, head to toe, and to wave them - "Tnufah" - back and forth, in preparation for their Avodah in the Mishkan.

However, the wife of Korach ridiculed this command and especially the way her husband looked, which fuelled the fire of jealousy and hatred towards Moshe Rabbeinu. In fact, the name "Korach" means bald, since this was a root cause and catalyst for the entire conflict.

R' Pinchos Hoffman Shlit'a quotes the Maharsha who explains that hair symbolizes Gashmiyus. Hair is a part of the body that a person can happily live without. Of course, it is nice to have, but it is not essential and thus it can be used in promiscuous and sinful ways. On the other hand, it can also be a symbol of spirituality, as the Leviim demonstrated in their preparation to serve and do the Avodah in the Mishkan.

The Belzer Dayan, **R' Pinchos Friedman Shlit'a (Shvilei Pinchos)** adds that the name "Korach" was intentionally given when he was a baby. Yitzhar, the son of Levi, saw with Ruach Hakodesh that his son was going to locate the tremendous wealth that Yosef HaTzaddik had buried in the ground when he was the viceroy of Egypt, in order to protect himself from the trials of wealth and the potential to

bring down his spiritual stature. Likewise, in order to protect his son, whom he saw would become fabulously wealthy, and help him overcome his desires and sinful pleasures, he named him "Korach" which means bald, or devoid of Gashmiyus.

Although his intention was pure, it did not work out. "Korach" is an evil name. It was the name of the son of Eliphaz, the grandson of Esav. A name creates the essence of the person, so with a name like "Korach" - it was a lost battle.

Tzitzis



Our Sages have gone into great detail to explain why Parshas Korach is juxtaposed to the previous parsha describing the mitzvah of Tzitzis. About the Tzitzis it is written, "You shall look upon them and remember all the commandments of Hashem and fulfil them."

Yet Korach did just the opposite; rather than look at the Tzitzis and do the right thing, he looked ahead to the dynasty that would emerge from him and this caused him to sin. He even went so far as to scorn the mitzvah of Tzitzis by standing before Moshe Rabbeinu and inquiring: if a Talis that is entirely composed of techeles (bluish dye) cannot exempt itself from the obligation, how can four threads of techeles exempt it? (Medrash)

Since Korach scorned the mitzvah of Tzitzis, it was as if he had scorned the Torah itself, as the gemara notes - "The mitzvah of Tzitzis is equal to all the mitzvos of the Torah." From the words of

Chazal who teach that Korach and his followers cry out daily from the depths of the earth, "Moshe and his Torah are truth,", we see clearly that Korach and his followers had actually denied Toras Moshe, the teachings of Moshe. Since he did not properly fulfil the mitzvah of Tzitzis – which he did not look upon, since he only used his eyes for evil – he eventually found himself in Gehinnom.

The following story is told over by the renowned Maggid, **R' Sholom Schwadron ZT"L**, in his incomparable manner. R' Sholom visited the United States on a number of occasions and was wont to comment on the American glorification of "summer vacation." He was intrigued at the notion that entire neighbourhoods practically emptied out over a period of two months, leaving homes and synagogues virtually empty.

On one occasion, he entered a local shul to daven mincha, but something was out of the ordinary. The large and normally vibrant shul was mostly empty; they barely could scrape together a minyan. The shortage was easily explainable. It was summer, and many of the neighbourhood families had travelled away for the summer. After mincha, a few mispallelim urged R' Sholom to say a few words, and he acquiesced. He climbed the steps before the Aron Kodesh and related a famous parable in the name of the **Kelmer Maggid ZT"L**:

"I was strolling slowly through the city streets before sunset when, from one of the houses, I heard a quiet sobbing. Sharpening my ears, I tried to determine the source of the weeping. As I walked toward what I believed to be the source, the crying increased in volume. It was a dreadful sound, one filled with anguish and longing. "I continued walking until I reached the doorway of a house. The cries had not ceased even for a moment. I knocked on the door, but there was no response. I rang the bell, but the door did not open. I tried twisting the doorknob with both hands - and it opened! The weeping grew louder. Who was crying here? What had happened? A child, a youth, a lonely old person? What sort of weeping was this?

I hesitated, unsure whether or not to go in. In the end, I gathered up my courage and entered. "I concluded at once that the crying was coming from inside a closet. Who was locked up there? Who could be sobbing inside? With trembling fingers, afraid of what I might find, I opened the latch and the door swung open. "I saw it immediately. There was a Talis in the closet - and the Talis was crying! "'What's wrong, Talis, to make you cry so long and so hard? What happened?' I asked. "Sobbing even harder, the Talis said bitterly, 'My owner has gone off on vacation in the mountains. He packed up his belongings. He put his money in his wallet and the wallet in his pants pocket. He packed all his valuables in a suitcase and went on vacation. He took everything that was important to him. I am the only thing he left behind!'

"I was quiet for several moments, wishing to offer comfort but not knowing how. All at once, I grew bold. I bent down, came close to the Talis, and whispered, 'Don't cry, Talis. The day will come when your owner will leave everything he owns here at home - the day when the man who owns this house will separate from everything he possesses. That will be a true separation. He will leave everything behind - except you. He will take you, his Talis, with him to the grave. Nothing else.'"

Having made his point, R' Sholom descended the steps in front of the Ark and made his way out into the street.

"The adventure of life is to learn. The purpose of life is to grow. The nature of life is to change. The challenge of life is to overcome. The essence of life is to care. The opportunity of like is to serve. The secret of life is to dare. The spice of life is to befriend. The beauty of life is to give."

Torah Gems



The miracle of the earth swallowing up Korach and his motley crew of evil cohorts, is one that has mystified many commentators throughout the ages. In many instances, Hashem has punished the wicked in manners ranging from drowning (Egyptians, Flood), fire and brimstone (Sodom), sword (Amalek, Balak) and epidemic disease. However, punishing a small group of individuals through a miracle of epic proportion is not one that is commonly inflicted. One must understand why it was necessary for Korach to receive his retribution in such a dramatic fashion.

Chazal employ a metaphor for a "no-win situation" in a gemara **ב''ק: ס** which tells of a man who had two wives, one young and one old. The young one used to pluck out his white hair so as to make him look young, whereas the old one used to pluck out his black hair so as to make him look elderly and dignified. Each one kept plucking until he had no more hair left on his head. The gemara coined this as, **קרח מכאן ומכאן** - "Bald on this side and on the other side."

With regard to the Korach rebellion and uprising, explains **R' Avraham Yosef Shmuel Alter Shlit'a**, Moshe recognized the impossibility of his situation. Once again, the people were dissenting, and he had nowhere to turn to help him out of this situation. Were they to be punished naturally, this would not prove that Moshe is

truly the chosen prophet of Hashem; just that they died like any other man. However, as they could not be punished by standard means - "from this side or from the other side" - there was just one possibility left: they must go down!

A miracle whereby the earth opens up and swallows them deep down into its bowels will prove conclusively that Hashem was sending a message to all would-be sinners that Moshe was untouchable and truly chosen from on high. Thus, Moshe's metaphoric dilemma of **קרח מכאן ומכאן** was rectified neatly with **קרח** having no place to go but down!



From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

16:12 **וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם מכאן שאין מחזיקין במחלוקת - פרש"י**

A terrible **מחלוקת** once broke out in a small town between two peasants. The Rov wanted to get involved and break up the fight but his family told him that it wasn't appropriate for the Rov to be involved with such people. The Rov disagreed and told them, "Do you know why we take 3 steps back when we say **עושה שלום** in Shemona Esrai? Because in order to make peace, one must step back. One must back down and look away from his own personal kavod - this causes real peace!"

R' Yisroel Reisman Shlit'a says in the name of R' Pam ZT"L, there is a 3-step formula for creating true Sholom: FARGIN, FARGESS, FARKOOK!

Step 1. FARGIN means not just to give in but to truly rejoice in another's success, even at one's own expense. This is the ideal, albeit most difficult of attributes. A person always wants to be right.

When one realizes that he gains more by being content - than by being right, he displays humility in action! However, if one finds this too difficult, let him go on to:

Step 2. FARKOOK means to overlook. Don't notice EVERYTHING! A parent or spouse who picks on every little detail will not have a happy relationship. Judge others favorably, think positively and one will find it not too difficult to Farkook. If these two steps are too hard, there's only one thing left:

Step 3. FARGESS - FORGET! When two people fight, says R' Pam, the only way to resolve the tension is by forgetting. Otherwise the fight will linger and the hurt remains. Sometimes a bad memory is not such a bad thing. If Hashem blessed one with a poor memory - use it!

Let us follow these steps to create everlasting peace in Klal Yisroel. **אם אין שלום אין כלום** - Without peace we have nothing!

Torah Gems

16:7 וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר ה׳ הוּא הַקָּדֹוש רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי

Rashi asks: **וקרח שפקח היה מה ראה לשטות זה** "Korach was intelligent, so what led him to (persist in) this foolishness (**שטות**)?"

It would seem that Korach's actions were much more wicked than foolish; why does Rashi look at what he did as "foolishness"? Also, the Medrash relates that Korach was incited to rebellion by his wife. She argued, "Why did Moshe appoint his brother as Kohen Gadol and leave you to carry the heavy Aron?"

Yet, this Medrash is difficult to understand, since Chazal teach us that the holy Aron in the Mishkan was weightless; in fact, it maintained the characteristic of **נושא את נושאיו** - "carrying its carriers," and they expended no energy when walking! What, then, was Korach and his wife complaining about?



R' Chaim Pinchos Scheinberg explains that the ease or difficulty of any endeavour is dependent on one's attitude. If one believes in the Torah's power to carry a person, it will do so. If one views the Torah as a burden, it will feel like one. Similarly, if one devotes himself to spiritual growth, it is not hard to accomplish.

This is the meaning of the gemara (סוכה נג:) that at the end of time, tzaddikim will be surprised to discover how "big" the yetzer hara really is and how hard it is to conquer it. Since tzaddikim devote their entire lives to overcoming the yetzer hara, it seems easy to them.

Certainly, Korach's actions were wicked. However, he could never have stooped so low and caused such a terrible rebellion had he not been foolish enough to confuse righteousness and wickedness. To him, the Torah was a heavy burden, and it certainly did not "carry" him. Thus, Rashi wants to know: What was it that led Korach to persist in his foolishness?

Machlokes

Each day of Creation, the Torah says, **ויראאלקים כי טוב**, Hashem saw that it was good." The exception is on the second day. The Midrash asks, "Why isn't it written **כי טוב** on the second day?

Reb Chanina answered, 'because machlokes (dispute) was created on this day. As it says, **ויהי מבדיל בין מים למים**, it divided between the waters…' [The concept of division and conflict was created on this day]. Reb Tebiyomi said, 'This division was for the purpose of

creation, yet [since there is a conflict] it still cannot be called **כי טוב**.

We derive from this that a machlokes that destroys the world is certainly extremely terrible.'" (Bereishis Rabba 4:6) The Shevet Mussar (37:22) proves that machlokes is worse than avodah zorah.

On the day the Eigel was made and worshiped, the mon fell (see Shmos Rabba 41:1) but it didn't fall on the day when Korach made his machlokes. This proves that machlokes is even more severe than avodah zorah.



In the mid-1800's in Hungary, a great Talmid Chacham by the name of R' Dovid Deitsch ZT"L, a contemporary and close personal friend of the **Chasam Sofer, R' Moshe Schrieber ZT"L**, passed away. The Chasam Sofer was then well on in years and failing health, and those closest to him decided not to tell him about his dear friend's passing, so as not to distress him. R' Dovid's funeral was small and kept hidden from the Chasam Sofer.

About a month after this, the Chasam Sofer and a few of his gabbaim, travelled to the resort town of Fishtiak, where the great Gaon was to make use of the therapeutic baths and hot springs for his aging body. The baths in this particular place were built as small pools which were heated from inside and kept sealed with large

shutters over the mouth of the pool, to retain the heat. When a person stepped down into the bath, the shutters overhead were opened up and held up in place by hinges that supported it.

The gabbaim of the Chasam Sofer arranged for a private bath for the Rebbe, as it would seem quite inappropriate for him to have to bathe with others around. Thus, the Chasam Sofer was alone in the large room of pools when he entered into the hot bath. Almost immediately after he settled in, he heard a crack and looked up in dismay to see that the hinges that were supporting the large overhead shutters had slipped off its bearings and the heavy doors came crashing down onto the opening over the pool. There was nothing the Chasam Sofer was able to do to stop the doors from closing down upon him, and in his weakened state, he was unable to lift up the shutter doors.

The heat became unbearable as the steam had no way to escape. It seemed that in a matter of minutes, or less, he would succumb to the torturous heat. R' Moshe, unlike most others who find themselves in a grave situation, did not panic, nor did he scream, claw or pound on the shutters until drained of every ounce of strength. Instead, in the darkness of that narrow little pool, he closed his eyes and made a **חשבון הנפש** - Accounting for his soul. "How could it be," he thought to himself, "that Hashem would allow me to perish in this horrible fashion? What did I do to deserve that this should happen to me? Surely, this is no coincidence." Right then, he remembered the words of the gemara "One who does not properly eulogize a Talmid Chacham, deserves to be buried alive." Being entombed in a tiny pool of water and suffocated by the heat and steam, is definitely akin to one who is "buried alive."

The Chasam Sofer decided that most likely somewhere in his life he did not correctly see to the final respects of a Torah scholar, and as a result he was being made to pay for this terrible oversight with his own cruel and unusual death. He accepted upon himself, that were

Hashem to spare his life, he would delve into this matter and do his utmost to rectify the situation.

As if by magic, the heavy shutters began to creak open and lifted up back into their rightful place. The Chasam Sofer called out and was rescued from the bath. That very day, he found out about the death and subsequent hushing of the funeral for his good friend R' Dovid Deitsch. He assembled anyone that he could and delivered a long and respectful hesped for his friend.



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

During the Holocaust, in one of the concentration camps, there was a Nazi rasha who every night, would randomly call out a name as they lined up for roll call, and he would afflict that person with terrible suffering.

One day during roll call the rasha called out, "Levi Stein! Come forward!" (We can't judge Levi Stein for what he did, as we can't judge anybody who went through the Holocaust). He turned to the person standing next to him in line and said, "Nu! Levi! Why aren't you going forward? The guard called you!" That person was Reb Avraham Steiner z'l (who later lived in Bnei Brak). He quickly assessed the situation. He could have claimed that his name isn't Levi Stein, but he decided that this was bashert, and he didn't want to hurt his fellow man. He stepped forward; ready to accept the pain, so Levi wouldn't suffer.

The Nazi criminal said, "This time, we'll play a different game. This time, the person who came forward will live, and everyone else will die." His life was saved, by being mevater.

One lesson that this story teaches us is that when matters seem terrible, it may not be so. Our view is short-sighted, and when something seems bad, it just might really be very good. Keep this lesson in mind when you are jealous of others. You think that he has

more than you, but it could be that he also doesn't have. And even if he does have, it could be that he has so much tzaros, he wishes he was in your place. So why be jealous?

In a sense, everyone is blind. We don't see things correctly. We think we don't have, when really we do have. We think that others have, when they really don't have. If we would have a clearer perspective, we wouldn't be jealous of anyone.

Torah Gems

17:23 וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים



Aharon's staff was the one that flowered, and it gave forth almonds. The commentaries ask an interesting question. Normally, when fruits grow, the flower or bud that preceded the fruit falls away. Why, then, are both the flower and the fruit simultaneously present on Aharon's staff?

In fact, the gemara (Yoma 52), explicitly mentions that the staff was hidden for Eternity together with its flowers and its almonds. What is the significance of the flowers remaining?

R' Moshe Feinstein, ZT"L, offers a beautiful insight. In the secular world, people are only interested in the final product, the bottom line, the fruit. The effort, time and preparation are all wasted if one does not produce. When it comes to matters of holiness and Torah, the exact opposite is true. Hashem wants the effort. The

preparation that a person performs before doing a mitzvah is important to Hashem like the mitzvah itself.

Now, what is the flower to the fruit? It is a preparation - first the plant blossoms, and then fruit emerges. For this reason, the flowers on Aharon's staff remained.

Hashem is sending us a message: "The fruit will develop and come about, but that which precedes it is also important to Me." This fruit represents the groundwork and preparation.

Therefore, when the staff was hidden for Eternity it was hidden with its flowers and with its fruit, because to us, preparation is significant.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Rabbi Paysach Krohn The Raffle Tickets

A number of summers ago at Camp Romimu, my son-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Dovid Pfeiffer, the learning director, along with his assistant, came up with an idea. They realized that camp on Shabbos presented a unique challenge. What can the kids do all day if they are not playing sports, swimming or taking a trip? And so, they came up with the idea that they would give the kids one raffle ticket for every half-hour of learning they completed.

During the middle of the summer, a set of two prizes would be raffled off, and at the end of the summer, another set of two prizes would be raffled off. What were the two prizes?

The boy with the winning raffle ticket would have the opportunity to drive a golf cart during one day of camp. They could go all over the camp and take whomever they wanted along for the ride. Many kids were excited to hear about this, though it didn't come close to the other prize, of which many kids specifically from Antwerp, Belgium, were thrilled to hear about: two hours of horseback riding.

One particular boy from Antwerp jumped up with excitement, exhilarated to hear about this winning option. But all the other boys realized that it was not his wish to win the prize that would go anywhere; he would actually need to have the winning raffle ticket. They figured that he would nonetheless put in many hours of learning, which he certainly did.



The night the camp held the raffle, lo and behold, this boy from Antwerp won. No one could believe it. He wanted to win and he did! After the raffle concluded and the boys settled down, Rabbi Shlomo Pfeiffer, the head counsellor, told them all the following secret.

"First of all," he began, "you should all feel proud for learning diligently every Shabbos. You earned all together hundreds of raffle tickets. But now let me tell you a secret. This 5th grade ten-year-old boy from Antwerp was surrounded by an amazing group of friends. Every raffle ticket which the boys in his bunk earned, they wrote his name on it and submitted it to the raffle."

Of course, when the time for the raffle came, this boy had over a hundred raffle tickets, and the likelihood of him winning was largely in his favour.

What a beautiful demonstration of unity and caring for a fellow friend.

Mrs. Rivka Malka Perlman The Erev Shabbat Frenzy

בזאת תדעון כי ד׳ שלחני לעשות את כל המעשים האלה...

Through this you shall know that Hashem sent me to perform all these acts… (*Bamidbar* 16:28)



Around a month and a half before Pesach this past year, I began having some plumbing problems in my house. A number of pipes burst underground and flooded our basement. Being that this happened on Friday just hours before Shabbat, my entire family was in a frenzy. We did not have any water and we all still needed to take showers and ready ourselves for Shabbat. That was besides the fact that my kitchen was a mess because Despite the craziness which pervaded our home on Erev Shabbat, Shabbat itself was peaceful and beautiful. But that was not the end of the plumbing problems.

Three weeks later, our water heater broke. It was Friday afternoon again, and all of a sudden, our basement was soaking wet. And so, once again, we entered Shabbat without hot water in our home and managed as best as we could.

Later that Shabbat, I came across a story which Mrs. Sara Yocheved Rigler wrote about herself. She tells about the time she once noticed a rat in her house yet could not get rid of it. Whatever she tried to do was to no avail. The rat had found a home of its own and had no plan of leaving any time soon. Unsure what to do, Mrs. Rigler decided that she would visit **Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg**

zt"l and ask if there was any possible reason why this rat persisted to remain in her home.

After hearing the circumstances of the rat, Rav Scheinberg said, "It is not the rat which needs to be attended to, but rather yourself." Explaining that everything which happens to a person comes directly from Hashem, he directed her to research the rat in *Perek Shira*. *A sefer* which enumerates the various songs of praise expressed by all parts of creation in the world, the rat too has a line. It says, "Let every *neshama* (soul) praise Hashem!" Taken from Psalm 150 in Tehillim, the rat conveys its appreciation for life. It does not complain, but rather embraces its lowly life and makes the most of it. Chazal explain this Pasuk to mean that for every *neshima* (breath), a word similar to *neshama*, we are to praise Hashem (*Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim* 889). Every breath of life is precious and requires that we show our immense gratitude to our Creator.

As Sara Yocheved Rigler came across this intriguing interpretation of what the rat says, she was sincerely moved. Realizing that perhaps the rat was doing more than being a nuisance, but was sending her a message, she began thinking of her own life.

"Why am I complaining?" she thought to herself. "I should be praising Hashem for the gift of a beautiful son and another day to live." From then on, she decided that she would work on always being positive. When she would be asked how everything is going, she would do her utmost to respond, "Great, Baruch Hashem!"

"The test of emunah is not whether a person believes, but whether he lives by what he believes." ~ Rav Dessler (Michtav MeEliyahu).

whY I Matter - Young Israel of Midwood Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

Down under - וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן

"Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehat son of Levi took . . ." (16:1) The Aramaic translation reads: "He separated himself." **R' Shlomo Kluger z"l** (1784-1869; rabbi of Brody, Galicia) writes: Based on this, we can understand why Korach was punished so severely.



Korach's 250 cohorts transgressed an express commandment in the Torah by offering a private ketores / incense offering, a sin for which the Torah imposes the death penalty, yet they merited to die in a "fire that came from Hashem" (16:35).

Korach, on the other hand, did not transgress anything for which the Torah imposes the death penalty, yet he died an ignominious death- being swallowed alive by the earth. Why? Why was his fate worse than that of those who made the Golden Calf and those who believed the Spies?

The answer is that Korach, alone among all of the other sinners just mentioned, separated himself from the Jewish People. The others, though they sinned, were protected by the merit of the community to which they adhered. *(Kohelet Yaakov: Bein Ha'meitzarim)*

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Severity of Machlokes



The Arizal taught that the final letters of **צדי<u>ק</u> כתמ<u>ר</u> יפר<u>ח</u>** spell Korach, because in the future, Korach will blossom and become from the greatest tzaddikim. Indeed, before his sin, Korach was from the greatest people of the generation. A proof to this is that he was appointed to carry the Aron. Only the greatest people in Klal Yisrael were given this right.

We cannot fathom Korach's spiritual greatness and therefore we are also unable to judge or to fully comprehend his sins. Nevertheless, we study parashas Korach so we can learn from his errors and accustom ourselves to run away from machlokes.

The Shlah writes, "From Korach, we learn just how severe is the punishment for disputes. Consider the great punishment that befell Korach. His illustrious offspring that would come from him in the future didn't help him. Korach was a prince in Yisrael, if it weren't for this sin. He carried the Aron! Dasan and Aviram and all of their children also perished.

The heavenly court doesn't punish people below the age twenty, but this time, because of the severity of machlokes, even babies died. One should learn from all of this to go in the path of peace. Everyone should follow the ways of Ahron, who was ohev shalom (Avos 1:12).

Notice that throughout the machlokes, Ahron didn't say anything at all, although Korach's intention was to take Ahron's honour away.

Whatever one can do to make peace and to extinguish the fire of machlokes, should be done. We learn this from Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe was the greatest Navi; he was a king, yet he himself went to Dasan and Aviram. They brazenly said, **לא נעלה** "We will not go to you," so Moshe and the elders came to them – Anything to make peace."

Real Hearing Written by D Fine

After Korach spits out his rebellious barrage against Moshe and Aharon, the pasuk says (16:4) **וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה** 'and Moshe heard.' What do these words mean; of course, Moshe heard (he was not deaf) – what is the pasuk telling us?

The Idea Is that Moshe looked deeper and understood where Korach's claim was really coming from. Korach hid behind the claim of 'the people do not need any leaders' to charge his way to the leadership himself. Moshe understood exactly what Korach wanted and looked beyond the mere words that came out of Korach's mouth. Moshe understood that (as the gemarah says) Korach's argument was borne out of his haughtiness and lust for honour. This is why Moshe responded 'in the morning HaShem will make known His chosen one' – for Moshe knew that Korach really wanted to be the leader himself. This was a real act of hearing.



The Wrong Outlook - Written by D Fine

In his argument, Korach says the words **כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קְדֹשִׁים** 'the people are all holy' (16:3). This was part of his faulty outlook on life, for HaShem tells Bnei Yisrael that they 'shall/will be holy' (vayikra 19:2) **וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ.**

In other words, Korach is hinting that it is enough to think one is holy now, but HaShem reveals the correct attitude in saying that no-one should assume they are fully holy at the present moment – we should always strive to grow and look to a time in the future that we WILL be holy.



This is why Korach is from the root 'Kerach' meaning ice, for ice keeps things cold, static, with no movement – just like his words hinted at the dangerous idea of keeping still spiritually and not aiming to continuously grow. And 'korcha' means a bald spot (Dvarim 14;1) – again, where nothing grows (heard from R' Eitan Feiner).

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages

Someone once asked **Rav Avigdor Miller**, "How can one build self-esteem?"

Rav Miller responded, "You don't have to. Just practice the skill of looking pleasantly at others and acting like a Mentch.

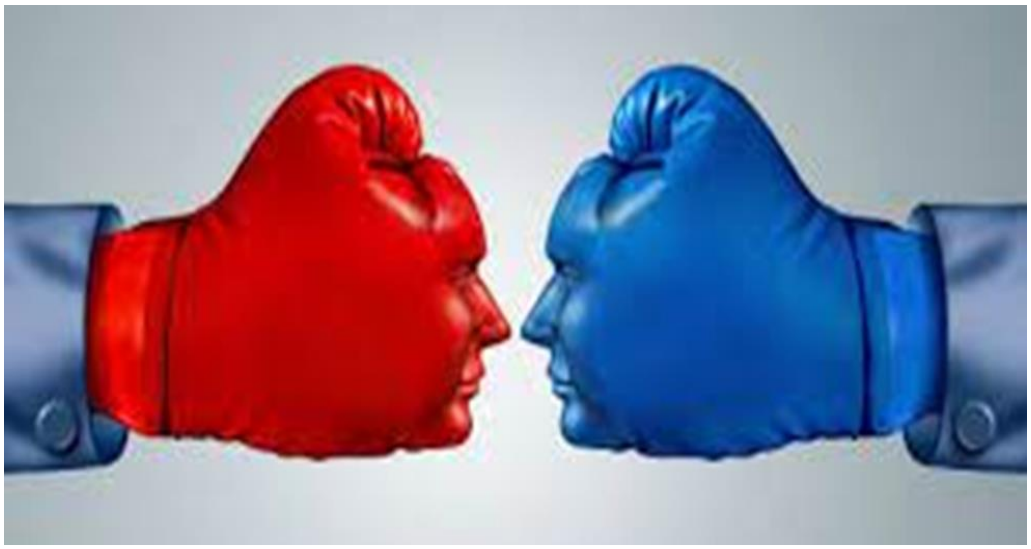
The rest will come automatically!"

Short Vort.com - In Machlokes Anything Goes Written by D Fine

I heard the following from **Rav Osher Wiess**.

The Chidushei HaRim asks why Korach picked on an argument that Moshe was 'raising himself over the kahal of HaShem' (16;3) if HaShem had said Himself that Moshe was the most humble person that lived (12;3).

If Korach is going to make something up against Moshe, why pick something that is blatantly untrue – and how did people go with korach on this one???



The Chidushei HaRim answers that this is the power of machlokes; nobody thinks straight and anything goes as 'truth.' Similarly , the Medrash Tanchuma relates that Korach told his followers a story that Moshe and Aharon took terumah, peah, etc from the field of a widow all for themselves and eventually left her with basically nothing.

Korach told this story despite it being impossible for terumah to occur in the desert; nobody owned land there and nothing grew (!), because he knew that anything will be accepted in a machlokes.

In short, BEWARE OF MACHLOKES! Even shorter…GADOL HASHALOM.

Blind Ambition - By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky



Love is blind. So is hate and any principle that begins to shade the intellect with emotion. This week, in what appears to be the worst ideological division of the Jewish people after the Exodus, a litmus test of human nature proved that the great divide bordered more on ego than on principle.

Korach, a cousin of Moshe and a brilliant man in his own right, began a rebellion that challenged the leadership and divine appointment of both Moshe and Ahron. In addition to his own family, Korach's actions inspired 250 Jewish leaders to denounce publicly the leadership of Moshe and Ahron.

Foremost among the self-appointed detractors were two men with a history of vindictive activities toward Moshe – Dassan and Aviram. Back in Egypt, when Moshe killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating an innocent Jew, these men threatened to inform the Egyptian authorities.

But Moshe wanted to deal with them. As leader of two million people, he could have laughed at the complaints of a minute fraction of the population, but he didn't. He reached out to Dassan and Aviram and asked them to come and discuss their qualms with him. His request was met with a barrage of insults.

"Even if you gouge out our eyes – we shall not meet!" they responded (Numbers 16:14)

I was always amazed at this most arrogant response. Why did these men, who obviously were stubborn, arrogant, and supercilious, respond in a self-deprecating manner? Why did they suggest the

horrific infliction of eye-gouging upon themselves? Would it not be enough to respond, even to the worst of enemies, "we will not come?" What connection does the loss of vision have with their refusal?

Reb Gimpel, a travelling salesman, developed an illness in a small village far from his home and was prescribed with a cure that entailed eating of non-kosher food. A foreigner in that town, he decided to ask the local rabbi if he was permitted to eat the medicine.

The gentile doctor did not know where the rabbi lived and suggested that Reb Gimpel ask the local butcher. Reb Gimpel went into the butcher shop. "Excuse me," he asked the burly meat vendor, "do you know where I can find your rabbi?" "The rabbi!" sneered the butcher, "why would a respectable-looking man like yourself need our rabbi?" The man was puzzled but continued to explain. "I'd like to ask him something. "Ask him something!" mocked the butcher. "Our rabbi doesn't know the difference between a horse and a cow! You're wasting your time! Ask the chazzan where he lives, I have no reason to tell you."

The shocked man went to the chazzan's home. "Excuse me," he asked. Do you know where the rabbi lives?" "The rabbi?" asked the cantor in horror. "Why in the world would you want to meet that ignoramus? Surely you don't want to ask him a question! I wouldn't want to be party to your misfortune. Better ask the mohel."

Frustrated the poor man went to the home of the mohel where once again he was accosted with a barrage of insults and put-downs. Finally, however, the mohel acquiesced and directed the man to the rabbi's home. The man entered the threshold and before he even shook the rabbi's hand he exclaimed, "Listen, I don't know you, and you don't me. I came here to ask one question, but I will ask you something totally different. Why are you the rabbi here? The butcher thinks you're a thief, the chazzan thinks you're an

ignoramus, and the mohel loathes you. Why in the world do you remain the rabbi of this town?"

The rabbi looked up from his bifocals and smiled. "Ah! The insults, the abuse and the criticism. But you know what: for a little honour it's all worth it!"

As the proverbial rabble-rousers of all time, Dassan and Aviram were preaching profound insight into the laws of arrogance. When one is set on a self-fulfilling mission of squabbling, as corrupt and perverted as his judgement is, so is his vision. He is blind to the critics, blind to the world, and worst of all, blind to his own self.

Once a man is blind, you can gouge his eyes and he will not notice. Only those with a pure sense of mission, cherish the vision that lets them see a situation from every angle. Even if it is not their own. While Moshe, the leader of the entire nation asks to meet his worst enemies and discuss their gripes, thy refuse and would rather be blind to any criticism.

Parshah Thoughts - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn



The congregation of Korach died in a miraculous fashion, in which the earth opened up around them, swallowed them up, and then returned to normal ground (16:31). **Rav Elimelech Biderman** suggests that it was necessary to have such a grand miracle to ensure that no one will forget about Korach and how bad Machlokes is. Although the Gemara says (Brachos 58b) that when someone passes away they are forgotten over time, by having

this miracle occur with Korach's death, the lesson of Korach will never be forgotten.

Rabbi Yossi Goldberg – Angry or Upset?

וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד טז׳ טו׳ And Moshe became very angry

The simple translation of this Possuk is that Moshe became angry. And it makes sense that he was angry. Moshe had sent for Dosson and Aveirom to come to him so that their differences could be solved in a peaceful way. But with great Chutzpa they refused to come and instead they accused Moshe of leading Klal Yisroel with arrogance. It is understandable therefore that Moshe would have become angry. However, Rashi explains these words, "Moshe was very pained (upset)".



Harav Shlomo Kluger asks on this, how did Rashi know to change from the simple meaning of the words of the Possuk? **וַיִּחַר** normally means an expression of anger. He brings from a Gemara in Eruvin that writes about a certain Amora that when he became angry, he did not Daven that day, as it would have been inappropriate to talk to Hashem whilst he was angry.

Rav Kluger points out that the above Possuk continues, **וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יְהוָה׳ אַל־תֵּפֶן אֶל־מִנְחָתָם**, "Moshe turned to Daven to Hashem". How could Moshe Daven to Hashem if he was indeed angry? This is how Rashi knew that it must be that Moshe was not angry but merely pained and upset. Therefore, he was still able to Daven to Hashem in that state.

We could add to this from Chazal that compares someone who becomes angry to someone who serves Avoda Zara. The reason for this comparison is that a person only becomes angry when someone or something does not go in the way that he was expecting or in the way he would have preferred.

However, if that same person would possess true Emuna and would live with the understanding that everything is preordained from Hashem and everything is for his ultimate good, he would not feel put out at all. His anger is a result of incomplete Emuna. If that's the case, it is simply a contradiction for someone to be angry and at the same time want to talk to Hashem. Is he connected to Hashem with Emuna at that moment or is he not? This further proves the point of Harav Shlomo Kluger above; Rashi was forced to explain that Moshe was upset but not angry. This way, he did not lack Emuna in that state and he was able to still talk to Hashem.

From here we can learn two things. Firstly, of course it is wrong to be angry. But secondly, it is equally natural for a person to react when things don't go to plan or when people annoy him. It is "ok" to be upset; just don't lose yourself in anger. When a person is upset, they can still function and still talk to Hashem. But when a person is angry; they lose themselves.

The Gemara says, don't try to calm an angry person; it will just make them worse. (Think about the Mitzriyim hitting the first frog of Tzefardea!) Not so one who is merely upset.

A family were heading out on an outing, but they kept on losing the way. It was a frustrating drive and at one point the father, who was driving, lost himself and started shouting. He shouted at his wife, at the GPS and at the one who had originally suggested that they go on this trip. Their 6 yr old son was sitting in the back and was disturbed to see his father have this meltdown. Innocently, he asked, "Why is Daddy so angry?" The innocent question caught the father off guard. He hesitated and replied softly, "Daddy's not angry. He's just upset."

The atmosphere in the car totally changed. After all, he wasn't angry anymore. He was just upset.

Lets work on our Emuna and our Middos so that we become calmer in our approach to disappointment. Just be upset – not angry.

Pearls of Wisdom… A Word for the Ages



The Steipler Gaon once made a surprise appearance at a Bar Mitzvah Seudah to which he had not been invited. He wished the father a Mazel Tov, and then sat down next to the Bar Mitzvah boy, spoke with him for a very short while, and then left. After the Steipler left, the Bar Mitzvah boy explained to his father what had happened.

Several years earlier, the Steipler had seen him enter the Shul on Yom Kippur carrying a large Sefer, which the Steipler thought was a Gemara. He told the boy, "Now we are supposed to Daven. Learning is for later." The boy then showed the Steipler that he was carrying a large Machzor, not a Gemara. The Steipler asked for the boy's forgiveness, which of course he gave.

The boy said, "Today, however, the Steipler just told me that the Mechilah, forgiveness, of a Katan, a boy under the age of Bar Mitzvah, is not valid, so the Steipler made sure to keep track of when I would become a Bar Mitzvah, so that he could ask forgiveness again at the first possible opportunity!"

Illogical - Written by D Fine



The 250 followers of Korach were pulled into this argument/rebellion, and they all offered their ketores despite the fact that they all knew that only one of them would be chosen – the rest were destined to perish. Each person genuinely thought that they would be the one to come out tops – above even Aharon HaKohen – to the extent that they were willing to put their life on the line for this judgment call.

And we know what happened – ultimately, they all perished and Aharon came out on top. We see from here the danger of machlokes; once dispute begins, all logic goes out the window in the quest for self-vindication and glory. Let's try and keep our brain on top of things at all times.

Weekly Inspiration

"When one eats just to satisfy desire, it brings a certain sadness. But eating in a sanctified manner increases joy and pleasure. Through the sparks of sanctity in the food that are elevated, this illuminates the soul, and Divine joy is felt." - **Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook zt'l.**

Time Heals

A wise counsel to avoid machlokes is to push matters off for later. When Korach and his congregation argued with Moshe, Moshe said, בֹּקֶר וְיֹדַע ה׳ אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ (16:5). Rashi writes that he pushed off the machlokes for the next day, because "maybe [by then] they will change their minds."



It is important to think things over well, to know how to respond, and if at all. Sometimes, after letting some time pass, he will also realize that he didn't understand all the data at first. With new data, he realizes that the person wasn't so guilty for what he did. Also, after thinking things over, one often realizes that he will lose more by making a machlokes than what he will gain. So it is always wise to push off responding until a later time. With a clear mind, he can decide how to respond, and whether it isn't better to just let matters pass.

A very precious, crystal bottle broke in the home of **Reb Efraim Zalman Margolis zt"l (the Matteh Efraim).** His wife was hysterical, but he remained calm. "How can you be so relaxed? Don't you realize how much that vase costs?" "I can't answer you now, but ask me again in a year, and I will explain it to you." She didn't forget.

Exactly a year later, she asked her husband for an explanation. He asked her, "Does it still bother you that the bottle broke." "So many things happened since then," she replied. "To tell the truth, I've almost forgotten the entire episode." He said, "What you grasp now, I understood immediately, when the vase broke." He explained, "Your father chose me to be his son-in-law, because he said that I am an iluy (genius). I am able to grasp in a moment, what others need

a year to comprehend. I knew that the broken bottle wouldn't bother me in a year's time, so I didn't let it bother me then either."

With a machlokes, one should also think ahead. Right now, you are angry at someone, because you feel that he wronged you. But how will you feel about this wrongdoing in a year from now? Will it bother you then? If it will not bother you then, perhaps you shouldn't allow it to bother you now. Think back to a machlokes you were involved in, in the past, and ask yourself: Are you happy that you said those harsh words; that you did those revengeful deeds? Probably, by now you realize that it would have been wiser to let matters pass.



The Imrei Noem told the following mashal:

A lion asked a sheep, "Smell my breath. How is it?" The sheep told him the truth, "Your breath smells horrid." "Where is your respect for the king of all animals?" the lion shouted and devoured the sheep. Then the lion went to the wolf and asked him his opinion. The wolf saw what happened to the sheep, so the wolf said, "My master the king, your breath smells lovely." "You are lying," the king of the jungle said. "How dare you lie to me," and he devoured the wolf as well. Then the king went over to the fox, and said, "Smell my breath, and tell me how it is?" The fox pointed to his nose and said, "My master, my nose is stuffed. I can't smell anything." And in this manner, the fox was saved.

The Imrei Noam said: This is what one should do when a machlokes is raging. It is time to keep away, because getting involved, in any way, will only cause you trouble.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR PARSHAS KORACH

When the Baal Shem Tov Laughed - Asharon Baltazar

Hunger was a familiar guest in Reb Shabtai's home. Work didn't come by so often for the bookbinder, and since Reb Shabtai and his wife, Perel, refused to collect charity, they regularly went to bed enduring the throbs of an empty stomach. Once, before Shabbat, they hadn't a single coin in the house—not for wine, *challah*, or even two stubs of wax for candles.

Despair cut through Reb Shabtai's heart like a fiery poker. Although the image of a barren table smothered in darkness was heartbreaking indeed, the couple agreed to follow the Talmudic adage, "Better make your Shabbat profane than to rely on the largesse of others."

On Friday afternoon, Reb Shabtai left for the synagogue, where he, as usual, spent the rest of the day reading Psalms and the weekly Torah portion. This, coupled with the peaceful silence, helped somewhat ease his burdened mind. When the sky turned orange tinged with red, Reb Shabtai began to prepare to welcome the Shabbat while the synagogue around him filled up.

As much as Reb Shabtai would have preferred that they last forever, the evening services eventually drew to a close. He remained in his seat and stared blankly at his *siddur*, sneaking occasional glances at the others leaving—he didn't want anyone pestering him as to why his windows were dark. The synagogue fell quiet as before, and Reb Shabtai finally decided it was time to come home.

Something, however, wasn't right. The sight of candles twinkling warmly from behind the grubby window made Reb Shabtai's heart sink. He was quite sure that was his home. Had Perel really been unable to contain herself from borrowing the candles? Or perhaps worse — money?

His bewilderment grew further as he crossed the front door to discover Perel beaming next to a table laden with a bottle of wine, two glazed loaves of fluffy *challah*, and an assortment of delicacies. He studied all of this quietly. A demand for the meaning of this would undoubtedly distress Perel, so Reb Shabtai resolved to simply leave it unaddressed. He returned Perel's smile.

"It was a miracle, Shabtai," said Perel, discerning her husband's unasked question. "While you were gone, I began to clean the house and came across a pair of gloves I didn't know we even had. The gloves, Shabtai, had big golden buttons! They were quite expensive, too, because once I snipped them off, they sold for a sizable amount. Everything you see here—" she motioned to the lavish table "— was bought with that money."

A sudden surge of gratitude warmed Reb Shabtai's heart; G-d had delivered in their time of need. He danced around the small table, clapping his hands with a spontaneous song on his lips. Perel laughed, the worries of poverty usually etched on her face now gone without a trace.

Miles away, sitting at his own Shabbat table, the Baal Shem Tov also began to laugh. The hearty sound reverberated around the room, despite the large crowd of students gathered there. This prompted a few of them to exchange curious stares, but no one attempted to inquire about the reason, nor did the Baal Shem Tov explain.

After *havdalah* the next day, Reb Ze'ev Kitzes asked the Baal Shem Tov for the meaning of his Friday night laugh. The Baal Shem Tov provided no answer, instead requesting his wagon driver to ready the horses for himself and his students. With a respectful silence, the students piled into the wagon after the Baal Shem Tov; they were accustomed to the occasional mysterious outing.

The wagon didn't stop until it had arrived in the Polish city of Opatow (Apta) the next morning. By the order of the Baal Shem Tov, one of

the students hurried off to find Reb Shabtai, a bookbinder. A wide-eyed Reb Shabtai soon stood in the front of the Baal Shem Tov.

"Tell me what happened on Shabbat night," said the Baal Shem Tov gently.

And so Reb Shabtai did: he recounted the couple's grim certainty that they'd fast that Shabbat, the unexpected gift from Above, and his dance around the table to praise G-d. The Baal Shem Tov nodded along, his beard failing to hide a wide smile.

"The entirety of Heaven rejoiced in your moments of pure joy," smiled the Baal Shem Tov. "Now tell me, what do you want to be blessed with?"

Reb Shabtai thought for a few moments, scrunching up his face wistfully. "I don't need silver or gold. It's obvious the one thing Perel and I want is children."

The Baal Shem Tov blessed the couple with a child, and one year later, he arrived in Opatow once more to serve as *sandek* for the baby boy at his *brit*. Yisrael—named to honor the Baal Shem Tov—would later serve Jewry as one of its most inspiring leaders: Rabbi Yisrael, the Maggid of Kozhnitz.

Gematriah

וַיֵּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיִּצֹּץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים It grew flowers, sprouted blossoms, and bore almonds (17:23) - Why did Aharon's staff grow almond blossoms, of all things?

שְׁקֵדִים = 454 = חשמונים

Aharon's almonds were restoring his ability to do the avodah unchallenged. The almonds hint at the Chashmona'im, who were descendants of Aharon and later restored the ability of the kohanim to do the avodah unchallenged in their time.

The Old Lady's Request

A story is told of an old lady who was nearing the end of her life. As she lay on her death bed surrounded by her loving family, she asked them to honour what she was about to ask of them to do, even though it might seem a bit strange to them.



"Please can you all leave this room and go to the nearby forest. Each of you is to find a twig or small branch and then bring it back to me here. Go!"

Out of respect, they all left the room and heeded their mother's wish. When they returned, each member of the family was carrying a twig. The old lady asked them to give their twigs to her. She reached over to the drawer next to her bed and pulled out some string. Holding all the twigs together she tied a string around them, making them into one bundle.

The family looked on, puzzled. The old lady then passed the bundle to the child standing closest and asked, "Please snap this bundle of twigs." The child tried but to no avail.

She passed the bundle to the next family member and asked of them the same. They too could not break the bundle. When they had all tried and failed to snap the bundle of twigs, she asked for the bundle back.

She untied the string and picked up one individual twig. She snapped it easily. She picked up another and snapped that one too. She stopped only after she had snapped the last twig.

With her remaining energy, she looked lovingly at all her family and said, "As long as the twigs were together in one bundle, they couldn't be broken. It was only when each twig was taken separately that

they were easily snapped. "Stay together as one and each of you will be stronger."

As Klal Yisroel, we need each other. Perhaps, now more than ever before We need to embrace our differences, respect each other and remember that we are united by our desire to serve Hashem **לשמה**. Then we will be able to draw strength from one another and find the resilience to survive the Golus until its end, may it be speedily in our days. *(Oneg Shabbos London, UK)*

The Rebbe's Tish that Started with the Soup Course.

As Told by Peretz Klein



Rav Schneider told me this story himself: I was born and raised in Brazil. When I was a teenager, I went to learn in Gateshead, England and I couldn't always travel bein hazmanim back home to Brazil. One time, my friend from Yeshiva invited me to spend bein hazmanim with his family who lived in Belgium. - I graciously accepted the offer.

On a Friday morning, we went to daven shacharis with the famous holy Rebbe, **Rav Itzik'l** (HaRav Moshe Yitzchock Gevertzman of Przeworsk zy"a, who lived from 1882 to 1976. After davening, the Rebbe noticing a new face and greeted me warmly. He asked me some questions: where I'm from, where I learn. He then he invited me to be his personal guest at the Shabbos Seuda that night.

Naturally I accepted the honour and I went that night to daven with the holy Rebbe. After davening was over, I was in for a little shock. Instead of starting the Seuda, the Rebbe and his family sat down to

learn. After a while, I realized this is not stopping so fast. I was a little confused as to the schedule, so I asked someone what's going on.

They explained that the Rebbe and his family would learn for the next few hours while the *olam* goes home to have the seuda with their families; then the Rebbe would first start his Tish for all his chassidim to come and watch, starting at the beginning with "Shalom Aleichem". I felt my empty stomach turn over, as I hadn't eaten properly all day long. It would be several hours till I would have any food to eat. All of a sudden, the Rebbe called me over and asked if I'm hungry. I didn't have a choice and I simply said "Yes, I am".

The Rebbe took me warmly and made Kiddush for me; he washed with me, ate challah with me, and had the fish course with me. Then he went back to continue his learning, until the time would come when all his chassidim would come to watch him have his Friday night Seudas Shabbos.

But that night, the Rebbe's Tish didn't have the beautiful zemiros of Shalom Aleichem, Aishes Chayil, etc. The crowd didn't get to hear their Rebbe's derhoiben Kiddush. They didn't see him wash his hands and eat the challah and fish. This week, the Tish began with the soup course. Why? Because the holy Rebbe, whose mind was famous for being comfortable in the highest heavens, also cared about the grumbles of a young stranger's empty stomach! *(Oneg Shabbos London, UK)*

'The spiritual state of a person is not measured by his emotional intensity but by the direction of his choices. One may feel dry and distant yet be ascending, or feel inspired yet remain unchanged. The essence lies in consistent movement toward truth. ~ Chazon Ish'.

Where is Your Furniture? - Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

A person once delivered a letter from the **Baal Shem Tov** to the Maggid. Entering the Maggid's house, he was shocked to see that there was barely any furniture inside. The same board that served as a table, placed on two stumps, became the bed at night, when it was placed on the floor.

Turning to the Maggid, he asked in astonishment, "Where is your furniture?"



The Maggid replied by asking him the same question: "And where is yours?" "My furniture is in my house," he answered. "The only reason you don't see it is because I am traveling right now. But this is your home, so where is yours?"

The Maggid replied "I am also traveling now. In my home [i.e. in Gan Eden], you will find my furniture."

So yes, the Maggid was extremely modest. Not only didn't he own luxuries, but he was also careful not to have more than the most basic necessities.

However, his great-grandson, known as the **heilige Ruzhiner**, lived in luxury. He travelled in a wagon of which even the Czar of Russia was envious of, and he wore boots made out of gold.

Some might ask, "Doesn't modesty apply to all aspects of one's conduct? A person should not ostentatiously show off his riches. Why did the Ruzhiner live with so much luxury?"

The answer is: At the same time the Ruzhiner wore golden boots, there were holes in the soles. In other words, the Ruzhiner felt that the gentiles and nobility looked down at the "poor" Jew. So in order

to enhance the image of a Jew, he dressed and traveled in the above-described style. However, he never felt any sense of personal satisfaction from his riches.

When a person reflects and realizes that he was entrusted by Hashem, the Creator of the entire Universe, to successfully accomplish his mission, how can he let Him down? He must and will persevere!

In this area, not only is haughtiness not frowned upon, but it is also laudable and in fact a necessity.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky's Unexpected Learning Partner By Daniel Goldstein



Rabbi Menahem began learning at Yeshivat Torah V'Emunah in Jerusalem, and later moved to Bnei Brak to study at Yeshivat Netivot Olam. His 14-year-old son Zohar joined a local *Talmud Torah* (Religious Torah School)

Shortly after entering the school, the boy returned home frustrated. "Father, I do not understand anything that is taught in school." "I can't read the *Gemara* without punctuation," he said.

The father responded to his son: "Zohar, when issues come up in life I go to the experts for advice, why don't you try the same thing?" Here in our city, lives the famous Sage Rabbi Chaim Kanivsky shlit"a, he is an expert at *Gemara*, go and seek his advice."

The boy went to Rabbi Kanievsky's house on Friday afternoon and asked him, "Perhaps your honour could teach me tractate Bava Metzia, the *Gemara* we are learning in *Cheder*?"

Rabbi Kanievsky replied: "When will I have the time to learn with you? And after a moment of thought, he said, "It's a good idea, sit my son and we will learn together."

"They sat and learned the tractate of *Baba Metzia* together for an entire hour: the giant Torah Sage with a young boy struggling to learn," the father notes with admiration. "When they finished studying and Zohar rose to go, he said: 'Rabbi, should I come again next week?' Rabbi Kanievsky, in his humility, replied: 'Come again next week and we will study together.'

So it was. The special friendship continued for two and a half years. Every Friday afternoon the boy arrived at the house of the great Torah Sage for a lesson in *Gemara*.

Even when the boy went to study in a yeshiva, the special friendship continued, albeit slightly differently: Zohar would arrive on Friday afternoons, and the rabbi would test him on what he had learned that week.

After several years, Rabbi Kanievsky said to Zohar: "Tell your father I said it's time for you to get married". After the young man got married, he went to Rabbi Kanievsky's home to ask advice about his Torah learning. The rabbi said to him: "I would like you to write a commentary on the *Mishnah Berurah* and indicate the sources on which the *Mishnah Berurah* wrote his rulings." In response, Zohar said that he felt this task was beyond him. He continued studying Torah in other fields and didn't write the commentary.

After a while Zohar approached Rabbi Kanievsky expressing his concern that he had not been blessed with children yet. The Rav looked at him and said, "I told you to write a book about the *Mishnah Berurah*." Zohar said again: "This is beyond me," but the great Sage

didn't give in and said, "Deal with the book and you will be blessed with children".



"And so it was," continues Rabbi Menachem with his story. "While writing the first volume of his commentary, he was blessed with his first son, and from there on, upon completing the next volumes in the series, he merited another son."

Rabbi Menahem took out the fourth volume of his son's book, *'Meir Oz'*, and said; "indeed he now has four children."

Rabbi Friedman concludes; we learn from this story how precious the soul of every Jewish child is, to the extent that the Great Torah Sage of the generation put aside his precious time to help a 14-year-old secular boy, connect to the beauty of the Torah and Judaism.

The Unpleasant Boss by Jack Rahmey



Lashon Harah is a terrible sin and has many negative ramifications but if we can control ourselves, we will be rewarded by our fellow man and more importantly by Hashem! As an example, Rabbi [Yaakov Yisrael] Lugassi told the

story of a man whose boss once asked him to provide some information about his coworker.

The man refused, noting that it is forbidden for him to speak *lashon ha'ra* about other people. The boss was enraged and made threats against the man. Still, the man did not budge. Over the next two months, the boss made this man's life in the office intolerable.

He was considering quitting his job, until one day the boss came into the office with a big smile and came over to the man and put his arm around him. *"From now on,"* the boss said, *"we are friends. I am depending on you and I am going to raise your status here in the company."*

The man asked the boss why he'd suddenly changed his attitude towards him.

"I will need to travel a lot for the company," the boss said, *"and I need somebody here whom I can trust. I will need to call often to check in on things here in the office, and I am worried about trusting people with important information. You, however, are trustworthy. You know how to keep your mouth shut, no matter what people do to you. You're the perfect man for the job."* From that day on, the man was extremely happy at work.

The Power of a Dream by Rabbi Yosef Weiss Z'tl

Mr. Azar, a successful salesman for a children's wear business, frequently traveled to all parts of the world. As a young boy in the 1930's, Mr. Azar had been educated in a Talmud Torah, then moved on to a yeshiva high school, where he stayed until he was 20. As he became more and more involved in his business, however, he began to move further away from mitzvah observance.

One day he happened to glance down at his tzitzis. He became lost in thoughts of his yeshiva days when he had been immersed in Torah and mitzvos.

"How can I desecrate my tzitzis with my current behavior?" he thought. So he decided to stop wearing tzitzis. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Azar scheduled a major sales trip to commence a few weeks later. In the interim, he worked overtime to finish up his local work. He would come home exhausted every night with barely enough energy to eat before he fell into bed.

One night he dreamt that he was driving a rented red car, headed toward Louisville, Kentucky. With no traffic, he had plenty of time to get to his appointment scheduled for half an hour from then. But he lost control of the car, which spun around several times, and then headed off the road toward a 20-foot embankment.

Mr. Azar tried desperately to turn the wheel, but to no avail. He closed his eyes and braced for the impact as the car crashed into the mountain. When he opened his eyes, he was amazingly unhurt. He tried to exit the car, but the doors were jammed shut. Then he smelled something burning. The car was on fire!

He started to yell, "Help! I don't want to die! I'm young, I have a whole life to live! Please, someone save me!" But no one was there to hear. The flames grew larger and suddenly the car exploded.



Mr. Azar sat bolt upright in bed, bathed in a cold sweat. It was a dream, but it had seemed so real. Still feeling shaken in the morning, he went to his Rav, **Chacham Baruch ben Chaim**, and relayed his dream.

He asked his Rav, "Are they trying to tell me something Upstairs? Am I going to die?"

The Rav asked him, "Is there anything you are doing now that you haven't done in the past? Or is there something that you aren't doing now that you were doing before?"

The first thing that came to Mr. Azar's mind was – tzitzis!

The Rav told him to immediately buy a pair of tzitzis. He made Mr. Azar promise that he would always wear them. "Do as I say and all will be well," assured the Rav. Mr. Azar complied and began wearing tzitzis again that very day.

A week later, Mr. Azar left on his trip. He visited Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago. He then rented a car – as it turned out it was a red car – and drove to Louisville, Kentucky. He had plenty of time until his meeting and there was no traffic. And then he lost control of the car! It was uncanny! He was living through his dream!

The car spun and spun, and headed off toward a 20-foot embankment. Mr. Azar tried to gain control of the car, but it was hopeless. The car crashed into the mountain, but Mr. Azar found himself unhurt. He had a dreadful feeling about what would happen next. Sure enough, the doors were jammed shut.

Then he heard a woman's voice telling him that she had seen his car lose control and she called the police. "Relax," she said, "they'll be here soon to get you out."

Mr. Azar screamed frantically, "There's no time!" He located a shattered window and dove through. He screamed to the woman to run away, and as they ran up the embankment, there was an ear-splitting explosion. They dove to the ground and then turned to see the car engulfed in flames. Later, in the emergency room, the medical staff shook their heads in disbelief as they examined Mr. Azar. "You are very lucky," they told him.

They removed his shirt, and then began to take off his tzitzis to remove the glass from his body. "No!" he said, "Don't touch those – they saved my life!" (Visions of Greatness, Vol. 1)

Pocket Guards From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles



Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson

Shneur Zalman Stern is a talented photographer and computer programmer, originally from Kentucky. He attended Hadar HaTorah in the 70's, the first *yeshiva* for young men who had little or no Jewish background. He was very close with the famous chasid, Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, who founded the *yeshiva*.

The road to a Torah life has its ups and downs. Once, on a Saturday night, after Shabbos was over, against Rabbi Jacobson's advice, Stern went to visit a photographer in Far Rockaway, Queens, the last stop on the subway line. They spoke for several hours, and it was well after midnight when Schneur Zalman finally left. He went to the station to catch a subway train back to Brooklyn.

He took note that there was no one else on the platform except himself. But suddenly two black youths grabbed his arms from behind and demanded his money.

With his heart pounding, Shneur Zalman said to them, "If you rob me or hurt me, you should know that there is a G-d in the world, and He will surely pay you back, in this world or in the next."

They sneered. One of the youths shoved his hand into Shneur Zalman's pants pocket and made a grab for his money, but then suddenly he began to scream:

"*Aiy! Aiy yaiy yaiy* ! Pocket guards! He got pocket guards!"

His fingers had gotten tangled in the *tzitzis* strings of Stern's 'little *tallit*', and it cast a fear upon him. Extricating his fingers with

difficulty, he jumped away and ran off as fast as he could, shouting, "Pocket guards! Pocket guards!"

The other young man was deeply affected. "Listen," he said. "You'll never catch a train here. The next one doesn't come till morning. Come with me. I'll take you to a different station."

And so, in the dark night, he led Shneur Zalman out of the station, and across several fields, till they came to another station, where he caught a train, and finally returned to the *yeshiva*.

The *tzitzis* had protected Shneur Zalman Stern physically and spiritually, saving him from one gangster, and transforming the other into an angel of kindness!

The Goat and the Grandson by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton

The young couple getting married were Baali Tshuva; The atmosphere was a bit tense being that their families didn't exactly agree with the Torah and commandments but it was generally happy especially for the bride's and groom's friends who were dancing singing and rejoicing to the music. (Men and women separately of course).

But when the band stopped and everyone sat down to eat the groom's grandfather, who had perhaps taken a few too many Le'Chaims, seized the opportunity between courses, climbed on the stage, and with a full wine glass in one hand and the microphone in the other, announced that he wanted silence.

He cleared his throat and began.

"First of all, thank you all for coming. Even the religious people. (Nervous laughter from the crowd). Second, I want to make a Mazal Tov toast to my grandson and his new wife and I hope they appreciate the 50,000 dollars we put out for this wedding." (more nervous laughter). He took a sip from his glass and continued. "And…"

He cleared his throat, waited again for complete silence and began, "I want to tell a story about religious Jews.

"Over seventy years ago, before the holocaust, there was a small town in Poland where there lived a lot of ultra-orthodox, Chassidic Jews. The boys starting from three years old went to Cheder to learn Torah all day till they got married. And then they kept learning as much as possible for the rest of their lives.

But it so happened that one of the boys there was a black sheep. From the beginning he didn't fit in, not only did he not sit and learn like the other children. he was what they call a troublemaker.

"He either came late to class or didn't come at all. And he loved to do crazy things, like what they call 'practical jokes'. Anyway, somehow, he made it to the seventh grade, but by the time he was twelve he had done so many practical jokes and crazy things that he was just on the edge of getting expelled from the school but they didn't kick him out because the fools they were, they hoped he would somehow change.



Then, one day he crossed the line. "It happened on Shabbos in the Synagogue. Everyone was dressed nice, really quiet and religious. They had been in the services, saying and singing prayers for almost an hour already and you know how it is when they open the ark to take out the Holy Torah, everyone was serious, chanting and looking at the ark when, just as they opened it a big GOAT jumped out!!

A big hairy goat! The women began to scream and waive their arms, the Rabbi stopped breathing and almost had a heart attack, people were yelling, rushing all over the place. It began jumping around the Synagogue making noises and

knocking people over. The caretaker was holding his head, others laughed so hard they fell off their seats. The kids loved it!!! Pandemonium!

It wasn't hard to figure who did it. The only one not in Synagogue was that crazy kid. He actually had snuck in the Shul early that morning with a goat and somehow put it in the Holy Ark! That's right! A goat!

"Needless to say the next day he was brought before the school board and officially informed that for once and for all he was permanently expelled!

"This is what I heard. Maybe for the first time in his life this kid got really serious. He said something like. "Expelled for life? I deserve a last request."

"'Deserve?' said one of his teachers 'if you deserve anything it's a good spanking!'

"'Maybe you're right about that too' he answered. "But a man before he is executed gets a last wish."

"Executed?! That's ridiculous! Last wish?" one of the Rabbis exclaimed. "I also have a last wish! That we never see you here again!!

But the boy continued, "Listen, for sure no other Jewish school will accept me. Right? So, I'll have to learn in a regular gentile school which is like killing my Jewish soul. So, before I'm executed I deserve a last wish."

"Nu" The Rabbis answered nervously, 'So what do you want?'

"My last request is; okay, I understand that I deserve no mercy but what about my children? One day I'll get married and have children. What will be with them? Why should they be doomed also? If I'm kicked out who knows who I'll marry and even if my children are Jewish who THEY will marry? That's my last request; save my children!"

The Rabbis were startled by this. They really wanted to be rid of him. But his speech touched them. So against their will and better judgement they gave him another 'last chance'

"Like I said I happen to know this person; Somehow he managed to finish the next few years and even got married to a Jewish girl.

Immediately after the wedding he shaved off his beard and removed his big black yarmulke for a little red one he kept in his pocket. But occasionally he did a commandment or two, and he even kept Shabbat, holidays and kosher.

"A few years later, I heard that he and his wife moved to America and then to Israel where they had an only son who grew up to be even less religious than they were and when he was eighteen, as soon as he finished high school, he announced he was leaving for America.

"His parents were heartbroken but somehow before he left, his father made him promise that no matter what he would marry a Jewish girl. And it worked! In America, although he had nothing to do with Judaism and was completely non-observant, by some miracle he married a Jewish girl and, like his parents, he and his wife had an only son.

"But this son was different from his parents and grandparents. He decided to become a Rabbi! A real observant Rabbi! So his grandfather's 'last wish' by the goat episode became a reality his offspring were saved!

The old man finished off the wine in the glass he was holding and concluded… "The reason I'm telling this story tonight is because that troublemaker that put the goat in the Ark back then was ME! And the groom whose wedding we are celebrating tonight!! Is my grandson!! "So, the moral is when you educate a child, remember! You are educating not just him but his children and children's children for all generations!"

"From Where will My Help Come?"



Reb Shmuel Brin sat in a waiting room packed with chasidim who had traveled from far and near to seek the advice of the **Rebbe Maharash**--the Fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. A tense atmosphere prevailed and showed itself in the serious and worried faces of all. Reb Shmuel was well known, the owner of a distillery which produced vodka, and an ardent follower of the Rebbe Maharash. He had been waiting to see the Rebbe for days, and now his turn had come, and he sat reciting Psalms with a broken spirit.

He entered the Rebbe's study, and was overcome with emotion--what had he done to bring this terrible calamity upon himself? He began to explain the situation to the Rebbe: "As the Rebbe knows, I earn my livelihood from my distillery. A certain tax is paid to the government for the amount of liquor produced, and a special meter attached to the fermenting vat measures each quart. From time to time an inspector comes to assess the taxes due.

"Until now there has never been any trouble, but it seems that one of my employees has found a way, through making a small hole in the vat, of siphoning off some of the vodka, and thereby by-passing the meter. The vodka he managed to steal he sold to his friends, and so he cheated both me and the government. I have no idea how long this has been going on, but this is how it came to my attention:

"A second worker caught the first thief red-handed and demanded a share in the take. The first thief agreed, but later they had an argument, and the second "partner" went to the police. Upon investigation, the police discovered the swindle and arrested the

thief. When questioned, he admitted the theft, but he claimed that it was done on my orders.

"I don't know why, but then the police freed the thief and arrested me instead. My family barely managed to bail me out and I came here right away to seek your advice. The penalty for cheating the government is very severe--there is even the possibility of life imprisonment or slave-labor in Siberia."

With that, Reb Shmuel broke into uncontrollable sobs, "Rebbe! Help me! me'ayin yavo ezri--From where will my help come?"

The Rebbe was thoughtful for a while, and then responded: "Yes, your help will come from me'ayin, from the Unknown, from G-d. Return to your home, and when you meet a Jew in trouble who will say: 'Me'ayin yavo ezri' help him; then G-d will also help you."

Reb Shmuel left very much encouraged. Not long after, Reb Shmuel heard about a terrible misfortune that had befallen his old friend Reb Chaim. He had become destitute in a devastating fire which destroyed his entire inn. With a house full of children, Reb Chaim was desperate.

Reb Shmuel went searching for his friend, and found him sitting near some scorched wooden logs where his inn had previously stood.

The two friends greeted each other warmly. Reb Shmuel eagerly offered his friend a loan, but he shook his head. "Where would you get the money? You have troubles enough of your own," he replied. "As we say in Psalms: 'From where will come my help? My help will come from G-d.'"

As soon as he heard the words of his Rebbe echoed by Reb Chaim, he was even more anxious to extend his help. He didn't let Reb Chaim go until he finally accepted the proffered money.

Weeks passed and finally the day of the trial arrived. Many members of the community appeared to testify on behalf of Reb Shmuel, but things didn't go well for him. The two accusers swore that they

acted under orders of their boss, and the prosecutor made a fiery speech denouncing Brin as a swindler of the worst type. Brin could only repeat over and over again that he was innocent of the charges.

After the lawyers had concluded their arguments, the judge proceeded to summarize the case and instruct the jury. He concluded his speech saying, "I want to recount the following episode which has a bearing on the case: Once, the young son of a nobleman was traveling by train. He left his luggage on the platform to get some refreshment. On his return it was missing, and along with it, all of his money and ticket. For a couple of days he hung around the station hungry and miserable, noticed by no one.

"A man descended from an incoming train, and with one look at the boy, invited him for a meal at his expense. The boy accepted gratefully and told the stranger about his predicament. The man reached into his pocket and gave him money for a ticket. When the boy asked his name, so that he could repay him, he refused, saying that one day the boy would pass on the favor to another, and that would be his reward.

"Members of the jury," concluded the judge, "this man that you see before you is the very man who helped me so many long years ago! Such a man could not be liar and a thief! A man who could so graciously help a complete stranger with no thought of recompense could never commit this crime! I leave it up to you to decide!"

In a few minutes the verdict was returned. "Not guilty!" Reb Shmuel Brin did not immediately hear the verdict. His mind was on the words of his saintly Rebbe: "Fill the void of another in distress, and G-d will fill yours."



"The pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty."



A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

What is the Purpose of Cement? - How does a *bachur* counter the effect of *pritzus* ?



You must know that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has created cement on the sidewalk for a purpose, not only to make it comfortable and clean to walk. The purpose of cement is, so you should gaze at it when you walk in the street. Study the cement on the sidewalk as you walk. It's a very important admonition, and it's very beneficial.

As you walk in the street keep your eyes on the cement. Now you know what cement is for? Cement is a wonderful product. No animals use cement. Birds don't need cement. Lions don't need cement. Only we need cement!

"The World Needs to Awaken More"

7 Tammuz is the yahrtzeit of the **Lev Simchah of Ger, zy"a**. In his sefer Lev Simchah he urges people to strengthen themselves in answering amen. He wrote: "The Midrash says: 'There is nothing greater before HaKadosh Baruch Hu than the amen that Yisrael answer.' Perhaps the world needs to awaken more, and to become aware of the great importance and virtue of answering amen. We don't know what we merited [vos m'farmugt], this great matter of answering amen..."

Tefillin After 72 Years by Gutman Locks



Last week at the Western Wall, I asked an elderly man to put on *tefillin*. He strongly refused.

I asked him, "When was the last time you put on *tefillin*?"

He smiled and proudly said, "72 years ago!" He held out his arm to show me the fading tattooed numbers. "1938," he said. "It was the day of Kristallnacht. Do you know what Kristallnacht is?"

"Of course I do," I told him.

"Two hundred and sixty-seven synagogues were burned down in one night. They burned down our synagogue, too. My *tefillin* were burnt up, and I have never put them on again," he said.

"I have a friend who was in the camps, too," I quickly said, "and he not only puts on *tefillin* today, but he even put them onto others inside the camp! Do you want to hear how he got *tefillin* into the camp?"

"Yes," he said strongly. "How did he get them in there?"

"His name is Laibel. Whenever he comes to Israel, he prays with our *minyan* at sunrise. He also has numbers tattooed on his arm. When we first met, he asked me, 'What do you do around here?' and I responded, 'I put *tefillin* on people here at the Western Wall.'

"Oh yeah?' he said, 'Well, I put *tefillin* on people in the death camp.' "I stared at him. There was nothing I could say. I was dumbfounded. I asked him, 'How did you get the *tefillin* in there?'

"He began his story. The Nazis had come to the ghetto and grabbed 137 young boys. He told me that only five of them survived. Only five.

"He was thirteen and a half years old. He was wearing the high boots that his father had bought him, and when he saw them coming, he stuffed his *tefillin* into one boot and his prayerbook in the other.

"They pushed the boys into a cattle car and drove them to the death camp, not far from the ghetto. When the train stopped, they slid open the side of the cattle car and immediately began pushing them toward the open door of the gas chamber. The boys were frightened and cried out.

They asked Laibel, 'What should we do?' He told them, 'We're going to stand in rows five across, and we're going to march right into that gas chamber singing a song of faith, the "Ani Maamin."' And they did just that. They stood in rows five across, and started singing and marching right into the chamber.

"The guards became so confused that they did not know what to do. They screamed, 'You can't do that! No one has ever done such a thing before. Stop it! Stop it at once! Here! Go over there to the showers instead!'

"They pushed them over to the showers and forced them to undress and throw their clothing into a pile in the middle of the floor. They made them empty their shoes, and the *tefillin* and prayerbook fell out onto the pile.

"After the shower, when they were dressed in camp clothes and were being pushed out, past the pile of their clothes, Laibel saw his *tefillin* and prayerbook lying there. He wanted so badly to run and pick them up, but terrifying guards were watching. He said to the boys, 'I did something for you, so now you do something for me.'

"'Whatever you want,' they said. 'You saved our lives.'

"He said, 'When I give the signal, start a fight and scream out loud. Okay . . . now!' The boys started to fight and scream. The guards ran over and tried to pull them apart, but they wouldn't stop fighting. In the confusion, he ran over and grabbed his *tefillin* and prayerbook, and hid them under his arms.

"Later, he was in the barracks, and wanted to put on the *tefillin*.



He was able to put the arm-*tefillin* on without anyone seeing, by pulling his sleeve over it, but how could he put on the head-*tefillin*? There were guards all over. He opened the window and stuck his head outside so he could put on the head-*tefillin*.

A guard came by and screamed, 'Who said you could open that window?' He told him that he was sick and throwing up, and if he made him close the window he would throw up inside, too. The guard left him. And he looked me in the eye and said, 'And I put *tefillin* on other men, too.'

I started to cry, and I kissed him on his *yarmulke*.

"The day after Laibel told me his story, there was an Israeli soldier at the Western Wall who wouldn't put on *tefillin*. No matter what I said, he simply refused. Then I told him Laibel's story, and he quickly said, 'Okay, I'll do it.'

"And you can do it, too," I said to the elderly gentleman who hadn't donned *tefillin* in 72 years, as I gently slid the *tefillin* I was holding onto his arm. He said the blessing and started to cry. We said the Shema, and he prayed for his family. He began to smile even while the tears were streaming down his face. A crowd gathered around and congratulated him on overcoming all those years of rejection.

Tefillah Tips - Ashrei - Rabbi Ephraim Epstein



קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶּאֱמֶת – ***Hashem is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity.***

The Ibn Ezra remarks that if a king is distant from his subjects, he will be unable to respond to their cries. Hashem is close to all and therefore hears every voice that calls out to Him.

The Yalkut Tehillim 808 asks, "Is it so, that G-d listens to everybody? The answer is Yes, if they call upon Him in truth." The question is, what exactly does it mean to call upon G-d in truth?

The Etz Yosef explains that it does not mean to only pray with fervour and intent. It is obvious to all that prayer must be serious and genuine for it to be effective. In truth, rather it means that the one who is praying should be a person of truth.

This has many implications. Firstly, it means that he is an honest person, that his word means something, and then his words of prayer will be powerful as well.

Second of all **Rav Miller zt"l** explains that a person must be true to his prayers, which means that one cannot pray for health and eat poorly, to be a Torah scholar and never open a Sefer, or to learn for a living and never seek work. one must be true to his prayers.

And finally, **Rav Mordechai Kaplan** used to state, "You had better be careful what you pray for, it just may come true." One must be certain that they truly desire what indeed they are praying for?

May we all recognize our closeness to Hashem when we pray. May we take advantage of the words of Dovid Hamelech and daven to Hashem in truth.

The Torah Any Times Newsletter

Rabbi Yossi Bensoussan - You are Human!



Across the world right now, many of the problems facing our Jewish communities have organizations in place to help solve them. And, without question, this is beautiful. But, at the same time, we cannot allow the role of such organizations to cause us to lose out on something else.

The Mishnah (Avos 5:13) states that there are four different types of people:

One who says, "What is mine is mine and what is yours is yours" is of average character. Some say, this is the character of Sodom. One

who says, "What is mine is yours and what is yours is mine" is unlearned. One who says, "What is mine is yours and what is yours is yours" is pious. One who says, "What is yours is mine and what is mine is mine" is wicked.

The view which states that the individual who says, "What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours" is actually a reflection of someone with midat Sodom, aligned with the ways of the corrupt city of Sodom, is most interesting. As we know, the city of Sodom was completely destroyed. It was a city of such wickedness that it was deemed fit to be obliterated. It must have then been filled with people of extremely low and poor character. Yet, what is so bad for a person to think, "What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours"? "I am not bothering anyone," you'll say. "I am not helping, but I am not involved in other people's business either. You leave me alone, and I will leave you alone." What is so wrong with that?

Many of us have gotten to a place where we feel that as long as we are not harming anyone, we are doing our job. But to personally get involved and take on something ourselves is not our business. - But that is a mistake.

Rabbi Yitzchak Berkovits is wont to say that when people remark, "I am only human!" they are missing the point. Do we have any idea what a human being is? How can you say, 'I am only human!' The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah) states that when Adam HaRishon was created, the angels sang to G-d, as they thought that there was another Supreme Being who had been created aside from Hashem, G-d forbid. That is how great we as human beings are.

We cannot let passivity take away our passion. When someone calls us describing a difficult and distressing predicament, we must not simply and quickly outsource the problem to others. How did this happen to begin with?

We stopped believing in ourselves. We stopped taking responsibility because we began thinking that only the Jews of yesteryear were

the real, holy Jews. But today, we are not so special! The effect this has had is that we have begun to downgrade all that we can do.

In my efforts to help teenagers, anytime someone says to me, "I don't wear Tefillin!" I say to him, "It sounds that you made a decision not to wear Tefillin. But I want to ask you if that was actually a deliberate and conscious decision?" I have found that such decisions of leading less of a religious life are less the by-product of a logical, thoughtful decision, and more so stemming from a lack of feeling important and believing that it makes any difference. "G-d doesn't care, so why should I put on Tefillin?" kids often say. Forcing the child at this point only fosters more dissension between the child and yourself and their relationship to Hashem.

Our focus and efforts are not to force our children into Torah observance, but rather impress upon them their own worth to themselves and to Hashem, which will over time lead them to finding a deep sense of connection to G-d and to themselves. This past Simchat Torah, I had the honour of spending Yom Tov with my brother, Rabbi Ari Bensoussan. We went to a Moroccan shul for davening, which was beautiful, and included exciting dancing and singing.

As the dancing continued, two boys walked in and took a seat in the back. They looked uncomfortable and out of place, yet they had clearly walked in themselves, and not at the coercing of anyone else.

When the time came for everyone to begin receiving aliyot from the Torah, I turned to them and motioned that they too should come up. One of them sheepishly looked down and refused, whereas the other one adamantly said no. But I still encouraged them to do so. One of them finally complied, though the other kept on waving his finger and refusing. As a friendly Moroccan with a dose of humour, I said to him, "You know what your grandfather is thinking back in Morocco?" But he remained with his decision not to stand up and

receive an aliyah. "Give me one reason why you won't?" I prodded him. "Give me one real reason."

I was ready for the response, "I don't believe in G-d," "I'm not here for that," "I just came for the food." I was prepared for all such rebuttals. But I wasn't ready for what he actually said. He looked me in the eye and said, "I can't; I'm not allowed." At this point, I began to nervously wonder, "Wait a minute… for all I know, this boy is not even Jewish, and he just is here..." I then embarrassedly began to back off myself.

"I drove here," he said.

I stopped pacing backwards. "What?" I asked him to repeat. "I drove here on Yom Tov," he said. If you were there, you would have seen how heartbroken he looked.

Now it was my turn. "You drove here?" I said. He nodded his head. "You drove to a Beit Knesset on the Chag?" "Yes," he muttered.

I paused for a moment and then said with building enthusiasm, "Do you not know where the beach is? Do you know how many other places you could have gone today? And you chose to drive here! If I would have known, you would have gotten an aliyah before me and the rest of the rabbis! You wanted to be here so badly; you even drove here…!"

He looked me back in the eyes, and then jumped up and walked straight to the bimah, grabbing a tallit.

I've heard some big rabbis recite a blessing when receiving an aliyah. But that blessing this boy made… I will remember it forever. It still echoes in my mind.

This boy felt like nothing, until he was reminded.

We often don't recognize the power that is inside of us, and what we can do if we would take charge and responsibility. We don't know what we are able to do for the people next to us until we try. Hashem

did not randomly make you neighbours with someone whose child is struggling for no reason. Don't be afraid to ask someone, even if you run no organization, "Is there anything I can do?" Because, you shouldn't be surprised, there might very well be everything you can do.

You don't need to save the world; just connect with the world. You have a lot you can offer. You don't need to give advice or guide anyone; you can simply listen and support them. So many of the great things which have happened to the Jewish people have started with just one person. It goes further than most people think. Try it.



Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*

There is a tremendous idea in this week's parsha. We have somebody challenging Moishe Rabeinu's authority and is trying to fight for the position of Aharon Hacohen.

How could someone have the audacity to attempt such a thing? But Korach did, together with 250 men!

There came a time when Moishe Rabeinu said, "fine, we will have a competition. You bring a korban, Aharon Hacohen will bring a korban, and let's see whose korban is accepted by Hashem". And Moishe Rabeinu silently offers a tefilla. He says," Riboino Shel Olam, I beg of You, please don't accept their korban, but only accept Aharon Hacohen's."

Moishe Rabeinu, come on! What is the question? Of course the Riboino Shel Olam is going to accept Aharon's and not theirs. We know what the *emess* is and who the true *navi* is. These people are just looking for kavod and machlokos. Why ***would*** the Riboino Shel Olam take their korban? Why does Moishe even have to resort to making such a request?

The answer is that Moishe Rabeinu understood the *koach* of *tefilla*. He was aware of the strength of a sincere prayer. Korach and his

followers would pray and daven with real sincerity and the Riboino Shel Olam would have no choice but to accept their tefilla and ultimately their korban. Therefore Moishe had no choice but to counter with his own tefilla, and to daven and make sure that this didn't happen.

We don't understand the koach of tefilla.

There was a teacher who tried to explain this concept to the children. He picked up the telephone in the middle of class. He dialled a number and put it on loudspeaker. The call was answered," Hello, this is the White House, how can we help you"? He said, "I would like to speak to the president of the United States of America." The receptionist answers, "that's really cute, but are you crazy? You can't just call up and speak to the President, he is a very busy man. He has advisors and secretaries, maybe I could possibly forward your call to one of them, but it is impossible to speak with the president directly".

The teacher says," thank you very much for your help" and he ends the call. He says to the children, "look at that, the president of the United States – a human being, and no one can get anywhere near him. The Riboino Shel Olam however, is right here.

קָרוֹב ה' לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶּאֱמֶת – ***Hashem is near to all who call Him, to all who call Him with sincerity.***

As long as you really mean what you say, with sincerity. As Chazal and the Zohar tells us, that when we daven, it is like we are going into the kodesh h'kadoshim. We are right there with the aron. We have an opportunity to talk to the Riboino Shel Olam at any time. He is always available to us 24/7.

This is an amazing benefit that we have. We can talk directly to the Melech Malchei Ham'lochim – Hakadosh Boruch Hu!

Raboisai! This is the great *yesoid* that Moishe Rabeinu is teaching us in this week's sedra. Moishe Rabeinu davened to Hashem that He

shouldn't accept their korban, because he understood the power of a sincere tefilla.

We should be zoche b'ezras Hashem that He will listen to and accept all of our tefillos.

Have a wonderful Shabbos!

Chabad.Org - Do You Procrastinate? Aharon Loschak



Is there something nice you've decided to do for someone, but you're dragging your feet getting it done? Have you recently resolved that you will finally invite your neighbours over for dinner, yet you haven't actually reached out to make it happen? Can you recall a time when you told yourself, "This week, I'm going to take the time to look over that business proposal my friend asked me to review," only to flame out and procrastinate yet again?

It happens all the time. You fully intend to be a knight in shining Armour but between your own family, your tight schedule, and the extra hours spent cleaning out the garage, you just never get around to it.

While completely understandable, it's not the best way to do things. Let's explore some alternatives.

The Almond Test

Our parshah is full of political intrigue, with the villainous Korah challenging Moses's leadership and trying to wrest the priesthood

away from Aaron. Of course, that didn't end too well for him and his crew, as the ground literally swallowed them alive.

But the legitimacy of Aaron's priesthood was still under fire, and so, we read of a test staged to quiet the chatter once and for all. Each tribe placed a staff in the Tabernacle with their name on it, "and on the following day Moshe came to the Tent of Testimony, and behold, Aaron's staff for the House of Levi had blossomed! It gave forth blossoms, sprouted buds, and produced ripe almonds."

At last, definitive proof for Aaron's right to the priesthood. But the obvious question is, why almonds?

The short answer is that almonds grow very quickly. In fact, the Hebrew word for almond, "*shkedim,*" is etymologically related to the word "*shaked,*" which means "quick." Due to their element of speed, almonds are the appropriate fruit for the priesthood.

The Priestly Blessing

What's the connection between the priesthood and speed?

One of the primary features of the priestly rite is the Priestly Blessing. During the repetition of the *Amidah* of the morning prayers, the priests get up in front of the people and bless them with the three special verses that speak of G-d's grace and favour. It is a moving moment, a gift to the people that the priests—as they recite in their blessing just prior—do "with love."

Curious minds ask, what is the purpose of this blessing? After all, Hashem is the one Who blesses the people, so why are the priests taking His job? What's more, the content of their blessing are promises G-d makes to the people, so what exactly is their function?

The Kabbalists answered this question by opening a window into the mechanics of G-d's blessing to us. - Human minds are accustomed to thinking of "blessing" in material terms: health, prosperity, and a nice family. But that is obviously not how matters originate within

G-d's "treasury." After all, G-d is far above all paradigms of materialism—good or bad—so the blessing as it originates in G-d's benevolence is something far more spiritual than we could possibly imagine.

From that spiritual conception of "goodness," there is a long process until it evolves and develops into money in your bank account and happy, smiling children. Inasmuch as G-d's blessing takes time and development until it manifests in physical life, it's entirely possible that it gets "stuck" along the way.

Imagine G-d's blessing as a slowly trickling stream that eventually gets to its destination, but there's always the possibility that driftwood, a large rock, or a dry patch will obstruct the trickle. So, too, the blessing destined to come our way can get stuck if we do not merit it to actually materialize today.

And here is where the priests' job comes in. They can speed up and smooth out the process. By invoking G-d's true love for His people, the priestly blessing turns that steady trickle into a raging river, a Niagara Falls that barrels through any obstruction. Anything that might have gotten in the way prior is now blown right out of the way.

Closing the Deal

By way of illustration: Imagine you sign a contract on a house and are now working on getting a mortgage. You collect all the monies for the down payment, you gather all the paperwork, and you make sure your credit score is squeaky clean. Your mortgage broker tells you, "it looks good," you've already locked in a rate, and now you're just waiting for the underwriter to sign off on it. The deal is closed. The loan is all but assured, and you really have no reason to assume anything will go wrong.

Yet that underwriter still hasn't signed it off, and you're anxious. Every morning you wake up thinking, "Will today be the day?" And day goes by, and crickets. It's nerve racking.

Now, imagine you have someone who can place a call and say, "Hey, can you just sign off on the loan?" Wouldn't that be great?

Well, that's the priestly job. When they bless the congregation, they act as the well-connected underwriter who can sign off on the blessing coming your way and make it happen. Today.

Hence the speedy almonds.

Be Your Own Underwriter

We can all emulate the priests in our own lives. So, if you've decided to do something really nice for someone else or pledged a friend a loan, it's time to carry through.

Yes, of course, things happen. You get a text from a friend who's desperately in need of a kind word and some quality time, and you respond, "Totally, we should definitely go out sometime soon!" And then you forget about it, and your poor friend is left wondering when she can contact you again to follow through.

Your friend who badly needs that loan for her start-up business is still waiting for you to come through, and you just completely forgot about it.

Yes, it happens, but we can all do better.

Be like the priests and be your own underwriter. Pick up your pen and sign off on it right now. Follow up, follow through, and make sure all the kind things you have pledged to do for others don't get stuck midstream.

The Noda B'Yehuda (1713-1793) said:

אין לך מצוה גדולה מן השלום...ואין לך גרוע מהמחלוקת - there is no greater Mitzva than peace...and nothing worse than **מחלוקת**.

Machlokes

We will now tell some true stories, which remind us that machlokes doesn't pay. One only loses by joining a machlokes:



A young couple bore their very first child. There was a bris, a *pidyon haben*, and everything was good for the first few months. But when the child was about five months old, a terrible stench emanated from him that reminded people of a corpse, *r'l*.

The parents brought the child to many doctors, but they said that they never saw anything like it before, and they couldn't find the source of this terrible odour. The child's grandfather was a student of **Reb Shmuel Wosner *zt'l*,** and he thought that a *brachah* from this great tzaddik could help. So, he, together with the father, flew to Eretz Yisrael and went from the airport straight to Reb Wosner's home. They wanted to receive his blessings and counsel and then immediately return home.

Reb Shmuel Wosner greeted them joyously, and after hearing the problem, he asked "Who is the child named after?" The grandfather said, "The child is named after my father."

Reb Wosner asked, "But why? The first child is generally named after the wife's family." The grandfather replied, "My son's fatherin- law is a very difficult person. I didn't get along with him from the very beginning. I don't even speak to him anymore. That's why I chose the name myself, and I didn't consider asking him what name he wanted." The child's father also explained that he didn't want to speak with his father-in-law about the name because he wants to keep his distance from him.

Reb Wosner replied, "Now everything is understood. This is how it appears when *mechutanim* fight, especially when they fight over a name." Reb Wosner said to the father, "You must ask your father-in-law forgiveness, and you must add a name after your father-in-law's family."

The father said, "Please don't ask me to make up with my father-in-law. That is asking too much from me." Reb Wosner told him, "Did you travel all this distance to do differently than the *psak* I gave you? Go to the next room and call your father-in-law right now."

The father and grandfather followed Reb Wosner's counsel. When they landed at Kennedy airport, they heard the good news that the child was healed. He didn't have the terrible odour anymore.

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A chassid was travelling by train to the **Sar Shalom of Belz *zt'l***. On board that train, there was also a paralyzed woman. Her family was bringing her to the Sar Shalom for a *refuah* and *yeshuah*. Her mind was functioning properly, so she could speak, but the rest of her body was paralyzed.



The chassid wanted to see what would happen when this woman is brought to the Sar Shalom and whether she will receive her salvation. When they arrived in Belz, he dropped off his packages and quickly went to the Sar Shalom. The paralyzed woman was already there, but it was three o'clock Friday afternoon, and the Rebbe wasn't receiving visitors at that time. Nevertheless, out of pity for
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the woman, the *gabaim* told the Sar Shalom that a paralyzed woman was outside, and she needs a *refuah*. The Sar Shalom replied, "Let her come here at *lecht tzinden*, because when we light the Shabbos candles it is an *eis ratzon*. *Be'ezras Hashem* we will try to help her."

The Sar Shalom used to light some of the Shabbos *lecht* himself. After he lit the candles, he asked the woman, "Do you know why you are suffering?" "No. I don't." "Try to find an explanation." She said that she no idea. The Sar Shalom asked her a third time. "No one is perfect. Think, perhaps you can understand why this happened to you." She thought, but she said that she still doesn't know.

The Sar Shalom told her, "I will tell you why you are suffering. You have a poor Jewish maid, and you are very strict and demanding of her. You think that because you are wealthy, you don't have to respect a poor maid. The maid is very hurt. You are suffering because of this *aveirah*."

The Sar Shalom asked, "Do you accept on yourself never to harm her again with your unkind words?" She said she was. The Sar shalom took a handkerchief, went around the bed with it, and she sat up, totally healed.

The Beis Yisrael was once sitting in the back seat of a car, and the driver and the Rebbe's *shamash* were in the front seats. The *shamash* felt that it was improper that his back was to the Rebbe, so he turned around and faced the Rebbe. The driver did the same. He turned around and faced the Rebbe.

The Beis Yisrael said, "When a **שמש** is turned around (and read backwards) it remains **שמש** . However, when a **מנהיג** (driver, leader) turns around it reads **גיהנם.**



Korach's Punishment

Korach and his followers were punished in a tragedy that never happened before, nor would it happen ever again. As Moshe said (16:30) **ואם בריאה יברא ה' ופצתה האדמה את פיה ובלעה אתם** "If Hashem will create a new creation, and the earth will open its mouth and swallow them and everything they have…"

The Ibn Ezra asks that things like this do happen, because there are earthquakes, and people sometimes fall inside. But the **Ramban** clarifies that this was different.



The Ramban writes, "That the earth should open its mouth and *swallow*, that is new. This never happened before. Because when the earth opens up – as it happens many times in an earthquake – the earth remains open. Sometimes, it will become filled with water and become a pond. But that the earth should open and immediately close, like someone who opens his mouth to eat, that was made new on that day, and it is like a new creation."

Why was it necessary that Korach and his followers die in an unusual way?

It is because Hashem wanted this story to be remembered. If they died a natural death, people would forget, and the gravity of *machlokes* wouldn't be known to us. Their unusual end helps us remember the severity of *machlokes*.

Why is *machlokes* so severe? Why were the children punished as well?

The Maharal (*Gur Aryeh* 16) answers, "It isn't that Hakadosh Baruch Hu brings punishment to children. Rather, wherever there is a *machlokes*, Gehinom is there. *Machlokes* and Gehinom were both created on the second day of Creation, meaning they are synonymous. This is the reason young children die. *Machlokes* is united with punishment." When one makes a *machlokes*, he brings Gehinom to himself, and therefore punishment is with him and his family *r'l*.

Yesodos M'ha Sedra – L'maaseh



A man drove through the rainy streets of Lakewood and noticed a familiar figure pushing a baby carriage. When he pulled up closer to offer a ride, he confirmed that it was in fact **R' Dovid Trenk zt"l** but the baby carriage was empty.

After R' Dovid got into the car, the driver pressed him for an explanation. Rabbi Trenk explained that he was driving along in the rain and saw a woman with a baby and several other young children struggling to make their way home in the rain. He stopped and urged them to climb in so he could drive them the few blocks they needed to go, but the woman refused, saying that she wasn't comfortable taking a ride

from a man who wasn't a family member, so instead of continuing on his way, R' Dovid got out of the car and handed her his keys telling her he would push the empty carriage and meet up with her at her house.



Vechol Maaminim - Chessed and Amen Meet

וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּטֹּת מִלִּפְנֵי ה' אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מַטֵּהוּ 17:24

Why did the Torah have to write that each one of the Nesi'im returned and retrieved his staff?

Harav Avraham Baruch Toledano, of Meknes, Morocco, explained that with this the Torah wanted to praise the Nesi'im. After it was determined from Above that Aharon was selected for the Kehunah, they accepted the decree with love, and therefore, each one retrieved his staff, to show that Hashem had not chosen them, but rather Aharon.

He added: This praise can also be said of any person who answers amen after his friend's brachah, because he is also showing with his action that he believes that the brachah that the other person said was made in accordance with halachah and that it is important and worthy of coming to fruition.

Therefore, Chazal say (Brachos 53b): "The one who answers amen is greater than the one who makes the brachah." The one who makes the brachah has only the reward of reciting the brachah; the one who answers amen, besides for the reward of amen that he has, also merits a reward because he held another person in esteem and made him greater. (*Imrei Baruch*)

Jewish Weekly-The Phoenix - Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky



It was in the early 1970's, when the widow of Jacques Lipchitz, the renowned sculptor, had come for a private audience with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, shortly after her husband's sudden passing.

In the course of her meeting with the Rebbe, she mentioned that when her husband died, he was nearing completion of a massive sculpture of a phoenix in abstract, a work commissioned by Hadassah Women's Organization for the Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus, in Jerusalem. As an artist and sculptor in her own right, she said that she would have liked to complete her husband's work, but she told the Rebbe, she had been advised by Jewish leaders that the phoenix is a non Jewish symbol. How could that be placed, in Jerusalem — no less!

I was standing near the door to the Rebbe's office that night, when he called for me and asked that I bring him the book of Job, from his bookshelf, which I did. The Rebbe turned to Chapter 29, verse 18, "I shall multiply my days like the Chol." And then the Rebbe proceeded to explain to Mrs. Lipchitz the Midrashic commentary on this verse which describes the Chol as a bird that lives for a thousand years, then dies, and is later resurrected from its ashes. Clearly then, a Jewish symbol. Mrs. Lipchitz was absolutely delighted, and the project was completed soon thereafter.

True to his nature, the Rebbe discerned the positive where conventional wisdom saw only negativism. How fitting, retrospectively, this beautiful metaphor of life returning from the

ashes. In his own divinely inspired way, the Rebbe had brought new hope to this broken widow. And in the recurring theme of his life, he did the same for the spirit of the Jewish people, which he raised from the ashes of the Holocaust to new, invigorated life. [Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, the 7th Chabbad Rebbe zt"l's, Yahrzeit is 3rd Tammuz.]



Zera Shimshon - וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח And Korach 'took' (16:1)

Rashi explains that Korach argued against the Mitzvos of tzitzis and mezuza. His argument was that if one string of blue techeiles exempts the entire tzitzis, surely, if the entire article of clothing is blue it should not need the required one string of blue techeiles. He argued the same about Mezuza, which contains two parshi'os, and protects an entire room, than surely a house that is full of Seforim (Sifrei Torah) should not need the protection of a Mezuza.

The Zera Shimshon asks that Korach's main complaint and the basis of his clash with Moshe Rabbeinu was because he was infuriated with the nomination of Eltzafan, which Korach held was a position he should have received. That being the case, what place did his argument about the tzitzis and Mezuza have?

It seems entirely out of context.

Zera Shimshon explains that Korach thought that he was greater Eltzafan. As well, he felt that his lineage entitled him to the position Eltzafan. He was the son of Yitzhar who was the second son of Amram and Eltzafan was the son of Uziel who was the fourth son to Amram.

Regarding the Mitzva of Tzitzis, it seems from the pessukim that the mitzva was given to constantly remind us of the Mitzos of Hashem. Korach thought that if the reminder was present in a stronger form, one did not necessarily have to fulfil the Mitzva as Moshe Rabbeinu taught it. In fact, it would be even better if the

entire article was blue since this would serve as a much stronger reminder.

The same is true with the Mitzva of Mezuza. This mitzva serves as a protection (see Zohar 3:300b). Korach reasoned that if one could have a Sefer Torah in his house, it would serve as an even stronger protection than that of just a small Mezuza and Hashem would definitely rather that one have such a protection if he was able to. Korach thought that his reasoning was better than that of Moshe Rabbeinu and that Moshe Rabbeinu had not correctly understood the Mitzvos that Hashem had commanded him.

Using this line of reasoning, Korach felt that since he was greater than Elzafan, here too Moshe Rabbeinu was wrong for picking someone not as great and that it was in reality he, Korach, who should have been picked.

Obviously, he was mistaken, and the Mitzvos were given exactly as Moshe Rabbeinu had said and not necessarily did everything have to fall into place the way Korach saw it. Nor did Hashem's pick of Elzafan over Korach have to fit with Korach's reasoning.

Parshah Thoughts - Ideas and Reflections - Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן
Korach initiated a dispute with Moshe (16:1).

The Chidushei HaRim (Likutei Yehudah) explains that Korach's point of contention was that he believed that each person functions on his own, and there is no need for leaders. His mistake was that the Jewish community is all about the unity of individuals who are joined together under leadership. Having a leader is an essential aspect of the community.

Rabbi Parkoff's Chizuk Letter - The Dual Personality Disorder

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן
"And Korach, son of Yizhar, son of Kehas, son of Levi, took [himself to one side] along with and Dasan and Aviram, sons of Eliav, together with Ohn, son of Peles, sons of Reuvain." – Bamidbar 16:1



The Satmar Rebbe once said that he recalled hearing his great-grandfather (**the Yismach Moshe**) tell his grandfather (**the Yitav Lev**) that the Yismach Moshe lived in this world three times. In other words, via the institution of Gilgul Neshamos [transmigration of souls], he came to this world on three different occasions.

The first time he was in this world, he claimed, was in the period of the Wilderness at the time of the incident of the Congregation of Korach. Upon hearing this, the Yitav Lev asked his father to tell him about the events of that time. The Yismach Moshe told his son that all the Heads of the Sanhedrin sided with Korach and the masses of the people sided with Moshe.

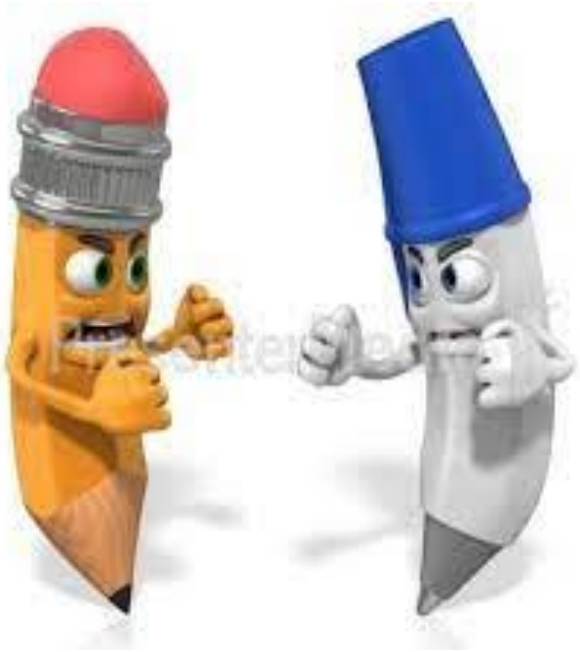
The Yitav Lev then pressed his father and asked him "Who did you side with?" He responded, "I was neutral". Whereupon the Yitav Lev asked him, "How could you not pick sides? – It was Korach against Moshe Rabbeinu and you stood on the sidelines? How could that be?"

The Yitav Lev told his son, I can see that you have no inkling of what a great person Korach was. If you would have been there and you would have seen who Korach was (as Rashi says, Korach was very

clever and was one who carried the Aron), you would not be so shocked by my neutrality. Korach wanted Kedusha. There was an element of good within his argument. It was hard to choose sides.

Zera Shimshon

וַיָּ֣קָם מֹשֶׁ֔ה וַיֵּ֖לֶךְ אֶל־דָּתָ֣ן וַאֲבִירָ֑ם ***Moshe got up and went to Dasan and Aviram*** (16:25)



From the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu was the one that went to Dasan and Aviram to try and make up (see Rashi), the Gemara (Sanhedrin 110a) learns that even if a person did not start the rift, nevertheless, he should not allow the controversy to continue on. He should do whatever he can to bring it to an end. The Gemara continues on to teaches that anyone that maintains a machlokes transgresses the passuk that warns (Bamidbar 17:5), "One shall not be like Korach and his assembly"

The Zera Shimshon asks - why does the Torah have to give the example of Korach when warning to stay away from machlokes. Every other sin that the Torah warns about simply says what the sin is and that we should keep away from it. Other than the sin of machlokes we do not find that the Torah gives an example of an individual who transgressed this sin. Why then does the Torah do so when warning against machlokes, using Korach as the example?

The Zera Shimshon explains that by specifying Korach the Torah wants to bring out that even if one feels that he was wronged, he is still not justified for creating discord. This is seen from Korach, for

although unjustified, Korach felt that Moshe Rabbeinu slighted him by not choosing him to serve as the Nasi of Kehas.

This is why the Torah singles out Korach as the example when warning against dispute to emphasize that even one who believes that he was not treated properly should not start a conflict. All the more so when one starts machlokes on account of even more trivial reasons.

The Zera Shimshon explains that the reason why even one who is offended may not cause machlokes is because every Jew has the Shechina - Devine Presence, on his face. Therefore, although the offender did not show respect to the person nor to the Shechina that is with every Jew, by striking back, the offended individual is showing disregard to the Shechina that is found even with the offender. Although Korach held that Moshe Rabbeinu nominated Eltzafan as the Nasi of Kehas and appointed his own brother as Kohen Gadol without being directed to do so by Hashem, once he clearly was that Hashem agreed with this nomination by the fact that the Divine Presence descended on to the Mishkan, he should have backed down.

We see from here that once a person gets angry and is caught up in his anger and machlokes, even the Shechina means nothing to him.

Parshah Pearls - A Divine Gift

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח "*And Korach took* ... " (16:1).

The trouble with Korach, explains **Rebbi Bunim from P'shischa**, was that he helped himself to greatness (or tried to). Greatness is a Divine gift. It is a good thing, only when it is bestowed upon a person. The moment one takes it by force, it is not Kosher and is destined to fail.

In Honour Of The Yahrtzeit Of Rav Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, The Sanz-Klausenburg Rebbe (1905-1994) 9 Tammuz/June 18, 1994

Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam was born to a Hasidic family of the Sanz dynasty in the small Jewish town of Rudnik, Poland. At just 14, he lost his father, and replaced him as the town rabbi. At the age of 21, he was invited to become the rabbi of Klausenberg (then part of Hungary) and head its yeshiva.



He became the founding Rebbe of the Sanz-Klausenburg Chasidic dynasty and was one of the youngest rebbes in Europe, leading thousands of followers in the town of Klausenburg, Romania, before World War II. His wife, eleven children and most of his followers were murdered by the Nazis while he was incarcerated in several concentration camps. An amazing saga of self-sacrifice and accepting suffering with love of Hashem. Arrival to Auschwitz transcribed from the Rebbes own words:

I have never told this story in public before. I was in the concentration camp, and I didn't want to eat treifa food. I arrived in Auschwitz on Friday. We were immediately chased off the cattle cars, and they began beating us with rods, and chased us into the Auschwitz camp.

We arrived at 10 o'clock in the morning. We were brought food which was so called "meat". Whether it was meat or straw… I don't know, but it was called meat. Everyone ran to eat. I was also called, " Rebbe, come and eat."

I say," treifa food you want me to eat? What are you saying? By these "evil people, not only was everything taken from me, spirit and soul, but I should also eat treif?

I didn't want to go. I therefore fasted the whole day Friday. Friday night I was already very weak. I lay there without being able to get up. Shabbos day, another announcement to come and take food. I don't go. I remained sitting there. The barracks emptied, no one remained there, and I remained all alone.

Suddenly, a wellspring of tears opened, I never used to cry, ever. "If this is the will of Hashem, so be it, whatever Hashem wants, I am content." But that Shabbos afternoon, I began to cry, "Riboino Shel Olam, You took everything from me." I remained bereft of clothing, and barefoot. No shoes, no clothing – nothing. I am laying here by the gentiles and I should eat treifa? " Master of the World. I don't want to eat treifa food."

As I am crying, all alone in the barracks, someone comes running, "are you the Klausenberger Rav?" I was very frightened because it couldn't be known that one is a Rav. The Rabbanim were the first to be killed. As soon as they knew that someone is a Rav, he was immediately murdered. Usually 99% of the time. I was very frightened.

In the meantime, another messenger came. "Rebbe, you must come, someone is standing by the door and is waiting for you." He is waiting for me? I can't hide. I didn't know if he is an S.S. or a kapo. I must go to the door. I go to the door and a man is standing there. He says to me, "tell me, was the ***Kishanaver Rav*** *your uncle?" I look at him and I wonder to myself, "How did he know that I was here, and that the Kishanaver Rav was my uncle?" The Holy Kishanaver Rav… I answer him, "yes"… What should I have said.. No? He tells me, "I have brought you bread and a plate of marmalade, so that you should have what to eat."*

I look at what he gave me then, according to the value of money today. Half a million is nothing in comparison. He brings me bread to eat… a large bread and a big plate of marmalade. "Here, you have it, go back and eat it." If so, I am determined that… Yes, Hashem is here as well. So here too, The Holy Creator is here! How did this man know that I was in Auscwitz, and he brings me bread to eat? So I am right that I didn't want to eat treifa food.

There and then, I undertook that under any circumstances, I would not eat any treifa food. If Hashem sends me Kosher bread and marmalade, what? I should eat treifa food Heaven Forbid? I searched for a little water to wash my hands for bread. I made Kiddush on the bread. I never saw that man again!!

I remained by the evil one for a whole year. I thank and praise Hashem for all that I have undergone. How many times they tried to destroy me? How many times I laid on the ground to be….Yet I survived without treifa food. And I think that I survived without desecrating the Shabbos. I was protected by Heaven.

Auschwitz

The inmates underwent selection, and he was ferried to the Auschwitz labour camp. Several months beforehand, the Rebbe's wife and nine of their children who remained with her were also sent to Auschwitz on a transport from Klausenburg. They did not survive. The Rebbe, however, survived Auschwitz, and was later released.

He attempted to remain fully observant in the inhuman conditions and to encourage his fellow prisoners. He never touched non-kosher food and refused to eat food cooked in a non-kosher pot. Often, he went hungry. His staunch faith gave spiritual strength to many. He assured his fellow inmates that Hashem was with them in the valley of death and would not abandon them.

The Rebbe did not shave his beard, which is considered a mark of holiness for Hasidim. He wrapped his beard and face in a handkerchief, pretending he had a toothache. This charade was accompanied by the fact that he cried all day as he worked, praying and communing with Hashem.

As the Russian Army moved closer to Poland, the Germans decided to liquidate the special ghetto-clearing unit of which Rabbi Halberstam was a member. All the prisoners were taken to a field outside of Warsaw, told to undress and stand near open pits, where soldiers prepared to machine-gun them.

At the last moment, however, a car sped into the field. A high-ranking officer jumped out and communicated the special order from Berlin to stop the execution and send the prisoners to the Dachau concentration camp, where they were needed as slave labourers.

This unexpected reprieve, however, led to a brutal death march that took place on Tisha b'Av, the Rebbe recited the traditional Kinot as the Nazis tortured the Jews. Since it was Tisha b'Av, the Jews took off their leather shoes, so the Nazis used the opportunity to make the Jews march on broken glass.

For the next week, the prisoners were forced by SS soldiers wielding wooden clubs and steel bars to march 21 miles a day at top speed. In the blazing July heat, the emaciated prisoners were deprived of food and water and allowed to rest only at night. Those who couldn't keep up were shot. They then left them to die of thirst in the summer heat.

As reported by several survivors, the Rebbe asked everyone to start digging in the earth. Each prisoner began to dig with his fingers, spoons, or pieces of wood. Miraculously, each found water, and small springs began to pop up everywhere, quenching everyone's thirst and giving them new life. The Rebbe himself didn't drink from the water because it was Tisha b'Av

The Jews were saved, and the bewildered Nazis left them alone. The Rebbe then said: "G-d's salvation comes in the blink of an eye." "Here we have proof that despite all the troubles and the apparent concealment of G-d's face, the Holy, Blessed One still loves us."

Another time, Rabbi Halberstam was shot in the arm by a Nazi and left to bleed to death. He wrapped a leaf around the wound and made a vow that if he survived, he would dedicate the rest of his life to saving the lives of others. - On the 5th day, the surviving marchers were packed into cattle cars for the rest of the journey to Dachau. Over the next few days, many succumbed to the overcrowding, lack of water, stench and heat in the cattle cars. Of the 6,000 that set out on the death march, less than 2,000 made it to Dachau alive. The Rebbe was one of the survivors.

During the Holocaust, his entire family was sent to Auschwitz, and Rabbi Halberstam tragically lost his wife and 11 children.

Nonetheless, he did not lose faith and continued to serve as an inspirational leader for the Jews in the camps.





After the war, first, he stayed at the DP camps to run soup kitchens and care for the countless orphans. He established and headed the She'erit haPletah ("Surviving Remnant") organization, which built mikvehs, set up Jewish schools, organized chuppas, and raised money for the victims. During this time, he met General (and future US president) Dwight Eisenhower, who was inspired by the "wonder rabbi".





Having heard of the greatness and the leadership of the Klausenberger Rebbe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, insisted on visiting the Wonder Rabbina' during his tour of the Feldfing Displaced Persons Camp in September 1945. The Rebbe was known as the main representative of Orthodox Jewry in the camp, however his love for everyone was legendary and he received the respect of all sections of the camp for his tireless work on behalf of all Jews.

General Eisenhower's visit coincided with Yom Kippur. On this most lofty day of the Jewish year the Rebbe was deeply involved in his prayers and despite being told on numerous occasions that the Five Star General was waiting to see him the Rebbe continued to pray with great intensity and devotion.

Being kept waiting was not something that Gen. Eisenhower was used to, however upon finishing his prayers the Rebbe told him "I was praying before the General of Generals, King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He. The earthly general had to wait." Impressed by the Rabbi's leadership and frankness, Eisenhower asked him if there was any way he could help him in his efforts. In typical fashion, The Rebbe asked for a small sample of the Four Species (Lulav, Hadassim Aravos and Etrog) so that the survivors could properly celebrate the upcoming Sukkot holiday.

That Sukkot the survivors of Feldafing celebrated the holiday of Sukkot courtesy of the efforts of the Klausenberger Rebbe and the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe.



Rabbi Halberstam then moved to New York, got remarried, and had seven more children. In 1960, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Netanya.

He rebuilt Jewish communal life in the displaced persons camps of Western Europe, re-established his dynasty in the United States and Israel, founded a Haredi neighbourhood in Israel and a Sanz community in the United States, established a hospital in Israel run according to Jewish law.

The Rebbe opened both a Hasidic-Ashkenazi yeshiva, and a Sephardic yeshiva, established the town of Kiryat Sanz and, to fulfil his Holocaust vow, founded the Sanz Medical Centre/Ladiano Hospital. Today, the hospital serves half a million people, runs strictly according to Jewish law, and has the distinction of being the only hospital in Israel that has never closed—not even for a worker's strike. Famous for his deep love and concern for every Jew, Rabbi Halberstam was beloved by everyone who knew him, secular and religious, Ashkenazi and Sephardi.

His two sons continue to lead the Sanz-Klausenberg communities in New York and Netanya.

Once at a tisch as a bachur was passing he asked the bachur to do something for him. He responded, "I'll see what I can do." He said "come here! You'll see what you could do? You'll see what you could do???

When I was in Europe before the war, I was a weakling. I was so weak that they needed to hold the gemarah up in front of me at night. But when I was in the camps, they made us climb steep hills, up and down, with heavy loads on our backs. We did it to live. So don't say 'I'll see what I can do.' You have much more strength than you ever imagined. Hashem gave you the ability to do whatever it is that you need to do."

The Holy Sanz-Klausenberger Rebbe Zt"l infused a living spirit into the dry bones of the survivors. He established Talmud Torah's, Yeshivos, Kolelim and girl schools in the D.P. Camps, according to our old tradition, with clear intent… **To revitalise the Jewish nation and return it to its crowning glory.**

"You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great."

Vedibarta Bam - A Compilation of Torah Insights in Question & Answer Format By Moshe Bogomilsky

וישמע משה ויפל על פניו- *"Moshe heard and fell on his face."* (16:4)



QUESTION: Rashi comments that this was the fourth offence committed by the Jewish people. On the previous three occasions, Moshe was able to defend them, but now "*nitrashelu yadav*" — "his hands sank down" — since he feared that Hashem would no longer accept his advocacy.

Why was Moshe unable to defend them at this time?

ANSWER: When the Jews sinned with the golden calf, Moshe came to their defence and argued: "In reality, the Jewish people did not commit any sin. The commandment, 'You shall not have any other gods' was said in singular and thus referred *only* to me. Consequently, only I am obligated and not them" (Rashi, *Shemot* 20:2). On the basis of this argument, Hashem forgave the Jewish people.

Korach argued that "Everyone is holy" and *all* had heard the commandments at Sinai (Rashi 16:3). Upon hearing these words, Moshe became very frightened, because this undermined the defence he presented in the case of the golden calf on behalf of the Jewish people. (**זכרון ישראל**)

"Tefillah is not informing Hashem of our needs; it is transforming the person into someone capable of receiving." ~ Rav Dessler (Michtav Me'Eliyahu)

"ויקח קרח" "Korach separated [lit., took] himself." (16:1)

QUESTION: What was the nature of the ideological dispute between Korach and Moshe, and what implication does it have for our times?

ANSWER: During their confrontation, Korach challenged Moshe about the requirement for a *mezuzah* on a house filled with *Sifrei Torah*. He also asked if a *tallit* made entirely of *techeilet* required a string of *techeilet* in the *tzitzit*. Moshe responded to both questions affirmatively.



Logically, Korach appeared correct. Moshe, however, told him, "Torah and *mitzvot* cannot be approached with our cold logic. A Jew must have *kabbalat ol* — complete submission to the will of Hashem — doing whatever He commands even when human logic may dictate otherwise."

The name "Korach" conveys to us the nature of his personality. It has the same letters as the Hebrew word "*kerach*" — "ice." For an advocate of using a cold and frigid approach to spiritual matters and serving Hashem only with logic and understanding, the name "Korach" — "*kerach*" — is appropriate.

*** * * * * ***

The two radically different approaches to Torah are illustrated by a story of the Ba'al Shem Tov. He once told his students that anything a Jew sees or hears is not a function of mere chance, but caused by *hashgachah peratit*, and intended as a message for the individual.

Afterwards, the disciples went out into the street and noticed a group of villagers singing and dancing. It was a holiday celebrated by

chiselling out a cross from the frozen water of the river and dancing with it through the streets. Deeply disturbed, they hastened back to the Ba'al Shem Tov and asked, "What lesson is being conveyed to us through this mysterious scene?"

The Ba'al Shem Tov replied, "Water has very unusual qualities. It enables a person who immerses in it to regain his purity. However, this can be accomplished only when the water is in the flowing state. When it freezes, then G-d forbid, it can become an object of *avodah zarah* . Likewise, Torah is compared to flowing water (see *Ta'anit* 7a). Through it one can reach the highest levels, but approaching it with coldness can make it 'freeze' and produce a radical spiritual decline in a person."

Korach's "chilly" approach deprived him of the warmth of Torah and ultimately led to his downfall.

ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן ויאמרו אלהם רב לכם כי כל העדה כלם קדשים
***"They gathered together against Moshe and against Aharon and said to them; 'It is too much for you! For the entire assembly — all of them — are holy."* (16:3)**

QUESTION: According to the *Midrash*, Korach declared a rebellion against Moshe after learning of the *parah adumah* — red heifer. What about the red heifer encouraged him?

ANSWER: Alternatively, the reason why Korach thought that *he* should be the *Kohen Gadol* instead of Aharon was that Hashem selected Elazar to prepare the red heifer, and the name Elazar (**אלעזר**) and Korach (**קרח**) both have the same numerical value of 308. (**פרדס יוסף החדש**)

"It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up."

"וידבר אל קרח...בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו ואת הקדוש"
***"He spoke to Korach... 'In the morning G-d will make known the one who is His own and the holy one.' "* (16:5)**

QUESTION: Why did Moshe push them off until the following morning?

ANSWER: When the Jewish people were in the wilderness their source of food was manna from Heaven, and each morning they would go out and find their daily allotment. According to the *Gemara (Yoma* 75a) the righteous *(tzaddikim)* would find their manna on the doorsteps of their tents. An intermediateperson *(beinoni)* had to leave the camp to gather it, and a wicked person *(rasha)* had to go some distance and expend considerable effort to gather his portion.

Therefore, Moshe told Korach and his followers that "In the morning G-d will make known — according to where you find your manna it will be obvious if Aharon is the *tzaddik* or you and your followers." (**מהר"ם שי"ף**)

Alternatively, the *Gemara (Berachot* 19a) says that if one sees a Torah scholar commit a transgression during the evening, one should not have suspicion about him during the day because it is definite that by morning he will have done *teshuvah*.



Korach and his people were Torah scholars and, in essence, great men. Moshe was confident that during the night they would realize their mistake and do *teshuvah*. Hence, their rebellion against him, which in reality was a rebellion against Hashem, would cease. (**שער בת רבים**)

ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אתם ואת בתיהם ואת כל האדם אשר לקרח.... ואש יצאה מאת ה' ותאכל את החמשים ומאתים איש מקריב הקטרת
***"The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their houses and all the people who were with Korach.... A flame came forth from G-d and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense."* (16:32,35)**



QUESTION: The 250 people who joined Korach were burned to death. Datan and Aviram were swallowed alive in the earth. What happened to Korach?

ANSWER: There is an opinion in the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 110a) that Korach did not die with those who were burnt or swallowed by the earth, but that he actually died later in a plague (see Rashi, ibid.). Another opinion says that Korach was both burnt and swallowed into the earth: When the 250 people began to bring their *ketoret*, Korach joined them and was consumed by fire. He was standing near the pit which opened up for Datan and Aviram, and he rolled into the open mouth of the earth.

According to the latter opinion, the reason Korach received both punishments is that if he had only been burnt and not swallowed, Datan and Aviram would have complained, "Why were we burned as followers of Korach, while Korach himself was not?" If he would have been swallowed but not burnt, the 250 people burnt would have had a similar complaint. Therefore, he received both punishments.

The fire of the *ketoret* burned his *neshamah*, and his body rolled into the open mouth of the earth. Thus, *all* his people witnessed him receiving his just deserts. (מהרש"א ועץ יוסף מס' סנהדרין)

"ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אתם" "The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them." (16:32)

QUESTION: The words **את פיה** — "its mouth" — are superfluous. It should have said simply "the earth opened up and swallowed them"?



ANSWER: When a Jew does good or, G-d forbid, evil, Hashem rewards or punishes him measure for measure *(middah keneged middah)*. Korach and his followers ridiculed Moshe with their mouths, by going around in the community agitating, and spreading blatant lies about him. Since they sinned by opening their mouths and saying improper things, they were punished with the earth's opening its "mouth" and swallowing them. **(ר' שלום זצ"ל מבעלז)**

"כל תרומת הקדשים...נתתי לך ולבניך...ברית מלח עולם הוא" *"Everything that is separated from the holy things...have I given to you and your sons...it is an eternal covenant of salt."* (18:19)

QUESTION: What is the connection between salt and the priestly gifts?

ANSWER: Some people, unfortunately, do not give tzedakah because they are reluctant to give away part of their wealth. The Torah, therefore, is telling us that tzedakah is like salt; it causes meat to shrink somewhat, but the preservative effect far outweighs the loss. Similarly, though on the surface it appears that one's net value is shrinking, in reality, thanks to the tzedakah, one's earnings are preserved. **(שער בת רבים)**

ואם בריאה יברא ה' ופצתה האדמה את פיה ובלעה אתם ואת כל אשר להם וירדו חיים שאלה *"But if G-d will create a new phenomenon, and the earth open its mouth and swallow them and all that is theirs, and they will descend alive to the pit."* (16:30)

QUESTION: Why did Moshe wish such a strange death upon Korach and his followers?

ANSWER: Moshe loved all the Jewish people, including Korach and his followers. These people were sinning terribly, since by quarreling with him, they were actually defying Hashem's will. Had they died immediately, they would have left this world without doing *teshuvah*, and they would thus have lost their share in *Olam Haba* — the World to Come. Therefore, he prayed that they descend alive to the pit, hoping that while still alive, they would regret their wrongdoings and do *teshuvah*.

According to an opinion in the *Gemara (Sanhedrin* 109b) Korach and his followers do indeed have a share in *Olam Haba*. (**מרגליות הים על מס' סנהדרין**)

"רב לכם בני לוי" *"It is too much for you, sons of Levi."* (16:7)

QUESTION: The *Midrash Rabbah* (18:2) asks, "Korach was a wise man and among those who carried the Ark. How could he have acted so foolishly?" Why does his being among those who carried the Ark make it difficult to comprehend why he engaged in the dispute?

ANSWER: The Ark that housed the Torah was two- and one-half cubits long, one and one half cubits wide, and one and one half cubits tall (*Shemot* 25:10). The dimensions all being in fractions conveys a lesson in humility. Namely, one who acquires Torah knowledge should learn from the Ark to be humble.

Declaring war against Moshe and Aharon was an act of brazen arrogance. The *Midrash* therefore wonders, since Korach was a wise person, why did he act so foolishly? Moreover, being among those

who carried the Ark, he should have known the Ark's message and not acted so arrogantly against Moshe and Aharon. (**עיטורי תורה בשם ר׳ עקיבא ז״ל סופר**)



DIVREI TORAH ON THE PARSHA BY BORUCH KAHAN

Korach's Thought Process

There has been much written in many places not only about who Korach was but what in fact was his motivation against Moshe and Aharon .The only thing that I found intriguing but could never get a solution to was if you actually think about it Korach as explained in the Rashi Commentaries at the beginning of the Parsha seems to have 2 fundamental problems a) who are Moshe and Aharon to be in charge of everything why didn't he get a chance and b) if you want to know what it was that he was looking for to achieve it was to become the Nosi since he was an older grandson of Kehos so why had he been skipped out and the Nesius instead went to his cousin Elizofon who was younger than him.

If you analyse this a bit more Korach sort of back tracks and says that he can live with the fact that Aharon got the Kehuna and Moshe the leadership because they are the sons of the oldest son of Kehos, Amrom but Elizofon, he is the son of the youngest brother so he should have not been skipped over.

If you look in Parashas VoEiroh Perek 6 Possuk 22 you will actually see that Elizofon is the second son of Uziel his older brother is Mishoel so according to Korach's logic then he should have approached Mishoel and find that he should be as angry as him since he had also been skipped over or what about even Korach's own brothers Nefeg and Zichri who did not get any Kibbudim so he should have had a whole bunch of brothers or cousins complaining with him.

Clearly the fact that they all get skipped up over and the Nesius went to Elizofon a much younger grandson proves without a shadow

of a doubt that the whole process has nothing to do with who is oldest and who should get first choice of a Kibbud but more to do with who was most suitable with the correct Middos and Mishoel ,Elizofon's older brother and Nefeg and Zichri ,Korach's younger siblings had no problem with Elizofon's appointment, so retrospectively one can see it was just that Korach was a trouble maker and using the Nesius as a pretext to cause a Machloikes against Moshe and Aharon.

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

וישמע משה ויפל על פניו *Moshe heard and fell on his face.* (16:4)



Why did Moshe *Rabbeinu* fall on his face? The *'Otzar Ephraim'* cites the *sefer 'Mishkanos Yaakov'* by Rav Yaakov ben Naim, *z"l*, of Salonika: *Chazal* have stated (*Megillah* 28a): Rebbe Yochanan said, "A person may not gaze at the face of a wicked person".

If this is so, then at the moment when Korach rebelled against *Hashem Yisbarach*, Moshe His servant, and the Torah from Heaven, Moshe was prohibited from looking at his face. This is why it states: "Moshe heard and fell" – why? "Because of his face" – not on his own face, rather, the intent is because of the face of Korach, and this is why Moshe lowered his face so as not to look at Korach. (*Siach Aharon*)

"There is nothing impossible to they who will try."

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי (טז:א) ***Korach the son of Yitzhar the son of Kehas the son of Levi*** (16:1)

The name Korach is written eleven times in this *parshah*, and each time the name is written deficiently, meaning without the '*vuv*'. *Chachmei Yisrael* derive from this a hidden meaning. The name **קרח** is an abbreviation of three character traits.

1 . קנאה – Jealousy – Korach was jealous of Moshe's position as leader

2 . רוממות – Loftiness – Korach chased after honour and glory for himself.

3 . חמדה – Desire – Korach desired a position of leadership that he was not worthy of.

Our Rabbis have taught us in *Pirkei Avos* (4:28) that we read this week: **הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד מוציאין את האדם מן העולם,** ***jealousy, desire, and glory remove a man from the world***. All this was fulfilled with Korach. (*Parperaos LaTorah*)



Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface by R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ולא יהיה כקרח וכעדתו ***He shall not be like Korach and his assembly*** *(17:5)*

It is incumbent on every person to distance himself from argument as much as possible and to prevent others from entering through the gates of fire that destroys all that is good.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was once travelling from city to city selling his *Seforim*. He came to a certain town where arguments were so strong that the entire community was divided into two. The situation was so bad that it reached a point where two separate *Chevra Kadisha*,

burial societies, were needed, and every burial caused further strife.

The *Chofetz Chaim* was asked to speak and he told the community: "Take note, every city has but one *Chevra Kadisha* and one cemetery. There is also only one *Malach HaMaves* [Angel of Death]. But, if you have here two *Chevra Kadisha* societies and two cemeteries, then you will need two Angels of Death. Since this would be a catastrophe, it would be good advice to get along…" (*Umatok HaOhr*)

Orchos Chaim L'HaRosh

65. אַל תִּתְעַבֵּר עַל רִיב לֹא לָךְ, כִּי לְסוֹף הֵם יַשְׁלִימוּ בֵּינֵיהֶם וְאַתָּה תִּשָּׁאֵר בְּכַעַס
Do not take sides in an argument that is not yours, because in the end, the two parties will make peace with each other, and you will be left with anger.

Rav Moshe Sternbuch comments that this directive refers to an argument that is not *L'Sheim Shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven. This type of arguing should be avoided at all costs. However, regarding a dispute that is for the sake of Heaven, one may get involved in.

In 1901, when **Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l***, was six years old, there was a *Pogrom* in their town and it forced Rav Moshe's father, Rav Dovid, who was the *Rav* of the town, to take his family and run for their lives. Many other Jews ran away as well.

A few weeks later, when it was finally safe for them to go home, Rav Dovid returned with his family. However, Rav Dovid found that a certain *Talmid Chacham* had come to the town while he was in hiding, and had declared himself the new *Rav* of the town, and was sitting in Rav Dovid's seat in the *Bais Medrash*. Rab Dovid abhorred any form of dispute, and he absolutely refused to involve himself in anything that had to do with a *Machlokes*. The townspeople still continued to recognize Rav Dovid as their *Rav*, but from then on Rav Dovid and his

sons would only *Daven* in the town's *Chasidic Shul*, and not in the main *Bais Medrash*.

Consequently, at a very young age, Rav Moshe learned to avoid any type of argument, and to be able to get along with others, even those whose backgrounds and customs differed from his own!

Penninim On The Torah -Machlokes – Peace



Shortly after the **Bobover Rebbe, Horav Shlomo, zl**, arrived in America, a local American rabbi slandered this wellspring of sensitivity and love for all Jews. It was the typical case in which one person thought that someone was infringing on his turf. What is a better way to deal with this issue than a pre-emptive slanderous strike against the incursor?

It may be hard to believe that a Torah leader, a respected *Rav* and teacher, would stoop to such acrimonious, loathful activity, but that is the nature of fear generated by envy. This rabbi thought that he would lose everything that he had achieved. He thought slander was the effective way to combat this alleged threat. The fact that his slander consisted of conjecture and lies did not matter to this flawed person. He was not about to share his turf with anyone.

The *Rebbe* was an individual of impeccable character. His sterling *middos*, character traits, were among his greatest attributes. The rabbi's vilifying remark, however, became downright humiliating, to the point that the *Rebbe* could no longer ignore this man's diatribe.

The *Rebbe* summoned all his *chassidim* to convene in the large *shul*. He was planning to address the entire assemblage. This was it. Finally, they would have the *Rebbe's* response to the unfounded insults that had been hurled at him. Everyone was in a fighting mood. They were in for a surprise.

The *Bobover Rebbe* entered the main sanctuary and ascended to the lectern that stood right in front of the *Aron HaKodesh* which housed the Torah scrolls. He scanned the assembly and began to speak, "I am declaring to everyone assembled in this *bais hamedrash*, as I stand in front of the holy Ark, that I absolutely forbid anyone from fighting on my behalf! My honour is my honour, and it will remain my honour, but only if everyone acts appropriately and does not take sides. Whoever does not obey me has no place in this *bais hamedrash*!"

The *Rebbe* had spoken for about fifteen seconds, but it was a speech that impacted everyone in that room and was remembered for generations. The night was not yet over. The *Rebbe* was not finished with his pre-emptive circumvention. He asked his *gabbai*, attendant, to take him to the home of the rabbi who had spread the rumours about him. He knocked on the door, and the rabbi greeted him. When he realised who stood before him, his face became ashen. The *Rebbe* understood that words were not necessary. Indeed, they would have had a negative effect. It was action that was needed to dispel the *machlokes*.

The *Bobover* embraced the rabbi and kissed him on the cheek! He then spoke, "Dear rabbi, you may go to any one of my *chassidim*, and they will attest that I harbour no ill will against you. Just as we were once friends, we will continue to be so." End of story.

It takes two people to create a *machlokes*. The *Bobover Rebbe* was not taking the bait. He would never be a party to machlokes.

Va'ani Tefillah

יָגַעְתִּי בְאַנְחָתִי אַשְׂחֶה בְכָל־לַיְלָה מִטָּתִי בְּדִמְעָתִי עַרְשִׂי אַמְסֶה

'I am weakened by my sigh; every night I drench my bed; with my tears, I soak my couch.' - Tehillim 6:7



David *Hamelech* feared death, but not for the same reason that we fear death. We fear the unknown, the loss of opportunity in this physical world. David feared his inability to continue growing spiritually. The fear of having his spiritual ascendency cut short rendered him weary with fear. The body can tolerate just so much. His emotions were frayed, his weeping so intense that his tears soaked his bed.

אשחה בכל לילה - Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl, explains that, "*every night I drench my bed,*" is derived from *la'suach*, to swim. David claimed that he was able to swim in his tears. In order for one to swim in a pool, the pool must contain sufficient water to cover his body. When one goes into the water, he becomes completely enveloped by it, to the point that he becomes one with the water.

The *Kabbalists* explain that when one immerses himself in a *mikvah*, he becomes suffused with the pure water. Thus, when he emerges, he is like a new person. David *Hamelech* was at one with his tears. He became a part of them.

Bitachon does not mean trusting that Hashem will fulfil one's wishes; rather, trusting that whatever He does is what is truly best. ~ Chovos HaLevavos (Shaar HaBitachon).

Parsha Thoughts - By Mordechai Sapoznick



In this week's parsha, Hashem told Moshe and Aharon to separate themselves from Korach and his followers before He punished them.

Rabbeinu Bachya asks why did Hashem have to tell Moshe and Aharon to separate themselves? Hashem could have saved them without them being separated from Korach? Hashem wanted them separated so that Moshe and Aharon shouldn't be affected from their bad ways. [**ספר עלינו לשבח**]

Rabbi Frand - Machlokes



I saw written in the name of **Rav Chaim Palagi** (1788-1868; Smyrna, Turkey) "From the time I started having a modicum of intelligence, I noticed that man or woman, regardless of family, regardless of country - any party that was involved in machlokes - suffered from it. Neither side ever emerges unscathed and unhurt from machlokes."

Rav Palagi lived to a ripe old age and said that he saw in his lifetime that when people get into protracted arguments—be it inter-family, inter-community, inter-city or intra-city—neither side ever wins.

Both sides suffer, physically and financially. He says that any person with sechel (clarity of understanding) should walk away from machlokes even if they are right, whether it will cost them physically, financially, or in terms of their honour. Whatever one loses by walking away from machlokes, he will eventually get back. One will ultimately profit in this world and the next by virtue of the fact that he was a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace.

I further once heard in the name of **Rav (Elazar) Shach zt"l**, (1899-2001; Bnei Brak), that he never saw anyone who lost by walking away from machlokes. This means when a person faces a choice of losing money or making a machlokes, Rav Shach advised people to be mevater (to pass up the opportunity to "fight for what is rightly his"). He said that in his long lifetime, he never witnessed anyone who ultimately lost because he was mevater.

Finally, I received an email written by students of **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman zt"l** [1914-2017; Bnei Brak]. It is written there, "We once asked our Rebbe (Rav Shteinman), "When the machlokes between Korach and Moshe began, how were the innocent bystanders supposed to know who was right?" On the one hand there was Moshe Rabbeinu—he certainly had credentials of his own. But on the other hand, there were 250 people.

These were not 250 peasants. These were 250 Roshei Sanhedraos (distinguished people) and they were presenting reasonable complaints. How should they have known with which side the truth resided? Rav Shteinman answered (in rhyming Hebrew) ***Mi she'Shosek hu ha'Tzodek***. He who keeps quiet—he is the one who is right. That is the sign.

"A Yid does not calculate according to reality — he calculates according to the Ribbono Shel Olam." ~ Brisker Rav.



Avoiding Machlokes

The Pele Yoetz writes השתיקה בעת הכעס כמים לאש שמכבהו - "Silence during anger is like water to fire – it extinguishes it."

Avoiding Machlokes



Before World War Two, in a city in Romania, there were two large chassidic courts. Each one had their own shochet, and each court claimed that only their shochet slaughters properly, and the meat of the other shochet was treif. A bitter machlokes broke out between them, which `lasted for two years, until the Nazis came, r'l, and the city was destroyed.

A righteous Jew, Reb Yitzchak Wertzberger zt'l, lived in this city and he refused to take part in the machlokes, and he ate from both shechitos because both shochtim were yirei Hashem. He said that the day he gets involved in the machlokes he will leave the city.

One day, someone said to Reb Yitzchak, "Why doesn't your rebbe speak up for our shochet?"

Reb Yitzchak replied, "It is because of the machlokes that all the troubles began, and you want my rebbe to have a part in this?"

Reb Yitzchak put his hand to his head and shouted, "Oy. What did I do? I just spoke about the machlokes!" He came home and told his wife that they must leave, immediately. "We can't stay in this city anymore."

It was Thursday. Not an easy day to pick up and run. But she was a loyal wife and they packed up that day and left the city. They moved to Arad, Romania.

This move saved their lives. Soon after, the Germans came to the city where the machlokes reigned; almost no one survived.

Today, Reb Yitzchak has grandchildren who are erlicher Yidden, some of them poskim and magidei shiur, and they have gratitude to Reb Yitzchak, who fled from the machlokes, and saved their lives.

The Way of Emunah- R' Meir Isamar Rosenbaum

Truth and Peace

A big machlokes once broke out in the city of Vilna, with many people opposing the local Dayan. The reason they disliked him was because he would not blindly obey the directives of the powerful members of the community, and he often stood in support of the simple and weak people.

During this difficult time, **The Dubno Magid zt"l** came to visit the **Vilna Gaon zy"a** in his home. When he entered, the Gaon asked him, "Please tell me some words of mussar." The Magid said, "In the story of the destruction of Sodom, Avrohom Avinu told Hashem (Bereishis 18:24): 'Perhaps there are 50 righteous men in the middle of the city?', in whose merit Sodom could be saved. "Why did he describe these tzadikim as living 'in the middle of the city'?

We learn from this that some tzadikim live in a city, but they aren't 'in the middle of the city.' They are not involved in communal affairs. But only tzadikim who are 'in the middle of the city' could have saved Sodom." He turned to the Gaon and said, "Rabenu, you are hidden away in the tents of Torah. You are immersed in serving Hashem all day and night. But a fire is burning outside. A machlokes is raging. And you are not getting involved. You are being silent as the fire spreads!"



Rosh Hashanah was a few days later. When it came time to blow the shofar in the main bais haknesses of the city, the baal tokeiah was unable to make a sound. The shofar was stuffed up and no sound emerged, no matter how hard he tried. Everyone was very worried that they wouldn't be able to fulfil the mitzvah, so they hurried to the Gaon's bais medrash to hear the shofar being blown there. However, when they got there, they saw that the tzibur had already begun to daven Mussaf.

The Gaon was standing and facing the wall and the chazzan had already begun to recite: "Hineni he'ani mima'as." When the chazzan reached the words, "And all of our problems and sins turn over for us…truth and peace are beloved to You", the Gaon suddenly turned his head to face the people who had just come in. His expression was like burning like a fire and he said in a loud voice, "Truth and peace are beloved to Him!"

The people then understood the reason their shofar had not worked. They knew that it was because of the machlokes they were involved

in against the Dayan. They immediately ran to appease him and invited him to daven with them at the front of the main shul. And as soon as they did so, the shofar began to work. It blew out loudly and clearly for all to hear!

He Fell on His Face In Order Not to Look at Them



וישמע משה ויפל על פניו *Moshe heard and fell on his face.* (16:4)

Why did Moshe fall on his face? Sefer Tiferes Yehonasan explains that the Gemara (Moed Katan 17B) says that any time a chochom places his gaze (in anger) upon someone, that person will either die or become impoverished.

Moshe wanted Korach and his men to regret their actions and do teshuva. He did not want them to die or to be punished. Therefore, he fell on his face so as not to look at them. If he had set his gaze on them, they would have immediately been punished. Instead, he wanted them to have enough time to do teshuva.

Rav Dessler — The illusion of giving vs taking -Michtav Me'Eliyahu

'The world assumes that love produces giving; the truth is the opposite — giving produces love. When a person invests effort and sacrifice into another, he binds his identity to that person, and what he has given becomes part of himself. Therefore he loves what he has given to'.

Long Life in The Merit of Avoiding Machlokes



It is related that when **Rav Shmuel Wosner zt"l** reached the age of 101, someone asked him, "Rebbi, how did you merit to live so long?" He answered, "I never got involved in a machlokes that was not relevant to me!"

A talmid chochom related, "I once was at a wedding together with Rav Wosner zt"l. Suddenly, we heard loud shouting from one of the corners of the hall. The Gaon asked me what was going on and I said that some people were debating a certain machlokes. He told me, 'If that's true, I'm getting out of here now!'" And so he did. He got up and left immediately.

Controversy For the Sake of Heaven

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח... וַיָּקֻמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה And Korach took, and they rose up before Moshe (16:1-2)

The Mishna states in Tractate Avot (5:17): **אֵיזוֹ הִיא מַחֲלֹקֶת שְׁאֵינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, זוֹ מַחֲלֹקֶת קֹרַח וְכָל עֲדָתוֹ** "Which is a controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven? The controversy of Korach and all his faction."

The Mishna specifically avoids calling it a controversy between Korach and Moshe, because even within Korach's group of 250 followers there was dissention, each one vying with the others for honour and glory. Indeed, this was a sure sign that their argument was not for the sake of Heaven. (Ye'arot Devash)

Do Not Speak Good or Bad

וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְהָר בֶּן־קְהָת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב

And Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehan son of Levi and Dasan and Aviram the sons of Eliav took...(16:1)

Rav Yitzchok of Stutchin zy"a (quoted in Sefer Chochmah M'ayin, page 60) related that the **Magid of Kozhnitz zy"a** said that it is not possible to say anything good about Korach because he caused pain to Moshe Rabenu. It is also not possible to say anything bad about him because he is the ancestor of the **Chozeh of Lublin zy"a**.

Rav Yitzchok added that we see that the Magid indeed has no chiddushim on Parshas Korach in his Sefer Avodas Yisroel.

A Drasha Without Conclusion

Some follow the practice not to allow a Bar Mitzvah boy to deliver a lengthy Torah discourse, or when a *chasan* says a *dvar Torah* (*pshetel*) at his *chasunah* or *sheva brachos*. but to interrupt him by singing him down.

The reason is to avoid shaming anyone who is unable to deliver a Torah discourse publicly by heart.

Rebbe Yissachar Dov of Belz zt'l said that this is to tell the young man, at the beginning of his marriage, that he doesn't have to have the final word. He can let others interrupt and say differently, and he can be fine with that, too.

'We must eliminate "I can't" from our lives and believe in our potential. Each of us carries a part of Hashem, who never says "I can't." This divine power resides within us all, both individually and as a nation.' ~ Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein.

Parsha Pages - Sons of Korach

NAMES - Assir, Elkanah, Aviassuf

FATHER - Korach

ANCESTRY - From tribe of Levi

ANCESTORS - The Prophet Shmuel, 24 Mishmaros



The gemara Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:1 says that Korach denied the Torah of Moshe, stating that he made up all the mitzvos, not that he heard them from HaShem. Obviously, he did not deny the two Mitzvos, "Onochi," and "lo y'h'yeh l'cho," as all the bnei Yisroel heard them directly from HaShem (see Rashi Bamidbar 16:3 d.h. "umadua").

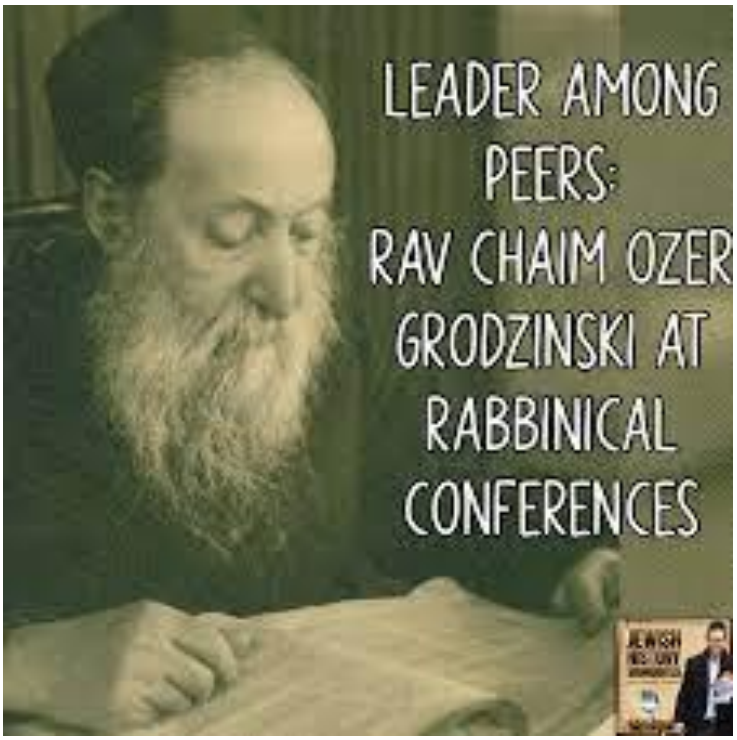
We can take the words of the Yerushalmi literally: Korach denied the "Torah." The numerical value of Torah is 611 (see Gemara Makos 23b). Korach's sons believed in Moshe and the 611 additional mitzvos he taught us.

The sons of Korach were three. Their names are Osir, Elkonoh, and Aviosof (Shmos 6:24). The numerical value of these three names is 611, the 611 Mitzvos in which they believed that their father denied. Korach in "mispar koton" has the value of two, as he believed in only two mitzvos.

It is interesting to note that the names Korach and his father Yitzhor both have the numerical value of 613.

"Develop an 'attitude of gratitude'. Say thank you to everyone you meet for everything they do for you."

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin



Rav Eliyahu Dessler, ZT"L, was once invited by **Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, ZT"L**, to join him in attending a gathering of Gedolim. This was after World War I, when the acute lack of funds for Yeshivos and schools threatened their very existence.

After some discussion, it was decided that in America there were wealthy individuals who appreciated Torah and would support Torah learning. Since Rav Chaim Ozer was the undisputed leader of European Jewry, it was recommended that he should be the one to travel to America and raise the needed funds.

Rav Chaim Ozer sat quietly, listening. When asked for his response, he stated that was not healthy enough to make the effort to travel to America. One of the Rabbonim got up and said, "What won't one do for Klal Yisroel! You should make the effort!"

The Chofetz Chaim, ZT"L, who was also in attendance, jumped up and cried out, "Who is Klal Yisroel? Rav Chaim Ozer is Klal Yisroel! His health is the health of Klal Yisroel!"

Those that were involved with Korach's uprising failed to realize a core tenet of our religion. Questioning Moshe, disputing anything that he said, is "kefira", as questioning the very belief in Hashem. The Torah leaders of each generation serve as our guardians and must also be respected as such.

Facebooker Shabbos Table Talk



The Gemara in Bava Basra relates the story of Rabba bar Bar Channa who travelled through the desert and was told by an Arab guide, "Come and I will show you the place where Korach was swallowed."

The guide brought him to a hole in the ground. He then put wool on a long spear and wetted it with water. When the guide put the spear into the hole and brought it back up, the wool was charred and singed. Putting his ear to the ground, Rabba heard voices saying, **משה אמת ותורתו אמת** "Moshe is true and his Torah is true and they (Korach's group) are liars."

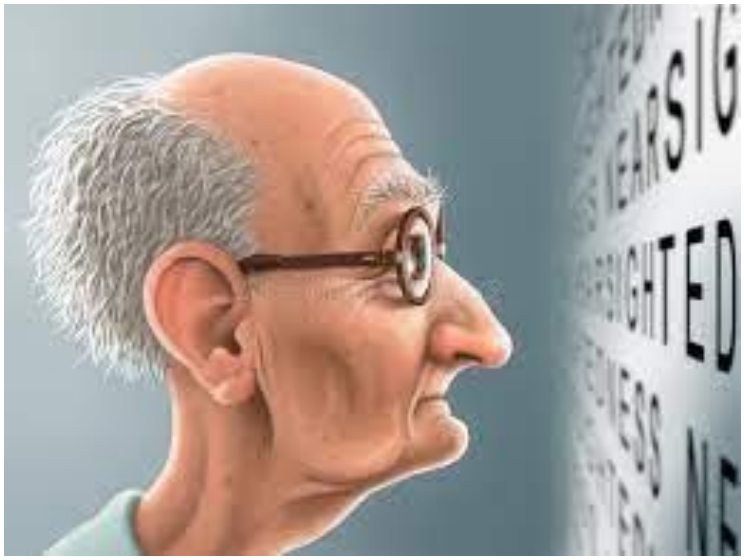
Some explain that though they had been swallowed up, Korach's people refused to admit defeat. Instead, they declared that Moshe and his Torah are true, but they then undermined this declaration by saying, "but remember, we are great liars!"

We learn from this that even in death the wicked refuse to repent. Unfortunately, all too often the living refuse to admit they are wrong too and would rather go to the grave repeating their mistake than having to live with the fact that they made a mistake.

We might wonder which is more of a hellish existence: going to your grave convinced you were right or living a lie to maintain your ego.

"Integrity is the most valuable and respected quality of leadership. Always keep your word."

Myopic View



R' Boruch Sorotzkin zt"l (Telzer Rosh HaYeshivah) would say: **רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי**- 16:7 Rashi says **עינו הטעתו** - that Korach's eye tricked him. Since a person has two eyes, he should have stated that his 'eyes' tricked him.

The problem was that Korach's view was myopic. He could only see things one way, with one eye, and so he failed. Perhaps this is why he justified his argument, seeing that Shmuel Hanavi, his descendant, was destined to be a leader.

In order to be a true leader, a person has to be able to see things from more than one vantage point."

Circle Time – Highlights from the Midrash

The Richest Jew in History

The Gemara tells us that Korach was the wealthiest Jew to ever live, and his great riches caused his ultimate downfall.

Where did he get his wealth and what happened to it afterward?

● Midrash Rabbah (18:15) relates that while Klal Yisrael were imprisoned in Egypt, Korach was employed as the personal treasurer of Pharaoh. He was in charge of all of the royal riches and storehouses of treasures and kept the key to all of them. Hashem commented: "In the end, they will go to Yisrael and Korach will get nothing from them."

● At some point, perhaps while serving as Pharaoh's treasurer, Korach discovered a cache of riches that had been hidden by Yosef

Hatzaddik (Sanhedrin 110a). When he ruled Egypt and had the only food available in the world, Yosef had collected pretty much all the money on the planet for Pharaoh.

He divided it into three parts: the money brought by idol worshippers was hidden in one location; money taken from people who stole and extorted from others but did not serve idols was put in a separate place; money paid by people who kept the seven mitzvos of Bnei Noach was hidden in a third spot.

● The riches brought by the idol worshippers were discovered by Korach, who took it as his own. The stash from the thieves and murderers was taken by Antoninus, the Roman emperor, (who killed two servants each day). The last portion of the money remains hidden until today and will be revealed to tzaddikim when Mashiach comes. (Ben Yehoyada to Sanhedrin 110a)

The idol-worshippers' money needed to be destroyed. That is what happened to it in the end when all of Korach's possessions flew toward the hole in the ground and were swallowed up along with him! (Midrash Rabbah) Korach's money was considered stolen. All the spoils of Egypt were meant to go to the Yidden who worked as slaves, as a *hanaka*. People from Shevet Levi, like Korach, were not supposed to take any. (Parashas Derachim)



● How much money did Korach have?

He had 300 white donkeys loaded with just the keys of his storehouses. Each key was made of leather and was very light. (Sanhedrin 110a)

Pardes Yehuda – Rabbi Yehuda Z. Klitnick

'וְאִם־בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא ה' וּפָצְתָה הָאֲדָמָה אֶת־פִּיהָ וּבָלְעָה אֹתָם ***But if the L-rd creates a creation, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them.'***

Why the punishment of being swallowed in the ground? If Moshe wanted to punish Korach and his followers, why did he choose distinctly the punishment of them being swallowed in the earth?

We can answer this with the words of **Harav Chaim Vital** -talmid of the **Ariza"l** in his sefer Likutei Torah: In Parshas Bereishis we find that Kain, the son of Adam, killed his brother Hevel, and the earth swallowed Hevel. Now, since Moshe was the Gilgul of Hevel, and Korach was the Gilgul of Kain, and we also see that the words **קרח הבל** is the Gematria 345, which is the same as **משה** 345.

Therefore, Moshe wanted to rectify the Neshama of Korach who was once Kain, and sinned by killing his broher Hevel, who was now Moshe. By doing **מדה כנגד מדה** - measure for measure, just as Kain had done to Hevel, and caused him to be swallowed into the earth, so did Moshe want Korach to be swallowed into the earth, to redeem the Neshama of Kain.

Vechol Maaminim

Minchah Is Effective for the Wicked as Well

וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־ה' אַל־תֵּפֶן אֶל־מִנְחָתָם לֹא חֲמוֹר אֶחָד מֵהֶם נָשָׂאתִי וְלֹא הֲרֵעֹתִי אֶת־אַחַד מֵהֶם 16:15

"Why did Moshe mention specifically "their Minchah" and not "their korban"?

Harav Yehonasan Eibshitz explained: In contrast to a korban *behemiah* that is not willingly accepted if the one bringing it is not worthy, the Minchah, which is the sacrifice of a poor person who could not afford an animal, is accepted even if the pauper is not

worthy of it. This is because the poor person sacrifices the Minchah with a broken heart, as we say in the passuk (Tehillim 51:19): **זִבְחֵי אֱלֹקִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּרָה לֵב־נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְכֶּה אֱלֹקִים לֹא תִבְזֶה**, 'The sacrifices of Hashem are a broken spirit; You will not despise a broken and crushed heart.'

Therefore, when Korach was wicked enough to rise up against Moshe, Moshe only needed to daven that the Minchah – also accepted from reshaim – should not be accepted, because their korban would surely not have been accepted.

Rav Yehonasan added that this virtue is not only in a Korban Minchah, but also in Tefillas Minchah. Of all the tefillos, it alone can be accepted even from one who is wicked. [Tiferes Yehonasan]

Vechol Maaminim

Had Korach Gone to Sleep, He Would Have Been Saved



וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־קֹרַח וְאֶל־כָּל־עֲדָתוֹ לֵאמֹר בֹּקֶר וְיֹדַע ה' אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְאֶת־הַקָּדוֹשׁ וְהִקְרִיב אֵלָיו (טז ה)

Rashi explains (based on Midrash Rabbah 18:7) that Moshe pushed off Korach and his people until morning "perhaps they will repent."

Harav Pinchas of Koritz explained that because Korach was a talmid chacham, and Chazal say (Brachos 19a) "if a talmid chacham transgresses a sin at night, do not think about him during the day…for surely he has repented," therefore, Moshe Rabbeinu thought that if he would push him off till the morning, surely he would do teshuvah. But in actuality, this move did not work, because the time when a talmid

chacham repents is before he goes to sleep (see Zohar Hakadosh in this parashah, 178:1), and Korach did not go to sleep that night. Rather, he circulated among Bnei Yisral and tried to convince them to join his uprising against Moshe and Aharon. (Rashi, 16:19). [Imrei Pinchas]

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series –

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה



וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח – **Targum says - וְאִתְפְּלֵג קֹרַח** – ***Korach split.***

Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein in his sefer U'Matok HaOr asks, what does Onkelos mean by **וְאִתְפְּלֵג קֹרַח** – ***Korach split?***

If you think about Korach, he had everything. He had extensive wealth, which the gemara in Sanhedrin [109b-110a] describes that he had so many valubles that he had 300 white mules- **פרדות לבנות** just to carry the keys for his storehouses. **The Marharsha** says they were white, because when approached by others, they would start getting in a frenzy, and would kick widly with the intent to kill!

Korach had honour. He carried the holy Aron. He was a navi – He foresaw that he would have descendents of Shmuel Hanavi and 24 Mishmaros. He was the 1st cousin to the king and cohen gadol. (Moishe Rabeinu and Aharon HaCohen.)

However **מי שיש לו מנה, רוצה מאתיים. יש לו מאתיים, רוצה ארבע מאות** Enough was never enough for him. He wasn't satisfied. He was jealous that Aharon was appointed as Kohen Gadol and not him.

Rabbi Shlomo Levinstein brings the **Ben Ish Chai** [Od Yosuf Chai] who says that wealth – **עשירות**, can either be a bracha for someone, or it could be to their detriment.

He says that the word **עשיר** can be split up into two words – **יש** or **רע** – It can either be good for a person, or bad. [**יש** is an allusion to the Mishnah in Uktzin 3:12 - *R' Yehoshua ben Levi* says, in the future *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* will bestow on each and every *tzaddik* 310 worlds as it states (*Mishlei* 8:21): "I have what (**יש**) to bequeath to those who love me, and I shall fill their store houses."]

This is what the gemara means by **שלקח מקח רע לעצמו** – ***He purchased a bad acquisition for himself*** – He chose the portion of **רע** when he could have taken the **יש** out of the word **עשיר**. Through his actions, he drove himself out of this world.

This is how he interprets Onkolus's word of **וְאִתְפְּלֵג קֹרַח** -***Korach split.*** He split **עשיר** into two, and chose the **רע**.

The Ramchal says that there are two types of **קנאה** – jealousy.

1. Stupidity- where a person wants what somebody else has.
2. Even more stupid, where if a person cant have what another one has, than he will do everything in his power to ensure that they cant have it either.

This was the illness which led to the decline and demise of Korach.

When R' Nissim Karelitz zt"l was asked about a neighbour hosting Shevah Berachos and another neighbour complaining, he remarked:– "How can it be that one neighbour finds the others simcha disturbing, such a thing shows stinginess and a lack of the ability to rejoice in another person's happiness."



Together with sanctifying our mouths by refraining from speaking forbidden talk, we should use our mouth to do *chessed* and to encourage others.

The custom at a *sheva brachos* is that the speaker says a lot of praises about the *chassan*, not all of them necessarily one hundred percent true. *Bachurim* from yeshivas Ponovitz asked their *mashgiach*, **Reb Yechezkel Levinstein *zt'l***, that perhaps they should stop that custom, because of the prohibition of speaking falsehood.

Reb Yechezkel Levinstein replied, "This generation has an illness that no one says a good word for another. Once a lifetime when a person can finally hear some kind words about himself, and get encouragement from them, you want to take that away from him too?"

Swallowing your Pride

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman told an eye-opening story which he heard from Rabbi Eliezer Zusia Stern.

A certain Rosh Kollel once took his students to the **Steipler** Rav to be tested on their learning. After they finished, the Steipler told the Rosh Kollel to stay behind as the students began to leave. The Steipler asked him what his name was, so he wrote it down on a piece of paper as the Steipler was hard of hearing. When the Steipler saw the name, he asked the Rosh Kollel once again to please tell him his name. The Rosh Kollel didn't understand why the Rabbi was asking; he already told him his name. The Steipler said he sees the name Shlomo on his forehead and asked him to explain why that wasn't the

name he wrote down. The Rosh Kollel remembered an incident he once had with a man named Shlomo and proceeded to tell the Rebbe.

Some years back, he traveled to America to raise funds for his kollel. At a certain shul, he met with the president there before he made his appeal and something he said offended the president whose name was Shlomo. Shlomo told the Rabbi it would be a waste of time for him to make an appeal there because, if he did, he would get up right after and tell everyone not to give him. The Rosh Kollel made an attempt anyway and, right after, Shlomo succeeded in ensuring that not even one congregant gave him.

The Rosh Kollel went to the next shul afterward and spoke to a man there who was excited to give. The Rosh Kollel picked out something nice in his building for this man to sponsor and he made a very generous donation and gave him a cheque on the spot. However, later that night, this man told his brother-in-law Shlomo about the donation and Shlomo convinced him that the Rosh Kollel was evil and he should cancel the cheque.

Now, for the second time, Shlomo caused the Rosh Kollel to lose donations. The Rosh Kollel did not fight back or say anything bad. He swallowed his pride and he moved on. Lo alenu, this president Shlomo passed away not too long after this episode.

The Rosh Kollel then asked the Steipler if there was any connection between the name on his head and that story.

The Steipler replied saying that his life should have ended already and he was only living on the extra years that he got from Shlomo who passed away before his time. That is why the name Shlomo was written on his forehead. He was living the years of Shlomo.

On one hand this is a frightening story, but at the same time it is a great lesson. The one who stays quiet always wins. That Rosh Kollel may have thought he lost some money for his kollel that day, but

little did he know, by him keeping quiet and staying out of machloket, he gained many more years of life.

Machlokes is always bad and if a person has an opportunity to keep quiet and prevent machlokes, his rewards will be great.

Rav Avigdor Miller On Rav Shach and the Lubavitcher Rebbe



QUESTION: Is there one main leader of Klal Yisroel today?

ANSWER: That's not for me to say. But what I can say is that we do have leaders today. Boruch Hashem, we have leaders.

But I must tell you that I disagree with the attitude of being *mivatel,* of putting down, someone else's gadol. No; I disagree with that attitude. Gedolim can be here and Gedolim can be there, and we have to appreciate all of them. Your Gadol doesn't have to be the only Gadol.

And even though there might be a machlokes, a disagreement, between them; yes, there may be a machlokes between them, but we should stay out of it. It's fire! Worse than fire! We shouldn't say a word. Not a word! So if Rav Shach, let's say, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe may have *sichsuchim,* some arguments; I don't know if they have, but if they have some *sichsuchim* it's none of our business. It's the fire of Gehenim to open up your mouth. Keep your mouth closed. It's a tragic mistake to mix in.

And the wisest way is to say nothing at all and to have the greatest derech eretz, the greatest respect, for all those people who are recognized. After all, the Lubavitcher Rebbi is recognized by many people. And Rav Shach is recognized by many people. So we

should keep our mouths closed and recognize both of them. That's the way we should follow.



The Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rav Shach

Why did the earth open its big mouth to swallow Korach? Because Korach opened his big mouth to speak against Moshe. So don't open your mouth! Because even today the earth opens its mouth to bury men. Many are swallowed in an early grave because they opened their mouths. And what's even worse many are swallowed into Gehenim just like Korach was. So don't open your mouth. You're only going to bring trouble upon yourself.

R' Yitzchok Grossberg

וַיְדַבֵּר ה׳ אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וַאֲנִי הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לְךָ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת תְּרוּמֹתָי לְכָל־קָדְשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְךָ נְתַתִּים לְמָשְׁחָה וּלְבָנֶיךָ לְחָק־עוֹלָם ***The L-rd told Aaron: Behold I have given you the charge of My gift [offerings]. I have thus given you all the holy things of the children of Israel for distinction, and as an eternal portion for your sons.***

Rashi says: ואני הנה נתתי לך: בשמחה. לשון שמחה הוא זה *Behold I have given you: with joy. It is an expression of joy.*

My father told me the following: It is very unusual that Hashems uses the expression of giving something over with joy. Why now? why to Aharon?

He answers , that just as Aharon was happy that his younger brother Moshe would be the leader/king of klal Yisrael, without any jealousy, similarly , Hashem was happy with Aharon!



Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Disagreeing Without Becoming Disagreeable

The Mishna (Avos 5:17) cites the arguments between Hillel and Shammai as the paradigm of an argument for the sake of Heaven. Similarly, the Mishna cites the arguments of Korach and his followers as the paradigm of an argument which is not for the sake of Heaven.

There is a lesson which we have still not learned since the times of Korach: how to have disagreements without being disagreeable. Someone can have profound differences with people and hold that they are terribly wrong and misguided. But that does not need to lead to personal animosity. It does not need to lead to Lashon HaRah and all the things that go along with machlokes.

Rav Volbe once said in a schmooze that in Slabodka there were two Yeshivas. There was Knesses Beis Yitzchak, founded by **Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz**, which on principle did not study Mussar. **The Alter of Slabodka** broke away from Knesses Beis Yitzchak and founded the Slabodka Yeshiva, known as Knesses Beis Yisrael, which was a mussar Yeshiva.

So, in the same small geographic area (one was in Kovna and one was in neighboring Slabodka), there were two Yeshivas with diametrically

opposite pedagogic philosophies. And yet, Rav Baruch Ber took a student from the Slabodka Yeshiva as his son-in-law! They had a philosophical dispute – should mussar be taught as part of a Yeshiva curriculum or should it not be taught. But that did not prevent them from being the best of friends, even to the extent of almost becoming like mechutanim!

There is a well-known incident which took place at the funeral of the Rebbetzin of **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l**. Normally, there is a custom that people ask forgiveness (mechilla) from the deceased, prior to taking final leave of them, before the body is lowered into the ground.

At that moment, Rav Shlomo Zalman announced that he does not need to ask mechilla from his deceased Rebbetzin because he never did anything in all his years of marriage to her for which he needs to ask mechilla.

Sometime thereafter, Rav Sholmo Zalman met a talmid of his who had recently gotten married. Rav Shlomo Zalman asked the talmid "Nu, how is it going?" The talmid responded, "It is going great! My wife and I never argue!" Rav Shlomo Zalman said, "You and your wife never argue? Is your wife sick?" The student repeated that he had a wonderful relationship with his newlywed wife, and that they never argued.

Rav Shlomo Zalman told him, "Listen, it is impossible for two people to live together in the same house and never argue about something. It is inevitable that there will be arguments. What do you mean you never argue?"

The talmid then questioned Rav Shlomo Zalman: "But Rebbe, you yourself said at the Rebbitzen's funeral that you had nothing to ask mechilla for from your wife, despite your decades of marriage to her. So, you can have a house with no arguments." Rav Shlomo Zalman told his student: "I never said that we never had arguments. We had disagreements.

There were issues. But there is nothing that I had to ask forgiveness for because we came to an understanding. Shalom does not mean that everyone sees things the same way and looks at things the same way and never has any disagreements. Shalom is the ability for people to have disagreements, to have issues, and to have different ways of looking at things, and yet come to Shalom."

We say about the Almighty that He is ***"Oseh Shalom b'Meromav"*** – He makes Peace on High between Fire and Water. Fire and Water are opposites and yet they can coexist in the universe. Shalom does not mean the lack of difference of opinion, or even argument. Shalom means that people – even people who have strong differences of opinion – have the ability to coexist in an atmosphere of mutual respect, admiration and even love.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman – Stay Away From Machlokes



Someone once asked **Rav Asher Freund** about a financial disagreement that he had with somebody. He wanted to know if he should summon him to a Din Torah, or let it go.

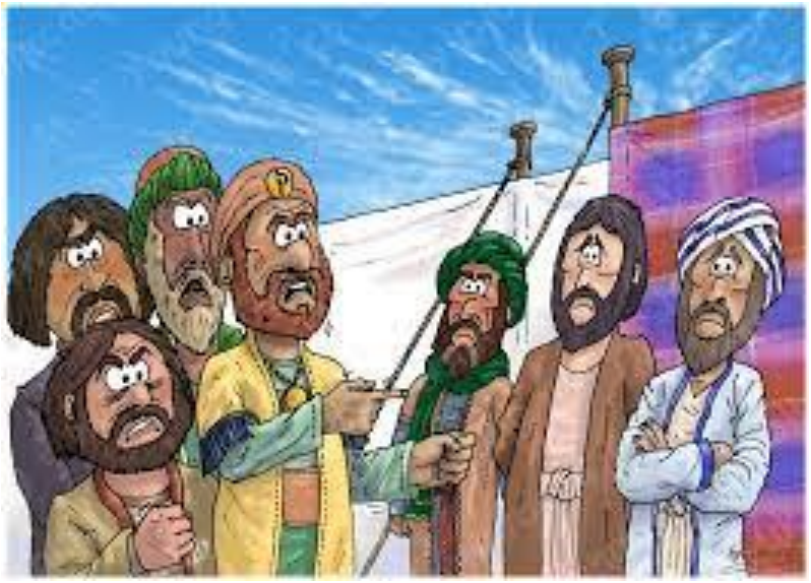
Rav Asher Freund said that he should forget about all his claims, and give in! If you have two options, either to get into a machlokes or run onto a motorway where the trucks are driving at 100k/h - then it is better to run onto the motorway!

Why? Because at least the trucks have brakes with which to stop, but a machlokes has no brakes. Once a machlokes starts, there is no stopping it!

Come To The Table – Rabbi Joey Haber

I want to give you a very important piece of advice.

A machlokes that is not L'Shem Shamayim is called - **קורח ועדתו - *Korach and his people!***



The question is, that Korach didn't fight with his people? Korach fought Moshe! So, if you want to talk about a bad fight, say **קרח ומשה?**

The answer is that Korach was in a fight with Moshe - But Moshe was not in the fight with Korach!

What makes Moshe not involved in the fight?

Moshe Rabeinu did everything in his power to '*come to the table*.' Moshe went to their house and said, "Let's make peace." He sent messages to them, to try to find a way to resolve the issue.

So, if you are in a position, where you were wronged in a terrible way – At least really try to come to some agreement/solution. Because, if you just allow it to fester, you are part of the machlokes!

But if you come to the table, and say, "Let's talk about this" – If you're making every effort trying to make peace, then you are not in a machlokes!

הוּא הֵטִיב לָנוּ. הוּא מֵטִיב לָנוּ. הוּא יֵיטִיב לָנוּ

"Hashem has always helped you. You can move forward with confidence…" – Rabbi Avraham Chaim Tanzer Zt'l



Take for yourselves fire pans… then the man whom Hashem will choose – he is the holy one*. (16:6,7)*

Moshe *Rabbeinu* told Korach's followers that the way to determine who Hashem had chosen was through the medium of *Ketores*, the Incense service. He chose *Ketores* because it is a service that Hashem desires above all others, but it carries the potential of death if it is not carried out properly. In other words, if Korach's followers were in the right and Korach should lead, they would take the prize. However, if (as it ultimately was indicated) they were wrong, they would die. The decision would come from Hashem.

One would think these men, who were Torah scholars of note, leaders of the *Sanhedrin*, would have cringed at the thought of taking this test. As *Chazal* (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:8) teach, Moshe was implying that, in the event one of their own was Divinely chosen, then he – and only he – would survive. The rest would perish. Yet, they foolishly continued their quest that would lead them nowhere but to an early grave.

This is the power of fellowship. Who has not seen otherwise intelligent, erudite men, who have achieved so much in life, throw it all away by making the wrong choice? They see a charismatic leader who convinces them to follow him, and, like donkeys, they listen and follow him to infamy.

While this might mitigate the irrational derision of Korach's followers in some manner, what about Korach himself?

He certainly was not out of his mind when he organised an iniquitous mutiny against Moshe and, by extension, *Hashem Yisborach*. To question *Torah min HaShomayim* when he was present during the

Revelation indicated that he had become unhinged – which is not true. Korach was completely in control of his senses. If anything, his emotions and deficient character traits led him afoul.

Veritably, *Chazal* (Ibid) ask this question: *Korach she'pikeach hayah, mah raah l'shtus zeh*? What did Korach, who was a clever person, see that brought him to this folly?"

They explain that his eye misled him. He saw a great chain of illustrious descendants emerging from him. He saw that Shmuel *HaNavi* – who would be equal in importance to Moshe and Aharon – plus other descendants who would prophesy with *Ruach HaKodesh*, Divine Inspiration, were destined to be his scions. Obviously, he must be correct in demanding a change in leadership – so he thought. He was unaware that, at the very last moment, his sons had repented.

Is the question only concerning Korach? Throughout our checkered history we have confronted demagogues and other forms of malcontents who feel the need to foment controversy in order to catapult themselves to positions of leadership. It goeswithout question that Korach was envious of Moshe and obsessed with his leadership powers – but still, was he insane to think that he should and could replace Moshe?

Once again, if he was so clever, what did he see that provoked him to undertake this lunacy?

The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, says that the *shtus*, foolishness, of Korach, was actually his *pikchus*, cleverness. At times, it is best not to be (act) so clever and defer to others; to stand quietly by the side and not seek attention for himself.

As the famous secular quote goes, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt." Korach wanted to show that he was a *pikeach*. His arrogance led to his downfall.

It was the importance of this character trait that Korach foolishly dismissed because he was hopelessly deficient in it. One can

appreciate only what he acknowledges and to which he is sensitive. Korach was clueless when it involved the emotions of others.

This idea holds true of our *gedolei ha'dor*, pre-eminent leaders of each generation. Their erudition was heads and shoulders above the rest. Yet, this was not necessarily what catapulted them to distinction – and kept them there. It was their sensitivity to the needs of all Jews that catalysed their towering over everyone else.

Horav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, zl, was not only the scion of an illustrious *mussar* pedigree, but he was also a *mussar* personality in his own right. He singlehandedly transformed the spiritual landscape of England, and, by extension, all of Europe. Yet, he was known for his *nosei b'ol im chaveiro*. The following vignette gives us an insight into the character of one of the premier *mussar* giants.

Prior to *Rebbetzin* Dessler's arrival (from England) in *Eretz Yisrael*, he would eat his meals at an orphanage established by the *Ponovezher Rav* to serve the needs of Holocaust survivors. Mrs. Munk was in charge of preparing the meals for the children, and, as such, out of deep admiration and respect, she would leave an extra treat for *Rav* Dessler.

The *Mashgiach* was embarrassed by this privileged treatment, and he more than once asked her to desist from doing so. He was no different from anyone else, he said.

One day, *Rav* Dessler noticed a young boy running out of dinner. He stopped to ask where and why he was running. It turned out that the boy had helped himself to a cherry that had been put aside for the *Mashgiach*. - *Rav* Dessler immediately went to Mrs. Munk and said, "From now on, I will either eat the very same meals as everyone else, or I will be compelled to eat elsewhere."

A young boy's feeling meant so much to him. Indeed, great people are those who care about (what appears to be) little things.

בס"ד

למודי משה

שלח לך - גליון קע"ה

The Best Way to Deal with *Machlokes* is to Circumvent It

The best way to extricate oneself from *machlokes* is to circumvent it. When a person suffers an indignity, or when someone whom we respect and love suffers an indignity or is slandered, our knee-jerk reaction is to put the other fellow in his place. We want to teach him a lesson, so that he would never again be cavalier with another's emotions. That, in and of itself, is the beginning of *machlokes*. The best way to stop a *machlokes* is to prevent it from starting.

R' Scheinbaum in his *Peninim* on the Torah brings a story which help bring out this point:

The story involves the **Bobover Rebbe's** son and successor, **HaRav Naftoli Tzvi, *tz"l***. It was the night of Pesach, and the first Seder would soon begin. We take it for granted that every home is filled with joy and good cheer. Some are not, due to prevailing illness, family issues, financial problems, and – strife. When parents are constantly at one another's throats – they suffer, as do their children.

Pesach Seder is an important family time. If the strife can be circumvented, it is quite possible for the family celebration of the Seder to minimize the discord fomenting between the parents. When people see how happy they could be, it often serves as a springboard for reconciliation and hope.

Rav Naftoli was one of the last people to leave the Bobover *Beis HaMedrash*. He purposely left alone and waited for one of his close *talmidim* to meet him a few blocks away. He was carrying a small package which he directed his *talmid* to drop off at a certain home and give it to the father. The *bochur* was used to carrying out

various "errands" for his Rebbe. He never asked – just did as he was told.

This night, however, was different. The house that he went to was not one of Bobover *chassidim*, and he had never gone on a *shlichus*, errand, on Pesach night – specifically coordinated to arrive right before the Seder. He gathered up the courage to query the Rebbe. Why? What? Who?

Rav Naftoli explained that while they were not Bobover *chassidim*, he had heard from someone that marital bliss did not reign in their home. For whatever reason, the parents were always arguing with one another, and the innocent children suffered immeasurably.

Pesach was a night especially dedicated to *chinuch*, educating children. If he could somehow quell whatever ill will existed between the parents, so that the Seder will be conducted as it should be, with both parents and children involved as a family – he will have resolved a significant problem. He had ordered a beautiful leather-bound *Haggadah* with the name of the wife engraved on it. The *talmid* was to give it to the husband as his gift to his wife.

Why did Rav Naftoli insist that it take place shortly before the Seder and not earlier? He feared that if too much time had elapsed, the gift would not be acknowledged. It had to be just right at the right time. It is not sufficient to simply perform a *chesed*. One must know when and how, so that it will be most effective.

Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa zt'l (quoted in Sifsei Tzaddik, Korach 8) explains that Korach was upset that he couldn't daven in the Kodesh HaKadoshim like Aharon HaKohen. He didn't know that one can attain the same perfect tefillah wherever he is in the world.

Kiddush Hashem by Rabbi Sender Haber

יַעַן לֹא־הֶאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי לְהַקְדִּישֵׁנִי לְעֵינֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל "***Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel…***" (Bamidbar 20:12)

Moshe was punished because he did not sanctify G-d's name. He did not make a Kidddush Hashem.

When I was a kid they told us that we had to behave nicely on the bus so that we wouldn't make a Chilul Hashem. When I got older, they told me that it wasn't true. Kiddush Hashem – Sanctifying G-d's name – is not about behaving on the bus. It is about being a good Jew, about following the word of Hashem, and about changing this world and making it holy.

Some people call it activism, some people call it Tikkun Olam, and some people call it making a difference. I'm afraid they might all be wrong.

The Chafetz Chayim had a granddaughter who was not very religious. **Harav Shimshon Pincus** once travelled with a different grandchild of the Chofetz Chayim, Reb Hillel Zaks to visit her in Be'er Sheva.

The woman explained that she had grown up in difficult times both physically and spiritually. In 1917, as a teenager, she was dealing with many internal struggles and doubts. She decided to confront the great Tzadik, the Chofetz Chayim, directly. The Chofetz Chayim was, of course, one of the greatest leaders and gedolim alive. She asked the Chofetz Chayim "How can you sit here in this little town of Radin "doing nothing" while in the world around you technology and industry are developing at an unprecedented rate?"

The Chofetz Chayim was not offended. He explained: "You see airplanes flying and you are very impressed, one day they will invent an airplane that can fly to the moon. You hear about bombs blowing

up buildings and you are awed, soon they will invent a bomb that can destroy an entire city.

It is true that the world around us is impressive and awesome, amazing advances are being made daily, but that is not my primary concern – I am not in the business of making better bombs or better airplanes. '*Mir Machen Menchen*' The Torah makes people better and my job is to become a *mench*. My job is to become a human being who is closer to Hashem. That is what I am doing here in Radin."

Looking back, we know that the Chofetz Chayim was not "doing nothing". By coming closer to Hashem, the Chofetz Chayim was able to bring an entire generation and generations after him closer to Hashem. He did this by concentrating on growth and by beginning with himself. The Chofetz Chayim is quoted as saying: '***I set out to change the world, then realized that I could only change my city, as I got older, I realized that I could only change those immediately surrounding me, and as I got older still I realized that I need to concentrate on myself***'.

We get so involved in the big things that we sometimes forget the little things. Our fifth grade teachers were right. We are supposed to act nicely on the bus and on airplanes. We are supposed to be honest, even if it means losing a little money. We need to trust in Hashem.

We need to be polite and courteous and hold the door open for people. We need to be careful about our language and control our tempers and think twice before waking up our neighbours or blocking their driveways.

We need to mow our lawns and return lost items and help old ladies across the street. We need to speak nicely about people. We need to show the world that the Torah really does refine a person.

All of that is a Kiddush Hashem.

Some people set out to solve the world's problems, while others help with the dishes. We need to focus inward. We need to look internally and work to change ourselves.

Reb Aron Kotler writes that Korach and his men did not set out to cause a revolution. They set out to come closer to Hashem. That is why they refused to relent: Even after Korach was swallowed up by the ground and the 250 men killed by fire the people demanded further proof that Aron was indeed the one chosen by Hashem to be the Kohen Gadol. Moshe needed to prove it to them by taking the staffs of each of the tribes and the staff of Aharon and putting them near the Aron overnight. In the morning Aharon's staff had sprouted leaves and fruits. Only then were the people convinced.

Although their objective was noble, it did not work. Rather than focusing on his own growth, Korach obsessed with Moshe's (supposed) power grabs and cronyism.

After the story of Korach the Kohanim and Levi'im, were charged with the responsibility to guide the Jewish people in their constant quest to come closer to Hashem. The people finally realized that the way to come closer to Hashem was not by changing the structure of Klal Yisroel; it was by using the Torah (of Moshe) to look into themselves and think "how can I become a better person?".

The Mesilas Yesharim writes that Hashem has placed us in the middle of a heavy battle. Our job is to constantly ask ourselves the same question: '***what can I do right now that will bring me closer to Hashem***'?

We are often convinced that is our primary job to change the world around us. We need to remember that our focus is to make Menchen. We need to look inward and make ourselves into people who are constantly growing as menchen and growing closer to Hashem.

We need to make a Kiddush Hashem.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series - לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב זצ״ל

Moshe Rabbeinu Attempts To Diffuse The Situation

הַמְעַט מִכֶּם כִּי־הִבְדִּיל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַקְרִיב אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְשָׁרְתָם' ***Is it not enough that Hashem has distinguished you from the congregation of Israel to draw you near to Him, to perform the service in the Mishkan of Hashem and to stand before the congregation to minister to them?***' 16:9

וַיַּקְרֵב אֹתְךָ וְאֶת־כָּל־אַחֶיךָ בְּנֵי־לֵוִי אִתָּךְ וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם גַּם־כְּהֻנָּה' ***He drew you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you, and now you seek the kehunah as well?***' 16:10

The Dubno Maggid explains that this is exactly what Korach wanted – He was a Levi but desired the kehunah as well. He told everybody that he desired to be the kohen gadol in order to get closer to Hashem! We all desire a stronger *kesher* to become closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We all want to bring ketores **לִפְנַי וְלִפְנִים.**

Moshe Rabbeinu could tell by the tone of the request, that Korach had ulterior motives. He told Korach, "You are a Levi, and have an enormously powerful position with which to serve Hashem. – This is your **תפקיד** - role in life. You are so enthusiastic to become a Kohen – as opposed to when I offered the kehunah to Aaron , my brother, who shied away from this prestigious honour. Your desired enthusiasm is therefore a sign that you have a vested interest, and it is not purely **לשם שמיים**."

Our gedolim were never chosen or elected to be gedolim – they emerged from within us! They weren't democratically chosen – they grew and developed into gedolim. They were never **מבקש גדלות**.

The Chazon Ish instructed **Reb Chaim Ozer** to show Klal Yisrael who he was and to lead them. Similarly, **Reb Yechazkel Abramsky** was told to go to London to assert his authority by Reb Chaim Ozer.

Our gedolim chose and groomed younger inspirational people to lead the Yidden. There was never a case of them desiring these positions themselves. **וּבִקַּשְׁתֶּם גַּם־כְּהֻנָּה** is a **סימן פסול**.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים ***And on the following day Moshe came to the Tent of Testimony, and behold, Aaron's staff for the house of Levi had blossomed! It gave forth blossoms, sprouted buds, and produced ripe almonds.*** 17:23

Rabbi Shimshon Rephael Hirsch asks, why almonds?



Rashi explains **וְלָמָּה שְׁקֵדִים? הוּא הַפְּרִי הַמְמַהֵר לְהַפְרִיחַ מִכָּל הַפֵּרוֹת, אַף הַמְעוֹרֵר עַל הַכְּהֻנָּה פֻּרְעָנוּתוֹ מְמַהֶרֶת לָבֹא** - that the almond is the quickest tree to produce its fruit. And anybody who wants to rise up against the kehunah, should know that the punishment will be swift in coming.

Reb Shimshon says that there is a phenomenon with every type of tree in the world except for the almond tree, that the almond tree is unique above all the other trees in that all trees first grow leaves and after the fruit is produced. Not so the almond tree, that first produces the fruit and then later grows leaves. (for shade and comfort.)

Says Reb Shimshon – is this not a perfect description of Shevet Levi? They were asked by Moshe Rabbeinu at one point - **מִי לַה' אֵלָי** "***Whoever is for the L-rd, [let him come] to me***!" (Shemos 32:26) They didn't hesitate, they were ready to step up to the task immediately.

An almond tree displays that it is the leader of all other trees. All other fruit trees also produce fruit, but first they produce their leaves, which is a comfort for them [shade and warmth], and then they go about producing their fruit.

However, the almond tree first produces the fruit, which is the primary goal. This was Aaron Hakohen – He did what was necessary first, before any comforts. He put the objective first – The Torah and Mitzvos and Avodas Hashem as a priority.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

וַיַּנַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמַּטֹּת לִפְנֵי ה' בְּאֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת.. וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצ֘ץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים.. וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מַטֵּהוּ 17:22-24

There was no command for each person to take his stick back. Only for Aaron - **הָשֵׁב אֶת־מַטֵּה אַהֲרֹן לִפְנֵי הָעֵדֻת לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת**. So, for what purpose did every nasi retrieve their stick?



Rav Zalman Sorotzkin says an athlete trains for many months for his event. The goal is to be victorious – to come first. If he comes in at 10th place, does he get an award? No, of course not. He doesn't get a loser's medal to take home.

So why did the nesi'im take back their sticks after losing?

Rav Zalman said that on the night prior, every nasi had a tremendous desire and passion that The Ribboino Shel Olam should choose him, **וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אֶבְחַר־בּוֹ מַטֵּהוּ יִפְרָח** - each one had a chance that it would be his stick that blossomed.

This was all about getting closer to Hashem, and they never wanted to forget this feeling for the rest of their lives. Therefore, they were so inspired by this feeling, they decided to take their sticks back home as a memento of this feeling of closeness to Hashem.

As it says in Shir Hashirim **אִם־תָּעִירוּ וְאִם־תְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה עַד שֶׁתֶּחְפָּץ** (3:5) – Make your feelings of love for Hashem into a memento, don't let that feeling disappear. Ensure that you hold onto that inspiration.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series- Machlokes

We must avoid machlokes at all costs. **בֹּא וּרְאֵה כַּמָּה קָשָׁה הַמַּחֲלֹקֶת, שֶׁהֲרֵי בֵּית דִּין שֶׁל מַטָּה אֵין עוֹנְשִׁין אֶלָּא עַד שֶׁיָּבִיא שְׁתֵּי שְׂעָרוֹת, וּבֵית דִּין שֶׁל מַעְלָה עַד עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה, וְכָאן אָבְדוּ אַף יוֹנְקֵי שָׁדַיִם**. Rashi tells us (16:27) that Korach and his entire family including the young children and their belongings were swallowed up and perished because of the machlokes. Normally the age of judgement is either 13 or 20.

וַיֵּעָלוּ מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן־קֹרַח דָּתָן וַאֲבִירָם מִסָּבִיב וְדָתָן וַאֲבִירָם יָצְאוּ נִצָּבִים פֶּתַח אָהֳלֵיהֶם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם.The Maharal says that machlokes is so terrible, that even the toddlers were responsible for being present!

Moshe Rabbeinu went to Nadav and Avihu and offered them and accorded them tremendous honour to discuss the matter and make peace. Their response was - **הַעֵינֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם תְּנַקֵּר לֹא נַעֲלֶה** – ***Even if you would threaten to pull out our eyes, we still won't come***! (16:14)

The Ohr Hachaim points out, that this shows the terrible price of machlokes. It can warp a person's whole understanding and appreciation of what is right, to the extent that a person doesn't see straight! It can take charge of a person's *seichel*! - **הַקִּנְאָה וְהַתַּאֲוָה וְהַכָּבוֹד, מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם** – These are things that can lead to machlokes and disaster!

Rav Dessler once saw a pack of wolves fighting over their prey. Instead of sharing the prey, they fought and killed each other to

death, until there was only one wolf left alive but injured badly. – This is the cost of machlokes.

However, sholom is incredibly powerful. Just by saying a good word or smiling at someone else can have an amazing affect on them, and brings peace to the world. - **כלי מחזיק ברכה לישראל אלא השלום** – We must engender peace amongst us.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series



Korach was on the same level as a *Navi* - **קרח שפיקח היה**. He foresaw that he would have generations of tzaddikim descended from him. Yet the jealousy drove him to a point where he was culpable for bringing a huge downfall in Klal Yisrael.

The Agra D'Kallah brings the famous story of the merchant who was going with Rabbah bar Rav Channah, and told him, "If you come with me, I will show you where you can hear the sounds of Korach saying **משה אמת ותורתו אמת** coming from underground."

The merchant said, **אמר לי ההוא טייעא תא ואחוי לך בלועי דקרח** - "*I will show you those from the assembly of Korach who were swallowed*."

If you spell Korach's name in full **קוף ריש חית** and look at the swallowed up letters of the name of **קרח**, (the letters in the middle) you will find – the swallowed up letters are **ו -י -י** which is the gematria of 26 – **י-ה-ו-ה**. Korach was in essence an **איש נכבד** – a distinguished person, but we see how distant jealousy took him.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

ספר מושב זקנים asks on the Pasuk **וַיְהִי מִמָּחֳרָת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה׀ אֶל־אֹהֶל הָעֵדֻת וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מַטֵּה־אַהֲרֹן לְבֵית לֵוִי וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים** '***And on the following day Moshe came to the Tent of Testimony, and behold, Aaron's staff for the house of Levi had blossomed! It gave forth blossoms, sprouted buds, and produced ripe almonds***.' (17:23)



The Daas Zekeinim ask why does the Pasuk repeat that the stick flowered?

Because people were suspicious, and thought to themselves, "Maybe Moshe brought a different stick for Aaron that had previously flowered, and Aaron's real stick is dried out!"

So, Hashem made a miracle within a miracle, and caused the stick to flower a second time - right in front of their very eyes! Once this proof had occurred, then - **וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מַטֵּהוּ** '***they saw and they took, each man his staff***.'

Rav Moshe Feinstein asks, so, what was the purpose in bringing in the stick with flowers already on it, why not just make flowers blossom in front of them?

He says that this is a remez to Torah and Mitzvos. It is not only the final product that Hashem values, but all the effort and preparation that went into it, is just as valuable in the eyes of Hashem - **אָנוּ עֲמֵלִים וּמְקַבְּלִים שָׂכָר**

A Wise Man would say: "Don't tell Hashem how big your problems are. Tell your problems how big Hashem is."

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

The founder of the Berdugo Family was **Rabbi Moshe ben Avraham Berdugo** -called "Mashbir" (c. 1679–1730), he was the *Dayan* in Meknès, where the Berdugos settled after leaving Fez. According to tradition, he is a direct descendant of King David. He is buried in the Jewish cemetery of Meknes, Morocco.

His grandson was the famous Rabbi Raphael Berdugo known also as *HaMalach* (the Angel) Raphael.

Rabbi Moshe Berdugo says on the Pasuk **וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קֹרַח אַתָּה וְכָל־ עֲדָתְךָ֭ הֱיוּ לִפְנֵי ה׳ אַתָּה וְהֵם וְאַהֲרֹן מָחָר** '***Moshe said to Korach, "You and your entire congregation should be before Hashem, you, they, and Aaron tomorrow***.' (16:16)

He asks, why does the Pasuk re-iterate that '*you and your congregation should appear before Hashem*' - and then add Aaron into the equation?

He brings a Gemara in Sanhedrin 93a that relates the following:

Two *neviei sheker* went to the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. and said to her: We have had a prophecy from Hashem that you must live with us. She went and said to her father what they said to her. Nebuchadnezzar said to her: The G-d of these people abhors this type of behaviour, so this is likely a false prophecy. When they come to you, send them to me. When they came to her, she sent them to her father.

Nebuchadnezzar said to them: Who told you to do this? They said: It was the Holy One, Blessed be He. Nebuchadnezzar said: But haven't I have asked Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (Neviai Emes) about this and they said to me: It is prohibited?

They said to him: We too are prophets like they are. G-d did not say this prophecy to them; He said it to us and permits this.

Nebuchadnezzar said to them: If so, I wish to put you to the test to determine if you are righteous, just as I put Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to the test.

Ahab and Zedekiah said to Nebuchadnezzar: They were three and we are only two, and our merit is not great enough to save us from the fire.

Nebuchadnezzar said to them: Choose for yourselves a third person, whomever you wish, to be put to the test with you. They said to him: We choose **יהושע כהן גדול**. They chose him because they thought: Let **יהושע כהן גדול** come with us, since his merit is great and it will protect us.

They took the three of them down and cast them into the furnace. They were burned, and as for **יהושע כהן גדול**, he survived, but his garments were singed.

Nebuchadnezzar said to **יהושע כהן גדול**: I know you are righteous because you were delivered from the fire, but what is the reason that the fire was slightly effective concerning you, but for Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah the fire was not effective concerning them at all, and their garments were not singed?

יהושע כהן גדול said to him: They were three righteous people, and I am one. Nebuchadnezzar said to him: But wasn't Avraham one person, and when he was cast into the furnace the fire had no effect?

יהושע כהן גדול answered him: There, in the case of Avraham, there were no wicked people with him, and license to cause damage was not given to the fire. Here, in this case, there were wicked people with me, and license to cause damage was given to the fire.

Rabbi Moshe Berdugo says: "**אַתָּה֙ וְכָל־עֲדָתְךָ֔ הֱיֽוּ לִפְנֵ֖י ה'** ***You and all your crew will appear before Hashem.***"

Korach might have thought that even if he would perish with the rest, it would not be a proof of being wrong, because he was only one

on his own together with 250 others. Maybe my demise would be due to them.

Therefore, the Pasuk highlights that Aaron will also join you tomorrow - **אַתָּה וְהֵם וְאַהֲרֹן מָחָר**. And you will see that all of you will perish, and Aaron will be completely unscathed, and the world will know that he has been rightfully chosen to be the Kohen Gadol!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

הִבָּדְלוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וַאֲכַלֶּה אֹתָם כְּרָגַע "***Dissociate yourselves from this congregation, and I will consume them in an instant***." 16:21

Moshe Rabbeinu attempted to broker some sort of agreement with Korach to make peace, but Korach wasn't interested. [Interestingly, Korach himself didn't bring his firepan. Sometimes, the instigators tell everyone what they must do, but they don't do it themselves.]



The Ben Ish Chai asks, 'what was Hashem asking Moshe and Aaron to do here? Couldn't Hashem destroy Korach and his congregation while Moshe and Aaron were present? How is it possible to say that Hashem was impeded by their presence?' Furthermore, what is meant by **רָגַע** - 'instantly'?

The Ben Ish Chai explains this with an explanation by Rabbi **יהונתן אייבשיץ** in **יערות דבש**. He discusses a Gemara in Taanis 21b - The Gemara relates a story involving a plague: *Once there was a plague of pestilence in Sura, but in the neighbourhood of Rav there was no*

pestilence. The people therefore thought that this was due to Rav's great merit. However, it was revealed to them in a dream that Rav's merit was too great and this matter too small for the merit of Rav to be involved. Rather, his neighbourhood was spared due to the acts of kindness of a certain man, who would lend his hoe and shovel to prepare sites for burial.

Rav Yoinosson asks, "Why couldn't the tremendous merits of Rav been effective in sparing everyone?"

He explains, that when Hashem brings 'destruction' (a plague) on a people, it does not differentiate between a tzaddik and a rasha. If there happens to be a tzaddik in the vicinity, Hashem might not want to bring the **הַשְׁחָתָה** and kill the tzaddik as well.

It all depends on how big a tzaddik he is. If he is a tzaddik, but not a big tzaddik who has **כמה נפיש זכותיה** – incredible merits. Hashem would not allow the **משחית** to enter at all, as it would still affect him. But if he has immense zechusim, like Rav, the **משחית** could destroy everybody, but he would not be affected.

The destruction wouldn't have affected Moshe and Aaron because of their immense merits. They could have stayed close to Korach and the congregation, because they were **נפיש זכותיה**. However, the fact that they would be present would not allow the Satan to carry out his mission to kill them ***instantly***.

Therefore, Hashem says - **הִבָּדְלוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וַאֲכַלֶּה אֹתָם כְּרָגַע**. Hashem could have done it even if they were present, but their kedusha was such that it would not allow the **הַשְׁחָתָה** to take place instantly.

"Emunah is the lifeline that sustains us through the trials and tribulations of life, providing us with hope and strength to overcome challenges." – Sefer Chayei Olam.



The Severity of *Machlokes*

The Rambam (in a letter) describes the severity of machlokes. He writes, "Don't contaminate your souls with *machlokes* that destroy the body, *neshamah*, and wealth.

I saw families perish; cities destroyed, communities dispersed, chassidim lost, honoured people disgraced, all because of *machlokes*. The *nevi'im* foretold prophecies, and scholars spoke wisdom regarding the severity of *machlokes,* but even they haven't fully described just how bad it is. Therefore, hate it, run away from it, and keep away from all those who love machlokes, lest you be punished with them."

The Shlah writes, "Why do I need to elaborate on the ugliness of *machlokes*? All *sefarim* are filled with this subject! The sin of *machlokes* is worse than *avodah zarah*.

The lowest Yid would certainly be *moser nefesh* rather than worship *avodah zarah*. So how could a person not be *moser nefesh* to avoid *machlokes*, for it is worse than *avodah zarah*!

Even a drop of *machlokes* is too much! One spark of machlokes can create a fire that destroys everything."

Reb Chaim Palagi *zt'l* writes, "I have seen several times that any man or woman, family, country, or city involved in a *machlokes*, both sides didn't come out clean. They were smitten on their bodies and with their money, *rachmanah litzlan* - Someone who has wisdom will think about this and be *mevater*…"

Every machlokes contains an element of disbelief in Hashem. If one believed in Hashem, he wouldn't stir up a machlokes.

Rebbe Bunim of Pshischa *zt'l* teaches, "*Emunah* means that one believes that he has everything he needs, and if he needs more, Hashem will give him more. So, there is no reason to be jealous [or to fight to get more]. If you suffer from jealousy, work to remove it from your heart with all your strength and attach yourself to the *Emunah* in Hashem's *hashgachah pratis*".

A Life and Death Situation

The Shlah writes, "From the story of Korach's dispute, we can learn mussar to avoid machlokes. Think about the severe punishment that came to Korach… Dasan and Aviram also died, together with their infants, although the court in heaven doesn't punish people below twenty (Shabbos 89:). But this time, even children perished. Such is the severity of machlokes (Tanchuma, Korach 3). Let us learn from this always to embrace peace."

A rosh kollel of a large kollel in Yerushalayim brought the kollel yungerleit to the **Steipler Gaon zt'l**, for the Steipler to test them on the sugya they were learning. When their Torah discussion concluded, and the kollel yungerleit were leaving, the Steipler asked the rosh kollel to stay behind because he wanted to speak with him.

The Steipler asked the rosh kollel for his name. The rosh kollel wrote his name on a piece of paper and showed it to the Steipler (the Steipler was hard of hearing).

The Steipler asked again, "What is your name?"

He wrote his name a second time. "My name is Yankel."

"Your name is Yankel? Why do I see Shlomo written on your forehead?"

The confused rosh Kollel replied, "I don't know why the Steipler sees Shlomo on my forehead. However, I just remembered a story, and perhaps it will somehow explain why the Steipler sees Shlomo on my forehead."

This is the story:

"Some years ago, I arrived at a community in chutz l'aretz to collect funds for the kollel. My first meeting was with the president of the community, a wealthy man whom everyone called President Shlomo.

Unfortunately, I have a loose tongue and said something that angered the president. He demanded that I leave the community and not fundraise there at all. I answered that I would fundraise and that I didn't need his consent.

"It won't be worth your while," President Shlomo retorted, and he was right. President Shlomo warned the community not to give me any money, and they all obeyed.

"I left in humiliation and went to another community. Over there, I met a person who loved to support Torah. He gave me a cheque for five hundred dollars. (This story occurred fifty years ago when five hundred dollars was a huge sum.)

"The problem was that this kind man was President Shlomo's brother-in-law, and President Shlomo somehow found out that his brother-in-law gave me five hundred dollars. He told his brother-in-law to stop the cheque, and he did so.

Then something dreadful occurred. The moment he stopped the cheque, President Shlomo died!"

The rosh kollel concluded, "I don't know if this story has anything to do with why the Steipler sees Shlomo on my forehead, but since I just remembered the story, I repeated it."

"The story explains everything," the Steipler said. "It explains why Shlomo is written on your forehead."

The Steipler explained, "You were destined to die on this trip. Your quota of years was over. But then President Shlomo humiliated you and caused others not to help you. Even after you had a cheque in your hands, he told his brother-in-law to cancel the cheque. Heaven decreed that Shlomo must die, and you will take his years.

This is the reason I see Shlomo on your forehead. You are now living President Shlomo's years."

The Arizal teaches that all one's aveiros and all one's mitzvos are written on the forehead. Perhaps you thought this didn't apply in our times, so I told you this story. The Steipler lived recently to our days, and he was able to see what's written on the forehead. So, be aware that it is true. All your mitzvos and chas v'shalom, the opposite, are written on the forehead.

We tell this story here because it demonstrates the severity of machlokes. President Shlomo's life ended because he engaged in machlokes.

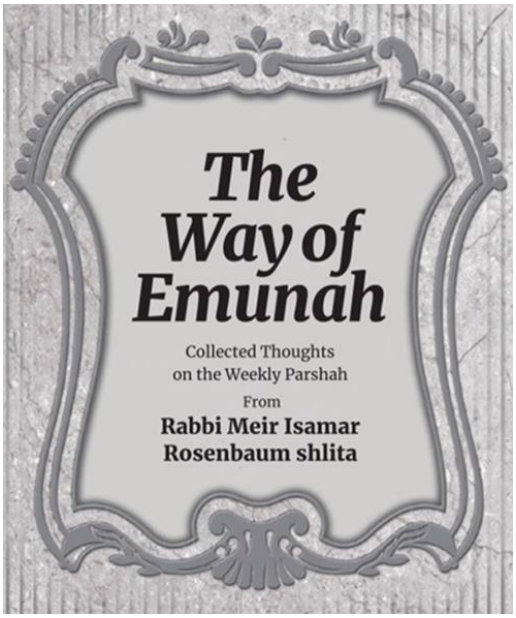
The Chidushei HaRim zt'l asks why Dasan v'Aviram's name are mentioned explicitly, while we don't know the names of the 250 people who joined Korach's machlokes.

The Chidushei HaRim replied that Dasan v'Aviram were worse (so we shame them by mentioning their names) because they had nothing to gain from this machlokes. They weren't from shevet Levi, and couldn't become the kohen gadol, so why did they get involved?

The 250 men were hoping to become the kohen gadol, so there is at least a limud zechus for them to be involved in the machlokes.

'Miracles happen to us all the time. We just need to get into the habit of recognizing them.' ~ Rabbi Elimelech Biderman.

A Wise Man Does Not Get Involved in a Fight



Sefer Otzros Hatorah notes that Rashi calls Korach a "pikech", a smart person, rather than calling him a "chochom", a wise person. He quotes sources as explaining that Korach, in fact, was not a big chochom. Anyone who could get involved in a fight like this could not be a real chochom, as Chazal say: "Who is a chochom? He who can see the future (the consequences of his actions)."

If Korach had been a chochom, he would have foreseen that he would gain nothing from his fight and that he actually would lose everything. This is as Chazal say (Yalkut, Parshas Matos): "One who sets his sights on something that is not his will not get what he wants and will lose what he has."

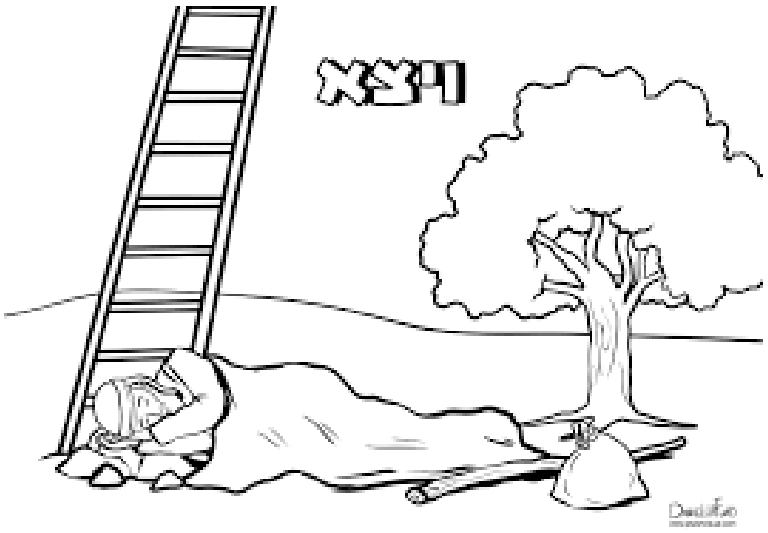
A "pikech" is someone who thinks he can get into a fight and win. A "chochom" is someone who is smart enough not to get into a fight.

False Shalom - True Machlokes

The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l says that having false shalom is better than having true machlokes. This means it is better to pretend there is peace, even when there isn't.

In this scenario, this is more important than being truthful.

The Torah tells us that Yaakov Avinu came to Har HaMoriah and placed stones around his head. Rashi (Bereishis 28:11) writes, "The stones started quarrelling. Each one said, 'Let the righteous man lay his head on me.' Immediately, Hakadosh Baruch Hu turned them into one stone."



The Vilna Gaon zt'l asks that if a miracle was to occur, and the stones would unite and become one, why couldn't they become a comfortable cushion?

The answer is that the stones were fighting, and no good can come from a fight!

The Baal HaTanya writes, "Most *tzaros* come from machlokes '*leshem shamayim*.' May Hashem save us from them."

Moshe Wanted to Change Korach's Neshama at Night

וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־קֹרַח וְאֶל־כָּל־עֲדָתוֹ לֵאמֹר בֹּקֶר וְיֹדַע ה' אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְאֶת־הַקָּדוֹשׁ וְהִקְרִיב אֵלָיו וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר־בּוֹ יַקְרִיב אֵלָיו '***And he spoke to Korach and to his entire assemblage saying, "In the morning, Hashem will let us know who is His, and who is holy, and He will draw near***.' (16:5)

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen writes that **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a** asks in the name of **Rav Dovid of Lubin zy"a** why Moshe said that Hashem would let them know in the morning. Why did they have to wait until morning?

He answers by quoting **the Arizal** as saying that tzadikim have the power to change the neshamos of others while they sleep. Accordingly, Moshe was worried about Korach and wanted to save him from a terrible downfall. He decided to change his neshama at night, thinking that this might help to rectify his ways. However, Korach stayed up all night and joked around (as Rashi says in the name of Chazal). Therefore, Moshe was unable to change his neshama at night.

There are No Chazakos in a Machlokes

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נַעֲלֶה 'And Moshe sent to call Dasan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav.' (16:12) Rashi states: "*From here we derive that one should not persist ('ain machzikim') in a dispute, because Moshe sought them out to conciliate them with peaceful words.*"



Sefer Eser Zechayos relates that when **Rav Yitzchok of Vorka zy"a** was in Warsaw, when he was approached by a man who said that he was very poor and needed money to marry off his daughter. He said that he had a "modern" cousin in Warsaw who was wealthy and he asked Rav Yitzchok to do him a favour and speak on his behalf to his cousin, and to ask him for 100 gold coins for the wedding expenses.

Rav Yitzchok went to the man's home and knocked on the door, but the man sent his servant to tell him that he had no business with any Rebbes and would not speak to him. The next day, Rav Yitzchok went to the man's home a second time, and he was told the same thing. When he went the following day for a third time, the rich man got very mad and chased him away himself, pushing him down the front stairs. Rav Yitzchok then said to himself: What else can I do? I did all that I can.

This modern man had a friend who was also a modern person named Mattisyahu Rosen. Rosen was very familiar with the Vorka Rebbe, as he was well-known and held in high regard by the ministers and would often meet with them about matters of concern to the community. When the two modern men met, the poor man's cousin told Rosen about the Rebbe who kept coming back and trying to talk to him.

When Rosen asked him which Rebbe it was, he told him that it was the Rebbe of Vorka.

When Rosen heard this, he perked up and asked, "What did you tell him?" "I pushed him down the stairs of my house!" Rosen said to him, "What have you done? You embarrassed a very holy man. You definitely will die soon for doing that!"

The wealthy man got very scared, and he said, "What should I do now?" His friend told him, "You have to appease him. He is a very nice man. He will forgive you."

The wealthy man immediately sent his servant to the Rebbe and asked him to come to his home. And Rav Yitzchok went. On the way, Rav Yitzchok said to his gabbai, "Since they are sending for me, I am sure that they'll give me the 100 gold coins that I am asking for. So why should I only ask for 100 coins so that they can make a very minimal wedding? I should ask for 200 gold coins so that they can make a nice wedding!"

As soon as they got close to the house, the man ran out and said, "Rebbe! Rebbe! What can I do for you?" Rav Yitzchok told him what he wanted, and the man immediately stuck his hand in his pocket and took out 200 gold coins, which he happily gave him. He then asked the rebbe to please forgive him, and Rav Yitzchok did.

Rav Yitzchok then said, "The Torah tells us not be 'machzik' in a machlokes. This means that there is no such thing as a 'chazakah' in a machlokes. Even if I was thrown out three times, the money was still given to me with a smile."

"Through Emunah, we understand that our existence is part of a grand Divine plan, and our trust in Hashem gives purpose and meaning to our lives." – Sefer HaKuzari.

Aharon's Offspring Were Chosen Even If They Are Not On His Level

Speak to the children of Yisroel and take from them a staff for each father's house…And the staff of the man whom I will choose will blossom. (17:17-20)

The Rishonim ask why this miracle of the staff needed to be performed at all. Didn't the entire nation already see what happened to Korach and his men for daring to challenge Aharon for the kehuna? Why was another sign needed? Furthermore, they ask why it says that Aharon will be "the man whom I will choose", in the future tense. Wasn't Aharon already chosen to be Kohen Gadol?



Sefer Tiferes Shlomo answers that the entire reason Korach and his followers challenged Aharon for the kahuna was because they saw that only the offspring of Aharon would be chosen to do the avodah before Hashem. They asked why the avodah had to be passed down hereditarily to the descendants of Aharon, even if they wouldn't be on the same level as Aharon and his sons.

They knew that Aharon and his sons were on a lofty level and were worthy of doing the avodah, but they thought that if their descendants wouldn't be on that level, they should not be given this privilege. Instead, they felt it would be more appropriate for each generation to have the worthiest men chosen for the job of doing the avodah like Aharon did.

The pasuk thus relates that for all generations to come, the kehuna will remain with the offspring of Aharon. He "will be chosen", meaning that he will continue to be chosen in the future. His staff

blossomed as a sign that he was the roots and anything that grows out of him will inherit his position. Even if a kohen is not on the level of Aharon Hakohen, he still is granted the right to do the avodah.

For this reason, Hashem said to place Aharon's staff in front of the nation as a remembrance and to stop the complaints (Bamidbor 17:25). The staff would remind them why Aharon's offspring are chosen to do the avodah.

Reb Shmuel Donn – Remez

וַאֲנָשִׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים וּמָאתָיִם They confronted Moshe together with two hundred and fifty men from the children of Israel. 16:2



Korach did not approach Moshe Rabbeinu alone. He gathered 250 men – 250 supporters to fight against the leader of Klal Yisrael.

Who were these men?

The Daas Zekeinim brings a medresh that says that these were a crowd of men led by the Nasi of Shevet Reuven – his name was **אֱלִיצוּר בֶּן־שְׁדֵיאוּר**.

As the Pesukim tell us back in Parshas Bamidbar, Shevet Reuven was the SECOND of the degalim mentioned.

If you look closely at the words in our Pasuk, you will find a beautiful hint as to the leader of this second shevet, who headed this assembly of Korach - The SECOND letter of each of the words **וַאֲנָשִׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל** Is roshei teivos of **אֱלִיצוּר בֶּן־שְׁדֵיאוּר**! [**נפלאות חדשות**]

From our Sages

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם ***And Moshe sent to call Dasan and Aviram*** (16:12)

It states in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 106): "From this we learn that one should not 'hold on' to controversy." Even if several attempts to make peace have been made without success, it is forbidden to assume that nothing more can be done. Rather, one must continue one's efforts until peace is attained.

Thus, despite the fact that Moshe had already spoken to Dasan and Aviram several times, he attempted one more time to dissuade them. (**Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorka**)

וּפָצְתָה הָאֲדָמָה אֶת־פִּיהָ וּבָלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וְיָרְדוּ חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה ***'That the earth open its mouth and swallow them up...and they go down alive into the pit.'*** (16:30)

A person can only repent while he lives. Korach and his followers, swallowed alive because of their sins, were granted the opportunity to repent and atone for their transgressions. (**The Rebbe**)

Rav Sholom Schwadron says that Korachs children took this late opportunity to do teshuvah, but Korach himself was such a rasha, that even as he was free-falling to his nadir – he still didn't take the opportunity!

"Emunah means being prepared to go forward in life, not knowing what the future holds – knowing only one thing for sure – That Hashem is always by my side." - ~ Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

Every failure is a step to success.

Jewish Education Program Queens [JEP]

Women Are Better Than Men At this!



The **Talmud** (Berachos 32b) says, "If one davens and is not answered, let him reinforce himself and daven again." Prayer comes from the depths of our hearts. Often, we can "dig deeper and deeper", more than we ever thought was possible. That type of prayer is much more powerful.

Korach was a very prestigious person. He instigated a terrible *machlokes*, quarrel, with Moshe Rabbeinu. He claimed that Moshe was making some things up on his own and pretending that Hashem had said them. He falsely said that Moshe had made certain leadership appointments on his own, and not by the direction of Hashem.

Undermining Moshe Rabbeinu was a very serious action. It was undermining all the teachings that Hashem had instructed Moshe to teach. Korach persuaded many others to join his rebellion. In addition, 250 of Korach's followers felt that they deserved to be the kohain gadol instead of Aharon HaKohain. Moshe told them that there could only be one kohain gadol. As a test to see which one person Hashem already chose to be the kohain gadol, Moshe told the 250 men, as well as Korach and Aharon Hakohain, to offer the ketores sacrifice. He explained that only the kohain gadol was permitted to offer that sacrifice. Anyone else who offered that sacrifice would perish.

They chose to offer the sacrifice. Korach and his followers were punished for their role in this terrible *machlokes.* They and all their

possessions were swallowed by the earth. Then, a fire came from Hashem and burned the 250 men. The Jewish people understood why Korach and his other followers had to be punished. However, they were upset that the 250 men were burned since they brought the sacrifice with sincerity. "The entire congregation of Bnei Yisroel complained…against Moshe and Aharon, saying: **אַתֶּם הֲמִתֶּם אֶת־עַם ה׳** - "You have killed the people of Hashem" (Bamidbar 17:6). **Targum Onkelos** explains that the Jewish People complained that Moshe and Aharon had caused those deaths.

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l asks, How could the Jewish People think that Moshe and Aharon caused the deaths of the 250 men? The men were warned numerous times what the consequences would be.

The Riva explains that Moshe gave them ample warning. He clearly told them that only one person would survive this test. Only the individual whom Hashem had already chosen to be the kohain gadol would survive this test. **Rashi** (Bamidbar 17:2) says that these 250 men were negligent and careless about their lives. That is why the pasuk (Bamidbar 17:3) says **הַחַטָּאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנַפְשֹׁתָם** -that they "sinned with their lives".

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l (Derash Moshe) answers that the Jewish People felt that the memory of this machlokes, this rebellion started by Korach would fade in time, by the next generation. The next generation would know about the miracles that Moshe had performed to quelch this rebellion. They would have total faith In Moshe and would realize that Korach's position had no merit.

Based on this thinking, the Jewish People felt that Moshe should have davened to Hashem to spare the 250 men. They said to Moshe, "You have killed the people of Hashem" because Moshe did not daven for their survival.

The Jewish People's evaluation was erroneous. Hashem knew the power and influence that machlokes could have. This is evidenced by the fact that we are still in galus from the destruction of the Bais

Hamikdash which resulted from sinas chinam, baseless hatred, which stemmed from machlokes. Hashem knew that these men had to die to stop the influence of machlokes.

According to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** ztl"'s explanation, the Jewish People felt that Moshe had caused the deaths of the 250 men **because he did not daven for them!!** Wow! They felt that Moshe's not davening was considered as if he had caused their deaths!

How many people do we know who need our tefillos? We must daven for them! Women have a special power of tefillah, moreso than men.

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l cited the following from our sages: King Yoshiyahu was a very big Tzadik. He encouraged and succeeded in bringing almost the entire Jewish People to teshuvah. He destroyed all the idols and evils done by his predecessor, King Menashe. King Yoshiyahu had hoped that his actions would avert the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. The only thing that was still needed was tefillah. King Yoshiyahu sent an emissary to one of the prophets at that time, to daven to avert the destruction. Yirmiyahu was the leading navi at that time. He dearly loved the Jewish People and would certainly have davened with totality of heart for them. Yet, he was not the prophet that King Yoshiyahu sent for. Rather, he sent the message to the prophetess Chulda. Why?

Rav Henach Leibowitz zt"l explained that **a woman has more compassion and mercy in her heart than a man**. Therefore King Yoshiyahu felt that her prayer would be more successful.

A woman's heartfelt tefillah has greater depth and can accomplish more than that of a man.

We <u>all</u> have an obligation to daven for those in need!

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

From the Wellsprings Of R' Guttman - Ramat Shlomo

וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ 17:5

When we talk about the dispute of Korach and Moshe, it is called the dispute of Korach and his assembly. There was no dispute between Korach and his own men? Why do we not mention Moshe as the opponent to Korach?

The answer is because Moshe really was not involved. He stayed away from machlokes and strife, and therefore the Torah tells us וְלֹא־ יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ – 'Don't be like Korach and his cohorts.' They are the ones who started and continued this horrible fight, and therefore they were punished.

In fact, we should learn from this story another great lesson. "Yehiye K'Moshe" - we should all act like Moshe Rabbeinu. After all, he is our Rebbe. And from Moshe we can learn how to handle a machlokes. In fact, a wise person once said, the best way to win a fight is to avoid one. Just getting involved and answering back to an angry person who is starting up is looking for trouble. Yelling back at someone who is angry is like putting a log on a fire. It is only going to make things worse. So, the best thing to do when someone is upset and lashes out at you is to remain silent and try to walk away.



Many people, after answering a nasty remark, justify their innocence by saying, "But he started. It is not my fault. If he would not have said that nasty, sarcastic, hurtful remark, I would never have answered this way. It is not my problem."

How wrong is this logic? In fact, Chazal teach us, "Ain machzikin b'machlokes." One should not strengthen a fight. It doesn't say we should not start a fight, but rather we should not uphold one. Do not keep it going. If someone starts up and you answer back, you are continuing the argument. This is forbidden.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu is not even mentioned when we talk about the machlokes of Korach and his assembly. It takes two to fight and Moshe was not interested in being the second party.

It is difficult but we must do everything in our power to live in peace with others. It takes strength, determination and hard work to get along with people. But if we do ours, Hashem will surely bless us with the greatest blessing in life - ***shalom***.

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

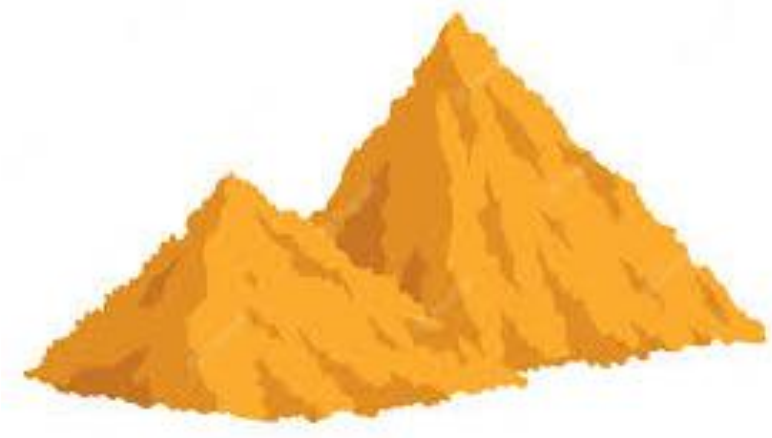
וירדו הם וכל אשר להם חיים שאלה ותכס עליהם הארץ ויאבדו מתוך הקהל ... (טז-לג)

During the mid 19th century, one of the chief antagonists to the hideous practice whereby rich Jews would shield their children from Polish or Russian military service by offering the authorities the children of poor families, was the famed chief rabbi of Bialystok, **R' Yom Tov Lipman Heilprin zt"l**, author of ***Oneg Yom Tov***. He fought tooth and nail against noblemen, communal leaders, and was accused of disloyalty to the government, and he was even imprisoned on occasion for his efforts. His constituents knew their Rav as a lofty individual, a Tzaddik and Talmid Chacham, who always looked out for their welfare. He was even known to perform an occasional miracle.

One of the well-known personalities in Bialystok was a man known as Reb Alter the Badchan. As his name suggested, he was a performer, an entertainer, who enthralled audiences at Jewish simchos. Reb Alter would act as a master of ceremonies, comedian, and various other functions and he would generate energy for a wedding party before and after the chupah. He would speak and sing, weaving in

references to the Gemara and Tanach, offering a humorous commentary on contemporary life and quite often doing impressions of Rebbes and Rabbanim. For his efforts, he would receive compensation and tips, but Reb Alter certainly did not become rich from being a badchan.

In order to supplement his income, Reb Alter would frequent the nearby sand dunes, where the business of sand mining took place. Sand is used extensively in building, glassmaking, road construction and electronic equipment, with sand and gravel being some of the most extracted resources in the world. Reb Alter would climb these dunes and fill up sacks of sand which he would then peddle to local businesses who needed them. This, too, didn't make a lot of money but Reb Alter, always cheerful and happy, would trudge to the sand dunes day after day, and do what he must to feed his family.



One morning, as Reb Alter was heading to the dunes, he heard his name being called from a window. R' Yom Tov Lipman, the Rav of Bialystok, was peeking his head out of his study window, asking Reb Alter to come inside for a moment.

He walked into the Rav's study and R' Yom Tov Lipman beckoned him to take a seat. The Rav had his nose buried in a sefer, so Reb Alter sat patiently, waiting for him to acknowledge his presence and tell him what he needed. R' Yom Tov Lipman, however, continued learning as if no one was waiting for him and he did not even lift his head for a solid fifteen minutes.

Reb Alter was patient, but after a while, even he began to squirm a bit. He looked at the clock on the Rabbi's wall and realized that every

minute he continued sitting there idly in the study, was a minute he was losing out on business. He cleared his throat to gain the rabbi's attention but to no avail. Finally, he said reverently, "Did the Rav ask me here for a specific reason? Is there something I can do for him?"

The Rav looked up briefly, noticed Reb Alter, and motioned him to sit back. The badchan continued to wait, although he was rapidly losing patience. Why had the Rav asked him to come to his study if he was just going to continue learning from his seforim and ignore him totally?

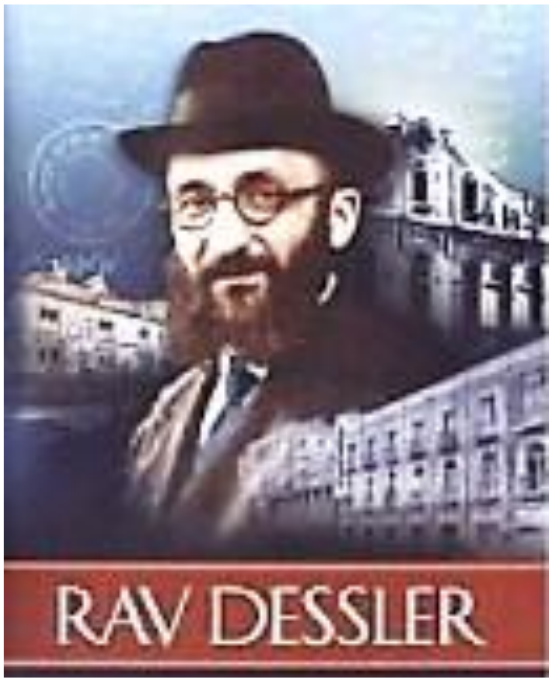
Reb Alter was good-hearted and refused to think ill of the Rav, but after another fifteen minutes, he could no longer hold himself back. He inquired if R' Yom Tov Lipman still needed him to wait there for any reason, and in response, the Rav again pointed to the chair and bade him to sit.

Another fifteen minutes elapsed in this manner and just before Reb Alter was about to explode, R' Yom Tov Lipman suddenly stood up and smiled. "Reb Alter, thank you for coming in. You can go now. Have a wonderful day."

Without a second glance, Reb Alter hurried out of the Rav's home and ran all the way to the sand dunes. When he got there, he saw a huge commotion taking place. It seems that just a few minutes ago, a tremor in the area caused a landslide, with one of the tallest dunes completely collapsing on itself, burying a handful of workers who were collecting sand. Emergency personnel were hauling away injured and dead bodies, and Reb Alter stood there in shock, realizing now why the great Oneg Yom Tov had asked him to sit still in his study for forty-five minutes.

R' Moshe Shmuel Shapiro zt"l, a descendent of the Oneg Yom Tov, recounted this story and said that in his youth, he met Reb Alter, who corroborated every single detail.

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt - Superb Sins



Some people may read particular episodes in the Torah and think, "How did these people act in such a way? I wouldn't have made such mistakes." This erroneous thinking is an outcome of misunderstanding what occurred.

R' Dessler writes that the sins told by the Torah as having been committed by the righteous biblical figures can't be understood plainly as actual sins. They are considered sins only by the pristinely strict standards that are even smaller than microscopic. - When we look at the story of Korach, we may think "How wicked!"

When the **Chozeh of Lublin** (1745- 1815) would begin his shiur on Parshas Korach, he would start by saying, "***My holy grandfather Korach***!"

The Igra D'Pirka writes that in the **Zohar** and Midrashim the greatness of Korach is magnified, that he was great in wisdom. Temporarily he made a mistake in a slight sin.

The Arizal comments that in the future Korach will be elevated above - **קרח יתעלה למעלה**. The end letters of צדיק כתמר יפרח, '*a righteous man will flourish like a date palm*', spell **קרח**. The allusion in צדיק כתמר יפרח hints to that he acted **לשם שמים**, as he wanted to bring the **עולם התיקון**, the Geula.

The Divrei Yoel tells us that really Korach was a great and holy man who served Hashem and had Ruach Hakodesh. This is just as we see in Rashi who says Korach saw a great chain of descendants emerging from him — Shmuel who was as important as Moshe and Aharon together, would descend from him…

The Arizal writes that Korach saw what will be in the future, that he will be a Kohen in the future. Korach thought to bring that time of the **עולם התיקון** in his days. This was Korach's mistake.

Short Story of The Week - Rabbi Mordechai Levin

A close disciple of **Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman, ZT"L, Rav Chaim Ehrlanger ZT"L**, once visited his Rebbi late at night and found Rav Aharon Leib singing happily whilst learning. Seizing the opportunity, he asked his Rebbi, "What is man's purpose in the world"? Rav Aharon Leib answered, "to reach such a spiritual height as to be considered a '***Merkava l'Shechina***,' to become such a holy person through studying Torah that Hashem will choose to 'live' within you and shine out onto the world from within you."

Rav Chaim Ehrlanger thereupon committed himself towards reaching that lofty spiritual level! In fact, he once sent a "kvittel," a written request to the **Imrei Emes from Ger**, asking for a blessing that he should accomplish his wish to be a Merkava l'Shechina. A while after, the Imrei Emes asked his son, the **Beis Yisroel from Ger**, to hide all the kvitlach that he had received. Except for two, one from his older son Rav Meir, and the other from Rav Chaim Ehrlanger as he was so impressed by the sincere and lofty request!

One day, an elderly man entered Rav Aharon Leib's home and was simply staring at Rav Shteinman.

When asked if he wished to speak with the Gadol, he responded with a story. During World War II in Switzerland, one night during a blackout, he noticed a small light burning in the synagogue. He went to check it out and found a young Rav Aharon Leib sitting by himself and learning. He asked him why he was sitting by himself, "No one would even know that you are learning"?

Rav Shteinman answered that "I am learning in order to reach the level required to become a merkava leShechina"!

The elderly man said, "70 years later, I have come to see what became of that holy young man!

Comment: Moshe asked Hashem to not simply punish Korach in a normal manner, but to create a new phenomenon, to kill Korach in such a unique way that all would point to Moshe and Korach and state, "Moshe was chosen to represent Hashem and be a Merkava l'Shechina, and Korach was punished for questioning this unique greatness of Moshe."

Working on our Middos

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein relates a story.

In Russia, during the times of Czar Nikolai, a great Talmid Chacham named Rav Eliyahu Leider came to a town, and was hosted by an incredibly wealthy man. During his visit, Rav Leider heard the host boasting in a haughty manner about his great wealth.

The man said, "I'm so wealthy that even if the government decides to confiscate my assets, I still have no need to fear! I'm well covered and diversified, and I'm very wealthy in cash!"

Rav Leider trembled when he heard these words, and he urged his host to stop his arrogance regarding his wealth.

Many years later, Czar Nikolai passed through the town of this wealthy Jew, and to enter the town, he had to cross a bridge. All the bridges in the area were built by this Jew, as he was awarded the exclusive government contract to build them.

These bridges were made for the average day loads of a carriage here and there. They were not built for the great mass of soldiers and royal entourage of the Czar.

After crossing some of the bridges in the area, they collapsed from the great weight, and ten of the Czar's commanders perished in the collapse. This crime was considered to be high treason in the eyes

of the Czar. It didn't matter that the bridges were built properly for average loads.

When the Czar demanded to know who had built such inferior bridges, and he was informed that the "scoundrel" was a Jewish man, it became clear to this Jew that his days were numbered. He grabbed a coat and filled his pockets with cash, and ran for his life. He was sure that with his money, he would still be treated with honor wherever he went.

However, in his rush, he accidentally filled his pockets with the wrong currency, and it was all useless. He had grabbed the wrong bills, and he now discovered that he was destitute. Having no choice, this Jew, who just a few hours before was amazingly wealthy, now had to start begging for money to live!

One Shabbos, this man went to stay by a poor man's home. That week, Rav Leider was also staying as a guest in the same house. They soon recognized each other, and then the wealthy man broke down in tears and said, "Your words to me about not showing off my wealth are still ringing in my ears!"

Rav Zilberstein would say, "**The Chofetz Chaim** used to repeat this story to his Talmidim to impress upon them that everything is in the hands of Hashem, and that He personally watches over each one of us with great exactness!"

Parsha Pearls

Why does the Torah dedicate almost the entire parsha to the story of Korach?

In parshas Chayei Sarah the Torah records twice Eliezer's story of finding Rivka: when it actually happened and when Eliezer told over the story in Lavan's house. Rashi (on verse 23:42) cites words of Chaza"l that explain this repetition: "Rabbi Acha said: Conversations of our forefather's slaves is more precious to Hashem then the

Torah of their children. [We can see this from the fact that] Eliezer's story is recorded twice in the Torah, while many main parts of the Torah were only given as hints."

We see from these words of Chazal that the more significant something is, the more time the Torah spends on it. Hence, the obvious question this week is, why does the Torah dedicate almost the entire parsha to the story of Korach - a story of a group of people who went against Moshe and Aaron?!



It appears that, through this, Hashem is telling His children for all generations the following message: "Notice how significant in My eyes is your respect of the Torah leaders of your generation!"

Parsha Points to Ponder - Compiled by Ozer Alport

Josephus writes (Antiquities of the Jews 4:2) that Korach's rebellion was partially inspired by his belief that his tremendous wealth entitled him to greater honor. How did Korach become so rich?

The **Gemora** teaches that Yosef hid three collections of treasures in Egypt, one of which was found by Korach, which gave him one-third of all the Egyptian wealth that Yosef gathered.

However, a different **Gemora** disagrees and says that the Jewish people collectively took all of Yosef's accumulated possessions with them when they left Egypt. They brought it to Eretz Yisroel, where it remained until the reign of King Rechavam, at which point the Egyptian king Shishak took it all away (Melochim 1 14:25-26), in

which case Yosef's treasures could not have been the source of Korach's riches.

A sefer called **Einei HaEidah** quotes a Midrash that says that Pharaoh initially ordered everyone to work for one day to show how many bricks they were capable of making. Korach recognized Pharaoh's true intentions, so he worked the entire day but said that his goal was to produce beautiful bricks fit for Pharaoh, and as a result, he only managed to make one brick.

When Pharaoh subsequently decreed that every Jewish slave had to double his original daily production, Korach was exempted, since his new quota would be a meager two bricks. Nevertheless, he continued to privately make bricks, and with the aid of his family, he amassed a tremendous quantity.

When Pharaoh later punished the Jews by requiring them to maintain their production levels even though they would no longer be supplied with straw (Shemos 5:18), they approached Korach to buy bricks from him so that they could fulfill Pharaoh's orders. As demand for Korach's bricks increased, he continued to raise the price, and because the Jewish slaves had no choice but to pay, he succeeded in accumulating massive wealth.

Frum.org - Weekly Dvar Torah by Michael Winner

וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ "***And you should not be like Korach and his congregation***…" (Bamidbar 17:5).

There is a life changing concept: Rav Shimshon Pincus and Rav Chaim Shmulevitch point out that this argument between Moshe and Korach was a "***once in history argument***." On one side, you have Moshe, who was 100% correct, and on the other side you have Korach, who was 100% wrong. If you need proof, see the end of the story.

But after that, every argument between two people, is not a 100% vs 0%. Each side has some truth to it. It could be 90% truth vs 10% truth, but it will never be 100% vs 0%.

Once a friend of mind had a side business and somebody else in the neighborhood wanted to open up a similar side business, which could possibly hurt my friends. So, he went to speak to him about it, and the other person didn't agree with him. However, he did understand where my friend was going, so he either agreed to or suggested to go to a Beis Din to render judgment. So … they went. And in the end, Beis Din agreed with my friend and said that the other person was not allowed to open up his business. When I asked him how the other person took it, he replied, "He accepted it without a problem, and he even drove me home afterwards." All our legal issues should go so smoothly.

The key is to have the ability to see what the other side sees. Even if you don't agree with it, it's important to still be able to see it.

Even if there are disagreements, the important part is to be able to put yourself in somebody else's shoes to see how they see. I'm not saying one should give up on their beliefs. However, by doing so, different tactics could be used to achieve the same goal, yet keep the peace.

On a personal level, it's certainly a wonderful thing to remember. The other side might be wrong. Perhaps you are 90% correct. However, they still have 10% on their side, and you need to understand that 10% to help bridge the gap.

"True belief in Hashem is a constant awareness that He is intimately involved in every detail of our lives, and that nothing is beyond His reach." – Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk.

Chizuk In Our Lives

In 1766, one of the most famous *Halachic* disputes took place, which became known as 'the **גט** of Cleves'. A man gave his wife a **גט** just two weeks after their marriage, but then changed his mind and subsequently wanted to reunite with her.

His family claimed that he hadn't been in a healthy mental state at the time of divorce, classifying him as a **שוטה** thus invalidating the **גט** , making them still married. This led to a major international **שאלה** in **הלכה** as almost all of the prestigious **פוסקים** of the day took sides in the matter including **Rav Yaakov Emden**, the **שאגת אריה** and the **נודע ביהודה**.

Rav Pinchos Horowitz, the בעל הפלאה , had an opinion too on the matter and sat down to write a **תשובה** validating the **גט**. As he picked up his quill, the ink spilt all over the parchment.

Rav Pinchos took it as a **סימן מן השמים** that enough **רבנים** had gotten involved in the saga and that he needn't write his viewpoint.

Five years later, **Rav Avrohom Abish**, the **רב** of Frankfurt was **נפטר**. He had been the leader of the minority view that the **גט** was invalid and the couple had remained married. The **קהילה** decided that they wouldn't appoint a **רב** who had publicly opposed Rav Avrohom Abish's **פסק** , which took many esteemed **רבנים** out of the equation for the illustrious position. They ended up appointing Rav Pinchos as the **רב** , who finally understood why the ink had needed to spill over the parchment, discouraging him from getting involved in the thorny debate!

"When things are bad, we take comfort in the thought that they could always get worse. And when they are, we find hope in the fact that things are so bad they can only get better."



Machlokes - Harav Yosef Dov Pincus

Parshas Korach immediately makes us think of machlokes and the importance of avoiding it.

There were many times when our father zt"l, as Rav of the kehilah in Ofakim, found himself dealing with disagreements and conflicting opinions between individuals and between various communities. But he would always, always flee from machlokes as if he was fleeing from fire.

I remember there was once a big argument between two communities in the city, and the other community was very, very upset with our father zt"l. When Friday night came, our father told me that he is going to daven in the shul of that community.

Those close to him looked at him like he was crazy. They told him it's a sakanas nefashos, they could beat him up! But our father said he is not afraid and he doesn't want to be machazik b'machlokes. It's okay that there are arguments, but machlokes, absolutely not! And so he went to daven with the other community, to everyone's amazement. The main thing is not to get entrenched in machlokes.

There was another time when elections were held for rabbi of the city, and our father zt"l fought for a certain candidate to be elected. In the end, someone else won the elections. On Shabbos, after morning davening finished, our father said to our mother, "Come, we're going." And we, the children, came along, too. Our father led us to the home of the rabbi who was elected, and when we got there, our father wished the newly elected rabbi a gut

Shabbos and mazel tov, with a big smile on his face, and then they sat down for half an hour and spoke divrei Torah.

We asked our father afterward what it was all about. He said, "I didn't think he was fit to be rabbi of the city, so I worked against his election. But now that he is elected, there is nothing to do about it, and there is no reason to keep up a machlokes."

Let us follow in Rav Shimshon's ways, to love shalom and pursue shalom and thereby bring the Shechinah to rest among the Jewish people.

It's Never Black and White

וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ ***One should not be like Korach and like his congregation***. (*Bemidbar* 17:5)

Due to a certain incident that took place, I interpreted this *pasuk* in an innovative way - **ולא יהיה** – "***It is not going to be like Korach and his congregation***."

In other words, a case like the controversy of Korach is not going to repeat itself. That was a unique event in history. The *machlokes* of Korach was black and white. *Moshe Rabbeinu* was 100.00% right and Korach was 0.00% right. There was not even a tiny fraction of truth to Korach's claims.

This type of *machlokes* happened only once in history. With every other disagreement from then until now, there is never one side that is 100% right. Neither side has the absolute truth. It is always a matter of which is more right.

If we keep this in mind, if we remember that even our adversary has a point, that there is no absolute truth, many fights will just dissolve.

We need to know that the main thing in Judaism is keeping the laws of the Torah. When two *bnei Torah* meet, two people who serve *Hashem* and are looking for the truth, but who were raised on

different schools of thought regarding *avodas Hashem*, they need to pay attention to the fact that despite their divergent approaches and conflicting opinions, they actually agree on all the fundamental points of *Yiddishkeit* and have no disagreement regarding them.

When uncertainties arise, each person should decide on them according to the *derech* he received from his rabbis and teachers. But this doesn't mean something is wrong with his friend who was taught a different *derech*.

The abundance of views and approaches in Torah issues is actually the beauty of the Torah. Together with all the truth, each has his own hue, his own approach and his own understanding.

Let's Not Quarrel

The incident of Korach involves two main issues, the first of which is that Korach challenged *Moshe Rabbeinu* as leader and chief prophet.

This brings us to the Thirteen Principles of Faith as enumerated by the Rambam. The sixth principle is summarized in the *Siddur* as follows:

I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the Prophets are true.

Right after that comes a principle that relates directly to our subject:

I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu, may peace be upon him, was true, and that he was the chief of prophets for those that preceded him and those that followed him.

It is a basic tenet of the Jewish faith that *Moshe Rabbeinu's* prophecy has a special status. Moshe was not just another prophet.

And Korach challenged this principle. He held Moshe to be like other prophets.

This principle which Korach took issue with is a very basic one.

The second issue in the incident of Korach is the *machlokes* he stirred up. Korach quarreled with Moshe and Aharon. This is the issue we will focus on here.

There is a Biblical prohibition on keeping up a quarrel. The introduction to *Sefer Chafetz Chaim* enumerates all the prohibitions that a person transgresses when he speaks *lashon hara*. One of them is the prohibition on *machlokes*.

What I am about to say regarding *machlokes* may not contain much that is new to you. But it is extremely important, nevertheless.

Machlokes is a Jewish *aveirah*. There were controversies in all generations, in the *shtetl* and in the *kehillah,* and the results were always disastrous. From a historical perspective, there is nothing that wreaked more destruction on the Jewish people throughout the generations up to this day than *machlokes* did. The factions and infighting among Jews were tremendously destructive, since they were even within families, inside the *shul,* between the closest people.

This is something unique to the Jewish people. The reason is that *Am Yisrael* is a special and intelligent people, a people that feels strongly about things. And *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created each individual with a different character from all others, so friction naturally arises. We are all thinking people. This causes a lot of *machlokesim*.

But Why is It So Bad? There are sins more severe than that of quarreling. For instance, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* sought to wipe out the Jewish people after the sin of *Eigel Hazahav,* the Golden Calf. And He forbade them to enter *Eretz Yisrael* for forty years because of the sin of the *Meraglim,* the Spies, and this totally changed the

course of history for the Jewish people. - The sin of Korach did not change history.

On the other hand, *machlokes* is so destructive! It is what undid the Jewish people throughout the generations.

I once heard from a prominent rabbi who was an expert in Jewish history that every place where there was *machlokes,* great changes took place in the Jewish people; entire communities vanished from the face of the earth.

People sense that quarreling is destructive. If a person is in a fight with someone, he usually suffers greatly from it. But this is not the main thing. *Machlokes* is an *aveirah,* forbidden by Torah law, like eating pork is. And an *aveirah* is a blazing fire.

The destruction caused by *machlokes* being an *aveirah* is inestimably greater than the damage caused by its eternal, practical form. If we would just understand this, it would totally change our lives.

If a person eats poison, it doesn't taste good, but that's not the point. Besides that it doesn't have a good taste, it has a very destructive quality to it. It contains a chemical that causes internal damage and could be fatal.

That's how it is with *machlokes.* When a fight is going on, it doesn't "taste good." It is a bitter experience. This may be part of the matter, but it is not the main part.

The main part is that it is prohibited by the Torah, which has a very destructive quality that reduces everything to ruins.

"Hashem is the source of compassion. He has more compassion for you than any other compassionate being." ~ The Chovos Halevovos.

A Message From The Kalever Rebbe - Pursuing Honor Destroys The Life

וַיֵּרְדוּ הֵם וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֹלָה וַתְּכַס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל
"*They, and all they possessed, descended alive into the grave*". (Bamidbar 16:33)

What sunk the Titanic?



In 1912, the Titanic was preparing for its maiden voyage. It was touted as being the largest, safest and most luxurious ship ever constructed. The captain was carefully selected for skills and expertise.

Before departing on what would be the ship's first and only voyage, the captain spoke to a group of journalists, where he described the honor of being selected to pilot this enormous and powerful ship, and he went as far as to say that the Titanic was unsinkable.

Halfway through the Titanic's journey, several other ships in the area sent warnings to the captain about seeing icebergs adrift. However, the captain, confident in his ship's invincibility and driven by his desire to show the world what the Titanic was capable of, ignored these warnings and refused to alter his speed and change course, leading the Titanic directly to its tragic end. An iceberg tore a while in the ship, sinking it and more than 1500 people lost their lives as a result.

This famous incident demonstrates how dangerous and damaging it is for someone to chase after honor and pride.

Wasting money for honor

Chazal taught in *Prikei Avos* (4:21), "Jealousy, lust and honor take man out of the world." The commentators explain, that the pursuit off honor will even prevent physical enjoyment in this world.

The *Ramchal*, zt"l, wrote in *Mesilas Yasharim* (chapter 11) that pursuing honor is the greatest waste of time, more so than chasing any other empty pleasure in this world. If not for one's honor, one would be content with any food he has, the clothing he can afford, and any house he can live in. Without this superficial desire to be lauded and celebrated by others, a person would be satisfied with his livelihood and would not exhaust himself pursuing wealth and riches, and he wouldn't try day after day to gain his peers approval, which is a fruitless endeavor without an end.

In 5713, I heard the ***Klauzenberger Rebbe*** speak about this very topic. The Rebbe explained that by his account, a person only needed 25 cents to survive an entire week, if they heeded the advice of *Chazal* who taught (Pirkei Avos 6:4), "*Bread with salt you shall eat, water in small measure you shall drink, and upon the ground you shall sleep; live a life of deprivation and toil in Torah*". Even if one wishes to live more extensively, the Rebbe explained, they can work part time and be able to enjoy the rest of their days.

However, when someone pursues wealth so that he can live a lavish lifestyle, or because he is envious of what others have, he will spend his entire life working, never satisfied with what he has, but always striving for more. In the end, he would have spent every day of his life working himself into exhaustion, and enjoying not a moment.

In this generation, we see how lavishly and carelessly people spend their wealth. They take extravagant vacations. They spend unimaginable sums of money on *Yom Tov* programs and extravagant *simchas*. And, they do all of this so people can know how important, powerful, successful they are. They seek honor and respect which is

shallow and superficial and not worth the money they had to spend to achieve it.

Honor killed him!

The *Peleh Yoeitz* wrote that when someone pursues honor, their days are full of anguish and pain. When someone focuses solely on being respected and honored, eventually, someone will not show him the honor that he thinks he deserves, and it will hurt. His ego will be crushed. And that pain can lead to a fight or argument, as this person tries to avenge those who have "disrespected" him. If that revenge cannot be delivered, he will resent this offender even more. Such a person who pursues honor will live a life full of anger, hatred, disagreements and disappointments.

The desire for honor can even cost one his life. One of the wealthiest men in the city of Kovna, lost all of his money and he became impoverished. He could not even afford a loaf of bread. And, in the end, he died of starvation. The entire town mourned his tragic death. However, when ***R' Yisrael Salanter*, zt"l**, heard this, he remarked: "This man did not die of starvation. His desire for honor killed him. Had he accept his new circumstances, he would have found the humility to seek the charitable help of others and he would have had enough for food".

Pursuing honor is an empty ambition because you can never achieve your goal, your lust for that respect will never be satiated. You will always think that you deserve more respect than you are receiving.

Chazal taught (Eruvin 13:) "Whoever pursues honor, honor escapes him." ***R' Eliezer of Koshnitz*** explained this, that when someone chases after honor, they will always *feel* like it is beyond their grasp; they will always feel slighted and disrespected. They will always resent people for not showing them enough honor. And, as the *Chazal* continued, "whoever runs away from honor, honor pursues him", Meaning when someone feels unworthy and humble, they will always feel like they're being too honored.

The grave of honor

Korach and his entire congregation perished because of their pursuit of honor and glory. The *Midrash (Bamidbar Rabba* 18) explained that *Korach* challenged *Moshe* when he saw that *Elitzafan ben Uziel* was appointed as the leader, and he wanted that position instead. He felt that he deserved that honor.

This is the meaning of our *pasuk* that says: " *They, and all they possessed,* ***descended alive*** *into the grave…* " *Korach* and his congregation, and all the people who are identifying themselves with their lifestyle of pursuing honor, wasted their lives – their lives descended in the grave. Only someone who does not pursue honor can have a true life of joy and contentment.



Here's a story that should give us some pause. The great tzaddik, Rav Shimshon Pincus, bought a new car from overseas. In order to get it shipped to Israel, he had to go to the port and present himself with many different documents, tax documents, citizenship documents, and he'd be able to free his car from customs.

He comes there with a stack of papers. He gives it to the customs officer. The fellow starts leafing through them and says to him, there's a number of papers here that are expired. I'm sorry, you can't have the car.

Now most of us would get frustrated. He had traveled quite a long distance, and now they're not giving him the car, and why can't… Rav Shimshon Pincus said, 'okay'.

Now how does a gadol react? How does a *maamin*, someone with faith in Hashem react? He finds a quiet spot, walks over to the wall, and he starts talking to Hashem, and speaking to Hashem with sincerity. I came here, I need this car, I could do my avodah to Hashem. Please, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, help things work out.



He feels like he's communicated his feelings to the emergency room adequately. He takes those exact papers, walks back to the customs officer, puts them down. The guy leafs through them and says, sure, no problem and gives him his car. Now what happened in this story? Something very simple.

When a person believes in the power of tefillah, the tefillah triggers reality, then tefillah works. We say it every day, even if we don't think about it. **קָרוֹב ה׳ לְכָל־ קֹרְאָיו לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֻהוּ בֶּאֱמֶת - *"Hashem is close to all who call upon Him — to all who call upon Him in truth."***

If you call out and you believe that your tefillah could work, that it's emes, that tefillah works, that prayer works. Then HaKadosh Baruch Hu responds.

Let's be mechazik today in understanding the power of our tefillah and believing that our tefillah could change our reality. And then **אם ירצה ה׳**, it will.

"You learn more from failure than from success. Don't let it stop you. Failure builds character."

Fascinating INSIGHTS

When a person is on the verge of death, what would we expect to be on their mind?

When the **Alter of Kelm** was on his deathbed, he requested that his clothes be laundered before giving them to the poor. - This is what he was thinking about just prior to his departure from this world!

In the 1920s and 1930s, **R' Elazar Mayer Preil** was a Rav in Elizabeth, New Jersey. As was the custom in many places, the Rav would purchase a Lulav and Esrog which the congregation would use, because many people didn't have their own. It was in 1933 a few hours before the Yom Tov of Succos that R' Preil, who became very ill, called R' Nosson Nuta Zuber, a Rav in Roselle, New Jersey, telling him to come immediately, expressing that it couldn't wait until Chol Hamoed.

R' Preil told R' Nosson Nuta, "I have one son, Yehoshua Yosef, who is nine years old. If I pass away, my son will inherit the Lulav and Esrog. However, a *katan* (under the age of bar mitzvah) cannot transfer ownership, making it unable for others to use. I want to give you ownership of the Lulav and Esrog so that the congregation can use it, in the event I pass away." - The acquisition was performed, and R' Preil passed away six hours later!

This episode reminds us of the words of Rashi (Bamidbar 27:15) that when the righteous take their leave from this world, they put aside their own concerns and deal with the concerns of the public.

Here is another incredible story, this time with **R' Pam's** granddaughter, who passed away in her thirties from a virulent illness.

While this righteous woman was being transported to the hospital, she was arranging a chessed for someone she knew. The people with

her were agape and asked astonishingly, "Even to such an extent?! You are so ill. How can you do this?"

She replied with a novel explanation in *Chazal's* statement, **אֲפִלּוּ חֶרֶב חַדָּה מֻנַּחַת עַל צַוָּארוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם — אַל יִמְנַע עַצְמוֹ מִן הָרַחֲמִים** (Brachos 10a). (The simple meaning is that even if a sharp sword rests upon one's neck, he shouldn't refrain from davening for mercy from Hashem, meaning hope is not lost.) Even if a person is dying, he should not withhold from being merciful and performing chessed for others! - Incidentally, R' Dovid Hollander (1913-2009) would say this novel explanation regarding those extra-special Jews during the Holocaust who would look to help others despite being on the verge of death.

Concerning the enslavement in Mitzrayim it says **וְגַם אֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת־נַאֲקַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם מַעֲבִדִים אֹתָם וָאֶזְכֹּר אֶת־בְּרִיתִי:** (Shemos 6:5), *and also I, Hashem, have heard the groan of the Jewish People whom Egypt enslaves.*

The Chassam Sofer is bothered by the word *gam* as to whom else is it referring besides Hashem? - It refers to the people themselves, meaning although each Jew was enslaved and afflicted, they still heard the other person's cry. They didn't say "I have so many of my own problems so I can't deal with the problems of others."

During the 1929 massacre in Chevron, Arabs entered a room in the Slobodka Yeshiva (located in Chevron) where there were two Jewish students. One of the boys, Yaakov, was severely injured while the other, Moshe, was lightly injured. Yaakov said to Moshe, "Because I am about to die, I will smear my blood over you so that they will think you are also dead. This way you will make it out alive." - His final thought was to spare the life of a fellow student!

At the end of **R' Shmuel Berenbaum's** life, when he was very sick, he asked his son to help him with taking a shower (when the water would make contact with his frail, delicate body, it would cause him pain). His son was stunned by this request, as the natural reaction

of R' Shmuel, who was known for his *hasmadah*, would be to use whatever energy he had to learn or give a *shiur*.

R' Shmuel explained, "I have a feeling that very soon my soul will be ascending to the next world. The Chevra Kadisha will then have to deal with me, and I don't want them to deal with a smelly body." - This is what R' Shmuel was thinking about at the end of his life!

R' Michoel Ber Weissmandl in his sefer Min Ha'maitzar describes a last worry of a Jew in a cattle car on the way to Auschwitz. Many non-Jews gathered and watched happily with pleasure Jews being taken to the cattle cars. They would even clap when the train began to travel to take the Jews to the concentration camps.

There were some Jews that weren't yet selected to be taken. These lachrymose Jews stood by the side of the train to tearfully say goodbye. - Once, when the train began to travel, a Jew stuck his head out of the window calling out to one of his Jewish friends who wasn't taken on the train:

"I forgot to feed the chickens. Please go to my home and feed the chickens." - This is what was on this holy Jew's mind while he was being taken to his death, that the chickens shouldn't suffer.



A young woman returned from seminary and found an entry-level job. For three years she worked there, but there was little room for growth. Then she heard about an extraordinary opportunity—a job that would double her salary and open many doors. She secured an interview and prepared carefully.

The night before the interview, a close friend called her. The friend explained that her family was struggling financially and that she too had an interview the next day for an amazing job. As they spoke, the young woman realized something surprising—they were interviewing for the same position. - All night she struggled with the decision. She needed the job—but her friend needed it more.

The next day she went to the interview and performed exceptionally well. It was clear that she was a strong candidate. But before leaving, she said something unexpected. "There's one more thing I want to share," she told the interviewer. "You're interviewing a friend of mine later today. I know her well. She's an exceptional person, and I believe she would be an outstanding employee."

The interviewers were surprised, but they thanked her. - Later that day, her friend was hired.

For weeks afterward, she struggled emotionally. At times she felt peaceful about her decision; at other times she wondered if she had sacrificed her future. Then, a few weeks later, she was introduced to a young man from an outstanding family. The match progressed beautifully, and eventually she was invited to meet his parents.

When she walked into the house, she froze. The boy's mother was the woman who had interviewed her. The mother smiled and said, "I want you to know something. When you came to that interview and recommended someone else—even though it cost you the job—I realized that someone who can put another person first like that would make an extraordinary wife. That's why I encouraged my son to meet you."

In time, she was also offered a good job. A single sentence. A single act. A single moment of kindness. Sometimes that is all it takes to change a life.



A Step You Almost Didn't Take



Moshe was a Holocaust survivor. He lost everything and everyone, and now he was alone in the world. No family, no friends, no one who seemed to need him. His days were empty, and one night he decided that the next morning he simply wouldn't get up. He slept past 6.30, past 7. Finally, close to 9, he dragged himself out of bed and headed to the bus stop.

Why are you late? A voice called out. He looked around. No one. Up here, the voice said. On a second-floor balcony stood a blind man. I can't see, he said, but I hear everything. When Hashem took my sight, He sharpened my hearing.

I recognize your distinct footsteps. You should know that every morning when I hear them, I know it's five minutes to seven. I know the bus is coming. From that moment, my entire day has order, my davening, my learning, my life. Today, you didn't come. I was lost. Please don't take away my five minutes to seven.

The next morning at five to seven, Moshe came running. He had thought his life meant nothing. Now he had learned that his footsteps were holding someone else's world together. - And that's true for all of us. Someone needs your smile. Someone needs your presence. You may never know who. Sometimes the only thing holding another person's world together is a step you almost didn't take.



Clarity

We all seek clarity. Clarity professionally, personally, spiritually, in our home, in our workplace. If we had clarity, we would know how to make the next step of our decisions. But often clarity is elusive. I want to give you an insight into gaining a clarity that maybe you never even knew you could access.

And it's not from me. It's actually brought down in the letter that the **Vilna Gaon** wrote. He writes there that every moment that a person keeps their mouth shut and doesn't speak Lashon Hara, he merits a hidden light.

What's a hidden light? So if you unpack in Chazal what **אור הגנוז** means, it means clarity. The ability to understand how to make the right type of decision. And what's remarkable about the **איגרת הגר"א** is he doesn't say if you master Shemiras HaLashon - if you figure out a way to stop speaking Lashon Hara. He says, **עַל כָּל רֶגַע וָרֶגַע** - once, one minute, where you're going to speak Lashon Hara, and you didn't speak Lashon Hara, you merit clarity in something that would have been murky.

So let's take one time today where we're going to speak something about somebody else. Let's zip it. Let's not speak. And Be'ezer Hashem will merit clarity at least in one thing in our life.

Self-Deception

A person can deceive himself more easily than he can deceive anyone else. ~ R' Yisrael Salanter zt"l.

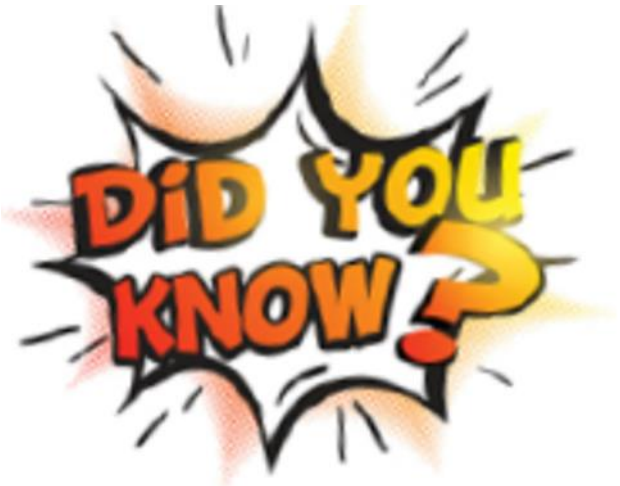
Rabbi Pesach Krohn - Project Mesorah

At the end of Parshas Korach the Torah tells us about a covenant a bris that the Ribono Shel Olem made with the Kohanim, it's called '**בְּרִית מֶלַח עוֹלָם**'. (18:19) The covenant of salt which lasts forever. In other words, this agreement that the kohanim will always be special is like salt. Salt doesn't spoil. As Rashi says **כַּבְּרִית הַכְּרוּתָה לַמֶּלַח שֶׁאֵינוֹ מַסְרִיחַ לְעוֹלָם** – *'Like a covenant made with salt, that it should never spoil.'*

It occurred to me that salt is amazing in the fact that salt by itself tastes awful. You can't eat it on its own. And yet, salt has the incredible capacity to enhance the flavour of other foods.

I think that maybe there is a symbolism about salt, and that is, if a person is only to himself – that's awful, but every person has the ability to season and enhance the lives of others.

That is the capacity of salt, and that is the capacity of humanity. If you are alone, and only for yourself, that doesn't taste good in Hashem's mouth (so to speak) and is certainly not good for the world. But every person has the capacity and ability to season and flavour another person's life.



Did you know that the gematria of the words **ה' איש מלחמה ה' שמו** is the same gematria as Eretz Yisroel! 832 [The name of Hashem is spelled in the Torah YUD- KEY-VUV-KEY]

The idea is that we don't have any power in any wars, Hashem fights all our wars [especially in Eretz Yisroel we see it bechush mamesh]. There is no room for **כוי** – **כוחי ועוצם ידי** Chas Vshalom [**ע' גמ' ע"ז ב:**].

When Sensitivity Brings Salvation - Rabbi Yoel Gold



There is a place in Boro Park called Fallsburg Bagels. People know it for the excellent food, but behind the store is a remarkable story.

The owner had opened a beautiful, expensive store. From the outside, it looked like everything was thriving, but the truth was very different. The rent in Boro Park was enormous, and the business was struggling just to keep up. At the same time, he was preparing to make a chasunah.

Anyone who has gone through a wedding knows how overwhelming the expenses can be. The dresses, the hall, the countless obligations — everything adds up quickly.

The wedding was only a few weeks away, and he simply did not have the money he needed.

He spoke about it to a friend. "I don't know how I'm going to manage," he admitted.

The friend asked, "Don't you have people who owe you money?"

"Yes," he said. "There's one person who owes me a large sum. If I could collect that debt, I would be able to cover many of the expenses."

"Give it to me," the friend said. "I'll collect it for you." And he began calling the debtor repeatedly, pressuring him to pay.

A few days later, the store owner received a letter in the mail. He opened it and saw that it was an invitation to a wedding. It was from the very man who owed him the money. He immediately picked up the phone and called his friend. "Please stop calling him," he said.

"Why?" the friend asked. "He owes you the money."

"I know," he replied. "But I just found out he's making a wedding. I know what it feels like to be under that kind of pressure. He doesn't need someone chasing him right now. Hashem will help me in another way."

It wasn't an easy decision. He needed the money desperately. But he chose sensitivity over pressure, kindness over demand. He hung up the phone.

Only moments later, his phone rang again. It was someone he didn't know — a man calling from upstate New York. At first he assumed the caller was asking for a donation. But instead, the man asked, "You have a store upstate, correct? The Fallsburg Bagels location?"

"Yes," he said. "It's open during the summer but closed most of the winter."

"That's perfect," the caller said. "We would like to rent it for six months in the winter and convert it into a matzah bakery. We'll kosher the entire facility and use it for production."

They began discussing details. The caller was serious. By the end of the conversation, they agreed on terms, and a contract was drawn up. - The amount of money he earned from renting out the empty store was more than enough to cover the expenses of the wedding — more than he would have received from collecting the debt. It came from a completely unexpected direction; at the exact moment he needed it.

He later reflected on what had happened. The greatest act of tzedakah he had done was not giving money — it was holding back, not collecting when someone else was under pressure. And in that

merit, Hashem provided for him in a way he never could have planned. Because when a person takes care of others, Hashem takes care of him.



The Symbolism Behind Keeping Hands and Feet Together During Prayer

Rabbeinu Bechaye writes in his commentary on this week's parsha that when Gentiles pray, they hold their palms together with their fingers pointed upward. He says they themselves do not know why they hold their hands in that position while praying. He asserts they got it from the Jews and the reason for this is reminiscent of the expression "I'm sorry I can't do anything my hands are tied." (In other words "I am powerless to do anything" therefore I pray to G-d to help me).

Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that this used to be a Jewish custom, and the Gentiles took it from us. Once it became their custom, the Jews refrained from doing it any longer. However, he says, a remnant of the Jewish custom still remains by the fact that we still keep our feet together when davening. - This too indicates that we are bound up, not able to move at all, without G-d's intervention.



"The mistake of Korach was not that he desired greatness. Every Jew should desire greatness. His mistake was that he wanted someone else's greatness. He saw the position of Aharon HaKohen and imagined that only there could he find fulfilment. Had he recognized the greatness that was uniquely his, he would have remained one of the greatest men in Israel." ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler.



Ha-Tchoo!! Ha-Tchoo!!

וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ (ז/ה)

The **גמ׳ סנהדרין (קי ע״א)** learns out from this **פסוק** that whoever supports a **מחלוקת** is **עובר** on the **לאו** of **וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ**.

There was once a raging controversy between two groups of **אידן**, where some people who wanted to get involved -of course with the claim that they were making peace. However, their Rebbe, **Reb Meir'l of Dzikov**, dissuaded them telling the following story:



It was a year of famine and the animals in the forest were hungry. The king of the forest suffered a lot. After not having eaten for three days, he felt very weak and a foul odour arose from his mouth. If he did not find food soon he was afraid that he would die.

Letting out a mighty roar, the lion summoned his servants. The horse was the first to rush to his side. "Draw near and smell my breath. Tell me; what do you smell?" asked the lion. The horse bowed his head towards the lion's mouth and replied, "There is a foul smell coming from your mouth, your majesty." "You traitor! How dare you insult the king! You shall die for your arrogance," roared the lion and with these words, he pounced upon the horse and made a hearty meal out of him.

A few days passed and once again the lion felt his stomach grumbling for food. His hunger grew so intense that a bad odour once again came out of his mouth. The lion gave a mighty roar, summoning his

servants. This time the wolf answered his call. "Draw near and smell my breath. Tell me; what do you smell?" the king demanded. The wolf did not to wish to make the same mistake as the horse. The wolf replied, "I do not smell anything, your majesty!" "Liar!" the lion roared. You are a traitor, you deserve to be killed. With one mighty leap, he fell upon the wolf and made a hearty meal of him too.

A few days passed and the lion was overcome with pangs of hunger. His mouth reeked from fasting. He gave a piercing roar, summoning his servants to him. This time the fox came forward and said, "Yes, your majesty, what can I do for you? The lion replied, "Draw near and smell my breath. Tell me; what do you smell?" The fox began coughing and sniffling. He said, "Your Bajesty, I cad't sbell adything today. I have a terrible stuffed dose. I caught a dasty cold.....

The Chassidim got the message – you must behave like the clever fox and not stick your noses into any dangerous fires of controversy where you can only get hurt.....(Tales of Tzaddikim/296/ **פרשת ויחי**)

Once, a **מחלוקת** broke out in Radin. The **חפץ חיים** saw that he could not settle the argument. He said, 'A **מחלוקת** is like a fire from which one must run away!' With that he picked himself up and left his hometown for a few weeks. (**ידידי עולם**)

There was once a town where the Rov permitted a **שאלה** with regard to **בשר וחלב**, which all the **פוסקים** held was **אסור**. A group of **חסידים** travelled to the **זצ"ל אבני נזר** to say that they needed a new Rov as they couldn't rely on this Rov anymore. The **אבני נזר** replied, 'Even according to the Rov was only **עובר** on an **איסור דרבנן**. And you want to be **עובר** on an **איסור דאורייתא** of **מחלוקת**!' (**ידידי עולם/תשובה**) We find that the **גדולים** understood the severity of **מחלוקת** and fled from it as one flees from a fire.

There was once a **מחלוקת** in a **ישיבה**, and a group of **בחורים** from one of the groups decided to leave the **ישיבה**. They planned on joining **ישיבת באר יעקב**. They approached the **ראש ישיבה ר׳ משה שמואל שפירא זצ״ל** asking to join his **ישיבה**.

To their shock, he replied, 'I do not want my **ישיבה** to be built or to benefit from a **מחלוקת**. Therefore I will not be accepting you into my **ישיבה**.

We see from this week's **סדרה** how much the **תורה** hates **מחלוקת**. Let's try to keep away from **מחלוקת**!



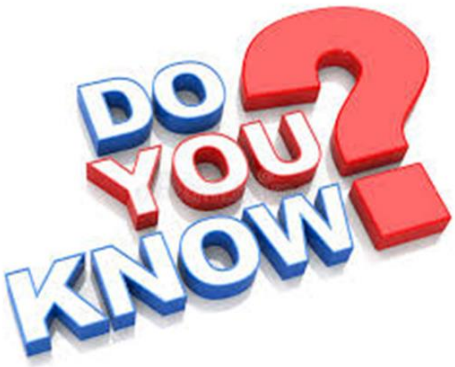
וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֵץ צִיץ, וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים (יז/כג) -[It brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and developed almonds]

Reb Moshe Fienstein זצ״ל asks; why was it necessary that when **משה** brought out the stick the blossoms and the buds were still on them? After all, aren't the fruit, the almonds, the most important and what really counts?

Answers Reb Moshe: Hashem is teaching us the following lesson: For Hashem it is not just the fruit that a person achieves that counts. Rather, all the stages and difficulties that a person overcomes in order to achieve the goal is beloved and treasured.

"Every person is given a mission in this world that no one else can fulfil. The root of jealousy is the mistaken belief that another person's success diminishes our own. In truth, Hashem has sufficient greatness, blessing, and purpose for every individual." ~ Rabbi Avraham Pam.

וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם--נָסוּ לְקֹלָם (טז/לד) - [And all the ארץ that were around them fled at their sound]



Did you know? ... that the משנה on תוספות יום טוב in אבות (ה/ו) lists out the things that were created on ערב שבת בין השמשות, says a great חידוש that the ground spoke and shouted out "they have been swallowed alive into the deepest level of the pit" and it was from that voice that the אידן were afraid and fled. (יגדיל תורה/קרח/רמב)

A Slice of Chesed by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser



There was a great tzaddik who was niftar just a few years ago: **Hagaon Hagadol Rabbi Dovid Feinstein zt"l**. Rabbi Dovid was the Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. He was a world-renowned posek and one of the most respected Torah authorities of his generation. He was the son and successor of **Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l**. As with all great tzaddikim, people flocked to him from every corner of the world seeking guidance, psak, wisdom, and solutions.

But where did Rabbi Dovid receive people? Not in a grand office. Not in a private study. Not in an elegant reception room. Rabbi Dovid received people in a pizza shop. Not in the front of the pizza shop. Rather, in the back corner of the pizzeria. That was where Rabbi Dovid Feinstein met with people. - How did that come about?

The owner of the pizza shop came to Rabbi Dovid with a serious problem. Business was terrible. Customers were not coming. The bills were piling up. He wasn't making a living and could barely cover expenses. "I may have to close," he told Rabbi Dovid. "There won't be a kosher pizza shop here anymore."

Rabbi Dovid listened carefully. He could have simply promised to daven. Instead, he did something more. From that day forward, whenever someone wanted an appointment with him, Rabbi Dovid would say: "Meet me at the pizza shop."

Why? Because every visitor would bring traffic into the store. Perhaps they would buy a slice, a drink, or a pie to take home. Day after day. Week after week. Appointment after appointment. People came to meet one of the greatest Torah leaders of the generation—and they met him in the corner of a pizza shop.

The strategy worked. Business improved. Customers came. The pizza shop remained open, and the owner was able to support his family. Yet he chose to sit in a small pizza shop because a fellow Jew needed help.

True chesed is not merely feeling another person's pain. True chesed is looking for practical ways to help. Sometimes the greatest acts of kindness are not dramatic. They are small, thoughtful actions that quietly transform another person's life.

Rabbi Dovid Feinstein showed us what genuine gemilus chasadim looks like. He didn't just care. He acted. And because he acted, a struggling business survived, a family was supported, and countless people learned what it means to truly help another Jew.

"Never dismiss a moment as insignificant. A single moment can earn an entire Gan Eden, and Hashem gives us many such moments throughout our lives." ~ The Beis Aharon.

Reb Dov On The Parsha



Korach and his followers were swallowed by the ground in a fascinating and terrifying way. The ground opened up, swallowing Doson, Aviram, their families and households, and Korach's family and all his belongings. (There's a machlokes if Korach was both burnt and swallowed, or something else.) Items belonging to them which were elsewhere in the camp came rolling to the hole and were sucked inside. Members of the household who were elsewhere got sucked into a "slide" (definitely not a fun-slide!) and were swallowed into the hole. Bnei Yisrael fled from the area in fear.

Why did they run? Moshe had just told them exactly what was about to happen, and to whom it would happen!

The simple reason is, that they didn't know exactly who and what were part of the household or owned by them. They saw various items and people sliding toward the hole, and were confused and frightened as to why that was happening.

Also, most if not all of Bnei Yisrael were convinced by Korach that he was right, including the Gedolei Yisrael. When they saw what happened, they thought they'd also be included.

We'd like to suggest the following simple and obvious explanation. But sometimes, we're so used to the story we know so well, that to picture it accurately is a chiddush!

The setup of the shevatim within the encampment was as follows. The Mishkan was in the center, with almost 2,000 amos (around 4,000 feet) between the Mishkan and the rest of Bnei Yisrael, with the Leviim in this area. Then came the Shevatim, three Shevatim per side. Yehuda, Yissachar and Zevulun were in the east, opposite the entrance of the Mishkan, where Moshe and Ahron were. Those Shevatim were positively influenced by Moshe and Ahron, producing many Talmidei Chochomim.

Reuven, Shimon and Gad were on the south side, of which Doson and Aviram were members. The Leviim of Kehas, which included Korach, were encamped on that side. Chazal comment on this, oy to the rasha and oy his neighbors. The 250 leaders of the Shevatim who joined Korach were mostly from Reuven, as they felt that they had lost the bechora to the Cohanim. Now, Moshe told Korach and his 250 leaders who each wanted to be Cohein Gadol, to be standing with their ketores by the entrance to the Mishkan. Many of Bnei Yisrael came to observe, on the east side of the Mishkan.

At the same time, Moshe tried for one last attempt at shalom with Doson and Aviram. They were in their tents, by the camp of Reuven, on the south. After rejecting Moshe's call for peace and insulting him, Moshe warned everyone to move away from the tents of Doson, Aviram, and Korach. Korach was exceptionally wealthy and had a tremendous amount of belongings. It's fair to assume that he had multiple tents as well. Once they joined forces, perhaps he moved them closer to Doson and Aviram's tents? Were they by the edge of Reuven, or somewhere else within the camp? And even if he did or didn't move closer to them, Korach himself certainly wasn't there! He was by the entrance to the Mishkan on the eastern side!

Picture this: Moshe warns everyone to move away from the tents of Korach, Doson, and Aviram. Then he gives one last warning, before the earth opened up. The Torah says that the earth opened beneath them and swallowed them all. The Mefarshim explain that there was

one opening, and that's why there were the slides heading from all directions into it. Doson, Aviram and their families disappeared into the hole, with Korach's family, either in the same location, or from their spot sliding and dropping down as well. Their belongings are sliding from everywhere to the hole! And Korach (according to this opinion), after being burnt by the fire which also burnt the 250 leaders bringing ketores, went sliding from the eastern side, from before the entrance of the Mishkan, all the way to the area between Reuven and Kehas where he was also swallowed up!

This made a huge impression upon Klal Yisrael! What an incredible scene! No wonder they were frightened! This punishment was affecting everywhere within the encampment and was seen by everyone!

Once again, I'm only trying to highlight the details of the story we know so well, to show the incredible nissim, and the great impression that it made. It is extremely important to notice and speak about the nissim which we see. And most importantly, to know what our reaction to them should be.

A Rov once gave a sermon about how every attribute, even negative ones, could be used for good. Anger could be used to be zealous for G-d's honor; stubbornness could be used to refuse the urgings of the Yetzer Hara to sin, and so forth.

"Rebbe," asked one of the listeners, "You say that every bad mida can be good. How can one use the mida of kefira (heresy and denial of G-d) for good?"

The Rabbi thought for a moment then said, "When you see someone in need, don't have faith and say, "Hashem will help him." You must think that G-d will not be there to help him, so you must do it yourself!"

The Yismach Moshe (Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum, 1759-1841) said that he remembered several of his previous lives. One of them took place at the time of the fight between Korach and Moshe. He described it as a time of great confusion. Korach was so great that one didn't know whether he or Moshe were right. - According to his descendants, he said he hid in his tent until it was over to avoid the machlokes.

But there should have been an easy way to tell who was right! We know that the Mon, the heavenly food the Jews ate in the Wilderness, had a built-in litmus test for righteousness. One who was a tzaddik had it fall right outside his door so he didn't have to go far. One who was wicked had to go far afield to gather his portion. Why not just look at where Moshe's mon and Korach's mon fell? Then you would know who was right. In fact, Moshe even said, "Boker v'yoda Hashem es asher lo," in the morning Hashem will inform who is His."

The Shevet Mussar, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Solomon Abraham ha-Kohen ha-Itamari (1640–1729), of Smyrna, Turkey, tells us a frightening thing. Do you know why they couldn't simply look at where the portions fell? Because machlokes, fighting and discord, is so powerful, that it pushes away parnasa and blessing, and on that day, NO MON FELL!

That's right, the blessing we receive can only be held in the vessel called peace, and when that is missing, there is no blessing. The day of the showdown with Korach, the Jews, men, women, and children, all had to fast. This should have made them reflect and make their choices carefully, but it didn't work for everyone, and many people were killed in fire or swallowed up in the ground. Even babies died, because the poisonous effects of machlokes impact one simply by being around it. - It wasn't a question of guilt at that point, because they were collateral damage from the deadly disease that is discord.

PARSHAS KORACH

WITH

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

Machlokes And Shalom

There's a fundamental principle which we should keep in mind whenever we hear *krias haTorah,* and that is: all of the episodes in the Torah are for each individual to learn from. Hakadosh Baruch Hu dictated these stories to Moshe Rabbeinu so that we should utilize them in our own lives.

Of course, it's of the utmost importance to know Chumash even *k'pshuto;* without lessons, just to know what happened in our history. Every Jew should have a clear picture of the lives of our *Avos* and *Imahos.* Everyone should know about Yosef Hatzaddik; how it happened that he went down to Egypt and because of him we all subsequently went down to Egypt. What happened in Mitzrayim? And Yetzias Mitzrayim, how did it all happen?

And once you know the Chumash, then go ahead and know what happened in the rest of Tanach. I would recommend, if you have no time, at least read the Tanach in English; at least once in your life. You won't understand much, but at least get an idea of what happened in the days of Yehoshua, what happened in the days of the *Shoftim.* That whole glorious era should be a blank in your mind? What happened in the days of Shaul and Dovid Hamelech and Shlomo Hamelech and all the kings of *Malchus Beis Dovid*? What happened to the *Aseres Hashevatim*?

There's so much! How could a person live out his life and not know our history? It's part of our great heritage, and therefore, among your achievements in this world should be familiarity with our history.

History Lessons

But there's something much more important than that. The stories of the past, as they're recorded by the Torah, are for the purpose

of teaching us how to live successfully in the present. It's a very important lesson and I'll repeat it: Whatever is said that happened in the history of our nation is said also for us to study and learn from there how to make our own history.

Now, even though that's true for everything, but when it comes to the story of Korach and his *machlokes* against Moshe Rabbeinu, it's even more so — because here the Torah especially sets up Korach as a model.

When it comes to this particular episode, Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to think about it more than others; we are expected to think about what happened and what could happen, *chas v'shalom*, to us.

Downfall of a Great Man



Korach, you have to know, was a great man. He went out of Mitzrayim with the Bnei Yisroel. If he wasn't a worthy man, he wouldn't have come out. Korach also stood at the *Yam Suf* and he sang *Az Yashir* with the rest of the nation. He stood at Har Sinai, and he shouted *naaseh v'nishma* just like everybody else. - Korach was a *tzaddik*, no question about it.

So what happened? He made a big mistake. When a certain evil thought entered Korach's mind — "Why should Moshe Rabbeinu give Aharon Hakohen so much power? We're also in the same *shevet*!" — he let that quarrelsome thought fester; he began to suspect that he was in the right. Korach suspected that Moshe was at fault.

He confronted Moshe Rabbeinu — he thought it was *l'shem Shamayim*, of course — and he spoke up against him.

A Torah Warning

What was the end of Korach and those who went along with him?

They died in the Midbar. **וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם** - *The ground opened its mouth – and it swallowed up Korach and his people* (16:32). Because he opened up a big mouth against Moshe Rabbeinu, so the earth opened up a big mouth on him. And at the conclusion of the story, the Torah tells us, **וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ** -"Be careful! The Torah goes out of its way to warn us: "Don't make a *machlokes* with the 'Moshes,' with the Torah leaders."

Because you have to know that Moshe Rabbeinu is not one person; he's considered a model for all the *Gedolim* in every *dor.* The Torah leaders, the *talmidei chachomim,* the *roshei yeshiva,* are our Moshes.

Many Moshes Why is that? Because Hashem wants us to look up to all the *Gedolei Yisroel* in our generation and obey them. Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zichrono livrachah,* was our Moshe Rabbeinu. Rav Aharon Kotler *zichrono livrachah,* he was our Moshe. And every *dor* has great leaders.

Baruch Hashem, even today we have great leaders. Maybe they're not as great as they were a hundred years ago, but they're our leaders. We have *roshei yeshiva, zol zein gezunt.* We have big *rebbes,* big *tzaddikim*. We have leaders! - Unfortunately, people are not utilizing them.

I don't understand why people aren't utilizing the *Gedolim*, but the minimum, the bare minimum is to respect them, to look up to them. Even though you may not always go to hear them because you're busy, but you must have in your mind the attitude, "I am loyal to the *Gedolei haTorah*, and I would never think of arguing with them, of causing *machlokes.*"

History Repeats Itself

And the model of Korach was given for that purpose. It's not just telling us stories so we'll have something interesting to listen to in

the shul, something interesting for the rabbi to speak about. It's telling us just as then people made a mistake, people are making the same mistake today.

People look at the Torah leaders and they think, "Well, it's true he knows more Torah than me, but what's so great about him? He's a human being like me."

Small Brains, Big Mouths

We look back in amazement at them. It's hard even to believe that such a thing ever happened. Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest man who ever lived, should have opposition?

But you see the same thing today. Again and again we see it.

All Types of Gedolim

Therefore, don't say, "Well, that story of Korach is only Moshe Rabbeinu. But this *Gadol* or that *Gadol,* this *rosh yeshiva* or another one, who is *he* compared to Moshe Rabbeinu?"

Because Hashem says, "And who are *you* compared to Korach? Korach was a very great man. You're a nobody, so you surely cannot make *machlokes*. You're not fit even to open your mouth!"

Korach in the Home

But it's even more than that. Did it occur to you that it also means that you shouldn't look for *machlokes* with your wife or with your husband? That you shouldn't make *machlokes* with your neighbors or with your mother-in-law? That if you're busy with *machlokes* with any Jew, you're transgressing וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ ?

Membership in K'hal Adas Korach

Why did the earth open its big mouth to swallow Korach? Because Korach opened his big mouth. So don't open your mouth! Because even today, the earth opens its mouth to bury men. Many are swallowed in an early grave because they opened their mouths. And what's even worse, many are swallowed into Gehenom just like Korach was.

To be swallowed by a cemetery is nothing like the problem of being swallowed by Gehenom.

And therefore, our function is that we have to follow the *Gedolei Yisroel* implicitly. Korach, he's our model forever to be careful to avoid *machlokes,* to not open our mouths against the Torah authorities. Even in your yeshiva, your synagogue, you shouldn't be rebellious against the *rav* or the *rebbi.* Even though he doesn't have wings sprouting under his *kapote*, even though he can't make any *mofsim* and there is no halo around him, he is the one that Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought to you; he's your Moshe Rabbeinu. So don't make *machlokes;* don't do anything to weaken his authority.

That's what it means, "Don't be like Korach." You're forewarned now; if you get involved, you are being judged by what you would have been in the days of Korach. - In the days of Korach, you would have been *Adas Korach.* Certainly, you would have been there!

Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshutz • "Author of Yaaros Dvash"

Rabbi Yonasan Eibeshutz was born about the year 5450 (1690) in Krakow, Poland. He was from a family of rabbis that went back to Rabbi Natan Shapira (author of Megaleh Amukot) and to the Arizal.

At the age of 3, his father, Rabbi Nasan Neta, Rav of the city of Eibeshutz, put him into cheder. On his first day there, as the teacher taught his class the alphabet, he came to the letter פּ and asked the students, "What do we call this letter when there is a *tzeirei* underneath below it?"

All the students answered in unison: Pei.

"Have you no questions to ask me, dear children?" the teacher added.

The children kept quiet. Only little Yonasan jumped to his feet and shouted, "Yes! Why is a tzereh needed under the pei? Even without it, we still call it pei."

The teacher looked at Yonasan with satisfaction and said, "Shame on you all. You all deserve to be punished. This little darling, who just arrived in cheder today, knows more than all of you."

Yonasan, who had not yet learned to respect his teacher, continued with a smile: "The Rebbe deserves a question too."

"What is your question?" the teacher asked him with a smile.

"You could have asked this same question before, when we learned the letter ה hei," the child responded with a grin!

The melamed immediately recognized that this new student possessed an extraordinary mind. Even as a very young child, Rabbi Yonasan was already analyzing language with remarkable precision and logic, foreshadowing the greatness for which he would later become famous.

Rabbi Yonasan lost his mother as a boy, and his father passed away before his Bar Mitzvah. From that moment on, he began to wander from place to place, sometimes under the roof of Torah greats. A teacher such as Rabbi Meir Eisenstadt, author of Panim Meirot, let him stay with him in Prusnitz for several years, and his close relative, Rabbi Eliezer Ettinger, admitted him into his yeshiva in Holleschau.

Besides his great abilities, Rabbi Yonasan was recognized for his boundless diligence. With the same fervor that he put into the study of the Gemara and its Poskim, he also studied the Zohar and the writings of the Arizal to the point that he knew them by heart. He also had an understanding of philosophy, astronomy, the natural sciences and medicine, and he knew several languages.

He was already known as a Gaon by the age of 18, and he was offered the position of Rav in the Jewish community of Yongvontslo in Bohemia. After staying there for three years, he left and settled in Prague.

In 5510 (1750), Rabbi Yonasan was chosen to head the Jewish communities of Altona, Hamburg, and Vedsbeck, a position that was considered as one of the most important and prestigious in Germany. There he remained until his final day, Elul 21, 5524 (1764).

Far from staying enclosed in the tent of Torah study, Rabbi Yonasan was involved in public life and troubled himself for the good of the community. He had friendly relations with political figures and discussed matters with bishops and priests. Because of his influence, the Talmud (which up to then the popes had forbidden) was allowed to be printed.

We have many stories and legends concerning Rabbi Yonasan's wisdom in his discussions with all kinds of enemies of the Jew people, ones whose mouths he shut by his lively retorts.

Rabbi Yonasan was a great scholar with an extremely sharp mind. The king had heard of him, and he often called him to the palace to chat with him and delight in his wisdom. The king's ministers, however, hated the Jewish people and were jealous of him. They constantly looked for ways to lower the Rav in the eyes of the king, yet he always found a way to answer them by reducing their words to nothing.

One day, Rabbi Yonasan left his home to go pray in synagogue. At that moment the king's coach was passing in the street and the king ordered his driver to stop. He asked the Rav to come over, and the king then asked, "Where are you going, honored Rabbi?"

"I do not know, your majesty," replied Rabbi Yonatan.

"You don't know?" the king repeated, quite angry. "How can a person not know where he is going?"

"Such is the case, your majesty. I do not know."

This reply greatly infuriated the king, who thought that this Jew was mocking him. He called for a guard and ordered him to take the

Rabbi into prison. The guard did so, and the king continued on his way.

Several hours later, the king ordered one of his servants to go and remove the Rav from prison and bring him to him.

When Rabbi Yonatan came before the king, he asked him, "How could you dare lie to me? Did you really not know where you were going?"

"I was careful not to lie, your majesty," Rabbi Yonatan replied. "I said only the truth. If the king had asked me where I was planning to go, I would have told him that I wanted to go to synagogue. But he asked me where I was going – and truthfully, that I did not know. The proof is that I thought I was going to synagogue, but in the end I was taken into prison!"

Strive For Peace

וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לִקְרֹא לְדָתָן וְלַאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נַעֲלֶה - *Moshe sent to call Dasan and Aviram, the sons of Eliav, but they said, "We will not go up."*

Rashi says: **מִכָּאן שֶׁאֵין מַחֲזִיקִין בְּמַחֲלֹקֶת, שֶׁהָיָה מֹשֶׁה מְחַזֵּר אַחֲרֵיהֶם לְהַשְׁלִימָם בְּדִבְרֵי שָׁלוֹם - *'From here we derive that one should not persist in a dispute, because Moshe sought them out to conciliate them with peaceful words.'***

From Moshe Rabbeinu, we learn that we should do whatever is in our power to end a machlokes. Shalom, peace, is the greatest vessel for berachah, and machlokes is the opposite. Machlokes is compared to fire; it can rage out of control and cause tremendous destruction. That is why Chazal say that, if necessary, we may even say an untruth for the sake of shalom.

Gedolei Yisrael sometimes disagree, but they do so respectfully and are careful to ensure that no one's feelings are hurt.

Mishnah Berurah is the classic sefer of daily halachah written by the **Chofetz Chaim**. While the Chofetz Chaim quotes many, many Rishonim and Acharonim in Mishnah Berurah, in only one instance does he quote a gadol of his own generation. In Chapter 585, the Chofetz Chaim quotes **Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk**, author of two famous sefarim, Meshech Chochmah on the Torah and Ohr Same'ach on the Rambam.

What is most interesting is that Rav Meir Simchah's comment does not appear in the original edition of Mishnah Berurah; it was added in a later edition. The Chofetz Chaim's son in-law **Rav Mendel Zaks** said that the following story is what caused that comment to be added:

In 1910, the Czar of Russia ordered all rabbanim to become fluent in the Russian language. Until then, most rabbanim spoke Yiddish, and not Russian. A meeting of rabbanim was held in St. Petersburg to discuss the Czar's decree. Rav Meir Simchah and Rav Dovid of Karlin felt that the rabbanim should go along with the decree, while Rav Chaim Soloveitchik and Rav Shalom Ber of Lubavitch felt that they should challenge it. When it seemed that most rabbanim were going to side with Rav Meir Simchah, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik sent word to the Chofetz Chaim, then in his mid-seventies, to come to St. Petersburg and let his voice be heard.

The Chofetz Chaim arrived and sided with Rav Chaim. His opinion was decisive. The Chofetz Chaim was concerned that perhaps he had hurt Rav Meir Simchah's feelings or indirectly caused dishonor to him by opposing his opinion. To make up for this, he included a dvar Torah of Rav Meir Simchah's in his Mishnah Berurah.

The fact that this was the only time that a contemporary is mentioned in Mishnah Berurah was a great kavod for the Rav of Dvinsk, and a great lesson about the lengths to which a Jew must go to avoid even a possibility of machlokes.



"Take, for yourselves, fire pans, Korach and his entire congregation. and place fire in them and put incense upon them before Hashem, tomorrow; and it will be that the man who will be chosen by Hashem, he is the holy one." (16:5,6)

Rashi (16:7) says that Korach was a brilliant man. What led him to believe that he would emerge from this test while Aharon and the other 250 men would perish?

Rashi answers that Korach misunderstood a prophetic vision. Korach saw great men descending from him. Amongst them was the prophet Shmuel who was equal in importance to Moshe and Aharon together (see also Tehillim 99:6).

Korach assumed that he would be saved in Shmuel's merit. Korach also saw twenty-four mishmaros, shifts of Leviim who would participate in the Bais Hamikdash service, from among his grandchildren. All of them would possess Ruach HaKodesh, prophetic spirit.

Korach concluded from this prophetic vision that he himself was a righteous individual and would be the one who would remain alive after the sacrifice of the incense.

Rashi says that Korach did not realize that he would die, his sons would repent, and that these great people would descend from his children. Korach made a fatal error that cost him his life.

Rabbi Yissachor Frand asks a question from sefer Zayis Ra'anan (cited in sefer Be'er Yosef). Why in fact didn't the merit of having such great descendants save Korach?

Sefer Zayis Ra'anan gives a fascinating answer.

The reason why Korach merited such great descendants was because his death created a Kiddush Hashem. Theoretically, had Korach repented and not died in that miraculous fashion, these great people would not have descended from him. The kiddush Hashem that came about from Korach was that he challenged the authority of Moshe Rabbeinu and caused a public validation of Moshe Rabbeinu's authenticity through a miracle. The entire nation saw the miracle and proclaimed, "Moshe is true and his Torah is true."

Korach caused all this to happen. Never again would anyone question the authenticity of Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership! Korach's intentions were wicked and he did what he did for the worst reasons in the world. However, it did create a kiddush Hashem of the highest magnitude. He was rewarded for that by having special descendants. - Hashem rewards anyone who participates in the sanctification of His Name.

Short Story by Yoni Schwartz

Rav Chaim Walkin, ZT"L, was a well-known and sought-after Mashgiach in Bayit Vegan. When his family was sitting shiva after his passing, a man walked in and told them, "I wanted to thank your father. He always would say the funniest jokes, and it really picked me up during difficult times."

The family was a little confused. "I'm sorry," they said, "you must have the wrong family. Our father was a very serious man."

"No, no," replied the man. "I knew your father for many years, and he would always brighten my day with something humorous."

The family did a little research, and it turned out that around twenty years ago, this man had a young child who was unfortunately killed in a car accident. The town was buzzing. Somebody had to break the news to him, but who?

Rav Walkin stepped up and broke the hard news to him as sensitively as possible. Rav Walkin then realized that now, every time this man sees him, he's going to think of him as the person who told him his son had been killed, and it's going to remind him of that tragedy. So, Rav Walkin decided that he's going to do something to break that association, something that would brighten his day. He would always have a couple of jokes prepared, and whenever he saw him, he'd always tell the man one or two of them and share some positive words.

Comment: In this week's parsha, Korach, we learn about the incredible power of Lashon Harah. In last week's parsha, it led to Bnei Yisrael being told they cannot enter Israel. This week, we learn how it led to a massive revolt against Moshe's leadership.

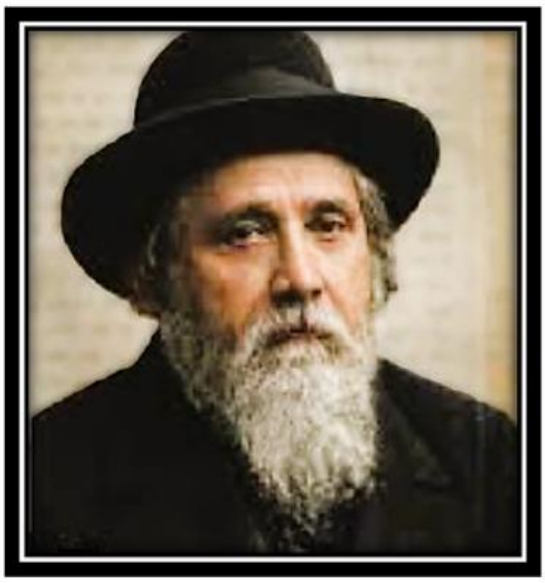
If evil speech is such a powerful, destructive force, then positive speech must be an equally powerful constructive force. So, next time we see somebody who struggles socially, maybe it's someone who others even find annoying at times, let us say something to brighten his or her day. We never know how powerful just a few small words can be.

Engraved Picture by Rabbi Moshe Hirschberg

Rabbi Yechiel Perr, (1935-2024) the longtime Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Derech Ayson of Far Rockaway, once heard that a man living in Far Rockaway had lived in the city of Dvinsk before WWII. Wanting to preserve whatever memories still remained from that world, Rabbi Perr sent a group of *bochurim* to meet him and absorb whatever they could.

The young men arranged a visit and sat around the fellow's dining room table hearing firsthand accounts of life in Dvinsk before the war. Although he was not religiously observant, the impressions of that great Torah world were still deeply rooted.

During the conversation, he shared an incident involving one of his Jewish neighbors.



This woman had once visited a non-Jewish neighbor in Dvinsk and was startled to see a large framed portrait hanging prominently on the wall. It was a picture of **Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk**, the famed *Ohr Sameach* (1843–1926).

Surprised, she asked, "Why do you have a picture of Reb Meir Simcha hanging in your home?"

The woman explained that she had once become entangled in a terrible legal case. False testimony, forged documents, and corrupt accusations had all been brought against her. No matter how much she appealed or defended herself, the case continued moving against her. Desperate, she even turned to the local *galach* (priest) for a blessing, but nothing changed.

Finally, someone advised her to seek a *brachah* from Reb Meir Simcha. She went to him and received his warm blessing. Then, miraculously, the very next morning the entire case turned around. The accusations collapsed, the charges were dismissed, and she was granted the pension that had been previously denied to her.

Out of overwhelming gratitude and admiration, she hung a large framed picture of Reb Meir Simcha on her otherwise bare wall, a constant reminder of the salvation she had experienced.

The *bochurim*, hearing this story from the emotionally animated survivor, became excited. Surely, they thought, this must have stirred something within him. Perhaps this recognition of greatness would awaken him to return to a life of *Torah* and *mitzvos*.

"What a *mofes*!" they exclaimed.

The man immediately waved them off in his thick Litvish accent. "*Meifis-shmeifis!*" he said. This is no *mofes*. "*Dus is keiach haTeireh*!" This is the power of Torah!

Despite how far he himself had drifted, deep inside him there remained an unshakable truth, etched into his very being: that the power of Torah is real, immeasurable, and capable of changing the world itself.

The *bochurim* walked away deeply moved. They realized that even a Jew who had wandered far could still carry within him an absolute awareness of the infinite strength of *Torah*, that through *koach haTorah*, impossible barriers can crumble, harsh decrees can be overturned, and salvations can emerge from places no one could have imagined.



Taire Yiden, we just finished *Parshas Shelach*, the whole inyan of the *Meraglim*. Where did it come about, the whole inyan of the *Meraglim*? Because they didn't learn from Miriam. The *Torah HaKedosha* tells us Miriam spoke *Lashon Hara* on *Moshe Rabbeinu*, *vlo lakchu mussar* and they didn't take *mussar* from Miriam. Every day we have after *davening* we say *Shesh Zechirus*.

One of them is **זכור את אשר עשה ה' למרים בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים**. *Freigt* the *heiliger* ***Arugas HaBosem***, why in the world do we have to talk about Miriam and mention her name, that she's the one who spoke *Lashon Hara*? If you want to bring out a point and you want to speak

about *Lashon Hara*, just say not to talk *Lashon Hara*. But why do you have to mention Miriam's name?

Zogt the *heiliger Arugas HaBosem*, because over here the Torah says everybody knows Miriam was a *Tzadkeis*. Miriam was the one who saved *Moshe Rabbeinu*, **ותתצב אחתו מרחק לדעה מה יעשה לו**.

And Miriam meant it *L'shem Shamayim*. And the Torah is teaching us a lesson: even when you're speaking *L'shem Shamayim*, even when you mean someone's biggest *tova*, you have to watch and consider your words, every word that you said. And that was the *tayna* on the *Meraglim*. They also meant *L'shem Shamayim*, but *L'shem Shamayim* could bring down the best people around.



I want to share with you such a great story. There was a *Yid* who lived in Europe, *a mol* in Europe there was a *kretshme*. He had a liquor store. And he had to go away on business, so he called in his daughter and he told his daughter, "I want you to watch the liquor store for a couple days".

After a couple days when he came back, people came to him, they said, "Your daughter did something terrible in the liquor store, she did something a big *aveira*". And the whole town was talking about it. And whenever she went, wherever she walked, they said, "Ah, there's that girl, there's that girl". And they would keep on talking, the whole town.

As years went on, couldn't do a *shidduch* and she was already twenty-seven, twenty-eight, and the father didn't know what to do,

"Should I move out of the town? Should I stay in the town?". Finally he found at the end of the town there was an *eltere bochur*, his name was '*Aaron de Shmasse*, Aaron the Whipper'. He used to sit on the horses and whip that horse. And *Aaron de Shmasse*, he was a single boy.

And the father approached him, "Do you want to marry my daughter?". He says, "For sure, nobody wants to marry me". Finally they set a date for the *chuppah*. He came to the *chuppah* and they were ready to be **מקדש את עמו ישראל בקדושה**.

And the girl turned around and she picked her eyes up to the *Shamayim* and she said, "*Tate in Himmel*, You know the truth. You know that I didn't do anything wrong. You know that I wanted to marry a *Ben Yeshiva*, *Talmid Chacham*. But it didn't happen.

Der Eibister, **לעלובת נפש תושיע במהרה בימינו**. Give me children *Talmidei Chachamim*. Give me kids that are going to be great *Talmidei Chachamim*".

And we find out who her children were. Her children was the *heiliger* ***Amudei Or, Rebi Yechiel Heller***. - And when he signs his name in the *tshuvos*, he signs **יחיאל בן רבי אהרן דשמאסע "העלוב"** - '*the humiliated one*'. And not only one child, no four children, the *Chossen Yeshuos* and *kama Rabbanim* in Europe, all from this story.

Look what we see over here. Words could break people. But on the other hand, when you're standing under the *chuppah*, she raised her eyes with a cry, "*Eibister Ne'eman*, now is the time that my *tefillah* could break all the worlds and You could be *mekabel* my *tefillah*".

ה' שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך. We have a chance to help people, to make people. Don't break people, lift them up, elevate them, and with that we'll all be *zoiche* that when we *daven* to the *Eibister*, the *Eibister* listen to our *tefillas* and your children will be *Talmidei Chachamim* **עד ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו אמן**.

Parsha Burst- Permanent Resting Places - Rabbi Jeremy Golker




Every single word of *Torah* is measured and is perfectly constructed and appropriate. Let me give you an example from this week's *sedra parshas Korach*. Something which is easy to miss but I saw in the writings of the ***Imrei Shefer***. A beautiful, beautiful idea.

ויקם משה וידבר אל העדה לאמר. *Moshe Rabbeinu* is facing a rebellion. And it says **סורו נא מעל אהלי האנשים הרשעים האלה**. He tells everyone to leave the tents of these wicked people who are rebelling. **ואל תגעו בכל אשר להם פן תספו בכל חטאתם**. You're going to get caught up in this. And again, the next *pasuk* in the *pasuk chaf zayin* it says **ויעלו מעל משכן קרח דתן ואבירם מסביב ודתן ואבירם יצאו נצבים פתח אהליהם**. We keep referring to the tents of these people as a tent, an *ohel*.

But yet, when the *pasuk* concludes and says **ותפתח הארץ את פיה**, the land opened its mouth, **ותבלע אתם ואת בתיהם**, we don't refer to *ohaleihem*, we refer to a *bayis*.

Why does it change from an *ohel* to a *bayis*?

The answer is this: A tent is a temporary dwelling place. A house connotes a permanent dwelling place. In the desert, their homes are referred to as tents.

However, once Korach and his followers were swallowed into the ground, their tents become their permanent resting places and therefore they're called houses.

Every single word of *Torah* is measured and is perfect. That's why the *Torah* switches from referring to their homes as an *ohel* to *boteihem* because at that point they were their permanent resting places.

TORAH TAVLIN

STORIES AND SAYINGS, WIT AND WISDOM FROM OUR TORAH LEADERS

וירדו הם וכל אשר להם חיים שאולה וגו' (טז-לג)

There is a familiar saying that goes as follows: ***"That man is so wealthy, he's as rich as Korach!"***

It is for us to understand, what is the infatuation that we have with Korach's wealth? Why are we so hung up about it? Weren't there any notably rich people, other than Korach?

The answer, says the Rebbe, **R' Boruch Mordechai ZT"L of Shedlitz**, is quite obvious. In the case of many wealthy people, during their lifetime they are practically living legends of wealth and prosperity. They appear to lack nothing with an endless cash flow. However, when it's their time to leave this world, somehow the legend tends to dissipate when it becomes obviously clear that their wealth was not as vast as it was made out to be.

In this particular respect, Korach has no competitors. Korach descended into the mouth of the earth together with all the wealth and riches that he accumulated throughout his lifetime. He literally "Took it all with him!" Along with his considerable possessions, he also took the legend of his great wealth - as well as the proof of how great it really was!

He remained, and always will remain, rich throughout!

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אותם ואת בתיהם....ואת כל הרכוש (טז-לב)

Chazal tell us that Korach was one of the richest men to have ever lived. However, all this could not help him as his wicked ways led to his eventual downfall and his horrible and unusual demise.

An extremely wealthy Jew made a special trip from his home in California, to consult with the previous **Lubavitcher Rebbe, R' Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson ZT"L** ,about a major business venture. After listening to the details of the business deal, the Rebbe advised him to take a certain course of action that would surely benefit him handsomely.

The wealthy man was overjoyed and felt an immense relief that his Rebbe was able to provide him with sound advice. After all discussion of business was concluded, R' Yosef Yitzchok began talking to the man about personal issues in his life and the manner in which he conducted his daily routine.

Soon enough, it became quite apparent to the Rebbe that there were many areas of Yiddishkeit, in which this rich Jew, and his family, were remiss, especially in their performance and observance of many important Mitzvos. The Rebbe, in his patient and warm way, of course, urged the man to adopt a more religious lifestyle and to slowly, but surely, change his ways.

"Rebbe, you don't understand," replied the man, who was a bit taken aback by the Rebbe's overtures, "while your ideas are very nice, they're simply not practical in the circumstances in which I live."

R' Yosef Yitzchok looked surprised. "I just don't understand you," said the Rebbe, shaking his head, "you travel three thousand miles to come to me for my advice in business, and you are more than willing to accept my advice even though I'm far from a businessman. On the other hand, when it comes to Mitzvos and religious observance, which is the area in which my ancestors and I have specialized in for many generations - then you're not willing to listen to me?"

The wealthy man took these words to heart and began the journey back to complete religious observance.

Torah Gems

ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי וכו' (טז-א)

The Torah tells us that Korach took something but does not tell us what he took. Many Meforshim over the centuries have dealt with this question. The truth is that he took ***everything*** for himself.

Explains **R' Dovid Feinstein Zt'l**, Hashem entrusted Korach with great wealth to use for His service, and Korach made the mistake of thinking that he had earned it himself. He treated it as if it belonged to him, and he could do with it as he pleased. Thus, Korach's very wealth – his trait of always taking – was his downfall.

On the other hand, a wealthy person – who acknowledges that his money really belongs to Hashem and regards himself as nothing more than an administrator of a trust fund – will find his wealth to be a true blessing. If he diligently and faithfully oversees the fund which has been entrusted to him, in accordance with all the wishes and instructions of it's true owner, then he can be assured of a handsome reward in this world and the next.

Parsha Points to Ponder by Rav Ozer Alport

After the leader of each tribe gave a staff with his name written on it to Moshe, Moshe placed them in the Mishkan. The next day, only Aharon's staff had blossomed, sprouting ripe almonds, thereby proving his legitimacy as Kohen Gadol (17:21-24).

What other miracle did Aharon's staff perform during that time that ensured that the other staffs would not sprout?

The **Baal HaTurim** notes that the pasuk states that Aharon's staff was placed among **מטותם** – their staffs. This word is also used in Shemos 7:12, where the Torah records that after Pharaoh's sorcerers turned their staffs into snakes, Aharon's staff swallowed **מטותם**.

The word is used here to teach that just as Aharon's staff swallowed the other staffs in Egypt, his staff also swallowed the staffs of the other tribes, and for this reason, only his staff blossomed. When Moshe removed his staff, it expelled all the others, and for this reason, the word **מטת** is written **חסר** (without the letter **ו**) to hint that at the time Moshe removed them, there was only one staff left to take out.



Chizuk - Inspiration

A Collision of Conscience

It began with the sudden crack of a car door against our vehicle. A woman had parked beside us and flung her door open at the exact moment we passed, striking our car with a force that left the damage staring back at us. But instead of apologizing, she turned the blame on us. She claimed we had driven into her door and threatened to take us to court.

I was burning with anger. I told my husband we could not simply let this go—we had to fight, to defend ourselves, to demand justice. But he would not. My husband does not avoid conflict out of fear. He does it from strength. He chooses peace when pride demands a battle. "Let it go," he said quietly, and kept driving. Out of respect for him, I swallowed my protest. But inside, the ache for justice did not leave me.

So I did the only thing left to do: I prayed. I asked Hashem to make it right in another way. Perhaps, I thought, someone else would hit that very same spot, and then the repair would somehow be covered. It was an unusual prayer—almost too strange to say aloud—but I meant every word.

The very next day, something astonishing happened. As I was driving, a car beside me suddenly swerved without warning—no signal, no reason—and crashed into the exact same place. The driver,

a young woman named Liora, rushed out in distress, apologizing again and again. She explained that she was new behind the wheel and desperately hoped to avoid involving insurance. "I'll pay whatever it costs," she promised. In that moment, it felt as though Heaven had answered me directly.

We exchanged information, and I told her I would speak with my husband. But when I told him what had happened, he looked at me gently and said, "You know we can't take anything from her. That area was already damaged. If we cannot clearly identify what harm she caused, we cannot accept payment." I was stunned. Everything had seemed to fall perfectly into place. My heart screamed, "This is your chance. Take it!" But my conscience would not let me rest.

The decision weighed on me more than I expected. At last, I called Liora and told her she owed us nothing. For a moment, the line was silent. Because the incident had happened around Tisha B'Av time, she finally said, deeply moved, "You are the most honest person I have ever met. Because of you, I promise I will fast next year on Tisha B'Av."

I did not know whether she would keep that promise. But a year later, as the fast was ending, I turned to my husband and said, "I wish I knew if Liora kept her word." Just then, my phone lit up with a message from her. She had fasted on Tisha B'Av—and even more, she had begun keeping Shabbos. "All because of your honesty," she wrote.





What food did Klal Yisrael eat on the day of Korach's revolt?



Nothing. On the day of Korach's revolt, the mon never fell, which left everyone without food.





In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Korach*, we learn about *Korach* who had the audacity to challenge the leadership and the decisions of *Moshe Rabbeinu*. *Moshe* responds to *Korach*, "You know what? Let's make a deal.

I'll bring a *korban* and let your side bring a *korban*. Let's see which *korban* is accepted in *shamayim*." That will be the litmus test of who's right in this *machlokes*. At that moment, *Moshe Rabbeinu* offers a silent *tefilla*. "Please *Hashem*, don't accept the *korban* of *Korach*."

Really? *Moshe Rabbeinu* had to *daven* for this?

If *Korach*'s *korban* was accepted, it would have caused a tremendous *chilul Hashem*. It would have changed the future of *Klal Yisrael*. There's no way *Hashem* would have accepted *Korach*'s *korban*. Why did *Moshe Rabbeinu* have to *daven* for this?

The answer is *Moshe Rabbeinu* was teaching us an incredible lesson, one that we need to internalize every single day of our lives, and that is the *koach*, the power, of one sincere *tefilla*. If *Korach* would have *davened* one sincere *tefilla*, *Hashem* would have had to answer him and it would have caused damage. - So, *Moshe Rabbeinu* had to counteract that by offering his own *tefilla*.

During a military operation, a young soldier Uri was sent into a dangerous area. Before leaving, he called home. His mother didn't answer. He tried again, no answer. A third time, still nothing.

Frustrated, he left a voicemail. "Mom, I'm heading in now. I just wanted to hear your voice."

That night, the mission turned deadly. Several soldiers were wounded badly and Uri himself narrowly escaped. When he finally returned exhausted and shaken, he called home. His mother answered immediately.

The first thing she said was, "Uri, are you okay?"

"Yes," he replied. "How did you know something happened?"

She began to cry. "Because all night I couldn't sleep. I don't know why, I just kept saying *tehillim*. I felt I needed to, again and again. I felt like I just couldn't stop."

Uri sat, he remembered the unanswered call, and he realized that while he was trying to reach his mother, she had already been reaching for him.

The power of *tefilla* is great. *Hashem* is waiting and anticipating every single one of our *tefillos*.

That's the message that *Moshe Rabbeinu* is teaching us in this week's *parsha*. Every *tefilla* is heard, every *tefilla* is special. It just takes a genuine, real *tefilla*, and it can shake the heavens.

Gut Shabbos.

"When a person is occupied with his own avodas Hashem, he has neither the time nor the inclination to measure himself against others. Korach looked outward instead of inward. The servant of Hashem asks, 'What is my task?' not 'Why does someone else have more than I do?'" ~ Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe.

Bringing Sholom into the World – Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff Shlita

It is a difficult Parshah. Many tzaddikim and Rebbes were reluctant to speak on Parshas Korach because it deals with such painful matters—kinah, machlokes, and destructive middos. Yet perhaps we can learn from Korach in the opposite way and discover a positive path of chizuk.

The Parshah begins with the words "**וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח**". What exactly did Korach take? Chazal discuss this at length, and the Midrash says, "**לקח מקח רע לעצמו**". However, I once saw a beautiful explanation quoted from **Rav Dessler**:

The Torah is describing Korach's personality. Korach was a "vayikach" person—a taker. There are people in life who are takers and people who are givers. Korach was concerned with his own kavod, his own interests, and his own ambitions. Such people use the world for themselves.

On the other hand, there are people who are here to give—to care for others, to provide comfort, honour, and support. Those are the people who sustain the world. From Korach we learn the contrast between taking and giving.

We see in this Parshah the terrible destruction caused by machlokes. Rather than focus on the ugliness of machlokes itself, let us focus on the greatness of shalom. We must train ourselves to avoid even the smallest traces of separation and discord—in the home, in the community, and in all relationships.

Chazal tell us in Chullin that **אין העולם מתקיים אלא בשביל מי שבולם פיו בשעת מריבה**—the world endures because of those who restrain themselves during an argument. Specifically during an argument, when emotions are running high.

Sometimes a disagreement begins over something very small. A person comes home tired or hungry and says something insensitive.

Suddenly there is tension. Yet if one holds back, remains silent, or responds kindly, he preserves peace. That is "**תולה ארץ על בלימה**"—the world stands because of those who know when to stop themselves.

Similarly, Chazal say, "**כל רודף את השלום אין תפילתו חוזרת ריקם**". One who pursues peace does not have his tefillos returned empty-handed. Perhaps that is why we conclude Shemoneh Esrei with **שים שלום**.

The Rambam writes at the end of Hilchos Chanukah that **כל התורה ניתנה לעשות שלום**. The entire Torah was given to bring peace. We even find that HaKadosh Baruch Hu allows His Name to be erased in order to restore peace between husband and wife. The importance of shalom cannot be overstated.

Yet there is one additional point. How does a person become someone who lives peacefully with others?

The answer is that he must first be at peace with himself.

Korach was not at peace with himself. He could not accept his own role and position. He desired greater honour and greater status. Although he possessed enormous talents and accomplishments, he was dissatisfied. Because he lacked inner peace, he created division and drew countless others into conflict.

The first step toward peace with others is peace within oneself.

The Torah says, "**בוקר ויודע ה' את אשר לו**". Rashi, citing Chazal, explains that Moshe told Korach that just as day cannot become night and night cannot become day, so too every person has his designated place.

Perhaps there is an even deeper lesson. The Ribbono Shel Olam created a world in which every person has a unique purpose and mission. Where you are is where Hashem placed you. Your role is yours alone. Wishing to be someone else runs contrary to the very design of Creation.

This helps explain the phrase "**עושה שלום במרומיו**". Why is there peace among the malachim? Because there is no jealousy. Every malach has a unique task that no other malach can fulfil. Therefore there is harmony.

When we say "**עושה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו**", we ask that same harmony be granted to us. Each person has his own mission, his own opportunities, and his own contribution to make for kavod Shamayim. No one else can fulfil our task, and we cannot fulfil theirs.

Much dissatisfaction and conflict stem from constantly comparing ourselves to others. But when a person accepts where Hashem has placed him, he can live with inner peace and extend that peace to others.

This was the greatness of Aharon HaKohen. Aharon was an **אוהב שלום ורודף שלום** because he was completely at peace with himself. Chazal tell us that he was never jealous of Moshe Rabbeinu. He could easily have been. He was older, yet Moshe became the leader of Klal Yisrael. Nevertheless, Aharon accepted his role with joy.

Because he had peace within himself, he was able to bring peace to the entire world.

The pasuk says, "**ואהרן מה הוא כי תלינו עליו**". I once heard a beautiful explanation. Moshe was saying: You want to know why Aharon was chosen as Kohen Gadol? Look at how he reacts when people challenge him. How does he respond when others have complaints against him? Does he become angry? Does he fight back?

Korach challenged the very foundation of Aharon's Kehunah, yet Aharon remained silent. The Ramban even writes that Aharon considered whether perhaps Korach was right and he himself was unworthy.

That level of humility and self-acceptance made him the perfect candidate for Kehunah Gedolah. He had no jealousy and no need to

prove himself. He knew that where Hashem placed him was exactly where he belonged.

We cannot speak enough about the need for shalom. In our interconnected communities, disagreements are inevitable—in families, kehillos, and mosdos. Yet every time a person avoids even a small dispute, every time he prevents even a slight feeling of separation, he increases peace in the world.

When we are at peace with ourselves and comfortable with who we are, we can be at peace with those around us and bring shalom to others.

In that zechus, may we merit the hashra'as haShechinah, for the Ribbono Shel Olam Himself is called the One who makes peace. May there be shalom within ourselves, shalom in our homes and communities, and may we always be among those who increase peace and bring kavod Shamayim to the world.

A gezunte and gebentshte Shabbos.



Destined death by Rabbi Shimon Kaplin

We all know that **בני קרח לא מתו**, initially they were part of **קרח**'s camp and they were swallowed up by the earth in this miraculous miracle, but at the final moment they did **תשובה** which stopped them falling into the abyss.

After the earth closed, everyone was shocked to see them clambering out after being saved as they fell, and of course they told everyone that they did **תשובה** at the last moment.

We see a *gevaldiga* thing, **הקב"ה** makes a **נס בתוך נס** – a miracle within a miracle, if a person is not deserving to be killed, he will survive.



I feel there was a similar message from **הקב"ה** only a few weeks ago. An Indian plane took off from an airport in India and after flying for two to three minutes it came crashing down into a building and turned into a ball of fire and huge flames rose from the crash site.

Miraculously one passenger survived, with only minor injuries.

If this person wasn't destined to die, then **הקב"ה** could have made him miss the flight, he could have had a flat tyre on the way to the airport, there are so many ways how **הקב"ה** could have stopped that person from dying on that flight.

The **הקב"ה** sent us a message, and the message is for us to understand that everything is with a **חשבון** in **שמים**, all the 241 people on that flight were supposed to die at that moment, the people in the building were supposed to die at that moment, and this person sitting in 11A was not supposed to die. **הקב"ה** could have orchestrated that he miss the flight, but **הקב"ה** is showing us that even in the most extreme circumstances where it's basically impossible to survive, if this person wasn't destined to die he will survive.

Many **גויים** started booking seat 11A on their flights thinking that the seat has a secret **מזל**.

It's got no **שייכות** to the seat, this person was meant to survive.

It's Not Just Calm Down

Moshe Rabeinu said to **קרח** - **בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו (ט"ז, ה')** – 'in the morning', **רש"י** explains, **משה** intended to delay them so that perhaps **קרח** would turn back and do **תשובה**. Usually, we learn this **פסוק** as follows: People normally calm down with time, **משה רבינו** was hoping that in the morning **קרח** will come to his senses.

However, if you look in the **ספרים** you will see that this is not the **פשט**. Korach wasn't a posh'teh mench – he was a great person, the **ספרים** explain that there was a teefa **מחלוקת** – there was a great debate over here between **משה רבינו** and **קרח**, it wasn't just that he was being told wait and hopefully he will "calm down! - Sleep over it… it will be alright tomorrow morning…" it wasn't like when a child gets in a temper at home and the mother tells the child, "Go to bed! Sleep over it overnight! You'll be okay in the morning……or count till one hundred"

מרע"ה gave a different **פשט** in the message was giving to **קרח** with telling him "**בקר**". It wasn't just, "Time out! Go for a walk… you'll feel better when you come back…" that wasn't **פשט** here, we're speaking about **קרח**.

A spiritual well

Reb Pichos Koritzer זצ"ל explains, when a person goes to sleep, of course he is rejuvenating his body, he's recharging from a tiring day, this is all happening in the physical sense. However, the **ספרים** teach us that when one sleeps it's a time of **המתקת דינים**, the **נשמה** goes to a place in the **עולם העליון** which is called "**באר עליון**", which the **ספרים** teach is the **ראשי תיבות** for "**בידך אפקיד רוחי**", in Your hands I shall entrust my soul, this refers to the **נשמות** where the **באר עליון** goes.

באר in the physical sense is a place of **מים** – a place of water, and in the spiritual sense it's a place where the **נשמה** is **מטהר**, when a

person sleeps it goes to the **באר עליון** and in the **באר** it receives a **טהרה**.

The **באר** is **מטהר** the **נשמה**, it freshens the **נשמה**, the **נשמה** gets a boost of **חדשים לבקרים – התחדשות**, a person becomes renewed, and when a person becomes renewed – of course he did **תשובה**, it's not a matter of **דן לכף זכות** – he most defiantly did **תשובה**.

מרע"ה said to Korach, **בבקר** – 'in the morning', this wasn't a count to ten like we were taught in school, it wasn't a cool off, **פשט** in the **בקר** is, "When you go to sleep you will wake up with a different **נשמה** – you will wake up as a different person, in **שמים** they will be **מטהר** the **נשמה**, you will come back in a different frame of mind you will realise your error and see your **נגיעות**."

The big **קשיא** then is: So, what taka happened? Why didn't **קרח** wake up the next morning and say to **משה, "חטאתי! עויתי ופשעתי**!" What happened to the **טהרה** in **שמים**?!

The answer is **פשוט**: **He didn't go to sleep!**

What was he doing the whole night? **חז"ל** tell us that throughout the night he went around trying to gain support, he went around trying to fly his flag, trying to get a great following, as **רש"י (ט"ז, י"ט)** brings from **חז"ל, "כל הלילה ההוא הלך אצל השבטים ופתה אותם**", he went to the various tribes and convinced them, he didn't even have time to go to sleep.

Every single night

The truth is, this is not just a nice and interesting **פשט** in **פרשת קרח**, this is the **מציאות**. We are **מאמינים** in **מאמרי חז"ל** that the **נשמה** goes up during the night, and we are **מאמינים** in what the **ספרים הקדושים** write that the **נשמה** receives a gevaldiga **טהרה**, this is the **מציאות** which happens at night.

I once a heard from **ר' יונה לוין שליט"א** - **שינה** is the **גימטריא** of 365, this is the **רמז** in **שינה**, 'you have to sleep 365 nights of the year...' The **אריז"ל** writes: The **שינה** by day isn't a good **שינה**, in the

day the **נשמה** doesn't go up to **שמים** like it does by night (except on **שבת** afternoon the sleep then is like the sleep of during the week).

We have to sleep 365 times a year. Sleep is so important for every **בן עליה** and any person who is striving to shtieg in his **עבודת השם**.

It's known about the **Telzer Rov זצ"ל** that he would go to bed every night at the same time.

The **נצי"ב** would make sure his **בחורים** in his **ישיבה** would go to bed on time, he would come back to **ישיבה** to make sure the **בחורים** were actually sleeping.

The **חפץ חיים** would say that he suffered for months after skimping his sleep (the **חזון איש** said the same thing).

Sleep is not just a physical rejuvenation, it's a spiritual rejuvenation,

This is an **ענין** which we must take seriously as we mature, understanding the tremendous **חשיבות** of sleep which has become one of the greatest **יצר הרע**'s of today's generation in every **ישיבה** around the world, it's a rampant **יצר הרע** – a dangerous disease which is just getting worse and worse.

We have to be aware, when lacking sleep we can't function properly, as the **כתב סופר** writes, "**כי צריך זה כדי ללמוד בעיון**" – we need the sleep in order to learn **בעיון**.

We all need a **חיזוק** in this **ענין**. When missing a night sleep, we are missing out on a gevaldiga **טהרה** which is **שייך** for a person to receive during his sleep at night. All the **גדולים** would always go to sleep, they would wake up in the early hours of the morning, but at night they would sleep.

ר' מתתיהו סולומון would always say, "...how many **גדולים** got lost on the way to bed?..."



In this week's parshah the Torah commands us (17:5) **לא יהיה כקרח וכעדתו**, "Don't be like Korach and his congregation." We must do everything possible to avoid machlokes.

Moshe Rabbeinu was a man of peace and sought with all his strength to end the machlokes and make peace. As we see, (16:12, and 16:25), **וישלח משה לקרא לדתן ולאבירם... ויקם משה וילך אל דתן ואבירם** - Moshe was trying to make peace with Dasan v'Aviram. Rashi (16:22) writes, **מכאן שאין מחזיקין במחלוקת**, "We learn from here that one shouldn't persist in machlokes." We should try to make amends and end machlokes as quickly as possible.

Rashi (Sanhedrin 110.) writes, "We must learn from Moshe Rabbeinu. He forgave Dasan and Aviram for disgracing him and went to them to end the machlokes."

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh (16:25) asks why the pasuk states **ויקם משה וילך אל דתן ואבירם** -"Moshe arose and went to Dasan v'Aviram." Why does the Torah need to tell us **ויקם**, that Moshe stood up? If the Torah only wanted us to know that he had been sitting down before, why is this piece of information important to us 3000 years later?

Rabboysai! Please open your hearts to the holy words of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh:

The Ohr HaChaim replies, "It states **ויקם משה** to tell us that as soon as Moshe had decided to waive his dignity and to go and appeal to Dasan and Aviram, "he arose," i.e. he was elevated in the eyes of Hashem." Moshe humbled himself to go to Dasan v'Aviram to end the

machlokes, and therefore, he attained honour **לפני כבוד ענוה** humility is followed by honour.

Wow! What a powerful lesson!

The Shlah (Korach, Derech Chaim Tochachas Mussar, 26) writes, "Whatever a person can do to increase peace and to extinguish the fires of machlokes, he should do so. Moshe Rabbeinu was a king and the greatest navi, but that didn't stop him from reaching out to Dasan and Aviram to make peace.

ויקם משה teaches us that as soon as Moshe had decided to waive his dignity and to go and appeal to Dasan and Aviram, "he arose," i.e. he was elevated in the eyes of Hashem."

A lesson for life!



Rav Grossman, the legendary *Rav* of *Migdal HaEmek*, shared the following story that transpired during the 1970s. During that period of time, **the *Kalover Rebbe*** himself, a Holocaust survivor, was living in the city of *Tiveria*, teaching *Torah*, spreading *Torah*, and disseminating *ahavas chinam*. That's what the *Rebbe* was all about.

And one evening, they're walking together, *Rav* Grossman and the *Kalover Rebbe*, who were close. And they're looking out at the beautiful, magnificent *Kinneret* at night. It's breathtaking. And the *Rebbe* points to an area further down and there's lights there and the *Rebbe* said, "What is that? It's on the other side." And *Rav* Grossman says, "It's a *moshav*, it's a *kibbutz*, it's a Jewish settlement." "Really?" *Rav* Grossman said.

"What's it called?" He said, "It's called *Ein Gev*." "How do you get there?" he says. "Well, we'd have to take a boat if we wanted to get there." "Great," *Rav* Grossman says. "Let's go!" "You have to take a boat." "Okay, so we'll arrange a boat."

And sure enough, the next day they arrange a boat and *Rav* Grossman in his *kapota* and his up hat, the *Kalover Rebbe*, *Chassidishe Rebbe*, they show up at this totally secular *kibbutz*. They walk in and the first thing the *Rebbe* does, the *Rebbe* walks over to a little boy and he says to him, **ילד איפה הבית כנסת?** Where's the synagogue? Where's the *shul*?" And the boy says, **אין בית כנסת פה זה קיבוץ חילוני**. There's no *beis k'nesses*, there's no synagogue, there's no *shul*, it's a secular *kibbutz*."

And the *Rebbe* was broken. He says, "How could it be that in a Jewish *kibbutz* in *Eretz Yisrael* there's no *beis k'nesses?*" And he was beside himself. He says, "*Rav* Grossman, this is crazy, what should we do about it?" Grossman said, "I don't know, we probably should talk to the guy who's in charge of the *kibbutz*." "Okay," the *Kalover Rebbe* said, "find him for me."

So they go and they figure out that the head of the *kibbutz* was a fellow by the name of *Muki Tzur*. They meet with *Muki* and the *Rebbe* is so full of *ahavas*, so full of love and the *Rebbe* says, "I mean this is a *Yiddishe kibbutz*, you know, I'm a Holocaust survivor," he says, "and we gave up everything for *Yiddishkeit* and here you could keep *Yiddishkeit* and it's free and you're not doing it."

And *Muki* was very moved by the *Rebbe* and he says, "Okay, so what's the first step?" And the *Rebbe* says, "I want you to arrange an evening where I'll come, everyone at the *kibbutz* will get together and it'll be a beautiful evening of *Torah*, of *chessed*, of *chizuk*, of just *achdus*, of unity." And *Muki* said, "Sure, when do you want to do it?" The *Rebbe* said, *"Motzaei Shabbos."* So *Motzaei Shabbos*, the *Rebbe* and *Rav* Grossman, they take a little boat, and they arrive at the *kibbutz*.

And at the shores of the *Kinneret*, the entire *kibbutz* is waiting for the *Rebbe* and for *Rav* Grossman. And they bring the *Rebbe* and *Rav* Grossman to the big public common area, a building where they had all the multipurpose things. And *Rav* Grossman speaks to them and he speaks straight from his heart and he says, "In my mind, in my heart, there's no such thing as religious and non-religious, there's no such thing as a *chiloni*, every *Yid* has *Hashem* in his heart, so every *Yid* is observant, you're observant, you have *Hashem* in your heart," and he inspires them. And then in a beautiful moment, *Rav* Grossman takes out a large *mezuzah,* and they walk over to the door of the *kibbutz*'s multipurpose room and the *Rebbe* makes a *berachah* and everyone answers *amen*.

And all of a sudden a woman starts crying out loud and she says, "I'm also a Holocaust survivor and I walked away from everything and I was from a family that was so dedicated to *Torah* and *mitzvos*, I must be an embarrassment to them."

And the *Rebbe* said, *"Chas v'shalom*, it's your journey, get closer, you'll see it'll make a difference." And on a whim, *Rav* Grossman who spoke a little bit, said to them, "Does anyone want a *mezuzah*? If you want a *mezuzah* for your little home, I can arrange a *mezuzah*."

And on the spot, 30 people asked for a *mezuzah*. And the evening concluded with singing of *Yisrael betach b'Hashem* and everyone sang and danced. It was an evening that was so lofty. And sure enough, *Rav* Grossman took care of 30 *mezuzahs* for a totally secular *kibbutz*.

What a *kiddush Hashem*! Incidentally, at that gathering was a young boy whose name was *Effie*. And this was *Effie's* first exposure to *Yiddishkeit*. And eventually he went on to become *frum* and *shomer Shabbos* and it was *Effie Eitam*, one of Israel's well-known personalities who always reminds *Rav* Grossman every time that he sees him that he's the one that started him on his journey.

My friends, that was an evening of tremendous *kiddush shem shamayim*, of bringing *Hashem* into this world in a beautiful way.

And the truth is that's the reason every single one of us was created: *mekadesh shem shamayim*, to make *Hashem*'s name in this world loftier, to be an ambassador for the *Ribbono Shel Olam*. And the scary thing is whether we like it or not, we are an ambassador for *Hashem*.



In Mexico City there's a very large *shul* and one day during the *Purim Seudah*, it's *Purim* evening already and they have a massive, massive *seudah* in the big multipurpose room downstairs in the *shul*. And there's hundreds and hundreds of *Yidden* that are there and the wine is flowing freely and there's music and it's beautiful and it's gorgeous.

And all of a sudden in the middle of all the festivities, *HaRav Tauil*, the Rabbi in Mexico at that time, sees the Chief of Police of Mexico City walking into their *Purim Seudah*. Now usually you meet the Chief of Police when there's trouble, but there's nothing wrong. So he goes over to the Chief of Police and he says: It's wonderful to welcome you to our *Purim Seudah*, but what brings you here now? Is everything okay?

The Chief of Police shares the most remarkable thing. He said there was a very large order of alcohol placed to the *shul*. They must have bought tequila and all kinds of a lot of tequila, tequila *gedolah*. And somehow somebody notified the police that there was a large

quantity of alcohol that had been ordered, and we figured there's probably a party.

Now we know Mexico City when there's a party where the alcohol flows freely, there's violence and often it's the underground and there's criminal activity, and sometimes it even ends in death. So we were concerned.

So we sent one or two police officers to be here. They weren't wearing anything that identified them as police officers, but in case something goes down they'd radio for help and we would come here in a big force, which we have not far away from here. He says at some point the police officer radios back to headquarters that he's never seen anything like this. People are drinking and they're drinking a lot, but there's so much love.

Everyone's just hugging each other and kissing each other and singing, and everyone's so happy. And there's not even an iota of nastiness, of negativity, of violence. And we thought back at headquarters that someone paid him off. They don't want the police going there.

I didn't believe him. Actually, Mexico City's police department has a lot of corruption, so I decided, you know, let me nip the corruption in the bud. So here I am. I came here expecting to see a full-blown violent underworld type party, but I've never seen anything like this in my life.

There's so much love, there's so much light in this room. I'm amazed. You people are not regular. - *Kiddush Hashem Shamayim.*

No one in the world is wealthier than one who studies Shaar HaBitachon (in Chovos Halevovos). And no one is happier than someone who has faith. ~ R' Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik zt"l.





Boost Of Inspiration - The Foolish Deal

Reb Shlomke Zvhiller, ZY"A, shared a profound insight (from the sefer Tzaddik Yesod Olam), a concept that can truly transform our lives, help us overcome the Yetzer Hara, and bring us deep, lasting peace.

When the Yetzer Hara tempts us, he tries to convince us that he's offering something exciting - a lucrative new opportunity or a pleasure we're currently missing. But in reality, he isn't offering anything new at all. He isn't bringing us new deals or genuine satisfaction; it's actually the complete opposite.

Think of it this way: he's not a business partner; he's a thief. He approaches us with a facade, pretending to offer an opportunity, while he's actually stealing from the fortunes we already possess.

The Gemara in Maseches Beitza (16a) teaches us that a person's provisions for the year are determined on Rosh Hashanah. Hashem has already blessed our accounts with parnassah, health, nachas, and all forms of true goodness. Our "accounts" are already overflowing. When the Yetzer Hara arrives with temptations whether it's lashon hara, or any other struggle he claims to have something new for us. But the "pleasure" he's trying to sell you is actually something he has siphoned from your own private account.

He takes the blessing meant for your parnassah or the nachas from your children, repackages it as an aveira, and says, "Look, here's

something new." If, chalila, we choose to take that deal, the "cost" is simply deducted from our own resources. Later, when we wonder why our accounts feel empty, we might ask, "But you promised me new pleasures!" He simply replies, "I cannot create new pleasures. I only took the joy you already possessed and reshaped it into the form of an aveira. It's your own loss."

Rav Shlomke explains that this is the Yetzer Hara's great trick. Once we truly grasp this that he has nothing to offer and is only stealing what is already ours—it becomes so much easier to stand firm and choose the path that protects our blessings.

Tefillah Reflections - The Power Of A Single Prayer

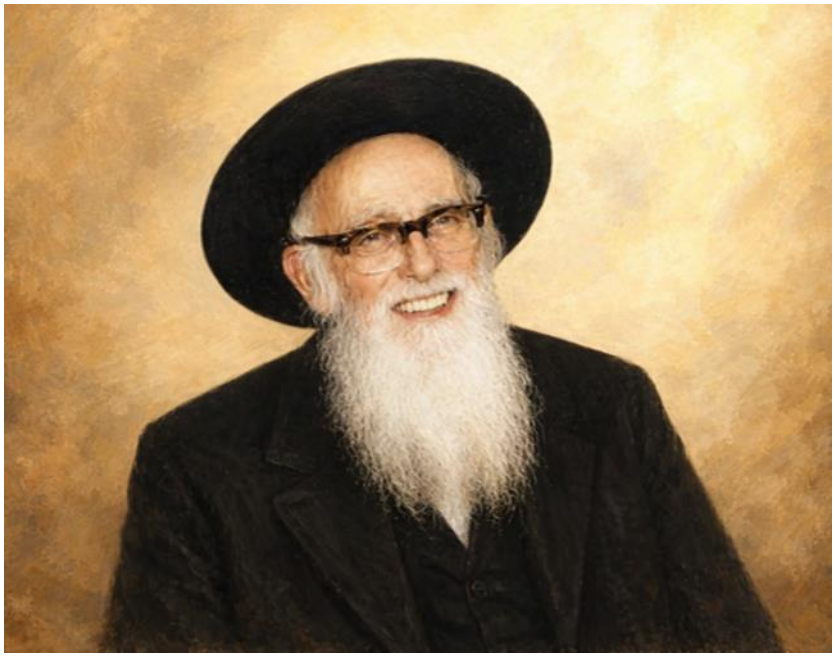
Leilui Nishmas The Lev Simcha, 5th Gerrer Rebbe, 7 Tamuz

The Lev Simchah of Gur once advised someone, "Prepare for your next prayer and endeavor that it be a special prayer with proper kavanah. Such a prayer has the power to elevate the prayers of seventy years." - ***It's worthwhile investing full kavanah in even one prayer, since it has the power to elevate all the prayers of a lifetime.***

The Privilege To Stand In Hashem's Presence

The Klausenberger Rebbe said: When you pray, know before Whom you are standing. Don't be like those people who rush through the tefillah and swallow it, while looking at the clock to make sure it does not take too long... That is way of coarse people, who do not appreciate the value of tefillah and belittle it. - We should regard tefillah as a privilege we want to take advantage of, not as a chore we want to end. [Leilui Nishmas the Yahrtzeit of The Klausenberger Rebbe, The Shefa Chaim, 9 Tamuz]

The Value of Shalom: Running From Machlokes



Gaon Yisroel and *Posek HaDor*, **HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, ztz"l**, was known to be *mevater* on his immense greatness in Torah knowledge and *middos*, and became known as an *ish shalom*. He possessed a certain way about him that made everyone feel incredibly comfortable in his presence.

There is one particular story told by his grandson that illustrates this beautifully.

Rav Shlomo Zalman was learning with his *talmidim* and *yungeleit*, with some aggressively shouting and rebuking him over a certain halachic ruling he had issued. They tried to convince him that his psak was entirely inappropriate.

Rav Shlomo Zalman simply sat there and listened to them.

After they finished speaking, he politely escorted them out.

When he returned, his grandson asked him, "Wow! Where does *Zaide* find the inner strength to tolerate such public shame from these people? They do not even come close to a millimeter of Zaide's *gadlus*. How could you remain so completely quiet?"

Rav Shlomo Zalman answered: "I want to tell you something. I was raised with an incredible *chinuch* to run away from *machlokes*. I was raised in Yerushalayim, Shaarei Chesed to be exact. One day, everyone was overjoyed by the wonderful news. The son-in-law of the Chafetz Chaim, Rabbi Aaron Cohen, was moving into our neighborhood. He was arriving from Europe. Everyone was ecstatic.

But then, something strange happened. After two months of his living there, Rabbi Cohen was suddenly nowhere to be found. Everyone grew worried. They went to his house and knocked on the door, but nobody answered.

After a while, fearing the worst, they broke open the door only to find the house completely empty. Not a single thing was left behind.

They began searching everywhere and questioning locals until someone mentioned seeing him rent a carriage to travel to the city of Yaffo. - They immediately sent a messenger to find out what was happening.

When the messenger located him, Rabbi Cohen sent back the following message: 'Before I moved to the Holy Land, I asked my father-in-law, the Chafetz Chaim, where I should live – Yerushalayim, Tzfas or Chevron?

The holy Chafetz Chaim told me, "It does not matter where you live. But I want you to give me your hand and shake on one condition: wherever you go, if a dispute breaks out, just run away. If there is *machlokes*, you pack up and run away that very day."

I gave him my hand and made that promise. I have been here for two months. This past week in the *shul*, elections were suddenly held for the *gabbaim*, and a massive dispute broke out. This person sided with one faction, and that person sided with the other. I immediately remembered the handshake I gave the Chafetz Chaim. That is why I fled immediately that very day with all my belongings."

Rav Shlomo Zalman turned to his grandson and said, "This is how I was raised. *Machlokes* is a consuming fire. You run away, pack your bags, and leave that very day. That is why, when those young men came here today, if I had answered them back, it would have sparked a dispute. Because I remained quiet, there was *shalom*."

This is a profound lesson for us all. We must realize that even the greatest leaders of our generation did not view *machlokes* as a minor

issue. They took it with the utmost seriousness. Even though they had every right to speak up and defend themselves, they restrained themselves because they truly understood the supreme value of peace and the immense destruction that conflict causes.

May we all strengthen ourselves in this area and merit to be true seekers of *shalom*.



Leilui Nishmas the Yahrtzeit of Rav Eliyahu Ben Rav Soliman Mani, 8 Tamuz

The yahrtzeit of Rabbi Eliyahu ben Rav Soliman Mani—the revered Chief Rabbi of Chevron and a leading Kabbalist—is observed on the 8th of Tammuz. Born in Baghdad in 1818, Rabbi Eliyahu Mani was a close disciple and associate of the Ben Ish Chai (Rabbi Yosef Chaim). In 1856, he fulfilled his lifelong dream of moving to Eretz Yisrael, eventually settling in Chevron where he served as the spiritual leader for over 40 years until his passing in 1899.

R' Eliyahu Mani writes: Berachos that we recite to Hashem are like keys of Heavenly treasure rooms, which bring down blessing and life to all the Worlds. But this is so only if a person recites the berachah with strong kavanah and enunciates the words properly.



How Will You Remember Me?

R' Shimon Baadani once asked one of his granddaughters, "When I pass away, what will you remember about your grandfather?"

After she mentioned a few things that were important to him, he said, "Always remember that I never fought with anyone. I always made peace. I would share my view, but in the end, I would find a way to make peace."





Korach's Vision — When Greatness Becomes a Michshol – Dr. Sholom Springer June 8th, *Chof-Tes Sivan 2009*

ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי. We all know the dramatic story of Korach: a brilliant, gifted leader who nevertheless launches a rebellion that ends in catastrophe. Chazal emphasize his greatness—**וקרח שפיקח היה**, a man of stature, wealth, intelligence, and spiritual sensitivity. And yet Rashi tells us the key to his downfall:

"**קרח עינו הטעתו**" — Korach's eye deceived him.

This derashah explores what Korach saw, why he misinterpreted it, and how this mistake echoes through other episodes in Tanach.

I. Korach's Vision Was Genuine — But His Interpretation Was Fatally Flawed

Rashi (Bamidbar 16:7) describes Korach's inner calculation:

ראה שלשלת גדולה יוצא ממנו... שמואל ששקול כנגד משה ואהרן... כ"ד משמרות... כולם מתנבאים ברוח הקודש. Korach saw a magnificent future emerging from him:

- Shmuel HaNavi, equal to Moshe and Aharon.
- Twenty-four mishmaros of Levi'im, all endowed with ruach hakodesh.
- Heman, his descendant, surrounded by nevi'im and singers of the Beis HaMikdash.

Korach's vision was not delusion. It was true. He genuinely saw greatness in the generations that would descend from him. But he drew the wrong conclusion:

"**בשבילי אני נמלט**." If such greatness comes from me, I must be the one who survives. I must be chosen. Korach believed the future

validated his present. He assumed that seeing greatness meant he was great. - This was the tragic error.

II. "מקח רע לעצמו" — The Strange Purchase Korach Made

Reish Lakish says: "**שלקח מקח רע לעצמו**." Korach made a bad purchase.

At first glance, Korach received nothing. He lost everything—family, wealth, followers, even his memory. Chazal say not even a pin of Korach remained; it rolled into the earth with him.

So what "purchase" did he make?

Korach did receive something—not what he wanted, but what Heaven gave him. His rebellion triggered a miracle unprecedented in history:

"**פצתה הארץ את פיה**" — the earth opened its mouth.

This miracle, requested by Moshe, dramatically affirmed:

- Moshe emes v'Toraso emes
- Hashem's choice of Moshe
- The authenticity of nevuah

This unintended Kiddush Hashem strengthened Klal Yisrael's emunah. And Hashem "balances the ledger": even unintended merit produces spiritual consequence. Thus Korach's "reward" was the greatness of his descendants—Shmuel, the mishmaros, the nevi'im.

He bought a "fur coat," but not the one he imagined.

III. The Pattern in Chazal: Evil Acts That Produce Good

This concept appears repeatedly:

- Bnei banav shel Haman taught Torah in Bnei Brak.
- Bnei banav shel Sisera became teachers.
- Bnei banav shel Sancheriv became leaders in Torah.

None of these resha'im intended good. But their actions triggered events—Purim, national teshuvah, renewed kabalas haTorah—that uplifted Klal Yisrael.

Chazal say: "**אין הקדוש ברוך הוא מקפח שכר כל בריה**." Hashem does not withhold reward from any creature. Even distant, unintended good is acknowledged.

Korach's descendants are his "reward"—but a bitter one, purchased through his downfall.

This leads to the central philosophical point: Seeing the future is not the same as understanding it. Korach saw the destination but not the path. He saw the result but not the cause. He saw the end but not the steps that lead to it.

He assumed: If I see greatness at the end, I must be great now.

But the future does not always reveal the present. Only Moshe Rabbeinu sees the entire picture.

Korach saw only the future—and misread the present.

Thus: "**קרח עינו הטעתו ומשה היה רואה**." Korach saw—but Moshe understood.

Korach's downfall teaches a profound truth: Spiritual gifts are dangerous when misused. Vision is dangerous when detached from Torah. The future cannot dictate the present; only Torah can.

Korach acted based on what he thought the future meant. Moshe acted based on what Hashem said the present requires.

Korach teaches us that even true spiritual insight can become a stumbling block when divorced from humility and halachah. Moshe teaches us that clarity comes only from Hashem.

We do not live by what we think the future holds. We live by what the Torah demands of us today.

And On Son of Peles

The Gemara says that On ben Pelet's wife saved him from machlokas - fights.

A Gerrer Chassid once took a son-in-law from a different Chassidus. When the Yom Kippur War broke out, the son-in-law was drafted into the army and sent to the front. His wife didn't allow him to leave before going to the **Beis Yisroel of Ger zt'l** to bid farewell and receive a bracha. Having no choice, the husband went into the Beis Yisroel and received a bracha for protection.

During the war, while on a dangerous mission, he was miraculously saved and returned home safely. He went to the Beis Yisroel to thank him for the miracle that occurred in the merit of his bracha.

Before entering the Rebbe's chambers and not yet having a chance to open his mouth, the Beis Yisroel said: - "the wife of On ben Peles saved him!"

Medrash U'Maaseh - Rabbi Fyvel Shuster

Welcome back to **מדרש ומעשה**, sharing a story for this week's **פרשה, פרשת קורח**.

רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד was one of the **גדולי ירושלים**, the **רב** of the **עדה החרדית** in **ירושלים**, and one **חול המועד**, some boys from the **חברון ישיבה** came to visit him as is customary to visit **גדולי ישראל** on the **חג**. When they entered his house on **חול המועד**, they immediately saw that he was in the midst of a **דין תורה**. There were two people there who were having an argument.

The **בחורים** wanted to step out and give them their privacy, but **רב יוסף חיים**, who noticed them, motioned to them to come in, and they took chairs and sat on the side. Now this is something which can happen often as **תלמידי חכמים** want young **תלמידים** to learn even from

דיני תורה and how they do things. Clearly here **רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד** wanted them to see something.

What was the case? There were two Jews. **ראובן** had some money. **שמעון** claimed to know how to invest money and make money. So **ראובן** gave **שמעון** a sum of money to invest with the agreement that they would split the profits that resulted from that investment.

Time went by, and after a reasonable amount of time, **ראובן** came to **שמעון** to check on his investment. He said, "How's it doing? I would like to collect my half of the profits."

שמעון told him that not only were there no profits, but the entire capital had gone. It was all lost. Now **ראובן** felt that this was there was something fishy going on here, there was something that wasn't right, and he wanted proof, he wanted his money back. The case eventually came before **רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד**.

Now **ראובן** and **שמעון** came from very different backgrounds. **ראובן**, the one who gave the money, was not, at least ostensibly, a **תורה**-observant Jew, whereas **שמעון** was a person who was known to be very exacting in his observance of **תורה** and **מצוות**. The boys were able to tell that **שמעון** therefore felt already that he kind of had an in with **רב יוסף חיים זוננפלד**. He felt that **רב יוסף חיים** would favor him because he's one of his community, so to speak.

So, when **רב יוסף חיים** asked him to explain himself, he not only said that he doesn't owe **ראובן** anything, but **שמעון** said, "In fact, **ראובן** owes me more money," and he gave a list of claims based on the contract that **ראובן** should pay him more money.

רב יוסף חיים asked, and the **בחורים** detected a certain amount of sarcasm here, but **שמעון** did not detect that at all, he said, "Is that all you think you should be getting from **ראובן**?"

So **שמעון** saw the opening, he says, "No, there's even more," and he gave a list of more demands.

Once again, **רב יוסף חיים** said, "And is that all? Is there anything more that you feel you should be getting from **שמעון**? From **ראובן**." And again **שמעון** jumped on it and gave some more demands and claimed more money.

רב יוסף חיים repeated that another two times, with **שמעון** again each time at this point he was already racking his brain to come up with more things that he felt he could ask for.

He felt that **רב יוסף חיים** was laying the red carpet before him to get as much as he possibly could out of **ראובן**.

Eventually, when **רב יוסף חיים** repeated once again, "And is that all you think that you deserve to get? Is that all that you think is coming to you?"

שמעון finally said to **רב יוסף חיים**, 'do you suspect me of taking money that isn't mine?"

רב יוסף חיים then stood up and said very sharply, "The problem is that you think that everything is yours! You don't think that there's anything that's not yours and that's not coming to you!"

The claimant **ראובן** actually when he saw the justice of **רב יוסף חיים** and the tactics that he used, he burst into tears out of seeing the beauty in which he ran that judgment and brought the person who had lost his money to come about and behave properly.

פרשת קורח is a very complex **פרשה** and there are many deep explanations of the arguments of **קורח**, but at least in a simple level that we can apply to our lives, **משה רבינו** told them, **רב לכם בני לוי**. There's enough. You have your duties as **לויים**, not everything is yours."

And this is something which is such a key that a person has to learn in life. **רב משה פיינשטיין** explained why in many schools when little boys start to learn **משניות** or **גמרא**, they start with **בבא מציעא**. - **בבא מציעא** is a **מסכת**, tractate, which deals with questions of ownership.

Two people find a **טלית** in the street, one says it's mine, the other says it's mine, lost objects.

And often people ask, why don't we choose something where the concepts are more familiar to the children? Let's say **מסכת ברכות**, things which deal with **דאוועגען** and **ברכות**, or **שבת** that they're familiar with. Why choose something involving laws of business and adjudication that may not be their day-to-day so much?

רב משה said because it's so important from the very beginnings at a young age to inculcate that understanding: not everything is mine. There are some things in life which are mine, and some things which aren't. And the basis of a person of **אמונה** understands that what **הקדוש ברוך הוא** gives me is mine, and what **הקדוש ברוך הוא** doesn't give me is not.

May **הקדוש ברוך הוא** give everyone that which they need **בשפע**, give **עם ישראל שלום** and **הצלחה** in all things, and wishing everyone a wonderful **שבת**.