

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT KORACH

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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE MIGHTIEST OF THEM ALL!

Pablo Picasso once remarked "I'd like to live as a poor man with lots of money." Money makes the world go round. Or does it?

Well, to be wealthy one must know how to take – and in this week's Parasha we are told about a man – Korach – that took – Vaykiach Korach.

The Pasuk doesn't exactly tell us what he took, but our Sages have delved to the depth to understand the inner meaning of this statement. Let's take a closer look;

Korach was a very wealthy man. The Gemara (Pesachim 119) relates that Korach got one of the 3 troves of gold which Yosef left in Egypt. In fact Korach's keys to his storehouses were so heavy he needed much help for the keys to be carried. Yet Korach with all his wealth was not contempt.

What was bothering Korach? He was jealous of the positions of honour that Moshe had given to others.

In order to understand this, we need to have some family background. Kehat, Korach's grandfather was one of Levi's three sons. He in turn had four sons of his own. Amram, his eldest, gave birth to Moshe and Aharon. Yitzhar, the second, was the father of Korach. His third and fourth sons were Chevron and Uziel.

Korach was jealous that the position of Kohen Gadol (high Priest) had been given to Aharon and not to him. However, he couldn't rightfully contest that appointment. Aharon's father was Amram, the Bechor (firstborn). His father was Yitzhar, the second son. Aharon clearly had precedence over him. He bore this jealousy quietly until he felt that he had valid grounds to contest an appointment made by Moshe. At that point, he tried to contest all of the

appointments that Moshe had made.

His opportunity came during our second year out of Egypt. Moshe, as directed by Hashem, had appointed Elitzafon, the son of Uziel, Kehat's youngest son, to be the Nasi (leader) of the Kehat family.

At that point Korach exploded. "My father was one of four brothers. Amram, the eldest, his two sons took positions of leadership. Moshe, you are the king and your brother Aharon is the Kohen Gadol. Who should be the Nasi? I, Korach, the son of the second son, Yitzhar. I deserve to be the Nasi. And you went and appointed Elitzafon, the son of the youngest brother, to be Nasi?! I don't accept the validity of any of your appointments!" Behind Korach's chants was his deep jealousy of Aharon.

King Solomon incisively stated that "jealousy causes rotting of the bones" (Mishlei: 14, 30).

Rabbi Elazar HaKappar famously taught in Pirkei Avot (4:21). 'Jealousy, lust and [running after] honour remove a person from the world.' He meant both from this world (jealousy destroys the physical health of a person-rots his bones-and thereby shortens his years on earth), as well as from the eternal delight of the next world (jealousy can lead to the gravest of sins, including theft and murder). And what does jealousy do to our consciousness, during the time that we are still alive and breathing? It eats away at the Simcha (joy) that G-d wants us to experience in this beautiful world He created, and distracts us from working to achieve our own spiritual potential...perhaps its most catastrophic effect of all.

Korach said to Moshe, "Why do you exalt yourselves up over the congregation of Hashem?" Rashi explains, "You have taken much too much greatness for yourselves." The Chafetz Chaim, (Rabbi Yisrael Mayer Kagan) points out that there are two types of jealousy. One can be jealous of the good

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things that another person has, meaning that he or she wants them also. "Look at the car you have! It's huge! It's so shiny! So nice! I'm going to get me a huger, shinier, nicer car than you!! Just you wait and see!"

And then there is another type of jealousy, which comes with a negative outlook towards others. "Look at the car you have! It's huge! It's so shiny! So nice! I'm going to make sure that your car is smaller, duller, and ordinary than mine! In fact I won't rest till your car is so small and dull and ordinary that it ceases to exist!! Just you wait and see!" One who has this second type of jealousy doesn't want others to be blessed with good things even (or especially) if he himself will never have them.

Korach and his congregation, explains the Chafetz Chaim, suffered from this "stingy-eyed" sort of jealousy. Whether or not Korach could ever be the High Priest, he didn't want others to have the honour that he lacked. "Why have you placed yourselves above the Congregation of G-d?" In other words, Korach didn't complain that he hadn't been elevated along with them. He wanted to bring them down to his level. A jealousy that seeks to bring others down rather than raising ourselves up is the worst jealousy of all.

Vayikach Korach – what did Korach take? He took himself away – he lost himself, focusing on others and taking away from his real potential and essence.

Every person is unique, with unique contributions to make to this world. Each individual is given what is necessary in order to make those

contributions. I have what I need and I need what I have. When the world is viewed in such a way, there is no place for jealousy.

The story is told of a stonecutter who would hew stones from the mountain. "Ping, ping", was the sound of his pick against the hard stone. "Why must I break my back to feed myself and my family?" he would bemoan his fate. "Others have such an easy life and for me it's so hard."

I wish I was the king.

The stonecutter didn't know what hit him, but there was a 'woof' and within a few seconds he found himself as king of the country sitting on the golden throne.

Life was good, but whenever he went out, he was stricken by the strong sun. One day on a stroll he said, "I want to be the most powerful, I want to be the sun", he thought, and ~~WOOF~~ he was radiating light and warmth to the entire world. "Ah, this is the life; I'm the sun, the most powerful in all of the world."

He sat there majestically, directed his rays here and there at will. Suddenly, a group of clouds moved beneath him, obstructing his light. He focused his energy as hard as he could, but he couldn't pierce the clouds.

He realized that the sun was not as powerful as he had thought. Even the sun was powerless before the clouds.

"I want to be the most powerful, I want to be the clouds", he thought, and ~~WOOF~~ he was dumping rain wherever he wished, haughtily blocking the sun's rays. "Ah, this is the life; I'm the clouds, the most powerful in all of the world." Just then a strong gust of wind blew him from side to side. He

realised that even the clouds were powerless before the winds.

"I want to be the most powerful, I want to be the wind", he thought, and ~~WOOF~~ he was churning waves in the ocean and blowing off hats in the city. "Ah, this is the life; I'm the wind, the most powerful in all of the world."

Nothing stood in his way, until he reached a mountain. Try as he might, he had to go around the mountain – it could not be moved. The wind was not as powerful as he had thought. Even the wind was powerless before the mountain.

"I want to be the most powerful, I want to be the mountain", he thought, and ~~WOOF~~ he stood majestically with his peak transcending the clouds. "Ah, this is the life; I'm the mountain, the most powerful in all of the world."

As he sat there in his splendour, he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his shoulder. "Ping, ping", was the sound of the stonecutter's pick against his stone. The pain was unbearable. The mountain was not as powerful as he had thought. It stood powerless before the stonecutter. "I want to be the most powerful, I want to be a stonecutter", he thought, and ~~WOOF~~ he was perched on the mountain, hammering his pick into its crevices...

People spend so much time and energy thinking 'what will be if', when that same time and energy would be much more effectively focused toward 'what can I best do with what I have'.

Hashem has blessed each one of us with special tools designed for our purpose in this world. Let's use them to the best and focus on appreciating who we are and what we can achieve.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT KORACH

Moshe Rabbeinu's biggest dream was to have the privilege of entering the Land of Israel. Moshe poured out five hundred and fifteen prayers before G-d until the Lord said to him, רַב־לְךָ אֱלִיתוּסָף דְּבַר אֵלַי, "Enough! Never speak to me of this matter again!"

G-d chooses to use the same language that Moshe himself chose regarding the controversy of Korach and his congregation, רַב־לְכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי, "Enough! You have gone too far, sons of Levi. G-d told

him as well; רַב־לְךָ.

Although the way of Moshe and Korach to fulfill their dream was completely different from each other, because, while Korach chose the path of controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven, a path that arouses envy, hatred, and competition, a path that takes one out of their own world, Moshe Rabbeinu chose the path of prayer, outpouring of the soul, and pleas. Nevertheless, they both received the same message, רַב־לְךָ. It is true that you have a dream, a dream to develop, to transcend, to be sanctified. But sometimes the dream, even though it is special and important,

for some reason (by the cause of the causes) is unfulfillable.

G-d says and so did Moshe Rabbeinu say, רַב־לְךָ. This is enough. Do not now look at your life as a complete failure, as if anything of what you have accomplished so far is worth nothing just because you have not fulfilled this specific dream. רַב־לְךָ. You have a very special role in this world, a role given only to you. Although it does not include entry into the Promised Land, it does not include a priesthood or kingship, but it includes the special part that has been especially designed only for you in the world.



RABBI YEHOANATAN SALEM

CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS

In this week's parashah we encounter another tragic incident during the journey phase of the Jewish People in the wilderness. Korach the Levite and his followers, two hundred and fifty dignitaries from the neighbouring tribes, were casting aspersions as to the fact that the priestly duties were heavenly-allocated. The argument was not settled until the authenticity of Moshe Rabbenu's and Aharon Hakohen's divinely-assigned roles was miraculously verified. This happened when the main perpetrators of the dispute, along with their families and belongings, were swallowed alive as the ground opened up and they descended to purgatory alive. The two hundred and fifty dignitaries, who challenged Moshe by bringing ketoret- incense, also died instantaneously, as a clear sign to all that Moshe and Aharon had not just taken these positions on their own accord.. How did Korach manage to convince

others to join his rebellion against Moshe Rabbenu, risking their lives for it, if they knew that the position of kohen gadol could only be occupied by one person? Our Sages tell us that Korach managed to rally his neighbours to his cause, since those closer in proximity to a person are more easily influenced by him. Even without consciously joining or including oneself in one's neighbour's activities, a person is automatically affected, either positively or negatively. Just as one who walks into a perfume shop, or on the other extreme, a leather tanner is automatically affected. The scent attaches itself to the person even without him having any physical contact with the objects that emit a smell. So it is with the actions and opinions of those in one's environment, and even their way of talking. Until today, I still have a Mancunian accent even though I have been living in Israel for twenty-five years. It is so ingrained in me, that unless I make a conscious effort to change it, it will remain so. Additionally, a person will be influenced by his surroundings and

society, since he wants to be socially accepted by them. He does not want to feel different or stick out "like a sore thumb," but rather, he wants to be popular and well-liked in his locality.

For these reasons, a person must be very particular when choosing where to live, to see who the neighbours are, where he will pray, what sort of educational system is available for his children, and what type of friends they will have. All these factors are highly influential on a person, whether he/she is aware of it or not.

Similarly, when choosing a friend, we must consider if they are going to be a positive influence on us or not. A person who agrees to everything that we do or say is not necessarily the best match for us. A person who is willing to correct us when seeing a fault, or when they see us entering a dangerous situation, is a much better option.

Let us act responsibly by putting ourselves and our families in positive surroundings. Additionally, let us be a positive environment for those who come into contact with us.



OUR CHAHAMIM

Rabbi Naphtali Amsterdam

The sixth of Adar is the Hilloula of Rabbi Naphtali Amsterdam Zatzal. He was born in 5592 (1832) in Salant, and his father was Rabbi Shlomo Zatzal. During his youth, he was extremely diligent in study, to the point that everyone called him "Naphtali the matmid." He was among the great students of our teacher Rabbi Israel Salanter Zatzal. He took on the role of Rabbi in the cities of Helsinki and Novogrod, where he did much to elevate the level of Torah observance and the fear of Heaven. Next, he returned to Kovno where he settled down to study. To sustain his family, his wife ran a bakery, and to better their income Rabbi Naphtali accepted the rabbinate of Yaswerin and Elkost. After a certain time, he gave up all public responsibility in order to devote himself uniquely to the study of Torah. In 5666 (1906), he went to live in Jerusalem, settling down in the Strauss district next to his friend Rav Yitzchak Blazer Zatzal. He left this world in 5716 (1916).

Rabbi Naphtali spent all his life spreading Torah and the fear of Heaven. When it was not in an official capacity, he gave

Mussar courses in his home, in the Beit Hamussar of Kovno, and in the Slabodka Yeshiva. He attributed great importance to the power of speech, encouraging everyone to verbally express his thoughts and ideas on Torah and the fear of Heaven. One day he said, "The power of speech, made in the depths of the soul, is such that it has a greater impact than deeds."

When he wanted to emphasize the prime importance of speech, Rabbi Naphtali relied on the opinions expressed by certain researchers concerning the fact that speech is lacking in babies. "It is not that they cannot speak, since nothing is lacking for this, but that they do not yet have the necessary intelligence to do so." This consists of the intelligence that man was endowed with, and which is at the root of speech. This is its very essence, the instrument that allows man to actualize his thoughts by means of words. When the source of speech is intelligence, everything can be found therein, given that it is used judiciously. Rabbi Naphtali gave an example to explain the importance of actualizing what we have in mind. When we ask ourselves what is preferable, the bread

that we eat or the gold we accumulate, everyone will agree that gold is worth more than bread, because it allows a person to purchase everything that he needs, including bread.

Yet when someone is lost in the desert, if he possesses a certain amount of gold but nothing to eat, he will die. However, if he had bread he would survive. That which is more important is therefore not the potential, but that which is tangibly present. Therein lay the interest to capitalize on man's intellectual strength. That is, furthermore, the role of man, said Rabbi Naphtali: "The entire goal of Creation was to make man descend into the world of action to perform concrete mitzvot, for example in taking the skin of an animal to make Tefillin, or taking linen and wool to make Tzitzit."

The same idea applies to the words of Torah and the fear of Heaven. Rabbi Naphtali Amsterdam Zatzal ends by saying that even though we can also accomplish the study of Torah by simple reflection, "the one who wants the Torah's fruit to be born in him, not to be forgotten or removed, should practice it verbally."



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

ZIMUN IF TEN PEOPLE ATE TOGETHER BUT NOT ALL OF THEM ATE BREAD

In a previous edition of Daily Halacha, we discussed the situation of ten people who ate a meal together, nine of whom ate bread, whereas the tenth ate other foods or drank. The Halacha in this case, as established in the Gemara and Shulhan Aruch, is that the ten men may recite a Zimun with Hashem's Name ("Nebarech L'Elokenu She'achalnu Mi'shelo"). Even though only nine people ate bread, the tenth can count toward the Minyan if he ate a Ke'zayit of other food, or drank a Rebi'it of a beverage other than water. (Since water does not provide any nourishment, its consumption does not suffice for one to be included in the meal.) Thus, for example, if

nine men ate bread, and a tenth who was with them ate a Ke'zayit of vegetables, such as a salad, or ate "Mezonot" food, and even if he just drank a Rebi'it of juice or wine, they may recite a Zimun with "Elokenu."

The question arises as to whether this Halacha would apply if fewer than nine of the ten men ate bread. Suppose only eight, seven or six men ate bread, and the rest ate other foods or just drank. Does the group recite a Zimun with "Elokenu," or is this allowed only if just one person did not eat bread?

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 197:2; listen to audio recording for precise citation) writes that a group of ten may recite the Zimun with "Elokenu" as long as at least seven men in the group ate bread, and the rest ate or drank something other than water. Zimun differs in this respect from Kaddish, which a group of ten people may recite even if only six – the majority of a Minyan – are responding. When it comes to

Zimun with "Elokenu," the Shulhan Aruch explains, Halacha requires that a recognizable majority had eaten bread. This is defined as seven people, and thus if six or fewer people in the group ate bread, "Elokenu" is not recited in the Zimun. But if at least seven people ate bread, "Elokenu" is recited, provided that the other three either ate a Ke'zayit of a different food or drank a Rebi'it of a beverage other than water.

It should be noted that, as the Shulhan Aruch rules, only a person who ate bread may lead the Zimun. In cases when fewer than ten people ate bread but the Zimun is recited with "Elokenu," the person who leads the Zimun must have eaten bread.

Summary: If ten people ate together, they recite a Zimun with "Elokenu" if at least seven of them ate bread, and all the rest either ate a Ke'zayit of other food or drank at least a Rebi'it of a beverage other than water. The one who leads the Zimun, however, must have eaten bread.



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Korach

Korach, Datan and Aviram, and 250 leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. The rebellion results in their being swallowed by the earth. Many resent their death and blame Moshe. G-d's "anger" is manifest by a plague that besets the nation, and many thousands perish. Moshe intercedes once again for the people. He instructs Aharon to atone for them and the

plague stops. Then, G-d commands that staffs, each inscribed with the name of one of the tribes, be placed in the Mishkan. In the morning, the staff of Levi, bearing Aharon's name, sprouts, buds, blossoms and yields ripe almonds. This provides Divine confirmation that Levi's tribe is chosen for priesthood and verifies Aharon's position as Kohen Gadol, High Priest. The specific duties of the levi'im and kohanim

are stated. The kohanim were not to be landowners, but were to receive their sustenance from the tithes and other mandated gifts brought by the people. Also taught in this week's Torah portion are the laws of the first fruits, redemption of the firstborn and various laws of offerings.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



1

Why did Datan and Aviram join Korach?

16:1 - Because they were his neighbors.

2

Why is Yaakov's name not mentioned in Korach's genealogy?

16:1 - Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach's rebellion (Bereishet 49:6).

3

What motivated Korach to rebel?

16:1 - Korach was jealous that Elitzan ben Uziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehat instead of himself.

4

What did Korach and company do when Moshe said that a techelet garment needs tzitzit?

16:1 - They laughed.

5

What warning did Moshe give the rebels regarding the offering of the incense?

16:5 - Only one person would survive.

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