



## Parshat Korach: The Source of Korach's Rebellion

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur on Chassidut by Rabbi Herschel Reichman

The parsha starts with the words, "Korach took." The verse does not specify what he took. Rashi and Unkelos clarify that he took himself and went away. Korach separated himself from the Jewish people by rebelling against the laws of the Torah, which ultimately bind us as one. He created a terrible split within Klal Yisrael.

Korach's rebellion was really a rebellion against the Oral Torah as interpreted by Moshe. Korach attacked the analytical methodology of *Torah Sheb'al Peh* and tried to replace it with common sense thinking.

The Shem MiShmuel cites the Ari, who says that Korach had a spark of the soul of Kayin. Kayin killed his brother Hevel and is infamous in Tanach as the first murderer. In Hebrew, murder is called *shofchat damim*, spilling blood, because blood connects the body to the soul. Although it is a physical entity, blood contains the source of life. When a person dies, blood ceases to circulate in the body and the soul goes back to heaven. The bond between body and soul is torn apart. This explains why murder is described as spilling blood.

We live in a world of systems. Hashem created the universe as a combination of many different inter-related factors. There is no such thing as a separate entity that does not affect another entity. This world and the upper world are systematically integrated. Whatever

happens in one world affects both worlds.

When Kayin killed Hevel, he not only split Hevel's soul and body, but he created a split between heaven and earth. He caused Hashem anger, which led to His separation from this world.

Chassidut teaches that a name defines an individual. Hashem put man into this world to accomplish; if a person feels worthless he will not accomplish anything. This was the weakness of Hevel and the reason why he was murdered. The word hevel means nothingness. Hevel was overwhelmed with a sense of worthlessness and failed to complete his purpose on earth. Therefore, Hashem did not save him.

Korach possessed the soul of Kayin. He was egotistical, selfish, and ungrateful to Moshe, who took the Jews out of Egypt, brought the miracles at Yam Suf and led them through the desert for forty years. These evil *middot* led him to rebel against Hashem. Aharon embodied *shleimut*, and therefore was Korach's target. Aharon was completely selfless in a healthy way. He knew his talents and focused on others to create wholesome unity within Klal Yisrael. Hashem selected him to integrate heaven and earth and to bring peace between Hashem and the Jewish nation through the *avoda* in the Mishkan. Aharon signified what Korach resented.

When Korach and his people offered the

mincha sacrifice, Moshe asked Hashem not to accept it. The mincha is only an adjunct to the tamid sacrifice. Why did Moshe only mention the mincha? The Shem MiShmuel explains that the mincha is a communal, and not an individual sacrifice. It is made of flour, which comes from the ground. The earth creates a unity of diverse things because it is the basis of so many integrated systems. Therefore, it serves as an atonement for the *klal*. That is why Moshe prayed that Korach, who had caused such a terrible rift in Klal Yisrael, would not have any part in this sacrifice.

*Ketoret* also represents the idea of integration into the *klal* because it consists of eleven spices. The eleventh spice, *chelebana*, has a terrible smell, but when it is mixed with the other ten, it takes on a wonderful aroma. This teaches us the power of the *klal*, which can transform a *rasha* into a *tzaddik*. Chassidic communities are founded on the principle that the group gives strength to its weak members. This was the secret of the *ketoret* and this is why Moshe used *ketoret* as the test to see who the true Kohen Gadol would be.

The story of Korach teaches us many lessons. Appreciating the people around us, running away from *machloket*, focusing on the *klal* as opposed to one's own selfish ego, and living in an integrated world of systems rather than a world of separateness.

## Achieving Balance: Class #1

Excerpted from Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller's Question and Answer series on Naaleh.com

### Question:

How can I learn to sincerely welcome in-laws and other relatives of my husband's into our lives when I don't really feel a natural connection or affinity towards them?

### Answer

The more you give to another person the more you'll come to like her. The next time your mother-in-law comes for a visit, instead of asking yourself, "How soon will she leave?" Ask yourself, "What is she missing that I can

give," or "How can I give her a feeling of joy or inclusion? What can I learn from her?" The more these questions become central in your relationship with your in-laws, the more you'll come to like them. It will take time and effort and not everyone succeeds, but keep at it.

Some people only reach a level where the relationship is externally polite and cordial, but there is no deep interaction or feeling of connection. If that's all you can do, that's ok. As you begin to work on trying to like them, you won't be completely sincere. Fake it until you make it. Being sincerely welcoming only comes later on.

Your reward at the end will be two-fold: As you grow to like your in-laws, you'll grow to like yourself better and you'll become a bigger more inclusive person. The fact that Hashem made your husband's parents his parents is part of His hashgachic plan, just as He made your husband your husband. Never speak negatively about your in-laws to your husband. It puts him in an impossible situation. He may side with you externally but not internally. The better your marriage is, the more you should show respect for your in-laws who made your husband into what he is.

# Bringing Torah To Life #15- Talmud Torah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

In this class we will examine how to teach children the value and sweetness of Torah, how to determine which school will serve as the best partner in educating your child, and how to then build a mutually beneficial relationship with your child's school.

Children between the ages of three to six develop a strong sense of what is normal and valued and what is not. No matter how many rhymes and songs they've learned, if they don't see anyone in their own life valuing Torah, they will pick up the worst possible message, namely, what you say and what you do reflect different values.

Let's look at three different home scenarios. In one home, the father comes home from work, eats supper, interacts with the family, and then may or may not go out to a shiur. However, if every so often, the father does go to learn, the child should be aware of it. The mother should say, "Say goodbye to Abba, he's going to learn Torah." Torah learning should be part of the child's sense of normalcy, just as eating with utensils or putting on shoes are.

There has to be time set aside for Torah, even

if it doesn't happen every day. The child should register that whenever possible, Torah learning takes priority. Additionally, the child should see that there are Torah books displayed prominently in the home. This will leave him with the impression that Torah is important, beautiful, and valued.

In another home, the father almost never goes out to learn. Here, the mother needs to make sure that at least on Shabbat there is Torah at the table. Even if Torah only comes into the home once a week it is visible and treasured.

In the third kind of home, the father really learns a lot. Maybe a chavruta comes to the house every night, or the father teaches in yeshiva or he is a full time kollel member. The child knows that Abba learns Torah. However, he can make the mistake of thinking that Torah belongs to Abba and has nothing to do with him. He can even reach a point where he views the Torah as a rival that cuts him off from his father. Here the father should, at least occasionally, invite his child to join him in Torah learning. This can be accomplished by telling a story at the Shabbat table or learning with the child daily, even if it is

only for a short while. This way the child won't end up feeling locked out of his father's world, which can result in serious problems later on.

Girls at this age need to see their mother involved in physical activities, and busy with spiritual pursuits. It is important for a girl to see that her mother is a seeker. She should go to a shiur or read an inspiring book so her Torah becomes a part of the home too. If she bakes challa or gives tzedaka, her daughter should hear her say every so often, "I am doing this mitzva because this is the Torah teaches."

There are wonderful Torah books available for kids today. There are sefarim on the parsha, Pirkei Avot, and stories about the sages. If the wordy stories are too hard for your young child, you can compensate with pictures. Show your child an illustration of Hillel lying on the roof. Tell him, "Do you see how hard Hillel is trying to learn? Even though it's cold and snowing, he's on the roof listening to Torah." This will teach your child the idea that learning Torah should be done in every environment and situation.

We will continue to explore this topic next week.

## Class Spotlight: The Mussar Revolution Rav Yisrael Salanter, Revolutionary Philosopher #1

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hanoch Teller

*Rabbi Yisrael Salanter was a great thinker and visionary, whose proactive concern for the fate of the Jewish people amid the turbulence of war, emancipation, and revolutionary movements left an indelible mark on the Jewish world. This course surveys the development and impact of the Mussar Movement, which transformed much of Jewish life and Torah observance in the 20th century.*

Two people can look at the same item and see different things. When a carpenter and an electrician enter a home, the carpenter will immediately notice the woodwork, while the electrician will focus on the electrical work. Rav Yisrael, with his fine vision, saw a need for the Mussar Movement. Even though many people of the time strictly observed the letter of the law, he noticed a disregard for the ethical part of Torah and a neglect of the spirit of the law.

Rav Yisrael advanced mussar as a solution to the extreme degradation and internal weaknesses of Jewish life in Russia. He taught that one should care about the other person's material wellbeing and worry about one's own spiritual wellbeing. He would say, "Your heart is a private domain but your face is public domain." Indeed one of the prime principles of mussar was to always maintain a happy countenance.

While Rav Yisrael is widely known as the founder of the Mussar Movement he also deserves credit for being the father of the Teshuva Movement. He went to Germany where the Enlightenment had already done tremendous damage, to try to bring his brethren back. He arrived at the port of

Memel, a town filled with Shabbat desecrators. Every Shabbat he would speak with the Jewish workers at the docks. His genuine love and affinity for them eventually won them over and the Jews of Memel began keeping Shabbat again.

Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski married the granddaughter of Rav Yisrael. Rav Chaim Ozer sent his wife's grandfather a dvar Torah and Rav Yisrael wrote back, citing the verse "Et biti natati l'ish hazeh." I know you can learn but are you also an ish, a mentch?

Rav Zundel Salanter was the Rebbe of Rav Yisrael. Although Rav Zundel tried to hide his righteousness under the guise of a simple wheat merchant, Rav Yisrael's keen eye noticed his greatness. Rav Yisrael followed Rav Zundel to learn his ways. When Rav Zundel saw this, he ordered him to leave him alone and go study Mussar. Rav Yisrael did exactly that.

Rav Yisrael would say, "When faced with a difficult decision, ask yourself what you would decide to do if you were faced with this decision at the time of Neilah." He would emphasize that everything a person does has consequences. If a Jew in Kovno speaks lashon hara in the Bet

Midrash, a Jew in Paris will desecrate Shabbat.

He stressed the importance of studying Mussar. If one only has ten minutes to learn one should study Mussar as this will bring him to the realization that he has more than ten minutes to learn Torah. One doesn't learn Mussar to be a tzaddik but to become a tzaddik. He said, "Before I started learning Torah, I thought the whole world was deficient except me. After I started learning, I saw that the whole world consisted of sinners including me. Now that I've learned some more, I realize I'm a sinner and I must judge the rest of the world favorably."

Rav Yisrael's teachings give us insight into the human psyche. He saying include: "A person can live with himself for seventy years and still not know himself." "Man is a drop of intellect drowning in a sea of instincts." "Man is equipped with far reaching vision, yet the smallest coin can obstruct his vision." "One who rushes headlong to perform a mitzva can destroy the whole world in his path."

Rav Yisrael Salanter, with his pioneering vision, revolutionized Torah study and our mode of ethical conduct. His impact continues to live on in the hearts and minds of thinking Torah Jews around the world.

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