

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

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur on Chassidut by Rabbi Hershel 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 shefichat 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, chelbana, 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.

## Parshat Korach: Inner Dynamics

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Parshat Korach tells the famous story of Korach and his followers, among them Datan and Aviran. They fomented a rebellion against Moshe and Aharon. How do we understand their brazenness when all of Klal Yisrael just recently stood at Har Sinai and saw Hashem choose Moshe and Aharon to lead the people?

The sefer Sam Derech says Korach acted out of pure envy, but Datan and Aviram acted for argument's sake alone. They were known as baalei machloket. They were always the instigators behind all the troubles.

Rav Miller says this world by nature is a place of conflict and dissension and that is why friction is so prevalent. We see this from the beginning of time. Before creation everything was unified. Then the world was divided into ordered parts. Time shattered unity and now division reigns supreme. That is why one of the aspects of the oneness of Hashem is that He transcends time.

We too are meant to go above and beyond time in performing a mitzvah. This is the idea of zrizut in doing a mitzvah. With spirituality we

aim for unity and shalom and one of the ways to do this is by trying to transcend time by not being bogged down by earthliness.

When we were created as a nation, we were created quickly above time. That is the wholeness we try to emulate and aspire to. Doing mitzvot quickly allows us to not get caught in this world with all its disparate parts, but to try to aim for unity and oneness. Judaism tries to forge things together as much as possible, to try to create this ultimate goal of achdut.

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Everything in this world has a positive and negative opposing force. The Maharal explains that Datan and Aviram were the antithesis of what Moshe and Aharon represented. Aharon was ohev shalom v'rodeph shalom, he loved and pursued peace. Moshe was the leader who unified the people as one nation. Datan and Aviram's mindset was to create divisiveness. They looked for machloket.

Datan and Aviram represented the world in its shattered state while Moshe and Aharon represented the pristine perfected state.

Datan and Aviram remained wicked people standing with arrogance before Moshe. It doesn't matter what you know intellectually, if it doesn't change your behavior.

The Beer Moshe says the opposite of being brazen is tzniut. The Maharal says tzniut is about being an inner type of person and doing things because of spiritual value without bringing in the personal and the physical.

We should strive to develop our avodat Hashem in terms of penimiyut with the recognition that our every act is in the

presence of Hashem. Looking over our shoulder to see what others are thinking is living a chitzoni external life. We only have to ask ourselves how this looks in the eyes of Hashem but not to think what other people will say.

We have to ask ourselves: Am I living a life dedicated to Hashem or to making an impression on other people? When you do a mitzvah that no one knows about, you'll be rewarded in heaven.

## The Words of Shlomo Hamelech

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

Shlomo Hamelech tells us in Kohelet, "In the morning, sow your seeds, and at night, do not rest your hand, for you do not know which will succeed, this one or that one, or whether both of them will be equally good."

The Metzudas David explains, we cannot know which direction the wind will go, whether or not one particular season will be good for the crops or not. Kohelet is telling us, plant in the seasons that are good for growth. But don't rest during other times, for it could be both times are good and perhaps only one crop will succeed. Don't take a chance on one. Be ready to work even during a bad season, because at the end it may turn out to be the most successful.

This is the simple meaning. However, the Mishna tells us more.

The sixth Mishna in Avot d'Rav Nosson tells us, "If you learned Torah when you were young, learn Torah even when you are old." In fact, learning Torah when one is old may garner even more reward. Hashem doesn't look for end results. He wants our efforts. The more the exertion, the greater the reward.

Likewise, Chazal say, "If you learned Torah when you were wealthy, learn Torah even when you are poor." The reward for learning despite difficulties is greater than learning when one has it easy.

The Gemara in Chagiga says, if a person travels six months to learn Torah, then learns for a day and travels back another six months, he gets reward as if he learned for a whole

year. Most mitzvot are not that way. If I travel three days to get to a wedding, I don't get credit for the days I traveled.

Yet the Mishna tells us, if a student travels during Sukkot to learn Torah from his Rebbe, he is exempt on the way from the mitzva of sukka. This is based on the principle, "Ha'osek b'mitzva patur min ha'mitzva-One engaged in a mitzva is exempt from another mitzva."

If one is traveling to learn Torah, the act of getting there is also part of the mitzva. Learning Torah is not an end result. The mitzva is lasok b'Torah, to busy oneself with Torah. Becoming a talmid chacham may or may not happen. There's no halacha that one must become one. Even if you don't remember what you learned, you still get reward for your efforts.

Chazal say, don't rest, plant the seeds. It may not be the best time to do it. But do it anyway. Study Torah in all circumstances, whether you are rich, poor, old, or young. "Ki heim chayeinu-For the Torah is our life."

Rabbi Meir gives another explanation. If you learned by one Torah teacher, don't consider it enough. Go and learn from others. He quotes a verse in Mishlei, "Drink the blessed water..."

The commentators explain, when it comes to learning the text of the Gemara, an approach in learning, limit yourself to one teacher. However, when it comes to sevaros (analysis) of the text, learn from multiple teachers.

Rabbi Yehoshua gives another explanation. "If

you married when you were young and became widowed, marry again when you are older..." Even if you are old and cannot have any children, don't rest..." And if you can still have children, have more. Each child is a blessing from heaven. Don't worry about financial burdens. Hashem provides.

Another way to understand the verse in Kohelet is: If you gave charity in the morning, give again in the evening. Perhaps one or the other may not have been necessary or perhaps they were both needed.

Tzedakah is compared to planting, because when you plant you take a chance. You don't know if the seeds will grow. When a person says he needs your help, perhaps he really doesn't. Still we have to take the chance and help him. We have to be oseh tzedakot, busy with good deeds.

We learn this from Hashem who constantly gives us life, health, financial resources, children, and numerous other blessings unconditionally. Hashem too takes a chance and plants. He gives us unlimited potential, kochot hanefesh, and there are times when a person wastes it or never uses it. Still Hashem does not stop giving.

So too, the Mishna tells us, if you are able to give, give. Don't say, "I already gave. I'm exempt."

May we continue to keep growing, moving forward, constantly planting, in our quest to reach tikkun (rectification) and sheleimut (perfection) in serving Hashem.