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maskil Le'David

Wealth Is Stored for its Owner for His Detriment

"Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehat son of Levi separated himself" (*Bamidbar* 16:1).

Rashi explains "separated himself" to mean that he took himself to one side to be separated from the congregation, to cause a stir about the priesthood. Onkelos also translates "separated himself" as "Korach cut himself off" — he detached himself from the rest of the congregation to start an argument.

Every Jewish *neshamah* contains within it part of all the other *neshamot* of Am Yisrael, for all originate from one source. A single person can have an enormous influence on the entire nation. This is especially true for the Bnei Torah who sit and occupy themselves by delving into Hashem's Torah. A great responsibility rests on their shoulders, for they are connected and intertwined with the rest of Am Yisrael, in whatever respect they find themselves. Through toiling in Torah they are endowed with a colossal power, affording others the strength to increase their mitzvah observance and Torah study.

This was Korach's problem. Despite the fact that he carried the Aron and was also a Navi, since he took himself aside and separated himself from the congregation, his *neshamah* was no longer connected to the rest of Am Yisrael. He relinquished responsibility for society as a whole, and so the merit of belonging no longer assisted him. This is why he was uprooted from the world and lost everything.

The entire episode of Korach is surprising for he was no average individual. Chazal (*Midrash Tanchuma*) tell us that Korach was a very wise person and was one of the select few who carried the Aron, as it says "And to the sons of Kehat he did not give; since the sacred service was upon them, they carried on the shoulder" (*Bamidbar* 7:9). The holy Arizal says that the last letters of the words **כְּתָמֵךְ יִפְרַח** ("A righteous man shall flourish like a date palm") spell קרח. Korach was a tzaddik. This being the case, we need to comprehend how he fell to such a low level where he gathered people together to argue with Hashem and incited the nation against Moshe and Aharon. Korach

did not lack anything. He had both wealth and honor, as the Gemara (*Pesachim* 119a) says, "Rabbi Levi says, the keys to Korach's treasury were equal to the load of three hundred white donkeys." So what brought him to speak so negatively — including *lashon hara* and *rechilus* — about Moshe and Aharon?

We also need to understand — if Korach was indeed so wicked, why did Hashem bless him with such great wealth? What was the purpose of this gift?

Examining the source of Korach's great wealth will shed light on these difficulties. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 119a) says: "Rabbi Chama Bar Chanina says, Yosef hid three treasures in Egypt and one was revealed to Korach." Perhaps, since Hashem knew that Korach possessed the very negative trait of jealousy, He gave him wealth from the treasuries of Yosef Hatzaddik to help him uproot this trait and correct his bad *middot*. How would this be achieved? Through contemplating his wealth, he will be reminded of Yosef's righteousness and upright *middot*. Even though Yosef's brothers were jealous of him, as we are told (*Bereishit* 37:11): "So his brothers were jealous of him" and embittered his life and sent him down to Egypt, he did not take revenge but instead behaved toward them with kindness and mercy. Furthermore, he was not jealous of the kingship of Yehuda and did not request greatness and honor for himself. He behaved with submission, treating everyone as an equal. He spoke to them with love, affection and brotherhood.

Unfortunately, Korach did not use the opportunity to learn this lesson from his wealth, because his jealousy overcame him.

Chazal tell us (*Avot* 4:21), "Jealousy, lust and honor remove a man from the world." The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 119a) tells us that wealth is stored for its owner for his detriment — Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says this refers to the wealth of Korach because he failed to pay attention to Yosef Hatzaddik's way of life and humility; he failed to learn the importance of staying far away from pride and jealousy. This is how he fell to the lowest level and fought against Moshe and Aharon. And what happened eventually? "They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit; the earth covered them over and they were lost from among the congregation" (*Bamidbar* 16:33).

This is the meaning of Chazal's statement that Korach acquired a bad acquisition — it was as if he stole money he didn't deserve.

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30 Sivan 5784
6 July 2024

1068

Korach

Shabbat Rosh Chodesh



Hilula

30 Sivan
Rabbi Yom Tov
Yedid HaLevi

1 Tammuz
Yosef HaTzaddik

2 Tammuz
Rabbi Yosef Ben Vallid

3 Tammuz
Rabbi Shneur Kotler,
Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood

4 Tammuz
The Maharam of Rotenberg

5 Tammuz
Rabbi Tzalach Cohen Zangi

6 Tammuz
Rabbi Chaim Deliroza,
author of *Torat Chaimof*





PARSHAH PEARLS

Inspiring Reflections

“Blessed are You...for having made me a Kohen”

“And whomever He will choose, He will draw close to Himself” (*Bamidbar* 16:5).

Rabbi Tzaddok of Lublin poses a difficulty:

Why do Kohanim not recite a daily blessing “For having made me a Kohen,” just as a man recites the blessing “For not having made me a woman”?

The Admor Rabbi Avraham Mordechai of Gur answers:

The Mechilta teaches us that before the Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, they were all fitting to be Kohanim, as it says, “You shall be to Me a kingdom of Kohanim.” It was this sin that resulted in the Kohanim alone being chosen to perform the holy service. So if a Kohen would recite the blessing “For having made me a Kohen,” this would be using the disgrace of his friend for his own honor.

The Decree Will Not Affect Them

“Separate yourselves from amid this assembly” (*Bamidbar* 16:21).

To whom was the warning “separate yourselves” directed?

Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar, zy”a, explains that the warning was not directed to Moshe and Aharon, for even if they were to be amid the assembly, they would not be affected by the judgment. Rather, it was said to the tzaddikim, Yehoshua and Kalev, and others of that stature, and also to the families of Moshe and Aharon.

This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: “I shall destroy them in an instant.” The decree on the entire generation had already been pronounced (as a result of the sin of the spies) but at the time Moshe Rabbeinu’s prayers mitigated the decree that they shouldn’t all die at once, only over a long period of time. Yet, after they now sinned again, the original decree was reinstated, since the Satan accuses during a time of danger.

Never Forget

“They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit; the earth covered them over and they were lost from among the congregation” (*Bamidbar* 16:32).

The fact that Korach was punished for his incitement against Hashem’s anointed one with such an unusual and strange death, demands an explanation. Being swallowed alive is not one of the four death-penalties prescribed by the Torah, so why was Korach punished in this extraordinary way?

Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Khrol, zt”l, cites a wonderful explanation, based on the Chazal “It is decreed on the dead that he will be forgotten from the heart.”

Since the Torah wanted all future generations to learn a lesson from what happened to Korach — that they should stay far away from *machloket* — Korach had to be punished in a way that he would never be forgotten.

That is why he had to be swallowed alive in the ground.



WALKING IN THEIR WAYS

Tidbits of faith and trust
penned by Moreinu v’Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David
Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

A Productive Investment

A few days before I was scheduled to travel to the States, my trusted secretary and escort’s wife called me up. She complained of recent extreme exhaustion. The family was also in the midst of moving. The tension of not feeling well, coupled with the frenzy of the move, caused her house to become one huge pressure cooker, a recipe for discomfort and discord. She asked for my blessing.

I felt bad for this woman. She was sacrificing so much to allow her husband to accompany me on my upcoming trip. I offered a silent prayer that Hashem put the proper words in my mouth to encourage her and bring her a measure of hope.

This is what I said: “It is true that you are undergoing a difficult time right now. You are forced to contend with several different challenges. But you should know that your difficulties are miniscule in comparison to those of others. There are countless women who plead for children, homeless individuals who die of hunger and terrible illnesses that kill people. A woman was just here, asking for a blessing, for her doctors had discovered a malignant growth on her neck, *rachmana litzlan*. Your troubles are cause for distress, but they can be resolved. They shrink in proportion to those of others, less fortunate than you.”

I continued in this vein, constantly returning to the case of the woman with the growth on her neck. She had eventually calmed down and went home.

A few days later, as my secretary and I were making our way to the plane, I noticed that he looked disturbed. I asked what was bothering him.

“Two days ago, my wife suddenly felt a bulge in her neck. Very much afraid, she rushed to the doctor. The doctor, more worried than she, sent her to take a series of tests. I am afraid of the results.”

I calmed him down and said that his wife had no neck problem whatsoever. He was appeased and the shadow of a smile appeared on his lips.

The time for our flight arrived. With calm hearts, we boarded the plane. At that very time, his wife was taking the tests she had been prescribed. A biopsy was taken in order to ascertain the status of the growth. With the help of Heaven, everything came back clear. Her fears allayed, the woman was sent home, in perfect health.

She immediately phoned her husband and emotionally told him that she was well.

Of course, I shared their happiness, and I told my secretary, “This is in the merit of those who support Torah. When one upholds the tree of life, he enjoys the fruits of his labors.”



WORDS OF THE SAGES

Who Took Note of the Child Who Read the Ketubah?

“That he not be like Korach and his assembly”
(*Bamidbar* 17:5).

Parshat Korach serves as a practical lesson time and again. It is applicable whenever strife rages like a rampant fire in a field of thorns, fueled by bad *middot*, jealousy and greed. The Torah warns us about this so that we shouldn't be swayed to behave with negative *middot* — so that, G-d forbid, we should not join the students of Korach and his assembly.

In this column we will bring (from the *sefer Bechol Nafshecha*) several anecdotes about the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, the Gaon Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel, zt"l, whose broad shoulders carried the responsibility for the spiritual and physical welfare of thousands of yeshiva students. With his saintly personality he understood how to act with ingenuity so that his deeds should not be the cause of any *chillul Hashem*.

Due to the large number of students learning in the Mir yeshiva in Yerushalayim, it became necessary to rent apartments in the Beit Yisrael neighborhood.

The Rosh Yeshiva told his students that they must be careful not to cause tenants to be evicted from their apartments by offering landlords a higher sum than the current tenants were paying.

HaRav Natan Tzvi held that there was no way that a ben Torah could succeed in his Torah learning if his presence in Yeshiva had caused a family to have to search for a new home. The pain and friction that would result from this arrangement would simply be the success of the evil inclination who seeks to penetrate the walls of the *beit midrash* and poison the atmosphere with arguments and strife.

The following story is yet another demonstration of the extent to which Harav Natan Tzvi was careful not to cause pain to any Jew, and shows his degree of sensitivity to the feelings of others.

At a certain wedding ceremony that the Rosh Yeshiva zt"l attended, a doubt arose as to whether one of the names written in the *ketubah* (marriage contract) was legible. They decided to call upon a young child to read the name, and determine accordingly. The child pronounced the name according to his perception, which resulted in further debate. In the middle of the heated discussion, the Rosh Yeshiva noticed that the young child, who did not understand exactly what was going on, looked self-conscious. He felt that he was the focus of the argument.

With his sensitivity and ingenuity, the Rosh Yeshiva took a coin out of his pocket, gave it to the child and told him, “You did a fine job!”

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The purpose of the wealth he was blessed with was to give him a chance to rectify his *middot* through contemplating the ways of Yosef Hatzaddik. Had he done so, this wealth would justifiably have been his. But since he was jealous of Moshe and Aharon and did not correct this trait, it is considered as if he stole these riches.

May it be Hashem's will that we merit rectifying our *middot* and straightening our path by distancing ourselves from negative traits such as jealousy and honor, and instead crown ourselves with upright *middot*, Amen v'Amen.



FROM THE TREASURY

Based on the teachings
of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu
Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi
David Chananya Pinto, *shlita*

Korach's Thoughts of Regret

Chazal (*Bava Batra* 74a) say concerning Korach: “In the future there is hope for his end and he will merit the World to Come.”

As cited above, the holy Arizal writes that the verse in *Tehillim* (92:13) “צדיק כתמו יפרח” (“A righteous man will flourish like a date palm”) refers to Korach (the last letter of each word spells “קרח”). This teaches us that in his final moments he repented.

This could mean that just as his sons didn't die because they repented, so too Korach repented. It could be that as the earth was opening its mouth to swallow him, he entertained thoughts of regret about his deeds, but it was already too late.

It seems likely that these thoughts of repentance came to him on account of his children, for Chazal tell us (*Yalkut Shimoni Korach* 752): “What merit did Korach's sons possess that they were saved? When they sat by Korach, their father, they suddenly saw Moshe Rabbeinu and immediately buried their faces in the ground. They said, if we stand up in honor of Moshe Rabbeinu, this will be a sign of disrespect for our father and we have been commanded to honor our parents. However, if we don't stand up we will be violating, ‘In the presence of an old person shall you rise’ (*Vayikra* 19:32). It is better that we should rise in the presence of Moshe Rabbeinu, even though this shows disrespect to our father. At that moment they entertained thoughts of repentance and about them David Hamelech says (*Tehillim* 45:2), ‘My heart is astir with a good theme.’”

Without doubt, when Korach saw how his sons were burying their faces in the ground and debating how to behave, and in the end they chose the honor of Moshe Rabbeinu over his honor, this deed instilled thoughts of great regret in his heart. He too wished to repent, for their correct conduct made him uncomfortable. However, it was hard for him to overcome his desire for honor.

But once he saw that his fate was decided and in another moment the ground will open its mouth, his thoughts of repentance intensified. But it was already too late and the ground swallowed him because of the great *chillul Hashem* that he caused.

In addition, he had the decree of Moshe Rabbeinu, the *gadol hador*, hanging over him. Moshe Rabbeinu decreed that Hashem should punish him with a completely new punishment, so that the world should know that Moshe had been appointed by Hashem and he had not taken this position for himself, as Korach fabricated about him. Therefore, Hashem had to punish Korach immediately so that the entire world should hear and be afraid. But in the future, Hashem will accept his repentance and he will merit the World to Come. When Chana prophesied, “Hashem brings death and gives life, He lowers to the grave and raises up,” she was referring to Korach.

"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True Eshet Chayil
In memory of Rabbanit **Mazal Medlin Pinto**, a"h



"She discerns that her enterprise is good — so her lamp is not snuffed out by night"

Chazal tell us that this verse refers to Chana the prophetess — in the merit of her supplication in the Mishkan, she merited giving birth to Shmuel HaNavi. The Midrash says, "She discerns that her enterprise is good," this refers to Chana who discerned the taste of prayer, as it says, 'Then Chana prayed and said: My pride has been raised through Hashem...' Therefore, she merited a son who was a partner to Moshe and Aharon, who lit up Israel like lamps, as it says, 'Moshe and Aharon were among His priests, and Shmuel among those who invoke His Name' (*Tehillim* 99:6). It is also written about Shmuel, 'The lamp of Hashem had not yet gone out, and Shmuel was lying in the Temple of Hashem' (Shmuel I, 3:3)."

This is why Chazal determined the main laws of the *shemoneh esrei* prayer, the most important of the daily prayers, according to the behavior of Chana when she beseeched Hashem for a child. Herein lies a lesson for all generations, a clear message about the power of a woman's prayers and deeds, through which she can merit raising a house of Torah and derive pleasure from blessed and upright generations.

One of the esteemed *baalei teshuvah* of our generation stood outside the yeshiva study hall, totally overcome. He couldn't fathom what had suddenly brought him to return to his roots after so many years of distance from anything Jewish. As he turns the pages of his album of family pictures, he thinks to himself, "How did it come to be that after generations of a life of assimilation, I am sitting here by the table and learning Gemara, Rashi and Tosafot with my precious children?" (In fact, he is not the only one faced with this perplexing idea. Many of those who merit retuning to a life

of Torah and mitzvot cannot understand how this phenomenon occurred.)

He broached his question to Maran HaGaon HaRav Elazar Menachem Man Shach, zt"l.

Maran Harav Shach thought for a moment, shuddered and replied emotionally:

"Savta, it is the tears of Savta! There, opposite the Shabbat candles, when she stood with her face covered by her hands and silently begged and prayed, 'Give me the *zechut* to raise children and grandchildren who are wise and understanding, who love Hashem and fear G-d.' Those tears never go to waste. They contain the power to have an effect even many years later and are the cause of her offspring returning to their roots..."

When Harav Shach, zt"l, was once asked by a *talmid* how one merits great children, he replied in short: "With a great mother..."

In the same vein, in one of the *sefarim* of the Mashgiach HaRav Wolbe, zt"l, in the chapter where he explains the subject of *tefillah*, he finds it appropriate to reveal a personal disclosure:

"I am convinced that if I achieved anything in Torah, it is in the merit of my mother's prayers. I noticed that she would pray for me even ten times a day."

She Confers Educational Values

In addition to the power of the prayers and tears of a Jewish mother, a woman is blessed with *binah yeterah*, extra wisdom. Chazal say, "The wife intuitively her guests more than the husband." It is not incidental that we are told about the Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger, zy"a, that he would sit with his wife and deliberate matters of *yirat shamayim* with her until midnight.

Starting with the Avot and Imahot, we find that Avraham and Sarah deliberated the correct way to deal with Yishmael. Finally, Hashem said to Avraham, "Whatever Sarah tells you, heed her voice." The extent to which the Torah emphasizes the mother's influence on the formation of the Jewish nation is clear. Who was the one who said, "Drive out this slave woman with her son"? Sarah Imeinu. And Hashem said to Avraham, "Heed her voice" — listen to her *ruach hakodesh* (Divine inspiration).

The singular strength that a woman possesses, and the extent to which her opinion is accorded respect by Chazal, is expressed clearly in the words of Rabbi Moshe Bar Yosef of Tehrani (the Mabit, in his *sefer Beit Elokim*). He compares a woman's strength to water which draws everything toward it.

The waters from which the Jewish people drank during their forty years in the desert were based on this foundation. They were blessed with water in the merit of the Well of Miriam. There is a famous question: Why specifically was the water chosen to be given in her merit?! There are several explanations but one answer is that water is endowed with a special force — it carries the food that we ingest to all corners of the body. It absorbs the nutrients of the digested food and carries them along one hundred and twenty thousand kilometers of blood vessels, a person's life force. Similarly, the Jewish woman is the one who draws on the foundations of spirituality that her husband brings home from the *beit midrash*, and through her sensitivity and intuition, imparts educational values to her children, who are our future.



"Contemplate and see that Hashem is good"

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