

# ב"ה Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1520 JUN 17<sup>TH</sup> '23 כ"ח סיון תשפ"ג

פרשת קרח  
PARSHAT KORACH

SHABBAT MEVARCHIM | AVOT CHAPTER 4

OU  
ישראל

## ויצא פרח ויצא ציץ ויגמל שקדים

במדבר יז:כג



Simchat Shmuel  
Rabbi Sam Shor  
Program Director, OU Israel Center  
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Towards Meaningful  
Shabbat: Introduction  
Rebbetzin Zemira Ozarowski  
Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative  
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YERUSHALAYIM SHABBAT TIMES PARSHAT KORACH

CANDLES 7:11PM • EARLIEST 6:17PM • HAVDALA 8:29PM • RABBEINU TAM 9:04PM

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See [TorahTidbits.com](http://TorahTidbits.com) for Divrei Torah by: Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersch Weinreb, Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman and Rabbi Daniel Mann.

## HELPFUL REMINDER



### SHABBAT MEVARCHIM

**Rosh Chodesh Tammuz** is on Monday June 19 and Tuesday June 20

מולד חודש תמוז יהיה ביום ראשון שלשים ושש דקות וחמישה עשר חלקים אחרי שלש בצהרים.  
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### KIDDUSH LEVANA

**Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad:** 3 Tammuz/ Wed. night June 21.

**7 Days After Molad:** 7 Tammuz/ Sun. night June 25

**Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana:** until 14 Tammuz, Sun. night July 2, all night



*This week's Torah Tidbits  
cover image!*

Photographed by Daniel Santacruz

This photograph of an almond tree was taken  
at Kibbutz Zuba, in the outskirts of Jerusalem.

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLY	KORACH	HAVDALA	CHUKAT
7:11	6:17	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	8:29	Candles 7:13 Early 6:19 Havdala 8:31
7:28	6:19	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:31	7:29 6:21 8:33
7:29	6:18	Beit Shemesh / RBS	8:30	7:31 6:20 8:32
7:26	6:18	Gush Etzion	8:29	7:28 6:19 8:31
7:28	6:20	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	8:32	7:30 6:21 8:34
7:27	6:18	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:31	7:29 6:20 8:32
7:29	6:20	Netanya	8:33	7:30 6:22 8:34
7:26	6:18	Be'er Sheva	8:29	7:28 6:20 8:31
7:28	6:19	Rehovot	8:31	7:29 6:21 8:33
7:11	6:19	Petach Tikva	8:32	7:13 6:21 8:33
7:27	6:19	Ginot Shomron	8:31	7:29 6:20 8:33
7:19	6:21	Haifa / Zichron	8:34	7:21 6:22 8:35
7:26	6:18	Gush Shiloh	8:30	7:28 6:19 8:32
7:28	6:20	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:32	7:30 6:21 8:34
7:31	6:18	Giv'at Ze'ev	8:30	7:32 6:19 8:31
7:26	6:17	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	8:29	7:27 6:19 8:31
7:28	6:20	Ashkelon	8:32	7:30 6:22 8:33
7:27	6:19	Yad Binyamin	8:31	7:29 6:21 8:33
7:23	6:18	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:32	7:24 6:20 8:34
7:27	6:18	Golan	8:31	7:28 6:19 8:32

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 9:04PM** • next week - 9:06pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,  
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

**Daf Yomi this Shabbat: Gittin 32**



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Editor: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider | [aaaron@ouisrael.org](mailto:aaaron@ouisrael.org)  
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## JERUSALEM

**Ranges 11 days Wed - Shabbat**  
**June 14 - 24 / 25 Sivan - 5 Tamuz**

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	4:33 - 4:35
Sunrise	5:33 - 5:35
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:06 - 9:08
Magen Avraham	8:22 - 8:24
Sof Zman Tefila	10:17 - 10:19
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:39 - 12:41
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:15 - 1:17
Plag Mincha	6:16 - 6:19
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:50 - 7:53



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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

**RABBI AVI BERMAN**

Executive Director, OU Israel

Given the fact that I was born in the United States at a time when I could easily find my favorite bag of Wise potato chips at any local grocer or gas station, I find it difficult to imagine a world without kosher products. But 110 years ago finding kosher food was a challenge in the United States. Envisioning a future in which kosher products would be available for Jews around the world, OU Kosher was founded.

My children and wife shared my experience and appreciation for OU-certified products when we lived in Vancouver, British Columbia. But once we returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, where our supermarkets exclusively carry kosher food, we forgot how hard it can be for Jews in the diaspora to find kosher food. That said, *Am Yisrael* living in *Eretz Yisrael* directly benefits from OU Kosher, which certifies 40-100% of the ingredients used in food products around the country. I do my best to remind my children of this often.

Last Sunday, following the wonderful day my wife and I spent at the Israel Day Parade, I was reminded of OU Kosher's impact during the second annual Arutz Sheva Jerusalem Conference in New York which took place that evening. This year's conference - otherwise known as *Kenes Yerushalayim* - attracted dignitaries, government officials and leaders who joined the parade that day.

Following opening remarks by Dudu Saada from Besheva, the program included



sessions, panels and roundtables that addressed timely topics such as immigration to Israel, early detection of antisemitic outbreaks, and celebrating 75 years of Israeli innovation. Participants were addressed by Gilad Erdan, Israel Ambassador to the United Nations, Moshe Lion, Mayor of Yerushalayim, Yaakov Hagoel, Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, Malcolm Hoenlein, Vice Chair of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and others. Many Israeli ministers and dignitaries were also present, including Ofir Sofer, Minister of Aliyah and Integration and Amichai Eliyahu, Minister of Heritage.

The highlight of the event was witnessing the delivery of the Jerusalem Prize which was awarded to OU Kosher for serving the needs of *Am Yisrael* for more than a century. With 1.4 million certified products, OU Kosher continues to meet our evolving *kashrut* needs on a global scale. Moreover, proceeds from OU Kosher support additional OU programs outside of *kashrut* - an element which catapults it to a league of its own.

*The award was presented by Ofir Sofer, Minister of Immigration and Absorption, together with the Besheva team, to Rabbi Mordechai Stareshesky and Rabbi Moshe Hauer. Mazal tov!*

I had a heartwarming encounter with one of the visiting Israeli ministers who had arrived in New York a week before the event. He said, "Last month I traveled to a city in Europe and couldn't find kosher certified products - even in the kosher store! The shop owner explained that in his area there are no certified products. Rather, shopkeepers and Jewish residents must reference detailed lists of kosher products when shopping. When I arrived in New York and found myself at a grocery store, I gained a newfound appreciation for the simplicity of picking up a product and finding the trusted OU certification on the label."

Despite the monumental achievements of OU Kosher, my colleagues were shocked to hear the organization would be awarded the Jerusalem Prize. In truth I expected nothing less. OU Kosher is led by people who demonstrate modesty and humility in everything they do. With an unwavering

focus on maintaining the highest standards of *kashrut* around the world, they have little time to celebrate milestones.

I give a tremendous *yasher koach* to Besheva and my friends Dudu Saada, Yoni Kempinski and Dudi Finkler for putting together an impactful conference. I thank Arutz Sheva for reminding us what a world without OU Kosher would look like. It is important to have *hakarat hatov* to the visionaries who started OU Kosher a century ago and who shaped it into the world's largest Kosher certification, visionaries such as David Fund z"l and Gus Jacobs z"l. I extend my *hakarat hatov* to Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbi Moshe Elefant, Rabbi Hershel Schachter and the hundreds of *rabbanim*, *mashgichim* and partners for their dedication to OU Kosher, advancing to what it has become today.

May you continue *m'chayil el chayil*, from strength to strength, and recognize the impact of your efforts.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

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*The family will be meeting  
at her Kever on Har HaMenuchot  
at 10:00am, Friday June 16 Be"H*

May the learning from this week's issue  
of Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמת our beloved father,  
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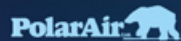
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## FROM THE DESK OF RABBI MOSHE HAUER



OU Executive Vice President

# Shaping Your Environment

Do we live in a world, a community, or a home that fosters disagreement and betrayal, or in one that encourages togetherness and trust? What role do we play in shaping those critical aspects of our environment?

The dispute between Moshe and Korach reaches its climax when Moshe declares that to prove his authenticity the earth would “open its mouth” to swallow up Korach and his partners (Bamidbar 16:30). Fascinatingly, the Talmud (Sanhedrin 37b) notes that this is the second time the earth opened its mouth. The first time was when Kayin killed Hevel and the earth “opened its mouth” to swallow and cover the blood of Hevel (Bereishit 4:11).

Both stories – those of Kayin and Hevel and of Korach – are paradigms of conflict. In a deeper sense the second is in fact a repeat of the first, as Korach is seen in mystical sources as a reappearance or gilgul of Kayin, while Moshe is associated with Hevel (see Shelah haKadosh, Torah Ohr Parshat Korach). Kayin successfully corrupted the earth’s environment, directing it to be his accomplice in destruction by swallowing up the blood of Kayin, thereby erasing from the world the presence of the person who had brought G-d’s presence to dwell within

it. Moshe, on the other hand, activated the earth to support his efforts of strengthening faith in Hashem’s word and in erasing from the world those who had introduced division and disruption, and sown distrust.

This is reminiscent of the Torah’s description of the land of Israel whose environment cannot tolerate bloodshed or immorality (Vayikra 18:25-8; Bamidbar 35:33), as well as the famous Talmudic account of the spilled blood of the prophet Zecharya that would not be absorbed by the earth of the Temple where it had been spilt (Gittin 57b). The right environment neither nurtures nor even tolerates corrupting and corrosive behaviors.

It is to some degree in our hands to define our environment. We can – like Kayin – create a context that breeds and feeds dissent, swallowing those who would uplift us. Or – like Moshe – we can create a setting where the arguments dissolve and disappear, and where faith and trust thrive. True, we will be unable to do this with dramatic feats like asking the earth to “open its mouth”. But we can certainly play a defining role in the sense of togetherness and trust that our home, communal, and global environments will nurture and encourage by the ways we choose to open our own mouths, by the tone we set in our personal relationships and by how we argue for what we believe in.

It is truly up to us to shape our environment for the better such that it will encourage peace, trust, and togetherness. ■

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4. The proposals must be submitted in writing by June 30, 2023 at 5:00 p.m., at the office of David Shub Law office, at the address listed below.
5. A draft of the Purchase Agreement and its appendices, including the construction permit, can be obtained for a payment of NIS 500 + VAT which will not be refunded.
6. It is clarified that no brokerage fees will be paid in connection with the purchase of the property.
7. Each bidder must attach to his bid a bank check, or a bank guarantee, valid for at least 6 months, to the order of Attorney David Shub for 5% of the bid. The bank check or bank guarantee will be collected and/or forfeited by the undersigned, as agreed, assessed compensation if the bidder will withdraw his offer and/or violates the conditions of his offer.
8. It is clarified that this invitation is not a "tender" ("Michraz") and the laws of tenders will not apply to it. The undersigned does not undertake to accept the highest bid, or any bid whatsoever. The undersigned reserves the right to conduct negotiations and/or bidding commerce, at any stage, with any of the bidders and/or request additional bids, at its sole discretion. The bidders will not have any claim and/or demand and/or claim in connection therewith and the undersigned may not sell the property at all.

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# KORACH



## 1ST ALIYA (BAMIDBAR 16:1-13)

Korach staged a rebellion against Moshe and Aharon along with Datan, Aviram and On and with 250 others. They claimed: we are all holy, why then are you above us? Moshe was distraught. He countered: G-d Himself will affirm whom He chooses. Bring an incense offering and He will choose. Moshe spoke to Korach: Why is it insufficient for you to serve as a Levi that you seek to be a Kohen as well? Moshe called for Datan and Aviram. They refused, saying: your leadership has failed, for you failed in bringing us to the Land of Israel.

The rebellion is multi-pronged. There is Korach. He seeks to be leader, either in place of Moshe or of Aharon. For we are all holy. Which is true. Datan and Aviram challenge Moshe's leadership; Moshe has failed to lead them to the Promised Land. Which is also true. But as in any rebellion, the criticisms while true are but half the story. We are all holy; but, hold on, G-d speaks to Moshe face to face. He doesn't do that with you. And true, Moshe is not going to lead them to the Promised Land; but they are going to get there. Oh, and what about leading them out of Egypt, leading to Mt. Sinai? The success of a leader lasts til night-fall; by morning, all's forgotten. There is no memory when it comes to dissatisfaction; past success is old news. And, did we forget that it wasn't Moshe's fault but the spies?



## 2ND ALIYA (16:14-19)

Moshe was angry. He said to G-d: Do not accept their offerings. I never took a thing from anyone. He turned to Korach: tomorrow, Aharon and you all shall offer incense on coals, each

## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven  
Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region

The story of the rebellion of Korach parallels the story of the spies from last week. Both are a rejection of the Divine, albeit in the rough and tumble of human dynamics. In the sin of the spies, although G-d promised the Land to us over and over - many times - the reality of the actual march gave the people cold feet. The sense of inadequacy, of weakness, of lack of confidence, of inferiority in the face of the nations of the Land drove the people to demur. As if to say: we are inadequate even with G-d's promises. Korach, on the other hand, suffers not from a sense of inadequacy but rather the opposite, of inflated self-image. The best person to lead this people is me. Korach's bloated self-perception led him to challenge Moshe's leadership, in spite of G-d's repeated selection of Moshe. As if to say: I know better than the Divine who is the best to lead this people and it is me. Opposite self-perceptions; same conclusion. With the spies, the people felt inadequate. With Korach, he felt superior. The stories of Bamidbar revolve around the reality of human nature; the challenge of fealty to the Divine amidst the myriad of human weaknesses. And a myriad of weaknesses there are.

bringing the incense before G-d. They did so, gathering at the entrance to the Mishkan. G-d appeared to the entire group.

Leadership in the Torah is not self-serving, but service of the people and of G-d. Moshe is insulted. He has had no personal gain. Those seeking leadership foist their ignoble intentions on others. The criticisms say more about the rebel than about the leader. Korach's interests are exactly what he criticizes in Moshe - power and personal gain. Ironical to criticize Moshe when, in fact, Moshe is the humblest of all and with no personal motive. He is the paradigmatic leader: the selfless servant of his people and of his G-d.



### 3RD ALIYA (16:20-17:8)

G-d warned Moshe and Aharon: stand clear for I am ready to destroy them. Moshe and Aharon objected: one sins and You are angry at them all? G-d instructed the people: stand clear. Datan and Aviram stood brazenly at their homes with their wives and children. Moshe: The following test will establish whether I am sent by G-d. If you all suffer a unique fate, swallowed into the earth, then it is clear that you have displeased G-d. The earth opened up, swallowing them and theirs into the earth. A fire consumed the 250 incense bearers. Elazar, son of Aharon took the incense fire pans for they had become holy by use. He took these and used them for a plating of copper for the altar, so all will know that only Kohanim are to bring incense. The people complained to Moshe and Aharon that they were killing the nation. A cloud covered the Mishkan.

From the punishment, we see the sin. Desired leadership, high office, lording over

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others; their fate was to fall low, below the earth. The bearers of the incense intended high religious office; the fire of religious desire consumed them. Incense assumes a central role in this story. Moshe told all to bring incense. In the next aliya, during the plague, Aharon brought incense to arrest the plague. Why not some other offering, like a sacrifice? This is conjecture, but perhaps incense symbolizes the ephemeral, the spiritual, the intangible. The Hebrew word for smell is reyach, akin to ruach, spirit. The word for breathing is noshem, related to neshama, soul. Incense is smoke, scent, wafting, intangible, like the soul. Man was created from the adama, the earth, with his neshama breathed into his nostrils. Moshe is indicating a powerful lesson of religious leadership: religious leadership, sought by the rebels, must be like incense. It need be pure, lofty, holy, driven by purity of motive, not the earthly desires of power and influence.



#### 4TH ALIYA (17:9-15)

G-d wanted to destroy the people. Aharon avoided this calamity by bringing incense immediately, standing between the dead and alive.

The intent to destroy the people by G-d is a recurring theme. But it never happens. This is a crucial theme: what the people deserve is one thing. What they actually receive is

another. Man may deserve destruction; but the power of G-d's mercy mitigates the harshness of what we deserve. We have seen this theme a number of times; the destruction is avoided. You have to read to the end of the story. The Torah is not the story of G-d's wrath burning. It is the story of love of G-d for the Jewish people, suspending what we deserve out of love.



#### 5TH ALIYA (17:16-24)

Moshe said: inscribe the name of each tribe on a staff, with Aharon's name on the staff of Levi.

The staff that sprouts is the one chosen. They were all placed in the Mishkan. Aharon's sprouted. The staff in the Torah is a symbol of power; Moshe's staff was the vehicle of the plagues, defeating Paro through Divine Power. Aharon's sprouted staff is a symbol of his Divine right to the power of religious leadership. His power does not come from his initiative, it comes from Divine sanction.



#### 6TH ALIYA (17:25-18:20)

G-d said: place Aharon's staff as a commemoration of this. The people complained to Moshe that those that approach the Mishkan die. The Kohanim and Leviim are charged with protecting the sanctity of the Mishkan. While the Kohanim will serve at the altar, the Leviim will serve them and preserve the sanctity of the entire Mishkan. The Kohanim are to both safeguard and to enjoy the holy offerings. They are given portions of offerings to consume, though with strict holiness. Agriculture also has holy produce, gifts that are given to the Kohanim, eaten with strict holiness. First born animals are holy gifts to the Kohanim, offered as offerings

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our beloved wife, mother,  
grandmother, great-grandmother

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with holiness, consumed by the Kohanim; while first born humans are redeemed. The Kohanim are not to receive a portion of Land in Israel; G-d is their portion.

The people complain that proximity to G-d is tough, life threatening. Moshe reassures the people that the Kohanim and the Leviim will protect the holiness, ensuring that all is done in accord with the demands of the holiness of the Mishkan.



#### 7TH ALIYA (18:21-32)

The Leviim also receive Maaser in lieu of a portion in the Land. With Kohanim and Leviim responsible for the sanctity, calamities ought to be avoided. The Leviim are to give a portion of their Maaser to the Kohanim. The Maaser of the Leviim differs from the portions of the Kohen, as they do not have the holiness that requires them to be eaten in a specific place and with purity. The Maaser is the property of the Levi, a benefit for public service.

Benefits given to those doing the public service, the Kohanim and the Leviim is perfectly understandable. But the Torah is pointing out not only what they get, but what they don't. Those in positions of religious power can easily use that position to extract wealth from a willing public. The Kohanim and Leviim are told that they are to receive portions of offerings, meaning, this and no more. Not land, not gold and silver, not palaces. The allotted gifts alone.

## HAFTORAH SHMUEL I

11:14 - 12:22

The prophet Shmuel gathers together the Jewish people to install Shaul as King

of Israel. During the course of his address to Bnei Yisrael he said to them, "Here I am; bear witness against me before G-d and before His anointed; whose ox did I take, or whose donkey did I take, or whom did I rob; or whom did I oppress, or from whose hand did I take a bribe..." This echoes Moshe's statement in this week's Torah reading: "I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them, and I have not harmed a single one of them."

The nation then gathers at Gilgal for a second coronation of King Shaul. The nation offers sacrifices and rejoices together. Shmuel then speaks to the people: he asks the people to testify that he never committed crimes against them and they confirm. He discusses how Hashem helped them every step of the way and then he rebukes them for wanting a flesh and blood king. He assures them that G-d will be with them if they follow in His ways, and reminds them of the consequences they will face if they do not follow G-d's word.

Shmuel cautions Bnei Yisrael that their newly appointed king is not a replacement for Hashem. He emphasizes that the people must continue to follow Hashem and obey His commandments if they want themselves and their king to be successful. ■

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## STATS

38th of the 54 sedras.

5th of 10 in Bamidbar.

Written on 184 lines (ranks 32nd).

13 Parshiyot: 7 open and 6 closed.

95 p'sukim (ranks: 39th).

1409 words (ranks: 36th).

5325 letters (ranks: 35th).

9th in Bamidbar in these 3 categories.

Above average in words & letters per pasuk. Korach is a short sedra (in a Book with many long sedras) with fairly long p'sukim (in a Book with lots of short-pasuk sedras).

## MITZVOT

9 mitzvot: 5 positives, 4 prohibitions.

Only 17 sedras have more mitzvot; 35 have fewer. Korach just makes it into the top third (tied with Ki Tisa).

*Mazal Tov to*

*Miriam & Rabbi David Shapiro & family  
on the engagement of their grandson*

*Mazal Tov to*

*Elky Grossman and Family  
on the marriage of her son*

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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

"Vayicach Korach... V'Datan V'Aviram" (Chapter 16, Pasuk 1)

Many ask on the grammar of the first word of the Parsha, when it is written "And Korach took... with Datan and Aviram and On ben Pelet" with the singular form of "Vayikach (he took)" instead of in the plural form of "Vayikhu (they took)"? It should be noted that Korach took these other people with him. The plural form should have been used here just as it is used in the next Pasuk "Vayakumu lifnei Moshe" "And (they) rose in the face of Moshe".

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalisher (Poland 1800's) answers that the use of the singular form of "took" is to reveal to us that the people, who sided with Korach in this rebellion against Moshe and Aharon, were not at all unified or united. Rather divided they were, each having their own personal aspirations and selfish egos that motivated them to argue with Moshe. "Vayikach" – Each one personally took to arguing for his own purpose. This division was the result of this evil plot.

Shabbat Shalom

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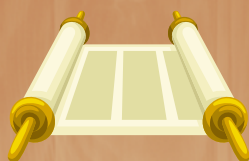
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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
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Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew  
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May the learning of these Divrei Torah be לעילוי נשמות  
HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Ariele zt"l

לעילוי נשמות

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# Hierarchy & Politics: The Never-Ending Story

It was a classic struggle for power. The only thing that made it different from the usual dramas of royal courts, parliamentary meetings, or corridors of power was that it took place in Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem, Holland, and the key characters were male chimpanzees.

Frans de Waal's study, *Chimpanzee Politics*<sup>1</sup>, has rightly become a classic. In it he describes how the alpha male, Yeroen, having been the dominant force for some time, found himself increasingly challenged by a young pretender, Luit. Luit could not depose Yeroen on his own, so he formed an alliance with another young contender,

Nikkie. Eventually Luit succeeded and Yeroen was deposed.

Luit was good at his job. He was skilled at peacekeeping within the group. He stood up for the underdog and as a result was widely respected. The females recognised his leadership qualities and were always ready to groom him and let him play with their children. Yeroen had nothing to gain by opposing him. He was already too old to become alpha male again. Nonetheless, Yeroen decided to join forces with the young Nikkie. One night they caught Luit unawares and killed him. The deposed alpha male had his revenge.

Reading this, I thought of the story of Hillel in *Pirkei Avot* (2:6): "He saw a skull floating upon the water, and said: Because you drowned others, you were drowned; and those who drowned you, will themselves be drowned."

In fact, so humanlike were power struggles among the chimpanzees that in 1995, Newt Gingrich, Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives, included de Waal's work among the twenty-five books he recommended young congressional Republicans to read.<sup>2</sup>

2. This essay was written in the days following the Brexit vote in Britain, when a struggle was taking place over the leadership of both main political parties. I leave it to the reader to draw any comparisons, either with primate politics or the story of Korach.

1. Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics*, London, Cape, 1982.

Korach was a graduate of the same Machiavellian school of politics. He understood the three ground rules. First you have to be a populist. Play on people's discontents and make it seem as if you are on their side against the current leader. "You have gone too far!" he said to Moses and Aaron. "The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" (Num. 16:3).

Second, assemble allies. Korach himself was a Levite. His grievance was that Moses had appointed his brother Aaron as High Priest. Evidently he felt that as Moses' cousin – he was the son of Yitzhar, brother of Moses' and Aaron's father Amram – the position should have gone to him. He thought it unfair that both leadership roles should have gone to a single family within the clan.

Korach could hardly expect much support from within his own tribe. The other Levites had nothing to gain by deposing Aaron. Instead he found allies among two other disaffected groups: the Reubenites, Dathan and Aviram, and "250 Israelites who were men of rank within the community, representatives at the assembly, and famous" (v. 2). The Reubenites were aggrieved that as descendants of Jacob's firstborn, they had no special leadership roles. According to Ibn Ezra, the 250 "men of rank" were upset that, after the sin of the Golden Calf, leadership had passed from the firstborn within each tribe to the single tribe of Levi.

The revolt was bound to ultimately fail since their grievances were different and could not all be satisfied. But that has never

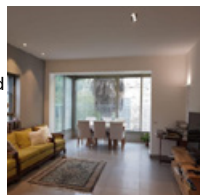


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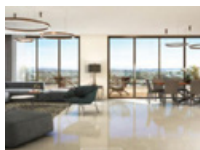
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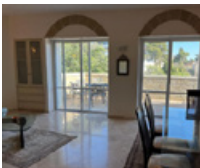
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stopped unholy alliances. People with a grudge are more intent on deposing the current leader than on any constructive plan of action of their own. “Hate defeats rationality,” said the Sages.<sup>3</sup> Injured pride, the feeling that honour should have gone to you, not him, has led to destructive and self-destructive action for as long as humans have existed on earth.

Third, choose the moment when the person you seek to depose is vulnerable. Ramban notes that the Korach revolt took place immediately after the episode of the spies and the ensuing verdict that the people would not enter the land until the next generation. So long as the Israelites, whatever their complaints, felt that they were moving toward their destination, there was no realistic chance of rousing the people

3. Bereishit Rabbah 55:8.



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in revolt. Only when they realised that they would not live to cross the Jordan was rebellion possible. The people seemingly had nothing to lose.

The comparison between human and chimpanzee politics is not meant lightly. Judaism has long understood that Homo sapiens is a mix of what the Zohar calls *nefesh habehamit* and *nefesh haElokit*, the animal soul and the Godly soul. We are not disembodied minds. We have physical desires and these are encoded in our genes. Scientists speak today about three systems: the “reptile” brain that produces the most primal fight-or-flight responses, the “monkey” brain that is social, emotional, and sensitive to hierarchy, and the human brain, the prefrontal cortex, that is slow, reflective and capable of thinking through consequences of alternative courses of action. This confirms what Jews and others - Plato and Aristotle among them - have long known. It is in the tension and interplay between these systems that the drama of human freedom is played out.

In his most recent book, Frans de Waal notes that “among chimpanzees, hierarchy permeates everything.” Among the females this is taken for granted and does not lead to conflict. But among males, “power is always up for grabs.” It “has to be fought for and jealously guarded against contenders.” Male chimpanzees are “schmoozing and scheming Machiavellians.”<sup>4</sup> The question is: Are we?

This is not a minor question. It may even be the most important of all if humanity is to have a future. Anthropologists are

4. Frans de Waal, *Are we smart enough to know how smart animals are?* New York, Norton, 2016, 168.

generally agreed that the earliest humans, the hunter-gatherers, were generally egalitarian. Everyone had their part to play in the group. Their main tasks were to stay alive, find food, and avoid predators. There was no such thing as accumulated wealth. It was only with the development of agriculture, cities, and trade that hierarchy came to dominate human societies. There was usually an absolute leader, a governing (literate) class, and the masses, used as labour in monumental building schemes and as troops for the imperial army. Judaism enters the world as a protest against this kind of structure.

We see this in the opening chapter of the Torah in which God creates the human person in His image and likeness, meaning that we are all equally fragments of the Divine. Why, asked the Sages, was man created singly? “So that no one could say: My ancestors were greater than yours” (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5). Something of this egalitarianism can be heard in Moses’ remark to Joshua, “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that He would rest his spirit on them” (Num. 11:29).

However, like many of the Torah’s ideals – among them vegetarianism, the abolition of slavery, and the institution of monogamy – egalitarianism could not happen overnight. It would take centuries, millennia, and in many respects has not yet been fully achieved.

There were two hierarchical structures in biblical Israel. There were kings and there were priests, among them the High Priest. Both were introduced after a crisis: monarchy after the failure of the rule of the “judges”, the Levitical and Aaronide

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priesthood after the sin of the Golden Calf. Both led, inevitably, to tension and division.

Biblical Israel survived as a united kingdom<sup>5</sup> for only three generations of kings and then split in two. The priesthood became a major source of division in the late Second Temple period, leading to sectarian divisions between Sadducees, Boethusians, and the rest. The story of Korach explains why. Where there is hierarchy, there will be competition as to who is the alpha male.

Is hierarchy an inevitable feature of all advanced civilisations? Maimonides seems to say yes. For him, monarchy was a positive institution, not a mere concession. Abarbanel seems to say no. There are passages in his writings that suggest he was a utopian anarchist who believed that in an ideal world no one would rule over anyone. We would each acknowledge only the sovereignty of God.

Putting together the story of Korach and Frans de Waal's chimpanzee version of *House of Cards*,<sup>6</sup> the conclusion seems to

5. Following the Brexit vote, the question is being asked in Britain as to whether the United Kingdom will remain a united kingdom.

6. Michael Dobbs, *House of Cards* (New York: Harper

Collins, 1989).  
7. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), pt. 1, ch. 11.  
8. Baba Batra 21a.  
9. Meaning, both views are correct, see Eruvin 13b; Gittin 6b.

follow that where there is hierarchy, there will be struggles to be alpha male. The result is what Thomas Hobbes called “a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.”<sup>7</sup>  
That is why the rabbis focused their attention not on the hierarchical crowns of kingship or priesthood but on the non-hierarchical crown of Torah, which is open to all who seek it. Here competition leads not to conflict but to an increase of wisdom,<sup>8</sup> and where Heaven itself, seeing Sages disagree, says, “These and those are the words of the living God.”<sup>9</sup>

The Korach story repeats itself in every generation. The antidote is daily immersion in the alternative world of Torah study that seeks truth not power, and values all equally as voices in a sacred conversation. ■

Collins, 1989).

7. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), pt. 1, ch. 11.

8. Baba Batra 21a.

9. Meaning, both views are correct, see Eruvin 13b; Gittin 6b.

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# One Miracle More

Is this miracle really necessary?

Picture the scene that greets our eyes, towards the end Parshat Korach...

The rebellion of Korach has been put down by Hashem with overwhelming force. A targeted earthquake and heaven-sent fire have decimated the ranks of the rebels. Plague has afflicted those who dared to complain in the devastation's aftermath.

*Hashem's choice of Moshe and Aharon for leadership could not be clearer...*

And yet, apparently, God feels the need to perform one more miracle.

He directs Moshe to collect a staff from each of the tribes of Israel; to inscribe the name of each tribal leader upon his respective staff- with Aharon's name etched onto the staff of the tribe of Levi. He further instructs Moshe to place all the staffs overnight in the Sanctuary.

These staffs, God explains, will serve as miraculous indicators of His own Divine will:

"And it shall be that the man whom I (God) shall choose, his staff will blossom; and I shall cause the complaints of the Children of Israel to subside from upon me."

Moshe complies with God's instructions; and twelve staffs, each emblazoned with the

name of a tribal leader, are brought to the sanctuary where they remain overnight.

On the morrow, when Moshe enters the sanctuary, he finds that Aharon's staff alone has "brought forth a blossom, sprouted buds and mature almonds." God has, once again, made known His selection of Aharon for the role of Kohen Gadol, High Priest.

But, as we have questioned above, why is this miracle necessary?

Hasn't God, in the most decisive ways possible, already declared his clear choice of Moshe and Aharon for leadership? Weren't the earthquake, fire, and plague, powerful enough indicators of God's resolve?

If the Israelites have not been convinced by now of God's choices; will the quiet, additional miracle of Aharon's flowering staff really make the difference?

Perhaps the key to understanding the miraculous coda of the Korach narrative lies in focusing not on the substance of the final miracle, but, instead, on its tone.

The flowering staff of Aharon could hardly be more different from the preceding miracles. Gone, suddenly, are the terrifying images of earthquakes, fires and plagues. In their place, in stark contrast, now appears the peaceful vision of a budding staff.

As God moves from death and destruction towards this culminating miracle of quiet beauty; He conveys a powerful message to the Israelites...

*Although I was forced to respond to the uprising against Moshe and Aharon with overwhelming power, I do not want the election of these leaders to remain forever rooted in those tragic, necessarily destructive events. Let, instead, the flowering of Aharon's staff become the enduring symbol of his priesthood.*


*Let the leadership of "this lover of peace and pursuer of peace" be forever associated in your minds with a quiet final miracle of creation. And, through this miracle, let both leaders and disciples alike learn that there is no more powerful force in God's arsenal, nor in their own, than the force of creation.*

To go a step further, the quiet miracle of Aharon's staff may well herald the onset of a global transition in the nation's development. If we accept that Korach's rebellion occurs, as recorded in the text, after the Chet Hameraglim<sup>1</sup>, the Israelites now stand on the threshold of major changes in their relationship with God.

*Over the course of the next forty years in the wilderness, as one generation of Israelites gives way to the next, the nation will move from the relational level of Yira, fear and awe, to the level of Ahava, love.*

The generation of the Exodus and Revelation will inexorably disappear; erstwhile slaves whose ability to relate to God is limited to the primitive plane of fear. This generation, heirs to a legacy of torment under Egyptian rule, responds only to


<sup>1</sup> The Ibn Ezra maintains that Korach's rebellion occurred earlier than recorded; rising out of the transfer of ritual privileges from the first-born Israelites to the Levi'im. Most authorities, including the Ramban, however, argue that the tragic events occur as recorded, shortly after the sin of the spies and at the beginning of the Israelites' 40-year period of wilderness wandering.



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overwhelming power. God, therefore, speaks to them in a language they can understand. Through events such as: the ten plagues, the parting of the Reed Sea, the thunder and lightning of Sinai- and the earthquake, fire and plague of Korach's rebellion; God becomes their new master, to be held in awe and to be feared.

The children of these slaves, however, will experience God differently. Raised for nearly four decades in the bosom of God's continual protection; surrounded by the clouds of glory; nurtured on the heaven-sent *man*; this second generation will learn to relate to God through the more mature dimension of love. To this generation, God will emerge as a loving, benevolent parent who, with kindness and sensitivity, sustains his people on their continuing journey.

The first step in the monumental transition from *Yira* to *Ahava* may well take place in the quiet of the night, in the solitude of the Sanctuary, as Aharon's staff begins to blossom. With this miracle, God deliberately moves from destruction to creation; heralding a journey that will bring his people close.

Our people's formative, national journey from *Yira* to *Ahava* creates the paradigm for the individual religious passage we are each meant to experience over the course of our lives.

If as children we necessarily begin with *Yira* - perceiving God as a mysterious, distant and fearsome power, capriciously controlling our destiny; a mature relationship with God requires that we successfully transition to the dimension of *Ahava*, as well. The sense of awe that underlies our perception of the divine should certainly

never be lost. As the years pass, however, a growing, more pervasive sense of love is meant to fill our hearts; as we learn to believe in an approachable, benevolent deity who desires our welfare and cares deeply for our concerns.

*Fearing God is easy. Loving Him can, at times, be difficult.*

Inevitably, there will be moments in our lives when God seems distant; when His will and intentions remain unclear; when our relationship with Him is strained. Nonetheless, we are challenged to cultivate a deep abiding trust that he is with us even then; perhaps, particularly then; watching over us and caring for us as a parent would a child.

The journey towards God experienced by our nation at its infancy should be experienced by each of us, as well. Only then can our relationship with God be complete. ■

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**T**he uprising of Korach and his cohorts described in this week's parasha is reflected in the haftarah's episode of the prophet Shmuel's admonishment of the people for their request to appoint a king. There are, of course, close comparisons between the two events. In both stories the people express a dissatisfaction with the leadership, a post granted to them by G-d Himself. In both stories, the leaders were prophets and members of the same tribe – Levi. And, in both stories, we find Hashem expressing anger at the malcontents.

However, there actually are great differences between these two episodes, almost enough to make us wonder why we would even compare the two!

In the parasha's account, Korach and his followers essentially rebelled against Moshe, questioning his very right to lead the nation, while in the events portrayed in the haftarah we find a nation who remained faithful to their beloved spiritual guide. Korach et al wished to remove Moshe from his leadership role-accusing him of malfeasance, while the people in Shmuel's era simply desired the appointment of a King to lead them in war and, while doing

so, reassured the navi that he was innocent of any misuse of power during his years of leadership. Perhaps the most decisive proof of the obvious dissimilarity between these two events is the difference found in the conclusions of these two challenges to leadership: Hashem condemned Korach and all of his rebels to death, yet, rather than punishing those who asked Shmuel for a different form of government, G-d granted the people their wish and provided them with their first King.

Rav Soloveitchik, in explaining Hashem's less severe reaction to the nation's request for a king, explains that the people's desire for a king was not, in itself, sinful. Quoting the Rambam (Hilchot Melachim 1;1) and following the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah in the G'mara (Sanhedrin 20b), the Rav reminds us that there was a mitzvah from the Torah for the nation to establish a monarchy upon entering Eretz Yisrael, much as they were commanded to build a Bet HaMikdash. The sin of the nation, rather, was *not* the request

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itself but the *reason* why they demanded a king. It was the Rambam who clarifies this, writing (*Hilchot Melachim 1:2*) that G-d was reluctant to accede to the people's request because it was not based upon their desire to fulfill the Torah's precept but because they preferred not to have a prophet lead them.

In commenting on the Rambam's explanation, the Rav clarifies why the improper motivation in performing a mitzvah, something which, generally does not nullify the performance of a mitzvah (*mitoch shelo lsh'ma ba lish'ma*) did, in this situation, do just that. G-d considered their request to be sinful, telling Shmuel "The have rejected Me from ruling over them" (Shmuel A 8:7). The Rav points us to the commandment to appoint a king as it is formulated in the Torah: "...and you should say 'I shall

appoint a King over me....then shall you appoint a king over you..." The very commandment includes your requesting a king and, therefore, the very request is part of the mitzvah! It is for that reason, says the Rav, that Hashem was insistent on HOW the question be asked.

It is this clarification that helps us understand why our ancients chose to connect the two stories of those who challenged their leadership. After all, given the seeming differences between the two events, we might rightfully wonder whether both episodes should be seen as "rebellions". But realizing now that the inappropriate way the people asked for a king was seen by G-d as an act of rebellion against HIS rule, we better understand the reasoning of Chazal.

And we better understand how to approach Hashem with our own requests. ■



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# Korach Lacked 20:20 Vision

Many commentaries are curious as to how Korach, who was a very wise individual could have erred so terribly and determined to attack Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership and authority. Rashi suggests as follows:

...עֵינָיו הִטְעָמוּ רָאָה שְׁלֹשֶׁת גְּדוּלָּה יוֹצֵאָה מִמֶּנּוּ – שְׁמוּאֵל שֶׁשָּׁקוּל כְּנֶגֶד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן – אָמַר בְּשִׁבְלֵוֹ אֲנִי נִמְלֵט... (רש"י במדבר טז:ז)

*His **eye** deceived him. He saw [prophetically] a chain of great people descended from him: Samuel, who is equal [in importance] to Moshe and Aaron. He [Korah] said, “For his sake I will be spared”. (Rashi Bamidbar 16:7).*

V'karata L'Shabbat Oneg sites a question that Rabbi Yisrael Friedman of Husiatyn asked his teacher regarding this Rashi, when he was only seven years old (he was later to become the Admor of Husiatyn). Why does Rashi state עֵינָיו הִטְעָמוּ – that Korach's “**eye**” deceived him (in the **singular**). Rashi should have stated that his “**eyes**” deceived him (עֵינָיו).

In fact, the young child continued, at the end of the Torah it is stated, in connection with Moshe Rabbeinu:

וּבְמֹשֶׁה בֶּן־מֵאָה וָעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בָּמָתוֹ לֹא־קָהָתָה עֵינָיו.  
(דברים לג:ז)

*Moshe was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His **eye** had not dimmed... (Devarim 33:7).*

Again, why does the Torah refer to Moshe's “**eye**” not dimming, in the **singular**, rather than referring to both his **eyes** not dimming?

The young student's teacher lacked an answer, but the wise young man offered the following explanation. Man is created with two eyes, perhaps to symbolically reflect that with one eye we need to recognize God's greatness, while with the second eye, we are to acknowledge our humility. Man needs to create the proper balance between these two perceptions.

Korach was a holy individual, who witnessed all the miracles in Mitzrayim and at Har Sinai, and he feared and respected God. However, due to his ego, recognizing that great men like Shmuel will be his descendants, he lacked humility. His issue was with one eye – the eye that should have kept him humble.

Moshe, on the other hand, was different. Notwithstanding that Moshe was the only individual to speak directly to God (פֶּה אֶל פֶּה), he maintained his modesty. That eye- retained the proper perspective when it came to his personal perception.

May we be able to attain “20:20 vision”, so that we recognize God's awesomeness, yet as we achieve personal growth in our avodat Hashem, preserve our humility. ■

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**8:30 PM**

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Program **Rabbi Elyada  
Goldwicht** (The Bais)

TUE, JUN 20

**9:15 AM**

**Rebbetzin Shira Smiles**  
Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla) (will  
speak as part of Rosh Chodesh  
Seminar)

**10:30 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

**9:30AM** Minchat Chinuch  
**Rabbi Breitowitz**

**12:15 PM**

Jewish National Revival  
**Dr. Deborah Polster**  
(Will resume in Fall)

**2:00 PM** Men's Talmud  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

**7:30PM** (The Bais) Safrus  
(Men) **Rabbi Tzvi Mauner**

**8:00PM**

Sefer Shmuel **Rabbi Machlis**

**SPECIAL EVENT**

**9:15AM-1:00PM**

L'Ayla Rosh Chodesh  
Tamuz Seminar

**Schedule Subject to change, please check website for updates**  
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WED, JUN 21

**9:00 AM**

Torah and Technology  
**Rabbi Shimshon Nadel**  
(new course)

**10:15 AM**

Contemporary Halachic Issues  
**Rabbi Anthony Manning**

**11:30 AM**

Ani Maamin-But Do You Know  
if it's Really True? (new course)  
**Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum**  
(Resumes June 28)

**12:30 PM** Lunch and Learn  
**Rabbi Neil Winkler**

**8:00 PM**

Halachic Controversies  
**Rabbi Aschi Dick** (The Bais)

THURS, JUN 22

**9:00 AM**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Ari Kahn**

**10:15 am**

Parshat HaShavua  
**Rabbi Baruch Taub**

**11:30 AM**

Unlocking the Messages  
of Chazal  
**Rabbi Shai Finkelstein**

**2:00 PM**

Men's Talmud-Mesechta –  
Bava Basra  
**Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld**

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Parsha, 7:00PM Mon  
Halacha, 7:00PM Wed

**Rebbetzin Shatz**

(L'Ayla)-Insights of  
Chazal- Tues, 5:00PM

**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua  
Wed. 8:30PM  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2244321902>  
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Thursday June 29, 9:15AM-1:00PM



**9:15AM** Words of Introduction  
**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

**9:25AM** Sefer Tehillim:  
Structure and Significance  
**Mrs. Chana Deutsch**

**10:15AM** The Paradigm of  
Constant Connection: A Text-Basis  
Exploration of Tehillim  
**Mrs. Sara Malka Reichman**

**11:00AM** Brunch

**11:30AM** The Internal Life and  
Times of Dovid HaMelech  
**Mrs. Yael Dworkin**

**12:15PM** Dovid Hamelech's  
Dream (Mizmor 132)  
**Mrs. Sara Leah Haber**

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**9:10AM** Words of Introduction  
**Mrs. Zemira Ozarowski**

**10:30AM** Brunch

**9:15AM** Lessons in Achdut from Parshat Chukat  
**Mrs. Shira Smiles**

**11:00AM** Humanity, Unity, and Connection to the Infinite  
**Mrs. Ilana Cowland**

**10:00AM** Personal Story of Jewish Unity  
**Rabbi Leo Dee**

**11:50AM** The Person Sitting Next to You: Practical Tips for Creating Connection and Achdut  
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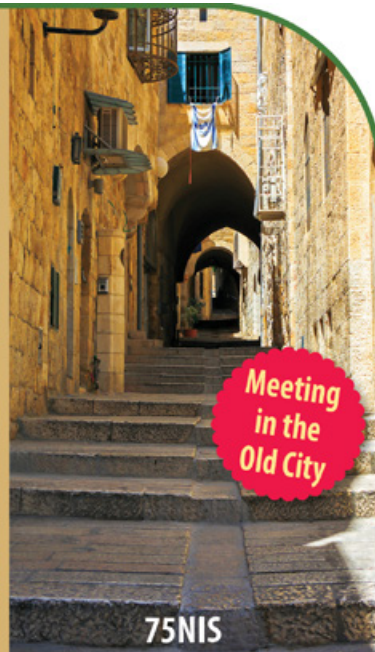
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**Sunday, June 18th**

- all Morning shiurim are sponsored anonymously

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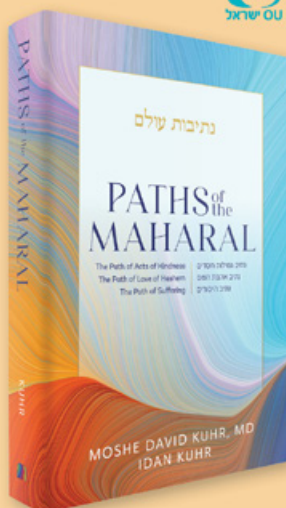
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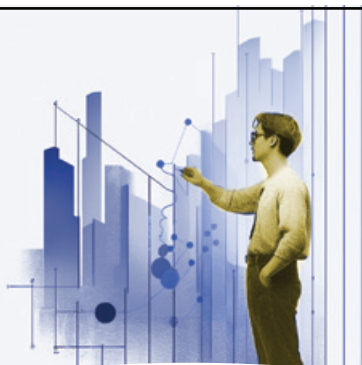
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**from 36 years of hands-on reporting by  
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**Tuesday, June 20, 7:30pm**

**Renewed US pressure on Israel:  
What everyone needs to know**

**Tuesday, June 27, 7:30pm**

**The Unseen US hand in the IDF  
withdrawal and expulsions in 2005**

**Tuesday, July 4, 7:30pm**

**How Israel can declare independence  
from the US and remain friends**



# Donkey's Directive

We are familiar with the complaint of Korach and his companions Datan and Aviram against Moshe and Aharon. Yet, when we look at Moshe Rabbeinu's retort to Datan and Aviram's criticism, it seems peculiar. Moshe Rabbeinu gets angry and implores Hashem to refuse the offerings of Korach and his group. He responds to their censure by saying that he never even took a donkey from the people for his personal use (*Bamidbar* 16;15). Rashi notes here that even when Moshe went back to Mitzrayim to lead the Jews out of slavery, he took his own donkey. Is using his own transportation as opposed to writing it off as a business expense the primary indication that Moshe was not abusing his position? Further, we can wonder if Datan and Aviram even deserved a response for their flagrant disrespect to Moshe!

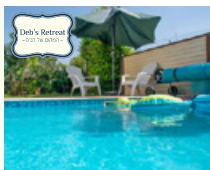
Rav Yerucham Levovitz shares here a powerful insight. It is natural to respond to critique with categorical denial, especially if one feels the condemnation is unwarranted. However, Moshe Rabbeinu teaches

us to reflect, to see if there is any truth to the accusation. If, after deep consideration, Moshe Rabbeinu can indeed say that he never took anything from *Klal Yisrael* for his personal use, even travel expenses incurred as part of his job, then he is indeed innocent of any charges leveled against him. It is easy to reject any admonishment or deny it. Processing all that is said to us through an honest and reflective lens is a sign of greatness. Rav Yisrael Salanter notes that Dovid Hamelech displays this *middah* as well. Dovid Hamelech declares, "*bakamim aly mire'im tishmana aznai* – when those who would harm me rise up against me, my ears have heard their doom." (*Te Hilim* 92;12) Even when his enemies leveled accusations against him, his ears were open to hear what they had to say. Realizing that everything said to us is some sort of message to help us reflect and grow motivates us to become greater, more expanded people.

Rav Wolbe explains that Moshe Rabbeinu's comment about not taking even a donkey teaches us that the real test of one's honesty is the way he handles money. Indeed, Chazal teach that Moshe Rabbeinu wore a robe without pockets or seams when dealing with the donations for the *Mishkan* so no one could even contemplate accusing him of dishonesty or corruption. There is a story told of a man who went to a contemporary gadol and lauded the shidduch he had just made for his daughter to a young man who he described as a boy with

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tremendous *yirat shamayim*. The gadol asked him if he ever saw this boy deal with money since one's integrity vis a vis money is the true mark of *yirat shamayim*.

Rav Druk in *Aish Tamid* notes that Moshe's emphasis on not taking anything from *Am Yisrael* for his personal use was an indication of his true greatness. Genuine leadership is displayed in one whose whole desire is to serve his people, never to

intimidate or dominate. Moshe Rabbeinu's humility is evident; the property of his people was not his for the taking.

The beauty of Torah is in the varied and diverse ways that it can be understood. The *Noam Elimelech* sees Moshe's statement as a plea of respite and forgiveness from his people. Supporting a Torah scholar generates a power of protection that helps one resist sin. Thus, Moshe Rabbeinu declares that he is at fault for the people's state, for had he allowed them to provide him with a donkey, they would not have come to sin so quickly. This undeniably distinguishes Moshe Rabbeinu as the quintessential leader of all time. ■

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Mashpiah, OU-NCSY

Executive Director, Camp HASC

Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

# Jewish Leadership

Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Tifereth Jerusalem on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, was the *Poseik haDor*, the leading Halachic authority of his generation. He was adored for his compassion, sensitivity and *midos tovot*, and respected for his unmatched genius and *hasmada*, constant engagement in Talmud Torah. Reb Moshe's wise counsel and *psak* were sought by Jews worldwide who turned to the *tzadik* with questions and quandaries large and small. *Igros Moshe*, a nine volume series of responsa, includes thousands of Reb Moshe's *teshuvot* and has its own index to navigate the range of topics covered, titled *Yad Moshe*.

Anecdotes relating to Reb Moshe's self-perception are insightful and instructive. Once, a woman who remembered Reb Moshe from his younger years as a Rav in Russia asked what position he now occupied in America: "Do you have a congregation or lead a community?" "I say a *shiur*," R' Moshe replied with deep simplicity, "and sometimes I answer people's questions and *paskan a she'eilah* (issue a halachic ruling)."

There was nary a topic relating to Jewish life and living that Reb Moshe did not address in his corpus of *p'sak*. A reporter

seeking to understand the global consensus and devotion to the *Gadol haDor* once asked Reb Moshe about the process through which he reached the pinnacle of Jewish leadership, and how and when he was declared the greatest authority on Jewish law in the generation.

Smiling, Reb Moshe replied, "I really don't know the answer to your question. All I can tell you is that I do my best to answer people who come to me with halachic questions. Often, they return a second time with something else to ask, so I imagine they are satisfied with the answers they receive."

Our sedra this week details the rebellion of Korach, a talented and righteous Jew with great potential for leadership and impact on Klal Yisrael, who remains an example of tragic failure and fall from grace.

Korach was fixated on hierarchy, roles and titles, and who was deserving of status and power or not. While seeking to appear as a champion of spiritual equality and open religious access within the community, Korach also made the claim that he himself was most qualified and worthy of being the Kohen Gadol. For Korach, leadership clearly meant power, entitlement and self-importance to him, despite his 'campaign pitch'. However, in seeking to undermine Moshe Rabbeinu's leadership, he revealed the vast chasm of difference in the *midos* and mentality of the two men.

On the opposite end of the spectrum

was Moshe Rabbeinu, the greatest man who has ever lived, who having reached the pinnacle of human achievement and self-actualization was nonetheless עָנִיו מְאֹד “exceedingly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth” (*Bamidbar*, 12:3). And it was specifically by means of this humility that he experienced the greatest level of clarity, revelation and *dveykus*.

וְלֹא־קָם נָבִיא עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר יָדְעוּ ה' פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים:

There was never a prophet like Moses in the People of Israel, who knew Hashem face to face. (*Devarim*, 34:10)

וְדִבֶּר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים כְּאֲשֶׁר יְדִבֵּר אִישׁ אֶל־יָרֵעֵהוּ

Hashem would speak to Moshe face to face, as one person speaks to another. (*Shemos*, 33:11)

The Baal Shem Tov says that Hashem Yisborach acts *midah k'neged midah*, ‘measure for measure’ with us, and ‘lowers’ himself to shine His Infinite light upon a human being (who lowers himself). Thus did Hashem speak with Moshe ‘face to face’ וְדִבֶּר כְּאֲשֶׁר יְדִבֵּר אִישׁ אֶל־יָרֵעֵהוּ, ‘with the same humility that Moshe spoke with his fellows.’

Despite his great stature and awesome

spiritual accomplishments, Moshe Rabbeinu remains the paradigm of authentic Jewish leadership: humility, self sacrifice and complete *bitul*, self-effacement before the needs of the People and the Will of Hashem.

It is said that the reason Rav Yosef Karo, the *Mechaber* or author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, was universally accepted and his codification of Jewish law remains the template of Jewish practice throughout the generations is that never once did he demand of others, “*Kabel daati*; you must accept my opinion.” As with Moshe Rabbeinu, Reb Moshe Feinstein and all the true *tzadikim*, the mark of Torah leadership is the *midah* of humility. Their focus is never self-serving, rather only serving others and Hashem sincerely and wholeheartedly.

The kernel of truth in Korach’s claim is that we are all leaders. May we also learn from his courage — and use it positively, to ‘lower ourselves’ and to take up the responsibility to serve and inspire those around us.... ■

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Upon Liad's arrival, he integrated into the medical team, providing advanced life support such as intubation and medications. After a joint effort of half an hour, the patient regained his pulse and started breathing again. He was promptly transported to the hospital for further treatment.

After the incident, Liad said, "I entered the medical field 15 years ago, and until this day I am committed to responding to emergencies and volunteering my skills to save lives. My ultimate goal is to help people return to their loved ones and resume their lives at the end of the day."



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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

There is a verse which should be familiar to each of us which appears in the *shir shel yom* for *Shabbat, Tzadik KaTamar Yifrach* - *The Righteous Blossom like the date palm.*

The Arizal points out that the *Sofei Teivot*, the concluding letters of the words *Tzadik KaTamar Yifrach* - *Kuf Reish Chet* - spell out *Korach*.

How are we to understand this teaching from the *Ari HaKadosh*, that encrypted in this verse about the blossoming potential of the righteous, is an allusion to *Korach* who seemingly represents an individual who is far from being righteous?

In addition, and in contrast to the depiction of *Korach's* challenge to *Moshe* and *Ahron's* leadership roles, *Parshat Korach* contains the interesting miracle which occurs to *Ahron's* staff- *V'hinei Parach Matei Ahron L'Veit Levi, V'vayetzit Perch, V'vayatzetz tzitz, V'vayigmol Shkeidim* - *And behold the staff of Ahron of the house of Levi had blossomed; it brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and developed almonds.*

In explaining this verse, **Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr** *zt"l* points out that normally when a fruit appears in nature, a bud first appears on the tree, then that bud turns to a blossom, and then the blossom disappears and a fruit begins to grow. However, here, when it comes to the miraculous growth that springs forth from *Ahron's* staff, the buds, flowers and almonds are occurring

simultaneously.

Rav Gedaliah Schorr explains that this miracle is meant to teach us a fundamental message about what differentiates *Ahron* from *Korach*. *Ahron* represents an individual who is in a constant state of growth and renewal and thus his staff reflects this - the buds, blossoms and fruit (almonds) are present simultaneously, as there is constant ongoing growth and renewal. Even after *Ahron* has achieved great spiritual growth, he doesn't rest, yet continues to seek opportunities for further growth and renewal. This, explains Rav Gedaliah Schorr, is the meaning of our verse - *Tzadik KaTamar Yifrach* - *Ahron* was in a constant process of growth and renewal.

Indeed, every single one of us has within us that same potential to either blossom like that *tamar* and bear fruit, or *chas v'shalom* to not see that potential for continued growth actualized. Each of us must work diligently to bring that innate potential to fruition.

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we each be blessed to emulate *Ahron HaKohein*, to strive to experience constant growth and renewal in our *Avodat Hashem*.

*Shabbat Shalom.* ■

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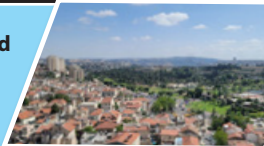
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# Geulah & Achdut

The Korach earthquake left our nation in complete chaos. Just a few months earlier, the entire population had gathered into marching formation, preparing to stride into Israel. The Jewish encampment in the desert was a logistical marvel, highly organized and highly coordinated. Each shevet occupied a distinct and well-defined sector with the entire convoy partitioned by flags.

Transporting a population of three million strong across a sandy desert is no small logistical feat, and it requires highly synchronized teamwork. According to one opinion of the gemara they journeyed in the "camp formation" rather than in single-file, further demanding precise and detailed choreography. The scene in parshat Beha'alotecha is a model of cooperation and coordination.

It is also a model of a harmonious "division of labor". During an elaborate inauguration ceremony, the Levi'im were inducted into their dual role. Tasked with guarding the Mishkan, they intermediated between the general population and the shechinah. However, they also assisted the Kohanim in their daily korbanot and in general Mishkan operations. They were content playing these subsidiary roles, without

demanding the limelight. Beha'alotecha presents an idyllic scene of social harmony and of national achdut- both within the Jewish encampment and within the overall population.

Korach's rebellion shattered everything. Demanding equal political and religious rights, he incited Levi'im into a full-scale rebellion. Moshe's unrelenting rivals, Datan and Aviram, exploited this mutiny to intensify their personal vendetta against him. Two hundred and fifty dissenters, hailing from the tribe of Reuven, joined the insurrection, hoping to recover their forefather's lost glory and abdicate title. It was an all-out contest of everyone against everyone, and we quickly spiraled into anarchy. Our national harmony was ripped to shreds by the Korach mutiny.

This revolt is the final event recorded by the Torah before the forty year "break in the action". The Torah doesn't document any events which transpired during those forty dark years, primarily, because nothing significant occurred, other than the slow and tragic extinction of an entire generation. Effectively, from a literary standpoint, the Korach uprising launched our mini-gallus of forty years in an empty desert.

Conceivably, national tefillah and teshuvah could have reversed the forty-year mini-galus which had been sentenced to us after the meraglim fiasco. After all, just a year earlier, a harsh divine punishment for the egel sin had been commuted. Korach's

rebellion, however, profoundly ruptured our social fabric and eliminated any hope for national recovery. A fractured nation could not rally to tefillah or to teshuvah. Our fate was sealed.

### **The Sale of Yosef**

Of course, this was not the first time, nor the only time in history that Jewish exile was triggered by social strife. Our first exile to Egypt was sparked by a sibling rivalry which erupted into the shameful sale of Yosef. Had the family not been fractured, history may have taken a different trajectory. Thousands of years later, on the eve of our lengthiest exile, this hideous crime would come back to haunt us.

The brutal murder of the ten martyrs, signaled the start of our dreaded and lengthy galus. During the show trial of our legendary Torah scholars, the Roman prosecutors invoked the crime of Yosef's sale as the basis for this punitive verdict. Just as we were about to depart for our long odyssey through history we were reminded, once again, that Jewish exile is always triggered by social disharmony.

Sadly, we didn't need this gruesome reminder. During the final stages of the second Beit Hamikdash, our society was wracked by strife, discord and bloody civil wars which took tens of thousands of lives. Our society was badly splintered into competing factions which sparred for political and religious control.

Eventually, facing a brutal Roman siege, we plummeted into even greater conflict. We had stored up enough grain to outlast several years of a siege, however during the siege, warring sects burned each other's granaries, introducing widespread hunger

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and disease. When the Romans finally breached the walls of Yerushalayim they discovered a city of corpses and skeletons. The Romans didn't conquer Yerushalayim, the city collapsed under the weight of dispute and internal conflict.

Jewish exile is always a product of societal disunity. From Yosef to Korach, to the civil wars of the second Beit Mikdash, this sad cycle repeats itself throughout Jewish history.

### **Every Jew Owns Israel**

The Land of Israel was awarded to a people and not to individuals. When our national unity frays, our hold on our Land erodes. The notion that Israel belongs to the larger community and not to any one individual group or faction, is illustrated by an interesting halacha. The easiest method to halachically transfer ownership of a portable item (known as *ma'aseh kinyan*) is to package it together with a land transfer. Smaller portable items can be bundled together with land and sold as one package through a process known as *agav*. This facile method of a kinyan transaction depends upon the seller actually owning transferable land.

The great French Tosafot scholar known as Rabenu Tam, the 12<sup>th</sup> century grandson of Rashi, asserted that even Jews who do not actually own land can execute this kinyan process, since every Jew, effectively, owns a potential burial plot in Israel. This narrow halachic application, allowing the use of a hypothetical burial plot in Israel as the basis for a land-based kinyan process, reflects the broader truth that the Land of Israel is a national heritage. Because it is a national commons, when our *achdut* falls

into disrepair our hold on the Land weakens and the dark specter of *galus* appears upon the horizon.

### **Intergenerational Community**

Israel belongs to every Jew, even those who are no longer amongst the living. Though the original generation which left Egypt was condemned to die in the desert, they legally inherited the Land of Israel. A very complex and elaborate system was installed to allocate Land in Israel. A parcel of land was posthumously awarded to each original member of the generation which had departed Egypt, but had passed away in the desert. The lands then reverted to their living children who physically entered the Land. Israel belongs to an intergenerational community of Jews, and not just whichever generation happens to be inhabiting it. Our deed to this Land is communal and historical, and when our solidarity splinters our deed becomes voided.

### **Broadcasting "Oneness"**

The Land of God lies beyond human reach and beyond human capacity. Only those whom Hashem authorizes stand any chance to settle this small parcel of Land. Throughout history, dominant empires attempted, in vain, to establish permanent holds on this Land, but, inevitably, they all came up empty. Unlike other regions on this planet, settlement in the Land of God must be divinely ordained.

We were specifically chosen to inhabit this Land as part of our national and historical mission to represent Hashem in this world. Our deed to Israel is integrated with our mission of spreading knowledge of Hashem to all of humanity.

One of the basic tenets of monotheism is

the Oneness of Hashem. Ideally, our own unity should reflect His indivisibility and Oneness. When our unity reflects His, our mission is successful, and our presence in Israel is justified. When we fall into social disunity, we no longer fully represent His oneness and our lease on His Land falters.

### Homogenizing Minhagim?

Part of the historical project of returning home is reinstating the unity we lost during exile. The enormous challenge of unifying religious and non-observant Jews is obvious, but even within the Orthodox community we face many interesting and unprecedented questions, as we walk through the uncharted territory of Jewish redemptive history.

Minhagim and other customs such as nusach hatefillah were crucial to maintaining Jewish identity throughout a punishing exile. Communal identity and communal traditions are major elements of religious identity and our diverse and particularized customs preserved Jewish identity and strengthened our sense of "belonging".

Now that we have all gathered "under one roof", in one country, will we begin to standardize some of these differences? Obviously, strict halachic ordinances are unchanging and cannot be ignored or homogenized. However, as history unfolds and more of the Jewish population "encamps" in Israel, it is possible that we will secure greater unity by homogenizing some of the different minhagim which we brought home from our exile. These differences were crucial to our survival when we were lost in history, but may deter national solidarity in our Homeland. ■



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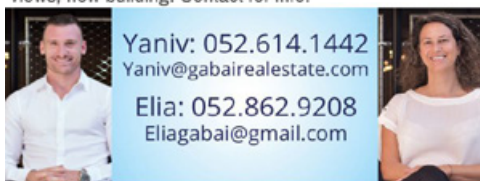
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# TOWARDS MEANINGFUL SHABBOS

BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



## Introduction

*On January 1, 2000, the New York Times printed a special edition to commemorate the newspaper's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This commemorative edition included the front page of the first edition of the newspaper 100 years ago, the front page of the current newspaper, and a front page projecting what might be written 100 years later. The writers wrote articles about what they guessed might be in the news in another century. On the bottom of the page, there was a box listing the Shabbos candle lighting time for January 2100. The non-Jewish editor of the newspaper was asked why he specifically chose to include that seemingly random item. His response was as follows - "We don't know what will happen in the year 2100. It is impossible to predict the future. But of one thing you can be certain. That in the year 2100 Jews will still be keeping Shabbos".*

This inspiring story emphasizes to us the eternity and constancy of Shabbos. No matter what happens, no matter where we are, or what century we live in, Shabbos will always continue to exist. This is an amazing thing!

However, on the other hand, because Shabbos is so eternal, and most of us have grown up with it and have been keeping it for decades, it is often taken for granted. This is truly unfortunate! There is so much beauty inherent in the Shabbos experience but because we never bother to focus on it

and to delve into it, we miss out.

We learn in Gemara Shabbos 10b – "אמר לו הקב"ה למשה: מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גנאי ושבת *Hashem said to Moshe: I have special present in my treasure house which is called Shabbos and I want to give it to Bnei Yisrael.*

Rav Shlomo Levenstein in his book ומתוך האור expands on this Gemara and explains as follows. If a man of limited means says he has a treasure locked in a safe, you can assume it's probably not worth very much. On the other hand, if a millionaire says he has a treasure stored in the safe, you can assume it's of great value. Here, the One with the treasure house, is none other than HaKadosh Baruch Hu. If Shabbos is considered one of the greatest gifts He has stored in His safe, this means it is of utmost value. Shabbos is the מקור הברכה, the root of all blessing in this world, but we need to spend the time to uncover what that means.

This week, we are beginning a new topic for this column. In this column – "Towards Meaningful Shabbos" – we will b'ezerat Hashem take a step back and really analyze all the components of our Shabbos experience – from lighting candles to Shalom Aleichem, from Zemirot to Havdala, from Lechem Mishna to the underlying concepts of the 39 Melachot, and everything in between.

It is my hope that in this way, we will uplift our weekly Shabbos experience, grow in our Avodat Hashem, and tap into the special Bracha that is inherent in the Shabbos. ■

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**RABBI AARON**

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

# One Person's Passion for the Land

*When the deep holy desire of love of Zion, of remembrance of the Land, to which all delights are attached **grows strong in the soul, even the individual soul, it opens up a fountain-flow for the entire community, for myriad souls attached to her.*** (Eretz Cheftetz 5:7) (Naor translation)

Rav Kook accentuates the powerful reverberations of a single person's yearning for the Land.

Ostensibly Rav Kook is echoing a central tenet found in Chassidut - namely, the remarkable stature and influence of a *Tzaddik*. Numerous chassidic texts emphasize the notion that the saint/ *tzaddik* - should be honored and recognized for their righteousness and even more so for their incalculable influence on this world and even the upper world.

The following is one example from the writings of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov on this topic, with whom Rav Kook was well versed:

"The true leader of the generation ought to be a great *tzaddik* indeed...After achieving such a state, he is capable by mere contemplative observation, reflecting on

each Jew, to bring sparkle and light into everyone's mind and intellect, distributing greatness to each in accordance with capacity and the quality of mind." (*Likkutei Ezzot, Zaddik*, no.108) ("The Religious Thought of Hasidism, Lamm, p. 301).

The influence of a *tzaddik* can be understood in mystical terms, as Rebbe Nachman seems to intimate above, or it can simply be understood rationally. Namely, a person of great charisma and influence can deeply impact the thoughts and actions of others.

## Rav Kook: The Tzaddik's Unique Role

In a powerful passage found in Rav Kook's *Orot Hateshuvah* (8:6) he speaks about the fact that the teshuva of *tzaddikim* brings a great light to "shine in all the darkened pathways." This notion can be applied to the effect that a saintly personality can have in regards to kindling a greater love and yearning for the Land.

"When the *tzaddikim* do teshuva, they cause the light of holiness to shine in all of the darkened pathways. The blemishes that they find within themselves, the counsel that they create for themselves so as to rise from [their] descent and from the despair in their heart to the clear light of supernal holiness and straightness - these themselves become great lights that illuminate the world. Whoever feels within himself the depth of the consolation of teshuva and the embitterment of thought [associated with]

rectifying his blemishes - both those whose rectification is within his grasp and those whose rectification is not yet within his grasp, regarding which he hopes for [God's] compassion - binds himself to the company of the tzaddikim, from whose thoughts of teshuva the entire world is renewed with a new light. (Orot Hateshuvah 8:6).

Rav Kook is speaking not only of the 'tzaddik's' influence but surely every person's potential to make an enduring impact. Positive actions - even positive thoughts - have a ripple effect for the good:

"A person knows that the moment that a stream of *ruach hakodesh* pours down on his soul, at any moment that a person uplifts himself through good deeds, [which comes about] through an awakening from above which pines for Godliness, for wisdom and righteousness, for beauty and justice - this brings a perfecting of the spiritual character of all of existence. (Orot Hakodesh Vol. 3, p.314).

Without question Rav Kook was a shining example of a single individual's extraordinary impact. He inspired multitudes to more passionately pursue the fulfillment of the mitzvah of yearning for the Land and more practically making the Land of Israel home.

Another remarkable illustration of a rabbinic leader who impacted others in their love of the Land was Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik. Rabbi Soloveitchik highlighted the

notion that at times it requires the courage of one individual to venture out on his own and heroically make his mark.

In an address given at a Mizrachi convention entitled "And Joseph Dreamt a Dream," Rabbi Soloveitchik describes the conflict between Yosef and his brothers. The brothers represented a conservative approach, while Yosef understood that changes were taking place and that it was necessary to plan and prepare accordingly. Yosef acted with a modern consciousness - he took note of innovation and change and responded positively. In Rabbi Soloveitchik's view, this position - sensitivity to the changing reality - is what characterized the Mizrachi movement, and Religious Zionism as a whole, in the modern era.

Rabbi Soloveitchik, speaking from a personal perspective, states that he came from the rabbinical tradition that had opposed Zionism, and whose love of *Eretz Yisrael* had never been garbed in political garments, preferring instead the language of Torah and prayer. Why, then, did he adopt the Zionist position, thereby severing himself from his family tradition? Because, the Rav testified, "I feel that Divine Providence ruled like Joseph and against his brothers" ('Five Addresses' p.36). ■

**Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum**

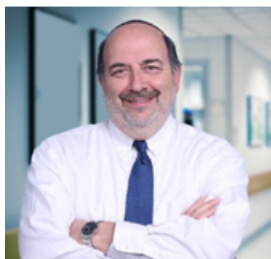
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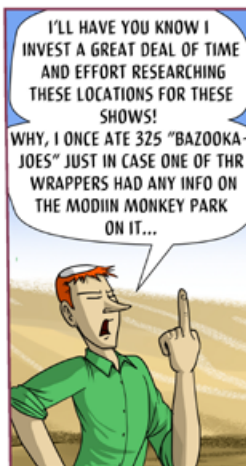
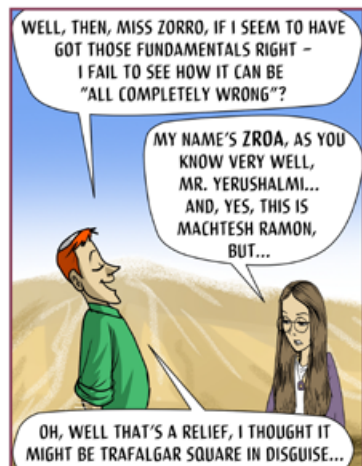
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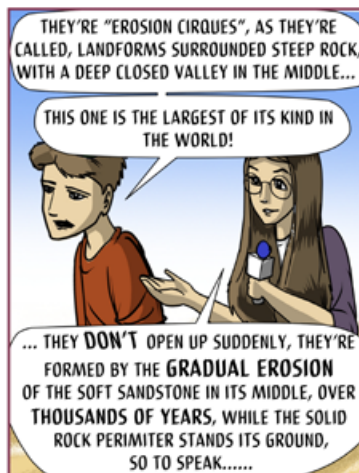
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## Lessons from our Leaders

Upon reading Parshat Korach carefully, we see that Korach's rebellion was not directed at Moshe, but rather against Aharon as Kohen Gadol. We can learn from both Aharon and Moshe's response. Instead of reacting with a proactive response to his rebellion, Aharon chose to remain silent. There are multiple occasions throughout the Torah where we see Aharon's profound silence. For example, around two months ago we read in Parshat Shemini about the death of Nadav and Avihu, two of Aharon's sons. The Torah writes "וידם אהרן" "and Aharon was silent". It is evident from this response that nothing could be said. Interestingly, Aharon responds similarly in Parshat Korach. Aharon once again responds with silence.

The Ramban writes that Aharon chose silence because Korach made him doubt if he was worthy of being the Kohen Gadol in the first place. Aharon was the Kohen Gadol only because Hashem commanded him to be; not because he felt he was the best for the job. However, it was precisely this humility that made him better for the position.

We often associate the middah of humility

with Moshe Rabbenui. As we read in Parshat Behaalotecha "Moshe was exceedingly humble". However, through Aharon's silence, his humility can also be seen.

According to Beit Hillel, we should all strive to be like Aharon, to be one of his students. Oftentimes when our position or character is in question it is difficult for us not to become defensive. Aharon Hakohen did not only remain silent but rather, he continued to end a plague on behalf of Bnei Yisrael. Aharon appreciated the importance of his role because he understood that Hashem chose him. His understanding along with his humility allowed him to reach this level of greatness.

I'd like to suggest that Moshe's response teaches us a crucial lesson about character development. In Shemot, Moshe was shy and was fearful of becoming the spokesman for Bnei Yisrael. Hashem's response was to alleviate his fear and assure Moshe that he would not be the spokesperson. Perhaps this is a message we can all internalize. When we seek to improve ourselves or give advice to others, we don't need to suddenly and completely change our character. In character development as the א"ר explains in פרק אבן שלמה perek א change must occur gradually, we shouldn't aim for the full 180 all at once. Perhaps Moshe would have rejected his mission to lead if it had seemed too big. Now, many years later Moshe assumes the role of a vocal advocate and is the lead spokesman for Hashem and Klal Yisrael. ■



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### Yehuda Bessner Jerusalem Chapter Director **Kedusha- Our Divine Potential**

In this week's Parsha, the story of Korach and his followers includes lessons not only on debate, dialogue, and leadership but on themes such as Kedusha as well.

This can be seen when Moshe is faced with the dilemma of Korach's disaccord with the nation's leadership, and their claim that the current situation is unfair since really "everyone is holy" - *כי כל העדה קדשים* (Bamidbar 16:3). On the surface this assertion seems logical, as to have people ranking above others in such a society appears to be antithetical. Nevertheless, this entire theory begins to unravel when Moshe presents the resolution of coming to the Mishkan with pans of coal and incense and letting Hashem decide if He accepts their offerings along with their preposition.

Famously, after the group comes to the Mishkan with pans in hand, Hashem opens the ground up and it swallows him and his family whole. This begs us to ask the question as to what exactly the specific issue of their complaint was. Perhaps it's that their request was inspired by egoism, and their wrong intentions is where they faltered, however that doesn't directly negate Korach's claim. Thus, I believe an explanation for these consequences can be

found immediately following these events as Elazar HaKohen is instructed to use the pans' metal as an overlay for the Mizbeach. The Gemara in Menachos (99a) learns from here the concept of *"מגדיל בקודש ולא מוריד"* - "We must only increase in holiness, but we cannot decrease", specifically that since these pans were meant to be used in service of Hashem on the Mizbeach, they now were to be elevated in status to be part of the Mizbeach itself.

We can see that Kedusha of even an object is intrinsically not stagnant, rather it's something that can be further developed. Particularly with the Jewish people, we must not understand our Kedusha as a given, but rather as our potential- and that is precisely what Korach got wrong. When Hashem tells us multiple times that we are Kodesh, that is our divine expectation and something we must always be working towards, rather than an automatic characteristic. Therefore, it is crucial to realize that there is no middle ground for us; If we are not actively ascending and striving to attain Kedusha, then we are in fact descending.



### Menashe Lopez 11th Grade, Chashmonaim **A Balance**

The parasha talks about the rebellion of Korach and his followers.

Korach and his followers based

themselves on ego, which led to the punishment of the earth swallowing all of Korach's followers along with all of their possessions. This is the gravity of how Hashem didn't want anything to do with such negative traits such as ego or even hate and pride.

Love is blind. Hate and any principle that begins to shade the intellect with emotion is a litmus test of human nature which proves that the great divide bordered more on ego than on principle.

This is the extent of basing oneself on weak principles that "shade intellect with emotion" which can be applied to our situation nowadays.

It's an everyday battle against our negative and positive traits which we have to strive to find a balance between. To always be working on improving the negative and embracing the positive in order to make sure that the negative doesn't take effect on those around us.

So let's take the opportunity to strive for emotional and logical balance within ourselves and within our lives.

Towards Hashem, friends, and family.

To be better than those who acted sinfully in Korachs rebellion.

To base our principals, morals and values on Hashem's, in our every waking moment. ■

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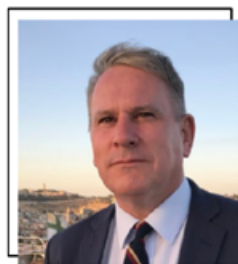


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Colonel Richard Kemp

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