



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

RAV KEHILLA, OHEL EPHRAIM IN NOFEI HASHEMESH
MAGGID SHIUR, DAF YOMI, OU.ORG
ROSH BAIS MEDRASH ENGLISH SPEAKING PROGRAM JCT MACHON LEV

Korach's Underlying Argument and Moshe's Response

One of the most perplexing aspects of the rebellion of Korach is the strength of the coalition he assembled. The Torah describes those who joined him as:

“נְשִׂיאֵי עֵדָה קְרָאִי מוֹעֵד אֲנָשֵׁי שָׁם”

“Princes of the congregation, men of renown, called to the assembly.”¹ (Book of Numbers)

Rashi, citing the Gemara², explains that the term *Ke'rei Moed* refers to members of the Sanhedrin who possessed the authority and expertise to sanctify the months and establish leap years. These were not ordinary dissenters. They were the greatest scholars and leaders of the generation. Yet this description raises a striking question.

WHY EMPHASIZE THEIR ABILITY TO SANCTIFY THE CALENDAR?

The Sanhedrin possessed many areas of authority: adjudicating capital cases, determining halachic rulings, and guiding the nation. Why does the Gemara specifically emphasize their expertise in sanctifying the months and establishing the calendar?

The Be'er Yosef suggests that this detail is not incidental. It reveals the ideological foundation of Korach's argument. To understand this, we must ask a deeper question.

WHAT WAS KORACH THINKING?

1. Bamidbar 16:2
2. Sanhedrin 110a

Korach's central claim was:

“כִּי כָל הָעֵדָה קֹדֶשׁ... וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ”

“The entire congregation is holy... Why do you elevate yourselves?”³

He accused Moshe and Aaron of seizing authority for themselves. But this accusation seems astonishing. After all, the entire nation had witnessed unmistakable proof that Aaron had been chosen by God. During the seven days of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*, Moshe erected and dismantled the structure daily, yet the Divine Presence did not descend. Only when Aaron performed the service on the eighth day did heavenly fire descend upon the altar. The miracle was public and undeniable. Aaron's appointment was validated before the entire nation. How, then, could Korach possibly deny it?

KORACH'S SUBTLE CLAIM

The Be'er Yosef explains that Korach did not deny that God had instructed Moshe to appoint a Kohen Gadol. His claim was more subtle. Korach argued that God gave Moshe discretion to choose anyone, and that once Moshe selected someone, Heaven would ratify the decision. In other words, Aaron's selection was not necessarily the uniquely correct choice. Rather, whoever Moshe appointed would have been confirmed by Heaven. To

3. Bamidbar 16:3

support this claim, Korach invoked a powerful precedent in Jewish law.

THE POWER OF THE SANHEDRIN

The Torah grants the Sanhedrin authority to determine the calendar. When the court declares the new month sanctified, the declaration takes effect, even if the court errs. The Gemara teaches that the sanctity of the festivals follows the decision of the court:

“You—whether unintentionally mistaken, deliberately mistaken, or misled.”⁴

Even if the court’s calculation is flawed, Heaven accepts the decision. Korach therefore assembled specifically those sages who were experts in sanctifying the months and intercalating the years. They symbolized the halachic principle that human leadership can determine sacred reality. His argument was therefore as follows: Just as the Sanhedrin determines the calendar and Heaven accepts their ruling, so too Moshe appointed Aaron. The miracle that followed proves nothing; Heaven simply affirmed Moshe’s decision. Had Moshe chosen someone else, the same heavenly fire would have descended.

MOSHE’S RESPONSE: “MORNING WILL COME”

Moshe responded with a brief but profound statement:

“בִּקְרֹךְ יִדְעֶה ה' אֶת אִשְׁרֵי לִי”

“Morning will come, and God will make known who is His.”⁵

What does morning (“*boker*”) have to do with the dispute? Rashi cites a Midrash explaining Moshe’s message: God established boundaries within creation. Just as He separated day from night, those divisions cannot be reversed. “Can you transform morning into

evening?”⁶ Moshe was responding directly to Korach’s theory.

TWO TYPES OF AUTHORITY

Korach assumed that priesthood functioned like the sanctification of the calendar, where human decisions shape sacred reality. Moshe rejected that premise. Some aspects of Torah are indeed entrusted to human authority. The Sanhedrin determines the calendar, and Heaven affirms their ruling. But other realities are not subject to human discretion. The priesthood belongs to that second category. Just as God Himself created the division between light and darkness, so too He personally designated Aaron as Kohen Gadol. This appointment is not flexible, negotiable, or subject to ratification. It is fixed by divine decree. Just as no human being can transform night into day, so too no one can alter the choice of Aaron.

THE ECHO FROM GEHINNOM

This insight sheds light on a remarkable passage in the Gemara.⁷ The Gemara recounts that travelers once heard voices emerging from a crevice in the earth declaring: “מִשֶׁה אֱמֶת וְתוֹרָתוֹ אֱמֶת”. “Moshe is true and his Torah is true.”

The Rashbam explains that these voices are the descendants of Korach, who continue to proclaim this truth. According to some explanations, they do so specifically on Rosh Chodesh. Why Rosh Chodesh? Because the central argument of Korach revolved around

6. Midrash Raba

7. Bava Batra 74a

4. Sanhedrin 110a

5. Bamidbar 16:5



THE WINDOW BUTLER
מקום נקי יותר
מקום נקי יותר

Professional Window Cleaning
Trusted | Local | Reliable

📞 055.978.5095

Screens • Tracks • Trislin • Windows at height

Kiddush HaChodesh, the sanctification of the month. Korach believed Aaron's appointment was analogous to the calendar -dependent on human designation. The descendants of Korach now declare the opposite: Moshe's Torah is true. The priesthood was not like Rosh Chodesh. It was not subject to human determination. It was a fixed divine reality. Korach's mistake was not merely rebellion; it was a misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual authority.

Judaism contains a remarkable balance. On the one hand, God grants human beings extraordinary responsibility. The Sanhedrin determines the calendar, interprets the law, and shapes the rhythm of Jewish time. Yet alongside that human partnership stands another truth: certain foundations of Torah are established directly by God and cannot be altered. The challenge of faith is learning to distinguish between the two.

Korach saw human empowerment and concluded that everything was negotiable. Moshe taught that while human beings participate in the unfolding of Torah, its deepest structures remain anchored in the will of Heaven.

The voices of Korach's descendants echo through history proclaiming: *"Moshe is true and his Torah is true."* Their words remind us that the greatness of Torah lies precisely in this balance. God entrusts the Jewish people with immense spiritual responsibility, allowing human decisions to sanctify time itself. Yet the foundation of that responsibility rests upon an unchanging divine truth.

When we live with that awareness, honoring both the dignity of human participation and the humility before God's eternal order, we transform disagreement into growth, leadership into service, and Torah into a living covenant between heaven and earth. ■

HAVING A SIMCHA?

MAGNET PHOTOGRAPHY

INSTANT MEMORIES YOU CAN TAKE HOME

- ◆ WEDDINGS
- ◆ BAR/BAT MITZVAH
- ◆ BRIS
- ◆ AND MORE...



**SCAN TO SEE
OUR WORK**




BOOK US NOW

WWW.BGB.CO.IL


051-595-8404


Yehoshua Ben Yehuda


Licensed Practical Engineer in Structural Design




Expert structural design and construction consulting for homeowners, contractors, and developers. Receive practical engineering solutions that combine technical excellence with real-world building experience.

Bringing over 40 years of construction experience and 15 years of academic expertise in Structural Design at Ariel University.


Academic Institutions and Structural Engineering Students can visit my website! *(site is in Hebrew)*



052-489-0545



https://hamanche.co.il



hamanche.co.il@gmail.com