



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

קרח - KORACH

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Candle lighting: 8:44 pm  Havdallah: 9:52 pm (50 minutes after שקיעה)

Dedicated by Tova and Allan Gutenberg to commemorate the yahrtzeit of Tova's parents Rabbi Joseph and Mrs. Ruth Kelman (Harav Chaim Yosef ben Harav Tzvi Yehuda z"l and Rachel bat Chaim z"l)

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דבר תורה **RABBI ELAN MAZER, CEO, MIZRACHI CANADA**

Parshat Korach - The Fire of the 250 Men

When we think about the rebellion of Korach, we often imagine one unified rebellion with one shared motivation. Korach, Datan and Aviram, and the 250 men all rise together against Moshe and Aharon, and together they challenge the leadership of Klal Yisrael. But the Netziv, in his commentary to the opening of Parshat Korach, teaches that this is not the case at all. The rebellion may have looked unified from the outside, but internally it was made up of very different people, driven by very different motivations.

While Korach in his pursuit of power coopted Datan and Aviram who were people of conflict and long-standing opponents of Moshe, the 250 men were not like them. The Netziv writes something remarkable: these 250 men were truly great people, "gedolei Yisrael," filled with yirat Shamayim. Their desire for the kehunah was not simply a desire for power or honor. It came from a burning longing for closeness to Hashem.

They wanted the avodah. They wanted the kedushah. They wanted to stand before Hashem with firepans and ketoret because their souls were aflame with spiritual ambition. Their sin was not that they wanted too little from religious life. Their sin was that they wanted deveikut - but in a way that was not aligned with the will of Hashem.

The Netziv explains the phrase "בנפשותם האלה" — "החטאים" — "these sinners with their souls" — not as a description of lowly people chasing honor, but as people who sinned with their very spiritual passion. They were willing to give up their lives for ahavat Hashem, but their love was not contained within the boundaries of Torah.

This is one of the great tensions of religious life. On the one hand, Judaism demands passion, creativity, personal striving, and spiritual hunger. On the other hand, that hunger must be rooted in humility, mesorah, and the standards of the Torah community. The question is not whether a person should aspire to greatness. The question is whether that aspiration deepens one's connection to Torah, or whether it becomes an independent path that breaks away from Torah.

This tension is powerfully reflected in the story of Rabbi Elazar ben Arach. In Pirkei Avot, he is described as a "המתגבר מעין," an ever-flowing spring. According to one opinion, his greatness outweighed all the other sages combined. He was creative, original, overflowing with insight. And yet, Chazal tell us that after the death of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, when the other students went to Yavneh, Rabbi Elazar ben Arach went elsewhere. He expected them to come to him, but they did not. Eventually, separated from the beit midrash and from his chevrah, he forgot his learning. The Gemara in Shabbat says that when he tried to read "החדש הזה לכם," he read instead "החרש היה לבם." Only after the Rabbis prayed for him was his Torah restored.

What happened to the "flowing spring"? The answer is that even the greatest spring needs a riverbed. Even the most creative soul needs the discipline and humility of belonging to a makom Torah. A person may be brilliant, original, even spiritually powerful, but Torah is not meant to be lived in independent isolation.

At the same time, conformity alone is also not the goal. The Mishnah teaches, "יהי ביתך בית ועד," "make your home a meeting place for the sages, and wrestle in the dust of their feet." Rav Chaim of Volozhin explains that Torah learning is a kind of battle. A student must ask, challenge, question, and even disagree. "אסור לו לתלמיד לקבל דברי רבו כשיש לו" — a student should not simply accept his teacher's words if he has real questions. Torah demands active engagement, not passive obedience.

But the key is "בעפר רגליהם" — "in the dust of their feet." We may wrestle, but we wrestle with humility. We may question, but not with arrogance. We may search for truth, but not with the illusion that our own inspiration stands above the Torah and its mesorah.

The Baal Shem Tov beautifully frames this balance through the words we say in tefillah: "אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו" — "our God and the God of our fathers." There is an emunah that comes from our ancestors, from tradition, from what we received. And there is an emunah that becomes "Elokeinu," personally discovered, tasted, and internalized. Each one alone has a weakness. Tradition without personal depth can become habit. Personal searching without tradition can become unstable. The ideal is both: "Elokeinu" and "Elokei Avoteinu."

The 250 men had fire. They had passion, longing, and spiritual courage. But their fire was not held within the vessel of commanded Torah. They wanted closeness to Hashem, but they tried to reach it by stepping outside the boundaries Hashem had set.



מדרש RABBI SHMAYA HENDEL, MAGGID SHIUR

כמדומין אתם ששררה אני נותן לכם? Not authority, but service

The Book of Bamidbar deals with the building of public domain and the creation of the social structure of Am Yisrael. Throughout the book, we often encounter issues that at first appear to be private questions, asked by one individual or by a small group, but later become questions that touch the entire public structure. The local solution does not remain only a solution for the individual, it becomes part of shaping the Israeli society.

In our parashah as well, we meet Korach and his group, and their claims against Moshe and Aharon. On the surface, this is a personal dispute about positions, honor, and authority, but these claims have public meaning for Am Yisrael in the wilderness, and perhaps also for our own time.

Korach challenges the leadership of Moshe and Aharon. Korach's central claim is stated in the verse: "רַב לָכֶם, כִּי כָל הָעֵדָה כָּלֶם קְדָשִׁים וּבְתוֹכָם הוּא, וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל קְהֵל ה'".

The Midrash Tanchuma expresses Korach's claim through a halachic discussion. Korach asks Moshe about "טלית שכולה תכלת", a garment made entirely of blue wool

whether it requires tzitzit. In his eyes if the whole garment follows the requirement of a techelet, why would it require a few strings on the corner? Are a few strings more significant than the whole garment?

The halachic discussion is really a philosophical discussion touching on leadership. The Torah commands: "קְדָשִׁים תִּהְיוּ, כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם". If holiness is demanded from the entire society, why do we need leadership? Why are there positions of hierarchy? Does a Holy nation, a fully blue garment, need spiritual leaders, needs tzitzit?

Why do Moshe and Aharon rise above the people?

The Torah and Chazal sharply criticize Korach and his group, but the criticism is directed at the place from which the claim comes. Chazal say in Pirkei Avot:

"מְחַלְקֵת שְׂאִינָה לְשֵׁם שְׁמִי, זוֹ מְחַלְקֵת קֶרֶךְ וְכָל עֲדָתוֹ"

Korach's motivation was wrong, Yet the question

itself is important. What is the place of hierarchy in the Torah? What is the proper form of leadership? Does leadership mean rising above the public?

Rabban Gamliel states a great principle in Masechet Horayot. When he wanted to appoint two sages to public office, he told them: "נֹתֵן לָכֶם עֲבֹדוֹת אֲנִי נֹתֵן לָכֶם", public office is not a prize, honor, or status. True leadership is a form of servitude, in the sense of carrying the burden of the community.

This is exactly where Korach is mistaken. He assumes that leadership is necessarily arrogance: "וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ". But Moshe's leadership does not come from pride, but from humility. Moshe leads not because he sees himself above the people, but because he accepts his mission for the people.

Indeed, the demand from leaders in every generation, whether spiritual, public, or political, is leadership of service. Not status above the community, but responsibility toward the community. Not authority, but service. Not arrogance, but humility that carries the burden of the public.



מחשבה RABBI AMI YUNGER, COO, MIZRACHI CANADA

When Redemption Comes Through Imperfect Hands

Based on Kima Kima by Rav Chaim Drukman

Can Hashem bring national salvation through a leader whose personal life and religious conduct are deeply flawed? If a moment looks like part of the unfolding of Geulah, should we expect the people who carry it to be tzaddikim, or does Tanach itself prepare us for a more complicated reality?

One of the clearest examples is Yeravam ben Yoash, the king of Israel also known as Yeravam II. Sefer Melachim describes him in harsh terms: "וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ד', לֹא סָר" "מַכַּל חַטָּאוֹת יִרְבַּעַם בֶּן נִבַּט אֲשֶׁר הָחִטִּיא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל", "He did what was evil in the eyes of Hashem; he did not depart from all the sins of Yeravam ben Nevat, who caused Israel to sin" (Melachim II 14:24). The Pasuk gives no attempt to soften his spiritual failure. Yeravam ben Yoash continued the corrupt religious path of the Northern Kingdom.

Yet the very next Pasuk describes one of the greatest national restorations in the history of Malchut Yisrael: "הוּא הֵשִׁיב אֶת גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִלְּבֹא חֲמַת עַד יַם הָעֲרֶבָה", "He restored the border of Israel from Levo Chamat until the Sea of the Aravah" (Melachim II 14:25). The same king who is condemned for his sins is also the king through whom Israel's borders are restored. The Navi places these two facts side by side, because both are true.

The Pasuk then explains why Hashem brought this salvation: "כִּי רָאָה ד' אֶת עֲוֹנוֹ" "יִשְׂרָאֵל מְרָה מְאֹד... וַיּוֹשִׁיעַם בְּיַד יִרְבַּעַם בֶּן יוֹאָשׁ" "For Hashem saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter... and He saved them through Yeravam ben Yoash" (Melachim II 14:26-27). Radak explains that this salvation did not come because the people had done teshuvah, but because Hashem saw their suffering and had mercy on them. The measure at work was not national worthiness. It was rachamim.

This is already a major principle. Hashem's compassion for Klal Yisrael is not limited to the moments when we deserve it. Sometimes the pain of the nation itself becomes the reason for salvation, even when the spiritual condition of the people remains

broken. That does not make the sins acceptable, and it does not turn flawed leaders into tzaddikim. It means that the Ribono Shel Olam is not trapped inside the calculations that we would have made.

Chazal go further. Tanna Devei Eliyahu teaches that what was not given into the hands of Yehoshua bin Nun or David HaMelech was given into the hands of Yeravam ben Yoash. He restored territory that even the greatest leaders of Israel had not restored. Chazal ask the obvious question: what merit did Yeravam have? Was he not an idol worshipper? Their answer is precise. He did not accept lashon hara about Amos HaNavi.

Amaziah, the priest of Beit El, accused Amos of conspiring against the king. Yeravam could have treated Amos as a rebel and silenced him. Instead, he refused to accept the accusation. According to Chazal, that act gave him the merit through which Hashem restored the borders of Israel by his hand.

This is not a simple story about a righteous king. It is a story about a flawed king, a suffering nation, and a hidden cheshbon of Shamayim. A person may be guilty of serious sins and still have one merit that Heaven weighs with enormous significance. A generation may be spiritually weak and still be the object of Hashem's rachamim. A national restoration may come through hands that we would not have chosen.

That does not allow us to confuse darkness with light. Yeravam remains Yeravam. His sins remain sins. Yet Tanach teaches us that Geulah does not always arrive dressed in the form we expected. Sometimes Hashem advances His promise to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov through people whose flaws are obvious, because the covenant with Klal Yisrael is deeper than the worthiness of any one generation. The question is not whether everything looks complete. It does not. The question is whether we have the humility to recognize that Hashem can begin to restore His people even through imperfect hands.



Can You Buy an Item with the Intention of Returning It?

Question: A few friends and I went to Activate, where participants are required to wear running shoes. Since it was summer, we were all wearing sandals and flip-flops. We went to a nearby store, bought shoes, played at Activate, and then returned the shoes afterward for a full refund. Was that permissible according to halachah?

Answer: This situation is actually quite common, and you deserve credit for asking. Many people never stop to think whether such behavior is halachically acceptable.

At this time of year, many people go camping or on trips and purchase equipment from stores known for their generous return policies, planning from the outset to return the items after they have been used. Is this permitted?

To answer that question, it is important to understand that halachah does not generally recognize a right to return an item simply because one no longer wants it. Halachah recognizes the concept of a mekach ta'us—a

mistaken sale. If a defect is discovered in the product, the buyer may return it and receive a refund. Otherwise, there is ordinarily no halachic justification to undo the sale.

At the same time, we follow the principle of *dina d'malchusa dina*—the law of the land is binding. Therefore, if local law or store policy allows customers to return merchandise within a certain period, one may generally rely on that policy.

However, the case you describe is different.

A store's return policy is designed for someone who bought an item and later decided not to keep it. In your case, the intention from the very beginning was never to keep the shoes. The plan was to buy them, use them, and return them. That is a much more serious issue.

The Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 228:4), in discussing *ona'as devarim*, writes

that a person may not ask a seller for the price of an item if he has no intention of purchasing it.

If it is prohibited to inquire about a product without genuine interest in buying it, it would seem all the more so that one may not actually purchase an item when he never intended to keep it.

Indeed, *Piskei HaMishpat* (p. 198) rules that buying an item with the intention of using it and then returning it is prohibited, even when dealing with a store employee rather than directly with the owner.

He adds that beyond *ona'as devarim*, such conduct may involve *geneivas da'as* (misleading another party), and possibly even *chilul Hashem*.

Return policies are intended to help honest customers, not to serve as a free rental program. As Torah Jews, we strive to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity, creating a true kiddush Hashem in all of our dealings.



Korach and the Holiness of Israel

This Shabbat we read Parashat Korach, one of the Torah's most famous accounts of conflict and division within the Jewish people. Korach presents an argument that, at first glance, sounds noble and inspiring: "כי כל העדה כלם" "For all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them" (Leviticus 16:16).

Korach claimed that there was no essential difference between Moshe and Aharon and the rest of the nation. If everyone is holy, why should there be leaders, priests, or unique roles within Israel? Yet the Torah teaches that although there is a kernel of truth in Korach's words, his conclusion was fundamentally mistaken.

The truth is that not every individual is holy to the same degree. Each person possesses free choice and can choose righteousness or wrongdoing. A person can live a life of holiness or, God forbid, distance himself from it. At the same time, there is a deeper truth: the Jewish nation as a whole is holy. The holiness of Klal Yisrael does not depend on the actions of any single individual. It stems from the unique mission of the Jewish people to reveal God's presence in the world.

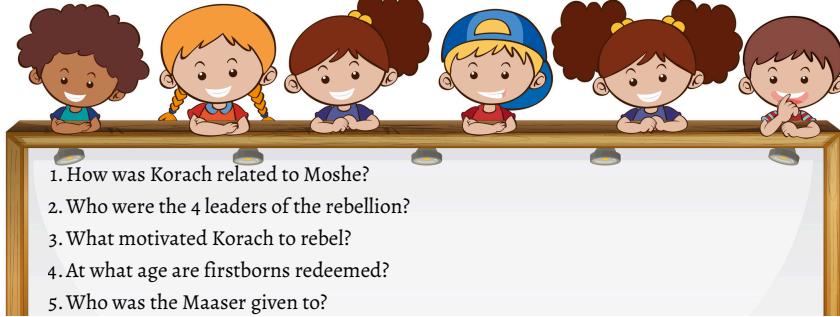
For this reason, even when we criticize certain behaviors, ideas, or policies, we must remember that we are speaking about fellow Jews. At times, strong disagreement is necessary, and standing up for truth is an obligation. Yet disagreement must never lead us to deny another Jew's place within the nation.

A famous story is told about the Netziv of Volozhin. He once heard a Jew say about another Jew, in a moment of anger, "ימח שמו" "May his name be erased." The Netziv responded: If that person were your brother and died without children, would the Torah not command the mitzvah of Yibbum in order to preserve his name? After all, the Torah says: "והיה הבכור אשר תלד יקום על שם" "The firstborn whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, so that his name not be erased from Israel." (Deuteronomy 25:6)

How, then, can one wish for the erasure of the name of a fellow Jew? This is the great lesson of Parashat Korach. On the one hand, we must never blur the distinction between truth and falsehood, between holiness and sin. The Torah does not teach that a wicked person is righteous. As King Solomon says in Sefer Mishley "אמר לרשע צדיק יקברה עמים יועמורו לאמים" "The wicked shall be buried with the nations; they shall be forgotten, and their name shall be as if it had never been."

"He who says to the wicked, 'You are righteous,' peoples will curse him, nations will denounce him." (Mishley 24:9) On the other hand, even when a person makes serious mistakes, he remains part of the story and destiny of the Jewish people.

Especially in times when disagreements among Jews can become intense and painful, Parashat Korach reminds us of a vital balance, to stand firmly for truth while maintaining love for our fellow Jews; to criticize actions when necessary, but never to sever the bond of shared nationhood. Not every individual is equally holy, but the nation of Israel as a whole remains forever holy.



1. How was Korach related to Moshe?
2. Who were the 4 leaders of the rebellion?
3. What motivated Korach to rebel?
4. At what age are firstborns redeemed?
5. Who was the Maaser given to?

1. Korach was Moshe's cousin.
2. Korach, Datán, Aviram and On.
3. Korach was jealous that Elitzafan ben Uzziel was appointed as leader of the family of Kehat instead of him.
4. Firstborns are redeemed at the age of one month.
5. Maaser was given to Shevet Levi.

Answers:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
	Seudah Shlishit Shiur	Or Chaim	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Ori Ezra
Sunday	Men's Semichat Chaver: Basar Bechalav	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz & Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Hendel
	Megillat Esther	Or Chaim	8:15 AM	Rabbi Aviad Pituchay-Chotam
	Smichas chaver	Mishkan Avraham	After Maariv	Rabbi Mann
Monday	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
Tuesday	Tzurba Chaburah: Niddah	Zoom	10:00AM	Mrs. Sonenberg - register at yoatzot.ca/chabura
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Tzurba Chabura: Shabbat	Zoom	10:00AM	Mrs Sonenberg - register at yoatzot.ca/chabura
	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Men's Gemara Iyun - Moed Katan	BAYT Rabbi's Office	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Thursday	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Shomrai Shabbos	8:00 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	70 Faces of Torah on the Parsha	BAYT	8:00PM	Rabbi Shaanan Scherer
	Mizrachi Mishmar	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	Rabbi Singer
	Womens Hafrashat Challah	Clanton Park	7:30 PM	Rebbetzin Mann
Daily	Gemara Brachot	Shaarei Shomayim	6:45 AM	R' Diena

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 18th **BMZD & KBY Shabbos**

More details coming soon!

YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash
Rabbi Yehuda Mann
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Maggidei Shiur Rabbi Ezer Diena · Rabbi Ori Ezra · Mrs. Aviya Ezra · Rabbi Josh Gutenberg · Rabbi Shaanan Scherer · Rabbi Chaim Singer · Mrs. Rifka Sonenberg · Rabbi Shmaya Hendel · Rabbi Aviad Pituchay-Chotam · Rabbi Jeff Turtel · Rabbi Ami Yunger