



Newsletter LITE: Parshat Korach 5769

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NEWSLETTER LITE: As there is very little Yeshiva news during the "Bein Hazmanim" break the newsletter will be going "lite" until Yeshiva resumes in Elul.

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Korach

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

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THE DANGERS OF BEING *NOGE-A BADAVAR*



ALL FOR A PIECE OF CAKE

Chazal write that Korach succeeded in winning the two-hundred and fifty people over to his side by offering them each a delicious piece of cake. We are speaking here of heads of the Sanhedrin who certainly were aware of all that Moshe Rabenu had done for the Jewish people, having lead them out of Egypt and brought them the Torah. Chazal's words are frightening, one piece of cake was sufficient to cause these leaders of *Klal Yisrael* to forget all the gratitude they owed Moshe Rabenu. We see the power of *shochad* - bribery.

BRIBERY IS NOT LIMITED TO CAKE

The Torah warns us that "the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise" (*Devarim* 16:19). Korach's sin in fact was a form of succumbing to bribery. Bribery is not limited to offering of money or other tangible rewards. We always assumed that Korach's sin was denying Moshe's leadership, but did he really completely deny it? Had this congregation truly denied Moshe's right as leader and prophet, why would they have had any desire for the *kehuna*? Does the *kehuna* not involve service in the *mishkan*, the edifice that was constructed based on the specifications given over by Moshe Rabenu. Was it not Moshe who informed the Jewish people that Hashem wished to reside in the *mishkan*? When Moshe cried out:

"whoever is for Hashem join me!" (*Shmot* 32:26), was the response not: "all the Levites gathered around him" (*ibid.*)? Was Korach not among the Levites who gathered around Moshe? When the *mishkan* that was constructed in accordance with Moshe's specifications was dedicated, did a fire not descend from Heaven and "the entire people saw and sang glad song and fell upon their faces" (*Vayikra* 9:24) - Korach and the two hundred fifty people with him were among them - can they deny what they saw with their very eyes?

We are told that Moshe Rabenu suggested solving the dispute by means of an incense offering. Moshe warned that only one person will survive (see Rashi *Bamidbar* 16:6), and we see from Chazal that Korach believed Moshe. Chazal ask: "Now Korach who was prudent, what did he see in this nonsense?" (Rashi *Bamidbar* 16:7), to which they explain: "His eye deceived him; he saw a great chain issuing from him, Shmuel, who is weighed against Moshe and Aharon; Korach said: Because of him I shall be saved. And twenty-four 'watches' will arise from his son's sons, all of them prophesying through the Holy Spirit" (*ibid.*). Korach did not err in his vision, these great people did in fact descend from him, but he himself was not saved. Shmuel and the twenty-four 'watches' descended from his sons who repented and were thus saved. Chazal's questioning of Korach's motive and their response can only be based on their understanding that Korach acknowledged Moshe's rights as prophet, and believed Moshe that only one person was destined to survive. Korach, of course, felt that it was he who would be the lone survivor. (Based on this we see how evil Korach really was, for if he truly believed there was an upcoming danger and his *Ruach haKodesh* told him that only he will survive, should he not have warned his supporters rather than lead them to their deaths?).

MOSHE IS RIGHT IN ALL BUT ONE POINT

If Korach acknowledged Moshe's right as a prophet, what then was the dispute between Korach and Moshe? Korach did not believe that Hashem specifically appointed Aharon as the Kohen Gadol, rather that He left it up to Moshe to fill the position. Korach believed that it was Moshe himself who felt that Aharon was the man for the job. Korach, we see, believed that Moshe was a prophet, yet in this particular case questioned Moshe's understanding of what Hashem told him. To counter this claim, Moshe said: "Hashem sent me to perform all these acts, that it was not from my heart" (*Bamidbar* 16:28). It was not Moshe's own decision, but it was Hashem who told him to appoint Aharon as the Kohen Gadol (see Rashi *ibid.*). In this instance it seems that Korach believed in Moshe's prophecy in general and only disagreed on this one point.

And it was to prove Moshe's justification on this one point that "the ground swallowed them".

We are often guilty of such an approach. We may refer to a particular Rav as a *machmir*, saying it is true he is a great *Talmid Chacham*, but this is his own personal *chumra*. He must be from Beit Shammai! There are indeed times when the Rav's conclusion is based on his own analysis which one may question. Often, however, his ruling is based on a specific passage in the Gemara, Ri"f, Rambam, or Shulchan Aruch. That's the way it is! At times it is the *halacha*, not that particular Rav, that is stringent. By the same token, Korach felt that "the Rav was *machmir*", that Moshe misunderstood what Hashem had told him.

We must ask ourselves, was not Moshe right until now? The ten plagues, the splitting of the sea, the manna descending, the victory over Amalek, the Ten Commandments, all occurred according to Moshe's words. Why specifically with regard to the Kehuna Gedola did Korach suddenly think Moshe may have erred? Korach felt that Moshe had a *negia*, a bias, in appointing his brother as Kohen Gadol. When it comes to saving the Jewish people and giving them the Torah, Moshe can be relied upon. When it comes, however to the appointment of the Kohen Gadol, if it is between Aharon and another person, Moshe cannot be trusted, he is a *noge-a badavar*, he is prejudiced.

WHO HAS A PERSONAL BIAS?

Can we not turn this question around against Korach? Why is it that only now Korach chooses to dispute Moshe's authority while until this point he followed it? (Datan and Aviram at least were being consistent, whatever Moshe said they disputed!). Korach was one of those who ran towards Moshe in response to "whoever is for Hashem join me!" (*Shmot* 32:26) Why all of a sudden is Moshe disqualified? Perhaps Korach's desire for the Kehuna Gedola makes him himself a *noge-a badavar*. The answer is: "For the bribe will corrupt those who see" (*Shmot* 23:8), one who is biased cannot even see this glaring question! He has no trouble accusing Moshe of not being totally unprejudiced and thus misled, but cannot for a moment entertain the notion that perhaps this is what is motivating him! Someone as righteous and modest as Korach being led astray by a desire for personal gain? Impossible! It is Moshe who is being led astray!

NO ONE IS FREE FROM THE EFFECTS OF BEING NOGE-A BADAVAR

The Shach was once involved in litigation. The other

litigant asked if they could have their case tried in a *Beit Din* in another town where neither of them were known and they would therefore receive an impartial ruling. He claimed that everyone here knew of the Shach and would dare not rule against him. The Shach acquiesced. The Rav in the far away *Beit Din* ruled in favor of the other person using a very novel understanding of the issue. The Shach, quite surprised by the Rav's ruling, asked where he came up with such a unique approach to the *halacha*. The Rav opened his closet, took out a Shulchan Aruch, and read from the commentary of the Shach. This "novel" ruling was precisely what the Shach himself had ruled. At the time the Shach wrote his commentary, however, he was not a *noge-a badavar*, and thus had the ability to come up with this unique interpretation. Once he had a vested interest, not only was he unable to recall his own *chiddush* but was even surprised to hear it espoused by another. I am not sure if the story is accurate, but it is certainly possible, "for the bribe will blind the eyes of the wise" (*Devarim* 16:19). Even one of the level of the Shach was unable to see his own shortcomings. It is possible for a man to be a great *lamdan*, but the *yetzer hara* is always a greater *lamdan*.

THE WISDOM OF ON BEN PELET'S WIFE

Korach should have realized that there is no logic in the face of bribery or bias. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 109b) relates how the wife of On ben Pelet convinced her husband to leave Korach's congregation. How did she do so? She did not cite all the great miracles that Moshe performed for the Jewish people. At that moment On ben Pelet had a *negia*, a bias, all the logic in the world would not convince him. What she wisely did was to remove this *negia*, by pointing out to her husband that whether Korach or Aharon became Kohen Gadol, On ben Pelet would only play a subservient role. Of what difference is it to him who becomes Kohen Gadol? When he felt he stood to gain by aligning himself with Korach, he could not have been convinced of the truth. It was only when his wife managed to remove that *negia* that was he able to be convinced that indeed Moshe was in the right in this dispute.

WE MUST REALIZE THE DANGEROUS EFFECTS OF NEGIOT

We are quite often faced with our own decisions to make. As much as possible we should seek the counsel of our Torah sages. This, of course, is not always possible. Chazal tell us "a judge should always view himself as if he had a sword resting between his thighs and Gehinom is open underneath him" (Sanhedrin 7a). R' Yisrael Salanter in his *Iggeret HaMussar* explains that Chazal were not

only referring to a judge in court. Each and every one of us is his own judge. We often must make a *halachic* decision or decide how to relate to another person. When making these decisions, a person must view himself: "as if he had a sword resting between his thighs and Gehinom is open underneath him". This means that even a slight shift to the left or right can produce tragic results. Only by keeping this in mind can we rid ourselves of any and all *negiot*. We must understand that even the slightest deviation from the truth can cause far more damage than any potential gain. If we understand this, not only will we rid ourselves of our prejudices, but we hopefully may have a new *negia* - the desire to err as little as possible. This can only work if we truly realize what it means that Gehinom is open beneath us, to understand the severity of the results of any mistakes. The Gr"a once went to visit a student of his who was ill. The student proceeded to blame the Gr"a for his troubles claiming that it was because the Rav taught him how severe the punishment in Gehinom is liable to be, that he became ill out of fear. The Gr"a responded that the potential punishment is in fact far worse than what the Gr"a had told him. His current illness pales in comparison.

The men Korach gathered were not ordinary people. They were the heads of the Sanhedrin: "leaders of the assembly, those summoned for meeting, men of renown" (*Bamidbar* 16:2), "people who had a name throughout the world" (Sanhedrin 110a). Each one felt he was worthy of being the Kohen Gadol. This means that for each person who claimed to be the one appropriate for the position, there were two hundred and forty-nine other great people who disagreed and felt that there was someone else more worthy. Why did not at least one of them negate his own opinion of himself in the face of the other two hundred and forty-nine? Each person was convinced that all the others were *noge-a badavar* and that is why they wished to disqualify him. Did anyone stop to think of himself as being *noge-a badavar*? The answer would be, yes, I am *noge-a* but I am not prejudiced by this bias. Imagine, two hundred and forty-nine *gedolim* can be prejudiced but you cannot. Me, biased? Impossible! It is like the Jew who once said: "Everyone in the world only thinks of himself, it is I alone who thinks of me!"

When one "thinks" something, he can be convinced that he is wrong by being shown a Gemara, Rashi, or Rambam that disproves his thesis. On the other hand, when one "wants" something all the Rashi's in the world will not convince him. He will accuse Rashi of having personal reasons for explaining as he did. If I love potatoes, how can you prove me wrong based on the fact that Rashi loved carrots? No questions can be asked on the opinion of one who "wants" a particular approach, one who

"thinks" cognitively can be convinced otherwise. The Torah warned us against this: "and not explore after your heart and after your eyes after which you stray" (*Bamidbar* 15:39), the heart and the eyes are filled with bias - only the mind can rule.

When we think based only on what "I want", we can reach mind-boggling conclusions. Last week we read about the report the spies brought back from *Eretz Yisrael*. The Jewish people reacted: "because of Hashem's hatred for us did He take us out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorite to destroy us" (*Devarim* 1:27). Is that why Hashem smote the Egyptians and showed us all these miracles and signs? In order to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites? Is this why Hashem sent ten plagues to the Egyptians, more at sea, gave us the manna - according to one opinion (*Yoma* 75b) this was bread that only angels were privileged to eat. Is this why Hashem gave us a double portion on Erev Shabbat, made us victorious in the war with Amalek, and gave us the Torah? "Has a people ever heard the voice of G-d speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard, and survived?" (*Devarim* 4:33). It took far less for Manoach's wife to realize: "Had Hashem wanted to put us to death, He would not have accepted from our hand an elevation-offering and a meal-offering,

nor would He have shown us all this, nor would He let us hear such tidings at this time" (*Shoftim* 12:23). How can it be that the "generation of knowledge", the generation that received the Torah, the generation that merited reaching the incredible level of prophecy at the Great Gathering at Har Sinai, can make such a ridiculous accusation? This is beyond comprehension!

When there are *negiot*, there is no logic. Once the people decide not to proceed onward to Israel, all of Manoach's wife's intuition is to no avail. Moshe attempts using logic: "yet in this matter you do not believe in Hashem, your G-d. Who goes before you on the way to seek out for you a place for you to encamp with fire by night to show you the road that you should travel and with a cloud by day" (*Devarim* 1:32-33). Would Hashem have escorted them with a cloud of fire in order

to destroy them? It was the Egyptians who were destroyed by means of the fire and clouds (see Rashi *Shmot* 14:24). Do they not realize that Hashem only does what is good for His people? Did Moshe, the greatest man of all time, not instruct them to proceed towards the Land. The *yetzer hara*, however, is not searching for logic, it is searching for what it wants to search for. "One who removes himself to court lust, will be exposed in every Torah conclave" (*Mishle* 18:1). One who has "wants" and

"desires", removes himself from everything.

TRYING TO RID OURSELVES OF *NEGIOT*

How do we remedy this situation? We must work on making greater use of our minds and intellects. Immediately following the description of the sin of the spies, the Torah warns "and not explore after your heart and after your eyes after which you stray" (*Bamidbar* 15:39). The spies were sent to scout out the Land. It is true that they must use their eyes, their eyes however cannot be the *poskim*. It is the mind that must make the ultimate decision. We must train ourselves - to attempt to follow the dictates of our intellect and logic. We must strengthen our *yirat Shamayim* and understand what it means that Gehinom is open before us. We must not only fear retribution for sin, but understand the reward for performance of a Mitzvah as well. If we ever elect not to learn one day, we must realize what is lost by not learning and what could have been gained by learning: "weigh the loss incurred by a commandment against its reward, and the reward gained from a transgression against the loss it entails" (*Avot* 2:1), remember "and the study of Torah is equivalent to them all" (*Shabbat* 127a).

In addition to Talmud Torah, we must involve ourselves in acts of *chesed* as well. We must realize what we stand to lose by wasting an opportunity to perform any mitzvah, and what we stand to gain by having performed the mitzvah. Once we understand this, our *negiot* will change, we will have a *negiah* to learn more, to involve ourselves in more acts of *chesed*". If we were to *daven* a shorter *Shmoneh Esrei*, we would manage to reach the end *Oseh Shalom* a moment sooner. So what? What have we gained? On the other hand, if we *daven* with more *kavana*, more heart, our prayer will be as it should. We must realize when we *daven* that we are given an incredible opportunity to have a private audience with the King of kings. With that in mind, we will view each extra minute spent in prayer as a gain. It is very difficult to gain audience with a king of flesh and blood. We have a private counsel with the King of kings free of charge! If we weigh the potential loss at not having performed a mitzvah against anything we may stand to gain instead, we will always opt for performing the mitzvah. With this in mind we will merit being blessed with goodness and with blessings and we will merit the days of the Moshiach and life in the Next World.

Kollel Dvar Torah
by Rav Elitzur Fishel

The *parsha* opens with: "Korach the son of Yitzhar, son of Kehath, son of Levi

separated himself, with Dathan and Aviram, sons of Eliav and On son of Pelet, the offspring of Reuven" (Bamidbar 16:1). Not long after that we meet up once again with Korach, Datan, and Aviram. What happened to On ben Pelet? Chazal expound on the *pasuk*: "the wise among women, each builds her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her hands" (Mishle 14:1), and explain that the former half of the *pasuk* "the wise among women each builds her house" refers to the wife of On ben Pelet while the latter half: "the foolish one tears it down with her hands" refers to the wife of Korach (see Sanhedrin 109-110). Korach's wife mocked him for cutting his hair at the time Leviim were appointed, thereby kindling the fire of discord. On the other hand, the wife of On ben Pelet pointed out to her husband: "what do you need all this for? In any event you will not become the leader, either you will be Moshe's assistant or Korach's, what do you stand to gain by getting involved in this?" On ben Pelet accepted his wife's advice and this is what saved his life.

HaRav HaGaon Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl Shlit"a poses the following question: "what type of claim is On ben Pelet's wife putting forth? Since when do we choose a particular path in life based solely on what is in it for us? We would have expected her to perhaps argue: "Moshe is truth, his prophecy is truth, how dare you join an opposition camp?" It is difficult to understand On ben Pelet's wife's reasoning.

Rav Nebenzahl answers that often the wise thing to do is not to try to prove that you're in the right! If the heart desires something than all the logic in the world will not convince anyone to act otherwise - the *yetzer hara* is just too strong. A person must be convinced that he does have what to gain, even over the arguments put forth by the *yetzer hara*. We have to speak to him in a language which he understands, to show him that what he truly desires cannot be attained, or that the direction the *yetzer hara* is pushing him towards is filled with stumbling blocks. What does he gain by polishing someone else's shoes?

The wife of On ben Pelet has taught us a valuable lesson - we must emphasize over and over again how worthwhile it is to serve Hashem, even from our perspective in this world.

HaRav Nebenzahl strengthens this point through another example in the Torah: When it was time for Yaakov to leave the house of Lavan, Hashem appeared to him saying: "return to the land of your fathers and to your native land, and I will be with you" (Bereishit 31:3). Yaakov then gathered his wives and told them the following: "I have noticed that your father's disposition is not toward me as in earlier days" (ibid. 4). Of what relevance is this, why did Yaakov not simply state that Hashem commanded him to return to the Land of Canaan? Only at the very end of his address to his wives did Yaakov state that Hashem instructed him to return to *Eretz Yisrael*. Why did he have to add that he was swindled by Lavan?

By the same token the matriarchs responded to Yaakov: "Rachel and Leah replied and said to him: have we then still a share and an inheritance in our father's house? Are we not considered by him as strangers? For he has sold us and even totally consumed our money" (ibid. 14-15). Only after that did they conclude: "whatever G-d has said to you, do" (ibid. 16).

Yaakov and our holy matriarchs are teaching us a valuable lesson: a person has to want to listen to the word of Hashem, he must at times work on presenting himself with arguments that even his *yetzer hara* would be satisfied with. It is true that intellectually we know we must listen to Hashem, it is true that the Torah places demands upon us which we must heed, but it is that much easier when even the *yetzer hara* is convinced.

This midrash states that Hashem looked into the Torah and then created the world, meaning that the Torah is the blueprint for the world. The laws which govern the running of the world are in fact found in the Torah. To use a simple example from our daily lives, we all know that when we are cheerful then the world around us will act cheerfully towards us. In fact, this is what Hashem desires as the Mishna explicitly states: "receive everyone with a cheerful face" (Avot 1:15). Hashem created the world in such a fashion that it is indeed worth our while to heed His word.

Man does not always view things from this perspective. At times he may convince himself that it is not worth his while to follow Hashem's commandments - it will not bring him good in this world. He now has his *yetzer hara* to contend with, which is a very difficult task, but as much as is possible a person should convince himself that even from the perspective of life in this world it is not worth violating the word of Hashem. This is the valuable lesson we learned from our patriarchs, our matriarchs, and from the wife of On ben Pelet.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List Announcements from the Yeshiva

Mazal Tov:

The Yeshiva would like to wish a Mazal Tov to:

- Michael (5759-60) and Ariana Bernstein on the birth of a baby girl.
- Joey Harary (5765-66) on his marriage to Frieda Benun.
- Shmully Ash (5766-67) on his marriage to Jamie Klein.
- Daniel Ross (5767-68) on his marriage to Yonina (Nini) Stein.
- Rabbi Samuel Kadish (5763-66) on his marriage to Malka Bromberg.
- Motti (5751) and Esther Kremer on the birth of a baby boy and to the grandparents, Jonny and Mirijam Kremer.

Baruch Dayan Emet:

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the passing off:

- Amy Kahan, wife of Jeremy Kahan (5743).
- Miriam Leba bat Esther, mother of Mark Tenenbaum (5757-58).

Hamakom Yenachem Otam B'toch Sha'ar Aveilei Tzion V'Yerushalayaim.

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel

- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Nachum Tzvi ben Ratza
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Yehudis Sara bas Esther
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha
- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah
- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlomo ben Esther
- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit
- Avraham ben Meela
- Bracha Sara bat Rivka Zelda

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Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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