



שמע קולנו

“יתגבר כארי לעמוד בבוקר לעבודת בוראו”



Parshas Korach

פרשת קרח

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The Secret to a Constructive Argument

Noam Schechter ('22)

“כל מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, סופה להתקיים. ושאניה לשם שמים, אין סופה להתקיים. איזו היא מחלוקת שהיא לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת הלל ושמאי. ושאניה לשם שמים, זו מחלוקת קרח וכל עדתו.”

“Any argument which is *lisheim Shamayim* will last, while any argument not *lisheim Shamayim* will not last. What is an example of an argument that is *lisheim Shamayim*? The arguments of Hillel and Shammai. What is an argument that is not *lisheim Shamayim*? The argument of Korach and his people.” (*Pirkei Avos* 5:17)

Why is it that the *Mishna* categorizes the argument of Korach as the paradigm of an improper argument? While it is true that Korach was arguing the wrong ideas and going against Moshe, what was it about the argument that makes it the epitome of a wrong argument? Additionally, why does the *Mishna* describe the *machlokes* of Korach as a *machlokes* between Korach V'adaso - between Korach and his people - shouldn't it be described as an argument between Korach and Moshe?

To answer these questions one must look at what an argument is, and what would make an argument *Lisheim Shamayim* or not. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the definition of the word argument is “a conversation or discussion in which two or more people disagree”, meaning that an argument must be where two opposing sides discuss and oppose. However, the *machlokes* of Korach was not a discussion at all; on the contrary, it was a one sided *kvetch*. The *Midrash Tanchuma* explains in this same vein, that an argument is only constructive when both sides agree to talk and to negotiate. If one side refuses to converse with the other side, then there is nothing that can be gained from arguing, and the disagreement just becomes a fiasco. This is what the *mishna* means when it speaks about a *machlokes lisheim shamayim*- an argument is only constructive, is only *lisheim Shamayim*, when there is something to be gained from the controversy; however, if there is communication and discussion between the two sides, then there is a *nachas ruach*-

a pleasant feel between the two opposing sides- and much that can be gained.

In the case of Korach V'adaso, however, there was no *nachas ruach*, there was no attempt by Korach to discuss and resolve. Malbim explains that in the fiasco of Korach's rebellion there was no organized collective group. Korach traveled around recruiting whoever he was able to find who had a complaint against Moshe. There was no collective goal nor one cohesive unit; each member of the group was in it for themselves. Korach wanted the *Kehuna*, Dasan and Aviram wanted power, and the *Bnei Reuven* wanted the benefits of the *Bechora*. Due to the fact that each person was unsatisfied with what they had, and did not unite for a common goal, all Korach v'adaso was, was a group of dissatisfied unhappy *kvetchers*.

For this reason, they refused to negotiate with Moshe. The *pasuk* says, *vayishlach Moshe likro lidasan viliaviram bnei Eliav, vayomru lo naaleh*"- "*Moshe sent to talk to Dasan and Aviram the sons of Eliav, but they refused to meet with Moshe*" (*Bamidbar 16:12*). Moshe attempted to meet with Korach, Dasan and Aviram, trying to civilly discuss their complaints, but Korach and the others refused to meet with Moshe. This is a perfect example of what the *Midrash Tanchuma*, and *lihavdil*, the Oxford English Dictionary, calls a useless argument. There was nothing productive that could have come from the complaints of Korach, but rather, it was the paradigm of a non-constructive *machlokes*, of a *machlokes sh'eino lisheim Shamayim*. However, an argument like that of Hillel and Shammai, where both

parties are striving toward the same goal of understanding the *halacha* and where both parties are willing to discuss and talk, that is the prime example of a productive argument, of a *machlokes lisheim Shamayim*.

Keeping in mind this fact of how Korach made his argument, and the fact that he was unwilling to civilly discuss, the second question of why the *mishna* explicitly says "Korach viadaso" instead of perhaps "Korach v'moshe" can be answered.

The argument of Korach was not really a *machlokes* between Korach and Moshe, it was rather a very one sided complaint. Korach refused to meet with Moshe, thus making Moshe more of an outsider than a part of the argument. The group of rebellious individuals were not fighting with Moshe per se, they were fighting amongst themselves due to the different desires of each person. Because of their need to *kvetch* they did not partake in an actual argument, it was an unproductive argument which is the paradigm of a *machlokes* which is not *lisheim Shamayim*.

A SHORT VORT

Akiva Kra (21)

In this week's *parsha* it states:

"וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל-פָּנָיו:"

Moshe heard and fell on his face.

After recording the complaint of Korach's group, Moshe "fell on his face." Many commentaries discuss why Moshe fell on his face after Korach made his first public speech challenging how the Jewish leaders were chosen.

Rashi writes that Moshe fell on his face because this was the fourth time that the Jews defied Hashem, and Moshe felt that he couldn't plead yet again on their behalf. The Ibn Ezra and Rashbam both write that Moshe fell on his face to daven to Hashem.

These two ideas appear to be unrelated to each other, but we can suggest that they are actually connected. Moshe did feel that he was asking too much from Hashem (like Rashi says), but he also knew that there really isn't such a thing as "too much" for Hashem. Therefore, he was able to daven (as the Ibn Ezra and Rashbam say) to Him.

This lesson is extremely powerful. We should never feel as if we can't reach out to Hashem. We can ask Him anything we want to. If we are in a bad position, we should always daven to Hashem.

Rav Adin Steinsaltz writes, "G-d probably understands [that] we are too stressed out to be davening. He probably doesn't understand why we don't daven to Him about that." We should always know that we can, and should, reach out to Hashem as often as we need.

Shabbat Shalom, Akiva Kra

Just Three Words: "I am Sorry"

Avraham Friedenberg ('22)

In this week's parsha, the Torah relates the following: "Vayishlach Moshe likro l'Dasan ul'Aviram binei eliyav vayomeru lo na'aleh" - "And Moshe sent to call Dasan and Aviram the sons of Eliav and they said, we will not go up." (Bamidbar 16:12). Rashi on this possuk cites the Gemara in Sanhedrin 110a that states: from here we see the principle that one should not carry on arguments. Moshe took the initiative to go after them to make shalom.

Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki commented: The *chachomim* said there is no *chazakah* in an argument. A *chazakah* means that since a situation is a certain way, we assume that it was that way before and will continue to remain that way. But if you try to make shalom when there is an argument, never say that since you have already tried and have not been successful it will be impossible for you to make shalom. Even if you have not been successful in the past, there is always the possibility that you will be able to make shalom now.

Even if someone seems very stubborn and many

people have tried to reason with him and have failed, it is always possible that a new approach or a new strategy might work to bring about *shalom*. There is no guarantee that any two people will be able to be on peaceful terms with each other. But we must make our best effort, because disputes are so destructive, so it is always worthwhile to keep doing all you can to keep shalom.

One very important step in bringing about peace is a willingness to apologize to someone. There are people who refuse to apologize to others even if they are clearly wrong. They are very stubborn about the matter and this keeps arguments going for much longer than necessary. Other people are willing to say they are sorry when they realize they have made a mistake. But they still refuse to apologize if they feel that they are right and that the other person is wrong. This, too, can needlessly prolong disputes. A person who sincerely loves and seeks shalom will be able to apologize to someone who feels hurt even if he thinks that he really did not do anything wrong. While this should not be done in situations when someone will take advantage of you, in most instances you lose absolutely nothing and gain much in terms of shalom by saying, "I am sorry".

5 Minute Lomdus

Yaakov Weinstock ('22)

The end of Parshas Korach discusses the different gifts the kohanim receive. Those gifts include the different terumos and ma'asros. However, is there a chiyuv to give terumos and ma'asros nowadays?

The Rambam writes that the Nevi'im made a decree that the lands close to Eretz Yisrael are obligated to give these gifts, and the chachamim after them established that the Jews that live in Ammon and Moav are also chayav to give because they are around Eretz Yisrael, but anywhere else there isn't even a chiyuv derabannan.

Rabbeinu Tam holds that the original decree was that all lands are chayav to give terumos and ma'asros, but it was nullified because nowadays people don't own their own land and therefore there is no chiyuv. However, by chalah, the Rambam writes that the chiyuv exists everywhere in chutz la'aretz in order that people won't forget about challah (Hilchos Bikkurim 5:8). Why is challah different in that there is still a chiyuv to separate challah, while there is no chiyuv of terumos and ma'asros?

Tosafos in Kiddushin (36b) explains that challah is more similar to a chiyuv on the person, because the chiyuv comes from the person kneading the dough. Since it's a chovas haguf, meaning that the chiyuv is on the person, it applies in all places. However, terumah and ma'aser are more similar to a chiyuv on the land and not on the person. It's similar to a chovas ha'aretz in that one needs land to be able to fulfill this mitzvah. The person doesn't do anything for the chiyuv to come. This can be used to explain a number of

other halachos brought down by the Rambam. Firstly, this can be used to explain why the Rambam holds that dough which was made outside Eretz Yisrael and was kneaded in Eretz Yisrael has upon it a

Torah obligation to separate challah, and, conversely, dough which was made in Eretz Yisrael that is kneaded outside of Eretz Yisrael is exempt from challah. Furthermore, this can be used to explain why the Rambam holds that fruits from outside Eretz Yisrael become chayav in terumah in Eretz Yisrael only on a derabannan level. The reason behind all these halachos is that these two mitzvos, challah and terumah/ma'aser, are determined by completely different things. The obligation by challah is completely based on the person's action and the location of that action. The chiyuv of terumah and ma'aser, however, is based on where the produce was grown and where it's from. Therefore, if the fruits aren't from Eretz Yisrael there isn't even a chiyuv derabannan of terumah/ma'aser.

The Destruction of Envy

Issac Cohen (23)

In this week's *parsha* we learn of the rebellion of Korach, Moshe's cousin. However, upon reading this section, the most obvious question arises: what was the reason for Korach's rebellion and what are we meant to learn from it/the outcome?

Rashi explains that the reason for Korach's rebellion against Moshe was jealousy, as he was envious of a relative who received honor while he did not. Korach's Achilles heel was his intense trait of envy. Even more so, his desire for honor, which was caused by his envy, caused him to lose the honor he already possessed. While it is true that we may be able to understand the reason for Korach's rebellion with this interpretation of Rashi, we are still left with what to make of it. *Pirkei Avos* teaches us the power of envy, and more importantly the destruction envy causes. When one focuses on the success of others and is pained by their success, that person will do irrational actions which will cause greater pain to himself and others, as *Pirkei Avos* says, Envy is one of three things that destroys a person (*Pirkei Avos* 4:28).

Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. expounds further, explaining that when one is involved in a dispute he may lose logic, which will lead to him making absurd arguments. Furthermore, his blindness and lack of logic turns him into an absolute fool to others. This type of foolish argument can be seen in the fiasco of Korach, as Korach accuses Moshe of being power hungry, while it is known that Moshe is the humblest man to ever exist.

Similarly, Rabbi Meir Arik is puzzled by Moshe's remark of "*Who is Aaron that you provoke with complaints*" (*Bamidbar* 16:11). What does Moshe mean here

and what is it that we learn can from it? Rabbi Arik explains that the *Talmud* teaches us that the true nature of a person is exposed when he is subject to financial pressure, drunk, or inflicted with anger. In the case of Aaron, Aaron had no personal assets, thus no financial pressure, and was forbidden to be intoxicated. Thus it was only possible to reveal Aaron's true nature through provocation of anger. Therefore, when Moshe made this remark, he meant: "provoke Aaron with complaints to expose his true nature, and you will observe his reaction of kindness".

The bottom line is that if you go back and look at your argument with a clear mind, the absurdity of your argument will become clear as well. Additionally, one must learn to remain in control of his emotions, as the consequences of being blind of one's emotions can be seen in the case of Korach's violent death.

We can understand the reason for Korach's accusations, however, our analysis brings about another important question: how is one meant to overcome envy? Envy is caused by focusing on others' success and comparing them to yours, thus one must try to focus on his own accomplishments in order to overcome envy. We must always remember that *Hashem* has a plan for every person. All the challenges and rewards that *Hashem* gives us are meant for our growth. Therefore, a person should say to himself "my problems and rewards are here for my success in the future. My friends' honor and challenges do not affect me as they are his problems or honor, as mine are mine". We must always remember that the goal is to focus on one's own problems, and we must be careful to retain our emotions, since that is the only way to give ourselves the best chance for success.

Mussar Moments

Max Korenman (22) & Avidan Loike (22)

In this week's *parsha*, *parshas Korach*, after Korach confronts Moshe, and says that Moshe is wrong, Moshe davens to *Hashem* and says *א-ל א-לֵהִי הַרוּחַת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר* "*Hashem the G-d of the souls in all flesh*." At first glance this seems as a strange way to refer to *Hashem*. A more logical way of reference to *Hashem* would be in the same manner as davening, such as: "*Hashem the G-d of our fathers and our forefathers*". Why is it that Moshe davens to *Hashem* in such a strange way?

There are two explanations, one discussed by Rashi and the other by the *Emek Davar*. Rashi explains that the reason *Hashem* is referred to in this manner is because Moshe was explaining that *Hashem* knows the thoughts of every person and that *Hashem* knows the true intentions of every person. This statement of Moshe is said in response to the fact that Korach lies and says that he doesn't want to be *Kohen Gadol* because he cares about *Hashem*, however, in reality it was all because of *chashivus*, of honor.

The *Emek Davar* explains that the reason is rather because Moshe was explaining an attribute of Korach: foolish and soft, just as flesh is soft. He adds on another possible answer based on *Gemara Sanhedrin*. He says Korach is like flesh in the sense that he only acts in ways which benefit him personally. However, in contrast, Moshe is always changing his *tefillah* based on what the situation at hand is. There is a very important lesson about *tefillah* that we can learn from this. When we are davening we shouldn't always daven in the same way, but rather we should customize our *tefillah* each time. Another lesson that we can learn from Korach is the amount of damage that can be done from someone acting solely out of self interest. Sometimes acting out of self pity is not only wrong, but damaging. So as we go into *Shabbos*, through the reading of *Kriyas Hatorah*, and the fiasco of Korach, we should realize how important it is to be selfless, and not selfish and how an action out of self pity can have the opposite of a desired effect.

Korach: an Early Populist

Samuel Gorman (21)

Last semester, I took a class in Yeshiva University on global populism. In this class, I learned about the nature of populism and populist leaders. Populists are often defined by their claim to be the true representatives of the common people. Such populist figures will try to distinguish between common people and the so-called elites. In this week's *parsha*, Korach is presented as the leader of a populist uprising.

At the very end of last week's *parsha*, *Parshas Shelach*, G-d instructs Moshe to tell the Jewish people to attach strings to their cornered garments, including a blue string; the *mitzvos* of *tzitzis* and *techayles* (*Bamidbar* 15:38). Immediately following the conclusion of this chapter, the *Torah* jumps into a discussion of Korach's rebellion. Rabbeinu Bachya (*Bamidbar* 16:1, d"b: *vayikach korach ben yitzhar ben kehas ben levi*) explains this juxtaposition. After learning the laws of *tzitzis* and *techayles*, Korach approached Moshe and asked about the laws of a four-cornered garment made entirely of *techayles* blue, enquiring whether it would require *tzitzis* with *techayles* or not. Moshe responded that such a garment would require *tzitzis* and *techayles*. This conversation between Moshe and Korach, which seems to be about the *halachos* of *tzitzis*, is what ties the chapter of *tzitzis* to the chapter of Korach's rebellion, explains Rabbeinu Bachya. When Korach asked Moshe about an entirely blue four-cornered garment, he was really referring to the Jewish people. The Jewish people all heard G-d at *Har Sinai*, and they are all holy, like how the blue garment is all blue, so why should they need an additional blue string, or a higher individual? Korach's question is not just why a blue garment should require *techayles*, but rather it is why a holy people should require a leader.

Rabbeinu Bachya's understanding of the juxtaposition between the chapters of *tzitzis* and Korach's rebellion fits in perfectly with *pasuk* 3 of *perek* 16. In this *pasuk*, Korach and his followers gather before Moshe and Aharon in objection to their leadership. Korach and his followers exclaim: "*rav lachem ki kol ha'eidah kulam kedoshim uvesocham Hashem, umadua tishasu al kehal Hashem*," meaning, simply: *why do you [Moshe and Aharon] raise yourselves above a nation comprised entirely of holy people who have G-d in their midst?* This *pasuk*, along with our Rabbeinu Bachya, is a perfect indicator of Korach's populism. Korach is opposed to the idea of having leaders; he is leading an uprising against the "elites" (in this case, Moshe and

Aharon). This is perfectly in line with the common populist platform of uniting common people against so-called "elites".

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *zatzal*, writing about this same topic of Korach's populism (<https://rabbisacks.org/first-populist-korach-5778/>), further explains Korach's argument in *pasuk* 3. Rabbi Sacks breaks down Korach's statement in this *pasuk* piece by piece into two claims, both of which, Rabbi Sacks claims, "are classic populist claims." First, Korach attacks the "elites," accusing Moshe and Aharon of nepotism. "*Madua tishasu al kehal Hashem*," asks *Korach*; why do Moshe and Aharon raise themselves above a holy nation? "*rav lachem- you have gone too far*," he exclaims. Here Korach can be seen attacking the "corrupt elites," as he accuses Moshe of nepotism for elevating his brother from among a nation entirely composed of holy people. Next, Korach presents himself as the hero of the commoner. "*kol ha'eidah kulam kedoshim uvesocham Hashem - the entire nation is holy and G-d is among them*," he declares. Here, Korach makes himself the spokesperson for the common Jew; the hero of the commoner. In this *pasuk*, Rabbi Sacks points out, *Korach* presents himself as a populist in two different ways. First, Korach attacks his "elites," and then he makes himself spokesperson for the commoners. Both of these tactics are indicative of a populist.

Korach's uprising, it would seem, is an early example of populism. His efforts to unite the people behind him by promoting an "us vs. them" narrative which distinguished between the common people and Moshe and Aharon (a.k.a. "the elites"), are archetypal populist methods.

Korach's Free Will

Dinuch Cohen (24)

“Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of Kehas, son of Levi...” (Bamidbar 16:1)

Rashi explains that the reason the *Torah* does not go one more step and trace Korach's lineage back to Yaakov *Avinu* is because Yaakov prayed that his name not be associated with Korach's rebellion.

This leads us to a question: how could Yaakov have been told in advance about Korach's rebellion? Isn't there a rule that a *navi* is never told in advance that someone will commit a sin?

This rule emerges from a disagreement between the Rambam and the Raavad in the sixth chapter of Hilchos Teshuvah. After stating that humans have free will, the Rambam asks: How could Hashem have told Moshe that the Jewish people will one day worship idols (*Devarim* 31:16)? Doesn't this mean that Hashem decreed and forced the Jews to worship idols, so how could He punish them for it? The Rambam's answer is that Hashem didn't decree that any particular Jew should sin; He just foretold that in the normal course of events, some people will sin.

The Raavad answers the question differently: he says that even if Hashem did indeed tell a *navi* that a particular individual would sin, that does not mean that he loses his free will. Just as Hashem's fore-

knowledge does not affect our free will, the prophecy of a *Navi* does not affect our free will.

We can deduce that the Rambam must have been unwilling to give the Raavad's answer because he held that the prophecy of a *navi* would affect free will. If a *navi* says that you are going to choose A, if you choose B you would be rendering the prophecy false. Therefore, Hashem would only reveal to the *navi* that you are going to choose A if He also took away your free will and forced you to do A.

Here too, if Hashem told Yaakov that Korach would rebel, Korach would have no choice but to rebel.

We could answer in two possible ways. Just as the Rambam says that Moshe was not told who would worship idols, perhaps Yaakov was only shown that one of Shimon or Levi's descendants would rebel, but he was not told who. Therefore, he prayed that whoever it would be, his name should not be mentioned together with him.

Alternatively, just as the Raavad says regarding the Egyptians - that although Avraham Avinu had a prophecy that Egypt would enslave the Jews, the Egyptians sinned by oppressing the Jews too much - so too here, perhaps Korach had no free will to a certain degree. Perhaps he could not help but doubt Moshe's prophecy. But the fact that he went around to all the Jews, attracting them to his movement, was his own free will, and for that he was punished.

MIDRASH MINUTES

Eitan Rochwarger (23)

Comparing Korach to Haman

In this week's *parsha*, *Parshas Korach*, Korach rises up together with two hundred and fifty people and attempts to feud with Moshe. The Midrash writes on how Korach came home to his wife who asked him what Moshe taught him that day. Korach responded that Moshe taught him about hilchos *tichales*: putting a blue string with his tzizis. Here his wife asks why only one blue string is sufficient when she can sew the whole thing blue. She sews the clothing and Korach gathers together the Sanhedrin (“*וַיָּקֶמְדוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַנְשֵׁי מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאוֹת*” - *to rise up against Moshe, together with two hundred and fifty Jews*) (Bamidbar 16:2)) asked Moshe if they only need one string. Moshe answered them that they only need one blue string to which they all laughed at him. Korach and his group then asked, does a room filled with *Torahs* need a *mezuzah*? Moshe responds by saying it does to which they laughed at him again. They continue to press Moshe as to why a room filled with the pessukim in a *mezuzah* needs a *mezuzah* at the door and claim that Moshe is making commandments that Hashem has never given.

Now, it is well known that Haman's mistake, by the story of the *megillah*, was following his wife's advice to build gallows which he is subsequently hanged on. But, it is not as well known that Korach's downfall started with his wife's advice. Korach and Haman were well known wealthy people who were influenced by their wives to do bad. They both undermined Hashem's authority which eventually led to both of their deaths. What one can learn from this is that although there are good influences in the world which are great, there are also many who will attempt to get others to do the wrong thing and cause more trouble in the world. This is one of the challenges in life, whether it's with jealousy or any other reason. Some will always act as a “yetzer hara” towards others but one must do their best not listen to them.

GEDOLIM GLIMPSE

Meir Morell (22)

Rabbi Mordechai Kletzki (later known as Meltzer) (1797-1883) was the son of Rav Asher Kletzki of Vilna, a distinguished layman and descendant of Maharam Padua (for more about Maharam Padua see the Shema Koleinu from parshas Bo 5781). Young Mordechai had an outstanding mind. Once, Rabbi Mordechai Mardush, author of the *Biur* on Maharam Schiff, happened to be in Vilna. During his stay, he delivered an intricate shiur to the city's *Iomdim* and among them was the youngster Mordechai. During the shiur in which complicated topics were presented, young Mordechai posed an unanswerable question. Rabbi Mardush stopped in the middle of the shiur and declared, "I am positive that this youngster will become a respected Rav in *Klal Yisrael*." At a young age he married the daughter of Rabbi Leib Meltzer, a noted maggid of Vilna. His father-in-law supported him generously, and he was able to immerse himself completely in the world of Torah. He became commonly referred to by his father-in-law's name, Meltzer.

In Vilna, the people were amazed at his intense *hasmodah*. Eventually he was accepted to the prestigious post of head of the *kloiz* (shul) of Rabbi Dovid Strashun (father-in-law of *Rashash*). He delivered a shiur in the early morning hours.

The *shamash* of the *kloiz*, who was in charge of waking those attending the shiur, related that often he would come to wake Rav Mordechai in the early hours of the morning, only to find him still engrossed in learning from the previous night. He would stand on a ladder at the shelf, a candle in one hand and the *sefer* in the other, and in that position he would learn for hours on end, often through the night.

In 1827, the famous Ramailles *Yeshivah* in Vilna was founded, and Rav Mordechai was called upon to be *Rosh Yeshiva*. Many people flocked to him for advice and counsel. In 1852, he was accepted as Rav in Kalavaria, and 12 years later he became Rav of Lida. He did not allow himself to be influenced by the powerful wealthy people of the town. He refrained from giving *haskamos*; one of the only *haskamos* he gave was to the *Chofetz Chaim*.

During the last year of his life he was stricken with a foot infection and confined to his bed. Immediately before his death, he told his son, "I have now concluded a *chiddush* that I am prepared to say in *Olam Haemes*; I am sure that this *chiddush* is *la'amita shel Torah*!" With these words his *neshamah* departed on the 27th of *Sivan* 5643. He is buried in an ohel that was erected in Lida.

After his death, his *talmidim* published *sefer Techeiles Mordechai*, with his *chiddushim*.

HALACHA HASHAVUAH

Yosef Weiner ('23)

Long Tachanun: because because, no no no

Rabeinu Bachya cites a possuk in *Parshas Korach* (16:22) as the source for *tachanun*. Thus, this week's column will focus on *tachanun*, and, more specifically, the extra *tefillos* added to *tachanun* on Mondays and Thursdays.

The Tur states that the reason for appending additional prayers to *tachanun* on Mondays and Thursdays is that Moshe ascended *Har Sinai* on a Monday to receive the second set of *luchos* and came back on a Thursday. Therefore, Monday and Thursday are considered *yimei ratzon*, days of favor (Orach Chaim 134). (See the Aruch Hashulchan (134:1) for a far more esoteric explanation).

Regarding the text which is recited, the Beis Yosef (134) states in the name of the Kol Bo that it was established due to a great miracle. The Eliya Rabbah (134:2) explains that once it was decreed upon the Jewish community that one of them would be thrown into a fire. They were granted thirty days to determine what to do. Every day, those who had dreamt would announce their dreams to the others. One day, a person who, despite not being very knowledgeable, was deeply afraid of sin, announced that he had had a dream of a *possuk* which contained the word "*ki*" two times and the word "*lo*" three times. A knowledgeable person explained that the dream was referring to a *possuk* in Yishaya (43:2) which states that when you are thrown into the fire you will not be harmed. Therefore, it was decided that the person who had the dream would be sent to be thrown into the fire, as clearly *Hashem* was giving a sign that He would protect this pious man from the fire. When the person entered the fire, it split into three sections. Three *tzadikim* emerged and each one said words of praise to *Hashem* and recited *vehu rachum*. Their words were compiled together and appended to *tachanun*. The first one's words go from the beginning of *vehu rachum* until *ana melech rachum v'chanun*, the second one's words go from *ana melech rachum v'chanun* until *ain kamocho*, and the third one's words are from *ain kamocho* until the end.

Unfortunately, one often finds that, due to the pace of the minyan, they are unable to say this *tefillah* in the time allotted to doing so. Rav Herschel Schachter asserts that in this type of circumstance one should recite one of the three aforementioned sections. He reasons that it is better to recite less but with more *kavanah*. However, one should not always recite the same section but rather should switch which one they say each day (*Hakoneh Olamo* 97). Rav Ephraim Greenblatt writes that one may recite *vehu rachum* at any point during the day if they had forgotten to do so earlier (*Rivevos Ephraim* Vol 6. 61). It is pointed out that according to the *Rivevos Ephraim* one who does not have time to recite *vehu rachum* after *shemonah esrai* may simply complete it at a later point in the day (*Hakoneh Olamo* 97). Lastly, Rav Chaim Kanievsky is of the opinion that one who is aware that they will not be able to recite the entire *vehu rachum* and *tachanun* in the proper place should skip portions of *vehu rachum* and recite *tachanun* prior to *kerias haTorah*. He further explains that even if one would be able to recite *tachanun* following *kerias hatorah*, it is nonetheless preferable to skip portions of *vehu rachum*, recite *tachanun*, and then go back to complete *vehu rachum* later (*Ishei Yisroel* 25:5).

WISDOM FROM THE HAFTORAH

Pinchas Rosenfeld (24)

In this week's *haftarah*, Shmuel *Hanavi* gathers all of *Bnei Yisrael* after he anoints Shaul and rebukes *Bnei Yisrael* for deciding that they need a king, because by doing so they are rejecting Hashem and the *Navi*. He reminds *Bnei Yisrael* that Hashem did for them in *Mitzrayim*, and that when they sinned Hashem sent help without a king. He then tells them that as long as they follow Hashem's words they will still be okay. Shmuel then has Hashem send thunderstorms, and when the nation sees this they ask Shmuel to *daven* for them, and they say they will do *teshuvah*.

וַיִּשְׁלַח ה' אֶת-יְרֻבָּעֵל וְאֶת-בְּדָן וְאֶת-יִזְבָּח וְאֶת-שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּצַּל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד אֹיְבֵיכֶם מִסָּבִיב וַתֵּשְׁבוּ בְטָח:

"And Hashem sent Yerubavel and Bedan and Yiftach and Samuel, and saved you from the enemies around you; and you lived in security."

When Shmuel is talking about the past, he refers to some of the *Shoftim*. Rashi learns that Yerubal was Gidon and that Badan was Shimshon. The Rambam asks as to why it was these four specific leaders Shmuel chose to name, as there were many more than these four people. He explains that Shmuel was telling the nation that they can be saved by both more and less perfect people. For example, Gidon originally worshipped idols, Yiftach was just helpful because he was strong, while Shimshon was a *Nazir* from birth and Shmuel was a *Navi* from quite a young age. Shmuel *Hanavi* specifically chose these four leaders to teach *Bnei Yisrael* that in the end, true salvation comes from Hashem. Hashem brings his salvation through many means, but ultimately for strength and salvation we must turn to Hashem.

PARSHA PUZZLERS

Submit your answers to shemakoleinu@yuhsb.org along with your name and cell phone number to be entered into a raffle at the end of the sefer! 1 answer = 1 entry!

(Hint: Use the Torah Temimah to find relevant Gemaras and Midrashim)

1. In this week's parsha, Aharon's staff sprouts *shekeidim*, almonds. Where else does the Torah mention almonds?
2. What do the staff of Aharon and the jar of man which served as a reminder to the miracle for the man have in common? What word appears by both of them?
3. How many people in the Torah "fell on their faces"? (source: Torah IQ: The Great Torah Riddle Book)

Answers from last week:

- 1) Parshas Bamidbar
- 2) Divrei Hayamim I 6:41 describes how Kalev received the fields and outskirts of Chevron
- 3) Moshe: ten amos (berachos 54b), Og: Six amos or a little more (Moreh Nevuchim 2:47), It seems that Dovid was (rashi to Shmuel I 17:38), Goliath: six amos and a zares (Shmuel I 17:4)

(note: the answers here are only accurate to the best of my knowledge, if you have any corrections, please send them)

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: ANIMALS IN THE PARSHA

Yisroel David Rosenberg (23)
Real Leaders: Praying and Braying

After Korach and his *eidah* mass around Moshe and Aharon with all of their accusations, Moshe responds with the test of the spice bringing. Moshe then invites Dasan and Aviram to speak with him to discuss the matter, but they refuse brazenly hurling ridicules at Moshe of taking them from a land flowing of milk and honey only in order to perish in the desert. Of course these ridicules were quite ridiculous themselves and Moshe's instinctive response is to turn to *Hashem* and to *daven*. And he davens that *Hashem* should not accept their offerings when they bring them.

But hadn't Moshe been the one to declare the whole *ketores* showdown? Why would Moshe have dared to make such a serious challenge if he was not confident that he would have been the victor? The consequences of his loss - his discrediting and the discrediting of all that he had said including the *Torah* - would have been so dire! Rashi on the *possuk*, based on a *Midrash Tanchuma*, explains that when Moshe says "*al teifen el min-chasam*" (*Bamidbar* 16:15), do not accept their offerings, he may also possibly be asking to negate the merit the offenders may have from the *Korban Tamid* of the *tzibur*. Since all of *Bnei Yisroel* have a portion in that *korban*, including the aggressors, they - the wrongdoers - might merit protection though it. Moshe had to *daven* that even the *Korban Tamid* would not stand for Korach and his followers.

But one could answer the question more simply by noting that we always have to *daven* when we want something. By *davening*, we recognize that everything we have going for us comes from *Hashem* and when things don't go our way it is because *Hashem* has other plans. So of course Moshe had to *daven*. Of course he had to ask *Hashem* that the rabble should not succeed. But how could Moshe have known what to respond without having consulted *Hashem* first?

Rashi on an earlier *possuk* (16:6) explains that Moshe knew that such a test would be effective because the *ketores* clearly has a form of deadly poison in it, a capability to kill those who should not be bringing it, as seen from the tragic actions of Nadav and Avihu. Moshe was in fact very careful with his language when he spoke to Korach and the others. He said "*vehaya ha'ish asher yivchar Hashem hu hakadosh*" (16:7). The man whom *Hashem* will choose at the end of the test, "*hu hakadosh*" he is the holy one and has been from the very beginning. This was a warning to them all that only the one who is in fact the rightful *Kohen Gadol* will survive. Moshe challenged these men based on what he knew to be true from Nadav and Avihu and warned them about what would happen. The *ketores* would provide adequate proof of Aharon's validity as *Kohen Gadol*.

So ultimately, of course, Moshe had to *daven*, and he had what to say in his *tefillah*, but one curious point still remains: Why did Moshe wait until right at this moment to *daven*? First Korach approached and Moshe answered him. Then Moshe sent for Dasan and Aviram and only when they refused did he *daven*. What changed?

In his *tefillah*, Moshe asked that *Hashem* not accept the *ketores* that would be offered by Korach and the rest. When he spoke with them initially, he warned them not to come because only one person would survive. Moshe was still hoping that they would not come. He was not going to pray that offerings that were not going to be offered in the first place not be accepted! And, in fact, Moshe was not just hoping, but actively continuing to try to dissuade them from making such a colossal mistake. It was why, Rashi notes based on a *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin*, Moshe sent for Dasan and Aviram (16:14). He wanted to settle the argument without such terrible consequences. But Dasan and Aviram were the epitome of *machlokes shelo leshema*. All they wanted was to be rabble rousers. When they sent back their biting retort to Moshe, "*vayichar lemoshe me'od*" (16:15), Rashi says Moshe was greatly distressed. Perhaps it was because now he knew that they were not going to calm down all the others. There was no more hope that they would not come with spice pans in hand.

Moshe *davened* and he asked *Hashem* not to accept their *ketores* because he had never taken the donkey of any one of them. This is his *tefillah*? Why the donkey? Rashi once again clues us in and explains that Moshe once had the right to take their donkey to use it for his family in order to travel to save *Bnei Yisroel* in *Mitzrayim*, but he still used his own possessions. Shmuel *Hanavi* acted similarly as noted in the *haftarah* (see Rashi on *Shmuel I* 12:3).

As a leader, all Moshe wanted was to serve. He did not take anything from the people. He did not wrong them. He was wholly committed to a peaceful resolution with Korach and Dasan and Aviram, but they only wanted to separate themselves from the people (see Rashi on *Bamidbar* 16:1). For all their clamor of Moshe and Aharon's excessive privilege, the prestige was all they wanted. These phonies spoke of how everyone was holy and deserving of *kavod*. But real leaders of the *Bnei Yisroel*, like Moshe, Aharon, and Shmuel, take nothing from the people and deflect honor that they do not need.

(This article is based on ideas from several shiurim by Rabbi Shalom Rosner, Mrs. Shira Smiles, and others, and perhaps mostly Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz and his "Korach Derasha - Arguing Selflessly and Calmly".)

FROM THE EDITORS' DESK

I'll be Fine, Don't Worry

"ויקח קרח בן־יצהר בן־קהת בן־לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אליאב ואון בן־פלת בני ראובן"
(*Bamidbar* 16:1)

One of the implied questions Rashi asks on the above *possuk* is: What connection do Dasan, Aviram, and On ben Peles, who are from the tribe of Reuven, have to Korach, who is from the tribe of Levi?

Rashi answers that since, geographically, the people of Kehas were next to the tribe of Reuven, those people from Reuven partnered with Korach. And here, Rashi says the famous statement: "Woe to the wicked one, woe to his neighbor". This is to say that a neighbor of a wicked person is negatively influenced by the wicked person.

This is very similar to the favorite Rambam of my Rebbi, Rabbi Mendleson. Rambam, *Hilchos Deos, Perek* 6 says:

"דרך ברייתו של אדם להיות נמשך בדעותיו ובמעשיו אחר רעיו וחבריו ונוהג כמנהג אנשי מדינתו. לפיכך צריך אדם להתחבר לצדיקים ולישב אצל החכמים תמיד כדי שילמד ממעשיהם. ויתרחק מן הרשעים ההולכים בחשך כדי שלא ילמד ממעשיהם."

Rambam says above, that human nature is to be affected by those around you and one should make sure to be around the right people so as not to be negatively influenced.

Rambam continues to say something very potent. He says "likewise, if a man is in a state where evil customs prevail and where the people are not following the righteous ways, he should go to a place where the inhabitants are righteous and follow the way of the good. If all the states known to him, or of which intelligence reached him, be followers of a path which is not good, even as it is in our own times, or if he be unable to migrate to a state whose rules of conduct are good, either on account of military operations or on account of sickness, he should isolate himself and live in seclusion, even as it is said on the subject: 'Let him sit alone and keep silence' (*Eicha*, 3, 28)"

This Rambam teaches a tremendously important lesson. Often, when someone is surrounded by people who are not always the greatest influences, they will be prone to say "I'll be fine, don't worry". This person is wrong! Rambam is teaching us that if we want to grow to be proper *שם* we need our surroundings to be one prone to the proper service of *Hashem*.

We should all be *זוכה* to live a life which aligns with the last statement in *Maseches Sukkah* on *daf* 56 which states: "טוב לצדיק, טוב לשכינו" "Good for the righteous, good for his neighbor".

Have a great Shabbos and have a great summer!

-Meir Morell

Parsha in a Nutshell

Korach, along with Dasan, Aviram, and 250 men from *Shevet Reuven*, challenge Moshe's right to lead the nation alone. Moshe attempts to reason with them, but they persist in their rebellion, so Moshe suggests a test. Each member of the rebellion, along with Aharon Hakohen, would bring a *ketores* offering. Whoever's offering was accepted by *Hashem* would clearly be the one chosen to do the *avodah*. The test was carried out, and *Hashem* caused the 250 men from *Shevet Reuven* to be burned by a heavenly fire. Korach, Dasan, and Aviram, as well as their families and possessions, were swallowed by the earth. This incident sparked a revolt among the nation, and Aharon was forced to bring an additional *ketores* offering in order to stop a plague which *Hashem* had unleashed as retribution. *Hashem* then confirms Aharon's status through another test. All the tribal leaders, as well as Aharon, leave their staffs in the innermost chamber of the *Mishkan*, the *Kodesh Hakedoshim*, overnight. In the morning, only Aharon's staff sprouted almonds and flowers. The *parsha* concludes by outlining the duties of the *kohanim* and *levi'im*, as well as the laws of *terumah* and *ma'aser*, the gifts given to the *kohanim* and *levi'im* respectively.

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