Beit Hamidrash Hameir Laarets | Issue 217

Korach | Who Is Truly Fortunate and Who Isn't





MESILOT Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha of Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l

From the weekly lessons of his son **Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita**

פרשת קורח | אנגלית

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of the Parshah
The Lofty Early Generations 5
Relative Expectations
Enduring Disputes
Blessings Beneath a Veil
The Soul's Garments and Nourishment
The Soul-Satisfaction of Torah Scholars13
Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World 14
Insatiable Love for G-D
The Greatness of Korach
Individual Torah Nourishment
The Fundamental Point: Integration with Others 22
A Ladder Ascending to Heaven 24
Summary and Practical Conclusions 27



Beit Hamidrash Hameir La'aretz

Publisher and Distributer of the Teachings o

- 500 Frank W Burr Blvd Suite 47 Teaneck, NJ 07666
- en@h-l.org.il
- www.hameir-laarets.org.il/en
- HaKatzir 666, Netivot, Israel
- (954) 800-6526
- HameirLaaretsEN
- HameirLaaretsEN
- © 054-870-8737

Message Us to Join Our WhatsApp Groups

Parshat Korach - Summary of the Parshah



Summary of the Parshah

Parshat Korach is the 38th Parshah in the Torah and comprises 95 verses.

Most of it deals with Korach and his followers' rebellion against Moses, along with the dreadful punishment that brought their dispute to its tragic end.

Let us summarize it here briefly:

On the eighth of Av, in the second year after leaving Egypt, the spies that the Jewish nation had sent, returned from the Land of Israel, striking fear into the hearts of the Jewish people with their terrifying reports:

"The land through which we passed to scout it out is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw in it are men of great size. We also saw the Nephilim there

— the children of Anak of the Nephilim. We appeared like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so were we in their eyes" (Numbers 13:32–33).

That very night, the ninth of Av, the Jewish people sat on the ground and wept and mourned baselessly:

"It was out of the hatred of G-d toward us that He brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us" (Deuteronomy 1:27).

This weeping was already third the sin: first their was the sin of the Golden Calf. the second was the sin of the complainers (in Parshat Beha'alotcha), this and "baseless weeping" (the sin of the spies) was the third time they sinned terribly.

Parshat Korach - Summary of the Parshah

Only a few days later, after the sin of the spies, a fourth sin occurred — Korach's rebellion.¹

2

It all started when Korach decided that he wanted to be the High Priest as well, and he approached Moses with the following argument:

"It is far too much for you. For the entire congregation is holy, and G-d is among them; why then do you raise yourselves above G-d's assembly?" (Numbers 16:3).

Korach, who was a great and learned man, managed to sweep along with him into rebellion a very large following, including famous Torah scholars, public figures, and people of high standing. The Israelite camp was

in turmoil; the atmosphere was poisoned, and the uproar grew uncontrollable.

Moses addressed Korach and his followers, asking them to wait until morning to resolve the matter:

"In the morning, G-d will make known who is His, and whoever is holy He will bring near to Him; whomever He chooses, He will bring near to Himself" (Numbers 16:5).

Korach agreed, likely thinking, "A few more hours of persuasive action among the Jewish camp could work to my advantage," and he indeed spent that entire night inciting the people against Moses.

When morning arrived, Korach and his followers

1. To quote Rashi:

"Moses heard and fell on his face" (Numbers 16:4) - "Because of the dispute, for this was already their fourth misdeed. When they sinned with the golden calf — 'Moses pleaded' (Exodus 32:11); With the complainers — 'Moses prayed' (Numbers 11:2); with the spies — 'Moses said to G-d: The Egyptians will hear...' (Numbers 14:13).

With Korach's dispute, Moses' hands grew weak — this is analogous to the friend of a king whose son had erred once, twice, thrice, and the friend kept appeasing the king. But after a fourth time, the friend despaired, saying: 'How much longer shall I trouble the king? Perhaps he will no longer accept my pleas.'"

Parshat Korach - Summary of the Parshah

still clung steadfastly to their argumentative dispute, and their end came quite swiftly:

Two hundred and fifty men burned: three entire were family clans in Israel (Korach, Aviram) Datan. and were swallowed up by the earth. Korach himself suffered both of these two unlucky fates — he both burned was and swallowed up alive.

In addition to these calamities, "Fourteen thousand seven

hundred died in the plague, aside from those who died on account of Korach" (Numbers 17:14).

Korach's rebellion did not last longer than 36 hours, and although 3,336 years have passed since this dispute, the lessons from the tale of Korach echo and remain an enduring lesson for all generations.²

Before we discuss and explore some detailed lessons from our Torah portion, let us begin with another topic.

2. The principal sin of Korach and his followers stemmed from a lack of faith.

Had they strengthened their faith, they would not have had envy and hatred, nor would they persecute Moses.

A Jew must always strengthen himself in faith, and one of the more powerful ways to do so is by sharing stories of the righteous.

The following is an excerpt from Rabbi Yoram Abergel on this subject (Imrei Noam, Beshalach, essay 11):

"A Jew should speak and share with his wife and children, as well as his friends — words that reinforce faith in the Creator.

By speaking words of faith, even if initially it may be only lip service, one's

heart will be strengthened with true faith

This is the meaning of 'I believed when I spoke' (Psalms 116:10) — 'because I uttered words of faith, in the end I truly came to believe'

Conversely, minimizing such speech depletes faith from the heart, as it is written, 'Faith has been lost, it is cut off from their mouth' (Jeremiah 7:28) — meaning, 'once faith ceases to be on their lips, it eventually departs from their hearts as well.'

Nothing implants pure and simple faith in the hearts of children — faith both in G-d and in His righteous servants — like telling them stories of the righteous at every opportunity: before bedtime, at

Parshat Korach - Summary of the Parshah

the Shabbat table, and at every available opportunity.

This is also why one of the most precious mitzvot is recounting the Exodus from Egypt, as Scripture states: 'So that you may recount in the ears of your child and your grandchild what I did in Egypt, and the signs I placed among them, and you will know that I am G-d' (Exodus 10:2). It is through the retelling of this story, that we succeed to implant holy faith deep into our children's hearts.

Indeed, the mitzvah of faith is the foundation of all Judaism, as our Sages have said (Makkos 24a): '613 commandments were given to the nation of Israel, and Habakkuk came and based them all on one principle - "A righteous man shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4).'

The Baal HaTanya explains (Likkutei Amarim, ch. 33):

'This is as if to say, there exists merely one mitzvah — the mitzvah of faith alone, for by faith alone a person comes to fulfill all of the 613 commandments, and this alone is the ultimate purpose of creation and of all worlds.'

We see clearly that in homes where strong faith in the sages is imbued and where parents regularly recount stories of the righteous, the children do not stray from the ways of G-d and are all possessed with great awe of Heaven.

Conversely, in homes where stories of the righteous aren't told, preferring instead to offer sharp innovations and stick to profound Talmudic pilpul, things may look fine at first — but when the children reach a certain age, they may suddenly abandon the path of G-d; while deep insights and novelties can encourage and yield brilliance and cleverness, it does not necessarily lead to simple and wholehearted faith.

In this generation, with all of the difficult challenges we face, both from within and without, one cannot stand firm in their faith without stories of our sages and their belief in G-d — whether it be from the Midrash, from the tales of the Baal Shem Tov, or other righteous figures.

One who mocks this approach will, sooner or later, find his approach to be faulty, for without strong faith in the heart, everything eventually collapses.

As our Sages say (Shabbos 32b): 'Leave the drunkard be — on his own, he will fall,' and a person lacking firm faith is akin to a drunkard, befuddled in his spiritual mind, ready to topple as soon as any challenge comes his way.

However, one with powerful faith is unshakable, impervious to the thought of leaving the proper path of Judaism.

This is why Torah scholars of previous generations paid such close attention to the acts and wonders of their teachers — so they would have inspiring anecdotes to share with their descendants."

Parshat Korach - The Lofty Early Generations

The Lofty Early Generations

Before we continue, we must remember that when we study figures in the Torah, we must be cognizant that we are "dealing" with individuals who were exalted and elevated beyond anything we can fathom.

We have no real comprehension of their inner world, the great powers that were contained in their soul, nor of the sharpness of their intellect. Consequently, we are utterly distant from understanding their actions, as actions stem from the soul that performs them, and as we have just clarified, we cannot grasp these souls.

If the early generations stand at the top of the ladder, we stand at the very bottom — this is what is known as "the decline of the generations."

Thus, even if we lift our eyes from the base of the ladder and look upward and learn and glean lessons from the actions recorded in the Torah, we must remain aware of how limited our vision and comprehension truly is.

In this vein, the Vilna Gaon describes the path of the decline of the generations:³

Moses was the spiritual father and head of all the prophets, standing at a tremendously high level.

The prophets after him were already on a markedly lower level, and the prophet Daniel served as a midpoint between the previous era of prophets and the following generations.

From generation to generation, the spiritual level of the Jewish people experiences a decline.

When the Second Temple was destroyed, the divine spirit departed from the Jewish people, leaving them with a 'body' without a 'soul.'

Parshat Korach - Relative Expectations

Nevertheless, as long as large groups of Torah scholars and the great yeshivot existed, the Jewish "body" remained above ground.

But once the exile intensified, G-d — so to speak — took the "body" and buried it deep in the earth, and from then on, the "body" began to decay.

At first, the "flesh" decayed, and consequently, the powers of the soul and spiritual perception diminished.

But still, the "bones" remained — the Torah scholars of the nation of Israel, who sustained the people by the power of their Torah.

Then, after a while, even these "bones" began to decay.

Nowadays, the Vilna Gaon continued, we are left with but a mound of earth, and our situation will remain so until the Moshiach comes and the verse "Awaken, arise from the dust" (Isaiah 52:2) will be fulfilled.

Relative Expectations

There may be some difficulty in understanding and internalizing the words of the Vilna Gaon.⁴

On the surface, it might not look that way at all: even in our modern era, people study Torah assiduously — some even innovate a great number of novel insights.

We pray, often with great and heartfelt intention. We all do our best to advance in the service of G-d, performing the mitzvot with care and beauty. How, then, can all of that be dismissed as a mere 'mound of earth' and nearly nothing compared to what was in the past?

To answer this question, let us illustrate with an analogy:

When a baby is born, everyone rejoices with him, even though he cannot yet do anything — cannot eat independently, nor drink, nor stand or sit, nor speak.

Parshat Korach - Relative Expectations

When he starts moving his hands and legs, crawling, standing, and sitting, everyone is surely delighted.

Likewise, when he first manages to utter a few unclear sounds, all are overjoyed, all the more so when he says complete words or performs new, more complex actions.

There is no feeling of sadness that he is not doing even more, that he is not developed to the degree of an adult, for he is simply progressing in the natural course of development.

In contrast, consider a grown adult who has engaged in just about every activity with great wisdom and skill — a person who has accumulated vast knowledge in many fields — and then tragically has been severely injured in a rough accident and spent a long time in a coma, on the very threshold between life and death.

Then one day, he opens his eyes, and there is immense joy among his family and friends.

At the same time, this feeling is tinged with sorrow and pain because his overall condition remains dire.

A few more days pass, and he can clearly see and track objects with his eyes. Again, there is much joy mixed with heartache.

Then, more time passes, and he begins to make a few noises; then, after further days, he manages to recall some words.

After more time and many medical treatments, he learns to stand, and with further rehabilitation, he takes a few steps.

Eventually, people start teaching him how to recognize letters again, and after yet more effort, he can read a little.

Over a long period of slow, consistent therapy, there is clear progress.

Here, too, although each improvement brings tremendous joy, it is coupled with profound sadness and anguish.

This person was once healthy and whole, wise and active, performing everything easily and **Parshat Korach - Enduring Disputes**

swiftly on his own, without any external aid.

Now, however, even after much progress, he is left disabled, in a wheelchair or with some other handicap.

Every move requires effort and assistance devices, and no matter how much he improves, it is nowhere near the abilities he once had before the accident.

So, too, is the case with the Jewish people after the Destruction of the Temple in our era of exile.

True, we still grow in spirituality — but compared to the levels we once possessed, it is not even close.

We once had immeasurably lofty and wondrous insights in Torah, a tremendous and palpable awe of G-d, and a profound love of G-d.

We enjoyed a clarity of faith — almost tangibly — as we

regularly witnessed miracles. We reached great levels of spiritual achievement that are far beyond our present grasp.

And all of this we have lost; what remains with us now, after great effort over a lifetime, is a mere fraction of what we had once attained swiftly and effortlessly in earlier times; everything else has been lost.

Thus, since we are effectively nothing more than a mere "mound of earth," one might think we cannot even dare to examine the actions of Korach and his congregation — figures infinitely beyond our own sorry spiritual state.

Yet the Torah is a Torah of life, and we are commanded to learn from it practical lessons about how to live. Thus, we must delve into it and find the lesson it holds for us.

And we will begin with a question.

Enduring Disputes

Our Sages state (Avos 5:17): "Any dispute that is for the sake of Heaven will ultimately

endure; one that is not for the sake of Heaven will not endure. Which is a dispute for the sake of

Parshat Korach - Enduring Disputes

Heaven? That of Hillel and Shammai. Which is one that is not for the sake of Heaven? That of Korach and his followers."

At first glance, one recognizes that the key outcome that the Mishnah uses to differentiate between the two is "endurance"; while a dispute for the sake of Heaven "will ultimately endure," one that is not for the sake of Heaven "will not endure."

But the Mishnah doesn't clarify exactly what this "endurance" entails and what it means.

To explain this, the Mishnah brings two examples:

"A dispute for the sake of Heaven; these are the disagreements of Shammai and Hillel." As is well-known, the two sages differed and held opposite views on many matters, and ultimately, a heavenly voice proclaimed, "The law follows Beit Hillel."

Although, since then, the Halachah has been fixed for all generations, and today, no one among the Jewish people rules in accordance with Beit Shammai (apart from a few individual cases in which the Sages themselves ruled like Beit Shammai), nevertheless, the teachings of Beit Shammai remain forever an integral part of our Oral Torah.

"A dispute that is not for the sake of Heaven: that of Korach and his followers." As explained elsewhere, their conflict lasted no more than a day and a half; after that, they were swallowed by the earth, and ever since, we emphatically declare, "Moses is true, and his Torah is true," and there is no remembrance to the ideals and beliefs of Korach.

At the same time, Korach's story itself is enshrined in the Written Torah, and as we know, if even one letter is missing from a Torah scroll, the entire scroll becomes invalid, and being that this is all part of the Torah, we must therefore explore and discover its depths.

At first glance, these examples do not seem to help clarify what is meant by "endurance."

If the Mishnah intends by "endurance" that people forever practice according to a given

Parshat Korach - Veiled Blessing

opinion, then there appears to be no difference between Korach's dispute and that of Beit Shammai — nowadays, the Halachah is not in accordance with Beit Shammai either.

Conversely, if the Mishnah means that "endurance" indicates their words have been incorporated into the Torah, then again, there agsin seems to be no difference: Korach's episode is also recorded as part of the Torah.

So what exactly is this 'endurance' our Sages are referring to?

Before answering, let us preface with yet another concept.

Veiled Blessing

The following ruling is recorded in the Shulchan Aruch:⁵

"The Torah readings have been arranged such that Parshat Bamidbar is read before Shavuos, Tishah B'Av occurs before Va'etchanan, and Nitzavim is read before Rosh Hashanah."

Over the yearly cycle, we read every Torah portion in sequence on Shabbat. If Shabbat coincides with a festival, we do not read the regularly scheduled portion but rather the festival reading. Consequently, often, two Torah portions are combined together to form a "double Torah Portion" so that we can "make up" for the missed week and ensure that all the portions are read throughout the year at their appointed times.

The Shulchan Aruch tells us to arrange the readings in such a manner that Parshat Bamidbar will be read before Shavuos, Parshat Va'etchanan after Tishah B'Av, and Parshat Nitzavim before Rosh Hashanah.

The Kaf HaChaim explains⁶ that there are two portions in the Torah that contain rebuke and curses: Bechukotai and Ki Tavo, and to avoid reading these curses right before Shavuot or Rosh

🗝 Wellsprings of Wisdom 🗫--

^{5.} Orach Chaim 428:4.

^{6.} Ibid. 428:16.

Parshat Korach - The Soul's Garments and Nourishment

Hashanah, we schedule these two to be read on the Shabbat two weeks ahead of these festivals.⁷

Although at first glance, the curses in these two sections are indeed quite frightening, our Sages teach that concealed beneath these curses lie vast and mighty blessings, and certain tzaddikim knew how to tap into the hidden blessing that lies within these very "curses."

Thus, as a general principle, although these words of rebuke appear to be curses, in truth, they are all blessings.⁸

One such 'curse' we wish to focus on is stated in the verse: "When I will break for you the staff of bread, and ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will return your bread by weight; and you will eat and not be satisfied" (Leviticus 26:26).

The simple meaning of this dreadful verse is clarified by Rashi to its sordid details, but we will share the blessing that is hidden within it.

But First, we will provide another introduction:

The Soul's Garments and Nourishment

Every created being requires sustenance, and not only does a physical creature need food, a spiritual entity also requires nourishment.

Just as maintaining and enlivening a physical body depends on food and clothing, so does the Divine soul need "food" and "clothing" for its vitality.

7. To quote the Kaf HaChaim:

"We read Parshat Bamidbar before Shavuot in order to create a separation between the curses of Parshat Bechukotai and the holiday of Shavuos — which is a day of judgment for fruit — so that the curses are not read right before the day of judgment, thus preventing the Satan from

seizing the opportunity to accuse the Jewish people, G-d forbid.

For the same reason, we read Nitzavim before Rosh Hashanah to separate between it and the curses of Ki Tavo.

8. See more on this in Likkutei Torah (Parshat Bechukotai 48a).

Parshat Korach - The Soul's Garments and Nourishment

Garments for the soul are formed by fulfilling the Torah's 613 commandments. Through each mitzvah, the light of G-d that resides in the mitzvah surrounds the person's soul from head to toe, akin to a garment that envelops the body.

Nourishment for the soul, however, comes from knowing the Torah, engaging in its study, and delving into its depths.

When one contemplates Torah, the wisdom of G-d enters his innermost being and unites with his soul, and it is through achieving comprehension of the Torah that a person draws the light of G-d — that is invested in His wisdom — into his soul; it

becomes one with him, and thereby one experiences the life-force of G-d, as it is clothed in His Torah wisdom.⁹

In this process of soul—Torah integration, there are many levels of intensity, as Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler writes:10

"Torah contains an immensely potent light that is capable of illuminating even the darkest recesses of the soul, as our Sages say (Eichah Rabbah, Petichta 2): 'If only they would have abandoned Me but still kept My Torah; for the light within it would bring them back to the good.'

Not only does the light of the Torah radiate within the darkness, but it can transform the

9. This is directly tied to one's World to Come.

In the future, when the soul is in Gan Eden, it will require spiritual nourishment and garments, and these can only be obtained through a person preparing themselves in this physical world throughout his lifetime.

The nourishment and garments in Gan Eden are formed by one's Torah study and mitzyah observance here.

The difference is that in this world — when the soul is clothed in the body — the intense spirituality and Divine light of the Torah and mitzvot are concealed by the body's physicality, but in the World to Come, when the soul ascends to Gan Eden, the Divine light created by its efforts in this world is revealed, and becomes its reward.

10. 'Michtav M'Eliyahu' (vol. 4, p. 53).

Parshat Korach - The Soul-Satisfaction of Torah Scholars

very darkness itself into light; when a person learns the Torah of G-d with genuine devotion and clings to it wholeheartedly, the Torah ultimately becomes part of his very essence.

One then begins to savor the sweetness of Torah study; the wellsprings of wisdom open before him, and he merits discovering new insights and feels a wondrous delight and pleasure in his soul.

One's heart is then uplifted on high, and one is imbued with a deep sense of gratitude toward G-d, the One who is the source of this pleasure, and one then pines with yearning for the Creator, blessed be He.

This, then, is the deeper meaning of a true Torah scholar."

The Soul-Satisfaction of Torah Scholars

There is a vast difference between the world of physical reality and spiritual reality.

In physical matters, once a person is satiated, he no longer desires to eat; in spirituality, however, satiation and longing can coexist at the same moment, and one who has not experienced this can hardly understand it.

The Torah is the soul's nourishment, and one who merits to study it will find his soul "satiated." Nevertheless, at that

very moment, one will also yearn to attain more. This combination and mixture of spiritual satisfaction together with ongoing desire, imbue the soul with a profound sense of meaning and peace.

To explain this concept:

It is well known that four tractates of the Talmud¹¹ conclude with the saying:

"Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina, Torah scholars increase peace in the

^{11.} These four tractates — Berachot, Nazir, Yevamot, and Kritot — form the acronym

of בְּיֵיכְ ("your children") and are sometimes identified by this acronym.

Parshat Korach - Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World

world, as it says, 'All your children shall be taught of G-d, and great shall be the peace of your children' (Isaiah 54:13)."

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky once explained:¹²

This statement does not mean that Torah scholars necessarily go from house to house, reconciling conflicts and working at bringing peace between husbands and wives or settling disputes between neighbors.

Rather, 'peace' is the opposite of vexation and anger — the traits that arise when one is discontented, resentful, and lacks an inner sense of fulfillment. Such a person easily grows angry and upset over the smallest matter, casting gloom on those around him.

Thus, the true hallmark of a true Torah scholar is to feel deeply content, gratified, and at peace, finding immeasurable joy and serenity in a single page of Talmud that he has learned — greater than the elation of a powerful business magnate who has just earned another million dollars.

As a result, he bears no grudge over trivial matters in dispute; his primary delight and satisfaction come from his Torah study, and other issues simply do not bother him.

When such a Torah scholar appears somewhere, his very presence creates a special atmosphere that uplifts all those around him to a sense of inner peace.

It in this way that Torah scholars 'increase peace in the world.''

Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World

In this context, we bring an excerpt from a talk delivered by

my late father, Rabbi Yoram Abargel:¹³

---- Wellsprings of Wisdom 🗫--

^{12. &#}x27;Pninei Rabbeinu Yechezkel' (vol. 1, p.16).

^{13. &#}x27;B'Tzur Yarum' (vol. 8, p. 72).

Parshat Korach - Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World

The world in which we live is lowly and shallow, filled with harsh realities — disappointments, downfalls, and the evil inclination. People face difficult tests in faith, modesty, and monetary matters. Everything often appears to be complicated because, as the author of the Tanya writes, this world is "the lowest realm, with none lower beneath it."

The way to navigate this world peacefully is simply to ignore it. Be like air — avoid colliding with difficult people; maneuver around them. Don't attempt to solve problems; try not to get entangled in them at all.

Even if you're pursued or harmed, don't respond; let it go. Eventually, you will gain while others will lose. Don't attempt to 'fix' the world; it's unrealistic. Only G-d can fix the world, and He will do so when the time comes.

Yet, despite its difficulties, this world holds a great blessing — priceless diamonds are scattered throughout it: genuine Torah scholars and righteous individuals, and anyone privileged to connect

with them, reaps reward in both this world and the next.

If you support a young Torah student, you lose nothing. Can you grasp the magnificence of standing together with a true Torah scholar in the World to Come?

Thanks to your support and your providing him peace of mind to study the Torah, you merit to behold the presence of the Al-mighty in Heaven — a privilege worth all worldly wealth.

Is there any price tag for a single word of Torah? Selling the entire planet and its possessions would not suffice to buy even the one letter "Bet" of the word "Bereishit," such infinite value is beyond purchase.

A true Torah scholar must not chase after donations; he deserves voluntary support.

According to one opinion of the Sages (see Shabbos 56a), even requesting rightful tithes is inappropriate for a Torah scholar, let alone receiving gifts; a Torah scholar's essence is giving, not receiving. Parshat Korach - Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World

Those who merit donating to Torah scholars must remember they are doing themselves an even greater favor. Through their donation, they connect to the Torah, opening a pipeline of blessing, and every Divine spiritual achievement of the Torah scholar also benefits the donor.

Those who truly protect the world — ensuring everyone's livelihood, health, and safety are the veshivah students and young married men who labor in Torah day and night.

Anyone who believes that by might and power alone, they protect the Jewish people is Such mistaken. a person resembles a fly perched on a plow, boasting, "Today, the plow and I worked the entire field," only grudgingly admitting that the plow helped "a bit."

In the merit of Torah scholars, the world stands and endures. and it is therefore crucial to never harm Torah scholars.

One who tries to dislodge or damage Torah scholars is akin to someone whose vertebra shifts out of alignment; even a minor shift can lead to paralysis.

This can be learned from what is related in the Prophets: when Uzzah reached out his hand and touched the Ark, immediately "The wrath of G-d blazed against Uzzah, and G-d struck him there for his error, and he died there by the Ark of G-d" (II Samuel 6:7).

If that was the fate of someone who merely touched the Ark of the Torah, all the more so for one who lavs a hand on the Torah itself and on its students.

We must never forget Uzzah's story; it is recorded in the Prophets not just to recount a historical event. The Torah is not a history book; rather, we are to learn real-life lessons from its narratives.

From Uzzah, we see how crucial it is not to infringe upon the honor of the Torah and its scholars, and certainly, we must never harm them.

History has never been kind to anyone who attacked Torah

Parshat Korach - Torah Learners — Sustainers of the World

scholars; they have never emerged unscathed.

The same is true and happened to Korach: he rose against Moses and dishonored him, and in the end, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed him and everything he had.

The young married scholars and yeshivah students protect and support the state. If, G-d forbid, there were no Torah scholars in the Land of Israel, whoever stayed behind would need to scramble to find some bunker to hide in from the rockets and terror attacks that would inevitably occur to a devastating degree, Heaven forbid.

Only the Torah learned by yeshivah students and young married scholars truly protects the Jewish people who dwell in this land, surrounded by nations thirsty for our blood.

Their Tikkun Chatzot prayers, their Talmud study, the Torah works they produce, and their daily prayers — stand for the Jewish people during times of crisis, striking terror in the hearts

of all the foes who contemplate harming us, G-d forbid.

Therefore, the Megillah says:

"All the ministers of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's officials exalted the Jews, for the dread of Mordechai had fallen upon them" (Esther 9:3).

It's remarkable: Mordechai HaYehudi was an exceedingly old, frail man — why would they fear him so greatly?

Rather, it was because Mordechai possessed immense holiness and was deeply connected to G-d that mortal terror overcame the nations. Similarly, it is written that many of the local 'professed themselves peoples Jews, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them' (ibid. 8:17).

When the Jewish people follow the proper path and cleave to the true righteous Torah leaders who engage in Torah and prayer day and night, an immense fear descends upon all other nations, and they cannot carry out their schemes to

harm us, Heaven forbid.

Parshat Korach - Insatiable Love for G-D

Sometimes, people portray Torah scholars and yeshivah students as a small, narrow-minded group; worse still, some label them as "freeloaders" and "parasites" who do not share in the burden of society. This is both wrong and inaccurate; woe to those who harbor such sordid ideas.

Indeed, the very life, breath, and livelihood of everyone in the country and the world exist solely by virtue of those who study the Torah.

With this introduction in mind, let us return to the verse: "Ten women shall bake your bread" (Leviticus 26:26).

Insatiable Love for G-D

We will cite a brief portion of the explanation of the Baal HaTanya: 14

"When I will break for you the staff of bread, and ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will return your bread by weight; and you will eat and not be satisfied" (Leviticus 26:26).

When making bread, there are two general stages: forming the dough and baking it.

Dough that has not yet been baked will not digest properly; it is not absorbed by the limbs of the body to become one's blood and life force. Only once it is fully baked can the body digest and absorb it, turning it into blood, thus becoming truly one with the person.

Likewise, with the soul's nourishment — namely, the Torah — if it has not been "baked" within a person, even if that person studies a great deal of Torah, the Torah remains external to him; it does not unite with him, nor does it impart to him any true vitality. It is comparable to unbaked bread.

But when the Torah is "baked" within a person, it is absorbed by all of his limbs, truly becoming one with him.

Parshat Korach - Insatiable Love for G-D

The fire that bakes physical bread comes from burning wood or gas, but the "fire" that bakes Torah within a person's heart is the fire of love for G-d, the fire of love that is found in every Jew.

Within each and every Jewish heart, there is a hidden, burning flame — an inner love and longing to cleave to G-d.

Even when a person is occupied with worldly matters, his heart still quietly burns with love for G-d and cries out, yearning to cling to Him, and is called "lovesick," as it is written: "Sustain me with clusters of grapes, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick" (Song of Songs 2:5). The verse then continues and says, "I am asleep, yet my heart is awake" (ibid. 5:2).

It is with this hidden, burning love — whose "sparks are fiery sparks, a Divine flame" (ibid. 8:6), continually ignited with the yearning for closeness to Him — that a person can "bake the wheat-bread," namely, the Torah.

When one bakes Torah with the flame of love for G-d, the words of Torah become absorbed within his innermost being, uniting entirely within him.

This is then the meaning of the verse: "Ten women shall bake your bread," which refers allegorically to the Torah, and "in one oven" refers to the warmth of love that springs from contemplating the unity of the world with G-d.

The phrase "ten women" alludes to the ten faculties that are within every Jew's soul: the three faculties of intellect (Chochmah, Binah, Daat) and the seven faculties of emotions (Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzach, Hod, Yesod, Malchut), all ten of which become engaged in this "baking."

The verse continues, "And you shall eat and not be satisfied," in much the same way that "One who loves silver shall never be sated with silver" (Ecclesiastes 5:9). So, too, one's love for the Torah will drive him to immerse in it endlessly, time after time without measure; each time the words

Parshat Korach - The Greatness of Korach

will feel entirely new, and he will never be fully satisfied — he will always yearn for more.

Indeed, this is the greatest blessing one can bestow upon the Jewish people: that their Torah study should truly nourish their souls, thus fulfilling the ultimate goal: "May you behold your World in your lifetime."

After this explanation, let us return to this week's Torah portion.

The Greatness of Korach

Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, known as the "Chozeh (Seer) of Lublin," was from the tribe of Levi and often referred to Korach as "the holy grandfather Korach."¹⁵

Korach possessed many outstanding qualities. He had an illustrious lineage — his forefathers were truly righteous men, as it says: "Korach son of Yitzhar, son of Kehat, son of Levi, son of Israel" (I Chronicles 6:22–23).

He was also extremely wise and astute, as our Sages attest: "Korach was a clever man," ¹⁶ and in addition, he was immensely wealthy.

Most importantly, Korach was privileged to be one of the carriers of the Holy Ark.

Let us elaborate further:

In Parshat Terumah, the Torah details the measurements of the Ark of the Covenant, stating:

"Its length shall be two and a half cubits, its width a cubit and a half, and its height a cubit and a half" (Exodus 25:10).

Further, along the width on each side, there were two poles, which served, as the verse says, "to carry the Ark with them" (ibid. 25.14).

Thus, there was a total width of two and a half cubits between the

^{15. &#}x27;Avnei Zikaron' (p. 12).

^{16.} Bamidbar Rabbah (18:8).

Parshat Korach - Individual Torah Nourishment

poles, and the full length of the Ark spanned this space. The Talmud teaches (Menachot 98b) that the Ark was borne by four Levites — one carrying each end of a pole.

We do not know precisely all of the family members of the Kehat clan who merited the great privilege of carrying the Ark of G-d, but we do know at least one who did: Korach, son of Yitzhar.

As the Midrash says: 17 Korach was a great scholar and one of those who bore the Ark."

Knowing this, the question only further intensifies: How could Korach fail so grievously by falling into a bitter dispute?

Individual Torah Nourishment

In the Book of Proverbs, we find King Solomon's plea before the Creator:

"Two things I ask of You; do not withhold them from me before I die. Keep vanity and lies far from me; do not give me poverty or riches; provide me with my allotted bread" (Proverbs 30:7–8).

The 'Sfat Emet,' Rabbi Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter once explained:¹⁸ The verse states, "Provide me with my allotted bread," and by "bread," the verse refers to the Torah. A person must beg G-d to reveal to him his own personal portion in the Torah — the portion that will leave a lasting imprint and truly nourish his soul, that being the ultimate purpose of the Torah. 19

- 17. Bamidbar Rabbah (18:3).
- 18. Sfat Emet (Parshat Korach, 5648).
- **19.** The verse states: "Speak to the children of Israel and let them take for Me a donation, from every man whose heart so moves him, you shall take My donation" (Exodus 25:2).

Rabbi Yisrael Gutfreund explained ('Even Yisrael,' p. 51): "Every man whose heart so moves him"
— in the particular facet in which a person's heart desires to serve G-d — whether in Torah study or divine service through prayer or through acts of kindness, as well as in whichever area of Torah learning: deep analysis, breadth of knowledge, exploring the plain meaning of matters, or homiletic interpretation —

Parshat Korach - The Fundamental Point: Integration with Others

This is why the Torah is called "bread": just as bread provides nourishment and sustenance to the body, so does the Torah to the soul.

The Mishnah likewise states (Avos 3:17): "If there is no flour, there is no Torah," implying that the ultimate purpose of Torah is to yield spiritual "flour" and nourishment.

Bread and Torah parallel each other — bread is bodily sustenance, and Torah is spiritual sustenance — and in this vein, our Sages instituted (Megillah 21a) that one who is called up to the Torah recites a blessing before the reading and again after the reading, analogous to how one blesses G-d both before and after eating bread.

Similarly, one blesses G-d before Torah study, thanking G-d for granting the opportunity to learn and, after studying, for having received genuine vitality and sustenance from the Torah that has become absorbed into his "bloodstream."

We can now understand Korach's deficiency:

The Torah he learned did not truly nourish his soul; his Torah was never "absorbed" in his body or "baked" in his heart; consequently, it did not satiate him spiritually. Feeling a terrible emptiness inside his soul, he lashed out in discord.

But we must understand: Why did his Torah study fail to satisfy him?

The Fundamental Point: Integration with Others

The 'Sfat Emet' continues to explain:

Korach could not achieve spiritual satisfaction from his

--- Wellsprings of Wisdom 🗫--

precisely in that arena where he feels drawn and inspired, 'from there take My donation' - that is where one must find a way to elevate oneself toward G-d."

This aligns with our Sages' words (Avodah Zarah 19a): "A person can learn Torah effectively only in a place where his heart desires."

Parshat Korach - The Fundamental Point: Integration with Others

Torah because he was unable to integrate and unite himself with the Jewish people, and this lack of integration was the root of his downfall.

Failing to merge and connect wholeheartedly with every Jew prevented the Torah from fully taking root in his heart and nourishing his soul.

The Torah hints at this at the very start of the Parshah, with the words "And Korach took" (Numbers 16:1), which Onkelos translates: "And Korach separated himself."

We have previously discussed at length the importance of integration — of merging with and caring for others.

Every person has a unique inner world and perspective, which may differ from his fellow, and this often leads to differing opinions. But such differences must never degenerate into hatred or bitter conflict. Even if one believes the other is mistaken and wishes to correct him, one must do so only in peaceful, pleasant ways.

Korach's error and awful mistake was the belief that attaining his goal required aggression.

We must learn and internalize that everything in the world deserves our attention and respect — all the more so, another Jew.

Every Jew is like a diamond, and although it may be covered in dirt, it still retains its unparalleled beauty and worth beneath the dust; its value does not depend on external appearances or surroundings.

We must treat every Jew we encounter with this same reverence, recognizing the greatness within each and everyone, and dedicate ourselves to helping him in every way possible.

If the surface seems grimy, we must encourage him to cleanse himself, and if sharp edges remain, we should assist and guide him to polish them away by accessing his inner resources.

This is the true idea of love of a fellow Jew: to value and cherish every Jew regardless of Parshat Korach - A Ladder Ascending to Heaven

who or where they are and to help them to be the best Jew they can be.

Our Sages say (Berachot 10a): "Let sins be annihilated, not the sinners." It is no greatness to love another Jew who does some favor in return — genuine, unconditional love is the highest goal and achievement.

You need not accept every choice another person makes, nor must you teach your children to emulate those choices. Yet you do need to embrace the person himself. Even if you reject a particular group's philosophy, you must not reject them as individuals.

Loving someone does not goading them mean with whatever you think is best for them. Love means to treasure the soul that stands before you, and it requires the utmost sensitivity toward every human being, beginning from your own family and extending to all of mankind.

In other words, this means to rise above our narrow vantage and learn to love and respect all people, their background, matter no upbringing, personality, or temperament.

Having clarified this point, let us return to the explanation of the Mishnah we presented at the outset.

A Ladder Ascending to Heaven

As is well known, throughout one's entire life, a person is incessantly engaged in constructing his spiritual character.

Moment by moment, adds bricks to this edifice, and this is a long and continuous process that lasts until a person's final breath.

Every deed a person performs becomes part of himself another building block of his personality, and in this manner, a person builds and shapes himself, his identity, and his world.

We bring an excerpt from a talk by Rabbi Yochanan Dovid Solomon:20

Parshat Korach - A Ladder Ascending to Heaven

"A person in this world is like a fetus in the process of being formed, gradually building up his body in his mother's womb.

Over nine months, the body takes shape; then, at birth, that body enters a life span of seventy, eighty, or perhaps ninety years, during which it will use the very same body that was formed during those nine months in the womb, prior to its beginning of life in this world.

So it is regarding the soul's existence in the spiritual realm:

A person is destined to live an eternal life in the spiritual world of souls, where it enjoys a spiritual delight so lofty that we cannot even imagine.

The soul, which is meant to absorb this wondrous pleasure in the future, consists of many parts, spiritual "organs" and "tendons," much the same as the physical organs of the physical body in this

world, and the eternal life of the soul depends on the wholeness and soundness of these 'organs.' Only through them can the soul live and receive the full radiance and wondrous pleasure that the Holy One, blessed be He, will bestow upon the souls above.

formation The of these soul-organs can be accomplished only here in this world — and nowhere else. It is impossible in the realm of the World to Come to repair a defect or lack in these organs spiritual that were neglected in this world — just as a 30-year-old man cannot rebuild his decaying and weakened teeth by eating calcium-rich cheese and milk if the damage was caused by poor nutrition during pregnancy."

Returning to the words of the Mishnah, the 'Sfat Emet' explains:²¹

"A dispute for the sake of Heaven that will ultimately endure" is a dispute that ultimately will become a Parshat Korach - A Ladder Ascending to Heaven

vital component in building a person's character.

"One cannot enter a covenant of peace without a preceding conflict, and as the holy Zohar (Pinchas 251b) states: 'Matzah (unleavened bread) alludes to argument and quarrel with the evil inclination, and it afterward becomes a mitzvah.'

Thus, a 'dispute for the sake of Heaven' will ultimately endure — and through the conflict, one eventually arrives at a state of calm and true peace. This, in essence, is the concept of the turbulent weekdays that are followed by the day of Shabbat, the day of rest.

This is what our Sages say (Berachot 5a): 'A person should

always incite his good inclination against his evil inclination; if he then overcomes it, good. If not, him recite the Shema,' meaning that even if one does not wholly prevail in his battle against the evil inclination, nevertheless, by engaging with it in dispute, he will merit at a later point in time rest and closeness to G-d — for no person is without a moment of grace, when he will benefit from the merit of having struggled and fought evil."

By contrast, a dispute not for the sake of Heaven will not endure; it brings no benefit in building a person's character. On the contrary, it brings about a deficiency that may never be healed.

May G-d grant us only to experience peace and unity forever.

Parshat Korach - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. In His abundant mercy, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave us His Torah and beseeched us: "I have given you a good teaching; do not forsake My Torah."

Thus, every Jew must maintain a connection to Torah study — each according to his time, responsibilities, and daily tasks.

- 2. Every Jew has a unique share in the Torah, a part that belongs to him personally. One must pray to G-d to merit finding their personal portion in the Torah, and by doing so, one will attain their ideal and proper spiritual level.
- 3. One's Torah study should be permeated with the love of G-d. Through this, the Torah study becomes engraved into his heart, absorbed in his limbs, and nourishes his soul thus enabling true closeness to G-d.
- 4. Torah scholars are the ones who illuminate this world, and it is in their merit that the world stands. One must, therefore, be extremely careful not to harm or otherwise offend Torah scholars.

Someone who tries to remove them from their position or hamper their efforts is like a person whose vertebra has become dislodged even the slightest — enough to paralyze them and confine them to a lifetime in a wheelchair, G-d forbid.

5. The only true protection over the Jewish people dwelling in the land of Israel, surrounded by hostile nations thirsting for their blood, is the Torah studied by the yeshivah students and the young married scholars, the Tikkun Chatzot (midnight prayers) they recite, the Talmud they study, the Torah responsa they author, and the prayers they raise.

These, and only these, stand by all of the people of Israel in difficult times and instill dread and fear in all of our enemies who contemplate raising a hand against us, G-d forbid.

6. When the Jewish people follow the righteous path and cleave to the true tzaddikim who engage in Torah and prayer day and night, a great fear falls upon the nations who are our enemies, preventing them from carrying out their schemes against us, Heaven forfend.

Sometimes, people portray Torah scholars and yeshivah students as a small, narrow-minded group; worse still, some label them as "freeloaders" and "parasites" who do not share in the burden of society. This is both wrong and inaccurate; woe to those who harbor such sordid ideas.

Parshat Korach - Summary and Practical Conclusions

Indeed, the very life, breath, and livelihood of everyone in the country and the world exist solely by virtue of those who study the Torah.

Torah scholars are the Almighty's "army" and are those who connect all of us directly to our source of life.

Shabbat Shalom!



Yarom V'Nisa

New! the fourth volume in the ffset

talks and essays from the our father

Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Ztz"l

on the weekly Torah Portion





Southern Branch: 666 HaKatzir St. Netivot **Northern Branch:** 6 HaMaginim St. Kiryat Ata www.hameir-laarets.org.il

+1 (954) 800-6526



0

Shabbat Times **Korach**

2nd of Tammuz ,5785

	Candle	Shabbat	Rabbeinu
City	Lighting	Ends	Tam
New York	8:13 pm	9:22 pm	9:43 pm
Miami	7:58 pm	8:55 pm	9:28 pm
Los Angeles	7:51 pm	8:53 pm	9:21 pm
Montreal	8:29 pm	9:45 pm	9:59 pm
Toronto	8:45 pm	9:58 pm	10:15 pm
London	9:04 pm	10:36 pm	10:33 pm
Jerusalem	7:34 pm	8:24 pm	9:20 pm
Tel Aviv	7:31 pm	8:22 pm	9:17 pm
Haifa	7:32 pm	8:26 pm	9:22 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:29 pm	8:22 pm	9:17 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of

HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

One's heart must always be pure. If one has the thought to harm another person, they must immediately stop themselves, and refrain from it.

Just like one would not want others to think the same about them, such thoughts about other must be firmly distanced and pushed away.

One who behaves in this proper manner, G-d erases in turn the evil thoughts of their enemies.



Become a Partner!

For Donations:
American Friends of Netivot Inc
980 Broadway St 336 Thornwood, NY 10594
PCSB Bank

Routing-#221970980 Checking-5151000774 Or Visit: Hameir-Laarets.org.il/Donate

+1 (954) 800-6526

RECOGNIZED BY THE IRS AS A 501(c)(3)

TAX DEDUCTIBLE ORGANIZATION



Receive Mesilot Weekly Anywhere Worldwide!

- Free of Charge -

Join Now!



Ask The Rabbil

Your Synagogue!



Media

hameir-laarets.org.il/en @





054-870-8737 (

en@h-l.org.il @





















