



# TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Korach

June 26, 2020

## A Taste of Torah

### Take It All In

by Rabbi Nesanel Kipper

The famed historic *machlokes* (dispute) between Korach and Moshe makes its appearance at the outset of this week's parsha. The Torah describes how Korach mobilized various members of the Bnai Yisrael to join him in his fight. He then stood before Moshe and demanded an explanation as to why Moshe and his brother Aharon considered themselves to be holier than the rest of the Bnai Yisrael, stating "the whole nation is holy" (Korach 17:3). Chazal tell us that Korach's challenge to Moshe and Aharon included a litany of arguments that he presented to Moshe. Among other claims, Korach referenced the mitzvah of *tzitzis*, which states that every four-cornered garment requires a string dyed blue with *techeiles*. He then argued that someone who is wearing a garment that is completely made of *techeiles*-dyed wool is surely not required to also add the *techeiles* string. Korach also argued that a house which contains Torah scrolls should not require a *mezuzah* on its doorpost, as the house is already full of Torah. Seemingly, these are random arguments meant to ridicule Moshe's teaching of the mitzvos.

Rabbi Aharon Lopiansky, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva of Greater Washington, provides a deeper understanding of Korach's position. A person who has made great strides and already lives in a state of *kedusha* (holiness), argued Korach, should not require external agents to enable spiritual growth. This line of reasoning is expressed in Korach's question as to why a garment made entirely of *techeiles* should require additional strings of *techeiles*. Inasmuch as the garment already possesses the desired quality of *techeiles*, an additional external strand is unnecessary – much like the person who has already attained holiness not requiring external elements to foster holiness. By the same token, a house full of Torah scrolls should not require a *mezuzah*. If the house is already full of holy

objects, why should it need an additional holy component on the outside? The entire Jewish People, argued Korach, have attained holiness, and don't need mitzvos of this sort, which are meant to connect a person to another realm that he has not yet incorporated. No, argued Korach, every Jew ought to be able to grow on his own, with the sanctity he has already obtained for himself. This logic extended to the leadership of Moshe and Aharon, as well. What is the purpose of this leadership, said Korach, if not to create a paradigm of greatness toward which the Jewish People could strive? Such a paradigm is unnecessary, as every Jew already has whatever is necessary to achieve maximum greatness.

Having explained Korach's reasoning, it now becomes necessary to understand what was, indeed, the flaw in his logic?

The Medrash teaches that when Korach argued that the rest of the Bnai Yisrael were as holy as Moshe and Aharon, Moshe responded by explaining that just as Hashem created a clear distinction between day and night, and created a clear distinction between the Bnai Yisrael and the nations of the world, so, too, He created a separation between Aharon and the rest of the Bnai Yisrael.

Moshe's response can be understood on a deeper level by gaining a better appreciation of the concept of *havdala*, separation, which Moshe referenced in his response.

When it comes to spiritual development and growth, there is no such thing as remaining stagnant. The Vilna Gaon states that if one is not striving to rise, he will inevitably fall. A person therefore needs to continuously look upwards to greater heights, new goals and loftier levels in his spirituality.

The reality of *havdala*, separation, ensures that there will always be an external model

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## Stories for the Soul

### Taking the Fight Out of the Man

During a visit to Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Shneur Kotler (1918-1982; Rosh Yeshiva of Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood, NJ) became involved in a public project which proved to be somewhat controversial. A certain Rosh Yeshiva (Dean) from Bnai Brak publicly spoke out against Rabbi Kotler for an extended period of time.

Some time later, after Rabbi Kotler had returned to the United States, he was walking in New York when he noticed the aforementioned Rosh Yeshiva across the street. Rabbi Kotler immediately crossed the street and welcomed the man warmly, inquiring as to why the fellow had come to the United States. The Rosh Yeshiva explained that he was raising funds for his yeshiva in Bnai Brak, whereupon Rabbi Kotler insisted that the man stay at his home in Lakewood for Shabbos.

Rabbi Kotler treated his guest royally over that Shabbos, seating him at the eastern wall of the yeshiva during prayers, giving him an *aliya* during the Torah reading, and talking with him as if they were best friends. After Shabbos, Rabbi Kotler sent two students to accompany the Rosh Yeshiva around Lakewood to assist him in raising funds.

As he prepared to depart from the Kotler home, the Rosh Yeshiva turned to Rabbi Kotler and asked him to forgive him for the incident that had occurred months earlier. Rabbi Kotler's response was as calming to the man as it was humble: "What's the problem? You were correct!"

Despite the aggressive behavior of Korach, Dasan and Aviram, Moshe attempted to seek conciliation and avoid escalating the fight they were looking for. It was only after his attempts failed that he had no choice but to fully respond to their attacks, but his initial response was to seek a way to avoid confrontation.

## Kollel Happenings

### KOLLEL CLASSES CONTINUE VIA ZOOM MEETING

The Kollel is continuing many of its classes and offering new classes via Zoom Meeting. You can tune in to live classes online or call in on a phone. For a full schedule and the links and phone numbers to access this treasure trove of Torah, visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

### BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is one of 28 local organizations selected to be part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit [www.denverkollel.org](http://www.denverkollel.org), email [rmh@denverkollel.org](mailto:rmh@denverkollel.org) or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

### HELP BUILD THE FUTURE OF TORAH IN DENVER

Claim your part in building the future of Torah in Denver! The Kollel is in the midst of a capital campaign to build a three-story, state-of-the-art Torah Center that will serve the entire Denver Jewish community. To contribute, or for dedication opportunities and details on the building, visit [denverkollel.org](http://denverkollel.org) or email [info@denverkollel.org](mailto:info@denverkollel.org).

## Parsha Quizzers

The six items below can be found in Rashi's commentary to this week's parsha. Can you figure out where they are? (Answers on bottom)

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) Bad neighbors           | 4) Infusion of life, not just death |
| 2) Shmuel can't save him   | 5) Not for personal use             |
| 3) Brings the whole family | 6) Just like <i>terumah</i>         |

## Lives of Our Torah Leaders

### Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael - Part X

Around this time, the three synagogues of Amsterdam reorganized, and there is speculation that Rabbi Menashe may have lost his position as the rabbi of Neveh Shalom in the process.

Due to his financial hardship, Rabbi

Menashe made plans to emigrate to Brazil, where his brother-in-law lived. Rabbi Menashe had a joint business venture with his brother-in-law in Brazil, and it is possible he planned on pursuing that and other business opportunities in that part of the world.

## A Taste of Torah

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of spiritual excellence that one has not yet achieved. This translates into the existence of people who are on a higher spiritual plane than others, who serve as a model for others to follow. This is what enables a person to aim higher and continue to grow. If all people existed on an equal spiritual plane, a dangerous reality of complacency would be created, where there would be no desire or motivation to grow further. As much potential as one may have locked within, a separate, external vision of greater achievement must exist to spur a person onward.

This is the error in Korach's argument. The garment may be full of *techeiles*, and the house full of Torah, but it still needs an external item to symbolize that there is more beyond its own existence to strive for in spiritual greatness and holiness.

This concept of *havdala* can also be utilized in the negative sense, in the form of *kinah*, jealousy. The essence of jealousy is looking outwards at others, recognizing a gap between oneself and what another person possesses and pining for what the other person has, be it in material or even spiritual wealth. However, there is positive

jealousy, as well; the recognition that there are greater heights still waiting to be scaled, and the resultant desire to climb higher in Torah and mitzvos. This type of jealousy is a lofty ideal when utilized to recognize that one still has much greatness to still strive for. Indeed, our Sages teach us that *kinas sofrim tarbeh chochma*, the jealousy of scholars increases knowledge. This teaching makes clear the positive effect of recognizing others' spiritual greatness and aspiring to also strive to greater heights and realize one's own great potential.

Despite Korach's insistence that everyone was equal, our Sages teach us deep down, Korach himself had his eye on becoming the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest), which was Aharon's position. Korach not only failed to properly understand the concept of *havdala*, he related to the concept of *havdala* through negative jealousy and a desire for power, and that is what ultimately led to his downfall.

May we all merit to recognize the greatness in each other and constantly set, and reach, new heights in our growth in Torah and mitzvos.

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|---|--|
| 1) Bad neighbors 16:1 s.v. <i>viD'asav</i>            | 4) Infusion of life, not just death 17:13 s.v.           |
| 2) Shmuel can't save him 16:7 s.v. <i>rau</i>         | 5) Not for personal use 18:6 s.v. <i>l'achem</i>         |
| 3) Brings the whole family 16:27 s.v. <i>unsh'hem</i> | 6) Just like <i>terumah</i> 18:27 s.v. <i>v'nechshav</i> |

## Parsha Quizzers - Answers