



Parsha Perspectives

RABBI ELAZAR MEISELS

ויקה קרח... ודתן ואבירם... חמישים ומאתיים נשיאי עדה
קריאי מועד אנשי שם ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרון

"Korach... and Dathan (Dathan) and Aviram (Abiram), took 250 men, princes of the congregation... men of renown. And they gathered against Moses and Aaron and said, 'You take too much upon yourselves.'" (Numbers 16:1-3)

The Jewish nation was in its infancy. Positions of responsibility were being assigned to various tribes, families, and individuals, but one man was unhappy. Korach (Korah), who hailed from the Kehothites, a prominent family of Levites, felt that he deserved better. Sure, the Kehothites were awarded the privilege of carrying the holiest items from the Tabernacle on their shoulders, but this was not enough for Korach. He felt that he, by virtue of his age, should have been given overall managerial duties.

A young man from a wealthy family was preparing to graduate college. Knowing there was nothing his dad couldn't afford, the young man informed his father that an appropriate gift to mark the occasion would be a beautiful sports car that he had long admired. Graduation day approached, and with unconcealed enthusiasm the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally the day came. After a grand ceremony, his father told him how much he loved him and handed him a beautifully wrapped gift box. The young man tore off the wrapping, opened the box, and found a leather-bound photo album containing pictures of him at every stage of his life. Hardly taking the time to look through the album, the young man yelled, "With all your money, this is the best you could do?" He stormed out of the house. He rarely called his father after that and never visited him. He refused to make peace with his disappointment over what

had happened on graduation day.

The young man grew to become a parent. One day, before his own daughter's eighth grade graduation, she asked to visit her grandfather, whom she had never seen before. He began to make arrangements but in the interim received a telegram informing him that his father had passed away and had willed all his possessions to him. When he searched through his father's important papers, he discovered the still-new photo album. As he turned the pages, his childhood passed before his eyes. When he came to the final page, which was blank, he realized it was supposed to have been filled with pictures of his graduation. Instead, there was an unopened envelope. He opened it up, and a car key dropped out. There was a tag with the date of his graduation and the words "paid in full."

Korach may not have had it all, but he

certainly had been granted an incredible opportunity to serve in the capacity of a Levite. Had he accepted his role, he would have ranked among the leading families in Israel and enjoyed immense respect and adulation. Instead, his legacy is that of a miscreant and rabble-rouser who chose to focus on the packaging, never taking the time to examine his gifts.

We do not have to repeat Korach's mistake. G-d truly loves us and wants us to be happy. We can feel confident that just because something is not packaged the way we expect it does not mean that it is not a gift.

Rabbi Meisels can be reached at
parsha@partnersintorah.org

WORD of the WEEK

קטרת

"And they shall take their pans and place upon them קטרת — ketoret — incense" (Numbers 16:17). Rabbi David Kimchi (Sefer Shorashim) relates קטרת — קיטור — smoke. Similarly the verb מקטר — mekater (Exodus 30:1) means to make smoke (Rashi) or to burn (Targum Yonatan). The Zohar (1:230a), possibly based on the phonetic similarity, connects קטרת to קשר — tie or connect. The Zohar sees the incense of the Temple as something tying heaven and earth together, and as something that serves to join the attributes of justice and mercy (Raya Meheimnah 3:224a).

Table Talk FOR DISCUSSION AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

As a punishment for his rebellion, Korach and his followers were swallowed alive by the ground.

נ) Judaism teaches that people are punished for their sins “measure-for-measure.” In what way was Korach’s punishment specifically appropriate for his crime of rebelling against Moses and Aaron?

ב) Until now, whenever the Jewish people sinned, such as with the golden calf and the spies, Moses always prayed to G-d that they be forgiven. Why didn’t Moses pray that Korach and his followers should repent and be forgiven as he had done previously?

HEY, I NEVER KNEW THAT!

After Korach’s rebellion, G-d commanded the Jews to cover the Altar with the incense pans of the rebels, so that “it shall not occur again like Korach” (Numbers 17:5). Rashi understands this as a consequence — “so that this will not occur again.” The Talmud translates the verse as “do not be like Korach” — a Biblical prohibition against inciting a dispute (Sanhedrin 110a). Some believe that the prohibition against being like Korach is rabbinic in nature, and that the simple meaning of the verse is in accordance with Rashi (Nachmanides, Meiri). However, Rabbi Moshe of Coucy (*Semag*, Negatives 157) and Rabbeinu Yonah (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 3:58) maintain that there is a biblical commandment against inciting discord and creating disputes. The Chofetz Chaim rules that if, through one’s gossip, one creates or encourages an argument, one has transgressed this commandment. The gossip transgresses regardless of whether the information is true or false, and even one who listens also transgresses (*Chofetz Chaim*, Introduction, Negatives, Be’er Mayim Chaim 12).

A QUESTION FOR THE RABBIS

You too shall take tithes...” (Numbers 18:28). The Talmud derives from here that “the agent of a person is like the person himself” (Kidushin 41b). This means that one can appoint an agent to give charity, tithe produce, betroth, or divorce, etc. Why may the above commandments be performed through an agent, but not commandments such as *tefillin*, matzah, and sukkah? One answer is that when the agent performs an action for someone, it is as though the sender has performed the action himself, and therefore only commandments that require an *action* may be performed by the agent. However, the agent never becomes the person himself and is not considered as his body. Thus, when the agent puts on *tefillin*, it is indeed as though the sender performed the action, but, in the end, the *tefillin* are on the wrong body and so, he does not fulfill the commandment (*Ketzot Hachoshen* 182:1).



PARTNERS IN TORAH

A DIVISION OF TORAH UMESORAH

Rabbi Eli Gewirtz, National Director
Mrs. Shoshana Schwartz, Editor
Rabbi Mordechai Becher, Contributor

For information call **800-STUDY-4-2** or email **INFO@PARTNERSINTORAH.ORG**

Distributed in UK by **Phone and Learn (PaL)**, a division of Partners in Torah
WWW.PHONEANDLEARN.ORG – **0800 055 3276**

LOOK *who made* PARTNER!

STEVE PRICE, *Benjamin*, PA (Partner # 48,562)

YELENA MOROSHEK, *Minneapolis*, MN (#45,784)

GOLDIE SILVER, *Ottawa*, ON (#45,731)

ELYSE SCHUNKEWITZ, *Monteville*, NJ (#45,372)

JENNY SALMAN, *Brooklyn*, NY (#44,271)

SIGN UP TODAY: www.partnersintorah.org/signup OR CALL: 1-800-STUDY-4-2
MAKING PARTNER HAS NEVER BEEN THIS EASY!

STUDY ANY JEWISH TOPIC OVER THE PHONE OR IN PERSON WITH A KNOWLEDGEABLE, CAREFULLY SELECTED PERSONAL TORAH TRAINER.

TO POST COMMENTS ON THIS PARSHA SHEET, VISIT US AT: partnersintorah.org/parsha-partner/korach5772#comments