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Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

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MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Wealth Is Stored For Its Owner For His Detriment

"Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehot son of Levi separated himself" (Bamidbar 16:1)

The Gemara asks (Sanhedrin 109b) what does 'separated himself' mean? Raish Lakish says Korach obtained a bad acquisition. Rashi writes that he took himself to one side to be separated from the congregation, to cause a stir about the priesthood. Unkelos also translates "separated himself" as "Korach cut himself off", he detached himself from the rest of the congregation to maintain a dispute.

Every Jewish neshama contains within it part of all the other neshamot of Am Yisrael, for all originate from one source. The influence of a single person has an enormous effect on the entire nation. This is especially true for the Bnei Torah who sit and occupy themselves by delving into Hashem's Torah. A great responsibility rests on their shoulders, for they are connected and intertwined with the rest of Am Yisrael, in whatever respect they find themselves. Through toiling in Torah they are endowed with a colossal power, affording others the strength to increase their mitzvah observance and Torah study.

This was Korach's problem. Despite the fact that he was one of the eminent people who carried the Aron and was also a Navi, since he took himself aside and separated himself from the congregation, his neshama was no longer included among the rest of the population. He relinquished responsibility for society as a whole, and so the merit of belonging no longer assisted him. Thus it came to be that he was uprooted from the world and lost everything.

The entire episode of Korach is surprising for he was no average individual. Chazal (Midrash Tanchuma) tell us that Korach was a very wise person and was one of the chosen ones who carried the Aron, as it says "And to the sons of Kehat he did not give; since the sacred service was upon them, they carried on the shoulder" (Bamidbar 7:9). The holy Arizal says that the last letters of the words 'צדיק בתמר יפרח' ("a righteous man shall flourish like a date palm") spell 'קרח'. Korach was a tzaddik, and this being the case we need to comprehend how he fell to such a low level where he gathered people together to argue with Hashem and His chosen ones, and to incite the whole nation against Moshe and Ahron. Korach did not lack anything, both wealth and honor were his lot, as the Gemara says (Pesachim 119a), "Rabbi Levi says, the keys to Korach's treasury were equal to the load of three hundred white donkeys." So what brought him to speak negatively about Moshe and Ahron, including lashon hara and rechilut?

We also need to understand – if Korach was indeed so wicked, why did Hashem bless him with such great wealth? What was the purpose of this gift?

Taking a look at the source of Korach's great wealth will shed light on these difficulties. The Gemara says (Pesachim 119a): "Rabbi Chama Bar Chanina says, Yo-

sef hid three treasures in Egypt and one was revealed to Korach." I would like to suggest, with s"d, that since Hashem knew that Korach possessed the very negative trait of jealousy, in order to uproot this trait and help him correct his bad middot, Hashem gave him wealth from the treasuries of Yosef Hatzaddik. What would this achieve? Through contemplating his wealth, he will be reminded of Yosef's righteousness and upright middot. Even though Yosef's brothers were jealous of him, as we are told (Bereishit 37:11): "So his brothers were jealous of him" and embittered his life and sent him down to Egypt – nevertheless he did not repay them with bad and instead behaved towards them with kindness and mercy. In addition, he was also not jealous of the kingship of Yehuda, and did not request greatness and honor for himself. He behaved with submission and treated everyone as an equal; he spoke to them with love, affection and brotherhood.

Hashem had mercy on Korach and blessed him with wealth from the treasuries of Yosef HaTzaddik, so that he should remember Yosef's righteousness and learn from his good middot. The idea was that this would help to uproot his embedded trait of jealousy and would enable him to rectify his middot. But unfortunately Korach did not use the opportunity to learn this lesson from his wealth, because his jealousy overpowered him.

Chazal tell us (Avot 4:21) "Jealousy, lust and glory remove a man from the world". The Gemara tells us (Sanhedrin 119a) that wealth is stored for its owner for his detriment – Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: This refers to the wealth of Korach because he wasn't wise to pay attention to Yosef Hatzaddik's way of life and did not take the opportunity to learn humility from him; to stay far away from pride and jealousy. This is how he fell to the lowest level and incited and fought against Moshe and Ahron. And what happened in the end? "They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit; the earth covered them over and they were lost from among the congregation" (Bamidbar 16:33).

This is what Chazal mean by saying that he obtained a bad acquisition; it was if he took and stole money that he didn't deserve. The main purpose of the wealth with which he was blessed was to give him a chance to rectify his middot, through contemplating the ways of Yosef Hatzaddik. Had he done so this wealth would justifiably have been his. But since he was jealous of Moshe and Ahron and did not correct this trait, it was considered as if these riches were stolen goods and had been taken in theft. For this reason, it is written that he had obtained a bad acquisition for himself, an acquisition of dishonesty and unscrupulousness.

May it be Hashem's will that we merit rectifying our middot and straightening our path by distancing ourselves from negative traits such as jealousy and honor, and instead crown ourselves with upright middot, Amen v'Amen.

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Hilula

3 - Rabbi Shneur Kotler, Rosh Yeshiva of Lakewood

5 - Rabbi Tzalach Cohen Zangi

6 - Rabbi Chaim Deliroza, author of 'Torat Chaim'

7 - Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, the Admor of Gur

8 - Rabbi Chaim of Shash

9 - Rabbi Yekutiël Yehuda Halberstam, the Admor of Sanz

2 Tamouz, Rabbi Yosef Benuaid



Walking in their Ways

Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v' Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit'a

A Productive Investment

A few days before I was scheduled to travel to the States, my trusted secretary and escort's wife called me up. She complained of recent extreme exhaustion. The family was also in the midst of moving. The tension of not feeling well, coupled with the frenzy of the move, caused her house to become one huge pressure cooker, a recipe for discomfort and discord. She asked for my blessing.

I felt bad for this woman. She was sacrificing so much to allow her husband to accompany me on my upcoming trip. I offered a silent prayer that Hashem put the proper words in my mouth to encourage her and bring her a measure of hope.

This is what I said, "It is true that you are undergoing a difficult time right now. You are forced to contend with various hardships, from within and without. But you should know that your difficulties are miniscule in comparison to those of others. There are countless women who plead for children. Homeless individuals die of hunger. Terrible illnesses kill people. A woman was just here, asking for a blessing, for her doctors had discovered a malignant growth on her neck, rachmana litzlan. Your troubles are cause for distress, but they can be resolved. They shrink in proportion to those of others, less fortunate than you."

I continued in this vein, constantly returning to the case of the woman with the growth on her neck. She had eventually calmed down and went home.

A few days later, as my secretary and I were making our way to the plane, I noticed that he looked disturbed. I asked what was bothering him.

"Two days ago, my wife suddenly felt a bulge in her neck. Very much afraid, she rushed to the doctor. The doctor, more worried than she, sent her to take a series of tests. I am afraid of the results."

I calmed him down and said that his wife had no neck problem whatsoever. He was appeased and the shadow of smile appeared on his lips.

The time for our flight arrived. With calm hearts, we boarded the plane. At that very time, his wife was taking the tests she had been prescribed. A biopsy was taken in order to ascertain the status of the growth. With the help of Heaven, everything came back clear. Her fears allayed, the woman was sent home, in perfect health.

She immediately phoned her husband and emotionally told him that she was well.

Of course, I shared their happiness, and I told my secretary, "This is in the merit of those who support Torah. When one upholds the tree of life, he enjoys the fruits of his labors."



Words of our Sages

Who Took Note of the Child Who Read the Ketubah?

"That he not be like Korach and his assembly" (Bamidbar 17:5)

Parshat Korach serves as a practical lesson time and again; it is applicable whenever strife rages like a rampant fire in a field of thorns, fueled by a bed of bad middot, jealousy and greed. The Torah warns us about this so that we shouldn't be swayed to behave with negative middot; so that G-d forbid we should not join the students of Korach and his assembly.

In this column we will bring (from the sefer 'Bechol Nafshecha') several anecdotes about the Rosh Yeshiva of Mir, the Gaon Rabbi Natan Tzvi Finkel zt"l, whose broad shoulders carried the responsibility for the spiritual and physical welfare of thousands of yeshiva students. With his saintly personality he understood how to walk between the drops and act with ingenuity so that his deeds should not be the cause of any chillul Hashem.

Due to the large number of students learning in the Mir yeshiva in Yerushalayim, it became necessary to rent apartments in the 'Beit Yisrael' neighborhood.

The Rosh Yeshiva pointed out to those seeking apartments that they must be careful not to cause current tenants to be sent away, which could result if they would offer the landlord a higher sum than the present tenants were paying.

HaRav Natan Tzvi zt"l held that there was no way that a Ben Torah could succeed in his Torah learning, if his presence in Yeshiva had caused a family to have to search for a new home. The pain and friction that would result from this arrangement would simply be the fruit of the evil inclination who wishes to penetrate the walls of the Beit Midrash and poison the atmosphere with arguments and strife.

The following story is yet another demonstration of the extent to which Harav Natan Tzvi zt"l was careful not to cause pain to any Jew, and shows his degree of sensitivity to the feelings of others.

At a certain wedding ceremony that the Rosh Yeshiva zt"l attended, a doubt arose as to whether one of the names written in the ketubah (marriage contract) was legible. They decided to call upon a young child to read the name, and determine accordingly. The child pronounced the name according to his perception, which resulted in further debate. In the middle of the heated discussion, the Rosh Yeshiva noticed that the young child, who did not understand exactly what was going on, looked self-conscious; he felt that he was the focus of the argument.

With his sensitivity and ingenuity, the Rosh Yeshiva took a coin out of his pocket, gave it to the child and told him, "You did a fine job!"

The Haftarah

"And Shmuel said" (Shmuel I 11:12)

The connection to the parsha: The haftarah tells about the Jewish people who requested that Shmuel anoint a king over them, whereas the parsha relates the episode of Korach rebelling against Moshe Rabbeinu a"h and requesting greatness for himself.

The haftarah also mentions that Shmuel asked: "Whose ox have I taken?" The parsha mentions a similar statement said by Moshe Rabbeinu a"h: "I have not taken even a single donkey of theirs".



Guard Your Tongue

Excessive Praise

One who praises a person in a situation where it is clear that the listeners will not disparage the subject, for example if they are not familiar with him, it is permissible to praise this person even in public, as long as the praise is not excessive.



Pearls of the Parshah

"Blessed are You...for having made me a Kohen"

"And whomever He will choose, He will draw close to Himself" (Bamidbar 16:5)

Rabbi Tzaddok of Lublin poses a difficulty:

Why do Kohanim not recite a daily blessing "for having made me a Kohen", just as a man recites the blessing "for not having made me a woman"?

The Admor Rabbi Avraham Mordechai of Gur answers:

The mechilta teaches us that before the Bnei Yisrael sinned with the Golden Calf, they were all fitting to be Kohanim, as it says "You shall be to Me a kingdom of ministers" (Exodus 19:6). It was the sin that resulted in the Kohanim alone being chosen to perform the holy service. So if a Kohen would recite the blessing "for having made me a Kohen", this could be considered as if he were using the disgrace of his friend for his own honor...

The Decree Will Not Affect Them

"Separate yourselves from amid this assembly" (Bamidbar 16:21)

To whom was the warning "separate yourselves" directed?

Rabbeinu Chaim Ben Attar zya"a, explains that the warning was not directed to Moshe and Ahron, for they would not be affected by the judgment even if they were amid the assembly. Rather, it was said to the tzaddikim, Yehoshua and Kalev, and others of that stature, and also to the families of Moshe and Ahron.

This is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: "I shall destroy them in an instant". The decree on the entire generation had already been pronounced (as a result of the sin of the spies) but at the time Moshe Rabbeinu's prayers eased the decree that they shouldn't all die at once, but rather over a long period of time. Yet after they sinned now once again, the decree was renewed, since the Satan accuses during a time of danger.

It Will not be Forgotten from the Heart

"They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit; the earth covered them over and they were lost from among the congregation" (Bamidbar 16:32)

The fact that Korach was punished for his incitement against Hashem's anointed one with such an unusual and strange death, demands an explanation. The earth swallowing a person alive is not one of the four death-penalties that are described in the Torah so what was the reason for Korach being punished in this extraordinary way?

Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Khrol zt"l cites a wonderful explanation, based on the Chazal "It is decreed on the dead that he will be forgotten from the heart".

Since the Torah wished that all future generations should learn a lesson from what happened to Korach concerning the importance of staying far away from machloket, Korach had to be punished in a way that he would never be forgotten. This is why he had to be swallowed alive in the ground.

Treasures

*Based on the teachings of
Moreinu v' Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita*



Korach's Thoughts of Regret

Chazal say (Baba Basra 74a) concerning Korach: **"In the future there is hope for his end and he will merit the World to Come."**

The holy Arizal zya"a cites the verse in Tehillim (92:13) "כְּתִמְרֵי יַפְרֹחַ" ("A righteous man will flourish like a date palm") as a reference to Korach. The last letter of each word spells "קרח", which teaches us that in his final moments he repented.

This can be understood according to the fact that just as his sons didn't die because they repented, so too Korach repented. It could be that exactly at those seconds that the earth opened its mouth to swallow him, he entertained thoughts of regret about his deeds, but it was already too late.

It seems likely that these thoughts of repentance came to him on account of his children, for Chazal tell us (Yalkut Shimon Korach 752): "What merit did Korach's sons possess that they were saved? When they sat by Korach, their father, they suddenly saw Moshe Rabbeinu and immediately buried their faces in the ground. They said, if we stand up in honor of Moshe Rabbeinu, this will be a sign of disrespect for our father and we have been commanded to honor our parents. However, if we don't stand up we will be violating 'In the presence of an old person shall you rise.....' (Vayikra 19:32). It is better that we should rise in the presence of Moshe Rabbeinu, even though this shows disrespect to our father. At that moment they entertained thoughts of repentance and about them David Hamelech a"h says (Tehillim 45:2) 'My heart is astir with a good theme'."

This shows without any doubt that when Korach saw how his sons were burying their faces in the ground and debating how to behave – and in the end they chose the honor of Moshe Rabbeinu over the honor of their father, this deed instilled thoughts of great regret in Korach's heart. He too wished to repent, for the extent of their correct conduct made him uncomfortable. However, it was hard for him to overcome his desire for honor and pride.

But once he saw that "the evil decree has become final"; his fate was decided and in another moment the ground will open its mouth – at that moment his thoughts of repentance intensified. But it was already too late and the ground swallowed him because of the great chilul Hashem that he caused.

In addition, he had the decree of Moshe Rabbeinu, the gadol hador, hanging over him. Moshe Rabbeinu decreed that Hashem should punish him with a completely new punishment, so that the world should know that Hashem had appointed him and he had not taken this position for himself, as Korach fabricated about him. Therefore, Hashem had to punish Korach immediately so that the entire world should hear and be afraid. But in the future Hashem will accept his repentance and he will merit the World to Come. Chana was referring to Korach when she prophesied "Hashem brings death and gives life, He lowers to the grave and raises up".



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'

In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

"She discerns that her enterprise is good - so her lamp is not snuffed out by night"

Chazal tell us that this verse refers to Chana the prophetess. In the merit of her supplication in the mishkan, she merited giving birth to Shmuel HaNavi, as the Midrash says "'She discerns that her enterprise is good', this refers to Chana who discerned the taste of prayer, as it says 'Then Chana prayed and said: My pride has been raised through Hashem...' Therefore, she merited a son who was a partner to Moshe and Ahron, who lit up Israel like lamps, as it says 'Moshe and Ahron were among His priests, and Shmuel among those who invoke His Name' (Tehillim 99:6). It is also written about Shmuel 'The lamp of Hashem had not yet gone out, and Shmuel was lying in the Temple of Hashem' (Shmuel I, 3:3)."

This is the significance of why Chazal determined the main laws of the Shemoneh Esrei prayer, which is the most important of the daily prayers, according to the behavior of Chana, when she beseeched Hashem to merit a child. Herein lies a lesson for all generations, a clear message about the power of a woman's prayers and deeds through which she can merit raising a house of Torah and derive pleasure from blessed and upright generations.

One of the esteemed ba'alei teshuvah of our generation stood outside the yeshiva study hall, totally overcome. He couldn't fathom what had suddenly brought him to return to his roots after so many years of distance from anything Jewish. As he turns the pages of his album of family pictures he thinks to himself, "How did it come to be that after generations of a life of assimilation, I am sitting here by the table and learning Gemara, Rashi and Tosfot with my precious children? (In fact, he wasn't the only one to be faced with this perplexing idea. Many of those who merit returning to a life of Torah and Mitzvot cannot understand how this phenomenon occurs.)"

He broached his question to Maran HaGaon HaRav Elazar Menachem Mann Shach zt"l.

Maran Harav Shach thought for a moment, shuddered and replied emotionally:

"Savta, it is the tears of Savta! There, opposite the Shabbat candles, when she stood with her face covered by her hands and silently begged and prayed "Privilege me to raise children and grandchildren who are wise and understanding, who love Hashem and fear G-d..." those tears never go to waste. They contain the power to have an effect even many years later and are the cause of her offspring returning to their roots..."

When Harav Shach zt"l was once asked by a talmid how one merits great children? He replied in short: "With a great mother..."

In the same vein, in one of the sefarim of the Mashgiach HaRav Wolbe zt"l, in the chapter where he delves into the depths of tefillah and explains this subject exhaustively, he finds it in place to reveal a personal disclosure:

"I am convinced that if I achieved anything in Torah, it is in the merit of my mother's prayers- I noticed that she would pray for me even ten times a day."

She Confers Educational Values

In addition to the power of the prayers and tears of a Jewish mother, we know that a woman is blessed with binah veterah, a particular wisdom. Chazal say "The wife intuits her guests more than the husband". It is not incidental that we told about the Gaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger zya"n, that he would sit with his wife and deliberate matters of yirat shamayim with her until midnight.

Starting with the Avot and Imahot, we find that Avraham and Sarah pondered the correct way to deal with Yishmael. Chazal say that there was deliberation between them, until Hashem said to Avraham "Whatever Sarah tells you, heed her voice". The extent to which the Torah emphasizes the mother's influence on the formation of the Jewish nation is clear. Who was the one who said "Drive out this slave woman with her son"? Sarah Imeinu. And Hashem said to Avraham "heed her voice" - listen to her ruach hakodesh (divine inspiration).

The singular strength that a woman possesses and the extent to which her opinion is accorded respect by Chazal, is expressed clearly in the words of Rabbi Moshe Bar Yosef of Tehrani (the 'Mabit, in his sefer 'Beit Elokim'). He attributes the 'force of attraction' to the woman and compares this strength to water which draws everything towards it.

The waters from which the Jewish people drank during their forty years in the desert were based on this foundation. They were blessed with water in the merit of the Well of Miriam. There is a famous question: Why was the water chosen to be given in her merit?! There are several explanations but what is relevant to our discussion is that water too is endowed with the force of attraction. It is the water in a person's body that carries the food that we ingest to all corners of the body. Water accounts for seventy percent of a person's physical make up. It absorbs the nutrients of the digested food and carries them along one hundred and twenty thousand kilometers of blood vessels, a person's life force.

The Jewish woman is the one who draws on the foundations of spirituality that her husband brings home from the Beit Midrash, and through her sensitivity and intuition, imparts educational values to her children, who are our future.