



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ל סיון תשע"ז - קרח - 24th June 2017 - Volume 9 - Issue 47

News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazal Tov to Mr & Mrs Malcolm Fagleman on the engagement of their daughter Hadassah to Hudi Scherer.

Kiddush This Shabbos

There will be a Kiddush after Davenning this Shabbos which is co-sponsored by Mr Rafi Green and Mr Frenchie Freedman in honour of the Yahrzeit next week of their respective fathers.

Girls Rosh Chodesh Group Is Back

We look forward to welcoming Girls year 5+ this Sunday, 25 June from 5.30 to 7.00pm to celebrate the Bas Mitzvahs of all our Shul friends. There will be Fun for all with a Chinese auction, hotdogs, latkes and of course cream cakes. Donation £5.

Silence

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all the people who were with Korach, and the entire wealth. (Bamidbar 16:32)

Somebody once asked Rabbi Avigdor Miller ztl. Why the "mouth" of the earth swallowed up Korach and his company and in a heartbeat he responded, "Because he opened up his big mouth, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed him up!"

So we know Korach had done something terribly wrong with his mouth. He spoke against Moshe convincingly and he managed to sway the hearts of not less than two hundred and fifty others. He publically and brazenly challenged Moshe and yes the very veracity of the Torah and was visited with a punishment Mida Knegegda Mida-Measure for Measure. Therefore the mouth of the earth swallowed him up. There may be another dimension of the "Measure for Measure" factor at play here.

The Mishne in Pirke Avos (1:17) states, "Shimon his son (of Raban Gamliel) says, "All my days I have been raised among the Sages and I have found nothing better for the body than silence, not study but practice is the main thing; everyone who talks excessively brings on sin." The Maharal wonders why the Mishne does not declare that silence is beneficial for the person. Why is it good for the body?

The Maharal explains that speech is not necessarily a purely rational process. Both the physical body and the G-dly intellect like some banana republic are constantly competing for control of the communication system. Whoever or whichever force dominates the propaganda machinery, namely the power of speech, that one is victorious, for now, over the entirety of the system.

Now there is a way there is a way to discern which is dominant and there is a way to manage the outcome of that battle for the human spirit. Remaining quiet is almost a guarantee that when one speaks, it's likely the intellect that has turned on and is giving voice.

On the other hand if one is talking excessively it is likely the body and the world of emotions is dominant and expressing itself. Therefore the body is invited as a quiet partner. The more it can remain still and

calm the greater the likelihood the Divine spirit has a chance to be heard. That is the victory we seek.

An obvious follow up question could be asked on Rabbi Miller's answer about the mouth of the earth swallowing up Korach because he opened up his big mouth. Why the earth?! Why did the heavenly domain not open a mouth pull him up and out?

Perhaps we can say that following the same line of Mida Knegegda Mida -Measure for Measure that the earth swallowing him was indicative that it was his earthiness was that speaking the whole time. He had many intellectual and high minded reasons why the Jewish People did not need leaders unless of course he was the leader.

He was able to convince mighty minds of the correctness of his opinions. He did a lot of talking. He spoke of the loftiest ideals, but his intellect was being hijacked and employed in the service of his earthy personality.

A person in such a state is like a dog barking, but a dog with a rich vocabulary. We all know what Woofy wants. It could only be one of three or four things that cause him to howl so. He may be ashamed to say it out loud or even admit it to himself. If he would be so sophisticated so as to have a Webster's Dictionary at his disposal, you can be certain he would dress those primal needs in an elaborately woven garment of well-placed fig leaves.

He would convince you that this is a real human rights crisis with global implications and not the beast within agitating for one or more of its local and basest desires. One mighty word might have saved Korach from Korach and it can rescue us from ourselves too, if employed. He would have gone up and not down, and we too can climb high with silence.

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Korach Got A Bad Deal

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

The first two words of the parsha — Vayikach Korach [and Korach took] — are problematic. There is no indication whatsoever throughout the

The Week Ahead

שבת פרשת קרח

- Mincha
- Candle Lighting
- Seder HaLimud
- Shacharis
- סוף זמן ק"ש
- 1st Mincha
- Ovos uBonim
- 2nd Mincha
- 3rd Mincha
- Rov's Shiur
- Maariv & Motzei Shabbos
- Sun Rosh Chodesh
- Mon / Thurs
- Tues / Wed / Fri
- Mincha & Maariv
- Late Maariv

שבת ראש חודש תמוז

- 7.30pm
- 7.56pm-8.00pm
- 8.40am
- 9.00am
- 8.56am
- 2.00pm
- 5.00pm
- 6.00pm
- 9.55pm
- Following
- 11.00pm
- 7.00am / 8.00am
- 6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
- 6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
- 7.45pm
- 10.50pm

entire parsha of what exactly Korach took. It is a strange way to begin a story with an ambiguous action by the main “actor” in the narrative. Chazal themselves struggle to interpret the meaning of this phrase. The Talmud [Sanhedrin 109b] elaborates: Reish Lakish interprets “Korach took a bad deal for himself” (Korach lakach mekach rah l’atzmo).

This begs the question. If someone purchases a car which turns out to be a lemon, that is a bad purchase (mekach rah). If someone purchases real estate that has just been flooded, that is a bad deal. In these cases, at least a person received something in exchange for his money — a car that is always at the mechanic or a piece of land that is under water, so we can call it a “bad deal.” However, Korach did not receive anything here. He did not wind up with a bad purchase or a bad deal. He lost everything he had and received nothing in exchange!

The sefer Be’er Yosef cites an idea from a sefer Zayis Ra’anani, which attempts to explain the teaching of Reish Lakish. Rashi here quotes a Medrash: “Korach, who was a clever individual, what did he see in this foolish scheme?” Korach was not a fool. Far from it — he was a very intelligent individual. Why did he agree to this deal? There were 250 people, only one of which could be Kohen Gadol. Those are terrible odds. It is the worse than playing Russian roulette.

Russian roulette is a “game” involving a gun with six slots for bullets. The person puts in one bullet and spins the cylinder. He puts the pistol to his head and pulls the trigger. There are at least five chances out of six that he will walk away alive. Even so, someone who plays the game is foolhardy, to put it mildly. Even more so, if someone changes the odds such that instead of having a 5 out of 6 chance of surviving the competition, the person has a 250 to 1 chance against surviving the competition, certainly the person must be suicidal to participate in such an endeavor. What did the wise Korach see that tempted him to take part in this crazy experiment?

The Medrash continues, “His eyes mislead him. He saw a chain of great lineage descending from him. He prophetically saw that the great Shmuel HaNavi would descend from him, about whom the Torah writes, ‘Moshe and Aharon among his priests, and Shmuel among those who invoke His Name.’ [Tehillim 99:6] Korach assumed ‘In his (Shmuel’s) merit I will escape.’” The Medrash says that Korach further foresaw through Ruach HaKodesh [Divine spirit] that he would have among his descendants 24 families (mishmaros) of descendants who would participate in the Bais Hamikdash service, all of whom would possess Ruach HaKodesh.

Korach concluded from this prophetic vision that he himself was a world class righteous individual (Tzadik yesod olam) and therefore he was willing to take his chances with the “Ketores challenge.” He went ahead with the wager and lost his life.

The Medrash said that his prophetic vision was imperfect. The Zayis Ra’anani asks — why in fact did the merit of having such great descendants not save Korach?

Before sharing his very interesting answer, I would like to preface it with the following thought. The Alter of Kelm once asked why is there such a thing as “the sanctity of the first born?” What is the source of this sanctity? The Alter explains that the source is the fact that the first-born participated in one of the greatest manifestations of Kiddush HaShem in the history of mankind.

The Ribono shel Olam came down to Egypt, saved the first-born Jews, and killed out the first-born Egyptians. This was a sanctification of G-d’s Name. The Almighty rewards participation in a Kiddush HaShem. He does not withhold reward from any creature. Although they were completely passive, the Jewish firstborn were the vehicles for accomplishing a Kiddush HaShem and even passive participation in a Kiddush HaShem generates reward.

The Zayis Ra’anani explains Korach’s mistake. Korach saw that Shmuel was going to come out from him. He saw that 24 mishmaros were going to come out from him. However, his mistake was that he did not realize that he merited the reward of having such great descendants

because he created a Kiddush HaShem. Korach’s Kiddush HaShem was that he challenged the authority of Moshe Rabbeinu and caused a public validation of Moshe Rabbeinu’s authenticity through a miracle from Heaven such that the entire nation arose to proclaim, “Moshe is true and his Torah is true.” Korach caused all this to happen.

Korach’s mistake was that he did not know which came first — the chicken or the egg. He thought, “I must be special, because Shmuel will be my great grandson.” However, the only reason Korach merited having Shmuel as a descendant is because he caused a Kiddush HaShem (albeit not the way he intended).

Never again would anyone question the authenticity of Moshe Rabbeinu’s leadership. Korach’s intentions were malevolent and he did what he did for the worst reasons in the world but the bottom line is that a Kiddush HaShem is a Kiddush HaShem and the Almighty does not withhold reward from anyone who participates in the sanctification of His Name.

Korach thought, “I earned this reward (of great descendants) because of who I am.” He was wrong. He earned the reward because of what he (unexpectedly) did. This is what Rashi means when he says, “his eyes deceived him.” A person sometimes sees cause and effect, but he mistakes effect for cause and cause for effect because “his eyes deceive him.”

Thus far, we have quoted the idea of the Zayis Ra’anani. Based on this teaching, the Be’er Yosef says, we can understand the words of Reish Lakish (“Korach took a bad deal for himself.”) We asked, “What kind of deal did Korach make, he was left with nothing?” The answer is, no — he made a deal. The deal was “Shmuel haNavi comes from me; 24 families of descendants of Kohanim who possess Ruach HaKodesh come from me.” It was a great deal. Would we not all love to have a grandson like Shmuel haNavi?

Sure. It was a great deal. However, what price did he pay for this deal? The price is that he stewed in Gehinnom [Hell] and every thirty days they reissue his sentence. He gave up his “This World”. He gave up his “Next World”. He burns in Gehinnom. Was it worth the price? No. It was not worth the price. Losing all of your material and spiritual wealth in this life and in the afterlife is a bad deal regardless of what the person receives in exchange.

Who Would You Choose?

Shlomo Katz (Torah.org)

The Torah relates that, in response to Korach’s rebellion, Moshe Rabbeinu “spoke to Korach and to his entire assembly, saying, ‘In the morning, Hashem will make known the one who is His own and the holy one, and He will draw him close to Himself; and, whomever He will choose, He will draw close to Himself.’”

Why, asks R’ Aharon Lewin z”l Hy”d (the Reisher Rav; killed in the Holocaust in 1941), does Moshe Rabbeinu appear to say the same thing twice: “Hashem will make known the one who is His own and the holy one, and He will draw him close to Himself,” and, again, “Whomever He will choose, He will draw close to Himself”?

Perhaps, writes R’ Lewin, some of the pronouns in the verse need to be translated differently, so that the verse says: “Hashem will make known the one who is His own and the holy one, and He will draw him close to Himself; and, whoever will choose him—i.e., whoever chooses to be on the side of the ‘holy one’ that Hashem chooses—He, Hashem, will draw that person close to Himself also.”

Alternatively, R’ Lewin continues, the verse could be translated: “Hashem will make known the one who is His own and the holy one, and He will draw him close to Himself; and, whoever will choose Him—i.e., whoever chooses Hashem—He, Hashem, will draw that person close to Himself also.”

Throughout history, R’ Lewin concludes, there have been people who challenge Torah sages and leaders, ostensibly L’shem Shamayim / for the sake of Heaven. Like Korach, these rebels speak in the name of Hashem and claim to be looking out for the good of the Jewish People. Hashem is not fooled, of course, and He declares: “He who truly chooses Me, him I will draw close.” (Ha’drash Ve’ha’iyun)