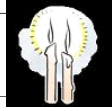


# KUSHNER COMMENTS



Shabbat Candle Lighting: 8:10 PM  
Havdalah: 9:11 PM

(Times are for Livingston, NJ)

*Thank you for reading Kushner Comments.  
Have a wonderful summer!*

## Parsha Summary: *Parshat Korach*

In *parshat Korach*, a major rebellion erupts in the midst of *Bnei Yisrael*. Under the orchestration of Korach, those who rebel challenge Aharon's appointment as Kohen Gadol and Moshe's competency as leader. Ultimately, Hashem responds to these rebellions by performing a miracle to prove that He chose Aharon and that Aharon's appointment was not a result of nepotism. Hashem also publicly punishes all those who rebelled.

*Enough is Enough!*

Rabbi Richard Kirsch

In *parshat Korach*, we learn of a rebellion that is spearheaded by Korach, Datan, and Aviram. This rebellion was in many ways directed at Moshe in particular. Still, we see that in 16:25 it states, "Moshe stood up and he went to speak to Datan and Aviram." *Rashi* quotes the *Midrash Rabbah* which states that Moshe hoped he could settle their differences quietly between them. Even though Datan and Aviram specifically attacked Moshe's character, he wanted to do what was best for the nation and he did not have any ego about it. He simply went to them to try to reconcile the situation. The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* 110a quotes Rav Ashi who remarks about this incident, "From here we learn that one must never continue an argument. One must do his utmost to bring peace."

The longer differences of opinion continue between two people, the deeper these differences become. As time goes on, the more difficult it is to resolve or eradicate them. A fight or an argument usually starts with a minor situation, but before you know it, it multiplies until it becomes a major *machloket*, or conflict.

In this story, Moshe put aside his own *kavod*, or honor, and he went to his enemies to see if their differences could be resolved. However, while we have explained how this is commendable, it also presents somewhat of a problem. The *Torah Temimah* quotes the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* 32a, which states, "A rabbi is not to negate his own honor. A rabbi must demand the respect that is due to him." This source clearly asserts that it is generally incorrect for a rabbi to degrade himself because it might minimize the respect that he is due. If this is the case, why, then, did Moshe not follow this rule?

The *Torah Temimah's* continuation answers this very question. It goes on to state, "if by forgetting his own personal *kavod*, [a rabbi] can prevent an argument from spreading, that is the only

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פרשת  
קרח



In this week's *parsha*, *parshat Korach*, we see that the beginning of the *parsha* starts with a rebellion and ends with the laws of *ma' aser*, giving a tithe to the tribe of Levi. The question here is why is that the case here? We need to look at the stories in a closer way in order to have a full picture of this *parsha*.

The *parsha* begins with a rebellion and it is initiated by Moshe's first cousin, Korach. Korach was one of the members of the Kehat clan and his job was to carry the *Aron Kodesh*, or holy ark. He also was the lead singer in the Levi choir and a very rich person. However, the only problem with this was that he wasn't happy with all of this. In fact, he wanted to serve Hashem in more of a direct manner like the six people who had greater positions than he: Aharon, Moshe, Eliezer, Itamar, Nachshon ben Aminadav and Eltzafan. Now why would a rebellion like this be dealt so harshly when all he wanted was to be in the same circle as his special cousin Moshe and to serve Hashem more directly?

If we take a look at *Pirkei Avot* 5:20, it discusses what the outcome will be to a dispute that is "*l'shem Shamayim*," for the sake of Heaven, and what the outcome will be to a dispute that is "*lo l'shem Shamayim*," not for the sake of Heaven. This *mishnah* specifically refers to Korach, saying that Korach's rebellion was not for the sake of serving Hashem rather it was for personal gain. Therefore, this is the reason why Korach's rebellion was dealt with so harshly.

Now if this is the case, we still may be bothered by the underlying question of Korach's rebellion: As for all of those who are not able to serve in the *Beit Hamikdash*, aren't we all left out because we can't serve Hashem in the *Beit Hamikdash* just like the *Kohanim*? The answer is no, and this begins to give us an understanding of why the *parsha* ends with the subject of *ma' aser*. The *mitzvah* of *ma' aser* mandates that everyone gives ten percent of a person's earnings to the *Beit Hamikdash*. Therefore, in any business we do, we are in essence serving God and we should be seen as though we are serving in the *Beit Hamikdash*.

In conclusion, we now can understand why we start the *parsha* with Korach and end with *ma' aser*. First the *parsha* shows us wrong way to serve Hashem, in that personal gain should not be a reason for serving Hashem. Then the *parsha* shows us a correct way of serving Hashem: By giving *ma' aser*, we are given the opportunity to serve God in a way that gives us no personal gain.

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time a rabbi is permitted and obligated to do so, just as Moshe did." Moshe is in fact the very paradigm of a rabbi who understands the correctness of deferring one's own *kavod* as a means of attempting to bring peace.

Unfortunately, in today's society too many people love to join in a fight. People take sides and before you know it, a community, a synagogue, or a family becomes caught up in something that could have been prevented. Nowadays, with anti-Semitism rampant, why wait for the Helen Thomas's of the world to unite us? Why can't we all just get along? Enough is enough already! Let us all recognize the value of peace and put it at the forefront of our everyday lives.

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