



Korach 5775

June 19, 2015

A Taste of Torah

On the Fringe

By: Rabbi Yossi Kaplan

Can a dozen frogs drown out the thunder? Can a hundred candles brighten the sun-filled day? Will a thousand rain drops hydrate an ocean?

There's a small scroll of parchment we place on our doorposts. We call it a mezuzah. And inside that scroll is written the Shema, the prayer that attests to the oneness of G-d. But many of us have shelves filled with books of Torah wisdom - all of them proclaiming the greatness of Hashem. Shall we then be required to add another small proclamation to our homes? Of what use can the mezuzah be?!

There's a garment worn by Jews worldwide. Tzitzit. In fact, the Torah requires all four-cornered garments to contain fringes on each corner. And there's one more requirement that is not perhaps not so well-known today. One strand must be dyed blue with *techeiles*. Now, say you purchased a garment dyed in its entirety with *techeiles*. Would you still be required to have a single strand of *techeiles*?!

Korach. Great Torah scholar and prophet... and a heretic! He was leader of the rebellion against Moshe and the Torah, and the

mentioned questions were raised by none other than he. Yet those questions bear answering.

But truth be told, these are hardly questions. Doesn't the Talmud (Menachos 43b) teach: The *techeiles* is the color of the sea, the sea is the color of the sky, and the sky - the color of the Heavenly throne? It is clear then, that glancing at those blue fringes were a reminder of the One sitting on that throne.

Would you trim your hedges with a crafts scissor or paint your deck with watercolors? Korach made a terrible error. True, the home is full of holiness. True, the garment is all blue. But just as a specialty trade needs specialty tools, an endeavor to remember G-d's presence requires no less a specialty tool. We can't chance an endeavor so important on readily found, everyday tools. We need a dedicated scroll upon the door, a dedicated fringe on our garment, to serve only one purpose. And yet Korach missed that point. Let's make sure we don't - and let us utilize the special tools the Torah provides us to draw closer to Hashem.

Stories For The Soul

News Flash-point

Based on a story by Rabbi Yissochor Frand

Reuvain had the paper delivered to his front door on a daily basis; he would take it in every day at 7 a.m. His neighbor Shimon, knowing this, would surreptitiously take the paper at 6, read it in his home, re-fold it, and return it to Reuvain's porch.

Reuvain, though, realized something was amiss, as he could tell the paper had been tampered with. One morning, he came out early and caught Shimon in the act. Infuriated, he shouted at Shimon, "How dare you take my paper before I read it!" Shimon responded, "What's the big deal?! It doesn't cost you anything! There's nothing to make such a fuss about."

Reuvain consulted with his rabbi as to how to deal with his neighbor. The rabbi told Reuvain that he had good advice for him - he should buy Shimon his own subscription. Reuvain was shocked. "What? My neighbor steals my paper and I should buy him a subscription?!"

The rabbi explained that the Chofetz Chaim (Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan; 1839-1933) recommends establishing a "shalom fund," meaning that one should put money aside to be used to maintain peace. Buying his neighbor a subscription would allow him to keep peace between them, and it was a worthwhile investment.

Reuvain followed his rabbi's advice, and the two men maintained a peaceful relationship.

In this week's parsha, we see the devastating results of *machlokes*, fighting, even when well-intentioned. We must strive mightily to avoid *machlokes* - even when it costs us a few dollars.

Kollel Happenings

The M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD ADOPT-A-BUBBY PROGRAM

Do you know of a senior – a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, neighbor, fellow congregant – who would benefit from a weekly phone call to schmooze, share a thought on the parsha or Jewish calendar, or just say hello? Do you have a few minutes a week to call a senior in the community and make a difference in the life of another? Contact the Denver Community Kollel's M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Adopt-A-Bubby program! Call Joyce Litzman at the Denver Community Kollel at 303-820-2855, or email jlitzman@denverkollel.org.

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 11:30 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

In Judaism, numbers are not simply a way to count things. Every number has a special significance. From gematria to Who Knows One? recited at the end of the Passover Seder, discover the world of numbers with Rabbi Moshe Heyman of the Denver Community Kollel. Every other Thursday from 2-3 pm Marathon Investments, 6565 South Dayton St., #1200. For more info, contact rmh@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: In between the *tachanun* prayer and the *va'anachnu lo naida* prayer, we recite a prayer known as "*shomer Yisrael*," recited while sitting upright. Why does this not suffice for praying while in a sitting position, and obviate the need to sit for the start of *va'anachnu lo naida*?

A: This custom predates the recitation of *shomer Yisrael*. *Shomer Yisrael* was originally recited only on fast days; it was incorporated later into the daily *tachanun* prayers, perhaps due to persecutions the Jews endured during those times. (See Ma'aseh Rav

and Siddur Eizer Eliyahu. Siddur Tehillas Hashem has a unique custom of reciting *shomer yisrael* only on Mondays and Thursdays.)

This week's question: The original Ashkenazic version of the middle blessing of the Shabbos prayers concluded with "...and may the Jews, lovers of Your Name, rejoice with You." The text was later changed to "...and may the Jews, sanctifiers of Your name, rest on it." Why was it changed?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org

Ask the Rabbi

Rebel with Which Cause?

Sarah Walsh from New York, NY wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My name is Sarah, and my bat mitzvah portion is Korach from the book of Numbers, and I am having trouble understanding why Korach is a villain, if he was by birthright a priest? Does Korach have the right to question the leadership authority of Moses? If not, why not? Is rebellion necessarily bad?

Dear Sarah Walsh,

Actually, Korach was by birth a Levite, and he was not content with that. He felt that he should get more honor and prestige. He created an entire rebellion, created hatred and arguments and divided the Jewish people - all for the sake of his honor, and his ego.

In addition, think of what Korach

had witnessed in his life. He saw Moses lead the Jews out of Egypt, cross the Red Sea, bring down the manna in the desert, and then Korach perceived/prophesied G-d speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. So rebellion is bad when:

It is for the sake of ego and personal honor,
It contravenes facts, and
It ignores basic moral ideas like gratitude.

For further study may I suggest the commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on Korach.

Reprinted with permission from *Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem*, www.ohr.edu