



TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel



Parshas Korach

July 1, 2022

A Taste of Torah

Good Reception

by Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher

Nobody likes criticism, even when it's offered constructively and gently. Indeed, the Talmud teaches that it is exceedingly challenging to properly rebuke others, as the recipient is likely to react badly.

While this ought to put a damper on those who are wont to walk around serving up healthy doses of criticism to others, it does not address the flip side of the coin: If you are on the receiving end of criticism, how should you react? Winston Churchill commented that criticism "fulfills the same function as pain in the human body; it calls attention to the development of an unhealthy state of things." We needn't take the British statesman's word for it, though; the same lesson is already present in this week's parsha.

As Korach launches his rebellion against Moshe's leadership, he is joined by Moshe's long-time nemeses, Dasan and Aviram. Moshe, looking to make peace despite the unending *chutzpah* displayed by these two men, attempts to set up a meeting with them, but his agent is sharply rebuffed by the derelict duo, as they cast Moshe as an unsuccessful, power-hungry leader who failed to make good on any of his promises.

Upon hearing the response of Dasan and Aviram, Moshe turns to Hashem and, among other things, states (Korach 16:15), "I have not taken even a single donkey of theirs." Rashi, citing a Medrash, explains that Moshe told Hashem that even when he returned from Midian to Egypt to begin the process of the Exodus,

he did not seek to be reimbursed for the donkey he needed to obtain for his journey to Egypt. Moshe was thus demonstrating his absolute integrity and selflessness as leader of the Jewish People, an answer to the cutting and brazen words of Dasan and Aviram.

Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz (1873-1936) points out the absurdity of the situation. Here we have two people who have, from day one, devoted their lives to challenging Moshe's authority, and they are now engaged in out-and-out insurrection, delivering a stinging harangue. Moshe should have simply waved off their words as he turned to beseech Divine assistance. Yet Moshe defends himself against their claims, going all the way back to the very start of his stint as leader of the Jewish People to make his point!

Rabbi Levovitz explains that while Moshe could have indeed dismissed Dasan and Aviram's spurious assertions, he chose, instead, to consider their ill-delivered words. While they had no business communicating with Moshe in such a disrespectful and hateful fashion, Moshe recognized that there were claims made against his leadership that he needed to honestly assess and consider. Perhaps he had, indeed, failed to live up to the perfection expected of his position. Moshe therefore conducted a thorough analysis of all of his actions as leader of the Jewish People, going all the way back to the very start when he journeyed from Midian to Egypt. After reviewing his entire history, Moshe concluded that he was innocent of any wrongdoing; he had not even billed the Nation for

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Stories for the Soul

News Flash-point

based on a story by Rabbi Yissochur Frand

Reuvain had the paper delivered to his front door on a daily basis; he would take it in daily at 7 am. 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 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 LIVE & LEARN LEARNING PROGRAM AT THE WEST DENVER KOLLEL TORAH CENTER

The Live & Learn Learning Program for seniors is held Tuesdays at the West Denver Kollel Torah Center. Coffee and pastries at 10:30 am, two classes of 45 minutes each from 10:40-12:15 (including 5 minute break between classes), and lunch (including take-home option) at 12:15. For more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

SPRING-SUMMER AVOS UBANIM CONTINUES THIS SHABBOS

The Kollel's spring-summer Avos Ubanim program continues this Shabbos afternoon at the Kollel Torah Centers in West Denver and Southeast Denver. Learning begins one hour before mincha, followed by nosh and prizes. Program ends 15 minutes before mincha in Southeast Denver, at mincha in West Denver. For sponsorships and more info, email info@denverkollel.org.

BUILD YOUR LEGACY AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF TORAH WITH LIVE ON/LIFE & LEGACY

The Kollel is part of Rose Community Foundation's Live On/LIFE & LEGACY program, which focuses on creating financial stability for the future through planned giving. Think it's not for you? Think again! Anyone can make a planned gift, no matter the amount. Visit www.denverkollel.org, email rmh@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855 for more information.

Halacha Riddles

Last week we asked: Why would the flooring material make a difference when one washes his hands on a regular weekday?

Answer: When washing *mayim acharonim* following a meal, one is not supposed to wash his hands over an area where people will walk, since the waters contain a *ru'ach ra'ah* (evil spirit) (Shulchan Aruch 181:2). However,

some opinions say this is only true if washing over an earthen floor, but a floor covered with any other material would not pose this problem. (Others, however, do not draw this distinction.) (Mishna Berura ad loc.:6)

This week's question: When is cold water halachically preferable to warm water?

Lives of Our Torah Leaders

Rabbi Meir Shapiro - Part LIII

As Rabbi Shapiro lay dying, he requested that the students present with him dance and sing the song "*Bicha batchu avoseinu*" (lyrics from Tehillim 22), which he himself had composed. The students obeyed and began dancing.

It was clear that Rabbi Shapiro was breathing his last, and some of the dancing students began crying. Seeing this, he managed to write two words: "*Nor bisimcha!*" (Only with joy!) With those words, his soul departed and he passed away. His position as Chief Rabbi of Lodz had lasted just three days before his passing. He was just 46 years old.

Rabbi Shapiro's death came as a great shock for the Jewish world, as he had previously been in good health and was still young.

The funeral was postponed until after Shabbos, and so his body was placed, wrapped in a tallis, upon the floor. On Friday night, the students of the yeshiva passed by the body, one after the other, and wished Rabbi Shapiro "Good Shabbos."

Following Shabbos, Jews arrived in Lublin from across Poland; some 200,000 people attended his funeral. His heartbroken wife, Malka Toba, passed away several months later. Though they were childless, Rabbi Shapiro commented that he had a son and a daughter: The son was *daf yomi*, and the daughter was Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin.

At the time of his passing, Rabbi Shapiro was considerably in debt, having taken out substantial loans to cover the expenses of the yeshiva.

A Taste of Torah

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his transportation as he travelled to save them from Pharaoh's clutches.

Rabbi Levovitz concludes that although criticism often comes via an imperfect messenger, it should always give a person pause to consider whether the message being delivered - once extracted from the hurtful packaging - should be carefully examined and

analyzed. Even if the complaint lodged sounds ridiculous, far-fetched and absurd, it is still worth the effort to scrutinize one's conduct and see how it measures up to the criticism. Moshe, for all his perfection and selflessness, took the time to do so - shouldn't we, with our faults and shortcomings, do the same?

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