

Fascinating INSIGHTS

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COMING SOON Bez"H

Fascinating Insights—The Sefer (in English)

[Disagreement Distance](#)

The sons of Korach לא מתו on אגרא דכלה tells us בני קרח, that in every generation we have בני קרח, those who cause מחלוקת.¹

We are instructed ³ don't be like Korach and his assembly. That is to say, don't be an instigator (קרח), nor one who agrees and sides with such a person (עדת).

It says ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי... Why doesn't the Pasuk continue and mention Yaakov's name (לוי בן...)?⁴ The Toras Avos⁵ explains that Korach took the aspects of Kedusha of Yitzhar, Kehas and Levi. However, the trait of Yaakov, humility,⁶ he didn't take. This lack of humility led to his downfall.⁷

¹ Bamidbar 26:11. On the second day of creation, division was created, as the waters were separated (Breishis 1:6,7). In fact, separation can only occur when there are two, and Monday is the second day. How does the Shir Shel Yom of Monday, the second day of the week, start? קרח!

² See Bamidbar Rabba 18:12. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (128:7) writes that it is better to have an improper Shliach Tzibur (Proper would mean a Gadol in Torah and Maasim Tovim. 30 years old as well as being married.) for Selichos and Yamim Noraim or Baal Tokea and מקריא for Rosh Hashana than to have מחלוקת.

³ Bamidbar 17:5. The Chassam Sofer (על התורה, Kedoshim, s.v. זמה) writes that Paroh, Haman and their counterparts were the stick of Hashem to punish the Jewish people. If their intent was לשם שמים, they would be rewarded well for their work. Since they intended it for the bad, they were punished. Nevertheless, since the will of Hashem was done through them, they receive good reward because the name of Hashem was sanctified through them as we have Pesach and Purim. Korach and his people who, however, provoked with their free will, are gone without any remembrance.

⁴ Bamidbar 16:1, Rashi s.v. בן יצהר.

⁵ Korach, s.v. ויקח.

⁶ The name יעקב originates from עקב which refers to humility as in עקב ה' ענה, the result of humility is fear of Hashem (Mishlei 22:4). Additionally, עקב, the heel, is the lowest part of our body.

⁷ The Mishna (Avos 5:13) says an example of לשם שמים is Hillel and Shamai whereas one that is not לשם שמים is the מחלוקת of Korach and

Humility leads to שלום, as it makes room for others. The importance of שלום⁸ is shown in that many Brachos and Tefilos conclude with שלום. Among them are (וישמ לך שלום), the last Bracha of Shmoneh Esrei (עושה שלום), the conclusion of Shemoneh Esrei (Yaaleh V'yavo—ולשלום...), the last Bracha in Maariv,⁹ Kadish (עושה שלום), Birchah Hamazon¹⁰ as well as the last Mishna in Shas—¹¹ לא מצא הקב"ה כלי מחזיק ברכה לישראל אלא השלום...בשלום.¹²

In the year 1760, there was an earthquake in Tzefas in which many were killed.¹³ R' Rafael Meyuchas¹⁴ (1695-1771) mentions this earthquake and he writes that it came because of¹⁵ מחלוקת.¹⁶ With this he explained ונתתי שלום בארץ—where there is peace in the land, without מחלוקת, then, as the Pasuk continues, ואין מחריד—there won't be any fear and noise¹⁸ (רעידה ורעש)—from an earthquake.

In the community of Kempna where they were looking for a chazzan, they decided on one named Shimon who had a beautiful and powerful voice although he was a sinner. Since he was a sinner, R' Yosef Shmuel, the Rav of Kempna, was dismayed with their choice. How could they allow him to Daven for them on Yomim

his assembly. The Noam Elimelech (End of Likutai Shoshana, s.v. איזה) is bothered why the Mishna didn't say the example of a מחלוקת that is not לשם שמים is that of Korach with Moshe? This is because Korach disagreed with his assembly, as they also each disagreed with each other. Each one wanted to be the leader, just that since they wanted to contend with Moshe and Aharon, they made peace temporarily. That is the מחלוקת of Korach and his assembly, as there was מחלוקת between them (Taamai Haminhagim, pg 521). Another answer given as to why the Mishna says קרח וכל עדתו, Korach and his assembly, and not קרח ומשה is because Moshe wasn't involved in the fight. Korach was fighting with Moshe, but Moshe wasn't fighting with Korach.

⁸ See Vayikra 26:6, Rashi.

⁹ In it we mention שלום many times in addition to its ending, הפורש סכת שלום.

¹⁰ In the last Bracha we end ...ושלום וכל טוב. Benching closes with ה' יברך את עמו בשלום.

¹¹ Uktzin 3:12. See Vayikra Rabba 9:9, Bamidbar Rabba 21:1.

¹² See Yerushalmi Brachos 2:4, Ohr Hachaim to Bamidbar 6:26.

¹³ The Chida (Roshai Avos on Avos 5:5) writes that in Avos Drebi Nosson (35:1) it says there was never a מפולת in Yerushalayim... We saw in the year תק"כ (1760) on the night of the 9th of Cheshvan a רעש (earthquake) in Tzefas where many Jews were killed—about 165 people. That night the earthquake was very strong in Yerushalayim. The shaking and quaking was there nearly the entire winter. There was no מפולת even though there was a lot of quaking in addition to it being strong. No one was killed.

¹⁴ Sefer Pri Hadama, Hlchos Taaniyos, chapter 2. He was an Av Beis Din in Yerushalayim.

¹⁵ Indeed, the Rabbis say that earthquakes come to the world because of מחלוקת (Yalkut Shimoni, Shmuel 2, 158).

¹⁶ It of course is no coincidence that when we arrange the word מחלוקת, we get מות חלוקת.

¹⁷ Vayikra 26:6. The simple meaning is I will provide peace in the land and you will lie down with none to frighten you.

¹⁸ There is a Pasuk ויתגאש ותרעש הארץ, the earth quaked and roared (Shmuel 2, 22:8).

Noraim?! He then shouted: “We can't accept Shimon as our *chazzan!*” Although there were those who sided with the Rav, others preferred Shimon. This split Kempna into two divisions. R' Yosef Shmuel then sent a letter to R' Yosef of Posen, seeking his advice. The response: “א צלם in the היכל, sanctuary (in the Beis Hamikdash) is preferable over a מחלוקת in Klal Yisrael.”¹⁹

Let us conclude with the words of the Noda B'Yehuda²⁰ (1713-1793): אין לך מצוה גדולה מן השלום...ואין לך גרוע מהמחלוקת, there is no greater Mitzva than peace...and nothing worse than מחלוקת.²¹

[A Consoling Call](#)

Can one fulfill the Mitzva of *Nichum Aveilim*, comforting mourners, through a phone call? R' Moshe Feinstein²² writes that there are two aspects to *Nichum Aveilim*. One is for the mourners who need to be consoled. The second is for the dead, as the following Gemara²³ demonstrates. “If a deceased person has no mourners, ten men should sit in mourning in his place—the place where he died—for seven days following the burial. There was a person who died in the neighborhood of R' Yehuda that had no mourners. Every day following the burial, R' Yehuda would bring a group of ten men and sit in mourning in his place. After seven days the dead person appeared to R' Yehuda in a dream saying תנוה דעתך, let your mind be at ease for you have set my mind at ease.” This explains the Rambam²⁴ who says that *Nichum Aveilim* takes precedence to *Bikur Cholim* since *Nichum Aveilim* is Chessed with the living and the dead. So concerning the living mourner, one can fulfill *Nichum Aveilim* through a phone call, but concerning the deceased one must go to the place. Even regarding the living mourner it is best to do it in person. If it's possible to go to the mourners, which is fulfilling the Mitzva completely, then one can't exempt himself through a phone call. However, there is a מצוה, קצת מצוה, part of the Mitzva, through a phone call.

R' Yitzchak Yosef²⁵ related that when his father, R' Ovadia Yosef, was *Menachem Avel* R' Elyashiv on his

¹⁹ See Afrakasta D'Anyan 1:165, s.v. ולענין.

²⁰ Yoreh Deah, end of Siman 1.

²¹ He then writes that in our times (in his time) מחלוקת לשם שמים is not common and the Satan dances.

²² Igros Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:40:11. See also Igros Moshe, Yoreh Deah 1:223. See also Beer Moshe 2:104.

²³ Shabbos 152. See the Badei Hashulchan 376:26.

²⁴ Hilchos Avel 14:7.

²⁵ Yalkut Yosef, Bikur Cholim V'aveilus, p. 434. R' Yitzchak Yosef, the sixth son of R' Ovadia Yosef who was born in 1952, is the Sefardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rosh Yeshiva of Chazon Ovadia and author of the set of Sefarim on Jewish law called Yalkut Yosef. In 1971, when he was 18 and studying at Yeshivas HaNegev, he collected Halachic rulings from the five volumes of Yabia Omer (the Sefarim of his father's responsa) that had been published by then, and published them in his Sefer Yalkut Yosef. This was published with his father's support and supervision. It is often considered one of his father's Sefarim because it is a summary of his father's rulings, since he went over it section by section and added his comments. He is married with five children. His eldest son Ovadia, named after his father, is married to the daughter of R' Shlomo Amar.

Rebbitzen, R' Shmuel Wosner called on the phone. R' Wosner asked R' Elyashiv what his opinion was about fulfilling *Nichum Aveilim* on the phone. R' Elyashiv then asked R' Ovadia Yosef his opinion. R' Ovadia Yosef answered that it depends if *Nichum Aveilim* is just for the living or also for the dead. If it is for the living, then a phone call is good.

R' Ovadia Yosef²⁶ writes regarding mourners sitting in a different city that one should do what he can to visit them since he is then doing Chessed with the living and the deceased. However if one is unable to travel there, and especially if he is a Torah scholar who uses his time for Torah, then he can do the comforting with a phone call or by writing a letter.

When R' Elyashiv was sitting Shivah after losing his daughter, R' Aharon Leib Shteinman called and asked R' Elyashiv *Mechila* since he couldn't come personally. R' Elyashiv told him that if *Nichum Aveilim* is for the mourner then he can be *Mochel* but he can't be *Mochel* if it's for the dead.

[Three Weeks, Three Traits, Three Kids](#)

The Parshiyos of Behaaloscha, Shlach and Korach correspond to תאוה, קנאה, כבוד, jealousy, desire and honor. Behaaloscha addresses desire as it deals with those dissatisfied with the מן. Shlach addresses honor as the Meraglim didn't want to go to Eretz Yisrael because they felt that if they go into Eretz Yisrael, they will be removed from being the heads and Moshe will appoint others.²⁷ Korach addresses jealousy as this is why Korach wanted to have Kehunah.²⁸

Korach had three sons: אביאסף אסיר אלקנה. These correspond to the three aforementioned traits and give us advice on how to deal with them. אלקנה corresponds to קנאה as it consists of the letters א-ל-קנא.²⁹ If one lives with the knowledge that everything belongs to Hashem, then he won't be jealous of anyone else. אסיר matches up with תאוה as it means to bind up. One controls his תאוה by binding it. אביאסף means to gather. This is a term used in reference to death as in ויאסף אל עמיו.³⁰ This alludes to that if one remembers his היום המיתה, day of death, then he won't have any desire for honor. This is because he will then want to make the most of his life so he will dedicate himself to Hashem.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander Ztz"l for close to five years. He received Semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications. His writings inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in a suburb of Yerushalayim where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

²⁶ Chazon Ovadia 1:8, footnote 10, s.v. לפי.

²⁷ Zohar, Shlach 158a, Mesilas Yesarim, end of chapter 11.

²⁸ Tangentially, the Chidushai Harim (Korach, s.v. ויקח. Sefas Emes, Korach תרמ"ז and Pinchas, תרמ"א) tells us that Hashem wanted to make Korach לוי גדול just as there is a Kohen Gadol.

²⁹ Shemos 20:5, 34:14, Devarim 4:24.

³⁰ Vayechi 49:33.