

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 39

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KORACH

23rd Sivan 5774

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 16, verses 1 - 13

- ✚ Korach convinces Dattan and Aviram along with two hundred and fifty other men to create a rebellion, challenging Moshe's and Aaron's leadership."
- ✚ Moshe calms the situation down by suggesting a showdown which will take place the following day, between himself and the rebels. They each have to bring a pan and burn incense in them. The rightful leader would be the one whose incense is accepted by Hashem..

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 16, verses 14 - 19

- ✚ Moshe tries to convince Korach, Dattan and Aviram to reconsider the Rebellion but his efforts were rebutted.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 16, verse 20 - Chapter 17, verse 8

- ✚ Everyone turns up the next day to watch the events unfold. Hashem tells Moshe he intends to destroy all the men who still wish to rebel and so he must draw the people back, away from Korach's, Dattan and Aviram's tent to escape punishment.
- ✚ Moshe proclaims if these rebels die like regular men, then Hashem is no longer with me, however if they receive a miraculous death, everyone will know that these men have provoked and angered Hashem.
- ✚ As soon as Moshe finishes speaking, A flame came down from heaven and consumed all the men who had offered up the incense. At the same time, the ground where the Korach and the remaining rebels were standing opened up and swallowed them alive along with all of their possessions.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 17, verses 9 - 15

- ✚ Moshe tells Aaron's son Elazar. To serve as a reminder that only Aaron's offspring can bring incense to Hashem. Hashem would like Elazar to gather up and melt down all the pans used by the rebels and make a covering to go on top of the Aron (Altar).
- ✚ A new rebellion broke out among Bnai Yisrael, accusing Moshe and Aaron of smiting down 'the people of Hashem'. As a punishment against the people, Hashem sent down a plague to wipe them out. Aaron intervened by running round the camp, holding burning incense persuading the people to do Teshuva (repent). Despite his efforts 14,700 people still perished in the plague.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 17, verses 16 - 24

- ✚ Aaron's appointment as Kohen Gadol is reconfirmed through the test of the staffs. Every leader of each tribe had to inscribe their names on their staff and place them in the Ohel Moed (tent of meeting). When they came to collect their staffs the following day, Aaron's staff had blossomed and was full of ripened almonds.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 17, verse 25 – Chapter 18, verse 20

- ✚ Aaron's staff is placed in the Holy of Holies to serve as reminder to those who wish to rebel in the future will only accomplish death.
- ✚ The duties of the Kohanim and Levi'im are reaffirmed along with a list of the Kohanim's share in the nations produce and livestock.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 18, verses 21 - 32

- ✚ The laws relating to the Levi'im's share of the nation's produce and the Terumah they must give to the Kohanim are also reiterated.

Haftorah – FIRST BOOK OF SHMUEL (SAMUEL), Chapter 11 Verse 14 to chapter 12, Verse 22

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Bnai Yisrael summon Shmuel the Navi to appoint a king, so he can rule over them, just like the other nations.
- ✚ Shmuel chastises them for wanting a king, but will adhere to their demands by anointing Shaul (Saul) to become the first king to rule over Israel. However Shmuel points out that everyone, including Shaul will be subject to the Torah and Hashem who is and always will be their true king.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ The sedra speaks about Korach rebelling against the authority of Moshe and Aaron in front of Bnai Yisrael ordering them to step down as leaders. Whereas the Haftorah is the complete reverse. This time it's Bnai Yisrael challenging the leadership with Shmuel who was a descendent of Korach's.
- ✚ While Korach expressed a right to interpret the Torah as he saw fit, Shmuel tells the people that the success of a king and his nation is totally dependent upon the torah and the unquestioned teachings of Moshe.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The craziest thing about the Korach story is that Korach's original reason for his protest against Aaron as the Kohen Gadol wasn't so crazy at all. Korach asks "As all of Hashem's nation is deemed holy, why did you raise yourself above us?" Meaning that everyone is equal and that everyone has the potential, no matter who they are or what their background is, to achieve great spiritual heights.

According to Rashi, Korach's mistake was that Korach created a separation between himself and the rest of Bnai Yisrael in making this accusation. I believe maybe Korach's original intentions were just for fairness and equality for all of Bnai Yisrael in terms of their potential and their ability to lead. But Korach should have approached his argument differently. If he had only viewed his concerns with Moshe and Aaron in private, instead of publically in front of everyone, then maybe things might have turned out differently. The fact Korach aired his opinions openly, only vilified him and rightfully so.

One of Korach's points of contention was that Moshe was fabricating the torah laws under the guise of Hashem's name. Korach and his followers asked Moshe the following questions: Is a garment made entirely of Techelet (special blue dye) still obligated in Tzitzits? And does a house filled with Torah scrolls require a mezuzah on its door post? When Moshe replied with the correct answer that a garment made entirely of Techelet is indeed obligated in Tzitzits, and that a house full of Torah scroll does need a mezuzah, Korach and 250 heads of the nation mocked him, claiming that this was completely illogical

On one level I can appreciate Korach's argument and concerns because at that precise moment in time, all of Bnai Yisrael were on the same level of prophecy as each other. However being equally holy and close to Hashem does not give us the right to understand his deepest of secrets. Korach's attitude was that if something was beyond his understanding then it must be that Moshe had made it up.

This arrogance was Korach's major error that ultimately led to his downfall. Many times we assume that we must have complete understanding of a person or a situation. We cannot even imagine that our knowledge may be limited, that there is some piece of information of which we are not privy to. When we think with this arrogant attitude like that of Korach, we can end up making very big mistakes.

May we all strive to be able to accept our own limitations and achieve a humble approach to all situations in life.

