

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Korach

5 Tammuz, 5783 / June 24, 2023

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Jeffrey Silver to commemorate the first yahrtzeit of his father, Label Silver ז"ל י"א ז"ל

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Annie and Shloimie Romberg for the yahrzeits of Shloimie's mother, Rae Romberg, Rachel bat Yosef v'Roizel Miriam ז"ל; Annie's father, Isidore Schindelheim, Yisroel ben Yosef u'Malka Frimet ז"ל; and Pinya and Hendel Rondberg, HY"D, Shloimie's uncle and aunt, who perished in the Kielce pogrom on 5 Tammuz 1946

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Larry & Sue Zeifman and Joe & Yocheved Zeifman in memory of their father Meyer Zeifman ז"ל י"א ז"ל on his yahrtzeit

Korach's Error

Rabbi Steven Gotlib

The ideological battle between Moshe and Korach is one of the best known conflicts in all of Judaism. While our first introduction to Korach is his telling Moshe Rabbeinu that all of Israel is holy and therefore he and Aharon should not be exalted above them, a midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 18:2) clarifies that this was not their first bout. The end of last week's parshah, which discussed the mitzvah of *tzitzit*, was actually also interrupted by Korach. He asked Moshe if a *tallit* that was entirely techelet still needed to have *tzitzit*.

The Ramban, in his commentary on the portion of *tzitzit*, wrote that seeing the *techelet* on our *tzitzit* is meant to remind us not to follow the desires of our hearts and eyes. Therefore, Korach argued that a garment that is already made of techelet would have no need for *tzitzit*! Moshe responded, however, that such a garment still, in fact, required *tzitzit*, much to Korach's annoyance.

Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner, the Ishbitzer Rebbe, explains (*Mei HaShiloach*, Korach 2) that the core of Korach's question was much deeper than a halachic technicality. According to Rabbi Leiner:

Techelet teaches of the fear of G-d,

and Korach asserted that the fear of G-d was something completely revealed to him at all times. He understood that everything comes from G-d, even the fear of G-d. If so, how could anyone ever do anything against G-d's will? Since all will and all action come from Him, may He be blessed, how could anyone do something not according to His will? (Betsalel Edwards tr.)

In other words, Korach believed that if everything that anyone ever does is ultimately a part of the Divine will, then we should be able to just do whatever we want, with no regard for Torah! Rabbi Leiner, however, notes that Korach cannot be correct. It is a fact, after all, that G-d created the world such that we have our own perception of it, so that we are able to choose to fulfill His will.

A similar idea was expressed by Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu* 3:2:6), who wrote that although the fundamental truth of reality is that G-d controls everything, the world of free will and worship "is the only truth that we have" but that "even our perceptions have been created for us and given to us by the Creator... for purposes of fulfilling our role in this world."

Regardless of reality from G-d's perspective, our perspective necessitates recog-

nizing that our actions are our own, and have consequences. One might say that this serves as a critique against too heavy a focus on philosophy over action. If we spend too much time thinking and not enough time doing, then we lose out on opportunities to make the world a better place. We need to think not only about the big picture, but also about each piece of the puzzle. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote in *Not in G-d's Name*, "Peace can be agreed around the conference table, but unless it grows in ordinary hearts and minds, it does not last. It may not even begin."

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Summary

Chapter 51 offers Yeshayahu's audience a range of positive promises and predictions; it is no surprise that the text is used for two of the seven Haftorot of Consolation that follow Tishah b'Av. The opening verses (51:1-3) conclude the Haftorah for Parshat Ekev, and the second half of the chapter (51:12-23) begin the Haftorah for Parshat Shoftim.

The opening verses continue the previous chapter's exhortation to place our trust in Hashem. Yeshayahu encourages the Jews to look to Hashem's treatment of Avraham and Sarah. While we may remember their tests and challenges, Yeshayahu emphasizes how Hashem identified them as special, blessed them and enlarged their family. Hashem speaks of the coming consolation as though it has already happened, which suits the certainty of Divine promises. (51:1-3)

Hashem then picks up a thread found in the early chapters of the book: a promise to offer Torah to the nations, who will honour it and come to learn it. But not everyone will wish to learn Torah; those who continue their hostility will be consumed. Either way, the Jews need not fear any nation. (51:4-8)

It is not surprising that Yeshayahu's audience might find faith difficult, but Yeshayahu offers them a second model from our history: the crossing of Yam Suf. Just as Hashem defeated the river-dwelling *tanin* (representing Pharaoh) and just as Hashem dried up the sea, so Hashem will act for us now. Our exiles will return with singing and rejoicing. (51:9-11)

Yeshayahu then asks: When you have the Creator of the heavens and the earth on your side, why do you fear the nations around you? Where does their rage get them? I have promised you redemption, and so it shall be. (51:12-16)

Of course, our fear of the nations is rooted in our history of suffering at their hands. Hashem's love for us has not protected us in the past, due to our sins. Hashem acknowledges this, validating our experience by pointing out how we suffered from famine and the sword. Our children fainted in the streets; we were intoxicated, but with suffering rather than with wine. Hashem mentions the "cup of rage" we have consumed; this is a broader image in Tanach, see Yeshayahu 27:3, Yirmiyahu 25:17 and Tehillim 60:5. (51:17-21)

But Hashem promises that the horrific past will not be repeated; once we return to Hashem, our suffering will be transferred to our tormentors. (51:22-23)

Insight

Our chapter is marked by doubled words; Yeshayahu calls, "Wake up, wake up! (51:9)" and "I, I am your comforter (51:12)" and "Awaken yourself, awaken yourself! (51:17)" The doubles appear elsewhere in Yeshayahu as well; see 29:2, 40:1, 43:11, 43:25, 48:15 and 61:10.

One could explain this as part of the overall poetic style of Yeshayahu, but a midrash identifies a deeper message. Yeshayahu exposed himself to ridicule and attacks willingly, in his hostility toward wickedness and his longing to promote righteousness. Therefore, Hashem rewarded him with a more forceful and bountiful form of prophecy. (Vayikra Rabbah 10:2)

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Siddur Insights: The Daytime Kiddush**Rabbi Jonathan Ziring**

From a strict legal perspective, Kiddush during the day only includes the blessing on wine. The Talmud (Pesachim 106a) records that when Rav Ashi visited Mechoza, he was asked to recite *Kiddusha Rabbah* ("the great Kiddush") during the day. He was unsure if they said something more than this blessing, warranting referring to it as *Kiddusha Rabbah*. To test this, he recited the end of the blessing slowly, waiting to see whether people would act as if Kiddush was about to finish or whether they expected more. When he saw an elderly man ready himself to drink, he realized that despite the title, they also included only the blessing on wine.

Various customs have developed as to verses that should be said before the blessing. Some say "*VeShamru Bnei Yisrael et HaShabbat*," "And the Jews shall guard the Sabbath." (Shemot 31:16-17) Some say the second half of a verse in the *Aseret HaDibrot*, beginning with the words "*al kein beirach*," "Therefore G-d blessed." (Shemot 20:10) However, many authorities oppose this, as one should not divide a verse. (Mishnah Berurah 289:2) Others add verses from Yeshayahu (58:13-14) about keeping Shabbat. Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik insisted, based on the above Talmudic passage which mentions nothing of such verses, that nothing should be recited besides the blessing. (Teshuvot V'Hanhagot 1:164)

Is this blessing in fact "Kiddush"? The Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 29:10) believed that it is, and thus treated it with the laws of Kiddush at night, forbidding eating beforehand and requiring that it be recited in the place where one will eat the Shabbat meal. The Raavad (ibid.) denied both of those rules, claiming that this is not really Kiddush at all. Rather it is just a way of ensuring that the Shabbat meal includes

wine. (See Chiddushei Rabbeinu Dovid to Pesachim 106a.) Ran (ad loc.) argues that it is a form of "song over wine".

Why is this called "the great Kiddush"?

- Some claim this is euphemistic, since it is not as important as the nighttime Kiddush. (Ran ad loc.)
- Rabbeinu Yehonatan (ad loc.) says that it is called this because of the honour of Shabbat, which drinking wine expresses.
- Rabbi Soloveitchik (Shiurim L'Zecher Abba Mari z"l Vol 2, pp 161-3) argues that while we may always say the same blessing on wine, for Kiddush – even during the day – those words take on a unique status. It acts to praise Shabbat. It is called "the great Kiddush" because it expresses the greatness of Shabbat. He contrasts this to the Kiddush at night, which formally sanctifies the occasion.
- Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein (Kedushat Aviv p. 115) suggests that perhaps the night and day of Shabbat are distinct units, each requiring sanctification. Thus, even though Kiddush during the day is merely a blessing on wine, it may add a level of holiness to the daytime part of Shabbat.

Thus, several perspectives emerge as to how the normal blessing on wine takes on different dimensions on Shabbat.

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Biography

Rabbi Yaakov Kanievsky

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Chaim Peretz Kanievsky was a Chernobyl chasid and shochet who lived in the village of Hornostaipil, about 100 kilometers north of Kiev, toward the end of the 19th century. His first wife passed away when he was sixty years old; on the counsel of the Rabbi, he re-married. The couple's first child, born in 1899, was named Yaakov Yisrael; the world would come to know him as "The Steipler Gaon".

At the age of eleven, Yaakov was sent to learn in Novardok, where he gained a reputation for scholarship and diligence. In 1918, the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yosef Yoizel Horowitz, appointed him to establish a branch of the yeshiva in Rogatchov, but there Yaakov Yisrael was conscripted into the Red Army.

Numerous stories are told regarding young Rabbi Kanievsky's commitment to mitzvot while serving in the army. He remarked on the satisfaction of being beaten because of his commitment to Shabbat observance, and he is said to have avoided wearing a warm uniform during the Siberian winter out of concern for *shaatnez*. Eventually he was discharged, with damaged hearing; some versions attribute this to childhood typhus, others due to the cold to which his ears were exposed while in the army.

Upon being discharged, Rabbi Kanievsky moved to Bialystok, where he continued to learn and began to publish works of Jewish law. He became Rosh Yeshiva of the Novardok yeshiva's branch in Pinsk, and he married Miriam Karelitz, sister of the Chazon Ish. In 1934, Rabbi and Rebetzin Kanievsky made aliyah, moving to Bnei Brak, where the Chazon Ish already lived. For the next fifty years, Rabbi Kanievsky dedicated himself to studying and publishing Torah, teaching students and counseling the many who approached him for aid. Rabbi Kanievsky passed away in 1985; more than 150,000 people participated in his funeral.

Rabbi Kanievsky's best-known work is his *Kehilot Yaakov* collection of novellae on the Talmud. His letters have been published in volumes entitled *Karyana d'Igrita*, and descriptions of his practices have been published in *Orchot Rabbeinu*. Rabbi Yaakov Meir Greenwald consulted Rabbi Kanievsky frequently on matters of mental and emotional health; he collected the correspondence and published it, with commentary, in a sensitive and insightful work called *Eitzot v'Hadrachot*.

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Weekly Halachah

Intention for the First Verse of Shema

Rabbi Adam Friedmann

A mishnah (Berachot 2:1) discusses the case of someone who happens to be reading the paragraphs of the Shema from the Torah when the time for the mitzvah of reading the Shema arrives. If the person intends to fulfill the mitzvah while, they fulfill their obligation. The implication of this ruling is that some kind of intention is required for the Shema. It's not enough to simply read the words. This halachah is codified by Rambam (Hilchot Keriat Shema 2:1) and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 60:5). They both understand the mishnah and the subsequent talmudic discussion to be referring to the first verse of the Shema only. If one says this verse without the correct intention, one does not fulfill the mitzvah.

What intention is a person supposed to have when saying this first verse?

- The first option raised by the Talmud (Berachot 13a) is the intention of fulfilling a mitzvah. If one is simply reading the verse as part of the Torah without intending to fulfill the mitzvah of reading the Shema, the recitation doesn't count. This possibility is ruled out by the Shulchan Aruch (see Mishneh Berurah 60:11).
- Not everyone agrees that one needs intention to fulfill a mitzvah, but everyone agrees about the intention for the first verse of the Shema. The Mishnah Berurah (60:11) writes that the necessary intention is to focus on "what one is saying", i.e., the meaning of the words.

Is "intent for what one is saying" a sufficient explanation of the obligation? Rabbi Nachum Rabinovitch notes (Yad Peshutah, Introduction to Hilchot Keriat Shema) that even when one is aware of the meaning of their words, the act of speaking can still be interpreted in a variety of ways. The person may be recounting a story. They may be issuing a command. Or they may be making a declaration. Rabbi Rabinovitch identifies the Shema with the last option. He notes that when the Sages refer to reading the first verse of the Shema as "accepting the yoke of heaven" (Berachot 13b), the Rambam understands this as declaring one's acceptance of G-d's unity (Sefer HaMitzvot, Aseh 2). According to the Rambam, then, this is the intention required for the first verse of the Shema. This entails some philosophical training, since presumably one must understand what it means that G-d is one before declaring that they accept this to be true.

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Sefer haChinuch #31: Kiddush and Havdalah, Part 2

By Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

We fulfill the mitzvah of Kiddush by reciting kiddush while holding a cup containing wine, because of a biblical textual linkage of wine and memory (Pesachim 106a). Rashi contended that wine is biblically mandated, but Rambam viewed it as a rabbinic obligation. (Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Shabbat 29:6)

The Talmud (Bava Batra 97a) states that one may recite kiddush with freshly squeezed grape juice, and most halachic authorities follow this view. The impressive list of 20th century permissive authorities includes Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Gedaliah Felder, Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, and Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. However, some prefer wine, for two reasons:

- Magen Avraham (272:3) wrote that we prefer aged, fermented wine. (However, one may read Magen Avraham as discussing a particular situation, in which fermented wine and grape juice will both be consumed at a meal, and using the fermented wine for kiddush would avoid requiring a new blessing for the grape juice during the meal.)
- Our grape juice is heated as part of its processing. This may reduce its acceptability according to some authorities, including Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 29:14).

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik prioritized wine. (Nefesh haRav pg. 185) However, he acknowledged that grape juice could be used, and certainly where there are health concerns involved with wine.

There is some debate as to whether the havdalah component of this ritual sanctification, verbally invoking the special status of Shabbat at its end, is a biblical or rabbinic obligation. If havdalah is a rabbinic obligation, women might be exempt; for more on this, see Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 296:4-5.

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Shabbat June 23-24

Shabbaton at Shaarei Shomayim: Machloket

FRIDAY NIGHT

Opening Dvar Torah: Rabbi Steven Gotlib

SHABBAT MORNING

Shiur after the Hashkamah Minyan: Rabbi Jared Anstandig: *The Legacy of Korach's Quarrel*

Derashah, Downstairs Minyan: Rabbi Jared Anstandig: *The Holy Rebellion*

Derashah, Sharp Sanctuary: Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner: *Calling All Korachs!*

Dvar Torah, 9:30 AM Minyan, Rabbi Yehuda Mann

SHABBAT AFTERNOON

7:00 PM MODERN MACHLOKET MARATHON: A PARADE OF DISPUTES

A SERIES OF BRIEF PRESENTATIONS ON HISTORIC JEWISH DISAGREEMENTS

~ IN THE SHARP SANCTUARY ~

Reform and Orthodoxy, Rabbi Steven Gotlib

Funding Kollel Study, Rabbi Yehuda Mann

German Reparations for the Holocaust, Rebbetzin Emma Taylor

Disobeying Orders in the IDF, Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

The Return of Techelet, Rabbi Jared Anstandig

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Seudah Shlishit: Rabbi Steven Gotlib, *From Piece to Peace*

After minchah R' Josh Gutenberg, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT (Milevsky Bais Medrash) (men)

After minchah, Idan Rakovsky, Halachah in the Parshah, Shaarei Tefillah

**Sun. June 25**

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver, Clanton Park (men): Hilchot Seudah

**Mon. June 26**

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, The Jewish Zoo, Week 4, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idanrak>

8:00 PM Prielle & Idan Rakovsky, Song of the Week, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklysong>

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah, Shomrai Shabbos (men)

**Tues. June 27**

8:00 AM R' Steven Gotlib, Sefer Emunah uBitachon, Village Shul

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Kohelet, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> *not this week*

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park (women)

**Wed. June 28**

8:00 PM R' Steven Gotlib, Ashkenazi and Sephardi Differences, The Village Shul

8:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Shir haShirim, Shaarei Tefillah

1 hour before minchah R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park

**Thurs. June 29**

8:00 AM R' Steven Gotlib, Jewish Mysticism, Village Shul

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Beitzah (advanced), for location: [ymann@torontotorah.com](mailto:ymann@torontotorah.com)

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