

Torah sweets

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KORACH – WHEN A DELAYED REACTION IS THE BEST ONE

A plane was sitting at the terminal, scheduled to leave shortly. Departure seemed to be taking ages, and the passengers grew restless. Eventually, a staff member announced on the P.A. system: "Ladies and gentlemen, we apologize for the delay to your journey today. During preflight checks the pilot wasn't happy with the noise coming from the left engine, so we had to delay departure until we can locate a new pilot."

In the business world, delayed decision-making – waiting too long to make important choices – can quietly drain momentum, cause missed opportunities, and increase hidden costs. However, in the arena of personal relationships, delaying decisions/reactions may be more advantageous than some think. We can learn this from Moshe Rabbeinu's exalted conduct.

In this week's Parsha, Korach, we learn about the rebellion that Korach and his cronies initiated against the greatest leader in history (Moshe). The ridiculous accusations were centered around the idea that Moshe had assumed too much power, for the whole congregation is entirely holy and raised himself over the congregation of Hashem (see Bamidbar 16:3). Ostensibly, Moshe could have fired back, as it was so clear that Moshe never had an iota of self-interest in any of his actions. However, what did Moshe 'answer' to Korach? The Torah tells us: (ibid. 16:5). "*Boker v'yoda Hashem – in the morning, Hashem will make known who is His.*" According to **Rashi**, Moshe was giving the rebels time until the morning to recognize their misconduct and correct their error. If they persisted, Hashem would show them that Moshe had been acting according to His will and instructions.

Based on this, **Rabbi Tzvi Sytner** observed that too often, we are reactionary when people say hurtful things to us. Our quick response is obviously not thought-through and may end up making matters far worse and regretting what we said. The classic example is the marital advice of not going to bed angry at one's spouse. This stems from the data that going to sleep angry may prolong and exacerbate a conflict, while also negatively impacting one's sleep. That said, staying up while exhausted and fighting the entire night does very little to make matters better. The best response in such cases is to get a good night's rest and tackle the matter again the next morning, only to discover that perhaps the issue that was driving the conflict wasn't so major to begin with. (It must be pointed out that we should let issues fester and address them at the optimal time with the proper mindset and approach. Moshe had every right to respond right away, but instead decided to wait until the morning to deal with it, in hopes that a night's rest would lead to a realignment of perspective.

The way to succeed in not being reactionary is by being aware of what triggers us and avoiding those situations as much as possible. There are four ideas to remember: 1) Triggers usually hit the body before the brain. Notice where you hold tension - your chest, stomach, or jaw - and use this as a cue that you are in a triggered state. 2) If you are in a heated situation, try to buy time by physically stepping away. You can say, "I am feeling a bit overwhelmed and need a moment to process this. I'll be back in ten minutes to talk", 3) If you can't escape the situation physically, try to mentally escape the space through deliberate breathing: inhale slowly through your nose for four seconds, hold your breath for four seconds, and exhale through your mouth for six seconds. This naturally calms the nervous system, and 4) You can ask yourself: "Am I reacting to what is happening right now, or is this reminding me of a past experience?" Remind yourself that you are safe in the present moment.

Too often, our personal challenges lead us to overreact to a situation emotionally and not rationally. Let's learn from Moshe's response that we are not obligated to react instantaneously just because we are expected to. Instead, let's try to bide our time until tempers cool and a sensible dialogue can be had.



HAFTARAH HONEYCOMBS BY RABBI MOSHE KLEIN **KORACH – KEEPING FOCUS ON THE PURPOSE OF LIFE**

In this week's Haftarah, Shmuel Hanavi rebukes the Jewish nation in response to their asking for a king. Shmuel tells them how Hashem took care of them in Mitzrayim, and how the issues with Pelishtim and Moav were solved by Hashem sending proper messengers. All the dangers took place after the Jewish nation sinned, and they were taken care of when the nation did Teshuvah. Why was a king needed, Shmuel asked, when in truth only Hashem – our true King can save us?

Then, Shmuel tells the people (Shmuel Alef, 12:13-14): "*Behold the king whom you have chosen, whom you have requested, and Hashem has appointed a king over you. If you will fear Hashem and serve Him...and you will not rebel against the commandments of Hashem, both you and the king who reigns over you, will be after Hashem.*" Shmuel then made it clear (ibid. 12:17) that asking for a king was not the ideal when he said, "*I shall call Hashem, and He will send thunder and rain, and you shall know and see, that your evil is great, which you have done in the eyes of Hashem, to ask for yourselves a king.*"

This conversation ends with Shmuel telling the people not to stray from Hashem, not to be afraid, and not to go after vain things (hatoyhu) which cannot profit or deliver, for they are vain (ibid. 12:21). What does this mean? It's brought down from both the **Vilna Gaon** and **Rav Tzaddok** that if one wants to know the meaning of a certain word, one should look at the context of the first time the word is mentioned in the Torah, which in our case, would be in Parshas Bereishis. The Torah states that when Hashem created the world, "the earth was toyhu - astonishingly empty." (See **Rashi** [Bereishis 1:2] who says that a person wonders and is astonished at the emptiness therein.)

The **Ramban** explains that the word toyhu (Kiddushin 40b) connoted a language of regret. If someone wants to coin a name and then realizes that he should not have called it that. He writes that when the world was created at the beginning, it was created with "chomer", undefined material which didn't have a form. (CONCLUSION ON PAGE 2) →

When one tried to explain what it is precisely, it would be unexplainable, and every attempt at describing it would be regretted. This is why the meaning of toyhu can be “mistake” because it’s not definable. The Pasuk (Tehillim 46:8) says, “take a look at the works of Hashem at the desolation in the land.” Rashi says that Hashem made the land of the nations desolate. The Gemara tells us that a name causes a certain future to its owner (as in, don’t call it shamos - desolation, but sheimos - names).

Rav Moshe Shapiro, ZT”L, explains that the name of something means the definition of its essence, and the opposite of that is shamos (desolation, like a desert which cannot be named). That’s what creation was before it had a tzurah (concrete form). The question remains: what does this have to do with what Shmuel told the Jewish people? To explain, Shmuel told the nation that if they don’t follow Hashem, they will be in a state of no meaning and no defined existence. There are people today who get involved in many different vices – some make a religion of sports. There is clearly something off about it, as one who gives meaning to anything other than Hashem is misguided. The same goes for politics, wherein people follow a leader and start to believe that said leader can truly help them.

One may have good intentions, but when a leader one is relying on is not Hashem, one is depending on a fake power, and there is no substance in that “following”. Rather, it only leaves one with a lack of clarity and living a life without a real tzurah. In Yiddish, there is a term called being “klor”, living with a sense of clarity, which so many people today lack. People may have money and material success, but too many live in a hazy state when it comes to knowing their purpose. Sadly, many don’t realize that the true meaning of life is serving Hashem and no one else.

We have so many good ideas, but the question is, are they part of a defined existence that can give us meaning and true happiness? A happy person is one who has clarity, knowing exactly what he is supposed to do and when to do it. He saves all his energies in the proper Torah channels. If one lives that way, they don’t have to excuse themselves, as everything is defined. When one is all mixed up with good ideas, allowing some dose of Hashem into their lives, and on the side, they have politics, sports, money, and games – it becomes one big blend, and one is ultimately leading a discombobulated existence. This was the crucial message of Shmuel. If one follows Hashem, one doesn’t live a life of desolation, but when one does not follow Him, one simply lives an empty life.

IF YOU CAN, PLEASE SHARE THE TORAH SWEETS WITH THOSE WHO YOU THINK WOULD BENEFIT FROM IT. THANK YOU!

1) The Torah (Bamidbar 15:39) commands us, “V’Lo Sasuru Acharei Levavchem V’Acharei Eineichem, do not stray after your hearts and after your eyes”. Rashi (ibid., quoting the Midrash Tanchuma Bamidbar 15) explains that “The eyes and the heart are ‘spies’ for the body that seek out sins; the eyes see, the heart lusts, and the body carries out the sins”. It is forbidden to do anything or act in a way that will, in turn, cause one to follow their eyes and heart and commit a sin. (Sefer HaChinuch, quoted in Biur Halacha Siman 1.) Thus, it is forbidden for a male to purposely gaze at a female, and one who frequently and intentionally does so is deemed a Rasha, wicked (Bava Basra 57b).

2) Furthermore, one who intentionally gazes at women is in violation of the negative commandment (Devarim 23:10): “V’Nishmarta Mikol Davar Ra - You must guard yourself from all evil”. The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 20b) derives from the Pasuk that one who isn’t careful with his eyes by day will ultimately end up following his heart and transgress a sin at night. One who takes a certain path or chooses a certain checkout counter in a supermarket or similar actions in order to be able to gaze at a female who is on that path or behind that checkout counter, even if this person is full of Torah and good deeds like Moshe Rabbeinu, will suffer the wrath of Gehinom [unless he does proper Teshuva] (Brachos 61a).

3) It is forbidden for a male to gaze at a female who is not dressed modestly, as doing so will bring him to forbidden thoughts. (Mishna Berura Siman 75:1) In the event that a male must speak with or otherwise be near a female who is not dressed properly, if he can do so without gazing at her, it is permissible to do so even if there is a possibility that he may inadvertently see her.

4) However, if he knows that there is no way that he will be able to speak with her or be near her without intentionally gazing at her, it is prohibited for him to put himself in that situation, and he must find a different avenue to accomplish what he set out to do without going there. (See Shach Y.D., Siman 142:34) Moreover, if a male is somewhere first and an immodest female arrives afterwards, unless totally necessary for him to be there for a valid reason and he knows he won’t gaze at her intentionally, he must leave that area. The above is true, even if by having to leave the area or not go in the first place, it will result in tircha, hardship/monetary loss, as hardship or losing money is not an acceptable reason to transgress prohibitions. (*Pnei Yehoshua*, Pesachim 25b)

5) If one has no valid reason (monetary or medical) to go to a place where immodest women are found, it’s prohibited to go there even if he is careful not to gaze at them. Thus, a male is forbidden to go to an immodest beach, boardwalk, or another vacation spot where he will surely be in the presence of many immodestly clad females, even if he thinks that he can be careful not to gaze. One who disregards this Halacha and goes to such a place anyhow is deemed a Rasha. (Bava Basra 57b)

6) If one needs to go somewhere and he isn’t sure if there will be immodestly clad women there or not, or if he has a valid reason to go to a place where there are such females, but he isn’t certain that he will have to gaze at them, he may go. (**Taz** O.C, Siman 316:3). Of course, in any of the situations above, if he finds himself having forbidden thoughts, he must leave at once lest he transgress the prohibition of *V’Nishmarta Mikol Davar Ra* or graver sins, Chas V’shalom (**Igros Moshe**).

SUGAR RUSH ON 613 MITZVOS BY RABBI ELI REIT

MITZVAH # 215 – BRIS MILAH

Every Jewish father is commanded to circumcise his son when the son turns eight days old, as the Pasuk (Bereishis 17:12) says, “You shall circumcise all males”. If the son’s health isn’t able to handle it, then the bris is delayed until he is better. If the father can’t do the bris himself, then he can have someone else do it on his behalf. This is what is typically done.

If the father is not alive or, for whatever reason, is unable (or unwilling) to arrange a bris, then the Jewish community is responsible for stepping in and arranging the bris. It is permitted to invite people to a bris ceremony (contrary to popular misconception); however, it is forbidden to invite people to the meal afterward. Instead, the host should just “inform” people about the meal in place of an actual invitation.

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This weekly column draws from Rabbeinu Bachye's introduction to each Parsha, linking it to a verse in Mishlei, and offering practical insights and takeaways.

“Shocher Tov Yevakesh Ratzon V'Doresh Ra'ah T'Voenu. Boteach B'Ashro Hu Yipol, U'KeAleh Tzaddikim Yifrichu - He who diligently strives for good will find favor; but he who seeks evil, it will come to him. He who relies on his wealth will fall; but the righteous will sprout forth like foliage.” (Mishlei 11:27-28)

What Goes Around Comes Around

Many cultures and belief systems have a maxim. People often refer to it as Karma (which we might want to stay away from since it is likely rooted in Eastern Religion), but the way we express it and understand it is Midah Kinegged Midah. The very yardstick that you apply to others is the one that will be used to measure what is coming to you - whether for good fortune or bad.

This is expressed poignantly by Yeshahyahu HaNavi (in 3:10-11): “Imru Tzadik Ki Tov Ki Pri Ma'allileihem Yochailu. Oy L'Rasha RaKi Gmul Yadav Ya'aseh Lo”. In our Psukim, Shlomo HaMelech is warning us to always attempt to further the interests and success of others and to daven for this while avoiding trying to cause harm.

Based on this, **Rabbeinu Bachye** states that a Shliach Tzibor is in a unique position to be able to effect positive outcomes by Davening on behalf of others. If he fails to do so it will come back to bite him. We see this in the arena of Ir Miklat. The Gemara in Makkos tells us that the freedom of the Goleh is obtained when the Kohen Gadol dies. The Gemara explains that the Kohen Gadol had the opportunity to Daven that no tragedy should happen during his tenure, and he failed to do so to the level that was expected.

Boteach B'Ashro

Let's look at the other side. Who would be so bold as to bring about harm to another? Rabbeinu Bachya says it is the person who is overconfident due to his wealth. He thinks that he can get away with his actions and certainly has no use for the other person. He has the resources to sustain himself and even pay for protection from any possible consequence. Or so he thinks. In fact, Hashem will use the person's resources toward his own undoing.

Connecting to the Parsha

There were two people in history who were fabulously wealthy and met with a spectacular public death: Haman and Korach. Each one was looking for more power and consulted their wives, who unfortunately for them, egged them on to raise the stakes, leading to their demise.

The takeaway is that true security comes from righteousness, not from wealth or influence.

Self-reflective questions

Do I actively seek opportunities to help others succeed, or am I primarily focused on my own interests?

**THE LEARNING IN THIS MAGAZINE IS DEDICATED AS
A COMPLETE AND SPEEDY REFUAH FOR LEEBA
MIRIAM GEULAH BAS LEAH AND ALL THOSE WHO
NEED IT**

Rav Chaim Walkin, ZT”L, was a well-known and sought-after Mashgiach in Bayit Vegan. When his family was sitting shiva after his passing, a man walked in and told them, “I wanted to thank your father. He always would say the funniest jokes, and it really picked me up during difficult times.” The family was a little confused. “I’m sorry,” they said, “you must have the wrong family. Our father was a very serious man.” “No, no,” replied the man. “I knew your father for many years, and he would always brighten my day with something humorous.”

The family did a little research, and it turned out that around twenty years ago, this man had a young child who was unfortunately killed by a car. The town was buzzing. Somebody had to break the news to him, but who? Rav Walkin stepped up and broke the hard news to him as sensitively as possible. Rav Walkin then realized that now, every time this man sees him, he’s going to think of him as the person who told him his son had been killed, and it’s going to remind him of that tragedy. So, Rav Walkin decided that he’s going to do something to break that association, something that would brighten his day. He would always have a couple of jokes prepared, and whenever he saw him, he’d always tell the man one or two of them and share some positive words.

Comment: In this week's parsha, Korach, we learn about the incredible power of Lashon Harah. In last week's parsha, it led to Bnei Yisrael being told they cannot enter Israel. This week, we learn how it led to a massive revolt against Moshe's leadership. If evil speech is such a powerful, destructive force, then positive speech must be an equally powerful constructive force. So, next time we see somebody who struggles socially, maybe it's someone who others even find annoying at times, let us say something to brighten his or her day. We never know how powerful just a few small words can be.

MILK'N'HONEY FROM JERUSALEM BY RABBI JONATHAN TAUB KORACH – A DISPUTE NOT FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN

At the start of the parsha, when we are told that Korach starts his rebellion against the authority of Moshe, the names of Doson and Aviram are mentioned. The **Chiddushei HaRim** asks why it is that others are not mentioned by name. There were 250 others who brought ketores (firepans with incense). He answers that the reason is that Doson and Aviram were people involved in an argument, disagreement, and mutiny for the sake of argument and dispute.

This is according to what the **Ramban** says, that the 250 were all firstborn, and they wanted to have a return of the priesthood to the firstborn instead of the descendants of Aharon. Therefore, there was a reason for their being involved in the dispute. Doson and Aviram were not firstborn, and they weren't Levites. What did they stand to gain? Why did they become involved in the mutiny? They were arguing for the sake of arguing. That is why they are singled out. They were evil people, motivated to cause dissent and division. However, I am not sure whether this is necessarily correct. If you look at the **Malbim**, he writes that Doson and Aviram are from the tribe of Reuven.

They also had a claim. Their claim was that since Reuven was the firstborn, his tribe should be the one who had priority, and those who performed the kahuna (priestly service) should be from the tribe of Reuven. Therefore, there was a certain justification to their claim. According to this, we see that there are three groups. There is Korach, who is one of the Levi'im, and he was lobbying to be a priest, rather than just being a Levite. There were 250 who were all firstborn, and they felt that the firstborn should have the right to the priesthood. And then there were Doson and Aviram, who were campaigning on behalf of the tribe of Reuven.

Now, if you have a look, all these three groups have aims that are mutually exclusive. They cannot all be the priests. It is either the Levites or it is the firstborn, or it is the tribe of Reuven. What united them is only opposition to Moshe. That is why the Mishnah (Avos 5:15), the example of a dispute, shelo l'shem sh'mayim, not for the sake of heaven, is Korach and all his assembly. It does not say Korach and Moshe. Korach and all his assembly were split between themselves, as well. That is an example of a dispute, not for the sake of heaven, when one side is not even united but is only together in their opposition to something or someone else.

KORACH – DON'T ARGUE WITH HATSS!

Summary: The Ramchal explained that having wisdom is not a cause for one to feel any arrogance; rather, it should focus one on the obligation to share his wisdom and teach others. Now, the Ramchal addresses the wealthy.

The Ramchal writes: "If he is wealthy, he may rejoice in his lot, but it is incumbent upon him to help those who do not have. If he is strong, he must help those who are weak and rescue the oppressed. To what is this similar? To servants in a household where each one is charged with a matter, and it is incumbent on each to stand on his appointed position to uphold the affairs and needs of the house. In truth, there is no place for pride here." (Mesilas Yescharim, Chapter 22)

Just because someone has money or strength today doesn't mean that they will have it tomorrow. Every blessing in our lives is not even a gift; rather, it's on loan from Hashem, Who can take it back at any time without so much as a notice. A business deal gone wrong, or an economic downturn, can leave one destitute and bankrupt. An accident or a sudden sickness can render a healthy person disabled.

The reason we have been "lent" money or resources like talents and abilities is so we can use them for a holy purpose – to help others. A person employed by someone and is told to use company money would be insane to think highly of himself due to the things the employer allowed him/her to tend to. Hashem's resources are similarly no cause for us to swell with pride.

The Ramchal continues: "Behold, this is the type of examination and contemplation proper for every person whose intellect is straight and not perverse. When this becomes clear to him, he may be called a truly humble person, for he is humble in his heart and inner being. This is as David said to Michal: 'I was lowly in my own eyes' (Shmuel II 6:22)." (ibid. Chapter 22)

It takes some analysis, but humility is not impossible if one has an accurate understanding of oneself and one's purpose. When King David transferred the Ark to Yerushalayim, he was dancing with zero inhibitions, which drew the ire of his wife, Michal. She felt this behavior was a breach of royal dignity. David countered that to lower oneself before Hashem is itself an honor. King David was lowly in his own eyes, which proves humility is not about how you act but how you view yourself.

The Ramchal concludes: *Our sages, of blessed memory, said (Sotah 5b): 'Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Come and see how great are the lowly of spirit, for when the Temple stood, a man brought a burnt-offering and earned the reward of a burnt-offering, a flour-offering and he earned the reward of a flour-offering; but as for him whose mind is lowly, Scripture ascribes it to him as though he had offered every one of the sacrifices; as it is said (Tehillim 51:19): 'The sacrifices of Hashem are a broken spirit.' Behold, this is a praise of the lowly of spirit, who are humble in heart and in thought.'* (ibid. Chapter 22)

Again, this doesn't mean that one should feel like a depressed loser. It means that one simply needs to remember that Hashem wants us to know our roles. The Vilna Gaon explains that the primary objective of the sacrificial service is for one to lower their pride and return to Hashem in full teshuvah, and a humble person accomplishes the greatest sacrifice: the negation of one's self-importance. More to come next week, B'eH.

SUGARY SAYING BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER

"All the work involved in doing Mitzvos is also part of eternity".

As a test, the shevatim (tribes) placed a stick in the Mishkan (Tabernacle) with Aharon's stick. The results were that Aharon's stick blossomed with flowers and almonds. This showed that Aharon was the chosen one. Hashem told them as a reminder to put away the stick with the flowers and almonds forever.

Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT"L, asks what the significance of the flowers remaining on the stick is. As long as there were the almonds, we can see that this is the one that bore fruit. He answers that when doing a mitzvah, even the efforts that bring about the fruits are important. And they must also be put away forever as a reminder of their significance.

In this week's Parsha, Dasan, Abiram, and two hundred and fifty men confronted Moshe Rabbeinu and accused him of exalting himself and Aharon over the Jewish people. Moshe fell on his face in distress, as this was the fourth incident where members of Klal Yisroel were sinning in a public forum. When Moshe is falsely accused, what does Moshe reply? (Bamidbar 16:5) *"He spoke to Korach and to his entire assembly, saying, In the morning Hashem will make known who is His own and who is holy, and He will bring close to Him, and whom He will choose, He will bring close to Him."*

Rashi elucidates why Moshe wanted to wait until the next day to prove Korach wrong. He writes that Moshe intended to delay them so that perhaps Korach and his colleagues would turn back from their confrontation. Moshe knew he did not do anything without Hashem. He understood that Korach and his assembly were woefully misconstrued in their assumption that he wrongly grabbed the office of leader for himself and Kohen Gadol for Aharon, his brother. However, instead of quelling the quarrel right there and then, he pushed it off to the next day. Why? Wouldn't it have been better to stop the argument in its tracks?

Moshe realized sometimes people just need a little time to process feelings, to overcome strong emotions, to start to think rationally again. He was hoping this would be the case with Korach and his colleagues. In the end, Korach took his argument all the way, which led to terrible repercussions for him and his entire assembly. There is an important lesson here that we can apply to our marriages. Moshe teaches us that giving a person time is valuable. When we are amidst an argument with our spouse, sometimes we need to wait a little before we can work it out. R'Shimon ben Elazar (Avos 4:18) advises, *"Do not appease your fellow in the time of his anger."*

Rabbi Yosef Palacci (Journey through Pirkei Avos, P. 305) gives the example of a husband who comes home after a long day. His wife has spent her day doing carpool, working part time, refereeing children, and dealing with a cranky baby. She made supper and the food is finally ready. Six o'clock comes. He said he would be home. When he walks in the door at seven, she is tired, and the food is cold. When she turns to him and asks, "Moshe, you said six o'clock. Why are you home at seven?" In that moment, it doesn't matter how good his excuse is; it is not the time to address it.

An easy-to-remember acronym (Torah Marriage Toolbox class #2) is HATSS. When our spouse has our HATSS on, now is not the time to argue, discuss, or work things out. HATSS stands for Hungry/Hormonal, Angry, Tired, Triggered, Stressed/Sick. It is more likely that the argument will result in the HATTS spouse being short-tempered, quick to criticize, or just unable to see another point of view. Sometimes, we need to take the lesson from Moshe and give our spouse some time.

It takes effort to exercise self-restraint and wait for the right time, especially if we are feeling anxious to work things out with our spouse, but the dividends are worth the effort. May Hashem bless us with the strength to have self-control and the wisdom to know when we should wait, and may He shine the light of Shalom Bayis into our homes!