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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת קרח

ויקח קרח וכו', ויקמו לפני משה ואנשים מבני ישראל חמשים ומאתים נשיאי עדה וכו', ויקהלו על משה ועל אהרן ויאמרו אליהם רב לכם כי כל העדה כלם קדושים ובתוכם ה', ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה': (במדבר טז, א-ג)
Korach separated himself ... They arose before Moshe with men of the Bnei Yisroel, two hundred and fifty of them, princes of assembly ... They gathered together against Moshe and Ahron and said to them, "It is much for you! For the entire assembly – all of them – are holy and Hashem is among them, so why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem?" (Bamidbar 16:1-3)

This week's *Sidrah* begins with Korach stirring the passions of his group into a frenzy of "righteous indignation." He accuses Moshe of fabricating commandments and abusing his power. Korach also alleges that Moshe prioritized his own family over others and therefore deserved to be opposed.

The Midrash questions the connection between our *parshah* and last week's, which discusses the command to wear *tzitzis*. It explains that Korach clothed his two hundred and fifty partners in garments made entirely of *techeiles* and then confronted Moshe. He questioned Moshe about whether a garment made completely out of *techeiles* requires a strand of *techeiles* on its *tzitzis*. When Moshe replied in the affirmative, Korach derided him. "How can this be? If one strand of *techeiles* exempts an entire garment made from other materials, then a garment entirely of *techeiles* should surely be exempt!" Korach then asked Moshe whether a house filled with Sifrei Torah requires a *mezuzah* on its door. Moshe answered that it is obligated. Korach ridiculed this, questioning how a single *parshah* written in the *mezuzah* could be more effective than multiple Sifrei Torah each containing two hundred and seventy-five *parshiyos*.

The Meforshim explain that these two examples were not just random questions meant to ridicule and scorn Moshe and the *mitzvos* he taught. Instead, they were the preface for Korach's claim. Korach claimed to Moshe: ה' קהל ה', ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה', *For the entire assembly – all of them – are holy and Hashem is among them, so why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem?* Just as a garment made entirely of *techeiles* should not require one thread of *techeiles*, and a house full of Sifrei Torah should not require a *mezuzah*, so too regarding Klal Yisroel, there should be no need for Moshe and Ahron to assume a leadership role. He was claiming that just as a *tallis* which is entirely made from *techeiles* does not need a special strand, so too a people as holy as the Yidden who all witnessed the revelation at Sinai does not need a special leader.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains the mistake of Korach and his followers. A *techeiles* garment *does* need a special strand of *techeiles* and a house full of Sifrei Torah *does* require a *mezuzah*. The reason for this is simple and straightforward. A garment produced entirely from *techeiles* is extraordinary in that it contains a substantial amount of the holy colour, more than a single strand. However, the garment is not dedicated as a *mitzvah* object, since it also plays the role of clothing its wearer. A house full of Sifrei Torah contains an enormous amount of *kedushah* due to its special contents; however, ultimately it also serves as a dwelling place. A person's garments require the thread of *techeiles* to be

totally reserved as a *mitzvah* object, and one needs to install in one's home a *mezuzah*, thereby designating part of one's house as entirely dedicated to a *mitzvah* item.

This was the message to Korach. It may be true that כָּל הָעֵדָה כֻּלָּם קִדְּשִׁים – the whole nation was holy; however, they were all people living regular lives, and we require a leader who is entirely dedicated to Hashem. Moshe was teaching that regardless of our elevated spiritual status, we require leadership and direction from those living in an entirely different sphere from the common people.

This concept is portrayed by the Rambam (*Hil. Shemittah* 13:12-13) who explains how Shevet Levi and anyone who devotes himself to Torah is distinguishable from the rest of the nation. He writes: Why did Shevet Levi not receive a portion of land in Eretz Yisroel with his brothers? Since they are separated to serve Hashem and to teach His righteous ways to the public. They are separated from the ways of the world by not partaking in war and not inheriting a portion of the land. Instead, they are the army and portion of Hashem. This status is not only reserved for Shevet Levi, rather anyone who elevates himself by detaching from worldly matters and wholly dedicating himself to serve Hashem becomes sanctified with an unparalleled *kedushah* and he will be the “portion of Hashem” and His heritage forever.

Similarly, Rabbeinu Yonah writes (*Sharei Teshuvah* 3:148) that it is a known fact that the leaders and teachers of Klal Yisroel were always those who devoted themselves constantly, day and night, to Torah. The sincere Lomdei Torah have stood by Klal Yisroel, ensuring its spiritual continuity by directing and leading the nation.

Let us learn this lesson: Despite the greatness of every Yid, we still need our leaders to guide us on the right path. Korach preached equality, saying that everyone is holy, but we understand and appreciate how important our Gedolim are. We acknowledge that only those select few who have fully dedicated themselves to the Torah, free from worldly concerns, are suitable to guide others spiritually and teach the ways of Hashem.

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