



Parshas Korach 2020, the Pursuit of Peace

The Parsha Perspective is dedicated in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward; may his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.

Our Parsha begins with the powerful Korach staging a rebellion against Moshe Rabbienu and his brother Aaron. Together with a few ringleaders, Korach assembled 250 men and accused Moshe of nepotism and power hoarding.

They took specific issue with Moshe's appointment of his brother Aaron as the Kohen Gadol. Their belief was that since the entire Jewish nation was holy, there is no need for anyone to be higher than another and hold the position of leader.

In response, Moshe proposed that they would participate in a test the next day, which would show who G-d determined to be the Kohen Gadol. Everyone would bring an incense offering in the Mishkan, and the accepted offering would show who was chosen.

G-d was deeply angered by Korach's offering and punished him and his accomplices for their lack of faith in Moshe Rabbienu. He commanded Moshe and Aaron to distance themselves from Korach and his allies as a giant hole opened up beneath them, swallowing them alive.

However, a question comes to mind: How could the Torah name this Parsha after a man who incited a rebellion against G-d's chosen leaders and paid for his actions with his life?

The Midrash Tamchuma explains that this Parsha is called Korach to teach us that we should not try to connect with G-d as Korach did.

He thought that he could do better and, therefore, decided to circumvent and sidestep G-d's chosen leaders. As the Pasuk writes (17:5), *“It shall act as a reminder for the Jewish people, that anyone who is not from Aaron's children, should not offer incense before G-d, for lest they will suffer the same fate as Korach and his supporters.”*

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe gives a deeper and more powerful explanation. He writes that this Parsha is called Korach to bring peace to such a problematic circumstance.

He quotes the Rambam in the Mishnah Torah (*end of the laws on Chanukah*) that the Torah was given to the world to make peace. As Shlomo HaMelach writes in Misheil about the Torah (3:17), *“All her ways are pleasant, and all her paths are peaceful.”*

Since Korach's intentions were to emphasize every Jew's holiness, the Torah highlighted that goal and named the Parsha after him. As he said to Moshe Rabbienu (16:3), *“You have gone too far! For the entire community is holy, and G-d is in their midst. Why do you raise yourselves above the G-d's congregation?”*

The Torah is elevating Korach even though he fought and rebelled against Moshe and Aaron. G-d wants peace in this world and is willing to have His holy name erased for the reconciliation between husbands and wives. This is why Aaron was chosen to be Kohen Gadol, for he loved peace and pursued peace, especially for husbands and wives.

In our daily life and during these trying times, it is imperative that we stay together and be unified despite all differences. This can be achieved by appreciating all the differences that make us an individual. For when we are joined together and united on all fronts, we can accomplish goals far beyond our imagination.

***“Peace cannot be kept by force;
it can be achieved by understanding.”***

~Albert Einstein

Have a meaningful Shabbos!
Rabbi Sholom Yemini