

# Derech Ha-rif

Excerpts from the Torah discourse delivered by The great Rabbi Yoshiyahu Yosef Pinto Shlita

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## First Shabbat Meal

"And Korach, the son of Kehat, the son of Yitshar, the son of kehath took."

One must first have pure simplistic Emunah, faith in Hashem, then they can develop it further through reflection and understanding.

The Midrash (Rabba 18:3) teaches that in the arguments that Korach presented to Moshe Rabbenu, he specifically chose the Mitzvah of Tzitzit to question - Heaven Forbid- Moshe's authenticity. Before the entire nation, Korach confronted Moshe on the Mitzvah of Tzitzit: "You say it needs a blue strand on each corner. Is this still true if the entire Tzitzit is dyed that special blue?" "Sure," replied Moshe. The obvious question is why had Korach chosen that Mitzvah among all 613?

To answer this question we present the fundamental forms of Faith in Hashem. The first level of faith is attained by reflection and observation at Hashem's greatness. The complexity of life and our incredible universe is irrefutable truth that Hashem Is. The next level of Faith is a pure, simplistic level, without questions, inspection, analysis or any form of mental exercise. It is a simple acceptance of Hashem's presence in the world. We exercise our principles of faith as our parents and generations earlier have; it is our solid inheritance. Our sages teach that we must first practice this simplistic, almost naïve faith, before we choose to develop our faith by analysis and observation.

The significance of this simplistic faith can be witnessed during the Spanish Inquisition where those that gave up their life for Hashem all practiced that simplistic faith. The perished, but those that managed to escape lived onwards. Unfortunately, those that decided they'd feign conversion ultimately dropped their practice of Judaism with the years, because their faith was based on understanding. At some point, when something doesn't make sense or work out any more, that Faith can easily falter and disappear.

Our faith must be based on a simple acceptance of its authenticity, not analysis and logic. It is most critical in our generation to have simple Faith, as our lives are filled with so many occurrences that beggar belief.

Korach, on the other hand, has his Faith based on an understand of Hashem, so to speak, while Moshe, the Leader of all Prophets lived by a pure and simplistic Faith in Hashem.

The Mitzvah of Tzitzit symbolizes the two forms of Faith. And, if we understand the symbolism, we will understand the importance and measure of each form of Faith. The white stands, which make up seven- eighths of stands per corner, represent pure, simplistic Faith- and it teaches us that a significant majority must make up this form of faith. On the other hand, the single blue strand

teaches us how much of our Faith should be invested in analysis of Hashem's Presence. The blue stands represent a Faith which arrives through understanding as the Talmud teaches they one of the objectives of the strand is to remind us of the sky and ultimately Hashem's Reign over existence.

Thus, when Korach came to Moshe and asked him if a purely blue Tallit needs white and blue stands, he was asking if simplistic faith is truly needed if one is filled with a Faith of understanding. Moshe responded "Yes," it should form the basis of one's faith. The logical form of Faith cannot exist without a basis of simplistic faith.

Our generation needs incessant reinforcement of one's simplistic Faith, as the confusion present is immense. Additionally, we have become accustomed to the scientific method of analysis which essentially teaches that if we can't measure, analyze and understand, the that but of information is not valid. Unfortunately, the Evil Inclination has imposed this mindset to the Jewish nation's holy basis of Faith.

The lesson of this week's Torah portion of Korach is to avoid all arguments and to believe in Hashem purely and without analysis and logic.

A fundamental trait to live by in our generation is that of wholeheartedness with Hashem. With wholeheartedness one can attain the most elevated spiritual levels possible to attain. Our ancestors in Morocco were great in their wholeheartedness to Hashem, to a point were they were constantly bound to Hashem. They may not have reached great levels of analysis in the Talmud and it's ancillaries, but their sanctity elevated them to the greatest connecting to Hashem.



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## Soul Of the Rif

Don't leave untied loose ends- ensure you bring closure to anything you have left unresolved. When one leaves loose ends, they tend to accumulate in one's head creating a vacuous space which gets filled by negative thoughts. See everything through to completion, with careful consideration and determination, and a settled mind. When you approach matters in this manner, you bring yourself onto the straight and sensible path, which will give you peace of mind. Seventy to eighty percent of your problems will have resolved themselves as these problems stem from erroneous assumptions where one is struggling with themselves, and this self-struggle leads to negativity which spills over to one's behavior towards others.



## 2nd Shabbat Meal

**"It is too much for you, O offspring of Levi."  
It may be that someone is smart but not wise, for wisdom comes only with Yirat Shamayim (Fear of Heaven).**

In this week's Torah portion Moshe Rabenu exhorts Korach and his congregation telling them "It is too much for you, O offspring of Levi." On these words Rashi comments: 'Korach was a smart person. What did he see that made him pursue this foolish course of action? His eye misled him, as he foresaw that a great descendant Shmuel HaNavi who is equated to Moshe and Aharon will issue forth from him, and he thought that in his merit he would be spared.'- Korach drew the strength to go against Moshe Rabenu from his descendant Shmuel HaNavi who was equated to Moshe and Aharon combined as the verse (Tehillim 99, 6) states "Moshe and Aharon among His Kohanim, and Shmuel among the callers of His Name". Why does Rashi specifically describe Korach as smart, and not describe him as wise?

Perhaps we may answer that wisdom is made up of several factors, one of which is Yirat Shamayim. Yirat Shamayim is a prerequisite to true wisdom. David Hamelech says "The beginning of wisdom is fear of Hashem" (Tehillim 111, 10)- The first building block of wisdom is Yirat Shamayim, for wisdom with no Yirat Shamayim is not true wisdom. One who is lacking in Yirat Shamayim may be smart but not wise, for regarding wisdom without Yirat Shamayim the verse (Tehillim 107, 27) says: "All their wisdom is lost"- such wisdom is neither true nor stable and does not lead anywhere.

Korach was smart but not wise, as evidenced by his uprising against Moshe Rabenu. His smartness led him nowhere. Obtaining something through smartness and cunning does not result in an enduring attainment and ultimately the matter attained illicitly will be lost. Korach's smartness led him to nothing but ruin and destruction. One who would like to attain wisdom should first set themselves the goal of attaining Yirat Shamayim, and only then will their wisdom have stability and lead to fruitful, good and wise deeds.

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 לאור מצבו הרפואי של האדמו"ר  
 רבי יאשיהו פינטו שליט"א  
 שאמוד לעבור בשבוע הקרוב טיפול רפואי ארוך ומורכב  
 נקראים בזה כל איש ישראל אנשים נשים וטף לקבל על  
 עצמם היוזק רוחני, ולהעמיד בתפילה לרפואת האדמו"ר  
 רבי יאשיהו יוסף בן זרי  
 לרפואה שלמה  
 והק א-ל כבוד לא ימאס תפילת רבים

## Q & A with the Rif



### Question:

Dear Rav, I am married for almost four years. My husband constantly makes me feel that I am not as good as his mother. His mother has greatly hurt me, I have no love for her and I do not enjoy her company- How can I explain to my husband that there is no need to force one's wife and one's mother together, and that they are two distinct and separate relationships?

### Answer:

The husband is acting improperly. The holy Torah says "Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife". One must honor his wife, and it is absolutely forbidden to compare who is better. There is no competition.

One should be devoted to his household and to his wife. May Hashem rest blessing, and may there be happiness and peace in the home with Hashem's help.





## 3rd Shabbat meal

"And those (Jewish people) in the vicinity fled upon hearing the sounds (of the earth opening up) expressing their fear that the earth swallow them too.)

Korach was swallowed by the ground because he denigrated a Talmid Chacham (Moshe Rabbenu) and as such the entire Oral Torah.

The Talmud in Sanhedrin 110a recounts an adventure which occurred to the great Sage, Rabba bar Bar Channah. He was once approached by an Arab who claimed to know where Korach was swallowed in the ground. Indeed, he brought him to a deserted location which had two openings in the ground and much smoke was emerging from them. The Arab explained that the entire month, Korach and his clan were burned, but at the end of the month the furnace was paused and for a brief moment Korach's screeches were heard exclaiming "Moshe is true and his Torah is true. And we (Korach and cronies) are fictitious." The mention of these particular details call for an explanation: why were there two openings, and what is the significance of Korach's particular exclamation of Moshe being true and himself and his cronies false?

In truth, when the earth opened up, Korach began to repent and exclaimed "Moshe is true, his Torah is true, and we are false!" The people in his vicinity couldn't understand what happened that Korach all of sudden was repenting. They were confused and began to flee at the sound of his screaming.

brought about the most dreadful destruction throughout the generations.

Interestingly, Korach's punishment of being swallowed into the ground can be explained through the Midrash which describes the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The Midrash says that Hashem raised the entire mountain above the nation and threatened to bury them alive if they didn't accept the Torah.

The nation did express their absolute dedication to Hashem and the Torah, when they declared: "Na'asei Venishmah, we shall do and (then) we shall listen." However, their intention was for the written Torah, not the oral portion- which primarily details the fine lines of every Mitzvah. To that Hashem responded with the threat of the mountain over their heads.

Hence, when Korach stood up against Moshe, he automatically opposed all the teachings which Moshe transmitted and thus he became worthy of that original punishable of being buried alive.

Thus any person who doesn't respect Sages is worthy to be punished like Korach. Korach didn't oppose Hashem nor the Written Torah, but Moshe and his Torah, the Oral Teachings from Sinai.

The two openings of the ground thus represent the two parts of the Torah, the Written and Oral Torah.

A woman can bring Salvation to the World, or, Heaven Forbid, destruction

When we delve into argument of Korach and his cronies, we find that the ones who played a critical role in the outcome were the wives of those involved.

On Ben Pelet's wife saved him from the terrible end that befell his associates. He was one of the first to join Korach's group, but his wife attempted to dissuade him by telling him that he actually had nothing to gain in the whole affair. "If Moshe wins," then you'll remain where you are now. And if Korach wins, you will still be below him.

On Ben Pelet agreed but revealed that he had sworn to follow Korach till the end. His wife kept on dissuading him, and agreed to save him from Korach. She poured him wine, which rapidly put him to sleep, and proceeded to position herself at the entrance of her house and removed her hair covering. When Korach's group stopped by to pick up their friend, she came out to them with her hair uncovered. That was enough to send them on their way (\*they were still God-Fearing people and would not present of any indecency) and save her husband.

When he finally woke from his slumber, the entire world had changed and he was a lone survivor among his group. Thus, in the merit of her intelligence, diligence and specifically her hair, she saved her husband from a horrible end.

Conversely, Korach's wife is the one who accelerated if not caused his perish. Rabbi Hanina bar Hama (Psachim 119a) teaches that the entire wealth of the world (which Yossef had amassed over the years of famine) was divided into three portions. One Korach found and took for himself, one portion Antinonus found, and the third and final portion Hashem reserved for the Tzadikim at the time of Redemption.

Korach was originally a very holy figure, he only faulted with the argument against Moshe. The Arizal a"h teaches that the end-letters of Tzadik Katamar Yiphrah (Tehillim 92:13) form the name Korach, alluding to the fact that he was a saintly figure before the incident. Also he will repent when Mashiach finally arrives.

Who thus caused his downfall? His very own wife. When Hashem commanded Moshe to establish the tribe of Levi to be the ones who serve in the Beth Hamikdash, part of their "swearing in" was to be shaved head to toe -including eyebrows. So he did, but when he arrived home his wife took one glance of him and began her denigrating of her husband. "You're the wealthiest man and this is what you're now brought to?" She continued putting Moshe down, and thus Korach had a mission for himself...

After the verses dealing with Korach being swallowed by the earth, we find a verse which tells us that the sons of Korach survived. Korach perished but his descendants still exist. Not only did they not die, but their spirit too survived in the form of any person who stands up against our Sages.

Thus, in Korach's episode, we find two women who were critical in the story; ON Ben Pelet was saved by his wife, and, on the very other end of the scale, Korach's wife brought about his demise.



## Treasure charms from the Rif

Studying the teachings of Yosef HaTzadik is a Segula for remedying of the Yesod (immoral intimate desires and actions) Our holy Sages teach that one of the ways to remedy the Yesod, and a Segula to be saved from the known sin is to study the Torah passages regarding Yosef HaTzadik. This refers to all the details and inferences one studies, and when one immerses oneself in the profound secrets hidden in the passage of Yosef HaTzadik, including the teachings of the Zohar, the Gemarra and the Midrashim regarding Yosef HaTzadik. Also the words of the early commentaries, the Ramban, the Kad HaKemach, the Or HaChaim and all the additional commentaries written for every novelty that a Jew synthesizes in Torah study gives them strength to succeed in the matter of the Yesod and to remedy the known sin. The more we immerse ourselves and expand the depth of our study of the teachings of Yosef HaTzadik, the more we purify ourselves and strengthen ourselves.



## The fourth Post Shabbat meal

## Storys from the Rif

Rabbi Pinchas Halevi Horowitz, the Baal HaHafla'ah.

It is told of the Baal HaHafla'ah that when he was elected as the Rav of Frankfurt, he approached his son in law, a Torah scholar who authored the work 'Berach Chaim', and asked him whether he would move with him to Frankfurt. His son in law replied that he did not want to leave, and wanted to remain in his town.

The Baal HaHafla'ah told his son in law: "I know that you are now married to my daughter for ten years and you have no children. Perhaps you would like to divorce her after ten years of being with her and not having children." The son in law replied "Perhaps" and did not say anything further. Upon hearing this, the Baal HaHafla'ah cursed his son in law that he will never have children neither with his wife nor with any other woman, and he would die childless.

And so it was. The Baal HaHafla'ah moved to Frankfurt, and his son in law the Berach Chaim divorced the Baal HaHafla'ah's daughter, married another woman and had no children and passed away childless. (The Berach Chaim was a great Tzadik, but nonetheless passed away childless.)

Many years later there was a great Tzadik- the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz. Once someone approached the Divrei Chaim asking for a blessing as he had no children. The Divrei Chaim asked him for his name, and the latter responded "Chaim". The Divrei Chaim proceeded to ask after whom he was named 'Chaim'. The person responded that he was named after the Tzadik, the Berach Chaim. The Divrei Chaim told him: "If so, you will have no children". When the person asked why, the Divrei Chaim explained that the curse of the Baal HaHafla'ah applied to him as well as he was named after the Berach Chaim.

We see here a profound principle- When one is aggrieved and distressed by someone, there is a severe negative judgment above which can cause damage in this world even after many years.

One should be extremely careful with all their actions and all their words, for the damage that may be caused as a result may be very difficult to remedy.

Many people experience severe difficulties without understanding why these difficulties have come upon them. These difficulties may have come upon them because of actions and words that take years and generations to remedy.

Therefore, one should be extremely careful to distance oneself from anything that may cause people distress, because remedying the damage that may be caused will be very difficult. We should all be very meticulous in this matter and be careful with each and every action.

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