

Nosh & Learn with Mindy, Parshat Korach, TBH-BE, 6/25/2020

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.*

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

Summary of Korach: Numbers 16:1 – 18:32

Numbers 16:2

וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל-מֹשֶׁה וְעַל-אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב-לָכֶם כִּי כָל-הָעֵדָה כִּלְמִם קִדְּשִׁים וּבְתוֹכְכֶם יְהוָה וּמִדּוֹעַ
תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל-קֹהַ יְהוָה:

They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too
far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the LORD is in their midst.
Why then do you raise yourselves above the LORD’s congregation?”

Numbers 16:7

וַיִּתְּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וְשִׁימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן קִטְרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מִחֹר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה הוּא הַקֹּדֵשׁ רַב-
לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי:

and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before the LORD. Then
the man whom the LORD chooses, he shall be the holy one. You have gone too
far, sons of Levi!”

Pirkei Avot 5:17

Every argument that is [for the sake of] heaven's name, it is destined to endure.
But if it is not [for the sake of] heaven's name -- it is not destined to endure. What
[is an example of an argument for the sake of] heaven's name? The argument of
Hillel and Shammai. What [is an example of an argument not for the sake of]
heaven's name? The argument of Korach and all of his followers.

Eruvin 13b:10-11

Rabbi Abba said in the name of Shmuel, For three years, the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai argued. One said, 'The halakha is like us,' and the other said, 'The halakha is like us.' A heavenly voice spoke: "These and these are the words of the living God, and the halakha is like the House of Hillel." A question was raised: Since the heavenly voice declared: "Both these and those are the words of the Living God," why was the halacha established to follow the opinion of Hillel? It is because the students of Hillel were kind and gracious. They taught their own ideas as well as the ideas from the students of Shammai.

Yevamot 14b:10

Bet Shammai did not refrain from marrying women from Bet Hillel and Bet Hillel did not refrain from marrying women from Bet Shammai to teach you that they established behaviors of affection and friendship one to the other, as it is said: "truth and peace you should love." (Zechariah 8:19)

A poetic comment from Resh Lakish on Korach: Sanhedrin 109b

Apropos Korah, the Gemara proceeds to interpret the verses written concerning him. **“And Korah, son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, took [vayikkah]”** (Numbers 16:1), **Reish Lakish says: He purchased [lakah] a bad acquisition for himself**, as through his actions he drove himself from the world. **“Korah”** alludes to the fact **that** because of him **a void [korha] was created in** the children of **Israel**. **“Son of Izhar,”** is referring to **a son who incited the wrath of the entire world upon him like the heat of the afternoon [tzohorayim]**. **“Son of Kohath,”** is referring to **a son who blunted [hik’ha] the teeth of his parents**, i.e., he shamed them with his conduct. **“Son of Levi,”** is referring to **a son who became an escort [levaya] in Gehenna**.

A final tale of the two wives of On and Korach from Sanhedrin 109b-110a:

Rav says: On, son of Peleth, did not repent on his own; rather, his wife saved him. She said to him: What is the difference to you? If this Master, Moses, is the great one, you are the student. And if this Master, Korah, is the great one, you are the student. Why are you involving yourself in this matter? **On said to her: What shall I do? I was one of those who took counsel and I took an oath with them that I would be with them. She said to him: I know that the entire assembly is holy, as it is written: “For all the assembly is holy” (Numbers 16:3),** and they observe the restrictions of modesty. **She said to him: Sit, for I will save you. She gave him wine to drink and caused him to become drunk and laid him on a bed inside their tent. She sat at the entrance of the tent and exposed her hair as though she were bathing. Anyone who came and saw her stepped back. In the meantime the assembly of Korah was swallowed into the ground, and On, son of Peleth, was spared.**

Korah’s wife said to him: See what Moses is doing. He is the king, he appointed his brother High Priest, and he appointed his brother’s sons deputy priests. If *teruma* comes, he says: Let it be for the priest; if the first tithe comes, which you as Levites take, he says: Give one tenth to the priest. And furthermore, he shears your hair and waves you as if you are as insignificant as excrement (see Numbers 8:5–11), as though he set his sights on your hair and wishes you to be shaven and unsightly. Korah said to her: But didn’t he also do so; he shaved his hair like the rest of the Levites? She said to him: Since it is all done for his own prominence, he also said metaphorically: “Let me die with the Philistines” (Judges 16:30); he was willing to humiliate himself in order to humiliate you. She said to him: And furthermore, with regard to that which he said to you, to prepare sky-blue dye for your ritual fringes, one could respond to him: If it enters your mind, Moses, that using sky-blue dye is considered a mitzva, take out robes that are made entirely of material colored with sky-blue dye, and dress all the students of your academy in sky-blue robes without ritual fringes; why could one not fulfill the mitzva in that manner? Clearly, Moses is fabricating all this.

This is the meaning of that which is written: “The wisdom of women builds her house” (Proverbs 14:1); this is referring to the wife of On, son of Peleth. And:

“Folly plucks it down with her hands” (Proverbs 14:1); this is referring to the wife of Korah.