



From the desk of
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1

Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Korach

HAMELECH

Envious Korach

Korach held a prominent position in the midbar. He was from the Kehat branch of Shevet Levi. When Klal Yisroel travelled from place to place, who held the Aron Kodesh, holiest of all vessels? None other than Korach!

Nonetheless, when his younger cousin Elitsafan was appointed overseer of Shevet Kehat, oy! Korach could not take that blow to his pride. Korach was: j-e-a-l-o-u-s! Envious! He wanted the honor for himself! He could not take it. So he rebelled against Moshe and Aharon, against Hashem! What did he gain from it all? Live burial! For himself and his family and friends and their belongings. With a side order of "fries", i.e., 250 Roshei Sanhedrin, burnt to a crisp.

The Camel Grows Horns

The Torah is telling us something here. Something is scary about the trait of jealousy. It is just not worth it. If jealous thoughts gnaw at you, run away to a healthier mindset. Nothing good comes out of jealousy! It just eats away at you, in this world and the next!

There was once a camel who wanted horns. He saw the oxen goring each other. It looked like fun. He also wanted a pair of those precious weapons. He found a dead ox and somehow affixed a pair of horns to his ears. Everything was

going great until he met his match. A "fellow" bull challenged him to a bullfight, and he lost his ears!

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 106a) uses this parable to describe Bilaam, who went to collect his wages for having brought about the demise of 24,000 Jews. As he was present at the battle, he was slain. Had he remained home and not been so frantic to get his money, he may just have stayed alive a bit longer.

It's Just Not Worth It!

But it is not only Bilaam. History is replete with those who looked outside of themselves and set their eyes on what was not meant for them. And what happened? What they yearned for, they never got; and what they previously had had, was taken away.

Where else do we see this? Kayin (he was jealous that Hevel had an extra sister as a wife), Doeg (jealous of Dovid Hamelech), Achitofel (wanted to become king), Gehazi (wanted Naaman's money), Adoniyohu (wanted to marry Avishag), Uziyaha (wanted to serve as a Kohen) etc.

All of these examples are brought in Gemara Sota (9b). The lesson is applied to the Sotah herself who set her eyes on someone other than her husband and in the end, only loses out on what she already had. Once she drinks the waters, she will die an ugly death. If instead she chooses to



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confess, she forfeits her ketubah money and must be divorced.

The concept dates back to the beginning of history as we know it, all the way back to the Garden of Eden. The serpent wanted Eve as a wife, and he lost his hands and feet, in addition to suffering a number of other curses as well. For our purpose, he sought to foster a fond relationship with a female and Hashem decreed that everlasting animosity and rivalry exist between them.

The Great are not Spared

Rabbi Chayim Vital (Sefer Shaarei Kedushah 2:4) adds a few more historical examples:

- a) The ten *shevatim* went to *galut* in Mitzrayim because of their jealousy of Yosef.
- b) Yeravam ben Nevat was the leading scholar of his day. Nonetheless, he was jealous of David Hamelech and his dynasty and due to that, forfeited his portion in the world to come and became the prototype gang-leader to sin.
- c) Shaul Hamelech was practically sin-free. Yet, once he became jealous of David, it was downhill from there.

We see that even our greatest have been challenged with jealousy, and many did not surmount the obstacle. This is as R' Yitzchak Blazer sent to the Alter fun Kelm: Rabbi Yisrael Salanter's parting message was that jealousy takes even a great man out of this world.

You Can't Touch This

Rebbi Elazar HaKapor teaches (Avot 4:21): Jealousy, desire and pursuit of prestige take a person out of this world.

The moon had to become smaller because it wanted to be the lone ruler (Hullin 60b).

Ben Azai teaches (Yoma 38a): You will be called by your name (of stature), you will be seated in your place, and you will be given exactly what you deserve. Nobody (and I mean Nobody) touches anything which is meant for another. No kingdom infringes upon its neighbor, even a hair's breadth.

Pele Yoeitz says of Jealous people: All their days are painful, his food is not tasty to him, he has no friends, he picks fights, his only happiness is another's downfall or failure, he yearns for others to stumble and make mistakes, even in matters of mitzvot. So many *aveirot* come from jealousy.

Chonio and Shimmy

A tragic tale of jealousy is recounted in Menachot (109b). There are two versions of the story. Here is how Rebbi Yehudah said it. Shimon Hatsaddik served faithfully as Kohen Gadol for 40 years. When he saw that his end was near, he declared that his younger son, Chonio, would take over his position.

Well, Shimon Hatsaddik passed on, but Chonio did not accept the position. He deferred to



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Shimmy, his elder brother. Shortly thereafter, Chonio regretted his decision. He was j-e-a-l-o-u-s! He wanted to be Kohen Gadol. But it was too late. Shimmy had already received the appointment, although he had not yet begun active service.

So jealous Chonio came up with a plan, a diabolical plot. He told Shimmy, "Let me teach you how to do the avodah."

Chonio dressed up Shimmy in a robe (commonly worn by women in that era) and a belt (a woman's belt). Then he began to show him around the Beit Hamikdash. When they got to the *mizbei'ach*, Chonio said, "Wait here a minute."

Then Chonio went and told the other Kohanim, "Do you know what my brother Shimmy did?! He told his girlfriend that on the day that he becomes Kohen Gadol, he is going to wear her robe and belt and do the avodah!"

The Kohanim heard Chonio's story and saw how Shimmy was dressed. Infuriated at this disgrace, they ran to Shimmy planning to kill him! Shimmy begged to be allowed to explain himself. He told them the truth, and then the Kohanim turned against Chonio, planning on killing him instead.

Chonio ran to take refuge in the king's palace, but it was not so safe there either, so he fled to Alexandria, Egypt, where he built a *mizbei'ach* and offered up *korbonot*.

Envy Almost Killed the Wise

In the introduction to his sefer *Be'er Yitzchok*, the author tells his story, how his life was almost ruined due to jealousy.

When Avrohom Yitzchok Glick was a young boy, he learned with a *melamed* who taught a number of children. Young Avrohom Yitzchok excelled and surpassed them all. One of the fathers, a learned man, but plagued with the terrible trait of jealousy, could not stand to see someone else's child outdoing his own. So he paid the *melamed* to convince Avrohom Yitzchok's father that his son was not capable of understanding Gemara. From then on, Avrohom Yitzchok was only present at the Shiur for chumash and mishna, but when it came time to learn Gemara, he was sent outside to play.

One day, the regular *melamed* could not teach so he found a substitute. When it came time for Gemara, young Avrohom Yitzchok went outside. The substitute asked why he went away. The remaining children said, "Oh, him? He doesn't have a head for Gemara."

The substitute found that to be queer, so he decided to find out for himself. He went over to the boy and began a conversation, slowly drawing him into the Gemara's discussion. He found the boy to be very clever, even at a higher level than the other boys.



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4

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The substitute discussed the matter with the regular *melamed* and the secret came out. Avrohom Yitzchok was sent to learn by a different *melamed* and became a great Talmid Chochom and Posek!

The “Whole” Story

Mishlei (14:30) teaches that jealousy is what makes bones rot. A recent story illustrates this well.

With space getting tight in the existing cemeteries, a new place was allotted for burial in Be'er Yaakov. But being that it was new, no one wanted to be the first one buried there. Until...

One day, the Chevra Kadishah received a phone call from overseas. A man was trying to get a burial plot for a woman who had been buried amongst gentiles. What was her story?

As a young girl, she had suffered a stroke and was fully paralyzed. Her parents looked for suitable care and only found it in a non-Jewish setting. As the parents aged, they appointed a lawyer to see to it that their daughter, when her time would come, be brought to Jewish burial. Providence had it that this woman, as non-functional as she was, outlived the lawyer. She died at age ninety, and with no known relative or friend, the institution buried her amongst gentiles.

Somehow, some time later, this caring Jew found out about this and it pained him greatly. So he

began making inquiries and worked on bringing her to burial in Eretz Yisrael.

When all was approved, they dug her up and she was *gantz* – no signs of decay. The *chevra kadisha* told over this surprising account to Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt”k who was not surprised at all!

“What do you want?” he said. “Decomposition is only a result of jealousy. Due to her medical state, she did not suffer from that illness called jealousy, so she remained complete. It is only natural.”

Two Neighbours Each “Build” Their Own “Addition”

Conquering jealousy can also bring blessing in this world. Listen to this.

Two families lived in the same apartment building. We'll give them fictitious names. The Alexander Family lived on the third floor and married off child after child. The Berlin Family lived below them on Floor Two, but for some reason, each suggested match was pushed aside. They attributed it to Mr. Berlin's wayward brother, a notorious crook. No one wanted to get involved with the family.

One day, Mr. Alexander knocked on Mr. Berlin's door and asked for permission to add on an extra room to his apartment. After all, he explained, we need sleeping space for our young couples when they come for Shabbat and such.



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5

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Mr. Berlin was thoroughly insulted. How could he be so cruel? he thought. It is not enough that he married off a number of children while ours still wait around, he even has to rub it in?!

But Mrs. Berlin did not share his view. She wisely waited until her husband calmed down a bit and quietly chided, "Are you absolutely certain that your refusal has nothing to do with jealousy?"

Mr. Berlin gave it some thought. "Maybe you're right," he said. "I will go upstairs now and give them permission."

They very next day, in walked seven Arab workers straight through the Berlin dining room, out onto the porch! After all, that was the best approach to the new addition.

Mr. Berlin was flabbergasted and appalled. No, this he did not imagine. It is one thing to grant permission, and quite another to relinquish your rights to your own home for weeks on end!

He wanted to protest, but his calm wife succeeded in calming him once again.

A few days later, cement spilled and soiled their floor and furniture.

"Enough!" Mr. Berlin exclaimed, "I am going right now to file for an end to this building campaign."

But Mrs. Berlin again said softly. "Are you sure that there is no jealousy in your motives? The

Alexanders are wonderful neighbors. They had no idea how messy their workers would be. Surely they will see to it that the mess gets cleared to our satisfaction."

Once again, Mr. Berlin followed his wife's lead.

Shortly thereafter, the *shadchan* called with a terrific offer for their son. After hearing her out, Mr. Berlin asked, as if had been through this before, "But what about the other side, are they really interested in us?"

The *shadchan* responded, "They heard about your brother and had their doubts, but when they asked your neighbors about you, they were so impressed with your whole approach to the building of your upstairs neighbors. With such fine *midot*, they can't wait to have their daughter meet your son!"

The *shidduch* was made, in direct response to surmounting the challenge and subduing all possible pangs of envy.

Let us understand the harm of jealousy and avoid it, focusing instead on our blessings and responsibilities to Hashem and to our peers. We only stand to gain.

Shabbat Shalom,
Mordechai Malka