

Parshas Korach  
Batya Rich  
10 Minutes of Learning at the Family Minyan  
June 28, 2025

Today's Kiddush is a Seudah Toda-ah, for my parents, and for so many other blessings in my life.

I entitled this dvar Torah of parshas Korach "Ungrateful Entitlement".

This Parsha, is one of my favorite Parshiot. Why? I am utterly fascinated that, once again, Hashem performs such a huge miracle, such like the world had never seen, He splits the earth wide open to swallow Korach and his followers. Compared to Splitting of the Sea, where Hashem shows his great love for the Jewish people. Here, this event was to punish.

I cannot imagine "What punishment could possibly be worse than to be swallowed alive and live for eternity in the bowels of the earth?" What are we supposed to learn from this particular event? What middot are in need of rectification?

Korach, who was a Levi, felt entitled to the title and role of the Kohain Gadol. This responsibility was given to Moshe's brother, Aaron. Korach was angry and resentful towards Moshe for "passing over" him for the job of Kohain Gadol. He blamed Moshe of nepotism or favoritism towards his brother. Encouraged by his wife to confront Moshe, Korach gathers Dathan, Abiram, On, and 250 leaders—many of whom are his relatives or from related tribes—to challenge Moses and Aaron's authority. We read today in Bamidbar 16: 1

"Korah, son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi..."

It's important to note how the Torah explicitly mentions the familial lineage to teach us that we can't really know someone until we understand their origins and background.

But while family is an indicator of who we are and what we are destined to become, it is not everything. It is only a PART of who we are. Who we are meant to become is partly Divine Providence and our free choice of who we want to be. Korach couldn't understand – given his lineage – why he wasn't to be the leader. As Moshe says in Bamidbar 16: 10 "He drew you near, and all your brothers, the sons of Levi with you, and now you seek the priesthood as well?" Korach prophesied that he was "destined for greatness". But, the greatness he saw was earmarked for his descendants, not to him. Korach was jealous of Moshe and sought honor. His free choice was to behave with "arrogance, and a sense of entitlement". To prove he was justified, he collected a "band of followers" to go along with his scheme and instigated a machloches. Korach created dissension and disunity among the Jewish people.

These middot raot were and are today, abhorrent to Hashem.

So, Hashem pours out His wrath upon Korach, in order to teach US a lesson. With yet still another beyond - belief event, Hashem splits the earth wide open, and Korach, along with 250 other men AND all their possessions, are swallowed up ALIVE by the earth, and are to this day believed to still cry out “Moshe Rabbeinu was right.”

To me, having a sense of “entitlement” is the opposite of expressing gratitude. If we are to bring the geulah, I believe we must demonstrate HaKores HaTov to Hashem for all He bestows upon us, the good we see and recognize, and even “what we cannot see as good”.

Rabbi Shalom Arush writes in his opening of his book, The Garden of Gratitude:

*“If everyone would heed the true tzaddik, follow in his path, and steadfastly believe in Hashem—in particular, that everything that happens is for our ultimate good; if everyone would constantly give thanks and praise to Hashem, whether under good circumstances or not, as it is written: In Hashem,( the name of G-d’s attribute of loving-kindness,) I will praise His word, in Elokim (expressing G-d’s attribute of Judgement) I will praise His word” surely all the troubles and all the exiles would be completely nullified and the complete redemption would take place!”*

What sounds SO easy to do, is perhaps, for all of us, the hardest. Hashem is asking us to stop complaining and be grateful!

How perfect that this particular Parsha falls in the month of both of my parents' yahrzeits. My father,obm, whose yahrzeit is 2nd of Siven, and my mother, obm, whose yahrzeit is the 27th of Sivan. It is clear to me now how I “missed the Mark” as the saying goes, while growing up.

As a child and teenager – I – like Korach, was ungrateful. My parents were born on the cusp of WWI, in 1914 & 1915. They were teenagers during the Great Depression. My father had to quit school after the 8th grade and work to help support his father and siblings. My mother graduated High School and then went to Secretarial school. She and my father, who became a Taxi driver when I was 7, both struggled to make ends meet and eventually afforded sending me to college. But, I could not appreciate fully what sacrifices they each made to raise me with WAY more than either of them were able to have while growing up. There was almost a 40 year generation gap between us and I just could NOT relate.

Please bear with me a few more minutes while I share one story to illustrate what I mean a bit more:

In 4th grade I decided to take up learning the clarinet, as learning to play an instrument in public grade school was offered as part of the curriculum. My uncle also played the clarinet and to save my parents \$\$\$, he donated his metal clarinet to "my cause".

I was NOT pleased.

Picture an 8 -9 y.o. child just wanting to "fit in" and be like everyone else. ...sitting in a large band, giving a concert, and while all other clarinetists had a black wooden clarinet, my bright and SHINY metal clarinet stood out VERY conspicuously...not to mention it's "tinny" sound instead of a pleasant, deep- wooden sound. I couldn't blame my inconsistent practicing or lousy clarinet talent...I had to blame it on having "a metal clarinet" !!!

Oh, did I ever yearn to have a black wooden clarinet like all the other clarinetists in the band.

And, being a spoiled only child, I felt ENTITLED to have what I wanted. Could I thank my parents that I got a clarinet at all ???....NO, I seriously doubt that I did! Nor did I think to thank them for ANYTHING they did for me. Chutzpah!!! Ok, blame that on youth and ignorance.

Eventually, I saved enough \$\$\$ to purchase my own black wooden clarinet, not brand new, but it was black, not silver.

The lesson for me today: Sometimes G-d gives me "a metal clarinet"...something I don't like, or feel not-too-good about, or prefer NOT to have happen.

Maybe the food served to me at a restaurant comes to me luke-warm rather than hot. (I'm eating OUT, & didn't have to cook, what's the problem, really ???)

Maybe my (wonderful) husband completes a kind and generous act-of-love which isn't done exactly to MY specifications. BUT, he saved me time by not having to do something I don't like to do....

Maybe the beet stain on my favorite dress does NOT come out in the wash...ok, wear it now during the week and not on Shabbos !

Truth be told.....it's ALL pettiness. Probably 99.99% of the things I get annoyed about are just NOT really important. But, I cannot let it go. I fight my yetzar hara just to feel gratitude ! I have to complain about it....after all, aren't I entitled to complain ? This is absolutely wrong thinking.

So my personal tikun is to learn and express gratitude. And now I wish to thank all of you:

Last year's yahrzeit for my Father, (the 2nd of Sivan), was sort of my initiation into The Family Minyan. I've now been here for one whole year and I have merited and enjoyed watching The Family Minyan transform into becoming The Shtiebel. My 2025 Yom Kippur, was the best ever,. I had a front row, center view of the Torah in the aron all through Ne'ilah, and from that davening, my prayers were answered. My daughter is now expecting her first baby in late August, which will be my first grandchild. My gratitude to Hashem, to our beloved kehillah, & to all who lead and participate in the Shabbat and Yom Tov davening, knows no bounds. I'm grateful to all of you who have made this past year here so very special. Thank you for being my friends, & my family in Eretz Yisrael.

My son moved to Israel 3 ½ weeks ago. Since I boarded the plane when I made aliyah 4 years and 4 months ago, I have prayed that Hashem would help me fulfill my mission to "bring my son home". He is now here, living and working on a farm near Netanya, working as a shepherd, caring for goats and other farm animals . He is happier than I've ever seen him in the past 10 years. He is now calling Israel "his home". WHAT a miracle this is!

ONE more thing: I must add just a few words about my parents. My father, alov hashalom, was given the name: Carl Kahn, he is Chaim ben Dovid, HaKohein. Chaim means "life"....and my father gave me life. Thank you, dad, for giving me life. Thank you, mom. Perhaps from where you are, you can see that I am now living like a Queen in Paradise, in Eretz Yisrael. My dream came true and every single day, I step out onto my marpeset facing this mountain and declare: I live here !!!! Not only am I in Eretz Yisrael. I live on the best street with amazing neighbors.

My father – having no Torah background that I know of – knew he was a Kohain and took pride in this. His paternal grandmother, and great-aunt (her sister) also married

Kohanim, demonstrating that being Kohanim, the title that Korach coveted, must have been of great importance to my ancestors.

My prayer for myself and to all who relate, that Hashem will help me recognize my petty desires, to stop me from complaining, and to JUST EXPRESS GRATITUDE.

In conclusion, I want to thank the kehillah for coming today. Thank you, Devorah Turk for preparing delicious food, to Chani and Emma who also helped to organize the kiddush. Thank you to all who contributed to the kiddush. Thank you Emma and Daniel Sass who encouraged me to give a Dvar Torah. Thank you all for your brochot and from them, may Hashem grant my parents' neshamot aliyot b'Shamaya. Through our brachot of gratitude, recognizing Hashem as our King and gracious Provider, may we all merit to bring the redemption SOON in our days.