



"If you search for it like silver, and seek it like buried treasures, then will you comprehend knowledge of God, and the fear of God will you find."

King Solomon, Proverbs 2:4-5

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Korach

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

The Torah devotes much attention to the dispute between Korach and Moses. However, an analysis of the text does not give us a good deal of insight into the real basis of their argument. From the verses it seems that Korach was simply complaining that Moses and Aaron had usurped too much power. However, this conclusion raises several bothersome questions. Firstly Moses' retort to Korach seems inappropriate. Moses sarcastically questions Korach asking him if he also desires the priesthood. Furthermore, the famous Medrash quoted by Rashi when Korach assembles 250 of the congregation leaders and together they confront Moses seem irrelevant to the argument. Korach in the leader's presence questions Moses; "Does a garment which is totally blue require fringes?" Moses responds in the affirmative and is ridiculed by Korach since one fringe of blue obviates a four cornered garment of fringes. Korach also questions him on whether a house filled with Sefarim requires a Mezuzah. Moses again responded in the affirmative. Korach again ridicules him because the obvious purpose of Mezuzah is to raise a person's cognition of the creator; and surely an individual with a house filled with Sefarim has such an appreciation. This confrontation seems to be unnecessary and irrelevant if the basis of the argument was merely a power struggle.

In order to comprehend the basis of the argument it is necessary to analyze the cause of the conflict and the personalities of the combatants. The beginning of the Parsha states that "vayikach Korach", and Korach took, took being a transitive Verb. Rashi rightfully questions "whom did he take" and quotes the Onkelos to demonstrate that the language of taking really connotes a conflict. It means, that he took himself aside and separates

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ASK YOUR CHILDREN:

"What's good about sharing? Peoples' feelings? Or agreeing that God wants others to be happy?"
Have your children email us with their answers: questions@mesora.org

SUGGESTED READINGS:

SEE THESE AND OTHER ARTICLES AT OUR SITE

Maimonides' 13 PRINCIPLES

THE BASIC FOUNDATIONS WHICH ALL JEWS MUST KNOW AS TRUE. WE URGE YOU TO READ THEM:
www.mesora.org/13principles.html

God's Existence Belief or Proof?

www.mesora.org/belieforproof.html

God's Land Without God?

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY:
www.mesora.org/openletter/openletter2.html

Aaron Seizing the Angel of Death

RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

In parsha Korach, (Numbers, 17:13) Rashi states an amazing story of how "Aaron seized the Angel of Death against its will." In order to understand this metaphor, we must first understand the events immediately prior.

God had wiped out Korach and his rebellion. The Jewish people on the morrow said the following (Numbers, 17:6) , "you (Moses and Aaron) have killed the people of God", referring to Korach and his assembly. Evidently, the Jews could not make such a statement the same day as God's destruction of the Korach assembly, perhaps because the

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Enemies of Our Own Happiness

RIVKA OLENICK

"The Almighty created man straightforward, but they invented many calculations." Koheles 7:29. What does it mean: "The Almighty created man straightforward God created mankind to live the best existence with everything necessary given in the greatest abundance, e.g. air, water, food, etc. All of these things take very little effort to acquire yet they are always taken for granted. What if there wasn't enough air, then we would die. But the air is plentiful. What if we had to search for water? We don't, it is also plentiful and fortunately, we don't have to search for food either. We were given the strength, capacity and motivation to pursue our livelihood to provide for oneself and our families. In addition to providing us with the basics of life, we were given a guide that teaches us how to live the kind of intelligent life most appropriate for human beings. This guide, called Torah, was given so that we could live our lives based on truth, acquiring this truth through knowledge. This is the only reason we were created - to seek and obtain knowledge. Living an existence permeated with truth is what makes a person truly happy. This is the meaning of "straightforward." Living a simple, contented life in the middle path, and which is in line with God's will for His created beings. A life that can produce great happiness and satisfaction. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth." Psalms 25:10

The Rambam says: "Most of the evils to which individual persons are exposed, are due to the defects existing in the persons themselves. We complain and seek relief from our own faults; we suffer from the evils which we, by our own free will, inflict on ourselves and ascribe them to God, who is far from being connected with them!" Guide For the Perplexed pg. 268. What are the underlying ideas in: "but they invented many calculations?" It seems that "but" implies a change that we insist on making. We force ourselves in a different direction that is contrary to straightforward. People "create" deviations or different ways not to proceed straightforward in life, by spending entire life times pursuing unlimited and clever ways not to live a straightforward life. The Rambam's statement above fits perfectly. We constantly involve ourselves in things that are unnecessary. Things that are unnecessary usually have no limit, meaning that we fall into the habit of desiring those things that aren't needed to preserve our life, many endless possessions. Most of these desires become endless because we need the approval of others. The only way to have the approval of others is by having more, and better. Unfortunately this way of life produces endless envy, jealousy and pain because, there will always be others who have "more and better." These are the traps or the "calculations" that people invent. There are those who make their life's career out of this. Of course, all of these "calculations" that we inflict on ourselves we foolishly blame on God. We say: "Why has God done this to me?" No, God has not done this to you. We refuse to examine our lives so that our free will should be used appropriately. We leave "thought and knowledge" in understanding life and the world to chance by making these calculations our "priority." We then complain and then blame God because He hasn't brought us relief from our own faults and misuse of our free will, even though God has already created us "straightforward." "The many calculations are the enemies of our happiness." Samson Raphael Hirsch from The Wisdom of Mishle pg. 160