

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholar's Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedibarta Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, The Vilna Gaon, Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin and The Call of the Torah.*

### ויקח קרח

**“And Korach took...” (16:1)**

The Torah says that *Korach* took something but does not tell us what he took. Many commentators over the centuries have dealt with this question, but we will suggest a new approach. The truth is that *Korach* took everything for himself. Hashem entrusted him with great wealth to use for His service, and *Korach* made the mistake of thinking that he had earned it for himself. He treated it as if it belonged to him and he could do with it as he pleased. Thus, *Korach's* very wealth, in other words, his trait of always taking, was his downfall.

*Shlomo HaMelech*, King Solomon, had just a situation in mind when he wrote in *Kohelet* (5:12), *Wealth is held for its owners* (i.e., for those who feel that it is theirs) *to harm them*. On the other hand, a wealthy person – who acknowledges that his money really belongs to Hashem and regards himself as nothing more than the administrator of a trust fund – will find his wealth to be a true blessing. If he diligently and faithfully oversees the fund which has been entrusted to him, in accordance with all the wishes and instructions of its true Owner, then he can be assured of a handsome reward in this world and in the next.

(*Kol Dodi*)

### בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו

**“In the morning Hashem will show who are His...” (16:5)**

Why did *Moshe* postpone the verification until morning? The *manna* had the unique quality of publicizing the true character of each person. For *tzaddikim* the manna fell in front of their door, ordinary people had to go out and gather it, while the wicked were forced to walk a distance to find it. Thus, when *Korach* said that all the people in the community were holy, *Moshe* replied, “In the morning Hashem will show.” By means of the *manna* He will prove who is right.

(*Rabbi Schiff from Torah Ladaas*)

### ותפתח הארץ את פיה ותבלע אתם

**“The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them.” (16:32)**

In *Pirkei Avot* we are told that ten things were created in the twilight of the first *Erev Shabbos* of Creation. One of them was the opening of the earth, which swallowed *Korach* and his congregation after their dispute with *Moshe*. What do we learn from the fact that the mouth of the earth was created in twilight?

The *Me'orah Shel Torah* answers that when a person finds himself in difficult circumstances it may seem to him as though there is no solution. He should realize, however, that the solution has

already been prepared, and it is his job to uncover it – a task that requires continuous intense effort. This principle is clearly illustrated in this *parsha*. Although *Moshe* was in serious danger and in a very difficult situation with *Korach*, the mouth of the earth had already been prepared for his opponents from the time of Creation. We walk through life for the most part oblivious to the elaborate plans that G-d has designed for our benefit. (Kol Dodi)

### ויצא פרח ויצץ ציץ ויגמל שקדים

**“It had produced blossoms and sprouted buds and bore ripe almonds...”** (17:23)

The Torah relates that all of *Klal Yisrael* witnessed the staff's entire ripening process from budding through blossoming to maturing ripe almonds. In truth, the miracle would have been just as convincing if they had seen only the final stage – the staff sprouting ripe almonds.

Viewing the gradual development of a lifeless staff turning into a fruit-bearing branch taught them that *Aharon's kedusha* was not conferred on him all at once by virtue of his being selected as *kohen gadol*. Such instant *kedusha* would subject *Aharon* to the charge of nepotism. Hashem showed the people by means of the blossoming staff that only by strenuous effort, coming up through the ranks, can one achieve prominence. Only *Aharon* who exerted himself to the utmost, raising himself to the highest spheres of spirituality and *avodat Hashem* was worthy of becoming the *kohen gadol*.

(Ta'am Va'daas)

### ויאמר ה' אל משה השב את מטה אהרן לפני העדות למשמרת

**“G-d said to Moshe, ‘Bring back the staff of Aharon before the holy ark as a safekeeping.’”** (17:25)

QUESTION: *Aharon's* staff that bloomed was placed in front of the holy Ark together with a flask of *manna* (*Shemot* 16:33). When the Ark was hidden, so was the jar of *manna* and *Aharon's* staff (*Yoma* 52b). What is the connection between the Ark, the staff, and the jar of *manna*?

ANSWER: The Ark represents Torah. In it were the Tablets, and the *sefer* Torah written by *Moshe* (*Bava Batra* 14a). *Aharon's* staff symbolizes the human craving for peace. *Aharon* was the ultimate peace lover, and through his staff *Korach's* rebellion was put to rest. *Manna*, on the other hand, which was the source of sufficient nourishment for all, represents economic security. Thus, the storing of the *manna* and the staff near the Ark conveys the message that the staff of *Aharon* and the jar of *manna* go together with the Ark of Hashem; there can be no economic security or enduring peace in the world without the moral and ethical standards of the Torah.

When the Ark is “lost” – when its sacred influence is eliminated from the arena of life – the staff of *Aharon* and the jar of *manna* and all they represent, disappear. All deliberations and plans for economic security and enduring peace come to naught because they are neither enshrined in the Ark, representing Torah, nor guided by the teachings of the Tablets contained therein.

(Ha'Derush V'ha'Iyun)

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