

## 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 בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי

**“And Korach, the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehat, the son of Levi took...” (16:1)**

*Korach* failed because he wanted to seize greatness and strength for himself with his own hands. Greatness is good only if it is bestowed on a man by Heaven. You cannot go out and take it for yourself. (Rabbi of Przysucha)

The *Chozeh of Lublin* (Rabbi Yaakov Hurvitz) noted that the reason the Torah mentioned *Korach's yichus* was to warn us that *yichus* is usually the reason one asks for honors for himself; and that we must be very careful not to fall into this dangerous web.

The name קרח is mentioned in this *parsha* eleven times, each time without the "ו". The name is an abbreviation for the words חמדה, רוממות, קנאה – jealousy, loftiness, and desire. *Korach* was jealous of *Moshe* and *Aharon HaKohein's* status. He pursued the crown of leadership, for the sake of his own honor and nobility; He coveted a position which he was not deserving of. The three attributes of jealousy, desire and the quest for honor is what remove an individual from the world. (Pirkei Avot 4:21)

### ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה'

**“And why do you raise yourself above Hashem's congregation?” (16:3)**

It is interesting to note that those who engage in a controversy with righteous men will attribute to these men traits which are the very opposite of their true character.

It was thus also in the case of *Moshe*, of whom the Torah states that he was “very humble, above all the men that were on the face of the earth.” His detractors, seeking to find fault with him, settled on arrogance, of all things, as the failing for which to attack their leader. (Kotzker Rebbe)

### ותפתח הארץ את פיה

**“And the earth opened its mouth...” (16:32)**

*Korach* and his assembly were punished מדה כנגד מדה – measure for measure. They sinned with their **mouths**, speaking *lashon hara* and disparaging *Moshe* and *Aharon*. Therefore, they were punished in kind: *the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them.* (Rabbi Sholom Rokach of Belz)

**אך פדה תפדה את בכור האדם ואת בכור הבהמה הטמאה תפדה**

**“However, you shall surely redeem the first born of man and you shall also redeem the firstling of unclean beasts...” (18:15)**

From this verse, we learn that it is a *mitzvah* to redeem a firstborn son from the *kohen*. We further learn vital details pertaining to this command...The redemption takes place on the thirty-first day of the infant’s life, the father of the child gives the *kohen* the equivalent of five silver coins, the weight of which must be at least 96 grams of pure silver. The Torah commands to redeem the mother’s firstborn son. Thus, it is possible that a father can redeem his firstborn son two or even three times (if he remarries after being widowed or divorced). In contrast to a *brit*, which takes place on *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov*, the *pidyon haben* does not. If the 31<sup>st</sup> day is *Shabbat*, then the *pidyon haben* takes place on *motzai Shabbat*. And in the case where the child was not yet circumcised due to health reasons or a low birth weight, he is still redeemed by the *kohen* on the 31<sup>st</sup> day. (Torah Treasures)

**ברית מלח עולם**

**“An eternal covenant of salt...” (18:19)**

In what way can Hashem’s gift of priestly offering to *Aharon* and his descendants be described as “a covenant of salt”? *Rashi* says that just as salt never touts, and even acts as a preservative for many other things, so this covenant will stay fresh and preserve *Aharon’s* dynasty forever.

This has a very powerful implication: Even if some *kohanim* go astray and pollute their special holiness, Hashem promises that in every generation, there will always be some who remain true to the covenant. Thus, just as salt will preserves food and does not allow it to spoil, so the covenant will preserve *Aharon’s* priestly family and ensure that its holiness is preserved in every generation. (Great Torah Lights)

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