

# Shabbat Spice

PARSHAT KORACH



## For the Sake of Heaven

By Rachele Nitzani

*Lilui Nishmat Binyamin Ben David v' Zippora*

In Parashat Korach, there is a clear and simple message: don't fight. But this message seems to contradict other areas in Judaism in which we find that fighting is accepted. In fact, arguing in Judaism is a holy activity, as Avraham and Moses both argue with G-d.

Hillel and Shammai also had always a dispute. So what then made the argument of Korah so different from the other disputes?

Korah attempts to reach heights where he doesn't belong. His purpose was skewed and impure. He wanted to be high priest himself.

Korah was Moshe and Aaron's cousin; he felt it unfair that both leadership positions went to a single family. He claimed he wanted equality, but what he really wanted was power.

That is what made the argument of Korah different from the argument of Hillel and Shamai- intentions.

An argument for the sake of Heaven is one that is about the truth, and an argument not for the sake of Heaven is about power, and the difference between the two is everything.

If I argue for the sake of truth I win regardless, because being defeated by the truth is a victory.

If truth prevails, no matter who wins, I learn something that I didn't know before. That is the argument that is permitted by Torah.

On the contrary, in a contest for power, I lose no matter what, because in diminishing my opponents, I have diminished myself. That is the argument of Korach; that the Torah makes very clear is unacceptable.

When the ground opens up and swallows Moshe's opponents, the argument didn't end- the next day, the whole community went against Moshe and Aaron for "killing the Lord's people." (Bamidbar 17:6).

The argument of Korach diminished the respect in which Moshe was held. The Torah wants us to avoid this.

When thinking about this parsha, the idea of arguing for Heaven's sake had special importance for me, as I am commemorating the *Shloshim* of my Dad. My Dad's whole work while he was on the community board in Milan was trying to work for Heaven's sake. There were many stories about him showing that he would only argue and voice out his opinion when it was for the purpose of *l'shem Shamayim*.

If he ever argued and was willing to go against the grain, it was for Torah matters and he left my family and me a legacy of how to always have the proper intention of *l'shem Shamayim*.

CANDLE LIGHTING 8:12PM | SHABBAT ENDS 9:20PM

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## Our Great Power

By Rachel Livian

In this week's parsha, Korach accuses Moshe Rabbanu of "*raising himself above the rest of Benei Israel.*" (Devarim 16:3).

Wait-this doesn't add up. Moshe was the most humble man on earth! How does this make sense that Korach can accuse him in the area of his greatest strength?

We learn something interesting- when a person is weak in an area, they need to jump to the other extreme in order to correct it. If a person has a tendency to get angry, they must try everything they can to stay calm.

Everyone has an area in which they are lacking and need to work on.

Moshe Rabbanu worked so hard on his humility that it was natural by that point- so when Moshe would go to the front of Benei Israel, he was not looking for any type of honor! In fact he didn't want the honor.

This was something Korach misread. He thought Moshe's actions were coming from a hunger for power and fame- which we know is clearly false.

This heavy parsha comes with an equally heavy lesson. We are the representatives for all of the Jewish people. We have great power in our actions- we can be a *kiddush Hashem*, or (*chas veshalom*) a *chilul Hashem*. Our power reaches further than even this- we have to also act in a certain way around other Jewish people in order to teach them the right way to behave.

Every single Jewish person has this special power to teach others by their actions. Of course with great power comes great responsibility.

Before we act, we need to think to ourselves- could this be interpreted in the wrong way?

Korach was able to misread the situation- the next time we act, let's not even allow room for misinterpretation.

Wishing everyone a beautiful Shabbat! ♥

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