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Qorach vs. Moshe

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The Torah tells us the story of the rebellion of Qorach (also spelled Qorah, Korach, Korah) and his followers. I would like to take a deeper look at this intriguing story.

Lets [first](one.html) review this text so that we can begin to understand it’s depth:

**Bamidbar (**[**Numbers**](nchart.html)**) 16:1** Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men;

2 and they rose up in [face](body.html) of Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, [two](two.html) hundred and fifty men; they were princes of the congregation, the elect men of the assembly, men of renown;

3 and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them: ‘Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every [one](one.html) of them, and [HaShem](hashem.html) is among them; wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of [HaShem](hashem.html)?’

4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his [face](body.html).

5 And he [spoke](mashal.html) unto Korah and unto all his company, saying: ‘In the morning [HaShem](hashem.html) will show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto Him; even him whom He may choose will He cause to come near unto Him.

6 This do: take you censors, Korah, and all his company;

7 and put [fire](fire.html) therein, and put [incense](ketoret.html) upon them before [HaShem](hashem.html) to-morrow; and it shall be that the man whom [HaShem](hashem.html) doth choose, he shall be holy; ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.’

8 And Moses said unto Korah: ‘Hear now, ye sons of Levi:

9 is it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the [tabernacle](mikdash.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them;

10 and that He hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee? and will ye seek the priesthood also?

11 Therefore thou and all thy company that are [gathered](gather.html) together against [HaShem](hashem.html); and as to Aaron, what is he that ye murmur against him?’

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and they said: ‘We will not come up;

13 is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, but thou must [needs](needs.html) make thyself also a prince over us?

14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us [inheritance](inherit.html) of fields and vineyards; wilt thou put out the [eyes](body.html) of these men? we will not come up.’

15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto [HaShem](hashem.html): ‘Respect not Thou their [offering](korbanot); I have not taken [one](one.html) [ass](chamor.html) from them, neither have I hurt [one](one.html) of them.’

16 And Moses said unto Korah: ‘Be thou and all thy congregation before [HaShem](hashem.html), thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow;

17 and take ye every man his [fire](fire.html)-pan, and put [incense](ketoret.html) upon them, and bring ye before [HaShem](hashem.html) every man his [fire](fire.html)-pan, [two](two.html) hundred and fifty [fire](fire.html)-pans; thou also, and Aaron, each his [fire](fire.html)-pan.’

18 And they took every man his [fire](fire.html)-pan, and put [fire](fire.html) in them, and laid [incense](ketoret.html) thereon, and stood at the door of the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron.

19 And Korah assembled all the congregation against them unto the door of the tent of meeting; and the glory of [HaShem](hashem.html) appeared unto all the congregation.

20 And [HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html) unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying:

21 ‘Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.’

22 And they fell upon their faces, and said: ‘O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall [one](one.html) man [sin](sin.html), and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?’

23 And [HaShem](hashem.html) [spoke](mashal.html) unto Moses, saying:

24 ‘[Speak](mashal.html) unto the congregation, saying: Get you up from about the [dwelling](dwelling.html) of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’

25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him.

26 And he [spoke](mashal.html) unto the congregation, saying: ‘Depart, I [pray](prayer.html) you, from the tents of these [wicked](wicked.html) men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be swept away in all their [sins](sin.html).’

27 So they got them up from the [dwelling](dwelling.html) of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side; and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, and their sons, and their little ones.

28 And Moses said: ‘Hereby ye shall [know](daat.html) that [HaShem](hashem.html) hath sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them of mine own mind.

29 If these men die the common death of all men, and be visited after the visitation of all men, then [HaShem](hashem.html) hath not sent Me.

30 But if [HaShem](hashem.html) make a [new](new.html) thing, and the ground open her [mouth](body.html), and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have despised [HaShem](hashem.html).’

31 And it came to pass, as he made an end of [speaking](mashal.html) all these words, that the ground did cleave asunder that was under them.

32 And the earth opened her [mouth](body.html) and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

33 So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit; and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly.

34 And all Israel that were round about them fled at the [cry](mashal.html) of them; for they said: ‘Lest the earth swallow us up.’

35 And [fire](fire.html) came forth from [HaShem](hashem.html), and devoured the [two](two.html) hundred and fifty men that offered the [incense](ketoret.html).

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**Qorach was a very great man**, though [one](one.html) must read carefully to appreciate this fact. The [name](name.html) of this Torah reading, Qorach, provokes an obvious question: Why is this portion named after a man who appears to be very [wicked](wicked.html)? It is written:

***Proverbs 10:7*** *The memory of the just is blessed: but the* [*name*](name.html) *of the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *shall rot.*

To understand the answer to this question, we must remember that Qorach’s identity is perpetuated forever, since the Torah is eternal.

From a mystical perspective,[[1]](#footnote-1) it is explained that Qorach’s [desires](needs.html) reflected the [spiritual](physical.html) heights to be reached in the era of the [redemption](redemption.html). Qorach’s problem was a problem with timing. He was ahead of his [time](time.html). Unfortunately, this bad timing also manifested a split in the congregation. Thus we see that Qorach was appropriately named, for the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) root word *qorach* means “division” or “split”,[[2]](#footnote-2) and Chazal, Our Sages,[[3]](#footnote-3) associate Qorach, not only in fact, but also in essence, with the cause of a division. The Targum Onkelos tells us that Qorach made a ‘division’.

***Targum Onkelos to*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***16:1*** *But Korach bar Izhar bar Kahath bar Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On bar Pelath of the Beni Reuben, made a division.*

In the Messianic age, the Levites (Qorach’s [tribe](tribes.html)) will be elevated to the station of [priests](priests.html), and the entire [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people will reach pinnacles of [spiritual](physical.html) [experience](experience.html), as we read in the Prophet Yoel:

***Yoel 3:1-2*** *And it shall come to pass afterward, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall* [*dream*](dreams.html)[*dreams*](dreams.html)*, your young men shall see visions: 2 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.*

Now that we realize that **Qorach was a great man**, we can begin to understand his [sin](sin.html).

The commentators explain that Qorach’s [sin](sin.html) was an infraction, for which there is no room for [forgiveness](forgive.html). [First](one.html), his declaration that Moshe had no right to lead a [nation](nations.html) in which everybody was holy, contradicts the order of [creation](bara.html). The [world](worlds.html) was created upon the principle of a mashpia ([giver](giver.html)), [one](one.html) who influences, who inspires others, and on a mekabel (receiver), [one](one.html) who is influenced, who accepts from him. This is the relationship of [male](male+female.html) and [female](male+female.html), [heaven](heaven.html) and earth, rebbe and talmid, [teacher](teacher.html) and student. Just as there is nothing on this [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) that is not in some way connected to the [spiritual](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) from which it receives its sustenance, so, too, is everything in this [world](worlds.html) sustained through the mashpia/mekabel process. Qorach wanted to exist beyond the parameters that [HaShem](hashem.html) set for this [world](worlds.html). He wanted everyone to be equal. This indicated rebellion against [HaShem](hashem.html)’s course of directing the [world](worlds.html).

The [Jewish](gen-jew.html) Encyclopedia, in the article “[Sun](hachama.html)“, tells us the following:

*The* [*sun*](hachama.html) *and the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *are employed as symbols in the Kabbala. Generally, the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *is masculine and represents the principal or independent—technically it is the “*[*giver*](giver.html)*” (“mashpia’”);* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *is the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*; so is Samuel, because he was independent, accepting no gift or fee from any* [*one*](one.html)*.[[4]](#footnote-4) The* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *is feminine, and represents the secondary or dependent—technically the “receiver” (“mekabbel”). Thus the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *means the father; the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*, the mother. Moses and Aaron; the rich man and the poor man; the Torah and the* [*Talmud*](orallaw.html)*; Rabbi and Rabina (or R. Ashi), are respectively the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *and the* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *(Heilprin, “‘Erke ha-Kinnuyim,” s.v. ). Samson’s* [*name*](name.html) *denotes “*[*sun*](hachama.html)*,” as he, likewise, was independent. The initial* [*letters*](letters.html) *of the names Samuel, Moses, and Samson spell “shemesh” (= “*[*sun*](hachama.html)*”). The* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *is the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*: “And his throne as the* [*sun*](hachama.html) *before me”.[[5]](#footnote-5)*



1. How do we understand this dispute? What was the root reason behind this dispute?

The root reason is that Qorach believed that they had already entered the Messianic age. He disputed that he had to be a receiver. It was Qorach’s understanding that he had become a [giver](giver.html), along with the other [two](two.html)-hundred and fifty men. They believed that they no longer needed to be receivers. There was no more rebbe and talmid. We are all holy, we are all [Shabbat](sabbath.html), we are all the [sun](hachama.html), we are all givers.

The [face](body.html) of Moshe was like the [face](body.html) of the [sun](hachama.html), where the [face](body.html) of Joshua was like the [face](body.html) of the [moon](chodesh.html).[[6]](#footnote-6)

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for afternoon is צוהריים tzoharayam, this word has the same gematria as Moshe = 345. The value is equal because the afternoon is when the [sun](hachama.html) is shining the brightest, and Moshe is the [sun](hachama.html).

Not all those who were in Qorach’s company were enticed:

***Sanhedrin 109b*** *Rab said: On, the son of Peleth, was saved by his wife. Said she to him, ‘What matters it to thee?* ***Whether the*** [***one***](one.html) ***[Moses] remains master or the other [Korah] becomes master, thou art but a disciple.’*** *He replied, ‘But what can I do? I have taken part in their counsel, and they have sworn me [to be] with them.’ She said, ‘I* [*know*](daat.html) *that they are all a holy* [*community*](community.html)*, as it is written, seeing all the congregation are holy, everyone of them. [So,]’ she proceeded, ‘Sit here, and I will* [*save*](salvation.html) *thee.’ She gave him wine to drink, intoxicated him and laid him down within [the tent]. Then she sat down at the entrance thereto and loosened her* [*hair*](hair.html)*. Whoever came [to summon him] saw her and retreated. Meanwhile, Korah’s wife joined them [the rebels] and said to him [Korah], ‘See what Moses has done. He himself has become king; his brother he* [*appointed*](settimes.html)[*High Priest*](priests.html)*; his brother’s sons he hath made the vice* [*High Priest*](priests.html)*s. If terumah is brought, he decrees, Let it be for the* [*priest*](priests.html)*; if the tithe is brought, which belongs to you [i.e., to the Levite], he orders, Give a tenth part thereof to the* [*priest*](priests.html)*. Moreover, he has had your* [*hair*](hair.html) *cut off, and makes sport of you as though ye were dirt; for he was jealous of your* [*hair*](hair.html)*.’ Said he to her, ‘But he has done likewise!’ She replied, ‘Since all the greatness was his, he said also, Let me die with the Philistines. Moreover, he has commanded you, Set [*[*fringes*](tzitzith.html)*] of blue wool [in the corners of your garments]; but if there is virtue in blue wool, then bring forth blue wool, and clothe thine entire academy therewith.’ Thus it is written, Every wise woman buildeth her house — this refers to the wife of On, the son of Peleth; but the foolish plucketh it down with her* [*hands*](fourteen.html) *— to Korah’s wife.*

[HaShem](hashem.html) clearly delineates the positions, rights, and duties of [priests](priests.html) and Levites; He quickly rejects Qorach’s impressive, but premature, attempt to establish a Messianic democracy. The [wicked](wicked.html) both quickly flourish and quickly wither:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 92:7*** *When the* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever… 12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

The final [letters](letters.html) of that verse’s last [three](three.html) words *TSADI****K*** *KATAMA****R*** *YIFRA****CH*** spell *Qorach*-- in the [end of days](lastdays.html), his egalitarian vision will indeed prevail.[[7]](#footnote-7)

“Qorach was such an intelligent person. How could he have made such a colossal blunder [and rebel against Moshe]?” This is the question that our Sages pose.[[8]](#footnote-8) They answer that he misinterpreted the information that he had. Qorach [knew](daat.html) prophetically that he would have extremely great descendants. The prophet Samuel, equal in stature to Moshe and Aharon, was [one](one.html) of them. Qorach reasoned that the [merit](merit.html) and service of his [future](future.html) offspring were so great that it had be he that would prevail in the rebellion.

The problem is that Qorach did not hear that this greatness would be due to his sons, not to his own actions. Qorach’s sons, Assir, Elkanah, and Avaisaph, saints and prophets, repent before it’s too late, and they survive;[[9]](#footnote-9) they’re the [first](one.html) of [forty](forty.html)-[eight](eight.html) prophets succeeding Moshe.[[10]](#footnote-10) They authored Tehillim ([Psalms](psalms1.html)) 42, 44-9, 84-5, 87-8.

Qorach was the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi. We do not mention that he was the son of [Yaaqov](jacob.html).

Rashi introduces our Parasha with the statement: “This Parasha is explained nicely in the [midrash](orallaw.html) of Rabbi Tanchuma”. Rashi quoted the [midrash](orallaw.html) Tanchuma, that the Patriarch [Yaaqov](jacob.html) had pleaded not to have any share in the rebellion of Qorach. For that reason, Qorach’s genealogy stops before mentioning [Yaaqov](jacob.html):

**Rashi: *the son of Izhar the son of Kohath the son of Levi*** *[The verse] does not mention, “the son of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*,” because he [*[*Jacob*](israelja.html)*]* [*prayed*](prayer.html) *not to be mentioned in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with their quarrel, as it is stated, “my honor, you shall not join their assembly” (Gen. 49:6). And where is his* [*name*](name.html) *mentioned in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with Korah? In (I) Chron. (6:22, 23), where their genealogy is traced for the service of the Levites on the platform [in the* [*Temple*](temple.html)*], as it says, “the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel”.[[11]](#footnote-11)*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabbah adds additional [insight](insights.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVIII:5*** *NOW KORAH, THE SON OF IZHAR, THE SON OF KOHATH, THE SON OF LEVI... TOOK. Why is it not written, ‘The son of* [*Jacob*](israelja.html)*’ or ‘The son of Israel’? This bears on the text, Let my soul not come into their council (Gen. XLIX, 6), namely that of the spies; Unto their assembly let my glory not be united (ib.), namely to that of Korah.* [*Jacob*](israelja.html) *said to the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! Let not my* [*name*](name.html) *be mentioned with those* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *people, either in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with the spies or in* [*connection*](connection.html) *with Korah’s quarrel. When then should my* [*name*](name.html) *be mentioned? When they trace their pedigrees to take their stand upon the dais; and so it says, The son of Tahlath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.[[12]](#footnote-12)*

1. Why didn’t [Yaaqov](jacob.html) want to have his [name](name.html) associated with the [sin](sin.html) of Qorach, as opposed to the golden calf or the [sin](sin.html) of the spies?

[Yaaqov](jacob.html) was the ultimate receiver. [Yaaqov](jacob.html) is represented by the [moon](chodesh.html). In Kiddush Levanah (the [moon](chodesh.html) blessing) we [face](body.html) the [moon](chodesh.html) and we say:

ברוך יוצריך

ברוך עושיך

ברוך קוניך

ברוך בוראיך

The [first](one.html) [letter](letters.html) of each word spells: יעקב - [Yaaqov](jacob.html). The “man in the [moon](chodesh.html)”, the [face](body.html), is the [face](body.html) of [Yaaqov](jacob.html). This explains why he did not want to be associated with a receiver who had failed.

Qorach went around “all night” according to the [Midrash](orallaw.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVIII:10*** *NEITHER HAVE I HURT* [*ONE*](one.html) *OF THEM (XVI, 15). By this Moses meant: I did not condemn the innocent nor acquit the guilty. When Moses saw that they persisted in their haughtiness, he said to them: BE THOU AND ALL THY CONGREGATION BEFORE THE LORD... TO-MORROW (ib. 16)* ***Korah went about all that night and misled the Israelites****. He said to them: ‘ What do you suppose? That I am working to obtain greatness for myself? I* [*desire*](needs.html) *that we should all enjoy greatness in turn, not like Moses who has appropriated the kingship to himself and has given the* [*High Priest*](priests.html)*hood to his brother!’ And so he went about winning over each* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *with arguments suited to that particular* [*tribe*](tribes.html)*, until they made common cause with him. How is this inferred? From the text, AND KORAH ASSEMBLED ALL THE CONGREGATION AGAINST THEM (ib. 19). They approached Moses, all* [*speaking*](mashal.html) *as Korah did. Instantly, THE LORD* [*SPOKE*](mashal.html) *UNTO MOSES AND UNTO AARON, SAYING: SEPARATE YOURSELVES FROM AMONG THIS CONGREGATION,.. AND THEY FELL UPON THEIR FACES (ib. 20 f.).*

1. Why does the [Midrash](orallaw.html) stress that Korah sought support all night?

Qorach did his work of gaining support at night, because subconsciously he [knew](daat.html) that he did his best work at night. Qorach is the night man. The night is the receiver in the same way Qorach was a receiver.

Rashi tells us about Qorach’s nighttime work:

**Rashi: *19 Korah assembled... against them*** *with words of mockery. All that night, he went to the* [*tribes*](tribes.html) *and enticed them [saying,] “Do you think I care only for myself? I care for all of you. These [people] come and take all the high positions: the kingship for himself and the kehunah for his brother,” until they were all enticed.[[13]](#footnote-13)*

Moses says that “in the morning” [HaShem](hashem.html) will reveal His will. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) lends us some additional [insight](insights.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVIII:4*** *Said He: In the morning the Lord will show who are His (Num. XVI, 5). What is the reason why He chose such a* [*time*](time.html)*? R. Nathan explained: The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, said: ‘ If all the magicians of the* [*world*](worlds.html) *were to assemble and try to turn the morning into evening, they would not be able to do so, and as I made a partition between light and darkness, so have I set Aaron apart to sanctify him as most holy.’*

1. Why does Moses wait till the morning to resolve this issue? Why not resolve it now?

Moshe procrastinated till the morning because he is the [sun](hachama.html) the daytime. Qorach is the [moon](chodesh.html), he is the night. Therefore, Moshe wanted to wait until his [time](time.html), his turf had arrived. Moshe wanted Qorach to see that this is the reality, that Qorach is the receiver.

Rashi alludes to this:

**Rashi: *near to Him*** *Heb. וְהִקְרִיב אֵלָיו . And the Targum [Onkelos] proves this [that it is referring to both the Levites and the* [*kohanim*](priests.html)*], for he renders the* [*first*](one.html) *phrase, “He will bring them close to Him” [and the second phrase] “He will bring into His service.” The Midrashic interpretation of* בּֽקֶר *, morning, [rather than* מָחָר *, tomorrow] is: Moses said to him [Korah], The Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed is He, assigned boundaries to His* [*world*](worlds.html)*. Are you able to transform morning into evening? That is how possible it is for you to undo this, as it says, “It was evening and it was morning... and He separated (*וַיַּבְדֵּל*) “ (Gen. 1:5, 7); similarly, “Aaron was set apart (*וַיִּבָּדֵל*) to sanctify him...”[[14]](#footnote-14).[[15]](#footnote-15)*

Rashi also tells us why Moshe put the decision off till the morning:

**Rashi: *5 In the morning, the Lord will make*** [***known***](daat.html) *Night is a* [*time*](time.html) *of drunkenness for us, and it is improper to appear before Him. His real intention was to delay, with the hope that they might retract [their opposition].[[16]](#footnote-16)*

Midrashim relate that Qorach’s 250 men donned solid blue [four](four.html)-cornered garments (talit) and ridiculed Moshe’s ruling, that they still needed the blue string, amidst the other [fringes](tzitzith.html), at each corner of the garment. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) Rabba offers further [insight](insights.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVIII:3*** *NOW KORAH... TOOK. What is written in the preceding passage? Bid them that they make them...* [*fringes*](tzitzith.html)*... and that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread of blue (Num. XV, 38). Korah jumped up and asked Moses: ‘If a cloak is entirely of blue, what is the* [*law*](law.html) *as regards its being exempted from the obligation of* [*fringes*](tzitzith.html)*? ‘Moses answered him:’ It is subject to the obligation of* [*fringes*](tzitzith.html)*. ‘Korah retorted:’ A cloak that is entirely composed of blue cannot free itself from the obligation, yet the* [*four*](four.html) *blue threads do free it! If,’ he asked again, ‘a house is full of Scriptural books, what is the* [*law*](law.html) *as regards its being exempt from the obligation of* [*mezuzah*](mezuzah.html)*?’ He answered him: ‘It is under the obligation of having a* [*mezuzah*](mezuzah.html)*.’ ‘The whole Torah,’ he argued, ‘which contains* [*two*](two.html) *hundred and* [*seventy*](seventy.html)*-*[*five*](five.html) *sections, cannot exempt the house, yet the* [*one*](one.html) *section in the* [*mezuzah*](mezuzah.html) *exempts it! These are things,’ he continued, ‘which you have not been commanded, but you are inventing them out of your own mind!’*

The Keli Yakar quotes the above [Midrash](orallaw.html). At the end of the previous Parasha (Shelach), we were informed of the [mitzva](cmds613.html) of [tzitzith](tzitzith.html). Qorach “took” the Parasha of [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) and challenged Moshe in the realms of [Halacha](walking.html). If a garment is completely made of techelet does it need [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) of techelet on its’ [fringes](tzitzith.html)? Moshe replied in the affirmative. Qorach challenged the answer given by Moshe.

Rashi gives us a similar response:

**Rashi: *Dathan and Abiram*** *Since the* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *of Reuben was settled in the south when they camped, thus being neighbors of Kohath and his children who were also camped in the south, they joined with Korah in his rebellion. Woe to the* [*wicked*](wicked.html)*, and woe to his neighbor! Now what made Korah decide to quarrel with Moses? He envied the chieftainship of Elizaphan the son of Uzziel whom Moses* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *as chieftain over the sons of Kohath by the [Divine] word. Korah claimed, “My father and his brothers were* [*four*](four.html) *[in* [*number*](nchart.html)*]” as it says, “The sons of Kohath were...” (Exod. 6:18). Amram was the* [*first*](one.html)*, and his* [*two*](two.html) *sons received greatness—*[*one*](one.html) *a king and* [*one*](one.html) *a* [*kohen*](kohen.html) *gadol. Who is entitled to receive the second [position]? Is it not I, who am the son of Izhar, who is the second brother to Amram? And yet, he [Moses]* [*appointed*](settimes.html) *to the chieftainship the son of his youngest brother! I hereby oppose him and will invalidate his word.[[17]](#footnote-17) What did he do? He went and assembled* [*two*](two.html) *hundred and fifty men, heads of Sanhedrin, most of them from the* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *of Reuben, his neighbors. These were Elitzur the son of Shedeur and his colleagues, and others like him, as it says, “chieftains of the congregation, those called to the assembly.” And further it states, “These were the chosen ones of the congregation” (1:16). He dressed them with cloaks made entirely of blue wool. They came and stood before Moses and asked him, “Does a cloak made entirely of blue wool require* [*fringes*](tzitzith.html) *[‘*[*tzitzith*](tzitzith.html)*’], or is it exempt?” He replied, “It does require [*[*fringes*](tzitzith.html)*].” They began laughing at him [saying], “Is it possible that a cloak of another [colored] material,* [*one*](one.html) *string of blue wool exempts it [from the obligation of techeleth], and this* [*one*](one.html)*, which is made entirely of blue wool, should not exempt itself?[[18]](#footnote-18)*

If [one](one.html) thread of techelet can be used to exempt a garment of [tzitzith](tzitzith.html), then surely a garment of techelet would not require [tzitzith](tzitzith.html)?

1. Why does Qorach choose [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) ([fringes](tzitzith.html)) for his argument as opposed to the [Parah Adumah](heifer.html) or another chok?

The word [*tzitzith*](tzitzith.html), [fringes](tzitzith.html), is related to that which bursts forth with life from seemingly dead earth and trees; this week, after Qorach’s debacle, we read that only Aharon’s [rod](staff.html) flowered, “Vayatzetz Tzitz”, and put forth buds.[[19]](#footnote-19) The garment, *begged*, represents external [physical](physical.html) reality, the illusory [world](worlds.html) of the senses, limited by its [four](four.html) corners, unless [one](one.html) progresses to the transcendental [world](worlds.html) of truth and eternity, via the [mitzvot](cmds613.html), linking every aspect of mundane life to [HaShem](hashem.html), it’s represented by the blue string.

We are to *see* the [tzitzith](tzitzith.html). If we wear a talit at night, we do not need [tzitzith](tzitzith.html). They only need [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) by day so that we can *see* them. Thus we understand that the reason Qorach chose to dispute this [mitzva](cmds613.html) was due to his perspective. He was [coming](coming.html) from the perspective of night! And from his perspective, he was right!

Moshe took *his* perspective of the [sun](hachama.html), of daytime. The talit requires [tzitzith](tzitzith.html) during the day.

Qorach’s eye mislead him. Qorach saw that Shmuel the prophet would be his descendant. He sought leadership because he saw how great his descendants would be, even though the [one](one.html) not chosen would die. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) confirms this:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah -*** [***Numbers***](nchart.html) ***XVIII:8*** *Now Korah, who was a clever man--what reason had he for such folly?* ***His mind’s eye misled him****. He foresaw that a long and distinguished progeny would emanate from him, particularly Samuel, whose importance would equal that of Moses and Aaron; as may be inferred from the text, Moses and Aaron among His* [*priests*](priests.html)*, and Samuel among them that call upon His* [*Name*](name.html)*,[[20]](#footnote-20) and that from among his descendants there would be formed* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *levitical divisions all of whom would prophesy under the influence of the Holy Spirit; as it says, All these were the sons of Heman.[[21]](#footnote-21) He argued: ‘Is it reasonable that, since such greatness is destined to emanate from me, I should keep silent?‘ He did not, however, foresee accurately. In fact his sons repented, and it was from them that the distinguished progeny was to emanate. Moses, however, did foresee it. The reason then why Korah was foolish enough to risk that danger was because he heard from Moses that they would all perish and* [*one*](one.html) *of them would escape; as it says, AND IT SHALL BE THAT THE MAN WHOM THE LORD DOTH CHOOSE, HE SHALL BE HOLY.*

Rashi also tells us about these great descendants:

**Rashi: *7 you have taken too much upon yourselves, sons of Levi*** *Heb.* רַב לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי *, [interpreted Midrashically as:] I have told you a very great thing. Were they not fools? For he warned them about it and they [still] took upon themselves to offer [the* [*incense*](ketoret.html)*]. They sinned at the cost of their lives, as it says, “the censers of these who sinned at the cost of their lives” (17:3). But what did Korah, who was astute, see [to commit] this folly? His vision deceived him. He saw [prophetically] a chain of great people descended from him: Samuel, who is equal [in importance] to Moses and Aaron. He [Korah] said, “For his sake I will be spared. [He also saw]* [*twenty*](twenty.html)*-*[*four*](four.html) *watches [of Levites] emanating from his grandsons, all prophesying through the holy spirit, as it says, “all these were the sons of Heman” (I Chron 25:5). He said, “Is it possible that all this greatness is destined to emanate from me, and I should remain silent?” Therefore, he participated [in the rebellion] to reach that prerogative, for he had heard from Moses that they would all perish and* [*one*](one.html) *would escape [death]: “the* [*one*](one.html) *whom the Lord chooses—he is the holy* [*one*](one.html)*.” He erred in thinking that it referred to him. He, however, did not “see” properly, for his sons repented [and thus did not die at that* [*time*](time.html)*]. Moses, however, foresaw this.[[22]](#footnote-22)*

1. If Qorach had prophecy, why did Qorach’s eye not see that the descendants greatness was due to his children’s [merit](merit.html), not his?

Because in order to hear a prophecy in it’s entirety, [one](one.html) must learn how to listen, how to be a receiver. Without this skill, Qorach did not hear the whole prophecy. Qorach wanted to give, therefore he missed the part that comes from a [giver](giver.html). Moshe, on the other [hand](fourteen.html), had perfected the art of hearing by being the receiver from [HaShem](hashem.html). He had perfected the art of hearing.

1. Why did Dathan and Abiram say that they will not come even if Moses would pull their [eyes](body.html) out of their sockets? Why [eyes](body.html)?

The [eyes](body.html) see during the day. We need light to see. Dathan and Abiram said they were givers, men of the day, and they did not need to see, because [eyes](body.html) receive whilst we are givers now. Light will come from our eye sockets, we are givers now. They had bought into Qorach’s arguments.

1. Why did [HaShem](hashem.html) open the ground to kill Qorach and his followers, as opposed to [plague](plagues.html) or some other way?

The ground “received” Qorach to indicate that Qorach and his followers were receivers. This was [HaShem](hashem.html)’s last message to Qorach. The ground formed a [mouth](body.html) which receives, and the [mouth](body.html) swallowed Qorach.

1. Why did [HaShem](hashem.html) have to prove that Aharon was the man with the sprouting rods? Why not use a bat kol?

Aharon was the [giver](giver.html) in the area of the priesthood. Aharon represented the [sun](hachama.html), too. Obviously Aharon’s [staff](staff.html) was still connected to it’s source. It produced fruit because it is still connected to it’s source. Aharon was therefore the source – the [giver](giver.html). Everyone else is the receiver that had cut themselves off from Aharon the [giver](giver.html).

1. In Tehillim 92:13, it says: צדיק כתמר יפרח - *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree*: – the last [letters](letters.html) spell Qorach’s [name](name.html). The Arizal says that Qorach was a צדיק - Tzadik.

Qorach was wise and there will be a [time](time.html) when he is a [giver](giver.html). Unfortunately, his timing was way off. Qorach was trying to assume the role of a [giver](giver.html) at a [time](time.html) when [HaShem](hashem.html) still had him as a receiver. But the [letters](letters.html) of Qorach’s [name](name.html) appear at the end of the words to indicate that in the end Qorach will be a Tzadik, not now.

1. Why was Joshua punished by having [laws](law.html) removed from his memory?

Moshe receives Torah from [HaShem](hashem.html) and then he turns around and becomes the rebbe, the [teacher](teacher.html), giving Torah to Joshua and the people. Joshua later turns around and becomes the [giver](giver.html). However, because he assumes the role of the [giver](giver.html) a minute early, his punishment is to forget what he received, because he is still supposed to be a receiver! Joshua said that he had never left Moshe’s side, therefore he had received everything, yet it was not yet his [time](time.html) to be a [giver](giver.html).

In each [generation](toldot.html) there is a Torah [teacher](teacher.html) who is the [giver](giver.html) of his [generation](toldot.html).

[One](one.html) day the [world](worlds.html) will be filled with the [knowledge](knowledge.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). We will all be filled to capacity. Thus we learn that this current situation where we have a rebbe and a talmid, is a temporary situation. It will not always be this way.

1. In the Song of [Shabbat](sabbath.html), [Psalm](psalms1.html) 92, the [first](one.html) [letters](letters.html) of each word spell *Moshe*, thus Moshe is [Shabbat](sabbath.html). Moshe was called [Shabbat](sabbath.html). How can this be?

Only [Shabbat](sabbath.html) has sanctity, the [six](six.html) days have no inherent sanctity, but rather they receive their sanctity from [Shabbat](sabbath.html). That is why we begin [Shabbat](sabbath.html) early on the [sixth](six.html) day and extend [Shabbat](sabbath.html) into the [first](one.html) day of the week. We are injecting the sanctity of [Shabbat](sabbath.html) into the [six](six.html) work days by affecting the [first](one.html) and the last of those [six](six.html) days.

In the same way, Moshe was holy and was giving that holiness to the people. He was giving the Torah and they were receiving it. Moshe is the [sun](hachama.html), he is [Shabbat](sabbath.html), he is the [giver](giver.html). Qorach and the people are the [moon](chodesh.html), they are the [six](six.html) work days, they are the receivers.

On the [fourth](four.html) day, [HaShem](hashem.html) created the [two](two.html) great luminaries, later it calls them a greater and a lesser luminaries. This is because the [sun](hachama.html) and the [moon](chodesh.html) were equal, later the [moon](chodesh.html) was diminished.

[Shabbat](sabbath.html) and [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html): This represents a fusion of opposites. [Shabbat](sabbath.html) is associated with the weekly [cycle](cycles.html) of the [sun](hachama.html), whereas [Rosh Chodesh](chodesh.html) is associated with the lunar [cycle](cycles.html). The [two](two.html) reflect the difference between a *mashpia* ([giver](giver.html)) and a *mekabel* (receiver). This very differentiation, however, also implies that a [connection](connection.html) is established between them; the *mashpia* and the *mekabel* are united.

The concepts of *mashpia* and *mekabel* are reflected in Parshat Qorach. Qorach appreciated the positive quality of the recipients. Thus, he asked Moshe:

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:3*** *“Why do you raise yourself above the congregation of G-d?”*

This was a mistake. Although the recipients have great positive qualities, these qualities are revealed when they submit themselves to the guidance of the *mashpia*.

1. Why can’t there be [two](two.html) kings with the same crown? Why can’t both the [moon](chodesh.html) and the [sun](hachama.html) be equal?

Everything that [HaShem](hashem.html) created is a pair: [Heaven](heaven.html) and earth, [**sun**](hachama.html) **and** [**moon**](chodesh.html), [Adam](adam.html) and Chava, man and woman, this [world](worlds.html) and the next [world](worlds.html), givers and receivers, Rebbe and talmid, [Shabbat](sabbath.html) and the [six](six.html) work days. However, [HaShem](hashem.html) is [One](one.html) and He is unique, He is NOT a pair.

Everything in this [world](worlds.html) works as either a [giver](giver.html) or a receiver. These pairs define everything in this [world](worlds.html). A man gives and a woman receives. Though on occasion they assume opposite roles, never the less, they are primarily in these roles.

Thus the [sun](hachama.html) is the [giver](giver.html) and the [moon](chodesh.html) is the receiver.

1. Why did [HaShem](hashem.html) create them equal and then later diminish [one](one.html)?

The [world](worlds.html) operates with givers and receivers now, but, that was not how it was in the beginning, nor is it how we will function in the end.[[23]](#footnote-23) When [Mashiach](mashiach.html) comes, there will be a drastic change when everyone will become a [giver](giver.html).

Kiddush Lavanah – Fill the lacking of the [moon](chodesh.html) that there be no diminishing of the [moon](chodesh.html) and that its light be equal to the [sun](hachama.html) as it was in the beginning. [One](one.html) day we will all be able to give, even as the [moon](chodesh.html) will be able to give its own light.

1. Why did Cain kill Abel, from a deeper perspective?

Because Abel was the [*giver*](giver.html) of his [generation](toldot.html) and Cain was the *receiver*. Abel was to be the disseminator of the Torah he received from his father, [Adam](adam.html), who in turn received it from [HaShem](hashem.html). They each started out a receiver and then turned around to become the [giver](giver.html).

Abel was the rebbe of that [generation](toldot.html). Cain murdered Abel because he claimed that they had already entered the Messianic age and that he, and everyone else, was not a rebbe, a [giver](giver.html).

Cain responded, “Am I my brother’s guardian (HaShomer)”?

[Yaaqov](jacob.html) guarded (shomer) the words of the prophecy of [Yosef](joseph.html). He was waiting for it to occur according to Rashi.

Cain no longer wanted to guard the words of Abel.

Qorach was a gilgul of Cain. Moshe was a gilgul of Abel. Thus we see that the confrontation between Moshe and Qorach was supposed to be the [tikkun](tikkun.html) (correction) of the confrontation between Cain and Abel. Yet, we see that Qorach repeated the [sin](sin.html) of Cain. Cain brought his [first](one.html) fruit [offering](korbanot) on [Nisan](feasts.html) 15, yet the Torah [teaches](teacher.html) that the [first](one.html) of the firstfruit offerings cannot be brought before [Nisan](feasts.html) 16. Thus we see that his timing was off. In the same way, Qorach would have been correct in the Messianic age, but alas, he was not in that age and instead sinned a very great [sin](sin.html). Qorach said that they were all holy, he wanted to be a [giver](giver.html) because he thought that they had entered the Messianic age. Qorach had the same message as Cain, and Moshe had the same message as Abel.

\* \* \*

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1. Likkutei Torah BaMidbar 54b et al. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The name “Korach” itself is used for a bald spot, which is a division of the hair. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Yalkut Shimoni, sec. 991. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I Sam. xii. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ps. lxxxix. 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Baba Bathra 75a [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Yoel chapter 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Midrash Tanchuma*; Rashi, Numbers 16:7 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Rashi on Bamidbar 26:11 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Vilna Gaon, *Seder Olam* 20; see Ex. 6:24, I Chron. 6:7,22, 9:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Midrash Tanchuma Korach 4, Num. Rabbah 18:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I Chron. VI, 22 f. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Midrash Tanchuma Korach 7, Num. Rabbah 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. I Chron. 23:13 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Midrash Tanchuma Korach 3, Num. Rabbah 4 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Midrash Tanchuma 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Midrash Tanchuma Korach 1, Num. Rabbah 18:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Midrash Tanchuma Korach 2, Num. Rabbah 18:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Bamidbar 17:23 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ps. XCIX, 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. I Chron. XXV, 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This is found in [Midrash](file:///D:\Word\People\orallaw.html) Tanchuma Korach 5, Num. Rabbah 18:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Sefer Yetzirah 1:7, Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 46:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)