



THE SHALOM BAYIT JOURNAL



Parashat Korach

Dangers of Focusing on What We Lack

Understanding the Torah and the Human Experience

Human beings have an incredible ability to overlook blessings while becoming consumed by what is missing. We can have meaningful relationships, opportunities, health, family, purpose, and countless gifts from Boreh Olam, yet find ourselves preoccupied with the one thing we wish were different.

The more we focus on what we lack, the more difficult it becomes to appreciate what we have. Both Chazal and modern psychology recognize that what we repeatedly focus on becomes stronger over time. The more attention we give something, the more space it occupies in our minds and in our lives.

When a person repeatedly focuses on what is missing, disappointment and negativity can slowly become their default way of thinking. They become more aware of problems than blessings and more focused on shortcomings than opportunities. Over time, comparison replaces appreciation and dissatisfaction replaces gratitude.

This mindset can slowly affect not only the individual, but also their family, relationships, and community. What begins as a thought can eventually become the lens through which we see the world.

At first glance, Korach's argument sounds noble. He approaches Moshe and Aharon and declares, "The entire congregation is holy." He appears to be standing up for equality, holiness, and the dignity of every Jew.

Korach was not an outsider. He was a Levi from the family of Kehat, the most distinguished family among the Leviim. He was entrusted with carrying the holiest vessels of the Mishkan. He possessed honor, status, influence, and a unique spiritual role within the Jewish people.

Yet despite all of these blessings, it wasn't enough. Many commentators explain that Korach's desire may have originally come from a sincere place. He wanted greater closeness to Boreh Olam. He wanted a deeper spiritual connection. There is nothing inherently wrong with wanting to grow spiritually.





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However, rather than valuing the role Boreh Olam had given him, Korach became focused on the role Boreh Olam had given someone else. His desire for holiness gradually became a fixation on position, and his longing for closeness to Boreh Olam slowly turned into dissatisfaction with his own place.

There is a striking irony in Korach's argument. He proclaimed, "The entire congregation is holy," yet his actions revealed that he could not tolerate someone else having a role above his own.

Korach became so focused on what Boreh Olam had given someone else that he could no longer recognize what Boreh Olam had already given him. And from that dissatisfaction came negativity, conflict, and division.

It is important to appreciate the magnitude of what Korach did. This was not simply a disagreement or a personal complaint. Korach gathered 250 respected leaders of the Jewish people and challenged Moshe publicly. He convinced many people to join his cause and created a rebellion that threatened the unity of the nation. In challenging Moshe's leadership, he was ultimately challenging the role that Boreh Olam Himself had established.

Korach was not an isolated story. Throughout Sefer Bamidbar, the Dor HaMidbar repeatedly struggled with the same challenge. Despite witnessing miracles, receiving the Torah, and experiencing Boreh Olam's presence in unprecedented ways, complaints and dissatisfaction continued to emerge.

The problem was not a lack of blessings, but an inability to recognize and appreciate the blessings that were already there.

Pirkei Avot teaches:

"Who is wealthy? One who is happy with his portion."

Modern research echoes this idea. People who regularly notice and reflect on the good in their lives experience greater well-being, resilience, and life satisfaction. Our attention shapes our experience. What we repeatedly focus on tends to grow.

The challenge of Korach is not simply to avoid conflict. It is to learn to notice the blessings Boreh Olam has already placed in our lives. It is to value our own role instead of comparing it to someone else's. True fulfillment comes less from getting what we want than from appreciating what Boreh Olam has already given us.

