



## **Korach – Glorious Diversity**

### **Eternal Dispute?**

In this week's Parsha we have the dispute between Korach and Moshe. The Mishnah in Avos (5:17) says: "Any dispute that is for the sake of the Name of Heaven will endure and any dispute that is not for the sake of the Name of Heaven will not endure. What is a [example of a] dispute that was for the sake of the Name of Heaven? The dispute between Hillel and Shammai. What is a [example of a] dispute that was not for the sake of the Name of Heaven? This was The Dispute of Korach and all his followers". There are many difficulties in this Mishna: first and foremost, why should we want a dispute to last forever? Should we not want the issue to be resolved conclusively? Why is it that the dispute that is for the sake of the Name of Heaven endures forever? Furthermore, the Mishna is not symmetrical. By the example of The Dispute for the sake of the Name of Heaven, both dissenting parties, Hillel and Shammai are mentioned. When it comes to the example of a dispute that is not for the sake of the Name of Heaven it only mentions one side of The Dispute - Korach and his followers! How do we understand this?

### **Appointed positions vs Natural Boundaries**

On the pasuk (16:5) "... in the **morning** Hashem will make known the one who is his own..." says Rashi: "**morning**" - Moshe told them (Korach and his followers) divisive boundaries Hashem made in his world! Can you change **morning** to night? That's what it would take to undo this (Ahron's appointment to be Kohen Gadol) as the verse

says: "...it was night and it was day and Hashem **separated** the light from the dark" (Bereishis 1:5) so also "Hashem separated Ahron to sanctify him" (Divrei Hayamim 1:23:13)". The metaphor that Moshe gave Korach and his people is very difficult to understand. They are totally incongruent! Day and night are **naturally divided!** They cannot coexist at the same time and place because they would neutralize each other. It is either day or night and it is their very nature that separates them and demands that they remain separate. Seemingly, Ahron's appointment is 'artificial' as it was mandated. Korach is complaining that he could have gotten the same appointment also!

### **Punished by Deliberate Freak of Nature**

Korach is subsequently punished by being swallowed up by the Earth. Moshe already foresaw that and told the people: " if a **creation** Hashem **will create** and the Earth will open its mouth..."(16:30) Rashi says: "Moshe was saying that if it was **created already** (as indeed the 'mouth of the earth' was created by the Genesis right before Shabbos came in) and if not, let Hashem **create it now**". Why was it necessary for Korach to be punished with a special creation of deviant nature, so much so that if I was not created yet Hashem would have to create it then and there?

### **Hillel & Shammai like Heaven & Earth**

We could hear Rashi as well as the Mishna in Avos echoed in the Zohar (Bereishis 17b) that **Korach was disputing the order of creation**

**itself.** When Hashem divided the waters on the second day of that in of itself was a **division for the sake of the Name of Heaven like the division between Hillel and Shammai!** What does all this mean? [*The firmament that became the sky –“shamayim” alludes to Shammai (=shamayim) and by contrast the Earth under the heavens would be Hillel. This explains the secret of why the Halacha is like Hillel in this day and age because we are on his ‘turf’ where he is the Mara d’Asra. In the future when we rise to level of Heaven the Halacha will be like Shammai as we’ll be on his ‘turf’ - but more about this later]*

### **Both Right?**

Another thing we know about the differences of opinion between Hillel and Shammai and their followers is that Hashem clearly endorsed both sides - despite the fact that He said that we should rule like Beis Hillel. The Heavenly voice rang out “these and those are the Words of “Elokim Chaim” - the Living G-d - but the Halacha is like Beis Hillel”. Seemingly this is an oxymoron. If they’re both right why should the Halacha be like Beis Hillel? The Talmud itself asks that question and says that Beis Hillel merited to have the Halacha like them because of their humility. This does not in any way detract from the academic validity of Beis Shammai’s opinions! the greater question is: they say polar opposite things as the Heavenly voice itself pointed out: “even though these say “kosher” and these say “pasul”, these say “pure” and these say “impure”, these say “permissible” is one says prohibited both are the words of “Elokim Chaim” - the Living G-d”. How can this be if they say mutually exclusive ideas?

### **Understanding Eilu v’Eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim**

My Rebbe, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisroel of Baltimore **HaGaon HaRav Yaakov Weinberg**

Z”L used to give a metaphor to understand how one integrated Torah encompasses mutually exclusive possibilities from simple algebra:  $x^2 = 4$ : what is X? There are two opposite possibilities to solve this equation: 2 and -2!  $2 * 2 = 4$  and  $-2 * -2 = 4$ ! Two polar opposites are both “correct”! [*The truth is that negative integers don’t even exist in physical reality! they are a theory and yet both solve the same equation!*] On a deeper level: **this one equation generates these two opposite possibilities!** Our Torah is to be viewed as a complex equation. All the different valid opinions, chiefly among them Hillel and Shammai, can solve the equation. **The ‘solution set’ is incomplete if you do not realize all the different possibilities.** Even though these possibilities are mutually exclusive of each other and you cannot work with both of them simultaneously, nonetheless they belong to the same equation and your study of the equation is incomplete if you did not realize all possibilities. We are to follow Beis Hillel as far as **practical Halacha**. In the Practical world we will use the solution of 2 which is a ‘real number’ as opposed the solution of -2 because it is a ‘theoretical number’. In this world the ‘Practical solution’ is Hillel’s way and Shammai remains the ‘theoretical solution’. **When we rise to the level of Heaven it is like going into a ‘negative integer universe’ and then the Halacha will be like Shammai because in that world Shammai will be the ‘practical way’ and Hillel’s way will be the ‘theoretical way’.**

### **One Torah for opposing forces**

The Prophet (Yeshayahu 43:7) says: “All that is called by **My Name** for my **Glory** I created it, fashioned it, and made it” We’re being taught two ideas: 1) The Divine name is at the most elemental level of reality. 2) Reality is to be an expression of the Divine Glory. [*In truth the “Divine Name” here refers to the world of “Atzilus” which is the “world of*

*ideas” that everything is based on and hence “created, fashioned, and made” refers to the worlds of Briah, Yetzira, and Asia” that branched out from it.] An entity that is also called “Divine Name” is the Torah! “The whole Torah is Divine Names” (see Ramban’s introduction to his commentary on the Torah). Whenever we say “Hashem’s Name is **One**” it refers to the Torah as it is **one Torah**. As we know, Torah is the “idea” that reality was based on and built from. Chazal say: “Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world”. **If Torah is the “blueprint” of all reality, then it has to have “programming” for opposites as the forces of reality themselves are oppositional.** Fire and water, as an example, cannot exist at the same place at the same time. There needs to be “oppositional programming” to create these opposites and “division programming” to separate them so that they don’t negate each other. **The amazing thing is even though all the cosmos is pieced together of opposing forces there are still one integrated Cosmos!** What is holding the world the opposing forces apart and yet together? what keeps the opposing forces in their ‘boundaries’ and yet unified and integrated place it is the exact same power- The “Name of Hashem”! The Torah that makes everything, keeps everything in its boundary, and keeps them unified integrated. This is why it was already foretold that there has to be dissent and disagreement in the **One Torah - the varying opinions are parallel to the varying forces in reality. Although they cannot be at the same place at the same time, they are all equally as necessary to make up the whole of reality!** The difference between Heaven and Earth is actually rooted in the fact that Torah could be interpreted like Shammai and Hillel – that divergence of approach is what made the division between Heaven and Earth.*

### **“Elokim Chaim”**

With this we could understand the depth of what it says:” both of the words of **“Elokim Chaim”**”. The Divine Name “Elokim” means “Master of **ALL** powers” (Tur Orach Chaim 5). That is the Name that Hashem used in the Genesis to create the world during the six days of creation, because he was creating many **different** forces - **like the forces parallel to Hillel and Shammai**. Hashem wanted to demonstrate that even though He is “One” – nonetheless He can create many different and diverse forces! During the Yomim Noraim we beseech Hashem to have mercy on us **“For YOUR sake Elokim Chaim”** - Meaning to say: Even if we’re not perfect – the world would be incomplete without us - because **“Elokim Chaim” wants a life of diversity! Different and diverse glorifies the One Creator and is a revelation of “Elokim Chaim”** – that is “the Name of Heaven” that supports division and those divisions will endure for the sake of the Name Heaven -“Elokim Chaim”

### **Korach’s Mistake**

Korach misses the point. He doesn't understand about diversity and differences amongst the Jewish people. **Diversity and divisions in Torah and Avodas Hashem is just as natural as the differences in the forces of nature – it all comes from the Torah and has a constructive purpose to glorify Hashem. There is a mission in things being different!** Things are different because of how they glorify the Name of Heaven in each in its own unique way!! Just like the natural divisions are to glorify the Creator the division of function between the different Jews is also to glorify the Creator! **No one has “more” than the other - everyone just has his own different and unique Mission.** Korach thinks that it’s an issue of “seizing power” - it’s not! **It’s a difference of mission!** Everyone has a different and unique mission that glorifies Hashem and it’s perfectly parallel to the

differences and division that there is in the forces of nature. Korach's inability to recognize this is what the Zohar means by **"he was arguing on the order of reality itself"**. He does not want to acknowledge the necessity and the Divine glorification that emerges from the differences and divisions between the different forces and that's called that 'he argued on the order of creation and disputed reality itself."

### **Korach's Punishment**

Korach's punishment had to be a 'unique creation' **that blurred the boundaries of nature!** Korach was in denial of the significance of the order of creation so he had to be punished **'measure for measure' with the order of creation being disrupted and the inanimate Earth should open up his mouth and swallow him as if it was alive!** He was denying the significance of the divisions in reality so these divisions had to be undone for the purpose of punishing him. **My Rebbe HaGaon HaRav Moshe Shapira ZT"l** added a point to this: on the second day when division was made it does not say "Hashem saw it was good". The midrash explains that on the third day of creation it says Hashem saw it was good" twice. First when the earth is revealed as the waters converged to one point and again after the vegetation sprouted. The first "it was good" by emergence of the earth is! The whole reason why the water was divided was as to expose the Earth! The third day finishes what the second day started! It's called that what happened on the second day of creation was not finished until the third day because the constructive purpose in dividing the waters on the second day was to reveal earth. **Korach doesn't see the value in division - he just sees it as unfair - therefore he does not deserve Earth because Earth was created by division - which Korach does not appreciate!** Therefore it is as if "the Earth disappeared beneath his feet" because he does not

appreciate divisions for the sake of the Name of Heaven he won't have the solid Earth that emerged from those divisions.

### **Egocentric vs Theocentric**

I want this week understand why in the Mishnah it mentions both Hillel and Shammai but when it talks about Korach it just says Korach and his all his followers - and Moshe is not mentioned. Hillel and Shammai appreciate each other! As the Mishna in Yevamos says they lived in love and Tranquility with each, other despite having opposing views! **They even intermarried because they appreciated how they're on a mission from Hashem and they're all just parts of Hashem's whole cosmos**

Korach sees divisions as pure unfairness. Every force and every person is like his own universe - and some people have bigger worlds than others. Korach only sees himself and wants more for himself! In accordance with his own view - he's just mentioned with his followers because he doesn't see anyone else. Dispute that is not for the sake of the Name of Heaven is purely egocentric and does not see the other side.

### **Good Shabbos**



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