



Korach / קָרַח

A Mouth For A Mouth

Toras Avigdor
Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l
Junior

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Friday Morning, Beis Yaakov Ateres Ahuva

Shira listened excitedly as Morah Temima talked about the Parsha. No other teacher in the school told over the Parsha as well as her. She always made it sound so exciting.

"And then Korach and his people, hundreds of famous, prominent Yidden went to Moshe and Aharon," she was saying. "They said, 'Hey Moshe! Why are you in charge? We're all big talmidei chachomim. We all heard Hashem talk at Har Sinai. Why do we need you as the leader?'"

"Soon, all of the Am Yisroel in the midbar were embroiled in this great machlokes. Here we had Korach, who looked like a gadol himself, arguing with Moshe Rabbeinu! Whom were they to follow?"

"Moshe and Aharon were so troubled that they fell on their faces! And then, two of Korach's people, Doson and Aviram said to Moshe and Aharon, 'isn't it bad enough that you took us out of Mitzrayim which is an eretz zovas cholov udvash - a land of milk and honey - to kill us in the midbar, but you also need to rule over us?' Can you imagine the chutzpah, on top of fighting with the Gedolei Hador, referring to Mitzrayim as eretz zovas cholov udvash?"



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The class sat with bated breath as they listened to Morah Temima's story. What was going to happen next?

"So then," Morah Temima continued, "Moshe Rabbeinu told Korach and his followers to all take shovels and fill them with ketores, which is asur for anyone who is not a Kohen to prepare, and put it in front of the Mishkan. 'Now,' said Moshe, 'we'll see who Hashem has truly chosen to be a Kohen.'

"And then Hashem told Moshe to tell Klal Yisroel to get **far, far away** from Korach and his followers - not just because of what was about to happen, but also because whenever you see people making a machlokes you need to get **as far away as possible!**"

Shira knew what happened next, but her heart was still racing as Morah Temima finished the story.

"So the rest of Klal Yisroel moved back, far away from these Reshaim who made a huge machlokes with Hashem's people. And then - the ground opened up **WIDE**, like a mouth! And swallowed Korach, Doson, Aviram, and all of their tents and belongings! **FWOOP!** Down into the earth they went, all the way to Gihennom! And the Gemara even tells us that to this day they are still in Gihennom singing the lesson they learned, 'Moshe emes v'soraso emes!'"

After the bell rang, Shira and her friend Goldie walked home from school, still thinking about how scary the story of Korach was. "You know," said Shira, "I never want to be involved in a machlokes - look how terrible it is!"

"I know," agreed Goldie with a nod. "That was such a terrible punishment that they got. The earth became a mouth that swallowed them! I wonder, did it have lips? Teeth?"

Just then the two girls stopped as they saw a figure walking slowly across the street carrying heavy shopping bags. The two girls ran over to the older

woman. "Rebbetzin Miller, please let us help you carry your bags!"

"Thank you so much," Rebbetzin Miller said with a kind smile. "So girls, would you like to share what you were discussing just now? It looked like such an animated conversation."

Shira and Goldie told Rebbetzin Miller about how Morah Temima had mammish made the parsha come alive for them as she described what happened to Korach.

"But I have a question," Goldie said. "Why did Hashem punish them with such a strange punishment that the ground opened up - like a mouth? It seems so strange - we never see anything else like that."

Rebbetzin Miller smiled at the girls. "You know, when I used to be a Morah in Kindergarten, a little boy once asked me this very same question. And do you know what I answered? I said 'since Korach opened up his big mouth against Moshe Rabbeinu, so the earth opened up its mouth to swallow him, midah kneged midah!'"

"I'm so happy that you girls just asked the same question, because a Kindergarten boy doesn't understand too much, but you girls are big enough to understand the deeper meaning here.

"Middah kneged middah is an important part of how Hashem runs the world. Because even though we don't have nevi'im today to tell us what Hashem wants, but He runs the world in such a way that we can see what He wants... If he punishes by means of a strange and unusual mouth, we look at that, and we understand that we misused our mouths.

"And so, whenever anything happens to us, we can always try to find some message of middah k'neged middah that Hashem meant to give us"

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