

זכור אתיום השבת לקדשו.
ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל-מלאכתך,
יום השביעי שבת לה'

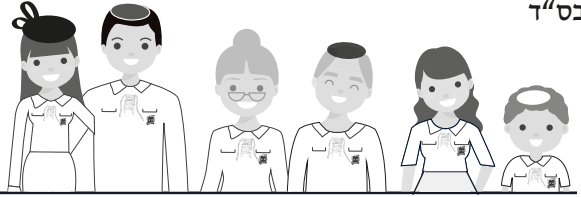
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SHABBAT LASHEM

THE VOICE OF BNEI AKIVA UK



ARE THE GREATEST LEADERS THE ONES WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT?

SAUL PETROOK
SHEVET SEENAI

In this week's *parasha*, the well-known story of the rebellion of Korach is centered around his idea that Moshe and Aaron wanted a higher status above everyone else, while Korach wanted that higher status for himself. Korach claimed that this higher status made Moshe and Aharon failed leaders, which led to his rebellion. The result of this was that Korach and his followers were swallowed up by the earth. But why did Korach go so far as to cause a rebellion? He already had so many privileges, and yet he still wanted more – to be a *kohen* like Aharon!

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-קִרְחַי שְׁמוֹעוּנָא בְּנֵי לֵוִי הַקֹּמֵט מִכֶּם
כִּי-הִבְדִּיל אֱ-לֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעַדְתָּ? שְׂרָאֵל הַקְרוֹיב
אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו לְעַבְדָּתָא אֶתְעַבְדַּת מִשְׁכְּנֵה וְלַעֲמֹד לְפָנֵי הָעֵדָה
לְשִׁרְתָּם

Moshe said to Korach, "Please listen, sons of Levi. Is it not enough that the God of Israel has distinguished you from the congregation of Israel to draw you near to Him, to perform the service in the *mishkan* of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them?"

Korach always wanted more, but why? Surely he would know that his revolt against Moshe and Aharon, who had been appointed by Hashem, would not be successful. Rashi answers this by saying that Korach had some divine insight by which he could see that in future generations, there would be families and individuals that came from him, who would be great and well-known.

It is said that Shemuel in his generation was as great

as Moshe and Aharon in their generation. But Shmuel is listed by himself, unlike Moshe and Aaron who were combined. And this is what Korach wanted, to be better than Moshe and Aharon. To be the main and only leader of the Jewish people. Korach wanted to be a great leader who would be remembered for a long time for how good he was, but here I think we see Korach's biggest mistake; it's what his definition of a great leader was. He felt that to be a successful leader, you must be famous and well-remembered.

But no, to be a great leader it's not necessarily about being remembered – it's so much more. It's about being a *mentsch* and just aiming to help other people. We've all heard many stories about wealthy people in various communities who secretly gave money to help the poor, but whenever asked publicly if they could donate to charity would refuse. From this we can see the essential quality of humility present in great people. The truly great people are those who live selflessly for the sake of others, enriching our society through their devotion. That is why, based on a passage in the Talmud, the *Rishonim* talk about the '*lamed-vav tzadikim*', the 36 righteous people on whose merit the world continues to exist. One of Rabi Sacks' most famous quotes is: 'Good leaders create followers, great leaders create leaders.' It's not always about having a big following and being popular; it's doing the necessary thing, that's right, even if it is not always perceived to be great by others.

Korach wanted to be remembered for his fame, yet unfortunately we remember him for all the wrong reasons. From his rebellion we can learn that to be great does not mean everyone knowing who you are, but rather helping others and doing the right thing, without any other motive.

SAUL IS IN SHEVET SEENAI AND IS ROSH OF MILL HILL SVIVA

POST-MODERNISM IN THE EYES OF RAV KOOK

PART 3: THE VALUE OF ALL IDEOLOGIES



these matters.

On the other hand, this doesn't mean we shouldn't make an effort to understand post-modernism's role in history, and what Hashem has planned for it. After all, something with such an impact on our life and the whole world can't be for no reason. Rav kook teaches us the following (*Orot HaKodesh* 1 p.13):

כל המחשבות הגיוניות הן ובקשר סיסטמטי הן נקשרות. גם אותן שאין אנו מכירים בהן כי אם בצבוע רעיוני בלבד, כשנחזקו זפה אחרי שרשן נמצא איך שהן משתלשלות ממקור ההגיוני

This means that any idea or theory that finds its way into this world has some logic behind it, or at least a purpose for it being revealed.

ממילא, יודעים אנו שאין שום מחשבה בטלה בעולם כלל, אין לדבר שאין לו מקום, כי כלם ממקור החכמה הן יוצאות

Therefore, any idea has its time and place when and where it is the correct thing. *Chazal* teach us that there isn't a single thing in this world that doesn't have a place.

וכל מה שיתעלה האדם יותר... הרי הוא לוקח מכל מחשבה... את גרעינה הנצחי, ההגיוני, הטוב, הנובע ממקור החכמה, והולך ומתעלה על ידן

The correct way to engage with theories that are foreign is to dive deep into them, until we find the seed of truth that is buried within. Once we find it, that seed of truth will bring blessing, as it is planted by Hashem's wisdom in reality.

We are told about Shelomo HaMelekh that he was the wisest of all people. The actual words in Hebrew are (*Melakhim I*, 5:11) **וַיְהִיכֶם מִכָּל-הָאָדָם**. This indeed could mean that he was wiser than all, but we can read it in a different way: Shelomo was so wise that he made sure to learn something from everyone he met. In *Chazal's* words, he found something to learn

even from a *cheresh, shoteh vekatan* (deaf-mute, fool and child). Even from them he found something to learn, something that would help him progress and develop.

Back to Rav Kook:

ומה זה? פלא כי חסידי עליו... באמת אין חשך ואין צלמנות לפניהם, והם נוטלים מכל ענין ומכל תכונ... את הטוב ואת הרענות, את הקדש שבן, ומקורבים אותו אל הקדש

The *chasidim*, those whose minds are connected all the time to *kodesh* and explore the world in the deepest manner, they never fear any thought, as they have the ability to filter the waste from the seed. They dig deep, and they find the seed. Then they show us why the seed they found is very much connected to *kodesh*.

“THE CORRECT WAY TO ENGAGE WITH THEORIES THAT ARE FOREIGN IS TO DIVE DEEP INTO THEM, UNTIL WE FIND THE SEED OF TRUTH THAT IS BURIED WITHIN... THAT SEED OF TRUTH WILL BRING BLESSING, AS IT IS PLANTED BY HASHEM’S WISDOM”

ומעתה ידע כי כל כבוד שישנה בקליטה של כל מחשבה... הוא מפני שלא נתגלה בהן סודו המפריא

Until the time comes when the *chakhamim* reveal the seed in each thought, there is a time of darkness. That darkness and difficulty is caused by the lack of productivity and fruitfully.

We hear so many people ranting about post-modernism. About how these theories are destroying the pillars of society. While some of their claims may be justified, all these rants are good for is to keep people away

from the post-modernist ideology, but that doesn't take us anywhere positive or show us what can be learned from it We don't just want to rant. We want to develop and evolve from each stage. And if the task we are given by Hashem is to do that using post-modernism, then we should aim to do it to the highest standards.

ולכן, זאת היא עבודת העיון הקבועה לכל ישרי לב. We want to be honest, so we must seek the seed of truth within post-modernism and relate it back to the big plan Hashem has for us.

What is that plan?

Tune in next week to find out.

RAV AVICHAH GOODMAN IS IN SHEVET NETZACH AND IS THE RAV SHALIACH OF BNEI AKIVA. TO CONTACT THE RAV, EMAIL RAV@BAUK.ORG.

TORAH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

GERSHOM MENDEZ SEIXAS | NAHALA 6TH TAMMUZ



Wouldn't you know, I've now got travel back across the Atlantic. Shame! Apparently my cruise broke the bank, but for the sake of Torah study we will find the money to fund a luxury two-week cruise from Spain to New York! This is the first trip we've made to the 'Land of the Free', and we will be stopping off at New York, Stratford (in Connecticut, not -upon-Avon) and Philadelphia, to meet the first American-born Hakham.

Gershom Mendez Seixas was the first Jewish American minister to be born in America itself. His father was a successful trader, originally born in Lisbon, who arrived at the American Colonies in 1730 via Barbados. He was fairly prominent in his business, and was one of the traders to sign the Non-Importation Agreement Act, one of the acts of resistance that led to the revolution. Gershom himself never formally trained as a rabbi, but served as such in the Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue in New York. This S&P community dates back to 1654 and the synagogue bears the official title '*She'arith Yisrael*'.

Once the American Revolution began, he supported the Whig revolutionaries (unlike many other religious leaders of the time) in favour of an America free from the rule of the British monarchy. In fact, when the British were on their way to New York, Mendez Seixas closed *She'arith Yisrael* as among its prominent members numbered many outspoken Patriots who would likely have been imprisoned or executed by the British. He delivered an impassioned sermon at what could have been the synagogue's final service, collected the *sifrei Torah*, *siddurim* and candlesticks and fled to Stratford, Connecticut and then down to Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, he led the congregation *Mikve Yisrael*, who acquired their first building in 1783 and is still an active synagogue today. At the building's consecration, Mendez Seixas called on 'Almighty God [to bless] the Members of these States in Congress assembled and [bless] his Excellency George Washington, Commander-General of these Colonies.'

Whilst in Philadelphia, an interesting event occurred, showcasing Hakham Seixas' political movements and fight for liberty. Before the existence of the 'No Religious Test Clause' (found in Article VI of the American Constitution that states that 'no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States'), members of the Pennsylvania legislature upon appointment had to affirm belief in the divine origin of both the Old and New Testament. This directly affected an individual named Haym Salomon, who was a key figure in the Revolution and financially assisted the likes of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, and yet could not join the government due to his Jewish beliefs. Hakham Seixas, along with the lay leadership of *Mikve Yisrael*, penned a petition to the Council of

Censors of Pennsylvania, which was published in *The Freeman's Journal* or *The North-American Intelligencer* in January 1784. The petition made the claim that this requirement limited the civil rights of citizens of America, as well as pointed out that the idea of limited freedom would discourage Jews from settling in Pennsylvania, and placed a stigma upon them. They argued that many Jews had suffered and died for the Revolutionary cause, as well as 'cheerfully contribut[ing] to the support of the militia, and of the government of this state'. Although the petition was initially ignored, in 1790, Pennsylvania altered their requirements to electing someone who acknowledges 'the being of a God and a future state of rewards and punishments' – so their *ikkarim* are belief in *matzui rishon* and *sekhar va'onesh*. They're eleven short, but no one's perfect.



In 1784, after the war, Hakham Seixas returned to New York and *She'arith Yisrael*, along with all of the religious articles he had safeguarded. In 1789, he was one of the first rabbis to give a Thanksgiving *derasha*, where he spoke about the importance of celebrating, as one, the political and moral victories taking place around them, and especially as Jews to thank God for the favourable position they were placed in, having been brought to this land where they can practise their religion freely, without restraint. However, he never lost sight of the nationalistic Jewish spirit and ultimate return to Zion. He emphasised the need to see ourselves not only as exiles, but in fact as captives, in spite of emancipation and equal rights with other members of society. In comparison to the former Kingdom of Israel, and the one to come, we have no choice but to consider our state as that of lowly captives.

Hakham Seixas was well-respected in the religious community, and would often visit the local churches to deliver sermons to Christian congregations (Leon da Modena used to do the same thing, if you recall *Shabbat Lashem Parashat Vayikra*). He was also honoured with being one of the fourteen clergymen present at George Washington's first inaugural ceremony in 1789. Hakham Seixas died in 1816, and the eulogy delivered for him by Emanuel Nunes Carvalho, at *Mikve Yisrael*, was the first printed Jewish sermon in America.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

- **Shabbat Shoutout** to our **Israel Machane Madrichim** currently on **pre-camp** in Israel

- **Lishmah** has now concluded for the year - we look forward to welcoming bogrot and sixth-form women next year!

- **SBM** has now concluded for the year - we look forward to welcoming chavirim back next year!

- **Veida motions** are now open! To **submit a motion** or **apply for a position** within Bnei Akiva, and for more details, please visit **bauk.org/veida**.

- We will be making a **siyum Tanakh** on pre-camp in memory of former mazkir **Marc Wineberg z"l**. To sign up, please visit **tinyurl.com/siyum-5783**.

- Mazal Tov to **Ari Naar** on being elected to the Mazkirut 5784 as **Technical Director!** Applications have now reopened for **Israel & Communities worker**, please email **mazkir@bauk.org** or visit **bauk.org/vacancies** for more information.

- **Summer Machane** applications are still open! Visit **bauk.org/camps** to sign up.

- To give any **comments** or **suggestions** to Bnei Akiva, please visit **bauk.org/feedback**.

- To keep up-to-date with all our latest events and announcements, make sure you're following us on **Facebook** and **Instagram!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS, PLEASE CONTACT BEN AT CHINUCH@BAUK.ORG

The advertisement is set against a yellow background. In the top left corner, there are two logos: the Bnei Akiva logo with the text 'BNEI AKIVA UNITED BRITAIN' and a smaller logo with the Hebrew letters 'תע' and 'מסד' below it. In the top right corner, the Hebrew word 'בס"ב' is written. The main text reads 'Read the best-selling book of all time....' followed by 'Tanakh!' in large, bold, blue letters. Below this, it says 'Sign up for YOUR part at:' and provides the URL 'https://tinyurl.com/siyum-5783'. At the bottom, it says 'in memory of former Mazkir Marc Weinberg z"l'. The bottom of the ad features a stylized bar chart with three groups of bars in purple, yellow, and black, each group sitting on a white rectangular base.

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