

AT THE ARTSCROLL SHABBOS TABLE

A PROJECT OF THE Mesorah Heritage Foundation

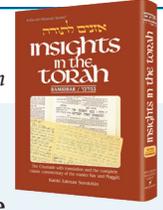
פרשת קרח
ב' תמוז תשפ"א
5781
JUNE 12, 2021
ISSUE #45
RABBI YITZCHOK HISIGER, EDITOR
DESIGN & LAYOUT: MRS. AVIVA KOHN

WEEKLY INSPIRATION AND INSIGHT ADAPTED FROM CLASSIC ARTSCROLL TITLES

DEDICATED BY MENACHEM AND BINAH BRAUNSTEIN AND FAMILY
L'ILLUI NISHMAS RAV MOSHE BEN RAV YISSOCHOR BERISH AND MARAS YENTA BAS YISROEL CHAIM

PARASHAH WAITING FOR THE MOMENT

Oznayim LaTorah – Insights in the Torah by Rav Zalman Sorotzkin



ויקה קרח בן יצחק בן קהת בן לוי.

And Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of Kehas, son of Levi separated himself (16:1)

“What caused Korach to foment dispute? It was because of Elitzafan son of Uziel, whom Moshe had appointed leader of Kehas. Uziel was the youngest of Kehas’ sons, and in Korach’s opinion, the leadership should not have been given to his son, but instead to the son of Yitzhar [the older son] — namely, to Korach” (*Tanchuma*).

Some commentators ask why Korach kept silent when Elitzafan was originally appointed. Korach was clever. He knew that a rebellion could succeed only if executed at the right moment. Moshe was involved in arranging the Bnei Yisrael according to their flags and designating their tribal leaders. This particular time was not auspicious for rebellion. The *Bnei Yisrael* had been yearning for the flags ever since the giving

of the Torah, when they had seen the angelic hosts arranged according to flags. When their desire was finally fulfilled, the *Bnei Yisrael* felt a special closeness to Hashem and His servant, Moshe. At that time, Korach would not have found receptive ears for his scheme to overthrow Moshe and Aharon. Therefore, Korach kept his thoughts to himself until the decree was passed against the entire people: “*In this Wilderness shall they cease to be, and there shall they die!*” (14:35). At that moment, Korach sensed that the entire camp was like a stack of explosives. He only needed to strike one match in order to blow up the entire structure that Moshe had built. This was the moment Korach had been waiting for to avenge his old grudge. 📖



RABBI MEIR ZLOTOWITZ ZT"l Upon His 4th Yahrtzeit — 30 Sivan

To mark the 4th yahrtzeit of Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz zt"l, legendary founder of ArtScroll Mesorah, on 30 Sivan, we present a collection of stories and vignettes from the inspiring and uplifting biography of this Torah pioneer authored by Yisroel Besser.

Klal Yisrael owes an eternal debt to Rabbi Zlotowitz for transforming the Jewish world through the ArtScroll series, touching – and teaching – Jews across the globe.

CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

Some people are kindhearted,” says Reb Shmuel Blitz, “but Reb Meir Zlotowitz was different. It wasn’t just compassion that motivated him in dealing with others, but a clear sense of what the person standing before him really needed.”

Reb Meir had an ability to see deeper. He was a “maskil el dal,” blessed with both the perception to see what others lacked and the generosity of spirit to fill that need for them. The following are a number of anecdotes that demonstrate this.

• • • • •

A couple Reb Meir knew had been married for several years, but had not yet been blessed with children. Reb Meir speculated that perhaps their parents hadn’t been generous when paying their *shadchan* and the matchmaker still had a bad feeling about it. He investigated and learned that it was so. He arranged for a third party to drop off an envelope filled with cash at the *shadchan*’s home, as a belated gift from the family. A year *continued on page 2*

ARTSCROLL MESSAGES

later, they had their first child, and no one — other than the secret messenger — knew of Reb Meir’s involvement.

•••••

A *talmid chacham* caught what he felt was a *halachic* error in an ArtScroll book and he faxed a letter to ArtScroll headquarters, saying that he had first noticed the mistake while perusing the *sefer* in *shul*, and then borrowed the book from a neighbor to confirm what he had seen.

Reb Meir himself sent back a response — not a letter, but a package. “Thank you for sharing the observation. We reviewed it and agreed that the layout of the page might have led others to reach the same *halachic* conclusion, which is indeed an error, and we will adjust it in future editions. As an aside,” Reb Meir wrote, “I noticed that you borrowed the *sefer*: enclosed is a copy of your own, so you will no longer have to borrow it.”

•••••

While on the phone with an off-site technician helping with a computer issue — a man Reb Meir did not know — he commented that the gentleman sounded tired. “Is everything okay?” he asked.

The technician admitted that he wasn’t having the easiest day. His son was in the hospital, he said, and after working long days at the office, he would go to relieve his wife at the hospital and spend the night there. He hadn’t slept normally in several days, and the fatigue and worry for his son’s health were getting to him.

Reb Meir offered his heartfelt wishes for a *refuah sheleimah* and then, when the call was complete, Reb Meir phoned Chaim Kahn, the president of the IT company.

“Chaim, I just want to make sure you realize what your employee is going through,” Reb Meir said. “You’re his boss and it’s up to you to do whatever you can to help him through this.”

•••••

At a massive public event, the organizers saved Reb Meir a seat on the dais with the *rabbanim* and dignitaries. Reb Meir was perfectly content in the dense crowd,

looking up at the dais. When one of the hosts came down to persuade him to come sit among the dignitaries, Reb Meir said, “Listen, I sell books, that’s all I do.”

A deferential young man stopped Reb Meir and started gushing about how ArtScroll — and its founder — had changed his life, how Reb Meir was his *rebbe*, the defining influence in everything he did.

Reb Meir stopped him.

“Tell me, my friend, when you put on your shirt in the morning, how do you go about it?”

The young man was confused by the question, and he was quiet.

“Do you first do one arm, then the other? Because I do it the same way, so we’re really the same sort of person,” Reb Meir said, satisfied that he had diffused what was, for him, an uncomfortable situation.

•••••

A talented fiction writer had worked hard on the draft of a novel in which the protagonist was a young girl who had questions in *emunah*. The plotline saw her leaving the Orthodox framework before finding answers and coming back. The ArtScroll editor working on the book was worried that readers might identify with the questions, the doubts in *emunah*, and be negatively affected before reaching the conclusion. She shared her reservations with Reb Meir, who immediately informed the writer that he couldn’t publish the manuscript. The writer argued that the opposite was true: readers would be swept in and their *emunah* strengthened by the strong, joyous ending. “Perhaps most readers will,” Reb Meir said, “but if even one reader stops before the ending and their *emunah* is weakened as a result, then we’ll have strayed from our mission.”

•••••

Chanoch Weisz recalls reading a book about Apple founder Steve Jobs. “And you, Meir, are the Steve Jobs of the Jewish world,” he told his friend.

Reb Meir’s face colored and he looked down in ob-



With Rav Dovid Feinstein and Rabbi Nosson Scherman



With Rav Chaim Kanievsky



(L to R) Rabbi Nosson Scherman, R’ Meir, and Rabbi Sheah Brander

Upon His 4th Yahrtzeit — 30 Sivan

vious embarrassment.

“What are you talking about?” he asked. “By us, it’s the *donors* who change the world, not *me*.”

More than once, Reb Meir was asked to involve himself in business discussions with his donors, either making connections or providing references. Often, he was invited to join in business deals by donors who liked him and wanted to see him succeed.

“We need someone with your brains, insight, and people skills,” a donor recalls telling him. “You’ll invest with me and you’ll end up rich. Think how much more you can do for *Klal Yisrael* if we let you in on this deal.”

Reb Meir rejected the offer outright. “I have a mission in life, and if donors become business partners, then they see me differently and I won’t be effective in my real job. Thanks, but no thanks.”

To another donor who extended the same offer, Reb Meir explained. “Imagine I join you in a deal and it fails — our relationship will sour, and then *Klal Yisrael* will lose out. How can I take the chance?”

•••••

An industry colleague once pointed out to Reb Meir that some publishers preferred to create books that would eventually rip, so that customers would be forced to buy new ones.

“That makes sense if you’re running a business,” Reb Meir said, “not if your mission is to give someone a *siddur* that can become their best friend.”

•••••

Before *Pesach*, along with selling *chametz* to his own *rav*, Rav Chaim Yisroel Weinfeld, Reb Meir would sell the *chametz* in his office and bungalow to other *rabbanim*, because he felt that the tradition of “*mechiras chametz gelt*,” giving the *rav* money in exchange for this service, was a rare opportunity to give money to *talmidei chachamim* without compromising their dignity.

•••••

Reb Meir’s generosity was matched by the speed with which it was dispensed. He met his old friend, Rav Meir Stern, at a *chasunah*. The two old friends caught up and Reb Meir asked the Passaic *rosh yeshivah* how

fundraising for the *yeshivah* was going. The *rosh yeshivah* sighed.

A week later, an envelope arrived at the *yeshivah*: a donation from Reb Meir Zlotowitz — not one check, but twelve head checks, post-dated over the upcoming year, his part in easing the burden of an esteemed friend.



With Rav Reuven Feinstein



With Rav Meir Stern



With Jay Schottenstein

In his later years, Reb Meir felt an obligation to teach others how to give. If he heard that a *rav* of a *shul* was making a *simchah*, he would call one of his acquaintances in that *shul*. “I assume you know that if a *rav* makes a wedding, the *baalei batim* are expected to help out: I’d like to be a part of whatever you’re doing.”

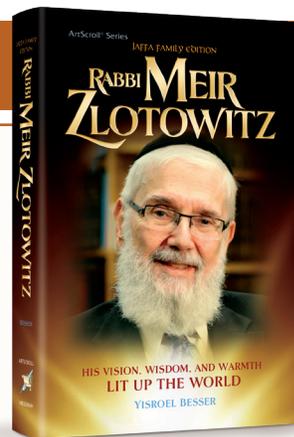
“Giving *tzedakah* as if you are rich,” he would often quip, “is the greatest *segulah* to actually get there.”

Occasionally, when he received a wedding invitation in the mail, he would respond with a phone call. “I see you’re making a wedding, and money might be tight. I’d like to know if you need help, and if yes, can I arrange for a loan at any terms that work for you?”

•••••

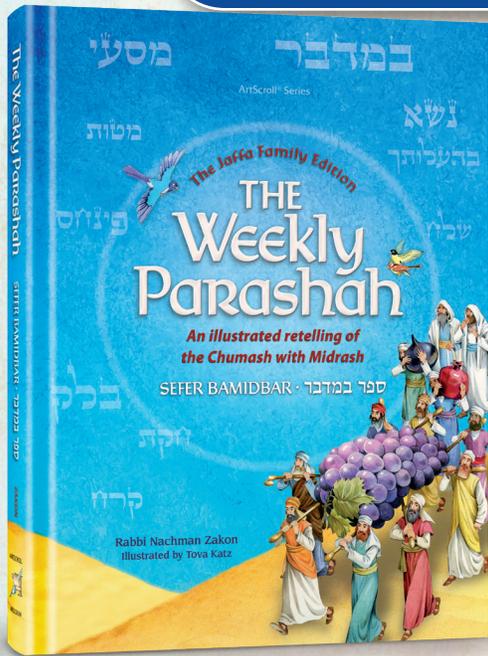
A manager at the Yerushalayim hotel where Reb Meir would stay was deeply distressed when he learned of Reb Meir’s passing. He told the Zlotowitz children how, over the years, Reb Meir would conduct meetings in the hotel lobby. There was ample opportunity to observe the goings-on in the busy reception area and see how the manager, in the course of a day’s work, dealt with all sorts of irate customers, enduring insults and criticism. Inevitably, Reb Meir would approach and say, “I’ve been sitting here all day and watching. You’re doing a fantastic job. People are stressed and they don’t mean to attack you. Please don’t take it to heart.”

These stories provide a small glimpse into R’Meir’s remarkable personality. Read his biography for a fuller appreciation of this extraordinary Torah pioneer. 





Parashah for Children



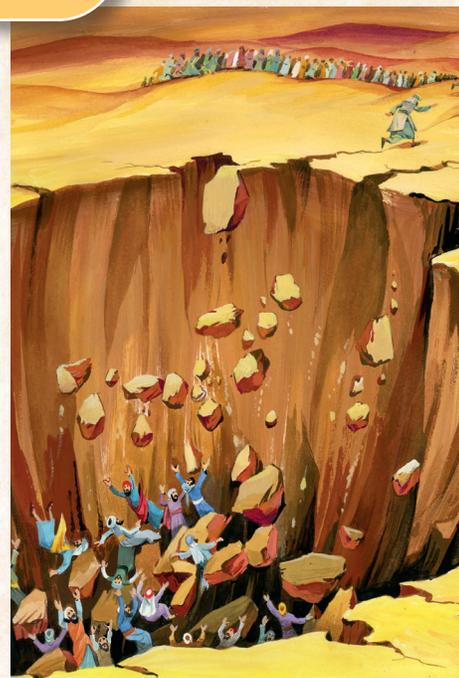
פרשת קרח

FASCINATING FACTS

When the earth opened to destroy Korach, Dassan, and Aviram, it was like a mouth. It opened up,

swallowed them, and then closed. This was not an earthquake! During an earthquake the ground splits and stays that way. This was something that had never happened before, just as Moshe had requested.

Everything they owned was swallowed up by the hole. Even if they had clothing waiting to be washed somewhere else, it was swallowed by the hole. If they had lent something to someone else, it was also swallowed up by the hole, even if it was as small as a needle.



Korach, Dassan, and Aviram were neighbors. Korach's family, the family of Kehas, lived on the south side of the Mishkan. Dassan and Aviram's *shevet*, Reuven, also lived on the southern side. Because they were Korach's neighbors, Korach was able to convince them to join him and fight Moshe. It was a very bad decision.

The *shevatim* who lived next to Moshe and Aharon — Yehudah, Yissachar, and Zevulun — gained a lot from being neighbors of such *tzaddikim*. That is why so many people from these *shevatim* were outstanding Torah Jews. If you sit next to someone in class who gets in trouble a lot, chances are that you will also get in trouble. If you have friends who are good, the chances are you will be like them.

The Torah's message here is to choose friends carefully — whom you sit next to in class, and whom you play with after school and on Shabbos. Make sure your friends will help you to get closer to Hashem.

Be friends with people whose goal in life is to gather more *mitzvos*, learn more Torah, do more *chesed* — and you will have that goal too!

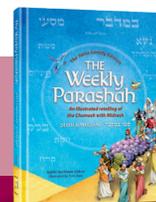
WIN A \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD!

THE WEEKLY QUESTION

Question for Parashas Korach:

When did Hashem create the "mouth" of the earth that swallowed Korach and his men?

Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday, June 16, to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition. HINT: The answer can be found in *The Jaffa Family Edition Weekly Parashah*.



The winner of the Parashas Naso question is: MOSHE WILWORN, Southfield, Michigan

The question was: What happens with Bircas Kohanim when all the men in shul are kohanim?

The answer is: If there are only ten kohanim in shul, they all go up, except the chazzan, and say Bircas Kohanim to an empty room. Who are they blessing? The Jewish people — wherever they are. If there are more than ten kohanim, then ten of them stay in their seats and don't say Bircas Kohanim, while the rest of them go up and recite the blessing.