

31 – Korach - Outline

Korach Summary

Month of Tammuz

- each month sets a tone for spiritual growth in that month
- begins with the summer solstice, which is the key to Tammuz
 - longest day in the year = most light
 - more light helps us **to see**; this is a month of vision
- enhanced vision in Tammuz
 - this can be either good, leading to life, or bad, leading to chaos and death
 - good: if we focus on seeing inwardly what needs changed, leading to repentance – requires humility
 - good: if we are seeing past the surface of others to see the good in them so that we can help to bring that out – also requires humility
 - bad: if we are looking in the wrong places, inflaming inappropriate passions
 - bad: if we are seeing only the surface, the material, the natural (not seeing in “wholeness.”)
- a few connections to the month of Tammuz (theme of “vision”):
 - “chush” (bodily ability): sight
 - mazal: sartan (crab, Cancer)
 - R’Ginsburgh: composed of two words, “sar” and “tan,” = “remove the body,” as the crab sheds its exoskeleton so that it can grow before forming a new exoskeleton
 - R’Ginsburgh: removing the body to reveal the soul beneath, concentrated sight to reveal what’s good inside and the inner life force
 - “cancer” is also the name of a disease, which shows the powerful two directions the energy of this month can be directed in
 - cancer is uncontrolled growth
 - if we throw off the “shell” of the Torah, the boundaries of the Torah, we will grow in an unorganized, uncontrolled, and eventually deadly way
 - June: “Pride month,” is an example of the throwing off of the yoke of the Torah leading to a deadly growth
 - it is humility that we seek now in this season, particularly, not pride
 - tribe, Reuben: “Reuven” = “see, a son”
 - Reuben also reveals another main theme of this season, passion
 - passion is associated with heat, and we’re just beginning summer
 - Reuben’s passion led him to sin against his father

- sight and passion are like brothers – our eyes can lead us to unchecked passion, and unchecked passion can lead us to stray with our eyes

Placing Korach

- “Korach” = “bald” and “ice”
 - the Sages emphasis “bald,”
 - not just to be bald, but to make bald
 - Jewish Encyclopedia: the rabbis teach that the name was “given to Korah on account of the gap or blank which he made in Israel by his revolt (Sanh. 109b)” (<https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/9465-korah>)
 - Korah *creates* baldness
 - in his pride, he *takes* men, and these go with him to the grave, making a bald spot in Israel
 - unusual Hebrew use of the word “take” here: “Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, **TOOK**. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men” (Numbers 16:1-2)
 - what did they take? They took men.
 - “Ice” also adds something to the picture
 - the season is warm, and the people, having just been given the 40-year sentence, are bubbling with emotional energy and “heat,” and cold, dispassionate Korah is the right channel for them, one who can use logic to bring their case to Moses, one who was well-placed (first cousin to Moses, well-spoken, even wealthy according to tradition)
 - Korah’s logical argument has some merit, according to the Sages, the idea that the entire nation is holy; they are to be a whole kingdom of priests, so why designate just Aaron and his family for the priesthood?
 - problem for Korah: What did *God* say? What is God’s word on the matter?
 - Logic and the intellect must be bounded by God’s Word
 - logic, in itself, is good, not evil
 - the intellect must be bound by Torah
 - intellect unbounded by Torah makes people become animals
 - madmen throughout history who are gifted with great intelligence but who reject God end up with their intelligence becoming twisted into an excuse-making machine to indulge the flesh; they become stupid and relate to people on a purely natural level, using them and eliminating those who are inconvenient or competition

- this slide into the realm of the animal is happening right now in the world culture
 - animal lusts go unchecked
 - logic is twisted to the opposite of truth: children are being maimed in the name of compassion
 - the time is late, and the fall into utter moral collapse is accelerating
 - still, as with any enemy of Israel, we must ask ourselves about the Korah within ourselves, the pride lurking there that likes to buck the authority and take others with us
 - baldness also quite obviously speaks of uncovering what is hidden, the idea of illumination, vision, seeing what was covered
- connecting to “adolescence”
 - the phase of human development we are associating with this time of the year, starting at Shavuot
 - adolescents are particularly susceptible to the kind of pride that leads to bucking authority
 - they are just beginning to experience independent thinking, and this leads them to start questioning everything they’ve learned; it’s a transition that is necessary but very precarious
 - teens are also challenged by enflamed passions as the body matures and as they grapple with relationship that suddenly feel much more complex
 - teens give far too much weight to the opinions of others, and others inevitably let them down
 - the place of safety for an adolescent is to humbly draw near to the spiritual authorities over them who can help to guide them through the difficulties of this phase
 - fight the rebellious spirit that springs to life at this time
- practical suggestion
 - all of us should try to be especially supportive of the spiritual authority placed over us now, in this moment when we are reading Korach
 - encourage them, let them know you trust them, be on guard against a judgmental spirit now

The Art of Submitting to Spiritual Authority

- God showing me, personally in this season: submitting to authority without grumbling is foundational; beyond that, be careful with your tone when interacting with spiritual authority, especially when doing so publicly
- A few guiding principles taken from Korach for submitting to spiritual authority
 - recognize how personally God is offended when we speak against our earthly spiritual authority:
 - “And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from ME the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against YOU” (Numbers 17:5)

- God equates the grumbling against Moses to grumbling against Him, personally
- we're assuming here that our leaders are not stuck in willful sin or in rebellion against God – if that's the case, find new leaders
- we can give input before decisions are made, but with respect
 - the body has organs and senses that the head does not have
 - the head must collect data from all input sources, put all that information together, and make a decision
 - head should be soliciting info from the body, and the body should be willing to contribute info to the head
 - the input should be given carefully, with the proper tone
 - our tone will grow out of our thought life, so we need to guard the way we are thinking about our authority
- be thankful that the burden of leadership is on them and not you
 - it's a heavy yoke
 - when the people in this portion realize they've messed up, they say that they can't even go to the Tabernacle because they are "undone;" God's response is to say that any iniquity related to the sanctuary and priesthood falls on the tribe of Levi and the priesthood, not on the people
- trust that God is, indeed, empowering our leaders to do the right thing
 - you likely won't sense it, so just trust
 - in chapter 18, after God puts this burden on the Levites and on the priesthood, He then literally gives them everything they need to do the work – tithes, firstfruits, etc.
- Let's use the extra light of this season to see the good in our leaders, especially
 - example from the Lubavitcher Rebbe
 - he says that the root desire of the 250 men was to draw near to God as they offered incense to Him, though they were misguided in how they did it; if God commands that the censers of these men who were struck dead be used for a covering for the altar, how much more does He care for the human souls? He won't give up on them.
 - the Rebbe is seeing in these misguided men something good, the desire to draw near to God

Yeshua

- Yeshua has quite a lot to say about the eye, vision:
 - anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart
 - if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light
 - He heals the blind - He is the antidote to lack of vision
 - He reproves the religious leaders by calling them "blind guides," so He points out where vision is lacking
- Korah goes down, Yeshua up

- bouncing off Grant and Robin’s conversation this week (<https://torahtodayministries.org/lesson/korach-2/> 19:25m)
- God allows us to create our own reality here
 - He is the Creator, and we are made in His image, and He invites us to create a world here
 - we are either creating heaven on earth, or hell
 - with each decision for life or death, we are adding a brick to a heavenly palace or to a hellish pit
 - Korach chose to focus on what he could see, Moses instead of the God behind Moses, and he crafted a world in which Moses and Aaron were power hungry liars
 - a natural-based reality, might-makes-right
 - in the end, he is swallowed by that lowly reality
- the lifeline of the dew
 - it’s a tough time in Israel – no rain (separation of heaven and earth), heat building
 - God continues to send the dew, which sustains many plants and animals in the Holy Land now
 - “dew” = “tal” from “talal” – “to cover/strew over”
 - “cover” evokes “kippur,” which we are approaching, the covering of the blood of the Messiah which re-connects us to God, leading to an empowerment to walk in victory
 - when we see the dew covering the ground, we can see it as a lifeline being extended to us until we reach that next encounter with the covering of Yeshua’s blood

31 – Korach – Transcrip (not exact)

Hello and welcome to Beth Tikkun and the Spiritual Seasons series. With this group of teachings, we are exploring the Torah portions in relation to the calendar as a whole and God’s overall pattern of salvation. This week, we are in parsha Korach, which is Numbers 16-18.

Korach Summary

“Korach” is “Korah” in English. This is the portion where we read about the rebellion fomented especially by Korah and several from the tribe of Reuben, including the brothers Dathan and Abiram. Korah was from the tribe of Levi and was apparently a first cousin to Moses and Aaron. These who led the rebellion convinced 250 well-known chiefs from Israel to stand with them against Moses and Aaron. They accuse them of going too far in establishing only Aaron’s line as the priests in Israel. They say that the WHOLE NATION is holy. Dathan and Abiram point to the fact that Moses had not brought them into a land of milk and honey and refuse to even go to talk with Moses. Once again God threatens to wipe out the nation, but Moses and Aaron

intercede. In the end, Moses declares that all would know who has despised the Lord if God creates a new thing by opening the ground beneath the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Immediately the land swallows them and their families, though it would seem that Korah's sons did not stand with their father and were not killed. They would go on to write some of the Psalms.

The next day, somewhat unbelievably, the people grumble against Moses and Aaron, saying that they had killed people of the Lord. Again God threatens to consume the nation, and this time Aaron stands in the gap for them, but almost 15,000 die from a plague. Imagine the scope of this. What is required to simply bury 15,000 people all at once so that the wilderness animals don't get at the bodies?

God then devises a test that is designed to demonstrate clearly who He has chosen for the priesthood. The 12 chiefs of the tribes each carve their names into a rod, with the rod from the tribe of Levi bearing Aaron's name. God says, "And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from Me the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you" (Numbers 17:5). The next day the rods are brought out, and only Aaron's had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds. This staff is placed in the ark as a reminder of who God had clearly chosen for the responsibility of the priesthood.

It would seem that the people were utterly convinced by this point of their error and despaired of even drawing near to God at all. In answer to them expressing this sentiment, God makes clear that the tribe of Levi and the Aaronic priesthood would bear any guilt connected to the sanctuary and the priesthood. In the last part of the portion, God gives to the Levites and priesthood the resources they would need to live and do their work, including the tithes and offerings from the people.

Month of Tammuz

Before we get into the text a bit deeper, I'd like to talk about the new month that we have just entered, Tammuz, because by God's design, the month sets the tone for spiritual growth in that month. We have just come through the summer solstice as Tammuz is beginning, and this is vital for understanding this season. On the summer solstice, which is the official beginning of summer for the Northern Hemisphere, the sun's rays are hitting the earth directly at their most northern point, which is the Tropic of Cancer. The Tropic of Cancer actually comes very near to the US. It passes through the Bahamas and just north of Cuba, which is why southern Florida has a tropical climate. The summer solstice is the longest day of the year for the northern hemisphere, meaning we have more light on that day than any other day in the year. After summer starts, the sun's direct rays begin moving south again.

The increased light in this season is the key to the month of Tammuz. This is because more light helps us to see. So this is a month about vision, when vision is most powerful for us. And that can be good or it can cause big problems if we use our sense of sight wrong at this time, and we see this problematic use of sight in this Torah portion of Korach. Again, this choice for how we use our enhanced vision now is the key to the season. If we use that enhanced vision to see

what is good and, in HUMILITY, to see what needs correction in us leading to repentance, then this month can be used powerfully for our growth. It's also good to use our vision at this time to see beyond the surface of others to the goodness in them. On the other hand, if we are arrogant, full of PRIDE, and if we allow the yetzer harah to rise up in us and influence what we are seeing, our vision will powerfully lead to our destruction. We can be powerfully led into sensual passions, or we can only see the natural and fail to see in "wholeness" and be led astray, as Korah was. So there is a great potential to go one way or the other now. Tammuz has to be walked especially carefully and with a special humility so that the powerful potential of the month isn't turned toward chaos and destruction.

Let's talk about a few connections to the month of Tammuz that the Sages have made over the centuries. We'll see that they all work together around this central theme of vision. The most obvious connection is the "chush" of the month, what I call the "bodily abilities" that from ancient times have been associated with each month. As I mentioned in a previous teaching, the "chush" of Tammuz is, in fact, the sense of sight. We are being enabled not only to see inwardly what needs correcting, but also to see what is good in others so that we can speak that out and help to bring that out of them.

The mazal of Tammuz is sartan, the crab, cancer. Remember that the important line on the globe that marks our summer is called the Tropic of Cancer. R'Yitzchak Ginsburgh says the word 'sartan' is understood as being composed of two words, "sar" and "tan," which literally translate to "remove the body." The crab has an exoskeleton that confines it to a certain size, preventing it from growing further. So in order to grow, it has to shed that exoskeleton. This makes it naked and vulnerable for a time, but it's necessary. It will then grow quickly before a new exoskeleton forms. R'Ginsburgh says that the crab is speaking to us about REMOVING THE BODY TO REVEAL THE SOUL BENEATH, removing the outer "shell" of reality by means of the power of CONCENTRATED SIGHT to reveal what's good inside and the inner life force.

Now, the word "cancer" also is the name of a disease that involves UNCONTROLLED GROWTH. So, again, there's a lot of potential here for chaos. R'Ginsburgh is looking at the positive side by talking about removing the body to reveal the soul. But another set of boundaries for us beyond the body is the Torah. If someone casts off the shell of the Torah that protects him, then that person is free to grow, but their growth will be uncontrolled and disorganize, unhealthy, and ultimately deadly. This is what cancer does in the body; it's a mass of cells that can't control their growth.

And I want to connect to this idea of casting off the protective shell of the Torah the unfortunate decision by modern society to make June "pride" month. Pride is the great enemy, especially at this time of year which we have been connecting to the phase of adolescence. It is humility that we seek now, not pride. It is submission to authority and submission to God's Word that we are to emphasize now as we seek to utilize the great energy of this time of year for life and not death. Pride month is a slap in the face of the One Who created us. It is a casting off of the yoke of the Torah, and it leads to a kind of unchecked growth, a cancer, that causes death. Now is a time to draw near to the boundaries of the Torah and the spiritual leadership

placed over us who can help to steer us through this season. The enemy would have a rift form between ourselves and our leadership now, as we see in parsha Korach, so we have to actively work against that happening.

The last attribute of the month of Tammuz I'll mention today is the tribe that is associated with the month, Reuben. "Reuven" means "see, a son," so we have yet another clear connection to sight here. Reuben also helps us to see the specific area where we are prone to falling in this month, what I would call "passion." Reuben's downfall is his passion that gets the better of him and leads him to sin against his father. Passion, which we could maybe describe as an enflamed emotional state, is connected to heat. And we now enter the heat of high summer. And passion is also connected to this idea of pride month, is it not?

These two big ideas of passion and sight are connected like two brothers. Passion often starts with an eye that wanders where it shouldn't go, or the reverse is true: a person is filled with unchecked passion that leads their eyes to places they should not look. This is a season where we need to be particularly vigilant to guard our eyes to see only that which is good and modest. In this way, we work to bring correction to our sense of vision.

Placing Korach

Let's do some thinking now to place Korach in the flow of the calendar. This portion is a bit of a train wreck. Let's start opening the heart of the parsha through the name. "Korach" means both "bald" and "ice." The Sages especially connect this name to the idea of baldness, which is not just being bald but also plucking out to make bald, either a bald spot or to make entirely bald. The Jewish Encyclopedia says that the rabbis teach that the name was "given to Korah on account of the gap or blank which he made in Israel by his revolt (Sanh. 109b)" (<https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/9465-korah>). Korah creates baldness. His thoughts are filled with pride and jealousy, and when he sees with his eyes that the time is right in Israel to gain power, he acts by taking hold of the leading men of Israel in such a strong way that they end up being uprooted from Israel. In his pride, he becomes a vessel for removing these leaders from the safety of submission to Moses and Aaron, and therefore submission to God through Moses and Aaron. In the end, all of these men die, more than 250 of Israel's leaders, and this is followed by the connected loss of 14,700 people in a plague. This is a great tragedy, indeed, with many tents in Israel missing people after it's all said and done, many fathers and mothers missing in Israel. How many children were left without parents to guide them because of this rebellion?

And this idea of taking hold of the people is found in the unusual use of the Hebrew word for "took" at the beginning of the portion, which says that Korah and some others "took," but it doesn't say what they took. Listen for this in the first verses of the portion: "Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, TOOK. And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men" (Numbers 16:1-2). So the question is asked, "What did they take?" They took men. Korah took men, and in taking them, he made a bald spot in Israel.

I think the other meaning for the name “Korach,” “ice,” also helps us to understand what’s going on here. In general, coldness is understood to be emotional coldness, a kind of icy intellect that is not properly touched by the warmth of love. One way to understand what’s happening here is that the people are filled with a kind of emotional passion, and they are attracted to Korah because his cold intellect can give a controlled voice to the emotions they are feeling. Again, the summer is a time for heat, and heat is associated with passion. And the people are upset that God has just sentenced them to 40 years in the wilderness. Their emotions are running high. And all that bubbling emotion will find an outlet that is capable of channeling that energy. The person named “ice” is just the right mouthpiece for them because he’s not so connected to this heat and can apply a kind of cold logic to the growing unease of the people. And Korah is well-placed to be used by the people. He’s first cousin to Moses and Aaron. And he was apparently well-respected. Tradition adds that he was very wealthy.

And so here is this one who can speak well and express the angst of the people to Moses and Aaron partly because he’s ice; he’s cold. And the Sages admit that Korah’s argument is quite logical. He says that the whole congregation is holy, so why should only Aaron be given the priesthood? Hadn’t God even said that they would be a NATION of priests?

Logic, in itself, is not evil; it’s a blessing, in fact. The problem here is that their logic is not being bound and limited by the word of God to Israel. It’s fine and good to be logical, but what has God SAID about the situation? The intellect must be bound by the Torah. When it’s not, it runs amok. The intellect unbounded by God’s limits makes people become animals. How many madmen in history have we seen that were gifted with great intelligence but who rejected God, and, in the end, their intelligence becomes twisted into little more than an excuse-making machine to indulge the flesh. They become stupid, and much worse. Such people become calloused and capable of the most heinous crimes against humanity because their unchecked human reasoning leads them to operate according to the rules of nature only without the balance of the laws of the spiritual domain. They become animals as their intellect is bent to the lusts of the flesh and as their logic leads them to devalue and use in a utilitarian way the people around them. And woe to the person near to such animal-men who is weak or inconvenient or inefficient or the opposite, those who are gifted and are, therefore, competition. All of these people need to be eliminated. And as such arrogant ones fall further and further into the pit of the uncontrolled flesh, they become absolutely convinced that what they are doing is the height of logic. Human logic is a gift, but when it is not bounded by the constraints of the Torah, it is a slippery slope that leads to all kinds of evil, and we are certainly seeing that today in our society at large. The world rides the rainbow headlong into the maw of this madness. Animal lusts go unchecked and logic is twisted to become the exact opposite of true logic, to the point that children are being maimed in the name of compassion. Parents who follow God and His ways are having children removed by the state. The state takes like Korah took. Friends, the hour grows late as our world teeters on the brink of absolute moral collapse. And the speed of the fall is accelerating.

But even as we notice these vast shifts in our culture, which is increasingly a single world culture thanks to the internet, we need to always be seeing and exposing the Korah within

ourselves. Is there is a kind of pride lurking in us that likes to buck the authority and to take others with us in doing that?

Well let's come back now to the spiritual season at hand. Beyond these ideas of unchecked passion in the body that finds an outlet through Korah, creating a vast bald spot in Israel, the idea of baldness, itself, also quite obviously speaks of uncovering what is hidden, this idea of illumination, seeing what had been covered. The hair on the head hides and protects the skin of the head, which more than the skin elsewhere on the body can quickly become overexposed to the sun. One benefit of hair is that it hides the head from overexposure to the light of the sun.

So Korah speaks to both the passions of this season and the illumination of the season. He becomes a channel for those passions, and through him a great pride that leads to death is revealed within the nation, illumination.

Let's connect now some of these ideas to the phase of growth called "adolescence," which we have said begins on a yearly basis at the mo'ed of Shavuot. The adolescent is particularly susceptible to the kind of pride that leads to bucking authority. This is because suddenly it becomes apparent that they are independent, that they have enough knowledge and ability to process the world on their own, and they don't have to just receive what is given to them from those in authority over them. This transition to independent thinking is a necessary step toward maturity, but it's a very, very precarious moment. As the teen begins thinking independently, he or she inevitably begins to question the choices the authorities are making. Pride springs up in the teen and must be exposed for the deadly poison it is.

Teens also are particularly challenged by enflamed passions as the body matures and as they grapple with relationships that suddenly feel much more complex. The teen tends to give far too much weight to the opinions of their peers, and their peers inevitably let them down. The teen needs to learn to see past the surface and into the heart, and that takes time.

The place of safety for an adolescent is to humbly draw near to the spiritual authorities over them who can help to guide them through the difficulties of this phase. They need to fight with all their beings the rebellious spirit that springs to life with much greater strength at this time of life.

So, to button up this part of our study today with a practical suggestion, let me encourage us all to be especially supportive of the spiritual authority placed over us now, in this moment when we are reading parsha Korach and in this general season. Encourage your leaders. Let them know that you trust that God is acting and speaking through them. One way to counter the energy of Korach in the world now is to re-commit to following and protecting and lifting up and coming alongside to help the spiritual authority God has chosen for us. Actively be on guard against a judgmental spirit now. Last week we talked about rejecting fear and pressing in on the path God has put before us. One way to do that is to be supportive of our leaders who are entrusted with helping to clarify that path for us.

The Art of Submitting to Spiritual Authority

I'd like to spend a bit more time now on this idea of submitting to spiritual authority. God has been speaking to me about this area of my walk recently in this season. It's not that I have much trouble submitting to the ULTIMATE DECISIONS of the authority God has placed over me, but what God is especially illuminating for me this year is how careful we have to be with our tone when even discussing with these leaders before the decisions are made, especially when we are speaking with them publicly, but with any communications, private or public. We can undermine our leaders when we are using an overly familiar tone with them or maybe an overly blunt tone with them. A person might be fine abiding by the decisions of the elders, but there's more to submitting than just accepting the final decisions without grumbling. Accepting the decisions of the leaders without grumbling is base level submission to authority. And in Numbers, we're seeing Israel struggle with this base level of submission. But they are on the path to learning. These lessons regarding spiritual authority can be very painful ones for us to grasp. The missteps here are very costly for Israel. The truth is that there's a real art to submitting to spiritual authority. I'm no expert, but we can draw at least a few guiding principles out of the text here.

First of all, it's clear that the people don't quite recognize how offensive they are being to God when they are grumbling about Moses and Aaron, God's chosen leaders, or worse, when they are openly challenging them. The only real mouthpieces for God here are Moses and, to a lesser extent, Aaron, and clearly the people are doubting that they are being faithful messengers. They assume Moses is guilty of some kind of cronyism when he declares that God's will is for his older brother to be the one and only beginning of the priestly line. So they question that. And they don't realize that in questioning Moses, God takes that as a direct questioning of Himself. Listen to this verse from Numbers 17 in which God equates grumbling against Moses to grumbling against Himself. God is talking to Moses, and He says, "And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from ME the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against YOU" (Numbers 17:5). In God's mind, speaking against Moses is speaking against Him. In fact, the people complain against Moses practically from the start, even in Egypt, rather than fully recognizing that when God entrusts a human with representing Himself to the people, He's really entrusting that person to be His face and mouth to the people.

So, number one, recognize that God's chosen leaders are representing God, and grumbling against them or undermining them is like doing that against God, Himself. That point alone should really give us pause when we are ready to speak to or about our leaders.

Now we're assuming here in this discussion that the leaders are good leaders and are not clearly in sin or, themselves, somehow in rebellion against God. If the leaders are caught up in willful sin, you should get out from under that leadership and find a different leadership to come under. But barring that sort of a situation, safety for the flock is found in submitting to the shepherds who represent God's will to us. Even if they're wrong, God will not take lightly a rebellious spirit against the elders. Let them be wrong. God will work it out in the end. The surest way to bring down condemnation on your own head is to buck your spiritual authority.

Pray and let God work it out if you think the authorities are getting a bit off track. God will bring about the correction if it's needed.

Now, we can also give input, particularly when we are asked for input. And good leaders will seek the input of the flock. This is because the body has organs and senses that the head does not have. A hand has a certain way of experiencing the world that the head does not have. The head must be receptive to data coming from all over the body. And it's the head's responsibility to sort through all of that information, weigh it all, and in the end make a decision. The hand has only very limited information, so the hand is not in a position to make a very good decision.

So the body should be trying to communicate with the head, and the head should be seeking that input, but we just have to be careful to communicate with the head respectfully, especially if we're giving feedback publicly, but always. Our interactions with elders can undermine them just with our tone, let alone our words.

Of course our tone is going to be based on our thoughts, our thought life. So guarding our attitudes toward our spiritual authority starts with guarding our thoughts about them. Be generous. Be humble. Fight pride when it starts to crop up. Understand that the elders' perspective is more expansive than yours. Understand that God is pleased when we submit to our authority, and He is particularly unhappy when we undermine them, even slightly.

And be thankful that the burden of leadership isn't on your shoulders! It's a heavy yoke. In this portion, the people finally seem to get it, and they say to Moses basically, "Oi, how can any of us come before God now. We'll all die. We've really messed up here." Apparently in answer to this comment from the people, God speaks directly to Aaron and says, "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear iniquity connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear iniquity connected with your priesthood" (Numbers 18:1). The answer to the people who have seen their error and are now reluctant to draw near to God is, "No, it's the Levites in general who will bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and it's Aaron and his sons who will bear the iniquity of the priesthood." And so this removes a great burden from the people. But recognize that this is burden that is taken from you is placed on your leaders. It is they who will be held accountable when the flock draws near to Him. And so because of this responsibility, they must spend a lot of time and energy in lengthy discussions and in prayer as they guide the flock.

Lastly on this topic for today and particularly coming out of this portion, trust that God is, indeed, empowering your leaders to do the right thing. You likely won't sense how God is empowering them. You just have to trust that He is doing so, and we can see this empowering of the leaders here in the portion. After God puts this burden on the Levites and on the priesthood, He then literally gives them everything they need to do the work of leading the people. He gives tithes to the non-priestly Levites, and He gives the non-priestly Levites to the priests to help them in the work of the sanctuary. And He gives parts of the consecrated things to the priests. He gives them the best of the harvests, the firstfruits, the best of the oil, and of the wine and of the grain. He even gives them the firstfruits of man and beast, though the

firstborn of men are to be redeemed with money. It's a powerful example of how God empowers the leaders He calls to lead. Trust that He is likewise empowering your own leaders. Once again, let's use the extra light being given to us now to see the good in those around us and particularly the good in our spiritual authority.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe uses his great ability to see past the surface, to see the goodness underneath, when he reads and comments on parsha Korach. In one case, he even brings out the goodness in the rebels. Recall that the 250 die, and God instructs Moses to take the censers they used to offer incense to Him and beat them into plates to cover the altar. The censers had become holy because they were used as vessels to make offerings to God. Offering incense to God is something that only the priests are to do. The priesthood had been specially consecrated and made holy in order to bring such offerings like the incense. They had to be consecrated so that they wouldn't die while doing that work. Well, these 250 men were not consecrated in that way to this holy service, so when they brought these incense offerings directly to God, they died. However, the censers, themselves, became holy. And the R'Schneerson says that though these mutineers acted sinfully and were severely punished, beneath their complaint was a desire to come close to God. They were misguided in doing that, but there was a root desire for nearness to God there. And he says that we should look at those censers that are elevated here to a place of honor on the altar and see that God's desire is much more than elevating pieces of metal; He wants to elevate human souls, which are infinitely more precious. So, even though the censers were used in this misguided way, God still found a way to elevate them. And if He found a way to use the censers, He won't give up on us either. We're worth much more to Him than those pieces of metal. Again, this is a rabbi who can see the good in people. He's an example to us of how we are to use the great light of this time to see.

Yeshua

Let's turn our focus now more directly to Yeshua. To start, Yeshua has quite a lot to say about the eye and vision. For one thing, in the Sermon on the Mount, Yeshua says that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart, and he also says that if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. Yeshua heals the blind, so He is the antidote to lack of vision. And He reproves the religious leaders by calling them "blind guides," so He points out where vision is lacking.

Beyond these explicit teachings about the eye and vision, I want to make a couple of other points connecting Yeshua to the portion and to the season. The first bounces off of Grant and Robin's discussion this week. Robin mentions the contrast between how Korah is taken down into the earth and Yeshua ascends into heaven (<https://torahtodayministries.org/lesson/korach-2/> 19:25m). One goes down, the other up. The point I want to make here is one we've talked about in this series recently, the idea that God allows us to create our own reality here on this earth. God is the Creator, and He has made us in His image. And He puts us here in this place, and He says, "Now you create a reality." Some people create heaven on earth. Others create hell. In truth, we are each crafting a world with elements of both all the time. But if we are growing in the Lord, then we are slowly learning how to more and more craft a world around us and within us that is heaven on earth, and we are less and less building a hell. With every choice we make

for life or death, we are adding another brick that is either making a heavenly palace or a hellish pit. That's not to say that there isn't one actual reality created by God. There is just one reality. What we are trying to do here build a replica of the true reality, build a mirror image of the one true reality.

Korach and those with him chose to focus on what they could see, the material realm alone, and it led them astray; it led them into a lie. They put their vision on Moses instead of the God Who stands behind Moses, and what they crafted was a world in which Moses and Aaron were power hungry liars. They chose to craft and believe in a reality that functioned only by the lowly laws of nature. And in the end, they were swallowed up by that lowly reality. Yeshua, on the other hand, ascended beyond the earth, though He will return to rule here.

The final point I want to make here in connection to Yeshua is a link to the physical season, especially the physical season in Israel now. It's a tough time physically in the Holy Land now, but it's not without a cord of hope. The rains are finished. The heat is building. The land turns yellow and begins to crack. Israel will go for about six months with almost no rain. Can you imagine? And this lack of rain is described as a separation of the heavens and the earth. The rain is a connection from above to below, a fertilization of the land that comes from above. And that connection is severed now.

But not entirely. You see, even when the rain stops, the dew remains. All the way through this severe dryness, this disconnection, God faithfully provides the dew. And it's a lifeline in Israel! Many plants and animals survive at this time off the dew that God generously provides now. Again, though we stumble, though the Korah in us sometimes gets the better of us, God never leaves us without a lifeline, a cord of hope.

And here's the connection I see to Yeshua with this. The word for "dew" in Hebrew is "tal," from "talal," which means to cover or strew over. The dew is strewn across the land to cover it. And "cover" reminds us of "kippur," which also means "to cover." In Israel and wherever we are in the world now, we can look at the dew and how it covers so thoroughly, and we can be reminded that the real covering is coming, Yom Kippur. This constant covering of the dew is a lifeline and a message of hope that helps to sustain us on our way to the next encounter with our spiritual covering, a time when we are re-connected to God by the blood of the Messiah and further empowered to walk in victory.

Well, that's all for today. Thanks again for listening. Below the video is a link to an outline of this teaching. May God bless us with a great desire to draw near to and support our spiritual authority at this time, and may He increase our sensitivity to how we think about them and engage with them. And may He grant us a great ability to see beneath the surface now, to see what needs adjusting in our lives, to see what is good in others. And may we rise up to be the people He has made us to be. Shalom.