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### **Parsha and Haftara Korach by Julie Zhuk on 2023-06-24**

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### **Haftara Korach**

The haftara for the week of Korach can be found in the book of Samuel. The prophet Samuel was a descendant of Korach. Korach was seen as the protagonist in the parsha for this past week's parsha. The prophet Samuel gathers the Jews to firmly install Saul as king of Israel. It is during the course of his address to the Jews he called out, "Here I am, bear witness against me before G-d and before His anointed one; whose ox did I take. Or whose donkey did I take. Or whom did I rob; or whom did I oppress, or from whose hand did I take a bribe. This echoes Moses' statement in this week's Torah reading: "I have not taken a donkey, from a single one of them and I have not harmed a single one of them. The nation of the Jewish of the Jewish people gathers at the city called Gilgal for a second coronation of King Saul. The first one was because they lacked a convincing enough amount of people.

The people offered sacrifices. They rejoiced together, and Samuel the Prophet gave a talk to the Jewish people. He asked the people to testify that he never committed crimes against the people. They confirmed this and discussed how G-d managed to save them and aided them every step of the way. He also talked about how G-d chastised them for wanting an actual king made out of flesh and blood. Samuel assured them that G-d would be with them if they followed His ways. He also assured them of the consequences if they did not follow G-d's directions. Samuel was trying to be serious with the Jews, he asked G-d to send a thunderstorm right away. The Jews were shocked because they were not used to the rain. It was not rainy season not yet. Samuel wanted the Jews to know that G-d would not forsake His people for His great name's sake. This is because G-d had sworn to make the Jews a people for Himself.

### **Parsha Korach**

We have reached the parsha Korach! Korach was a cousin of Moses, who was jealous of him. He was jealous, because he felt that Moses had all the power. He wanted Moses to share the power, but G-d was giving all of the power to Moses. The leadership was granted towards Moses and in that time, Korach incited mutiny against Moses. Korach is joined by two others named Dathan and Abiram. There are two hundred and fifty distinguished men in the community who end up offering the sacrosanct incense. They were trying to prove their worthiness for the priesthood. Since they were being so awful, G-d punished them. The earth opened up and swallowed them.

Before they were punished, G-d warned Moses to go to the dwellings of the three main conspirators, Korach, Dathan, and Abiram and warn those assembled there to keep their distance. There was a disaster that was about to strike, the Torah explains that Moses did exactly as G-d stated. Rashi explains that we are to believe these Jews were to have shown some kind of respect to Moses, but they didn't. Moses was hoping that these three men would

feel some kind of embarrassment, for their actions, but they didn't. They had no interest of showing any kind of repentance for their actions.

Somewhere in the past it is written in history, Moses trying to ask forgiveness of G-d for the mistakes the Jews have made. This time, Korach and his followers had gone too far. There was just nothing that could be done for them. Moses realized that and he didn't try to ask forgiveness for them. He was too humble and he understood there was no going back as hard as he would try for them. The Torah attests that Moses that Moses was the most humble face on the earth and surely getting a sign of respect would be the last thing on his mind! There was a fire that consumed the people giving up the fire offerings. There was a subsequent plague that was stopped by Aaron offering of incense. Aaron's staff miraculously blossoms and brings forth almonds and it proves that his designation as a priest is divinely ordained. G-d commanded an uplifting from each crop of grain, wine, and oil. He also wanted a collection of firstborn sheep, cattle, and other specified gifts. These were to all be given to the kohanim. This is the basic story of the parsha.

This parsha is teaching us something important that we all struggle with. We are not supposed to be jealous of each other. Being jealous is insidious and can morph into a horrible monster. The Jewish Sages say that jealousy, desire, and the pursuit of honor can remove a person from the world. There is a consequence of jealousy, and these destructive character traits are mentioned in the parsha of Korach. Korach was not a nice person, he was jealous, and impudence led him to rebel against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Korach had social status and wealth, and still, he was not satisfied. He was feeling jealous, and the parsha explained this was normal; we have to be aware if they start to grow! The reason is having too much jealousy is self-sabotaging. It will hijack a person's clarity and perception as well. It's a negative trait to have, and it's meant to be harnessed. People need to work on transforming it from a bad one into a good one.

The Talmudic Sages encourage the Jewish people to admire and work on being more like others who are virtuous and who have positive behaviors. Jealousy among Torah scholars will increase wisdom. The desire to refine one's abilities, knowledge, and character is positive and productive. At the same time, having destructive jealousy shows a lack of self-worth; it shows someone else's success will decrease your own. This was how Korach saw his life go down; he thought Moses was getting all of the attention. He thought he was being vindictive, and it was because of this that Korach and all of his followers got swollen up by the earth that opened up. It was an open miracle that G-d created. It wasn't just Korach's followers, but their properties that got swallowed up in this whole in the ground.

The Torah informs us that back thousands of years ago people lived like nomads. There were no actual houses, that's why when G-d swallowed up the earth it was Korach, his followers, as in their children went down with them as well. The worst thing that Korach had done was contest the authority of the greatest prophet of all time, Moses. Moses was known as the man who G-d personally sent to strike out the ten plagues in Egypt. Moses was sent by G-d personally to split the sea, Moses was the one to help bring the Torah to the Jewish people. The Torah tells us that surely Moses should have been way beyond dispute, he should have reprimanded Korach, or even given him some form of criticism.

Korach openly argued against the leadership of Moses. Korach had a huge ego, he could have possibly imagined himself for his flimsy tent to actually be a real house. We learn in this parsha the difference between how Korach viewed what a house should have looked like compared to what the Torah thought a person's house should have looked like. The Parsha asks us if we only see four walls as the external part of the physical sections for our house. These four walls make up the part of our house. Do our houses have an intimate and personal, deeper, and spiritual space as well? The Parsha also asks us if we have in our homes furniture and gadgets, or do we understand a home is a haven?

It's like having a sanctuary that a for our family where we can go and feel loved, safe, and feel secure. The most important thing we learn from this parsha is teaching the ways of Judaism to our children. In Judaism, educators are constantly speaking about Chinuch. The Rebbe was always educating his children, and they taught their children and so forth. For him providing a sense of education to others was the most important concept.