

# דרכים בפרשה קרח

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## כל העדה כולם קדושים

*"The entire congregation is holy.*

Rashi famously asks at the beginning of the parsha: "קרח זה מה ראה לשטות זה?" Korach was a brilliant man, so what brought him to such a terrible mistake?

The Midrash says that Korach challenged Moshe Rabbeinu with a strange halachic question. He gathered 250 important people and dressed them in garments made entirely of techeles. Then he asked Moshe: "Does a garment that is completely techeles still need tzitzis?" Moshe answered yes.

Korach and his followers started laughing. "If one strand of techeles can exempt a regular garment," they argued, "then surely a garment made completely of techeles should exempt itself!"

But this was not just a joke or political attack. Korach was not a simple person trying to make fun of Moshe. Chazal call him a pikeach. There was a whole depth behind this question.

There is a powerful way to understand this: A beautiful chassidische pshat explains that Korach and Moshe were arguing about the entire understanding of avodas Hashem. In sifrei Chassidus it is explained that a beged represents something complete, finished, and put together. It surrounds the person in a clean and orderly way. Techeles represents spiritual greatness, the color that reminds us of the sea, the sky, and finally the Kisei HaKavod.

Korach looked at Klal Yisrael after Matan Torah and said: "כל העדה כולם קדושים." The whole nation is holy already. In his mind, Klal Yisrael had reached a very high madreigah. They were already a beged of techeles.

And once a person reaches that level, Korach believed, he no longer needs someone above him to guide him higher. Why should there be hierarchy? Why should there be a Moshe Rabbeinu? If everyone is already holy, then the nation should be able to stand on its own. A garment that is completely techeles should not need extra strings hanging from its corners.

Moshe answered with the secret of tzitzis.

What are tzitzis? Tzitzis are, by definition, loose strings that hang beyond the beged itself. They are not woven neatly into the beged. They hang lower, outside the garment's finished structure. Moshe was teaching Korach

something fundamental: in Yiddishkeit, there is no such thing as a finished person.

No matter how much a person grows, there must always be loose strings still hanging down, unfinished areas, places where a person still needs to work on himself and keep growing. True greatness is not becoming perfect. True greatness is never stopping the climb.

The Mezritcher Maggid gives a beautiful mashal.

A king built a massive tower that looked completely closed from the outside. The walls were smooth and impossible to enter. The foolish people stood outside and admired the tower from below, convinced there was no way to go higher. But the wise person noticed a small rope hanging down from above. He realized that the whole purpose of the tower was not just to stand beneath it and admire it. The purpose was to climb.

Korach looked at ruchniyus the way the foolish people looked at the tower. He saw holiness as something complete that could simply be achieved and possessed. Moshe Rabbeinu taught that the whole purpose of avodas Hashem is the climb itself.

Maybe that is why tzitzis specifically hang downward from the garment. The Torah places the symbol of holiness not in the perfect middle of the beged, but in the loose strings hanging from the edges. The greatness of a Jew is not found in being complete. It is found in always wanting to grow more.

One of the biggest dangers in avodas Hashem is becoming spiritually comfortable.

A person davens, learns, gives tzedakah, keeps Shabbos, and slowly starts feeling, "I'm already doing fine. I'm already where I need to be."

Externally, the beged looks beautiful. But internally, the growth has stopped.

Korach's mistake was not that he lacked greatness. His mistake was thinking that greatness means completion.

Moshe Rabbeinu taught the opposite. Even a garment made entirely of techeles still needs tzitzis. Even the holiest person must still have loose strings hanging from the corners, areas where he still needs to grow, improve, and climb higher.

The lesson of tzitzis is that true kedushah is never found in thinking we have finished growing. It is found in the willingness to keep becoming bigger people.

This Shabbos, instead of asking ourselves whether we have already arrived, maybe we should ask a different question: What is the next thread I still need to climb?

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,