

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS KORACH

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

THE GREAT OPPONENT

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Part I. The External Opponent

A World of Preparation

As has been explained many times here, we're in this world only as a preparation for our station in the Next World. **הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה דוֹמָה לְפָרוּזְדוֹר בְּפִנֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא** – *This world is a vestibule before the World to Come*, **הַתִּקְוָה עֲצֻמָּה בְּפָרוּזְדוֹר** – *a lobby where you have the opportunity to prepare yourself*, **בְּרִי לְטָרְכָנִים לְטָרְקֵלִין** – *in order that you should enter the banquet hall* (Avos 4:16). The banquet hall of Olam Haba; that's what we're aiming for all the days of our lives.

Now, included in this world of preparation is the principle of *nisayon*, being tested. That's a fundamental teaching laid down at the beginning of *Mesillas Yesharim*: **כָּל עֲנִיְיֵי הָעוֹלָם נְסִיוֹנוֹת לְאָדָם** – *Everything in this world was made for the purpose of testing man*. It's a good idea to memorize those words and repeat them to yourselves from time to time because it's a statement that is intended to explain all the phenomena of this world.

The word 'test', however, has a broader meaning than what most people think because **נִסְיֹן**, *test*, comes from the word **נִס**, *a banner* – it's related to the word **נָשָׂא**, *to lift up*. And that means that the purpose of the test is to elevate you, to make you better. How do we become better people, more worthy of Olam Haba? Primarily by being tested in various ways and elevating ourselves by means of our struggles and successes.

A History of Opponents

Now, included in the *nisyonos* of this world is that we have various opponents, enemies and adversaries, who were put here in this world for the purpose of testing us. The history of our nation is a history of facing opposition; all types of ideologies and nations and movements and ideals that test our *emunah*, our loyalty to Hashem.

In ancient times we were faced by the fact that all of mankind worshiped idols. Everyone around us implicitly believed in *avodah zarah* and there were thousands of people who claimed

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they were sick, *baalei mumim*, all kinds of other troubles, and when they went to the shrines of the idol they came out healed. People who walked in on crutches came out dancing.

All over the world similar stories were told and it became extremely difficult to resist that temptation. Even for the *maamin* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu it was a test; there were many foolish people who said, "Certainly we believe in Hashem but from time to time it pays to make use of *avodah zarah* in certain areas when we need help."

Frum Akums

They didn't *chas v'shalom* become *meshumadim*. They were still loyal to Hakadosh Baruch Hu – they were all *shomrei Shabbos*, they all kept *kashrus* and even kept the laws of *tumah v'taharah* that we don't keep today – but they made the error of utilizing what they thought was an opportunity to help themselves.

Let's say he wanted a *refuah* for a certain malady, a certain illness. So he went to this-and-this priest of *avodah zarah* – he paid him a nice price of course; the priest didn't do it for nothing – and the priest made certain obeisances. He bowed down and he offered incense before his idol and he said, "That's going to help you." It was a tremendous *yetzer hara* and for many years *avodah zarah* remained a thorn in the side of our nation.

And yet we look back now and we understand that it was one big test – and the majority of the people withstood that *nisayon* and were *zocheh* to excellence just because of that. And they're in Olam Haba now enjoying the reward for that *nisayon* that they had to endure, the opponent that they used as a ladder to climb towards greatness.

New Days, New Tests

As time passed the test was changed. Because idolatry evolved into world religions and for the past more than a thousand years Christianity and Islam have to some extent been a test of our *emunah*.

Now anybody who knows the subject will laugh at that. That's a test? An ignorant *meshugene* who was alone in his tent smoking hashish and hearing voices. It's as silly as can be!

The whole thing is such a *shtus*! Anybody who looks in the Koran or the New Testament sees right away how ridiculous the whole thing is; they're both silly books from beginning to end. But still it was a test because the gentile religions spread across the world and their libraries are full of 'learned' works explaining how the arguments for their religion are true and until recently it made a tremendous impression.

Today they don't have the effect anymore because evolution took over; but up until a certain time – because they were so powerful and so many – it had a tremendous influence in the world. And some of our people, ignorami, weaklings, were persuaded and went lost. We had *meshumadim* in Europe, people who bowed before the opponent and went lost.

Islamic Terror

In the Arab countries too; there was a time when in Teiman there was a *gezeiras hashmad* – they terrorized the Jews – and there were those who folded. That's why they wrote to the Rambam for his help, his advice. That's when he wrote his famous *Iggeres Teiman*, to encourage them against the opponent of Islam.

And the truth is, even in more recent times there have been some Jews who lived in their

countries who were persuaded by them to go over to their religion. Even to this day, in *Medinas Yisroel*, there are Jewish girls who marry Arabs.

In fact, the religions were a test for us in other ways as well. We had to suffer the laws that they made against us for hundreds of years, the persecutions and ridicule and scorn that they showered upon us. For centuries they have called us every name. Look in the *selichos*. They called us *kelev*. They called us everything else. They killed us too. Jews were always in physical danger in Christian Europe and in the Mohammeden countries. We were always standing on a powder keg.

And yet, to a very great extent, *ruba d'ruba* of the nation passed the test. There were a few Jews, *meshumadim*, who sold their souls in order to get glory among the gentiles but Klal Yisroel passed the test. And we acquired more *Olam Haba* by means of that; by means of resisting – not only resisting but ridiculing – the wiles of these powerful religions. The gentile religions were a great opponent but the nation of Hashem was up to the task.

Test of Tolerance

And then came the time of ‘enlightenment’ – a different type of test, the test of tolerance. Hakadosh Baruch Hu saw that we had passed the test of oppression; that despite all the *tzaros*, despite all the hatred and oppression, we remained loyal. And so He tested us in a different way.

It was a bitter test and very many went away. But the loyal ones preferred to remain stuck in the crowded ghetto with its narrow little streets, with its difficulties of making a living. And even among those who left the ghetto, there were opportunities for greatness.

I always give the example of the Jews in Germany. When there was so much assimilation a number of German Jews decided that they were going to fight for the preservation of the Torah. And they built up an Orthodox *kehillah* that was excellent in every detail.

They were *machmir* in everything; in some respects they were more *frum* than the Jews in Russia and Poland were. They organized *kashrus*, strict *hashgacha*; not *rabbanim* who gave *hechsherim* and were paid for it. No. The *kehillas* gave *hashgacha*; and they were very strict on every detail. The German *kehilla*, the strong ones who withstood the test, became great because of that. Those that remained loyal, they were a glorious example of the *am kadosh*, who knew that this world is only a hallway before the Next World.

The Government Tests

Now, today we face another great opponent, a very powerful opponent and that is the academicians, the scientists. I prefer to call them the ‘evolutionists’, the ‘materialists’. Now actually evolution is as silly as could be. Anybody who studies the subject well knows there's nothing at all to back up anything. On the contrary, there are very many big questions that cannot be answered according to their theory. It's a theory full of holes and lies; thousands of falsifications.

But today this opponent has unleashed all of its weapons in a massive attack on belief in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Today, the entire civilized world has been employed by this opponent. All the colleges teach evolution. All the press teaches evolution. Even the government has been employed by the *yetzer hara*; like it says in *Mesichta Sota* (49b), מְלֻכּוֹת תְּהַפְּדוּ לְמִינּוֹת – *The government itself becomes minus*. The

government is spending billions of dollars – our dollars – trying to demonstrate that the world happened by itself.

Elevated By Evolution

The courts too; judges have given verdicts in favor of evolution. Evolution has to be preached in all the schools but to teach there's a Borei? It's forbidden by federal law to speak of the Creator. It's a *meshugas!* The whole world, *meshugoyim!*

But like all of our opponents, this is also a test made for our benefit. It's a pattern of history, of Hashem's Hand in history. The *goyim* come along and are *metamei* the world with all kinds of false ideas and we turn our backs on them. Whatever they throw our way, we remain loyal to the Torah.

Today, it's even worse – they want to poison even the little children with the worst ideas; all types of immorality and *hefkeirus* they want to ruin us with. And still, the Am Yisroel fights back with all their *koach* against them. And by standing with a stiff backbone against all these opponents, we are elevated. By passing these tests we become greater and greater.

Part II. The Internal Opponent

Weighing the Opponents

Now all of these are our opponents, no question about it. They always were and in one form or another they always will be. And yet there's another opponent, one that we overlook, that is the worst one of all.

Worse than *avodah zarah*? Worse than the Muslims and Christians? Worse than the *mushchasim*, the degenerates, who want to spoil our children? Even worse than the academicians, the atheists who are out to destroy our *emunah*

in a Borei? Which opponent could be worse than all these?!

So pay attention now. The Gemara says as follows: אָמַר כְּנַסַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנַי הַקְּרוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא – *The Jewish nation speaks to Hashem and says, רַבּוֹנוּ שָׁל רַבּוֹנוּ שָׁל עוֹלָם רְצוֹנֵנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ* – “Master of the World! We wish to do Your will.” We're the Jewish Nation after all; we like to fulfill the word of Hashem. אֲלָא מִי מַעֲבָב – “Only, what prevents us? What stops us? *שְׂאוֹר שֶׁבַּעֲסָה* – *The yeast in the dough, וְשַׁעֲבוֹד מַלְכוּיּוֹת* – *and the influence that the gentiles have over us.*”

First on the List

Now, the second thing on the list, ‘the influence of the gentiles’ – that's a *sheim klali* for everything we spoke about already. It's a long history of opposition, an opposition to all of our *emunah*, that still continues today. And yet it seems like that's the minor one; it's second on the list, the second problem. What's the first one? The first on the list – is ‘the yeast in the dough’.

What's that? The yeast in the dough is the *yetzer hara* that's within us. That's worse than all the other opponents. That's what Am Yisroel says: “What's our biggest problem? *מִי מַעֲבָב* – *What's most holding us back from our potential in Your service? שְׂאוֹר שֶׁבַּעֲסָה* – *The yeast inside the dough.*” The yeast doesn't let the dough rest – it's producing gasses and the dough is bubbling and rising.

That's the *yetzer hara* within us. It's the first and most dangerous opponent. *שַׁעֲבוֹד מַלְכוּיּוֹת*, *the influence of the goyim*? Oh yes, that too; that's also a very big factor. But it's not as big as *שְׂאוֹר שֶׁבַּעֲסָה*, *the yeast in the dough*. The opponent within us, that's the biggest opponent and it's that enemy that will be our subject tonight.

Korach the Maamin

Everyone knows that there was a gentleman named Korach and we all know what happened, the story of his downfall. But Korach, you have to know, was a man who had participated in all the great experiences of the Jewish nation. He was present in Mitzrayim and he saw all the miracles, all the *makkos* of Mitzrayim. וַיֵּאֱמָן הָעָם – *The people believed* (Shemos 3:41) and Korach was there too. He was one of the people.

He saw with his own eyes how Hakadosh Baruch Hu came and redeemed us from slavery and he marched out together with the nation singing the song of redemption. He saw the *Yam Suf* split, he walked through it on dry land. He saw how the Egyptians were drowned when the water came crashing down on them and he sang *Az Yashir* along with everyone. וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בְּה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדוֹ – *Korach believed in Moshe too!*

Then he stood at *Matan Torah* and heard the Voice of Hashem and together with the rest of the nation he shouted 'Naaseh v'nishma'. It says there וְגַם בְּךָ יֵאֱמִינוּ לְעוֹלָם – *At Har Sinai they believed forever in Moshe Rabbeinu.*

Korach Was 100%

So what was left already? Korach was 100%. Nobody today has as much *emunah* as Korach had. It's common sense. He knew that Hakadosh Baruch Hu was overhead. He saw *ananei kovod* every day. He ate מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם every day. He saw Hashem feeding the nation *mann* every day. And so Korach was a *maamin* without any blemish in his *emunah*. He was more convinced than we'll ever be.

Was there any question of the smallest doubt of *emunah* in the mind of Korach? Of course not. To Korach, *avodah zarah* didn't exist at all. Any other ideology was *botel u'mevutol*. He would

have split his sides laughing at the New Testament and the Koran. Evolution?! He would absolutely think that the scientists escaped the asylum. Call the police! The *meshugenehs* are loose!

Materialism? The foolishness, the pulls of *Olam Haze*? To go to a movie or a baseball game? It would have been nothing him; not a test at all. After all, Hashem is right here in front of him. None of the external opponents could budge Korach from his rock-solid *emunah*.

The Puzzle

So how was it that Korach tripped up? It's a big puzzle. How was it that such a great man became an enemy of Moshe Rabbeinu and went lost from the nation? What happened? He didn't lack any *emunah* so what was the opponent that overcame him?

The answer is this: More than all of our opponents, the greatest one, the most difficult one to overcome, is the שְׂאֹר שְׂבַעְסָה. What's bubbling inside you, your character traits, your *middos*, that's the biggest of all *nisyonos*.

And so, despite all the knowledge that Korach had, despite the fact that his *emunah* was ironclad in Hakadosh Baruch Hu – you couldn't move it; you couldn't melt it; nobody in the generations of today has as much strong loyalty as Korach had – and yet, when he was faced by the test of seeing somebody who was from his own *shevet* of Levi being elevated to the office of *kehunah* while he, Korach, was overlooked, that ruined him.

The Invisible Opponent

Now Korach didn't imagine it was something wrong inside him, jealousy or desire for glory. "Glory?! *Chas veshalom!* I just want the *zechus* of worshiping Hashem in the *Mishkan!* And Moshe

Rabbeinu is taking away from me what's rightfully mine, what rightfully belongs to my family." Korach was a great man in Torah after all, with very great children. לְמִנְצֵחַ לְבְנֵי קִרְחַ מְזֻמֹּר. He had beautiful children, Korach. "So why shouldn't I have the opportunity to serve Hashem?!"

So Moshe said, "Look, it wasn't my decision. בִּי ה' שְׁלַחְנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה בִּי לֹא מִלְּבִי – Hashem sent me to do it. It wasn't from my own choice" (Bamidbar 16:28).

The Theory of Korach

But Korach had arguments. "I know Hakadosh Baruch Hu told you to do it, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu did it only because you pressured Him into doing it."

You hear that argument? "Hakadosh Baruch Hu favored you because you did so many good things for Him, so therefore He allowed you to pressure Him. But if you hadn't put the pressure on Him, He wouldn't have done that."

Now, we might smile at such a thing but that's only a sign of our lack of *emunah*. They believed so much in Hashem, to them Hakadosh Baruch Hu was a *Chai* – He's *very very* real – and therefore He reacts! It's true that He is full of the greatest Wisdom but because of the services that somebody rendered to Him – Moshe Rabbeinu after all took the Jews out of Mitzrayim and he persuaded them to accept the Torah – so Moshe Rabbeinu had earned so much credit in the eyes of Hashem that when he asked, "Hashem, do me a favor and make my brother Aharon the *kohen*," so Hashem said, "Alright."

That was Korach's theory. And he brought a proof. "You see!" he said, "Didn't Nadav v'Avihu die? You see they died. It's a sign Hashem wasn't pleased with that family." You hear that? He had a proof for his theory.

Innermost Theories

So the theory of evolution, all of the *shibud malchiyos*, that was nothing to Korach because it came from the outside. But a theory about why I'm doing this or that, why I'm arguing or making *machlokes*, that's already from inside my own self. That's an opponent worthy of Korach.

Now to us it seems silly because we already know the truth. We remember from last year's *kriyas haTorah* what happened to Korach at the end. *But he didn't know!* And his mind was already aimed in a different direction. *Middos* makes a person think in a different way and it's a very big job to oppose your own way of thinking.

A Helping Wife

All the traits of character are concealed behind a veil of a person's own self. It's so concealed within him that he doesn't even begin to realize what's doing. Now sometimes, if he's fortunate, so his wife might tell him something. You know, when a wife criticizes a husband, the husband should consider himself very lucky. After all, nobody else will criticize him. Who's going to tell him the truth outside the house? And after a while he begins to think, "Maybe I really am a pretty decent fellow."

So he comes home and right away his wife deflates him. She puts a pin in his balloon and it bursts. Oh, is that an achievement for him! Because now he found out something about his most dreaded opponent. Now he begins battling – not against his wife; against himself.

But Korach didn't do that. I'm sure he did but he didn't do it enough. And so when Moshe said, "Don't blame us. Blame Hashem," Korach didn't believe him. Because to recognize your own bad *middos*, that's the hardest battle of all. Korach's *seichel* worked in a different way now and he

studied the subject and he came up with this theory that Moshe Rabbeinu was able to persuade Hashem. “You’re at fault here. You’re limiting the opportunities of the Am Yisroel! Why did you persuade Him?”

Can You Answer Yourself?

That’s a lesson to remember: The *yetzer hara* of character traits inside you makes your *seichel* work in a different way, to see things the opposite of the way they are. And that means the biggest of our opponents is the *middos* in ourselves!

And so, it really is a waste of time to think about external enemies when the internal enemy is the biggest. Of course, it’s a mitzvah to overcome the external enemies. רַע מָה שְׂתִשִּׁיב לְאַפְיִקוֹרִים, absolutely. It’s a mitzvah to know how to answer back every one of them. At least in your own mind you should be fortified with an *emunah* of steel against all the external opponents. *But of all the opponents, the one you can’t answer back so easily is yourself.*

To discover the truth about yourself is the most difficult of all the things in the world. Many things you have to learn in this world but to learn about yourself, that’s most difficult of all. After all is said and done, the great *milchama* of the *middos* is the battle that makes a person great; that’s the enemy you should focus on most.

Part III. Our Opponent

Emunah is Not Enough

And so we have to know that the story of Korach was placed in the Torah to be a lesson for us. Because we think that if we’d *really* believe – if let’s say, if we’d hear His Voice, then from then on there’d be no problem at all. If only we saw *mann* fall from the sky and saw the *Yam Suf* split

and our enemies fall into the water and be drowned, that’s all we’d need – then we’d have the rock-solid *emunah* of our forefathers and we’d all be loyal servants of Hashem.

But it’s not true; it’s not true at all. Because after the test of *emunah* there’s another test, a more trying test, a more bitter test; and that’s the test of character, of *middos*.

From Buddha to Bust

I had a man here who was once a member of a Buddhist monastery in California; he was a *talmid* of *avodah zarah*. But he used to come late to the prayers there and they were angry at him. “You’re coming late to the ‘*minyan*!’” They criticized him and finally he left them. He threw away Buddhism and he found his way to Flatbush, to our shul.

Then he got married. He found a nice Jewish girl, a *frum* girl, and there was a *chasunah*. So did he live happily ever after? No. Because that’s when the real test began – the test of *middos*, the trouble of getting along with someone else. The test of *emunah*, yes, that he survived. Buddhism, that opponent he overcame. But the test of fighting against yourself, of יָצַרְוּ אֶת יִצְרוֹ, that was too bitter of a *nisayon* for him.

What was the end? Just like his guru, his lama, threw him out of the monastery, his wife threw him out of the house. It ended up he was standing in *beis din* and he’s saying to his wife, “*Harei zeh giteich*”. Ay yah yay! He’s giving her a *gett* now.

The Tragedy of Middos

What a heartbreak! Did you ever see a *gett* being given? I used to have *gittin* in my house before I came to New York. The *beis din* is here and the husband is standing there. They’re all

watching and she's taking her hands like this – she puts her hands up like this. That's the girl to whom he had once said, “*Harei at mekudeshes li.*” And now he's saying “*Harei zeh giteich.*” What a tragedy, what a heartbreak that is.

Now, how could it be such a thing? He was a *maamin*, a real believer. He came here at night and he learned Torah too. So what happened?

What happened is that he never considered the real opponent; the test of envy and jealousy and *kavod* and *gaavah* and impatience and laziness and many other things. And that opponent, the yeast in the dough, that's an even more bitter test than all the tests of *emunah*.

The Bigger Job

So even though you're a *frum* Jew; let's say you're a *baal teshuvah* and you threw away all the *avodah zarah* and you moved to Williamsburg. You put on a nice beard and *peyos* and a black hat and now you look like you were born into a family where even the mother had a beard and *peyos*.

You have no connection anymore with the old foolishness that you once upon a time looked up to and honored. No television! No newspapers! Even a radio you don't bring into your house. You look down on all of that! You're a changed man!

Very good! That's the right way to do! But you have to know inside there's still a big job ahead of you. Now begins the great problem of being a *mentch*.

Just Like Korach

Now that's a very big problem because more or less that is a description of all of us. A man reads the Torah in shul and he's surprised at what Korach did. He looks down at him. How could such a good man do such a foolish thing?

What *meshugas* got into his head? That's what he's thinking.

Meanwhile, he himself can't get along with his friend in the synagogue. He's upset at the *gabbai* for something else. The *rav*? Not even a question. He talks about him behind his back. He has *machlokes* with a neighbor on his block too.

“Not all of my neighbors,” he tells me, “Just this one because he's a blankety-blank.” Well, Korach got along with many people too.

And so wherever you go you can't run away from this one opponent, the *middos* bubbling inside you. You're complaining about something. You're angry, impatient, jealous. You're selfish. Whatever it is, you're struggling against the same opponent that was the downfall of Korach.

Study Yourself

And that's why Hashem says, **שִׁמּוֹ לְבַבְכֶם עַל דְּרֹכֵיכֶם** – *You must put your mind on your path in life.* You must think about yourself. How much? Each person according to his nature, but you must have some time to think about yourself. And if **נְחַפְּשֶׁה**, *if you search*, **וְנַחְקְרָה**, *and you search even deeper*, then you'll discover. But you have to search greatly. You have to go mining within the depths of your character to discover what is it that's making you think and act in certain ways.

You want to be great in the Next World? You want to raise yourself up forever by means of this *nisayon*? Take an inventory every night before you go to sleep. Spend five minutes thinking. Five minutes is a very good start! You should know that there were wise men even among the gentiles who gave this *avodah* much more than five minutes. There was one wise *goy*, a true story, who every Saturday night he told his family that he was going into a room by himself; “Please don't disturb me” he said. Every

Saturday night he spent time reflecting on his life. A true story – in recent history. A *goy!*

The Middos Are in Control

If you give five minutes a day to this opponent I guarantee you'll become great. Five minutes to look back on the day and see, how did I behave toward my fellowman?

How did I speak to my wife in the morning? It depends on your *middos*. How did I speak to my children when I got up? It depends on your *middos*. In the synagogue, how did I deal with people? How did I deal with this or that problem? Do I recall what I said or how I looked at someone, with what expression on my face? When I went to my place of business, what did I say? What expression did I have? What were my attitudes towards people that I met? And so on.

It doesn't mean that a person must spend his entire life in introspection, but if he never made an attempt to examine himself, he is going to continue all his life walking in darkness. He won't begin to realize how evil he is! You know, there are evil Orthodox Jews. Of course, there are many more evil non-Orthodox Jews but even amongst *shomrei mitzvos*, there are plenty of *reshaim gemurim*. People who are constantly earning the biggest sins by saying the wrong words, by getting into *machlokes*, by mistreating others because of the **שְׂאוֹר שְׂבָעָה**.

And so if you'll just ignore it and go your merry way, the yeast bubbles and makes trouble; it festers. You have to get busy healing yourself! If your only contact with *yiddishkeit* is coming to *shul* and performing *mitzvos*, living like an Orthodox Jew – which is very good, *ashreichem* – nevertheless you should know that your chances of changing your character are almost nothing.

Draining the Infected Soul

If somebody is lazy and he doesn't search out the *middos ra'os* that he possesses, so nothing is going to help. The Vilna Gaon says it's like a wound that is not healed; it's covered up but it's festering. It's infecting the body.

Suppose there's an operation and the surgeon is in a hurry to get rid of you and to collect his bill. So he sews you up immediately without draining the wound. It takes time to drain out the excess fluid; it takes time – sometimes it takes weeks or treatments – but he's a busy man! He doesn't have time to waste on you.

And you find even a couple of months later that you're not finished. He left something inside; not only a roll of gauze. There's fluid there still that's ripe for infection.

Sue Yourself

So about the doctor, you'll complain. You'll be very angry. You'll want to sue him. But what about yourself? If the *makah* of bad character is not healed inside, it's a wound that will cause you much more trouble than that. All you're doing is sewing it up on the outside and imagining it's all good. It's very foolish.

Spend as much time as you can on this. It's never too much time when you're trying to cleanse yourself because the health of your soul is much more important than any other form of endeavor for one's health. And when you succeed – to whatever degree you succeed – that's a greatness. It's the primary accomplishment that you came into this world to achieve.

The Biggest Battle

Even the best of us – and you people who come here *are* the best; you're excellent people. We sit together and we fortify ourselves in



QUESTION

Can a Jew ever be a rasha?

ANSWER

Well, we have to look in the Chumash and ask Moshe Rabbeinu. And Moshe Rabbeinu said about Korach, **סוּרוּ נָא מֵעַל אֹהֲלֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים** – *“Move yourselves away from the tents of these reshaim”* (Bamidbar 16:26). So he called them resha'im. So we see that sometimes a Jew could be a *rasha*.

There's no such thing as saying “There's no *reshaim*”. This liberal attitude that everything is excusable cannot be accepted by us. We have our principles and sometimes you have to call a thing by its name. And a person who is disloyal to the Torah certainly deserves a certain rebuke. And if he deserves the name of *rasha* – it doesn't mean you have to say it – but you could certainly categorize him in the category of *rasha*.

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emunah. Among us there's no lack of conviction in the truthfulness of all the Torah principles; we believe in *Olam Haba* and in *Torah min haShomayim* and in all the miracles. And yet, *af al pi kein*, we have one big opponent that we have to overcome – the same one that felled Korach.

It's a lifetime struggle to be able to conquer the inclinations of impatience and selfishness and arrogance and laziness and so much else – so many qualities you have to fight against in order to overcome this greatest of all opponents. It's not easy. But that's the *nisayon* that makes you great. By means of battling all our lives against the opponent within us, that's how we achieve greater and greater perfection. And that's how we best prepare ourselves **לְהִכָּנֵם לְטָרְקֵלִין**, to enter into the banquet hall of the Next World!

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Let's Get Practical

Taking a Daily Inventory

Although Korach was great in *Emunah*, it was the *se'or sheb'isah*, the inner opponent known as the *yetzer hara* of *middos*, which was his downfall. This week I will try to remember that “*kol inyanei haolam nisyonos l'odom*”, *everything in this world is a test*. Every evening I will *bli neder* set aside a few minutes to review my day and take inventory of my *middos* and how I utilized them.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

- 108** – For What to Pray | **463** – Downfall of a Great Man
- 544** – Middos: Whom Hashem Chooses
- E-121** – The Great Opponent