

Discourse 53

“*Vayikach Korach... -
Korach separated...*”

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Korach,
3rd of Tammuz, 5725
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,⁹⁴² “Korach separated etc.” In the Midrashic teachings⁹⁴³ of our sages, of blessed memory (cited by Rashi) it states that he also argued against the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit, saying, “A [four cornered] garment made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue) is exempt from Tzitzit, for since a garment made of a different material is exempted by a single thread of *techelet* (dark blue), [therefore] does not one made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue) exempt itself?”

Now, Likkutei Torah⁹⁴⁴ explains the matter of Korach’s dispute, and the relation of his dispute against Aharon’s Priesthood to his dispute about the *mitzvah* of Tzitzit. To explain, in the coming future the Levites will be Priests (*Kohanim*)⁹⁴⁵ because the powers of Might-*Gevurot* will then

⁹⁴² Numbers 16:1

⁹⁴³ Midrash Tanchuma Korach 2

⁹⁴⁴ Likkutei Torah, Korach 54b

⁹⁴⁵ As stated in Likkutei Torah of the Arizal to Ezekiel (44:15), and Likkutei Torah there; Also see Tanya, Ch. 50.

be elevated and become primary, whereas the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim* will be secondary to them.⁹⁴⁶

This is why Korach wanted to make the powers of Might-*Gevurot* primary even now, because Korach was a Levite and the Levites are from the aspect of the powers of Might-*Gevurot*. He therefore argued against Aharon's Priesthood, because the matter of Priesthood (*Kehunah*) is the aspect of Kindness-*Chessed*, in that, as known,⁹⁴⁷ "the Priest (*Kohen*) is a man of Kindness-*Chessed*."

This is also why he argued that a [four cornered] garment made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue) is exempt from Tzitzit, in that *techelet* (dark blue) is the aspect of Might-*Gevurah* and [it therefore] does not require the strings, which are drawn from the aspect of Kindness-*Chessed*, even though the strings of *techelet* (dark blue) are like the light (*Ohr*) of Kindness-*Chessed* in the vessel (*Kli*) of Might-*Gevurah*, being that the string [itself] is the matter of a drawing down (*Hamshachah*) etc.

[Likkutei Torah⁹⁴⁸ concludes that in truth he "erred in vision,"⁹⁴⁹ being that this conduct (that the powers of Might-*Gevurot*) will be primary, will only be possible upon the completion of the refinements (*Birurim*). For in that time even the evil inclination, which is from the aspect of the powers of Might-*Gevurot*, will be transformed and become "very good-

⁹⁴⁶ This is as stated by the Ramaz to the Torah portion of Eikev (271a) – see Likkutei Torah *ibid*.

⁹⁴⁷ Zohar III 145b; Tanya *ibid.*, and elsewhere.

⁹⁴⁸ Likkutei Torah *ibid*. 54c.

⁹⁴⁹ See Isaiah 28:7

Tov Me'od-טוב מאד,⁹⁵⁰ which is not presently so, in that [presently] vitality is derived by the forces of externality from the powers of *Might-Gevurot*. This is why [presently] the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim* are primary, whereas the powers of *Might-Gevurot* must be secondary in relation to the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*.]

Now, in addition to the fact that because he was from the aspect of the powers of *Might-Gevurot*, he therefore argued that the strings, which are drawn from the aspect of Kindness-*Chessed*, are unnecessary, he also disputed against the matter of the strings of the *Tzitzit* in general, [arguing] that relative to the garment [itself] they only are constricted drawings forth.

This is as explained in *Likkutei Torah*⁹⁵¹ on the verse about the Levites,⁹⁵² “Let them pass a razor over their flesh.” That is, because the Levites are from the aspect of the powers of *Might-Gevurot*, it therefore is necessary that there not be any excess in the aspect of the “hairs” (*Sa'arot*) and constrictions (*Tzimtzumim*) drawn forth from them. He therefore said that they did not at all need the aspect of the “hairs” (*Sa'arot*) and the strings of the *Tzitzit*. About this Moshe responded that such is indeed the measure, namely, that for there to be a Supernal drawing down from Above to be revealed below, this is not possible except specifically by way of the “strings” and “hairs”].

However, based on the above, that Korach's dispute was because he wanted to bring about that even presently the powers

⁹⁵⁰ See Midrash Bereishit Rabba 9:7

⁹⁵¹ *Likkutei Torah* ibid. 54b

⁹⁵² Numbers 8:7

of Might-*Gevurah* should be primary, we must understand why he (not only) disputed (against the Priesthood of Aharon, who is from the aspect of the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*, but also) disputed against Moshe, who was a king.⁹⁵³ This is because the matter of kingship is the aspect of Might-*Gevurah*.⁹⁵⁴ We also must understand Korach's argument about a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue). For, at first glance, the argument that the aspect of the "hairs" and "strings" are altogether unnecessary, can also be said about a garment (*Tallit*) that is entirely white.

2.

This may be understood by prefacing with the explanation elsewhere⁹⁵⁵ about Korach's argument that,⁹⁵⁶ "the entire congregation is holy... why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of *HaShem*-יהוה?" That is, Korach's dispute was **not** about the matter of leadership itself (being that the two-hundred and fifty men who participated in Korach's dispute were themselves the leaders of the congregation). Rather, it only was in regard to the matter of leadership and exaltation in matters of holiness, such as the exaltedness of Aharon, about which it states,⁹⁵⁷ "Aharon was set apart to sanctify him as the holy of holies." It was about this that Korach argued, "the entire

⁹⁵³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Beit HaBechiraah 6:11

⁹⁵⁴ See Likkutei Torah, Balak 72b and elsewhere.

⁹⁵⁵ See Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 2, p. 329; Vol. 4 p. 1,049; Also see the Sichah talk that preceded the discourse, Ch. 2 (Torat Menachem, Vol. 44 p. 39 and on).

⁹⁵⁶ Numbers 16:3

⁹⁵⁷ Chronicles I 23:13

congregation is holy,” in that in holiness itself there is no need for exaltedness.

3.

Based on this, we can explain why Korach (not only argued against Aharon, who was the aspect of the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*, but also) against Moshe, even though he was a king, the matter of which is Might-*Gevurah*. For Korach’s dispute against Moshe’s kingship was not because of the essential exaltedness of Kingship-*Malchut*, which is regular exaltedness, but because in the matter of Kingship-*Malchut* there is exaltedness in holiness itself.

This is understood from the fact that a king is anointed with the anointing oil,⁹⁵⁸ and the matter of anointing with the anointing oil is connected to the matter of holiness. This is why the Priests (*Kohanim*), as well as the vessels of the Temple, were [also] anointed. Thus, though the matter of Kingship-*Malchut* is of the aspect of Might-*Gevurah*, [nonetheless] because of the holiness in the matter of Kingship-*Malchut*, it therefore is [also] related to the aspect of the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*, and it is about this that Korach disputed, being that he wanted to make the powers of Might-*Gevurot* primary.

⁹⁵⁸ See Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 1:7

4.

Based on this we can also explain why Korach's argument was specifically about a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) made [entirely] of *techelet* (dark blue), rather than [entirely] of white. This is because the string of *techelet* (dark blue) in the Tzitzit is like the matter of the exaltedness of the side of holiness (about which Korach specifically disputed). In contrast, the white strings of the Tzitzit are like regular exaltedness (which Korach agreed to).

To explain, the difference between *techelet* (dark blue) and white, is that by comparison, *techelet* (dark blue) is very costly. This is why “con artists would exchange *techelet* (dark blue) with *kala-ilan* (indigo) [which is very close in appearance].”⁹⁵⁹ (This is also cited in Rashi in explanation of the statement in the Torah portion of Tzitzit,⁹⁶⁰ “I am *HaShem*-יהוה your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt,” that, “It was I who in Egypt distinguished between he who was a firstborn and he who was not, and I also shall distinguish and exact punishment from whosoever attaches wool dyed with *kala ilan* (indigo) on his garment and pretends that it is *techelet* (dark blue).”) That is, not only is it costly by comparison, but it also has a special holiness to it. This is understood from the fact that they would cover the [holy] vessels of the Tabernacle with a garment of *techelet*.⁹⁶¹

⁹⁵⁹ See Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 61b; Avodah Zarah 39a

⁹⁶⁰ Numbers 15:41

⁹⁶¹ Numbers 4:6 and on

In contrast, white is neither costly, nor does it have any special holiness. [This is also why,⁹⁶² nowadays it is not our custom to use *techelet* (dark blue) [on the Tzitzit] but only white. This is because [nowadays] the world is incapable of receiving the special holiness of the matter of *techelet* (dark blue), which is not so of the sanctity of white etc.]

From this it is understood that the commandment of the Holy One, blessed is He, to attach white strings to a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) is not because there is any superiority to the white strings, just as, in and of itself, the garment (*Tallit*) has no special exaltedness. The same is so of the white strings (Tzitzit), in that, in and of themselves, they have no special exaltedness, and as long as the strings are by themselves (unattached to the garment (*Tallit*), they have no special exaltedness, but rather the *mitzvah* is the matter of attaching white strings to the garment (*Tallit*). It therefore is inapplicable to ask whether a garment (*Tallit*) that is entirely white could exempt itself, being that the exaltedness of the white strings is not because they are white.

In contrast, about the *techelet* (dark blue), Korach assumed that the commandment to attach a strand of *techelet* to a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) is because of the special exaltedness of *techelet* (dark blue), in that it is costly and holy etc. He therefore argued that a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue), which already is costly and holy etc., should exempt itself and not require a strand of *techelet* (dark blue) which is external to it.

⁹⁶² Pri Etz Chayim, Shaar HaTzitzit, Ch. 4-5; Also see Likkutei Torah, Korach 45d; Also see Igrot Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab Vol. 1, p. 351 and on.

This is also why he argued, “Why do you exalt yourselves.” That is, in regard to exaltedness that is holy, such as the strand of *techelet* (dark blue), it is enough that the entire congregation is holy, like a [four cornered] garment (*Tallit*) made entirely of *techelet* (dark blue), and there is no need for [any additional] exaltedness of holiness.⁹⁶³

⁹⁶³ This is where the transcript of this discourse concludes. It states there, that at the conclusion of the discourse, the Rebbe spoke about the words of his honorable holiness the Rebbe Rayatz, of the 3rd of Tammuz (which begins on this Shabbat) of the year 5687 (Sefer HaSichot 5687 p. 169), “‘May *HaShem*-יהוה our God, be with us [as He was with our forefathers] etc., may He not forsake us nor cast us off,’* (Kings I 8:57) *HaShem*-יהוה, blessed is He, should be with us and will be with us,’ meaning that this is both a request and a promise etc.” [* This may be further elucidated by the discourse entitled “*Yehiy HaShem Elokeinu Imanu*” 5728 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5728 p. 246) which explains that “our forefathers” refers to the aspects of Wisdom-*Chochmah* and Understanding-*Binah* of the soul, which is the general matter of the intellectual powers (*Mochin*). The request is that just as the light illuminates within the intellect (“our forefathers”) it should be drawn down and revealed in the emotions of the heart (“with us”). For, the primary aspect of man is the emotions (*Midot*). He connects this to the matter of Korach, who wanted the powers of Might-*Gevurot* be primary. For, Korach saw the powers of Might-*Gevurot* as they are in their root, higher than the powers of Kindness-*Chassadim*. It is for this reason that the restraint of the *Tzimtzum* preceded the revelation. However, the truth of the matter is that the *Tzimtzum* is for the sake of the revelation. The same is so of the matter of the intellect (*Mochin*) and the emotions (*Midot*), that there first must be the concealment of the “narrow of the neck” (*Meitzar HaGaron*), however, the intention in this is that through this there is caused to be a drawing down of the light of the intellect (*Mochin*) into the emotions (*Midot*).]