



# Rabbi Dovid Roberts

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## THE INDIGNANCE OF DIFFERENCE

## Parshah

The Sefas Emes utilises a cryptic comment of the Zohar to explain the inner meaning of the Machlokes of Korach. The Zohar Hakadosh explains that Korach was aiming to fight 'Shabbos & Sholom'

His argument was designed to wreck the unity and harmony of Creation itself. The architect of his demise had therefore to be Creation itself.

ואם בריאה יברא ה' ופצתה האדמה את פיה

Rashi quotes the Gemara in Sanhedrin

ורבותינו פירשו (סנהדרין קי) אם בריאה פה לארץ מששת ימי בראשית מוטב ואם לאו יברא ה'

Moshe Rabbenu makes an extraordinary demand of Hashem. If the 'mouth in the Earth' was already written into the DNA of Creation during the 6 days of Creation, that is good. But if not, Hashem will have to do something that he has not done since then, i.e. engage in an act of Creation *ex nihilo* to obliterate Korach and his followers.

Machlokes – division and fragmentation were introduced into Creation on Day Two (the number implying multiplicity). The upper and lower realms were separated and Gehinom was created. Shomayim was no longer in direct contact with Eretz.

Shomayim itself is the paradigm of unity, consisting of two conflicting elements (in their spiritual primordial forms of Din and Chesed) Aish & Mayim. These cannot normally coexist, one extinguishes or evaporates the other. But Hashem acts as a supreme conciliator – Oseh Sholom Bimeromov – He makes peace in his upper realms.

Shabbos is the ultimate expression of harmony and unity – רזא דאחד – the resolution of the tension between opposing concepts. The harmony of being able to unite conflicting forces finds expression in the duality<sup>1</sup> of

זכור ושמו, לחם משנה, עומר כפול, עונשה כפול, מתן שכרה כפול, מזמורה כפול

All aspects of Shabbos speak to the unity of Creation – the challenges posed by fragmentation and division can all be resolved in Shabbos. The dissonance and clash of ideas and forces that torment us though the week - self and other, inner and outer, head and heart, body and soul - are all synthesised into a glorious, regal oneness that acknowledges Hashem (the *טוב להודות לה* as the fulfilment of the *טוב כי omitted on day two!*) as the supreme source of all<sup>3</sup>, and the consequence is a serenity and inner peace that is a foretaste of Olam Haba.

The Gemara in Shabbos 10B describes Shabbos as a gift - *Matanah Tovah Yesh Li B'Beis Genazi*, I have a good present<sup>4</sup> in my treasure house

1 See Maharal Tiferes Yisroel 30 for an elaboration of this idea with regard to the unity of marriage – (note the double expression in *lecha dodi* – לבואי כלה בואי כלה)

2 The entire theme being the ability to accept the sovereignty of Hashem, despite appearances to the contrary, the tension of *מנוח* as fragmentation (לא חנוח) clashing with the round wholeness of *שיר* (both as poem and *שיר*, the round ring worn by animals *אשונה* אשונה אשונה אשונה)

3 In a fascinating aside the Sefas Emes, also explains the concepts of *Kedusha* and *Tahara* referring to the Kohen and Levi respectively – the latter being attainable, the former ultimately a gift, thus Divinely ordained (ענין מסלת ישרים פכ"ו)

4 Is there any other sort?? Again, perhaps an allusion to the *טוב* omitted on day 2.

I would like to give to Bnei Yisrael. Similarly, Hashem sanctified the Kohanim with a special gift called the *Kehunah*. Korach argued with Shabbos because he argued with the concept of a gift from Hashem which is a total *chesed* and can't be earned. Bnei Yisrael can use their *Kedushah* to establish *Yom Tov*, but they can't create a *Shabbos*. *Shabbos* is a gift from Hashem.

However, an important caveat is required. One cannot aim for unity as an overarching goal, if one does not first acknowledge, respect and appreciate boundaries. There are real differences between day and night, man and woman, *kodesh and chol*, *Yisrael and amim*. The absurd and pernicious attempts of society to blur these distinctions is, in essence, an attempt to unravel, deny and violate Creation<sup>5</sup> itself.

גבולות חלק הקב"ה בעולמו, יכולים אתם להפוך בקר לערב? כן תוכלו לבטל את זו, שנאמר (בראשית א) ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר ויבדל

Hashem has designated boundaries which are immutable. Korach refused to accept this (we are all equally holy), and argued that the power structures were artificial constructs, not Divine. His indignance was the result of his inability (or unwillingness) to accept difference.

Without acknowledging the Divine provenance of real difference, there can be no *שלום*, no *שבת* and no real purpose to our *בנייה*

5 Deeming some of these as mere 'social constructs' is as unhelpful as it is unpalatable to the Torah mindset.



### A Quick Vort: *Ma'ayanah Shel Torah*

BY YISROEL AVROHOM KAYE

The pasuk (Bamidbar 16:1) says "And Korach.... took...."

The Maayanah Shel Torah brings R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa who explains that Korach failed because he tried to seize greatness and strength for himself with his own hands. Greatness is only good if it is conferred upon man *min hashamayim*.

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לע"נ שמעון בן שרגא ז"ל

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2. What lies behind these three different stages of flowering?