

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

ותנו בהן אש ושימו עליהן קצרת לפני ה' מחר והיה האיש אשר יכרד ה' הוא הקדוש רב לכם בני לוי ... (יב-ז)

Rashi states, “*Eino hitaso*, his eyes led him astray” indicating that it was Korach’s eyes which allowed him to fail so miserably. Although he was a smart and capable person, he was unable to focus on his own lofty role in the *Mishkan* and instead, insisted on focusing on his cousin, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, and his unique role. Had Korach remained focused on his own position, he could have succeeded in fulfilling his calling. Instead, he was consumed and overcome with jealousy, believing that Moshe had usurped what should have been his. His constant “eyeing” of Moshe gnawed at his ego and destroyed him.

The *Mussar* movement created by R’ Yisroel Salanter ז”ל changed the way Jews treat each other and interact with the world. There is a tradition that the revolution was sparked by R’ Yisroel’s reaction to a terrible incident that occurred to a simple shoemaker in a small town. Yankel was illiterate and unable to learn *Torah* or *daven* much. One day, he received a letter on fancy stationary postmarked from the big city. With great difficulty he managed to read the letter informing him that his wealthy, childless uncle had passed away and left his fortune to Yankel the poor and illiterate shoemaker.

Yankel hurried to inform his wife about their newfound wealth. His wife rejoiced in the good news, but advised him to proceed with caution and ask to speak with some wealthy men in town and seek their advice on a business to invest in.

Wisely, Yankel listened to her suggestion and brought the money to a reputable local financier to invest for him. Within a short period of time, he was earning enough to be able to bid his shoe repair shop a final goodbye. He lived on his investment income and grew richer day by day. With nothing to do, he began to frequent the *bais medrash*, where he would pay young scholars to learn with him. First they taught him how to read, then to *daven*, and then to read *Chumash*. Eventually, he was learning *Gemara*. He felt good about himself as he steadily progressed and grew in *Torah* and *avodas Hashem*.

The years passed. His sons were enrolled in various *yeshivos*, where they were good students. His upward trajectory, which included advancing in learning and doing very well financially, earned him growing respect in the small town. One day, a *shadchan* proposed the *Rov’s* daughter as a suitable match for Yankel’s son. The two sides agreed, and the entire town rejoiced with the news of the match between this prominent individual and their revered *Rov*.

With one exception. Years ago, next to Yankel’s shoe repair shop, was a blacksmith. The two had been friendly, sitting on their stoops when business was slow, whiling away the hours in conversation. The blacksmith was never able to accept the fact that his neighbor, the shoemaker, had risen to prominence, while he remained a simple laborer, working long hours and struggling for every penny. He would look on bitterly as Yankel would deliver a *shiur* or speak in learning with scholars.

Finally, it was the day of the wedding and the townspeople gathered to celebrate the momentous occasion. The *chupah* was a grand spectacle, as befitting the *Rov’s* daughter. Yankel stood tall and proud, his face glowing with a surreal light. He silently thanked *Hashem* for his good fortune. The glass was broken, shouts of *mazel tov* filled the air, and the music began to play. Yankel prepared himself to joyously greet his guests. There was a crush of people around him, and at their head was his old friend, the blacksmith. “Yankel,” he shouted above the music, loud enough for everyone to hear. He reached under his coat and held up a pair of torn shoes for all to see. “Hey, Yankel, how much would you charge me to fix these shoes here?”

People looked on in horror. Yankel stood there, deflated, the joy seeming to rush out of him. The bitter, vicious ploy had worked. The blacksmith had come at the most glorious moment of Yankel’s life and reminded him that he was really nothing more than a lowly shoemaker. The blacksmith’s cruel tactic was the talk of the evening. The next day, Yankel passed away of a broken heart. The story spread like wildfire and was retold in horror across Lithuania.

When R’ Yisroel Salanter heard of the cruel and callous action of the blacksmith, he decided that a revolution, teaching the importance of *tikkun hamiddos* was necessary. He took the task upon himself and instituted the study of *Mussar* in depth.

והיה מורי חדש בחדשו ומורי שבת בשבתו ... (ישעי' ס-כג)

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY AN UNEQUALLED HISTORIAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

In this week’s *Haftorah*, the *Navi* tells us that “*from new month to new month, and from Shabbos to Shabbos ... everyone will come before Hashem ...*” All the people, even gentiles who come from other nations, will arrive and bow down to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* in the holy city of *Yerushalayim*. *Chazal* explain that this means that some people who live near the city of *Yerushalayim* will come every *Shabbos* to bow down while those who live far away will come every new month to bow down. But what is this idea of either paying homage on a weekly basis or monthly?

R’ Hersh Domaluk *shlit”a* explains that *Chazal* tell us that the word “מזל” signifies a “full” continuation -

meaning a full year. **Rashi** even notes that the *Navi* says “all flesh shall come” - since flesh is soft and continuous, unlike stone which is hard and final. The *Gemara (Rosh Hashana 17a)* deduces from this *posuk* that those who do evil go down to *Gehinnom* with their bodies intact and remain there for twelve months, during which the evildoer’s body is destroyed, and the soul is burned. The wind then spreads the ashes under the feet of the righteous.

Thus, the ultimate goal of a person’s spiritual journey is continuity. If a person devotes himself to being continuous in his spiritual pursuit - from *Shabbos* to *Shabbos* or month to month – then *Hashem* will be happy to speed up the coming of *Moshiach*.

בקר וידע ה' את אשר לו ואת הקדוש והקריב אליו ואת אשר יכרד בו יקריב אליו ... (יב-ז)

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV FROM THE FAMILY OF R' CHAIM YOSEF KOPFMAN ZTL

מחשבת הלב

As Korach gathered his group in protest against Moshe and Aharon, the *Torah* writes וידבר אל קרח *Moshe Rabbeinu* responded to them saying, “בקר” - “come (in the) morning,” and *Hashem* will make known whom He has chosen. Why does the *posuk* choose the word “בקר” morning, and not “מחר”, tomorrow, as it does a bit further in the narrative?

There are a few *geshmake pshatim* to understand this question. One is based on a thought from the **Avodas Hagershuni (R’ Gershon Ashkenazi ז”ל)**. He says that the morning was when the *mann*, the Heavenly food appeared daily. Where it landed would show the truth as to who was a *tzaddik* and who wasn’t. The righteous person would have his “food” deposited at the entrance of his home, while a sinner would have to travel a distance to retrieve his portion. Thus, “בקר”, in the morning, it would become clear as day who was right - Moshe or Korach. The *mann* would be the proof.

Rashi in another *pshat* says that Moshe said, “Now is a time of *shikrus*, drunkenness - cloudy and unclear. Let’s wait till the morning.” והוא היה מוכן לדחותו שמה יחזור. He wanted to stall until morning hoping in the interim they’d do *teshuva*. The message and *machshava* here is quite clear. When one is upset or angry, it’s useless, even counterproductive to try and smooth things over right away. Instead, take a lesson from *Moshe Rabbeinu* and say, “Maybe let me think about it overnight....”

There was once a couple who established a rule that they would never go to sleep while upset with each other, and would settle any differences prior to going to sleep. One time, the wife was particularly upset at the husband and needed to vent. She looked at him and saw him sound asleep. She was further aggravated and decided to wait till the morning to voice her displeasure. Needless to say in the morning, after he prepared a lavish breakfast for her, her anger had pretty much subsided. **בקר וידע**. He winked at her and said, “I went to sleep knowing that in the morning ... things would already be settled.”

משל למה הדבר דומה

ויקדלו על משה ועל אהרן ויאמרו אלהם רב לכם ... (יב-ז)

משל: Being the Rabbi of a community comes with a lot of responsibility, and often, not very easy ones. Once, **R’ Yosef Dov Soloveitchik ז”ל** of Brest-Litovsk, better known by his magnum opus “*Beis Halevi*”, was once sitting in a conference with the rich dignitaries of his community. After much discussion, and despite the importance those particular communal affairs, the conference was at a standstill as the dignitaries seemed to feel they knew better than their Rabbi.

Suddenly, a woman came in with considerable perturbation, and pleaded to ask the Rabbi for his advice. She said it was of utmost importance. R’ Yosef Dov acceded, and she asked about the interpretation of a dream. “I had an awful dream, Rabbi,” she cried. “In my dream my only son was demented!” “That is a good dream,” R’ Yosef Ber replied. “If he was

actually crazy, then it is a sign that he will become rich. Go in peace, and may *Hashem* bless you.”

After the woman left, one of the dignitaries asked the Rabbi curiously, “Honored Rabbi, how do you infer that her dream is of a good nature?”

“Easily enough,” he replied. “Something about the participants of this conference suggested it....” The conference ended - all in agreement with R’ Yosef Dov!

נטל: Amongst the many lessons gleaned from the story of Korach and his followers, something profound is noted right at the beginning of the story. One of the first things the *Torah* mentions, is Korach’s inability to humble himself to someone greater than himself. He and the rest of the group “ganged up” on Moshe and Aharon with concocted accusations. It was clear that this issue lies at the root of the disastrous tale that followed thereafter.

סורו נא מעל אהלי האנשים הישעים האלה ואל תנעו בכל אשר להם ... (יב-ז)

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON MIDDOS TOVOS FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R' GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

דרגה יתירה

Everything in life is orchestrated by *Hashem* and there is a great lesson to be learned from even the smallest or slightest action. If we are running late, or ahead of schedule - there is a reason for it. WE may not know the reason but *Hashem* certainly does! In fact, this is a very important idea that can be learned from this week’s *parsha* regarding Korach.

In *Pirkei Avos* we are taught, “*Al Tistakel b’kan kan, ela b’ma sheyesh bo.*” Don’t look at the container, the outer wrapping, but rather what is inside! In English the expression goes: “Don’t judge a book by its cover!” Sometimes on the outside, something or someone looks so beautiful and special. But that is not what counts. It is what is inside, the *pnimiyus* that is important. If the *pnimiyus* of something is rotten, then it makes no difference how great it looks on the outside.

Now let’s examine the man who is Korach. Korach looked very holy. He had a long white beard. He was a huge *Talmid Chacham* and his outer appearance was very impressive. He was strong, he was wealthy, and if you judged him by his externals, you would say, “Wow, Korach is a great man.”

But Korach wound up being swallowed up by the earth, because inside Korach was rotten. His arrogance destroyed him and ALL of his followers. The good *middos* and humility of a person reflect their *pnimiyus*, and that is truly what counts.

The lesson we must learn from him is that we are all living in a very superficial world where people are more into looking good than being good. But the *parsha* of Korach comes to shake us up and tell us in no uncertain terms that what is truly important in the eyes of *Hashem* is to be good and humble on the inside. A person has to make sure that his focus is on his *pnimiyus* and not on his *chitzoniyyus*, because if the *pnimiyus* is salty, no matter how beautiful the *babka* looks on the outside, it is inedible and will wind up in the ground ... just like Korach!