

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmani zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



תשפ"ה Korach

• Zera Shimshon - the Limud that brings Yeshuos •

ליל 348

אמרות שמשון

What Korach's Jealousy Was Really All About

The Parsha begins with Korach gathering an assembly to rise up against Moshe and Aharon, and tells us as follows.

וַיִּקְהֲלוּ עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב לָכֶם כִּי כָל הָעֵדָה כָּלֶם קְדָשִׁים וּבְתוֹכָם ה' וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל קָהָל ה' (טז ג):

- They gathered together against Moshe and against Aharon and said to them, "It is much for you! For the entire assembly, all of them, are holy and Hashem is among them, so why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem?"

After the ground opened up and swallowed Korach and his family, and the fire broke out and burned Korach's assembly, the Jews complained to Moshe and Aharon telling them that it was them who caused Korach and his people to die. As a punishment for that, a plague broke out and killed many Jews. Following the Jews' complaints and the subsequent plague, Hashem wanted to demonstrate to the Jews that it wasn't Moshe and Aharon who chose themselves, rather it was He, Hashem, who chose them, and He thus commanded Moshe to do as follows.

דבר אל בני ישראל וקח מאתם מטה מטה אב וכו' איש את שמו תכתב על מטהו. ושם אהרן תכתב על מטה לוי וכו' והיה האיש אשר אבחר בו מטרו יפרח והשכתי את תלנות בני ישראל

אשר הם מלינים עליכם. וכו' והנה פרח מטה אהרן לבית לוי ויצא פרח ויצץ *Speak to the Children of Israel and take from them one staff for each father's house... each man's name shall you inscribe on his staff. And the name of Aharon you shall inscribe on the staff of Levi... It shall be that the man whom I shall choose, his staff will blossom; and I shall thus subside from upon Me the complaints of the Children of Israel, which they complain against you... And behold! The staff of Aharon of the tribe of Levi had blossomed; it brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and developed almonds.*

The Sefer Zera Shimshon quotes a Midrash that says that the blossoms

were inferring to Hashem's choosing of the children of Aharon, while the buds which sprouted were inferring to Hashem's choosing of Aharon himself. This would seem superfluous, for we don't find Korach's arguments directed towards Aharon's children but rather towards Aharon himself, and therefore confirming Aharon's status would have been sufficient. Furthermore, even if we were to understand Korach's arguments to be directed towards Aharon's children as well, nevertheless it still would seem out of place to confirm the status of Aharon's children even before confirming the status of Aharon himself, being that all that Korach clearly stated in his argument was Aharon himself.

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We can explain that there was an inherent difference between what Korach saw as 'Moshe taking the royalty for himself', and what he saw as 'Moshe taking the Kehunah for his brother Aharon'. For in regards to royalty, the only Jewish lineage of royalty is that of the tribe of Yehuda. Royalty of any other tribe isn't a lineage, and thus its kingship would only be passed down to the king's son if he is fit and worthy to rule, otherwise the kingship would go to another who is indeed worthy of it. Therefore, when Moshe 'took the royalty for himself', it wasn't a lineage of royalty that he took, rather he merely took royalty for himself alone, for his son would need to earn the kingship anew if he would want to rule after his father. Yet in regards to Kehunah it isn't so, for Kehunah definitely is a lineage and a consequential inheritance, whereas

each Kohen doesn't need to take the Kehunah anew, rather if his father is a kohen he will naturally be a kohen as well. Therefore, when Moshe chose the priesthood for Aharon, it wasn't Aharon alone to whom he gave the Kehunah, rather he was essentially giving it to all the coming generations of Aharon, as well.

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Accordingly, we can explain that It wasn't so much that Korach was envious of the royalty and priesthood that Moshe took for himself and for his brother Aharon. What really caught his envy was the lineage of priesthood that Moshe gave to

הוצאת הגליון והפצתו לזכות

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האשה החשובה מרת רבקה בתיה בן מוה"ר אביגדור ע"ה פרענקל נפטרה ביום כ' תמוז תשע"ח ח.נ.צ.ב.ח.

הוקדש על ידי חתנה ובתה הרבני מוה"ר זלמן לייב חונתנו קטיל ברכת חיים ויחיו

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Aharon; that was something that made Korach very jealous and resentful. Thus, although indeed Korach never specifically mentioned Aharon's children, nevertheless it was predominantly Aharon's children's getting the Kehunah that Korach complained about, and which caused him to do what he ultimately did.

Consequently, when Hashem wanted to defuse Korach's arguments, He specifically inferred to Aharon's children being chosen for the Kehunah, even before inferring to Aharon's own Kehunah, for it was indeed Aharon's children which Korach was primarily upset about.

זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ב

AVOT SHIMSHON • PIRKEI AVOT

Chapter 4 Mishna 4

With Hope Placed in the Worm

Rabbi Levitas, a man of Yavneh, says: "Be exceedingly humble of spirit, for the hope of man is the worm."

We must understand what the Tanna meant by the phrase "the hope of man is the worm," for the heart of every person always hopes and longs for good things and consolation. So who is it that hopes for something bad (which is what the worm seems to represent in the *Mishnah*)?

This can be explained based on what another Tanna said (*Avot* 3:1): "[Man, reflect,] where are you headed? To a place of dust, worms (*rimah*), and maggots (*tola'ah*).]" The commentators explained that the worm (*rimah*) and the maggot (*tola'ah*) are two distinct things: the worm appears before the flesh begins to decay, and the maggot comes afterward, once the flesh has already decomposed (see *Siftei Kohen*, *Parashat Beshalach*, under "Vayanichu").

The Talmud (*Shabbat* 152b) also mentions that a person who harbors envy in his heart — his bones rot after death; but one who has no envy — his bones remain intact. Nonetheless, the Tosafot (*Bava Batra* 17a, under "Shiv'a") wrote that although the maggot may not affect him, hardly anyone is spared from the worm.

Now, one who is humble certainly has no envy at all. Therefore, his bones will endure and only the worm — not the maggot — will have any effect on him, and based on his spiritual level, it's possible he won't even feel it. So the Tanna's intention in saying "the hope of man is the worm" is not to imply that man's hope is for something bad, but on the contrary — it is a positive hope: that his final fate will be only the worm and not the maggot. Hence, he taught that since every person hopes that only the worm will affect his bones and not the maggot, he must be humble of spirit, for through that he will merit that his bones remain whole and not be consumed by the maggot.



Chapter 4 Mishna 8

Well-Deserved Honor

Rabbi Yose says: "Anyone who honors the Torah — his body is honored by people; and one who disgraces the Torah — his body is disgraced by people."

We must understand what the Tanna comes to teach us by repeating his words, for it's obvious that someone who does not honor the Torah will not be honored by others. Why, then, did he say "his body is honored" and not simply "he is honored"? Additionally, we must examine why he said "his body is honored by people" and not "among people."

This can be explained based on what the *Poskim* (halachic authorities) wrote (*Yoreh De'ah* 244:12): that one is obligated to rise before a person who performs good deeds. It is also ruled (*Yoreh De'ah* 243:6) that it is forbidden to make use of someone who studies *halachot* (Torah laws). Based on these principles, the Tanna teaches us two things.

First, he said: "Anyone who honors the Torah," that is, one who performs good deeds — even if he is not a Torah scholar — "his body is honored by people", meaning others may not use his body for labor or tasks, just as it is forbidden to make use of one who studies *halachot*. That is why the Tanna precisely stated "his body is honored by people" — because using his body is forbidden, and everyone will regard him as someone above them.

Secondly, he added: "One who disgraces the Torah — his body is disgraced", to teach us a novel idea: even if he is a Torah scholar, if he disgraces the Torah, his body becomes *chol* (חול) mundane, devoid of sanctity), as Rashi explains, and others may use him freely without any prohibition. For the Talmud (*Yoma* 72b) says: "Any Torah scholar whose inside does not match his outside is not a true scholar and is called an abomination."

Published and distributed by The International Organization to Disseminate the Works of The Zera Shimshon
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