

In this week's *Parashah*, we read about Korach's rebellion. Moshe's first reaction to the rebellion is to tell Korach (16:5), "In the morning *Hashem* will make known the one who is His own and the holy one." Why did Moshe tell Korach to wait for the morning?

R' Avraham David Wahrman z"l (1771-1840; rabbi of Buchach, Poland; prolific author) explains: We read (*Eichah* 3:23), "New every morning, great is Your *Emunah* / faithfulness." The light of morning is associated with *Emunah* because it symbolizes our waiting with faith for dark times to pass. We read further (*Tehilim* 101:6), "My eyes are upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with Me." Only those who are "faithful," who possess *Emunah*, can dwell with *Hashem* and know His secrets.

Why is this so? R' Moshe ben Nachman z"l (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) teaches that *Emunah* / faith in *Hashem* is an abstract concept whose concrete manifestation is *Bitachon* / placing one's trust in *Hashem*. Trusting in *Hashem* necessarily means being content with one's lot, for one recognizes that he can only have what *Hashem* has decreed he will have, and he cannot have that which *Hashem* has decreed he will not have. *Bitachon* thus enables one to be a "faithful" friend, for a person who possesses *Bitachon* is never jealous. Moshe told Korach to wait for morning because Moshe hoped that reflecting upon the "morning" would lead Korach to revisit his jealousy and repent. (*Machazeh Avraham*)

Shabbat

"And the seventh day is *Shabbat* for *Hashem*, your *Elokim* . . ." (*Shmot* 20:10)

R' Aharon Lewin z"l *Hy"d* (the *Reisher Rav*; killed in the Holocaust) writes: The reason the Torah adds the words "to *Hashem*, your *Elokim*" is to teach that *Shabbat* is not merely a day of rest from work. All week long, a person toils to support his family and does not have time for the more frivolous things in life. One might have thought, therefore, that the Day of Rest is a time to engage in such pursuits. No, says the Torah, the seventh day is *Shabbat* for *Hashem*--a time to pursue the spiritual perfection one does not have time for during the workweek.

R' Lewin continues: We read (*Yeshayah* 56:2), "Praiseworthy is the man who does this and the person who grasps it tightly--who guards the *Shabbat* against desecration and guards his hand against doing any evil." The prophet praises a person who not only observes *Shabbat*, but also takes care not to wile away the day in improper behavior. This, writes R' Lewin, is also the meaning of the *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 118a): "Whoever observes *Shabbat K'hilchato* / as it was meant to be observed has all of his sins forgiven." The *Gemara* refers to not just observing *Shabbat* in a technical way, but observing it as it was meant to be observed.

Midrash Rabbah makes a startling statement: "You might have thought that I, *Hashem*, gave you *Shabbat* to your detriment. No! I gave it to you for your benefit!" R' Lewin explains that this *Midrash* is teaching the same idea: *Shabbat* was not given to us as a day to get ourselves in trouble, but rather as a day to improve ourselves. (*Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun: Shmot* 167)

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Chayim ben Harav Avraham Mordechai a"h (9 Tammuz)

“Kel, the Elokim of the winds for all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with the entire assembly?” (16:22)

R' Menachem Mendel Stern z"l (1759-1834; rabbi of Sighet, Hungary) explains Moshe's prayer: *Hashem*, when You make storms with strong winds, You limit them so they do not destroy the world. If You do that for the nations of the world, who were created solely to facilitate *Bnei Yisrael's* service of *Hashem*, certainly You should not destroy *Bnei Yisrael!*

(*Derech Emunah*)

“They and all that was theirs descended alive to the pit...” (16:33)

R' Chaim Tirer z"l (1760-1818; rabbi of Czernowitz, Bukovina) writes: The verse is informing us that not only did Korach and those associated with him descend to the depths of *Gehinnom* alive, even their belongings fell that great distance without breaking--contrary to what one would expect consistent with the laws of nature. In this way, *Hashem* demonstrated that not only does He have great power, He also is great in his ability to restrain His power. This was *Middah-K'negged-Middah* / a measure-for-measure response to Korach. [Apparently, R' Tirer means that *Hashem* restrained His power in response to Korach's argument that all of the Jewish People are holy and, therefore, they do not need a leader such as Moshe. *Middah-K'negged-Middah Hashem* taught them a lesson about reining in their potential--in this case, by accepting a leader even when they think they do not need one.]

(*Be'er Mayim Chaim*)

Pirkei Avot

“Rabbi Elazar Ha'kappar says: 'Jealousy, desire, and honor remove a man from the world.'” (Chapter 5)

R' Gedaliah Silverstone z"l (1871-1944; rabbi in Belfast, Ireland and Washington, D.C.) writes: The traits listed here are three bad characteristics that ultimately bury those who possess them. It is true, he continues, that each of these traits can have a positive manifestation. Regarding “jealousy” we read (*Mishlei* 23:17), “Let your heart not envy sinners, rather [envy] those who revere *Hashem* all day.” When we use it as a tool for attaining reverence of *Hashem*, jealousy is a good thing. Regarding “desire” we read (*Tehilim* 42:3), “My soul thirsts for *Elokim*, for the living *Kel*--when shall I come and appear before *Elokim*?” And, regarding “honor” we read (*Mishlei* 3:35), “The wise inherit honor and fools generate disgrace.”

R' Silverstone explains: When these traits are used in the service of *Hashem*, they can indeed be good. But, when personal “desire” gets in the middle of them, as in the wording of our *Mishnah*, they lead a person down the road to destruction.

(*Lev Avot*)

“Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehat son of Levi separated himself...” (16:1)

Rashi z"l comments: The verse does not, however, mention Levi being “the son of Yaakov,” because Yaakov offered a prayer that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach's quarrels, as it says (*Bereishit* 49:6), “With their assembly let my honor not be united.” [Until here from *Rashi*]

R' Menachem Mendel Hager z"l (*Rebbe* of Kosov; died 1825) writes: We read in *Tehilim* (3:1), “A song by David, as he fled from Avshalom his son.” The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 7b) asks: Given that King David was fleeing from his son Avshalom, should it not say, instead of “A song”--“A lamentation by David”? The *Gemara* answers that King David was praising *Hashem* that the punishment for his sins involved being pursued by his own son, who surely would show him mercy if he caught him, rather than by a renegade slave, who would not be likely to show King David the same mercy. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Hager suggests another answer to the *Gemara's* question: When King David saw Avshalom's rebellious nature, he feared that his son had inherited that nature from him. King David then examined his own deeds with a fine-tooth comb and concluded that Avshalom's rebelliousness was not due to any character flaw on his (David's) part. Having thus “fled” from Avshalom, he gave praise to *Hashem*.

This, suggests R' Hager, is the meaning of Yaakov's prayer that his name not be connected with Korach's quarrels. Yaakov was praying that he be saved from the negative character traits that lead to *Machloket* / being involved in disputes, so that Korach's quarrels could not be associated with, or blamed on, his (Yaakov's) character.

(*Ahavat Shalom*)

“For the entire assembly--all of them--are holy and Hashem is among them; why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem? (16:3)

R' Eliezer Dovid Gruenwald z"l (1867-1928; rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* in Oyber Visheve, Hungary and other towns) writes: Korach was asserting that Moshe was not special in his own right; rather, *Hashem* had chosen Moshe as a representative of *Bnei Yisrael* in their merit, not his own.

This, continues R' Gruenwald, is the same mistake *Bnei Yisrael* made leading up to the creation of the Golden Calf. They said (*Shmot* 32:1), “This man Moshe, who brought us up from the land of Egypt--we do not know what was with him!” They meant: We do not know what was so special about him. This is why our Sages say that the *Parah Adumah* / red heifer atoned for the sin of the Golden Calf. *Parah Adumah* is a “*Chok*” / a *Mitzvah* whose logic we cannot understand, and it teaches us that there are truths in this world that are beyond our perception or understanding.

(*Keren Le'Dovid*)