



PARSHAS KORACH & CHODESH TAMUZ

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Korach will Blossom

The Parallel of Moshe's Rebuke to Korach and him being Denied Entry into Eretz Yisrael

Moshe reprimanded Korach and his followers for not being content in their role as Levites and demanding to offer Ketores like Aharon the Kohen Gadol. He told them, "רב לכם", 'Your lot is very great.' The role you were given to fill is very important; you have no need to aspire to something that you were not destined for.

The Gemara¹ relates that Moshe Rabbeinu was denied entry into Eretz Yisrael with these same words - "רב לך", 'Your lot is very great.' You have no need to enter Eretz Yisrael.

Moshe Rabbeinu did not sin by reproaching Korach and his followers; to the contrary, he fulfilled the mitzvah of giving rebuke to a sinner. Why should the words he used to fulfill the mitzvah of rebuking a sinner be used against him?

Korach's Motive in his Stand Against Moshe

The Arizal paints a completely different picture of Korach than the one we are used to. Korach was a great man, he reveals, and his intent in fighting against Moshe was for the sake of Heaven.

Tzaddikim have one passion that is so strong that they are sometimes blinded by it and err. This is their deep desire – לתקן עולם במלכות שכי - that the kingship of Hashem should be revealed in this world with the ushering in of the era of Mashiach.

The world, in its current state of imperfection, must be ruled according to the lenient guidelines of Chesed – loving-kindness. Would the world be ruled according to the dictates of Din - stringent judgment - it would be destroyed due to the punishment demanded by Din.

However, when Mashiach will arrive, the world will be perfect and there will be no blemish in mankind. The world will flourish even under the uncompromising demands of the attribute of Din.

Today, it is incumbent to have Din submit to Chesed so that there should not be suffering and punishment.

Kohanim are people of Chesed, Levites are people of Din. Therefore, in the Temple, the role of the Levi was one of servicing the Kohen. Din submitted to Chesed.

However, that is only as of now. When Mashiach will come, Din will be more important and the Levites will therefore assume leading roles in the Temple. Korach, in his great desire to bring the days of Mashiach, wanted that - as a Levi - he should serve as the Kohen Gadol.

In his great desire that Hashem reign supreme on this world, Korach erred in his assessment of the situation. The world at that point was not yet ready for Mashiach.

The Mitzvah of Waiting for Mashiach

There are ninety-five verses in the parsha of Korach, which are hinted to in the mnemonic of the name of the Prophet Daniel which is gematria (numerically equal to) ninety-five.

The prophecies of Daniel contain dates when the redemption could take place. However, none of the dates mentioned in the book of Daniel are the final date by when Mashiach must already be here. It is only *very probable* that Mashiach will appear on these dates.

The date upon which Mashiach will definitely arrive remained unknown even to the Prophet Daniel himself, the master of the dates of redemption. He asked the angel, "When is the date that we can only wonder about?" He was answered, "סתומים וחתומים הדברים, קץ הפלאות - the date that we can only wonder about?" He was answered, "עד עת קץ", 'These things are hidden and concealed until the time of the end [of exile].'

At the end of his work, Daniel inserted the phrase which is his final message: "אשרי" 'Fortunate are those who wait; they will attain.' The will of Hashem is that we wait and anticipate the redemption. Extreme patience is necessary; it is forbidden to hasten the end of exile through any means other than prayer, studying Torah and acts of kindness².

Korach erred in that he did not wait; as if he ate an unripe fruit and became sick. The mnemonic hints to the number of verses in this week's parsha with the name of the prophet who taught us that we have to wait patiently for the redemption. It will come; but only in its right time, not earlier.

The Purpose of the Delaying of the Redemption

Mashiach's arrival is postponed because no rectification will be possible after his arrival. Any soul that is not ready before Mashiach's arrival will not be part of the redemption. Because Hashem promised that no soul will be lost to the Jewish people, Mashiach cannot arrive until every last soul is ready. The wondrous plans of Hashem are orchestrated so that every soul will be rectified in time and included in the redemption.

Moshe Rabbeinu told Korach and his fellow Levites, "רב לכם", you are very great. It is due to your greatness - you are from the attribute of Din which can only reign during the era of Mashiach - that you must now be subservient to the Kohanim and cannot be the leaders. If you lead now, i.e. Mashiach arrives now, many souls will be lost.

Had Moshe entered Eretz Yisrael, the world would have immediately achieved its perfected state and the era of Mashiach would have commenced. However, many souls, including those of the generation of the wilderness, would have been lost.

Hashem responded to Moshe's supplication that he be allowed to enter the land, using the same reasoning Moshe attempted to persuade Korach with. "רב לך" - you are too great for this era. Millennium and centuries would have to pass before all souls will be rectified. The redemption has to wait.

The Entire Congregation is Holy!

One of Korach's complaints against the leadership of Moshe was, 'Why do you raise yourself above the congregation? They are all holy to Hashem!'

During the era of the future redemption, the Jewish people will study Torah directly from Hashem and the teacher-student relationship will be abolished. Yirmiyahu predicted this era, "נִתְּתִי אֶת-תּוֹרַתִי בְּקִרְבָּם וְעַל-לִבָּם אֶכְתְּבֶנָּה ... וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּע אֶת-ה' כִּי-נִתְּתִי אֶת-תּוֹרַתִי בְּקִרְבָּם וְעַל-לִבָּם אֶכְתְּבֶנָּה ... וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת-אָחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּע אֶת-ה' כִּי-נִתְּתִי אֶת-תּוֹרַתִי בְּקִרְבָּם וְעַל-לִבָּם אֶכְתְּבֶנָּה" ³ 'I will put the Torah within them, and upon their hearts I will write it ... a man will no longer teach his friend and a man his brother saying, 'Know Hashem,' because

they will all know Me, from their smallest to their greatest.' Korach wanted to hasten the era of the redemption when the teacher-student relationship will be abolished.

He also fought against the idea of Shabbos⁴. When Mashiach will come, it will be Shabbos a whole week. Korach wanted every day to be Shabbos, not just the seventh day of the week.

The Crucial Error of Korach

Rabbi Akiva perceived deeper thoughts of Torah than Moshe Rabbeinu did. When Moshe ascended to Heaven, he perceived a vision of Rabbi Akiva teaching his students wondrous insights on the crowns that adorn the letters of the Torah. These were so profound that Moshe did not grasp them and was disheartened.

He then heard one of the students asking, "From where does the Rebbe know these insights?" Rabbi Akiva responded, "This is the law we received from Moshe from Sinai." Hearing this, Moshe was reassured.

In the Gemara⁵, Rabbi Akiva is referred to as Korach. Like Rabbi Akiva, Korach understood concepts of Torah that even Moshe did not and therefore felt confident disregarding his authority.

In doing so, he made a pivotal error. He did not understand, as Rabbi Akiva did, that all of his greatness in Torah was only achieved through the channel of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Indeed, the Midrash questions, 'Why did Korach, who was so wise, and who was from those that carried the Ark, commit this imprudent act?'

As a carrier of the Holy Ark, Korach knew that those that carried the Ark did not strain under its weight. To the contrary, the Ark carried its bearers.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the Holy Ark of the Jewish people. Just as the Ark contained the Tablets and the Torah scroll, so was Moshe the embodiment of Torah. Any insight of Torah an individual perceived was channeled to him through Moshe. Even those that seemed greater than Moshe, i.e. as if they were his bearers, were really carried by Moshe – he was the source of their greatness.

Korach's failure to subjugate himself to the tzaddik of his generation was his crucial mistake.

Tamuz and Korach

Korach will not forever be sunk beneath the ground; he will flourish once again. His future is hinted at in the psalm of Shabbos which states, "צדיק כתמר יפרח", 'The tzaddik will blossom like a date palm.' The last letters of this phrase is קרח. With the coming of the era of Mashiach, the יום שכולו שבת, day that is all Shabbos, Korach will blossom forth from the ground where he was sucked into, and "בחצרות אלקנו יפרחו" – in the courtyard of our G-d he will flower⁶.

Just as Korach was buried underground, so is Tamuz a time that is very low. It was in Tamuz that the gates of Yerushalayim and the Bais HaMikdash were swallowed up in the earth. Tamuz is a month of grief and sorrow.

However - like Korach - Tamuz will once again blossom with the coming of Mashiach.

The Transformation of Tamuz

The four letters of Hashem's name, ק, ו, ק, י,¹ can be arranged in twelve different orders. Each of these arrangements is hinted at in a different verse of scripture. When the name of Hashem is arranged straightforwardly, it is a sign of Chesed. When it is hinted at in the beginning of the words, it is also a sign of Chesed. The opposite is also true; the name of Hashem backwards, and also when it is hinted at in the end of the words, is a sign of Din.

Each of the twelve months of the year corresponds to a different one of these twelve arrangements. The arrangement of Tamuz is "וכל זה איננו שוה לי"⁷, which is a verse from Megillas Esther. The month of Tamuz is one of strong Din. The arrangement of Tamuz contains the letters of Hashem's name backwards and hinted at in the end of the words.

Tamuz is a very difficult time for the Jewish people. However, its arrangement is derived from the Megillah, a sefer which tells of a story of ונהפוך הוא - of the overturning of a bitter decree to a sweet one. The date that was to be the demise and destruction of the Jewish people was transformed into a victory over their enemies.

This hints to the essence of Tamuz. Now it is a bitter month, but in the future it will be sweet.

Continuing its description of Korach's future, the chapter of Shabbos concludes, "להגיד" "כי ישר ה'" 'To inform that [the arrangement of the name of] Hashem is straightforward.' The arrangement of Tamuz, the month of Korach, will not forever be backwards. Together with Korach, Tamuz will be transformed.

¹ סוטה י"ג ע"ב

² סוף מסכת כתובות

³ לא:לב, לג

⁴ זוהר

⁵ בכורות נ"ה ע"א

⁶ ארז"ל

⁷ אסתר ה:יג

¹ The ק is instead of the ה of the name of Hashem. This is done in order to avoid writing this supremely holy name of G-d.