

Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Korach

Smarter Than Smart

How could Korach start an uprising against Moshe Rabbeinu? Who would join him? They would kill him on the spot. Was he a fool? The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that Korach was a very smart person. His plan was carefully thought out and executed. The verse relates his lineage, "Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehas, the son of Levi" (Bamidbar 16:1). Yitzhar was the oldest son of Kehas. The two younger sons of Kehas would not have the *chutzpah* to speak against him because his father was the oldest. Kehas was the most prominent of the three sons of Levi. They tended to the holiest part of the Mishkan. Korach himself was one of the bearers of the *Aron Kodesh* (Holy Ark). The other two sons would not dare to speak out against him. Levi was the most distinguished tribe. No one would contradict them in front of Moshe Rabbeinu.

"Korach took (himself) along with Dasan and Aviram" (Bamidbar 16:1). They were the leaders of the tribe of Reuven, Yaakov's firstborn son. Korach cleverly gathered all of this prestige on his side and stood before Moshe Rabbeinu. However, he was so smart that he outsmarted himself. "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem" (Devarim 18:13). The Pele Yoatz explains that a person should not resort to trickery and corruption to get his way. Rather, he should walk in perfect faith with Hashem.

Kindertlach . . .

Don't outsmart yourselves. "I know that I must be in school on time. However, if I sleep 30 minutes late, I can skip parts of the morning prayers, gulp down breakfast, say Bircas HaMazone while I am running to school, and sneak in the back way. If I get caught, I can use the note that my mother wrote last week." You may think that you are so smart because you thought out such a clever plan. However, is this the right way to go to school? Hashem wants us to do things the straight way. Use your intelligence for learning Torah, not to outsmart the rules.

"Boruch Atto Hashem"

"Class, I have a question for you. Which words do we say at least 100 times each day?"

"Boruch Atto Hashem."

"Correct Dovie! What do these words mean?"

"Blessed are You, Hashem."

"Very good Aharon. Now, what does the word 'blessed' mean?"

"Something that is blessed gets bigger or better. The verses of 'bracha' in parashas Ki Savo (Devarim 28:4-6) detail this. 'Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, and the fruit of your animals, the offspring of your cattle, and the young of your flock. Blessed shall be your fruit basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.'"

"Excellent Gedalia! A blessing is an increase in one's *ruchnius* (spirituality) and/or *gashmius* (physicality). When we bless someone, we request that they will grow. This raises a puzzling question. The Torah commands us to bless Hashem, as the verse states, 'You will eat, be satisfied, and bless Hashem your G-d' (Devarim 8:10). What can we possibly add to the Almighty, Who is perfect in every way? He can not possibly grow any more flawless than perfection. Furthermore, Hashem Himself asked Rebbe Yishmael ben Alisha to bless Him (Berachos 7a)! We



ourselves bless our Creator 100 times each day. What are we adding to His perfection?"

"Rebbe Yishmael's bracha asked Hashem to act with *rachmonus* (mercy) towards His children and not judge them harshly. Perhaps our blessing Hashem is really a request for compassion which is a bracha for us."

"Fantastic, Boruch! You are thinking along the same lines as the *Rashba*, in his commentary to the gemora in Brachos. He relates that our prayers beseech Hashem to judge us kindly, overcome His anger and act with *rachmonus*. Therefore, every time that we say, 'Boruch Atto Hashem' we are asking Him to have mercy and bless us with growth.*

"Now class, I must tell you that there is another explanation to these words. Avudraham and others relate that 'Boruch' is a description of one of Hashem's *middos* (traits). He is 'Boruch' – the source of all blessing. When we say the words, 'Boruch Atto Hashem' we identify Him as the source of all the blessing that we receive. This is the opinion of

most of the *Rishonim*, and it the *poshut p'shat* (simple explanation of the words).

"Another *peirush* of the word 'boruch' is elucidated by the siddur Ohr HaChama. He cites the opinion of the Sefer HaBahir that 'Boruch' is from the word 'berech' – the knee. We must bend the knee in subjugation to the Almighty. When we say, 'Boruch Atto Hashem', we identify Him as the One to Whom all knees bend. We say this three times a day in the 'Aleinu' prayer. 'To You every knee must bend; every tongue must swear. Before You Hashem, our G-d they will bow and prostrate themselves.'"

"Wow! What a powerful statement! I never realized the impact that my words can have."

"Now, class, let us complete the end of the phrase. The name of Hashem is not said; rather He is referred to with the name of 'Adnus' – the Master. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 5) relates the *kavannah* that we should have when pronouncing the Name. The first *kavannah* is 'Adnus' – He is the Master – the Ruler of everyone and everything. Additionally, the four letters of the Name refer to His Eternity – He was, He is, and He will always be.

"And so, we have learned the explanation of the beginning of our *brachos*. Now is the time class, to begin taking the time to think about the meaning of the words that you say at least 100 times each day. 'Boruch Atto Hashem' – our knees bend to the Source of all blessing! Who is He? Our Master Who is eternal. May He have *rachmonus* upon us and send down bracha to His children."

"Amen!"

Kindertlach . . .

It is so easy to run thru the words, 'Boruch Atto Hashem'. We say them so many times. Stop for a moment and think what they mean. We identify Hashem as the source of all blessing. All of the chochma (wisdom), health, parnassa (livelihood), children, and salvations come from Him. We are speaking directly to the Master of the universe, Who is eternal. He is the One Who can help us with everything. Secondly, we ask Him to have rachmonus upon us. If left solely to our merits, who knows what we would receive? Therefore, we ask Him not to judge us strictly, rather to act mercifully and bless us. Thirdly, we subjugate ourselves by acknowledging that He is the One to Whom all knees must bend. Kinderlach, when we stand nobly and humbly in prayer, we can influence Hashem's mercy and bring blessing down to all Klal Yisrael and ourselves.

*See Nefesh HaChaim Shaar 2, Chapter 2 for further explanation.

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