



דרכים בפרשה

קרח



ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אליאב ואון בן פלת בני ראובן

And Korach son of Yitzhar son of Kehas son of Levi separated himself, with Dasan and Aviram sons of Eliav and On son of Peles, the offspring of Reuvain (16:1)

Rav Hai Gaon, who according to Rav Dessler was the greatest of the geonim, writes in his *Tshuvos (Respona 13)* the following parable.

There is a story about a lion who wanted to eat a fox for his dinner. The fox said to the lion: "What good can I be to you? I will show you a fat person whom you can kill and you will have plenty to eat." There was a pit covered with branches and grass and behind it sat the man. Upon seeing the man, the lion told the fox that he is scared that the man will cause him trouble. The fox responded: "Nothing will happen to you or your son. Maybe your grandson will suffer for it, but until then, there is plenty of time." With his eyes on the "food", no further persuasion was necessary. The lion ran towards the man and fell into the pit, and thus was trapped. The lion screamed out to the fox: "Didn't you promise that punishment will only come to my grandson?" The fox responded, "Perhaps your grandfather did something and now you are paying the price for it." "Is that fair?" asked the lion. "The father eats sour grapes and the children's teeth ache?" The fox

replied: "So why didn't *you* think of that before?" Rav Hai Gaon concludes: "*How much mussar there is in this parable!*"

Obviously, this is a lot more than just a children's story. After all, it made it into Rav Hai Gaon's *Tshuvos*. From our *parsha*, we can find at least two lessons using this parable.

Rav Dessler (Michtav M'Eliahu 4) connects this to our *parsha* as follows: Korach was from the greatest in the generation. He practically had it all. He had many followers and was the wealthiest man alive. Yet, just like the lion in the *mashal*, he saw a bigger prize, and suddenly was not happy with what he already had.

Korach is the perfect example of what Rav Elazar Hakappar meant when he stated, (Avos 4:28) **הקנאה והתאוה והכבוד, מוציאין את האדם מן העולם**

There is another beautiful explanation of Rav Hai Gaon's *mashul* that we can offer based on a vort from Maran Harav Shach *zt"l*.

Rashi explains that Korach's lineage was not traced back one more generation because

Yaakov prayed that he not be mentioned with them. What difference would it have made? Was Yaakov merely concerned for his reputation?

The Rambam in *Hilchos Tshuva* (3:2) tells us that a person's judgment is determined by weighing his merits against his transgressions. Nevertheless, only HaShem knows how to assign deeds their proper weight. Therefore, a person must be very careful about his performance of every action.

Maran Harav Shach *zt"l* gives an example of being taken to task for what one thought may have been a mitzvah. A person might be punished for his grandson not keeping shabbos properly, for if he had done a better job educating his own child, the latter may have been more successful in raising his own children.

When Yaakov asked that his name not be mentioned in connection with Korach, he was really asking that the *aveiros* of Korach not be added to his balance sheet. Indeed, the Torah left out Yaakov's name because Yaakov's *chinuch* of his children was as perfect as possible.

In light of Rav Hai Gaon's *mashal*, we understand this very clearly. We must be careful with each and every step we take because we are affecting not just ourselves but generations.

Similarly, there is a well-known vort that explains why Noach received a bite for

arriving late to feed the lion. This seems rather harsh for Noach who was busy with this task 24/7 for an entire year. Was it so bad that he was a few moments late?

Some understand that because this was exactly what HaShem had wanted from him at that moment, it was to be viewed as the most important task in the world. This is indeed a great lesson for all of us as there is truly never a menial task from Hashem. Whatever we are engaged in at that very moment should be performed to the fullest.

However, the Baalei Mussar point out that Noach's responsibility was indeed so much greater than just feeding the animals in the *taiva*. He was responsible for the perpetuation of the species. These were the last two lions left, and the last of every species. If he failed to care for them properly, they would become extinct. The lion's bite reminded Noach of that deeper responsibility.

There may be many other "children" in the world, and perhaps even within the same family, but a parent must understand that each and every child represents the beginning of many future generations.

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפּעל



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