

Sefer Bamidbar

THE RAHMANI FAMILY EDITION

FOR THE HATZLACHA, HEALTH, AND HAPPINESS
OF OUR FAMILY AND ALL KLAL YISROEL

פרשת קרח

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Garden of Positive Thought

Contents:

Part I. The Garden - 1

Part II. Korach's Garden - 4

Part III. Your Garden - 7

Part I. The Garden

The Neglected Field

In Mishlei perek chaf daled, possuk lamed, Shlomo Hamelech tells us a short story: עַל שִׁדָּה אִישׁ – I once passed by the field of a lazy man, עָצַל עֲבָדִי – I once passed by the field of a lazy man, וְעַל בָּרִם אָרֶם חָסֵר לֵב – and he had a vineyard there too, this person, and I could tell that this fellow was lacking in his mind. It says *leiv* in the possuk and in *lashon kodesh* the word *leiv* means mind.

“Now, how did I know that the owner was an *atzel*; lazy, and a *chasar lev*; lacking the right kind of mind?” said Shlomo. וְהִנֵּה עֲלָה בְּלֹו קִמְשָׁנִים – behold, the entire field was overgrown with thistles,

– and brambles covered the entire surface. And not only were thorns and weeds growing in the field but וְגִרַּר אֲבָנֵי נְהֶרְסָה, the wall of stones surrounding the field had already begun to crumble.

Now, somebody else would have passed by and would have noticed that the owner is a negligent man and that's all; but Shlomo Hamelech knew that nothing happens in this world perchance. Nothing is random and if such a sight came to his attention, it meant that Hakodosh Boruch Hu was trying to teach him something. “It's *min hashomayim* that I took this route today,” said Shlomo. “Hakodosh Boruch Hu caused me to come across such a case in order that I should learn important lessons from it.”

Recipe for Disaster

And so, וְאֶחָדָה אֲנֹכִי, I looked into it. Now *echezeh* is different from *er'eh*. *Er'eh* means to see with your eyes what is superficial and apparent, but *echezeh* is a deeper insight – like *chazon* Yeshayahu, it's a *nevuah*. And so, אָשִׁית לְבִי – I put my mind to this incident, רָאִיתִי לְקַחְתִּי מוֹסֵר – I saw and I took instruction from it.

Now, the first lesson, that the owner of this field is a lazy fellow, that's simple. Because, said Shlomo, מְעַט שָׁנֹת, a little sleeping when you're supposed to be at work, מְעַט תְּנוּמוֹת, a little bit of slumbering; it means you take off from work and take a nap now and then, מְעַט חֲבֵק יָדַיִם לְשֹׁכֵב, putting your arms together and lying down for a rest, too much of that is a recipe for disaster.

It's like the man who has a sign on the shop door. There's a picture of a clock and it says “Will be back in 15 minutes.” Now anybody who means business shouldn't have such a sign. If you already

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have it you should take it down and forget about it – destroy it. Sometimes the shoe store or the *mocher sefarim*, the Hebrew book store, has such a sign. But you don't want to buy books every moment of the day and so just at the time when you have a few free minutes, let's say *bein hasedorim*, you come there and you find that sign, 'Will be back in 15 minutes.' So in the meantime you go back to the yeshiva and you sit down for a while. You come back twenty minutes later and the same sign is still waiting for you, 'Will be back in 15 minutes.'

The Unhappy Surprise

Now, nothing is wrong with taking a rest. But the man who is always seeking to evade his responsibilities, what is going to be the result of all of his excuses that he is tired and he'll do it later? **וְכָא מִתְהַלֵּךְ רִישָׁךְ** – your poverty will come like a *mishalech*. *Mishalech* means a vagabond. You know, when you meet a vagabond on the road, it's not such a happy experience. You're afraid of him; he might do something to you.

And so, a man who doesn't attend to his business, he doesn't manage his affairs, he'll encounter unhappy surprises in life. "You'll encounter poverty," Shlomo said, "like you encounter a bum on the street." That's the first *peirush*; the *possuk* is telling you that if you have a field or a shoe store or even if you're a *rebbe* in the yeshiva, whatever it is you're doing you have to be a hustler.

Cultivate Your Estate

But there's another explanation. Not that the first *pshat* is wrong but we're going to talk now about the other lesson – the more important lesson that Shlomo Hamelech learned when he saw the field. Shlomo said as follows: Every person in this world is endowed with another field – you have up here in your mind an estate given to you by Hashem for a purpose, and the purpose is to cultivate it, to cultivate it with good ideals and good attitudes.

Now you have to know something right away. If you'll just wait, if you'll just let your mind remain, don't think it will lay dormant, an empty field waiting for you to begin planting. Oh no! It will produce the things that grow naturally. And naturally means you'll have thorns and weeds. Even on a city street if you leave things alone, if traffic would stop for ten years, the whole street would begin to change. The weeds and grass would begin to sprout and trees would drop seeds into the cracks and new trees would begin to grow. It would lift up the sidewalk. In fifty years, it would be a jungle.

Now I understand that today the jungle is admired. The environmentalists love the forests, but you have to know that forests are good for snakes and bears, for chimpanzees. But despite all the propaganda, human beings must have cultivated land.

The Worst Tragedy

And so when Shlomo passed that overgrown field he reminded himself about this great function we have in this world. *Ra'isi* – I saw, *lakachti mussar* – and I took instruction from that. Shlomo was thinking, "A man with an uncultivated field like this, so you can be sure that just like his fields are neglected because of his laziness, his mind surely is neglected. After all, it's easier to plow a field of earth than the field up here and so if his field is full of thorns and brambles, so this lazy man's mind must be a wilderness too." That's why he called him an *adam chasar lev*, a man lacking in mind.

Now, when a man fails to grow fruits and vegetables in his garden, or he doesn't plant wheat in his fields, no question it's a big pity. After all, it's a shame to waste good real estate like that; he might even become poor because of his negligence. But you must know that if a man is poor in his mind, that's the worst of all tragedies. To not have *parnasah*, that's terrible; it's a big sin to be lazy and not fulfill your obligations in the *kesubah*. But after all there's always welfare; maybe you have a rich uncle who will bail you out – *something* you'll find.

But if you have a poor mind, nobody is going to save you.

A Field of Orchards

Now, when we talk about planting good things in our mind, about uprooting weeds and planting beautiful saplings, you have to know that there are very many different kinds of orchards a person can have up here. When you have such real estate you don't just grow grapes and you're finished. You have to plant cherries too. And apples and pears. The mind of a Jew has many compartments, many orchards, and each one has to be tended to with the utmost care.

There's one orchard of *ahavas Hashem* and another of *yiras Hashem*. There's an orchard of *Shas* and an orchard of *Chumash*. There's *bechina* – that means to see Hashem in the world around you – and there's *emunah*. You have to tend to your orchard of *bitachon* and to a separate orchard of *chesed*. There's very much cultivating to do. That's why you'll have to listen to these tapes for many years – not only me; you can go to better places too – but wherever you go, there's a lot of planting to do.

Root Out The Weeds

But one of the most important – and overlooked – orchards that a Jew must plant in his mind is the function of how to look favorably at your fellow Jews. It's a *mitzvah* of the Torah: **בְּצֶדֶק תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ**. It means that it's your Torah duty to form righteous opinions about your fellow *frum* Jew (Shavuos 30a).

Now don't think it's something you can ignore – whether you like it or not, your mind is always forming opinions of others. It can't be helped; you're always making judgements. A cow, *l'havdil*, is able to go through life without thinking, without judging; but if you're an *adam* then you're a judge – as soon as you see somebody, you're already forming opinions.

And so you have to get busy tending your orchard of *bitzedek tishpot amisecha* because if you don't labor in cultivating the orchard of *dan l'kaf zechus*, only weeds will grow there. All types of weeds; jealousy, anger, frustration, haughtiness and other things too. And once your mind is filled with weeds, *uva mishalech*, a vagabond might come along and grab you unexpectedly. You'd be surprised – the wrong seeds that grow wild in your mind might someday confront you with a *nisayon*; suddenly a test will come up and you're vulnerable – who knows what can happen *chas veshalom* because you're not prepared. Sometimes a person is ruined entirely in his *ruchniyus* – his entire life is ruined because of the poisonous seeds that slowly grew in his head.

The Weeds Take Over

I know a story. There was a *bochur* in our *yeshivah* who came from a very good home, very *frum* people. His father was a *rebbe* who had a *shtiebel*. He was a good *bochur* in learning – he had a beautiful orchard of exquisite *peiros* when it came to learning *Gemara* – but he didn't have an interest in cultivating the other orchards; when it came to studying *yiras shamayim* every day a half hour in *yeshivah*, he never bothered. He wasn't interested.

Well, when I left the *yeshiva* he also left and I lost track of him. Years later I hear he's out west someplace. Out west? He threw away his *yiddishkeit*. Ayy! Such a home! I left him a *bochur* from a *chassidishe* house. Now he's a psychologist and he is divested, he is *ois getun*. I was shocked! I knew him in the *yeshiva*. He was a good *bochur*.

What happened? He had never cultivated the garden of his mind! He wore a nice black velour hat but you can't rely on that – what matters most is what's under the hat. Unless you put something here in your garden and you cultivate it all the time you won't be ready for a *yom tzarah*, for the tests of life, and who knows what could happen?

Seeding The Weeds

In Mishlei (14:22) we read another *possuk* connected with this subject. The *possuk* is talking about the subject of thoughts and it states: **הֲלוֹא יִתְעוּ הַרְשֵׁי רָע** – *Won't they go lost, those who plow wrong thoughts into the field of the mind?* When people start thinking bad about others, when they like to see faults in other people, their thoughts are like seeds which will grow into bigger thoughts until eventually they'll go lost entirely.

Let's say there's somebody who sits in the *beis hakenesses* and talks and talks *lashon hara* on everybody – this person is this and that person is that. His head is full of suspicion about others. Everyone is wrong! He sits at home and talks with his wife *lashon hara* on everybody. Visitors come and when they leave they talk *lashon hara* on the visitors. He's always looking for faults.

So Hashem says: that's what you're looking for? You're looking to inject poison into your mind? *Haba letamei poschim lo*, I'll let you succeed. You'll succeed and your mind will become poisoned by the very worst kind of *rosh vela'anah*. You'll become better and better at finding faults in other people – the more a person looks for what's wrong in others, the more people will become worse and worse in his eyes, until *zis'u*, until he goes lost altogether.

Part II. Korach's Garden

The Great and Tragic Personality

It happened many times in our history to very great men. We'll take one example, from this week's parsha. Everybody remembers what happened to Korach, how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed him and he went lost forever.

It's a tragic story and we'll take the time to study it in some detail because that's the reason the Torah took the trouble to write about it at length. It's expected to be a model for us in our daily lives so that we should see now how dangerous it is to

have a mind that is not cultivated with the utmost care.

Now don't misunderstand me; Korach was a great man. First of all, nobody who wasn't good was able to leave Mitzrayim. Remember in the *haggadah* of Pesach we say to the *rasha*, **לֹא הָיָה נִגָּאֵל**, – had he been there, he wouldn't have been redeemed. It's a principle that those who weren't worthy did not leave Mitzrayim. And so if Korach left Mitzrayim you can be sure he deserved it. Korach went through what everybody else experienced. He passed through the *Yam Suf* with everyone else and as he walked he sang *Az Yashir*. I imagine he had a beautiful voice and that he sang as loud as anyone else.

But not only was Korach worthy of leaving Mitzrayim and experiencing all the *nissim* of the *midbar* but he stood at Har Sinai with the whole Klal Yisrael and accepted the Torah. **וַיַּחֲנֶה שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגֶד הָהָר** – *And the nation encamped in front of Har Sinai* (Shemos 19:2). It doesn't say, *vayachanu*, and they encamped. It says *vayichan*, *loshon yachid* – and he encamped, which means the whole nation spoke up *k'ish echad*. It means that Korach and his congregation also stood at the foot of Har Sinai and together with everyone else they shouted *naaseh v'nishma* with the greatest enthusiasm.

The Tragedy

So you can be certain that Korach was a good frum Jew. And so it's a big question – what happened? How could such a great personality fall so far?

The answer is that he allowed brambles to grow in his mind. It was a result of being a *choreish ra* – Korach was plowing wickedness; he began to think wrong about others, he planted seeds in his mind of being *dan lekaf chov* and those little seeds grew into big trees, trees of poisonous fruit.

You remember that glorious day of the *hakamas hamishkan*, when the Sanctuary was finally erected in this world and the Am Yisroel would now claim the exclusive glory of having Hashem reside among

them? There were very few days – we could even say no day ever – in the history of the world when there was so much rejoicing.

The whole nation was celebrating. וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד הָשֵׁם – *And the Glory of Hashem appeared to all the people, וַיֵּרָא כָּל הָעָם וַיִּרְאוּ, and a fire came forth from before Hashem...and all the people saw, and they shouted in joy (Vayikra 9:23-24).* Imagine such a thing! A whole nation; millions of men, women and children shouting in great ecstasy at the sight of the Shechina.

And then suddenly a tragedy took place. וַתֵּצֵא – *A fire went forth from Hashem and it consumed Nadav and Avihu, the two sons of Aharon who had entered the Sanctuary to officiate as the newly appointed kohanim, וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי הָשֵׁם, and they perished there before Hashem (ibid. 10:2).*

Making Sense of Tragedy

Now, the whole nation when they saw that tragedy, they were overwhelmed with shock and sadness. On the happiest day such an event should occur?! It was unimaginable! And Korach was there too along with everyone else; he was standing there, watching, and he was troubled too: “How could such a thing happen that the two sons of Aharon should die in the Mishkan by the Hand of Hashem?! Such nice young men, *tzadikim*, should fall dead in the middle of such a great celebration?!”

Now Korach understood that Hashem doesn't do things for no reason – particularly a tragedy as great as this – and so we understand that he began to suspect Moshe Rabeinu. Korach was thinking, “Maybe it's because they shouldn't have been there in the first place! It's what I thought all along – it's true they were great men but were they the only ones worthy of being chosen? Was it *yashrus* that Moshe should appoint his brother and his brother's sons as the *kohanim*? Why should they be chosen instead of me and my sons? I'm also a Levi, after all.”

One of The Best

Now Korach wouldn't have said that if he had been a nobody or an ordinary Levi. The truth is that Korach was one of the best Levi'im; he was a *lamdan* and a *tzadik* and he had very good sons too, just like Aharon. לְמִנְצַח לְבִנֵי קֹרַח מְזֻמָּר – The children of Korach have beautiful *tefillos* in the *sefer Tehillim*. Hakodosh Boruch Hu put his spirit into them and they sang beautiful songs to Hashem; they were glorious prototypes of the Levi'im who sang *shirei kodesh* to Hashem. You see later (Bamidbar 26:11) that וּבְנֵי קֹרַח לֹא מָתוּ – they didn't die in what happened to Korach, because they were *tzaddikim gemurim*. And their father was certainly somebody – a man is not *zocheh* to such children unless he himself has worked in his lifetime to acquire certain great attributes of character.

“So if I have such good sons,” Korach had thought all along, “why weren't we chosen?” And so already at the time that Aharon's children were appointed a seed of suspicion began to grow in his mind; seeds of *dan lekaf chov* were planted in Korach's head in his mind and he began to suspect that maybe Aharon didn't have the right to be a Kohen.

And now, when he witnessed what happened at the *chanukas hamishkan*, all of those brambles of suspicion that had taken root in his mind began to release their poisonous fruit. “Now you see that I was right. Hakodosh Boruch Hu showed his displeasure – they weren't really fit for it. It was Moshe Rabeinu who gave the *kehuna* to his brother's family, not Hashem.

A Favor for Moshe

Now Korach knew just like we do that Hakodosh Boruch Hu had said to Moshe, “Take your brother Aharon and *hakreiv*, bring him near.” Korach also knew that it was the word of Hashem but he began to reason like this: This, I'm repeating what I heard from my *rebbe zichrono levrachah*. Korach was thinking, “Moshe Rabbeinu did so many good things

for Hakodosh Boruch Hu. He served Him so loyally, he organized the Bnei Yisrael, he took them out of Mitzrayim, he brought them together to Matan Torah – he lived completely for Hashem and Hakodosh Boruch Hu felt a certain indebtedness, a *hakaras hatov*, to Moshe Rabbeinu.

And so when Moshe Rabbeinu put in a good word for his brother, “Can you make my brother, Aharon, the Kohen Gadol, and his sons should be the *kohanim*,” Hakodosh Boruch Hu wouldn’t refuse. רָצוֹן יִרְאֵיו יַעֲשֶׂה – Hashem does the will of those who fear him (Tehillim 145:19) Like we say, *tzaddik gozer v’Hakodosh Boruch Hu mekayem* – when a *tzaddik* wills something so Hakodosh Baruch Hu fulfills his will. That’s a principle, that independent of what Hakodosh Boruch Hu would have done anyhow, one of His considerations is to fulfill the will of the *tzaddikim*. He’ll change the course of history in order to demonstrate His favor for His chosen ones, so that the world should see that He favors them.

That’s what Korach reasoned: “It’s only because Hakodosh Boruch Hu yielded to Moshe’s will. But who said that it was best for the Am Yisroel? Why didn’t he put in a good word for me? Am I worse than his brother? Could be I’m even better for the job than his brother. If Moshe Rabbeinu would have been perfect without any flaws in character, without any desire at all to domineer the people, if he would have been completely humble then he wouldn’t have desired such a situation. And therefore because of him, we suffered this great tragedy on what was supposed to be the happiest day in our history.”

Self Obliteration

Now the truth is that it wasn’t so. Moshe Rabbeinu said, “What do you want of me? I didn’t say *anything* to Hakodosh Boruch Hu. לָכֵן אַתָּה, you, Korach, וְכָל עֵדְתְךָ, and all of your congregation, הַנִּעְצָרִים, that are gathered together, עַל הָשֵׁם, you’re gathered against Hashem. Not against me. וְאַהֲרֹן מֶה – What is Aharon that you should complain against him? (Korach 16:11). אַהֲרֹן מֶה הוּא,

Aharon is nothing. Aharon doesn’t have any desires. He didn’t want anything in the world; he didn’t even have the slightest inkling of being chosen. *Mah hu!* *Mah* means nothing at all. *Nachnu mah*, Moshe Rabbeinu said, “Who are we? We’re nothing. Aharon and I are nothing at all. It’s only Hashem.”

It’s like in the Kelmer Talmud Torah, people were sitting there listening, and the old *rosh yeshivah* who was saying the *schmuess* sat in the back seat. He spoke in the back seat so that you didn’t see anybody. All you heard was the voice. He effaced himself entirely. He didn’t exist. A man is sitting in the back seat and he’s talking. Everybody is sitting and looking to the front and listening. That’s how our leaders used to be.

Now, it’s true that Moshe had tremendous power, but he had the ability to submerge his personality so entirely that nothing of his own desire stood in the way. That’s how great leaders are. They can nullify their personality. They erase all their desires in order there shouldn’t be any *mechitzos* that intervene between Hashem and the people.

The Unhappy Ending

But Korach wouldn’t listen to that. It was hard for him to believe such a thing because he had already plowed the seeds of evil for so long; Korach wasn’t a brute, a ruffian who could be misled so easily by partisan rivalry. He was a great man. We have the statements of the *gemara* to certify the importance of Korach. But that’s what happens in the mind that isn’t cultivated with the utmost care.

Korach had already plowed and sowed and tended to these shoots of *dan lekaf chov* and now they sprouted forth poisonous fruit: “What do you mean you’re nothing? Do you mean to say you can erase from yourselves all the tendencies that human beings have? Don’t you have at least a little bit of love for yourself? It’s just because of you! You twisted it so that Hashem should choose your

brother. You were able to finagle it out of Hashem so to speak.”

And it was those seeds in Korach’s mind that eventually led to his downfall. וַתִּפְתָּח הָאֲרֶץ אֶת פִּיהָ. Because Korach opened his big mouth, the earth opened its big mouth and swallowed him into Gehenom forever. He was a good man, Korach; a very good man. But הֲלוֹא יִתְעוּ חֹרְשֵׁי רָע – *Won’t they go lost, those who plow wrong thoughts into the field of the mind?* As good as you are, if you’re too lazy to cultivate the orchard of good thoughts about others, then those seeds produce weeds and brambles and something bad is sure to happen.

Part III. Your Garden

Purpose of the Story

Now, it’s important to understand that this incident wasn’t put in the Torah just to fill space, to tell us a story of something that happened in the wilderness. The Torah took the trouble to describe the story of Korach at length לְאֹת לְבִנֵי מִרְי, *as a sign for people who like to make trouble* (Korach 17:25).

It says it openly: וְלֹא יִהְיֶה כְּקֹרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ – *You shouldn’t be like Korach and his congregation* (ibid. 17:5). Some poskim even say it’s a Torah law, you shouldn’t follow in the ways of Korach; it doesn’t only mean that you shouldn’t make *machlokes* – it means that you should be careful not to plant the same seeds that Korach planted in his, the seeds of being *dan lekaf chov* that lead to *machlokes*.

Now, it doesn’t mean that if you’re *dan lekaf chov*, you should expect that today or tomorrow the earth will open up its mouth and swallow you. That’s not how Hashem works in this world but Korach is a *marshal* for where you’re headed. הֲלוֹא יִתְעוּ חֹרְשֵׁי רָע – *Surely they will go lost, those who plow seeds of evil thoughts in their minds.*

A Dangerous Proposition

Of course, Korach got it over the head right away because he started up with the wrong person. He chose the very worst man to start up with! Had he been suspicious, let’s say of some ordinary Jew in the wilderness, it wouldn’t be a *mitzvah*, but he wouldn’t have ended up in the ground right away. Korach started up with Moshe Rabbeinu, however – that’s like touching an electric wire of 100,000 volts.

But you can be sure that it’s still a very great peril to suspect *any* Jew. Every *frum* Jew, even if he’s not Moshe Rabbeinu, is beloved by Hakodosh Boruch Hu. Which Jew? The most foolish fellow. The fellow with all faults. He’s ugly. He’s rude. He’s mean. He doesn’t smile at you. He blocks your driveway. He won’t give you a raise. Still, Hakodosh Boruch Hu loves him with an intense and fiery Love.

And therefore maybe he’s not Moshe Rabbeinu – so he’s not a 100,000 volt live wire – but it’s still a very dangerous proposition to be suspicious of any *frum* Jew. I’m not talking now about the *reshaim*; I’m not talking about being *melamed zechus* on wicked people – that I’ll leave to somebody else bigger than I am. The *frum* Jews, the *shomer mitzvos*, those are the ones Hashem loves and therefore one of your big jobs in this world is to be an *ohev tzedek*, to want to find the good in your fellow Jew and to always judge him favorably.

You Can’t Get Lazy

And that means we have to get busy because it’s impossible to do this if you don’t work at it. It won’t happen if you’re a lazy man. עַל שְׂדֵה אִישׁ עָצֵל – *I passed by a lazy man’s garden*, said Shlomo. He didn’t pull out the weeds as soon as he saw them growing and so what grew in his mind? בְּסוֹ פְּנֵי הָרָלִים, *brambles are growing*, and all manner of poisonous roots.

It means that unless you are always busy weeding out, then poison is growing. And so, as soon as the thought comes into your mind that you

don't like that person, so you must do something about it. You can't be an *ish atzel*! Instead of letting that seed sprout, right away you have to try to uproot it. And therefore, whenever you have some grudge against somebody, if you wish to emulate Hashem, you must try to be like a lawyer and find every kind of excuse to justify him.

Even if you know that he did something wrong, you could say as follows: "It could be he didn't realize it was wrong." You can say, "He didn't know how serious it was. Maybe he's ignorant. Maybe he doesn't know how great the sin is." If he did something to bother you, so you have to get busy weeding – "Maybe his boss yelled at him today." "Could be he's worried about *parnassah*, about his children." You overlook whatever it is and you wipe it from your mind. Instead of being lazy and letting it grow poisonous roots, you exert your imagination to transform what seems to be an act of irresponsibility, an act of sin, and you interpret it in the very best way.

That's an extremely important function among Jews. We have to be *misgaber* on this Yetzer Hara of trying to find faults in our neighbors and in our *mechutanim*, in our daughters-in-law and sons-in-law, and everyone else we come in contact with.

You Can't Understand

You can't think of any excuse? Maybe you don't know how to think. Among the requirements of being *dan l'kaf zchus* is, *אַל תִּדְּרִן אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ עַד שֶׁתִּגְּזֵעַ לְמִקְוָמוֹ* – don't judge the fellowman until you're in his shoes. If a child makes a mistake and breaks something, don't get excited too much, because if you were a child, you would also break things.

So let's say your wife likes to talk. So you say, "Why does she talk so much? It gets on my nerves." So wait until you're a woman, then you'll judge her. Every person should be judged according to his condition and you'll never understand his condition.

Planting Flowers

Now, besides for pulling out the weeds, a person has to get busy planting flowers; planting fruit saplings and all good things. Instead of being *chorshei ra*, people who are plowing bad thoughts, the *possuk* continues, *chesed v'emes chorshei tov*, those who think good thoughts will be rewarded with even more good thoughts. Those who want to walk in the Ways of Hashem – Hashem is always thinking good about us – and make an attempt to think the right thoughts about fellow Jews, they'll succeed; *habo litaher poschin lo* and it will become easier and easier.

We're not talking about *ma'asim* now – we're talking about correcting the mental attitudes, to learn how to think good thoughts about your fellow man. It's a big job and I'm far away from that myself. I'm saying this not for you; I'm listening to it myself as I'm saying it. But let's listen and maybe a little bit of it will stick to us.

Look And You'll Find

I had a *rebbe* once, a great *rebbe* and he once told us that a person is not one thing – he's a bundle of things. I remember it like yesterday; I heard him say that sixty years ago. "A person is not one *middah*," he said, "he's a bundle of *middos*." So one thing might be not good, but something else is good in him. And therefore, if we'll look, we'll find. But if we're busy looking only for what's wrong, we'll find that too and we'll be failures.

Here's a man who is *roidef achar hakavod*, he loves *kavod*. He's a *ba'al ga'avah*, he thinks much of himself. You want to judge him? Weed out those thoughts and look for good things; he has good things, I guarantee it.

Today I hear that husbands and wives are fighting all the time. And in some parts of town people are going crazy – in certain modern neighborhoods it's divorces and divorces and divorces. A tragedy! What's going on here? The world is going crazy!

Tragedy of Divorce

So a man said to me, “Well, after all, there’s a *din* of *get* in the Torah, isn’t there?” *Meshugeneh!* There’s also *misah* in the Torah and funerals in the Torah. *Misah* is a tragedy and *gittin* are a tragedy.

Now when you speak to couples – I spoke to a couple of women today. They called me up to tell me their husbands are no good at all. “It’s his fault. There’s no other way out.”

“What’s the trouble?” I asked.

“He’s so mean to me,” she says, “He’s inhuman.”

Now, if I ask him, I’m sure he’ll give me a report about his wife. She doesn’t do her work. She looks for trouble. She’s criticizing me, nagging, this and that.

Everybody thinks they’re right! And they’re all wrong because they are all sinning against this great quality which Hashem said you should try to gain, to judge your fellowman *l’kaf zchus*, to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Don’t Be Wicked

You’re going to say, you can’t find good in your wife? You can’t find good in your husband? Come on, come on. That’s nothing but wickedness! It’s not true at all!

A wife does many things for her husband and he should think about that and appreciate her to no end. And even if your wife said something that seems wrong to you, so what? You can say it’s because she doesn’t feel well today. Maybe she didn’t sleep well or some other trouble she has that’s bothering her, that’s why she’s letting it out on you; but she doesn’t really mean any harm, so be *melamed zchus*.

And your husband too. When a husband comes home from work and says something nasty, the wife should say to herself, “He worked very hard today. There was competition; maybe the gentile

supervisor was persecuting him. My husband didn’t mean any harm.”

And then after she pulls out the weeds, she begins to plant. “Look, my husband is an *ish ne’eman*.” She reminds herself that he goes to work every day. Now, he’d like to sit home. He’d like to go the *Beis HaMedrash* and learn. He feels like he’s wasting his life in the shop where he’s working but he’s doing it out of loyalty to his family.

There are so many loafers today in the world, unfortunately. Some people go to Atlantic City and loaf. Some people go to *shtiblach* and loaf; they sit in *shtiblach* and they don’t learn a word. And your husband is a decent man. He’s working, supporting his family, giving away his life. His life! Every week he comes home and he gives her money. She thinks about that and appreciates her husband. That’s how married people must live. They should always try to give each other the benefit of the doubt and always attempt to explain that the other party meant well.

A Good Deal

So we come back now to one of the great lessons we learn from Korach. That great tragedy was the result of this error of Korach being *dan Moshe Rabbeinu l’kaf chovah*; to the side of guilt. Instead of giving him the benefit of the doubt, Korach let that seed of suspicion and distrust grow wild and you know what happened at the end – it was a tragedy of tragedies. וַתִּפְתַּח הָאֲרֶץ אֶת פִּיהָ – And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up Korach. It was a stunning blow for the whole Am Yisrael! Korach! “If *that* can happen to such a man, it can happen to us too!”

And the entire nation got busy learning the great lesson that one of our functions in life now is to take this garden of our mind and develop it to the best of our ability by planting seeds of being *dan es chavairo l’kaf zechus*, of trying our utmost to judge your fellow man with a meritorious balance and to think well of him always. Because that’s the purpose why you came to this world; in order to plant an

orchard of delectable peiros and a garden of beautiful flowers in your mind.

And we should never forget what Chazal tell us (Shabbos 127b), how great this investment of planting pays off. הִיָּן אֶת הַבְּרוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת – If you make the effort to judge somebody in a positive light; you overcome the natural laziness of the mind and you look for the good, הַמִּקּוֹם יִדְיָהוּ לְכַף זְכוּת, – then middah k'neged middah Hakodosh Boruch Hu will always judge you favorably too. And when He does that, you can be certain He does it with a full Hand, a heaping Hand of reward in this world and also in the world to come.

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגיד זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

The Rav has said here many times that murderers have to be executed. Then why is it that the Sanhedrin so rarely killed a murderer?

A:

The Sanhedrin was like a Beis Hamikdash. They did everything with a certain procedure in the Sanhedrin, and if the procedure was not perfect, they didn't do it. If there's a flaw in the procedure, they can't sentence the murderer to death. But when the Sanhedrin doesn't sentence him, he doesn't get away with it, don't worry about that. Because that's when the king takes over. The king enforces law and order and he does what he has to do to make sure the murderer doesn't get away with it.

The king takes care of it; nobody gets away with murder. Suppose there was a technicality, and we can't kill him because of this technicality. So the Sanhedrin says, "We follow certain procedures and these procedures don't permit us to kill him when there's a flaw in the procedure." So they say to the king, "Take care of him. It's your job." And the king takes care of him. Don't worry! The murderers didn't get away with anything with Am Yisroel in the olden days. The Jews were a wise people and murderers didn't get away with anything. The kings took care of the murderers.

TAPE # E-217

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