

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



ענין השבוע

AL EI DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"a of Gur

Holding Up the World

ויאמר משה אל קרח שמעו נא בני לוי, המעט מכם
כי הבדיל אלוקי ישראל אתכם מעדת ישראל וגי

Moshe said to Korach, "Hear now, descendants of Levi: Is it insignificant for you that the G-d of Yisrael has separated you from the assembly of Yisrael..." (Bamidbar 16:8-9)

The Sfas Emes' points out a seeming difficulty in the pasuk's wording. המעט מכם literally means, "Is it insignificant

One might not be on the highest madreigah; yet even as he tends to his own needs, he seeks out Hashem, since he knows that he himself is nothing. He longs to come close to Hashem from wherever he is

from you?" Shouldn't it say, "המעט לכם - Is it insignificant to you?"

The Mishnah (Avos 5:10) states: "One who says, 'What's mine is yours and what's yours is yours' is a *chassid*. One who says, 'What's mine is mine and what's yours is mine' is a *rasha*." The Sfas Emes² explains that Maseches Avos is about ways of piety, not wickedness, and therefore the second statement should not be taken at

face value. He explains that both parts of the Mishnah refer to upstanding people who serve Hashem — only there's a difference between their outlooks. Every Yid influences and assists other Yidden – a father leads his household, a *rebbe* his *talmidim*, and a *rav* his congregation. This person, who the Mishnah calls a *rasha*, believes that all his positive influence is due to his own abilities: "What's mine, my own *avodas Hashem*, and what's yours, the help I've extended to others – is all mine. It's all thanks to my strength and wisdom." But the *chassid* credits his successes, both with himself and with others, to others. "Both *what's mine* and *what's yours* are yours – it was all achieved by Hashem's *koach*, in the merit of the *tzibbur* and Klal Yisrael."

This, explains the Sfas Emes, is the meaning of המעט מכם. Korach saw his greatness as his own – מכם – and he therefore aimed to attain the highest *madreigah* possible. But Aharon felt that his position and *madreigah* are "yours" – it is all from Hashem and not at all his own *koach*. He carried out the *avodah* as a *shaliach* of the *tzibbur*, and in their *zechus*. Because of this, he wasn't concerned about his *kehunah*; it was not a thing he had achieved or could achieve but was bestowed by Hashem.

cont. on page 2

I Am Your Share

ויאמר ה' אל אהרן בארצם לא תנהל וחלק
לא יהיה לה בתוכם אני חלקה ונהלתה בתוך
בני ישראל

Hashem said to Aharon, "In their land you shall have no heritage, and a share you shall not have among them; I am your share and your heritage among Bnei Yisrael." (Bamidbar 18:20)

Aharon was not destined to enter Eretz Yisrael; why did Hashem need to tell him he would not have a share in the land? The Gemara (Sanhedrin 90b) asks a similar question about the pasuk (18:28), – ונתתם ממנו את תרומת ה' לאהרן הכהן – *and you shall give from it a gift (terumah) of Hashem to Aharon the Kohen*; since Aharon would not enter Eretz Yisrael, there would be no opportunity to give him *terumah*. The Gemara answers that Aharon will be given *terumah* after *techiyas hameisim* – and this is an allusion in the Torah to *techiyas hameisim*. Why doesn't the Gemara ask this question about our pasuk as well? In fact, the Gemara's response wouldn't answer this question, since the Smag writes⁴ that *l'asid lavo*, Shevet Levi too

cont. on page 3

4 *Lavin* 276-277; cited by *Mishnah L'Melech*, *Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel* 13:10

1 5636

2 5643 s.v. *B'pasuk hame'at*

Holding Up the World

cont. from page 1

Based on the above, the Sfas Emes explains the pasuk (16:11), וְאָהֲרֹן מָה הוּא כִּי תִלִּי, – וְאָהֲרֹן מָה הוּא כִּי תִלִּי – *and as for Aharon – what is him that you protest against him?* The pasuk in Iyov says (26:7), – תִּלְּהָ אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלֵי מָה – *He suspends the earth upon nothingness.* Rashi explains, “There is no foundation; it is poised in the air upon the might of Hashem’s arms.” The Gemara (Chullin 89a) expounds on this pasuk: “אִין הָעוֹלָם מִתְקִיִּים אֲלָא בְּשִׁבִיל מִי שְׁבוּלָם – *The world continues to exist only because of those who close their mouths at a time of strife.*” These approaches are actually one and the same. Hashem suspends the world upon nothingness – meaning, upon those who consider themselves to be nothing – and it is those same people who have the ability to “close their mouths at a time of strife.” A prime example of this was Aharon, who considered himself nothing – וְאָהֲרֹן מָה הוּא, *and Aharon, what is he?* – and therefore kept quiet at the time of Korach’s conflict, thus sustaining the entire world.

But is it true that only one who has no self-regard at all can keep quiet during a time of conflict? In fact, people often keep quiet for a variety of reasons. One might recognize that the other party is more powerful; one may have the insight to realize it’s no use trying to convince another; one might have *derech eretz* and good *middos*; one may decide to give in and be *ma’avir al midosav*. Why, then, does the Sfas Emes seem to limit the ability to close one’s mouth at a time of strife to a person who considers himself nothing?

The answer is that indeed, anyone can close his mouth to conflict. It is a great accomplishment to do so, and *Sefarim* say that one who doesn’t respond to insult is given the ability to give effective *berachos*. Nonetheless, if one has regard for himself – even if he keeps quiet to conflict – he cannot sustain the world, since he does not feel entirely nullified before Hashem.

The Gemara’s nuanced expression is, “מִי שְׁבוּלָם אֶת עַצְמוֹ,” which literally means “one who closes himself.” Why doesn’t it say “– מִי שְׁבוּלָם אֶת פִּי – *one who closes his mouth*”? Because closing one’s mouth is not enough to hold up the world. One might be the victim of harsh and untrue words. But instead of entirely rejecting the diatribe, one should think, *yes, these specific accusations are not true, but in general, he’s right. I really am nothing at all, and I must truly improve in various areas.* In order to do this, one must “close himself,” nullifying his very essence. In this way he can hear the voice of Hashem behind the tirade, urging him to *teshuvah*³ – and in this manner he sustains the entire world.

When Aharon kept quiet to Korach’s conflict because he truly considered himself as nothing, it was a historic event – an actualization of מָה עַל בְּלֵי מָה in its fullest sense, maintaining the existence of the world.

But it is not the physical existence of the world that is maintained when one nullifies himself entirely; Hashem created the physical world and continues to create its sustained existence. But the spiritual element of the world needs to be sustained. How can the עוֹלָם, world, continue on, since it is a place of הַעֲלָם, Hashem’s hiddenness? What *zechus* can maintain it? Only when one ascribes himself no “self” and completely nullifies himself before Hashem, and demonstrates this by remaining silent at a time of conflict and understanding that all his accomplishments are only by Hashem’s *koach*. Only then is Hashem revealed through the הַעֲלָם, and the world in its entirety sustained.

The pasuk (16:10) states, וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ גַם – וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ גַם *yet you seek kehunah as well!* The Baal Haturim notes that the word וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ appears in two other places: וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ מִשָּׁם אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנוּ בְּכָל לְבַבְךָ וּבְכָל – אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנוּ בְּכָל לְבַבְךָ וּבְכָל *From there you will seek Hashem,*

your G-d, and you will find Him, if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul (Devarim 4:29); and וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ אֶת ה' וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָךְ – וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ אֶת ה' וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָךְ *You will seek Me and you will find [Me], if you search for Me with all your hearts* (Yermiyah 29:13). What’s the connection between these pesukim?

We may suggest that they allude to two different types of people. Some people’s approach to *avodas Hashem* is וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ גַם; whatever good deeds they do are with the thought that they might lead to a position of prominence and further their personal interests. The proper approach, though, is וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ אֶת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ, seeking out Hashem from *there* – from wherever a person stands. One might not be on the highest *madreigah*; yet even as he tends to his own needs, he seeks out Hashem, since he knows that he himself is nothing. He longs to come close to Hashem from wherever he is – וּבִקְשֶׁתְּךָ אֶת ה' וּמִצֵּאתָ כִּי תִדְרָשְׁנוּ בְּכָל לְבַבְךָ.

These are high *madreigos* – serving Hashem entirely *lishmah* and feeling completely subservient to Him. One might think, *If only I would do everything I must, even with other motives mixed in!* Indeed, the Gemara (Pesachim 50b) teaches, “עוֹלָם יַעֲסוּק, אָדָם בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת אֵין עַל כִּי שְׁלָא לְשִׁמְהָ, שְׁמִתוּךְ – שְׁלָא לְשִׁמְהָ בָּא לְשִׁמְהָ. One should involve himself in Torah and mitzvos even if not *lishmah*, because doing so not-*lishmah* will result in *lishmah*,” but *sefarim* say that even the initial *shelo lishmah* must be with the understanding that *lishmah* is the objective. A Yid must continually grow and reach higher and higher, until his *avodas Hashem* is completely *lishmah*. One must always yearn to serve Hashem *lishmah*, and be bothered by the fact that his *madreigah* is not what it should be. The balloon of self-regard must be regularly punctured so that the truth is revealed – that there is no reality at all to so-called prestige.

(פרשת קרח תשפ"א – ס"ג מאמר א)

3 See *Reishis Chochmah, Sha'ar HaTeshuvah*, chapter 3, citing *Zohar hakadosh*, Shemos 107a

אני חלקך - I Am Your Share

cont. from page 1

will inherit Eretz Yisrael. He cites the pasuk (Yechezkel 48:31), שַׁעַר יְהוּדָה אֶחָד שַׁעַר לְוֵי אֶחָד – *the gate of Yehudah, one; the gate of Levi, one*, and the Gemara's statement (Bava Basra 122a) that in the future, Eretz Yisrael will be divided between thirteen *shevatim*.⁵ Accordingly, Aharon will have a share in Eretz Yisrael *l'asid lavo*; so why is our pasuk addressed to Aharon?

We might suggest a distinction

The manner in which Eretz Yisrael was divided – through a navi, the urim v'tumim, and ruach hakodesh – demonstrates that each shevet was connected on a deep spiritual level to its portion of Eretz Yisrael

between our pasuk and that of *terumah*. The pasuk says that Bnei Yisrael will give Aharon *terumah* – so the Gemara asks when this will be. But as far as inheriting Eretz Yisrael, the pasuk says that he will not have a share – and, in fact, he would not. Thus, the Gemara does not ask on this pasuk. But why would the pasuk need to say that Aharon would not have

a share? After all, Aharon did not enter Eretz Yisrael at the time it was divided, so it is obvious that he would not inherit it.

In truth, the Smag's statement that Shevet Levi will inherit Eretz Yisrael *l'asid lavo* is difficult to understand. The Rambam⁶ writes that the reason Shevet Levi does not have a share in Eretz Yisrael is because they are set aside from Klal Yisrael to serve Hashem. Since this will not change *l'asid lavo*, why will they have a share in Eretz Yisrael at that time?

The manner in which Eretz Yisrael was divided – through a *navi*, the *urim v'tumim*, and *ruach hakodesh* – demonstrates that each *shevet* was connected on a deep spiritual level to its portion of Eretz Yisrael.⁷ Indeed, the inheritance of the Land by Bnei Yisrael as a whole was because it is אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיהָ דֹרֵשׁ אֹתָהּ אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיהָ בֹרָה תָמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיהָ בָּהּ – *A land that Hashem, your G-d, seeks out; the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it* (Devarim 11:12). Eretz Yisrael provides the opportunity to serve Hashem out of joy, with one's needs taken care of.

In the present world, this phenomenon is not clearly seen; the world is run in a manner of hiddenness, such that the spiritual reality is not visible. Thus, Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael in a manner of *gashmiyus*; with a sense of אִישׁ תַּחַת גִּפְנוֹ וְאִישׁ תַּחַת תְּאֵנָתוֹ – *each man under his grapevine and under his fig tree* (Melachim I 5:5). This is

why Shevet Levi could not have a portion in Eretz Yisrael – so that they, who stand and serve Hashem, would not get dragged down into superficiality and the material aspect of the Land.

And for this reason, the pasuk addresses Aharon when stating that Shevet Levi would not inherit Eretz Yisrael. It is specifically because of their *kedushah* – most manifest in Aharon HaKohen, the *kohen gadol*⁸ – that they could not have a part in the Land, so as not to endanger their *kedushah* with material abundance.

But *l'asid lavo*, the world will be an embodiment of הַאֲרֶץ תִּמְלֵא דַעַת אֶת ה' – *the earth will be filled with knowledge of Hashem* (Yeshayah 11:9); people's engagement in *gashmiyus* will be in a proper manner, and only for the sake of spirituality. In this climate, Shevet Levi, too, can inherit Eretz Yisrael; there will be no danger of being lured into materialism. In fact, the Maharsha⁹ writes that the future *Olam Haba* will be entirely *kodesh kodashim*, holy of holies, like Aharon HaKohen. Because, as we have learned, Shevet Levi did not inherit Eretz Yisrael so as not to impair their holiness, therefore, when the world will be *kodesh kodashim*, there will be no reason to withhold from them a share in the Land.¹⁰

(בנאות דשא – קרח תשפ"ב)

5 See *Shittah Mekubetztes*

6 *Hilchos Shemittah V'Yovel* 13:12

7 See at length *Ibra D'Dasha*, vol. 1 p. 116

8 See Horiyos 13a

9 Sanhedrin 90b, *Chiddushei Aggados*

10 Some have asked (See *Raza D'Shabsi*, Bava Basra p. 865 column 4) how the *issur* of Shevet Levi inheriting the Land could be reversed *l'asid lavo*. Based on the above we may explain (in a manner of *drush*) that since by addressing the prohibition to Aharon, the pasuk indicates that it is to safeguard Shevet Levi's *kedushah*, its non-application *l'asid lavo* is not considered a reversal, since there will simply be no need for a safeguard.

The Inheritance of Shevet Levi

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַהֲרֹן בְּאַרְצָם לֹא תִנְחַל וְחֶלֶק לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי חֶלְקָךְ וְנַחֲלָתְךָ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

Hashem said to Aharon, "In their Land you shall have no heritage, and a share you shall not have among them; I am your share and your heritage among Bnei Yisrael." (Bamidbar 18:20)

The Rambam¹¹ maintains that the prohibition against Shevet Levi taking a share in Eretz Yisrael applies only to Eretz Yisrael itself; regarding other lands Bnei Yisrael would conquer, Shevet Levi shares the spoils with the rest of the nation. The Ra'avad disagrees, maintaining that other lands, as well, are subject to this prohibition.

Kesef Mishnah explains the background of this dispute. After the battle with Midyan, all of Klal Yisrael were given a share of the spoils, including Shevet Levi. The Rambam deduced from this that the same is true of any land outside Eretz Yisrael which Bnei Yisrael would conquer. Although Shevet Levi's share in the spoils of Midyan was smaller than that of the other *shevatim*, this was a one-time *gezeiras hakasuv* (decree of the Torah).

The Ra'avad came to the opposite conclusion from the same source: since Shevet Levi was given a smaller share of the goods of Midyan than the other *shevatim*, their sharing of the spoils must have simply been a special sort of *terumah*; normally they wouldn't get any share at all, even outside of Eretz Yisrael.

It has been suggested that perhaps the very reason that Shevet Levi normally cannot take a share in spoils of war is because they don't fight in wars of conquest. This is why they did have a share in the spoils of Midyan – since Hashem commanded that they take part in that battle. But they received a specific share of the booty – which was smaller than the shares of the other *shevatim* – because it was a unique instance that wouldn't be repeated.

This approach would explain a point made by the *mefarshim*: why does the pasuk need to prohibit Shevet Levi from taking a share in the land? Since they wouldn't fight in its conquest, certainly they wouldn't get a share. According to the above, that is exactly the point: it is *because* they wouldn't fight that they would not get a share – which means that in all cases, spoils are only given to fighters of a battle.

However, the suggestion that Shevet Levi received a specific portion, unequal to that of the other *shevatim*, simply because it was a one-time occurrence, does not seem adequate. Perhaps it could be said that normally, all fighters share equally so that they will return to fight in the next battle – so Shevet Levi, who wouldn't fight again, did not receive an equal portion; after all, Hashem is their portion and inheritance.

Following the above approach, the pasuk's statement, לֹא תִנְחַל וְחֶלֶק לֹא יִהְיֶה לָּךְ בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי חֶלְקָךְ וְנַחֲלָתְךָ – *In their Land you shall have no heritage, and a share you shall not have among them; I am your share and your heritage*, is not the actual reason they would not inherit the Land, rather, it is a promise of compensation of sorts for their losing out in its division. The real reason is because they would not fight in the conquest of the Land.

However, this interpretation is difficult to read into another pasuk (Devarim 18:1-2), לֹא יִהְיֶה לְכֹהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּים וְגו' חֶלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגו' ה' – *There will not be for the Kohanim, the Levi'im... a portion and an inheritance with Yisrael... Hashem is his inheritance*. Since this pasuk is addressed in the third person, it would not seem to be a promise of compensation;¹² rather, that this is the reason they do not have a share in the Land – Hashem is their inheritance, so they do not get any other inheritance. Accordingly,

taking a share in the Land is unconnected to whether a *shevet* would fight for its conquest.

This is clear also from a pasuk (Shmuel I 30:24), כְּחֶלֶק הַיָּרֵד בְּמַלְחָמָה וְכֶחֶלֶק הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל הַכְּלִים, – *like the portion of the one who went into battle, so is the portion of the one who remained with the baggage; they shall divide [it] equally*. Since Shevet Levi was like “the one who remained with the baggage,” they too would have inherited Eretz Yisrael, if not that “Hashem is his inheritance.”

The *Minchas Chinuch*¹³ writes that even the Ra'avad, who maintains that Shevet Levi did not get a share in lands conquered out of Eretz Yisrael either, agrees that this is only with lands which would be given the *kedushah* of Eretz Yisrael. A land which would not get *kedushas Eretz Yisrael*; for example, if it was conquered before the lands of the Seven Nations, or if its conquest was not made with the consensus of most of Klal Yisrael – the Ra'avad agrees that Shevet Levi gets an equal share in it.

It has been asked: How can this be so, since the Ra'avad's own proof is from the war of Midyan, which preceded the conquest of the Seven Nations, and was thus not given *kedushas Eretz Yisrael*? It would seem clear that even in such a case, the Ra'avad would hold that Shevet Levi does not get a share.

We may suggest that the *Minchas Chinuch's* distinction applies only from the time that Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael. From that time until they conquered the Seven Nations, it was improper to conquer other nations;¹⁴ so if they did, Shevet Levi, too, would get a share. But Midyan was conquered before Bnei Yisrael entered Eretz Yisrael, so Shevet Levi did not receive a proper share in it.

(בנאות דשא – קרח תשפ"ב)

11 *Hilchos Shemitah V'Yovel* 13:10-11

12 It is also debatable whether this could be understood in the Rambam's words.

13 408 end of no. 8

14 See Sifri, end of Eikev; *Tosafos*, Gittin 8a s.v. *Kivush*