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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ד RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS KORACH

BALD OR NOT BALD THAT IS THE QUESTION FOR EVERYONE

The Zohar Hakadosh writes that Korach's rebellion against Moshe was really a rebellion against Shabbos. On the other hand *Chazal* say that his eye fooled him into starting a rebellion against Moshe. We will attempt to explain this interpretation on our level of understanding.

The name Korach is from the *lashon hakodesh* word קרח to be bald. The *gemarah* Sanhedrin 109b says that his name represents the gap and baldness in the amount of *Klal* Yisrael's members that were killed because of his rebellion against Moshe. We can add on another interpretation to his name as follows. The *gemarah* above tells us the advice that Korach's wife told her husband as she inflamed his *machlokes*. "Look at all the *kovod* that Moshe did for himself that he became king, and for Ahron that he appointed him to act as the *Kohen Gadol*. All you got was shame and embarrassment. Moshe and Ahron shaved off all the hair on your body from head to toe and then he waved you in different directions as if you were a piece of dung. (Bamidbar 8,5). Moshe was jealous of your beautiful hair so he contrived that he alone will have hair and you will be bald. According to the above we can say that this is the reason why he was called קרח because it was this baldness of his body which was caused by Moshe that instigated the lead up to his uprising and insurgence.

It was an issue with hair that inflamed the rebellion to take its path. Yet in this same episode it was the hair of Ohn Ben Peles's wife that saved him from joining the rebellion and being swallowed up by the earth. She sat in front of her tent with her hair uncovered. When Ohn's co rebellions came to pick him up they didn't dare to come close to the tent and Ohn was thereby saved. Here we see that in the same episode of Korach it was hair that redeemed one of the mutineers from losing his life by joining the revolt of Korach.

Hair symbolizes the surplus and excess of the body. Our Bris with Hashem is the *Bris Milah* when we cut off the foreskin of the body which is excess. This conveys that the life of the *Yid* is different from that of a gentile. It is the excess over necessities which cause us to go astray as we learned from the Torah for the *passuk* says וישמן ישורון ויבעט. Indulgence with all that earthliness has to offer and technology innovates, jams our spiritual GPS and we quickly lose sight of the goal and destination that Hashem planned for us. Esav was described as hairy שעיר when he was born. Yaakov is described as איש חלק smooth non hairy when he was to be *bentched* from his father. Aisav symbolizes the *Nachash Hakadmoni* who seduced Chavah to eat from the *Aitz Hadaas* the only fruit that was prohibited to her. He nudged Chava on to go for more and not to be satisfied with the great assortment of fruit that were permitted for her.

Aisav sought after the extras and non essentials which indicated that he focuses on his hair שעיר which also spells ירשע he will do evil. Yaakov symbolized the bald body who controls his physical appetites and cravings. יעקב is the gematria of בפנים what is inside. He doesn't look at the superficial layer of nature and it ends there. He looks beyond the veil of nature and sees the אלהים hiding behind הטבע which is the same *gematriah* 86. He partakes from the world only if it is a means to serve him for he perceives its purpose of the G-d Code which lies inside.

Chazal say that when Hashem brought Chavah to Adam for the first time He **braided** her hair. The esoteric understanding of this is that her task was to be in and focus on Adam's physical needs. She needed a *shemirah* that she should occupy herself only with essentials and not with excesses and extras more than necessary. Her braided hair was red alert and a constant reminder that she should have apprehension to

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ensure that she constantly is in control her impulses and not to be curious over non essential living. In other words her hair had to be "tied down" and not freely flowing or loose. However, her failure began when she stopped taking cue from her braids and she began conversing non essential chatter with the Nachash. The topic was the Forbidden Fruit. Speech also possesses essential and non essential talk. The Nachash was relating to her through non essential speech the gain of eating something that Hashem prohibited. One thing led to another and she ate the "Decadent Fruit" from the *Aitz Hadaas*. Chazal say that by giving the fruit to Adam she ruined and compromised not only his spiritual dimensions but that of the world as well.

Adam was known as the *Challah* of the World, the special piece of dough set aside to the Kohen. Therefore it is a custom for the woman *Erev Shabbos* to bake challahs and fulfill the mitzvah of taking challah since her sin occurred on *Erev Shabbos*. Following this concept we suggest that the prevailing custom is to make braided *challos* specifically. It was this neglect of remembering the form of her hair that caused her to be involved with non essentials and extras, thereby dwarfing Adam from his previous lofty stature. This association of *tikkun* for Chavah by taking Challah suggest is hinted in the words *גם לאשה עמה ויאכל*. The word **גם** is extra. We suggest that the Torah is alluding to the mitzvah of taking challah from the dough only is has the volume of 43.2 eggs the *gematriah* of **גם**. Because Chava not only ate from the fruit but she also gave it to Adam she must make a repair every Shabbos by correcting the challah with this mitzvah.

Shevet Levi who was dedicated to the service of Hashem underwent an initiation process of removing all their hair on the body. Dedication to constant *avodah* in the *Mishkan* and the *Beis Hamikdash* requires an ethos of binding with Hashem at all times without distractions. The *Shechinah* dwells there. This is only possible with the strong conviction of not indulging in the physical world. The root of the word decadent is from the word decay. In Latin the root word means to fall and sink. Today decadent is used to describe such things as a fancy desert, superior tasty mouth watering chocolate and luxury. In truth the new usage of this word is not new at all. It just reveals the veracity of the *passuk* above *וישמך ישרון ויבעט* that when one indulges in luxuries of any kind he places himself in *danger* of spiritual decay and descent.

There are two avenues to reach shelaimus when it comes to partaking from the physical world. One is to partake and *even* enjoy what the world has to offer as long as one has in mind that it is all *לשם שמים*. A *Yid* has the power to elevate and sanctify the physical as long as his intentions are pure. When the non essential experience involves a far greater pleasure than the minimum essential, the test of possessing pure intention is more challenging.

The second way is to avoid the extravagant and the lavish, whether it be food, objects, talk etc. In this venue the liability and focusing on the *לשם שמים* are less challenging.

Korach opined that the shaving of all one's bodily hair was an inferior choice in order to dedicate one's life of *Kehuna* to a lifestyle essential of *kedusha* and G-dliness. He held that the superior method was the way Hashem did for Chavah to tie her hair in braids as a reminder. The fact that it didn't work for her Korach rationalized that it was because she was a woman and *נשים דעתן קלות*. However if a man was to put his hair in braids that would work for him. The difference between a man and a woman in *lashon hakodesh* is this point exactly. The word to remember is *זכר* and it means male also. The word to forget is *נשי כי נשני אלקים* and it means also women. It was therefore that he felt humiliated and downgraded by having to undergo the razor shaving experience when he could have excelled even more with hair that was braided which would be then elevated to sanctification.

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This is the connection between last week's *parsha* which ends with *tzitzis* followed by Korach. Korach saw *tzitzis* as a symbol of *avodah* just like braided hair. The eight strings on every corner symbolizes strands of hair, and the braids and knots represents the discipline that he must make for himself when experiencing the non essential encounters. The blue string that binds the loose hair is to remind one of the *Kisay Hakavod* which is the intention that one must have when he partakes from this world both the essentials and the non essentials *בכל דרכיך דעה*. See Shulchan Aruch siman 231 if you are courageous enough. Obviously Hashem wants one to experience even non essentials as long as *kovod shamayim* is the underlying driving force.

In truth, before the *chait* that avenue could have worked. However after the *chait* one must first discipline himself in living with the non essentials and then when he is on the *madraigah* he can go further to the higher level going for upgrades in non essentials even when the pleasure of experience has increased.

When one constantly associates with luxuries and craves for extras beyond the necessities, unintentionally and unknowingly, his psyche causes him to start looking at himself and his life, as also merely an extra and surplus. This self-image is a product of slowly addicting oneself to non essentials which infuses into one's experience extra and more intense pleasure than minimum necessities. This has many ramifications. One will find that soon the luxuries transformed into essentials *גם הנפש לא תמלא*. One's mind slowly will now start playing games with him and bring doubts in *emunah* and the fulfillment of mitzvos. The *yetzer hara* will persuade him that **he** is "extra" in the eyes of Hashem and not necessary just extra baggage. Such a thought will cause one to be lackadaisical when it comes to fulfillment of mitzvos since in his distorted thinking he is not really achieving anything. Or his perspective on mitzvos and learning Torah have changed and he looks upon them as luxuries but not necessities.

An example of such is hinted in the Chazal (Meseches Kaalah 8) that *one is only free if he is occupied in the learning of Torah*. Chazal are referring to freedom from the *yetzer harah*. However, I once heard an interpretation to this to mean if someone who is not *Toradik* (I hope) needs a favor to help him move furniture or the like and can't find anyone, he goes to the *Beis Medrash* to ask a *bachur* in the middle of Seder can you help him for an hour with pay. The *Bachur* responds can't you see I am in the middle of learning. The man replies you are going to learn for another few hour anyway can't you spare an hour? The *bachur* asks the man "if you were working for a living and the roles are reversed and I come to you at your work place and ask you to please stop what you are doing and help with a task for an hour, what would you reply? Of course not I have a job and working is my means to earn a livelihood. The *Bachur* responds "You look at me as a *בחורין* just learning. So what if you learn 300 words less you can make it up tomorrow. That is your mistake. My learning is more required than your job. Every word I learn is the essence of life and not a luxury or surplus one can do without.

However, fortunate is the person who lives a life without indulgence in materialistic objects and values, for then his perspective of the world and himself is that of utmost necessity. His being in this world is imperative, his mission on earth is indispensable and cannot be duplicated. *חייב אדם לומר בשבילי נברא העולם*. There is no happenstance in a world managed and orchestrated by Hashem. It was Adam who ate from the *Aitz Hadaas* that brought imperfection into creation. It is the animal instinct in man which continues to degrade the world and all its components, destroying Hashem's perfect symmetrical balanced wondrous dwelling. It is *Am Yisrael's* exclusive task to repair the rip of Adam and the *Aitz Hadaas* to bring about the *geulah* and then perceive that every blade of grass and morsel of food has a divine purpose in creation leaving an opportunity for Man's morals and *bechirah* to reveal it.

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Shabbos is the day of neshama when we are gifted with the neshama yesairah who gives new insight for 24 hours. Although during the week our lenses are dirty and we perceive the world with only at the exterior level. On Shabbos we are given the sight to see Hashem as the Baal Habos of the creation. Even an Am Haaretz on Shabbos would not dare lie concerning taking tithes from his maaser. If one works on the Shabbos he will merit to unjam his spiritual GPS and redirect himself on the right path of self fulfillment. The gift of Shabbos offers an individual the choice of the non essentials to be enjoyed for its taste, colors, textures, smell etc. Shabbos allows a person to fulfill the mitzvah of עונג שבת and therefore every non essential food or clothing is encourage to enjoy. As we say in *Zemiros* אכול בשמחה כי כבר רצך on Shabbos one can eat all the delicacies to his fancy with *simcha* because Hashem made a mitzvah out of *Oneg* Shabbos.

Korach didn't want just one day a week when he could less loose and remove the reins of his body. He wanted it every day. For that he would need a *neshamah yesairah* during the week which most people do not earn to possess. If he would have taken his Shabbos more seriously and with greater devotion, he would have acquiesced to Moshe and Ahron.

Gut Shabbos,

Rav Brazil