

# NAME THAT SAVIOR

*by Rabbi Pinchas Winston*

## FRIDAY NIGHT:

*"Do this: Take for yourselves fire-pans-Korach and his entire assembly-and put fire in them and place incense upon them before G-d tomorrow. Then the man who G-d will choose-he is the holy one.*  
(Bamidbar 16:6-7)

There aren't too many showdowns in the Torah, but this is the most famous of all. And, even though it is VERY difficult to understand how anyone could stand up against the great Moshe Rabbeinu, especially when the Divine Presence hovered above and took note of everything, it happened. Indeed, it happened in spite of the fact that just two parshios ago G-d Himself stood up for Moshe Rabbeinu, and called him the humblest and most trustworthy man on earth (Bamidbar 12:3)!

When Miriam complained to Aharon about her brother Moshe, it had not been with any malicious intent. On the contrary, as Rashi points out, she had been trying to bring Moshe back to his wife, Tzipporah. Since Moshe was on prophecy call 24 hours a day, he had moved out in order to remain in a constant and fitting state.

And yet look what happened to her: she was stricken with tzora'as, the Divine punishment for having spoken loshon hara, not to mention that G-d personally criticized her. How could Korach have ever gotten it into himself that he was justified in going head-on against Moshe? There must be much more to this than meets the eye.

And there is:

Korach, the son of Yitzhar was from the level of the Ruach of Kayin from the side of evil, as the verse indicates, "And Korach took" (Bamidbar 16:1). This evil Ruach of Kayin was en clothed within him, and therefore, he accused Hevel his brother, Moshe Rabbeinu. (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 33)

In other words, and this is quite famous, the duel in the desert was an old one, dating back to the days of Kayin and Hevel, who had reincarnated into Korach and Moshe Rabbeinu. Thus, this rebellion represented the final chapter in a story than began back at the beginning of human history when Kayin murdered his only brother, Hevel. And, as we will now learn, this had been part of his motivation in challenging Moshe in the first place.

...Korach thought he had rectified Kayin the firstborn, and therefore, he tried to overcome Moshe, who was Hevel. However, he had erred in this because the tikun of Kayin could not have come

through Korach, since he was from his evil side. Rather, it could only come through his descendant, Shmuel HaNavi, who was also from the good side of Kayin. Chazal have said that Korach prophesized but did not know... (Tanchuma, Korach 5). (Ibid.)

In other words, sometimes we say things that mean one thing to us and something else to G-d. Korach sensed greatness was to come from his lineage, but mistakenly thought that he was the reason why. As it turned out, he was only a part of the lineage from which the good would come, and from the bad part at that, as Rabbi Chaim Vital explains:

This is the sod of, "And he saw the Kini" (Bamidbar 24:21). Who is Kayin? Shmuel was from Kayin. This is alluded to in, "Oh! Who will survive when He imposes (mem-shin-mem-vav) these (aleph-lamed)?" (Bamidbar 24:23), which are the letters of "Shmuel." (Ibid.)

The words were those of Bilaam the gentile prophet, who was given a vision of the future of the Jewish people just before his own demise. They allude to Shmuel the prophet, who, like Korach, drew his soul from Kayin's. However, unlike Korach's soul, Shmuel's came from the good part of Kayin's soul, which is what gave him the ability to rectify the damage that Kayin caused to himself by murdering Hevel.

### **SHABBOS DAY:**

*It is too much for you, offspring of Levi!"* (Bamidbar 16:6-7)

That was talking on the level of Sod, showing how gilgulim play a role in the things we do and how we do them. One must, therefore, be very careful about ascribing greatness to oneself, for it may be misplaced honor in the end and cause self-destruction instead.

However, there is another very important insight that emerges from the posuk itself, one that few focus on because the words are taken only as a criticism as opposed to a hint to what can go wrong in general. True, Korach's soul may have come from Kayin, but he also descended physically from the tribe of Levi, and as Moshe Rabbeinu was hinting, that had a lot to do with where Korach had gone off track.

Who was Levi to begin with? Levi was the third child born to Leah, who named her son as she did because she had assumed that:

"This time my husband will be attached (laveh) to me, because I have given birth to three sons for him." Therefore, he called him 'Levi.'" (Bereishis 29:34)

In other words, of all those sons that Leah bore for Ya'akov Avinu, and there were six altogether, Levi alone represented the turning point in her relationship with her husband. Until Levi had been born, Leah had to play second fiddle to her co-wife and sister, Rachel, always feeling as if her marriage to Ya'akov was mistaken on some level, even though it could not have happened without the seal of approval from Heaven.

However, the role of Heaven in Leah's marriage to Ya'akov became eminently clear with the birth of Levi; being one of four wives, she had already given birth to her share of the 12 Tribes. However, as Rashi explains, Levi was even more special that this:

**HE CALLED HIM LEVI:** It says in Devarim Rabbah that The Holy One, Blessed is He, sent Gavriel to bring [Levi] before Him, and [G-d] named him and gave him the 24 priestly gifts. Since the gifts accompanied him (laveh), He called him "Levi." (Rashi)

Now, the truth is, those priestly gifts from the beginning had been destined for the firstborn of each tribe, since they had been designated as the priests of the Jewish nation. Wasn't that what Ya'akov was gaining when he bought the firstborn right from Eisav at the beginning of Parashas Toldos?

In fact, Levi had to usurp that right from the firstborn, something he had only been able to do because the firstborn had been involved in the sin of the golden calf. Levi, on the other hand, rallied around Moshe when the time came to exact punishment on the offenders and Moshe called out, "Who is for G-d, come to me!". (Shemos 32:26)

Therefore, Korach had two advantages spurring him on. In effect, he was saying to Moshe Rabbeinu, "Give me the position of Kohen Gadol because I am a firstborn, and if you will answer me that the firstborn lost that right at the time of the golden calf, then I will answer you that I am also a Levi as well, who, like your brother Aharon, was destined since birth to enjoy that position of servitude. And, if you question my boldness, did you question it when I zealously joined you with the rest of my tribe to do your bidding after the sin of the calf? So why do you now question my intense desire to serve G-d in the holiest way possible?"

In truth, Korach had been making a good point. That was why he had been able to fool himself, and so many other great people into challenging Moshe. However, as Moshe Rabbeinu alluded, and as is the case in most rebellions, the very foundation upon which he built his case was going to also be the source of his downfall.

### **SEUDOS SHILSHIS:**

*"Do not look at his appearance or at his tall stature, for I have rejected him..."* (I Shmuel 16:7)

History is full of countless, interesting characters who had what might be called a "messiah-complex." Countless people have had illusions of grandeur, which can be taken quite seriously by others when they are supported by specific qualities that one might ascribe to, such as courage and charisma.

Depending upon the times, the level of education of the masses at the time, and the sense of desperation people feel, such would-be saviors can pull millions after them on their journeys from stardom to self-destruction. Witness Shabbtai Tzvi of the 1650s, who proclaimed himself to be the savior of the Jewish people, only to convert to Islam upon the insistence of the Turkish emperor at the time. Even after his conversion to Islam, Tzvi managed to tow misguided disciples after him.

Korach did not stand alone before Moshe Rabbeinu that fateful day when the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up him and his followers-those that weren't already consumed by a Heavenly fire. Somehow, he had managed to convince some of the most respected members of the community at that time to support him in his push for the position of Kohen Gadol, just as Shabbtai Tzvi had convinced rabbis and lay people alike in his time that he heralded the Final Redemption.

Moshe Rabbeinu said to Korach, his relative, "Of all the things that made Levi unique, it was not that he brought more respect to his mother, or that he made peace between his parents. What made Levi unique above and beyond everything else was the fact that G-d Himself had named him, and that G-d Himself had given the priestly gifts to him; he had not assumed them for himself."

Even Shmuel HaNavi the great prophet had difficulty picking out the Moshiach. Yishai, as requested, had marched all of his sons before the great and revered prophet, and he was not disappointed by what he was shown. On many occasions, he thought to himself, "Surely before G-d is His anointed one." (I Shmuel 16:6)

However, G-d's response to Shmuel's thoughts were, "I have rejected him." One after the other they stood before Shmuel exhibiting traits of royalty, and one-by-one-seven altogether-they were turned away for one hidden reason or another until none were left. Surprised, all Shmuel could say was, "Are these all the boys?"

"Ah, well, actually, there's one more. But, you wouldn't be interested in him, I don't think, I mean, well, you see, he was born from a concubine of mine, and he's red, and ruddy all over, and you know, not all that, how should I put it, kingly . . . certainly not compared to his brothers who are of pure descent. That's why we left him out in the fields where a good shepherd boy belongs instead of inviting him to this wonderful feast in your honor."

"What can I tell you, Yishai? G-d sent me here to anoint the true king of the Jewish people, and He said he would come from your family. Now, He has just rejected all seven of your sons, and I don't believe that this was meant to be an exercise in futility. So, if you indeed have an eighth son, which is always a nice number when it comes to miracles, bring him quick; history awaits his anointment!"

And, when Dovid finally arrived on the scene, it was not Shmuel who confirmed his right to the kingship, but G-d Who said, "Arise and anoint him, for this is he!" (Ibid. 12)-to the complete shock of all who were there. Thus, Dovid HaMelech wrote later:

The stone that the builders despised has become the cornerstone. (Tehillim 118:22)

### **MELAVE MALKAH:**

*For it is not as man sees; man sees what his eyes behold, but G-d sees into the heart."* (I Shmuel 16:7)

In truth, it is really only G-d Who can make such decisions correctly, for as He told Shmuel the prophet: G-d sees into the heart. We humans lack the ability to do the same, and therefore are easily

fooled by the externals, which history has proven can be awesomely deceiving.

So, how can we know when we see the real thing, if we are so easily deceived and deluded by others and by ourselves. The Rambam addressed this issue when he wrote:

If a king will arise from the House of David, learned in Torah and involved in mitzvos like Dovid his ancestor, as per the Written and Oral Law; he is able to cause ALL of the Jewish people to live according to [Torah] and fight G-d's wars, then it is assumed that he is the Moshiach. If he attempts this and is successful, builds the Temple in its place, and gathers the dispersed Jews [back to Israel], then he is certainly the Moshiach. (Yad, Sho'etim, Hilchos Melachim, 11:4)

It's a tall order, but Moshiach has to be a tall leader. Not physically-speaking of course, but spiritually-speaking. He has to be someone who sets out to know Torah backwards and forwards, according to all the traditions we know going back to Moshe Rabbeinu, on as many levels as he can. Mitzvos must be his reality, and he must be able to bring back the entire Jewish people to Torah and mitzvos in his time. And, he must somehow trigger a drive to return to Eretz Yisroel.

If he gets that far, then he will certainly raise the eyebrows of Torah leaders around the world, who will be impressed by his apparently unusual successes, especially his ability to focus only on his work, but not his role. They will certainly want to investigate his plans and his sincerity, and if he is truly Moshiach, he will check out-at least enough to earn the cooperation of the Torah world and others, but necessarily their 100 percent seal of approval. For, after all that, he will only have earned a "chezkus Moshiach;" the possibility that he is Moshiach will still remain somewhat doubtful.

However, when the Jews start pouring back into Eretz Yisroel, more than likely because of him, the scales will seriously tip in his favor. Nevertheless, the clincher will only come when he somehow brings that Temple back to its rightful home on Har HaBayis-the Temple Mount. For, between all of these successes, and Eliyahu running around announcing his arrival, it will be clear that G-d has named him Moshiach, and that he is the true anointed one.

He will be the one, according to the Arizal, to truly possess the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu (Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Chapter 20), who, unlike Korach, came from the side of Hevel, and not that of Kayin.

May it happen quickly in our time.

Have a great Shabbos,  
Pinchas Winston

Copyright © by [Rabbi Pinchas Winston](#) and Project Genesis, Inc.

Rabbi Winston has authored many books on Jewish philosophy (Hashkofa). If you enjoy Rabbi Winston's Perceptions on the Parsha, you may enjoy his books. Visit Rabbi Winston's [online book store](#) for more details! [www.thirtysix.org](http://www.thirtysix.org)