



RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

This week
at the kollel →

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies

It's enough for you, sons of Levi! (16:7)

WHEN KORACH AND A GROUP OF LEVITES challenged what they saw as second billing to Moshe, Aharon, and the Kohanim, Moshe told them, "You have a great calling to serve Hashem, but you are misusing it to fight *against* Hashem!"

Our *ba'alei mussar* (ethical giants) tell us that a person becomes whatever he perceives himself to be. Moshe was telling Korach and his followers that they could all become valuable people in Hashem's service, if they would keep that goal in mind. Instead, they were focusing their efforts on rebellion—something far short of what they could become and do.

Similarly, in last week's Torah portion, we found the Spies talking about their own self-perception:

If we were, in our eyes, like grasshoppers, so were we in [the Canaanites'] eyes. (13: 33)

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that people commonly underestimate their strengths—which are often far greater than what they imagine and strive for. They can usually do better. People expect what they're accustomed to, and they often do not recognize their real abilities. Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz argues that a person can usually rise to the level that is expected of him, which he then uses as his benchmark.

In last week's Torah portion, the Spies admitted that their vision of themselves was simply that of grasshoppers—lowly and ineffectual. That's how they felt about themselves, and so that's what they became. Once you give up

on yourself, nothing of substance can develop. You might say that they jumped to their own conclusion!

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman once gave an example of cows, grazing in a field, with only a flimsy fence to keep them from leaving. He noted that the fence would really be no match for thousand-pound animals, if they would try to knock it down. Yet the cows don't do it. Why not?

His answer: Because when they see the fence, they assume it is meant to keep them inside—so they don't bother trying to leave!

Human beings are similar. We harbor certain thoughts about our limitations, which then fence us in. We don't even attempt to challenge those fences.

Rabbi Mordechai Mann makes a beautiful simile with Rabbi Akiva. Akiva was a shepherd and an *am ha'aretz* (uneducated and unfamiliar with Torah attitudes) when Rachel, the daughter of Kalba Savu'a, chose to marry him. Our Sages tell us that she recognized a vast potential for greatness in Akiva, and she set out to make him into *Rabbi Akiva*, the great man he became.

What did Rachel do to accomplish this? Did she constantly nag him to go to the *beis midrash*? Did she become his full-time supervisor?

According to Rabbi Mann, Rachel didn't have to tell Akiva a word of *mussar* (criticism). Rabbi Akiva knew that his wife had strived to marry a great

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BASED ON THE S'FAS EMESS

Provisional Provenance

Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of K'has, son of Levi. took... (16:1)

[The Torah doesn't mention that Levi] was the son of Yaakov, because Yaakov [had prayed that] his name not be associated with their strife, as the Torah says [in Yaakov's blessing for Shimon and Levi, B'reishis 49:6], "Don't join my honor with their assembly!"

Where is his name [associated] with Korach? In Divrei Hayamim I (6:22-23) when the Leviim are associated with the [Temple service]: "The sons of Aviasaph, the son of Korach... the son of Levi, the son of Yisrael." (Rashi, commentary to 16:1)

WHAT WAS SO REPULSIVE ABOUT THIS INCIDENT that, on his deathbed, Yaakov begged not to have his name associated with it? And if Korach was really that abominable, why is Yaakov's name associated with him in Divrei Hayamim?

If there was one trait that defined Yaakov, it was *emmess*, Hashem's truth. ("Give the truth to Yaakov," Micha 7:20) *Emmess* is absolute. By definition, there is no room for controversy within *emmess*. Hence, Yaakov did not want his name—and by extension, *emmess*—to be mentioned in conjunction with strife.

However, Divrei Hayamim is tracing Korach's lineage back to *Yisrael*. The name *Yisrael* applies to each and every Jew, no matter how far he has strayed from Yaakov's ideal of *emmess*. ❧

At the Kollel

KEY: 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️🖐️🖐️ Advanced 🚺🚻 for men and women

Looking for a chavrusa? See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**
(Jewish Law & Parasha)
Rabbis Dani Schon
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM
Grand Deluxe breakfast served

Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah
at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn
at Strauss & Troy**
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

Thursday

🖐️🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM
Homemade refreshments served.

Minyanim Daylight Time

Shacharis
Sunday8:15 AM
Monday–Friday7:20 AM
ShabbosN/A

Mincha
Sunday7:45 PM
Monday–Thursday5:45 PM
Shabbos6:30 PM

Ma'ariv
In the Beis Midrash:
Sunday–Wednesday9:45 PM
Thursday10 PM
ShabbosN/A

Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**
(Maseches B'choros)
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**
Live video conference!
Rabbi Dani Schon.....
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**
Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**
Rabbis Dani Schon
& Binyamin Teitelbaum
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

Chavrusa Learning
(private & small groups).....times vary

Self-Fulfilling Prophecies CONT'D

Torah scholar. He knew she could have had a wide choice of suitors, since her father was both a Torah scholar and very wealthy. When Rachel chose Akiva, she was, in effect, telling him that *he* had the ability to become the Torah scholar she was looking for. And that was all that was needed. Rabbi Akiva was convinced that this great woman saw it in him, and that enabled him to do it.

Experts in the field warn us, for this reason, never to tell a child, “You are

bad,” even when the child’s misbehaving. Rather, parents should say, “You are acting the way a bad child would act, which does not suit you.”

Maybe this is why it is common practice, at weddings and *sheva b'rachos* (the week of celebrations afterward), to exaggerate and portray the bride and groom as greater people, perhaps, then

they really are. This might be, in part, to motivate them to climb to those heights, and to set their sights higher.

The lesson for us is to shoot high and far, and to think highly of ourselves. If we perceive ourselves as lowly grasshoppers, that is what we will become. But if we set our sights on higher things, we can reach them. 🙏

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