

King Arthur & Korach:

Uncovering the Secret "Sin" of Rabbi Akiva's Students

I – The Day Before Arthur was King



"Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is rightwise king born."

-Merlin (*La Morte de Arthur*)

1. Yevamos 62b

Rabbi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of students, and they all died in a short timespan because they did not treat each other with honor.

שנים עשר אלף זוגים תלמידים היו לו
לרבי עקיבא ... וכולן מתו בפרק אחד
מפני שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה

II – Honoring or Acting?

2. Sefer Hamitzvos

1. To <u>honor</u> one's father and mother	1. לכבד אב ואם (Mitzvah 210)	Parents
2. To <u>fear</u> one's father and mother	2. לירא מאב ואם (Mitzvah 211)	
1. To appoint a king whose <u>fear</u> should be placed upon you and be in awe from <u>honor</u>	1. למנות מלך שתהא אימתו מוטלת עליך ושייאמן בו מהכבוד (Mitzvah 173)	King

3. Kiddushin 30b

There are three partners in creating a person: Hashem, father, and mother. When a person <u>honors</u> one's parents, Hashem says, "it is as if I lived amongst them and you <u>honored</u> me."	שלושה שותפין הן באדם הקב"ה ואביו ואמו בזמן שאדם <u>מכבד</u> את אביו ואת אמו אמר הקב"ה מעלה אני עליהם כאילו דרתי <u>בניהם וכבדוני</u>
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"Let my people go!"

4. Shemos Rabbah 7:3

And [say] to Pharaoh King of Egypt to send out the Children of Israel - Hashem said [to Moshe and Aharon], " <u>Treat Pharaoh with honor</u> for the monarchy."	ואל פרעה מלך מצרים להוציא את בני ישראל... אמר להן הקדוש ברוך הוא הוּא הוּא <u>נוהגין בו כבוד</u> וחלקו כבוד למלכות
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III – Merlin vs. Dennis



Women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government!

Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony!

-Dennis (Monty Python & the Holy Grail)

Kad Hakemach (R' Bachya)

אין מלך בלא עם

There is no king without a nation

5. Laws of Kings 2:1

We treat the king with great honor and place fear of him in everyone's hearts.

As it says, "And you shall surely appoint a king upon you" – that you should place his fear upon you.

כבוד גדול נוהגין במלך ומשימין לו אימה ויראה בלב כל אדם שני שום תשים שתהא אימתו עליך

III – Korach and Miriam's Error

6. Bamidbar 12:2 & 16:3

And they said, "Does Hashem only speak to Moshe? Hashem also speaks to us!"

ויאמרו הרק אב־בְּמִשְׁהָ דְּבַר יְהוָה הֲלֵא גַם־בְּנוֹ דְּבַר וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה

For the entire nation is holy, and Hashem is in their midst.

כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כְּלֵם קְדוֹשִׁים וּבְתוֹכֶם יְהוָה



Which person looks different than all the others?

7. Numbers 12: 6-8

G-d said, "Please listen to My words. If there be prophets among you, [I] the Lord will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak to him in a dream.	וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּנִי דְבַרֵי אִם־ יְהִי נְבִיאֵכֶם יִהְיֶה בְּמַרְאֵה אֵלָיו אֶתְוַדַּע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר־ בּוֹ
Not so is My servant Moses; he is faithful throughout My house.	לֹא־כֵן עַבְדִּי מֹשֶׁה בְּכָל־ בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמָן הוּא
With him I speak mouth to mouth; in a vision and not in riddles, and he beholds the image of the Lord.	פֶּה אֶל־פֶּה אֲדַבֵּר־בּוֹ וּמַרְאֵה וְלֹא בְּחִידֹת וַתִּמְנַת ה' יְבִיט

8. M'oray Aish (Rabbi Ari Kahn)

Rav Soloveitchik once explained in the name of his grandfather that Miriam knew that her brother was a

great prophet... Her mistake lay in failing to grasp or accept the qualitative difference between Moshe's prophecy and her own. She mistakenly believed that she and Aharon were in the same "league" as their brother Moshe. This was clearly not the case: Moshe towered above all others. He was on a completely different level



9. Exodus 34: 29-35

<p>29 And it came to pass when Moses descended from Mount Sinai, and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses' hand when he descended from the mountain and <u>Moses did not know that the skin of his face had become radiant</u> while He had spoken with him</p>	<p>כט וַיְהִי בְרִדְתּוֹ מִשָּׁה מֵהָרֶם סִינַי וְשֵׁנָי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה בְּרִדְתּוֹ מִן־הָהָר וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא־יָדַע כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו בְּדַבְּרוֹ אִתּוֹ:</p>
<p>30 And Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses and <u>behold the skin of his face had become radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.</u></p>	<p>ל וַיֵּרָא אֶהָרֶן וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְהִנֵּה קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו וַיִּירָאוּ מִגִּשְׁתֹּת אֵלָיו:</p>
<p>34 When Moses would come before the Lord to speak with Him, he would remove the covering until he left; then he would leave and speak to the children of Israel what he would be commanded.</p>	<p>לד וּבָבֹא מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי ה' לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ יִסֹּר אֶת־הַמַּסְוֶה עַד־צֵאתוֹ וַיֵּצֵא וְדִבֶּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה:</p>
<p>35 Then the children of Israel would see Moses' face, that the skin of Moses' face had become radiant, and [then] Moses would replace the covering over his face until he would come [again] to speak with Him.</p>	<p>לה וּרְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה וְהִשִּׁיב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמַּסְוֶה עַל־פָּנָיו עַד־בֹּאוֹ לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ:</p>

10. Sifrei (Numbers) 153:2

<p>Moshe prophesized with the language of "so says G-d," and other prophets prophesized with the language of "so says G-d." Moshe had the <u>added</u> degree of</p>	<p>מֹשֶׁה נִתְנַבֵּא בְּ"כֹה אָמַר ה'"... וְהַנְּבִיאִים נִתְנַבְּאוּ בְּ"כֹה אָמַר ה'", מוֹסַף</p>
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prophecy with the language of "This is the thing [that G-d said]."

עֲלֵיהֶם מִשָּׁה שֶׁנִּתְנַבֵּא
בְּשׁוֹן "זֶה הַדְּבָר"

11. Gur Aryeh Bamidbar 30:2

When Moshe prophesized about non-Torah matters, his clarity of prophecy was like all other prophets.

גם כאשר הוא מתנבא דברי העולם אין
אפשרות אפילו למשה לראותם באספקלריה
המאירה.

IV – Rabbi Akiva's Students

12. Pirkei Avos 6:3

One who learns from a friend one chapter, one law, one verse, one statement, or even one word of Torah must treat his friend with honor.

הַלּוֹמֵד מִחֲבֵרוֹ פָּרֵק אֶחָד אוֹ הַלְּקָה
אֶחָת אוֹ פְּסוּק אֶחָד אוֹ דְּבַר אֶחָד אוֹ
אֶפְלוֹ אוֹת אֶחָת, צְרִיף לְנִהוּג בּוֹ כְּבוֹד