Class # 38– Parshat Korach: the surprising role of modesty in mitzva life

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class

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Video: <http://www.israelvideonetwork.com/this-rabbi-is-a-human-google-and-has-been-labeled-israels-national-physician/>

1. What value does the Rabbi place on human life?
2. In what way is the rabbi’s medical work an “Avodah” -service to Hashem
3. Is the Rabbi interested in recognition, why or why not?
4. How does the Rabbi’s interest in recognition differ from other exceptional doctors and scientists?
5. Why do exceptional doctors and scientists need the nobel prize ?
6. What does the need for prizes and recognition say about the fulfillment one is getting from the intrinsic service itself?

The modest person, has a realistic sense of the human condition. This realistic sense is reflected in the way the modest person engages in proper *Avodah*. Proper *Avodah* is productive of real value for mankind and as such provides a life of meaning for the doer.

The immodest person has an unrealistic sense that mankind should serve his need for recognition and greatness.  The immodest person lacks understanding of the intrinsic value of their proper act of service, instead *Avodah* is hijacked to realize their own boundless need for recognition.

[מיכה ו׳:ח׳](http://www.sefaria.org/Micah.6.8)

(ח) הִגִּ֥יד לְךָ֛ אָדָ֖ם מַה־טּ֑וֹב וּמָֽה־יְהוָ֞ה דּוֹרֵ֣שׁ מִמְּךָ֗ כִּ֣י אִם־עֲשׂ֤וֹת מִשְׁפָּט֙ וְאַ֣הֲבַת חֶ֔סֶד וְהַצְנֵ֥עַ לֶ֖כֶת עִם־אֱלֹהֶֽיךָ׃ (פ)

[Micah 6:8](http://www.sefaria.org/Micah.6.8)

(8) It has been told to you, O man, what is good, And what HaShem requires of you: Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk ***modestly*** with your G-d.

Babylonian Talmud – Sukkah 49B

[סוכה מ״ט ב](http://www.sefaria.org/Sukkah.49b.31-45)

מאי דכתיב (מיכה ו, ח) הגיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה ה' דורש ממך כי אם עשות משפט ואהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלהיך עשות משפט זה הדין ואהבת חסד זו גמילות חסדים והצנע לכת עם אלהיך זו הוצאת המת והכנסת כלה לחופה והלא דברים ק"ו ומה דברים שדרכן לעשותן בפרהסיא אמרה תורה הצנע לכת דברים שדרכן לעשותן בצנעא על אחת כמה וכמה

[Sukkah 49b](http://www.sefaria.org/Sukkah.49b.31-45) What is the implication of the text, “It has been told to you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8): ‘To do justly’ means [to act in accordance with] justice; ‘to love mercy’ refers to acts of loving kindness’, ‘and to walk humbly with your God’ refers to attending to funerals and providing a bride with a dowry for her wedding. Now can we not make an a fortiori deduction: If in matters which are normally performed publicly the Torah says ‘to walk humbly’, how much more so in matters that are normally done privately?

Sukkah 49B - Rashi:

**הוצאת המת והכנסת כלה** - דכתיב בהו לכת טוב ללכת אל בית אבל מלכת אל בית משתה (קהלת ז) אף שם צריך הצנע לסעוד במדה נאה ולשמוח במדה נאה ולא להנהיג קלות ראש בעצמו וי"א אם צריך לבזבז להוצאת מת עני או להכנסת כלה ענייה יעשה בצנעא ולא לימא קמי מאן דלא ידע דעבדי [כן] וכן מפרש בשאלתות דרב אחאי:

**Attending to funerals and providing a bride with a dowry for her wedding:** Kohelet ch.7 states, “it’s better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the wedding hall”, yet even in the case of the [wedding] you need to conduct yourself with modesty, to eat a proper amount, rejoice a proper amount and not to act with levity. Others say [acting modestly at the wedding and funeral means], if you need to pay for a poor person funeral or wedding you should do it discreetly, and not mention it before others who are unaware that you contributed [to these poor people].

*Korach's Rebellion*

**Bamidbar Ch. 16:1**

16:1 [Korach son of Yitz'har (a grandson of Kehoth and great-grandson of Levi)](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3039) [began a rebellion](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3040) along with [Dathan and Aviram (sons of Eliav)](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3041) and [On son of Peleth](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3042), descendants of Reuben. 16:2 They had a confrontation with Moses along with 250 Israelites who were men of rank in the community, [representatives](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3043) at the [assembly](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3044), and [famous](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3045). 16:3 They demonstrated against Moses and Aaron, and declared to them, '[You have gone too far](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3046)! All the people in the community are holy, and God is with them. Why are you setting yourselves above God's congregation?' 16:4 When Moses heard this, he threw himself on his face. 16:5 Then he spoke to Korach and his whole party. '[[Tomorrow] morning](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3047),' he said, 'God [[will show that He](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3048)] knows who is His and who is holy, and [He will bring them close to Him](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3049). He shall choose those who shall [be allowed to] [present [offerings]](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3050) to Him. 16:6 'This is what you must do: Let Korach and his entire party take [fire pans](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3051). 16:7 Tomorrow, place [fire](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3052) on them and offer [incense](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3053) on them before God. The man whom God chooses shall then be the holy one. You sons of Levi have [also] gone too far!' 16:8 Moses tried to reason with Korach. 'Listen [to what I have to say], you sons of Levi. 16:9 Isn't it enough that the God of Israel has separated you from the community of Israel? He has brought you close to Him, allowing you to serve in God's Tabernacle and to minister as the community's leaders. 16:10 Although He gave this privilege to you and all your fellow Levites, you are now also demanding the priesthood! 16:11 It is [actually](http://bible.ort.org/books/pentd2.asp?ACTION=displaypage&BOOK=4&CHAPTER=16#C3054) against God that you and your party are demonstrating! After all, who is Aaron that you should have grievances against him?'

1. What was Korach’s status in Israel?
2. What intrinsic value is produced by the avodah of the tribe of Levi, of which  Korach was a member?
3. Was Korach satisfied with the intrinsic value of his service?
4. What service did Korach want? Why?
5. What does Korach’s need of status say about the fulfillment he was finding in his current role?

**Rashi – Bamidbar Ch. 16:1**

**Dathan and Abiram:** Since the tribe of Reuben was settled in the south when they camped, thus being neighbors of Kohath and his children who were also camped in the south, they joined with Korah in his rebellion. Woe to the wicked, and woe to his neighbor!

**Now what made Korah decide to quarrel with Moses?** He envied the chieftainship of Elizaphan the son of Uzziel whom Moses appointed as chieftain over the sons of Kohath by the [Divine] word.

Korah claimed, “My father and his brothers were four [in number]” as it says, “The sons of Kohath were…” ([Exod. 6:18)](http://www.chabad.org/9867#v18). Amram was the first, and his two sons received greatness-one a king and one a kohen gadol.

Who is entitled to receive the second [position]? Is it not I, who am the son of Izhar, who is the second brother to Amram? And yet, he [Moses] appointed to the chieftainship the son of his youngest brother! I hereby oppose him and will invalidate his word (Midrash Tanchuma Korach 1, Num. Rabbah 18:2).

1. According to Rashi, why did Korach think he deserved the higher rank? What metric did he use in choosing the rank of a person?
2. What metric did Moshe use (Yitzchak vs Yishmael, Yaakov vs Esau, Reuben vs Yosef, Levi vs first born)