



יואל ווערצבערגער,
נשיא מכון

THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

והגדת
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לרפואה שלמה בראנדל בת חי' - נדבת בעלה ילדיה ונכדיה

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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Naming Names

This week's parashah opens with a list of names (*Bamidbar* 16:1). Korach, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather are mentioned, but not his great-great-grandfather. His great-great-grandfather was Yaakov Avinu, and we are taught that the reason Yaakov is not mentioned here is because he requested that his name not be included when Korach's lineage was described during his rebellious period (*Bereishis* 49:6).

Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 109b) offer homiletic interpretations of these names that are associated with the story of Korach being swallowed up. The name Korach can be understood as hinting to the idea that Korach created a bald spot among the Jewish people, meaning that when he and his followers were swallowed up by the earth, they left a bald spot within the ranks of the Jewish nation.

His father was Yitzhar. That name can be understood as hinting to noontime, meaning that Korach provoked anger as intense as the heat of midday. His grandfather's name was Kehas. That name can be understood as hinting to the idea that Korach brought shame upon his distinguished ancestors, as he sat on the edge of the teeth of those who gave birth to him. Finally, he was a great-grandson of Levi. The name Levi can be understood as hinting to the idea that because Korach and his followers were swallowed together, he did not go alone but served as an escort to the others who were swallowed up as well.

However, the question becomes: What would have happened had Yaakov not requested to be omitted? Would the Torah have mentioned his name as well and found a homiletic interpretation for it? Would that

scenario have stopped after listing his four ancestors, or would it have found homiletic interpretations for Yitzchak and Avraham too?

Or perhaps, had Yaakov not requested to be omitted, no names beyond Korach's own would have been mentioned—not even his father's—because the Torah mentions his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather specifically in order to highlight Yaakov's exclusion.

YIRAS SHAMAYIM

R' Avraham Chaim of Zlotchov (*Orach Lichaim*) cites the Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 85a), which states that when there are three consecutive generations of Torah scholars, the next generation does not have to exert as much effort to acquire Torah knowledge because

ר' אברהם חיים ב"ר גדליה מזלוטשוב

R' Avraham Chaim (8 Tishrei 1726-26 Teves 1816) was a student of the leaders of the second generation of the Chassidic movement: The Maggid of Mezeritch (c. 1700 - 1772), and R' Yechiel Michel (1726-1784) of Zlotchov, Ukraine both of them students of R' Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov (c. 1695 - 1760). R' Avraham Chaim also studied under R' Shmuel Shmelke Horowitz (1726-1778) of Nikolsburg, ultimately marrying his niece, Malka, daughter of R' Pinchas Horowitz (1731-1805) of Frankfurt, author of the *Haflah* and *Panim Yafos* among other sefarim. After suffering years of childlessness, the couple divorced, and R' Avraham Chaim married the daughter of R' Yissachar Ber, the Rav of Zlotchov. R' Avraham Chaim was appointed the Rav of Zbariv, Ukraine, until 1793, when his father-in-law R' Yissachar Ber emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, and R' Avraham Chaim replaced him as the Rav of Zlotchov. Although not blessed with biological children, he raised several orphans, including his wife's son Yosef Azriel, and Yekusiel Shmelka (1800-1861) the son of R' Moshe Leib (1745-1807) of Sassov. R' Avraham Chaim prepared a volume of his teachings, entitled *Orach L'Chaim*, that was ultimately published posthumously (Berditchev, 1817). In 1873, 2 additional volumes of his teachings (on Avos, and on the Haggadah), were published in Lvov, entitled *Pri Chaim*.



the Torah naturally returns to its home—that is, to such a family.

The Zlotchover explains that this concept is limited to Torah knowledge. It does not apply to becoming a *yarei Shamayim* or a *tzaddik*. In those areas, a person has free choice to continue along the path established by his ancestors or, Heaven forbid, to choose a different direction.

The Torah here stresses that Korach had three ancestors who were *tzaddikim*. Therefore, it would have been easier for him to continue in their path, and the merits of his ancestors would have guided him toward success. Nevertheless, he still possessed the freedom to choose a different direction.

He adds that this is the meaning of the opening words, “And Korach took.” He separated himself and removed himself from the path that had been set before him. He used his free choice in a harmful way.

R' NAFTALI TZVI STERN

R' Naftali Tzvi Stern takes the idea one step further.

Korach looked upon his ancestors with great admiration and recognized how great they were. However, this appreciation caused him to become arrogant and demand greater honor for himself.

According to the first explanation, we should learn to be very careful not to rely on our ancestors



and to recognize that we possess free choice and are responsible for our own actions. According to the second explanation, we should learn to be careful that our lineage does not become the very cause of our downfall, just as Korach's ancestors ultimately contributed to his straying from the proper path.

These ideas are not limited to ancestry; they apply to all of our talents and gifts. One should be careful not to rely solely on natural talent, but rather to recognize that success requires effort and hard work. At the same time, one must be careful not to allow natural talent itself to become the cause of his downfall.

ר' נפתלי צבי שטרן

R' Naftali Tzvi Stern passed away at 25 years old (7 Cheshvan 1879). This sefer was printed in 1900 by his father from the notebook that he found. He explains that the title, *Girsa Diyankisa*, was because the Torah was from when his son was young. In 1875, the Yetev Lev wrote, “My Yedid is worthy of having the title *Moreinu*.” Rabbi Moshe Panethwrites, “He was respected by the Gedolei HaDor. I knew him and saw how he constantly learned with *mesiras nefesh*”

Mazel Tov

The Zera Emes Project extends a heartfelt Mazel Tov to the Eisenberg/Fried and Friedlander families on their children's marriage. (The Eisenberg/Fried families - especially the choson, Gedalya - facilitated the reprinting of the Fisher Family Legacy Haggadah.)

The Zera Emes Project extends a heartfelt Mazel Tov to R' and Mrs. Tzodek Katz and R' and Mrs. A Weiss on their children's marriage. R' and Mrs Tzodek have been involved with the Zera Emes Project from the beginning.