

שִׁינָה לֹא בְּחֶדֶשׁ – מְרִיבָה אוֹת יַעֲלֶה-יָדַי

Strife Makes People Famous Too Soon

THE TEACHING

A teaching connected to the Sefer HaMiddos, under strife (מְרִיבָה): through the strife (מַחֲלָקָה) in the world, people become famous before their time (מִפְּרָסְמִים קִדְּם זְמַנָּם).

One who enters the service of Hashem (עֲבוֹדַת הַשֵּׁם) must wait and linger before he becomes known. Strife exposes him too early, and that harms the person, and even the path he came to reveal. It brings death upon the people of strife, or, when the damage is smaller, poverty (עֲנִיּוֹת).

MAIN POINTS

- The secret is in the Torah's law: “וְכִי יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים יַחְדָּו וְנִגְפּוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה וְיֵצְאוּ יְלָדֶיהָ” (שמות כא:כב), “when men quarrel and strike a woman with child, and her children come out.”
- Beginning a new path is like pregnancy (הָרִיוָה): “בְּדֶרֶךְ חֻכְמָה הִרִיתִיךָ” (משלי ד:יא), “I have taught you in the way of wisdom.” The path must stay hidden and grow, like a child in the womb (עֶבֶר), until its time comes to go out into the world.
- Coming out too early is like a child born before its time (נִפְּלָה), and strife is what causes it.
- On “אִם לֹא יִהְיֶה אָסוֹן” (שמות כא:כב), “if there is no fatal harm”, Rashi says “בְּאִשָּׁה”, “to the woman.” Sometimes only the people who came out early are lost, and others can still enter that path of wisdom (דֶּרֶךְ חֻכְמָה) and reveal it.
- And sometimes the path itself is lost, so that no one else can bring it out into the world: that is like the death of the woman.
- As the damage, so the punishment: “עֲנוּשׁ יַעֲנֶשׁ” (שמות כא:כב), a fine of money, meaning poverty; or “וְנָתַתָּ נֶפֶשׁ תַּחַת נֶפֶשׁ” (שמות כא:כג), “a life for a life.” May Hashem save us.

A PRACTICAL TAKEAWAY · OUR OWN REFLECTION

Strife does damage far beyond the argument itself. Stay far from it. And when you begin something good, let it grow quietly until its time.

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