

"You may not discontinue the salt of your G-d's covenant from upon your meal offering, with all your sacrifices you shall offer salt." (2:13)

Salt symbolizes the covenant of Hashem. The commentators, noting the varied qualities of salt, infer different lessons from this *pasuk*. *Horav S.R. Hirsch z.l.* asserts that besides salt's practical use as an indispensable enhancer of the taste of food, it is both concretely and metaphorically used as the means of suppression of all vegetable growth. A field is rendered sterile if it is sown with salt. On the other hand, salt prevents decay from setting in. When we contemplate these two attributes of salt, the ability to retard growth and to prevent decay, we consider the traits of immutability and resistance to change. Salt seals an object into itself, so that it is rendered unsusceptible to transforming outside influences.

In that spirit, salt implies that the *Bris*, covenant, constitutes an unchanging bond, which does not yield to external pressure. Although *Bris* already represents a *mitzvah* which is observed under all circumstances and remains stable under all conditions, the attributes of salt emphasize the quality of unalterableness. That which is designated as "*Bris Melach*" reflects something which not only remains forever, but also remains unchanged.

Inasmuch as the salt which is the sign of the covenant is to be brought from the *tzibbur*, national treasury, the implication is that the covenant is the charge of the nation. *Klal Yisrael* is, therefore, empowered with the endurance and immutability of this covenant. Its meaning and its authority is not subject to the whim of the individual, but rather it is the inviolate obligation of the nation collectively, to uphold this covenant as trustee and guarantor.

Horav Elie Munk z.l. attributes another quality to salt, its stabilizing element. This quality results from the interaction of fire and water, such as when salt is produced by the heat of the sun evaporating sea water. Salt is designated as *Bris Elokim*, the covenant of Hashem. This covenant represents the alliance between the opposing natural elements of fire and water. It symbolizes the guarantee of Hashem's covenant with man, a covenant founded upon the harmonious union of two antagonistical principles, love and justice.

Horav Nissan Alpert z.l. concentrates on salt's use as a preservative. He explains that salt preserves by removing the blood and other impurities from the meat. Once the elements which cause meat to spoil are extracted, the meat lasts it for a long period of time. This concept can be similarly adapted to people. One can have exceptional qualities and talents, but if he is not cleansed of his iniquities, he will be morally stagnant.

Korach's behavior suggests this idea. Korach had everything, including brilliance, family lineage, and wealth. Unfortunately, he also was imbued with various moral impurities of which he did not cleanse himself. This catalyzed his downfall. Man is likened to a fertile field, which contains

stones and weeds to be removed before planting can effectively begin. If these impediments to successful growth are not removed, the individual, like the field, will disintegrate into decay.

This is the *Torah's* message: "*With all sacrifices you shall offer salt.*" If one wishes to scale the mountain of Hashem, to reach the height of sublimity, he must first purge himself of his moral contaminants, so that his approach to Hashem will be pure.