

## BE A THINKING PERSON!

### PARSHAS KORACH

Korach was exceedingly smart and was one of the richest men in history. He had the privilege of being from the family of Kehas, which was privileged to carry the holy Aron HaKodesh. He was also a prophet, seeing futuristically the great people who would be his descendants. Unfortunately, all this was not enough for him. Korach became jealous of an appointment which he felt that he should have received. As a result of his jealousy, Korach instigated a terrible dispute and questioned the legitimacy of Moshe and Aharon's leadership. His dispute was actually against the validity of the Torah and Hashem. Korach and his followers were, therefore, punished by being burnt, by the earth swallowing them up, or a combination of both.

Korach falsely accused Moshe of having made up parts of the Torah. Korach approached Moshe in a very demeaning way. Korach said that it did not make sense that a garment made totally of techailles (blueish wool) still needed a string of techailles tzitzis. He claimed that a room full of Sifrei Torah should not need a mezuzah on the doorpost (**Rashi** on Bamidbar 16:1). Korach then told Moshe and Aharon that the entire Jewish People were holy, and that Moshe and Aharon had taken too much of the leadership for themselves (Bamidbar 16:3). Moshe & Aharon were devastated by the serious dispute that Korach was promulgating. The **Torah** (Bamidbar 16:4) records Moshe's reaction. "And Moshe heard and fell on his face." **Rashi** explains that this was already the fourth major sin that the Jews were involved in. Moshe's tefillos had saved them until now. Moshe felt that this was one time too many and he could not approach Hashem in prayer. Interestingly, what was Aharon's reaction? Why didn't he also fall on his face? **Rabbeinu Bachya** explains that Korach's main complaint was directed at Aaron's appointment as Kohain Gadol. It would have been unbecoming for the modest Aaron to remonstrate by displaying such a reaction. The **Ramban** explains that Aaron, in his modesty and holiness, did not utter a word throughout this whole

*"And Moshe  
heard and fell on  
his face."  
(Bamidbar 16:4)*

controversy. He held his peace, seemingly admitting that Korach's status was greater than his own, and that he had only become the Kohain Gadol because that was what Hashem had wanted.

**Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Beifus** in Yalkut Lekach Toy, quotes the **Midrash Rabbah** (Bamidbar 18:9) gives an example of Aharon's extreme modesty at an earlier point in time. At the dedication of the Mishkan, Moshe anointed Aharon. When the oil was placed on Aharon's head, he had trembled, feeling that perhaps he didn't deserve the appointment as Kohain Gadol. If that was true, then benefitting from the holy anointing oil would have deserved the serious punishment of kares.

The great Aharon was always contemplating if he truly deserved such honors. Korach was different. The **Midrash Rabbah** continues, that Moshe had told Korach numerous things to try to appease him and to calm his wrath. Korach did not respond to any of Moshe's entreaties. Korach did so intentionally. Korach said to himself that if he answered Moshe, Moshe would respond. Since Moshe was smarter than Korach, Korach was concerned that Moshe would counter all his arguments and win the debate. Korach was not interested in that, thus he remained silent.

by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

Aristotle was similar in this way to Korach. **Rabbi Yisroel Brog** quotes the **Rambam** as saying that Aristotle was so brilliant, that he was on a level just below prophecy. Aristotle should have recognized the obvious fact that there is Creator who created Man for a purpose. Just like Korach, Aristotle wanted to block the obvious from his mind. Aristotle was extremely immoral. He wanted to push the idea of Hashem out of his mind, to enable himself to continue in his immoral ways.

Aharon was a thinking person. Korach and Aristotle chose not to be thinking people. **Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto**, in the third perek of his sefer Mesilas Yesharim (Path of the Just) discusses the importance of being thinking people. Before we act, we should stop and think if the action is appropriate. If it is appropriate, we should think if there is any aspect of the act that can be improved. After we act, we should also stop and think. Was the action proper? Was there any aspect of it, in thought or deed, that could be improved for the future?

**If we go through life as thinking people, we will be better people. That refers to actions we do to others, as well as actions that we do to/for Hashem. We won't act in a rash manner, and we won't act inappropriately. We will have better quality and happier interpersonal relationships and a closer and better relationship with Hashem.**

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