

בס"ד

דברי תורה ד'צבי אליהו  
DIVREI TORAH

קרח

Korach

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## Playing Your Roll

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In Parshat Korach we read about the revolt led by Korach, a close relative of Moshe & Aharon, in which he and 250 men quarreled with Moshe over the elevation of Aharon to the priesthood. Korach himself was upset that Elizaphan ben Uzziel, another relative of theirs, was appointed head of the Kohathite family, the Levite group of which they all belonged. They felt all of this was a result of Moshe hoarding power for himself, and bestowing it upon those of his own personal choice.

Korach's rebellion occurred after the negative report brought by the spies about the Land of Israel. Interestingly, the bestowal of priesthood upon Aharon took place at least one year before the incident of the spies. This means that Korach waited at least a year before he decided to revolt against what he felt was an injustice. The obvious question is why would he wait so long? It's normal to dispute a situation at its outset and not wait until later to bring your grievances. Our Sages tell us that Korach was no fool, but actually a man of high spiritual stature. Therefore, we can say that his decision to wait must have been part of a tactical plan, but what?

The Torah and our Sages tell us that the spies who gave a bad report about Eretz Yisrael were not lowly individuals. They were the heads of the tribes and men of renown. They were not men who simply wanted to rebel against G-d's wishes. They actually had holy intentions behind their thought process. Chassidus explains that the spies felt that going into the Land of

Israel would be a tremendous spiritual descent for the Jewish people. Their situation in the desert was extraordinary! They had food, clothing that grew naturally on their bodies, the luxury of the Divine Presence dwelling with them in a revealed manner, they were learning Torah...they had it all! Going into the Land of Israel, having to engage in physical labor and seemingly taking away time from spiritual pursuits would surely bring them down many levels! This is why the spies mentioned that there were giants in the land. The Sages say that these giants were angels that had initially descended into this physical world for holy purposes, but had been spiritually degraded by the physical temptations of this world. The spies thought that if this were true, how much more so would the Jewish people become degraded if they were forced into this new lifestyle.

However, they failed to realize that the purpose of creation is for G-d to have a dwelling place in this lowest physical realm. This is His ultimate desire. This can't be accomplished by staying within the comfort zone of revealed G-dliness and by never confronting the challenges of the physical world. The only way to give G-d what he desires is to take physicality, work and refine it, and make it a vessel for G-dliness. This is itself a spiritual service and results in the ultimate elevation of the Jewish people.

Whereas every Jew may not reach the level of a talmid chocham (a wise student of Torah), every Jew *can* do the physical mitzvot that G-d has prescribed for us. In Torah study, some are on a higher level than others and may comprehend more. But in regards to mitzvot, every Jew does

the same act, whether a tzaddik, one deemed wicked, or anywhere in between. You put on tefillin or say Kiddush in the same physical way as any other Jew. Therefore, every Jew plays an integral part in refining the materials of this world that he or she must.

Now we can see why Korach waited to complain. The Kohanim were removed from matters of worldliness and physicality to a great degree. This was especially true of the Kohen Gadol. Their service was in maintaining the Tabernacle & Temple and imparting holiness upon the Jewish people. Korach understood that Moshe and Aharon were on an extremely high level. Such a lofty service like being Kohen Gadol was indeed proper for Aharon. Therefore, Korach did not raise a complaint when Aharon was elevated to this position. However, once the spies gave their negative report, and Moshe had to explain to them that the ultimate service was physical mitzvot, Korach saw fit to begin his attack. He argued that if the most important aspect is to elevate the world through the physical acts of mitzvot, which all Jews do the same as any other (even Moshe & Aharon), than how can Moshe & Aharon take all of the esteemed positions for themselves?! All of Israel witnessed the revelation at Sinai, all of them are G-d's children, and all of them do mitzvot, which are most vital to fulfilling G-d's purpose for creation! Therefore, Moshe & Aharon have no right to hoard all the power. Korach argued, "You two are the same as the rest of us!" Korach saw this as the most opportune time to bring his grievance and try to prove that Moshe & Aharon were taking too much of the lime light.

Sounds like a decent argument, huh? But this is only externally. Pnimiyus Hatorah teaches that there are two parts to a mitzvah. There is kavanah (intention), which serves as the soul of the mitzvah, and there's the actual act that serves as the body of it. When a person does a mitzvah without any kavanah whatsoever, not even simply thinking about the fact that he is doing G-d's will, then it is like a body without a soul and that mitzvah is not elevated to its highest spiritual destination. This is why it is important not to do mitzvot by rote, but to work to at least have a little kavanah behind what we're doing. And G-d, who can make something from nothing, can surely make a little into a lot.

This is what Korach failed to comprehend. Sure, the physical mitzvot that every Jew performs makes a dwelling place for G-d. It creates the structure so to say. But just like no one would want to dwell in a home with no lights, G-d's Essence does not want to dwell in a structure that is not yet infused with His Holy Light! This light comes from the kavanah involved in performing mitzvot. Moshe & Aharon had an advantage over the masses in that their deep intentions when performing mitzvot created tremendous illumination. Even though their physical act was the same as everyone, the soul of their deeds outshined that of others. They were chosen by G-d for their position due to being on such a level. Korach did not take this into account in his analysis. If he had done so, he would have internalized that he was in fact quarreling with G-d's decision, and not with Moshe & Aharon.

Every Jew must understand that there is a personal mission that they must fulfill. It is their own special mission, and their soul

must accomplish it. There is no need to be jealous or harbor hatred for another because of what elevated positions his or her mission might place them in. That is where G-d wanted them to be at that specific point in time and it may not be needed for you to be in such a position. You may not need as much money, power, or influence as the next person. Having it that way might actually throw you off the proper path to accomplishing what G-d wants. We are all precious in the eyes of G-d. We are all expected to get to the highest level we are personally able to

reach. We don't know how high that is, so we can never stop pushing and encouraging ourselves, and our brethren to reach new heights. But let's be happy when they get there, and let it inspire us to go further, knowing that we are all simply going where we're supposed to go, and doing what each of us is supposed to do to bring our righteous Moshiach.

*(In Honor of & based upon the teachings of Rebbe Menachem M. Schneerson ztl, hillula Tamuz 3)*