



## Parshas Korach 2019, the advance of the ego

*This Shabbos is Gimmel Tammuz, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the histalkus of the Lubavitcher Rebbe — Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Traditionally, this is a day for reflection, prayer, and positive action.*

Our Parsha begins with Korach staging a rebellion against Moshe Rabeinu and his brother Aaron. Together with a few ringleaders, he gathers 250 men and accuses them of nepotism and power hoarding. Their specific issue was Moshe appointing Aaron (*Moshe's brother*) as the Kohen Gadol.

Furthermore, they argued that since the entire Jewish nation was holy, there was no need for one person to lead them. Therefore, it was unnecessary for Moshe to be the leader of the Jewish nation. In response, Moshe proposed a test. The next day, each of them would bring an incense offering to the Mishkan, and G-d would let them know who was his chosen one.

G-d was immensely angered by the nation's association with Korach and wished to destroy them. However, Moshe and Aaron prayed on behalf of the Jewish people, and Instead, G-d made the earth open up to swallow Korach and the rest of the rebels.

However, a question comes to mind: Wasn't Korach a powerful man? Not only was he the great-grandson of Levi himself, but also Moshe and Aaron's first cousin. He was even able to participate in the service in the Mishkan! Why did he feel the need to rebel?

Furthermore, the Talmud in Sanhedrin (110a) explains that Korach was an extremely rich man. He obtained this wealth by finding one of the three treasures of Yosef Hatzadik. They were hidden by Yosef after accumulating an extreme amount of wealth

from selling grain during the years of famine. So why did he rebel against Moshe and Aaron if he was so fortunate to have both spiritual and physical prosperity?!

The answer lies in **egotism**. The ego is a very powerful force — a small amount can inspire, motivate, and drive a person to accomplish great things. As the Gemara in Sota (5a) shows, *"A Torah scholar should have a healthy ego, so he can have ambitions in his learning, and to influence others for the good."*

However, any more than that can be lethal. For example, Korach! He was successful in both spiritual and physical matters. He saw that he was destined to have a great Prophet — Shmuel Ha'Navi — be his descendant. Unfortunately, this inflated his ego and drove him to rebel against the greatest leader of all time, Moshe.

Because of his ego, he thought he could lead and do a better job than Moshe. This stemmed from the many positive qualities that he felt that he could take a stance against Moses and Aaron. which ultimately led to his downfall.

In Judaism, there is a very fine line between acceptable and unacceptable amounts of ego. We must be mindful not to exceed our limits and be haughty, as the consequences can be grave. As the pasuk in Mishlei says, *"Every haughty heart is an abomination to G-d, and he will not go unpunished."* But we must serve G-d, knowing we are extremely important to Him; therefore, each of our thoughts, sentences, and actions can greatly impact this world.

In our daily life, you can lead or be led. You can lead your life by learning from others and growing from the misdeeds of your past actions, which will inspire you to stay strong when tested.

Alternatively, you can be led by your ego, which would blind you to the true reality of your situation and lead you to make irrational and harmful choices for your spiritual and physical life. Furthermore, it would stop you from achieving your true potential and being your true self. Therefore, humility is an invaluable resource that we must treasure.

***"Cherish criticism, for it will place you on the true heights."***

-The Rebbe Rashab, the 5th Chabad Rebbe

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*