



## *Parshas Korach 2021, the wrath of the moment*

*This Sunday is the third of Tammuz, which marks twenty-six years since the passing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson. Traditionally, this is a day for reflection, re-commitment, and above all, positive action.*

Our Parsha begins with Korach staging a rebellion against Moshe and his brother Aaron. Together with a few ringleaders, he gathers 250 men and accuses Moshe and Aaron of nepotism and power hoarding. They took specific issues with Moshe’s appointment of his brother Aaron as the Kohen Gadol, the high priest.

Furthermore, they argued that since the Jewish nation was all holy, there is no need for any person to be higher than the other. Therefore Moshe Rabbeinu didn’t have to hold the position of leader of the Jewish people.

In response, Moshe proposed that they all participate in a test the next day, which would determine who indeed was chosen to be the Kohen Gadol. Everyone would bring an incense offering in the Mishkan, and then G-d would make his choice known.

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

Yet, Korach’s punishment did not stop the others from continuing to rebel against Moshe and Aaron. So G-d instructed Moshe about the test of the sticks.

A leader from each tribe would have their name written upon their sticks, and they would be placed overnight in the Holy of Holies. The stick that blossomed and bloomed with any growth or vegetation would be recognized as G-d’s chosen leader.

Moshe then gathered sticks from the tribes and placed them overnight in the Holy of Holies as G-d instructed. The following day, all the leaders gathered as Moshe retrieved their sticks. Needless to say, only Aaron's stick had blossomed miraculously with ripe almonds. This test demonstrated decisively that Moshe and Aaron were the chosen and elected leaders by G-d.

However, a question comes to mind: When Korach initially rebelled, Moshe suggested that they all offer the incense offering and watch whose offering was accepted. As the Pasuk writes (16:5), *"Come in the morning, and G-d will make known who is His."* But why did Moshe stall and delay the test that could potentially suppress this developing rebellion? Why did he want to wait till the following day to end this revolt and mutiny?!

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh (*Rav Chaim Ibn Attar, a well-known Moroccan Kabbalist from the early 1700s*) writes that Moshe was attempting to save those who would give the incense offering. As the Torah details the story (*Vayikra 10:2*) of the untimely death of Aaron's two sons, Nadav and Avinu. They were killed by bringing *"a foreign fire that G-d had not commanded them to give."*

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh explains that Korach came to Moshe in the afternoon just following the incense offering. Therefore, Moshe recommended that they wait until the morning to bring the offering, so it would not be considered *"a foreign fire that G-d had not commanded them to give."*

However, Rashi gives a simple but immensely powerful explanation. He writes that Moshe saw the intense and radical rage that Korach inflamed within his followers. Being the faithful leader he was, Moshe wanted to save the people actively rebelling against him.

He wished to stop them from going down a path that they can't return. From continuing on a journey that can only lead to the death of thousands of his Jewish brothers. Hence, he stated, *"let's wait till the next morning."*

Moshe hoped their passion would diminish and decline through delaying and waiting till the morning. Their anger towards him would subside, and common sense would take hold of them again. So they can realize the inherent contradiction and inconsistency of Korach's claims.

He first claimed that every Jew is Holy and a child of G-d; therefore, there is no need for a leader. Yet, he also argued that he should have been the one who was anointed as the Kohen Gadol, the high priest.

Furthermore, most of the people who died for Korach's cause had **NO** actual part in his fight. Because they were from the tribe of Reuven, who could not ever serve in the Mishkan or Beis Hamikdash. For Ya'akov Avinu took away their priesthood as a punishment for Reuven moving his bed into Leah's tent.

Yet, somehow Korach managed to convince them to join him in his endeavor to serve as the high priest. So by delaying till the next morning, Moshe hoped that Korach's followers would cool off and realize the apparent insanity of their leader and his demands.

In our daily life, it is imperative that we understand that **to engage while in a fit of rage is the essence of idiocy**. For anger can propel and cause a person to ignore **ALL** values, morals, and principles to satisfy their temper. To make decisions that only protect their pride and arrogance rather than doing what is correct and truly necessary. In their rage, some will take out their frustrations on those who are incapable of defending themselves.

This crucial and vital lesson is apparent in both our spiritual and physical lives. As the Rambam writes (*Sefer Madda, Hilchos De'os 2:3*) that a person who is angry is considered as if they have done idol worship. For during that moment, they have kneeled to the statue of themselves.

***“A second of patience in a moment of anger  
saves you a hundred moments of regret.”***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*