

# **Dvar Torah** by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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## **KORACH**

Parshat Korach contains two areas of complaints against Moshe. The first is the well-known dispute with Korach. In Bamidbar 16:21, we find G-d instructing Moshe and Aharon, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment." In the following verse it states, "And they fell upon their faces and said "O' G-d, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin and You be angry with the entire assembly?"

G-d responded by instructing Moshe to "Speak to the assembly saying, 'Go up from all around the dwelling places of Korach, Datan and Aviram.'" They are swallowed up and Moshe and Aharon are vindicated by G-d. The very next day, 17:6, "The entire assembly of the Israelites complained on the morrow against Moshe and Aharon saying, 'You have killed the people of G-d!' You would think that after what they saw the previous day, they would be a bit more inhibited in their complaints. Thus, they held Moshe accountable for the death of the people. There remain some unanswered questions in these two cases of complaints against Moshe.

Firstly, why, in the episode with Korach does G-d instruct Moshe and Aaron "Separate yourselves" while later, during the people's complaint, G-d says, "Get yourselves up"? Secondly, during the Korach episode, Moshe intervenes only on behalf of the innocent and G-d responds accordingly, waiting for those that are innocent to separate from Korach. However, at the time of the people's complaint, Moshe intervenes on behalf of all the people, yet G-d immediately takes retribution and fourteen thousand, seven hundred died. Why?

Rabbi Moshe Silverman pointed out that Moshe cannot save Korach. His actions were premediated, and guilt was clear.

It is to Korach to save himself by backing down. He does not and he is swallowed up. However, Moshe can and does separate himself and the rest of the Jewish people. Thus, in the next verse, he falls asking G-d to exonerate the people in this case. G-d listens and spares the people. In the second scenario, when the people complained they did so with malice. They believed that two hundred fifty quality people died when they could have been spared. They did not know that this was from G-d.

Thus, when Moshe hears G-d's plan, being asked to "Get yourselves up from among this assembly and I shall

destroy them in an instant", in the very same verse "he falls on his face" showing G-d that he does not want to get up and remove himself from guiding these people. Moshe immediately responded to G-d when told to "Separate" in reference to the death of Korach, while he did not immediately respond to G-d when told to "Get yourselves up" when the people complained. Moshe is not even offended by their challenge; he is only concerned about preserving their well-being and showing them their error. Perhaps, this is what we should be looking at in life. Disputes are based on error - not malice - need to be approached as Moshe Rabbeinu did: First, by immediately showing concern about the party that is in error, secondly, by taking caring action to help show their mistake and finally, saving the party from further pain by putting an end to the specific situation that caused the error. 🛟