

## Korach

How could it be?

Korach was a smart man. The Sages of the Talmud tell us so. Moshe Rabenu was a modest and humble man. He was the most modest and humble man on earth. Yet Korach (the smart man) said to Moshe Rabenu (the humble man), "Why do you make yourself more important than the rest of the community?" Was Korach not smart? Or was Moshe Rabenu not humble? Otherwise—how could it be?

Furthermore, when the daughters of Tzelaphad came to Moshe Rabenu demanding that they be included in the land distribution (of Eretz Yisroel) because their father had no sons, Moshe had to consult Hashem as to what to do. So *Chazal* (our Sages of the Talmud) tell us that this was an embarrassment in return for what he had previously told the Jewish judges whom he had appointed that "any matter of difficulty, you bring to me." This incident was specifically geared to indicate, for all to see, that Moshe Rabenu did not have all the answers and that in fact he had to turn to Hashem. How can we explain this event. Moshe Rabenu, the most humble person ever, should say that "any matter of difficulty you should bring to me." Was then Korach correct in claiming that Moshe Rabenu was projecting a feeling of self-importance?

No. Korach was absolutely wrong. Moshe Rabenu—when he said "any matter of difficulty you should bring to me"—did not, for even one moment, wish to suggest that he had all the answers. What Moshe Rabenu meant was that you will bring these problems to me and I will ask Hashem. However, seeing that there were people like Korach, who although they were smart, because they were impressed with their own self-importance, they could misunderstand and claim Moshe Rabenu was placing an emphasis on his own importance.

And this is why Moshe Rabenu was presented with the problem of the daughters of Tzelaphad. Because he had made a statement which could be interpreted as being ego-centered, he was presented

with a question that he could not answer, so that all could see, that without “batting an eyelid” and with no embarrassment at all, Moshe Rabenu said, “I don’t know” and turned to Hashem for the answer.

This is what *Chazal* (in the Mishna) say “Sages, be careful with your words”—they may be misinterpreted by others who do not share the same pure values.

And *Chazal* also said (in the Mishna) “Do not judge someone until you are in his situation.” Beware of misreading the inner intentions of a spiritual leader. Your own criteria may be inaccurate in judging him.

In order for one to protect himself from the above mentioned errors he should study Torah daily. He will then be assured of appreciating the greatness and holiness of our Sages, and learn to appraise them properly and justly.