



Words of Wisdom

By

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The story of *Korach* is one of the most fascinating episodes in our history. *Korach*, a great man and leader from the most prestigious family, incited a rebellion against the authority of *Moshe* and *Aharon* along with 250 of the greatest men of the generation. They paid the ultimate price for this rebellion, and were killed by G-d in the most spectacular fashion.

During this attempted coup, *Moshe* admonished *Korach* and his men. In his admonishment he insisted they back down, using the terminology "*rav luchem*, you have plenty," reasoning that they did not need to seek the priesthood.

The *Gemara* in *Sotah* 13b cites *R' Levi* who notes an interesting parallel. In *Parshas Vaeschanan*, *Moshe* recounts how he had prayed fervently to enter Israel. G-d responded to his prayers with the identical statement, "*rav luch*, you have plenty." *R' Levi* says, "with '*rav*' *Moshe* addressed [*Korach*], with '*rav*' Hashem addressed [*Moshe*]."

R' Moshe Yechiel Epstein in his work *Be'er Moshe* explains that *rav luch* is a comment on boundaries. *Moshe* was communicating to *Korach* and his men that although they have strong ambitions and desires to achieve higher levels of *kedusha*, sanctity and holiness, they must understand that even in spiritual pursuit there are limits. Everyone has a job to do, and everyone needs to be comfortable with their station. Hashem used this specific argument with *Moshe* as well. *Moshe* had an enormous spiritual desire to enter the land of Israel. That desire was laudable but simply not practical. It was beyond his spiritual boundary.

The word *rav* connotes boundaries. More precisely though, the word *rav* means plenty, more than enough. The message conveyed in both of these instances is that you already have more than you need, spiritually. *Moshe* was told he does not need to enter Israel, and *Korach* was told that he does not need the priesthood. This was expressed with the message to both of them, that they were to recognize they already have more than they needed spiritually.

This indicates an interesting and rather intriguing lesson. The need to fuel our spiritual passions is common knowledge. A large insatiable appetite for spiritual endeavors is essential for our growth. However, an ungratified drive is uncalled for. The *Vilna Gaon* taught, one needs to "find joy in his lot, be *sameach bechelko*" not only in regard to their physical possessions but in regard to their spiritual "possessions", their *milei dishmaya* as well. At times, we need to take a step back to consider and rejoice over what we have attained spiritually. The root of the mistake *Korach* made was his inability to recognize and find contentment with his spiritual station, to understand he had *rav*, he had attained plenty. His urge to do more, to be greater, stemmed from his lack of spiritual contentment, this is ultimately what caused his demise. We would all be wise to seek to find joy and contentment in the spiritual progress we have made.