

Good Shabbos.

In this week's Parsha, we learn the story of Korach. Korach is a Levi. It is his job to carry the Aron. He is also a very rich man. But he isn't happy. Since he is Moshe's first cousin, he feels he should be up there with Moshe. Korach decides to take some action. He turns to Shevet Reuven for support.

The first-born of every family was originally supposed to serve in the Mishkan. After the golden calf, that was given to the Leviyim, who did not participate in the aveirah. Korach claims that Moshe planned all along to give the handling of the mishkan to the Leviyim. Also, Moshe played favorites by giving his own group of Leviyim, Kehos, all the best honors: Kohain Gadol, Kohanim, Mishkan workers, carrying all the main items – everything! Korach convinces 250 people to join his rebellion. This includes the Princes of Reuven. Once Korach has started, two more villains from the past, Dasan and Aviram, also join in.

Moshe says to Korach, "If you really think you can be Kohanim, then bring pans of Ketores - incense - to the Mishkan tomorrow. We will see if Hashem accepts you, or will you be punished and die!?"

Next, Moshe turns to Dasan and Aviram, who were also leading the fight. He sends messengers to them and tells them to come before him and the Judges. They refuse, and send back a message that Moshe broke his promise. Instead of leading them to a "Land of Milk and Honey", he has led them to die in the desert.

Korach spends the night convincing the Bnei Yisroel that he is doing it for them, not just for himself. By morning, everybody gathers to see the challenge for the Mishkan.

Hashem orders Moshe to clear the area around the family tents of Korach, Dasan, and Aviram. Something terrible is about to happen. Moshe tries one last time to get Dasan and Aviram to do teshuva. But they are too stubborn. They won't even answer Moshe when he speaks!

Suddenly, the Earth splits open and swallows Dasan and Aviram and their families. At the same time, a heavenly fire burns Korach and his 250 followers who stand at the entrance of the Mishkan with their pans of Ketores.

Korach is sucked into the hole, joining Dasan and Aviram. The earth closes but the Bnei Yisroel can hear them. Korach and his followers are singing that Hashem is correct, and that Moshe and the Torah are true. They also confess that they are evil for rebelling against Moshe. The sons of Korach, however, did not die because at the last minute they did Teshuvah and sided with Moshe.

Good Shabbos.

Parshat Korach tells how Korach started a rebellion against the leadership of Moshe. This act involved a surprising amount of *chutzpah*, given the fact that Moshe had just delivered the Jews from slavery in Mitzrayim, led them through the Red Sea, and brought them to Har Sinai.

Yet Korach still thought he could start a public rebellion against Moshe. What was the source of his great *chutzpah*?

The Midrash says that a few hundred years earlier, when the entire wealth of the world was gathered by Mitzrayim, a large portion of treasure was eventually given to Korach. It is said that Korach's wealth was so great that he needed a caravan of 300 mules just to transport the **keys** to his treasure house!

It was this great wealth that prompted Korach to challenge Moshe's leadership. Wealth is a wonderful resource. But like anything, it can be abused. A wealthy person might sometimes feel a sense of power and entitlement - which then comes out in inappropriate ways.

The Chachamim say that wealth is a tremendous test in life, perhaps even greater than the test of poverty. The challenge of wealth is to avoid using it as a prop for someone's ego, and instead use it for the betterment of mankind.