

"And Korach took . . . and Dasan and Aviram . . . the sons of Reuven." (16:1)

Rashi notes that the *Torah* mentions Dasan and Aviram's lineage. He explains that, since the tribe of Reuven encamped on the south in close proximity to Korach, they developed an association with Korach. This relationship enabled their involvement in Korach's dispute. This seems puzzling. Throughout their sojourn in the wilderness, we find Dasan and Aviram described as Moshe's archenemies who instigated every incursion. Their incessant bickering and complaining resulted in many tragic consequences.

Horav Chaim Elazary, z.l., suggests the following difference between the insurgent attitude of Korach and Dasan and Aviram's orientation. Even though Dasan and Aviram undoubtedly exhibited flagrant disrespect towards Moshe, he was not the target of their disobedience. Their desire was simply to return to Egypt. They never disputed Moshe's legitimacy as leader of *Klal Yisrael*. In contrast, Korach's prime objective was to usurp Moshe as leader. His blatant defiance of him was his method of degrading Moshe's position as leader. This insurrection was the first of its kind in our history. Perhaps this is why Korach's punishment was so frightening. He was the first person to question *Klal Yisrael's* leadership, and, therefore, his punishment was symbolic, commensurate with the evil that he had wrought.

Our *Torah* leaders represent the stability and uniqueness of our nation; to question their legitimacy or to dispute their authority is to disdain one of the basic tenets of our faith.