

They said, "Come, let us build a city for ourselves and a tower whose top will be in the heavens, and we will make a name for ourselves. (11:4)

"*We will make a name for ourselves*" is the attitude one would expect from an individual with an insecure ego. *Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl*, remarks that becoming aware of one's ego can lead to two possible attitudes: humility or arrogance. An obsession with one's insignificance can either stimulate one to do something for the common good, to serve humanity, or it can drive him to defy what he believes is an inexorable destiny, to break the shackles of human limitations by revolting against Hashem. The people of that generation chose arrogance. They could not accept the fact that one's worth, his personal success, is measured by his contribution to society. Their tower was a useless facade, the concretization of an obsessive ego bent on rebellion against the Almighty. The tower was a grotesque monument to their presumptuous pride, to a society who thought they could eradicate the eternal periphery that exists between man and G-d. They dreamed of greatness. They had delusions of grandeur.

Hashem scattered them across the earth, creating seventy distinct nations. He separated them with geographic barriers and impeded their communication with the obstacles of different languages and cultures. They could no longer unite to form a coalition for the purpose of rebelling against Hashem. They now realized the futility of their dreams, the folly of their actions. Weakened, and obliged to depend upon their own resources, deprived of their unions and coalitions, they would each be compelled to utilize his individual strengths for the good of humanity.

Their collective mistake was in each seeking to establish a name for himself. That is not the *Torah* way. A Jew's purpose in life is to "*likra b'Shem Hashem*," glorify Hashem's Name. He is to follow in the footsteps of our forefather, *Avraham Avinu*. Although *Avraham Avinu* was born in a pagan country to pagan parents, he reached out to a world, not to "make a name for himself," but rather to call out in the name of G-d. He endeavored to instill His Name in others, inspiring them with His laws. He sought to teach them the meaning of love and kindness, to serve as the symbol of peace between G-d and man. We are acutely aware of our infinitesimal paltriness compared to the Almighty. Yet, we realize the opportunity to achieve greatness by concentrating our efforts to glorify His Name.