

And he (Moshe) said to Hashem; Do not turn to their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, neither have I hurt them. (16:15)

Moshe, acting atypically, implored Hashem not to accept any form of offering whereby Korach and his henchmen could expiate their sin of rebellion. *Sforno* interprets Moshe *Rabeinu's* demand in the following manner. Had they sinned against Hashem, then He would have pardoned them after they had atoned for their actions. Sins committed against one's fellow man are not atoned even on *Yom Kippur*, unless the sinner has appeased the one whom he has wronged. Moshe disclaims receiving any benefit from them. Thus, his leadership over them was entirely for their benefit, to attend to their affairs and needs. Their criticism of Moshe's authority was totally self-centered and spurned on by ingratitude. We infer from here how reprehensible is the individual who is ungrateful. Moshe *Rabeinu* went out of his way on behalf of *Klal Yisrael* every time they committed *aveiros*. Never did he shun the opportunity to help them. Now we see an attitude that is not consistent with the Moshe we have come to know. He actually asks that these ingrates not be forgiven. Their actions are so despicable that they cannot be expiated. Their lack of appreciation reflects an evil of the lowest level. They are not *mentchen*, human beings.

Let us try to understand what Moshe is saying. What about all of the other acts of ingratitude exhibited by *Klal Yisrael*? Should we wash over them as if they had not happened? It would appear that the sins that the people had committed against Hashem did not concern Moshe as much as those committed against himself. He seems to be saying to Hashem, "You may be willing to forgive them, but I am not." Why is this?

We suggest that the acceptance of ingratitude has its limits. We owe everything to Hashem, but does that stop us from sinning? No! We do not always think about Hashem as our prime benefactor. Reality and perception are worlds apart. While reality dictates that Hashem is the source of everything, perception -- the way our minds are foolishly accustomed to think -- tells us that we are the ones who accomplish everything. People do not realize that when they err they are demonstrating a sense of ingratitude towards the Almighty. One who develops a sense of appreciation towards his fellow man will eventually realize that the true source of his success and accomplishments is Hashem. One who is by nature an ingrate will manifest his ingratitude in every situation. He will surely not distinguish between man and G-d.

This is the underlying meaning of Moshe's critique of Korach. The people do not possess an iota of appreciation. They are self-centered and arrogant. Such people have no business in society. They destroy what they claim to build.