

It is too much for you! For the entire assembly – all of them are holy and Hashem is among them. Why do you exalt yourselves over the congregation of Hashem? (16:3)

Nothing is as audaciously offensive as a despot who makes use of his Torah knowledge to undermine Torah leadership and mutiny against Hashem. Korach confronted Moshe *Rabbeinu* with a *halachic* query. He and all of his henchmen came dressed in garments fashioned completely of *techeiles*, turquoise wool. He asked derisively, “Does a *tallis* made completely of *techeiles* require one strand of *techeiles* thread in the *Tzitzis*?” Moshe replied, “Yes.” The fact that a garment is made of *techeiles* does not exempt it from the *techeiles* requirement of *Tzitzis*. This is what Korach was waiting for. He pounced back, “If a single thread is sufficient to exempt an entire garment, does it not stand to reason that an entire garment of *techeiles* should not require one more strand?” Then Korach went on to compare the nation to a garment that is completely made of *techeiles*, since all of the people are holy and Hashem resides among them.

Unquestionably, Korach rewrote the book on demagoguery. His despotism had sunk to a nadir never expected of a person of his distinction. Even the lowest of the low, however, require some basis upon which to build their foundation of evil. What possessed Korach to think that he could dispute Moshe? As Hashem’s chosen leader of *Klal Yisrael*, Moshe led *Klal Yisrael* out of Egypt and initiated Hashem’s splitting of the Red Sea, followed by the descending of the *manna*, and climaxing in bringing down the *Luchos* and the Giving of the Torah. Was Korach so insane as to question Moshe’s leadership? Never have we had a leader of Moshe’s distinction. Yet, Korach questioned and undermined his leadership. On what basis?

Horav Yosef Nechemiah Kornitzer, zl, explains that Korach and his followers contended that Moshe’s successful leadership was due to the fact that Hashem was a part of the Jewish congregation. Hashem walked/traveled with them. Is it any wonder that all of Moshe’s exploits achieved extraordinary success? A nation that heard Hashem’s voice and experienced the greatest Revelation known to mankind certainly did not require Moshe to be their leader. The people were all holy because Hashem was among them. This is what Korach intimated with *Rav lachem*, “It is too much to you! For the entire assembly – all of them are holy and (because) Hashem is among them.” What right do Moshe and Aharon have to lord over the nation, when, in fact, it is all Hashem’s doing?

Rav Yosef Nechemiah posits that their complaint was based in the *mitzvah* of *Tzitzis*. The Torah instructs us *U’re’isem oso u’zechartem es kol mitzvos Hashem*; “You shall see it (the *Tzitzis/techeiles* strand) and (as a result) remember all of the *mitzvos* of Hashem.” How does this happen? *Chazal (Tanchuma Shelach)* explain that looking at the turquoise color of the *techeiles* brings to mind the color of the sea. This, in turn, inspires one to consider the heavens (similar color), which will compel him to contemplate the Heavenly Throne. Thus, *Tzitzis* launch a sort of domino effect, whereby one thinks of and comes closer to Hashem. Korach contended that if a

strand of turquoise wool can bring one to think of Hashem, surely, if Hashem is in the camp, they had all of their bases covered. This is why Chazal attribute Korach's insurrection to his misunderstanding of the mitzvah of Tzitzis.