

Moshe's Failure in the Korach Revolt

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Moshe says to Korach, "It is too much for you (RAV), you sons of Levi" (Bamidbar 16:7). The Talmud in Sota 13 states, "With the word RAV (too much), Moshe rebuked Korach and the other Levites. Therefore, with the word RAV (too much), G-D rebuked Moshe that he would not enter Eretz Yisrael" (D'varim 3:26). Rashi explains that Moshe was held accountable for the improper way he spoke to Korach and the other Levites.

In other words, G-D ignored Moshe's prayers, and his hundreds of pleas to enter the Holy Land, because of the harsh way Moshe spoke to Korach. We must try to understand what Moshe did wrong in the way he rebuked Korach. What did Moshe do that caused G-D to refuse him entry to the Holy Land with the same word RAV (too much) that Moshe used to rebuke Korach?

The Midrash says that Moshe's pleas to enter Eretz Yisrael was motivated by his great desire for spiritual perfection. The Mitzva of living in Eretz Yisrael is equal to all the Mitzvot of the Torah (Sifri Parshat R'ei). Thus, Moshe pleaded with G-D to grant him this merit of dwelling in the Holy Land.

Moshe sought spiritual perfection, which can only be attained by living in the Holy Land. G-D told him RAV (too

much) perfection for you. G-D used the same word RAV that Moshe used when Korach and the other Levites approached him to attain the Kedusha of KEHUNA.

In a certain way, Moshe was ignoring and dismissing the Levites' appeal for spiritual perfection. G-D held him accountable for this. Consequently, when Moshe's plea to enter the Holy Land was denied, G-D used the same terminology to Moshe that Moshe had used to Korach and the other Levites. MIDA K'NEGED MIDA, G-D responds to our behavior with measure for measure. This means that the way we treat and behave with others is the same way that G-d treats and behaves with us.

The lesson is that we must be extremely polite, respectful, extra sensitive, and courteous, when giving rebuke to our fellow Jew. 🙏

