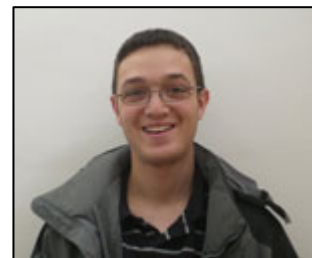




THE ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE

by Eitan Cooper

As I write to you from Camp Ramah in Nyack, New York, I draw upon many similarities between our year at Orayta and my experiences at Camp Ramah. Both have been amazing experiences, filled with learning and camaraderie. Both are committed to Judaism and promoting the State of Israel as a pinnacle of our faith. Additionally both have exhibited opportunities for taking oneself seriously and initiating oneself as a leader. Orayta provided us with knowledge and skills to become leaders in our Jewish communities, while being at camp presents a practical outlet for this training. But what is truly the significance of a leader? Now that we have the skills, what is our role?



Our *Parasha* this week, *Parshat Korach*, deals with two fundamental examples of what the role of a leader can be. Korach, who denies that only *Kohanim* and *Leviim* are suited for work in the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), challenges Moshe's authority and more importantly, G-d's divine ordinances regarding the Holy Service. Korach's rebellion is particularly problematic in that he not only acted in opposition to Moshe on an individual level, but gathered a following of 250 other individuals. While his concern seemingly is to promote the status of his followers, Korach acts with a selfish hunger for power; a destructive characteristic in a leader. When Korach is summoned to the *Ohel Moed* (Tent of the Meeting) to receive his judgment, he is called not only by himself, but with Datan and Aviram and their whole following. As it says in 17:24, "*Daber el haeida*," "speak to the congregation." Korach uses his influence and leadership abilities in a negative way, to create a fissure within the nation instead of unification under G-d's oneness.

While Korach exemplifies the use of leadership for self motivated ideologies and division among the nation, Moshe serves as the complete opposite, the paradigm of a proper leader. He too commands authority and serves at the top in the hierarchy of the nation, but only with the intention of doing G-d's will and caring for the nation - never with a personal alternative. Moshe's innate quality of *annavut* (humility) makes him best suited to be the leader of a nation, one we should all strive to emulate.

As we continue on throughout our summers and are presented with more opportunities to assume leadership roles, we should all make it our goal to conduct ourselves as Moshe did, with the concerns of others as our top priority, and to similarly endow ourselves with a sense of humility. We must take all the lessons we learned in *Yeshiva* and only apply it for good in order to achieve success as leaders in Moshe's example.

Have a great summer!

Eitan Cooper