

### The Chasam Sofer's Bewilderment:

## “I am surprised that the righteous sons of Levi named their son Korach which was a name of one of the chiefs of Eisov”

In this week's parsha, parshas Korach, we read: **“ויקח קרח בן יצהר בן קהת בן לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אליאב ואון בן פלת בני ראובן - Korach the son of Yitzhor, the son of Kehos, the son of Levi separated himself with Dason and Avirom, sons of Eliav, and Ohn the son of Peles, sons of Reuven. Rashi comments: **“ולא הזכיר בן יעקב, שביקש רחמים על עצמו שלא יזכר שמו על מחלוקתם, שנאמר (בראשית מט ו) בקהלם אל תחד כבודי”** - the lineage in the possuk does not extend one more generation to include Yaakov, because Yaakov prayed for mercy that his name not be associated with this dispute. So, we must endeavor to explain why Yaakov Avinu prayed that his name not be associated with Korach's assembly.**

Additionally, it is worth examining the great Chasam Sofer's bewilderment over the fact that the “righteous sons of Levi” would name their son Korach - which is a name of ill-repute; for it is the name of one of the eleven chiefs of Eisov listed at the end of parshas Vayeshev (Bereishis 36, 15). This astonishing fact leads the Chasam Sofer to the disturbing conclusion that his very name was the cause of Korach's downfall; due to his name he lost all of the kedusheh that he was destined to inherit from his holy ancestors. In the words of the Chasam Sofer:

**“קרח בן יצהר. אני תמה על צדיקים בני לוי, שקראו שם בנם קרח שהוא שם מאלופי עשו, וקיימא לן (יומא לח:): רשעים לא מסקינן בשמייהו, וחזי מה עלתה ביה. ואולי היינו דקמשמע לן קרא דמיחסו עד לוי, לומר אף על פי שהיה חוט המשולש, מכל מקום ניתק מהרה על דאסקי בשמייה דרשע. וזהו ויקח קרח, זה השם קרח - לקח כל מה שהיה לו להתקדש, על ידי שהיה בן יצהר וקהת ולוי אבותיו, וזהו השם קרח לקח את הכל.”**

The name Korach, the name of one of Eisov's wicked descendants, carried such a negative impact that it negated the force of kedusheh that should have accrued to Korach from his three holy predecessors-- Yitzhor, Kehos and Levi. For this reason, the Gemoreh states (Yoma 38b): **לא מסקינן בשמייהו** - we do not use the names of the wicked.

We learn incredibly from the Chasam Sofer that the spiritual depths to which Korach sank were a result of the fact that he bore the name of a wicked person. Notwithstanding, we must try to comprehend and reconcile the fact that “the righteous sons of Levi” - as they are referred to by the Chasam Sofer - would choose to name their son Korach - the name of one of Eisov's tribal leaders.

### “The wise among women, each builds her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her hands”

Let us begin our journey by introducing an important lesson from our blessed sages concerning the difficult and historic dispute that erupted between Korach and his assembly on one side and Moshe and Aharon on the other. This is a vital lesson for all proper, well-meaning, Jewish women in every generation. They possess the ability to influence their husbands positively or negatively. On the one hand, they can persuade their husbands to get involved in disputes that have horrible consequences. On the other hand, they can save their husbands from aligning with inappropriate associates.

The Gemoreh (Sanhedrin 109b) details the positive influence exerted by Ohn ben Peles's wife on her husband and how she saved his life. She asked him what difference would it make to him, practically speaking, whether Moshe was victorious or whether Korach was victorious. Either way, he would remain in a subservient position. He then asked her what he should do. After all, he had already committed himself to join their cause.

Knowing that the people were holy and modest, she devised a plan to save her husband. She knew that the men would not enter her home if her hair was unkempt and uncovered. She got her husband drunk and left him inside their home. She then sat at the entrance to their home, uncovered her hair and left it disorderly. Anyone that came looking for her husband saw her and immediately went away. By the time

Ohn ben Peles awoke from his inebriated state, Korach and his assembly had been swallowed by the earth.

In contrast, the Gemoreh (ibid. 110a) goes on to describe the negative influence exerted by Korach's wife on her husband - leading him down a path of destruction. Korach's wife said to him: Look at what Moshe did; he made himself king; he appointed his brother Aharon as the Kohen Godol; he assigned Aharon's sons to be the assistant kohanim. Furthermore, he cut off your hair; he treated you degradingly; he certainly noticed your hair and didn't want you to share his stately appearance. Concerning these two women, the possuk states (Mishlei 14, 1): "The wise among women, each builds her house," is a reference to the wife of Ohn ben Peles; "but the foolish one tears it down with her hands," is a reference to Korach's wife.

### **"And let them pass a razor over their entire flesh"**

As we just saw, Korach's wife tried to goad her husband into confronting Moshe by disparaging the leviim's initiation ritual; specifically, she claimed that her husband was ridiculed by having to shave off all of his hair. This ritual of initiation is described in parshas Behaaloschu (Bamidbor 8, 5):

**"וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהר אותם, וכה תעשה להם לטהרם הזה עליהם מי חטאת והעבירו תער על כל בשרם וכבסו בגדיהם והיטהרו... והניף אהרן את הלויים תנופה לפני ה' מאת בני ישראל והיו לעבוד את עבודת ה'... והבדלת את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל והיו לי הלויים... כי נתונים נתונים המה לי מתוך בני ישראל תחת פטרת כל רחם בכור כל מבני ישראל לקחתי אותם לי."**

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "Take the Leviim from among Bnei Yisroel and purify them. So shall you do to them to purify them: Sprinkle upon them water of purification, and let them pass a razor over their entire flesh, and let them immerse their garments and they shall become pure. . . Aaron shall wave the Leviim before Hashem from Bnei Yisroel and they shall be to perform the service of Hashem. . . You shall separate the Leviim from among Bnei Yisroel, and the Leviim shall be mine. . . For given, given are they to Me from among Bnei Yisroel; in place of the first issue of every womb, the firstborn of everyone of Bnei Yisroel, have I taken them to Myself."

Korach's wife scoffed at him and incited him to rebel on account of this initiation ritual. She mocked the fact that they were made to shave off all of their hair and that their bodies were waved in the air like pieces of dung. An expanded version of Korach's reaction to this ritual is provided by the Midrash (Bamidbor Rabbah 18, 4):

**"ויקח קרח, לקח טליתו והלך ליטול עצה מאשתו, כשאמר הקב"ה למשה, קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהרת אותם, וכה תעשה להם לטהרם וגו' והעבירו תער על כל בשרם, מיד עשה כן לקרח התחיל לחזור על ישראל. לא היו מכירים אותו, אמרו לו מי עשה לך כך, אמר להם משה עשה בי, ולא עוד אלא נטלני בידי ורגלי, והיו מניפין אותי ואומר לי הרי אתה טהור, והביא את אהרן אחיו וקשטו ככלה והושיבו באהל מועד, מיד התחילו שונאי משה להתגרות בו את ישראל."**

After being shaved and bodily waved around, Korach wandered among the people; at first, they did not recognize him. The inquired as to who had done these things to him. He explained that Moshe had done this to him. Furthermore, he brought his brother Aharon and dressed him up in fancy garments and placed him in the Tent of Meeting, Ohel Moed. Immediately, those opposed to Moshe began inciting the people of Yisroel against him.

Reviewing these various accounts, we are struck by a surprising fact; the subject of body hair seems to be at the center of the dispute between Korach and his assembly and Moshe and Aharon. At first, Korach and all of the other Leviim's hair is shaved off as commanded: **"והעבירו תער על כל בשרם"**-and let them pass a razor over their entire flesh. Next, Ohn ben Peles is saved from the fate of Korach's assembly because of his wife's exposed, disheveled hair. The deeper significance of this curious connection between the shaving of the Leviim's hair and Korach's dispute with Moshe needs to be explained.

### **"But my brother Eisov is a hairy man while I am a smooth-skinned man"**

I have been inspired, with Hashem's help - He Who benevolently grants man knowledge - to propose an explanation for these surprising and curious matters. I would like to begin by recounting Yaakov Avinu's statement to Rivkeh Imeinu, when she instructed him to go before his father Yitzchok in order to receive the blessings that Yitzchok intended to bestow upon his brother Eisov (Bereishis 27, 11):

**"ויאמר יעקב אל רבקה אמו, הן עשו אחי איש שעיר ואנכי איש חלק, אולי ימושני אבי והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע והבאתי עלי קללה ולא ברכה... ותקח רבקה את בגדי עשו בנה הגדול החמודות אשר אתה בבית ותלבש את יעקב בנה הקטן."**

Yaakov said to his mother Rivkeh, "But see, my brother Eisov is a hairy man and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will touch me and I shall be as a mocker in his eyes; I will thus bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing". . . Rivkeh then took her older son Eisov's clean garments which were with her in the house, and clothed Yaakov her young son.

It seems strange that Yaakov was so concerned about the difference in hairiness between Eisov and himself and did not focus on the difference in their voices and manners of speech. For, we are all very familiar with Yitzchok's famous words (ibid. 22): "הקול קול יעקב והידים ידי עשו" - the voice is Yaakov's voice, but the hands are Eisov's hands. For that matter, why did Rivkeh expressly dress Yaakov in Eisov's fine garments that were located in her house? Surely she must have realized that it would still require a miracle for Yitzchok not to recognize Yaakov's voice.

After much consideration, I would like to propose an explanation for Yaakov's remarks and actions. We know that the commentaries are perplexed by the fact that Yitzchok intended to bestow the blessings upon the wicked Eisov rather than upon the righteous Yaakov - who spent his time in the Beit Midrash of Shem and Ever studying Torah and serving Hashem. The Tiferes Shlomo (Toldos) suggests that it is precisely because Yaakov was engaged in Torah study and service of Hashem that Yitzchok did not wish to bestow the beroches upon him. He feared that the material blessings of this world would corrupt Yaakov - a reflection of the possuk (Devorim 32, 15): "וישמן ישורון ויבעט" - Yeshurun became fat and kicked, i.e. affluence causes the people to become lax and even rebellious in the service of Hashem. Here is what he writes:

**"צריך להתבונן בכוונת יצחק אבינו, שלא היה רצונו תיכף לברך את יעקב רק את עשו, אך הענין שיצחק היה מפחד לברך את יעקב בברכת עולם הזה, כי היה ירא לכל יזוח דעתו וישמן ישורון ויבעט על ידי תאוות העולם הזה, לולי רבקה אמנו שהשכילה בחכמה ובדעת להבין, כי גם טובת עולם הזה מסייע לאדם לעבוד הבורא בהרחבת הדעת."**

At the end of this paragraph, he states that it was only due to Rivkeh Imeinu's wisdom and foresight that Yaakov received the beroches. She understood that the riches of this world can assist one in serving Hashem more completely.

### The Hair on One's Head Represent Man's Excesses

Next, let us introduce the words of the Arvei Nachal (Behar): **"נודע כי שערות מורים על מותרות, ורצוני לומר ענין מותרות העושר"** - hair represents affluence and excess. In a similar vein, the Yearot Devash (Part 1, Drush 6) addresses the reason the Torah prescribes in parshas Ki Seitzei (Devorim 21, 12) the shaving of the head of a beautiful woman taken into captivity. To prevent her from returning to her previous ways, her excesses must be minimized. As stated above, the hair represents these excesses.

The Abarbanel (Behaaloschu) utilizes this idea to explain why HKB"H commanded that the entire body of each of the Leviim be shaved:

**"והנה בראשונה הזהירים על מקום דירתם וישיבתם, שיהיה סביב למשכן ולא בתוך בני ישראל, ואחר כך הזהירים שייטהרו מהעוונות שהיו בידיהם, ואחר כך משם והלאה יתרחקו מהתאוות הגשמיות, שעליהם רמז העברת התער על כל בשרם, כי להיות השער מותר הגוף, היה התגלחותו רומז להרחקתו מהדברים המותרים."**

Firstly, the Leviim were required to dwell separately from the rest of the people; their dwellings surrounded the Mishkan; they did not dwell amongst the other tribes. Then they were advised to purify themselves of their existing sins. Lastly, they were warned to distance themselves from material cravings and lusts; this warning was alluded to by the shaving of their bodies. Just as hair is an extraneous part of the body, shaving it off represents the distancing of oneself from things in life that are extraneous and irrelevant to one's true purpose.

Now, let us see how this idea is reflected in HKB"H's command to Moshe: **"קח את הלויים מתוך בני ישראל וטהרת אותם"** - take the Leviim from amongst Bnei Yisroel and rid them of all worldly concerns; **"וכה תעשה להם לטהרם הזה עליהם מי חטאת"** - in order to purify them and prepare them for their designated service, it is necessary to remove their body hair, representative of that which is superfluous in this world; **"והניף אהרן את הלויים תנופה לפני ה' מאת בני ישראל"** - this entire procedure was meant to convey the rationale for the Leviim's separation from worldly matters; they had to remain separate, because they were chosen to stand before Hashem and to perform His service.

### The Mitzvah of "Peios" Surrounding Both Ears

We can apply this concept to better understand the mitzvah to leave "Peios" on one's head and not to shave one's beard (Vayikro 19, 27): **"לא תקיפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנך"** - you shall not round off the edge of your scalp and you shall not destroy the edge of your beard. As we have explained, HKB"H's does not want man to divorce himself entirely from matters of this world. For, we have an explicit possuk which states (Mishlei 3, 6): **"בכל דרכיך דעהו"** - in all your ways know Him. According to the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 231), this possuk teaches us that all benefits one derives from this world should be solely for the sake of serving Hashem and not for one's own personal pleasure: **"בכל מה שיהנה בעולם הזה, לא יכוין להנאתו אלא לעבודת הבורא יתברך כדכתיב בכל דרכיך דעהו."**

So, on the one hand, HKB"H warns us to shave off the hair on our heads and not to let our hair grow wildly - symbolizing

that we do not wish to pursue the excesses in this world. Nevertheless, we are instructed: **“לא תקיפו פאת ראשכם”**--you shall not round off the edge of your scalp - we are not to shave our heads completely. Rather, we are to leave the hair at the edges of the head as an indication that HKB”H indeed wants man to derive pleasure from this world - so long as it is for the sake of heaven.

We can add a nice little tidbit concerning the reason why the “Peios” are left specifically on both sides of the head. The halachah is stated in the Shulchan Aruch as follows (O.C. 181, 9): **“שיעור הפאה מכנגד שער שעל פדחתו ועד למטה מן האוזן”** - the hair of the “peiah” should extend from the forehead to the bottom of the ear. Let us suggest a reason for these prescribed boundaries of the “Peios.” When the Torah was given to us at Har Sinai, we heard the first two commandments with our own two ears directly from the Almighty. In the words of the Gemoreh (Makkos 24b): **“אנכי ולא יהיה לך מפי הגבורה שמענום”**.

Now, with these two commandments: **“אנכי ה' אלקיך אשר - הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים, לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני”** - I am Hashem your G-d, Who took you out of the land of Egypt and There shall not be unto you the gods of others before Me - HKB”H conveyed to us that we should perform all of our deeds solely with Him in mind - without any ulterior motives which are tantamount to other gods. For this very same reason HKB”H commanded us to leave two unshaven “Peios” specifically on both sides of the head adjacent to the ears. This serves as a reminder that we are to utilize matters of this world solely for the sake of Hashem - a message we heard with our ears at Har Sinai in the form of the first two “dibros”--**“אנכי”** and **“לא יהיה לך”**.

### Eisov's Fine Garments Signify the Use of Material Wealth for Heaven's Sake

We can now shed some light on the message Yaakov cleverly conveyed to Rivkeh with the statement: **“הן עשו אחי”** **“איש שעיר ואנכי איש חלק”** -- But see, my brother Eisov is a hairy man and I am a smooth-skinned man. In other words, he was remarking that his brother Eisov was an **“איש שעיר”** - a man prone to pursue and indulge in the excesses of this world, signified by the hair. I, Yaakov, on the other hand, am an **“איש”** **“חלק”** - devoid of hair. I do not pursue the irrelevant excesses of this world; my only desire is to engage in the study of Hashem's Torah day and night.

In truth, this is why my father Yitzchok thought to bestow the blessings of this world upon Eisov instead of me. He feared that matters of this world would interfere and prevent me from immersing myself in the study of Torah and the service of

Hashem. Hence, how can I go before Yitzchok to receive the beroches? **“אולי ימושני אבי”** - perhaps he will feel that I am neglecting my role as an **“איש חלק”** - a man who is supposed to forego the pleasures of this world; **“והייתי בעיניו כמתעתע”** - hence, he will think that I am an impostor, attempting to abdicate my true role - engaging in Torah study - in favor of pursuing the pleasures of this world. As a result: **“והבאתי עלי”** **“קללה ולא ברכה”** - I will have brought a curse upon myself rather than a blessing.

In response to Yaakov's concerns: **“ותקח רבקה את בגדי עשו”** - **“בנה הגדול החמודות אשר אתה ובית ותלבש את יעקב בנה הקטן”** - Rivkeh took Eisov's precious garments and placed them upon Yaakov. With this symbolic gesture, Rivkeh Imeinu meant to convey a vital message. Yes, it is true that Yaakov himself has no interest in the imprudent excesses of this world; his only real desire is to study Torah and serve Hashem; thus, he is smooth-skinned, devoid of hair.

Nonetheless, the material blessings of this world serve an important role and benefit in the service of Hashem. One needs money to send his children to religious schools, to purchase tefillin and mezuzot and to perform mitzvot in general in a more elegant fashion. Worldly blessings allow one to study Torah and serve Hashem more comfortably. As we learned from the Tiferes Shlomo above, this was the gist of Rivka Imeinu's message: **“לולי רבקה אמנו שהשכילה בחכמה ובדעת להבין, כי גם”** **“טובת עולם הזה מסייע לאדם לעבוד הבורא בהרחבת הדעת”**.

### “Riches hoarded by their owner to his misfortune” - Refers to Korach's Wealth

Continuing along this exalted path, let us endeavor to explain why Korach chose to confront Moshe specifically after the command to initiate the Leviim had been fulfilled: **“והעבירו תער על”** **“כל בשרם... והניף אהרן את הלויים תנופה לפני ה'”** - their bodies had been thoroughly shaved and their bodies had been waved. We will base our explanation on a statement of Chazal's to the effect that Korach's cataclysmic downfall came as a result of his enormous fortune. We have learned in the Gemoreh (Pesochim 119a):

**“אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא, שלש מטמוניות הטמין יוסף במצרים, אחת נתגלה לקרח, ואחת נתגלה לאנטונינוס בן אסירוס, ואחת גנוזה לצדיקים לעתיד לבוא. עושר שמור לבעליו לרעתו, אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש זה עשרו של קרח... אמר רבי לוי משאוי שלש מאות פרוטות לבנות היו מפתחות בית גזיו של קרח.”**

Yosef hid three fortunes in Egypt; one was revealed to Korach. Rabbi Shimon the son of Lakish states that the possuk in Koheles (5, 12): **“עושר שמור לבעליו לרעתו”** - riches hoarded by their owner to his misfortune - refers to Korach's fortune.

It is now quite apparent why Korach chose to confront Moshe specifically after his entire body had been shaved and his body had been waved before Hashem - as depicted in the Midrash above. Due to his newfound fortune, Korach developed a lust for money and wealth; this led to his tragic decline and began a downward spiral - consistent with the phenomenon of "aveirah gorreres aveirah" - one transgression leads to another. He coveted the position of Kohen Godol and he scoffed at the Leviim's initiation ceremony. The shaving and waving procedures were meant to illustrate the sanctity of the Leviim and their ability to separate themselves and elevate themselves above the material matters of this world. This behavior clearly indicated that Korach was not on the appropriate spiritual level; he had failed to separate himself and elevate himself above the material world.

### A Person's Name Exerts a Positive or Negative Influence on His Life

In this manner, let us now address the perplexing issue of what would prompt the "righteous sons of Levi" to name their son Korach - the name of one of the wicked chieftains of Eisov. We have learned in the Gemoreh (Berachos 7b): **"מנא לן דשמא גרים, אמר רבי אלעזר דאמר קרא (תהלים מו ט) לכו חזו מפעלות ה' אשר שם שמות בארץ, אל תקרי שמות אלא שמות"** The Gemoreh teaches us that one's name has an effect on one's life; a possuk from Tehillim is quoted to substantiate this fact. Further substantiation for the tremendous influence exerted by one's name can be found in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni Yishayah 449): **"אילו זכו הדורות, היה הקב"ה קורא שם לכל אחד ואחד, ומשמו היו יודעים את טיבו ואת מעשיו... אמרו רבותינו, כשהיה רבי מאיר רואה אדם, היה למד שמו ומשמו היה יודע את מעשיו."** Had the generations been worthy, HKB"H would have named each and every person; from his name we would have known his nature and his accomplishments. . . . Our Rabbis said that when Rabbi Meir would see a man, he would learn his name and from his name he would know his accomplishments.

So, now I would like to propose a novel explanation as to why the "righteous sons of Levi" named their son Korach. They must have foreseen by divine inspiration that this son would find one of Yosef's three hidden treasures. They anticipated, therefore, that he would be faced with the difficult challenge of dealing with great wealth - a challenge that was likely to distort his good sense and his commitment to his G-d. Hence, they cleverly decided to name him Korach - which derives from the word "קירח", meaning bald one - in the hope that this name would exert a positive and overriding influence assisting him to overcome this difficult challenge. They hoped that this name would impart a sanctity that would allow him to overcome the

extravagances of this world which are analogous to the hair on one's head; they hoped that he would be like a spiritual bald man where matters of this world were concerned.

Yet, their noble intent failed, seeing as the name Korach was the name of one of the wicked chieftains of Eisov. So, not only did this name not have the desired positive effect, but it even had a more significant deleterious effect. He scorned Moshe for shaving off all of his hair and publicly exposing his shameful secret - that he lusted after wealth and did not want to be devoid of hair, physically or spiritually.

We now stand enlightened as to why Yaakov prayed that his name not be mentioned in association with Korach and his assembly. Indeed, Korach fell victim to the lust for riches; yet, he did not admit to this shortcoming. In fact, he maintained that his intentions were purely motivated and for the sake of heaven. He pointed to his very name Korach as proof that he was like a bald man, free from the excesses of this world. Thus, he meant to prove that he was following in the footsteps of Yaakov, described as **"איש חלק"** - smooth of skin and devoid of hair.

Therefore, Yaakov cleverly prayed that his name not be mentioned in association with Korach's assembly. He intended to reveal to all of Yisroel the root of Korach's failure and downfall. Korach had failed to follow in Yaakov's footsteps as a "smooth-skinned man," making every effort to avoid the irrelevant extravagances of this world. In fact, Korach did just the opposite; he followed in the footsteps of Eisov, a "hirsute man," chasing after wealth and honor - which remove a person from the world.

At this point, it is worth focusing on the wisdom exhibited by the wife of Ohn ben Peles. Recall that she messed up and uncovered her hair in order to protect her husband from participating in the rebellion of Korach's assembly. Her seemingly immodest act was designed to expose Korach's blatant lie. Not only did his character not match his name - one who is bald and free of excesses - but he, in fact, lusted after worldly extravagances - signified by her head full of wild, disheveled hair. Consequently, it was in the best interest of every member of Yisroel, descendants of Yaakov, described as a "smooth-skinned man," to distance themselves from him and his rabble.

### Chief Korach the Son of Eliphaz - Confiscated All of Yaakov's Riches

We can now appreciate to an even greater extent the magnificent insight provided by the Chasam Sofer. He taught us that the name Korach - the name of one of the evil tribal chiefs

of Eisov - was the cause for Korach's ruination. As the possuk states, Chief Korach was the son of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Eisov. We can even propose a reason as to why Eliphaz named one of his sons Korach. It is the way of the "klipah" - the negative forces in the world - to emulate the forces of kedusheh - to conceal their true natures and to promote their lies. Hence, Eliphaz chose the name Korach to suggest that he and his sons resembled Yaakov, a "smooth-skinned man" - one who avoids excesses. As we have learned, the name Korach suggests baldness and absence of hair, alluding to one who abstains from excesses.

Of course, this was a total lie and misrepresentation. For Eliphaz and all of his chieftain sons followed in the footsteps of Eisov - eager to pursue monetary gains, avarice, and the passions and appetites of this world. Proof regarding Eliphaz's true nature can be found in Rashi (Bereishis 29, 11): **"שרדף אליפז בן עשו במצות אביו אחריו להורגו והשיגו, ולפי שגדל אליפז בחיקו של יצחק משך ידו, אמר לו [אליפז ליעקב], מה אעשה לצייוי של אבא [שפקד עלי להרוג אותך], אמר לו יעקב טול מה שבידי"** When Yaakov fled to Charan to avoid Eisov's wrath and vengeance, Eliphaz pursued Yaakov at his father's command; he was instructed to kill Yaakov. Growing up, however, under Yitzchok's influence created a moral dilemma for Eliphaz, causing him to hesitate before completing his mission. Eliphaz asked Yaakov what he should do concerning his father's directive. Yaakov advised him to confiscate all of his possessions; for a poor person is considered like a dead person.

At first glance, this might appear as if Eliphaz, in stark contrast to his father Eisov, was a moral, good man; after all he spared Yaakov's life. Yet, it is a definite mistake to entertain this notion. Our blessed sages have taught us that it is prohibited to accept charity from idolaters; the kindness they extend is merely for their own benefit. To this end, we have learned in the Gemoreh (B.B. 10b):

**"תניא אמר להן רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לתלמידיו, בניי מהו שאמר הכתוב (משלי יד לד) צדקה תרומם גוי וחסד לאומים חטאת, נענה רבי אליעזר ואמר, צדקה תרומם גוי, אלו ישראל, דכתיב (דברי הימים א יז כא) ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ, וחסד לאומים חטאת, כל צדקה וחסד שאומות עובדי כוכבים עושים חטא הוא להם, שאינם עושים אלא להתגדל בו."**

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai teaches his students a lesson by expounding a possuk in Mishlei (14, 34). The possuk states: **"צדקה תרומם גוי וחסד לאומים חטאת"** - Charity will uplift a nation, but the kindness of regimes is a sin. He teaches them that the first part of the possuk refers to Yisroel; while the latter part of the possuk refers to the idolatrous nations of the world. Their acts of charity and kindness are motivated by what serves them best and enhances their reward.

Applying this lesson to Eliphaz's actions, it is clear that his actions were self-serving and motivated by greed. In truth, he coveted Yaakov's wealth and possessions. Had he truly wanted to save Yaakov's life, he would not have left him alone at the crossroads empty-handed and penniless. Thus, we can deduce that Eliphaz's naming of his son Korach - suggesting that he and his sons were meritorious and "smooth-skinned" like Yaakov - was a total lie.

It is now patently clear how the name Korach - which the "righteous sons of Levi" gave their son with the hope that it would prevent him from falling prey to greed and avarice - in fact, had a deleterious effect on him. This was the name of a wicked man, Chief Korach, the son of Eliphaz - who pursued Yaakov and stripped him of all his earthly possessions, while he was out on the road, far from home. As a result, this name stripped Korach of all the kedusheh that he was destined to inherit from his predecessors. As the Chasam Sofer taught us: **"ויקח קרח"** - the name Korach took from him all of the kedusheh that he was meant to inherit as: **"בן יצהר, בן קהת, בן לוי"** - the son of Yitzhor, the grandson of Kehos and the great-grandson of Levi.

In conclusion, we can appreciate a revelation of the Arizal's concerning Korach. He explains in Shaar HaPesukim that (Tehillim 92): **"הנה סופי תיבות צדיק כתמר יפריח הוא קרח"** - the final letters of the words **צדיק כתמר יפריח** - a righteous man will blossom like a date palm - spell out the name **"קרח"**. This allusion suggests that in the future Korach's soul will be rectified; it will achieve "tikun." According to what we have just learned, an argument can be presented in Korach's favor. His downfall was caused by his infamous name - the name of one of Eisov's tribal chiefs. Therefore, once he has been judged and cleansed of his misdeeds by the fires of Gehinnom, he will merit tikun.