



SIMCHAT SHMUEL

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The **Lubavitcher Rebbe zy'a**, asked how is it possible that a portion of the *Torah Hakedosha* is named for *Korach*? The Rebbe explained that the *Torah* is teaching us that we can learn something constructive even from *Korach's* bitter controversy. Just as *Korach* wanted to be a *Kohen Gadol*, every Jew should similarly desire to draw near to *Hashem*.

The *Mishna* in *Pirkei Avot* suggests an interesting insight regarding the rebellion initiated by *Korach*.

Any dispute that is for the sake of Heaven is destined to endure; one that is not for the sake of Heaven is not destined to endure. Which is a dispute that is for the sake of Heaven? The dispute(s) between Hillel and Shamai. Which is a dispute that is not for the sake of Heaven? The dispute of Korach V'Adato- Korach and all his company...

How are we to understand this statement, that *Korach's* challenge to the leadership of *Moshe* and *Aharon* becomes the paradigmatic example of a *Machloket She'eino L'Sheim Shamayim*? Indeed there are numerous *Midrashim* which suggest that *Korach* might

have had at least initially pure motivations, that he saw the value in each and every individual and therefore struggled with the idea of communal hierarchy. So, what was it about the way in which *Korach* carried out this challenge, that truly placed *Korach* and his followers outside the accepted norms?

The **Ohalei Yaakov, Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a** asked why our *Mishna* refers to the dispute that *Korach* had as the dispute of *Korach V'Adato*, and not the dispute between *Korach* and *Moshe*? The Rebbe explained that this teaches us that *Korach* and his comrades were not truly in agreement with one another, there was no unity within their ranks. The only thing they agreed on was their challenge to the leadership of *Moshe* and *Ahron*. Hence our *mishna* refers to this tragic episode as the *machloket Korach V'Adato*!

Our *Sedra* opens with the words:

וַיָּקָח קִרְיָשׁ בֶּן־יִצְחָר בֶּן־קֵהָת בְּרִלְי וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם
בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאֵב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פֶּלֶת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן

And Korach the son of Yitzhar, the son of Kehat, the son of Levi, took together with Datan and Aviram the sons of Eliav and On the son of Pelet, the descendants of Reuven....

What exactly does the expression *Vayikach Korach-Korach took*, mean in this context? What is it that *Korach* took?

Onkelos, translates the word *Vayikach* (literally and he took) as *-V'Itpileig-And he and the others separated themselves*.

Perhaps, *Onkelos' insight* can help us to better understand why the *Mishna* considers the

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story of *Korach V'Adato*, as the prime example of a *Machloket She'eino L'Sheim Shamayim*. A healthy, respectful disagreement is not only normal, but acceptable, particularly when the motivation is pure, with the primacy of bettering the community is at its core. However, any disagreement which is so harsh that it leads to strife, division and separate factions within our ranks, that contributes to any breakdown in unity, is considered to be not in consonance with the ways of Heaven.

We live in a world that unfortunately is still overcome with much division and strife. *Yehi Ratzon*, may we strive for and merit to always navigate any disagreements we may have in a way that is productive, and may we have the fortitude to always strengthen our communal infrastructure, to stay united and connected - even when at times we may disagree. ■



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