

“Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of Kehas, son of Levi separated himself.” (16:1)

Rashi observes that in detailing Korach's lineage the Torah does not mention Yaakov Avinu. It stops at Levi. He explains that Yaakov implored for mercy that the Torah not mention his name in regard to the dispute. Yaakov sought to distance himself as far as possible from any vestige of controversy. We must endeavor to understand this request. It is common knowledge that Levi is Yaakov's son. Therefore, when the Torah mentions Levi, it is clearly referring to Yaakov by extension. What did Yaakov accomplish by excluding specific mention of his name?

Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, explains that Yaakov's life had been marked by controversy. From birth, he was battling Eisav. The conflict with Lavan, followed by the anguish over his daughter, was a continuation of a life of crusading against evil, confronting it head-on. Yaakov feared that people might err and think that Korach had assumed the mantle of crusader against evil, that he was following in the footsteps of his distinguished ancestor. Yaakov sought to dispel this notion. Korach did not seek to uproot evil, to battle l'shem Shomayim, for the sake of Heaven, to elevate Hashem's Name. No! Korach was arrogant and insecure. He sought to undermine Moshe's leadership. He was not a crusader; he was not a warrior for the sake of Heaven. Korach was a baal-machlokes, a man who pursued dispute as a means of subverting Klal Yisrael's leadership. He was a demagogue who sought to destroy the inherent good that Moshe Rabbeinu infused in the people so that he could assume control. Yaakov could not relate to this type of machlokes. Thus, we can understand why he did not want to be included in Korach's lineage.