

## **"And it was on the next day... and behold the staff of Aharon of the House of Levi, had blossomed, it brought forth a blossom, sprouted a bud and almonds ripened." (17:23)**

Immediately following the premature deaths of Korach and his band of evildoers, Hashem commanded Moshe to collect twelve staffs, representing each of the twelve tribes and place it before the *Aron Ha'Kodesh*. Hashem caused a miracle to occur which would certainly convince the skeptical Jews that Hashem was ultimately in charge. It was Hashem who chose Moshe and *Aharon* as leaders. It was He who directed the affairs of the world.

Demonstrating his choice of Aharon for the position of *Kohen Gadol*, Hashem miraculously caused Aharon's staff to blossom and sprout buds and almonds. It seems strange that Hashem did not cause this miracle to occur in the presence of Korach and his followers. Would it not have had a greater impact if Korach had observed this miracle? Perhaps the experience would have evoked a feeling of repentance within Korach which would have circumvented the tragic punishment and ensuing plague that followed. Why did Hashem cause a miracle *after* the fact, when the insurgents had already been eliminated ?

*Horav Dovid Shneur, Shlita*, cites the *Baal Ha'Turim* who posits that the significance of the three miracles (blossoming and sprouting buds and almonds) is parallel to the three infamous individuals who criticized and opposed the *Kehunah*: Korach, Yeravam *ben* Nevat, and Uziah *Ha'Melech*. *Horav Shneuer* suggests that these three dissenters have one evil characteristic in common -- jealousy. Each one envied the current leadership. Each one was obsessed with such jealousy that he begrudged the one chosen by Hashem to serve as the spiritual leader of His people.

Jealousy for the wrong reason is a terrible *middah*, character trait. It is the result of insecurity and a lack of *bitachon*, trust in Hashem. It can literally destroy people. Jealousy is a poison that clouds the mind and prevents rational thoughts. At times, the finest people are consumed by this vicious disease, for which, the *Orchos Chaim L'Ha'Rosh* states there is no cure. Korach's jealousy was terminal; it was a disease that distorted everything that he saw. If he had seen the miracles that occurred to Aharon's staff, it would have had no influence on him -- for he had succumbed to the pernicious disease of envy.

There is but one antidote to the disease of jealousy -- concentrating on strengthening our *bitachon* in Hashem. When we are secure in our *bitachon*, then we fear nothing. We are resolute in our faith that whatever we are supposed to have, we will have; whatever accomplishments we are to achieve, we will succeed in seeing reach fruition; whatever position we are to assume, we will attain. With *bitachon* as the underlying perspective in life, we do not feel threatened by any situation or deprived of any object, for we believe that Hashem sustains and nurtures us. We are totally in His hands. True *bitachon* is unshakeable. It is there in bad times, as well as good times. We have only to remember and imbue in our minds Dovid *Ha'Melech's* words (*Tehillim 13:6*), said

in his moments of greatest travail, "l,guahc hck kdh h,jyc lxxjc hbtu". "I trust in Your kindness, my heart will exult in Your salvation."