

Korach took, (separated himself). (16:1)

Korach had it all, but, it was not enough for him. He wanted more, or he simply did not want Moshe *Rabbeinu* to have it. Korach was a clever dissident who was able to attract a powerful following of supporters. First, he told the people that he was acting on their behalf. Since he already had it all, he had no need for personal leadership. He was taking a stand for “others.” He felt that the people were being exploited, and he was coming to their rescue. *Kol ha’eidah kulam kedoshim*, “The entire congregation is holy”; “Hashem is in their midst.” Why do you, Moshe, set yourself apart?

Such a caring and loving leader-to-be had only the people’s best interests on his mind. His agenda was not personal. It was about *Klal Yisrael*. He wanted to make them “great.” Veritably, Korach did not really care about the people. He had one goal: to destroy everything that Moshe *Rabbeinu* had established. He was obsessed with taking Moshe down. He knew quite well that Hashem would never allow “His” Moshe to falter. Why was Korach doing this? Moshe had never hurt him, so, it could not be revenge. Envy? Quite possibly, but Korach was way “up there,” a blessed and overly fortunate man. Why did he envy Moshe?

Korach was an unhappy, negative person who – regardless of how successful he was; how much he possessed – was never happy. If someone else had it – he had to have it! He could not tolerate when someone had something which he did not have. In today’s vernacular, this is an apt description of a malcontent: an unhappy, never satisfied person. Regardless of how smart and clever a person may be, his obsession with others diminishes his ability to enjoy what he personally has achieved, because he is so busy begrudging others their success. This is a person who measures his own success by his friend’s achievement. He is envious of everyone – even his own children!

Such a disgruntled person is never happy, unable to offer a compliment, because he views every achievement negatively, always comparing it to that of others. Such a parent judges his child’s success relative to his potential – which, on the whole, can be a powerful motivator if used positively. If, however, it becomes a parent’s tool/medium for constantly putting his child down, it reflects a deep-rooted, harmful illness. The parent who demands that his child be the best in the class is of the same short-sighted, miserable school of thought. Children thrive on compliments – not on parental negativity.

Korach was afflicted with an even deeper morose. It is one thing to demand more of oneself or one’s children; it is completely another to ignore one’s blessings. Korach’s inner-craving for what others possessed, his envy of those around him, his self-dissatisfaction, blinded him from seeing, and, thus, enjoying his own wonderful blessings. His myopic vision was always focused outward, degrading himself and those closest to him, when he saw that someone else was one step ahead. Driven by jealousy, he was never happy with personal accomplishment. Even when he was on top, he was looking behind him to see who was catching up with him.

We all know a “Korach.” They are divisive people, who are harmful to a community. They wrap themselves in a façade of competitiveness, always striving for a more ambitious position, when, in reality, their behavior is nothing more than a cover-up for bitter discontent. These people find fault in everyone but themselves. As Korach erred because of his “eye,” (He saw the illustrious lineage descending from him; thus, he thought he could not go wrong.) likewise, these modern-day Korachs turn a blind eye to their own failings.

Korach’s antagonism towards others stemmed from his own feelings of dejection and discontent. When one is unhappy with himself, he turns on others. Self-loathing generates animus towards others, because the antagonist must focus his hatred on someone other than himself. Thus, it is one’s failure to see himself in the best possible light that creates the Korach-like attitude that causes us to turn against others – often our closest friends and relatives. Hatred brooks no discrimination. It is an all-purpose, all-inclusive deviation from what is proper and correct. Hatred directed against oneself, but expressed towards others, is the saddest form of animus, since the individual hurts others when, in fact, the one whom he really wants to hurt is himself. The consequences of such deviant hatred are outlined in *Parashas Korach*.