

"And Korach took/separated himself... They gathered together against Moshe and Aharon." (16:1,3)

Korach is one of the most tragic figures in the *Torah*. He had such amazing potential for achievement. In fact, he was one of those who participated in carrying the *Aron Ha'Kodesh*. This distinction, together with the massive wealth he had accumulated, was still not sufficient to quell his feelings of envy, his lust for power. *Chazal* refer to Korach's incursion as "*shtus*," foolishness. We would assume that a man who carried the *Aron* would know better. Did he not know that the *Aron* was not carried by its carriers, but that actually the *Aron* supported itself, as well as its carriers? He should have realized that man's endeavor is meaningless unless it is blessed with the will of Hashem.

It was pure *machlok'es*, conflict, that motivated Korach. He lusted for power, and was driven by envy and greed. Yes, he was the perfect *baal machlok'es*, the one who generates and fuels discord in a community. In *pasuk 21:11*, it is written, "*And the sons of Korach did not die.*" Is that really true? **Horav Yosef Chaim, zl, M'Baghdad**, comments that the *pasuk* alludes to the timelessness of discord and its universal effect on a community. Korach died, but his sons are those who carry on his philosophies, those who follow his reprehensible tactics, those who live for conflict and discord. These individuals receive a perverted sense of satisfaction when they are able to destroy the harmony of a community. These people, indeed, remain very much alive.

It was not sufficient for Korach to simply keep his feelings of discontent to himself. He found it necessary to challenge Moshe *Rabbeinu's* leadership. He led us out of Egypt; he devoted his entire life to being the quintessential leader of *Klal Yisrael*. Yet, one person, together with a group of insecure followers, attempted to impugn Moshe *Rabbeinu's* position. Is there no wonder that *Chazal* refer to him as a fool?