

"Morning (tomorrow) and Hashem will make known who is his." (16:5)

The *Midrash* questions Moshe's choice of the word *morning*, instead of the more usual, *tomorrow*. They comment that Moshe told Korach, "Hashem sets boundaries in this world which you can not undo. As Hashem has separated day from night, so has He separated *Bnei Yisrael* from the gentile nations. Similarly, He has separated Aharon from His people. When you will be able to reverse the distinction set by Hashem between day and night, then you will also be able to reverse the separation between Aharon and the rest of *Bnei Yisrael*."

In this vein, referring to the *pasuk*, *and it was evening and it was day*, Moshe used the word *morning* rather than *tomorrow*. The *Midrash* suggests that the word *boker*, morning, is an allusion to Korach's inability to alter the Divine order of creation. Aharon's status as *kohen* is a prime example of the immutability of the established order.

We suggest a homiletic rendering of this *Midrash*. The *Midrash* views *erev*, *evening*, as a metaphor for the actions of the evil and *boker* as a symbol of the actions of the righteous. *Horav Shlomo Breuer z.l.* explains this statement in the following manner. As night and day follow one another in the realm of nature, so, too, are good and evil daily occurrences in our lives. Day and night sharply contrast, but they have in common the fact that they both transform slowly. Day does not break all at once, and night does not fall spontaneously. They both reach their climax gradually. Through the vehicle of "*erev*," the mixture of evening in which the light of day gives way to the specter of shadows and ultimately darkness, night slowly descends.

Man's moral development undergoes a similar metamorphosis. *Tzaddik* and *rasha* are stark contrasts, like day and night, but they also share a common denominator; their development is also gradual. One does not change spontaneously from being righteous to being wicked -- or vice versa. Initially, one who stands on the summit of *Torah* observance will slowly weaken some of his constraints. The conscientious *Shabbos* observer gradually allows himself a few dispensations. After a while, he becomes a *mechallel Shabbos*, *Shabbos* desecrator. Likewise, the dietary and marital laws are not eliminated at once. One slowly, gradually, and often inadvertently, dispenses with his religious restraints.

This is true in communal activities, as well as in individual lives. Those groups which have broken with *Torah* Judaism did so with care and diplomacy, always formulating some lame excuse for their rebellion against Hashem. Indeed, even today there are those who attempt to mix the observant Jew with his non-observant counterpart all for the sake of unity!

Had Korach and his followers openly proclaimed his detestation of Jewish leadership and flaunted his opposition to Hashem, he would have been immediately dismissed. Consistent with the methods of the wicked, however, he cloaked his malevolence in a mantle of piety and concern for

this fellow man. He acted out the part of the perfect "erev," craftily ensnaring the people and turning them against Moshe and Aharon. How did Moshe respond to this veiled threat? How did he expose this hidden evil, this mixture of light and darkness? Only amazing brilliant light, the light of *Torah* truth, the light of "boker," reveals this veiled darkness.

This was Moshe's message to Korach: you may have deceived most of the people, but in the "morning" the brilliance of *Torah* truth will blaze forth and expose the darkness of your evil for all to "see."