

He (Moshe Rabbeinu) spoke to Korach and to his entire assembly. (16:5)

Either debated, dissenting opinions or the fire of controversy can characterize disagreements based in Torah. *Chazal* (*Pirkei Avos* 5:17) label the controversy of Korach *v'adaso*, and his congregation, as a *machlokes she'lo l'shem Shomayim*, controversy not for the sake of Heaven. It is a disagreement which undermines the very underpinnings of Torah Judaism. Korach *v'adaso* stand in contrast with the two classic debaters of the *Mishnah*, Hillel and Shammai, who debated *l'shem Shomayim*. Interestingly, concerning Hillel and Shammai, both disputants are named, while in the controversy that surrounded Korach and Moshe, it is called the *machlokes* of Korach *v'adaso* – no Moshe – just Korach and his assembly.

Horav Aharon Walkin, zl (Pinsker Rav), explains that *Chazal* are alluding to the cause of the widespread controversy that enveloped so many. It was *adaso* – his assembly. Had Korach himself met with Moshe *Rabbeinu* and stated his critique, they would have worked it out. We find differing opinions between Torah leaders throughout the generations. When the fire of *machlokes* reaches the periphery, however, the congregation who has nothing to do with their lives other than fan the flames of dissent until they reach conflagration status – causes the debate to lose its amicability and become ugly. The members of the congregation lose respect for one another. This is what occurred in the Korach controversy. It was the *adas Korach* who turned the variance of opinion into a raging inferno of discord. They were unlike Hillel and Shammai whose respect and love for one another never waned. Their exchange of views was for the purpose of clarifying *halachah*. It was all for the sake of glorifying Heaven. They might have disagreed – but it never became personal.