

And Korach ben Yitzhar ben Kehas ben Levi separated himself. (16:1)

The *Midrash Tanchuma* observes that Yaakov *Avinu's* name is glaringly omitted from Korach's lineage. The *Midrash* says that it was by design, so that Yaakov's name not be included together with that of Korach. The mere thought of dispute distances Yaakov *Avinu* from these people. This reverts to *Bircas Yaakov*, the blessings the Patriarch gave his sons shortly before his death. He said, *B'sodam al tavoh nafshi, b'k'halom al teichad kevodi*, "Into their conspiracy may my soul not enter, with their congregation do not join, my honor" (*Bereishis* 49:6). This refers to the Korach controversy.

Did it mean that much to Yaakov not to have his name included with these miscreants? Does everyone not know that Yaakov was their great-great grandfather? Does hiding one's face in the sand protect his identity? Would anyone blame Yaakov for Korach's failure as a human being? *Horav Meir Shapiro, zl*, offers a practical explanation. *Chazal* teach (*Meseches Kiddushin*), "Fortunate is he who sees his parents engaging in an *umnus meulah*, an appropriate vocation. Woe is to he whose parents are engaged in a degrading vocation." Regarding this statement, the *Alshich* would quote the *pasuk* at the end of the Rebuke in *Parashas Bechukosai*, "And I will remember My Covenant with Yaakov" (*Vayikra* 26:42). The fact that this perpetuation of the Covenant is mentioned in the Rebuke would seem to imply that it is a curse to have the relationship Hashem had with Yaakov included in the curses. It is as if it is being held against the Jews.

The *Alshich* explains that one who is himself engaged in an appropriate vocation – yet has seen his parents in an unseemly vocation – shows that it did not rub off on him. While his parents may have had "issues," he, at least, pulled through and made a name for himself. However, if he is engaged in an unseemly vocation, while his parents are upright, distinguished members of the community, he will look even worse. Thus, when *Klal Yisrael* "blew it," their distinguished ancestors' relationship with Hashem makes them appear even worse.

Thus, explains *Rav Meir Shapiro*, Yaakov was doing his descendants a great service by praying for his name to be ignored. Knowing that these *reshaim*, wicked people, were descendants of the Patriarch would have indicated that their nefarious rebellion was that much more egregious.