

## And Korach separated himself. (16:1)

In the beginning of *Sefer Devarim*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* details the places in which the Jewish nation acted inappropriately. Rather than underscore the sin and humiliate them, our leader alludes to various indiscretions by the names and places in which these events took place: *Bein Paran u'bein Tofel, v'Lavan va'Chatzeiros v'Di Zahav* (*Devarim* 1:1). The commentators note that these places do not exist on any geographical map; rather, they are allusions to sins – Paran refers to the spies who were sent out from the Wilderness of Paran. Tofel and Lavan allude to the people's complaints about the *Manna*. Chatzeiros is where Korach's rebellion took place, and Di Zahav, literally means "an abundance of gold," is a veiled reference to the sin of the Golden Calf.

While we can infer the various indiscretions from the geographical names stated by the Torah, we find it necessary to be creative in linking Chatzeiros to Korach. The *Chidushei HaRim* explains this with a brilliant synopsis of the meaning of Chatzeiros. A *chatzeir* is a courtyard. On *Shabbos*, one may not carry from one private courtyard to another unless the members of the collective courtyard all agree to make an *eiruv*. *Chazal* provide a dispensation whereby a parcel of food is placed in one of the houses of the members of the courtyard. Everyone contributes toward the purchase of this *eiruv*, thus making all of the members partners, essentially transforming the area into one large *chatzeir* in which all may carry.

*Chazal* laud Shlomo *Ha'melech* who was *mesakein*, established/instituted, the *eiruv* reform. He saw a problem and addressed it. Hashem was quite pleased with this *tikkun*. Why? The *Gerrer Rebbe* explains that *eiruvei chatzeiros* teaches the value and power of *achdus*, harmony/unity among Jews. The very method through which an *eiruv* becomes valid is by the partnership that encompasses all of the members of the neighborhood.

*Eiruvei chatzeiros* symbolizes Jewish unity. Korach fought against Jewish unity. He created a rift when he separated himself from the *klal*, community. Thus, the word *chatzeiros* is an excellent choice for emphasizing the *machlokes Korach*, dispute of Korach. He catalyzed the opposite of *eiruv* by creating divisiveness within the nation.

It is amazing that so many years later, Korach stands alone as the individual who created *machlokes* in *Klal Yisrael*. Furthermore, he impugned the leadership of Moshe and Aharon, which is in itself an unforgiveable mutiny. Yet, the Torah focuses on the *machlokes*, the shattering of unity. Perhaps everything could have been "worked out," even overlooked, had Korach not destroyed the harmony that existed in *Klal Yisrael*. Some people are rabble-rousers, always on the lookout for an opportunity to arouse dissent and discord. They cannot leave well enough alone. It is almost as if they are nobody in their own right. However, when sides are taken and discord reigns, they come to the fore with their perverted opinions. They thrive on *machlokes*, very much like bacteria flourishes in/on an infection. Every community is cursed with such Korachs, who appear out of the woodwork once they smell a dispute brewing among partners, husband and wife, parent body of a school, or members of a *shul*. They do not really care who triumphs, as long as

*machlokes* is present. Such individuals represent the greatest danger to a united *Klal Yisrael*. I just cannot figure out why everyone is so frightened of them.