

## There is much to you, Bnei Levi. (16:7)

*Rashi* asks: Korach was a *pikeach*, clever person. What is it that he saw which led him to this *shtus*, folly? (What did he think? He obviously knew that what he was undertaking was mutinous. Did he think that he would emerge unscathed?) *Eino hitato* – His eye led him to error. He saw a great chain of descendants emerging from him (referring to Shmuel *HaNavi*, the twenty-four *mishmaros*, watches, which officiated in the *Bais Hamikdash*. Among them were included *Neviim*, prophets, who possessed *Ruach HaKodesh*, Divine inspiration). Korach ruminated to himself, “Is it possible that all of this greatness is destined to be established from me, even if I will remain silent?” He joined in partnership with others, assuring that, even if the others would perish, one could live – and that would be him. (It was Aharon, but Korach was so drunk with power, seeking glory that he failed to realize that it might be Aharon that would live, and they would all die.) Korach did not see well (this was his error), for his sons repented from their original complicity in the mutiny and lived. It was their illustrious descendants whom Korach had seen – only he did not realize that the lineage was made possible by his sons’ last minute repentance.

The *Midrash Tanchuma* is the source of this remarkable, eye-opening understanding of Korach’s actions. A clever man made a foolish decision based on short-sightedness, an error in judgment based on the premise that if he took a position antagonistic of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, his sons, whom he had raised, would follow suit. Apparently, he did not think that his sons had minds of their own. He had educated them to follow their father (which, under normal circumstances, is a good thing). Wherein lay his mistake? Why did his sons not follow in their father’s path? (Veritably, they did, but, at the last moment, they repented.)

I think that Korach (as all parents should realize) should have understood that, while education is important and certainly sets the tone for children to be made aware of their parents’ principles and guidelines, personal example is also a major (and, possibly, an overriding) factor in education. Korach’s sons saw their father break the rules by rebelling against Moshe, impugning the integrity of his leadership, thereby questioning the Almighty’s decision to establish Moshe as His agent to lead the nation. When children see a father break the rules (whenever he sees fit), they have no qualms about doing the same when it suits them. Korach’s sons respected their father and followed him to infamy – until they realized that this was not the way to go. One does not rebel against Moshe; one does not question Hashem. How does a son, however, rebel against his father? He does not – usually – unless he sees his father rebelling! When Korach decided to dispute Moshe, he was, by his personal example, teaching his sons: when it suits “me” all bets are off, and I will even rebel against Moshe. This being the case, we understand why Korach’s sons broke ranks with their father and repented. After all, this is what he had taught them to do.