

And Korach gathered the entire assembly. (16:19)

Korach is recorded in history as the archetype of the *baal machlokes*, one who generates strife and contention. We may wonder what distinguished Korach in this area. After all, he was not the first person in the *Torah* who was involved in strife. Did not Kayin fight with his brother? And the list goes on from there.

We suggest that while Korach was not the first person to argue with others, he was the first to start a movement founded in contention, whose goal was to usurp the leadership of *Klal Yisrael*. It is one thing to disagree, even to argue publicly. To gather people, however, for the sake of convincing them to join him in a "holy war" against the *Torah* leadership of that generation is reprehensible. This type of deplorable behavior earned Korach his infamous reputation.

Are things really that much different today? Frequently when people do not see eye to eye, rather than resorting to "healthy" disagreement, they resort to malicious slander, encouraging others to join them in their battle for "justice." No, we have not veered very far from the course that Korach charted. In fact, he would take pride in the character of *machlokes* that exists today.