

And the earth opened up its mouth and it swallowed them...and all the men that belonged to Korach. (16:32)

All those who joined Korach in his conflict met their end tragically. Korach's sons, however, did not die. As *Sforno* comments, "They were not drawn after him in the matter." It seems strange that such a charismatic demagogue as Korach had no permanent influence upon his children. *Chazal* assert that Korach was imbued with the ability to see the future. Therefore, he was secure in his success, since he foresaw his noble descendants. Ostensibly, Korach's ability was limited. He saw the *tzaddikim* that would be his progeny, but he did not see his own disaster. In any event, what happened to his children? Why did they not follow in their father's footsteps? Also, what merit did Korach have that his descendants achieved such spiritual prominence?

We suggest a fundamental lesson to be derived from here. Korach made one enormous error that cost him everything. His theology was founded in "*krumkeit*," distortion, nurtured with arrogance and deceit. Yet, Korach was not a parent who imposed his faulty perspective upon his children. He was not one who feared that his children might sway to the "right" of his opinion. This trait is what saved him and them. He permitted his children to grow spiritually, unencumbered by his own misconceptions.

Chazal tell us that Moshe *Rabbeinu* was *rebbe* to Korach's sons. During the height of the conflict they asked, "Who should we follow, our father or our *rebbe*?" This teaches us that Korach encouraged his children to study from their *rebbe*, and he did not pressure his children to challenge their *rebbe* because of his beliefs.

Do we see this parental attitude today? How often do we find those whose insecurity about their own spiritual beliefs causes them to demand that their children adopt the same spiritual agenda. They demean anyone who might teach their children a way of life that is incongruous with theirs. After all, how would it look if their child were to be more observant than they? It would cramp their lifestyle if they were to feel uncomfortable to do whatever they please in the presence of their children. In this realm, Korach acted correctly. Regrettably, it was the only such area.