

## Korach separated himself. (16:1)

Korach earned the infamous nomenclature of *baal machlokes*, the paradigmatic quarrelsome person. This is in addition to *Chazal* labeling him an *apikores*, heretic. He earned these ignominious titles by virtue of his mutiny against Moshe and Hashem. When we sit back and analyze what took place, we wonder what Korach requested that was inappropriate. He complained to Moshe that he had been passed over for a distinguished leadership position. He said, "My father's brother had four sons. Amram was the oldest. His two sons, Moshe *Rabbeinu* and Aharon *HaKohen*, both took the top positions of leadership. Who then should be next in line, if not I, Yitzhar's son? (Yitzhar was the brother of Amram.) Instead, Moshe chose Elitzfan *ben Uziel*, a younger cousin of Korach, who was Kehas *ben Yitzhar's* eldest son. Korach's first mistake was intimating that this was Moshe's decision. Moshe did not make his own decisions. Hashem did. Korach essentially argued with G-d. We can ask a similar question concerning Korach's dispute of the law of *Tzitzis*, which requires every garment to have *Tzitzis*, fringes. Korach questioned: if one strand of *techeiles*, purple wool, exempts the *tallis*, so, surely, a garment made completely of *techeiles* should be exempt. On the surface, his question had basis. Once again, he missed the most important principle: Everything comes from Hashem: every decision; every leadership choice; every *halachah*. Hashem declared that a garment of *techeiles* requires *Tzitzis*. It is what it is, and we accept Hashem's assertion. We do not question Hashem.

*Horav Yaakov Neiman, zl*, quotes Rabbi Meir, who declared (*Eiruvim* 13b) that he could render one hundred and fifty logical reasons for purifying a *sheretz*, creepy creature/insect, which is deemed *tamei*, ritually impure. The question is asked: If Rabbi Meir was so certain that his logic was solid, why did he not purify the *sheretz*? *Rav Neiman* quotes the *Alter, zl, m'Kelm*, who derives from here that one does not rely (basic *halachah*) on his own *seichel*, cognitive analysis. If the Torah states that a *sheretz* is *tamei*, we must believe that not a single one of Rabbi Meir's logical deductions are correct. We follow the Torah; we follow Hashem; we do not question.

Throughout the generations, some have thought that by their brilliant deductions, they could find loopholes in *halachah* through which they could alter tradition. We see what has resulted from their brand of *halachic* analysis. Korach had reasons to question, to dispute, but he forgot that we do not contravene Hashem. The Torah need not conform to our line of thinking. We must adjust our thought process to understand the Torah. Korach did not get it.