

## *Parshas Korach, Rabbi David Mahler*

Often the most intriguing thoughts are those that are counter-intuitive.

*Korach* is mentioned in *Pirkei Avos* as an example of a *machlokes*, an argument, that is *L'shem Shamayim*, for the sake of heaven. The Mishna teaches that any argument for the sake of heaven will endure forever. On the flip side, any disagreement that is not for the sake of heaven will not endure. *Korach* and his band of rebels are the *mishna's* paradigm of a group who acted *Shelo L'shem Shamayim*.

When one argues for personal or selfish reasons, those arguments do not stand the test of time. They fall short of living in posterity. The *mishna* writes that the disagreements between *Hillel* and *Shammai* last forever in our nation's psyche because they were *L'shem Shamayim*.

However, how can we say that *Korach's* fight was not one *L'Shem Shamayim*? *Korach* was fighting for something in the world of *Ruchinyus* – religious and spiritual. He wanted a greater portion, capacity and access to *Hashem*. He wanted to be more involved and have a greater stake of *Kedusha*.

Rav Mordechai Druk in his *sefer, Darash Mordechai*, writes that when a person gets involved in a *machlokes* over a *davar gashmi*, material matters, over time people get over it. They realize it's just money or a car or something inconsequential in the grand scheme of things.

However, this is not the case concerning a *Machlokes L'sheim Mitzva* or *Shamayim*. If someone makes a *Machlokes* in which he feels it is a *Mitzva*, what he is doing is something noble, something that is principled - that is a real *Machlokes*. There is no backing down. When a person does things and he believes that his claims are "in the name of G-D", it is really very difficult to back down. It's hard to let go and therefore this argument will endure. Rav Druk fascinatingly flips the *Mishna* on its head explaining that disagreements in the name of *Hashem* last forever because neither side is willing to compromise their beliefs or principles.

*Korch's* argument doesn't endure because it only feigned of being principled and of noble intentions. It was really selfish, motivated by jealousy and honor.

The most dangerous *Machlokes* is a *Machlokes* when you say to yourself you are doing it *L'sheim Mitzvah*.

One lesson we can glean from this *parsha* is that very few things are worth fighting over. Very few things are worth making a fuss over. When it comes to the principle, we can't both be right. A person must be especially careful when he/she acts *L'Shem Shamayim*, as one might think that the truth of the cause gives license to act as one pleases.

Any *machlokes*, even one that is motivated by the best of intentions, can have terrible *repercussions*. Despite *Korach's* lofty intentions, the *machlokes* caused the demise of his entire family. If so, can there be any cause that justifies *machlokes*?

(The idea that both sides cannot be correct does not apply to *Torah*. There is a concept throughout the *Talmud* that *Eilu V'eilu Divrei Elokim Chaim* – that both sides of an argument are the word of G-D. This is why *Shammai* and *Hillel's* disagreements endure forever.)