

Parshas Korach

This week's Parsha-Korach, Moshe's cousin Korach, organized a rebellion and was punished.

One may ask why this is considered a rebellion versus an academic dispute that would be lauded rather than punished. The answer lies in the method by which Korach formulated his questions. Gur Aryeh, among others, said in Rashi in 16:2 that although Korach had specific questions against Moshe, he acted out his complaints against Moshe.

Had Moshe given an alternative approach, would this have satisfied Korach? The answer is likely not since Korach acted out his method of life. He already drew his conclusions, placed himself in the seat of dispute, and was duly punished.

The Hebrew word for ice is spelled with the same letters as Korach. If there is an argument and a question about a method to operate within Judaism, then that is praised. When you go out intending to sway people to a negative outcome and conclude there is no conversation to be had, you act like Korach, which has a cooling effect and is like ice. The problem with ice is that it requires a medium to sustain, and when taken out of that high-energy medium, it melts (i.e. a fridge).

Sustaining an oppositional existence takes too much energy and is unsustainable. In the regular or 'right' environment, i.e., an environment of truth, it will melt and dissolve into oblivion.

The truth is in the Torah and what Moshe and the Rabbanim taught us. The problem with Korach is that he had a compelling and convincing argument that could have been credible, making his approach even scarier and thus warranted punishment.

Communal breakdowns happen, but if they are Leshaim Shomayim, they can have credibility, especially if they are approached through dialogue, devoid of ego, and to better the community, unlike Korach's way, which aims at destabilization and outcomes that steer people from faith and the path of serving Hashem.

This coming week marks the 30th Yahrzeit since the passing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose central goal was to provide warmth and community by bringing every Jew closer to Hashem. The Lubavitcher Rebbe's mission was to get as many people closer to their roots and faith so that we collectively cajole Hashem to usher in Mashiach by more of us doing more every day to bring Mashiach closer.

Good Shabbos