

OzTORAH

The Company You Keep

The Chumash is populated with characters. Some are saints, some are sinners, all are full of fascination. The story of Korach is a prime example.

Commentators and congregations have been debating Korach for centuries. A nasty piece of work, yet not without his good points. Not only Korach but his supporters and associates too.

Everybody knows (or should) about On ben Pelet whose wife was shrewd enough to warn him to extricate himself from the Korach team because whatever happened to Korach in the end, On was bound to suffer, and it was best for him to get out while he could.

What about Datan and Aviram?

The Midrash thinks that they were the two Israelites who had been quarrelling in Egypt (Sh'mot 2). Later incidents where there was trouble in the camp also involved them.

No wonder Moshe's task of leadership was so difficult when he had to keep the peace amongst the people and had to handle trouble-makers like Datan and Aviram.

Korach hardly realised when he fomented his rebellion against

Moses that having Datan and Aviram in his company was never going to bring him much joy. Not only would he have to undermine Moshe but his own team would try to undermine him himself.

Anyone who tries to be a leader, even a leader of the opposition, has to face problems in his own ranks.

On ben Pelet got out while he could but Datan and Aviram should have been removed before they could do any more harm.

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