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A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANOCH YERES

RAV, BEIT KNESSET BEIT YISRAEL, YEMIN MOSHE

הרמו מתוך העדה הזאת ואכלה אתם כרגע (י:יז)

"Go out from among this congregation, so that I may consume them in a moment." (17:10)

Why does G-d have to instruct Moshe and Aharon to remove themselves from the people once again here? G-d had just told them to separate themselves a few verses previously? "Separate yourselves from among this congregation that I may consume them in a moment" (16:21).

The Ramban (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman 1194-1270, Spain-Acco) deepens the question. Does G-d not have the dominion to wipe out many people in a plague while the one righteous person amongst them is saved, as He had done during the plagues in Egypt?

The answer offered is that although Moshe and Aharon themselves were in no danger because they had not sinned, the other people around them who did sympathize with Korach would realize the danger that they face by standing in the vicinity of Korach. When Moshe and Aharon were commanded to separate themselves again, they became an example for others to understand the need for all to separate themselves from Korach's presence and ways.

Additionally, perhaps, so long as righteous individuals like Moshe and Aharon were in the sinner's presence, G-d would refrain from striking those who were culpable. G-d was instructing Moshe of the need to exit the people and plead for their mercy and ask for their forgiveness which Moshe did with fervor.

Shabbat Shalom