

# FAINT PERCEPTION

*by Rabbi Naftali Reich*

Korach says to Moshe, "Why do you elevate yourself above the congregation of Hashem?" Korach claimed that Moshe was acting haughtily. How could he possibly have accused Moshe, the humblest of all man of vanity, wasn't this rather absurd?

Commentators explain that Korach's charge was reserved of projection. As our sages teach us 'one who seeks to disqualify another projects his own defects on him.' Korach's distorted perception of Moshe was because he himself possessed such an inflated self view. It was impossible for him not to see that characteristic in others. But why do we see ourselves in others? Why can't we judge others rationally and objectively, outside of our tainted self perceptions? The answer is that this is a natural weakness of the human condition. We deeply desire to feel comfortable with ourselves. And the only way we rationalize our defects is by seeing the world as an extension of our own tainted selves.

*A young man lived through the horrors of the holocaust and told a religious leader that in the valley of death he lost his faith in G-d. It was one story he said that stripped him of his faith. A religious Jew had smuggled a prayer book into the barracks and fondly shared it with those who shared half their daily bread rations with this opportunistic wicked Jew. When I saw the long line of emaciated Jews being forced to give up their lifeline to this supposedly religious Jew, I knew I would never be religious again.*

"What do you mean", said the Rabbi? "Why did you look at those other Jews that refused to share the siddur with others? Why didn't you look at those who were willing to give up their precious life support for their faith?"

In our own lives, all too often we too see others with our own warped sense of pointing out the failings of others. We are simply trying to justify our own weaknesses. Let's try to cultivate a positive sense of highlighting other peoples good points, thus accentuating our own positive traits. Text Copyright &copy 2009 by Rabbi Naftali Reich and **Torah.org**.

Rabbi Reich is on the faculty of [the Ohr Somayach Tanenbaum Education Center](#).