

LAMPLIGHTER

22 Sivan
Parshas Korach

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

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Abused Merits

By Lazer Gurkow

In this week's Parshah we read about the infamous Korach. Korach was smart, rich, and powerful. He was also a rebel. Worse than a rebel he was a jealous rebel. His rebellion was nearly successful and G-d found it necessary to stamp out his rebellion in the most remarkable fashion: Korach and his followers were literally swallowed alive in a sudden earthquake.

Our sages note that Korach was to be the ancestor of the great prophet Shmuel. Korach knew that his progeny Shmuel would be greater in piety and spirit than Moses and Aaron combined. In light of his illustrious progeny Korach thought he was powerful enough to challenge Moses and Aaron. He was convinced that his life would be spared, that he was somehow invincible.

As the story unfolded it became painfully obvious that Korach was wrong. Why did his progeny not stand by him in good stead? Why did the merit not protect him? It is explained that once the merit became the reason for his sin, i.e. the justification for his rebellion, it lost the power to protect him.

We often find ourselves in similar predicaments. For example, we make a donation to the UJA and then resent the expectation that we continue to support our local Synagogue. We wash the dishes at home and are irritated that we are still expected to take out the trash. We do the shopping for our parents and resent that we are asked to follow up with the laundry. We wonder why our past merits are not enough to save us from future obligations?

Perhaps it is because we have transformed those merits into our reason for avoiding further obligation. When we use one good deed as an excuse to avoid another we deny ourselves credit for the future mitzvah as well as the one we performed!

Slice of LIFE



A LUCKY PARTNERSHIP

Menachem Mendel HaLevi ("Max") Katsch, an international dealer in furs who resided in London, often visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson. Although a relatively new member of the Chabad community in England, he was quite familiar with how the Rebbe's advice and blessings had impacted many people's lives in virtually every area of human experience.

Once, during a private audience, he put forth a tongue-in-cheek proposal for the Rebbe to partner with him in a business venture! The Rebbe's expression became serious and he said, "I'll agree. But remember that in a partnership, neither partner gets to make a move without the consent of the other. Do we have a deal?"

Mr. Katsch was of course excited about this lucky opportunity to "partner" with the tzadik. So even though at the same time he was somewhat sceptical about the Rebbe's knowledge of the fur trade, he readily accepted the deal. The Rebbe gave him a token amount of dollars to "seal" the arrangement.

The Rebbe then advised him to make a large purchase of a rare fur that had never even been on the man's radar screen: muskrat fur! The dealer went home and placed a large order for this unusual fabric.

When he reported back to New York, the Rebbe responded that the buy was far too conservative. A much larger quantity should have been purchased. On the Rebbe's say-so, Katsch went out and bought astronomical quantities of the stuff -- to the point of investing his entire personal fortune to pay for the shipments, and also borrowing large sums to purchase even more.

To the man's chagrin, shortly after the acquisitions the value of this unusual fur began to plummet. Perhaps, he thought, he should hedge his investment and sell off a significant percentage of what he had purchased.

As promised, he contacted the Rebbe for his consent. To his surprise, the Rebbe did not grant consent and reminded him of their agreement with regard to unilateral moves.

The price of the fur continued to sink. And with it sank Mr. Katsch's spirits; it seemed to him that he would certainly be ruined. Every day, he watched his fortune slipping further and further away. All pleas to the Rebbe were met with the same answer: "Don't sell."

Facing financial ruin, he finally began to question his entire relationship with the Rebbe and Chabad-Lubavitch. Perhaps it was all a mistake. With each day's devaluation of his inventory, his distance from the Chabad community widened.

The bleeding continued for nearly half a year altogether. One day, the price took a slight tick back up. He again consulted the Rebbe. But the Rebbe still withheld consent. When the price had risen to where he could break even, the Rebbe still would not green-light the sell-off.

The price of the fur continued to rise incrementally. At each juncture, Mr. Katsch desired to sell, and always the Rebbe advised him to wait.

Although by now his disillusionment was coated with heavy layers of

bitterness, he continued to honour his agreement with the Rebbe.

Shortly thereafter, a famous fashion designer put out a line that called for extensive use of a rare material: muskrat fur! The industry was soon astonished to discover that a man in England had the market cornered. When Katsch reported this to the Rebbe, he was told that the time had come to sell.

The inventory went fast. Even after repaying the loans and subtracting his costs, he made many millions in profit. He excitedly boarded a plane to hand the Rebbe a check for his "share." The Rebbe declined, requesting that the man give the money to charity instead.

Katsch then asked the Rebbe if they could perhaps pursue another venture together. The Rebbe smiled as he demurred: "I'm sorry... You're a shvacher shutaf, 'a weak partner'-'too weak-hearted'."

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from an article by Moshe Bryski on //Chabad.org, the rendition of Eliyahu Touger in Keeping in Touch - Vol. 2, and, from a special source in London, a relative, who supplied a number of little-known details.

Biographical note:

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe (11 Nissan 1902 - 3 Tammuz 1994), became the seventh Rebbe of the Chabad dynasty after his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, passed away in Brooklyn on 10 Shvat 1950. He is widely acknowledged as the greatest Jewish leader of the second half of the 20th century. Although a dominant scholar in both the revealed and hidden aspects of Torah and fluent in many languages and scientific subjects, the Rebbe is best known for his extraordinary love and concern for every Jew on the planet. His emissaries around the globe dedicated to strengthening Judaism number in the thousands. Hundreds of volumes of his teachings have been printed, as well as dozens of English renditions.

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ISSUE 1144

MOSHIACH MATTERS

It is well known that the Messianic Era, and especially the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, is the fulfilment and culmination of the creation of the world, for which purpose it was originally created. (*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, ch. 36 of Tanya*).

In light of this teaching we must make certain that our actions are directed towards the ultimate goal of the creation of the world - bringing Moshiach.



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Iyar, 5712 [May 6, 1952]
Brooklyn, N. Y.

It was with especial pleasure that I received the list of names of those of our community who reside in Russia...

I am convinced that maintaining contact with them, if only by thought, reinforces the concept that "all Jews are responsible for – and integrated with – one another." Indeed, since the darkness and obstruction [of all things holy] of that country have no control over those [of us] who are outside its borders, [our] bond with those who still find themselves there supplies them with the strength to resist and to fortify themselves regarding their situation, and diminishes the cruel tyrant's power over them.

By analogy: A person finds himself in a dank cellar, but part of his body extends out into the pure, fresh air. The vitality thus absorbed by the body extends to its entirety, including the part that is in the dank cellar.

But to achieve this [we] must be as a single body, and this is accomplished by the power of thought... which transcends all limitations of time and space – as my father-in-law, the Rebbe, said on the night of Shmini Atzeret 5693. And although there it concerns a nasi, a leader of Israel, a semblance of this also applies to all who are connected with him...

I trust that you will continue to maintain such contact in the future. Certainly, this would be greatly beneficial for those who find themselves there, as well as for those who find themselves here.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Advice on How to Stay Away from Disputes

- "Never stop seeking friends and people who will love you. Do not minimize [the danger posed by even] one enemy."
- "Do not get angry about trivial matters against any person, lest you gather enemies for no reason."
- "Do not refuse the [requests of the] members of your city. Nullify your will before the will of others."
- "Do not quarrel with anyone without cause, if he did you no harm."
- "A man of wrath stirs up quarrels, but he who is slow to anger abates strife."
- "Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones."
- "A gentle reply turns away wrath, but a distressing word stirs up anger." Often, the same response can bring either resolution or conflict. It all depends on the tone of voice.
- "A passer-by who becomes embroiled in a quarrel that is not his is like one who grabs a dog by its ears." It's bad enough that we have our own arguments; certainly we should not mix into someone else's.

A WORD

from the Director

In his commentary Rashi explains the method by which Korach gathered support for his rebellion: "The entire night, he went to the tribes and tricked them, [saying,] 'Do you think I care only for myself? I care only for all of you! These men have come and taken all the high positions. [Moshe took] the kingship for himself and the priesthood for his brother.' Eventually they were all lured [into Korach's rebellion]."

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J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

A SILENT CONFRONTATION

In a townlet near Ushamir in the Ukraine there lived a Jew who was manager of the estates belonging to the local *paritz* (land-owner). This manager was an evil man - evil in the eyes of heaven and evil in the eyes of man - and the Jews of the township suffered bitterly at his hands.

One day Ushamir was visited by Reb Mordechai Dov of Hornisteipl, and great numbers of chassidim from all the surrounding regions converged on the town in order to greet him - and among them, of course, came the embittered townsfolk of that little place. When their turn came to speak to the Rebbe they told him of their woes, and asked his advice as to what they should do.

"I'll visit your township myself, G-d willing" he said, "and once there we'll see what to do."

When he paid his promised visit hundreds of people accompanied him, some by wagon, some on foot. As the Rebbe and this whole retinue passed by the house of the manager, someone pointed it out to the Rebbe. He motioned the wagon-driver to stop, turned to face the house, and gazed upon it at length.

Meanwhile, since the Rebbe's carriage stopped, all the other carriages also halted, as did the hundreds who had followed on foot. And as that vast crowd stood there watching the Rebbe gaze intently at the house, they were quite certain that at any moment the hated man inside would be miraculously turned in to a heap of bones.

When the man inside looked through the window and saw the silent multitude outside his house he went out to the balcony and surveyed the strange sight.

For some time the Rebbe looked him straight in the eye. Then the Rebbe stepped down from his carriage, and with measured steps walked into the house.

The master of the house meanwhile went downstairs, and met the Rebbe inside.

He led him into a room and there, the two of them sat alone, facing one another. Five whole minutes and still they had not exchanged a word. Then the Rebbe rose and left the house, stepped up to his seat in his carriage, and went off to his lodgings.

After spending Shabbat in the township and reciting *Havdalah* to mark the departure of the Day of Rest, the Rebbe was sitting in his room, with large crowds of people at his door waiting to see him. Suddenly the man whom everyone dreaded appeared at the door, and asked to be admitted to the Rebbe's presence.

The Rebbe was consulted, and he gave the order that the man should be allowed in at once.

What they spoke about while alone there for two hours no one knows. But the man who came out of the room at the end of the two hours was a different person from when he had entered.

The first thing he did was to hand out money for the purchase of refreshments for a Chassidic celebration. He danced with all those present and hurried home, where he shattered his *trefah* [non-kosher] kitchenware. He replaced it all with new utensils, and from then on conducted his household conscientiously according to the dietary laws for the preparation of kosher food.

And, as he became a penitent in all the areas of his life, he went out of his way from that day on to deal kindly and charitable with his fellows.

Just half a year later he died. He was buried with every mark of respect, and was mourned with genuine regret by all the townsfolk.

Sometime later the *tzaddik* of Hornisteipl visited Ushamir once again. And again, among those who flocked there to see him were of course the citizens of that little township.

But this time, as they took their turns for a private audience with the *tzaddik*, he asked each one of them in turn: "Well, what do you have to say about my *ba'al teshuvah*?"

In response, each one of them praised at length the acts of charity which had distinguished the last months of this man's life. This exchange was repeated so many times that the townsfolk finally understood the Rebbe's intention: the more said to his credit in This World, the better would it be for his soul in the World Above.

The last townsman to enter was an individual who had not yet forgotten all the suffering that he had undergone in former years at the hands of the estate manager. When the Rebbe asked his question, he therefore enumerated bitterly all the acts of undeserved malice and spite that were still fresh in his memory.

The Rebbe interrupted his tirade with an original paraphrase of a Talmudic teaching.

There is a statement in Tractate Sanhedrin that if all the judges of the high court are unanimous in saying "guilty," then the accused is to be returned innocent.

With this in mind, Rebbe Mordechai Dov said: "It seems that if all say 'innocent', that is likewise not desirable...."

And from then on he never spoke of that man again.

[Selected and adapted by Yrachmiel Tilles from the rendition in A Treasury of Chassidic Tales (Artsroll), as translated by our esteemed colleague Uri Kaploun from Sipurei Chasidim by Rabbi S. Y. Zevin.]

Biographical note:

Rabbi Mordechai Dov Twerski of Hornisteipl [1840 - 22 Elul 1904] was named after his two maternal great-grandfathers, Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl and Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch. In addition, he was a direct descendant of Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli and the son-in-law of Rabbi Chaim of Sanz. A highly respected Talmudic scholar, he was also the author of a popular book of Chasidic guidance, *Pele Yoetz*

Thoughts THAT COUNT

Come morning, and G-d will show who is His, and who is holy... and whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to Him (16:5)

Why this reference to "the morning"? Moses said to Korach: G-d has set boundaries in His world. Can you transform morning into evening? If you can, you can change this... It is written: "It was evening and it was morning... And G-d distinguished..." (Genesis 1:4-5); in the same way, "And Aaron was distinguished, to be consecrated..." (I Chronicles 23:13). (*Rashi; Midrash Rabbah*)

And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up (16:32)

Rabbah bar Bar Chana said: I was proceeding on my travels, when an Arab said to me, "Come, and I will show you where the men of Korach were swallowed up." I went and saw two cracks in the earth from which issued smoke. Thereupon he took a piece of clipped wool, soaked it in water, attached it to the point of his spear, and passed it over there, and it was singed. Said I to him: "Listen to what you are about to hear." And I heard them saying thus: "Moses and his Torah are true, and they [Korach's company] are liars." (*Talmud, Sanhedrin 110a*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 20 JUNE 2014

BEGINS	ENDS
4:50MELBOURNE	5:51
4:53ADELAIDE	5:53
4:43BRISBANE	5:39
6:12DARWIN	7:04
4:41GOLD COAST	5:37
5:02PERTH	6:00
4:35SYDNEY	5:34
4:40CANBERRA	5:40
4:30LAUNCESTON	5:34
4:53AUCKLAND	5:54
4:40WELLINGTON	5:44
4:25HOBART	5:30
4:38BYRON BAY	5:35
6:54SINGAPORE	7:45



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS KORACH
22 SIVAN • 20 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:50 PM
	MINCHA:	4:55 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:59 AM
	MINCHA:	4:50 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:51 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
		MON-FRI: 8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	4:55 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM