

Lamplighter

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Korach
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

Everything in this week's Torah portion, Korach, seems to be centred around the concept of priesthood.

The portion begins with the challenge of Korach against Aaron the High Priest. It concludes with the gifts the Jewish people are obligated to give to the kohanim (priests).

Priesthood, it appears, is an important element in our service of G-d, with Korach symbolizing those negative forces that seek to impede our spiritual progress. Kohanim are distinguished by their total devotion to G-d; indeed, the Torah tells us that "G-d is their portion." Therefore, when a Jew gives the kohanim the special offerings enumerated in the Torah he is, in effect, making that offering to G-d.

These gifts express the willingness of every Jew to dedicate himself to the service of the Creator, according to the principle, "All the best parts belong to G-d."

A Jew must reserve for G-d only the very best of whatever he possesses - even if this goes against his nature. Although without the Holy Temple (may it be immediately rebuilt) we cannot fulfil these mitzvot in the literal sense, the principle of utilizing only our very best for holy purposes applies in every place and in all circumstances.

The best portion of our material and spiritual wealth (time and energy) are to be reserved for the "kohen" that exists within - the holy Jewish soul - to G-d and to His Torah. "Best," as it applies to the hours of the day, is synonymous with "first."

As soon as the Jew opens his eyes in the morning he says "Modeh Ani," thanking G-d for restoring his soul. Then, before he begins his workday, he climbs the rungs of prayer and studies the Torah's Divine wisdom. Laying down this firm foundation is what guarantees the Jew success in his more mundane daily pursuits.

Korach's argument challenged this concept. "Is a tallit (four-cornered garment) that is entirely blue required to have tzitzit?" he and his followers demanded sarcastically of Moses. "Does a house full of holy books still need a mezuzah on the door post?"

If every Jew is holy by virtue of his G-dly soul, Korach claimed, the Divine Presence already rests among the Jewish people - and it is therefore unnecessary to dedicate the "best parts" for holy purposes.

Moses' answer, however, was clear and unequivocal. A Jew must not content himself with the innate holiness with which he is born, but must always strive to attain higher and higher levels of spirituality.

Yes, the all-blue tallit does require tzitzit, and the room full of holy books still needs the extra measure of holiness of the mezuzah.

May we speedily merit the fulfillment of "all the best parts belong to G-d," with the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Humility vs. Low Self-Confidence

By Naftali Silberberg

Moses was exceedingly distressed, and he said to the L-rd, "Do not accept the offering [of Korach and his cohorts]. I have not taken a donkey from a single one of them, and I have not harmed a single one of them." — Numbers 16:15

Humility was one of Moses' most outstanding qualities. In fact, the Torah affirms that "Moses was exceedingly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth." Yet, when his leadership was contested by his scholarly and prodigious cousin Korach, Moses responds with seemingly uncharacteristic righteous indignation. One would have expected Moses to turn to G-d and say, "A-lmighty, perhaps You should consider allowing Korach to assume my position—he is far more qualified than me! I am more than happy to abdicate my position to the worthier candidate!"

A proper understanding of how the Torah views humility will explain how Moses' reaction to Korach's uprising wasn't inconsistent with his exceptional humbleness.

True humility is not a result of an undervaluation of one's talents and accomplishments. Such is a false humility, for it is built on a false foundation. Rather, the truly humble individual is keenly aware of all his strengths and qualities—but simultaneously recognizes that all these talents are G-d-given, and therefore do not constitute a reason to feel superior to another whom G-d has not bequeathed such talents. "Perhaps," the humble person thinks, "if that person had been blessed with the same gifts, he would have accomplished the same as me—or perhaps even more!"

Moses recognized that G-d had endowed him with tremendous leadership qualities, and he therefore absolutely rejected the notion of relinquishing his position to anyone. This cognizance, however, did not interfere with his genuine humility and respect for every Jew.

On a deeper level, the person who is entirely devoted to fulfilling the will of his Creator is naturally egoless, because he has no personal ambition—his goal is only to further G-d's "agenda" on this world. While arrogance is a sense of self-importance, dedication to G-d means realizing that life isn't about the individual or what he wants, it's about serving a higher purpose. Moses, despite all his greatness, of which he was keenly aware, was a dedicated servant of G-d. And when Korach sought to impede his fulfillment of his divinely ordained mission in life - shepherding the Jewish Nation - Moses responded by firing on all cylinders.

Many confuse humility with meekness. In truth, the humble person is very driven and will not stomach any opposition. But he is not driven by his own ego; he is driven by a desire to implement the Divine plan.



We Don't Ask Twice

A certain family that lived in Boro Park, Brooklyn, were relatives of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Whenever they had a question, they would ask the Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, and she would transmit the question to the Rebbe. Afterwards, she relayed the Rebbe's answer to the family.

One day, she received a phone call that the mother was very sick and after many tests in the hospital, the doctors concluded that she needed an operation. They were calling to ask for the Rebbe's consent and blessing for the operation.

When the Rebbetzin conveyed the message to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said they should not do the operation. The Rebbetzin told the family the Rebbe's answer, but a few days later they called again. They reported that the doctors said that because they refused the operation, her condition deteriorated and her life could be endangered. They asked her to ask the Rebbe again in the light of this new information.

The Rebbetzin said that in Lubavitch you don't ask twice. "I consider myself a chasid (follower) of the Rebbe and I do as the chasidim do, and so I cannot ask again," she said.

The family was distraught, so the Rebbetzin said that although she

would not ask again, if the Rebbe came home and asked whether she had heard anything from the family, she would repeat what they had told her.

When the Rebbe came home for supper, he asked the Rebbetzin whether she had heard from the family. She told the Rebbe what they had said and then added, "I'm not asking, I'm just telling you."

The Rebbe looked serious and after a pause he said, "I repeat, they should not operate!"

The Rebbetzin conveyed this clear answer to the family and a few days later they called again. They said that the doctors said her condition had deteriorated further and her life was in immediate danger. They were asked to sign that they took full responsibility for the woman and absolved the doctors and the hospital of any responsibility.

The Rebbetzin said, "The Rebbe said two times already not to operate."

When the Rebbe came home, the Rebbetzin told him the latest events and the Rebbe said, "Why don't they try medication?"

The Rebbetzin immediately called the family to tell them. They in turn mentioned it to the doctors, who laughed at them in response. "A rabbi knows better than we do about medicine? We say that only an operation can save her and it's not a matter of medication."

The family believed the Rebbe and went from department to department, looking for a doctor who would understand them. Finally, they found a

doctor who thought for a moment and then said, "I think I know which medication the Rebbe has in mind, and since I wear a white jacket and can go wherever I want, I will visit your mother and give her an injection and let's see what happens."

A few days later, the doctors said her condition had suddenly stabilized. They did not know what had happened, but she was no longer deteriorating. The doctor was optimistic and told the family that apparently he had indeed used the medicine the Rebbe was thinking of. He gave the woman another injection and two days later the doctors who had been treating her admitted she had improved somewhat. Every so often, the doctor would come by and give her medication until she was out of danger and was released from the hospital.

The family kept in constant touch with the Rebbetzin. When the Rebbetzin told the Rebbe that the woman had returned home, the Rebbe said, "When they asked me about an operation, I saw that if they did it, she wouldn't make it off the operating table, which is why I adamantly opposed an operation. When they asked again, I thought the doctors would see that the family was adamantly opposed to an operation and would try medication. When I saw that they weren't thinking along those lines at all, I explicitly suggested medication."

The Rebbetzin related this and said that the Rebbe had added; "Now you see how important it is to listen, even when the experts say the opposite."

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ISSUE 988

MOSHIACH MATTERS

"Do all you can - in a manner of Orot D'Tohu in Keilim d'Tikkun (lights of Tohu in vessels of tikkun, i.e., the harnessing and control of tremendous energy and enthusiasm) - to actually bring Moshiach in the most immediate present! May it be G-d's will that there finally be ten Jews who will be obstinate that they absolutely must achieve the redemption from G-d and they most certainly will achieve." (*The Lubavitcher Rebbe, 28 Nissan, 5751*)

INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Critique

Translator's note: To the Rebbe, all criticism was self-criticism. As he saw it, finding fault with others was simply an avoidance of one's own responsibility to rectify whatever was amiss. Here we bring you freely translated excerpts of two letters, both from the spring of 5719 (1959), which exemplify this point:

...Regarding what you write about the nature of Chabad's activities in the Holy Land, it is known that, in such cases, one must first make the utmost effort to do whatever is dependent upon oneself. And if you see that some other person is not fulfilling his task, this should prompt you to a greater and more intense effort on your part.

This, for two reasons:

On the most basic level, if you see a deficiency—even if it is in your fellow's domain—you must do everything in your power to fill the lack.

Furthermore, Chassidic teaching—as taught by the Baal Shem Tov—tells us that the very fact that you were made aware of a deficiency in a particular area is a clear indication that it is your responsibility to rectify it. For certainly you were not shown this for no reason!

In another letter, the Rebbe writes:

...Regarding your despondency, which you explain as brought on by the weakening of certain activities of the Lubavitch Youth Organization, particularly...

It is obvious and self-understood that your reaction should be the very opposite of what it is. To employ the analogy of the human body: if a person recognizes a certain weakness in one of his organs, would it occur to him to deal with this by inducing a weakness in his other organs? On the contrary: one of the ways of healing the weakened organ is to strengthen the other parts of the body.

And are not all Jews as one body?

Religion, State, and the Ten Commandments

... You write concerning those who are thinking to "separate between religion and state"...

The Jewish faith unites two extremes (which only seem to be in contradiction to each other). On the one hand, it includes the most abstract concepts, such as the unity of G-d, the unity of creation, [the concept that the world was created] *ex nihilo*, etc. On the other hand it instructs the daily life of man down to its most minute details, including the most simple and mundane things.

We see this also in the Ten Commandments, which begin with the commandment "I am the L-rd your G-d...", whose inner meaning is the negation of any true reality save the reality of G-d, and concludes with commandments such as "Do not kill," which pertain to the lowliest instincts in man.

This teaches us that there cannot be any separation between religious and mundane matters in Jewish life. On the contrary: as is the case on the micro-level of personal life, unity and harmony on the macro-level of social life can be achieved only via the synthesis of the two domains—by integrating the spiritual into the material and thereby refining the material.

Hence the all-time motto of our sages, of blessed memory: "The essential thing is not study, but deed." Though they occupied themselves with the study of the secrets of the Torah and the most sublime concepts, they also elaborated, in exacting detail, on practical matters, including matters—such as eating and drinking—that seem petty and insignificant. But this is the touchstone of any individual or ideology...

The purpose of a Mezuzah

The purpose of affixing a Mezuzah is to fulfil a Mitzvah - a Divine Commandment.

One of the purposes for this Mitzvah is to facilitate other Mitzvahs: As a Mitzvah hanging visibly on our doors the Mezuzah is a constant reminder that our homes and everything therein, belongs to G-d, and must therefore be used properly.

The Mezuzah also serves as protection for the entire home. On every Mezuzah is inscribed G-d's name, "Sha-dai," which is an acronym for "Shomer Daltot Yisroel," the Guardian of the doors of Israel.

A WORD from the Director

This week's Torah portion is Korach.

According to the simple reading of the portion, we see Korach as a wicked person, one who not only fought with Moses but also encouraged others to quarrel with him, as well. How, then, is it possible that we call something as holy as a Torah portion the name of a wicked person?

Chasidic philosophy offers a beautiful explanation of who Korach truly was and what we can learn from him. The name Korach is appropriate for the portion because, according to a deeper level of Torah Korach represents the striving of the Jew to reach the highest spiritual peaks. Thus, the lesson we learn from Korach is not only a negative one, the rejection of his approach of strife, but also a positive concept, the importance of seeking spiritual peaks.

The appreciation of Korach's positive qualities, however, has to be coupled with the awareness of his negative qualities. This can be connected with a concept of general significance.

G-d desires that a Jew serve Him on his own initiative, with his own power. For this reason, the soul descends into this material world where there is a possibility to err. The intent, however, is that a Jew should make a positive choice. These qualities are reflected in the narrative of Korach.

Korach was a clever person who sought to reach the level of High Priest. Since he had to achieve this level in this world, he had two choices how to express this holy drive. In practice, he did not choose the proper approach. However, the lesson, to use one's potentials as prescribed by the Torah, remains.

The portion of Korach teaches us a practical and applicable lesson; to quote the Previous Rebbe, "Just as a person must know his faults so that he can correct them, he must be aware of his positive qualities so that he can use them in the fullest degree possible." A Jew must realize that he is not controlled by exile and can strive to reach the highest spiritual potentials, his "holy of holies." Similarly, one has to appreciate the advantage of our generation, the last generation of exile and the first generation of redemption.

Have a good Shabbos!

J.I. Gutnick

It Happened Once...



Rabbi Yaakov Landa was a chasid of the fifth Lubavicher Rebbe, the *Rebbe Reshab*, but not the usual type of chasid. The Rebbe took an unusual liking to him and even made him the 'House Rabbi.' Any questions that arouse in the household of the Rebbe; if a chicken was kosher, if something was permissible on Shabbat etc., would be directed to Rabbi Landa. And, needless to say, the devotion of Rabbi Landa to the Rebbe was boundless.

In addition to being a great Scholar, Rabbi Landa was a very knowledgeable man in mundane things as well and was an expert at home remedies.

When the very contagious and deadly disease of typhus broke out in Russia near the turn of the century Rabbi Landa had ample opportunity to use his skills. The regular doctors, besides having virtually no treatment for typhus, were also understandably very reluctant to come in contact with the sick, while Rabbi Landa both did have remedies and did not fear for himself when it came to saving others.

He succeeded in healing hundreds but it was almost inevitable that he eventually contracted the disease himself. In a matter of days he lost consciousness and his life was hanging in the balance for several weeks until the crisis finally passed and he came to.

The only problem was that when he was sick and unconscious, the Rebbe Reshab passed away, unbeknownst to him.

Every day Rabbi Landa was taken from his room outside into the sun to get stronger, until after several more weeks he was back to his old self. Of course all the time he was recovering he asked everyone that passed by about the Rebbe's health, but the chasidim agreed among themselves not to mention a word to him about the Rebbe's passing. The answer was always the same: "the Rebbe is fine."

But Rabbi Landa sensed that something was wrong and kept asking until somehow he got the one person that didn't know about this agreement, and he heard the bitter truth.

A normal person can understand what a terrible blow this must have been to him. A Rebbe is more than just a leader or even a father, the Rebbe virtually reveals the soul and true essence of the Chassid. But the relation between Rabbi Landa and the Rebbe Reshab was even deeper and more personal than that; Rabbi Landa had been near the Rebbe day and night and his life was virtually tied up with his.

That night Rabbi Landa wrote a short letter to the Rebbe. He folded the letter up, put it in an envelope, and the next morning when he was taken outside, he waited for the same man to pass, to whom he handed the letter and requested that he put it on the Rebbe's grave and tell no one about it.

In the letter he wrote that he wanted the Rebbe to take him away from this world. He wanted to be with the Rebbe because he felt that life was worth nothing without him.

Two days later the Rebbe's son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (who became the Rebbe in his father's stead) came to visit Rabbi Landa. He pulled up a chair, sat next to his bed where he was laying in the sunlight, and said, "I just was by my father's grave and he gave me a message to give over to you."

Rabbi Landa ushered up all his strength, propped himself up on the bed and prepared himself for the Rebbe's message from 'beyond.' When the Rebbe's son saw Rabbi Landa was ready, he continued.

"My father said: 'Stop making stupid requests!'"

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

Moses became very angry. (Num. 16:15)

The commentator Rashi translates the above as: "He was very upset." Even when Moses was attacked by two trouble-makers he was upset rather than angry. Chasidim relate that Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, was extremely careful not to become angry. On one occasion he was nearly provoked to anger. He asked for the Code of Jewish Law, noting that the Talmud compares anger to idolatry. "I am close to an offense which is similar to idolatry," he declared, "I will see first if my anger is permitted according to Jewish Law." By the time he had examined the question there was no more need for an answer.

And Korach gathered all the congregation against them. (Num. 16:19)

When it comes to doing a Mitzva (commandment), it isn't all that easy to find people who are interested. Unfortunately, however, when it comes to inciting controversy, everyone comes running.

(*Mateh Aharon*)

And you shall give there of the heave-offering of the L-rd to Aaron the Priest. (Num. 18:28)

If, as we read in the Torah, Aaron the Priest passed away in the desert before entering the Land of Israel, how would the Jews be able to fulfil this commandment? Rather, this is an allusion to a time after the Resurrection of the Dead, when Aaron will again be alive and able to receive his due.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS KORACH • 23 SIVAN • 25 JUNE

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	4:51 PM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:30 PM
SHABBOS:	TEHILLIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9:59 AM
	THE MOLAD OF THE MONTH OF TAMUZ IS:	
	FRIDAY 1 JULY 2011:	2:56 & 11 CHALAKIM AM
WEEKDAYS:	MINCHA:	4:45 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	5:52 PM
	SHACHARIS SUN-FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	MAARIV:	5:45 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 24 JUNE 2011

Begins	Ends
4:51 MELBOURNE	5:52
4:54 ADELAIDE	5:54
4:44 BRISBANE	5:40
6:13 DARWIN	7:05
4:41 GOLD COAST	5:38
5:03 PERTH	6:01
4:36 SYDNEY	5:35
4:41 CANBERRA	5:41
4:31 LAUNCESTON	5:35
4:54 AUCKLAND	5:55
4:41 WELLINGTON	5:45



Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נבג"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.