

# Shabbat Korach

## June 27, 2009

### 5 Tamuz 5769

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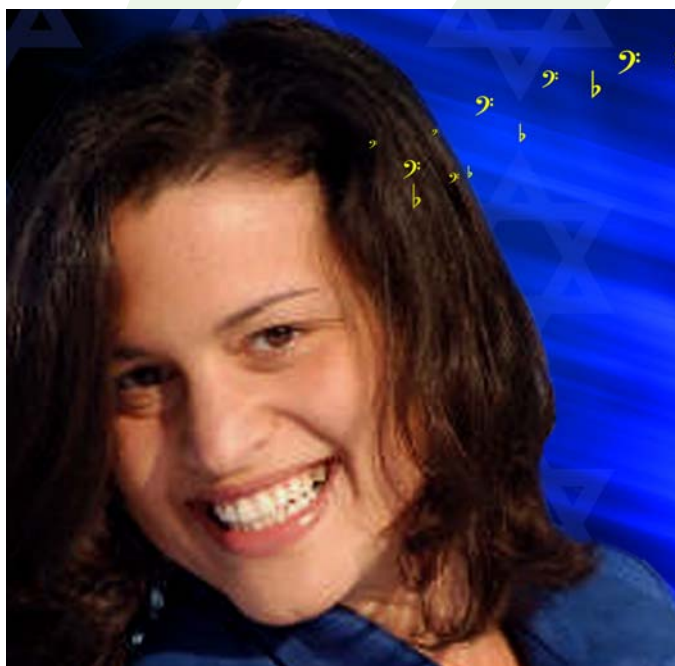
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## News

### CONCERTS IN CALIFORNIA

Rachel Hyman continues her concerts in California. She will be at the divine service at the Yreka Seventh-day Adventist Church on Shabbat June 27 at 11:00am.

346 Payne Ln  
Yreka CA. 96097



### CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TRAINING

In Israel we want to be considerate of every generation in our congregations. While the children are prospective members today, they are also the next generation of leaders. That is why we want to encourage their spiritual growth and nurturing by mature leaders.

This weekend, Friday 26 and Shabbat 27 of June, we are going to have a Children's Ministries Training program in the area of Tel Aviv - Petach Tikva. Everyone is welcome to the meetings, but they must apply if they want to sleep on the site, because the number of beds is limited.

The program will be led by Anne-May

Wollan, TED Children's Ministries Director and Svetlana Shchelkunov, Israel Field Children's Ministries Director.

Friday's program presented by Anne-May Wollan will be:

11:00 "Let Him be Known"

11:45 "A Mini KID Seminar for Pastors"

14:30 "What Does Dorothy Know?"

Our Kabbalat Shabbat will be at 20:00.

Shabbat presentations will be:

09:30 "A Footprint for KIDS' Lessons"

11:30 "Who is God?"

14:00 "Seven Essentials for Developing, Enhancing, and Growing Kids' Faith"

15:45 "Balanced Teaching With a Clear Focus"

### SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

The Israel Field is happy to announce that in July we will run two important meetings; first a spiritual assembly on Sabbath 25. All congregations and members are invited to join us in Jerusalem at the auditorium of the YMCA, King David Street, at 9:30am. The special guest speaker for this event will be Dr John Graz, General Secretary of the International Religious Liberty Association.

### FESTIVAL OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

It is a privilege for us to organize the first Festival of Religious Freedom in Jerusalem on Sunday 26, at 17:30 in the YMCA, King David Street, Jerusalem.

This festival will be a Jewish-Christian Festival, since we will have a speech from a famous rabbi in Jerusalem and the participation of several people, singers, and choirs from Jewish and Christian communities. The purpose of this festival is to celebrate God and religious freedom. Everyone is welcome to join us for this event. I am sure that it will be extra special by being held in the city of Jerusalem.

# OVERVIEW



## KORACH

### NUMBERS 16:1-18:32

**K**orach, Datan and Aviram, and 250 leaders of Israel rebel against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. The rebellion results in their being swallowed by the earth.

Many resent their death and blame Moshe. G-d's "anger" is manifest by a plague that besets the nation, and many thousands perish.

Moshe intercedes once again for the people. He instructs Aharon to atone for them and the plague stops. Then G-d commands that staffs, each inscribed with the name of one of the tribes, be placed in the Mishkan. In the morning the staff of Levi, bearing Aharon's name, sprouts, buds, blossoms and yields ripe almonds.

This provides Divine confirmation that Levi's tribe is chosen for priesthood and verifies Aharon's position as Kohen Gadol, High Priest.

The specific duties of the levi'im and kohanim are stated. The kohanim were not to be landowners, but were to receive their sustenance from the tithes and other mandated gifts brought by the people. Also taught in this week's Parsha are laws of the first fruits, redemption of the firstborn, and other offerings.

### REBELLION AGAINST G-D

**T**he Parsha begins with the story of Korach's rebellion against Moshe and Aaron. Korach was a member of the tribe of Levi and a cousin of Moshe and Aaron. Jealous of Moshe's and Aaron's leadership, he gathered 250 people and together they rebelled against Moshe and Aaron.

Korach claimed, "The entire congregation is holy... Why do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the L-rd?" Moshe warned Korach that his uprising was not against him and Aaron but against G-d.

When Korach didn't repent, Moshe told everyone to distance themselves from Korach and his people. The Torah tells us what happened next. "And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed

them up and their households." Korach and the leaders of the revolt disappeared into the ground. The others who were with Korach were burnt in a fire sent from G-d. Korach's sons did not die for they repented at the very last moment.

### WHATEVER WE OWN IS DUE TO G-D

**A**ccording to our sages, Korach was one of the wealthiest people who ever lived. Yet, he was a jealous person and envied Moshe and Aaron in their position of leadership. He used his wealth to gain power to argue against Moshe and Aaron, who were G-d's appointed leaders of the Jewish people. Korach was not happy with his share and forgot that whatever he owned was due to G-d.

King Solomon in Ecclesiastics says, "Wealth can at times be to the detriment of its owner." Our sages say that this refers to the wealth of Korach who in the end lost everything as a result of using his wealth for the wrong thing.

There is wealth which brings honor to its owner and there is wealth, as in the story of Korach, which brings destruction and misery. In order that wealth bring honor and good, one must recognize that wealth comes from G-d. When one realizes this they will use their wealth according to G-d's will. Distributing part of their wealth to charity, thus, expressing their thanks to G-d for blessing them with wealth

### CONSTRUCTIVE OR DESTRUCTIVE JEALOUSY

**R**abbi Zalmen Marozov states that the Torah is not a book of stories, but living directives on how to conduct our lives. This is implied by the name "Torah" — "teaching and guide." The teachings of the Torah apply continuously.

This is especially true of the lesson we should learn from the story of Korach, as Rabbi Eliezer says in the chapter 4 of Pirkei Avot "Envy, lust and the seeking of honor drive a person from the world."

The Talmud says that a person should be careful not to put one's eyes (i.e not to desire and envy) what does not belong to them; "For Korach wanted something which did not belong to him, as a result, not only

didn't he get what he desired, but he also lost what he already had!"

Jealousy is one of the worst qualities a person can possess. Yet, according to our Talmudic sages, there is a jealousy which is constructive; "Jealousy amongst scholars," say our sages, "brings additional wisdom."

When the jealousy concerns spiritual matters (Torah knowledge etc.) which, as a result, drives the person to strive higher and achieve more, that jealousy is constructive. This kind of enviousness is encouraged by our sages. But when the jealousy concerns physical matters such as wealth and personal honor etc., it is destructive and "drives a person from the world," as we see in this week's Parsha, Korach

## WHO ARE YOUR NEIGHBOR?

**K**orach managed to convince two hundred and fifty people from the neighboring tribe of Reuben to join the revolt. He told them, "The entire congregation is holy and G-d is among them." In other words, there is no need for Moshe and Aaron's leadership for we are as holy and as close to G-d as they are. Moshe warned the people to disassociate from Korach and his compatriots, Dathan and Abiram, who were rebelling against G-d.

It teaches us two lessons: The first is how much a person must try to avoid being involved in quarrels. The Torah says, "they should not be like Korach and his congregation." From this our sages derive that it is a sin to be involved in quarrels and divisiveness as Korach was.

Another important lesson is the value of a good neighbor and how much one should avoid living next to a neighbor who may have a negative influence. We see this from the fact that of all the twelve tribes, Korach was only able to influence 250 people from the tribe of Reuben. Our sages explain that the tribe of Reuben were Korach's neighbors and as result he had influence over them.

## WHO IS HE?

**W**hen Moshe reprimands Korach for seeking the priesthood, he concludes:

"Therefore, you and your congregation who gather together are against the Almighty; and Aharon, who is he that you complain against him?" (Numbers 16:11) What did Moshe mean when he said, "and Aharon, who is he"?

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger comments that when someone verbally abuses a very distinguished personage and then disparages a common person, the common person won't take great offense. This is what Moshe was saying to Korach. Since you are really complaining against the Almighty, how can your words hurt Aharon? He will easily remain oblivious to what you say since he sees that you also have complaints against the Almighty.

Rabbi Kalman Packouz gives us this lesson: When we come in contact with a very critical person, we need not take offense at what he says. This is the way he speaks to all people so there is no reason to take it personally. Realize that the problem is his, not yours, and you free yourself from any possible hurt feelings from what he says.

## SIN AGAINST THE RUACH ELOHIM

**K**orach, Dathan and Abiram and their followers committed the sin against the Ruach Elohim, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of man," said Mashiach, "will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Ruach Elohim, Will not be forgiven." (Matatyahu 12:32.) These words were spoken by the Mahiach when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of G-d were attributed to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Ruach Hakodesh that G-d communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven.

G-d works by the manifestation of His Ruach to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Ruach Elohim's work is finally rejected, there is no more that G-d can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from G-d, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. There is no reserved power by which G-d can work to convict and convert the sinner. "Let him alone" (Hosea 4:17) is the divine command. Then "For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries." (Hebrews 10:26, 27.) [based on PP 405]

## WEALTH AND HONOR ARE FROM G-D

**T**here once lived a wealthy religious man. He thanked G-d for everything he had and shared his wealth with others.

Once, as he was returning home from morning prayers he thought about the words he just recited in the morning prayers, "Wealth and honor are from You."

"Is it possible that the wealth which I possess is always in G-d's hands?" he wondered. "Could G-d really take away everything from me? Even if He destroyed my factories in this city, I still have businesses in other cities. If He destroyed my business on land, I still have ships on the oceans."

As the man was so immersed in thought, he entered a forbidden neighborhood which was off limits to Jews, punishable by death. He was immediately arrested. Begging for his life, he was told that his life would be spared if he signed a note transferring everything he owned to the church. He did so and was released.

Now, on his way home, he was thankful to G-d that his life was spared. "Now I see that G-d can take everything away in an instant. But is it possible for G-d to give everything back as fast as He had taken it?" he wondered.

Suddenly he heard a tremendous noise. Looking back he saw that lightning hit the building in which he had just transferred all his wealth to the church. The entire building was engulfed in flames together with the note he had just signed. In an instant he was once again as wealthy as before.

## WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

**R**abbi Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev once saw a man running about frantically in the marketplace. He stopped the man and asked him, "What are you doing?"

The man barely gave the Rabbi a glance and replied, "Sorry Rabbi, I'm very busy and I don't have time to talk to you now."

But Rabbi Levi Yitzchak persisted. "Tell me why are you in such a rush. What you are doing?"

The man replied, "Can't you see, Rabbi. I'm trying to make a living.. that's what I'm doing."

"You are making a mistake!" replied the Rabbi. "Making a living is G-d's doing and that was predetermined on Rosh Hashana. What you have to do is make the proper vessel for G-d's blessings to descend. The study of Torah, giving charity and the performance of mitzvot is included in that which you have to do. My question was, "What are YOU doing? Are you living up to your part?"

## YOUR NEIGHBOR

**I**n Pirkei Avot, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai asked five of his students, "Go out and see which is the good way to which a person should cling?" Each of the five had a different idea. His disciple, Rabbi Yossi said, "to have a good neighbor." When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai said, "Go out and see which is the evil way from which a person should keep far away? Rabbi Yossi replied, "A bad neighbor!" Thus, from the story of Korach we see the importance of having a good neighbor and how much one must avoid a bad neighbor.

## REPENTANT NEIGHBOR

**T**he Talmud tells the following story; In Rabbi Meir's neighborhood there lived bad people, who annoyed him so much that he prayed for them to die. Rabbi Meir's wife Beruriah said to him, "It says (Psalms 104), 'Let sins be consumed' not sinners!" Instead of praying for their demise, you should better seek G-d's mercy that they should repent and not be wicked any more!" Rabbi Meir listened to his wife and sought G-d's mercy on their behalf and they indeed repented.

## EDITOR

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## HAFTARA

### 1 Samuel 11:14-12:22

**PARASHA:** In the text of the parasha the people of Israel are not happy that Moses and Aaron are keeping the great responsibilities of Governance and Priesthood to themselves. Moses and Aaron were brothers and it seemed to the people and especially to 250 leaders who were influenced by Korach, that a conflict of interest had occurred. "You have gone too far! All the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the L-RD is among them. So why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the L-RD? (Num. 16:3).

**HAFTARA:** In our haftara the people of Israel challenge the authority of Samuel and G-d and decide to have a new king. But Samuel is not satisfied and wants to be sure that nobody accuses him of anything wrong during his time of leadership. "I have listened to you in all that you have said to me, and have set a king over you. See, it is the king who leads you now; I am old and gray, but my sons are with you. I have led you from my youth until this day. Here I am; testify against me before the L-RD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you." (1Sam. 12:1-3). The people confirmed to Samuel that they have no reproach against him. "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from the hand of anyone." (1Sam. 12:4). Samuel recalls to the people of Israel all the mistakes they have made during their history from the time of Jacob to the present. The L-rd confirmed Samuel by sending thunder, "and the L-RD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the L-RD and Samuel (1Sam. 12:1-3). Samuel confirmed to the people of Israel that G-d's love is unconditional. G-d has chosen Israel. He will not rebuke him and will not reject him And Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the L-RD, but serve the L-RD with all your heart; For the L-RD will not cast away his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the L-RD to make you a people for himself. (1Sam. 12:21-22).

## BESORAT YESHUA

### Mark 5:9-20

**PARASHA:** In the text of the parasha we have the story of the rebellion of Korach. When we look carefully at this text we recognize the principle of the first rebellion, the great rebellion of Satan: You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of G-d ... I will make myself like the Most High." (Is. 14:13-14).

Korach wanted to make himself like Moses. We know that Moses and Aaron were appointed by G-d and when Korach challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron, he challenged the authority of G-d. This rebellion was possible because Korach was possessed by the same spirit as Satan. He was trying to flatter or to charm the people of Israel when he said "All the congregation are holy." (Numb 16:3) In this story we have a case of demonic possession. That's why the punishment of G-d was so exemplary.

**BESORAH:** In the Besorah of Mark we have a parallel story, a story of demonic possession. It is about the possession of a man, "And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain" (Mark 5:2-3). Yeshua recognized that this man was possessed by one or several demons, fallen angels. He asked them a question: "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." (Mark 5:9).

They knew who Yeshua was and begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now a great herd of swine was feeding on the hillside there and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." (Mark 5:10-12). Here we see the great power of Yeshua who gained victory over evil, Satan and all demons, "So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea" (Mark 5:13).

