


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday nights* ..... קדש

**Friday 7 June 2013 - 29 Sivan 5773**  
**Sedra Korach**

**BALANCE**


**L**IFE, ESPECIALLY JEWISH LIFE, IS A DELICATE BALANCE OF THE PHYSICAL and the spiritual, of action and feeling. Ideally, one needs a subtle combination of both. In fact, that is the keynote of Judaism. There are the basic practical actions, the Mitzvot, and there are also the different levels of feeling and meaning which each individual is able to add.

The practical dimension, the Mitzvot, relates equally to every Jew. The laws of Shabbat apply equally whether one is a great scholar or a twelve-year-old girl; the action of putting on Tefilin applies to every male whether a Bar Mitzva boy of thirteen or a famous Sage.

The meaning, the thoughts and feelings, are likely to be different in each case. At the level of thought each person is a unique individual. And for each person there are different levels of meaning, such as at different ages, and going through varied experiences in life.

Maintaining the balance between these two dimensions is a constant aspect of Judaism. Yes, action is the main thing, as the Sages repeatedly stress. Yet meaning is also important.

The Sedra<sup>1</sup> describes a rebellion by Korach, a cousin of Moses and Aaron. He was jealous of Aaron, who headed the Priesthood, and



לזכרון נצח מרת טויה רלה בת פרחיה ז"ל  
**In Loving Memory of Mrs Victoria Menashy ז"ל**  
**1 Tammuz 5770**

claimed that everyone should be a Priest, which is as much as to say that no-one should be a Priest.

An interpretation of this rebellion is that Korach was trying to upset the balance between action and meaning. The Priest represents a quest for greater spirituality. His role in relation to others is to bring them to realise that a further step of holiness is possible. Yet at the same time he helps a person recognise the power of simple action. The High Priest and the Priesthood provide a balancing factor between action of the Mitzvot and the search for meaning.

Korach sought to dissolve the Priesthood. As a result, everyone and everything would be seen as 'holy', without borders. This could lead to acceptance of *any* action as good, even when it descends below the line of decency; or to a state where action is entirely forgotten, and the only quest is for ecstasy. Or, possibly, to the nihilistic sense that *nothing* is holy...<sup>2</sup>

The Sedra tells of the defeat of Korach. Moses and Aaron, and the chain of leaders, Prophets and Sages who followed, have always taught how to maintain a healthy balance in our lives.

This quality distinguished the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whose Yahrzeit falls on Tuesday (11 June). In his teachings, collected in hundreds of books, the Rebbe showed how to combine action with meaning at every level. He showed how to balance the needs of one's own self, and of society around one. The Rebbe urged the small group of knowledgeable and observant Jews who had survived the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War to open their homes and their hearts to those who had seemingly lost all faith and practice. This open approach helped change the face of Jewish life.

The Rebbe's teachings focus the thousands of years of our tradition into the realities of the present, helping us to see personal meaning and inspiration in Mitzvot such as Torah study, Tefilin, Mezuzah, Kashrut, Mikveh, lighting Shabbat Candles and above all, love of one's fellow. May his merit and memory protect us and the entire Jewish people, and help move us and humanity forward to the next, ultimately positive stage of history.

1. Numbers chs.16-18. 2. Based freely on the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 8 p.107 ff.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care

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*SEDRA KORACH*

**JEALOUS?**

Hadassah and Esther were sitting on the floor of Hadassah's living room, their folders and papers scattered all around them. They felt very pressured with their upcoming exams and had a lot of revising to get through that evening.

"Whew!" Esther said, looking at her watch, "We've been studying for an hour and a half already!" "Wow, we really need a break! Let's go to the kitchen and find something to eat."

The two girls jumped up, and headed toward the kitchen. They helped themselves to some cake that was sitting on the counter and sat down.

"You know what really bugs me?" Hadassah began. "Go on," said Esther.

"Well, you know how we are putting on an end-of-year performance. So I'm in the choir. And Mrs Rothberg, the director, put Abigail Corn in charge of the choir. Now, don't get me wrong, she sings beautifully, but sometimes I feel like she thinks she's so in charge, and acts all high-and-mighty about it. It really annoys me so much!"

"I hear what you're saying... That sounds frustrating," Esther sympathized.

"Yes, it really is! I feel like maybe going up to her to let her know that she just can't boss us around! We're all as good as one another, and no one is better than anyone else!"

“Yes, I understand,” Esther said, “but maybe you should look at it this way. Mrs Rothberg gave her this position, along with the responsibility to make sure that the choir turns out the best it could be. If she wasn’t as disciplined or on top of things as she is, the choir would just become chaos... and that would bug you even more,” she ended off with a wry smile.

“I guess you might have a point,” Hadassah agreed, “but I still feel she considers us second class, that we don’t sing as *beautifully* as she does.”

“Well...do you?” Esther asked.

“I try... Oh my, okay okay, you’re right again. Stop always having a point!” Hadassah laughed.

Esther joined in her laughter, “Hadassah, just think of it this way, Abigail is putting all her effort into making the choir a fabulous one, and getting all the girls to use their voices the way she knows they can. Appreciate her efforts! If you just keep thinking about how she annoys you, it just seems like jealousy. You know, as we learnt just yesterday in Sedra class. Why did Korach argue with Moses and Aaron? Because he was jealous over who should be leader.... Then he persuaded a lot of other people to rebel as well. But why? Moses and Aaron were doing a great job!”

“Mmm... You’re right. You really are. I never thought to look at it that way. I guess I don’t want to be like Korach. Abigail puts in so much work towards making the performance successful. I should appreciate it!”

There was a moment of silence. Then Hadassah said: “But Moses and Aaron weren’t bossy! Why does she have to be so....”

“Sh..... “ said Esther, putting her finger to her lips, and both girls smiled.

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