

06/26/71

Candlelight time 8:46, Sabbath ends 9:39
Scriptural Reading for Saturday
morning, June 26

KORACH: Numbers 16:1 — 18:32

HAFTARAH: Samuel I, 11:14 — 12:22

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK: *The Korach affair (Nu. 16-17) is an example of destructive dissent. Dissent in itself is no vice and conformity no virtue in Judaism. Molded by genuine respect for each individual his intrinsic distinction and uniqueness, Judaism encourages free thought and self-assertion. Constructive controversy has become the hallmark of Jewish cultural heritage, marked as it is by rich and creative interchange of disputing arguments and differing viewpoints. Indeed, unanimity in opinion is rather suspected than respected, while dialectical argumentation is revered as sign of man's honest quest for truth. What, then, makes a controversy (mahaloket) destructive or constructive? It's real motivation, is the rabbis' answer. If the participants share the aim of finding the truth, discovering the Creator's design, their controversy is fruitful and destined to succeed. If, conversely, each seeks his own personal gain, their controversy is futile and doomed to fail. The latter is of Korah's type (Avot 5:20) The Torah warns: "Let no one be like Korah and his band" (17:5).*

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, July 3:
KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32
HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP is shown by Moses. When challenged by Korah and his band, he openly declares his integrity before God (Nu. 16:15): "Not even one donkey have I taken from them; not even one of them have I wronged." No matter how powerful the leader and how trivial his challenge, when accused, he must answer the charge, he must plead his case. A leader must always let his records be checked and cleared. Following Moses' example, the prophet Samuel, when enthroning Saul, also exposes himself to public scrutiny (Sam. 12:3-4): "Here I am. Testify against me before the Lord and his king. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I wronged? Whom have I oppressed? From whom did I take a bribe...?" A true leader is not only responsible and responsive but also constantly a respondent. Leadership must be accountable.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

GOVERNMENT is both a necessity and a threat. While protecting society from the perils of anarchy, it tends to limit and suppress individual liberty. Taught to respect government and pray for its stability – “for if not for the fear of it people would swallow each other alive” (Avot) – we are also urged to check and curtail its power and oppose its tyranny. Judaism enjoins us to follow and uphold the civil and fiscal rules of the state – “The law of the kingdom is law” (Talmud) – provided they are reasonable, equitable and ethical; if, however, they oppose universal morality, or conflict with Torah’s teachings, they are void. Injustice does not become binding law just because it is legislated; nor does any civil legislation supersede the religious demands of Torah. Torah’s conception of the ideal form of government is expressed by Josephus Flavius (Jewish historian of the 1st century) in a term first coined by him: theocracy. This does not mean the rule of priests or clergy, but rather of an unpretentious civil government which recognizes the supremacy of God. Supporting a benevolent government or fighting a wicked regime, the Jews consider God alone as ultimate Ruler, to whom they unswervingly pledge: “We have no King but You!”

Scriptural reading for Saturday, July 8:
KORAH: Numbers 15:1-18:32
HAFTARAH: Samuel I 11:14-12:23

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

· **ASSERTING JOY:** Biblical style uses "hinneh" (commonly translated "behold") to introduce a positive, exclamatory assertion. The Psalmist (133:1) acclaims the delights of close-knit brotherhood with "hinneh ma-tov:" "Behold, how good, how pleasant, is the dwelling of brothers in unity." "Behold," however, does not convey the full rhetorical force of "hinneh." The two are different words: "behold" is a verb; "hinneh" is a preposition. In context, "behold" appears mainly in the imperative, calling upon the audience to direct their attention to something impressive, to see and hold it in view. The verb "behold," even as it aims to evoke excitement, does not project it; having no adjectival quality, "behold" neither appraises nor qualifies that which is presented before the eyes of the beholder. Not so the preposition "hinneh;" serving also as a demonstrative pronoun, "hinneh" reveals the personal relation between the speaker and the theme of his assertion. Rather than just a demand for the audience's attention, "hinneh" is an expression of the speaker's own joy: "This is what I admire and desire; I enjoy asserting it." Notifying Aaron of his priestly privileges, God injects "hinneh" (Nu. 18:8); it conveys not "behold," but "with joy:" "I, with joy, give you charge of My sacred offerings..."

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 14:
KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32, 28:9-15
HAFTARAH: Isaiah 66:1-24
Rosh Hodesh Tammuz Saturday and Sunday,
June 14 and 15

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE JEWS are forever the people of God. This conviction is a central idea in prophetic literature. Prophet Samuel was at first reluctant to comply with the people's wish to have a king: "God is your King!" he told them. But even under the rule of a human king, it was made clear, God alone is the ultimate Sovereign—to whose will all must submit. Under any political regime, Jews acknowledge the supreme kingship of God alone. For they are forever His people. This idea is underscored by the prophet at the enthronement of the first king, Saul (Samuel I 12:22): "For sure the Lord will never forsake His people—for the Lord so decided to make you His people." No matter the merits or the circumstance—the Jews are eternally God's people.

Candlelight time 8:46 Sabbath ends 9:39

Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 26:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought-of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

IS "THE PEOPLE" THE SUPREME SOVEREIGN? If so, then the theocratic rule of Moses and Aaron was aptly challenged by the articulate dissidents, Korah and his band, who confronted their leaders point-blank (Nu. 16:3): "Too much (power) for you: For the whole community, everyone of them, are holy; the Lord dwelling in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the community of the Lord?" The validity of this argument, in theory, cannot be lightly dismissed. Moses himself, in his characteristic humbleness, wished (11:29), "Would that all the people of the Lord be prophets; that the Lord bestow His spirit on them all!" Certainly Moses would admit that no leader may set himself up and look down on the people. "Why did I confer greatness on you, if not for the sake of Israel?" said God to Moses (Midrash). Impeached, Moses felt compelled to assert his innocence (16:15): "Not even a single donkey have I ever carried away from them, nor wronged even one of them!" Moses agrees that no leader may exploit his position or take advantage of his people. Still, Korah was out of line: In Torah's view, "The People" is not the ultimate authority; nor is any mortal ruler. God is. His Will, as conveyed in Torah, is both source and substance of viable law.

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 30:

..KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

..HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE STORY OF KORAH'S REBELLION against Moses (Nu. 16:1-35) starts with an intriguing Hebrew phrase, "Korah took..." What is the meaning of this "taking?" One interpretation is that he "took" with him the other members of the rebellious group, he "led" them. In this context, to "take" means to persuade, to appeal. The only human way to "take" people is not physically by force but spiritually with words. Other explanations: Korah "took" the initiative; he "took" himself, committed himself; he "took" the first step, came forward; he "took" the risk, spoke up. To embark on any venture, positive or negative, one must first be involved in the stage of "taking"—taking oneself, others; taking initiative, risk. One must "take" a stand, make a decisive commitment.

Candlelight time 8:46 Sabbath ends 9:39

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 27:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 18:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Rosh Hodesh Tammuz - Friday, June 17

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

KINGSHIP ("melucha") is viewed in Scripture with ambivalence. It is a result of social pressure and political needs, but also a threat to human rights and Divine authority. Without constant vigilance, the king is tempted to abuse his power – oppress his people, rather than lead them, defy his God, rather than heed Him. The king in Israel was dependent, in his authority, on the will of the people, and in his role, on the message of the prophets. The endorsement of prophecy, however, meant not to consecrate the king but to direct him; to protect him – not from his people but from himself – to guard and guide him in the ways of Torah. The foreign conceptions about kings as divine or super beings, or as endowed with divine quality of rights, are utterly discarded by Torah and prophets. A king must submit to the law, or he loses his claim to uphold the law. Kingship in Israel was regularly criticized and challenged, and tolerated only within limits. Never was it sanctioned in terms of divine or holy absolutism. For Jews there is only one King – Father in Heaven.

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

TEMPLES SERVE HUMAN, NOT DIVINE, NEEDS (Isaiah 66:1): "Thus says the Lord: The heavens, My throne; the earth, My footstool. Where is the house you can build for Me? Where, the place for My rest?" The same idea was expressed by King Solomon in his prayer at the Temple's dedication (I Kings 8:27): "Will God truly reside on earth? If the heavens and the heavens above heavens will not contain You, how much less this house which I have built?!" With all this profound realization of divine supremacy and human inadequacy, the urge to erect monumental edifices to God surpassed all reason and vision. We certainly maintain temples to serve our own needs, not God's. Is it not also possible that we often build them to enhance our own glory, rather than the glory of God?

Candlelight time 8:41 Sabbath ends 9:35
Scriptural reading for Saturday, June 11:
KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32, 28:9-15
HAFTARAH: Isaiah 66:1-24
Rosh Hodesh Tammuz - Saturday, June 11

REFORM

Candlelight time. 8:46 Sabbath ends 9:39

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 22:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

SAMUEL'S FAREWELL SPEECH (I Sam. 12:1-22) demonstrates the integrity of true authority. The great leader feels accountable for his conduct to the people. He acknowledges their right and duty to impeach him. He opens himself to their challenge; "Here I am. Testify against me before the Lord and before His anointed king. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I wronged? Whom have I oppressed? From whom have I ever taken a bribe? From whom have I ever turned away my eyes? If so I will here and now account to you." None among the people complained or accused him of any wrong doing. The concept of the leader's indebtedness to the people rather than their subordination to him is clearly confirmed here. A leader who exploits his position of authority and power to obtain personal gains, to enrich himself economically, forfeits his right to lead. The message conferred to all leaders is according to the rabbis: "Not mastery is granted to you, but servitude is expected of you."

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Candlelight time 8:43 Sabbath ends 9:36

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 14:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

THE IMPEACHMENT OF MOSES led by Korah and his followers touched upon a principle in leadership. To what degree is there room for authority of a few leaders among a society where all are free and masters? Korah insisted against Moses (Nu. 16:3): "To much authority have you! For the entire community, all of them, are distinguished, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourself above the Lord's community?" This claim is exemplified in the Midrash. Korah asked: Does a house filled with books of the Torah require a Mezuzah? Moses answered that it does. Even a community full of leaders needs strong and authoritative leadership.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY is an intriguing issue in both biblical and rabbinic sources. Why should the group suffer on account of one of its members (or vice versa)? Don't the acts of one member affect the entire group (and vice versa)?

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and prayed (Numbers 16:22): "O God, Master of the spirits of all mortals! If one person is at fault, why would You blame the entire community?"

Implicitly, the Divine response is that *kol Israel* (all Jews) are, indeed, in larger or smaller measure, responsible for one another. The Hebrew term is *arevim*, which entails a double meaning of being "guarantors" for one another and of being "intermingled" with one another.

Is controversy destructive or constructive? Any controversy which is for the sake of Heaven, in search for truth, is destined to be beneficial. Any controversy which is not for the sake of Heaven, but motivated by selfish pursuit, is doomed to failure. An example of the latter is Korah's rebellion against the authority of Moses

and Aaron. It is disastrous, not so much for its arguments, but for its motivation: Lust for power and personal glory.

Constructive controversy is exemplified by Hillel and Shammai. Their disputes on Torah views, in mutual respect, shaped the enduring, creative tradition of rabbinic debates marked by moral integrity (Avot 5:17).

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY? is an intriguing issue in both biblical and rabbinic sources. Why should the group suffer on account of one of its members (or vice versa)? But, don't the acts of one member affect the entire group (and vice versa)?

Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and prayed (Numbers 16:22): "O God, Master of the *ruhoi* (spirits) of all mortals! If one man is at fault, why would you blame the entire community?" Explain the Sages: "You, O God, unlike human rulers, know the *ruhoi* of all mortals — the hidden intentions of each and every person as a unique individual. How can You act indiscriminately?" So argued Moses and Aaron. How did God respond?



Aloha--and Shalom

Dr. Zvi Yehuda and his wife, Hasya, paid a surprise visit to Pearl Harbor's Aloha Jewish Chapel recently and held a study session for Jewish worshippers there. Dr. and Mrs. Yehuda (R) are shown with former Clevelander Trudy (Gottlieb) Ettelson and her husband Richard, Lt., CHC, USNR, who was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1982. He is rabbi at the Aloha Jewish Chapel and serves the Pacific basin area as well.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE responsibility? — is a debatable issue in both biblical and rabbinic sources. Don't the acts of one person affect the group, and vice versa? Moses and Aaron, however, fell on their faces and prayed (Numbers 16:22): "O God, Master of the spirits (*"ruhot"*) of all mortals! If one man is at fault, why would you blame the entire community?"

Elaborate the Sages: "You, O God, unlike human rulers, know the 'spirits' of all mortals, the hidden intentions of each and every person as a unique individual. How can You act indiscriminately?" This is Moses' and Aaron's argument. But what is God's answer?

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

KORAH'S REVOLT against the establishment, challenging the exclusive authority of Moses and Aaron, is presented in the Torah with a good and valid argument Korah says: "Enough for you! For the entire community, all of them, are holy; and among them is the Lord! Why, then, do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?" (Nu. 16:3) This echoes Moses' own wish: "Would that all the Lord's people, were prophets." (11:29) The Korahites, although their claim was just and legitimate, aimed at breaking the "system" and lacked due respect and concern for lawful authority; therefore they failed. Authority uninspired by freedom becomes tyranny; freedom undirected by authority becomes anarchy. Torah teaches the dignity and balance of both freedom and authority.

Candlelight time 8:46 Sabbath ends 9:39

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 30:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32, 28:9-15

HAFTARAH: Isaiah 66

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

KORAH'S AFFAIR (Nu. 16-17) is an example of destructive dissent (Avot 5:20). Dissent in itself is no vice, nor conformity a virtue in Judaism. Constructive controversy is the hallmark of the Jewish heritage--rich with creative interchange of disputing arguments and differing viewpoints. What, then, makes a controversy destructive or constructive? Its real motivation and direction: If the aim is finding the truth, discovering God's design, ennobling man's conduct--a controversy may be fruitful and succeed. On the other hand, if each of the participants seeks only his personal gain, their controversy is futile and doomed to fail. "Let no one be like Kora'h and his band" (17.5).

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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KORAH

By **RABBI ZVI YEHUDA**

**CONTROVERSY (MAHALOKET) –
DESTRUCTIVE OR CONSTRUCTIVE?** Any controversy which is for the sake of heaven, in search for truth, is destined to be beneficial. Any controversy which is not for the sake of heaven and motivated by selfish pursuit is doomed to failure. An example of the latter is Korah's rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron. It was disastrous, not so much because it was motivated by lust for power and personal glory. Constructive controversy is exemplified by Hillel and Shammai. Their disputes on Torah views, in mutual respect, shaped the enduring, creative tradition of rabbinic debates – marked by moral and intellectual integrity (Avot 5:17).

KORAH'S OPPOSITION to the authority of Moses and Aaron, is sharply articulated (Numbers 16:3): "Too much for you! All in the

community are holy, and in their midst is Hashem. Why, then, should you raise yourselves above Hashem's congregation?" A convincing argument! Its first part echoes Moses' own words (12:29), "Would that all Hashem's people were prophets!" The sanctity of the entire community, under God, negates absolute human authority which must remain restricted. However, Korah's intimation that Moses and Aaron did raise themselves "above Hashem's congregation" was vain rhetoric. While preaching against human authority, Korah offers himself as the fit authority. In subtle style, Moses responds to Korah's, "Too much for you!" (*rav-lakhem*), with (v. 9): "Is it too little for you?" (*ha-me'at mikkem*). Thus illustrating that Korah's controversy was not for the sake of heaven; it was not selfless.

See Torah on page 49.

Candlelight time 8:44 Sabbath ends 9:38

Scriptural reading for Saturday morning, June 17:

KORAH: Numbers 16:1-18:32

HAFTARAH: I Samuel 11:14-12:22

Thought of the Week

By Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

KORAH'S REVOLT against the establishment, challenging the exclusive authority of Moses and Aaron, is presented in the Torah with a good and valid argument. Korah says: "Enough for you! For the entire community, all of them, are holy; and among them is the Lord! Why, then, do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?" (Nu. 16:3) This echoes Moses' own wish: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets." (11:29) The Korahites, although their claim was just and legitimate, aimed at breaking the "system" and lacked due respect and concern for lawful authority; therefore they failed. Authority uninspired by freedom becomes tyranny; freedom undirected by authority becomes anarchy. Torah teaches the dignity and balance of both freedom and authority.

Thought of the Week

By RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

KORAH'S OPPOSITION to the authority of Moses and Aaron is sharply articulated (Nu. 16:3): "Too much for you! All in the community are holy; and in their midst, the Lord. Why, then, should you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?!" Korah's argument echoes Moses' own words (12:29): "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!" The sanctity of the entire community, under God, negates exclusive, unlimited, human authority. On this, Korah was right. But his intimation that Moses and Aaron raised themselves "above the Lord's congregation" is vain rhetoric.

Ironically, speaking as guardian of freedom against human authority, Korah offers himself as the fit leader. To Korah's claim – "Too much for you!" – Moses retorts in sarcastic parody: "Is it too little for you?!" (9).

Thought of the Week

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda

KORAH

July 3, 1992

KORAH'S OPPOSITION to the authority of Moses and Aaron, is sharply articulated (Nu. 16:3): "Too much for you! All in the community are holy, and in their midst, is *Hashem*. Why, then, should you raise yourselves above *Hashem's* congregation? A convincing argument! Its first part echoes Moses' own words (12:29), "Would that all *Hashem's* people were prophets!" The sanctity of the entire community, under God, negates absolute human authority which must remain restricted. However, Korah's intimation that Moses and Aaron did raise themselves "above *Hashem's* congregation" was vain rhetoric. While preaching against human authority, Korah, this guardian of freedom, offers himself as the fit authority. In subtle style, Moses responds to Korah's, "Too much for you!" (*rav-lakhem!*), with (v. 9): "Is it too little for you?" (*ha-me'at mikkem*).

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

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RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

CONTROVERSY – IS IT DESTRUCTIVE OR CONSTRUCTIVE? The rabbinic view is formulated in the Mishna (Avot 5:17). Its summation is as follows: Any controversy that is “for the sake of heaven” (*le-shem shamam*), namely, that its motivation is altruistic and its objective is the search for truth, is constructive. Such a controversy will yield beneficial results and will have an enduring, positive impact. Conversely, any controversy that is not for the sake of heaven, that is motivated by egoistic concerns and selfish pursuit, is destructive. Such a controversy is doomed to failure.

Constructive controversy is illustrated by Hillel and Shammai and their opposing rabbinic schools. Their various disagreements on Torah issues, both in Halachic and philosophic matters, were marked by mutual respect between all the opponents and the intellectual integrity of each of

them. Their dissension was motivated by a genuine quest for the truth. This manner of “controversy” exerted an enduring impact on Jewish cultural creativity and intellectual life, shaping the inimitable brilliance and unmatched thoroughness of philosophic-conceptual arguments, both secular and religious, in Judaism.

The classical paradigm of destructive controversy is Korah and his band in their irreverent rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron. Despite their pretense, their controversy was certainly not for the sake of heaven. It was motivated by their lust for power and glory. Whereas the Hillel-Shammai type of controversy enriches and strengthens Judaism, the Korah type of controversy yields catastrophic results and threatens the unity of the Jewish people. This is the normative lesson of the story: Be not like Korah and his band!

Friday, June 18, 1993

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RABBI ZVI YEHUDA

CONTROVERSY – DESTRUCTIVE or constructive? Any controversy for the sake of Heaven, reflecting moral integrity and a genuine search for truth, is enduringly beneficial. In contrast, any controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven, and that stems from selfish pursuit and immoral motives, ends in failure. Korach's rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron was such a controversy; it was disastrous, not so much for its arguments, but for its base motivation: lust for power and personal glory.

The traditional paradigm for constructive controversy is that of Hillel and Sammai. Their disputes on Torah views shaped the enduring, creative tradition of rabbinic debates. They were marked by mutual respect, a quest for truth and moral integrity (*Avot* 5:17).

Thought of the Week**Rabbi Zvi Yehuda****KORAH**

June 14, 1991

MAHALOKET: CONTROVERSY -- DESTRUCTIVE OR CONSTRUCTIVE? Any controversy which is for the sake of Heaven, in search for truth, is destined to be beneficial. Any controversy which is not for the sake of Heaven, which is motivated by selfish pursuit, is doomed to failure. Example of the latter is Korah's rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron; disastrous, not so much for its arguments, but for its motivation: Lust for power and personal glory.

Constructive controversy is exemplified by Hillel and Shammai. Their disputes on Torah views, in mutual respect, shaped the enduring, creative tradition of Rabbinic debates -- marked by moral and intellectual integrity (Avot 5:17).