

# KOL MEVASSER

## Criticism or Contempt

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

This week's Torah portion begins with the words "Vayikah Korah," and Korah took. But the verse never tells us what Korah took! Our classic commentators offered their explanations.

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra opines that Korah "took men" with him in fomenting rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Rashi explains that Korah "took himself to one side" in order to dissent from the current Israelite leadership. Ramban explains that Korah "took counsel with his heart" to rise in rebellion.

Perhaps, though, the Torah is teaching us something else. By not stating what Korah took, the Torah is in effect saying: Korah took....nothing! Korah gave the appearance of taking bold action, but in fact he offered nothing but bluster. He had nothing positive to suggest. Korah is good at complaining, he is an effective demagogue: but he had no actual agenda. The Torah lists his grievances but does not list any of his plans for improving the lot of the Israelites. Korah and the other rebels never disclose how their leadership would be better than that of Moses and Aaron.

The Pirkei Avot (5:21) distinguishes between the types of disputes conducted by

Hillel and Shammai and the dispute generated by Korah and his cohorts against Moses and Aaron. The debates of Hillel and Shammai were "in the name of Heaven." The dispute of Korah was "not in the name of Heaven."

The usual understanding of this passage is that Hillel and Shammai were not arguing for their own personal glory but in order to clarify the halakha. Even when they disagreed on particular rulings, they both accepted the halakhic system and worked within it. On the other hand, Korah and the other rebels were not motivated by an honest search for truth, but by the desire to gain personal power. Their rebellion was not for the sake of Heaven but for their own selfish goals.

We might refine this explanation by considering two words: criticism and contempt.

Hillel and Shammai were critical of each other's views on certain matters. They marshaled arguments to bolster their own views and to refute the views of the other. Criticism aims at undermining the arguments of the opponent, not at discrediting the opponent's character. People who are critical of each other's viewpoints can still sit together and offer their cases and refutations. Even if neither side is convinced to change his/her mind, the debate can be civil and respectful.

## KJ Schedule Parashat Korah

### Erev Shabbat / Friday, June 20th

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... | 6:30 am |
| Shir Hashirim .....           | 6:45 pm |
| Minhah/Arbith .....           | 7:00 pm |
| Shabbat Candlelighting .....  | 7:49 pm |

### Shabbat Korah

#### Saturday, June 21st

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Shaharit/Morning Prayer .....        | 8:30 am |
| Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit ..... | 7:00 pm |
| Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah .....     | 8:54 pm |

### Weekdays

#### Sunday, June 22nd

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Shaharit ..... | 7:30 am |
|----------------|---------|

### Monday to Friday, June 23rd to 27th

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Shaharit ..... | 6:30 am |
|----------------|---------|

### Erev Shabbat & Erev Rosh Hodesh Tammuz Friday, June 27th

|                               |         |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Shaharit/Morning Prayer ..... | 6:30 am |
| Shir Hashirim .....           | 6:45 pm |
| Minhah/Arbith .....           | 7:00 pm |
| Shabbat Candlelighting .....  | 7:51 pm |

Contempt is something different. A contemptuous opponent is not interested in engaging in serious discussion or debate, but rather in assassinating his opponent's character. He does not offer arguments to bolster his views or to refute his opponent's arguments. Rather, he attacks his opponent's character. He wants to demonstrate that he is superior and his opponent is inferior. He speaks and acts

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## Donate Food to Ethan's Bar Mitzvah Project

Ethan Spencer Kurtz  
who celebrates his Bar Mitzvah today,  
June 21st 2014, at Kahal Joseph invites  
the community to participate in his Bar  
Mitzvah Chesed project. Ethan is collect-  
ing food for the SOVA food bank. Please  
bring non-perishable food items this  
weekend and drop them off in the SOVA  
collection bins in Kahal's lobby.  
Thank You!

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with contempt. This was the approach of Korah's cohorts Datan and Aviram toward Moses. They sought to discredit Moses in the eyes of the people, to malign his character and his leadership. They were not interested in a disinterested dialogue with Moses on the best way to lead the Israelites; Datan and Aviram even refused to appear before Moses when he summoned them. They were contemptuous.

When people—individually, communally, nationally—have disagreements, they can engage in serious discussion and dialogue even if the parties are critical of each other's positions. Each can offer arguments and refutations. Both sides—even if holding very different positions—can still find common ground and can see themselves as working toward one goal.

But when people—individually, communally, nationally—are contemptuous of the other side, then the basis for discussion,

## Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored in honor of  
the Bar Mitzvah of

**Ethan Spencer Kurtz**

by Michelle and Stan Kurtz

Mazal Tov to Ethan  
to his parents, Michelle and Stan  
to his sister, Jenna  
and to his grandfather, Saul E. Levi

### Torah & Haftarah Readings

Bamidbar / Numbers: Korah 639 to 648  
Haftara Shmuel Alef / Samuel I 649 to 651

debate and reconciliation is undermined. The contemptuous party or parties are not at all interested in dialogue or debate; they are interested in destroying the other party. They see themselves as being superior; they are above discussion or criticism; their opponents are discredited and dehumanized.

And this may be the inner meaning of "Vayikah Korah," and Korah took... nothing. Korah and his cohorts did not come to criticize Moses and Aaron but to contemptuously displace them. When people offer contempt instead of criticism, they essentially offer nothing of value. They bring nothing to the table except hatred and self-righteousness.

Shabbat Shalom

## In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries for June 21 to 28, 2014. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend services the preceding Shabbat.

### 23 Sivan / Shabbat, June 21st

Lily Judah *Lulu bat Toba*

Salim Kamara *Salim ben Ezra*

### 24 Sivan / Sunday, June 22nd

Sara Davoudian *Sara bat David*

Joseph Meir Hakimpour *Yosef ben Meir*

Edith Judah *Esther bat Chana*

### 26 Sivan / Tuesday, June 24th

Daniel Rojhani

George Sassoon *Khadoory Hai ben Ezra*

Samha Zekha

### 27 Sivan / Wednesday, June 25th

Abdallah Joseph *Abdallah Faraj Yoseph Isaac*

Maurice Mathalon *Maurice Moshe ben Avraham*

### 28 Sivan / Thursday, June 26th

Aziz Daniel Pourati *Aziz ben Daniel*

### 29 Sivan / Friday, June 27th

Eric Jacob Jonah *Ezra ben Yaacov*

Abraham Mashaal *Avraham ben Yehezkel*

### 30 Sivan / Shabbat, June 28th

Ester Meyer *Ester bat Sofi*

## Refuah Shlemah

Rahel bat Marcel

Mordechai Cohen / Mordecai ben Avraham

Moselle Amron/Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana

Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam

Joseph Sharaf / Yossef ben Jamila

Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha

Pnina Herzbrun / Pnina bat Esther

Michael Herzbrun / Michael Baruch ben Sarah

*Wishing You a Peaceful Shabbat*



## Hold the Date! A Day in the Park

with Kahal Joseph Congregation  
*Fun for the whole family!*

Sunday July 13 at 11:30 am  
Roxbury Park  
471 South Roxbury Drive  
Beverly Hills, Ca 90212

*Games & sports for kids*  
*BBQ & Picnic on the lawn*  
*Cards and backgammon*



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Dafna Ezran by e-mail at [dafnayoung@gmail.com](mailto:dafnayoung@gmail.com) or call 310-502-8548



## Flavors of Babylon An Iraqi Cookbook

2nd edition release Summer 2014

Special Offer—\$30 at KJ

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Our first edition copies sold out quickly

Linda Dangoor was born in Baghdad and settled in the UK in the 1960s. Although she left Iraq when only ten years old, the link to her roots through food has always been very strong. She started cooking at a young age with her mother and grandmother. Linda Dangoor has always been interested in cooking.



Her Middle Eastern background and travels enhanced the discovery of dishes and inspired the creation of new ones. As an accomplished and experienced cook, recognizing a need in the market, she resolved to put down her favourite recipes from her native Iraq in modern book form. To order call KJ at 310.474.0559 or send a \$30 check to:

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Kahal Joseph Congregation  
10505 Santa Monica Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90025



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# Congratulation to KJ's Class of 2014

## Elementary & Middle School



**Ilan Bouskila**  
Hillel Hebrew Academy  
Will be attending  
Shalhevet High School



**Ariel Nissim Young**  
El Rodeo School  
Will be attending  
Beverly Hills High School

## High School



**Jessica Fischman**  
Beverly Hills High School  
Will be attending the  
University of California  
Santa Cruz

## College & University



**Candice Rabbie**  
University of Arizona  
Bachelor of Science,  
Accounting



**Leetal Sara Sayegh**  
University of  
Colorado, Boulder  
Bachelor of Science,  
Journalism

## Professional & Graduate School



**Natalie Levy**  
Boston University  
Master of Arts, Art  
Education



**Jennifer Reiz**  
Loyola Law School  
Juris Doctor (JD)

We send our best wishes and congratulations to these amazing new graduates in the Kahal Joseph community. May they use their academic talents and new degrees to fulfill their potential and bring life, joy and peace into the world. They have already brought so much happiness to those close to them with their recent accomplishments.

If there are additional graduates who deserve recognition this year, please let us know and we will include them in future issues, b"H. Call our office at 310.474.0559 or e-mail [dafnayoung@gmail.com](mailto:dafnayoung@gmail.com)

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