

KOL MEBASSER

Rabbi's Message

"Korah took," says the Torah... but what exactly did he take? Generations of commentators have struggled with this problem, as a quick glance at the Rabbinic Bible or translation websites like Bible Gateway will demonstrate.



Rasag explains the verse by saying that Korah "approached" Moses, much as the word "take" is used to mean "bring over" in Gen. 18:5. This is similar to the view of Rashi, who suggests that Korah "took *himself* physically to one side, to be separate from the congregation in a spirit of contention." A second camp including Rashbam, Hazekuni, and Ibn Ezra claims that the Torah is just using shorthand language for Korah "took *people*" to join his protest. This stance is close enough to the ensuing story to be ratified in several English translations, all of which say some version of "Korah took *men*." Yet neither point fully satisfies Ramban, who argues from the Midrash Tanhuma that Korah "took *counsel* in his heart" to carry out his protest against Moses.

While each position has a legitimate anchor in Scriptural language, the Midrash Tanhuma that Ramban quotes does an excellent job of explaining the wider religious message behind Korah's complaint as it tries to answer the tighter question of what it was that he "took." The Midrash says:

"Korah Took" – what is written in Torah right before this? "Tell Bene Yisrael to make tsitsit... and to put a blue thread with the tsitsit of each corner" (Num. 15:38) Korah jumped up and asked Moses: 'if a cloak is made entirely of blue threads, would it be

exempt from the requirement of tsitsit?' Moses answered that it is obligated, and Korah retorted: 'a cloak that is entirely blue cannot absolve itself, but the four blue threads from the tsitsit would?!' He then asked: 'if a room is full of Scriptural books, would it be absolved from the requirement of mezuzah?' Moses answered that it is obligated, and Korah retorted: 'a Torah that has 275 sections cannot absolve the room, but the two sections of the mezuzah would?! These are things which you have not been commanded; you must be inventing them out of your own mind!'

Each of Korah's Midrashic objections underscores his main critique of Moses and Aaron in the Scripture: "You take too much upon yourselves: given that the entire people is holy, with God among them, how can you promote yourselves to be above God's congregation?" For Korah, the Holy People is like the all-blue cloak or the room full of sefarim. If we are "a nation of priests" (Ex. 19:6), then what is so special about leaders? Shouldn't holiness be equally accessible to everyone?

Had Korah been making a sincere challenge designed to reveal the truth, it might have given Moshe pause to reflect, but his cynicism actually ends up exposing the flaws of his own argument. From God's deadly response, we learn that Korah was a master of rhetoric who cared only for his personal advancement. For him, the problem was less that all people weren't being treated equally and more that it wasn't himself at the top of the heap!

In a world full of Korah-like figures, we know that holiness is not expressed equally in every soul. It could be worthwhile for all of us to seek out mentors whose integrity and spiritual striving we admire so they can lead us through a complex, morally fraught

Parashat Korah

Torah: Num. 16:1–18:32, 95 Pesukim
Hertz 639–648; Stone 820–837
Haftarah: I Sam. 11:14–12:22
Hertz 649–651; Stone 1186–1187
Tefillot: Morid Hatal

KJ Schedule Ereb Shabbat

Friday, July 8th

Shaharit 6:25 am
Shabbat Candle Lighting 7:49 pm
Minha 6:30 pm

Yom Shabbat

Saturday, July 9th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer 8:30 am
Keri'at HaTorah 10:15 am
Musaf 11:30 am
Women's Tehillim 5:45 pm
Minha 7:15 pm
Se'uda Shelisheet 8:00 pm
Arbit 8:40 pm
Habdala 8:52 pm

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life. Those among us who strive to live up to those weighty goals would do well to accept this responsibility with hesitation and humility, so that our fellows who have entrusted their spiritual lives to our leadership can have the confidence that we have their best interests at heart.

KJ Schedule (continued)

Weekdays

Sunday, July 10th

Shaharit.....7:30 am

Monday, July 11th to Friday, July 15th

Shaharit6:25 am

Ereb Shabbat / Friday, July 15th

Shaharit6:25 am

Shabbat Candle Lighting..... 7:46 pm

Minha6:30 pm

Preserve a Piece of Kahal Joseph Heritage

A Special Opportunity to Do a Mitsva

A collector of rare Judaica recently passed away in New York, and his family sold his entire library to Rabbi Melhado's favorite Jewish book dealer, who is now offering them for sale.

For a limited time only, there are about 30 unique printings available from **Calcutta, Bombay, and Baghdad**, many of which are scarce and difficult to find at any price.

If you want to take advantage of this special, tax-deductible opportunity to help Kahal Joseph rescue some of these items to treasure as part of our cultural heritage, contact Rabbi Melhado, who can arrange a discounted rate from the seller.



Shabbat Kiddush

is sponsored
in memory of

Ronen Navah, z"l

by Tikvah and Yoel Iny
and Family

Women's Tehillim Group

5:45 pm Saturday
before Minha



Thanks to our member Miriam Shadi, the tehillim group is getting new life. Join your fellow Kahal Joseph sisters for community, **coffee & snacks** and reciting the Book of Psalms.

All women are welcome to participate, and whoever arrives first is invited to say the Yehi Ratson & begin reading. When more arrive, we can share the text until we have finished all 150 Psalms. What a great spiritual lift on Shabbat!

Upcoming Fast Days

The two summer fasts both fall on Shabbat this year, and will be observed the next Jewish calendar day.

17th of Tammuz

daytime only on Sunday, July 24th

9th of Ab

from Motsa'e Shabbat, August 13th to
nightfall on Sunday, August 14th

In Memoriam

We remember yearzeit anniversaries from July 9 to 16, 2016. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka & attend Shabbat services.

3 Tammuz / Shabbat, July 9th

Joseph Moses *Yoseph ben Aharon Moshe*
Habibollah Rokhsar *Habib ben Mordecai*

4 Tammuz / Sunday, July 10th

Aaron Saul Levy *Aharon Shaul Halevi*

6 Tammuz / Tuesday, July 12th

Eliyahu Irani *Eliyahu ben Moshe*

8 Tammuz / Thursday, July 14th

Isaac Shamsi *Itzhak ben Shemuel*

10 Tammuz / Shabbat, July 16th

Khanbaba Pouladian *Itzhak ben Avraham*
Hatoon bat Haviva

Isaac Shamash *Itzhak Rahamim ben Abraham*

Refua Shelema

Abe Abraham • Moselle Amron • Sally Amron • Haskell Avrahami • Sylvia Cohen
Mordechai Cohen • Esther Duke
Sassoon Ezra • Lev Hakak • Tilda Levy
Doris Moshi • Florice Newberry • Maurice Ovadia • Gracie Tizabi • Katie bat Farha
Miriam bat Yetta • Aliza bat Victoria

Condolences

We offer our deepest condolences
to the family and friends of
Ronen Navah, z"l

He is the son of our friends, Rabbi Avi and
Janice Navah. May Hashem comfort them
together with all the mourners of Tzion.