

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

KORAH

Haftarah: Yeshayahu 66:1-24

JUNE 7-8, 2013 30 SIVAN 5773

Rosh Hodesh Tamuz will be celebrated on Shabbat & Sunday, June 8 & 9.

DEDICATIONS: In honor of the wedding of Aryana and Steven Ritholtz

Candles: 8:05 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:00 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:15 AM

11:00 - 12:00 Orah's will be here with our Shabbat Morning Kids Program upstairs in the Rabbi's study. Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . . And Leah Colish will be babysitting down in the playroom

Kiddush sponsored by Chantelle and David in honor of the marriage of Steven and Aryana – Sheva Berachot follow the meal. Please join us

5:30 - Mincha Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.

5:30: Ladies Torah Class at the Lemberger's 1 East Olive.

Class - Rav Aharon on Pirkey Avot 6:45, Minha: 7:25 PM – Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:55 – with Rabbi David on Korah

Seudah Shelishi sponsored by Chantelle and David in honor of the marriage of Steven and Aryana Sheva Berachot follow the meal – please join us

Evening Service (Arbith): 8:55 PM - Shabbat Ends: 9:05 PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Daily 6:30 AM class – Honest Business Practices

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – 7PM

LADIES: Wednesday Night 8PM with Esther Wein at The Grill Home
Financial Peace University – Tuesday at 8PM

Save the Date! Six Flags Great Adventure

Don't miss out on our Annual Summer 2013 Sephardic Youth Trip!

Fun for a day, Memories for a lifetime.

Our tentative dates are either June 24th or June 25th.

We are looking for more adult chaperones and potential drivers.

We need Sponsors – We are hoping to raise \$1800 to supplement the costs
Sisterhood? Any of you?

Last year, this was an It was an awesome bonding experience and kids had a blast.

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

The Rivers of History and the Light of the Tallit

The Midrash tells us that it was the law of sinit and tallit that was the protagonist in creating the revolt of

Korach. It's a pity that neither Korach nor his wife could appreciate the true beauty of the Tallit.

Eleven years ago this week, we set up a huge stage on the beach behind my house. A team of imported concert roadies set up speakers with generators and lights. Hundreds of girls and women converged under the stars to dance the night away to the music of Neshama Carlebach and her band. I as a man wasn't invited!

This week eleven years later, instead of a stage, we are preparing a Chupah about 300 yards to the west and if all goes as planned, my daughter Aryana will B'H be married on that same beach under the setting sun. This one I hope to attend!

This week we read the portion of Korach. My wife Chantelle was going through some notes when she found one of our newsletters from the same portion, but from 2002. This allowed us to recall that our daughter Aryana was celebrating her Bat Mitzvah during this very same week.

The newsletter included her speech from that night. 12 year old Aryana began by noting that this portion presents a great opportunity to talk about the power of women and how the influence of one woman led to the destruction of Korach and his group, while the intelligence and wisdom of another saved Ohn ben Pelet from going down with the rest. But instead of speaking about that she spoke about a converging of rivers.

Aryana told us how she noticed that a river of tears flow through every Simcha. But unlike sad tears which are salty, these tears are sweet. The river flows with the tears of parent's nachat for their children from a very ancient river. This powerful river began in the Land of Israel and flowed through Babylonia, Syria, North Africa, Spain, France, Germany, Poland, Russia and into the Americas. It is a river that flows from generation to generation. It is a river that flows wherever Jews have lived. And it gets mightier and sweeter with each passing day when a parent or grandparent "sheps nachas" from their children."

This week, Aryana's rivers which combine her mother's family's rich past and my own ancestors becomes even stronger as it joins the rivers of the Ritholtz and the Serman families. Those rivers bring histories, stories, and customs. And this wedding will no doubt see a combining of those customs where we come together Ashkenazim and Sephardim – Those from Eastern Europe and the Near East, all of us Americans as well. Incidentally all four of the couple's grandfathers are Veterans – two from WWII and two from Korea. King David writes, "Hineh ma

tov uma na'im. Shevet achim gam yachad" How wonderful it is when the tribes of brothers come together in unity.

The wedding itself will bring together some of those customs. Sephardim will see the bride and groom host (brief) pre-nuptial receptions shortly before the chupah ceremony. The bride hosts a women's reception in one room where she sits on a distinctive, ornate throne-like chair. Her friends and family approach and wish her mazal tov. The groom hosts a reception for the men nearby where the tena'im are signed and the mothers of the bride and groom break a plate. There the ketubah (marriage contract) is also completed, witnessed, and signed. This is in contrast to the Sephardic custom. There, the bride and groom sit together with their respective families for the signing of the Ketubah.

Another custom that will be different is "The Bedecken" or the veiling of the bride by the groom. With great fanfare, dancing and singing, the guests escort the groom to the bride. The groom then lowers the veil over the bride's face. The groom, surrounded by his enthusiastic friends, is escorted out of the room to prepare for the Chuppah.

At the ceremony, when the bride reaches the chuppah, she circles the groom seven times. She breaks the wall that separates them and builds the spiritual wall within which they will reside. Towards the middle of the ceremony, we add a Sephardic tradition which includes the groom donning a new tallit over which he will say the Shehehyanu blessing having in mind the happiness of the marriage and the wedding blessings. And before the concluding breaking of the glass, we cover the bride and groom with that tallit and bless them with Birkat Kohanim, the priestly blessing and concluding with the words from the Book of Ruth where the elders and the people blessed Ruth, the mother of the Messiah, with the words, "HaShem make the woman that is coming into your house like Rachel and like Leah, the two of whom built the house of Israel". The groom will break the glass after reciting the words recalling Jerusalem during the final song and as the ceremony ends the bride and groom are escorted away from the Chupah in song and dance by friends and family.

Finally the reception itself has differences. While most Ashkenaz affairs are seated, Sephardim tend to come and go with other obligations. On the night of my daughter's wedding, many have obligations to attend another wedding in Brooklyn and an engagement party in Manhattan. Thus dinner is served all night as are desserts. People walk and talk, have a drink, dance, eat and sit down and then

get up and someone else may take their place. The fun is keeping the party going without a break and lastly when most of the guests have left to sit with just the families at one large table, have something to eat, give people a chance to speak and together say Birkat haMazon thanking Hashem and blessing the couple with Sheva Berachot.

Well that's the plan. I'll let you know how it goes.

The foremost wedding blessing is, "May Hashem bless the couple to build a Bayit Ne'eman BeYisrael". I saw a beautiful thought by Rabbi Eliezer Eisenberg which combines the various customs we noted. Building a home requires three elements: A foundation, walls, and a roof. The foundation is the history the couple brings to the marriage: their families, what they have learned, and their achievements in Midot- ethics and Chesed – Kind Acts.

The walls are the contribution of the bride. As we mentioned, under the Chupah, the bride circles the groom seven times, separating the home from the influences of the outer world. As the Talmud teaches, "One who is without a wife, lacks a wall". The wife creates the walls that define and surround the Jewish house. She is the Gevurah, the strength and vessel.

The roof is the contribution of the groom. Returning again to the book of Ruth, Boaz was asked "spread therefore your wing over your handmaid." The husband brings the Kallah to the chuppah that he creates. And their private and personal chuppah is under the tallit which he drapes over them. As the minhag among Eastern Europeans to not wear this large tallit until the boy is married, the tallit which Aryana will be giving Steven will be the first time he wears his one tallit. .

We mention often during the ceremony that the couple should be like Adam and Chava in the Garden of Eden. The Ben Ish Chai quoting the Arizal teaches us that the garments of Adam haRishon. before the sin were ketonet ohr/garments of light. The tallit that Steven will put on represents this original light in the form of Ohr Makif and protects from any outside forces. He continues that sisit are the gematria or equivalent numerical value of "beit ya`akov". And quotes the verse, "beit ya`akov lekhu ve nelekhah be'ohr Hashem/ House of Ya`akov go and let us walk in the light of Hashem".

So I ask you all out there to bless the couple and all the couples of Israel that they be zoche, worthy to build a Bayit Ne'eman. May their foundation rest solidly on the treasures found in Aryana's rivers of history. May it rest on zechut avot – the merit of our

forefathers and their struggles through the millennia to get us where we are today. May aryana be worthy to build walls of holiness and be a true Akkeret Habyit and may Steven always set above them and protect them with a roof of spiritual light.

May this light always guide and direct them, may it watch over them and protect them. May they merit with that supernal light to guide those rivers to their final destination, bringing Mashiah Bimherah Beyameynu, Amen!

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

PS ... We lost a very special person this week in Senator Frank Lautenberg. I had a personal relationship with the Senator going back almost twenty years. Although we didn't see eye to eye on everything, he was always there to help and be of assistance when needed. He went out of his way on occasions even offering to assist when he wasn't asked. I had fun building some very special pieces for him and Bonnie over the years. The Senator really was a gentleman and a scholar. We extend our condolences to an incredible lady, Bonnie Englehardt Lautenberg and to their children. I will certainly miss Frank Lautenberg.

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Korach, along with Dattan, Aviram, and 250 men from Shevet Reuven, challenged Moshe and Aharon's leadership. Moshe set the next day for a showdown, hoping that the rebels would reconsider their rebellion.

2nd Aliya: After attempting to convince Korach to reconsider, Moshe attempted to sway Dattan and Aviram. Moshe's efforts were rebuffed.

3rd Aliya: The next day Hashem instructed Moshe and the nation to separate themselves from the tents of Korach, Dattan, and Aviram. Moshe proclaimed that his and Aharon's leadership would be divinely confirmed through the way in which Korach and his followers would die. Korach, Dattan, and Aviram, along with their entire families were swallowed up by the earth, while the 250 men from Reuven were consumed by a heavenly fire.

4th Aliya: A rebellion broke out among the people, and Aharon had to intervene in order to stop the plague sent as a punishment against the people. 14,700 people perished in the plague.

5th Aliya: Aharon's appointment as Kohain Gadol is reconfirmed through the test of the staffs. Aharon's staff was the only staff that miraculously sprouted almonds.

6th Aliya: Aharon's staff is placed in the Holy of Holies. The duties of the Kohanim and Leviyim are stated along with a list of the Kohain's share in the nations produce and live stock.

7th Aliya: The Levite's share of the nation's produce and the gifts given by the Laviyim to the Kohanim are stated.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"And he [Moshe] said to Hashem, 'Do not turn to their gift offering.'" (Bemidbar 16:15)

The perashah begins with the tragic revolt led by Korah against Moshe. Moshe suggests that the dispute be resolved by challenging Korah and his followers to prepare incense offerings, which they will offer to Hashem. Aharon will do so as well, and the person whom Hashem truly desires and selects to serve Him will survive, while all the others will perish.

After Korah refuses to back down and accepts the challenge, even at the cost of his own life and the lives of his followers, Moshe grows angry and prays to Hashem not to accept the offerings of Korah. Rabbi Ozer Alpert asks, why was it necessary for Moshe to pray that the offerings not be accepted? If Hashem would accept them it would be tantamount to substantiating Korah's blasphemous and heretical arguments. Wasn't it obvious that Hashem wouldn't do something which would cause catastrophic consequences?

Rabbi Alpert tells the following story, that will help answer our question. Rabbi Shalom Schwadron was once praying at the Kotel, when he was startled by a loud noise. Turning around, he saw two men wearing leather and chains who had just pulled up behind him on a motorcycle. One man took out a pen and paper and scribbled a note, which he showed to his friend. After his friend nodded his approval, he folded up the paper and placed it in one of the cracks of the Kotel. The men returned to their motorcycle and sped off with a bang.

Rabbi Schwadron was curious as to what these seemingly non-spiritual men had written. Suddenly a gust of wind blew the poorly placed paper straight to his feet. He picked it up and read, "Please Hashem, Maccabi Tel Aviv (a sports team) for the

league championship" – a prayer which was apparently subsequently answered.

The lesson of the story is that contrary to what we get used to believing, prayer is not only for those of the highest level of piety. A prayer from the depths of the heart is a powerful thing. We say every day in "Ashrei," "Karob Hashem lechol kor'av – Hashem is close to all those which call out to him genuinely."

Moshe knew that with their lives on the line, Korah and his followers, heretics that they were, would pray for the acceptance of their incense offerings with tremendous fervor and intent. He had no choice but to counter their powerful prayers with an even more potent one of his own. Moshe knew that a heartfelt prayer about whatever is important to the supplicant – whether it is the final score of a sporting event or even the deposition of Hashem's hand-picked prophet and leader – brings him close to Hashem, who is likely to answer such prayers in the affirmative. This is a lesson we should remember the next time we open a Siddur. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"It's enough for you, sons of Levi." (Bemidbar 16:7) When Korah, Datan and Abiram came to Moshe and questioned his authority, they also expressed their wishes to become like the Kohanim, and serve G-d in a closer way. Moshe tried to diffuse the issue by saying that they already have a special status by being Leviim (Levites), so why ask for more? Ultimately, this became a major rebellion, and the only way it could be squashed is by an open miracle of the earth swallowing up Korah and his followers. This was Divine proof that Moshe was correct in his decision.

However, the Midrash tells us that forty years later, when Moshe begged and pleaded with Hashem to try to enter Israel, Hashem refused him with the same words that Moshe used to Korah, "lk cr - It is enough for you," which is similar to "ofk cr/" Hashem was saying to him, "Moshe, it is enough for you to be the leader here. You don't have to go to Israel." The reason these same words were used was that Moshe was being shown that it is incorrect to tell someone not to strive for a greater position in spiritual matters. Although Korah used the wrong methods and ultimately paid with his life, he still wanted an opportunity to get closer to Hashem, and Moshe seemed to be telling him, "It's enough. You don't need more."

We learn from here an important lesson. If we see someone getting close to Hashem more than we are able to handle for ourselves, we should never hold him back. Sometimes we see people learning

more Torah than we do, or praying Amidah for a longer time. Even if we cannot be like them, we should not discourage them. We should understand that everyone has to be comfortable on his own level and ideally, we should be happy that Hashem is being served in a better way. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Testing Our Strengths

The Torah in Parashat Korah describes the revolt waged by Korah and his followers against the authority of Moshe and Aharon. Korah and his group posed to Moshe the question, "Madu'a Titnas'u Al Kehal Hashem" – "Why do you elevate yourselves over the congregation of G-d?" Korah accused Moshe of asserting his authority and exerting power for personal, egotistical interests, for prestige and glory.

Just two weeks ago, in Parashat Behaalotecha, we read the Torah's description of Moshe Rabbenu as "exceedingly humble, more so than any person on the face of the earth." G-d Himself testified to the fact that Moshe was the precise opposite of how Korah portrayed him. Korah charged him of asserting himself out of a desire for honor and power, whereas in truth, Moshe was more humble than any other person in the world.

This incident teaches an important lesson about the way we are tested during life. Namely, our patience is tested specifically in our areas of strength. If a person pokes fun at us for something regarding which we profess no skill or expertise, it doesn't bother us. But it is when we are challenged in the area in which we feel accomplished that our patience and forbearance are tested. As a Rabbi, I could easily ignore an insult about my talents as a softball player. I do not play softball, I never put much effort into honing my skills in the sport, and I never thought of myself as much as a softball player. So if a person would come along and make fun of me for being a lousy player, it would not affect me too much, or at all. But if somebody would come along and challenge my ability to deliver Torah lectures, which is precisely the field in which I have invested much time and effort, that is when I will be tested. This is when I might be naturally inclined to feel offended and get angry, and must find the inner strength to ignore the insult. Moshe was challenged specifically in the area of his greatest achievement – humility – and he passed the text with flying colors, ignoring the insult and proposing a way to prove that the leadership appointments were made by Hashem, and not by him.

Our areas of success and achievement are often our source of personal pride, and it is thus specifically regarding those areas that we are emotionally vulnerable. Since they provide us with a sense of satisfaction, challenges to our success in those areas tend to hurt. We should learn from Moshe's example to keep at our emotions at bay, and to have the strength to ignore insults and retain our dignity in the face of unwarranted criticism and scorn.

Rabbi Wein

ANSWERING MACHINES

Almost all of our telephones today, whether they are landlines or mobile phones, are equipped with a "leave a message" answering service. Like all of our modern technological wonders, this telephone answering service has a darker side to its apparent sunny convenience. When I arrive home late at night after attending an event or a celebration and I see that red light flashing on our answering machine, indicating that a caller or numerous callers have left a message, my mood darkens.

I must then and there listen to those messages for there may be an emergency situation that demands my attention – and even a response late at night. But most of the time, these messages can certainly wait for my response until the next day. But, I must listen to them even though it will now take me more time to get into my "going to sleep" mode, simply because I know that these messages exist and the callers expect my response.

I was born at a time when and in a place where phone numbers were only four digits in length and one spoke to a real live person called an "operator" to connect a call. Our home phone was one of four homes connected on a party line, and no one thought of having an answering machine attached to one's phone. We have certainly progressed at least as far as phone technology is concerned.

But, the nostalgia that overtakes those of my age tells me that life was simply less stressful when there were no answering machines attached to our phones and that miraculous hand-held phones were not the center point of our daily existence.

Heaven must also have an answering machine service to receive all of our calls and requests. There is no doubt that the Lord's omniscience and omnipotence allows for instant awareness of all requests and entreaties to Heaven. Yet we do not always receive instant responses to our calls to Heaven. Sometimes we are put on hold and at other times our messages are recorded on the Heavenly

answering machine for further attention and processing.

Our calls are never ignored though, for the Heavenly answering machine is always turned on and working. According to Jewish tradition and belief our calls can be returned, so to speak, years and even generations later. But once our message is recorded on that Heavenly answering machine it remains there permanently and will be dealt with in Heaven's good time and effective manner.

The Talmud teaches us that not only our words and spoken wishes are recorded but that even our tears, unspoken and private as they may be, are also counted and stored in the vaults of Heaven. And the gates of tears are never closed or locked. Tears do not bring forth or require a "leave a message" response. They are immediately assessed, counted and considered. In a macho society, tears are sometimes considered to be a sign of personal weakness and soft character. In Jewish life they are viewed as the lubricant of our souls and one of the keys to emotional holiness and psychological stability.

The call that the Jewish people placed to Heaven millennia ago regarding our restoration to national sovereignty in our ancient homeland, the Land of Israel, was on the Heavenly answering machine for a long time. Heaven never erased that original call from its answering machine and the Jewish people never stopped making that call over and over again, certainly many millions of times over the centuries of exile and dispersion.

And unexpectedly, against all odds and rational predictions, that call has been returned by Heaven in our times. And all of the tears shed over our exile and persecution have been counted and remembered and have, in fact, become the fuel for the renewal of our national energy and nation-building drive.

Maybe when I overcome my frustrations at having to listen to and respond to my answering machine messages I do so with a feeling that I am attempting to imitate Heaven in so doing. The Heavenly answering machine records when our calls were received but it does not indicate exactly when that call will be returned. Yet, we are confident that the return call will eventually come and that our communications are never completely ignored or deemed to be irrelevant and unnecessary.

The mysteries of our private lives and of Jewish national life oftentimes overwhelm and even discourage us. But we should continually remember

that we left a message on the Heavenly answering machine and that we are certainly not alone or forgotten in our struggles and hopes.

Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth
Power vs. Influence

The Korach rebellion was an unholy alliance of individuals and groups unhappy with Moses' leadership. There was Korach himself, a member of the tribe of Levi, angry (according to Rashi) that he had not been given a more prominent role. There were the Reubenites, Datan and Aviram, who resented the fact that the key leadership positions were taken by Levites rather than members of their own tribe. Reuben had been Jacob's firstborn, and some of his descendants felt that they should have been accorded seniority. Then there were the two hundred and fifty "princes of the congregation, elect men of the assembly, men of renown" who felt aggrieved (according to Ibn Ezra) that after the sin of the golden calf, leadership had passed from the firstborn to a single tribe, the Levites. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. The Korach story is an all too familiar tale of frustrated ambition and petty jealousy – what the sages called "an argument not for the sake of heaven."

What is most extraordinary about the episode, however, is Moses' reaction. For the first and only time, he invokes a miracle to prove the authenticity of his mission:

Then Moses said: "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea. If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the Lord with contempt."

In effect, Moses uses his power to eliminate the opposition. What a contrast this is to the generosity of spirit he showed just a few chapters earlier, when Joshua came to tell him that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp, away from Moses and the seventy elders. Joshua regarded this as a potentially dangerous threat to Moses' leadership and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" Moses' reply is one of the most majestic in the whole of Tenakh:

"Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his spirit on them."

What was the difference between Eldad and Medad on the one hand, and Korach and his co-conspirators on the other? What is the difference between Moses saying, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets," and Korach's claim that "The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them"? Why was the first, but not the second, a legitimate sentiment? Is Moses simply being inconsistent? Hardly. There never was a religious leader more clear-sighted. There is a distinction here which goes to the very core of the two narratives.

The Sages, in one of their most profound methodological observations, said that "the words of the Torah may be poor in one place but rich in another." By this they meant that, if we seek to understand a perplexing passage, we may need to look elsewhere in the Torah for the clue. A similar idea is expressed in the last of Rabbi Ishmael's thirteen rules of biblical interpretation: "Where there are two passages which contradict each other, the meaning can be determined only when a third passage is found which harmonises them."

In this case, the answer is to be found later in the book of Bemidbar, when Moses asks God to choose the next leader of the Israelites. God tells him to take Joshua and appoint him as his successor:

So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua, son of Nun, a man of spirit, and lay your hand on him. Make him stand before Elazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. Give him some of your splendour so that the whole Israelite community will obey him."

Moses is commanded to perform two acts over and above presenting Joshua to the priest and people. First he is to "lay his hand" on Joshua. Then he is to give him "some of your splendour." What is the significance of these two gestures? How did they differ from one another? Which of them constituted induction into office? The sages, in Midrash Rabbah, added a commentary which at first sight only deepens the mystery:

"Lay your hand on him" – this is like lighting one light from another. "Give him some of your splendour" – this is like pouring from one vessel to another.

It is this statement that will enable us to decode the mystery.

There are two forms or dimensions of leadership. One is power, the other, influence. Often we confuse the two. After all, those who have power often have influence, and those who have influence have a certain kind of power. In fact, however, the two are quite different, even opposites.

We can see this by a simple thought-experiment. Imagine you have total power, and then you decide to share it with nine others. You now have one-tenth of the power with which you began. Imagine, by contrast, that you have a certain measure of influence, and now you share it with nine others. How much do you have left? Not less. In fact, more. Initially there was only one of you; now there are ten. Your influence has spread. Power operates by division, influence by multiplication. With power, the more we share, the less we have. With influence, the more we share, the more we have.

So deep is the difference that the Torah allocates them to two distinct leadership roles: king and prophet. Kings had power. They could levy taxes, conscript people to serve in the army, and decide when and against whom to wage war. They could impose non-judicial punishments to preserve social order. Hobbes famously called kingship a "Leviathan" and defined it in terms of power. The very nature of the social contract, he argued, was the transfer of power from individuals to a central authority. Without this, there could be no government, no defence of a country and no safeguard against lawlessness and anarchy.

Prophets, by contrast, had no power at all. They commanded no armies. They levied no taxes. They spoke God's word, but had no means of enforcing it. All they had was influence – but what influence! To this day, Elijah's fight against corruption, Amos' call to social justice, Isaiah's vision of the end of days, are still capable of moving us by the sheer force of their inspiration. Who, today, is swayed by the lives of Ahab or Jehoshaphat or Jehu? When a king dies, his power ends. When a prophet dies, his influence begins. Returning to Moses: he occupied two leadership roles, not one. On the one hand, though monarchy was not yet in existence, he had the power and was the functional equivalent of a king. He led the Israelites out of Egypt, commanded them in battle, appointed leaders, judges and elders, and directed the conduct of the people. He had power.

But Moses was also a prophet, the greatest and most authoritative of all. He was a man of vision. He heard and spoke the word of God. His influence is incalculable. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, in a manuscript discovered after his death:

. . . an astonishing and truly unique spectacle is to see an expatriated people, who have had neither place nor land for nearly two thousand years . . . a scattered people, dispersed over the world, enslaved, persecuted, scorned by all nations, nonetheless preserving its characteristics, its laws, its customs, its patriotic love of the early social union, when all ties with it seem broken. The Jews provide us with an astonishing spectacle: the laws of Numa, Lycurgus, Solon are dead; the very much older laws of Moses are still alive. Athens, Sparta, Rome have perished and no longer have children left on earth; Zion, destroyed, has not lost its children.

The mystery of Moses' double investiture of Joshua is now solved. First, he was told to give Joshua his authority as a prophet. The very phrase used by the Torah – *vesamakhta et yadekha*, 'lay your hand' on him – is still used today to describe rabbinic ordination: *semikhah*, meaning, the 'laying on of hands' by master to disciple. Second, he was commanded to give Joshua the power of kingship, which the Torah calls 'splendour' (perhaps majesty would be a better translation). The nature of this role as head of state and commander of the army is made quite clear in the text. God says to Moses: "Give him some of your splendour so that the whole Israelite community will obey him . . . At his command, he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in." This is the language not of influence but of power.

The meaning of the midrash, too, is now clear and elegantly precise. The transfer of influence ("Lay your hand on him") is "like lighting one light from another." When we take a candle to light another candle, the light of the first is not diminished. Likewise, when we share our influence with others, we do not have less than before. Instead, the sum total of light is increased. Power, however, is different. It is like "pouring from one vessel to another." The more we pour into the second, the less is left in the first. Power is a zero-sum game. The more we give away, the less we have.

This, then, is the solution to the mystery of why, when Joshua feared that Eldad and Medad (who "prophesied within the camp") were threatening Moses' authority, Moses replied, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets." Joshua had confused influence with power. Eldad and Medad neither sought nor gained power. Instead, for a while, they were given a share of the prophetic "spirit" that was on Moses. They participated in his influence. That is never a threat to prophetic authority. To the contrary, the more widely it is shared, the more there is.

Power, however, is precisely what Korach and his followers sought – and in the case of power, rivalry is a threat to authority. "There is one leader for a generation," said the sages, "not two." Or, as they put it elsewhere, "Can two kings share a single crown?" There are many forms of government -- monarchy, oligarchy, and democracy – but what they have in common is the concentration of power within a single body, whether person, group or institution (such as a parliament).

Without this monopoly of the legitimate use of coercive force, there is no such thing as government. That is why in Jewish law "a king is not allowed to renounce the honour due to him."

Moses' request that Korach and his followers be swallowed up by the ground was neither anger nor fear. It was not motivated by any personal consideration. It was a simple realisation that whereas prophecy can be shared, kingship cannot. If there are two or more competing sources of power within a single domain, there is no leadership. Had Moses not taken decisive action against Korach, he would have fatally compromised the office with which he had been charged.

Rarely do we see more clearly the stark difference between influence and power than in these two episodes: Eldad and Medad on the one hand, Korach and his fellow rebels on the other. The latter represented a conflict that had to be resolved. Either Moses or Korach would emerge the victor; they could not both win. The former did not represent a conflict at all. Knowledge, inspiration, vision – these are things that can be shared without loss. Those who share them with others add to spiritual wealth of a community without losing any of their own.

To paraphrase Shakespeare, "The influence we have lives after us; the power is oft interred with our bones." Much of Judaism is an extended essay on the supremacy of prophets over kings, right over might, teaching rather than coercion, influence in place of power. For only a small fraction of our history have Jews had power, but at all times they have had an influence over the civilization of the West. People still contend for power. If only we would realize how narrow its limits are. It is one thing to force people to behave in a certain way; quite another to teach them to see the world differently so that, of their own accord, they act in a new way. The use of power diminishes others; the exercise of influence enlarges them. That is one of Judaism's most humanizing truths. Not all of us have power, but we are all capable of being an influence for good.