The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
6701 Old Pimlico Road
Baltimore. MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org

June 20, 2026 **Korach** **5 Tammuz, 5786**

Kvetch!

Jews love kvetching. And we love kvetching about the kvetchers. "Oy vey!" "I'm telling you ... I'm totally overwhelmed from all his meshugasen!" "There she goes again! Oy, how much more can I handle?"

Well, if you think you have heard it all, check out the Torah portions of Behaalotecha, Shelach, Korach and Chukat. First, the Israelites bemoan their lengthy travels in the desert. Then there's a sob story about the manna, followed by the spies coming back from Israel with a false report, which causes a national meltdown. Then Korach forms a rebellion against the leadership of Moshe and Aaron, and they complain about water, and they defy Moshe and try to enter Israel and are massacred. . . . It goes on and on. The attitude of "woe is me" reigns supreme.

Question: A group of slaves is redeemed from Egypt after generations of slavery. Instead of feeling gratitude, they verbally abuse their redeemer and bicker relentlessly. Why?

An answer: Here we come to the upside of kvetching. Kvetching is one step up from slavery. A slave cannot kvetch because of fear of the whip. More importantly, the slave mentality breeds apathy and a clogging of the emotional valves. It's too painful, so it's easier to disengage.

The first step out of slavery is to release suppressed feelings, performing emotional bypass surgery to unclog the indifference that has crept into the heart. The first step to freedom is to re-humanize ourselves.

Once the heart begins to feel, it will inevitably feel positivity and optimism. However, at first, the predominant feelings (in most people) will be those of pain, loss and confusion as one struggles to adjust to the new reality. This is considered progress.

It took 40 years of unclogging emotions for the Israelites to be ready to finally enter Israel with optimism, passion and a commitment to freedom.

Historically, Jews have mastered the art of kvetching, and have even turned it into an art form: some of the best and most innovative comedians are Jewish. Comedy is often a sophisticated version of kvetching (and sometimes a better earner). Why did we kvetch so much?

Because life for Jews has been so difficult and overwhelming, and often we couldn't do anything concrete about our troubles. Yet we made sure to keep our hearts open, to not fall into the abyss of depression or allow our hearts to turn to stone. We kvetched to keep our hearts open and our emotions flowing. Kvetching has been our national safety net against emotional death.

Kvetching is the first step out of slavery and a way of ensuring that we don't enter a soul-destroying slave mentality.

After reading this, you might think that I consider it a mitzvah to kvetch! Not exactly. You see, kvetching is great when there is no option to take action, or immediately after being released from captivity.

But the Jew in the 21st century is not in these conditions. We are physically freer than we've been in a long time, and have been privileged with more opportunities for activism than our ancestors could even dream about. Today, kvetching is an escape from the myriads of opportunities for activism. It is time to bury it and its twin, pessimism, forever. They have served their purpose, and are outdated, dangerous and holding us back from moving forward.

Anti-Semitism? Do something about it. Moral decay? Talk about it. Family disintegration? Take the lead. Country in crisis? Add light and activism to the conversation. Radicalism? Be the voice of reason.

Kvetching is so old-fashioned. It's time to forward march!

(by Rabbi Levi Avtzon from www.chabad.org)

A Sovereign Right

Korach succeeded in planting a doubt in the Jewish people's minds concerning the Divine nature of Moshe's appointment and his prophecy. Moshe, therefore, took unprecedented steps to deter any possible skeptics. He called for the earth to open up and swallow the rebels. This would convince the people of his status. However, if this miracle did not occur, then Moshe's authenticity, as well as the validity of the entire Torah would be suspect.

The Chechnover Tzaddik asks the following question: How could Moshe take so great a risk? Perhaps Korach's assembly would repent and therefore not be subject to this death by Divine decree. This would give the appearance of Moshe being proven wrong.

(continued on the other side)

The Midrash notes that even nursing babes were subjected to this punishment. Although under normal circumstances, a child does not receive the death penalty, as a by-product of dispute, normative legal procedures are suspended. How can we understand this concept?

Within the Jewish legal realm we find two judicial systems. The first is the system implemented by the Sanhedrin and the lower courts. The second is the sovereign ruler's right to judge. The natures of these two systems are very different. The Sanhedrin and lower courts focus on the rights of the individual. Therefore elements such as two witnesses and prior warning are necessary for a conviction. It is the king's responsibility to insure the well-being of society, and therefore, he has the right to do whatever he sees fit in order to fulfill that responsibility.

Korach's rebellion was an act of secession from the sovereign state of the Jewish people. By declaring that he and his assembly were no longer subject to Moshe's authority, Korach lost the right to be tried within the court system. Only those who consider themselves to be members of the state are subject to the court's jurisdiction. Moshe, therefore, dealt with them in his capacity as king. He saw their act as an act of war which threatened to undermine the very fabric of Jewish society. Therefore, Moshe waged war against them. The death of the assembly of Korach was not decreed by Heavenly court. This was an executive order from Moshe, invoking his right as king. Repentance would not have saved Korach's assembly, for Moshe's action was necessary in order to eradicate any doubt from the minds of Bnei Yisroel as to the capacity of his prophecy.

Children, therefore, were subject to this decree as well. The king has the right to do whatever he deems necessary for the preservation of his state. Moshe had that right, even more so in this situation, where Korach's act was one of war, in which circumstance the individual loses all his rights.

(by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Dedication of plaques on the Shul board which is prominently located in the hall at the entrance to the Shul is an appropriate means of Tzedakah and supports the Shul as well. Below is the list of items available. Please contact Howard Kaplon at hkaplon@towson.edu for more information.

1. Top (large) Plaques $5,400
2. Medium Plaques $3,600
3. Small Plaques $1,000
4. Simcha Leaf $250

Yahrzeit Plaques on the Shul's Memorial board are available. Each yahrzeit plaque is $360.

Yahrzeits This Week:

Lawrence Ziffer	9 Tamuz - Tuesday night / Wednesday for father	Pinchas ben Yosef Elimelech

SHUL DIRECTORY

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 6/19 — 4 Tammuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 6/20 — 5 Tammuz
Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:21 a.m.
Minchah — 8:05 p.m.
Shiur — after Minchah
Shkiah — 8:37 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 9:26 p.m.

Sunday, 6/21 — 6 Tammuz
Shacharit —8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Monday, 6/22 — 7 Tammuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Tuesday, 6/23 - 8 Tammuz
Shacharit— 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Wednesday, 6/24 — 9 Tammuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Thursday, 6/25 — 10 Tammuz
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:20 p.m.

Friday, 6/26 — 11 Tammuz
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles — 8:19 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.