

Shabbat Korah

Parshat Korah (Numbers 16-19). Shabbat in New York starts at 8.08 pm.

Playing Politics

When Korah and his group protested against Moses, they threw back at him the words he had used when confronted by Eldad and Medad who were prophesying outside the Tabernacle (Numbers Chapter 11). He said, "If only God would give everyone the gift of prophecy and His spirit to everyone." Korah said, " All the community is holy, and God is with them." And it is true, that the Torah has called the people 'A kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'" But what Moses was talking about was the aspiration, the hope, not the reality. Equality and sameness are not identical. Obviously, some people have greater gifts than others and are more suitable leaders.

When Korah and his gang protested and demanded the priesthood, Moses said to them " **Is it such a small thing** that you have been elevated to become Levites and important positions in the community, that you should want more?".

To which, Datan and Aviram, allies of Korah and the notorious troublemakers who refused to negotiate, threw back Moses's words at him. " **Is it such a small thing** that you have taken us out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert that you also want to rule?" Which of course is a giveaway. Egypt was hardly a Garden of Eden. They were only interested in politics, not truth. Like anti-Semitism, it is both dishonest and evil and misuses words and slogans. It is about whipping up hatred, not making peace.

But you see how easy it is to twist and misuse words. This is why the Mishna in Avot says "Wise men, be careful how you speak because other malignant people might use your words to lie."

Shabbat Shalom