

Dear Chavraya,

In a world of so much sorrow and strife it is wonderful to have something of a public nature to celebrate. In a world so lacking in wise leadership it is wonderful to celebrate leaders who have acted wisely. Now is a *shehechyanu* moment in which to thank God for keeping us alive, for sustaining us, and bringing us to this time. To all of those who have worked so hard to insure the blessing and the right of equal marriage, I extend a grateful "yishar kocho'chem," "May your strength be true."

On this very special Shabbat I would love to insure a minyan. It is Rosh Chodesh, the new moon, a time to celebrate wholeness, and several of our members have prepared to read Torah, and it is indeed a time to say *Shehechyanu* together as a community. Would you consider coming to shul and helping to make a minyan this week?

In this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Korach*, Korach foments a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Korach is a leader who wants more power than he has. The events of this *parasha* suggest for me a question as to what constitutes what I would call a worthy rebellion. Judaism begins with a challenge to the status quo. Abraham is truly an iconoclast, one who smashes idols. The prophets rail against injustice and hypocrisy. Rebellion for the sake of a higher truth and purpose, that seeks justice and well-being for all, that knows means and ends to be of the same cloth, this is a rebellion for the "sake of Heaven," worthy and noble.

Parashat Korach begins with the words, *vayikach Korach / and Korach took*. In one word, the rabbis see revealed the purpose of Korach's rebellion. It is to enhance his own power, to take for himself. Prepared to battle to attain power for its own sake, Korach's way is the way of contention. The Aramaic interpretive translation of the Torah called *Targum Onkelos* in fact translates *vayikach Korach* as *v'itp'leyg Korach*, and Korach contended. The Slonimer Rebbe remarks on this, "One who contends against peace contends against the Holy name of God, for God is called by the name, Shalom." The Slonimer goes on to say that Shabbat and Torah are also called Shalom. To contend against peace is to contend against the pillars of Judaism. To work for peace and to wage a peaceful rebellion against all that denies peace in our world affirms the essence of Judaism.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor