

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

BEHA'ALOTECHA

JUNE 11, 2011 9 SIVAN 5771

DEDICATIONS: A refuah shelemah for Eliyahu Ben Regina

Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach Notes

Mincha at 7:00 - Followed by Kabalat Shabbat and Arbit
Candle Lighting: 8:07PM

Shabbat Day Shaharith: 9:00 AM

Kidush sponsored by Dr and Mrs Baruch Kahn in memory of Baruch's day
Shmuel Eliyahu HaKohen

Shabbat morning program for young children 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. There'll be a smorgasbord of Tefila, Parsha, Stories and Snacks! Coordinated by Orah Burstyn with the assistance of Riki Waldman
Fun at the Rec: We have reserved the Rec for Shabbat afternoon fun in the sun.
Meet at the Colish's 167 National Blvd at 2:30ish. Everyone is welcome.

Pirkei Avot with Rabbi Aharon Siegel at 6:30

Learn How To Read From The Torah - Come join Ari Waldman, Yosef Kahn, Chezkiyahu Burstyn and Rabbi Yosef Colish as we learn to read from the Torah, sefardi style.

Mincha at 7:20 followed by Seudah Shelishi –And a class (Simultaneous children's program)

“ Levi, Aaron, the Menorah and the Macabees ?” 8:00

Arbit at 9:50 followed by Havdalah – Shabbat ends at 9:07

Sunday Shaharit at 8:00 AM –

Followed breakfast and our Tefilah Class at 8:45 with breakfast
And Shaharit Daily at 7:00 AM (preceded by a class at 6:30)

THIS SUNDAY! “Cool Off at the Ice Arena” Sunday at 1:45 p.m.

Bundle up and brrrr-ing your friends for ice skating, Sunday June 12th from 2-4 PM \$10 includes admission, skate rental and snacks. Ages 9 and up. We'll meet at the rink at 1:45. Please RSVP with Rabbi Yosef Colish.

Hebrew Birthday Bash! - We would like to start a Hebrew Birthday Kiddush once a month to celebrate everyone's Hebrew birthdays together as one extended family. We are seeking a volunteer to coordinate the gathering of names and joint sponsorships of all interested parties. If you can volunteer and commit to doing this, please speak with Hindy or Rabbi Colish.

Weekday Morning Class Daily, Mondays - Fridays 6:30 -7:00 a.m.

Come join Herman Ovadia, Jeff Metviner, Shlomo Zalman, Shlomo Colish, Hal Waldman, Uri Levy, Dovid Steinberger and Rabbi Yosef Colish for cookies, coffee and a taste of the Divine as we discover **“Mundane and Mystical Insights into the Mystical and Mundane.”**

“Rockin' Recording Studio Tour” Come tour Michael Wagner's recording studio, learn the ropes, record live music and have a blast! Only 5 spots left! Boys ages 8-18. Sunday June 26th from 4-6 PM. Please RSVP with Rabbi Yosef Colish to reserve you spot today. Sponsored by Michael Wagner.

If you have not sent back your **membership dues** please do so promptly. If you did not receive the letter please speak with Ely, Hal or Ida.

We want to thank Jack Azizo for graciously donating his laptop to assist the shul with web based learning.

Lights Camera Action! Shabbat Afternoon at 6:30 p.m.

We invite children of all ages (1st grade thru 12th grade) to join the newly formed **Bnei Asher Torah In Motion Theatre Troupe**.

Join us as we rehearse parasha plays, sedra skits and other torah tales to perform in our shul, just one block "off Broadway!"

We are seeking clothing donations to use as costume and props. Great ideas are canes, hats, robes, towels, old sheets, belts, etc.

Auditions and Casting for our first play will take place this Shabbat at 6:30 PM, don't miss out!

Directed by Rabbi Yosef Colish

please reply to

ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com

Manhattan Mincha Minyan – 985 Third Avenue – between 58th and 59th – 4PM Mon – Thurs
At our Artistic Frame – Call Rabbi Greenwald for more information
212-289-2100

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

By Rabbi Aron Tendler

1st Aliya: Aharon is instructed to light the Menorah, and the Menorah's construction is reviewed. Moshe is commanded to inaugurate the Leviyim into the service of the Mishkan.

2nd Aliya: The Leviyim are inaugurated into Temple service. Their term of service was from age 25 to age 50.

3rd Aliya: The Bnai Yisroel keep their second Pesach since leaving Egypt. The laws of Pesach Shaynie - the makeup

Pesach (one month after Pesach) are taught for those who were unable to bring the Pascal Lamb at the appropriate time.

4th Aliya: The movement of the Pillar of Clouds as the indicators of when to set or break the camp is identified. In addition to the Pillar of Clouds, Moshe is commanded to make two silver trumpets that would be used to herald the traveling of the encampment, or the movement of troops during war.

5th Aliya: The description of the nation's travels from the desert of Sinai is recorded. Moshe approaches Yisro, who refuses his offer to join them in Eretz Yisroel.

6th Aliya: The two verses of "When the Ark went forth" are stated, and then things begin to unravel. The main body of this Aliya describes the nation's complaints against the physical conditions of their dwelling in the desert. The Manna is described in contrast to the nation's desire for "real food". Moshe expresses his frustrations as leader, and Hashem promises to send quail to satisfy the people's desire for meat. Moshe is instructed to appoint a Sanhedrin to help him govern and teach the nation. The 70 Elders are divinely confirmed, and Eldad and Maydad prophesies the transition of leadership from Moshe to Yehoshua.

7th Aliya: The quail descend upon the camp in such quantity that each person collected 1000 lb. of meat. Aharon and Miriam speak Lashon Harah about Moshe, resulting in Hashem confirming Moshe as His preeminent servant and prophet. Miriam is afflicted with Tzaraat.

This week's Haftorah records the prophesies of Zechariya to Yehoshua the Kohain Gadol.

In 3390 - 371 b.c.e, Zerubavel along with Yehoshua led 40,00 Jews back to Israel. They began building the 2nd Bais Hamikdash only to be stopped when Cyrus withdrew his permission. In this prophesy, Zechariya showed Yehoshua that he could be worthy of effecting forgiveness for the Bnai Yisroel, in spite of his own short-comings. He was shown a vision of the Menorah (the obvious connection to our Parsha) representing the eventual purity of the Jews, and their acceptance by the other nations.

The less obvious connection to our Parsha may be the concept of Teshuva and its relationship to the fulfillment of our mission. Just as the generation of the Exodus struggled with who they were in contrast with who they should have been, so too, in the building of the second Bais Hamikdash and the second Jewish commonwealth, Zerubavel and Yehoshua struggled with the realities of who they were in contrast to their undertaking of resurrecting the soul of their People.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Against the enemy who oppress you, you shall sound short blasts of the trumpets." (Bemidbar 10:9)

Our parashah speaks about the misvah of the trumpets. The trumpets were blown for a number of occasions. They were blown to gather the people, to announce that the nation will travel onward in the desert, and

as an alarm for war. The Rambam (Laws of Ta'anit 1:1) says that the Torah is not limiting the occasions to the ones mentioned, but it is a general rule that a call must be sent out on any trouble that occurs. We must cry out to Hashem when a calamity happens because all bad events are a result of our deeds and we need to repent. Therefore we always cry out to Hashem. We must never attribute events to nature.

A true story was told about a year ago about Yossi Stein (name changed). Yossi was 18 years old, lives in Israel and learns in Yeshivah. One day Yossi started feeling strange. At first the symptoms were intermittent and he tried to ignore them and go on with his daily routine. But as they increased in frequency and severity, he realized he'd have to tell his parents and see a doctor. The doctor examined him and became very concerned, and ordered many tests to be done immediately. Yossi's mother became frantic but the doctor held back and wouldn't say what it was until the results were in. The tests and doctors' opinions came back much worse than anything they had imagined. Yossi would need a liver transplant. They were advised to apply for a liver in a country in Europe. Their only option was Brussels, the world center for liver transplants, but they usually gave priority to European citizens. However, Yossi's situation was so desperate that they decided to book the flight anyway. "It's not up to the doctors, in any event," Mrs. Stein kept repeating to herself. "It's up to Hashem. If He wills it, somehow we will get what Yossi needs. We can only try." The cry was sounded as the prayers began.

They arrived in Brussels and entered the hospital, and he was placed on a waiting list.

They were warned that four or five patients were in line ahead of him. They settled down to wait. In the meantime, up above, a decree had been issued. A volcano in Iceland erupted, emitting tons of ash and clouds of smoke and gas into the air. Thousands of people were now stranded in airports all over Northern Europe because of these clouds. Jets were grounded, business transactions were interrupted and much of European life ground to a halt. And all the while in Belgium, a young man prayed to Hashem to save his life, joined by the entire family and many friends.

In the midst of all this, an organ became available in Brussels. The hospital immediately notified the first person on the list, but he was stranded in another European country and could not get there in time. The hospital went down the list and got the same story until they got to Yossi! This type of transplant could not wait much longer, so Yossi got the precious organ. After the surgery, the doctors told the Steins that Yossi's liver had deteriorated so badly that had the events not turned out the way they did, he might not have lived out the week.

When Hashem wills it, he has many ways to answer our prayers. Perhaps that volcanic cloud was meant to help one ill young man recover. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Why should we be excluded from sacrificing?" (Bemidbar 9:7)

When a group of Jews who were ritually impure could not participate in the Korban Pesah, they reacted in an unusual way. They complained to Moshe and said, "Why should we be exempt from this misvah just because we are tny (unclean)? Isn't there

something for us to do?" In the merit of this response, they were given a new misvah of Pesah Sheni, where a person can "make up" the misvah of Korban Pesah.

This attitude is very precious in the eyes of Hashem, and it is something we should think about. Many times we start to do a misvah, but it doesn't work out. How do we feel about being off the hook? Are we relieved, as if another burden is off of us, or do we feel the lack of opportunity to serve Hashem?

There was once a great Rabbi who came to a large yeshivah with a proposal. Whoever could answer his difficult question would have a chance to marry his daughter. The question was extremely difficult, and although many potential answers were suggested, no one came up with the right response, so the Rabbi headed back to his town. On the way back home, the Rabbi saw someone trying to catch up to him, and when he stopped, he realized it was one of the students from the yeshivah. "Did you think of another answer?" the Rabbi asked. "No, but I couldn't bear not to know the right answer," the student replied. The Rabbi then exclaimed, "You are the one for my daughter if you feel that way about Torah!"

We should analyze our approach to Torah and misvot and realize they are opportunities rather than burdens. That way we will fulfill them in a better way, and it will further enrich and uplift our lives. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

The Torah and Big Ben

In the beginning of Parashat Behaalotecha, the Torah briefly discusses the Misva of the Menora, which lit each day in the Mishkan. The Torah (8:3) makes a point of informing us that

“Va’ya’as Ken Aharon” – Aharon did as he was commanded, and fulfilled this Misva. Rashi comments that this verse was added to give praise to Aharon “She’lo Shina” – for not “deviating.” He fulfilled the Misva precisely as he was commanded, without any changes or modifications.

These brief comments of Rashi have generated countless pages of literature, as many scholars struggled to explain his intent. Why would one have expected Aharon to “deviate”? Why was he deserving of such praise for complying specifically with this command?

One explanation that has been offered (among many) focuses on the precise command that God issued in this Parasha: “Beha’alotecha Et Ha’nerot,” which literally means, “When you elevate the candles.” The Kohen who kindled the lamps of the Menora was to step up to the Menora for the lighting. There was a small step in front of the Menora, and the Kohen was required to stand on the elevation while performing this Misva. Aharon was a tall man, and could have thought to himself, “I don’t need to stand on the step. I can easily reach the Menora without it.” Many people in that situation would have disregarded this requirement, based on their logical intuition. Aharon, however, “did not deviate.” He did precisely as he was commanded, without modifying the rules based on his own reasoning.

This was the great praise of Aharon – and the great lesson he teaches us. We must observe all the Misvot, and all their details, with strict compliance, and never attempt to “deviate” from the rules based on our intuition.

There is a Halacha requiring that

when the Torah is lifted in the synagogue and shown to the congregation, it must be lifted high in the air. Rav Yitzchak Hutner (1906-1980) explained this requirement by drawing an analogy to Big Ben, a tall clock in England that has become a major tourist attraction in that country. The clock stands very high in the air, Rav Hutner noted, not only so that it can be seen from a distance, but also so that it is kept out of people’s reach. If people would have access to the clock, they would change the time if it did not correspond to the time on their watches. Anytime a person would notice that the time on Big Ben did not match the time on his watch, he would reach up and alter the time on Big Ben. The people who built the large clock ensured that it would stand well beyond human reach, so that people would set their watches to Big Ben, and not the opposite. Its height indicates that our clocks should be set to correspond to Big Ben, and we cannot try to change the time on Big Ben to correspond to our watches.

This is why the Torah must be held up high in the synagogue – to remind us that it is “out of reach.” We have to change ourselves to accommodate the Torah, rather than try to change the Torah to accommodate our intuition. Its laws are definitive, and we initially think differently, then we must modify our thinking to correspond to the Torah’s laws.

Aharon sets an example of complete submission to the Torah’s authority, without questioning it based on human reasoning, and this is the example we must follow in our attitude toward Torah and Misvot.

Rabbi Wein

The flames that emanated from the lamps that were to be lit as part of the menorah lighting ritual in the Mishkan and later in the Temple in Jerusalem were to be facing towards the center stem of the great menorah itself. There is a difference of opinion amongst the rabbis as to whether the lamps themselves could be removed from the menorah or whether they were permanently affixed.

Be that as it may, all opinions seemingly agree that the lamps had to be lit in such a way that their wicks and the resultant flames faced inward towards the main stem of the menorah. The symbolism implicit in this detail of the ritual of lighting the lamps of the menorah is that all efforts of all different types of Jews are to be directed ultimately to one common cause and goal – the lighting of the menorah, which symbolizes the light of Torah and Godly wisdom.

Many different people and groups may view this goal from different angles and traditions depending upon the place of their lamp in the menorah’s superstructure, but all are required to look inward and to work together for this basic Jewish value of spreading the light of Torah in the world.

This was also the idea implicit in the idea that the kruvim – the forms of the two angels on the cover of the Holy Ark - faced each other. They covered the Ark of the Law and were united face to face in protecting and disseminating Torah to Israel. The Talmud teaches us that when they did not face each other, when they operated so to speak at cross purposes, it was a disastrous sign for the Jewish people.

There may be varying and differing ways to promote Torah and its value system but all these ways must converge face to face in a sense of unity of purpose. Looking away one from another only diminishes our chance of success in achieving this holy goal.

The honor and duty of lighting the menorah was reserved for the High Priest of Israel, the descendant of Aaron. Aaron himself was distinguished by the sense of harmony and unity he brought to Jewish life and society. He was able to take all of the different talents and traditions of twelve vastly different tribes of Israel and focus them together towards a common goal of national unity and Torah holiness. Therefore his direct descendants were charged with accomplishing this very same goal and this was symbolized for them in the daily lighting ritual of the menorah.

The concept of Jewish leadership was to foster a unity of purpose and a common national vision. It was never meant to divide and fracture Jewish society into squabbling groups. There are those in the Jewish world whose face is only turned towards the past, away from the realities and the issues that so desperately confront us.

There are those in the Jewish world who only face the present and have no connection any longer with the Jewish past thus depriving themselves of necessary perspective and historical experience. Only when all groups in the Jewish world face each other and combine their strengths in a positive fashion, will the light the lamps of the menorah again be lit in brightness and warmth.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Parsha Parables

People of the Look
The story of Rus, read each year on Shavuot is the classic embodiment of the story of the convert. Rus and her sister Orpah are descendants of Moavite royalty, and Ruth herself is a princess. They marry brothers, the sons of a wealthy Jewish expatriate who left Canaan to live in Moav because of a famine. But both husbands die and leave Rus and Orpah penniless. Indeed, Orpah returns home to her Moavite roots, but Rus decides that instead of returning home to the luxury and comfort of her father's palace, she would follow her mother-in-law, a poor, penniless, broken widow. The Navi tells us: And they raised their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth cleaved to her. And she (Naomi) said, "Lo, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her god; (you too, should) return after your sister-in-law." And Ruth said, "Do not entreat me to leave you, to return from following you, for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your G-d my G-d" (Rus 1:14-16).

The words of Rus are the basis for many of the intricate laws concerning the incumbency of Jews to attempt to dissuade prospective converts from joining the flock. Jews are not supposed to proselytize, and thus each of Rus's comments, "for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your G-d my G-d" refers to individual dissuasions presented to Rus to discourage conversion. Finally the Navi tells us: "And she (Naomi) saw that she (Rus) was determined to go with her; so she

stopped speaking to her" (ibid v.18).

What intrigues me is the order of Rus's commitment, "for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your G-d my G-d."

Theologically speaking, it should be G-d and sanctity that draws one to convert, not following particular individuals. Rus tells Naomi that she wants to go where Naomi will go and sleep where Naomi will sleep and that her people are her people and finally she says the words, that I would have thought define the nature and the draw of any convert, "Your G-d is my G-d." Why does Rus begin with the seemingly mundane and mortal before she reaches the pinnacle of theology, "Your G-d is my G-d"?

The Story: Yesterday, my dear friend, Shloime Dachs, related this story to me: Rav Avraham Yaakov HaKohen Pam, of blessed memory, was a beloved Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Vodaath. One of his last missions the last decade before he passed away in August 2001, was to establish Shuvu, a network of Yeshivot Israel, to help educate Russian immigrants about Torah and return them to their glorious roots.

Together with trusted students, he worked relentlessly on behalf of Shuvu, helping it grow into a major force in Jewish education in the State of Israel. Almost a decade after he had established Shuvu, Rav Pam fell very ill. That did not deter him for exerting every effort on behalf of Shuvu. In fact, in July 2010, the summer before Rav Pam passed away, his body racked with cancer, and his health diminished by both the plague and the chemotherapy and radiation that were trying to

stop it, he pledged to personally attend the summer parlor meeting on behalf of Shuvu.

The word was out in full force, and posters were plastered all over the streets of the Flatbush and Boro Park sections of Brooklyn with a picture of the frail and weary Rav Pam, his ubiquitous smile enjoining others to join the great work of Shuvu.

Clearly the organizers were sending a powerful message, "Rav Pam, despite his critical health, was going to attend the meeting, shouldn't you?"

Seeing Rav Pam's picture all over the streets surely tugged at the heartstrings and even purse strings of many admirers, but there was one person who felt that something was wrong. Mrs. Pam.

The Rebbetzin understood that sometimes her husband had to be exploited for the sake of the important work of Shuvu, but she felt it was totally improper to staple signs illegally to lampposts and even worse, neighbors' trees. She decided that she would at least take care of her own block and apologize to her neighbor, a black family, whose beautiful tree was "defaced" with a poster of her ailing husband.

She knocked on the door and pointed to the tree that had the poster and told them that she was sorry that someone had put a sign on the tree without permission. As she was about to remove the poster, the man called her back. "Mrs. Pam, would your mind coming in for a moment?"

As she entered, the man said, "I really don't mind your husband's picture on the tree. In fact, please step into the dining room."

Rebbitzin Pam could not believe her eyes. On the wall was a 16x20 inch portrait of none other than her own husband, Rav Pam.

"We all know your husband is a saint. There is not a day that he does not greet us so warmly. His kindness and gentleness is such a reminder to our family that we put his picture in our own living quarters. Surely his picture on my tree is an honor, not an insult!"

The Message

Perhaps the greatest draw to Judaism for the outsider and potential convert is not the theology of the Diety Himself, but rather the actions, the customs, the lifestyle, and most importantly, the people who enact His missives.

Perhaps that is what Rus meant. In the eyes of the newcomer to Judaism, only when the lifestyle is truly attractive, "for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge" and only when, "your people shall be my people" does the potential convert truly feel that, "your G-d" should become, "my G-d."

Sir Jonathan Sacks Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

Two Types of Leadership

In this week's parsha, Moses has a breakdown. It is the lowest emotional ebb of his entire career as a leader. Listen to his words to G-d:

"Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these

people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? . . . I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin." (Numbers 11: 11-15)

Yet the cause seems utterly disproportionate to its effect. The people have done what they so often did before. They complain. They say:

"If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (Numbers 11: 5)

Many times Moses had faced this kind of complaint from the people before. There are several such instances in the book of Exodus, including one almost exactly similar:

"If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." (Exodus 16: 3)

On these earlier occasions Moses did not give expression to the kind of despair he speaks of here. Usually, when leaders faced repeated challenges, they grow stronger each time. They learn how to respond, how to cope. They develop resilience, a thick skin. They formulate survival strategies. Why then does Moses seem to do the opposite, not only here but often throughout the book of Numbers?

In the chapters that follow, Moses seems to lack the unshakable

determination he had in Exodus. At times, as in the episode of the spies, he seems surprisingly passive, leaving it to others to fight the battle. At others, he seems to lose control and becomes angry, something a leader should not do. Something has changed, but what? Why the breakdown, the burnout, the despair?

A fascinating insight is provided by the innovative work of Prof. Ronald Heifetz, co-founder and director of the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.[i]

Heifetz distinguishes between technical challenges and adaptive challenges. A technical challenge is one where you have a problem and someone else has the solution. You are ill, you go to the doctor, he diagnoses your condition and prescribes a pill. All you have to do is follow the instructions.

Adaptive challenges are different. They arise when we are part of the problem. You are ill, you go to the doctor, and he tells you: I can give you a pill, but the truth is that you are going to have to change your lifestyle. You are overweight, out of condition, you sleep too little and are exposed to too much stress. Pills won't help you until you change the way you live.

Adaptive leadership is called for when the world is changing, circumstances are no longer what they were, and what once worked works no more. There is no quick fix, no pill, no simple following of instructions. We have to change. The leader cannot do it for us.

The fundamental difference between the books of Exodus and Numbers, is that in Exodus, Moses is called on to exercise technical leadership. The

Israelites are enslaved? G-d sends signs and wonders, ten plagues, and the Israelites go free. They need to escape from Pharaoh's chariots? Moses lifts his staff and G-d divides the sea. They are hungry? G-d sends manna from heaven. Thirsty? G-d sends water from a rock. When they have a problem, the leader, Moses, together with G-d, provides the solution. The people do not have to exert themselves at all.

In the book of Numbers, however, the equation has changed. The Israelites have completed the first part of their journey. They have left Egypt, reached Sinai, and made a covenant with G-d. Now they are on their way to the Promised Land. Moses' role is now different. Instead of providing technical leadership, he has to provide adaptive leadership. He has to get the people to change, to exercise responsibility, to learn to do things for themselves while trusting in G-d, instead of relying on G-d to do things for them.

It is precisely because Moses understands this that he is so devastated when he sees that the people haven't changed at all. They are still complaining about the food, almost exactly as they did before the revelation at Mount Sinai, before their covenant with G-d, before they themselves had built the sanctuary, their first creative endeavour together.

He has to teach them to adapt, but he senses – rightly as it transpires – that they are simply unable to change their pattern of response, the result of years of slavery. They are passive, dependent. They have lost the capacity for self-motivated action. As we eventually discover, it will take a new generation, born in freedom, to develop the strengths needed for self-governance, the precondition of freedom.

Adaptive leadership is intensely difficult. People resist change. They erect barriers against it. One is denial. A second is anger. A third is blame. That is why adaptive leadership is emotionally draining in the extreme. Many of the great adaptive leaders – among them Lincoln, Gandhi, John F. and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Anwar Sadat and Yitzhak Rabin – were assassinated. Their greatness was posthumous. Only in retrospect were they seen by their own people as heroes. At the time, they were seen by many as a threat to the status quo, to all that is comfortingly familiar.

Moses, with the insight of the greatest of the prophets, intuitively sees all this. Hence his despair and wish to die. It is far easier to be a technical leader than an adaptive one. It is easy to leave it to G-d, hard to realise that G-d is calling us to responsibility, to become His partners in the work of redemption.

Of course, the Torah does not leave it there. In Judaism, despair never has the last word. G-d comforts Moses, tells him to recruit seventy elders to share the burden of leadership with him, and gives him the strength to carry on. Adaptive leadership is, for Judaism, the highest form of leadership. That is what the prophets did. Without relieving the people of their responsibility, they gave them a vision and a hope. They spoke difficult, challenging truths, and they did so with a passion that still has the power to inspire the better angels of our nature.

But with devastating honesty – never more so than in its account of Moses' temporary breakdown – the Torah tells us that adaptive leadership is not easy, and that those who exercise it will face

anger and criticism. They may come to feel that they have failed. But they have not. Moses remains the greatest leader the Jewish people has ever known, the man who almost single-handedly shaped the Israelites into a nation that never gave up or gave way to despair.

Nowhere is the difficulty of adaptive leadership more simply summarised than in G-d's words to Moses successor, Joshua.

Be strong and courageous, for you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous to keep and obey all the law my servant Moses gave you . . . (Joshua 1: 6-7)

The first sentence speaks about military leadership. Joshua was to lead the people in their conquest of the land. The second verse speaks about spiritual leadership. Joshua was to ensure that he and the people kept faith with the covenant they had made with G-d. The first, says the verse, demands courage, but the second demands exceptional courage.

Change always does. To fight an enemy is hard, to fight with yourself harder still. To help people find the strength to change: that is the highest leadership challenge of all.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And he called the name of that place 'graves of lust' for there they buried the people that had lusted" (11:34)

Although Hashem had smote them with "a very great plague" (11:33), yet compared to the nation in general only a small number perished. We see that those "that lusted" were the sole culprits, which demonstrates that the survivors who constituted the overwhelming majority were not the lusters.

Above (11:20) it was stated "Because you rejected Hashem that is in your midst", but here they are declared to have been punished for their lust of eating. We learn that the sin of becoming enslaved by desire is equivalent to rejecting Hashem. To serve Him "with all your heart" requires freedom from everything else, and to be enslaved by excessive passion for anything is equivalent to rejecting Hashem.

In addition, men that are never satisfied but always lust for more and newer pleasures are never truly appreciative and grateful to Hashem. And because the chief function of life is gratitude, they are undeserving of the gift of life.

The purpose of life is not the pursuit of pleasures but rather the pursuit of Perfection and of finding favor in the sight of Hashem. The seeker of Perfection is justified in living properly and even happily, but Hashem desires that His people should never lose sight of the supreme intention for which He created them: To know Hashem.

Quoted from "Journey Into Greatness" by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT'L

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