

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

YITRO

JANUARY 18-19, 2013

17 SHEBAT 5774

Tu B'Shebat will be celebrated on Thursday, January 16.

DEDICATIONS: In memory of my father and teacher, Yosef Ben Esther – Joseph R. Bibi and his brother Eliyahu Ben Esther 22 Shebat

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I prepared the newsletter on Monday for distribution this week awaiting all the articles. Today, Hashem called my dad, Joseph R. Bibi, Yosef Ben Esther back to Heaven to be gathered to his people. He is returning to New York from Florida and the misvah will be tomorrow morning ... see details below. Two thoughts strike me as we will read the Aseret HaDibrot – the revelation at Sinai and as we go into Tu Bishvat.

Moses, this week, goes to a level that no man had reached before nor has reached since, yet he is called the most humble of men. With all of my dad's accomplishments, my father was the humblest man I knew. He didn't know the word, "I". He was one of the architects and builders of our great community and often thrust to the forefront, but had this way of melting into the background and making it all about others. He refused honor while honor chased him, yet he never allowed it to catch up. There was always something else to do, someone else to help, some place in the community that needed to be taken care of.

On Tu bishvat we often compare man to a tree, and one could easily discuss the roots, the branches and the fruit when it comes to Joe Bibi. But I realized that my father was so much more than that. He was man sent into the garden to watch it and to care for it. He was the one responsible for the trees; for protecting their

roots, in being the elder who connected the entire community to our past. He protected our aging community members through senior living and nursing programs which he was instrumental in developing and overseeing. He cared for the limbs, for the people through the Synagogues and social assistance organizations he built and helped maintain. And he insured the fruits through the schools and Yeshivot that were his daily work. He took on these tasks when they were left to him by my great Uncle Dave z'sl and my dad's cousin Isadore Dayan z'sl. He ceded them with confidence to Marvin Azrak z'sl, but with Marvin's passing he stepped back into do what he could. He was deeply grateful to Elliot and Bunny for all their support in all these endeavors.

The Misvah will take place tomorrow, Thursday, morning January 16th at the Magen David Synagogue in Brooklyn at 9:00AM. Tomorrow is Tu Bishvat which means that we don't offer mournful and tear evoking eulogies. We will be sitting at Victor's home at 1859 East 8th Street in Brooklyn. Shahrut each morning at 7AM (Sunday at 8AM) and Mincha and Arbit at 4:30PM. I believe the Areyat will be on Tuesday afternoon the 21st, Tehilim at 2:30 followed by Mincha at 4:30, speeches and then Arbit – Ahi Ezer Congregation, 1885 Ocean Parkway and Avenue S.

We understand that many people are away for Yeshiva vacation and appreciate all the warm texts and emails recalling my dad. B'H, I presume, we will have the Sheloshim on Thursday February 13th at Ahi Ezer Congregation, 1885 Ocean Parkway. Beserot Tovot.

Editors Notes

Can You Hear Me Now? Yitro!

Why is one of the most famous portions in the Torah, the one in which the Ten Commandments are given and listed named after a man who bears the title of chief idol priest?

"Can you hear me now?" For about ten years we were inundated by some guy in a hardhat doing Verizon commercials asking that question, but is there more to it? And what about the clichés, "went into one ear and out the other", or "speaking to him is like speaking to a stone"?

In last week's portion of BeShalach, we read that the "nations heard". And this week we begin by learning that Yitro heard. I recall discussing with Rabbi Abittan the concept of hearing and listening.

Sometimes we hear words but they have no effect. Sometimes we hear words and we think that we'll act on them, but we don't. And sometimes we hear, we commit and we act on those words.

I recall a story that I heard many years ago from Rabbi Mansour. It took place in Jerusalem in the 20's. The family of Rav Chaim Yehuda Leib Auerbach was moving into a three bedroom apartment. The apartment had been occupied by a number of people including a young man who recently arrived from Europe and was heading off to work at a kibbutz. When the Auerbachs moved in, the young man asked permission to stay for another week. The Auerbachs agreed provided that the man would abide by and respect Shabbat.

On Shabbat the Rebetzin walked by the young man's room only to see him writing a letter. She was upset and asked her son Shlomo Zalman z"sl who would eventually become a gadol hador to speak with the man.

Shlomo Zalman knocked on the door and explained to the man that his mother was upset as the man agreed to observe the Shabbat and obviously was not. The young man was puzzled. He knew on Shabbat one did not work or light a fire, but he wasn't doing anything wrong. Shlomo Zalman explained that writing was a creative act and was not permitted.

The man apologized for not knowing explaining he never learned. But then looked at the Shlomo Zalman and asked. "Do you think I don't know G-d? I do. Come let's take a walk and I'll tell you a story".

"It was during the First World War in Europe. I was a soldier and the battlefields were bloody. We fought from trenches. We on one side and those we were combating on the other. Bullets would fly and every so often there was a brief pause to collect the wounded and the dead. In the trench with me were two religious Jews and during those pauses they sat together reading from small Psalm books they carried with them. Even within the horrors of war they had this aspect of calm that comes from deep faith and I was very jealous. Why didn't my father teach me anything about being Jewish, I whispered to myself. So I turned to Hashem and said to him, if You are really here on this battlefield with us, if you really hear me and care about me, send me a sign and get me out of here. Let a bullet injure my trigger hand so they'll send me back home and I'll survive this war.

A moment later in the midst of the silence a single shot was heard. And that shot struck my right forefinger. You can still see that the finger does not bend. I was sent from the front and was committed to going to a Yeshiva and learning about G-d and everything those other Jews knew that I didn't. G-d had spoken to me in the foxhole and now I would act on it. But once I got home I realized it would take only a short time to get my degree in agriculture so I put off the Yeshiva while I finished my studies at the university.

Six months later, diploma in hand, I set out for the Yeshiva. But the fervor of a miracle in the battlefield had cooled. A few days later I grew bored and left to pursue further studies in agriculture.

Commenting on the story later in life, Rabbi Auerbach observed that sometimes we hear, sometimes the voice is so loud that it penetrates us and we know, but unless we act all is for naught. (Although this young man did make aliyah, and did dedicate himself to the return of the Jewish people to the land and to building the land and I imagine its more than possible that some of his great grandchildren are learning today in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael).

Rabbi Mansour quoted the words from Aleynu LeShabeyach we say three times every day. "Veyadata HaYom, VeHashebota Lebabecha". You will know that day and your heart will return.

We may ask for signs and it's rare that we get such open and clear responses as the one the soldier got, but if we really pay attention, if we really listen, if we really open our eyes, we can see them. Hashem is always speaking to us. Sometimes it's loud and sometimes it's in a whisper, but it's there. And when

we do hear it and when we do know, it's up to us to act.

The entire world heard what Yitro heard. They heard and they feared. They heard and they knew. They heard but failed to act. The opportunity was there for all of them, but the opportunity would pass them by. In the entire world only one man heard and acted. He was Yitro, I guess the portion could have been named for anyone in the world, but in the end it was named for the one man who acted.

We need to remember to get to the place takes many steps. We hear and we know, but the key is to act. The Verizon commercial asks, if you can hear me now. Yes, we can. But the real answer to the question comes from another commercial, it's the one for Nike where we are told, Just do it!

So lets learn from Yitro. Today, get up and DO IT!

Shabbat Shalom
David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: Yisro brings Moshe's wife and two sons to join him in the desert. In 18:10, Yisro proclaims his belief in Hashem (G-d) and identifies His manifest justice as the primary motive for his belief and conversion.

2nd & 3rd Aliyot: Yisro observes Moshe's daily schedule as chief administrator, judge, and teacher. He advises his son-in-law to delegate some responsibilities to a hierarchy of worthy judges and administrators. This would allow Moshe to focus his attention on those issues that demand his specific attention. Moshe listens to Yisro's advice.

4th Aliya: This begins the preparation for Revelation. It is the 1st day of Sivan, and the Bnai Yisroel have been in the desert for 43 days. Moshe is told by Hashem to explain to the nation that they are a "kingdom of priests..."

5th Aliya: Moshe tells the nation of G-d's expectations and they respond, "all that Hashem will command we will do." Moshe is further instructed to tell the people to prepare themselves by immersing themselves and their clothing in a Mikveh, and to remain apart from their spouses for 3 days. Mt. Sinai is to be fenced off so that no person or animal could ascend the mountain until the shofar sounded the conclusion of Revelation. On the 3rd day, Revelation began with lightning, thunder, the sounding of a Shofar, and Mt.

Sinai completely engulfed in clouds, smoke, and fire. Moshe led the nation to assemble at the foot of a trembling Mt. Sinai.

6th Aliya: Hashem summoned Moshe to ascend the mountain and instructed him to re-emphasize the prohibition against anyone ascending the mountain during Revelation. Moshe descends and discharges G-d's wishes. With Moshe standing among the people at the foot of the mountain, Hashem spoke the Ten Commandments to the entire people.

7th Aliya: This last Aliya describes the reaction of the nation to Revelation. In 20:19, the Pasuk factually states that the Bnai Yisroel (Jewish Nation) collectively heard G-d speak. It is among the most fundamentally important statements in the entire Torah. The Parsha concludes with the three commandments regarding the Mizbeach (Altar).

This week's Haftorah is from Yishaya 6 and 7. Continuing the theme of Revelation, the Haftorah recounts the famed vision known as Maaseh Hamerkavah - the vision of Hashem as He sits upon His throne surrounded by various angels singing His praises.

Yishaya prophesied during the reign of Achaz, the King of Yehudah. This vision is repeated in greater detail in Yechezkel, and is usually associated with Yechezkel, rather than Yishaya. However, in this awesome vision, Yishaya is told of the eventual destruction of Yerushalayim. He is sent to relate this prophecy to the new King Achaz, who would prove to be an evil and wicked monarch.

The concluding prophecy is far more optimistic than the beginning one. Achaz is told not to fear the coming war with Aram and Israel. In the merit of his, yet to be born son, Chizkiyahu, their alliance would fail. Chizkiyahu would eventually be crowned as "The Prince of Peace," and return the Jewish people to an unprecedented devotion and commitment to Torah scholarship and observance. Unfortunately, the Jewish People would return to their evil ways and Yerushalayim would be destroyed.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"Moshe went out to greet his father-in-law." (Shemot 18:7)

We find in our perashah a hint to the great obligation one has to honor his father-in-law. Despite the fact that Moshe Rabenu was the leader of the entire nation, he went out to greet his father-in-law, Yitro, when he approached the Israelites in the

desert. The Gaon Rabbi Ovadia Yosef zt"l writes (Halachot Olam vol. 8 Parashat Shoftim), "A person is obligated to honor his father-in-law even if he isn't a Torah scholar, even if he is not old. He must stand for him, and when he goes up to the Torah the son-in-law must stand until the portion is completed. He should kiss his hand just like he would kiss his father's hand. He should never call him by his name but use an honorable title. All the more so if he is a Torah scholar and performs many misvot. He is also obligated to honor his mother-in-law as is worthy of her."

Hacham Ovadia also speaks about the importance of a seudat misvah (a meal that is in honor of a misvah). We see in the perashah that Yitro made such a meal, and Aharon and all the elders attended. One should never be lazy to attend. He quotes the words of the famous Rabbi, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev zt"l, who was well known for always finding a way to speak well of the Jewish people. "Master of the Universe, did You ever see a Jew make a festive meal to celebrate a sin that he did? Quite the opposite is true. Whenever a Jew does a misvah he immediately makes a big meal and invites all of his friends and relatives to celebrate with him." Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Reuven Semah

"And you shall not go up the altar on steps so as not to reveal your nakedness." (Shemot 20:23)

The last verse in this perashah tells us that when we construct the ramp leading to the Mizbeah, altar, it should be a flat surface going upwards, not like stairs. The reason is that when one walks up stairs he must take a wider step which might reveal those parts of the body which should be covered. But with a flat ramp, a person can take smaller steps, without having this problem. Rashi points out that in actuality there really was no problem since the Kohanim were very well clothed and there was no possibility of anything being revealed. The Torah is teaching us, however, that this is a sign of disrespect to the ramp to walk that way and therefore we were commanded to build a flat ramp. The real lesson is not limited to the way we treat the stairs. Rather, if we should even be careful with something which has no feeling, like stairs, how much more so with people, who have feelings.

It is instructive that this verse is in the same perashah as the giving of the Torah because it is teaching us the way to be able to receive the Torah. If we treat other people, and even inanimate objects, with respect, then we show that we appreciate the qualities of people and of objects. Then we can learn from them and that is part of the process of receiving the Torah. If, however, we don't have respect for

belongings or for people themselves, we will not be able to learn from others, even those who are supposed to be teaching us Torah. It is no wonder that when we see the quality of education dropping in society, the amount of respect for people and for values is dropping proportionally. We would do well to strengthen ourselves and our families in these positive values so that we could properly receive the Torah. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

BASIC TRAINING

The military training given to recruits varies from country to country, but all nations start the process with basic training. Basic training disciplines soldiers to react in almost instinctive ways to various situations, making their responses nearly automatic. The soldiers benefit from this system, as each individual is trained to maintain focus on his job as part of the military team, even under fire. When the bombs burst and the bullets fly, the well-trained infantryman does not panic; he proceeds to fight as instructed by his commander. Fear, rationalization, and other deterrents to top-flight performance under fire have been defused by the training process.

Sometimes a person does something "just because" – for no other reason other than it feels good at the time. If it is not forbidden by secular or Torah law, why not enjoy it if one feels like it? Well, something may be permitted, but that does not mean that it is beneficial.

Developing the discipline to turn down a permitted luxury may benefit a person in the long run. If a person can say no to something permissible, that same individual will find it easier to say no when something is harmful or illegal. The great Rosh Yeshivah of Porat Yosef in Yerushalayim, Hacham Ezra Attieh, used to drink only half a glass of water and eat only a small portion of what was served to him. His reasoning was that if he was able to control himself from indulging in permitted pleasures, he would be better able to deny himself forbidden items.

You often have the chance to choose whether to enjoy the pleasures of this world without inhibition. It only takes a moment of control to change into your spiritual exercise clothing and flex your discipline. Suppressing the urge might deprive you of a bit of permitted enjoyment, but it will give you the basic training you need under fire – the fire of forbidden pleasures. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Peace in This World and the Next

We read in Parashat Yitro of Yitro's suggestion that Moshe Rabbenu appoint a network of judges to work alongside him judging the people, rather than judge all the cases by himself. Yitro assures Moshe that if he follows his suggestion, "Kol Ha'am Ha'zeh Al Mekomo Yabo Be'shalom" – "This entire nation will come to its place in peace" (18:23). By establishing an efficient judicial system whereby everybody is guaranteed to have his disputes resolved promptly and fairly, Moshe can help maintain peace and goodwill among Beneh Yisrael. When people know that all disputes are being handled properly, and that everyone is giving and receiving precisely what they are supposed to, there is no resentment and people get along with one another in peace and harmony.

While on the surface Yitro's point seems clear, the Hafetz Haim (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) notes a subtle point in Yitro's choice of words that should draw our attention. Our Sages have taught that there is a distinction between wishing somebody that he should go "Le'shalom" and go "Be'shalom." The word "Le'shalom" is the term that should normally be used when bidding somebody farewell, whereas "Be'shalom" is reserved for the deceased. We should use "Be'shalom" only when bidding farewell to a departed person and wishing him or her a pleasant and peaceful afterlife. Why, then, would Yitro use the word "Be'shalom" in this context? He obviously wasn't anticipating that everyone among Beneh Yisrael would die; the point he was making was that an efficient judicial system would help ensure a peaceful existence here in this world. So why did he use the term associated with the deceased?

The Hafetz Haim explained that Yitro here actually refers to peace in both worlds – this world and the next. If a person leaves this world holding onto money or property that does not lawfully belong to him, he does not experience rest in the afterlife. He will have to return to this world in a different incarnation in order to return the assets. A proper judicial system thus ensures "Be'shalom" – that people can enjoy peace in the afterlife and enjoy the delights of the next world. If disputes are not properly handled in this world, then the soul will have to return at some later point to handle them.

The Hafetz Haim's powerful words should serve as an added deterrent against dishonesty in our financial dealings. People might be tempted to think, "Well, it's only a few dollars," or "Look, this is how things are done," and justify dishonesty on this basis. The

Hafetz Haim warns us that even "if it's just a few dollars," and even if "this is how things are done," these factors will not help one in the next world. For those few dollars, he will be denied rest in the next world.

Simply put, we need to remind ourselves that it's never worth it to act dishonestly. No matter how much money we stand to gain or save through even a so-called "minor" ethical breach, we will end up losing, either in this world or the next. And the loss will always far, far exceed anything we could possibly gain.

Rabbi Wein

It is well known that there is a difference of opinion as to whether Yitro's arrival in the camp of Israel in the desert occurred before or after the revelation and granting of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Even if we say that Yitro arrived before the momentous event of Mount Sinai and that the Torah is recording events in a chronological manner, it still is difficult for us to understand.

Why is this most important event in Jewish history as outlined for us in the Torah, be preceded by a rather mundane description of Yitro's arrival and reception in the camp of Israel? Would it not be more effective to highlight the revelation at Sinai immediately at the beginning of the parsha? And this appears to be especially true since the parsha goes into great detail and some length in describing the circumstances and experience of the revelation at Sinai.

Why is there such an apparent emphasis on Yitro and his arrival? And this question certainly is even more difficult if we adopt the opinion that the revelation at Sinai occurred before the arrival of Yitro. It almost seems that by recording for us the entire story of the arrival of Yitro the Torah somehow diminishes in emphasis and focus the narrative regarding the revelation at Sinai itself.

If there ever was a stand-alone event in Jewish and in world history it certainly would be the moment of the revelation and granting of the Torah at Mount Sinai. So what is the story of Yitro doing being involved in the immortal narrative of the most seminal event in human history?

We are all aware of the great dictum of the Talmud that proper worldly behavior precedes the Torah itself. The order of the subjects in this week's parsha reinforces this idea clearly and cogently. The Torah records for us the politeness, courtesy, respect and sensitivity extended to Yitro by Moshe and Aaron and

the Elders of Israel and all of the Jewish people when he arrived in their midst.

The Torah indulges in great detail in describing the reception that Yitro received. Simple courtesy extended to a stranger is the basis of the Jewish value system. It is what separated Abraham from Sodom. The Ten Commandments and in fact the entire Torah itself cannot be understood or appreciated without a grounding in this basic idea of the worth of the human being and of the necessity to honor, welcome and help of one another.

That is why we are not to be murderers, robbers, adulterers, lying witnesses or people of greed and avarice. The Talmud places great emphasis on the small things in life that make for a wholesome society. It records for us in great solemnity that one of the great virtues of the leading scholars of Torah of its day was that they greeted everyone, no matter who that person was, in pleasantness.

This value is emphasized over and over again in the writings of the great men of Israel, throughout the generations. Therefore the welcome to Yitro must **perform precede the law of the Torah itself for it is the value upon which the Torah itself is based.**

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

This week's parsha consists of two episodes that seem to be a study in contrasts. In the first, in chapter 18, Yitro, Moses' father-in-law, a Midianite priest, gives Moses his first lesson in leadership. In the second, the prime mover is God himself who, at Mount Sinai, makes a covenant with the Israelites in an unprecedented and unrepeated epiphany. For the first and only time in history God appears to an entire people, making a covenant with them and giving them the world's most famous brief code of ethics, the Ten Commandments.

What can there be in common between the practical advice of a Midianite and the timeless words of revelation itself? There is an intended contrast and it is an important one. The forms and structures of governance are not specifically Jewish. They are part of chokhmah, the universal wisdom of humankind. Jews have known many forms of leadership: by prophet, elders, judges and kings; by the Nasi in Israel under Roman rule and the Resh Galuta in Babylon; by town councils (shiva tuvei ha-ir) and various forms of oligarchy; and by other structures up to and including the democratically elected Knesset.

The forms of government are not eternal truths, nor are they exclusive to Israel. In fact the Torah says about monarchy that a time will come when the people say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," – the only case in the entire Torah in which Israel are commanded (or permitted) to imitate other nations. There is nothing specifically Jewish about political structures.

What is specifically Jewish is the principle of the covenant at Sinai, that Israel is the only nation whose sole ultimate king and legislator is God himself. "He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws, Halleluyah" (Psalm 147: 19-20). What the covenant at Sinai established for the first time was the moral limits of power. All human authority is delegated authority, subject to the overarching moral imperatives of the Torah itself. This side of heaven there is no absolute power. That is what has always set Judaism apart from the empires of the ancient world and the secular nationalisms of the West. So Israel can learn practical politics from a Midianite but it must learn the limits of politics from God himself.

Despite the contrast, however, there is one theme in common to Yitro and the revelation at Sinai, namely the delegation, distribution and democratization of leadership. Only God can rule alone.

The theme is introduced by Yitro. He arrives to visit his son in law and finds him leading alone. He says, "What you are doing is not good" (Ex. 18: 17). This is one of only two instances in the whole Torah in which the words lo tov, "not good," appear. The other is in Genesis 2, where God says, "It is not good [lo tov] for man to be alone." We cannot lead alone. We cannot live alone. To be alone is not good.

Yitro proposes delegation:

You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. (Ex. 18: 19-22)

This is a significant devolution. It means that among

every thousand Israelites, there are 131 leaders (one head of a thousand, ten heads of a hundred, twenty heads of fifty and a hundred head of tens). One in every eight adult male Israelites was expected to undertake some form of leadership role.

In the next chapter, prior to the revelation at Mount Sinai, God commands Moses to propose a covenant with the Israelites. In the course of this, God articulates what is in effect the mission statement of the Jewish people:

You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' (Ex. 19: 4-6)

This is a very striking statement. Every nation had its priests. In the book of Genesis, we encounter Malkizedek, Abraham's contemporary, described as "a priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14: 18). The story of Joseph mentions the Egyptian priests, whose land was not nationalised (Gen. 47: 22). Yitro was a Midianite priest. In the ancient world there was nothing distinctive about priesthood. Every nation had its priests and holy men. What was distinctive about Israel was that it was to become a nation every one of whose members was to be a priest; each of whose citizens was called on to be holy.

I vividly recall standing with Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz in the General Assembly of the United Nations in August 2000 at a unique gathering of two thousand religious leaders representing all the major faiths in the world. I pointed out that even in that distinguished company we were different. We were almost the only religious leaders wearing suits. All the others wore robes of office. It is an almost universal phenomenon that priests and holy people wear distinctive garments to indicate that they are set apart (the core meaning of the word kadosh, "holy"). In post-biblical Judaism there were no robes of office because everyone was expected to be holy[1] (Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, called Jews "a nation of philosophers," reflecting the same idea).

Yet in what sense were Jews ever a kingdom of priests? The cohanim were an elite within the nation, members of the tribe of Levi, descendants of Aaron the first high priest. There never was a full democratisation of keter kehunah, the crown of priesthood.

Faced with this problem, the commentators offer two solutions. The word cohanim, "priests," may mean "princes" or "leaders" (Rashi, Rashbam). Or it may mean "servants" (Ibn Ezra, Ramban). But this is precisely the point. The Israelites were called on to be a nation of servant-leaders. They were the people called on, by virtue of the covenant, to accept responsibility not only for themselves and their families, but for the moral-spiritual state of the nation as a whole. This is the principle that later became known as the idea that kol Yisrael arevin zeh ba-zeh, "All Israelites are responsible for one another." Jews were the people who did not leave leadership to a single individual, however holy or exalted, or to an elite. They were the people every one of whom was expected to be both a prince and a servant, that is to say, every one of whom was called on to be a leader. Never was leadership more profoundly democratized.

That is what made Jews historically hard to lead. As Chaim Weitzmann, first president of Israel, famously said, "I head a nation of a million presidents." The Lord may be our shepherd, but no Jew was ever a sheep. At the same time it is what led Jews to have an impact on the world out of all proportion to their numbers. Jews constitute only the tiniest fragment – one fifth of one per cent – of the population of the world, but an extraordinarily high percentage of leaders in any given field of human endeavour.

To be a Jew is to be called on to lead.[2]

[1] This idea re-appeared in Protestant Christianity in the age of the Puritans, the Christians who took most seriously the principles of what they called the "Old Testament," in the phrase "the priesthood of all believers."

[2] On the role of the follower in Judaism, see the future Covenant and Conversation on Kedoshim.

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