

Pursuit of Purpose

INSPIRING A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

A Guide to Effective Leadership

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי
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In this week's Parsha, Moshe asks Hashem to appoint a leader for Klal Yisrael after he dies. In his request to Hashem for a leader, Moshe lists a few criteria that are critical for this leader to have. Moshe asks (27:16-17), "May Hashem, G-d of spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the assembly, who shall go out before them, who shall take them out and who shall bring them in; and let the assembly of Hashem not be like sheep that have no shepherd." Rashi explains the Pasuk as follows, "Moshe said, Master of the world! The personality of each individual is revealed before you, and they do not resemble each other. Appoint a leader who can put up with each individual according to his personality."

We clearly see from Rashi that a leader is someone who places the individuality of each person at the forefront of his policies and leadership. Rashi emphasizes that the leader is required to be tolerant of each person according to his personality. He doesn't merely say that the leader has to be tolerant, rather he needs to tolerate each person according to his personality. This implies that a leader is required to personally get to know each person that he is leading, as he has to lead them according to their personality. A leader has to be a master psychologist and have a deep understanding of each person. This ingredient is so important, as Moshe says in the Pasuk, that if they don't have this they will be "like sheep without a shepherd." This Rashi has ramifications for all of us, as leadership comes in many shapes and sizes. There is a Rav, a Rebbi, a Menahel, and a parent, each person a leader in their own right. In these positions we tend to take the easy way out and make rules and guidelines that deal with everyone the same way. We see from here that it is critical that we don't lose sight of our primary responsibility, which is to lead everyone according to their own unique personality.

Rashi continues to explain the Pasuk and says, "One that will take

them out through his merits, and who shall bring them in through his merits." From this Rashi we can glean another insight into leadership. A leader is not leading with his wisdom and strength, he is leading with his Zechusim. The attitude of a leader has to be I can't lead, as Hashem is in charge and I am powerless to accomplish anything. Rabbi Henoch Lebowitz ZT"L used to say "A leader is someone who allows Hashem to lead." His attitude has to be that his Hatzlacha is in his Zechusim. Therefore, if he falls short or is not successful, he should see that as a lack in his own merits, and he should continue to increase his Zechusim.

A further insight in leadership can be derived from Hashem's response to Moshe. After Moshe makes his request, Hashem says (27:18), "And Hashem says to Moshe, take to yourself Yehoshua Bin Nun." Rashi comments, "Take him with words, how fortunate are you that you are privileged to lead the children of Hashem." This implies that it was necessary to persuade Yehoshua to take the position by telling him what a privilege it is to guide Hashem's children. Yehoshua is being handpicked by Hashem as the most fitting candidate to replace Moshe. Why was it necessary to persuade him by telling him how lucky it is to be in this position? Surely Yehoshua would have been totally committed to this role by just knowing this is what Hashem wants!

It seems that leadership is so challenging that just knowing you are the right man for the job, and that this is your purpose, is not enough to maintain the stamina of the position. You need to also know how fortunate and privileged you are to be in this position. Many Mechanchim and parents often lead based on mission and obligation. We see from here that this attitude is not enough to maintain our drive. Our passionate flame to inspire and teach needs to be continuously kindled through knowing how privileged and fortunate we are to be in this position.



Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

“Through the profound teachings of Shir HaShirim, I have come to grasp the boundless love that Hashem eternally bestows upon Klal Yisroel, even in times when they transgress against Him. Nevertheless, it is natural to question how we can reconcile this enduring love with the instances in Tanach where Hashem appears to reject Klal Yisroel due to their sins. How can we explain this?”

One of the most poignant expressions of Hashem's apparent rejection of Klal Yisroel can be found in the book of Hoshea (Chapter 1), where Hashem proclaims, "...for I will no longer accept the House of Israel or pardon them...for you are not My people, and I will not be your [G-d]."

Chazal were also troubled by this very question and provide an insightful explanation (Bamidbar Rabbah 2:15): Imagine a scenario akin to a king who, in a fit of anger, declares, "I am divorcing my wife, and I no longer care for her children! She is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband!" However, the king then proceeds to descend to the marketplace and visits a goldsmith, instructing him to fashion exquisite golden jewelry for his wife. A friend of the king witnesses this scene and promptly informs the neighbors, saying, "Did you not hear that the king is embroiled in a dispute with his wife, claiming to divorce her? Yet, I personally saw him at the goldsmith's, commissioning jewelry for his wife." In the same vein, when Hashem becomes angered with Klal Yisroel, He proclaims, "I do not desire her! She is no longer Mine, and I am no longer hers!" However, Hoshea addresses the nations of the world, remarking, "Do not be mistaken by His words, 'For you are not My nation.' Do you think that He is truly angry with them? Observe what He says next: 'Instead of being told, "You are Not-My-People," they shall be called "Children-of-the-Living-G-d."

These instances where Hashem seems to spurn Klal Yisroel are merely manifestations of His unfathomable and unwavering love for us. They serve as poignant means through which Hashem, in His infinite devotion, strives to awaken us from our spiritual slumber and draw us closer to Him. It is akin to a heartfelt plea, as Hashem ardently endeavors to restore His beloved children to their rightful place in His embrace.



ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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“The significance of cultivating Bitachon, unwavering trust in Hashem, is clear, as it holds the key to success and fulfillment in both the material and spiritual realms. Yet, how does one embark on the journey to acquire this coveted trait, a trait so vital and transformative?”

In response to this very question, Dovid HaMelech, the illustrious King of all Klal Yisroel, offers his profound insight in Tehillim (31:1). He declares, "O Hashem, my heart was not proud nor my look haughty; I did not go in ways greater or beyond my ability." What, then, does Dovid HaMelech, perched upon the throne beside Hashem's glorious heavenly abode, consider as "greater or beyond his ability"?

Expanding on this, Dovid HaMelech continues in Tehillim (31:2), revealing his approach: "But I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child am I in my mind." Here, Dovid HaMelech humbly expresses that he does not entertain thoughts of grandiosity or self-sufficiency. Instead, he sees himself as no more capable than a weaned child, who finds solace and security in the loving embrace of its mother. Thus, his very soul finds tranquility in relying solely on Hashem, just as that child relies wholly and unconditionally on its nurturing mother.

Furthermore, Dovid HaMelech imparts his wisdom to Klal Yisroel in Tehillim (31:3), urging them, "O Yisroel! Await Hashem's help from now and forevermore!" The depth of one's reliance on Hashem is directly proportional to their recognition that there are no alternative options. It is when we internalize this truth, when we acknowledge that our only true recourse lies with Hashem alone, that we fully embrace and depend upon His assistance.

Therefore, the journey towards attaining bitachon begins with a humble and genuine acknowledgment of our limitations and a rejection of self-reliance. Just as a weaned child finds comfort in the arms of its mother, we too must find solace in surrendering ourselves to Hashem's loving care. By awaiting His help with unwavering trust, we open ourselves to the boundless blessings and guidance He bestows upon us.

In this pursuit, let us emulate Dovid HaMelech's humility and wisdom, knowing that our greatest strength lies in recognizing our utter dependence on Hashem, the ultimate source of support and salvation.