


The Truth About Spiritual Leadership


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THE TRUTH ABOUT SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP



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TZIMTZUM

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Introduction

Over the past month I've been sharing with you regarding some of the anomalies within the text of the Torah and how these apparent mistakes serve as a type of vertical descent into what the Torah is teaching on a deeper level. You've heard how the French Medieval Sage Rashi devoted his life to compiling commentary dedicated to unravelling these countless anomalies.

For in the Torah, there are such things as seemingly unnecessary repetition, addition or subtraction of letters in words, enlarged or diminished letters, spacing of texts, you name it, it's there, causing much pain to a translator unfamiliar with the Jewish Oral tradition. A tradition that should flow as an irreplaceable support to the text itself, both for compiling a Torah scroll and studying it.

For example, verses 35 & 36 in Numbers 10 are offset by two back-to-front Hebrew Nuns that separate these verses from the rest of the text. One of the reasons given for this, is that these verses constitute two additional hidden books of the Torah, making a total of seven Books of the Torah instead of five. This is why Solomon writes, **"But those who fail to find Me harm themselves; all who hate Me love death. *Chochmah* [wisdom] has hewn out her seven pillars" (Proverbs 8:36-9:1)**

But not only do anomalies inhabit the text of the Torah itself, they should also be evident in a Torah adherent lifestyle. One of the reasons I disdain Jewish criticism of Yahshua, when they critic him and his ministry within the correct cultural and mission context, is because they're own tzaddikim of past generations also carry a plethora of seemingly questionable actions and advice themselves, that when studied on a deeper level are sound. We see them seemingly breaking Halacha, seemingly desecrating Shabbat and giving very questionable instructions to students. Even Scripture itself has Solomon give an order to have a baby cut in half and Avraham attempting human sacrifice.

If we study the requirements of what makes a person pleasing to Yahweh Elohim, whether they be a prophet, a king, a priest, a

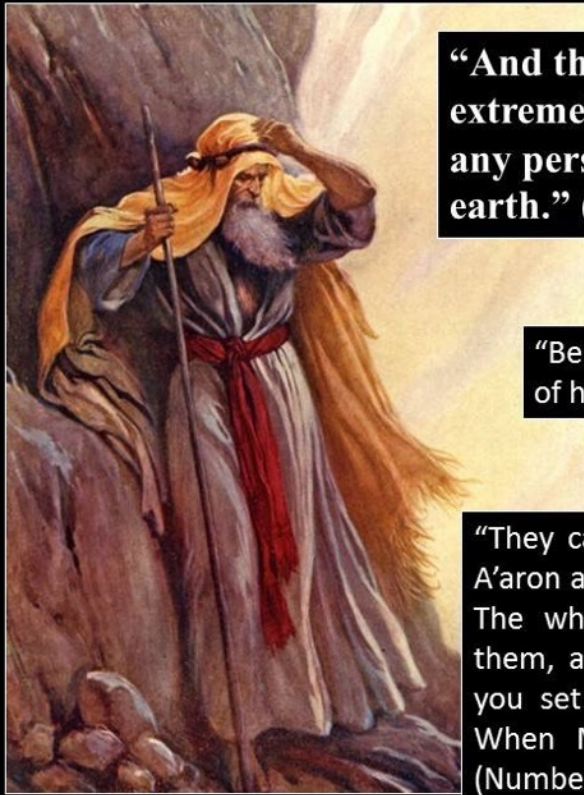
leader or even a common foot soldier, we find some very interesting things. In particular, the office of leadership carries a requirement that might surprise you.

LEADERSHIP AND ITS STRANGE REQUIREMENT

Our subject today is the truth about leadership within the household of faith. When it comes to leadership in matters of Torah, our first chief reference is none other than the greatest prophet who ever lived, Moshe Rabbeinu.

And here in lies possibly one of the greatest anomalies in Scripture. Why? Well, when he look at the attribute of modern leaders today, even within religious movements, we see the chief characteristic that Moshe possessed being all but devoid in them all. What characteristic is this? Humility.


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“And the man Moshe was extremely humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.” (Numbers 12:3)

“Be very, very lowly of spirit, for the hope of humanity is the worm.” *Pirkei Avos* (4:4)

“They came as a group to oppose Moshe and A’aron and said to them, “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and Yahweh is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above Yahweh’s assembly? When Moshe heard this, he fell facedown.” (Numbers 16:3-4)

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The Torah tells us something very interesting about Moshe. That he was the most humble of all men. This is a big statement, especially when it pertains to the role of leader.

And the man Moshe was extremely humble, more than any person on the face of the earth.” (Numbers 12:3) The trait of humility is seeing yourself as being less than other men.

In other words, the person who brought Israel out of Egypt, who split the sea for them, and received the Torah from Heaven considered himself smaller than everyone else.

The Torah is telling us that the greatest of all leaders was the humblest of all men who ever lived. From a Western standpoint, such a statement cannot be more counter intuitive than this.

If we look at how our society and culture depict strong leaders, such things like boldness, decisiveness and unwaveringness come to mind. Our movies, corporations, electorates and athletic spheres do not in any way portray humility as being a chief attribute for fulfilling the role of leadership in any of these areas. Today humility is associated with weakness and ineptitude. But in Torah, humility is not considered a sign of weakness, rather it is looked upon as being instrumental. It's not looked upon as being an admiral trait either, but as an essential tool for all who aspire to attain the quality of great leadership.

Arrogance, something we've seen in the latest American presidential election from both candidates, is actually a trait that inhibits would-be followers from really getting behind and trusting and respecting these individuals.

The Hebrew word for “humility” is **עֲנָוָה** Anavah from Anav, which means “lowly.” Anavah is not the opposite of self-esteem. It does not mean self-deprecation! It is the opposite of pride. It's not about thinking less of yourself, but thinking about yourself less!

The patriarch Avraham showed deep humility when he protested before Elohim saying: **“Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak to Yahweh, who am I but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27)** And even Saul, the first King of Israel was discovered **“hid among baggage”** when he was selected to be king in **1 Samuel 10:22**. And yet what killed Saul? Arrogance, fueled by ego. What saved David? Humility, when he was found out about his transgression with Bathsheva in **2 Samuel 12:13** where he said, **“I have sinned against Yahweh.”** Elsewhere, David had several lawful opportunities to kill Saul who intended to kill him, but refused to do so out of respectful humility. When Shimei son of Gera hurtled

stones, kicked up dust and insulted David as he fled Yerushalayim, the King refused to kill him saying, “**if he is cursing because Yahweh said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who can ask, ‘Why do you do this?’**” (2 Samuel 16:10)

Sha’ul showed humility when he said, “**Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Messiah Yahshua came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.**” (1 Timothy 1:15)

All leaders of Israel were commanded to conduct themselves in a spirit of humility. The traits we often associate with high office, such as haughtiness, condescension and entitlement are to be avoided at all costs with those who are in power.

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Rabbi Louis Jacob’s wrote: “Greatness and humility, in the Jewish tradition, are not incompatible. They complement one another....The greater the man the more humble he is expected to be...The Torah, say the rabbis (Taanit 7a), is compared to water for just as water only runs downhill, never uphill, the word of Elohim can only be heard in a humble heart.”



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just as water only runs downhill, never uphill, the word of Elohim can only be heard in a humble heart.”

A would-be leader once came to a great rabbi with a complaint. “All my life,” he said, “I have tried to follow the advice of the rabbis that one who runs away from fame will find that fame pursues him, and yet while I run away from fame, fame never seems to pursue me.”

The great rabbi replied: “The trouble is that while you do run away from fame you are always looking over your shoulder to see if fame is chasing after you.”

THE POWER OF HUMILITY

No human leader is flawless. Rather than create a false persona of perfection in leadership, the Torah sets the standard of “The Humble Leader.” A leader’s vulnerabilities should enhance his effectiveness in leadership. Failure is transcended by its own acknowledgement.

There is a saying in the Jewish writings that goes,

“One should never appoint a leader unless he carries a back of reptiles on his back. In other words, a leader cannot be appointed unless there is something reprehensible in his background so that if he becomes arrogant, one can tell him “turn around.” (Yoma 22b)



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This insight gives us clarity to a popular verse.

“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)

“And one who was a nobleman asked (Yahshua) and said to him, “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Yahshua said to him, “Why do you call me good? There is no one good except the one Elohim.” (Luke 18:18-19)

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Messiah Yahshua: Who, being in very nature Elohim, did not consider equality with Elohim something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death-- even death on the tree! (Philippians 2:5-8)



“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1) In other words, when dealing with a transgressor, be very careful. Deal with him in a manner that is tailored to restore him. Turn around and see that you are no better, lest you be tempted to fall prey to arrogance.

Leaders are expected to lead as human beings. Why? Because we can identify with them. The Creator of the Universe chose to relate to man with what? A man! A human being, the son of a man! King Messiah Yahshua was a human being born of a woman. He was 100% human. He never sinned, but his life was not devoid of trouble. He was born as a human being through the line of Judah subject to the tug-of-war between the *yetza-hara* (evil inclination) and the *yetza-tov* (good inclination). His spirit coming through the outpouring the Ruach itself was encased in a body of flesh, a weaker perishing vessel.

“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41) Yahshua

knew that subjecting himself to a low state disarmed the power of the *yetza-hara*. All the propensities for the iniquities that plagued his ancestor, of the progenitor of the tribe of Yehudah – Judah would gain no foothold over him if he remained a humble servant.

“And one who was a nobleman asked (Yahshua) and said to him, “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Yahshua said to him, “Why do you call me good? There is no one good except the one Elohim.” (Luke 18:18-19) Yahshua, despite being given everything under his feet (1 Corinthians 15:27) always subjected himself to the lowest of states in all his dealings even refusing to accept an acknowledgment that he was a good man.

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No-one can help another person unless he becomes like that person, unless he takes on that person’s weakness.

“Therefore, since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity, so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, HaSatan, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For, truly, (Yahshua) did not come to help the angels, but to help the offspring of Avraham. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to Elohim, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” (Hebrews 2:14-17)



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What does it take to be a successful leader? The sacrifice of one’s ego and the elevation of humility. Ego, arrogance and pride obliterate one’s effectiveness. St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.) wrote, “Pride is the commencement of all sin’ because it was this which overthrew the devil.”

“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.” (Ezekiel 28:17)

What Elohim desires most in us, especially in leaders, is not outward sacrifices but a humble spirit according to **Psalm 51:17** and **Micah 6:8**.

“Be shepherds of Elohim's flock that is under your care, watching over them--not because you must, but because you are willing, as Elohim wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29)

Humility is about taking up the appropriate amount of space and to grow the leadership of others. A leader is to become Tzimtzum, to contract oneself to elevate others.