
❧ JEWISH LEADERSHIP II ❧

More Leadership Qualities, Practical Skills, and Becoming a Leader

The first Morasha class on Jewish leadership focused on the need for everyone to see himself as a leader, and listed some of the personal qualities needed for this role.

In this second class, the theme of personal development as a means to becoming a public leader is discussed further. These qualities include: seeing the good in everyone, regarding oneself as a representative of God, exercising self-control, refining one's character, and demonstrating humility.

We will then take a look at leadership from a practical perspective regarding skills and attributes that can assist a leader such as passion, creativity, and being a team player. Finally, we will explore how university students and young professionals have the ability not only to serve as Jewish leaders by brainstorming, planning, and implementing Jewish programs, but also have the power to orchestrate a worldwide renaissance in Jewish life.

This class will address the following questions:

- ❧ How should a leader balance his focus between the individual versus the group?
- ❧ Can there be a difference between a leader's public persona and "who he is at home"?
- ❧ Can the temptations that have plagued leaders for millennia be overcome?
- ❧ Why is humility crucial for a successful Jewish leader?
- ❧ What practical skills can assist a leader in achieving his goals?
- ❧ How are university students and young professionals uniquely suited to trigger a worldwide revolution in Jewish awareness?

Class Outline:

Section I. Seeing the Good in Everyone

Section II. A Representative for the Real Leader of the World

Section III. Self-Control and a Refined Character

Section IV. Humility

Section V. Practical Attributes of Leadership

Section VI. Becoming a Leader and the Tipping Factor

Part A. Planning and Implementing a Program

Part B. The Tipping Factor and Sparking a Jewish Renaissance

SECTION I. SEEING THE GOOD IN EVERYONE

Since the role of the leader is to ensure the well-being of the community, he needs to be able to ensure the well-being of each individual. To this end, the leader must have an *ayin tov* (a good eye), the ability to see the good in every person, so that each person under his leadership can reach and fulfill his potential.

1. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld (heard in person) – A good king must relate to the uniqueness of the individual and help him find his place in the nation as a whole.**

A good king needs to have the ability to see the multifaceted qualities of each individual. Hebrew has two distinct words for a ruler – *moshol* (מושל) – dictator, and *melech* (מלך) – king. The Ibn Ezra (Bereishit/Genesis 37:8) and the Gaon of Vilna teach us that a dictator imposes himself from above and rules against the will of his people; in contrast, a king is accepted willingly by the people.

Whereas a Stalin ignores his subjects' basic humanity and individuality and mercilessly uses them as so many bricks in some inhuman structure he wishes to build, the Jewish king does the exact opposite. His basic role is to unite the nation, but he does so by appreciating the unique qualities of each individual, helping him fulfill his specific role in the nation as a whole.

A good metaphor for a true king is a conductor of an orchestra, who brings out the distinct qualities of each musician, whilst synthesizing these qualities into one harmonious unit. To do this, he must be able to see and appreciate the uniqueness of each musician, just as a king must be able to do with each of his subjects.

2. **Ibid., based on Bereishit 49:10-12 –The blessing that Yehudah's descendants should become kings is accompanied by the blessing that they be able to perceive the inner qualities of each individual. For leadership requires developing the best in people.**

We see the importance of having an *ayin tov* or “good eye” the first time kingship is mentioned in the Torah. Immediately after he blessed Yehudah that the scepter of kingship would never depart from his tribe, Yaakov blessed him that his portion in the Land of Israel should produce an incredible abundance of wine (Bereishit 49:10-12). Why should the tribe of kingship specifically need wine?

Wine has a unique power to bring out the hidden elements of a person's character. The numerical value of the Hebrew word for wine (*yayin*, יין) is equivalent to that of the Hebrew word for secret (*sod*, סוד). Wine helps us see elements of the self which are normally secret or hidden.

The last phrase of Yaakov's blessing to Yehudah: “חַכְלִילֵי עֵינַיִם מִיָּין וְלֶבָן שְׁנַיִם מִחֶלֶב” translates roughly – according to *Rashi* – as “eyes made red from wine and teeth made white from milk (Bereishit 49:12). The Sages (Ketubot 111b in the gemara's second *drash* on the verse, that of Rav Dimi, and in *Rashi: divrei hamatchil remoz li*) – perhaps because having red eyes is not usually regarded positively, or perhaps because the word that the verse uses for red (*chachlili*, חַכְלִילֵי) is a somewhat strange choice over the normal *adom* – saw a much deeper meaning here. They divided the word *chachlili* into three parts and the result is *chach* – smile, *li* - to me, *li* – to me [not just one “to me,” but two – indicating a greater depth of my self]. Now a deeper level of the blessing emerges: “The smile to my depths of your eyes is greater than wine, and the whitening of your teeth is better than milk.” Yaakov blessed the king that his eyes would be able to bring out the beautiful depths of a person even more than wine. With his *ayin tov* he could smile to the very essence of a person and strengthen him even more powerfully than milk, which strengthens the bones and thus gives strength to the entire structure of the body.

This is the incredibly beautiful blessing to the Jewish king, whom the Rambam (Maimonides) describes as the “heart of the Jewish people” (Hilchot Mamrim 3:6). Just as the heart pumps blood and life throughout the body, so too the king gives strength and life to every member of the nation. To do this he needs to be able to see the depths of each person and appreciate his unique beauty.

3. **Rabbi Mattisyahu Rosenblum, Morasha – We must train ourselves to see below the surface of a person’s personality, and appreciate the good qualities that lie beneath. King David demonstrated this ability to an extraordinary degree.**

It is not always easy to see the good in people. Everyone has his faults. What we sometimes see on the surface can be quite unappealing; we need to look inside to discover the beauty that we know is hidden in every Jew.

We know that the *Tselem Elokim* (Divine Image) of a person is his true essence. We don’t have to deny that someone has faults, but we should realize that his true nature (*Tselem Elokim*) is only masked by them.

A speaker once stood in front of an audience and took out a \$100 bill. “Would anyone here throw this out?” he asked. The answer was, of course, a resounding “No.” He folded the bill and asked the same question. The response was the same. He folded it over again, and again asked the same question. Again, the response was the same. He crumpled it up until it was a mere ball and the response was the same. Finally, he covered the bill in dirt, but still all agreed they would keep the bill. This illustrates a very important point: when we know the worth of something we don’t throw it out just because its value is concealed; we keep it and try to reveal its true worth. Since we know that each person has a Divine soul which has been sent into this world with a unique purpose, we should not dismiss its importance because its value is hard to see.

Although the above speaker was discussing the mentally handicapped, his point can help us view all human limitations in an entirely different way. Since we know that each person has a beautiful soul inside him, when we see another’s faults we should ask ourselves what fears and disappointments could have contributed to forming them.

This approach is illustrated by the following story involving King David. The Talmud (Baba Batra 110a) relates that a grandson of Moshe (Moses) named Yehonatan (described in Shoftim/Judges chapters 17-18) fell to the level of being the priest of an idol in order to support himself. When King David later saw that money was very precious to Yehonatan, he placed him in charge of the Temple’s treasury. The result was that Yehonatan was subsequently referred to as *Shvuel* because “he *shav* – returned, to *El* – God, with all of his strength” (I Divrei HaYamim/Chronicles 26:24).

Most people would have dismissed this individual completely: “There is no justification for the slightest association with idolatry. Certainly he is not someone to be trusted with the Temple treasury!” David looked far deeper. He saw that Yehonatan was someone whom God had given an unusual desire for money and that this desire had pulled him in the wrong direction. If this desire could be directed in a positive way, even better – if he could use that desire to help the public by guarding its money – the path would be paved for him to become what he should in every aspect of his life. This was the “eye” of David, the King of Israel!

The following source is a modern day example of King David’s quality of seeing the best in people and developing it.

4. **Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblum, They Called Him Mike, pp. 111-112 – A leader must identify another’s talent, and give him confidence and responsibility.**

[Mike Tress, as a leader of American Jewry] was always pushing people to develop their talents, and was a master at building up a person’s confidence. When he said, “You can do it,” people believed him ...

As a leader, one of Mike’s greatest strengths was his ability to spot talents in others and give them responsibility. He never suffered from the need to protect his own stature ...

5. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld (heard in person) – Seeing the profound worth of others actually improves them and helps them grow.**

How we look at things affects everything around us. It is prohibited to stand next to a person's field lest one harm his neighbor's crops through his *ayin hara* or "bad eye" (Baba Batra 2b with Meiri). The idea seems to be as follows. First, everything draws its power and sustenance from its deeper spiritual roots. Second, how a person perceives and talks about something has an effect on that thing. If we *perceive* something as an unimportant little item unconnected to any deeper level it *becomes* even less significant. It can no longer as readily draw from its roots, and it withers and loses its power and vitality. The word for something which is unconnected to the spiritual is *chol* (חול) – the same word for sand, which is something small and completely dried out. Therefore, people can hurt the growth of a person's crops merely by how they look at them.

The *Ramchal* discusses how if one is given bread by a person with an *ayin tov* he will be satisfied, while the same bread given by someone with a bad eye will leave him hungry since that eye will dry up the sources of the food's strength.

When we have an *ayin tov* and can see the depths and beauty of something we strengthen its connections to its roots and it becomes much stronger. One of the qualities that Boaz saw in Ruth, the mother of the Davidic dynasty, was her powerful *ayin tov*. The Zohar HaKodesh (Vayakhel p. 217) relates that Boaz, seeing her *ayin tov*, actually requested that Ruth look at his field. He saw that, unlike most people, her eyes brought blessing to whatever she looked at.

The word eye (*ayin*, עַיִן) is related to the word for a spring that produces living water (*ma'ayan*, מַעַיִן). An *ayin* is supposed to penetrate to the depths of the thing and get to its source of life-giving moisture. Any *ayin* that does the opposite is called an *ayin ra*, a bad eye, since it is an eye that simply does not fulfill its function.

6. **Ibid. – *Ayin tov* is the basis for spiritual growth.**

Ayin tov is considered to be the starting point for spiritual growth. For example, under the guidance of Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, 1849-1927 the students in Slabodka Yeshivah would gather to point out how various students had grown in certain areas. They were trained to focus on what others had done right, not where they had gone wrong. It was in such a *beit medrash* [study hall], in such an environment of positive energy, that Torah giants grew.

The success of Slabodka in producing growth is well known. Rav Shach used to say that all the Torah that exists in the Land of Israel and America is an outgrowth of Slabodka. The Chofetz Chaim said of the Alter, "I create books, R' Nosson Zvi creates people."

7. **Ibid. – The ability to see the good in others, as well as in oneself, was the basis upon which the Jewish kingship was built, and is the basis for every person's own growth.**

The Midrash [Yalkut Shimoni, Rut, Ch. 600] relates that Ruth (*Rut*, רוּת) was so named because she saw (*ra'ata*, רִאֲתָה) the kingship of King Shlomo (Solomon) that would emerge from her, the grandson of her grandson. Even as a poor widow she was able to look deep into herself and see the potential to eventually produce the kingship of Shlomo, the high point in the history of the Jewish people.

The greatness of an *ayin tov* [seeing the good in others] does not end with the effect it allows us to have on others – it changes the relationship we have with *ourselves*. Was Ruth perfect? One would guess that the very princess of Moab [an immoral, idolatrous nation] would embody a full measure of that nation's spiritual pollution. But Ruth could look within and see future greatness, and this gave

her the strength to make the incredible sacrifices she did in order to become part of the Jewish people and bring out her potential ...

Thus we see that leadership and the institution of the Jewish king are dependent on the quality of an *ayin tov*. From this we learn: success in life comes from an *ayin tov* toward oneself, seeing the greatness that can and should emerge.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION I:

- ⇒ A good king or leader must relate to the uniqueness of the individual and help him find his place in the nation as a whole. To this end, he must train himself to see beyond a person's exterior, and to focus on the good which lies hidden within him. In fact, this mere change of focus on a person's positive qualities helps to develop those qualities.
- ⇒ The ability to see the good in *oneself*, to sense the inner potential and idealism that lies inside oneself is essential to becoming a leader. *Actualizing* this potential in one's own life, in one's family, and in the world at large is the starting point of spiritual growth and becoming a Jewish leader.

SECTION II. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REAL LEADER OF THE WORLD

Just as a leader should guide people to express their highest aspirations (as we saw in the previous section), he should also teach people to form the most profound relationship possible – a relationship with God.

The ideal leader should be an ambassador of the true Leader of the world. To do this he begins by making people aware of the reality of God's existence, as the next source illustrates.

1. Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Vol. III, p. 22 – The concept of kingship in Judaism is to ensure that everyone recognizes that God is the true King.

The true attribute of kingship is, as the Maharal explains, to make God the King over the Jewish people, by bringing everyone to the recognition that God is King over the entire world, and that all of our success and happiness is in serving Him.

מדת המלכות האמיתית היא כביאור המהר"ל:
להמליך את הקב"ה על העם, להביא את כולם לידי
הכרה שהקב"ה הוא מלך על כל הארץ, וכל הצלחתנו
ואשרנו הם להיות עבדיו.

2. Rambam, *Hilchot Melachim (Laws of Kings) 1:7* – No matter how wise a leader might be, he must always be aware that he is only acting as God's agent.

[If an heir to leadership] is not God-fearing, then even if he is exceedingly wise, he is not appointed for any position of authority ...

וכל מי שאין בו יראת שמים אע"פ שחכמתו מרובה אין
ממנין אותו למינוי מן המינויין שבישראל ...

3. **I Kings 3:5; 9 – Since the king is essentially only an agent of God, he must be able to discern what God truly wants in any situation. For this reason, when King Shlomo was given the opportunity to choose whatever he wanted from God, he requested “an understanding heart.”**

In Gibeon, God appeared to Shlomo in a dream at night. God said to him, “Request what I should give you” ...

“May You grant Your servant an understanding heart, to judge Your people, to distinguish between good and evil” ...

בְּגִבְעוֹן נִרְאָה יְקֹנֵק אֶל שְׁלֹמֹה בְּחִלּוֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר
אֱלֹהִים שְׂאֵל מָה אַתָּן לְךָ:

וַיִּתֶּתָּ לְעַבְדְּךָ לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ לְשֹׁפֵט אֶת עַמְּךָ לְהַבִּין בֵּין טוֹב
לְרָע.

The following story illustrates how Rabbi Moshe Feinstein emulated the ways of God.

A young man living in Israel had a Jewish legal question and decided to call the leading authority, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, to get an answer. It was 10:00 AM in the morning when he decided to place the call, but he did not realize that it was 3:00 AM in New York City, where Reb Moshe lived. He dialed the number and Reb Moshe himself answered the telephone. Without much of an introduction, the young man asked his question. When he paused, waiting for an answer, he was puzzled when instead of responding, Reb Moshe excused himself and asked the young man to hold on for a few minutes.

“Does the great rabbi need to refer to books? Everyone knows that he responds to difficult questions within seconds, as he has the entire Torah at his fingertips!” he thought to himself as he waited. In five minutes Reb Moshe returned to the telephone. He stated his opinion clearly. Then, right before hanging up, Reb Moshe asked the caller for his name and address. The man was surprised, wondering why the great rabbi needed this information, but supplied it with hesitation. One week later, the young man received a check in the mail from Reb Moshe along with a note of explanation:

“When you called me at 3:00 AM, I took time out to wash my hands and recite the blessings on the Torah before responding to your query. Although you were prepared to pay for the phone call, I feel responsible for the time I kept you waiting, because the time was used for my benefit not to ‘talk in learning’ prior to reciting the blessing. Therefore, I am sending you a check to cover approximately five minutes’ worth of long distance talk.” (From Glimpses of Greatness, Rabbi David Koppelman, Moznaim Publishing Company, p.191).

This was at a time when international calls were quite expensive, not to mention that Reb Moshe was awakened in the middle of the night, yet responded as if it was daytime!

KEY THEMES OF SECTION II:

- ∞ A Jewish king does not act for his own personal benefit. Rather, the ideal Jewish leader understands that he is a human emissary and servant of the Divine Will, and guides his subjects accordingly.
- ∞ A Jewish king helps his people form the most profound relationship possible, a relationship with God.

SECTION III. SELF-CONTROL AND A REFINED CHARACTER

Clearly, being a proper Jewish leader will require a number of special qualities. To serve God in a more public role, he must obviously be loyal to God's Law in his private life. A Jewish leader must be in control of his physical desires, in contrast to what we so often find lacking in political leaders.

1. Rabbi Abraham J. Twersky, M.D., *Do Unto Others*, Andrews McMeel Publishing, pp. 144-145 – What principle can one follow to make the correct decisions in one's actions?

Some people are driven primarily by the pursuit of self gratification ... What I have witnessed is that the more a person falls prey to the demands of self, the more his uniquely human qualities disappear. On the other hand, doing for others is a powerful tool for building the spirit. Acts of selfless kindness turn the soul outward, and in the process break the worst of habits, freeing us from the seemingly unconquerable self-destructive needs and cravings.

A student once approached my forebear, the Rabbi of Rhizin, a learned and holy man and asked him, "What principle can one follow in order to make correct decisions in one's everyday actions?" After a moment's reflection, the Rabbi responded, "The answer is quite simple. The duty of a person is to overcome temptations. The tempter is always at work, and he seeks to seduce us through the cravings of our physical being. The principle to follow in order to resist is to act just as a tightrope walker maintains his balance, by tilting himself opposite that to which he feels pulled. So can a person always make a right decision by acting opposite to that for which he feels himself craving."

And this is where the simple mechanics of doing unto others can play such a powerful role in helping a person to overcome even the worst habits. I have heard it said this way: the reason one should not transgress is not because it is forbidden. Rather, it is because one is so busy doing for others that one simply doesn't have the time. Do one good deed, and you begin to fill the empty space in the heart with goodness. Even the smallest good deed is enough to move one in the right direction.

In fact, being a righteous individual is not only a prerequisite for being a leader, the two are actually the same thing in different contexts. As the next source describes, one can be a good leader of the public *because* one is a good leader of one's own self.

2. *Sefer HaKuzari* III, 2-5 – An upright and pious person is a good leader, since his mind rules over the instincts of his body.

2. The Kuzari said, "Tell me how the upright and pious people of your religion behave."

3. The Rabbi said, "An upright person is one who is concerned with his country. He provides all its citizens with their every provision and need. He leads them justly, does not oppress any one of them, and does not give to any one of them more than his rightful share ..."

4. The Kuzari said, "I asked you about an upright person, not a leader!"

ב. אמר הכוזרי: ... ספר לי מעשה החסיד שבכנס היום.

ג. אמר החבר: החסיד הוא, הנוהר במדינתו, משער ומחלק לכל אנשיה טרפם וכל ספקם, וינהג בהם בצדק, לא יונה אחד מהם, ולא יתן לו יותר מחלקו הראוי לו, וימצאם בעת צרכו אליהם שומעים לו, ממהרים לענותו בעת קראו, יצום ויעשו כמצותו, ויזהירם ויזהרו.

ד. אמר הכוזרי: על חסיד שאלתיך לא על מושל.

5. The Rabbi said, “An upright person is a leader. All of his senses and attributes – both spiritual and physical – submit themselves to his command. He thus leads them just like a real world leader, as it says, ‘He who rules his spirit is greater than one who captures a city’ (Mishlei/ Proverbs 16:32). He has shown that he is fit to govern – that were he to rule over a country, he would preside over it justly, just as he has done with his own body and soul.”

ה. אמר החבר: החסיד הוא מי שהוא מושל, נשמע בחושיו וכחותיו הנפשיים והגופיים, ומנהיגם ההנהגה הגופית, כמו שנאמר: “ומשל ברוחו מלכד עיר (משלי מז:לב)”. והוא המוכן לממשלה, כי אלו היה מושל במדינה, היה נוהג בה בצדק כאשר נהג בגופו ונפשו.

3. **Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblum, *They Called Him Mike*, pp. 409-410 – We see in the example of Mike Tress, the long-time leader of the Agudath Israel of America, how a Jewish leader lives up to his ideals both in public and private.**

[Whereas a public persona often displays a less than ideal side to his family] the Tress children perceived their father in precisely the same terms as the other youngsters upon whom he had such a decisive impact. And the values with which they were raised were exactly the same as those which Mike preached in the public sphere. The precise fit between his private and public personalities is but another reflection of the extent to which “*tocho k’boro*,” his inside was like his outside (Berachot 28a).

4. **Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblum, “Cast Your Bread Upon the Waters,” *Mishpacha Magazine*, September 22, 2005 – Similarly, Rabbi Moshe Sherer, the next president of Agudath Israel of America, also exemplified ideal character traits.**

I’m currently in the process of finishing a biography of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, who headed Agudath Israel of America for over three decades. That biography could be described as a Jewish version of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. By unanimous consent Rabbi Sherer was one of the most effective people in recent memory, and the impact of Agudath Israel of America during his tenure was, in large part, a function of his remarkable talents.

Those talents were many, and this is not the place for their enumeration. But the deeper I become immersed in this project the clearer it becomes how much of Rabbi Sherer’s success was a function of good *midot* [character traits] – the respect, concern, and sensitivity he showed to others, and the dignity with which he conducted himself. Even in the decades when Agudath Israel was a small, virtually penniless organization, with a handful of employees, he was making connections with literally hundreds of politicians and key bureaucrats at all levels of government – federal, state, and municipal ...

Developing and refining good character traits is a life-long process. The following story relates to both the importance of a leader to show sensitivity (discussed in the first leadership class), and how people can put aside self-serving interests for a greater need. In this case, sensitivity for a special needs classmate expressed by boys playing baseball on opposing teams, made all of them leaders (and winners).

In Brooklyn, New York, Chush is a school that caters to learning-disabled children. At a Chush fund-raising dinner, the father of a Chush child delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, “Where is the perfection in my son Shaya? Everything that God does is done with perfection. But my child cannot understand things as other children do. My child cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is God’s perfection?”

The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father’s anguish, and stilled by his piercing query. “I

believe,” the father answered, “that when God brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that He seeks is in the way people react to this child.” He then told the following story about his son Shaya.

Shaya attends Chush throughout the week and a boy’s yeshivah (Torah institute) on Sundays. One Sunday afternoon, Shaya and his father came to the yeshivah as his classmates were playing baseball. The game was in progress and as Shaya and his father made their way towards the ball field, Shaya said, “Do you think you could get me into the game?”

Shaya’s father knew his son was not at all athletic, and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya’s father understood that if his son was chosen in, it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging. Shaya’s father approached one of the boys in the field and asked, “Do you think my Shaya could get into the game?”

The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, “We are losing by six runs and the game is already in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we’ll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning.” Shaya’s father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya’s team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya’s team scored again – and now with two outs and the bases loaded and the potential winning runs on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shaya was told to take a bat and try to get a hit. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible, for Shaya didn’t even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However, as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact. The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya’s teammates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shaya.

As the next pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far and wide beyond the first baseman’s reach. Everyone started yelling, “Shaya, run to first! Shaya, run to first!” Never in his life had Shaya run to first. He scampered down the baseline wide eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher’s intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman’s head, as everyone yelled, “Shaya, run to second! Shaya, run to second.”

Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran towards him, turned him towards the direction of third base and shouted, “Shaya, run to third!”

As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, “Shaya, run home! Shaya, run home!” Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit the “grand slam” and won the game for his team.

“That day,” said the father who now had tears rolling down his face, “those 18 boys reached their level of perfection. They showed that it is not only those who are talented that should be recognized, but also those who have less talent. They too are human beings, they too have feelings and emotions, they too are people, they too want to feel important.” (From *Baseball Heroes*, by Rabbi Paysach Krohn, in *Echoes of the Maggid*, (ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications Ltd.)

KEY THEMES OF SECTION III:

- ∞ Leadership in Judaism starts with the leader's self. A true Jewish leader cannot lead a life that falls short of the ideals he represents. His ability to lead the community flows from his ability to perfect his own character and actualize his own potential.

SECTION IV. HUMILITY

Humility is a prerequisite for every Jewish leader. Without it, the king or leader will be unable to transcend his own will and petty desires, and he will never perceive and follow the Will of his Maker. Only a truly humble person is fitting to wield the staff of leadership.

Ironically, no one is in greater danger of losing his humility than those who attain power. As Lord Acton wrote: "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." From the emperors of Rome down to the Stalin's and Mao's of our own time, one can think of very few leaders who were not utterly self-centered and petty. Their "greatness" was expressed only in terms of imposing their petty selves upon others. In contrast, the greatest Jewish leaders have always been most humble individuals, as the following sources illustrate.

1. **Midrash Pesiktah Zutra (Lekach Tov), Shemot (Exodus) 5, s.v. *va'yomer Pharaoh* – Historically, the greatest Jewish leaders were the most humble. In contrast, the non-Jewish kings were prone to self-aggrandizement and denial of God.**

When God gives the wicked greatness they insult and deride God. For example, Pharaoh said, "Who is God?" (Shemot 5:2). Nebuchadnezzar said [to Daniel when he was threatened with death], "And who is this who will be saved from my hand?" [implying that God did not have the power to save Daniel] (Daniel 3:15). Sancherib (Sennacherib) said, "Who among all the gods of the lands saved their land [from being conquered by me. Do you think God will save you from me?]" (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 36:20). Chiram said, "I will ascend over the tops of the clouds. I will liken myself to the Most High" (ibid. 14:14).

But when God gives greatness to the righteous of the Jewish people, they become even more humble. For example, Avraham (Abraham) said, "I am earth and ash" (Bereishit 18:27). Moshe said, "What am I [that I should go to Pharaoh]?" (Shemot 3:11), and "What are we?" (ibid. 16:7)...

... הרשעים שבזמן שהקב"ה נותן להם גדולה מיד מחרפין ומגדפין, פרעה נתנאה ואמר מי ה', ונבוכדנצר אמר ומאן הוא אלהי די ישזבינכון מן ידי (דניאל ג טו), סנחריב אמר מי בכל אלהי הארצות אשר הצילו את ארצם (ישעיה לו כ), חירם אמר אעלה על במתי עב אדמה לעליון (ישעיה יד יד)...

אבל צדיקים שבישראל כל מה שמתגדליון, ענוה מתוספת להם, אברהם אמר ואנכי עפר ואפר (בראשית יח כז), משה אמר מי אנכי (שמות ג יא), ונחנו מוה (שם טז ז)...

2. **Bamidbar (Numbers) 12:3 – The greatest leader of the Jewish people, Moshe, was the humblest of all people.**

The man, Moshe, was exceedingly humble, more than any other man upon the earth.

והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם אשר על פני האדמה:

In the next source, we see that humility is the defining quality of our more recent leaders.

3. **Sarei ha-Me'ah, Vol. I, p. 261 – Rabbi Akiva Eiger (1761-1837), who was the unanimously respected leader of European Jewry, wished to become the caretaker of a mikvah (ritual bath) so that he would not be a burden on his community.**

Rabbi Akiva Eiger was famous for his incredible humility. Rabbi Akiva Eiger's pure heart always ran from positions of authority and he was never happy being a rabbi. In his old age he was serving as rabbi of Posen. His fame was known far and wide and he was considered the greatest authority in the entire nation of Israel. After hearing about the death of the man in charge of the mikvah in a neighboring village he wrote the following letter to a friend who lived in that village.

“In my old age I want to earn my livelihood from *heter* [permissibly] and not from *issur* [prohibitively – Rabbi Akiva Eiger felt that taking money for his rabbinic position was in violation of the precept that forbids receiving money in exchange for the teaching of Torah], from the toil of my hands and not from the crown of Torah. Therefore, I beseech you to persuade the heads of your community to rent me the mikvah. I am prepared to resign my rabbinical position and become the mikvah attendant in your village.”

Despite his status as the greatest rabbinic authority of his generation, Rabbi Akiva Eiger asked that his epitaph contain only one phrase: “The servant of the servants of God.”

4. **Shemot 32:32 – A major facet of humility is that one's private interests are not one's focus. Moshe asked to be erased from the Torah if God would not forgive the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf. And he did this after God offered that he should become the father of a new chosen people!**

“Now, if You would, please forgive their sin. If not, erase me now from Your book that You have written.”

ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת.

In practical terms, having humility can mean closing an enterprise that in retrospect you feel is not, and will not, achieve your goals.

5. **Ner Le'Elef, Leadership and Management Booklet, p.12. – Humility allows one to have the courage to do the right thing.**

I want to give a new angle on what humility does for a leader. Humility allows a leader to have the confidence not only to initiate a project, but to close an enterprise which is not working. Humility allows one to have the courage to do the right thing. It allows one to see that someone else is doing the job better and to learn from him, join him or hire him. It allows one to let other organizations on one's turf. Humility gives one the confidence to have trust and stop dealing with other organizations as if they were competing businesses. Someone who overcomes all that will indeed be wearing the Crown of a Good Name (Pirkei Avot/Ethics of the Fathers 4:14).

KEY THEMES OF SECTION IV:

- ⇒ An intrinsic quality of Jewish leadership is humility. Without the quality of humility, it is impossible for a leader to put aside his personal ambitions and lead the nation solely with its good in mind and according to the Will of God. From a historical perspective, it is therefore not surprising to find that the greatest historical leaders of Judaism were singled out for their extreme humility.
- ⇒ Humility allows one to have the courage to do the right thing.

SECTION V. PRACTICAL ATTRIBUTES OF LEADERSHIP

Based on the two Morasha shiurim on leadership until this point, we have learned that the core attributes of a Jewish leader are: (1) the readiness to take responsibility and act, (2) showing empathy and compassion, (3) having patience, (4) seeing the good in everyone, (5) acting as a representative of God, (6) exercising self-control and refining one's character, and (7) developing humility, balanced with positive self-esteem. One might call these attributes the "soul" components of Jewish leadership.

There is an additional dimension to leadership, which focuses on harnessing practical skills and traits that assist leaders in brainstorming, strategizing, and implementing their ideas and goals. (As a leader, one needs to be especially sensitive to the principle that our skills and attributes are bestowed by God, as the Talmud (Berachot 33b) teaches: **הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים**, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven.")

Below is a list of these attributes:

1. **Based on Ner Le'Elef, Leadership and Management Booklet, p. 12 – Additional qualities of a leader.**

1. ***Developing a vision of where you want to get to.***
2. ***Being passionate and enthusiastic.*** Some people do have a vision and speak of it a lot, but they don't believe in it enough to do something about it. Without passion you will lack commitment, and without commitment you will lack both focus and energy. Energy emerges out of the intense commitment and passion which one has for the project.
3. ***The ability to communicate your vision, passion and courage to others.*** This builds on your belief in other people. Only rarely does this mean speech-making, though it does involve communication skills. It certainly involves content, a depth of understanding to give content to one's passion and vision.
4. ***An ability to develop a team with a sense of community of common purpose.*** The ability to listen, learn, and grow together with them.
5. ***A show of strength, fortitude, clear thinking and compassion in times of crisis or difficulty.*** The type of strength that others feel they can lean on. Tough times often require one to make tough decisions and balance one's compassion with a clear understanding of the needs of the hour.
6. ***The courage to doggedly and persistently follow one's vision.*** This is more than dedication. It requires the ability to stay the course even when things are very tough. It requires resilience, the ability never to be bitter, to retain a certain naïve sense that you can do the improbable (i.e. the seeming impossible as opposed to the actual impossible).
7. ***The ability to create strategic plans.*** The ability to go from here to there. But more than that, the ability to make things happen where others would not have seen the opportunity. To paraphrase Milton Berle, a leader is someone who, when opportunity does not knock, builds a door.
8. ***A willingness to take reasonable risks.*** Taking risks probably means failing from time to time. A good leader is not deterred by failure, rather, he learns from it and goes forward. He operates on the cutting edge, always a little mad in his thinking, always a little defiant of conventional wisdom.

9. **Belief in other people in their ability to achieve together with you.**
10. **An ability to change, reassess, and, if need be, chart a new course.** Real leaders have no hassle admitting that they were wrong, learning from others, and showing themselves to have weaknesses. They don't feel a need to act like a leader. They just act like themselves.
11. **Good judgment.** Leaders have a high level of common sense. They are generally level-headed and make consistently good judgments. They have an above average insight into people and usually view people holistically; not in black and white terms. They may be highly emotional, but avoid, in the main, making emotionally-based decisions.
12. **Ability to problem-solve.** They need to know how to get obstacles out of the way. Sometimes this requires networking, sometimes creativity, and sometimes it requires patience and tolerance.
13. **Creativity** is a component which facilitates much of the above.

Certainly, there are successful leaders out there whose descriptions differ from the list we have suggested. And, in the field, there is nothing approaching consensus on this issue. The four E's of GE's official template of executive excellence are Energy, Energize, Edge, and Execute. Maybe that is the best list of all.

Of course, it does help if you are a natural orator and have charisma, but great leaders have often lacked these qualities. Many of the attributes that make up a great leader can be acquired.

2. **Ibid. p. 15 – Can leadership be learned?**

There is a great debate in the business world over whether leadership is natural or whether it can be acquired. Leadership is too big a word, too vague and abstract. This lends itself to an almost mystical labeling of someone as a leader, a dividing of the world into leaders and non-leaders. But we have already shown that the Torah view of leadership is quite different. The Torah expects all of us to be leaders in some sense. And in fact, the characteristics of a Jewish leader can indeed be learned and developed!

The short list above is more accessible to us than we imagine. Does that mean we are all suited to become high profile leaders of governments, corporations, and institutions? Whether or not every person is capable of serving as the CEO or dynamic leader of an organization can be gleaned from the following incident:

There are many people who come to me for advice as a retired rabbi. A fine young man walks in, his heart set on being a rabbi of a synagogue, and he has all the proper credentials. He is sincere, idealistic, scholarly, pious, and anxious to teach Torah and inspire and lift a community. Only one ingredient is absent: he does not possess that intangible quality to be a rabbi. Either he is too shy, or lacks self-confidence, or is inarticulate so that one needs to strain to understand what he says. Or his personality is such that he does not inspire confidence. He might make a good classroom teacher, but not the leader of a synagogue.

My problem is this: I do not want to play God. First, I could be wrong. On the other hand, am I not doing a disservice by advising him to go into the rabbinate? (Based on Tales Out of Jerusalem, by Rabbi Emanuel Feldman, Feldheim Publishers, pp. 27-30).

This brings us full circle to an insight from the beginning of the first Morasha class on leadership:

A leader is not necessarily someone who has the all the appropriate talent in place for the job at hand. A leader

is someone who sees the job at hand and does something about it, who recognizes that the task is crucial and no one else is doing it (E. Braverman).

KEY THEMES OF SECTION V:

- ⇒ In addition to the core attributes of Jewish leaders, there is an additional dimension to leadership which focuses on harnessing practical skills and traits that assist leaders in brainstorming, strategizing, and implementing their ideas and goals.
- ⇒ Leadership skills can be acquired, everyone can function as a leader, but a heavy dose of realism is required to ascertain if one is capable of serving as a high profile leader in government, business or organizations.
- ⇒ Ultimately, a leader is not necessarily someone who has all the appropriate talents in place for the job at hand. A leader is someone who sees the job at hand and does something about it, recognizing that the task is crucial and no one else is doing it.

SECTION VI. BECOMING A LEADER AND THE TIPPING FACTOR

Now that we've explored the values and attributes that embody a Jewish leader, and concluded that we each have what it takes to be a leader, how can we apply these skills to ourselves as university students and young professionals? Jewish students and young professionals have invigorated Jewish life in many cities across the globe by jump-starting a variety of exciting and influential programs. For example:

- Debbie and Rachel launched a *Study with a Buddy* chavrutah program, pairing up individuals who wanted to learn more about Judaism with those who could serve as mentors.
- Ben, Steve, and Michael established a monthly Israel Solidarity Forum, featuring professors, rabbis, journalists, and politicians.
- Sarah and Tami organized a chesed program to visit the elderly at a nursing home, as well as raise funds to buy and distribute food for the impoverished in Israel.
- Robert and Dror initiated a "Turn Friday Night into Shabbat!" weekly Shabbat celebration featuring delicious food, company, and songs.
- Shira, Betsy, and Margolit organized a free crash course in reading beginner's level Hebrew.

How can someone get involved in planning and launching a program?

PART A. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM

The first step in launching a program is to identify what you believe needs to be accomplished, what you are capable of achieving, and who you can make part of your organizing team.

1. **Ner Le'Elef, Leadership and Management Booklet, p. 19. – Four basic questions to get started.**

1. Where are you now?
2. Where do you want to get to?
3. How do you propose to get from here to there?
4. Who do you want to join you in this endeavor?

Choose your team and brainstorm what you would like to accomplish. For example:

We will produce a journalistic style video for YouTube on the strategic balance in the Middle East and network it to reach 100,000 views.

We want every student on Pesach eating matzoh balls at the Sedarim and understanding why.

Then, write down a mission statement to focus on your objectives.

2. **Ibid. p. 21 – Creating a mission statement.**

Once you understand your needs, you need to make a mission statement, which is what Stephen Covey calls beginning with the end in mind. This represents the long-term vision of the organization or project. The project's vision defines how its mission is expected to be accomplished in the long term. (This is not the same as strategy, which are the specific steps of implantation that need to be taken.) It is a very important communication tool to establish direction and to ensure consistency amongst all of its parts.

We are dedicated to finding and regularly visiting homebound and infirm Jews in our city to alleviate their condition and bring joy to their lives.

The next step is to establish specific goals and timing for your project.

3. **Ibid. p.24. – Establishing your goals.**

Aside from your vision, you should make specific goals for the next year and, if applicable, general goals for the next two to five years. Without goals you have no way of knowing whether you have been successful or not. And without goals you will be amazed at how the year will just slip by. You must ask yourself the question: How do our goals for the next year fit in with our mission statement? You must then develop ways of assessing whether you are achieving your goals or not.

We will offer free crash courses in Hebrew taught by volunteers, so that twenty-five percent of the Jewish population in our city will be able to read basic Hebrew within four years.

Once you have determined your goals and timing, then chart a strategy to achieve your goals.

4. **Ibid. p.27. – Charting a strategy.**

Once you have clear goals you must have a specific action plan for implementing those goals. Your strategy answers the questions, "What are you going to do and how?" Bear in mind the following: Each project you do must fit into the goals for the year. In addition, you must understand how each one of the projects fits in with each of the others. Finally, how will you secure the funds to cover any costs? Don't chew off more than you can handle with the talents and resources available.

We will raise \$25,000 for the poor relying on soup kitchens in Jerusalem by asking Jewish students on campus to contribute \$5- \$250 during the year.

We will establish a series of classes on Spirituality and Kabbalah by inviting local rabbis and educators to teach, and recruiting twenty-five students to participate by advertising through Facebook, networking, and making catchy posters.

Once you've got your mission statement, goals, and strategy, you're set to go!

PART B. THE TIPPING FACTOR AND SPARKING A JEWISH RENAISSANCE

Scientists are obsessed with finding tipping points, the levels at which the momentum for change becomes unstoppable. Consider the implications of the collective power of an estimated 30,000 students and young professionals internationally, currently studying about Judaism, many of whom travel to Israel, who develop a transformed appreciation of Jewish life. If these people would then inspire another 30,000 friends to plug into Jewish programs (that's one student or young professional per person), we're on the road to creating a worldwide movement ...

Join the Renaissance!

KEY THEMES OF SECTION VI:

- ⇒ Jewish students have invigorated Jewish life at universities by jump-starting exciting and effective programs.
- ⇒ To successfully plan and implement a program write a mission statement, identify clear goals, and brainstorm a strategy to reach your objectives.
- ⇒ A tipping point is the level at which the momentum for change becomes unstoppable. Consider the implications of the collective power of an estimated 30,000 students and young professionals internationally, currently studying about Judaism – if they would inspire another 30,000 friends to plug into Jewish programs, we're on the way to creating a worldwide renaissance.

CLASS SUMMARY:

HOW SHOULD A LEADER BALANCE HIS FOCUS BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE GROUP?

A good leader must relate to the uniqueness of the individual and help him find his place in the nation as a whole. To this end, he must train himself to see beyond a person's exterior, and to focus on the good which lies hidden within him.

CAN THERE BE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEADER'S PUBLIC PERSONA AND "WHO HE IS AT HOME"?

To serve in a public role, he must obviously be loyal to God's Law in his private life. A Jewish leader must be in control of his physical desires, in contrast to what we so often find lacking in political leaders.

CAN THE TEMPTATIONS THAT HAVE PLAGUED LEADERS FOR MILLENNIA BE OVERCOME?

The Rabbi of Rhizin taught: "The duty of a person is to overcome temptations. The tempter is always at work, and he seeks to seduce us through the cravings of our physical being. The principle to follow in order to resist is to act just as a tightrope walker maintains his balance, by tilting himself opposite that to which

he feels pulled. So can a person always make a right decision by acting opposite to that for which he feels himself craving.”

WHY IS HUMILITY CRUCIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL JEWISH LEADER?

No one is in greater danger of losing his humility than the person who attains power. As Lord Acton wrote: “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” From the emperors of Rome down to the Stalin’s and Mao’s of our own time, one can think of very few leaders who were not utterly self-centered and petty. In contrast, the greatest Jewish leaders have always been most humble individuals.

WHAT PRACTICAL SKILLS CAN ASSIST A LEADER IN ACHIEVING HIS GOALS?

The core attributes of a Jewish leader are: (1) the readiness to take responsibility and act, (2) showing empathy and compassion, (3) having patience, (4) seeing the good in everyone, (5) acting as a representative of God, (6) exercising self-control and refining one’s character, and (7) developing humility, balanced with positive self-esteem. One might call these attributes the “soul” components of Jewish leadership.

There is an additional dimension to leadership, which focuses on harnessing practical skills and traits that assist leaders in brainstorming, strategizing, and implementing their ideas and goals. These practical skills include: developing a vision of where you want to get to; the ability to communicate your vision, passion, and courage to others; the ability to create strategic plans; belief in other people to achieve together with you; good judgment; ability to problem-solve; and creativity.

HOW ARE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS UNIQUELY SUITED TO TRIGGER A WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION IN JEWISH AWARENESS?

Consider the implications of the collective power of an estimated 30,000 students and young professionals internationally, currently studying about Judaism, many of whom travel to Israel, who develop a transformed appreciation of Jewish life. If these people would then inspire another 30,000 friends to plug into Jewish programs (that’s one student or young professional per person), we’re on the road to creating a worldwide movement.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING & SOURCES

Rabbi Warren Goldstein, *Defending the Human Spirit: Jewish Law’s Vision for a Moral Society* Feldheim 2006, see Ch. 2, Political Power