



THE TASK OF LEADERSHIP

FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE ARE INEXTRICABLY bonded together. The Torah describes details of the service in the Temple which, although destroyed two thousand years ago, remains the inner reality of Jewish consciousness. The Temple is in the past, and will also be in the future. Hence it teaches us about the present.

In the Temple service, every day the High Priest would enter the sacred hall of the Temple, where the lights of the golden Menorah burned. The Sedra¹ describes the special clothes he wore. From this we can learn something about the nature of Jewish leadership.

The High Priest was the spiritual representative of the entire Jewish people. On their behalf he entered the Temple, where the presence of G-d was revealed. The Rabbis tell us that his clothes expressed his bond with all other Jews.

On each shoulder he wore an onyx stone, set in gold. On the stones were engraved the names of the Twelve Tribes, six on each stone. A golden chain, passing from each onyx stone on the shoulder, supported the 'Breastplate of Judgement', worn on his chest. On the Breastplate were twelve different precious stones. Each jewel was engraved with the name of one of the Twelve Tribes.

This means that the High Priest carried with him the names of the Tribes, the totality of the Jewish people. When he entered the Temple

this acted as a remembrance before G-d, expressing the plea that G-d should remember His people and look on them with favour.

Was this remembrance only on behalf of those righteous Jews who dedicatedly express the noble traditions to their people? No. The Sages explain that the garments of the High Priest linked him with everyone. Thus another garment he wore was a blue cloak. On its hem there were “pomegranates” made of coloured wool, within which were bells made of gold. When he walked, the bells could be heard, perhaps similar to the way we hear the bells on the crown of the Torah Scroll today.

The Sages tell us that the “pomegranates” are a symbol for those people who imagine themselves to be completely remote from Judaism². They may think of themselves in this way, but the Talmud states that that “even the emptiest among you are as full of good deeds as a pomegranate is full of seeds”³. When the High Priest entered the Holy Sanctuary he carried with him these Jews as well, together with all others, evoking G-d’s blessing for them and arousing in all of them their sense of being joined with G-d.

Through the generations this has been the function of Jewish leadership: to ask G-d for blessing for the Jewish people, and to remind all of us that we have great spiritual power⁴.

This was the role of Mordechai, during the stirring times commemorated by Purim, which begins on Saturday night. Many Jews in the vast Persian empire were deeply assimilated. However, Mordechai was able to arouse them to face the threat posed by Haman and to stand up for being Jewish. They had the chance to escape by converting to Haman’s religion, bowing to him and worshipping him. Mordechai, caring for every single Jew, was able to inspire them all. He made them recognise that, however remote they sometimes may feel, the true inner reality of each person is the portion of G-d within. This recognition triggered the Divine response described in the Scroll of Esther, the miraculous turnabout in which the Jewish people were saved.

1. Exodus 27:20-30:10. 2. *Akedah*, Tetzaveh, Gate 51; *Torah Or* 80c. 3. Eruvin 19a. 4. Based freely on the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s *Likkutei Sichot*, vol. 21, p 188.

Torah teachings are holy - please treat this page with care
SPONSORED BY DR REUVEN JOEL



SEDRA TETZAVEH - PURIM

LEADERS IN THE SCIENCE MUSEUM

It was a crisp Tuesday morning. Ben and Josh came to school early today. They had been asked by the headmaster to attend the Year 7 class trip to a science museum as leaders for one of the groups of boys. It was a treat for Purim. The headmaster had told them that as Year 10 boys, they were mature and responsible. He believed they would be great helpers. Ben and Josh felt very grown-up and responsible.

They were assigned six boys to take around the science museum. When they arrived, Ben and Josh were careful to make sure they always had the boys with them and that no one got lost. They went through the museum with the boys, tried out different experiments and read many interesting facts.

At one point, Josh and Ben were distracted by a really fascinating display, and for a few minutes they forgot about the boys. When they turned around, they saw that all six boys were gone. They were very worried, and ran in different directions to try to find them. They anxiously looked through every part of the building to spot at least one of the boys.

Suddenly they heard a loud voice saying: "Who do you boys belong to?"

Uh ooooooh, Josh thought, that had better not be them! He and Ben hurried to where the voice was coming from. They saw the six boys standing there red-faced and one of the security guards looking very upset.

"Are you in charge of these boys? They were in a room that was off limits to visitors. There is a reason why the sign says

'Staff Only', boys! There was dangerous equipment there. They could have been hurt!"

The Year 7 boys apologized and felt bad for what they had done. They thought they could have a small adventure, but it landed them in a very sorry place.

The Science teacher, Mr Shaw, who was also on the trip, heard the commotion and came over to the group. He apologized to the security guards profusely and told the boys that they would suffer consequences for their actions.

"But it was our fault really," Ben said, "We got distracted and we weren't watching them for a moment." "Yes, we should really be blamed for this incident." Josh added. "We are really sorry" he said, turning to the security guards. "Don't worry," said the main guard, smiling. "I wouldn't like to get the boys into trouble. Especially since you have such caring leaders!"

The guards went away, and Mr Shaw turned to Josh and Ben. "Boys, I am very impressed with you. You are acting like real leaders, taking responsibility for your actions. Like in the Sedra. The Sages point out you do not find Moses' name mentioned in this Sedra. On account of the Golden Calf, G-d told Moses that He wanted to wipe out the Jews, and He would start the Jewish nation again from Moses. Moses told G-d that if He wipes out the Jews then G-d should wipe out Moses' own name from His Torah. That didn't happen of course, but because Moses said that, you find that in this Sedra, Moses's name is not mentioned. This emphasises that he was a real leader, taking responsibility for the Jews.

"And later on, Mordechai did the same, inspiring the Jews to remain true to Judaism despite Haman's terrible decree. And so too all our great leaders. They care about the Jewish people more than they care about themselves. And that's what you did today, boys. I'm very proud of you!" The boys blushed and thanked him.

"Now run along and continue being the great leaders you are with your group of boys!"

***Torah teachings are holy –
please treat this page with care***