



## *Parshas Yisro 2024, the most capable leader*

***The Parsha Perspective is in honor of Eretz Yisroel. May G-d protect our brave soldiers. May G-d return all the hostages and return them immediately.***

*The Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Hinda Bas Udl and those who need to experience a speedy and complete recovery with G-d's help. And in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and memories a blessing.*

The release date of this episode coincides with the Yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Along with being the daughter of the previous Chabad Rebbe, she was the partner in any campaign or action the Rebbe undertook. In her merit, may we experience the ultimate redemption and the coming of Moshiach!

Our Parsha has the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments, making it one of the most significant portions of the Torah. G-d came down to the mountain and said the Ten Commandments, confirming that we are His chosen nation.

Just six weeks after leaving Egypt, the Jewish nation arrived at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Moshe instructs them to purify themselves for three days in preparation for the giving of the Torah. They can't approach or touch the mountain, for it is holy and pure; only Moshe and Aaron were allowed to be on it.

On the third morning, the shofar's piercing sound grew louder as smoke, thunder and lightning covered the mountaintop. G-d descended upon Mt. Sinai as the terrified and frightened Jewish people gathered around its base. G-d then said the Aseres Hadibros, the Ten Commandments, to the trembling and traumatized Jewish nation.

So overwhelmed, they turned to Moshe and begged him to act as an intermediary, for G-d's holy and divine words were more than they could physically handle. Moshe agreed but responded (20:17), ***"Don't fear G-d, for He has shown Himself to you so that you fear Him and not sin."***

However, a question comes to mind: Just prior to the Jewish people receiving the Torah by Mt. Sinai, Yisro gives his son in law some unsolicited advice. He says to Moshe Rabbeinu that he should establish a system with judges and rabbis to answer the nation's questions. Yisro reasoned Moshe will wear himself out and be unable to properly lead the Jewish people if Moshe does it alone. He says (18:21) ***"You shall seek out from the nation, capable individuals who fear G-d, honest men who will hate bribes."*** But why did Yisro not add to the criteria that the judges should be smart and knowledgeable? How could they determine and adjudicate cases if they aren't learned and educated on the laws? Why didn't Yisro add that the judges and rabbis must be Torah scholars to settle disputes and answer questions?!

The Ramban, Rav Moshe Ben Nachman gives an interesting answer. He writes that the term **אֲנָשֵׁי־חַיִל** - **capable individuals**, indicates that those who Moshe would choose would have significant Torah knowledge to judge the nation. They would be Torah scholars with a deep understanding of the many laws, rules and regulations that G-d set upon His chosen people.

According to the Ramban, the brilliance and ability of the potential judges is inherent to the qualifications of leading the people. He quotes Moshe Rabbeinu in Sefer Devarim, where he recounts the requirements of leadership within the Jewish nation. (Devarim 1:12) ***"Pick from each tribe, men who are wise, discerning, and experienced, and I will appoint them as tribal leaders."***

However, the Baal HaTurim, Rav Yakkov Ben Asher, gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He agrees that Torah knowledge is a prerequisite to being a judge, **but it is not the most important element of leadership.** Yisro's recommendation was not to find the smartest individuals to judge the nation, rather, find the most capable people to lead the nation the next phase of their lives.

The Baal HaTurim explains that the qualifications of a judge are much more than just understanding of Torah and its many laws. A proper judge must first have an immense fear of G-d, then be honest, capable, wise and trustworthy. A judge must always act and be above board and recognize that they represent something far greater than themselves.

The term **אָנְשֵׁי-הַיָּל** - **capable individuals**, is ambiguous only because it includes many characteristics, they must be G-d fearing, honest, wise, fair, and confident. They should pursue justice for the sake of justice alone and be an example for the nation to aspire to. Similar to a **אִשַּׁת הַיָּל** - **A woman of valor**, who is the holiness and bedrock of her home. Judges and leaders are the foundation of our society and must G-d fearing and above board before any other quality.

This profound lesson in leadership is relevant as we reflect on the life of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. A beacon of modesty, her life teaches us the profound impact of inner strength and quiet influence.

As the Rebbe's wife and partner, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka could have been immersed in fame and admiration. Yet, she chose a path of exceptional modesty, influencing profoundly in a gentle, yet powerful manner.

Her strength flowed from an inner fountain of faith, courage, and dedication to the Jewish people. In a world often captivated by external fame, her life remains a testament to the true essence of influence and character.

In our daily life, we often encounter different forms of leadership. From our homes to our communities, the impact of a leader is unmistakable. Yet, true leadership goes beyond mere management, it's rooted in qualities that transcend conventional skill sets. A leader who embodies a faith in G-d and honesty sets a standard that inspires others to do the same.

**"Leadership is, I have argued, the acceptance of responsibility. Therefore if we are all responsible for one another, we are all called on to be leaders, each within our sphere of influence – be it within the family or community.**

**–Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

*Have a meaningful Shabbos! Rabbi Sholom Yemini*