



GROWTH

At The

SHABBAT TABLE

PARSHAT SHEMOT

Real Leadership

Why did Hashem choose Moshe to be the first leader of the Jewish people?

The famous answer is that Moshe was a shepherd, and once, while he was shepherding the flock, one of the sheep ran away. Moshe pursued it, and when he finally caught up to it, he picked up the little sheep. "You were thirsty and looking for water," he said. "Let me bring you to a spring to hydrate you." Seeing that, G-d decided that Moshe was the proper candidate. "I see how you even take care of a single lost sheep," said Hashem. "I'm going to entrust you with My children."

Although it's a beautiful story, one can't help wondering.... is that really such a big deal? Just imagine someone gave you a puppy to watch for a few weeks as he goes away for vacation, and the puppy runs away. Of course you have to go looking for it; it's your basic responsibility! Why, then, are we so astounded with Moshe's action?

R' YY Jacobson shared a phenomenal explanation. Moshe didn't only go to pursue the sheep. He was teaching something incredibly profound. And that is: when you see a sheep that leaves the herd and runs away, instead of labeling it as a rebel, a horrible sheep, or as the "black sheep of the family," find out what she's thirsty for. Moshe understood that there is a thirst and yearning, that this sheep needs something and she's not getting it in the herd, so he said: "Let me give you what you need."

In essence, Moshe was teaching a timeless lesson for every leader, teacher, parent, and mentor. When encountering a "black sheep of the family," before giving labels and judging, find out what she's thirsty for...

Key to Success

A certain man had dreamed of being successful in life, and after a while, he decided that it was time to buckle down and turn his dreams into a reality. He had heard of a masterful teacher, a guru who was thriving in some far-off beach. After some research, he found the exact location and he flew out. He knocked on the guru's door and begged, "All I want in life is to be successful. I want to build something with my life and achieve the extraordinary. How do I do it?" The guru took a good look at him and after a few moments, he told the man, "Meet me tomorrow by the water, 5:30 in the morning. I'll teach you how to be successful." The man couldn't have been more excited, and agreed to the guru's instructions.

The next morning, the man found himself ready at 5:30 by the water, dressed in his suit. He immediately wished he had worn his bathing suit, though, after the guru told him to walk into the water. The man walked about knee-deep into the ocean and turned around to ask, "Okay, so can you teach me how to be successful?" The guru didn't hesitate. "Keep walking." Trusting the guru's wisdom, the man continued to walk until he was about waist-deep. "Keep going," the guru instructed. The man continued until he was already shoulder-deep. "Now can you teach me...?" The guru smiled. "I didn't tell you to stop walking." Finally, the man was nose-deep, but right before he could turn around, the guru shoved the man's head underneath the water. Out of nowhere, the man was being drowned, and in full-panic mode, he tried breaking free of the guru's grasp. However, the guru was just too strong; the man tried breaking free with all his might but to no avail. After several moments of wrestling without air, just before the man was about to lose consciousness, the guru pulled him out of the water and asked him a question he would never forget. "Just now, when you were underwater, what did you want most?" Without hesitation, the man answered that he wanted, more than anything, to breathe. The guru explained: "When you want to succeed as much as you just wanted to breathe, then you'll be successful." [1]

Our Sages teach us, "בדרך שאדם רוצה לילך מוליכים אותו". This means that when a person has a burning desire for something, his will is so strong that he can and will end up where he wants to be. An individual's *ratzon* can never be underestimated. Anything is within reach; it's just a question of "how badly do you want it?"

[1] Story recounted by R' Shmuel Reichman

"The test of faith is whether I can make space for difference. Can I recognize G-d's image in someone who is not in my image, whose language, faith, and ideals are different from mine? If I cannot, then I have made G-d in my image instead of allowing Him to remake me in His."

(R' Jonathan Sachs)

Refuah Sheleimah, b'toch she'ar cholei Yisrael:

Ariel Ben Frida	Noach Ephraim Ben Elka Sara	Avigayil Bat Tehillah
Frida Bat Yaffa	Miriam Bat Bakol	Chana Bat Malka
David Ben Rivka	David Ben Tzivvia	Tzvi Dov Ben Sarah
Rena Bat Bakol	Ariella Bat Hila	Yitzhak Ben Naama
Noach Yisrael Ben Victoria Yaffa	Zev David Ben Sara	Yehoshua Ben Miriam
Rachamim Ben Shifra	Sofia Bat Vera Barno	