



Ian Schwartz
Gush Chapter
Director
I Spy

This week's parsha addresses the challenges and responsibilities of leadership. We see that Am Israel complain about their hardships. First, generally as an unspecified complaint (פרק"א א-ג), but then a more specific complaint that seems somewhat absurd: "The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost" (פרק"א ד-ה).

Am Israel seems to have forgotten that in Egypt they had been slaves, and that they had cried out to be freed by God. There was something so horrible about this behavior that it induced Moshe into a breakdown, as he turns to Hashem and says that he cannot carry the weight of the people on his own.

Hashem responds by instructing Moshe to gather seventy elders to share the leadership burden with him. We learn from this about leadership and the importance of collaboration. Moshe recognizes that he cannot bear the weight of leadership alone and seeks assistance.

The Rambam, in משנה תורה, reflects on the qualities of a good leader. He writes in Hilchot Melachim (ב:ב): "A king should be of great stature and the most outstanding in his generation, surpassing all others in his

wisdom and understanding. He should be gentle and lowly of spirit, for the higher a person rises, the humbler he should become."

From the Rambam's words, we learn that leadership is not about wielding power but about humility and wisdom. A true leader should prioritize the wellbeing of his people and show compassion and understanding.

The selection of the seventy elders also highlights the significance of shared responsibility within a community. This teaches us that true leadership is about serving the people and seeking their collective welfare.



Ruth Derfler
10th Grade, Elazar
**40 years -
Was it Our Fault**

In this week's parsha we begin reading about the instructions for the lighting of the menorah in the mishkan. The menorah represents the divine light, symbolizing the presence of God among the nation. The act of lighting the menorah is a reminder that each person has the potential to bring light and holiness into the world. It teaches us that leadership is not just the responsibility of a chosen few but is a calling for all individuals.

Later on in the parsha, we encounter the nation complaining about how they are tired of eating manna and want to eat meat. Moshe rabbenu gets very overwhelmed by the people's complaints and asks Hashem for help. Hashem then instructs Moshe

to gather seventy elders to share the burden of leadership. This act highlights the importance of delegating responsibility and recognizing the unique strengths and abilities of others.

We also witness the pivotal moment when Miriam is afflicted with tzaraat as a result of speaking lashon hara about her brother. This incident teaches us about the destructive power of gossip and the necessity of cultivating a community rooted in love, respect, and positive communication.

As we study this week's parsha we should be inspired to embrace our own leadership potential and to cultivate an environment of unity, respect, and kindness within our communities. May we strive to be sources of light, bringing holiness and positivity into the world, and may we recognize the inherent value and power of each individual in the pursuit of a better and more harmonious society.

We can learn a lot about ourselves from this week's parsha and it should be a mirror to look into and reflect from and see how we ourselves can contribute to our own communities. We should be open and willing to better ourselves as a person to better our surroundings and bring a more positive light into the world. ■

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