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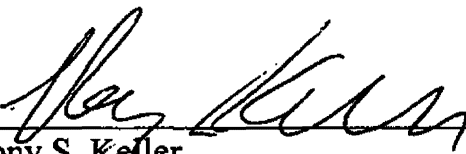
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**TIMELESS LEADERSHIP:
AN EXAMINATION OF CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP STYLES
THROUGH THE LENS OF BIBLICAL LEADERS**



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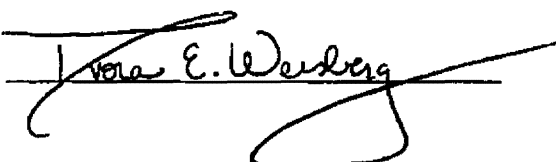


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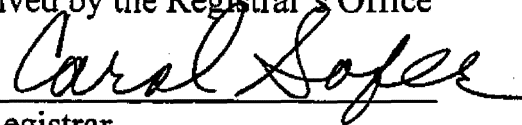
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THE LENS OF BIBLICAL LEADERS

by

David Eshel & Rony S. Keller

Advisor:
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Introduction

Why do people all over the world, of various religions and races, consider figures like Moses, Devorah, David, and Ezra leaders? What characteristics of their persona, actions, and words compelled people to follow them? Who were these influential individuals? What societal circumstances as described in biblical texts mandated responses by these leaders? Who followed these leaders, and why? According to the text, what types of leadership styles did they demonstrate?

In this paper, we will examine these biblical leaders through the in-depth study of texts from Tanach, Midrash, Talmud, and commentaries; specifically focusing on how the rabbis viewed these leaders and critiqued the special characteristics and qualities that aided them in their leadership. Lastly, in our textual exploration, we will probe contemporary scholarly works on each individual leader, as well as the general topic.

Following the textual analysis, in the final chapter of this work, we develop a curriculum based on our research and findings. Using biblical and post-biblical material as a foundation, we will simultaneously compare our findings to modern and universal leadership and management styles. This curriculum should be used as a course of study for mature students, ranging in age from confirmation to adulthood. Specifically, this curriculum will be ideal for teen youth groups, Hillel student boards, synagogue boards, and overall staff development.

Although the bulk of this work will focus on a more humanistic view of the bible and its biblical leaders (i.e. through authorship rather than through divine inspiration), it is important to remember that for the Tanach, Talmud, and later commentators, these characters' actions were God-centered. Our examination of these biblical leaders will

mainly utilize a historical lens. "One need not recognize the Bible's narrative thrust as either Divine or as an amalgam of numerous myths, folktales, and epics. Instead, a modern interpreter of the Bible has the option of seeing it as a rich and multilayered piece of historicized fiction; as a written actualization of the monotheistic idea; and as an exploration of the contested relationship between an omniscient creator and free-willed humans."¹

The remainder of our introductory section will provide a brief overview of the four biblical characters cited in this work, as well as synopses of the contemporary styles used to evaluate their leadership.

Biblical Leaders

Moses – Leader, prophet, and lawgiver. Commissioned to take the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses led them from his 80th year to his death at 120 during their wanderings in the wilderness until their arrival at the Plains of Moab. Moses was born in Egypt to Levite parents—Amram son of Kohath son of Levi, and Jochebed daughter of Levi. He was their third child, after Aaron and Miriam. The primary sources for the story of Moses' life and works are in the biblical books Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.²

Devorah – Judge and prophetess during the period of the Judges. Devorah promoted the war of liberation from the oppression of Jabin king of Canaan. She is cited as a primary author of the Song of Devorah. Unsuccessful efforts have been made to determine the exact time and place of Devorah's war within the general framework of the conquest of Canaan and the period of the Judges or to date the song by means of geography or the

¹ www.ajc.org/site/c.ijIT12PHKoG/b.1038423/k.B6B2/Canon__Study_Guide__The_Art_of_Biblical_Narrative.htm

² Encyclopedia Judaica – Moses

political situation reflected in it. The primary sources for the story of Deborah's life and works are contained in the Book of Judges.³

David – The youngest son of Jesse. He is a descendant of the Ephrathite family that lived in Beth-Lehem in Judah. David's successes against his external enemies were achieved not only by military power but also by diplomatic talent and the successful exploitation of the politics of his time. The chief and most important task which faced David was to convert the loose pre-monarchic national union of the tribes of Israel into a territorially defined political body. He brought the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem. David made preparations for the building of the Temple, and even arranged for the Temple service. The primary sources for the story of David's life and works are contained in the biblical books of Samuel, the early chapters of Kings, and Chronicles.⁴

Ezra – Priest and scribe who played a major role in the rebuilding of the Temple, after the return from the Babylonian exile. Ezra was apparently an important person in Babylon before he assumed the role of religious leader of the Jewish community in Jerusalem. The primary sources for the story of Ezra's life and works are contained in the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah.⁵

³ Encyclopedia Judaica – Deborah

⁴ Encyclopedia Judaica – David

⁵ Encyclopedia Judaica – Ezra

Leadership Styles

Affiliative Leadership – The affiliative leader represents collaborative competence in action. Affiliative leaders are most concerned with promoting harmony among their people. They do this by trying to foster friendly and meaningful interactions. Further, by nurturing personal relationships, they expand and build the bonds already developed. The result is a stronger willingness and desire by the people to connect to their leader. The people will more easily embrace the vision set by the leader, buying in and making it their own. The affiliative leader will focus on the emotional goals and wellbeing of the people, many times even at the expense of the greater vision. The hope is that this personal care, connection, and sacrifice will ultimately benefit the greater vision with a stronger desire by the people for connection to their leader.⁶

Charismatic Leadership – The authority of the charismatic leader is considered to be endowed from birth. This person is born with physical and/or mental traits that differ from everyone else. Both the charismatic leader and his or her followers regard these attributes as emanating from God. This is a key component. The followers must be willing to recognize such authority. Without this, the charismatic leader remains irrelevant and meaningless. Therefore, charismatic leadership is regarded as a process of interaction between the personality of the leader and his or her followers, exploring a shared vision and achieving a desired objective. The emergence of a charismatic leader requires a certain favorable climate. This climate is one of crisis, insecurity, and stagnation.⁷

⁶ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 63-65.

⁷ Malamat, 158-160.

Coaching Leadership – The coaching leader focuses on deep conversations that go beyond the everyday concerns. Instead they explore an individual's life. They explore goals, beliefs, and personal hopes. Coaching leaders encourage their people to establish long term meaningful goals as well as envision ways of reaching those goals. They act as counselors, helping their people explore their values and expand their abilities. This style of leadership works best with people who show initiative and desire development. This form of leadership has the potential to fail if individuals lack motivation or require excess direction.⁸

Collaborative Leadership – To work in collaboration means to work as a team. In working together towards a greater goal, often much more may be achieved. A collaborative leader creates full staff investment, a shared vision, and strong/positive group dynamics. Collaborative leadership requires that a leader assess a variety of options before taking action. The leader should gather all information from his/her constituents and engage in active listening. Acting in collaborative leadership may be challenging because these leaders often become much more like followers and should practice self-restraint. Finally, the blueprint for collaborative leadership includes constituents assuming roles typically held by leaders, approving/disapproving decisions made by leaders, and there is a partnership in implementation.⁹

Command Leadership – This style of leadership does not provide the followers with occasion to lead or really be part of the team. This type of leadership is necessary in situations when a leader is scarcely clinging onto his/her influence or during a crisis; the

⁸ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 59-63.

⁹ Aron, 86.

type of leadership that is necessary when the circumstances call for immediate, decisive action, and there is no time (at least in the mind of the leader) for explanation and team building. Command leadership is not recommended when the leader is able to include his or her constituents in the decision making process. When command leadership is over-utilized it can create reliance in followers and cast them in subordinate roles. Subordinates typically do what they are supposed to, and little else. Command leadership soothes fears by providing clear and concise directions.¹⁰

Hierarchical Leadership – This form of leadership provides followers with an efficient, top-down, I say-you do system. Within hierarchical leadership, people know their roles, and function solely based upon the leader's energy and enthusiasm. Hierarchical leaders do not share the vision with their constituents and therefore a follower might censor information from the leader out of fear.¹¹

Instructional Leadership – This style of leadership maintains that if one combines moral imagination with interpersonal competence a true balance may be reached for both the leader and follower. Moral imagination is direction, focused on the probability for improvement; seeing the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be. Interpersonal competence is the ability to convey vision, understand others' perspective as well as eliciting a desired task response from others by having them join you in moral, imagination.¹²

¹⁰ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 76.

¹¹ Aron, 82-83.

¹² Greenfield, 60-64.

Servant/Steward Leadership – Servant leadership is one where the leader models the activities that he/she expects others to perform. A servant leader is an intent listener, knowing that genuine listening both builds strength in others and provides information for problem solving. This style of leadership states that individuals are free to make autonomous decisions, as long as these decisions embody the values shared by the community. For example, a servant leader would perform menial and laborious tasks to demonstrate that all members of the organization need to share in the realization of the vision and values. By engaging in this behavior, the leader builds trust among his/her constituents, and thus furthers the perpetuation of the group's vision.¹³

Transactional Leadership – Transactional leaders are always fully aware of their greater vision. This form of leadership provides the followers an opportunity to have significant input on the group's final outcome. The leader unconditionally shares the vision with his/her constituents and together they work to make the vision a reality. In this style of leadership the leader does not create the vision with the people, but they do work as a team to bring it to fruition.

Transmissional Leadership – This form of leadership is closely related to transactional leadership, only in this case, the leader expects the constituents to follow his/her lead. The people are aware of the vision but ultimately have no input into its implementation. This style of leadership is essentially authoritative, where the followers follow, but not blindly.

¹³ Sergiovanni, 274.

Visionary Leadership – The visionary leader is inspirational, self confident, self aware and definitely empathetic. The visionary leader is able to clearly articulate purpose and connect it to the values shared by the people. Empathy is crucial, allowing the leader to sense how the people feel and to understand their perspective. This helps the leader articulate an inspirational vision. The visionary leader also articulates where the people are going, but not necessarily how they are going to get there. This sets people free to innovate, experiment, and take risks. Knowing the vision gives people clarity, and believing in the vision builds connection, commitment, and pride. Visionary leadership can be particularly effective when people are lost during a time of change or if they are stagnant and in need of direction.¹⁴

¹⁴ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 57-59.

Chapter I

Moses

There are few people in the world who do not recognize the name Moses. Certainly, anyone familiar with the מֹשֶׁה (Hebrew Bible) has heard of Moses. Much of the exodus and the entirety of the Israelites' story are associated with this great man because he was the pivotal figure in the Israelites' desert experience. Even those unaffiliated with the three Abrahamic religions have some understanding of Moses; however, for Jews especially, the utterance of Moses' name evokes countless images of the exodus, the Passover Seder, and the quintessential components of leadership. Why is the name Moses such a household term? What was so special about this man that raises him above so many other biblical and non-biblical leaders? Why was he considered a leader? How did he lead? Why did people follow him? Why was he chosen by God? He was a fascinating individual, but was he born that way?

Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and through the desert, but he worked under God's guidance and tutelage. Although the majority of this chapter will focus on a more humanistic view of Moses, it is important to remember that for the Torah and later commentators, Moses' actions were God-centered. This paper will utilize various scholarly works demonstrating Moses' ability to be an authority as the Israelites' leader while still maintaining himself as God's conduit.

First, I will trace the history of Moses' leadership through the Torah. Second, I will provide textual examples as support for Moses' legitimacy as a leader. Third, the chapter will illustrate Moses' development and his influence on the Israelites as a people. Next, the chapter will examine Moses' humility and his ability to relinquish his

leadership to Joshua. Finally, I will analyze Moses' leadership style, drawing on various contemporary leadership models and theories.

Looking at Moses' birth, it did not seem that he would become a great leader; he was born into hopeless situation. Born during the Pharaoh's decree to kill all the first born Israelite males, he was immediately forced into hiding. He was sent down the Nile River and raised as an Egyptian prince. From a young age, Moses was a resilient character, destined for survival, both due to his mother's courage and his own ability to stay alive and adapt to new surroundings. After some time, Moses realized his true family roots and then embraced his Israelite heritage by killing an Egyptian taskmaster who was whipping an Israelite. Following this realization, Moses left Egypt and traveled to the desert as a place for introspection¹⁵. In the desert he met Zipporah; he lived in the desert with his wife, children, and father-in-law, Jethro. Moses' destiny found him; while in the desert Moses realized the path that his life would follow.

While tending to Jethro's flock, Moses noticed a burning bush that was not consumed by the fire (Exodus 3:2). It was at this point when Moses' life changed forever. All of his life experiences were leading to this moment; while standing in front of that bush engulfed in flame, Moses was singled out to lead the Israelites out of slavery. Also at that instant, although unbeknownst to him at the time, Moses became the greatest leader that Judaism has ever known, later earning the praise of the Torah: "And there has not arisen since in Israel a prophet [leader] like Moses, whom Adonai knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10).

Many scholars who study leadership often ask the question: are leaders born or made? In Moses' case, it seems that both are true. We are invited to wonder if all of

¹⁵ Staak, 7.

Moses' experiences leading up to the moment of revelation provided him with the tools to lead a nation. The exodus narrative clearly shows that there is something special about Moses; however, in addition to being chosen by God, Moses' personal experiences also helped prepare him to lead Israel. Whether through his personal choices or through God's hand, Moses' life prepared him for his future endeavors. "He learned how to live in an arid, uninhabited region with only his herd around him. The practical lessons he gained at this time were to stand him in good stead later on. Every moment he had to be alert to danger. His duties, however, left him many solitary hours to think. Alone in the wilderness, Moses' spirit was trained and tempered."¹⁶ While he tended to Jethro's flock, Moses was preparing to tend to the Israelites. This time of solitude in the desert taught Moses the skills to survive on his own. Therefore, from a historical point of view, when the time came to lead the Israelites, Moses knew how to make water potable or how to survive with little food.

Moses was a truly unique individual; however an undeniable question arises: other great individuals must have existed in biblical times, why did God choose Moses of all people? How could a child born into a hopeless situation, raised as an Egyptian prince, later become a lonely shepherd, and receive the call from God to lead the Israelites out of bondage? Many of these questions are not obvious, the answers hidden deep within the text. However with the aid of Midrash, these complex questions concerning Moses' leadership are further clarified.

According to Rabbi Ari Zivotofsky, there are four biblical citations, later traced through Midrash, that provide reasons for God's choice of Moses:

¹⁶ Ibid.

- 1) And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out (וַיֵּצֵא) to his brothers, and looked on their burdens; and he saw (וַיִּרְא) an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man (וַיֵּשׂ), he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. (Exodus 2:11-12)
- 2) And when he went out (וַיֵּצֵא) the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews struggled together; and he said to the one who did the wrong, why do you strike your fellow? And he said who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, certainly this thing is known. (Exodus 2:13-14)
- 3) And when Pharaoh heard this matter, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. And the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up (וַיִּקָּם) and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, how is it that you have come so soon today? And they said, an Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and also drew enough water for us, and watered the flock. (Exodus 2:15-19)
- 4) And Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock far away into the desert, and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb. And the angel of Adonai appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when Adonai saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. (Exodus 3:1-4)

"As each of these stories is examined in light of the rabbinic literature it will be seen that a common theme emerges. Moses is consistently portrayed as not only caring and concerned for others, but also willing and ready to act upon those feelings."¹⁷ In the first citation (Exodus 2:11-12), Moses could have easily been seen as an ill-tempered individual who acted upon impulse. However, the rabbis of the Midrash saw a different man; they saw a person who was genuinely concerned for his fellow Israelites by examining the usage of the word נָקָם. *AND HE LOOKED (וַיִּרְא) ON THEIR BURDENS.* *What is the meaning of AND HE LOOKED? He looked upon their burdens and wept, saying: 'Woe is me for you; would that I could die for you.' There is no labor more strenuous than that of handling clay, and he used to shoulder the burdens and help each*

¹⁷ Zivotofsky, 259.

one. (Exodus Rabbah 1:27)¹⁸ Moses was so overwhelmed with emotion and sadness for his brethren that he took action and performed the necessary duties of a leader.

The rabbis of the Midrash thus dismiss the possibility that Moses acted impulsively by insisting that Moses was simply demonstrating the characteristics of a leader. In addition to this initial question of Moses' motivation for killing the taskmaster, a further question arises regarding Moses' behavior in this situation. If in fact Moses' act of murder was justified, why then did he look around for witnesses (שִׂיחַ) before killing the taskmaster? If his actions were justified, then why did he behave cautiously? The answer to this question lies within an analysis of word שִׂיחַ. If the word שִׂיחַ is understood as a mensch, not just as a person, then Moses did not see a true man anywhere around him worthy of taking action. Leviticus Rabbah (32:4) further supports Moses' actions: *R. Judah says: He saw that there was none to stand up and display zeal in the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, so he slew him himself. R. Nehemiah says: He saw that there was none to stand up and utter the Ineffable Name against him, so he slew him.* There was no "man" (שִׂיחַ) standing there at that moment to do the right thing, therefore Moses took the duty upon himself, as a leader. Lastly, in reference to this first citation regarding Moses killing the Egyptian taskmaster, the strongest defense of Moses' actions comes from Pirkei Avot (2:5). Hillel states: *In a place where there is no man (שִׂיחַ), strive to be a man (שִׂיחַ).*¹⁹

This first citation demonstrates Moses' passion for morality; he was a man of action who consistently fought for justice. "Did he better the lot of the Jewish people with his deed? Perhaps not and maybe he did not even help that one Jew, who might

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 260-261.

have already been dead, but he could not stand idly by and watch an injustice. He was a man (אִישׁ) of action.”²⁰

Like the previous citation, the opening words of the second citation state that Moses went out (יָצָא), seemingly illustrating that Moses maintained the same attitude as the day before. Moses went out (יָצָא) ready to continue his actions as a leader and pursue justice. However, when Moses intervenes between two quarreling Israelites he is not greeted in a kind way; instead they question his authority as the man (אִישׁ) who suddenly acts as a judge over them. Responding to these remarks by the Israelites, Exodus Rabbah 1:30 promotes the idea that Moses was always the chosen leader, even before God officially spoke to him. *R. Judah said: Moses was twenty years old then. They said to him: ‘You are not yet fit to be a judge and ruler over us, for only a man of forty possesses full understanding.* Responding to the accusatory tone of his brethren, the rabbis assert that Moses already possessed his leadership skills, albeit underdeveloped. The time he later spent in the desert maturing and growing provided him the perfect balance of leadership skills and maturity.²¹

After slaying the Egyptian taskmaster and confronting the quarreling Israelites, Moses fled Egypt fearing that the Pharaoh would kill him. He ran through the desert and finally settled in Midian at a well. When he arrived at the well, he noticed seven women retrieving water for themselves and their animals. However, upon closer examination, he noticed that some shepherds were harassing the women. Moses decided to intervene. The third citation states that when the women were being harassed, Moses stood up (קָם) to help them and water their flock. Once again, Moses was ready for the challenge and rose

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

up to help the women, even though he was a stranger, a refugee from all he had ever known. At this point in the narrative, Moses has performed several selfless acts, however this action is especially notable because he did not have any personal connection with these women; his desire for justice compelled him to assist the women.

When the women returned to their father's house, Jethro asked them what was special about their day. They explained that an Egyptian man (יְהִי מִצְרִי) helped protect them from harassing shepherds and then aided in watering the flocks. The authors of the Midrash are bothered by the retelling of the story to Jethro. They wonder why the women said an Egyptian *man* (יְהִי מִצְרִי) and not just an Egyptian (מִצְרִי) helped them. The rabbis once again analyze the word מִצְרִי, noting that Moses was not merely an Egyptian, but he was an מִצְרִי—a man—willing to stand up and take charge when witnessing injustice.²²

Looking at these three citations we can see a progression in Moses' behavior. Moses' intercessions become broader; first he saved only one Israelite, then he intervened with two Israelites who were quarreling, and finally he assisted seven people whom he had never met. Even more noteworthy is the progression of Moses' ability to handle each event. In the first episode, Moses used brute strength and murdered the taskmaster to control the situation. However, in the second occurrence, he did not use physical strength at all; instead he used the power of speech to mediate between the Israelites. Finally, when Moses encountered the shepherds harassing the women he handled the situation peacefully, even though (theoretically) the shepherds could have been violent. Regardless of the circumstance, Moses remained a man (מִצְרִי), a person who was not afraid to take charge to support his beliefs. "These three stories together represent the

²² Ibid., 262.

course of Moses' development toward becoming a leader. In each he displays the traits of empathy and of standing up to an injustice as a man (אִישׁ), yet after these three incidents he still is not selected to lead the Jewish people, and God has not yet spoken to him."²³

Later in the narrative while Moses was tending to Jethro's flock in the desert, he encountered the burning bush; this encounter became the pivotal point in both Moses' leadership development and in his life. When Moses saw the bush burning, the text states that he turned aside (אָסְרָה־צִיד). This moment, the rabbis suggest, was the actual moment when God chose Moses as the leader for the Israelites. The text says that he turned aside; it does not say that he turned aside to see the bush, or the miracle; it merely states that he turned aside. In that instant when he turned aside, Moses performed the highest of selfless acts. *And when Adonai saw that he turned aside to see; because God saw that Moses turned aside from his duties to look upon their burdens, He called unto him out of the midst of the bush.* (Exodus Rabbah 1:27). Moses was not necessarily interested in miracles of the moment; he was thinking about his brethren, the Israelites, and because of that, God chose Moses to be the leader who led the Israelites out of Egypt.

This is what made Moses special; Moses saw the pain of others. "Others may say that they would help if they had recognized the need; Moses was uniquely sensitive to recognize the need."²⁴ The world knows Moses' name, but it was these acts that made him a unique leader, selected by God. These four citations help explain why Moses may be considered the greatest Jewish leader of all time. These quotes also provide concrete examples of how Moses' leadership developed. "The rabbis were trying to impress upon

²³ Ibid., 263.

²⁴ Ibid., 266.

the reader, the Jewish masses, that ordinary caring is truly great. This is what leaders are made of; this, and not supernatural acts, is what led to the selection of Moses and what made Moses great as a *man* (אִישׁ).²⁵

Throughout the תנ"ך, later rabbinic, and scholarly works, Moses is most often referred to as either a leader or prophet. However, these terms should not be used interchangeably, since different qualities are required of a leader and a prophet. What does it mean to be either of these, and how are they different? Merriam-Webster²⁶ defines a leader as someone who leads; a guide or conductor person who has commanding authority or influence. But what does it mean to lead? In what ways does someone lead?

Rabbi David Lieber, a professor of Bible, discusses these themes, stating that the definition of modern leadership is different from the definition of biblical leadership. Lieber cites the nineteenth century historian and essayist Thomas Carlyle's definition of a leader as someone who writes history. Carlyle claims that history is simply the biography of great men with large numbers of people following them as blindly as sheep wherever they are lead.²⁷ However, "the Bible does not view the leaders of each age simply as people who embody the aspirations of a large number of their fellow men. Rather they are 'persons in situations' placed there by God to perform a task which [God] has set for them."²⁸ According to Lieber, the Bible is not concerned with a leader's interests; rather it is concerned with the outcome of the leader's actions and how history

²⁵ Ibid., 265.

²⁶ "Leader." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2005. <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (29 July 2005).

²⁷ Lieber., 269-270

²⁸ Ibid.

will be shaped by those actions. Leaders within the biblical narratives are therefore catalysts; they serve as vessels who administer God's plan for the nation.

On the other hand, Merriam-Webster²⁹ defines the term prophet as an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group. Although the two terms may seem similar, subtle differences exist between the two words. A leader commands, and a prophet speaks the words of the greater message. By these definitions, Moses could be classified as both a prophet and a leader, commanding the authority of Israel, while simultaneously speaking the words of God. Lieber defines three types of biblical leadership: wisdom, priestly, and prophetic. Wisdom leadership is centered upon a teacher who is the authority on a particular set of literature such as short sayings (Proverbs) and discussions of life (Job). Priestly leadership is focused on the leader preserving the status quo and looking back to the past for assessment. Finally, prophetic leadership is based on a leader who looked towards the future rather than the past. Using Lieber's different models of biblical leadership, we can identify Moses' leadership with a prophetic model. "He [the leader] is the one who brings the original message, establishing the framework and setting the principles. It is he who is divinely commissioned to interpret human history in light of the acts of the God of the covenant, to judge his contemporaries by its demands, and to recall them to their role as the 'covenant people.'"³⁰

As the leader/prophet chosen by God to lead the Israelites from bondage to freedom into the Promised Land, Moses was ready to take action and confront the Pharaoh. Upon his return to Egypt, Moses needed to create a blueprint to free his people,

²⁹ "Prophet." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2005. <http://www.merriam-webster.com> (29 July 2005).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

and lead them into the land promised to them by God. After conquering his own fears concerning his speech impediment and his lack of leadership experience, Moses' next challenge was to gain the confidence of his own brethren. "Somehow Moses must gain their unqualified support and arouse their will to be free, for only with the backing of a united people could he successfully confront the Pharaoh."³¹ Although his true authority came from God, Moses also realized that he needed the support of the Israelites in order to be an effective leader.

In the beginning of his tenure as the leader of the Israelites, Moses gained the trust of the Israelites by serving as a father-figure. "The father is a servant to his children in that he provides for their material well-being. Their needs for food and shelter are never questioned by him and he does his best to supply them. When it comes to moral issues, however, the father turns from servant to an authority, from a functionary to a guide."³² Eventually, Moses becomes the Israelites' guide, magistrate, and overall authoritative leader, but in the immediacy of freeing his brethren, Moses must satisfy the Israelites' physical needs. Similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs³³, Moses needed to tend to the Israelites' immediate physical needs -- food, clothing, and shelter -- before he could tend to their emotional wellbeing. As their relationship deepens, Moses will provide the Israelites with all levels of the hierarchy, eventually preparing them for a new leader and then entrance into the Promised Land.

As the Israelites progressed through the desert and through their journey, Moses' confidence increased, and consequently, his leadership developed as well. Moses

³¹ Staak, 15.

³² Roshwald, 73.

³³ Physiological, Safety, Love, Esteem, and Self Actualization (www.tutor2u.net/.../motivation_theory_maslow.asp)

transitioned from simply providing his people with basic physical needs, and began acting more like their guide. "Like a good teacher, he must have realized that the best way of educating is by combining principle with practice."³⁴ Moses used the manna provided by God to teach the Israelites about consumption, preservation, and how to function as part of a community. First, God spoke: *This is the thing which Adonai has commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons, whom each of you has in his tent* (Exodus 16:16). After God spoke, Moses added: *Let no man leave of it till the morning* (Exodus 16:19). Finally, the Israelites acted: *However they listened not to Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank; and Moses was angry with them* (Exodus 16:20). Moses used this style of educating the Israelites, and they slowly adapted, matured, and accepted Moses as their leader.

"There is no direct highway from slavery to freedom,"³⁵ therefore Moses needed a good strategy. Since Moses had spent long periods of time in the desert shepherding Jethro's flock and since he had God as his guide, it seems that God and Moses had a carefully planned strategy for avoiding the Egyptians after the Israelites left Egypt. *And Adonai spoke to Moses, saying, speak to the people of Israel that they turn and encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal-Zephon; before it, shall you encamp by the sea* (Exodus 14:1-2). "The fact that the Israelites had to turn and to encamp in a precisely designated spot that would look to Pharaoh like a trap for the refugees, but in fact prove a trap for the pursuers, is a fairly clear indication of a planned

³⁴ Roshwald, 78.

³⁵ Staak, 18.

strategy.”³⁶ Moses was more than a motivational leader who mobilized the Israelites into action to hurry out of Egypt and travel into the desert; he was also a strategist or general surveying the field. According to the text, with God’s guidance, Moses was able to maneuver the Israelites into the safest place away from the Egyptians’ pursuit. Moses understood how the people felt, because he too had escaped from Egypt in a hurry, therefore “while the Egyptian chariots thundered on, Moses rallied his demoralized people.”³⁷

Not coincidentally, it was in the desert, under God’s supervision and Moses’ leadership, that the people received the foundations for Judaism. This process took time. The Israelites did not leave Egypt as a unified people; they had no sense of *עם*. “Like Moses himself only a few years before, these wanderers needed to experience the solitude of the wilderness where a man can contemplate something larger than himself. In the desert the [Israelites] were alone with God.”³⁸ Through wandering, self-reflection, and unification, God and Moses provided the people with the framework of living. Although the Israelites’ time in the desert was not an idyllic experience, it was easier to talk about how land would be divided, what laws would govern the people, and how rituals would be performed in the desert, because everyone was on the same level; the rich and the poor intermingled, and discussions transpired without argument because the idea of land and freedom seemed very distant to the former slaves.

Through God’s inspiration and Moses’ direction, the Israelites received three unifying elements that would eventually transform them into a nation. Moses helped to provide them with religion, law, and mode of worship. Some scholars say Moses

³⁶ Roshwald, 81.

³⁷ Staak, 19.

³⁸ Ibid., 20.

developed many of the early Israelite rituals from fragments of local tribal communities or from some of the Egyptian based customs he learned from his youth. Other scholars state that he learned about God and monotheistic religion from his time with Jethro tending to his flocks.³⁹ The Torah credits these institutions to God, portraying Moses as God's aide in establishing these three unifying elements. The religion that Moses introduced essentially brought together a group of unruly slaves and turned them into a cohesive nation under God. God united the people under a new religion and created a set dogma for the people to believe and follow, stating: *I am Adonai your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me* (Exodus 20:2-3). Moses' role as the leader of the people helped him to show the nation the correct path. Understandably, the people were resistant to this new religion, and when Moses (who was dedicated fully to God) discovered that they had strayed so quickly by creating a Golden Calf, he was enraged. Upset at the actions of the Israelites, Moses smashed the definitive law (The 10 Commandments) that he received from God in front of the people. With a resistant people, Moses had his work cut out for him; an attempt to persuade the Israelites that God's path was the correct way. Finally, Moses presented the people with a definitive mode of worship, a system of ritual observance that was to be followed exactly. This precise system of worship was not easy or similar to anything that the Israelites had previously experienced, but they were asked to follow it exactly, and it was Moses' responsibility to ensure success.

Moses always served as the peoples' spokesmen. *And Moses pleaded with Adonai his God, and said, Adonai, why does your anger burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty*

³⁹ Ibid.

hand?...Turn from your fierce anger, and repent of this evil against your people (Exodus 32:11-12). "Moses was torn with compassion for his people. As a leader who loved his followers, he accepted full responsibility for their actions. He felt deeply involved in their destiny."⁴⁰

Moses was at the center of the Israelites' world; he was their judge, arbiter, leader, and support system. The people looked to him for guidance on matters that involved every aspect of their lives in the desert. Some scholars believe that in these instances Moses was the central figure in the lives of the Israelites, the peoples' behavior could be classified as a cult-like following. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, in her article *Moses and the Cults*, expresses concern about the relationship between Moses and the members of the community. In her study of mainstream cults like Hare Krishna and the Moonies, she believes "despite their expressed allegiance to an ultimate god, the main thrust of their belief is the devotion to the group's leader."⁴¹ Besides devotion to a leader, other cult-like characteristics existed during the early stages for this new nation in the desert: willingness to extinguish all ties to any prior religion or faith, low quantities of food and water, and new rituals introduced by the leader. Upon first glance, particular behaviors also may have seemed cultish: "they begin to feel divorced from their former life. This disembodiment from the familiar makes the individual more malleable and more capable of being 'molded into a soldier'; it also makes [him/her] respond more readily to promises of a new identity, a new life of salvation."⁴²

According to Frymer-Kensky, immediately following the departure from Egypt the Israelite community exhibited cult-like characteristics, but after further examination,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁴¹ Frymer-Kensky, 444.

⁴² Ibid., 445.

it quickly becomes obvious that this group of people was not a cult. Although it often seemed like the people were centered on Moses, excluding the Golden Calf incident, the Israelites never worshipped anything other than God. Another proof that the Israelites were not a cult lies in the Israelites inability to cope with their new surroundings and the idea of freedom. The Israelites were so accustomed to slavery that in their first tastes of independence they challenged Moses; when the Egyptians were attacking at the Sea... *they said to Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell you in Egypt, saying, let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness* (Exodus 14:11-12). Based on these actions it is clear that these people were not a cult; they were not behaving with any unity regarding their new endeavors. Most people involved in cults do not notice that they are being brainwashed; however the Israelites were well aware of their changing surroundings, and persistently complained about thirst, hunger, and the adverse conditions. Lastly, unlike a true cult leader, Moses never claimed to be the ultimate authority; he always remained a humble conduit to God.

The people understood that Moses was not God and therefore did not worship him as a god; however, because he did serve as their main agent to God, when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai for a long period of time, the Israelites were confused. The people were placed into a position where their only point of access to their new religion was gone, and that made them nervous. In an attempt to compensate for their sense of abandonment, the people needed another agent and thus built the Golden Calf. The Israelites' actions were abhorrent in the eyes of God and in the eyes of Moses. At the

same time, this moment proved to be another clear example of Moses' love for the people and his outstanding skills as a leader. Moses fought for his people and even stood up to God; Moses' brave action ensured the Israelites' survival. "The incident of the Golden Calf was a critical event marking a turning point in Israel's history, for after Sinai the importance of Moses diminished and he was superseded by the institutions of a developing religion."⁴³

Following the Golden Calf incident, Moses very slowly began diminishing his role as the Israelites' leader. Although he was still their judge and motivator, he and God began introducing other vessels and conduits to God. *And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before Adonai to speak, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spoke to the people of Israel that which he was commanded. And the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with God* (Exodus 34:33-35). Moses started acting closer to God than to the people. While he was veiled and distancing himself, Moses simultaneously introduced two 'intermediaries' between God and the people, in order to provide the Israelites with more direct access to God. The first of these 'intermediaries' was the law. Once the law was introduced to the people, Moses no longer needed to resolve all the Israelites' problems alone; they now had direct contact with God's laws. The second of the 'intermediaries' was the tabernacle. Once the people built this structure, they, like Moses, had visual access to God through the physical, traveling unit, as well as the cloud that often hovered over the tabernacle revealing God's immediate presence.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid., 449.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

During this transition Moses often acted in mysterious and secretive ways. However, ultimately it was Moses' honesty, instinctive leadership, and faith in God that made the people feel he was in control. After the incident of the spies, Moses made sure that the Israelites knew that they would never see the Promised Land; only the next generation would understand freedom and therefore be allowed to enter the land. Although the truth was harsh and difficult to hear, Moses delivered God's message like a true leader; Moses knew that his followers were entitled to the truth and deserved to know the plan for the future. *Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all who were counted of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against me, shall by no means come into the land concerning which I swore to make you live in it, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised* (Numbers 14:29-31). "If you want people to follow your plan, they have to know it."⁴⁵ It was instances like these, when Moses rose up and acted like a leader, providing the Israelites with the definitive plan for the desert experience and letting the people know that they would not see the Land of Israel, that paved the way for future generations to characterize Moses as the quintessential leader figure.

While Moses was a great leader, he was human and had limitations. Unlike most leaders, Moses was able to recognize his own flaws and recognize his personal shortcomings. Moses displayed his fears and feelings of inadequacy when God asked him to free the Israelites. Soon after God's call, Moses said to God: *Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt* (Exodus 3:11) and *What if they don't*

⁴⁵ Baron, 28.

believe me and do not listen to me, but say Adonai did not appear to you (Exodus 4:1)?

Both Moses, with great humility, and God needed to chose a successor; a new leader who would take the next generation of Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua was one of the two spies who entered the land and told the truth about what they saw; therefore he was rewarded with leadership over the Israelites. Joshua's ascension was not only a result of his positive behavior, but also a reflection of Moses' negative behavior. "The failure of Moses to lead the Jewish people into the Promised Land constitutes a central tragedy of the second half of the book of Numbers, and the book of Deuteronomy. The ambiguous circumstances surrounding both his loss of the reins of leadership and his disqualification from entry into the land add to the reader's sense of frustration and wonder."⁴⁶

In line with the proper role of a departing leader, Moses made Joshua's transition as easy and seamless as possible. God and Moses prepared the Israelites for new leadership. Moses not only taught Joshua, he actually groomed him as the future leader. "One of the most vivid images from the bible is that of Moses mentoring Joshua in the 'tent of meeting' ...we only know that when Moses went into the tent *a pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent, and his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not from the Tent* (Exodus 33:9, 11)."⁴⁷

However, despite Moses' willingness to train Joshua, the question remains: why wasn't Moses chosen to lead the people into the land of Israel? Throughout the Torah, the relationship between God and Moses seemed to be characterized by mutual respect, not blind obedience. On many occasions, Moses challenged God's decisions, rulings,

⁴⁶ Helfgot, 51.

⁴⁷ Woolfe, 200.

and ideas, thus providing Moses with a higher status than Noah or even Abraham; he supported the Israelites and challenged some of God's decrees. However, Moses was not allowed into the Promised Land because he did not follow God's instructions precisely on one occasion; this seems to contradict God's previous leniencies and acceptances of Moses' questioning. "He [Moses] was not eager to accept God's mission, and he raised skeptical arguments with God when the first contact with Pharaoh resulted in harsher conditions for the enslaved [Israelites]. Why should that have been condoned, while a doubt, in a moment of great annoyance, should be regarded as a great sin?"⁴⁸ Was Moses' action of striking the rock so bad that it prevented him from entering the land of Israel? Perhaps Moses' punishment was not due to him striking the rock per se; perhaps Moses was held to a higher moral standard than common people. Thus, when he struck the rock rather than speak to it, he was punished for disobeying God's words instead of arguing with God.

Another interpretation of Moses' punishment is not rooted in striking the rock at all. Moses was a wonderful leader, one who fought for the people, acted as their conduit to God, and tended to their needs. However, perhaps leading the Israelites for many years and serving as God's instrument for even longer, took its toll on Moses, both physically and mentally. In his later years, Moses' weariness may have brought about his final demise and "punishment." Similar to the founder of a company who has difficulty relinquishing control, so too, Moses may have had difficulty during his final years. When company executives establish an institution, they have a plan and vision in mind. However, after a long period of time their vision may become outdated, unable to adjust to the changing needs of the company or society.

⁴⁸ Roshwald, 88.

"Disobeying the directive of God to speak rather than strike, as serious as it might be, is not the essential point. His error was not merely a failure to obey God's command; it was also a failure of leadership. Moses, by hitting rather than speaking, responds to this current crisis in precisely the same fashion as he had responded to the problems of the generation that had left Egypt thirty-eight years before...Moses' 'desert response' to this second water crisis revealed that he was not a leader who could address the concerns and crises of a new generation, one which would enter the Land of Israel."⁴⁹

It was the moment at the rock (Numbers 20:11) where Moses and God realized that Moses no longer understood the new generation; the time had arrived to introduce a new face, a new leader, someone who better understood the needs of these new Israelites.

One of Moses' greatest leadership moments lies in his willingness to assist Joshua as he became the leader of the Israelites. Moses' life is filled with many noteworthy leadership moments; however, looking at these moments collectively it is clear that the entirety of Moses' life was a step by step progression toward becoming the quintessential Jewish leader. From birth he was placed into a challenging situation, yet he survived and thrived; as a young man, Moses served as one of the highest ranking leaders in Egypt,⁵⁰ eventually taking a position of great leadership. Throughout his life, Moses continued to develop through personal introspection, support from family, and training and support from God.

Shakespeare said, "Be not afraid of greatness; some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon them."⁵¹ In the beginning Moses was extremely reluctant to lead. However this initial shyness did not indicate his future success; leadership was thrust upon him and he adapted. Although many, if not most, of Moses' accomplishments were due to God's supervision and guidance, nevertheless

⁴⁹ Helfgot, 55.

⁵⁰ Silver, 16.

⁵¹ Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene V; as cited by Baron, 11.

Moses was the agent for the people, and performed God's actions in front of the Israelites and Egyptians. God and Moses worked together closely to attain their goals; however, despite God's guidance, Moses still needed to solve the Israelites' problems and tend to their physical and emotional requests. Moses loved the Israelites and believed in the greater cause of their exodus and journey to the Promised Land. Interwoven into his many attributes as a leader, Moses was also skilled at showing the Israelites the positives of their situation, continually motivating them to appreciate their present situation.

"Yes, you're hungry, he told the Israelites. You're hot, thirsty, suffering, and in pain. But you have freedom! Recognize your gifts and use them.' *Adonai spoke to Moses: "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Speak to them and say: By evening you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; and you shall know that I am Adonai your God (Exodus 16:11-12).*" Moses was able to get that message across not because he was a skillful orator but because he was persistent, motivated, and dedicated to his cause."⁵² In these moments, when the people were at their weakest, the true leader emerged, never allowing the Israelites to quit.

Moses' leadership may also be found in his ability to inspire the Israelites to be optimistic about their situation. Since the Israelites had been slaves for so long, it was inevitable that it would require a great deal of time for them to lose their slave mentality. After generations of slavery, the people could not grasp the concept of freedom. Not understanding freedom, the people were psychologically trapped by ignorance. This inability to move past their patterned behavior may be better explained through Rick Ross's idea of a 'ladder of inference.'⁵³ According to Ross, people recognize everyday

⁵² Baron, 13.

⁵³ http://www.actiondesign.com/resources/concepts/ladder_intro.htm

routine events through a lens of past beliefs and incidents. The problem with this process is that our own perceptions blur our view of current events. We often focus on things and ideas that only reinforce what we already believe, even though these ideas may not be very relevant. "Nowhere in the book of Exodus do we find the Israelites pitching in and trying to locate water themselves."⁵⁴ They were certainly not a physically weak people, because they endured hard labor at the hands of Egyptians, but the Israelites were mentally and psychologically incapable of understanding independence. While they were in the desert, based on the 'ladder of inference' it was impossible for the people to abandon their old frame of reference and therefore they had difficulty moving away from the slavery of Egypt.

Moses, the peoples' leader, strove to propel the Israelites' thought processes away from past hardships toward a free and holy community. Ross recommends engaging in a particular line of questioning that aids in resetting a person's paradigm. Through clarification of facts and validation of current ideas, a person can move away from his or her ladder of inference and focus on the existing situation, rather than only drawing from previous experiences. Moses attempted to transform the peoples' point of view away from slavery and towards freedom. "The Israelites had broken with their past. Moses was resolved to capitalize upon their unique and exhilarating experience and to mold them into a new and different kind of society."⁵⁵ Moses, of course, used God's advice and guidance, but as the leader of the Israelites, he also appointed judges and forced the people to begin solving their own issues. Moses empowered them to make their own

⁵⁴ Baron. 58.

⁵⁵ Silver, 33.

decisions and these actions slowly provided the framework for the people to shift their thought processes toward the Promised Land and freedom.⁵⁶

As outlined above, Moses was a great leader, who managed to accomplish many seemingly unattainable goals with a people that were disjointed and rebellious; he followed the path set out for him by God and never lost faith in his mission. Based on these astounding accomplishments, another question arises: did Moses embody a particular style of leadership? Were Moses' methods of motivation, guidance, and vision all components of his overall leadership style?

When examining various leadership styles, we can assign Moses to several of the categories, since he was not a stagnant leader throughout the journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan. Over time, his leadership capabilities matured and adapted to the various situations that he faced. Moses' leadership characteristics reflect several different styles, each dependent upon the particular situation, God's guidance, and the development of his leadership experience. The styles of leadership that Moses embodied are listed below in sequential order, ranging from his initial acts as leader to those just before his death in the desert. Moses modeled the following contemporary leadership styles: hierarchical, transmissional, command, and instructional, as well as servant leadership during his later years.

Initially, when leaders begin to take control, they gravitate inevitably toward authoritarian forms, so that they may attain control over their followers. Moses started his leadership similarly, first shying away from it, but then accepting the challenge and leading the people as an authoritarian leader. This type of leadership is referred to as hierarchical leadership, a style that reflects a top-down system of leading. A noted

⁵⁶ Baron. 59-60.

characteristic of this style is that other individuals' opinions are not validated or recognized; the leader is the only individual in control. Followers understand their roles within the group; the unit functions based upon the leader's energy level and enthusiasm alone. The leader's vision is dominant, and followers are often afraid of sharing their own opinions, fearing the leader. At the moment when the Pharaoh frees the Israelites and they have the opportunity to leave Egypt, Moses embodies a hierarchical leadership style so that the people will follow directions carefully and succinctly. *And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the people of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed from the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and garment (Exodus 12:34-35).* Although efficient, this style also contains a few dangers, including: rapid leader burnout, limited support from the constituents, lack of clear group goals, and lack of a shared group vision.

Simultaneously to his hierarchical style, Moses also led the people with a transmissional leadership style: a method where the leader shares a vision and expects his/her followers to join the vision. Moses received the vision and goals from God and in turn spread the information and elements of the vision in a transmittal fashion. Although this style is also an authoritarian type of leadership, transmissional leadership is slightly more advanced than the hierarchical system, because in the latter system the followers receive some information about the vision even though they are not permitted to express their opinion. *And Moses said to the people, do not fear, stand still, and see the salvation of Adonai, which God will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen*

today, you shall never see them again. Adonai shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace (Exodus 14:13).

In addition to the aforementioned styles of leadership, Moses also displayed characteristics of command leadership. Like both the hierarchical and transmissional styles, command leadership does not provide the followers with opportunities to lead or really be part of the team. Once again, as portrayed in Exodus 14:13, Moses demonstrates that he is in command, the only source of information for the Israelites. While occasionally this type of leadership is necessary in situations when a leader is barely clinging onto his/her influence, this style is not recommended when the leader is able to include his or her constituents in the decision making process. When command leadership is over-utilized it "can breed dependency in followers and cast them in subordinate roles. Subordinates do what they are supposed to, and little else."⁵⁷ An example of the Israelites' learned helplessness and inability to do anything beyond Moses' instructions comes from the reception of manna: *And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered double the amount of bread, two omers for one man; and all the chieftains of the community came and told Moses. And he said to them, This is what Adonai meant: Tomorrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to Adonai; bake that which you will bake today, and boil what you will boil today; and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning (Exodus 16:22-23).* In addition to leading virtually helpless people, another challenge for command leaders is to adapt their style and attempt a paradigm shift where they act more as leaders of leaders than leaders of followers.

As the Israelites traveled through the desert, the original group of rebellious complainers slowly began to unify and function as a true nation. During the Israelites'

⁵⁷ Sergiovanni, 272-273.

maturation process, Moses too underwent a leadership style metamorphosis, under God's guidance and with some assistance from his father-in-law. After he led the people using hierarchical, transmissional, and command leadership techniques, it appears that Moses began to feel the effects of burnout. As a result, when Jethro recommended that Moses delegate some of his authority, Moses began leading using alternate leadership styles. Instructional leadership is comprised of the formula Leadership = Moral Imagination + Interpersonal Competence. It asserts that the blending of moral imagination and interpersonal competence creates the perfect type of leadership. Moral Imagination⁵⁸ refers to the idea that in leadership there is always room for improvement, a constant need to see the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be. Interpersonal Competence⁵⁹ is repeatedly articulating the group's vision, understanding other peoples' viewpoints, and remaining open to the possibility of others joining the leader in his or her moral imagination.

The text clearly shows that Moses engaged in Moral Imagination since he heeded the advice of his father-in-law regarding delegation, and accepted support from his brother, Aaron, throughout their relationship. *So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said* (Exodus 18:24). Completing the formula for instructional leadership, Moses also engaged in Interpersonal Competence. Many of Moses' actions could be classified as Interpersonal Competence because he repeated the vision and goals that God prescribed for the people: *Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying: observe all instruction that I enjoin upon you this day. As soon as you have crossed the Jordan into the land that Adonai your God is giving you*

⁵⁸ Greenfield, 61.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 62.

(Deuteronomy 27:1-2). Regardless of the peoples' complaints or the challenges that befell the people as a whole, Moses always guided the nation on its projected path. Finally, Moses' strong Interpersonal Competence is evidenced by his relationship with Joshua, accepting Joshua as an equal and remaining open to many of Joshua's viewpoints. *Joshua the son of Nun, who attends you, he shall enter it [The Promised Land]. Imbue him with strength, for he shall allot it to Israel (Deuteronomy 1:38).*

As demonstrated by Moses' continually changing leadership style, Moses was a successful leader because of his versatility. It would have been easier for Moses to remain a static character, rigidly adopting one leadership style since he was working under the authority of God. God supported Moses; therefore, Moses did not need to grow and develop as a leader to convince the people to respond to him. Nevertheless, Moses adapted and matured. Using the instructional leadership formula, it becomes evident that Moses transitioned from an authoritarian leader who acted as the sole leader, to a guide who accepted constructive criticism and learned to delegate. Within this transition, Moses trained himself to be more receptive to the people, and then worked to provide them with other leadership possibilities and direct communication with God.

On a final note, as Moses became more receptive to the people, he also adopted several characteristics of Steward/Servant Leadership. Steward leadership states "that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led, to the leader, in response to and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant stature of the leader."⁶⁰ The harder a leader works to act as the servant to the people, the greater the authority the leader possesses. Moses was the quintessential leader who

⁶⁰ Sergiovanni, 273.

worked unendingly hard for his followers. He listened to their complaints, kept them safe, and provided them with all their physical needs through God's guidance.

A servant leader is one who models the activities that he or she expects of others. The building of the tabernacle was an arduous and detailed task for the Israelites; God designated the blueprint, and the people built accordingly. Moses worked hard as well, specifically commanded by God for specific tasks: *You [Moses] shall make a cover of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide* (Exodus 25:17). A servant leader works laboriously to complete tasks to demonstrate that all members of the organization need to share in the realization of that vision. Moses acted as the Israelites' role model from the moment that he accepted the task of being their leader, until the moment when he died looking at the Promised Land. Although he showed many characteristics of Steward Leadership, he was not a purely servant leader. Below is a list of specific traits that comprise Servant Leadership, and beneath each trait is a citation from the Torah which demonstrates that trait within Moses.

Characteristics of a Servant Leader

- Always knows and can articulate the bigger goal, the vision, and the dream, which excites followers' imagination and sustains their spirits.

And Moses said to the people, do not fear, stand still, and see the salvation of Adonai, which God will show to you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall never see them again. Adonai shall fight for you, and you shall hold your peace (Exodus 14:13-14).

- Is an intent listener, knowing that genuine listening both builds strength in others and provides information for problem solving.

And it came to pass on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood by Moses from the morning to the evening (Exodus 18:13).

- Can tolerate imperfection in self and others.

And it came to pass on the next day, that Moses said to the people, You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up to Adonai; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned to God, and said, oh, this people has sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if you will forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I beg you, from your book which you have written (Exodus 32:30-32).

- Ability to be on two levels of consciousness always: 1) in the real world, involved and responsible; and 2) detached and standing outside the real world, seeing it in the long sweep of history and future.

But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spoke to the people of Israel that which he was commanded. And the people of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone; and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him (Exodus 34:34-35).

Like all leaders, Moses made mistakes during his tenure of shepherding the Israelites to the edge of the Promised Land. However, within those mistakes lies the criteria and formula for the exemplary leader: Moses was never too arrogant to accept

advice; he heroically took risky steps to build a nation in the wilderness. Additionally, although Moses did not need to change and adapt as a leader because he had God's absolute support, he nevertheless matured from his initial authoritarian leadership. Moses drew from his previous life experiences and developed into a guide, motivator, and well-rounded leader. Finally, Moses performed the toughest role of a leader, admitting when his leadership has been surpassed. In his admission and acceptance, Moses also trained and supported Joshua.

לא קם בִּישָׁרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה עוֹד, נָבִיא וְמוֹדִיט אֶת תְּמוּנָתוֹ

Chapter II

Devorah

Devorah was a prophetess, a political and military leader, and a judge. She had a unique combination of talents and positions unrivaled by most other Biblical figures. For most of Jewish history, she remained an anomaly, a woman whose positions were difficult to explain. "Devorah, *eshet Lapidot*, was a prophetess; she led Israel at that time. She used to sit under the Palm of Devorah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her for decisions." (Judges 4:4-5). Her background is unknown and there is even debate as to her marital status. The Rabbis were tremendously uncomfortable with the idea of Devorah as a judge and leader, but they could not deny the fact that Devorah was a servant of God, a prophetess of God to the people. At the same time, modern scholars recognize the strong leadership qualities of Devorah and develop strong arguments promoting her as a leader.

Synopsis of Judges 4-5

Devorah was both a prophetess and a judge over Israel. She sat under a palm tree in the hills of Ephraim between Ramah and Bethel. The Israelites would come there for guidance and rulings. Devorah sent for Barak, telling him that God had commanded that he take 10,000 soldiers from the tribes of Naftali and Zevulun and go out to wage war against Sisera, the Canaanite general, and his army. God would deliver the enemy into his hands. Barak responds by saying that he will go only if Devorah accompanies him, to which she replies that she will. However, she also tells him that the victory will not be

because of him or attributed to him. Instead, God would deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman.

Barak gathers his forces and proceeds to Mt. Tavor. Sisera, hearing about Barak's deployment, takes his forces to the Kishon brook, as he is afraid of doing battle on the mountain. Deborah tells Barak to descend from the mountain and fight Sisera, because God will enable him to prevail. God throws the enemy army into a panic and destroys them all, except for Sisera, who flees the battlefield. He hides in a tent belonging to Yael, wife of Chever the Kenite. Yael gives Sisera milk to make him drowsy and, once Sisera falls asleep, she kills him with a tent peg and hammer. Yael then shows Sisera's body to Barak, who had been pursuing the enemy general. The Israelites were saved and Deborah and Barak sing a song to mark the occasion. Deborah chastises the other tribes of Israel for not coming to the defense of their own people in the battle and she praises Yael for her courage. She closes the song by expressing the hope that all of God's enemies will meet a fate similar to that of Sisera.

Rabbinic sources:

The Rabbis of our tradition seem to have a very hard time with the idea of Deborah specifically and women in general taking the role of judge or leader. They call her a prophetess, but do not refer to her as judge, despite the placement of the story of Deborah in the Book of Judges and not the books of the prophets. Regardless, the rabbis go to great lengths to discredit Deborah as an unfit person to lead while still acknowledging her worthiness as a prophetess. Yet, there are places that even her worthiness to prophesy comes into question. There are few places where her leadership

role is supported, and unusual for Talmudic tradition, rarely are there any debates within the text concerning Devorah as leader. The following are examples of rabbinic traditions that focus on Devorah as a woman, a prophetess, and a leader.

Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 66b

Rav Judah said in the name of Rav: Whoever is boastful, if he is a sage, his wisdom departs from him; if he is a prophet, his prophecy departs from him.....If he is a prophet, his prophecy departs from him; we learn this from Devorah. For it is written, "The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased until that I arose, Devorah, I arose a mother in Israel; and it is written, Awake, Awake, Devorah, awake, awake, utter a song."⁶¹

The rabbis claim that Devorah was boastful and because of this she lost her abilities as a prophetess. They claim that the fact the people had to call for her to "awake and utter a song" suggests that up to this point she had not been able to utter a song. Her boast "Until I arose..." leads to the loss of her prophetic ability. The people were unaware that she had lost her ability and did not know why she would not have been uttering a song all along. What is interesting is that there is no direct mention of Devorah ever losing her abilities as a prophetess or any other reference to the people being surprised of Devorah's lack of song. Perhaps "awake, awake" is merely a call for Devorah to utter a song in celebration of a victory. As a leader of Israel, her people wanted her to take a public stand in celebration. They wanted her to utter a song for all Israel to hear.

⁶¹ Translation by Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman, B.A., Ph. D. of the Talmud Bavli

Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 14a

Devorah, as it is written: "And Devorah a prophetess, *eshet lapidot*." What is the meaning of *eshet lapidot*? Through this expression, Scripture informs that she used to make wicks for the Tabernacle that stood in Shiloh. "And she sat under a palm tree." Why did Devorah choose to judge Israel while sitting under a palm tree, rather than under a different species? R. Shimon ben Avshalom said: "Because Devorah was careful not to transgress the prohibition against *yichud*. She therefore chose a palm tree, whose branches are very high, so that she and others with her would be clearly visible. Another reason she chose to sit under a palm tree was because it symbolized the Jews of her generation: Just as the palm tree has only one heart, so too, the nation of Israel in that generation had only one heart for their Father in heaven."⁶²

This text shows Devorah in a more favorable light. The rabbis translate *eshet lapidot* as "woman of torches or wicks" rather than "wife of Lapidot," with Lapidot being the name of her husband. Devorah was a woman of God who made wicks for the candles to be burned at Shiloh. The rabbis assume the central sanctuary was in Shiloh because this was before the time of the Temple. In contrast to the Pesachim text, there is no indication here that Devorah was haughty. There is no mention as to the intention of Devorah in the creation of the wicks, so one can assume that her intention was with a true heart.

Next, the passage praises her for her choice in location from which to judge. It was important that no improprieties were assumed and that there was no gossip about Devorah's interaction with the people as she judged. Since she was a woman, people

⁶² Translation taken from The Schottenstein Daf Yomi edition of the Talmud Bavli

would be more likely to make assumptions if she was alone with a man in a place that no one else could see. In order for her to be an effective leader she needed to have a clean reputation. By meeting in an area that was open to the public on all sides and could not be blocked by hanging branches, she was taking care not to put herself in any compromising positions. "The rabbis had to find a way for [Devorah] to fulfill her leadership role while obeying the strictures demanded of women in the name of modesty."⁶³ The palm tree was also a symbol of her success of bringing a sense of unity to the people who had been fractured before her rise to power. As the palm tree has one heart, Devorah unified the people into one cohesive group. Devorah was bringing her people back to God, the one God of Israel.

Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 14b

Rav Nachman said: "Prominence is not becoming to women. For there were two prominent women, and the meanings of their names were repulsive. One's name meant bee and one's name meant weasel. Concerning the bee (Devorah), it is written: "And she sent and called for Barak." However she herself did not go to him."⁶⁴

(The translation also cites the Maharasha, who writes that bearing the names of lowly and repugnant creatures should have inspired these two prominent women to attain greater levels of humility. However, they failed to do so, and even acted haughtily toward esteemed and distinguished individuals such as Barak [by Devorah] and King Josiah)⁶⁵

⁶³ Bronner, 15.

⁶⁴ Translation taken from The Schottenstein Daf Yomi edition of the Talmud Bavli

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Just when the previous text from the same section seemed to praise Devorah, this text returns to negatively judge Devorah as did the first text. Generally it is not at all odd for two passages in the same tractate to take different approaches to an issue or character. In fact we frequently see disagreements on the same page, or even the same line, in the Talmud. What is interesting is that in the case of Devorah a disagreement only comes after a positive statement about her. There are no disagreements after a negative statement.

The rabbis feel Devorah, as a woman, needs to know her place. She is acting outside of what the rabbis believe to be the normal role of a woman. There is no way that a woman should have the power that Devorah does in the first place, let alone speak to a man in such a way. It is interesting to note that the rabbis considered Barak to be a distinguished individual though he shied away from the challenge posed to him by Devorah. As the leader of the people, ultimately the responsibility rested with Devorah. Barak's denial had to be dealt with, and as both judge and prophetess, Devorah handed out punishment.

It is also unclear as to the reason that bees are considered repulsive, especially since the land of Israel is referred to as the land of milk and honey. You cannot have honey without bees. (Although some interpreters understand the "honey" of the "land of milk and honey" as a reference to date honey) Perhaps it is because they have a stinger. Since this is the case, then maybe the name is actually fitting. The people needed her. The rabbis understood this. Yet they have so much trouble with her being a woman that it is like a stinger in their side.

Modern Commentary on the Deborah Narrative:

Deborah's greatness did not come from her economic status, her physical beauty, or her devotion to her husband as a wife, fulfilling all wifely duties to perfection. Rather, her greatness comes from wisdom and a high level of spirituality. These two virtues overshadowed anything else and were clearly recognized by the people of Israel. Similarly, the position of judge in Israel was not one attained by heredity. It was placed upon only those who showed the ability to perform as such. Deborah was clearly one of these people. It is rare that a woman is mentioned in her own right, outside of the accomplishments of her husband. Even if one chooses to translate *eshet lapidot* as wife of Lapidot, this mention of Deborah's husband is merely a passing thought. If one chooses to translate *eshet lapidot* as woman of torches, then Deborah is discussed without the common reference to a husband.⁶⁶

However, some writers argue that Deborah must have proven herself as a remarkable wife and mother to attain her eventual status as judge. Even though we have no other female judges in the Hebrew Bible to compare Deborah to, or any information about Deborah's family, Schepps still makes the claims that, "a woman of that time who had not proved herself in homely devotion would not have commanded the basic respect of the Israelite people, just as no debased merchant of the city could have commanded the agrarian people as did the farmer Abraham. An idle woman of the town could not have been a prophetess to the Hebrew nation, for they would have considered her words but babble."⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Schepps, 66-67.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 68.

First and foremost, Deborah had to gain the respect and support of the people. Her eventual status as judge must have been built upon her prior status. It is not to say that being a great wife and mother makes one suitable to judge. Rather, in order to be initially recognized, a woman had to first be a great wife and mother. This is clearly a double standard between men and woman. No assumptions about one's role as husband and father were placed on men. But for Deborah, if she was not respected or admired for her other roles, the likelihood that the people would choose to listen to her judgments is quite low.

Additionally Deborah must have been perceived as a whole and respectable person. "In Judaism, prophesy is not perceived as the experience of the unusual individual, gifted with parapsychological powers or possessing extraordinary spiritual characteristics that can be developed only at the expense of other manifestations of personality."⁶⁸ Rather the prophet is seen as the perfect person, a person who has achieved wholeness. This person is to be emulated as a role model. One should not dismiss the prophet. On the contrary, one should strive to be like the prophet.

Deborah never refers to herself as a judge or prophetess. Rather, in the song of Deborah she refers to herself as a mother. Schepps asserts that what she meant by this is that she is mother to an entire people. From this we might assume that it is the people who laid the role of judge and prophetess upon her. They requested and desired her leadership. "Deborah blesses the people, all people wealthy and poor alike, who join her call to arms. She blesses them for their courage and for their refusal to bow down before idols forsaking their way of life, their rule of life."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Steinsaltz, 100.

⁶⁹ Schepps, 72.

A fuller sense of Deborah as mother is also revealed in her name. Deborah can be translated as bee. This name hints to Deborah's role as mother in Israel. "Like the queen bee, she raises up the swarm for battle, sending out drones to protect the hive and conquer new territory."⁷⁰ The observation that mothers protect their young against enemies is a universal motif. This motif is continued in the understanding of Deborah. Deborah as the mother of Israel protects the people in time of danger and in the face of attack.

In regards to Deborah's role in battle, especially as a woman, many readers look to the supposed weakness of Barak's request for Deborah to accompany him rather than viewing it as a request exemplifying the strength, respect, and honor given to Deborah. Why would he now of all times choose to honor Deborah? As the military leader, he should have taken the information and went to battle. Instead, he asks Deborah to go to battle with him. This was his weakness. Tikvah Frymer-Kensky argues that prophets had always played an important role in battle.

Letters from the ancient city of Mari show that prophets sent word to King Zimri-Lim to give assurance and advice in battle, and Assyrian inscriptions record omens in which prophets urged the king to take action and promise the presence and protection of the gods. The Esarhaddon oracle cited above continues, "We will go by your side and slay your enemies."⁷¹

She continues that prophets were such an important presence in battle that Elijah and Elisha are called "Israel's chariot and cavalry."

Similarly, biblical readers may not have had any second thoughts about a female's role in battle. "One of the earliest literary creations, the Sumerian epic 'Enmerkar and the Lords of Aratta,' shows the king consulting with a female sage."⁷² Most of the

⁷⁰ Frymer-Kensky, 51.

⁷¹ Frymer-Kensky, 48.

⁷² Ibid.

Assyrian prophets were women, and reports from both the ancient and more recent Near East consistently discuss the presence of women as the ones who inspire armies and taunt enemies. Because of this, there is no indication that readers would have found Barak's request of Deborah out of the ordinary.⁷³

Adin Steinsaltz, contends that it was never the intention of Deborah to go into battle. Instead, Deborah understood her role as a woman. Men were to fight battles. As prophetess and judge, "she found a man suited to the task of military commander and not only gave him control over the armed forces but tried as much as possible to avoid any personal participation, even as an observer."⁷⁴ Deborah's punishment of Barak for not taking the responsibility of the battle was to declare that victory would come not at the hands of Barak, but a woman. "This punishment reveals another side of the nature of Deborah: the acceptance of certain division of roles between men and women."⁷⁵ Barak's request showed weakness and his punishment was a reversal of the roles of men and women.

Other commentators disagree with the premise of Steinsaltz. They see the Deborah narrative as an example of male and female role reversal in the Bible. The fact that Deborah is a prophetess and judge is the first indication of that reversal. It continues when Deborah summons Barak. Lillian Klein argues that, "Deborah assumes a very masculine role when she 'sent and summoned Barak' to come to her."⁷⁶ Therefore, if this paradigm is in fact a viable one, the reaction of Barak would make sense, as would the prediction that victory would come through the hands of a woman. If the role of women

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Steinsaltz, 101.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Klein, 34.

is to support the men as they go off into battle, Barak takes on the role of the woman and Yael (the one who ultimately kills Sisera) takes on the role of the man.

Leadership qualities:

There are a number of qualities Deborah possesses that constitute her as a leader. These qualities are: (1) the gift of prophesy, (2) wisdom, (3) style, (4) boldness, and (5) judgment of character.

1. The gift of prophecy: In our own day and age it may be difficult to define the nature of prophecy. Whether one believes the prophet communicates directly with God or is an individual who possesses unique wisdom and insight, the divine gifts attributed to Deborah command respect from her people.
2. Wisdom: It is unclear how Deborah received the education that prepared her to serve as a judge. Some scholars assume that she must have eavesdropped on the conversations of the elders and the storytelling of the sages. But if it stopped merely at listening, this would only be knowledge, wisdom in its potential. It was Deborah's ability to apply her knowledge to the reality of the everyday that truly made her wise.
3. Style: Deborah's style was consistent and distinct. She sat beneath her palm tree on the hill and dispensed advice to all those that approached her. In a sense she was holding office hours. If her people were in need of guidance they did not

need to search Devorah out. They knew exactly where she would be. By her consistent practice, she made herself accessible and available to her people.

4. **Boldness:** As a woman, Devorah was at a natural disadvantage in Israelite society. However, she did not allow this clear disadvantage to impede her success. For example, Devorah did not hesitate to summon Barak rather than seeking him out when they needed to speak. It is this aggressiveness, this boldness that made Devorah effective.
5. **Judgment of Character:** Devorah was a shrewd judge of human nature. She carefully baited Barak when he hesitated to follow her advice, cunningly warning him that the victory would be attributed to a woman, and not to his military skill. By doing so, she put him in a situation in which he needed to succeed, he needed to prove her wrong.

The multiple leadership styles of Devorah:

Devorah as a Charismatic Leader:

The fact that Devorah was a prophetess directly links her to a main aspect of charismatic leadership. Her attributes are connected directly to her interaction with the divine and her authority comes directly from the divine. The people were open to such understandings of divine ruling. Devorah's rule as a judge comes during a time of political and religious upheaval (how do we know this?) for her own people as well as an outside threat from a conquering enemy. The specific threat at hand comes from Sisera

and his armies. The people were in turmoil and disarray, creating a situation where Devorah was able to rise as leader.

Devorah as Servant Leader:

Devorah's role as servant leader also comes from her role as prophetess. She is a servant of God. She serves the people as a servant of God. More importantly, Devorah stays true to the values and ideals of her people, acting as a champion for these values and ideals. Through her presence at the battle she displays her loyalty to her people's covenantal community. This in turn infuses her people with this same inspiration, this same desire to stay true to their shared values and ideals.

Devorah as a Visionary Leader:

As an exemplar of the covenantal values, ideals, and relationship with God, Devorah presents the people with a vision of what life could be with a return to and a focus on their tradition. In this sense, the vision is not necessarily new, rather it is a return to the original path. Through her leadership and acceptance by the people, Devorah's life as an example builds commitment by the people, providing clarity and direction. There is a sense that the people are fighting for and toward a shared goal, a shared covenant.

Devorah as a Coaching Leader:

Devorah's role as judge and the way she judged allowed her to make the personal connections and affect individuals as associated with coaching leadership. Individuals

would come to her directly for counsel. Similarly, she sent specifically for Barak in this time of struggle. Through her words she attempted to encourage Barak, supporting him in battle, and ensuring victory. In a sense, she was supporting him as an effective leader and military power. However, even with the encouragement, support, and direction given by Devorah, Barak still requested that Devorah come with him. He would only believe in her words if she accompanied him in battle.

Devorah as an Affiliative Leader:

Devorah's ultimate goal is to re-unite the people and bring them back to the values and ideals of their covenant. She arises in a time of upheaval, unrest, and idol worship as well as outside threat. By staying true to her values and ideals, she gives the people something to build upon and unify around. As a mother, she is there to heal the rifts between her people during these times of duress, offering hope and a vision for a unified future under God.

Devorah as a Commanding Leader:

During times of conflict and crisis, Devorah's role as leader turns on her ability to directly command. In this time of confusion and fear, Barak seeks her counsel. She tries to encourage him with her vision of triumph and victory, but to no avail. The people are in disarray and there is rampant fear of the coming conflict with Sisera. Devorah finally tells Barak exactly what he needs to do and how to do it. At the same time she tells him directly that he will not be the ultimate victor in the coming battle, rather victory will

come at the hands of Yael. This did not seem to concern Barak. He was only interested in defeating the enemy and putting an end to this crisis, an end to this war.

Chapter III

David

It is well accepted in Jewish tradition that one of our best examples of a true leader is King David. The Bible is filled with examples of heroes and leaders who are often so much larger than life that we are unable to relate to them. Additionally, the text will focus on only certain aspects of these individuals so that we are unable to see them as "real" people. This is not the case with King David. King David is developed in the narrative as an entire person. We see his amazing feats, we study his cunning, we experience his grand vision, and at the same time we see him as human. David is a man with faults, a man who transgresses, leading a people as its king and at the same time trying to be a father to his children. The life of King David is found in I and II Samuel, the first chapter of I Kings, and is embellished in Chronicles. There is also a great deal of rabbinic and modern commentary on David. A study of King David is an excellent window into the challenges all truly great leaders eventually face.

Synopsis:

God was disappointed with the reign of Saul and instructed Samuel to anoint the next king. David was the eighth and youngest son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah. He was also a direct descendent of Ruth the Moabite. David began his life as a shepherd. Samuel called him out of the field and anointed him without the knowledge of Saul. David then returned to his sheep. His first encounter with Saul came when the king was looking for someone to play music for him, and the king's attendant summoned the skilled David. Saul was pleased with David and kept him in his service as a musician.

The first time David publicly displayed his courage was when, as an inexperienced boy armed with only a slingshot and a few stones, he confronted the nine-foot, bronze armored Philistine giant, Goliath of Gath. After skilled warriors had cowered in fear for forty days, David made a slingshot, invoked God's name, and killed the giant. After this, Saul took David on as commander of his troops and David formed a close friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan.

David was successful in battle against the Philistines and this aroused the jealousy of Saul, who tried to kill David by throwing a spear at him. David stayed with Saul, however, and Saul offered him his own daughter, Merav, as a wife. He later reneged on his promise, but offered David his second daughter, Michal, in exchange for the foreskins of 100 Philistines, a price that David paid.

Saul's jealousy of David grew, and he asked his son Jonathan to kill David. Jonathan was a friend of David's, however, and hid David instead. He then went to his father and convinced Saul to promise not to kill David. Saul promised, and David returned to his service. This promise did not last and, after Saul attempted to kill David a second time, Michal helped David run away. David returned briefly to make a pact of peace with Jonathan and to verify that Saul was still planning to kill him. He then continued his flight from Saul, finding refuge with the king of Moab. On the way, the priest Ahimelech of Nob gave David a weapon. When Saul heard this, he sent Doeg the Edomite to kill the city's priests.

In the course of his flight, David gained the support of six hundred men, and he and his band traveled from city to city. At one point, in Ein Gedi, David crept up on Saul while he was in a cave, but instead of killing him, cut a piece from his cloak and

confronted Saul. Saul broke down and admitted that David would one day be king and asked David to swear that he would not destroy Saul's descendants or wipe out Saul's name. David swore to this, but it did not stop Saul from continuing to pursue him. Finally, David and his supporters joined the service of Achish, the Philistine king of Gath who entrusted David with control of the city of Ziklag. Under Achish's employ, David raided the cities of nomads who harassed the Israelites and gave the spoils as gifts to the leaders of Judah to win their support for him against Saul.

Eventually, while David was battling the Amalekites, Saul and Jonathan were killed on Mt. Gilboa in a fight with the Philistines. David mourned, and then began a new stage in his life. He moved to Hebron, along with his wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, and his followers. The people of Judah were grateful to David for saving them from desert raiders while he was in Ziklag, and they appointed David king.

Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner crowned Ish-Boshet son of Saul king over the tribes of Israel. The regions of Judah and Israel fought, with David's dynasty growing stronger as Saul's grew weaker. Finally, after Abner had a fight with Ish-Boshet, Abner approached David and made a pact with him, which allowed David to unite the tribes and rule over all of Israel. As Abner was leaving David, however, David's advisor and army commander, Joab, killed Abner without David's knowledge. Soon, Ish-Boshet was also killed and the tribes of Israel anointed David as their king. David was thirty years old at the time, and had ruled over Judah for seven years and six months. Over the years, he had taken more wives and had many children. He had also made pacts with kings of various surrounding countries.

David's first action as king was to capture what is now the City of David in Jerusalem, fortify it and build himself a palace. When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king and was threatening their hegemony over the entire region, they attacked, spread out over the Valley of Rephaim and captured Bethlehem. David retaliated and, in three battles, forced the Philistines out of his territory.

Once David had established the safety of his kingdom, he brought the Ark of the Covenant, which had been passed from city to city, to Jerusalem. He then wanted to build a temple to God and consulted Natan the prophet. Natan replied to David that God would always be with David, but it would be up to David's son to build the Temple because David had been a warrior and shed blood. David then began fighting wars against Israel's neighbors on the east bank of the Jordan. He defeated the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites and the Arameans. These wars began as defensive wars, but ended with the establishment of a Davidic empire that extended over both sides of the Jordan River, and to the Mediterranean Sea. David enforced justice in his empire and established civil and military administrations in Jerusalem, modeled after those of the Canaanites and Egyptians. He divided the country into twelve districts, each with its own civil, military and religious institutions. He also established Jerusalem as the secular and religious center of the country.

Despite this flawless reign on a national level, David had many problems in his personal life. One day while the men were at war, David spied a beautiful woman, Batsheva, from his rooftop. He discovered that she was married to Uriah the Hittite, but this did not stop him from sending for her and getting her pregnant. He then recalled Uriah from battle and urged him to visit his wife, hoping to create the impression that

Uriah was the father of Batsheva's baby. Uriah refused to go home to his wife, so David sent Uriah to the front lines of battle, where he was killed. David then married Batsheva. When confronted by Natan the prophet, David admitted his sin. In punishment, Batsheva's child died and David was cursed with the promise of a rebellion from within his own house. Batsheva and David soon conceived a second son, Solomon.

David's personal problems continued when his son Amnon raped Tamar, Amnon's half-sister. Absalom, Tamar's full brother, then killed Amnon. Absalom fled, but David could not stop thinking about him. Finally, Joab convinced David to allow Absalom to return. Absalom was a handsome man and became popular with the people of Israel. Then, forty years after Samuel had anointed David king, Absalom, along with two hundred men, journeyed to Hebron with the intention of rebelling against his father and taking over his kingdom. He had the support of the men of Hebron who were insulted by the removal of the kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem, the elders whose status was undermined by parts of David's policy, and the Benjaminites who wanted to avenge Saul's family.

David feared that Absalom would return and conquer Jerusalem, so he and all his followers fled the city, leaving only ten concubines to guard the palace. David told the priests Zadok and Abiathar to remain in the city along with his friend and now spy, Hushai the Archite. Meanwhile, Absalom reached Jerusalem, took over the city and slept with David's concubines. Hushai befriended Absalom, advised him, and told the priests to send messengers informing David of Absalom's plans. David gathered his troops and then killed 20,000 of Absalom's Israelite soldiers, including Absalom himself. David returned to power. A second revolt broke out at the hands of Sheba son of Bichri, but

with the help of Joab, David succeeded in crushing this rebellion as well, and in killing Sheba.

Eventually David grew old and had to stop fighting. At this point, Adonijah, David's oldest son, declared himself king. David, however, had promised Batsheva that her son Solomon would be king, and publicly anointed Solomon. Fearful of retribution Adonijah ran to the altar in Jerusalem, but Solomon pardoned him and sent him home.

David delivered a last set of instructions to his son, telling him to follow the words of God and to repay in kind specific people that had either wronged David or helped him. David then died after forty years as king, thirty-three of those in Jerusalem. He was buried in the City of David.⁷⁷

Rabbinic Sources:

The Rabbis considered David to be the ultimate example of a Jewish leader. David possessed all the qualities desired in a ruler. If we could live in times similar to the reign of David, we would be living in the best situation possible. Ancient Jewish sources claim that the messiah will come from the line of David and we will return to a time like that of the David's kingdom. For the rabbis, David was the greatest of kings, statesman, and Torah scholar. At the same time, the rabbis were not blind to the transgressions of David. "The rabbis maintain the reality of David's sins and make no attempt to interpret it out of existence."⁷⁸ To the rabbis, David was human and prone to make mistakes. But this in no way lessened their admiration of him.

⁷⁷ Adapted from Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

⁷⁸ Kalmin, 86.

Midrash Tehillim 118:17

“Open the gates of righteousness to me” – In the world to come they will say to each person, “How did you occupy yourself?” If he responds that he fed the hungry, they will say to him, “This is the gate of God, the one who fed the hungry may enter.” If he said he gave drink to the thirsty, they will say to him, “This is the gate of God, the one who gave drink to the thirsty may enter.” If he said he gave clothes to the naked, they will say to him, “This is the gate of God, the one who gave clothes to the naked may enter.” If he said he raised orphans, acted charitably, performed acts of loving kindness, they answered similarly. And David said, “I did all of these things, let all of the gates be opened to me.” Therefore it says, “Open the gates of righteousness to me, I will enter them and praise God.”

David could have demanded that the gates of righteousness be opened to him based on his military accomplishments, statesmanship, unification of the tribes, or even bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Rather, the midrash contends that what was most important to David and truly deserving of merit was his treatment of the needy. David should ultimately be judged not on his physical strength, but on his strength of character. Similarly, since he claims to have performed all of these acts, not one gate but many gates of righteousness should be opened to him so that he may be able to praise God through each of them. Interestingly, David’s humility is not an issue here. He believes he is deserving of multiple gates because of his actions.

Yalkut Shimoni Tehillim 78

David would bring the young goats to feed on the tops of grasses, which were tender. The older goats he would bring to feed on the mature grasses, which were medium consistency; he would bring the fully mature goats to feed on the roots of the grasses, which were tough. The Holy One said, "One who knows so well how to herd the flock each according to its strength, he shall come to herd my flock – the people of Israel."

According to this midrash, David was destined from birth to lead the people of Israel. This text discusses how even as a young shepherd, the way he guided his flock would serve him as a guide of the people of Israel. David is depicted as concerned for each member of his flock. As a young boy he is concerned with his animals and as a king he is concerned with every level of society. This is demonstrated in his development of a taxation system and implementation of a bureaucracy. These creations may have been considered a nuisance to some elements of society, but ultimately David is praised for his care and concern for all peoples in his kingdom.

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 30a – 30b

"One day of your study of Torah is more pleasing to me than a thousand sacrifices which Solomon might offer to me on the altar." David then spent every Shabbat in the study of Torah..... On the day that his time came to die, the Angel of Death stood before him, but could not take him because he wouldn't stop reciting his teachings. The angel said, 'What shall I do to him?' There was a garden behind the palace, and the Angel of death went and climbed into the trees and made a noise. David went out to see, and as he

climbed a step, it crumbled beneath him, [distracting him from Torah], and his soul departed and he died.

Not only was David a successful military leader and statesman, he was also a scholar and devoted servant of God. The rabbis depict David as a lover of God, living only to serve God. In this text, David tries to persuade God to reveal the day of his death. God tells David only that he will die on a Shabbat in his seventieth year. David pleads to live until Sunday, but God refuses to reduce Solomon's reign by even a day. David pleads then to die on Friday so he can spend Shabbat in heaven. The first part of the text is God's answer to David. However, when the time did come for David to die, the rabbis contend that he had to be distracted from his study of Torah long enough for the Angel of Death to take his soul. One can infer that the rabbis believed David to be such a pious person that every moment of his life was spent in the pursuit of the service to God.

Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 22b

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: Why didn't the house of Saul retain the kingship? Because there were no blemishes in it.

The rabbis were very aware of the fact that David was a fallible human being who made mistakes. There was definitely no way to get around the fact that David had blood on his hands, acted immorally and even tried to justify his improper actions. Even so, this in no way detracts from the rabbis' admiration for David or calls into question his direct link to the messiah. They seem to turn his transgressions on their head by stating

that only a house with blemishes would retain the kingship, perhaps meaning that only a king who was truly human and still fully devoted to God could rule.

Was it true that the house of Saul did not have any blemishes? Or was it that they unable to admit their blemishes and ask forgiveness? Perhaps they believed they were above any distinctions of blemish. That fact that David was so devoted to God, he understood that he was not the ultimate power. He was merely a servant of God. He was a human, prone to transgression. But David was able to admit these transgressions, ask for forgiveness, and deal with the consequences that followed.

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 107a

David once said before God: "Master of the Universe, why do people say 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,' but not God of David?" The answer came, "They were tested by me, but your faith has not been proved." David pleaded, "Then test me and try me." And God said, "I will test you and I shall even grant to you what I did not grant them. I shall tell you beforehand that you shall fall into temptation at the hands of a woman."

With this illustration, Rav Yehudah asserts that a person should never ask to be tested by God because David did so and ultimately fails. Even though David knows that the test will involve forbidden sexual relations, he still commits adultery with Batsheva, or, according to rabbinic tradition, at least uses deception in order to be with her.⁷⁹ Even though the rabbis depict David as the Torah scholar, servant of God, and righteous and benevolent king, he is not depicted as a man with great humility.

⁷⁹ Kalmin, 86.

It takes a good level of brashness and haughtiness to request a test from God, especially when one makes the request confident that failure is impossible. Also, perhaps the ultimate example of David's arrogance was to complain to God about his reputation. He believed himself to be so righteous as to deserve mention in the opening paragraph of Amidah along side of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Midrash Ruth Zuta 51

David's transgression in connection to the famine was in his not having applied his own gold and silver. He used it for use in the building of the Temple, and even during three years of famine the people of Israel asked for it to given to them but he did not want to give them anything. The Blessed One said to him, "You refrained from rescuing human beings from death in order to save your money for the Temple. So, the Temple will not be built by you, but by Solomon."

Even though David considered himself both a pious and compassionate king, deserving of enter the gates of righteousness, his devotion, according to this midrash was also a transgression. He was so focused on his vision of constructing a Temple for God that he lost sight of his responsibility as a benevolent leader of the people. He lost sight of what was truly important to God, God's people, and instead concentrated on building something grand to match his ego. The people were in need, yet his devotion blinded him to their suffering. Forsaking the people in order to build a Temple for God can be perceived as building a Temple devoid of God. Perhaps this is a rabbinic justification for God's decision that David was not allowed to build the Temple. David had lost sight of

what was truly important and therefore what he would build would not be an acceptable dwelling place for God.

Modern Commentary on the David Narrative:

One modern commentator Rudolf Kittel examines two aspects of David's life that contributed to his success over his lifetime. This commentator discusses multiple attributes of David, from his time as a young boy in the court of Saul to his time as statesman, each one building on the next. David's diverse talents allowed him to draw on the different strengths needed to succeed, each in its own time. Opportunities arose, whether by chance or by his own doing, that he was able to take advantage of due to his many talents and skills. Kittel writes of David, "Although posterity has made of him almost a saint and retouches his image greatly, through it all we can see his real form; a real man of flesh and blood, shining in the splendor of his fame, genius, and bigness of soul, but casting dark shadows as is usual with men endowed with will power, vitality, and energy, and almost inevitably so when they are seated upon thrones."⁸⁰

Long before his reign, David's talents were serving him well in his introduction into the court of King Saul. The men of King Saul's court searched for an individual who could rid the king of his sadness. Because David was a skilled lute player and perhaps an accomplished poet and minstrel, he was invited to Saul's court to perform for the king. Even in ancient times, music was considered a means for calming the soul. "In Israel as in Greece, minstrel and poet were often combined. Almost every poet was a composer as well. Even in Italy in the nineteenth century there were whole guilds of minstrels, of

⁸⁰ Kittel, 113.

whom some were called finders of new songs while others were mere singers.”⁸¹ These individuals mainly came from the agrarian class. As a shepherd, David might spend time playing his lute and composing songs about some incident of the day. Kittel notes that even today in the Middle East, many young shepherds continue this tradition of music and composition.

It is clear by his actions that David was an artist and composer. David composed after the death of both Saul and Jonathan as well as after the death of Abner. When the ark of the covenant was brought to Jerusalem, David led the way with music and song. Because of these examples, “we may cling to the belief that when once a member of the royal court, David used his art and talent to cheer up King Saul.” With this, we can see how David actually came into favor with Saul.

Another reason for David’s acceptance into the court of Saul is David’s ability as a warrior as well as his sociable personality. In continued battles with the Philistines, feats of David’s strength in combat won praise from multiple circles. It is possible that these tales of David made their way to King Saul and David was therefore brought before him. The king was so struck by David’s physical might as well as his personality and musical skill that he later made David the preferred leader of the king’s troops. Kittel continues, “David’s irresistible personality then won, in succession, the heart of the people, the friendship of the king’s son, the favor of the ever-jealous courtiers, and lastly, even the love of the king’s daughter.”⁸²

David was a tremendous soldier and military leader. Yet, it was in his unification of his kingdom that he displayed his accomplishments as a true statesman. David had

⁸¹ Ibid., 114.

⁸² Ibid., 115.

originally established his capital in Hebron. Initially this was the perfect place for ruling over the tribe of Judah. Hebron was a significant city and his tribe and kinsmen would be in the immediate vicinity. But, David could not unite the tribes from this site. He would have been in the southern most part of Israelite territory. He would have been bound by the requests and concerns of his own tribe and seen by other tribes as favoring his own clan. This would then spawn jealousy and feelings of neglect by the remaining tribes. "It was absolutely necessary for David to gain the favor of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim, Manasseh, Saul's tribe, and the old main tribes of the central section of the country where Gideon was by no means forgotten, and all of this without losing the favor of Judah."⁸³ David ultimately decided on Jerusalem.

David's choice of Jerusalem was extremely smart and cunning. The fact that Jerusalem did not belong to any of the tribes made it a neutral site with no significance to anyone. It was a non-Israelite city, inhabited by the Jebusites. This initially posed a challenge to David, but it also proved to be another opportunity to display his might and ability as a warrior king, conquering a city that had thus far withstood all outside attacks. Conquering this city allowed for the unification of David's kingdom and removed constant menace of a foreign rule within the borders of David's kingdom.

Even though Jerusalem held no current significance to any one tribe, it still played a significant role in the stories of all the tribes as a collective. "During the Amarna period the city king, Abdi-Chipa, had ruled there. The city had its name, Ursalim, from the old god Salem, in whom we may probably recognize El-elyon of that king and priest Melchitzedek, in the story of Abraham. The holy rock on Mount Zion had probably

⁸³ Kittel, 136.

already been the sanctuary of El-elyon."⁸⁴ Jerusalem had a rich history, was a strong hold, and had been a place of worship. At the center of kingdom, it made the perfect capital for David's final unification of the tribes into one national body.

Hagen Staaks cites the mention of Hiram, King of Tyre as support for the strength of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and ultimately the reign of David itself. Hiram is mentioned for the first time in connection with David's building operations. II Samuel 5:11 states that the king of Tyre sent messengers and cedar trees to David along with carpenters and masons who helped in building David's palace. This record indicates international recognition for David's reign. Phoenician rulers like Hiram did not engage in political and economic relationships unless they were sure of the power and the credit of the other party.⁸⁵

To ensure that everyone acknowledged Mount Zion (Jerusalem) as the true capital of Israel, David proposed to install the Ark of the Covenant there, thus making Jerusalem the dwelling-place of God. David and all of Israel celebrated with all their might through song and dance. When the ark was finally brought up in great celebration, "David danced before God with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod (II Samuel 6:14)." David's wife Michal may have shared her husband's joy over the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem, but she did not approve of his dancing. She told him he was no better than a common rake shamelessly exposing himself as he performed his ecstatic dance dressed only in a linen cloth. David brushed her aside, knowing that the common people would understand his exuberance as true love of God. "I will be abashed

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Staak, 102-103.

in your eyes, but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor (Samuel II 6:22).”⁸⁶

This is an instance of the mixture of politics and religion characteristic of David. His joy before God was real, but it was also a good show for the common people who wanted their king to display the sign of God.⁸⁷ David showed signs from the beginning of becoming a great politician. He was shrewd, knowing when to wait and when to act quickly. He was able to subordinate practically everything to his ambition. He was willing at times to place even his family, his wives and friends – and honesty itself – below his prime objective. Like every real politician, he lived under an obsession, partly a drive to self – fulfillment, partly an honest desire to serve his people.⁸⁸

The stories of David show his ability to adjust to any situation, turning it to his own advantage. Without losing sight of his goal, he was all things to all people. He feigned madness when it was necessary; he was loyal when it was necessary; he wooed the enemy when it was necessary.⁸⁹ Yet with all his cunning and focus, his relationships with his family were anything but functional, stable, and honest

In another treatment of the David narrative, one modern commentator, Dorothy Zeligs, chooses a psychoanalytic approach. It is an in-depth study of David as individual, and at specific points as a leader, taking into account his stature, his personality, and his relationships. David is a tremendously complex figure presenting interesting contrasts and problems. In regards to his personality and demeanor, “Strong and often ruthless in battle and rule, David was also capable of gentle and tender

⁸⁶ Ibid, 103.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 104.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 96.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 96.

emotions and is beloved as the sweet singer of Zion."⁹⁰ In regards to his relationships, "A great king and fearless warrior, David was at the same time a weak, indulgent father, who almost lost his throne to his own son."⁹¹ As a king and as a leader, David evoked love and loyalty and at the same time envy and hatred in his people. Men and women alike turned to David with strong feelings and emotion.

There is little argument as to David's strength as a leader, warrior, and statesman. Yet, David's most difficult role may have been as father. According to Zeligs, it is in his role as father that David reveals the most conflicting aspect of his personality. "His relationship to his sons is marked by indulgence to their wishes, a lack of restraining discipline, and a surprising unawareness of their real character qualities."⁹²

When David's oldest son, Amnon was obsessing over his secret desire for his half sister Tamar, David gave in to his plea that Tamar should come to Amnon and prepare a meal for him to tempt his appetite. "If David had known his son and understood the weakness of his character, he would not have exposed both his children to such a dangerous situation."⁹³ Instead of knowing his children, taking time to spend with his children, David tried to appease them and make up for his absences by giving in to their indulgences.

After Amnon's rape of Tamar, David does not punish his son. He may have showed anger, "but there is no indication that David did anything to punish Amnon or to force him to right matters through marriage." The fact that Tamar did not go to David after the incident and that he heard about it through other channels speaks to the

⁹⁰ Zeligs, 162.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 183.

⁹³ Ibid.

possibility that there was no real relationship between David and Tamar. We never hear of Tamar again.

Similarly, David's other son Absalom does not go to his father about the rape. Instead, he takes matters into his own hands, plotting to kill his older brother for his actions. David's relationship with Absalom deteriorates even further. After killing his brother, Absalom goes into exile for three years. David longed for his son, allowing him to return, but David would not allow him back in the palace. However, after a period of time, David allows Absalom to see him in the palace. Absalom bows low to his father, yet at the same time he was plotting to overthrow his father and take the kingdom for himself. Absalom's plotting was quite public, but news of this never reached David. It is only after the beginning of Absalom's rebellion that David is willing to admit its existence and fight back. Yet David fights back with a heavy heart. When news of David's forces' victory over the forces of Absalom reaches David his first reaction is to inquire into the wellbeing of Absalom. When he learns of his death, David cries out for his son.

David was lamenting the son who tried to overthrow him, to remove him from power and probably kill him. Why did he regret the death of his son? Perhaps he was actually crying out for his own failings as a father. By lamenting his son, David was trying to redeem himself as a father. An man as ambitious and driven as David was, he could not consider himself a failure. He was the man who unified the tribes, brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and was the king for all people; surely he could succeed as a father. But that was not to be.

Leadership qualities:

David demonstrates many qualities that mark a successful leader. A few such qualities are: (1) creativity, (2) relating to the people, (3) risk taker, (4) belief, (5) vision, and (6) loyalty.

1. Creativity: Not only was David talented musically as well as poetically, he had the ability to face problems and find innovative solutions to them. He defeated the Philistines using cunning and strategy rather than brute strength. He chose a capital for his kingdom that was not directly claimed by any one tribe. David also developed a system of government services, justifying a strong central government to the tribes.
2. Relating to the people: David was a king of the people. All social classes perceived David as their representative. His reputation as a soldier gained him support from the masses while his connections to the king by friendship and marriage gave him respectability with the local elite.
3. Risk taker: For better or for worse, David was not afraid of taking risks. He took risks with his life and the life of his men in countless battles and wars of expansion. In all his dealings with Saul, he risked his own life. He risked challenges and upheaval from the people with the institution of the census, taxes, and social services. David was always willing to take risks whether for the advancement of power or in his own personal life, as with Batsheva. Even if

some of the risks were foolish or unethical, David was willing to assume the responsibility for them in order to meet a challenge.

4. **Belief:** For David, his strong belief system was based on his connection with God. Every society has its own values which express what they deem to be most important. For the people of Israel that set of values was based on service to God. By bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, David expressed to the people that he believed in the same value system they did.
5. **Vision:** David had a strong vision of ultimately unifying the people. He used his popularity, creativity, relationships, and religion to pursue a policy of unification among the fighting tribes of Israel. David acted and made decisions based on unification and creating something that all tribes could jointly believe in. From establishing a neutral capital to bringing the ark to Jerusalem, David gave the people reason and ability to come together.
6. **Loyalty:** As stated earlier, David was a king of the people. In this sense, people believed in him because they knew they could count on him to be consistent. Even if he may have had plans to become king during King Saul's reign, he never showed any disloyalty to Saul. His loyalty is demonstrated through his last pledge to Batsheva promising that Solomon would become his successor to the throne.

The multiple leadership styles of David:

David as an Affiliative Leader:

A strong and unified kingdom could only emerge if David had the support of the people. In order to build support, David developed a system that dealt with the needs of the people. Because he took care of his people, through social programs and protection, people were more willing to follow their king. David expressed his vision and then did what he said he would do. He could be trusted as a king of his word, fostering comfort and security. David was not afraid to be among the people, dancing and celebrating with them as the Ark of the Covenant was finally brought to Jerusalem.

David as a Charismatic Leader:

For the biblical writers, a man's right to lead was authenticated by divine inspiration. A leader did not hold his position only because he came from the right family or received popular acclaim. Correct ritual alone could not elevate a man to the kingship. It was God who made the final imprint on the man, thus setting him apart as God's deputy on earth. Israel's king was God's servant.⁹⁴

David was chosen by God to be king. From the time he was a young boy, anointed by Samuel, David was destined to lead the people of Israel. As king, he would shepherd his people as he guided his own flock as young boy. David was endowed with multiple attributes that made him a successful leader. As a true king of the people, he was beloved by all levels of society for his prowess as a soldier, statesmen, and man of God. Knowing that David was a man of God, chosen by God, they viewed his attributes

⁹⁴ Staak, 88.

as gifts from God. During this time of division, David rose as the king who would unify God's people.

David as a Command Leader:

As a soldier and military commander, David needed to command. In times of unrest and war, the people need someone to direct them. David's troops were loyal and loved their leader. In these times of battle, they followed willingly and without question. This could have been dangerous for David, but because his people were loyal he was able to command in times that would give his people the opportunity of realizing David's vision, a vision the people believed in and worked towards.

David as an Instructional Leader:

David recognized that for the people of Israel to flourish and the kingdom to prosper, the tribes must be unified. He made difficult choices that were sometimes met with hesitation. But David was able to articulate his vision of a unified people and garner the support of the tribes. People believed in him and recognized that he was a king of his word. Because of this, they embraced his vision and strove to make it their vision as well.

David as a Servant Leader:

David was considered a king of the people and all levels of societies claimed David as their own. He was part of the agrarian society, growing up as a shepherd, caring for his father's flocks. He was part of a military society, starting off as a soldier and

developing into a military leader. He was part of the elite as a member of royal court, playing music for king Saul, befriending Saul's son, and marrying Saul's daughter. As a servant and representative of God David sought to unify the people. He celebrated with the people and among the people as he brought the Ark of The Covenant to its dwelling place in Jerusalem. Though scorned by his wife for dancing, David saw his dancing with the people as a way of showing them he was with them. He was their king.

David as a Visionary Leader:

From early on, David had great vision and ambition of where he wanted to guide the people of Israel. As a king of the people, he developed a devoted following who trusted him and believed in him. The people believed in where David wanted to take them and his actions mirrored his words. He envisioned a united kingdom, one where all tribes were unified under one king and had one capital. He articulated his desire for a capital that could be embraced by all, a capital where he could bring the Ark of the Covenant to a fitting dwelling place. David also envisioned a system that would care for the people, making their lives better and more fruitful. David's vision was needed. Tribes were fighting, allegiances were divided and the people were lost. David was the king who would take this fractured people and unite them as one.

Chapter IV

Ezra

When examining all four leaders presented in this work, it becomes apparent that Ezra is perhaps the least recognized and most overlooked. His story is unfamiliar to many Jews, and most people do not realize that the book of Ezra is included in the Tanach. The stories of other biblical leaders are more extensive, providing the reader with lengthy biographies that describe how they ascended to their leadership role. Ezra, on the other hand, does not have a long story or biography; instead, the book of Ezra contains a lengthy introduction. "Ezra is a priest [and scribe] with the most touted pedigree in the book. Impeccable credentials link him directly with Aaron, and form the longest pedigree in the book."⁹⁵

This chapter will focus on four main components of Ezra's leadership: a) Ezra's attributes, qualifying him as the leader for the returnees, b) his leadership qualities as referenced by the text and various scholarly works, c) his partnership with Nehemiah, highlighting their unified work together, and d) an analysis of Ezra's leadership styles through contemporary leadership models. Although the bulk of this chapter will focus on a more humanistic and historical view of Ezra, it is important to remember that for the Tanach, Talmud, and later commentators, this character's actions were God-centered.

The book of Ezra is found towards the end of the Tanach, between the books of Daniel and Nehemiah, and is often linked with the latter text; some scholars suggest that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one work.⁹⁶ In addition, both books deal closely with the period following the exile and highlight the return to Jerusalem. In

⁹⁵ Eskenazi, 136.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

586 BCE, the Babylonians destroyed the first Temple and the elite Judean populace was taken captive and brought back to Babylon. In 539 BCE, Persia defeated under King Cyrus defeated Babylonia. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the city and the Temple. Three years later, in the 536 BCE, the Jews made their first return to Jerusalem under the guidance of Zerubbabel, and shortly after, these returnees rebuilt the Temple altar and foundation. In 515 BCE, the Temple was finally rededicated. Over the next 57 years, the returnees continued to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, encountering resistance from those who had remained in Judah during the exile.

Although the book is called "Ezra," the title character does not appear until the seventh chapter, which coincides with the year 458 BCE. "His life shows that he was prominent in the Babylonian Judean priesthood. He may have been the leader: certainly, he was one of the prominent members of the group, interested in collecting and editing the written laws as a means of reform in the homeland. His life shows that he occupied a position of trust at court with the emperor [king] himself. This is all that we know of him, but it is enough to give us a fairly clear picture of him as a man of his time."⁹⁷ Ezra was a leader in Babylonia, and was sent to Jerusalem by the king to use his skills for rebuilding the community. After careful planning and authorization from King Artaxerxes, Ezra traveled to Judah, where he began his work of leading and teaching. *And now, I [King Artaxerxes] issue an order that anyone in my kingdom who is of the people of Israel and its priests and Levites who feels impelled to go to Jerusalem may go with you [Ezra] (Ezra 7:13).*

⁹⁷ Kittel, 420.

"In comparison with other figures named as prophets, Ezra at first seems unremarkable. No great poems or celestial excursions, in the manner of Isaiah and Ezekiel, no political acumen or existential alienation, in the manner of Jeremiah, appear in the biblical story of Ezra."⁹⁸ However, this humble man was responsible for reintroducing the Torah to the people of Israel following the exile. As the text states: *for Ezra had dedicated himself to study the Teaching of Adonai so as to observe it, and to teach laws and rules to Israel* (Ezra 7:10). Immediately upon his arrival in Judah, Ezra displayed his great leadership skills indicated by the above quote; he dedicated himself to the study and observance of the Torah first, before he taught it to the people. In essence, Ezra practiced what he preached.

Ezra's traits distinguish him as a character capable of various tasks. Within the text, Ezra played many roles, and therefore received a variety of monikers: priest, redactor, teacher, scribe, and leader; each of these labels fit him well. First, Ezra was a priest; this is detailed in the beginning of the seventh chapter, which describes the priestly lineage that connects Ezra to Aaron. Additionally, he was a redactor and a teacher: "As redactor and teacher of the *Torah she-bichtav* 'the written Torah,' to the people Israel after the First Destruction, Ezra rescues his people from ignorance of Torah and thus separation from God."⁹⁹ In addition to these roles, Ezra was also a scribe. However, unlike modern-day scribes, this position was more complex during Ezra's time. The scribe functioned as a copier, writer, communicator, military officer (2 Kings 25:19), clerk, and writer (Jer. 36:32).¹⁰⁰ Lastly, Ezra's role as a scribe made him a leader, as

⁹⁸ Halivni, 77.

⁹⁹ Ibid., xi.

¹⁰⁰ Constable, 31.

well, since he had far more authority than someone who simply wrote the dictations of a king; Ezra was an ambassador for the king and a vessel of God.

Ezra spent four months guiding the people from Babylonia to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:9); therefore, when they arrived in Judah, his companions knew and accepted him. Additionally, Ezra knew how to handle the people and motivate them without using forms of manipulation. In verse 8:15, Ezra realized that the Levites were not among the people preparing to return to Jerusalem. Instead of angrily summoning the Levites, Ezra appointed delegates and authorized them to invite the Levites on their journey. His actions produce the Levites for the voyage: *and of the temple servants whom David and the officers had appointed for the service of the Levites—220 temple servants, all of them listed by name* (Ezra 8:20).

Ezra also led with 'flexible firmness.'¹⁰¹ When Ezra heard that the nation of Israel had transgressed by not separating themselves from the peoples of the land, sadness overcame him. He rent his clothes and tore his hair out, yet still remained open to what the people were saying. "Ezra, shocked by the news, goes into mourning and prayer. The prayer (9:6-15) is an example of his subtle, non-autocratic manner of operation."¹⁰² In verse 10:2, Shecaniah admits the peoples' guilt, but also suggests that repentance is possible. Ezra is outraged and saddened as the people's leader, nevertheless, he listens to what the returnees are saying and agrees with the suggestion. "Some would-be leaders would never take advice from their flock."¹⁰³

Ezra was sensitive to the needs of the people at all times. In all instances where he could have exercised strict control over the nation, he instead exercised a reasonable

¹⁰¹ Reid, 1.

¹⁰² Eskenazi, 139.

¹⁰³ Reid, 1.

amount of power. Ezra listened to the people's suggestions even when he was angry, and he effected change. When the nation finally began to stabilize so that he could start teaching Torah, Ezra continued to show his leadership capabilities. Before teaching the Torah to the people, Ezra needed to assure himself and the nation that he was not leading them in an autocratic style; rather they were engaged in a form of democracy. "Here is a leader who listens to his community, who shuns dictatorial measures (even though he clearly has authority to use them), who works through committees, who hears the needs of the people, and who devises *with them* a procedure that will be most responsive to their needs, without thereby compromising his own rigorous standards."¹⁰⁴

In his special receptive and people-centered leadership style, Ezra helped build many facets of Judaism. The redaction of the Torah is not discussed in the Bible, but according to some modern scholars, Ezra redacted the Pentateuch and paved the way for our current blueprint of worship (according to the rabbis of the Talmud, Ezra was a great leader but did not redact the Torah.). Ezra's audience was familiar with the Torah stories and laws, but Ezra was the first to present them with a newly minted, finished product. In summary, Ezra was the individual who brought the written word to the people. "Ezra's reconstruction was not so much one of masonry as of an inner restoration. He transformed the Hebrew [sic] religion from its original state, centered in the tent of meeting, the Ark of the Covenant, and the sacrifice on the altar of Yahweh, to a religion of the Book."¹⁰⁵

Through his leadership, Ezra not only changed the visible system of worship and the physical structure of general Judean practice, but he worked to alter people's

¹⁰⁴ Eskenazi, 141.

¹⁰⁵ Staak, 141.

perception of prayer. He did not change their thoughts for them; instead, he provided the nation with the tools to begin changing on their own. *While Ezra was praying and making confession, weeping and prostrating himself before the House of God, a very great crowd of Israelites gathered around him, men, women, and children; the people were weeping bitterly* (Ezra 10:1). The aforementioned quote demonstrates that Ezra was a role model; his behavior ignited actions in others, without the need for coaxing or coercion.

When Ezra confronted the people about his anger regarding their intermarriage, the nation responded with one accord: *We must surely do just as you say* (Ezra 10:12). This immediate and overwhelmingly positive response is evidence that Ezra influenced the Judeans from the moment that they arrived in Jerusalem. When he first came to Judah, Ezra encountered a people who had not segregated themselves from the people of the land; and, although they had rebuilt the Temple, he found that they were greatly distanced from the Torah. Through Ezra's leadership and role modeling, he aided the people of Israel to recognize their errors and helped them correct their ways. "To a point, they do to themselves what once God would have done to them, taking upon themselves [God's] role as judge."¹⁰⁶

"When Ezra presented the Torah anew to the returned exiles, he did so not only as the scribal heir to a line of faithful but fallible human guardians. Rather, Ezra presented his canon as a prophet charged by God to a congregation freed of idolatry."¹⁰⁷ As a teacher, Ezra teaches the Torah to the people in a variety of ways, but never uses force or coercion. Ezra was a true and successful educator because he taught the people about

¹⁰⁶ Miles, 380.

¹⁰⁷ Halivni, 78.

Torah, and then supplied them with the necessary components to study it on their own. Essentially, Ezra's success laid in his ability to make himself dispensable. "At the core of Ezra's activities is the transfer of power and knowledge from himself to the community as a whole. He does so by example, delegation of power, joint decision making, reading of the Torah, and finally departing, leaving the community and the Torah in each other's care. In other words, Ezra succeeded in teaching God's '*statutes and ordinances in Israel* (Ezra 7:10)'.¹⁰⁸

Ezra was a peoples' leader. He traveled with them from Babylonia and knew exactly what to say in particular situations to spark the peoples' energy and belief. Unlike Moses who led from afar, Ezra incorporated himself into the Israelite nation; he was a part of the group and led from within. Moses acted as God's direct conduit and prophet, leading the Israelites to revelation and the entrance to the Promised Land; however, Moses led in front of the people, rather than among them. In contrast, Ezra was embedded in the nation and led through role modeling. He rarely needed to proclaim his feelings to the people because they had a close and intimate relationship with him; they were often able to detect his opinions on their own. The relationship between Ezra and the returnees was a strong partnership, they did not want to disappoint Ezra, and therefore the people acted in accordance with his authority.

Perhaps due to experiencing exile, or simply due to maturation, the nation of Israel was a distinctly different group under Ezra's supervision, than it was under Moses. When Moses led the people, the Israelites were a rebellious and divided people, who were removed from an unhappy, yet comfortable situation, and placed in a wild and desolate environment. He took a scattered group of people and turned them into a

¹⁰⁸ Eskenazi, 138.

cohesive nation under God. Ezra also needed to gather the people and return the Torah to their midst; however, unlike Moses, he was dealing with an already unified faction. Ezra's task was easier than that of Moses; however, Ezra primed the people more efficiently than Moses, readying them to accept the Torah once again. "But the people of Moses' time, also according to tradition, were unfit and unprepared to hear the word of God. The people '*stood at a distance* (Exodus 20:15)' as the Torah was revealed. Only in Ezra's day did the nation gather around, willing and eager to receive the written word. In this sense, the work of Ezra completes the work of Moses."¹⁰⁹

The returnees were different than the Israelites of Moses' time. When they returned from Babylonia, they had a new openness to tradition. "The contrast between the recalcitrance of the Israelites under Moses and the docility of the Jewish remnant under Ezra is striking."¹¹⁰ Conceivably the people were more obedient because they had lived under foreign rule in a foreign land, and therefore learned how to comply with laws and rules. This new congregation was a united front: *We must surely do as you say* (Ezra 10:12). The people were genuinely interested in following God's laws and statutes through Ezra's guidance. "Where once it was the lonely and beleaguered domain of the prophets and priests, the Torah of Moses, in account of the return from Babylonian captivity, appears in popular demand—sought after by the people of Israel at large."¹¹¹

The Jewish remnant returning from exile seemed to embrace the text while expressing repentance for their idol-worshipping past. This unique environment led to a second revelation for the nation of Israel. Under Moses, the Israelites received God's law from Sinai as their first revelation, and under Ezra, the people received a renewed

¹⁰⁹ Halivni, 4.

¹¹⁰ Miles, 380.

¹¹¹ Halivni, 13-14.

doctrine. With Ezra's guidance as editor and scribe, "critical scholars of the Bible believe that this is the time in which the Five Books of Moses were arranged in their present form, the time of the Pentateuch's canonization."¹¹² This canonization and acceptance by the people served as the nation's second revelation.

"The Torah was revealed to Moses, but received, hundreds of years later, under Ezra. Yet the two prophetic figures are not entirely analogous. Whereas Moses must be seen as a passive conduit, the recipient of a perfect, divine Torah, Ezra must be seen as a prophet whose task was to rebuild the Torah."¹¹³ Through Ezra's direction, the weeks after the second revelation were vastly different from the days after Moses' revelation at Sinai. Once the Israelites received Torah at Sinai, only forty days passed before the people built the Golden Calf, revolting and neglecting their new vows. The exilic returnees however, acted conversely and spent the weeks following their revelation engaged in obedient festivals and fasts.¹¹⁴

As stated above, Ezra's leadership and role modeling created many of Judaism's service blueprints. At a particular point under Ezra's direction, the people of Israel became the People of the Book.

And all the people gathered as one man in the open place before the Water Gate; and told Ezra the Scribe to bring the book of the Torah of Moses, which Adonai had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the Priest brought the Torah before the congregation both of men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it in front of the open space before the Water Gate, from early morning until noon, before the men and the women, and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Torah. And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a platform of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Uriah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up;

¹¹² Ibid., 12.

¹¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 83.

and Ezra blessed Adonai, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped God with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Torah; while the people stood in their places. So they read in the book in the Torah of God clearly, and gave the interpretation, so that they understood the reading (Nehemiah 8:1-8).

In these eight verses, Ezra reads aloud the contents of the Torah, the Torah that he and his entourage from Babylonia redacted. He stood on a pulpit, a raised piece of wood, specifically built for reading the Torah. Ezra read to the men, women, and all who could understand, hoping that all would be attentive to the words of God. Further, the choreography of the above moment is easily identifiable with the modern worship choreography of most contemporary synagogues. The person reading the Torah aloud typically stands on an elevated platform, with people on either side of him or her. Other similarities include standing when the Torah is raised, bowing during worship, as well as interpreting the words of Torah for all to understand their meaning. "The Torah, however, unlike other law books, was intended to be read before the people, and their cooperation was solicited. As we see in the book of Nehemiah, public readings of the scriptures inspired a zeal for observance."¹¹⁵ It is through this format that Ezra preaches to the people the redacted Torah, inspires them, and ultimately influences the structure of worship for Judaism.

Ezra accomplishes a variety of key events throughout his time as the leader for the returnees. Not only was he the editor and redactor of the sacred text, but he also served as a guide for the people. Once again, unlike Moses, Ezra provided the people with the laws, statutes, and religious practices, while simultaneously providing the nation with the practical steps necessary to abide by the Torah. Ezra acted as both leader and interpreter

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 24.

for the people. "Moreover, evidence has been shown that the religious leadership of the return from the exile was able to provide the people with authoritative guidance."¹¹⁶ Ezra was a multifaceted leader who is often elevated to the status of Moses.

The rabbis of the Talmud Bavli state that Ezra was a very important leader, so much that the Torah might have been given to him, if it were not given to Moses:

It has been taught: R. Jose said: Had Moses not preceded him, Ezra would have been worthy of receiving the Torah for Israel. Of Moses it is written, and Moses went up unto God (Ex. 19:3), and of Ezra it is written, He, Ezra, went up from Babylon (Ezra 7:6). As the going up of the former refers to the [receiving of the] Law, so does the going up of the latter...And even though the Torah was not given through him, its writing was changed through him... (Sanhedrin 21b).

Ezra worked very well in close partnership with the people. In addition to his effort redacting the Torah and teaching the returnees, Ezra also had a partner in his mass work of rebuilding Jerusalem: Nehemiah. Scholars argue whether Ezra lived prior to Nehemiah, or vice-versa. However, many believe that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were once one work. Their roles mirrored one another, and they seemed to work together to rebuild Judah. According to one scholar, Ezra led prior to Nehemiah, placing the beginning of their leadership at 458 BCE and then 445 BCE respectively. "Ezra's contributions included a refurbishing of the Jerusalem temple, which at that point was nearly seventy years old...Nehemiah began a series of fortifications that were hastily completed. Although Ezra clearly had a more varied range of interests, Nehemiah focused almost completely upon the fortifications [of the walls of Jerusalem]."¹¹⁷ Each leader had his particular focus, but they were working towards the same goal of rebuilding Jerusalem; Ezra rebuilt from the inside out and Nehemiah fortified from the

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 36.

¹¹⁷ Berquist, 110 & 113.

outside inward. In their joint efforts, it is apparent that working with a partner or disciple who will continue a leader's vision is vital. Ezra empowered the people to study and learn autonomously, and Nehemiah was a helpful companion to maintain the intensity of rebuilding.

Both Ezra and Nehemiah were excellent and capable leaders with very distinctive styles. They are both presented as pious men. However, Ezra rarely asked for anything for himself, while Nehemiah is very demanding and seldom waits for an invitation. "Nehemiah bursts on the scene with hardly an introduction bristling with energy and concern...the absence of pedigree and the sudden introduction establish an immediate contrast with Ezra's venerable credentials."¹¹⁸ Although they are different, they both filled a specific need: Ezra aided in bringing about a spiritual restoration, while Nehemiah occupied himself with building the city walls and fostering a political, moral, and societal reform.

Ezra and Nehemiah were a successful team. However, focusing on Ezra alone, it is evident by the text that he was a leader for the people. He rarely exuded any form of dictatorship and often provided outlets for his constituents to aid him in fulfilling his vision. In addition to his styles of direction analyzed through the Tanach and scholarly material, three types of modern leadership styles also describe Ezra's actions. The following section will examine these three forms of leadership and consider Ezra in their light: transactional leadership, instructional leadership through moral imagination and interpersonal competence, and collaborative leadership.

Transactional leadership is characterized by a leader who shares his/her vision and negotiates with his/her followers on how to make the vision a reality. Unlike Moses,

¹¹⁸ Eskenazi, 144.

who did not negotiate with his followers, Ezra consulted with the returnees, considered their feedback, and then made his decisions. As cited earlier in this chapter, Ezra 10:2 plays a significant role in defining Ezra's leadership. Even in his most intense moment of sadness and mourning, Ezra was open to hearing the ideas of the people. The returnees definitely understood and recognized Ezra's vision, and they worked together to bring the vision into reality. In this particular situation, Ezra did not need to lead in partnership with the people; as the king's appointee he could have easily dictated what would happen¹¹⁹, but he chose to utilize their feedback. Thus, as evidenced by the following verses, Ezra undoubtedly demonstrated transactional leadership:

And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken alien wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this matter. And now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all such women, and those born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the Torah. Arise; for it is your task, and we are with you. Be of good courage and do it! Then Ezra arose, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, swear that they should do according to this word. And they swore (Ezra 10:1-5).

Instructional leadership is the second form of leadership reflected in Ezra's work; it is a combination of moral imagination and interpersonal competence. Moral imagination is direction, focused on the possibility for improvement and seeing the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be.¹²⁰ Interpersonal competence is the ability to articulate vision, understand others' viewpoints and their context, as well as eliciting a desired task response from others by having them join you in moral imagination.¹²¹ By combining these, instructional leadership maintains that one may

¹¹⁹ Ezra 7:14, 25-26

¹²⁰ Greenfield, 61.

¹²¹ Ibid., 62.

attain true leadership and foster an environment welcoming to both the leader and followers.

Ezra's interpersonal competence stems from his dedication to God and studying text. *For Ezra had dedicated himself to study the Torah of Adonai, so as to observe it, and to teach laws and rules to Israel* (Ezra 7:10). He stated his vision, and the people responded because they understood and resonated with Ezra. He solicited their response, so they felt like they were part of a partnership, not a dictatorship. In the following example, Ezra asked the returnees to fast and they agree. *So we fasted and besought our God for this; and he listened to our entreaty* (Ezra 8:23). Ezra certainly had a strong moral imagination because his entire journey and mission inspired him to arrive in Judah and rebuild the returnee community. He saw a large discrepancy between how things were when he arrived and how they should ultimately be. Upon his arrival, the people were unfamiliar with the Torah and rituals; Ezra helped to train the people. After realizing their guilt of intermarrying with the daughters of the land, Ezra and the people rectify their errors and prepare to move from their past into a new future, thus identifying Ezra's moral imagination. *O Adonai God of Israel, you are righteous; for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is this day; behold, we are before you in our guilt, for we cannot stand before you because of this* (Ezra 9:15).

Finally, Ezra led through collaborative leadership. A collaborative leader creates full staff investment, a shared vision, and a comfortable group dynamic. As the leader, Ezra needed to listen to the people and be patient with them. "Collaborative leadership doesn't require that the titular leader mask his or her own opinions or feelings; Ezra is quite open in his distress about the mixed marriages...Ezra models utmost self-restraint,

letting the people accept responsibility for both the problem and its solution.”¹²² Ezra, as the quintessential collaborative leader, knew to listen to his followers. He realized that he lacked all the answers, and permitted his followers to have significant input. “Rather than simply assessing a situation and taking action, the leader must become much more of a follower, practicing self-restraint, listening carefully, framing issues, and acting as a facilitator rather than a didactic leader.”¹²³

As Isa Aron, points out, Ezra was celebrated as a collaborative leader because he was patient and truly listened to the people. In Nehemiah 8:1, when Ezra was preparing to read aloud from the Torah scroll, he waited for the people to ask him, rather than just thrusting the text upon them. *And all the people gathered as one man in the open place before the Water Gate; and they asked Ezra the Scribe to bring the book of the Torah of Moses, which Adonai had commanded to Israel.* In standing back and hearing the voice of the people, Ezra personified a leader willing to learn and grow from and with his people.

Ezra was a teacher. He had a passion for learning and an unending belief in God. He dedicated himself to others, vowing to educate them in the ways of Torah, but not before he studied it himself. Ezra never expected his followers to partake in anything he would not do himself. He was selfless and motivated; he knew how to influence the returnees without coercion or manipulation. The authors of the Talmud even claimed that if Moses had not received the Torah at Sinai, Ezra would have been just as worthy. Many scholars claim that Ezra's revelation was the “second revelation,” where he introduced the edited and redacted Pentateuch to the exilic remnant in Jerusalem.

¹²² Aron, 91.

¹²³ Ibid., 92.

However, Ezra was not perfect; he was a people's leader, who occasionally was so involved internally, that he missed what was happening in his immediate environment. "It is striking that Ezra has to be told about the mixed marriages in his community and does not see the situation on his own."¹²⁴ He was so involved in the day-to-day activities that as a leader he overlooked the community as a whole. However, his flaws were small compared to his accomplishments. Ezra was the underrated, quiet, faith-filled leader that rebuilt the exiled community and revitalized the spirit and soul of the people by providing them with the Torah. "Ezra was the first and the last prophet to bring God's message—the Torah of Moses—to a receptive audience, united, finally, in the spirit of monotheism."¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Eskenazi, 139.

¹²⁵ Halivni, 78.

Study Guide to Multiple Resonant Leadership Styles

Rationale

Boards are comprised of congregants. Congregants often act like rowers of a ship; they move the vessel along, but rarely supply input regarding the direction of the craft. Ideally, congregants should initiate change, while the professional leadership of the institution should share the vision to steer the vessel. Board members are usually more active than other congregants; however, they still may only function as mere representatives, not reaching their full potential as true initiators of development. In this type of situation, the leader of the institution may not feel supported and therefore may engage in a form of hierarchical leadership. *[NB: the term leader may refer to clergy, senior staff, board members, lay leaders depending on the particular structure of the organization]*

This style of leadership, known as command leadership, does not provide the followers with occasion to lead or really be part of the team. This type of leadership is necessary in situations when a leader is barely clinging onto his/her influence or during a crisis; this type of leadership may also be necessary when the circumstances call for immediate, decisive action, and there is no time (at least in the mind of the leader) for explanation and team building. When command leadership is over-utilized it can create reliance in followers and cast them in subordinate roles. Subordinates typically do what they are supposed to, and little else.

In most synagogues/institutions, it is not the conscious intent of the leader to administrate in this manner. Generally, synagogues/institutions utilize this system because it is an automatic and reactionary style of leadership. Initially, leaders feel more comfortable using command leadership because they remain in control of the vision and values of the institution. However, this style of leadership isolates, separates, and

stagnates, any individual or institutional growth. In order to foster sustainable and collective progress, leaders must use a resonant style of leadership, creating an environment where mere members become contributing stakeholders. Resonant styles of leadership create settings where each individual can articulate the vision, understand his/her role, and truly believe that his/her participation is important. This style of leadership benefits individuals, allowing them to feel invested in the organization; this empowerment motivates the constituents to support the institution and help it reach its goals.

This work is an introductory study guide to multiple resonant leadership styles. Specifically we will focus on four styles: visionary/affiliative, servant, collaborative, and instructional. The study guide will draw from the various sources of the four biblical leaders researched in our thesis. Utilizing the information about the four biblical leaders researched in the thesis, we will explore these resonant styles, using Moses, Deborah, David, and Ezra as a lens of leadership.

In many instances, depending on your particular institution and situation, these leadership styles may overlap. It is important to assess the group, and specific organization prior to administering these leadership forms. Just as the four biblical leaders within this paper accessed a variety of styles to meet their specific challenges, so too, you and your organization should remain open to utilizing a combination of leadership styles.

Study Guide Goals

- Introduce multiple styles of leadership
- Show connections between biblical leaders and contemporary leadership styles
- Establish the idea that we are part of a tradition that utilized various styles of leadership
- Develop investment in resonant leadership for both the leaders and constituents
- Encourage synagogue leaders and members to access models of resonant leadership through examining biblical sources
- Help leaders and members to evaluate the current leadership style used by their institution

Study Guide Objectives

Learners should be able to:

- Describe the current leadership system utilized by their institution
- Define resonant leadership and resonant leadership styles
- Explain in their words the connections between contemporary leadership styles and the four biblical leaders in this study guide
- Implement some/all of the resonant leadership styles appropriate for their setting
- Articulate why their personal involvement is vital to the progress of their organization
- Integrate the material learned into their specific roles and responsibilities within their institution

Visionary Leadership: An Examination of Moses

Models

The visionary leader is inspirational, self confident, self aware and definitely empathetic. The visionary leader is able to clearly articulate purpose and connect it to the values shared by the people. Empathy is crucial, allowing the leader to sense how the people feel and to understand their perspective. This helps the leader articulate an inspirational vision. The visionary leader articulates where the people are going, but not necessarily how they are going to get there. This frees people to innovate, experiment, and take risks. Knowing the vision gives people clarity, and believing in the vision builds connection, commitment, and pride. Visionary leadership can be particularly effective when people are lost during a time of change or if they are stagnant and in need of direction.¹

Method

Moses is considered the Jewish people's greatest leader. He overcame his own self-doubt, a speech impediment, the Pharaoh, and a people unprepared to unify as a nation. However, through all this difficulty he achieved greatness with resilience and resonant leadership. As evidenced by the quotes below, from early on Moses was prepared for the challenges that he would eventually face as a leader. Are you ready for the leadership challenges that lie ahead for you and your organization?

Activity: In Moses' Sandals

Below are several quotes about Moses, some from scholarly works, and some from Jewish texts. (1) Post each of the quotes in different areas around the room. (2) As a group, review the definitions of resonant and visionary leadership. (3) Divide the people in attendance into six groups. (4) Each group should rotate around the room visiting all six quotes (approximately 2-3 minutes at each station). (5) At each station the learners should read the quote and answer the following question (which should be posted at each station): What does this quote tell us about Moses' leadership style? (6) Following the group rotations to each station, post all quotes on one document for the learners using either a handout or transparency. (7) Based on their answers to the initial question, the groups should engage in a discussion utilizing the guiding questions/thoughts below (approximately 3-5 minutes).

¹ Ibid., 57-59.

Quotes

- “He [Moses] learned how to live in an arid, uninhabited region with only his herd around him. The practical lessons he gained at this time were to stand him in good stead later on. Every moment he had to be alert to danger. His duties, however, left him many solitary hours to think. Alone in the wilderness, Moses’ spirit was trained and tempered.”²
- “AND HE LOOKED (וַיִּבְטֹחַ) ON THEIR BURDENS. What is the meaning of AND HE LOOKED? He looked upon their burdens and wept, saying: ‘Woe is me for you; would that I could die for you.’³ There is no labor more strenuous than that of handling clay, and he used to shoulder the burdens and help each one.”⁴
- “Somehow Moses must gain their unqualified support and arouse their will to be free, for only with the backing of a united people could he successfully confront the Pharaoh.”⁵
- Similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs⁶, Moses needed to tend to the Israelites’ immediate physical needs – food, clothing, and shelter – before he could tend to their emotional wellbeing.
- And Moses pleaded with Adonai his God, and said, Adonai, why does your anger burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?...Turn from your fierce anger, and repent of this evil against your people.⁷
- “The Israelites had broken with their past. Moses was resolved to capitalize upon their unique and exhilarating experience and to mold them into a new and different kind of society.”⁸

Guiding Questions/Thoughts

- In what ways does each quote relate to your views of Moses’ leadership?
- Identify and list what your organization can learn from the ways that Moses is portrayed in each quote.
- Using your new understanding of Moses’ leadership, make a list of at least five concrete methods that you will use (individually or as a group) to implement resonant leadership styles into your organization.

² Staak, 7.

³ Exodus Rabbah 1:27

⁴ Zivotofsky, 259.

⁵ Ibid., 266.

⁶ Physiological, Safety, Love, Esteem, and Self Actualization (www.tutor2u.net/.../motivation_theory_maslow.asp)

⁷ Exodus 32:11-12

⁸ Silver, 33.

Servant Leadership: An Examination of Deborah

Model

Servant leadership is one where the leader models the activities that he/she expects others to perform. A servant leader is an intent listener, knowing that genuine listening both builds strength in others and provides information for problem solving. This style of leadership states that individuals are free to make autonomous decisions, as long as these decisions embody the values shared by the community. For example, a servant leader might perform menial and laborious tasks to demonstrate that all members of the organization need to share in the realization of the vision and values. By engaging in this behavior, the leader builds trust among his/her constituents, and thus furthers the perpetuation of the group's vision.⁹

Text

ויספו בני ישראל לעשות הרע בעיני יהוה ואהוד מת: וימקרו יהוה ביד יבין מלך-קנעו אשר מלך בחצור ושר-צבאו סיסרא והוא יושב בחרשת הגוים: ויצעקו בני-ישראל אל-יהוה כי תשע מאות רכב-ברזל לו והוא לחץ את-בני ישראל בחזקה עשרים שנה: ודבורה אשה נביאה אשת לפידות היא שפטה את-ישראל בעת ההיא: והיא יושבת תחת-תמר דבורה בין הרקמה ובין בית-אל בהר אפרים ויעלו אליה בני ישראל למשפט: ותשלח ותקרא לברק בן-אבינעם מקדש-נפתלי ותאמר אליו הלא-צנה יהוה אלהי-ישראל לך ומשכת בהר תבור ולקחת עמך עשרת אלפים איש מבני נפתלי ומבני זבולון: ומשכתי אליך אל-נחל קישון את-סיסרא ושר-צבאו יבין ואת-רכבו ואת-המונו ונתתיהו בידך: ויאמר אליה ברק אם-תלכי עמי והלקחי ואם-לא תלכי עמי לא אלך: ותאמר הלא אלך עמך:

1) And the people of Israel again did evil in the sight of God, when Ehud was dead.
2) And Adonai sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-HaGoyim. 3) And the people of Israel cried to Adonai; for God had nine hundred chariots of iron; and strongly oppressed the people of Israel for twenty years. 4) And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time. 5) And she sat under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-El in Mount Ephraim; and the people of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6) And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-Naphtali, and said to him, "has not the God of Israel commanded, saying, go and gather your men to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun? 7) And I will draw to you, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into your hand." 8) And Barak said to her, "if you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, then I will not go." 9) And she said, "I will surely go with you" (Judges 4:1-9).

⁹ Sergiovanni, 274.

Questions for Discussion

- In what ways does Devorah meet the specifications of servant leadership, based on the previous text and the leadership model description?
- List the qualities of a servant leader. Read line 6. Now, using the list of qualities that you created, write a dialogue between Devorah and Barak, to fill-in the gap in the text between when he first arrived and her statement of action.
- As stated in the rationale, servant leadership is a form of resonant leadership. This style creates settings where individuals can articulate the vision of the organization, understand their role within their institution, and truly believe that their participation in their community is important. In what ways did Devorah provide these opportunities for Barak? In what ways did she not?
- Based on the above responses, think about a current or previous position that you have held in your synagogue/organization (such as religious school chairperson, treasurer, or board member). Describe how your group was led. Did your team or committee engage in resonant leadership? Could you articulate the vision? Did you feel that your participation was vital to the group? Thinking back to these instances, how would you have served in your position utilizing the qualities of servant leadership?
- In your present position, can you currently state your institution's vision and goals? Is your voice a critical component of the organization? As a servant leader, how can you simultaneously balance your roles as a board member and as a congregant? In what ways can you act as a servant leader to the congregants/members and support the organization's vision by being one who is also led?

Affiliative Leadership: An Examination of David

Model

The affiliative leader represents collaborative competence in action. Affiliative leaders are most concerned with promoting harmony among their people. They do this by trying to foster friendly and meaningful interactions. Further, by nurturing personal relationships, they expand and build the bonds already developed. The result is a greater willingness and desire by the people to connect to their leader. The people will more easily embrace the vision set by the leader, buying in and making it their own. The affiliative leader will focus on the emotional goals and wellbeing of the people, often even at the expense of the greater vision. The hope is that this personal care, connection, and sacrifice will ultimately benefit the greater vision by inspiring a stronger desire by the people for connection to their leader.¹⁰

Text

וַיָּבֹא כָל־הָעָם לְהַכְרֹת אֶת־דָּוִד לֶחֶם בְּעוֹד הַיּוֹם וַיִּשָּׁבַע דָּוִד לֵאמֹר כֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה־לִּי אֱלֹהִים וְכֹה יִסְיָף
כִּי אִם־לִפְנֵי בּוֹא־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ אֶטְעַם־לֶחֶם אוֹ כָל־מִאֲמָוָה: וְכָל־הָעָם הִפִּירוּ וַיִּיטֹב בָּעַיִן יִנִּיחֵם כָּכָל אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּעֵינֵי כָל־הָעָם טוֹב:

(In regards to David fasting and mourning after Abner's death) **35) All the troops came to urge David to eat something while it was still day; but David swore, "May God do thus to me and more if I eat bread or anything else before sundown. "** **36) All the troops took note of it and approved, just as all the troops approved everything else the king did. (II Samuel 3:35 – 36)**

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן יְהוָה וַיַּצִּגּוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ בְּתוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל אֲשֶׁר נָטָה־לוֹ דָּוִד וַיַּעַל דָּוִד עֲלֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
וַיִּשְׁלָמִים: וַיְכַל דָּוִד מִהַעֲלֹת הָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים וַיִּבָּרֶךְ אֶת־הָעָם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: וַיַּחֲלֹק
לְכָל־הָעָם לְכָל־הֶמְדוֹן יִשְׁרָאֵל לְמֵאִישׁ וְעַד־אִשָּׁה לֵאמֹר חֲלַת לֶחֶם אַחַת וְאַשְׁפָּר אֶחָד וְאַשִּׁישָׁה אַחַת
וַיֵּלֶךְ כָּל־הָעָם אִישׁ לְבֵיתוֹ:

17) They brought in the ark of God and set it up in its place, inside the tent which David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before God. 18) When David finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the God of Hosts. 19) And he distributed among all the people-the entire multitude of Israel, man and woman alike-to each a loaf of bread, a cake made in a pan, and a raisin cake. (II Samuel 6:17-19)

¹⁰ Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 63-65.

וַיִּקְבְּצוּ כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־דָּוִיד בְּחֶבְרוֹן לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עֲצָמְךָ וּבִשְׂרֹךְ אֲנַחְנוּ: גַּם־תָּמוּל גַּם־שְׁלֹשׁוֹם גַּם בְּהִיּוֹת שְׂאוֹל מֶלֶךְ אֹתָהּ הַמוֹצִיא וְהַמְּבִיא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ אֹתָהּ תִּרְעָה אֶת־עַמִּי אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֹתָהּ תִּהְיֶה נָגִיד עַל עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּחֶבְרוֹן וַיִּכְרַת לָהֶם דָּוִיד בְּרִית בְּחֶבְרוֹן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ אֶת־דָּוִיד לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּדָּבָר יְהוָה בְּיַד־שְׁמוּאֵל:

1) All Israel gathered to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. 2) Long before now, even when Saul was king, you were the leader of Israel; and God said to you: You shall shepherd My people Israel." 3) All the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a pact with them in Hebron before God. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of God through Samuel. (I Chronicles 11:1-3)

וַיִּנָּעַץ דָּוִיד עִם־שָׂרֵי הָאֲלָפִים וְהַמְּאוֹת לְכָל־נָגִיד: וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִיד לְכָל קָהָל יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם־עֲלֵיכֶם טוֹב וּמִן־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נִפְרָצָה נִשְׁלַחָה עַל־אֲחֵינוּ הַנִּשְׁאָרִים בְּכָל אֲרָצוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַמָּהֶם הַקְּהָנִים וְהַלְוִיִּם בְּעָרֵי מִגְרָשֵׁיהֶם וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֲלֵינוּ: וְנִסְבֶּה אֶת־אָרוֹן אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲלֵינוּ כִּי־לֹא דִרְשָׁנָהּ בְּיָמַי שְׂאוֹל: וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הַקָּהָל לַעֲשׂוֹת כֹּן כִּי־יֵשֶׁר הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי כָל־הָעָם: וַיִּקְהַל דָּוִיד אֶת־כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־שִׁיחֹר מִצְרִים וְעַד־לְבֹא חֶמֶת לְהָבִיא אֶת־אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים מִקְרִיַּת יִעָרִים: וַיַּעַל דָּוִיד וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּעֲלֹתָהּ אֶל־קְרִיַּת יִעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לִיהוֹדָה לַהֲעֵלוֹת מִשָּׁם אֶת אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה יוֹשֵׁב הַכְּרוּבִים אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שֵׁם: וַיַּרְפִּיבוּ אֶת־אָרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־עֲגֹלָה חֲדָשָׁה מִבֵּית אֲבִינָדָב וַעֲזָא וְאֲחִיו נְהֻגִים בַּעֲגֹלָה: וְדָוִיד וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁשֻׁקִּים לִפְנֵי הָאֵל הַיּוֹם בְּכָל־עֹז וּבִשְׁשִׁירִים וּבְכִנֹּרוֹת וּבְכַנְבָּלִים וּבְחַתְּמִים וּבְמִצְלָתִים וּבְחֻצְצֹרוֹת:

1) Then David consulted with the officers of the thousands and the hundreds, with every chief officer. 2) David said to the entire assembly of Israel, "If you approve, and if Adonai our God concurs, let us send far and wide to our remaining kinsmen throughout the territories of Israel.....that they should gather together to us, 3) in order to transfer the Ark of our God to us, for throughout the days of Saul we paid no regard to it." 4) The entire assembly agreed to do so, for the proposal pleased the people. 5) David then assembled all Israel ... in order to bring the Ark of God from Kiryat - yearim. 6) David and all Israel went up to...bring from there the Ark of God. 7) They transported the Ark of God on a new cart...8) and David and all Israel danced before God with all their might – with songs, lyres, harps, timbrels, cymbals, and trumpets. (I Chronicles 13:1 – 8)

Activity

- Place all four quotes individually in the center of a poster board or butcher paper, designate four quadrants around the quote, and place each poster board/butcher paper in one corner of the room.
 - Divide the group into four smaller groups and station each group in front of a poster board.
 - Groups should take approximately five minutes to read, discuss, and write a commentary on their quote, paying specific attention to the bolded text. Within your commentary address the following:
 - Is this quote an example of affiliative leadership?
 - If yes, how did David demonstrate affiliative leadership, and if no, why not?
 - Groups should then rotate to all four corners, reading and commenting on each quote and the commentary of the previous group(s).
 - The first group should write their comments on the upper left portion of the poster, the next group should write their commentary below the first group's, etc.
 - Now, take 2-3 minutes and read through all quotes and commentaries.
- Come back together as a group and collectively answer the following questions:
- List three ways in which David acted as an affiliative leader?
 - Why was this style of leadership significant in David's success as a leader?
 - Using the quotes and commentaries as inspiration, what are some specific ways you can act as an affiliative leader in your organization?

Instructional Leadership: An Examination of Ezra

Model

Instructional Leadership – This style of leadership maintains that if one combines moral imagination with interpersonal competence a true balance may be reached for both the leader and follower. Moral imagination is direction, focused on the probability for improvement; seeing the discrepancy between how things are and how they might be. Interpersonal competence is the ability to convey vision, understand others' perspective as well as eliciting a desired task response from others by having them join you in moral, imagination.¹¹

Text

וַיֵּאסְפוּ כָּל־הָעָם בְּאִישׁ אֶחָד אֶל־הֶרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְעֹזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לֵהֲבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיָּבִיא עֹזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה לִפְנֵי הָעָהָל מֵאִישׁ וְעַד־אִשָּׁה וְכָל מִבֵּין לְשִׁמְעַת בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד לַחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי: וַיִּקְרָא־בּוֹ לִפְנֵי הֶרְחוֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם מִן־הָאֹר עַד־מִחְצִית הַיּוֹם נֶגֶד הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַמְּבִינִים וְאֲזַנֵּי כָּל־הָעָם אֶל־סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה: וַיַּעֲמֵד עֹזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר עַל־מַגְדֵּל־עֵץ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָבָר וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶצְלוֹ מַתִּיתְיָהּ וְשֵׁמָיָה וְנָעֲמָיָה וְאוּרִיָּה וְחִלְקִיָּה וּמַעֲשִׂיָּה עַל־יְמִינוֹ וּמִשְׁמָאֵלוֹ פְּדִיָּה וּמִישָׁאֵל וּמִלְכִּיָּה וְחִשְׁשִׁיָּה וְחִשְׁבֻּדָּה וְכַרְיָה מְשֻׁלֵּם: וַיִּפְתַּח עֹזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לְעֵינֵי כָּל־הָעָם כִּי־מַעַל כָּל־הָעָם הָיָה וַיִּכְפַּתְחוּ עֲמָדוֹ כָּל־הָעָם: וַיִּבְרַךְ עֹזְרָא אֶת־יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים הַגָּדוֹל וַיַּעֲנוּ כָּל־הָעָם אָמֵן אָמֵן בְּמַעַל יְדֵיהֶם וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לַיהוָה אֲפִים אֲרָצָה: וַיִּשְׁוּעַ וּבָנֵי וְשִׁרְבֵיָהּ יָמִין עֲקֹב שְׁבָתִי הוֹדִיָּה מַעֲשִׂיָּה קִלְיָטָה עֲזַרְיָה יוֹזָבֵד חֲנוּ פִלְאִיָּה וְהַלְוִיִּם מְבִינִים אֶת־הָעָם לַתּוֹרָה וְהָעָם עַל־עַמְדָם: וַיִּקְרָאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים מִכָּרֶשׁ וְשׁוֹם שָׁכַל וַיְבִינּוּ בַּמִּקְרָא:

1) And all the people gathered as one man in the open place before the Water Gate; and told Ezra the Scribe to bring the book of the Torah of Moses, which Adonai had commanded to Israel. 2) And Ezra the Priest brought the Torah before the congregation both of men and women, and all who could hear with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. 3) And he read from it in front of the open space before the Water Gate, from early morning until noon, before the men and the women, and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the Torah. 4) And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a platform of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Uriah, and Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishaël, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5) And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up; 6) and Ezra blessed Adonai, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped God with their faces to the ground. 7) Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Torah; while the people stood in their places. 8) So they read in the book in the Torah of God clearly, and gave the interpretation, so that they understood the reading (Nehemiah 8:1-8).

¹¹ Greenfield, 60-64.

Method

Ezra was the quintessential instructional leader. He continuously worked to examine his current situation and strove to find ways to make improvements. Ezra was a leader amongst the people, who had a special ability of recognizing the people's perspective. He shared his vision openly, and motivated his constituents, making them feel like they were vital parts of the nation. As evidenced by the first verse of the text, the people gathered together and requested that Ezra read them the Torah; he did not push the text onto them, rather he prepared them, and empowered them to ask for the words of Torah.

Activity

- As an instructional leader, Ezra listens to the people and only then decides to read them the Torah (verse 1). Like Ezra, identify ways you can seek out the needs of your constituents in order to serve them better. *[NB: Using the above text (specifically the bolded material), notice that Ezra's actions provide the foundation for our contemporary Torah service.]*
- Create an action plan outlining the steps that you can take to implement the ideas generated regarding the needs of your constituents.
- In small groups (3-5 people), compare the text with the model of instructional leadership. According to this text, how were Ezra's actions synonymous with this particular leadership style? Next, using a Venn diagram, web the similarities and differences between Ezra's actions and the leadership model.
- Based on your above findings, reexamine instructional leadership vis-à-vis how your organization does or does not function in this manner. Next, list at least five concrete that ways your group can implement these suggestions.

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