

Moshe's hopes of leading Israel to the Promised Land crashing down in failure. The ability to speak wisely at the proper moment is still one of the great talents of human beings. All of us should attempt to cultivate and use it regularly in our personal, family and communal lives. *Rabbi Berel Wein and torah.org.*

Haftarah Summary Rabbi Aron Tendler

In the year 2779 Yiftach HaGiladi became Judge, Shofet. Yiftach is described as a gifted warrior who was seemingly unworthy of becoming the Shofet. His brothers had cast out Yiftach because he was the son of a concubine. While away from his family Yiftach gathered around himself an army of outlaws. Due to the oppression and tyranny of Ammon, Yiftach was asked by the elders of Gilad to return to the family and lead them against the forces of Ammon. Yiftach was victorious and remained Shofet for six years.

There are a number of reasons why the story of Yiftach was selected to complement Parshas Chukas. First of all the issue of leadership. The Talmud tell us that "Yiftach in his generation was like Samuel in his generation." Although Yiftach was not the greatest scholar, he nevertheless was the recognized leader and a prophet. As such he was accorded the absolute support of the Halacha and the people. This support can at times appear as dogmatic as the law of the Red Heifer. However, our absolute support for our acknowledged Torah leadership is the foundation of our legal system and the transmission of Torah from generation to generation.

The second reason has to do with the battle with Sichon. Sichon was

Minyan Schedule

Erev Shabbat Parashat Chukat	
Candle lighting 15/07/16	4.46 pm
Mincha (Mizrachi)	4.50 pm
Shabbat Parashat Chukat	
Shacharit 16/07/16	9.15 am
Children's Service	10.00 am
Mincha (Mizrachi)	4.40 pm
Shabbat ends	5.45 pm

Erev Shabbat Parashat Balak	
Candle lighting 22/07/16	4.50 pm
Mincha (Mizrachi)	4.50 pm

Announcements

**Kiddush is sponsored by
The Synagogue**

**Mazal Tov to Jack and
Miriam Stein on the recent
marriage of their eldest
granddaughter**

**'An expanding universe?
Orthodoxy in the 21st
century' see email for the
programme details**

king of the Ammonites who had taken possession of lands once belonging to Moab. Sichon refused to allow the Bnai Yisroel to pass through his lands and went to war against them. Sichon was destroyed and his lands were forfeited to the Bnai Yisroel. In our Haftarah, the king of Ammon, as cousins to the Moabites, claimed legal ownership to the lands which Moshe had taken from Sichon, who had taken them from Moab. *Rabbi Aron Tendler and torah.org.*

Or Chadash

קהילת אור חדש

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Shabbat Parashat Chukat
10 Tammuz 5776; 16 July, 2016
Shabbat Torah reading: Stone Chumash
page 838, Haftarah page 1187.

President Jonathan Erlich
Rabbi-in-residence
D'var Torah Rabbi Franklin

The Leadership Model of Aaron Rabbi Marc D. Angel

"And when the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel." (Bemidbar 20:29) Aaron the High Priest was an honored and beloved leader of the children of Israel. At his death, he was mourned by the entire congregation, even more than the mourning that took place at the death of Moses. What were Aaron's outstanding virtues that made him such a remarkable leader?

As High Priest, Aaron was involved on a regular basis with the Temple service. He wore distinctive priestly garments and carried himself with dignity. It would have been

natural for people to feel distant from him; he was a holy man, a master of Temple ritual. Yet, the people felt close to him. He was able to maintain the gravitas of his office, while still remaining accessible to the public. Aaron managed to balance ceremonial dignity with human kindness. He did not become a ritualized automaton; nor did he lose his sense of connectedness with the people. He could have come across simply as an impersonal Temple functionary; but he didn't. He could have compromised the formal dignity of office by acting informally, joking around during the ceremonies, or by arriving late at the Temple service or skipping the service altogether whenever he wanted.

Had he behaved in this fashion, he would not have been a respected or effective religious leader.

Aaron's greatness, according to the



Pirkei Avot (1:12), laid primarily in his sensitivity to the needs of the people. Aaron “loved peace and pursued peace; he loved people and brought them closer to Torah.” Aaron well understood that the role of a religious leader was to interact in a loving way with others. The responsibility was not to talk at them, but to listen to them and discuss with them, to make time for them, to worry about their worries and to rejoice in their joys. In spite of his heavy ceremonial responsibilities as High Priest, Aaron was there for people when they needed him. He was a soothing and comforting spirit in the community. He found ways to bring people together, to dispel controversies.

The key to Aaron’s successful spiritual leadership was his ability to balance ceremonial responsibilities with an unshakable commitment to the people. He understood the importance of religious ritual, and he also understood that religion should reflect love, compassion and inclusiveness. Carelessness in religious service undermines the meaning and holiness of the rituals. Harshness in religious leadership undermines the beauty and attractiveness of Torah.

The great Hebrew poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, lamented the negative turn in the religious life of his day in Eastern Europe: “Halakha has an angry face - Strict, severe,

hard as steel, strict justice - [it] sets forth its ruling and leaves no room for differentiation: Its yes is Yes, its no is No, fossilized piety, obligation, enslavement.” (quoted by Zvi Zohar, *Rabbinic Creativity in the Modern Middle East*, pp. 4-5)

Aaron made sure that religion and halakha did not have an angry face. The goal of Torah is not to enslave us but to liberate us; it is not to undermine our basic humanity but to bring out the best in us. It demands dignified observance of religious ceremonies and rituals; but it also demands a spirit of love and kindness in our interpersonal relations. Aaron’s goal was to serve G-d and to bring people closer to the service of G-d. He conducted the ceremonies of the High Priest with precision and seriousness, and he thereby taught people the awe of G-d. He conducted his personal life governed by love of others, by a commitment to increase peace and harmony among the community, and he thereby taught the people that the face of religion is benevolent, wise and smiling.

When Aaron died, all the people of Israel mourned their loss. When the religious model of Aaron dies, so all of us become mourners. If, however, we can strive to emulate the example of Aaron, we can love peace and pursue peace, love our fellow human beings and bring the world closer to the ideals of Torah. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the*

Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

The War of the Words Rabbi Berel Wein

The Torah invests a great deal of worth into the power of speech. Though we read in Pirkei Avot that “words spoken are not as important as deeds performed,” the Torah nevertheless constantly emphasizes the importance of the spoken word. Improper speech, slander and obscenity are terrible abuses of the gift of speech. The Torah rates speech as the one quality that truly separates humans from the animal kingdom. Speech can console, comfort, advise, persuade and inform. It is the primary method for educating and communicating with others. Speech can be holy and it can lead to reconciliation, compromise and understanding between humans, even amongst former enemies. On the other hand, force, even when justified and necessary, rarely settles matters or increases understanding and wisdom. Force is to be employed only if speech fails. The Torah tells us that even in war, the Jewish army entering the Land of Israel was “to call out for peace with its enemies” before embarking on military action. Of course, speech is not a surefire winner all of the time and without some use of force or threat of force, security and progress cannot occur in a complex and dangerous world such as ours. But Churchill’s line about the UN “It is better to jaw, jaw, jaw than to war, war, war” certainly retains its place in the truisms of history.

Moshe admits at the beginning of his mission of leading the people of Israel that

Or Chadash is a friendly community. We hold tuneful participatory services, in the nusach Ashkenaz tradition, on Shabbat and Yom Tov. Focusing on personal growth, we welcome all, from small children to older men and women, of all levels of observance. We have operated since 1995. During the year we arrange special activities including: learning, shiur/lecture series and social events.

temperamentally and physically he is not a person of words and speech. Yet his greatest successes and achievements occur when he follows the Lord’s command and speaks to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh. Moshe is not only the giver of the written Torah to Israel but he is the master teacher of the Oral Law - he spends the last forty years of his life speaking, teaching, explaining, and guiding. For this reason, it is clearer to us why he was punished for striking the rock in anger to bring forth its waters rather than adhering to G-d’s instructions to speak to the rock. By striking the rock and not attempting first to speak to it, Moshe unwittingly enshrines force over speech, power over persuasion in the minds of his followers. Striking the rock is the antithesis of everything that Moshe taught and did until now. Certainly striking the rock achieves an immediate success - water flows from it. But the Lord tells Moshe that striking the rock does not sanctify the people of Israel or its G-d. It may appear to be a quick fix to the problem but it certainly is not a long lasting lesson of morality and holy behavior. Striking the rock and not speaking to it is what brings

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