

THE HONESTY OF MOSES

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In the next Torah portions we see a detailed description of the establishment of the temple and the contents within it, provided with an exact description of the donations and the sums of money that God ordered for this establishment. The Almighty commanded a collection from every person in the amount of a half shekel. At that time the number of the Sons of Israel was 603,550 males over the age of 20 years.

It means that 301,775 shekels were collected. Moses detailed for us the way that every donation was brought for use in the process of establishment of the temple, for example by the pillars, the straps, the hooks, and the covers. Moses details the use of gold, silver, metal, wood, cloth materials, leather, and precious stones that were collected by ensuring that every single gerah that was given be used towards the building of the temple, and not to his private and secret bank account... This thing is a wonder in our eyes because Moses was very honest and nobody mistrusted him. If he were mistrusted, why would he detail in public all accounts and the small details in regard to financing the temple? The answer to this teaches us that there are two directions that characterize personal integrity.

Not only that, but other people are committed toward the positive judgment, but at the same time I am also committed to prevent myself from being in a situation that could allow others to make wrong conclusions towards deeds that I do. Too frequently we hear people saying "I don't care what others think about me. I know that what I do is the right thing."

Nonetheless, the attitude of the Torah is different. The Torah says that also we have ambition to fulfill God's will in the most complete way. It is forbidden to leave a wrong impression to the people around us.

In the case of Moses he had a special need to detail in a public forum all the invoices of the administration of public money. After the golden calf incident and the breaking of the two stone tablets, God forgave the people of Israel and ordered Moses to make new tablets. Right after that the building work of the temple started and in the hands of Moses was a complete ton of gold and silver. The potential to steal or corrupt part of the materials was possible, but the fact remains that Moses was not accused of doing unsuitable deeds demonstrated in the details that show us the honesty of Moses. With regard to his public role as the leader of the people his awareness became even more complicated because he knew that all eyes were upon him. This sensitivity that is known to all of us exists in great potency by people who are in a key position that serve leaders of the public.

What is the meaning of a leader of the public? How are we as a people seeing our leaders?

The fundamental demand from every public personality is that he will fulfill his role from clear intentions to improve the state of the public, and not to any other interests - personal or other. By doing this, he does not have to consider what they say about him, only in regard to the concern of the benefit of the public.

Moreover, the honesty of conducting the public should be seen by many, and it is not enough that he will be complete with the clarity of his deeds and conscience before God, as Moses said "and you must be clear before God and Israel." Despite the greatness of Moses and his devotion to the people of Israel he didn't win an entrance to the Promised Land, but nevertheless he established the foundation of leadership leading the people in the land of Israel. He did that in three ways, by his selfless activity as a leader, by the way he told the history to the people, and by the way he gave the commandments to settle the land to those people who would enter the land. These ways show us that Moses fulfilled in his life a model of leadership. Moses serves as a personal example of how to lead the people, and also affixing laws of justice and legal matters, and leadership to direct the people during their settlement in the land.

Moses describes how he initiated the establishment of a legal system in the desert. He asked from the people to chose personalities that he would appoint as judges and order them to judge in justice. If they could not come to an agreement, they would have to ask him to make the final decision. The best preparation to the settlement of the land was establishing a system that would take care of moral life inside the people of Israel.

For that, Moses commanded the elected judges to judge the people according to moral criteria. It seems that these criteria are the foundation of the stable national life. Also when they entered the land of Israel, the people of Israel were commanded first to establish a legal system, the same legal system that Moses established in the desert. The commandments, judges that you must have (Deuteronomy 17:1) is the first commandment in regard to leadership in the Land of Israel. If so, it seems that Moses hints to the people of Israel that they must see him as a model to imitate and establish a legal system as a first priority.

What are the considerations of electing a leader? The State tries to help us in electing our leaders by a basic law of the Knesset. "Every Israeli citizen In the day of giving the list of candidates that contain his name, and that he is over 21 years of age, is privileged to be elected to the Parliament, unless the court prevents him this right by the law or he has a final verdict against him for punishment in prison for a period of over three months, and in the day of giving the list of candidates it must be only after seven years after his release from prison, and only if the chairman of the central election committee stated that the crime of his verdict has no disgrace.

Today, we are free from the hard situation of electing a leader by God himself who elects the High Priest. With that, I believe by God's election of the High Priest, He places into his hands the ability and the responsibility to be a model to be imitated.