

# KOL MEVASSER

## A Model of Genuine Religious Leadership

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

“And the Lord said to Moses: How long will this people despise Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will smite them with the pestilence and destroy them, and will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they” (Bemidbar 14:11-12).

What a great offer! God tells Moses that He will destroy all the Israelites and create a new nation, a greater nation, from Moses himself.

Moses had many reasons to be tempted by this offer. He had been bitterly betrayed by leaders of ten out of twelve tribes, who came back with a demoralizing report after they had spied out the Promised Land. The people murmured against Moses, saying they would rather return to slavery in Egypt than go forward under Moses' leadership. With all the dissatisfaction, backbiting and betrayals among the Israelites, how could Moses have resisted God's phenomenal offer? Here was an ideal opportunity to be rid of the betrayers and complainers in one fell swoop. Here was a chance to eliminate a faithless and unreliable nation and be done with all their nasty complaining and rebelling.

And yet, amazingly, Moses rejected God's offer. “Forgive, I pray You, the iniquity of this people

according unto the greatness of Your loving-kindness and according as You have forgiven this people from Egypt until now” (14:19). Just as he had done after the sin of the golden calf, Moses pleaded with God to have mercy, to spare the people, to forgive them. How are we to understand this remarkable behavior of Moses?

The Torah describes Moses as the humblest of all people. He did not relish being a leader; he did not seek the limelight; he did not want power or wealth; he did not seek self-aggrandizement. If left alone, he would have preferred being a shepherd in Midian. But God chose him to lead the Israelites out of bondage and into freedom. When he undertook this responsibility, Moses considered himself a faithful servant of God. He gave himself totally to the wellbeing of the people. Even if they sometimes spurned him and betrayed him and rebelled against him, Moses rose above feelings of personal egotism. He was chosen to lead his people, and he was going to fulfill his mission with every ounce of energy in his power. Even if God gave him a way out of this responsibility, Moses was unwilling to betray the people even if they had betrayed him.

Moses demonstrated leadership qualities that set a standard for Jewish religious and lay leadership. Leaders need to emulate Moses' incredible humility and devotion. They need the wisdom and patience to stay loyal to the people, even when the people demonstrate very negative behavior. Leaders need to understand that they are

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## KJ Schedule Sh'lach

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, June 12th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am  
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm  
Candle Lighting ..... 7:46 pm

### Shabbat

Saturday, June 13th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 8:30 am  
Women's Tehillim Group ..... 7:00 pm  
Minha & Arbit ..... 7:00 pm  
Havdalla..... 8:55 pm

### Weekdays

Sunday, June 14th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 7:30 am

### Weekdays

Monday & Tuesday June 15 & 16  
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am

### Rosh Hodesh Tammuz

Wednesday & Thursday, June 17 & 18  
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:15 am

### Erev Shabbat

Friday, June 19th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am  
Minha / Arvit..... 6:30 pm  
Candle Lighting ..... 7:49 pm

Shabbat Shalom  
U'Mevorach

*Wishing you a Peaceful  
& Joyful Shabbat*

## Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored by  
Sholeh & Moussa Shaaya  
Hilda & Tooraj Rojhani

in memory of  
Daniel ben Tooba, z"l  
Maurice ben Simcha, z"l  
Ezra ben Noor, z"l

## Rabbi Daniel Bouskila

will be delivering the sermon  
for Shabbat 6/13 on the topic of  
**"613 Ways to Improve  
the World"**

followed by a festive Kiddush  
In honor of this special Shabbat  
and the 613 Mitzvot in the Torah

## In Memoriam

We remember these yearzeit anniversaries  
June 13 to 20, 2015. It is customary to light a  
memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend  
Shabbat services.

### 26 Sivan / Shabbat, June 13th

Daniel Rojhani  
George Sassoon *Khadoory Hai ben Ezra*  
Samha Zalkha

### 27 Sivan / Sunday, June 14th

Abdallah Joseph  
Maurice Mathalon *Maurice Moshe ben Avraham*

### 28 Sivan / Monday, June 15th

Aziz Daniel Pourati *Aziz ben Daniel*

### 29 Sivan / Tuesday, June 16th

Eric Jacob Jonah *Ezra ben Yaacov*  
Abraham Mashaal *Avraham ben Yehezkel*

### 30 Sivan / Wednesday, June 17th

Ester Meyer *Ester bat Sifu*

### 1 Tammuz / Thursday, June 18th

Selina Jacobs  
Ezra Kemareh *Ezra Yaacov*  
Maurice Morris *Moshe ben Abdullah*  
Lulu Moshi *Lulu bat Simha*  
Abraham Posmentier *Avraham ben Isser*  
Nadhim Sarraf *Yitzhak ben Haim*

### 2 Tammuz / Friday, June 19th

Isaac Amron  
Eugene Conateanu  
Simha Goury *Simha bat Lulu*  
Meyer Edward Nathan *Meir ben Ezra*

### 3 Tammuz / Shabbat, June 20th

Joseph Moses *Yosef ben Aharon Moshe*  
Habibollah Rokhsar *Habib ben Mordecai*

## Thank You

### Professor Lev Hakak

Our longtime member, Professor Lev  
Hakak delivered the sermon last  
Shabbat on parashat Behaalotkha.  
Professor Hakak dedicated his sermon in  
everlasting blessed memory of his  
beloved firstborn son  
Jacob Hakak, z"l  
(1980-2014)

## Refuah Shlemah

Abe Abraham  
Moselle Amron  
Sylvia Cohen  
Esther Duke  
Sassoon Ezra  
Tilda Levy  
Maurice Ovadia

## Torah & Haftara Readings

Bamidbar / Numbers  
Parashat Sh'lach Lecha 623 to 634  
Haftara /from Prophets  
Yehoshua/Joshua 635 to 637

## KJ Newsletter Graduate Issue— Deadline Extended

Mazal Tov! E-mail us photos and info  
about your graduates for our special is-  
sue. Send graduate's name, degree, and  
school to [dafna@kahaljoseph.org](mailto:dafna@kahaljoseph.org) by  
June 18th 2015



KJ Women's  
Tehillim

Join our wonderful group of  
women as we gather to read  
the Psalms and pray for those  
in our community

Shabbat Day @ 7:00 pm

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serving God, not their own personal egos. True religious leadership is not manifested in seeking power or control, nor in seeking honor or public accolades. Just the opposite! A genuine religious leader, like Moses, must exemplify humility and self-sacrifice.

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz has written a powerful article, "When Leaders Fail," (Jewish Action Magazine, summer 2015). He describes the grievous consequences of religious leadership that falls short of the Torah ideals. Rabbi Breitowitz notes the destructive nature of pride and overconfidence and the dangers of charisma and the personality cult. When religious leaders—whether rabbinic or lay—become smug, they may come to feel invulnerable. They lose sight of proper moral boundaries, thinking that they are not accountable to anyone. They seek power and prestige; they seek to control; they do not function as humble servants of God or as loyal servants of the public.

Rabbi Breitowitz writes: "Erudition, scholarship and personal magnetism are no guarantee of spirituality and inner goodness.... If one is imbued with compassion, kindness and humility, then Torah study will make him more so. If one is competitive, arrogant and self-aggrandizing, Torah scholarship will simply create another battlefield in which those qualities can be expressed..... All of this suggests that communities must pay much closer attention to the moral qualities and personality traits of the leaders and role models that they choose. That certain flashy

qualities might be overvalued in the selection process while other qualities—gentleness, modesty—are undervalued or even disparaged will only hurt the community in the long run."

Rabbi Shemuel de Medina, a leading sage of 16th century Salonika, wrote a responsum in which he dealt with a certain rabbi who quit his position out of despair. This rabbi was so disgusted with his community that he made an oath never again to serve as a religious leader. Rabbi de Medina gently chastised this rabbi, and told him that his oath was to be rescinded. Rabbi de Medina pointed to the example of Moses, the ultimate leader, the man of genuine humility and loyalty. Moses demonstrated that a religious leader's duty was to God and to the people; that a religious leader was to view himself as a humble servant of God and the people; and that the true religious leader is one who braces his shoulders to carry the burdens of the public, patiently and lovingly...in spite of any and all frustrations that religious leadership entails.

It may not be possible for religious leaders to achieve the greatness of Moses. But at least they and the community at large should know the ideal to which all should aspire.

"And the man Moses was very humble, more than all the men that were upon the face of the earth" (Bemidbar 12:3).

Shabbat Shalom

## Trams, Bikes, Cafes & Shabbat

Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo

The religious and traditional Israeli Jewish population is on the rise, while the secular population is shrinking. Over the last few years, studies have shown that the number of Israelis who do not observe religious traditions has decreased, comprising only one-fifth of the total Israeli population. This is in contrast to earlier days when 41 percent of Israelis declared themselves secular (1974). Approximately one-third of the general Israeli population considers itself fully observant and the number of traditional Israelis has risen from 38 percent to about 50 percent.

This should make us think. While it is true that the increased observance among Israelis is not always for genuine and healthy reasons, and often goes hand in hand with extreme political views, it cannot be denied that within the next 50 years Israel [may] see an enormous growth in Jewish pride and religious commitment.

As a matter of fact, it is well known that a greater number of secular Israelis would like to become more observant. However, for various practical reasons, or due to social pressures, they are unable to make this switch.

One of the great challenges, if not the greatest, is Shabbat, the only official day of rest in Israeli society when people enjoy visiting their parents and friends who live far away or who may be in hospital. Many would love to go to a restaurant and enjoy an afternoon ride through neighborhoods in Yerushalayim or other cities. But none of this is possible without the use of cars or taxis and with no open restaurants. Here are some suggestions to overcome these obstacles:

According to one of the greatest halachic

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Sephardic authorities, the righteous Rabbi Yosef Chayim of Baghdad (circa 1832-1909), also known as the Ben Ish Chai, there is no prohibition against riding a bicycle on Shabbat; that is, when carrying is halachically permitted, through the use of an *eiruv* (a symbolic wall around a city or part of a city), which is found in almost every city in Israel. In his opinion, all objections to riding a bicycle on Shabbat are highly questionable. The three most quoted reasons mentioned are: 1) *shema yetaken mana* –if the bicycle breaks down, there is concern that the rider may repair it; 2) it is considered one of *uvdin de-chol* – weekday activities, which are not in the spirit of Shabbat; and 3) *mar'it ayin* – an act that is permitted but might be confused with something else that is definitely forbidden.

According to the Ben Ish Chai, these objections have no halachic foundation. Firstly, he says, “There are numerous items vulnerable to breakage that we would have to prohibit” and “we should not issue new decrees that weren’t made by the Rabbis of the Talmud”. Secondly, riding a bicycle is not considered a weekday activity. And thirdly, the *mar'it ayin* argument does not apply, since no one can confuse riding a bike with riding other vehicles such as cars or even horses and wagons, which are inherently different.

This is why members of the Syrian Orthodox Community in Brooklyn ride bicycles on Shabbat to the synagogue, to visit their parents, or just to get around the neighborhood. In Israel, permitting the use of bicycles on Shabbat would greatly increase Shabbat observance among those who now drive cars to visit their parents and friends. Once they know that they could take the bike, many would be delighted to become *shomrei Shabbat*. Perhaps specific paths for bike riders could be designated for Shabbat so as to prevent accidents. Special Shabbat bikes should be available, which can’t go more quickly

than a certain speed, are decorated with beautiful colors, and have a halachically permitted Shabbat light to indicate this is not an ordinary bike. Religious neighborhoods could decide not to permit this in their localities.

There is little doubt that this would result in fewer cars on the road and a wonderful atmosphere of nation-wide tranquility, which Israelis encounter on Yom Kippur. It would also allow people to walk in the middle of the road on Shabbat, which would become a national joy. Our psychologists, environmentalists and physicians will surely encourage such a novelty, even though they may lose some business!

Now that Yerushalayim has introduced the light rail, and many other cities may follow suit, it might be a good idea to consider a “Shabbat tram,” which would have a special service to the various hospitals. This will no doubt require considerable technical, innovative and halachic thinking to ensure that Shabbat is not violated, but in an age of unprecedented major scientific breakthroughs, it should not be so difficult to overcome all obstacles. We can leave it to the great inventors at the Zomet Institute in Alon Shvut, Gush Etzion.

Obviously, these trams should run infrequently in order not to spoil the Shabbat atmosphere in the streets. They should be colorfully decorated with flowers and Shabbat themes, have comfortable seats, and drinks available. They should travel more slowly than on weekdays and be free of charge. We should not ask non-Jews to operate these trams – it is time to stop the “Shabbos goy” phenomenon in modern Israel! We must make sure that we can run it ourselves, making use of several halachic leniencies and innovations.

Finally, I wonder whether it would be possible to open some restaurants on Shabbat, especially in the less religious neighborhoods. Such restau-

rants would be fully Shabbat observant, where people could get a drink and a piece of cake free of charge and have the opportunity to meet their friends. Bnei Akiva and other youth organizations should take an active role in running such cafés. They could become a place for communal singing, lectures, debates and other religious-cultural activities on Shabbat. Perhaps setting an MP3 player on a Shabbat clock could provide nice and relaxing Jewish music in the background.

Large American and Israeli companies should finance such initiatives, and people could pop in during the week to donate some money to the restaurant they visited, or they could pay in advance if they so desired. It is, however, especially important that we do not lose sight of the *spiritual* aspect of Shabbat, which is a day that protests against the bustling commerce and the profanity of our lives. It must save us from the agitation and passion of acquisitiveness and the betrayal of our spiritual needs.

Israel greatly needs traditional Shabbat observance before it falls victim even more to the idolization of ourselves and our physical needs. We must therefore make sure that all the above suggestions go hand in hand with a call for more spirituality and authentic religiosity. These suggestions should not be seen as an attempt to seek leniencies for the sake of leniencies. The goal must be more genuine Shabbat observance and immense joy of the day.

It was the great Jewish American psychologist Erich Fromm who wrote: “One might ask if it is not time to re-establish the [traditional] Shabbat as a universal day of harmony and peace, as the human day that anticipates the human future”. We should therefore look for ways by which [all] can have a greater taste of this breathtaking day, and offer them this opportunity by making it easier for them to participate in its holiness.

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