



Behalotcha-Shlach



English version

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CONDUCTOR LEADERSHIP

My mother sent me a speech given by a music conductor. This is what the conductor told his audience.

“At the age of 45, I had already been conducting for more than 20 years, and suddenly, I was struck by this fascinating insight: the conductor of the orchestra does not make any sound! The greatness of the conductor is his ability to make **other people** make great sound. This changed everything for me.

“I wanted to know if I was successful, at bringing out the greatness in others, in my musicians. So, how do I know if I am? I look into their eyes. If the eyes are sparkling, you know that you did it. And if they are not, I need to ask the question... Who am I being, what am I doing wrong, that my musician's eyes are not shining? And this is the same for all leadership. If the eyes of my children are not shining, if the eyes of my students are not shining, if the eyes of my congregants are not shining, if the eyes of my staff are not shining,... Who am I being, what am I doing wrong? Success is not about wealth and fame and power. It is about how many shiny eyes I have around me... And the way we conduct is by the choice of words we use, the way we express ourselves...”

David HaMelech refers to G-d as למנצח, To the Conductor. What a beautiful way to describe G-d, a Being that cannot be described. G-d has been conducting music from the beginning of time. All of what has ever happened, all that is happening, all that will ever happen - all is music conducted by G-d. We, all of creation, are G-d's musicians. And the Conductor of the orchestra does not make any

sound Himself. His greatness is his ability to make His orchestra produce great sound. A thought that we can meditate on for eternity. (It is no coincidence that David Hamelech, who personified the Middah of Malchut, of Bitul, was the one to refer to G-d as the מנצח, the Conductor.)

What is actually mindboggling is that G-d sometimes allows *us* to be *His* conductor, and He actually plays music for us: He changes the natural course of events. *R' Kahana says, in the name of R Yishmael, son of R Yossi, "What does it mean when it says Lamnatzeach? It means, sing to the one who allows us to conduct Him, and He is happy"* (Pesachim 119a). Rashi explains that Hashem gives us *the power* to conduct Him. How, exactly, do we "conduct" G-d?

When Moshe prays for Miriam's recovery, he does not just pray. He draws a small circle in the ground and stands in the middle of it. He says to G-d, I will not move from this spot, until you cure my sister לֹא אֶפְרָא אֶת רַגְלֵי מִרְיָם (Bamidbar 12;13; Avot dR'N).

Moshe, what are you doing? Are you manipulating G-d? Moshe, I thought you were the humblest of them all! How do you "put G-d up against the wall" like that?

The answer is because G-d actually *allows* us to conduct Him!! He is actually happy when we conduct, and He plays to our music. *We* are not allowed to do this circle thing. We know that Choni HaMagal also did it, and he almost got excommunicated for it by Shimon Ben Shetach, for

you need to be very close to G-d to pull such a thing off (Taanit 3;8). We cannot draw circles and talk like that to G-d, but we do put our feet together when we pray, as if we are not going anywhere without G-d. We hold our hands down, as if we are chained. We are saying to G-d, I can't move from this spot without You. I can't solve my problems, without You. I can't think, get cured, bring parnassah, do Teshuvah, bring the Mashiach, make peace, without YOU. I can't even open my lips, I can't even pray without You. G-d, please, make music! Do Your thing!

You know, it is actually interesting. Moshe draws a circle, not a square. Choni's last name became HaMaagal, because of the circle he drew, Agol. Why the circle? Why not a square?

Ever noticed that G-d did not create square things? Raindrops, flowers, faces, fruits, clouds, grass, trees, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc... they are all round. G-d created only round things. He expects mankind to finish off the job, to make a square Mishkan, with its square utensils, and square tzitzit and square tefillin; i.e., "square" means adding the last touches to perfect things. He wants us to bring His world to perfection. So, when Moshe cries out to G-d, he says, "I am nothing without You!! I cannot perfect the world without YOU! I cannot even get out of the circle that you put me in, without You, G-d! Without G-d, I am powerless". And then, G-d plays His music.

There is something that G-d created on the sixth day of Creation, at the very last second of twilight. He created Tongs (Avot 5;6). Why was it so important for G-d to create tongs? You can only make tongs with tongs. You cannot shape metal in fire with your hands. So, who made the first pair of tongs? Who put his hands in fire long enough to shape the first metal, so that we can have tongs to build machines, planes, space shuttles, reach the moon, to make water out of air? G-d. Anything humans ever made, G-d says - Hey, I started you off! I gave you the instruments. Now, it is your turn to make the music. But when we are stuck, when we pray, when we realize how we cannot

make music without Him, G-d plays our music for us.

G-d, Himself, leads the world silently; He is the Master Conductor. Human leaders, as well, lead best when they lead silently. There is the preacher, the persuader, the orator. And there is the silent leader, the conductor.

Moshe Rabeinu was the greatest leader our nation ever had. He transformed a nation of slaves into a nation of princes. He gave infinite courage to an infinite nation. What was his greatest talent? He was definitely not a good orator, for his speech was halting. The Torah does not single Moshe out for his courage, miracle work, scholarly level, love and care for each and every one of his people... The Torah mentions only Moshe's humility. וְהָאִישׁ מוֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה (Bamidbar 12;3)

Why is humility the single trait to be singled out, out of all of Moshe's leadership qualities? Because the greatest leaders are conductors, for only the conductors can bring out the best music from their orchestra, from those they lead. And the greatest conductors, the ones who truly lead the people in their lives, are the most humble ones, not the ones who make noise, attract the most attention, or anything of the sort. The way they lead is not by what they say, but how they say it. It is not what they do, but how they do it.

Rabbenu Bachye points to the way the Torah spells the word humility here when referring to Moshe. עָנָו. What? Why is the word עָנָו spelled without the letter Yud? Isn't it supposed to be עָנִי?

The Yud was taken away from Moshe, because Moshe lacked the letter Yud in his humility. וְהָאִישׁ מוֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה *Will we (Moshe and Aharon) be able to take out water for you from this rock?* (Bamidabar 20;10) Uh, one second. Moshe, YOU AND AHARON are going to bring out water, or G-D will bring out water? The word should have been וְיֹצֵא, which would mean, *He* will take out, and not וְיֹצֵא which would mean, *we* will bring out! Because of that one letter, because

Moshe did not mention that G-d will take out the water, his Humility Metal got a little scratch; it was not perfect, even if it was the best ever. If Moshe would have chosen the right way of saying what he said, if he would have let G-d play all the music,

and leave himself as only the conductor...Moshe would have been perfectly humble, a true עניו.

Silent Leadership is G-d's way of leading. It is the only leadership that really makes the eyes of those we lead shine.

Selfie Steps to lead the people in your life effectively through Silent Leadership.

1. Humility. Shine the spotlight of attention on those you intend to lead, and not on yourself. In life. Conversation. Priorities. Respect their ideas. Let them shine. Act reserved. Stop rambling.
2. Build trust. Win trust by honoring and showing genuine care for the individuals you lead. Be Real. Follow through on commitments.
3. Keep calm. Don't let your emotions get the better of your intellect. The best leaders are the most rational.
4. Focus on actions, instead of words. Look inwardly, into yourself, for where you can improve instead of preaching to others.
5. Choose your words carefully. The way you say things carries more weight than what you say.

THE MITZVAH TO BE YOURSELF

At least twice a day, we recite the words וְלֹא-תִתּוֹרֵר אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרֵי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם. *And you shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes, that you are straying after them.*

The Netziv brings to our attention a deeper meaning of this Passuk. Why does the Passuk use the word תּוֹרֵר, which comes from the root word spying, looking for something new, or wandering? It would be more appropriate to say, instead, וְלֹא תִלְכּוּ אַחֲרֵי לְבַבְכֶם *And don't go after your hearts...?!?*

Our Rabbis wanted to bury King Solomon's Kohelet, for it seemed to contradict the Torah, until they reconciled each apparently conflicting verse. (Vayikra Rabah 28a). Rabbi Yishmael asks if there may be a contradiction to these words of Shema, "not to wander after your heart", in the words of Kohelet, שִׂמְחָה בְּחַיֵּיךָ בְּגִלְדֵיךָ... וְהִלַּךְ בְּדַרְכֶיךָ *Rejoice lad, in your youth, and go in the way of your heart* (Kohelet 11). But Rabbi Yishmael reconciled the difference by focusing on the precision of the words. Go after your heart, but don't תּוֹרֵר, or *wander* after your heart.

What is the difference between going after your heart or wandering after your heart? "Going after your heart" would mean following what you connect to, looking inward. תּוֹרֵר, wandering after your heart, would mean looking outward, at what everyone else is doing. רבי אומר איזהו דרך ישרה שיבור לו האדם כל שהיא תפארת לעושיה

The most beautiful you is when you are following what you really connect to, something internal, or מן האדם (Harchev Davar/ Netziv). The Torah is telling us, in the words, לֹא תִתּוֹרֵר, to be yourself. Be original. Life is limited. Don't waste time trying to be someone else.

The Netziv expounds on why this concept of being yourself is mentioned next to the laws of Tzitzit strings. Tzitzit strings are the reminder to the 613 mitzvot, and each person has a mitzvah that he connects to. The Talmud brings a list of Rabbis, where each Rabbi mentioned that his Olam Haba would come from a specific Mitzvah that he connected to and took very seriously. Tzitzit, Shabbat, etc. (Shabbat 118b) The Ritva writes that each Talmid Chacham should choose one Mitzvah to observe with extra-special care. And, even one Mitzvah that you do whole heartedly can be your winning ticket to Olam Haba (Sefer Charedim Perek Chivat EY; Rambam end of Mishnayot Makkot).

In learning, as well, connecting is extremely important. Rav said, אין אדם לומד תורה אלא ממקום שליבו חפץ. *A person learns only what his heart desires, as we see in the Passuk* ה' חפצו בתורה. (Avodah Zarah 19a) One of the greatest causes for people to leave learning, to lose its sweetness, is that for too long, they learnt only parts of Torah that they did not connect to. This is because they never looked inward at what speaks to them, but only outward, to what everyone else was learning.

Let us take this to a drone's eye view. There are three areas in religion. White. Black. And Grey. White is the area of the things that you are commanded to do. Black is the area of things that you are commanded not to do. They are both חובה, mandatory. The grey area, the area of רשות, optional, is the area where all of our spiritual dilemmas are found. Black and white are so easy. Open up the Torah, and there it is. But the grey area is just not clear. How long to pray? How long to learn? How much Hishtadlut and how much Emunah? How much time to spend on any specific Mitzvah? How much Chessed should I do, for whom and in which way? What is the right balance, in so many areas of life? How far beyond the letter of the law should I take my Torah observance? What should I focus on in my learning? Halacha? Aggadah/Mussar/Character refinement?

Most people solve grey questions by looking around and seeing what other people are doing. But this is a huge mistake. The Chassid Yaavatz says something that can blow your mind. The hardest question for the Faithful Jew to answer is Tzaddik v'ra lo, rasha v'tov lo – “Why do good things happen to bad people, and why do bad things happen to good people?” There are many answers to this question; each one has its time and place. But the Chassid Yaavatz says that the answer, most of the time, is that a person is judged according to what he *could* do. You can have a Tzaddik who is suffering, because he can do much more than he is doing. And you can have a Rasha who is rewarded greatly, because, for who he is, that is all he can do!!!(See לעבודך באמת R Dov Yaffeh zt'1, page שלה)

בכחם and להך אחר לבך and לא תתורו אחרי לבבכם are telling us the biggest lesson in life. Go inward, go toward your C3. Focus on what *you Connect* to. Gauge yourself by what *you Can* do. And invest in your unique *Character* strengths, something we learn from Navot.

Navot HaYizraeli had a beautiful vineyard next to King Achab's palace. King Achab coveted Navot's vineyard and asked Navot if he could buy it for a heavy price; or, he would barter it for a much better vineyard, somewhere else. But Navot refused, saying that this vineyard was a family inheritance and he did not want to part with something that was so dear to his family, no

matter the price. King Achab came home very upset, and his wife, Queen Izebel, asked what was wrong. He answered her, telling her how Navot had turned down his offer. Izebel then framed Navot, saying that he cursed King Achab and the Name of G-d. She hired false witnesses, had Navot killed, and took his vineyard for her husband. (Melachim 2;21 א)

Our Rabbis ask, why was Navot HaYizraeli punished in this way? *Because he had a beautiful voice. He would go up to the Beit Hamikdash for the Holidays and sing in G-d's honor. This had become such an attraction that many people made the pilgrimage, just in his merit. One year, though, Navot stayed home, out of fear that while he was gone, someone would loot his vineyard. His punishment was death, and that his field be taken from him.*

Why was Navot punished so severely for not singing in the Beit Hamikdash? Shlomo Hamelech taught כבוד אֱתֵי־קוֹךָ מִהוֹנֶךָ Honor Hashem from your wealth. (Mishlei 3;9) What does that mean to honor Hashem “from your wealth”? Our Rabbis learn, אל תקרי אל תהונך, *Don't read this passuk to mean to honor Hashem with your money. Learn it to mean that you are to honor G-d with what He graced you with* (See Rashi ibid.). If He has given you a pleasant voice, honor Him with that (see Pesikta Rabti 25; see Kaf HaChaim 54).

This sheds light on understanding our Tefikid, our unique mission in this world, our calling. Focusing on others' strengths leaves us feeling weak. Focusing on our own strengths is what makes us strong. One of the greatest regrets in life is realizing that you lived a life that others wanted you to be, rather than being yourself. And one of the greatest joys in life is the joy of celebrating your uniqueness, the original and authentic you. שְׁמַחַת בְּהוֹרֵי בְּיָלְדוֹתֶיךָ. Our Rabbis teach that the saving grace for Kohelet is how King Solomon ends the statement. וְדַע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֲלֹהִים יִרְאֶנָּה הָאֱלֹהִים בְּמַשְׁפָּט Know that whatever you do in life, you will have to answer up to Heaven that you have done your best, and you have used G-d's gifts to serve Him (Vayikra Rabba 28a).

Never forget these words of King Solomon. You were born an original. Don't die a copy.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF SONNY AND IRENE GINDI A”H