

In addition to political *savoir faire*, a leader's ability to inspire the masses often relies on an unquantifiable dose of undefinable charisma. With charisma, leaders speak to our hearts, not just our minds. With charisma, leaders evoke our loyalty and devotion, not just our votes.

Charisma creates a strong personal bond between leader and follower. It defines essential and transformative aspects of the bonds between hasidim and their rebbes, yeshiva students and their teachers, congregants and their spiritual leaders, and children and their teachers and youth leaders.

But charisma can be dangerous. Allowed to overflow the boundaries of propriety, it can be a manipulative tool enabling leaders to control and even abuse their minions — politically, socially, economically, and sexually. There are too many examples of leaders — presidents, congressmen, rabbis, and teachers — who have abused the trappings of their offices to mistreat those who respect them and are devoted to them. If charisma is indeed from the Greek "charis," or Divine gift, then a good leader, a responsible leader, will do "as God commanded Moses," and lead with humility, self-restraint, and respect.

MARK DRATCH

Is Joshua a model for contemporary leadership? What do we learn from Joshua, or Moses, about how to be a true leader of a people? Some qualities may seem obvious — great vision, skill, wisdom, the ability to charismatically motivate and inspire a group toward great purpose. But what about the power inherent in leadership roles, or how to utilize that power to do good and not harm?

A good leader knows how to use power for a positive purpose. Power is a tool for creating change. But power over another person, group, or nation is another story — it can become the root of oppression and harm to others. When people are revered publicly for their leadership but have done so by mistreating people in private, is that truly an accomplishment to celebrate?

As leaders, every action is potentially a teachable moment. To ignore, deny, or minimize a leader's abusive behaviors in their private life is to sanction that behavior in the public eye.

As a community, it is time we demand accountability of our leaders. Courageous victims are breaking their long-held silence on sexual abuse from rabbis and other public figures. We can no longer pretend that our "beloved leaders" are immune from misusing their power to harm others.

NAOMI TUCKER

**Devarim 34:9 "And Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened to him and did as God commanded Moses."**

Israelite recognition of Joshua's authority was not quite as automatic as the verse from *Devarim* might have us believe. Immediately upon his assumption of command, we hear a seemingly *conditional* assent to Joshua's call to arms: "We will obey you just as we obeyed Moses; only let the Lord your God be with you as He was with Moses." (Joshua 1:17) God was quick to address the worrisome question mark that hung over Joshua's status. He promptly had Joshua direct the Israelites to cross the Jordan, which miraculously dried up for the occasion: "On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, so that they revered him all his days as they had revered Moses." (4:14)

Joshua was no head-in-the-clouds mystic. The "spirit of wisdom" that filled him was the practical knowledge of governance and warfare needed for the conquest of Canaan, just as Bezalel's "Divine spirit of wisdom" (Shemot 31:3) was the practical knowledge of metalwork, stone-cutting, and wood-carving needed for the construction of the Tabernacle. We must never underestimate the importance of practical wisdom; it is a most precious and Divine gift.

Wise Joshua must have also known that genuine leadership — especially spiritual and charismatic leadership — can never simply be transferred from one person to the next like ownership of property. Although "Moses had laid his hands upon him," true acceptance of Joshua's authority would only come after Moses' death, when Joshua would stand on his own feet and offer proof that God was indeed with him.

BEREL DOV LERNER

The Israelites hearkened to Joshua in part because God "exalted him," but also because Joshua translated and amplified events for his followers. Joshua understood, as Moses sometimes overlooked, that effective leaders need followers. Engaging the hearts and minds of followers through symbolic interactions and dialogue enables a leader to mobilize and sustain the challenging work of transformation required to create a future that better satisfies the unmet deeper yearnings of the group.

MICHAEL SHINER

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Let us hear

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13