

REVIEWS | Daniel Keren

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' New Book Offers Practical Lessons in Leadership

("Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible" by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. 314 pages hardback, Maggid Books & the Orthodox Union, 2015.)

It is now about two years since Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks stepped down as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations (Great Britain and the Commonwealth) after 22 years of leadership in England. He is just as busy travelling around the English-speaking world giving lectures from a Torah perspective to both Jews and non-Jews.

Rabbi Sacks is a most prolific and talented writer. Maggid Press, a division of Koren Publishers and the Orthodox Union have jointly published Rabbi Sacks' latest book "Lessons in Leadership"

that focuses on the importance of leadership and how just every person has an obligation to demonstrate this vital quality in their day-to-day lives.

The book includes an intriguing foreword by Professor Ronald Heifetz, the founding director of the Center of Public Leadership and the King Hussein bin Talal Senior Lecture in Public Leadership at the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government that is titled "Leadership and Public Learning."

At first glance one might think that leadership is the sole obligation of charismatic and talented individuals such as the former Chief Rabbi of Great Britain. But Rabbi Sacks argues otherwise in his introduction titled "Daring Greatly."

He writes: "It was fascinating to discover how much of the Torah is, in fact, about leadership, not in the narrow sense of holding formal office, but rather as a general approach to life. The heroes and heroines of the Torah, the patriarchs and matriarchs and their children, and the Israelites as they left Egypt and journeyed to the Promised Land, were all faced with the responsibilities of freedom..."

"Don't ever think that leaders are different from the rest of us. They aren't. We all need the courage to live with the challenges,

the challenge of leadership. Jews dared believe that together, and with heaven's help, we can change the world. Daring greatly makes us great. There is no other way.

"Lessons in Leadership" offers insights from each of the parshas in the weekly Torah readings that Jews around the world hear in the shul on Shabbos morning. For the upcoming Shabbos, on Parshas Vayelekh, Rabbi Sacks titled his leadership lesson "Consensus or Command?"

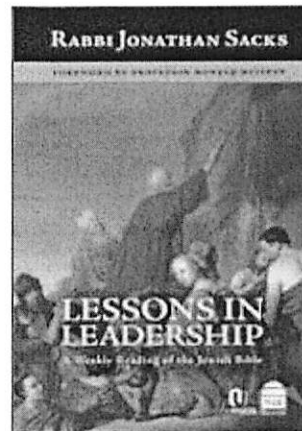
The author notes that there is a subtle difference in the advice that Moshe Rabbeinu gave to Joshua his successor and the guidance that G-d gave Moshe's primary disciple. Both begin with the words "Be strong and of good courage." Moshe however, follows with "for you [Joshua] will come [tavo] with this people into the land" (Deut. 31:7).

G-d, however says, "for you will bring [tavi] the Israelites into the land. (31:23). Rabbi Sacks explains that at first glance tavo ("come with") or tavi ("bring") sound and seem similar. But there is an important difference.

Rashi explains that Moshe was instructing Yehoshua to make an effort to keep the elders of the generation on the same page with him, whereas the Holy One Blessed be He was commanding Joshua to bring the Israelites into the land even if against their will.

How to reconcile the seeming difference between leading the Jews by consensus or by command, Rabbi Sacks writes "It is not the job of leaders to give people what they want. It is the job of leaders to teach people what they ought to want. But at the same time, they must involve people in the decision-making process. Key figures and constituencies must feel that they were consulted. Collaborative, consulting, listening leadership is essential in a free society. Otherwise, there is autocracy tempered by assassination... The crown of leadership is invisible, yet you know who is wearing it and who is not. It is therefore, in front of you, waiting for you to put in on. Wear it with pride and may all you do be blessed."

"Lessons in Leadership: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible" by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks is available in Jewish bookstores or by contacting the publisher by calling (203) 830-8508 or by emailing info@korenpub.com



the mistakes and mishaps, and to keep going. One of the truest as well as most amusing remarks is the one attributed to Winston Churchill: "Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." It is not their victories that make people leaders, it is the way they cope with their defeats – their ability to learn, to recover, and grow."

All of us have numerous opportunities to demonstrate leadership qualities whether in our homes with our families or in the classrooms or workplaces with colleagues, clients or in shul or on the block so-to-speak. Rabbi Sacks notes that a good leader creates followers, whereas a great leader creates and inspires other leaders to help him carry out his positive agenda.

"Happiness," Rabbi Sacks writes, "is a life lived in the active mode. It comes not to those who complain, but to those who do. The greatest word uttered by the Jewish people at the holiest moment of their history, when they met G-d at the mountain and became His people, was Naaseh, "We will do." Judaism is a religion of doing, and what we do together is greater than any of us could do alone. That is

