



TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS

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HOLY, HOLIER, HOLIEST

Let me ask you a question: if you were to choose the person who would lead the Jews into the Land of Israel, would it be Yehoshua or Moshe? Seemingly, the ideal way to enter Israel, the birthright of the Jewish people and the holiest place on earth, would be with the greatest prophet that the Jews ever had, who spoke to G-d like a man speaks to his fellow and taught us the Torah. However, that's not the case, and it begs the question: why?

In case you see this as Moshe's decision, there are many sources to the contrary. The Midrash Rabba on Parshat Ve'Etchanan, for example, explains that the unusual choice of Ve'Etchanan as prayer hints to the fact that Moshe prayed 515 times to enter into Israel. It's true that Moshe made mistakes in his leadership, but it's easy to argue that those mistakes didn't warrant G-d's choice to remove Moshe as the leader right before one of the greatest moments in Jewish history.

G-d wouldn't give us a second-rate leader to bring the Jews to Israel, so Yehoshua must have been the best option. But, the Gemara teaches us that Moshe was like

the sun and Yehoshua was like the moon, reflecting the light of Moshe instead of creating his own light. Was this not a downgrade or a weakening of leadership?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that, while Moshe's leadership would have been miraculous, having Yehoshua as a leader accomplished something much deeper. Chassidic thought teaches that the ultimate purpose of our existence in this world is to create a "Dira b'Tachtonim", a dwelling place for G-d in the messiness, physicality, and imperfection of this world. Rather than the wondrous and miraculous leadership of Moshe, G-d preferred the humanity of the leadership of Yehoshua. Though it took more effort, failed battles, and political and religious complexity, it brought G-dliness further down into this world, advancing that ultimate purpose.

Every element of life can be challenging, messy, unideal, and deeply human. May we always remember that holiness and G-dliness comes in those moments.



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YES WE CAN

Parshat Nitzavim-Vayeilech is always read before and in preparation for Rosh Hashona.

With the beginning of the new Jewish year everyone strives to improve their Midos and try their best to fulfill the potential they were given.

Every year we set goals for ourselves that we try to accomplish throughout the year. Although we try our best to fulfill them, in a moment of weakness we often give up on ourselves.

You may ask yourself, are we setting goals that we know we can't reach?

But the real answer is no, we are not. The problem is that Yetzer Harah tries to make us believe that our goal is too big and far reaching to accomplish.

It's the exact same with our aspiration to learn Torah and do more and more Mitzvot. We want to, but the Yetzer gets us to believe that it's too much for us to handle.

This is exactly what Moshe prepared us for in this Parsha

”כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנוכי מצוך היום לא נפלאת היא ממך ולא רחוקה היא, לא בשמים היא... ולא מעבר לים היא”

Meaning it feels far because the Yetzer Hara causes the goal you had set for yourself to feel impossible to accomplish.

It's neither in the sky nor beyond the sea. You don't need to wait for anything or anyone. Don't let yourself think that your goals and ambitions are far for you to accomplish.

That's why Moshe closes with the words ”כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאוד”

Believe in yourself and you'll be able to accomplish anything you want to do.

Shabbat shalom! ■



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