

Dvar Torah by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres**

to his community at

Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

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VA'EIRA

In this week's Parsha, Moshe seems to be on the right path. Moshe performs the signs that G-d gave him, his brother Aaron speaks for him and the people begin to believe in him.

"(Moshe) performed the signs before the people. They believed and when they heard that G-d was concerned with them and had seen their suffering, they bowed and worshiped" (Sh'mot 4:30-31). However, things start going awry. Pharaoh rejects Moshe's request, at his first appearance, to let the people take a trip to the desert. Pharaoh refuses to recognize G-d. He even worsens the daily work routine of the Israelites, forcing them to gather their own straw. Overall, it seems that Moshe's first appearance before Pharaoh is a disaster. Moshe returns a second time with Aharon to Pharaoh. They turn the staff into a serpent, but Pharaoh is not fazed. Then, they bring the first plague and again Pharaoh is not impressed. Whatever Moshe does now and what he will continue to do, fails to free the Israelites from their slavery. We are told of the stress that Moshe experiences. He complains to G-d. "Why, G-d, have you brought

trouble upon these people, why did you send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on these people and you have not succeeded in saving your people" (5:22-23). G-d reassures Moshe and encourages him not to falter but to continue in his mission.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l points out the enduring message learnt from this scenario. Leadership, even at its highest level, is often marked by failure. Leaders are not tested by their success but rather by their failures. It takes no special skills to succeed in good times. There are times when the greatest of people stumble. At such a moment, one's character is tested. A great human being is not someone who never fails. Rather, they are those who overcome defeat and never give up. They learn from their mistakes and keep trying. After every refusal or bump in the road, they become stronger, wiser and more determined.

This is the story of Moshe Rabeinu as presented in our Parsha. As quoted in a tremendous letter written by Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, author of the "Pachad Yitzchak", Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Chaim Berlin to disheartened and discouraged students because of repeated difficulties in the study of Talmud. His message to him was that greatness cannot be achieved without failure. There are

heights you cannot reach without first having fallen.

This is Moshe Rabeinu. He begins with tremendous setbacks, failures and frustrations. He never quits and perseveres.

Moshe's example to us as a leader is not only his eventual success of redeeming and freeing the Israelites. Rather, an additional lesson resonates and that is how he never gave up and never threw in the towel. His persistence and determination remain an important lesson for all of us. 🏰