

Parsha Plug: Parshat Pekudei

Shemot 39:43	שמות לט:מג
<p>43 Moses saw the entire work, and lo! They had done it as the Lord had commanded, so had they done. So Moses blessed them.</p>	<p>מג וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמְּלָאכָה וְהִנֵּה עָשׂוּ אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' בְּעֵשׂוֹ וַיְבָרַךְ אֹתָם מֹשֶׁה:</p>

Masechet Megillah 13b	מסכת מגילה יג:
<p>“They cast pur, that is, the lot” (Esther 3:7). A Sage taught the following baraita: Once the lot fell on the month of Adar, Haman greatly rejoiced, for he saw this as a favorable omen for the execution of his plans. He said: The lot has fallen for me in the month that Moses died, which is consequently a time of calamity for the Jewish people. But he did not know that not only did Moses die on the seventh of Adar, but he was also born on the seventh of Adar, and therefore it is also a time of rejoicing for the Jewish people.</p>	<p>הפיל פור הוא הגורל תנא כיון שנפל פור בחודש אדר שמח שמחה גדולה אמר נפל לי פור בירח שמת בו משה ולא היה יודע שבשבעה באדר מת ובשבעה באדר נולד</p>

Masechet Moed Katan 27a-b	מסכת מועד קטן כז.:-
<p>Our Rabbis taught: Originally, they would bring [food] to the house of mourning, the rich in silver and gold baskets and the poor in osier baskets of peeled willow twigs, and the poor felt shamed: they therefore instituted that all should bring [food] in osier baskets of peeled willow twigs out of deference to the poor. Our Rabbis taught: Originally, they would to serve drinks in a house of mourning, the rich in white glass vessels and the poor in coloured glass, and the poor felt shamed: they instituted therefore that all should serve drinks in coloured glass, for the honor of the poor. Formerly they were wont to uncover the face of the rich and cover the face of the poor, because their faces turned dark in years of drought and the poor felt shamed; they therefore instituted that everybody's face should be covered, for the honor of the poor. Originally they were would take out the rich [for burial] on a dargesh (a tall, ornamented bed) and the poor on a plain bier, and the poor felt shamed: they instituted therefore that all should be brought out on a plain bier, for the honor of the poor. Originally, they would set an incense-pan under [the bed of] those that died of intestinal disorders, and the living suffering from intestinal disorders felt shamed: they instituted therefore that it should be set under all, for the honor of the living that suffer from intestinal disorders. Originally, they would</p>	<p>תנו רבנן בראשונה היו מוליכין בבית האבל עשירים בקלתות של כסף ושל זהב ועניים בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה והיו עניים מתביישים התקינו שיהו הכל מביאין בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה מפני כבודן של עניים תנו רבנן בראשונה היו משקין בבית האבל עשירים בזכוכית לבנה ועניים בזכוכית צבועה והיו עניים מתביישין התקינו שיהו הכל משקין בזכוכית צבועה מפני כבודן של עניים בראשונה היו מגלין פני עשירים ומכסין פני עניים מפני שהיו מושחרין פניהן מפני בצורת והיו עניים מתביישין התקינו שיהו מכסין פני הכל מפני כבודן של עניים בראשונה היו מוציאין עשירים בדרגש ועניים בכליכה והיו עניים מתביישין התקינו שיהו הכל מוציאין בכליכה מפני כבודן של עניים בראשונה היו מניחין את המוגמר תחת חולי מעים מתים והיו חולי מעים חיים מתביישין התקינו שיהו</p>

<p>immerse all utensils that had been used by a niddah [before her death] and the living women who were niddah felt shamed: they instituted therefore that they should subject utensils used by all [dying] women alike, out of deference to the living niddot. Originally, they would immerse all utensils that had been used by a zav [before their death] and the living who were zavim felt shamed: they instituted therefore that they should subject utensils used by all [the dying] alike, out of deference to the living zavim. Originally, the [expense of] taking the dead out [to his burial] fell harder on their relatives than their death so that the deceased's relatives abandoned them and fled, until at last Rabban Gamaliel came [forward] and, disregarding his own dignity, going out [to his burial] in linen garments, and thereafter the populace followed his lead to come out [to burial] in linen garments. Said R. Papa. And nowadays all the world follow the practice of [coming out] even in a paltry [shroud] that costs but a zuz.</p>	<p>מניחין תחת הכל מפני כבודן של חולי מעים חיים בראשונה היו מטבילין את הכלים על גבי נדות מתות והיו נדות חיות מתביישות התקינו שיהו מטבילין על גבי כל הנשים מפני כבודן של נדות חיות בראשונה מטבילין על גבי זבין מתים והיו זבין חיים מתביישין התקינו שיהו מטבילין על גב הכל מפני כבודן של זבין חיים בראשונה היתה הוצאת המת קשה לקרוביו יותר ממתתו עד שהיו קרוביו מניחין אותו ובורחין עד שבא רבן גמליאל ונהג קלות ראש בעצמו ויצא בכלי פשתן ונהגו העם אחריה לציאת בכלי פשתן אמר רב פפא והאידינא נהוג עלמא אפילו בצרדא בר זוזא:</p>
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<p>Masechet Moed Katan 29a</p>	<p>מסכת מועד קטן כ"ט.</p>
<p>And Rabbi Levi bar Ḥayyata said: One who departs from the deceased should not say to him: Go to peace, but rather he should say: Go in peace. One who departs from the living should not say to him: Go in peace, but rather he should say: Go to peace. One who departs from the deceased should not say to him: Go to peace, but rather: Go in peace, as it is stated: “And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age” (Genesis 15:15). One who departs from the living should not say to him: Go in peace, but rather: Go to peace, as David said to Absalom: “Go in peace” (II Samuel 15:9), and he subsequently went and was hanged; whereas Jethro said to Moses: “Go to peace” (Exodus 4:18), and he went and was successful.</p>	<p>ואמר רבי לוי בר חיתא הנפטר מן המת לא יאמר לו לך לשלום אלא לך בשלום הנפטר מן החי לא יאמר לו לך בשלום אלא לך לשלום הנפטר מן המת לא יאמר לו לך לשלום אלא לך בשלום שנאמר (בראשית טו, טו) ואתה תבא אל אבותיך בשלום הנפטר מן החי לא יאמר לו לך בשלום אלא לך לשלום שהרי דוד שאמר לאבשלום (שמואל ב טו, ט) לך בשלום הלך ונתלה יתרו שאמר למשה (שמות ד, יח) לך לשלום הלך והצליח</p>

<p>Ritva on Moed Katan 29a:1</p>	<p>ריטב"א על מועד קטן כ"ט א:א</p>
<p>One who departs from his friend should not say, "Go in peace" but "Go to peace": Since his friend needs prayers about the place to which he is going, as from here he has already departed in peace. And one who departs from the deceased is the opposite, as he needs to go from here in peace, and then he will surely find peace there. And if he doesn't go from here in peace, that he has no good deeds,</p>	<p>הנפטר מחבירו אל יאמר לו לך בשלום אלא לך לשלום: פי' לפי שחבירו צריך תפלה על המקו' שהולך שם כי מכאן כבר נפטר הוא בשלום והנפטר מן המת הוא בהפך כי צריך שילך מכאן בשלום ואז ימצא שלום שם בודאי. ואם אינו הולך מכאן בשלום שאין בידו מעשים טובים</p>

<p>then he will not find peace there. Therefore, one needs to make a good sign for them that they should go in peace.</p>	<p>לא ימצא שם שלום לפי צריך שיעשו לו סימן טוב כי בשלום הוא הולך:</p>
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<p>Mishneh Torah, Mourning 4:4</p>	<p>משנה תורה, הלכות אבל ד':ד'</p>
<p>We dig burial caves in the earth and make hollows at the side of the caves. There we bury the corpse with its face upward; we then place the earth and the stones back in place above it. They may bury it in a wooden coffin. Those who accompany the corpse tell him: "Go in peace," as Genesis 15:15 states: "You will go to your ancestors in peace." Markings are made on the graves. A tombstone is placed on the grave. For the righteous, by contrast, a tombstone is not placed, because their words will cause them to be remembered; a person will not need to visit in the cemeteries.</p>	<p>(ד) וְחוֹפְרִין בְּעֶפְר מְעֵרוֹת וְעוֹשִׂין כּוּךְ בְּצַד הַמְּעָרָה וְקוֹבְרִין אוֹתוֹ בּוֹ וּפְנָיו לְמַעְלָה. וּמַחְזִירִין הָעֶפֶר וְהָאֲבָנִים עָלָיו. וַיֵּשׁ לָהֶן לְקַבֵּר בְּאֲרוֹן שֶׁל עֵץ. וְהַמְלוֹוִין אוֹתוֹ אוֹמְרִין לוֹ לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם שְׁנֹאמַר (בראשית טו טו) "וְאַתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶל אֲבוֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם". וּמְצַנְנִין אֶת כָּל בֵּית הַקְּבָרוֹת וּבוֹנִין נֶפֶשׁ עַל הַקְּבָר. וְהַצְדִּיקִים אֵין בּוֹנִים לָהֶם נֶפֶשׁ עַל קְבֻרָתָיהֶם שְׂדֵבְרֵיהֶם הֵם זְכוּרָנָם. וְלֹא יִפְנֶה אָדָם לְבַקֵּר הַקְּבָרוֹת:</p>

<p>Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Moshe's Death, Moshe's Life (Vezot Habracha 5775)</p>
<p>What do we learn from the life, and death, of Moses?</p> <p>[1] For each of us, even for the greatest, there is a Jordan we will not cross, a promised land we will not enter, a destination we will not reach. That is what Rabbi Tarfon meant when he said: It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.[2] What we began, others will continue. What matters is that we undertook the journey. We did not stand still.</p> <p>[2] "No man knows his burial place" (34:6). What a contrast between Moses and the heroes of other civilizations whose burial places become monuments, shrines, places of pilgrimage. It was precisely to avoid this that the Torah insists explicitly that no one knows where Moses is buried. We believe that the greatest mistake is to worship human beings as if they were gods. We admire human beings; we do not worship them. That difference is anything but small.</p> <p>[3] God alone is perfect. That is what Moses wanted people never to forget. Even the greatest human is not perfect. Moses sinned. We still do not know what his sin was – there are many opinions. But that is why God told him he would not enter the Promised Land. No human is infallible. Perfection belongs to God alone. Only when we honor this essential difference between heaven and earth can God be God and humans, human.</p> <p>Nor does the Torah hide Moses' sin. "Because you did not sanctify me ..." (Num. 20:12). The Torah does not hide anyone's sin. It is fearlessly honest about the greatest of the great. Bad things happen when we try to hide people's sins. That is why there have been so many recent scandals in the world of religious Jews, some sexual, some financial, some of other kinds. When religious people hide the truth they do so from the highest of motives. They seek to prevent a <i>chillul Hashem</i>. The result, inevitably, is a greater <i>chillul Hashem</i>. Such sanctimoniousness, denying the shortcomings of even the greatest, leads to consequences that are ugly and evil and turn decent people away from religion. The Torah does not hide people's</p>

sins. Neither may we.

[4] There is more than one way of living a good life. Even Moses, the greatest of men, could not lead alone. He needed the peacemaking skills of Aaron, the courage of Miriam and the support of the seventy elders. We should never ask: Why am I not as great as X? We each have something, a skill, a passion, a sensitivity, that makes, or could make, us great. The greatest mistake is trying to be someone else instead of being yourself. Do what you are best at, then surround yourself with people who are strong where you are weak.

[5] Never lose the idealism of youth. The Torah says of Moses that at the age of 120, "his eye was undimmed and his natural energy unabated" (Deut. 34:7). I used to think these were two complementary phrases until I realized that the first is the explanation of the second. Moses' "eye was undimmed" means he never lost the passion for justice that he had as a young man. It is there, as vigorous in Deuteronomy as it was in Exodus. We are as young as our ideals. Give way to cynicism and you rapidly age.

[6] At the burning bush, Moses said to God: "I am not a man of words. I am heavy of speech and tongue." By the time we reach *Devarim*, the book named "Words," Moses has become the most eloquent of prophets. Some are puzzled by this. They should not be. God chose one who was not a man of words, so that when he spoke, people realized that *it was not he who was speaking but God who was speaking through him*. What he spoke were not his words but God's words. That is why He chose a couple who could not have children – Abraham and Sarah – to become parents of the first Jewish child. That is why he chose a people not conspicuous for their piety to become God's witnesses to the world. *The highest form of greatness is so to open ourselves to God that His blessings flow through us to the world*. That is how the priests blessed the people. It was not their blessing. They were the channel of God's blessing. The highest achievement to which we can aspire is so to open ourselves to others and to God in love that something greater than ourselves flows through us.

[7] Moses defended the people. Did he like them? Did he admire them? Was he liked by them? The Torah leaves us in no doubt as to the answers to those questions. Yet he defended them with all the passion and power at his disposal. Even when they had sinned. Even when they were ungrateful to God. Even when they made a Golden Calf. He risked his life to do so. He said to God: "And now, forgive them, and if not, blot me out of the book you have written" (Ex. 32:32). According to the Talmud God taught Moses this lesson at the very outset of his career. When Moses said about the people, "They will not believe in me," God said, "They are the believers children of believers, and in the end it will be you who does not believe." [3] The leaders worthy of admiration are those who defend the people: even the non-orthodox, even the secular, even those whose orthodoxy is a different shade from theirs. The people worthy of respect are those who give respect. Those who hate will be hated, those who look down on others will be looked down on, and those who condemn will be condemned. That is a basic principle of Judaism: *middah kenegged middah*. The people who are great are those who help others to become great. Moses taught the Jewish people how to become great.

The greatest tribute the Torah gives Moses is to call him *eved Hashem*, the servant of God. That is why the Rambam writes that we can all be as great as Moses. [4] Because we can all serve. We are as great as the causes we serve, and when we serve with true humility, a Force greater than ourselves flows through us, bringing the Divine presence into the world.