



MACCABI WORLD UNION

Department of Education

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י"ב ניסן תש"פ

פסח, משבר ומנהיגות

Pessach, crisis and leadership

Dear Friends,

In these hard, difficult days for everyone, we are more than ever in need of voices of sanity, hope, optimism, and vision.

Let's be those voices! Let's share that vision! Pessach and its message of leadership should be our inspiration.

The similarity of Pessach with the present pandemic lies not in the 10 plagues upon Egypt, but in the lesson of leadership of Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Nachshon ben Aminadav, and its application to these times we are living through. It is connected with their decisions and actions in the era of the biggest crisis of the Jewish people 3,300 years ago – and of how we take today take on the responsibility of leadership in this tremendous crisis.

Some 33 centuries ago, the Jews were at the lowest point in our ancient history: slaves for 230 years, repressed and abused under the relentless tyranny of the violent Pharaoh; the Hebrew slaves had almost lost all capacity or will to resist, could foresee only more repression and abuse, no future other than *another day of pain* in an endless succession of such days. Yet, when Pharaoh's brutal measures reached unbearable extremes of cruelty, and it seemed the Children of Israel had fallen to rock bottom of human misery; the 3 children of Amram – Moshe, Aaron and Miriam – restored hope, optimism and joy to a people who seemed to have lost them forever. With God's help (the same God who's help we beseech so much nowadays) our 3 heroes – leaders! – consoled, planned an escape route, escorted, guided and led the Children of Israel through the precarious uncertainties of their time towards a brighter, more promising future. Though plagued by fears, hesitations, doubts, and agonies over the folly or wisdom of following in the path of their extraordinary leaders, the People of Israel made the immediate breathless dash from slavery to liberty. Though questioned by some, ***the many*** embraced Moshe, Aaron and Miriam's leadership and participated in their plan to achieve a better future as a free Nation in their Land.

When leaders propose *true visions*, they succeed because talented people follow the leaders, their plans and actions. At a moment when life and death were balanced; when the Children of Israel were trapped between the raging sea and Pharaoh's murderous army, the situation was resolved not by Moses, Aaron, or Miriam, but by



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the "Prince" of Yehudah, Nachshon ben Aminadav. Moses prayed, pleading for God's Help, but Nachshon grasped that it was time for action, not prayer: he jumped into the sea, and the miracle of the parting of the waters began¹; the Children of Israel passed through, flanked by walls of water. Moshe, Aaron, and Miriam's leadership engaged, enlisted and included **others**, like Nachshon. Success of the leaders' proposals, ending the existential crisis, and following a broad aim towards a distinct goal, were all made possible as shared tasks that forged a nation capable of achieving the leaders' vision.

Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and young Nachshon ben Aminadav teach us multiple powerful lessons in the art of transformative leadership, of **establishing a vision**, a design of the future to answer fundamental questions such as "*What must be done to achieve a better future?*", "*How to continue after crisis?*", of **inclusion of the many**, especially other leaders, as the key to successful progress. They illustrate that **hope for a better future is sustained through consistent action**, and that this principle is fundamental to establishing good processes whose success sustains those who participate in them. They demonstrate that **strength in the face of dramatically adverse situations** is decisive in order to overcome them, along with seeking the best possible alternatives to resolve each situation. They show that one should never give in to despair, hopelessness, bitterness, emptiness. Finally, they give powerful instruction in the wisdom of a fundamental message: achieving resolution of even the worst situation is best possible when we **include our ideals**; when we not only refuse to give up what we believe in, but **act with greater strength drawn from belief in our ideals, our guiding vision**.

Maccabi leaders around the world in these difficult days have the duty of encouraging others, of bringing hope to our members, organizations and Communities. *Our communities and the societies in which we live need to hear our voice*, as loudly as possible, saying with confidence that *this tough period shall pass*, and that the Maccabi Movement will always stand for and work towards building a better life and brighter future for the Jewish People. Through our vision, our heart, and our actions, we stand strong together. That is the meaning of our "*Chazak ve'Ematz*".

May God inspire the minds of scientists to find a treatment and cure for the sick and a vaccine for all Humanity to banish the evil virus that today afflicts all aspects of our lives.

May we continue to transform ourselves to serve our People, connecting with our heritage and with the State of Israel.

¹ Bamidbar Rabba XII 7, 26; Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 37a.



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And since it is Pessach, ***May God once again set us free...*** so that next year we shall again enjoy the splendid encounter, meaningful dialog, affectionate banter and loving hugs of our loved ones.

**Chag Pessach Sameach!
Chazak ve'Ematz!**

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