

Thank you Julie, for sharing some of your thoughts about today's Agudas Achim. To follow-up on that, I'm going to talk about leadership – which seems very appropriate since not only is Julie one of our Vice Presidents, but she is also one of the chairs of our newly formed Leadership Committee, whose goal is to ensure that there is a pipeline of future Agudas leaders, volunteers, Board members, and Officers.

You've probably all heard the story about a conversation between Golda Meir and Richard Nixon in which they compared their jobs as leaders of their countries. I love this story & I know that Rabbi Levine likes to tell it too. Apparently Prime Minister Meir told President Nixon that being Prime Minister of Israel was far more difficult than being president of the United States, because whereas Nixon was president of 200 million people, Meir on the other hand was prime minister of 5 million prime ministers.

5 million prime ministers. So what Meir was saying was that every citizen of Israel was a leader. Implying that every Jew is a leader. And as such, every member of Congregation Agudas Achim is a leader. I agree with her.

So what does being a leader mean? Around here, it can mean leading services, reading haftorah, ushering, teaching, cooking, donating, fundraising, or organizing social action efforts. Quite simply, it can mean being a role model in terms of giving of your time, your skills, or your resources when you know that there is a need.

As you might expect, examples are everywhere. One is how each of our Bonim Society members have shown their leadership by making a commitment to help our congregation achieve a stable financial future. If you haven't yet seen our beautiful new Bonim B'Yachad donor wall, please stop into the atrium to admire it.

Another wonderful example is how Herb Glimcher saw an opportunity these past few weeks to do what he could to raise the bar of our fundraising efforts.

Yet another great example of leadership is how Kenny Steinman galvanized members of the local Jewish community to collect, organize, and donate clothing and books needed by new Americans living right here in central Ohio.

And a final example is how every member of our Board of Trustees has made a donation to our High Holiday appeal this year - 100% participation. That's what I call leading by example.

Of course, some people are reluctant leaders. I too was a reluctant leader - there is no shame in that. In fact, some of our greatest leaders have been reluctant - Moses is perhaps the most famous example.

In Parshah Shemot, God said to Moses "I will send you to Pharaoh to take My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt". And Moses responded to God by asking "Who am I to do such a thing? Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, to take the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Can you imagine? God appeared before Moses and spoke aloud to him, which even in Biblical times was not an everyday thing, and still Moses said to God "nah - I think you got the wrong guy - maybe you should ask somebody else."

But in the end, Moses did what needed to be done, and became arguably the greatest Jewish leader of all time. Like I said, there is no shame in being a reluctant leader, as long as you can put aside that reluctance and do what needs to be done, and do it to the very best of your ability.

I want you to know that our High Holiday appeal each year is **not** icing on the cake. The excellent and inspirational programming that Agudas provides 365 days a year **depends** upon the success of the High Holiday appeal. I ask each of you to invest in our present - invest in our future. Now is the time to fold down one of the tabs on your pledge card, and hand it to an usher. Your pledge card should have been inside of one of the prayer books that you picked up in the Social Hall on your way in - if you didn't get one, let an usher know and they'll find it for you. If you've *already made* a High Holiday pledge or donation this year, I want you to be a role model right now by **participating** too - go ahead and return your card to an usher with **none** of the tabs folded down. And if you're *already* a Bonim Society member, or are considering becoming one, then participate now by folding down the Bonim tab on your card and handing it to an usher. Wouldn't it be awesome if we had 100% participation in **this** room of leaders too? Let's aim for that goal together.

Now I know that many of you may be reluctant to be a leader today in this way. Like Moses, many of you may be thinking "nah - you got the wrong guy - maybe you should ask somebody else." It's okay - I'm not asking you to go threaten Pharaoh, or to part the red sea. But I **am** asking each and every one of you to be the leader and role model that Golda Meir said that you are. Fold down one of the tabs on your pledge card and return it to an usher now.

May we all be sealed in the book of life

Gemar chatimah tovah      גמר חתימה טובה