

WHAT WOULD BE ENOUGH?

RABBI ARI S. LORGE 5776, PARASHAT VAYIGASH 5776

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

BIG QUESTION: WHEN DOES AMBITION CLOSE OUR EYES TO WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE?

In this sermon, Rabbi Lorge explores the character trait of endless ambition, which is shared by our patriarch Jacob and by Alexander Hamilton, as portrayed in the Broadway musical *Hamilton*. In both cases, he argues, it takes a tragedy to focus these men on what really matters, and to be satisfied with what they have. This discussion will allow participants to consider how to find an appropriate balance in their own lives between ambition and a sense that they what they have already is “enough.”

DISTRIBUTING THE SERMON:

Links to a video recording of the sermon, as well as a copy of the written text, are available on the CORE Groups page of the Central Synagogue website. A few days before your meeting, you should contact your group members to let them know which sermon you will be discussing, so that they can watch and/or read it in preparation for the discussion. (It is helpful to include a link to the materials in your email). In order to keep the sermon fresh in everyone’s minds, you may wish to recommend that participants make a note of any questions or reactions they have immediately after watching it. Even if you saw the sermon in person, please at least review the written text before the meeting, so that you can participate fully in the discussion.

NAME TAGS:

For at least the first several sessions, please ask everyone in the group to wear a name tag (or, if seated around a table, to place a name card in front of them). Even if most people know one another, it is important that no one feel uncomfortable for not remembering everyone else’s name.

INTRODUCTION AND ICE-BREAKER:

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

- (a) their name; and
- (b) something they are striving to achieve.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Materials: pens, copies of “Personal Dayenu” sheets.

This activity will allow participants to reflect on the blessings for which they are most grateful, and to consider, as a group, whether we can really ever say that what we have is “enough.”

1. Distribute copies of the attached sheet: “*Dayeinu*: What would be enough?”.
2. Read through the introductory material as a group.
3. Ask each person to take 10 minutes or so to fill in the sheet to create their own “*Dayeinu*.” They can organize the blessings chronologically (as the traditional *Dayeinu* does), or in order of importance.
4. Bring the group together to consider the discussion questions at the bottom of the sheet.

TEXT STUDY

Attached is a text-study sheet that you may use to facilitate a discussion of the themes and issues raised by the sermon. Please make sure to either make a copy for each member or ask everyone to bring it themselves, in paper or electronic form. If you choose the latter course, you may still wish to print a few extra copies for those who may forget to bring theirs.

Here are some things to consider:

- (a) It is customary to recite a blessing before studying Torah.

BARUCH atah, Adonai
Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tzivanu laasok b'divrei Torah.

בָּרַךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God,
Sovereign of the universe,
who hallows us with mitzvot,
commanding us to engage with words of Torah.

- (b) Our tradition teaches us that Torah study can be a source of healing and blessing. You may want to ask members of the group if they would like to dedicate their study to anyone in particular. This is a nice way to help the group get to know one another, and to learn about significant events in each other's lives.
- (c) Depending on the preferences of your group, you may choose to distribute this sheet the week before the meeting, so that participants will be familiar with the texts, and can begin to think about their own responses.
- (d) You can choose to either work through the texts as one group, or to break up into pairs ("hevruta") for an initial period of discussion, and then allow the pairs to share something they learned with the group.
- (e) The ultimate goal of these groups is not for participants to master a particular number of Jewish texts, but to connect with one another. If group members are sharing their own stories and experiences in a way that seems fruitful, there is no need to cut off that conversation in order to make sure you "finish" the text sheet. If you are unsure, you can always poll the group to decide whether it is time to move on.

CONCLUSION

We recommend that you wind down the text study about 15 minutes before the end of the session, to allow for a meaningful conclusion. This conclusion may take any shape you wish. Some possibilities are:

- (a) Ask each person to name one insight they have gained, or one question that they are taking with them.
(b) Ask each person to offer a blessing to the group, drawn from your learning together.
(c) Ask each person to say one word to represent how they are feeling coming out of your discussion.

DAYEINU: WHAT WOULD BE ENOUGH?

One of the highlights of the Passover *seder* is the singing of *Dayenu*, which means “it would have been enough for us.” The song progresses through a list of miracles God has performed for the Jewish people, and after each one, we proclaim, “If you had only done this, and nothing else, it would have been enough.” In our Reform *Haggadah* (the text we read during the seder), the list is as follows:

Had God brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us, Dayeinu (it would have been enough)!

Had God divided the sea and not permitted us to cross on dry land, Dayeinu!

Had God permitted us to cross on dry land and not sustained us for forty years in the desert, Dayeinu!

Had god sustained us for forty years in the desert and not fed us with manna, Dayeinu!

Had God fed us with manna and not given us the Sabbath, Dayeinu!

Had God given us the Sabbath and not brought us to Mount Sinai, Dayeinu!

Had God brought us to Mount Sinai and not given us the Torah, Dayeinu!

Had God given us the Torah and not led us into the land of Israel, Dayeinu!

Had God led us into the land of Israel and not built for us the Temple, Dayeinu!

Had God built for us the Temple and not sent us prophets of truth, Dayeinu!

Had God sent us prophets of truth and not made us a holy people, Dayeinu!

This is a list of our communal blessings. But what about the personal blessings, or miracles we have experienced over the course of our lives?

Please take a few minutes to consider what the core blessings of your life have been, and use the attached sheet to compose your own personal “Dayeinu”

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.

Had _____
and not _____, it would have been enough.