

Menachem Mendel Schneerson (Hasidic Leader who died in 1994)

What Makes a Good Leader? (Quote from the book: [Towards a Meaningful Life](#))

In our secular society we tend to think of a leader as a person who's well connected or who is powerful or charismatic or wealthy. We judge leaders by what they have. But a true leader should be judged by what he has not: Ego, arrogance, and self-interest. A true leader sees his work as a self-less service towards a higher purpose. As the sagists say leadership is not power and dominance. It is servitude. That doesn't mean that a leader is weak. He derives great strength from his dedication to a purpose that is greater than himself.

Every generation has its Moses, a leader who inspires absolute trust, who is totally dedicated to fulfilling his unique role. He understands and appreciates each person's role in perfecting this world and guides him or her accordingly. He rises above any individual perspective to take a global view, seeing how much each person and each issue fits into the entire scheme of the contemporary world. A true leader shakes people from their reverie and tells them, no, you don't need to live a life of desperation and confusion. Yes, you do have the ability to find meaning in your life and the unique skills to fulfill that meaning. You're an important link in a chain of generations past. You have a legacy worth preserving and a future worth fighting for.

It is wise to be a bit skeptical when assessing a leader. Is he truly devoted to his mission or just seeking glory? Is he truly interested in the welfare of others or simply building a flock for his own self aggrandizement? A true leader does not seek followers. He wants to teach others how to be leaders. He doesn't want control. He wants truth. He doesn't impose his leadership on others, nor does he take away anyone's autonomy. He inspires by love, not coercion. When it comes time to take credit, he makes himself invisible. But he is the first to arrive at a time of need, and he will never shrink away in fear. He is so passionate about your welfare that when you consult him for guidance, it's like coming face to face with yourself for the first time.

John 21:15-17 – “If you love me (Jesus says to Peter)—feed, nurture, guard, guide and fold my sheep.”

Acts 20:28-31 - “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard.”

2 Cor. 1:24 – “...we [do not] lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy... .”

Ecclesiastes 8:9 – “There is a time when a man lords it over others to his own hurt.”

2 Cor. 10:8 – “The authority the Lord gave us [is] for building you up, not for pulling you down.”

2 Cor. 13:10 – “The authority the Lord gave me [is] for building you up, not for tearing you down.”

1 Thess. 5:12-13 – “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other (the result of honoring leaders).”

Hebrews 13:7, 17 – “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their faith. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Peter 5:2-4 – “Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will be a crown of glory that will never fade away.”

All scriptures are from the NIV Bible