

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

by Rabbi Dovid Green

It's always healthy to take stock. To review past accomplishments positive and the inevitable, negative. Though we always try to set our sights ahead to be able to achieve, one needs on occasion, to look back to examine where we came from so as to direct us (or redirect us) to where we want to go. A healthy recommendation.

This week's portion contains a review of the accomplishments both positive and negative, of the Jewish people from the time of the exodus from Egypt till they were about to enter the holy land. A new era was about to begin. Moshe needed to give the necessary direction to the people he would soon be taking leave of. How would he insure that it would be received in the most effective way?

Rabbi Zelig Pliskin explains in his book **Love Your Neighbor** this important factor in human relations as shown in the Torah.

"MOSHE SPOKE TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL...AFTER HE HAD SMITTEN SICHON KING OF THE AMORITES, WHO DWELT IN CHESHBON, AND OG, THE KING OF BASHAN, WHO DWELT IN ASHTASROS AT EDREI" (Devarim 1:3,4)

The sages teach that here when Moshe "spoke" to the Jewish People, it was words of rebuke. Rebuke is most effective when it can be perceived as being sincere. The Torah emphasizes that Moshe rebuked the Jewish people *_after_* he had smitten Sichon and Og. Moshe reasoned, that if he rebuked them before they entered at least *_part_* of the land, they might wonder what their leader had against them and what good he had done for them since "it must be that he does not have the power to bring us into the land". Moshe therefore waited until after he had conquered part of the land before giving the necessary rebuke. (a paraphrasing of Rashi)

"Had the people felt that Moshe's rebuke was insincere and that he had ulterior motives, his words would have been ineffective. A person will only accept rebuke if he feels that the rebuker has his best interest in mind."

"We also see from here that timing is a major factor in rebuke. In many instances by waiting for an opportune time to deliver admonition, a person will be more successful than he would have been had he admonished earlier."

Each attempt at communication and helpful well-timed direction will bring multiple results we might not have imagined! The ripple effect, we are taught is called "mitzvah goreres mitzvah" - one mitzvah

creates (the opportunity for) another mitzvah". May we all cultivate healthy peaceful relationships with others!

Good Shabbos