

BOOK REVIEW

Religion and Contemporary Management: Moses as a Model for Effective Leadership, Arthur Wolak, (New York: Anthem Press, 2016), 170 pp. Reviewed by Simcha Rosenberg

The author of this book has a background in business, management and Jewish studies with articles published in *The International Journal of Organizational Analysis* and *The Jewish Bible Quarterly*, among others. This work is part of a popular genre which seeks to derive lessons for contemporary leaders in the business world from the Bible.

While current management vocabulary and buzzwords differ from Biblical terms, many of the ideas in vogue today can be shown to have parallels with Biblical figures, and Moses especially. Moses is understood here to be an effective leader because he was able to galvanize the masses toward a goal. He possessed vision, inspired followers, stuck to his mission statement and empowered others to become leaders themselves. These leadership qualities remain central throughout history.

At first blush, one may consider Moses an unusual model for contemporary leaders, as he is described as a *very humble man, more so than any other man on earth* (Num. 12:3), a trait not associated with many leaders today. The thesis of the book is the idea that the skill set of a leader must include the influence of personal attributes and principles, particularly humility and empathy, which are here presented as the core of effective leadership. Humility functions to focus the effort of the group on achieving the purpose of the organization, rather than revolving around the leader personally. Empathy allows a leader to understand the strengths and weaknesses of others, to both learn from them and lead them.

This book is an interesting study in leadership qualities and many different theories of leadership are discussed. Freud's Great Man Theory, Trait Theory and the more modern transformational leadership theories are covered and related to Moses. It is more of a management and leadership book than a work of Bible scholarship, and would serve as a welcome resource for any person of faith in a leadership or management position.

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