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**Selected Readings on Jewish Communal Professionals**

1. **Pirke Avot 2:2**

רבן גמליאל בנו של רבי יהודה הנשיא אומר יפה תלמוד תורה עם דרך ארץ שיגיעת שניהם משכחת עוון וכל תורה שאין עימה מלאכה סופה בטילה וגוררת עוון וכל העמלים עם הציבור יהיו עמלים עימם לשם שמיים שזכות אבותן מסייעתן וצדקתם

עומדת לעד ואתם מעלה אני עליכם כאילו עשיתם

Rabban Gamliel, son of R. Judah said, “All who labor for the community should labor with them for Heaven’s sake, for then the merit of the community’s forbearers will sustain them and their beneficence will endure forever. And as for you who labor, I regard you as deriving great reward as though you had accomplished it all on your own.

According to this text, there are a number of groups who are involved in the dynamic of communal work (God, community workers, and the previous generations). How does each of these partners impact the type of work that we do? Can you think of a particular context in which you have felt that your efforts were either blessed by God or impacted by the influence of others? Can you think of a particular context whereby you felt rewarded by the product of your work? What are some of the ways that frustrate us such that we do not feel acknowledged?

1. **Babylonian Talmud Horiot 10a/b**

נתן דעתו להושיבם בראש כשעלה שלח להם ולא באו חזר ושלח ובאו אמר להם כמדומין אתם ששררה אני נותן לכם עבדות אני נותן לכם

Rabban Gamliel made up his mind to place colleagues in positions of communal responsibility. He sent for them and they did not come. He sent for them again and they did respond. He said to them, “You suppose I was offering you a burden but rather think of it as servitude.”

What is the dynamic at play in this midrash? Are there times when you have felt reluctant to pursue your career? What are the obstacles that we occasionally face? Is our work a burden? How do we transform ourselves to regard our work as true service and not just a daily burden? What are the resources that we can identify which help us move to this new paradigm?

1. **Siddur – Shabbat Morning Prayer**

מִי שֶׁבֵּירַךְ אֲבוֹתֵֽינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל הַקָּהָל הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה עִם כָּל קְהִילּוֹת הַקּוֹדֶשׁ הֵם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם: וּמִי שֶׁמְּיַחֲדִים בָּתֵּי כְנֵסִיּוֹת לִתְפִלָּה וּמִי שֶׁבָּאִים בְּתוֹכָם לְהִתְפַּלֵּל וּמִי שֶׁנּוֹתְנִים נֵר לַמָּאוֹר וְיַֽיִן לְקִדּוּשׁ וּלְהַבְדָּלָה וּפַת לְאוֹרְחִים וּצְדָקָה וְכָל מִי שֶׁעוֹסְקִים בְּצָרְכֵי צִבּוּר בֶּאֱמוּנָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יְשַׁלֵם שְׂכָרָם וְיָסִיר מֵהֶם כָּל מַחֲלָה וְיִרְפָּא לְכָל גּוּפָם וְיִסְלַח לְכָל עֲוֹנָם וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם

May God who blessed our ancestors bless this entire congregation, along with those who unite to establish synagogues, who give funds for heat and light and wine for Havdalah, bread to the wayfarer and charity to the poor; and all who devotedly involve themselves with the needs of this community and the Land of Israel. May god bless them by making all their worthy endeavors prosper.

This blessing, traditionally said on Shabbat reminds us that we need to unite to bring the fullest of blessings to our work. What is the valence of the word “unite?” Do you find it easy to work with others in your field or members of other organizations? Can you recall a professional circumstance whereby uniting with others helped you achieve your goals? What are some of the obstacles that community service workers face when trying to work with others?

1. **Passover Haggadah**

אִלּוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְלֹא עָשָׂה בָהֶם שְׁפָטִים, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ עָשָׂה בָהֶם שְׁפָטִים, וְלֹא עָשָׂה בֵאלֹהֵיהֶם, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ עָשָׂה בֵאלֹהֵיהֶם, וְלֹא הָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ הָרַג אֶת בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת מָמוֹנָם, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת מָמוֹנָם וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת הַיָּם וְלֹא הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְתוֹכוֹ בֶּחָרָבָה, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְתוֹכוֹ בֶּחָרָבָה וְלֹא שִׁקַּע צָרֵנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ שִׁקַּע צָרֵנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ וְלֹא סִפֵּק צָרְכֵּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ סִפֵּק צָרְכֵּנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה ולֹא הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת הַמָּן, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת הַמָּן וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַׁבָּת, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַשַׁבָּת, וְלֹא קֵרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ קֵרְבָנוּ לִפְנֵי הַר סִינַי, וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה, דַּיֵּינוּ.

אִלּוּ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה וְלֹא הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, דַּיֵינוּ.

אִלּוּ הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא בָנָה לָנוּ אֶת בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה, דַּיֵּינוּ.

If He had brought us forth from Egypt, and not inflicted judgement upon the Egyptians, it would have been enough. If He had inflicted Judgement upon the Egyptians and not executed judgement upon their gods, it would have been enough….. If He had divided the sea for us and had not made us pass through on dry land, it would have been enough.

In the spirit of this popular song, the Dayeinu text reminds us that each step is a process to a complete goal. Even when not achieving all of our goals, we need to acknowledge the blessing of each step and say “we did well enough.” What are some of the greatest accomplishments of your professional work? What are some of the ways we can give ourselves the strength to keep doing our work? Can you identify a project or specific goal for this year whereby you would be able to genuinely say, Dayeinu (it was good enough)?