

These are the names of the men who are to take possession of the Land for you. (34:17)

Each *nasi*, leader of his respective tribe, took title to a province on behalf of his entire tribe. He would later apportion the land to be distributed among the members of his *shevet*, tribe. Noticeably, preceding each tribal leader, the word *nasi* is written, except for the first three the Torah mentions: Yehuda (Calev ben Yefuneh); Shimon (Shmuel ben Amihud); Binyamin (Elidad ben Kislone). Why is the title *nasi* omitted from their names? *Horav Tzvi Hirsch Ferber, zl*, explains that all the *nesiim* achieved distinction as a result of being selected to lead their respective *shevet*. Their position distinguished them above the members of their tribe. The leaders of Yehuda, Shimon and Binyamin were distinguished leaders even before they were selected to achieve the title *nasi*. They were, indeed, leaders who did not require a title to distinguish them.

Calev ben Yefuneh, husband of Miriam, father of Chur (who gave up his life in an attempt to prevent the sin of the Golden Calf from occurring), needed no introduction to leadership. He led *Shevet Yehuda* without the title. Elided ben Kislone of the tribe of Binyamin was Eldad who (together with Meidad) prophesied in the camp. To be a *Navi* during the tenure of Moshe *Rabbeinu's* leadership meant that he was a member of the nation's spiritual elite. Shmuel ben Amihud was the leader of his tribe even prior to being selected as *nasi*. After their fiasco with the previous *nasi*, Zimri ben Salu, the tribe was especially circumspect in appointing a replacement.

In short, these men required no title. They made the title and gave it value and distinction. Individuals who achieve distinction based upon their personal worthiness and leadership ability possess qualities such as integrity, empathy, decisiveness and vision. They stand above the crowd, leading by example, inspiring others through their actions and decisions – rather than relying on authority derived from their title. Even if they were not in a position of authority, their natural leadership qualities still shine through, as they have the ability to inspire and influence others, regardless of their title.

On the other hand, those whose fame and authority is position-based might become the victims of title-over-achievement, in which their title overshadows their actual contributions. They may struggle to maintain the same level of recognition or influence as their worthy counterpart, as their fame is intrinsically bound to their title. A title not founded in achievement and personal qualities lacks depth and authenticity. While both leaders may achieve distinction, one who gains his position based on personal worthiness will tend to have a more enduring impact and legacy.