

Who is wise?

Prayer for the Day

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They say that a burden shared is a burden halved, so perhaps sharing one of my current preoccupations will help.

It is always an honour to be elected to a senior office in an organisation that one values, but there is a catch: along with the glory and, one hopes, the satisfaction of a job well done, comes the responsibility, not just for oneself, but for one's colleagues too. And at this time of year the approach of the AGM starts to concentrate the mind.

Responsibility brings with it the obligation to hand over that responsibility responsibly, so one finds oneself holding colleagues up to unaccustomed scrutiny, and working out permutations of possible committee members more complex than a Rubik's cube. Of course no-one is indispensable, but that is cold comfort if no-one else is prepared to take over the mantle of leadership. So spring is the time when arms are twisted and deals are struck, even if smoke-filled rooms are no longer politically correct!

So it was that I found myself pondering on the record of achievement of some of my colleagues. Some were superb administrators, some had vision, some were people people; some had all of these qualities, some had none! But all have helped me develop my own contribution to the organisation. "Who is wise?" asks the Talmud in the *Ethics of the Fathers* – and gives the answer "the person who learns from everyone." From some of these colleagues I have learned how easily one can succeed in promoting our objects and achieving our vision; from others I have learned how easily one can fail!

May we all be blessed with the wisdom to distinguish good examples from bad, the strength to reject the bad, the self-confidence to follow the good, and the perseverance to achieve our goals.