

THE TORAH OF LEADERSHIP

Too Much Collaboration? | Dr. Erica Brown | October 14, 2021



Pieter Breugel the Elder, "The (Great) Tower of Babel," oil, 1563 (45 by 61) Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Genesis 11:1-9

וַיְהִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אַחַת וּדְבָרִים אַחָדִים:

וַיְהִי בְּנֹסְעֵם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר גִּיּוֹשְׁבוֹ שָׁם:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ הִבֵּה נִבְנֶה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשָׂרָפָה וְתִהְיֶה לָּהֶם הַלְּבָנָה לְאַבְנֵי וְהַחֲמֵר הִיָּה לָהֶם לְחֵמֶר:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ תְּבַהּ | נִבְנֶה־לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה־לָּנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן־נִפְּוֶז עַל־פְּנֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:

וַיִּרְדַּ וַיְהִי לְרֹאֵת אֶת־הָעִיר וְאֶת־הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עַם אֶחָד וְשִׂפָּה אַחַת לְכָלָם וְזֶה חַלְלֵם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא־יִבְצָר מֵהֶם כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת:

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

הָבָה גִּרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה שֵׁם שְׂפָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ:

וַיִּפֹּץ יְהוָה אֶתְּם מִשָּׁם עַל־פְּנֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וַיַּחְדְּלוּ לִבְנֹת הָעִיר:

עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בְּכֹל כִּי־שָׁם בְּלַל יְהוָה שְׂפַת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפְיָצָם יְהוָה עַל־פְּנֵי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ

Everyone on earth had the same language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them hard.”—Brick served them as stone, and bitumen served them as mortar.— And they said, “Come, let us build us a city, and a tower with its top in the sky, to make a name for ourselves; else we shall be scattered all over the world.” The Lord came down to look at the city and tower that humans had built, and the Lord said, “If, as one people with one language for all, this is how they have begun to act, then nothing that they may propose to do will be out of their reach. Let us, then, go down and confound their speech there, so that they shall not understand one another’s speech.” Thus the Lord scattered them from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confounded the speech of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

Reflective Question

When has a collaborative leadership project you’ve worked on gone terribly wrong? Why?

Leadership Challenge

How can you make a current leadership commitment more meaningfully collaborative?

