

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

RE'EH

AUGUST 3, 2013

27 AB 5773

Rosh Hodesh Elul will be celebrated on Tuesday & Wednesday, August 6 & 7.

We begin Selichot on Thursday morning.

Jalacha class at 6:10 followed by Selichot at 6:25 each morning

Our Condolences to the family of Essie Ezraty, former sisterhood president on her passing last week.

To her Husband Albert and children Marla, Steven, and Marc – May you be comforted from Heaven

We have been asked to prepare a special white Tevah cover for the holidays along with a white curtain for the Ark
If anyone would like to dedicate either of these items, please let David or Sam know.

\$5200 for the curtain and \$3600 for the Tevah,

Rabbi Dr Mayer Abittan and his family will be with us this Shabbat

Our Torah reader Abie Lieber needs a lunch invitation for this Shabbat.

I am deeply honored that I can be of assistance this Shabbat at the Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach as their guest rabbi as a Hakarat HaTov for their assistance to us post Sandy. If you would care to trek west, please join us Class at 7:15PM followed by Mincha and a Seudah Shelishi class.

Candles: 7:50 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:30 PM – We've moved the time to 7:30 as we've been waiting for guys to show up each week. Please show up by 7:30 sharp so we can have a minyan together. We did this last week and it worked out perfectly.

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:39 AM.

Tefilah will be preceded by a class at 8:30AM on Hilchot Shabbat with a Sephardic twist.

Kiddush this week sponsored jointly

By Herman and Rebecca and by Ernie Davidson in memory of our dear friend Jeffrey Oberman on his Second Yahrzeit
11:00 - 12:00 Orah's will be here with our Shabbat Morning Kids Program upstairs in the Rabbi's study. Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . . And Leah Colish will be babysitting down in the playroom

6:00 - Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.

5:30: Ladies Torah Class at the Lemberger's 1 East Olive.

Pirkei Avot with Rav Aharon: 6:30 Minha: 7:15 PM –
Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:45 with Rabbi Dr. Chaim Abittan
Evening Service (Arbith): 8:45 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:50PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

Daily Hebrew language class follows afterward in the Rabbi's Study

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Daily 6:30 AM class – Honest Business Practices – Note 6:10 on Thursday and Friday as we begin Selichot

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – 7PM

Rabbi Yenay has agreed to continue the class. Chazak U Baruch – although Albert, Boris and Gregory were away, we had 26 people attend. Rabbi Yenay drives back and forth from Lakewood, 2 hours each way. If you want to continue this class, please show him your support and be there at 7PM sharp. Men and Women are invited.

We are four weeks away from the High Holidays

Please pay your outstanding bills

Its crucial at this time that we have your support

If you need help with your statement please speak with Hal or Ely

We are looking forward to receiving a plan for the garden in the
Front of the Synagogue

We apologize for the eye sore – a temporary fence went up this week paid for by the sponsors.

The revised plan is for the board to meet next Sunday, August 11th in the morning at 9AM with the sponsors to review a plan and then move forward. All board members should plan on attending to review this and other business.

Thank You to the Lembergers and all the Brit Milah sponsors who helped fulfill an amazing misvah. It was really an uplifting experience. Thanks to Tina and Uri, Kathy and Sarina, Leon and Karen, Lisa and Esther, Herman and Rebecca, Shaya and Jody, Chaim and Lisa, Hal and Penny, Jack and Patti, Bobby and Hindy, Ely, Chantelle and her husband.

If you have not sent your checks in, please do so and Chazak UBaruch.

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

Can You Really See?

I am always intrigued by the people who I meet and after engaging in some theological conversation, they close in saying that, "if there really were miracles and I saw what Benai Yisrael saw in Egypt and in the desert, I guess that I would be more observant".

But the fact is that although we say that "seeing is believing", it takes more than seeing for something to truly enter the heart. There is a physical seeing and then there is a deeper emotional and spiritual seeing.

Even our forefathers who experienced the plagues, the death of the first born, the exodus, the splitting of the sea, the revelation at Sinai, the well of Miriam, the clouds and the manna falling from heaven had their moments. Imagine crossing the sea and still carrying an idol in the knapsack as some mystical insurance policy. It takes much more than miracles.

This week's portion begins with the word Re'eh, The word is a directive to see. The Malbim brings down that this usage of the word "Re'eh" is because the blessing and curse described here by Moshe are not simply promises for the future but actually a visible property which exists amongst the Jewish people. He goes on to explain that one can actually see that people who observe the Torah have a sense of accomplishment, fulfillment and spiritual growth whereas those who go against it can be seen to live mundane lives which lack such achievement or satisfaction.

But I believe that although the rest of the verse is directed in the plural, this word Re'eh is directed in the singular, because not everyone can really see. It may be in front of our face and on a physical level we see it, but it takes more than seeing with our eyes for the vision to penetrate our mind, heart and soul. And although many people may see and experience the

same object or event, they will all walk away with something different.

I am reminded of a true story that Rav Yechezkel Levenstein told over.

As he entered a taxi in Israel, his driver noticing the rabbi, turned to strike up a conversation.

"You know, I have a very religious best friend. He wasn't always religious, in fact we were army buddies and he was as irreligious as me. After the army as most of us did then, we went off to travel and found ourselves camping in the Amazon in South America. In the middle of the night we all woke up to hear muffled screams and we saw our friend with a huge boa constrictor around his neck squeezing tighter and tighter.

"Of course we screamed at the snake and hit it with sticks but it was just going tighter around his neck. Nothing we were doing was helping and our friend was quickly losing consciousness. With nothing else we could do one of the friends shouted to him "say shema yisrael" – so with his last ounce of strength our friend said shema yisrael and all of a sudden the snake unloosened his grip and crawled away. It was a miracle!! – It struck him so deeply that when he returned home, he started learning about the Shemah, then praying every day, and then learning too. So now our friend wears a hat with a religious wife and kids in yeshivas."

"That's a great story" the Rav exclaimed "but why are you not more religious after witnessing all this?"

"Well" said the taxi driver "the miracle didn't happen to me!"

When I tell the story, people are amazed that this guy could retell this story again and again and its just a story he tells to the religious guys that come into his cab and nothing more. He saw, but he didn't see. But its not so amazing.

Do you know anyone who still smokes? I was shocked that some of the most observant guys I know still smoke and allow their children to smoke. Aside from the halachic point of view, where Maimonides notes that a sound mind requires a sound body, and for this reason it is a religious obligation to take care of one's health and where the Shulchan Aruch brings a number of regulations enacted for health purposes and where the Talmud comments that in general, health regulations are treated with greater stringency than any other section

of halacha, there is the box. One picks up a box with a clear warning label. One knows that smoking kills not only the smoker, but those around the smoker and one still smokes. How?

We can see, we can know, but unless it enters us and becomes a part of us, we're not really seeing. That was the problem of the generation that left Egypt. Their internal eyes were closed and thus they were condemned to die in the desert.

Moses tells their children, speaking to each as individuals and in speaking to them, he is speaking to us. He begs us to strive with all our abilities to really open our eyes, our hearts and our souls and to see. We need to let that vision enter us and become a part of us and change us for the better.

As we approach the month of Elul, the month of introspection and the month of change, let's open our eyes to the point where each of us can answer as the holidays approach, "Ah, now I see".

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st and 2nd Aliyot: Moshe instructs the Chosen People to eradicate any remnant of idolatry and strengthen all aspects of service to G-d. All offerings must be brought to the "Chosen" place, the Bais Hamikdash, so that worship is an act of humility and selflessness, rather than a self-indulging "need". An even greater danger to our uniqueness is the innate desire to compromise and assimilate Torah values with other forms of worship. (the Chanukah bush syndrome)

3rd and 4th Aliyot: Moshe forewarned the Jews against incorporating any pagan practices, and against the false prophet, idolatrous missionaries, and the Ir Hanidachas - the Apostate City. These must be destroyed along with their material belongings. When using the world in accordance with the wishes of the Creator, we declare the existence of a Creator who has a divine purpose for creating the material world. When we misuse the physical in the service of "gods who are not G-d", we negate the Creator's purpose for creating the universe. Therefore, they and all their belongings must be destroyed.

5th, 6th, and 7th Aliyot: The remainder of the Parsha, details those Mitzvos that set us apart from all other nations: Kashrus; Maasros - Tithes; the Shmitah - sabbatical year; the laws regarding lending money; the Eved Ivri - a Jew who is a slave; the consecration of the first born animal, and a review of the main Yomim Tovim - holidays: Pesach, Shavouth, and Succoth.

Rav S.R. Hirsch points out that Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are not reviewed in Sefer Divarim because there were no changes in the practices of those Yomim Tovim when living in the desert or living in Eretz Yisroel. (Intro. to Divarim)

Isaiah 54:11 - 55:5 - This week's Haftorah is the third Haftorah of Consolation. Yishayuhu Hanavi described the utopian times of Mashiach when the veiling values of societal assumptions and norm will be lifted and the reality of our absolute dependency on Hashem will be realized and accepted. Money and other assumed values and goals will be replaced by the currency of Avodas Hashem and Yiras Shamayim. G-d will be recognized by all as the only Provider of sustenance in contrast to our present assumed self-sufficiency and independence. The words of Yishyuhu offer us hope in knowing that closeness to Hashem and the end of Galus is up to us. All we have to do is trust the beginning words of the Parsha: "The Blessing: that you should listen to the commandments of Hashem..."

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"When Hashem your G-d will broaden your boundary as He spoke to you and you say, 'I would eat meat.'" (Debarim 12:20)

Moshe Rabenu explained to the Israelites that when they settle in the Land and follow the Torah, they would find success in their endeavors and Hashem would expand their borders. When this occurred they would desire meat and they would be allowed to eat it anywhere they wished. While the Jews were in the desert they were permitted to eat meat, but only meat from the offerings in the Mishkan. However, when the people entered the Land and lived far away due to the expansion of the borders, they could then eat meat at home even if it wasn't from a korban. The broadening of the boundaries is referring to distance from the Mishkan, but it also refers to wealth and success.

Rashi explains: The Torah here has taught proper conduct, that a person should not desire to eat meat, except out of broadness of hands and wealth. Rabbi Benzion Shafier asks that Rashi seems difficult

to understand. What is wrong with desiring meat? The Torah might tell me that if I can't afford meat, I shouldn't eat it. If it is beyond my means and purchasing it would create an undue burden on my budget, I couldn't buy it. But what's wrong with simply wanting it?

The answer to this can be understood by focusing on the distinction between pleasure and lust. Pleasure is the amount of enjoyment you receive from a given activity. Lust is the pull you have to engage in that activity. Pleasures are things that Hashem created for man to enjoy. Passions, or lusts, are things man must learn to control. As unusual as it may sound, most people fail to make a distinction between pleasure and passion.

Hashem created us to be happy. If one brings new desires into his world, desires he can't possibly fulfill, he is destined to be miserable. He will be constantly wanting, constantly hungry; his life will become the opposite of a pleasurable existence. Our desires are things that we can and must control. If we have the capacity to fulfill the desire to eat meat, we can allow those desires to surface. Hashem created many pleasures for man to enjoy and we should use those pleasures to better serve Him. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"If your brother entices you saying, 'Let us go and serve gods which you have not known.' (Debarim 13:7)

The Torah seems to emphasize that these other gods which are forbidden are not known to us. What is the difference or relevance whether the other gods are known or not?

The Hatam Sofer points out something which is especially important in our days. There are always people who will propose ideologies which are considered revolutionary. Each one will make a claim that his way is unique, his way is novel and his way will be the answer to all of man's problems. Even though others tried it and failed, they will say that this is guaranteed success. The Torah predicted this from way back and showed how all these "new gods" are all false, just like the old ones. Just like we see new claims to dieting and other fads which are said to be easy and quick, and yet we know it's impossible to do anything without effort, so too when it comes to Torah. None of the "isms", the non-Torah ideologies have worked in the past and none will work in the future. There is only the true Torah way of life, which involves commitment, effort and perseverance, but ultimately brings with it success, happiness and blessing! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

WIRELESS DIET

Human beings have an innate need to be in touch with others. Knowing that others care about us is essential to our self-esteem and general mental health. "Small talk" is a big issue that relieves frustrations and gives life to the lonely.

Understanding the need for connection to others, however, does not explain the addiction to telephones and e-mail. Life is certainly more fast-paced and hectic than it was twenty-five years ago. Response time can determine success or failure, but it is no excuse for rudeness.

And rudeness seems to be the order of the day. Although most individuals spend precious few moments a day with a spouse, sibling, or other family member, they often spend this valuable time pressing little buttons with their thumbs rather than connecting directly with the live person before them. Or people go to a house of worship – and suddenly their specially downloaded ring tones blare out and disturb others. Similarly, there are those who carry on loud – and often long – phone conversations while traveling on public transportation or carpooling with friends. This is not pleasant for the vehicle's other occupants, to say the least.

The solution is really simple to understand and difficult to achieve: Go on a wireless diet. Cut back on your connected hours. Turn your wireless devices off when you are in company or in a place where your conversation deserves the old "phone booth" privacy. Give yourself and your neighbors a break. Try this, and your reduced consumption of cellular spam will increase your self-esteem and self-respect in your eyes and in the eyes of others. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

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The Real Wealth

The Torah in Parashat Re'eh presents the Misva of Ma'aser Sheni, which required farmers in Eretz Yisrael to bring one-tenth of their produce to Jerusalem and eat it there in the city. They also had the option of transferring the Kedusha of the Ma'aser Sheni onto money, and bringing the money to Jerusalem where they would use it to purchase food which they would then eat. The Torah says that the purpose of this Misva is "Lema'an Tilmad Le'yir'a Et Hashem Elokecha" – so that the people would learn Yir'at Shamayim, fear of Hashem.

How does this Misva engender Yir'at Shamayim?
Why would someone achieve a keener spiritual

awareness by eating a portion of his produce in Jerusalem?

The Sefer Ha'hinuch explains that this Misva brought one Yir'at Shamayim by compelling him to spend time in the holy city of Jerusalem. The person had to eat the entire tithe in Jerusalem, and thus had to spend several days, or perhaps a week or two, in the city. Jerusalem was the site of the Bet Ha'mikdash and of the Sanhedrin, which consisted of the nation's seventy-one leading sages. When visiting Jerusalem, one had the opportunity to see the service in the Mikdash, to spend time with the Kohanim, and bask in the environment of Torah and Kedusha that permeated the city. This experience had an effect. A person would not leave Jerusalem without absorbing some of the holiness of the city, and this would lead him toward higher levels of Yir'at Shamayim.

This command of Ma'aser Sheni begins with the words, "Aser Te'aser." The Talmud, in a famous passage, notes the seemingly redundant expression and explains it to mean, "Aser Bishbil She'tit'asher" – "Give a tenth in order that you will be wealthy." This is generally understood as referring to the Misva of "Ma'aser Kesafim," donating one-tenth of one's earnings to charity, in the merit of which one earns wealth. Indeed, I personally know several community members who became wealthy once they began making a point of donating one-tenth of their earnings to charity. But we can arrive at a much deeper meaning of the Gemara's comment once we realize that this Pasuk is written in reference to Ma'aser Sheni. The Pasuk is saying that one should observe this Misva in order to acquire the real "wealth" – Yir'at Shamayim. This is the true fortune to which all of us should aspire – closeness with G-d, a keen awareness of His presence, and a desire to perform His will. We must observe the Misva of Ma'aser Sheni in order to achieve this inestimable treasure.

Although we cannot observe the actual Misva of Ma'aser Sheni nowadays, we can and must observe the general message conveyed by this Misva, by placing ourselves in an environment of Kedusha. The Misva of Ma'aser Sheni is predicated upon the basic premise that people are affected by their surroundings. We cannot delude ourselves into thinking that we can live in places without a strong Torah presence and somehow retain our connection to Torah. We are affected by our environment, and it is therefore imperative for ourselves and our children to live not in the place where we can earn the most money or enjoy the best luxuries, but in a place with a strong religious community and Torah foundation.

To its immense credit, our community has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to build a phenomenal religious infrastructure – synagogues, yeshivot, Mikvaot, adult education programs, and so on. Our parents and grandparents understood the necessity of a Torah atmosphere, that the "fortune" of Yir'at Shamayim is earned through the Misva of Ma'aser Sheni, by placing ourselves in an environment of holiness, and they worked tirelessly to create such an environment. It is crucial that we continue this legacy by continuing to avail ourselves of this infrastructure and continuing to maintain it. A person should never think that he can bring his family to some remote location and they will somehow manage to preserve their religious commitment. The "wealth" of Yir'at Shamayim requires an environment of Torah, as it is only in such an environment where we and our children can withstand the secular influences that abound and further develop our connection to Hashem and His Torah.

Rabbi Wein

Moshe seemingly interrupts his long oration to the Jewish people about their history and destiny with a surprising review of the year's calendar holidays. The calendar has always been central to Jewish life and survival. Under the dark regime of Stalin, Soviet Jewry was forbidden from owning or possessing a Jewish calendar.

The depths of loyalty of Soviet Jewry, to their inner faith, is seen in the fact that somehow millions of Soviet Jews still knew when the Jewish holidays – especially Simchat Torah – would occur. For the calendar is the rhythm of our lives and evokes with it memory, hope and a feeling of the timelessness of Jewish life and its traditions.

As such, the mere existence of the Jewish calendar posed a threat to the atheistic, cruel Communist regime that ruled then over a large part of humankind. The calendar in Jewish life and thought does not really only mark the passage of time gone by. Rather, it focuses on time that is yet to come, on the future, which can somehow always be brighter than was the past.

One of my younger grandchildren proudly told me that he had calculated how many years in the future a certain anomaly on the Jewish calendar, regarding erev Pesach, would occur. I bless him that he lives to see it but he is already certainly enthusiastic about the prospect and looks forward to its happening.

The calendar supplies us with a vision of the future and allows us the ability to feel that we are masters of our own fate and that we can, by our own efforts, be influential in determining our destiny.

The Jewish calendar is a progression of one holy day to the next holy day. We are always on the way to celebrate and commemorate our obligations to serve our Creator. Though there have been numerous sad days introduced into our calendar since the times of Moshe, the Jewish calendar still remains one of upbeat spirit and joy, family and hospitality, compassion and appreciation of life and its bounties.

The parsha of Re'eh always falls in the month of Elul, leading to the glorious month of Tishrei with its days of awe and compassion and the celebration of Torah and its commandments on Succot. The review of the Jewish year, which occupies a great deal of the subject matter of this week's parsha, is therefore most fitting for it prepares us not only for the coming month but for the coming year generally.

Though the future is always inscrutable, we can nevertheless be comforted and feel secure by the consistency of our calendar, which has marked the journey of the Jewish people through time and centuries. The Jewish calendar reminds us daily of our uniqueness as a people and of the eternity of our Torah and our faith. It thus fits rather neatly into Moshe's overall message to the Jewish people as recorded for us here in the book of Dvarim. The passage of time itself is one of the life's gifts bestowed upon us by our Creator

Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth

If you seek to understand Judaism's social vision, look at its anti-poverty legislation.

"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight-fisted toward your poor brother. Rather be open-handed and freely lend him sufficient for his needs in that which he lacks. Be careful not to harbour this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for cancelling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor

people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land." (Deut 15: 7-11)

Ostensibly the passage is about the cancellation of debts in the seventh year (shemittah, the year of "release"). The oral tradition, however, extended it to the laws of tzedakah - the word usually translated as "charity" but which also means "distributive justice, equity". The rabbis interpreted the phrase "sufficient for his needs" to mean the basic requirements of existence: food, clothing, shelter and so on. "That which he lacks" was understood as referring to a person who was previously wealthy but has now become impoverished. He too must be helped to recover his dignity:

It is related about Hillel the Elder that, for a certain poor man who was of good family, he bought a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him. When on one occasion he could not find a slave to run before the man, he himself ran before him. (Ketubot 67b)

The force of this passage lies in the fact that Hillel himself was notoriously poor, yet he gave of his money and time to help a rich man who had lost his money regain his self-respect. This double aspect is evident throughout the laws of tzedakah. On the one hand, they are directed to the brute fact of poverty. No one must be deprived of basic physical necessities. On the other, they address with astonishing sensitivity the psychology of poverty. It demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, shames. Tzedakah, ruled the rabbis, must be given in such a way as to minimize these feelings:

When Rabbi Yannai saw a certain man giving a coin to a poor person in front of everyone, he said: It would have been better not to have given it to him than to have given it and put him to shame. (Hagigah 5b)

In a famous passage, Maimonides describes the eight levels of charity:

There are eight degrees of charity, one higher than the other.

The highest degree, exceeded by none, is that of one who assists a poor person by providing him with a gift or a loan or by accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment – in a word by putting him in a situation where he can dispense with other people's aid. With reference to such aid it is said, 'You shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall live with you' (Lev. 25: 35), which means: strengthen him in such a manner that his falling into want is prevented.

A step below this is the one who gives alms to the needy in such a way that the giver does not know to whom he gives and the recipient does not know from whom he takes. This exemplifies doing a good deed for its own sake. One example was the Hall of Secrecy in the Temple, where the righteous would place their gift clandestinely and where poor people from noble families could come and secretly help themselves to aid. Close to this is dropping money in a charity box . . .

One step lower is where the giver knows to whom he gives, but the poor person does not know from whom he receives. Thus the great sages would go and secretly put money into poor people's doorways . . .

A step lower is the case where the poor person knows from whom he is taking, but the giver does not know to whom he is giving. Thus the great sages would tie coins in their scarves, which they would fling over their shoulders, so that the poor could help themselves without suffering shame.

Lower than this, is where someone gives the poor person a gift before he asks.

Lower still is one who gives only after the poor person asks.

Lower than this is one who gives less than is fitting, but does so with a friendly countenance.

The lowest level is one who gives ungraciously. (Mattenot Ani'im 10: 7-14)

This exquisitely calibrated ethic is shot through with psychological insight. What matters is not only how much you give, but also how you do so. Anonymity in the giving of aid is essential to dignity. The poor must not be embarrassed. The rich must not be allowed to feel superior. We give, not to take pride in our generosity, still less to emphasise the dependency of others, but because we belong to a covenant of human solidarity, and because that is what God wants us to do, honouring the trust through which he has temporarily lent us wealth in the first place.

Especially noteworthy is Maimonides' insistence that giving somebody a job, or the means to start a business, is the highest charity of all. What is humiliating about poverty is dependence itself: the feeling of being beholden to others. One of the sharpest expressions of this is to be found in the Grace after Meals, when we say, "We beseech You, God our Lord, let us not be in need of the gifts of men or of their loans, but only of Your helping hand . . . so that we may not be put to shame nor humiliated for ever and ever." The greatest act of tzedakah is one that allows the individual to become self-sufficient. The highest form of charity is one that enables the individual to dispense with charity. From the point of view of the giver, this is one of the least financially demanding forms of giving. It may not cost him

anything at all. But from the point of view of the recipient, it is the most dignifying, because it removes the shame of receiving. Humanitarian relief is essential in the short-term, but in the long-run, job creation and economic policies that promote full employment are more important.

One detail of Jewish law is particularly noteworthy: even a person dependent on tzedakah must himself or herself give tzedakah. On the face of it, the rule is absurd. Why give X enough money so that he can give to Y? Giving to Y directly is more logical and efficient. What the rabbis understood, however, is that giving is an essential part of human dignity. The rabbinic insistence that the community provide the poor with enough money so that they themselves can give is a profound insight into the human condition.

Jewry has had many distinguished economists, from David Ricardo (whom Keynes called the greatest mind that ever addressed itself to economics), to John von Neumann (a physicist who, in his spare time, invented Game Theory), to Paul Samuelson, Milton Friedman and Alan Greenspan. They have won an astonishing 38% of Nobel prizes in the field. Why should this have been so? Perhaps because Jews have long known that economics is one of the fundamental determinants of a society; that economic systems are not written into the structure of the universe, but are constructed by human beings and can be changed by human beings; and thus that poverty is not a fact of nature but can be alleviated, minimized, reduced. Economics is not a religious discipline. It is a secular art and science. Yet, deeply underlying the Jewish passion for economics is a religious imperative: "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your brothers and toward the poor and needy in your land."

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