

**SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE  
TERUMAH**

**Haftarah: Melachim I 5:26-6:13  
FEBRUARY 20-21, 2015 2 ADAR 5775**

**DEDICATIONS: In Honor of The Engagement of  
Sam Yusupov and Dana Ben-Zaken**

**Candle lighting Friday evening February 13 at 5:17 p.m. Mincha at 5:17**

**SHABBAT: Perasha class with Rav Aharon at 8:30AM this week  
Shaharit - Hashem Melech at 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:45AM**

**Kiddush Sponsored by Maurice and Allison Borenstein  
In honor of their children's birthdays – Happy Birthday Mollie and Joseph  
Please sponsor a Kiddush or Seudah Shelishi or breakfast in memory or in honor of a loved one**

**Early Mincha after Kiddush - Begin at 12:20 and Amidah after 12:36**

**Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30 with Jennifer  
Ages 2-5 - in the Playroom/  
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library / Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!**

**Children's afternoon program with the Bach at the Bach all February at 3:00 PM  
Ladies Class at the Lembergers at 4:30**

**Shabbat Ends at 6:17 - Return for Arbit at 6:35**

**No Movie Night Tonight**

**NOTE CHANGE IN SCHEDULE:**

**02/28/15, 03/07/15 - REMAINING MOVIE DATES**

**Sunday morning class with Sam Yusupov at 9AM  
Krav Maga at 10AM**

**WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE**

**Shaharit Sunday 8:00AM, Mon and Thurs at 6:55, Tues, Weds and Fri at 7:00**

**New York Islanders**

**38-19-1, 1st in Metropolitan Division**

**Sam Yusupov has donated a pair of tickets to Sunday nights Islander game at Nassau Veterans  
Memorial Coliseum Sunday, February 22, 6:00 PM.**

**We will raffle them off in order to raise money for our Youth Program.  
Tickets \$50 each.**

**No more than 18 tickets will be sold.**

**Please let us know if you would like to donate \$50 and have a chance or two to win!**

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to  
[ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com)  
 Newsletter archives now at [BenaiAsher.Org](http://BenaiAsher.Org)

Follow us on twitter @BenaiAsher for a daily dose of Torah, Israel or something of interest

**Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at NEW TIME OF 4:30 PM Thru Purim – Please join us! 212-289-2100 – Mincha– The most important tefilah of the day – followed by and Arbit all winter! Give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!**

### Editors Notes

**There was no newsletter this week. Great week ... busy week. I'll tell you about it next week B'H. But Albert Levy – a real man of incredible chesed needs something to distribute to all the patients in Maimonides ... so Albert this is really in your Zechut**

**From the Archives ... I wrote this last YEAR from Salt Lake City**

### Intent and Tolerance

I am writing on Monday night from Salt Lake City Utah. I am deeply grateful to Rabbi Benny Zippel of the Chabad of Salt Lake City for putting together a minyan for me ( Any visitors to Salt lake or any friends of Rabbi Zippel, please send him my appreciation) and to my friend Jack Azizo for taking an earlier flight to Salt Lake to be part of the minyan and for taking me to dinner in Park City. It's amazing to find such a nice kosher restaurant in the middle of the ski lifts and trails.

Rabbi Zippel invited me to speak to a rather diverse group of guys who were doing me tremendous favor in coming.

We read this week of the mishkan and the items Moses was assigned to make for it. One of the items is the Shulchan or the table where the Lechem HaPanim or the showbreads were placed.

I recalled a story that Rabbi Abittan told us about the showbreads. The story is brought in Moreshet Avot and by Rabbi Feinhandler in his Beloved Children series.

A Portuguese Marrano, who had been raised externally as a Catholic with very limited knowledge of his Jewish roots was able to leave Portugal and travel east to the Holy Land. He settled in Safed. One day he sat and listened carefully to the Rabbi's

lecture about the lechem hapanim, which used to be offered in the Bet Hamikdash every Shabbat. In his lecture, the rabbi sighed and said with anguish that now, due to our many sins, we do not have the Bet Hamikdash and we do not offer lechem hapanim. This Marrano, who had not learned Torah and was very naive in his service of Hashem, heard this, went home and innocently told his wife that every Friday she should prepare for him two loaves of bread sifted thirteen times. He requested that she kneads the dough in purity and bake it well in the oven, because it was his desire to offer the bread before the aron kodesh, and perhaps Hashem would accept the loaves which he would set before Him.

His wife baked him the loaves, and every Friday he would stand before the aron kodesh in the synagogue and pray and plead with Hashem to accept his offering. He would offer his supplication like a son entreating his father, after which he would set the two loaves down and leave.

The shamash would come every Friday and remove the two loaves, without inquiring where they came from. After Arbit, this G-d-fearing Jew would run to the aron kodesh, and since he wouldn't find the loaves, he would be elated and full of joy, and he would go home and tell his wife, "Praise and thanks to Hashem, may He be blessed, for He has accepted the bread. For Hashem's honor, don't be lax in making the loaves next week and be very careful, because we do not have any means of honoring Him other than with these loaves. And so we are obligated to give Him pleasure through them." This custom of the Marrano couple continued for a long time.

One Friday, the rabbi who had given the lecture about the lechem hapanim lingered in the synagogue. At the same time, this man came into the synagogue, as he did every Friday, with the two freshly-baked loaves. He approached the aron kodesh, and began to pour out his heart in prayers and supplications, without noticing that the rav was present. He was filled with such enthusiasm and happiness as he brought this gift before Hashem that he didn't pay attention to anything else.

The rabbi kept quiet, and saw and heard everything the man said and did, and it angered him greatly. He called to him and rebuked him: "You fool! Does Hashem eat and drink? Of course it is only the shamash who takes these loaves, and you are foolish enough to think that Hashem is the one who accepts them."

The rabbi continued to rebuke the man until the shamash came as usual to take the loaves. The rabbi

called the shamash over and he admitted that he was the one who removed the two loaves every week. Upon hearing this, the poor simple Jew began to cry and asked the rabbi to forgive him, since he had erred in understanding his lecture. Although he thought he had been doing a mitzvah, he now understood that he was really doing an aveirah – a sin.

Immediately after this, a special messenger came to the rabbi from the holy Ari – Rabbi Isaac Luria, and told him: "Go home and leave a will for your household, because tomorrow, at the time when you are scheduled to give your lecture, you will die, for this decree has already been set." Upon hearing these dreadful tidings, the rabbi was frightened and went to the holy Ari to ask him what had happened. The Arizal replied: "I have heard that your sin was that you have put a stop to Hashem's pleasure. From the day that the Bet Hamikdash was destroyed, Hashem never experienced pleasure as he did when the Marrano in his innocence would bring the two loaves of bread and offer them to His aron kodesh with the conviction that Hashem accepted them from him. Because you stopped him from bringing the loaves, death has been decreed upon you, and there is no way to avert this decree."

The rabbi went home and left a will for his family. On Shabbos, when it was time for him to give his lecture, he died, just as the holy Ari had foretold.

It's a crazy story, but it gives us insight and a tremendous lesson in two areas. Intention often outweighs actions. Look how powerful our intentions are. It was the intent of the Marrano that "pleased" Hashem. This makes me think about my own way of doing misvot.

We someone is called to Shamayim, we talk about doing misvot Le'lluy Nishmato, to raise up his soul in heaven. Thus we have prayers in the home, reading tehilim, learning Mishnah, giving charity and saying berachot or blessings. Considering this I realize how often my blessings sound like huhmahnah huhmanah without clear words. Grab something to eat, mumble some words with little thought and bite. But with this concept of raising the soul, we stop. We lift the food, we say that the blessing I will make will raise the soul of my teacher, father Yosef ben Esther and then eat. That's kavana and in fact we should do this every time we do a misvah. When we don a talet, or light candles or pray, we should begin by saying that I am coming to do the misvah of such and such and even if I don't understand all the details, may Hashem accept my prayer or blessing or action. Intent is so powerful.

The second lesson is in tolerance.

Saying Kaddish I am reminded of those who were not observant, but found their way back to Torah and Misvot through Kaddish. Many of those who worked on Shabbat and still came to early minyan to pray and say kaddish for a parent find themselves with observant children and even grandchildren studying in Yeshiva.

But imagine if when they came to the Synagogue on Shabbat they were rejected instead of being drawn in. Imagine if they were told that being nonobservant they had no place with the observant. In many communities this happened, but Baruch Hashem, Rabbi Yaakob Kassin set a beautiful example for many of us. I have heard he said that although I may not get the fathers, I will get the children and certainly the grandchildren. In contrast when one loses the father, he loses every generation to come.

Being in the Chabad of Salt Lake, I saw this message of outreach and tolerance. I saw a rabbi reach out and draw people in with love and with caring. The lesson of Rabbi Kassin, the lesson I see in Utah is a lesson played over and over again. It's a lesson that must be played over and over again if we hope to overcome the tide of assimilation and intermarriage which cuts of people from the Jewish body.

Someone said to me that my father was a man who looked at people and sought to build and not to break. In a world where we think everything is disposable, my father always sought to fix. I saw it in the sifrei torah cases and the other Judaica on his workshop. Pieces sent by Synagogues to the man who found time to repair these special objects. Very rarely is something beyond hope and until someone excludes themselves from the community we must strive with all we have to be tolerant and bring them back.

So this week let's take upon ourselves to try having the proper intent and being more tolerant. Lets try it for a week or even a day. We'll be the better for it.

Shabbat Shalom  
David Bibi

### **Elie Wiesel and the Defense of Jewish Life Jonathan S. Tobin**

Like a lot of Jews, Peter Beinart says Elie Wiesel's writings helped influence his development as a thinker and a writer. The same could be said of me.

At this point, the Nobel Laureate Wiesel has made his mark on more than one generation of Jews who were raised on his novels and memoirs exploring both his experience in the Holocaust as well as Jewish traditions and the dilemma of modern Jewish life. But, as he writes in his latest Haaretz column, Beinart has no patience for Wiesel these days. Why? Because Wiesel has written a public letter published as an ad in the New York Times and the Washington Post, supporting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to speak to Congress about the nuclear threat from Iran.

According to Beinart, this is just one more example of Wiesel being "blind to the harm that Jews cause." Whatever your opinion about the wisdom of Netanyahu's decision to give the speech (and I've repeatedly questioned it), the notion that an Israeli leader speaking up to urge the world to stop Iran obtaining the ability to threaten or to carry out another Holocaust is causing "harm" is not only outrageous. It speaks volumes about the mindset of Beinart and others like him who view Jewish self-defense with more alarm than the continued efforts of those who seek to slaughter Jews.

I think Netanyahu made a terrible tactical mistake by choosing to inject himself into a debate over Iran sanctions that the side he supported was already winning. President Obama's efforts to spike those sanctions was given a major boost when, fairly or not, Netanyahu's alleged breach of protocol became the issue, diverting the nation from the administration's indefensible efforts to promote détente with Iran. But since Netanyahu is determined to go ahead with the speech, his critics are not so much focused on his blunder as on their desire to silence all discussion about the Iranian nuclear threat so as to give more room for Obama's push for appeasement.

Beinart claims Wiesel made two unsupported statements in his letter. The first is that the U.S. and Iran are on the verge of a "terrible" deal. The second is that an Iranian nuclear weapon could mean the "annihilation and destruction" of Israel. Yet there's not much to Beinart's objections here.

There's not much dispute about the terms the U.S. is currently offering Iran. Discarding his 2012 campaign promise to eliminate Iran's nuclear program, President Obama has already put on the table an offer that would allow the Islamist regime to retain thousands of centrifuges for enriching uranium as well as letting them keep control of their stockpile of nuclear fuel. Administration apologists claim that this is the best that the West can do in any bargain with Iran but Beinart doesn't even bother to make that weak argument but simply writes as if the much discussed terms of the negotiations are a mystery that will only be revealed at the signing ceremony. Such terms would not be much of a deterrent to stop

Iran from building a bomb; the only question being whether a nuclear "breakout" would take a year or, as many intelligence sources insist, far less time. Nor does he deign to dispute that even if Iran initially abided by those terms, that it would make Tehran a nuclear threshold state that would make this terrorist sponsoring government more powerful, aiding its drive for regional hegemony.

Even less convincing is Beinart's claim that an Iranian nuke wouldn't be an existential threat to Israel. Though he can quote some retired Israeli security officials downplaying the threat, he knows very well that the dispute in those circles is not so much about the danger but about the best way to counter it with many deprecating the possibility of an Israeli military strike.

Though Iran might not use such a weapon to destroy Israel, their possession of one does raise such a possibility for two reasons. One is that they are building ballistic missiles that could deliver such a bomb. The other is that leading figures of this unabashedly anti-Semitic regime have repeatedly stated their desire to annihilate Israel.

Put in that context, Wiesel's assertions are unexceptionable. Indeed, if one goes back and reads many of President Obama's statements about an Iranian weapon in his first term during which he pledged never to allow such a development to take place, Wiesel's position actually seems in concert with that of the administration.

But Beinart's real agenda here isn't to make weak arguments in defense of the administration's efforts to build a new entente with Tehran. Rather, it is to denounce Wiesel's instinct to defend Israel's government against efforts to delegitimize its attempts to defend the Jewish state. Because he thinks, or at least at one point thought about the writer, as a symbol of concern for human rights, Beinart is appalled that Wiesel thinks Israel shouldn't be forced to make unilateral concessions or that Jerusalem should be divided. He thinks he should be in the forefront of those flaying Israel for its policies on the West Bank rather than defending its current government as he has its predecessors led by both Likud and Labor prime ministers.

But again, this tells us more about Wiesel's grasp of the essence of the conflict rather than any alleged insensitivity to the sufferings of the Palestinians. To the contrary, Wiesel has always been outspoken about the need to respect the humanity and the rights of Palestinians. But at the same time he has celebrated Israel's control over a united Jerusalem because that means for the first time in its history, all faiths have access to their holy places.

Moreover, Wiesel's defense of Israeli efforts to defend its people against a continuing campaign of Palestinian terrorism isn't insensitive to non-Jews. He

grasps that it is the Palestinian national organizations that have perpetuated this conflict despite repeated Israeli offers of peace and independence that have been turned down flat by both Fatah and Hamas. Beinart rightly senses that so long as an icon of humanity like Wiesel is willing to stand up for Israel's right to defend itself and to not be forced into unilateral and suicidal concessions, non-Jews will understand that the Jewish state's rights should be respected. Whatever one may think of the current government of Israel, the notion that its efforts to preserve the existence of the state and the security of its people "defile" Wiesel's ideals is a monstrous distortion of the truth. For those who have wrongly come to view Israel as the villain in the Middle East conflict and who reflexively deny the Palestinians' rejection of peace and coexistence, any defense of Israel is too much, even when it comes from someone whose bona fides as an authority on human rights dwarf those of a Peter Beinart. In the context of the politics of either Israel or the United States, Wiesel is not right-winger or an opponent of compromise, assuming that peace with the Palestinians were ever possible. He is, rather, a centrist who simply sticks to consensus issues like Iran and a united Jerusalem. But to the likes of Beinart, even those positions are anathema. Beinart's current niche in the secular media is as a Jewish writer who can be relied upon to denounce Israel's government so it is little surprise that he would defend appeasement of Iran. But when he matches his puny stature as a critic of the Jewish state against Wiesel's standing as an advocate of Jewish life, he is out of his depth. By bashing the famous survivor in this manner, he is doing more to damage his own tattered reputation than undermining that of Wiesel.

### Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st Aliya: A list of raw materials necessary for building the Mishkan was presented to the Bnai Yisroel: gold, silver, copper, wool dyed sky-blue, dark red, and crimson, linen, goats wool, ram skins, acacia wood, oil, spices, incense, and precious stones. The Ark is described in detail.

2nd Aliya: The cover of the Ark and the Cherubim are detailed. The weight of the cover alone, without the Cherubim, is between 150 lb. and 2500 lb. of pure gold! The Shulchan - Table and the Showbread are described.

3rd & 4th Aliyot: The Menorah and her utensils are described. Her weight was 1 Talent = 3000 Shekels =

150 lb. of pure gold. The basic structure of the Mishkan, consisting of beams, decorative materials and leather coverings, is outlined.

5th Aliya: The Paroches- dividing partition separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Mishkan is described.

6th & 7th Aliyot: The ramped, copper, Mizbeach is described. The outer enclosure surrounding the entire Mishkan is described.

### EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"From every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion."

With the exception of the tragic incident of the Golden Calf, the rest of the book of Shemot is devoted to the preparations for and the construction of the Mishkan. Everything was to be given voluntarily. So anxious were the people to have a share in creating a resting place for the Shechinah, that those in charge of the work had to appeal to Moshe to order a halt to the contributions. Their hearts were truly motivated. The Torah implies that this feeling was the key element of this entire project.

A true story is told about the Vilna Gaon. Once he visited a very wealthy man to ask him for a donation for an important charity. The wealthy man responded with a halachic question. "Is it permitted for me to give charity? I am deeply in debt, much more than I am worth, and all the money I have is borrowed from others." The Rabbi didn't even have a chance to answer when suddenly the local tailor arrived at the house. He was delivering a most expensive suit of clothing that he had made for the "wealthy man"! The Rabbi asked, "If it is true as you say, why did you buy such an expensive suit with other people's money?" The rich man answered that he purchased this suit also on credit. The Rabbi commented, "A pasuk in Yirmiyahu describes what you are doing: 'Your dwelling is amid deceit, through deceit they refuse to know Me – the words of Hashem' (Yirmiyahu 9:5). All of your actions are deceitful, but when it comes to charity you suddenly become an honorable man."

Quite often it happens that when a person experiences a decline in his wealth or business the first sacrifice is the charity, and the standard of living remains high. However, the Torah describes the donations to the Mishkan that their hearts were motivated. If a person's heart is motivated, the charity is the last sacrifice. Baruch Hashem our community is well-known for its truly generous heart. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell in them."  
(Shemot 25:8)

The Midrash says on this pasuk that this is compared to a king who had an only daughter. Although he wanted her to marry, he couldn't bear to part from her. So he told his daughter, "Wherever you go, make me a room so I can be with you." So, too, Hashem said to the Jewish people, "Take my daughter, 'the Torah,' but make me a sanctuary to dwell amongst you."

When the great Rav Shach k"z saw this Midrash, he got so excited for days. He said: You see how great it is to learn Torah. You get to have Hashem with you. Hashem and the Torah are inseparable, and when one acquires Torah, he acquires a connection with G-d.

Let this be an inspiration to us to attach ourselves to the Torah and to Hashem. It will only bring us more berachah! Shabbat Shalom.  
Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

### **RABBI ELI MANSOUR** **Pure Charity, Pure Misvot**

Parashat Teruma begins with Hashem's command to Beneh Yisrael to bring materials for the construction of the Mishkan. This marked the first "appeal" in Jewish history, and was also, without question, the most successful. As we read later, in Parashat Vayakhel, the people responded so generously that Moshe had to instruct them to stop donating, as the donations had already exceeded the amounts needed for the Mishkan.

Significantly, this command of "Ve'yikhu Li Teruma," to bring donations for the Mishkan, is preceded by Parashat Mishpatim, which is devoted mainly to the Torah's system of civil law. Much of the Torah's code of ethical civil conduct appears in Parashat Mishpatim. It discusses issues such as fairness, honesty, proper treatment of employees, responsibility for other people's property, and other principles of ethical interpersonal conduct. Significantly, the Torah presents the concept of "Teruma," of giving donations for important religious causes, only after it presented its basic code of ethics. Some Rabbis explained that the Torah thereby teaches us that one cannot reach the level of "Teruma," of donating money, before he has committed himself to "Mishpatim," to the principles of ethical behavior. All too often, people mistakenly justify unethical business practices on the basis of their generous donations to charity and religious institutions. They feel it is legitimate to earn money unethically if large sums of that money will go to support Rabbis, Yeshivot and synagogues. This is a

terrible mistake. Parashat Mishpatim must always precede Parashat Teruma. God does not want His institutions supported by ill-begotten gains. He wants us to first and foremost be ethical people, and only then give generously to synagogues, Yeshivot and other worthy causes.

In truth, this applies generally to all areas of religious life. The Halachic rule of "Misva Ha'ba'a Ba'abera" ("a Misva resulting from a sin") establishes that if a person commits a sin in order to facilitate the performance of a Misva, he does not fulfill the Misva. The classic case of this principle, as the Gemara discusses at length, is that of a person who steals a Lulab in order to fulfill the Misva of Arba Minim on Sukkot. A person who steals for the sake of a Misva does not fulfill the Misva. It is preferable not to perform the Misva at all than to perform the Misva by committing a sin.

One area where people – often unknowingly – try to perform a Misva through committing a sin is the area of Tocheha, criticism and rebuke. People think they do God a favor by condescendingly insulting and denigrating their peers who follow a lower religious standard. But this type of conduct, too, is a "Misva Ha'ba'a Ba'abera" – a Misva facilitated by a sin. Insulting a fellow Jew is forbidden, and it serves only to further distance him or her from Torah observance. This grave transgression cannot possibly be justified as part of the performance of a Misva. It is far preferable to avoid giving Tocheha altogether than to criticize people in an insulting manner.

Just as the money we donate to charity must be pure, so must all the Misvot we perform be pure. We may not steal money to give charity, and we must not violate any Torah command for the sake a Misva. By keeping our Misvot pure we ensure that they will be lovingly accepted by God and bring great merit to ourselves, our families and all Am Yisrael.

### **Rabbi Wein** **NONSENSE**

The famous legend is that while Rome burned to the ground, its emperor Nero entertained himself by fiddling on his violin. The current election campaign in Israel reminds me of that legend. Every nonsensical issue from returning used bottles and pocketing the deposits to the current contempts regarding the appointment, firing and reappointment of avowed leftists as judges for the awarding of the Israel prize in literature fill the media day in and day out.

All of this is occurring against the backdrop of the collapse of Arab states that surround us, the continuing progress of Iran towards nuclear capability and perhaps, most importantly, the challenges of the real domestic issues here in Israel. All of the political parties advance such nonsensical spin and engage in terribly vitriolic and unfair character assassinations of leaders other than the ones they follow.

Jews in major European capitals are being slaughtered simply because they are Jewish. There is no doubt that anti-Semitism in all of its guises – including and perhaps especially, anti-Israel activities and propaganda – is the popular program of the academia and masses of Europe. There is no need any longer for Holocaust denial – the Holocaust is simply irrelevant in today's Jew-hating world.

One could say, and I think there are many who do, that we are reliving the decade of the 1920s when officially backed and intellectually condoned anti-Semitism ruled Europe. The major difference, however, between then and now is the state of Israel. So what the state of Israel will do, if anything, to counteract this plague should be one of the major issues placed before us in this election. Sadly until now, it is completely missing from the rhetoric and discussion.

People are fascinated by nonsense and unimportant matters. To the sports fan there is nothing more important than the success or failure of the team that one is rooting for. Deep down in one's heart, one is well aware that in the long run of history, it really makes little difference which team wins the championship.

The fan is also well aware that one's team's winning or losing the championship cannot materially affect one's status in life, one's family relations and one's ultimate achievements and mission. Yet in spite of all of this knowledge and reality, millions of people the world over are more preoccupied with the relatively nonsensical sports page of the newspaper than with any other contents of that paper.

It is the nonsense of life that fascinates us and holds our attention and imagination. We almost willfully wish to ignore the dangers and challenges that face us and of which we are certainly aware. We concentrate on matters, which at best are very peripheral to our lives, success and future. Election campaigns are aware of this proclivity of ours and as a result we are forced to deal with the vastly unimportant issues raised by the political parties and to ignore the very real issues that should be discussed, debated and clarified. The elephant is

always in the room here in Israel but no one wishes to recognize its presence and effect upon us.

To me, perhaps the most serious issue that exists in our country currently is the fact that there are large numbers and significant sections of Israeli society that do not share the ethos and accept the basic legitimacy of the existence of the state of Israel. The four Arab political parties, which have united to form one electoral bloc, will according to current polls, comprise at least ten percent of the Israeli Knesset after the elections.

The Israeli Arabs have never been integrated into Israeli society. Many if not most of them feel themselves to be Palestinian and not Israeli. Even though very few of them would choose to give up their Israeli citizenship and live under the rule of the Palestinian Authority, their hearts and souls belong more to Abbas than to any Jewish Israeli political leader or head of government.

To me, again, what to do with our own Arab citizens and how to integrate them into Israeli society, while still allowing them complete religious autonomy, is a greater problem than how to deal with the Palestinian Authority. In addition, the splintered but numerous and politically important Charedi public, and all of its various political parties and organizations, appears to also have significant representation in the next Knesset. Yet, in its heart of hearts much of this section of Israeli society views the state as a sinful creation and is a form of exile of Jews amongst Jews.

How to deal with this strange but real condition should be a topic of debate, discussion and policy. Yet aside from the populist demand for army service for Charedim, nary a word is heard from either side of the divide as to how this problem should be tackled. It will take great shocks unfortunately to make us begin to ignore the nonsense and deal with the mortal dangers and challenges that truly beset us

### **Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Gratitude of Labour**

There is an important principle in Judaism, a source of hope and also one of the structuring principles of the Torah. It is the principle that God creates the cure before the disease. Bad things may happen but God has already given us the remedy if we know where to look for it.

So for instance in Chukkat we read of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron and how Moses was told that he

would die in the desert without entering the Promised Land. This is a terrifying encounter with mortality. Yet we read before any of this, we first hear the law of the red heifer, the rite of purification after contact with death. The Torah has placed it here to assure us in advance that we can be purified after any bereavement. Human mortality does not ultimately bar us from being in the presence of Divine immortality.

This is the key to understanding Terumah. Though not all commentators agree, its real significance is that it is God's answer in advance to the sin of the golden calf. In strict chronological terms it is out of place here. It (and Tetzaveh) should have appeared after Ki Tissa, which tells the story of the calf. It is set here before the sin to tell us that the cure existed before the disease, the tikkun before the kilkul, the mending before the fracture, the rectification before the sin.

So to understand Terumah and the phenomenon of the mishkan, the Sanctuary and all that it entailed, we have first to understand what went wrong at the time of the golden calf. Here the Torah is very subtle and gives us, in Ki Tissa, a narrative that can be understood at three quite different levels.

The first and most obvious is that the sin of the golden calf was due to a failure of leadership on the part of Aaron. This is the overwhelming impression we receive on first reading Exodus 32. We sense that Aaron should have resisted the people's clamour. He should have told them to be patient. He should have shown leadership. He did not. When Moses comes down the mountain and asks him what he has done, Aaron replies:

"Do not be angry, my lord. You know how prone these people are to evil. They said to me, 'Make an oracle to lead us, since we do not know what happened to Moses, the man who took us out of Egypt.' So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewellery, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!" (Ex. 32: 22-24).

This is a failure of responsibility. It is also a spectacular act of denial ("I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!").<sup>[1]</sup> So the first reading of the story is of Aaron's failure.

But only the first. A deeper reading suggests that it is about Moses. It was his absence from the camp that created the crisis in the first place. "The people began to realize that Moses was taking a long time to come down from the mountain. They gathered

around Aaron and said to him, 'Make us an oracle to lead us. We have no idea what happened to Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt.'" (Ex. 32: 1).

God told Moses what was happening and said: "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have wrought ruin" (32: 7). The undertone is clear. "Go down," suggests that God was telling Moses that his place was with the people at the foot of the mountain, not with God at the top. "Your people" implies that God was telling Moses that the people were his problem, not God's. He was about to disown them.

Moses urgently prayed to God for forgiveness, then descended. What follows is a whirlwind of action. Moses descends, sees what has happened, breaks the tablets, burns the calf, mixes its ashes with water and makes the people drink, then summons help in punishing the wrongdoers. He has become the leader in the midst of the people, restoring order where a moment before there had been chaos. On this reading the central figure was Moses. He had been the strongest of strong leaders. The result, though, was that when he was not there, the people panicked. That is the downside of strong leadership.

But there then follows a chapter, Exodus 33, that is one of the hardest in the Torah to understand. It begins with God announcing that, though He would send an "angel" or "messenger" to accompany the people on the rest of their journey, He Himself would not be in their midst "because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way." This deeply distresses the people (33: 1-6).

In verses 12-23, Moses challenges God on this verdict. He wants God's presence to go with the people. He asks, "Let me know Your ways" and "Pray let me see Your glory." This is hard to understand. The entire exchange between Moses and God, one of the most intense in the Torah, is no longer about sin and forgiveness. It seems almost to be a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of God. What is its connection with the golden calf?

It is what happens between these two episodes that is the most puzzling of all. The text says that Moses "took his tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, far from the camp" (33: 7). This must surely have been precisely the wrong thing to do. If, as God and the text have implied, the problem had been the distance of Moses as a leader, the single most important thing for him to do now would be to stay in the people's midst, not position himself outside the camp. Moreover, the Torah has just told us that God had said He would not be in the midst of the people –



and this caused the people distress. Moses' decision to do likewise would surely have doubled their distress. Something deep is happening here.

It seems to me that in Exodus 33 Moses is undertaking the most courageous act of his life. He is saying to God: "It is not my distance that is the problem. It is Your distance. The people are terrified of You. They have witnessed Your overwhelming power. They have seen You bring the greatest empire the world has ever known to its knees. They have seen You turn sea into dry land, send down food from heaven and bring water from a rock. When they heard Your voice at Mount Sinai, they came to me to beg me to be an intermediary. They said, 'You speak to us and we will hearken, but let not God speak to us lest we die' (Ex. 20: 16). They made a calf not because they wanted to worship an idol, but because they wanted some symbol of Your presence that was not terrifying. They need You to be close. They need to sense You not in the sky or the summit of the mountain but in the midst of the camp. And even if they cannot see Your face, for no one can do that, at least let them see some visible sign of Your glory."

That, it seems to me, is Moses' request to which this week's parsha is the answer. "Let them make for Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst" (25: 8). This is the first time in the Torah that we hear the verb sh-kh-n, meaning "to dwell," in relation to God. As a noun it means literally, "a neighbour." From this is derived the key word in post-biblical Judaism, Shekhinah, meaning God's immanence as opposed to His transcendence, God-as-One-who-is-close, the daring idea of God as a near neighbour.

In terms of the theology of the Torah, the very idea of a mishkan, a sanctuary or Temple, a physical "home" for "God's glory," is deeply paradoxical. God is beyond space. As King Solomon said at the inauguration of the first Temple, "Behold the heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot encompass You, how much less this house?" Or as Isaiah said in God's name: "The heavens are My throne and the earth My foot-stool. What house shall you build for Me, where can My resting place be?"

The answer, as the Jewish mystics emphasized, is that God does not live in a building but rather in the hearts of the builders: "Let them make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them" (Ex. 25: 8) – "among them," not "in it." How, though, does this happen? What human act causes the Divine presence to live within the camp, the community? The answer is the name of our parsha, Terumah, meaning, a gift, a contribution.

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying 'Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from everyone whose heart moves them to give.'" This would prove to be the turning point in Jewish history.

Until that moment the Israelites had been recipients of God's miracles and deliverances. He had taken them from slavery to freedom and performed miracles for them. There was only one thing God had not yet done, namely, give the Israelites the chance of giving back something to God. The very idea sounds absurd. How can we, God's creations, give back to the God who made us? All we have is His. As David said, at the gathering he convened at the end of his life to initiate the building the Temple:

Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things ... Who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. (I Chronicles 29: 12, 14)

That ultimately is the logic of the mishkan. God's greatest gift to us is the ability to give to Him. From a Judaic perspective the idea is fraught with risk. The idea that God might be in need of gifts is close to paganism and heresy. Yet, knowing the risk, God allowed Himself to be persuaded by Moses to cause His spirit to rest within the camp and allow the Israelites to give something back to God.

At the heart of the idea of the sanctuary is what Lewis Hyde beautifully described as the labour of gratitude. His classic study, *The Gift*,<sup>[2]</sup> looks at the role of the giving and receiving of gifts, for example, at critical moments of transition. He quotes the Talmudic story of a man whose daughter was about to get married, but who had been told that she would not survive to the end of the day. The next morning the man visited his daughter and saw that she was still alive. Unknown to both of them, when she hung up her hat after the wedding, its pin pierced a serpent that would otherwise have bitten and killed her. The father wanted to know what his daughter had done that merited this divine intervention. She answered, "A poor man came to the door yesterday. Everyone was so busy with the wedding preparations that they did not have time to deal with him. So I took the portion that had been intended for me and gave it to him." It was this act of generosity that was the cause of her miraculous deliverance.<sup>[3]</sup>

The construction of the sanctuary was fundamentally important because it gave the Israelites the chance to

give back to God. Later Jewish law recognised that giving is an integral part of human dignity when they made the remarkable ruling that even a poor person completely dependent on charity is still obliged to give charity.[4] To be in a situation where you can only receive, not give, is to lack human dignity.

The mishkan became the home of the Divine presence because God specified that it be built only out of voluntary contributions. Giving creates a gracious society by enabling each of us to make our contribution to the public good. That is why the building of the sanctuary was the cure for the sin of the golden calf. A people that only received but could not give was trapped in dependency and lack of self-respect. God allowed the people to come close to Him, and He to them, by giving them the chance to give.

That is why a society based on rights not responsibilities, on what we claim from, not what we give to others, will always eventually go wrong. It is why the most important gift a parent can give a child is the chance to give back. The etymology of the word Terumah hints at this. It means, not simply a contribution, but literally something "raised up." When we give, it is not just our contribution but we who are raised up. We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give.

[1] In Deuteronomy 9: 20, Moses discloses a fact which has been kept from us until that point: "God also expressed great anger toward Aaron, threatening to destroy him, so, at that time, I also prayed for Aaron."

[2] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006.

[3] Shabbat 156b.

[4] Maimonides Hilkhos Shekalim 1: 1, Mattenot Ani'im 7: 5

## AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"When Adar enters Joy is increased."

In order to increase our simcha and pleasure in life we must examine the joys that are already in our possession. The gift of being able to see all of the wonderful and splendid creations which Hashem created just for our enjoyment. "And Elokim said Let there be Light...and it was Good" (Beresheet 1:3)

The question is posed that since Hashem made the light than certainly it is 'Good', so why is Hashem telling us that the Light is 'Good'? Because He wants us to see and realize how good this gift of

light is that He is giving us. Like a father who loves his child, when he brings him a new bicycle he wants his child to get maximum enjoyment. Therefore the father tells his child how excellent the bicycle is and how much he will enjoy it.

To see, in full color, the blue sky, yellow sun, red apples, golden oranges, the kind face of your mother, father, wife, husband, child, colorful flowers, blue sea, starry sky, birds, animals... This is a tremendous Joy in life.

Other pleasures include eating/tasting, walking, sleeping, thinking, clothing, living in a free country, breathing, speaking, hearing, teeth, water, heartbeat, life, being Jewish, Torah....

And now that we are focusing on some of the Gifts that we possess, we can smile (all day) and realize how wealthy we are right now. This is simcha/happiness, to be aware of our possessions.

Once a man received a phone call late at night. The caller told him that he was the previous owner of the home and that there was a bag of diamonds hidden under the basement floor. The man rushed downstairs and broke up his floor to find the diamonds. The truth is that the diamonds were always on his property and the treasure was already his, but he didn't know it.

It is the Awareness of our wealth that makes us rich. We are wealthy! Sometimes we just don't know it.

"Happiness is a state of mind. You cannot buy it in any store or find it on a vacation.

Happiness is in the mind. And it is peace of mind that is the only true happiness in this world.

When a man has nothing to worry about and his mind is completely at rest, that is the ultimate form of Happiness in this world/Olam Haze'.

An idealist cannot have peace of mind unless he is making progress in learning Torah.

Unless he is able to perform more Mitzvot.

Unless he can have more children to bring up in the ways of the Torah.

Accomplishments are necessary for obtaining peace of mind.

Happiness is accomplishing something worthwhile.

This is wealth that lasts forever."