

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

TERUMAH

FEBRUARY 1, 2013

1 ADAR I 5774

Rosh Hodesh Adar 1

DEDICATIONS: Refuah Shelemah for Rivka bat Esther
And in memory of Rebbetzin Esther Neumann

Please note: Areyat – Sheloshim for Joe R Bibi – Wed, Feb 12 3PM to 6PM – Ahi Ezer Ocean Pkwy and Ave S

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 4:54 p.m. Mincha at 4:55
SHABBAT 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:56AM
Derasha by Rav Aharon

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30
Ages 0-5 - in the Playroom
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library
Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!

KIDDUSH: Would anyone like to sponsor?

Mincha follows Kiddush with amidah not before 12:34 PM

Shabbat Ends – 5:54PM
Return for Arbit – 6:10 PM

Kid's Movie Night follows at 6:45
Pizza and Fun!

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

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

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai – 7PM –

Daily class with Rabbi Colish at 6:30AM

Please join us for the next movie night sponsored by the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach and Lido Synagogue. **Yellow Asphalt** will be shown at the Lido Synagogue on Saturday evening, February 1st at 7:30. Refreshments and discussion to follow. Suggested donation: \$5

Yellow Asphalt ([Hebrew](#): אספלט צהוב, *Asfalt Tzahov*) is an [Israeli](#) movie depicting [Jahalin Bedouins](#) and their way of life, specifically their conflict with Israeli [Jews](#). The film is a pastiche of three short stories depicted sequentially:

- *Black spot* ([Moshe Ivgi](#), [Zevik Raz](#)) - about an Israeli tanker crew which runs over a Bedouin boy
- *Here is not there* ([Tatjana Blacher](#), [Abed Zuabi](#)) - about the doomed love of a German woman and her Bedouin husband
- *Red roofs* ([Raida Adon](#), [Sami Samir](#), [Motti Katz](#)) - about a love affair / physical relationship of an Israeli Jewish farmer and his Bedouin maid

The stories are shot on location in the [Judean desert](#), and casts members of the [Jahalin Bedouin](#) tribe in acting roles. The three shorts are woven together by the presence of the same village elders in all the films, who happen to be actual members of the Jahalin Bedouin. The movie was released with [Hebrew](#) and [Arabic](#) audio tracks. The shorts are based on true events, and the director actually lived with the Bedouin tribe for some time before making the movie, learning their view of things portrayed in the movie. The entire movie took seven years to create. The movie tries to portray the [clash of civilizations](#) between the Bedouins and Israeli Jews in a non-judgmental manner.

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 5PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

If anyone can join us for Minyan – give us 22 minutes and we'll give you the world to come – we would appreciate it. Beginning Monday and then through the first week in March when we change the clock we will be moving tefilah to 5PM in order to say mincha and arbit. As a couple of regulars cant join us we would appreciate any help from the outside. If you have friends or relatives who work or live by 59th and 3rd, please pass the word. THANKS

Editors Notes

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

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.” (Shemot 25:2)

When the Jewish nation left Egypt at the time of the Exodus, they left with great wealth, which the Egyptians themselves gave them. Later, at the splitting of the Red Sea, great wealth from the dead Egyptians washed ashore. This wealth was even greater than what they had taken from the Egyptians earlier.

The Hatam Sofer (quoted by Rabbi D. Staum) notes that there was a significant difference in the interest the Jews displayed when collecting the wealth at the time of the Exodus and the eagerness with which they gathered the wealth at the Red Sea. In Egypt, Moshe Rabenu implored the nation to ask for and accept the wealth of the Egyptians. At that time the Jews were happy just to be leaving alive; they were not focused on wealth.

At the sea, however, they were already removed from a slave mentality and viewed the wealth differently. In that case Moshe Rabenu had to coax them away from the spoils that were continuously washing ashore.

Whereas the wealth of Egypt was granted to them even though they were not searching for it, at the sea they were excited about the wealth and scooped it up eagerly.

The Hatam Sofer asserts that from the spoils of Egypt they constructed the Mishkan, the resting place of the Shechinah (Hashem's Presence), whereas from the spoils of the sea they contributed to

the construction of the golden calf. King Solomon in Mishlei (20:21) says, “If an inheritance is seized hastily in the beginning, its end will not be blessed.” That is essentially what occurred at the edge of the sea. They grabbed at the wealth with gusto, and the end result of that acquisition of wealth was disaster.

This idea is relevant to us living in the affluent society of the West. We see around us an insatiable desire to accumulate more and more – pleasures, money, vacations, aesthetics, and so on. Amassing the pleasures and luxuries of life drains our ability to seek more from other more important areas of life. The motivation for our pursuits plays a vital and clear role in the outcome of our efforts. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

Our sages were able to derive beautiful and practical lessons from the Mishkan and the utensils therein. The Hatam Sofer quotes his Rabbi, R' Nosson Adler who said that the Aron (Ark) symbolizes Torah study in this world. The Luhot (Tablets) it contained represented Torah, the Cherubim symbolized its students and the poles (badim) which were used to carry the Aron symbolized its supporters.

Let us develop this analogy further. The two Cherubim faced each other, underscoring the respect scholars afforded each other. At the same time, the Cherubim's faces were directed toward the Cover of the Aron containing the Tablets. This suggests that whatever differences may arise in scholars' interpretations of the Torah, those differences are based on each scholar's genuine attempt to interpret the Torah, as contained in the Tablets behind the Cover.

The poles of the Ark symbolize the supporters of the Torah, those who provide the financial wherewithal for the Torah's students. It is particularly significant that the poles were not functional. They remained in a stationary position, attached to the Aron even when it was resting. This teaches us that those who perceive that they are upholding the Torah are in reality being upheld by it. The poles did not support the Aron; the Aron upheld the poles. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR Spiritual Currency

Parashat Teruma begins with the command, “Ve'yikhu Li Teruma,” instructing Beneh Yisrael to donate materials for the construction of the Mishkan. Curiously, rather than commanding Beneh Yisrael to “give” or “donate” materials, G-d commands them to “take a donation.” And the question is obvious: how does one “take” a donation? Why did Hashem formulate the command in this fashion?

David Ha'melech famously proclaims in Tehillim (49:18), "Ki Lo Be'moto Yikah Ha'kol" – a person does not bring any of his material assets with him to the next world. In Jewish tradition, a dead body is buried in plain, simple shrouds with no pockets, emphasizing the point that no matter how much wealth a person accumulates in this world, he takes none of it with him to the next world. He leaves this world empty-handed. The currency in this world, whether it's the U.S. dollar, the Euro, or the Israeli shekel, has no value whatsoever in the next world.

The only thing a person takes with him in his spiritual currency – his Torah and Misvot. This cannot be seen, but it – and only it – accompanies a person on his final journey to the next world, where it has enormous value.

A king once asked Baron Rothschild how much he was worth. Rothschild gave a number that was around one-tenth of his true worth.

"What?!" the king exclaimed. "You're trying to fool me? I know you're worth at least ten times that!"

"No," the Baron replied. "You asked me what I am worth, not what my property is worth. True, my assets are worth ten times as much as what I said, but that is not my worth. All that can be taken away from me in an instant. My worth is only the charity I have given. Those are the only assets that can never be taken away from me."

People bring their money to the bank for safekeeping. Rather than risk losing the cash, they deposit it in their bank account so it will be secure and they can access it later. This is what we are doing every time we give charity. We are depositing our money in the safest savings account imaginable. It is ensured not by the FDIC, but by the Almighty Himself. The Rabbi or collector to whom we give the donation is the like the teller. When we give money to the bank teller, we know we are not really giving it to him or her; the teller is just transferring the funds for us into our account. Similarly, the money we give to charity, every penny of it, is deposited straight into our heavenly account.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) once asked, "If there are ten birds on a rooftop, and we shoot two of them, how many remain on the roof?"

Naturally, his audience replied that eight birds remain on the roof.

The Rabbi noted that this is incorrect. The moment the shots are fired, all the other birds fly away. The only birds that remain on the roof are the dead ones.

He proceeded to explain that this is true of money, as well. Whatever money we have can so easily "fly away." It is said that money has wings, and we have seen this happen many times. People can go to sleep wealthy and wake up poor if their assets devalue overnight. Ironically, the only assets that we really keep, that stay on the roof, are the "dead" ones – the assets we donate to charitable causes. These are secure and guaranteed to remain with us for all eternity.

In this vein, the Ben Ish Hai explained the otherwise peculiar expression, "Ve'yikhu Li Teruma." When one makes a charitable donation, when one contributes toward the "Mishkan," he is receiving, not giving. He is depositing those funds in his own account in the most secure and profitable "savings plan" possible, and earning greater dividends than any other investment could ever yield.

Rabbi Wein

There was a long and critical article that appeared this past week in one of the Hebrew newspapers here in Israel concerning the role of rabbis in society. There is no question that the role of most rabbis in the United States is far different than what is currently the case in Israeli society.

In the United States the rabbi is a far more personal figure. He is a teacher, speaker and confidant. He is also expected to be somewhat of a social worker, psychologist and counselor. His main task is to care for his flock, which in most cases is limited to his immediate congregation and in certain instances does expand to include the entire Jewish community where he is located.

He also has important executive and administrative duties as well as being a fundraiser. This is certainly not the classical job description of rabbis over the past centuries in Europe, the Levant and early American Jewry. While holy men and kabbalists abounded over all of these centuries, those rabbis were not expected to be a dispenser of blessings, an advisor as to business matters or a political guru.

His realm of expertise was limited to studying and teaching Torah, writing books, debating halachic issues and being a role model in his community. This type of rabbi in the main did not take hold in American soil. In America the congregational rabbi described earlier in this paragraph came into being

and to a great extent still exists today in American Jewish life.

It is interesting, if not even distressing, to note that there is a great disconnect between the yeshiva education given to potential rabbis in the United States and the real skills needed when they actually enter the field. This disconnect has caused many personal and communal difficulties and disappointments.

In Israel, in most cases, the congregational rabbi as he exists in the United States is absent here. There are neighborhood rabbis, city rabbis, court judge rabbis, chief rabbis, army rabbis, but almost all of them have very little contact with the people or society that they are meant to serve. In Israel the matter is further complicated by the fact that the community that they are meant to serve is not a homogeneous one.

The congregational rabbi in the Diaspora may have a diversity of people in his congregation but basically he is serving a particular section of the Jewish society. Here in Israel the rabbi is serving a society that is at one and the same time secular and religious, believing and denying and of a very different social and economic strata.

The concept of a congregational rabbi has made some headway here in Israel over the past few years, especially in areas that have absorbed immigrants from English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, the great disconnect between the Israeli rabbinate and the Israeli public is felt in all areas of Israeli life and is a vexing and disturbing issue.

In Israel certainly, again with relatively few exceptions, the disconnect between the yeshiva education, the formal exams given for rabbinic ordination and the entire mindset of the educational system with the general society, is glaring and troublesome. Israel needs rabbis desperately but also desperately needs rabbis that can somehow connect to the average Israeli without a demeaning attitude and an always critical eye.

In both the United States and Israel the Hasidic rebbe and the rosh yeshiva have both supplanted the roles and authority traditionally ascribed to the rabbi. But these positions have currently expanded so that the rebbe and the rosh yeshiva are not only rabbis but are savants as well. All personal, domestic, social and economic questions are addressed to them for divinely inspired answers.

They are all active in politics with all of the baggage that that brings with it. They are somehow to be invested with prophetic powers that can decide life-and-death issues for individuals, institutions and for the State of Israel itself. Over the last few decades this has been shown to be a very slippery slope that bordered on dangerous consequences for many.

Great caution should be exercised in appealing to those who proclaim themselves to be all-knowing. Great and wise men should certainly be consulted on issues of importance, and their opinions, if rendered, should be taken into consideration. Nevertheless in the long run of life it is only we that are responsible for our actions and for our behavior and policies.

Both rabbis and savants need to be connected to and part of the general society in order to be effective and productive. All of Jewish history bears out this contention. One would hope to see progress in narrowing the disconnects and enhancing the roles of rabbis and savants as well.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

The sequence of parshiyot, Terumah, Tetzaveh, Ki Tissa, Vayakhel and Pekudei, is puzzling in many ways. First, it outlines the construction of the Tabernacle, the portable house of worship the Israelites built and carried with them through the desert, in exhaustive and exhausting detail. The narrative takes almost the whole of the last third of the book of Exodus. Why so long? Why such detail? The Tabernacle was, after all, only a temporary home for the Divine presence, eventually superseded by the Temple in Jerusalem.

Besides which, why is the making of the Mishkan in the book of Exodus at all? Its natural place seems to be in the book of Vayikra, Leviticus, which is overwhelmingly devoted to an account of the service of the Mishkan and the sacrifices that were offered there. The book of Exodus, by contrast, could be subtitled, "the birth of a nation." It is about the transition of the Israelites from a family to a people and their journey from slavery to freedom. It rises to a climax with the covenant made between God and the people at Mount Sinai. What has the Tabernacle to do with this? It seems an odd way to end the book.

The answer, it seems to me, is profound. First, recall the history of the Israelites until now. It has been a long series of complaints. They complained when the first intervention of Moses made their situation worse. Then, at the Red Sea, they said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done

to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Ex. 14: 11-12).

After crossing the sea they continued to complain, first about the lack of water, then that the water was bitter, then at the lack of food, then about the lack of water again. Then, within weeks of the revelation at Sinai – the only time in history God appeared to an entire nation – they made a golden calf. If an unprecedented sequence of miracles cannot bring about a mature response on the part of the people, what will?

It is then that God said: Let them build something together. This simple command transformed the Israelites. During the whole construction of the tabernacle there were no complaints. The people contributed, some gold, some silver, some bronze, some brought skins and drapes, others gave their time and skill. They gave so much that Moses had to order them to stop. A remarkable proposition is being framed: It is not what God does for us that transforms us. It is what we do for God.

So long as every crisis was dealt with by Moses and miracles, the Israelites remained in a state of dependency. Their default response was complaint. For them to grow to adulthood and responsibility, there had to be a transition from passive recipients of God's blessings to active creators. The people had to become God's "partners in the work of creation."^[1] That, I believe, is what the sages meant when they said, "Call them not 'your children' but 'your builders.'"^[2] People have to become builders if they are to grow from childhood to adulthood.

Judaism is God's call to responsibility. He does not want us to rely on miracles. He does not want us to be dependent on others. He wants us to become His partners, recognising that what we have, we have from Him, but what we make of what we have is up to us, our choices and our effort. This is not an easy balance to achieve. It is easy to live a life of dependency. It is equally easy in the opposite direction to slip into the mistake of saying "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (Deut. 8: 17). The Jewish view of the human condition is that everything we achieve is due to our own efforts, but equally and essentially the result of God's blessing.

The building of the Tabernacle was the first great project the Israelites undertook together. It involved their generosity and skill. It gave them the chance to

give back to God a little of what He had given them. It conferred on them the dignity of labour and creative endeavour. It brought to closure their birth as a nation and it symbolised the challenge of the future. The society they were summoned to create in the land of Israel would be one in which everyone would play their part. It was to become – in the phrase I used as the title of one of my books – "the home we build together."

From this we see that one of the greatest challenges of leadership is to give people the chance to give, to contribute, to participate. That requires self-restraint, *tzimtzum*, on the part of the leader, creating the space for others to lead. As the saying goes: "When there is a good leader, the people say: The leader did it. When there is a great leader, the people say: We did it ourselves."^[3]

This brings us to the fundamental distinction in politics between State and Society. The state represents what is done for us by the machinery of government, through the instrumentality of laws, courts, taxation and public spending. Society is what we do for one another through communities, voluntary associations, charities and welfare organisations. Judaism, I believe, has a marked preference for society rather than state, precisely because it recognises – it is the central theme of the book of Exodus – that it is what we do for others, not what others or God does for us, that transforms us. The Jewish formula, I believe, is: small state, big society.

The person who had the deepest insight into the nature of democratic society was Alexis de Tocqueville. Visiting America in the 1830s he saw that its strength lay in what he called the "art of association," the tendency of Americans to come together in communities and voluntary groups to help one another, rather than leaving the task to a centralised government. Were it ever to be otherwise, were individuals to depend wholly on the state, then democratic freedom would be at risk.

In one of the most haunting passages of his masterwork, *Democracy in America*, he says that democracies are at risk of a completely new form of oppression for which there is no precedent in the past. It will happen, he says, when people exist solely in and for themselves, leaving the pursuit of the common good to the government. This would then be what life would be like:

Above this race of men stands an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications and to watch over their fate.

That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seeks, on the contrary, to keep them in perpetual childhood: it is well content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property, and subdivides their inheritances: what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?[4]

Tocqueville wrote these words in the 1830s, and there is a risk that this is what some European societies are becoming like today: all state, no society; all government, little or no community.[5] Tocqueville was not a religious writer. He makes no reference to the Hebrew Bible. But the fear he has is precisely what the book of Exodus documents. When a central power – even when this is God Himself – does everything on behalf of the people, they remain in a state of arrested development. They complain instead of acting. They give way easily to despair. When the leader, in this case Moses, is missing, they do foolish things, none more so than making a golden calf.

There is only one solution: to make the people co-architects of their own destiny, to get them to build something together, to shape them into a team and show them that they are not helpless, that they are responsible and capable of collaborative action. Genesis begins with God creating the universe as a home for human beings. Exodus ends with human beings creating the Mishkan, as a 'home' for God.

Hence the basic principle of Judaism, that we are called on to become co-creators with God. And hence too the corollary: that leaders do not do the work on behalf of the people. They teach people how to do the work themselves. It is not what God does for us but what we do for God that allows us to reach dignity and responsibility.

[1] Shabbat 10a.

[2] Berakhot 64a.

[3] Attributed to Lao-Tsu.

[4] Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged and with an introduction by Thomas Bender, The Modern Library, New York, 1981, 584.

[5] This is not to imply that there is no role for governments; that all should be left to voluntary

associations. Far from it. There are things – from the rule of law to the defence of the realm to the enforcement of ethical standards and the creation of an equitable distribution of the goods necessary for a dignified existence – that only governments can achieve. The issue is balance.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z"TL

“And they shall make for Me a Mikdash, and I shall dwell in their midst.” (25:8)

The subject of the building of the Sanctuary occupies more space in the Torah than any other matter. It is described repeatedly in all of its minute details and yet the Mishkan did not continue for more than 39 years in its present form. And so, why does the Torah devote so much space to a passing phase of history which lasted such a short time?

The purpose of the Mishkan is clearly stated “And I shall dwell...And they shall know that I am Hashem their G-d that took them forth from the land of Egypt so that I dwell in their midst.” The Mishkan was the means of imparting the True Knowledge, ‘Daat Hashem’, Sensory Perception. These are the vehicles we use to gain the objective of life, ‘Yirat Hashem’ which is Awareness of Hashem’s presence, greatness/power and kindness which fill the world. “His greatness (gudlo) and His goodness (tuvo) fills the world.”

When the Jews in the desert would see Moshe’s tent they would point and say “Moshe Rabenu lives right there.” And when they saw Aharon’s tent they showed their children “ Aharon Hacoheh lives over there.” When they passed by the Mishkan they all said “Hashem lives there!”

By gaining this ‘Emunah Chusheet’, Sensory Perception of Hashem, they achieved the highest level of perfection and became the Greatest Generation of all time, ‘Dor Deah’.

We have the opportunity to gain this Awareness in our prayers 3 times each day.

When we say “You” (Hashem) about 100 times in the Amidah, paint the picture in your mind that you are standing in front of The King of Kings, your Father who loves you and can do everything for you.