

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

KI TISA/PARAH

Haftarah: Yehezkel 36:16-38

MARCH 18, 2017 20 ADAR 5777

DEDICATION: To Charlie at Whiz Travel – THANKS – You are the BEST!

To subscribe or to unsubscribe, please reply to
ShabbatShalomNewsletter@gmail.com
 Newsletter archives now at BenaiAsher.Org

Shabbat Shalom From Cyberspace E Mail Edition is published each week since 1995 and is distributed to 20,000 readers. Our goal is to spread torah knowledge. Articles are downloaded from sites and from e-mail forwarded to us. We encourage you to reprint the newsletter and distribute it to co-workers, friends and family. You can retransmit copies by fax, mail or by hand. Be a part of the Mitzvah of spreading torah. It takes so little to make copies and distribute them. And with E Mail it just takes a click to send this along. To subscribe directly or have us send to a friend or family member, click the link or send a request to SephardicCongregation@gmail.com with your name, phone, fax and E-Mail Address

Daily Minyan MINCHA - Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame – 4:00PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100 – Mincha– The most important tefilah of the day –Give us 11 minutes and we'll give you the World To Come!

Editors Notes**Fake News ... What about Fake Weather**

Wouldn't you like to be a weatherman?
 What happened to 18" Central park 3.7" and its raining as of 10AM.
 Do you think it's a conspiracy of the media which gets us to tune in to TV, radio, and websites and rack up the advertising revenue?
 Maybe the supermarket chains, Home Depot and Lowes which sold out of food, shovels and salt yesterday pay them off?
 Or maybe it's the Teachers Unions looking for an extra day off?
 Perhaps it's the Russians and the Chinese, because closing down the Northeast for just one day has a multibillion dollar effect on our economy in lost productivity. Yes, really!
 Or maybe Hashem just wanted people to spend a day with their kids!

True Leadership – Ki Tissa 5777

At the center of this week's portion of Ki Tissa is the worship of the Golden Calf, but I believe more important than the sin is the lesson of Divine Mercy as an answer for our propensity to sin. We are taught the thirteen attributes of Hashem which we repeat whenever we beseech the Al-Mighty for compassion and forgiveness in the face of our transgressions. And we hear the words which man always longs to hear, Salachti KidVarecha – I have forgiven according to your request.

King Solomon writes in Proverbs that a righteous man can fall seven times and still rise up. We say modeh veovev, admit and leave your sin, yerucham – and Hashem will grant forgiveness.

With this in mind, one must be puzzled by the Haftara which we read on Shabbat Zachor. The prophet Samuel conveys to King Saul, Hashem's command to wage battle against the Amalekites, and to leave no survivors--neither human nor beast. Saul mobilizes the Israelite military and attacks Amalek. They kill the entire population with the exception of the king, Agag, and they also spare the best of the cattle and sheep.

Hashem reveals Himself to Samuel. "I regret that I have made Saul king," G-d says. "For he has turned back from following Me, and he has not fulfilled My words."

The next morning Samuel travels to Saul and confronts him. Saul does not even know that he has done anything wrong. The verse writes, and Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "May you be blessed of the L-rd; I have fulfilled the word of the L-rd."

When Samuel pressed Saul on the sound of the sheep in the distance and Saul's failure to comply with Hashem's command, Saul defends himself, saying that the cattle were spared to be used as sacrificial offerings for G-d. Samuel explains that this was wrong. Saul admits his wrongdoing with the words "Hatati – I have sinned, for I transgressed the L-rd's words, for I feared the people and I hearkened to their voice."

Saul invites the prophet to join him on his return home. Samuel refuses his offer. "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you, today; and has given it to your fellow who is better than you." Again Saul admits his sin begging Samuel to accompany him so that the King can pray to Hashem. Agag is executed. Most likely the animals were killed. Apparently Saul has within 24 hours not only admitted his sin, not only has he regretted and promised to do better, he has fixed his sin.

The chapter closes by telling us that Samuel did not return to Saul again. The door was closed and forgiveness was not to come.

And the question is why? We know that Saul was "exceptional and fine; there was no one in Israel finer than him; from his shoulders and up, he stood taller than the rest." These words teach of his humility and greatness. The rabbis suggest that until this point he never sinned. And what of the rest of his life?

The end is near and King Saul is on the verge of going to war to defend Israel from the Philistines, but before doing so wants to know whether he will be successful. Since Samuel had died already, Saul secretly goes to a witch to temporarily bring Samuel back from the dead. Saul sees the image of Samuel and hears the voice of the prophet which closes by explaining, "And the L-rd will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines; and tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me." Rashi comments on "with me" as being in my abode. The Rabbis explain that Samuel resides in the highest levels of Heaven and Saul is promised that he too will reside there indicating his greatness is matched by few others.

All this simply compounds and complicates the question. Saul is certainly a saint so why did Hashem refuse to forgive him? In fact why did he not even give Saul a chance at forgiveness?

I believe the answer can be found in this week's portion with Moses, our first and ultimate leader. After the Sin, when Hashem told him that He would destroy the Jewish people because of the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe responds: "If You would, forgive their sin. And if not, please obliterate me from the book You have written."

By making this statement, Moshe offered to sacrifice more than his life; he was willing to give up even his soul. "The book You have written" refers to the entire Torah. The rabbis say that each letter represents a soul of each of the children of Israel who left Egypt. Having your name erased means having your soul erased. Furthermore Moshe is identified with the Torah and he dedicated his soul for it, still he was, nevertheless, willing to sacrifice his connection with the Torah for the sake of Jewish people.

Rabbi Abittan always explained that leadership involves self-sacrifice to the point of eliminating self-concern entirely. A true leader identifies totally with his people and their purpose, and is willing to give up everything for them. Moses exemplified this type of leadership.

Moses was the most humble of all people yet when we come down to it, he allows everything to fall on his shoulders never yielding to the blame game.

Hashem offered to make a new nation from Moses, but Moses refused to throw the people under the bus no matter their guilt.

I believe that in understanding Moses' greatness, we can understand Saul's failure.

When confronted with the sound of bleating sheep, Saul responds that it was they (the people) who brought them (the cattle and sheep) and had pity on them. It's the proverbial, "I'm sorry, BUT ..."

And the answer lies in prophet's response: "And Samuel said, "Although you are small (humble) in your own eyes, are you not the head of the tribes of Israel?"

Apparently Saul only listened to the people out of his own humility rather than any nefarious reason. Although his humility may have been second to only Moses, and although he was completely righteous, he failed in the most important of leadership qualities. A leader must lead. Saul instead appeared to lead but in reality followed his people.

This advice is crucial is to relates all leaders today, especially the rabbinate. Too many are so afraid of their congregants and benefactors that they either lead by poll rather than lead by that which is right or lead with self-preservation most important in their mind.

The Talmud tells us than in the generation before Mashiach, the face of the generation will be like the face of a dog. What does the Talmud mean?

A dog walks in front of its master; the dog appears to lead, yet at each fork and corner, the dog always looks back to see where its master wants it to go. In the same way too many leaders of this generation lack conviction and direction. When pressed instead of doing what's right, they look back to see which way political convenience and convention wants them to go. And when pressed, instead of protecting their flock, they act in self-preservation; they throw anyone under the bus.

Too many synagogues look to hire rabbis they can "control" instead of the true leaders we need. We must sacrifice our desire for control and avoid leaders who not only look back for direction, because we will end up with those who look ahead primarily to protect themselves and their paychecks. We need leaders who are bound only to Heaven and set their sights only upward for direction.

Shabbat Shalom, David Bibi

Brooklyn Kosher Pizza Battle - The Pie Michelle Honig & Nikki Casey – The Forward

There's a kosher pizza war brewing in the heart of Hasidic Brooklyn — and a Jewish religious court has laid down a Solomonic decision about how the pie is going to be sliced.

Basil Pizza & Wine Bar is an established gourmet spot on Kingston Avenue, the main drag in the Crown Heights neighborhood. Enter Calabria, which opened its doors the first week in March — directly across the street.

Before the rival eatery even served its first slice, Basil co-owner Danny Branover sued last month in the local Beit Din, or rabbinical court.

He cited the Jewish law of Hasagat Gevul, which literally means “infringement of boundary,” and is often used to prevent unfair competition or business practices. In this, traditional Jewish law runs counter-cultural to American capitalism. Not only is unbridled competition a no-no, but the businessmen agreed to follow a rabbinic ruling that, in truth, has no legal standing in secular society.

Basil contended that Calabria's pizza was, like theirs, “specialty” pizza, and therefore would interfere with Basil's livelihood. Calabria contended that its “Roman-style” pizza (a thick, hearty rectangular pizza that's baked in an oil-rubbed pan) is totally different from Basil's thin-crust Neopolitan-style pie.

The rabbinical court mostly sided with Basil, ruling that Calabria could not sell specialty pizza without unfairly competing. It did say in the decision, issued in Hebrew and the ancient Aramaic language, that Calabria could sell regular (New York-style) pizza.

Both sides promptly claimed victory — and it remains to be seen which spot will win out with customers.

Calabria says it will abide by the rabbis' decision and changed its pizza. It has redefined its establishment as one that offers “New York-style pizza,” according to the restaurant's web site.

“We made sure to differentiate ourselves in every aspect, and everyone who comes into the store can see it right away,” Shemi Harel said. “It's not like any other pizzeria, any other restaurant in the neighborhood. We try to do a simple New York-style pizza.”

He said he wants to put the conflict behind him. “We've got a lot of support and the people of Crown Heights are behind us. We're just trying to make people happy and do a good pizza place,” he said.

Basil says it never wanted to put its rival out of business — and simply asked for its neighbor to play fairly according to Jewish law.

“There's no American law that says you can't open a pizzeria next door,” said Basil co-owner Clara Perez, who is

not Jewish. “But my partner (Danny Branover) said that in their Torah they're not allowed to do that.”

The complicated decision may shape the commercial fortunes of a business strip in central Brooklyn. But it also has its roots in centuries of Jewish religious and cultural practices.

The law of Hasagat Gevul, like nearly everything in the Talmud, is vigorously debated. Some believe that competition is good, as long as the existence of a business does not prevent or impede people from patronizing the original store. Others take a more stringent position and rule that businesses that are too similar cannot co-exist in the same area.

Dani Klein, founder of YeahThatsKosher.com, a website that covers kosher travel and restaurants, said the strict interpretation might end up hurting everybody in a Jewish neighborhood like Crown Heights, which is fast becoming a kosher foodie destination.

“No business wants competition at their doorstep, but this is America, where competition is what makes businesses and industries thrive,” Klein said. “There are many communities that can't afford to have too many kosher restaurants, because the community isn't large enough to support it. But Brooklyn is not that area.”

The Beit Din is less a court of law and more of a means of arbitration between litigants. If a defendant refuses to accept the Beit Din's jurisdiction, the rabbis of the Beit Din cannot compel the defendant to obey.

They may prevent the defendant from getting a hashgacha (kosher certification) from the local certification agency, but there are multiple kosher certification groups — or Vaads — and independent rabbis who give certification in the New York area, which the defendant could easily obtain. Refusing to go to Beit Din may not give the eatery a good name in the community — and it may lose some of the more religious clientele — but if it's located in a populous area such as Brooklyn or Manhattan, that may not matter.

In Crown Heights, things seem to have settled down to an uneasy truce for the time being. With Calabria's changes, the new restaurant has secured kosher certification and has opened its doors.

In other words, the rabbinical court battle is over, but the competition will continue to be waged in the court of popular opinion.

And may the best pie win the battle of Kingston Avenue.

Summary of the Perasha Ki Tisa- The sin of the egel. Forgiveness and The 2nd Luchot

1- Mahasit hashekel. The Kiyor. The anointing oil. Parashat Ha'ketoret. Bezalel is designated to make the

kelim. Shabbat.

- 2- The sin of the egl. The sinners are punished. Moshe prays for forgiveness (Moshe's 2nd 40 days on har Sinai). Hashem says he will only send an angel to be with Benei Israel.
- 3- Moshe requests that Hashem be with Benei Israel directly instead of an angel. Hashem agrees
- 4- Moshe asks Hashem hereniy nah et kevodecha ("show me your glory")
- 5- Moshe's 3rd 40 days on Har Sinai. Hashem tells Moshe to make a 2nd set of luchot. Hashem shows Moshe the 13 midot.
- 6- Hashem establishes a brit with us. The parsha goes on to repeat certain mitsvot from Parashat Mishpatim (Holidays, Pidyon, Bikurim).
- 7- Moshe comes down with the 2nd luchot. Moshe teaches the torah Benei Israel.

FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE

"I have endowed the heart of every wise-hearted person with wisdom" (Shemot 31:6)

Hashem appointed Besalel and Aholiab to make the Mishkan and to use all those with wisdom in their hearts to assist them. If we think about it, these people had just been enslaved for many years in Egypt doing menial work. Where did anyone have experience or background to be able to create the magnificent utensils of the Mishkan?

The answer is that Hashem gave wisdom to the "wise at heart." The one who wanted to use his heart to serve Hashem was given wisdom for G-d, Who is the Source of all knowledge. This is a lesson for us. We don't have to know everything to serve Hashem; we have to want to know everything to serve Him. There is a lot of potential in us and in our children which is waiting to be tapped. It needs the will and the direction. Let's not allow all that potential to go to waste with all the distractions of today's society! Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

Interdependence

While standing on the steps of the Temple Mount and viewing the crowds who came to visit, Ben Zoma remarked, "Blessed is the One Who created all these people to serve me!" This statement could be grossly misunderstood if viewed as a selfish comment by an egocentric individual. But the meaning behind Ben Zoma's observation is quite different. Ben Zoma was humbly acknowledging the interdependence of human beings. Craftsmen, farmers, technicians, doctors, freight handlers – no one person can do everything alone. In order to

survive, individuals need a great variety of goods and services which they cannot provide for themselves, either due to lack of talent or lack of wherewithal. Ben Zoma was acknowledging his own shortcomings and his appreciation to Hashem for creating so many different people to provide for each other.

Life requires that you interact with your fellow man. Think, for a moment, how many different people it takes to provide the food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other goods and services you need just to get through one day. It only takes a little thought to consider that all has been provided for you and to appreciate it. "Blessed is He, Who created all these to serve you!" (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

Rabbi's Corner (2016) Rabbi Elie Abadie, MD

Every generation is known for something that typifies it. It is usually something important that defines a generation. In past history, the generations were known for a natural phenomenon, like the generation of the flood. Or, a historical event is credited, like the Exodus from Egypt. Even a period of time, like the generation of the Desert is common. It could also be a kingdom, like the Kingdom of David generation or the Kingdom of Solomon generation. Other generations include The Mediaeval ages, the Age of discovery and conquests, the Renaissance generation, the Emancipation generation, the Holocaust generation, the landing on the Moon generation, etc.

The infamous generation of the Golden Calf, that we read about in this week's Perashat Ki Tissa, is different than all the others. Its difference is not in the people that were part of it, but in its recurrence in almost every generation. When Moshe pleaded with G-d to spare the lives of the Israelites, G-d answered him: "Now, go lead the people to where I have told you, and on the day that I make My account, I shall bring their offense to account against them". Our Sages learn from that statement that in every generation, as evil may befall the Israelites, part of it is due to the debt of the sin of the Golden Calf; since G-d did not extract retribution from them at that time.

Interestingly enough, I believe that not only the retribution of the Golden Calf offense appears in every generation, the Golden Calf itself also appears in every generation, of course in a different form. In every generation, we see "something" that so many people are so involved and enthralled by that they ignore principles of ethics and morals. They worship that "thing" as if it were an idol, a god, or something that they cannot live without. They would be willing to

forgo all sense of appropriate conduct, just to "worship" this new idol.

I am not sure what "thing" would qualify to be the Golden Calf of our generation, the generation that we live in. There might be actually many "things" that could qualify; money, fame, sex, arrogance, power, etc.

Consider these TV programs: "American Idol", "Supermodel", "The Voice", "The Apprentice", "Thrill of a Lifetime", "X-Factor", "Americas Got Talent" and many other reality shows. If it is a moment of fame that all participants are searching for, I would criticize it, but I may understand. What I fail to understand is the phenomena of so many people watching these shows!! What are they gaining? Except a waste of time and indulging in fantasies. It must be that the spectators live vicariously through the participants, or maybe they wish they were the ones becoming famous and winning the amount of money promised. That, to me, represents the Golden Calf of our generation. Participants, and spectators alike, are just overtaken by the glamour, the fame, the thrill, the satisfaction, and of course the money that comes from it. Indeed, after all that fame, glamour, and attention, it is the money that most people worship. Yes, fame and glamour can fulfill our psychological needs, but money can "buy" everything...except happiness.

This generation has indeed found the "gold" in the Golden Calf to worship.

RABBI ELI MANSOUR **The Half We Don't See**

Parashat Ki-Tisa begins with the Misva of "Mahasit Ha'shekel" – the mandatory half-shekel tax that was imposed upon all members of Beneh Yisrael. The first time this tax was collected, the silver coins were used to make the "Adanim," the sockets that formed the foundation of the Mishkan. All the other parts of the Mishkan were made from materials that the people donated voluntarily. The sockets, however, were supplied through a mandatory half-shekel flat tax imposed upon each and every member of the nation.

One Rabbi commented that the sockets which formed the foundation of the Mishkan represent the foundation of the Jewish religion. Of course, each and every Halachic detail is crucial and indispensable. But the foundation, the basis of it all, is faith in God. Without faith, sincere commitment to the Torah's precepts is impossible. And this is why

the sockets were supplied through a mandatory tax. When it comes to other Misvot, we find some commands that are directed toward certain members of the nation, and some that are binding upon all but with room for some to excel at a higher level than others. Some members will choose to focus more on some areas of Torah than other areas, and levels of commitment will, naturally, not be the same for everyone, as much as we should all be aspiring to excel. But when it comes to the foundation, we are all on the same page. We all share equally the same obligation to firmly believe in God's existence and providence.

If, indeed, the "Mahasit Ha'shekel" donation represents faith, we can perhaps understand why it required donating a half-coin, rather than a complete coin. A prerequisite of faith is acknowledging that we see only half the picture. We do not have access to the whole picture; we can never truly understand why God runs the world as He does, why misfortune befalls the righteous while the wicked prosper. Oftentimes God's decisions seem to us unfair, but this is because we see only half the picture, whereas He – and only He – sees the complete picture and has complete knowledge of what's best for us and the world.

Later in the Parasha, we read that Moshe Rabbenu asked God to show him how he runs the world, the answer to the age-old question of why the righteous often suffer while the wicked prosper – "Har'eni Na Et Kebodecha" ("Show me, if You please, Your glory"– 33:18). God answered Moshe that no man can access this knowledge. Even Moshe Rabbenu, whose level of prophecy far surpassed that of any other prophet, who spoke to God "face to face," in whatever sense that can happen, was not given the answer to this question. Indeed, even Moshe saw only part of the picture.

This should be a great source of comfort for us when we encounter times of hardship and distress. All of us – even Moshe Rabbenu – are in the same "half-shekel" group. We are not supposed to have the answers to all the questions, and we will never understand why God does what He does. The foundation of the Mishkan, of the Torah, is the acceptance of the inherent limitations of our understanding, and believing that the full picture is known only to the Almighty.

VICTOR BIBI **SOD HAPARASHA**

Will be distributed under a separate list
If you want to receive this article every week,
please let us know and we will add you to that list

Rabbi Wein STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

I recently was on the tour of the Galilee region here in Israel. The tour stopped for a visit in the town of Rosh Pina. Because of cars parked on both sides of the street, the bus was unable to negotiate and brings us to the top of the hill where the walking tour would begin. Since I had visited Rosh Pina a number of times previously, I decided that I would remain on the bus instead of climbing all the way up the hill. However when the bus driver parked the bus all the way down the hill, he sweetly informed me that I could not stay on the bus and that he was going to lock it up and go to the synagogue for the afternoon prayer service.

Not realizing where the synagogue really was, I volunteered to accompany him since I also wanted to participate in the prayer services. The bus driver led me through a wooded area, which opened up to an enormously high and steep staircase. At the top of the staircase stood the synagogue, which was our goal.

The bus driver, who appears to be approximately half my age and only two thirds of my bulk, started walking up that staircase in a brisk manner. As I later determined, the staircase had one hundred twenty five steps before it reached the street level of the synagogue and it did not have a handrail or banister on either side.

Now a wise person would just sit down on the bottom step of the staircase and wait until the bus driver returned and opened the bus again. However, I felt challenged and so I began to ascend that staircase. After climbing about sixty steps, winded and amazed at my own stupidity, I stopped to contemplate the situation. It was just as dangerous for me to go down, as it was strenuous for me to go up the rest of the way. I was literally stuck in the middle.

Standing precariously on the narrow step, I rested to catch my breath and decide what to do. Since I was climbing the staircase for the sole purpose of participating with a quorum in the afternoon prayer services, I brazenly assumed that the Lord would help me climb the remaining half of the staircase and so I proceeded to walk up the steps to the top.

I must admit that after the climb I prayed with some fervor, thankful that somehow I had made it to the top of the staircase and that my vital organs still seemed to be working properly. Taking a far safer route down to the bus when the prayer service ended made me

think of the dilemma that faces all of us at one time or another in our ordinary lives.

We are often in a situation where we are stuck in the middle – where it is too difficult or impossible to extricate ourselves from where we are and yet we dread having to pursue the matter to its apparent outcome. The uncertainty as to whether to proceed or withdraw, to climb or to descend, is a very uncomfortable feeling.

This is pretty much the situation in which Israel finds itself today regarding its relationship to the West Bank and to the Palestinians. Should we continue to build in those areas and contemplate annexing them to Israel itself or should we consider withdrawing further, both territorially and ideologically. This issue is now the heart of the debate that consumes much of governmental and civilian thought here in Israel.

We are stuck in the middle and there seemingly are no good choices or avenues of escape that can prove satisfactory and positive in the long run. Our experiences with Gaza and Lebanon have made us very wary of abandoning the territory or settlements unilaterally. It seems that any move that Israel would make would endanger its short-term and certainly long-term security.

Yet, in the face of worldwide opposition, even from those countries that claim to be friends of Israel, annexation of territories that are in dispute would bring about enormous diplomatic disapproval and other dire consequences. Once the Oslo agreements placed us on this slippery slope more than two decades ago, we constantly find ourselves to be in this position. Perhaps we have no other choice but to just stand on that middle step and wait and see what may yet develop in this very volatile part of the world. But it certainly is no fun to be stuck in the middle

Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks The Sabbath: First Day Or Last?

In the immensely lengthy and detailed account of the making of the Tabernacle, the Torah tells the story twice: first (Ex. 25:1 – 31:17) as Divine instruction, then (Chs. 35 – 40) as human implementation. In both cases, the construction of the building is juxtaposed to the command of the Sabbath (31:12-17; 35:1-2).

There are halakhic and theological implications. First, according to Jewish tradition, the juxtaposition was intended to establish the rule that the Sabbath overrides the making of the Tabernacle. Not only is the seventh day a time when secular work comes to

an end. It also brings rest from the holiest of labours: making a house for God. Indeed, the oral tradition defined 'work' – melakhah, that which is prohibited on the Sabbath – in terms of the thirty-nine activities involved in making the sanctuary.

At a more metaphysical level, the Sanctuary mirrors – is the human counterpart to – the Divine creation of the universe (for the precise linguistic parallels between Exodus and Genesis, see Covenant and Conversation, Terumah 5763/2003). Just as Divine creation culminates in the Sabbath, so too does human creation. The sanctity of place takes second position to the holiness of time (on this, see A. J. Heschel's famous book, *The Sabbath*).

However, there is one marked difference between the account of God's instruction to build the Sanctuary, and Moses instruction to the people. In the first case, the command of the Sabbath appears at the end, after the details of the construction. In the second, it appears at the beginning, before the details. Why so?

The Talmud, in the tractate of Shabbat (69b), raises the following question: what happens if you are far away from human habitation and you forget what day it is. How do you observe the Sabbath? The Talmud offers two answers:

R. Huna said: if one is travelling on a road or in the wilderness and does not know when it is the Sabbath, he must count six days [from the day he realises he has forgotten] and observe one. R. Hiyya b. Rav said: he must observe one, and then count six [week] days. On what do they differ? One master holds that it is like the world's creation. The other holds that it is like [the case of] Adam.

From God's point of view, the Sabbath was the seventh day. From the point of view of the first human beings – created on the sixth day – the Sabbath was the first. The debate is about which perspective we should adopt.

Thus, at the simplest level, we understand why the Sabbath comes last when God is speaking about the Tabernacle, and why it comes first when Moses, a human being, is doing so. For God, the Sabbath was the last day; for human beings it was the first. However there is something more fundamental at stake.

When it comes to Divine creation, there is no gap between intention and execution. God spoke, and the world came into being. In relation to God, Isaiah says:

I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say: My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please. (Isaiah 46:10)

God knows in advance how things will turn out. With human beings, it is otherwise. Often, we cannot see the outcome at the outset. A great novelist may not know how the story will turn out until he has written it, nor a composer, a symphony, nor an artist, a painting. Creativity is fraught with risk. All the more so is it with human history. The 'law of unintended consequences' tells us that revolutions rarely turn out as planned. Policies designed to help the poor may have the opposite effect. Hayek coined the phrase 'the fatal conceit' for what he saw as the almost inevitable failure of social engineering – the idea that you can plan human behaviour in advance. You can't.

One alternative is simply to let things happen as they will. This kind of resignation, however, is wholly out of keeping with the Judaic view of history. The Sages said: 'Wherever you find the word *vayehi* ['and it came to pass'] it is always a prelude to tragedy.' When things merely come to pass, they rarely have a happy ending.

The other solution – unique, as far as I know, to Judaism – is to reveal the end at the beginning. That is the meaning of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not simply a day of rest. It is an anticipation of 'the end of history', the Messianic age. On it, we recover the lost harmonies of the Garden of Eden. We do not strive to do; we are content to be. We are not permitted to manipulate the world; instead, we celebrate it as God's supreme work of art. We are not allowed to exercise power or dominance over other human beings, nor even domestic animals. Rich and poor inhabit the Sabbath alike, with equal dignity and freedom.

No utopia has ever been realised (the word 'utopia' itself means 'no place') – with one exception: 'the world to come'. The reason is that we rehearse it every week, one day in seven. The Sabbath is a full dress rehearsal for an ideal society that has not yet come to pass, but will do, because we know what we are aiming for – because we experienced it at the beginning.

We now begin to sense the full symbolic drama of the making of the Tabernacle. In the wilderness, long before they crossed the Jordan and entered the promised land, God told the Israelites to build a miniature universe. It would be a place of carefully calibrated order – as the universe is a place of

carefully calibrated order. Nowadays, scientists call this the 'anthropic principle', the finding that the laws of physics and chemistry are finely tuned for the emergence of life. Just so did the Tabernacle have to be exact in its construction and dimensions. The building of the Tabernacle was a symbolic prototype of the building of a society. Just as it was an earthly home for the Divine presence, so would society become if the Israelites honoured God's laws.

The ultimate end of such a society is the harmony of existence that we have not yet experienced, living as we do in a world of work and striving, conflict and competition. God, however, wanted us to know what we were aiming at, so that we would not lose our way in the wilderness of time. That is why, when it came to the human execution of the building, the Sabbath came first, even though in global terms, the 'Sabbath of history' (the Messianic age, the world to come) will come last. God 'made known the end at the beginning' – the fulfilled rest that follows creative labour; the peace that will one day take the place of strife – so that we would catch a glimpse of the destination before beginning the journey.

Only those who know where they are travelling to will get there, however fast or slow they go.\

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER ZT'L
"And by what then will it be known that I have found favor in Your eyes?" (33:16)

Moshe Rabenu was the greatest man to ever walk the face of this earth. His greatness was dependant on the piety of Bnei Yisrael. When the sin of the Golden Calf is committed, Hashem orders Moshe to "Go down, for the People whom you have brought out of Egypt have become corrupt". Since the greatness of Bnei Yisrael was mitigated by committing a sin, so was Moshe's greatness lessoned. His greatness is resulting from the elevated holiness of the Jewish Nation

Hashem tells Moshe, "And now let me alone and I shall destroy them" (32:10). Which means, "Don't let me alone" and continue to intercede on behalf of the people (Berachot 32A). Moshe is successful with his prayers and Hashem rescinds the decree. By this act of entreating for Israel, Moshe gained the highest excellence and achieved for himself and for his people more than ever before. The Golden Calf had been intended for this.

At this point, after pleading for the lives of his people and with his back to the wall, Moshe feels it

is a moment for great opportunity. Moshe asks Hashem:

- 1) to rest His presence solely upon Israel, as it is said, "Is it not by Your going with us?"
 - 2) not to rest His presence upon the nations, as it is said, "And we should be set apart, I and Your people"
 - 3) that he be made known the ways of Hashem, as it is said, "Make known to me Your ways"
- And Hashem granted all three requests (Berachot 7A).

We can learn from Moshe that even though we may think that we are in low and weak position emotionally, financially or spiritually, this can be an excellent opportunity for us to shoot high and ask for what you need and count on Hashem (Bitachon). He is our loving Father who is just waiting and hoping and prodding us to call out and just ask.

R' Miller Z'L is teaching us a tremendous Mussar learned from Moshe Rabbenu.

Moshe was at the weakest position of his career, since the source of his greatness/power was Klal Yisrael.

And now they had made the most terrible sin of the Egel/Golden Calf. Then, Hashem tells Moshe "Lech red"/get down from your greatness (Rashi).

Normally when we have challenges we can tend to lay low, or even hide under the covers. Moshe did the opposite; He asked Hashem for 3 very strong requests & was granted them all.

The problem IS the solution. When we understand that the source of our challenge is our Father in heaven & that He is sending us these tests because he wants to hear from us, in order that we get closer to Hashem! This is the solution.

The problem was that our connection was loose & Hashem sent us the problem which became the solution since it caused us to make our connection better by calling out to Hashem.

So the best opportunity to ask Hashem for all you need can be when you are down.