



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

ת"ו

3 - 9 February, 2019
28 Shevat -
4 Adar I, 5779

Torah :
Exodus 25:1 - 27:19

Haftorah:
Kings I 5:26 - 6:13

■ CALENDARS

We have Jewish Calendars, if you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi / Chaplain to contact us.

■ FAMILY PROGRAMS

Do you have family on the outside who are struggling, please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

■ GRAPE JUICE & MATZAH

Aleph offers free Grape Juice and Matzoh for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll, it is available to all prisons.

ALEPH INSTITUTE
Hyman & Martha Rogal
Center

5804 Beacon Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
412-421-0111
Fax: 412-521-5948
www.alephne.org
info@alephne.org

GIVING OR GETTING

The very first United Jewish Appeal was launched this week. Our Parshah deals with the first fundraising campaign in history. Moses initiated it in order to build the Sanctuary in the wilderness as well as all to acquire all the materials needed for the special utensils required for the sacred services. This is, therefore, a good time to talk about the art of giving.

The holy Rabbi Israel of Ruzhin said that while some people claim that "If you give you are a fool and if you take you are clever," Jewish tradition teaches us that those who give and think they are only giving are, in fact, the fools. But those who give and understand that they are also receiving at the same time are truly wise.

The truth is that in giving, we actually receive more than we give. And not only a slice of heaven in far-away paradise, but even in the here and now. Certainly, in our relationships—whether family, business or social—our generosity is often reciprocated and we find the other party responding in kind. But it goes beyond giving in order to get back. The very fact that we have done good, that which is right and noble, gives us a sense of satisfaction. "The takers of the world may eat better. But the givers of the world sleep better."

This explains the unusual expression in our G-d's words to Moses in our Parshah: v'yikchu li terumah--"and they shall take for me a contribution." Why

take? Surely, give would be the more correct term. But because in giving we are also receiving, the word take is also appropriate. For the same reason we find that the Hebrew expression for "acts of loving kindness" ("gemilut chassadim") is always in the plural form. Because every time someone performs a single act of kindness, at least two people are benefiting—the receiver and also the giver.

I have seen people over the years who were good people, giving people, who shared and cared for others. Then, after years of being givers, they stopped. Why? They became frustrated at the lack of appreciation for all their hard work. After all they had done for others, they never even got a simple "Thank You." So they were disappointed, disillusioned, and in some instances, even bitter. They resigned from public life and from whatever community services they were involved in.

How sad that they didn't realize that even if human beings are notoriously unappreciative, G-d Almighty takes note of every act of kindness we perform. And He responds with infinite blessings in his own way. Our sages taught that if we express regret over the good that we have done, we might well forfeit all the merits we would have otherwise deserved.

The rabbinate is one of the helping professions. Anyone involved in a congregational position doesn't only make speeches and teach Torah. One is called upon to serve in a pastoral role—visiting,

helping, counseling, comforting. While it can be very taxing and often emotionally draining, it is without doubt a source of deep satisfaction; particularly when one is able to make a real difference in people's lives.

There are, of course, many people I have been privileged to help in one way or another over the years. One feels a very profound sense of purpose knowing that you were able to help someone through a crisis, or lift their spirits in a hospital, or give them hope and solace in a time of loss. Sure, I was the giver. But I received so much back in return. My life was rendered so much more meaningful, more worthy, for having helped a person in need.

I shall never forget the look on a young woman's face when I gave her the good news that I had managed to locate her wayward, absentee husband and convinced him to sign on the dotted line to give her the long awaited Get that would finally free her to get on with her life. She was so radiant, absolutely beaming with joy. Whatever efforts I had made on her behalf were well worth it just to see her feel the freedom.

So whenever you think you're a big deal because you did something for a good cause, remember; you are receiving much more than you are giving. Let us all be givers and be blessed for it.

By Rabbi Yossy Goldman

THE GOLD STANDARD

The Mishkan (Taber-

nacle) was an impressive structure, constructed of acacia wood, gold, silver, copper and luxurious animal hides. The laws and discussion of the Mishkan's construction span five Torah portions, and would, at first glance, seem irrelevant to us nowadays. The Mishkan ceased to be used almost 3000 years ago with the construction of the first Temple in Jerusalem, of what consequence all these laws?

Interwoven through the story of the Mishkan, however, are numerous ethical and moral lessons and practical advice that we continue to live by to this day. One of them pertains to the materials used in the construction project.

Almost everything in the Mishkan was made of, or plated with, gold, silver or copper. We know that the Jews left Egypt with an excess of gold – as evidenced by their making of the Golden Calf – why then did G-d instruct that the lesser materials of silver and copper should also be used in the Mishkan's construction? Surely pure gold would have looked much more spectacular.

Recently, during a weekly discussion group in a school here in Leeds (England), we were talking about intermarriage. One of the boys asked me a perceptive question: "If you were sitting in my place," he asked, "and were not a rabbi with a religious upbringing, could you honestly say that you would only marry a Jewish girl?"

My response was that being born into a religious family and being a rabbi means that I face different challenges (thankfully, intermarriage isn't one of them) than those brought up in a different way. And vice versa. G-d throws each of us the challenges that He feels that we can deal with, no more but no less.

As each of us struggles with our challenges, each on our own level, the struggle is precious to G-d. Whether we would classify ourselves as "gold," "silver" or "copper" is irrelevant, as long as we are working in the holy field of making a home for G-d in this world, a modern day Mishkan.

The commentaries note that the altar that was used for the sacrifices in the Temple was copper-coated. The objective of the altar was to bring forgiveness, and it was therefore fitting that it not be made of gold, a material that does not tarnish, rather copper. Copper tarnishes, but can be restored to its former state, demonstrating that just as tarnished metal can be returned to its former shining state, so too, even one who may be classified as "copper," "tarnished copper" at that, remains a shining Jew, ready and able to sparkle.

By Rabbi Eli Pink

LEAP YEAR

This year is a shanah meuberet (lit., "a pregnant year") or a leap year on the Jewish calendar. The Jewish leap year, which occurs 7 times in a 19-year cycle, has 13 months instead of the regular year's 12. This is so that the lunar-based Jewish year should remain aligned with the solar seasons (12 lunar months make up a total of 354 days -- slightly more than 11 days short of the 365.25 day solar cycle). The added month is called "Adar I" and is inserted before the month of Adar (termed "Adar II" in leap years).

The festival of Purim celebrated on Adar 14, is

in Adar II on leap years, while the 14th of the Adar I is marked only as "Purim Minor." Similarly, birthdays and most other anniversaries are marked on the 2nd Adar.

PASSOVER

Please begin working with your Rabbi / Chaplain to ensure the paperwork is being processed and the necessary arrangements are being made for Passover.

In Jewish History

Friday, 28 Shevat, 5779 - February 3, 2019
Hashmonean Holiday (2nd century BCE)

On Shevat 28 (134 BCE?), Antiochus V abandoned his siege of Jerusalem and his plans for the city's destruction. This day was observed as a holiday in Hashmonean times. (Megilat Taanit)

Sunday, 30 Shevat, 5779 - February 5, 2019
Tosfot Yomtov Appointed Rabbi of Krakow (1644)

The 30th of Shevat is celebrated by the descendants of Rabbi Yomtov Lipman Heller (1579-1654) as a day of thanksgiving, for his liberation and restoration after his imprisonment in Vienna in 1629.

Rabbi Yomtov Lipman was one of the important rabbinical figures of the early 17th century. Known as the "Tosfos Yomtov" after his commentary on the Mishnah by that name, he also authored important commentaries on the Rosh and other rabbinical works. A disciple of the famed Maharshal of Prague, Rabbi Yomtov Lipman was appointed, at the tender age of 18, to serve as a dayan (rabbinical judge) in that city. He subsequently filled a number of prestigious rabbinical positions, including rabbi of Nikolsburg and of Vienna. In 1627 he was recalled to Prague to serve as the city's chief rabbi.

That position earned him powerful enemies when he refused to follow the dictates of Prague's rich and influential citizens and strove to relieve the burden imposed on the poor by the suffocating "crown taxes" imposed on the Jews. His enemies informed on him to the government, falsely accusing him of treason. In 1629, Rabbi Yomtov Lipman was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. The Jewish communities of Bohemia succeeded in having the sentence commuted and reduced to a heavy fine, and raised the funds for the payment of the first installment that secured his release. However, his enemies obtained an imperial decision that he could not officiate as rabbi in any town of the empire, leaving him homeless and destitute. It took many years for him to pay off the balance of the fine and be restored to his former position. It was only in the winter of 1644, when he settled in Krakow after being appointed chief rabbi of the city, that he felt that that he could celebrate his release and restoration.

Shevat 30th (the 1st day of Rosh Chodesh Adar)--the day that Rabbi Yomtov Lipman assumed the rabbinate of Krakow--was celebrated by him and his family as a day of thanksgiving to G-d. Rabbi Yomtov Lipman asked that future generations continue to mark the date, and the custom is upheld by his descendants to this day.