

Torah Weekly

To Be More Inclusive

For years, the trend in education was to segregate children with special needs, but nowadays, we try to include them in conventional classrooms as much as possible.

Inclusion, mainstreaming, integration—these are all different ways of how children with different needs are included in traditional classrooms.

So, is inclusion beneficial, and for whom?

Research over the last 15 years indicates that with the necessary support and proper training, its benefits seem to be overwhelmingly positive *for everyone*.

Students with special needs gain from increased social opportunities, higher expectations resulting in increased skills and achievements, increased self-respect and confidence, and better preparation for adult life.

But the benefits surprisingly were equally shared by students *without* special needs. They too gained in greater academic success, enhanced feelings of self-esteem from mentoring students, increased appreciation of their abilities, and a greater acceptance that all people have unique abilities. They learned sensitivity and empathy as well as strong collaborative skills.

In the workforce, a similar idea is gaining traction, as employers are starting to acknowledge the importance of diversity. The effectiveness of human

resource systems designed for a homogeneous workforce is being questioned as employers recognize the contributions of all different kinds of intelligences and talents. So it looks like we were created as diverse human beings for a reason: we all have what to contribute.

In the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Moses gathers the nation of Israel and lists the various materials that they can contribute to the Tabernacle, G-d's home on earth.

"Take from yourselves an offering for the L-rd; every generous hearted person shall bring gold, silver, and copper..." (Exodus 35:5)

The Rebbe explains that each of these materials represent a different persona in the nation. Gold represents the purity of the *tzaddik*, the fully righteous individual. Silver (*kesef* in Hebrew, which also means "yearning") represents the *baal teshuvah*, the returnee. Copper, the least expensive of metals, represents the sinner.

We might have thought that only a *tzaddik* who is removed from the enticements and ensnarement of this world has the ability of transforming it into something holy. Or, we might believe that only a *baal teshuvah*, who intimately knows the negativity of this world can transform its lowliness into loftiness. But the Torah teaches us even the sinner must be included

in this endeavor and has what to contribute.

Amazingly, G-d's home on earth is not complete without each of their contributions.

No matter our spiritual standing, no matter our intellectual abilities or our emotional intelligences, we were all handcrafted by our Creator to make our world a home for G-d.

And, whether we consider ourselves low or high, righteous or wicked, someone with limited abilities or someone super talented, we are all needed. As unintuitive as it may initially seem, each and every one of us has what to gain from the other!

What a golden (or is that copper?) idea!

By Chana Weisbuerg

Parshat Shekalim

When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, each Jew contributed an annual half-shekel to the Temple. The 1st of Adar marked the beginning of the collection of the shekalim. In commemoration, the Torah reading of the Shabbat that falls on or before Adar 1 is supplemented with the verses (Exodus 30:11-16) that relate G-d's commandment to Moses regarding the first giving of the half-shekel. "Parshat Shekalim" is the first of four special readings added during or immediately before the month of Adar (the other three being "Zachor", "Parah" and "Hachodesh")

February 20-26, 2022
19-25 Adar, 5781

First Torah:
Exodus 35:1 - 38:20
Second Torah:
Shekalim: Exodus 30:1-16
Haftarah:
Kings II 11:17 - 12:17

PARSHAT VAYAKHEL

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 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

We offer 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 (available to all prisons).

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No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

How Is The Money Spent

And Moses assembled all the congregation of the Children of Israel and said unto them: "These are the words which G-d has commanded that you should do them. Six days shall work be done but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of solemn rest to G-d..." (Exodus 35:1-2)

Some individuals, when approached with the suggestion that they begin to observe the Shabbat, respond with a question and a challenge: "Why do you talk to me about miracles? We live in a mundane physical world. I have a business on Fifth Avenue and I see that I earn much more on Saturday than on other days of the week!"

The answer is that money by and of itself is not the purpose and goal of a person's happiness and well-being. It all depends how the money is used. If we were to ask this individual, "Let us say for the sake of argument that you were given a choice, either to earn a thousand dollars extra this year and end up in a hospital having to pay the doctor a thousand dollars plus, or not to earn the extra money in the first place and not end up with the sickness and the extra medical bills?" Obviously he would choose to remain healthy and to reject the money for such unwholesome purposes.

The Torah of Truth teaches that the money which a Jew earns through profaning the Shabbat does not "belong" to him; in a sense it is not "Jewish" money. One may protest that this money is owned by the Jew; it is deposited in his bank account and he retains full control over the funds. He can write a check to whomever he desires. But it remains to be seen for what purpose this money will ultimately be spent (Based on a discourse given Nissan 11, 5736).

By Rabbi Yitschok Meir Kagen

Inner Shabbat

"If only the Jewish People would keep two Shabbats as they should be kept, immediately they would be redeemed." (Shabbat 118a). In each Shabbat, there are two Shabbats: An outer Shabbat, and an inner Shabbat.

The outer Shabbat is but an entranceway, a liberation from work. The inner Shabbat is a world inside, a world of contemplation and delight. As a bride is whisked away from the rest of the world to be only to her beloved and no one else, so Shabbat carries us out of a mundane life on earth into the arms of the divine.

We can breathe again, our shackles temporarily broken. There is no work to do, because we have left the world of work behind.

And that allows us entry to the inner Shabbat, where divine thought breathes here on earth.

So we stop, pore over the holy, mystical teachings of our masters, contemplate deeply their words, and wrap ourselves in prayer, in communion with the Knower of all Thoughts.

Keep both Shabbats and you will find yourself redeemed.

Monday, February 21, 2022 --- 20 Adar 1, 5782

Purim Vincent (1616)

In 1614, the evil Vincent Fettmilch organized an attack on the Jewish quarter of Frankfurt, and the Jews were subsequently expelled from the city. Thanks to the Emperor's intervention, two years later the Jews were allowed to return to the city in honor, and Vincent and his cohorts were hanged. The Jewish community marked the date of 20 Adar as a yearly day of celebration, naming it "Purim Vincent." (*Yosef Ometz* 1109)

Passing of R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1995)

R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was a renowned halachic authority who lived in Jerusalem. Many of his rulings pertain to modern technological advances as they apply to Jewish life.

Passing of "Bach" (1640)

Adar 20 is the yahrtzeit (anniversary of the passing) of Rabbi Yoel Sirkes (1560?-1640), Rabbi of Krakow and author of the *Bayit Chadash* ("Bach") commentary on the great Halachic work, the *Arba'ah Turim*.

Tuesday, February 22, 2022 --- 21 Adar 1, 5782

R. Elimelech of Lizhensk (1786)

The great Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717-1786) was one of the elite disciples of Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezritch, and a colleague of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. He is also widely known as the *No'am Elimelech*, the title of the renowned chassidic work he authored.

Rabbi Elimelech attracted many thousands of chassidim, among them many who after his passing became great chassidic masters in their own right. Most notable amongst them was Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz, the "Seer of Lublin." Many of the current chassidic dynasties trace themselves back to Rabbi Elimelech.

Thursday, February 24, 2022 --- 23 Adar 1, 5782

Passing of 1st Rebbe of Ger (1866)

Chassidic Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Altar (1799-1866), author of *Chiddushei Harim* (a commentary on the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch), was a disciple of the Maggid of Koshnitz and Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, and the founder of the "Ger" (Gerer) Chassidic dynasty. All his 13 sons had died in his lifetime, and he was succeeded (in 1870) by his young grandson, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter (the "Sefat Emmet").