

MAR 13 2010 27 Adar 5770 Parshat Vayakhel-Pekudei-HaChodesh

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Time editor at large Nancy Gibbs recently wrote about relief efforts in Haiti, "One's duty in the face of disaster is not just to be kind but to be sensible. It's a waste when all those who want to help wind up getting in the way, a distraction neither the victims nor the professionals can afford." Gibbs goes on to explain how disastrous charitable efforts can be when they are not addressed to the needs of the victims. Generally waste is not associated with charitable giving, yet at times the greatest waste occurs specifically with charity.

In this essay I'd like to explain the nature of charitable motivations. I'd like to differentiate between the giver and receiver and how the intentions of one and the needs of the other react to and counteract each other. To support my thesis I'll bring Moshe's request of Bnei Yisrael to stop donating to the building of the Mishkan. Lastly I'd like to suggest ways in which we can take the lesson of this essay and use it to guide our own charitable donations.

One of the 613 mitzvot is to give charity and in fact Maimonides wrote that charity is a sign of Jewish lineage. If one meets a stingy Jew, Maimonides wrote, one should suspect their Jewish roots, for Jews have a charitable nature running through their veins. Although charity is in our communal DNA, Jews donate for various reasons. Some feel the need to effectuate change, to correct the world, others to help a needy person, while some strive for honor and run from guilt. In all of the examples it is the giver that we focused on.

In the charity equation the recipient is the other factor. A theme that runs through Maimonides well known list of who to give charity to first is the need of the recipient. While the need of the recipient as the first priority seems obvious, unfortunately other factors frequently take precedence. Instead of the most needy, emotional needs, whether they are honor, guilt or the need to feel effective often directs our charitable dollars.

In all areas of life our feelings tend to lead us astray. Instead of acting in accordance with what we know is correct, we give in to our petty, instinctual desires.

It is unfortunate that in an area as important as charity, where so many depend on our largesse, we let our feelings get in the way of what is just. When the needs of the recipient clash with the cravings of the giver

it is rare that the proper outcome is ever achieved. There can be no greater shame. It is our responsibility to not only be generous but vigilant with our resources to ensure their proper use.

Our sedra reviews the generosity of Bnei Yisrael in the building of the Mishkan. Donations flowed in from the entire nation. So generous were the people of Israel that Moshe had to call a halt to their generosity, and in so doing taught a lesson for the ages. Hashem wrote, "Moshe commanded, 'Let no man or woman bring any more material for the sacred offering.' And the people stopped bringing." Moshe taught us that although the people wanted to give, since there was no need they should no longer give. His lesson needs to resonate with us; we need to ensure our charitable dollars are used properly in the service of the needs of those that seek them.

**Rabbi Uri Pilichowski**

Assistant Rabbi,

Beth Jacob Cong, Beverly Hills

**MAZEL TOV TO OUR FRIENDS  
AVSHALOM & SHARON KATZ  
ON THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR  
DAUGHTER, TALII!**

**KASHRUT NOTICE!!**

OU Kosher Pre Pesach

**Webcast on Tuesday,  
March 23 - 2:30 PM**

With Rabbi Yisroel Belsky  
and Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Focusing on: Selling Chometz, Chometz  
after Pesach, Seder and Haggadah.

Email your questions to:

[safrane@ou.org](mailto:safrane@ou.org)

View the webcast at:

[http://www.ou.org/ourradio/kosher\\_webcast](http://www.ou.org/ourradio/kosher_webcast)



**JDC's HAITI & CHILEAN  
EARTHQUAKE DONATIONS**

With your help, the Orthodox Union will continue to work with our partners, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the William J. Clinton Foundation, and others, to bring life saving assistance to those in Haiti & Chile.

To make a donation by mail, kindly send a check to the Orthodox Union at 11 Broadway, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10004. Checks should be made out to "Orthodox Union Haiti Relief Fund" or "Orthodox Union Chile Relief Fund."

**UPCOMING EVENTS  
@ OU WEST COAST**

*Check our website for Convention  
lectures & panel discussions*

➤➤ **Kosher for Passover** ◀◀  
**Supermarket Tours  
at Ralphs Markets – NOW!**  
➤ **MARCH 15 - Century City;**  
**16 - La Brea/3<sup>rd</sup>; 17 - Torrance;**  
**18 - Woodland Hills**

➤ **THIS WEEKEND:**  
**A social evening for  
"Empty Nesters"**

**Saturday MAR 13, 8pm**  
*"When You Have an Empty Nest,  
Build a Bird House"*

**With Rabbi Dov Heller, LMFT**

*Private home--RSVP to*

*310-229-9000 x 201 or*

*[estherr@ou.org](mailto:estherr@ou.org)*

➤ **Annual Manny Stern, z"l,  
Synagogue Leadership Seminar  
Sunday, April 18, 5pm**

with **Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn**

*"Storm-winds: Program Ideas That Will  
Blow Your Mind"*

*"On Fire: Sparking Immediate Shul Growth"*  
for OU Shul Rabbis/Presidents/Board  
Members/Exec & Youth Directors

*A program from OU-West Coast  
Community & Synagogue Services*

**Hold-the-Date**

**Tuesday, May 4, 2010**

**Tefilla Enrichment Initiative**

*A one-evening seminar featuring speakers  
who will inspire and encourage us to achieve  
meaningful tefilla experiences.*

*This program will take place  
at B'nai David-Judea.*

*Watch for more details.*

➤ **OU Annual Awards Banquet  
Tuesday, June 22**

Honoring

**David & Debbie Schultz**

**Seth & Ruth Berkowitz**

**Dr. Steve & Linda Tabak**

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## OU SYNAGOGUES AROUND THE REGION

### Beverly Hills: Cong. Beth Jacob (310) 278-1911

- **SUN MAR 14, 2010:** Tiferet Award BQ honors R/M Marc Mandel

### Beverly Hills: Young Israel of North B.H.: (310) 276-7650

- **Shabbat MAR 20:** Guest speaker, Yossi Baumol, Director, Hebron Fund
- **Shabbat APR 9-10:** RZLA w/Rabbi Yosef & Dr. Rivka Blau, Solly Sacks
- **Shabbat APR 17:** AIPAC w/ LA Director Catherine Schneider
- **Shabbat APR 24:** Guest, Hon. Israel Con Gen'l Yakov Dayan

Calabasas Shul: (818) 591-7485

### Canada-Calgary: House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel (403) 259-3230

- **WEDS JUNE 2:** Annual Dinner & Installation of Rabbi Yisroel Miller

Canada-Edmonton: Beth Israel (780) 488-2840

Canada-Vancouver: Schara Tzedek (604) 736-7607

- **WEDS MAR 17:** Guest Speakers, Robert Horenstein, Dr. Alex Moens, Michael Eltermand, Mod: Dr. Alan Posthuma: "Christian Zionists-Are They Good for the Jews?" - RSVP

### Denver, CO : BMH-BJ Cong (303) 388-4203

- **SUN MAR 14:** Annual Event

Denver, CO: EDOS (303) 322-7943

Irvine, CA: Beth Jacob (949) 786-5230

LA: Adas Torah (310) 203-9659 [www.adastorah.com](http://www.adastorah.com)

LA: Aish Hatorah (310) 278-8672 x 305 or [tsullivan@aishla.com](mailto:tsullivan@aishla.com)

LA: B'nai David-Judea (310)-276-9269 or [amram@bnaidavid.com](mailto:amram@bnaidavid.com)

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Annual Tribute Dinner

LA: Etz Jacob (323) 938-2619

LA: Mogen David Cong. (310) 556-5609

- **SUN APR 11, 9am:** Annual Yom Hashoah Program/Breakfast--Holocaust Remembrance Day with survivor Sol Berger

LA: Young Israel of Century City: (310) 273-6954

- **Shabbat Hagadol MAR 26-27:** S-I-R Rabbi Mark Dratch

LA: Young Israel of Hancock Park: (323) 931-4030

LA: Yeshiva of LA (YOLA) 310-203-3197 [yeshivarabbi@juno.com](mailto:yeshivarabbi@juno.com)

- **MINCHA/MAARIV:** SUN-THURS, 15 minutes before Shkiah;  
**LATE MAARIV:** SUN-THUR 10pm. **M-TH am/pm:** adults/students chavrusas

Laguna Woods, CA: Beth Torah (949) 587-1967 (a retirement community)

La Jolla: Adat Yeshurun (858) 535-1196

- **SATs Nights, 6:45pm:** Parent-Child Learning & prizes, too

- **SUN JUNE 6:** Banquet Gala

Las Vegas, NV: Shaarei Tefila (702) 384-3565 (Mikva 384-3317)

Oakland, CA: Beth Jacob (510) 482-1147

Palm Springs, CA: The Desert Synagogue (760) 327-4848

Palo Alto, CA: Emek Beracha (650) 857-1800 (Mikva 493-5555)

- **MAY 9:** Annual Dinner. Guest speaker Hadassah Lieberman

Phoenix, AZ: Beth Joseph (602) 277-8858

Portland, OR: Kesser Israel (503) 222-1239

Sacramento, CA: Keneset Israel Torah Center (916) 481-1159

- **Shabbat MAR 12-13:** S-I-R Rabbi Zvi Grumet. RSVP for Dinner/Lunch

San Diego, CA: Cong. Beth Jacob (619) 287-9890

San Diego, CA: Kehillat Ahavat Yisrael-KAY (858) 633-0181

San Francisco, CA: Adath Israel (415) 564-5665

Seattle: Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath (206) 721-0970

- **Shabbat MAR 12-13:** S-I-R Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

- **MON Evening MAR 15:** Rabbi Chaim Nissel "Empowering Our Children"

Seattle: Ezra Bessaroth (206) 722-5500

Seattle: Sephardic Bikur Holim (206) 723-3028

- **Shabbat Hagadol Luncheon, MAR 27**

Valley Village, CA: Shaarey Zedek Cong. (818) 763-0560

- **MON APR 12:** Annual Banquet honoring Perla & Herman Muhlstein

Venice, Pacific Jewish Center-The Shul on the Beach:(310)392-8749

Washington-Mercer Island: Shevet Achim (206) 275-1539

Woodland Hills: Beit HaMidrash (818) 999-2059 (5850 Fallbrook Ave.)

- **SUNs @ 6:15pm:** Pre-Mincha-Shiur-Baba Kama w/Rabbi Yaakov Rechnitz

West LA: Westwood Kehilla (310) 441-5288x30 [director@kehilla.org](mailto:director@kehilla.org)

- **Shabbat MAR 19-20:** S-I-R Rabbi Menachem Nissel

## B'NEI AKIVA OF LA ANNOUNCEMENTS

➔ **Office:** 310-248-2450 [bnaiakivaLA@gmail.com](mailto:bnaiakivaLA@gmail.com)

➔ **MON Evening APRIL 19: Annual Community-wide Yom HaZikaron & Yom Haatzmaut Ceremony**

*Upcoming Events:* Snifim next week;

Chevyra Bet (9th-12th grade) NY Shabbaton; Israeli Day Parade - New York



## ORTHODOX UNION'S JOB BOARD OFFERS LIVE NATIONWIDE WEBCAST ON OVERCOMING AGE BIAS IN THE JOB MARKET, MARCH 18

Though we would like to think that age discrimination doesn't happen to those in the job market, unfortunately, bias does sometimes occur unfairly. To combat age bias in the job market, the **Orthodox Union's Job Board** will present a FREE nationwide live webcast, "**Ten Strategies for Overcoming Age Bias in Your Job Search**," on **THURS, MAR 18, 5:30pm-7:30pm EDT**.

Those who wish to view the broadcast must register before hand at [www.oujobs.org](http://www.oujobs.org). Instructions for viewing will be sent after registration.

## RESPONDING TO EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS AMONG THOSE IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS, OU JOB BOARD TO PRESENT 'FROM BREAKUP TO BREAKTHROUGH' ON WEB AND IN PERSON, MARCH 23

People going through a divorce often have job problems as well. To accommodate their needs at such a stressful time, the **Orthodox Union Job Board** will present a free workshop, "**From Breakup to Breakthrough**," to be held **Tuesday, March 23, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** at OU Headquarters in New York and everywhere on the web at [www.oujobs.org](http://www.oujobs.org).

## NCSY-JSU-YACHAD ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS



**Office contact:** 310-229-9000 x 209 [www.westcoastncsy.com](http://www.westcoastncsy.com)

Start planning your summer, check out our amazing summer programs @ A

Want to help run a chesed project? call Solly at 310-557-6582

**SUN APR 18<sup>th</sup> @ UCLA: NCSY's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Basketball Tournament\***

Sign your team up today by calling 310 229-9000 ext. 226

\*Sponsorship opportunities available.

**MAY 29-31:** Spring Regional

**CITY NCSY:** Call Solly @ 310-557-6582 or [Shess@westcoastncsy.com](mailto:Shess@westcoastncsy.com)

**DNL--MONs 7-8pm:** @ Pizza World 365 S. Fairfax Ave.

**Latte&Learning-TUES 7:30pm:** @CB&T-233 S. Beverly Dr. w/R'Josh Horwitz

**JR. NCSY:** (6-8 grade) Call Josh 310-694-2976 or [ncsyjosh@gmail.com](mailto:ncsyjosh@gmail.com)

... **NCSY Bar/Bat Mitzvah** tutoring available. Talmud Torah classes.

**YACHAD:** Call Perri @323-228-4191. Ongoing activities.

## OU COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ▶ **ONGOING: OU'S WOMEN'S TORAH NETWORK (WTN)**

Classes with Geri Wiener – Spring Sessions coming up!

➔ **MONs-Valley** (private home):

➔ **WEDs-City** (OU Hdqtrs): **MAR 10**

▶ **SUN MAR 14th, Bikur Cholim presents** KidFest at Paramount Studios with **Uncle Moishy in Concert**. Includes games, rock-climbing, family photos, prizes, food, and information on children's health. Concert tickets are limited and may be purchased at [www.bikurcholim.net](http://www.bikurcholim.net).

▶ **AIPAC POLICY CONFERENCE-WASHINGTON DC-MAR 21-23**

▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-MONDAY EVENING-APR 19, BNEI AKIVA**

▶ **Yom Haatzmaut-APR 19, 7pm, presented by Consulate General of Israel & Saban Theater – Hold-the-Date**

## ISRAEL'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

### Let the Web content roam free

Amobee hopes to enable content creators to survive today's free Internet culture by providing their output in exchange for embedded advertising. Is this Google's next acquisition?

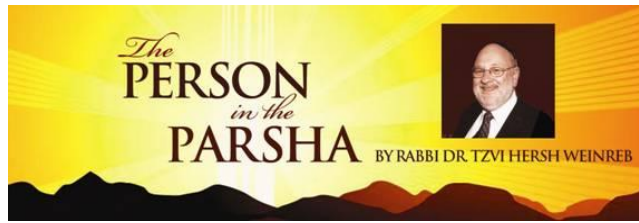
### Big brother IS watching

An Israeli startup has developed a potentially game-changing surveillance camera that can both monitor a panoramic field and zoom in on details.

### Israel's ancient trees tell their tales

They've been growing for hundreds of years and have many stories to tell, now the Jewish National Fund is working hard to ensure that Israel's oldest trees will continue to thrive for the benefit of generations to come.

[www.Israel21c.org](http://www.Israel21c.org)



## Parshat Vayakhel – Pekudei - HaChodesh

March 13, 2010 – 27 Adar 5770

To read more articles and essays by Rabbi Weinreb, visit his blog at [www.ou.org/rabbi\\_weinreb](http://www.ou.org/rabbi_weinreb)

### "Endings and Beginnings"

What is life all about?

One answer to that question is that life is all about beginnings and endings. Birth and death, marriage and divorce, hopeful anticipation and inglorious defeat.

Most commonly, beginnings are bright. Even the pessimists among us cherish new beginnings and find promise in them. A new leaf is exciting, encouraging, and full of possibilities.

Yet, beginnings have downsides, too. They are often fraught with the handicap of inexperience and sometimes contain moments of anxiety and even foreboding.

Our sages recognized this well when they cautioned us, "*Kol hatchalot kashot* – All beginnings are difficult!"

Endings, on the other hand, are not always negative. Sometimes it is good to close the book on an unfortunate set of circumstances and to exclaim, as we do on Rosh Hashanah Eve, "Let the past year and its curses be gone!"

Indeed, there are endings which are truly happy occasions, which represent the successful conclusions of long processes of efficient effort and hard work. Those endings celebrate achievement and accomplishment.

This week's Torah readings include two lengthy *parshiyot*, *Vayakhel* and *Pikudei*, and the supplemental reading of *Parshat HaChodesh*. These readings exemplify celebratory endings and hopeful new beginnings.

*Vayakhel* and *Pikudei* are twin portions, replete with technical details. They describe the completion of the construction of the Tabernacle, a significant accomplishment made even more significant because it was a process in which every Jew participated.

Additionally, with these readings, we conclude our study of the Book of *Exodus*, in its own right an achievement worthy of celebration. What can be a more joyous ending than a *siyum*, the completion of one of the most basic and essential books of the Bible?

One of the most powerful educational tools in our tradition is the festive party known as the *siyum*. Even the very young

Jewish student knows that when he or she finishes a chapter or a book of Torah, at least a modest party will mark the occasion. The cupcakes, or ice cream, or pizza of the *siyum* is the perfect reinforcement of the achievements of learning. Adults, too, celebrate *siyumim* and find them rewarding markers of adult learning. The grand *siyum* of the entire Talmud in which those who study *Daf Yomi*, a page of Talmud each day, has in our time become an event which fills large stadiums and in which tens of thousands participate.

We have, then, *two* happy endings this week: The completion of the first Jewish house of worship, so long ago in our history. And the completion, in which we all will participate this Shabbat, of a formidable section of our Torah.

This Shabbat is special too because it heralds a new beginning in the supplemental Torah portion, *Parshat HaChodesh* (*Exodus* 12:1-20), in which we hear the Almighty proclaim the upcoming month of *Nissan* (which begins next week on Tuesday, March 16) as the beginning of all the months on our calendar. A beginning of beginnings.

It is no coincidence that, although we call this month *Nissan*, it carries but one name in the Torah, *Chodesh Ha'Aviv*, the month of spring. For springtime is the ultimate beginning, nature's herald of newness and hope. No wonder, then, that spring was the season chosen by God for the Exodus long ago, and for the festival of Passover, which now approaches.

Every one of us endures numerous endings and beginnings in our lives. As we welcome a new month this Shabbat, it is profoundly appropriate that we reflect on those life events, attempt to transcend the challenges of those which were difficult, and celebrate those which are worthy of celebration.

This is a Sabbath of beginnings and endings for us all. Endings of *siyum*, accomplishment, and beginnings symbolized by the blossoms of spring signaling life and potential renewal.

What a wonderful, complex Shabbat this is!