

## Light Insight

### *No Previous Experience Required*

*“And each person whose heart motivated him came.”*

*(Exodus 35:21)*

**T**ake a look at the really wealthy people in the world. What is it that they all have in common? Tremendous initiative. Initiative means not focusing on what you have now, but having the confidence to project what might be, and to act on it.

“And each person whose heart motivated him came.”

When the Jewish People were commanded to build the

Tabernacle, an artifice of unique holiness in the world, the place that would house the Divine Presence, they were camped in the middle of the desert. On their way to the Land of Israel, rescued from years of Egyptian slavery, they were not by any means prepared for such a project. Skilled weavers, gold and silver smiths, carpenters and craftsmen of all kinds were required to construct the Tabernacle and its vessels according to G-d’s intricate instructions.

“And each person whose heart motivated him came.”

The workers who built the Tabernacle had to be motivated by their hearts because none of

them had any previous experience in the advanced skills necessary for building it, and there were no teachers to train them. They were the true pioneers. They were successful because they had the inner courage to come forth and volunteer to do whatever was needed. They didn’t think about their shortcomings. They projected their dreams, and G-d filled them with success.

Just as it takes great initiative to become materially wealthy, so too it takes great initiative to become spiritually wealthy. Capitalize on those peak moments of inspiration to focus your spiritual goals higher and higher, and you will get help from above to lift you to the skies.

## ETHICS of the FATHERS

*“On three things the world stands: On Torah, on Service and on Kindness.”*

**I**nterestingly, our Sages did not include in the list the quality of *Tzedaka*, charity. Rather they chose Kindness. Later commentators explain this in light of the following discussion in the Talmud:

Greater is Kindness than *Tzedaka*, for a kindness can be bestowed on both a rich person and on a poor person, while *Tzedaka* can only be given to the poor. Even a rich person sometimes needs a favor, or a little help, but a gift of money to a rich person isn’t *Tzedaka*.

Kindness can be done both for those that have passed away, and for those that are living, while *Tzedaka* can only be given to the living. Honoring

one’s memory by doing a mitzvah in his or her merit, or looking after his or her affairs or relatives is a kindness that can be done for a person that has passed on to the next world. No money can get to them there, however, and even money given to bail out the debt of a poor deceased person is really only *Tzedaka* for the living that might have to shoulder the debt.

Kindness can be done with one’s very body, while *Tzedaka* can only be given with one’s money. A kindness can be an act that one performs for someone else, or even a pleasant or supportive word at the right moment. *Tzedaka* can only be given with money or some object of value.

For these reasons, Kindness precedes *Tzedaka* for the list of Qualities upon which the world’s existence depends. As King David wrote in Psalms, “A world of Kindness He builds.”

## LOVE of the LAND

*Selections from classical Torah sources which  
express the special relationship between  
the People of Israel and the Land of Israel*

### Shunem

**W**henever the Prophet Elisha passed through Shunem he enjoyed the hospitality of a “great lady” who not only pro-

vided him with meals but also built for him a special guest room where he could comfortably stay. He rewarded her kindness by blessing her to give birth to a child, and several years later Elisha brought that child back to life after his sudden death.

An Arab village, Solem, marks the spot where all this took place and the nearest Jewish settlement is the Moshav Shitufi (Cooperative Settlement) of Merchavia.

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## Response Line

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### Blue Moon

*Stan Appleton wrote:*

*I am an assistant chaplain on a maximum security state floor in a local facility. In one of my recent services I was asked a question concerning the following. Could you please explain to me the Jewish calendar? In particular the additional month every seven years. Why it is added?*

Dear Stan,

The Jewish calendar is based on both the moon and the sun.

It is based on the moon, meaning that the first of the month coincides with the appearance of the new moon and the 15th coincides with the full moon, etc. It is based on the sun such that the holidays fall in the proper season, as the Torah says, “Observe the Spring month and make Passover...” (*Deuteronomy 15:1*) From this we see that Passover must fall in the spring.

The problem is that the sun doesn't seem to care much about what the moon is doing. The solar year, from spring to spring, is about 365 days long. But 12 lunar cycles are only 354 days, 11 days less than the

solar year. In other words, after twelve “moons” have passed, there are still 11 days left until spring.

If this situation were left uncorrected, Passover would fall each year 11 days earlier in the season than the year before. After a few years, Passover would fall in the middle of the winter.

The Jewish calendar is adjusted so that this doesn't happen. This is done by adding an extra month every couple of years. This creates a “leap year” with 13 months. A “leap year” occurs 7 times over the course of a 19 year cycle. (For the mathematically inclined:  $11 \times 19 = 209$ .  $209/30 = 7$  approximately). This insures that Passover comes out in the spring, Rosh Hashana in the fall, etc.

The added month is called Adar. That is, in a leap year, there are two months of Adar, Adar One and Adar Two.

It's interesting to contrast our calendar with the Christian and Moslem calendars. The Christian (Gregorian) calendar is totally solar based, with no regard to the moon. Every so often you even get a “blue moon,” a month with two full moons in it. The Moslem calendar, on the other hand is based totally on the moon, causing their festivals to rotate throughout the seasons. Some years Ramadan is in the summer, some years it's in the heart of winter. Our calendar, by contrast, is based on a synthesis of the solar and lunar motions.