



ONE Sabbath Torah Guide

After six days of artful work, on the final day of Creation, God rested. Every week, Jews also have the opportunity to take a step back from the craziness of daily life in order to rest, relax, and reenergize for the week to come. In reality, though the week may have ended, the work that needs to be accomplished in repairing our world is nowhere near complete. Though we all may choose to live our Jewish lives differently and to observe this moment of Jewish time known to us as Shabbat in our own unique and equally valid ways, we must use this sacred moment in time to join together in order to pursue the eradication of worldwide poverty and disease. ONE is dedicated to this goal and as a Jewish people we, too, must dedicate ourselves to dramatically improving the condition of our fellow beings around the world.

When our sacred Torah came into being generations ago, it seems as though the text always intended to speak to the present moment of the reader. So it is at the beginning of 2009, as we prepare to enter a new presidential administration with its call for hope and change, that we once again read our texts through the lens of our current reality. The Torah portions which span the first 100 days of President Barack Obama's administration are from the Books of Exodus and Leviticus and trace the journey of the Israelite Exodus from Egypt, the 10 commandments and many other laws, the building of the tabernacle, and particular emphasis on sacrificial obligations. What do these stories mean to us today? Would it be a stretch to say that like the Israelites, we are at the edge of the wilderness and beginning the treacherous journey to freedom? Are we a lawless and idolatrous community on whom new rules and regulations must be imposed? Are we on the brink of new leadership that will ultimately guide us into the Promised Land?

It is difficult to know what these next 100 days, much less four years, will bring. In these days, may we join together each week to celebrate our day of rest and in this moment of respite, let us also join together with ONE to eradicate global poverty. It is no surprise that our foundational Jewish texts compel and inspire us to this end. Jewish tradition teaches, "in every generation a person is obligated to look at herself as if she had come out of Egypt." We are to look at ourselves not only as slaves in Egypt, but as the widow and the orphan, the blind and the deaf, and most certainly the impoverished. Particularly in this season of Passover, may we remember that we, too, were slaves in the land of Egypt as we push to alleviate global hardship and let us seek comfort in the memory of the age-old struggles of our people who also sought to manage global challenges confronting their society.

The following guide pulls, when possible, relevant texts from each weekly Torah portion that highlight the pursuit of economic justice via fair wage practices, providing for the

hungry, magnanimous treatment of workers, welcoming the stranger, and many other facets of injustice and poverty. The suggested 'ONE issue,' which connects to the Torah texts when possible, provides the focus for each week. In weeks where the Torah portion does not relate directly to poverty issues, there are various texts for your choosing. When available, each portion has a relevant link(s) to Divrei Torah and relevant articles or quotes from Jewish leaders that span all movements and organizations.

May you go from strength to strength as you play your role in mending the world,
Jen Gubitz, HUC-JIR Rabbinical Student

Parashat Va'era

January 24, 2009/28 Tevet 5769

ONE Issue: Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord." See, I shall strike the water in the Nile with the rod that is in my hand, and it will be turned into blood; and the fish in the Nile will die. The Nile will stink so that the Egyptians will find it impossible to drink the water of the Nile. And the Lord said to Moses, "Say to Aaron: Take your rod and hold out your arm over the waters of Egypt – its rivers, its canals, its ponds, all its bodies of water – that they may turn to blood; there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and stone." Exodus 7:18-19

There is nothing in the world more grievous than poverty—the most terrible of sufferings. Our teachers said: All the troubles of the world are assembled on one side and poverty is on the other. Midrash Rabbah Exodus 31:12

Related links:

[The Earth is the Lord's](#), Dr. David Goldblatt

[ONE Calls on Senate to Ask Sen. Clinton about America's Global Poverty Efforts](#), ONE Campaign Press Release

Parashat Bo

January 31, 2009/6 Sh'vat 5769

ONE Issue: Agriculture and Food

There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you. Exodus 12:48-49

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a festival of the Lord. Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in all your territory. And you shall explain to your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt. Exodus 13:6-8

"When you are asked in the world to come, 'What was your work?' and you answer: 'I fed the hungry,' you will be told: 'This is the gate of the Lord, enter into it, you who have fed the hungry'" (Midrash to Psalm 118:17).

Related Links:

[Words Matter: Tikkun Olam](#), Rabbi Art Green

[The Morning After: Sustaining Social Change](#), Leonard Fein

Parashat B'shalach (Shirah)

February 7, 2009/13 Sh'vat 5769

ONE Issue: Water and Sanitation

And the Lord said to Moses, “I will rain down bread for you from the sky, and the people shall go out and gather each day that day’s portion – that I may thus test them, to see whether they will follow My instructions or not. But on the sixth day, when they apportion what they have brought in, it shall prove to be double the amount they gather each day.” Exodus 16:4-5

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pass before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel, and take along the rod with which you struck the Nile, and set out. I will be standing there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will issue from it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. Exodus 17:5-6

Related Links:

[Where the Wood Meets Water](#), Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz

[Acts of Justice, Shouts of Joy](#), Rabbi Elliot Rose Kukla

Parashat Yitro

February 14, 2009/20 Sh'vat 5769

ONE Issue: Development Assistance

As this portion does not have explicit texts relevant to poverty, please consider the following texts regarding charity from the Book of Daniel, Talmud Bava Batra, and Pirkei Avot.

They who provide charity for the many are like stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3

One who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses. Talmud Bava Batra 9a

Run to perform mitzvot...for one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah...and the consequence of a mitzvah is another mitzvah! Pirkei Avot 4:2

Rabbi Eleazar said: One who leads others to do good is greater than one who oneself does good, for it is said, “One who causes the giving of charity confers peace” (Isaiah 32:17) – Babylonian Talmud: Bava Batra 9a

If you want to raise a person from mud and filth, do not think it is enough to keep standing on top and reaching a helping hand down to the person. You must go all the way down yourself, down into mud and filth. Then take hold of the person with strong hands and pull the person and yourself out into the light. Rabbi Shelom of Karlin (18th Century)

Related Links:

[Redeem Those Enslaved](#), Rabbi James Jacobson-Maisels

[Yitro's Advice for the 21st Century](#), Rabbi Joshua Levine Grater

Parashat Mishpatim (Sh'kalim)

February 21, 2009/27 Sh'vat 5769

ONE Issue: Debt Cancellation

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. Exodus 22:20

You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their out-cry as soon as they cry out to Me, and My anger shall blaze forth... Exodus 22:21-22

If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, do not act toward them as creditor; exact no interest from them. If you take your neighbor's garment in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets; it is his only clothing, the sole covering for his skin. In what else shall he sleep? Exodus 22:24-26

Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves. (This permits poor people to take what they need.) Exodus 23:10-11

Related Links:

[Mishpatim: Having Yourselves Been Slaves in Egypt](#), Rabbi Lewis Eron

[Exodus Morality](#), Carol Towarnicky

Parashat T'rumah

February 28, 2009/4 Adar 5769

ONE ISSUE: Education

As this portion does not have explicit references to poverty, please consider the following texts.

Be mindful, then, that you do not spoil and destroy My world. For if you spoil it, there is no one after you to repair it. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

Let your house be open wide and let the needy be members of your household. Pirkei Avot 1:5

Who is mighty? One who sees someone who has fallen into a pit and lifts that person out. Midrash Psalms 52:6

Related Links:

[Is G-d Present in Our Consumption?](#), Ariel Shalem

Parashat T'tzaveh (Zachor)

March 7, 2009/11 Adar 5769

ONE Issue: Agriculture and Food

This is what you shall do to them in consecrating them to serve Me as priests: Take a young bull of the herd and two rams without blemish; also unleavened bread, unleavened cakes with oil mixed in and unleavened wafers spread with oil – make these of choice wheat flour. Exodus 29:1-2

You shall take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in the sacred precinct; and Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. These things shall be eaten only by those for whom expiation was made with them when they were ordained and consecrated; they may not be eaten by a layman, for they are holy. Exodus 29:31-33

Related Links:

[Responsible Clothing](#), Rabbi Dorothy A. Richman

Parashat Ki Tisa (Parah)

March 14, 2009/18 Adar 5769

ONE Issue: MDGs

Everyone who is entered in the records, from the age of twenty years up, shall give the Lord's offering: the rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than half a shekel when giving the Lord's offering... Exodus 30:14

You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread – eating unleavened bread for seven days, as I have commanded you – at the time set of the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you went forth from Egypt. Exodus 34:18

The choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk. Exodus 34:26

And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. Exodus 34:28

Related Links:

[Tzedakah And Jewish Education](#), Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson

[Positive Communal Action](#), Laura Safran

Parashat Vayak'heil/P'kudei (Hachodesh)

March 21, 2009/25 Adar 5769

ONE Issue: Child and Maternal Health

As these portions do not have explicit references to poverty, please consider the following texts from the Talmud and Proverbs.

In the way of righteousness I will go, in the midst of the paths of justice. Proverbs 8:20

Providing charity for poor and hungry people weighs as heavily as all the other commandments of the Torah combined. Talmud Bava Batra 9a

Rabbi Yitzchak said: Whoever gives even a small coin to a poor man receives six blessings, but whoever speaks reassuringly to him receives eleven. Talmud Bava Batra 9b

The diligent go early to perform mitzvot. Talmud Pesachim 4a

The world rests on a single pillar: righteousness. Talmud Chagigah 12b

Related Links:

[Table for Two](#), Rabbi Phil Miller

[Planting the Seeds for Self-Sufficiency](#), Ahuc Sela

Parashat Vayikra

March 28, 2009/3 Nisan 5769

ONE Issue: Education

When a person presents an offering of meal to the Lord, his offering shall be of choice flour; he shall pour oil upon it, lay frankincense on it and present it to Aaron's sons, the priests. The priest shall scoop out of it a handful of its choice flour and oil, as well as all of its frankincense; and this token portion he shall turn into smoke on the altar, as an offering by fire, of pleasing odor to the Lord. And the remainder of the meal offering shall be for Aaron and his sons, a most holy portion from the Lord's offerings by fire. Leviticus 2:1-3

You shall season your every offering of meal with salt; you shall not omit from your meal offering the salt of your covenant with God; with all your offerings you must offer salt. Leviticus 2:13

The priest shall turn these into smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire, of pleasing odor. All fat is the Lord's. It is a law for all time throughout the ages, in all your settlements: you must not eat any fat or any blood. Leviticus 3:16-17

Related Links:

[The Pending Guilt Offering and the Global Climate](#), Rabbi Shlomo Levin and Jonathan Neril

Parashat Tzav (Hagadol)

April 4, 2009/10 Nisan 5769

ONE Issue: Trade

Further, any meal offering that is baked in an oven, and any that is prepared in a pan or on a griddle, shall belong to the priest who offers it. But every other meal offering, with oil mixed in or dry, shall go to the sons of Aaron all alike. Leviticus 7:9-10

And the flesh of his thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being shall be eaten on the day that it is offered; none of it shall be set aside until morning. Leviticus 7:15

If, however, the sacrifice he offers is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and what is left of it shall be eaten on the morrow. What is then left of the flesh of the sacrifice shall be consumed in fire on the third day. Leviticus 7:16-17

Related Links:

[From Guilt to Action](#), Rabbi Dorothy Richman

Chol HaMoeid Pesach

April 11, 2009/17 Nisan 5769

ONE Issue: Development Assistance

Even the poorest person in Israel may not eat until he reclines, and they must not give him less than four cups of wine. Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 9b

HaLachma Anya, di achalu avahatana b'ar'a d'mitzrayim. This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in need come and celebrate the Passover. Passover Haggadah Ha Lachma Anya

This year we are slaves. Next year, may we all be free. Haggadah, Ha Lachma Anya

Related Links:

[Why Is This Night Different From All Others?](#), Jewish Council for Public Affairs

[The Bread of Poverty, The Bread of Redemption](#), Rabbi David Seidenberg

Parashat Sh'mini

April 18, 2009/24 Nisan 5769

ONE Issue: Agriculture and Food

And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: Drink no wine or other intoxicant, you or your sons, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die. This is a law for all time

throughout the ages, for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean. Leviticus 10:8

Speak to the Israelite people thus: These are the creatures that you may eat from among all the land animals: any animal that has true hoofs, with clefts through the hoofs, and that chews the cud – such you may eat. Leviticus 11:2-3

These you may eat of all that live in water: anything in water, whether in the seas or in the streams, that has fins and scales – these you may eat. Leviticus 11:9

Related Links:

[Considering Our Food Choices](#), Rabbi Elliot Rose Kukla
[Bestowing Gifts in a Meaningful Way](#), Beth Kalisch

Parashat Tazria/M'tzora (Rosh Chodesh) no text

April 25, 2009/1 Iyar 5769

ONE Issue: HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria

You shall put the Israelites on guard against their uncleanness, lest they die through their uncleanness by defiling My Tabernacle which is among them. Leviticus 15:31

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel said, "The world stands on three things: justice, truth and peace." And these three are actually one thing. When justice is served, truth is done and peace is made. Palestinian Talmud, Ta'anit 4:2, 68a

Related Links:

[Leper as "Other"](#), Lydia Bloom
[Water for Life](#), Carol Towarnicky
[Unclean](#), David Segal