

What Needs Fixing?



Parshat Haazinu: *Deuteronomy 32:1-32:52; II Samuel 22:1-22:51.*

Dr. David Luchins, a professor at Philadelphia's Touro College and frequent lecturer at Aish HaTorah, recalled the following story.

On the morning after Yom Kippur in September 1993, U.S. Sen. Daniel Moynihan and the professor had a private meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. Moynihan had requested the meeting at the behest of Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik, who had a number of questions about the newly signed Oslo Accords.

Peres was eager for Soloveichik's support for this undertaking and gave detailed answers to every question. At the end, Moynihan thanked Peres for his "strong support of the Aish HaTorah Jerusalem Fellowships." (The senator was a founding honorary chairman of the Aish program.)

Peres grew animated, "Senator, let me tell you why I support the Jerusalem Fellowships and yeshivot. Over 60 years ago when I was 8 years old, I was already an ardent Labor Zionist. I had a religious uncle who was upset by my lack of faith and dragged me to the village of Radin to meet the venerable Yisroel Meir Kagan, also known as the Chofetz Chaim.

"The old rabbi and I had quite a talk. He quoted Maimonides, and I responded with Marx. He quoted Talmud, and I quoted [Zionist leader Menachem] Ushishkin.

"Then he began to cry and put his hands on my head and blessed me saying, 'The Almighty gave me long life. He should give you the same. You should go as you wish to Israel and become a great leader of the Jewish people; but remember, my child, that you can't have a Jewish state without the Almighty and the Almighty's Torah.'"

At this point, Peres grew quite emotional, "Senator," he declared, "Yesterday was Yom Kippur. I do not fast all day. My wife does. I do not spend the day in synagogue. But every Yom Kippur night I think of that old rabbi and realize how true his words were."

Peres knew that Israel and the Jewish nation could not exist without Torah. He

understood that Torah is relevant to all Jews and is crucial to the future of the Jewish people.

Throughout Jewish history, ideologies have risen to replace Torah and mitzvot. In our recent history, the Enlightenment movement claimed that the future of the Jewish people depended on being "a Jew in the house and a German in the street." In the early 1900s, it was Zionism that claimed Jewish continuity is dependent on having our own state. Today, it's *tikkun olam*, repair the world.



Rabbi Simcha Tolwin

Rabbi Aaron Starr of Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield wrote on the Times of Israel website on Oct. 5 that "perhaps it is *tikkun olam* itself that is destroying the Jewish community. Perhaps it's time to say Kaddish for *tikkun olam*."

I believe *tikkun olam* has become the new "ism" to replace the essence of what it means to be Jewish. We have sold out *tikkun olam* as just another "ism" and are ignoring its true meaning. The new *tikkun olam* has, unfortunately, replaced Torah and mitzvot and is leading us on a path of assimilation and apathy.

Tikkun olam comes from the Aleinu prayer, but we lopped off the rest of the sentence! The complete phrase is *l'takkain olam b'malchut Shadai* —to repair the world "with the glory of God."

The greatest Jewish contribution to the world is the idea of One God Above — the creator and sustainer of the world who loves you. Of course, we are at the forefront of social causes *because* we are the "God people."

Peres knew that nothing can replace the Torah and mitzvot; they are the only guarantor of your families' Jewish continuity. So let's make Kiddush on *tikkun olam* and sanctify it. Let's make *tikkun olam* about God.

As Lori Palatnik, founding director of the Jewish Women's Renaissance Project, says, "It's time for the Jewish people to once again be the God people." This is *tikkun olam*. *

Rabbi Simcha Tolwin is executive director of Aish Detroit. Read Rabbi Starr's blog on tikkun olam on page 20.

20th Annual Fall Fix Up Join us November 6th!

3 Ways to Fix Up this Fall with Jewish Family Service!

Fix Up in your Community

Families, friends, and community groups are invited to come help homebound older adults prepare for winter.

All ages welcome!

Meet at Congregation Shaarey Zedek at 9:30am for breakfast and supply pick-up.

Fix Up the Cemetery

Young adults will be working at the historic B'nai David Cemetery to restore and beautify the grounds.

Meet at 9:30am at the B'nai David Cemetery. Breakfast will be provided.

9535 Van Dyke Road, Detroit

In partnership with NextGen, Repair the World and Hillel of Metro Detroit

Fall Fix Up Block Party

6th-12th graders earn community service credit while giving back in their community!

Registration and pizza lunch starts at 12:15pm.

Transportation provided.

Drop off and pick up at Adat Shalom Synagogue.

In partnership with J-Serve and Repair the World

To register, visit jfsdetroit.org/fallfixup or contact Lindsay Leder at (248) 592-2309 or lleder@jfsdetroit.org.

Jewish Family Service

Fall Fix Up is generously Sponsored by:

Presenting Sponsor:



LSG INSURANCE PARTNERS
Brokers & Advisors



PROFESSIONAL PARENT CARE



CONGREGATION SHAAREY ZEDEK

2129780