

Devarim; Shabbos Chazon 2023

Mistakes Were Made

3 minute read | Straightforward

As the Torah wraps up its story, it records every stop between Egypt and the border of the Promised Land. Moshe retells the story of their journey together and does the same.

It's a nice recap, but it seems odd on closer inspection.

Some of the stops were simple rest stops where nothing relevant happened. On a road trip, the gas station and toilet break aren't part of the itinerary; Moshe includes them.

Far more surprisingly, he lists all the places they screwed up. He names and shames each one; the places they clashed with Moshe and defied God, the places they worshipped idols, the places they surrendered to materialism, and the places they succumbed to desire.

It's surprising because humans don't usually emphasize or highlight failures; we typically avoid the stigma and negativity associated with talking about failure.

Imagine reminiscing with your significant other about that restaurant where you had a huge argument. Or that Pesach you insulted your mother-in-law. They're not the kind of thing that lend themselves to reminiscence.

One conventional answer is that our actions impact our surroundings; our actions have a ripple effect in the world that leaves some residual mark or impact that lingers on our environment, for better and worse. That's probably true.

But perhaps there is a simple yet profound teaching here.

To learn from mistakes.

King David famously states that his sin is constantly before him in his mind's eye. It's not an admission of a perpetual guilt complex; the word he uses is related to the notion of mistakes. He didn't forget his mistake; he recalled it. It's wise!

There is deep wisdom in emphasizing failure.

You mustn't forget your mistakes; you must learn from them.



There's a popular folk saying in hard times; if everyone were to put their bundle of challenges into a pile and everyone head to claim one, most would choose their own.

The conventional explanation is based on a preference for familiarity; the devil you know.

But perhaps there might be something more profound to it

It's an acknowledgment of our individual paths in life. Your challenges and mistakes are the building blocks of what makes you uniquely you; you are your story. To pick someone else's story is to stop being you and be someone else entirely.

Picking and choosing is impossible; your story is yours, and theirs is theirs. Our trials and our errors shape us uniquely, weaving the tapestry of our existence.

Your bundle of challenges and tribulations isn't just yours because it's familiar; if there is a Creator and Providence, it is, in essence, designed for you. When the universe puts us in a challenging situation, that challenge has your name on it; it is destined and meant for you.

We ought to humbly remind ourselves that sometimes the circumstances win and judge others accordingly.

The Torah teaches this wisdom by acknowledging the places our ancestors faltered. It reminds us to remember that happens, and it's something we do too, and there's no need to pretend otherwise. It's part of our story on a national level; it's part of the human condition. We should integrate our failures.

It's not an ascending narrative that tells a story of things getting better, or a descending narrative tells a story of things getting worse. It is an oscillating narrative, that tells a story of ups and downs, triumphs and failures, joy and despair, growth and regression. The terrible, painful times, but we got through them. The best of times we enjoyed, and when they didn't last, we survived no matter what.

Everyone makes mistakes. Some minor, some not. Some are recoverable, some not. But don't forget them.

Mistakes are part of life, and the Torah integrates them into the human story because even in mistakes, there exists a possibility of redemption.

Learn from mistakes. Just remember they don't all have to be yours.

Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost

3 minute read | Straightforward

There are parts of the Torah that we all love, with fond memories of the wonder of learning them for the first time, like the Creation story, Avraham's first encounters with God, the Ten Plagues, and Sinai. Hopefully, it's not sacrilegious to observe that some parts are a little less riveting, like the Mishkan's design-build, the laws of sacrifices, and the 42 locations in the wilderness the Jewish People visited on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land:

אֵלֶּה מַסְעֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְצִבְאוֹתָם בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן
(33:1)

It's worth asking what the point of this is. The Torah is not a history journal; it exists to teach all people for all time. Here we are, 3000 years later, tediously reading about rest stops.

Why does it matter at all?

In a sense, it's the wrong question to ask, and it betrays the kind of thinking we are all guilty of.

We have this expectation and perception of linear progress, consciously or not, that our lives should be a straight road, leading directly and smoothly to our destination. What's more, we are relentlessly focussed on the outcome, where we are going. And then we get frustrated and feel sabotaged when invariably, it doesn't pan out that way!

But this is a stiff and unrealistic view of not only progress but life itself. Progress is incremental and organic, not linear or mechanical.

If you've ever driven long-distance, there are a few things you just know. You can't go straight as the crow flies, so you know you're going to have to follow the signs that guide your way carefully to get to the right place. You know you will probably miss an exit when you're not paying attention, and it'll cost you 15 minutes rerouting until you are back on track. You know you will need to stop for gas and bathroom breaks. You know there will be long stretches of open road where you can cruise, and there will be times you will get stuck in traffic. You know you will have to get off the highway at some point and take some small unmarked local streets. We know this.

We trivialize the journey, and we really mustn't. Sure, there are huge one-off watershed moments in our lives; but the moments in between matter as well – they're not just filler! While they might not be our final glorious destination, the small wins count and stack up.



The Sfas Emes notes how the Torah highlights each step we took to put Egypt behind us – מִסְעֵי מִצְרַיִם. We might not get where we're going so quickly – but if Egypt is behind us, then that means we must still be moving forwards. As we get further away from our point of origin, we should keep it in the rearview mirror to orient us as a reference point to remind us that we're headed in the right direction. However long it takes to get where we're going, and however bumpy and curved the road is, it's important to remember why we got started in the first place.

The 42 stops along the way were not the optimal way to get from Egypt to Israel. It doesn't take 40 years to travel from Egypt to Israel. But it happened that way, and the Torah tells us this for 3000 years and posterity because that's the way life is, and we can disavow ourselves of the notion that progress or life should somehow be linear. The process is not a necessary evil – it is the fundamental prerequisite to getting anywhere, even if it's not where we expected, and it's worth paying attention to.

We put Egypt behind us one step at a time. We get to the Promised Land one step at a time. Any step away from Egypt is a substantial achievement – even if it's not a step in the physical direction of the Promised Land, it truly is a step towards the Promised Land.

It's about the journey, not the destination.

The journey is anything but direct, and there are lots of meandering stops along the way. It might seem boring and unnecessary – I left Egypt, and I'm going to Israel! But that's the kind of thinking we have to short circuit. It's not a distraction – it's our life.

Life isn't what happens when you get there; life is every step along the way.

Who Watches the Watchman?

6 minute read | Straightforward

The Torah details many laws that help regulate society. As with any legal system, the Torah anticipates that sometimes people will fail, break the law, and what to do about it.

But sometimes, it's already too late. Some crimes go unsolved in what is called a cold case, when there are no leads, no suspects, and no witnesses, which is particularly dangerous for the obvious reason that the perpetrator remains at large and unidentified.

The Torah describes such an example.



In the event an unidentified body is discovered in an unpopulated area, the Torah commands a specific and highly bizarre ritual, where the elders and leaders of the closest city take a calf to a nearby river or stream, break its neck, and make a public proclamation they didn't kill this innocent person:

וְעִנּוּ, וְאָמְרוּ: לֹא שָׁפְכוּ אֶת-הַדָּם הַזֶּה, וְעֵינֵינוּ, לֹא רָאוּ. כִּפָּר לְעַמֶּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-פָּדִיתָ, ה', וְאֶל-תַּתּוֹן דָּם נָקִי, בְּקֶרֶב עַמֶּה יִשְׂרָאֵל; הֵם הָיוּ הַמְּבַעֲרִים הַדָּם הַזֶּה מִקִּרְבֵּנוּ: כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂה הַיְיָ, בְּעֵינֵי ה' – וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם, הַדָּם. וְאָתָּה, תִּבְעֵר הַדָּם הַנָּקִי-מִקִּרְבֵּנוּ: כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂה הַיְיָ, בְּעֵינֵי ה' – וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם, הַדָּם. (21:7-9)

Beyond the specifics of the ritual that require their own explanation, it's quite something for the Torah to require the elders, sages, and leaders to say they weren't the killers.

Would anyone seriously suspect that they were?

Rashi explains the proclamation to mean that they didn't know there was a traveler and therefore were not complicit in the murder by letting them travel in a dangerous area alone. The Sforno similarly explains that they must affirm that they didn't knowingly permit a murderer to roam free.

The Chasam Sofer takes a very different approach, observing that it is straightforward to say the murder was not their fault, but they don't get to say that. In this reading, the ceremony is not a declaration of innocence; but a public statement of collective responsibility and guilt, a confession and acknowledgment that the crime happened on their watch.

Or in other words, there is no question of why the Torah summons the elders and sages and leaders to answer for the quiet mystery death of an innocent; it's the answer.

“Our hands didn't kill this person; we didn't hold the knife, or the gun, or give them the pills. But that's as far as we can go in disclaiming responsibility. Because we weren't looking, we weren't paying the close attention this person deserved and needed, so the criminal – and the victim – slipped right through our fingers.”

When the Torah describes the Mishkan construction process, it presents an exhaustive account of each donation because the leaders were publicly accountable for each contribution; and that's just for finances! As the Lubavitcher Rebbe said, people are not dollars.

If you are surprised the Torah requires leaders to account for human life, then, like the sages who perform the ritual, you haven't been paying attention.

In the section detailing the rituals for sacrificial atonement, the Torah talks about leaders who make mistakes:



אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יִחַטָּא וְעָשָׂה אַחַת מִכָּל־מִצְוֹת הַ אֲלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂינָהּ בְּשִׁגְגָה וְאִשָּׁם – When a leader incurs guilt by doing unwittingly any of the things which God commanded not to do, and he realizes his guilt... (4:22)

The Torah plainly and unambiguously talks about when, and not if, leaders make mistakes because avoiding mistakes in power is impossible; we need to stop pretending otherwise because denying errors compounds them and makes things worse. Very few people expect a society without any wrongdoing, but corruption and impotence in dealing with misconduct are highly destructive; the cover-up is always worse than the crime.

When politics demands a lie, but people demand the truth, you get corruption. Leaders that face painful truths are not just morally preferable; they save lives. Wilfully blind leaders playing make-believe about real problems in our community alienate and disillusion people who care, weakening their ties to a community that won't show care and concern to the people who need it! We can't afford to tolerate leaders who fixate on maintaining the illusion of infallible perfection and divine knowledge. We will never correct our community's mistakes so long as we deny them and don't confront them. While we can't reasonably expect perfect leaders, we can reasonably expect perfectly compassionate and honest leaders who will do what is right and proper.

On Yom Kippur, the great Day of Atonement, the Kohen Gadol's first atonement ritual is a personal confession for himself and his family, publicly owning his mistakes.

Every year before Tisha b'Av, we publicly read Isaiah's explicit rage against corrupt leadership and broken institutions that don't protect the vulnerable – רָחֲצוּ הַזְּכוֹת הַסִּירוּ רֵעַ מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם מִנְגִּיד עֵינַי חֲדָלוּ הֲרַע: לְמַדּוּ הֵיטֵב בְּדַרְשׁוֹ מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁרוֹ חֲמוּץ שִׁפְטוֹ יָתוֹם רִיבוֹ אֶלְמָנָה... שָׂרִיד סוֹרְרִים וְחֲבָרֵי גִבּוֹרִים כָּלוּ אֶהָב שָׁחַד וְרָדַף שְׁלֹמֹנִים יָתוֹם לֹא יִשְׁפֹּטוּ וְרִיב אֶלְמָנָה לֹא־יָבוֹא אֲלֵיהֶם.

The Ibn Ezra explains that the Torah is suggesting that when something terrible happens in a community, that community has some introspection and soul searching to do. In fact, this is the Rambam's universal guidance on how to respond to tragedy; bad things happen in a climate and environment, and we can identify the factors that make them more likely to occur in a given context and change them.

We don't often have to deal with murders in our community, but the Torah doesn't explicitly talk about murder at all – כִּי־יִמָּצָא חֵלֶל בְּאֶדְמָה... נִפְלַ בְּשִׂדָּה לֹא נוֹדַע מִי הִכָּהוּ –

R' Aaron Lopiansky teaches that we must not mistakenly classify sexual abuse as a sin or misdemeanor. It is no exaggeration to say that sexual abuse is a matter of life and death, among the most severe crimes a human can commit, right alongside murder, which ties back into the severity of the sage's confession over an unidentified body.

If a survivor of abuse commits suicide, who really killed them?



R' Aharon Lichtenstein warns against resorting to the no-true-Scotsman fallacy – “he wasn’t really one of us!” We don’t get to disclaim wrongdoers after the fact when they fit in seamlessly alongside the best and brightest our community has to offer until being found out. We have to be willing to ask the difficult question of what allowed them to hurt vulnerable people yet blend right in with us.

There are good reasons why victims are scared to report crimes in our community, and if you want to sleep well at night, make sure you’re not one of them. People who have experienced abuse and trauma are not damaged goods, not pitiful, stained misfits who deserve your deepest sympathies. It’s not their fault. You need to believe them, and you need to believe in them. The abuser’s best friend is the Sefer Chofetz Chaim; they rely on and exploit the fact that their victim will remain silent.

You can be very sure there are victimized and vulnerable people in your circles. If you don’t know of any offhand, you ought to wonder why no one trusts you enough to share that with you. It starts with not turning away or keeping silent when people misguidedly or maliciously defend abusers; victims must know in their bones that you are with them all the way, otherwise you are complicit.

The Torah uses emotion extremely sparingly, so we ought to sit up and notice when it does. The way the Torah uses the imagery of spilled innocent blood to demand the sages publicly beg forgiveness is particularly powerful; the Torah has no tolerance for unanswered crimes, where the victim dies alone and invisible – וְאֵל-תִּתֶּן דָּם נָקִי, בְּקִרְבַּי עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל; וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם, הַדָּם. וְאַתָּה, תִּבְעֵר הַדָּם. הַנָּקִי-מִקְרָבָךְ –

Every time one of our institutions acts to protect a victimizer instead of the victim, we fail that test.

On Shabbos, Jewish communities worldwide for generations have said a prayer for the victims with a particularly stirring line:

כִּי-דִרְשׁ דְּמִים אוֹתָם זָכַר לֹא-שָׁכַח צְעָקַת עֲנָוִים – For He does not ignore the cry of the distressed; He who requites bloodshed is mindful of them.

The Torah plainly and unambiguously demands that leaders take extreme ownership and recognize the systemic failures that lead to an innocent person’s untimely death, with a ritual of collective responsibility for contributory negligence, that they did not meet their duties of care to the standards the victim required.

Today, purging ourselves from the guilt of innocent blood and doing what is right and proper in the eyes of God means allegations should be taken seriously and thoroughly, and impartially investigated. We do what is right and proper by upholding the rule of law, applying the law evenly, without fear or favor, even if the accused is someone we care about and look up to. Call the police, and report the abuse. Make sure the authorities know and make sure competent mental health professionals are involved. If there’s the slightest hint of impropriety or wrongdoing, the institution must reorganize.



The Torah's consistent vision of our society is that we stand up for each other, and most especially for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Systemic failures in our entire communal framework allow such things to happen, and the Torah calls on the leaders of that framework to account for bad things that happen on their watch.

“We didn't see! We didn't know!” These excuses don't cut it when your head is in the sand and you didn't do anything last time around. The errors and omissions for things we weren't paying attention to are still sins that require rectification on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur – שוגג / על חטא שחטאנו ביודעים – ובלא יודעים.

If good people don't enforce what is right and proper against abusers and criminals because we're afraid of backlash or negative attention, then the abusers and criminals win by default because no one bothered to stop them.

It's not the mayor, Rosh Yeshiva, or local rabbi who must perform the ritual; it's all of them, which is to say that no one gets to say it's not their fault. We are responsible for both our actions and inactions.

Who watches the watchers? All of us – שפטים ושטרים תתוקלך בכל־שעריך –

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing. We deserve leaders who protect the people who need it most, and we ought to demand that; if we can't disempower bad leaders, we need new institutions and leadership.

Leaders are responsible for their communities, but communities are responsible for who they choose to follow.

As the Mishna in Avos reminds us, find yourself a teacher.

Chazon; Vision Through Frosted Glass

6 minute read | Straightforward

The Jewish calendar associates certain times and places with different events and emotions. In the summer, the Jewish calendar marks several days and weeks for mourning in general, and in particular, the loss of sovereignty in the land of Israel, and especially the destruction of the religious order of the Temple.

Believing that history is written by God's hand alone, our sages do not accept the notion that the Roman Empire went up against the God of Israel and won a victory; rather, our sages teach that there



was a fatal flaw in the Jewish People's religious observance that gave rise to a weakness the enemy could exploit. In the instance of the loss of the Second Temple, our sages attribute the weakness to baseless hatred and internal strife. People talk about this a lot, that working on this weakness is the mechanism to right all wrongs and restore the Temple and Jewish sovereignty and invite a new utopian era of history.

But not enough people talk about why the First Temple fell, which ought to be surprising because the reasons are extremely well documented.

While our sages can only speculate why the Second Temple fell, the reasons the First Temple fell is crystal clear for the simple reason that it took place in the age of the last prophets.

If we wanted to know what issues plagued a society to the extent it could destroy or prevent a Temple from existing, God's prophets have some thoughts on the matter.

We ought to want to understand the issues that cause the loss of a Temple because they are the issues that preclude a new one from materializing. Our Sages suggest that each generation that does not see it rebuilt has participated in its destruction; a generation that hasn't resolved the issues that cause the loss of a Beis HaMikdash isn't ready for one. In other words, if we don't have a solution, we are part of the problem.

The crescendo of the days of mourning is Tisha b'Av, and the Shabbos before is always Parshas Devarim, also known as Shabbos Chazon, named for the opening words of the Haftara, Isaiah's Vision – תזון ישעיהו –

Isaiah's words are so clear and sharp they need little embellishment or explanation. He speaks through his doomed audience in words that reverberate through the ages in the hope that one day we might actually pay attention:

שמעו דבר-ה קציני סדם האזינו תורת אלהינו עם עמרה. למה-לי רב-זבחיכם יאמר ה שבעתאי עלות אילים וחלב מריאים ודם פרים וכבשים ועתודים לא תפצתי. כי תבאו לראות פני מי-בקש זאת מידיכם רמס חצרי. לא תוסיפו הביא מנחת-שןא קטרת תועבה היא לי החדש ושבת קרא מקרא לא-אוכל און ועצרה. חדשיכם ומועדיכם שנאה נפשי היו עלי לטרה נלאיתי נשא. ובפרשכם פפיקם אעלים עיני מכם גם פי-תרבו תפלה אינני שמע ידיכם דמים מלאו. רחצו הזכו הסירו רע מעלליכם מנגד עיני חדלו הרע. למדו היטב דרשו משפט אשרו חמוץ שפטו יתום ריבו אלמנה.

“Listen to Hashem, you leaders of Sodom. Listen to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah!”

“What makes you think I want all your sacrifices?” says Hashem. “I am stuffed from your burnt offerings and sacrifices of rams and the fat of cattle. I get no pleasure from the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats. When you come to worship me, who asked you to parade through my courts with all your ceremony? Stop bringing me your meaningless gifts; the incense of your offerings disgusts me!”



“Your celebrations of Rosh Chodesh and Shabbos and your fast days are all sinful and false. I want no more of your pious meetings! I hate your new moon celebrations and your annual festivals. They are a burden to me. I cannot stand them! When you raise your hands in prayer, I will not look. Though you might offer many prayers, I will not listen because your hands are covered with the blood of innocents!

“Wash yourselves and become clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways; learn to do good. Seek justice! Help the oppressed and vulnerable! Defend the cause of orphans! Fight for the rights of widows!” – (1:10-17)

There were many prophets and prophecies whose names and stories are lost; they were not included in the canon of Tanach. The ones that were selected were included because of their resonance beyond their time.

The prophet rails against bribery, broken institutions, corruption, and perversion of justice as the ultimate crimes. If a society’s institutions are too crooked to protect the people who need them, those people can be stepped on with impunity. That society, in a subtle, but very real way, endorses and protects criminals and predators, that society is morally bankrupt and not fit for purpose.

These aren’t relics of the past; they’re part and parcel of the world we live in, a constant specter we must battle against. A permanent victory that vanquishes evil forever is childish fantasy; even the most ideal world would still require a justice system. It’s not a flaw; it’s a feature of human choice.

But when our society is challenged, when evil rears its ugly head, how do we respond? Do we respond decisively and with finality? Or with denial, hesitancy, and lip service?

The prophet is emphatic that the individuals in his society did not personally take up the fight for the vulnerable people who needed someone in their corner:

– רְחֲצוּ הַזִּכּוֹ הַסִּירוּ רַע מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם מִנְגֵד עֵינַי הַדְּלוּ הָרַע. לְמַדּוֹ הַיֵּטֵב דְרָשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט אֲשֶׁרוֹ הִמּוֹץ שְׁפֹטוּ יְתוֹם רִיבוֹ אֶלְמָנָה – Wash yourselves and become clean! Get your sins out of my sight. Give up your evil ways; learn to do good. Seek justice! Help the oppressed and vulnerable! Defend the cause of orphans! Fight for the rights of widows!

The prophet’s words are chilling.

You cannot hide behind institutions. How many vulnerable people do you know? Are they getting all the help they need? What are you doing about it? And are you so sure those institutions are doing everything possible?

How often do we learn of another aguna, another fraud, another molester, another scandal, and another cover-up. How many times have once-great institutions and leaders failed to remove



malfeasors from their prey or even acknowledge them as the predators they are? It is the highest betrayal, and it is a crime against the victim and the Jewish People.

We are not a community if we do not protect and ease the burdens of our brothers and sisters. When individuals have been proven dangerous, whether on the balance of probabilities or beyond a reasonable doubt, we should not tolerate their influence or presence. If you're wondering which incident this is a veiled reference to, that says a lot about where we are and how much work we have to do.

A generation that does not see the Temple rebuilt has participated in its destruction.

It's crucial to understand the prophet's specific criticism correctly. Isaiah's words are not a polemic against leaders or the establishment, and nor is this. It was and is a call to action directly to each of us as individuals, not to hide behind or rely on institutions or anybody else to get help to the people who need it.

They and we need you.

Our society has much to be proud of today, but make no mistake; we cannot launder or buy off mediocrity in one area with excellence in another. The prophet acknowledges that the people of that time were diligent and meticulous in their prayer and sacrifice, yet awful at other things, and it wasn't enough to save them.

The quantity and quality of Torah study and charity in the world today are phenomenal and unprecedented in history; we should rightly be proud, but let's not kid ourselves that there's still lots more to do. We know precisely what God thinks when people need our help and go neglected and unassisted:

לְמָה-לִּי רַב-זִבְחֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר ה' שֹׁבַעַתִּי עֲלוֹת אֵילִים וְחֶלֶב מְרִיאִים וְדָם פְּרִים וְכִבְשִׂים וְעֹתוּדִים לֹא תַפְצְתִּי – “I am stuffed from your burnt offerings and sacrifices of rams and the fat of cattle. The blood of bulls, lambs and goats does nothing for Me!” (1:11)

The lessons we ought to learn from history knock on our door regularly. In Moshe's parting address to the people he spent his life trying to save, he admonishes their refusal to be receptive:

אָדַבַּר אֲלֵיכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם – “I spoke, yet you would not listen!” (1:43)

We see problems around us, and we do not do enough to fix them. If someone has financial issues, family issues, health issues, or can't get into school, you ought to know that thoughts and prayers are not the solutions those problems require.



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If you see something wrong, do not make our ancestors' mistake of hiding behind false piety. Get involved and lend a hand in fixing the problems in your community. And if you have some money, open the checkbook – but don't forget to roll your sleeves up, or else you're just hiding behind other people in a slightly more sophisticated way.

How can we fast, weep, and pray when there are so many abused, hungry, poor, and other vulnerable people in our communities? Our wonderful charities and outstanding individuals and organizations lead the way for the rest of us, but they do not satisfy our personal obligations. If we had a Temple today, we couldn't be trusted to keep it; otherwise, it would be here by now.

If it's too hard to cry for tragedies we never experienced, tragedies we are thousands of years removed from, maybe that's fair enough. But then let's cry for now; for how far we are from where we could be, for the agony in our communities that's way too close for comfort. Cry for the injustices around you that you don't seem to do anything about.

צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפָּט תִּפְדָּה וְשִׁבְיָהּ בְּצִדְקָה – “Zion will be redeemed through justice; its restoration will be through righteousness.” (1:27)

It is easy to make that difference; resolve to be better in a meaningful and substantial way.

Help people find jobs and grow their businesses. Give more charity. Give food and clothes away. Volunteer more. Make sure no child is left without a school. Stop bullying in school, shul, and work. Get involved in your community's events and organizations. Use any influence you have, talk to influential people, and make that difference. Even if it's just you alone, take responsibility for some of the people around you who don't yet know that you are someone they can rely on for the helping hand they need.

If the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing, are you so sure you're not one of them?

I present TorahRedux l'ilui nishmas my late grandfather, HaGaon HaRav Yehuda Leib Gertner ben HaRav HaChassid Menachem Mendel.

I hope you enjoyed this week's thoughts. If you have questions or comments, or just want to say hello, it's a point of pride for me to hear from you, and I'll always respond. And if you saw, heard, read, or watched anything that spoke to you, please send it my way - Neli@TorahRedux.com.

If you liked this week's edition of TorahRedux, why not share it with friends and family who would appreciate it?

Neli

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***PS** - TorahRedux is my pride and joy, the product of thousands of hours of learning, research, writing, editing, and formatting. My business, Hendon Advisors, allows me to dedicate time to TorahRedux, and I welcome your assistance in furthering my goal to keep publishing high-quality Parsha content that makes a difference. I source and broker the purchase and sale of healthcare businesses; I kindly ask for your blessings and prayers. If you are a buyer of healthcare businesses or can make introductions to healthcare operators who might buy or sell, just reply to this email to get in touch.*

Redux: *adjective* – resurgence; refers to being brought back, restored, or revived; something familiar presented in a new way. Not to see what no one else has seen, but to say what nobody has yet said about something which everybody sees.