



Behar 2022

Charity Redux

6 minute read | Straightforward

One of the foundations of the modern world we inhabit is the notion of egalitarianism, the idea that all humans are equal in fundamental worth or moral status; giving birth to, among others, the ideas that women aren't lesser than men, and that black people aren't lesser than white people, and the like.

In many respects, it is self-evident that all humans are fundamentally equal, and the Torah says as much – וַיְבָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם –

But it is equally evident that in many respects, the universe is fundamentally not fair or equal; plenty of people are disadvantaged in countless ways. Human input isn't decisive; luck is. Many hardworking, honest, and decent people have difficult, stressful, and impoverished lives, not to mention the various health issues so many people experience.

A relatively recent phenomenon in modern civilization is the welfare state; first-world governments allocate taxpayer funds to alleviate the poverty of the disadvantaged and less fortunate – in other words, charity is a core part of national policy. This practice has been criticized for perversely enabling and exacerbating poverty further, reducing the incentive for workers to seek employment by reducing the need to work and reducing the rewards of work. If we help these people, so the thinking goes, they become dependent and lazy.

While the specific contours of government policy are best left to experts, it brings to the fore a relevant question that profoundly impacts our orientation to others.

What do we owe to each other?

The conventional understanding of charity is that it's an act of benevolent kindness and generosity, initiated and executed at the actor's sole discretion; this is not the Jewish understanding.

The Jewish understanding of tzedaka is orders of magnitude more comprehensive and overarching. Extending far beyond the boundaries of kindness, the word itself literally means justice. The practice is a religious duty and social obligation; we might even say that we have a duty to dispense justice by helping the less fortunate. This obligation was comprehensive – in the ancient agrarian world of the Torah, Jewish farmers were subject to mandatory taxes with religious significance that were allocated to different beneficiaries according to specific parameters. To this day, many Jews tithe their income, allocating at least ten percent to worthy causes.

The Torah is consistently firm and unequivocal in our obligations towards each other:



וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ וְהִחַזַקְתָּ בּוֹ... וְחָי אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ – When your brother languishes, and his hand falters, you must steady and support him... Let your brother live by your side, with you. (Leviticus 25:35,36)

This framing allows no savior complex; the Torah says plainly that the recipient of your help is a disadvantaged equal, lateral to you – with you, and alongside you. There is no hierarchy or verticality in helping your brother – אָחִיךָ – and you must help him live alongside you, with you – עִמָּךְ. The person you get to help is not lesser or worse than you.

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch highlights how in this conception, the value of a person is not tied in any way to their economic productivity; the Torah speaks of a person's hand faltering and requiring assistance, yet still remaining your brother – וְכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ וּמָטָה יָדוֹ עִמָּךְ.

The Rambam famously taught that the highest level of charity is helping people get on their own feet – the ultimate and most literal fulfillment of helping your brother stand alongside you.

In the Torah's primeval story of the dawn of humanity, Cain fatefully asks God the rhetorical question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This question deserves scrupulous attention, not just because we read the story and know that Cain is attempting to cover up his crime, but because it is the great unanswered question of Genesis and quite possibly the entire Torah and all of human history.

The pregnant silence in the story is jarring; when we read about the obligations we have toward our brother, we should consider them in light of the Torah's first brothers – perhaps suggesting that yes, you are indeed your brother's keeper.

Echoing the Genesis story, the Ramban famously wrote to his son that humans have no natural hierarchy; nobody is better than you, and you're better than nobody. Humans are brothers; the Torah speaks of what we owe each other as a result of our fraternal bond; our obligations to each other are born of sameness, not of difference. The interpersonal mitzvot are obligations between equals – from human to human; horizontal, and not vertical.

The mitzvah to aid others is far-reaching – it goes far beyond money, encompassing time, energy, emotion, even to the point of manual labor:

לֹא־תִרְאֶה אֶת־חֲמֹר אָחִיךָ אוֹ שׂוֹרוֹ נִפְלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ וְהִתְעַלַּמְתָּ מֵהֶם הֲקָם תְּקִים עִמּוֹ – If you see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must surely raise it together. (Deut 22:4)

Beyond your brother, or the people you'd want to help, you are even obligated to help the people you don't:

כִּי־תִרְאֶה חֲמֹר שׂוֹנֵא רֵבִץ תַּחַת מְשָׁאוֹ וְחִדַּלְתָּ מֵעֲזֹב לוֹ עֲזֹב תַּעֲזֹב עִמּוֹ – When you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless surely help raise it. (Ex 23:5)

R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch notes the common tendency humans have to give up on people who seem to attract calamity and misfortune; it would be far easier to cut them loose. The Torah speaks



against the backdrop of such wayward thinking and reminds us that this person is your brother; you cannot give up on him. You must persist in helping, even if he fails over and over again – עֲזֹב תֵּעָזֵב / הִקָּם / תִּקִּים.

However, this unilateral obligation is ripe for abuse, enabling cheats and crooks to exploit good people. The Kli Yakar offers a sharp caveat; you must only keep helping people who are at least trying to help themselves – עֲמוּ. R' Shlomo Farhi piercingly suggests that it is not actually possible to help someone who won't help themselves; the mitzvah is only to help people, not enable. But so long as they're trying, don't walk away; figure it out together – עֲזֹב תֵּעָזֵב עֲמוּ / הִקָּם תִּקִּים עֲמוּ.

Our sages suggest that we should be grateful for cheats and crooks; otherwise, we'd be guilty over each and every person we fail to help.

While many mitzvos and rituals have an accompanying blessing to initiate the action, the Rashba notes that interpersonal mitzvos do not have such a blessing; making a blessing before helping another person would be dehumanizing, instrumentalizing a person into something you do a mitzvah with, eroding the mitzvah entirely.

R' Yitzchak Hutner was a Rosh Yeshiva renowned for his wit. Sick in hospital, a student came to visit his teacher and mentor. The great rabbi asked his guest why he had come, and the young man responded that it was a great mitzvah to visit the sick. Characteristically, R' Hutner challenged his visitor, “Am I your Lulav? Did you come to shake me?”

The Torah has a prominent spiritual dimension, but the interpersonal aspect of the Torah is a coequal, interdependent, and reciprocal component. It can be easy to get carried away with the spiritual trappings of helping people without being concerned about the person, but that's what it's all about, and the other person is the source of your obligation – he is your brother.

If we are more concerned about lazy freeloaders who exploit public resources than disadvantaged people who need a helping hand, it is only misdirection from the lesser angels of our nature; moral indignation permits acting on envy and hate under the cloak of virtue. The Torah articulates a clear skew and strong preference toward taking action that helps others; the marginal cost of not helping is unacceptable.

Tzedaka is not charity or philanthropy. It is justice, plain and simple. Your choice isn't whether to help others; it's who to help and how; which charities to give to, and in what quantities. It's the right thing to do; it is wrong not to.

It is important to be a good steward of capital; will this contribution be the highest and best use of your resources? But while it's vital to think in terms of impact and effectiveness, be mindful that some people aren't ever going to get by on their own, that less fortunate isn't a euphemism; it's a self-evident and observable fact. The widows and orphans of the world aren't going to be okay because



you wrote a check one time or sent a care package for Pesach; people experiencing chronic illness aren't going to recover because you visited them once or hosted a fundraiser that time.

The Torah's calls for your continued interest and persistent involvement, not a one-off act; a mode of being, a mentality of feeling obligated to intervene for people who need help today and, in all likelihood, will still need help tomorrow and the day after as well.

Your brothers need you; you must persist.

Soul Sparkles

3 minute read | Straightforward

When you think about the parts of Judaism and Torah that capture hearts and minds, you probably aren't alone if the book of Vayikra isn't on your highlight reels. It's quite understandable! The sacrifices; purity laws; Shemita; Yovel, and all the other miscellaneous laws and rituals – they're rather arcane and quite removed from our daily lived experience.

Of course, that's not to say that they don't matter – they're part of the Torah; they're important. But unlike, say, most of the books of Bereishis and Shemos, there's no overarching story or character-driven narrative with broadly applicable lessons and morals. It's not exactly blasphemy to notice that maybe they're just a little less exciting.

The book of Vayikra draws to a close with a beautifully detailed exposition of abundant blessings and fulfillment for properly observing the Torah. The blessings are accompanied by an equally detailed and gruesome description of all the terrible calamities that could befall the Jewish People should they fail to uphold the law properly. Many congregations customarily read this section quickly and quietly, and it is no honor to be called to the Torah for this particular reading.

Yet curiously, the final word that immediately follows this grim reading is a postscript with an abrupt and stark change of tone, the miscellaneous section about the assessment and valuation of pledges – Parshas Arachin.

The laws of pledges are technical and specific, and there is a lot of literature that explores the exact parameters. When the Mishkan and Beis HaMikdash stood, they were operated and managed by a public endowment. People could pledge all kinds of contributions to the fund; they could pledge animals, money, property, and fascinatingly, even humans.

The essential broader point of these laws is that the fund was sophisticated and could receive anything of value. Since everything can be valued, it's simply a question of determining what that specific value is. While the eyebrow-raising notion of pledging a human conjures imagery of human sacrifice or



slavery, it only modestly and simply entailed calculating the lifetime labor value of that person and then redeeming that value by contributing the corresponding amount to the public fund.

But of all things, why do the ponderous laws of Parshas Archin close out the book of Vayikra, following all the awful curses?

We could probably make peace with the notion that the Torah is like all things; some parts are more interesting, and some less. If we find meaning in the details of the census, architecture, and sacrifices, the Torah blesses us for observing the laws with joy. Yet specifically for those of us who are disenchanted with some of the arcane technicalities the Torah charges us with, the Torah forecasts a grim and intimidating future for us, that our worlds will fall apart with misery and pain.

The Ishbitzer compellingly suggests that by stating these laws specifically here, the Torah makes a sweepingly broad statement that all humans and all things have a fundamental and intrinsic value and worth – reminding us that even after tragedy strikes, all is not lost. All people are still worth something, including the people who have temporarily lost their way. Faced with a disheartening list of some of the worst things that can happen to a human, the Torah reminds the same people cowering from the curses that we are still worth something. Sure, how exactly we calculate the precise value is technical, but don't miss the wider point. Even the worst of us still has something valuable and special to them, and it ought to change our orientation to ourselves and to others.

Moreover, it bears noting that the nature of the endowment's expenditures was not profane or secular. From even the most awful, depraved, and lost souls, the endowment spent every last penny of their contributions on only the holiest and most sacred things; the value he has to offer is not worth less than yours.

There's a Yiddish expression that powerfully captures a vast amount of wisdom in just a few short words: the pintele Yid. It literally means the dot of a Jew; the fundamental essence of Jewish identity, and is perhaps related to the concept of the incorruptible soul – חלק אלוהים ממעל. This imagery articulates clearly and plainly that no matter how far you try to distance yourself, there will always remain some small spark that lies buried deep within. Perhaps that's the inalienable and inviolable part of us that Parshas Archin tries to speak to, even if we may have lost our way to some extent. The pintele yid, your soul spark, cannot be lost or extinguished; it can only ever lie dormant. It will wait patiently for as long as it takes to reignite and burst into flame once again, even if it takes generations.

Whatever you have done, whatever mistakes you have made, big or small, many or few, you need to remind yourself that you are worthwhile.

We are all better than the worst thing we've ever done.

Gratitude Redux



8 minute read | Straightforward

Emotional states are everything.

While all animals experience emotions, they are predominantly simple; human capacity for complex thought uniquely impacts the context and depth of how we perceive and experience our emotions. Some emotions, like guilt, can come from our understanding of our role in events in the external world.

One of the highest human emotions is gratitude, which affirms that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits that we have received. Research has shown that gratitude is one of the most powerful predictors of wellbeing, over and above most known factors, including health and wealth. Gratitude is tightly linked to feeling happy, empathetic, energetic, forgiving, hopeful, optimistic, and spiritual while feeling less depressed, envious, and neurotic.

The Mesilas Yesharim teaches that God’s entire purpose in Creation was to have a counterpart to share the gift of God’s goodness with – humans, created as we are in God’s image and likeness.

It follows that recognizing goodness activates and draws out what’s best in us; gratitude and recognition arguably form the undercurrent of the vast majority of mitzvos, and it might not be a stretch to say perhaps all of Judaism.

The Midrash imagines God walking Adam through Eden. After reveling in how beautiful and wonderful each tree is, God would say that each marvelous one had been designed for human enjoyment. Inasmuch as we can say that God could want anything, God wants humans to enjoy His gifts and recognize and appreciate those blessings.

The first words God says to the Jewish People articulate that God wants to be recognized – אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ – and not just for higher-order activities such as Creation, but for a specific and personal intervention in their lives, that God had rescued them from slavery. The next thing God has to say is that God cannot tolerate idolatry, where humans would misattribute God’s work to other, lesser powers. Idolatry betrays and demeans the good that God has done, and ranks among the most egregious sins towards God; idolatry entirely undermines God’s purpose for Creation, that God’s goodness to be appreciated and loved – וְאַתָּה בְּתָאֵת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכֹל גַּפְּשֶׁךָ וּבְכֹל מְאֹדֶךָ –

In the agrarian world of the Torah, there used to be an annual national thanksgiving ritual – the mitzvah of Bikkurim. Farmers would tie a string to the first fruits that sprouted. Then, after the harvest, the Mishna describes how the entire country would sing and dance together at a massive street festival in Jerusalem to accompany the farmers dedicating those first fruits at the Beis HaMikdash to express their gratitude for the harvest – and almost everyone was a farmer.

On arrival, the farmers would present their baskets to the attending Kohen and recite some affirmations, including a brief recital of Jewish history. They’d recount how Yakov fled from Lavan,



that his family descended to Egypt, and that God rescued the Jewish People and gave them the Land of Israel – וַיִּפְּנוּ לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת / וַיִּרְדּוּ מִצְרַיִם / אֲרָמִי אֲבֹד אָבִי. The prayer closes with an instruction to the farmer to rejoice – וַשְׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבִיתְךָ אִתָּהּ וְהַלְלוּ וְהַגִּדְוּ אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ.

It's hard to overstate how central our sages saw the mitzvah of Bikkurim. The Sifri suggests that the merit of Bikkurim is what entitles the people to the Land of Israel; the Midrash Tanchuma says that the merit of Bikkurim fuels the world's prayers; and the Midrash teaches that the mitzvah of Bikkurim perpetuates nothing less than the entire universe.

But there's one part that doesn't quite fit.

The farmer would work his field manually; weeding, plowing; sowing; pruning; watering, and guarding it. It redeems no less than an entire year's work when the harvest comes, and ensures food security for the next year!

The farmer has worried for a year, living with anxiety and uncertainty. After the harvest, those troubles are gone; he can sleep easy now, and it might be the one time a year he can undoubtedly pray from a place of love and security, not fear and worry. So it's a strange thing for the Torah to instruct the farmer to rejoice – וַשְׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבִיתְךָ.

If this is the happiest anyone will realistically be, why does the Torah need to command joy?

Healthy and well-adjusted humans require a sense of satisfaction and self-worth that comes from hard work and self-sufficiency – בְּזוּעַת אֶפְיֶךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם. Our sages call unearned benefits the bread of shame – לֶחֶם שֶׁל בּוֹשָׁה. When a child begins to individuate from the parent and insists on doing it “all by myself,” we recognize the child undergoing a healthy phase of human development. Eternal childishness and helplessness is a sickness, not a blessing. And after all, self-reliance is the American Dream!

But we can take doing it “all by yourself” too far – וְאַמְרַת בְּלִבְבְּךָ פְּחִי וְעֵצִים יָדֵי עֲשָׂה לִי אֶת־הַחֵיִל הַזֶּה.

So perhaps the challenge for the farmer – and us – isn't only in celebrating the blessings – וַשְׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב; it's that even after taking a bare piece of land and making it fruit all by himself, he has to admit that he didn't truly do it alone – אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבִיתְךָ.

Gratitude has a fundamental connection and interaction with humility. It grounds us and orients us by recognizing that what we are and what we have is due to others, and above all, to God, and so the error of self-sufficiency isn't just that it's morally wrong – it's factually wrong!

As R' Yitzchak Hutner notes, מודה doesn't just mean thanksgiving; it also means to confess. When we thank another, we concede that we needed the assistance of another, admitting our frail weakness and showing our vulnerability. We acknowledge that another has shared gifts with us, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives. Genuine gratitude strengthens relationships by helping us



recognize and appreciate how we've been affirmed and supported by others. But our ego can inhibit us if we don't get it in check, telling us we did it alone.

Gratitude affirms that self-sufficiency is an illusion, perhaps God's greatest gift of all. John Rawls sharply observed that a person cannot claim credit for being born with greater natural endowments, such as athleticism or intelligence, as it is purely the result of a natural lottery. As the Rambam explains, our lives are a gift within a gift; by definition, our starting points cannot be earned, so gratitude should be our first and overwhelming response to everything. Sure, we may deserve the fruits of what we do with our gifts, but the starting point of having any of those things to start with is the more significant gift by far.

By thanking God loudly and in public, we firmly reject the worldview of self-sufficiency or that we did it ourselves – פָּחֵי וְעֶצְמָם יְדֵי עֲשָׂה לִי אֶת־הַחֵיל הַזֶּה – and perhaps the ritual also helps recalibrate our expectations.

It is natural to be pleased with where you are but to want more still. Healthily expressed, we call it ambition, and unhealthily, we call it greed – יֵשׁ לוֹ מְנַה רוּצָה מֵאֵתֵיּים. You're glad you got something, even though it wasn't quite what you wanted.

But nothing undermines gratitude as much as expectations. There is an inverse relationship between expectations and gratitude; the more expectations you have, the less appreciation you will have, and it's obvious why. If you get what you expected, you will not be particularly grateful for getting it.

Expectations are insidious because although we can superficially express gratitude, what looks like gratitude might actually be entitlement cloaked in religiosity and self-righteousness. It's a blind spot because you think you're thankful even though you didn't get what you wanted! But that's not joy; it's the definition of resentment.

Getting gratitude right brings out what's best in humans, encouraging us not just to appreciate life's gifts but to repay them or pay them forward. But beyond gratitude's incredible blessings, getting gratitude wrong is catastrophic and is one of the catalysts for all the Torah's curses and prophecies of doom:

... – תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵבָב מְרֹב כֹּל – Since you did not serve God with joy and good spirit when you had it all... (28:47)

It's a sentiment the Jewish People expressed uncomfortably often in the wilderness, complaining about lack of food and water, about the dangers they faced from the Egyptians as they were leaving, about the inhabitants of the land they were about to enter, and about the manna and the lack of meat and vegetables.

Moshe warns us how his people lacked gratitude in difficult times and warns them of making the same mistake in good times:



הַשְׁמֵר לָךְ פְּרִי־תְשׁוּבָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי שְׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם: פְּרִי־תֹאכַל וְשִׁבְעַת וּבָתִּים טָבִים תִּבְנֶה וְיִשְׁבְּתָ: וּבָקָרְךָ וּצְאֵנֶךָ יִרְבּוּ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבּוּ־לְךָ וְכָל יִרְבּוּ־לְךָ וְאֲשֶׁר־לְךָ יִרְבּוּ: וְרַם לְבָבְךָ וְשִׁכַּחְתָּ אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמּוֹצִיאֶךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים: – Take care lest you forget Hashem your God and fail to keep His commandments, His rules, and His laws, which I enjoin upon you today. When you have eaten your fill, and have built fine houses to live in, and your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold have increased, and everything you own has prospered, beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget Hashem your God—who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage. (8:11-14)

So perhaps the short history of how the farmers got their land recalibrates our thinking. Our enemies might have slaughtered us; but God has given us our lives and security – אַרְמֵי אֲבָד אָבִי. We might have been spared death, but we could have been enslaved or subjugated to any number of enemies; yet God has given us our labor – וַיִּרַד מִצְרַיִמָּה. And on top of safety and freedom, we have material abundance – וַיִּתְּנֵנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת. With that kind of context, it would be ridiculous to think we somehow had it coming or that we did it by ourselves!

We don't practice Bikkurim today, and we're missing out on a vital aspect of Judaism. But we've probably all seen the contemporary analog, though – many businesses frame and hang their first dollar of revenue. It's sentimental, but it's a powerful symbol, and just like Bikkurim, it is a ritual that captures the moment you are overwhelmed with gratitude and joy. By dedicating our first sign of success, the first fruit, the first dollar, we protect ourselves from the hubris that we had it coming or the narcissism that we did it ourselves.

The Hebrew term for practicing gratitude literally means “recognizing the good” – הַכֵּרַת הַטוֹב; gratitude is recognizing the good that is already yours. The things you lack are still present, and in expressing gratitude, no one is saying you need to ignore what's missing. But there is no limit to what we don't have, and if that is where we focus, then our lives are inevitably filled with endless dissatisfaction.

As R' Shamshon Raphael Hirsch explains, almost all the mitzvos of the Land of Israel reflect this sentiment in one way or another. By heavily regulating our use of the land, with Shemitta, Yovel, the Omer, Sukka, and the tithes, the Torah guides us that there is only one Landlord, and we are all here to serve – הִכַּל נְתוּן בְּעַרְבוֹן, וּמִצִּוְדָה פְּרוֹסָה עַל כָּל הַחַיִּים.

The Jewish people are named after Yehuda, a form of the Hebrew word for “thank you” – תּוֹדָה. We're not just the people of the book; we could more accurately be called the grateful people, the people of thank you.

As R' Jonathan Sacks teaches, our blessings and prayers are a daily gratitude ritual; from the first words we say in the morning – מוֹדָה אֲנִי – to everything about life itself: for the human body, the physical world, the earth to stand on, the eyes we see with, and the air we breathe.

The Eliyahu Rabbah notes that the prayer leader repeats the Amidah aloud, and the congregation answers Amen, for all except the Thanksgiving blessing – מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ. You can delegate plenty to others, but not saying thank you.



TorahRedux

While most of us aren't farmers in the Land of Israel, each of us has a long list of blessings to be thankful for, and although we're sorely missing a national thanksgiving ritual; we can learn its lesson that there is no such thing as self-made.

If there are any good things or accomplishments in our lives, we didn't get them by ourselves; we all got plenty of help.

You need to recognize how blessed and fortunate you are, with no void of resentment for the things you don't yet have; to be wholeheartedly and wholesomely thankful, decisively abandoning your expectations and entitlement, truly rejoicing with what you have – איזהו עשיר? השמח בקלקו –

Let gratitude, joy, and happiness spill over beyond the confines of the religious sphere and into the rest of your life – it will deepen and enrich you. Thank God, and perhaps your spouse a little more; your parents, children, colleagues, clients, and community.

We can't make it alone, and we're not supposed to. We need each other; it's a key design feature of being human – לא טוב היות האדם לבדו –

As the legendary physicist and science educator Carl Sagan once said, to bake an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the entire universe.

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.

Neli

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

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.