

## Class 13 Rabbi Sacks on the ills of globalization and the challenge of charity

Today's reading which is the final one, is from the writings of Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks of England (former Chief Rabbi). In many ways this reading is a summary of much that we have learned the entire semester. You will find references to the Biblical model of charity vs that of the Rabbis. You will also find a mention of Maimonides understanding of charity of fulfilling the needs of the poor (*Dei Mahsaro*) even subjective ones, those that preserve the dignity of the poor person. The concept of the "deposit", that man's money actually belongs to God (which we studied in the frontal class), is also there. And of course, you can expect to find in his treatment Maimonides famous "ladder of charity" especially its highest rung, rehabilitating the poor person so that he will no longer needs to beg.

The purpose of the reading than is to see how a modern-day Jewish thinker takes many of these traditional elements that we have studied, adds some new ones, and applies them to the world we live in with the challenges of globalization and of entire countries that are stuck in a state of poverty.

In reading the article keep on the alert for what is new and what have we already seen in the course of the semester. I have highlighted the passages that seem to be the most essential.

### **Summary Questions:**

What is the central insight of Monotheism according to Jonathan Sacks?

In what way does the religious approach differ from the enlightenment in their approach to humanity?

What is the theology of Judaism regarding ownership according to Jonathan Sacks?

According to Rabbi Sacks what are the essential features of the "Seventh year" and the Jubilee?

What does Rabbi Sacks derive from the law of giving charity "sufficient for his need in that which he lacks", "*Dei Mahsaro*"?

Jewish law states that even the poor are obligated to give charity – why is this so important to Jonathan Sacks?

According to Rabbi Sacks what is the basic religious and social problem of the huge disparities of wealth, exploitative practices, harsh conditions of employment?

What is Rabbi Sacks bottom line in regard to treating the problems that have arose from globalization?

# The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations

## Compassion: The Idea of Tzedakah

It is morally impossible not to be troubled by the ever-growing gap between the few at the top and the many at the bottom of the economic ladder. What makes the present situation worse than in the past is that these inequalities are visible. When the horizons of the majority of mankind were limited to the next village or town, inequalities might exist throughout the world, but few were aware of them on a daily basis. There were fabled lands where gold ran free, but that was somewhere else in the realm of legends and dreams. The global media have transformed all this. Television has brought the world of the rich and famous to the most remote villages, while bringing images of hunger, famine, war and disease into our living rooms. We can no longer claim that we did not know.

Nor are traditional defences of inequality sustainable today. The worldview of antiquity and the Middle Ages was built on the belief that differences in power, wealth and status were part of the ordained order. Status was a given of birth. Hierarchy was written into the fabric of the universe. Some, said Aristotle, are born to be free, while others are born to be slaves. True or not, said Plato, people must be trained to believe that differences in fate are preordained, if societies are to defend themselves against unrest: inequalities can be lamented but they cannot be changed. That canonization of the *status quo* has no place in the contemporary world. Modernity is the move from fate to choice, and we can no longer reasonably claim that the way things are is how they were destined to be.

Why then does it continue? Many defenders of the new economy argue - rightly, in my view - that it is the best chance nations have of defeating poverty. Countries that have embraced it, most notably in South East Asia, but also in South America, have prospered. So too has India, which has developed a highly effective information-technology base. The economic reforms introduced by **Deng Xiaoping** in China in 1978 helped 800 million peasants to double their incomes in a mere six years. Seventy-six million Chinese moved out of poverty in the past decade alone.

But not every nation has access to the new technologies. They are on the other side of the so-called digital divide. Nor have world economic policies always been to the benefit of the poorest. Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank, has been highly critical of international financial institutions for the way they have imposed inappropriate strategies on failing economies. Economic liberalization can make the strong stronger but the weak weaker. Money is more mobile than people. Funds that flowed into a developing economy can equally rapidly flow out, leaving industries devastated and huge numbers of people unemployed. Speculative capital is not always invested in education and infrastructure. Often it is invested in sectors with quick gains, fuelling property booms while leaving long-term growth untouched. Stiglitz compares some of the economic policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on poor countries to setting small boats loose on a rough sea. Even if the boats are sound and well-captained, they are likely to be hit broadside by a big wave and capsize.

Nor has help always come from multinational corporations. They are not charged with the pursuit of justice. They exist to generate profits for shareholders, and that, by and large, is what they do. If currency movements or differential wage-rates mean that they can cut costs substantially by moving production from one country to another, they will do this. The costs in terms of local misery and disruption do not accrue to them. Even if they did, most multinationals have divested themselves of ownership of their manufacturing base, which is now contracted out. Corporate responsibility of first-world companies for

third-world economies has become diffuse and easily evaded. Multinational firms have become the targets of a growing protest movement, documented in Naomi Klein's No Logo, by people rightly concerned at highprofit companies factoring out their production to countries where workers labour for long hours at low pay in insanitary conditions. There is a strong case for international regulation to improve wage-rates and work conditions. But there is also a convergence of interest between the corporations on the one hand, and governments seeking to attract investment on the other, leaving the workers themselves with little power to change their fate.

The other key players are nation-states themselves. But their commitment to international aid remains ambivalent, not least because often in the past it has failed to get through to people in need. It has been commandeered by governments, and sometimes used to prop up failing, oppressive and dictatorial regimes. In Africa, for example, 90 per cent of the hungry live in rural areas, but because the continent's political elite tend to live in port cities, the countryside suffers from neglect. As one aid worker put it during the 1984--85 famine, 'Starve the city people and they riot, starve the rural people and they die. If you were a political leader, which would you choose?' During the 1990s there were seventeen major armed conflicts in Africa alone, as compared to ten elsewhere in the world, leaving 20 million people, mainly women and children, starving and in need of humanitarian assistance. Aid, to be effective, needs good government, but good government cannot be created by aid.

Inevitably, too, Western governments face a conflict of interests. Their first duty is to protect their own economies. There is a fear that assisting developing countries may damage domestic welfare. Under conditions of total mobility of production, work goes to countries with the lowest wage-rates. Employment is exported, which means, in the short term at least, that unemployment is imported. This may benefit some in the developed countries - the elites who run companies and design and market products. The losers are the traditional blue-collar workers, who have seen production shift from within to across national boundaries. Service industries in almost all the developed countries have expanded while numbers in manufacturing have fallen. Governments may think twice about creating a situation in which rising employment elsewhere leads to falling employment among their own constituents.

A world in which the few prosper and many starve, offends our deepest sense of fairness and human solidarity. You do not have to be a convinced egalitarian to know that disparities of this magnitude - vast, concentrated wealth alongside widespread suffering - is intolerable. The real problem, though, is one of responsibility. No one planned this outcome. It happened as a result of billions of transactions, investments and purchasing decisions. As Robert Reich reminds us:

*The emergence of the global, high-tech economy seems largely out of anyone's hands. One development seems to have sparked the next, without any clear decision having been made about consequences. No one explicitly decided that technologies of communication, transportation, and information would advance as quickly as they have. Or that these technologies would push the economy from large-scale production toward a wide array of innovative products and services, with easy switching to better ones . . . Nor, especially, did anyone decide to accept the downsides of all this progress.*

The invisible hand - the unanticipated outcome of a myriad actions and reactions - is not always benign.

There are no easy solutions, but there are hard questions. What is our responsibility to humanity as a whole? What bonds of obligation link us to those with whom we do not share a country, a political structure, a language or culture? What proportion of our wealth, if any, are we duty-bound to share? The language of rights is not always helpful here, because rights presuppose a network of law and obligation that can implement them. A right is like a cheque: it has value only if there is bank and an account against which it can be drawn. Without that it is mere expectation without delivery. What then is the moral basis of global economic responsibility?

At this level, religious concepts are more helpful than narrowly political or economic ones. The central insight of monotheism that if God is the parent of humanity, then we are all members of a single extended family-has become more real in its implications than ever before. The Enlightenment gave us the concept of universal rights, but this remains a 'thin' morality, stronger in abstract ideas than in its grip on the moral

imagination. Far more powerful is the biblical idea that those in need are our brothers and sisters and that poverty is something we feel in our bones. Every year on Passover Jews eat the bread of affliction and the bitter herbs of slavery. On the festival of Sukkot, they leave the comfort of their homes to live in shacks - 'tabernacles' - as a reminder of what it feels like to be without a solid roof, exposed to the elements, living as millions do today in Calcutta or Caracas. The great faiths do more than give abstract expression to our shared humanity; they move us to action and give compelling shape to the claims of others upon us.

I want to examine the Jewish experience because it combines two elements that are particularly relevant to our present situation. On the one hand, as I showed in the previous chapter, Judaism is **sympathetic to the free market** and limited government as the best defences of individual liberty and creativity. On the other, it was aware from the days of Moses that an **open economy does not guarantee** just outcomes in the larger sense of a society in which everyone has the means of a dignified existence. This, to Moses and the prophets, was a matter of deep concern. In the words of one contemporary biblical scholar: 'From the start, Israel lived with a covenant charter which put optimum value on a people in egalitarian relations under one sovereign divine power.' Early Israelite religion was the attempt to create a 'heterogeneous, classless, decentralized association of tribes conceived as a brotherhood - and at least in larger measure than in Canaanite society, as a sisterhood - of social, economic and political equals.' That involved a commitment, one we can trace through biblical legislation and prophetic utterance, to an economic order that balanced freedom with equity. To understand it, we must first understand the idea contained in one of Judaism's key words .

---

In two verses in the Book of Genesis, God specifies the mission with which Abraham and his descendants are to be charged:

*Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations of the earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right [tzedakah] and just [mishpat], so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what He has promised him.*  
(Genesis 18: 17-19)

The two words, tzedakah and mishpat, signify different forms of justice. **Mishpat** means **retributive** justice or the rule of law. A free society must be governed by law, impartially administered, through which the guilty are punished, the innocent acquitted and human rights secured. Tzedakah, by contrast, refers to **distributive justice**, a less procedural and more substantive idea.

It is difficult to translate tzedakah because it combines in a single word two notions normally opposed to one another, namely charity and justice. Suppose, for example, that I give someone £100. Either he is entitled to it, or he is not. If he is, then my act is a form of justice. If he is not, it is an act of charity. In English (as with the Latin terms *caritas* and *iustitia*) a gesture of charity cannot be an act of justice, nor can an act of justice be described as charity. Tzedakah is therefore an **unusual term, because it means both.**

It arises from the theology of Judaism, which insists on the difference between possession and ownership. Ultimately, all things are owned by God, creator of the world. What we possess, we do not own - we merely hold it in trust for God. The clearest example is the provision in Leviticus: 'The land must not be sold permanently because the land is Mine; you are merely strangers and temporary residents in relation to Me' (Leviticus 25: 23 ). If

there were absolute ownership, there would be a difference between justice (what we are bound to give others) and charity (what we give others out of generosity). The former would be a legally enforceable duty, the latter, at most, a moral obligation, the prompting of benevolence or sympathy. In Judaism, however, because we are not owners of our property but merely guardians on God's behalf, we are bound by the conditions of trusteeship, one of which is that we share part of what we have with others in need. What

would be regarded as charity in other legal systems is, in Judaism, a strict requirement of the law and can, if necessary, be enforced by the courts.

What tzedakah signifies, therefore, is what is often called 'social justice', meaning that no one should be without the basic requirements of existence, and that those who have more than they need must share some of that surplus with those who have less. This is absolutely fundamental to the kind of society the Israelites were charged with creating, namely one in which everyone has a basic right to a dignified life and to be equal citizens in the covenantal community under the sovereignty of God. So, for example, the covenant code specifies:

*Do not ill-treat a stranger [i.e. a non-Israelite] or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

*Do not take advantage of a widow or orphan. If you do, and they cry out to Me, I will certainly hear their cry . . . If you lend money to one of My people among you who is needy, do not be like a money-lender: charge him no interest.*

*If you take your neighbour's cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to Me, I will hear, for I am compassionate. (Exodus 22: 21-7)*

God, for the Israelites, was actively concerned in the economic and political order, especially with those who, because they lacked power, or even a 'voice', became the victims of injustice and inequity:

*He upholds the cause of the oppressed,*

*And gives food to the hungry.*

*The Lord sets prisoners free.*

*The Lord gives sight to the blind,*

*The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,*

*The Lord loves the righteous.*

*The Lord watches over the stranger,*

*And sustains the fatherless and the widow,*

*But He frustrates the way of the wicked. (Psalm 146: 7- 9)*

The society the Israelites were to construct would stand as a living contrast to what they experienced in Egypt: poverty, persecution and enslavement. Their release from bondage was only the first stage on their journey to freedom . The second - their covenant with God - involved collective responsibility to ensure that no one would be excluded from the shared graciousness of the community and its life. Hence the Bible's insistence that a free society cannot be built on *mishpat*, the rule of law, alone. It requires also *tzedakah*, a just distribution of resources. This view has close affinities with Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen's concept of 'development as freedom':

*The adult who lacks the means of having medical treatment for an ailment from which she suffers is not only prey to preventable morbidity and possibly escapable mortality, but may also be denied the freedom to do various things - for herself and for others - that she may wish to do as a responsible human being. The bonded labourer born into semi-slavery, the subjugated girl child stifled by a repressive society, the helpless landless labourer without substantial means of earning an income are all deprived not only in terms of well-being, but also terms of the ability to lead responsible lives, which are contingent on having certain basic freedoms . Responsibility requires freedom.*

Sen has, I believe, put it absolutely correctly. Individual freedom may be best described, as Isaiah Berlin argued, in terms of

'negative liberty', namely the absence of constraints (*chofesh* in biblical Hebrew). But **collective freedom** (*cherut* in Hebrew) is something else. It means, among other things, that my freedom is not bought at the price of yours. A society in which the few prosper but the many starve, which some but not all have access to good education, health care, and other essential amenities, is not a place of liberty. That requires more than an absence of coercion. It involves the removal of barriers to the exercise of responsible citizenship: 'poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states'.



---

How was this achieved? The Bible is set in the context of a predominantly agrarian society, and its provisions are designed to address the kinds of poverty that arise in that environment. No one could be made to work on the seventh day, so that for one day each week all economic and political hierarchies were suspended. Various portions of the harvest were set aside for the poor - the corner of the field, the forgotten sheaf, and similar measures for other crops (Leviticus 19: 9- 10; Deuteronomy 15: 1- 2). On the third and sixth year of the seven-year agricultural cycle, the hungry were given a tenth of all produce (Deuteronomy 26: 12). On the seventh year, when no labour was permitted on the soil, produce belonged to everyone, 'so that the poor of your people may eat' (Exodus 23: 10). All outstanding debts were cancelled (Deuteronomy 15 : 1- 2). This last provision was open to circumvention, so the Bible warns explicitly against it:

*Be careful not to harbour this wicked thought: 'The seventh year, the year for cancelling debts, is near', so that you do not show ill will towards your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhearted towards your brothers and towards the poor and needy in your land. (Deuteronomy 15: 9- 11 )*

Indebtedness is a form of servitude. To ban loans altogether would condemn people to poverty and deprive them of the chance to start or sustain their own enterprise. That is why, from a biblical perspective, micro-lending of the kind currently undertaken by the World Bank, is essential. Nothing is more effective in alleviating poverty than giving individuals the chance to create small businesses. But to allow debts to accumulate is also wrong: the economic system must encourage freedom, not financial slavery. That is why periodic debt release is necessary. It enables people to begin again, freed of the burdens of the past. The Bible is candid in its appeal to the lenders. Not only is debt relief a moral duty. It is, in the long run, the key to collective prosperity (' the Lord your God will bless you in all your work' ).

A similar idea lies behind the institution of the Jubilee year. Everyone must have a share in the land. In the course of time, some - through poverty, bad harvests or other misfortunes - will be forced to sell. One year in 50, therefore, all land is to be returned to its original owners so that no one is denied his or her ancestral inheritance. The connection between economic equity and political freedom is explicit: 'Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; then shall each of you return to his inheritance; then shall you return, each of you, to his family' . (Leviticus 25: 10).

What these periodic redistributions testify to is the biblical awareness that an equitable distribution will not emerge naturally from the free working of the market alone. It is no coincidence that the single most effective recent campaign for international debt relief -Jubilee 2000 - was drawn directly from the biblical idea of the Jubilee year. It also underlies Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown's proposal for a 'modern Marshall Plan' for the developing world. The sabbatical and Jubilee years act as a corrective to the market by restoring a level playing field to those who have been forced to sell either their labour or their land. They break the cycle of poverty and dependence.

---

With the transition, some 2,000 years ago, from biblical to post-biblical Judaism, we find a greater emphasis on tzedakah, the direct provision of financial aid, as opposed to agricultural produce. Israel had become less of an agrarian economy, more a society of small businesses and trade, and rabbinic law is a systematic attempt to apply the principles of the Bible to new economic circumstances. Communal taxes were instituted. New forms of distribution were set up, among them the tamchui which distributed food daily,

and the kuppah which weekly provided funds for those in need. The disbursement of tzedakah funds called for high standards of probity, so to be appointed as a distributor of communal funds became one of the highest accolades the community could give.

The key text here was Deuteronomy 15: 8, 'You shall open your hand wide to him [ the poor person] and shall surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he lacks.' The rabbis took this to include gifts as well as loans. More importantly they read it as offering a definition of the kinds of poverty they were called on to address:

***Sufficient for his need*** - means that you are commanded to maintain him, but you are not commanded to make him rich. *That which he lacks* - means even a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him. It is told of Hillel the elder [head of the Jewish community in the first century BCE] that he bought for a certain poor man of good family a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him. On one occasion he could not find a slave to run before him, so he himself ran before him for three miles.

There are two kinds of poverty according to this interpretation. The first ('sufficient for his need' ) refers to an absolute subsistence level. In Jewish law this was taken to include food, housing, basic furniture and if necessary, funds to pay for a wedding. The second (' that which he lacks' ) means relative poverty - relative, however, not to others but to the individual's own previous standard of living. This is the first indication of something which plays an important role in the rabbinic understanding of poverty. Over and above sheer physical needs is a psychological dimension. Poverty humiliates, and a good society will not allow humiliation.

**Protecting dignity and avoiding humiliation** was a systematic element of rabbinical law. So, for example, the rabbis ruled that even the richest should be buried plainly so as not to shame the poor. On certain festive days girls, especially those from wealthy families, had to wear borrowed clothes, 'so as not to shame those who do not have'. The rabbis intervened to lower the prices of religious necessities so that no one would be excluded from communal celebrations. Work conditions had to be such that employees were treated with basic respect. Here, the proof text was God's declaration, 'For to Me the children of Israel are servants' -meaning that they were not to be treated as servants of any human being. **Freedom presupposes self-respect**, and a free society will therefore be one that robs no one of that basic human entitlement.

**One element of self-respect is independence.** This explains a remarkable feature of tzedakah legislation. Maimonides lists the various levels of giving-to-others, all except one of which involve philanthropy. The supreme act, however, does not:

The highest degree, exceed ed by none, is that of one who assists a poor person by providing him with a gift or a loan or by accepting him into a business partnership or by helping him find employment - in a word by putting him in a situation where he can dispense with other people's aid. With reference to such aid it is said, 'You shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall live with you' (Leviticus 25: 35), which means strengthen him in such a manner that his falling into want is prevented.

This ruling is the result of a profound wrestling, within Judaism, with the fact that aid in the form of charity can itself be humiliating for the recipient. It can also create welfare dependency, reinforcing, not breaking the cycle of deprivation. The greatest act of tzedakah is therefore one that allows the individual to become self-sufficient. The highest form of aid is one that enables the individual to dispense with aid. **Humanitarian relief** is essential in the short term, but in the **long run**, job creation and the promotion of employment are more important.

There is one other detail of Jewish law which is particularly fascinating. It specifies that even a person dependent on tzedakah must himself or herself give tzedakah. On the face of it, the rule is absurd. Why give X enough money so that he can give to Y? Giving to Y directly is more logical and efficient. What the rabbis understood, however, is that giving is an essential part of human dignity. As an African proverb puts it: the hand that gives is always uppermost; the hand that receives is always lower. The rabbinic insistence that the community provide the poor with enough money so that they themselves can give is a profound insight into the human condition.

---

Judaism represents a highly distinctive approach to the idea of equality, namely that it is best served not by equality of income or wealth, nor even of opportunity. Nor is it sufficient that we each have equal standing before God at times of prayer, and before the law in cases of dispute. A society must ensure equal dignity - the Hebrew phrase is *kavod habriyot*, 'human honour' - to each of its members.

This is a constant theme of the prophets. Amos, one of the first literary prophets, says in his most famous oracle, 'They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground, and deny justice to the oppressed.' Isaiah says:

*The Lord enters into judgement with the elders and princes of His people: 'It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing My people, by grinding the face of the poor?' says the Lord God of hosts.*

Jeremiah says simply of the reforming king Josiah, 'He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is this not to know Me?' says the Lord.'

The prophets, who lived and worked more than 2,500 years ago, were the world's first social critics, unashamed to deliver their message to kings and speak truth to power. Religion has, they argued, a moral, social and economic dimension. It involves justice, not merely in the narrow sense of the rule of law and the transparency of procedures, but also in the substantive sense of conferring on all members of society an honoured place. Prophetic teaching, writes Johannes Lindblom, 'is characterized by the principle of solidarity. Behind the demand for charity and justice ... lies the idea of the people, the people as an organic whole, united by election and covenant.' Huge disparities of wealth, exploitative practices, harsh conditions of employment, the existence of what some today call an 'underclass' - these are fractures in human solidarity. They create a divided society. They destroy the notion of the common good as something we share and in which we all participate. That is not something from which we can hide on the grounds that it is not our responsibility. As Heschel notes: '[T]he prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty but all are responsible. If we admit that the individual is in some measure conditioned or affected by the spirit of society, an individual's crime discloses society's corruption.' And what in the days of the prophets applied socially, today applies globally. The scope of our interconnectedness defines the radius of responsibility and concern.

---

Tzedakah is a concept for our time. The retreat, set in motion by Reaganomics and Thatcherism, from a welfare state, together with the deregulation of financial markets throughout the world, has led to increased and increasing inequalities both in developed countries and the developing world. The importance of tzedakah is that it does not mean 'charity'. It is not optional, nor does it depend on the goodwill of those who give to others. It is a legally enforceable obligation. Nor does it depend on any specific economic doctrine. It goes hand in hand with a free market, while recognizing that the market has inherent limits. George Soros is right when he admits that

*International trade and global financial markets are very good at generating wealth, but they cannot take care of other social needs, such as the preservation of peace, alleviation of poverty, protection of the environment, labor conditions, or human rights - what are generally called 'public goods'.*

The inequities of markets are no reason to abandon the market. Globalization has led to increased prosperity for those countries which have participated in it. We will not cure poverty by destroying a system of wealth-creation, any more than we will cure illness by abolishing doctors or end crime by annulling law. **New technologies and the growth of trade** are our best - our only - hope for ending hunger, curing disease,



and raising living standards throughout the world. This, the rabbis recognized. The Talmud imagines the following dialogue between King David and his advisers:

*At dawn, the wise men of Israel came to David and said, 'O Lord, the king, your people Israel need sustenance.' He said, 'Let them support one another.' They replied, 'A handful cannot satisfy a lion, and you cannot fill a pit by the earth which you dig from it.'*

David proposed redistribution. His sages told him that the cake was not big enough, however it was sliced. Economic growth is more powerful than simple redistribution. But that is true only if there is a genuine willingness on the part of those who gain to ensure that the losers also benefit; and that does not happen through the market mechanism on its own.

No religion can propose precise policies for the alleviation of hunger and disease. What it can do, and must, is to inspire us collectively with a vision of human solidarity and with concepts, such as tzedakah within the Jewish tradition and its counterparts in other faiths that serve as a broad moral template for what constitutes 'a fair and decent world'. Globalization, writes Zygmunt Bauman, 'divides as much as it unites ... signalling a new freedom for some, upon many others it descends as an uninvited and cruel fate'. There can be no doubt that more -much more - of the economic surplus of advanced economies should be invested in developing countries to help eradicate extremes of poverty and hunger, ensure universal education, combat treatable disease, reduce infant mortality, improve work conditions and reconstruct failing economies. As with tzedakah, the aim should be to restore dignity and independence to nations as well as individuals. This has now become an urgent imperative. The globalization of communications, trade and culture, globalizes human responsibility likewise. The freedom of the few may not be purchased at the price of the enslavement of the many to poverty, ignorance and disease.

End. (From pp. 108--124)