



### Repairing Life's Potholes

More than 11,000 extra potholes will be filled across Staffordshire, England this year - following a £5 million investment from the county council.

New York City has a website dedicated solely to updating how many potholes have been repaired (125,877 as we go to print) this year.

What is it about potholes that makes it a news item?

Potholes aren't great for our cars, or for buses, trucks, motorcycles or bicycles, for that matter. Which is why these states are trying to clean up their pothole acts.

But what about the potholes of our lives - life's little (or big) ups and downs and jolting, gaping holes that make us notice that life isn't easy and effortless?

We are told that our ancestor Jacob "wanted to live in tranquility." And that's precisely when things started happening. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, a famine started in the entire area where Jacob lived, and his life was anything but peaceful. Instead of spending his old age pleasantly studying Torah and doing mitzvot, Jacob was involved in all kinds of trials and tribulations.

Was Jacob's desire to live tranquilly so terrible that he deserved such punishment?

Easy Street.

That's what we grow up thinking life will be someday if we work hard enough and basically live moral, ethical, healthy lives. And Easy Street doesn't have any pot holes, no ups or downs, nothing that isn't pre-planned (by us) and scheduled into our itineraries.

But G-d has different plans for us. Because our purpose here in this world is to improve ourselves and the world around us, to help others and thereby ultimately help ourselves. To do good and to make the world good. And to accomplish all of this, life has potholes. Life has downs so that we can stretch ourselves and pull on reserves of strength, fortitude and energy that we never knew existed or could exist except for the fact that we were jarred by one of life's potholes and forced to call upon that energy.

Jewish teachings explain that life has its downs and ups. This doesn't mean life has ups and downs, that we must expect the "wheel of fortune" to change and if we have been on top we must eventually hit the bottom.

Downs and ups means "a descent for the purpose of an ascent" - that no down is meaningless, no pothole is put in our path unintentionally. The opposite is true. A descent or difficulty is put in our path not as an obstruction or obstacle but as a challenge to overcome and there by become stronger.

Jacob had reached a pinnacle in his Divine service, in his refinement of his self and his soul. But a Jew never rests. No matter how righteous or elevated, no matter how much we have stretched and extended ourselves, there's always more room for growth, another nook or cranny to clean, another character trait or attribute to further perfect.

Because with each up that has followed a down, we've reached a new level, we've moved from a dirt path to a paved single-lane street, to a two-way road and then on to a four or six or eight lane highway.

So, the next time you drive into a pothole, see it for what it really is.

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

### Divine Distribution

*"When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not remove completely the corners of your field as you reap and you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them..." (23:22)*

(continued on the other side)

The latter portion of this week's Parsha deals extensively with the festivals. In the midst of the chapter of the festivals, the Torah introduces the laws concerning leaving crops for the poor. Rashi cites the Midrash that questions why these laws are repeated, having already been discussed in Parshas Kedoshim. Furthermore, why are these laws specifically repeated in the middle of the section regarding the festivals? The Midrash answers that since the festivals were a time when offerings were brought up to Yerushalayim by the Jewish people, the Torah is teaching that a person who leaves for the poor "leket" – grain which falls from the harvester and "shikecha" – grain which is forgotten by the harvester, and "pe'ah" – a corner of the field that is left for the poor, is considered to have built the Beis Hamikdash and offered Korbanos within it. Why are these particular gifts, leket, shikecha and pe'ah singled out from amongst the many forms of charity? Furthermore, what is the meaning of the comparison to the building of the Beis Hamikdash and the bringing of Korbanos?

The commentaries explain that when Hashem commanded us to build the Mishkan, He did not use the words "yitnu li" – "give to Me", rather "yikchu li" – "take on My behalf" for we cannot give to Hashem; we acknowledge that the wealth we possess is really His, and therefore, we built the Mishkan with that which was His. This concept holds true for Korbanos brought in the Beis Hamikdash as well. We do not "give" Korbanos to Hashem; rather, through the symbolic gesture of bringing a Korban, we acknowledge that what we have is really His.

Almost all forms of charity involve giving to a poor person. This action often provides the person giving with a feeling of magnanimity, and can skew his perception so that he feels he is giving that which belongs to him. Leket, shikecha and pe'ah are unique forms of charity in that the landowner does not give anything to the poor; he is forbidden to collect the produce involved, thereby preventing him from determining who will receive it. The landowner is commanded to leave the produce where it is and allow any needy person who wishes, to take it for himself. This procedure drives home the concept to the landowner that he does not control the wealth; rather, charity is merely the means by which Hashem distributes His wealth. When a person fulfills these mitzvos, which are the most difficult forms of charity for they preclude the feeling of satisfaction from having actually given, it is as if he built the Beis Hamikdash and offered Korbanos; the comparison is clear, for these actions also require a person to comprehend that he is merely the conduit through whom Hashem redistributes that which is His.

*(by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*

**Mr. and Mrs. Avi Blumenthal** are sponsoring Kiddush this Shabbat

in honor of their 10 year wedding anniversary this week.



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#### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

**Friday — Lag B'Omer, 5/16 — 18 Iyar**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Shabbat, 5/17 — 19 Iyar**

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.

Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:25 a.m.

Minchah — 7:45 p.m.

Shiur — after Minchah

Shkiah — 8:16 p.m.

Ma'ariv — 9:02 p.m.

**Sunday, 5/18 — 20 Iyar**

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.

Minchah / Maariv — 8:00 p.m.

**Monday, 5/19 — 21 Iyar**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, 5/20 — 22 Iyar**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, 5/21 — 23 Iyar**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

Tanya Shiur: 2<sup>nd</sup> part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud

V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation

and the unity of Hashem — 8:40 p.m.

**Thursday, 5/22 — 24 Iyar**

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

**Friday, 5/23 — 25 Iyar**

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.

Shabbat Candles — 8:02 p.m.

Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.