

Steven D. Reece

From: Michael Schudrich <schudrich@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 15, 2013 05:29
To: sdreece@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Touching Base

Walking humbly is already exactly what you are doing.

We walk always seeking to be closer to God by loving gods' creations ever more deeply daily.

Take care,

michael

On Wed, Jan 23, 2013 at 5:26 PM, Steven D. Reece <sdreece@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Michael,

Thank you very much for your response. I understand its lateness. You are a busy leader with many responsibilities. I have been occupied over the past few months with travel and my studies. I went to India in September to lecture about our work and I had the opportunity to speak in the synagogue in New Delhi. I had a very full semester with two courses. Lots of reading and writing. I also went to Erie, PA to lead some leadership training over the holidays. For this reason, my response to you is late. I apologize.

Thank you for the link to the article on Rebirth of Jewish Life in Poland. I have not read it yet, but I have scanned it and it seems to be a valuable resource, which I will be able to draw from in my studies. Speaking of which, much has developed over the past year in my PhD studies. This past semester, I took Ethical Leadership and Organizational Integrity and as a part of this course I had two projects that I developed: Teaching the Ethics of Micah 6:8 to Children and a Code of Ethics for The Matzevah Foundation (TMF). As you can imagine, both projects embraced Jewish ethical values, which find themselves expressed in several major ethical theories such as altruism (love mercy or chesed shel emet/gemilut chasadim), communitarianism (Kol Yisrael and do not stand idly by) and the work of Emanuel Kant (do the right thing – act justly).

From Micah 6:8, I have developed an “ethical triad” based on acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly. I use Jeremiah 7:5-7 as a clarifying definition and I have applied these values to what we are doing in and through TMF. It is very helpful for me to have your input into what I am doing, especially now at this point as I am presently studying Jewish Ethics. My primary sources for understanding Jewish ethics is Rabbi Joseph Teleshukin. I have purchase several of his books as references. Below, I have included a table that outlines what I am exploring for my ethical triad:

Micah 6:8	Jeremiah 7:5-7	Jewish Ethics	Matthew 23:23	Worldview Triad (Wolf, 2010)
Act justly	Do not live as you are; change your ways and actions and deal with each other justly	<i>Tzedek</i> (justice, social action) <i>Tikkun olam</i> (healing of the earth)	Justice	"Preserving justice (hope)" Social responsibility
Love mercy	Do not oppress the weak or shed innocent blood; show mercy, care/love for others	<i>Tzedakah</i> (charity) <i>Chesed</i> (kindness) <i>Gemilut chasadim</i> (true loving-kindness)	Mercy	"Social compassion (charity)"
Walk humbly <i>(hatzne'a leches)</i>	Do not follow other gods; be faithful to the One True God	<i>Halakhah</i> (the path that one walks) – The Law <i>Tznius</i> (modesty) Faithfulness in conduct	Faithfulness	Integrity having "leadership discipline (faith)"

The highlighted material above is preliminary and I am presently exploring it. As you know there is there is much controversy about what does it mean to "walk humbly" (tznius) among the Jewish community. Some view it as modesty and link it to sexuality primarily; however, Telushkin treats it as humility. I am reading what he has to say about humility now and it seems to resonate more with what I am learning in my journey of understanding. I am dependent upon God for everything. I own nothing and I control nothing. Everything that we have been able to do through our work is dependent upon God.

Please feel free to give me your direction with regard to walking humbly (acting justly or loving mercy) or any other aspect regarding Jewish ethics that I have outlined above. I am planning to study Rabbinical Leadership/Mentoring in the fall. I am planning to contact Dr. David Blumenthal of Emory University about providing me some direction and possibly serving as my professor of record for the course (it is a self-study or self-directed study course). If you know of anyone, who has the expertise and might be open to volunteering in this capacity, please let me know.

Finally, I am continuing to seek funds for restoring Jewish cemeteries in Poland. I will be meeting with a group from NYC in the coming months regarding their support. I have met with the president of the Jewish Federation of Georgia last November and I also met with a local rabbi (Reform) about our work. I continue to pray and seek God's provision for all that He has planned to do in restoring Jewish cemeteries and thereby bring back the memory of His people in Poland.

Thank you for all that you have done for me. I hope that we will have an opportunity to get together sometime in the future, possibly the next time I am in Warsaw.

Szalom,

Steven

From: Michael Schudrich [mailto:schudrich@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 27, 2012 12:37 PM

To: sdreece@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Touching Base

Dear Steven,

I am going through old emails and just found yours. Really sorry for not answering for over one year!! But here I am and will try to answer your questions:

The Torah is lived today essentially the same way it was lived hundreds and thousands of years ago IE. Understanding that the Torah contains within the text 613 commandments (mitzvot) from God. These mitzvot are our guidebook to living and trying to enhance a moral and ethical God filled world. Our challenge of tikkun olam is to fix the world in the image of God's kingship, meaning to share with the world the concept that there is one God and that God has moral

expectations from us. That living morally is something that can be achieved at least partially. That the human being is capable of always changing and improving him/herself. That we can return to God until the last breath of life.

To answer question #1, I am including a link to what i wrote a few years ago. To always realize that many Polish Jews living in Poland only discovered in the last years (up to 222 years ago when communism fell) and that this identity for many is still fresh and fragile.

<http://www.taubephilanthropies.org/files/assets/pdf/2012/DeepRootsBook.pdf>

PP. 25-30

To answer #2: To understand that to empower a person to return to their roots, to continue the tradition of their ancestors beliefs is a great mitzvah.

This is for a beginning. What else can i help you with.

Szalom.

michael

On Tue, Sep 6, 2011 at 3:37 PM, Steven D. Reece <sdreece@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Michael,

Generally, I think that spiritual (religious) and cultural would be best, especially living out the Torah today. For example how does the Torah relate to Tikun Olam? How might I better understand the Jewish worldview or how Jews see themselves in the world today?

I am open to whatever you might suggest, as I begin my studies.

Primarily in this PhD program and as a leader of The Matzevah Foundation, my task is to develop a competent understanding of what it means to be Jewish and then to be able to communicate that understanding to others. I will be evaluated on what I develop, as I must create artifacts (materials) that

demonstrate competency in this sphere: a manual or handbook, presentations, a webpage, articles, etc. I understand much experientially from what I have been doing in my work with you and the Jewish community for the past seven years. However, I would like to understand more about what I am doing academically, but from a distinctly Jewish perspective.

Secondly and related to this competency, I am trying to develop two aspects of our foundation's -- Matzevah's purpose, which is firstly to educate people regarding the Shoah and its impact on Jews of Polish descent. I have done much reading on Jewish and Polish history and some reading on the impact of the Shoah on families among the second and now third generation descendants of survivors of the Shoah. The second purpose of Matzevah is to mobilize volunteers and resources for Jewish cemetery restoration projects and to join the Jewish community of Poland in this mitzvah.

Since we are at the beginning and developing how we do all of this, I would like to answer two questions:

1. What might I need to know in order to be sensitive to the needs of potential Jewish volunteers (of Polish descent) while sharing with them the needs of the Jewish community in Poland today?
2. What might Baptist volunteers need to know as well in order to better understand the importance of this mitzvah and take part in it?

Principally through the foundation, I am trying to develop a way to serve the needs of the Jewish community of Poland. My desire is to serve you and in order to do this, I need your help.

Steven

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Schudrich [mailto:schudrich@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, September 05, 2011 5:39 PM

To: sdreece@gmail.com

Subject: Re: Touching Base

What aspect do you want to understand? Religious? Spiritual? Social?

On Monday, September 5, 2011, Steven D. Reece <sdreece@gmail.com> wrote:

> Dear Michael, It was good to see you again as well. I will let you know when I will be in Warsaw again next spring. In the meantime, if I could, I would like to ask you for some assistance related to my PhD studies. Could you recommend to me five books to read in order to assist me better understand Jewishness? I have two books presently that I am reading:

1. What is a Jew? by Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer and revised by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, 19962. Living with God in the Twenty-First Century: Judaism's Approach to Bettering Mankind's Destiny by Rabbi Yosef Gabay, 2000 I would like to know if you think these are beneficial for me to read. Secondly, if you could give me your recommendations on five other

books to read concerning my request, I would greatly appreciate it! Sincerely, Steven From: Michael Schudrich [mailto:schudrich@gmail.com]

> Sent: Sunday, September 04, 2011 10:06 PM

> To: sdreece@gmail.com

> Subject: Re: Touching Base Dear Steven,

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> wonderful to see you. Always happy to see you when ypu are in Poland

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> take care,

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> michael

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> On Monday, August 22, 2011, Steven D. Reece <sdreece@gmail.com> wrote:

>> Dear Michael,

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>> I am sorry for the delayed response, but after returning home from Warsaw a week ago, I hit the ground running and this is the first opportunity that I have had to write to you.

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>> Firstly, I wanted to tell you that we (The Matzevah Foundation) are working on a cemetery restoration project in partnership with the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland. We will be working in Zambów. We have begun the dialogue with FODZ concerning what we might be able to do specifically next summer and I am working on a project proposal for FODZ to consider. I wanted you to know that we are committed to this project and will begin to seek and develop resources for this project within the next month.

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>> Secondly, I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you while in Warsaw and for agreeing in principle to allow me to do research with you on the rabbinic pattern of leadership as it relates to the resurgence of Judaism in Poland. I do not know if this will be my exactly research problem/question as I have to work this out with my committee chair/academic advisor but I believe that it may and for this reason I wanted to start the dialogue with you concerning this possibility. Regarding this matter, I welcome any of your input especially as it relates to academic resources or research ideas. I am early on in the process, so your input would be invaluable, However, I am developing presently my learning plan for the PhD, which will include a research project and dissertation that are vitally linked to each other.

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>> Lastly, I am tentatively planning to be in Warsaw next spring possibly in April so that we can make definite plans for the Zambrów Project. I would

like to know if we could schedule some time for meeting and discussing a potential research project. Would you have time to meet with me next spring?

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>> Thank you again for your support and encouragement in what we are doing and for me personally in my work toward a PhD.

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>> In God's peace,

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>> Steven

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>> Steven D. Reece

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