

# "Of Land and Light"

Global Day of Jewish Learning, November 2016  
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## A) Jewish Perspectives on Solar Energy

Source #1

Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, 59b	תלמוד בבלי, מסכת ברכות, נט ע"ב
<p>One who sees the sun at the beginning of its cycle ... should say: 'Blessed are You who makes the works of creation.'</p> <p>And when does it happen that the sun is at the beginning of its cycle? Abaye says, 'Every twenty eight years, the cycle begins again and the Nissan equinox falls in the hour of Saturn, on the evening of the third day, the night before the fourth day (of the week).'</p>	<p>תנו רבנן: הרוֹאֵה חֶמְהָ בְּתְקוּפַתָּהּ... אָמַר: "בְּרוּךְ עוֹשֵׂה בְּרִאשִׁית".</p> <p>וְאִימָתִי הוּא? אָמַר אַבְי: כָּל כ"ח שָׁנִין וְהֵדָר מִחֲזוֹר וְנִפְלָה תְּקוּפַת נִסָּן בְּשַׁבְּתַאי בְּאוֹרְתָא דִּתְלַת נְגָהֵי אַרְבַּע.</p>

Source #2

<b>Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, 11 Nissan, 5741 / April 15, 1981 (Part 1: <a href="http://www.chabad.org/394468">www.chabad.org/394468</a>, Part 2: <a href="http://www.chabad.org/408957">www.chabad.org/408957</a>)</b>
<p>The Blessing of the Sun reminds us that there is an open and clear solution ... to harness solar energy - the heat and warmth of the sun – to use it as a source to generate electricity. Then the country [United States] will be freed from its subservience to small states who have oil in their lands.</p> <p>The question arises: What will be accomplished by a small group of Jews, who don't make energy policy and get together and discuss the issue amongst themselves? Firstly, Maimonides rules, the Torah of Truth rules: When a Jew asserts even a single statement based on Torah, he is "obligated to view himself and the entire world as equally balanced" and his one statement has the power to tip the entire scale, "for himself and the entire world to the side of merit and bring salvation." In addition, experience has shown that words initially spoken in private and later publically – through effort, they eventually reached a wider public and eventually Washington. So we should not be discouraged for we've already seen that this has an effect...</p> <p>As we recited in the Blessing of the Sun, "Nothing is shielded from its heat"... When this energy potential is fully harnessed, it can even generate a surplus, allowing the US to share energy with other nations as well ... This is done as a fulfillment of God's command to fully utilize the resources God provides, especially the resources He has given this Nation of Kindness, to use for the individual good and the common good; for the good of this entire nation and of the entire world.</p>

## B) Values Conflicts / Means versus Ends

Source #3

Deuteronomy 16:19-20	דברים ט"ז : י"ח-כ
<p>19. You shall not judge unfairly; you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just.</p> <p>20. Justice, justice you shall pursue that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you</p>	<p>יט. לא-תטה משפט, לא תכיר פנים; ולא-תקח שחד--כי השחד יעור עיני חכמים, ויסלף דברי צדיקים.</p> <p>כ. צדק צדק, תרדף--למען תחיה וירשת את-הארץ, אשר-יהוה אלהיך נתן לך.</p>

## C) Texts that Connect and Help Us Reflect

Source #4

Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra, 60a	תלמוד בבלי, מסכת בבא בתרא, ס ע"א
<p><b>Mishnah.</b> In a courtyard which he shares with others, a person should not open a door facing another person's door nor a window facing another person's window. If it is small, he should not enlarge it, and he should not turn one into two. On the side of the public domain, however, he may make a door facing another person's door and a window facing another person's window, and if it is small he may enlarge it or he may make two out of one.</p> <p><b>Gemara.</b> Whence are these rules derived? R. Yochanan said: from the verse of the scripture, 'And Balaam lifted up his eyes and he saw Israel dwelling according to their tribes (Numbers 24:2).' This indicates that he saw that the doors of their tents did not exactly face one another, whereupon he exclaimed: worthy are these that the divine presence should rest upon them!</p>	<p><b>משנה:</b> לא יפתח אדם לחצר השותפין פתח כנגד פתח וחלון כנגד חלון. היה קטן, לא יעשנו גדול. אחד, לא יעשנו שנים. אבל פותח הוא לרה"ר פתח כנגד פתח וחלון כנגד חלון. היה קטן עושה אותו גדול ואחד עושה אותו שנים</p> <p><b>גמרא:</b> מנהני מילי? א"ר יוחנן דאמר קרא (במדבר כד:ב) "וישא בלעם את עיניו וירא את ישראל שוכן לשבטיו". מה ראה? ראה שאין פתחי אהליהם מכוונים זה לזה. אמר ראויין הללו שתשרה עליהם שכינה</p>

Source #5

<p>1 Now Balaam, seeing that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, did not, as on previous occasions, go in search of omens, but turned his face toward the wilderness.</p>	<p>א וַיֵּרָא בַלְעָם כִּי טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי ה' לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא־הָלַךְ כְּפָעַם־בְּפָעַם לְקַרְאֵת נְחָשִׁים וַיִּנְשֵׂת אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר פָּנָיו:</p>
<p>2 As Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the spirit of God came upon him.</p>	<p>ב וַיֵּשָׂא בַלְעָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל שֹׁכֵן לְשִׁבְטָיו וַתְּהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים:</p>
<p>3 Taking up his theme, he said: Word of Balaam son of Beor, Word of the man whose eye is true,</p>	<p>ג וַיֵּשָׂא מִשְׁלוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר נֹאֵם בַּלְעָם בְּנוֹ בְעוֹר וְנֹאֵם הַגִּבֹּר שֵׁתֶם הָעֵין:</p>
<p>4 Word of him who hears God's speech, Who beholds visions from the Almighty, Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:</p>	<p>ד נֹאֵם שָׁמַע אִמְרֵי־אֱלֹהִים מִחַזֶּה שִׁדְי יַחֲזֶה נָפֶל וּגְלוֹי עֵינָיו:</p>
<p>5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, Your dwellings, O Israel!</p>	<p>ה מֵה־טֹבוֹ אֱהַלְיֶךָ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:</p>

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