

# A Living Talmud: Nothing But Nets

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

-*Pirkei Avot 1:14.*

The possibilities of a world of change are enormous. This is a century rich in potential to solve problems, provide prosperity to all, to overcome longstanding issues of injustice that previously we could not surmount...

Religious faith has a profound role to play.—*Tony Blair, Former British Prime Minister and Chairman of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation*

“The world is more malleable than you think and it’s waiting for you to hammer it into shape.” - *Bono*

Rabbi Tarfon said “It is not up to you to finish the work, yet you are not free to avoid it.”

-*Pirkei Avot 2:16.*

“The first reason to work to eradicate malaria is an ethical reason—the simple human cost. Every life has equal worth.—  
Melinda Gates, wife of Bill Gates

The moral test of any society is how it treats the most vulnerable of God’s children: the elderly and the ill, the widow and the orphan, and above all, the children. Global efforts call upon us to end extreme poverty... Therefore, Reform Movement is partnering in an effort to eradicate malaria.—Article, “What’s the Buzz?”

Maimonides taught that there are eight levels of *tzedakah*, each greater than the next, and the greatest level is to empower others through gifts, loans or partnerships in such a way that they are able to become independent and able to sustain themselves.

—*URJ Resolution to End Global Poverty*

Rabbi Joshua asked, “Where shall I find the Messiah?” “At the gate of the city,” Elijah replied. “How shall I recognize him? “He sits among the lepers!” “Among the lepers! What is he doing there?” cried R. Joshua. “He changes their bandages,” Elijah answered. “He changes them one by one. That may not seem like much for a Messiah to be doing, but apparently in the eyes of God, it is a mighty thing indeed.”

**Whoever saves a  
life, saves  
the world  
entire.  
*Sanhedrin 4:9***

The Torah forbids us to “stand idly by the blood of [our] neighbor.  
*Leviticus 19:16.*

“We need nets. Not hoop nets, soccer nets or lacrosse nets. Not New Jersey Nets or dot-nets or clarinets. *Mosquito* nets... I tried to think how many times I have said or written the word “net” in 28 years of sports writing, and I came up with, conservatively, 20,000. I’ve started us off with a \$20,000 donation. That’s a whole lot of lives... Together, how many lives [could we] save?” - *Rick Reilly, article from Sports Illustrated, 5/1/2006*

“This time we have to speak out. We can’t stand idly by while hundreds of people are dying or being killed... We can’t stand by while people in camps are going to be dying of disease and hunger... We have to act.” - Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, RAC, speaking on the genocide in Dafur

“WHAT IS MIGHT? WHEN YOU SEE PEOPLE ABOUT TO FALL AND RESCUE THEM.”  
-*MIDRASH TEHILLIM 52:24*