

## **Va'era**

Not a single detail of the physical appearance of our greatest leader, Moses, is recorded. It is what a person achieves in life that matters, not the superficial image people have of him. What a far cry this is from our cosmetic age!

## **Bo**

*And you shall tell your son in that day* (13:8). The secret of engendering religious loyalty within our children is contained in this single verse. It demands that parents assume the role of teacher and spiritual mentor, and also that they display no reticence in “telling” their children how they should and should not behave.

## **Beshalach**

Scholars who attempt to rationalise the drying up of the Red Sea and the ten plagues as ‘natural phenomena,’ in order to legitimise the text, forget one thing: The Torah actually *wishes* us to view them as miracles. Making them ‘plausible’ actually impairs, rather than corroborates, the account.

## **Yitro**

*And you shall select, from among all the people, men of courage, God-fearers, men of truth who hate ill-gotten gain, and appoint them as leaders* (18:21). Were nations to take Yitro's advice, the world would be a far happier, equitable and more peaceful place.

## **Mishpatim**

The unifying principle underlying the laws in this sidrah is that human beings must always take responsibility for their actions – whether of omission or commission. Responsible citizenship has to be the primary goal of both religious and general education.

## **Terumah**

Just as the synagogue is a *Bet kneset*, literally a 'home for assembling,' so was its precursor, the Sanctuary, furnished along the lines of a 'home,' with a table, loaves, lamps, buckets, shovels, frying pans, washing facilities, exquisitely wrought objects, curtains and multi-coloured hangings. We should aim to feel 'at home' in synagogue, and bring some of the sacred spirit of the synagogue into our homes.