

Shabbat Shalom
from Rabbi Michael Gold

Candle Lighting Time
Friday Erev Shabbat 5:59 pm

Services

Thursday Morning Feb 19 8:30 am Minyan followed by Bagels and
Bible (Note – there will be no minyan nor Bagels and Bible next week Feb. 26.)
Saturday Feb.21 9:30 am Shabbat morning service

Purim Services

Monday March 2 7 pm Megillah Reading, Purim Shpiel, Hamentaashcen (\$5
donation appreciated for refreshments)
Tuesday March 3 5:30 pm Seudat Purim (Purim Dinner for those with
reservations)

I love the Olympics. But the politics never stops. A Swiss commentator spent the entire run of Israel's bobsled team (known as *shul runnings*) complaining that Israel should not be at the Olympics. He accused the team of participating in genocide (the newest false accusation of the Jews.) Fortunately, the Swiss media company removed his commentary from their online coverage of the game.

Here is my weekly message.

PARSHAT TERUMAH
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

“There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people.” (Exodus 25:22)

I recently gave a lecture at Florida Atlantic University on the ethics of A.I. (artificial intelligence.) Today we have computers and robots (bots) that imitate and even surpass human intelligence. But the ethical issues raised by this technology are huge.

I covered many issues in my lecture including privacy, bias in decision making, and perhaps most disturbing, deepfakes. Deepfakes are where artificial intelligence pretends to be a real human being, using video and audio

information. For example, criminals have been able to fake the voice of a grandchild to call a grandparent with the well-known grandparent scam. ("Grandma, I am in trouble. I was arrested and need \$10,000 for bail immediately. Can you send it in gift cards?") And of course, there is the problem of my students writing their final paper using ChapGPT, the most popular large language model which can write everything from sonnets to dissertations.

A big concern is whether the superior intelligence of A.I. will someday conquer our inferior intelligence as humans. I quoted Isaac Asimov's three rules of robots from his 1950 book *I Robot*: (Rule 1 – a robot may not injure a human being; Rule 2 – a robot must obey humans orders unless the order violates Rule 1; Rule 3 – a robot must protect its own existence unless this violates Rule 1 or 2.) Experts say ethics must be built into artificial intelligence. But how? For example, how do you get a self-driving car to make ethical decisions in deciding whether to hit a pedestrian or a wall?

At the end of my talk, I raised a major ethical concern that grows out of this week's Torah portion. Artificial intelligence is a wonderful tool, but there is no inner self or consciousness there. Philosophers speak about philosophical zombies, creatures that act like humans but have no inner self or consciousness. They are mere machines. The Talmud speaks of how Rava built a man (the earliest example of a Golem) and sent it to Rav Zeira. Rav Zeira said, "Return to the dust" (*Sanhedrin* 65b). Should such machines replace humans?

Today, if your child wants a pet, you can buy a toy that will talk back and become a friend of your child. If your teenager needs counseling, you can arrange a counselor bot who will talk to your teenager. Such bots can be extremely dangerous. There are several lawsuits pending against artificial intelligence companies because teens have committed suicide following the advice of such a bot.

For people who want companionship without the complications of dating or forming relationships, you can build a loving relationship with an artificial partner. (I recommend the 2013 movie *Her*, about a lonely man who falls in love with the operating system in his computer.) Today dating is becoming less popular. Who needs to date a real person when you can fall in love with a machine? I am sure there are people who love Siri or Alexa.

In this week's portion, we read about the building of the holy Tabernacle to be carried through the wilderness. From where in the tabernacle does God speak to Moses? The tabernacle has two Cherubim, sculptures of angels (some say children) above the Holy of Holies facing one another. God speaks

from between the faces of the Cherubim. In other words, God speaks in the spot where human beings face one another. In the midst of human relationships, we find the presence of God.