

“A Spiritual Stimulus Package”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

In an age of spiritual as well as monetary depletion, we are clearly in need of a spiritual stimulus package. Some proposed “spending” measures:

1. **Giving.** Nothing grows one’s own soul more than tending to another. Jewish law mandates that the first responsibility of one who receives charity is to give in turn to another who is less fortunate. Giving highlights our own blessings and reminds us of our capacity to assist others.
2. **Ritual.** If you wish to meet someone, put out your hand. If you wish to keep a friendship alive, write or call. If you wish to relate to God, speak the language of ritual. Lighting candles, offering a prayer, blessing food before you eat, all teach a central Jewish lesson: sometimes the feeling follows the action. Reach out in ritual to feel God’s presence in your life.
3. ***Havdalah*, separation.** Step from the stream of everyday activity to carve out sacred time. The world will always be filled with more than we can take in, with insistent demands for our attention. But shabbat dinners and time for quiet contemplation must be deliberately set aside or they will not occur.

A.J. Heschel poignantly reminds us that the urgent often crowds out the important. Refocus on what is important; give your spiritual capital a chance to grow.