

Ancient Egyptian Model

(God the Socialist)

Gasp! Share the Wealth?

The progressive governments of the world are anxiously trying to emulate the Israelites, in gradation in taxation. This has raised the temperature of some of the critics of various administrations. Various negative words are enlisted in an effort to cast the section of the people that *cannot get so much*, as being dead weight that should be eliminated. This is not a positive approach to congregational living, in the LORD.

Now, we must admit that there is no shortage of devious people, to lend a measure of truth to some of the criticism. For instance, in the case of the "welfare queens"; these are people that have decided to steal from others, through certain loopholes that are not supervised properly. Unfortunately, some of these loopholes cannot be supervised to a level that would stop the cheats, without harming the people who actually need the benefits. The LORD'S servant, Nehemiah, was beset by this type of behavior. However, since he had the support of the LORD, he was able to see, and close, the loophole.

And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews. For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.

Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them. And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?

Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.

Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury. Restore, I pray you, to them, even

this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest.

Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.

And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD.

And the people did according to this promise.

(Nehemiah 5:1-13)

The LORD knows that the rulers, too, have various devious ways of acquiring funds. Therefore, there should be no complaint about the one who has abundance, being required to provide for the ones that have not: such was the requirement on the rulers of the nation of Israel. However, the ones that received a heavier weight of responsibility to provide for the ones who originally had nothing are the priests. The provisioning for the needy, from the storehouse of the ones that have, was extended to both cover the priests, and to flow through the priesthood, too. In this way, it was expanded to include the ones that have no budgetable source of income, as was the case for the priests, and the Levites, too. The following is an example of the people's funds that came to the priests.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, saying,

He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the LORD shall bring his oblation unto the LORD of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the LORD. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'.

And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part.

For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel.

This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the LORD in the priest's office; Which the

LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, by a statute for ever throughout their generations.

(Leviticus 7:28-36)

Therefore, since there were some folks with more *wave breast and the heave shoulder* than other folks, it seems reasonable that they would be given a greater burden to release some of these assets to priests, as well as sharing the other shoulder and a portion of the remainder with the poor of the land; or, even, by indirect donation to the poor. What is indirect donation? To answer the preceding question, I need to tell you a little bit about property taxes.

Property taxes are designed so that a government, or government dependent organization, such as a school, can meet its assumed responsibility. To begin the process, a budget is prepared and approved. Then, the funding of the budget is apportioned to the community, based on the prosperity of the property--its assessed value. The property that has greater prosperity contributes a greater portion than the property with less prosperity. The same was true for the people of Israel, by the Law. This is the statement of the Law:

And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service.

And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

(Numbers 7:1-11)

Even so, the portion that was provided by the more wealthy ones was not more significant, either spiritually or societal, than the portion that was provided by certain folks with less. You probably find this difficult to believe. Well, to help you understand it; here is an example that shows how much the LORD'S measuring scale of importance in giving differs from what might be assumed to be true.

And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them,

Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

(Matthew 12:41-44)

The weight of a distribution from our assets, to provide for the support of the LORD'S work, is tightly linked to the motive of the distribution. The tithe was provided from an obligatory type of state of the heart; however, there is a clearer expression of devotion to the LORD than that. One of the apostles of God described the clearer expression of devotion.

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

(2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

Charity: the weight of this method of distribution of ones assets is captured beautifully in the preaching of that same apostle of God.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though

I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

(1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

To prime the people for that type of expression to the LORD, God introduced the congregation to another kind of support for His work. A natural portion of the extension of our self that is a clearer expression of our devotion--charity--is the outreach that is referred to as charitable giving. Other names for charitable giving are freewill offerings and vows. Once they are established, these are mandatory extensions of charity: prior to that, the decision is voluntary.

When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.

But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.

That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

(Deuteronomy 23:21-23)

Prior to the actual public declaration of intention, the intended distribution is a matter of communion between the LORD and the individual. This does not mean that the intention has less power than the distribution itself; a woman of Israel shows us how this applies. This is the record of her communion with the LORD:

Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh.

And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year,

when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk.

Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

(1 Samuel 1:1-11)

The following Scripture is the record of Hannah's completion of her intention. As you read it; note that she refers to the intention in the completion, thereby indicating that the intention powered the performance.

Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word.

So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD.

And he worshipped the LORD there.

(1 Samuel 1:20-28)

Even when the distribution seems to fall outside of the purity of holiness, still it must be honored as binding. In respect to that matter of honor, another woman of Israel and her son help us understand this type of obligation. As per a certain commandment of the LORD, as recorded in the law of Moses; the following actions of this man ought not to be done.

And there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah. And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it.

And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

And when he had restored the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

(Judges 17:1-5)

Even though those actions ought not to be done; Scripture tells us why Micah and his mother thought it was appropriate spiritual behavior.

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

(Judges 17:6)

Moreover, they had some support in their belief, as provided by an elected servant of the LORD; even though the behavior of the elected servant exceeded both the responsibility and authority of his election.

And there was a young man out of Bethlehemjudah of the family of Judah, who was a Levite, and he sojourned there. And the man departed out of the city from Bethlehemjudah to sojourn where he could find a place: and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehemjudah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place.

And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals.

So the Levite went in. And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons. And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

(Judges 17:7-13)

In summary, the method of "taxation" that the LORD installed in the congregation of Israel is the correct way to provide for the long-term benefit of a group of people. This might be why there are so many systems of government that have imitated this method.

What? You say that there are very few governments that provide support through the priesthood, for the almost sole sake of the priesthood. Well, that is a somewhat western world type of thinking, but we will go a bit further to address that, too. However, keep this thought in mind, O modern western man: Non-profit status.

For you, O modern priesthood; keep this Scripture in mind, please.

Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

(Exodus 22:22-24)

Also, O modern priesthood; keep this Scripture in mind.

Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

(1 Timothy 5:1-8)

Furthermore, even considering the preceding Scripture, there are two tithes needed to make a fifth. As to the second tenth; the more obvious imitation of the tenets of God the Socialist, as it is done by many of the governments of the world, involves the other half of the fifth that comes from the people of a nation. We go there, next: please keep the following Scripture in mind as you move forward.

When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

(Deuteronomy 17:14-20)

