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**Speech by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks on Receiving the 2016 Templeton Prize
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Beloved friends,

The news that I had won this prize almost rendered me speechless, an event that would have been unprecedented in the history of the rabbinate. But it has left me moved, humbled, thankful, and deeply motivated, because to me the award is not just about what has been done but also about how much there is still to do.

I want to express my deep sense of gratitude to and kinship with the Templeton family: to the memory of the late Sir John, whose vision still drives the prize and the Foundation that bears his name, and to the memory of his son the late Dr Jack Templeton, who so ensured its continuity. But also and especially to Jack's wife Pina and their daughters, Heather Templeton Dill and Jennifer Templeton Simpson, who beautifully embody a combination of leadership and humility that is so rare and so precious. Elaine and I had the privilege of visiting the Foundation headquarters in April of this year and we were impressed and inspired by the range and quality of the programmes it supports and the vision that underlies them. May you continue to bring blessings to the world. And thanks in particular to Joanna Almond, Lynn Coletta and Don Lehr for everything surrounding tonight and the other events related to the prize.

I want to thank Lord Griffiths for all he has done; to Lord Carey for nominating me for the prize; and for the music tonight, to the Shabbaton Choir, the choir of the Sacks Morasha Primary School, and organist Gerard Brooks.

I know full well that the credit is not mine, but that of the Jewish tradition to which I have tried to give voice, and to its twin imperatives: to be true to our faith and a blessing to others regardless of their faith. People sometimes ask me how I became a speaker, and I answer: Simple. I married the best listener in the world. So my thanks to Elaine, and to our children – Josh, Dina and Gila – and their

wonderful families who gave me so much support, and to Joanna, Dan and Debby, my wonderful team. And thanks ultimately to God, who believes in us so much more than we believe in Him.

I said that to me the prize is less about recognition of the past than about responsibility for the future, and it is to that future I turn tonight. This is a fateful moment in history. Wherever we look, politically, religiously, economically, environmentally, there is insecurity and instability. It is not too much to say that the future of the West and the unique form of freedom it has pioneered for the past four centuries is altogether at risk.

I want tonight to look at one phenomenon that has shaped the West, leading it at first to greatness, but now to crisis. It can be summed up in one word: *outsourcing*. On the face of it, nothing could be more innocent or productive. It's the basis of the modern economy. It's Adam Smith's division of labour and David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage that says, even if you are better than me at everything, still we both gain if you do what you're best at and I do what I'm best at and we trade. The question is: are there limits? Are there things we can't or shouldn't outsource?

The issue has arisen because of the new technologies and instantaneous global communication. So instead of outsourcing within an economy, we do it between economies. We've seen the outsourcing of production to low wage countries. We've seen the outsourcing of services, so that you can be in one town in America, booking a hotel in another, unaware that your call is being taken in India. This seemed like a good idea at the time, as if the West was saying to the world: you do the producing and we'll do the consuming. But is that sustainable in the long run?

Then banks began to outsource risk, lending far beyond their capacities in the belief that either property prices would go on rising forever, or more significantly, if they crashed, it would be someone else's problem, not mine.

There is, though, one form of outsourcing that tends to be little noticed: the outsourcing of *memory*. Our computers and smartphones have developed larger and larger memories, from kilobytes to megabytes to gigabytes, while our memories, and those of our children have got smaller and smaller. In fact, why bother to remember anything these days if you can look it up in a microsecond on Google or Wikipedia?

But here, I think, we made a mistake. We confused *history* and *memory*, which are not the same thing at all. History is an answer to the question, "What happened?" Memory is an answer to the question, "Who am I?" History is about facts, memory is about identity. History is his-story. It happened to someone else, not me. Memory is my story, the past that made me who I am, of whose legacy I am

the guardian for the sake of generations yet to come. Without memory, there is no identity. And without identity, we are mere dust on the surface of infinity.

Lacking memory we have forgotten one of the most important lessons to have emerged from the wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and the new birth of freedom that followed. Even to say it sounds antiquarian but it is this: *A free society is a moral achievement.* Without self-restraint, without the capacity to defer the gratification of instinct, and without the habits of heart and deed that we call virtues, we will eventually lose our freedom.

That is what Locke meant when he contrasted *liberty*, the freedom to do what we ought, with *licence*, the freedom to do what we want. It's what Adam Smith signalled when, before he wrote *The Wealth of Nations*, he wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It's what Washington meant when he said, "Human rights can only be assured among a virtuous people." And Benjamin Franklin when he said, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom." And Jefferson when he said, "A nation as a society forms a moral person, and every member of it is personally responsible for his society."

At some point the West abandoned this belief. When I went to Cambridge in the late 60s, the philosophy course was then called Moral Sciences, meaning that just like the natural sciences, morality was objective, real, part of the external world. I soon discovered, though, that almost no one believed this anymore. Morality was no more than the expression of emotion, or subjective feeling, or private intuition, or autonomous choice. It was, within limits, whatever I chose it to be. In fact there was nothing left to study but the meaning of words. To me this seemed less like civilization than the breakdown of a civilization.

It took me years to work out what had happened. Morality had been split in two and outsourced to other institutions. There were moral choices and there were the consequences of our moral choices. Morality itself was outsourced to the market. The market gives us choices, and morality itself is just a set of choices in which right or wrong have no meaning beyond the satisfaction or frustration of desire. The result is that we find it increasingly hard to understand why there might be things we want to do, can afford to do, and have a legal right to do, that nonetheless we should not do because they are unjust or dishonourable or disloyal or demeaning: in a word, unethical. Ethics was reduced to economics.

As for the consequences of our choices, these were outsourced to the state. Bad choices lead to bad outcomes: failed relationships, neglected children, depressive illness, wasted lives. But the government would deal with it. Forget about marriage as a sacred bond between husband and wife. Forget about the need of children for a loving and secure human environment. Forget about the need

for communities to give us support in times of need. Welfare was outsourced to the state. As for conscience, that once played so large a part in the moral life, that could be outsourced to regulatory bodies. So having reduced moral choice to economics, we transferred the consequences of our choices to politics.

And it seemed to work, at least for a generation or two. But by now problems have arisen that can't be solved by the market or the state alone. To mention just a few: The structural unemployment that follows the outsourcing of production and services. The further unemployment that will come when artificial intelligence increasingly replaces human judgment and skill. Artificially low interest rates that encourage borrowing and debt and discourage saving and investment. Wildly inflated CEO pay. The lowering of living standards, first of the working class, then of the middle class. The insecurity of employment, even for graduates. The inability of young families to afford a home. The collapse of marriage, leading to intractable problems of child poverty and depression. The collapse of birthrates throughout Europe, leading to unprecedented levels of immigration that are now the only way the West can sustain its population, and the systemic failure to integrate some of these groups. The loss of family, community and identity, that once gave us the strength to survive unstable times. And there are others.

Why have they proved insoluble? First, because they are global, and governments are only national. Second, because they are long term while the market and liberal democratic politics are short term. Third, because they depend on changing habits of behaviour, which neither the market nor the liberal democratic state are mandated to do. Above all, though, because they can't be solved by the market and the state alone. You can't outsource conscience. You can't delegate moral responsibility away.

When you do, you raise expectations that cannot be met. And when, inevitably, they are not met, society becomes freighted with disappointment, anger, fear, resentment and blame. People start to take refuge in magical thinking, which today takes one of four forms: the far right, the far left, religious extremism and aggressive secularism. The far right seeks a return to a golden past that never was. The far left seeks a utopian future that will never be. Religious extremists believe you can bring salvation by terror. Aggressive secularists believe that if you get rid of religion there will be peace. These are all fantasies, and pursuing them will endanger the very foundations of freedom. Yet we have seen, even in mainstream British and American politics, forms of ugliness and irrationality I never thought I would see in my lifetime. We have seen on university campuses in Britain and America the abandonment of academic freedom in the name of the right not to be offended by being confronted by views with which I disagree. This is *le trahison des clercs*, the intellectual betrayal, of our time, and it is very dangerous indeed. So is there another way?

Two historical phenomena have long fascinated me. One is the strange fact that, having lagged behind China for a thousand years, the West overtook it in the seventeenth century, creating science, industry, technology, the free market and the free society.

The second is the no less strange fact that Jews and Judaism survived for two thousand years after the destruction of the Second Temple, having lost everything on which their existence was predicated in the Bible: their land, their home, their freedom, their Temple, their kings, their prophets and priests.

The explanation in both cases, is the same. It is the precise opposite of outsourcing: namely the internalization of what had once been external. Wherever in the world Jews prayed, there was the Temple. Every prayer was a sacrifice, every Jew a priest, and every community a fragment of Jerusalem. Something similar happened in those strands of Islam that interpreted *jihad* not as a physical war on the battlefield but as a spiritual struggle within the soul.

A parallel phenomenon occurred in Christianity after the Reformation, especially in the Calvinism that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries transformed Holland, Scotland, England of the Revolution and America of the Pilgrim Fathers. It was this to which Max Weber famously attributed the spirit of capitalism. The external authority of the Church was replaced by the internal voice of conscience. This made possible the widely distributed networks of trust on which the smooth functioning of the market depends. We are so used to contrasting the material and the spiritual that we sometimes forget that the word *credit* comes from the Latin *credo*, I believe, and *confidence*, that requisite of investment and economic growth, comes from *fidencia* meaning faith or trust.

What emerged in Judaism and post-Reformation Christianity was the rarest of character-types: the inner-directed personality. Most societies, for most of history, have been either tradition-directed or other-directed. People do what they do, either because that is how they have always been done, or because that's what other people do.

Inner-directed types are different. They become the pioneers, the innovators and the survivors. They have an internalized satellite navigation system, so they aren't fazed by uncharted territory. They have a strong sense of duty to others. They try to have secure marriages. They hand on their values to their children. They belong to strong communities. They take daring but carefully calculated risks. When they fail, they have rapid recovery times.

They have discipline. They enjoy tough challenges and hard work. They play it long. They are more interested in sustainability than quick profits. They know they have to be responsible to customers, employees and shareholders, as well as to the wider public, because only thus will they survive in the

long run. They don't do foolish things like creative accounting, subprime mortgages, and falsified emissions data, because they know you can't fake it forever. They don't consume the present at the cost of the future, because they have a sense of responsibility for the future. They have the capacity to defer the gratification of instinct. They do all this because they have an inner moral voice. Some call it conscience. Some call it the voice of God.

Cultures like that stay young. They defeat the entropy, the loss of energy, that has spelled the decline and fall of every other empire and superpower in history. But the West has, in the immortal words of Queen Elsa in *Frozen*, let it go. It's externalized what it once internalized. It has outsourced responsibility. It's reduced ethics to economics and politics. Which means we are dependent on the market and the state, forces we can do little to control. And one day our descendants will look back and ask, How did the West lose what once made it great?

Every observer of the grand sweep of history, from the prophets of Israel to the Islamic sage ibn Khaldun, from Giambattista Vico to John Stuart Mill, and Bertrand Russell to Will Durant, has said essentially the same thing: that civilizations begin to die when they lose the moral passion that brought them into being in the first place. It happened to Greece and Rome, and it can happen to the West. The sure signs are these: a falling birthrate, moral decay, growing inequalities, a loss of trust in social institutions, self-indulgence on the part of the rich, hopelessness on the part of the poor, unintegrated minorities, a failure to make sacrifices in the present for the sake of the future, a loss of faith in old beliefs and no new vision to take their place. These are the danger signals and they are flashing now.

There is an alternative: to become inner-directed again. This means recovering the moral dimension that links our welfare to the welfare of others, making us collectively responsible for the common good. It means recovering the spiritual dimension that helps us tell the difference between the value of things and their price. We are more than consumers and voters; our dignity transcends what we earn and own. It means remembering that what's important is not just satisfying our desires but also knowing which desires to satisfy. It means restraining ourselves in the present so that our children may have a viable future. It means reclaiming collective memory and identity so that society becomes less of a hotel and more of a home. In short, it means learning that there are some things we cannot or should not outsource, some responsibilities we cannot or should not delegate away.

We owe it to our children and grandchildren not to throw away what once made the West great, and not for the sake of some idealized past, but for the sake of a demanding and deeply challenging future. If we do simply let it go, if we continue to forget that a free society is a moral achievement that

depends on habits of responsibility and restraint, then what will come next – be it Russia, China, ISIS or Iran – will be neither liberal nor democratic, and it will certainly not be free. We need to restate the moral and spiritual dimensions in the language of the twenty-first century, using the media of the twenty-first century, and in ways that are uniting rather than divisive.

The moral and spiritual dimensions of human flourishing are what the Templeton Prize and the Templeton Foundation have always been about, and it will be by developing these themes globally, together with others, over the coming years that I hope I can repay a little of the honour you have bestowed on me today.

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