

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE BO

JANUARY 4, 2014

3 SHEBAT 5774

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Rabbi Asher Abittan Z'SL – 8th Shebat
David ben Sarah – David Mizrahi – 7th Shabbat
Haim ben Victoria – Hymie Gindi – 8th Shebat
And in memory of Susie Barnathan A"H

Shaharit Wednesday morning January 1 at 8AM
Thursday the 2nd is Rosh Hodesh – Breakfast will follow services

This Shabbat is the Rabbi's Yahrzeit Shabbat
The Abittan family will be joining us.

Candle lighting this Friday evening is at 4:22 p.m. Mincha at 4:25
SHABBAT 9:00 AM - Please say Shema at home by 8:55AM

Shabbat Morning Children's Program 10:30 - 11:30
Ages 0-5 - Morah Avital in the Playroom
Girls Ages 6-12 - In the Upstairs Library
Treats, Games, Stories, Prayers and Fun!
With Leah

KIDDUSH: is sponsored by the Rebetzin in memory of Rabbi Abittan z'sl

Mincha follows Kiddush with amidah not before 12:23 PM

Shabbat Ends – 5:22PM
Return for Arbit – 5:40 PM

Please Join us this Saturday night for Kid's Game Night –
6:15 - 7:45 -There will be pizza, raffles music, Torah and fun!

Please join us for our monthly movie night featuring:
“The Other Son” a moving and provocative tale of two young men--one Israeli, the other Palestinian--who discover they were accidentally switched at birth, and the complex repercussions facing them and their families.
Discussion and Refreshments to follow
Where: Lido Synagogue - Suggested Donation: \$5
When: Saturday evening, January 4th, 7:30

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE

Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yenai – 7PM –
Daily class with Rabbi Colish at 6:30AM

Rabbi Abitan's z'sl yahrtzeit falls out Wednesday night and Thursday
January 9th which is the 8th of Shevat

Tu Bishvat is Wednesday night February 15th
We thank Lisa Gaon for her \$300 donation sponsoring the evening
Those wishing to attend should let Dr Hal or Penny know

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

I wrote this week's article on Sunday as the Jewish Voice had an early deadline. And so all of you not working tomorrow have something to read (as if you don't already have lots to read) we're sending this out on Tuesday.

You'll see that I wrote about a funeral I attended last week. Sadly, I am just returning from another funeral now. Susie Barnathan A"H passed away early this morning. We extend condolences to her husband, Henry Rico Barnathan and her mother Julie Massry. To all her wonderful children, Joey, Eddie, David and Ikey Barnathan, Rachel Mosseri, and Julie Montague To her brothers Charles, Eli and Rabbi Abie Massry and her sisters Sheryl Levy, Joyce Chehebar and my own dear sister in law Ruth Bibi. The family will be sitting at 724 Avenue P, between East 7th & 8th through Monday morning. Susie was truly a righteous woman, a sadeket. Rabbi Alouf spoke about being her neighbor and living next door to such a special lady for so many years. Her brother spoke of having an angel for a sister. We pray that her merit be a protection for her family and the entire community.

Controlling Time and Appreciating Every Moment

Rabbi Abittan z'sl, whose Yahrzeit is this week, would tell us that the day is fast approaching when we should no longer say, "Abal, 120 years" or "May you be blessed with 120 years". We see more and more people living productive lives into their late 90's and regularly see people joining the centenarian club. Both Rav Shach and Rav Scheinberg were still working after their 100th birthday and Haham Ovadia passing away at 93 was somewhat of a shock. I notice that some people reading Tefilah LeMoshe aloud each Shabbat lower their voice when reading that the days of man are seventy years and with strength eighty years. So when I attended a funeral for a woman who passed away before reaching her 70th birthday, it was in many ways a tragedy to lose someone at what we would call today, a relatively young age.

And as sad as a day it was, the funeral was not sad in the way one might imagine. The funeral was inspirational.

Rashi's first comment on the Torah cites that the Torah should have begun with "the first mitzvah commanded to all of Jewry as a nation, the mitzvah of kiddush haChodesh." He refers to the portion we read this week which really details the birth of the Jewish people as a chosen people and nation of G-d and the Torah as a book of Laws.

We learn from this portion and the specific verse of HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem, "this month is for you", the concept of the Jewish nation having the power to set the calendar. One must understand that we are not talking about mere dates. Our calendar directs a physical and spiritual flow of time. And control of this through the declaration of the new moon and of leap years was specifically given to the Jewish nation. We decide which day will have the holiness of Yom Kippur, which day we will celebrate Pesach ridding our homes from Chametz and eating Matzah. G-d is in essence telling us that before everything in life, before any misvot, before we leave Egypt, we must realize something; time is in our hands.

One might think that at a funeral we would walk away with exactly the opposite message alluding to the fact that time is not in our hands at all. And that's why I found this funeral inspiring. Rabbi Mansour suggested that many in the secular world would say that Diane Azrak Massry passed away before her time. He assured those that came to pay their respects that morning that everything occurs at its time. And he guaranteed that based on his conversations with Diane that she understood this. We heard about a woman who valued each and every moment in her life and lived every day to its fullest. The rabbis tell us that our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah were able to leave this world with their years and their days as each day was precious.

As I sat there listening to Rabbi Sutton, Rabbi Malka, her son Adam and her grandson speak only a few days after we read the opening portion of Shemot, I was reminded of the words of Rabbi Sacks. Our Exodus begins with the birth and stories of Moses, but "the Torah is a deep and subtle book, and it does not always deliver its message on the surface. Just beneath is another and far more remarkable story, not about a hero but about six heroines, six courageous women without whom there would not have been a Moses."

We say that behind every great man, there is a great woman, but it's usually more than one woman.

Those who spoke of Diane, spoke of a woman who was an incredible mother finding a specific and different connection with each of her children and grandchildren, adjusting her interest and conversation to what was important to them. I recalled Yocheved, the mother of Moshe who must make very difficult decisions but always with her children's interests at the forefront.

They spoke of a woman who became a matriarch to her siblings. One is easily reminded of Miriam, the prophetess who follows the basket of her brother and approaches Batya, the daughter of Pharaoh and suggests to the princess that a Hebrew woman, her own mother, might be called to nurse the child.

Diane became a mother and grandmother to her husband Louie's family. They lost their mother and grandmother some years back and one of the rabbis mentioned how one of Louie's grandchildren was crying in school because his "grandmother" Diane passed away. We understand this adoptive love through Batya who adopted Moses and we see how G-d looked upon this adoption. Of all the names we have for Moses, we use the name Batya gave him, evermore.

The Torah tells of the midwives. Shifra was the one who beautified the children and Diane beautified her environment and all those around her. It's an amazing thing when a grandson doesn't want to go clothing shopping without his grandmother.

The Torah tells of Puah who soothed and comforted the babies. Diane brought comfort to all around her. No matter how sick, she never complained. No matter how sick, she never focused on herself. She served those who came to visit and blessed them.

And I leave to last the sixth. Like Ziporah, the wife of Moses' wife, the daughter of a Midianite priest, who was determined to accompany Moses on his mission to Egypt, despite the fact that she had no reason to risk her life on such a hazardous venture. It is she who, at a crucial moment, has a better sense than Moses himself of what God requires when she circumcises her son saving her husband's life. I have tremendous Hakarat HaTov to her first husband Marvin who I can listen to for hours. It was Marvin who helped my cousin Morris and me to know our uncle Jimmy Azrak who was his uncle too. We never knew Jimmy and it was Marvin who filled in the blanks allowing us to see a picture of a very special person. One might expect a man divorced to speak ill

of his wife, but Marvin only praised Diane for the special person she was. And my Hakarat HaTov is even greater towards Lou Massry who with his brother has encouraged me and strengthened me always in following a path to teach and explain Torah. My heart goes out to him after experiencing this loss, not once in his life, but twice. He cared for her with everything a person has. He lifted her spiritually. We pray that Hashem will comfort him and the entire family.

When I write and teach, I guess I take on the role of Rabbi. I keep the certificate by my desk to remind me. But for much of my day, I'm usually the guy who made someone's furniture. People interact with a rabbi in one way; often with a nice façade. But to the furniture maker, it's very different. We're like the plumber, the painter or even the housekeeper. We see what people are really like. The rabbi's tell us a person reveals himself through his pocket, his cup (through drinking too much) or his anger. We can add another. When someone's doing a house, going through the pressures of change orders, delays, personalities, mistakes and unrealized expectations, you meet the real person. What I write is what I know. Diane Azrak Massry was a very special lady. Tehi nafsha Serurah Be'Sror HaChayim.

Rav Avraham Pam, z'sl writes: A Jew knows that his life has a profound purpose and his soul has descended from beneath the Heavenly Throne to this earth to accomplish a mission only he can fulfill. For that mission he is allotted a certain amount of time to achieve his task. Whatever he accomplishes in his life on this earth will be what must sustain his soul for all eternity. Every day of one's life carries the potential to be filled with great accomplishments.

May we all be blessed to never waste time, to never kill time and to use every moment, every hour and every day as best as we can. Life is precious as long as we appreciate every moment.
Shabbat Shalom

PS: We all know of the tuition crisis. The problem has led to a number of parents being forced to send their children to public school. Instead of sitting by and watching, a group of gentlemen have come together and offer a plan to assist these families in maintaining and strengthening their connection with Yahadut. Please see the following and pass the message on to those who can be helped.

Community Talmud Torah Committee
For those parents that are sending their children
to Public Schools, this notice is very important.

We are proud to announce an agreement with our Public School P.S. 238, located at East 8th between Ave P and Quentin Rd. It will offer an elective course in the Hebrew Language for students in grades K-8 for the school year starting September 2014, providing enough students register. Special IEP (Individual Educational Programs) are also available. The tuition is FREE.

We will also open a Talmud Torah for those students attending P.S. 238 and other Public Schools. The Talmud Torah is not associated with the Public School, but is our own Community organization. It will offer Religious studies after school hours from 2:45pm-4:45pm, four days a week. For the younger students, it will offer a curriculum in our "Ktab" tradition of Siddur, Torah, Holidays and Halacha. Older students will be introduced to Mishna, Talmud and Jewish History. Tuition will be free for the first 2 months and thereafter be \$200/mo. for the remaining 8 months of the school year. A tuition assistance program will also be available.

The result of learning the Hebrew Language in Public School (for one hour a day), together with a religious Talmud Torah education (for two hours a day), will be excellent. We believe your child will learn to speak Hebrew, and will be religiously educated according to our traditions. Additionally, we emphasize that a religiously observant home together with your child's weekly Shabbat attendance at a Synagogue Youth program will be very important for their social and religious development. After graduation from P.S. 238, we believe, your child will be sufficiently educated to be admitted to any Yeshiva High School.

If your child is currently going to a Public School other than P.S. 238, and if you are not in their school zone, you may be eligible to transfer to P.S. 238 or be eligible for free bussing to our Talmud Torah program. Kindergarten Registration for the September 2014 School year must be prior to January 13th.

Please be aware there are a limited number of seats available for Kindergarten and the deadline is fast approaching. The Public School Board and our committee need to know approximately how many children in each grade will attend P.S. 238.

We need a NON BINDING response from all interested parents before January 10, 2014.

Please pass this email to any interested parents. If you have any questions or concerns, you may reach us at info@communitytt.org.

Board of Directors: Morris Matalon, Jack Dushey, Mickey Shamah, Daniel Harari, Ernest Maslaton

Shabbat Shalom

David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

1st & 2nd Aliyot: Moshe and Aharon forewarned Pharaoh about the Locust. His advisors begged Pharaoh to consider Moshe's request, and Pharaoh attempted to negotiate with Moshe and Aharon that the children should stay behind. When his offer was refused, all negotiations broke down and Pharaoh chased Moshe and Aharon away. The Locust swallowed up Mitzrayim (Egypt), but Pharaoh still refused to send away the Jews.

3rd Aliya: Darkness enveloped Egypt for three days. Pharaoh told Moshe that he could take out his people, but he had to leave the cattle behind. Moshe refused and Pharaoh forewarned Moshe that he could not come to him again. In truth, the next time they saw each other would be after the Death of the First Born, when Pharaoh went to Moshe.

4th Aliya: Moshe forewarned the Egyptians about the Death of the First Born. In 12:2 Hashem (G-d) commanded Moshe and Aharon with the very first Mitzvah to be given to the Nation. The very first Korban Pesach was described along with the Mitzvos of Matzoh, Chametz, and Pesach.

5th Aliya: The Bnai Yisroel were commanded to mark the inside of their doors with the blood of the Korban Pesach.

6th Aliya: The plague of the Death of the First Born left Mitzrayim in mourning. Pharaoh and the Egyptians hurried the Jews out of Mitzrayim. Approximately 600,000 men besides women, children, and the elderly (3,000,000 total) as well as about 1,000,000 non-Jews (the Eruv Rav) left Mitzrayim during the Exodus. It was the year 2448, and the Pasuk says that the Jews had been in Mitzrayim for 430 years. (exactly 430 years from the Bris Bain Habisarim - The Covenant Between the Halves) The laws of the Korban Pesach were reviewed.

7th Aliya: The Parsha concludes with a review of the laws of Pesach as well as introducing the Mitzvos of

Pehter Chamor - the commandment to exchange all first born, male donkeys for a sheep; Pidyon Haben - redeeming the first born male child; and the Mitzvah of Tefillin.

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

“No man could see his brother nor could anyone rise from his place for a three day period.” (Shemot 10:23)

For three days an Egyptian “could not see his brother.” This was followed by an even more severe period of darkness that actually paralyzed the population, to the degree that whoever was sitting could not stand and whoever was standing could not sit down.

The Hidushei Harim z”l once remarked that the greatest darkness possible is when one doesn’t take notice of the troubles of another person and doesn’t seek to come to his aid. This is hinted to in the phrase “no man could see another” in the plague of darkness. One of the greatest challenges we face is the obligation to look beyond our own struggles and relate to others. In some circumstances there is much that can be done. In other situations, taking note means using tact, wisdom, and sensitivity in our approach to the plight of others. Sometimes it’s just common sense.

Make sure that you have all the facts straight from other sources before asking questions or offering advice. Don’t ask a married woman how many children she has unless you know for sure that she does have children. Don’t ask a stranger or a casual acquaintance what he does for a living in this economically stressing time, unless you know for sure that he has a job.

It is crucial for teachers to know the family background of the students. When a teacher discovers that the young boy he has so sternly instructed to bring a note from his father is actually an orphan, it isn’t only the child who will be deeply hurt. The teacher will be devastated as well.

During the final days of the plague of darkness, the Egyptians sat like stone, unable to flex a muscle. They had no way to eat a morsel of food or to drink a drop of water. So how did they survive? One explanation is that when the Israelites entered their homes, they were filled with compassion for the Egyptians and fed them and gave them water to drink. This teaching is a mind-boggling revelation of the loftiness of the Jews of that time. After so much enslavement their hearts filled with compassion for the very men who had treated them so brutally. It is a very illuminating example of how we should treat others. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

One of the most important aspects of Judaism is remembering the Exodus from Egypt.

Indeed many misvot were given to us just so that we can remember the redemption, as we say in many of our prayers, “o”h”r”om”in ,@th”mh”k r”f”z - a remembrance of the coming out of Egypt.” But we must remember not only the actual Exodus, but also the technical aspects which Hashem did to make the miracle more complete. The perashah tells us that during the plague of the first born, ,«ur«uf%0C ,ŠF0n, when so many Egyptians died, there was no barking of any dogs that night. The Rabbis say that when the Angel of Death comes to a city, u”j, the dogs sense it and bark furiously. But here, Hashem made a miracle and didn’t allow the dogs to bark, which was a natural consequence. The reason is so that the Jewish people should not be scared by a sudden bark. Did you ever walk near a house when all of a sudden a dog barks and frightens you for a moment? The Jewish people were spared that small discomfort

As we remember o”h”r”om”in ,@th”m”h, the Exodus from Egypt, we should always remind ourselves of the many kindnesses Hashem did to make our journey more pleasant. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

RABBI ELI MANSOUR The Lesson of the Moon

We read in Parashat Bo the first Misva given to Beneh Yisrael as a nation – the Misva of “Ha’hodesh Ha’zeh Lachem Rosh Hodashim” (12:2). This Misva requires us to establish the Jewish calendar according to the lunar cycle, meaning, the revolution of the moon around the earth, which occurs approximately every 28.5 days. The Jewish year is defined by twelve lunar cycles, as opposed to most other nations, which base their calendar upon the 365-day revolution of the earth around the sun. Before Beneh Yisrael left Egypt, G-d commanded that they should declare new months based upon the sighting of the new moon, and this is the basis upon which the Jewish calendar is arranged.

This command is followed by a series of laws relevant to the Korban Pesah, the paschal offering which Beneh Yisrael brought on the night they left Egypt. These include the requirements to undergo Berit Mila before performing the sacrifice, to slaughter a sheep, to place the blood on the doorpost, and to partake of the meat inside the home without leaving the home throughout the night. It also included a prohibition against sharing the sacrifice with non-Jews.

One might wonder, what is the connection between these laws and the Misva of the Jewish calendar?

Why does G-d introduce the laws of the Korban Pesah with the command to establish a lunar-based calendar?

Rav Shemuel Salant (Jerusalem, 1816-1909), in his *Be'er Yosef*, explains that the lunar calendar system conveys a vital lesson for Beneh Yisrael. The moon becomes visible only when it is at a distance from the sun. During the daytime, when the moon is near the sun in the sky, it is overwhelmed by the light of the sun and cannot be seen. It is only when the sun sets and the moon is separate from the sun that it retains its identity and can be identified by people here on Earth.

The same is true with the Jewish people. Just as the moon is minuscule in relation to the sun, we constitute but a tiny percentage of the world population. And just as the moon loses its identity when it comes close to the sun, we become absorbed by the rest of mankind when we draw too close to the non-Jewish world. Although we engage in the general world, we must ensure to remain separate and apart in order that we retain our unique identity and our loyalty to our special mission. If we become too much a part of general society, we cannot be "seen"; we just blend in and are no longer discernible as Jews.

The laws of the Korban Pesah were intended, at least in part, to separate Beneh Yisrael from the Egyptian society in which they lived. As our Sages teach, Beneh Yisrael became entrenched in Egyptian culture and worshipped idols. They were therefore commanded to publicly slaughter the sheep, the Egyptian deity, and place its blood on their doorposts as a symbol of their firm repudiation of this pagan belief. And they were commanded to undergo *Berit Mila*, so they would be physically different from the people of Egypt, and to remain indoors throughout the night without including any Egyptians in their feast. All this was meant to establish our nation's separate and distinct status, to draw the "moon" away from the "sun," so-to-speak, so the Jewish nation could come into existence and step onto the stage of history.

This is the connection between the lunar calendar and the Korban Pesah, as both relate to this theme of separation and retaining our national identity. Together, these laws remind us of the importance of remaining separate, that even as we involve ourselves in general society, we must not draw so close that we lose our uniqueness and distinct status.

Rabbi Wein

Advancing years certainly have their effect. Physically it becomes more difficult to do the things that once one was able to easily accomplish. Light bulbs now refuse to be changed, items on the floor resist efforts to be picked up, print becomes smaller and less distinct and difficult senior moments of memory become routine.

King Solomon in *Kohelet* lists the infirmities of advancing age in brutal and vivid detail. Yet all of us pray for long life and years of great age. As the saying goes, it certainly beats the alternative. But all of this being said, I feel that there are certain unique privileges that come with the accumulation of decades. There are certain valuable privileges that inhere to one becoming elderly. An older person, though one may now be more restricted physically and functionally, one is freed of certain social and external inhibitions.

One no longer places the importance on fashionable style and clothing that one did in one's younger years. Most of the elderly are able to make peace with their social and monetary situation and the drive to accumulate more and more diminishes, though it never really disappears completely from us as long as we are alive.

Time plays a greater role than before and there often is a problem of how to fill it. The years of retirement are often years of boredom and are emotionally unrewarding. The challenge is to be able to exploit the advantages of age and disregard, to the extent possible, the problems and disadvantages that come with advancing years.

One of the privileges that I feel age bestows is the ability to be more honest and explicit with one's own self and opinions. The fact that one no longer really aspires to greater position and/or fame (certainly one wishes no more notoriety) frees one's mind from always having to be influenced by current political correctness and the oppressive hand of conformity.

I have often thought that the Lord delayed the challenge to Abraham of sacrificing Isaac until Abraham was of very advanced age. Even then according to many commentators and Midrash, Abraham was troubled by what the world would think of him and his message of monotheism if he committed this seemingly inexplicable act of murder.

Yet since this challenge occurred as the almost final challenge of his long career, the opinions of others and the public relations angle played less of a role in

Abraham's decision to follow God's commandment no matter what. Age confers upon one the courage of conviction. And therefore opinions that one would keep to one's self in one's younger years for fear of unwanted controversy are more easily expressed publicly by those who have achieved substantial years.

It is not that one does not completely care what others think when one achieves the status of being elderly. It is rather that it means that it should be possible to gain a recognition of one's true self and a truthful expression of the experience of years lived and hopefully of the wisdom of life itself.

The Talmud recognizes the privileges of age in many respects. The Talmud itself says regarding the questioning of a certain opinion of one of the sages: "If wisdom is perhaps lacking, at least age and experience is present." There are many so-called retired people that I know who now serve as consultants and guides for companies and younger entrepreneurs. Their experience and know-how are of enormous value and importance.

One of the great privileges of age is the knowledge of failure. No one passes through this world without experiencing moments, if not even years, of small reward and even of dismal failure. Unless one knows how to deal with failure, financial reverses, personal disappointments and family problems one is unlikely to record eventual success in these areas later in life.

It is ironic that younger generations are reticent to accept the advice and guidance that the elderly are willing to give them. Most people somehow resent being told what and how to do things. Yet the elderly are an enormous resource for wisdom and the avoidance of error and often have a clearer perspective on life.

That is why Judaism emphasizes respect if not even homage to the elderly. It is no accident that most of the great leaders of the Jewish people and especially of the Torah world, in recent as well as past times, were people of age and experience.

Moshe begins his career at the age of eighty, hardly an age where any congregation in the world today would engage his services as a spiritual leader. Nevertheless the privileges of age are present, vital and important. They should certainly be exploited to the extent they can be, by society generally and families particularly.

Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks

To gain insight into the unique leadership lesson of this week's parsha, I often ask an audience to perform a thought-experiment. Imagine you are the leader of a people that has suffered exile for more than two centuries, and has been enslaved and oppressed. Now, after a series of miracles, it is about to go free. You assemble them and rise to address them. They are waiting expectantly for your words. This is a defining moment they will never forget. What will you speak about?

Most people answer: freedom. That was Abraham Lincoln's decision in the Gettysburg Address when he invoked the memory of "a new nation, conceived in liberty," and looked forward to "a new birth of freedom." Some suggest that they would inspire the people by talking about the destination that lay ahead, the "land flowing with milk and honey." Yet others say they would warn the people of the dangers and challenges that they would encounter on what Nelson Mandela called "the long walk to freedom."

Any of these would have been the great speech of a great leader. Guided by God, Moses did none of these things. That is what made him a unique leader. If you examine the text in parshat Bo you will see that three times he reverted to the same theme: children, education and the distant future.

And when your children ask you, "What do you mean by this rite?" you shall say, "It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, because He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses." (Ex. 12: 26-27)

And you shall explain to your child on that day, "It is because of what the Lord did for me when I went free from Egypt." (Ex. 13:8)

And when, in time to come, your child asks you, saying, "What does this mean?" you shall say to him, "It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage." (Ex. 13: 14)

It is one of the most counter-intuitive acts in the history of leadership. Moses did not speak about today or tomorrow. He spoke about the distant future and the duty of parents to educate their children. He even hinted – as Jewish tradition understood – that we should encourage our children to ask questions, so that the handing on of the Jewish heritage would be not a matter of rote learning but of active dialogue between parents and children.

So Jews became the only people in history to predicate their very survival on education. The most

sacred duty of parents was to teach their children. Pesach itself became an ongoing seminar in the handing on of memory. Judaism became the religion whose heroes were teachers and whose passion was study and the life of the mind. The Mesopotamians built ziggurats. The Egyptians built pyramids. The Greeks built the Parthenon. The Romans built the Coliseum. Jews built schools. That is why they alone, of all the civilizations of the ancient world are still alive and strong, still continuing their ancestors' vocation, their heritage intact and undiminished.

Moses' insight was profound. He knew that you cannot change the world by externalities alone, by monumental architecture, or armies and empires, or the use of force and power. How many empires have come and gone while the human condition remains untransformed and unredeemed?

There is only one way to change the world, and that is by education. You have to teach children the importance of justice, righteousness, kindness and compassion. You have to teach them that freedom can only be sustained by the laws and habits of self-restraint. You have continually to remind them of the lessons of history, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt," because those who forget the bitterness of slavery eventually lose the commitment and courage to fight for freedom. And you have to empower children to ask, challenge and argue. You have to respect them if they are to respect the values you wish them to embrace.

This is a lesson most cultures still have not learned after more than three thousand years. Revolutions, protests and civil wars still take place, encouraging people to think that removing a tyrant or having a democratic election will end corruption, create freedom, and lead to justice and the rule of law – and still people are surprised and disappointed when it does not happen. All that happens is a change of faces in the corridors of power.

In one of the great speeches of the twentieth century, a distinguished American justice, Judge Learned Hand, said:

I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it.[1]

What God taught Moses was that the real challenge does not lie in gaining freedom; it lies in sustaining it,

keeping the spirit of liberty alive in the hearts of successive generations. That can only be done through a sustained process of education. Nor is this something that can be delegated away to teachers and schools. Some of it has to take place within the family, at home, and with the sacred obligation that comes from religious duty. No one ever saw this more clearly than Moses, and only because of his teachings have Jews and Judaism survived.

What makes leaders great is that they think ahead, worrying not about tomorrow but about next year, or the next decade, or the next generation. In one of his finest speeches Robert F. Kennedy spoke of the power of leaders to transform the world when they have a clear vision of a possible future:

Some believe there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills — against misery, against ignorance, or injustice and violence. Yet many of the world's great movements, of thought and action, have flowed from the work of a single man. A young monk began the Protestant reformation, a young general extended an empire from Macedonia to the borders of the earth, and a young woman reclaimed the territory of France. It was a young Italian explorer who discovered the New World, and 32 year old Thomas Jefferson who proclaimed that all men are created equal. 'Give me a place to stand,' said Archimedes, 'and I will move the world.' These men moved the world, and so can we all." [2]

Visionary leadership forms the text and texture of Judaism. It was the book of Proverbs that said, "Without a vision [chazon] the people perish." (Prov. 29: 18). That vision in the minds of the prophets was always of a long term future. God told Ezekiel that a prophet is a watchman, one who climbs to a high vantage-point and so can see the danger in the distance, before anyone else is aware of it at ground level (Ezek. 33: 1-6). The sages said, "Who is wise? One who sees the long-term consequences [hanolad]." [3] Two of the greatest leaders of the twentieth century, Churchill and Ben Gurion, were also distinguished historians. Knowing the past, they could anticipate the future. They were like chess masters who, because they have studied thousands of games, recognise almost immediately the dangers and possibilities in any configuration of the pieces on the board. They know what will happen if you make this move or that.

If you want to be a great leader in any field, from Prime Minister to parent, it is essential to think long-term. Never choose the easy option because it is

simple or fast or yields immediate satisfaction. You will pay a high price in the end.

Moses was the greatest leader because he thought further ahead than anyone else. He knew that real change in human behaviour is the work of many generations. Therefore we must place as our highest priority educating our children in our ideals so that what we begin they will continue until the world changes because we have changed. He knew that if you plan for a year, plant rice. If you plan for a decade, plant a tree. If you plan for posterity, educate a child.[4] Moses' lesson, thirty-three centuries old, is still compelling today.

[1] The Spirit of Liberty" – speech at "I Am an American Day" ceremony, Central Park, New York City (21 May 1944).

[2] The Kennedys: America's Front Page Family, 112.

[3] Tamid 32a.

[4] A statement attributed to Confucius.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

"And it shall be to you a sign upon your arm and a remembrance between your eyes, in order that Hashem's Torah be in your mouth, for with a strong arm Hashem brought you out from Egypt" (13:9)

The deliverance from Egypt was done in order to give Israel the Torah, and it is the cause which obligates Israel to accept the Torah. This obligation is frequently mentioned together with the Misvot. But the acceptance of the Torah is expressed here by learning and repeating: "that Hashem's Torah be in your mouth." This is indeed necessary and important in order to fulfill the Torah laws.

We must understand that the learning and the repeating of the Torah is an end in itself, and from elsewhere in the Torah we can see that it is the most important of all the Torah functions. "And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart. And you shall teach them diligently to your sons and you shall speak in them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you arise." (Debarim 6:6-7, Perashat Shema).

Indeed it is written "In your mouth and in your heart to do it" (ibid. 30:14). But the doing is a condition: the learning must be with the resolve to do. But the learning in itself is the major function, and therefore the Tefilin on the arm and between the eyes are indeed to remind us that Hashem's Torah should be in our mouths, and here no doing is mentioned.

Thus the redemption from Egypt is intended primarily for the purpose that Israel devote itself to Torah-

study. This is clearly indicated: "Because of this that Hashem did for me when I went forth from Egypt. And it shall be to you as a sign upon your arm and as a reminder between your eyes in order that the Torah of Hashem be in your mouth."

The Exodus from Egypt was in order that the Torah should be in the mouths of Israel.

Quoted from "A NATION IS BORN" by Rabbi Miller ZT'L

Some important thoughts on Tefillin heard from Rabbi Miller ZT'L

Before putting on your Tefillin think of the following:

1. "Beezrat Hashem, I am going to do a Positive Commandment of Hashem, to put on Tefillin.
2. "In remembrance of Hashem taking Us out of Egypt"
3. "In order that Your Torah should be on my mouth"
4. "I thank You Hashem for giving me this arm & head on which I can put on these Tefillin"
5. Look at the straps around your middle finger & think/say "I am engaged to The Creator of the World!"
6. I will serve Hashem with my arm/body & head/mind.

(extra credit: "I am putting on my Tefillin even though the Romans/Spanish Inquisitors/Nazis would have me killed if they were here....I am doing it anyway). Mesiroot Nefesh.

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