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MS-915: Joshua O. Haberman Papers, 1926-2017.

Series A: Sermons and Prayers, 1940-2016.

Subseries 1: High Holidays, 1941-2016, undated.

Box
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Sermons and notes, 2004-2006.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the
American Jewish Archives website.

From Dov Marmor's Six Lives

p106 Lily Piccus' writings on death?

Read Marmor's "Beyond Survival"

p189 "With Abraham Joshua Heschel I believe that a sense of awe & wonder is the root of religious faith"

How Enjoyable Can Life Be?

Refer to CS Lewis' Comments about
the failure to draw oneself from belief
in great numbers of things as survived
in memory, which is a poor substitute for
faith

Add to Y-36e

Reference to
study of woman

prolonging life of

Morse ~~Deal~~ May

be held off, still

both is

inevitable



From Out of the Whirlwind, Essays on

Mourning, Suffering & The Human Condition
by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

p. 4/5: - Man... must not plunge into total
darkness because of death... Death forces man
to transcend his physical self and to identify with the
timeless covenantal community....

11/18 (pr. of before burial) casts man into total
darkness - but when 11/18 turns into 11/19
(Mourning after burial) one must recover
"intelligent" sadness.



Kaddish

through the Kaddish we hurl defiance at death...
When Mourner recites "glorified & sanctified..." he
declares: No matter how powerful death is, notwith-
standing the ugly end of man, however terrifying the
grave is, however nonsensical & absurd every thing
appears, ... and how nauseating an affair life is,
we declare that we are not giving up, that we are
not surrendering, that we will carry on the work of
our ancestors - ... the ultimate goal - the establishment
of God's kingdom and eternal life for man"

My thought

The Kaddish drives home 2 truths: My human
insignificance - and God's alm. plty. Majesty!

מְבַלְיָנִיתִי עָלַי יָגוֹן, עָלַי לִבִּי דָוָי.

My grief is incurable, my heart is sick within me.

Jeremiah 8:18

מִי יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם וְעֵינַי מְקוֹר דְּמָעָה,

וְאָבָבָה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה אֶת חֲלָלִי בַת־עַמִּי.

O that my head were water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night. . . .

Jeremiah 8:23

Fear not death; we are destined to die. We share it with all who ever lived, with all who ever will be. Bewail the dead, hide not your grief, do not restrain your mourning. But remember that continuing sorrow is worse than death. When the dead are at rest, let their memory rest, and be consoled when the soul departs.

Death is better than a life of pain, and eternal rest than constant sickness.

Seek not to understand what is too difficult for you, search not for what is hidden from you. Be not over-occupied with what is beyond you, for you have been shown more than you can understand.

As a drop of water in the sea, as a grain of sand on the shore are man's few days in eternity. The good things in life last for limited days, but a good name endures forever.

O God, our Father, You redeem our souls from the grave, You are the Rock of our salvation. Forsake us not in time of trouble, in days of distress and desolation. Help us to endure, O Lord, for we have placed our hope in You.

after Ben Sira

Israel soon and speedily. May His great Name be blessed forever and ever. Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, elevated, adored and raised up for praise be the Name of the Holy One; blessed be He, beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation that are uttered in the world.

My there be abundant peace from Heaven and life, upon us and upon all Israel.

What, in plain words, is the Kaddish saying to the mourner and to all of us who crave understanding and a vision beyond death?

The clue is the lavish outpouring of praise for God in the Kaddish.

What it says is, you who are weeping over the passing of life, know that there is One Who is ~~far~~ bigger than life. Seek comfort in your connection with the One Whom we praise above all things in this world.

Don't think about death as annihilation, as being cut-off from the world and God. We have ^{an} unbreakable bond with God, as envisaged by the author of Psalm 139:

Whither shall I go from Your spirit?

Or, whither shall I flee from Your presence?

If I ascend into heaven, You are there;

If I make my bed in the nether-world,

Behold You are there. (Ps. 139.7-8)

Maimonides suggested that the pathway to serenity is the recognition that ultimately only God matters, nothing else.

Even life is only dust and to dust must return. But you partake of God's eternity to the extent that you connect with God.

Yitgadal v'yitkadash... Magnified and sanctified be His great Name in the world which He created according to His will and let us say, Amen.

" Death is the side
of life which is turned away
from us "
Rilke - Letter to W. von Hulewitz



Death

O why should the spirit of
mortal be proud,
in this little voyage from
Swaddle to shroud?

James Thurber

DYING

Wm Auden's last poem before his
death (1973)

He still loves life

But Oooo how he wishes

The good Lord would take him.



Re: Death Before or after Jane Sheel

Fidman ^{see} Andrew - Bible scholar on R.C. affairs
"Die"

+ permit of ~~entirement~~ ^{purpose} & pleasure

Stevenson's view of success

Whether you are a success or failure depends on
your standards of judgement

If I live to be 100 - ed. by Neenah Ellis

Harry Shapiro (a painter)

p. 99

I knew there is something that holds this
mystery together

"you know what I think prolongs life? ... it is
to have a heart full of love"

A tombstone inscription:

Here lies Jane Shore

I say no more

Kardich

p. 241/2 is death
oblivion?

Yk. Seminar Topic

~~PATHWAYS TO~~

~~A PRESCRIPTION FOR~~

THESE
SERENITY IN A TROUBLED
IN DIFFICULT TIMES

TIMES →

Memorial Seminar
"FEAR NOT"

Consolations in ~~the~~ Contemplation
of death

Reconciliation With Death

Read Samuel Johnson's last prayer
composed shortly before his death

I wish I had had in my earlier years
the ^{insights} attitudes I developed past the
age of 80

① Many things you worry about today,
take care of themselves without
you doing, due to other factors
or lose importance
some time after.

Proof: Returning from a
2 weeks' vacation. Looking at
the old newspapers I find
much of the news no longer
relevant

From N. Glazer's memoirs
p 87/82 Buker's misjudgement of the Nazis' rise to power. As late as 1932 he considered "the Nazis will not possibly win the day"

p 88/85 When asked "Do you pray?" - Buker answered "Before going to sleep" and after awakening: "..."

p 109/81 "Most scholars like to talk about their own work and about others only if they find something to criticize, or better, to tear down"

p 127/8 Why be Jewish? [xerox]

p 132 - Glazer then in his forties, taught at Hebrew Theol. College in Chicago and participated in a special service for students & faculty established betw 1939-43 prompted by Jew. suffering in Europe:
"For the first time in my life I became aware of the necessity of prayer"

p 133/4 [xerox] The child taking Glazer's hand to cross the street - an Irish trust

p 134/6 [xerox] The Prayer ^{goodness in Man}

From Gershom Scholem

p104 refers to Bukharin "religiösität ohne religion"

Read Kafka's Legende "Vor dem Gesetz," die auf mich größten Eindruck machte"

PSALMS

p117/8 Scholem when ordered by German military to report for the draft on June 1919 received from his friend — the then 27 year old Russian Labor Zionist leader Solomon Rubaschoff — later known as Solomon Schasor, Pres. of Israel, — a little black booklet, a miniature edition of the Psalms, in which he had inscribed "god protects you against all evil, He will protect your soul" Ps 121.7 *יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵךְ יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵךְ יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֵךְ* "Dieses ganz kleine schwarze Büchlehen hat mich seitdem, und bis heute, auf allen meinen Wegen und Reisen begleitet"

p155 Scholem's 2 favorite German novelists: Jean Paul (whose work is filled with biblical stories) and Paul Scheerbart

p173 Commentary on the extreme Nazi propaganda in Munich in the 1920's — "Aber es war doch erschreckend, die Blindheit der Juden, die von alledem nichts wissen und nichts sehen wollten, wahrzunehmen."

Messianic faith is
nothing but belief
in ^{a future} act of God of
God's work of creation

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TOPIC
For J.K. Study Seminar
2004

THE MESSIANIC
REVIVAL

WHAT WE CAN & CANNOT
BELIEVE

Refer to Lubavitch split

Messianic Jews

II

Ms. Maxine R. Haberman

Novelist: "Life is
a sickness of the
spirit."



For Memorial Service

See poem on REMORSE OVER THINGS
LEFT UNDONE

2nd Reader - Kennedy p. 130 Guilty

VANITY - FUTILITY

The cloud-capp'd Towers,
The gorgeous Palaces,
The ~~Solemn~~ Temples,
The Great Globe itself,
Yea all which it Inherit,
Shall dissolve;

And, like the baseless Fabrick of a Vision
Leave not a wreck behind.

Inscription on tablet left of the statue of Shakespeare
in Westminster Abbey.

Slightly altered
quote from
The Tempest

Don't wait for
the best judge. —
It takes place every
day



We join in prayer those who were recently bereaved, whose tears have hardly dried, and with many others who, time ago, lost a spouse, a child, a parent or sibling ^{and those whose sorrows are still an open wound} and are left with deep questions about life and death.

There is an

Angel of

U/17⁰
T

forgetfulness

apply to my

Y 13 kran 2000

Serman

Hampton Inn®

Memorial Service

2004 How county
Pain & Loss
in Life

base on P 5 90, AZ

Extend us to number our
days - 8/19 p 11N' 11ND

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PS 90

UN' SIND

What's really important?
Very few things? That
includes to bear losses
in order to overcome
pruiges

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Melvin Selman '04

How do you count ~~Success & failure~~
in life? ~~gains & losses~~



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We think that death
is cruel - but
do not consider the

death of a chicken
or fish or lamb
Cruel,

It is only our
death as humans
we call Cruel

See cruelty in the death
of a mosquito or
fish or animal
we consume

Died
July 2004.
Not yet 14 yrs
old!

© Diana Walker



Matthew J.T. Stepanek, best known as "Mattie," has been writing poetry and short stories since age three. His first three books of poetry are titled *Heartsongs*, *Journey Through Heartsongs*, and *Hope Through Heartsongs*. Mattie is a frequent public speaker who has appeared on *Oprah*, *Good Morning America*, and *Larry King* and has had his poetry published in newspapers and magazines nationwide. In 2002, Mattie has been awarded the Children's Hope Medal of Honor, the Verizon Courage Award, and the Humanitarian Award from the Pediatric Nursing Society of America. Mattie serves as the Maryland State Goodwill Ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, as well as the National Goodwill Ambassador for 2002. He lives in Maryland, with his mother, Jeni, where he is homeschooled.

Look for future books in the *Heartsongs* series.

Also available on Hyperion AudioBooks.

VSP Books



08/02

www.HyperionBooks.com

Celebrate the World

We had cake at school today.
It was a celebration,
But it wasn't anybody's birthday.
It was a celebration
Of the world.
The world needs a birthday celebration.
The world has lots and lots of friends,
And I am one of the world's friends,
So I celebrated today.
I said thank you to the world,
And thank You to God for the world,
And also,
Thank you for the cake
That made it a celebration of life!

July 1994

(when 4 yrs old!)

For Yizkor

DEATH IS NOT STRANGE

Death is not strange,
Strange is life,
That flesh can think,
And body believe,

That dust can sing:

That a clod
For a man's life-time
Can house God.

That dead things live
When touched by God's breath,
Is the miracle,
Not death.

Joseph Leftwich

IF OUR PARENTS WERE TO COME BACK TODAY

What would we say to them? Here are six questions to think about:

1. What would you say to your parents that you never found the time or knew the way to say to them when they were alive?
2. What would you wish that they might have lived to see?
3. What would you not want them to know?
4. If they came back, would they approve of how we live or not?
5. How have we changed since they left us?
6. Would we treat them differently if we had them back now?

Rabbi Hillel Silverman

I SHALL NOT GO ALONE

I know not when I go or where
From this familiar scene;
But He is here and He is there,
And when I leave this life I know,
For that dim vast unknown,
Though late I stay, or soon I go,
I shall not go alone.

About Living (Part I)

Life!
Something
To be celebrated...
Something
To be savored...
While it lasts.
For although
Life is wonderful,
Life is not forever.
People grow older,
And then they die.
Some people even die
Before they grow older.
Dying may seem
Sad and scary,
But once death is over,
We can actually Live
Forever in Heaven.

June 2000

(age 10)



About Living (Part II)

Although I am
Greatly anticipating
Going to Heaven
When I die,
I would really like
To finish my life
On earth as a mortal
For a long time first.

But,
I know that life
On earth is limited.
And,
I know that Life
In Heaven is eternal.

So,
Every day,
No matter who we are,
What we do, or
Where we are,
We must celebrate
The gift of life on earth
While we have it,
For Ever.

June 2000

(page 10)

I was fascinated by a newspaper story about a former Palestinian terrorist, Wahid Shoebat, who became an ardent Christian Zionist. As a young man, Wahid took part in attacks against Israelis. Born in Bethlehem, he was taught 'in school that Jews are descendants of monkeys and pigs' He threw a bomb to the roof of a bank in Jerusalem. After spending time in jail he moved to the USA and married a Christian woman. She persuaded him to read the Bible. It turned into an eye-opener, leading him to abandon Islam and convert to Christianity. He went through a complete change of mind from wanting to destroy Jews and the State of Israel to fighting for Israel theologically and politically. He went on lecture tours encouraging Jews to make Aliyah to strengthen the state of Israel.

What can we do for Israel? First, we must keep ourselves well informed. Second, make regular pilgrimages to Israel as often as possible. Third, write your congressman and senator to support Israel as America's ally in the troubled Middle East.

And now, let us pray that God protect and preserve the promised land so that the light of its prophets and saints might shine brightly, make the right go forth according to the truth and help bring peace to our world.

ISRAEL IN THE LIGHT OF PROPHECY

The re-establishment of the state of Israel must be understood in the light of Biblical prophecy. Israel is the fulfillment of

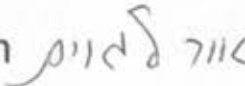
Isaiah 60. 1-3 :

“Arise, shine , for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples. But upon thee the Lord will arise, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

“darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the peoples”---We live on the brink of world destruction. If Iran is free to develop nuclear weapons, there will be nuclear war and the end of humanity.

“Isaiah referred to a “gross darkness of the peoples.” Indeed we live in times of genocide, when peoples are exterminated, when Isis boasts of the decapitation of innocent persons and burns alive prisoners of war; when Assad butchers hundreds of thousand citizens and all the states of the Middle East, except Israel, are dictatorships.

In this context Israel stands out as a shining light of freedom and compassion. In Israel no one is decapitated; no prisoner is burned alive; women enjoy equal rights, drive automobiles which they are forbidden in Saudi Arabia. In the Middle East

Israel is as Isaiah 42.6 says an  “a light unto the nations.”

For Memorial Service w/ Thom Stepanek
Stepanek could face death and rejoice
in life because he turned away from his own predicament
Thinking meel about making

peace in our war torn world
Houston Lubbock Encinity the T

Community News

died at 13 yrs

Mourners gather to remember Mattie's life

by Noelle Barton
Staff Writer

Former president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter called him an angel and a messenger from heaven as he eulogized 13-year-old Matthew "Mattie" J.T. Stepanek during his funeral service at a Wheaton church Monday morning.

Stepanek died June 22 of complications related to his rare form of muscular dystrophy, dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy.

Nearly 1,000 people gathered to honor the life of the child poet and peacemaker from Rockville, including talk show host and media maven Oprah Winfrey, "Lord of the Rings" star Sean Astin, talk show host Montel Williams and young country singer Billy Gilman.

Montgomery County fire officials gave Stepanek a full firefighter's funeral as an honorary member of the International Association of Firefighters. Mattie had asked that his casket be transported atop a fire truck and that firefighters ride their motorcycles to the funeral service, which they did.

More than 100 other cyclists joined those riders on Harley Davidsons, members of various Harley owners groups that had long supported the fight to find a cure for muscular dystrophy.

During his eulogy, Carter said Stepanek,

who suffered his whole life from muscular dystrophy but whose positive attitude preceded him, was the "most extraordinary person I have ever known in my life."

Stepanek had once told Carter he'd like to meet Osama bin Laden to talk to him about peace, but that he wouldn't want to be alone with him in his cave, so he invited Carter to join him.



Stepanek

Such sentiments sparked laughter among the audience at St. Catherine Laboure Catholic Church on Veirs Mill Road as friends and people who only knew the boy through his television appearances spent two hours remembering him.

Reading letters the two had shared as he prepared to write the eulogy, Carter said he came upon Mattie's thoughts on living and death.

"I choose to live until death," Mattie wrote, "not spend time dying until death occurs."

Continuing the fight

As another friend, Stephanie Goldklang, put it in an interview last week, he did more

in his 13 years than some do in 100.

With the passing of Stepanek last week, those that had known him mourned the loss of what Jerry Lewis, spokesman for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, called a "shining star."

Stepanek, who leaves his mother, Jennifer, 44, had been hospitalized at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., since March.

Goldklang, district director for MDA in Greenbelt, said the last two weeks of Stepanek's life were particularly tumultuous. She recalled one of his last big events in February when he "brought the house down" at the 2004 Heartsongs Gala that awarded prizes to people who embrace Stepanek's philosophies.

"The speech was very, very hopeful, but he knew, I think, that he wasn't doing so well," Goldklang said. "It was almost like he knew his time was precious, and he was saying you need to continue this fight."

A couple of weeks later, Stepanek entered the hospital for the last time.

Though his small-framed body was unable to process oxygen normally, Stepanek breathed new life into the MDA's annual Labor Day telethon.

"Mattie was something special, something very special," Jerry Lewis said in a statement. "His example made people want to reach for

the best within themselves. It was easy to forget how sick he was because his megawatt personality just made you want to smile."

Born July 17, 1990, in Prince George's County, Stepanek was one of four children of Jennifer Stepanek. The three others died in early childhood from the same rare muscular dystrophy disease that afflicted Mattie, according to an MDA press release about the boy's death. Jennifer has the adult onset form of the disease. She and Mattie's father divorced many years ago.

By age 3 Mattie began writing poetry to cope with the death of his brother, according to the MDA release. Several years later his first volume of poems, "Heartsongs," brought him national and later international fame. He went on to pen four more poetry books.

"Heartsongs" topped the New York Times bestseller list in 2001.

He once said poetry "is a way that you can inspire others while you're expressing your true feelings."

After the publication of his first book, Stepanek enjoyed visits on the Oprah Winfrey show, Good Morning America and Larry King Live, as well as a feature in People magazine.

"He was my heart inspiration," Winfrey said, placing her hand over her heart. "His heart song left a big heart print for me."

PATHWAYS TO SERENITY & PEACE OF MIND

INTRODUCTORY STORY FOR Y.K. STUDY SESSION

Two orthodox Jews were taking a short break from their Yom Kippur morning service when they saw two Reform Jews walking out of their synagogue a block away, heading straight to a restaurant nearby. One of the orthodox Jews, somewhat shocked, said to the Reform Jewish pair whom he knew: "Aren't you fasting today?"

"No," said one of them, "our rabbi gave a sermon, telling us that ritual and ceremonial observances are not so important. What counts is living an ethical life all year long." With these words, he and his friend walked into the restaurant for lunch.

Said the other orthodox Jew to his friend: "Have you ever heard anything as ridiculous as that? The rabbi preaches a sermon, and, then, these Reformers must keep an ethical life all year long" -- for just one busy meal!

And now, it is time to get serious.....

PATHWAYS TO SERENITY AND PEACE OF MIND

Joshua O. Haberman
Yom Kippur, Sept. 25, '04
Washington Hebrew Congregation

Charles Dickens opened his *TALE OF TWO CITIES*, referring to the upheavals of the French Revolution, with a series of contradictions:

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.

It was the age of wisdom. It was the age of foolishness.

It was the season of light. It was the season of darkness.

It was the spring of hope. It was the winter of despair.

Today, in the aftermath of 2 world wars, the holocaust, more genocides and, now, global terrorism, we seem to be heading into an age of unrelieved darkness, a long winter of despair and far out of sight is the age of wisdom, the season of light and the spring of hope !

A New Yorker, walking down Braodway, saw a little boy crossing the street straight into the path of a car. The man

snatched the boy to safety. Then, he snarled at the boy:
 “What’s the matter, kid ? Don’t you want to grow up and have troubles?”

Yes, we are facing a future of troubles. When will this tailspin into chaos be arrested? What will put deviant mankind back on track? Is there really a higher order, a system of moral checks and balances ? Is God watching?

In the past, some kind of universal moral consensus could be relied upon to put restraints on bloodshed . Is this consensus in a state of collapse? Will some madman, driven by misguided beliefs, inflict catastrophic destruction upon us ?

Our son, Daniel, is an orthodox rabbi and scholar in Jerusalem. Recently, he caught his 3 year old son red handed, stealing a playmate’s toy. “Moshe Chaim,” Daniel said gravely, “don’t you know the Torah tells us “You shall not steal.” Moshe Chaim paused for a moment and said: ‘No problem,’ I’ll get a new Torah without ‘You shall not steal.’”

Removing any of the moral imperatives of the old Torah would break down the pillars holding up our world – yet those

pillars are being shaken by fanatical pseudo-religious groups loosely united in their network of terror. Isaiah's lament was never more timely:

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes.” Is.5.20-21

How do you keep going in such dark and menacing times?
How face problems the individual feels helpless to deal with?
Turning the question to the private domain,-- how cope with personal vexations for which you see no solutions?

I don't want to sound glib and all-knowing when, in fact, I find it extremely difficult to suggest pathways to serenity and peace of mind in this pathological age .
However, I feel I can share with you a few points which in my personal life have helped me retain a measure of serenity and peace of mind.

I recently took an Amtrak train to New York and boarded the very last car of the train and was surprised to see a sign on the door QUIET CAR. I asked the conductor what it meant. “No cell-phones,” – he said “and no loud conversation.”
It was the most pleasant trip to New York.

You will enhance your mental and spiritual well-being if you will schedule regularly quiet time in a quiet place. Give yourself a break. Get off the treadmill of activities, jobs and tasks which crowd your daily agenda.

Listen to Psalm 127:

*You who eat the bread of toil, it is vain for you
to rise up early and sit up late.* Ps.127. 2

What the Psalmist is saying is, don't get obsessed with the things you do. Don't try too hard to achieve --- because, -- the Psalmist gives you a reason in the next sentence:

God gives to His beloved in sleep Ps. 127.2b

This calls for an explanation: Anne Morrow Lindberg wrote beautifully about the pacifying effects of the sea:

“As you contemplate the rolling waves for a while, the mind, too, begins to drift, to play, to turn over in gentle, careless rolls like those lazy waves on the beach.”

And on the beach, Mrs. Lindberg tells us, you learn to wait for the gift of the sea:

But it must not be sought for...

Patience, patience, patience is what the sea teaches.

Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open,

choice-less as a beach, --- waiting for a gift from the sea.”

The idea expressed so well by Mrs. Lindberg is that switching, at times, from activity to passivity is beneficial.

Without your doing, even while you are asleep, things may turn your way. Some of the most important gains in life are not gotten by hot pursuit but fall into your lap if only you will sit still long enough to let it happen.

Isaac Newton was at leisure in an orchard when he saw an apple fall from a tree. Why did the apple fall down? The question sparked his discovery of the law of gravitation, one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs. An hour of unhurried reflection may open your eyes to things you are otherwise too busy to notice. Racing breathlessly through a busy day puts blinders on you. You are so bent upon your agenda, you can't see open doors of opportunity. Do nothing for a while each day and you will be surprised by good ideas that will pop into your mind. God's gifts may come to you unawares, as the Psalmist said: *God gives to His beloved in sleep.*

Americans, more than any other nation, acclaim hyper-activism and condemn non-activity. We prove our worth by doing things. We feel guilty when we don't do any thing. A visitor from China was taken by his host on a long subway

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Anne Morrow Lindberg spoke of treasures to be found on the seashore. You will not need to go seeking; you'll find them simply by waiting. Have faith that there is a generous Source in the universe that gives freely if only you are ready to receive.

John Burroughs wrote a poem, entitled WAITING:

Serene I fold my hands and wait.
 Nor care for wind nor tide nor sea;
 I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
 For lo, my own shall come to me.

Another step toward serenity is to rid yourself of the notion that you and you alone are in charge of your life.

To begin with, it is factually mistaken, an illusion. If you re-think some of the most important events or turning points in your life, you'll see that many of these were neither intended nor planned by you but happened, due to the action of others or due to events you did not contrive.

Ego-centrics pay a heavy price for their distorted self-image: If you think that you are in control, you will blame yourself for every setback since, you imagine, as William Ernest Henley declared in his poem, *Invictus*,

I am the Master of my life

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Henley's exaggerated sense of self-determination was ridiculed by Keith Preston, who wrote this parody of *Invictus*:

I am the captain of my soul

I rule it with stern joy

And yet I think I had more fun

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The reality is that no one is in full control of his life. In various degrees we are all dependent or interdependent. We are shaped by forces other than our own far more than we realize. Consider again the calming influence of the ocean. You cannot force your will upon it. The ocean is simply too enormous, too powerful. You have to take it as is. You must submit to its rhythm, its rising tide and the receding flow of the ebb. There is no sense of shame or defeat when you acknowledge the invincible power of the sea, and yield to it. You simply accept the inevitable, the necessity of it all. And this is one of the secrets of serenity: to accept what must be, as Reinhold Niebuhr said so well in his famous prayer:

God give me the serenity to accept things which cannot be changed; Give me courage to change things that must be changed; And the wisdom to distinguish one from the other..

“To accept things which cannot be changed’ is not a prescription for indifference or fatalism --- it is realism, the acceptance of limitations, the acknowledgment “I am not God.”

The late Menachem Schneerson, known to Lubavitcher Hassidim as the *Rebbe*, once received a letter from a man suffering depression. The letter read: I would like the Rebbe’s help. I wake up each morning,

sad and anxious. I can't concentrate. I find it hard to pray.
I observe the commandments but find no spiritual
satisfaction. I go to the synagogue but I feel alone.
I wonder what life is all about. I need help.

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The 55th psalm tells of a person so distraught by his problems that he wants to run away:

"Oh that I had wings like a bird. Then would I fly away and be at rest." Ps. 55.7

But soon enough he realizes that escape is no option.

He must live with his problem. Finally, it dawns upon him that he is not the only player in his life. Other forces, other factors, God Himself, may have a hand in shaping his destiny. So he says, or some inner voice, says to him:

Cast your burden upon God and He will sustain you. Ps.55.23

Know when to quit . Leave a little to God. **Let go and let God!**

Does this mean, God will do your job or solve your problem?

Not at all. The end of the sentence, *He will sustain you,*

suggests that you will still have to act, but with God's help.

God may enable you to gain new insight or provide other means with which to work out your problem. *Cast your burden upon God* means “you are not the only player in your life; don’t carry the world on your shoulders.” Reach out to God in prayer and reflection. No one knows, how God, in response, will reach out to you but, unless you take time out to listen with your inner ear, you will not perceive God’s guidance and help. 11

Many of us are tormented by regrets over past mistakes and missed opportunities; or we worry about future problems. I strongly urge you to focus on today, on the matter at hand, on the present moment. A meditator in Zen Buddhism was asked how, despite his many tasks, he managed to be so calm and collected. He answered: “When I stand, I stand; when I walk, I walk; when I sit, I sit; when I eat, I eat.” “But I do the same,” interjected the inquirer, “what do you differently?”

“No,” said the sage: “When you sit, you think of standing up and when you stand, you are already mentally running.”

The idea is to live each day to the fullest. Concentrate on this moment, this place, this person you are with.

Don't live in the past ~~with~~ its regrets and don't be pre-occupied with tomorrow ~~and~~ its anxieties. Today is what counts, as John Greenleaf Whittier would have us see:

*No longer forward nor behind
I look in hope or fear,
But grateful, take the good I find,
The best of now and here.*

There is one other pathway to serenity and peace of mind. It is thankfulness. It has been drummed into the head of every well-brought up person to acknowledge every gift, helping hand or favor with a note or some thank-you expression. Do you realize how many benefits you enjoy without a word of gratitude on your part ?

Charles Lamb said:

“I am disposed to say grace upon 20 other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out on a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem.”

The Radziner Rebbe reminds us of another dimension of thanksgiving: **“When we come out unscathed by an accident, we give thanks; why not thank God for every day which passes without mishap? One who is cured gives thanks for**

recovery, ---why not give thanks when in good health and spared illness?"

Think of this: Hardly a day passes on which you might have been injured or killed or ruined by some mistake luckily caught in time. Add to these known escapes from harm the unknown dangers which you avoid day and night.

A man complained to his friend. "I am miserable. I can't pay my bills. "Then," consoled the friend, " be grateful that you are not one of your creditors."

An old lady in New England gave thanks after an especially delicious meal: **"Dear God, thanks for the 2 teeth you let me keep, and thank you that they meet."**

A wit once wrote:
**"From the day you are born till you ride in a hearse
 Nothing happens that couldn't be worse."**

Instead of lingering on what you have lost, be glad for what is left. We should learn this lesson from the pilgrims, who instituted the first Thanksgiving in America. What kind of year was it for those 102 brave men and women who stepped off the Mayflower in 1621? It was a terrible year of hunger, disease and struggle with Indians: 6 died in Dec.; 8 in January; 17 in February; 13 in March.; more later, including governor John Carver and his wife. In that first year there were

never more than 6 or 7 well at any one time. They leveled the graves so that the Indians could not count their losses. Yet they instituted a thanksgiving celebration for whatever good remained after all their losses.

Many people suffer from a depressing sense of failure; they feel that they have not lived up to their potential and classify themselves as unsuccessful. They should think again with Psalm 128 in mind:

**You are happy when you earn your daily bread
and see your wife within your house like a fruitful
vine, your children round your table like olive plants
So shall a man be blessed who reveres God.**

The psalm reminds us what really matters: self-support; a roof over your head; food on the table and a decent family life --- these are the blessings that count, the rest, such as wealth, glamour, power are the superfluities, the frills that do not necessarily make you happier. You may remember the popular poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson:

When Richard Cory went down town
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean shaven, and imperially slim

And he was rich – yes, richer than a king
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place

So, on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Corey, one calm summer night
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Whenever you belittle yourself as “unsuccessful”
remember a remark of Ivan Turgenev, Russia’s greatest and
most successful playwright and novelist next to Tolstoy and
Dostoyevsky: **“I would gladly give all my success and fame
just for knowing that someone worries about me
if I am late for dinner.”**

Possession, contentment and appreciation are different things:
To the magnate who boasted of his vast estate, a poet said:

“The Land is yours but the landscape is mine”

You are rich if you expand your sense of appreciation
and multiply thanksgiving.

As long as we are alive we are at risk. There is no insurance against adversity, harm and pain. But we can respond in ways that restore serenity and some peace of mind, the pathways of which are

- (1) A half-hour or more each day for quiet time to collect yourself, changing pace from activity to passivity. Do so with reflection on a psalm or prayers. Even more beneficial is keeping every 7th day as Shabbat – a full day of cessation from all productive activities. It teaches us not to exaggerate the importance of our work and yield control to God, the Creator to Whom we owe everything.
- (2) The second pathway to serenity is ego-management, mindful that many of the important things in your life happen without your doing. You are not the only player in your life. **“Cast your burden upon God. He will sustain you.”**
- (3) The third pathway to serenity and peace of mind is not to wallow in regrets over yesterday nor torment yourself with worries about tomorrow but focus on today.
- (4) Finally, enhance your enjoyment of life by way of thanksgiving. Thankfulness is the twin of happiness. Practice thanksgiving so that life becomes thanks-living.

In these days, when we are horrified by atrocities, which make us despair of humanity, *we should* note every act however small that restores hope in human goodness.

The German Jewish scholar Nahum Glatzer escaped the Nazi hell, in advanced age. He told of an incident which restored his faith in human beings. He was standing on a busy street corner in Chicago when a little unknown girl, afraid to cross the street, took his hand and trustingly walked with him to the other side. Then, she ran off wherever she had to go. The little girl's trust broke the spell of Prof. Glatzer's deep suspicion of human beings whose viciousness he had experienced under the Nazis.

It was like that one human footprint in the sand which saved Robinson Crusoe from his despair of loneliness. All the negative evidence of many years that his island was uninhabited, was overruled by one single footprint. So, one simple act of kindness might overturn all the negative experiences we may have had with human nature. So, let us be patient and trust that good will prevail.

May you be inscribed in the Book of Life. May God show us the way to peace in our time, in the world and in our mind.

PATHWAYS TO SERENITY AND PEACE OF MIND

Joshua O.. Haberman

~~Study session, Yom Kippur 2004~~

~~Washington Hebrew Congregation~~

It was the best of times,
It was the worst of times,
It was the age of wisdom
It was the age of foolishness
It was the season of Light
It was the season of Darkness
It was the spring of hope
It was the winter of despair

With this opening of *The Tale of Two Cities* Charles Dickens summed up the contradictory upheavals of the French Revolution and then added the surprise ending:

“In short the period was like the present period”

Now, one and one-half centuries after Dickens, in the aftermath of 2 world wars, the holocaust, more genocides and global terrorism, we seem to be heading into an age of unrelieved darkness, a long winter of despair while an age of wisdom, season of light, and spring of hope are out of sight.

A New Yorker, walking down Broadway, saw a little boy crossing the street straight into the path of a car. The man snatched the boy to safety. Then, he snarled at the boy: “What’s the matter, kid ? Don’t you want to grow up and have troubles?”

Yes, we are facing a future of troubles. When will this tailspin into chaos be arrested? What will put deviant mankind back on track? Is there really a higher order, a system of moral checks and balances ? Is God watching?

It seemed to us in the past that some kind of universal moral consensus could be relied upon to put restraints on bloodshed . Is this consensus in a state of collapse? Will some madman, driven by misguided beliefs, inflict catastrophic destruction upon us ?

Our son, Daniel, ^{some} ^{once} is an orthodox rabbi and scholar in Jerusalem. ^{once} he caught his 3 year old son red handed, stealing a playmate's toy. "Moshe Chaim," Daniel said gravely, "don't you know the Torah tells us "You shall not steal." Moshe Chaim paused for a moment and said: 'No problem, I'll get a new Torah without 'You shall not steal.'

Removing any of the moral imperatives of the old Torah would break down the pillars holding up our world – yet those pillars are being shaken by fanatical pseudo-religious groups loosely united in their network of terror. Isaiah's lament was never more timely:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil.

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes." Is.5.20-21

How do you keep going in such dark and menacing times? How face problems the individual feels helpless to deal with? Turning the question to the private domain,-- how cope with personal vexations for which you see no solutions?

I don't want to sound glib and all-knowing when, in fact, I find it extremely difficult to suggest pathways to serenity and peace of mind in this pathological age . However, I feel I can share with you a few points which in my personal life have helped me retain a measure of serenity and peace of mind.

I recently took an Amtrak train to New York and boarded the very last car of the train and was surprised to see a sign on the door QUIET CAR. I asked the conductor what it meant. "No cell-phones," – he said "and no loud conversation." It was the most pleasant trip to New York.

You will enhance your mental and spiritual well-being if you will schedule regularly quiet time in a quiet place. Give yourself a break. Get off the treadmill of activities, jobs and tasks which crowd your daily agenda. Listen to Psalm 127:

You who eat the bread of toil, it is vain for you to rise up early and sit up late. Ps. 127. 2

What the Psalmist is saying is, don't get obsessed with the things you do. Don't try too hard to achieve --- because, -- the Psalmist gives you a reason in the next sentence:

God gives to His beloved in sleep Ps. 127.22

This calls for an explanation: Anne Morrow Lindberg wrote beautifully about the pacifying effects of the sea:

“As you contemplate the rolling waves for a while, the mind, too, begins to drift, to play, to turn over in gentle, careless rolls like those lazy waves on the beach.”

And on the beach, Mrs. Lindberg tells us, you learn to wait for the gift of the sea:

“One never knows what chance treasures these easy unconscious rollers may toss up on the smooth, white sand of the conscious mind. But it must not be sought for... Patience, patience, patience is what the sea teaches. Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open, choice-less as a beach, --- waiting for a gift from the sea.”

The idea expressed so well by Mrs. Lindberg is that switching, at times, from activity to passivity is beneficial.

Without your doing, even while you are asleep, things may turn your way. Some of the most important gains in life are not gotten by hot pursuit but fall into your lap if only you will sit still long enough to let it happen.

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reflection may open your eyes to things you are otherwise too busy to notice. Racing breathlessly through a busy day puts blinders on you. You are so bent upon your agenda, you can't see open doors of opportunity. Do nothing for a while each day and you will be surprised by good ideas that will pop into your mind. God's gifts may come to you unawares, as the Psalmist said: *God gives to His beloved in sleep.*

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Consider again the calming influence of the ocean. You cannot force your will upon it. The ocean is simply too enormous, too powerful. You have to take it as is. You must submit to its rhythm, its rising tide and the receding flow of the ebb.

There is no sense of shame or defeat when you acknowledge the invincible power of the sea, and yield to it. You simply accept the inevitable, the necessity of it all. And this is one of the secrets of serenity: to accept what must be, as Reinhold Niebuhr said so well in his famous prayer:

God grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change.

This is not a prescription for indifference or apathy. It is the counsel of realism, the acceptance of limitations, the acknowledgment "I am not God."

The late Menachem Shneerson, known to Lubavitcher Hassidim as the *Rebbe*, once received a letter from a man suffering depression. The letter read:

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Up to a certain point of youth, we flatter ourselves with the notion that we can do anything we want to do. Maturity teaches us to recognize limitations. One of these is that you can't solve all problems. A good example is the frustration of parents who try so hard to shape a child in their own image. The parent desperately wants the child to benefit from his experience and may be absolutely right in pushing the child in a certain direction. But is rebuffed. I once counseled a parent who was in tears over the child's course of action. "What more can I do?" cried the parent. My advice was: Face the fact that you cannot shape the child's life. Accept the child as is and count on

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Know when to quit . Leave a little to God. Does this mean, God will do your job or solve your problem? Not at all. end of the sentence, ***He will sustain you***, suggests that you will still have to act, but with God’s help. God may enable you to gain new insight or provide other means with which to work out your problem. ***Cast your burden upon God*** means “don’t carry the world on your shoulders.” Reach out to God in prayer and reflection. **Let go --- and let God!** No one knows, how God, in response, will reach out to you but, unless you take time out to listen with your inner ear, you will not perceive God’s guidance and help.

I would like to point to one more pathway to serenity and peace of mind: Many of us are tormented by regrets over past mistakes and missed opportunities; or worry about future problems. I strongly urge you to focus on today, on the matter at hand, on the present moment. A highly experienced meditator in the Zen Buddhist tradition was asked how, despite his many tasks, he managed to be so calm and collected. He answered: “When I stand, I stand; when I walk, I walk; when I sit, I sit; when I eat, I eat.” “But I do the same,” interjected the inquirer, “what do you differently?” “No,” said the sage: “When you sit, you think of standing up and when you stand

you are already mentally running.”

The idea is to live each day to the fullest. Concentrate on this moment, this place, this person you are with. Don't live in the past with its regrets and don't be pre-occupied with tomorrow with its anxieties. Today is what counts as John Greenleaf Whittier would have^{us} live:

*No longer forward nor behind
I look in hope or fear,
But grateful, take the good I find,
The best of now and here.*



THOUGHTS ON MORTALITY

Joshua O. Haberman

Memorial Service, Yom Kippur. Sept. 25, 2004

This hour of reflection is an hour of memories, but more than that. As we recall our departed, we review our relationship with them; we remember their characteristic sayings, their words of advice and, sometimes, rebuke. In our youth we rejected some of their ways, but, with the passage of time, we have come to think and act more and more like them. Much of what they experienced, we have or shall experience. We reconsider our relationship with them and, if we find fault, we forgive and ask to be forgiven.

Inevitably, we think of aging and mortality. I remember now a special lecture my professor of sermonics gave on "Topics a Young Rabbi Should Avoid Preaching". "It is not seemly for a young rabbi", he said, "to preach on *How to Face Death with Serenity*," or, "*How to Grow Old Gracefully*."

At my point in life, having passed the age of 85, the topic of death is no longer off limits. But, I like to think that I am still too young to speak about *Growing Old Gracefully*, ~~to~~ ~~which Maxine responds with a smile and "don't kid yourself."~~

It is difficult to work up enthusiasm on the subject of death. You would be ill served, however, if I did not try to help you come to terms with the inevitable. Avoidance is so

**An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.**

Tennyson's poem mirrors psalms 131:

**God, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty
I do not exert myself in things beyond me
Or in things too wonderful for me.
I have quieted my soul like a weaned child with his mother.**

**Why life? and why death?, are unanswerable questions.
Unwilling to follow the cynic who sees no meaning in life and
death, I share the trust that speaks out of two words from
Psalm 27.10: *Adonai ya-asfeni* "God will pick me up"
Or, as a poet put it:**

**The dead are not bereft
Whoever falls from God's right hand
Falls into his left. Amen**

deeply ingrained in us that if death ever crosses our mind, it is usually the death of some one else, not our own. A pious, elderly couple reflected on their future. Said the husband: "Sarah, you and I should live till 120, but if it is God's will that one of us should die first, I shall definitely move to Israel."

Shakespeare said: "The sense of death is most in apprehension." Worse than death is the fear of it.

An Englishman, wanting to make death less frightening to family and friends, had his tombstone inscribed: "Cheerio, --- see you soon, " -- hardly reassuring, I should think.

To get rid of the fear of death is on the agenda of every religion and many a philosopher. Plato, greatest of them all, said: "The whole life of the philosopher is a preparation for death." How can one prepare for dying without sinking into depression?

Familiarity dispels fear. A visit to the dying will do more for you than for the one on his deathbed. Volunteers for hospice care will confirm what I have often observed,--- dying is nearly always a painless passage into final sleep. The end is usually an easy gliding into another sphere of being. The last words of one of England's greatest surgeons, Dr. John Hunter, were: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die." .

Mastering the fear of death calls for the opposite of avoidance: awareness and reflection. A practicing Jew who prays and reads his Bible, especially the Psalms, cannot but learn to face death without panic. Daily, upon awakening, I recite the traditional thanksgiving for the restoration of my life. My daily prayers at home speak of God as the Source of Life who ordains death and remind me that life is not a gift but a loan, that the soul inhabiting my body will be taken and remain with God unto eternity. The Psalms echo repeatedly the comforting line: "Though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Jewish wisdom suggests that consciousness of death might enrich our life. The Biblical sage Kohelet said: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to a house of feasting; for that is the end of every man and a living person should take it to heart." (Ecc. 7.2) What did Kohelet mean? What is there about death which, according to Kohelet, "a living person should take to heart"? He may have had in mind the admonition of the 90th Psalm "to number our days so that we may get us a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90. 12)

The most prominent Jew of the 19th century, Sir Moses Montefiore, counselor and friend of Queen Victoria, instructed his butler to knock on his door every hour and say "Moses

Montefiore, another hour of your life has passed.” The hourly reminder of his mortality was a powerful incentive to make the most of his life, which he did until his death at the age of 101.

Perhaps the most prodigious achievement due to a sharp awareness of death was that of the novelist Anthony Burgess. After being diagnosed with brain tumor and given only one more year to live, Burgess, in a furious outburst of creative energy, poured out 5 novels in a single year, -- and best of all, the tumor disappeared.

Averell Harriman was an undistinguished, rich playboy until his sister, Mary Rumsey, was killed in a riding accident. She had been a social worker with a strong social conscience. Harriman had been very devoted to her. Friends reported that her death motivated him to go into public service. He distinguished himself as diplomat and statesman , chief negotiator of the nuclear test ban treaty, serving the cause of peace, in his sister’s spirit.

A former editor of TIME magazine, Charles C. Wertenbaker, was told by his doctor that he had terminal cancer and one year to live. In a moving chronicle of that final year, his wife records that from that moment on, the two most often spoken words in their home, were “*important*” and

“unimportant.” Awareness of death gave them a new scale of priorities, a new perspective on values.

Death consciousness is the broom that sweeps pettiness out of our life. “Life is too short to be little” said Benjamin D’Israeli.

The wisdom gained when you number the days of your life is to focus on what matters, get on with your work, discard your resentments and stop feuding. “Life is too short to be little.”

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In T. S. Eliot’s play, *The Cocktail Party*, one of the characters, Edward, tells the psychiatrist: “I am obsessed by the thought of my own insignificance.” Is life an absurdity? Or, does it have some higher meaning and purpose, even though we can neither know it nor prove it? Alfred Lord Tennyson speaks for me in his humble admission:

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Tennyson's poem mirrors psalms 131:

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THOUGHTS ON MORTALITY

Joshua O. Haberman

Memorial Service, Yom Kippur, Sept. 25, 2004

This hour of reflection is an hour of memories, but more than that. As we recall our departed, we review our relationship with them; we remember their characteristic sayings, their words of advice and, sometimes, rebuke. In our youth we rejected some of their ways, but, with the passage of time, we have come to think and act more and more like them. Much of what they experienced, we have or shall experience. We reconsider our relationship with them and, if we find fault, we forgive and ask to be forgiven.

Inevitably, we think of aging and mortality. I remember now a special lecture my professor of sermonics gave on "Topics a Young Rabbi Should Avoid Preaching". "It is not seemly for a young rabbi", he said, "to preach on *How to Face Death with Serenity*," or, "*How to Grow Old Gracefully*."

At my point in life, having passed the age of 85, the topic of death is no longer off limits. But, I like to think that I am still too young to speak about *Growing Old Gracefully*, to which Maxine responds with a smile and "don't kid yourself."

It is difficult to work up enthusiasm on the subject of death. You would be ill served, however, if I did not try to help you come to terms with the inevitable. Avoidance is so

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deeply ingrained in us that if death ever crosses our mind, it is usually the death of some one else, not our own. A pious, elderly couple reflected on their future. Said the husband: "Sarah, you and I should live till 120, but if it is God's will that one of us should die first, I shall definitely move to Israel."

Shakespeare said: "The sense of death is most in apprehension." Worse than death is the fear of it.

An Englishman, wanting to make death less frightening to family and friends, had his tombstone inscribed: "Cheerio, --- see you soon, " -- hardly reassuring, I should think.

To get rid of the fear of death is on the agenda of every religion and many a philosopher. Plato, greatest of them all, said: "The whole life of the philosopher is a preparation for death." How can one prepare for dying without sinking into depression?

Familiarity dispels fear. A visit to the dying will do more for you than for the one on his deathbed. Volunteers for hospice care will confirm what I have often observed,--- dying is nearly always a painless passage into final sleep. The end is usually an easy gliding into another sphere of being. The last words of one of England's greatest surgeons, Dr. John Hunter, were: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die." .

Mastering the fear of death calls for the opposite of avoidance: awareness and reflection. A practicing Jew who prays and reads his Bible, especially the Psalms, cannot but learn to face death without panic. Daily, upon awakening, I recite the traditional thanksgiving for the restoration of my life. My daily prayers at home speak of God as the Source of Life who ordains death and remind me that life is not a gift but a loan, that the soul inhabiting my body will be taken and remain with God unto eternity. The Psalms echo repeatedly the comforting line: "Though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Jewish wisdom suggests that consciousness of death might enrich our life. The Biblical sage Kohelet said: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to a house of feasting; for that is the end of every man and a living person should take it to heart." (Ecc. 7.2) What did Kohelet mean? What is there about death which, according to Kohelet, "a living person should take to heart"? He may have had in mind the admonition of the 90th Psalm "to number our days so that we may get us a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90. 12)

The most prominent Jew of the 19th century, Sir Moses Montefiore, counselor and friend of Queen Victoria, instructed his butler to knock on his door every hour and say "Moses

Montefiore, another hour of your life has passed.” The hourly reminder of his mortality was a powerful incentive to make the most of his life, which he did until his death at the age of 101.

Perhaps the most prodigious achievement due to a sharp awareness of death was that of the novelist Anthony Burgess. After being diagnosed with brain tumor and given only one more year to live, Burgess, in a furious outburst of creative energy, poured out 5 novels in a single year, -- and best of all, the tumor disappeared.

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A former editor of TIME magazine, Charles C. Wertenbaker, was told by his doctor that he had terminal cancer and one year to live. In a moving chronicle of that final year, his wife records that from that moment on, the two most often spoken words in their home, were “*important*” and

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So, he wonders , what is the meaning of life? “Why? It can’t be that life is so senseless “....It suddenly occurs to him: “Maybe I did not live as I ought to have done, what if my whole life has been wrong?” Was it all a waste?

What a pity if a person does not take stock of his life until close to death! The time to assess and reconsider one’s life is while one is alive and well and still able to change one’s course of life. Better yet, rethink your goals and priorities every day. A practicing Jew does it daily when he says his prayer. Do you know that the Hebrew word for praying, *hit-pallel* means to judge oneself?

In T. S. Eliot’s play, *The Cocktail Party*, one of the characters, Edward, tells the psychiatrist: “I am obsessed by the thought of my own insignificance.” Is life an absurdity? Or, does it have some higher meaning and purpose, even though we can neither know it nor prove it? Alfred Lord Tennyson speaks for me in his humble admission:

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Omit p 6 §3 top 7 §3

The Fear of Death

Shakespeare said: "The sense of death is most in apprehension." Worse than death is the fear of it.

Though the thought of death often comes to mind, few rarely think it through. We quickly drop the subject and turn to other matters.

Some, however, are obsessed by thoughts about death. Sigmund Freud confessed to his friend, Ernest Jones, that he thought of death daily and hated to grow old. Dylan Thomas was enraged by the idea of dying and the year before his death at 39 wrote:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Edna St. Vincent Millay faced the idea of death with a temper outburst befitting an adolescent:

Withstanding Death till Life be gone,
I shall bolt my door with a bolt and a cable;
I shall block my door with a bureau and a table;
With all my might my door shall be barred.
I shall put up a fight, I shall take it hard.
With his hand on my mouth he shall drag me forth,
Shrieking to the south and clutching to the north.

An Englishman, wanting to make death less frightening to family and friends, had his tombstone inscribed: "Cheerio, --- see you soon." Hardly reassuring, I should think.

To get rid of the fear of death is on the agenda of every religion. Many a philosopher agreed with Plato who said: "The whole life of the philosopher is a preparation for death." How can one prepare for dying without sinking into depression?

Familiarity dispels fear. A visit to the dying will do more for the visitor than for the one on his deathbed. Volunteers for hospice care will confirm what I have often observed: Dying is nearly always a painless passage into final sleep. The end is usually easy gliding into another sphere of being. The last words of one of England's greatest surgeons, Dr. John Hunter, were: "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and pleasant a thing it is to die."

Mastery of the fear of death calls for the opposite of avoidance: awareness and reflection. A religious person who prays and reads the Bible, especially the Psalms, may well learn to face death without panic. The first thing I do, upon awakening each morning, is to recite the traditional Jewish thanksgiving for the restoration of my life. My daily prayers at home speak of God as the Source of Life who ordains death and remind me that life is

not a gift but a loan, that the soul inhabiting my body will be taken and remain with God unto eternity. The Psalms echo repeatedly the comforting line: **“Though I walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.”** (Ps. 23.4)

Jewish wisdom suggests that consciousness of death might even be helpful in the conduct of life. The Biblical sage, Kohelet, said: “It is better to go to the house of mourning than to a house of feasting; for that is the end of every man and a living person should take it to heart.” (Ecc. 7.2) What did Kohelet mean? What is there about death which, “a living person should take to heart”? He may have had in mind the admonition of the 90th Psalm “so to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom” (Ps. 90. 12)

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Death consciousness is the broom that sweeps pettiness out of our life. "Life is too short to be little" said Benjamin Disraeli.

The 90th Psalm speaks of wisdom to be gained from considering the brevity of life: "**So teach us to number our days that we may get us a heart of wisdom.**" (Ps. 90.12) The wisdom gained when you number the days of your life is to focus on what matters, get on with your work, discard resentments and stop feuding. "Life is too short to be little."

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Granted that awareness of our mortality may actually improve a person's character and conduct of life, we would still want to get over the fear of death. How?

Before attempting a meaningful answer, we must be more specific about what makes us afraid of death. Is it the dread of the unknown? Or, the horror of being cut off from everything -- extinction?

We may take comfort and re-assurance from ~~the best~~ publicized dying man of our time, Mitch Albom's hero of his famous book, *Tuesdays With Morrie*, ^{He} emphatically denied that death is separation and annihilation. A sense of connectedness helped Morrie face death without fear.

Only months before his death, he was interviewed on Ted Koppel's show. Morrie acknowledged that he was an agnostic from age 16 until the onset of Lou Gehring's disease, his ~~final~~ illness. "What changed your mind?" asked Koppel. Morrie explained: "A growing sense of the interconnectedness of all things. I am part of some larger Power.... Maybe the difference between life and death is not so great, not a chasm. There is a little bridge." Morrie concluded that there must be something beyond. The world is not sufficient, but, he added: "I don't know what is beyond."

It is a thought expressed almost 2 centuries earlier

terminal illness. “What changed your mind?” asked Koppel. Morrie explained: “A growing sense of inter-connectedness of all things. I am part of some larger Power..... Maybe the difference between life and death is not so great, not a chasm. There is a little bridge.” Morrie concluded that there must be something beyond. The world is not sufficient, but, he added: “I don’t know what is beyond.”

Morrie’s point is almost identical with the idea expressed some 2 centuries earlier by the famous song of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, -- kol ha-olam kulo gesher tzar me-od; v’ha-ikkar lo l’fached klal--**ALL THE WORLD IS A NARROW BRIDGE AND THE MAIN THING IS NOT TO BE AFRAID.**

The Bratslaver saw the universe as multi-dimensional. ~~This~~ Our life is something transitional, a short phase, moving across “a narrow bridge” toward another dimension of being.

The point is that in death as in life we remain connected with something greater than ourselves. We, creatures of flesh and blood, do not endure long in our physical condition, but whatever connects us with God is eternal.

Is life an absurdity? Or, does it have some higher meaning and purpose, even though we can neither know it nor prove it? Alfred Lord Tennyson speaks for me in his humble admission:

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Keeping Tom Peace of Mind in a Pathological Age

SIX

FIVE STEPS TOWARD PEACE OF MIND

PATHWAYS TO SERENITY & PEACE OF MIND

by Joshua O Haberman

May 2006

Tolstoy's epic novel, *WAR AND PEACE*, explores the question whether human beings shape events or are shaped by them. As we look at our world today, we are intimidated by the global dimensions of terrorism. As individuals we feel powerless to deal with it. Dreadful events are shaping our way of life, our outlook upon the world, our view of the future with its frightening possibilities.

In times such as these, we tend to turn inward in line with Reb Zussy's confession: "When I was young, I thought I could change the world. Later, I hoped to change our community but could not. Now, that I am old I have come to realize that all I can do is change my own self."

Yom Kippur is a time to consider changes within ourselves, a time for inner cleansing, for the purging of our souls. For Jews, this is not an annual but a daily task. Our daily prayers include the self-evaluation, known in Hebrew as *chesbon ha-nefesh*,-- an accounting of one's soul. Every day, we should be rethinking our way of life, our priorities and our problems.

What are our persistent problems?

What are the sources of our tensions? Is it the workplace? The family? An unsatisfactory self-image?

Life without problems is unthinkable. Adversities and setbacks are out of our control. There is only one thing you can control, ~~and that is you~~. *You are always free to decide how to react to whatever befalls you. Life deals you a set of cards. How you play them, is up to you.* The way you respond will lead you either to despair or to peace of mind.

Everybody wants peace of mind but few know the way. You can't get there in one, single leap. It is a step-by-step achievement. I want to suggest 5 steps toward that goal.

The first step is to give yourself a break. Get off the treadmill of activities, jobs and tasks which crowd your daily agenda. Listen to Psalm 127:

You who eat the bread of toil, it is vain for you to rise early and sit up late. Ps.127. 2

What the Psalmist is saying, in plain words, is don't get obsessed with the things you do. Take time out to do nothing. Psalm 127 tells you in the next sentence what will happen:

God gives to His beloved ones in sleep Ps. 127. 2

Without your doing, even while you are asleep, things may turn your way.

Some of the most important gains in life are not gotten by hot pursuit but fall into your lap if ~~only~~ you will ~~only~~ sit still for ^{long enough} ~~a while~~ to let it happen.

Isaac Newton was at leisure in an orchard when he saw an apple fall from a tree. Why did the apple fall down? The question sparked his discovery of the law of gravitation, one of the great scientific breakthroughs in history. An hour of reflection may open your eyes to things you are otherwise too busy to notice. Daily reflection on what you said or did this day may do wonders for keeping your personal relationships in good repair, at home or at work. Racing breathlessly through the day's routine puts blinders on you. You are so bent on your agenda that you can't see open doors of opportunity. Do nothing for a while each day and you will be surprised by good ideas that will pop into your mind. God's gifts may come to you unawares, as the Psalmist put it: *God gives His beloved in sleep.*

The second step toward peace of mind is to rid yourself of the notion that you and you alone are in charge of your life. If you think that you are in control, you will hold yourself responsible for everything that happens to you.

This fallacy is wrapped up in the closing line of William Erenst Henley's famous poem "Invictus" which says:

I am the Master of my life

I am the Captain of my soul

The poet Keith Preston ridiculed Henley's vastly exaggerated sense of self-determination with this parody:

I am the captain of my soul

I rule it with stern joy

And yet I think I had more fun

When I was just a cabin boy!

The reality is that no one is in full control of his life. We are all, more or less, dependent or interdependent. Full independence and self-determination does not exist. We are largely shaped by forces and events we neither intended nor created by ourselves. What I am saying is that you are not the only player in your life.

The 55th psalm proposes that if you cannot cope with a certain situation, you should recognize your dependence and, in the words of the Psalmist:

Cast your burden upon God. Ps. 55. 23

Does this mean, count on God to do your job? Not at all.

The next line says: *He will sustain you*, suggesting that you will still need to act, but with God's help. God may enable you to gain new insight or provide other means to work out your problem.

Cast your burden upon God means putting down the heavy load you are carrying and reach out to God in prayer and reflection. No one knows how, in response, God will reach out to you but, unless you take time out to listen with your inner ear you will not perceive God's guidance.

Insert Aitken story - p. 8/9

The third step toward peace of mind is to scale down your expectations and the demands you make on yourself. We pay a heavy price for driving ourselves beyond our abilities. The saying, "don't bite off more than you can chew" is sound warning against over-reaching, over-scheduling and over-committing. Don't over-program yourself. Respect your limitations and you will ^{ease} ~~lessen~~ your tensions. ^{Insert comment on Ps 131} The habit of daily prayer can be your safety net when, as part of your prayer, you reflect upon your goals and ambitions and cancel those which, on second thought, are not worth the effort.

The fourth step toward peace of mind is to deal with indecision. The psychologist William James said, "There is no more miserable human being than one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision." When you can't make up your mind about something, you get that sinking feeling. Indecision is enfeebling, paralyzing. It will fill your days and nights with worry.

What hinders your ability to act decisively? There are several causes: fear of the risks of a new situation; fear of losing what you have; unwillingness to pay the price of adjustment; self-doubt as to whether you will measure up to the new challenge; confusion about what you really want; and so on. What a relief it is to finally take a stand and act. For this the author of Psalm 40 thanked God: *He set my foot upon a rock. He established my goings.* Ps. 40. 3 Somehow, in the course of his prayers and reflections, he received God's guidance and from it the power to act: *I delight to do Your will, O my God* Ps. 40. 9

[See also My Psalm book - Ps 86

The fifth step toward peace of mind is thanksgiving. A mishap, disturbance or pain will get our immediate attention. How aware are you of your good fortune when nothing bad happens to you?

Stop to think how much could go wrong in your life. Think of the many diseases you escaped. Are you self-supporting and materially comfortable? Imagine the sudden loss of all your possessions --- which did not happen; or worse, the loss of those dearest to you, who are still alive and well with you. Have you ever thought of giving thanks for what did not happen? The truth is that we take too much for granted. Unbeknownst to you, you have been shielded against many dangers; therefore, you survived.

The author of Psalm 66 does not take well-being for granted. He invites us to consider God's work for our benefit: *Come and see the works of God* Ps. .66. 5

He has granted us life and kept our feet from stumbling. Ps.66. 9

Thanksgiving and happiness are twins. Every word of thanks, to some degree, cheers us up. People with thanks on their lips enjoy moments of contentment and contentment is the stuff serenity and peace of mind are made of. I want to propose a simple calculation to you: Take a few minutes for a quick inventory of your life. List what is missing but also what you have gotten; failures, but also achievements; wherein you fall short, but also what you can do; the things that went wrong, but also what turned out right.

Can you see, hear, talk, walk, take care of yourself? Can you breathe, eat, sleep? Does your heart beat without pain? Do you have a home? Family? A friend who cares? The poet Carl Sandburg said: I am grateful for three things: to be out of jail, to have a roof over my head and a little love. We hardly need more for contentment. Remember Ben Zoma's definition of wealth: *Who is rich? He who is pleased with his lot.* Pirke Avot. 4. 1

There are many obstacles to peace of mind but also steps that lead to it. The five steps we have talked about are:

1. Don't become enslaved by your work and activities. Give yourself a break. Take time out to do nothing, time to think, to reflect.
2. "Cast your burden upon God" --you are not the only player in your life.
3. Scale down your expectations. Don't over-reach; don't over-program yourself; accept your limitations.
4. Don't torment yourself with indecision. Go one way or the other, but decide and go.
5. Practice daily thanksgiving. It leads to contentment and peace of mind.

Yrkor 2004

FEAR NOT

Having passed my 85th year I belong to the oldest group
in our country — ^{now} and I feel an obligation to share
thoughts with those years than myself on the final
chapters of life all must face, sooner or later.
— one is avoidable, the other inescapable
What is avoidable is aging, but only if one
terminates one's own life

What is inescapable is death, — one way or the other
it must happen.

~~It~~ It is difficult to be cheerful about ~~both~~
either topic — aging or death. However
~~As a mark~~ reflection on both is a mark of maturity.
Such reflection need not be morbid or frightening.
But whatever feelings it may evoke — we must
as we grow older face both.

Even the happily married, surrounded by family, or in the midst of a crowd, we may experience a poignant pang of loneliness, a loneliness of the heart, a sense of not being understood. A crucial part of yourself cannot be communicated. No matter how close, how intimate you are with another person, there remains a gap that cannot be bridged. There are things about you no other person will ever know. Adrienne Rich says so in her lines:

Two strangers, thrust upon a rock
May have at last the perfect hour of talk
That language aches for; still --
Two minds, two messages.

At this time of Yizkor, we think of our families, the living and those no longer alive. We remember all the love and tenderness shown us, the sacrifices made for us, the guidance and models of conduct that shaped our

They say, time is a great healer, But there are sorrows that cannot fade away. My son-in-law, Rabbi David Forman, wrote a very personal article for the Jerusalem Post about his sister's death at age 12 when she was run over by a streetcar in Boston. He actually never knew her because the accident happened before he was born. He was only told that she was an angelic child.... When David's father, at age 91, made his last trip to Israel, David writes "he went to the wall...and found a seat adjacent to it and motioned to me to sit next to him. His voice trembling, he said...'There is not an hour in the day that I do not think of her. I stand before these stones imploring God to return her to me.' There is nothing more painful than the death of a child."

When a parent dies, we lose a large measure of our past; when a child dies, we lose a portion of our future.

Inevitably, memories of our departed include also conflicts, decisions and situations which were resented by either side, theirs and ours. There were times when we were not understood as we had craved. Such memories are painful. But, we must not be too harsh in condemnation or in self-reproach.

There are limits of understanding between persons. Most people don't even understand their own deeper self. We must be grateful for whatever was and is good in our relationships and not look for the perfection which is beyond human reach.

A man was eagerly looking for a spouse. Friends introduced him to suitable ladies but he found fault with every one of them. Finally, he found the one he thought was "the perfect woman" ... but no match, because **she** was looking for the perfect man. The best relationship does not seek perfection but tolerates imperfection.

My sister and I, as children, would occasionally get into an argument. I would try all my methods of persuasion to change her mind, -- often to no avail. She just wouldn't budge and if pressed for an explanation, she'd cut me off with the infuriating answer: "You'll never understand." I have come to see that there are indeed things about each of us no other person will ever understand, simply because, as Adrienne Rich put it: "Two minds, two messages."

There will never be total disclosure and understanding between two persons. As Emerson wrote in his diary: "We never touch but at points." One can be with people and yet be lonely. Loneliness is not being alone but feeling unrelated, that is, not communicating. This is the point of Jean Ingelow's poem:

Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said.

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets: "I'm looking for a key to unlock myself." Many of us are locked up in ourselves. We have a sense of futility. What is our purpose? What our reason for existence? We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we don't find it --- because we keep looking for it in ourselves. We should be looking beyond ourselves. The meaning of our life is in relationship, in connection with something greater than we. The meaning of our personal, individual existence is embedded in the totality of life --- ultimately with the Maker of life. It is God Who has the master key to each of us. Think of the Psalmist's words: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Ps. 90.1

God is the ground of our being.

"Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever the earth and the world were formed,
Even from everlasting to everlasting,, Thou art God." Ps. 90.2

It is God Who on this day calls within our souls:

"Return , ye children of men." Ps.90.3

Acknowledge that you are part of the original context of life from which you were torn for the short time of your existence and to which you are destined to return.

In the light of faith, loneliness is an illusion. No being is ever cut off from the totality of life. As Richard Beer Hofmann said:

"They are all in us. Who is alone?"

The medieval philosopher , Master Eckhart expressed our paradoxical sense of existence as separate beings , yet forever connected with the totality of life and with its Maker:

That I am a man
I have in common with all men.
That I see and hear
And eat and drink
I share with all animals.
But that I am I is exclusively mine,
And belongs to me
And nobody else,
to no other man
Nor to an angel nor to God
Except in as much as I am one with Him.

This is the mystery of the Shema: God is one, the world is one, life is one, even the living and the dead are one. You are not alone. You are forever connected with God, the Creator with Whom are the spirits of all flesh, those of our departed and ours as well, when our time comes. Amen

Y 13 kor

For nearly 40 years I have had the task - and also privilege - of dealing with the issues of death & dying during this hour of remembrance. What I really would like to do is to come back after my death & tell you what it was like.

Since I can't count on that, I shall once again wrestle with this topic on a speculative, intuitive level - in other words share with you my ^{best} guess on the subject.

At any point in life
With each passing year, this subject gains personal relevance.

The real problem is not death, but going
It is futile to find meaning in death, the task is to find meaning in that last chapter of life which has been lengthened from the sixties to the seventies and now seems to be reaching the nineties - i.e. statistically, but in reality, the last chapter may be at any point in life

The Inanity of the Pre-Kashmiri reflections
in the Gates of Prayer

TAKE *to light your way*
SHARE *to help a friend*

Life Lights

אורות החיים

Help for wholeness and healing

Do Jews Believe in the Soul's Survival?

RABBI ELIE KAPLAN SPITZ



There is a Jewish tale of twins in the womb. As one emerges from the birth canal, he is greeted with an embrace and celebration. Meanwhile, the unborn twin, unconscious of his future fate, is panic-stricken over the potential loss of all he has ever known. Likewise for us who live an earthly, embodied existence, our future death is frightening. We cannot know

אורות החיים
אורות החיים
אורות החיים

with certainty what will happen once we die. We are saddened to imagine leaving our loved ones and the familiarity of our current existence. Yet the Jewish tradition affirms that our physical demise is not the end of our consciousness. In the words of Rabbi Ya'akov, "This world is a passageway before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the passageway in order to enter into the main room."

Judaism Teaches That We Each Have a Soul

Each of us is endowed with a *neshamah*, an intangible soul that links us to the Divine. As God created Adam from the earth and breathed into him the *nishmat chayyim*, the soul-breath of life, so we are both animated and made conscious by the spirit of our Creator. Upon our death, our *neshamah* returns to its source with memories gathered and a record of deeds. It is our life's task, the Ba'al Shem Tov (the founder of Hasidism, 1700–1760) taught, to cultivate and elevate our *neshamah* through acts of connection to God, particularly acts of compassion.

Judaism, in contrast to many other religions, places its emphasis on this life. God's promised rewards as recorded in the Torah are consistently this-worldly and communal. Because of this, many rabbis have de-emphasized or even denied Judaism's belief in an afterlife. However, our people has always avowed survival of the soul. Although the Torah hardly addresses what happens after we die, there is a recurring phrase that affirms another realm of existence. Regarding six key figures, the

Before his death, Rabbi Zusya said, "In the coming world, they will not ask me: 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

—Hasidic wisdom

Torah records that "he died, was gathered to his people, and was buried." Medieval and contemporary biblical scholars agree that "gathered to his people" refers to soul, a quality of consciousness that persists and is rewarded with an eternal life on another plane.

There Is Evidence That the Soul Survives

At first impression, we moderns are skeptical of the belief in survival of the soul because we fear it is a product of wishful thinking. Yet the fact that we want to believe it does not make it untrue. We want to be loved, but that does not mean that we are not lovable and loved. We are also unsure because there are no scientific proofs for either the soul or its endurance. But much in life is not subject to quantifiable proofs. For instance, although we may lack conclusive proof that we are loved, we may have evidence that our intimate relationships are grounded on sincere care. Likewise, there is evidence for con-

tinued existence of the soul that we may weigh, assessing the credibility of the witnesses and the consistency of accounts.

As a rabbi, I have grown to take seriously the stories that congregants have shared with me that point to an afterlife:

- *“When I was a medical student I took a vacation to Texas. While asleep I fell out of bed. Actually, it felt like I was thrown out of bed. I looked up at the clock, which read 5 A.M. Shaken, I went back to sleep. An hour later the phone rang. My mother shared that my father had had a heart attack at 5 A.M.”*
- *“Falling asleep on the eve of my daughter’s funeral, I saw lit figures with vaguely familial faces enter my room. They assured me that my daughter had joined them on the other side and that she was fine. I found the visit to be real and comforting.”*
- *“I was thrown from my automobile in a car accident. Lying on the side of the road, I emerged from my body. I looked down and saw the medics working on me. I experienced no pain as my consciousness was drawn upward toward a bright light. Although I felt increasing joy, I also desired to return to my body. Suddenly I was zapped back into my body and felt racking pain. The experience changed my life. I no longer fear death and am more spiritual.”*

When people tell me these stories, they consistently do so with much emotion and in vivid detail. It is as if the experience touched them at their core and is imprinted there. Because of the emotional and intimate nature of these recollections, people often withhold their stories. In addition, people are afraid that

Rav Nachman accounted in a dream to his friend Rabbah: “[My death was no more painless] than removing a hair from milk. But if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to say to me, ‘Go back to the world as you were,’ I would decline, for the dread [of death] is anguishing.”

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD, MO’ED KATAN 28A

their listeners will dismiss their accounts as products of coincidence or fantasy. Yet there is a vast contemporary literature that deals with near-death experiences, mediums, and past-life memories. My reading offered a larger context for the personal anecdotes people told me. In sum, I have grown to believe beyond a reasonable doubt that the teaching of the Jewish tradition is true: we are endowed with a soul that survives our physical demise. As a modern thinker, I wanted to assess for myself whether my tradition’s statements of faith were true. As a Jew, I also wanted to know more about what my tradition teaches about the nature of the afterlife.

Scripture Describes After-Death Experiences

Hebrew scripture describes communication with the dead. When King Saul needs to speak with the deceased prophet Samuel, he goes to a medium, the Witch of Endor, who conjures up the soul of the prophet. Samuel tells the king that he and his sons will join him the next day. In a similar vein,

the Talmud recounts that after Rabbi Nachman died, he appeared to his friend Rabbah and said, “[My death was no more painless] than removing a hair from milk. But if the Holy One, blessed be He, were to say to me, ‘Go back to the world as you were,’ I would decline, for the dread [of death] is anguishing.”

The Talmud relates that when people die they emerge from the physical body and undergo a life review in which they are made aware of their shortcomings and achievements. The *Zohar* elaborates that upon death the soul is drawn toward the *Shechinah*, God’s presence, often pictured as a bright light. Deceased family members greet the soul and serve as guides toward the light. There is a multileveled process of soul purification, aided by the deeds of loved ones who are still living. According to medieval Jewish writings, the recitation of the Mourner’s Kaddish prayer is one of the acts that brings merit and helps elevate the soul of a loved one.

“In the World to Come...the righteous sit with crowns on their head and enjoy the radiance of the *Shechinah* [Divine Presence].”

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD, *BERACHOT* 17A

The Jewish Tradition Has Intuitions of the World to Come

The nature of the World to Come is unclear. As the Jewish philosopher Maimonides noted, to describe a disembodied state to a person in this realm is like describing color to a blind person. Nonetheless, it is described in the Talmud as a place without eating or drinking, but with a reward marked by the bliss of basking in God’s presence. At the same time, there is a diversity of opinion as to the specifics of the future state of the soul. In the Book of Daniel, there is the promise of resurrection during the messianic era. This reversal of the natural course of death is a reward for the righteous, according to the Rabbis of the Talmud. In Jewish mystical writings beginning in the twelfth century (and later integrated into mainstream Judaism), there is also a claim of reincarnation. In many traditional prayer books, there is a nighttime prayer that asks God to forgive us for our sins in this life and in any previous life.

Despite variations in the particulars of the nature of the World to Come, the messianic era, resurrection, and reincarnation, the Jewish tradition is consistent in its belief that we are more than our bodies and that there is life beyond death. Judaism is also consistent in teaching that how we live now matters, both in terms of God’s expectations of us and for the trajectory of life to come.

R. Eleazar said, "On the day when a person's time arrives to depart from the world...three messengers stand over him [or her] and provide a report of all the person's deeds in this world, and the individual admits all and signs an account."

—ZOHAR I, 79A

Belief in Survival of the Soul Makes a Difference in Our Lives

Now that I have a broader context for death, I am much more comfortable at the bedside of the dying. I can share with the patient and his or her family that when we die it is not the end; our soul emerges from our body at the point of death as a butterfly from a cocoon. Many of these people welcome hearing their faith affirmed not just by me, but also by the Jewish tradition. Others find comfort in being invited to consider that this life is not all there is. Despite sadness, death feels less tragic knowing that there is life after life.

I live my life more responsibly and compassionately because of a belief in an accounting at the end of days. Moreover, if there is a personal consciousness that survives this plane of existence, then there is an additional reason to believe in a transcendent and unifying consciousness. Cultivating a relationship with the Divine through ritual deeds and acts

of compassion adds wholeness and holiness to the days of this life.

Though there is no conclusive proof for what happens after we die, the accounts of the living offer evidence for belief in survival of the soul, a belief affirmed by the sacred texts and folk wisdom of our tradition. We are each here for a unique purpose, Jewish tradition teaches, and each day of our lives is a precious gift from the Divine that we are to celebrate and use responsibly as God's partner.



Author: RABBI ELIE KAPLAN SPITZ is spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Israel of Tustin, California, and author of *Does the Soul Survive? A Jewish Journey to Belief in Afterlife, Past Lives, and Living with Purpose.*

Series Editor: RABBI NANCY FLAM

PHOTO: The citron, or *etrog*—"fruit of the goodly tree." Photo courtesy of Neot Kedumim, the Biblical Landscape Reserve in Israel.

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A Caring Thought From:



Eulogies

For a Devoted Leader

Nu. 20. 24

And Aaron was

gathered to his people

also 20. 72

gathered to his people

to see him

Death does not extinguish the life of a leader.

A grateful people gathers up the highpoints of his life & achievements and weaves them into a wreath of honor forever held in grateful remembrance.

Death an Elevation

to full view

Nu. 20. 25

And the Lord said to Moses

Take Aaron & Eleazar his son & bury them up to Mt. Hor.

We learn that Moses was bidden by God to escort his brother Aaron up to the top of Mt. Hor immediately before Aaron died. Why? What was the object in making Aaron climb Mt. Hor before his passing?

It suggests a profound thought about the effect of death upon the survivor.

The departed is always elevated by memory to the peak of his finest qualities, his highest achievements, his noblest words & deeds.

These highpoints of his life stand out prominently (now hat) in this party moment.

Even as the Sun appears ^{its} largest size and most (impressive) majestic ~~aspect~~ at the very moment of its setting — so life (upon its final backward glance takes on) in its final moments radiates in its ~~most~~ fullest glory . . .

X (Death Stripped to the naked personality)

Num. 20. 28 / 19th AIC / 17th AIC / 18th AIC / 19th AIC / 20th AIC

And Moses stripped Aaron

of the act was symbolic. What a strange thing to do. (yet) In reality ~~we all do the same~~ Death strips a person of all outward marks of status, acquisitions and appearances. As we beheld the image of the departed we see now the person himself — his true structure of character & the genuine self.

PREPARING FOR DEATH

Men do not love to think of death, because they are not on good terms with him. They resort to forgetfulness. They occupy themselves, often, intensely. They rush into pleasures. They count him to be no kind companion, and no pleasant friend, that will insist upon reminding them of dying and death. It is a gloomy thing. All the offices of death are gloomy

Now, death is not in itself anything terrible, as a mere physical event. Most persons die with as little pain as a child goes to sleep; and all the suffering which precedes death is so little in the majority of instances that if it were all summed up and put upon a man who is alive and well, he would be shamed to shed a tear....

Death in and of itself is merciful. ...When men are prepared to die, nature is as gracious to them in dying as to an apple, when it is ripe and ready to fall from the bough. The stem itself prepares, as a part of its ripeness, to let go; so that when the least breath of wind shakes the apple, it falls easily to the ground.

When the time comes, no one clings to the bough of life very tenaciously. Generally, we do not need to be torn from it by rude handling. There are exceptions, but as a rule, there is more pain in a toothache than in dying. Therefore, there is no need to fear death as a physical experience .

In regard to the interruption of our plans and affections, death is certainly a more painful thing. We ask what will become of our children? What will become of our estate? What will become of these mighty interests which have depended upon me, and which my hands have controlled and guided? --

These questions are the reasons, even more so than fear of pain, why men do not like to think of death.

Yet, let no one deceive himself. Since the world began, has there ever been a man whose place could not be taken? Have children, after loss of parents, not been able to find their way through life? Nature is made so large and so bountiful, and God's providence is so generous that, after all those who think that they are so important to their estate, to their business, to their families, overestimate. To be sure, if they should die, the household would not be carried on as they are carrying it on; but it would not be destroyed.

Besides, we are not as necessary as we think. The sun will come up tomorrow if you do die. The stars will shine if you are not here to see them. Summer will come if your plough is still. The world is not made to turn on you as a pivot. You occupy a very small place. Your little will, and your little purposes, are practically invisible in the totality of things. And no man is so necessary that God cannot raise up another creature to take his place. The work that you have in your hands, God scatters and divides up among a hundred.

So men overestimate their importance, and think that death is a terrible thing because they are conceited in regard to their relations here in this world.

The true significance of death lies in the fact that it brings men into relationship with God. The prospect of death makes and the possibility of an eternal nothingness, makes man desperate for a realm of eternal life, for eternal power.....

Henry Ward Beecher --paraphrased in part

The Kaddish Mitzvah

by Herbert A. Yoshowitz

② Kaddish - by L. Wieseltier

~~① 207~~
~~25,000~~

~~③~~

④

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A Holocaust Memoir
by Lucius Salton
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③

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Repentance
Joy & Death

The White Kittel

is worn on

happy occasions

- at the Seder

and Wedding - but

also on solemn occasions

& as shroud on

death bed

to illustrate the

connection betw

all.

At solemn times,
Joy & Death

The White "kittel"

is worn by the groom

at his wedding,

at the Seder

on Y. Kippur

and at one's death

For HUC Student body

- ① Refer to Janet Ross Marder's portrayal message
- ② The Rabbi as teacher Today
Lesson & million from Israeli style
of preaching & teaching.

Francis Rosenthal's view of the new
approach to the modern Jew who
has been alienated from tradit. learning
and needs to draw into Torah
from Life Today - [see the plaque
outplace of modern
Jewish thought]

How teaching adults differs:

What does it mean
& what does it mean to me, my life

Illustrate . Confirm. Class - Story of Jacob & Esau

Siblings / On being the less favorite one
Esau, less favored by Rebekah

Jacob " " " 1500c

Do you feel that one or both parents favor another sibling?

What do you do when you are less favored?

Esau tried especially to please his father

Janet Ross Marder

THE WORK WE LOVE

As for practicing, rather than using discipline as a weapon against ourselves, think of it as an outgrowth of your desire to spend a little time every day with what you love. When desire is joined to discipline, miracles are possible....Edgar Degas, an artist who understood repetition to be the essence of craft and beauty, was intrigued with the relationship between repetition and mastery. It was precisely the ritualized, often unglamorous, movements of the ballet dancers he observed by the hour before beginning to paint, that interested him.

- Maureen McCarthy Draper, The Nature of Music: Beauty, Sound and Healing

He shall be like a tree planted by waters, sending forth its roots by a stream. It does not sense the coming of heat; its foliage is ever fresh. It has no care in a year of drought; it does not cease from yielding fruit.

- Jeremiah 17:8

Most of the dancers in the paintings of Degas are not performing on stage. The artist catches them in the unglamorous atmosphere of the dance class or practice hall. He celebrates the sensibility of everyday - the mastery of repetitive motion that allows the dancers to soar. He shows us not ethereal ballerinas floating in mid-air, but solid creatures of flesh and blood training their muscles to do the difficult and demanding work of their craft.



ABOUT THE RABBINATE

We rabbis know something about repetitive motion, of course.

We know that over the course of a career we will perform our characteristic tasks over and over again - writing sermons, eulogies, invocations; naming babies; blessing wedding couples and B'nai Mitzvah; teaching Torah; offering prayers. We learn, early on, that our ability to succeed in this work depends on a mastery of these everyday tasks - and even more so, on our ability to continually find them rewarding.

Repetitive stress injuries, after all, are not only physical in nature. Besides carpal-tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, tendonitis and other problems brought on by too much wear and tear on the joints, there are the injuries wrought by repeated actions that gradually wear away the spirit.

The first and most obvious injury is boredom. Can an unending round of baby namings and B'nai Mitzvah, week in and week out, sustain our interest? Can we put our heart into every funeral we conduct, and find meaning in each recitation of the liturgy? Can we bring energy and focus to each new counseling situation we encounter? Can we muster the enthusiasm to organize yet

Continued Page 1

leagues to meet uniformity in the international movement.

CCAR BULLETIN - March 2005

Marder: Continued from Page 1

another cycle of holiday programs?

But the greatest danger for rabbis is not boredom but discouragement. Even the most successful of us, by conventional standards, know that there are many people we simply cannot touch, no matter how hard we try. Virtually every week we display our passions before the gaze of indifferent onlookers. They fail to respond to our invitations and challenges; they douse our dreams with cold water; they remind us, in a hundred different ways, that what is at the very center of our lives is on the periphery of theirs. Rabbis who are naive, impatient or overly impressed with themselves will soon be disillusioned, and will probably not last long in this work.

Against these occupational hazards of the rabbinate I set the vision of the prophet Jeremiah, who saw the good man, the person who trusts in God, as a green and fruitful tree that survives in the harshest of climates. Nourished by underground streams, the prophet said, the faithful endure drought and blistering sun. They draw on hidden sources of resilience; they defy the elements and send forth new growth in every season.

I have all the proof I need that Jeremiah's vision is true. For I have spent these past two years getting to know women and men who work in every part of the rabbinate. I know that there is frustration and disappointment, and that some of us have been deeply wounded in the course of our work. But I am left most of all with a sense of amazement that so many good people have given their lives to this difficult and demanding craft we have chosen.

I thank you, my remarkable colleagues, for the lessons you have taught me, during these years, about resilience and renewal. I have seen you transcend defeat and go on; I have seen you encounter callousness without ever losing your own compassion; I have seen you sustain the discipline of study to keep from running dry.

I marvel at the hours of patient and persistent effort you put in, most of it behind the scenes and unacknowledged, to pursue holy tasks and build sacred communities. I honor you for the devotion you continue to bring to repetitive tasks so that they never become routine, and for the humor that keeps you balanced and sane.

I am proud to be among you and to share the only title I have ever wanted to bear: a teacher and lover of Torah. Together may we survive and thrive, finding reasons to celebrate the good that we are able to do for our people. May we soar, now and then, and find joy and beauty in the work we love.

As my term as president comes to an end, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the privilege of serving our Conference, and welcome with great respect and affection my wonderful successor, Harry Danziger.

SOLUTIONS

ORKESTRATION / Small Conference

Janet Ross Marder

THE WORK WE LOVE

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Continued Page 1

June 30, at 1 pm...
leagues to meet informally, study together, and discuss common international movement.

Marder: Continued from Page 1

another cycle of holiday programs?

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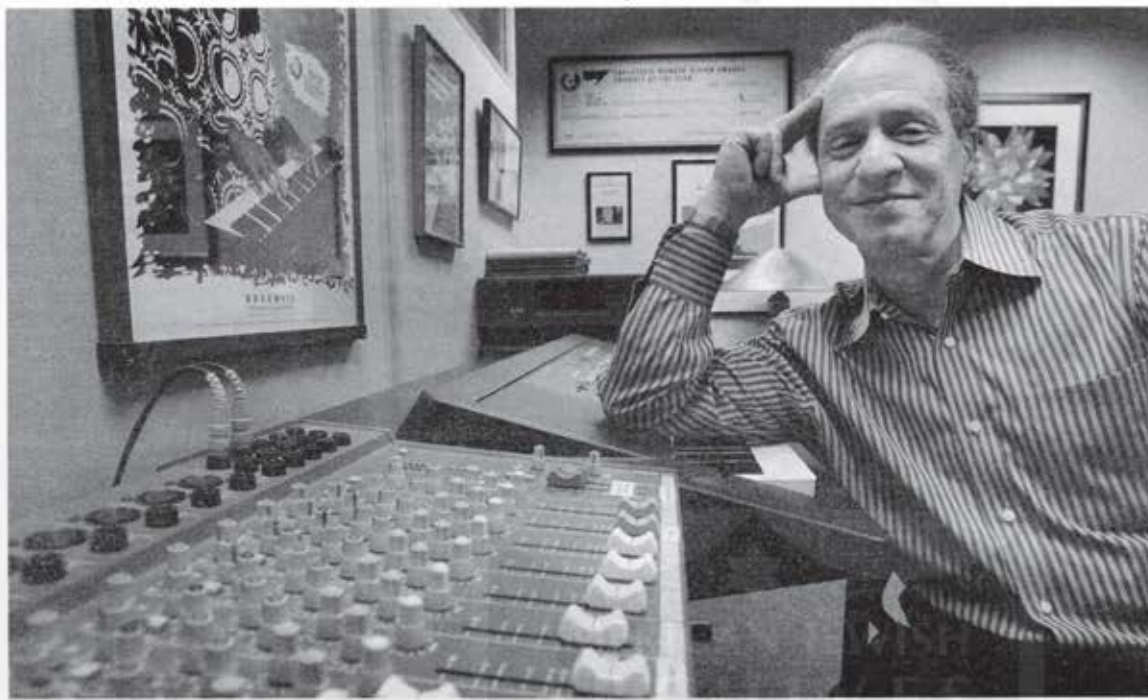
I thank you, my remarkable colleagues, for the lessons you have taught me, during these years, about resilience and renewal. I have seen you transcend defeat and go on; I have seen you encourage callousness without ever losing your own compassion; I have seen you sustain the discipline of study to keep from running dry.

I marvel at the hours of patient and persistent effort you put most of it behind the scenes and unacknowledged, to pursue your tasks and build sacred communities. I honor you for the devotion you continue to bring to repetitive tasks so that they never become routine, and for the humor that keeps you balanced and sane.

I am proud to be among you and to share the only title I have ever wanted to bear: a teacher and lover of Torah. Together may we survive and thrive, finding reasons to celebrate the good that we are able to do for our people. May we soar, now and then, and find joy and beauty in the work we love.

As my term as president comes to an end, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the privilege of serving our Conference, and welcome with great respect and affection my wonderful successor, Ha Danziger.

Going to great lengths to cheat death! Inventor treads softly in his quest to live forever



Author and inventor Ray Kurzweil take 250 supplements each day and drinks plenty of alkaline water and green tea so he will be around to witness human immortality.

BY JAY LINDSAY

WELLESLEY, Mass. (AP) — Ray Kurzweil doesn't tailgate. A man who plans to live forever doesn't take chances with his health on the highway, or anywhere else.

As part of his daily routine, Kurzweil ingests 250 supplements, eight to 10 glasses of alkaline water and 10 cups of green tea. He also periodically tracks 40 to 50 fitness indicators, down to his "tactile sensitivity." Adjustments are made as needed.

"I do actually fine-tune my programming," he said.

The inventor and computer scientist is serious about his health because, if it fails him, he might not live long enough to see humanity achieve immortality, a seismic development he predicts in his new book is no more than 20 years away.

It's a blink of an eye in history, but long enough for the 56-year-old Kurzweil to pay close heed to his fitness. He urges others to do the same in *Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever*.

The book is partly a health guide so people can live to benefit from a coming explosion in technology he predicts will make infinite life spans possible.

Immortality would leave little standing in current society, in which the inevitability of death is foundational to everything from

religion to retirement planning. The planet's natural resources would be greatly stressed, and the social order shaken.

Kurzweil writes of millions of blood cell-sized robots, which he calls "nanobots," that will keep us forever young by swarming through the body, repairing bones, muscles, arteries and brain cells. Improvements to our genetic coding will be downloaded via the Internet. We won't even need a heart.

The claims are fantastic, but Kurzweil is no crank. He's a recipient of the \$500,000 Lerner-MIT prize, which is billed as a sort of Academy Award for inventors, and he won the 1999 National Medal of Technology Award. He has written on the emergence of intelligent machines in publications ranging from *Wired* to *Time* magazine. *The Christian Science Monitor* has called him a "modern Edison." He was inducted into the Inventors Hall of Fame in 2002. Perhaps the MIT graduate's most famous invention is the first reading machine for the blind that could read any typeface.

During a recent interview in his company offices, Kurzweil sipped green tea and spoke of humanity's coming immortality as if it's as good as done. He sees human intelligence not only conquering its biological limits, including death, but also completely mastering the natural world.

"In my view, we are not another animal, subject to nature's whim," he said.

Critics say Kurzweil's predictions of immortality are wild fantasies based on unjustifiable leaps from current technology.

"I'm not calling Ray a quack, but I am calling his message about immortality in line with the claims of other quacks that are out there," said Thomas Perls, a Boston University aging specialist who studies the genetics of centenarians.

Sherwin Nuland, a bioethics professor at Yale University's School of Medicine, calls Kurzweil a "genius," but also says he's a product of a narcissistic age when brilliant people are becoming obsessed with their longevity.

"They've forgotten they're acting on the basic biological fear of death and extinction, and it distorts their rational approach to the human condition," Nuland said.

Kurzweil says his critics often fail to appreciate the exponential nature of technological advance, with knowledge doubling year by year so that amazing progress occurs in short periods.

His predictions, Kurzweil said, are based on carefully constructed scientific models that have proven accurate. For instance, in his 1990 book, *The Age of Intelligent Machines*, Kurzweil predicted the development of a worldwide computer network and of a computer that could beat a chess champion.

"It's not just guesses," he said. "There's a methodology to this." Kurzweil has been thinking big

ever since he was little. At age 8, he developed a miniature theater in which a robotic device moved the scenery. By 16, the New York City native built his own computer and programmed it to compose original melodies.

His interest in health developed out of concern about his own future. Kurzweil's grandfather and father suffered from heart disease, his father dying when Kurzweil was 22. Kurzweil was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes in his mid-30s.

After insulin treatments were ineffective, Kurzweil devised his own solution, including a drastic cut in fat consumption, allowing him to control his diabetes without insulin.

His rigorous health regimen is not excessive, just effective, he says, adding that his worst sickness in the last several years has been mild nasal congestion.

In the past decade, Kurzweil's interests in technology and health sciences have merged as scientists have discovered similarities between the disciplines.

"All the genes we have, the 20,000 to 30,000 genes, are little software programs," Kurzweil said.

In his latest book, Kurzweil defines what he calls his three bridges to immortality. The first bridge is the health regimen he describes with co-author Dr. Terry Grossman to keep people fit enough to cross the second bridge, a biotechnological revolution.

Kurzweil writes that humanity is on the verge of controlling how genes express themselves and ultimately changing the genes. With such technology, humanity could block disease-causing genes and introduce new ones that would slow or stop the aging process.

The third bridge is the nanotechnology and artificial intelligence revolution, which Kurzweil predicts will deliver the nanobots that work like repaving crews in our bloodstreams and brains. These intelligent machines will destroy disease, rebuild organs and obliterate known limits on human intelligence, he said.

Kurzweil said he believes new technology will emerge to meet increasing human needs. And he said society will be able to control the advances he predicts as long as it makes decisions openly and democratically, without excessive government interference.

But there are no guarantees, he added.

Meanwhile, Kurzweil refuses to concede the inevitability of his own death, even if science doesn't advance as quickly as he predicts.

"Death is a tragedy," a process of suffering that rids the world of its most tested, experienced members — people whose contributions to science and the arts could only multiply with agelessness, he said.

Kurzweil said he's no "cheerleader" for unlimited scientific progress and added he knows science can't answer questions about why eternal lives are worth living. That's left for philosophers and theologians, he said.

But to him, there's no question of huge advances in things that make life worth living, such as art, culture, music and science.

"Biological evolution passed the baton of progress to human cultural and technological development," he said.

Lee Silver, a Princeton biologist, said he'd love to believe in the future as Kurzweil sees it, but the problem is humans are involved.

The instinct to preserve individuality, and to gain advantage for yourself and your children, would survive any breakthrough into biological immortality — which Silver doesn't think is possible. The gap between the haves and have-nots would widen and Kurzweil's vision of a united humanity would become ever more elusive, he said.

"I think it would require a change in human nature," Silver said, "and I don't think people want to do that." ❖

Jay Lindsay is an Associated Press writer.

A RAY OF LIGHT FROM THE KADDISH PRAYER

by Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman

Yizkor 2005

At all other times
~~Judaism is anything but a morbid religion.~~ Most of our prayers
 and observances celebrate life and God as Creator. This memorial
 hour of Yizkor is exceptional with its focus on the end of life.

As
~~While~~ we remember ~~our~~ dear ones who have died, death is very much
 on our minds, their death and *ours* *ever* *should* ~~our death.~~

Most people resist thinking about death. Some are obsessed by it. Sigmund Freud confessed to his friend Ernest Jones that he thought of death daily and that he hated to grow old. Others are enraged, like Dylan Thomas who one year before his death at the age of 39, wrote

Do not go gentle into that good night,
 Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light

Edna St. Vincent Millay faced the idea of death with a ~~temper~~ *temper* outburst befitting an adolescent:

Withstanding Death till Life be gone,
 I shall treasure my breath, I shall linger on.
 I shall bolt my door with a bolt and a cable;
 I shall block my door with a bureau and a table;
 With all my might my door shall be barred.
 I shall put up a fight, I shall take it hard.
 With his hand on my mouth he shall drag me forth,
 Shrieking to the south and clutching to the north.

The majority of people, the young more so than the old, choose ways



Hilton

If Yizkor means to
us only remembrance of
dear ones, we miss
the most important point
(aspect) of Yizkor

of denial. Death is something that happens only to others.


In this hour, all of us, young and old, are prompted to come to terms with the unalterable fact that the human mortality rate is 100%.

Can we make the certainty of our mortality more acceptable?

What thought could help us tolerate the prospect of death?

Reform Judaism's standard prayer book, *The Gates of Prayer*, includes reflections on death prior to the mourner's kaddish. These are meant to comfort the grief stricken. With some reluctance I must share with you my personal aversion to these reflections. I find no comfort in them. Consider the opening sentence of one of these meditations:

“The contemplation of death should plant within the soul elevation and peace...”

On the contrary! The parent who is shattered by the death of a child, the grief-stricken spouse or the person thinking about his own death, experiences anything but an elevation of soul and peace. The contemplation of death, which most of us try to avoid with a passion, gives us discomfort mixed with anger, not soul elevation and peace. 

Likewise beside the point is an alternate reflection which draws a graphic analogy of life with a flickering candle:

“Life is finite” we are told...“like a candle it burns, then it fades and it is no more....yet we do not despair.”

Wrong again! The death of one we love or thoughts about our own death push us to the brink of despair.

The Bible reflects much more accurately the mentality of people facing up to death: With a mixture of hurt and anger the Psalmist challenges God:

“What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust praise you? Shall it declare your truth? (Ps. 30.10)

The Psalmist could not rationally justify death . Neither can we.
Why go through life with all its experiences, pleasures and pains ?
Why accumulate knowledge, even wisdom, only to vanish in
oblivion? Is the Creator a sadist, making us vulnerable to all kinds of
suffering before blowing out that flickering candle we call life?

The two contentious rabbinical academies of Hillel and Shammai
which were at odds on all issues, debated two and one half years
the question whether it is better to be born or not to be born.
This time they reached agreement. Considering all the afflictions in life, ~~not~~
they agreed that not to be born would be preferable.

If we wonder, why death, we should also ask, why life?
What is its meaning? For what purpose has life emerged in the universe?
A bereaved mourner, humbled by ignorance of why life and why death,
put up a tombstone for his beloved wife and had it inscribed:

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Now we reflect on the lives of those who are no more, and how we related to them. We see before our mind's eyes the images of a spouse, a parent, a son or daughter, a brother or sister, even special friends who were as close to us as kin. We remember the portion of our life we shared with them.

How we miss those with whom we felt so free to talk about everything. What, if you could, once more, have an hour with them? What would you say to them?. Is there anyone to whom you did not say often enough, "I love you"? Thinking it over, are you sorry for words that should never have been spoken? for things you should never have done?

A legend tells us that God sent one of his angels to mingle among human kind and bring back the most precious thing he could find. The angel returned with a tiny little bottle. God asked, what makes this so precious? The angel replied: "I saw a man sobbing with regret over something he should have done or failed to do, and I caught some of his tears in this bottle. God approved of the tears of regret as something most precious.

Tears of regret wash away whatever poisons our relationship; they cleanse us of guilt and help us form a new self-image and a new bond even with those who have gone from this life.

Is death the ultimate separation, or, will our death be the portal of reunion with those who went before us?

~~Death is on our minds in this hour.~~ Most people resist thinking about death. Some are obsessed by it. Sigmund Freud confessed to his friend Ernest Jones that he thought of death daily and that he hated to grow old.

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See Loneliness Prayer

in d.p. 22 - 1945 describes
the lonely woman
~~to sense God as Companion we need to~~
~~become familiar with~~ in a piece
of regular contact!



Never Alone

*This collection of thoughts and prayers
is dedicated to all our friends.*

*Your generosity has filled the lives of
many people with hope, consolation and
the chance for a better life.*

*May this book help to remind you
that you are never alone.*



*Compiled
and edited by
Sara Tarascio*

*Illustrated
by
Marion L. Quimby*

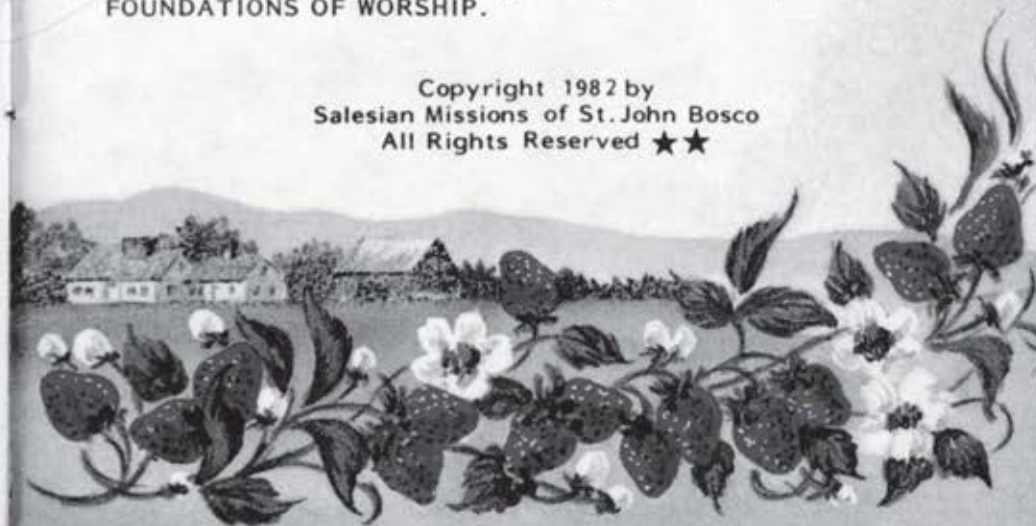
Never Alone

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We wish to thank the authors whose work has contributed to this booklet and whom we were unable to contact.

"Life's Fulfillment" by Ralph Spaulding Cushman reprinted from FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP.

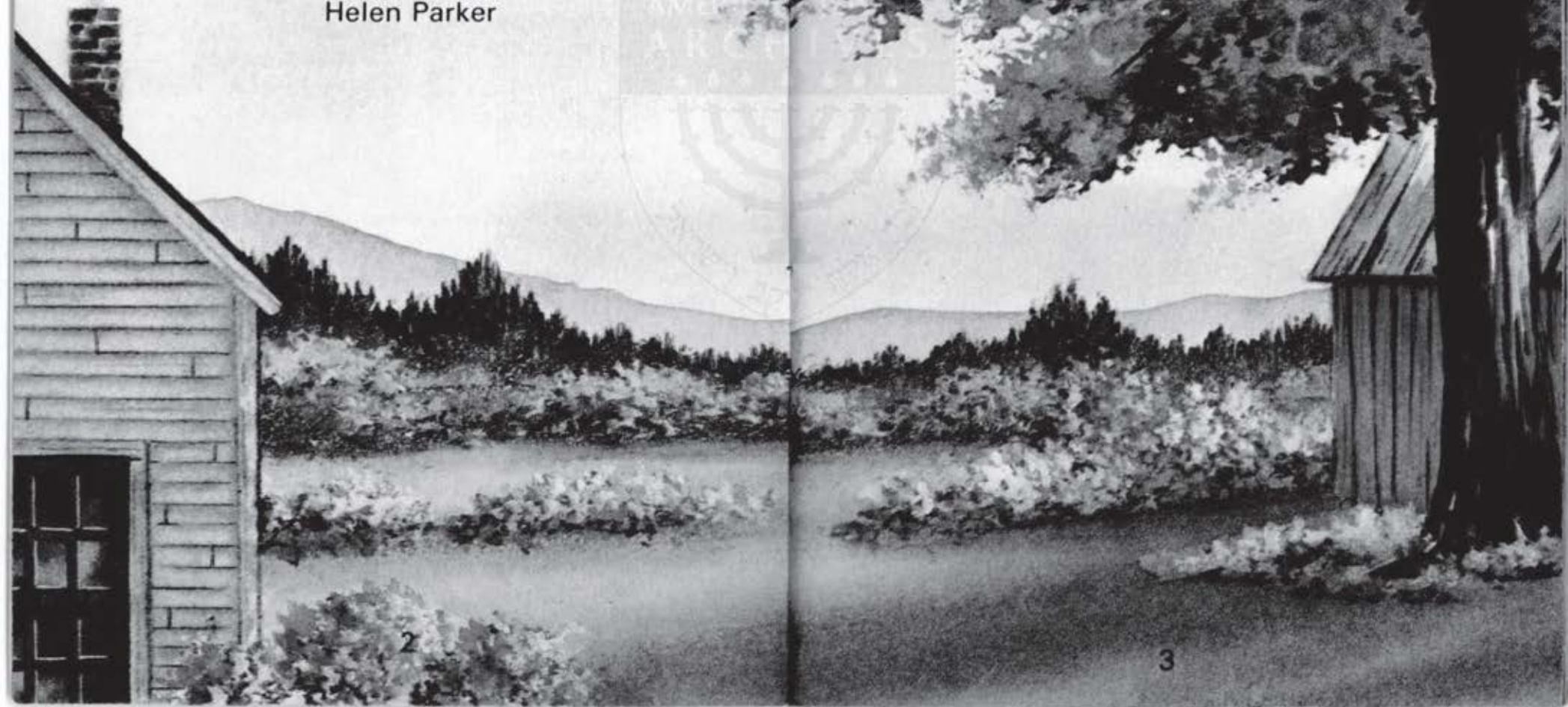
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Never Alone

Sometimes, oh Lord, when I cannot pray,
I sit very still with nothing to say.
But never-the-less, I know you are there;
I whisper your name 'cause I know you care.
You know that I'm troubled with things on my mind,
And you know I've been weak, so often unkind,
But your spirit is with me,
 right here in this home;
And I know that I never am walking alone.

Helen Parker





Life's Fulfillment

Of all the prizes
That earth can give
 This is the best;
To find Thee, Lord,
A living Presence near
 And in Thee rest!

Friends, fortune, fame
Or what might come to me—
I count all loss
If I find not
Companionship
 With thee!

Ralph Spaulding Cushman

God Promised

God did not tell me,
Only roses would grow.
That I'd find no sorrow,
On the path I must go.

But He promised to be there,
Each step of the way,
Providing a way to escape,
The temptations each day.

His grace all sufficient,
Daily to see me through.
He'd help me to conquer,
And be victorious too.

Dottlee Dugan Reid


Song of a Good Samaritan

I cannot sail across the seas
to work with people there—
but, still, I know it's up to me
to give and gladly share.

I may not follow jungle paths
or teach in distant lands—
but, still, there are some people here
who need my loving hands.

I'll never chant by calm lagoons
beneath a full-moon sky—
but, still, I shall fulfill my goal
if I, before I die,
forget to walk horizon's edge
in seeking destiny
and help the person I can see
who is in front of me.

Eugene G.E. Botelho



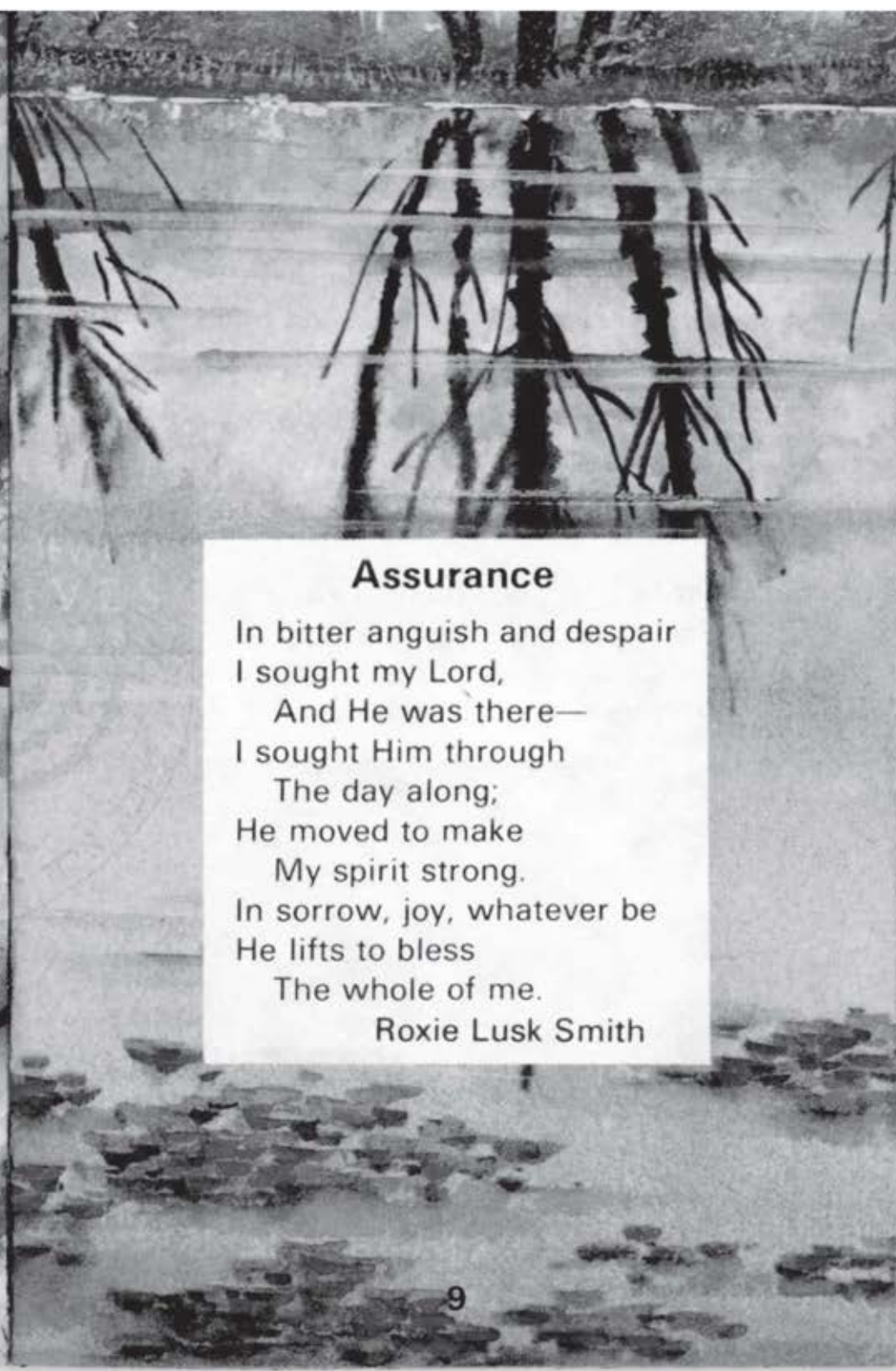
Lord Help Me Today

Lord help me today,
To give a cheery smile;
Lord help me today,
To go the second mile;
Lord help me today,
Not to seek worldly fame;
Lord help me today,
To praise Thy holy name.

Lord help me today,
To be a shining light;
Lord help me today,
To know the wrong
from right;

Lord help me today,
In each and every way.
Lord help me today,
To seek you when I pray.

Ronald A. Bond



Assurance

In bitter anguish and despair
I sought my Lord,
And He was there—
I sought Him through
The day along;
He moved to make
My spirit strong.
In sorrow, joy, whatever be
He lifts to bless
The whole of me.

Roxie Lusk Smith

Rest Thou My Mind

Rest Thou my mind in Thee, Dear Lord;
Give to me sweet repose;
Take weary flesh and troubled mind;
In peace my eyelids close.

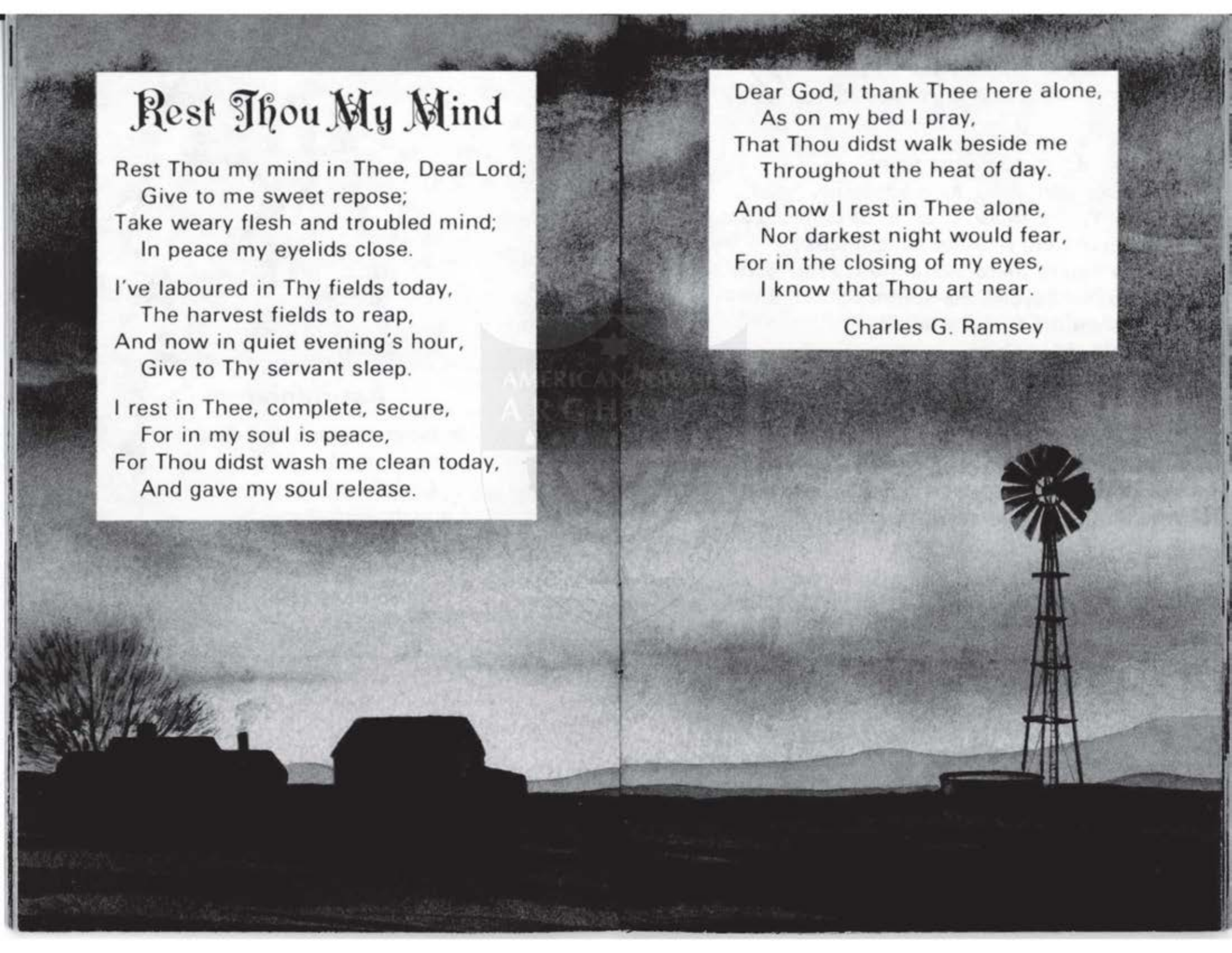
I've laboured in Thy fields today,
The harvest fields to reap,
And now in quiet evening's hour,
Give to Thy servant sleep.

I rest in Thee, complete, secure,
For in my soul is peace,
For Thou didst wash me clean today,
And gave my soul release.

Dear God, I thank Thee here alone,
As on my bed I pray,
That Thou didst walk beside me
Throughout the heat of day.

And now I rest in Thee alone,
Nor darkest night would fear,
For in the closing of my eyes,
I know that Thou art near.

Charles G. Ramsey



I Know You're There

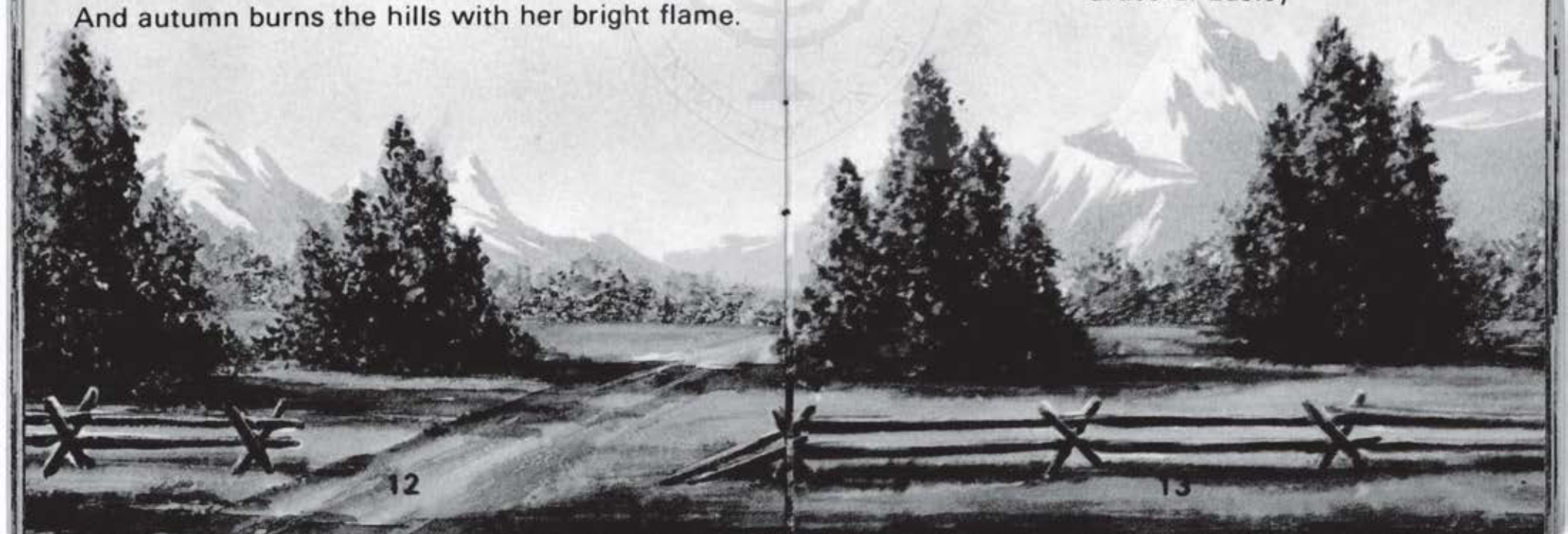
I know You're there
when dawn begins to paint
The skies with color high above my head.
I know You're there when birds begin to sing
In spite of rain, a happy song instead.
I know You're there along the narrow path
That winds beyond the summit of a hill.
And when the twilight falls,
'neath stars above,
Within the silence I have found You still.

I know You're there
throughout the busy hours
I scarce have time to whisper Your sweet Name,
When snowflakes turn the winter world to white,
And autumn burns the hills with her bright flame.

I know You're there
when spring peeps through the ground,
And bluebells softly ripple in the wind,
When summer comes and dappled shadows lend
A quiet peace beyond the river's bend.

I know You're there
beyond the slightest doubt,
So many times I've felt Your presence when
Doubt blocked the way or when a bridge was out,
And once again You helped me on again.
And through the years when it may well appear
I walk alone and there are none to care,
Dear Lord, what breathless joy to turn around,
... And find You there!

Grace E. Easley



God's Love

God is always with me
I have no need for words
For even in the stillness
His love is ever heard.

His warming presence fills me
So deep within my soul
And fills my heart with gladness
His love does make me whole.

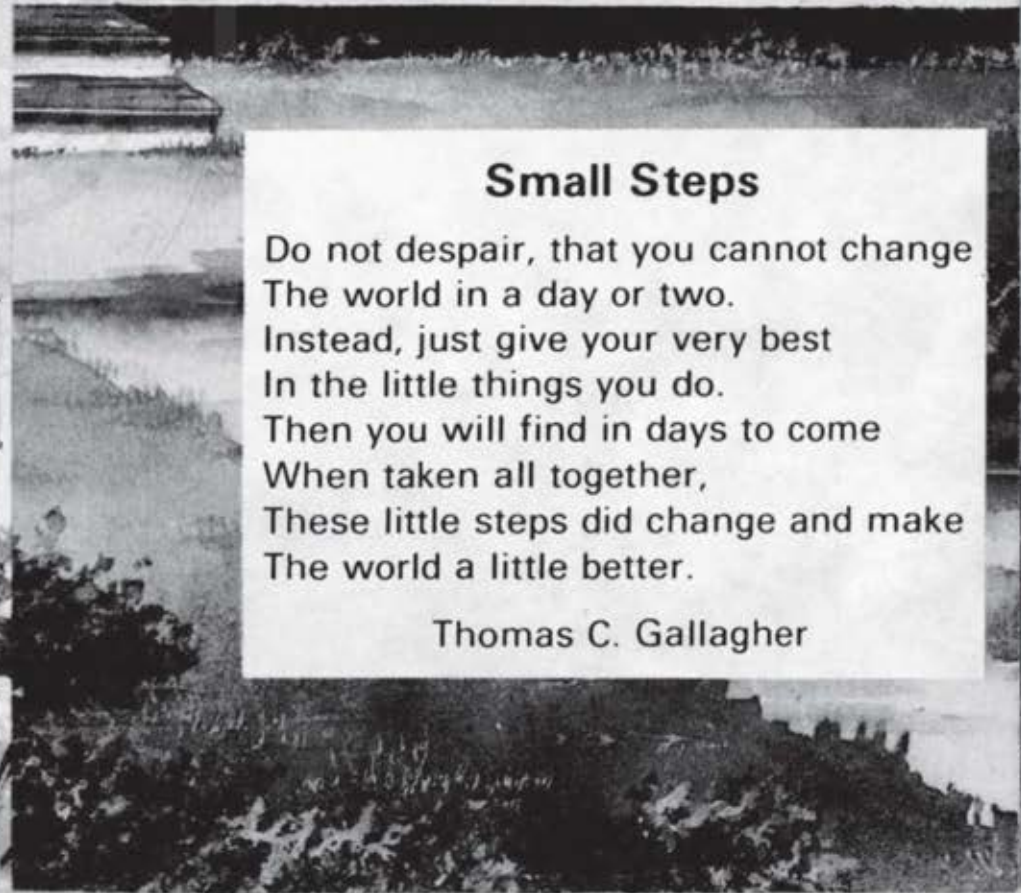
Dolores Karides

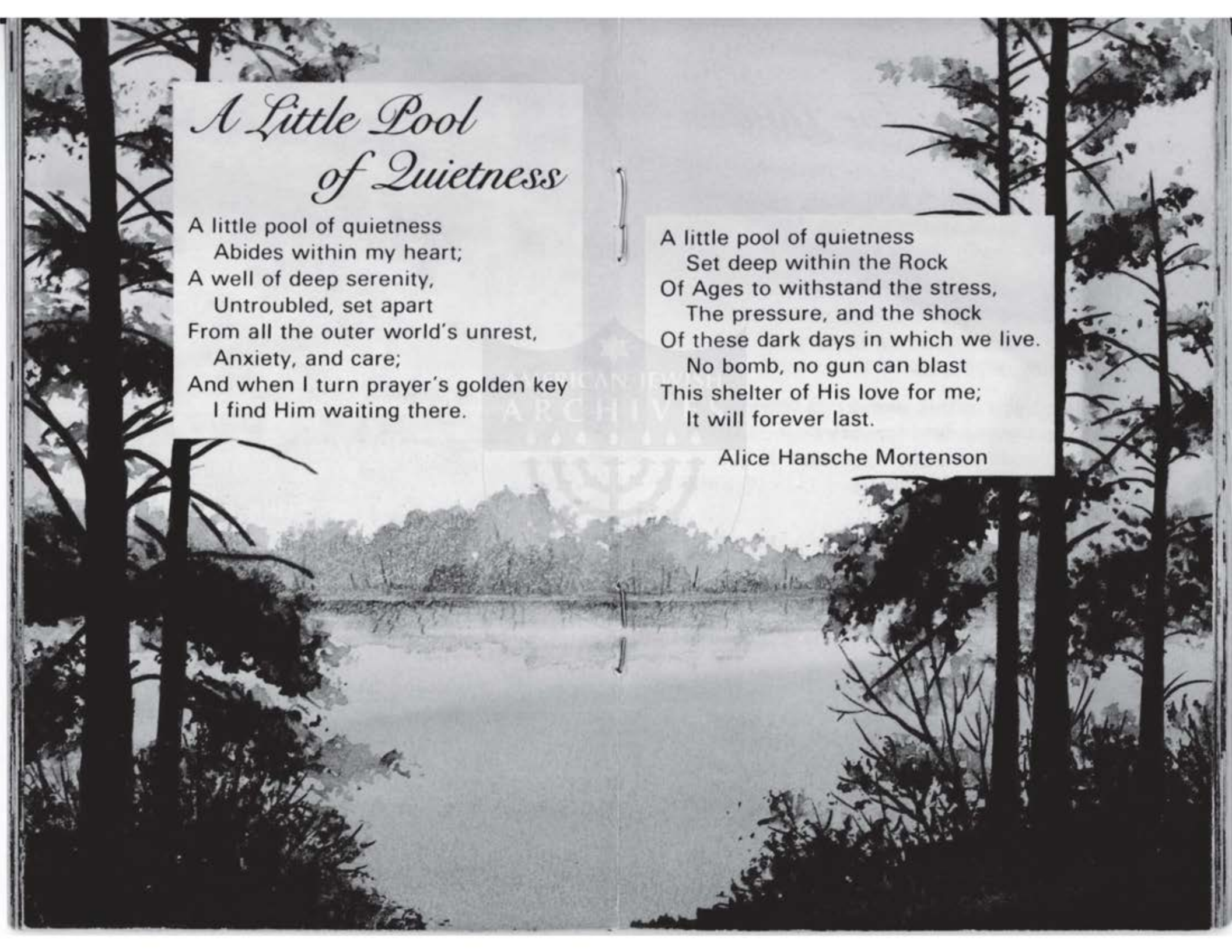


Small Steps

Do not despair, that you cannot change
The world in a day or two.
Instead, just give your very best
In the little things you do.
Then you will find in days to come
When taken all together,
These little steps did change and make
The world a little better.

Thomas C. Gallagher





*A Little Pool
of Quietness*

A little pool of quietness
Abides within my heart;
A well of deep serenity,
Untroubled, set apart
From all the outer world's unrest,
Anxiety, and care;
And when I turn prayer's golden key
I find Him waiting there.

A little pool of quietness
Set deep within the Rock
Of Ages to withstand the stress,
The pressure, and the shock
Of these dark days in which we live.
No bomb, no gun can blast
This shelter of His love for me;
It will forever last.

Alice Hansche Mortenson

A Plan For You

Who walks with Christ need never fear,
For His strong arm is ever near;
He's there to lift you when you fall,
And He listens for each loved one's call.

Who can doubt His tender care,
For can't you feel His presence there?
The love that suffered on the cross,
Will minimize your every loss.

He placed you in this wondrous world,
Trees, and grass, and flowers dew-pearled,
And He Who heeds the sparrow's fall,
Will not abandon you at all.

His highest creation, you, a man,
Are at the center of His plan;
He's watched mankind for a million years,
Held his hand, and dried his tears.

He gives you joy for every pain,
And sends the sunshine after rain;
He died so you could conquer sin,
With a plan for Eternal Life to win.

If you sang His praise for a million years,
And shed a million grateful tears,
The debt you owe could not be paid,
He only asks you walk with Him—unafraid!

W.R. Goodman

Confession

Sometimes I come to You in tears
My heart so full of pain,
Discouraged and disheartened
You pick me up again.

Sometimes I come to You in want,
I grumble and complain
And then You give just what I need
And pick me up again.

Sometimes I come to You in fear,
I fight my dread in vain
I cannot do it on my own—
You pick me up again.

Sometimes I come to You in thanks
And then it's very plain
That anytime I come to You
You'll pick me up again.

I always come to You in love,
Whether in loss or gain
You show me sweet compassion
And pick me up again.

Gretta Viney



Who Lives Alone

"She lives alone" I heard him say,
Who sadly cast a glance my way,
"It must be hard, when day is done,
To set the table just for one.
What does she do when twilight falls,
All alone within those walls?
It is a shame she's missing out,
On what the world is all about."

I paused a moment in surprise,
Then turned and gazed into his eyes,
And felt a pang of sympathy,
For those who LOOK but do not SEE.
Within each soul God puts a spark
Of purest hope that lights the dark,
And in each life however small,
The faith to muddle through it all.

Within each heart He does abide,
However forms and features hide
The patient strength His hands bestow,
Upon us mortals here below.
Who lives alone should never be
The object of one's sympathy,
For moments worth their weight in gold,
Are often ours to have and hold.

To reach the door and turn the key,
And know He's waiting there for me,
With time for thought and time for prayer,
How light the burdens that I bear.
And though I set a place for one,
He's with me 'til the meal is done,
And evermore and constantly,
I have the Lord for company.

Grace E. Easley



Polite Prayer

The polite part
of speaking
with God
is to be still
long enough
to listen.

Edward Gloeggler



Use Me Lord

Lord, give me courage to be true
To You in all I say and do.
Give me your love to keep me sweet
To everyone I chance to meet.
Give me your power to keep me strong.
Grant me your presence all day long.
Give me the Faith that all may see
How very real you are to me.
Give me wisdom to choose the best.
Help me perform each task with zest.
Give me vision to see your plan
Use me, Lord, wherever you can.

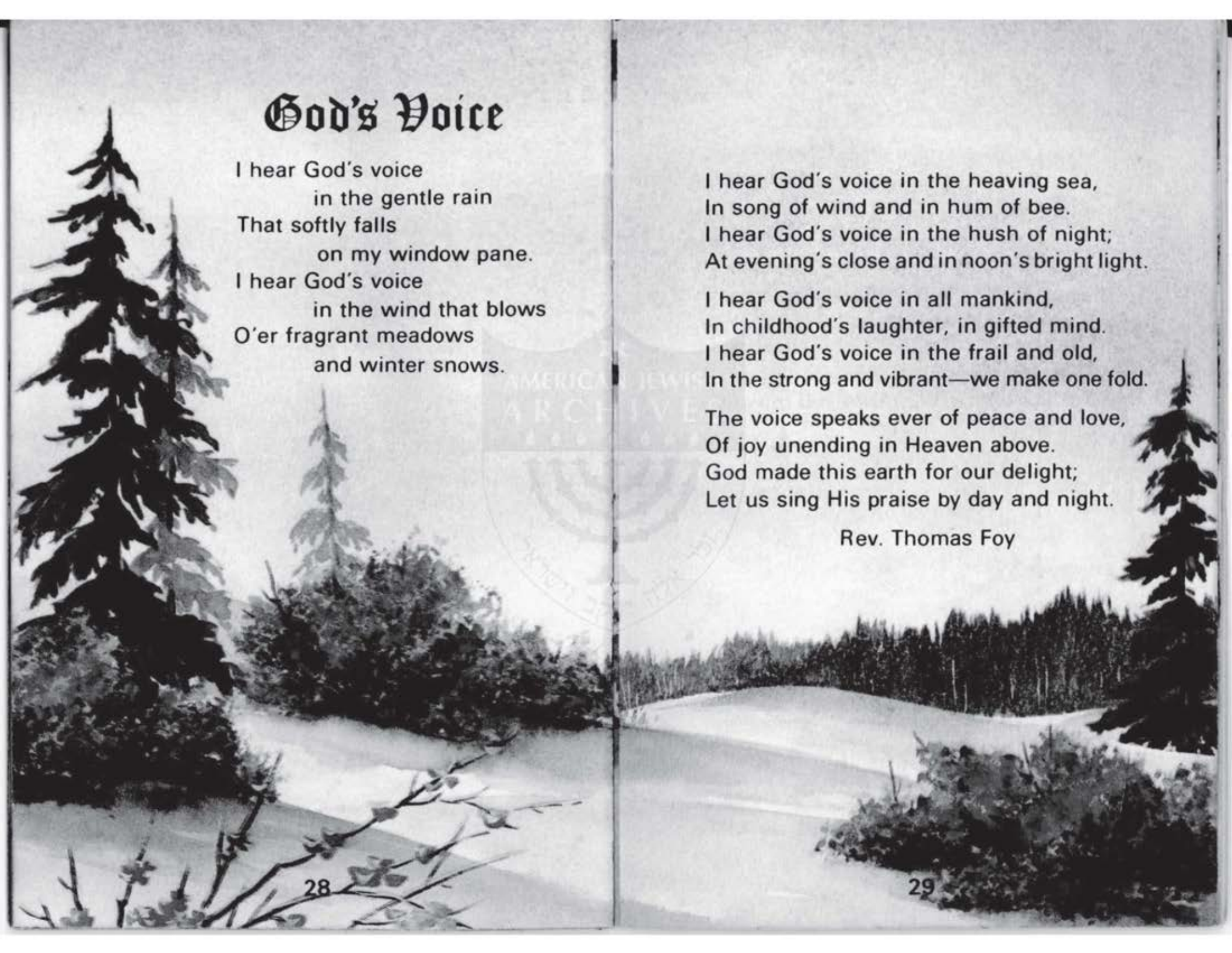
Day by Day

Day by day my Shepherd walks beside me;
Day by day I know His tender care.
And I know whatever shall betide me,
Christ my Lord goes with me ev'rywhere.

Midst life's storms and through deepest valley,
His abiding Presence goes before.
I'm assured whatever shall befall me,
His rich grace my courage shall restore.

Day by day my Saviour's love surrounds me,
Day by day communion sweet is mine.
And darkest night shall not confound me,
When I walk with Christ my Lord divine.

Kathryn T. Bowsher



God's Voice

I hear God's voice
in the gentle rain
That softly falls
on my window pane.
I hear God's voice
in the wind that blows
O'er fragrant meadows
and winter snows.

I hear God's voice in the heaving sea,
In song of wind and in hum of bee.
I hear God's voice in the hush of night;
At evening's close and in noon's bright light.

I hear God's voice in all mankind,
In childhood's laughter, in gifted mind.
I hear God's voice in the frail and old,
In the strong and vibrant—we make one fold.

The voice speaks ever of peace and love,
Of joy unending in Heaven above.
God made this earth for our delight;
Let us sing His praise by day and night.

Rev. Thomas Foy

Reaching Out

Reach out to Him,
the time for love is now,
Nobody knows you better than He does.
He always understands, no matter what,
He's ready to forgive whatever was.
Reach out to Him, nor ever be afraid,
Walk slowly 'lest you miss Him
in your haste,
Make Him a part of everything you do,
For life was never given you to waste.

Reach out to Him, and never be alone,
Just as the sunlight filters
through the trees,
So shines His love throughout
the darkest hours,
Sustaining us through moments
such as these.
It is in trusting Him above all else,
We come to know what life is all about,
And find a God who takes within His own,
... The hands we are forever reaching out.

By Grace E. Easley

Treasures

Rich, rich indeed, am I this morn,
For hope has come to me.
No more is mine a restless soul,
With hope it could not be.

Rich, rich indeed, am I today,
For faith has come to me.
No more I walk with downcast eyes,
Instead, the Light I see.

Rich, rich indeed, am I tonight,
His Love has come to me.
No more the ache of a lonely heart,
For lo! its Mate is Thee!

Rich, rich, forever rich am I,
For All has come to me.
I would not ask another boon,
Mine is Eternity!

Esther Nilsson

SALESIANS ARE WORKING IN: ALGERIA ANDORRA
ANGOLA ARGENTINA AUSTRALIA AUSTRIA BAHAMAS
BELGIUM BENIN BHUTAN BURMA BOLIVIA BRAZIL
BURUNDI CAMEROON CANADA CANARY ISLANDS

The Salesians were founded
in 1856 by John Bosco to care
for poor and needy teenagers.

Today there are 40,000
Salesian Priests, Brothers and
Sisters working in 96 countries
around the world, continuing
the work of their founder.

They work in 3,104 Schools,
220 Orphanages, 864 Nurseries
and 219 Hospitals and Clinics.

John Bosco based his system
of education on reason, religion
and kindness.



POLAND PORTUGAL PUERTO RICO RWANDA SAMOA SCOTLAND SENEGAL
SOUTH AFRICA SOUTH KOREA SOUTH VIETNAM SPAIN SRI LANKA SUDAN
SWEDEN SWITZERLAND SYRIA SWAZILAND TAIWAN TIMOR TUNISIA TURKEY
UGANDA URUGUAY U.S.A. VATICAN CITY VENEZUELA YUGOSLAVIA ZAIRE

LEBANON LIBERIA
ISRAEL ITALY IVORY COAST JAPAN
KENYA LITHUANIA LUXEMBURG MALTA
LESOTHO MACAO MADAGASCAR MEXICO
MADEIRA ISLANDS MOROCCO MOZAMBIQUE
IRAN PAPUA NEW GUINEA PARAGUAY PANAMA
NETHERLANDS NICARAGUA PERU PHILIPPINES

CAPE VERDE CHILE CHINA COLOMBIA CONGO COSTA RICA CUBA CURAÇAO
CZECHOSLOVAKIA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ECUADOR EGYPT EL SALVADOR
ENGLAND EQUATORIAL GUINEA ETHIOPIA FRANCE GABON GUATEMALA
GERMANY HAITI HONDURAS HONG KONG HUNGARY INDIA IRELAND

Loneliness

Loneliness may visit,
but it never can possess,
a heart where God's love lingers
and where his spirit rests.

Dianne W. Brown



Salesian Missions
2 Lefevres Lane
New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801

Some enjoy their suffering

Oscar Levant: "I don't drink,

I don't like it, (It makes me feel good."

March 25/06 "HOT NEWS"
Newspaper report

Danish government announced that the name
of "Jesus" has been added to the list of
authorized names

Yzker 06

What Death Teaches us About Life

① Death is the ultimate proof that we are subject to laws or powers beyond our control

Our Limited Control — apply to various areas and relationships

② Teach us to count our time — i.e. time is running out — you can't put off what must be done

③ In view of the inevitable limit to our life time we must distinguish between important & unimportant

Don't waste time on trivialities

Life is too short to be little

Texts: Eccles. Better go to house of mourning than to that of feasting

The chaotic World Condition - Hemingway's comment
Frustration about loss of meaning

Torrey's story of boy
standing in line for movie

" I like to be with people "



There is a mystery in human hearts
And though we be encircled by a host
Of those who love us well and are beloved,
To every one of us, from time to time,
There comes a sense of utter loneliness

(Anonymous)

File Akhenaten
Illustrations

DEPERSONALIZATION
Reduction to Numbers

Mandel I p. 144 Includes

→ they haven't numbers
they've got names!

p 311 - Seroyan's story about Loubliner

See Loubliner p. 73/

Kennedy p 213 - Rupert Brooke paid a boy \$ wage
for page to him

REDUCTION OF DESIRE, QUIKKEST WAY
to Contentment

Contentment consists not in adding more fuel,
but in taking away some fire;
Not in multiplying of wealth
but in subtracting men's desires

Thomas Fuller

A distinguished American Magazine features annually a series of ^{features} articles ~~by distinguished authors~~ under the title: How My Mind Has Changed ^{significant changes in their} in these ^{in these} ~~articles~~ ^{articles}. Besides a philosophy of all faiths & knowledge ~~from~~ ^{from} viewpoints & otherwise.

If I should ever have the privilege of contrib. ~~an article~~ to this series I would have to acknowledge a major change ^{in my estimate of} ~~in my~~ scale of priorities with respect to the importance of piracy.

As a young man of college age in ~~the~~ ^{put a high premium on} the first few years of unswayed life I ~~highly prized~~ ^{highly prized} piracy. I revelled in fantasies of personal freedom, having ~~my own~~ ^{my own} ~~home~~ ^{apartment} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ independent means ~~my own~~ ^{my own} schedule. ~~I would~~ ^{I remember} ~~even~~ ^{even} ~~resulting~~ ^{resulting} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~what~~ ^{what}

visits ~~made~~ ^{made} by family ^{members} and family reunions as a kind of intrusion. ^{in my personal life} and usually I was in a hurry to leave such functions ^{as soon as possible}. Crowds repelled me. Including those gathered for religious purposes. ~~Relig.~~ ^{Relig.} in its group elevations, I thought was superficial ~~compared~~ ^{compared} to the more private & personal ^{side} of the religious experience.

However, there are ~~some~~ ^{quite a few} who enjoy themselves

Most people resent the commercials on TV. ~~to belong to that small minority of~~
~~very occasional viewers who prefer~~ ^{and I am among the} ~~some of the commercials to~~ ^{dislike} ~~the~~ ^{most} ~~the~~ ^{on TV}
~~that on the screen~~ ^{take up} ~~the~~ ^{supra} Bell Telephone's Home Commercial
Reach Out & Touch Someone. ~~It never fails to capture my attention & make me~~
~~of it just~~ ~~It is~~ ~~the~~ ~~variety~~ ~~but~~ ~~enough~~

Its various situations illustrate ~~only~~ ~~one~~ ~~message~~
The joy of ~~communication~~. Wherever I hear the people
Reach out

I ~~have to~~ ~~feel~~ ~~that~~ ~~this~~ ~~is~~ feel a tug
at my heart. I think of people I should be in touch with. I remember
~~relationships~~ ~~stimulated~~ ~~or~~ ~~renewed~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~high~~ ~~mobility~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~modern~~ ~~life~~ ~~style~~ ~~of~~ ~~neglecting~~ ~~a~~ ~~family~~ ~~life~~
In plain words, ~~the~~ ~~problem~~ ~~is~~ ~~our~~ ~~separating~~ ~~ourselves~~ ~~from~~ ~~each~~ ~~other~~
to a real problem & a real need - ~~the~~ ~~need~~ ~~to~~ ~~reconnect~~.
to keep in touch ~~accentuated~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~extreme~~ ~~mobility~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~modern~~ ~~life~~ ~~style~~ ~~of~~ ~~neglecting~~ ~~a~~ ~~family~~ ~~life~~

The music of Posh H&S ~~is~~ ~~in~~ ~~large~~ ~~measure~~ ~~the~~ ~~joy~~ ~~of~~ ~~reunion~~ &
~~the~~ ~~theoretical~~ ~~concepts~~ ~~underlying~~ ~~the~~ ~~music~~ ~~of~~ ~~Posh~~ ~~H&S~~ ~~is~~ ~~in~~ ~~large~~ ~~measure~~ ~~the~~ ~~joy~~ ~~of~~ ~~reunion~~ &
Some of the concepts are more peripheral - ~~Central~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~music~~ ~~of~~ ~~Posh~~ ~~H&S~~ ~~is~~ ~~in~~ ~~large~~ ~~measure~~ ~~the~~ ~~joy~~ ~~of~~ ~~reunion~~ &
The Posh H&S piece is ~~reminiscent~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~constant~~ ~~displacement~~ ~~of~~ ~~families~~ ~~as~~ ~~they~~ ~~keep~~ ~~moving~~ ~~and~~ ~~uprooting~~ ~~themselves~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~original~~ ~~family~~ ~~unit~~ ~~is~~ ~~being~~ ~~lost~~ ~~by~~ ~~the~~ ~~process~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~modern~~ ~~life~~ ~~style~~ ~~of~~ ~~neglecting~~ ~~a~~ ~~family~~ ~~life~~

~~Another meeting~~

~~the time~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~said~~ ~~to~~ ~~transfer~~ 3
Signals after ~~the~~ ~~assembly~~ of the people ~~to~~ ~~begin~~.

In this light those who prefer to sit in their own homes & read
the prayer books ^{by themselves} in the privacy of their homes ~~rather than~~
are missing the most important part of this ~~helping~~ ~~to~~ ~~observe~~ - which

is to ~~make~~ make yourself part of your people to reconstitute the church
people as a ~~single~~ ~~community~~. ~~I have~~ ~~actually~~ ~~changed~~ ~~my~~ ~~mind~~
~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~relative~~ ~~importance~~ ~~of~~ ~~community~~ ~~feeling~~ ~~experience~~ ~~and~~
~~recognize~~ that

What we need ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~individuals~~ ~~or~~ ~~individuals~~, what America needs and
what we need ~~is~~ ~~more~~ ~~community~~ and ~~not~~ ~~more~~
~~privacy~~.

^{Steven Spielberg's} ^{the film}
This summer E.T. swept the nation ~~with~~ like a giant tidal wave ~~to~~ ~~its~~ ~~first~~
~~month~~ ~~alone~~ ~~this~~ ~~movie~~ ~~about~~ ~~an~~ ~~alien~~ ^{viz. her} and his relationship with a young boy, sold in its first
month alone \$107 millions worth of tickets ~~and~~ ~~it~~ ~~has~~ ~~well~~ ~~become~~ ~~the~~ ~~box~~ ~~office~~ ~~hit~~ ~~of~~ ~~all~~ ~~time~~. ~~Young~~ ~~and~~ ~~old~~
have come out of movie theatres wiping their tears ^(Record by Bonnie Raitt) ^{and} ^{little}. It is their ~~space~~ ~~creature's~~ ~~pathetic~~ ~~wish~~ ~~of~~
to "phone home" that makes people reach for their handkerchiefs. When this Extraterrestrial (2)
crosses their hearts, he crosses them for everyone who feels ~~that~~ a sense of loss ^{uprooted} ~~or~~ ~~remoteness~~ ~~or~~
~~separation~~.

Left behind by an exploring space craft from another star, the ~~little~~ ^{abandoned} little E.T. is befriended
by a child, Elliot, whose parents recent separation - the father having ~~moved~~ ~~out~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~house~~ left the

child with a certain sense of abandonment. Loneliness prompts ^{each} the human child and ~~the~~ E.T. to reach out to one another in mutual protection.

Though worlds apart, ^{both E.T. & the} they learn to communicate. ~~Because~~ ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{at} ~~the~~ ^{the} heart is universal.

The ache of the lonely heart — who is immune to it?

There's not a child nor ^{an} adult who doesn't easily identify with E.T.'s sense of strangeness.

As Ellen Goodman puts it. "He is the most articulate part of us that learns the one basic word of our emot. vocab. : "Home". The reason for the movie's enormous appeal is clear!

~~Because the movie speaks to~~ ^{It} ~~a universal~~ ^{is} need to belong, ~~it hits home.~~

It deals with the most widely shared problem of our society — the problem of loneliness.

Most people ^{still} think of loneliness as ^{an abnormality} ~~response to an abnormal condition~~ ^{isn't it} the special burden of the bereaved ~~city bereaved~~ ~~or divorced or single person?~~ ^{Suppose you don't fall into this} ~~group~~ ^{or you may} ~~they be~~ ^{from that category} ~~from that category~~ ^{from that category}

~~is inclined to think~~ ~~of loneliness as~~ ~~someone else's~~ problem!

Yet ~~there is~~ ^{it's} deeper ~~subsurface~~ level of feeling there is a loneliness unrelated ^{to family} to status such as marriage ~~or family~~. There is the loneliness of the well married, the loneliness of the child who has both parents, there is even loneliness in the midst of a crowd. It is the loneliness of the heart, a sense of not being understood, of perhaps never having been ^{possibly, fully} understood by anyone ~~severely~~.

(*) But I should like to suggest to you that there is an even more profound sense of loneliness - ~~at~~ the deepest level of our consciousness - something that is part of our human condition - or call it predicament if you wish. Consider this: Is it possible that a person may be blessed with an understanding

and loving partner ~~and have the best~~ and still suffer spells of ~~profound~~ deep almost frightening loneliness? ^{Could it be that even} ~~Is it possible that~~ if you enjoy the best

possible communication with another person - there still remains ~~at~~ a feeling that a ~~large~~ part of yourself ~~is simply~~ ~~simply~~ cannot be communicated?

~~Have you encountered this~~ ~~ultimate gap between~~ ^{yourself and your deepest consciousness} ~~which cannot~~ ~~be bridged~~ ^{by any means of communication?} ~~It is the burden~~ ~~of our selfhood~~

Is this not the burden of our selfhood? ~~It is an irreparable~~ ~~state of isolation rooted in the knowledge~~ ^{Close your eyes for a moment and think, please, do:} ~~Don't you see that~~ ~~It is you against the universe~~ ~~standing alone~~ ^{by yourself} ~~in the whole world,~~ ~~simply~~ ~~you~~ ~~confused~~

Although we may have a clear & strong sense of belonging to family & people
— many of us lack a truly strong relationship with anyone — in terms
of full mutual disclosure and intimate communication. *

~~This is the loneliness of the human heart, a ache of the lonely
heart. It is the universal pain of the human being, conscious of his
individual separate existence, & being torn out of the ~~whole~~ larger
context of life and knowing all along that he cannot last very long by himself.~~

~~to this sense of cosmic ~~isolation~~~~
~~loneliness which no human compassion can relieve us — ~~at all~~~~

Achienne Rich alludes in her lines:

Two strangers, thrust for life upon a rock
May have at last the perfect home of folk
That language aches for, still
Two minds, two messages.

one in 2 while

one in 2 while

Sometimes I would succeed
and sometimes not.
~~at all~~

~~Sister ~~of~~ ~~my~~ ~~child~~ I'd pet into an argument with my ~~young~~ kid
I would practice on her all powers of persuasion
I tried by every ~~known~~ way to change her mind ~~she~~ ~~went~~ ~~on~~
I'd try to get off ~~dead~~ ~~center~~ ~~by~~ ~~keeping~~ ~~pressing~~ ~~it~~ ~~pressing~~ ~~her~~
to tell my ~~child~~ ~~and~~ ~~parent~~ ~~my~~ ~~strategy~~ ~~of~~ ~~keeping~~ ~~her~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~middle~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~argument~~
for an ~~at~~ ~~placation~~ ~~of~~ ~~her~~ ~~intuition~~ ~~of~~ ~~her~~ ~~mother~~ "you'll never understand"~~

Unlike other religions ^{we never} ~~we never~~ with drew the faithful from society in monasteries & convents, - 7 -

We Jews never believed that the soul's companionship with God was sufficient for the ~~complete~~ ^{complete} life. ^{On the contrary, our early belief ~~underscale~~ ^{underscale} the truth that} We are made for community existence. We are physically & psychol. interdependent - So much the more damaging & deplorable ~~is the~~ is a speedy life style with excessively paralyzing fences.

I shall not go on here ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~be~~ ^{to} already much lamented disintegration of the American family. With one out of 5 children ^{in America} presently growing up in a single parent home, ~~and in most cases~~ ^{and the mother working} ~~the~~ ^{for the most part} in ever growing portion of our people are experiencing accentuated loneliness and emotional deprivation ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~cause~~ ^{cause} of incalculable consequences. |

I should like to focus tonight on the so called Normal family whose way of life, intentionally or unintentionally tends to split off & isolate each person even more. Privacy ~~has become~~ ^{once} the blessing - or if you wish - the curse of the affluent few, has become the curse of the many. We build homes with 3 bedrooms & 4 bathrooms. Whereas the one car family was still forced to plan shopping trips & various chores together the ~~2 & 3 car~~ ^{2 & 3 car} were typical.

LONELINESS



"Poems that Touch the Heart"

p. 23, 31

The CB Cage in US: One 30 million stls
installed, need then one for every 300.

Surrendering & Breaking Out of Loneliness

Sympathy: Prayer poems: Give me...
ears that hear my brother's cry,

There is a Loneliness
poem by Mary Bruner - Poems Touch Heart
p. 258

Before It is Too Late
Ibid
p. 257

Sid Greenberg -

Companions for Our Loneliness

p 115-123

p 116/117

The inescapable loneliness

How to relieve loneliness:

p 117/ 1. Use your solitude

p 119 "Let us keep our silent sanctuaries..."

The most isolating form of loneliness is not to be apart from people. It is to be apathetic to them, indifferent, unrelated.

Gates of Prayer

p 670-672

MARITAL DISCONTENT

~~scribbles~~ - Rabbi Schmully
Bofsch
quotes

"Helen Rowland:

Marriage is where a woman
exchanges the attention of many
men for the inattention of one

Sanctity & Absurdity of Life ?

Life is a sexually transmitted

disease



Guy Bellamy

The Good Side of Discontent: SPUR TO
Progress!

Ellz Wheeler Wilcox :

The Splendid discontent of God
With Chaos, made the world.
And from the discontent of Man,
The world's best progress spring

DON'T LISTEN TO CRITIC

Story Rabbi delivered guest sermon & stood
in the receiving line - a lady came up
and said "Rabbi, that was a terrible
sermon - I'm sorry I came"

At which the Presid. turned to the rabbi and
said: Don't pay any attention to that lady
- she only repeats what others are saying.

AT START OF QUESTION PERIOD

Prime Minister Eshkol had to see a party hack ^(seeing of face) ~~that~~ was
hard-pressed for time. So he said to him

You and I are very busy. So to save time,

Why don't you begin with

Your conclusion.

So try to make your point as soon as possible

AMERICAN CHILDREN OBEY PARENTS

An Englishman - returning from his trip to America
was asked what impressed him about the Americans:

"The thing that impressed me most about America
is the way parents obey their children

Permitt kobelet

repeats of time

Don't drink & be
Merry

Don't ponder the
ineffable & unanswered
questions - enjoy what you can

Re MESSIAH

Poor unskilled Jew very observant
jobless — finally a Yehova in
Jerusalem took pity on him &
gave him a job.

Jubilant told his wife "I've got job"
"What will you do?"

Messiah Watchman: — "Keep an
eye on Mt Olives where Messiah
is expected — and announce
his arrival!"

Wife: how much will they pay you?

He: The pay is not much,
but the job is permanent

WEALTH & POVERTY ARE RELATIVE TERMS

Picasso

I'd like to live like
a poor man
with lots of money

John JACOB ASTOR III

The man with a
million \$ is as
well off as if he
were rich

Rockefeller, asked
what he wanted in life,
answered with a single
word

MORE

2 Ways of RESIGNATION - LIMITATION

Contentment

①

A degree of resignation ^{ie. "acceptance" of what is} essential to the acquisition of Contentment

② Limit Expectations

See Ps 128.2-4

Ps 131

Re: WAR IN IRAQ — NO GOOD ALTERNATIVE

Edmund Burke (1729-97)

"A political decision is not always a choice
between good & evil but often it is
a choice between the

disagreeable and the
intolerable

Soloveitchik "The Lonely Man of Faith"

Tradition Summer 1965

p.6

Berachel "I will speak that I may find relief"

(67) "I am lonely": — not "I am alone". In my "desolate howling solitude" drives me to God. — It's a loneliness engendered by faith

[Joh: The loneliness of man of faith is his sense of incompleteness of needing God to be fully alive]

p.8

Loneliness due to alienation from prevailing technological society whose materialism has no place for the spiritual values of faith

p.9

It is not a conflict between science & faith

p.11/12

The first & 2nd Adam according to 2 Creation stories
Adam I — "in the image of God" has dominative, creative spirit and a plan for explaining how universe functions
He is technological, utilitarian.

p.13

Adam I has the dignity of creative power with which to have dominion over the earth.

p.14

The brute who is helplessly enmeshed in the inexorable processes of nature has no dignity. "There is no dignity without responsibility and one cannot ~~assume~~ responsibility as long as he is not capable of living up to his commitment."

Man of old was... succumbed in multitudes to yellow fever or any other plague with degrading helplessness could not lay claim to dignity.

Tests

p. 22

1325 09107 117 210 105

Ecc. The two are better than one because... if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but we know that is done when he falleth and hath not another to help him out.

p. 22 For Adam the first, his female partner was a "functional" partner — a work partner, not an existential counterpart. — Thus, the natural community, fashioned by Adam I is a work community, committed to the successful production...

p. 23 Description of the natural community for enhancement of survival is not a work together — but ^{do} ref. the being together. This Adam would never admit that he cannot, out of self, see himself without Eve. They are not 2 souls bound together in an indissoluble relation.

p. 25 Adam II is alone, alienated from world of the brute and of the instinctual mechanical state of an outward existence. He struggles for the discovery of his identity because he suffers from the insecurity implied in... gazing into that senseless something without being answered a reciprocal gaze, in always being a silent partner without return

being watched.

p 25/26

Insecurity arises from the wondrous, unique & incommunicable reality (of man) from peering into somebody who returns one's gaze suspiciously

p 26

What is the worse / evil idea ~. (§1)

p 27

to be Mein, to be the only one, singular and different, and consequ. / only

p 28

True faith - Community! (§1,2)



Tel Aviv-Sheraton Hotel

115, HAYARKON STREET
TEL AVIV 63573, ISRAEL
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Loneliness is not relieved

by a crowd. (Loneliness in the crowd
means no relationship)



Levelness - I used to belittle the herd instinct - the crowing to see
and be seen by the crowd

Now I realize that far from being peripheral - the Convocation of the crowd
is the central purpose. Shefer a Signal for assembly
Original name of Rosh H. is Day of Salem Assembly
Assembly is restoration of ^{original & natural} human condition of ^{group} belonging

This summer's rediscovery of our family
The family that lives together stays together
Absence makes heart grow colder

The Shefer without math piece - direct outlet - NO VENEER
Hindrances to relationships
Impediments (of) to interaction are the barriers

~~Conflicts or Compromises~~
Hostess renewed chairs, forcing guest to stand & talk rather
than each withdraw to his own chair

on "Loneliness" - theme of play

"THE INKWELL"

530 at the Cape Playhouse
Wed - July 21, 1982

by Harold J. Kennedy
with Arlene Francis
Anita Fillette
Jeffrey Lynn
Dorothy Most

Story of a young actress, ^{several times} married & divorced, revisiting her home town and, driven by loneliness of heart to resume a teenage romance with a physician, who though married to a respectable woman for nearly 30 years, is strongly tempted to desert his wife in favor of (his former) the sweetheart of his youth.

My comments on the loneliness theme in the play

You are lonely when

- ① Not understood - or when you think you aren't understood.
- ② Not involved in the joys, hopes, big & petty problems
- ③ ^{hopeless to respond to} ^{of people} ^{the burdens that press down on you} ^{family, friends, neighbors} Not caring about anyone - and feeling not being cared about

The Loneliness of Pretence

Robert Frost's poem "Revelation"

The Lonely God: Chresidic story of hide & seek game - boy left standing behind tree after kids dashed away. Boy paws streaming down his cheek ran back to his father who said
Now you know how God feels when his people no longer look for him!

Legitimacy of Loneliness

"There never be anyone else like you"
Existential Uniqueness
Poem - "Once Only You" - in Ann Landers Column
Religion is belonging

X E Stanley Jones "A religion which does not begin with the individual, does not begin, but religion which ends with the individual ends"

Under pass "graffiti" in Chicago
S. Lake Park & 55th St.

THE CITY

Squeaking Under City Stone
The millions on the millions run
Everyone a life alone
Every One a soul undone

Gryll
Yasko
1972

These all the poisons of the heart
Branch and abound like whirling brooks
And there strive every useless art
Like spoiled meats on a butcher's hooks
Borne forth upon their frightful kind
The faces of each ruined child:
The wretched demerons of the mind
That now is tamed, ~~and~~
And once was wild.

To Be Continued

Lewis Browne - "Stronger Than Fiction"

Continuity - the secret of life

The mystery of time

The Calendar is the measuring yard of continuity

Continuity is at the heart of all loyalties

It is the crown of love

It is the symphony for family:

From Generation to Generation - most precious inheritance history is that which ties one generation to the other - the connecting links which make possible continuity

The Discontinuity of Jewishness

in dejudged persons . . .

Man's Extremity is
God's opportunity

If we do not come to God
through reasoning or
morally impelled, we
fall on our knees in
weakness & dependence
as George Herbert said
in his lines about Man

"If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast"

Alone-ness / IMMORTALITY

Man's alienation

& sense of incompleteness
in this life.

Read Slavoj Žižek The Lonely Man
of Faith



Rilke's Todesproblem

p 20 & 5 Was wirst Du tun Gott
o Problem ^{leotom} ich stecke - f Psalen

Merkmale in Prolog im Himmel
re Man, the small set:

Ein wenig besser würd er leben
Hättest Du ihm nicht den Schein des
Himmelslichts gegeben,
Er nennt's Vernunft und braucht's allein
Nun tierischer als jedes Tier zu sein



A YIZKOR 2006 idg
A Special Note —

Get over ^{that} your hurt

People nurse their hurts & keep
suffering not just once, when the
incident first happened — but
ever since, daily — making the
hurt last a thousand fold.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound is the sweep
Of easy wind and downy fliks.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep
And miles to go before I sleep.

Meaning: Loss of purpose, meaning
— What promises?, a sense of the "ought to be"

S. Karff:

We are so mesmerized by the work of our hands,
— the ^{relentless} drive to get & get more, — that
we have lost contact with the source of our
being. We're confused about our aims
& priorities — some in conflict
w/ We want success in our careers
but also a full family life.
Multiple demands at work, rob us
~~of~~ of quality time with spouse
children — and what is
just as important — time for ourselves
— quite Karl Kraus

Y K Sluins

Praka Reurrection

re pr. 2 yrs something
you have

Pharisaic Belief in Here after
Pirke Av. 6. 4, 12

Doctrine of Reward - 6.7

Praise of Material food 6.8
This worldliness

Why Life? Why this world? 6.13

on seeing the Silver Lining
Prayer of Old Woman

After dentist extracted
most of her teeth

Dear God
you know that I have
only 2 teeth left but
I am grateful that they
meet.

Who is rich, like who
is pleased with his lot!

Subj: **JTS Torah Commentary**
 Date: 4/19/2006 5:14:16 AM Eastern Standard Time
 From: dlp@JTSA.EDU
 To: jhabe92073@aol.com

JTS Torah Commentary
 is brought to you by The Jewish Theological Seminary
 JTS Torah Commentary

Parashat Shemini
 Leviticus 9:1 -11:47
 April 22, 2006 24 Nisan 5766

The text of the parashah and haftarah is available
 online. Visit:
<http://www.jtsa.edu/community/parashah/archives/5766/shemini.shtml>

This week's commentary was written by Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz,
 Senior Rabbinic Fellow, JTS

Loss strikes each one of us at different points in our lives. None of us can avoid the experiences of the death of a loved one and the grieving that follows. And no matter who it is or when that time comes, it is exceptionally painful for those left behind. In his text, *Understanding Bereavement and Grief*, Norman Linzer perceptively writes, "With the death of a [spouse] you lose your present; with the death of a parent you lose your past, and with the death of a child you lose your future." Our parasha this week, Parashat Shemini presents us with the sudden, tragic and mysterious loss of part of Aaron's future, the death of his two sons, Nadav and Avihu. Though commentators struggle to understand the precise circumstances of their deaths [the Torah merely states that "... they offered before the Lord alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them. And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them" (Leviticus 10:1-2)], perhaps the more compelling difficulty is in Aaron's response to this tragic loss: "vayidom Aharon" (and Aaron was silent). How are we to understand this seemingly trite response to the deaths of his two sons? Should he not have protested, as Abraham before him, "shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Genesis 18:25) or cried out like Jacob at his perceived loss of Joseph, "I will go down mourning to my son in Sheol!" (Genesis 37:35). Why was Aaron silent?

Rashi, the most prolific of medieval commentators, understands "vayidom Aharon" in consonance with the Aramaic translation of Onkelos, as a straightforward "and Aaron was silent." Aaron's response was indeed an absolute silence. For Rashi, this silence was not a silence of mourning but rather one of submissive acceptance. Quoting *Leviticus Rabbah 12*, a collection of rabbinic legends on Leviticus, Rashi writes, "He received a reward for his silence." Aaron's response is virtuous. Though he does not understand the ways of God, he does not seek to understand or challenge them. John Hartley echoes this traditional understanding in explaining, "Aaron clearly accepted what had taken place without lashing out at God" (Hartley, *Word Biblical Commentary: Leviticus*, 134). Though this response may be difficult for us to comprehend, it does seem to fit with the literal meaning of the text.

Rashbam, continuing in his grandfather's footsteps, echoes Aaron's respect for God's judgment. Yet, Rashbam's understanding is more nuanced. He reads "vayidom" in the context of Ezekiel: God declares to the prophet, "O mortal, I am about to take away the delight of your eyes from you through pestilence; but you shall not lament or weep or let your tears flow. Moan softly; be silent in mourning the dead . . ." (Ezekiel 24:16-17). Though the Israelites desire to mourn the tragedy about to befall them, God commands them to refrain from any expression of public mourning. The Israelites are silent. Reading Aaron's behavior in this context, Rashbam portrays Aaron as far less accepting than Rashi. Indeed, Rashbam affirms Aaron's inner feelings of distress and utter confusion: "Aaron refrained from that which he had wanted to mourn and to cry over." The feelings remain a deep part of him; according to Rashbam's commentary, he however suppresses them for the sake of God and for the sake of the collective community.

Nahmanides (Ramban) offers two other perspectives on Aaron's reaction. First, Ramban argues, "vayidom" means "he became silent." And so he writes, "This means that he had cried aloud, but then he became silent." According to this reading, Aaron did express his grief and only afterward fell silent. And his subsequent silence is a contemplative silence, not one of full acceptance but rather one of struggle. It is an attempt to understand the mysterious and provocative ways of God.

In Ramban's alternative reading he suggests that "vayidom" means "he ceased": "...perhaps the meaning thereof is as in the verse, 'let not the apple of your eye cease' (Lamentations 2:18) and so Aaron ceased to shed tears." As in his first commentary, Ramban believes Aaron cries over his sons' deaths. What is different in this explanation is the nature of the silence that follows. This second silence is categorical and accepting. Aaron is calmed completely. Not only do his tears cease, but also his mourning in its entirety comes to a close.

We have seen that rabbinic commentaries on the Torah present us with a number of possible interpretations of Aaron's reaction to the deaths of his sons, from total and complete acceptance to a painful cry and mild protest. Ramban's explanation is most appealing to me: he recognizes that mourning must precede the acceptance of a loss of someone so dear to one's soul. Moreover, expressing one's emotion at such a time is not only human — it is profoundly Jewish, even central to our laws of mourning. A house of mourning becomes a safe space to speak of the pain of loss. There, the community comes together, bringing God's presence back into the life of the mourner.

In his timeless essay entitled, "To Hold with Open Arms," Milton Steinberg writes:

Given God, everything becomes more precious ... [but] it is easier for me to let go. For these things are not and never have been mine. They belong to the universe and the God who stands behind it. True, I have been privileged to enjoy them for an hour, but they were always a loan due to be recalled. And I let go of them more easily because I know that as parts of the divine economy they will not be lost.

Seeing God at the center and realizing that our own lives and the lives of those around us are a precious gift on loan for a certain period of time, to be cherished but ultimately to be relinquished, may allow us to cope more easily with the pain and shock of loss, be it the loss of

the past, the loss of the present, or as in Aaron's most painful case,
the loss of the future.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Matthew Berkowitz

Lifestyles of the Rich and Infamous

An Astor heir swept a beauty off her feet, they married — and then things turned ugly.

Perhaps I'm a shallow reader, in search of the cheap thrill, but when a historical biography begins with its hero escaping from the Bloomingdale Asylum, a "madhouse for the rich" in 1900, the book exerts a fairly immediate claim on my attention. Such is the case with *Archie and Amélie*, in which, we will presently learn, the daring escapee is none other than John Armstrong "Archie" Chanler, a society figure and scion of Old New York's distinguished Astor family. To sustain our interest, the narrative must build on that somewhat theatrical beginning, and thanks to the vividness of its subject matter and the lucidity of its style, this tale of "love and madness in the Gilded Age" does just that. Throughout, it engages its readers in the initially charming and ultimately harrowing tale of the marriage between two self-willed and self-absorbed thoroughbreds, a public and scandalous romance that crashed and burned, as such romances are wont to do, in a decidedly spectacular fashion.

Wearing its research lightly, Donna M. Lucey's book tracks the all-too-relevant family history of the unfortunate Archie, a member of an entitled Hudson River clan whose considerable eccentricity failed to muddle an essential hardheadedness when it came to matters of inheritance and the distribution of family wealth. Meanwhile, the lovely Amélie Rives was growing up in a similarly prestigious but inconveniently impecunious Southern matriarchy. Reduced circumstances hardly clouded Amélie's sense of her own worth and even perhaps inspired her to step out on her own and become a famous writer.

Her most successful fiction, *The Quick or the Dead?* (1899 — with that question mark lending the title its hilarious piquancy), was a steamy account of a widow's erotic passion for her late husband's look-alike cousin. The novel sold an impressive 300,000 copies and, as might have been expected, won its lovely and unashamedly self-promoting author a remarkable amount of notoriety, including so much upsetting hate mail that she had to ask her publisher to screen her correspondence.

The couple met in Newport, and the attraction between them sizzled as a consequence of an incident with a lost dancing shoe — an event that sounds like real life imitating Cinderella as reimagined by Margaret Mitchell. After a rocky courtship, the wildly ambitious and seductive Amélie finally said yes, and the pair were married in a hasty ceremony attended by only one member of Archie's proper, fiercely territorial family.

To Lucey's credit, she mostly leaves us to draw our own conclusions when, soon after the wedding, Amélie began writing her sister-in-law letters steeped in grief and anguish. Was Archie more than slightly mad? Was the flirtatious Amélie frigid? Could their postnuptial difficulties have had something to do with sex? After this inauspicious begin-

ARCHIE AND AMÉLIE Love and Madness in the Gilded Age

By Donna M. Lucey
Harmony, 339 pp. \$25.95

Reviewed by FRANCINE PROSE

ning, the marriage limped through seven more years, much of which the couple spent apart or abroad.

Along the way, Amélie became the toast of Europe, making the acquaintance of such literary luminaries as Oscar Wilde and Henry James. There she also became involved in a disastrously passionate friendship with Archie's unstable younger brother and discovered the splendors and misery of morphine addiction. Though Archie appears to have indulged his wife's every whim — renting the palace at Fontainebleau as a vacation villa — money, it seemed, was not enough to buy conjugal bliss.

Eventually, in 1895, the ill-matched pair divorced, further shocking and embarrassing relatives on both sides of the family. Four months later, Amélie remarried a certain Russian Prince Pierre Troubetzkoy, "an artist and an aristocrat," who, like his new wife, possessed more glamour and panache than money. Meanwhile, poor Archie descended into madness, combining paranoia with schemes for communicating with

dead spirits. Among his delusions was the conviction that he could put himself into a sort of trance in which his face would somehow morph into the death mask of Napoleon.

Worried about Archie's welfare, and perhaps even more concerned about how his instability might affect their family fortune, his siblings arranged to have him transported and committed to the Bloomingdale Asylum, in the northern suburbs of Manhattan, from which, against all odds, Archie managed to liberate himself. After a struggle to clear his name of the insanity allegations, he retired to Virginia, to a mansion not far from Amélie's ancestral home. There his declining years were marked by increasing madness and high drama: Archie shot and killed the husband of an abused wife who had taken refuge in his home.

Reading *Archie and Amélie*, I found myself thinking of the famous conversation between Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. "The rich are different from you and me," Fitzgerald is supposed to have said, to which Hemingway allegedly replied, "Yes, they have more money." What *Archie and Amélie* suggests is that the rich may have been even more different from the rest of us, at least before the pharmaceutical industry discovered how to modify the bizarre behaviors that were, for so long, the privilege of the privileged. ■

Francine Prose's *Reading Like a Writer: A Guide for People Who Love Books and for Those Who Want to Write Them* will be published in September.



Detail from a photographic self-portrait in the nude by Amélie Rives (1892) and, inset, John Armstrong ("Archie") Chanler

IN BRIEF | The Father of His Countries

The liberator of South America learned much from his travels in Europe and a brief, early visit to the United States, argues John Lynch in *Simón Bolívar: A Life* (Yale Univ., \$35). While living in Paris, the young Venezuelan aristocrat immersed himself in the study of the Enlightenment; while visiting the United States on his way home, he saw what he called "rational liberty at first hand."

These broadening experiences gave him perspective on his colonized homeland, but he never lost sight of what was uniquely South American, including the terrain. "You will find valuable guidance in the very nature of our country," he said in an 1830 speech, "which stretches from the highlands of the Andes to the torrid banks of the Orinoco. Survey the whole extent of this land and you will learn

from nature, the infallible teacher of men, what laws the congress must decree."

Ultimately, Bolívar liberated not just Venezuela but also Bolivia, Panamá, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, some of which he ruled as dictator — all this accomplished in a lifespan that fell short of 50 years. As for the combination of freedom and authoritarianism, Lynch contends that critics who accuse the

young rebel of compromising his beliefs as he aged have got him wrong: "The evidence shows that his principles in 1828-30 were not basically different from those he had developed from 1812 onwards, that his insistence on liberty and equality was always accompanied by a search for strong government."

— Dennis Drabelle

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Yizkor Address, Oct. 2, 06

by Joshua O. Haberman

One of the most famous poems of the 20th century, is entitled, *Lullaby for Miriam*, The author, Richard Beer-Hofmann, a Viennese Jew, tells of thoughts that crossed his mind as he put his baby daughter to sleep. It is late afternoon and the sun is setting:

Sleep , my child, sleep.

Look at the sun, -- the sun is dying

Sinking behind the mountains in shrouds of red.

What do you know of the sun and death?

Somberly he reflects on the child's destiny. If only he could give her his life's experience ! But no one can make such a gift to another:

Blindly we go and we go alone,

No one can anyone's partner be

He realizes, she'll have to live her own life. But he wonders, is any person the sole possessor of his life? Is our existence something entirely separate and isolated? Is anyone really alone in this world?

We are but riverbeds. Through you and me

Runs the blood of the past to those who shall be,

They are all in us, Who is alone?

You are their life --- their life is your own—

Thus the poem speaks of the human condition with its contradictions between birth and death, between solitary, individual existence and the bond that binds generation to generation.

Lullaby for Miriam was published all by itself as a single page book. Rainer Maria Rilke, the century's greatest poet, memorized it and on his trip to Sweden, aristocratic families would send their carriages for him so that he might recite the poem for them.

What explains the profound appeal of this poem? It is the allusion to man's fate of loneliness and death, redeemed by the greater reality of the unity of life, our link with all the generations that have ever been. A sharp awareness of loneliness is not limited to single persons, the widowed and the elderly living alone.

An anonymous poet wrote:

There is a mystery in human hearts

And though we be encircled by a host
Of those who love us well and are beloved,
To everyone of us, from time to time,
There comes a sense of utter loneliness

Even the happily married, surrounded by family, or in the midst of a crowd, we may experience a poignant pang of loneliness, a loneliness of the heart, a sense of not being understood. A crucial part of yourself cannot be communicated. No matter how close, how intimate you are with another person, there remains a gap that cannot be bridged. There are things about you no other person will ever know. Adrienne Rich says so in her lines:

Two strangers, thrust upon a rock
May have at last the perfect hour of talk
That language aches for; still
Two minds, two messages.

My sister and I, as children, would occasionally get into an argument. I would try all my methods of persuasion to change her mind, -- often to no avail. She just wouldn't budge and if pressed for an explanation, she'd cut me off with the infuriating answer: "You'll never understand." I have come to see that there are indeed things about each of us no other person will ever understand, simply because, as Adrienne Rich put it: "Two minds, two messages."

was and is good in our relationships and not look for the perfection which is beyond human reach.

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There will never be total disclosure and understanding between two persons. As Emerson wrote in his diary: "We never touch but at points." One can be with people and yet be lonely. Loneliness is not being alone but feeling unrelated, that is, not communicating. This is the point of Jean Ingelow's poem:

Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said.

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets: "I'm looking for a key to unlock myself." Many of us are locked up in ourselves. We have a sense of futility. What is our purpose? What our reason for existence? We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we don't find it --- because we keep looking for it in ourselves. We should be looking beyond ourselves. The meaning of our life is in relationship, in connection with something greater than we. The meaning of our personal, individual existence is embedded in the totality of life --- ultimately with the Maker of life. It is God Who has the master key to each of us. Think of the Psalmist's words:

"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations."

God is the ground of our being.

"Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever the earth and the world were formed,

Even from everlasting to everlasting,, Thou art God."

It is God Who on this day calls within our souls:

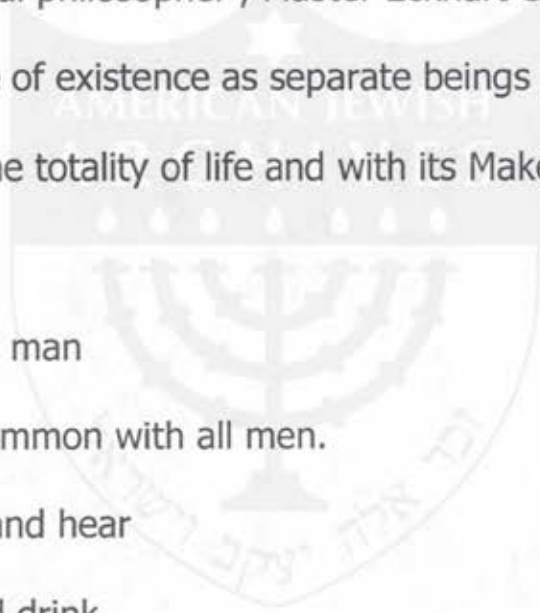
"Return , ye children of men."

Acknowledge that you are part of the original context of life from which you were torn for the short time of your existence and to which you are destined to return.

In the light of faith, loneliness is an illusion. No being is ever cut off from the totality of life. As Richard Beer Hofmann said:

“They are all in us. Who is alone?”

The medieval philosopher , Master Eckhart expressed our paradoxical sense of existence as separate beings , yet forever connected with the totality of life and with its Maker , in these words:



That I am a man
I have in common with all men.
That I see and hear
And eat and drink
I share with all animals.
But that I am I is exclusively mine,
And belongs to me
And nobody else,
to no other man

Nor to an angel nor to God

Except in as much as I am one with Him.

This is the mystery of the Shema: God is one, the world is one, life is one, even the living and the dead are one, ---with God, the Creator with Whom are the spirits of all flesh, those of our departed and ours as well, when our time comes. Amen



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by Joshua O. Haberman

One of the most famous poems of the 20th century, is entitled, *Lullaby for Miriam*, The author, Richard Beer-Hofmann, a Viennese Jew, tells of thoughts that crossed his mind as he put his baby daughter to sleep. It is late afternoon and the sun is setting:

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We are but riverbeds. Through you and me

Runs the blood of the past to those who shall be,

They are all in us, Who is alone?

You are their life --- their life is your own—

Thus the poem speaks of the human condition with its contradictions between birth and death, between solitary, individual existence and the bond that binds generation to generation.

Lullaby for Miriam was published all by itself as a single page book. Rainer Maria Rilke, the century's greatest poet, memorized it and on his trip to Sweden, aristocratic families would send their carriages for him so that he might recite the poem for them.

What explains the profound appeal of this poem? It is the allusion to man's fate of loneliness and death, redeemed by the greater reality of the unity of life, our link with all the generations that have ever been. A sharp awareness of loneliness is not limited to single persons, the widowed and the elderly living alone.

An anonymous poet wrote:

There is a mystery in human hearts

And though we be encircled by a host
 Of those who love us well and are beloved,
 To everyone of us, from time to time,
 There comes a sense of utter loneliness

Even the happily married, surrounded by family, or in the midst of a crowd, we may experience a poignant pang of loneliness, a loneliness of the heart, a sense of not being understood. A crucial part of yourself cannot be communicated. No matter how close, how intimate you are with another person, there remains a gap that cannot be bridged. There are things about you no other person will ever know. Adrienne Rich says so in her lines:

Two strangers, thrust upon a rock
 May have at last the perfect hour of talk
 That language aches for; still --
 Two minds, two messages.

At this time of Yizkor, we think of our families, the living and those no longer alive. We remember all the love and tenderness shown us, the sacrifices made for us, the guidance and models of conduct that shaped our

They say, time is a great healer, But there are sorrows that cannot fade away. My son-in-law, Rabbi David Forman, wrote a very personal article for the Jerusalem Post about his sister's death at age 12 when she was run over by a streetcar in Boston. ~~character.~~
 He actually never knew her because the accident happened ~~he~~ before he was born. He was only told that she was an angelic child.... When David's father, at age 91, made his last trip to Israel, David writes "he went to the wall...and found a seat adjacent to it and motioned to me to sit next to him. His voice trembling, he said...'There is not an hour in the day that I do not think of her . I stand before these stones imploring God to return her to me.' . There is nothing more painful than the death of a child."

When a parent dies, we lose a large measure of our past; when a child dies, we lose a portion of our future.

Inevitably, memories of our departed include also conflicts, decisions and situations which were resented by either side, theirs and ours. There were times when we were not understood as we had craved. Such memories are painful. But, we must not be too harsh in condemnation or in self-reproach.

There are limits of understanding between persons. Most people don't even understand their own deeper self. We must be grateful for whatever was and is good in our relationships and not look for the perfection which is beyond human reach.

A man was eagerly looking for a spouse. Friends introduced him to suitable ladies but he found fault with every one of them. Finally, he found the one he thought was "the perfect woman".... but no match, because **she** was looking for the perfect man. The best relationship does not seek perfection but tolerates imperfection.

My sister and I, as children, would occasionally get into an argument. I would try all my methods of persuasion to change her mind, -- often to no avail. She just wouldn't budge and if pressed for an explanation, she'd cut me off with the infuriating answer: "You'll never understand." I have come to see that there are indeed things about each of us no other person will ever understand, simply because, as Adrienne Rich put it: "Two minds, two messages."

There will never be total disclosure and understanding between two persons. As Emerson wrote in his diary: "We never touch but at points." One can be with people and yet be lonely. Loneliness is not being alone but feeling unrelated, that is, not communicating. This is the point of Jean Ingelow's poem:

Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said.

In Lewis Carroll's fantasies is an incident of a padlock with arms and legs that says to everyone it meets: "I'm looking for a key to unlock myself." Many of us are locked up in ourselves. We have a sense of futility. What is our purpose? What our reason for existence? We go through life looking for the key to unlock life. And we don't find it --- because we keep looking for it in ourselves. We should be looking beyond ourselves. The meaning of our life is in relationship, in connection with something greater than we. The meaning of our personal, individual existence is embedded in the totality of life --- ultimately with the Maker of life. It is God Who has the master key to each of us. Think of the Psalmist's words: "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." Ps. 90.1

God is the ground of our being.

"Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever the earth and the world were formed,
Even from everlasting to everlasting,, Thou art God." Ps. 90.2

It is God Who on this day calls within our souls:

"Return , ye children of men." Ps.90.3

Acknowledge that you are part of the original context of life from which you were torn for the short time of your existence and to which you are destined to return.

In the light of faith, loneliness is an illusion. No being is ever cut off from the totality of life. As Richard Beer Hofmann said:

"They are all in us. Who is alone?"

The medieval philosopher , Master Eckhart expressed our paradoxical sense of existence as separate beings , yet forever connected with the totality of life and with its Maker:

That I am a man
I have in common with all men.
That I see and hear
And eat and drink
I share with all animals.
But that I am I is exclusively mine,
And belongs to me
And nobody else,
to no other man
Nor to an angel nor to God
Except in as much as I am one with Him.

This is the mystery of the Shema: God is one, the world is one, life is one, even the living and the dead are one. You are not alone. You are forever connected with God, the Creator with Whom are the spirits of all flesh, those of our departed and ours as well, when our time comes. ~~Amen~~

Oct. 2006

The USES OF SUFFERING

for J.K. Seminar

AND ITS RELIEF

2007

The USES (1) All forms of Suffering are learning experiences - even bereavement - *Mark Twain* - "What better is going to house of mourning than feasting"

But Mark Twain's advice - Don't draw wrong conclusion
Cut that jumps on hot stove may never again want to jump on a stove even when it is cold

(2) PAIN is your ^{nerve system which registers} ^{body} early warning system of some more serious physical problem

(3) Suffering ^{may} toughen you — *Good* it's teacher
↳ ENDURANCE

(4) Suffering makes you sympathetic to others - It ^{sensitizes} us
Bible "we're stronger kindly - as you remember your own suffering as slaves in Egypt
There is a bond that unites sufferers

The Sufferer often looks for others to blame
but much of suffering is self-afflicted

Why ^{bad things happen to} good people - Suffering may be unrelated
to merit or demerit -
see Rambam on ^{this} question

Relief: ① Challenged by suffering to review our thinking
& conduct we may be induced to make
changes that bring relief

② We reach out for help, for advice, for counsel
limits of our own power, we realize
we are not self-sufficient - Difficulty of getting others
people to seek compelling when others are in trouble, slavery, poverty, etc.
refer to Gully's boast in INVICTUS, etc.
Inter-dependence.