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FACING YOUR MORTALITY

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman- Yizkor 2011

In this hour of remembrance, names and images of various people come to mind: a parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandparents, friends who passed away yet are present in memory. Most important are the relationships with the persons we remember. Love and longing, are sometimes mingled with embers of resentment. Who wronged whom? This is the time to forgive those who hurt you; also forgive yourself for hurting others.

As we remember those who died, the reality of death crosses our mind. It may be just a fleeting thought. Who can count the times that such thoughts enter the mind? The sight of a dead bird, falling leaves, the siren of an ambulance may trigger awareness of our mortality. And, of course, the obituary page--- often the first page we look at.

Usually we drop the subject very quickly. We are not ready to think through implications of our own death., although some have managed to laugh off death.

The poet Dylan Thomas once said to a friend that he wouldn't mind dying. "But why?" asked the friend. "Just for a change" - answered Thomas.

The poet Roger McGough found relief from other worries when thinking about death:

"Every day, I think of dying... It helps keep my mind off things."

The mother of Germany's greatest poet, Goethe, was unperturbed by death. Invited to a party during her terminal illness, the old lady told the maid: "Say that Mrs. Goethe is unable to come because she's busy dying at the moment."

How should we face death? Most common are two reactions.

The first is denial.

Young people think that death happens to others, not themselves. In that respect some won't grow up. William Saroyan in middle age admitted that everybody has got to die but added: "I always believed that an exception would be in my case. "

The motion picture mogul, Louis B. Mayer, when solicited to donate to a charity, refused. The solicitor said: " Mr. Mayer, you can't take it with you when you go." Answered Mayer, "If I can't take it with me, I won't go."

The second reaction to death is anger, rage.

A good example is Dylan Thomas's poem

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

Edna St. Vincent Millay screamed even louder:

Withstanding Death, Till Life be gone....
I shall bolt my door, With 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

Such screams of protest will not keep the Grim Reaper away.

The classic Jewish response to death is not futile protest nor idle speculation about the mystery of death but a call for prudent living while still alive: “So teach us to number our days,” says the 90th Psalm, “that we may get us a heart of wisdom.

Jewish wisdom suggests three priorities.

The first is --- live in the here and now. You don’t know if you will be alive next year, next month or even tomorrow. So, make the most of today.

Kohelet , the Bible’s sophisticated preacher, says, enjoy, enjoy ! “Eat your bread in gladness, drink your wine in joy...be happy with a woman you love, wear good clothes and look your best.” Koh. 9.7-9

The same idea is summed up in the Latin motto: *Carpe diem*, make every day count. In this respect the Romans were blunt to the point of grossness.

At many a banquet, a human skeleton was seated as *memento mori* –a reminder of death urging you to snatch as much pleasure as possible while still alive.

I listened to Randy Pausch's famous "Last Lecture" which he delivered at the Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh. Knowing that he had only 3 to 6 months to live, he said: "I'm dying and I am having fun and I'm going to keep having fun every day I have left."

I say to you, do not wait until dying; enjoy God's gift of life now and every day. Unlike other religions which glorify self-denial, fasting, sleepless vigils and other forms of suffering, Jewish teachings urge us to appreciate God's gift of life with all its pleasures in the here and now. Treasure all the positive ingredients of the good life -- health, affluence, a loving family. Most of our ceremonies are celebrations. The Sabbath, a day of spirituality is also a time of "oneg," of physical enjoyment, of leisure and pleasure.

The second rule to live by in the light of our limited lifetime is Hillel's 'אמת לא עכשו אמ: "If not now, when?" Don't put off, don't postpone the good you can do or the joy you can have today.

Why are so many addicted to procrastination?

Is the reluctance to act due to the fear of failure?

Is it a misguided perfectionism, never feeling ready to act, forever waiting for the right time . Our medieval philosopher Bachya ibn Pekuda wrote: “It is part of caution not to be overly cautious.”

The wise Kohelet in the Bible put it this way: “The farmer who keeps watching the wind, will never sow; and he who observes the clouds will never reap.”

(Koh. 11.4)

Every action is risky but so is inaction .

It is foolish to wait too long for the fulfillment of your dream, be it a career move, a life-time wish to travel, study a foreign language or how to play a musical instrument. Whatever it is, remember Hillel’s challenge: “If not now, when?”

The third rule to live by in awareness of the inevitable, is a Biblical sentence ^{סדר ביתך} וצו את which became an English idiom “Set your house in order,” (II Ki. 20.1) meaning “settle your affairs.” This refers not only to financial transactions, securing assets for your estate and paying off debts; it is also a challenge to review and repair personal relationships. Seek the peace of mind that

comes with reconciliation. If you bear a grudge and the resentment of wounded pride, get rid of all that bitterness . The only way to do so is to forgive and forget. The Talmudic definition of a hero is one who has control over his evil impulses; and the hero of heroes is one who turns an enemy into a friend.

An important strategy of settling your affairs is to simplify your life. Cut down excessive engagements; drop burdensome projects; withdraw from complicated deals and resign or disengage from causes for which you have lost interest. Concentrate on what really matters to you. In other words: RESET YOUR PRIORITIES.

Each stage of life has its own priorities: In youth, it is self-development, growth of knowledge and skills in preparation for a profession.

For the adult, it is choosing a spouse, raising a family and building one's career .

In the latter stages of life, it is putting the years that remain to their best possible use.

I suggested 3 rules:

First, make each day count. Don't miss opportunities for enjoyment.

Second, don't put off the realization of your life's deepest wishes.

Third, settle your affairs, simplify your life, reset your priorities. Focus on what really matters at this stage of your life.

The great rabbinic sage, Hafetz Chayyim once said: Life is like a postcard. At first, you write in big letters with wide space between the words. But when you get to the end of the card, you find that space has run out and you have not yet gotten to the most important things you wanted to say.

FOCUS ON WHAT REALLY MATTERS WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME. Time is your greatest treasure. As the Psalmist said: COUNT YOUR DAYS —meaning— SPEND YOUR DAYS WITH WISDOM.

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Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman- Yizkor 2011, Oct. 8, '11

In hour of remembrance, names and images of people come to mind: a parent, spouse, sister, brother, grandparents, friends. They passed away yet are present in memory. What stands out in our memory are the relationships we had with them

There may be one special person to whom your heart is whispering:

Miss you, miss you, miss you

Everything I do

Echoes with the laughter

And the voice of you.

Miss you....

Everywhere I go

There are poignant memories

Silhouettes and shadow

Of your form and face.

Miss you....Nothing now seems true,

Only that 'twas Heaven just to be with you.

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Such temper tantrums will not keep the Grim Reaper away.

The classic Jewish response to death is not futile protest nor idle speculation about the mystery of death but a call for prudent living while still alive:

“So teach us to number our days,” says the 90th Psalm, “that we may get us a heart of wisdom.” “number our days” --- not years, not months, not weeks, but days. Seeing your future lifespan in days rather than years, might make you wise. In which way?

Jewish wisdom suggests three priorities.

The first is --- live in the here and now. You don't know if you will be alive next year, next month or even tomorrow. So, make the most of today.

Kohelet, the Bible's sophisticated preacher, said, enjoy, enjoy ! “Eat your bread in gladness, drink your wine in joy...be happy with a woman you love, wear good clothes and look your best.” Koh. 9.7-9

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Why are so many addicted to procrastination?

Is the reluctance to act due to fear of failure?

Is it a misguided perfectionism? Being cautious, waiting for the right time ?

Our medieval philosopher Bachya ibn Pekuda wrote: "It is part of caution not to be overly cautious."

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Every action is risky but so is inaction . It is foolish to wait too long for the fulfillment of your dream, be it a career move, a life-time wish to travel, study a foreign language or how to play a musical instrument. Whatever it is, remember Hillel’s challenge: “If not now, when?”

The third rule to live by in view of our mortality, is a Biblical sentence **צו את ביתך** . It became an English idiom “Set your house in order,” II Ki. 20.1 meaning “settle your affairs.” This refers not only to financial transactions, securing assets for your estate and paying off debts; it is also a challenge to review and repair personal relationships. Seek the peace of mind that comes with reconciliation. If you bear a grudge and the resentment of wounded pride, get rid of all that bitterness . The only way to do so is to forgive and forget. The Talmudic definition of a hero is one who has control over his evil impulses; and the hero of heroes is one who turns an enemy into a friend.

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THE CERTAINTY OF DEATH

Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman- Yizkor 2011

I doubt that you can find a person, young or old, who does not have death on his mind, -- not always, but at various times. Seeing a dead bird on the pavement, falling leaves, a life insurance advertisement, the siren of an ambulance may trigger your awareness of your own mortality --and, of course, the obituary page, which is the first newspaper page likely to be read by the elderly.

It is futile to ponder the question why there is death or, why there is life. What, if anything, survives the body of the dead is a matter of speculation or faith, but not knowledge.

It doesn't help to face death with an outburst of anger as did Edna St. Vincent Millay:

Withstanding Death

Till Life be gone....

I shall bolt my door

With 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.

Screams of protest will not keep the Grim Reaper away. We have no choice but accept mortality but there are many choices about what to do and how to live the remaining years of our life.

Jewish wisdom suggests three priorities.

The first is --- live in the here and now. You don't know if you will

be alive next year, next month or even tomorrow. So, make the most of today.

Kohelet ,the Bible's sophisticated preacher tells us: enjoy, enjoy ! In view of the brevity of life,he said: "Eat your bread in gladness, drink your wine in joy...be happy with a woman you love, wear good clothes and try to look your best." Koh. 9.7-9

The same idea is summed up in the Latin proverb:

Carpe diem, make every day count.

Unlike other religions which glorify self denial, fasting, sleepless vigils and other forms of suffering, Jewish teachings urge us to appreciate God's gift of life by enjoying its pleasures. Treasure all the positive ingredients of the good life -- health, affluence, the love of family. Most of our religious acts and ceremonies are celebrations.

The Sabbath, e.g., is a sacred day of spirituality but also a time of “oneg,” of physical enjoyment, a day of rest and pleasure.

The second rule to live by in the light of our limited lifetime was formulated by Hillel א'מת' לא עכשו אמ: “If not now, when?” Don't put off, don't postpone the good you can do, or the joy you can have today.

Why are so many of us addicted to procrastination?
Is the reluctance to act due to a lack of self-confidence? To a fear of failure?

With others, it's a kind of misguided perfectionism, never feeling ready to act, forever waiting for the right time to act. Our medieval philosopher Bachya ibn Pekuda wrote: “It is part of caution not to be overly cautious.”

The wise Kohelet in the Bible put it this way: “The farmer who keeps watching the wind, will never sow; and he who observes the clouds will never reap.” (Koh11.4)

In life, every action is risky but inaction is also risky. I cannot but deplore the unreasonable postponement of marriage by couples who live together for years and still keep waiting for the right time. He'll act after the next promotion or the next bonus; she wants to finish a project or get her master's degree before she becomes a Mrs.

A grand-niece of mine in Israel was in a relationship with a very suitable young man for a number of years. They were in love but he could not bring himself to propose marriage.

My sister and I took to heart Hillel's challenge “If not now, when?”

We hosted a surprise family dinner at the Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv. As we were about to start, the significant other of our grand-niece asked what is the surprise? We said: "The surprise will be the announcement of your engagement." He turned red as a beet, but after the shock wore off, he proposed to our grand-niece and set a wedding date. They have been living happily ever after.

It is foolish to wait too long for the fulfillment of your dream, be it a career move, a life-time wish to travel, study a foreign language or how to play a musical instrument. Whatever it is, remember Hillel's challenge: "If not now, when?"

The third rule to live by, in preparation for the inevitable, is a Biblical sentence צו את ב'תך which became an English idiom "Set your house in order," (II Ki. 20.1) meaning "settle your affairs." This refers not only to settling financial transactions, securing assets for your estate and paying off debts but it is also a challenge to review and repair personal relationships. Why waste diminishing life time with petty grievances, feuds and trying to get even?

Seek the peace of mind that comes with reconciliation. If you bear a grudge and the resentment of wounded pride, get rid of all that bitterness—and the only way to do so is to forgive and forget. The Talmudic definition of a hero is one who gains control over his evil impulses; and the hero of heroes is one who turns an enemy into a friend.

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In youth it is self-development, growth of knowledge and skills in preparation of a profession.

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In the latter stages of life it is putting the remaining years of life to their best possible use. I suggested 3 rules:

First, make each day count. Don't miss opportunities for enjoyment.

Second, don't keep putting off the realization of your life's deepest wishes.

Third, settle your affairs, simplify your life and enjoy peace of mind.



Only 3 possible reactions to
mortality

1. Rage - Edna St. Vincent Millay
#8
2. Submission
3. Denial - Freud's refusal
192 to face death
would not go to cemetery
for mother's interment

Dying need not be agony
When Goethe's mother lay on her deathbed
her servant girl brought her invitation to
a party. The old lady told the girl: "Say that Mrs Goethe
is unable to come, she's busy dying at
the moment."

The Motion Picture Mephisto

Louis B Mayer when solicited for a
Charity and told "You can't take it with
you when you go" - replied
PS 49.17
"If I can't take it with me, I won't go"

Poet

Dylan Thomas discussed w. the friend the
Friend on concept of the "death wish"

The friend asked, "Who wants to die?"

Thomas answered "Oh, I do"

But why? asked the friend?

"Just for a change" - answered Thomas

How much of a change is death?

We cannot change the cards we are dealt
We can choose how to play them



157-9

From Randy Pausch

Yizhar

Spend your time with as much
Care & Caution, as you spend your
Money — even more so because
Money can be replaced — but an
hour of your lifetime spent is gone
& irreplaceable.

p179 "I'm dying and I'm having fun.
And I'm going to keep having fun every day I
have left." [Author of
The Last Lecture]

p192 "Try to do things with people dear to you
that they'll find unforgettable"

p204/5 "I'm certainly grateful for having advance
notice of my death — allowing me to prepare
my family for the future"

See website www.thelastlecture.com

So there I was, the "yeshiva bochur" grandson, accompanied by two Gentile friends, roller-skates over my shoulder, embracing my grandmother.

She kissed me and wished me a "Gut Shabbos." But for the first time, she looked at me with terrible disappointment. I'd never, ever seen her look at me like that. She had always looked at me before with enormous pride. Now I even saw tears welling up in her eyes. That look made me understand what I had done. And I think that was the last time I was ever knowingly *mechallel Shabbos*, the last time I ever knowingly desecrated the Sabbath.

I think about that often, because when I picture standing before God's heavenly throne, after a hundred and twenty years, it is not His punishment that I fear. After all, God is biblically described as, "Hashem, Hashem, *kel rahum vehanun*" – the God of love, who loves you both before and after you sin, the God of infinite patience and forgiveness. I think of God with too much love to ever be fearful of Him or of His punishments; that, too, is one of the legacies I got from my grandmother. But I am desperately afraid that maybe He will be disappointed in me. I would never want God, or my grandmother, to ever again look at me in disappointment with tears welling up in their eyes.

On my graduation day from the Yeshiva of Brooklyn, I learned a lesson that helped me immeasurably in my quest not to disappoint my Parent in Heaven. The lesson is the importance of time, and how we must plan every day and every hour of the precious time that God gives us. The guest speaker was Rav Alexander Lichner, founder of Boys Town, Jerusalem, son-in-law of Mr. Mendlowitz, the head of Yeshiva Torah Vodaas (Vodaath), and the inspiring teacher of Rav Mandel, who was so crucial to my early religious development. He looked at us, young and eager, and told us the following mesmerizing analogy from the *Hafetz Hayyim*.

Life is like a post card. You begin to write, and you leave a great deal of space between the letters, words and lines. After all, the post card is large and you don't have all that much to say. But then, as you come toward the end of the card, you realize that it was smaller than you thought, and that you had more to say than you thought. So you squeeze the words together, and you squash the lines in a mad, last-minute

attempt to get everything in. Most of the time you leave out things you wanted to write, because your most important thought – you may not even have space for your name!

Yizkor - Uncertainties of Life

Don't squander time

- See Rishin's "Listening to God"

p 29/30 p"n of join - analog of life
and a postcard

At first you write in big letters
with plenty of space in between
until you get near the bottom
& find you haven't space to tell all
you want to tell

Purpose or Meaning of Life?

Emily Dickinson wrote

"If I can stop one heart from breaking
I shall not live in vain;

If I can ease one life the aching
Or cool one pain
Or help one fainting robin
Unto his nest again
I shall not live in vain"

It's in the spirit of Einstein's
that the purpose of life is to do
good for others - but what then, is
the purpose of the other's life?

Wm Saroyan

Everybody has got to die, but I always
believed an exception would be in
my case. Now what?

Stewart Alsop

A dying man needs to die as a
sleepy man needs to sleep, and
there comes a time when it is
wrong as well as useless to resist

Assumptions of Levity

1. B. B.'s father - Prof Ben Zion Netanyahu passed 101 years
2. Walter Breuninger died last April at age 114

3 Reasons why people are afraid of death

1. Death is an irreversible process - forgetting to go somewhere and never being able to return
2. Death is totally unknown
3. The notion of total extinction - total cessation of being - just is the bodily part. The non-bodily part remains - only we can't describe it

4. Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Ilyich (at age 50)
"Death makes life the evil jest of some devil"
Ivan Ilyich deplores not the sins he may have committed but mourns for the pleasures he mislaid
Tolstoy tries to win us to a full acceptance of the joys of the life of this world.

5. Purpose of Life
Emily, Dickinson's "If I can stop one heart from breaking..."

6. Cicero in his essay on Aging "The satisfactions of the mind are greater than all the rest"

7. Yert's' disgust with his old age

8. Dylan Thomas' Rapt against Death

9. Think of dying to "keep my mind off things"
Poem by Roger McGough

10. The pagan custom of skeleton at banquet

11. Riskin "Don't squander time" - Postcards!

12. Freud's dread of aging

13. Ps 90.12 מִיָּמִים אֲנִי וְיָמַי כַּעֲשָׂרָה יָמִים וְכַעֲשָׂרָה יָמִים

14. Chagall's Chayyam on Life and Postcard

15. Louis B. Mayer - "I won't go"

(a) poet Dylan Thomas - Wants to die "just for a change"

(c) poet's mother joked "being busy ^{dying} at the moment"

(d) 3 meditations to mortality

16. Randy Pennick 1 in dying and having fun

17. Poem Remember by Rossetti

18. Poem When tomorrow starts without me

19. Tagore There is no such thing as Nothing

20. Ans 1 See it about Saul

ABOUT TOLSTOI'S *Death of IVAN ILYICH*

of his life. He abandoned the ways of the aristocratic class into which he had been born and undertook to live as a primitive Christian, committing himself to an extreme simplicity of life and to the service of mankind, especially the poor and the humble. He repudiated art and his own great achievements as a novelist and proposed the doctrine that artistic creation was justified only when it led men to morality and piety.

The particular nature of his crisis is most relevant to "The Death of Ivan Ilych." At the age of fifty, Tolstoi was thrown into a state of despair by his insupportably intense imagination of mortality. It was not a new problem that he confronted—even in his youth he had known periods of black depression because he felt that the inevitability of death robbed life of all meaning. In *Anna Karenina*, the great novel he had completed shortly before the onset of his crisis, Prince Levin, who closely resembles Tolstoi, cannot endure the thought that "for every man, and himself too, there was nothing but suffering, death, and oblivion." Death, he feels, makes life "the evil jest of some devil; and he must either learn to see human existence in some other way or commit suicide. Levin is able to pass beyond this terrible alternative; he overcomes his despair and accepts life for what good he may find in it. For a time it lay within Tolstoi's power to make a similar decision, but the period of calm was not of long duration; the horror of death again became unbearable and could be coped with only by the help of a religious faith.

And yet, despite this much ground for supposing that Tolstoi had an over-religious purpose in writing "The Death of Ivan Ilych," it is not easy to show that the story itself supports the hypothesis. If we search it for religious doctrine we find none. Nor can we even discover in it any significant religious emotion. Although it is true that the conclusion, the moment of Ivan Ilych's escape from pain into peace and even into "light," is charged with feelings and described in metaphors that are part of the Christian tradition, the passage can scarcely be taken as a genuinely religious affirmation or as effectually controverting the thoughts that the dying man has had about "the cruelty of God, and the absence of God."

On the contrary, it might well seem that Tolstoi, by his representation of death, is trying to win us not to the religious life but, rather, to a full acceptance of the joys of the life of this world. From the Christian point of view, his intention might even seem to be open to the charge of paganism. It was an ancient pagan custom to seat a human skeleton at a feast as *memento mori*, a reminder of death, to urge upon the revelers the idea that life is short and that the fleeting hours must be snatched; just so does Tolstoi use Ivan Ilych's death to shock us into awareness of what it means to be alive.

And it is not the virtuous life that Tolstoi has in mind or the pious life—he means life in any actuality, any life that is really lived. Ivan Ilych is remarkable not for the sins he committed but for the pleasures he never took. "Ivan Ilych's life had been most simple and most ordinary and therefore most terrible," says Tolstoi in the famous opening sentence, and as the reader follows Ivan Ilych's career as a "successful" person, he cannot but conclude that even a poor man's taking of pleasure had involved his sinning, his life would have been less "ordinary" and therefore less "terrible."

And this would indeed seem to be a pagan conclusion. But perhaps it is not only pagan—perhaps it is also to be understood as Christian. For

life there cannot be a spiritual life, without the capacity for joy or delight there cannot be the conception of the happiness of salvation. The first inhabitants of Hell whom Dante meets on his journey are the Neutrals or Trimmers, the people who had lived "without disgrace and without praise"—those who, as Dante says of them, "were never alive." It was thus that Ivan Ilych had lived, without disgrace and without praise, as one who was never alive. In his maturity only three things had afforded him pleasure—his official position and the power over other men that it gave him; the decoration of his pretentious and conventional home; and playing whist. He had never known the joy of loving or of being loved. He had never felt the sting of passion or the energy of impulse. He had never experienced the calm pleasure of moral satisfaction such as might come from the consciousness of having been loyal or generous. He had never admired anyone or anything; he had never been interested in anything or anyone, not even, really, in himself. He had never questioned or doubted anything, not even himself.

Indeed, he had lived without any sense that he had a self or was a self. He had assumed all the roles that respectable society had assigned to him: he had been a public official, a husband, a father. But a self he had never been, not between the time of his childhood (when there had been a little glow of pleasure and affection) and the time of his dying. Only at the point of his extinction is selfhood revealed to him. The means by which the revelation is effected are agonizing; it comes through pain and fear, through self-pity, through a hopeless childlike longing for comfort and love. Yet in his awful dissolution, Ivan Ilych is more fully a human being than he had ever been in the days of his armored unawareness of himself. And it is when he has been tortured into an awareness of his own self that he can at last, for the first time, begin to recognize the actuality of other selves, that of the young peasant Gerasim and that of his poor sad son.

looked in the mirror a way
years, irritated disgust
at the course of old age

The Tower

What shall I do with this absurdity -
O heart, O troubled heart - his caricature,
Deceit age that has been tried for me
As to a Lopez tail? -

Re Yizhar ^(Socrates in old age took lessons in dancing & playing instruments) Simon in Yeshu

What to do w. the time still available — Copy!

AS I SEE IT — Take Time!

Sept 15 1971

Refer to Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be" view of death — "Dread of the Unknown"

... of experience &

David Fouman in his remarks on my 80th, quoted
Schopenhauer "The first 40 years of
life are the fact, the rest is
commentary."

Gidd. Fraenkel As we grow older,
for the unlearned, it is winter
— to the learned, it is a
time of harvest

Frenkel's
fear of
Ageing: Frenkel dreaded ageing.
At age 44 he referred to himself
as "a shabby old 1st celite" At 50
he deplored his "decapitule". A visiting
friend remarked to see in Frenkel "the old age
complex" though most often Frenkel
was cheerful even optimistic

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Check on 'Mollie Kruger's column
Unholy Writ.

Autocracy of Death
— So What?

Answer Ps 90.12

למנו ימינו כן / וְיָדַעַתְּ אֲרָכְךָ
אֲרָכְךָ וְכֹחַ יְמֵיךָ

So teach us to number our
days that we may get us a
heart of wisdom.

It's like spending money —

If you have a limited amount
you must be careful spending it!

With a limited life-time, you
must be wise and careful

in spending each day

~~That's not specific enough~~
What is a wise way of spending

your life?

That's what Judaism
- or Jewish learning is all
about -

These Priorities

- ① Family relations
- ② Accumulation of learning
- ③ Enjoy each day

A balanced life

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the
hand,

Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you
plann'd:

Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while 9
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be
sad.

[1849]

[1862]

THE THREE ENEMIES

[1862]

THE FLESH

'Sweet, thou art pale.'

'More pale to see
Christ hung upon the cruel tree
And bore His Father's wrath for me.'

'Sweet, thou art sad.'

'Beneath a rod
More heavy, Christ for my sake trod
The winepress of the wrath of God.'

'Sweet, thou art weary.'

'Not so Christ:
Whose mighty love of me sufficed
For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist.'

'Sweet, thou art footsore.'

'If I bleed,
His feet have bled: yea, in my need 11
His Heart once bled for mine indeed.'

THE WORLD

Sweet, thou art young.'

'So He was young
Who for my sake in silence hung
Upon the Cross with Passion wrung.'

'Look, thou art fair.'

'He was more fair
Than men, Who deigned for me to wear
A visage marred beyond compare.'

'And thou hast riches.'

'Daily bread
All else is His; Who living, dead,
For me lacked where to lay His Head.'

'And life is sweet.'

'It was not
To Him, Whose Cup did overflow
With mine unutterable woe.'

THE DEVIL

'Thou drinkest deep.'

'When Christ would sup
He drained the dregs from out my cup:
So how should I be lifted up?'

'Thou shalt win Glory.'

'In the skies
Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes
Lest they should look on vanities.'

'Thou shalt have Knowledge.'

'Helpless dost thou
In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:
Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just.'

'And Might.'—

'Get thee behind me, Lord
Who hast redeemed and not abhorred
My soul, oh keep it by Thy Word.'

[1851]

[1862]

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes
bright

As sunlight on a stream;
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bright
sweet,

Whose wakening should have been
Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide
meet;

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me,
and I'm not there to see;
If the sun should rise and find your eyes,
all filled with tears for me;
I wish so much you wouldn't cry,
the way you did today,
while thinking of the many things,
we didn't get to say.

2 I know how much you love me,
as much as I love you,
and each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too;

But when tomorrow starts without me,
please try to understand,
that an angel came and called my name,
and took me by the hand,
and said my place was ready,
in heaven far above,
and that I'd have to leave behind,
all those I dearly love.

But as I turned to walk away,
a tear fell from my eye.
for all life, I'd always thought,
I didn't want to die.

I had so much to live for,
so much yet to do.
it seemed almost impossible,
that I was leaving you.

I thought of all the yesterdays,
the good ones and the bad,
thought of all the love we shared,
and all the fun we had.

If I could relive yesterday,
just even for awhile,
I'd say goodbye and kiss you
and maybe see you smile.

But then I fully realized,
that this could never be.
for emptiness and memories,
would take the place of me.

And when I thought of worldly things,
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you, and when I did,
my heart was filled with sorrow.

imaginary
A sentimental dialogue
of a mourner with the
deceased partner
who is physically gone
but remains as a
remembrance
but remembrance is
not presence and
cannot alleviate the
pain of loss

But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me,
from His great golden throne,
He said, "This is eternity,
and all I've promised you".

Today for life on earth is past,
but here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow,
but today will always last,
and since each day's the same day,
there's no longing for the past.

But you have been so faithful,
so trusting and so true.
Though there were times you did some things,
you knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven
and now at last you're free.
So won't you take my hand
and share my life with me?

3

So when tomorrow starts without me,
don't think we're far apart,
for every time you think of me,
I'm right here, in your heart.

David M. Romano



b. in 1861 d. 1937 - first Asian writer to receive Nobel Prize in Lit. (1913) Rabindranath Tagore on Death } came from one of India's richest families
From Review by Adam Kirsch of The Essential Tagore Harvard (2011)
Tagore was crushed by death in suicide of his sister-in-law with whom he seems to have had a romantic relation
It was his experience - first moment of death "I was unaware then of the slightest lock anywhere in my life."

There seemed no loophole in its tightly woven

in The New Yorker
May 30, 2011
p. 79



THE UNFATHOMABLE GOD

How does God know? Why would God care? Is it conceivable that God responds to my prayer? Is it not an utterly absurd notion, a colossal conceit, to expect God to pay attention to so minuscule a being as an individual human being?

Could I, pay attention to a single cell among the many billions of my body? Yet, each cell counts and is connected with all my limbs and organs, with the whole of my body. So is God and all God's creatures. The great truth is connectedness. The one big difference is that God consciously relates to each being, however minuscule. How is it conceivable? It is not --- but remember as Isaiah said in chapter 55.8ff "My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways...."

The great truth is connectedness. God and the cosmos in all its parts are connected. Do I know it? Do I understand it? NO ! but I believe it.

On the basis of KNOWLEDGE alone, I would be an atheist. But since my knowledge relates only to an infinitesimal part of reality, my knowledge is inadequate for conclusions.

The unimaginable dimensions of the unknown leave room for BELIEF. I choose to Believe that INTELLIGENCE, DESIGN AND PURPOSE are at the core of all existence. That core is GOD and God's abiding connection with all is the equivalent of LOVE.

REFLECTIONS ON HOW I AM REFLECTED IN THE RETIREMENT MIRROR

BILL CUTTER

These comments are a chance for me to look at the experience of partial retirement and to share with colleagues and friends whatever I have learned about myself. I don't have any grand philosophical claims nor much that is of a particular clinical nature. But I have had a good look at myself and have used that to consider the experience of friends and colleagues who share my status.

Several clichés come to mind as I begin these remarks. Some of them are partly true. There is that old play on the word "tire," so that retirement just means putting on a new tread, while you keep the engine running and the old auto moving forward; then there is the notion that you should plan your retirement carefully; finally I think of the current shibboleth that "today's 80 is yesterday's 60."

My response to these hopeful notions is that 1) "retired" also contains the word "tired," and sometimes I am more tired than I used to be at the same time of day. But the truth is that retirement is probably the wrong word; 2) you can't plan your "retirement" carefully because denial is part of how we live so that planning ahead is unlikely, and anyway new opportunities come up that one could never have anticipated; and—finally—3) nearing 80 is still a milestone and has its own limitations. It is our ability to accept the limitations of our particular time in life that might work best—knowing that new and younger people will build their tomorrows out of stuff we have created—and they will do so without even acknowledging that this is the case.

Sometimes that is painful, because people have a way of acknowledging your contribution only in the most general way, perhaps remembering a story or two about you, but basically moving on after having assimilated all that you have left them to work with. The trick for us "retirees" is to suspend the ego so that such over-simplifications don't matter. But an interesting reversal is possible here, it seems to me: just as I have to get used to the disadvantages that come with aging, so young people should be trained to get accustomed to the disadvantages that come with youth. That could be the opening of a fruitful dialogue. And perhaps it would begin to change the definition of what is "normative" or canonical about our professional status.

There are some people who really look forward to getting back to their hobbies or to their favorite organizations so that they may take better photographs or create a better tomato. And there are certainly people who are happy that they are ready to leave Consolidated Sheet Metal Manufacturing Company after forty years in the vice-presidential suite that nearly wore them down. People with a lot of money have to spend

a lot of time investing and harassing their portfolio managers. But I don't have a lot of money, and my organization might as well be called Consolidated Neurotic Attachment, formerly Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and there is nothing I would rather do than stay in touch with the institution, its faculty and its students. But, then, few of us are so lucky as to have that kind of community in which to work. The principal client of the College-Institute needs renewal on a revolving basis, so there is always a freshness of need and aggravation with "that new generation" who knew not Joseph.

I try to contribute during retirement by teaching a little, and nagging people on the few committees where I serve. Both my teaching and my nagging have remained pretty strong, so now I only have to work on doing a little less of both. My biggest challenge has been to let my voice be heard a little less on the grounds that people have taken you more seriously than you may believe, and that they are ready to hear their own voices a little more. This has been my biggest challenge, to be sure, but the other challenge has been to get more accustomed to my home, less familiar with the kitchen, and liberated from the telephone. I recently interviewed four aging friends from outside our professional community and heard from them what their anxieties were. Each case was different, but in one way or another each was aware of the possibility that they might become "a drag" on the community one generation younger.

My greatest pleasure has been the time to go through some of my old book collections, savor an idea more slowly, and have people call me "sir" in public places. These are not small pleasures. I know that if we had grandchildren, visiting with them would compensate for a lot; and I do not in any way treat that experience casually. But one lives in one's own life, and that is where the retirement and the aging processes call on the clever expositions of old age by Dayle Friedman and Tom Cole—two marvelous expositors of aging. I am not yet at old age, otherwise I would be turning to my friend Shelly Marder.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE
But all of us are on this road. So the key to life for Cole and Friedman is: to keep the sense of obligation going. Dayle Friedman builds that out of the notion that one is not free from mitzvot just because she is old; and Tom Cole argues the same point from a more socially conscious point of view: service to the world in which we are privileged to live. Do we stop frequently enough to be grateful for having breathed? For having driven up a coast line? For being able to get on a plane and go somewhere? For having the paper delivered to your door in the morning? These opportunities for gratefulness come to my attention more easily now that I am partially

retired, and they have added up to a remarkable sense of gratitude as well as sorrow that most of the people in the world couldn't even understand these words. And so, that gratitude re-enforces the sense of obligation. And whenever I feel sorrowful about any of these dynamic and changing elements in my life, I seek out a friend with whom I might share these strange sensations. Look at the evidence: the editor of our professional journal, of this Newsletter, the wise counselors like Al Vorspan, and Jack Stern, of blessed memory. One could go on and on. The truth is, I feel the drumbeat of time, but when I see who is following after me I am able to add some music to that drumbeat, and really: The melody is not so bad!

Something about Lea Goldberg's variation on Bialik's great theme "When I die, mourn me thus: He had one more song in him" (contained in our old *Rabbis' Manual*) moves me to tears and to action every time I read it:

Many no longer know my name
And fewer still
Know that I have one more rhyme
For them.
I sit down under a tree
And flecks of sun
Fall on my brow
From between the leaves.
I know that tomorrow
All will be quiet
And only in my soul can one hear
The Bat Kol of my thundering youth.
In time past God
Would listen to my prayer
But now he has so many
Other voices to heed.

Choirs of lofty voices
Break out from between the clouds
Singing at him in splinters as if
A stone had been thrown through a window.

But once a year
He bends his ear to me
And says in great compassion:
Child of my old age, old guy
"Is your voice still fresh?
Is your voice still full of dew?
I've kept your old family album
And there I've kept between its leaves
An old dried flower leaf
That you dropped somewhere in your garden."

And in an old family history book
Between the pages you can find
A dried leaf from a flower.

Cutter here: I'll take once a year, and I'll make the most of it.



A Special Note —

An ancient pagan custom to set
a human skeleton at a feast
as memento mori, a reminder of death,
to urge upon the readers the fact
that life is short and that we
must snatch the swiftly passing hours
and draw from them as much joy
as we can — Kohelet

Eat, drink... Isaiah 22

[Yonah is remorseful not for his sins
but for the pleasures he never took,

We have death on our mind

far more often. Now we

are willing to talk about it



Arthur Hugh Clough 1819-1861

It fortifies my soul to know
That though I perish, Truth is so

Re: Foxhole faith

'And almost everyone when age,
Disease, or Sorrows strike him
Inclines to think there is a God,
Or something very like Him
from *Dipsychus* - 1862

If hopes can be dupes
Fears can be liars

Yizkor

Main cause of death is life

All life is a funeral illness



Yahrzeit "Memorial" Lamp

"Memorial" - so soon after death hardly needed
Memorial light is a misnomer

Real purpose is to help us, the living, to face
death with the help of faith in immortality.
Not by remembering the departed but to remember the
spirit/soul - which is God's light and everlasting
Death - a crushing blow to our sense of
Security - Are we really eternal?
As cynics said - "From dust to dust"

This is what we see. Could
there be an invisible something
in the human being that does
not die?

This is precisely the stubborn affront
of our faith

Prov 20.27 פְּרִימוֹת הַיָּיָן
man's spirit is the light of God
Long lasting ie eternal

Jewish mysticism goes into more detail - it speaks of God scattering sparks of His own Being among all the living. These sparks are gathered up in the moment of death to become again part of the Eternal Light of the Universe.

Do not stop at the sentence

Just returns to Just —
but add its 2nd part

but the spirit returns
to God Who gave it

Lillard in one of his essays says
that he is not worried about his
condition or death but dying -
that's hard to take

~~Not~~ Not death but dying is what
~~troubles me~~ troubles me

II K: 20. 1 Prophet Isaiah said to the
king Hezekiah Set your ^{affairs} house in
order for you are going to die

Ps 49. 17 "In death no one will carry anything
away"

In the News ■

"Prettyfying death"

30% Percentage of U.S. households that have no life insurance coverage.



■ An artist decorated this personalized coffin.

A Happy Final Resting Place

■ If your life has been filled with joyous experiences, why spend the rest of eternity sealed in a run-of-the-mill casket? ■ That's part of the reason a Singapore philanthropy partnered with a local nursing home to come up with a concept known as "happy coffins." The Lien Foundation commissioned a community of Singapore artists and designers to create personalized coffins for three of the home's residents. ■ Before the wooden caskets were painted, the three recipients discussed their lives, passions and dreams with the artists tasked with customizing the coffins. ■ One casket had a colorful rendering of yellow sunbursts, musical notes and angels against a white background, along with the words: "Love is the only thing we can carry with us as we go & it makes the end easy." ■ "The traditional negative associations surrounding the coffin were transformed into a celebratory symbol of courage, life and beauty," says Lien CEO Lee Poh Wah, 40. "It gets people to focus on how the departed have lived." —Blair S. Walker

FROM

TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

an old man, a young man.

and life's greatest lesson

by Mitch Albom, Doubleday, 1997

p.170.....Mitch wonders how he might continue conversations with Morrie after Morrie's death, when visiting his grave. Morrie reassures him and smiles, “ **‘Tell you what. After I’m dead, you talk. And I’ll listen. ‘**

p.174.....”**As long as we can love each other, and remember the feeling of love we had, we can die without ever really going away. All the love you created is still there. Death ends a life,not a relationship”**

p159.....At a basket ball game when the Brandeis team seemed to be winning,the students began to chant “We’re number one! We’re number one! Morrie stood up and yelled: “**What’s wrong with being number two ?”** The students looked at him and stopped chanting.

REFLECTIONS AFTER READING TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

In his interviews with Ted Koppel, Morrie stated point by point how to prepare oneself for death:

1. Talk about it
2. Accept it
3. Keep an open heart (to new ideas, feelings, experiences, friendships,)
4. Be alert to what interests you and go for it
5. Be compassionate toward yourself and others...Treat yourself gently
6. Mourning never stops..i.e. we shall again and again fall into rage, bitterness, regrets
7. Come to terms with your unresolved relationships ----reconcile, forgive

On Religion in the face of death: Morrie acknowledged that he was an agnostic from age 16 until the onset of his final illness. “What changed your mind” -- asked Koppel. Morrie explained: **A growing sense of the interconnectedness of all things. I’m part of some larger Power..... Maybe the difference between life and death is not so great, not a chasm but a little bridge.**

Morrie concludes that there must be something beyond, the world is not sufficient, but "I don't know what is beyond."

This reminded me of the famous song of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav:

Kol ha-olam kulo gesher tzar me-od, v'ha-ikar lo l'fached klal

*All the world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is
not to be afraid*

I now understand the saying of the Bratzlaver as belief in a multi-dimensional universe and this life as something transitional, a short phase moving across "a narrow bridge" toward another dimension of being. The point is that in life and in death **we remain connected with something larger than ourselves.**

Morrie sums up his approach to death : "Keep connected and let go."

IT IS NOT IN OUR POWER TO ESCAPE DEATH BUT WE MAY
CHOOSE HOW TO DIE

Morrie stressed that we should identify the way we want to die, with fear or serenity, anger or gentleness....Be compassionate, loving, take responsibility for your self and others.

SUMMING UP MY IMPRESSION OF MORRIE SCHWARTZ:

What matters is not so much what he said but saying these things with death "knocking at his door." It's the example of how to face death with dignity, even humor at times and overcoming all the natural bitterness in response to dreadful illness and the certainty of imminent death.

Morrie refused euthanasia. The reason, it seems, was that Morrie had found a great purpose for living and that was helping others face

death by his example. Viktor Frankel, founder of logotherapy, would say that Morrie derived his strength to face death from the purpose he recognized in living to the very end.



F A X

TO: Elizabeth Barnett

FROM: Joshua O. Haberman (Tel:301 770-4787 Fax: 301 984 8687)

Kindly write or fax permission to quote the poem below (with whatever corrections you may wish to make) in my forthcoming commentary on the Psalms, now tentatively entitled: Healing Psalms: The Dialogues with God that Help you Cope with Life

From "Moriturus"
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

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

I hope this is correct, --- and many thanks!

ETHICAL WILL QUESTIONS

Instructions: Introduce the idea of the ethical will as a "love letter to your family." If there is any confusion, refer back to this broader **definition of an ethical will**:

An ethical will is a record of the significant moments in a person's life, and a compilation of insights that this person has derived from these experiences. Ethical wills enable the composer to pass his or her wisdom, perceptions and moral conclusions onto others, in the hope that they may positively influence the actions of future generations.

Then proceed into the interview itself. Feel free to change the order of the questions you ask, skip some, or add new ones based on how the interview is going and what the resident seems to be responding well to.

Values and Education

1. **What values and beliefs are important to you and which you would like to pass on to others?**
(Offer example of a value - ---- education)
2. **What are your spiritual beliefs?**

THOUGHTS

3. Do you have children? **What thoughts would you like to pass down** to your children and or grandchildren? If no children, what thoughts would you like to pass down to others?
4. What books or films were most influential to you? What did they teach you?

WORDS OF WISDOM

5. What advise would you offer other people about **how they should live their lives?** Or- **What words of wisdom** do you wish to impart to the next generation?
6. Is there **anything in your life that you want others to know** about? This is a gift to your family.

LIFE EXPERIENCES

7. **What have you learned from your life experiences** that you can share with us? Are there any particular experiences that you wish to share with your family or friends? Why did you choose these ones, out of your many memories? What have those experiences taught you?
8. **Have you ever had a life altering experience** or an event that changed your life that you can share with us? How did this event affect you? Was this the most significant moment of your life?

9. **What was the most meaningful event** in your life? Was it the result of a great deal of work? Did it change the way you view the world?
10. **What makes your life worth living?** Was it a particular relationship, your work, a group you were a part of?

LIFE'S LESSONS

11. **Did you have dreams when you were young** that you filled? Didn't fulfill?
12. **Have you learned something from your parents or grandparents** that you wish to share with your children or others?
13. **Who is or was the most important person in your life** and what did you learn from that person?
14. Were there any others who greatly impacted your life? What did they do or say?

REGRETS AND GRATITUDE

15. **Is there something that you are grateful for?**
16. **Do you have regrets** of something you did not do?? Or something you did?
17. What were the things in your life that **you are most proud of?**

DECISIONS

18. What was the **hardest decision you ever made?**
19. **What hopes and/or dreams do you have for your loved ones?**
20. Is there anything in your life that you should have done differently?

CHANGE AND THE FUTURE

21. If you could **change one thing in the world**, what would it be? How would you change it??
22. If you only had one year left to live, what would you do?

Questions, Remarks of the Dying

1) I am afraid.

I am not ready to die.

Am I dying now?

Is today the day I will die?

There is so much I want to do before I die.

I am going to be fine. I'm not planning to die any time soon.

I am not angry. I'm just very, very sad.

I am ready to die.

I just want it to be over.

I am waiting to die. I have nothing to live for and nothing to look forward to.

2) I wish my children would let me go.

I feel like I am disappointing my family – letting them down – by not fighting anymore.

I am worried about how my family (my children, my husband, etc.) will manage without me.

What upsets me the most is that I have to say goodbye to my family.

3) What kind of God would make someone suffer and linger like this?

The doctor suggested that I go into hospice. Isn't that giving up?

How can I have peace and acceptance before I die?

Is it okay to want to die?

How does one know that it is time to die? When is it time to let go?

Why are you here?

Will you officiate at my funeral?

If only I believed that there is something after we die. What scares me the most is that there will be absolutely nothing.

Is there an afterlife? Is it okay if I believe in one?

On Aging & Death

from Raymond
P. Scheindlin

•29•

בשנה או שנתיים לילד / רחישו יש בצפועו נחשים,
ובן עשר יקפץ בין אבותיו / בארץ בגדי בינות תישים.
ובן עשרים אהוב ללב ואהב / להתפאר ומתהדר לנשים,
והתנאה והתנאה כחיו / ושחרותו והודו בן שלשים.
והתמם והתחבר בבואו / בארבעים לרציו הישישים—
ויקץ משנת ילדות ושחרות / בלבון ראש וזקן בן חמשים.
ובלהות הזמן עוברות ושבות / עלי איש עת אשר יבוא בשישים.
ומשישים לשבעים גאנח מן / כאב זקן ונקאה בין קדושים.
וילמד הזמן את בן שמונים / במלכתו ופחיו הקיושים,
והתערבו לבן תשעים דרכיו / ולא ידע קצירים מתרישים.
ובן מאה — ומי יגע למאה? — / לתמה ילכו אליו אנשים,
ובן מות — אחי תולע ורמה / מאוס אחים מגאל הלבושים.
הלא אחביר דבר נהי לקונן / לבכי בו וגופי לתדשים!

שמואל הנגיד

Wine, Women & Death
Medieval Hebrew poems

•29•

A child of one or two can get around
By crawling like a snake upon the ground.
A ten-year old frolics in glee amid
His elders, as among the goats the kid.
At twenty years a man's on pleasure bent;
To captivate the girls his whole intent.
A man of thirty years is at his height;
His looks, black hair, and strength are his delight.
When forty comes upon a man he tends
To spend his time among his aging friends.
He puts his youthful daydreams out of sight,
When fifty turns his hair and beard to white.
A man becomes obsessed with morbid fears
On finding himself arrived at sixty years.
From sixty to seventy, groaning with age and gout,
He sits among the elderly devout.
The eighty-year old man is scarce aware
That Time has caught him in its mighty snare.
At ninety years a man lives in a daze;
He can't tell plowing time from harvest days.
A hundred-year old man is but a freak;
They come to stare at such a queer antique.
A corpse is something everybody loathes,
With worms and maggots in its burial clothes.
And so laments and dirges I indite,
To mourn my life and body day and night.

Samuel the Nagid

Uncertainty

George W Bush famous remark
criticized & ridiculed by some but true

to fact "Stuff happens"



Just a note ...

Yizker II

on Death

What troubles people
is not so much the
certainty of ^{dying} death
but how one will
die. ~~People~~ ~~than~~ the
~~few~~ ~~of~~ ~~death~~ is worry about
how death would
come.

To JOE LAIBERT from Jerusalem - after his discharge from hospital & resign. fr. P.H.S.B. Glass Aug 10, 1967
If only you could... Not be concerned at all about -5- "Security" why should a man of your ability, record of achievement and means worry? From my point of view, your report and is full of straight "A's" and I only wish you would, in your own mind, not down-grade yourself. Is there a recipe against fear, worry? Is it possible to gain self-confidence, trust, faith in the future? I believe it is. Be strictly empirical. Have you not managed to meet all kinds of situations well in the many thousands of days that are passed? Your powers were equal to the need day by day. It should fill you with the assurance that tomorrow will find you equally qualified to handle your affairs as yesterday and today. There is just one addendum: Nobody but nobody can only win. The most successful must at all times be ready to tolerate certain losses. For life is very much like a business which shows no profit without expenditures. To make money you must be ready to lose money. To live successfully, you must be ready to suffer some losses. Biologically, life is a chain-reaction of simultaneous little revivals following sharply on the heel of countless little deaths. Part of us dies every moment, while the ~~new~~ self is growing into new life. Trust that for a long time yet to come, the force of life, the power for renewal within you will have the upper hand. Take the small defeats and losses of every day life with the inner trust that forces of victory are gathering at the same time, leading you, unbeknown to yourself, to triumph. Death

If I may speak theologically, what I have just pointed out is my understanding of the doctrine of resurrection. "The revival of the dead" is an on-going process in this life, as part of our normal existence which, as I said, is every moment new life rising out of the grave of that part of ourself which is vanishing..... Yes, your security does not depend on Pittsburgh Glass. It does not even depend on what you alone are able to do for yourself. Your security is in the endless reservoir of power that flows into your life by the grace of God without your doing so much as lifting a finger.....

Your reference to an invention of yours caught us all by surprise. What is it? In any event, Mazal Tov! Your vacation trip --freely roaming about -- must have done you loads of good. By now, you are back in the routine of daily work and we all hope that it too agrees with you.

We all were most interested in Ruth's letter in which the words "boy" "male" and "Eric" occur with spectacular frequency. But, I see with pride that life is not all play for you, beloved niece. Work as a nursery school teacher should be rewarding in experience if not compensation. You can learn a lot about true human nature from those little devil-angels who make scarcely an attempt to conceal their true ambiguous human nature. Of course you do not overwork--- regular swimming club visits with Adina take care of that! (Wish we could get such a bargain \$15 per season) What kind of college is that which offers river-boat cruises, parties etc. as you mention in connection with "college orientation?"

Now, Ruthie, hold on to your seat. On my way back from Mount Zion (mentioned earlier in this letter) I spotted a group of American girls and having only Danny with me, I offered them a ride to town. 2 of them turned out to be daughters of rabbis and one a class-mate of yours! Toby Chepnick claims that she graduated together with you from highschool this year and asked me to send you regards. She is spending this year at the Chaim Greenberg Institute studying Israel, Hebrew, touring and some academic work. Small world.

Please forgive Debby for not answering your latest letter. She is spending this week at Hannah's Kibbutz as you know. Judy has no excuse and, I hope, will write you soon.

Love and kisses

Josh

19 dectm total extraction².

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.2&thid=12d986701ef64841&mt...> 1/19/2011



Bibi's father - 101 years old

May 4, 2011

■ AGE IS no impediment to Prof. Ben Zion Netanyahu, who celebrated his 101st birthday in March of this year. The prime minister's father, who is in full command of his faculties, lives in Jerusalem, but had no problem traveling to Tel Aviv for the launch of the 11th volume of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's letters. Netanyahu arrived at the Jabotinsky Institute without fanfare, to the pleasant surprise of many of the veteran Revisionists who had come to honor the memory of their revered leader. One of the speakers at the event was Dr. **Ido Netanyahu**, the prime minister's younger brother, who brought their father along for the ride. Ben-zion Netanyahu had a double reason for attending: Aside from taking pride in the oratory of his son, he had been a close associate of Jabotinsky's, as had his father, Rabbi Natan Milikowski. In welcoming the elder Netanyahu, Jabotinsky Institute director **Yossi Ahimeir** noted that he was probably the only person in the country who had not only known Jabotinsky personally, but worked alongside him and had a lengthy correspondence with him.

greerfc@gmail.com

Some Definitions You Won't Find in Your Dictionary

- ADULT:** A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.
- BEAUTY PARLOR:** A place where women curl up and dye.
- CANNIBAL:** Someone who is fed up with people.
- CHICKENS:** The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead.
- COMMITTEE:** A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.
- DUST:** Mud with the juice squeezed out.
- EGOTIST:** Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.
- GOSSIP:** A person who will never tell a lie if the truth will do more damage.
- HANDKERCHIEF:** Cold storage.
- INFLATION:** Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.
- INTOXICATION:** Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
- MYTH:** A female moth.
- MOSQUITO:** An insect that makes you like flies better.
- RAISIN:** Grape with a sunburn.
- SARCASM:** The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the recipient who just doesn't get it.
- SECRET:** Something you tell to one person at a time.
- SKELETON:** A bunch of bones with the person scraped off.
- TOOTHACHE:** The pain that drives you to extraction.
- TOMORROW:** One of the greatest labor-saving devices of today.
- YAWN:** An honest opinion openly expressed.
- WRINKLES:** Something other people have; you have character lines.

Here We Are Again... The High Holidays!

continued from page 3

about yourself and others (by the way, I use Papermate Sharpwriter pencils because they erase totally clean). Then start a list to be continued when you are inspired to do things you want to do on the path ahead – things that enhance your mind, body and spirit, which should start you in a direction that will bring you joy and satisfaction, and take notes. Let me know what interesting things you come up with so I can pass them on to

others. You can help others while helping yourself. You are the key; please e-mail me (marcia@inter.net.il) or write to me c/o AACI.

May it be written and may it be sealed, that each of you has a New Year that brings fulfillment and happiness, peace and prosperity, and a good healthy, satisfying year full of life's very best things.

See next page on
AGING

Henry James's Jewish Biographer

by Arnold Sable, Kibbutz Kabri

Leon Edel

I have always been interested in the lives of children of Jewish immigrants to North America, those who made a great success of themselves in the arts. These are people who started life in the New World with practically nothing but their intelligence and drive. Coming from humble backgrounds, they somehow managed to accomplish remarkable things.



him from becoming one of the great biographers of the twentieth century with his five-volume biography of Henry James.

And, for me, an especially intriguing question is how this Jew entered this totally non-Jewish world, the world of Henry James, who was a snob and an esthete. How did Leon Edel gain entrance to the homes of gentile English aristocrats, get their

The list is almost endless. Everyone has his or her own favorite examples... Irving Berlin (1888-1989), born Israel Baline in Belarus. Kirk Douglas, born Issur Danielovitch in 1916 to parents also from Belarus. Harold Pinter (1930-2008), whose grandparents came from Poland and Odessa. Philip Roth, born 1933 to parents from Galicia. The Canadian author, Mordecai Richler (1931-2001), whose grandfather was a rabbi from Galicia.

How did they achieve what they did? Were they born with special qualities? Or did their luck or their being at a certain place or time help them become what they became? Did the fact that they were Jewish have something to do with their achievement? Questions such as these are material for a discussion, but provide no real, agreed-upon answer for their successes.

Someone not as well known, and not in the celebrity category, is for me one of the best examples of Jewish achievement. Leon Edel (1907-1997) fits my categorization. Edel was the first child of Russian-Jewish immigrants. His father, Simon, was a tailor, then a storekeeper in Saskatchewan. His mother, Fannie Malamud, took Leon and his brother back to Russia for a 13-month stay. In Canada their house had no library. Edel had to borrow books from Winnipeg, 400 miles away. These inconveniences did not prevent

confidences and their help in his work on Henry James?

Didn't Leon Edel ever encounter anti-Semitism? Weren't there people who refused to have anything to do with him, who refused to turn over James's letters to him or reveal facts about Henry James because Edel was Jewish? These are intriguing questions, ones that will never be answered.

What a life Leon Edel had. His house in Saskatchewan was a two-story frame house with a wood stove and a coal-burning stove. Imagine the winters on the Canadian prairies, sub-zero temperatures, heavy snowfall... imagine summers with scorching heat.

Imagine being a Jew in this sparsely settled land, although Edel said that he did not experience anti-Semitism. But loneliness was a problem for him.

The Edel family eventually moved to Montreal. Leon entered McGill University, where he received his B.A. in 1927 at the age of 20. It was also at this time that he first heard of Henry James, one of America's great writers.

After working as a journalist at a local Montreal newspaper, Edel won a scholarship from the Province of Quebec that enabled him to live in Paris. There he received a doctorate from the

continued on bottom of next page

Henry James's Jewish Biographer

Re AGING

Sorbonne. One the heels of this achievement, he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, which enabled him to edit the plays of Henry James.

During WW II, Edel served under General Patton and was present at the liberation of Paris. Three years after the James plays were published, he began his biography of Henry James. People flooded him with James material, and he was welcomed into the homes of the English aristocracy who talked to Edel about the James they had known. They turned over to him their letters from James.

Two "piquant" details about Henry James: the man was an avid - perhaps avaricious - diner-outer. He was invited to so many meals at restaurants and great houses that it would take a book to describe the food and the guests at these hundreds of meals. Another detail, albeit a sad one: at the end of his life, he built a bonfire at his house in Rye, England. There he burned his huge,

voluminous correspondence, letters he had received and saved through the years. The letters, a magnificent collection, assuredly from great and famous people, took two days to burn. What a loss for literature!

Leon Edel's biography of Henry James, in five volumes, took 19 years to write. For some of the volumes he received a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

I do have an ulterior motive for writing about Leon Edel for the *Senior Spectator*. I wanted to end with a quotation from Edel's writings, something I keep above my desk and look at every day:

AGING

"The answer to old age is to keep one's mind busy and to go on with one's life as if it were interminable. I always admired Chekhov for building a new house when he was dying of tuberculosis."

③ On Newism

Hillel's אין אדם יודע את אלוהים

④ Title for my Y K Seminar

~~FROM A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE~~
~~EXPLORING THE HUMAN CONDITION~~

List topics on front cover

① The Dilemma of Aging
You want to no longer but
not be old

② My Y K Seminar or Lecture
on MEMOIRS

Auticipating a
~~with my~~ sharply reduced future
my hope now rests on the
possibility that I am a late
bloomer as worded in Pg 92

אין אדם יודע את אלוהים

גילי לופטוס פסנתר

ילידת טורונטו, 1989, עלתה ארצה בשנת 1992. החלה את לימודי הפסנתר בגיל שש בקונסרבטוריון העירוני מבשרת-ציון אצל מיכאל מרמינסקי. שירתה בצה"ל במעמד של מוסיקאית מצטיינת, בוגרת תכנית דיויד גולדמן למוסיקאים צעירים מצטיינים במרכז למוסיקה ירושלים. זוכה במלגות קרן התרבות אמריקה-ישראל משנת 2006. בוגרת תואר ראשון באקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים, בכיתתו של איתן גלברזון. מסיימת לימודי תואר שני משולב בפסנתר ובפסנתר פטישים באוניברסיטת מקגיל בקנדה, אצל שרה ליימן ותום בגין. השתתפה במחנה האמנויות "אינטרלוקן" בארצות הברית, שם זכתה בפרסי-הצטיינות בפסנתר. בשנת 2010 זכתה בפרס ראשון בתחרות הקונצ'רטו הקלאסי באוניברסיטת מקגיל, וניגנה עם תזמורת בניצוחו של אלקסיס האוזר. גילי השתתפה בכיתות-אמן רבות, ביניהן עם ריצ'רד גוד ומאריי פרחיה, ובפסנתר פטישים עם צבי מניקר וברט ואן אורט. הקליטה לקול המוסיקה.

לב אברהם לופטוס כלי נגישה

נולד בקנדה בשנת 1986 ומתגורר בישראל משנת 1992. בוגר התיכון שליד האקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים בכיתתו של אלדד שילוח. שירת בצה"ל במעמד של מוסיקאי מצטיין, הופיע במסגרת להקות צבאיות שונות וייצג את צה"ל בקונצרטים בקנדה. בוגר האקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים בכיתתו של אלון בור; המשיך את לימודיו באוניברסיטת מוצרטאום בזלצבורג, אוסטריה, בהדרכת פיטר זדלו. השתתף בכיתת אמן בהדרכת גרט מורטנסן (קופנהגן). לב זכה בפרסים ראשונים בתחרויות לנגינה בדואו (במסגרת דואו פרדיגמה יחד עם יהונתן גבעוני – השניים אף הופיעו בעבר בצעירים במרכז) ולנגינת סולו של האקדמיה למוסיקה ולמחול בירושלים, וכן בפרס השלישי בתחרות הבין לאומית לנגינת סולו בכלי נגישה פנדים בבולגריה. זוכה מלגות קרן התרבות אמריקה-ישראל. לב היה תדיר נגן אורח בתזמורת הפילהרמונית הישראלית, בתזמורת הסימפונית ירושלים, רשות השידור, בתזמורת הסימפונית הישראלית ראשון לציון, בתזמורת אוניברסיטת מוצרטאום וכן באנסמבל למוסיקה מודרנית "קפריזמה", באנסמבל "מיתר" וב"אנסמבל המאה ה-21". כסולן ניגן עם תזמורת הבמה הישראלית חולון, הסימפוניה הישראלית באר שבע, התזמורת הסימפונית של פלובדיב (בולגריה) ובמסגרת "אנסמבל המאה ה-21". לב הופיע בפסטיבלים נודעים כגון פסטיבל קול המוסיקה בגליל העליון, הפסטיבל הבין לאומי למוסיקה קאמרית בירושלים, שבמסגרתו הופיע תחת שרביטו של דניאל ברנבוים, חגיגות המוסיקה באבו גוש, פסטיבל האליין (אוסטריה) לכלי נגישה והפסטיבל הבין לאומי לכלי נגישה בנובי-סד (סרביה). לב משמש כיום נגן כלי נגישה ואסיסטנט טימפני בתזמורת הסימפונית הישראלית ראשון לציון.

Reliability / peace of mind
your conscience / trying to be one's

Cuppin fruit is a job you can't turn over to another

1/2/1

Essen
Jacob

2) 1/0
10 1/0's

An den = Age of Anxiety

Irony - time of unequalled affluence - a material ease
(transportation - credit cards etc.)

Cult of Happiness

The pretty "Have Fun" on

Matthew's wish "I want my child to be happy"

instead of former "I want my child to amount to something"

Fun comes from English beeh "FON" i.e fool

HAPPINESS

John O'Hara:

Happiness is only for greeting card, Contentment is what we have to achieve

2nd View on Indecision



CROWNE PLAZA

HOTELS & RESORTS

THE PLACE TO MEET

2 Views on Indecision

1st - Do nothing - Many problems
resolve themselves or just go
away without you doing anything
- of Ps 127.2 & Wm James'
quote

2nd Opposite - Act now
Don't sink into mine of procrastination
Proverb He who desires the wind,
will not sow

Ps 40 Reflect. on

Against Irresolution

~~Ps 119:12 I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes~~
I hate the irresolute

ACT
TODAY! 95.7

12/12/12 10/12/12 10/12/12

To day, if only you would listen to his

voice.

Rio Newman's stress on Today: Don't
worry about tomorrow or yesterday

CONTENTMENT

DISCONTENT

Contentment is

happiness

resignation.

but not necessarily lethargic
It allows for will to change to
improve

Contentment

The less desire,
The more Contentment.

What is more miserable than discontent?

Shakespeare in King John IV sc. 2, l. 53

Eccle 1.8 The eyes ^{not} are never satisfied with seeing
5.9 He that loves money (silver) shall not be satisfied with money
and he that loves abundance shall not be satisfied with riches.
וְעַיִן לֹא תִשְׂבֵּעַ בִּרְאוּת וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יֶחֱמַק לֹא יִשְׂבֵּעַ בְּכֶסֶף וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יֶחֱמַק בְּרִבְוֹת לֹא יִשְׂבֵּעַ בְּרִבְוֹת

Re: Contentment

Anecdote: They asked Rodefelle
what he wanted: He answered
with one word: MORE

Check anecdotes on "Contentment"
also under Rodefelle

No experience is wasted
on
Fairy Young


CROWNE PLAZA
HOTELS & RESORTS

THE PLACE TO MEET.

MISTAKES ARE NOT WASTED

Good judgment comes
from experience,
and a lot of that
comes from bad
judgment

Contentment is not Unitary

There are a varieties of contentment

— C. in one's career but not
with one's health

C. in finances but not marriage

C. in one's community but not with
nation politics
In short one could be content in some
ways & discontented in others.

Content with one's personal condition
but not with



Do it Now

Stephen Grellet's "I shall not pass this way again"

Tolstoy: NOW, only time you control

Indian poet "Look to this day!"

Fairy tale Death - helps keep my mind off things.

Arthur Schopenhauer's fear of death

Living in the presence of death:

① Let go

② ~~Accept~~ Limitations

~~What makes you~~ ~~As you change from youth to maturity~~

③ ~~Let go of ambition - expectations~~ We must change

with ~~at~~ every stage of development, from youth to maturity to old age. ~~We must change~~ ~~our~~ ~~one~~ ~~expectations~~

to everything there is a season - ~~say early~~ let go of some interests & activities & way of life and turn to other interests & activities ~~and way~~

more on keeping with you age. Ex I loved skiing but gave it up because it is too risky at my age

~~The ability~~ Every ~~adjustment~~ ~~to~~ new situations requires ability to change, to let go of some things and adopt other things. The ability to adjust & re-adjust is the key - the good life


WORRY

A personal note...

The best way to chase your worries away is to focus on the day.

Rome's philosopher-king,
Marcus Aurelius said

"We can live only in the present moment in this brief now. All the rest of life is... shrouded in uncertainty"

 Leo Tolstoy: "There is only one important time — Now... because it is the only time that we have control over ourselves."

Gael Stribling "The past is a bucket of ashes, so live not in your yesterday, not just for tomorrow, but in the here & Now."

H. P. is unsatisfactory
p. 72/3 Jewish Educat. on
at gymnasium - describes
himself as Rationalist -
Atheist in his youth

p. 104 Schmitzler mentions
a medical student
Richard Kohn, known later
as Dr. Kerry

(p. 246) - Reference to
his attraction to a
young - 16 yr - American
Cora Kohn, on her
visit to relatives in
Tschel,

(p. 291) Interesting view
on the mistaken
beliefs of the era's
liberalism

(116) Arthur Schitzler
totally assimilated family
Only his grand mother
observed a frequent
of Jew. tradition —

fasting on yk & eating
Matzo on Pesach —
but no observance

(155) At age 13 ^{DEATH} ^{sleepless} ^{one night}
suddenly realized w. the
horror ^{responsibility} of death
and broke into weeping.

This truth comes to me
now daily — it doesn't
make me weep but I
can't say I like it.

(182) ^{Tension between} Schitzler & his father.
Schitzler resented his
father's statements of how
much he owed to him
in furthering his career

(129) Lueger
(138) Antisem. Student
Fraternities — Theodor
Heuze

Yizkor 2012

On black Memory Stick

Yizkor Memorial Service 2012

Memorial Service is not, originally, a remembrance of our deceased
Yizkor - May He (God) remember

but a plea to God to remember us, the dead & the living

In grief - learn to let go!

but, if you release your hold on something
can your open hand receive new gifts

Denial of Death

I Sam 20.3 ^{David} There is only one step betw. me & death

Beensen: "Death is always imminent" step 10'00" 1"

I Sam. 12.23 David, on death of his ^{newborn} son & Bathsheba "I shall go to him but he will not return to me"

Diana Athill's book Somewhere Toward The End

She tells how she felt past age 90 when the end can't be far. You can say "Somewhere Toward the End" at any age - 20, 30, 40.

Wm Soroyan 5 days before his death Soroyan told the Assoc. Pres

DENIAL "Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case. Now, what?"

Don T. Putoff

John Singer Sargent - most famous & highly priced portrait painter of his time did hundreds of portraits but the one portrait of his mother he did not get around to finish

Re: Uncertainties of Life

personal being. The only way we can pray to God is by imagining a personal being to whom we direct our prayers. But what does that really mean to you?

KATZ: There are two things to be distinguished here. First I think it is very important in this discussion of basic theological notions not to reduce God solely to the personal. The impersonal, which you've had a tough time relating to, just as I do, is still very much an aspect of divinity, of transcendence. As for the mystery of God, it has rightly been noted, if I could understand God, I would be God. And the Kotzker Rebbe once said, "A God that any Tom, Dick or Harry can understand, phooey, I don't need such a God." So there is always the mystery of the divine transcendence.

But when one conceives of the personal aspects of divinity, that is, God is not a person but has personal aspects, one desires a sense of security and a sense of the meaningfulness of life more than anything else. By security I mean that human life is not a random thing, that it is not absurd, that there is some kind of ultimate purpose into which we fit in some oblique way that is not clear to us. That our actions do matter, and that ultimately there will be a kind of squaring of the circle, that a divine personal being, God, knows how it all fits together. Meaninglessness is the ultimate enemy of Judaism. So for example, in your sermon last Saturday, you mentioned Job. I've always read Job in a confident way because what happens in the whirlwind is that out of the chaos and struggle the Almighty reveals Himself, not how He works—that is the mystery—but that He works. God acts as an agent who provides assurance that there is some ultimate sense to our being, and to the being of the world. In this we find the comfort to know that our life counts and that the world counts and that it's not all Sisyphus, pointlessly rolling the rock up the hill only to have it come back down again and crush us.

Q: I think it was Heschel who said, "When I pray, I speak to God, when I study, God speaks to me." When you read Tanakh [Bible] or hear the Torah read from the *bimah* [pulpit platform], do you understand that to be God's word? In what sense is the Torah God's word?

Among the great and abiding uncertainties of life is —
Does life make sense? If there are reasons for
life, just to be born & die & be forgotten as though
even believers in God have no answer & I can't believe

KATZ: That is a more troubling question than the nature of God in the sense that modern scholarship has brought a tremendous armory to bear on the question of *Torah mi-Sinai* [Torah given at Sinai], that is, a literal revelation of the Torah text as the encoded word of the divine. When I hear the Torah read and studied, having been trained to hear all the critical doubts and know all the critical problems, the challenges do surface and the literal text does become problematic. But there is something about the Torah text, a kind of uncanny quality, that always presses itself upon me. The more I study it closely, as I have done over many years, the more it comes back to redeem the situation, to undo, if not altogether, the doubts, I have. By uncanny I mean that there always seems to be more in the Torah text, a profundity, a depth of human wisdom and transcendental experience that defies ordinary expectation. In every passage, whether we find it explained in the Midrash [Commentary] or some kind of kabbalistic exegesis, there seems to be something quite extraordinary about the Torah text as it speaks to us in every generation. I have tried to wrestle with that. I have tried to make a study, a serious study, of the alternative theories of revelation.

You mentioned Buber. I think it's fair to say that Buber has been the most influential exegete of the modern nonpropositional interpretation of revelation that attempts to defend the theory of revelation in a post-Kantian age, that is, to defend the theory of revelation as not heteronomous, i.e., as not being the command of God, and not literal so that it is not subject to the criticisms of the higher Biblical critics. My own view, however, is that all of the nonpropositional reconstructions of revelation ultimately come to rack and ruin and one has to consider some kind of propositional reading. That helps me take the Bible in some more substantive sense. The other thing is that I always find the "reductive" accounts of Torah, to use that term here, are inadequate. Reading the Torah purely as a psychological account, as a sociological account, as an historical account, as a Marxist account, never does justice to the richness and variety, to the extraordinary fecundity of the Torah as a source and document. All this reinforces, at least for myself, the notion that this is a text of sacred meaning, of sacred origin.

the meaning & purpose of human existence,
our existence, we don't know them
you've never been? (Tolstoy's terrifying question)
that the meaning & purpose of human life but that
only known to God.

From "Grow Something Besides Old" by Lillian Beth Jones

Be Positive

I want to be like my cocker spaniel puppy Nash,

because whenever he sees a sunbeam
he runs and lies down on it.

ANGER Management

Patience Need to think & wait before acting

"Funny how a walk around the
blocks can change your mood"

Be Open - you don't commit until:
you open up & are
ready to engage

"How is a person like a safety pin?"

Answer It has to be open before it can be
used.

#

Yzhen

Good to see you —

Nobody knows if we'll ever

See each other again



Unatzeroties

or
J. Zhan

use ending of my

1974 Annual Meeting
of March 20, 74

Addeben

~~whose mother asked him to remove a rock from
the flower bed.~~

Story of boy ~~who~~ tried to lift the heavy
rock out of the flower bed but could not.

His brother stepped by "Are you using all your
strength?" Yes, I am said the boy.

No, you are not. You have not asked me to help
you!

Bronze plaque on desk of kind
executive:

"I expect to pass through this world
but once. Any good therefore
that I can do, or any kindness
that I can show to any fellow
creature, let me do it now. Let
me not defer or neglect it,
for I shall not pass this way again."
Stephen Grellet

Thanks to an Umbrella
"Thank you for this circle
of dry

How is a person like a safety pin?
It has to be open before it
can be used

Re TODAY A personal note...

Proverb "Seize the day, and put the least possible trust in tomorrow."

Martial: Tomorrow's life is too late.
Live today.

The Indian poet, Kalidasa, said 1500 years ago
"Look to this day
For it is life, the very life of life
For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision
... Look well, therefore, to this day."

Goethe "Nothing is worth more than
this day"

File: KINDNESS - YIZKOR -

I shall not pass this way again
through this world, alas
Once and only once I pass
If a kindness I may show
If a good deed I may do
To a suffering fellow man
Let me do it while I can
~~No~~ delay for it is plain
I shall not pass this way again
Unknown

PROMPTNESS

UNCERTAINTY OF MARRIAGE

~~Markmaxsuspectxhain~~ I saw a cartoon of 2 showgirls, one showing an engagement ring to the other, who exclaims in surprise: "You mean you'd give up show business for something as uncertain as marriage? "

Senior Shopping List

Wondering about the
Meaning of your life?

Sooner or later everyone
wonders: What's the
meaning & purpose of my
life?

It's not written in your
Birth Certificate.

Producers & celebrities
from Hollywood & the music biz
make no mention of it.

So, how do you find out?
Some verses in the Bible

say life is about as
meaningful as a breath
of air!



If there is any
purpose or
meaning to
our ~~lives~~ lives in this world
it's in its connection

~~out~~ the meaning of life²

~~with the totality of
life, the universe.~~

If the world has
meaning then each
of us partakes of it,

The problem of this question
is that why the world
existed - or was
created is unknown
& unknowable.

So, within the framework
of our utter ignorance
for the meaning of purpose
of existence, ~~the quest~~
~~the quest of the universe~~
we leave this question
left to ~~the~~ ~~arbitrator~~ ~~outside~~
and focus on only one
down to earth epistemic

~~What is the purpose or~~
meaning of my own short
life within the compass of
millions of 1:847 years?

attributed
since 1893



NILE HILTON

I shall not
pass this
way again

Stephen Grellet

Phillips Brooks

1835-1893

Anonymous

PROCRASTINATION
INDECISION

The Philosophy of NOW-ISM

The Follies of Optimism & Pessimism

Scale down expectations

The arrogance of social engineering

The ideology of "Change" — ^{root cause is chronic discontent} — The folly of the elsewhere

Predictions are hot air

Prophecy has been turned over to fools

* The Point: ① What matters most is what you'll do with this day, this hour here — not elsewhere — because everything else is uncertain

[Re-read The Courage to Grow Old — David Derman]
p. 83-88

Consider Robert E. Lee's poem's last stanza

I'm not yet a ghost,
nor planning to rot —
And I'm making the most
of the years that I've got

→ Ash audience which word should be changed

I'd change the last line to "Of the days that I've got"

Re: Book title "The Courage to Grow Old" It doesn't take ^{but the} courage to grow old
It takes courage to face possible deterioration

Live your life in small packages — hour by hour
Don't worry about tomorrow, next week, month
or year.

Among the fallacies of optimism — is the fallacy
of the elsewhere. Elsewhere may be worse
than your ^{present} place (now).



Uncertainties

Very uncertain about oneself!

See As I See it of Sept 11, 74

" From Endings to New Beginnings

James Branch Cabell

The optimist proclaims that we live
in the best of all possible worlds,
and the pessimist fears this is true.

Donald Robert Perry Marquis (1878-1937)

Procrastination is the art of keeping up
with yesterday

"An optimist is a guy that has never
had much experience

WORRY : There are 2 days about which I never
worry: One of these days is yesterday
And the other is Tomorrow

Robert Jones Burdette
(1844-1914)

UNCERTAINTY & Success

The Sukkah is a symbol of the insecurity & fragility of life. It is not to be a permanent structure of brick & mortar but built as an (impermanent) temporary structure symbolizing the ephemeral nature of Human Cond.: 94

In Life everything is temporary

Our vulnerability & dependence on God

#

#

#

#

After the Bubble, Beauty Is But Fleeting for Greenspan Portraits

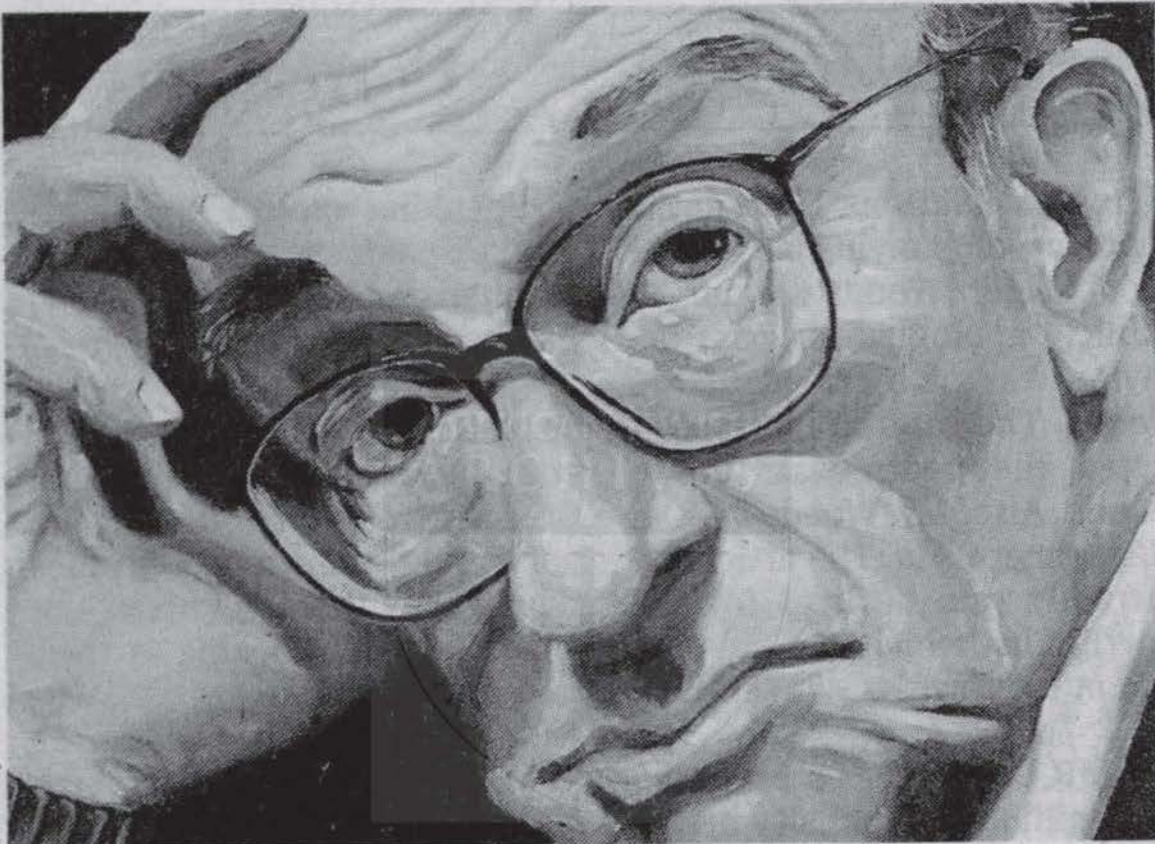
Feb 19, 09

* * *

Y K. Serrano

Some Owners Who Paid Top Dollar Stash

Paintings of Ex-Fed Chief in Closet, Under Bed



Courtesy of Matthew Schirmer

'Irrational Exuberance' by Erin Crowe

BY LUCETTE LAGNADO

In the offices of the Hennessee Group hang two oil paintings and two prints, each portraying the bespectacled visage of former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

"What I should do is make them into a dart board," says Charles Gradante, who with his wife, Lee Hennessee, runs the Fifth Avenue firm that advises investors in hedge funds. "All I see when I look at these paint-

Please turn to page A6

Life's Changing Fortunes!

File:
 JEWS - Characteristcs
 p. 42
 CHARACTER
 HONESTY-
 TRUTHFULNESS
 SINCERITY

TIME IS NOW
 Painted everybody
 but never
 finished his
 own mother
 MOTHER'S
 DAY
 How he neglect
 until it is
 too late



Mme. Picre Gautreau (1865): She was the American wife of a Paris banker.



Mrs. Henry White (1863): She was the wife of the U. S. Minister-to-be in London.

Sargent: An American Old Master

BY CHARLES MERRILL MOUNT

JAN. 12 marks the one hundredth anniversary of a day in 1856 when an American doctor and his wife, wandering the continent of Europe, had a son born to them at Florence. In this centenary year of his birth, it is fitting that America, which so long and earnestly has desired an old master of its own, should awaken to the fact its greatest master has all along been enshrined in its museums.

During his lifetime, John Singer Sargent, a big, bearded, burly man, looking at the world quizzically past a scar, let complexion and bullfinch nose, stood astride the Atlantic like Colossus. On both shores his extraordinary, vivid portraits were imitated by a host of lesser men, and each successive phase of the murals he painted for Boston was awaited with bated breath. It was a social coup when he could be induced to make even a drawing, and a word of his was sufficient for a slew of museums to buy the efforts of his protégés. When in 1925 he died, the

CHARLES MERRILL MOUNT, himself a portrait painter, wrote the recent book on Sargent, "John Singer Sargent, a Biography."

last of the great masters passed into eternity.

As with every great portraitist, the fame of Sargent suffered a decline in the years immediately following his death. Each age feels antipathy to that preceding it; manners suddenly seem artificial and clothing appears ridiculously old-fashioned. When one is still living in proximity to that other age, it is difficult not to feel the shame of association; and when the portraitist has done his work honestly and well, he bears the brunt. Only after a generation has passed, and individual memories suffer conversion into that generality called history, does a fresh look once more show the portraitist at full worth. Then the painter who was merely fashionable disappears, and each portrait, no longer valued as a likeness, or for its smartness, must exist entirely on the merit of its artistic content. Few survive the test.

THE depths of critical disdain for Sargent were reached when Roger Fry took time off from preaching the new religion of Cézannah to write, "That Sargent was taken for an artist will perhaps seem incredible to the rising generation, but I can testify to the

fact. * * * For a quarter century it was rare to find anything but disparagement after his name. Judged by a standard unrelated to his art, Sargent appeared beaten.

Were it anyone but Sargent, therefore, it might come as a surprise to discover that during those very years when his reputation reached nadir, more than 140 of his paintings made their way into museums around the world. America, where by some critics his very claim to nationality was challenged, led the parade with the acquisition of ninety-six, while Britain, far in the lead when the artist lived, quietly added to its national treasures another thirty-six. In France, Australia, Canada, South Africa and Japan, museums felt the same compulsion.

The very number thus honored, surely some sort of record, signifies that while in its accustomed way the public had for a time turned from Sargent, those in responsible positions upheld their trust and seized the opportunity to make important acquisitions. It is no ordinary figure who thus scores a triumph in even his darkest hour, and John Singer Sargent was no ordinary man.

Few Americans have achieved the



Portrait of the Artist (1892): As John Singer Sargent saw himself at age 36.

SOMETHING JEWISH FUNNY FUNNY FUNNY

Inbox x

Ruth Lambert

12:44 AM (8 hours ago)

to Lambert, Parshinutel, Forman, me

THE PARKING SPACE

Moishe is driving in Jerusalem . He's late for a meeting, he's looking for a parking can't find one. In desperation, he turns towards heaven and says: "Lord, if you find parking place, I promise that I'll eat only kosher, respect Shabbos, and all the ho
Miraculously, a place opens up just in front of him. He turns his face up to heaven
"Never mind, I just found one!"

THE PARKING SPACE

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THE MEZUZAHs

A wealthy Jewish man buys a fabulous home in Beverly Hills . He brings in a local workman to decorate the place. When the job is finished, the homeowner is delighted but realizes that he's forgotten to put mezuzahs on the doors. He goes out and buys 50 mezuzahs and asks the decorator to place them on the right hand side of each door except bathrooms and kitchens. He's really worried that the decorator will chip the paint work or won't put them up correctly. However, when he comes back a few hours later, he sees that the job has been carried out to his entire satisfaction. He's so pleased that he gives the decorator a bonus. As the decorator is walking out of the door he says, "Glad you're happy with the job. By the way, I took out all the warranties in the little boxes and left them on the table for you!"

MEAL TIME ON EL-AL

It was mealtime during a flight on El-Al. "Would you like dinner?" the flight attendant asked Moishe, seated in front. "What are my choices?" Moishe asked. "Yes or no," she replied.

PHILANTHROPY

A visitor to Israel attended a recital and concert at the Moscovitz Auditorium. He was quite impressed with the architecture and the acoustics. He inquired of the tour guide, "Is this magnificent auditorium named after Chaim Moscovitz, the famous Talmudic scholar?" "No," replied the guide. "It is named after Sam Moscovitz, the writer." "Never heard of him. What did he write?" "A check", replied the guide.

CHANUKAH STAMPS

A woman goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Chanukah cards. She says to the clerk "May I have 50 Chanukah stamps please." "What denomination?" says the clerk. The woman says "Oy vey...my god, has it come to this? Okay, give me 6 orthodox, 12 conservative and 32 reform!"

MOISHE

Moishe Goldberg was heading out of the Synagogue one day, and as always Rabbi Mendel was standing at the door, shaking hands as the congregation departed. The rabbi grabbed Moishe by the hand, pulled him aside and whispered these words at him: "You need to join the Army of God!" Moishe replied: "I'm already in the Army of God, Rabbi." The rabbi questioned: "How come I don't see you except for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?" Moishe whispered back: "I'm in the secret service."

Poem Y. K. Y. M. חַיִּים וְחַיִּים
7/1 - 11

Leonard Cohen's Song

Though you died is upon
the faithful angels,
who are intensely loyal
who are courageous knights...
and you died is upon them

Yet you deserve praise
from weak mortals
from mere breath and chaos
from wilted flowers

— and your glory is upon them,¹

8/29/2012

<https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&view=bsp&ver=ohhl4rw8mbn4>

Re: Mishal Zion : of Bronfman Fellowships

Re: Leonard Cohen's poem
of several stanzas
beginning with

If it be your will
instead of May it be your will

All prayers since 1945
should start with the
disclaimer "if"

Prayers are now said
"conditionally" i.e.
if there is a God who
hears our prayers. (goh)

Oct 2011

Yizkor 2012

The last
My last letter to my Dear Ones

Lessons of my life

- ① You must give to get
 - in education
 - in Career
 - in friendship
 - in marriage



- ② Put Family first - They'll stay with you to the last

- ③ What is success?
What is failure?

- ④ Do something, at least one thing, for which one may say about you *וְיִדְבַּר וְיִשְׁבַּח*

ELEVEN YEARS AFTER 9/11

Joshua O. Haberman

Eleven years have passed since the twin towers of the World Trade Center were demolished by the Al Qaeda attack of Sept. 11 in the year 2001 and some 3000 men and women perished in the burning wreckage.

Although the man responsible for this crime against humanity, Osama ben Laden, was brought to justice for this horrendous crime, we are still far from secure. It could happen again --and even worse.

The reason is that the problem is bigger than Osama ben Laden. The problem is human nature. --- the savagery and brutality of which human beings are capable. The sanctity of life, taught for centuries by Judaism and Christianity, is held in contempt by terrorists and nations busily preparing for aggressive wars.

The danger of a repeat attack upon the US of even greater magnitude remains. Next time our enemies might hit us with nuclear weapons causing countless thousands of casualties.

Is there anything we can or should do?

The Bible teaches us that good and evil urges dwell within the human heart . Our Scriptures spell out the ways of helping the good to prevail against evil. We must practice compassion for the poor, the ill, the handicapped and the helpless. We must pursue justice.

For most of us the Biblical command to love our neighbor may b e too much to expect. We can not underestimate the power of hate. But neither should we underestimate the healing power of good,---the helpfulness and generosity of people.

Externally, beyond our borders , America should lead the world in disarmament and do all in our power to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The best way to commemorate the first assault on the U.S. by Al Queda, is to make sure it will have been the last assault upon our nation. There is reason for fear and worry but also for hope. Immediately after this afternoon's commemoration, we shall again raise the flag which had been lowered this morning. In raising the flag, we shall raise our hope that we shall overcome all that threatens us. We shall prevail as one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all. Amen

OUR CHRONIC DISCONTENT

by Rabbi Joshua o. Haberman
Yom Kippur Seminar, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2012

~~In today's seminar,~~ I want to deal with one of the most striking characteristics of the human condition. From the cradle to the grave most people feel discontented for reasons, --or no reasons. This chronic discontent is the theme of Germany's greatest literary work, FAUST, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

The aged Dr. Faust sadly realizes that none of the experiences of his long life have given him satisfaction. He reaches out to the devil with a deal: He will surrender his soul to him in return for a moment of contentment which he would wish to prolong.

Mephistopheles has Faust regain his youth and leads him through all kinds of experiences, but to no avail. He remains dissatisfied. Finally, in old age Faust undertakes the reclamation of land from the sea. Doing good to a large number of people brings him the contentment for which he had craved all his life. The drama of Faust underscores the place of discontent in life. We are not talking about the many trivial situations of justified dissatisfaction and complaints in daily life, such as dissatisfaction with a purchase

or with the service in a restaurant or your attorney's handling of a case.

I am talking about the constant feeling that something is amiss; that things don't seem right; relentless worry, often not knowing why; unending fault-finding, a disgruntled mood and negative attitude toward life and a painful dissatisfaction with your own self, your appearance and performance; feeling under-appreciated or insufficiently respected. The person having such feelings may not be diagnosed as depressed but as chronically discontented. What accounts for this sour mood about life?

The French philosopher Blaise Pascal ¹⁶²³⁻¹⁶⁶² suggested a surprising diagnosis of this condition: **"All human evil comes from this --- man's being unable to sit still in a room."**

What did he mean? It is the drive for change, any change; the fallacy of the elsewhere; the notion that any change would be for the better; that elsewhere will be better than here , as the proverb says: The grass looks greener on the other side.

Rome's foremost poet, Horace, told his rich friends: "When you are in the city, you want to be in your

country villa; and when you are in the country, you want to be in the city."

In other words, you can't sit still and be satisfied. No doubt there are many who fantasize about changing their career, location, even their spouse. This, too, may be the fallacy of the elsewhere. There is a Yiddish saying: **"what one has, one does not want; and what one wants, one cannot get."**

This kind of discontent is part of a persistent feeling that you are missing out on something. But as soon as you get what you want, you want something else.

Discontent is also related to faultfinding. Most families have at least one perpetual faultfinder. ~~It is sad when it is a parent, father or mother.~~

Even gladness is unwanted by some. Oscar Levant!
I don't drink.
I don't like it.
It makes me feel good!

A mother gave her son two neckties for his birthday. That evening, to please her, he wore one of her neckties at dinner. She looked at him and said: "I see, you're wearing one of my ties. What's the matter with the other tie? You don't like it?"

Some of us carry a hurt throughout life because of a parent who was always critical, of the way you dressed or

ate, would not approve of anything you did and kept finding fault with you at every stage of life.

Some people must always have something to complain about. The story is told about a Mr. Finkelstein who was a patient at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Suddenly, without explanation, he checked out and transferred to a small, run-down hospital on New York's East side. There the registrar was curious why Mr. Finkelstein made the transfer:

"What was wrong with the Mass. General ; it's an excellent hospital?"

"I could not complain about the hospital," answered Finkelstein

"Was it the nurses? Were they not attentive?"

"Oh, no, the nurses could not have been more considerate. I could not complain."

"So, was it the food?"

"The meals were tasty. I couldn't complain.

So tell me, Mr. Finkelstein, why did you move to our little hospital here?"

"Because here. I can complain."

How do you cope with a persistently disgruntled mood? How can you gain contentment in life?

The super hi-way to contentment is gratitude. In every situation you can find something for which to give thanks, like the elderly spinster who added to her daily grace before meals : "And dear God, thanks for letting me keep my two teeth and especially because they meet."

There is wisdom in one of the most popular Pesach songs, the *Dayyenu* – meaning "enough for us." This song of 14 stanzas lists 14 stages in the liberation from Egyptian slavery, each of which would have been enough cause for thanksgiving. The first says: "If God had only led us out of Egypt, but had not punished the Egyptians, - *Dayyenu* - it would have been enough." Similarly, each of the following 13 acts of redemption is acknowledged with *Dayyenu*, it's enough for thanks to God ^{for just this one thing} even if He had done nothing else.

The *Dayyenu* teaches us that you don't have to have it all. Be satisfied with a piece of what you want, say *Dayyenu, it is enough.*

Many of us are very ambitious; we want to expand; more success, more wealth. But too much of anything can ruin you, financially or physically. Know your limit.

Know when to stop. Know when enough is enough –and say *Dayyenu*.

Economists tell us that a major cause of the recession we have suffered was the lack of restraint of our banking and credit system. The drive to get all you can get is dangerous. Be satisfied with less than the maximum.

The wisest of all statesmen, Solon of Athens, said:
 “Do nothing to excess.”

If you cannot get everything you want, enjoy the good you do have. Think of Matthew Arnold’s little poem:

Is it so small a thing
 To have enjoyed the sun
 To have lived in the spring
 To have loved, to have thought,
 To have done ?

Saying it in prose: If you can eat, sleep, walk, enjoy reasonably good health, love and be loved by someone and be self-supporting, you have the basic conditions for well-being. Be grateful. Every moment of gratitude is a step closer to happiness.

A professor at the University of California, Sonya Lyubomirsky, in her research on increasing happiness

listed 11 Happiness Boosters , the first of which is
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

“Keep a gratitude journal,” she advised, “and once a week list three to five things for which you are thankful....If you name a particular person who has been kind to you or influential in your life, don’t wait to express your appreciation. Write him/her a letter now, or visit and thank the person.

The wife of the popular author , Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, introduced a gratitude ritual in her Shabbat observance. It is not a ceremony; not a prayer . She simply asks all around the table: What good has happened to you this week?

Even if it was a tough week, you could probably think of at least one pleasant experience.

The other day I stopped on a main road to let a car turn from a side street into my lane. The driver was surprised, then threw me a kiss. It was a pleasant moment of goodwill interaction.

If you try, you’ll remember all kinds of good things that happened, even something as trivial as ^{the response of} ~~hearing~~ a

human being instead of a recorded message on your telephone call.

The most personal cause of our discontent has to do with our self-image. There are no statistics but I guess many, maybe most, people feel that they are under-achievers; they keep thinking of unfulfilled hopes and dreams, of undeveloped abilities and talents, of having fallen short of their potential.

There is a long list of celebrities who rose from unpromising starts and setbacks to spectacular success. Don't let a rejection or setback drive you to self-contempt.

Marilyn Monroe, after only one year under contract with Twentieth Century Fox, was dropped in 1947 because the production chief, Darryl Zanuck, thought she was unattractive.

To^m Cruise auditioned for a role on a TV program and was turned down because the casting director said he wasn't ~~handsome~~^{good-looking} enough.

In everyone's life there are incidents of which one is ashamed. How could I have said this or done so? You cannot un-make what was done. All you can do is regret, resolve to do better, ---and forgive yourself.

In forgiving yourself, you recognize that you are not perfect, that you have faults. *to remind me.*

The next step is self-acceptance, mixed with a bit of humility. There is an element of healing in self-acceptance. You must not be too severe in self-judgment. The *Sayings of the Fathers* include the remarkable statement of Rabbi Simon: *Do not regard yourself wicked* Av.2.18 *לֹא תִבְיָשׁ אֶתְּמוֹתָיִךְ* You must not lose your selfrespect; don't ever believe that you are too far gone. If you have made mistakes and wrong decisions, don't say: "I am a loser." Remember, the way to make good decisions is to learn from bad ones.

Give yourself credit for self-improvement; the way is always open for self-renewal. That's what Yom Kippur is all about. Repentance opens the door to a change for the better; you can improve relationships; you can rise to a higher level.

Forgiving another person who offended you is difficult but doing so, you do yourself a favor. Let bygones be bygone. Listen to Walter De La Mare's line:

Poor Jim Jay, Got stuck fast, In yesterday.

If you want peace of mind, you must forget the unpleasant and move on with your life.

What are the ways to contentment in life? I suggest to you five rules:

(1) The first, ~~be~~ gratitude for whatever is right in your life. Be grateful for a good spouse, a loyal friend, for physical well-being—that is, more or less of it—that you can walk, hear, see and are self-supporting.

(2) Second, realize that you were not given any guarantees in life. The future is uncertain. So, make the most of today and be surprised by joy.

(3) Third, It is good to achieve and succeed. Hope to win, but you can't be a winner all the time. Everybody is a loser some time. Accept a loss. Don't blame other; don't blame yourself. If you lose it's not the end of the world. You win and you lose some. So is life.

(4) Fourth, lower your expectations and you will have fewer disappointments. Expect less from people and you will get along better.

(5) Fifth, change anything to improve your life but accept what you cannot change and make the best of it. Never cease hoping and working for what should be but

accept, at least for now, what is. This point is beautifully expressed in Reinhold Niebuhr's famous prayer:

O God, give me serenity to accept what cannot be changed, courage to change what should be changed, and wisdom to distinguish one from the other.

The deepest source of chronic discontent is inherent in the human condition. We are stuck in a no-win situation over which we have no control. In Rabbi Elazar ha-Kappara's blunt words:

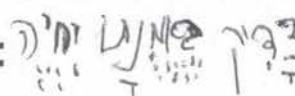
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We are tossed into life for some unknown purpose and under terms not of our own choosing. Some are born talented and beautiful; others, inferior and unattractive; some into poverty and others, into plenty; some are disabled and others healthy and strong. None of us was given any entitlements at birth.

Our sages did not give us sweet talk, with pie-in-the-sky promises but realistically pointed to terms of life over which we have no say. Our rabbis would not go as far as Thomas Hobbes who called the life of man: "*solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short*, --but they would not deceive us

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Nevertheless---and this a is an amazing paradox --- despite our grim realism, we are an optimistic people. Our toast is *L'chayyim*, to life ! Every Rosh Ha-shanah, we wish one another "to be inscribed in the book of life," Israel's national anthem is *Ha-tikvah*, the hope.

Our vision of the future is messianic, the triumph of good over evil, It is a hope based, not on reason but on faith, the faith expressed in the first chapter of the Bible that at each stage of creation, God called it good. What seems evil in our life according to man's judgment, may, in the higher perspective of God, be part of a larger good. The God of Israel is not only the Creator but also the Redeemer. We keep faith with God, minding the prophet Habakuk's (2.4) words:  The righteous shall live by his faith.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR LIFE

(2012)

Vienna's great playwright, Arthur Schnitzler, tells in his autobiography that at the age of 13, during a sleepless night, he realized with horror that sooner or later, he too must die --- and broke into weeping. The popular novelist, William Saroyan, reacted to death the opposite way. Only 5 days before he died, he told the Associated Press, "Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case."

Diane Athill recently published a book entitled *SOMEWHERE TOWARD THE END*. She tells how she felt when, passing the age of 90, she realized that the end could not be far away. She need not have waited till 90 to recognize that the end could happen very soon, ^{even} at an early point in life, in childhood, youth, at age 30, 40 or 50. David, as a young man fearing assassination, exclaimed:

"I'm only a step away from death."

Everyone of us should acknowledge this truth.

The denial of death is useless and so is lamenting our destiny which allows for no exception.

Instead of idle speculation about the meaning of death and the hereafter, we should consider how to live, how to use the time still

allotted to us, as suggested in Robert E. Lee's verse:

I'm not yet a ghost
Nor planning to rot
And I'm making the most
of the years I've got.

How can you maximize your life-time and spend your remaining years ?

I have three suggestions.

The first is, focus on the here and now !

Leo Tolstoy said: "There is only one important time --- NOW."

Carl Sandburg would have us ignore the past and future: "The past is a bucket of ashes, so live not in your yesterdays, not just for tomorrow, but in the here and now."

You must not torment yourself with regrets and might-have-been's. You cannot re-live the past nor waste time with fantasies for a future that cannot be realized. Focus on what you can do today and its possibilities.

YIZKOR 2012

MAKING THE MOST OF THE LIFE ALLOTTED TO US

by Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman

The Yizkor/Memorial service is the most personal, intimate hour of Yom Kippur. Many remember with love and longing dear departed ones, ---a parent, a child, a brother or sister or very close friends. Some have mixed memories of problematic relationships and smoldering resentments. For them this should be a time of forgiving and forgetting.

Originally, this service was not a call on us to remember but on God to remember. The word *yizkor* means "may He remember." "He" Is God. We are asking God to remember the souls of our departed ~~and grant them eternal life~~. With these words, we affirm the importance of every person. Each is sufficiently important to be remembered by God.

When remembering the death of others, it is unavoidable to think of your own death. Vienna's great playwright, Arthur Schnitzler, tells in his autobiography that at the age of 13, during a sleepless night, he realized with horror that sooner or later, he too must die ---and broke into weeping. The popular novelist, William Saroyan, reacted to death the opposite way. Only 5 days before he died, he told the Associated Press, "Everybody has to die, but I always believed an exception would be made in my case."

The denial of death is useless and so is lamenting our destiny which allows for no exceptions. Instead of idle speculation about the meaning of death and the hereafter, we should **consider how to live**, how to use the time still allotted to us, as suggested in Robert E. Lee's verse:

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How can we maximize our life-time and spend well our remaining years ?

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The Indian poet Kalidassa said it 1,500 years ago:

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There is value in long range planning. But all future intentions are "iffy." Your life and work of today is what counts.

My second suggestion is a warning: don't delay, don't procrastinate.

Many of us accumulate a list of unfinished plans and undertakings, unfinished

Not because of inability but because we kept putting them off. The number-one enemy of achievement is procrastination.

John Singer Sargent was one of the most famous portrait artists of the 19th century. He made portraits of anybody who was somebody in America and England. Dismayed by the vacuous faces of English nobility, he painted with enthusiasm London's wealthy Jews. More than 140 of his portraits were acquired by museums around the world. He left one unfinished portrait ---the only picture he made of his mother. Overwhelmed by assignments, he probably kept delaying work on this one picture, waiting for a more convenient time which never came.

My two suggestions for making the most of our remaining life time, living in the here and now and avoiding procrastination, are well summarized in Steven Grellet's poem:

I shall not pass this way again

Through this toilsome world, alas

If a kindness I may show

If a good deed I may do

Let me do it while I can

No delay, for it is plain

I shall not pass this way again.

CHRONIC DISCONTENT

by Rabbi Joshua o. Haberman

Yom Kippur Seminar, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 2012

A chronic discontent is one of the most striking characteristics of the human condition. From the cradle to the grave most people feel discontented for reasons, --or no reasons. This chronic discontent is the theme of Germany's greatest literary work, FAUST, by Johann Wolfgang Goethe.

The aged Dr. Faust sadly realizes that none of the experiences of his long life have given him satisfaction. He reaches out to the devil with a deal: He will surrender his soul to him in return for a moment of contentment which he would wish to prolong.

Mephistopheles has Faust regain his youth and leads him through all kinds of experiences, but to no avail. He remains dissatisfied. Finally, in old age Faust undertakes the reclamation of land from the sea. Doing good to a large number of people brings him the contentment for which he had craved all his life. The drama of Faust underscores the place of discontent in life. We are not talking about the many trivial situations of justified dissatisfaction and complaints in daily life, such as dissatisfaction with a purchase

or with the service in a restaurant or your attorney's handling of a case.

I am talking about the constant feeling that something is amiss; that things don't seem right; relentless worry, often not knowing why; unending fault-finding, a disgruntled mood and negative attitude toward life and a painful dissatisfaction with your own self, your appearance and performance; feeling under-appreciated or insufficiently respected. The person having such feelings may not be diagnosed as depressed but as chronically discontented. What accounts for this sour mood about life?

The French philosopher Blaise Pascal ¹⁶²³⁻¹⁶⁶² suggested a surprising diagnosis of this condition: **"All human evil comes from this --- man's being unable to sit still in a room."**

What did he mean? It is the drive for change, any change; the fallacy of the elsewhere; the notion that any change would be for the better; that elsewhere will be better than here , as the proverb says: The grass looks greener on the other side.

Rome's foremost poet, Horace, told his rich friends: "When you are in the city, you want to be in your

country villa; and when you are in the country, you want to be in the city.”

In other words, you can't sit still and be satisfied. No doubt there are many who fantasize about changing their career, location, even their spouse. This, too, may be the fallacy of the elsewhere. There is a Yiddish saying: **“what one has, one does not want; and what one wants, one cannot get.”**

This kind of discontent is part of a persistent feeling that you are missing out on something. But as soon as you get what you want, you want something else.

Discontent is also related to faultfinding. Most families have at least one perpetual faultfinder. It is sad when it is a parent, father or mother.

A mother gave her son two neckties for his birthday. That evening, to please her, he wore one of her neckties at dinner. She looked at him and said: “I see, you're wearing one of my ties. What's the matter with the other tie? You don't like it?”

Some of us carry a hurt throughout life because of a parent who was always critical, of the way you dressed or

ate, would not approve of anything you did and kept finding fault with you at every stage of life.

Some people must always have something to complain about. The story is told about a Mr. Finkelstein who was a patient at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Suddenly, without explanation, he checked out and transferred to a small, run-down hospital on New York's East side. There the registrar was curious why Mr. Finkelstein made the transfer:

"What was wrong with the Mass. General ; it's an excellent hospital?"

"I could not complain about the hospital," answered Finkelstein

"Was it the nurses? Were they not attentive?"

"Oh, no, the nurses could not have been more considerate. I could not complain."

"So, was it the food?"

"The meals were tasty. I couldn't complain.

So tell me, Mr. Finkelstein, why did you move to our little hospital here?"

"Because here, I can complain."

How do you cope with a persistently disgruntled mood? How can you gain contentment in life?

The super hi-way to contentment is gratitude. In every situation you can find something for which to give thanks, like the elderly spinster who added to her daily grace before meals : "And dear God, thanks for letting me keep my two teeth and especially because they meet."

There is wisdom in one of the most popular Pesach songs, the *Dayyenu* – meaning "enough for us." This song of 14 stanzas lists 14 stages in the liberation from Egyptian slavery, each of which would have been enough cause for thanksgiving. The first says: "If God had only led us out of Egypt, but had not punished the Egyptians,- *Dayyenu* - it would have been enough." Similarly, each of the following 13 acts of redemption is acknowledged with *Dayyenu*, it's enough for thanks to God even if He had done nothing else.

The *Dayyenu* teaches us that you don't have to have it all. Be satisfied with a piece of what you want, say *Dayyenu, it is enough.*

Many of us are very ambitious; we want to expand; more success, more wealth. But too much of anything can ruin you, financially or physically. Know your limit.

Know when to stop. Know when enough is enough –and say *Dayyenu*.

Economists tell us that a major cause of the recession we have suffered was the lack of restraint of our banking and credit system. The drive to get all you can get is dangerous. Be satisfied with less than the maximum.

The wisest of all statesmen, Solon of Athens, said:
 “Do nothing to excess.”

If you cannot get everything you want, enjoy the good you do have. Think of Matthew Arnold’s little poem:

Is it so small a thing
 To have enjoyed the sun
 To have lived in the spring
 To have loved, to have thought,
 To have done ?

Saying it in prose: If you can eat, sleep, walk, enjoy reasonably good health, love and be loved by someone and be self-supporting, you have the basic conditions for well-being. Be grateful. Every moment of gratitude is a step closer to happiness.

A professor at the University of California, Sonya Lyubomirsky, in her research on increasing happiness

listed 11 Happiness Boosters , the first of which is
COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS.

“Keep a gratitude journal,” she advised, “and once a week list three to five things for which you are thankful....If you name a particular person who has been kind to you or influential in your life, don’t wait to express your appreciation. Write him/her a letter now, or visit and thank the person.

The wife of the popular author , Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, introduced a gratitude ritual in her Shabbat observance. It is not a ceremony; not a prayer . She simply asks all around the table: What good has happened to you this week?

Even if it was a tough week, you could probably think of at least one pleasant experience.

The other day I stopped on a main road to let a car turn from a side street into my lane. The driver was surprised, then threw me a kiss. It was a pleasant moment of goodwill interaction.

If you try, you’ll remember all kinds of good things that happened, even something as trivial as hearing a

human being instead of a recorded message on your telephone call.

The most personal cause of our discontent has to do with our self-image. There are no statistics but I guess many, maybe most, people feel that they are under-achievers; they keep thinking of unfulfilled hopes and dreams, of undeveloped abilities and talents, of having fallen short of their potential.

There is a long list of celebrities who rose from unpromising starts and setbacks to spectacular success. Don't let a rejection or setback drive you to self-contempt.

Marilyn Monroe, after only one year under contract with Twentieth Century Fox, was dropped in 1947 because the production chief, Darryl Zanuck, thought she was unattractive.

To_hCruise auditioned for a role on a TV program and was turned down because the casting director said he wasn't handsome enough.

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In forgiving yourself, you recognize that you are not perfect, that you have faults.

The next step is self-acceptance, mixed with a bit of humility. There is an element of healing in self-acceptance. You must not be too severe in self-judgment. The *Sayings of the Fathers* include the remarkable statement of Rabbi

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What are the ways to contentment in life? I suggest to you five rules:

(1) The first I stressed earlier ---gratitude for whatever is right in your life. Be grateful for a good spouse, a loyal friend, for physical well-being (that is, more or less of it) that you can walk, hear, see and are self-supporting.

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When remembering the death of others, it is unavoidable to think of your own death. Vienna's great playwright, Arthur Schnitzler, tells in his autobiography that at the age of

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You must not torment yourself with regrets and might-have-been's. You cannot re-live the past nor waste time with fantasies for a future that cannot be realized. Focus on what you can do today and its possibilities.

According to the Biblical sage, Kohelet, the best you can do is to enjoy, enjoy! Yes, Kohelet is blunt about it:

“There is nothing better for a person to do than to eat, drink and be merry.”^{8.15}

Our rabbis re-inforced Kohelet with the warning that you shall have to give account before God's judgment seat for any ^{legitimate} joy or pleasure you denied yourself. Such self-denial would express contempt for God's gifts.

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My third suggestion is best expressed by the Biblical sage, Kohelet:

תָּוֹב לָנוּ עֲשׂוֹת מִלֵּבָבָא מִכָּל מְלָכָא
וְעוֹשֵׂה מִלֵּבָבָא מִכָּל מְלָכָא
וְעוֹשֵׂה מִלֵּבָבָא מִכָּל מְלָכָא

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON Koh.3.1

what may be appropriate at one stage of life, may be inappropriate at another stage. To make the most of our life, we must make major changes from time to time; we must let go of some

activities and interests and turn to others, more in keeping with our age.

To mention but one trivial personal example. I used to be an enthusiastic skier. But after my 70th birthday, I realized that skiing was too risky at that age and gave it up. As we are aging, we must be able to change, to let go of some things and turn to other things and interests. The ability to adjust and re-adjust is the key to a good way of life.

I made three suggestions for making the most of your remaining life time :

1. Live in the here and now, enjoy life as much as you can.
2. Don't procrastinate. You cannot be sure of your future. Live in the here and now.
3. Change your way of life at each new stage of life.

What I want to stress at the end is well said in Steven Grellet's poem:

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If a kindness I may show
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