

SHABBAT SHALOM-BO-2012

What a difference a week makes. Weather wise, last week frigid; this week, bearable. Last week Habs can't win; this week, well once in a while they do. Last week; it's in the bag for Mitt; this week, who knows and at this rate, who cares. Last week; San Francisco and Baltimore, way to go; this week they're gone.

Moods and realities change in a flash and our Torah portions dealing with the Exodus reflect this reality. Last week the portion began with despair and disillusionment with Moshe's leadership and his grandiose plans for freedom seemingly going quickly down in flames. Pharaoh had tightened the screws and the Israelites had decided it might be better to be live slaves than dead heroes. Standing in their shoes, I could well see the possibilities of freedom and nationhood to be a fool's dream. The picture was pretty bleak and even Moshe complained to the 'boss' as to his effectiveness.

But this week, we can already feel the breeze of change. Like the current sanctions against Iran, the plagues are taking effect. Egyptian and Israelite alike take note of the ongoing events. The pressures on Bnai Yisrael are easing and victory is almost in sight. This week's portion of Bo marks the historic Exodus, the very foundation of the development of the Jewish people.

Amidst all this drama, oddly enough, there appears to be a pause in the action as a new element is suddenly introduced. Just as we are being prepared for the final steps leading up to the Exodus there is the pronouncement that; "Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem". This is the first month of the rest of your future, history. It is more than a commentary on this historic month but the foundation of the formulation of the Jewish calendar. Intriguing! The basic concept of freedom is intrinsically linked to our ability to put together a calendar. How does the mapping out of months and days impact upon freedom?

The basic difference between slavery and freedom is all a matter of the impact of time. Does time control or restrain us? If so, well, that's slavery. On the other hand, do we master time and use it effectively? Do we know how to prioritize our time? Well, that's freedom.

A 'time out' is usually considered a form of punishment or as some refer to it, a form of rehabilitation. A child or even an adult who is stressed out needs some 'time out' so as to be able to tune back in.

But the need for a 'time out' is a daily challenge. It's a positive and not a negative. It is an exercise in self-control. Can I take 'time out' of the 'expected' to do the 'unexpected but necessary'? In the course of a busy day: to take a 'time out' for Mincha or a Bracha, to put on Tefillin, take a class, do an act of Tzedakah or perform an act of Chessed, say a kind word, attend a community meeting; yes, 'time out' from the regular; 'time out' to do something special. 'Time out' from the usual to create a Temple of Time timeout for Shabbat and Shul.

Who is a slave and who enjoys real freedom? It's all a matter of time management. We rationalize that we are the victims of the times. We argue that we are what we are because of the circumstances in which we live. What can I do? It's the sign of the times!

Not so, says the Torah. Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem, the consequences of the times are in our hands. If we allow the times to shape us, then we're back to slavery. If we shape our destiny despite the times, then we have found freedom.

But alas, we have at times unfortunately, lost our way in what many might have considered the best of times while we have managed to survive even in the worst of times. Hopefully, one of these days, we will get it right. In the meantime, cherish the blessing of time; cherish the opportunity it affords you.

Master it so that it serves you, your family and your community well. Seriously, make every moment count; we haven't a moment to lose.

Shabbat Shalom.

Rabbi Dr. Mordecai E. Zeitz

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Light Shabbat Candles-4:36 PM; Services-4:50 PM;

Shabbat Morning-Services-8:45 AM;

Mincha-4:45PM followed by a class in the Parsha; Ma'ariv & Havdalah-5:42PM

Next Shabbat-SHABBAT SHIRA-Join us for a special Shabbat of Synagogue Song presented by Cantor Yossi Pomerantz and the Synagogue Choir directed by Michael Green

Join us for LUNCH AND LEARN—TUESDAY—FEB. 7TH NOON - 1:15 PM

At Papa Ernie's—Decarie & Bourret .Lunch, Learn, Shmooze: Good for Body & Brain.