



#BringingtheDomeHome

Thursday, August 6, 2020
16 Av 5780

Dear friends,

As we continue to try and find a new normal and create a balance of safety and productivity in our lives, it's important to take stock of where we want to be when we can gather again. What has been easy to leave behind and what are we missing more than ever? What do we want our new normal to be?

This week's Torah portion, *Eikev*, finds Moses worried about the future too. According to Rabbi Harvey Fields, he foresees a time when the Israelites will be comfortable, prosperous and secure in the land and he wonders what the state of their spiritual health will be in such a future era of victory and abundance. Unsure of what they will choose to do, Moses presents them with four guidelines that seem to be just as relevant today as they were then.

1. Remember your past and how you were tested 40 years in the desert.
2. Be grateful for the abundance you have received. When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to Adonai your God for the good land that has been given you.
3. Be humble as individuals. Do not believe that your prosperity and good fortune are a result of your talent alone.
4. Be humble as a community. After you have defeated your enemies and you occupy the land of, do not say to yourselves: "God has enabled me to occupy this land because of my virtues."

To me, these guidelines are excellent ideals for us today- as they were back then.

1. Our hardships feel acute right now, but if we take the long view, we know that there is another side. Jews are no strangers to adversity, plagues and uncertainty. Our creativity and flexibility will ultimately make us more viable and vibrant in the end.
2. We should recognize how the foresight of past leaders and the generosity of those who are able to be so right now, have given us the financial cushion we need to ride out the economic uncertainty of the moment.
3. We should recognize that we are fortunate. We are part of a caring and supportive community. Despite our anxiety, we are not alone.
4. Finally, we must maintain our humility and use our resources to help others and support the greater community, as we have always done. We find ourselves in a position to offer people financial assistance, college scholarships and food in addition to spiritual and emotional support. These are great gifts.

Like the people of Israel in Parashat Eikev, we are still in the wilderness and we have much work that needs to be done, but we are also blessed with a strong, thoughtful and committed leadership. We are blessed with physical, emotional and spiritual resources. As we prepare for Shabbat let us humbly give thanks for the fortitude of our congregation and the love and connection, we all share.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Mara Nathan