

KOL MEVASSER

Spontaneous Remarks

Rabbi Marc D. Angel

I recently attended a funeral where one of the eulogizers was a grandson of the deceased. He began his talk by saying that he did not prepare any remarks because he wanted his words to be spontaneous. He then rambled on for five minutes, hemming and hawing, and saying nothing of consequence other than that he loved his grandmother and would miss her.

He apparently was so concerned about being “spontaneous” that he did not consider the feelings of the audience who had come to pay their respects to the deceased. He abused our time and our good intentions by not having had the courtesy to prepare some words in advance so that he could speak coherently.

A bit after this episode, I attended a synagogue where a “guest rabbi” delivered the sermon. This rabbi began by informing us that he does not prepare sermons in advance because he believes in speaking spontaneously and from the heart. He went on for fifteen or twenty minutes (which felt a lot longer!) rambling from one thought to another, and leaving the congregation with a feeling that they had learned nothing from him, and that he had wasted all of our time.

But at least he was “spontaneous.”

Often enough, people think that being spontaneous equals being more sincere and more honest. They somehow imagine that speaking without preparing is a virtue rather than an abuse of those who must listen to the unprepared words. They do not realize that one can be sincere and honest even when taking the time to think before talking. Indeed, they do not realize that speaking “spontaneously” without first contemplating and organizing their thoughts is a sign of disrespect to the audience.

When I was in high school, I participated in our school’s debating society. One of the skills we were required to master entailed “impromptu speaking.” We were given a piece of paper with a topic written on it. We were allowed one minute to organize our thoughts, and then we had to give a five minute speech on the topic. We learned the importance of developing a wide store of knowledge so that we could speak intelligently on whatever topic was presented to us. We learned to think quickly and efficiently, to come up with an opening statement, to organize an outline of what we wished to say, and to come up with a concluding statement. Even though “impromptu speaking” appeared to be “spontaneous,” it was actually based on thinking in a disciplined and structured manner.

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KJ Schedule Parashat Re’eh

Erev Shabbat

Friday, August 22nd

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	6:45 pm
Minhah/Arbith	7:00 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	7:13 pm

Shabbat

Saturday, August 23rd

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	8:30 am
Minha, Seudah Shlisheet, Arvit	6:45 pm
Motzei Shabbat / Havdallah	8:20 pm

Weekdays

Sunday, August 24th

Shaharit	7:30 am
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Erev Rosh Hodesh Elul

Monday, August 25th

Shaharit	6:30 am
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Rosh Hodesh Elul

Tuesday & Wednesday, August 26th & 27th

Shaharit	6:15 am
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Weekdays

Thursday & Friday, August 28th & 29th

Shaharit	6:30 am
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Erev Shabbat / Friday, August 29th

Shaharit/Morning Prayer	6:30 am
Shir Hashirim	6:45 pm
Minhah/Arbith	7:00 pm
Shabbat Candlelighting	7:04 pm

Shabbat Torah & Haftara Readings

Devarim / Deuteronomy: Reeh 799 - 818
Haftara Yishayahu / Isaiah 818 to 819

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Solomon Nagie Dabora, z"l
by
Hannie Kelly & Family

Seudah Shlisheet

is sponsored in memory of
Sirus Elie, z"l
by The Elie Family

Refuah Shlemah

Mordechai Cohen / Mordecai ben Avraham
Moselle Amron/Mazal Tov bat Salha Matana
Tilda Levy / Tilda bat Miriam
Joseph Sharaf / Yossef ben Jamila
Maurice Ovadia / Moshe ben Noosha
Michael Herzbrun / Michael Baruch ben Sarah
Sal Sassoon / Shlomo ben Sasson Menashe

Shabbat Shalom U'Mevorah

Wishing You a Peaceful Shabbat

Positions for Teachers & Aids

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In Memoriam

We remember these yahrzeit anniversaries
for August 23 to 30, 2014. It is customary to
light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, &
attend services the preceding Shabbat.

27 Av / Shabbat, August 23rd
Lulu bat Shereen

28 Av / Sunday, August 24th
Goel Berookhim
Malka Isaac Malka bat Rivka

29 Av / Monday, August 25th
Rebecca Shamash Rivke bat Sarah

30 Av / Tuesday, August 26th
Israel Messiah Yisrael ben Mashiach

1 Elul / Wednesday, August 27th
Nissim Moses Nissim ben Yoshua Efraim

2 Elul / Thursday, August 28th
Saltanat Kohan

4 Elul / Shabbat, August 30th
Edward Kelly

We send our condolences to the family of
Evelyn Azar, z"l
May Hashem comfort them together with
all the mourners of Tzion.

We send our condolences to the family of
Hannah Postmentier, z"l
mother of Elaine Mizrahie who is the wife of
Phillip Mizrahie. May Hashem comfort them
together with all the mourners of Tzion.

We send our condolences to the family of
Houshang Avraham ben Yishmael, z"l
father of Sara Cohen (who is the wife of
Simon Cohen) & father of Shawn Yousefia.
May Hashem comfort them together with
all the mourners of Tzion.



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A Talmudic teaching has it that one should listen to the words of sages, even when they are engaged in seemingly trivial conversations. Sages have a storehouse of wisdom and knowledge. Sages train themselves to think before speaking, to organize their thoughts. Even when they seem to be speaking casually, their deeply rooted intellectual training leads them to speak clearly and intelligently. Even when they speak “spontaneously,” their minds have processed their thoughts before the words leave their mouths.

The issue of “spontaneity” comes up frequently in discussions of religious observance. We sometimes hear people say that they prefer to be “spontaneous” in their spirituality rather than to follow the rules and regulations of the religion. They don’t seem to realize that spontaneity, unless deeply rooted in knowledge and self-discipline, is not in itself a virtue. Just as rote observance of mitzvot is religiously defective, so is a shallow spontaneity that lacks forethought. Ideally, a religious personality develops authentic spontaneity—a spiritually alive soul that fulfills mitzvot with a sense of excitement, wonder, self-discipline, orderliness.

This week’s Torah portion includes many laws relating to religious belief and worship; government; criminal law; domestic life; agricultural laws; holy days. We are told that if we follow the mitzvot we will have blessing, and if we disregard the mitzvot we will suffer the consequences.

Psalms / Tehillim 81

The following psalm is read before Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and is also appropriate for the celebration of the New Month, also called the “New Moon.” In anticipation of the High Holy Days, we offer you a selection of the liturgical poetry.

- 1** For the lead [musician], set to the gittit, [a psalm] of Asaph.
- 2** Sing with joy to God, our strength; sound [the shofar] to the God of Jacob.
- 3** Take up the melody, and sound the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the lyre.
- 4** Blow the shofar at the [New] Moon, on the designated day for our festival.
- 5** For it is a statute for Israel, [a day of] judgment for the God of Jacob.
- 6** [The day when royal] vestments were put on Joseph, when He went out [as viceroy] over the land of Egypt. “I will hear a language I never knew.”
- 7** [God said] “I removed his shoulder from the burden; his hands were freed from the basket.
- 8** In trouble you called, and I rescued you;
I answered your secret call with thunder; I was sure of you at the waters of Meribah. Selah!
- 9** Listen, My people, and I will warn you: Israel, if only you would listen to Me.
- 10** There should not be among you any foreign god; nor should you bow to [any] alien god.
- 11** I am the Ad-nai your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt;
open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

The underlying message is that a living relationship with God must be based on firm foundations of thought and deed, not on ephemeral “spontaneous” feelings. The more we learn Torah, and the deeper our awareness of the power of mitzvot, the greater blessing we will find in our lives. Self-discipline is not the antithesis of spontaneity, but the key to genuine spontaneity. Thinking before one speaks and acts is not a sign of artificiality, but is rather an indication that a person follows in the ways of sages.

Organizing and preparing our thoughts before we speak or act is a sign of respect to others. Moreover, it is a sign of self-respect.

- 12** But My people did not heed My voice; and Israel would none of Me.
 - 13** So I banished them, [since they followed] the stubbornness of their heart, they walked in their own counsels.
 - 14** Would that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!
 - 15** I would soon subdue their enemies, and turn My hand against their oppressors.”
 - 16** The haters of Ad-nai would then deny [their hatred] before Him; and their destiny would be [sealed] forever.
 - 17** And He will feed [Israel] with the fat of the wheat; and satiate [Israel] with honey drawn from the rock.
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The Custom of Saying Selihot

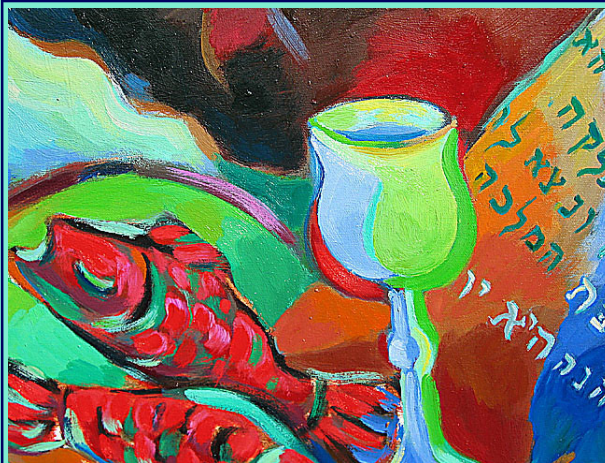
Starting after Rosh Hodesh Elul, Sephardic Jews around the world wake up in the early morning to recite the Selihot, special prayers and poems. The Selihot are recited daily until the end of the Yamim Nora'im, "The Days of Awe" or High Holy Days.

The custom of waking up early during the 40 days from Rosh Hodesh Elul until Yom Kippur is codified in Shulhan Aruch. The special prayers facilitate Teshubah or repentance, since it is not appropriate that we should arrive at the High Holy Days, asking Hashem for forgiveness, without having prepared. The last ten days of this 40-day period is called Aseret Yeme Teshubah or "the ten days of repentance" when we add extra prayers in the Tefillah and extra songs in the Selihot.

The origins of Elul as a month of special Divine grace and mercy go back to the time of Moses, during the first year after the Jewish people went out of Egypt. Seven weeks after the Exodus, the people of Israel received the Torah at Mount Sinai. But just 40 days later, while Moses was still up on the mountain, they violated their special relationship with G-d by worshipping the golden calf. Upon descending from the mountain and witnessing their transgression, Moses smashed the two stone tablets on which G-d had inscribed the Ten Commandments; he then returned to Mount Sinai for a second 40 days to plead with G-d on Israel's behalf.

On the early morning of the 1st of Elul, Moses once again ascended Mount Sinai. On the mountain, G-d allowed Moses to "see My back, but not My face" (which Maimonides interprets as a perception of G-d's reality but not His essence) -- the closest any human being ever came to knowing G-d -- and taught him His "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy."

Moses remained on the mountain for 40 days, until the 10th of Tishrei (Yom Kippur), during which time He obtained G-d's whole-hearted forgiveness and reconciliation with the people of Israel. Ever since, the month of Elul serves as the "month of Divine mercy and forgiveness."



KJ Shabbaton

Friday, September 12, 2014

6:30 pm Minha • 7:30 Dinner

Families Share a Table • Special Kids Menu

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