

Our Precious Heritage: Respecting Truths Our Ancestors Gifted to Us

Moral Values are important?

They enable us to see

And measure our desires and actions

With yardstick of Integrity.

Spiritual ethics are a pathway

To guide us to ways of Peace,

Where selfishness and self-interest

Can be acknowledged-then to cease.

Standards set high so to live by

Put our actions to the test-

Have we made our lives a blessing?

Have we each day done our best?

How to live-what our IDEALS are

Were goals set by our Ancestry;

And all our choices, all our actions

Become what is our History.

*Now how we live-what our IDEALS are
Will become our children's legacy,
And all our actions will determine
Future of World and Humanity.¹*

What truths have you been gifted by those who taught you? What are those eternal principles which continue to guide how you live your life? Have you in turn set things in motion to help determine the path of the next generation's lives?

A significant part of the problem of the dearth of value of Judaism is the lack of objective yardsticks to measure it. How do you measure whether someone is "a good person"? What yardsticks do we use to show the reward for practicing Judaism? There's no SAT score or grade for observing Judaism and no objective consequence, like being denied college admission, for not doing so.

At the same time, more than any grade or score we are influenced by the example set by those who came before us, who showed us the way to live. The standards for daily living might not be able to be

¹ Lucille Frenkel, "Our Precious Heritage Respecting Truths Our Ancestors Gifted to Us"

statistically quantified but they are known qualitatively to us through the daily choices and decisions we make. We certainly have the primary role to play in shaping our lives, yet it was modeled for us by those who came before and we shape the formation for those to come.

Those who are not physically present have gifted us numerous truths by which we live each and every day. Long after they have physically departed this earth, we continue to follow in their example. We want to make them proud of us. Our shared experiences bring forth numerous emotions-we learn that what is more important than what one did is how one lived.

How do we enable ourselves to keep our loved ones in mind each and every day? How have they influenced you and how have their lives inspired you to be more devoted to your family and to look out for one another? How will they continue to inspire you to live each day with meaning, purpose and integrity?

When we think of our parents and grandparents we think of a void in our lives, of someone who was there and taught us essential truths

about life but who we can no longer physically turn to for comfort or support. We miss the long conversations and the great life lessons that came from daily contact. At the same time, the truths that our ancestors gave us are eternal, and their messages resonate with us today. It's when we have it hard, the decisions that are difficult to make, that we turn to our ancestors for guidance. We look for signs as to what we should do with our lives and the impact that we should make in the world.

May we continue to light the torches that our ancestors lit, following in their example. When we are faced with roadblocks, may we try to think about what would our ancestors have done or how they would have advised us, and let us take the best step forward that we can. As we continue on our journey from being bound to becoming free, let us think about how we can be the change we want to be in the world and make them proud of our example.

*“Listen”-said the grandfather,
And I will tell you the story of Passover,*

*And how our ancestors were slaves in Egypt long ago.
And I will show you the lashmarks of bondage
Which still burn upon my soul!”*

“But I do not believe in fairytales”-said the child.

*“Listen”-said the grandfather,
“And I will tell you the marvel of the Red Sea parting,
And of how God sheltered us to freedom long ago.
And I will show you a pearly shell
Plucked from the floor of the open Red Sea!”*

“But I do not believe in miracles”-said the child.

*“Listen”-said the grandfather
“And I will tell you of Judaism,
For we are Judaism.
Judaism is God and God is love,
Love of law and law of love.
And I love you.”-said the grandfather*

“I believe in love”-whispered the child.²

We continue with Yizkor in our booklets.

² Lucille Frenkel, “The Telling.” In *A Jewish Adventure*. (Milwaukee, WI: The Eternity Press, 1983), p. 154.