

EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

1. Moses lived to 120. But his real career began when he turned 80.

2. אתה גיבור לעולם ה',....מי כמוך בעל גבורות

3. הפלא שזכיתי בע"ה לגיל הגבורות. להזכיר את קירבתי לנושא של מוות: ראיתי אשה שהנילה את עצמה מן הגג. אח"כ – עוד בכיתה א' – איך מת עלי ידידי הטוב יהושע קויפמן. ובכתה ג' -- ידידי שאול גודמן.... כל זה גרם לי שלא אהיה בטוח אם אגיע לבר מצוה, או לישא אישה, למצוא תרופה לחליי.... וזה לא הפך לאובססיה, אלא להחשיב כל רגע שאני בחיים, ובעיקר יכול לפעול לטובת אשתי ומשפחתי.

4. The sheer joy of being alive – *really* alive – ... מודה אני לפניך

5. The Sages say that *“at eighty years one acquires (or is characterized by) strength.”* This is a popular dictum, one oft repeated by those who congratulate new octogenarians. It is usually assumed to reflect on the physical stamina that allows a person to reach this level of longevity. However, the source for this statement in the Mishna is a verse in Psalms that reads: *“ואם בגבורות שמונים שנה”*, that eighty years is the time for *גבורות*, “strengths” in the plural. To me this implies that there are two types of “strength” – physical vigor and resilience, which normally characterize a younger person; and moral or spiritual strength: the wisdom that comes with experience, the courage to defy all and contribute to the world and to the community, the valor to do what is right rather than what is convenient. *I should add that these words are not descriptive but normative; this is not the way of most people, but the way it should be—the right way....*

6. ברכת שהחיינו??

7. Special mission in life

8. When I retired from presidency, I announced in public that henceforth I expect to have the time to walk in the snow in Central Park with my wife, reread the Federalist Papers, perhaps learn Greek or Latin, and learn the political theories of the Founding Fathers and, of course, finish studying a few מסכתות. I am sorry to tell you that *I have done none of the above!!*

9. What, then, do I plan to accomplish the remaining years that the Almighty may grant me?
I'm not going to tell you...!

10. מרכבת המשנה לר"י אלאשקר על אבות פרק ה

Author Merkavat HaMishnah: “When you reach 80, your time is limited, so concentrate not on earthly matters but on your service of the Almighty”

11. מחזור נוסח ספרדי ליום הכפורים - תוכחה לר' אברהם אבן עזרא ז"ל:

כי בן שמונים טרח עלי בניו. אין לבבו אתו ולא עיניו. בזה ליודעיו ולעג לשכניו. רש בכוסו גם לענה פתו: כי אחרי זאת כמת יהי נחשב. אשרי איש אשר נחשב לגר תושב. אין בלבו רעיון ולא מחשב. רק לאחרית נפשו ומשכרתו:

Abraham Ibn Ezra: “When you reach 70, what you is not accepted as important, and you become a burden to your friends, At 80 – you are a burden to your children. Your heart, your eyes

no longer function that well. You become a source of embarrassment to your friends; they treat you as if you're gone already...You are fortunate if you see yourself as a stranger in the world, thinking only on the immortality of your soul."

12. The famous writer and wit, Franklin Adams, once asked a colleague, "Whose birthday is it today?" "Yours?" she guessed. "No, but you're getting warm," Adams replied, "It's Shakespeare's." ...So it is with me – all that *tzimmes* you're making—it must for somebody else—a really important person.

13. **Thank Richard Joel – Middl Ageas- FAITH/KNOWIDG///I starteds fvaith in him; now KNWLDG! tribute to both of us that we have become strong friends instead of competitors—even though I am unable to ennoble as well as he does...**
I thank him for his most precious gift – his friendship. I pray that it will define our relationship for many many years—for the good of YU as well as the two of us and our families