NORMAN LAMM

SEE A-428

SHMINI ATZERESS 1957 Last Blessing or Last Fling

1. WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, YIZKOR NOT ONLY TIME THINK OF BELOVED RELATIVES. BUT ALSO - OF OURSELVES. THIS SOLEMN MOMENT WE NOT ONLY RECOLLECT, BUT ALSO INDULGE: INTROSPECTION. IN RECALLING THOSE WHOM WE LOVED AND NO LONGER HERE, WE AWARE OF FACT (TO WHICH WE ARE SOMETIMES OBLIVIOUS

IN THE RUSH OF THINGS) THAT: WE ARE MORTAL OURSELVES. WE REMEMBER: LAW OF LIFE THAT LIFE MUST COME TO AN END, EVENTUALLY...TODAY WE IMPRESS

UPON OURSEPVES FACT THAT WE WILL NOT LIVE FOREVER - AND THEREFORE LIFE WE HAVE LEFT TO OURSELVES (&MAY WE...120...) IS ALL THE MORE PRECIOUS TO US.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF IMPENDING END ALWAYS HAS PROFOUND EFFECT MAN. CAN MELT HEART STRONG MAN. MAKE HERO OF COWARD MORE OFTEN THAN NOT: APPROACH OF DEATH, LIFE'S GREATEST DISASTER, EVOKES REACTION WHICH CAN TELL US ALL WE NEED KNOW ABOUT A MAN: PERSONALITY, PRINCIPLES, IDEOLOGY, GENUINENESS

AND THE MORE INTENSELY A MAN AWARE OF END. MORE CONCENTRATED BECOME HIS

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES LIFE, WHETHER GOOD OR BAD. -> m MIL: Granson areas is it of. . & little timeleft - sport at wally! ON THIS YIZKOR DAY, THEN, WE WAKE UP TO FACT THAT LIFE NOT ENDLESS, AND ARE CALLED UPON DECIDE WHAT DO WITH YEARS REMAINING TO US ...

3. THE CHOICE PRESENTED TO US IN CONTEMPLATING THE INEVITABLE, IS CLEARLY DELINEATED IN THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE CONCERNING ISAAC & TWO SONS. ESAU. JACOB.

BOTH BAINTLY ISAAC & HIS WILD SON ESAU WERE CONCERNED WITH FINITENESS LIFE.

BOTH BASED THEIR BEHAVIOR ON FACT THAT IT ENDS, BOTH ACTED OUT OF KNOWLEDGE THAT MAN MORTAL, SOON MUST DIE YET SAME CAUSE RESULTED EFFECTS WORLDS APART FROM EACH OTHER.

בין ל ייי זגצונ עבול וא ונגיו ווא אוני ייי וגדע אוווי LISTEN TO ISAAC:

(translate and explain)

LIFE SO SHORT, SAYS IBAAC ... GOING TO DIE ANY DAY NOW.

SO MUCH LEFT UNDONE.

HAVE TAKEN CARE JACOB * IS SORT PERSON ALWAYS BE CREDIT ... yosheiv ohalim ... BUT WHAT OF ESAU?? - ALWAYS BE CONDEMNED PLAY THE SAVAGE? -UNWANTED,

UNLOVED, FEARED AND HATED? ETERNALLY ENSTRANGED FATHER HEAVEN? SHALL NOT BE SAID HIM DID SOMETHING NOBLE ALL LIFE? & SO, BECAUSE OF IMPENDING DEATH, ISAAC ACTS, SENDS ESAU OFF ERRAND

HE CAN PERFORM COMPETENCE...NOT SELFISH...NOT INDUIGE SELF..BUT HIGHER PURPOSE ... MITZVAH ... KIBBUD AV ... ISAAC IN A HURRY TEACH ESAU DO SOMETHING DECENT, UNSELFISH, SOMETHING RESULT IN brachah.....

DEATH'S APPROACH SPURS INAL TO HEIGHTEN UPE'S BLESSING

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ESAU MOTIVATED SAME CONSIDERATION BREVITY LIFE, EVENTUAL DEATH. BUT DOOK HOW DIFFERENT A CONSTRUCTION HE PLACES ON THIS INEVITABLE FACT: 1.21 x 21 c/c 2) TC 1 UNU JINU 5 U 1 2 1 1 2 2 1 2 (elaborate)

FOR ISAAC, IMMINENCE DEATH INCENTIVE LEAVE BLESSING FOR ESAU . WAS REASON TO FAST ON LINTELS

FOR IBAAC, DEATH SIGNAL REENFORCE SPIRITUAL WORTH CHILD

FOR ESAU , WAS EXCUSE FORFEITING BIRTHRIGHT

THIS IS HOW DEATH CLEARLY DEFINES ESSENCE MAN'S PERSONALITY, BY MAKING HTM CHOOSE BETWEEN: LAST BLESSING ... OR LAST FLING!

4. ALL US ACQAINTED W SUCH CASES APPROACHING DISASTER ACTING ASTEST DISTINGUISH

BETWEEN ISAACS AND ESAUS

TWO YOUNG MEN (SEEM REMARKABLY ALIKE PERSONALITY, BACKGROUND) OFF TO WAR. ONE ACHEIVE DIGNITY, SPIRITUAL WHOLESOMENESS FROM SAME EXPERIENCE

WHICH LEADS OTHER TO IMMORALITY.NIHILISTIC OUTLOOK ... ONE FINDS G-D IN THE FOXHOLE...THE OTHER SEEKS ESCAPE FROM HIM IN FOXHOLE

AWARENESS DEATH HAS MADE ONE CHOOSE LAST BLESSING, OTHER LAST FLING THAT'S WHY LAST WAR TURNED SOME RELIG YOUNGSTERS INTO CYNICAL ADULTS & FLIGHTY YOUNGSTERS INTO SERIOUS DEDICATED PIOUS ADULTS

"BEHOLD I AM GOING TO DIE" HAS FORCED UPON THEM ULTIMATE CHOICE THEIR LIVES: HOW TO LIVE IN THE FACEOF DEATH IT IS MOST FATEFUL CHOICE ANY MAN CALLED UPON TO MAKE LAST FLING, OR BLESSING

5. AND NOT ONLY IS THIS CHOICE BETWEEN CONCENTRATED GOOD OR CONCENTRATED LACK OF IT TRUE FOR APPROACH END OF LIFE - BUT ALSO FOR END ANY PARTICULAR

PERIOD IN LIFE. TAKE YOUNG MAN ABOUT TO BE MARRIED. IMPORTANT PERIOD HIS LIFE DRAWING TO A CLOSE. I TALK TO MANY SUCH WHO EXPERIENCING LAST SYLLABLES CELIBACY ... AND IN BEHAVIOR MAN AT THIS TIME HAVE CLUE TO

HIS WHOLE CHARACTER, HIS MORAL AND RELGIOUS DISPOSITION - AS WELL AS GOOD HINT OF HOW HE'LL LIVE OUT HIS MARRIED LIFE ... EITHER "LAST FLING" k'chol ha'goyyim....BACHELOR PARTIES.....OR: FASTING...yom-kippur Minchah.

6. SAME APPLIES AN EARLIER PERIOD LIFE OF MAN, WHEN STILL CHILD, WHEN PARENTS PREPARING HIM FOR APPROACHING END CHILDHOOD, BEGINNING ADULT LIFE.

PARENTS REALIZE CHILDHOOD A PRECIOUS STAGE LIFE. QUESTION: WHAT DO WIITH IT? FIRST BLESSING OR FIRST FLING? ... OUR CHILDREN BEING REARED AGE WHEEL TIME TURNS FAST. NO TIME FOR MUCH FRIVOLITY. MANY THINGS WILL SOON CROWD

THIER DAYS AS THEY GROW UP. WHAT WILL IT BE? * LINTELS OF LUXURY, THE nezid adashim OF DANCING, PIANO, ELOCUTION LESSONS, FOLLOWED BY PORRIDGE SCOUTS, FRATERNITIES, 101 OTHER DIVERSIONS - HARMLESS & PLEASANT AS THEY ARE - OR: THE brachah OF JEWISH EDUCATION ... NOT S.S. BUT ... ISAAC OR ES

- 7. OUR GENERATION EVEN MORE AWARE OF END OF WORLD THAN THAT OF 20 CENTURIES AGO, WHEN END-WORLD AND KINGDOM OF G-D EXPECTED MOMENTARILY.
 - -H-BOMBS, I.C.B.M.S HAVE MADE UNIVERSAL DESTRUCTION AN IMMEDIATE AND REAL POSSIBILITY
 - END OF WORLD NO LONGER MATTER THEOLOGOICAL SPECULATION
 - IS OVERWHELMINGLY REAL THREAT, MADE POSSIBLE BY SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, & HANGING ON THIN THREADS DIPLOMACY, POLITICS.
 - "BEHOLD I AM GOING TO DIE" OF IMMEDIATE IMPORTANCE EVEN TO YOUNG MAN, WOMAN IN PRIME HEALTH
 - THREFORE: EVEN WHILE DIPLOMATS CONCERNED PREVENTING FRIGHTFUL POSSIBILITY, PROBLEM FOR EACH US: HOW REACT TO DREAD THREAT OF END? FOR PSY CHOLOGICALLY, IT DOES AFFECT US....
 - SHALL, WE DEDICATED SELVES TO WHAT IMPORTANT, SACRED IN LIFE & TRY FOR LAST BLESSING AS DID ISAAC? -
 - OR SHALL WE CONCLUDE THAT SINCE DEATH IMMINENT, NOTHING ANY LONGER OF ANY IMPORTANCE, HENCE SELL BIRTHRIGHT, TAKE LAST FLING AT BANQUET OF SELF-INDU:GENCE IN WILD, PAGAN TRADITION OF ESAU?
 - IS OUR REACTION TO THE SOMBER MOOD OF OUR TIMES TO BE THAT OF THE RABBIS: shuw yom echad lifnei missas'cha...(which means every day)....
 OR: THAT OF THE PAGAN QUOTED BY ISAIAH WHO SAYS:

MINI 2 12 (12/6, /") MP 2 (12/6)

- SHALL OUR ATTITUDE BE THAT OF MOSES, WHO IN FINAL SIDRA READ THIS HOLIDAY ROUNDS OUR CARRER, PREPARES TO DIE WITH SONG v'zos ha'brachah....
 OR THAT OF A DON QUIXOTE WHO ECHOES THE SENTIMENT OF AN AGE WHEN HE SAYS:
 "MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES"?
- (8. KORETZER REBBE WAS TALMID OF BAAL SHEM TOV. SAID OF BAAL SHEM, THAT WHEN REALIZED HE WAS GOING TO DIE, EXCLAIMED: RIBBOBO SHEL OLAM, I MAKE THEE A GIFT OF THE REMAINING HOURS OF MY LIFE. THAT IS THE WAY TO LIVE: TO REACT WITH SPIRITUAL MIGHT AND HEALTH TO THE THOUGHT OF DEATH, TO MAKE OUR HOURS AND DAYS AND YEARS GIFTS TO THE CREATOR)
 - 9. THE GREAT CHOFETZ CHAYYIM ONCE SAID THAT A MAN'S LIFE CAN BE COMPARED TO A POST CARD... WHEN HE BEGINS TO WRITE, LARGE LATERS, LONG SPACES, FILL WITH TRIVIAL EXCHANGES.."HOW ARE YOU?".."WEATHER GOOD"..... BUT AS DRAW TO END OF CARD, REALIZE IMPORTANT MESSAGE STILL UNDELIVERED, BEGIN TO WRITE SMALL, CRAMPED, WRITE ON MARGINS, ON REVERSE SIDE, SKIP CONJUCTIONS & PREPOSITIONS, ONLY MOST IMPORTANT WORDS & THEY ARE CHOSEN WITH GREAT CARE.

 **** SO LIFE MAN- IN YOUTH WASTES TIME IN FRIVOLITY, NONSENSE, THE TRIVIAL.AS MATURES & REALIZES END MUST INEVITABLY COME, BEGINS CONSERVE TIME, DEVOTE EFFORTS ONLY WHAT HAS ULTIMATE MEANING, REAL SIGNIFICANCE....

10. SO MANY OF US TOO BUSY FOR FULL JEWISH LIWING IN OUR YOUTH AND EARLY MATURITY...POSTPONE IT FOR OLD AGE, AS IF TORAH MADE ONLY FOR RETIRED PEOPLE... WELL, IN THIS ATOMIC, SUPERSONIC, ROCKET & SATTELITE AGE, WE NO LONGER HAVE THE SECURITY OF MAKING SUCH LONG-RANGE PLANS.

EVEN AT THE TOP OF THE POST CARD WE'VE GOT TO BEGIN CRAMMING, DISCARDING THE TRIVIAL AND C NCENTRATING ON THE MOST IMPORTANT....FOR OUR ERA IS FULLY CHARACTERIZED BY ISAAC'S STATEMENT 10 yadati yom mossi.

WE HAVE GOT TO DECIDE TODAY FOR TOMORROW: SHALL WE MAKE A GIFT OF OUR HOURS TO G-D - OR FRITTER THEM AWAY IN NEUROTIC QUEST FOR "FUN" AND "GOOD TIMES", WHICH LEAVE US EMPTIER AFTER EXPERIENCING THEM THAN BEFORE?

SHALL WE, IN WHATEVER YEARS G-D CHOOSES TO GIVE US, GRASP A LAST brachah - OR SELL OUR becherah? - LIKE ISAAC, REACH FOR THE LAST BLESSING... OR LIKE E SAU, PUT ALL OUR ENERGY INTO A GRAND LAST FLING?

11. THE QUESTION, MY FRIENDS, IS A MOST CRUSIAL ONE. AS WE RISE TO YIZKOR AND THE MEMORY OF OTHER MORTALS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US, WE MUST FACE THE TRUTH AND UNDERSTAND THAT

HOW WE LIVE IN THE FACE OF DEATH DETERMINES,

ULTIMATELY, WHETHER IT WAS WORTH OUR BEING BORN IN THE FIRST PLACE.