



“The Marathon of Life”

December 2017

Recently, before we had the great Marathon in our city, one of our members "Johnny" walked into my office and asked me "Rabbi, should I run the marathon"?

So I asked him, "why do you want to run the marathon"? He answered me "because at the end of the Marathon, I can drink all the beer that my heart desires". Then I asked him,

"why don't you want to run the marathon"? He answered me, " look at me, I am 63 years old and never ran a marathon in my life". I told him "go for it

and do the best you can". At the end he managed to run 10 miles, I don't know about you, but that is a serious run even for somebody who is experienced. Two weeks after the marathon, Johnny calls me and he says "Rabbi can we meet I need to talk". So we made up to meet, and it ended up being one of the most inspirational moments that I've ever had. I walked into the coffee shop and Johnny was sitting there waiting for me and he had tears in his eyes. He said,

"thank you for encouraging me to run the marathon, I never realized it was going to be a life-changing experience". He continued "Rabbi, please let me share with you what I learned from this experience". "As I was running the race I realized, that not all of us are going to reach the finish line, but that does not mean that we shouldn't try. Then I looked toward the starting line and realized that there are some people running the race in wheelchairs, some while wearing prosthesis, and there was actually someone that I noticed on crutches. Making me realize that some of us are better equipped to run than others but that didn't seem to hold them back from running the race. As I was running a looked over my shoulder I noticed about a block behind me was a gentleman in a wheelchair without legs and he was pushing himself with a device made to work with his hands. I was thinking to myself this man in the wheelchair would give anything to have a pair of legs, yet that did not hold them back from being part of the race. I was totally inspired and encouraged by his determination. I also could not help noticing the people along the route who were cheering us along. I did not know any of them

but I was quite inspired by their cheering, smiling and voices telling us not to quit. I ran as long as I could, until my body physically could not go any longer. That night when I came home I sat down with a pen and paper, to write down my feelings of the moment.

I was thinking to myself, I ran the marathon but it actually was a lesson of a lifetime, and the title I wrote on my paper was "Running the Marathon of Life". Isn't it the same for all of us as we go through this path called life? We all enter the race, some make it to the end faster than others. Some are better equipped to run than others but that shouldn't hold us back from running. And if you ever feel like you need to stop running, look over your shoulder to those less fortunate than you are, who would give anything to be in your place. Every so often we need to pause in life and take stock of what we have and thank G-d for it and be grateful, as opposed to being depressed or upset on what we don't have. And another big lesson that I have learned, in life sometimes the biggest act of kindness that one can do for another is even from the sidelines, is a kind word, a smile and some words of encouragement". There are those moments in life when we are shown more than we can understand, never underestimate "just being there" for others. We chatted for a bit longer, shared a few laughs and parted ways. It will be a morning that I will long remember. What a powerful lesson to carry with us, that it is okay for us to enjoy life, even though things might not be as perfect as we hoped for. It reminded me of the story "The Peacock and the Crow"

A crow lived in the forest and was absolutely satisfied in life. But one day he saw a swan. "This swan is so white," he thought, "and I am so black. This swan must be the happiest bird in the world."

He expressed his thoughts to the swan. "Actually," the swan replied, "I was feeling that I was the happiest bird around until I saw a parrot, which has two colors. I now think the parrot is the happiest bird in creation." The crow then approached the parrot. The parrot explained, "I lived a very happy life until I saw a peacock. I have only two colors, but the peacock has multiple colors."

The crow then visited a peacock in the zoo and saw that hundreds of people had gathered to see him. After the people had left, the crow approached the peacock. "Dear peacock," the crow said, "you are so beautiful. Every day thousands of people come to see you. When people see me, they immediately shoo me away. I think you are the happiest bird on the planet."

The peacock replied, "I always thought that I was the most beautiful and happy bird on the planet. But because of my beauty, I am entrapped in this zoo. I have examined the zoo very carefully, and I have realized that the crow is the only bird not kept in a cage. So for past few days, I have been thinking that if I were a crow, I could happily roam everywhere." ...End of story

That's our problem too. We make unnecessary comparison with others and become sad. We don't value what G-d has given us. This all leads to the vicious cycle of unhappiness. Let us learn to be happy in what we have instead of looking at what we don't have. There will always be someone who will have more or less than we have. A person who is satisfied with what he/she has is the happiest person in the world. As we are about to say goodbye to 2017, let us just pause for a moment and reflect. There have been some great times that made us laugh and there have been those moments that have made us cry. We started off the year with many resolutions some we were able to keep and some that fell by the wayside. But at the end of the day here we are celebrating another year. On behalf of All your Chaplains, thanks so much for all that you do in making our city a better and safer place to live and raise our families. Our blessing to each of you is "May 2018 be one of your best years yet".

Season's Greetings, A very Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanza, Happy Chanukah and Happy New Year to the world's greatest flock. Should you need a shoulder to lean on or ear to listen, or perhaps some good humor to share, don't hesitate to send an e-mail or give us a call.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain Rabbi Moshe Wolf
May G-d bless you and keep you safe. Amen!
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