

3 Av, 5765 (Sept. 3, 2005) *Shabbat of Consolation#3Cosmic Consciousness:* J. M. Terrett

Re' eh See! **Inside out, NOT outside in!**

Torah: Deut.11:26-16:17

(1)12:28 [keep, listen =happy *d'or l'd'or l'olam va'ed* {generation to generation, forever} doing what is good and right in the eyes of the L-rd]; **(2)12:32** [observe and practice ALL, adding nothing, taking away nothing]; **(3)14:2**[holy, chosen to belong from among ALL the peoples]; **(4)15:4, 5**[no poor, land blessed if obey and obey, being careful to detail ALL commandments];

Haftarah: Is. 54:11-55:5 (I Sam. 18:18, 42)

(5)54:13[ALL sons disciples in great prosperity]; **(6) 54:14**[established by righteousness, banish worry, nothing to fear, no panic shall approach you]

Brit Chadashah: Jn. 7:37-52 (F)

(7) 7:38[out of inner being, according to Scriptures, shall flow rivers of living water]

Psalm 97 L-rd's Table: I Cor. 11:23-34

Passage: 2 Cor. 4:16-18

This last week, I had the enjoyable privilege of dressing up in a great big blue "bell" costume and becoming the Bell Canada mascot: "Belly" on the grounds of the legislature. The costume was extremely hot and I could not see very well, nor move very fast. My job was to wave at people and to hug children and it was so much fun that both of my shifts went by very quickly, but I discovered something quite amazing about myself and about the people I encountered.

What's on the inside comes out and you cannot fool people for very long, even in a costume. I enjoy people and I love kids and they picked up on it. I looked for the kids in the crowd and waved at them and every single Japanese tourist on the grounds of the legislature wanted to have their picture taken with my arm around them. At first I was supposed to go and spend time at the lost child booth, but I attracted such a crowd that they kept me at the Bell Canada main booth. Why? I wasn't supposed to make a sound, and nobody could really tell who it was in that big blue bell costume – and yet I spent the afternoon and evening singling people out of the crowd and giving them individual attention and they saw right through me.

Some mascots are grumpy, others flirt with the girls or want to draw attention to themselves, me, I just wanted to love people – even the ones who punched me, pushed me and hung onto my legs and wouldn't go away. You see, we all wear costumes of some kind – our carefully composed public persona, but unless what is on the outside reflects what is on the inside, people will eventually see through our disguise and find out who we really are.

As people age, I am fascinated by the facial wrinkles which they develop – some develop permanent smile wrinkles and others develop permanent frown wrinkles, and no amount of make up can disguise the spiritual impact which the facial wrinkles eventually display permanently for all to see. How is your costume doing? What kind of wrinkles will you be wearing permanently one day? The big blue bell with the goofy smile wasn't really a disguise, it was more like a metaphor for who I am on the inside – when it was time to go, my "bodyguard" had to rescue me from the crowds, and I think the crew I worked for were a little surprised that I seemed to be a natural, and that I wasn't really wearing a costume at all.

Kids can tell if you like them and most people let you know the vibes they pick up from you. Unfortunately for my change purse, people can tell I have a "yes" face which doesn't threaten them – full of mischief and fun, maybe but not really scary or mean. How about you? What kind of costume are you wearing? What kinds of signals or vibes do you broadcast? What kinds of wrinkles is your soul etching on your face? I have my vinegar moments and my Vesuvius episodes, and days when the big blue bell suit is shrouded in black clouds, complete with peals of thunder and flashes of lightening which threaten to tear the fabric of galaxy to shreds repeatedly.

But deep down and eventually, what's on the inside comes out and the river of living water starts flowing again. I have called this phenomenon: cosmic consciousness and it has nothing to do with levitation, contacting interstellar life forms or going into deep meditation trances. It has a lot to do with living out what is on the inside and not wearing a disguise which doesn't fool people for long. Earlier in chapter four of 2 Corinthians, Paul talks about some of painful realities which constantly tried to overpower his ministry and prevent the inner river of living water from flowing out into his life. Because for all of its fun, and frolic, the world we live in does wallow in an intense and hostile spiritual darkness which does not take kindly to the light which the L-rd has lit deep in the heart of every believer.

Sometimes this light grows very dim, and in the lives of some believers it is even extinguished, either temporarily or permanently and the inner darkness which is left, eventually takes over the costume, and chisels the dark inner realities of their souls onto their faces for all to see. Physical beauty fades, but inner beauty doesn't have to. Children are so cute and young people are so full of hormones and vitality that is hard to believe that so many of them will turn into bitter, anger, depressed old people, as dark and broken on the outside as they are on the inside. How does this happen?

People who come to the L-rd and who lose their cosmic consciousness succumb to the negative propaganda of this immense spiritual darkness which surrounds each of us and instead of letting what is on the inside shine through onto the outside, their hearts let their inner light go out and their personal spirituality caves in repeatedly until there is no more room for any spiritual light to really shine. The passage which I have selected this morning speaks about the burdens which our inner and our outer lives will develop and which we shall carry both in this life and throughout eternity. Our light afflictions of the moment, and we're talking about Paul here – you know shipwrecks and "floggings are us", with the odd stoning and the occasional violent assault thrown in, just to keep things exciting – these either produce for us an eternal weight of glory which is beyond all measure, or our insides implode and the weight of judgment which this world is storing up drags down back into the darkness from which the L-rd delivered us.

What is the solution? It is not more tribulation. It is not a better costume or a lifetime of perpetual facial makeovers. It is simply a cosmic consciousness which looks at everything which happens to us in whatever current moment we are stuck in from the perspective of eternity. Instead of defining ourselves according to our temporal situations, we need to learn to define ourselves according to our eternal destination, so that our inner life – our personal spirituality becomes more and more the driving force, the hard drive, which powers our lives – inside and out.

You see, one day G-d is going to take us out of the costumes which we have been wearing all of our lives and let the real "us" be revealed for everyone to see. Who we are on the inside is who we are, no matter what package we try and wrap it up in. The perfect "look", the most amazing "style" and the most appealing "lines" may fool some people most of the time, but eventually all the make up in the world will not be able to hide the inner darkness and the end of our lives may be as tragic as the end of the world which T. S. Elliot describes in his poem: "The Hollow Men"

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

Cosmic consciousness understands that just as all of our ancestors have died and gone to "their reward", so will each us die and go to our reward. We can run away from what is on the inside, we can deny it as long as we have breath, and we can bury it in the deepest recesses of our souls, or dress it up in the most amazing costume and repeatedly subject it to endless makeovers which really don't fool people (unless they are playing the same game of denial and deception) – but one fine morning we will all breathe our last and I believe in that last moment we will be allowed to see three things: first, who we really are on the inside, secondly, the eternal impact of how we have lived our lives and finally, our eternal destiny, where we either walk through the wall into the real *Never Never land* of G-d's Kingdom, or we sink back into the darkness we have hidden in our hearts for so long. **You see, who you are on the inside is the real cosmic consciousness you carry with you into eternity.**

Today, we are going to celebrate the L-rd's table and as we move into the month of Elul and prepare once again for the High Holy Days, we need to look deep inside and renew our commitment to eternity and to the spirituality of love and forgiveness and joy and peace and truth and especially of light and living water. We need to perpetually shed whatever carnal costumes our flesh and our world want to fit us into and instead, let the inner truth of G-d's love in our blessed Messiah, shine out daily and constantly for all to see. How's your inner man doing? What weight are you building for eternity in the depths of your soul? What will you see, when it's time for you to shed your temporary costume and let the real you come out? Let's pray.