

It's about Time ! ... It's about Time ...

It's all about Time ... Time and Changes ...

And who among us does not feel enslaved to time,
at least some of the time, or most of the time,
-- or even -- G*d-forbid -- all of the time.

It seems, there's never enough time ...
I'd love to help, if only I had the time ...
We'll get to that, as soon as we have some free time ...

It is therefore quite fitting -- timely, you could say --
that Torah presents, as we read this morning,
at the very beginning of the movement
from the time of slavery to the dawning of freedom
as the very first *mitzvah* to the entire community
the following instruction:

הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשִׁי הַחֲדָשִׁים רֵאשִׁוֹן הוּא לָכֶם לְחֲדָשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה:

At the basic level of *p'shat*, this can be read as -- here's how you will henceforth be keeping track of time, enumerating the months starting with the month of Aviv/Nisan -- from the springtime of your birthing into freedom ...

and at a deeper and more universal level, it's as though G*d is saying ... it's now time ... for you to take charge of keeping and measuring your own time ... for nothing that marks our level of freedom than that of the freedom over one's time

Time ... and Changes ... "Time and Tide waits for no one"

Have you noticed how many of the fundamental Hebrew words for Time are really words for Change?

The word for Year - *Shanah* - is connected to the root *L'shanot Hodesh* - month - has the sense of *Hadash* - new/renewal and even the word for days, *yamim*, sounds suspiciously similar to *yamim* -- the seas --

that archetypal symbol of ever-constant change
where truly, Time and Tide wait for no one. ...

The sea indeed ... we are continually crossing the Sea ...

Which brings us to Pharaoh ...

For what is Pharaoh in this picture

If not the heart-hardened, unyielding resistance to change and growth
and the realization of one's full potential

Whether the one of which we speak is an individual,
a family system, a people, or a planetary community ...

Pharaoh is the shell that, against all reason,
against any and all mounting evidence ...

Continues to act like the husk / the shell of a seed
which closes off and hardens itself

with no thought or intention other than to deny the blossoming ...
the freedom of expression of the full beauty ...
of the life-force within ...

And what is the response to this Pharaoh ?

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל־פַּרְעֹה כִּי־אֲנִי הִכְבֵּדְתִי אֶת־לְבוֹ
וְאֶת־לֵב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שְׂתִי אֶתְתִּי אֵלָה בְּקִרְבוֹ:

Bo - come - "come with Me" ... See that I am with you ...

and what's more -- and even more remarkable and harder to see --

"*shiti ototai aleh **b'kirbo***" ... I have set these signs of Me [even]

within him"

This, to me, is a core teaching of the parsha ... for I read it as a model
of how to maintain one's center and focus in any difficult negotiation, or
confrontative situation ...

Here G*d in essence is inviting Moshe -- and, by extension, every one
of us -- as hard as it may be -- to look ... and see through that
seemingly closed outer shell of Pharaoh's heart ... see through, look
within ... and see none other than My Holy Presence within ...

Speak, even to the Pharaohs of our lives, as though you are speaking to Me ... and when you do ... know I am with you ... you will stay focused and clear ...

and I, in My time, will work with you, to do My part to effect the needed Change ...

L'hotzi'anu mimitzrayim ... to bring forth the new life of the seedlings of the flowering of springtime ...

and to bring you forth from the narrow straights
of oppression of body, and oppression of mind.

Well, it's about that Time ...

So, by way of closing ... a poem of Yehuda haLevi, from Spain in the Golden Age of the 12th century ...

עֲבָדֵי זְמַן - יְהוּדָה הַלֵּוִי

עֲבָדֵי זְמַן עֲבָדֵי עֲבָדִים הֵם
עֲבָד אֲדֹנָי הוּא לְבַד חֶפְשִׁי
עַל כֵּן בְּבִקֵּשׁ כָּל-אֲנוּשׁ חֶלְקוֹ
"חֶלְקִי אֲדֹנָי" אֶמְרָה נְפֹשִׁי.

A blessing for us all ...

keep time well

make time for what's most important

give time to those in need

share time with those we love

and may all of our Time be Time in Service

to the Source of all Life, and for all Time ...

and may this blessing be truly *l'doratam* ... for all of our generations

... it's about time !

... or, in the timeless words of Hillel ... if not now, when ?

Shabbat shalom.