

Good Yom tov and I wish you all shana tova and well over the fast; Good to see so many here tonight Yom Kippur means day of atonement its kind of nice to know that atonement is as easy as just turning up;

Of course the best way through the fast is right here in shule; wouldn't it be nice if every day could be a Yom Kippur spent in shule ...no?... no?...minus the fasting bit of course; wouldn't it be nice if families and communities could slow down a bit and appreciate more often what truly is valuable and important by being here in shule. Wouldn't it be nice if the world was Cadburys, chocolateNot on Yom Kippur of course.

The year started off brightly enough with great optimism with news of the 33 Chilean miners pulled to safety after spending over two months trapped underground in living hell wouldn't it be nice if we could share good news stories all the time.

And, Things were going well for a while, we even thought that the stimulus package at the end of 2010 had done it and we were over the GFC but since then it's been downhill and extremely volatile. The stock markets have been volatile, Australian politics with its minority government is volatile, the Malaysian option for asylum seekers is a volatile policy and tests our sensibility; Carbon policy is volatile; Osama bin Laden was killed; Dominique Strauss Kahn is removed as head of the European Bank and Greece teeters economically and Italy teeters with relevance, and Amy Winehouse dies of drug addiction. And Steve Jobs dies of cancer we coined apple dipped in honey he coined apple dipped in money.

The 10th anniversary of 9/11 was a very volatile reminder of terrorism. Israel is still volatile with continued and sustained acts of terrorism against it, this past year in Itamar, more recently in Eilat. Gilad Shalit is still captive; and the Rugby in New Zealand is volatile; One could say that the whole world has become Jewish because, Now it is not just the Jews who have to live with uncertainty but now, the whole world knows what it means to live with uncertainty,

Now its not just the Jews who live in insecurity now the whole world knows what it means to live in insecurity. What beggars belief is how much volatility the human spirit can absorb. Oh for the days when our immediate Knowledge of the world, stretched from Minsk to Pinsk.

It is no wonder then, that they took to rioting. We just had to let off some steam. I am not talking about the Arab spring uprisings. I am talking about rioting in our own back yard, in England; Israel the Garden of Eden, Australia is the front yard and England the backyard. So I'm talking about the riots in our back yard, with our Australian ancestors, from the old dart; they went on a rampage; the rioting came from places with names like Newcastle, Enfield, Camden, Lewisham and Oxford St. suburbs, streets and parks trashed; could have been our streets; private businesses and shops burnt to the ground; cars upended; palpable fear in the streets. The western World awoke to a rude shock, could those English riots happen in other Western democracy, perhaps here in Australia. How was it possible that in a seemingly modern progressive society like England the youths could take to the streets pillage, plunder and riot? Ostensibly they were rioting against inept policing and the death of a young disadvantaged thief; but in truth it had nothing to do with the thief; the young rioters were destroying the very local areas that they lived in, they were destroying their own shops, torching their own friend's cars. They were destroying their places of work; The crowds of rioters weren't big but neighbors and the community were helpless and could only stand by and merely watch, as did the police at times. These were not riots about young ideologues concerned with an economic racial or political cause; they were not after reform. These were about thugs and hoodlums with blackberries, iPhones connected by face book and fueled by drugs and alcohol. These UK riots were not racially based. These riots were about greed and opportunism. They were after plasma TV's, brand name shoes and designer clothing. It was plain old vandalism and looting on testosterone.

Demonstrations in a democracy are a legitimate form of expression. Labor Day marches around the world, I remember, Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn being completely shut off to over 1,000,000 black Americans who march

annually. Once the march developed into the infamous Crown Heights riots and saw the death of an Australian, Yankel Rosenbaum. The apartheid demonstrations of the 70's; the Vietnam War demonstrations. Have you heard of the Australian face book activist Debra Trishard who started Oscar,s Law named after her puppy Oscar to shut down cruel puppy breeding factories; The tent city demonstrations in Israel, as Israeli society struggles for a more equitable society and on the other side of the ledger you have the anti-Semitic Max Brenner demonstrations. All have an ideological focus; upon which to base their demonstration.

Not so the rioters of Britain - they were rebels; worse they were rebels without a cause.

Many were the reasons given for the breakdown. The police were blaming the parents, where were the parents, not a fair assumption as many were brought up without fathers. The politicians were blaming a culture of greed and jealousy. Sociologists were blaming the disadvantaged, academics were blaming ethnicity, every excuse was found to explain how British youth were disengaged from society as if you can have engagement when their ears and eyes are glued to iPods and video games.

May I suggest, that the London riots and they could very well have been Australian riots; were everything to do about a loss of a values, they were about a steady breakdown of their own British culture simply not knowing right from wrong; they were about a loss of self assurance and confidence in their own society; its was about loosing belief in your way of life.

And this is the point that I would like to make tonight. I would argue that in Britain it was more than about just pessimism of their own society; It was about a loss of respect for Religion and God, Britain has lost its soul. Godliness has been robed from Britain; These are the statistics; only 27% of Britain believe in a God 33% in Australia and 90% in America; don't ask me the percentage in Israel. The Church of England has a lower turnout than the orthodox shules on Sabath. Once you rob a people of their soul and rob them of a belief system, then, what you're left with is the remains of a cadaver. When you loose self-belief and become bored in the majesty and spirit of the universe and you deflate the awe and splendor of the world that we live in, and you live in the vacuum of Godlessness, then all you are

left with is the tale of human avarice (greed) and materialism and a broken society; so you are bound to get riots over plasma TVs.

It bears a common thread with Julian Assange Wiki leaks and with the closure of Rupert Murdoch's News of the World in Britain. Honestly, was anyone surprised by the depths to which the British Tabloids would sink? The Royals; David and Victoria Beckham's, the phone tapping; Britain has been going down a tabloid sewer for years with scarcely anyone objecting, Britain is inflicted by the tall poppy syndrome as is Australia.

Murdoch was only supplying the demand for scandal to a cynical public. Western media does not drive policy or ethics Western media follows, the media is a reflection of society and feeds off society and feeds it what it wants.

Wouldn't it be nice if we had wholesome and exciting role models to look up to?

Wouldn't it be nice if we could be our own kid's heroes?

When a public deprives itself of its belief in itself, disrespecting its own dignity and disregarding its capacity for altruism, you are left with pessimism. I am convinced that the slow death of God and religion in Britain from its once days of glory brought about the breakdown of its once glorious culture.

Britain lost its soul; it lost its values; it is following Europe in the march towards Islam and I don't think it can win the Rugby. Yes I know they have retained the ashes. And put on the best wedding of the year, were you one of the 3 billion who watched Kate marry William.

It's not fair I am picking on Britain too much; have you heard the story of the Nevada policeman who pulls over a car and says to the driver that since he was wearing a seatbelt he has won \$5000 as a prize. The officer asked what he planned to do with the money. The driver replied I think I will get my drivers license. Oh don't listen to him yelled the woman in the passenger seat he speaks nonsense when he is drunk. This woke the guy in the back seat. When he saw the police officer he moaned I knew we wouldn't get far in a stolen car. At that moment there was a knock from the trunk and a voice called out in Spanish por favor, have we crossed the border yet? Now there's a society struggling for direction!

1. I am the Lord you're G-d. – means - I am watching you even when the police aren't. So put down the darn television
2. Thou shalt have no other gods, so stop obsessing over the celebrity's and royals and idolizing over Hollywood stars ;
3. Do not use Gods name in vain – so don't go about blaming everyone else. And don't go around blaming the media
4. Remember the Sabbath – so stay at home Friday night and make Friday night family night.
5. Honor your father and mother – and don't blame the dysfunctional family.
6. Thou shalt not kill – so don't
7. Thou shalt not steal – so don't
8. Thou shalt not commit adultery – value the opposite gender; and learn to love someone unconditionally and absolutely.
9. Thou shall not bear false witness – that's right Marcus it was not Gods fault
10. Thou shalt not be covet – so don't queue up to loot – that could only happen in England.

Moses, in Deuteronomy 8: 11 presents, his last will and testament to bnei Yisroel. He is standing on the banks of the Jordan having been disavowed from crossing into Israel proper; he has just spent 40 years wandering with his beloved people in the desert and prepares to leave them with a legacy which he hopes will leave them in good stead as they enter the Promised Land.

He tells them “Not by bread alone does man live..... but by the word of God.

Be careful he says; do not forget the Lord your G-d . . . do not forget that when you enter the land and when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proudremember and do not forget *the Lord your G-d*, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery . . .

You may say to yourself, Kochi votzem yadi asa li et hachayiol hazeh.....

“My strength and the strength of my hands have produced for me all this wealth .”

Moses warns Israel – it is not so.....you thought that our wandering for 40 years in the desert was the real test, and that once you conquer Israel and settle the land, your problems will be over;

No says Moses; as you enter the land of Israel that is when the real challenge will start;

Precisely when you prosper; when you have rich harvests and safe homes;

Moses hints here to a law of History. A society that becomes affluent and complacent and loses its mental and spiritual edge will decline and fall.

The real challenge is not poverty but affluence; not insecurity but security not slavery but freedom.

Moses outlines in this his legacy the account of the decline and fall of civilizations. He prays that Israel will not be one of those civilizations that fall. It is a pattern of ancient Greece and Rome and it is a pattern of Western Democracy. It is the immediate challenge of our culture to be able to uphold and sustain a free society.

Moshe continues with his warning V'noshantem beoretz, you will grow old in the land, meaning, you no longer will have , the moral and mental fortitude to defend freedom, you will be grow old and tired and lose spiritual energy; sooner or later your civilization will collapse.

When western democracy loses its soul, it's self belief, then you get London riots.

So Moshe tells them above all remember where you come from, you were once slaves; you had to fight for things; remember your ancestry' you did not just drop out of the sky you are the children of Avraham and Sarah; remember your covenant from Sinai, it gave you faith;

He urges us; maintain your faith,

for a society is only as strong as its faith.

A society is only as strong as its hope and self belief.

Only faith can lead us to support our fellow human beings sometimes before our own needs. Only faith can motivate us to act for the benefit of a future, a future that we will not live to see. Only faith can stop us from wrongdoing, when we believe that no one will find out.

Only faith can save a society from decline and fall.

When a single fruit merchant in Tunisia brought hope to an Arab spring of uprising can that human spark also bring hope to the Streets of the West? Can the indomitable spirits of hope buried deep in the darkness of a Chilean mine for over 60 days arise and bring hope to the quest of all mankind.

Perhaps my words are best summarized by the poem found on the body of an unknown American soldier in WW2:

Look God I have never spoken to you
But now I want to say How do you do;
You see they told me you did not exist.
And like a fool I believed all of this;

Last night from a shell hole, I saw your sky
I figured right there and then they had told me a lie;
Funny I had to come to this hellish place
before we become acquainted to see your face.

Well I have to go now God; Good Bye
Strange; since I met you I'm not afraid to die.

Over the years we always argued what was the secret to Israel dominance over its larger neighbors? We first thought it was our guns; our guns gave us superior military capabilities,
we then thought that perhaps it was our political system or maybe our economic system;

When really all along it has always been our core values, our religion, our faith.

Israel although a secular state still maintains core Jewish values; "kol Yisrael arevim zeh bezeh". All of Israel are guarantors, we are there, one for the other. Any nation any culture any people can be like Israel and stand shoulder to shoulder with a sense of purpose & strength; – if only it retains its soul;

The blast of the shofar shakes us to the core; it emanates from every single shule; it is a global soul searching and spiritual renaissance. To awaken the goodness and optimism of mankind for Is it not also true that every single day human beings give charity, politicians stand up for moral principles men and women honour their commitments to each other. Is it not true that people volunteer and give to society feed the poor and heal the sick? I don't think we will decline and fall.

Wouldn't it be nice if the whole world was chocolate, I mean
Wouldn't it be nice if the whole world was a cholent; and all of mankind would keep one shabos , just one shabbos and make every Friday night an International family night.

May it be Gods will that each of us be bestowed with koach gezunt and ruach health strength and faith in the fulfillment of our destiny; to illuminate the earth with the torch of freedom , lets start with Friday night family night; to keep alight the spirit of human dignity that it never be extinguished and peace will reign all over God's realm. Amen