

Friday Evening Message – 25 September 2020

Shabbat Shalom (Shabbat Shalom to all my American friends)

Letter from America Cromer



Look up the word 'prejudice' in Wikipedia and you will find several definitions and comments. These include a **preconceived**, usually unfavourable, evaluation of another person based on that person's..... and then a variety of attributes is listed. Also mentioned is that it may include any **unreasonable** attitude that is **unusually resistant to rational influence**. Another definition speaks of a feeling, favourable or unfavourable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or **not based on, actual experience**.

Jews have been on the receiving end of prejudice for millennia. To express prejudice towards Jews is unreasonable and irrational. However, I have heard Jews indicating prejudice against foreigners, those of other colour and ethnicity, people of other religions, those of other than heterosexual orientation and those with gender dysphoria. Nobody chooses the colour of their skin, nobody chooses to be gay, nobody chooses to have a mis-match between the gender of their brain and the gender of their body. None of these groups poses any threat. They are not to be despised. It is the people who hold prejudiced views who are to be despised.

Siddur Lev Chadash has a reading on the subject of prejudice (page 296). For me one sentence stands out. **Never judge others till you have been in their position**. If you hold any prejudices think how you would feel if you woke up black or gay or

transgender one morning. No. These are not just words. I would like you to think about this. NOW.

Near the end of President Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address there are eight wonderful words: with malice toward none; with charity for all.... Those would be good sentiments for you to adopt during these High Holydays. Do you have any prejudices? If so, are you being rational and reasonable? Examine your conscience. It's time to throw away your prejudices.

As I've said before: I'm watching you and I'm sure She is too.

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