

Shabbat/Yom Kippur

"Your Time is Limited, So Don't Waste It Living Someone Else's Life"

Steve Jobs z"l, In Memoriam

It is only in the last couple of years that I jumped on the Apple/Macintosh bandwagon. I tend to be pretty set in my ways and was a PC guy ever since personal computers hit the market. However, once I came to VTT and started learning Macs, I got really hooked. Over the past three years, I have been continuously amazed by my Apple tech toys and wonder how it is possible that they develop so fast, are so user friendly, and how we ever lived without them in the past? So, when I learned of the passing of Steve Jobs this past Wednesday, I was saddened that such a brilliant and visionary man had been taken from the world at such a young age and wondered if the Apple company could be the same without him. I spent some time reading articles about him and the full-text of a commencement address that he had made at Stanford University in 2005. I was moved. I became less sad about his death; I was inspired by how he had lived and found that many of the themes contained in his speech are timely and relevant for our High Holiday season.

Four times each year, Jewish communities around the world add a memorial service to the prescribed prayers for the special holy festivals of Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Pesah, and Shavu'ot. This service is called *Yizkor*, which literally means "He will remember." The memorial prayers both ask God to remember the lives and souls of our dearly departed for the good and provide us with the opportunity to recall our loved ones who have died and our memories of our time with them. Yom Kippur, a day already fraught with introspection and emotions, is a time where it would also be natural to be able to reflect on the contributions of departed loved ones to our lives.

In our time, it is also common during Yizkor services on Yom Kippur to recall the memories and contributions of members of our wider community who have passed away. While none of us knew Steve Jobs personally, he has had such an impact on our world and lives that honoring his memory for a Yom Kippur Yizkor is appropriate.

In that 2005 commencement address at Stanford University, Steve Jobs told the graduates part of his life story, of his cancer diagnosis and prognosis, and shared with them some of the lessons and mantras that had--and would continue to drive--the way he lived his life. During the High Holy Day season that begins with Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we are intended to be reflecting on how we live our lives, on the mistakes we have made and how we intend to correct them, and on "resolutions" for how to make ourselves and our relationships better for the future. There were so many statements or quotations from Steve Jobs' address that I could have chosen for the purposes of this *yizkor* in his memory. Not only was he a genius with technology, but after reading his address I am certain that he would have made an incredible teacher. I decided to use the quotation that the Huffington Post also chose for the title of its article in which they printed the full text of the address (feel free to use the link below to read the address yourself), "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

After his cancer diagnosis in 2004, Steve Jobs became acutely aware of and sensitive to time. While he had already been living a life guided by his own vision, mission, and talents, the realization that his illness was potentially about to cut his life much shorter than he had envisioned forced him to focus on how he made choices about what he would do each and every day to get the most out of the time he had left. He came to see that the best way to make those choices would be to make sure that he was living **his** life, guided by **his** values, vision, and mission, not those of others. Steve Jobs explained that he would look at himself in the mirror each morning and ask himself if what he had planned for his day would actually make him happy and satisfied. If he went too many days without saying "yes" to himself, then he knew something was wrong and that a change needed to be made.

How often do we allow ourselves to be driven to making decisions or doing things because it is what others want or demand from us? How often do we wake up in the morning, look at our schedules or to-do lists for the day and wonder how we ended up in this predicament or with

these things to do? Steve Jobs' experience and teaching is something from which we can all learn. It is tragic that these lessons often have to be learned as a result of someone realizing that their life is being cut short and that their time is now more precious than it used to be. I pray that it will not take an illness to inspire us to live our lives with purpose. Through technology, Steve Jobs' mission was to try to help and make our lives easier, smoother, and faster. While he accomplished this likely beyond any of his original wildest dreams, the impact that his life lessons can have on our lives go far deeper and have much more significant meaning than any technological device.

During the traditional Yizkor prayers, we ask the the souls of the departed "be bound up in the bond of life," meaning that their presence in our lives endure beyond their physical lives on earth.

I have read several comments praising Steve Jobs for his vision that led to the technological hardware that has become so integrated into our daily lives, saying that it is through them that he has made tremendous impact on our lives. Rabbis have even gone so far as to call these works "tikkun olam," acts of repairing the world. Steve Jobs will never design another device, but if we learn from his teachings, then his impact and influence on our lives and the world will have extended long beyond his years on earth. His soul will certainly be bound up in the bond of life. He will have made the human world a happier and more fulfilled and satisfied place. *Kein y'hi ratzon*/May it be God's will. *Zikhrono livrakha*/May his memory be for blessing.

I wish you all *g'mar hatimah tova*/to be sealed for the good in the year 5772.

Shabbat Shalom!

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/05/steve-jobs-stanford-commencement-address_n_997301.html