

## **2/3 Full, 2/3 Light:**

### **Genesis, Light, and Darkness**

*“And the Creator saw the light that it was good” - Genesis 1:4*

*This was my commentary for Simcha Torah (Joy of Torah) service of Fabrangen Havurah and Tikkun Leil Shabbat, October 24, 2016.*

Friends, Chaverim, sometimes, we can get confused and think that reality is just that which is light, that the darkness is nothingness, like the void before the One called the world into being.

That, I believe, is living in a form of denial, the denial that darkness exists. If you have ever met someone who denies his or her own dark side, or refuses to see darkness in any corner of the world, you know that the denial of darkness can be dangerous indeed.

And sometimes, it appears to us, that when we see, along with the Spirit, that light is good, we think that darkness is thus all bad.

Friends, I ask you, How can darkness be all bad, when darkness generates dreams, darkness fosters friendships forged in midnight conversations, and only darkness gives us the ability to see the stars. And how can darkness be all bad when so many babies are conceived in the dark?

Sometimes, when depression sneaks in the door and comes to live in our house, we can be tricked into a different error of the mind, that of thinking that all is darkness.

When we live without any light, we never see the fullness and beauty of ourselves, and we cannot fully see other people's full beauty or the real beauty of creation.

In the past eight years, as I have gone through the ups and downs of living with cancer, I have had some time to think about the light and the darkness. Sometimes I have had too much time, usually around 2 in the morning, to look out the window into the dark night and the bright street light, to think about the darkness and the light.

I know when we have a heavy burden, the darkness sometimes feels unbearable. The sudden death of a loved one, a horrific regret, watching a friend drown in addiction, or a terminal diagnosis.

Over time, we can, with the Creator, see that not only light is good, but darkness can have its own good, its own blessing. A widower finds a second love. Regret brings reconciliation and deeper friendship. Addiction sometimes brings, in the fullness of time, the joy of recovery. A terminal diagnosis can reveal depth of friendships, help build community, fill us with the longing to be closer to the Source, a longing that can lead us to more a life more full of joy and wonder and gratitude.

Sometimes I tell friends that despite the cancer, my glass is still 2/3 full. I do feel that, most of the time, I really do. I lead a blessed life.

And I ask you, What if the glasses we drink from in our lives are 2/3 full of light?

I love the metaphor of the vessels of light. There is much wisdom and kabbalistic teaching and midrash about these vessels. Some say, Ruach created vessels of light at the time of creation, and they shattered, spilling sparks around the world. Some say that each of our mitzvahs can redeem one spark of light.

What if, what if, what if?

What if the vessels of light had a touch of darkness in them? What if they were filled with 2/3 light and 1/3 dark? What if, in the year to come, in addition to being able to redeem some sparks of light, we also get the chance to redeem the shards of darkness?

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