

**August 8, 2008**

***Shabbat Shalom!***

*I recently finished reading Randy Pasuch's book, The Last Lecture, in fact, two weeks before his death on July 25. What amazed me about the book (and the lecture) was the attention he paid to small details of daily life and how he found significance and, usually, something positive in each experience.*

*The Torah reading for this week, D'varim, begins the book of Deuteronomy, which is viewed as the farewell speech of Moses, that is, his last lecture to the Israelites so that they would remember well what they learned on their journey out of slavery towards freedom. . The observance on the Jewish calendar of Tish'ah B'av, the commemoration of the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem (Saturday night August 9 to Sunday, August 10), also carries with it the theme of remembrance, touched with sadness but also with hope for a better future.*

*As the world prepares for the Beijing Olympics to begin, the discussions continue about the proper approach to these games, given the nature of China's policies with regards to Sudan and Tibet, as well as to their own people. Some say that China has not done enough to move forward towards a better record on human rights; others assert that China has made great strides over the last several decades. And still others argue that politics should not enter the arena of athletic competition.*

*Whatever our personal position on these issues, we can, in the coming weeks, consider and remember...*

- *Talented individuals who look forward to engaging in healthy competition*
- *Reporters who focus on the real stories of athletes and their personal fortitude*
- *Losers*
- *Winners*
- *Those who stand their ground on the principles of equality and acceptance*
- *Those who believe in teaching by example*
- *The creativity that will attempt to bring people from across the world together*
- *The persistence that can produce positive change in nations and societies*
- *The indignation that, when expressed, can lead some leaders to end persecution*
- *The hope that all voices will be heard and heeded.*

*May some aspect of the days to come realize the vision we have for a world that can inch closer to cooperation and peace.*

**-- L'shalom,  
Rabbi Larry K.**