

September 11, 2008

Shabbat Shalom...

At this writing, on the seventh anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, some of my reflections on those tragic events a year after the attacks came to mind:

“Before September 11, 2001, there seems to have been an unwritten rule in New York City, especially in Manhattan – don’t make eye contact with anyone. Yet, on that day, everything changed. One of the more creative responses to the events of September 11, 2001 is the book WITH THEIR EYES, which contains a series of monologues prepared by students at Stuyvesant High School, located several blocks away from the site of the World Trade Center. These Stuyvesant High teens interviewed peers, faculty and school staff to create a dramatic presentation of the testimony they gathered about the events of 9/11. In the midst of these collected stories is this comment from one student: ‘I remember on the first day...makin’ eye contact with everyone. If you’re from the city, you know you don’t make eye contact when you’re walkin’. But this was the only way you communicated for the first couple of hours because everybody had masks on (due to the dust and smoke). Everybody was [actually] looking at each other and I was like, this is amazing.’”

The Torah reading for this week, Ki Teitzei, repeats over and over the commandment that we need to care for people who are in need, naming, specifically, the poor, the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. In these times when more and more people are finding it difficult to make ends meet, that biblical prescription remains important for us today. We should open our hearts to people who need our support and assistance, whatever the cause of their despair. Perhaps we also need to look into their eyes, whenever we have the opportunity, to gain a sense of their concern and to give them hope.

On this day when we recall one of the darkest days of our nation’s history, may we shed the light of our eyes and spirits upon each other to do our part to create a peaceful world.

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