

Dear Chavraya,

The sound of voices singing rise up to me from the shtibl as I write. Voices of children, voices of parents joined as one, touching me almost to tears as they sing in Shabbos. Just a little earlier, also touching me to tears, photographs sent through the magic of the Internet, our grandson as "Shabbat boy" at school today, Leo sitting with little sister Ruby, with parents and aunt and uncle, generations together.

All of these images that touch me so deeply tell of the essence of this Shabbos as *Shabbat Ha'Gadol/the Great Shabbos*. The name comes from the Prophet Malachi, whose words form the Haftorah chanted on Shabbos morning. Standing in the gateway to Pesach, against the backdrop of redemption from slavery long ago, the prophet looks ahead to the ultimate redemption, beginning closest to home, with parents and children. With words so poignant, he says, *Behold, I am sending you Elijah the Prophet before the great and awesome day of God/yom Ha'Shem ha'gadol v'ha'norah/that he may turn the heart of the parents back to the children, and the heart of the children back to their parents....*

In the pure voices rising up from below, in the pure images formed of light, parents and children, children and parents, telling of a vision, reminding of its urgency. It is the hope and the promise of Pesach. The great and awesome day of God is the time of swords turned to plowshares, the time of harmony and peace between people and people, people and earth, people and God.

With few words now or time to write them if they came, I offer only the intimations of a prayer as we enter this Shabbos. May we be part of a great turning, the hearts of parents to children, of children to parents, of all people to each other. It is the vision and hope of Shabbos each week, and of this week all the more so. Every voice is needed, every hand and every heart, every sweet smile to inspire, a world of peace for children and parents everywhere, all people joined as one, the great and awesome day come soon.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor