



STEADFAST FREEDOM YOGA

June 15, 1991: 13 Years Old - Bar Mitzvah Speech, New York

Today is a day that I have been anticipating for many years and I cannot believe it is here already. To begin with, I have many people to thank. First, I must thank my Hebrew teachers for teaching me how to read Hebrew, and my religion teachers for teaching me about Judaism in great depth. Next, I would like to thank Rabbi Geller and Cantor Julie for helping me to explore my Jewish identity.

In the 90's people sure are weird. I have seen some people who will do anything for money. Just yesterday a construction worker was tearing up a concrete sidewalk and selling the pieces as chips of the Berlin Wall for \$7.50. Then my friend Frank was approached by a man outside of NYU who wanted him to support the troops in the Gulf of Mexico, rather than the Persian Gulf. **Whoever would have thought that we would go to war in the 90's?** This was supposed to be the time of world peace. The Gulf War was a shock to all of us. I bet 99 percent of all Americans did not even know where Kuwait was until Iraq invaded. But was it a war? The ground invasion had only one battle and yet these soldiers received a better welcome home than the Vietnam vets who were at war for four and a half years. It doesn't make sense. The gulf ground war lasted one hundred hours and the entire war was forty-three days. Many more Americans came home from Vietnam in body bags. Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield combined had a death toll of one hundred and eighty-seven people, most of these in non-hostile incidents.

The environment and what is happening to it is a very big problem. The ozone layer is depleting rapidly and the air is polluted. There is garbage in our water. **If we do not pollute ourselves to death we will become crispy critters after we blow the planet to bits during World War III. Gee I can't figure it out.**

However, with all the commotion and pollution we still have managed to be technologically advanced. Unless you want to be hopelessly out of style you have a CD player, a microwave, and a VCR. Many people have two VCRs, one for the upstairs bedroom TV and one for the downstairs.

The positive point is that I am only thirteen years old and my generation is giving great thought to future preservation of this beautiful planet we live on. Therefore we will possibly be able to clean this mess up and turn everything I said around. **We can fix the ozone, make world peace, and clean up the lakes and oceans. It will be a hard**

task, but we have to do it now. By the time I have children I hope the world will be a safer and cleaner place to live. Our generation is making a big effort by recycling and doing similar things. Remember, **ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!**

As Rabbi Geller always says to his students on their Bar Mitzvah day, “Look out and remember the faces of the family and friends that are here.” I am so lucky to have such great family and friends. I want my four grandparents to know that I love them to infinity and they mean a great deal to me. Adam, as we are both getting older I see us becoming more like friends than brothers and you are very important to me. Mom and Dad, words cannot describe the great feeling of love that I have towards you. You are the best! Thanks you all for coming today. Amen!