

Ultimate Parsha continued...

We learn from both of these notes that we tend to take the status quo for granted—when it is positive. However, the negative times cause us pause. This is why Yosef focuses first on the years of famine—to get Pharaoh's attention. It is also why the Egyptians only take note when the famine begins; they do not necessarily see the hand of Hashem in the years of prosperity. This sentiment has even been popularized in the Joni Mitchell song Big Yellow Taxi: "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." We've all certainly appreciated our health so much more after any sort of illness. Ironically, these difficult times often help us remember how reliant we are on Hashem at all times.

This year in particular I've noticed how much of a huge impact it makes when any of the Beren Academy teachers or students are absent. Until this year I never really understood when one of my rebbeim stressed what a difference each person makes during davening, but now it makes all the sense in the world to me. Because of the absences of my colleagues, from illness, death in the family, or even jury duty, I have come to appreciate how strong a team we are when all present. The absence of any particular student also leaves a gaping hole, as the hallways and classes are different and less rich for the absence of any student. The challenge for me is to express this gratitude to everyone at school when we are all present, rather than waiting for an absence to bring our usual good fortune into stark relief.

During this Shabbat Chanukah, my personal resolve going forward is to make every effort to show appreciation to Hashem as well as the wonderful people in my life, during bad times AND during great times.

Shabbat Shalom,

Paul S. Oberman

Dear Robert M. Beren Academy Families and Friends,

As 2017 winds down, and as we begin our celebration of Chanukah, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of RMBA.

On a personal level it is a privilege to be a part of the RMBA life each and every day, and I want to share with you a taste of this wonderful school. Please make some time to come visit the school; I would be honored to give you a personal tour.

As you can see, RMBA's engaging learning community pairs eager young minds with committed and talented faculty. If you have not yet had the opportunity to make an annual fund gift to support the school, please click [here](#) to do so. Every amount, large or small, helps, as we really want everyone to participate in supporting the school at whatever level possible.

Have a wonderful Chanukah, and best of everything in 2018.
Paul Oberman