

Tales of David

by

Michel M.J. Shore

Illustrations by

Jacques J.M. Shore



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Tales of David

Simple Wisdom for Complicated Times

***for Dr. Balfour Mount,
in whose home, amidst
an atmosphere of peace,
daydreams were conceived
into stories.***

***These tales exemplify
and are in honour
of Adam H. Herzig
who is the wisest man I know,
much wiser than David could ever be.
It is a privilege to have him as an uncle.***

Acknowledgements

With thanks to my brother Jacques J.M. Shore, who, upon reading the tales, was inspired to create the illustrations.

In gratitude to Daniel Selznick who encouraged me to share these tales with others.

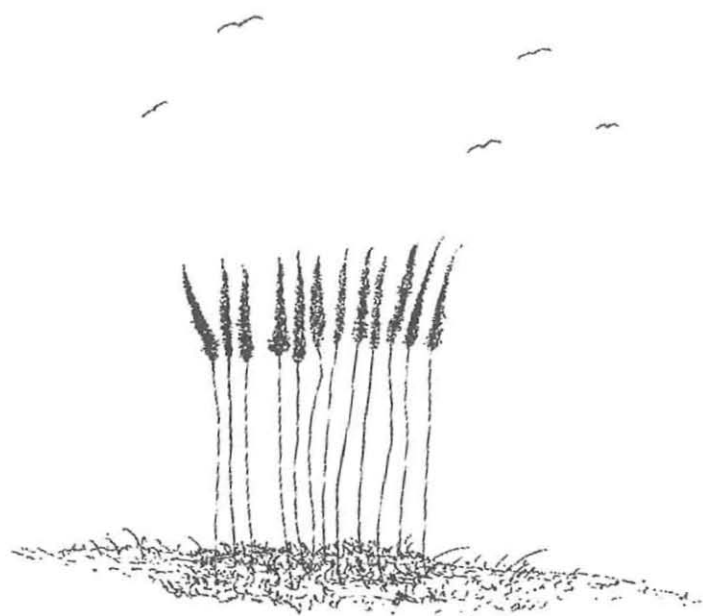


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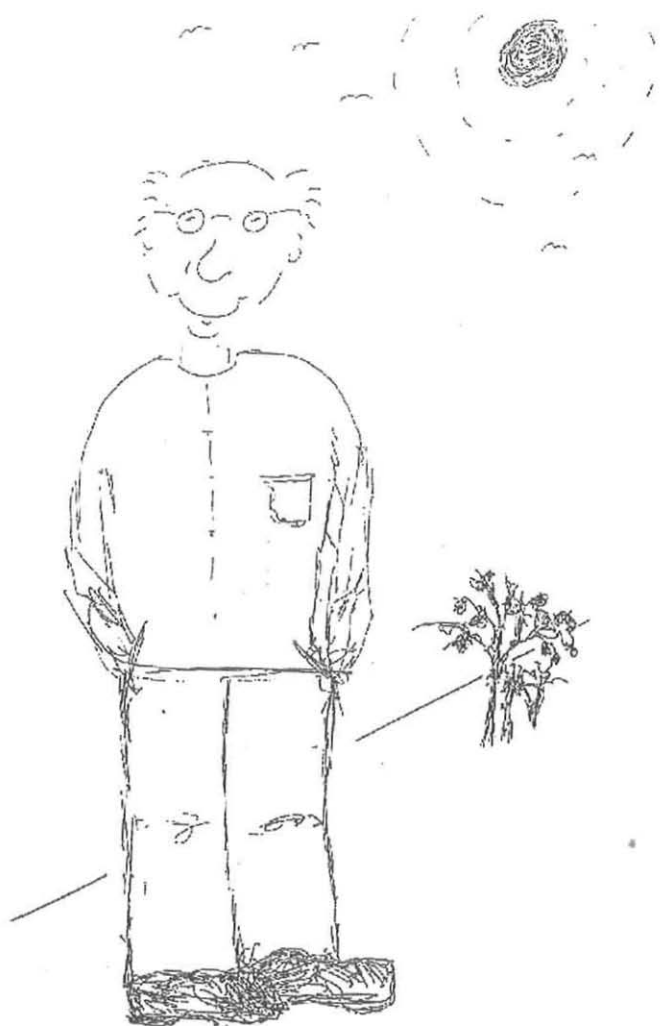
Introduction

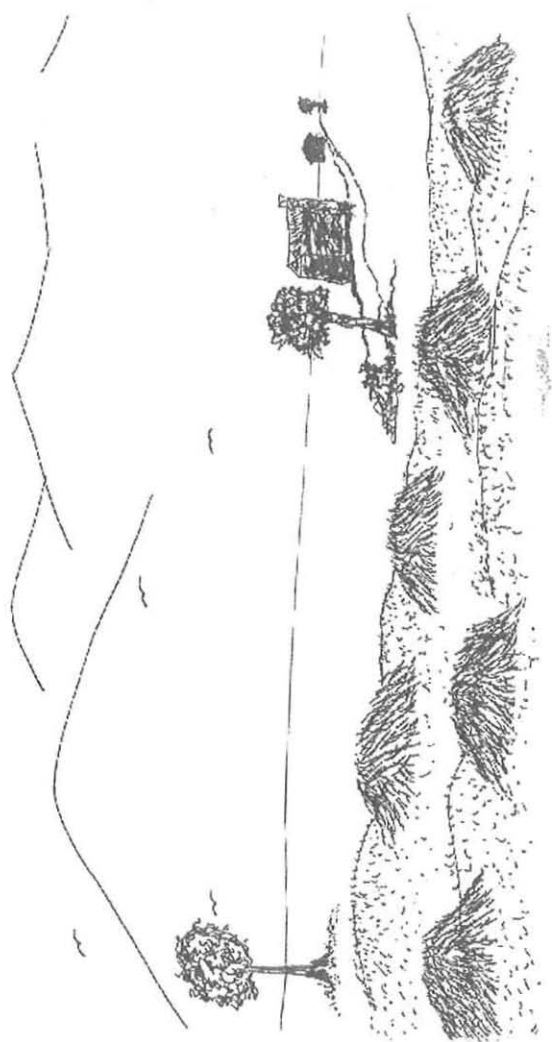
The tales herein chronicle incidents in the life of a man called David. This David is not the David of the Bible, nor is he a modern-day David; he is not a saint but a simple, honest man who passes on what wisdom and knowledge he gathers in the course of his life. He seems to live in many different time periods.

To be completely honest, I began to set down each of these tales from my dreams. I began to write them as fully as I could, over the last year, and marveled at how the character of David not only continued to reappear to me but seemed to age gradually, each time he appeared to me again.

Some may ask if I imagine myself to be David. I don't believe that to be the case. For reasons I cannot completely understand, I was an observer in each of these dreams but I did not interact with David himself. I was rather a witness, a silent observer. I live with a deep personal faith but I am not a man of the cloth; by trade I am both a jurist and a poet. But I felt the need to share these stories, particularly since after I wrote them down, I recognized the wisdom imparted to me. I hope they do so for you as well.

*I am grateful to my brother
Jacques
for this work of joint collaboration.*

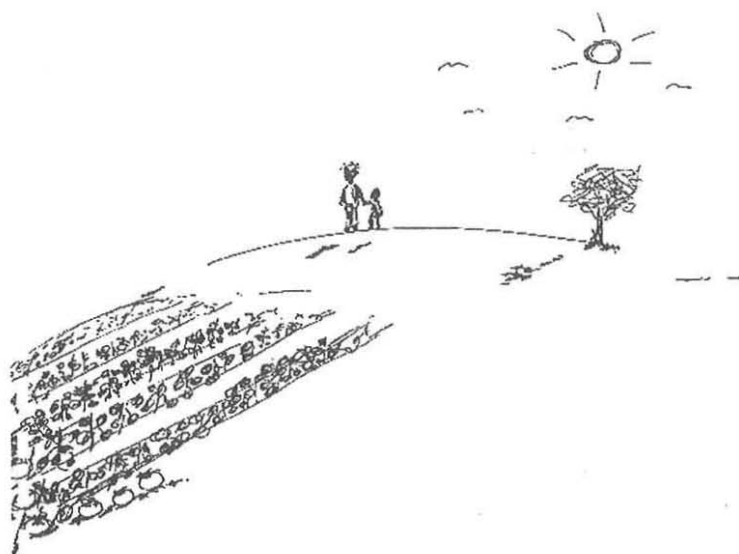




God's Crops, David's Help

David had helped God's crops grow for many years as a farmer.

Now as he grew older, the villagers, young, old, and not so old, would often come to his farm simply to talk to him about helping crops grow ... all kinds of crops.



Silence to Hear Music, Melody, Rhythm

An observant child, who often came to visit David and would walk with him, asked him why he often walked the land in silence.

David answered, "To hear its music, its melody, its rhythm."

The child asked, "What do you mean?"

David continued, "The music means instruments. Are all the crops playing together? Is there a crop that is left out? If so, why? Maybe, the tomatoes are lonely. Then I haven't given them enough attention."

"The melody, what is the song they are playing? Is it sad or happy – quick or slow? It tells me whether I have understood their mood and been respectful of it."

"And the rhythm?" the attentive child asked.

"That, my good friend," said David, "Is their pulse, like our heartbeat. Is it in harmony? Are they, like you and me, walking together in step?"



Climbing Stairs to See the View

David sat on his porch contemplating the sunset. He entered its deep orange aura. Suddenly, a child appeared, as if sent on a sunbeam that sprinkled David's lemon grove with confetti, and sat on the stairs next to him.

"David, do you think it fair that I have to do homework every day?"

David's voice wafted through the lemon scent. "Fair for now – or for later?"

"What do you mean?" Simon asked.

"Well! It doesn't seem fair now but it will."

Simon looked puzzled.

David continued, "Did you ever climb the stairs of the White Mansion at the top of the hill, where the Governor lives?"

"I did."

"Why did you?"

"I wanted to get to the top!"

"And, what did you see at the top?"

“I was able to see the whole village and all the farms for miles.”

“Do you remember how many stairs you had to climb?”

“I don’t.”

“Was it worth it?”

“For sure!”

“Would you do it again?”

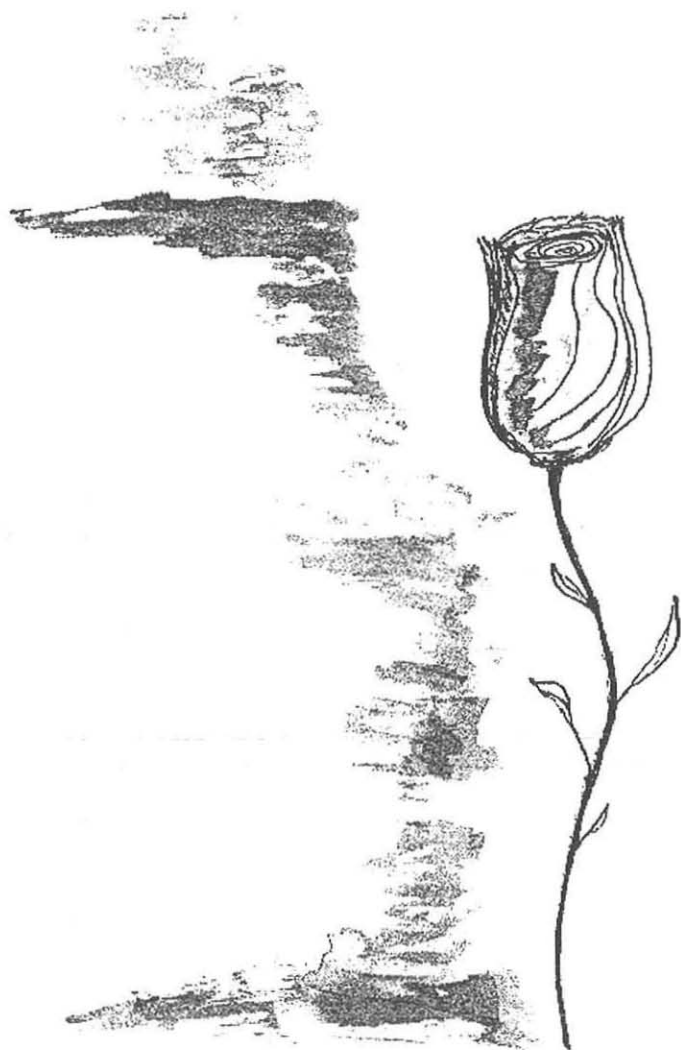
“Yes, when I have the energy.”

“Simon, that’s why you have to do your homework, so that you can see far and wide. We never stop climbing, although we do not know how many stairs there are. And, sometimes, we would do it all over again – just to see more than we saw before.”

“I have an idea, Simon. Every day that you come to see the sunset with me, I will speak to your mother and explain that you are simply restoring your energy to finish your homework.”

“And then, David, we will look at the view together.”

“That’s fair, Simon, if you can climb the stairs.”



Making Room for the Future by Placing the Past in Memory's Storage

Hana was probably as old as David. She lived alone in the village in a small cottage she had shared for fifty-five years with her husband. At the end of a storm, a year ago, he passed away quietly without disturbing anyone. He took his body but left his love to protect and comfort Hana.

Hana would on occasion walk to seek out David for advice. As on this windy spring day, it seemed she was swept to his farm; and she landed in David's rose garden where he was pruning branches for the roses to feel the breeze that caressed him.

"You never stop working, David," Hana stated in cheerful greeting.

"This is not work, Hana; I am simply opening Nature's window."

Hana never dropped in. She always appeared as if she had never left. Yet she never made herself obtrusive. It was as if David would turn the page he was reading about his life, and there she was together with her husband, Jonathan, David's best friend. Most memories David had were bound to Jonathan in his memory's album.

Hana had asked David whether she should renovate

her house. Her grandchildren had grown in both numbers and age and were now appearing more frequently on weekends and holidays. Hana's children felt that the grandchildren would remove her from her loneliness.

Her bun, neatly yet gently attached to the back of her head, was an illustration of her personality — orderly, yet never imposing on others.

David thought for a moment of Hana and Jonathan and the home they had built. He said, "Hana, is there a choice?"

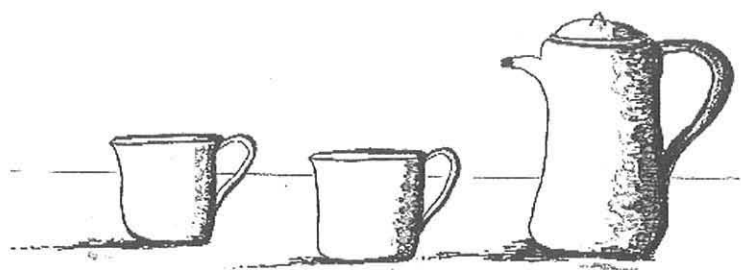
"No, David, there rarely is."

"The renovation is not for novelty, change for the sake of change but rather for betterment. The children will feel more comfortable and, maybe, even come more often."

"Hana, what do you want to do?" asked David.

"Get rid of the clutter," responded Hana immediately, "that will be most of the renovations." She realized that she almost needed none, "to set aside the past physically to make room for the future."

She recognized that former decorations and arrangements are never moved away, they are simply placed in memory's storage.



God's Embrace

An unusually heavy rain beat David's roof. The world seemed transformed. Low clouds dissolved David's white cottage and the orange stucco of his roof gave an appearance of a raft buffeted on waves by the wind.

From the sea-like setting, the distinct staccato knock at the door was quickly differentiated from the roof's pentameter sea rhythm by David.

That knock could have been none other than that by Amos. Amos, who owned the general store, brought David his supplies every Thursday, no matter what the weather, so that David could amply prepare for his day of rest.

Amos grew up with an aunt after his parents' death when he was very young. David gave much thought to Amos who rescued himself by a deep faith from depression and despair.

David invited Amos for tea and Amos always accepted.

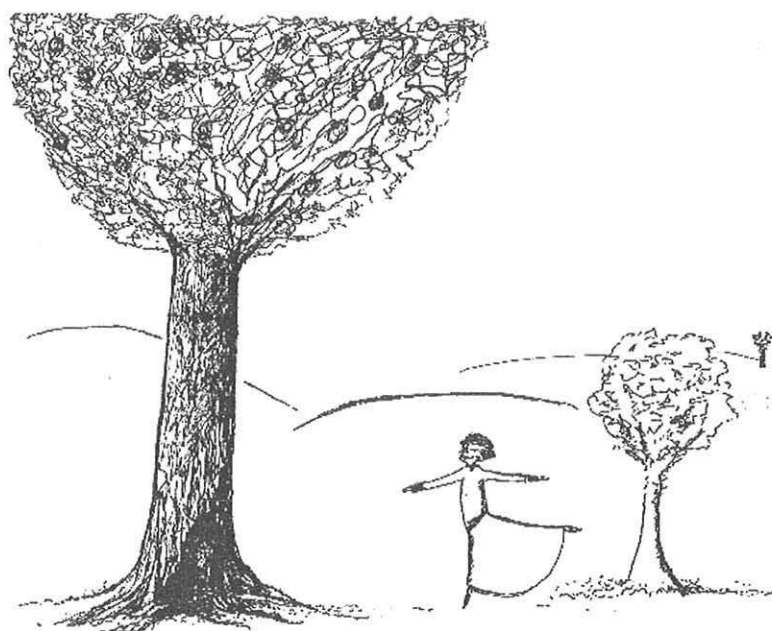
"Amos, what allows you to be so cheerful despite the weather?"

"David, with you I can share the reason. When I was a child both my parents hugged me at the same

time from both sides of the bed. And I always remember the hug, day after day. It reminded me then, as it always does now, of Noah's Ark. They placed all their hopes in me; and always said, 'just as we are with you now, we will always be with you, protecting you.'"

Amos, now prematurely gray at the temples, looked at David and said, "David, you, too, helped me when you said to me that if I fall, it will be into God's nest, embraced in his arms. Since that time David, I am no longer afraid, I feel God's embrace and shelter."

The rain continued as did their silence between the raindrops. David and Amos sat under the stucco roof, nestled in God's embrace.



The Dance Continues even when You Sleep

The sun set. Its soft orange glow allowed the ever-present distant soft mystical life-force auras of each field, each tree, sunflower, blade of grass, to be seen even by those who look but barely see.

Small Debra, eight years old at most, danced in front of an apple tree facing David's house. Twice a week for the last year, David brought her to his cottage so that she would show him how she danced.

Her older brothers and sisters often made fun of her. As seven of them shared two rooms, David offered her mother, a widow, to spend that time with Debra so that she would be given particular attention.

"I love to dance, David."

"And I love to watch you dance, Debra," said David, from his choice seat on a stump of a tree, holding the flute with which he accompanied her.

"David, I am happy only when I dance – I would dance forever if I could."

"But you can, Debra."

Debra continued to dance to her music; although David's outer music had stopped.

"How, David?"

"Well, just ask yourself, are you in the dance, or is the dance in you?"

"I believe the dance is in you; and even when you don't seem to be dancing, you are dancing within yourself."

"Look at the trees, the grass, the flowers! What do you see?"

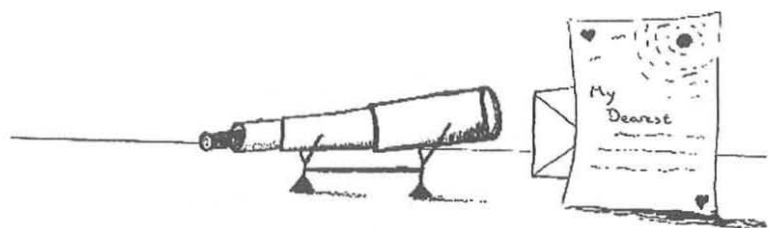
"A very special light in each."

"Yes, it is always there. I don't always see it; that does not mean it's not there. The light of each of God's creations is always aflame. Sometimes, you can't see it but, maybe, one day you will see it all the time."

"Now I understand, David. I am always dancing inside. It's just that others can't see it."

"I must always remember that my dancing can continue even if others don't see it, or don't want to see it."

"Yes, Debra, your light is always aflame, and your dance continues even when you sleep."



The Letter and the Kaleidoscope

David was tilling the land.

Noah appeared from nowhere and yet seemed to be everywhere. For him, his was the most difficult problem in the world.

“David, why won’t she marry me?”

“Is that what she said, Noah?”

“Well, not exactly,” he said, reading the letter. “She said we should wait until we are older.”

“Why is that making you sad?”

“But David, I am twenty and she is eighteen.”

“Noah, she hasn’t said no, she just said she wants to wait, and that she needs time.”

“Does that mean no?”

“Noah, my grandmother used to say, it is not that which is written in a letter that is important; rather, it is how we read the letter.”

“Noah, do you remember my kaleidoscope I used to show you at my cottage when you were a child? You asked me to see it over and over again. You said it never appeared the same. A letter, Noah, is like life and also like a kaleidoscope. You decide how you see it. There are many ways, each very different.”



Saving a Lamb from Slaughter

Dawn came as a gentle breeze.

David awoke as he did each day, grateful for the gift of a new day. The knock at the door did not startle him. Putting on his robe, David rushed to the door and found a child and a lamb in front of him.

He beckoned Alexander, whose name did not yet appear to fit him, to come in. Alexander did and so did the lamb.

"David," blurted out the child, "My father wants to have the lamb slaughtered for the meat. He does not know that I am here. Please help me. Look, the lamb is limping and my father says that it is blemished. We can't feed it because it is ill and will die. David, I don't want it to die. I know my father won't be able to use it for milk nor to sell it for meat."

"What can you do, Alexander?"

"I can take care of it, David. I can feed it, and hope it will become stronger by exercising it. That's what the veterinarian said, David."

"Will you hide it here, David?"

"I will try to keep it alive Alexander, not hide it. I

will speak to your father and ask him if I can buy the lamb. You can take care of it.”

“Thank you, David.”

“Alexander, perhaps you can take care of the lamb next to its mother for as long as she is alive.”

A smile appeared in Alexander’s anxious, intense and worried eyes.

“Alexander, what do you see?” asked David as he pointed at the sunrise.

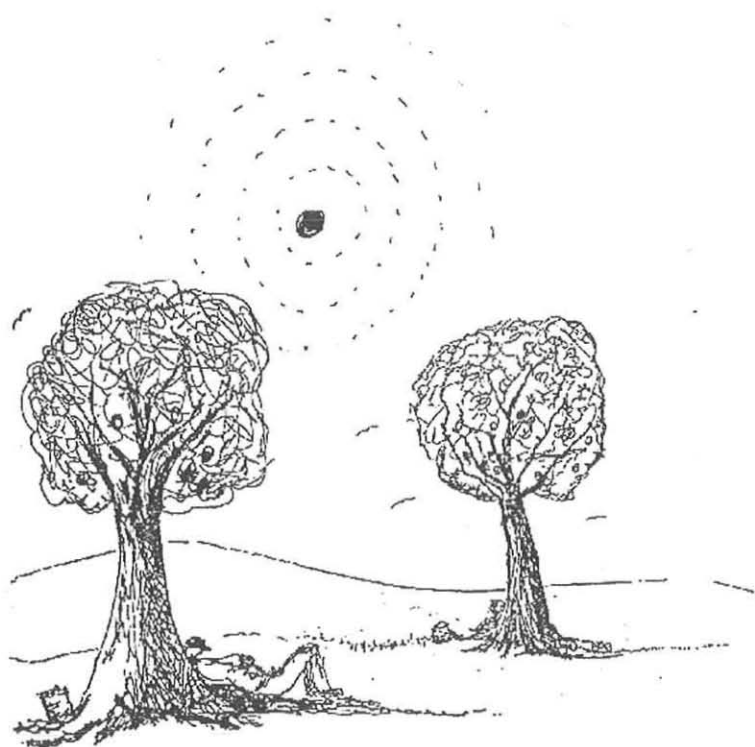
“The sun is waking up,” said Alexander.

“Yes, Alexander, the sun rose, but did you know that the sun is always awake somewhere in the world?”

“Is it?” Alexander looked puzzled.

“Yes, when the sun sets here, it rises in another part of the world. It never sleeps.”

“Like you, Alexander, we must be aware and shine in different places for all creatures, always.”



Enjoying the Process

The noon heat opened the ovens of heaven to heat the crops for market.

David sat in the shadow of a large tree that served as a tabernacle to give him shade. Even then he was able to see the sun through the roof of leaves, cocooned as he was on three sides by the large trunks of adjoining trees.

A gentle air current sailed in his direction. It kept him comfortable while he rested. Refreshed within an hour, he returned to work. The student he hired was already picking peaches.

“Did you rest, Joseph?”

“I did not.”

“Why not?”

“I thought I’d finish more quickly.”

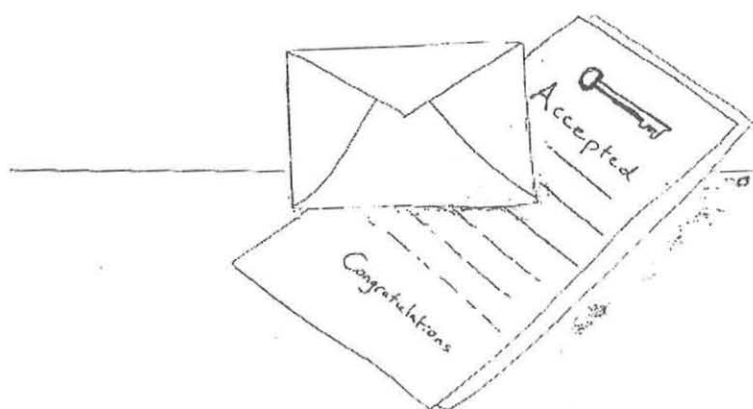
“Joseph, try to rest.”

“But why, David?”

“So that you can feel refreshed and enjoy what you are doing.”

“Is that important, David?”

“Yes, Joseph, so that you enjoy being quick now, rather than being quick only to enjoy it later.”



Are You at Home or Is Your Home Inside of You?

Mathew was excited, apprehensive, anxious, happy and sad. He anticipated loneliness and adventure all at once. The long-awaited letter arrived. The scholarship for his higher studies would cover his expenses for three years. He would not be able to work outside of his studies, nor come home to see his family.

“David, I waited and waited. Now I realize, I don’t know why I waited, whether to be able to stay here or to leave.”

“Mathew, I believe it was both; however it does not have to be one or the other.”

“Why, David?”

“Mathew, you can go, yet stay, or you can stay, yet go.”

“How, David?”

“If you go, you can stay with all of us in your heart and mind; or, you can stay, and think only of what you could have done, had you left. That is really leaving. Then, you would be here, but we would no longer be here, in your heart and mind.”

“Mathew, we will always be with you; if you leave room for us inside yourself, you will feel that always, wherever you are.”

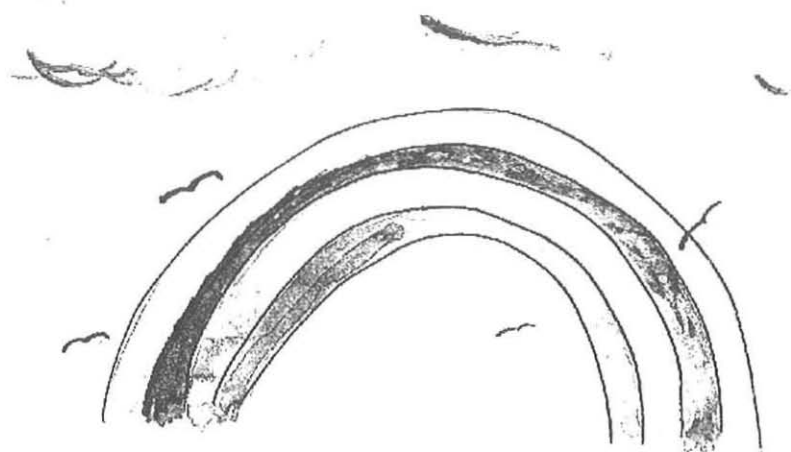
“But David, I love my family, you and my friends.”

“I know, Mathew, you will take your home with you.”

“How, David?”

“You don’t always live in your home; your home lives in you and will always live in you. Your dormitory key is temporary but the key to your home, and all whom you love, is permanent. Every time you are lonely, Mathew, remember we are always waiting for you; and when you think of us, and conduct yourself as if you were at home, you are, in your home in you.”

Mathew left David with a lighter heart. He realized he did not leave David. He brought David with him.



I Hear Colors and I See Sounds

David put out his chair and sat on the porch. The rain had stopped and the sun reflected its presence on each glistening leaf, petal, branch and blade of grass. The scent of freshness wafted throughout the land.

Dora, white cane in hand, walked carefully but quickly up the path she had learned to navigate as an infant when she first learned to walk. She had lost her sight, suddenly, a few days after her third birthday. For the last nine years, it was her memory together with her heightened sense which gave her vision; yet she longed to paint her world with color.

As she climbed the stairs, counting to six, she knew David was there even before he greeted her.

"David, I waited for three days to see you, but Aunt Celia did not want me to go out in the rain. She said the puddles were all over. Finally, I convinced her I would not get wet; I knew I could sense where the puddles were by the inclines in the land."

"Dora, I wish I had known; I would have come to see you or brought you here in my cart."

"No, David, I wanted to come and surprise you with a discovery I made."

“What is it, Dora?”

“I know what color everything is, even if it has changed color since I lost my sight.”

“How Dora?”

“By the way I feel about it. David, I can hear colors and I see sounds. If I feel calm inside about leaves, then I know they are green, as green as green in the forest in July. If I feel a sense of love inside myself, the color is red like a rose and if I forget about myself, it is yellow. If I think about becoming a writer, my career, and the stories I hope to write one day, I see the orange sunset.”

“What about blue, Dora?”

“When all the walls are removed, and I feel no clouds, then I know it is sky blue; and the midnight sky, David, is the color I feel when I am so small, so very little that I know I am in God’s arms; and, David, when I feel so small then I feel I am bowing to God and know that the color is violet.”

“How did that happen, Dora?”

“I remembered the rainbow from long ago and how I felt about each color, each of the ribbons.”

“Dora, is that why you came to see me?”

“No David, I wanted to tell you something even more important. Even when I am not outside, I know when

the colors are about to change and while they are changing, without even being outside."

"How Dora?"

"If I only think about them, I hear them changing."

"Dora, I am looking at my garden. Tell me what is the color of the flowers on the left of you."

"Violet."

"And, on the right?"

"Red and in front, white, the color of silence!"

"Yes, Dora, yes, you are able to see them. That is extraordinary."

"No David, that's love! My love for you, because, David, you told me last year, on my birthday, that your gift to me was a prayer that my soundmarks become landmarks. David, your prayer was answered; God has let me see with His eyes through my ears."

"What do you hear now, Dora?"

"Your love, David, and it is violet."



I Remember the Hunger

"I remember the hunger."

"Is that why you opened the soup kitchen?"

Jordan spoke very little, only a word here and there. Not because he was shy, but because he felt that words got in the way of spaces which were never empty but allowed for the wholeness that is always present. He had no use for clutter in his kitchen, nor in his mouth, nor in his mind; he had too much to do.

Often, during a period of three years, Jordan had been forced to fast and remain silent; as an orphan he was taken by the partisans to the forest, hidden from those who would have killed him, just as they had killed his parents, never thinking of who he was and who he would become. His crime and that of his parents, was simply that they belonged to a minority, when the tyranny of the majority reigned.

"Yes, David, I could not live knowing someone is hungry in our community."

Jordan had saved his money and waited for the day when he would feed those in his present world, as so many in his former world had perished.

He remembered the faces of his friends. Hungry children, someone who died hungry and others who never lived to be hungry.

Each day he would go to the outdoor market and buy a large part of the day's produce. What a joy to fill baskets and baskets and then to go to the community kitchen to cook. Day after day, it was the same routine, but for Jordan, it was totally different – another day – he could not wait to get up.

Stuffed peppers, pastas, baked breads in all shapes and sizes, mountains of potatoes, pools of soup, gardens of lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and beans adorned his tables.

Two to three hundred people streamed through his kitchen each day.

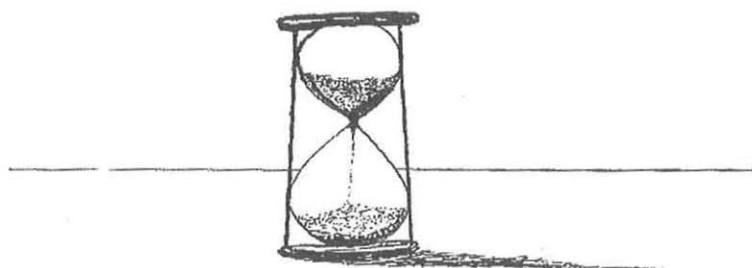
“Jordan, take a few days off every couple of weeks, after all you are retired. I will take your place.”

“Thank you, David, but I am off every day. This is not work. Every time I prepare food and feed someone, I feel less hungry.”

“Then Jordan, you must eat more than you do.”

“No, David, I am not hungry for myself. I am hungry for everyone who comes in here. I realized after the war that I would never satisfy my hunger, if someone else went hungry.”

“If I were not to do this, David, then I would be fasting for every hungry person. No matter how much I ate – my appetite would never be satisfied. I would always be hungry.”



Alexander Had Come Home

The sunrise beckoned a new day, gently awakening humanity, animals and vegetation. A profusion of red and green, deep fuchsia, yellow and orange flowers, swayed in the wind and an ocean current from afar transported tidings from a land across the sea.

A knocking on David's door jarred on him for a moment. It was a thought carried on the breeze which entered his open window. His early morning meditations and prayers, drifted in and out of his house. His daily dialogue with God, although just a background hum to the symphony of birds heard in his orchards, wafted on the scent of flowers and fruits. A hint of lavender, mint, roses, mango, papaya and lemon, gently perfumed the room.

He greeted the Divine in Alexander, acknowledging as he always did, the image of God in each human being. Alexander looked tired; the exhaustion of the city could be seen in his strained eyes and tense features. These delicate features had once known the repose of a peace within that David knew. Although the source of all is in oneself, Alexander had to retrace millions of his steps to envision where he had once been, in order to return to land with both feet where his life had begun.

One day, Alexander's aged parents had told David that he would arrive at the village after a thirty-five year long absence. They had visited him every few years and always returned with the same message. He was too busy, had too many obligations, work, business trips, family vacations, all closer to the life he had made since his departure. Yet, this, too, was his home; perhaps he had come home to reclaim himself.

Each time his parents visited him, it seemed that Alexander had left another part of himself behind. They tried to bring something of his former self to him on their periodic visits but they realized that was impossible; he would have to reclaim himself, not necessarily through an external journey but an internal one. To reclaim himself, did not mean he would lose his acquired self, layer upon layer of life, but that he would catch sight of his core, the source of his vision of the world, of himself, who he was and what he was meant to do.

David saw the middle-aged man, intense brown eyes, the lines which now mapped his forehead, the deep shadows of fatigue circumnavigating Alexander's eyes. The rivulets of wrinkles, like rivers from an ocean, had needed to shed so many tears of frustrations, of illusions lost, of betrayals lived, of meaning forgotten through the sands of an hourglass. If not to stop them, then to find essence in the grains as they descended; not that David could reverse the movement and make them ascend, but, at least that he might transcend them. All

these thoughts collided in David as he witnessed Alexander's face.

David came out to sit on the porch with Alexander, as they had sat many years ago. He had taught Alexander how to breathe; his parents, how to speak. Often they inhaled on the count of four, holding their breath for four, while entering the stillness of the space between inhalation and exhalation, which was also on the count of four. Together, breathing rhythmically, they had often meditated. Alexander's life had changed when his world had opened to him, transported on breath, navigated by the soul.

David and Alexander returned to the breath, which was the origin of it all whence it came. They continued their internal dialogue where they had left off. The intervening years made Alexander yearn for the breath that was the source of it all, only now, so much deeper than it had been before.

As in the past, Alexander was content to sit on the covered porch and hear the music, watch the choreography of nature, its landscapes, sets, props, scents, enveloping him, as he had once described in a poem for David, prior to his departure to study law. He had left it all to bring justice to the world outside his village. The world, he had read, suffered the frustration of people not heard, and if heard, not understood. Just as he had often made peace between his schoolmates, he would do so in the world. Somehow, it had not worked

out exactly that way. Although he was well-known, had served on many commissions, had helped, it was so little and there was so much injustice, so many voiceless people. He could only be the voice for so few of them; and for whomever he helped, so many more suddenly appeared, everywhere, all the time.

Through the red tape of bureaucracies and technocrats, rules, regulations, procedures, often people were forgotten or not even remembered. Alexander could not look away and yet for the few whom he had helped, he had to turn away from the others; and become numb.

David and Alexander sat without a word as they had so often, years ago. David knew there was nothing to say and yet everything to understand.

A deep dialogue of silence enveloped them; an energy force was emitted from each to the other in unconditional love and acceptance, with nothing to be said, nothing to be justified, or explained, no trial to be heard. Alexander was so tired of trials, so drained of listening to witnesses, so anguished hearing the pain of victims, so frustrated to hear lies; he felt so inadequate in being the voice of the voiceless. Here now, there was nothing to explain. Alexander had come home.

David and Alexander had both entered their breath. Their breathing became synchronized. By their presence, they had both entered their hearts, their vulnerability now protected, refuge having been found. Suddenly both were transported into every flower, every caress of

breeze, each leaf, every atom that drifted in all directions; they became one with the all and in unison with the Divine. They became a part of the all, they became the all; their moments united together beyond space and time. Both were in one meditation, the very essence of dialogue, in the ebb and flow of the ocean of life.

David knew that all he wanted to say could not be said; it had to be experienced mutually. From the depth of his meditation, he believed that Alexander understood or just knew. Self-realization or actualization was so simple, so very simple.

We are created by Divine love, each one of us; in that particular love, unique to each person, is a vision; and it is only in that vision, for each person, that the purpose of each life becomes clear. In that, is the passion for life which gives meaning. Once the vision is lost, the child in each of us loses himself.

Happiness begins if the initial act of love, the very life force, which created the child, can be returned by the adult whose talents (life force) are put to work in that for which that child was given life. It is the Divine diploma, not to be framed, nor stored away, but is the vision, given to each person to find within himself and never to forget. To commit one's life to it; it is given at birth as a reason for birth. Many have never found it; as if they had not been nurtured by their surroundings; and, if they have found it, they have often lost sight of it.

This vision has to be reclaimed every day of one's life, in the passion of wanting to begin again. Not necessarily to complete a task but to begin it, to leave an imprint that one has truly lived. This is the response to life. The remuneration for it. The paradox is that it gives satisfaction, a sense of self worth, the only one that exists, the very essence of what life is about. It is to live with passion, the reason for one's existence.

Every soul has a song to sing, one song; it is to find that song and, yes, to sing it; just as every bird has its song, each human has to find his. That is the job of life. To walk through the obstacle course, the hardships. In finding purpose and following it, the mission is accomplished.

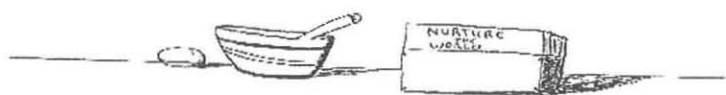
That is all there is. So simple, so very simple; and yet, most of humanity does not have the proper conditions for each person to find his vision because of poverty, oppression, injustice, disease or simply neglect. All of these must be vanquished for each individual to truly live out his life, rather than pass it by. Sad, thus disillusion exists, frustration in anguish, due to one's separation from one's reason for life – all else becomes meaningless. Yes, that is what it's all about – that is all there is. That is all that makes sense.

Our job is to live our respective visions and help others live their respective visions. This is the response to life, not a reaction to momentary desires, distractions

and the lesser and the greater wars inside and outside of each human being.

Whose thoughts were these? Whose meditation was it? Neither Alexander nor David knew; they witnessed that they had shared it together. Their combined energy, life forces, came together as one, in dialogue, a telepathy of the spirit that embraces each meditation which becomes stronger in the climate of unconditional love and acceptance. It had traveled years to a space in which David and Alexander had once been, and that they now had again shared.

What Alexander had come to reclaim was his song and it could only be reclaimed in the silence of his own still small voice. David had simply nestled and kept a refuge intact for Alexander, where he could hear it.



The Soup Kitchen

The lentil soup was thick with nutrition: legumes, carrots, potatoes and spices. In appearance, an indistinguishable blend, yet, the discerning taste, although forming a whole, could differentiate the unique flavor of every ingredient. David's thoughts accompanied every spoonful. It was not that he was elsewhere, rather, it is the soup that initiated the stream of consciousness, interrupted by the nods of greeting which he returned to whoever entered the room.

When Jordan decided to enlarge his soup kitchen, he was no longer able to manage himself as there was too much to do. Ruth and Miriam had finally realized their dream — a soup kitchen for neighboring villagers and travelers who needed meals.

Those, who could walk into the soup kitchen, were welcomed with warmth and care. Those, who could not, had meals brought to them by the youth and elders of the village, who volunteered their time.

Ruth and Miriam had known hunger as children, before having been brought to the village by an uncle who saved their lives, after their parents had been massacred in a city across two seas.

A conglomeration of humanity met here, some who

could pay, others who could not. No one knew who did and who did not, payment could only be made in a box, that held cards in small envelopes, provided at the entrance with a thought for each guest, wherein the cards were returned with or without payment as one could afford.

David's card stated in bold letters:

A TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS ONE IN WHICH EACH FRIEND WISHES THE OTHER BETTER THAN HE WISHES FOR HIMSELF.

David decided to pick a second card which simply said:

A TRUE FRIEND HELPS THE OTHER BECOME MORE AND MORE HIMSELF RATHER THAN WHAT THE FRIEND WOULD LIKE HIM TO BE.

Ruth offered David a second bowl of soup which he declined but he did accept a third card which said:

SEE YOUR FRIEND, NOT FOR WHAT HE WAS YESTERDAY, BUT WHAT HE HAS BECOME TODAY; HE HAS GROWN AND SO HAVE YOU; NEITHER IS HE WHAT HE WAS, NOR ARE YOU. SEE HIM AND YOURSELF, AS IF FOR THE FIRST TIME.

David thanked Ruth, and walked toward Miriam, who had written the cards.

“Miriam, what gave you the idea for the cards?”

“The soup, David, is for the body and the thought, for the soul. If the thought is accepted, just as the soup is, one day, no need will exist for soup kitchens because everyone will take care, of at least, someone else. The soup satisfies the body, only for a day, if that; but the thought, if lived, could sustain for a lifetime.”

David expressed his gratitude, walked away, collected the three thoughts and shared them with others, as he slipped them into envelopes and into the box that said, **NURTURE THE WORLD**, written in bold letters.



The Answers in Three Questions

Michael had grown up with David. In his smooth face, framed by his soft white beard which waved in the wind like a gentle willow in a landscaped garden, two big aquamarine eyes shone like pools reflecting the blue sky and white clouds. Sitting in his garden, Michael's gaze, far in space, transported him and David into their childhood.

“David, the stories told to me as a child, revolve one by one; and, yet, no story is more important to me than the one mother told me. Like all good stories, it began with a king. He wanted to meet the wisest man in the world.”

The sage lived in a faraway kingdom beyond two oceans, several forests and a desert. On the summit of the highest mountain he made his home in a cave. After rigorous physical training for a year, the king undertook the hazardous journey with two guards. After months of travel, he climbed the mountain alone; his two guards waiting for him in the foothills. After several days' journey, with his tent and his knapsack, he arrived at the top to see the sage, tilling a plateau for the few vegetables that could grow.

Without a word of greeting, the sage went about his work, oblivious to the monarch. Although he had known of the latter's eventual arrival, as he descended the mountain once a year for supplies, yet he spoke not a word. The king, who appeared ignored, picked up a shovel and worked with the sage.

Suddenly, a man appeared with an arrow in his back, before the two solitary figures working on the crest of the mountain. The sage did nothing, he simply continued his labors; the king dropped his shovel and carried the wounded man to a cave he thought was the sage's. The king removed the arrow, applied herbs to disinfect the wound and bandaged it tightly to stop the bleeding. The king lay the man down, covered him with a blanket, then a second blanket, he had folded as a pillow, and withdrew from the cave.

To his surprise, the sage, now turned to the king with warmth and said, "My child, you can descend and return to your kingdom to rule, while I will continue to meditate."

"But great sage," said the king, "I have waited to ask you questions, after much physical training and a long journey."

"I know, my child, but I have answered your questions of which there were three."

"We have not even spoken," said the king.

“My child, they have been answered,” said the sage and after a pause he continued, “your first question was, what am I to do?”

“The answer is simple, you must always do whatever must be done. You removed the arrow from the back of the wounded man and saved his life.

“Your second question, for whom am I to do it? My child, for whoever appears before you.”

“And your third question, when am I to do it? My child, at the very moment that a need arises.”

“There is no mystery to the questions, only to the source of the answers. It is therein that you must dwell and walk in its ways. Go, my child, in that spirit.”

Before departing, the king returned to the cave and found the man he had saved was conscious.

“Your Majesty,” the wounded man whispered, “you are most lucky to be alive.”

“No good sir, it is you, who have been saved.”

“That is only part of the truth. I ascended the mountain to kill you. With my last ounce of life, I would have stabbed you with a knife that fell from my hand before I lost consciousness. After you bent down to carry me, I gave into my wound and lost my desire to harm you. Known for a long time to your guards as someone

desiring to kill you, on several occasions I had escaped. One of your guards at the bottom of the mountain shot the arrow that wounded me, and yet, after a short time, I made my way up the mountain, determined to see justice done. For you had incarcerated my best friend unjustly, not having listened to his story in which he described a crime, committed by someone else.”

Upon having heard the story, the king promised to liberate the friend upon his return. The king realized that, by having saved the wounded fugitive, he had also saved his own life. Not only had he found the answers to his three questions, but by the answers, he had also had his life spared.

The king reigned for many years, having learned and lived the rules of life daily. No matter what allurements or obstacles were in his way, he had conquered himself, which he realized had been so much more difficult than the cities he had conquered. The precious crown on his head had no value to him when he died, but the crown of his good name allowed him to be remembered.

David, too, remembered the story, which was his favorite, told by the same mother and at the same time that his brother had heard it. Each brother had thought that the story had been told just for him, and it had.



About the Illustrator

Jacques J.M. Shore is an attorney, specializing in federal law and government relations, in Ottawa, Canada. He is married to Donna, a family physician, and they have three daughters: Emily, Amanda and Victoria. His late father, Sigmond and mother, Lena, survived the Holocaust.

While he has written many published articles and essays on law and public policy, Mr. Jacques Shore has written two most significant books. His first book, *Menorah in the Night Sky* was awarded the "Our Choice" recognition by the Canadian Children's Book Centre. *Friday Night with the Pope* was Mr. Shore's second in the world of children's literature. Mr. Shore has a multi-dimensional artistic talent in that he was also an illustrator for several previously published book covers of his brother's books. In the *Tales of David, Simple Wisdom for Complicated Times*, he has illustrated the short stories.

About the Author

Michel M.J. Shore, born in Paris, in 1948, sat on a human rights tribunal from 1989 until 2003 where he specialized in war crimes and in crimes against humanity. He now sits as a judge in a High Court in Canada. With advanced degrees and a background in philosophy, international law, negotiations, mediation, healing, and writing, he lectures on the art of active listening, seeing and silence. Michel is the author of *Jerusalem Breezes*, *A Human Panorama of Jerusalem* and *A Hope for Peace*; *O Canada, Canada*; and *The Tempest: Random Reading in Ethical Temperature*. His latest publications are *Many Journeys, One Destination*, with photographer-artist Kevin Robins; and *I Hear Music in Every Psalm, Meditation-Poems*, with calligraphy by Jamie Shear. Michel's recent work includes his poetry in the film, *Frankl's Choice*, produced and directed by Ruth Yorkin Drazen, featuring Richard Dreyfus and Kathleen Chalfant; *Tales of David, Simple Wisdom for Complicated Times* is his latest short story collection.

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Born in 1948, in Paris, Michel M.J. Shore has sat on a human rights tribunal from 1988 until 2003 where he specialized in war crimes, crimes against humanity and trauma. Since 2003, he sits as a judge in a High Court in Canada. With advanced degrees and a background in philosophy, international law, negotiations, mediation, healing, and writing, he lectures on the voice of the voiceless, the narrative as a source of understanding the human condition, the art of active listening, seeing and silence. Shore is the author of *Jerusalem Breezes*, *A Human Panorama of Jerusalem* and *A Hope for Peace*; *O Canada, Canada*; *The Tempest: Random Reading in Ethical Temperature*; *Many Journeys, One Destination*, with photographer-artist Kevin Robins; and *I Hear Music in Every Psalm, Meditation-Poems*, with calligraphy by Jamie Shear. Shore's recent work includes his poetry in the film, *Frankl's Choice*, produced and directed by Ruth Yorkin Drazen, featuring Richard Dreyfus and Kathleen Chaland; and his current book of short stories, *Tales of David, Simple Wisdom for Complicated Times*. Shore's forthcoming poetry book visually documents the inner journey which transcends all maps and furthestmost destinations.



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