

He said:

For while this year it may be a Catholic against whom the finger of suspicion is pointed, in other years it has been, and may someday be again, a Jew—or a Quaker or a Unitarian or a Baptist. It was Virginia's harassment of Baptist preachers, for example, that helped lead to Jefferson's statute of religious freedom. Today I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you—until the whole fabric of our harmonious society is ripped at a time of great national peril.

He made the important point that seems so obvious that he shouldn't have had to make.

He said:

I am not the Catholic candidate for president. I am the Democratic Party's candidate for president, who happens also to be a Catholic.

Finally, he said:

But if this election is decided on the basis that 40 million Americans lost their chance of being president on the day they were baptized, then it is the whole nation that will be the loser—in the eyes of Catholics and non-Catholics around the world, in the eyes of history, and in the eyes of our own people.

Throughout her career, Judge Barrett has impressed the brightest legal minds with her deep understanding of the law and commitment to judicial independence. She made it clear at her hearing 3 years ago that she would be loyal to her oath, and that is to uphold and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States.

It is clear, under the appropriate canons of judicial ethics, that if for some reason a judge can't apply the law because of some personal opinion or conviction, then one needs to disqualify oneself. President Kennedy said that, if it violates your conscience and your faith and you can't reconcile the two, you should resign.

Well, there is just no legitimate reason to question whether Judge Barrett's religious beliefs would make her unfit to serve on the Supreme Court, and I hope our colleagues on the other side will refrain from, once again, imposing a religious test on Judge Barrett as we consider her nomination.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, on another matter, with the school year well underway, I, like, I am sure, many of my colleagues, am continuing to listen to and learn from our teachers and administrators about how this unprecedented school year is unfolding. Whether kicking off the year in person or online or with some hybrid model, educators are facing a whole new range of challenges that have made the past several weeks anything but ordinary.

Over August, I spent some time talking to kindergarten through 12th grade teachers and students to learn how they were preparing to overcome the hurdles brought on by this pandemic. I also visited our colleges and universities to see how they were handling the start of the new year, and since then, I have stayed in close contact with all of them to learn more about how it is proceeding.

Our college campuses, for example, in most cases, are home to more than just classrooms and libraries. They are whole communities unto themselves with student housing, offices, dining facilities, gyms, convenience stores, and with, in some cases, full-service utility companies.

Lee Tyner, who serves as general counsel for Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, testified before the Judiciary Committee earlier this year and compared running a campus to leading a small city. You have a vast set of responsibilities that extend far beyond the education you are providing to your students, and those responsibilities have only grown more challenging during the pandemic.

Back in July, I spoke with some of the chancellors of our public colleges and universities to learn more about how they were preparing to deal with the immense challenges higher education was facing, and last Friday, I was able to catch up and see how things had gone—whether they had gone according to plan or whether they had encountered problems they had not been able to anticipate.

I learned about the University of Texas System's comprehensive plan to keep students and staff safe at each of their campuses across the State, which involves a serious testing infrastructure. Four institutions have built labs on their own campuses to conduct the testing that is necessary, and each has the capacity to test between 500 and 2,000 people each day. Other campuses are partnering with the UT Health Science Center institutions for their own testing, and these are providing a no-out-of-pocket cost testing opportunity for students, faculty, and staff.

The University of North Texas System has reopened campuses with a mix of in-person, online, and hybrid instruction, and it has been very effective at stopping the transmission of the virus. If a student or any close relative tests positive, there are clear guidelines for isolating and then contact tracing to minimize the spread.

When I spoke last week with the chancellors, UNT had only 27 active cases on campus, and it has seen no evidence of COVID-19 transmission in the classrooms or buildings where they conduct face-to-face activities.

This is the trend most campuses are seeing. There is a low to zero transmission rate in classrooms, thanks to these preparations and these precautions. The biggest risk to students, staff, and the surrounding communities actually comes from off-campus activities or people who bring it onto the campus who are not part of that student body or administration.

In Texas and States across the country, we have seen news articles about how off-campus parties and gatherings have been linked to clusters of these new cases. Appropriately, the universities have cracked down on these campus groups or individuals hosting those events, and they are trying to do what

they can to identify them and then stop the spread.

John Sharp, who is the chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, talked about one unconventional way that A&M is trying to pinpoint potential outbreaks as soon as possible.

A&M has adopted the practice of wastewater surveillance, which has been used for years as a way to detect viruses or diseases within a community. Now it is being used to find the source of individual COVID-19 cases or clusters of cases in student housing, particularly dormitories. The university takes wastewater samples from sewage systems on campus, and a positive test allows them to then go back and target individuals for testing.

Obviously, if there is no virus detected, they know there is no need for that conditional testing, at least at this time. This practice can help to detect an outbreak at a dorm that can otherwise go unnoticed for several days and, thus, be spread far and wide.

Our colleges and universities across the State have gone to great lengths to manage the crisis that did not come with a manual. They have implemented the best practices to protect the health and safety of students and staff members and to ensure that their students have access to a quality education, which is the very purpose for which they exist.

In our conversation last week, these chancellors told me how helpful the CARES Act funding has been over the last several months, and they reiterated that they need more help. They need Congress to come together and provide more help. It is not just colleges and universities. It is also our elementary, middle, and high schools.

Congress has already provided more than \$30 billion in emergency relief for education, including \$2.6 billion in Texas alone. This funding has gone a long way to prepare for this school year and to allow these leaders to manage the risks associated with the spread of the virus.

They say they need more help, and it is incredibly frustrating that, despite this being a bipartisan goal and something we were able to do together in four separate bills, we have now been unable to pass another relief bill to give our schools and our children the resources they need in order to be safe. You would think this would be a priority.

The two House proposals we have seen—one of which passed the House earlier this year and the other of which was introduced last week—did include additional funding for education, and a bill we proposed over the summer included another \$105 billion for education—more than tripling the investment that has already been made in the CARES Act.

History has proven that legislation gets harder to do the closer we get to an election, and perhaps nothing is better evidence of that than where we find

ourselves today, but the need for additional help should transcend those partisan differences.

I spoke to Secretary Mnuchin less than an hour ago, and he continues talking to Speaker PELOSI, but at some point, while talking is good—it is better than not talking—sometimes it is important not just to talk but to actually do something. In this case, that would mean the House and the Senate working with the President to agree on another bill. So I hope we are at a point at which we can see some relief soon.

I am thinking about the airline industry and the tens of thousands of airline employees who are being furloughed, actually, starting today. American Airlines and Southwest Airlines are headquartered in my State. I know, through no fault of their own, the airlines are struggling. We have tried to help them, and we have helped them, but we need to help the airlines' employees by providing them with more assistance during this challenging time. We can do that if we would get off of dead center and work out some mutually agreeable compromise.

Nobody is going to get everything one wants. It is not the nature of life or the nature of this business, but the American people are depending on us to do our jobs, and we cannot let them down.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BLACK REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOTS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, America's founding principles, including that all men are created equal and endowed by our Creator with unalienable rights, are timeless and apply equally to all Americans.

Commitment to these founding principles is what ties us together as Americans, so it is vital that all Americans feel connected to them.

That is why I have been working for years to establish a memorial on the National Mall to those Black Revolutionary War patriots who fought for our founding ideals.

I commend to all Americans the insights of the founder of the organization working to build this memorial, who argues that these patriots' service and sacrifice completed the Founders' vision.

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I was absent due to an urgent family matter requiring my attention when the Senate voted on vote No. 200 on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 551, S. 4653. On vote No. 200, had I been present, I would have voted yea. •

YOM KIPPUR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Rabbi Michael Cohen is a longtime friend of Marcelle and me. He occasionally sends me a Sunday sermon, which I thoroughly enjoy and share with family members. Following a week of mourning the passing of Justice Ginsburg, it was comforting to have this sermon to read after church this last Sunday.

I ask unanimous consent that this sermon be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Jerusalem Post, Sept. 24, 2020]

THE ECHOES OF YOM KIPPUR

(By Rabbi Michael M. Cohen)

When the gates of heaven close during the Ne'ila service of Yom Kippur, many of us put the avodah, the work, of Yom Kippur behind us. But that is an illusion. As the expression goes, when one door closes, another opens.

Commentating on the Kol Nidre service at the beginning of Yom Kippur, when the gates are open wide, Rabbi Max Arzt teaches the goal of Yom Kippur is, "to lessen the distance between what we are and what we ought to be."

If the long day of introspection has worked, then at Ne'ila those gates close on who we were and open to a lighter, better and more refined version of who we are.

But that too is an illusion. It is a fleeting moment of personal triumph. Like the sunset that gives way to the night, the dawn to the morning, the moon and its phases, the high tide and the low tide; stasis is not *derech haolam*, the way of the world.

Each morning the siddur, the prayer book, reminds us, "Day after day You renew creation." In that unfolding story we are, truth be told, composed of stardust. Most of the elements of our bodies originated in stars and the Big Bang.

Like the rest of the universe, our course is one of continual renewal. Yom Kippur highlights that awareness and the work we began on Rosh Hodesh Elul, the beginning of the month of Elul, 40 days earlier. Our work reaches a higher level on Rosh Hashanah and the Ten Days of Repentance, *aseret yomei teshuva*, culminating with Yom Kippur.

Those 40 days parallel the period when Moses returned to Mount Sinai to receive

the second set of tablets following the incident of the Golden Calf. Moses, Moshe rabbeinu, Moses our teacher, literally models *teshuva*, repentance, return, when after the first tablets lay shattered at his feet he turned around and returned to once again climb Mount Sinai.

We are no different, as the echo of Yom Kippur is always with us, pushing us to climb the mountain all year long. Yom Kippur Katan, the small Yom Kippur, observed by some in most months on the day preceding Rosh Hodesh, is one of those echoes. It includes a daylight-hours' fast and special liturgy.

Rabbi Shefa Gold elucidates the origins of Yom Kippur Katan, teaching, "Kabbalists were moon watchers. The lenses through which they gazed were intensely focused on issues of exile and redemption. And so as the moon waned, the exile of the Shechina (the Divine Presence) was noted and mourned."

With the moon's return came the celebration of the miracle of redemption, a redemption that could be tasted and known but briefly before the cycle of exile continued. They based their custom on a legend that was recorded in the Babylonian Talmud in which God says to Israel, "Bring atonement upon me for making the moon smaller." (Hullin 60b) THAT EPISODE in the Talmud is fascinating in and of itself. There God admits after God made the moon smaller than the sun that God had wronged the moon, and because of that God needed to do *teshuva*! Implied within that radical text: If God can admit to wrongdoing and address transgression, who are we not to?

In addition to Yom Kippur Katan, another echo of Yom Kippur is the sixth paragraph of the weekday Amidah prayer. There we say the confessional *selach lanu*, forgive us, in the same manner that we say the confessional prayers *ashamnu* and *al chet* of Yom Kippur. Interspersed within the *al chet* Yom Kippur liturgy itself we also say *selach lanu* as we do during the rest of the year: "Ve'al kulam eloha selichot selach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu." And for them all, God of forgiveness, please forgive, pardon us, help us atone." The *selach lanu* paragraph follows the fourth and fifth paragraphs of the Amidah. We first ask for *binah*, understanding, including self-understanding, so we can ask in the next prayer for help with *teshuvah*, repentance. There is a logic within the order of the Amidah: first self-understanding followed by repentance, and only then forgiveness.

Three times a day the weekday Amidah is said. This means three times a day—evening, morning, and afternoon—we ask for forgiveness. In Judaism there is the concept of not saying a *bracha levatala*, a blessing whose purpose is not going to be fulfilled. This means that when we ask for forgiveness throughout the day there is the implied understanding, since we can't say the *bracha* in vain, that we did something wrong in the morning, afternoon and evening.

For some this is proof Judaism is a religion of guilt. Rabbi Art Green teaches the opposite when he says that Judaism is actually about guilt relief. This system provides us precious moments throughout the day to check in with ourselves and recalibrate as needed.

Elaborating, Rabbi Daniel Kamesar, z"l (of blessed memory), looks to the past daily sacrificial system of the Temple in Jerusalem as a model for that guilt relief when we would bring a *chatat* or an *asham* offering as expiation for our wrong choices, for missing the mark. Watching the smoke rise heavenly could be a cathartic, like watching the breadcrumbs of the Tashlich service float downstream away from us.

"Burn it up and let it go," Daniel points out. "Most therapists are trying desperately to help us achieve that."