We began tonight’s service with a quote from Sadie American that I want to bring us back to:

The Jew is an idealist. The Jew has been guided through Egyptian gloom and darkness by the light that never was on land or sea. But the Jew combines with the ideal - the practical. The Jew has seen the stars reflected from the wellsprings on the earth about him; and so, though the Jew gazed at the stars, they have not fallen into the abyss of loss of faith and trust in the eventual triumph of Right and Justice.

This is a striking metaphor constructed by a striking woman – an activist and social reformer, organizer and pioneer in a time when such roles were not very open to women.

Still today of course, some roles are opportunities are thought of in gendered terms… midwives, still very much a female profession – and the majority of those providing online education for Ontario’s children are women as well – silently toiling away to bring forth brilliance from our distracted youth.

What Sadie American writes, is truly about being aware…. Aware like Moses was when he acted out in anger at the Egyptian overseer, of the suffering in the world around him, though he did not have the control needed to properly deal with the situation. Aware like Moses was, most notably when he looked into the burning bush, noticed it was not being consumed, and received his charge.

Our tradition, as we will hear tomorrow in Uri’s d’var Torah, says that Moses was, in many ways great, but also incomplete.

In the book of Psalms we hear the words

חֶֽסֶד־וֶאֱמֶ֥ת נִפְגָּ֑שׁוּ צֶ֖דֶק וְשָׁל֣וֹם נָשָֽׁקוּ׃

Hesed v’Emet Nif-GA-shu / Tzedek v’Shalom Na-SHA-ku

The verse is traditionally read Loving kindness and truth – shall meet, and Justice and Peace shall Kiss.

But in the years leading up the American Civil War, one of the first Reform Rabbis in North America, Rabbi David Einhorn, chose to read this verse differently.

Loving kindness and truth shall meet – and when they do – Justice and Peace shall kiss.

This verse, according to our tradition, refers actually to our Torah Portion. Moses was the Law and Justice leader. This had its negative sides - anger and impulse – a burning focus which pushed away the Jewish people.

Aaron, on the other hand, was loving-kindness and peace. This also had its negatives – Aaron built the golden calf for the sake of appeasing the masses, and went too far beyond the bounds of what was Right in order to create Peace.

But – Rabbi Einhorn teaches, we can find a place of meeting between these concepts. When Law is applied with kindness and compassion, when Truth is told, mixed together with loving-kindness so that others can hear it.

He concludes “True peace lies in the meeting of love and truth, when justice and peace kiss one another.”

Friends – this week, I don’t need to give you a sermon on leadership or on truth.. we are in Canada.

But what I do want to talk about instead is that we often hold to our idea of what is ‘right’ Truth. Law. Einhorn isn’t a nihilist – there is no law- he very much believes in Truth and Law. But what I find so compelling about Einhorn's teaching on this particular night, is the reminder that Right isn’t peace. Truth.. isn’t peace. And loving-kindness alone isn’t wholeness – isn’t the whole picture. We don’t teach only to forgive and forget – we are Jews. Rather what we teach is that true peace comes when we seek to temper our righteousness anger with kindness. Our thirst for justice, with our thirst for mutuality.

Our prayers for the eventual triumph of Right and Justice are not that – they are prayers for coming together – healing. Peace.

Shabbat. Shalom.