I have a confession to make, I am a computer nerd, a techno geek. In terms of the information super highway, I drive in the carpool lane, with my top down, the radio up, speeding toward whatever new technology waits at the end of the road.

Where others spend their extra money on music, books, or clothing, I spend mine on gadgets. My friends will tell you that if it is grey, plastic and runs on batteries I own it. At one point not to long ago my belt and shoulders were loaded down with beepers, cell phone, digital organizer, laptop computer, fax modem, CD rom drive. I had so many battery operated things hanging from my person that it would have been more energy efficient for me to plug in and drag an orange extension cord behind me where ever I went.

A great medieval Jewish scholar, Rav Nachman of Bratslav, teaches about a way to understand God's role in the world. Rav Nachman explains that God being all powerful must reduce and contract God's self in order for people to have freedom of choice and free will, this idea is called *tzimzum*, and it is the basis by which deeply spiritual Jews can make sense of freewill and an omnipotent God. For me, about 3 months ago it was the basis for reducing my dependency on technology and the physical and mental load I carried with me everyday. *Tzimtzum* taught me to do away with some of these gadgets and devices so I could better enjoy and appreciate the real technological marvel, the natural world.

The one device however I could not live without was this, my PalmPilot. Again a grey, plastic, battery operated gadget, but one whose utility far out weighs its technological burden. The PalmPilot is a calendar, a phone book, a note pad, a calculator, a checkbook, and much more all in one nice, small grey plastic battery powered case. It is the organizer of choice among Rabbis and Jewish professionals, so much so that mine is not even the only one on this bima tonight.

Two months ago I was at a Rabbinic Convention in Pittsburgh, standing there on the convention floor surrounded by rabbis and Jewish scholars, I envisioned rabbinic gatherings of ancient times, rabbis hunched over big books of the Talmud and the Torah discussing, arguing the intricacies of Jewish Law. The modern rabbinic convention was nothing like what I imagined, while we argued the intricacies of Jewish law, and in this case the purpose and values of Reform Judaism, most rabbis I saw were not hunched over books, but instead these little, grey plastic, battery powered PalmPilots. And they weren't only looking at them they were pointing them at each other. You see a PalmPilot can not only store information, but it can transmit, or beam that information across a room to another PalmPilot. And so here I was in a room full of Rabbis as they were beaming programs, appointments and business cards back and forth. Were it not for the yamukahs and business suits one could have mistaken us for a Star Trek convention with our tricorders out asking some Scotsman to beam us aboard the mothership.

PalmPilot in hand I entered into the fray and within a few moments my little grey plastic gadget beeped at me with a message. Someone was trying to beam me something, and as polite as Stanley Kubrick's, fictional computer Dave in 2001, my PalmPilot wanted to know if I wanted to receive the transmission that was coming in. I looked down at my screen to see what program or information I was being sent, and there in digital type was the message, "Do you want to receive Torah?" Click Yes or No.

Oh the cosmic implications of this question, my little grey plastic, AAA powered computer was posing one of the most loaded and imperative questions ever asked of a Jew, and to answer all I needed to do was click a button Surely it would not be that easy, by saying yes does this mean that I would receive and understand the whole Torah, what if I clicked NO? Worse still what if I clicked YES,. But Torah overloaded my memory, sent my system into complete failure, crashed my database of knowledge and information? As I pondered the

implications of my decision, a new message flashed on my screen, transmission of the application "Torah" lost, searching for source. And then it was gone, whoever was trying to send me the Torah got tired of my waiting or moved on to someone else and my screen returned to its original state, Torah was just a click away, but I was to slow to respond and now it was gone.

It may surprise some of you but in our tradition, in the Jewish operating system (to make one more computer pun) we are all being beamed Torah, though unlike on a PalmPilot the steps we must take to receive Torah are much greater than simply clicking "yes" on our screen. What we are doing tonight is beaming Torah, our tephilot, our prayer service sends Torah and the Jewish tradition out in to the air, Prayers in Judaism while directed at God are also aimed at the Jewish community as a whole. By praying out load, as a community in song and in voice we send Torah out into the air for it to be received by our congregation and community who take the spirit and *ruach* that we generate here tonight and apply it to their lives and relationships.

We beam Torah when we leave work early on a Friday night so we can be home with our families to light the shabbat candles and welcome the Sabbath Queen into our home with the Kiddish, the challah, and a special shabbat meal. It is Jewish custom to place our shabbat candle sticks in a window facing the street so that the light of shabbat, the beam of Torah and Jewish tradition shed light on our community and all who pass by our house. How fortunate we are to live in a time and a place when the only thing that prevents those candles from, shinning brightly in our windows is our own hesitancy or reluctance to so publicly proclaim our faith and our heritage. Perhaps the Torah we beam to each other tonight in the safety of our *sanctuary*, will give some the confidence and the resolve to move those shabbat candles to a place of prominence in our homes so that we may beam the light of Judaism to our neighbors and community.

We beam Torah when we sit with our friends and discuss Jewish events and happenings. When we gather as Havuroth, as a groups of friends to increase our own Jewish knowledge and awareness and experience by sharing our insights and opinions with others. Like the rabbinic convention in Pittsburgh, in such groups Torah bounces back from one to another, growing stronger with each transmission, till the group can no longer contain its power and it bursts out beaming the value of Jewish learning and reflection to others who expand our havuroth or form their own.

We beam Torah when we model Judaism and the value of a Jewish education to our children. When we drop them off or pick them up at religious school and talk about what they are learning, sharing our own questions and desire for the understanding that comes with study. Likewise when we have this moment and fail to make the connection between where we are headed and what is being taught there, we loose the transmission. We beam not Torah but instead transmit to our kids a Jewish education that must be endured, an errand that must be run, rather than an opportunity and a blessing.

I can illuminate a hundred ways that we send Torah out into the world, though tzedakah, through community service, though holiday celebrations, through Jewish books and films, the list is almost endless. What I cannot illuminate, what each of us must identify in ourselves is how we **receive** Torah. How we take these ideas, these values, these rituals and traditions and make them our own? Its not as easy as clicking a button and having it downloaded into our memory. Judaism is not high tech, it is very low tech. It is a system of beliefs, values and commandments that God and our heritage ask that we accept into our lives, into our internal make up, that they become very much a part of who we are.

Our challenge is to find a way to accept Torah and Judaism more fully into our lives, to take all of these beams of Judaism that fill this synagogue and this community and find a place

for them on our hard drive, to load them into our memory, the sacred storage spaces of our soul that we access time and again in our businesses, our families and in our interactions with one another.

Our goal is to make Judaism one of the lenses by which we view the world and our responsibility to it. We already do this with so many other aspects of our life, before we decide to do this or that, before we make a judgement or a business decision we weigh the consequences and benefits of that decision against our own moral code, we weigh it against our community and national standards, is it legal, is it just? We weigh that decision against the opinions of our friends and colleagues; what will they think of this act, how will my friends and family, my parents, my children view what I am about to do?

What is missing, and what is required is a Jewish lens, a Jewish filter for these actions and decisions. When we make a place, a permanent and readily accessible place for Torah and Judaism in our lives, then like a PalmPilot we carry it around with us where ever we go, and can refer to it and draw upon it for insight and perspective as we face life's challenges and dilemmas. And unlike little grey plastic boxes, the batteries on Judaism never run out, and instead they are constantly recharged by the beams of Torah and Jewish life that right now flood out of this sanctuary, our shabbat table, our religious school and our Jewish community. Lets us then make a place for Torah in our lives, a permanent and sacred place, right next to the teachings we received from our parents, the wisdom we receive from colleagues, the guidance we receive from our community. The question "Do you wish to receive Torah? is on all of our screens How will you click?