

Will you drop the baton?

by **LEIBEL BAUMGARTEN**

for Chabad house

His feet pound the track as he runs. The crowd cheers, he picks up speed; he dare not slow down. His knee begins to quiver, his back starts to ache; yet his heart does not buckle. The relay runner shows no sign of stopping. Neither the pain nor the exhaustion can slow him down, for he holds his strength in his right hand: the baton. He must reach his goal, he must reach his teammates. They started the race, they will finish it. They are counting on him to do his part. He cannot let them down.

For thousands of years, the Jewish people have survived and thrived. No matter the circumstances, no matter challenges, we have powered ahead, knowing that our portion of the race must be won. Our ancestors began the race and passed the baton to their children: Abraham, Rachel, Moses, Ruth, King David, Esther, Maimonides, all the way down to grandpa and grandma, and now to us.

During each leg of the race, they did what they could to bring warmth and goodness into the world, to be a beacon of light. They then passed the baton, imploring the next generation to continue the legacy and pick

up speed. The previous generations now sit in the stands, watching us carefully as we grab the baton. They cheer loudly, supporting, encouraging, entreating.

The baton is the Torah. It is what gives us our strength; our drive. It holds the blood, sweat, sacrifice and joy of years gone by; it embodies the hope and dream of the future. The Torah reminds us of our history and instructs our mission.

The runner does not drop the baton to increase his speed, nor does he remodel it to better suit his grip. In his hand he holds history, in his hand he holds life. Our Torah today is the very same - letter for letter - as the one given to Moses at Sinai. Our Torah today looks identical to millions of others throughout time. It is the Torah our parents guarded, it is our Torah to love and cherish so that our children will learn and inherit it.

The race has come to Omaha. It's time to pick up the baton. All of history is watching. Will you grab the baton? Will you carry it forward?

Be a part of history; get your letter in the Omaha Unity Torah today. Don't drop the baton. A nation depends on you.

For more information, please visit www.omahatorah.com.