

Let me recount it very briefly, as befits a text. After a long illness, I was permitted for the first time to step out-of-doors. As I crossed the threshold sunlight greeted me.

This is my experience - all there is to it. And yet, so long as I live, I shall never forget that moment. It was mid-January - a time of cold and storm up North, but in Texas, where I happened to be, a season much like our spring. The sky overhead was very blue, very clear, and very, very high. Not, I thought, the *shamayim*, heaven, but *shemei shamayim*, a heaven of heavens. A faint wind blew from off the western plains, cool and yet somehow tinged with warmth - like a dry, chilled wine. And everywhere in the firmament above me, in the great vault between the earth and sky, on the pavements, the buildings - the golden glow of the sunlight. It touched me, too, with friendship, with warmth, with blessing. And as I basked in its glory there ran through my mind those wonderful words of the prophet about the sun which someday shall rise with healing on its wings.

In that instant I looked about me to see whether anyone else showed on their face the joy, almost the beatitude, I felt. But no, there they walked - men and women and children, in the glory of the golden flood, and so far as I could detect, there was none to give it heed. And then I remembered how often I, too, had been indifferent to sunlight, how often, preoccupied with petty and sometimes mean concerns, I had disregarded it. And I said to myself, How precious is the sunlight but alas, how careless of it are we. How precious - how careless. This has been a refrain sounding in me ever since.

*Milton Steinberg*