

# *Off The Pulpit*

January 30, 2014

## **Baseball and Memory**



When I was nine my father took me from Harrisburg to Baltimore for my first live baseball game. The Orioles won, 6-2 (I remember that Elston Howard hit a home run for the Yankees.) We drove back home and I slept the entire way, shocked and muddled when we pulled up in front of the house.

Memory is a peculiar thing. Some events stick in the mind while others, arguably as important, vanish as though they never were. Why do I remember Elston Howard and forget the name of my teacher that year? There are inflection points in lives, flashes of significance that endure in our minds.

What is true of a person is true of a people. The Jewish people elevate certain moments and events in our history while others are forgotten. Memory is not a tape recorder

but an editor. We shape our stories as we shape our selves. From the Torah until today, Jews recount those elements of our tale that highlight sacred values, deepen our connections and emphasize our relationship to God. Much is no doubt forgotten; not everything that happens is equally significant. The Jewish past is shaped by a collective memory that enables us to endure.