BABY TALK

 Will and Dori Solomon of Charlottesville, Virginia welcomed their first child into the world at 2:47 a.m. on July 23, 2017. They named the eight-pound, two-ounce baby boy “Max.” Max resembled nothing so much as a cherubic angel, with his already growing honey-colored head of curly hair and his chubby pink cheeks. His eyes were heavenly blue and captivating, completing the divine image. The couple were delighted with this special new life which had now been added to their lives. The pediatrician declared little Max Solomon “about the most perfect baby she had ever seen.” But then again, maybe she said that to every new pair of parents, out of professional tact and courtesy.

 For the next twelve months, baby Max thrived and met all of the normal boy growth benchmarks regarding his height and weight. He was a fine eater and sleeper. His motor skills were developing on schedule. He received his routine immunizations without complaint. Max was -- for lack of a better word -- a ‘mellow’ baby: observant, calm, affectionate, smiling, and good-natured. The neighbors, friends, and relatives of the Solomon family marveled during their visits to the Solomon home. Some teased that “the terrible twos” would inevitably be coming soon, and that Max would then “upset the apple cart, big time!” But Will and Dori remained steadfast that their boy would defy the odds and stay wonderful. “He’s the best child any couple could have wished for!” they gushed.

 But on Max’s first birthday, the happy couple was stunned when suddenly Max spoke for the first time during the presentation of a cupcake with a single lit candle on top, while sitting in his high chair in the Solomon’s modest kitchen. His voice was that of an adult male, deep and resonant, and the words from his mouth were in a coherent, complete sentence.

 “Shall we all sing ‘Happy Birthday’ together before I blow out the candle?” Max gently asked.

 Dori looked at her husband in disbelief. Will asked his wife if she heard what he thought he had just heard.

 “Don’t worry. Neither of you are imagining anything. Yes, I can talk. No need to panic. Everything is alright.” Max interjected.

 Max Solomon went on to detail his intentions.

 “For the next twelve months, I will talk in detail for exactly one hour per month, always on the night of the new moon. I will share fascinating information with you both – about your lives, the nation, and the world, and more importantly, what will happen in the years to come. For the rest of each month, I will simply be an ordinary baby for you to enjoyably raise. Now, the words I share must absolutely be our secret. No one else must know – at least not at this time. No nosey strangers, newspaper reporters, television cameras, or other interviewers. No media ‘circuses,’ please! We must have strict privacy as a family. I also suggest that you carefully videotape my pronouncements as proof of their accuracy when they actually occur in the future,” Max decreed.

 Will then stared at Max, and asked his one-year-old son, “How can this be happening?” He quickly wondered in his mind if he should contact a child psychologist, or their pediatrician, or perhaps the FBI, or – heaven forbid – even an exorcist. He would ask Dori’s opinion on what they should do, when Max was next asleep.

 Max grinned a relaxed smile, showing only four teeth in a mouthful of gums. “It’s quite complicated, but no need for your concern. I might add that certain Jewish mystics who have delved into Kabbalah over the centuries are indeed on the right track, but for most people, the Universal Truth is largely incomprehensible, let alone believed once realized. You see, there is an underlying unity in all that exists, that which we call reality. The confusing social discords around the world, and the utter and baffling lack of peacefulness and harmony that you see in daily modern life, is all just an illusion. Suffice it to say, I chose you as my loving parents, and I am content to be here and share my knowledge with you.”

 Sure enough, each month for the following twelve months --on the night of the new moon, for only one hour – Max spoke at length on many topics, with Will recording each session meticulously using a digital palm-sized camcorder, while Dori took precise written notes as a kind of back-up.

 The information that Max shared was a heady combination of the optimistic, the devastating, the surprising, the alarming, and the awe-inspiring.

 A sample of Max’s pronouncements: the winner of the 2020 U.S. Presidential Election; the exact date and place where the people of Earth would first encounter extraterrestrial beings; how cancer would finally be eradicated from the globe; the outcome of the World War between China, Russia and America; the effect of a new pandemic whose deadly viral microbes would sweep the world; what the first human colony on Mars would stumble upon while exploring under the planet’s surface; the discovery of a new source of clean, renewable energy; the elimination of all automobiles; and how and when world hunger and poverty would finally be conquered.

 Max Solomon also told his parents that they would soon have beautiful twin daughters whom they would name Mia and Sophia. Max also said he knew the exact date that both Will and Dori would die, but that he felt it was not proper for them to know those specifics. “Some people find such information oddly comforting, but others are thrown into unnecessary panic and distress, so it’s best left unsaid,” he explained.

 One the final new moon in June, 2019, Max announced that his work was done, and that his spirit would leave his body on his second birthday on July 23. “Please don’t be sad about my leaving you. You have both been outstanding and understanding parents. I have loved you as you have both loved me. You have my permission to reveal all of my pronouncements to the world after I am gone, but only after each event has occurred. You see, the future cannot be altered or prevented. What you have both been given is a gift of sorts, a rare glimpse into what time, past-present-future, actually is. Just as there is entropy and decay, so is there eternal rebirth of all existence.”

 Those were the last words that Max Solomon spoke, for his final monthly hour was concluded. On his second birthday, to the minute, he breathed his last, as he had foretold – his small body caressed by his tearful mother and father.

 Over the coming years during the lifetimes of Will and Dori Solomon, every prediction that Max made came true. The Solomons revealed to the world the story of their remarkable son, the only boy they would ever have. They shared the videos and the notes of Max’s pronouncements -- both records having been carefully dated and placed in a Charlottesville bank safe deposit box, so that none could claim they had been altered in any way. Some skeptics called the whole affair an elaborate hoax, while others were convinced that this strange experience was both valid and possible.

 To this day, devoted pilgrims and the just plain curious visit the tiny grave of Max Solomon, 2017-2019, in a Charlottesville, Virginia cemetery, and pause and wonder…

 THE END

 by Jack Karolewski

 April 13, 2019