

## **High Holiday Message 2018**

When I agreed to take on the role of President, I realized that we are standing at the precipice, dancing our way delicately along the razor's edge. The tenuous bridge between where we are today and where we will end up in the future. While the time behind us has a rich history, I was once advised that yesterday ended last night at midnight, so we have only forward to go.

With that in mind, the future has the opportunity to become what we shape it to be. A wise man once said, "Our past does not determine our future."

We are all familiar with the Pew report that came out a few years ago...you all remember – the one that analyzed Jewish participation in belonging to a shul and impact on millennials. Looking back on that report, it was good, as it gave a snapshot on what is happening. It was not so good, however, in that it gave Conservative Judaism the excuse to stand behind on, what I will call, the failure to attract our young adults. This is not how it used to be.

There is a book that I have been recommending, Spencer Johnson's "Who Moved My Cheese?", a bestselling book with over 26 million copies sold and printed in 37 different languages. The book, in parable form, discusses the reaction when the mice and humans that live in a maze find out that when they go to the same spot for their cheese, and their cheese is no longer there.

I will not give away the story, as I do wish you all to read this book. The entire book is a quick read.

To be blunt, the membership numbers here at the JCCP/CBT have been trending downward. This is also reflected in the trending issues we have with the shortfall in our budget which you, the congregation, recently approved. We have placed ourselves in the position that we have been reliant upon a tenant to balance our budget; instead of being financially self-sufficient, with the tenant adding to our bottom line. I have heard all too often that we are a religious institution, not a business. When, in reality, we are a business whose business is religion. At the end of the day, if we cannot make ends meet, there will be no JCCP/CBT, regardless of whether we are perceived as a business or a religious institution. Did someone move our cheese and no one told us? Have we lost our mojo? Do we view the Pew report as an opportunity to point towards the future or as an excuse to hide behind as things continue to deteriorate?

I have a question for you: Who wants to see changes here (raise your hands)? Who here is willing to change, meaning each of you (raise your hands)?

For those that raised your hand on the second question – congratulations. You are the ones that realize that for the JCCP / CBT to change, **we** must change. Mahatma Gandhi is attributed with the saying, “Be the change you want see in the world.” The message is that change does not just happen; change has to start

with oneself, for if we strive towards those loftier goals, which it is good to have, others will see the example set and follow. We can move forward, but we must keep in mind that small changes over time will have a big impact...I will repeat this, because it is important: Small changes over time will have a big impact.

Leadership expert and author John C. Maxwell points out that if you are out front, where the leader should be, and you charge the mountain, when you get to the top and you turn around to find out no one followed you, all you have done is taken a hike. If the mountain represents our future tomorrows, for us to conquer that mountain and make it into the future, we must take the mountain together. If I alone stand at the top of the mountain, or am followed by only a few, I know what our tomorrows will bring and will plan accordingly to satisfy those alongside me.

60 years ago, it took more than one person's vision, it took more than one person's sweat and it took more than one person's persistence to plan and achieve the building we are in, this community and this religious institution. People have come up to me and said that it is up the young people to step up. At almost 56, in the JCCP/CBT, I am one of the young people, there are not many younger people behind me. The point is that if we stand around and wait for someone else to step up, if we wait for someone else to lend that hand, and if we wait to see if Hashem will provide a solution, guess what, we have already given up the dreams of our founders, the visions of the leaders since then and our own desires for the future here.

I cannot and will not do this alone. I believe that we have a great leadership team and great officers, but we cannot and will not do this by ourselves.

We need you.

**Get involved.** Together we can still be a great community. **Get involved.** Do not just complain and point out deficiencies, which we know about. **Get involved.** Together we can create the actions to point us to that brighter future. **Get involved.** The dreams, hopes and desires are still there and up to you to awaken them within yourselves. **Get involved.** Join a committee, they are looking for new people and new ideas. **Get involved.** And together, together, we can...we will take that mountain. **Get involved.** And tomorrow will be a brighter future.

From Debbie, Gabrielle, Rebecca, myself and the officers and board of the shul, I want to wish all a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

L'Shana Tova