

A Message from the Rabbi Yitzhak
September/October 2013

As many of you know, as of July 1st I have entered my final two years as your Senior Rabbi. I am now half time at TBI and half time discovering new possibilities for my creative energies. Shonna and I are having more time for family visits, travel and spending time together preparing for our future. While retirement is a term used broadly to describe this life transition, I prefer to think in terms of re-deployment, re-direction, re-creation or some yet undiscovered word that expresses my hope for continued meaningful service and living.

Of course I am not alone in experiencing this time of transition. Shonna has been my full and constant partner in sharing our love, care and energies for this community and I am so deeply grateful for all she has done and continues to do for our community and in so many ways as my life-partner.

As well as this personal dimension of transition, I know that our community also has a collective awareness of the importance of this time we have entered. Many of you have spoken with me about your questions regarding TBI's future. I am excited for the possibilities that our community will now have for refreshing vision and revitalizing communal energies in this time of important transition.

In these two years of shifting into the honor of becoming our congregation's Rabbi Emeritus, I want to do all I can to strengthen our community and to help us inventory our strengths and challenges for the future. As I gently make my personal evolution I also want our TBI community gracefully and successfully to move forward defining its needs for future leadership and its overall vision for the future.

I am very aware of the many abilities of our members, which gives me great confidence in the future of our congregation. One aspect of communal life that I am particularly aware of and excited about is the prayer life of our community. Our Shabbat services have become over the years a time and place for profound renewal of the spirit for the many people who participate. Several of the regular participants have developed wonderful prayer leadership skills and knowledge. I have been working with our Tefillah u'Minhag (Religious Affairs) Committee and Board toward creating a Prayer Leadership Team to honor the abilities of these community members, to provide assistance to my very capable Associate Rabbi Boris Dolin, and to honor the age-old Jewish understanding that prayer is the domain of every Jew, not solely the domain of clergy.

I am so proud of the people who have year after year deepened their understanding of our prayer traditions and have maintained the vital spiritual core of our community.

I will be working with Rabbi Boris and the Tefillah u'Minhag Committee to invite capable individuals to become members of this team and they will take on new levels of responsibility for organizing Shabbat morning services as a starting point. Everyone who wishes to participate will have a welcome pathway for learning and practicing the necessary skills to join this team.

During my times away from TBI it has been wonderful for me to have such confidence in the leadership that Rabbi Boris provides in my absence, the great abilities that our Executive Director Nina Korican brings to keep us well organized, and the enthusiastic spirit that so many of you demonstrate in taking up responsibility for whatever is needed to care for and maintain the well-being of our Kehilat Kodesh, our Sacred Community.

Let us move forward together into our new time of discovery and let us all awaken to its wonderful possibilities as we renew our deepest spiritual life during these Days of Awe.

May you all be blessed with a Shana Tova u'Metuka, a Sweet New Year.