

From The Rabbi



On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, I quoted these words from the Book of Leviticus:

**Lo taamod al dam re-echa
Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow**

I then interpreted these words to mean:

If you witness someone in trouble, you are obligated to help him or her. We have no right to turn a blind eye to others who are in need. In Judaism there is no such thing as a bystander. If you witness something that is wrong, you are obligated to reach out in compassion and help.

I acknowledged that with all of the great programs and activities on our congregation's agenda, Conservative Judaism is alive and well in North East Queens. However, I then asked the question:

What are we doing as a congregation to do our part to address issues that are plaguing our society and weighing on our minds.

I announced a new initiative that would put social justice onto the agenda of our synagogue in a meaningful way. I invited anyone who was interested in being part of this initiative to let me know and that immediately after the holidays I would begin to work on this effort. I am happy to report that a number of people have spoken to me and I am compiling a list of people who will become part of the new Community Organizing team that we are forming.

On Chol HaMoed Sukkot I had two meetings with two different community organizing specialists who guided me to take the first step in this initiative. This is to reach out to the clergy in our area, get them on board and to reach out to members of their congregations to become part of the team. Once all the clergy are on board and interested members of the congregations are identified, a meeting with a community organizer will be held. At this first meeting, the social action issue to be addressed by our community will be identified and we will begin the training of the team that will empower us to roll up our sleeves and begin to work on fixing a part of our world that is broken. Possible items for our agenda could be: Gun Violence, Racial Inequality, Global Warming, Election Reform.

If you are interested in being part of this team, please let me know as soon as possible so that you can be invited to the initial meeting that will take place either at the end of November or the beginning of December.

The year 5777 has begun at Congregation L'Dor V'Dor with a great deal of positive energy and I am looking forward to all that we have planned for this month. Please take some time to read this edition of Temple Talk, mark your calendar and make plans to join us!

Rabbi Gordon Yaffe