

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

Rabbi Jay Perlman

Tenth Anniversary Celebration

May 2014

To say that Emily and I are overwhelmed by this evening and this weekend would be an understatement. We can hardly believe that ten years have passed since we first arrived here in Needham.

And while it was that many thought that our move from St. Louis to Boston had everything to do with making *aliyah* to Red Sox Nation, the truth of the matter is that we came here for a completely different reason: We came because of you.

Emily and I were just starting out on our own life journey together. Liana wasn't even two. And Jonah "wasn't even." And we were looking for a community with whom to raise our family... to create friendships ... to experience the richness and beauty of Jewish life... and to share our lives.

The people of Beth Shalom moved us immediately. Here we found individuals, couples, and families dedicated to heartfelt care and concern for others – a hallmark of this congregation from its very beginning. Here we found a community that saw itself as being on a journey of the spirit --- people inspired to bring meaning and joy to their lives through Jewish celebration, learning, outreach... dance... and song. Here we found a unique warmth... and goodness... that had been kindled by dedicated leaders... sustained by the people who were here... and thoughtfully shared by a wonderful Rav... Rabbi Sonsino.

And so it was, that from the beginning, we knew that in Temple Beth Shalom we had found a new home. In a very real way... you had us at "Hello."

Affirming over the years has been the fact that our community mission of growing in *menschlichkeit*...of nurturing and inspiring souls... and of being transformative through word and deed... has resonated so deeply with so many. Our congregation is vibrant and growing because people see and sense that together, we are creating something very special --- and something so very much needed in our world today: a community of meaning... a place where relationships are authentic and genuine... a link to something eternal... a source of solace and hope and strength.

Indeed, there is much happiness and pride to be found in the fact that our congregation is bursting at the seams -- brimming with energy -- and bringing together all ages and life stages.

What we are doing is making a profound difference.
What we are doing is nurturing and inspiring souls.

No wonder we continue to be inspired to imagine and innovate... craft and create.
No wonder we continue to be moved to share our life journeys with one another.
And it is no wonder that we need a new physical home. One that will hold us and help us to fulfill our holy mission.

The exciting journey that we have shared during these past ten-plus years has been one of sacred partnership. And Emily, Liana, Jonah, and I are so deeply grateful to all of you.

Thank you for inviting us to be part of your...and your family's lives.

Thank you to all of the wonderful lay leaders who offer of their hands, hearts, and time to guide us along our way. A special word of thanks to all of our Beth Shalom Past Presidents – most especially those who have been beloved partners with me since my arrival: Mark, Peggy, Jonathan, Beth, and Michael.

Thank you to the beyond-outstanding and dedicated staff of our community – all of our educators... clergy... administrative professionals and leadership... and our custodial team. A very special thank you to Rabbi Sonsino and Ines... for your continued love for this community and for your friendship... And to Rabbi Todd... my “partner in rabbinic crime”... and, of course Michele... for ALL that you do... and all that you are!

Thank you to all those who made this weekend possible: Co-Chairs: Mark & Margery... Peggy & Andy... Carol & Jonathan

And to committee partners: Sydney & David... Jillian & Joe... Ina & Ron... Margie & Alan... Lisa... Debbie and Jeff... Carolyn... Florence... and Tricia.

Thank you to my family for being here and for all of their love and support: My mom and my brother, Josh and sister-in-law Carol... and to Emily's parents, Melanie and Jerry.

And Emily, I want to thank you... the love and light of all that I am... my true partner in all that I do. I wouldn't be who I am without you. I love you.

Lastly, thank you for all that we do together to make our community shine with such blessed brightness.

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech HaOlam... Shehecheyanu V'kiymanu V'higyanu
Laz'man HaZeh.*

Blessed are You, Holy One – for giving us life... sustaining us... and enabling us to reach this special, special time. Amen.