

## Shalom L'Kulam (Peace, Everyone),

I keep all my electronic materials in file folders in the cloud and, in the case of my newsletter submissions, I number them so that they are filed in chronological order. Not exactly sure why I do that – I'm pretty sure it is a holdover from my time working as an engineer in Detroit when we had an intricate naming protocol for thousands of files – but it makes it awfully handy to see how many I've written. And, drumroll please ... this is my 50<sup>th</sup> newsletter article since arriving at Temple Sinai. That doesn't translate into 50 months, on account of a couple of double issues around the calendar cycle, but still a milestone that feels significant – I suppose because the number ends in a "0".

I don't manage to do it for everyone all the time but Jayne, in the office, puts significant birthdays of congregants on my calendar so that I can try to call and wish you blessings from Temple Sinai. We're encouraged to assign added significance to those birthdays that end in "0" ... again, I'm not entirely sure why, but I know that humans need those opportunities to mark the passage of time.

This is nothing new to humans; the framers of our tradition have been creating them for millennia. We have rituals celebrating the emergence of new human life, b'nai mitzvah, weddings, and funerals. We even have the traditional "2<sup>nd</sup> Bar Mitzvah." In the Mishnah, we learn that the rabbis found 70 years to represent a full life. That makes sense, considering the life expectancy 1800 years ago. Anything beyond that was "bonus time." Thirteen years into that bonus life and it was a chance to celebrate again, so 83 years old is the time to celebrate. In fact, come to Temple Sinai on April 27 to see **Marty Roth** and **Dick Fierstein** celebrate that very moment in their lives ... born 83 years ago, only one day apart!

More recently, as modern therapy has explained the human experience more thoroughly, we have been challenged to think about other milestones that do not, yet, have expression in our tradition. We live through highs and lows which are not found in the prayer book, but modern liturgists (including your rabbi) create ways to use Judaism's wisdom to guide us through them. There is no Talmudic ritual for retirement from a career. We have no traditional way to express our feelings when our children "leave the nest." And what about the hard times in our lives – when we lose a job, receive a poor diagnosis or face the pain of betrayal?

If you've been living through something that feels significant – positive or otherwise – there just may be a way that Judaism can help you mark it. Publicly or privately, we need those mechanisms. Give me a call and let's talk about what is happening for you. Even if we decide no ritual is needed, sharing the experience with another person allows us to continue to build our *Kehillah Kedoshah* – a Sacred Community of people who are there for each other.

In the meantime, I'm already thinking about what I'll write for my 100<sup>th</sup> newsletter article!

*L'shalom, In Peace*

*Jay TelRav*