

## RABBI'S RESPONSA

**Shalom LiKulam** (Peace Everyone),

I was speaking with one of you this week and you told me you'd been at the hospital in Greenwich for eleven days... "What?!?" I said. "How did I not know about that? Why didn't you call the temple?" And then came the response that is like nails on a chalkboard to a rabbi, "I know you're busy, Greenwich is far and **I didn't want to bother you.**" I said, "Bother me? You know this is, literally, what I do?"

In order to avoid this sort of thing happening again, it seemed to me that I might want to go ahead and provide you with a handy-dandy, When-To-Call-Your-Rabbi instruction sheet.

You should definitely call your rabbi when:

- You're feeling down or particularly challenged and don't want to talk about it with your family members, your friends or your therapist.
- You aren't sure what you think about God. Alternatively, you are sure what you think about God and you'd like to tell me about it.
- A loved one is either not long for this world or has just died and you're not sure what to do next.
- You're in a conflict with someone and you recognize that you can't figure it out alone. You might come in with them or alone but don't come looking for a "yes man" whose only goal is to make you feel better. I was trained by some phenomenal teachers at HUC who taught me to listen carefully and to speak truth in a way that is kind and, hopefully, helpful.
- You want to understand something Judaic that you're embarrassed to admit you don't know (or don't remember). I promise, no judgment.
- You want to discuss the way my interpretation of Jewish texts and traditions can/should be applied to today's world. We can talk personal ritual practice, societal values or politics but, if I'm not on the bimah, and because we're discussing for the higher purpose of understanding each other, I will share my honest political feelings.
- You see some way in which Temple Sinai could better meet your needs or have some ideas about what we could be doing differently. Most of what works best at Sinai came from suggestions from you.
- You have **simchas (happinesses)** you want to share with us. There are plenty of reasons to feel down these days – everyone enjoys good news!
- You saw something scientifically cool last night on the Discovery Channel and you want to see how I think it fits into the religious teachings about the Universe.

You definitely should not call your rabbi when:

- You had committed to reading Torah for Rosh Hashanah and the week before, you realize you just haven't had time to get to it. **(None of you have done that yet)**
- You want to know the times of services or other Sinai programs. **(And please don't text me, either.)** You can find all of that information on our amazing new website or using the brand new

Temple Sinai Stamford app – available wherever you find your apps.

☒ You're moving out of town to be closer to the grandchildren and are resigning from the temple...I take these really personally and may get a little emotional about our community's loss.

☒ You are just home from a stay in the hospital and you didn't want to bother me! **(OK, you should still call because better late than never, but be prepared for me to scold you gently for not calling sooner!)**

I'm looking forward to speaking to each of you soon enough ... hopefully for one of the positive, life-affirming reasons to call but, even if you've just begun a stay in the hospital, call anyway.

Rabbi Jay TelRav