

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

### JOURNEYS OF EXPECTATIONS

It's summertime, and according to the George Gershwin song, "the living is easy." School is out, and many have vacation time. In the United States, more travelling happens during the summer than in any other time of the year. Some people spend months planning their summer travels. Others may make more spontaneous arrangements and still others plan to stay home and relax. For some, the summer is hardly a vacation, as the work week continues year round...and of course, for those in travel-related businesses, the summer can be even more hectic than other times of the year.

I was thinking about all the anticipation that goes into summer travels, and recalling trips that either met or exceeded expectations. I also recall many trips in which I needed a vacation from the vacation! Did you ever plan one of those trips that was going to be JUST PERFECT, and a few little hiccups changed everything? Sometimes, no matter how much we plan, the unexpected can make drastic changes in the experience.

Compare our modern travel experiences with the ultimate journey: the Israelites' trek through the wilderness in search of the Promised Land. They had almost no time to prepare, and didn't even know how long the journey would last. Unexpected challenges faced them at every corner; lack of food or water, rebellions, hostile neighbors and the challenge of accepting a new way of life after receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. Some questioned the very idea of leaving Egypt and wanted to return to the hard, but predictable lifestyle of slavery. Many were fearful as they approached the Promised Land, as 10 out of 12 scouts reported the land was too dangerous to inhabit. But the two scouts, Joshua and Caleb, who reported excitement and confidence, were able to inspire the rest of the nation. The people also had to face the fact that Moses, the leader who had guided them all the way, helped establish procedures and interpret God's words, was not going to accompany them to the new land; but they also had confidence in the new leader, Joshua.

We just finished the holiday of Shavuot, in which we remember receiving the Ten Commandments. Once the Israelites received the Law, they knew they had a long journey ahead of them before their new start in a new land. In another three months, we will begin the journey of a New Year, with all the excitement and expectation that comes with it. There may be unexpected challenges along with exciting surprises. Whatever the New Year brings, we can remember how Joshua and Caleb, with their optimism and enthusiasm, helped our journey into the Promised Land have a great start.

I am very excited about sharing 5776 with all of you, and know that Temple Beth Torah is at the edge of a great New Year.

*Rabbi Dan Gordon*

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