

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

### *Transitions*

The High Holy Days are a perfect time to think about transitions. Beyond moving from one year to the next, we experience a variety of transitions. It is a new school year, a new season, and an opportunity to begin all things anew. The cyclical nature of our calendar means that endings and beginnings merge with each other. We blend the joy of newness with memories of the past. On Simchat Torah, we finish reading the last lines of Deuteronomy, knowing that immediately follows the story of creation in Genesis that brings us full circle.

Both minor and major transitions affect us in different ways. The seasons change predictably, but sometimes severe weather causes important adjustments to life. Changing jobs, developing new relationships, shifting family structures, moving into a new home, etc.; every life event stimulates new experiences and responses. Rosh Hashana encourages us to remember how fresh beginnings can motivate our dedication to re-creating our personal world and the world around us, enhancing how we embrace life and the people in our lives. Each year, we grow older. For the young, that growth often involves increased vigor and responsibility. The transitions from childhood to adolescence to adulthood are filled with learning how to make a unique contribution to the world. For elders, the growth can inspire a different awareness. Aging encourages us to look back on life's accomplishments and experiences, while being mindful of new limitations. Maturity adds to our wisdom, but sometimes also diminishes our bodily strength. The challenge of managing change is a big part of growing from year to year.

Yom Kippur includes *Yizkor*, when we remember those who have who have transitioned into *Olam Ha-Ba*, the world to come. It is a time to consider the impact dear ones have had on our lives, and what impact we can make in the coming year. A new year is an exciting moment to embrace challenges and opportunities of personal growth and development at every age.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, (1930-2021), who died from COVID-19 last year, was a Hasidic rabbi and also psychiatrist who specialized in treating addictions and chemical dependency. He wrote dozens of scholarly guides, most of which connected Jewish teachings with managing everyday challenges. Several of his books utilized characters from Charles Schultz' *Peanuts* to help teach important lessons. I remember seeing a cartoon of Charlie Brown and Snoopy sitting on a dock. Charlie Brown says to his dog, "We only live once, Snoopy." Snoopy's thought balloon responds, "Wrong! We only die once. We *live* every day!"

A New Year reminds us that each day is precious; a time to welcome the growth and opportunities that come with change.

Transitions can be subtle or dramatic. Together, let's move into the New Year with an excitement for all our new prospects.

L'shalom and Shana Tova!

*Rabbi Dan Gordon*

