

President's Message March 2007

### **THE DEATH OF A CONGREGATION**

What was here before you were? What was here when you needed it to educate your children? What was here when you needed a place to say Kaddish for your loved ones? What was here when you needed a place to attend a High Holiday service? What was here when you simply needed a friend, or someone to be with you during a time of trouble?

The answer is our temple, the Jewish Center of Northwest Jersey.

I am quite concerned for the future of our temple.

I am seeing a trend where people, after the children have been confirmed, feel that they do not need the temple anymore. They do not come to the bi-weekly Shabbat services and they become twice-a-year Jews. They still belong to the temple, but do not participate anymore. After that happens for a while, then they give up their membership.

This behavior will lead to the death of the synagogue, unless many new young families move in and take over running the temple while their children are here.

I believe we have a responsibility as Jews to make sure that the temple is a vital and functioning organization. We need to do it, simply because someone did it for us. The founders of our temple, 60 years ago, made sacrifices so that there would be this shining example of Judaism. I have heard from people a reason why they do not continue their membership in the temple: "We do not come any more." I offer two suggestions: first, come and be part of the congregation. If there are things that you would like to see happen, then help us make them happen. Second, remain members for the greater good of Judaism. We are always stronger when we are united. When we are separated, we are weaker. If you know someone who has left the temple because it does not help them in the present, but has helped them in the past, remind them of their obligation to continue the Jewish tradition. It was passed from their ancestors, but it also needs to be passed on through the community. In Warren County and the immediate environs, we can feel very alone out here, and we need and depend on every one of us to make this congregation work.

Please work to keep this community alive and vibrant.

Shalom for now,  
Howie