

## President's Message December 2007

I thoroughly enjoyed [Rabbi Lewis' discussion of A. J. Jacobs' book](#) in last month's Journal. I will now go way over my head (and knowledge) and take some positions based upon my interpretation of the Torah. Mr. Jacob's would prefer to treat the Torah as the unconditional "word of God," and show the logical fallacies that emanate from that position. I prefer to follow liberal Judaism's interpretation of Deuteronomy 5:26 as granting humans free will to interpret and follow or not follow God's commands.

Most of my career, I have been in the so-called service business. Mainly producing ideas (in reality reams and reams of paper), and not a product. My interpretation of several Torah passages has been instrumental in my ability to integrate this ancient sacred text into my everyday life and decisions that I make. Exodus 18:17-23 is loosely interpreted by me to mean that I do not have to do everything myself. In my family, I hope to work as a team, and perhaps even more so in my professional work. I have no problem having someone work with me (or for me) who is much smarter than I am. In fact, I seek out those individuals. I am lucky to have such individuals on our Temple's Board of Directors!

Of course, the Ten Commandments have a lot to say how we should conduct our lives. We remind ourselves of them when we enter our sanctuary, as they are encapsulated on our left wall facing the bima. Most liberal Jews, and certainly I, would not want the Ten Commandments to be displayed in a secular public building. First of all, there are 603 other commandments, some of which should also be given "equal time" to the Ten Commandments. Also, in my opinion, it diminishes their importance in our lives if they are publicly displayed in secular and/or governmental buildings.

Our lift is one of the most important improvements in our Temple since I have been a member. I hope to live long enough to need to use it. We have had several guests at the Jewish Center who could not have attended Bar/Bat Mitzvahs without it. However, if there was ever a heated discussion in the Center, where not everyone agreed, this was it. Once more, the Torah made it clear to me the path to take. Leviticus 19:14 and Deuteronomy 27:18 clearly indicate that impediments should be minimized that impair one with disabilities (which all of us have).

I know I am beginning to sound a little "preachy," and to that issue I would quickly say that people will have other interpretations of these passages. I am very comfortable with that, and in fact that is part of free will too. Not everyone's free will results in the same interpretations and actions. However, most institutions, including our Temple, need to find a consensus, and move forward. I am glad we have done that.

Shalom,

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