

March 28<sup>th</sup> 2008

Shabbat Shalom, a Good Shabbos to you all. I look forward to shortly being back at Beth Jacob and greeting and addressing each of you in person but until then, this medium will have to suffice.

Thank you! Natalie and I feel very honored by the trust that you have placed in us and the warmth with which you have enveloped us. We look forward to settling in for a long and productive tenure here at our new home in Beth Jacob.

This week’s parsha, Shmini, begins on the eighth day of the Miluim, the consecration of the Mishkan Tabernacle. Until this point, Moshe had been performing the avodah, the Divine service, but now Aharon Hakohen was about to take over. Moshe had to tell him: “Draw close to the altar!” As Rashi explains: Aharon felt embarrassed and hesitant to assume the leadership position of Kohen Gadol, the High Priest. Moshe reassured him: For this you have been chosen!

We feel truly humbled and honored by the position of leadership that you have chosen for us. Humbled by the great expectations that are accompanying our arrival and honored by the trust, faith and hope that has been placed in us. We ask you to join us in our t’filah that Hashem will grant us the necessary strength, wisdom, energy, insight and siyatta dishmaya {heavenly assistance} to accomplish our goal of bringing Beth Jacob to the next level in regard to unity, strength and vibrancy.

But we can’t do it alone.

The renowned conductor, Arturo Toscanini had a perfect sense of musical pitch. Once, he and students listened to a tape of a symphony orchestra. They performed a piece of music Toscanini was familiar with and he knew that it called for fourteen violins.

A few minutes into the concert Toscanini shouted, “It’s off!” To the student it sounded fine but the master conductor was distraught. He explained that only thirteen violins were playing. The student could hardly believe that the absence of one violin could be perceived even by such an artist. But when they researched the tape, they discovered that sure enough, that evening, only thirteen violins had played. The fourteenth was absent.

I graciously and humbly accept the honor and responsibility of conducting the beautiful symphony that is Beth Jacob. With the efforts and participation of each and every one of you, I am confident that the beauty of our compositions will rise to the highest points of the heavenly sphere.

We cherish and value the involvement of each and every violin and are awed by the beautiful symphony that we can become.

Thank you, thank you, thank you and may we all go mai’chayil l’chayil, from strength to strength.

Good Shabbos,  
Rabbi Yisroel Ciner