



## From the Rabbi's Study

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This Message is adapted from Rabbi Portnoy's address at the Consecration of the new Shule

*Hodu lashem ki tov ki leolam chasdo* – As we celebrate Pesach in our beautiful new Shule, we give thanks to the Almighty for all that has been achieved.

Our Rabbis teach-us that we should always be in the driving seat *Da meayin bata ulean ata holech* - know from where you have come and where you are going to . This doesn't only apply to individuals but to communities as well.

*Da meayin Bata*.....we have emerged from small beginnings in 1976 with the vision of our Founders to whom I pay tribute today, *ulean ata holech* ....and we continue our journey through this wonderful landmark in the life of our community by the sheer determination of its current leadership!

This Yom Tov we must express our thanks firstly to our President Anthony Thwaites who, together with Rosalind, has demonstrated untiring dedication to our building programme during what has clearly been a most demanding presidency.

In the spirit of *Acharon acharon chaviv* - that one leaves the most important until last, we must acknowledge that our stunning new Shule simply could not have been built without the supreme energy of one man Terry Krell who, with his 'Rebbetsin' Hilary, by his side really must take credit for the great achievement manifest in our entire new complex.

May the Almighty bless them both and treat them *midah k'neged midah* – measure for measure - rewarding them with circumstances through which they will see *banim uv'nei banim* – children and grandchildren *oskim baTorah uv'mitsvot* – steeped in their Jewish heritage.

I must confess to feeling proud of what our kehilla has achieved! The Shule in which we sit now is a fine example of what can be done through many individuals making their unique contribution to a united whole, just like the letters in a *Sefer Torah* or the many parts in an orchestral score. That is after all, what *Kehilla* is all about. There are other words for community such as *Eida*, *Tsibbur*, but with the Almighty's help *Kehilla* - a group of people united through common purpose - is what we have become, with warmth, friendship and growing spirituality somehow manifest in the very fabric of our new Shule.

Parashat Shemini, which coincided with completion of the building, deals with the *shivat y'mei hamiluim* – the seven full days of the inauguration service of the *Mishkan* - the portable sanctuary in the wilderness.

At the end of this period the Children of Israel wanted to know why the *shechinah* – the Divine Presence - was not yet manifest in the *Mishkan* – it was still a building site! Moshe responded by explaining that Divine Presence would dwell there only after his brother Aron's performance of the Divine Service for the first time. Consider this - Moshe was telling the people that only after they carried out G-d's command would they benefit from His Divine Presence. This is a concept fundamental to Jewish faith and, indeed, to our community as we celebrate freedom, this Pesach, in our new Shule - that first a Jew must dedicate himself to obeying the will of G-d and then untold benefit will be the consequence of that dedication.

As we sit down to the Seder this year, let us resolve to fill our new Shule complex with spirituality through prayer, the learning of Torah and a host of daily Jewish activity.

May all the prayers that we utter in our beautiful new abode be answered for our kehillah, for the people of Israel, especially those living in Eretz Yisrael, and indeed for the whole of humanity until the time when *lo yisa goy el goy cherev velo yilmedu od milchamah* – when nation shall not lift up sword against nation and no nation shall know war anymore.

*Ruthie and the children join me in wishing you a Pesach Kasher Ve'Sameyach – a Happy and Kosher Pesach*