

# Farewell Tribute to Rabbi Shalom Plotkin

(In the recent Beth El Megillah newsletter, Rabbi Shalom Plotkin wrote a touching farewell message to the congregation. "I believe this will be my last Megillah message as your pulpit rabbi. . . As I write this in early May, I am in the uncertain position of not knowing where I'll be called to serve next." Rabbi Plotkin wrote that it was an honor to have served the congregation for the

past seven years, and that he will "take lots of great memories and lessons with me to my next rabbinic endeavor." Beth El's Men's Club and Sisterhood is sponsoring a special Kiddush in honor of Rabbi Plotkin's 7 years of service to the synagogue on Shabbat morning, July 18. - See Howard Berger's Honorable Menschen column on Page 10)

By Rabbi Gordon L. Geller  
Temple Emeth Shalom



Rabbi Gordon L. Geller



Rabbi Shalom Plotkin

I had penned this message at Lag B'Omer time, enlivened by picnic celebrations recounting the heroic exploits of inspired teachers like the ancient Talmudic great, Rabbi Akiba. Akiba, in storied days of yore, braved cruel oppression to teach enlightened Torah in opposition to the accepted Roman party line. Thankfully, today as well, do we benefit from the courageous free-thinking of supremely talented teachers such as the proud feminist, Anna Quindlen, who is heroically stepping aside - at the top of her journalistic game - to make room for a newly budding generation of word smiths and aspiring social critics.

In a similar fashion, but from a much more local and personal perspective, another fearless rabbi-teacher and social activist role model (especially toward the elderly and disabled as well as the poor and

downtrodden) will soon be stepping down from his Margate pulpit. Our community's irreparable loss will prove to be the priceless gain of Rabbi Shalom Plotkin's new congregation.

My tenure of more than two decades has witnessed a goodly number of other colleagues of immense ability rotate in and out of the town. Why then do I single out Rabbi Plotkin for special mention? Primarily, I believe, because one to whom much is given, much is owed. Since our two shuls are near neighbors - both

proximate to the newly refurbished JCC - following my serious heart attack, several years back, Reb Shalom persistently cajoled me into the gym I had never set foot into for more than a dozen years. He then acted as a patient and painstaking physical trainer and motivational coach for crucial rehabilitation exercises I might very probably never have undertaken on my own. Ever since, we have grown close together, as personal and professional confidantes, undertaking a slew of joint projects, both Jewish and ecumenical, from building an Indian Orphanage - due to a deadly tsunami - to the projected A.C. Boardwalk Holocaust Memorial.

As a result, we have been dubbed by some JCC regulars as their rabbinic dynamic duo. Because just as Reb Shalom's boundless energy, unflagging enthusiasm, and undimmed idealism have continually provided the spiritual wind

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NASO

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Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25

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