

Threat and Opportunity

A couple of weeks ago I discussed with the Shabbat congregation a feature I had seen in The Forward. A panel of rabbis was asked, "What is the greatest threat facing the Jewish people today?"

Before distributing the panel's responses, I put this question to those assembled. If you were not there yourself, take a moment to think about your response.

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Ready? What's your answer?

Several people in the congregation joined with a number of the rabbis in answering that the greatest threat to us is apathy. But one rabbi's way of expressing this was both astonishing and, at first glance, comical.

Rabbi Gil Student wrote, "Jews don't fight enough." Really?! Aren't we famous for fighting or, at least, arguing? Disputation—always for a divine purpose—is a hallowed mode of Jewish communication, especially for the purpose of clarifying issues and getting to the truth. Ever since Abraham questioned God's imminent destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, we've been arguing with God and with each other.

Student continued, "A wise man once said the the opposite of love isn't hate, but indifference. Too many Jews care passionately about a variety of important issues, but not about Judaism and the Jewish community. The Jewish community loses out when these bright, energetic people tune out."

I think he's got a point. So go back and think: What is there in Jewish activity, ideas and/or spirituality that you

_____ care most about? What is there in Judaism that you are passionate about?

I've got two more questions for you:

- What can our Temple do to help you express your caring, better than we are already doing?
- How are you willing to share your passion for Judaism with others?

I would be happy to hear your answers, and I think our board members would, also. So share with us.

The festival of (הַכּוּנָה only one correct way to spell it!) begins on the evening of December 12. The word means "dedication." This season is the perfect opportunity to voice your Jewish passions, and find ways to fulfill them.

Happy הַכּוּנָה!

Rabbi Paul Tuchman

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