

# Rabbi Sharff's Reflections

With the celebration of Passover just over the horizon, and my wanderings in the desert rapidly coming to an end, I find myself spending more time thinking about some of



my experiences in the Southwest. Two years ago, I had the pleasure of traveling to San Diego to the Union for Reform Judaism's Biennial Convention. It was an eye opening experience studying and worshipping with over five thousand Reform Jews using the Mishkan Tefillah.

Amidst the conversations, dialogues and sessions, one of the overarching elements I noticed was the ever-increasing use of technology by those in attendance. This included palm

pilots, BlackBerrys, blogs and video projection, including the "Torah-cam," all reflecting our need to connect the twenty-first century with thousands of years of our traditions and values.

Many of our ancient texts are now available on CD-Rom both in Hebrew and in translation. What used to take up entire bookshelves can now take up just a few inches of desk space. One can get 10 Minutes of Torah emailed to work and home, and a drash is now just a mouse click

away or just as easily found on your iPhone or Netbook. You can even receive weekly 'tweets' explaining the parasha in 140 characters or less.

Yet for all of its wonders, technology remains only a tool in connecting both with our heritage and with one another. For example, a weekly interpretation of the Torah portion is only relevant if one takes the time to read it and bring its lessons to life. A CD-Rom of Talmud that sits on the desk helps as much as a collection that sits solitary on a bookshelf.

Our Rabbis believed and continue to believe that Torah is a living, breathing, growing entity, waiting for us to become engaged. It is to be constantly explored and studied as well as cherished, but only if we take the time to do so.

Our technology has assisted our lives in many ways but has also made us busier than every. One can now be reached 24/7, which in turn takes away our ability to cherish that which is most important in our lives, namely family, tradition and shared customs and values.

My prayer for us is that as we find new technological ways to make our heritage accessible, may we also find new ways to also continue to hold onto what we hold most dear. For our technology may becoming increasingly disposable, but our heritage will always be eternal.

## Havdalah at Home: New Membership Committee Initiative

Har Sinai's Membership Committee is beginning to sponsor monthly Havdalas hosted in the homes of our members. We hope that everyone will join in and look forward to this becoming an ongoing event. We thank Cheryl and Michael Goldsmith, Mark and Mindy Leiner and Ellen and Harry Snyderman for offering to host our first few Havdalas. If you would want to open your home to a group of families at the close of Shabbat, please let us know. The host family chooses a group of members to invite to its home for a clergy-led Havdalah, light refreshments and good conversation. Please contact Membership Chair, Sheryl Jacobs, at [sheryljacobs@comcast.net](mailto:sheryljacobs@comcast.net) or (410) 363-8560 if you would like to host a Havdalah at Home.



Cantor Ellen leads us in wishing farewell to Shabbat at February's Havdalah at Home

