



Shir Tikvah
שיר תקווה

Shabbat Tazria-Metzora 5777 /April 28, 2017

Dear Shir Tikvah:

The sun is out. Minnehaha Creek is flowing. The birds have returned. The sky is blue.

As spring arrives and the tulips burst forth from the earth, the last thing we are thinking about is Yom Kippur! And yet, five months from today, we will gather together and we will stand before God and the congregation and ask one another for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a spiritual practice, one we must engage in regularly. Given how beautiful, fabulous, fractured, and complex we humans are, each of us has caused hurt and each of us has been hurt. Five months before Yom Kippur is a beautiful opportunity to think about someone you may have hurt, either inadvertently or intentionally. Consider the rebirth of spring an opportunity to set things right: Go to them, acknowledge wrong doing, ask their forgiveness, and make a sincere commitment to refrain from the hurtful behavior in the future.

If you are fortunate enough to have someone come to you seeking forgiveness: pause, listen, and try to accept their ask of forgiveness. It can be a powerful gift-not merely for them, but for yourself, to lay down the burden of the hurt, to open our hearts like the earth opens for new growth this spring.

Forgiveness is hard work-and it is vitally important for our individual spiritual well being and the health and vitality of our communities. Forgiveness is good for the soul.

As we prepare for Shabbat, I pray for us all a true season of healing and forgiveness.

Shabbat Shalom,
Michael