

Cantor Rita Glassman
First Sermon, Friday July 1 2022

The renowned playwright William Shakespeare, in his play Romeo and Juliet, wrote the famous line “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.” From a Jewish perspective we can say that there is quite a lot in a name. In our precious Torah, names can mean one thing, and a name that is changed can tell a whole different story. A spiritual mentor of mine once said “Your name is the sound that carries your life’s dream.” Which brings me to the name of my new congregation-Temple Israel of New Rochelle. A good solid name. The TEMPLE, the Mishkan, the place of assembly where so much of meaning, heart and connection happens. A Temple -where people from all walks of life, all ages, all genders, people of faith come together to pray, to study, to celebrate, to mourn, to grieve, to heal, to bring some measure of TIKKUN, REPAIR to this world. A Temple, a place where we are stronger together than we could ever be apart.

Then ISRAEL-the name given to our Patriarch, our ancestor Jacob, who long ago struggled with an angel in a dream, holding on for dear life until he was given a blessing. So Jacob/Yaakov “the Supplanter” becomes Yisrael- “the one who wrestles with God. “

Then there is the acronym TINR. It may not appear to have any hidden meaning, unless you see the letters in Hebrew form

(TAF, YUD, NUN, RESH) and we double the NUN. Two beautiful words emerge-TEYN NER (GIVE LIGHT).

Inside each one of us there is a light, something we can give and share with one another to bring something of beauty and joy to this community and the greater world . The NER TAMID, the flame that burns perpetually in the sanctuary can be a reminder of the flame that burns inside each of us and which can never really go out. It may need to be tended to, nurtured and rekindled at times, but it is that light that brings us together, strengthens us and makes us a real KEHILLAH K'DOSHAH, a sacred and inspired community.

I hope I will be a Cantor for you who will give and add light to the light that is already here-a light that surely has always been here. I pray that at Temple Israel of New Rochelle, TINR, the community of "TEYN NER", every member will know that their light-their unique gifts, creativity, knowledge, voice and participation is exactly the light we need in this moment and what Rabbi Jesse and I will always welcome with gratitude, with open arms and with open hearts.

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