

August 7, 2009

Shabbat Shalom!

Whether we realize it or not, there are always aspects of our lives which we could consider blessings for which we can be grateful. When I asked the campers in my mini-course at Crane Lake Camp about the blessings in their lives, these 8th-10th graders listed family, health, education, community, friends, a personal sense of morality, a home, food, freedom, books and love. Each of us should take a moment every day to create such a blessings list, at least in our minds (if not on paper), to reiterate the reasons we have to be thankful.

The Torah portion for this week, Ekev, includes a passage in Deuteronomy Chapter 8 that encourages us to be thankful for the blessings we enjoy: “The Eternal God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain to hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing. . . .When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Eternal your God for the good land given you.”

At the Temple Board meeting this past Wednesday, I asked our congregational leaders what they consider to be the blessings given to our community and how we can offer thanks for those blessings. Among the blessings they noted were friendships, music, a community in which we can all grow, programs we offer, the beautiful land on which Temple sits, children, opportunities for study with peers and colleagues, and social activities. Our Board members felt that we can show gratitude for these blessings through contributing to the community in some way, tzedakah/righteous giving, participation, volunteering, and bringing other people into our Temple circle.

I am sure you could add to this list that begins to express our essence as a congregation, but each of us can begin by expressing gratitude in a personal way. May we each find blessings around us and give thanks for them every day of our lives!

-- L'shalom, Rabbi Larry K.