



Shabbat Nachamu/12 Av 5777
August 4, 2017

Dear Shir Tikvah:

I returned from Jerusalem and my study at the Shalom Hartman Institute with a full heart, inspired to share the Torah I learned with you.

This week, at our first Rabbinic Team meeting together, Rabbi Rappaport, Rabbi Rosenberg, and I opened with these words from Israel Levinthal, written 90 years ago, in 1927:

"The Synagogue must be "shaul k'neged shamayim v'aretz." It must aim at uniting Heaven and Earth-the highest ideals of our religious life with the needs of our everyday worldly life-so that through "aretz," earthly activity, we may reach out into "shamayim" and touch the very dome of Heaven, and through the inspiration of our Heavenly ideals mold a better, nobler existence here."

What an inspiring and timely text! To be rabbis of a synagogue community whose very purpose and name is to courageously "Sing Hope!" into the world is a privilege for each of us. We are humbled by the task before us, grateful for this sacred opportunity, and are digging deep into the holy work of rabbinic leadership together.

Our Shir Tikvah synagogue was founded nearly three decades ago by Rabbi Stacy Offner and an intrepid, fearless, dedicated group of Jewish leaders who dreamed a new Jewish world into being: a community of vibrant prayer, inclusivity, compassionate justice, and animated Judaism. Today, Rabbis Rappaport, Rosenberg, and I are honored to serve as a spiritual leaders of this k'hilah k'doshah-holy community-and to engage in the blessed and challenging work of uniting heaven and earth in pursuit of a nobler existence.



Shabbat Shalom,

Michael