

July 2020 / Tammuz 5780

קהלה קדושה בית שמחת תורה

Dear CBST Members and Friends,

היום הרת עולם! Hayom harat olam! Today the world was born! We joyfully proclaim this every year on Rosh Hashanah, the first of the High Holy Days. Anticipation builds as the summer ends. For many of us, the High Holy Days frame a uniquely intimate and yet communal experience of G-d in our lives, unlike any other.

This year, we will celebrate, but this is a new world. We will not come together as we have year after year, decade upon decade, century on century. This year, we must find each other in prayer through cyberspace.

This year, we are outraged. The horrific, escalating corruption of our nation, reaching our borders and beyond, as the worst of the world's leaders step forward. Our nation staggers under assault from its toxic leadership. We are suffering through many plagues: COVID-19, economic crisis, police brutality, rising Jew hatred, racism, and a corrupt, self-serving White House. We need to reinforce our connection to our community and to G-d.

This year, our voices cry out. In prayer, our voices cry out. Masked face to masked face and through all media, our voices cry out. Across the nation, around the world, our voices cry out. Justice, justice, we cry out. Black Lives Matter, we cry out. Trans Lives Matter, we cry out. Immigrants Matter, we cry out. Through days of injustice, suffering, heartless murder, sad and senseless loss, our voices cry out. And in the night, our voices cry out.

This year, in prayer and song, in sacred time and space of the High Holy Days, we will cherish each other. In an atmosphere of blessing and love, with strangers and friends, we will make community, each of us yearning to release memories of our misdeeds and face the realities of life and our own mortal fragility. We need each other. We need to feel the presence and promise of holiness.

This year, we will continue our commitment to action as a bold spiritual community of resistance and love. We work to rescue the earth and its inhabitants, to fight the wanton cruelty of our most powerful officials, to generate safety and possibility for the most vulnerable and threatened among us. We protect the widow and the orphan, the refugee from across the oceans, the child at our southern border, the trans woman of color, the queer youth fleeing bigotry within their own home. We stand for the black citizen of our own country still facing racist brutality and violence. We stand against racism, queer-hatred, rising Jew-hatred, Islamophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia in the world. We stand here, strong and proud, and grateful for our diversity.

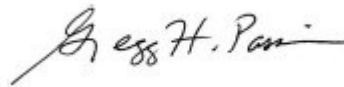
In moments when despair or fear or anger might overwhelm us, we do not give up—we act. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. As we fulfill our traditional responsibilities of *cheshbon nefesh* (self-assessment) and *teshuvah* (atonement), as we lay our souls bare before the Holy One, we sustain each other with music, courage and with joy, with expressions and reflections of hope. We are reminded, in sacred text, on the door handles of our synagogue and on its walls: It is good to give thanks. CBST will once again and always bring us the spiritual moment and strength to make a good and sweet new year. Together we say,

חַזַּק חַזַּק וְנִתְחַזַּק. Hazak hazak v'nithazek.

Be strong, be strong, and we shall be strengthened.



Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum
Senior Rabbi



Gregg H. Passin
Board President



Yolanda Potasinski
Executive Director