

The logo for our 70th anniversary shows a tree in full foliage with the letter *Ayin* (the Hebrew number 70), embedded in its trunk. I want to suggest that it is a carob tree:

One day, Honi the Circle Maker was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

The man replied, "Seventy years."

Honi then asked the man, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?"

The man answered, "Perhaps not. However, when I was born into this world, I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees."

Rabbi Harold and Suzette Kushner arrived in Natick in 1966. In 1978, when the Temple celebrated the "burning of the mortgage" by rededicating our current building, Rabbi Kushner reflected on the tasks that fell to Temple Israel's founders:

"The task of the first Jewish families in the town of Natick was clear but difficult: to establish a Jewish presence where none had existed before ... to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes of people who had never encountered a Jew outside the pages of their Bibles. These early families did that and more. They sank roots into the soil of Natick..."

Each successive generation has had to meet its own challenges: helping that fledgling congregation grow into a fully mature, fully staffed institution; maintaining the community's sense of warmth and intimacy even as it grew to over 500 families; and passing on to its children the love of Judaism and of Jewish life, in an increasingly complex and changing world. Each generation met those challenges by planting its own seeds, which continue to bear fruit for us today.

For almost 50 of those 70 years, Rabbi Harold S Kushner's leadership and vision have provided an anchoring presence, assuring us that continuity and creativity, tradition and change, are both compatible and necessary for a vibrant future. The many seeds he has planted in the minds and hearts of those of us who have benefited from his council, listened to his sermons and read his books, are too numerous to count. The fruit that will grow from them will continue to bring spiritual nourishment to generations to come!

Chazak Chazak,

Rabbi Dan Liben