WHY I AM NOT A FIRST ADOPTER – ANY MORE
Rabbi Dan Moskovitz – RHD2 5776

1. I do not have an Apple iWatch
    a. This surprises people because I am a techie
    b. I had a birthday this past week, it was a big one – it has a five in it
        i. I could have asked for a watch
        ii. I didn't – no that I don't want one – I kinda do
            1. But I don't because I have decided that I no longer want to be a first adopter
                a. I used to be, I have the first iPad, the first iPhone, I even had the first Mac
                    i. Pretty much apple has all my money
            2. But maybe with being older hopefully I have grown more mature.
                a. Not just in years but in patience.
                b. I have learned the value in waiting
                c. Letting someone else be the pioneer, blaze the trail, discover the bugs, deficiencies and problems.
    c. The Talmud teaches that at 5 you learn torah, at 20 you learn a trade, at 40 you learn understanding.
        i. I now understand that it is not always good to be first, sometimes in fact it is better to be second or third.
        ii. Yes nachshon was brave, he was the first of the Israelities into the parted waters of the sea of reeds.
        iii. But Sheldon was smart, he was the guy behind nachshon, who went in second – after waiting to make sure Nachson didn't drown.
2. This year the Reform Movement released a new machzor, Mishkan HaNefesh – the contain of the soul. It has been a decade long endeavor by some of the greatest rabbis and cantors in our reform movement.
    a. It has been covered on the pages of the NYT, reported on NPR and written about in in Jewish news papers coast to coast, north and south.
    b. It's a beautiful Machzor

    c. It's a needed machzor, sharing some of the many refinements and enhancements that made our new daily Prayerbook Mishkan T'filah such a welcome improvement over the Gates of Prayer.
    d. But we are not using it here at Temple Sholom, not yet, maybe in a few years
        i. I want to let all the other congregations, their rabbis and cantors test drive this new machzor.
        ii. Let them uncover where it raises us up and where it lets us down.
            1. They can work out the kinks, I'm in no hurry.
            2. As the great rabbis taught, if it ain't broke don't fix it.
3. But by the same token – few people ride horses to work any more. Just about everyone has a cellphone, a microwave oven and an email address.
    a. While we don't have to be first, its probably not a good idea to be last or never.
    b. Change is hard – for our self and for congregations
        i. We can sometimes make it easier by going gradually
        ii. Keping the best of the past and embracing the possibility of the future
        iii. That is true for synagogues and machzors as it is for people
4. So this morning Rabbi Brown and I want us to begin to explore this new Reform Machzor – to examine just one setting of one prayer, to see what our movement and our rabbis and cantors are trying to make new and improved.
    a. Tradition teaches the old shall be made new and the new shall be made holy.
    b. Lets explore what is new and find what is holy in this new Machzor, in time – we will surely adopt it, so lets explore what it has to offer.
5. We begin our study with a familiar prayer, maybe one that has become too familiar, so much so that we don't think about its words very deeply anymore, its just a mantra we say or sing with our cantor.
    a. The prayer we are going to study this morning is: Avinu Malkeynu

b. In particular on the idea of God as King. This traditional metaphor for God is one that is fraught with issues.
c. We will look at how Mishkan HaNefesh engages these issues.
    i. My colleague Rabbi Rebacca Stern offered this thought to frame our study:
        1. The words used to capture and define an experience as vast as God will of course be inadequate. And, while the original Hebrew of the traditional machzor is an obstacle for some, the English of Gates of Repentance turns a fence into a solid wall. Each year I am more frustrated with our outdated text, and ever more eager for our movement's new machzor.
        2. And yet finding new words to replace the old and familiar is very hard. Just a single word can make a reading seemingly inappropriate for a prayer book. Can be a new wall where we wanted to build a gate.
    ii. So lets dive in with an open mind, an inquisitive nature and a struggling soul.