**“I am as my people are”**
**Rabbi Dan Moskovitz**
**Pesach 5784**

Like many of you I am challenged every time someone asks me the seemingly simple question, “How are you?” Since October 7 I have had to pause and think about how to answer, not because I am not sure how I am, but rather how do I convey in a concise, salutary manner the sadness, angst and pride that is churning inside of me as I contemplate this moment is Jewish history.

The best answer I have heard has been attributed to an orthodox rabbi in Los Angeles who’s name and congregation I never learned. The answer he gives to the question, “how are you?” is “I am as my people are”. Admittedly it doesn’t quite roll off the tongue but it encompasses so much of what I am feeling as a rabbi, a zionist and a Jew who has dedicated his life to serving our people and safeguarding our traditions.

Not that the rabbi’s emotional state should be a barometer for individuals in the community, but as Cathy Bregman once related to my wife Sharon about the life of a Rabbinic Family, “we live in the weather of your lives”.

Put simply what affects you affects me. So when you are feeling unsafe at work, when you worry about your children on university campuses, when your facebook feed and instagram are filled with antisemitic and anti-Israel hate speech from people you thought were your “friends" and “allies” I too am caught up in that turbulent storm. Multiplied as it is by the dozens of stories I hear from our community each month about the same and the state of the world looks dark and bleak.

And then I look out at the hundreds gathering at the Vancouver Art Gallery each Sunday at 2p. The packed pews on what would otherwise be a quiet shabbat or the hundreds that have been attending our Israel related educational and engagement programs. I notice the countless congregants wearing silver dog tags to “Bring Them Home”. I read the messages, emails, and appreciate the conversations expressing support for our work as a congregation to navigate these stormy times and I am filled with pride and hope.

I am proud of how our community at temple and up and down Oak Street (Richmond and West Van too) has pulled together, how we have made space for differing points of view while being united in our grief and commitment to peaceful protest and seeking a lasting peace for both peoples.

I am hopeful that though we are seeing the greatest increase in anti-Jewish hate in my lifetime, our people have been here before and trust that “muscle memory” to teach us the survival skills to find our way through it again.

Stuck as we are between Purim and Passover it's impossible not to turn to Jewish humor which has so often been our emotional salvation, just as prayer and study have been our spiritual one. So with a smile and some seriousness I invite you to add one line to your seder meal just before the hardboiled egg and the matzo ball soup. “They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat”. It a Jewish joke perhaps as ancient as the haggadah itself but that only adds to its redemptive power. I am as my people are, and my people are gathering for seder as we have done for thousands of years and will do for thousands of years to come. In spite of everything we’re still here. That’s not Jewish luck, that's perseverance, that’s us! Let’s eat!