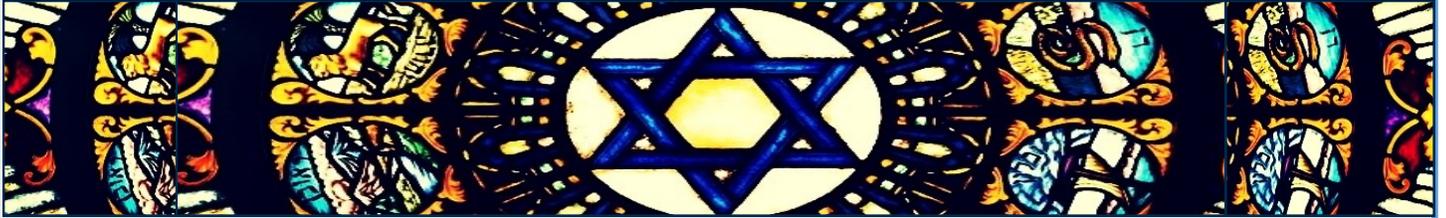


# RABBI JACK'S MESSAGE IN A MINUTE



Our ancestors were known by many names. "The descendants of Abraham and Sarah", *Beit Yaakov* --" the House of Jacob", and most commonly in the Torah, *B'nai Yisroel*--"the Children of Israel". All of these monikers carry within them the not so subtle notion of familial, bloodline ties among its members. And then things changed.

This week we begin the fifth and final book, Deuteronomy, which is the very long farewell speech of the incomparable prophet Moses. He knows that his end is near, ( he dies in 37 days ) and so we can be sure his last words will have great importance and lasting impact. One feels that Moses is aware that his exhortations, warnings, advice, insights, and inspirational directives will endure forever and form the fundamental and foundational belief system of his people for all future generations. Moses was talking not just to those who stood before him, but to us as well. That is why it is noteworthy to recall how Moses referred to his audience--it was in a fashion that was hitherto never used. For the very first time the assembly was called *Kol Yisroel--all Israel*. In other words simply Israel, with no qualifiers, without any connection to direct relatives or individual lineages.

Moses was a man of vision and keen understanding. He knew that to fulfill the ancient covenant in perpetuity, and be worthy of a true Land of unending Promise, we must see ourselves as a nation of inclusion--*kol yisroel* -- all who desired to be a part of this community would be counted as Israel. For example, the mixed multitude that travelled with them from Egypt and the various resident aliens that attached themselves to the Israelites after subsequent battles or meanderings would also constitute Israel. Moreover, Moses could easily predict that as the tribes would enter a land of Canaanites, Amorites, Edomites, and Jebusites, it was likely that individuals in the shared geographic area would want to join greater Israel. Moses instructed us to embrace diversity, to warmly welcome everyone who crosses our threshold.

Emanu-El represents the vision of Moses and our tradition of *kol yisroel*--a broad, comprehensive big tent definition of peoplehood. Pride Shabbat, Latino Shabbat, Gospel Shabbat and our approach to interfaith couples, Jews by choice and every category of humans we can imagine underscores the best interpretation of our heritage and history. We are blessed to continue this legacy.

L'shalom,  
Rabbi Jack

P.S. Please join us this Friday night for Sing Along Shabbat with vocalist Miriam Waks. Invite others to join us too. We want to have a great turnout for our guest and have many voices rise up in joyfully singing.