

GUIDED MEDITATION TO BRING US TO THIS SPECIAL SHABBAT

Michael Steven Marx, 22 June 2016

The six Psalms that occur in this part of the service awaken us spiritually and lead us into welcoming the Shabbat with *L'cha Dodi*. But as Rabbi Jonathan has often reminded us, each Psalm represents a day of the week and gives us the opportunity to reflect on the week now ended as we prepare to enter into the peace and blessing of Shabbat.

Tonight, though, I'd like to use the pattern these Psalms provide to lead us in a guided meditation, not of the past week, but looking back on the past years that have led us to this Shabbat celebrating having Rabbi Linda and Rabbi Jonathan as our rabbis for these 30 years.

So I invite you to position yourself comfortably, relax, close your eyes, and follow me as we reflect...

*Thinking back over these thirty years, each of us can remember milestones in our lives and in our family—weddings, bris and baby naming ceremonies, birthdays, and anniversaries that were enriched by joyous blessings, songs, and celebrations from the rabbis. And it's not just these major events; every *Erev Shabbat* as we prepare for the *Kiddush*, accomplishments big and small—a new job, success in school, vacation trips—all are praised with a hearty *mazel tov* and *ya' she Koach* from Rabbi Jonathan and Rabbi Linda.

*And it hasn't been just the good times that we have shared—individually and as a congregation—with the rabbis. How many of us have called to give them a name of a friend, family member, or even our own name, to add to the *Mishebeirach* list? How many of us have awoken from a recuperative nap to find that Rabbi Jonathan or Rabbi Linda have come to our home or hospital room just to see how we were getting along?

*We all have suffered losses. That, too, is a part of the Jewish life cycle. How often we have found comfort in Rabbi Linda's and Rabbi Jonathan's soothing voices. How often as we have mourned at the funerals of loved ones have we found comfort in the sweet harmony of the rabbis singing the 23rd Psalm?

*Rabbi Linda's or Rabbi Jonathan's voice—depending on your age, on cassette tape, CD, or mp3 files—became the soundtrack for a year in your life—or your children's lives—as they studied to become *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. Those weekly meetings are more than just lessons in how to chant the Torah *parshah* and Haftarah; they are sacred moments when the rabbis learned more about us than we realized, and the rabbis become not just teachers and mentors, but friends.

*Of course, we hear the voices of the rabbis singing and chanting at services and speaking to us through their High Holy Day sermons. We've all wondered at the meandering pathways of Rabbi Jonathan's sermons as he preaches to us about Judaism and the environment, shares in the joys of family, or encourages us to add a new Jewish practice to our daily lives. And then, we are enraptured by the elegance of Rabbi Linda's sermon as she parses a Hebrew text and

untangles a grammatical structure to open up a hidden meaning that suddenly speaks to each of us and pierces our souls. Her voice and arms raise in passion—and compassion—for Israel, for the neglected in our community, for *Tikun Olam*, filling us with a sense of conviction that we can do better, we can be better.

*From their lives, we see that being Jewish extends beyond the walls of our tiny Temple Sinai. Many of us have travelled the world with them and seen how Jewish life once thrived or now prospers and endures in Israel, in Eastern Europe, and in Cuba. Even if we haven't gone beyond Saratoga Springs, many of us have climbed Crane Mountain or swum in Goose Pond to celebrate an Adirondack Shabbat. How much do we look forward to that annual trip to celebrate *Succot* in the rabbis' *succah*, shaking the *lulav*, smelling the *etrog*, and enjoying the company and refreshment of our Temple Sinai friends?

FORTUNATELY for us, there are only 6 days leading up to Shabbat because there are still many more memories and moments each of us have shared with the rabbis these past 30 years. While this meditation may have stirred more memories, someone else is approaching the Temple door. It is the Sabbath Queen, and we must welcome her with *L'cha Dodi*.