

RABBI PETER KNOBEL
RABBI DAVID M HOROWITZ

AUGUST 26, 2019

B”H

It is surreal to be standing here this day. Fifty years ago, the ordination class of 1969 stood at the Isaac Mayer Wise Temple and received *s'micha* from our Rosh Yeshivah, Dr. Nelson Glueck. Many of us celebrated that anniversary in California, at the Naorr convention with Peter and laughed and reminisced. Others of the class of 1969 joined with Peter at in Cincinnati, at the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbi's) convention and we laughed and reminisced. Fifty years have passed since the beginning of our careers as rabbis. It is surreal to be standing here this day. Even rabbis need rabbis, and Peter was our rabbi.

I have been asked to speak on behalf the class of 1969 this morning. We had a strong class. We even liked one another. There are two other members of our class present, Rabbi Arthur Star and Linda, and Rabbi Danny Roberts. Some of our classmates were taken from us earlier, and I remember especially Rabbi David Lieb who, with Estelle, shared granddaughters with Peter and Elaine.

We are taught that the entire world is sustained by three things. First, by Torah. Peter was one of the Brainiac's of our class. He took semitic languages that no sane rabbinic students would entertain. Peter was steeped in Torah. At Yale he continued his studies. I remember thinking, along with another member of our class that when Peter was named to follow Rabbi David Polish as the Rabbi of Beth Emet, the Free Synagogue, that is was perfect. He brought the fullness of rabbinic compassion along with the academic credentials that was necessary in this learned congregation. He shared his knowledge with rabbinic students at the Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion. He never ceased to study and impart that knowledge to us all. He wrote and he spoke. But never did he set aside his vocation as a congregational rabbi.

The second is *avodah*. While the work literally means work, it has taken on the meaning of liturgy. Peter prayed, led prayer, and was instrumental in bringing liturgy to all our congregations as chair of the CCAR's liturgy committee. An aside; Peter did whatever the CCAR or the College Institute or the Union or Reform Judaism asked of him and did it with grace and expertise. He led the CCAR

committee that opened the doors of rabbinic leadership to the LGBTQ community at a time when that was not a popular position. I personally, will be forever grateful to my friend who helped make that happen.

And finally, *g'milut chasadim*. Translated as acts of loving kindness, it is so much more. Peter was the cement that held the class of 1969 together. He constantly reached out to each of us bringing knowledge, comfort, and sage advice. Even as president of the CCAR, Peter was always our class president for life. We shared him reluctantly. It was a title that Peter took seriously, perhaps sometimes too seriously, caring for us all. It was not just the dinners he and Elaine arranged for class members at every CCAR convention that brought us together, it was the knowledge that he would never forget us in good times or in difficult times. His phone would ring, or buzz, and beep without a break and he answered and responded to us with love. He was never too busy to help a classmate. For that matter, he was never too busy to help anybody.

It is difficult for one who needs consolation to console others. I personally have lost one of my best friends in the world. Our class will remain strong because his

memory will continue to be the cement that holds us together. It will never be the same without him. We may dine together, but not with his selection of wine for our tables. That sweetness is gone. Never again with that twinkle in his eye. Never again with his warm embrace.

Peter taught us to care for one another. We, as a class, now reach out to Elaine, Jeremy, and Seth and their families and cradle them in our arms and with the blessing of Peter's memory.