

## Rabbi Josh Dorsch, Opening Remarks

It is somewhat surreal for all of us to be here today, as we are honoring the memory of Rabbi Leonard Rosenthal. My heart aches for Judy, for Adina and Jeremy, Adam and Sarah, and Margalit, for his grandchildren Neriya, Zecharya, Michal, Esther, Elijah, and Zev, to all of his family and friends who are here with us, his passing is devastating. I hope that I, and our community, can be here for you, just as Len has been here for all of us, as you navigate this difficult time in your lives.

My heart also aches for all of us. Rabbi Rosenthal has meant so much to so many, not just those of us here today, but the outpouring of love and support from the community, people from all over the world who are in pain at his passing has been tremendous. On behalf of the family and the Tifereth Israel community, I want to thank you for all of your condolences, and your wishes. I also want to take a moment to acknowledge all of Len's Rabbinic colleagues who are here with us today, your presence means a lot to Len's family and to all of us.

When I think of Len, I am reminded of one of my favorite sayings from *Pirke Avoth*, which teaches *Aseh Lechah Rav Mekaneh Lechah Chaver*. Acquire for yourself a rabbi, a teacher, and you will find for yourself a friend.

I remember the very first time I spoke with Rabbi Rosenthal, I was interviewing for the position here at Tifereth Israel, we arranged a time to talk on the phone. I was a little nervous, not really sure what to expect, I called, he picked up the phone and said in a way that only Len could, and I am using the PG version, he said "So you're the jerk who's trying to take my job!" After an awkward period of

silence, he assured me that he was joking, and that I would eventually come to appreciate his unique and somewhat snarky sense of humor.

The relationship between a rabbi and his predecessor, especially one who was beloved by the community for almost thirty years, can be dicey at times, to put it mildly. And to be honest, when I first arrived in San Diego, I was a little terrified.

But from the moment I got here, Len and Judy invited us over for Shabbat, he went out of his way to ensure that my family and I were comfortable. He showed me the utmost respect. At times we may have disagreed behind closed doors, but I took comfort in knowing that he always supported me and had my back. I looked toward Rabbi Rosenthal with admiration. I admired his career, spending over thirty years as the pulpit Rabbi at Tifereth Israel, responsible for the spiritual care and wellbeing of thousands of congregants, supporting and aiding them in the most vulnerable and intimate of moments spanning decades and generations of families.

I was in awe of the sanctuary, this beautiful sanctuary that he was instrumental in designing and fundraised for, and the endowment which he grew from almost nothing, ensuring that Tifereth Israel, and the values he instilled in the community, would continue to thrive for generations to come.

I was inspired by the relationships he built, he was a pillar of San Diego and the Southern California Jewish community, SDRA, the Federation, Camp Ramah, the Rabbinical Assembly, he was well known, well liked, and respected everywhere.

But I was also overwhelmed by his humility, and his passion, and the way in which he cared for each and every member of his community.

*Asah Lecha Rav, Mekanah Lechah Chaver.* When I came to San Diego two years ago, I turned to him as a Rabbi, a colleague, someone with experience, someone with wisdom, and knowledge, but I will miss him as a mentor, a confident and a friend. His presence will missed, but together we will continue to move forward embracing the values, the love and the passion, that he instilled in all of us.