

SUPPORTING ANSHE TIKVAH BASED UPON THE TEACHINGS OF THE TORAH

“Many Jewish organizations raise funds, but only synagogues raise Jews.”

—Rabbi Alexander Schindler

Ernest G. Freudenthal once said, “There comes a time in the history of an institution when those who love it, those who depend upon it, and, yes, even those who only occasionally use it must face the facts of its needs and provide for them.” He reasoned that if you have faith in your members, trust their judgment, give them plenty of information, and have them search their souls, they will support the congregation.

If we are to be realistic, we must acknowledge that regardless of the type of financial support system utilized, members contribute to a congregation to the extent that they believe is appropriate. Therefore, it is critical that we all become educated regarding our obligation to support our temple. Ideally, each of our members would give to the best of his/her ability and not be asked for a fixed amount. But because a temple is also an institution with financial needs, it is essential to require a specific commitment from each member so that budgets can be created and planning can be done.

We bear this in mind when we read **Exodus 30:13-15**, “*This is what every one who is entered in the records shall pay: a half-shekel by the sanctuary weight... everyone who is entered into the records...shall give Adonai’s offering: the rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than half a shekel;*” therefore, Anshe Tikvah asks for a half-shekel from every member family in the amount of \$1226 to equal \$2 for each of the 613 mitzvah in the Torah.

However, the building of Tabernacle was not limited to the half-shekel for we are taught in **Deuteronomy 16:17** that, “*every person shall give as you are able according to the blessing of Adonai, your God, which Adonai has given you.*”

In this light, Anshe Tikvah asks that you search your heart and your soul as you make your *terumah* gift. As a general guide, we suggest the following:

<u>Your gross family income</u>	<u>Terumah gift</u>
\$25,000 to \$50,000	.5%,
\$50,000 to \$75,000	1 %,
\$75,000 to \$100,000	1.5%,
\$100,000 to \$150,000	2 %,
\$150,000 to \$175,000	2.5%
over \$175,000	3% of their annual gross income.

Our members are encouraged to contribute according to their financial ability. That is the essence of *tzedakah*—justice and righteousness—as our Jewish tradition teaches it.

It is our plan that Anshe Tikvah remains a religious institution that practices the teachings of Judaism. **No one, regardless of monetary possessions, is turned away.** If someone comes to our temple Administrator and expresses a desire to join our Congregation, that person is never exposed to an embarrassing or humiliating dues adjustment committee. That person is treated with dignity and respect, and enrolled in our temple membership after making a private arrangement with the Administrator.

Such a plan also requires that those who are financially able assume, at the very least, the full cost of membership, and that those of greater means contribute even more than the cost of membership. Nevertheless, dues to the temple are not a voluntary charity; rather they are payments by all of us for a service to all of us and should fall within the established guidelines.

Through the fulfillment of your *half-shekel* and *terumah* gift giving, you are making an annual commitment to support the vision, mission and goals of Anshe Tikvah.

As Maimonides taught in his stages of *tzedakah*: It is good to give, better to give with a giving heart, better still to give after being asked, and even better to give before being asked. A synagogue is much more than a membership organization: it is our congregational home.