

# Tekiah

**Kayitz 5768  
Summer 2008**

According to the internet, the following is a Nigerian Folk Tale

The chief sent out messengers to announce that he would give a feast and asked that each guest bring one calabash wine. One man wanted to attend very badly but was too stingy to spare a calabash of wine. His wife suggested that he buy the wine, but he said, "What?! Spend money so that I can attend a feast that is free?" He thought to himself, "If hundreds of people were to pour their wine into the chief's pot, could just one calabash of water spoil so much wine?" The day of the feast came. Everyone bathed and dressed in their finest clothes and gathered at the house of the chief. There was music and dancing. Each man, as he entered the chief's compound, poured the contents of his calabash into the chief's large earthen pot. The man also poured his water there and then greeted the chief. When all the guests had arrived, the chief ordered his servants to fill everyone's cup with wine. The man was impatient, because his mouth watered for some sweet wine. At the chief's signal, all the guests put their cups to their lips and were surprised that what they tasted was water. Each guest had thought that his one calabash of water would not spoil a great pot of good wine, and so each one had brought water. This story reminds us all that a vibrant and thriving community is dependant on everyone. If we are like the above village and we only bring the minimum that we think we can get away with, the community will not thrive. If each of us contributes the best we have, the congregation will flourish.

One of the great historical facts for Temple Beth El is that the members have always been willing to be involved, to make sure that we were there for each other and for the community as a whole. Whether one was celebrating a child becoming a bar or bat mitzvah, or one was mourning the loss of a dear one, we have been there for each other. Someone had to prepare the oneg or kiddush. Someone had to organize the shiva meal. Because each person accepted the responsibility to make sure the work was done, we have had a strong community.

Each of us brings our own particular strengths and talents. Each contribution of time and energy contributes to the strength of the greater community. This may sound like an altruistic act, but we do it for ourselves. By being part of the giving structure of the synagogue, each of us guarantees that when we have needs, they will be met. When we all bring wine, there is wine for everyone to drink. In this way may we as individuals and as a community go from strength to strength and strengthen each other.

Have a great summer.  
Rabbi David Kaplan