

Hillel, a sage of the first century, taught: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" Members of our congregation have been living Hillel's words for the last several months.

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?" In response to anti-Semitic graffiti and tropes that have surfaced in our neighborhoods and environs, RSNS members have formed an anti-bias committee. Their work with the Anti-Defamation League was realized in a jointly sponsored meeting with Evan Bernstein, ADL Regional Director, at Community Synagogue. Mr. Bernstein will be the keynote speaker at our Synagogue on University Day, April 30. Following his address, there will be opportunities for guests to attend a number of breakout groups. The day will include a special program for children. Details will be forthcoming.

"If I am only for myself. What am I?" Understanding that we have a responsibility to the greater community, our members have been involved in a number of actions including, but not limited to, a lobby day on behalf of Planned Parenthood in Albany, demonstrations in support of refugees at Battery Park and at Peter King's office, and an educational advocacy program to raise the age so that children under age seventeen are still tried as juveniles in New York State. We are planning two Friday evenings that will focus on the situation of Sudanese refugees and the status of Dreamers.

"If not now, when?" To give people opportunities to lobby, demonstrate, advocate and learn, we have initiated a weekly listing of events each Wednesday under the title "Social Action." Rabbi Tarfon, a contemporary of Hillel, taught, "Although you may not finish the work, you are not free to desist from it." Now is the time, and the work must continue.

Warmly,
Lee