Dear Chavraya,

There is a beautiful phrase in this week's Torah portion, *Parashat Bo*, that I have often thought would make a fine motto for a shul, or, for that matter, any community. Moses once again comes before Pharoah with the call to "let my people go." Worn down by the plagues, but still not ready to forgo slave labor as the buttress of his economy, Pharoah asks, *mi va'mi haholchim/who are the ones that are to go*? Moses answers, *bi'n'arenu u'vizkeyneinu neyleich /we will go with our young and with our elders*. Knowing that without the children there will be no future for these God-inspired freedom riders, Pharoah parries and says, *let the men go*.

Moses recognizes that there is no freedom if it is not for everyone, and so too there is no future if its promise is not for everyone. We will go with our young and with our elders is further defined to include all of the sons and daughters of Israel, *b'vaneynu u'vivnoteinu…neyleich/we will go with our sons and with our daughters*. It is obvious that there is no future for any people without children. In Moses' response to Pharoah there is a deeper recognition. Moses speaks a fuller truth, one that is understood by oppressor as well as liberator. There is also no future without the generations going forth toward it together, and there is no future if women as well as men, daughters as well as sons do not share equally in the great journey.

We can do great things when everyone among us is part of the effort and the calling. In the brevity of Moses' words is a call to include, not exclude. If we walk together toward the Promised Land, we will get there. It is a great motto for a shul, for any community, society and nation, for every people and polity. *Bi'n'arenu u'vizkeyneinu neylech, b'vaveynu u'vivnoteinu/we will go with our young and with our elders, with our sons and with our daughters.* May that be our motto as we go forward together, as Nehar Shalom and all of the overlapping communities that give context to our striving.

Shabbat shalom,
Rabbi Victor