

As we announced over Rosh Hashanah, this year's theme is *Tzedek, tzedek tirdof*: Justice, justice shall you pursue, based on Deuteronomy 16:20, which states in full: 'Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may live and inherit the land that Hashem your God is giving you'.

Over the millennia, commentators have made much over this repetition of the word, *tzedek*, justice, with widely ranging opinions regarding what it signifies. What most commentaries have in common, however, is the assumption that the repetition intensifies the commandment, and holds us to a higher standard than simply what we might refer to as "the rule of law." Ibn Ezra suggests that we must pursue justice both when it will be to our gain and to our detriment; Rabbeinu Bahya suggests that we must pursue justice in both word and deed.

We can keep reconstructing this verse; that is our work as a community. Different groups in our community pursue justice from different angles, such as Sanctuary TBI, seeking justice for immigrants, and our Eugene Carbon Free Challenge teams that will work to mitigate our community's greenhouse gas emissions – and indirectly work for justice for those who will be most affected by climate change. Some will pursue justice by working at TBI's Egan warming site (or other warming sites), caring for those who are unhoused and would otherwise risk freezing in the night. Some will work from justice from within our community, and some will turn to our community as a place of rest, finding their justice work in other fora. The commentary tradition well supports an expansive understanding of how to work for justice.

In any case, the outcome is the same: we pursue justice in whatever form, as the verse says above: "that [we] may live and inherit the land that Hashem [our] God is giving [us]." Whether or not we believe in our lives as a literal gift from God, to pursue justice even when it is not to our direct benefit is to recognize that our lives and our privileges are gift, and that we only merit to continue to live and thrive if we work to create a more just world for all. The inheritance of future generations depends on it.