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American Jewish Committee
A Century of Leadership

הוועד היהודי האמריקני

It is my great pleasure and honor to send this message of greetings to Len on his eightieth birthday.

As is well known, the sages of the Mishnah (Avot 5:24) declare that eighty is the age of "gevurah", of mightiness. This comment requires some elucidation, especially as the same Mishnah describes forty as the age of power or strength! In fact, some commentators have interpreted the identification of eighty with might, as intentionally euphemistic. However others interpret mightiness in this context as referring to spiritual power. Indeed earlier on in that same tractate (4:1) the sage Ben Zoma describes the truly mighty person as "he who can control his passions". However there is another answer given in the later parallel work of Avot of Rabbi Nathan (Ch.23) to the question who is mighty (i.e. a hero) - the hero is he who makes one who hates him into one who loves him (often translated as , he who makes his enemy into a friend.)

In this sense we may describe Len as one of the great heroes of our times, who has pioneered the work to help transform hostility into friendship and to lead others to overcome their passions and pain in order to be reconciled with one another and even to learn to love one another.

Above all he and his work "sanctify the Divine Name" in striving to purify precisely that which seeks to represent the Divine - Religions - from those distortions and poisons that pollute the sublime.

Few can be described as having a legacy while they are still active and creative - but Len is one of those exceptions.

I send my congratulations and prayers that Len will enjoy many more healthy and mighty years of promoting respect among faiths and communities; purifying and sanctifying the Divine.