



MESSAGE FROM THE RABBI
NOVEMBER 2015

The High Holidays are behind us now, but the work of *cheshbon ha-nefesh* (an accounting of our soul) that we did then shouldn't be. If this annual experience – these most sacred of days - are to have any meaning, they must be used as a roadmap for how we live out the rest of the year.

Not long ago, a friend of mine said, “You know, when you get right down to it, Judaism expects a lot from people.” It was an interesting way to put it. But I'd have to agree with her. Judaism starts from the premise that a long time ago we were given a plan for how to live a good and decent life and how to build a just society. This plan is the laws contained in the Torah and the subsequent and ongoing interpretation of them throughout the ages. Then Judaism gives us a choice – and, implicitly, tells us that every one of us is both capable and obligated to choose properly. The choice is to follow these prescriptions for decency – or not. As we read in the Torah portion, *Nitzavim*, on Yom Kippur (this is God talking to the Jewish people at the end of their 40-year sojourn in the desert): “See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity...I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day. I have put before you and

death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your descendants would live—by loving God, heeding God's commands, and holding fast to God. For there you shall have life...” And a few verses earlier, God seems to anticipate our protests that this is too hard a task for us: “Surely, this Law which I command you this is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond your reach!...No, this thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.”

All well and good! But our tradition knows that we will stumble and make mistakes throughout our lives. In addition to the Torah, we have a wonderful plan to help us pick ourselves up when we fail. We have a prescription for thoroughly examining our mistakes and a process for moving through and, ultimately, beyond them. That process is contained in six stages. They are *not* for the Ten Days of Repentance alone. Rather, they ought to be used every day of the year or whenever we need them, or both. These six steps, each with an accompanying piece of wisdom from our tradition, are:

1. Introspection and Recognition

The first stage in the process of *t'shuvah* is reflection and self-examination. Only when we inspect ourselves and our actions can we truly become aware of how we've "missed the mark" in the past.

"The things hindering and preventing repentance are three: ignorance of having committed a sin, excusing oneself, and the love of money and glory. It is clear that every one of these hinders repentance. If a person does not recognize or know that she has sinned, she will never regret doing the thing she does, nor repent, as a sick person cannot be cured as long as she does not feel or know that she is sick; for she will never seek a cure. So if one does not know that she has sinned, she will never repent."

2. Confession and Rebuke

According to the Book of Proverbs, the person who covers up his or her faults is bound to stumble in life, whereas the person who recognizes and freely admits his or her faults will find mercy. It is the confession of sin that is crucial. However, there are times when, for one reason or another, we are not able to recognize the potentially negative consequences of our own actions, even

when we are actively pursuing self-understanding. Similarly, there are times when we see others performing hurtful actions and we believe that those people are either oblivious to what they are doing or are simply refusing to acknowledge their erroneous acts. According to the Jewish tradition, those are the times when reproof or rebuke is absolutely necessary. Since the recognition and confession of wrongdoing in the past is an essential step toward repentance, it is an obligation to help everyone become more aware of his or her own faults, even if it means that others must point out those faults.

"Twenty-four things hinder repentance...Five of the twenty-four misdeeds shut the ways of repentance to those who commit them. The first one is he who hates rebukes because he leaves himself no way of repentance; for it is reproof that induces repentance...All the prophets rebuked Israel until they repented...But he who hates reproof does not come to listen to the prophet; hence he persists in his faults, which seem good to him. "

3. Repentance and Atonement

Recognition and confession of sin, while important, are only the first steps in the repentance process. The ability to recognize what one has done wrong does not necessarily lead to forgiveness, especially if that ability is not accompanied by repentance and atonement. To repent is to feel remorse or self-reproach for what one has done or failed to do, to the point where one's regret concerning past actions is strong enough to change one's mind or point of view regarding those actions. At best, the remorse or regret that one feels after performing a misdeed leads to the desire to compensate or make up for that action in some way.

“Rabbi Eleazar said: ‘It is the way of the world that when a man has insulted his fellow in public and after a time seeks to be reconciled to him, the other says: “You insult me publicly, and now you want to be reconciled to me between us two alone! Go, bring the people in whose presence you insulted me, and I will be reconciled to you.” But God is not like that. A person can stand and rail and blaspheme in the marketplace, and the Holy One says: “Repent between us two alone, and I will receive you.”’

4. Rejection of Repeated Sin

According to Jewish tradition, it's not enough to atone for a sin even if the feelings of regret and remorse that accompany the atonement are genuine. The rabbis were concerned with a person's complete repentance, not just with simple compensation. In this regard, repentance was considered to be true only if a person learned from his or her mistakes and when confronted with an opportunity to do the same wrong deed again, that person refrained.

“Rabbi Bunam was asked, ‘How can a person know if their repentance is genuine?’ ‘If the person loses the desire to commit those very offenses again,’ answered the rabbi.”

5. Forgiveness

Ideally, true repentance results in forgiveness. When we are granted forgiveness, that can mean we have been excused for an offense; the one whom we have wronged has renounced anger and resentment toward us; we have been absolved from any further payment for our wrongdoing; and we are thereby free from the consequences of our error.

“When a wrongdoer makes amends, confesses, and begs forgiveness, it is the duty of the injured party to forgive him: ‘When you have mercy on your fellow, you have One to

have mercy on you; but if you do not have mercy on your fellow, you have none to have mercy on you;”

6. Renewal and Transformation

If this entire process was only about repentance, then its ultimate goal would be the previous stage, forgiveness. However, forgiveness only relieves us from the negative actions or misdeeds that we've done in the past, whereas *t'shuvah* – return – is more concerned with who we will become in the future. The prayers of this season implicitly ask for the strength to change, to renew and transform ourselves into a better “version” of ourselves...The whole process properly ends with resolution. After looking back, we look forward and resolve not only to not repeat our mistakes but also to commit ourselves to living a better, more righteous life. We commit to continuing our own personal “return” to God, and it is this return that will renew us, transform us, and ultimately give us peace.

“Rav Dov Baer of Mzeritz said: ‘Sin contains repentance as the olive contains the oil. At the hour of your repentance and of your turning away from sin, the sparks of divine splendor that were in it [repentance] are raised to the heavenly regions.’”

Shanah tovah. May the upcoming Jewish year 5776 be the one in which each of us changes and grows into the person we were meant to be.

Rabbi Kim S. Geringer

President's Message

We've got a couple of updates with more holidays rapidly approaching!

We have a date change. On December 4th we will be having a pre-Chanukah dinner which will be attended by some special guests; Don Leibowitz and his wife from the Union for Reform Judaism will be joining us. Don will be presenting our temple with a framed certificate recognizing Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam as a Union for Reform Judaism Temple. I encourage everyone to attend this very special dinner and service!

Also on the same night we will have someone taking some video of our temple for a fundraising campaign that has been a long time in the works! So make sure you all look as lovely as you usually do. If for some reason you don't want to get caught on camera let Cyndy or I know.

With Chanukah approaching there is an opportunity for our Hebrew School Students to participate in a Jewish Federation of Ocean County event called “Café' Europa”. It's an opportunity for the children to deliver a short Chanukah performance of 5-10 minutes to Holocaust survivors that the Federation helps. Lunch is provided, and though the date is being determined, it will either be on Sunday Dec. 6 or Sunday Dec. 20th.

The board will be meeting again on November 19th at 7pm at my home. Since we do not have a

permanent place to meet, please speak with me if you would like to attend.

L'Shalom

Wendi Higgins

Membership

We are always looking for new innovative ways to attract new members! Do you have any ideas that might assist us? Please contact our membership committee with your suggestions. We are hosting a Pre-Hanukkah Shabbat Dinner, why not ask a friend or neighbor to join you for this culinary delight on Friday, December 4th!!

Please join us for the Bar Mitzvah Service of Casey Gill as he is called to the Bima on Saturday, November 21st. We are very proud of Casey and his accomplishment as he becomes a Bar Mitzvah. Join us for this simcha to hear Casey chant Torah!

Mazel Tov to Filomina Jonas' parents, Conceicao and Inocencio Duarte as they celebrate and renew their wedding vows to honor their 50th wedding anniversary on November 22nd! May they be blessed with many more healthy, happy and rewarding years!!

Hebrew School

Our students are back in the swing of Hebrew! They are working weekly with Iris Harari to sharpen their skills and to learn more of our heritage and history. They have been asked by Ocean County Jewish Federation's Jewish Family & Children's Service to attend and hopefully entertain the Holocaust Survivors in our area at a luncheon in their honor. Our students have been invited to join Temple Beth Am Shalom's Hebrew school as they participate in this event...more to come on this!!

Temple Committees

Temple Committees	Chair/Members
Choir	<u>Philip Altland</u> Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Pat Barndt-Higgins, Madelyn Dunn, Robert Dunn, Syble Bleiweis, Rena Kreisler, Helen Cocuzza
Finance	<u>Treasurer, Robert Dunn</u> Financial Secretary, Cyndy Friedland President, Wendi Higgins
Fundraising	<u>Dayna Otto</u> Pat Barndt-Higgins, Syble Bleiweis, Madelyn Dunn, Cyndy Friedland, Wendi Higgins, Joan Silverman, Ruth Schlyen
Greeters	Hope Gardiner, Rhona Levy, Myles Levy, Edna Schaffler
Hospital Visits	Jack Crespy
Membership	<u>Cyndy Friedland</u> Syble Bleiweis, Joan Silverman
Music	Philip Altland
Newsletter	Helen Cocuzza
Oneg & Dinners	<u>Madelyn Dunn</u> Pat Barndt-Higgins, Wendi Higgins, Filomina Jonas
Religious School	Cyndy Friedland
Ritual	<u>Allan Levy</u> Philip Altland, Charles Flum
Tributes & Get Well	<u>Syble Bleiweis</u> Joan Silverman
Yahrzeits	Pat Barndt-Higgins

Tributes Cards

Tribute cards can be sent for weddings, engagements, promotions, bat and bar mitzvahs, in memory, births and any reason you may choose.

The donation amount is \$5.00 and upwards in increments of \$5.00. It is a wonderful way to earn money for our temple. Just call Syble Bleiweis at [609-978-4240](tel:609-978-4240) or Joan Silverman at [609-698-0000](tel:609-698-0000) to send these cards.



Wishing you a complete recovery.....

To: Dolly Weiss
From: Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam
Ruth and Gary Schlyen

To: Rhona Levy
From: Congregation Sha'arey Ha-Yam



May the memories of our loved ones be a blessing.....

To: David Sherman, In Memory of your Beloved Brother
From: Mike and Dolly Weiss

To: Sheila Press and Family, In Memory of your Beloved Husband Mel
From: Joan and Terry Silverman

To: Sandra Feldman, In Memory of your Beloved Husband Hank
From: Syble and Ernie Bleiweis



Birthdays are always something to celebrate.....

Ernie Bleiweis November 26

Fran Breese November 27



Rena and Mark Kreisler

November 13

Loretta and Sheldon Wallerstein

November 24

Yahrzeits



בראבא יתגדל

May the memories of our loved ones be a blessing.

11/1/1998 (12 Cheshvan)	Beulah Sagman	Mother of Dolly Weiss
11/3/1978	Benjamin Chasanoff	Father of Deanna Bovasso
11/10	Susan Baron	Cousin of Cyndi Friedland
11/12/1972	Samuel Bailen	Uncle of Rosalie Donadio
11/16/2005	Blaize Bovasso	Husband of Deanna Bovasso
11/21/2007	Frances Myles	Mother of Loretta Wallerstein
11/21/2012	Barnett Jacobs	Husband of Jackie Jacobs
		Father of Helen Cocuzza
11/22	Marvin L. Taub	Father of Cyndi Friedland
11/23/1999	Frances Kaplan	Mother of Michael Kaplan
11/24/2009	Leo Miller	Father of Philip Miller
11/27 (Kislev 15)	Minnie Krupnick	Mother of Madelyn & Sheila Ehrlich
11/29/1983	Donald P. Fisher Jr.	Father of Laura Miller

Fundraisers... We need your support!!!

Join us for a pre-Chanukah Dinner, Friday December 4th, 6:00 PM (prior to services). "Pot Luck", \$12/person members, \$15/person non-members...age 12 and under – free. Contact Madelyn for reservations and to arrange for your food donation 609-660-1614 or justmemad@aol.com

Amazon Smile - When shopping at www.SMILE.Amazon.com you can designate REFORM JEWISH COMMUNITY of BARNEGAT (there are no additional fees, the congregation makes a percentage).

ShopRite Cards are always sold at services, but can be purchased anytime by contacting Dayna (609-709-9410) or Syble (609-978-4240).

Tribute Cards can be sent to anyone for any reason with a *minimum* donation of \$5. Contact Syble (609-978-4240).

Board of Trustees

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday November 19, 2015 at 7 PM. At present, the Board does not have a regular meeting location. The November Board meeting will be held at the home of Wendi Higgins. If you are interested in attending, please contact Wendi for directions (732-232-1861 or cbreezego@gmail.com).

2015 Shabbat Services Dates/Times

November 2015

Friday, November 6, 7:30 pm
Friday November 20, 7:30 pm

December 2015

Friday, December 4, 7:30 pm
Friday December 18, 7:30 pm

Kibbitz Corner

A book review from Rosalie Donadio....

[E.L. Doctorow 1931-2015 –author of “Ragtime” during an interview in Time Magazine, stated: “The historian will tell you what happened. The novelist will tell you what it felt like.]

The Train to Warsaw by Gwen Edelman

The story evolves via dreamlike images of two people who survived the Warsaw Ghetto desperately in love only to be separated at liberation. By chance they reconnect a few years later. The woman is compelled to return to Poland, in the winter, where her husband, a prominent writer, will be honored. He is revered by the Polish intelligentsia who at this point remain unaware of the subject of his most recent book ... which deals with the Holocaust, a subject Poles have refused to address. He succumbs to his love's continuing pressure and they travel, by train, due to the severity of the Polish winter. Both are disappointed that they cannot identify the sites of their youth, their happiness before 1939. Despite the decades of being together, the passion remains and notwithstanding their present comfort and success, seek the missing threads of what their lives should have been and the terrible losses endured.

It is both a testament to the resilience of love as well as the embedded antisemitism of the Polish nation.

Rosalie Donadio

CONGREGATION SHA'AREY HA-YAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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