

# The Shofar



September 2016  
Av-Elul 5776

## A Message from Rabbi Jordi Gendra



### The 40-Day Challenge

Self-exploration — is it The New Frontier or is it pure indulgence? Isn't it indulgent to focus on oneself when there is so much suffering in the world?

Traditionally, the month of Elul (starting on September

4 this year) and the 10 days that follow, culminating on Yom Kippur, are a time for *tshuvah* — repentance.

The 40-day process begins as an internal one, where each of us is invited to reflect on our life in all its facets, to think about the things that are going well and things that could be improved. Ideally, this process does not remain in our minds but translates into our daily living and into tangible changes and actions in the world — action in the way we treat ourselves, those close to us, and the broader society.

Is *tshuvah* a solitary process or one to be shared with others? The word *tshuvah* has its root in the word *shav*, meaning “return.” When we contemplate our life we become closer to our essence and it can be seen as a return to our true self and lead to more authentic actions in our life.

Life pulls us in all sorts of directions, drawing us outside of ourselves — answering emails, preparing things for work, socializing, helping others, etc. Having time to be still, reflect, and “go inside” can help connect with who we are and what our deep aspirations are: a return to our selves.

At our core, are we all the same or is each of us unique? Part of the process of *tshuvah* — return to self — is to connect with that part of us that is a mystery. The Hebrew term for the highest part of our soul is *yechidah*, which, on the one hand, means “unique,” and on the other means “in union.” It is a paradox that one's essence can simultaneously be one with the creation, giving us a feeling of melting or merging, and also be totally unique, giving a feeling of individuality. Holding opposites is one of the challenges and realities

of everyday life, just as it is in the more spiritual aspects of ourselves. One day we go to a funeral and mourn the loss of a dear friend, the next we hold a healthy baby in our arms and feel the hope and joy of a new life. One day we fail to live up to our expectations and the next we succeed beyond all expectation. Similarly, when we connect deeply with the process of *tshuvah*, we hold the feeling of being at one with everything and also become aware of the uniqueness of our own being. As we translate this into our daily life, we hope to be better equipped to hold very different states of mind and situations of life in a healthy way.

Through the process of *tshuvah* — return — we also tap into the level of connection with all people, animals, plants, and the Earth, which helps us have more compassion for our environment. The inner awareness leads to outer action. The process of *tshuvah* also implies “another chance.” Through this process, we reach a high level of forgiveness towards others and ourselves. There may be actions that need to be taken to make amends, there may be new behaviors and attitudes that need to be developed, but there is a way.

The process of *tshuvah* may lead us to realize that we need professional help for some of our work on self-improvement. The help we need may be on different levels — a psychological level or perhaps on the level of accounting or nutrition, to name but a few. The main point is that our 40 days of *tshuvah* can be a time we reach out to others for help and others reach out to us.

The sound of the shofar is one of the calls for *tshuvah*. Traditionally, the shofar is blown every morning during the month of Elul, on Rosh Hashanah, and at the end of Yom Kippur. The sharp piercing sound is a wake up call, arousing us to see things from a different and deeper perspective.

There are plenty of opportunities to do *tshuvah* — an e-course on *tshuvah* (a daily email), a weekend Jewish meditation retreat, and High Holiday services are but a few. Wishing you a meaningful *tshuvah* period leading to constructive changes inside and out, helping to bring more peace in the world.



## Greetings from Our President and VPs

Hello everyone and welcome to “end-of-summer” life. For some of us, September means the beginning of school, with all the attendant excitement and drama. For others, it means preparation for the High Holidays, a sense of a second chance at a New Year and a very busy synagogue season. For many, it represents the end of vacation and the beginning of more intense work. All of those things are true for those of us who are engaged with or entrusted with the care of our CBT-BI community.

The board, the board officers, the new committee chairs, and the office team are all making progress in learning and performing our respective roles. We are still seeing some struggles related to transitions of both people and governance structure, but with the help and support of many, we are finding our way. I (Lynn) can speak for myself in noting that those who have provided both positive



feedback and concrete suggestions have made this journey easier, especially on some difficult days. I am very grateful to the many of whom have approached our new leadership and related changes in that spirit.

Many have been very busy working on new ideas and re-invigorating existing programs for the fall. The rabbi has shared plans for his new adult education program, which will be open to the public for the first time. The ritual committee and the office staff are heavily engaged in the planning and preparations that are required to ensure that the High Holiday services run smoothly. Wendy has been in updating curricula, preparing classrooms, and getting ready for at least one new teacher as well as working with our clean-up and decoration crew to ensure the kids have another great year. Many committees and groups have continued to meet and will provide updates on governance, strategic planning, membership and fundraising activities, among others.

Please enjoy our building’s new look following clean up, furniture rearrangement, and creative picture hanging. Thanks to the volunteers who have helped over the (hot) summer. We probably have done all that we can without spending money, and look forward to the day when we can repair the carpets and seating and have an even more beautiful and functional spiritual home.

Many exciting changes are on tap for this coming year. We look forward to sharing them.

*Lynn Helmer, president*

*Beth Nazer, Marcy Kaufman, Leora Rothschild,  
vice presidents*

### Join the Congregation for a “Welcome Back” Kiddish

The Membership Committee will sponsor a community open-house kiddish on Saturday, September 10.

All are invited to join us for services and a “welcome back” kiddish to catch up with the latest. It’s an opportunity to pray, nosh and kibitz with old and new friends.

### *The Shofar*

**Editor: Lisa Parker**  
editor@cbtbi.org

*The Shofar* is published six times a year: January, March, May, July, September, and November. Editorial deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication month.

**Congregation B’nai Tikvah-Beth Israel**  
115 East Holly Avenue, Sewell, NJ 08080  
(856) 589-6550 • info@cbtbi.org • www.cbtbi.org

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## A Message from Wendy Marder, Educational Director



School begins Sunday, September 11, a day we will introduce students to their new classrooms, teachers, assistants, materials, and curriculum. It is also a day we will get to know each of the students better and immerse ourselves in the blessing of a new year. We

will celebrate Hebrew summer birthdays and lay the groundwork for future Rosh Chodesh assemblies. But it is also 9/11, so we will pause in our joy and anticipation of a great year and remember and pray for those who lost their lives and those who lost their loves. It is fitting that we begin our year this way, with joy and sadness and remembering the past and going forward to the future. That is how we celebrate the High Holidays. We remember and learn from our past and go forward striving to do and be better.

Many hours were spent over the summer critiquing last year's curriculum, texts, methods, and space, and much time was spent creating new and refreshed space throughout the school and synagogue. We held meetings and indoctrinated new teachers into the wonders and joys of setting up a classroom and bringing knowledge from the printed page to the hearts and minds of our students.

This year we welcome Jennifer Klavens to our school as our new second grade teacher. Yes, this principal is feeling ancient as yet another student of mine becomes a teacher, but I guess it is to be expected as I begin my 31st year with our school. It is with much pride that we welcome as assistants, and former students as well: Gabby Emma, Evan Wax, Delaney Mulloy, Dara Wax, and Rebecca Klavens. We anticipate that our new student volunteers — Alex Mulloy, Josh Hancock, and Hannah Berman — will add to the fun in our school and be a big help. Miss Betty is due to come back to attend Confirmation class for Bianca's graduating year and we look forward to her enthusiasm.

We are planning some new activities this year:

- A third grade workshop that will involve learning about family trees, preparing materials for the *Chag Hasiddur*, and helping students get acquainted with each other.
- A Back-to-School Day that all will include the fifth grade orientation with the rabbi, a Torah workshop with the sixth and seventh graders, and a Sukkah party.
- A joint Shabbat dinner with Tot Shabbat, kindergarten, and first grade with Rabbi Abby, with myself, Mrs. Eisenberg, and Mrs. Mulloy facilitating.
- A family Shabbat service with highlights from the second grade.
- A culminating school Shabbat Friday night service with all the grades leading different prayers.
- A DJ dance party for Purim Day after a children's Megillah reading and parade.
- Speakers and programs for our teens and adults open to the entire community, including one on drug abuse and one on suicide prevention.



We had some great outreach programs last year as we collected for families who suddenly had to stay overnight in the hospital due to a child's illness as well as for animal shelters, the homeless, food pantries, and gifts to lift the spirits of a soldier in Qatar. Tzedakah money was sent to Yad Sarah, Mazon, Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, cancer funds, and local families in need. I would like to see our *tikun olam* (repairing our world) projects expand even more.

We will continue to have Shabbat school — six this year — each with a different theme, and we plan to bring the families in each class together for hands-on experiences for learning as well as socializing, in our belief that connecting with each other is what makes our synagogue and religion flourish.

Thank you in advance for all your help and cooperation. Please sign up to be a class parent, to assist at Shabbat school, to be our librarian, to help at a dinner or oneg, and/or to help in the office. You don't have to have a child in our school to help.

As we go forward into a new year, we look back and say thank you to all who helped make last year great. May we all be blessed with strength, patience, and good health so that we can make 5777 the best year yet.

Wendy

## CBT-BI Creates Updated Food Policy

Under Rabbi Jordi's guidance, the synagogue has recently implemented a new policy for bringing outside food into the building.

CBT-BI supports *kashrut* as a basic tenet of Judaism. Furthermore, CBT-BI is a *k'hillah k'doshah*, a sacred community, and so must have one clear, consistent practice. We trust that all of our members and friends are willing to observe these policies, no matter what their personal level of observance may be, so that any member of the Jewish community can feel comfortable eating in our building.

We are allowing home cooking in non-kosher homes to be brought into the premises due to the limited number of supervised caterers in our vicinity. Our kitchen, and what we serve at CBT-BI, represents the Jewish traditions around food. This means that great care must be taken to preserve the *kashrut* of the kitchen. **It is essential that members bringing food into the premises honor the trust implicit in our policies** and take the care to read ingredient labels carefully and honor our policies.

We urge you to follow these guidelines scrupulously. We trust that our members care about CBT-BI's reputation for proper *kashrut* and will indeed observe these rules faithfully.

In order to have potluck meals at the synagogue, we ask our members to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Food brought in for a potluck must be kosher (**dairy or vegetarian only**). It may not be brought into the CBT-BI kitchen or used with any utensil from the kitchen.
- Home-prepared food must be made in disposable aluminum pans and it must be brought in still in that pan, and cut in auxiliary kitchen space (separated from the main kitchen) set up for that purpose. All mixes or ingredients must carry *ahashgahah* (kosher certification), explained below.
- Home-prepared food must be brought in on paper plates and served only on the special separate cake trays used only for that purpose. No utensils, other than disposables, may be brought from home.
- Fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, salt, sugar, spices, tea, coffee, soft drinks, and milk do not require *kashrut* certification. Fruits and vegetables should be inspected for bugs and eggs should be checked for blood spots. Cut raw fruits and vegetables, or salads can be prepared at home.
- Because processed foods must both contain kosher ingredients and be prepared in a kosher way, all prepared

or packaged food (including canned, frozen, baked, or foods otherwise changed from their natural state) as well as dairy products (yogurts, etc.) must bear *kashrut* certification from a recognized authority, such as the O-U or O-K. A list of symbols used by such authorities will be posted to our website. There are hundreds of supervising agencies. If there is doubt as to a particular symbol or *kashrut* authority, the rabbi will give final approval.

- The "K" symbol is not trademarked and is not a symbol for a specific certification authority. Therefore, it is not sufficient to certify that the ingredients and manner of preparation are kosher. The "Tablet K" heksher is also not recognized by the Conservative movement as reliable and may not be used.
- When wine is served, it is our policy always to have grape juice available for those who can't drink alcohol.
- Although it is impossible to keep track of all possible food allergies, it is an increasingly common courtesy to label foods containing nuts, since some people with that allergy have severe, life-threatening reactions.



### Youth Service Leader Needed

CBT-BI is looking to hire an adult to lead youth services from 10 AM to noon on Yom Kippur. The candidate should be comfortable teaching grades 3 to 7, know Hebrew, and be familiar with the High Holiday liturgy.

The board has approved paying someone to do this.

Please contact Debbi Ret **ASAP** (609-805-4055 or [debret13@gmail.com](mailto:debret13@gmail.com)) if you are interested.

# A View from the Pew

by Yossef ben Eliyahu

## Throwing Out the B'nai Mitzvah with the Bath Water - Part II

In my previous article, I argued that with regard to our b'nai mitzvah,

*...we largely fail to actually include them in our efforts to maintain and engage others in the CBT-BI community. They don't feel welcomed because we do not welcome them, invite them to join us, instruct them or mentor them! Also, we underestimate their talents, capacities, maturity, and willingness to engage in the life of the synagogue. At this point in their development into adulthood, they are already a valuable resource.*

This neglect on our part boosts their future disinterest in participating in Jewish communal life. We offer them nothing to nurture their Jewish identity and neglect to prepare them to assume a role in maintaining synagogues and other Jewish communal organizations. The continuation of participation in organized Jewish communal life is vital to insuring that there will be an American Jewish community for the generations that follow.

As the *zayde* of two (almost three) teenagers, I know their lives are oversubscribed. Their weekly schedule is a sprint through high school classes and homework, after-school activities, sports, confirmation class, dance lessons, volunteer activity at the local animal shelter, and the list goes on. I also understand that many of our younger congregants may have no interest in the organizational life of the synagogue. But I also know that some of our youth are, indeed, interested in what we do and how we do it. They are the ones most typically engaged in BBYO, our religious school, or in their school clubs and organizations. They are eager to help us! We don't need many of them, but we do need those who are interested and committed.

We should consider having our youth participate on various committees such as Family Promise of Gloucester County, ritual, education, Sisterhood and Men's Club, and fundraising to name a few. Which committees they would serve on and the extent of their

participation will have to be discussed, evaluated, and decided with them as part of that process. Substantial discussion and planning are required for this to happen. Who will help me? Talk to me at synagogue, email me at

[chaskes@rowan.edu](mailto:chaskes@rowan.edu), or call me at 856-227-7930.

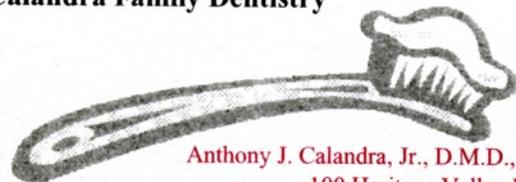
At their b'nai mitzvah, we tell them they are now adult members of the congregation and, as such, are responsible to fulfill the commandments: observing Shabbat, fasting on fast days, visiting the sick, comforting the mourners, and maintaining the synagogue, and the like. But neither they nor we have lived up to our mutual obligations. What is paramount here is that the adult members of the CBT-BI family reach out to instruct and mentor these young people. We need to live our commitment to secure a Jewish future for generations to come. It's essential that we model our organizational skills and share our knowledge. These are transferable skills useful in college (collegiate organizations such as Hillel) and later in one's occupation. When we do this, we truly engage and link the generations in our congregation to the sacred work of CBT-BI, *l'dor, va dor*. This is an important part of our obligation as adult members of our community.

B'shalom,

Yossi



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### **Modern Jewish Thought**

What are the origins of the different trends in contemporary Judaism?

How did the Jews integrate themselves in the world during the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century?

Rabbi Jordi will explore these and other questions in a new adult education series titled "Modern Jewish Thought,"

**starting Thursday, September 22 from 7 to 8:15 PM.**

**The five-session course will continue on October 6, November 3, December 1 and January 5.**

**Required reading** is Alan T. Levenson's *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers: From Spinoza to Soloveitchik* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.; 2nd edition, February 28, 2006; ISBN: 0742546071).

The book is available from Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.

The course is **free for CBT-BI members** and \$20 for non-members.

For more information, contact **Judy at 856-589-6550 or [info@cbtbi.org](mailto:info@cbtbi.org)**.

## Men's Club News by Jordan Harris



With fall around the corner and cooler weather on the horizon, the Men's Club is gearing up to host some spectacular autumn events. The summer season has been active, with strong attendance for our monthly breakfast meetings (held on the first

Sunday of the month) and for our card/game nights (sponsored on the fourth Thursday of each month). The Men's Club continues to try many of our area's terrific diners in search of the perfect spot to find great food along with terrific conversation for our meetings. This summer, we had our breakfast gatherings at CBT-BI, where we enjoyed catered breakfasts and a quiet atmosphere to discuss our plans for future events.

Although the summer can be a slow season in which to plan events (due to vacations, beach trips, and pool memberships), the Men's Club nevertheless remained active throughout the summer. The Men's Club sponsored a Friday service and oneg during the summer when Rabbi Gendra was on vacation. August saw a "Sunday Sundae" event open to all synagogue members looking to enjoy an afternoon of ice cream and camaraderie. The Men's Club ended August with a visit to Citizens Bank Park to see the Fightin' Phillies take on the Washington Nationals on Jewish Heritage Night.

The fall is expected to be a busy season with preparation for the High Holidays beginning in September. The Men's Club will be sprucing up the outside of the synagogue as well as doing service book exchanges in preparation for the holidays. We also will be gathering to construct our beautiful sukkah in October — a great fall tradition. We also are in the stages of planning one of the best trips of the last few years to Manhattan to see the infamous and haunting Ground Zero site with a meal at the legendary Katz's Delicatessen at the beginning of November.

One of the best ways for members to have an input on event ideas and planning is to attend our monthly breakfast meetings, usually held on the first Sunday of the month at either area diners, bagel shops, or CBT-BI. It is a great forum to present ideas for future events or offer suggestions on how the Men's Club can be improved. The meetings are a terrific avenue for socialization as well; very often, our discussions can go from synagogue matters to sports to politics in a very short period.

If you have not attended a Men's Club event or have not been in a while, please take the opportunity to attend one of our breakfast meetings, bring your game skills to our card/game nights or check the calendar for some of our upcoming events that will interest you. There are plenty of laughs and fun to be had with the Men's Club.

See you at the next event!

## Sisterhood News by Luba Veytsman



Our Board is planning another exciting year for our Sisterhood members! Thank you to Diane Shapiro for hosting our first event, our annual August barbecue. Our second program is scheduled for Sunday,

September 18 at 9:15 AM at the synagogue. Lori Gerstein will talk to us about preparing and staying safe when emergencies happen. It is a very interesting and

helpful program, so please come and join us. A light breakfast will also be served.

Sisterhood's New Year challah sale is taking place now. Please see the flyer on Page 8.

Our Gift Shop has a beautiful display of Judaica, where you can find gifts for Jewish holidays and bar and bat mitzvah celebrations.

We always are open to hearing about new ideas, so please let us know what kind of programs you would like to see and/or attend in the future.

Shalom,  
Luba



***Sisterhood Rosh Hashanah Challah Sale***  
**2016 - 5777**

Please place your order for delicious round Challah from Ginsberg's Bakery by **Sunday, September 25, 2016**. Please mail your orders and checks to Rose at the address below. You may also place your order by emailing or calling Rose at:

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Then please mail your check made out to CBT-BI SISTERHOOD to:

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Orders will be available for pick up at the Synagogue on **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2016 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm**. If you cannot pick up at that time, please contact Rose to make other arrangements.

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