



חדשות Chadashot

Cheshvan/Kislev 5784
November 2023

News from The West Temple



Am Yisrael Chai!

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Rabbi Brown

Together, We Are the Image of God

Since my ordination as a rabbi in 2005, I have looked forward to the end of *Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah* and to the beginning of the Hebrew month of *Heshvan* as a time to recharge and fall into a “regular” rhythm with my congregation and my day-to-day life. *Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah* marks the end of our Jewish high holiday season that began almost a month before with Rosh Hashanah. This year it fell on Shabbat/Saturday, October 7.

Sadly, this year, none of us have had a break. By “none of us,” I mean everyone in the Jewish world. Rabbis are working with congregation members who are in crisis; Jews and people who love them, all over the world, are reeling from the horrific actions that occurred in Israel on *Shmini Atzeret/Simchat Torah* on October 7 and the ongoing fallout consequences stemming from that day.

(continued Page 2)

On Rosh Hashanah, I didn't get to share my sermon – the service was running long, and I wanted to respect congregation members' needs to finish the service in a timely way. In last month's bulletin, I shared the first part of my Rosh Hashanah sermon. This week I'm going to share part two of that sermon, which is how I learned the lesson that we are all created *b'tzelem Elohim*/in God's image. Perhaps because of what is going on between Israel and Gaza today, this is the most important lesson that any of us can be reminded of.

Until the end of 8th grade, I attended an Orthodox yeshiva day school. At Yeshiva of Central Queens, we were taught Genesis chapters 1 and 2 – including that Adam was created in God's image. At Yeshiva of Central Queens, I was the “odd one” and was often left out or teased because: my family wasn't “religious” enough – we didn't observe Shabbat in a traditionally observant way; we ate out in restaurants that weren't kosher; I had a skin condition and didn't look like the other kids; I didn't get good grades and rarely spoke up in class for fear of sounding stupid. Is that why they teased me and left me out? Honestly, I didn't know because they never told me. But I did know that if I truly had been created in God's image, they wouldn't have treated me poorly. And if they were truly created in God's image, they wouldn't treat another person the way they treated me.

Once I got to high school, I went to public school. Suddenly I was plunged into a world of kids from all different races and all different cultures and religious traditions. I made friends. I found out that I was smart enough to do well in my classes. During the first week or so, one day, when I got home from school, I repeated something derogatory that a classmate had said about people of color. It was the **ONLY TIME** that my mother ever slapped me across the face. She slapped me across the face and said, “Don't ever say that again! Your classmate was created in God's image!” Whoa! My mother made it clear that *she* believed that every *human being* was made in God's image. And that included everyone – not just the white, Ashkenazi Jewish people who attended my old school.

After college, I ended up in San Francisco. There, I was *really* surrounded by all kinds of people. And it seemed like all those people were just like me - trying to live true to themselves. They were all on some kind of spectrum: between well-educated and not. Between entrepreneurs and day laborers.

Between straight and gay. Between partnered and single. Between white and people of color. Between adventurers and those who preferred a more predictable path. And the list could go on. Getting to know such a varied mix of human beings helped me see how we are all created in God's image: we are all creative, we all have strong feelings and passions; we are all trying to do our best. We were different, but we were the same.

Much later, in Rabbinical School, I learned a teaching of the Mei HaShiloach. The Mei HaShiloach is the collected teachings of the Isbitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Isbitz, who lived from 1800-1854. In his commentary on *Bemidbar* (the first *parashah*/Torah portion in Numbers), he taught what the Torah means when it says that Adam was created "in God's image."

He teaches that when the Torah says that Adam was created "in God's image," it means that we each contain a *part* of God and that all of us together make the image of God complete. Each of us is like a mosaic tile. The part of God that each person embodies is what makes us unique. In order for God's image to be complete, each of us has to be accepting and even celebrating the ways in which we are unique at every moment. If we aren't, the "tile" of God's image that is ours will be missing, and God's image will be incomplete.

I love this teaching because it tells us that even if we are odd, quirky, weird, if we dance funny (or not at all), or prefer to stay home and read a book to going out with friends, or are "different" in any way, we have to honor and celebrate that part of ourselves. We shouldn't hide or pretend to be someone else in order to "fit in."

I like to compare this to the ingredients in chocolate chip cookies. It could be that there are times when the baking powder would like to be chocolate chips. Chocolate chips are more popular. They taste better than baking powder – even without being baked into the cookie. But: it is necessary for the baking powder to be 100% baking powder. Without the baking powder, there would be no cookie – there would just be a flat cardboard-y, inedible, ugly thing that has some flour, salt, sugar, and chocolate chips in it.

Everyone together is what makes the image of God whole. Every single one of us is necessary. And it is necessary for every single one of us to live with integrity and to honor who we are at our core. And it is necessary for each of us to accept others – even when they are different, weird, or quirky in ways that we are not. Even when we disagree with them. Each of us is necessary.

Perhaps if each of us ... all of us ... everyone on this planet ... could realize that every single one of us is necessary to complete the image of God, we would finally be able to live together in peace.



In 1945, a diary was discovered in the liberated Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp. It was written by a 14-year-old Jewish girl named Rywka Lipszyc and documented her life in the Łódź Ghetto between October 1943 and April 1944. Rywka's diary tells the story of a young girl who lost her siblings and parents, but never lost hope or her faith. Through historical artifacts and documents, interactive touch screens, documentary videos, and photographs, the exhibition explores the story of a young girl's fight for survival in the Łódź Ghetto and reconstructs what might have happened to Rywka.

Lunch 'n Learn

Shosh Ault invites you to a museum tour that she will lead:
The Girl in the Diary: Searching for Rywka from the Lodz Ghetto

Friday, November 10

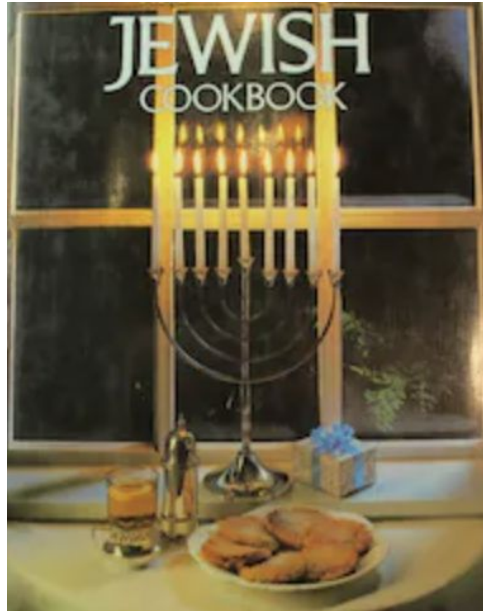
11:30am - 12:30pm

Cost: \$8 per person for tickets

We will meet at the Maltz Museum of Jewish heritage at 11:15am
Following the museum tour we will go to lunch at Taza Restaurant on Chagrin at
1pm. The cost of lunch is not included.

Please RSVP to Debbie Chessin at bitwteducator@gmail.com

Coming Spring 2024



A glorious compilation of family favorites, holiday treats, brisket secrets, and the super secret tricks we use to make delicious meals and snacks for friends & family & strangers.

Please send recipes, cover art, food-related poetry, and commentary to include in this very special community cookbook to: veep@thewesttemple.com

Please send in recipes by the first night of Hanukkah, sundown on Thursday 7 December 2023, and prepare to purchase and receive your very own Beth Israel cookbook (especially all the brisket secrets we can get) in time for Passover!

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From the President-

A Prayer for Peace

In a world that's broken and shattered,
Plagued by indifference, falsehood, and corruption,
We feel the uncertainty.
We feel the pain.
And we are not helpless.

God, we pray for peace:
For wholeness and healing,
For safety when violence touches us all.

God, we pray for peace:
For justice and compassion,
For acceptance in the face of hatred.

We will not be held hostage to hopelessness.
We pray for peace.
We struggle for peace.
We bring peace.
We will be whole.
God, help us to be whole as we pray for peace.

Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker wrote this upon the one year anniversary of the hostage crisis at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. He and the three congregants who were held hostage survived.

Walter Wright

From the Educator-



In November, we read Parashat Vayeira. In Genesis 18 verses 1-4

Adonai appeared to him by the terebinths of Mamre; he was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot. Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, bowing to the ground, he said, "My lords, if it please you, do not go past your servant. Let a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree. And let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves..."

This text brings us to one of the most important stories of kindness to strangers. The concept of hospitality, also called *hachnasat orchim* (bringing in strangers), being extended to others is a central value in Judaism. An act of *g'milut chasadim* (loving kindness), *hachnasat orchim* is considered a mitzvah.

In this parsha, we learn that Abraham's and Sarah's kindness to their guests was exemplary. They took great measures to make their guests feel welcome and at home by washing their guests' feet, offering a place to rest and preparing a special feast. Modeling more than a standard level of courtesy, Abraham and Sarah taught later generations the true meaning of hospitality.

As we approach the holiday season, it is a perfect opportunity as a family to talk about the blessing of giving to others. Hosting guests and taking care of them is an important way to express this. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, have your children think of ways to share the gifts of the holiday by making loved ones or friends welcome and cared for in your homes.

Debbie Chessin

November Schedule:

Sunday, 5th- Religious School-10-12pm

- 10:30-11:30 am- Yad B'Yad

Monday, 6th- Hebrew- 6:30 pm

Saturday, 11th- Grades 5 & 6 Bar and Bat Mitzvah Retreat-10-2 pm at BI-TWT

Sunday, 12th- Religious School- 10-12 pm

Monday 13th – Hebrew-6:30 pm

Sunday, 19th- Religious School- 10-12pm

Monday, 20th - Hebrew School- 6:30 pm

Thursday, 23rd - Thanksgiving

Sunday, 26th- NO- Religious School

Monday, 27th- Hebrew- 6:30 pm

Debbie Chessin, Director of Education*

*This position is partially funded through the Fund for the Jewish Future of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland.

October Pictures: The High School class enjoyed building the sukkah for our congregational celebration of Sukkot. Our Religious School Families enjoyed our traditional pizza in the hut during Sukkot. Students in Grades PK-4 grade learned about Mindfulness practices with educator, Debbie Friedman. Our PK-2 made mini Torahs for Simchat Torah.

Enjoy the photos...



☆ Celebrations ☆

November Wedding Anniversaries - 2023

Dr. Robert & Judith Weiss	November 1	48 th
Joshua & Sarah Lazar	November 2	10 th
Karen & Todd McAleer	November 6	21 st
Scott & Tracy Grauel	November 7	21 st
Dr. Charles & Rivienne Levin	November 15	37 th
Sidney Donahoe-Goldberg & Heather Goldberg	November 18	16 th
Donald & Lynn Mansfeld	November 25	42 nd
Rick & Tina Keller	November 26	40 th

November Birthdays – Young People

Noah Griffith	November 2	12 th
Kailynn Cruz	November 4	14 th
Sadie Goldberg	November 4	14 th
Maya Lynn Klosterman	November 5	8 th

November Birthdays – Adults

Jonathan Jaslove	November 1
Dr. Robert Goldberg	November 2
Jennie Sedlak	November 2
Karon Greenfield	November 6
Kati Roth	November 6
Karen McAleer	November 8
Frank Labus	November 12
Jon Watts	November 18
Dr. Joel Keller	November 21
Kari Basiewicz	November 23
Jay Krasnow	November 24
Charles Fisher	November 25
Debra Girard	November 25
Dr. Robert Weiss	November 25
Heather Goldberg	November 27
Eleanor Dreshfield	November 29
Myrna Pendery	November 30
Jennifer Robock	November 30



MAZAL TOV! Our congregation welcomes little **Joseph Levi Copen**, who was born on October 5, 2023. His parents are Jesse and Elliot Copen, and his delighted grandparents are Alice & George Copen.

PERPETUAL YAHRZEITS

November 2023

WEEK ENDING

NOVEMBER 4

Phern R. Berns
Richard McGary
Clifford Altfeld
Leonard Jaslove

WEEK ENDING

NOVEMBER 11

Lois Fernandez
David J. Samuels
Ralph Forman
Morris Rabin
Max Eisenstot
James Feldman
David Max Klipstein-Hauser
Edith Lettofsky
Vivian Lopatin
Milton Hyman
Alexander Pankiw
Beatrice Barnes
Billy Rutenberg

WEEK ENDING

NOVEMBER 18

Anna Jaffe
Harry S.Schwartz
Norma S. Cohen
Michael Lee Horvitz
Anna Skoro Pasternak
Joseph Jacobson
Judith Anne Tisch Lieber
Helen Wilner
Charlotte Gorland
James Curran
Marion Weidenfeld

WEEK ENDING

NOVEMBER 25

Micahel Button
Hella Klipstein
Helen Klein
Nathan Alterovitz
Bernard Eckstein
Emilia McGucken
Meyer Jaffe
Charles J.Cramer
Edward Ault

WEEK ENDING

DECEMBER 2

Fannie Melnick
Lisa Reminick
Leslie Dus
Mort Epstein
Oscar Sattinger
Harry Barkan



May their memory be for a blessing



The congregation is mourning the death of
Jean Loeb Lettofsky,
wife of Rabbi Alan B. Lettofsky,
on October 26, 2023.

Jean was the esteemed director of the Aaron Gerber Library of Siegal College of Judaic Studies for 30 years and the dean of Cleveland Jewish librarians.

She was the cherished mother of Sharon (Marcelo Schliserman) Lettofsky, Deborah (Howard) Bobrow, and the late Seth Loeb Lettofsky. As well as the devoted grandmother of Itai and Tair Schliserman and Aidan, Daniel and Lindy Bobrow.

May her memory always be for a blessing



Service Schedule November

Friday Evenings

All Friday services on ZOOM,
unless otherwise noted.

November 3

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

November 10

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

November 17

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBD

November 24

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
Luis Fernandez

Saturday Mornings

All Saturday services in person,
unless otherwise noted.

November 4

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown

November 11

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Rabbi Brown and
Debbie Chessin
(plus B'nai Mitzvah Retreat)

November 18

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Sarah Bedrossian

November 25

9:30am Torah Study
11:00 am Shabbat Service
Luis Fernandez

CONTRIBUTIONS

November 2023

General Fund

We gratefully acknowledge a donation from Ahmed Alrefaei.

In Memory of Harry Mittleman

-Robert & Judith Weiss

Rabbi Brown's Discretionary Fund

In memory of Gerald Greenfield

-Karon Greenfield

The Alan B. Lettofsky Fund for The Center for Jewish Life

In Memory of Jean Loeb Lettofsky

-Elaine & Steve Edelstein

Religious School Fund

In memory of Phyllis Sapell

-Shosh Ault