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Rabbi Rachel Brown

My column this month is a condensed version of the talk I shared on Rosh Hashanah:

A Better Draft – Rabbi Rachel Brown

Rosh Hashanah is called *Hayom harat olam* – the birthday of the world. Birthdays aren’t about the past; they’re about the future, about possibility.

The Torah begins with creation: light separated from darkness, the first day unfolding. Our mystics taught that God created more than one draft before this world. Early versions collapsed, or left no space for anything but God. Finally, God chose to practice *tzimtzum* – stepping back, leaving room for imperfection, struggle, and human freedom. Creation, by design, is unfinished.

(continued Page 2)

That resonates with me as a parent. I often want to fix things for my son, to do them quickly and correctly. But if he's going to learn, I have to step back, let him try, even let him fail. That's *tzimtzum*. That's what God did for us.

But sometimes this unfinished world feels unbearable: violence between Israelis and Palestinians, rising antisemitism here at home, and our country divided and fraying. Members of our own community tell me they hesitate to wear a kippah in public. Headlines tighten our chests, lock our shoulders. At times, this world feels like a failed draft.

But the Hasidic masters remind us: maybe that's the point. Each of us is born with a *hisaron* – a gap, an emptiness, a lesson to learn. Life itself is a series of drafts. We stumble, we forget, we hurt each other. And each year, Rosh Hashanah invites us to begin again. To write another draft.

I think of Maoz Inon, an Israeli peace activist whose parents were murdered in the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023. He could have chosen rage or revenge. Instead, he speaks of peace and reconciliation, insisting no child – Israeli or Palestinian – should endure what he has endured. His grief could have consumed him; instead, he is writing a better draft.

What might a better draft look like for us this year? A better draft of politics that remembers policies affect families. A better draft of our communities, where we protect children instead of burying them. A better draft of ourselves – speaking more gently, forgiving more quickly, remembering that every person is made in God's image.

Creation is unfinished because God left it that way – waiting for us to take up the work. This Rosh Hashanah, may we write a better draft: one of compassion, courage, and healing. May Israel and Gaza find a way to choose life. May our country rediscover its soul. And may each of us, in our own lives, begin again.

Rabbi Rachel Brown

President's Desk



Hello Friends. Shanah Tovah to all of you. We have welcomed in the New Year of 5786 and are looking forward to Kol Nidrei and Yom Kippur (which may have happened by the time you read this). The time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is called *Yamim Nora'im*, the Days of Awe, and they are a time for everyone to think about the past year. They are a time to reflect on our actions and to reflect on what we could have done differently, and maybe better. In many cases, this is an individual self-reflection. I'd like to offer a Beth Israel self-reflection.

On the whole, this was a wonderful year for Beth Israel.

- Our Religious School is thriving, our children are learning about Jewish values and history, and they are celebrating milestone occasions with the community.
- Our building is continuing to undergo renovations – shortly after Yom Kippur, the second floor will become a construction zone as we remove and replace all of the windows in the sanctuary, foyer, library, offices/classrooms along the north side of the building, behind the bimah, and by the back staircase. The sanctuary windows will take five weeks to be made and installed; the rest will be quicker. We can't wait to welcome everyone for our Chanukah celebration, to enjoy the warmth and glow of the sanctuary.
- We switched mahzorim for the High Holy Days and had a terrific response to our book dedication fundraiser – thank you to everyone who contributed and has dedicated a set of prayerbooks to loved ones.
- We continue to offer programming for adults, sharing our knowledge and skills with one another.

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But there are challenges.

- As are most non-profit organizations, Beth Israel is facing financial hurdles. The Board is having conversations about how to address them but know that every contribution you make is critical towards enabling us to offer quality programming for our youth and adults.
- Our membership is shrinking. It's not a huge decline, but it's a decline. And given that we have financial hurdles to overcome, every member family that leaves hurts. So if you hear of new families moving to the area, please encourage them to visit us. We can offer them a tour of the building and speak with them about our programming. I've already seen the fruits of these labors with several new families at Sunday School.

As I reflect back on my first 15 months as President of Beth Israel, we have accomplished great things. But I know that we can do more. We're a volunteer run organization – if you are interested in helping keep Beth Israel strong and vibrant and present, please let me know. We will use your skills to grow this amazing community.

Thank you all so much for your support and participation.

Best wishes,

Josh Levy
President
president@thewesttemple.org



Educator's Desk

As we head into October, we are excited to share several special holiday celebrations and family programs happening throughout the month!

The holiday of **Sukkot** begins on Monday evening, October 6. Sukkot is a joyous time on the Jewish calendar when we gather to eat, spend time in our congregation's sukkah, and celebrate with family and friends. The sukkah, though not sturdy or permanent, reminds us of God's constant presence and protection. When we sit in it, we are reminded that no matter where we are, we are never alone.



This year, we are delighted to once again celebrate Sukkot as a community. Please join us on **Sunday, October 12, from 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.** for a special all-school family Sukkot service, followed by our traditional *"Pizza in the Hut."*

- Families with last names **A–L**: please bring a side dish
 - Families with last names **M–Z**: please bring a nut-free dessert
- Pizza and drinks will be provided.

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Bulletin Editors: Geralda Simko & Alice Copen

Later in the month, we invite you to join us on **Friday, October 24** for a **Musical Shabbat and Congregational Pasta Dinner** with renowned local musician **Rabbi Micah Shapiro**. This promises to be a special and joyous evening of song, community, and celebration—perfect for families with children of all ages.



We hope you will join us for these wonderful opportunities to gather, celebrate, and share in the joy of community.

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 Schedule:

Wednesday, 1st - Erev Yom Kippur- Kol Nidre service- 7:30 pm

Thursday, 2nd – Yom Kippur

- 10:00am Morning Service
- 12:30- Yizkor
- 4:00 pm- Afternoon Family service
- 4:00 pm Mincha
- 5:00 pm- Neilah/Concluding Service
- 6:00 pm Havdalah

Sunday, 5th- Religious School

- 9:30- Family Tefillah- PK-6
- 10-10:15-Havdallah- PK-12
- 10:15-12- Classes- PK-12

Monday, 6th- Hebrew- 6:30 pm and Erev Sukkot

Sunday, 12th – Religious School-9-12 pm

- 9:30 - Family Tefillah- PK-6
- 10-10:15- Havdalah-PK-12
- 10:15-11- Classes PK-12
- 11-12- Family Celebration of Sukkot and Pizza in the Hut-PK-12

Monday, 13th - Hebrew -6:30pm

Sunday, 19th – Religious School- see the schedule from October 5

Monday, 20th - Hebrew- 6:30 pm

Friday, 24th- Family Musical Shabbat and Congregational Dinner with Rabbi Micah Shapiro- 6:00 pm

Sunday 26th- Religious School-see the schedule from October 5th

Monday, 27th- Hebrew-6:30 pm

Highlights from September: This year we celebrated a special Opening Day of Religious School

! Enjoy the pictures!



Photos from our Temple picnic!









BETH ISRAEL
THE WEST TEMPLE

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24601 Lorain Road, North
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FOR SPONSORING
**RABBI BROWN'S
INSTALLATION EVENT**



SAVE THE DATE

Congregational Retreat- March 1-3

Castaway Bay Resorts- “Creating Sanctuary” with Guest
Artist and Storyteller- Elizabeth Yaari

More Details to Come!



Service Schedule October

Friday Evenings

All Friday services on ZOOM,
unless otherwise noted.

Saturday Mornings

All Saturday services in person,
unless otherwise noted.

October 1& 2: Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur
Rabbi Brown, Larry Sheir, Beryl Palnik, Choir

October 3

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Ken Dunn

October 4

9:30am Torah Study
11:00am Shabbat Service
Ken Dunn

October 10

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Rabbi Brown

October 11

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

October 17

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
On ZOOM
Luis Fernandez

October 18

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

October 24

Congregational
dinner & musical
program with Micah
Shapiro

October 25

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

Nadia McSlide B-day Party
(after services)
RSVP by Oct 16

October 31

7:30pm Kabbalat Shabbat
ON ZOOM
TBA

November 1

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

☆ Celebrations ☆

October Wedding Anniversaries

Mr.& Mrs. Michael Kolesar	October 5	46 th
Dr. & Mrs. Sam Alterovitz	October 6	55 th
Mr. &Mrs. Roger Abady	October 8	42 nd
Mr.&Mrs. Leonard Weiss	October 20	33 rd
Mr.& Mrs. Craig Sumner	October 21	19 th
Dr. John &Carole Heimke	October 22	37 th
Ms. Emmie Hutchison &Mr. Michael Evans	October 22	26 th
Mr. &Mrs. Ed Rand	October 26	12 th
Mr. &Mrs. Scott Machol	October 27	46 th
Mr. &Mrs. Steven Strongosky	October 28	30 th
Mrs. Allison Winokur & Mr. Neal Brashear	October 28	24 th
Mr. &Mrs. Michael Palnik	October 30	48 th

October Birthdays- Youth

Benjamin Griffith	October 4	8 th
Charlotte Watts	October 6	4 th
Evelyn Payne	October 7	14 th
Jackson Sumner	October 12	17 th
Lucille Lercher	October 20	13 th
Zev Balanson	October 25	18th



October Birthdays- Adults

Mrs. Paula Jacobson	October 2
Mrs. Debbie Chessin	October 4
Mrs. Beth Darmstadter	October 4
Mr. Louis Lazar	October 11
Mr. Andrew Melott	October 11
Mr. David Dvorin	October 13
Linda Kroll	October 20
Mr. Kenneth Cooper	October 21
Mrs. Rivienne Levin	October 21
Mrs. Marilyn Morgenstern	October 21
Dr. Evelyn Neufeld	October 24
Mr. Scott Machol	October 25
Mrs. Kathleen Weiss	October 26
Mrs. Denise Phares	October 31



PERPETUAL YAHRZEITS

October 2025

Week Ending October 4

Fanny Green
Jerome Nakrin
Hettie Schwardzenfeld Zacky
Illy Brown
Esther Elias
Daniel Sissman
Maxine Goodman Levin

Week Ending October 11

Nita Goldberg
Ben Goldman
David Huber
David Mandel
Richard Rosen
Shirley Altfeld
Sidney Rosen
Richard Feibengaum
Anne R. Kantor
Susan Diamond
Frances Fine



Week Ending October 18

Tova Chait
Bernice Weisberg
Harris Blecker
Benjamin Cohen
Laurie Ellen Kranyak
George W. Oliver
Ruth Kaplan
Neil Levit
Harry Mancher
Rober Oscar Zabarsky
Alvin Mattes
Dave Gorland
Gerald Greenfield

Week Ending October 25

Sidney Gordon
Zelda Gruber
Frieda Provder
Mady Solomonescu
Arthur Green
Reuben Slone
Garson Hertzberg
Karl Kreuscher, Sr.
Andrew Mark
Pearle Fairberg
Arthur Loeb

Week Ending November 1

Samuel Bir
Fred Kassel
Harry Mason
Betty C. Sissman
Saul P. Weissman
Patsy Zabarsky
Phern R. Berns
Ann Rubin
Harry E. Schwartz
Nellie Palnik
Annette Jasilionis
Frank Kramer

CONTRIBUTIONS

Robert and Judith Weiss
In Memory of Jack Keller
-Joel and Linda Keller
In Memory of Carol Heisey
-Nancy Eilberg

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Beryl and Michael Palnik
In memory of Braanda and Sander Schwartz
-Barbara Schwartz

Rabbi Brown's Discretionary Fund

In Memory of Bruce Altchouler
-Val Tate
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-Karon S. Greenfield
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-Joel and Linda Keller
In Memory of Lenore Heller
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In Memory of Rose A. Lehrer, Carmella Hendricks
-Norm Lehrer

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In Memory of Reva Barkan and Carol Rimm
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-Rabbi Alan Lettofsky

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In memory of Ricky Singer
-Rita Singer

Contributions received after the 15th of the month will appear in the next Bulletin

Thank you!

