

# THE STAR

Fall Issue



November/December 2022

CHESHVAN / KISLEV / TEVET 5783

VOL. 25 NO. 5

**TEMPLE BETH TORAH, 130 MAIN STREET**  
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

# THE RABBI'S WORD: ROSH HASHANA 5783

SHALOM, and Happy New year, I am often asked for a copy of my sermons, several of you have asked for the Rosh Hashana first day sermon

## A GUIDE TO BEING HUMAN THE SEVEN R'S OF REPENTANCE

"Resh Lakish said, if a man comes to purify himself, he is helped from above." (Yoma 38b)

Can people change? We joke that "a leopard cannot change its spots" or "you cannot teach an old dog new tricks." Note that both these proverbs deal with animals. Humans can change, we can get on the right path when we have gone astray. It is difficult, but certainly do-able. How do we go about changing? In the book *The Ten Journeys of Life*, the author speaks of the Seven R's of Teshuva (repentance).

It is a series of steps we each must take as we strive to follow the correct path.

**RECOGNITION** - The first step is to recognize that a particular action is wrong. The words "everyone is doing it," "it is not big deal," "it is simply my nature," are signs that we do not even recognize our misbehavior. Pharaoh at first hardened his heart, but eventually the Torah teaches that "God hardened Pharaoh's heart." Pharaoh became so used to doing the wrong thing that he did not even recognize it as being wrong. We humans, despite our rationalizations, can discern right from wrong.

**RESPONSIBILITY** - It is not enough to say that a particular action is wrong. We must not make excuses, but rather accept responsibility. There is a famous Midrash (Rabbinic legend) how Cain, after slaying his brother Abel, blamed God. It is like a thief who blames the guard for not better protecting the property. So, we blame illness, racism, the way we were raised, our nature, everything but ourselves. Finding a scapegoat for our misbehavior is the easy way out, taking responsibility is the Jewish way.

**REMORSE** - When we do wrong, we often feel bad, and we can think badly of ourselves. Guilt has a purpose; it causes pain which makes us change our ways. That is why we fast on Yom Kippur to give ourselves that hunger pain which is like the pain of guilt. However, I want to differentiate between guilt and shame. Guilt is the statement "I did something bad." Shame is the statement "I am bad." Shame is not encouraged in Jewish thought.

**RESTITUTION** - This is the key point, and therefore it is smack in the middle. We must pay the price for our bad behavior. This certainly means apologizing to those we wronged; Jewish law says we should apologize three times. It means paying for any monetary loss, and suffering whatever punishments are appropriate. Restitution may even mean something harsh, resigning a position or even serving jail time. Restitution is the beginning of healing.

**RESOLVE** - Only after we have paid the price are we ready to resolve to change our ways. This is a decision regarding behavior. We will strive to return to the proper path. The Talmud teaches that if we sin and repent, sin and repent, without the resolve to change, Yom Kippur does not help. There must be a decision not to turn down the wrong path.

**RECOVERY** - Recovery grows out of the recovery movement, as some of you may be familiar with the popular twelve step programs, where those who attend are required to turn to a higher power, to turn towards God to lead us to come onto the right path. The Talmud teaches, "Resh Lakish said, if someone comes to purify themselves, they are helped from above." (Yoma 38b) The recovery movement also recognizes that change is a difficult process that we must struggle with daily.

**REPENTANCE** - The word t'shuvah, translated as repentance, actually means "return." Maimonides describes true repentance as the ability to face precisely the same temptation and this time take a different path, to return to the proper path. In the Joseph story in the Torah, we read that Joseph tested his brothers. If you recall, the brothers who were jealous of him, this dreamer, and father's favorite, with the gift of the multi-colored coat, they wanted to get rid of him, so, they plotted to sell him into slavery, but first flung him into a pit. When after becoming Viceroy in Egypt under the Pharaoh, during the time of world-wide famine, he arranged it so that they could abandon the other beloved brother Benjamin to slavery. When his brother Judah stepped forward to save Benjamin, prepared to give himself as a slave instead, Joseph knew that his brothers had done true t'shuvah - repentance.

So let us remember that we are not alone, we are human beings and there are many times that we will miss the mark, the bulls-eye, as in archery. Let us be kinder to ourselves, let us find a way to be less critical of ourselves, let us find a way to be less critical of others.

When making amends, I often encourage a call, reaching out to say 'hello;' without any expectations, without even needing a response. I am not looking for lovey dovey, I am looking for cordiality. The blessing occurs in the reaching out, a double blessing occurs when there is a response. When asked about world issues, I respond by saying, it is too big for me, my concerns are immediate, in the family, are siblings talking to each other, are parents and children talking to each other? This is where the matter of forgiveness begins, this is where these High Holy Days begin. We all say: amen!

**As we wish each other  
a happy Healthy Shana Tova.**

## Co-President's message

To turn a phrase... it takes a village to orchestrate the TBT High Holiday observances!

There are just so many folks to thank and appreciate. Try as we might, we're bound to leave someone or something out. If we have, please let us know and we'll catch up in the next Star Newsletter!

### **Thanks to (in random order):**

Carol Gershenson and Leslie Levine for the magnificent Rosh Hashanah flower arrangement,

The Scotts and the Golds for the gorgeous Yom Kippur flower arrangement, and Kathi Mag for letting all of the flowers in, and for coordinating housekeeping.

The Rosenblatts for the outdoor flowers, and for providing a "break fast" spread on Yom Kippur.

Sallyanne Scott for handling tickets, the Yizkor list, and SO many other details.

Phil Lohman for designing our beautiful community holiday greeting card.

Barry Goldberg for donating security services in loving memory of Andie.

David Forrest for hours of preparation, and organizing our HH observances, along with support from our Ritual Committee. His efforts went above and beyond!

Sam Sussman for being our shofar blower extraordinaire.

Joe and Janet Rosenblatt for reciting the YK haftorah and blessings.

Helene Rosenblatt for her beautiful flute playing on Kol Nidre.

Gary Evans and his sons for constructing our Sukkah (best in the neighborhood!).

All those who lifted a Torah, did a reading, donated food for our collection, or helped out in some other manner, large or small.

And, last but certainly not least, Rabbi Alan for leading us so capably through ALL of our services and rituals!

**Yasher koach to all!**

# A Scrapbook of October 2022 Sukkot pix



Well, Gary Evans and his sons erected our Sukkah in plenty of time to celebrate. Folks gathered and Rabbi Alan instructed the group on the traditions of Sukkot and the Lulav. Deb provided cider, donuts and apples from Belltown Hill Orchards.



Rabbi Alan led everyone taking turns with the Lulav moves.













A festive and instructive time was had by all.

# Improvements



Painting of TBT has, but for a few patches, been finished...Dave ordered a brand new updatable sign board for TBT to replace our antique sign which gave long years of service.



Some time ago someone dropped off this stained glass and cement Star of David. It has finally found a home in the sunshine on this back wall of TBT.



The dense yew hedge in front of the terrace has been removed and awaits attractive planting and repairs to the brick face!

# US

**Rabbi:** Alan Lefkowitz

**Co-Presidents:**

Deb Hammer, Dave Forrest and Vice president Barry Goldberg

**Financial Secretary,** Sallyanne Scott

**Corresponding Secretary for Donations,  
and Gardening:** Kathi Mag

**Recording Secretary:** Carol Gershenson

**Membership and Publicity Chairperson:** Karen Klein

**Treasurer and Memorial Park Director:** Barry Goldberg

**High Holidays Committee:** Rabbi Alan Lefkowitz, David Forrest, Harold Nevins, Carol Gershenson, Joe Rosenblatt, Sallyanne Scott, and Deb Hammer

**Friday Night Announcements:** Deb Ehrlich

**The Star Newsletter:** Phil Lohman, Micki Bellamy, Deb Hammer

**Ways and Means:** Judy Gold and Helene Rosenblatt

**Building Consultants:** Dave Forrest, Phil Lohman,  
Kathi Mag and Gary Evans

**Torah Study, Building Rentals, and Webmaster:** Deb Hammer

**Rabbi Emeritus:** Seth Riemer

.....  
As requested, the lyrics to Deb's Rosh Hashanah number... enjoy!

**Rosh Hashanah 2022 Shul Business**

**Sung to the tune of There's No Business Like Show Business**

*(credit to Rhoda London for the idea!)*

There's no business like shul business  
Like no business we know...  
20 people have 20 opinions,  
Yet they rarely show up to make minyans.  
At High Holidays we are appealing,  
To keep our ceiling  
From falling in!

There's no people like shul people  
Like no people we know...  
The truth is that we have the very finest kind  
Of members that you will ever find,  
Even if they sometimes drive you out of your mind  
They always do it with heart  
Yom tov – let the year start!

## VIVIAN BROMBERG OBITUARY

**T**<sup>BT</sup> member **Vivian Rosalyn Bromberg** was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada on September 12, 1963. She lived a short but vibrant life. She would fight bullies on the playground who picked on her for her height, making her tough at a young age. She excelled in school, to the point where her father asked if the teachers were sure they were talking about his Vivian and not some other Vivian. She was fiercely independent, walking the streets of Toronto while still in grade school to have cereal at home while she watched television during lunchtime. Vivian was so stubbornly independent that she could not be tied to Canada, especially when she fell in love. She went to college at Connecticut Central State University, where she graduated Magna Cum Laude and received a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science. She got married, had a child, Shane, finished her immigration paperwork to become a US citizen, and then had another child, Danielle. Vivian's professional life had many hats; she turned from computer science to homemaker, then to landlady, and even to customer service representative at Publix. However, work was not what defined Vivian. She would rather be remembered by how she enjoyed mornings having coffee with her friends, afternoons at the pool, dinners at her favorite restaurants, and evenings playing (and winning) at card games— where she could shuffle until the cards practically caught fire. Sadly, it was a life of simple pleasures that was cut too short when she developed Stage 4 cancer. Vivian chose to live her final days in hospice care at Memorial South in Hollywood, Florida, where she passed peacefully on the morning of September 23, 2022 at age 59. She is survived by her mother, Agnes Whitehouse of Pembroke Pines, FL; father, Istvan Kuti of Toronto, ON; husband, Louis Bromberg of Latham, NY; and devoted children: Shane Bromberg-Bodie of Schenectady, NY and Danielle Bromberg of New York, New York. We will all miss her presence, but we will continue to love and cherish the memories we made with her even now that she has gone. Donations in her memory should be contributed to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to plant trees in Israel. Chapel service 11:00 a.m. Sunday, September 25, 2022 at Levitt Weinstein Beth David Memorial Chapel, 3201 N. 72 Avenue, Hollywood, Florida 33024 (954) 963-2400.