



## A Message from Rabbi Rachel

*A Time of Eights*



It is a time of eights these days. We have just reached eight billion people on this planet. It is Kislev, the month of Chanukah, where we celebrate eight days of the miracle of light. The number eight is an important one in Judaism. The world, as

we know, was created in six days. On the seventh day, rest was created. So, what happened on the eighth day? The regular rhythm of life began. The eighth day is the day that models all the days to come. The Torah portion that is called *Shmini/Eighth* is also about this. When the preparations have been made, when creation is done, now, how do we go about the daily routine of making our lives worth living, making our lives holy?

There's a lovely Jewish text that goes through significant milestones in a person's life. *Ethics of Our Ancestors* gives us guidelines about what our ancestors thought was significant to concentrate on during many ages of life. For example, age five is when to start learning, and this text is also one of the sources for 13 being the age where we begin following mitzvot. After 20, it continues with every decade being significant, for some purpose. What it says about age 80 is interesting. *Ethics* says that the decade of 80 is "for strength."

When I've taught this verse, many folks are initially surprised. We know that 80 year olds aren't (generally!) at their peak of physical strength. But this speaks to what the word "strength" is; according to Judaism, physical strength isn't the main part of strength at all. At 80 – as I see in others in my role as a rabbi – a kind of inner strength shines through. People at 80 are aware that, like the six days of creation, the main work of their lives is concluded. Most times, by 80, folks have already experienced

some retirement. The 80s are a time for being ready to make the rest of one's life holy, worth living.

Eight seems like a particularly strong number to me this year because this is a "post-Covid" year. Even just in the microcosm of CBTBI, we have gone through a bit of a (re)creation of CBTBI during the Covid years, when priorities and abilities to gather were different. We have had some time to reflect. Now feels like a time of eights; it is a time to (re)create the "new normal." It is a time, at CBTBI, to get into new rhythms, of gathering, of prayer services, of supporting each other, of celebrating together.

As we celebrate eight billion people on our planet, as we prepare to celebrate the miracle of eight days of Chanukah, let us celebrate this time of eights. Let's celebrate this time of re-creation, and looking towards the future together.



### HOLIDAY SHOPPING!



Sunday, December 11  
10 AM-1 PM  
in the oneg room



- Items from the Sisterhood Judaica shop, including gift wrap/bags, candles, menorahs, decorations, and limited quantities of gelt and dreidels.
- Foxfire jewelry & accessories, with PTO receiving 20% of proceeds
- Remaining items from Chic Bags & Accessories Bingo
- Bracelets sold by Jacob Szasz in support of his mitzvah project
- Gift cards



## From the President's Desk by Ben Negin

### *A Fantastic Start*



The year 5783 is off to a fantastic start! Fully opening the synagogue's operations has been a challenge; however, I am proud to say that the congregation stepped up tremendously. Thank you to Lori Samilson and the entire ritual committee for running an outstanding High Holiday program.

Moving back to "normal" after being away for two years took a lot of work by the ritual committee as well as many others. Ultimately, the holidays went off with out problems. Also, I want to give a big thank-you to the Rabbi and the kitchen committee, including Mina Newstadt and Sevena Sacks, for providing food for the services and Sukkot celebrations. The holiday events brought together the congregants, as well as visitors, including two Rowan students, as well as our neighbors, for an enjoyable time.

CBTBI has also faced some challenges over the past few months. As most of you are aware, anti-Semitism is

on the rise. In October, there was a statewide FBI warning issued about a threat to synagogues. I was truly impressed by the rapid and thorough communication between law enforcement, Federation security, and temple leadership in the response to this threat. Chief Patrick Gurcsik and the Washington Township Police Department have served as amazing partners in the safety of our community. I also want to thank the work of Steve Blocher and the building and security committee, who responded to these threats at all hours. We are also planning to hold an anti-Semitism education event in the coming months.

Community building is my main priority for the coming year. We have had some wonderful events, thanks to the membership, adult education, and fundraising committees. After two years, the return of bingo was a smashing success under the leadership of Donna Blocher and the tireless work of the fundraising committee.

Overall, volunteers are the lifeblood of CBTBI. Joining committees is a way to be part of the community. This is how you can forge relationships, help others, and make our synagogue stronger. Please reach out to me, the rabbi, or any board member to connect with any of our committees.

## A View from The Pew by Yossi Chaskes

### *Access and Inclusion: Jewish Values and Language*

It is the values and ideals of Judaism, and how those values and ideals are practiced in daily life, that I hold most dear. This is true for me when applied to issues of access and inclusion for all those that are labeled as "other." This is certainly true for persons with a disability. Although my mobility issues are apparent, many, if not most members of CBTBI, are persons with "invisible" disabilities such as diabetes, ADHD, dyslexia, or lupus. Twenty-six percent of all Americans have a disability. All of us interact with persons with a disability, often unaware that we are doing so.

Words have the power to shape our understanding of the reality we experience daily. Words have the

power to heal and bring comfort. They also have the power to denigrate and evoke shame. Words have the power to shape our daily reality. In Judaism, we understand the concept of *lashon hara* and *lashon tov*, literally an evil tongue and a good tongue or hurtful speech and benign speech. Yiddish proverbs offer a window into the extent to which Judaism understands the power of the spoken word. Here are some examples:



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## A Message from Wendy Marder, Educational Director

*Thankful*



So it's Thanksgiving and I will be staying home because I am sick. I don't ever remember being sick on Thanksgiving and missing the festivities. Sure, we arrived late, due to ice storms, came at dinner time to let the kids rest a bit more when they

were sick, and even during Covid, we were a few around the physical table but the whole family gathered virtually. One of most beautiful Thanksgivings was in 2019 right after Ami's first brain surgery and he made it home the day before, which allowed me to cook and prepare and welcome different family and friends all weekend. It was miraculous and we will always cherish those days and pictures.

So this year, I'm not cooking or traveling, and though we will FaceTime instead of being around the table in person, I am still thankful. We still will share sweet words, enjoy seeing each other without the stress of traffic, fatigue, or illness. Blessed still and maybe even more reflective without the shlepping or major preparations.

At CBTBI we ask: "what are you thankful for?" Answers can change on a daily basis, depending on circumstances, but we emphasized what are you thankful for that you cannot buy?

Not sure you can read the answers on the bulletin board, but I will list a few: "my family, my teachers, my students, food, pets, the Phillies, vacations, my mom's help, good health, friends."

Certainly our students have been taught to be thankful, are being raised to appreciate people and feelings, not just things.

How about being thankful when you are sad, because of an illness, a loss, a bad day? Can you be thankful when you are in pain, mentally or physically?

Acknowledging pain and the why of it, allows us to explore the love in the loss. If we didn't care for someone so much, we wouldn't be in such pain. There is beauty in that and it shows how much that person meant to you.

Counting the blessings, even while acknowledging the curses in life, makes us greet each day stronger and more willing to help life be better for everyone. Think of all the positives that came out of Covid, the Zooms, connections, groups online that brought so much to people when we couldn't gather; the amazing opportunities to be together without leaving home; cold weather, illness, distance, disability, and time, to name just a few deterrents to gathering in person; a blessing that came about because of Covid restrictions.

Thanksgiving is one day a year on the American calendar, but built in to our daily, weekly, and monthly prayers. We are always reminding ourselves and others that we have so much to be grateful for.

Even remembering so many of our congregants and extended family who have passed away, I feel them and their influence on our lives. I am honored to have known them.

I am blessed with an amazing family, friends, and synagogue community. I am thankful.

**Sisterhood Chanukah Party**  
**Thursday, Dec. 15, 7pm**  
**Open to Congregation**  
**Games, Songs, Refreshments**  
**\$5/person**  
**RSVP by Dec. 11 to Meryl**  
**[MerylTLK@comcast.net](mailto:MerylTLK@comcast.net) or**  
**(856) 956-3646**

### *The Shofar*

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## View from the Pew *continued from page 2*

- A wicked tongue is worse than a wicked hand.
- A slap heals but a hard word is remembered.
- Words must be weighed, not counted.

Unfortunately, our language is rife with words and expressions that denigrate the disabled by evoking the idea that disability is something that renders the person “less than” whole, damaged, and diminished. You can read disabled as “not abled” and invalid as “in valid.” Our language is riddled with colloquial expressions conveying the idea that disability makes people less of a person, and thus, less worthy, and less valued. People believe that acquiring a disability is tragic and, thus, the disabled are to be pitied. Here are some examples from everyday speech that are part of the cultural lens through which we see the world:

- She turned a *blind eye* to the situation.
- He turned a *deaf ear* to her warnings.
- Her decision had a *crippling effect* on her family.

### Tikkun Olam – To Repair the World

*Now, each person must say: “The entire world was created only for my sake” (Sanhedrin 37a). Consequently, because the world was created for my sake, I must constantly look into and consider ways of making the world better; to provide what is missing in the world and pray on its behalf. Likutei Moharn 5:1-2*

The work of *tikkun olam* is precisely “*to provide what is missing in the world...*” The work of the Divine is never finished. Rabbis tell us that the world is recreated every day and our obligation is to assist in its completion. We repair the injustices around us; we repair the world. The Pirke Avot makes the obligation incumbent on us all.

***Disability rights are human rights. For those of us with a disability, there are no special needs, but only human needs.*** Jewish values direct us to be inclusive and accessible. At CBTBI, those of us with a disability have the same needs to be part of the community as other congregants. These needs include having access to

parking, the building, and all its rooms. To be part of the prayer community, we need to be able to hear the service, read a siddur, and have safe access to the bimah. And now, more important than ever, we must be able to remain safe in the event of an emergency. ***When we have access, we feel valued, acknowledged, and included as full participants in the CBTBI family.*** This is what repairing the world looks like!

### No Insult or Stumbling Block

*You shall not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am God.*  
Leviticus 19:14

The officers, board members and the executive director of this synagogue have shown a genuine concern and diligence regarding the safety of all members of the congregation as well as issues of access and inclusion for those of us with an accessibility challenge. Need I remind anyone of the remodeled accessible bathrooms, on both levels, and the installation of the lift. Very recently the synagogue has

moved forward on a grant that will improve sound augmentation for those with system compatible hearing aids. With all that has been done, there are some critical issues that need attention. Some issues are inexpensive and require minimal effort, while others are more costly, disruptive and time consuming. An example of the former is large-print

editions of the siddurs, machzors and chumashim. Examples of the latter include widening certain doorways to safely accommodate wheelchairs and walkers, placement of a railing along the entire length of outside ramp, and a renovation of the bimah to make it more accessible and secure.

Many of these things will also benefit others who are not disabled but perhaps are not as sure footed as they were in their youth, as well as for the youngest members of our community. None of us have special needs, but all of the CBTBI family have human needs.

