

Rabbi's Message



It is now about a month since Superstorm Sandy hit our area. There are still uninhabitable homes, places that don't yet have power, and needs that must be addressed. Lives have been altered forever, irreplaceable possessions have been lost. There are still many people who need help.

Like many others, I have been glad to see the outpouring of support for those affected by the hurricane. Many in our congregation have made donations of money, goods, and time; traveled to hard-hit areas to deliver food and goods; or helped with cleanup. The challenge will be to continue providing help when the storm and its aftermath are no longer news, to remember those whose lives won't be back on track for a long time.

The week after the storm, I prepared hot food, and together with three others, picked up more food and delivered it to a building in the Rockaways, where we served it to perhaps 50 people. One of us, a temple member in excellent shape, climbed 11 flights of stairs with about 10 quarts of soup, and walked up and down the halls knocking on doors and offering soup.

As we were driving out to the Rockaways, we passed through Brooklyn neighborhoods that appeared untouched by the storm, where people were shopping, going about their business. One person in the car commented that it's like we live in a cocoon. We were less than half an hour's drive away from people in desperate need after the hurricane, without power, water, food, heat, and yet everything seemed normal.

The thing is, we live in a cocoon all the time. Our city is always a place where poverty and need are

separated by only a few blocks from wealth and comfort. We don't see much about poverty on the news, because it isn't news—it's a constant. In the Torah we read "There will never cease to be needy ones in your land" (Deuteronomy 15:11). This is as true today as it was in the time of the Torah (and Nachmanides, in his commentary on this chapter, said that the phrase applies to any land where we live, not just Israel, and that it refers both to poor Jews and poor non-Jews).

This is why we are commanded to give tzedakah, which is often translated as "charity," though its root is the word "justice." Tzedakah refers specifically to giving money to help the poor. Our rabbis tell us that we should devote ten percent of our income to tzedakah (though we should not give more than 20 percent, or so much that we impoverish ourselves). It is separate from supporting our community institutions, such as synagogues (which is also an obligation). People living in poverty are also obligated to give tzedakah.

Jewish tradition makes no judgment on people who are poor. They are not considered to be inferior to those who are wealthy, or fundamentally different from them. There is also "a refusal to distinguish between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. As creations in the divine image, and as descendants of the same ancestors, the poor are entitled to the same level of dignity, and the same quality of life, as the wealthy" (Rabbi Jill Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy: Pursuing Social Justice Through Jewish Law and Tradition*).

Furthermore, our tradition is very clear that true generosity is consistency of giving—not just giving when something happens that makes us feel a rush of generosity, like a hurricane or other disaster. Tzedakah by habit is what is most desirable, even though it may not feel as good as making a one-time decision to donate out of a feeling of compassion for others.

(continued on Page 2.)

Rabbi's Message (Continued)

Those who lost so much in the hurricane will be in need for a long time to come, and a significant proportion of them were already living in poverty before the hurricane came. There are also many people in our city and in our world who were unaffected by the hurricane, but who were poor and continue to be.

The hurricane reminded us how suddenly comfort can turn to need. It should also remind us that we often live in cocoons of comfort, that we are not different from those living in poverty, and that tzedakah—justice in our community—means contributing to the care of those less fortunate than ourselves at all times, not just after a natural disaster strikes.

As Hanukkah approaches, this is a season when we think about giving, buying gifts for family and friends. This year, let us take this opportunity to think about our habitual tzedakah. How much are we giving? Is there more we can do to help the needy ones in our land? In this season of dedication (which is the meaning of the word “hanukkah”), let us rededicate ourselves to reaching the ideal that we read in Deuteronomy chapter 15, verse 4: “There shall be no needy among you.”

Happy Hanukkah, and I look forward to seeing you at temple.

Celebrate Shabbat at Our Monthly

Polluck Dinner



Friday, December 7th at 6:30 PM

Bring a homemade casserole or hearty soup.
We supply good bread and wine.

Services follow at 8:00 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING



Thursday evening,
December 13th

7:30 PM

Temple Banquet Room

President's Message



Our roof restoration project is formally underway with the engagement of Walter Sedovic Architects (WSA). WSA will be providing professional services and construction administration for the restoration of the Sanctuary roof including upgrades to our air conditioning and ventilation systems. The benefits to be derived from this effort will be working for us and for those that follow us in the years ahead. I thank members of the Congregation for their expression of support in advancing the roof restoration project.

I am pleased to report that we have received a grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the Daniel & Joanna S. Rose Fund to support the restoration and repair of our roof. Daniel Rose is Chairman of Rose Associates, Inc., a New York-based 85-year old real estate organization. He has pursued a career involving a broad range of professional, civic and non-profit activities. Professionally, he has developed such properties as the award-winning Pentagon City complex in Arlington, VA and the One Financial Center office tower in Boston. As an institutional consultant, his credits include the creation and implementation of the "housing for the performing arts" concept for New York's Manhattan Plaza. We appreciate the confidence that the Rose Fund has demonstrated in our synagogue and our rebuilding program.

In addition to seeking continued support from foundations and other organizations, I am creating an ad hoc Building Fund Committee to manage programs for supplementing our fundraising activities. I anticipate that this committee will be advocating creative and imaginative ways to obtain support for our facility needs.

During the past month our Sanctuary was filled with joy and appreciation for the dedicated work of four of our young people who achieved their bar and bat mitzvahs. I congratulate **Barzeli Bowman Schneider, Michael Kaplan, Jack Kaplan** and **Rayna Pajares-Held** and their wonderful families on their accomplishments. They have demonstrated the commitment that our Congregation has for education, love of Judaism and continuity of family participation in Temple affairs.

During the past month our Congregation has extended a helping hand to our neighbors citywide in their efforts to cope with the devastation brought upon our community by Hurricane Sandy. Through volunteering at relief shelters, distribution of food and supplies, and financial donations we trust that our efforts helped in some modest way in the recovery of storm victims.

Judy and I wish you and your family a glowing Chanukah.

Gerard Soffian

Toy Drive



Now through Wednesday, December 19th

New toys, gift wrapped, labeled with age and gender

Religious School Update

The religious school is in full swing. Our new teachers, Raya Grutman and Bryna Bilanow have been working hard with their students, as has our beloved veteran Vicky Katz. So far, the students are adapting well to their new teachers and the new curricula. Some have even been using the online classroom opportunity Temple Beth Emeth now offers. Of course, the teachers and the students are still getting used to this new learning option, but overall, the program seems to be working.

Our students in the Shatilim and Ilanim classes receive Hebrew instruction during the week. With the new system, students work in pairs or individually with the teacher for half an hour each week. While they do get close attention and can move at their own pace this way, the time is limited and the progress will be slow if the students are not doing additional work outside of class. Students should be using the Online Learning Center for 15 minutes at least three times a week! Essentially, the online work is set up to provide reinforcement of what the teachers cover in their sessions as well as enhance learning via games and fun activities. The Online Learning Center can be accessed at www.behrmanhouse.com. Please contact Rabbi Hoover if you need assistance.

With Hanukkah around the corner, the students will be learning about the holiday, and we all look forward to sharing latkes and other tasty treats together in celebration.

The Events Committee of the Board of Trustees invites you to:

"EAT, PRAY, SHARE"

Sponsor an Oneg after Shabbat services! Shabbat services offer a special opportunity to contribute to the life and community of Temple Beth Emeth. Sign up for a date that's significant to you; celebrate a simcha with the Temple by bringing food or contributing \$36 (or more) to sponsor a simcha.

Sign Up by calling Alice at the Temple Office; Write "Celebration/Oneg" in memo section of your check.



Member of the Month

Gale Resnicoff



Gale is a life-long Brooklynite who grew up on the corner of Ocean and Parkside Avenues right here in Flatbush. She attended PS 92, Walt Whitman Junior High School, and Erasmus Hall High School which “was one of the top schools in the country when I attended.” After graduating from The Old Grey School, she attended Brooklyn College for a year before she married her husband, Sy. She and her husband moved into first a 3, then a 4, then a 6 room apartment on Caton Avenue near the Parade Grounds (“the family kept growing”). In 1976, the family, now four kids and a dog, left Flatbush and bought a house in Marine Park and “I’m still there and still love the neighborhood.” After her husband passed away, Gale began to take classes at Kingsborough. “I’d probably still be there, but I became a grandmother and would rather spend time with the grandkids than with books!”

While growing up, Gale’s parents attended High Holy Day services at the Prospect Park Jewish Center. The family kept a Kosher home but were only able to semi-observe the Shabbat as her father worked on Saturdays. She attended Sunday school for a year and that, as she says, “was the extent of my religious education.”

While on Caton Avenue, several of her friends had become members of Temple Beth Emeth. It was at that time that her daughter, Shari (our own Shari Chappell) needed to begin Bat Mitzvah lessons so the Resnicoffs joined Beth Emeth.

(continued on page 6.)

Worship Services



December 7th & 8th

Friday Evening	Oneg Following Services	8:00 PM
Saturday Morning	First Night of Chanukah	10:00 AM

December 14th & 15th

Friday Evening	Chanukah Services and Latke Oneg	6:30 PM
Saturday Morning	Eighth Night of Chanukah	11:15 AM

December 21st & 22nd

Friday Evening Service	Oneg Following Services	8:30 PM
Saturday	No Service	

December 28th & 29th

Friday Evening Service	Oneg Following Services	8:30 PM
Saturday	No Service	

(Member of the Month, continued from page 5.)

Coincidentally enough, the day that Shari was signed up was also Rabbi William Kloner's first day as TBE's new Rabbi who, in Gale's words, "proved to be a wonderful Rabbi in his many years that he served the Temple." All four of her children have had their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs here as did two of her grandsons, Scott and Jason. Now, when she comes to Temple, it is for the High Holidays or for some special event and she always has a good time. "I think Rabbi Heidi [Hoover] is doing a great job as she had a big act to follow." On the personal side of her life, Gale met her future husband, Sy, at a fraternity party when she was 16 and he was 19. They were married 2 ½ years later. They had four children – Glenn, who lives in New Jersey, is married to Judi and who are the parents of Daniel and Diane; Meryl, who lives in Israel, is married to Uri and are the parents of Meitav, Shira, and Adi; Marci who is an RN at Lutheran Hospital and is very involved in holistic alternatives; and, of course, the aforementioned Shari who, along with her husband Paul Chappell (who put together the fantastic series of historic interviews for the Temple's Centennial celebration and fixed Cantor Noni's microphone), are still members of TBE. Gale was married to Sy for 23 years until his untimely passing. "It was a very good marriage and I loved being a Jewish Princess."

Along with her family, Gale is extremely happy to be able to be with a "great group of friends" that keeps her very, very busy.

Away from the family and friends, Gale wonders "if shopping and dining out are considered hobbies. I do enjoy the theatre and attend often. I am a member of the City of Hope organization which raises money for research for catastrophic diseases for the City of Hope Hospital in California."

Her shopping and theatre is not to say that she stays in New York all of the time but she is not a big traveler since "it takes me forever to get organized to go away." She has been to Italy and Brazil. She has been to Israel several times to visit her youngest daughter who lives there including a trip last April for her oldest granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah.

Professionally, Gale is still working for the New York City Department of Education in the Division of Nonpublic Schools which is located at 65 Court Street. She loves the area around the building since there are "so many stores [in which] to get into trouble in at lunchtime." There's that "hobby" of hers again. She now lives with her "wonderful companion, a golden retriever named Rusty" who, she says, is great because he doesn't talk back. He is very cuddly, though!

"In closing, I would like to say that except for losing my husband at a very young age, I've been blessed."

By Alan Zarrow

Book Plates



Book plates are now available for placement in prayerbooks - either Shabbat or High Holy Days. Donation for each plate is \$18. Book plates could be for either "in memory of", "in celebration of", or "in honor of".

Contact the Temple Office for donating..

Torah Study



Friday Evening, December 21st

7:30 PM

with Rabbi Heidi Hoover
Temple Banquet Hall

Secrets of Beth Emeth

This month, The Truth continues its series designed to explore the gems of the Temple building that are hidden in plain sight. Join us on a monthly tour of our 100-year old building. You will be surprised to see what you have missed.

Walk into Vikki's classroom and, at first glance, it looks like any other center for learning with desks, chairs, and games. But look up and you see an unusually-shaped ceiling for a classroom. Look closer and you see paneled walls. What was this space originally designed for? Read on!



The Temple Board Room



When you walk into "Vikki's room" you take a step back in Temple Beth Emeth history.

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(continued from page 7.)

You are entering the Temple Board Room – site of the Board of Trustees meetings, an occasional Brotherhood meeting, and an even-more occasional Temple Youth Group meeting. The photo in this article was taken in the spring of 1974 during a Temple Youth Group board meeting – or as it was not-so-originally called back then, a “bored” meeting (By the way, who **is** that person in the chair?). The room was covered with wood paneling and the walls were decorated with the portraits of our past Rabbis that are now hanging in the Temple lobby as well as framed photos of our past presidents. There was also an extra set of American and Israeli flags (can anyone tell us where they are now located before we use that topic for a future column?). The deep red colored chairs of the style that our mystery guest is sitting in are now located in the sanctuary and were used, appropriately enough, for the 2011 Temple Youth Group reunion photo that was posed for in front of the ark. The pink colored armless chairs in the background of the photo as well as the modular tables have not been seen in ages (but I have a hunch). On the inside wall next to the door is a plaque dedicated to the hard work of the past presidents of the Brotherhood of Temple Beth Emeth and to its founder, Rabbi Samuel D. Soskin whose portrait is hanging on the wall behind our mystery guest. Oh – and the name of the mystery guest sitting in the chair? Current Temple member Bonnie Greenbaum.

If anyone has any corrections or additions to this column or if you think you know of a secret place in the building that we should explore, please feel free to contact me at Ehallzman@yahoo.com.

By Alan Zarrow

Congratulations to Alan Zarrow for being honored by Erasmus Hall High School at halftime of their game against Lincoln back in October. The citation reads: "Erasmus Hall High School Sports Legends Day honors one of its own - Alan 'Mr. Erasmus' Zarrow, Athletic Director and Coach, - October 20th, 2012.

Please note that this year's Break-the-Fast on Yom Kippur was supported by the Development Fund.



Saturday, December 8th

Mama Doni Hanukkah Concert at 11:00 am.

\$15 per family for temple members, \$20 per family for non-members.

The religious school will hold a bake sale to benefit hurricane relief.

MEMORIAL FUND

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- RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FUND**
- ROOF FUND**

Candlelighting



Friday, December 7	4:10 PM
Friday, December 14	4:11 PM
Friday, December 21	4:14 PM
Friday, December 28	4:18 PM



Yahrzeit Kaddish List

The names listed below are taken from the *Bronze Tablets* and the *Book of Life*. Names are read at the Sabbath service following the date of passing. For information about *Memorial Plaques* and perpetual Kaddish, please call the Temple Office.

December 7th & 8th	December 14th & 15th	December 21st & 22nd	December 28th & 29th
Moe Berkowitz	Helen Block	Jeffrey Baer Edelson	President Harry S. Truman
Joel Berks	Hyman Jacob Cohen	Samuel Bergmann	John Allen
Monte Maurice Bliss	Jesse Cohen	Benno Bernstein	Kate Appel
George Blixman	Benjamin Dannenbert	Harold Chamack	Morris Becker
Gussie Dicker	Philip Dicker	Becky Cohn	Raphael Berger
Rose Dratch	Helen Jacobs Epstein	Hannah Fischgrund	Maud Bernstein
Samuel Dubin	David Freeman	Francis Florsheim	Delphine Block
Sybil Garner	Bruce Fremer	Ruth Frost	Rudolph Chess
Esther Geduld	Mamie Goldstein	Birdie Gewant	Elias Cohen
Gertrude Gerheim	Hilda K. Girshick	Joachim Ginzberg	Stanley Edwards
Ann Edith Goldberg	Max Girshick	Abraham Goldfarb	Aleja Figueroa
Lawrence Gutter	Fay Goldman	Sadie Gardner Goldman	Arnold Gewirtz
Anna Isbiz	Mamie Goldstein	Louis Goldner	Daniel Goldman
Anna H. Kestenbaum	Murray Goodman	Amalia Gumpert	Jennie Golluber
Hilda Kuhn	Mollie Greenman	Leonard Harris	Anna Greif
Flora Laskey	Charles Halpern	Gisha Herwitz	Ann Heffel
Barney Miller	Harry Herzog	Adeline Herzog	Jacob Hirschberg
Auguste L. Newman	Isadore Jacobs	Lenore Jacobs	Regina Kiss
David Rosenberg	Samuel Janover	Fanny Kleiner	Michael Kohn
Dora Rosenberg	Mandell Javer	Louis Kottick	Isabella Krupin
Anna Sacoder	Solomon Joachim	Lazarus Lipschitz	Henry B. Laskey
Beverly Schulmon	Yetta Kartell	Joseph Loeffler	David Levine
Addie Shank	Mary Kasper	Herman Mehrlust	Edna Strich Lindauer
Milton Soklow	Fanny Lazarus	Camilla Minzesheimer	Aaron Markman
Sadie Suber	Amy Jill Lehrer	Jacob Newman	Rae Nebenzahl
Florrie Wolff	Matthew G. Mendell	Minnie Petrie	Esther Tobia Newman
Edith Zucker	Rosalie Piesen	Edmund Piesen	Henrietta Norton
	Gustave Rothapfel	David Rabinowitz	Jean Stern
	Charles Rubens	Max Schwalbe	Sophie Sternberg
	Robert Rubenstein	Leah Silverman	Carrie Strauss
	Saide Schoendorf	Theophile Souweine	Rose Strich
	Max Simon	Abraham Sustick	Julette L. Tapolow
	Bruce Solomon	Louis Tartikoff	Henrietta Tobias
	Ruth Solomon	Amelia Hernstadt Tishcler	Mamie Victor
	Caroline Strauss	Lillian Trager	Bernardine Weltman
	Fiest Strauss	Rose Frey Winkel	Stella Wolff
	Edward Tobias		Pepi Zuckerman
	Louis Victor		
	Sidney Wedeen		
	Sophie Witze		

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