

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Staying High after the Holidays

The ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are called “the Days of Awe.” It’s a time for reflection and renewal, reconnecting with people and priorities. This year, the days were particularly full. Between visiting those too ill to attend services, corresponding with incarcerated Jewish men, and sadly saying goodbye to longtime TBT member David Babendure, who passed away on September 18, there was little time for personal obligations. Among the things I *was* able to accomplish during the Days of Awe was to visit my dentist’s office...where I most assuredly said, “AWE!”

Most dentists (and insurance companies) recommend visiting your dentist twice a year. You can schedule it around the same time you schedule changing the batteries in your smoke detector. Nearly ten years ago, I was having some problems with my gums, and the dentist and hygienist recommended that I come every three months, or twice as often as the average person. The multiple treatments hurt my gums and my finances. But I noticed that, as time went on, when I kept to the regimen, the treatments were not hurting as much and the health of my gums improved.

When my dentist, a Jewish man who grew up in Israel, came in to look at my mouth, he offered me a *Shana Tova* (Happy New Year). I told him I hoped he had a satisfying and fulfilling *Rosh Hashanah*. He smiled and said, “I don’t want to just be inscribed NOW – I want it to LAST!” I thought of all the people who get their “fix” of religion in September, and hope it will last all year. If I went to the dentist once a year, and didn’t think about my teeth from one appointment to the next, my oral health would suffer. Now that I’m in the habit of seeing the dentist every three months, I am more easily able to stay on track. I have also come to enjoy reconnecting with both the dentist and hygienist, being able to catch up personally, and we now know each other beyond the patient/practitioner relationship.

Perhaps there is a similarity with our spiritual health and well-being. I know there are those who may regard attending worship services as a chore; an obligation, like going to the dentist, that you have to get out of the way once or twice a year. If you’re not used to it, it can actually be painful. The more often we can connect with the spiritual side, the more comfortable we will become. Of course, prayer and spirituality does not always have to occur in a house of worship. Some of my most spiritual moments have been while experiencing beautiful nature or sharing intimate moments with friends and loved ones. But worshipping together, with a community, enhances it for everyone. There are a few families at Temple Beth Torah who have brought their children to Shabbat services since they were infants. These children grow up feeling like the synagogue is their second home; the other children become like cousins and other adults become like uncles and aunts.

The spirit of a small synagogue like TBT really enables the “one big happy family” feeling. Like all families, we have close moments and tense moments. The more we’re together, the more comfortable we’ll be with both the liturgy and each other.

We’ve had a truly inspiring Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I can sense this will be one of our best years ever!
L’shalom,

Rabbi Dan Gordon

To see previous monthly messages from Rabbi Dan Gordon, visit
<http://temple-beth-torah.org/our-rabbi/rabbis-monthly-message-archives/>

Lunch & Learn *with Rabbi Dan*

Wednesday, October 28, 12:30PM
Nourishment for the Body, Mind and Soul
Once a Month

Rabbi Dan Gordon facilitates a relaxed discussion on a variety of topics, including mitzvot, Torah, holidays, current events and Jewish Practices. Each month is a different topic and everyone gets a chance to participate. Bring your own lunch, and get ready to nourish both your mind and your body!

Upcoming dates: October 28, November 18, December 16

No RSVP necessary, feel free to just show up!

Saying Good-bye

We are sorry to inform you of the death of longtime Temple Beth Torah member David Babendure after a prolonged illness. David had been a member of Temple Beth Torah for over 20 years, contributing in many ways, including opening his home for Hebrew school classes and his corporate office for board meetings in the early 1990's. Our support and prayers go out to his wife Rhani, his children Sean, Pia and Nicole, step-sons Tray and Cannon Leatherwood and Wiley Sale and several grandchildren.