

# THE BAYIT הבית

Newsletter of Congregation Beth Tefilah, August 2014  
Elul 5775

## Gates of Fall שערי סתיו

### Our Mission

Congregation Beth Tefilah is a dynamic Orthodox Shul that serves the Jews of London, Ontario and area. We are an integral part of the London Jewish Community and participate fully in the ongoing life of Clal Yisrael. We are a home of prayer, a place of Torah learning, a community of chessed, and a cultural and social centre. We are an inclusive family that celebrates the traditional Jewish way of life together in a warm and non-judgmental atmosphere.

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### Rabbi's Message

#### Rosh Hashanah: Humility Shabbat of Penance

The days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are (*Aseret Yemei Teshuva*), the ten days of penance and the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is (*Shabbat Shuva*), the Shabbat of return. This year, the two days of Rosh Hashana lead directly into the Shabbat of return.

Comes the question. After forty-eight hours of prayer and judgment on Rosh Hashanah, have we not yet fully repented before G-d? How much more penance and returning can be asked of us?

That Yom Kippur is still before us makes sense. The Talmudic sages explained that G-d makes His judgment on Rosh Hashana and only seals His verdict on Yom Kippur. It also makes sense that we continue to pray during these ten days lest the positive judgments of Rosh Hashanah be reversed or, G-d forefend, the negative judgments of Rosh Hashanah remain in place. But that we continue to repent and return to G-d during this time is difficult to understand. Once we have repented for our sins and have returned, what more can be asked of us?

On the deepest level it is true that there is no end to repentance. Regret can be experienced on many levels and the closer we draw to G-d, the more sincerely and deeply we regret our sins. Yet, if this were the only reason for the ten days of repentance, we should have an entire year of repentance. After all, King David repented all his life and declared, "*My sin is before me all my days.*" Are we different?

It appears that the notion of continued repentance after Rosh Hashanah isn't to deepen our relationship with G-d and broaden our repentance. Rather, it is to correct a defect in our Rosh Hashanah repentance.

Though we were sincere in our regret and genuine in our resolve and confessed our sins, in some

ways our repentance we left wanting. It was a fault that we could not possibly correct on Rosh Hashanah, which is why we are given a full week and a Shabbat day, to correct and complete it.

### Humility

Humility is the signpost of repentance. We can't regret our sins unless we acknowledge our failures. If we don't confess our errors, we won't acknowledge that we have strayed. Confession before G-d is a humbling experience; a bitter pill of shame that is the hallmark of regret. It is crushing to the ego to realize how low we have fallen. Despite our best efforts and intentions, despite our previous errors and repentance, we have yet to learn from them. There is a sense of hopelessness. No matter how many times we resolve to change, when a new Rosh Hashanah arrives, we realize that we have sinned again.

How much more humbling can a life experience be? We come, hat in hand, begging for a forgiveness we know we don't deserve. Yet, we work at it because we really care. We try again. We resolve again that next year will be better despite all our shortcomings, weaknesses, vices and failures. As Rosh Hashanah progresses, a light kindles at the end of our tunnel. We sense that

our relationship with G-d is on the mend. Our hope for the future is kindled. We creep out of despair and into the light. Our confidence in ourselves and our future, is thankfully restored. And this, this recovery of sorts, is the defect that the week of penitence and the Shabbat of Return are designed to correct.

### **The Red Heifer**

A curious law about the Red Heifer will shed light on the defect of our Rosh Hashanah penitence. The Red Heifer was a sacrifice through which the ritually contaminated were purified. A perfectly Red Heifer was slaughtered as a sacrifice and its carcass was burned to ash. This ash was mixed with water and the mixture was sprinkled on those who were ritually contaminated through contact with the dead.

Because the Red Heifer purified the impure, our sages instituted many practices to ensure that those who handled it were themselves pure. First, even if they were in a state of purity, they underwent the process of purification. Second, the water that purified the handlers was sprinkled by children who were born in stone houses, built in a way that precluded their inhabitants from ever becoming impure. Third, these children were raised in these homes and weren't permitted to venture out, until they performed the sprinkling, to ensure that they were pure when sprinkling the water.

Yet, despite all these precautions, our sages insisted that before

actually handling the Red Heifer, the Priest be ritually contaminated and then immerse in a ritual pool. There was a historic reason for this. The tradition that our sages were handed down from Moses allowed for a ritually contaminated priest to handle the Red Heifer so long as he had immersed in a ritual pool. This teaching is not in the Torah, in fact a simple reading of the Biblical text implies the very opposite. Yet, this was their oral tradition.

In the last two centuries before the Common Era, a group emerged called the Sadducees, who opposed the entire notion of an oral tradition. They insisted on a literal reading of the Bible and rejected the rabbinic traditions. The sages went to great lengths to dispute this erroneous, though pious seeming, approach. One of the measures taken to oppose the Sadducees was to insist that the priest be contaminated in accordance with what was permitted by the oral tradition.

This is the historical reason, but let us delve into an underlying spiritual application. When the priest underwent this extraordinary process of exceptional purification, he would have exulted over his upgraded and unique state of purity. It can be assumed that it would have been challenging for him to keep this exultation from turning to pride. Pride smacks with arrogance and impurity, certainly an undesired ingredient for the facilitation of purification.

One of the benefits of contaminating the priest after the extensive purification is to lower him somewhat and demonstrate that he is still subject to impurity. No matter how holy one is, one is always subjected to sliding backwards. Pride makes us forget that and our sages never wanted us to forget.

### **Days of Penance**

The penance of Rosh Hashanah is intense. Similar to the purification process for the priest that handled the Red Heifer, G-d wants us to cover all our bases and repent for every possible sin. He demands that we regret them sincerely and keep Him literally in our thoughts and hearts every moment of Rosh Hashanah. This repentance is of the highest scale and its very height is its defect. It can lead to hubris.

Toward the end of Rosh Hashanah, our confidence in our relationship with G-d is restored. But such confidence allows pride to seep in. The next week is a time of penance to remind us that no matter how high we rise on Rosh Hashanah, we can be in need of penance the very next day. It is a week to correct our Rosh Hashanah pride and restore our humility.

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### **Upcoming Programs and Events**

Don't look now, but it's almost Rosh Hashanah. That's right, cottage season is winding down, school season is gearing up and

Beth Tefilah is getting ready for many wonderful events.

The first event is **Chai Five Wonderful Water-full Fun**. Chai Five caters to children ages 5 – 7 and 8 – 11. The theme of this event is water as it is a prelude to Rosh Hashanah and Tashlich.

Children will observe the behavior of fish in water and learn fascinating things about why we jettison our sins at the river. We will have special fishing and water races and will feed the fish (weather permitting) at the Thames River behind the Shull. The highlight of the event will be a special treat. Each child will make and take home their own Candy Apple!

Chai Five will be held on the second Monday of each month. The Wonderful Water-full Fun Chai Five takes place on Monday September 8, 4:00 – 5:30 PM. Supervised walking will be offered from LCHDS at 3:45 PM. Admission to this event is \$5.00 for Members and \$7.00 for non Members.

The following week we turn our attention to adults as Rabbi Gurkow will launch his latest book at the home of Sony and Stephen Taran. The Book, **Mission Possible: Living With Higher Purpose**, with its many reflections on purposeful living, is perfectly suited to the High Holidays and makes a wonderful High Holiday gift.

Listen to a live interview with the author about his book, learn about its main themes, big ideas and target audience. Have the opportunity to ask questions,

purchase your own autographed copy and socialize over delicious desserts. The book launch will take place at the Taran Family Home, #7-27 North Crest Drive, on Wednesday, September 17, 8:00 PM.

Beth Tefilah is thrilled to announce that Cantor Rabbi Aharon Fisher will join us again for the High Holidays. His sweet voice and inspiring cantorials have inspired us for two years running and we are happy to have him back with us this year.

Moving from the days of awe to the days of joy, we announce two Sukkot events. The first is for adults at the Sukkah of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Gurkow on Sunday evening, October 12, 8:00 PM. This will be a **Farbrengen in the Sukkah** with inspiring song, insightful Divrei Torah, delicious munchies and L'chaim. In the spirit of Simchat Bet Hashoeiva and the holiday's pulsing joy, this will be a joyful and upbeat event. It will not be held in the event of rain.

On very next day, there will be a **Chai Five Family Sukkot Party**. Due to Thanksgiving Weekend, Monday, September 13, third day of Chol Hamoed, is not a school day. Our annual Sukkot Party will include Lunch in the Sukkah, a scavenger hunt for children, an exciting Sukkot Game Show and several arts and crafts projects for children to complete on their own or with their parents.

The event will be held at Beth Tefilah, rain or shine, (in the event of rain, lunch will be served indoors). Admission is \$8.00 for

non members and \$6.00 for members.

The grand finale of our High Holiday season is **Simchat Torah**. Every year on Simchat Torah, Beth Tefilah is the place to be. An abundant, delicious, deli buffet is accompanied by drinks and L'chaim, song and dance. We offer dedicated Hakafot for children, teenagers, grandparents and members of Tzahal, but everyone is invited to join in the dancing, singing and lively camaraderie.

The highlight of the evening is the last Hakafah when we take the Torahs outdoors and dance on the street. It is a proud display of our Jewishness, singing Am Yisrael Chai, plainly and openly for all to hear.

The evening service and Kiddush will commence at 7:00 PM. Everyone is welcome and please bring a friend.

Looking ahead to after the High Holidays, Beth Tefilah will host a communal Shabbat Dinner on Friday night, October 31, an amazing Chai Five on Monday, November 10, Teens in the Kitchen on Thursday, September 13, LCHDS Shabbat on Shabbat, September 15 and Londoner's Tell Their Stories on Shabbat, November 22.

After a one year hiatus, Beth Tefilah is proud to announce the **return of JLI**, The Jewish Learning Institute. The first six week semester of the coming year begins on Tuesday, November 4 **How Happiness Thinks**. What does happiness

really mean and how does one attain it? How do we maintain happiness in times of stress and how do we keep it vibrant in times of routine? How does happiness enhance our quality of life and how does it enhance our family and marriage?

These questions and more will be explored in our JLI course, How Happiness thinks. For more information or to reserve, email [rabbi@bethtefilah.org](mailto:rabbi@bethtefilah.org)

As he does every year, Rabbi Gurkow will purchase a set of Lulav and Etrog for you. If you would like to order a set, please contact Rabbi Gurkow directly (519) 434-3962 or [rabbi@bethtefilah.org](mailto:rabbi@bethtefilah.org). The due date for reservations is Monday September 29.

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**Our Lives**

**Congratulations**

George and Miriam Lazarovits on the birth of their granddaughter, Bailey Sara born on May 13, 2014 to their son Michael Lazarovits and daughter-in-law Susan Lambert.

To the Brown family on the occasion of their son Zalman's inaugural donning of Tefilin.

Mazal tov to grandparents, Sam and Mina Sussman, on the recent Bat Mitzvah of their twin granddaughters, Emily and Jessie, on March 16, 2014 in Vancouver, BC. Emily and Jessie are twin daughters of Debra and Ken

Miller, Sam and Mina's daughter and son-in-law.

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**Condolences:**

With sadness we acknowledge the passing of: Sandy Levin's mother, Idelle Levin who passed away in Chicago, April 23, 2014 (23 Nissan).

Rose Horowitz, a long time Beth Tefilah member, passed away on April 14, 2014 (14 Nissan).

Saul Benjamin David Fridman, son of Dr Gerald and Janet Fridman.

Robin Tugender's father, Farrand (Yehoshua Falik) Miller, July 6, 2014 (8 Tamuz).

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**Reminder - High Holidays**

The High Holidays are around the corner, we would like to remind you about Beth Tefilah's policy. Guests are welcome to celebrate the High Holidays with us; however we ask you to keep in mind that guests are asked to donate a minimum of \$125.00 per adult. This allows us to provide a quality, festive and spiritual environment during this special season.

**Reminder - Donations**

Beth Tefilah is now set up for credit card contributions and for automobile donations.

- 1. Credit Card
- “Dues are not to be paid on

**line using Canada Helps”**

Donations are processed online through [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org).

Visit [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org). Click on Make A Donation. Follow links for Charity and Religious Organization. Scroll to Congregation Beth Tefilah and complete the form.

The funds will be transferred to Beth Tefilah and the web site will process your donation.

2 To Donate a vehicle to Beth Tefilah

visit <https://donatecar.ca> Click on the link to donate and follow prompts to Beth Tefilah.

Funds generated by the car sale will be transferred to the Shull and you will receive your donation from Beth Tefilah.

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**Friends of Congregation Beth Tefilah**

We appreciate the support given to us by our Friends. A minimum donation of \$36.00/year will put you on our Friends list. This donation is used to help offset the cost of compiling and mailing this newsletter as well as other programs undertaken by the Shul. All donations are eligible for a tax receipt. Call the Shul office at 519-433-7081 if you need more information.

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## **Presidents Message**

It is my pleasure as the returning president for Congregation Beth Tefilah Synagogue to offer best wishes in the coming new year 5775. Our small but vibrant synagogue has and continues to offer orthodox Judaism to the London community in a sincere and meaningful way for members, friends, and non-members alike. Our Rabbi and Rebbetzin, Lazer and Basie Gurkow, have been with us about 15 years providing stability, warmth, education and spiritual growth to those they encounter. We are very grateful for their energetic approach to increasing the knowledge and opportunities for Yiddushkeit to others, while caring for their own wonderful large family.

During the past year, the synagogue led by our past president Avi Brown, Vice President Derek Mazer, and Treasurer Elly Freund-Bell, and the board members, did a fine job of tending to the many different challenges that any shul must deal with. Whether it was building issues, member concerns, consulting with our Rabbi, interacting with the greater London Jewish Community and beyond, these people handled themselves in a very careful and considerate way. Yasher Koach!

As we are all very aware, times are very difficult in Israel, and are likely to continue that way for some time. Innocent people on both sides of the Gaza border have lost their lives which is very sad to see. People live in horrible fear from rocket and bomb attacks that prevents them from living a normal life. Lets pray for the safety of our friends and family involved in this conflict. We hope for a truce that can stick in the new year.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are opportunities for us all to look at ourselves with truth and sincerity. Can we be better by: caring more for others, taking on more mitzvahs, being generous with time and money, providing for ourselves and our family needs, etc. Always strive to do better is my motto, and don't look back too much!

All the best in the New Year.

Shanah Tovah!

Jack Bottner, President

## DONATIONS – March 26, 2014 – August 20, 2014

### Yahrzeit and Yizkor:

- Gerald and Janet Fridman for Janet's father, Ellis Blasley.
- Maish and Maxine Levin for Maish's uncle, David Rachman and Maish's mother Sheila Levin.
- George and Miriam Lazarovits for George's father, Miksa Lazarovits.
- Gerald and Janet Fridman for Gerald's mother, Sarah Fridman.
- Boris and Jane Sverzhinsky for Jane's mother Shmulait bat Noach.
- Phil and Judy Weinstein for their parents, Phil's father Yosef David ben Freidal Alter, Judy's father Joel Cola, and Judy's mother Bronia Cola.

### Kiddush and Seuda:

- Rabbi Tzvi and Linda Berman and Jack and Michelle Bottner.
- Maish and Maxine Levin in honour of Aufruf for their son David and bride to be Julia Gurau.
- Norman and Riquette Sherman, general donation, in honour of Yahrzeit of grandson Adar Allouche.
- Manny and Hazel Friedman in memory of Manny's father, Shlomo-Zundel ben Menachem Mendel, Manny's brother, Leon Friedman, and Hazel's father, Aba Leb ben Peretz.
- Menachem Fellig and Yael Goldberg for Yael's birthday and Chaya Fellig's birthday.
- Chabad Lubavitch of Waterloo ( Rabbi Moshe Goldman), gratitude for a wonderful welcome extended to him at Beth Tefilah, including Maftir.
- Congregation Beth Tefilah to honour Mary Adams and her sister, Patti Ciufio for their work in the gardens.
- Danny Bell and Elly Freund-Bell in honour of Danny's father's Yahrzeit, Moshe ben Yitzchak (Paul Bell).
- Lesley Classic for Sylvia Classic.
- Norman and Riquette Sherman general donation in honour of Yahrzeit for Norman's brother, Alvin Sherman.
- Rabbi Tzvi and Linda Berman in honour of their new granddaughter, Chana Ita and Yahrzeit for Linda's mother, Sylvia Foudin.
- The Antony family in honour of Yahrzeits for for Abie Antony and Rebecca Wolf.

### Contributors to Potluck Kiddush:

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Lisa Klinger                   | • William and Rachelle Frydman |
| • Sharon Richman                 | • Alex and Ludmila Lyadski     |
| • Carl Ehrman                    | • Laurence and Darlene Guslits |
| • Jack and Michelle Bottner      | • Octavian and Maria Tetelbaum |
| • Rabbi Eliezer and Basie Burkow | • Sam and Mina Sussman         |
| • Chana Richards                 | • Isaac and Jessica Shapiro    |
| • Rabbi Tzvi and Linda Berman    | • Marnie Richmond              |
| • Ari and Tamar Judah            | • Gerald and Janet Fridman     |
| • Moshe and Joan Yatziv          |                                |

**Shavuot Dairy Lunch:**

- Antony Family
- Menachem Fellig and Yael Goldberg

**CBT Endowment Fund**

- Avraham and Pearl Santopinto

**HH Honours**

- Marvin and Hannah Sherebrin

**General Donations:**

- Irwin and Sabina Finestone
- Mirit Poznansky
- Nathan Schiff
- John and Kayla Molnar
- Tamara Volokhov
- Joseph and Gloria Gilbert
- Danny Bell and Elly Freund-Bell
- Menachem Fellig and Yael Goldberg
- Sharon Richman
- Chana Richards
- Devorah Elias
- Boris and Jane Sverzhinsky
- Debie Medzon
- Carl Ehrman
- Irving J. Zwirek
- Devorah Gordon
- Monty and Roslyn Caplan
- Phil and Judy Weinstein
- Shahnaz Keypour
- Fannie Goose Foundation
- Sam Katz Foundation
- Sam and Esther Teitelbaum Foundation
- Sandy Levin
- United Jewish Appeal
- Yitzchok and Isidore Halberstam
- Gertrude Luxenberg
- Ruth Antony
- Stephen Antony
- Jack and Michelle Bottner
- Rabbi Tzvi and Linda Berman
- Moshe and Joan Yatziv
- Peter Mazer
- Nicole Chabot
- Derek and Naomi Mazer
- Chabad Lubavitch of Waterloo
- Irwing and Susan Gurau
- Chevra Kadisha Sewing Group
- Shalom and Nicki Ishai
- Donald J. Grossman
- Zara B. Leff
- Sam and Mina Sussman
- Sari and Allen Gold

If we have inadvertently omitted anyone who donated between March 26, 2014 and August 20, 2014, please call the office at 519-433-7081. We will be happy to include you in our next newsletter.