

THE



# Kol

VOLUME 100 NO. 1

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

ELUL 5780/TISHRI/HESHVAN 5781

A still life illustration featuring a wooden honeycomb dripping with honey, a whole pomegranate, and a pomegranate cut open to show its seeds. The background is dark and textured.

## Home FOR THE Holy Days

## *L'Shanah Tovah*

HIGH HOLY DAY SCHEDULES INSIDE





### **Mission Statement**

*Temple Beth El is a vibrant and inclusive community of Jews who join together for prayer, education, celebration, mutual support and comfort, tikkun olam and acts of loving kindness. We are guided by Torah and the principles of the Conservative movement. We are committed to our community, the State of Israel, and Jews around the world*

### **Vision Statement**

*Our vision is that Temple Beth El will be an inspiring center of Conservative Judaism in which meaningful experiences and memories take root and grow.*

### **Values Statement**

*We are a welcoming and inclusive congregation.*

*We value and respect each congregant and his or her personal journey in Judaism.*

*We foster a sense of connectedness with our community.*

*We value participation in all aspects of synagogue and Jewish life.*

*Our congregation will be here for the entire Temple family now and for future generations.*

## *Welcome to our house.*



139 Winton Road South  
Rochester, NY 14610  
Phone: 585-473-1770

# STAY CONNECTED

In these unprecedented times, the way we gather has needed to be different. We are still holding services and finding ways to come together as a community. Please stay connected with us via the zoom links below and at **tberochester.org**, where you can find up-to-date information and content.



 [facebook.com/TBEROCH](https://facebook.com/TBEROCH)  [@tberochester](https://instagram.com/tberochester)

 **Subscribe to our YOUTUBE Channel: Temple Beth El Rochester**



## WEEKDAY SERVICES

### Shacharit:

Sunday: 8:30 am  
Monday–Friday: 7:30 am  
Rosh Hodesh: 7:15 am  
Secular Holidays: 8:30 am



### SHACHARIT ZOOM LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6p5ky6h>  
Call-in: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 846 8881 5480

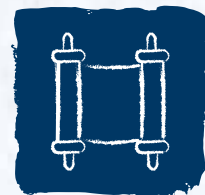
### Mincha/Ma'ariv:

Sunday–Friday: 6:00 pm



### MINCHA/MA'ARIV ZOOM LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6d78zsx>  
Call-in: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 841 5194 9603



## SHABBAT SERVICES

Pesukei dezimra: 9:30 am  
Shacharit: 10:00 am  
Torah Service: 10:30 am



### ZOOM WITH THE CONGREGATION:

<https://tinyurl.com/y23h7qh8>  
Call-in: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 858 5167 5893

**Mincha/Ma'ariv:**  
1½ hrs prior to sunset



### MINCHA/MA'ARIV ZOOM LINK:

<https://tinyurl.com/y6d78zsx>  
Call-in: (929) 205-6099  
Meeting ID: 841 5194 9603

# HIGH HOLY DAYS



***All High Holy Day Services will be led by Rabbi Leonardo Bitran and Hazzan Randall Levin via livestream unless specified.***

## **SELICHOT SERVICE**

**Saturday, September 12**

8:45 pm ..... Havdallah followed by “Music for the Soul” Service led by Hazzan Randall Levin

## **ROSH HASHANAH**

**EREV ROSH HASHANAH**

**Friday, September 18**

6 pm ..... Mincha/Maariv Service

8–9 pm ..... Niggunim Only Service live from Miami with Rabbi Dan Horwitz

## **FIRST DAY ROSH HASHANAH**

**Saturday, September 19**

P’sukei Dzimra and Shacharit Service led by Max Steiner [▶ YouTube](#)

Yoga service led by Michelle Marcus [▶ YouTube](#)

10–11:30 am ..... Torah Service & Abbreviated Musaf

10:45 am ..... Sermon

3 pm ..... Learning Session live from Miami with Rabbi Dan Horwitz

## **SECOND DAY ROSH HASHANAH**

**Sunday, September 20**

P’sukei Dzimra and Shacharit Service led by Max Steiner [▶ YouTube](#)

Yoga service led by Michelle Marcus [▶ YouTube](#)

10–11:30 am ..... Torah Service & Abbreviated Musaf

10:45 am ..... Sermon live from Miami with Rabbi Dan Horwitz

12 pm ..... Shofar Service in TBE parking lot (IN PERSON)

5 pm ..... Tashlich, Mincha, and Shofar Service at Lake Riley (IN PERSON)



## KOL NIDRE

Sunday, September 27

6:30 pm ..... Kol Nidre Service

9–10 pm ..... Niggunim Only Service live from Miami with Rabbi Dan Horwitz

## YOM KIPPUR

Monday, September 28

P'sukei Dzimra and Shacharit Service led by Max Steiner  YouTube

10:30 am ..... Torah Service

11:15 am ..... Sermon & Yizkor

12 pm ..... Musaf

2 pm ..... Learning Session with Rabbi Bitran

3 pm ..... Learning Session live from Miami with Rabbi Dan Horwitz

Mincha Service led by Max Steiner  YouTube

7 pm ..... Ne'ilah

*Zoom links for online services at [tberochester.org](https://tberochester.org)*



# SUKKOT



**All High Holy Day services will be conducted via livestream unless specified.**

## EREV SUKKOT

**Friday, October 2**

6 pm ..... Mincha Maariv Service

6:30 pm ..... Candle Lighting

## FIRST DAY OF SUKKOT

**Saturday, October 3**

9 am ..... Shacharit

6 pm ..... Mincha

7:29 pm ..... Candle Lighting

## SECOND DAY OF SUKKOT

**Sunday, October 4**

9 am ..... Shacharit

6 pm ..... Mincha

7:27 pm ..... Holiday Ends

## CONCLUDING DAYS OF SUKKOT

### HOSHANAH RABA

**Friday, October 9**

7 am ..... Shacharit with Hoshana Raba Service

### EREV SHEMINI ATZERET

6 pm ..... Mincha/Maariv

6:18 pm ..... Candle Lighting

## SHEMINI ATZERET

**Saturday, October 10**

9 am ..... Shacharit

11 am ..... Yizkor Recited

## EREV SIMCHAT TORAH

6 pm ..... Mincha and Simchat Torah

7:17 pm ..... Candle Lighting

## SIMCHAT TORAH

**Sunday, October 11**

9 am ..... Shacharit

6 pm ..... Mincha

7:15 pm ..... Holiday Ends





# Family Service and Programs live from Miami on ZOOM led by Rabbi Dan Horwitz

## **ROSH HASHANAH**

**FIRST DAY ROSH HASHANAH**  
**Saturday, September 19**

10:30–11:15 am..... Tot Shabbat Service

12–1 pm ..... Teen Lunch n Learn:  
What do Akon, Hillary Duff  
and Miley Cyrus have to say  
about Teshuva?

1:30–2:15 pm ..... Family Service

**SECOND DAY ROSH HASHANAH**  
**Sunday, September 20**

4–4:30 pm ..... Virtual Tashlich

## **YOM KIPPUR**

**Monday, September 28**

10:30–11:15 am..... Tot Kippur Service

1:30–2:15 pm ..... Family Service

**FIRST DAY OF SUKKOT**  
**(Shabbat) Saturday, October 3**

10:30–11:15 am..... Tot Shabbat Service

1:30–2:15 pm ..... Family Service



*Zoom links  
for online  
events at  
[tberochester.org](http://tberochester.org)*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Sometimes the light's all shinin' on me  
Other times, I can barely see  
Lately, it occurs to me  
What a long, strange trip it's been.  
-Grateful Dead*

While I'm admittedly not much of a Grateful Dead fan, and this is likely the oddest start to almost anything I've penned, these lyrics struck me as I sat down to write for this KOL.

If someone told us last year at the conclusion of High Holy Days that come March our world would be turned upside down—that “normal” life would come to a grinding halt, I think we all would have called that person out as crazy. Yet here we are—September 2020 and normal has taken on a completely different form. It's like we've all been transported to another dimension. Yes, indeed...what a long, strange trip this year has been.

While we have experienced loss, both individually and as a community, and noting it has taken some time to adjust, new routines shouldn't erase our ability to remain steadfast in honoring and celebrating tradition.

### **Sometimes the light's all shinin' on us...**

Over the past several weeks, TBE has hosted a baby naming, an aufruf, and three B'nei Mitzvah. We are similarly planning for another 16 B'nei Mitzvah through next spring.

An obvious bright spot—we are again on the precipice of our High Holy Day season. While it won't look like last year, or any other year for that matter, we strive to bridge old and new traditions, celebrating a new year and opportunity for a fresh beginning.

How lucky are we to have such an abundance of nachas?

### **Other times, I can barely see...but we're going to be just fine.**

We all want to know there's a plan for us - to see what's coming around the corner. For me, the gift of this grand pause is finding contentment in actually not being able to see, not knowing all the answers, and to have more faith that everything will be just fine. The truth is, we have no choice. Let's commit to continuing to look forward together.

On behalf of the Officers and Board of Directors, may 5781 bring health and peace to each of you and the people of Israel.

L'shanah Tovah,

Martin A. Spokony  
TBE Board President

For highlights of the  
Minutes of the Board of  
Trustees Meeting, please  
go to [tberochester.org](http://tberochester.org).





# FROM THE DESK OF THE SENIOR RABBI

## FROM PINCHAS TO COVID 19 AND THE HIGH HOLY DAYS 5781

At the beginning of the summer we read *Parashat Pinchas*. At the end of the summer, already in the book of Deuteronomy, we read *Parashiot* like *Ki Tavo* or *Nitzavim-Vayeilekh*. None of these *Parashiot* are read during the High Holy Days. Those *Parashiot* are from the Book of Genesis, (in the case of Rosh Hashanah) and the book of Leviticus (in the case of Yom Kippur). Nevertheless, *Parashat Pinchas* presents an interesting dilemma, applicable to our situation of Covid 19 and, in some ways, to the High Holy Days this year, 5781.

Let's remember the story. In a surprising turn of events, Pinchas kills Zimri and Cozbi for an immoral act they performed in front of Israel. Was Pinchas a hero or a murderer? He saved countless lives: no more people died because of the plague. On the other hand, Pinchas seemed a man of violence. Incredibly strangely, God says the following in *Parashat Balak*, "Pinchas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the Priest, has turned back My anger from the Israelites by being zealous among them on My behalf, so that I did not wipe out the Israelite people in My zeal. Therefore say: I am making with him My covenant of peace" (Num. 25:11-12). God declared Pinchas a hero and makes a special covenant of peace with him. This is troubling and confusing, because we know that if Pinchas had killed Zimri and Cozbi before or after their cohabitation he would have been guilty of murder. His actions require us to learn about decisions.

It has been written that there are Moral decisions and Political decisions. Each one has its own realm of concern. Jewish Moral decisions are inside of *Halachah* (Jewish Law), which gives answer to questions that deal with what should I do. Political decisions answer the question what should we do. The we makes political decisions more difficult because they involve conflicting considerations from different sides of the spectrum. Moral law tends to be timeless, while Political decisions are time limited.

Therefore, we can say that according to Jewish Morals (*Halachah*), Pinchas should not have killed anyone. *Halachically*, one should not commit murder. To truly understand Pinchas' action, we need to say that he was making a political decision for which the thousand that were dying were his main concern. Where was Moses? Moses was compromised because he himself was married to a Midianite woman. He couldn't oppose the Midianites as strongly as Pinchas did. Pinchas acted NOT on moral principle, but on political calculation. It is better to kill these two lives and save thousands.

The difference between moral and political decisions becomes very clear when it comes to decisions of life and death. The moral rule is: saving life takes precedence over all other *mitzvot* except three: incest, idolatry, and murder. It is clear that we as individuals have moral decisions to make, but what about governments? They must act in the long-term interests of the people, we think. We have moral duties as individuals; we make political decisions as a nation. The two are different. There is a tension between Moral and Political decisions. We hold life as sacred, and yet we are committed to justice, liberty, and opportunity. Here governments have a lot to say. In our traditions, the Prophets have held politicians accountable to morality, thus preventing political decisions from becoming amoral. As we live through these unprecedented times in modern history, let us keep this dilemma of Moral and Political decision close to our hearts, so we can use them wisely. Our High Holy Days this year will be very different. Decisions are being made to bring to you the best Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we have to offer. It is my hope that you will still be able to attain a measure of inspiration, renewal, and sacredness this year. I sincerely hope that now, more than ever, the Shofar, liturgy, and melodies will bring to your hearts the messages of inner peace, inspiration, and readiness to live and enjoy the new year as ever before, with much tradition and Judaism available to you.

Shanah Tovah Umetukah,

Rabbi Leonardo Bitran



Look for this icon to see Zoom links for online events or information at [tberochester.org](http://tberochester.org).



## FROM OUR HAZZAN

What we have learned in the past year? I suspect quite a bit. My recollection of writing a Kol article at this time last year seems like it was a million years ago. Most of our lives have changed in significant ways during the past year. Like many of you, I have lost a few friends along the way. There has been some sadness for sure, but also signs of tremendous hopefulness that springs forth from unsettling times. Humans have a dualistic nature to them. On the one hand, people are resistant to change, and on the other hand we have this incredible ability to adapt when it becomes absolutely necessary. Many of the greatest human success stories involve someone being forced to do something that they at one point resisted with all of their being. One of the things that I have learned about during the past year is all of you, the members of Temple Beth El, young and old. From my interactions with elderly members of our community, to our Keshet and Limmud parents, to my bar mitzvah students and their parents, and our professional staff, I have witnessed first-hand this unique human ability to adapt, this incredible resilience and tenacity that our congregation possesses. I have seen seniors use technology in a way that they likely never imagined, I have spent countless hours commiserating with parents over how their children (and mine) would be able to learn online, and seen how our professional staff has struggled, personally and professionally, and ultimately succeeded in adjusting to a drastically different reality. It is inspiring.

Our High Holidays will be different this year, for sure. But the themes of the holiday and in our sacred prayers will speak perhaps more loudly than ever. During the online classes I teach, a common reaction has been how prayers that seemed antiquated a year ago suddenly felt fresh and relevant, as if our ancestors were speaking to us through the collective wisdom of generations. Three themes of the High Holidays stick out in this regard:

- 1) We are not in control of everything. The emphasis on Rosh Hashana in particular is God's sovereignty, the idea that God is ultimately the one who created us and indeed the world, and the universe will unfold in a way that is largely out of our hands. During the Un'taneh Tokef prayer we confront our own fragile mortality, asking "How many will pass on, and how many will be born. Who will live and who will die?" How different those words ring this year compared to last!
- 2) We can change. "Ut'shuva, ut'fillah, u'tzedakah." Our changing, our prayers, and our righteousness have the power to transform our destiny. Teshuva involves self critique and a resolve to act in line with our principles. Yes, much is out of our control, but these three divine aspects of humanity have been, and will continue to be, the ways in which we can determine what sort of world we live in going forward.
- 3) Compassion. The Hebrew word for compassion is the most common word found in the High Holiday Machzor. In the Untaneh Tokef prayer, God is depicted as a judge. But the Rabbinic understanding of God is specifically as a *compassionate* judge, and when the balance of one's deeds are in doubt, God places an extra good deed on the scale of justice. This challenging time has been a source of humility in our lives, hopefully enabling us to show greater compassion for one another, and for ourselves.

During the coming year, may we continue to approach the world and our fellow human beings with humility and compassion.

Emily, Henry, Michael, and I wish you a L'shana tova umetuka!

Hazzan Randall Levin