Rabbi’s Corner - “Each of Us is a Ram”: Sermon from Second Day of Rosh Hashanah 5781
By: Rabbi David Finkelstein

In a video she published last month called “Caught in the Thicket,” my teacher Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, the President of Hebrew College, says beautiful, poetic, and heartbreaking words about “The Binding of Isaac,” chapter 22 of the Book of Genesis, today’s Torah Reading for Rosh Hashanah. Among these poetic words, Rabbi Anisfeld says, “The tragic momentum of the story seems irresistible: the child will have to die.”

Do our lives have tragic momentum?

Is the tragic momentum in our lives irresistible, or is there still hope?

The story of Aqedat Yitzhak, the Binding of Isaac, enables us to feel terror as hope recedes, the tragedy gets closer and closer, and each verse puts Isaac’s life in deeper peril. Why, though? Why read this story on Rosh Hashanah? In what I am about to say, in this homage and response to Rabbi Anisfeld’s piece, I hope to suggest answers to these questions.

(Continued on page 4)

Mark’s Remarks – Zooming in for the Holidays
By: Mark Frydenberg

Like many synagogues, Temple Beth Israel responded to the current global pandemic by offering high holy day services online only this year, for the first time in our history. Rabbi David Finkelstein and Cantor Ellen Band led services for a mostly empty sanctuary filled with computer cables, microphone cords, and webcams on tripods and Harrison, a Bentley University student who managed the cameras and technology that enabled us to stream the services on Zoom.

This was a true team effort, from even before the holy days started:

Paul, Al, and David Smith, Ed Brown, and Alan Levine helped coordinate distributing of machzors prior to Rosh Hashanah. (Here’s a reminder, please return yours to the office if you borrowed one).

Devin Shmueli, Joan Friedman, Erica Mackin, and others shopped, cooked, and

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Mark’s Remarks– Zooming in for the Holidays
By: Mark Frydenberg

(Continued from page 1)

delivered the dinner so that members could share a meal together on Erev Rosh Hashanah, and join on Zoom for Kiddush and Motzi and community. Behind the scenes, many people helped to ensure our services went smoothly:

Susan Holbert organized our in-person Tashlich and shofar blowing at the Watch Factory location, arranging groups, promoting the event, and providing the texts for the services. Phyllis Werlin provided hints and suggestions gleaned from online conversations about planning virtual services.

Andrea Baron helped with setting up the technology and joined in the sanctuary on Rosh Hashanah to make sure all went well. Our “Zoom ushers” – coordinated by Susan Baron, and including Dina Baker, Sylvia Hobbs, Ben Nudelman, Linda Ungerleider, Penina Weinberg, and me – managed the waiting rooms and let people in the call.

Jim Baron sounded the shofar from his living room (with an impressive 39-second tekiah g’dolah, but who’s counting?).

TBI members participated in our services by creating videos. Thanks to:

- Hankus Netsky, for sharing Yiddish melodies and melodies of the Hollender family.
- Howard Trachtman , Paul Smith, Natasha Moshinsky, Jerry Schectman, and Celia Schneider, and Erica Mackin for recording Torah and Haftarah readings.
- Yaron Sharagai for his musical interpretation of the Yom Kippur morning Haftarah.
- Audrey Kennen, Catherine Cantrell, Mark Frydenberg and Susan Baron for recording prayers for the country, Israel, and messages for the congregation.
- The Goldstein/Kaitz and Conrad/Cohen families for carrying on the tradition of offering the priestly blessing.
- Phyllis Werlin chanted Kol Nidre recorded from her “other” synagogue in Malden.
- Larry Bloom and Merrill Grif for recording the Book of Jonah.
- Cantor Band recorded several favorite High Holy Day melodies.
- Rabbi David recorded his sermons.

Many more participated in our online new year’s greeting video. Visit http://tbiwaltham.org and click on Rosh Hashanah Videos or Yom Kippur Videos to watch them again. Thanks to Max, a student at Bentley University, who prepared and uploaded these videos to our YouTube channel so that we could easily share them on our website.

Because our services were virtual this year, many guests were able to join us from a distance. We welcomed out-of-town parents, relatives, and friends to celebrate and pray with us. A touching moment for many people came during a Mi Shebeirach blessing for the congregation. The Zoom screen spotlighted participants briefly while reciting their Hebrew names, as if to say, "Hineinu" – Here I am.

As your synagogue president, I am very proud of all that we have done together to keep Temple Beth Israel relevant and operating during this pandemic. With your involvement as an organizer, helper, or participant, we provided meaningful experiences on Shabbat

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and holidays throughout the spring and summer, and now at the High Holy Days. Let this spirit of collaboration, success, and enthusiasm continue to guide us throughout the year ahead, with all its uncertainty, and strengthen our community as we continue to gather online and safely in person, when possible.

Through the magic of split screen software, the cantor and rabbi appear next to each other even though they were more than 20 feet apart.

A virtual Torah Reading

Jim Baron sounds the shofar safely from home, in front of a TBI virtual background.

Phyllis Werlin and Cantor Band chant Kol Nidre as Rabbi David holds a Torah scroll.
Genesis chapter 22 is completely do-or-die for the Jewish people, for God’s covenant with Abraham. Or maybe it’s die-or-die. If Abraham slaughters Isaac, then he will have no heir, and Sarah will not be the mother of the Jewish people. But if Abraham doesn’t listen to God, then he demonstrates his unfitness for the covenant. God sets this crisis in motion, and only God can put an end to it. While this traumatic episode of near infanticide doesn’t end with Isaac’s death and it doesn’t end the covenant, yet it does destroy Abraham’s family. Isaac walks away and never sees his father again. Sarah dies - her story ends here. God never speaks to Abraham again and Abraham never speaks to God, either. They’re through with each other - their relationship does not survive the events on Mount Moriah. Having banished Ishmael and Hagar forever in yesterday’s Torah reading, all but slaughtered Isaac in today’s, and with Sarah dead, Abraham ceases to be a husband or a father. Who is he now? What is he? What has God done to this family?

And yet, while things are certainly very very bad for Isaac and Abraham, There is the ram. The ultimate disaster is averted, even though many other traumas have occurred along the way. The ram is there. According to a mishnah in Pirkei Avot, the ram was there all along, ever since twilight on the 6th day of Creation. The ram is there waiting for its close-up for a few thousand years at least. Like a young actor standing in the wings, waiting for its debut. But this actor is stuck. Its horns are caught in a thicket. It can’t seem to get itself onto the stage. God has given it a crucial role to play, but God has also deprived it of the power to walk onto the stage. Its horns are caught in the thicket. The ram is stuck, waiting for Abraham to release it. First, the ram has to watch and wait as Abraham lifts the knife over Isaac. The angel has to call Abraham by name, and he has to say, “Hineini. I am here.” Then the angel has to make a little speech while the ram waits some more, still stuck. When will it be the ram’s time? And finally Abraham lifts his eyes and the ram is seen. Finally, it is seen for what it can bring to the story.

I can’t stand that that ram is stuck in the thicket! I’d like to see it become a battering ram, to see it run up to Abraham even before he puts Isaac on the altar, to break loose from the thorns, so that it can run up to their tent even before Abraham and Isaac set forth, so that it can headbutt Abraham and Isaac in the shins and force them to stay home. Don’t they know they can save lives just by staying home?! I wish the ram would pull off one of its own horns and blow a tekiah gedolah right in Abraham’s face and then yell, SNAP OUT OF IT!

Change can’t wait. While the ram waits, Isaac is melting away. Like an ice cube on a hot summer day he melts, his life force getting smaller and smaller until his death looks like a foregone conclusion. Even though we know how the story ends - that Isaac lives - it feels as though Isaac is slaughtered every year. There’s no ice left, you say. Just a single crystal of life. A brand plucked from the fire. Only a shred of emunah of faith left in humanity, and in God.

My friends, the ice is melting. There is smoke in the sky and fire on the ground. Children and grown-ups are dying by the hundreds of thousands. Cruel knees are pressing down on innocent necks. But each of us is a ram. We
are all rams. We are capable of saving lives, not God forbid as substitute sacrifices like the ram in chapter 22, but as battering rams.

Rams are working on a vaccine. Rams are working at the CDC and in every hospital and laboratory in the world. Rams are putting out fires in California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. Rams are organizing and attending peaceful protests. Rams are showing their love. Rams are donating their time and their money. Rams are calling their friends to help fend off the loneliness. Rams are cooking and delivering food for each other. Rams are making the best of this Global Warming-Reckoning with Racism-Global Pandemic moment. Rams are wearing their masks.

We don’t have to do this alone. There is already a stampede of rams, and we can join in. Just start by doing one thing that could help save a life. Then do another. But we need to lift up our heads out of the thicket. Liberate ourselves and intervene with love and interrupt the disasters whose tragic momentum is gathering speed. We need to get up out of the thicket and get involved in whatever ways we can. There’s no time for waiting, until the angel is ready, until Abraham is ready, until the angel’s tears drop out of heaven into Isaac’s eyes already filled with terror. We need to get up and vote. And if we’ve already voted then we need to help others vote so they can be heard as well.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Rabbi’s Discussion Groups</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesdays, Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1:00pm - 2:00pm Rabbi David’s Open Zoom Hour</strong></td>
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<td><strong>811 0356 9244</strong></td>
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**TBI Library**

The mission of the TBI library is to provide members, clergy, and staff with a variety of materials of Judaic interest, in a warm and welcoming environment, and to promote and encourage the sharing of Jewish learning and culture. We encourage reading, listening, and viewing for pleasure as well as for information and spiritual guidance.

TBI has a wonderful collection of adult and children’s books, as well as CDs, DVDs, periodicals, and other media. We have a computer that visitors may use, as well as a wireless connection you may use with your device. While many of the adult books have been catalogued, we have just begun the process of cataloguing our children’s books. You can access the database here.

**Rules for usage:**

While most of TBI’s materials may be borrowed and returned, some items are too fragile to transport and may only be used in the library. Books and other items may be borrowed for a two-week period. Please contact the Librarian, Marilyn Racette, marilynracette@gmail.com at if you need to extend that period. Please also contact the Librarian if you wish to donate any materials to the library.
Social Justice Committee

So many High Holiday sermons focused on the difficult times we are living in due the COVID-19 pandemic, the ills of our society and especially their impact on marginalized people, from institutionalized racism to the climate crisis and so many more. Our own Rabbi David spoke of our community’s need to address these issues of justice, and many rabbis called on all of us to perform Tikkun Olam, an action to repair the world. Temple Beth Israel must continue growing as a welcoming and inclusive community, even as our latest inclusion project, an ADA compliant bathroom in the Family Room, should be finished by Sukkot.

Let us all commit to educating ourselves, being better allies and calling out racism and other acts of injustice. Your action may be individual, or one supported by the Social Justice Committee. The Committee will soon be discussing several topics and possible projects that could focus on homelessness, environmental justice, the Waltham Black Future Fund and anti-semitism, among other issues. What other topics or concerns might the Committee consider? Please email me at ulinda@gmail.com.

Please also attend the next Community Conversation, facilitated by JOIN for Justice, to help guide our community to actions that matter to your heart. We will meet on Sunday, October 18 from 10:00-12:00 noon. You can pre-register for the event, to receive your unique link. Pre-register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcqf-uvqjspH9HEvh7-f9Mlgo1yHGJMHCzR. Look for an email to come soon, repeating this pre-registration information. The Community Conversation is open to all TBI members, regardless of whether you participated in the prior sessions.

Special thanks to Penina Weinberg, a member of the Social Justice Committee, for suggesting a Days of Awe Food Drive and to Andrea Baron for delivering all the boxes to the Family Table pantry. Our members donated a wide variety of items, mostly from the preferred list, as well as monetary donations. Finally, a todah rabah to Rabbi Sara and Rabbi David for challenging us to donate and adding over 15 bags of kosher dry beans to our donations, one in honor of each congregant who contributed.

Update from our partners: Community Day Center (CDC) of Waltham continues to provide bagged lunches to 40-45 clients weekdays as part of their mission to serve people who are experiencing homelessness. Their greatest needs are: bottled water or juice boxes, individual snacks and individually wrapped homemade desserts (brownies, cake). More Than Words continues to collect books and clothing for its social enterprise that empowers youth who are in the foster care system, court involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. You may leave your donations at each organization, both located on Felton Street.

Linda Ungerleider
Committee Chairperson
We are now meeting by computer and by phone, instead of in person.

**To join by phone—no computer needed:** Dial (301)-715-8592. You will hear a prompt to enter a meeting ID. Enter the meeting ID, followed by #. In the listing of events below, we show the meeting ID for each event.

**To join by computer or mobile device,** visit [zoom.us](http://zoom.us) in a web browser, click *Join a Meeting*, and enter the meeting ID and password for the event (or click the direct link to the event posted on our website or in our weekly email update). **The current list of events appears below.**

For the latest schedule of online events, visit [http://www.tbiwaltham.org/virtual-tbi/](http://www.tbiwaltham.org/virtual-tbi/).

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<td>Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30</td>
<td>Shabbat Shalom - 5:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31</td>
<td>Shabbat Morning Together - 10:30 am</td>
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**Yom Tov Services**

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<td>826 7077 9733</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11</td>
<td>Simchat Torah Morning 10:00am</td>
<td>865 6607 7923</td>
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**Thursday Morning Minyan**

| Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 | Morning Minyan 8:00am | 860 6404 5288 |

**Rabbi’s Discussion Groups**

| Tuesdays, Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27 | 1:00pm - 2:00pm Rabbi David’s Open Zoom Hour | 811 0356 9244 pw: 157389 |
### Thursday Morning Minyan 8:00am

8:00am

The minyan will begin promptly at 8 am, and will end by 9 a.m. The Zoom link is below. We will include the Torah reading. We will use Siddur Sim Shalom for Weekdays. (Note, this is a different edition of the siddur than what we have used at the synagogue.) You can pick up a copy at TBI (contact Andrea to make arrangements), or follow along in the PDF version which you can download at http://www.tbiwaltham.org/pray/morning-minyan/ or click here.

[Click Here to Zoom in to the Minyan](http://www.tbiwaltham.org/pray/morning-minyan/)

Zoom id: 860 6404 5288

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### Friday Night Service followed by Shabbat Dinner at Home November 13, 5:30pm

After such a successful dinner on Erev Rosh Hashanah, your Chessed team is coming together to make another meal happen.

On November 13th at 5:30, we will have our usual Friday Night Shabbat Zoom serviced followed by a shared meal. Our chefs will prepare a meal to include Sweet and Spicy Pineapple Salmon, grilled asparagus, and roasted potatoes as well as a light dessert. **All you need to do is register by clicking here.**

Please register as soon as possible as registration will close once 20 households have registered. **This event will cost $18 per person but we will not turn you away if you cannot pay. There are funds to support your participation in the Event Participation Fund. You can pay online at [http://www.tbiwaltham.org/pray/friday-nights/](http://www.tbiwaltham.org/pray/friday-nights/) or you can mail in a check to the Temple Office.**

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### TBI Bookshelf

by Marilyn Racette

We are at the beginning of a new year, with high hopes for a future defined by a more just and equitable society. To do the work of teshuva and correct the wrongs of the past, we need to understand it. When I entered our library to see what I might write about this month, my eye fell on Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement by Debra L. Schultz. This book follows a group of Jewish women who came of age in the shadow of the Holocaust and were deeply committed to social justice. They rejected the postwar middle class life, and put their lives on the line to fight racism. A second book also caught my eye, Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery by Anne Farrow, Joel Lang, and Jennifer Frank of The Hartford Courant. Waltham resident Allen Hagar presented Rabbi Foust with this “work of compelling historical research” which includes information about Jewish participation in the slave trade, as well as a brief reference to Waltham, its mills, and its connection to the cotton industry. To borrow these books, email me at [library@tbiwaltham.org](mailto:library@tbiwaltham.org).
**October and November Yahrzeits**

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We wish a long life to our members who are observing a Yahrzeit in the coming weeks.

If you would like assistance to arrange a virtual minyan so that you may say kaddish for your loved ones, please contact the Temple office at least one week in advance.

- Oct 3 - Miriam Chernoff, in memory of her aunt, Cynthia Ullman
- Oct 5 - Susan Furman and Beth Cormier, in memory of their mother, Florence Furman
- Oct 7 - Karen Dines, in memory of her mother, Ashley Schiff
- Oct 8 - Dina Baker, in memory of her mother, Zelda Wolfman
- Oct 17 - Roni-Beth Shapiro, in memory of her mother Ruth Shapiro
- Oct 17 - Catherine Cantrell, in memory of her mother, Miriam Bowra
- Oct 18 - Beverly Kaplan, in memory of her father, Benjamin Moldoff
- Oct 23 - Carole Cotton, in memory of her mother Edith Escott
- Oct 26 - Marilyn Racette, in memory of Bertha Grossman
- Oct 27 - Hannah Snyder, in memory of her grandfather, Len Snyder
- Oct 29 - Andrea Baron, in memory of her father, Allyn Abramson
- Nov 2 - Erika Cohen, in memory of her father, Arpad Viltzschek
- Nov 2 - Bruce Trager, in memory of his grandmother, Rose Fox
New Year, New Bathroom

By: Andrea Baron

During the summer, while nobody was using the building, we took advantage of this by hiring a contractor to update our Family Room bathroom and make it ADA compliant. After the plans were drawn up and the contractor hired, the books and toys were removed by Marilyn Racette and Erika Cohen and the furniture was placed in the social hall. Demolition began with the safe removal of the entire floor. Then the walls came down. The closet and about a foot of the Family Room now make up the roomy bathroom. The room has a new coat of paint and is ready for use when we get back in the building. See the journey below.
Donations

High Holy Day Pledges

Although we are not in our building, our operating expenses continue. We welcome your additional High Holy Day pledge. Please indicate when or in how many payments you wish to fulfill it.

Cantor Ellen Band
Susan G. Baron
Eric and Jessica Benjamin
Miriam Chernoff
Steven Chilton

Erika Cohen
Alan Corman
Lillian Etkind
Ellen Feinsand
David Freedman
Sari and Walter Gazda
Stanley and Janice Goldstein
Elly Grekin
Robert Gross & Edie Rosenberg
Elinor Handel
George and Judith Isaac
Joel Israel
Edward and David Kaufman
Diana Korzenik
Jordan Kreidberg
Alan Levine
Erika Mackin

Carol Master & Sherry Mayrent
Orrin Potash
Marilyn Racette
Babak Shirazi
Yaron Shragai
Hanna Griff Steven
Albert Smith
David Smith
Paul Smith
Martha Tolpin
Bruce Trager & Jill Stanton
Pennie Weinberg
Charles Weinstein
Steven Zief
Scott and Sharon Ziegler

Temple Beth Israel Memorial Park

The cost for an individual grave in Temple Beth Israel Memorial Park for members is $2,200. The cost for non-members is $2,800, which includes one year of membership ($600). Graves in the Kulanu interfaith section are sold in lots of two, at a total cost of $4,400 for members. The cost for non-members is $7,600 for a lot of two, which includes one year of family membership ($1,200). Please contact Jay Trilling of Menorah Cemetery Management Corporation, at (857) 636-9440 for further information. —Jim Baron, Cemetery Committee Chair

Temple Beth Israel Donation Form

For your convenience, please use this form to make your donations and send to: Temple Beth Israel, 25 Harvard Street, Waltham, MA 02453. You may also donate online at http://tbiwaltham.org/donate. The minimum donation amount is $10. Please add additional information on another sheet.

Attached is my donation check in the amount of $ ______. Please allocate it to the following funds.

___ General Fund    ___ Event Participation Fund    ___ Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund
___ Goldstein Prayerbook Fund    ___ Morris Hollender Torah Fund    ___ Children’s Services
___ Education Fund

This donation is being made ___ in honor of ___ in memory of ________________________________

This donation is made by:  
Name: ________________________________  Name: ________________________________
Address: ________________________________  Address: ________________________________
City/State/Zip ________________________________  City/State/Zip ________________________________

Social Media

TBI now has full suite of social media offerings. Please feel free to join or follow any of our social media channels!

Facebook: facebook.com/TBIWaltham/
Twitter: twitter.com/tbiwaltham
Instagram: instagram.com/tbiwaltham/
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/tbiwaltham/
Mark Your Calendar! October Highlights

| Shabbat       | Friday Nights at 5:30 pm  
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| October 10    | Shemini Atzeret 10:30am on Zoom: 870 4780 8679  
|               | Simchat Torah Evening Service 6:00pm on Zoom  826 7077 9733 |
| October 11    | Simchat Torah Morning Service 10:00am on Zoom  
|               | 865 6607 7923 |
| October 18    | Community Conversation - see page 6 to register |