

## Rabbi Fox's Message for Temple Beth Shalom's Heshvan/Kislev 5767 (November 2006) Newsletter

As the seasons turn, from Summer greens to Autumn reds and yellows on the East Coast of the United States, we begin our focus on the interior of our lives. Occupying the indoor more, we begin to put into practice those vows we made during the High Holidays and most of us will meet each day with a feeling of success of newly begun projects.

And yet we wonder: Will we be successful making a difference in our lives this year? Only time will tell. In lieu of our wait to find out, we should take a page from Nature – we should look to focus first on what we do well. When we feel the comfort of success, however small or large, we gain a confidence that we can make greater strides in our life and those around us.

Hillel famously asked the question, for whom do we live our lives to their fullest and when should we begin doing so. We know the answer: First for ourselves and then for others . . . and we must begin immediately. So much of our existence occurs, as the saying goes, while we are making other plans. Let's not miss a minute of our lives, especially if we believe that we can be involved in *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world around us.

Being an active and involved participant in Life – ours and others – is something that can be a difficult or frightening thing. The unknown outcome of any endeavor can stymie us and make us less effective and less happy. So, as we begin our journey into the heart of this Jewish year, let me make three suggestions of things you can do that will give you great satisfaction, no matter the outcome.

First, vote! Voting not only affects your life and the people whom you love, it is an important habit to develop. Voting prevents you from blaming others for your misfortune – no matter the result, you can always say that you took part in deciding how your life unfolds. And doing so makes you think about how we affect each other by our words and actions.

Second, celebrate Thanksgiving and invite someone to share it with you. When we are with people a little less familiar than our close family, we tend to take certain customs more seriously. How wonderful it is to sit around the Thanksgiving table, sharing the joys of our life, especially the often overlooked ones! Sharing your Thanksgiving can also have the benefit of reminding us that there is always someone in need of our presence or our assistance. And we all know that being aware of that will only bring good into your life.

Finally, get reconnected with your Jewish self. I know you may feel that you just spent a good deal of time at shul in the last month or so, but connecting Jewishly – attending services or some community wide Jewish event (perhaps even our Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, for example) – makes everyone's life in our community that much richer.

In the end, as the leaves turn, so too do we: We turn a little inward at this season. We must remind ourselves even more so, then, that we are not alone. Whether we feel it strongly or ignore it, we cannot escape the fact that we are always part of something much greater than ourselves.

May this New Year unfold for you and yours with exciting mysteries, new friends, and a

renewal of connection to your community and to the quieter place in yourself that will provide calm for you for the rest of the year.

Kol Tuv (All Things Good),  
Rabbi Fox

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