

THE TIME HAS COME FOR CHANGE - by Rabbi Tom Heyn for Chai Lites Sept 2016

Most Jews are well-acquainted with the concept of *Tikkun Olam* (or to be grammatically correct, *Tikkun HaOlam*.) We generally associate “repairing the world” with acts of social justice like feeding the homeless, raising awareness about human trafficking, and similar humanitarian efforts. But there is another kind of *Tikkun* that is not as well-known but equally important -- *Tikkun HaNefesh*, the repair or healing of the soul.

Whenever we engage in the work of helping others, we find that we are most effective when we take into account the sociological, psychological and spiritual factors that contribute to the “brokenness” we seek to repair.

For example, if you've ever listened to a *Mi Shebeirach* prayer for healing, it expresses the yearning for a *refuah shleima* which means a complete healing. This includes *refuat haguf*, a healing of the body, as well as *refuat hanefesh*, a healing of the spirit, soul or self. Although a complete healing is not always possible, the *Mi Shebeirach* reminds us of the need for wholeness and integration.

Indeed, the physical and spiritual aspects of life are like two sides of the same coin. The work of transforming the world actually begins with transforming yourself. When you change the way you think, you will change the way you feel and behave. Before long, the world around you begins to change.

To be clear, the work of *Tikkun HaNefesh* is not just about having a good therapist or meditating for ten minutes each morning. It is about a fundamental inner re-alignment with the spiritual dimension of reality that allows you to feel more deeply connected to yourself and to others. In theory and in practice, it doesn't detract from one's commitment to social justice and the work of *Tikkun HaOlam*; it actually enhances it.

These same principles apply to health and wellness, which was our programmatic focus over the past two years when we learned that “wellness” encompasses much more than physical fitness. To be healthier as individuals and as a congregation, we do well to exercise and strengthen our emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves.

Taking this idea to the next level, our programmatic theme for the coming New Year (5777) will focus on the relationship between *Tikkun Ha-Olam* and *Tikkun Ha-Nefesh*. Our two upcoming Scholar-in-Residence programs slated for 2016-2017 will relate directly to each of these domains. Our weekend with “Mitzvah Hero” Danny Siegel (Nov 18-20) will focus on repairing the world, and our weekend with the “Kirtan Rabbi” Andrew Hahn (Feb 3-5) will focus on healing the soul.

All of our programs and services will continue to include elements of both, but our goal for the coming year is to highlight the complementary or “integrative” nature of everything we do as a congregation. I hope you will support this initiative through your active participation and generous contributions, as well as your personal efforts to spread the word. Everyone deserves to know that Temple Israel is no

longer just a religious institution but a continuously-evolving center for learning, practicing and transforming ourselves and the community in positive ways. This year's theme is yet another way we are "redefining Jewish life through our uniquely progressive approach."

If I were to offer a statement or motto to describe the coming programmatic year as it relates to *Tikkun HaOlam* and *Tikkun HaNefesh*, I would say: "You can't effectively engage the One without engaging the Other." This statement describes the inter-dependent relationship between both aspects of *Tikkun*, and it warns against a dualistic way of thinking that views the two as discrete and separate. Dualistic thinking leads to polarization on all levels. Too often, we become estranged from "the Other," causing us to become estranged from "the One" we call God.

This brings me to the process we begin in earnest this season – the process of *teshuvah* or "return." As the High Holy Days approach, our tradition urges us to reconcile ourselves with others as a necessary step toward the "at-one-ment" we seek. Our communal gatherings on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are intended to facilitate that process along with the prayers we often read and recite.

For close to forty years, we have used *Gates of Repentance*, the Reform movement's prayerbook (*machzor*) for the High Holy Days. It has served us well as an impressive work combining traditional liturgy with interpretations that were new and exciting when they first appeared in 1978. But because our world and our lives have since changed in so many ways, the *machzor* has come to feel dated, if not irrelevant and uninspiring.

For this reason, the time has come for change. We have decided to affirm our commitment to the work of *Tikkun HaNefesh* by investing in the Reform movement's newly published prayerbook for the High Holy Days.

Mishkan HaNefesh brings together a diverse selection of prayers, readings and notes to create space for a multiplicity of approaches. Through updated translations, transliterations, essays, commentary and poetry, the new *machzor* will provide an environment in which those of all backgrounds can find meaning during the High Holy Days.

The coming New Year promises to be a time for change for many of us at Temple Israel. We recommit ourselves to *Tikkun HaOlam* in a way that will be strengthened by our commitment to *Tikkun HaNefesh*. And to help us get off to a great start, we will make use of a valuable new resource designed to nurture, heal and empower the soul – *Mishkan HaNefesh*.

A *mishkan* is a "sanctuary, shelter or dwelling place." It is my hope and prayer that your soul will feel at home with us, this year more than ever. We are here to support you in the ways you go about the work of repair and healing. And we hope you will support us through your generous response to our High Holy Day appeal and through your participation and engagement in our exciting programmatic initiative.

The time has come for change and transformation on all levels. Are you ready?