



RABBI ARI ROSENBERG

הרב ארי בן הרב אהרון וחיה-לאה

CONGREGATIONAL EXPERIENCE

2012-Present, Rabbi, *Temple Sha'arey Shalom*, Springfield, NJ

Rabbinical Experience

יהושע בן פרחיה אומר: עשה לך רב

"Rabbi Joshua Ben Perachia would say: Get yourself a Rabbi." (Pirkei Avot 1:6)

Leading a 250 family New York metropolitan area suburban congregation as a solo rabbi: reaching out to new members; fostering relationships with and among longstanding members; relating to people by being inclusive, comforting, compassionate and uplifting; providing stimulating and engaging lifelong learning opportunities; promoting justice and righteousness through social action; innovating spiritual experiences within and without the confines of the synagogue; and actively raising funds to support the congregation.

- Outreach

כי ביתי, בית-תפילה יקרא לכל-העמים

"My house shall be a house of prayer for all people." (Isaiah 56.7).

- Consulting in development of exciting and dynamic new website;
- Videoblogging "Shabbat Shalom" greetings promoting services and events
- Actively utilizing synagogue Facebook page for encouraging participation;
- Posting weekly sermons online, in video and text formats;
- Making personal phone calls to invite potential members to meet with the rabbi;
- Leading "Shabbat Under the Stars" outside the synagogue and within the community;
- Providing free "Tot Shabbat" Services for potential members with young children;
- Co-officiating at community-wide Shabbatons and interfaith community events.

- Inreach

הלל אומר: אל תפרוש מן הצבור

"Hillel would say: Do not separate yourself from the community." (Pirkei Avot 2:4).

- Being the first to arrive and the last to leave every synagogue service and activity;
- Greeting everyone as they enter, meeting eye-contact, and making a connection;
- Making an effort to speak with each person before the conclusion of the event;
- Leading services with a smile and a positive, uplifting disposition;
- Singing with enthusiasm and charisma;
- Personally calling each member on the occasion of their birthday and anniversary.
- Preaching the value of all people being created in the image of God, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, social differences, learning challenges, "class," or social status.

- Engagement

וְאַתֶּם תְּהִיוּ-לִי מַמְלַכַת כֹּהֲנִים, וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ

"You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6).

- Encouraging members of the community to offer sermons throughout the year on such topics as travel to Israel and Jewish values;
- Creating opportunities for lay leaders to lead various parts of services;
- Inviting stimulating scholars and musicians to draw community members to services;
- Developing popular programs outdoors, such as "Prayer Walks with the Rabbi";
- Extending personal invitations to attend particular events of interest to individuals;
- Balancing the need to maintain traditions and customs with the need to come up with new and innovative ideas "outside the box".

- Education

וְשִׁנַּנְתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם, וְדַבַּרְתֶּם בָּם, בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ, וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ

"You shall teach [the Jewish traditions] to your children,

you shall speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the way, when you lie down and when you rise up." (Deuteronomy. 6:7).

- *Preschool:* conducting services and lessons with songs, stories, and blessings;
- *K-3:* Leading weekly Shabbat services for young families, with lessons on the traditions and stories teaching Jewish values;
- *Primary:* Leading monthly youth Rosh Hodesh services, covering classes for absent teachers, and offering special sessions for each grade;
- *Confirmation:* Teaching stimulating subjects such as the History of Zionism, Jewish Ecology, the Jewish Values Matrix, Contemporary Issues, and Jews in the News;
- *Post-Confirmation:* Providing Jewish depth and context to contemporary issues;

- **Education (continued)**

- *Adult Education:*

- Conducting stimulating and engaging “*tikkuns*” on *Slichot* and *Shavuot*, on such topics as “Envisioning the Future of Temple Sha’arey Shalom”, and “Jewish Love Stories from the Talmud”;
- Engaging nearly twenty lifelong learners on Thursday afternoons, throughout the year, in such topics as “Jewish Poetry,” “Modern Jewish Short Stories,” and “Making Jewishly Informed Decisions”;
- Involving over thirty lifelong learners on Saturday mornings, twice a month, in seminars on such topics as “Jewish Approaches to World Religions” and “The American Jewish Experience”.

- **Religious Action**

**רבי ישמעאל בנו אומר הלומד על מנת ללמד מספיקין בידו ללמוד וללמד
והלומד על מנת לעשות מספיקין בידו ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות.**

Rabbi Ishmael said: One who learns in order to teach is given the opportunity to learn and teach. One who learns in order to do is given the opportunity to learn, teach, observe and do. (Pirkei Avot 4:5).

- Delivering invigorating sermons in support of Gay Marriage, Responsible Gun Reform, Immigration Reform, Women’s Rights, Combating Hunger and Poverty, and Pursuing a Viable and Secure “Two State Solution” for Israelis and Palestinians.
- Leading Temple Sha’arey Shalom’s first annual participation in the L’taken program offered by www.RAC.org teaching youth to implement Jewish values in active lobbying to Senators and Congresspeople in Washington DC;
- Rejuvenating and revitalizing Temple Sha’arey Shalom’s Social Action Committee;
- Bringing Confirmation families to volunteer at Community Food Bank of New Jersey
- Preparing lunches for www.bridgesoutreach.org with members of all ages;
- Actively participating in congregational rummage sale, which not only raises funding for the congregation, but also provides a sizable donation to local people in need.

- **Ritual**

Rabbi Eliezer said: If a person prays only according to the exact fixed prayer, and adds nothing from his own mind, his prayer is not considered proper. (BT B’rachot 28a).

- Utilizing every religious service as an opportunity to shed light on the relevance of Jewish traditions in light of contemporary issues and community concerns;
- Engaging with every participant, making a personal connection with everyone;
- Providing a comforting and compassionate presence through illness and grief;
- Visiting hospitals and homes through recovery, mourning, crises, and celebrations;
- Celebrating “*simchas*” with convivial festivity, and a respect for Jewish tradition.

- **Development**

רבי אלעזר בן עזריה אומר...אם אין קמח, אין תורה. אם אין תורה, אין קמח
"Rabbi Eliezer Ben Azariah would say...without sustenance, there is no Torah;
without Torah there is no sustenance." (Pirkei Avot 3:17).

- Working closely with fundraising team to strategize resolution to budget shortfall;
- Delivering personal appeal at fundraising gathering;
- Inviting previously unapproached individuals to participate for the first time;
- Directly soliciting merchant sponsors for advertising brochure; and
- Requiring all unaffiliated life-cycle events to include donation to synagogue.

2008-2012, Associate/Assistant Rabbi, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, Great Barrington, MA

- **Rabbinical Experience:** Fulfilled full range of rabbinic functions in 370 family congregation.
- **Services:** Led services and conducted life-cycle events with enthusiasm and integrity.
- **Education:** Engaged children and adults in formal and informal settings.
- **Youth:** Advised junior and senior youth groups, creating programs with Jewish content.
- **Pastoral Care:** Provided pastoral care as a comforting presence with a genuine concern.
- **Outreach:** Offered the unaffiliated educational opportunities; participated in public and interfaith events; brought additional congregants through conversion process.
- **Inreach:** Enhanced connections between member families and the congregation.
- **Fundraising:** Participated in campaigns to pay off mortgage and endow rabbinic position.

RABBINICAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

- 2007-2008, **Middle School Coordinator, Rockdale Temple, Temple Sholom, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2007-2008, **Student Rabbi, Congregation Anshe Emeth, Piqua, OH**
- 2007-2008, **Teacher, B'nai Mitzvah, Adult Education, Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2006-2008, **High School Teacher, Cincinnati Reform Jewish High School, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2007, **Summer Rabbinic Intern, Temple Sholom, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2005-2007, **Student Rabbi, Temple Ohev Israel, Newark, OH**
- 2005, **Summer Rabbinic Intern, Rockdale Temple, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2004-2005, **Teacher, Fifth Grade Judaics, Isaac M. Wise Temple, Cincinnati, OH**
- 2004-2005, **Student Rabbi, Temple Beth Isaac, Trenton, MI**

PRIOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2000-2003, Teacher, Grades Five through Twelve, *Temple Sinai*, Oakland, CA
- 2001-2003, Graduate Student Advisor, *UC Berkeley*, Berkeley, CA
- 2000-2001, Paralegal, *Gnazzo Thill*, San Francisco, CA
- 1999-2000, Paralegal, *Nossaman, Guthner, Knox and Elliott*, San Francisco, CA
- 1997-1998, Teacher, English and Math, *Upward Bound*, Berkeley, CA
- 1994, Kibbutz Volunteer, *Kibbutz Yotvata*, and *Kibbutz Kfar Hanasi*, Israel

EDUCATION

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, OH

- Rabbinic Ordination, 2008
- Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters, 2007
- Rabbinic Thesis, "*Poetic Justice: Beauty, Morality, and Humanity in the Words of Isaiah the Prophet*" (Referee: Dr. David Weisberg)

Rutgers College, New Brunswick, NJ

- Bachelor of Arts in English, 1996

Professional Development

- Balfour Brickner Fellowship, *Religious Action Center*, Washington DC, 2013
- Certificate of Pastoral Care, *Good Samaritan Hospital*, Cincinnati, OH, 2007

AFFILIATIONS

- *T'ruah (Rabbis for Human Rights)*, Haver, 2003-Present
- *J Street*, *Rabbinic Cabinet Member*, 2008-Present
- *Multicultural BRIDGE*, *Board of Directors*, 2010-2012
- *HUC Cincinnati Association of Reform Zionists of America*, *Co-President*, 2005-2006
- *HUC Jerusalem Peace and Justice Committee*, *President*, 2003-2004

REFERENCES WILL BE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST

A Personal Statement
by Rabbi Ari Rosenberg

When I reflect upon the most important lesson I learned throughout my trajectory from Assistant Rabbi to Associate Rabbi to Solo Rabbi, it can all be just about summed up in a short passage from the introduction of the book “Relational Judaism” by Dr. Ron Wolfson. He said:

What really matters is that we care about the people we seek to engage. When we genuinely care about people, we will not only welcome them; we will listen to their stories, we will share ours, and we will join together to build a Jewish community that enriches our lives.

My goal, as a rabbi, is to guide my congregation to view affiliation not in terms of a transactional model, but rather to view the community in terms of a relational paradigm. The synagogue is more than a venue for people to pay a fee for certain services. I see my primary role, as a rabbi, being to foster relationships with every member of the synagogue, and to help create an atmosphere in which connections, within and among the community, are formed and strengthened. The congregation is meant to be a community of interconnected people supporting one another towards our common cause of preserving our time-honored traditions and giving life to our Jewish values. Becoming a “kingdom of priests” and a “light unto the nations” is all about enriching relationships.

When the prophet Isaiah taught that the Temple should be a “house of prayer for all people” (Isaiah 56:7), he was telling us that it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone feels welcome in our houses of worship. I helped my congregation design an exciting and dynamic new website to put our synagogue on the radar screen of those who might appreciate what we have to offer. Likewise, I videoblog Shabbat greetings and sermons, for people to feel a connection even when they cannot be here, but also to entice new people to consider joining us. I try to develop innovative programming, both within the sanctuary, but also outside, in nature, so that there is something for everyone. Other outreach vehicles include special programming for unaffiliated families with young children, and participating in Interfaith community events likely to be attended by potential members. I greet every new face that walks through the doors of the synagogue with a warm smile, a hearty handshake, and a garrulous game of Jewish geography.

When Hillel cautioned “do not separate yourself from the community” (Pirkei Avot 2:4) I believe he would have appreciated the lengths I go to build bridges and foster relationships with members of my congregation. I am almost always the first to arrive and the last to leave every synagogue event, and I make an effort to connect with each person. I engage people during services with eye contact and an uplifting disposition. While I haven’t got a voice like Neil Diamond, I more than make up for it with enthusiasm and charisma. My sermons often touch upon themes of inclusion. And, I make an effort to call every member on their birthdays and anniversaries.

While some rabbis may have a top-down hierarchical approach to their rabbinate, I stand by the Torah’s instruction that we are to be a “kingdom of priests” in an egalitarian relationship with one another (Exodus, 19:6). My general approach is to collaborate with the leadership of the congregation, providing guidance, focus and vision, while endeavoring to embolden and empower new leaders to step up and assume responsibilities. I work with members to help lead parts of the services, and to offer sermons of their own from time to time. My Scholar in Residence programs,

Prayer Walks with the Rabbi, and Shabbat Under the Stars all share the common goal of increasing participation by drawing people out to connect with the community. I try to “meet people where they’re at” by thinking “outside the box” to come up with creative and innovative programs people would want to attend, and maybe make a friend or two along the way. These events have been extremely well attended, and one cannot put a value on the extent to which they have contributed towards community building.

As a rabbi, every time I recite the V’ahavta, I am reminded what a powerful opportunity it is *ושננתם/v’shinantam*, to build relationships through teaching. Although my current congregation does not have the numbers some other congregations may have, my lifelong learning classes draw nearly twenty students on Thursday afternoons, and over thirty for Saturday morning sessions. Congregations four times our size are not gathering that many people to engage in study together on a regular basis. I’ve covered a variety of topics such as “Jewish perspectives on World Religions” and the “American Jewish Experience” but what I believe is activating this unbridled enthusiasm is my general approach to teaching. I use text and powerpoint and poetry, not only to impart information, but also to engage with people and to connect with them, and to utilize our discourse as a means to discover what drives one another, what makes us tick, and why. This approach has been no less effective in my work with children from Preschool through post-Confirmation.

Like Rabbi Ishmael, I believe the difference between “learning in order to teach” and “learning in order to do” (Pirkei Avot 4:5) is a matter of relationships, between teacher and class, among the class, and most importantly amidst the learners and those with whom they choose to share the lesson. I “teach in order to do” in all my classes, but also every time I deliver a sermon on the subject of Justice and Righteousness. My Balfour Brickner Fellowship at the Religious Action Center (RAC) taught me how to use the best that our tradition has to offer to inspire congregants to put Tikkun Olam into practice. Although my current congregation at one time had a thriving Social Action Committee that brought Martin Luther King Jr. (twice!) to speak and once won an award for converting our social hall into a summertime shelter for homeless people, believe it or not but the Social Action Committee didn’t have a single member by the time I arrived. After delivering a number of sermons on the subject, I began by pursuing a chair for the committee. Next, I brought the Confirmation Class to the L’taken Social Justice Seminar at the RAC. After that, the youth group was eager to work closely with our burgeoning Social Action Committee. And, now, I am proud to see we have a thriving Social Action Committee with a healthy host of campaigns and activities every month. Although most of the decisions are now being delegated to new leaders in the community, I try to participate in each event, in part to draw more people, but also as another opportunity to build and bolster relationships.

My approach to ritual is like Rabbi Eliezer, who believed in a balance between *קבע/keva*, the “fixed prayer” of tradition, and *כונה/kavannah*, the extemporaneous prayer from the heart (Pirkei Avot 2:16). As a reform “rabbi’s kid” (my father, Rabbi Aaron Rosenberg, serves Temple Emanu-El in Waterford, CT), I was raised in the spirit of the Reform Movement from before I was born. However, I also have a special place in my heart for more traditional worship. What I like most is variety. People seem to appreciate when I make a connection between contemporary issues and the prayers we recite at services. Lifecycle events, I see as occasions to connect with families and a rare

opportunity to get to know them better. My congregants will tell you that the pastoral care I offer through health challenges and grieving periods is unparalleled because I believe one of the most important roles of a rabbi is to be a compassionate presence through difficult times. To share the grief and the pain and the suffering of others is to show them through our actions that they are not alone. This is the very foundation of the relational paradigm upon which a congregation can thrive and prosper.

Of course, there can be no foundation for a congregation built upon a relational paradigm without the financial wherewithal to support the infrastructure, just as Rabbi Eliezer Ben Azaria would say about there being no Torah without sustenance (Pirkei Avot 3:17). While there are rabbis who feel that it is professional to be as far removed as possible from development and fundraising, I have a different perspective. I believe the rabbi is uniquely qualified to consult with a fundraising committee, precisely because of the rabbi's intimacy with members of the congregation, his or her awareness of concerns within the community, and a certain cognizance of potential patrons who might not otherwise be on the minds of others. As rabbi, I feel it is important to be involved in fundraising so that I can help ensure that relationships are not enervated, but rather invigorated, throughout the process.

In sum, I believe everything in my rabbinate boils down to the relationships I foster within and among members of the community. Outreach is the opportunity to build new relationships. Inreach is an occasion to bolster existing relationships. Engagement is about empowering congregants to enhance their relationship with their community and culture. Education is an occasion to better understand one another through our reflections and reactions to texts and traditions. Religious Action is extending what we have learned among one another to what we can do for others. Ritual is where we pursue the relationship between the world in which we find ourselves and the world from which we come. Development, at last, provides the glue with which these relationships can be built.

Throughout this personal statement, I have shared so much about myself, and my approaches to the rabbinate. I thank you for your time and for your consideration, and I look forward for the opportunity to listen to your vision of the best way I can be of service to your congregation.

בשלווה/B'shalom,

הרב ארי בן הרב אהרון וחיה-לאה

Rabbi Ari Rosenberg