

# FBJC—THE SHOFAR

## WORDS FROM RABBI BROWN (TAKEN FROM PART OF HIGH HOLIDAY SERMON)

Technology has made us slaves to our inboxes and we have forgotten how to authentically connect with our colleagues, friends and family. The sad reality is that rather than have a face-to-face conversation with many people today, we are more likely to email, text, or call someone who is right next to them.

Have we forgotten how to fully see one another? Although I recognize there are pitfalls to the digital age, I have adopted advanced telecommunications techniques and appreciate the possibilities that exist to connect to new people in different ways. One such example that I have added to my high-tech repertoire is Facetime.

With my new I-phone, I am able to easily take candid photos and videos of my two growing boys and instantly send them to friends and family. More importantly, Apple's Facetime feature has opened a new world that was not too long ago thought as science fiction.

I remember as a child that we had many cousins in different parts of the country, and we would visit them every couple of years. Besides intermittent phone calls, we would trade New Year's cards, and exchange school photos. Til this day, some of those Polaroid picture images are etched into my memory bank and provide comfort.

Today with Facetime, instead of being captive to infrequent visits or costly

long distance bills, we can reach out to one another across the world. My boys, Yonah, who is now 3 1/2, and Nati, who is 19 months old, get to see their grandparents daily even though they live in New Jersey and Florida. In fact, the boys emit a Pavlovian response whenever the Facetime chime rings... Mom-Mom Mari, Popi Steve, Grandma Renee.

The excitement is palpable as our families get to witness firsthand the latest tricks or words their precious jewels have learned. Facetime is especially invaluable whenever either my wife, Ari, or I are out of town—as we can catch up with the boys.

This stunning technology sparks my mind to consider: What are the other connotations of “facetime” in our daily lives. In the business world, middle managers relish the chance for a power lunch with company executives so they can have some Facetime with the boss, as they climb the corporate ladder.

Are these people fooling themselves about the authenticity and depth of relationships? Politicians obsess so much with saving “face” and

demonstrating their candor and portray a likable folksy image. Political ‘junkies’ pay thousands of dollars for a photo op, or chance to have Facetime as a fundraiser. In many cultures, the notion of saving face supersedes other values. People often act against their own self interest in order to maintain their image or honor above all else.

Given all of these allusions about Facetime, let us turn our spirits and thoughts to our Jewish heritage to find deeper meaning in these *Yamim Noraim*.

When we pray individually and collectively one key aspiration is to connect deeply to our Creator. The concept of “*Devekut*” is that we offer our supplication to the Holy One in order to be at peace within the Divine presence. In fact, “*Devek*” in modern Hebrew means glue. Our job this High Holiday season is to assemble together shoulder to shoulder (cont'd pg 2)

## RABBI BROWN, CONT'D

cling to G-d in hopes of being inscribed in the Book of Life in 5776.

Here are 3 examples of Facetime interactions in our Torah. I will focus on the story of our emissary with G-d, Moshe Rabenu recounted in Exodus 33:11. Only Moses the prophet par excellence was able to come 'panim me mol panim' - Face to Face with G-d."

And the Lord spoke unto Moses—face to face.. Not by an angel, but he himself in person; not by a dream or vision, but in real visible appearance; not in dark speeches, but clearly in plain words, easy to be understood; not by a voice from heaven at a distance, but mouth to mouth, being near, as when on the mount, and now at the door of the tabernacle; as a man speaks unto his friend, freely, familiarly, plainly, cordially, openly, without reserve or show of authority, or causing

dread and fear.

We as a people ratify Moses every day by reciting the Shema—"to listen" as we did at the foot of Sinai by reciting "*Neasey ve Nishma*". This concept is hard because the Israelites actually say 'we will do and we will listen', rather than listen and then do. This tension of unconditional behavior presents a conflict in our relationship dynamic with G-d. How is it that we are supposed to follow G-d's instructions when it was Abraham who challenged G-d by reciting "*hashofet shel kol haaretez lo yahseh mishpat*" will the supreme judge not judge justly? In fact, one main reason that Abraham was granted the honor to be the Father of Monotheism is that he had the holy audacity to challenge G-d. As Jews, we are obligated to chase justice even if this means civil disobedience of government or G-d himself.

Life brings us many chal-

lenges through conflict. We often become estranged from friends and family and especially G-d. My hope and blessing for this holy congregation of Fort Belvoir is that in 5776 we are given the strength and insight to reconnect to loved ones to see the godliness in each other. I know it may be difficult and you might think that you have been wronged through an unforgivable act. Nevertheless, we do not want to be enslaved to rancor and bitterness. So, I encourage you to reach out with your I-phone and touch someone to create new memories and experience the godliness in each other.

L'Shana Tova,  
Rabbi Randy Brown

## VETERAN'S

We will be celebrating Veteran's Day on Friday, November 13 - with our Deli Dinner at 5:30 PM, followed by our service at 7 PM. All of these events will be at Belvoir Chapel.



## HANUKKAH HAPPENING

Our candle lighting will be on the third night, Tuesday, December 8—at 7 PM, due to a conflict at the Chapel. We will light the second candle, sing songs, and enjoy latkes and donuts. Please bring your own Menorah so we can light

them together downstairs. On Friday, Dec. 11 we will be having our Hanukkah Dinner. 5:30 PM dinner, followed by services at 7 PM. Please RSVP to Sara. Suggested donation—\$10 per person; \$30 max/family.

# Happy Hanukkah




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## HEBREW SCHOOL

We are still looking for a Hebrew School teacher. If you know of anyone interested in teaching our students—please let

Rabbi Brown know. He can be reached at [rabbi-randybrown@gmail.com](mailto:rabbi-randybrown@gmail.com)

*Happiness is a byproduct of a meaningful life!*

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

We wish to express our condolences to Alan and Eddie Smolins—on the loss of their mother and our long-time member, Libby Smolins.

Get well wishes to Jacob Weiss, nephew of Mindy Higgins. Get Well wishes to Ron Markiewicz.

We would like to thank Dale Latiff, Bea Kleier,

Leah Choper, Evan Krauss, Lara Krauss, Mindy Higgins, Barry Malihi, Eva Calero, Sarah Malihi, Ruth Stulman, Emily Markiewicz for helping before and during the Oneg Shabbat meals and for sponsoring. We really appreciate you! Please sponsor an Oneg Shabbat or Kiddush Lunch—check out the

schedule on the bulletin board.

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### *Fort Belvoir Jewish Congregation Mission Statement*

*We will create and sustain a leaning and participatory congregation that will enhance the congregants; appreciation of liturgy, Torah and holidays. We will enhance congregational fellowship and a sense of Kehilla (Community) and project our Jewish presence to the surrounding communities. Our congregation will effectively plan and conduct religious services as well as cultural, social and other activities that encourage participation and fulfill the broad spectrum of needs of our DoD congregants.*

**FBJC**

