

## **Rabbi Lewis' Message for October, 2010**

Not until I woke up on the morning of Shabbat Shuvah between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, did I realize it was Sept. 11. I turned on the television for a few minutes to hear the recital of names, then went off to Shabbat morning services. When we said kaddish at the end of the service, I thought of those 3000 people who had lost their lives and wondered about the family of one of them, a family I had known from my days at [Temple Sinai in Summit](#).

Their son Scott had worked at Cantor Fitzgerald and died that day at the age of 29. After services, I met a friend for lunch at a local diner. We sat down and, in a moment of spiritual serendipity, I saw Scott's parents Janice and Chuck sitting in a booth across the aisle. I hadn't seen or spoken to them in the nine years since 9/11.

They had just returned from the ceremonies at Ground Zero. We spent some time catching up. Immediately after Scott's death, they had set up the SCOTT HAZELCORN CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION. The website explains:

“The Foundation was formed in response to the tragic events of September 11th 2001, when over 2800 Americans were killed at the World Trade Center. Our son Scott, worked at Cantor Fitzgerald, and unfortunately, was lost to us forever on that terrible day. So we want to say to any of you who have lost a loved one; we share and deeply understand your pain. Our son Scott always had a special love for children, and talked about ultimately living a life where he could help to both educate and bring joy into their lives! Whether it was his dream of one day owning and operating an ice-cream truck, so he could hear the squeals of children's laughter, or running a summer camp where he could help to bring together children of all socio-economic backgrounds, Scott wanted to devote his life to helping children. He was actually in the process of preparing to enter the field of teaching when he was so suddenly and tragically killed. Keeping this in mind, both family and friends joined together immediately following September 11th to form the foundation that now bears Scott's name. Its mission is to provide help to all children in need with a special emphasis on children who lost a loved one on 9/11/01.

To this end, the SCOTT HAZELCORN CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION sponsors 'CAMP HAZE', a one week all expense paid summer camp specifically created for children who've lost a loved one due to the World Trade Center attack as well as any child, ages 7-12, who have lost a parent to illness or tragedy. In addition we sponsor other projects that benefit children in need.”

I thought of the Hasidic idea that the only response to human tragedy is to do a mitzvah. That is what Scott's family has done over and over again. The Foundation doesn't bring Scott back but it does give hope and laughter to the children who have lost a loved one. Scott's mother Janice said: "There will always be a hole in my heart, but we go on." They haven't let their pain get in the way of the good they can do. There is a lot we can learn from their response to their terrible loss.

Sukkot teaches us that life is impermanent and unpredictable. We stand inside the sukkah, look up at the stars and remember our vulnerability. But rather than feel hopeless, we are commanded to rejoice in the holiday – *v'samachta b'hagecha*. Every moment is precious. Each time we choose a mitzvah, a holy action, we are sanctifying that moment and making it eternal. May your new year be filled with the joy of holy action.

Rabbi Ellen Lewis