VICTORY PARK HEBREW CONGREGATION

TISHRI 5769 - 2008



L'Shana

Tova!

Victory Park & Districts Hebrew Congregation INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION NOT FOR GAIN

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INDEX

CONTENT	PAGE
Message from Chief Rabbi Goldstein	2
Message from the Rabbi's desk - Rabbi A Uzvolk	4
Message from Chazan Mark Samowitz	5
Rosh Hashanah Message from the Chairman	6
Message from Laia Uzvolk - Rebbetzin Victory Park Shul	7
Message from Des Zeelie - Headmaster King David Primary	7
Message from King David Pre-Primary School	8
Helpful Hints	9
Calendar for Yom Tov	10
Shul Security	12
Yom Tov Brick Messages	14
Bubbe's Talmud	15
Rosh Hashanah - The New Year and Teshuva	16
Candle Lighting for Shabbat and Yom Tov	18
Jewish Jeopardy	19
Sudoku	20
Challa Recipe	22
Taking Responsibility	24
Holy Days - Time for Accounting	26
Yom Tov Overview - The Month of Elul	28
Ten Days of Repentance and Return	29
Yom Kippur	29 / 30
Rosh Hashanah and the roots of Teshuva	32
Succos	33
Dancing with the Rebbe	34
Yahrzeit List 5769Photo Album	35
Purim Photo Album	36 - 39
Welcome New Members / Childrens services / Lulavs	40



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Workwise
Batsumi Gifts
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OFFICE OF

"Go up the mountain". These words can guide us as we look ahead to the New Year. Originally, they were uttered by Moshe to the twelve spies just before they went on THE CHIEF RABBI their mission into the land of Israel 3319 years ago, more than one year after the Jewish People were liberated from Egypt and received the Torah from G-d at Mount כל כנסיה שהיא

לשם שמים

At first glance the phrase "Go up the mountain" refers to practical instructions for the spies. As is well known every Hebrew letter has a numerical value and The Baal HaTurim, one of our classic commentators from the middle ages, points out that the numerical value of the Hebrew phrase "et hahar" – the mountain – equals that of the Sinai. Hebrew word "Torah". Moshe was not referring to a physical mountain, but rather סופה להתקים (פרקי אנח דיה)

-ANY COMMUNITY DEDICATED FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN WILL ENDURE FOREVER"

the symbolic mountain of Torah values, from which they would be able to maintain their clarity of vision and purpose. Unfortunately, the spies didn't follow Moshe's instructions and they came back with a negative report, which filled the people with pessimism and despondency about their capacity to triumph and enter the 'Promised

TEAL PICE, CHAPTERS OF THE PATIENTS 4:14

The image of a mountain is connected to our Jewish identity. The Torah itself was given on a mountain - Sinai - albeit a very low mountain to symbolize humility which is required for the achievement of greatness. Why the image of a mountain? Because when we stand on top of a mountain we have a completely different Land'. perspective on the world. We see the big picture. Moshe was telling the spies: "Go up the mountain", "Transcend your own fears and self interest, transcend your entanglement with unimportant details and see G-d's grand vision for your lives and

At this time of year as we celebrate and introspect from Rosh Hashanah to You Kippur, "Go up the mountain" is our guiding principle. We often get so entangled and enmeshed in the hassles of day-to-day life that we fail to see the big picture. for the Jewish People." We need to step outside of our routine activities and preoccupations, and transcend ourselves so that we can assess where we are headed, and properly understand whether we are indeed on the right path. As Jews we look at the world and our lives from the lofty vantage point of our Torah values, which are as solid and eternal as a mountain.

One central Torah value is that of gratitude and appreciation. So often we become distracted by our problems and stresses that we don't see and appreciate all of G-d's generous blessings. The Talmud says that must give thanks for every breath of air that we take into our lungs. We also sometimes take for granted the love and support of those who are closest to us. We need to step back and see the big picture to truly appreciate what we have been

From the transcendent perspective of the mountain of Judaism we can be inspired to change for the better. Rosh Hashanah is a time of hope. It is a time of change. We look to G-d to change things for the better. we and our families and our community be blessed with a new year of health, prosperity and goodness. And we also

But it is also a time of change for us. We can change ourselves for the better. And as we stand before G-d during the pray to G-d that Israel and South Africa overcome the serious challenges they face. Days of Awe asking Him for a better year, we commit ourselves to becoming better people and better Jews. Thus,

emerges the theme for these days, "Changing decrees in heaven and hearts on earth". At our Rabbinical Conference in Israel this year we decided to focus on a message of change for the New Year. Change for the better. Every year we should try to become better Jews and better people as we turn to G-d for a year

filled with greater blessings than the last. At the conference we were in agreement that "Changing decrees in heaven and hearts on earth" be our communal theme for the upcoming Days of Awe and for the New Year. project for us all to work on together, as it becomes the guiding theme for our community over the next few weeks. Each one of us needs to find areas of improvement in all aspects of our Jewish life, so that we don't remain static during

Let us go forward together at this time as the South African Jewish Community and change decrees in heaven and hearts on earth, and let the New Year, please G-d, be better than the old in every respect, and let it be a year of positive the coming year.

change and growth. May Hashem bless us all with His abundant goodness.

ny aldsi-

Rabbi Warren Goldstein

CHIEF RABBI



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from the Rabbi's desk.....

Dear All

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, we reflect upon the past year and set goals for the coming one. As a community, CAP took off in Victory Park, we held our 40th Anniversary dinner, we bid farewell to Chazzan Harel and welcomed our new chazzan- Mark Samowitz. We launched a new

youth program, replaced our windows, set up a data base, distributed matzahs and shallach manot, and created a functional minyan roster.

As individuals in the community we celebrated births, weddings, engagements, bar and bat mitzvas. We prayed we also mourned and we miss....

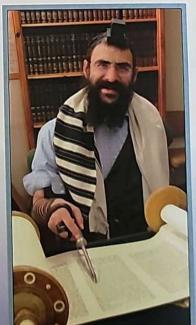
One of the messages of Rosh Hashanah is that we can start again. It's a bit like passing "go". Time is not only linear it is cyclic. This means that we all can start again. We can reinvent ourselves. Imagine a clear slate, the only limits are our mindsets.

As South African Jews we're concerned over the political situation in Zimbabwe and in South Africa. We're worried over Iran. We still have no answer to the Palistinian disaster and are not sure who will be Israel's next prime minister.

Interest rates and inflation coupled with the high price of petrol have hit many of us hard. I think that many of us have lots to pray for. I invite you to our shul to make that connection.

One of my themes this year has been "Belief in Hashem". We need to really appreciate the unlimited power of the constant Creator and how that Creator cares, and does for our wellbeing constantly. Hashem is not just one step ahead of us. He really can answer our prayers. We are truly infinitely small next to Him and we are next to Him. With this in mind there is always hope. Allow me to end with a quote by Rabbi Tzvi Freeman: "Even when we mess up, we have not wrestled control from Him. After all the dust has settled, where we are and how we are is exactly as He planned at the outset of creation."

May the coming year be truly good and sweet- Shanna Tova



Rabbi A. Uzvolk





Chazan Mark Samowitz

Firstly, I would just like to say how wonderful it is to be back in Victory Park and to lead you in Tefilla once again as your Chazan. This is the Shul I grew up in and I have known most of you since my debut in the choir as a child soloist. I have led a lot of congregations over the last few years in Australia and America, but there really is nothing like being Chazan for congregants with whom I have had a connection almost my entire life!! It's good to be back home!

The Torah is filled with mitzvot in order that we live life awake and aware and that we're not just living like robots on automatic pilot going about our day without thinking!!! Brachot create awareness about our food and the laws of lashon hara create awareness about our speech. Shabbos creates a weekly awareness that H-shem created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th.

Rosh Hashanah challenges our awareness of the 'overall picture' It really challenges us to take a step back and ask if the things we're doing are really the things we're meant to be doing, and to ask the question: Am I really being the very best ME I can be?

By giving us the gift of teshuva, H-shem gives us the awesome opportunity to wipe the slate clean, to steer the ship back on course and to repair our relationships with both our fellow man and with Him.

Implicit in the fact that we have a 'Yom Hadin' - day of Judgement - is that there is a 'Judge'. What we do, what we say, and how we act matters to H-shem. His Judgement is an expression of His love.

I wish every single congregant a Shana Tova ugmar chatima tova - a healthy, happy, sweet, fulfilling new year!! You will all be in my tefillot.

Chazan Mark Samowitz





Rosh Hashanah Message from the Chairman

We enter the month of Elul full of anticipation and preparation for the New Year that is almost here. As we do so it is important to look back and see what has happened in the community. This year we celebrated our 40th anniversary with a dinner that was well supported by many members past and present, and was a great success.

I am really proud to say that attendance at our Friday night services has grown during the last few months. We see nearly 40 children each Friday night for Kiddush. This is a really good sign that our Shul is still vibrant and growing. The Shabbat morning services are still supported by the regular members and we extend to all congregants an open invitation to come and join us. Sponsoring a brocha is a wonderful way for congregants to celebrate their simchas and share it with friends and family. All those who wish to sponsor a brocha please call me. Our daily minyanin continue

albeit with some difficulty. We implore all gentlemen to honour their roster duty to ensure that we have a minyan each and every morning and evening.

We welcome back Mark Samowitz as the Chazan of the congregation. Unfortunately due to prior commitments Mark will not be with us for the High Holidays. However we were fortunate to get Chaim Shalpid to assist us over Yom Tov.

Joseph Gerassi has left King David Victory Park after many successful years as its headmaster. We wish him well in his new position. We look forward to welcoming Mr. Andrew Stead in January next year as the new principal.

As we prepare for the spiritual month ahead let us be cognisant of the political and socio-economic problems being experienced in the country and worldwide. The xenophobic attacks that took place earlier this year are still a worry for the country as a whole. Despite the continued Zuma lobbying and increasing calls from the SACP and Cosatu alliance we as the South African Jewish community must be thankful for the religious peace and stability that we enjoy here. Many of our fellow Jews in other countries suffer from continued anti Semitic attacks on a daily basis. We hope and pray that the New Year will bring them the same peace and stability that we enjoy.

The CAP initiative has grown and become an integral part of our lives in the Victory Park area. To all of those responsible Kol ha kavod and many thanks from all the residents.

Your Committee believes that the shul looks tired and is in need of a major refurbishment. We have decided that we will begin a Project Upgrade after Yom Tov. This Project will need to be financed and further information will follow.

To the Rabbi and Laia thank you for all your hard work and continued efforts for the community.

My thanks also go to all those who were involved in producing this wonderful magazine as well as to those who supported us by taking an advert, inserting a greeting or sponsoring a page

Special thanks go to my wife and family for their continued support.

We wish those members that are travelling far and wide to spend Yom Tov with family an enjoyable time and we look forward to your safe return.

Wishing you all a Shana Tova U M'tuka - may we all be inscribed for a good and peaceful year.

Jeffrey R Sher Chairman



Message from Laia Uzvolk - Rebbetzin Victory Park Shul



Dear Friends.

I'm overwhelmed at the thought of committing a message in writing to the shul magazine. This is our 3rd Rosh Hashonna with Victory Park, I guess that makes a Chazokka. May we spend many more years together in friendship, security, with spiritual and material prosperity.

At the time of writing this article the Olympics in Beijing are drawing to a close. I somehow feel connected. You see, I too am running to the finish line- the end of 5768, and out of breath at that.

On deeper reflection, in the Olympics each competition is over in a relatively short time. Hours, days, months and years of preparation are invested into single contests.

As Rebbetzin, mother and wife, I often feel that my role is in the background-holding it all together. I know that it does not carry the glamour but it sure is the backbone of success. So my message to all the mothers and wives of our community is this *The community needs us*. Think about it when your husband is off to minyan during the two family rush hours of the day, breakfast, supper and bath time. May we be blessed not with fewer responsibilities but with greater strength to carry even more. And may we merit to "reap with joy" the fruits of our labour.

On behalf of my husband and children, may we all be inscribed for a Ketiva va chatima tova- A good blessed year.

Fondly Laia

Message from Mr Desmond Zeelie - Headmaster King David Victory Park Primary School

It is a privilege to be given the opportunity to contribute to the Victory Park Shul Yomtov magazine.

As a Beit Midrash, (House of Learning) the Victory Park Shul is an integral part of our vibrant campus. It has been exciting to observe how the Shul has grown over the past year and the excitement that has been rejuvenated among the Victory Park Shul community.

King David Victory Park Primary School are excited about our future interactions with the Shul and I have no doubt that both the Shul and School will benefit from each others growth and input.

L'Shanah Tova Tikateivu V'Techatemu Desmond Zeelie



King David Pre-primary School

"THE WORLD ABIDES ONLY BECAUSE OF THE BREATH OF LITTLE CHILDREN LEARNING TORAH" Yehudah Ha Nasi Talmud: Shabbat 119b

Our Sages teach that Hashem looked into the Torah and used it as a blueprint for the creation of the world. And I believe that if Hashem used the Torah as the blueprint for creating the world, then certainly He did the same when He created each and every one of us. He implanted within each of us a Divine blueprint that guides the development and our life from birth onwards. This blueprint not only guides our destiny but also our development towards that destiny.

The blueprint that G-D used to create the world contained the perfect unfolding of history – past, present and future – that will lead us all, those who came before us and those who will come after us. For this to be true, this blueprint is imbedded in every rock and tree, every atom and molecule, every star and planet. And certainly in every child that we are blessed to love and nurture as they fulfill their singular part in the Divine plan of which they and we are a part.

All creation, including the creation of people, proceeds in two stages: potential comes first and reality follows. We can plant – by instilling values and perspectives. On the other hand we can build – by inserting new bricks into our daily lives. Planting and building are the fundamental processes necessary to create perfection in this world. Those of us who understand that these two are the fundamental processes for bringing forth human potential will teach our children differently. Our educators have inculcated these two approaches into their teaching so that we, at KDVPPPS can plant a seed and watch it grow and flourish into a beautiful Jewish soul.

Education to us is life; the reason why we teach extends from the reason why we live. Because life is education for all of us, teaching is a lifelong obligation and responsibility for each one of us. The very act of teaching is a vital ingredient in our very own 'brand' of education. At King David Victory Park we strive to imbue in our children a love for Yiddishkeit. Everyday we begin by thanking Hashem for a brand new day by saying Mode Ani and the Shema. Fridays are the highlight of our week as we welcome SHABBAT into our hearts with a special Shabbat ring, enjoying the shining candles, the wine and delicious challah.

Each Chag (festival) is celebrated with songs, dances, stories and of course the traditional foods pertaining to each specific festival.

Human greatness is passed like a flame from one candle to another. We cannot give to others what we ourselves fail to possess. We must ignite our own growth before we can pass the torch to others. Education is all about transforming, actualizing and igniting human potentials. This takes time and discipline. In addition, it requires a willingness to change one's own life and realize the importance of educating others. If we partake in this experience, we soon can experience the exquisite pleasure of kindling a young Jewish Neshoma. A special thank you to our dedicated and committed educators who have ONE goal; create a warm, safe, loving and nurturing environment for our children.

In the words of Benjamin Franklin, 'Tell me and I will forget, show me and I might remember, involve me and I will understand'

I wish you, you families and your special children a Gmar Katima Tova – may you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of life.

Lynda Romain Principal



Helpful Hints

With the approach of Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgement, it is particularly appropriate for us to visit the cemetery to request our dearly beloved departed to intercede for us during the session of the Heavenly Court.

In Shul our dress should be modest and befitting a House of God. Ladies are reminded that, in conformity with the Jewish tradition of feminine modesty in dress and conduct, clothing that is any way revealing (including sleeveless dresses) is not appropriate. Married women should wear a head covering.

Every Jew is obligated to hear the shofar on Rosh Hashana. It is the main mitzva of the day. Please make sure that you are in Shul in time to participate in this mitzva.

Commencing on the first night of Rosh Hashana and continuing until Hoshanna Rabba (the seventh day of Succot), we dip our kitka and bread into honey instead of salt.

On the first night of Rosh Hashanna, after we make the Hamotzei, it is customary to eat a piece of apple dipped into honey and to say the following prayer:

Baruch Atah Ad-onai E-lo-hainoo Melech Haolam Boray Pri Ha'aitz. YehiRatzon Milfanecha, Ado-nai E-lo-hainoo Vai-lo-hai Avotainoo Shetchadesh Aleinoo Shana Tova Umetuka.

On the second night of Rosh Hashana, it is questionable whether or not we need to say the bracha shehecheyanoo since the Torah describes the two days of Rosh Hashana as one long day. For this reason it is customary to put a new fruit, which has not yet been eaten this season, on the table at the time of candle lighting. When the bracha Shehecheyanoo is said (by the women during candle lighting and the men during kiddush), this fruit is kept in mind. Alternatively if the woman is wearing a new garment at the time of candle lighting, she may have this in mind. The new fruit is eaten right after kiddush. [See 'Candle Lighting for Shabbat and Yom Tov' section for the text of the bracha]

On Yom Kippur, in addition to the normal candles, we light a lebediker licht - a candle for the living. We use a yahrzeit candle for this purpose. In addition, we also light a yahrzeit candle in memory of those departed relatives for whom we will be saying Yizkor. Yizkor is said both on Yom Kippur and Shemini Atzeret.

Leather shoes should not be worn on Yom Kippur.

If you have been told by a doctor that it is necessary to eat or to take medication on Yom Kippur, please discuss this with the Rabbi as there are certain guidelines and procedures which should be followed.

On Yom Kippur it is forbidden to carry. Please bring your named Machzor and talit to Shul before the onset of Yom Kippur and leave them there overnight. Those who live within the Eruv area may carry a machzor and talit to Shul. Items which are not necessary for Yom Kippur may not be carried, even within the Eruv area.

It is extremely important for all males to receive an aliya (to be called up to the Torah) on the day of Simchat Torah. Even boys under the age of Bar Mitzvah are called up to a special aliya. Please make sure to be in Shul with your sons and grandsons on Simchat Torah morning.



Victory Park Hebrew Congregation Calendar for High Holidays Sept/Oct 2008

SATURDAY NIGHT 20 SEPTEMBER SELICHOT AT MIDNIGHT

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CHIMPAN		2000							
SEPTEMBED	9.6	OFBTE	20	PERTENDED	200	WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	-
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Mincha & Mearly	5.45pm	5.45pm Mincha & Maariv	5.45pm	5.45pm Mincha & Maariv	5.45pm	5.45pm Mincha & Maariv	5.45pm	5.45pm Mincha & Maariv	5.45pm
SEPTEMBER	28	SEPTEMBER	29	SEPTEMBER	30	OCTOBER	-	OCTOBER	2
Selichot followed by Shachrit	7.30am	7.30am Selichot followed by Shachrif followed by Hatarat Nedarim	5.15am	Rosh 1st de Shad Shofa	Rosh i 2nd da 8.00am Shachi 10.00am Shofar	Rosh Hashanna 2nd day Shachrit Shofar	B.00am Selichor 10.00am Shachrit	Fast of Gedalla Fast begins Selichor followed by Shachrit	4.38am 5.30am
Minche & Mean	Candle Mincha 5.45pm Maariv	Candle Lighting before Mincha Maariv	5.50pm Mincha 6.00pm by Tasl 6.15pm Maariv	Candle Lighting after 5.50pm Mincha followed 6.00pm by Tashlich 6.15pm Maariv	6.39pm 5.30pm 6.15pm	5.30pm Mincha 6.15pm Maarv & end of Yom Tov	8.00pm 6.39pm	6.00pm Mincha & Maariv 6.39pm Fast ends	5.45pm 6.27pm
OCTOBER	10	OCTOBER	9	OCTOBER	1	OCTOBER	80	OCTOBER	6
Selichat followed by Shachrit	7.30am	7.30am Selichot followed by Shachrit	5.30am	5.30am Selichot followed by Shachrit	5.30am	Erev Yom Kippur Kaporot Selichot followed by Shachrit Mincha Candle Lighting &		Yom Kippur Shachrit Yokor Mincha	8.00am 10.45am 4.00pm
Mincha & Maarly	6.00pm	6.00pm Mincha & Maariv	6.00pm	6.00pm Mincha & Maarlv	6.00pm	6.00pm Kol Nidrei	6.15pm	6.15pm Maariv & Fast ends	6.43pm
OCTOBER	12	OCTOBER	13	OCTOBER	14	OCTOBER	15	OCTOBER	16
Shachrit	8.00am	8.00am Shachrit		Succoth 1st day Lulav & Etrog Est in Succah Shachrit	9.00am	Succoth 2nd day Lulav & Etrog Eat in Succah 9.00am Shachrit	9.00am	Shact	5.45am
Aincha & Maariv	6.00рт	Candle Lighting before Mincha 6.00pm Maariv	5.56pm Mincha 6.00pm Maariv 6.15pm Candle	5.56pm Mincha 6.00pm Maariv 6.15pm Candle Lighting after	5.45pm Mincha 6.15pm Maariv 6.45pm Maariv	6.15pm Maariv & end of Yom Tov	5.45pm 6.15pm 6.47pm	6.15pm 6.47pm Mincha & Maariv	6.00pm
CTOBER	19	OCTOBER	20	OCTOBER	21	OCTOBER	22	2 OCTOBER	23
thoi Hamoed Lulav & Elrog Eat in Succah thachrit	8.00am	Hashana Rabba Lulav & Etrog Eat in Succah 8.00am Shachrit	5.30am	Shemini Atzeret Eat in Succah 5.30am Shachrit Yizkor	9.00am 10.30am	Simehat Torah 9.00am Shachrit 0.30am	8.00an	8.00am Shachrit	6.00pm
lincha & Maariv	Candle Mincha Mincha Maariv	Candle Lighting before Mincha Maariv	6.00pm Mincha 6.00pm Candle 6.15pm Maariv 1 by Haka	6.00pm Mincha 6.00pm Candle Lightling after 6.15pm Maariv followed by Hakafot	6.00pm 6.50pm 6.15pm	6.00pm Mincha 6.50pm Maariv & end of 6.15pm Yom Tov	6.00pm	6.00pm 6.51pm Mincha & Maariv	6.00pm

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We do not say Tachnum from Yom Kippur until 2nd Marcheshvan. All Hazkarot for Yarzelts during this period must be made before Yom Kippur.

NOTES

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Shul Security

A hearty yasher koach to our team of security personnel whose dedication to our safety is exemplary.

Please show your appreciation by co-operating with any security requirements over Yom Tov. They are for the safety of YOUR family.

Craighall Road will be closed to traffic from the corner of Yaron Avenue to the corner of Lynton Lane/Danya Road.

Security affects everyone in the community and as a community we should all do our part to share the responsibility. If you are currently not on the security roster and you would like to assist and are over the age of 18, please call either Colin Wainer on 082-414-1729 or Alan Lewis on 082-854-8310.

May we all be blessed with a happy, healthy and safe year.



Wishing the community a happy and SAFE New Year and well over the fast.

From the VPCAP committee, volunteers, street captains and all the contributors.

Sign your VPCAP Debit order...it's the right and the safe thing to do.

Don't let your security come at your neighbours expense!!

Regards and stay safe, Victory Park CAP Committee

VICTORY PARK CAP - FOR THE COMMUNITY ... BY THE COMMUNITY



With compliments and best wishes Alan and Sue Bulafkin



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Yom Tov Messages

wish everyone a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year and well over the Fast

Anthony, Stephanie, Zack and Micah Becky, Shirley, Russel, Andy, Carl, Evan and Richy Koton Fineberg wish you and your loved one a year blessed with health, happing a year blessed with health, happiness contentment and all that is good

With best wishes from the Block Family

Best wishes to all our family and friends for a happy and healthy New Year, and well over the Fast. With love - Mannie, Marilyn, Cindy and Jonathan Chaimowitz

happiness

Wishing all our family and friends L'shana Tova and well over the fast. Jonathan, Jianele, Jesse and Ailee Mae Gabriel

May all our friends and family be blessed with a wonderful year - and well over the fast Steve and Anga Fittinghoff & family

Wishing you a year of health and happiness. May you have a meaningful fast. Mike and Lynn Strimling and Family

Jackie and Nomi Plaks wish our friends and family a good Yomtov and well over the Fast

Wishing our family and friends a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year and Well over the Fast Julius and Brenda Levin

Year and well over the fast, from Sharon and Winston Akum and fa

Joel and Salome Hurwitz wish you peace, happiness, health and

Our sincere good wishes for a healthy, happy and wonderful

Colin, Naomi, Nili and Tamara Schamroth wish everyone a Shana Tova Umetukah

Best wishes for a year filled with peace, happiness and prosperity and well over the fast. David and Sylvia Glasser

Ambrose and family wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year and

hanah Tovah Tikatevu from Ari, Lisa Danya, Eden and Samara Meyerthal

Jeffrey and Zandra Sher wish all the community Shana Tova Umetukah.

With best wishes for a peaceful, happy & healthy New Year & well over the Fast. From Ephraim & Elaine Dove

Wishing our dear children, family and friends L'Shanah Tova U'metukah We wish you all a meaningful fast. Mel and Anne Stamelman

Rosenthal wish all our friends and family a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year and well over the Fast

We wish our family friends a happy and healthy New Year and well over the Fill

Steve and Ami Mendelsohn and family wish everyone a wonderful New Year and a meaningful Fast

Shanah Tova - Aubrey, Jennifer, Sarah and Gershon Hurwitz and Mrs Lutrin.

Wishing Rabbi & Leah Uzvolk & all Congregants Shanah Tovah and well over the Fast, Best wishes Ell, Joy, Natasha, Samantha, Dolly, Steffani & Joni Ovadia

Shana Tova for 5769. Wishing you health, happiness and peace. Ezra and Lal Berger



Bubbe's Talmud

- * If you can't say something nice, say it in Yiddish.
- * If it tastes good, it's probably not kosher.
- * No one leaves a Jewish wedding hungry; but then again, no one leaves with a hangover either.
- * No one looks good in a yarmulke.
- * The optimist sees the bagel, the pessimist sees the hole.
- * Why spoil a good meal with a big tip?
- * WASPs leave and never say good-bye. Jews say good-bye and never leave.
- * Twenty percent off is a bargain; fifty percent off is a mitzvah.
- * Wine needs to breathe, so don't rush through the kiddish.
- * Israel is the land of milk and honey; Florida is the land of milk of magnesia.
- * The High Holidays have absolutely nothing to do with marijuana.
- * Always whisper the names of diseases.
- * If you don't eat, it will kill me.
- * Anything worth saying is worth repeating a thousand times.
- * Where there's smoke, there may be smoked salmon.
- * Never take a front-row seat at a bris.
- * Prune danish is an acquired taste.
- * Next year in Jerusalem. The year after that, how about a nice cruise?
- * Never leave a restaurant empty-handed.
- * Before you read the menu, read the prices.
- * If you're going to whisper at the movies, make sure it's loud enough for everyone else to hear.
- * No meal is complete without leftovers.
- * What business is a yenta in? Yours.

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Rosh Hashanah - The New Year and Teshuvah

The Head of the Year

Our New Year's Day is a day for deep soul-searching and resolution. Yet, as its very name indicates, Rosh Hashanah—Head of the Year—is not just the beginning of another cycle; it is the head of these days. Just as the brain is the chief of the organs, directing and integrating all of a person's functions and behavior, so, in the same way, this day of Rosh Hashanah directs the course of the ensuing new year. Through it the life force, blessing and sustenance for the days that follow are provided. On Rosh Hashanah, the anniversary of the creation of man in the world, the inhabitants of the world are judged anew.

The main themes of Rosh Hashanah, as expressed in our prayers, are a) coronation: we accept God's kingship over us anew each year; and b) that we ask God to grant us a year of life, health and happiness. Although Rosh Hashanah is an awesome day, and obviously a time for solemn reflection and self-evaluation it is not a day of sadness. We have faith in God's mercy and are confident that He loves us despite our many faults. We approach Rosh Hashanah with happiness because it is the day for ensuring a new year better than the one before; we cannot be sad.

"This day is holy to God, your God; do not mourn and do not weep... for the joy of God is your strength." (Nechemiah 8:9—10)

The Shofar

The special mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah is hearing the blowing of the Shofar (ram's horn) which symbolizes the coronation of God as King of the universe and brings to mind several great events which involved a ram's horn—among them the Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai and the Binding of Isaac on the allar on Mt. Moriah. It will also herald the coming of the Messiah. The sounding of the shofar is a call to look into one's soul and improve one's ways, saying, as expressed by Maimonides: "Awake you sleepers from your sleep, and you slumberers, arise from your slumber—examine your deeds, repent and remember your Creator" (Hilchos Te-shuvah, Chapter 3).

Women, too, have taken upon themselves this mitzvah, even though it is bound to time—the factor which serves in most cases to exempt women from being obligated in a mitzvah.

The Shofar is the oldest of wind instruments. So simple and so primitive and so much a part of Jewish history, its piercing sounds penetrate our beings and bring us close to God and the observance of His commandments. As the prophet affirms, "Shall the Shofar be blown in a city and people not tremble?" (Amos 3:6)

Special Foods and Customs

Rosh Hashanah has numerous special customs, and many of them are connected with the Holiday meal.

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, we dip our challah into honey instead of salt. (This custom may go on until Hoshanah Rabbah, depending on family custom.) Right after the blessing over bread, a sweet apple is dipped into honey and a special prayer is said asking God for a sweet year.

The head of a fish is usually eaten, signifying our hope to be the "head," outstanding in righteousness and an example for all. A popular way to prepare the head is to stuff it with the same mixture used for gefilte fish and then cook it like regular gefilte fish.

On the second night, a new fruit which was not yet eaten this season is put on the table, preferably at the time of candle-lighting. When the blessing shehechiyonu ("Who has kept alive and bought us to this season") is made (by the women at candle-lighting and by the men during Kiddush) this fruit is kept in mind. When keeping in mind the new fruit, it should be in front of the woman during candle-lighting, and she should light the candles close to the beginning of the Kiddush meal (which is permitted on the second day Yom Tov as it does not ever coincide with Shabbos). Or, preferably the woman may have in mind a new garment she is wearing for the first time, at the time of candle-lighting.

This new fruit is eaten right after Kiddush and is often a pomegranate (although it can be any new fruit), because this is one of the fruits for which the Landof Israel is praised in the Torah, and also because it is said to contain 613 seeds, equal to the number of our commandments.

Tzimmes is a sweet carrot dish generally eaten on Rosh Hashanah and throughout the month of Tishrei. The Yiddish word for carrots is meren, which also means increase. Tzimmes thus symbolizes the desire to have our merits increase above our shortcomings.

Honey cake has always been a traditional and popular dessert during this time.

Many people use round challahs on Rosh Hashanah, and also round farfel for soup, to express the hope that the new year will likewise be rounded out and perfect and bring the best of everything to everyone. In addition, the word farfellen represents the hope for a falling away of our misdeeds of the past year.

There is a custom not to eat nuts because of the similar numerical equivalent of the letters in the word for nut (egoz) and the word for sin (chet). A very practical reason not to eat nuts is in order to keep the throat clear for the long prayer services of the Yom Toy.

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, after the afternoon services, we customarily "throw" our sins into a body of fresh water which has in it live fish. The custom is known as tashlich, from the statement (Michah 7:19); "And you shall cast away (tashlich) all your sins..." If the first day of Rosh Hashanah has

Since Rosh Hashanah is the Head of the Year, it sets the pattern for each of the days to come. For this reason we should try to be extra careful in everything it do and think and say on this all-important day. Whether praying or serving food, making blessings, eating, or conversing at the table, we try to keep in middle at all times that this is Rosh Hashanah, and as this day goes, so will the rest of the year. It is customary not to sleep during the day so that we should be up all ent when receiving our verdict for a good year.

After the service on Rosh Hashanah we all greet one another with the good wishes of L'shona Tova Tikosaivu V saichosaimu May you inscribed and sealed for a good year



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Laia's Sweet Challah

Original Recipe by Rebbetzin Naomi Shishler

I'll bet you thought challah refers to the two braided loaves of bread reserved for Shabbat meals and the round loaves for Yom Tov. It does. But mainly, challah is the small chunk of dough we tear off and burn before baking any bread.

Originally, that dough was given to a Kohen, a descendant of Aaron who served in the Temple. In messianic times, we'll reinstate the practice. Meanwhile, we need to burn that challah before we can eat the bread from which it was taken.

Taking challah tells us that whatever we are given is not for our use alone. If we have wisdom, money or good health, our first step is to put them towards a G-dly purpose.

This is one of the three mitzvot that are given especially to women. When taking challah it is a very auspicious time to pray-your prayers go straight to the Heavenly Throne!

Recipe:

- 2 Cups sugar sifted
- 7 teaspoons salt
- 5 Cups warm water (if eggs or yeast in fridge then use hot water)

Beat to blend.

4 eggs - check each one to make sure it has no bloodspot (this would make it not kosher. White, unwashed eggs have fewer bloodspots)

1 Cup oil

Mix

2 packets dry yeast (10g each)

6 Cups sifted flour

Mix until smooth

Add 4 cups sifted flour - Mix until smooth

Add 4 more cups sifted flour - Mix until smooth

If sticky (should be a drop sticky but if your finger comes out with a lot of dough on it then it's too sticky!) add 1 cup sifted flour at a time to a maximum of 16 Cups sifted flour. (If still very sticky add a little oil)

Put in 2 oiled bowls. Cover with towels and place in warm place to rise. When risen punch down, recover and replace to rise again.

When risen, join the two bowls of dough in one bowl. Make the Blessing for separating the dough, and pray from your heart. "Baruch Atah ... melech haolam asher kidishanu bemizvotav vetzivanu lehafrish challa" ("Blessed are You ... Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate challa") Take a piece of dough about the size of your fist and put it at the bottom of your oven to burn while you preheat it. Leave it in until completely burnt. This is the "challah".

Punch down the dough again. Shape it as you need to. For Shabbat make strands that you plait – a minimum of 3 per loaf. For Yom Tov make one very long strand which you coil around to make a round challah.

Paint with beaten egg. Sprinkle with sesame or poppy seeds.

Bake for 30 - 45 minutes at 180 - 200 degrees (you'll have to get to know your oven!) You know they're done when golden brown and when you tap the bottom it sounds hollow!

Enjoy! Good Shabbos! Good Yom Tov!









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Taking Responsibility Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowitz

A major theme of Rosh Hashana is Malkiyut -- making God our King. This entails recognition of and submission to a higher authority. The whole season engenders a feeling that "I can't just do what I feel like, because there's Someone Who runs this place."

What is it that we're submitting to? And what does this submission demand of us?

The Torah quotes God as saying "I've put before you today life and good, death and evil; choose life." Amazingly, God tells us that the choice of life is up to us!

God is King but the choice is ours?! It's paradoxical but there's a beautiful resolution: Generally speaking, submission means helplessness and relinquishing control. Here we're really submitting to a sense of responsibility for ourselves. "It's all up to me."

The constant theme of the "Viduy" confession is: "I didn't live up to my responsibility and I didn't do what I could for myself." We regret being infantile and neglecting responsibility. Rosh Hashana is the day the Jew celebrates maturity and being responsible for doing what he knows is true and good, rather than doing what he feels like at the moment.

HUMBLE BEFORE GOD

Making God King doesn't mean surrender in the form of leaving everything up to Him. It's realizing that God wants what's best for you. This is obvious if you understand what God is saying: "Use your brains. Wake up, grow up, and realize where you are going and what you are doing. Be responsible for your life."

The foremost responsibility is to work out what is right by studying, thinking and understanding. Figure out what you are living for and what your goals are and how you will achieve them, and understand the consequences of stupidity and impulsiveness. This is not surrendering to an outside force or a humble submission. It's uplifting and it feels great!

People get confused about the definition of humility. Making yourself "small before God" doesn't mean telling yourself you are a "nobody." It means you are getting rid of every aspect of yourself that may distance you from God. It means that all your distractions and cravings are put in their proper perspective. It's taking your issues and realizing that one side is healthy and wholesome -- and another side is nothingness.

Maimonides explains the mitzvah of "fearing God:" After you recognize the Almighty's greatness, you are spontaneously filled with awe and deep humility. You ask yourself "Who am I, a lowly being, to stand before Him?"

This doesn't mean saying, "I am a nobody." It means recognizing that God is the one source of success. Don't be a big shot and think you can provide yourself with an independent source of success and actually be happy. That's the submission: submitting to the reality that there is only one road, and that there are no shortcuts to true greatness, happiness and success. There is no other alternative.



MATURITY MEANS CHOOSING

We can now properly understand the "Viduy" prayer. Saying "I have sinned" isn't paying lip service to the bully, and hoping he'll be nice to you. It is the intellectual recognition that you've neglected responsibility. It's an admission that crime doesn't pay and that being irresponsible will get you nowhere. Sure, it's fun going through life being a kid and playing with toys, but is that really all you want?

"Viduy" means recognizing that up until now you have followed your impulses, never really choosing, letting your life simply unfold and being more of an observer than an active participant. It's the realization that reality is passing you by and that it's not going to wait for you. And if you don't grow up now you are going to miss it.

This theme of "maturity" is woven throughout Judaism. For example, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the day a Jew becomes responsible. A child at the age of 13 does not know everything, but is old enough to start asking questions. You begin to recognize that there are people older and wiser who can give the right direction. Until this point, it was up to the adults to find a way to get you to listen. Suddenly at 13 you are responsible. And you celebrate it, because in Judaism we are proud of maturity and it is something to look forward to.

This is why a younger child is not counted in a minyan. How can he be a part of a scale model of the Jewish nation if Judaism stands for maturity and he is not yet mature? This is what the Bar Mitzvah represents — from now on you are a responsible human being.

NOT BEING SUPERFICIAL

On Rosh Hashana we re-clarify and restate our dedication to responsibility: We have strayed, yet we have come back to our senses. And we celebrate it.

But be careful not to miss the point. It's easy to build up to a submission to a higher being and turn it into a surrender to the "big bully in the sky." Make sure you are not guilty of doing superficial things to "appease the gods."

On Rosh Hashana there are many possible distractions: putting all the significance into dipping the apple in honey, banging your chest harder and harder, making unrealistic resolutions that may not even deal with your issues, choosing the right place to pray and the right clothes to wear, and reading the Viduy books in which the author writes down all the sins he thinks you may have done.

That is not submitting to responsibility. It's escaping it. Don't be superficial. Let us all have a meaningful growth process this High Holiday season.



Holy Days: Time for an Accounting Rabbi Berel Wein

The basis for Judaism and its value system can be summed up in one word – accountability. The gift of freedom of choice and action that God granted to humans comes, as do most gifts, with a price. And that price is that all of us are completely accountable for our actions and behavior. We each have an account sheet, so to speak, with columns for both credits and debits. How that account sheet looks eventually determines our fate and our eternity. But, there are those intermediary times when we can take stock.

The Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are such times. Our account sheet is reviewed as we pass before the Heavenly court without cover or pretense. The message of the Holy Days is a clear one. We are held accountable for good or for better for our past deeds and also for our future intents. We are deemed to be responsible individuals and therefore our account sheet is of vital importance in determining our status in life and our future.

Just as all publicly held firms must produce an annual fiscal report attested to by reputable accounting firms, so too during these Holy Days do we individually publish our own annual report. And, the Heavenly court that is aware of all of our actions and behavior attests to that report. Because of this it is completely understandable why accountability is the key word to any understanding of Judaism.

One of the ills of our current society is its acceptance of unlimited freedom of choice and behavior but its refusal to be accountable for the results of this uninhibited freedom. One of the hallmarks of our society is its inability to admit error in previous decisions, policies and behavior. No one is held accountable for all of the great mistakes of the past centuries.

The bankruptcy of those Jewish organizations and individuals who fled from Torah and tradition is evident to all by now, but many of them – those still in existence - continue along their merry way as though there was no past to reexamine and no true future to contemplate. But the law of accountability allows for no exceptions and eventually overtakes everyone. That should be apparent to anyone with even rudimentary knowledge of the story of Israel throughout the ages.

The final parshiyot of the Torah read in the synagogue over these past and coming weeks concern themselves almost exclusively with this idea of accountability — of reward and punishment and the aspects of the covenant of Sinai between God and Israel. The Torah itself declares that this "covenant shall respond to them even till the end of days." In a covenant, as in a contractual agreement, each side is held bound to its agreed upon terms and conditions. We are bound to our end of the covenant and the Lord, so to speak, states that He also is bound to His commitments. Again, accountability is the key word to the entire covenantal experience and challenge.

One should feel that one is accountable not only to God and to one's fellow human beings but perhaps most importantly to one's own self. The primary question addressed by Judaism is: "Of what purpose is my life - why am I here and what is asked of me?" If this question is never really addressed or if it is sloughed off and defined in purely material or monetary terms then obviously life has little meaning. If it has no deep meaning then no dutiful accounting of behavior can ever arise in our minds and hearts. For life to have any sense of meaning or purpose then the goal of accountability must resonate within each individual.

The prayers of the Holy Days stress not only God's greatness and man's relative puniness but also the coming to terms of each individual with one's own past deeds and future aspirations. True teshuva – repentance – requires this simultaneous look both backwards and forwards regarding our life's actions and our mission and hopes. The concept of rigorous accountability helps us formulate a meaningful answer to our goals and aspirations in life. It allows us to age and mature gracefully and it creates the proper backdrop for our future plans and actions. It therefore is the ultimate blessing in our lives.





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YOM TOV OVERVIEW

The Month of Elul

Repentance, Prayer, Charity

Three key activities in Elul have the power to nullify any harsh judgment and enable us to receive the verdict during Tishrei for a year of good: Through teshuvah (repentance or return), we return to our inherent good selves, since a Jew by his very nature is good and desires no evil. Through tefillah, (prayer), we cleave to the Creator, Who is the source of our soul and for Whom our soul is always yearning. By giving tzedokah (charity), we are performing a deed which is really only just (tzedek means justice), for we are merely the guardians of the wealth extended to us by God and are His messengers for distributing it to those in need. It is not so much kindness we practice by giving of our wealth to others, as justice, for in truth, we are not the real owners.

During Elul we listen to the shofar, a call to repentance, every day after morning services (except on Shabbos and on the day before Rosh Hashanah). We add Psalm 27, with its allusions to the holidays of Tishrei, to our daily prayers. In the final days of Elul, in the very early hours of the morning, we highlight our preparation for the new year with the selichos, heartfelt prayers for forgiveness.

Hatoras Nedorim is recited preferably on Erev Rosh Hashana to nullify one's vows except those made to one's fellows, such as a promise to repay a debt. It is said in shul before at least three men but preferably ten men, and includes such personal vows as a resolution to increase in one's performance of a particular mitzvah.

And so Rosh Hashana will find us well prepared, as we enter the month of Tishrei with joy in our hearts and confidence that God, in His mercy, will grant us a truly good and blessed year.

Rosh Hashanah

The Head of the Year

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Ten Days of Repentance and Return

A Significant Week

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the days in between are known as the Ten Days of Teshuvah (repentance or return).

During these days we are especially careful in all the mitzvohs we perform. As in the month of Elul, special attention is given to the three mitzvohs of teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah (see Elul).

The seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are highly significant and should be filled with Torah and mitzvohs to the fullest measure. Not only is this the last week before Yom Kippur, it is also the first complete weekly cycle of the new year and serves as an atonement for all the Sundays, Mondays, etc. of the past year.

The third of the ten days, the day after Rosh Hashanah, is the Fast of Gedalia.

The Shabbos between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur has a special distinction. It is known as Shabbos Shuva (Shabbos of Return) because of the beginning words of the Haftorah of this Shabbos: "Return Israel unto God your God." (Hosea 4). It is customary for Rabbis to speak to their congregants on this day on the importance of teshuvah, repentance and returning to God's ways.

Special Customs

An interesting custom symbolic of forgiveness is Kaparos (atonement). Men and women each take a rooster or hen, respectively, and say a short prayer while holding and circling it above their heads. It is hoped that the realization that this animal is going to die, a fate of which we ourselves might be deserving, will bring us to a total repentance.

It is preferable to observe this custom early in the morning before Yom Kippur. (Some women practice this custom during the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.) The chicken or the equivalent value of the chicken is then given to charity—for charity brings forgiveness and averts harsh decrees.

Kaparos can also be observed with money instead of a live chicken. The money is also waved aloft and the prayer said, substituting, "This money will go to charity" for "This fowl will go to its death." Afterwards, the money is given to charity.

During all ten days of repentance, additional sentences are inserted in different parts of the daily prayer, emphasizing the fact that we are now amidst these awesome days. Many Jews have the custom of continuing the Selichos (Prayers for Forgiveness) during the weekdays between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur

The Day Before Yom Kippur

Among the many preparations for the awesome day of Yom Kippur, and perhaps one of the most important, is the seeking of forgiveness from friends, relatives and acquaintances—for actual wrongs done or to soothe bad feelings that may have arisen during the year. This is one aspect of our behavior that cannot be forgiven by God unless forgiveness is first sought from those we have wronged. Another custom practiced on Erev Yom Kippur is that of going to the mikvah and immersing ourselves in it so that we become pure in preparation for Yom Kippur. It is customary too, during that day, for parents to bless their children. The afternoon service, Minchah, is said early in the afternoon. The Viduy (confession) prayer is included in the Amidah (standing prayer). It is a mitzvah to eat two full festive meals on Erev Yom Kippur. The meal before the fast is eaten in the late afternoon and is finished no later than 20 minutes before sunset. So important is it to eat well before Yom Kippur that we are told that this mitzvah is equal to the mitzvah of fasting on Yom Kippur itself. To ease our fast, the food we serve at this meal should not be salty or spicy. Partaking of a festival meal at this time demonstrates our faith in God's abundant mercy and our confidence in being forgiven and sealed for a good year.

It is traditional to eat kreplach at this meal. Kreplach are pieces of dough filled with ground meat or chicken, then cooked or baked and served with soup. Only chicken kreplach are served on Erev Yom Kippur because no meat is eaten on this day. This special traditional dish alludes to our hope that kindness will "cover" any strict judgment we may deserve.



Forgiveness—an Eternal Gift

"I have forgiven" are the eternal words spoken by God on the tenth of Tishrei, after Moses prayed to God and fasted for forty days on behalf of the Jewish people. This day became Yom Hakippurim, the Day of Atonement, for all generations. Any time a Jew sincerely repents he is forgiven, but this day has a special power because of the forgiveness granted to the Jews on the original Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur and all the laws pertaining to it start before sunset, as do all the holidays, with candle-lighting by the women of the house. A twenty-four hour candle is also lit in the house in honor of the holiday, as we cannot honor it with festive meals. The light also reminds us of the Second Tablets that were given to the Jews on this day, for light symbolizes Torah. This candle is an addition to any yahrzeit candles.

On Yom Kippur, no melachos (work) may be done. The machzor (Holiday Prayer Book) should be brought to shul before sunset (unless you live within an eiruv). Since women begin the holiday when they light candles and may not carry afterwards, they should be sure to get their machzors to shul earlier in the day. Indeed, Yom Kippur is referred to in the Torah as Shabbos Shabbason, a total rest day just like Shabbos. In fact the doubled wording teaches us that even if Yom Kippur comes out on Shabbos, the laws of Yom Kippur are observed on that day and are not postponed, unlike other fast days when they occur on Shabbos.

On Yom Kippur five activities are specifically prohibited: eating and drinking, anointing oneself with perfumes or oils, and washing (for pleasure), wearing leather shoes, and marital relations.

Men go to shul in their white garments called kittels, and women often dress in light colors or white, which symbolizes purity.

Special Prayers

The evening service begins with the chanting of Kol Nidrei, during each main prayer we say the Viduy (confession), beating the heart with the right hand at each phrase as we enumerate all the sins we may have committed and ask God for forgiveness. The Viduy is phrased in the plural ("We have sinned"), for all Jews are considered as one body, and we are all responsible for one another.

One of the unique prayers of Yom Kippur is the Avodah section in the Musaf Prayer, which describes in detail the great and awesome service performed on Yom Kippur by the Priests in the Holy Temple. This Service was highlighted by the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies, the place where the tablets of the Ten Commandments were kept. Only on this one day a year, and only after much preparation, was the High Priest allowed to enter. Described are his preparation, the Service, and the exciting conclusion: when the red string at the window of the Temple turned white, the Jews knew they were granted forgiveness. The High Priest then emerged safely from the Holy of Holies. If his concentration or purity of thought had wavered but an instant, he would not have been able to withstand the intense revelation of Godliness within the Holy of Holies.

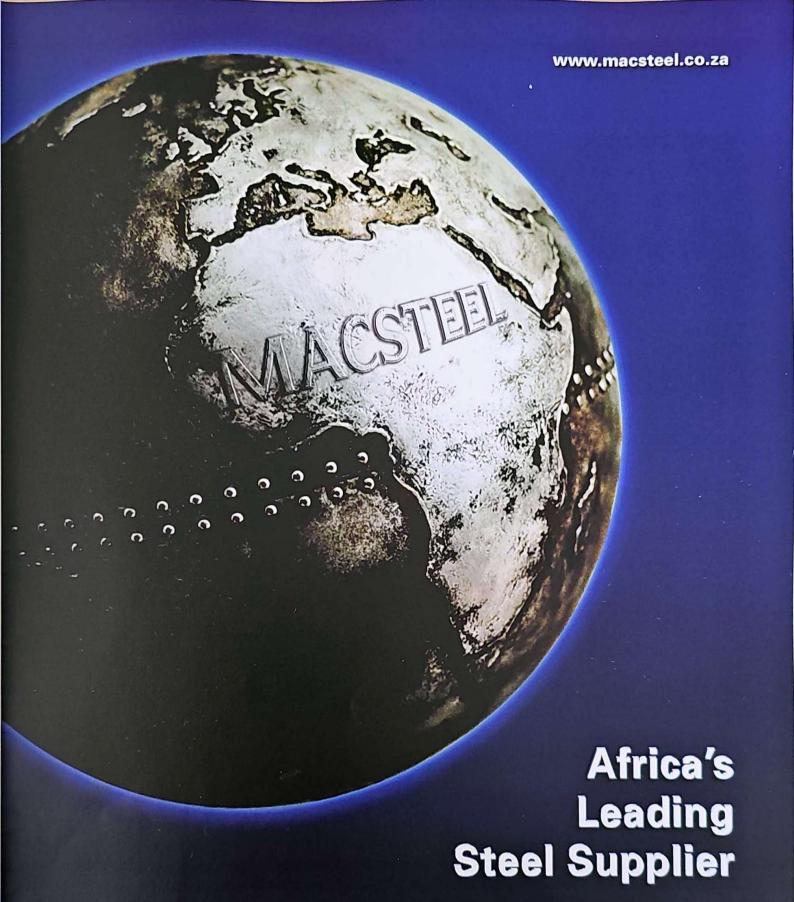
The fifth and final prayer of Yom Kippur day is the Neilah prayer said after the Minchah (afternoon) services. A fifth prayer service is unique to Yom Kippur Day. Neilah (locking) is the closing time of our prayers, when God's inscription for us for the coming year is sealed. We muster together all our remaining strength to say this prayer with real devotion. Everyone recites out loud the "Shema Yisroel" and the sentences which follow it, and the prayer culminates with the final blowing of the Shofar.

The evening services are then said, quietly but in a mood of triumph and confidence in having been sealed for a good and healthy year. Afterwards, if it is a clear night, the "Sanctification of the New Moon" blessing should be said for the month of Tishrei (if it has not yet been said).

As at the conclusion of every Yom Tov, the Havdalah is said, but with the distinction that after Yom Kippur the blessing over light is included, since during Yom Kippur we were prohibited from using fire. (Fire is not included in the Havdalah of the other Holidays because it is permitted for cooking on those days.) Care should be taken that the Havdalah light be kindled from a pre-existing flame, lit before Yom Kippur. The fast is not broken until the Havdalah is said.

Everyone goes home to break the fast. That night or early the next morning we are already involved in building the Succah,





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Yom Tov and the Intermediate Days

Outside Israel, Succos is celebrated an additional (eighth) day. The first two days are Yom Tov, to which all the laws of Yom Tov apply. The third through seventh days of the Holiday are called Chol Hamoed. These days are not highlighted with candle-lighting or Kiddush meals, but only very necessary work may be done.

The seventh day is called Hoshana Rabbah. It is the last day of shaking the Lulav and Esrog. The Holiday culminates in Shemini Atzeres, which is Yom Tov once again.

Rosh Hashanah:

The New Year and the Roots of Teshuva Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo

If one thinks about it, the concept of a new year is really quite surprising. After all, what is really new about the year that will begin this Shabbat?

A new year is not like a new day. From a human perspective, it is easier to say that the day starts at a certain point – for most of us, that point being when we wake up to greet it. Not so, however with a year. True, there is a natural cycle of seasons that repeats itself every twelve months, but that cycle has no obvious beginning or end. And even if we were to decide that it starts in the fall or the spring, what does that have to do with human existence? Am I not to continue next week exactly where I left off this week – I will continue to work on projects left unfinished, pay bills that were not yet paid and continue with all the same relationships and responsibilities that were a part of my existence up until now.

So what's all the fuss about a new year and why do we work so hard to better ourselves as if we were starting our lives all over again?

In fact, the concept of a new year is not just pretense. Rosh Hashanah traditionally marks the anniversary of man's creation. In the same way as Shabbat allows us to meditate on God, Rosh Hashanah gives us the opportunity to reflect upon the nature of man.

One of the most important lessons in the first chapter of the Torah is that man is created – he is not just part of a process. This need not be in contradiction to evolution, but rather that when man became man, something completely new occurred. The mechanics of this novelty are secondary – the fact of the novelty is what the Torah wants to get across. Man's beginnings lay in innovation and so he will forever yearn for this quality so basic to his original essence. (This is paralleled by man's being born man and woman in the same body, thereby creating an essential yearning to be reunited with the other half.) Thus, creativity and innovation are at the very core of human existence. Something new is another way of saying a possibility previously ignored. The realization of such a possibility touches man to his very core.

Rashi (Devarim 6:6), quoting the Sifri, points out that God commands us to always relate to the Torah as a new doctrine. He explains that people are always interested in the new, but as soon as a doctrine becomes old, our interest wanes. We are not told that there is something wrong in this attitude, but rather that we have to work within it, presumably because it is part of how God made man. Thus, the key to Torah study and the practice of mitzvot is that we always engage it with novelty. We have to come to it fresh each time. The same mitzvah, even if we perform it in the same way, has many possibilities within it. We can investigate those possibilities and reap the excitement that comes from them or we can treat our previous experiences as if they were the only ones possible.

Sameness is a trap that men and women build for themselves. It is perfectly reasonable to build on our past experiences, but when we build routines and expectations overwhelmingly upon our past, it prevents us from seeing the rainbow of possibilities in any given situation.

In truth, Rosh Hashanah is the most miraculous of holidays. Miraculous in the sense that it is a bit unreasonable. It tells us to ignore the reality that next week is no different than this week and to pretend that it is. The secret is, that when we look at it as if it is different, what has been the same up until now, actually does become different. We learn from Rashi that something does not need to be outwardly new to really be new. Rather - that which appears to be the same on the outside has the potential to be truly new on the inside.

It is for this reason that we experience the teshuva process during these days. Teshuva can only be accomplished if we open ourselves up to possibilities that defy our past routines and expectations. It is the time when we have a special opportunity to go beyond what we have been and would normally continue to be. It is a time to go back to our human roots and to seek the novelty that God implanted within us. May we all meet this wonderful challenge.



Succos

The Season of our Rejoicing

The "Ten Days of Awe and Repentance" are followed by "the Season of our Rejoicing." This is one of the names given to the holiday of Succos, for the Torah commandment to "rejoice" is mentioned more often in connection with the holiday of Succos than for any other Yom

Succos is indeed a time of rejoicing. Following closely after Yom Kippur, the day of forgiveness, it is a time of starting the new year fresh. Succos begins on the fifteenth day of Tishrei, at the time of the ingathering of the crops—a further cause for rejoicing, as one looks with a sense of pride and accomplishment upon the fruits of one's labour of the previous months.

The seven-day holiday of Succos is one of the Sholosh Regolim, the three Festivals when all Jewish males over age thirteen were commanded to come celebrate the Yom Tov in the proximity of the Holy Temple. (The other two Sholosh Regolim are Pesach and Shavuos.) Women and children joined these pilgrimages whenever possible.

The Temple celebration during Succos was highlighted by the ceremony of water-drawing for the Holiday offerings. This ceremony was unique in that all year the libations on the Altar were performed with wine, but on Succos plain water was used. Yet it was said that "whoever has not seen the joy at the place of the water-drawing has never seen true joy in his life!" (Succah 51) The joy expressed in this ceremony was the joy of a simple and pure acceptance of God's will, as symbolized by clear water, as opposed to the acceptance that is based on understanding, symbolized by wine.

The Succah—A Symbol of God's Protection

The dominant mitzvah is, of course, the Succah. The Succah is built before the holiday begins. Almost anything can be used for the walls, but the roof covering must be schach, which is plant-life material meeting to certain specifications. Evergreen branches, corn-stalks or bamboo are popularly used. During the entire festival we live in these temporary dwellings as much as possible.

The Succah is symbolic of the clouds of glory which protected the Jews during their forty years in the wilderness. These clouds of glory, serving as a shade and a shield were an ever-present reminder of God's kindness and love for His children. As we sit in the Succah, we too are aware of and grateful for God's protection.

All meals must take place only in the Succah unless it rains. The most appealing meals are prepared for the Succah and the fanciest dishes and accessories are brought out to dress the Succah table. Many observe the custom of decorating the Succah beautifully. The Succah is a place of rejoicing and festivity for the whole family.

It is considered very desirable to have poor people as guests in one's Succah for each of the festive meals, corresponding to the heavenly guests who are said to visit every Succah. The mitzvah of dwelling in a Succah is unique in that the person's whole body participates in it. We fulfill the mitzvah by entering and having something to eat as long as it is with the awareness that this mitzvah was given to us in remembrance of our Deliverance from Egypt. On the first two nights of Succos one makes the blessing "... to dwell in the Succah" if one eats a k'zayis (one ounce) or more of bread. Thereafter one makes this blessing if one eats bread, cake or other food made of the five grains which is more than two ounces.

The Four Kinds

A most beautiful and meaningful mitzvah of Succos is the "taking of the four kinds." The four plants enumerated in the Torah are the Esrog (citron), Lulav (palm branch), Hadassim (myrtles) and Aravos (willows). Much energy and money is expended in acquiring the most beautiful ones possible. This mitzvah is performed every day of Succos except on Shabbos. It should be done early in the day but is permissible until sunset. The Lulav, Haddasim and Aravos are taken in the right hand in a specified manner and the blessing is recited. The Esrog is then taken in the left hand and held to the other three species. All are swayed together, in accordance with various customs. The resulting sight is quite beautiful and memorable to behold.

A left-handed person takes the Lulav and other species in the left hand and the Esrog in the right hand. While women are not obligated in this mitzvah, they have generally taken upon themselves to perform it throughout Succos. When "taking the four kinds" one should be careful to have the hands free of gloves, rings, etc.

This mitzvah can penetrate very deeply and has extraordinary relevance to our lives today. In our oral tradition, it is explained that each of these four kinds corresponds to a different type of person, from the Esrog which has both refreshing taste (constant Torah learning) and delightful fragrance (good deeds) to the Aravah, which has neither of these qualities. Despite their differences, the Torah instructs us to take these four and bind them together, for they complement one another. So too does one Jew complement another, and only when there is true harmony among all the Jewish people can we hope for an ideal existence. May it happen soon!



Dancing With The Rebbe Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein

Nineteen years ago, my 64-year-old father, of blessed memory, passed away rather suddenly just before the High Holidays. Needless to say, it was difficult for me to concentrate on my prayers appropriately. When Simchat Torah came, I couldn't bring myself to join the others in my synagogue who were dancing with the holy Torah scrolls. So there I stood in a corner, feeling sorry for myself, and then I remembered the following incredible story.

One of the many great heroic personalities to emerge from the Holocaust was Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, the hassidic grand rabbi of Klausenberg, Romania. Before, after and even during the most hellish experiences he suffered at the hands of the Nazis, the Klausenberger Rebbe was loved and revered for his sheer genius, his selfless devotion to the welfare of the most unfortunate, his piety and his courageous leadership.

Due to his pre-war reputation as a great rabbi, people were attracted to the rebbe and sought his advice and guidance even within the camps. This was not lost on the Germans and they treated the rebbe with special beatings and particular cruelty. The rebbe risked his precarious health by not eating any food that wasn't kosher or which may have been prepared together with non-kosher food and would regularly use his tiny allotment of drinking water to wash his hands before eating bread, all the while urging others to preserve their own lives by eating anything they could get their unwashed hands on, kosher or otherwise. His admirers and followers sought to protect the rebbe and would risk their lives to help him in any way that they could. They would often make it possible for him to keep Shabbos and Jewish holidays by taking on his workload in addition to their own.

It once happened that the rebbe was able to avoid working on the last days of the Sukkot holiday due to the creative designs of his devoted bunk mates. But somehow the Germans got word of the ruse and forced his followers to watch as they proceeded to administer a savage beating so violent that no one thought the rebbe could survive its ferocity. The Nazis would not allow anyone to go to Rabbi Halberstam's assistance, even after they were done with him, and they marched everyone out to work, leaving the rebbe in a broken heap on the barracks floor.

As night fell, the Jewish prisoners were marched back into their barracks expecting to mourn the rebbe's untimely passing. Instead, they found that their master had miraculously dragged himself over to a post, clawed his way up until he was nearly standing and was swaying back and forth while moving his lips in the hoarsest of whispers. "Rebbe what are you doing?!" his followers exclaimed. "Let us help you down so you can rest!"

The rebbe waved them off. "Children, tonight is Simchat Torah," he murmured. "Come dance with me."

I waded into the revolving circle of men who were clutching the Torah to their hearts, and on that particular Simchat Torah night, I walked round and round while in my mind I danced with the rebbe.

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YAHRZEIT LIST FOR TISHRI 5769

We wish long life to the following congregants who have yahrzeit during the coming month:

CONGREGANT		YAHRZEIT	DATE OF	YAHRZEIT		
OSCHEROWITZ	Louis	Father			4.4	
ARENSON	Carol	Mother	2nd	TISHRI	1st	OCTOBER
HOFFMAN	Jenny		4th	TISHRI	3rd	OCTOBER
PAIKEN	Sam	Mother	5th	TISHRI	4th	OCTOBER
SCHNAID	Linda	Mother	5th	TISHRI	4th	OCTOBER
CHAIT	Hazel	Husband	6th	TISHRI	5th	OCTOBER
DAMELIN		Mother	7th	TISHRI	6th	OCTOBER
COPANS	Barry	Father	7th	TISHRI	6th	OCTOBER
LANG	Arlene	Mother	8th	TISHRI	7th	OCTOBER
ROME	Jerome	Father	8th	TISHRI	7th	OCTOBER
	Maureen	Mother	8th	TISHRI	7th	OCTOBER
SCHNAID	Linda	Father	15th	TISHRI	14th	OCTOBER
FRIEDLAND	David	Mother	16th	TISHRI	15th	OCTOBER
FRIEDLAND	Louella	Father	17th	TISHRI	16th	OCTOBER
SHER	Jeffrey	Grandmother	19th	TISHRI	18th	OCTOBER
COHEN	Jack	Mother	20th	TISHRI	19th	OCTOBER
HELLMANN	Ivan	Father	20th	TISHRI	19th	OCTOBER
STRIMLING	Michael	Mother	20th	TISHRI	19th	OCTOBER
BLOCK	Michael	Grandmother	21st	TISHRI	20th	OCTOBER
MARKS	Gillian	Son	21st	TISHRI	20th	OCTOBER
MARKS	Lara	Brother	21st	TISHRI	20th	OCTOBER
FEIGIN	Jonathan	Grandmother	23rd	TISHRI	22nd	OCTOBER
BLACHER	Dave	Father	24th	TISHRI	23rd	OCTOBER
GORDON	David	Mother	24th	TISHRI	23rd	OCTOBER
OSSIP	Loma	Aunt	24th	TISHRI	23rd	OCTOBER
FIHRER	Joan	Father	25th	TISHRI	24th	OCTOBER
ISRAELSTAM	Helen	Mother	29th	TISHRI	28th	OCTOBER
LEVIN	Julius	Father	30th	TISHRI	29th	OCTOBER
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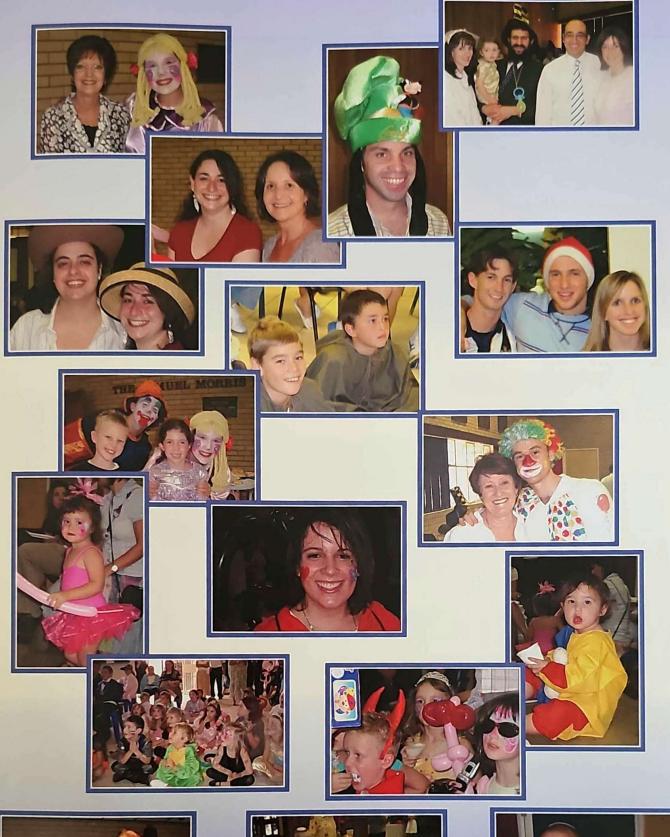
N.B. Yahrzeit candles should be lit on the night before the given date.







Purim Celebrations











More Celebrations











Minyanim, Selwyn Segal and the Choir





























Lulav and Etrog

If you wish to order your own Lulav and Etrog for Sukkot, please contact Rabbi Uzvolk on 084-221-8770.

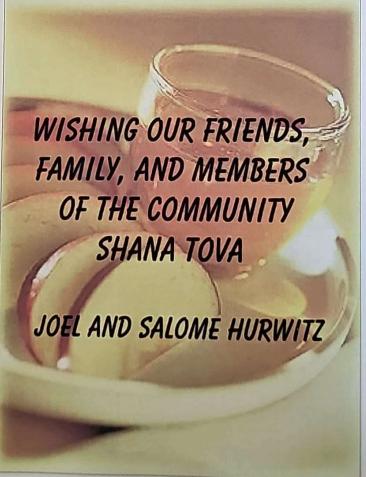
Children's Services

There are Children's Services every Shabbat and Yom Tov evening and morning.

Welcome to our Shul New Members - 2008

Jacqueline, Jeffrey, Michael and Daniel Epstein
Eva, Neil, Philip and Sharna Berelowitz
Lorien, Jonathan, Kira, Ariella and Ruby Gimpel
Nola, Benjamin and Danni Nel
Ezette, Mark, Joshua, Erin and Amber Gordon
Susan, David, Aaron and Daniel Fleishman
Rona and Ronnie Friedman
Joanne, Stephen, Jordan, Dean, Jared and Isabella Goldberg







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