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שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה

Shana Tova u'M'tukah

Good and Sweet New Year

to you and your extended families.

*Cathy Lowenstein
School Principal*

*Rabbi Matthew Bellas
School Rabbi*

Rosh HaShana 5771

September 8th-10th, 2010

ראש השנה

שנת תשע"א



“God spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak thus to the Israelite people: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts.’” (Lev. 23:23-24)

The biblical months do not follow the same numbering as the calendar months, which explains why the month of Tishrei is considered the seventh month in the Bible. Nissan, the month during which we celebrate Pesach is the first biblical month.

Rosh HaShana marks the beginning of the Jewish calendar year, which follows the lunar cycle. It is the Jewish New Year. Two festival days are observed, based on ancient rabbinic tradition. The High Holidays (Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur) are observed as a time of introspection, resolving to make ourselves and the world around us better in the year to come. The blasts of the shofar not only serve as the announcement for the New Year, but also as a “wake-up call” to our hearts, minds, and souls that the work of תשובה (“return” to God and goodness) must begin.

There is powerful imagery that is associated with the High Holiday season. The Rabbis teach that we are to imagine ourselves on Rosh Hashana (and Yom Kippur) as being very much in the presence of God, who is judging us based upon our actions from over the course of the past year. The intention and verve with which we undertake the very personal process of תשובה will determine whether or not we are written into the Book of Life or the Book of Death for the coming year. Our liturgy reflects a repeating request for God to write us into the Book of Life. As modern and enlightened Jews, we do not necessarily take this teaching literally; however, it does speak to the severity with which we are expected to regard the events and transformation of the עשרת ימי תשובה, the “Ten Days of Repentance,” (The ten days beginning with Rosh HaShana and ending with Yom Kippur).



We are instructed that true תשובה is a three-fold process:

- 1) You seek out those against whom you have transgressed and apologize for your wrong-doing.
- 2) You commit never to repeat that transgression again
- 3) You follow through on your commitment by actually not repeating the wrong.

Therefore, the outcome of one's תשובה will not be known for quite some time, but the process of introspection and self improvement is the central theme and meaning of the High Holiday season.

The Month of Elul and S'lichot/Prayers of Repentance

The month of Elul is a time of repentance in preparation for the High Holidays. Tradition teaches that the month of Elul is a particularly propitious time for repentance. This mood of repentance builds through the month of Elul to the period of S'lichot, to Rosh Hashanah, and finally to Yom Kippur.

According to tradition, the month of Elul is the time that Moses spent on Mount Sinai preparing the second set of tablets after the incident of the golden calf. He ascended on Rosh Hodesh Elul/First day of the Jewish month of Elul and descended on the 10th of Tishrei, at the end of Yom Kippur, when repentance was complete. Other

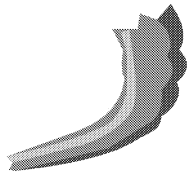
sources say that Elul is the beginning of a period of 40 days that Moses prayed for God to forgive the people after the Golden Calf incident, after which the commandment to prepare the second set of tablets was given.

During the month of Elul, from the second day of Elul to the 28th day, the shofar is blown after morning services every weekday until the day before Rosh Hashanah to make a clear distinction between the rabbinic rule of blowing the shofar in Elul and the biblical *mitzvah*/commandment to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana. Four blasts are blown: *t'ki'ab, sb'varim-t'ruah, t'ki'ab*. Rambam explained the custom of blowing shofar as a wake-up call, designed to rouse us from our complacency. It is a call to repentance. The blast of the shofar is a very piercing sound when done properly.

S'lihot/Prayers of Repentance are recited from the Sunday before Rosh HaShana until Yom Kippur. If Rosh HaShana begins on a Monday or Tuesday, *s'lihot* begins on the Sunday of the week before Rosh Hashana, to make sure that there are at least 3 days of *s'lihot*. The first *s'lihot* service of the holiday season is usually a large community service, held around midnight on *Motza'ei Shabbat*/Saturday night after the conclusion of Shabbat. The entire community, including men, women and children who are able, attend the service, and the rabbi gives a sermon introducing the season of repentance.

The Shofar

The shofar was used in biblical times to announce *Rosh Hodesh*/the New Moon, festivals, and the Jubilee year. Rosh HaShana is termed “*zikbron t'ru'ab*/a memorial of blowing” or “*yom t'ru'ab*/a day of blowing” of the shofar. It was also employed in processions, as a musical accompaniment (particularly to religious services in the Temple), and to signify the start of a war. The shofar was blown in the times of Joshua to help him capture Jericho. As they surrounded the walls of the city, the shofar was blown, the walls collapsed, and the Jews were able to capture the city. The shofar was commonly taken out to war so the troops would know when a battle would begin.



According to the Talmud, a shofar may be made from the horn of any animal except that a cow or calf (Rosh Hashanah, 26a), although a ram is preferable. The horn can come from a non-kosher animal based on the idea that it is permissible to be put in the mouth and that eating is not at all related to its usage. The obligation of shofar is to **hear it**. The order of preference for the shape and source of a shofar is the following: 1) curved ram; 2) curved other sheep; 3) curved other animal; 4) straight - ram or otherwise; 5) non-kosher animal; 6) cow. The first four categories are used with a bracha, the fifth without a bracha, and the last, not at all. There are three main blast types for the sounding of the shofar:

<i>T'kiyah</i>	_____	תְּקִיעָה
<i>Sb'varim</i>	_____	שְׁבָרִים
<i>T'ru'ab</i>	_____	תְּרוּעָה

The blasting of the shofar on Rosh HaShana is both a blast to mark the beginning of the first calendar month and to serve as the “wake up call” and reminder to focus on the task of repentance. The shofar blast at the end of Yom Kippur officially marks the end of the fast and the ten days of repentance, which began on Rosh HaShana.

In years when Rosh HaShana coincides with Shabbat, the shofar is not blasted. The reason for this is to prevent a possible violation of Shabbat by the shofar blower, who might carry the shofar to synagogue on Shabbat, thereby violating Shabbat law. In addition, there are those that argue that blasting the shofar “creates” music and creation of anything is prohibited on Shabbat.

For a special teaching on the spiritual reasons for not blowing shofar on Shabbat, please turn to the end of the Rosh HaShana packet.

The *Tashlikh* Service (Symbolic “Casting Off” of Sins)

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, before sunset, Jews traditionally proceed to a body of running water, preferably one containing fish (man cannot escape God's judgment any more than fish can escape being caught in a net; we are

just as likely to be ensnared and trapped at any moment as is a fish), and symbolically cast off (*tasklikh*) their sins. The ceremony includes reading the source passage for the practice, the last verses from the prophet Micah (7:19), "He will take us back in love; He will cover up our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." **If the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, as it does this year, the *Ashkenazim* perform *tashlikh* the second day (so as not to carry prayer books to the water, which would violate Sabbath laws). *Sephardim* hold the ritual even on the Sabbath [as do a number of liberal Jews].** The ceremony can take place anytime during the high holiday season through Hoshanah Rabbah at the end of Sukkot.



Proper Greetings for the Festival:

שָׁנָה מוֹבָה תִּכְתִּיבוּ
Shana Tova Tikateivu
 May you be inscribed for a Good Year

שָׁנָה מוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה
Shana Tova u'M'tukah
 Good and Sweet New Year

Festival Schedule:

Saturday night, September 4th, 2010

Slichot Service at your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for exact start times)

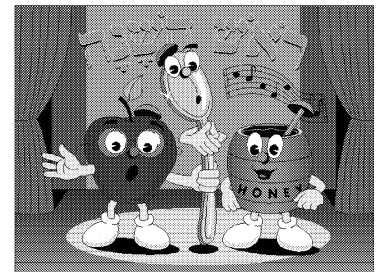
Wednesday evening, September 8th, 2010

Preparation of the *eiruv Tavshilin* (see below for an explanation)

Candle lighting at 7:24pm

Festival services in your local synagogue (check synagogue publications for exact start times)

The Festival Meal in the Home



Thursday, September 9th, 2010

Morning Festival services at your local synagogue including the blowing of the shofar

Festival Meal in the Home

Tashlikh Service (casting away of mistakes from the previous year) in the late afternoon, in some Sephardi and other communities

Candle lighting for the Second Day of Rosh HaShana at **after 8:22pm**

Friday, September 10th, 2010

Morning Festival services at the local synagogue including the blowing of the shofar

Festival Meal in the Home

Tashlikh Service (casting away of mistakes from the previous year) in the late afternoon, in most Ashkenazi communities

Erev Shabbat/Festival Havdalah to conclude Rosh HaShana and welcome in Shabbat.

Candle lighting at 7:20pm

Ritual Practices in the Home:

The rituals surrounding festive meals on **הגים**/festivals are very similar to what is practiced on **שבת**/Shabbat. What is different are the texts of some of the **ברכות**/ritual blessings, which focus on the celebration of the festival that has arrived (when Shabbat and the festival coincide, both are mentioned, with Shabbat always taking precedence as the holiest day in Jewish tradition). Therefore, the **ברכות** over the lighting of candles and the wine make mention of the **יום טוב**/festival day and its themes.

For Rosh HaShana, the ritual of eating apples and honey is added, preceded by the **ברכה**/blessing for eating fruits of the tree. This blessing is followed immediately by a prayer asking for the year ahead to be a sweet one, this being

the ritual symbolism of this combination of sweet fruit and honey.

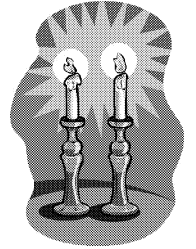
Below, you will find the program for the recitation of blessings and practice of the pre-meal rituals customary for Rosh HaShana eve. Please note that candle lighting may only occur at its prescribed time of sunset. It is permitted only at or slightly before and, therefore, must take place as Rosh HaShana eve begins each day. Blessings over the wine, washing of the hands, taking of bread (traditionally a round **הלה** loaf), and apples and honey are to be practiced at meal time.

Candle Lighting for Festivals

הדלקת נרות ליום טוב

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. אשר קדשנו במצותיו. וצונו להדליק נר (של שבת ו) של יום טוב.
Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir (shel Shabbat v') shel yom tov.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to light the candles [of Shabbat and] of the festival.



ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. שהחיינו וקיימנו והניענו לזמן הזה.
Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'beheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higi'yanu la-z'man ha-zeh.
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Blessing the Children

ברכת הבנים והבנות

For Sons:

לבנים:

יְשִׁימְךָ א-להים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה:
Y'simkha Elohim k'Ephrayim v'kb'Menasheh
May God make you like Ephraim and Menasheh

For Daughters:

לבנות:

יְשִׁימְךָ א-להים כְּסָרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה:
Y'simeikh Elohim k'Sara, Rivka, Raheil, v'Leah.
May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

For All Sons and Daughters:

לכל הבנים והבנות:

יְבָרְכֶךָ ה' וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.
Y'varekh'kha Adonai v'yishm'rekha.
May God bless you and protect you.

יֵאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּךָ.
Ya'eir Adonai panav eilekha vi'khuneka.
May God shine God's presence upon you and be gracious unto you.

יֵשָׁא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיֵשֵׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.
Yisa Adonai panav eilekha v'yaseim l'kha shalom.
May God lift God's presence be toward you and grant you peace.

לשבת: ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי. ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם ויכל א-להים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה: וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה. ויברך א-להים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו. כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא א-להים לעשות:

On Shabbat Eve only: Vay'bi erev vay'bi vokeir yom ha'shishi. Va'y'khalu ha'shamayim v'ha'aretz v'kehol tz'va'am va'y'khal Elohim ba'yom ha'sb'vi'i m'lakhto asher asa. Ya'yish'bot ba'yom ha'sb'vi'i mikol m'lakhto asher asa. Va'y'varekh Elohim et yom ha'sb'vi'i va'y'kadeish oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'lakhto asher bara Elohim la'asot.

On Shabbat Eve: It was evening, it was morning, the sixth day. The heavens and the earth and all that were within it were completed. On the seventh day, God completed all the work that God had done. Then, on the seventh day, God rested from all the work that God had done. Then, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on it did God rest from all the work of creation that God had done.

סברי מרנן ורבנן ורבותי.

Savri maranan v'rabanen v'rabotai.

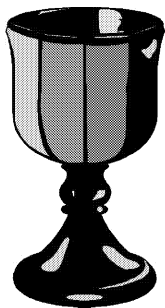
ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. בורא פרי הגפן.

Barukh Atab Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל עם ורוממנו מכל לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו. ותתן לנו ה' א-להינו בראהבה, את יום [השבת הזה ואת יום] הזכרון הזה, יום [זכרון] תרועה [בראהבה] מקרא קדש, ובר ליציאת מצרים: כי בנו בחרת, ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים וברך אמת וקום לעד. ברוך אתה ה', מלך על כל הארץ, מקדש [השבת ו] ישראל ויום הזכרון.

Barukh Atab Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam asher bahar banu mi-kol am, v'rom'manu mi-kol lashon v'ki'd'shanu b'mitzvotav, va-titein lanu, Adonai Eloheinu, b'abava et yom [haShabbat haZeh v'et yom] haZikaron haZeh, yom [z'ikh'rom] t'ru'a [b'abava] mikra kodesh, z'eikber li'tzi'vat mitz'ra'yim. ki vanu vaharta v'otanu qidashta mikol ha'amim u'd'varkha emet v'ka'yam la'ad. Barukh Atab Adonai, m'kadesh [ha-shabat v'] Yisra'el v'yom haZikaron.



Blessed are you, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has chosen us from among all peoples, and exalted us above every language and sanctified us with God's commandments, and you gave us, Lord our God, with love the day [this day of Shabbat and the day] this day of remembrance, the day of [remembering] of the shofar blast [with love] a holy convocation, a memorial of the Exodus from Egypt. Indeed, You have chosen us and made us holy among all peoples and Your word is truth and will exist for all time. Blessed are You, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] Israel and the seasons.

כמוצאי שבת: ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. בורא מאורי האש.

On Saturday night: Barukh Atab Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, borei m'orei ha'eish.

On Saturday night: Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has created the lights of fire.

ברוך אתה ה', א-להינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש לחול, בין אור להשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה: בין קדשת שבת לקדשת יום טוב הבדלת, ואת יום השביעי מששת ימי המעשה קדשת, הבדלת וקדשת את עמך ישראל בקדשתך. ברוך אתה ה' המבדיל בין קדש לקדש.

Barukh Atab Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, hamavdil ein kodesh l'hol, bein or l'hoshekh, bein Yisra'el la'amim, bein yom ha'sb'vi'i l'sheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se. Bein k'dushat Shabbat lik'dushat yom tov bindalta, v'et yom ha'sb'vi'i misheishet y'mei ha'ma'a'se kidashta, bindalta v'kidashta et amkha Yisra'el bik'dushatekha. Barukh Atab Adonai ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who has differentiated between the sacred and the mundane, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and six days of activity; between the sanctity of Shabbat and the festivals have You differentiated, and the seventh day from the six days of activity have You sanctified, you have differentiated and sanctified Your people Israel with your holiness. Blessed are You, the One who differentiates between the holy and the holy.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Barukh Atab Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam she'beheyanu v'kaiy'manu v'higiy'nanu la-z'man ha-zeh.

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

Kiddush for Rosh HaShana Day

קדוש ליום ראש השנה

לשבת: ושמרו בני ישראל את השבת, לעשות את השבת לדורתם ברית עולם. ביני ובין בני ישראל את היא לעולם. כי ששת ימים עשה יי את השמים ואת הארץ, וביום השביעי שבת וינפש.

On Shabbat Afternoon: V'shamru v'nei Yisra'el et ha'Shabbat, la'asot et ha'Shabbat l'dorotam b'rit olam. Beini u'vein b'nei Yisra'el et hi l'olam ki sheisbet yamim asa Adonai et ha'shama'yim v'et ha'aretz, u'va'yom ha'sh'vi'i shavat va'yinafash.

On Shabbat Afternoon: The children of Israel shall observe the Shabbat for all their generations as an everlasting covenant. Between Me and the children of Israel shall it be an everlasting sign, for in six days did God create the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he ceased from work and rested.

וידבר משה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל:

V'a'y'dabeir Moshe et mo'adei Adonai el b'nei Yisra'el.

Moses declared the sacred times of the Lord to the children of Israel.

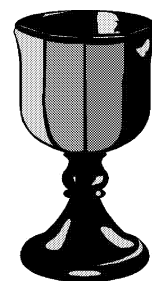
סברי מרגן ורבנן ורבותי.

Savri maranan v'rabanen v'rabotai.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. בורא פרי הגפן.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam borei p'ri ha-gafen.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine.



Ritual Hand Washing

נמילת ידיים

The hands are ritually washed before breaking bread at any meal.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. אשר קדשנו במצוותיו, וצונו על נמילת ידיים.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yada'yim.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to wash the hands.

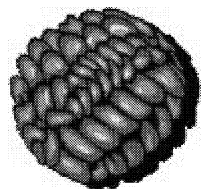


On Rosh HaShana, our hallah looks different. While the braiding remains, instead of being long and somewhat narrow, the Rosh HaShana hallah is round. The cycle of creation and the circle of life are major themes as we celebrate the anniversary of Creation on Rosh HaShana and round foods, including the hallah are symbolic of this meaning of the festival.

Breaking Bread

המוציא

Two round hallah loaves are held together for the recitation of the following blessing, marking the beginning of the festive meal.



ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם. המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam ha'motzi lehem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has brought forth bread from the earth.

Dipping & Eating Apples in Honey:

On the surface, the tradition and practice of dipping and eating apples in honey on Rosh HaShana is a very basic one. We take a sweet apple and the sweet honey together in hopes of in some way symbolically bring ourselves into a “sweet new year.” However, rituals do not come about by accident. The foods and objects chosen for our practices are not coincidences. They all have deeper meanings associated with them.

Sadly, the most common association for the apple is with the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. However, it is actually highly unlikely that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was the apple. The Rabbis of the Talmud teach that the produce of the Garden of Eden were wheat, figs, and dates: three of the seven holy species of the Land of Israel. Therefore, at Rosh HaShana it is important to understand what our tradition does say and teach about the apple.

In the Book of Song of Songs, we find the following quotation: “As the apple is rare and unique among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved -- Israel -- amongst the maidens (nations) of the world.” God is the speaker here and the message is that God loves the Children of Israel. And what is the reason for this love? In the Midrash, it is explained that the apple tree puts forth the nub of its fruit even before the leaves that will surround and protect the little fruit at its beginning stage of growth are fully sprouting. The Jewish people, by accepting the Torah with the statement: “we will do and then we will understand” -- placing action and observance of Torah commandments ahead of complete understanding and rational acceptance -- imitated the behavior of the apple. Thus, the apple is a Jewish symbol, a reminder of our relationship with God, the source of God’s love, and the gift of Torah, which serves as our guide in this High Holiday season as we focus on *t’shuvah*/introspective self-reflection as we go into the new Jewish calendar year.

Honey also has strong associations for the Jewish people. The Land of Israel was described as a “land flowing with milk and honey” and the last of the seven holy species of the Land of Israel is honey. Of course, the honey of the Middle East of the ancient world was date honey, not bee honey as is used by most of us today. Nevertheless, the symbolism evoked by the sweetness of the honey and references of it to our connection to Israel remind us to be resolved in the Jewish New Year to maintain and strengthen our connection to our Holy Land.

Eating Apples and Honey

אכילת תפוחים ודבש

Apples and honey are eaten at the beginning of each of the festive meals of Rosh HaShana.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam borei p'ri ha-eitz.

Blessed are You Lord our God, sovereign of the universe who creates the fruit of the tree.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה.

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanekha Adonai Eloheinu v'Eilobei avoteinu, she't'hadeish aleinu shana tova u'm'tuka.

May it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, that you will renew for us a good and sweet year.



When Shabbat Immediately Follows a Festival

The Custom of the *Eiruv Tavshilin*

This year, we once again encounter the scheduling issue which places festival days immediately before Shabbat. According to Jewish law, it is forbidden to do any act on a festival day that prepares for a following day, even if the following day is Shabbat. Therefore, the Rabbis created a halakhic/legal device (loophole), called an *eruv tavshilin*, which allows one to cook food on a festival day for use on a Shabbat that immediately follows it. Without this device, preparing fresh and delicious foods for Shabbat would be near impossible.

Eruv tavshilin works in the following way: if a festival day -- whether it is the first or second day of the festival -- falls on a Friday (as does the second day of Rosh HaShana this year), an *eruv tavshilin* is set aside on the day preceding the beginning of the festival (Wednesday or Thursday afternoon), so that we will be permitted to prepare for Shabbat (cooking as well as any other necessary preparations) on the festival itself. This *eruv* consists of a challah or two matzot (if it is Passover), and a cooked food, such as meat, fish, or an unpeeled hard-boiled egg. The *eruv* serves as a symbolic beginning of the preparation for Shabbat process that is then permitted to be continued as necessary during the festival, instead of beginning any preparations from scratch. While this is a small distinction, it is a meaningful way around what would otherwise be a violation of a festival day.

To set up an *eruv tavshilin*, one takes the pre-cooked items (it is a good idea to wrap them in aluminum foil, or another distinctive packaging, to easily keep them apart from the rest of the foods in your home), sets them aside and recites the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוַת עֵרוּב.

Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al mitzvat eiruv.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us regarding the *eiruv*.

The *eruv* is then put away until Shabbat, during which it must be consumed. In many communities, it is customary to use the challah or matzah as one of the two loaves of bread used at the Shabbat meal.

Other important notes:

* The *eruv tavshilin* only allows one to cook on Friday for Shabbat, it does not permit cooking from one day of the holiday to the next (i.e. Thursday for Friday).

* On holidays it is only permissible to cook from a pre-existent flame, one that is burning since the onset of the holiday.

A Thought for Rosh HaShanah

The Silent Day of Rosh Hashanah

By: Rabbi Dov Linzer

This year, the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat. And so, after a month of blowing shofar in anticipation of this great day, we will celebrate the first day of Rosh Hashanah in silence. For most of us, this is greatly distressing - the very character of the day and our experience of its profundity are created through the blowing of the Shofar, and we must sacrifice this for what seems like a minor concern - lest a person might forget and carry the shofar in the public domain. But does this make sense? Why must the entire Jewish people give up blowing the shofar because of how one or two forgetful individuals who live in communities with no *eruv* (that permits them to carry from private to public domain on Shabbat & festivals) will act?

I believe that there is a deep message in this silence. A central part of our character, our human essence, is to do, to act, to create. This quality is, in fact, central to the day of Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is not the day the world was created, but the day that human beings were created. Created in the image of God, with a Divine mandate to follow and partner in God's act of creation - "fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the seas, and the birds of the heaven, and over every living things that moves on the earth." And on the anniversary of this day, on Rosh Hashanah, we must give an accounting for how we have lived up to this awesome responsibility - have we done all we can to partner with God, to create, to build, to make the world a better place?

But on this Shabbat, on this Rosh Hashanah, we are told to pull back. Our creative impulses must be reined in because someone could sin, someone could be hurt. We cannot allow the pursuit of the good and the right to bring about the hurt of others. We must be sensitive even to the slightest possibility of offense, no matter how remote it seems. It is specifically when we are striving for greatness and following our loftiest visions that we must be exquisitely sensitive to those around us, to the presence of others in this world.

The Talmud in Makkot tells us that Micah the prophet distilled the entire Torah to 3 principles - "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love lovingkindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). The character of *tzniut*, humility, is the awareness that one is not the center of the universe, that God exists, that others exist, and one must comport oneself with this constant awareness. We all know that there are people who in their pursuit of abstract ethical causes are callous to the actual individuals that they work with or are serving. It is exactly when one is pursuing justice and loving-kindness that one must be the most careful to walk *bitzniut*, to think about and attend to the needs of those around him or her.

I am a person who is always running somewhere - to give a class, to learn Torah, to go to shul. Looking back on this year, I cannot remember in any specific instance what I was running for. What I can remember, what stands out most clearly in my mind, are the times that I stopped running and held the door for someone, or stopped to ask someone how she was doing, or stopped to help someone carry a baby in a stroller down the subway steps. Those were moments of real *kedusha*, of real holiness. And I also remember all those times that I did not stop, when what I was doing was too important to take out a minute to say hello, or to give a poor person some spare change, or when I bumped into someone and mumbled a quick apology as I hurried by. Looking back on those events, I can only wonder how important that thing I was running to really was, and how important it could have remained after I had been so inattentive to the needs of another human being.

This quality that preceded creation is called *tzimtzum*, contraction. For a world to exist, God had to pull back from perfection so that space could be made for others, so that existence could be so multifaceted, so richly complex. When we create we, too, have to make sure that our creation is more than just an extension of ourselves. How much do we involve others in our plans, collaborate, listen to other perspectives and reflect upon them? How much do we truly value the unique contributions that our spouse, our friends, our colleagues can make? How much do we make room for the values of others, particularly when they differ from our own? This type of complex, rich creation can only come after the first powerful act of *tzimtzum*.

On Shabbat, on the first day of Rosh Hashanah upcoming, we will contract ourselves, we will pull back on our single-minded pursuit of the true and the good to make space for others. And on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, when we blow the shofar and give expression to our yearning to create a world that is right and that is good, we will know that we must go about this task *bitzniut*, with full sensitivity to those around us, so that the world we create will be world of richness and of beauty.

A *ketiva va'chatima tova* to you all

For families interested in the opportunity to learn more about Rosh HaShana, its history, customs, and ritual practices, the following internet addresses may prove useful:

General Information:

<http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/kids/together/roshhashanah/parentrosh.shtml>

http://www.everythingjewish.com/RoshH/RH_origins.htm

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm>

Laws and Customs:

http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/jrpguide/12_part4.shtml

http://learn.jtsa.edu/topics/diduknow/jrpguide/12_part5.shtml

The Shofar:

http://hillel.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Rosh_Hashana/Overview_Rosh_Hashanah_Community/Sounding_Shofar/HowToShofar.htm

If any questions remain unanswered, please feel free to call the school at 604-736-7307 and be in touch with Rabbi Matthew Bellas, who prepared this material, at ext. 3403.

*The Board, Administration, Faculty, & Staff
at Vancouver Talmud Torah
wish a*

גִּמְרַר חַתִּימָה טוֹבָה

G'mar Hatima Tova

May you be sealed for the Good

to you and your extended families.

*Cathy Lowenstein
School Principal*

*Rabbi Matthew Bellas
School Rabbi*

Yom Kippur 5771

September 17th-18th, 2010

יום הכּפּוּרִים

שנת תשע"א

“The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: you shall practice self-denial...you shall do no work throughout that day. For it is a Day of Atonement, on which expiation is made on your behalf before the Lord your God...It shall be a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall practice self denial, on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall observe this your Sabbath.’” (Lev. 23:26-32)

Besides Shabbat, Yom Kippur is the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar. In fact, Yom Kippur itself is called **שַׁבַּת שְׁבֻתוֹן** (Sabbath of complete rest) in the Torah. A common misconception about Yom Kippur, due to the fact that it is a fast day and that our focus is to be on forgiveness and regret for misdeeds of the past, is that it is a sad and solemn festival. This, however, is not supposed to be the case. While it is a day that must be taken seriously, it really is a day of joy, likened in many ways to a wedding day. On Yom Kippur, each individual Jew comes before God to be united or reunited with God and God’s ways. When we do so, it is traditional to wear a white robe, called a *kittel*, as does a groom at a wedding or white clothing as a bride on her wedding day. Just as on one’s wedding day, we fast in order to separate ourselves from the mundane of the everyday, to physically purify ourselves and to focus on the deeper meanings of the day. Finally, Yom Kippur is the day on which we envision ourselves moving into a new phase of our lives, with a fresh start, a clean slate, and a new beginning. Therefore, while the serious purposes, work, and characteristics of the day are to be remembered and acted upon, it is also crucial that we regard Yom Kippur as a day of celebration. In fact, it is taught in the Mishna that at the end of Yom Kippur, eligible young men and women would go out into the fields wearing their Yom Kippur white clothing (so that one would not be judged based on his or her perceived wealth) in order to make matches for themselves. What greater celebration is there in the Jewish tradition than the pairing together of a bride and a groom?

Festival Schedule:

Friday evening, September 17th, 2010

סְעוּדַת מַפְסֵקֶת - *se'udat mafseket* - “stopping meal”

Shabbat and *Yom Tov* Candle lighting at 7:05pm in the home

Kol Nidre services in the local synagogue (check with synagogues for exact start times)

Men should remember to bring a talit for this service, the only evening service during which it is worn throughout the year.

Saturday/Shabbat, September 18th, 2010

Morning services at the local synagogue (check with synagogues for exact start times)

Early afternoon break - often used for a nap

Minḥa - The afternoon service during which we read *Maftir Yonah*, the story of Jonah and the Whale

N'ilah - The concluding service of Yom Kippur at which we blast the Shofar and recite

Havdalah (8:05pm)

Break Fast Meal

Traditional Greeting for the Festival of Yom Kippur:

The greeting used in the days after Rosh HaShana and through Yom Yippur changes from wishes for being inscribed for a good year, which were appropriate to Rosh HaShana, to prayers for being “sealed” for a good year:

נִמְרַח חַטֵּימָה טוֹבָה

G'mar hatima tova.

May you conclude being sealed for the good.

On Yom Kippur, tradition teaches that God seals our fates for the coming year. Therefore, the greeting traditionally given one to another reflects this thematic change from blessings for the New Year to a positive final outcome in this season of renewal and return.

Candle Lighting for Festivals

הדלקת נרות ליום טוב

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל [שַׁבָּת וְ] יוֹם טוֹב.

Barukh Ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha'Olam asheir kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel [Shabbat v'] yom tov.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the universe, who has sanctified us with the commandments, and commanded us to light the candles of [Shabbat and] the festival.

Traditional Practices:

Yom Kippur is a day of focus on one task and one task alone: asking for forgiveness for misdeeds of the past year and making commitments to improvement in the coming year. All potential distractions to this weighty task are eschewed in an effort to help individuals achieve success. Therefore, on Yom Kippur, a traditional day's activities will be concentrated in the synagogue with participation in the prayer services of the day. There are *Kol Nidre* services in the evening, followed by a morning service that begins early in the morning and goes into the early to mid afternoon. A break is then taken for a couple hours before the afternoon and concluding “*N'ilal*” (literally, “locking” of the gates of heaven) services. It truly is a day on which we focus ourselves, as much as possible, on the needs of the day and our personal relationships with God and our fellow human beings.

The most well-known custom of Yom Kippur is the **תַּעֲנִית**, the “fast.” The Torah commands us to practice self-denial on the day of Yom Kippur. The most significant way that we do so is by refraining from eating and drinking, often gluttonous practices, particularly in this day and age and in our society. In fact, a Yom Kippur that falls on Shabbat is the only occasion on which one is permitted to fast on Shabbat. Other fast days are shifted in the calendar if they coincide with Shabbat because the observance of Shabbat as a festive celebration supercedes all other observances.

The question of children fasting is an an important one to consider. For health reasons, it is recommended that children not fast on Yom Kippur. However, as far back as the Mishna, the Rabbis discussed how fasting should be handled as children approach the age of Bar and Bat Mitzvah, when they are first required to fast. They taught the following:

Young children, we do not ask them to fast on Yom Kippur. However, we train them one or two years beforehand so that they become accustomed to the commandments. (Yoma 8:4)

הַתֵּינוּקוֹת, אִין מְעַנִּין אוֹתָן בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים.
אֲבָל מְתַנְבִּין אוֹתָם לְפָנֵי שָׁנָה וְלְפָנֵי שְׁנָתַיִם.
בְּשֶׁבִיל שְׂיִהְיוּ רְגִילִין בְּמִצְוֹת: (יומא ח:ד)

So, what we learn from this mishna is that boys and girls should begin “practicing” fasting for as long as they can one or two years before their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. However, this practice does not preclude parents’ abilities to

teach lessons about fasting for children even younger than that age. An appropriate fast for very young children can be the holding back of sweets of all kinds (sugary breakfast cereals, spreads, and desserts) for the entire day. At a slightly older age, perhaps children would skip or eat a very light breakfast. By taking a gradual approach over the course of several years, children will learn about the fast and how to successfully navigate it.

Fasting is only one of the ways that we take the focus away from our physical desires on Yom Kippur, concentrating instead on spiritual and introspective ones. There are a number of additional “abstinences” that were enacted by the Rabbis of the Mishna. In the Mishna, we find the following teaching:

On Yom Kippur, it is forbidden to eat, drink, bathe, anoint one’s self, wear leather sandals, and share in intimate relations. (Yoma 8:1)

יום הַכַּפּוּרִים אָסוּר בְּאֵכִילָה וּבְשִׁתְּיָה
וּבְרְחִיצָה וּבְסִיבָה וּבְנִעִילַת הַפְּנֵדֶל
וּבְתַשְׁמִישׁ הַמַּפָּה. (יומא ח:א)

Refraining from bathing, anointing one’s self with makeups or fragrances, wearing leather footwear, and sharing in intimate relations are symbols of physical comfort, luxury and indulgence. Each of these practices were seen as being centered around the needs of the body and on Yom Kippur, these are secondary to the meaning of the day. We strive to appear before God in as pure, innocent, humble and natural a form as possible, and refraining from these activities or practices enables us to do so.

How to Say “I’m Sorry.”

A fantastic children’s book that is worthwhile for the approach of Yom Kippur is called The Hardest Word. Indeed, one of the hardest things to do is to apologize for a wrong because it of its requirement to admit that we have made a mistake, that we have been wrong. As a means of trying to “save face” for ourselves, our apologies are often incomplete and have the opposite effect that we intend: they offend the person we have wronged even more because of the apology’s failure to fully express “the four R’s” of apologies. On Shabbat Shuvah (the Shabbat that falls between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur) one year, a lawyer was asked to deliver a talk about British Columbia’s Apology Act of 2006. He cited an article by John C. Kleefeld which described these 4 R’s as being the building blocks to real and effective apologies, as revealed by research. They are the following:

- 1) Remorse: “I am really sorry for/that (specifics of the wrongdoing)”
- 2) Responsibility: “I know what I did was wrong.”
- 3) Resolution: “I promise it won’t happen again.”
- 4) Reparations: “If there is anything I can do to make it up to you, please let me know.”

The inclusion of these four elements express genuine contrition, a commitment not to repeating the wrong, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to make restitution. It is common for individuals, when apologizing to say things like, “If I have offended you, then I apologize.” Such an apology puts the responsibility on the “victim” to decide if s/he has been wronged. The responsibility must be on the “perpetrator” to take responsibility and to apologize in a genuine way.

Special Features of Yom Kippur Prayer Services:

The Kol Nidre Prayer

The name given to the service on Yom Kippur eve “Kol Nidre” is derived from the text that serves as the opening prayer for that service. **כָּל נִדְרֵי**/Kol Nidrei is not so much as a prayer as it is a declaration, asking God not to hold us accountable for oaths that we will not be able to fulfill over the course of the next year. The swearing of an oath or promise of any kind is taken extremely seriously by Jewish tradition, for they are seen as being made in the name of God. Failure to fulfill an oath is as if one took God’s name in vain. As Yom Kippur begins, we make this declaration with full knowledge that our prayers over the next twenty-five hours will contain many promises. Yet, we are wary that we will not be able to fulfill them all. Therefore, while we take seriously the commitments we make on Yom Kippur, the Kol Nidre prayer allows our imperfect ability to fulfill them to be acceptable.

The Kol Nidrei melody is one that is recognized the world over and is one of the rare melodies that is almost, if not completely, universally implemented. Its music brings an instant association with the festival of Yom Kippur and is meant to transport members of the congregation into a serious and introspective state of mind. The mood is enhanced by the Torah scrolls being removed from the ark and held aloft throughout the entire chanting of the text. The paragraph of Kol Nidrei is recited three times, beginning traditionally in a quiet volume, gradually increasing with each successive recitation. The completion of the third rendition reaches a climax as the Cantor reaches full volume and then ends abruptly, leaving the room in an eerie silence.

The וידוי/ *Vidui* Confessional

The central prayer text for the day is called the "על המצות" "*al heit*," meaning "for the misdeed." This is the confessional during which we beat our breast over the area of our hearts as a combined way to perform both verbal and physical repentance. One of the intriguing aspects of this text is that it is formulated in the plural. Each of us is confessing to sins that were committed by "us" as a community of the whole. It is not phrased as "For the sin that **I** have committed." Rather, each of us confesses to "the sins that **WE** have committed." Some of the misdeeds listed in this confessional apply to us and some of them do not. However, a communal confessional provides comfort to us as individuals in a community of "sinners." It is much easier to perform the confessional for your own sins if you know that others are doing it right there next to you.

Recalling Yom Kippur of Temple Times: The *Avodah*/"Worship" Service

Yom Kippur in the time of the First and Second Temples was the one and only day on which the *Kobein Gadol*/High Priest would enter the *Kodesh HaKodashim*/Holy of Holies (most inner chamber of the Temple) and recite the Tetragrammaton (four letter name of God: yud-hey-vav-hey), God's holiest of names. Intricate preparation by the High Priest for this one moment was required, under the supervision of many aides. He would stay awake studying the entire night before the day of Yom Kippur in order to be sure of what he would need to do and remain ritually pure. The moment of the recitation of the name was accompanied by tremendous anticipation.

After the destruction of the Temples, new ways to create the drama of the Temple service was deemed necessary by the Rabbis in order to preserve the traditions of the past. The Rabbis of the Talmud obligated the study of the details of the Temple service on Yom Kippur. This obligation led to the creation of the *Avodah* Service as one of the parts of the *Musaf*/Additional Service on Yom Kippur. A recounting of the practices of the *Kobein Gadol*/High Priest and the verses from the Torah related to the sacrifices of Yom Kippur are included in the liturgy of the service. The *Avodah* Service is marked by the practice of full-body prostration (Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are the only two times when the practice is permitted) three times, corresponding to the recountings of the High Priest's requests for forgiveness from God during the ancient Temple services on Yom Kippur. Full-body prostration is common in the most traditional of communities even today.

The Story of Jonah and the Whale

The Book of Jonah, one of the books of the "minor prophets," is read on Yom Kippur afternoon. It is famous for the section of the story in which Jonah is swallowed by a giant sea creature (typically translated as "whale.") When the story begins, God orders Jonah to travel to the city of Nineveh and deliver God's message there. Not wanting to, Jonah runs away to Jaffa to sail off to Tarshish. A huge storm arises and the sailors, realizing this is no ordinary storm, cast lots and learn that Jonah is to blame. Jonah admits this and states that if he is thrown overboard the storm will cease. The sailors try to get the ship to the shore but in failing feel forced to throw him overboard, at which point the sea calms. Jonah is miraculously saved by being swallowed by a large fish. In chapter two, while in the great fish, Jonah prays to God and asks for forgiveness. God then commands the fish to "vomit" Jonah out.

God repeats the order to Jonah to visit Nineveh and deliver God's message. This time he goes there and walks through the city crying, "In forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed." The Ninevites believe his word and appoint a public fast, ranging from the King (who puts on sackcloth and sits in ashes) to the humblest person. God has compassion and spares the city for the time being.

Embittered by this, Jonah questions the need for his journey, stating that since God is merciful it was inevitable that God would yield to the Ninevites' entreaties. He then leaves the city and makes himself a shelter, waiting to see whether or not the city will be destroyed. God causes a plant to grow over Jonah's shelter to give him some shade from the sun, but a worm bites the plant's root and it withers. Jonah, now being exposed to the full force of the sun, becomes faint and desires that God take him out of the world.

God says to him, "Are you really so very angry about the little plant? You were upset about this little plant, something for which you have not worked nor did you do anything to make it grow. It grew up overnight and died the next day. Should I not be even more concerned about Nineveh, this enormous city? There are more than one hundred twenty thousand people in it who do not know right from wrong, as well as many animals?"

The story ends with a question, challenging the reader to face the questions and challenges posed by Yom Kippur, as its final few hours tick away. The book is unique in its ending in such a way. No other book in the Bible does so.

For families interested in the opportunity to learn more about Yom Kippur, its history, customs, and ritual practices, the following internet addresses may prove useful:

General Information:

<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm>

<http://learn.jtsa.edu/yomkippur/>

http://www.ujc.org/content_display.html?ArticleID=1574

Kol Nidre:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Yom_Kippur/Overview_Yom_Kippur_Community/Prayer_Services/Kol_Nidre.htm

Should you have any questions or thoughts about any of the above High Holy Day information, please feel free to call Rabbi Matthew Bellas at 604-736-7307 ext. 3403.