

Preparation הכנה

September 2011

Elul 5771 - Tishrei 5772

Kehillat Chovevei Tzion

Kehillat Chovevei Tzion
Route 25A at Nicolls Road
P.O. Box 544
East Setauket, NY 11733
(631) 689-0257

Visit us on-line at
www.kct.org

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*A Kehillah for those
wishing to participate
in traditional religious
services on Shabbat
and Yom Tov
... so much more!*

Established 1994



Preparing
to
Celebrate
the
High Holidays
at
Kehillat Chovevei Tzion

5772

SCHEDULE
OF
HOLIDAY
SERVICES

Selichot

Rosh HaShanah

Shabbat Shuvah

Yom Kippur

Sukkot

Hoshanah Rabbah

Shmini Atzeret

Simchat Torah

Shabbat Bresheet

KEHILLAT
CHOVEVEI
TZION

SERVICES CANDLE LIGHTING

SELICHOT

.....
SATURDAY SEPT. 24 10:00 PM

ROSH HASHANAH

.....
WEDNESDAY SEPT. 28 6:15 PM 6:22 PM
THURSDAY SEPT. 29 8:15 AM
(TASHLICH ...) 5:00 PM
(... AT THE SETAUKET DUCK POND)
FRIDAY SEPT. 30 6:15 PM 7:18 PM
8:15 AM

SHABBAT SHUVAH

.....
FRIDAY SEPT. 30 6:00 PM 6:18 PM
SATURDAY OCT. 1 9:00 AM

YOM KIPPUR

.....
FRIDAY OCT. 7 5:30 PM 6:07 PM
SATURDAY OCT. 8 8:30 AM
4:00 PM
(SHOFAR AT 7:01 PM)

SUKKOT

.....
WEDNESDAY OCT. 12 6:00 PM 5:59 PM
THURSDAY OCT. 13 9:00 AM
6:00 PM 6:56 PM
FRIDAY OCT. 14 9:00 AM

SHABBAT CHOL HAMOED SUKKOT

.....
FRIDAY OCT. 14 6:00 PM 5:56 PM
SATURDAY OCT. 15 9:00 AM

HOSHANAH RABBAH

.....
WEDNESDAY OCT. 19 7:00 AM

SHMINI ATZERET

.....
WEDNESDAY OCT. 19 5:45 PM 5:49 PM
THURSDAY OCT. 20 9:00 AM
(INCLUDING YIZKOR)

SIMCHAT TORAH

.....
THURSDAY OCT. 20 5:45 PM 6:46 PM
(MAARIV-HAKAFOT) 6:45 PM
FRIDAY OCT. 21 9:00 AM

SHABBAT BRESHEET

.....
FRIDAY OCT. 21 6:00 PM 5:46 PM
SATURDAY OCT. 22 9:00 AM

Celebrating, studying and growing together as a community of the committed, the extended member families of **Kehillat Chovevei Tzion** will again come together this year, **to celebrate its eighteenth year** in its *Setauket Beit Midrash* for the High Holiday period. The KCT Ritual Committee is delighted to provide you with this compendium for self-study, for family and individual use, in preparation for the upcoming holidays.

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a rest day, a remembrance with shofar blasts, a holy convocation. Vayikra 23:24

Shanah Tovah Tikatevu!

. . . . KCT: For Holidays, For Year-round

ברוך

Dear Chaverim,

Welcome to **Kehillat Chovevei Tzion** for the High Holiday season, 2011/5772. This information packet will help you prepare for this holiday period. Here you will find information about observance of the High holidays, and about the KCT schedule of holiday services.

KCT is now well into its 18th year. From the beginning, we have been a group of Jews committed to praying together and learning together. We are not only a religious community, but a community of friends, gathering for religious observances and for life cycle events, both happy and sad.

We hope you will enjoy the holidays at KCT. But more than that, we hope you will continue to come join us often in shul - you will find a place for religious reflection, for connection to your Jewish heritage, and a community of your committed friends and neighbors.

Wishing you a sweet and wonderful 5772.

Shana Tova Umetukah

Charlie

For the member families

of *Kehillat Chovevei Tzion*,

Elaine Ehrenberg	Bruce Engelberg
Harvey Goldstein	Craig Harris
Douglas Lee	Charles Mann
Karen Mann	Martin Vitberg

Herman Werner

.K.

. . . . Seating

Everyone will have reserved seats for *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Seats are normally reserved for husband and wife, and dependents and household members. Additional seats are available for other family members who live outside our local area, or for guests who likewise live outside our local area. **Full-time students are guests of KCT and will be seated by the ushers in unoccupied seats.** Seating request information and purchases of additional seats, should be received **no later than Monday, September 12, 2011.**

The charge for all additional seats is \$54 each. If you need additional seats for your family or guests coming from a distance, please use this same reservation form. You will receive individual tickets for all of your seating assignments, which must be brought with you to each service and shown to the guard at the entrance for security reasons. **Your understanding of, and compliance with, the long-standing policy that tickets are not shareable and are intended for use by the person whose name appears on them, are greatly appreciated.** By the time of arranging for seats, your family's financial commitments to the *Kehillah* will need to have been met. **.K.**

. . . . Honors

Members of every family in the *Kehillah* will be offered honors at some point during services on *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*, consistent with our *minhag*, our traditions. Please be sure to send in the English and Hebrew names of your family members (printed, script or transliterated, as you prefer) so that those being honored with *aliyot* can be called up appropriately. **.K.**

... Tashlich

As has been KCT's custom each year, we will once again gather at the **Setauket Duck Pond** on **Thursday, September 29**, at **5:00 PM** for the personal and meaningful brief Tashlich service. Following a verse from the Book of Micah, the community gathers at a flowing body of water and recites the prayers symbolically casting our sins into the moving waters, often in the physical form of bread crumbs, as the moving waters take them out to sea. Some opinions require the waters to be home to fish, reminding us of our precarious existence on earth, and that like the fish, we too are caught up by a net, the net of divine judgement. If one can not perform Tashlich on Rosh HaShanah, one may do so any time prior to Yom Kippur. **.K.**

... Lulavim and Etrogim



Planning for *Sukkot* includes the purchase of a set of *lulavim* and *etrogim*. Some people make a delightful family expedition of this process, seeking out vendors in the City or elsewhere on Long Island; (see the accompanying article elsewhere in this booklet). Others prefer to arrange for their order to be placed through KCT. Orders paid by check in the amount of \$55 to KCT may be placed, if received no later than **Thursday, October 6**, using the enclosed form. **.K.**

... Tzedakah and Yizkor

The essence of *Yizkor* is an act of *tzedakah*, a contribution made on behalf of loved ones, of which the *Kodosh Baruch* takes note, to earn merit for the deceased in His eyes. Our *Kehillah* has made a significant, commitment to *tzedakah* over the years. **We consider it appropriate and necessary that a substantial part of our operating budget goes for various contributions throughout the year made by the *Kehillah* in the name of the collective member families.** We encourage you, as you plan your individual *tzedakot*, for whatever contributions are within your means and family custom, to consider *Kehillat Chovevei Tzion* as a worthy beneficiary of your generosity and support. **.K.**

... Food Makes the Holiday

With no scarcity of recipes and cooking suggestions coming into all Jewish holidays, most of the *Kehillah's* participants renew fond culinary memories each year throughout the holiday period. But the fragrance and the special tastes will most assuredly be enhanced if you know that you have provided for those in the surrounding community who perhaps eat less lavishly or often not at all. The *Kehillah* has been a longtime supporter of several food pantries in the Brookhaven area, and while donations of non-perishable foods may be made at various times, we have set aside *Kol Nidre* evening as the point of special urgency for strong support of this *gemillut chesed*, and we ask when you come to services that evening, that you bring two or more such items with you, to deposit in the specially marked boxes in the entrance way. Should you wish to make a financial donation by mail, you may also find **Mazon** to be a respected and appropriate organization with such an outreach mission. **.K.**

... KCT Partners with M'Yad L'Yad



M'Yad L'Yad
Helping Hands

M'Yad L'Yad (Helping Hands) is committed to enhancing the lives of the Jewish needy in our own Long Island community. Volunteer sponsors paired anonymously with recipients encourages ongoing relationships and provides friendship and dignity, as well as material support. Visit www.myadlyad.org or call Amy Engelberg at 471-8414. **.K.**

... Melodious Prayer Elevates the Holiday

Leading us this year again at the *amud* as our holiday *chazzanim*, will be **Bruce Engelberg** and **Ben Zion Levy**, whose talents and beautiful voices inspire us at Shabbat and Yom Tov services throughout the year. We are delighted to welcome back **Harvey Goldstein** as the Ba'al Shofar again this year, and we invite all those wishing to participate in leading any portions of the service to contact us at this time at 689-0257. **.K.**

.... The KCT Memorial Wall

In the KCT Beit Midrash, the Memorial Wall represents the *Kehillah's* commemoration of our loved ones. Each plaque contains the name of person recalled, in Hebrew and English, and the date of death. *Yahrzeit* lamps on each side of the plaque are lit during the week of the appropriate date and for *Yizkor*. New additions to the Memorial Wall are specially dedicated at the next *Yizkor* service following placement, and each is individually remembered at every *Yizkor* service that follows.

A memorial plaque order form is enclosed. Please call with any questions, as the plaques are cast bronze and permanent, making accuracy especially important at the time of ordering. **.K.**

.... The Kehillah Remembers

The *Kehillah* remembers with great fondness and respect all the loved ones whom we have individually

.... KCT Remembers

Throughout this past year, 5771, the *Kehillah* has continued to remember its extended family at all of its services, through the inclusion of names in its Memorial Book. Their names, alongside all those departed members of the House of Israel, who sacrificed their lives for **קדוש השם**, the sanctification of God's holy name, are enshrined in our souls and appear here as a lasting tribute to their memories, as we mindfully approach the start of another year with the promise of Life, Peace and Goodness for all humanity.

Kehillat Chovevei Tzion
Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin

Ellen and Richard Baron and Family
Michael Baron
Eleanor Baron
David Schuster
Jean Schuster
Jack Feinstein
Jules Gordon
Sheldon Altman

Fran and Stan Bogaty
Ethel Galonsky
Max Galonsky
Lillian Levy
Sidney Levy, MD
Sophie Brody
William Brody

Ira and Rona Dressler
Philip and Eva Dressler
Hana and Louis Piotrkowski
Molly Lasky

Alan Ellman and Sons
Wendy Ellman
Jack Ellman
Ronald Ellman
Judith Norbitz
Stanley Norbitz
Anna and William Walitsky
Zina and Nachum Norbitz
Regina and Usher Turkel

Elaine and Howard Ehrenberg and Family
Irving Kotler
Frieda Kotler
Bessie Fiance
Shulem Dambrot
Esther Dambrot
David Dambrot
Edouard Dambrot
Mirai Dambrot
Hillel Rosner
Lucien Dambrot

Amy, Bruce, Pamela and Rachel Engelberg
Paul Engelberg
Sylvia Engelberg
Lawrence S. Foss

Rae Danish
Robert Danish

Carole and Phil Epstein and Family
Hyman Shainwald
Muriel Shainwald

Lori, Jeff and Steven Forst
Abraham David Perlmutter
Helen Perlmutter

Aaron Foss
Lawrence S. Foss
Albert Elias Foss
Paul Engelberg
Sylvia Engelberg

Ruth and Herb Gelernter
Samuel Gelernter
Beatrice Gelernter
Rabbi Theodore N. Lewis
Dorothy Lewis
Lillian Lewis

Harriette Gilbert
William Gilbert
Karen Gilbert
Yetta and Jacob Granate
Sarah Saleem
Ida and Isidore Goldsmith
Esther and Isaac Granate
Rose and Meyer Gilbert

Nancy Gold
Burton Gold
Abraham I. Gold
David Gaines
Ruth Gaines

lost over the years. KCT produces a **Book of Remembrance** to be used at the four *Yizkor* services throughout the year. All names of family members who are so remembered are placed into the book by the *Kehillah*. There is no charge for any listings in this *Yizkor* book, and we invite you to take home a copy after services.

On these pages, you will find a listing of the included names from previous years. These will continue to be included automatically in future years. Should there be any changes to the listing, you need only send in those changes, to be received **no later than Monday, September 12**. *Yizkor* is at once both a collective experience and an individual one, and is the timeless prayer of personal memory of the Jewish people. *Yizkor* is recited twice during the High Holiday season, on Yom Kippur (Saturday, October 8) and on Shmini Atzeret (Thursday, October 20). **.K.**

.... May the Memory of the Righteous Forever be for a Blessing

Harvey and Regina Goldstein and Family

Emanuel Goldstein
Bernard Rosenberg
Anna Katz
Chaim Katz
Tillie Goldstein
Frances Schenkel
Benjamin Schenkel
Joseph Schenkel
Pearl Cohen
Shirley Wurtzel
Sam Wurtzel
Yetta Wurtzel

Stephen Goldstein

Helaine Susan Goldstein
Dr. Jacob Martin Goldstein
Adele Goldstein
Sydney Benjamin Nadler
Burton Jay Nadler

The Friends of Claire and Julius Gordon

Claire and Julius Gordon

The Hanish Family

Leah Abrahams
Al Abrahams
Rachel Shulkin
Leon Hanish

Carol and Craig Harris

Florence Kaplan
Herbert Kaplan
Esther Harris
Nathan Harris

Stanley Harris

Janet Harris
Sally Harris
Minnie Levine
Ethel Weinstein
Ida Rhoda Lapp
Irving Harris
Jacob W. Harris
Mark I. Gross
Paula Harris
Harry Weinstein
Rebecca Lewinson

Carol and Sid Harvey

Anna Harvey
Herman Block

Mickey and Neil Hecht and Family

Florence Hecht
Morris Hecht
Alan David Hecht
Sam Loewenstein
Ida Loewenstein
Rose Lowenstein
Max Lowenstein
Sam Kaplan
Anna Kaplan
Sam Schneider
Tess Schneider
Larry Karlan
Blanche Karlan
Penny Karlan Geisman
Rick Geisman

Madalyn and Lewis Helfstein

Hyman Karl Hellmann
Mamie Hellmann
Morris Hellmann
Samuel Hellmann

Sophie Hellman
Lillian Helfstein
Michael Helfstein
Sarah Helfstein
Harriet Helfstein
Cecelia Jennie Katzin
Jacob Katzin
Estelle Corman
Louis Corman
Eugene Corman
Abraham Chefitz
Harry Helman
Rae Helman
Norman Blaustein
Gertrude Blaustein

Rochelle Hochstadt

Moe Gottlieb
Sarah Gottlieb

The Friends of Fran Jarecki

Fran Jarecki

Harvey and Mady Kolker and Family

Ernest L. Hall
Ruth Hall
Morris Kolker

Ronnie and Michael Lamm and Family

Irving Nadler
Miriam Nadler
Kurt Lamm
Jerrod L. Kash
Arthur Field
Adele Singer
Lucille Stanzler-Field

The Lee Family and Charlotte Berke

Henry Berke
Celia and Henry Katz
Rebecca and Barney Berke
Herman and Beatrice Berkeley
Harvey and Dorothy Lee
Sidney Berkeley
Irving and Paulette Berkeley
Joseph Berke
Richard Lee
Joseph and Esther Berkeley
Melvin and Mildred Madison
Ethel Mark
Pauline Hurwitz

Vilma and Ben-Zion Levy

Abraham Shmuel Levy
Mazal Tov Levy
Meir Michael
Georgia Michael
Haim Michael
Gila BenHarosh
Reffael BenHarosh
Rosette Bendugo
Moshe Bendugo
Victoria Levy
Eliyahu Yadgar
David Levy

Mort Lifson and Family

Joyce Lifson
Josef Herman Lifson
Hannah Lifson
Leonore Lifson
Gussie Maurer
Joseph Maurer
George Maurer
Sue Maurer

Harry Maurer
Sadie Simon
Mamie Neff

Nola and Robert Makofsky

Norma Goldberg
Abe Makofsky
Esther Gurin

Charles and Barbara Mann and Family

Henry Tulchin
Isabele Mann
Milton Mann
Ruth Stein
Solomon Stein
Phil Manning
Pearl Goldberg
Solomon Goldberg
Eric Gray
Nettie Friedman
Solomon Friedman
Helen Propper
Edward Propper
Martin Propper
Rose Savel
Morris Savel
Dora Tulchin
Abraham Tulchin

Karen and Alfred Mann and Family

Rabbi Yitzchak Socachevsky
Bracha Socachevsky
Rebecca Rossman
Morris Rossman
Lena Mandelbaum
Chaim Mandelbaum
David Scher
Sadie Scher

Marilyn and Jeffrey Margulies

Lee, Amy and Gabe, Paul and Ilana
Esther Margulies
Henry Margulies
Ethel Oken

The Mendelsohn Family

Dr. Burton L. Mendelsohn
Rebecca Mendelsohn
Gregory Mendelsohn
Lila Schell

Bruce and Tova Merriam and Family

Shmuel Youdelevich
Miriam Merriam
Alex Merriam
Sarah Merriam
John Merriam

Joyce and Rick Miller and Family

Joseph Guzik
Claire and Seymour Karsh
Henrietta and Max Miller
Bertha and Alex Neulicht

Sue Nadelson and Family

Etta Lerner
Al Lerner
Morton Nadelson
Sally Nadelson

Judy, David, Michael, Michelle and Marc Nathan

Henrietta Silfen
Samuel Silfen

Gabriel Nathan
Arnold Nathan
Jean Nathan
May Helfand

The Neber Family

Morris Hecht
Florence Hecht
Rose Lowenstein
Hedwig Neber
Helaine Goldstein
Fran Greenspan

Larry and Linda Padwa

Leslie Baum
May Baum
Betty Padwa

Miriam and Samuel Rozengarten

Sara Rozengarten
Molly Schorr

Ronald, Roberta, Shayna, Joshua,

Cari and Miles Sacks

Samuel Sacks
Rebecca Sacks
Joseph Charatan
Esther Charatan
Morris Lieberman
Faye Lieberman
Michael Weg
Florence Weg
Sol Sacks
Eva Sacks
William Charatan
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Laurie Schwartz and Family

Paul Schwartz
Marilyn Kamen
Paul Kamen
Esther Schwartz
Edward Schwartz
Fay Rosenthal
Harry Rosenthal
Lena Kamanowitz
Joseph Kamanowitz

Randy and Leonard Spier and Family

Florence Streimer
Nathan Streimer
Evelyn Streimer
Max Streimer
Lynn Susman

Richard Seidell and Loraine Foss-Seidell

Lawrence S. Foss
Albert Elias Foss
Paul Engelberg
Sylvia Engelberg
Helene Seidell
Louis Seidell
Mary Seidell

Roberta and Jeff Tiskowitz

Anita Israel
Jack Elias
Shirley Elias
Irving Tiskowitz
Sophie Tiskowitz
Sondra Noble
Esther Kravitsky

Barry Tobachnick and Family

Albert Kasden
Esther Kasden
Lillian Tobachnick
Albert Tobachnick

Myra and Herman Treitel and Sons

Rose and Isidore Treitel
Helen and Hyman Weinberg
Chana and Isaac Sukenik
Esther and Mordechai Waisbord
Yerechmiel, Devorah, Chaim
Nachum and Avram Waisbord
Adele Sukenik Waisbord
Jacob Israel Waisbord
Florence Streimer
Nathan Streimer
Evelyn Streimer
Max Streimer
Lynn Susman

Fred and Rosalind Turnofsky and Family

Abraham Turnofsky
Joseph and Lillian Littwin
Paul and Ruth Milch
Harvey Littwin
JoAnne Weissbart
Sarah Turnofsky

Gail and Martin Vitberg

David, Aliza, Yaffa, and Zehava

Aviva Sara Vitberg
Alan Charles Lehrman
Dr. Joseph Lehrman
Rose Lehrman
Bernard Vitberg
Betty Vitberg

Marilyn Weinberg and Children

Leonard Weinberg
Pearl Forman

Lester Forman
Harvey Forman
Fannie Weinberg
Morris Weinberg

Jerry and Randee Weingarten and Family

Martin Weingarten
Ella Weingarten
Daniel Emert
Bess Emert

Herman, Stefanie and Elyssa Werner

Diane Werner
Minnie Werner
Irving Katz
Florence Katz
Samuel and Emma Rosenfeld
Joseph Katz
Monroe and Sylvia Scheiner
Emil and Ada Menist
Gilbert and Elsie Rose
Philip Menist
Rene Bluval
Edward Berkowitz
Michael Newman
Phyllis Katz
Erica Alexis Kluger

Cherie and Bill Zager and Family

Arthur Salzman
Morton Zager
Helen and Jack Zager
Minnie and Harry Meissel
Rose and Harry Tillem
Ida and Sam Salzman

Zichrono L'Vracha

May their memories be for a blessing and for good.

Names of loved ones to be memorialized with new plaques on the KCT Memorial Wall will be included in this year's Memorial Book if the plaque order form is received by the September 9 date, as well. **.K.**

**Remember your loved ones
through the dedication of a
plaque on the Memorial
Panels of KCT**

.... Preparation through Study and Action

*Drawn from various sources, ancient, historic and modern, the selection of personal study materials on the following pages is presented by the editors of **KCT Preparations** with a view toward stimulating thought, study, discussion, agreement and disagreement, and evaluation approaching and*

leading into the days of our holiday preparations in a variety of different ways. Perhaps readers will find materials that trigger further thought and inquiry, even resulting in the development of a D'var Torah to be presented at KCT on Shabbat or a Yom Tov. Please contact us to arrange for you to present your D'var Torah to the Kehillah. We start this section with an overview of the names and significances associated with the holiday of Rosh HaShanah.

... Rosh HaShanah: Its Many Names

Called to our holiday preparation signaled by various names, we begin this section of study materials with an excerpt from the writings of Fred Toczec on behalf of Anshe Emes Synagogue in Los Angeles, CA.

Rosh Hashanah, is known by many names historically and liturgically, reflecting the many facets of the unique day.

A Day of Judgment. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 16b) teaches that three books are opened before God on Rosh Hashanah: one for the wholly virtuous, one for total evildoers, and one for those in-between. The first are inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life; the second are inscribed and sealed in the Book of Death; the fate of the third is held in the balance between Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur -- if they repent and are found worthy, they are inscribed for life; if not and they are found unworthy, they are inscribed for death. *Hilchot Teshuvah* teaches that each of us should consider ourselves in the last category. That is, each of us should consider ourselves (and the entire world) during the entire year as half-meritorious and half-guilty -- one sin tips the scale of guilt for ourselves and for the entire world; one mitzvah tips the scale of merit for our ourselves and the entire world. Incidentally, how can Rosh Hashanah be both a Day of Judgment and a Yom Tov (i.e., a day of celebration)? While we are being judged, we know that G-d does so with kindness and to give us life; thus, we celebrate.

A Day On Which God Tests Our Hearts. As we recite in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy, "Give praise to the One Who tests hearts on the Day Of Judgment; to the One Who reveals the depths in judgment." As the *Siach Sarfei Kodesh* teaches, deep inside the heart of every Jew -- even the most estranged -- there is a spark of Jewishness that remains pure and perfect; this spark is reawakened and invigorated on Rosh Hashanah.

A Day Of New Beginnings. Rosh Hashanah, which occurs at the beginning of the month of Tishri, has been a time of new beginnings throughout history. Among the new beginnings ushered in by Tishri are the following: (a) God created Adam on the first day of Tishri, thus completing the creation of the universe (R' Eliezer); (b) the Patriarchs were born during Tishri; (c) God remembered Sarah, Rachel and Hannah, who had been childless for many years; (d) Joseph was freed from prison (where he

had been confined on false charges), beginning his rise to power in Egypt; and (e) the process of redemption of our ancestors in Egypt began with the end of their bondage and harsh labor. Additionally, the month of Tishri is in the autumn, a time when the harvest of the previous year has been gathered in and we take stock in order to close the books.

A Day Of Personal Introspection. The knowledge that God sits in judgment of us on Rosh Hashanah, determining our collective and individual fortunes for the year to come, sobers us to do serious self-searching and reappraise our personal life. Proof of this is found in the details of the mitzvah of Shofar. This mitzvah does not prescribe an ensemble of instruments, but only one. It thus emphasizes that our orientation should be, first and foremost, on improving ourselves, and introducing sanctity into even the ordinary and commonplace of our daily lives. As Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch wrote, "First become a blessing to yourself so that you may be a blessing to others." Additionally, the Shofar is symbolic of prayer/introspection in the purest form -- during the entire year, we pray with our physical being (our throat, tongue, teeth and lips); on Rosh Hashanah, we pray with our spiritual essence (our breath). **.K.**

... The Poetry of Selichot

Excerpted from the writings of Rabbi Beryl Wein

Note: Some of the historic references may sound familiar, based on teachings over past High Holidays by KCT speakers and teachers. Interested readers may wish to investigate some of these references further, perhaps utilizing the reorganized KCT Library or authoritative on-line sources.

The Ashkenazic Jewish world begins its recitation of selichot in a few weeks. By that time, our Sephardic brethren will have already been reciting their version of selichot for some weeks already, since the onset of the month of Elul. All of these prayers center about the continued recitation of the thirteen attributes of the Almighty as revealed to Moshe after Israel's sin of the Golden Calf. In them, we appeal for God's mercy and forgiveness as we approach the days of judgment and awe. The custom of reciting such selichot prayers is an ancient one, dating back at least to the sixth century in Jewish Babylonia. Almost every major rabbinic figure through the fifteenth century tried his hand in composing

selichot. Out of the literally thousands of poems written, a few hundred have actually been incorporated into the standard ritual of the various groupings of Jews. The Sephardim naturally favor the poems of the great Sephardic poets such as Yehuda HaLevi, Avraham ibn Ezra, Shlomo ibn Gavriel (Gabirol) and Donash ibn Lavrat. The list of Ashkenazic poets of selichot poems includes Rashi (Rabi Shlomo ben Yitzchak), Rabi Shimon of Mainz, Rabenu Tam (Rabi Yaacov ben Meir, Rashi's grandson, Rabi Shmuel ben Meir (another grandson of Rashi)) and other notable French, German and Austrian scholars. Suffice it to say, the rabbinic elite, the great men of Israel, all took part in this project of selichot poetry and prayer.

Poetry was once an important aspect of Jewish religious life. It was also part of Jewish culture. In the world of the Sephardim during the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry and thereafter, Hebrew poetry flourished. The great Hebrew poets of Spain mentioned above did not restrict their poetic talents to liturgy and sacred poems. They also wrote secular and general poems, even about romance and nature. However, poems of this nature were practically unknown in the Ashkenazic Jewish world until the time of the Haskala in the nineteenth century. Poems of secular or even general nature were never accepted in Ashkenazic religious circles as being necessary or even positive. The fact that most if not all of the poets of the Haskala were no longer observant Jews undoubtedly colored this attitude of rejection of all secular poetry. In the religious world of Ashkenazic Jewry, poetry was strictly restricted to those of a spiritual and liturgical nature. The nature of poetry itself was far different in the Ashkenazic world than amongst the Sephardim. Style, elegance of phrase and meter, and the rhythm of the sound of words combining with each other were all hallmarks of the Sephardic poetry, expressed even in their religious and liturgical poetry. Learned and ethical content were stressed in the Ashkenazic poetry, and style took a back seat to substance. However, both in Sephardic and Ashkenazic selichot poetry, the use of acrostics, alphabets and biblical quotations as being the chorus of the poem, all are usual components. The name of the poet himself is often hidden in the poem itself by the use of those devices just mentioned. Also, the poem always contained an intriguing mystery of authorship and other subliminal messages waiting to be deciphered by those who read and recited the poem as part of the selichot services.

In the Ashkenazic world, there were three main compilations of selichot that became fixed in tradition over the years. One is called the liturgy of Lithuania and is the one basically in use in the Lithuanian yeshivot and the non-Chasidic synagogues of Jerusalem and the world. The second compilation is that of Poland and is used extensively by the differing Chasidic groupings. There is also a compilation that follows the liturgy of the holy Ari (Rabbi Isaac Luria of sixteenth century Tzfat) that is used by certain Chasidic groups. The Sephardim also have many variations of their basic selichot liturgy, depending upon their original countries of origin. The choice of which poems to include in the liturgy of the selichot service is apparently one left to the popularity of the poem and/or the poet in the eyes of the worshippers. The liturgical poem, Keter Malchut (The Crown of Royalty) written by Rabi Shlomo ibn Gabirol is recited on the night of Yom Kippur in many Sephardic congregations. This long poem of approximately one hundred stanzas is one of the true classics of all Hebrew poetry, both in stylish elegance and holy content. Selichot provided an outlet to the genius and creativity of the Jewish muse. **.H.**

... Selichot Portrays a God of Compassion

Based on Rabbi Neil Gillman's 2003 Torah study of Shabbat Nitzavim-VaYeLech (Deuteronomy 29:9-31:30), which is read this year on September 16). Rabbi Gillman is professor of Jewish philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Invariably, year after year, the Selichot service plunges me into the High Holiday mood. Selichot is very special. Part of the story is the glorious music. Equally important are the words of the liturgy that convey the season's distinctive theological message: Our God is a forgiving God.

That image of God is in stark contrast with the image of God that we encounter in this week's twin Torah reading. The God portrayed in these closing chapters is a God who threatens to punish God's people should they worship other gods. The punishment is portrayed in vivid terms: plagues, diseases, sulfur and salt - just like God's punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

There is but one reference in this Torah text to a God who is prepared to accept the people's repentance and welcome them back in love. But that reference (in Deuteronomy 30:1-5) to God's

readiness to forgive can take place only after the punishment has been meted out.

But preemptive repentance is everywhere in prophetic theology and it is this prophetic God-image that pervades the Selichot liturgy. The contrast is particularly striking because paradoxically, the entire Selichot service is centered on a Torah text from Exodus that we recite again and again, throughout the Selichot service and again on Yom Kippur. But the version of this text that we recite on these occasions has already been subjected to an intra-biblical, prophetic Midrash that effectively turns its original meaning on its head. In the process, the punitive God of our Torah reading becomes the all-compassionate God of the prophets.

The Torah text is Exodus 34:6-7. It has come to be known as the "Thirteen Attributes" because it lists 13 distinctive attributes of God. It begins with a description of God as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger and filled with loving kindness. But as the passage continues, the image turns darker. This God "does not remit all punishment." In fact this God "visits the iniquity of fathers upon children and children's children, upon the third and fourth generation."

But at Selichot, we do not recite this entire passage. Instead, we recite an amended version that omits the darker side and retains only the brighter side. We recite this version because in the Book of Jonah, the haftarah for the Yom Kippur afternoon service, the prophet amends the text.

Jonah is our only successful prophet. He prophesies, Nineveh repents, and punishment is averted. But Jonah is furious at God for having spared the city. He knew that Nineveh would repent, that the city would be spared, and that he would be exposed as a false prophet.

Why did Jonah know that the city would be spared? Because he knew the description of God in Exodus and, in addressing God, he uses those very words, but only the opening ones: "I know," Jonah says, "that You are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness." (Jonah 4:2) Then, in place of the darker, concluding words of that Exodus passage, Jonah's concluding words are "renouncing punishment" - the very opposite of "yet He does not remit all punishment" of Exodus.

On Selichot, and throughout the High Holiday period, it is the Jonah version of the passage that we recite.

We pray to Jonah's forgiving God, a God who welcomes the repentance that comes before punishment and successfully defers God's rage. As Nineveh was spared, so will we.

Indeed, may it be so.

.K.

. . . . Avinu Malkeinu: *Father and King*

Excerpted from a past High Holiday message of Rabbi Yisroel Fine, of the Cockfosters and North Southgate Synagogue in North London, England.

A sudden hush stilled the Beth Medrash of the Yeshiva at Kfar Chassidim, nestled in the hills outside Haifa. It was Rosh Hashonah, the Ark was open and the voices of the Rebbe and student were poised to invoke "Avinu Malkeinu", "Our Father our King". Unexpectedly, their legendary Rebbe, Rabbi Elya Lopian, of blessed memory, spoke:

"Avinu – a father loves his son so much. There isn't anything in the world he wouldn't do for him, especially in his time of need. But, alas a father may not be able to help because he lacks the ability, the wealth and influence to do so."

"Malkeinu – a King has the power and ability to help his people. Indeed, a benevolent monarch may respond positively to the reasonable requests of his loyal subjects. Yet, there are times when His Majesty may become estranged from the common folk, turning a deaf ear to their pleas." "But," Rabbi Elya cried out, "You, God, are Our Father and King. You love us and have the power to help us....Avinu Malkeinu..."

Perhaps the two most powerful images of the Days of Awe are the visions of God as both our Father and King. Each image evokes special feelings within us, as we stand in judgement during this fateful time: the unconditional love of a father and the uncompromising commands of a king.

What then is the nature of our special relationship with God?

Our Father recognizes our human frailties and limitations. He realizes that, ultimately, if we disobey His wishes, it is not to spite Him, but simply because our desires overwhelm us.

Our Father knows that deep down we really love him and so, time and time again, He overlooks our faults

and forgives us. His love is unconditional. He extends favors to us, even though we are truly undeserving.

Our Father has great confidence in us. He recalls our “Yichus”, reminding us we come from good stock. We have “Zchut Avot” – the good merits of our forefathers, our spiritual DNA- besides, Our Father, too, is a partner in our creation and has a vested interest in our success. Our Father is aware of our unique talents and abilities and wants to give us every opportunity to realise our potential.

Our King provides us with everything we need to succeed in this world. He offers us food, clothing and shelter. His Majesty may on occasion lavish us with wealth, but he looks after our health and well-being. Our King directs us to growth opportunities because He has all the right connections.

In return, our King demands complete and undivided loyalty. His every wish is our command. We stand before Him in awe and fear because we recognize that He has the power to deprive us of our most basic needs and deny us every comfort. What’s more, if we disobey His command, we are insubordinate and deserving of reproof. By violating His orders we reject His authority and, in the process, demonstrate our ingratitude for all the favors He has bestowed on us.

Mussar [ethical works] suggest that we imagine the Almighty as a kindly, generous millionaire, who knows our family well and, thus befriends us. He supports us in style, making sure that all our needs are met and often surprises us with that little bit extra that makes a difference. In return He requests that we follow His guidelines for success and fulfilment in life. Even though we do not always fully understand and appreciate His requests, we know that He truly has our best interests at heart.

He stands to gain nothing by our commitment because He already has it all. Imagine rejecting our Benefactor’s requests or ignoring them, and then, adding insult to injury, attributing our good fortune to other sources – our own talents, hard work or luck. What sheer audacity, what blatant Chutzpa! Yet, isn’t this what we do when we sin? We refuse to honor the wishes of our Benefactor and, then, shamelessly deny that He helped us at all!

On a more profound level, the metaphors of King and Father personify the two major manifestations of

God in our world- Justice and Mercy. Indeed, these attributes are reflected in G-d’s very names: the Four-Letter Name symbolizing Mercy and “Elokim”, [literally powers] representing Justice. It is during these Days of Awe, in particular, that we appreciate the counterbalance between G-d’s Justice and Mercy. For if justice were to predominate, none of us would escape punishment: “There is no saint on Earth who does good and does not sin” [Ecclesiastes 7:20]. There would be no plea-bargaining or probation, no opportunity for repentance. Conversely, if Mercy were all-pervasive, man would inevitably be forgiven. He would not be held accountable for his actions. Anarchy would prevail.

On these days of Judgement, G-d strikes the perfect balance between these two poles. He tempers His Justice with Mercy, enabling His subjects to prove their loyalty to Him once again. As the Midrash observes, at the moment of repentance when the Shofar is sounded, “ G-d arises from the throne of Judgement and descends to the throne of Mercy.”

During these days of Judgement, we face a most critical challenge: Our mission is to unite with our King our Father, so that He who has the power to pardon us will be filled with the love to forgive us.

He can only achieve this mission – on which our very lives depend- if we direct our goals to realizing our Father’s hopes and our King’s expectations. These goals define all our priorities and determine future commitments. They are the New Year Resolutions for the rest of our lives. Our Father has endowed us with unique abilities and talents, which He hopes we will dedicate to Torah and our people. He is our role model, teaching us Torah and inspiring us with love for our people by his example: healing the sick, feeding the poor, comforting the widow and the orphan... He loves us because, in a very real sense, we are part of Him: our Neshamot, our spiritual essence, is “a part of G-d above.” And so our Father hopes that we will follow in His footsteps by realizing our full potential and dedicating our special talents to His Torah and our people.

Our King provides us with all our basic needs- food, shelter, clothing and so much more. Indeed there is so much that His Majesty does for us morning, noon and night – that we cannot even begin to thank Him. Thus, our King has every right to expect total loyalty.

We must be at His beck and call, performing our services for Him with zeal and enthusiasm. His wish

is our command and each command must be carried out with care and precision. No matter how high we rise in life we must remember that we, like Moshe are no more than His servants.

As servants and loyal subjects, our Master's priorities become our own. We must prioritize His Torah and Mitzvot in our lives and set them as the focus of our daily agenda.

“Avinu Malkeinu” – our Father our King be gracious to us and answer us, even though we have no worthy deeds; treat us with charity and kindness, and save us.

I wish you, your families and all of our congregants a Ketivah Vechatanim Tovah. **.K.**

.... The Thirteen Divine Attributes

The Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy (Exodus 34:6-7) are recited several times throughout the selichot. From where do they come?

Exodus 34:6-7 . . .

34:6 And HaShem passed by before him, and proclaimed: 'HaShem, HaShem, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth;

34:7 Keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and unto the fourth generation.'

This passage appears in the Torah at the time that God proclaimed His readiness to do away with the Jewish People after the sin of the Golden Calf. According to Rabbi Yochanan's interpretation (Rosh Hashanah 17b), Moshe felt that the sin of the Jewish People was so serious that there was no possibility of his intervention on their behalf. In addition, many prayers composed throughout the Middle Ages especially for this service are uttered. Twice a day at the end of services, it is customary to recite the fourteen verses of Psalm 27, which reinforces the concept of repentance as a courageous and uplifting effort.

A Psalm of David

27:1

HaShem is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? HaShem is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

27:2

When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh, even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.

27:3

Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise up against me, even then will I be confident

27:4

One thing have I asked of HaShem, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of HaShem all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of HaShem, and to visit early in His temple.

27:5

For He conceals me in His pavilion in the day of evil; He hides me in the covert of His tent; He lifts me up upon a rock.

27:6

And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; and I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices with trumpet-sound; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto HaShem.

27:7

Hear, Oh, HaShem, when I call with my voice, and be gracious unto me, and answer me.

27:8

In Thy behalf, my heart has said: 'Seek ye My face'; Thy face, HaShem, will I seek.

27:9

Hide not Your face far from me; put not Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; cast me not off, neither forsake me, Oh God of my salvation.

27:10

For though my father and my mother have forsaken me, HaShem will take me up.

27:11

Teach me Your way, O HaShem; and lead me in an even path, because of them that lie in wait for me.

27:12

Deliver me not over unto the will of mine adversaries; for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out violence.

27:13

If I had not believed to look upon the goodness of HaShem in the land of the living!--

27:14

Wait on HaShem; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yea, wait for HaShem.

Adapted from: www.wzo.org and www.ou.org

.K.

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... Tashlich: Casting Away The Sins

An extract from the writings of Rabbi Moshe Lazarus

The "Tashlich" prayer is said on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashana by a body of water that preferably has fish in it. These prayers are symbolic of the casting away of our mistakes. Of course, it is foolish to think you can rid sins by shaking out your pockets. Rather, the Jewish approach is deep introspection and commitment to change. Indeed, the whole idea of "Tashlich" is partly to commemorate the Midrash that says when Abraham went to the *Akeida* (binding of Isaac), he had to cross through water up to his neck

If Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbat, "Tashlich" is pushed off until the second day. If "Tashlich" was not said on Rosh Hashana itself, it may be said anytime during the Ten Days of Repentance. Both the body of water and the fish are symbolic. In Talmudic literature, Torah is represented as water. Just as fish can't live without water, so too a Jew can't live without Torah! Also, the fact that fish's eyes never close serve to remind us that, so too, God's eyes (so to speak) never close; He knows of our every move.

This is the text of "Tashlich" . . .

Who is like You, God, who removes iniquity and overlooks transgression of the remainder of His inheritance. He doesn't remain angry forever because He desires kindness. He will return and He will be merciful to us, and He will conquer our iniquities, and He will cast them into the depths of the seas.

Give truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham like that you swore to our ancestors from long ago.

From the straits I called upon God, God answered me with expansiveness. God is with me, I will not be afraid, what can man do to me? God is with me to help me, and I will see my foes (annihilated). It is better to take refuge in God than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in God, that to rely on nobles.

Many people also read Psalms 33 and 130. **.K.**

... The Shofar: What Do We Hear?

Written by Rabbi Avie Gold, this overview presents material from the ArtScroll/Mesorah text "Rosh Hashana - Significance, Laws and Prayers."

"Why do we blow [the shofar] on Rosh Hashanah?" the Talmud asks. In answer, the Talmud exclaims indignantly, "Why do we blow? - the Torah has told us to blow!"

What better reason, what further rationale do we need? The Torah clearly states (Numbers 29:1): "In the seventh month, on [day] one of the month, a day of [shofar] blowing shall it be unto you." Indeed, according to Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, the primary intent upon which one should concentrate during the sounding of the shofar is to fulfill the will of the Creator.

That Israel needs no rationale other than "the Torah has told us to blow," is illustrated with a story told about the renowned chassidic Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev:

One year Rabbi Levi Yitzchak spent a long time in search of a man who would be worthy of blowing the shofar in his synagogue. Rosh Hashanah was fast approaching, and though many righteous folk sought the privilege, vying with each other in demonstrating their expertise in the mystical kabbalistic secrets associated with the shofar, none of them were to his taste.

One day a new applicant came along, and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak asked him on what deep mysteries he meditated while he was performing the awesome mitzvah.

"Rabbi," said the newcomer, "I'm only a simple Jew. I don't understand too much about the hidden things of the Torah. But I have four daughters of marriageable age, and when I blow the shofar, this is what I have in mind: 'Master of the universe! Right now I am carrying out Your will. I'm doing Your mitzvah and blowing the shofar. Now supposing You, too, do what I want, and help me marry off my daughters.'"

"My friend," said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "you will blow the shofar in my synagogue!"

TEN SYMBOLISMS

Rabbi Saadiah Gaon (10th century) enumerates 10 symbolic meanings alluded to by the mitzvah of the Shofar:

1. Rosh Hashanah marks the anniversary of the world's creation. As such it is also the day on which God's sovereignty over Creation began. Since it is

customary to sound the trumpets at the coronation of a new king, we likewise proclaim His sovereignty over us on this day with the sounding of the shofar. This is in accord with the verse (Psalms 98:6): "With trumpets and shofar sound call out before the King, God."

2. Rosh Hashanah initiates the Ten Days of Repentance. Just as a king will proclaim a period during which amends can be made before a decree is to be enforced, so does the shofar blast proclaim, "Whosoever wishes to repent -- let him repent now. If not, let him not complain later."

3. At Mount Sinai the Jews shouted, "We will do and we will listen" (Exodus 24:7), when they accepted the Torah. At that time, the sound of the shofar continually increased and was very great (Exodus 19:19). On Rosh Hashanah the shofar reminds us to renew our commitment to "do" and to "listen."

4. The shofar reminds us of the admonitions of the prophets and their calls to repentance, as stated in Ezekiel 33:2-9... "He sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the shofar and warns the people... [If] he heard the sound of the shofar but did not heed the warning; his blood shall be upon himself..."

5. The shofar reminds us to pray for the rebuilding of the destroyed Holy Temple, of which the prophet (Jeremiah 4:19-20) lamented: "I shall not be silent, for the sound of the shofar have you heard, O my soul, the shout of war. Destruction upon destruction has been proclaimed..."

6. The shofar, a ram's horn reminds us of the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22), when Abraham sacrificed a ram in lieu of his son. We similarly offer to sacrifice our lives in sanctification of the Holy Name. Thus, may our remembrances ascend before Him for the good. (According to one opinion in Pesikta Rabbasi 40:6, the Binding of Isaac took place on Rosh Hashanah.)

7. The sound of the shofar inspires fear and trembling in the hearts of all who hear it, as the prophet (Amos 3:6) asks: "Can a shofar be blown in a city, and the people not tremble?"

8. The shofar reminds us of the great and awesome Judgment Day of the future, which Zephaniah (1:14-16) describes: "Near is the great day of God..."

a day of wrath is that day; a day of trouble and oppressiveness; a day of utter desolation; a day of darkness and blackness; a day of clouds and thick fog; a day of shofar and shouting..."

9. The shofar reminds us of the long anticipated day of the ingathering of the exiles, and arouses an inner yearning in our hearts for that time. "And it will be on that day, He will blow on a great shofar, and they will come -- those who were lost in the land of Assyria, and those cast out in the land of Egypt -- and they will bow to God on the holy mountain, in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 27:13)

10. The shofar reminds us of the resurrection of the dead and awakens our belief and yearning for that day. For then: "All inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth, when he raises a banner upon the mountains, you shall see, and when he blows the shofar, you shall hear." (Isaiah 18:3)

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The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes about a number of additional beautiful insights into the Shofar, including: (a) its sound is compared to that of a child crying out to his/her parent (and, in turn, to our crying out to God, our Father); (b) the use of an animal's horn reminds us that even our most hardened "animal-like" instincts are included in the service of God; (c) although many ritual vessels can become "*tameh*" (ritually impure), the Shofar cannot -- the Shofar is the device with which we express our innate connection with God; this connection can be neither severed or sullied; it remains intact and is always ready to be drawn upon; (d) the Shofar preferably has a bend in it, symbolizing our willingness to bend our will to that of God; and (e) the mitzvah of the Shofar is only fulfilled when it is blown with the intent of connecting to Godliness; the same is true of all *mitzvot* -- they are not simply tasks to be blindly carried out, but rather are spiritual tools to connect with God in a meaningful way. **.K.**

... **The Shofar: The Historical Connection** ...

(The author of this historical note is unknown.)

The blowing of the Shofar is the only specific commandment for Rosh Hashanah. Just as trumpeters announced the presence of their mortal king, the Shofar is used by Jews to proclaim the coronation of the King of King. The Shofar is the ritual instrument of the ancient Hebrews and the modern Jews, said by scholars to be the only Jewish cultural instrument to have survived five millennia of

our history. Of martial origin, the shofar was a priestly instrument in Biblical times. According to the Mishna, two different forms of shofar were used in the Temple: one made of ibex horn, its bell ornamented with gold, was sounded at New Year and during the Yovel Days; and, one made of ram's horn, with silver ornamentation, was sounded on fast days. We learn from the Mishna and the Talmud that



in the Hellenistic period, no improvements or modifications that might affect the tone were permitted: no gold-plating of its interior, no plugging of holes, no alteration of its length (the minimum permissible length of a ritually approved horn was 3 handbreadths); the shofar tone was to be preserved unaltered. Nor was the process of steaming or boiling permitted. Apart from its liturgical uses, the shofar was closely connected with mystic symbolism. Its blast destroyed the walls of Jericho, and in the Dead Sea scrolls we read that during battles, shofar blowers sounded a powerful war cry to instill fear into the hearts of the enemy while priests blew the six "trumpets of killing". The "Great Shofar" is said to have been sounded during the greatest event in all Jewish history, the giving of the *Aseret HaDivrot* (the Ten Commandments to given Moses at Mount Sinai, establishing Shavuot). Historically, the shofar has also served in a number of popular ritual usages, including being sounded during rites to bring rain and in the event of local disasters. In our times, its liturgical use is restricted to the High Holiday period.

"Then you shall transmit a blast on the horn; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, the day of Yom Kippur, you shall have the horn sounded throughout the land...And proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." (Leviticus 25) **.K.**

... Revisioning the Unataneh Tokef

This interpretive view of the Unetaneh Tokef was written by Rabbi Jack Reimer. Some may remember Rabbi Reimer from when then-President Bill Clinton read the rabbi's "A Time for Turning" at a National Prayer Breakfast.

Let us ask ourselves hard questions
For this is the time for truth.

How much time did we waste
In the year that is now gone?

Did we fill our days with life
Or were they dull and empty?

Was there love inside our home
Or was the affectionate word left unsaid?

Was there a real companionship with our children
Or was there a living together and a growing apart?

Were we a help to our mates
Or did we take them for granted?

How was it with our friends:
Were we there when they needed us or not?

The kind deed: did we perform it or postpone it?
The unnecessary gibe: did we say it or hold it back?

Did we live by false values?
Did we deceive others?
Did we deceive ourselves?

Were we sensitive to the rights and feelings
Of those who worked for us?

Did we acquire only possessions
Or did we acquire new insights as well?

Did we fear what the crowd would say
And keep quiet when we should have spoken out?

Did we mind only our own business
Or did we feel the heartbreak of others?

Did we live right,
And if not,
Then have we learned, and will we change? **.K.**

... From Kol Nidre to Neilah

This brief overview, entitled "From Kol Nidre to Neilah: The Prayers of Yom Kippur", summarizing the components of the Yom Kippur services, is extracted from several publications of the OU.



Kol Nidre . . .

On the eve of Yom Kippur while there is still daylight, Jews congregate all across the globe wearing white. They don their *tallitot* and Kol Nidre is chanted with a sense of emotional anticipation and a centuries-old feverishly moving melody.

Dating back until at least the ninth century, Kol Nidre, at first glance, seems to have nothing at all to do with Yom Kippur. Indeed, it appears to attempt to release one from keeping his oaths and vows. Many commentators address this issue and their main approach seems to be that Kol Nidre, in actuality, emphasizes the importance of keeping one's word and reaffirms our belief of honoring our commitments. How appropriate, as we enter a day when we will be saying over and over how we plan to change and do *teshuvah*.

Over the years various versions of Kol Nidre have been adopted in various places. Indeed, the version found in most siddurim actually contain parts of each version. This stems from a *machloket* (halachic dispute) over whether Kol Nidre is to annul vows from the past year (Babylonian traditional) or to declare annulled all vows of the coming year (European tradition, *Tosofot*).

The Shema . . .

During the Shema on Yom Kippur, the second line, "*Baruch Shem Kavod Malchuto LeOlam V'aed*", "Blessed is the Name of His Glorious Kingdom for all eternity" is read aloud. Moshe originally heard this line from the angels when he was on Mount Sinai receiving the Torah from God. Though normally said quietly, on Yom Kippur it is said out loud. Normally, we dare not utter angelic phrases loudly, but on Yom Kippur, it is as if we are spiritually raised to the level of angels and we say the verse out loud.

Avinu Malkinu . . .

The Gemorrah in *Taanit* tells the story of when there was a very bad drought in Eretz Yisrael, the land of Israel. Public fasts were proclaimed and special prayers were said. The great Torah Scholar Rabbi Eliezer was called upon to lead the prayers with the saying of the 24-blessing Amidah, which is said at times of severe drought. Yet, no rain fell. His disciple, Rabbi Akiva came to the front and said a special prayer in which each verse began with the words, *Avinu Malkenu*, Our Father, Our King. Rain fell. The prayer became a regular part of the prayer services during a time of fasting or tragedy. Today, it is said fast days and during the ten days of repentance. On Yom Kippur, during Neilah, the word

ketiva, inscribed, is replaced by *chatima*, sealed, because in the Neilah prayer G-d seals our fate for the coming year.

Viduy . . .

Confession, is an essential part of repentance. Repentance cannot be just a fleeting thought like other thoughts that come and go in a person's mind. By confessing one's sins out loud, it becomes something much more real. A person must come to the complete understanding that the sins he committed are wrong and cannot be rationalized away.

The two forms of confession, *Al Cheit* and *Ashamnu*, alphabetically list all types of sins. The *Al Cheit* prayer lists many sins or categories of sins that are commonly committed. Sins are expressed in the plural not only to save individuals from embarrassment but so that the congregation as a whole might attain true atonement. One cannot confess only for oneself, rather one has to beg forgiveness for all Jews who sin. As the Rav Issac Luria, 16th Century Kabbalist, wrote that confession is written in the plural, "We have sinned" because all Israel is considered like one body and every person is a limb of that body. So we confess to all the sins of all the parts of our body.

If you read the *Al Cheit* carefully, you will see that the list of sins is not a list of the *Mitzvot*. Rather, it is a list of categories of sins that are the most common. Many relate to our misuse of speech and having the wrong type of thoughts or attitude. Some have to do with more concrete mitzvot like Shabbat or Kashrut. All relate to us in way or another. Of course, one should not feel limited to confess only the list of sins printed in the siddur, one should mention *viduy* any specific sins which he or she may have committed.

It is customary to gently beat one's chest during the *viduy*, as if to say that your heart may have led you astray in the past but hopefully, this will not happen in the future.

Neilah . . .

A Jew prays three times a day on weekdays. On Shabbat and Holidays, including Rosh HaShanah a fourth service is added (*Mussaf*) in memory of the additional sacrifices given on these days in the Temple in Jerusalem. On Yom Kippur, yet a fifth service (the only day of the year with 5) is added. The extra service unique to Yom Kippur is called Neilah.

Neilah is said after Mincha as the sun is going down and literally means closing (or locking) and refers to either the closing of the gates of the Holy Temple at the end of the day or it refers to the closing of the gates of prayer as Yom Kippur is ending .

The Neilah service contains stirring pleas that our prayers be accepted by G-d before Yom Kippur ends. The heavenly judgment inscribed on Rosh Hashanah is now sealed during Neilah. The chazan chants the service in a special melody designed to stir the emotions and bring the congregation to greater devotion.

There are a number of customs that have become well accepted in connection with Neilah. Usually the Rabbi or a local scholar will speak before the Neilah service to inspire the congregants to pray more fervently. In many congregations he will himself lead the service instead of the cantor - again - expressing the heightened sense of urgency.

The *Aron Kodesh* (the Ark that contains the congregation's Torah scrolls) is kept open for the entire service. Those able to stand up for the entire time, do so.

Selichot (prayers of repentance) are recited and *Avinu Malkenu* (Our Father Our King) is said even when Yom Kippur falls out on Shabbat.

Following Neilah, the shofar is sounded with one great and mighty long blast and the services conclude with the exclamations of Shema Yisrael - Hear Oh Israel and Next Year In Jerusalem -

L'Shana Haba B'Yerushalayim ! .K.

... **Yonah: A Whale of a Story**

[Editors' note:

Interesting! The very concise book of Yonah, only four chapters in length, does not mention the Jewish People at all, and in that way it is unique among the books of the Prophets. And yet, there are many reasons for its being recorded anyway: It contains a lesson to the Jewish people on how quickly one can repent. ~ The miracles that the prophet experienced are worthy of mention, especially the miracle of his being swallowed by a "fish". ~ The message is that Hashem has mercy on those who repent, no matter who they are, and what their background is. In this book there is no mention of kings, history, or politics. It is meant to be universal, containing a message for all times and places.]

~



This excerpt is from the introduction in Commentary magazine describing the JPS publication of the commentary on the Book of Jonah by Dr. Uriel Simon.

The book of Jonah is read in its entirety during the afternoon service on the day of Yom Kippur, as the Haftorah, the prophetic reading, appended to the reading of the Law. Jonah is one of the twelve minor prophets. But as against all the rest, his book does not purport to be the prophecy or writing of a prophet: it is rather a portrait of the prophet from the outside, so to speak, revealing a variety of unpleasant (and human) characteristics that would presumably have been concealed had we the words of Jonah himself: and it is this which gives the book its distinctive fascination.

Various reasons are given in Jewish writings for the selection of this prophetic reading on the Day of Atonement: "The Book of Jonah is read . . . in order to teach us that no man may fly away from God. . . . Another reason why we read the Book of Jonah is because it informs us that God pardons and forgives those who turn in Teshuvah [repentance], as we are told in the case of Nineveh. . . . Another reason for reading the Book of Jonah is because the prophecy of Jonah purposes to teach us that the compassions of God extend over all that he has made, even idolaters—then how much more do they extend over Israel!" (Days of Awe, S. Y. Agnon).

A Jonah ben Amittai is mentioned in II Kings 14:25, as a prophet who was a contemporary of Jeroboam II, King of Israel in the 8th century B.C.E. There has been some inconclusive discussion among Biblical scholars as to whether this is the same Jonah, or a different one. In any case, from its style it is quite clear that the Book of Jonah was written centuries later.

Jonah has been a favorite subject for Midrashic commentary. We are told, for example, that the great fish that swallowed Jonah was specially created for this occasion when God created the world. The surprising reaction of Jonah to God's command is explained by the story that he had previously been given a similar commission to perform in Jerusalem, and that the inhabitants had repented and "averted the evil decree." Foreseeing a similar reaction in Nineveh, and fearful that his own reputation as a prophet would suffer thereby (or, more charitably, afraid that God himself would suffer in the eyes of the people), he decided to escape. .K.

... Sukkot Throughout the Ages

Excerpted from "Succot", produced by the Publications Division of the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the World Zionist Organization.

Ancient Origins

~ Abraham

The Book of Jubilees, composed about 130 B.C.E., claims that Sukkot was celebrated long before the granting of the Law and that Abraham was the founder of the custom of the Festival of Sukkot:

When he came to live in Beersheba he set up his tents and instituted a ceremony which centered around these tents; he erected an Altar and made circuits around it accompanied by prayer: 'And Abraham built Sukkot for himself and his servants in the seventh month, and he was the first to celebrate the festival of Sukkot in the Holy Land.' (*Book of Jubilees 16.26*) It maintains that this celebration was the inspiration for the law of Sukkot found in our Torah.

~ Jacob

There is also an ancient legend based on Genesis xxxiii.17, 'And Esau went to Seir (lit: goat) - and Jacob came to Sukkot.' In this legend, Esau represents sin and temptation and Seir stands for the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus xvi. gives the law of Seir [Heb.: goat] on the Day of Atonement.)

When Seir, i.e. the Day of Atonement, departed, Jacob came to the Sukkah. This is the origin of the custom of beginning the building of the Sukkah soon after the termination of Kippur. There is also a Midrash which tells us that Jacob not only observed Sukkot but also added Shemini Atzeret.

~ In the days of the First Temple

Sukkot was considered the culminating Festival and because of its importance became known as HAHAG, "The Festival." King Solomon chose this Festival as the occasion for the celebration of the dedication of the Temple. (*1 Kings, Ch. vii, 2*).

Ezra and Nehemiah instructed those who had returned to Zion to build Sukkot. Apart from the Mitzvah of the Sukkah which was taught in the Torah (they wished to establish the new State on the basis of the Torah), they were also anxious to recapture some of the splendor of former times, and Sukkot with its rich ceremonial could provide this

atmosphere. The Bible tells us that those who returned cooperated with enthusiasm in the observance of the Festival and celebrated it so that the glory of former days returned.

~ The Water Libation Ceremony

"He who has not witnessed the rejoicing at the water-drawing huts has, throughout the whole of his life, witnessed no real rejoicing." (*Sukkah 53b*). This passage refers to a ceremony for the blessing of abundant rainfall that the Jews had when they dwelled in the land of Israel.

In addition to the colorful procession in the Temple in which the Lulav and the Etrog were carried by the worshipers whilst the Hallel (*Psalms 113-118*) was recited there was the libation of water in the Temple on each of the seven days at the morning Service.

According to the Mishnah, a young Kohen took a golden pitcher to the spring of Shilo (Siloam) where he filled it with water and carried it up to the Water Gate, where the procession was greeted by three calls on the ram's horn by the priests. The officiating priest then led a large torch-lit procession to the Bet Hamikdash (The Temple), ascended the ramp on the south side of the great Altar, and turned to the left (west), where there were two silver basins, one for the pouring of the wine, the other for the water was poured. At this point, the people broke out in jubilant singing and dance, and wished one another: "May God bless you out of Zion so that you see the goodness of Jerusalem all the days of your life."

In later days, at the moment when the priest was about to pour the water into the basin, the people shouted to him "Raise your hand!" because once, Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 B.C.E.), king and high-priest, showed contempt for the rite by spilling the water at his feet and was pelted with etrogim by the worshipers standing around.

The pouring out of water had no Biblical support. According to R. Nehunya it was a law given by God to Moses at Sinai, but was not recorded in the Scriptures.

Scholars maintain that there was a belief current amongst many nations that the pouring out of water at the time when the first autumnal rains were due would magically induce rain to fall. Judaism would not tolerate this superstition and so it took an ancient custom of the nations and incorporated it in the Temple service, and the libation of water became a symbol of rain.

The prayer of rain began to be recited in the tefillah in the days of the Second Temple.

~ Temple Celebrations

"The Light was so Brilliant it seemed more like Day than Night" The Talmud gives a vivid description of the festivities on the termination of the first day of the festival. Tall candelabra were erected in the "Court of the Women." Each candelabrum bore four bowls, which held seven and a half gallons of oil; the cast off branches and girdles of the priests were used as wicks. Young priests ascended ladders and poured their jars of oil into the basins. The light was so brilliant that it seemed more like day than night.

Two galleries were built around three sides of the court for the spectators; in the upper one sat the women; in the lower the men, because of the "levity" of the occasion. Men distinguished in the Community by their purity and character danced, with flaring torches in their hands, reciting appropriate verses in which God was praised. In the Tractate Sukkah we are told Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel was so adept that, with eight torches going, not one of them touched the ground when he prostrated himself, touched his fingers to the pavement, bent down, kissed it, and at once sprang up (*Sukkah 53a*).

There was an orchestra consisting of many instruments played by the Levites, who stood on the fifteen steps that led down from the court of Israel to the court of the women. These fifteen steps corresponded to the fifteen "Songs of the Degrees/Steps," SHIR HAMA'ALOT, found in the Book of Psalms (120-134).

There was a march through the court of the women, beginning at a signal on trumpets played by two priests, and moving to the sound of continuous trumpeting to the gate opening to the East. There they turned about facing west and said: "Our fathers who were in this place stood with their backs to the Temple and their faces eastward, and worshiped the sun toward the east but our eyes are unto the Lord." (*Ezekiel viii. 16*) The joy at this ceremony gave rise to the Talmudic quotation about the rejoicing.

~ In the Middle Ages

In medieval times, the sukkah brought the atmosphere of the countryside to the squalid quarters of the ghetto. The green leaves represented the fields and orchards of the Holy Land for which they yearned and prayed.

The Rabbi delivered a discourse on the laws of Sukkot some time before the Festival and he appointed certain learned individuals to tour the Jewish quarters between Yom Kippur and Sukkot to supervise the building of sukkot. The bond of fellowship was fostered by families uniting to share one sukkah. The medieval sukkah was bedecked with the fruits which the Bible mentions grow in the Holy Land, to bring the Holy Land to the sukkah.

In the Middle Ages it was often difficult to acquire an etrog to comply with all the requirements. It was to be a "goodly" fruit. The distance from the countries which grew the etrog to the ghetto areas of Europe was considerable, and traveling was not easy. Yet men went on long journeys to obtain the fruit.

In some communities it was the custom to kindle a light each night of the Festival, in honor of the *ushpizin* (one of our heavenly guests or spirits of our ancestors) for that day and in other communities seven lights each night for the seven heavenly guests.

In some communities it has been the custom to distribute charity throughout the town so that the poor might not find the task of building a sukkah and adorning it beyond their means.

A Hassidic Rabbi, known as the Tzanzer (d. 1876), when asked why he insisted upon special charity for Sukkot replied, "We are commanded to adorn the sukkah. And what better ornament can there be than the distribution of charity among those who lack the means wherewith to be glad in the 'season of rejoicing'?"

~ In Modern Times

In Western countries, the sukkah has become an important adjunct to the Synagogue, today. The synagogue sukkah draws large congregations for kiddush after service and it has become a center for the gathering of people - congenial because of its pleasant surroundings and distinctive atmosphere. The sukkah of the home is being joined by the communal sukkah, bringing people together for the celebrations.

In Israel, today, the situation is different. Whether the season is mild or hot, sukkot sprout up on balconies, open spaces and even in parking lots. Easy-to-build sukkot make it more convenient; weather-proofing is unnecessary and sukkot takes to the streets of every town as the *s'khah* (leafy roofing) is brought around on trucks from seasonal tree-trimming. **.K.**

... Putting Simcha into Simchat Torah

Written by Rabbi Wayne Allen, spiritual leader of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Willowdale, Toronto, Ontario.

Simchat Torah, the festival of rejoicing with the Torah, brings the holiday season to a happy conclusion. The name for this holiday does not appear in the Bible or the Talmud. It is mentioned first in the literature of the early Middle Ages and is based on the Babylonian Jewish custom of completing the weekly Torah reading once a year on this day. Jews in the land of Israel completed the Torah reading cycle once every three-and-a-half years and celebrated then (See "A Treasury of Differences in Custom", compiled by Rabbi Benjamin Menashe Levin, page 98).

Completing the reading of any religious text is considered cause for celebration, but completing the reading of the Torah is even more special, so the regular synagogue routine is displaced by all kinds of merriment. For example, Rabbi Yehiel Michel Epstein writes that, ordinarily, dancing is not permitted in the synagogue, but it is permitted on Simchat Torah (*Arukh HaShulhan* 669:3) in honor of the Torah.

As everywhere in the Jewish world, the hakkafof of Simchat Torah—marching with the Torah in processions around the synagogue—is also observed by Sephardic Jews. But Dr. Henry Toledano, a respected Sephardic scholar, author, and teacher, notes that Moroccan Jews perform the hakkafof with a difference. Instead of marching around with the Torah in their arms, the Moroccans march around the Torah with their children in their arms. And following the synagogue service, the entire hakkafof ceremony is repeated in each home. A chair is placed in the middle of the sukkah, presumably with a Torah or at least a Chumash (The five books of Moses in bound form) placed on it, and the adults carry the young children, marching them around the Torah and singing the traditional songs for the occasion.

The Moroccan custom seems to suggest two important ideas. The first is one of compensation. Compensation is a kind of unspoken, hardly recognized principle in Judaism that attempts to balance things out over time. For example, within one week following Tisha B'Av, the saddest day of the Jewish year, Jews in Israel celebrated a kind of Sadie Hawkins Day when the daughters of

Jerusalem went out to the vineyards in borrowed white clothes to find suitable husbands. It was considered one of the two most joyous days of the year and occurred shortly after a three-week period of semi-mourning. The day after Rosh Hashanah is the Fast of Gedaliah. It is as if the calendar is compensating for two days of over-eating.

With Simchat Torah, we see the same principle at work. The Days of Awe are hardly a child-friendly experience. The synagogue services are long, the language is difficult, the themes are solemn, the new clothes are uncomfortable, and the expectations of good behavior are enormous.

But Simchat Torah is a day for unbridled joy when children are given the opportunity to see the playful side of Judaism. For children this is critical. A child compelled to go to the synagogue for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but not exposed to the synagogue celebration of Simchat Torah, will grow up with a skewed view of Judaism. To these unfortunate children, Judaism will seem boring, morose, and distasteful. But when children see the happiness attached to Simchat Torah and are made the central focus of the day, they will see the side of Judaism that teaches that life is celebration.

The second idea suggested by the Moroccan custom of celebrating Simchat Torah is that our children are as valuable to us as the Torah itself. Just as other Jews carry the Torah, Moroccan Jews carry their children. Children are not more important than Torah. We do not and must not sacrifice Jewish observance for the sake of the children. But children are just as important as the Torah, for without our children, the Torah cannot be passed on. Children and Torah must be equally valued.

So this Simchat Torah, show your children the joy, happiness, and celebration that come with being Jewish, and remember that it is they who will carry this joy to future generations. **.K.**

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at K.C.T.**

~

**Honor Any Occasion of Your Choosing
... Please Ask Us!**

... When a Citrus is No Lemon

Lulav and Etrog: the Personal Mitzvah



Some people go to great lengths to precisely and joyfully fulfill the mitzvot associated with lulav and etrog, including personally selecting them for purchase from qualified sources. While they may also be purchased with confidence through KCT, those wishing to select their own, may be guided by this brief overview drawn from several respected sources among many in the Jewish community.

". . . And you shall take for yourselves on the first day (of Sukkot) the fruit of a goodly tree, a palm branch, the myrtle branch, and the willow of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (*Leviticus 23*). The Shulchan Aruch gives precise specifications concerning the requirements of form, appearance, and texture of the Arba Minim (the Four Species): Etrog, Lulav, Hadassim, Aravot.

The Etrog . . .

A superior *Etrog* is of medium size, its bright yellow surface is furrowed and covered with *Blitos*, bumps (which distinguishes it from the ordinary lemon). Another criterion of the etrog is its need to be grown from a strain that is not grafted with another fruit. To be considered ritually fit, the Etrog must be shaped "like a tower"--its bottom larger than its top. The *Pitom*, the flowered blossom at the tip of the fruit, and *Uketz*, the stem which is sunk into the broad base, must be examined carefully to make sure that both are present and intact. (To avoid the problem of the pitom falling off, many people prefer to use Etrogim which grow without Pitoms) The Pitom should be directly in line above the Uketz.

The Lulav . . .

The Lulav is a small, young branch of the date palm. The leaves--two-fold and spear-headed--are linked to a solid central stem. Near the pointed tip of the Lulav, the spine splits into two double-leaves called *Te-yomes*, twins. The points of the Te-yomes should not be split. The backs of the leaves should be light green, the fronts white. A select Lulav has a straight spine, against which the leaves lie flat, covering and overlapping one another.



Hadassim . . .

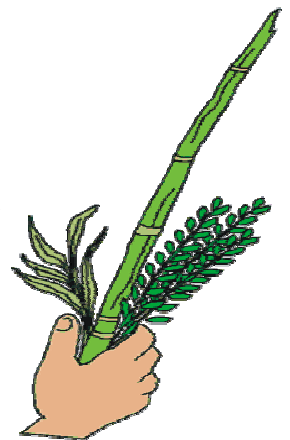
The oval leaves of the *Hadass* cover the myrtle branch from top to bottom in groups of three, growing from one stem. The top of the branches should not be broken off, and should overlap the stems of the upper leaves. Three Hadassim are required for the mitzvah of the Arba Minim.

Aravot . . .

The *Arava*, willow requires a great amount of water, and so it is commonly found near streams, ponds, or rivers. Select Aravot have long, slender green leaves with smooth edges, and a straight, reddish stem. Two Aravot are needed to complete the Arba Minim.

Each set of arba minim therefore includes one etrog, one lulav, three haddasim and two aravot.

The Four Species all taken together make up one single mitzvah. If any of the species are missing then one has not fulfilled the Mitzvah. The four species are not taken on Shabbat even if Shabbat is the first day of Sukkot. The Mitzvah does not apply at night.



Arba Minim: Gathering and Shaking . . .
 So what do we do with them, now that we have them? Take the Lulav and hold it in your right hand (unless you're a lefty) with the spine facing you, and say:

Boruch attah Ado-nai Elo-heinu melech ha'olam, asher kidishanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al netilat lulav.

[Blessed are You God our God King of the Universe who has sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us regarding taking the lulav.]

Other than the first day of the holiday (or the first day when you perform the mitzvah), the etrog is lifted right after the blessing, and the shaking commences. On the first day of the holiday, (or your first time), while still holding the lulav, pick up the etrog in your left hand and recite the following blessing. (Toward the end of the blessing put the etrog and lulav together):

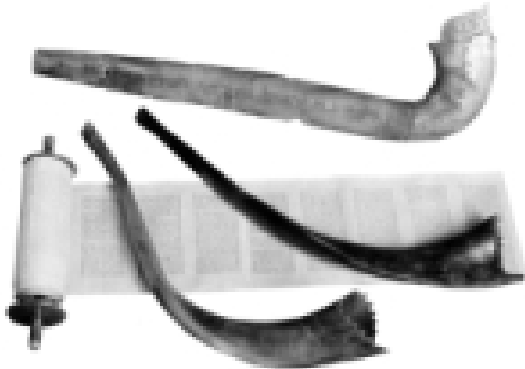
Boruch attah Ado-nai Elo-heinu melech ha'olam she'hechyanu, vikimanu, vi'higi'anu lazman hazeh.

[Blessed are You God our God King of the Universe who has granted us life, sustained us and enables us to reach this occasion.]

There are varying customs, including holding the etrog upside down during the blessing, and then turning it over for the shaking. If you travel to other communities during the holiday, you might wish to observe and note the different *minhagim*. **.K.**

. . . . Shofrot: All Shapes and Sizes

No matter what shape your shofar is, long or short, curved or straight, if you know how to sound it, have it in shul with you for Neilah and join with our *Ba'al Shofar*, Harvey Goldstein for the concluding notes of Yom Kippur.



The KCT Library . . . For Study Year-round Special Dedicatory Opportunities Are Available . . . Please Ask!

The evolving library at KCT contains many volumes of traditional texts as well a growing collection of timely special-interest books, periodicals, and local as well as Israeli newspapers. The library is open whenever the building is open, and visitors are encouraged to browse the collection and to offer suggestions for enhancements and additional book purchases, and of course to offer their personal support. **.K.**

. . . Volunteer Opportunities Abound at KCT



Especially as we move through this 18th year, your Kehillah needs you more than ever !! Call and declare how we may best include you as the New Year unfolds: (631) 689-0257 or www.kct.org **.K.**

**Assuring the Future of the Kehillah
 ~
 Dedication, Endowment, and Tribute
 Opportunities are Available
 Please Ask Us!**

As with all Jewish celebrations, parents are enjoined to insure that children understand the significance of the holidays and the practices, at their own level of comprehension. With the growing number of grandchildren in the Kehillah, the editors present a brief extract of the materials developed over many years by Professor Eliezer Segal, of Calgary University. The full text appears on-line at www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/EliMahzor/

Editor's note: If you are old enough to read this poem for yourself, then instead read it aloud to someone who isn't. If perchance your youngest ones aren't around for Yom Tov, then come to KCT a few minutes earlier and we'll provide the children as you pour out your love through this evocative Jewish poetry.

Fretful Frederica

~

Fretful Frederica
is flustered and flurried.
The New Year is coming!
She's starting to worry.
On Rosh Hashanah,
Frederica now fears,
her fate will be judged
for the rest of the year.

We all will be counted
as shepherds count lambs,
as captains count soldiers,
as farmers count yams,
as painters count colors,
as authors count words,
as cooks count their spices,
or cowboys their herds.

We all will be counted,
checked outside and in
for kindness or meanness--
for virtues or sins.

Fretful Frederica
is flustered and flurried.
The New Year is coming!
She's starting to worry.
Will she be happy,
or will she shed tears?
The great day of judgment
is finally here.
Then, on Yom Kippur
the decree will be sealed.
She'll have just ten days
to submit her appeal.

What kind of days
will the year have in store?
She wonders and ponders,
and wonders some more...

Will she get to relax
in a warm bath with bubbles,
or sit in a pit
full of cold, scratchy
stubble?

Will her kite soar way up ,
in the sky roaming free,
or tangle itself
in the bough of a tree?
Will she score straight A's
and impress them in school,
or forget all the answers
and feel like a fool?

Repenting and praying
and helping the poor
will make the new year
oh so joyful for sure.

Will her garden be gifted
with sweet-scented roses,
or weeds that will have us all
holding our noses?
Will she sleep all night smiling
at dreams in her head,
or be wakened by Skrunch-
monsters under her bed?

Will she dance the ballet
with precision and grace,
or trip on a shoelace
and fall on her face?

Repenting and praying
and helping the needy
will make the new year
much more happy
indeedy.

Will she keep hitting homers,
as crowds cheer and shout,
or will they all boo
as she strikes herself out?
Will she lead expeditions
to the Empire of Glock,
or will she get lost
when she strolls 'round the
block?

Will her paintings be shown
in the finest museums,
or will everyone stick out their
tongues
when they see 'em?

Repenting and praying
and acts of goodwill
will make the new year
yet more wonderful still.

~

Editors' note:

This poem feels best
when followed by a hug!



