

THE TEMPLE ISRAEL NEWS

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS SPECIAL HIGH HOLY DAYS EDITION

RABBI'S MESSAGE

What a delight it is to be in our newly re-furbished Temple! The walls have been freshly painted, the floors waxed, and new curtains have been hung in our sanctuary thanks to the Davis family. One of the beautiful features of our new sanctuary is the white translucent shades on the windows. In the daytime, when they are closed, you can see the sun shining through and a gauzy view of the world outside. The Talmud teaches that one should not pray in a room without windows. According to Rav Kook, this is because one cannot pray without a recognition of the outside world. Praying means nothing if it is done in a cramped, narrow corner, unrelated to the vast panorama of God's world.

Windows have another function too -- we can look out of them, but others can also look in them and see us. To see people engaged in prayer and in sacred rituals can be inspiring. During the month of Tishri, there will be many opportunities to look through windows and see people lifting their hearts to God. Look and you will see people rise as the shofar is blown. Look through the windows of the sukkah to see families with coats on, huddled for a meal. Look in the synagogue and you will see people dancing with the Torah. The Baal Shem Tov taught that when you watch a person sway in prayer do not think it is strange. The month of Tishri is a time of unbridled passion and religious fervor for Jews. Dare to be "strange." Dare to embrace your Judaism and your God.

Jon Perlman

ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS ...

Rosh Hashana

Rosh Hashana is the "head of the year." We gather for two days in prayer to celebrate the renewal of our spiritual lives in the new year. We acknowledge God's sovereignty in our lives and we welcome the opportunity to become better people. The theme of the day is judgment – all human beings pass by God in review. A member of the congregation sounds the shofar to herald the new year but also to wake us from complacency and spiritual paralysis. On Shabbat, the

shofar is not sounded (the laws of Shabbat supercede the laws of a festival day – Shabbat is more important). We eat a new fruit and say the *shehechyanu* to thank God for bringing us to this day. We eat apples dipped in honey for a sweet new year.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the companion day to Rosh Hashana. The theme of Yom Kippur is atonement. We are cleansed of the encrustations of spiritual impurity (sins) that we have gathered from the previous year. On Rosh Hashana, we are judged; on Yom Kippur, the judgment is sealed. We have another chance to improve our spiritual lives. Those over the age of 13 are expected to go without food and water for the entire day. Fasting represents our sincere wish to exercise our souls. The physical self is put on hold for a day. We do not wash, use perfumes, wear leather shoes, or have intimate relations. Some dress in pure white for an added effect. The shofar is sounded at the last service of the day (at nightfall) to signify the closing of the gates of judgment.

Sukkot

Five days after Yom Kippur, Jews celebrate the bounty of the new year. As the harvest comes to a close, we build a small open-air hut (sukkah) in our backyards and revel in the outdoor elements one last time before the winter. A sukkah gives shade from the sun, but light must come through its thatched roof. Families typically take their meals in the sukkah. We wave a bouquet of branches including the palm, myrtle, and willow and hold an etrog (citron) in our left hand in praise of God. The lulav and etrog are also used as ritual, beseeching God for good rains during the winter season in eretz yisrael.

Simchat Torah

The coda of Tishri is Simchat Torah. Originally scheduled as the final day of Tishri celebration, with the recurring theme of the days of judgment on Hoshana Rabba (the day before) and a special eighth day of assembly to conclude Sukkot, Simchat Torah has come into its own as the celebration of the reading of the Torah. The following Shabbat we start from the beginning of the Torah, the book of Beresheet,

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Genesis. On Simchat Torah, we have a ceremonial reading of the last verses of the Torah from the book of Devarim, *Deuteronomy*. We dance with the Torah, wave flags, and eat sweets for a sweet new year.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Rosh Hashana

September 26-- Evening Service **6:30 – 7:00 PM**
Note new earlier time

September 27-- Morning Service-9:00 AM-12:30 PM
Evening Service **6:30- 7:00 PM** (Sept 27)
Note new earlier time

September 28-- Morning Service 9:00 AM–1:00 PM
(includes Shofar service)
Tashlich to follow at 1:00 PM at Miller’s River

Yom Kippur

October 5--Kol Nidre 6:00 – 8:00 PM (Wear tallit and tennis shoes)

October 6--Morning Service 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Mincha/ Neilah 5:00 – 7:00 PM (shofar sounded)

Sukkot

Week of October 13—At the home of Dr. Myron and Suri Maron--Time to Be Announced

Simchat Torah

*****October 19th --Special Family Program*****
10:30 AM--MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

<p>For more information, please call Temple Israel in Athol at 978-249-9481 or contact Co-presidents Dr. Myron Maron at 978-724-0238 or Mitchell Grosky at 978-249-9090.</p>
