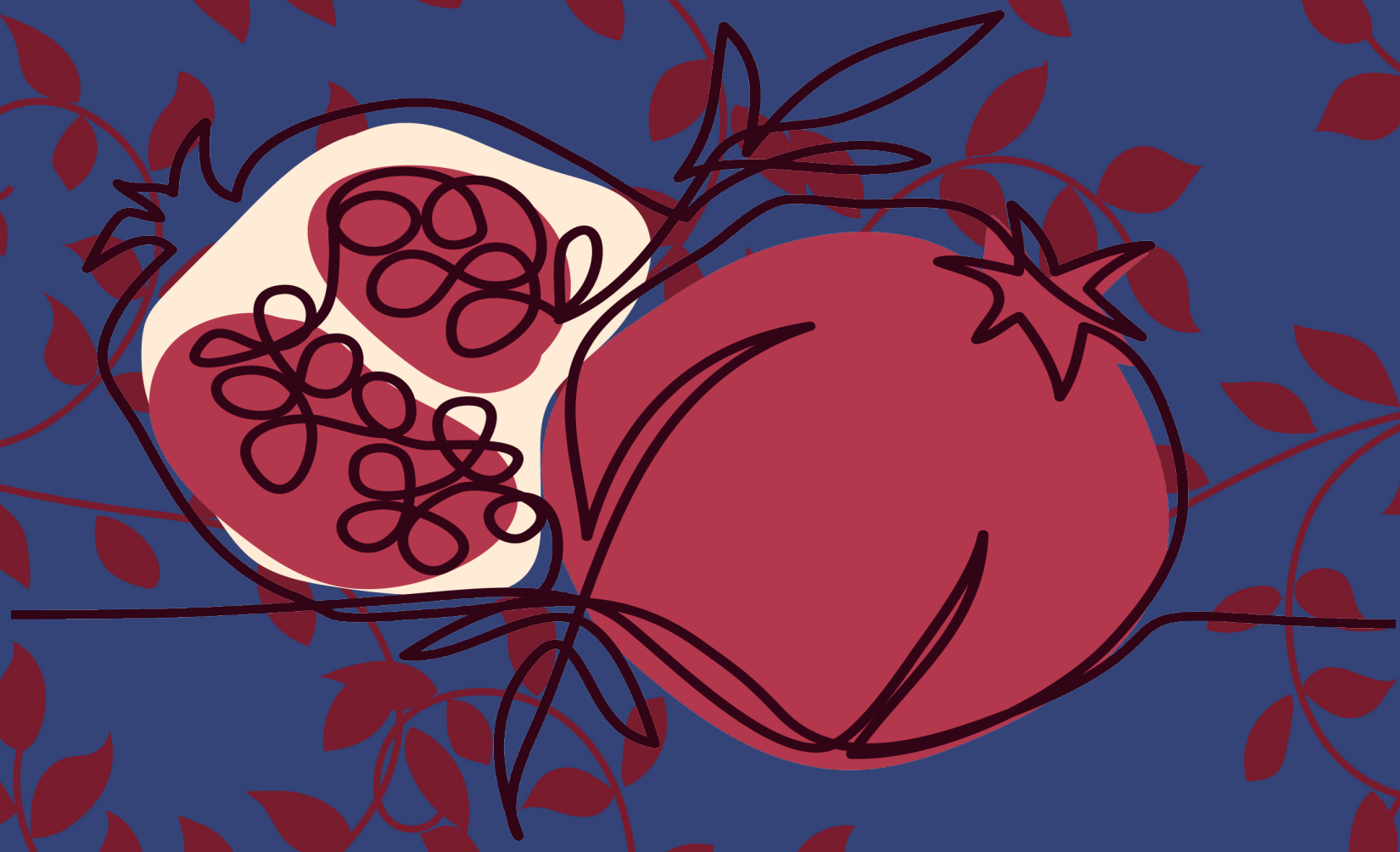
The Charlotte
JEWISH NEWS
Celebrating Jewish Life

Celebrating *High Holidays* in Charlotte



L'Shanah Tovah

Celebrating High Holidays in Charlotte

TEMPLE BETH EL

Services will be held at Temple Beth El at 5101 Providence Rd., Charlotte, NC 28226. For tickets and information call (704) 366-1948 or visit templebethel.org/registration. Full array of High Holy Day Information can be found online: www.templebethel.org/highholydays

Tuesdays, August 30 and September 6, 13, and 20
Elul Reading Series, 7 p.m.

Saturdays, September, 3, 10, 17, and 24
Torah Study, 9 a.m.
Shabbat Evening Service, 10:30 a.m.

Fridays, September 9, 16, and 23
Shabbat Evening Service, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 17
Selichot Concert & Service featuring Nefesh Mountin in partnership with Temple Israel, 8 p.m., Temple Israel Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
College-Age Congregant Hangout & Check-in, 9 p.m.

Saturday, September 24
Young Adult New Year's Toast & Havdalah, 6 p.m.
NoDa Brewing Teen Pizza & Paint: Dinner, Havdalah, & Mural Creation, 6 p.m.

Sunday, September 25
Rosh HaShanah Evening Service, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, September 26
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service for Families with Young Children, 8:30 a.m.
LJCC-Gorelick Hall
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service for Families with School-Age Children, 8:30 a.m.
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 11 a.m.

Monday, September 26
Tashlich:
Arboretum with Rabbi Knight, 4:30 p.m.
Dogwood Park with Cantor Thomas, 4:30 p.m.
Freedom Park with Rabbi Nichols & Rabbi Erdheim, 4:30 p.m.

Friday, September 30
Shabbat Shuvah Service with Rabbi Schindler and Patty Torcellini, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 1
Torah Study, 9 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service, 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, October 2
Community Memorial Service, 10:30 a.m., Hebrew Cemetery

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre: Yom Kippur Evening Service, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 5
Yom Kippur Morning Service for Families with Young Children, 8:30 a.m.
LJCC-Gorelick Hall
Yom Kippur Morning Service for Families with School-Age Children, 8:30 a.m.
Yom Kippur Morning Service with Yizkor, 11 a.m.
Study, Reflect, Move, Meditate, 2 p.m.
Healing, Neilah, and Havdalah, 3:30 p.m.
Light break-the-fast following Havdalah

Sunday, October 9
Religious School Sukkot Experience, 9 a.m.
Social Justice & Action TriBE Launch Party, 4 p.m.
Sukkot Evening-Jazz Under a Full Moon in the Sukkah, 6 p.m.

Monday, October 10
Tot Sukkot, 9:30 a.m.
Festival Morning Service, 10:30 a.m.

Tuesday, October 11
TriBE Leader Gathering in the Sukkah, 7 p.m.

Friday, October 14
Kehillat Shabbat Sukkot, 6 p.m.
Congregational Shabbat Dinner in the Sukkah, 7:15 p.m.

Saturday, October 15
Sukkot Torah Study, 9:00 a.m.
Take a Hike with Rabbi Knight, 10:30 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service, 10:30 a.m.
Porch Sukkot Cookout, 6 p.m.
Offsite

Sunday, October 16
Congregational Simchat Torah Brunch & Gathering, 9 a.m.
Religious School Simchat Torah Celebration and Consecration, 10 a.m.

Monday, October 17
Tot Simchat Torah, 9:30 a.m.
Festival Morning Service with Yizkor, 10:30 a.m.

TEMPLE ISRAEL

Services will be held at Temple Israel at 4901 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC 28226. For tickets and information call (980) 960-2380 or email Kelly at kwilson@templeisraelnc.org

Saturday, September 17
Havdalah & Selichot Concert featuring Nefesh Mountain (joint program with Temple Beth El), 8 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary (TI)
Selichot Service with Temple Beth El, 9:30 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Dessert reception, following service

Sunday, September 25
Erev Rosh Hashanah Service, 6 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary

Monday, September 26
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Family Service, 9 a.m.
Sam Lerner Hall at Shalom Park (LJCC)
Tashclich, 1 p.m. (approx.)
Creek by Temple Israel
Evening Service, 7 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary

Tuesday, September 27
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Torah Tots program, 9 a.m.
Sam Lerner Hall at Shalom Park (LJCC)
Evening Service, 7 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, Yom Kippur Evening Service, 6:30 p.m. (seated by 6:15 p.m.)
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary

Wednesday, October 5
Torah Tots program, 8:45 a.m.
Sam Lerner Hall at Shalom Park (LJCC)
Family Service, 9 a.m.
Sam Lerner Hall at Shalom Park (LJCC)
Yom Kippur Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Mincha Service, 5 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Neilah, 6:30 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Break-the-Fast, 7:50 p.m.
Leon & Sandra Levine Social Hall (Reservations Required)

Sunday, October 9
Erev Sukkot Service, 6 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom

Monday, October 10
Sukkot Morning Service, 9:30 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Torah Tots program, 10:30 a.m.
Temple Israel (TI) Sukkah
Kiddush, following services
TI Sukkah
Evening Minyan, 7 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom

Tuesday, October 11
Sukkot Morning Service, 9:30 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Kiddush, following services
TI Sukkah
Evening Minyan, 7 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom

Wednesday, October 12
Social Club (By Reservation Only), 12 p.m.
TI Sukkah
Evening Minyan, 7 p.m.
Zoom

Thursday, October 13
Morning Minyan, 8 a.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom
Women of Temple Israel (WoTI) Sukkot Program, 6 p.m.
TI Sukkah
Evening Minyan, 7 p.m.
Zoom

Friday, October 14
Shabbat Evening Services, 6:15 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Southern Fried Sukkot, 7:15 p.m. (By Reservation Only)
TI Sukkah

Saturday, October 15
Torah on Tap (Young Professionals) *Sukkot*, 7 p.m.
TI Sukkah

Sunday, October 16
Erev Shemini Atzeret Service, 6 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel & Zoom

Monday, October 17
Shemini Atzeret Service – Yizkor, 9:30 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Simchat Torah Tots program, 5:30 p.m.
Mindy Ellen Levine Chapel
Evening Minyan, 5:30 p.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Simchat Torah Food Truck Festival, 6 p.m. (Reservations Required)
TI Sukkah & Inner Parking Lot
Simchat Torah Dancing With The Torahs, 7 p.m.
TI Inner Parking Lot

October 18
Simchat Torah Morning Service, 9:30 a.m.
Morris & Sylvia Speizman Sanctuary
Kiddush, following services (By Reservation Only)
TI Sukkah

Celebrating High Holidays in Charlotte

CONGREGATION OHR HATORAH

For more information visit www.chabadnc.org.

Saturday, September 17
Selichot Service, just after midnight.

Sunday, September 25
Rosh Hashanah Evening Service, 7 p.m.(Candle lighting at 6:57 pm).

Monday, September 26
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Shofar service, 11:30 a.m.
Mincha and Evening Service, 7 p.m. (Candle lighting after 7:52 p.m.)

Tuesday, September 27
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Shofar Service, 11:30 a.m.
Mincha and Evening Service, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, September 28
Fast of Gedaliah — Fast begins at 5:56 a.m. and ends at 7:36 pm.

October 4
Eve of Yom Kippur.
Kol Nidre Service, 6:30 p.m. *Candle lighting and beginning of fast,* 6:45 p.m.

October 5:
Yom Kippur Morning Service, 9 a.m.
Yizkor Service, 11:30 a.m. *Mincha,* 5 p.m.
Fast ends at 7:39 pm.

HEBREW CEMETERY

Community Memorial Service
Join us, rain or shine, for a Community Memorial Service. 1801 Statesville Avenue. For details visit www.hebrewcemetery.org.

The Community Memorial Service is the only service that is attended by all clergy from the greater Charlotte area. Once again we will be offering an in-person service as well as a virtual option. Come together as a community and remember your loved ones that passed.

October 2, 10:30 am.

BALLANTYNE JEWISH CENTER

Everyone is welcome free of charge and reservations are not required. For more information about High Holiday services visit our website at www.jewishballantyne.com.

Rosh Hashanah Services will be held at the South Charlotte Banquet Center, 9009 Bryant Farms Road.

Monday, September 26
Morning Service, 9:30 a.m.
Rabbi's sermon and blowing of the shofar, 11 a.m.
Services followed by a Kiddush lunch, 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 27
Morning Service, 9:30 a.m.
Rabbi's sermon and blowing of the shofar, 11 a.m.
Services followed by a Kiddush lunch, 1:30 p.m.

Yom Kippur Services will be held at Courtyard Marriott Waverly, 6319 Providence Farm Lane.

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 5
Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Neilah, 6:15 p.m.

HAVURAT TIKVAH

All services will be held in the MacLean Fellowship Hall on the campus of Avondale Presbyterian Church on Park Road. Due to the uncertainty of a potential COVID surge this fall, please email admin@havurattikvah.org after Sept. 8.

Monday, September 26, 10 a.m.
Rosh Hashanah Service followed by a brief kiddish with challah, apples, and honey

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre Service

Wednesday, October 5, 10 a.m.
Yom Kippur Service

THE UPTOWN CHABAD

For more information visit www.theuptownchabad.com

Monday, September 26
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Shofar Service, 11 a.m.
Kiddush Lunch, 12 p.m.
Rosh Hashanah Dinner, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, September 27
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Shofar Service, 11 a.m.
Kiddush Lunch, 12 p.m.

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 5
Yom Kippur Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Yom Kippur Evening Service, 5:30 p.m.
Break Fast, 7:40 p.m.

THE RUACH COMMUNITY

All services are free of charge and open to all. No reservations required. For more details, email the.ruach.band@gmail.com. Services will be held at The New Theater at the Parr Center at Central Piedmont Community College on Elizabeth Avenue.

Monday, September 26
The High Holy Days Experience: Rosh Hashanah, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, October 4
The High Holy Days Experience: Kol Nidre, 7 p.m.
Immediately followed by Yizkor Service

TEMPLE KOL AMI

Tickets are included in TKA membership, but non-members are welcome to purchase tickets and join us as well. Military and college students are invited to worship with us for free. All services take place at Philadelphia United Methodist Church, 1691 SC-160, Fort Mill. Further information about junior congregation services, tashlich, yizkor and break fast can be found at www.templekolamisc.org.

Sunday, September 25
Erev Rosh Hashanah Service, 7 p.m.

September 26
Rosh Hashana Service, 10 a.m.

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, 7 p.m.

Wednesay, October 5
Yom Kippur Service, 10 a.m.
Neilah, 4 p.m.

TEMPLE KOL TIKVAH

Visit www.templekoltikvah.org for more information. For tickets, call (704) 987-9980 or email admin@templekoltikvah.org.

Sunday, September 25
Erev Rosh Hashanah Service, 7:00 p.m.
Davidson College, Duke Family Performance Hall

Monday, September 26
Children's Service, 9 a.m.
Davidson College, Sprinkle Room
Rosh Hashanah Service, 10 a.m.
Davidson College, Duke Family Performance Hall
Tashlich, 3 p.m.
Roosevelt Wilson Park in Davidson

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, Yom Kippur Evening Service, 7:00 p.m.
Davidson College, Duke Family Performance Hall

Wednesday, October 5
Children's Service, 9 a.m.
Davidson College, Sprinkle Room
Yom Kippur Service, 10 a.m.
Davidson College, Duke Family Performance Hall
Healing Service, at TKT, 2 p.m.
Afternoon Service, at TKT, 3:30 p.m.
Yizkor, at TKT, 4:30 p.m.
Neilah, at TKT, 5:30 p.m.
Break-the-Fast, at TKT, 6:00 p.m.

TEMPLE SOLEL

Services will be held at Grace Presbyterian Church at 2955 W. Hwy 160, Fort Mill, SC 29708. For information visit templesolelsc.org, write to us at info@templesolelSC.org or call (803) 610-1707.

Sunday, September 25
Rosh Hashanah Evening Service, 7 p.m.

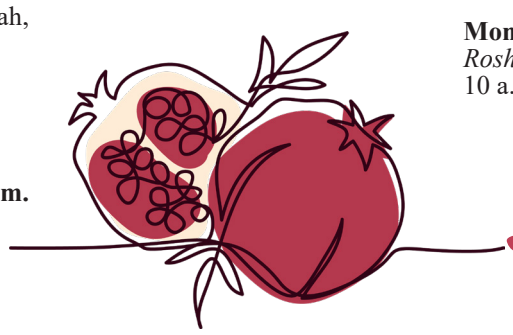
Monday, September 26
Rosh Hashanah Morning Service, 10 a.m.

Friday, September 30
Shabbat Shuvah Services, 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, October 4
Kol Nidre, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, October 5
Yom Kippur Morning Service, 10 a.m.
Yizkor Service, 3 p.m.
Neilah and Concluding Service, 4 p.m.

We will conclude with a community break-the-fast immediately following the concluding services on Wednesday, 10/5.



L'Shanah Tova

FROM THE BIMAH

A Countercultural Celebration

By Rabbi Becca Diamond, Temple Kol Tikvah

I've often heard people say that Judaism is countercultural. The most obvious meaning of this is that we live as a minority religious and cultural group in a majority Christian society. It is easy to see that we run counter to the majority culture when we celebrate different holidays, eat different traditional foods, and even pray in a different language than most of our neighbors. The High Holidays highlight this as well. It is easy to see that we are "other" when we have to make special arrangements to take time off of work and school to gather as a community on our most important days. But I would argue that Judaism is countercultural in more than just these obvious ways. Our tradition emphasizes values and behaviors that are different from what our secular culture espouses, and this is highlighted during the High Holidays.

The clearest example of this is how the New Year is celebrated. In America, it is a night of partying and fun, where we get dressed up and stay up late to watch the fireworks when the clock strikes midnight — at least, those of us who don't fall asleep by 10:30 p.m. like I do! Beyond the celebration, an important part of the New Year is making a resolution. According to some quick Googling I did, the most common New Year's resolutions are to exercise and lose weight. All of this is perfectly good and fun, and I am fully in favor of all of this (except the fireworks, which terrifies my poor little dog). But compare this to how we celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. We take Rosh Hashanah as a day to come together in prayer as a community, to spend time as a family, and most importantly, to begin the process of reflection, which culminates in Yom Kippur ten days later. It is our invitation to start doing t'shuvah, often translated as repentance, but is really a way to reflect on whether we are living in a way that aligns with our values. While a resolution typically encompasses external goals (having a healthier body, setting career goals, saving more money, etc.), t'shuvah is all about internal reflection. It is about living our lives as the people we aspire to be, and understanding how our behavior affects those around us.

In a society that emphasizes external goals like looking good and making more money, reflecting on our behavior truly is countercultural. It is not something that we would think about if not for the Jewish calendar, as our ancestors have built this reflection process into our yearly holiday cycle. Just like we go to the doctor for an annual exam to check out our bodies, in Judaism, we have an annual checkup on our souls to see how we're doing as people. This is the value that Judaism provides: it offers an alternative model to what our culture values. It is compatible with American culture, but it gives us the opportunity for depth and meaning, which so many of us crave and which is often lacking from our secular culture. This year, like every year, when we request time off of work or pull our kids out of school for the High Holidays, let us remember why we are putting in so much effort to celebrate as a community. The value-added of Judaism is this time for reflection and meaning that we treasure in our tradition and we seek out in our lives. Let us remember this purpose of the High Holidays and take the time we need for reflection.

TEMPLE KOL TIKVAH OF LAKE NORMAN

5783: A Year of Reconnecting

By Rabbi Yossi Groner, Congregation Ohr HaTorah

A year is an eternity. A year is a complete entity that covers the cycle of time. Each year has its own identity, which is more than the sequential number identifying it. The New Year of 5783 is a year of Hakhel — a year of assembly.

The year of Hakhel comes once every seven years right after the Jewish Sabbatical year, known as the Shmitah year. Hakhel calls for a unique mitzvah for the king or leader of the Jewish people to gather all Jewish people, men, women, and children to the plaza of the Holy Temple and share with them words of inspiration from the Torah.

During the Sabbatical year, farms, orchards and all agricultural lands in Israel would lay fallow, with open access to the poor and undomesticated animals to partake of its yield.

After the Sabbatical year, all agricultural work would resume on these lands. In preparation for returning to the hectic rhythm of work, the Torah commands the Jewish leader to gather all the Jewish population in Israel for an in-person gathering to guide them in conducting the business.

Taking place at the beginning of the year in conjunction with Sukkot, the mitzvah of Hakhel would become the theme of the year. This translated into an increase of communal gatherings where thoughts on the Torah were shared and relationships within the community flourished.

Hakhel resonates with us at this time more than usual. Hakhel reminds us of the need for in-person gatherings, which lead to community building. Since the winter of 2020, when major lockdowns began globally, community life has not been the same. Many of us were petrified of COVID, and rightfully so. In addition, many of us got used to a new reality with virtual reality meetings. Some of us found this way of meeting enticing as a convenient way to stay in place and connect with people.

Virtual reality and video conferencing have the major benefit of bringing together people who are located in distant locations. Yet virtual meetings cannot replace the physical connection of in-person gathering which are necessary for human development and for community building.

Maimonides writes that human nature, as created by G-d, is to be social and to be part of a society. An individual's well-being benefits from being part of a community.

A synagogue in Hebrew is not called a house of worship; rather, it is called a beit knesset, a house of ingathering. The purpose of the synagogue is to build a community where people congregate, bond, and build long-lasting relationships. In later years, the communal kiddush luncheon was introduced to synagogue life for the purpose of community building.

Interestingly, the Talmud teaches that some of the daily rituals in Judaism can only be observed when done as a community, thereby emphasizing the point that a higher level of holiness dwells within a community. That is why some prayers can only be recited in the presence of community.

The importance of gatherings goes back to the very origins of Jewish communal life. The Midrash relates that Moses would conduct gatherings of the Israelites in the desert every Shabbat. These gatherings had a dual purpose: for teaching Torah and for community building.

As we enter the new year of 5783, the year of Hakhel, our prayer is for the reinvigoration and restoration of our communal life with as many community building opportunities as can be had safely and wisely. We gather with a sense of gratitude for being able to congregate, celebrate, and be part of a vibrant Jewish community. L'shanah Tova.

FROM THE BIMAH

To See Ourselves and One Another

By Rabbi Asher Knight, Temple Beth El

In the month of Elul, the month that leads to the High Holy Days, we read from the Torah portion in Deuteronomy, Parshat Re'eih, which commands us to re'eih, "to see." Perhaps, to re'eih/see is the perfect message leading up to the High Holy Days. All of us want to be seen and known and loved for who we are and what we bring to the world. The gift of this season begins with the spiritual work recognizing the gifts of our lives, to prioritize the health and psychological well-being of our body and mind, to be kinder and gentler and more nurturing to the only vessel we have. To "see" ourselves more clearly means seeing the complexity of our lives — the good and the less than ideal together. Each of us had proud moments and moments we wish we could "do over."

The opportunity of the High Holy Days is to see ourselves anew, to choose to engage in healthy behaviors, to act ethically and courageously, to see the ways that we can be a blessing for those we love, for our community, and for others. We explore, we re'eih/see our own souls and choose to recognize the fullest possibility of our lives in a new light. That is the transformative opportunity ahead — an honest, inward exploration and the optimistic sense that we can yet become who we want to be.

Author Valerie Kaur wrote beautifully in her book "See No Stranger" that "You don't need to know people in order to grieve with them. We can grieve with them, in order to know them."

What if we recognized that part of work of "seeing" in this season is understanding that the people around us are engaged in the same introspective work? Thus, to "see," means wondering about the experience of our partners, our parents, our children, our co-workers, and our neighbors with the same questions we might ask of ourselves: What motivates them? What might they love and fear losing? What has their life been like? What are they celebrating and what are they mourning? What challenges have they overcome and what obstacles are they still facing?

When we imagine their lives and listen to their stories, we may compassionately recognize that most people make mistakes, just like we do. Most people have had love and loss just like we have. To see others is to empathetically understand that everyone acts out of their own self-interests, their own pains, and their own fears. Seeing is about expanding the circle of people whom we see as a part of our journey, to love beyond ourselves by recognizing that we may have differences, but we are connected by the fact that we are human, and we are, every one of us, created in the image of God. We do not have to love and agree with people with whom we disagree, but we can see them as we would hope others see us too, as complex and multi-dimensional people.

May our seeing at this High Holy Day season help us see the good in ourselves and the good in other people. May we see ourselves in the mirror with generosity and kindness. And may we greet each other in the hallways of our community with a generous smile, a listening ear, a warm embrace, and a kind heart as we celebrate that our community is made whole through seeing ourselves and one another more fully.

TEMPLE BETH EL

Consistent Jews

By Rabbi Chanach Oppenheim, Charlotte Torah Center

If you were asked to choose one verse that summarizes the entire Torah, what would it be?

A fascinating Midrash brings a four-way dispute.

Ben Azzai says it's the verse describing the creation of humanity. Ben Zoma says it's Shema Yisrael . Ben Nanas says it's love your neighbor as yourself. Shimon ben Pazi says it's you shall offer one lamb in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. (Numbers 28:4)

Which would you choose? Loving your neighbor or Shema are pretty safe guesses, and Ben Azzai at least links it back to the creation of humanity, but what's going on with Shimon ben Pazi? Remarkably the Midrash concludes that Shimon ben Pazi's is the best option. How are we to understand the daily lamb offering as encompassing the entire Torah?

Maharal (16th century Prague) explained that although it's important to spend time on passionate spiritual endeavors, the recipe for being a robust Jew and creating vibrant Jewish communities involves a different ingredient. Only through consistent and continuous meaningful Jewish engagement, day in and day out, can we become ideal Jews through affecting real change in ourselves. The entire Torah can be summarized by saying that consistency is the most important trait for a Jew, the rest is commentary. Consistently in doing Judaism is what it's all about.

The non-spectacular nature of this verse is exactly what renders it significant. It does not describe any miraculous historical events, nor moments of spiritual ecstasy. But by continuing to bring the same offering, twice every single day, the Jew expresses commitment with conviction. Shimon ben Pazi is suggesting that dedication, consistency and continuity are the most fundamental elements in Torah life.

While the daily offering is indicative of the value of consistent routine, the inherent danger of consistency is the apathy that can lie beneath the surface of routine — the capacity of a person to become so used to a task that it becomes mundane and complacency sets in.

Passion is the opposite extreme. Imagine witnessing the event at Sinai, which represents the height of inspiration, excitement and spirituality for the Jews at that time. Right after the verse about the daily offering, there is a reference to Mount Sinai, the epitome of Jewish inspiration and passion, is juxtaposed with the daily offering — the epitome of routine. It is precisely this juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory religious experiences that highlights the balance we are required to strike. While in order to integrate Judaism within our daily lives we must be persistent in being consistent, at the same time, in order to stave off the real risks of complacency, we must seek the moments of passion and inspiration.

Here's an example of how to apply this idea in other aspects of our lives. Imagine a person with a severe anger problem. No workshop or weekend retreat can – on its own — effect a lasting change in that person; thinking otherwise is a delusion. He might have been inspired to work on his anger and he can learn tools and techniques but only long-term consistent practice of them will make a difference.

Let's apply the passion vs. routine concept to long-term, meaningful relationships. It's easy for a bride and groom to gaze at one another on their wedding day lovingly. It's wonderful to celebrate anniversaries. But true love and dedication is manifest in day-to-day mundane matters — even after a quarrel — even when you're not feeling it. Buying in completely in a relationship — even on mundane days — is what keeps the relationship going and is a good indicator of the emotional functional ability of it.

We don't have sacrifices today but certain messages are eternal. Constancy is the key to any relationship, whether it's with G-d or someone you love. But we also need the sweetness and the spark. Sitting with family and friends at the Passover Seder or enjoying the novelty and comradery of sitting in the Sukkah or staying up all night on Shavuot are special occasions giving us sparks of meaningful and joyous connection to being Jewish, but it's the daily, ongoing offerings that represent our commitment, even in the inevitable moments that we don't feel particularly inspired.

The High Holidays are a time Jews participate in timeless prayers, tunes, and rituals in the synagogue — rituals that make many feel safe, nostalgic, and connected to our community. This year, let's think of how we can be consistent with our Jewishness throughout the year — e.g, committing to listen to a weekly Jewish podcast that has meaning for you. Whatever it is, the main thing is to do something regularly that keeps you connected to your roots, roots which run deep.

May you have a sweet, healthy, and happy New Year.

CHARLOTTE Torah CENTER

FROM THE BIMAH

The Three "T"s

"On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed,
And on Yom Kippur it is sealed:
How many shall pass away
and how many shall be born,
Who shall live and who shall die,
Who shall reach the end of his days
and who shall not,
Who shall perish by water and who by fire,
Who by sword and who by wild beast,
Who by famine and who by thirst…" (U'Netaneh Tokef)

As I rabbi I hear a lot of complaints about Judaism from people. One of the biggest complaints I have heard over the years is how many Jews feel that they are not able to access Judaism, due in part, to not understanding Hebrew or never having learned what the High Holy Days are about. This year, I have decided to highlight pieces of the prayer, "U'Netaneh Tokef" in order to infuse meaning accompanied by action — something we can all take part in to observe the High Holy Days. I am sure many of you know the above prayer.

This year, instead of shaking in fear about "who will live and who will die," our focus should be on the final verse of the prayer:"Repentace, prayer and charity avert the severity of the decree."

The power of the High Holy Days truly hits me only the moment I hear the sobering words of the prayer, U'Netaneh Tokef, specifically when the congregation recites the above verses together in one voice. My childhood High Holy Day memories bubble up at me. I remember sitting among hundreds upon hundreds of other Jews, shielded between my parents. I am still often hit by the words of this prayer.

The rest of the year, I saw these same congregants at non-religious events, in the grocery store, at drop offs for youth programs and Hebrew school; yet on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I saw everyone in a different light. On these Awesome Days, I was able to see everyone as very religious Jews, committed to Jewish life and to the community as a whole. Even families who never came to shul, I saw them arrive early in the morning with all of their Jewish ritual garb. I never saw this as hypocritical. Attending the High Holy Days was important, for everyone. The Holy Days themselves seemed to have the power to transform us.

The prayers, themselves, even seem to suggest that God is a merciful God, forgiving our failed actions by teaching us through this prayer that "Three things avert the severity of the decree, and they are prayer, charity, and repentance." (Genesis Rabba 44:12)

In Hebrew it sounds even more poetic: "u'teshuva,u't'filah, u'tzedakah. The Three "T's":
Teshuva, (repentance)
Tefillah (Prayer)
Tzedakah (Charity)

These actions not only have the power to turn over God's decree, I would argue that they have the potential to transform us. Putting this practice together with hearing the blasts of the shofar, can elevate your High Holy Days experience. The word, "shofar" comes from the Hebrew word meaning, "to improve."

So many Jews attend High Holy Days services without realizing how potentially transformative they can be. Once we acknowledge how we have fallen short of our goals this past year, we can begin the New Year by putting the U'Netaneh Tokef prayer into practice. The shofar blasts should be a wake-up call for us, a reminder to us to activate the Three T's. Although I am wholeheartedly against assigning someone's illness or death to their actions, performing the actions of repentance, Prayer and charity can only lead to an improvement in all of our lives.

I hope that this year, when you recite the U'Netaneh Tokefprayer, you will feel deeply close to your fellow Jews and most of all that the final verse will move you to transform your lives, which is the true message of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Shana tova tikateivu. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for a good year ahead. May you transform your lives with repentance, prayer and charity. May it be God's will.

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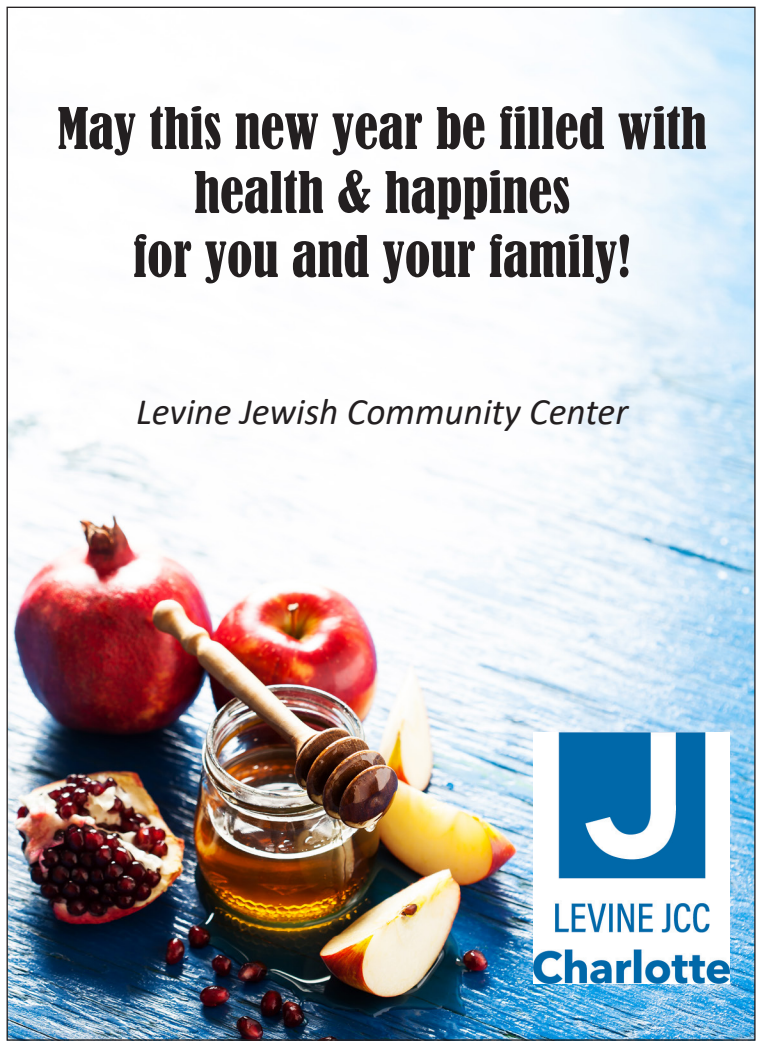


FROM THE BIMAH

Hineini: A Personal Prayer for the Holidays and Every Day

By Rabbi Michael Wolk, Temple Israel

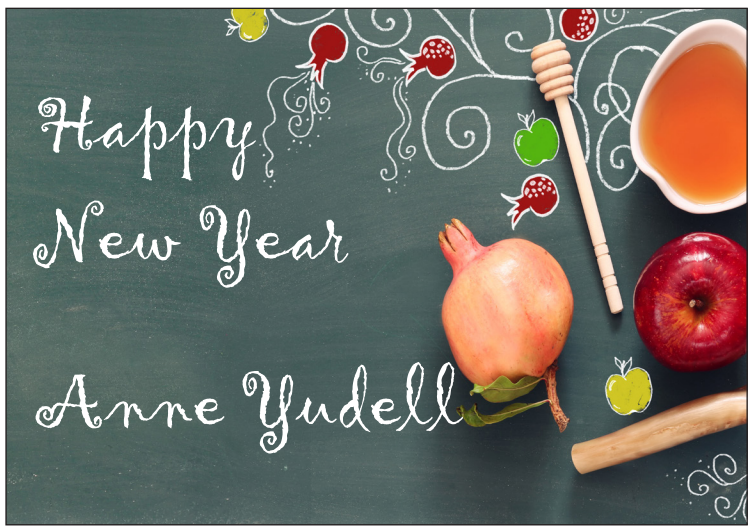
One of the most dramatic prayers on the High Holidays is the Hineini meditation that the cantor chants before beginning the Musaf service. While almost every prayer in the book is written in the plural because we approach God as a community, this prayer is written in the singular. It opens, "*Here I am impoverished in deeds.*" Most prayers are intended to be sung or recited by everyone in the room, but this prayer is just for the one person in each community who is tasked with leading the service. In Hebrew one term for the prayer leader is the Shaliach Tzibur or the messenger of the community because that person is taking the prayers of the community, channeling them with his or her own voice, and delivering them to God. It is an incredible religious responsibility, but practically it is also quite a daunting task. More Jews attend Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services than any other service of the year and they come expecting a peak experience. The prayers are more complex than on a regular Shabbat and the music is much ornate. That's why the cantor takes a moment to spiritually prepare before starting.

Throughout the prayer the cantor expresses his or her insecurity in the face of this challenge. "I have come to plead before You on behalf of Your people Israel who sent me, although I am not fit nor worthy for the task… Do not blame them for my transgressions." A prayer leader who takes this prayer seriously comes to the bimah with a sense of humility. The most important word however, is the very first word – Hineini. Here I am. The prayer leader is well aware of his or her shortcomings, but nevertheless opens the service with the statement that I am here. That takes courage.

Over the course of a year we each have our own Hineini moments. Those are the times when we are faced with a new challenge. Maybe we are asked to do something difficult at work. Maybe our families are facing new challenges. Maybe a friend is in a crisis. Maybe we received a bad medical diagnosis. A person facing any of these moments is facing a situation where there is no clear way forward. At those moments, the most important thing that you can say is Hineini. Showing up is the most important thing that you can do even if you do not know how to solve the problem. We show up for the people in our lives and for the commitments that we take on.

As we get ready for the new Jewish year of 5783, know when is it important for you to say Hineini.

temple israel



L'Shanah Tova

May the New Year of 5783 fill your lives and our world with health, joy, and peace.

QUEENS UNIVERSITY of CHARLOTTE
Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center

L'Shana Tova

Vintner Wine Market wishes everyone a happy and healthy New Year

L'Shanah Tovah

L'shanah Tovah from the Jewish Community Refugee Initiative.
We hope for a good year to come not only for ourselves and our families, but also for all those fleeing persecution in search of safety and freedom.

JCRI Jewish Community Refugee Initiative CHARLOTTE

L'SHANAH TOVAH

MAY THIS NEW YEAR BE FILLED WITH HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND SWEET MOMENTS

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