

The Kibbitzer

Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon
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Rosh Hashanah Painting
by Evelina Beketova

Table of Contents

Page 1	Cover Page
Page 2	Table of Contents
Page 3	Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks - Prayer as Partnership
Page 4	The President's Corner - Steve Billor
Page 5	Building and Grounds - Gabe Lifschitz
Page 6	Shabbat Services Leaders/Food Drive
Page 7	Candle Lighting Times/Onegs
Page 8	Shabbat Shoftim
Page 9	Shabbat Shoftim D'var Torah
Page 10	Congregation Beth Shalom
Page 11	Rosh Hashanah Sayings and Tot Shabbat
Page 12	Our Congregation
Page 13	Connecting with friends....
Page 14	Connecting with friends, page 2
Page 15	Rosh Hashanah Customs
Page 16	Rosh Hashanah Customs page 2
Page 17	It's Rosh Hashanah. Rest from Worry
Page 18	Two Stories - Wise Men of Chelm
Page 19	Jewish Book Festival
Page 20	Our Advertisers
Page 21	Time for a Nosh - Apple Babka
Page 22	High Holy Day Calendar
Page 23	September Calendar



Shofar, Brand: Nechama Fine Art

This article, by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, is as pertinent today as when he originally wrote it in 2003.



Prayer as Partnership

By Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
Rosh Hashanah 5764/2003

We enter the New Year, this year as last, poised between hope and fear. The situation in Israel remains uncertain. Elsewhere, antisemitism is on the rise. The international arena is still tense: neither the campaigns in Afghanistan nor Iraq have not ended the threat of terror of which the West has been aware since the attack on the World Trade Center two years ago. Individually, we live in an age of rapid and unpredictable change. In retrospect, ours will be called the Age of Uncertainty. Jews, however, are no strangers to uncertainty: our ancestors lived with it and still found themselves able to celebrate life. That in no small measure was due to the strength they gained through prayer, especially during the *Yamim Nora'im* (*Days of Awe*). What, though, is prayer?

Josephus, who lived in the first century C.E. and witnessed the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans, tells us that the Jewish world at that time was divided into three groups: the Sadducees, the Essenes and the Pharisees. They differed in their view of fate. The Sadducees believed that history was made by human beings. The Essenes believed the opposite, that what happens is the result of Divine providence, not human choice. The Pharisees, guardians of rabbinic Judaism – our Judaism – and the sole group whose beliefs survived, thought that both were true: fate is an interplay between heaven and earth, Divine decree and human choice. That is what gave the Pharisees their distinctive view of prayer.

Tefillah (*Prayer*) is where heaven and earth meet in the human soul, and something new is born. For without the faith expressed in prayer, fear would prevail. Would we have the same courage to build, create and take risks if we believed that ultimate reality was deaf to our prayers, blind to our fate? But Judaism said more: just as we have faith in God, so God has faith in us. He has invited us to become His “partners in the work of creation”. Prayer therefore is precisely that interaction between the infinite and the finite that, according to the Pharisaic sages long ago, shapes the course of our collective and individual lives. If we were Sadducees we would not need to pray. If we were Essenes, we would not need to do anything except pray. We would not need to act. Providence would do it for us. Both were wrong. We need to act, to do our share. God asks that of us. But when we act, we are not alone. If we have aligned our wills with His, God is with us.

So it was then. So it is now. Looking back on the birth of the State of Israel, indeed looking back on Jewish history as a whole, it is hard to disentangle the role of Providence and the acts and choices of individual Jews. In truth it is both. Jewish history – the most remarkable of any people on earth – is the story of God acting through human beings who acted because they had faith in Him. In Jewish history, as in our individual lives, heaven and earth, God and us, each play their part, in ways not always apparent at the time but which become clear in retrospect. Prayer is where heaven and earth meet and a new strength, greater than ourselves, is born.

May our prayers this year have a special depth and intensity. And may the Almighty hear our prayers, for ourselves and our families, for the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and for the world – and may He grant us health and fulfilment, blessing and peace. ■

The President's Corner



Steve

Shalom Everybody!

I am writing this article on August 13th, 2024. As I stated in last month's article, we had a surprising upheaval when Rabbi Lefkowitz gave us 28 days' notice on July 2nd and then left the congregation two weeks early without notice.

So, I have done the last few services as our Lay Leader and many of the other board members are filling in as well. Last Friday night, Neil Spindel covered for Sandy Santucci as our Cantorial Soloist. Neil and I laughed and said before we started the service that everybody would appreciate Sandy Santucci being our cantorial soloist more than ever. It was a fun night as we tried to measure up to Sandy.

As I have researched the D'Var Torah's for each week's service, it is amazing how the weekly portions can apply to what we are dealing with at CBS and in life. The portions for the last several weeks have dealt with the value and power of giving your word when committing to something and communal responsibilities, as well as knowing there are good times that come out of hardship and that we are better people for surviving through it. In a nutshell, I have watched our Board and our Congregation, come together and be closer than we ever have before. There are no arguments or disagreements as to what we need to achieve to come out better than we were before. Everybody is jumping in to help with our weekly successes. As I stated in last month's issue, I am so very thankful for our wonderful Board at CBS and its wonderful and giving members. I am so very proud to be a part of this congregation at this time in our history. I am so very excited about this new chapter in the life of CBS.

Another positive situation/story happening at CBS is that Neil Spindel and Lynn Kaler are working together to instruct our two B'nai Mitzvah students. We learned that our B'nai Mitzvah students were not receiving complete training under our earlier Rabbi. Neil and Lynn have created an in-depth lesson plan to educate them on our rich history and to learn how to read Hebrew for their upcoming B'nai Mitzvahs.

And most importantly, we are still reaching out to Rabbis to fill our gap as our spiritual leader. Beth Shalom has been around for over 20 years, and we have been in this position before as have other synagogues from time to time. With our strong Lay Leaders guiding our Shabbat services, we are moving on without skipping a beat.

We will keep everybody informed of our progress through our Shabbat services, e-blasts and my monthly article in The Kibbitzer.

I continue to invite you all to come to services and watch our "Lay Leaders" do their stuff.

Should anyone have any questions, concerns, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Steve Billor



Building and Grounds



Gabe Lifschitz

This month as we approach the high holidays, I write some words of appreciation to all of you who have contributed by either donating money, setting aside time to help keep the temple in good condition, or by helping with Shabbat services. In these challenging times, I appreciate all who are Lay leaders, or helping our next generation to learn about how to become attuned to Judaism.

You will read that I ask every month for help with the temple. The temple, just like your home, needs attention, only that it has more space, larger air conditioning units, fire safety systems, security, a wooded area, and a big lawn. Taking care of CBS is a mitzvah and every little bit you can you is greatly appreciated. We need help with handy skills like interior electrical work, patchwork for drywall, and plumbing. If you know someone who does work for you regularly, please send the name and contact information to: cbs-building@outlook.com

Some of the items we need to get fixed include:

1. Replace the exhaust fan motors in the bathrooms
2. Tear in the blue canvas awning by the wooden entrance doors
3. Drywall work to cover a hole in a bathroom

By the time this article is published in the Kibbitzer, it will be time to have a get-together. In conjunction with the observation of Labor Day, we welcome you to meet at the temple on the days below.

Sunday, September 1, 2024, starting at 1:00 PM

Monday, September 2, 2024, starting at 10:00 AM

- Clearing the large storage room of clutter and prepare items to decide whether to keep or throw away.
- Organizing the classrooms with chairs, binders, and items that do not belong in a classroom.
- Weather permitting
 - * Trimming bushes around the building.
 - * Removing and bundling twigs.
 - * Clearing around the driveway to include the yellow parking bumpers on the south side of the building.

Thank you

Gabe Lifschitz



Shabbat Services Leaders

Our congregation will continue to hold Shabbat services to ensure our members can attend and worship. Below are the Lay Leaders that will lead the Shabbat Services in conjunction with Sandy Santucci. This will continue through Rosh Hashanah while we retain a new Rabbi.

1. Any member (in good standing) can volunteer to do a lay leader Shabbat service.
2. Anyone who holds a lay leader service will be provided a Parashah for that week.
3. You can swap lay leader services with someone else who is willing to do it. You are responsible for ensuring there is no gap.

9/7/24	Dave Friedman - Shabbat morning service
9/13/24	Neil Spindel
9/20/24	Gabe Lifschitz
9/27/24	Steve Billor
10/2/24	Rosh Hashanah
10/3/24	Rosh Hashanah



Please bring your non-perishable foods and/or personal items in a bag to CBS. We will have large bags available for your convenience. There is a donation box in the lobby for your donation. We operate a food bank once a month to serve the community. Thank you for your support!

Candle Lighting Times

Candle Lighting Times

DATE	TIME	PARSHA
Friday, Sept 6	7:25 PM	Shoftim
Friday, Sept 13	7:17 PM	Ki Teitzei
Friday, Sept 20	7:09 PM	Ki Tavo
Friday, Sept 27	7:00 PM	Nitzavim-Vayeilech



Oneg Schedule

September Sponsors

There can be no joy without food and drink.

Talmud, Mo'eJ Katan

September 6	CBS Congregation	Please bring a dish to share
September 13	CBS Congregation	Please bring a dish to share
September 20	CBS Congregation	Please bring a dish to share
September 27	CBS Congregation	Please bring a dish to share

If you'd like to sponsor an oneg, please call

Marilyn Sobel at (813)727-1180 or nurseknitter@aol.com



Shabbat Shoftim

If you'd like to follow along on Shabbat Shoftim, I've provided the portions.

Feel free to print out this page and bring it with you to services!

6. And if a Levite comes from one of your cities out of all Israel where he sojourns, he may come whenever his soul desires, to the place the Lord will choose,

ו וְכִי־יָבֹא הַלֵּוִי מֵאֶחָד שְׁעָרֶיךָ מִכָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשֶׁר־הוּא גָר שָׁם וּבָא בְּכָל־אֹת גִּפְשׁוֹ
אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה:

7. and he may serve in the name of the Lord, his God, just like all his Levite brothers, who stand there before the Lord.

ז וְשָׁרַת בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו כְּכָל־אֶחָיו הַלְוִיִּם
הַעֲמֻדִים שָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

8. They shall eat equal portions, except what was sold by the forefathers.

ח חֶלֶק כְּחֶלֶק יֵאָכְלוּ לְבַד מִמִּכְרֵיו
עַל־הָאָבוֹת:

9. When you have come to the land the Lord, your God, is giving you, you shall not learn to do like the abominations of those nations.

ט כִּי אָתָּה בָּא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
נָתַן לָךְ לֹא־תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּתוֹעֵבַת הַגּוֹיִם
הָהֵם:

10. There shall not be found among you anyone who passes his son or daughter through fire, a soothsayer, a diviner of [auspicious] times, one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

י לֹא־יִמָּצֵא בְךָ מִעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ־וּבִתּוֹ בְּאֵשׁ קִסָּם
קְסָמִים מְעוֹנָן וּמְנַחֵשׁ וּמְכַשֵּׁף:

11. or a charmer, a pithom sorcerer, a yido'a sorcerer, or a necromancer.

יא וְחֹבֵר חֹבֵר וְשֹׂאֵל אוֹב וְיִדְעֹנֵי וְדַרְשֵׁי
אֶל־הַמֵּתִים:

12. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations, the Lord, your God is driving them out from before you.

יב כִּי־תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה וּבְגִלְלֵי
הַתּוֹעֵבַת הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹרִישׁ אוֹתָם
מִפְּנֵיךָ:

13. Be wholehearted with the Lord, your God.

יג תָּמִים תִּהְיֶה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

D'var Torah on Shoftim

By Rabbi David Saperstein

At Mount Si God called upon the Jewish people to be holy people. Partners with God in creating a world of Justice for all. In Parashat Shoftim, which means “Judges”, they're now on the banks of the Jordan, almost at the promised land when God tells the Israelites to appoint judges and police officers so they can begin to administer this Justice.

God's final instruction to them is among the Torah's most famous lines, “Tzedek, Tzedek, tirdof”, or “Justice, justice shall you pursue”. Why “Justice, justice shall you pursue?” The second “justice” must have some meaning. Some say “justice” is repeated for emphasis, to teach that pursuing Justice is among the most important things a person can do. Others say that it's repeated to teach that we must be just in the way we go about our pursuit of Justice.

Here in Shoftim, we learn about five kinds of Justice.

Rules of Worship

First, God gives the Israelites a lengthy list of instructions about what they can and cannot do when they worship. They can't plant a tree or build a monument near God's Altar and they aren't allowed to sacrifice any animal that has a blemish. Above all, they're warned not to worship idols or intentionally break God's law because the punishment is death.

Appointing of Kings

Addressing the second form of Justice, God tells the children of Israel that when they arrive in the promised land, if they want they can be like other nations around them and appoint a king. Criteria for qualified royalty are pretty strict. The king must be from their own Nation, and must not keep an excess of horses, wives, silver or gold. In addition, the king must write his own Torah scroll and read it regularly to remind him to follow its laws. He must rule fairly treating all people alike, no matter how rich or poor they are.

City of Refuge

For the third form of Justice, God tells the children of Israel to create Cities of Refuge in the promised land. If a person accidentally kills someone, he or she can flee to these cities and be safe from relatives of the dead who might seek revenge. But if someone intentionally commits murder and tries to escape into the City of Refuge, the Elders of that City are to send him or her directly into the hands of the vengeful family.

Witness

Carrying on with the theme of crime, the fourth part of Parasha Shoftim covers witnesses and testimony. In order for Testimony to be valid, two witnesses must give the exact same testimony. If it is discovered that two witnesses got together to make up false testimony, the Torah says to rid the city of that evil. In this case to kick out the false Witnesses. In another famous line, the Israelites are told not to have compassion for them - a life for a life, an eye for an eye and so on to scare the daylights out of others who might have been considering providing false testimony of their own.

Rules of Warfare

The fifth and final form of justice is about the rules of warfare. God tries to comfort the Israelites telling them not to be fearful or faint-hearted when they go out to war, even if they are outnumbered by their enemies. Easier said than done, but officers were also to protect the lives of soldiers who had a lot to lose, or a lot of living left to do. They were to tell their armies whoever has built a new house but hasn't lived in it yet, go home. Whoever has planted a vineyard and hasn't picked the fruit yet, you go home. Whoever is engaged to a woman but hasn't married her yet, you can go home too.

Conclusion

For 3,000 years the command “Justice, justice shall you pursue”, has defined who the Jewish people are and what they're about. This is especially true today in the face of the critical need to ensure Justice on issues like environmental devastation, economic injustice, genocidal activity around the globe. This call warns us we dare not wait for opportunities to do justice but rather must act assertively to address the great moral issues of our time. That is our heritage, may we prove worthy.

Congregation Beth Shalom

Shabbat Services

Can't make it to services? Join us online with a live feed from Zoom or Facebook!

Zoom Link:

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89710744448?
pwd=dkpTR2RFcGtNzdzVFc1Uk5wMFpiQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89710744448?pwd=dkpTR2RFcGtNzdzVFc1Uk5wMFpiQT09)**

Meeting ID: 897 1074 4448

Passcode: 721348

Facebook Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BethShalomBrandon/>

Find the Mishkan Tefilla (Siddur):

**[https://www.ccarnet.org/publications/mishkantfilahforshabbat/?
fbclid=IwAR2sT9TxlbCvAT_VGvYArkHVRfMZTkvxVuSjKSXodlExMFCl7LWOACMzWA](https://www.ccarnet.org/publications/mishkantfilahforshabbat/?fbclid=IwAR2sT9TxlbCvAT_VGvYArkHVRfMZTkvxVuSjKSXodlExMFCl7LWOACMzWA)**

CBS Office Hours

The administrative office is currently open by appointment only. We can be reached by calling the office, (813)681-6547, email, cbsbrandon@outlook.com.

Although our hours are limited, we are always here for you. Do not hesitate to reach out with any needs, concerns, or questions.



Congregation Beth Shalom

provides a meaningful spiritual home for people of all ages and levels of knowledge, a place to learn and to question, a place to worship and to celebrate, and a place to find a community that cares.

We offer:

- ✧ Friday worship services at 7:00 PM
- ✧ Complete B'nai Mitzvah preparation
- ✧ Adult Education classes
- ✧ Communitywide events
- ✧ Community Food Bank

Advertise in the Kibbitzer!

Business Card \$20/month

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Becoming a partner in our congregation offers an opportunity for enduring friendships and a personal spiritual journey. A place in our Jewish community.

Members also have free access to many of our educational and entertainment events.

Call Judith Pliner (856) 8162174

Embrace radical amazement

Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement ... get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

Be a little bit better each day

May you replace ease with effort, may you find joy in always scaling new mountains, may you never rest from your pursuit of knowledge; may you desire to always be a little bit better than yesterday and a little bit less than tomorrow. That's what will make you a whole human being and bring you true happiness.

Rabbi Benjamin Blech



Friday, September 13th at 6:30 PM Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon will have a Tot Shabbat. Toddlers, preschoolers, and children in early grades of elementary school are all welcome. Cantorial Soloist, Sandy Santucci will be running the program.



Our Congregation

September

Yahrzeits



9/3	Richard	Glaser	Husband	Of	Barbara	Glaser
9/13	Elinor	Smith	Mother	Of	Caren	Magdovitz
9/14	Herman	Finkelstein	Father	Of	Mark	Finke
9/15	Isaac	Shienbaum	Father	Of	Marvin	Shienbaum
9/15	Morris	Brandwein	Father	Of	Anita	Clifford
9/20	Raymond	Sperry	Father	Of	Bruce	Sperry
9/21	Carl	Miller	Father	Of	Sheryl	Finke
9/23	Elwin	Saviet	Father	Of	Howard	Saviet
9/26	Eugene	Zazulia	Grandfather	Of	Iylene	Miller
9/28	Joseph	Plesur	Husband	Of	Carole	Plesur

Birthdays

9/15	Ruth	Lifschitz
9/25	Steven	Markoff
9/28	Alan	Weiss



Anniversaries

8/25	Carol Anne and Dave Friedman
9/27	Steven and Inna Markoff



Connecting with friends and staying happy, despite the challenges

As per the most recent UN happiness survey, Israelis are the fourth-happiest people out of 130 nations.

By Dr. Mike Gropper
July 20, 2024
Jerusalem Post

During the past 10 months, we as a nation have endured enormous stress that has not let up. Since Oct. 7, when the adrenaline rush began, there has been a constant sense of uncertainty and worry. After all, we are at war, one that is threatening the survival of our nation.

I guess I have always felt that we were at war in some way or another. This war is certainly different and, in fact, quite scary, and no one really knows where this is going and how things will look even one month from now. Will we be able to declare victory over Hamas, push back Hezbollah, and return people to their homes? Will our hostages come home? Will Iran start attacking again as it did the night of April 14, miraculously not harming us?

Yes, there are miracles, many of them.

So, with all of these threats to our national security, how is it that we generally are a happy people? This is borne out by the most recent happiness survey by the UN, which found Israel to be the fourth-happiest people out of 130 nations.

An outsider would declare that this finding is impossible, and it can't be true. However, if you ask Israelis, they would most likely agree that in spite of everything, we are a happy country, filled with love for our people and our nation. Like the name of our national anthem "Hatikvah" suggests, we never lose hope. And, although the happiness rating mentioned above was listed in 2022, the general facts that are the bases for this high rating are still very much intact.

There are many explanations in the UN study as to why certain nations are happier than others. Certainly, for Israel there are many reasons. I have decided to focus my attention on the sense of community, friendship, and resilience. It's true that at this time Israel is facing unique challenges, yet the resilience and sense of community among its people contribute to its happiness. Let's explore some aspects of why Israelis remain positive even in difficult times.

Shared purpose and unity

Israelis often come together during national holidays, celebrations, and moments of crisis. The sense of unity and shared purpose fosters a strong bond among citizens.

Serving in the army is a common experience, creating connections that transcend backgrounds and social status. Youth groups provide a strong friendship base and unifying experience for young people and foster the value of friendship.

Community and 'hevra'

The Hebrew term "hevra" encapsulates the values of friendship and community. Israelis prioritize relationships with family, friends, and neighbors.

Whether through family gatherings, Shabbat dinners, or informal get-togethers, these connections provide emotional support.

Relationships formed in the army or Sherut Leumi (National Service) foster strong bonds because these are powerful experiences, and these bonds remain with many Israelis throughout life.

Aliyah

People who have moved to Israel often find themselves with others going through the same things. Very often, younger people and/or families connect to people having similar experiences and share the trials and tribulations of moving to a new country.

My wife and I certainly went through this in Haifa, where we began, and we became very good friends with other English speakers, forming our own friendship and support community. Many years later, we still maintain many of these friendships.

Small country, strong bonds

Israel's small size means that events – both joyful and tragic – affect almost everyone. The interconnectedness creates a sense of shared destiny.

Whether celebrating a national achievement or mourning a loss, Israelis stand together.

Miracles and gratitude

The recognition of miracles, both large and small, contributes to a positive outlook. Gratitude for life, freedom, and the ability to thrive despite challenges reinforces happiness. During the past 10 months my wife and I, like many other Israelis, were on call to help our children and our grandchildren, since some of our family members were directly involved in the war. It's easy to forget about yourself and your own needs.

Like many, we did our utmost to exercise and stay positive, and as therapists we have helped others to achieve the same. But during this crisis, we often neglected the need to get together with friends. Recently, we decided to take a break from family, and we invited a very special couple to our Shabbat dinner table. It was a wonderful evening, and my wife and I were very happy we did it.

The evening was a reminder of the importance of connecting with friends even during the difficulties we are all facing at this time. No doubt, maintaining friendships is one of the major secrets of our happiness in Israel. My advice to others is to reach out and get together with friends – old ones and new ones. It will make you feel better and at least give you some control over an important emotional need during these tough days.



Rosh HaShanah Customs, Symbols, and Traditions

There are many wonderful customs, symbols, and traditions associated with Rosh HaShanah, the Jewish New Year, a time of prayer, self-reflection and repentance.

1. Preparing during the Hebrew month of Elul

Preparation for both Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur (the “Day of Atonement”) customarily begins a full month before the holidays themselves, with the entire Hebrew month of Elul dedicated to reflecting on the past year, and preparing to improving ourselves, our communities, and our world in the coming year. Learn more about how you can observe the month of Elul.

2. Celebrating at home

Jewish holidays begin in the evening, so many Jews begin Rosh HaShanah with a festive dinner with family or friends before attending services at a synagogue that night and again the following day.

On Erev Rosh HaShanah (the night the holiday begins), we recite the festival candle blessing and *Kiddush* (blessing over wine). We also recite *HaMotzi* (the blessing over bread) as usual, but the *challah* – the special twisted loaf Jews eat on Shabbat and other special occasions – is round, rather than the oblong loaf we eat during the rest of the year.

This custom has several explanations: One is that the round shape reflects the ongoing cycle of years and seasons; another is that, as our thoughts turn to repentance and self-improvement, the round *challah* reminds us that the opportunity for *t’shuvah*, is always available to us. Another common interpretation is that the round *challah* resembles a crown, symbolizing the sovereignty of God – a common theme throughout the High Holidays. Learn how to make a round *challah*.

Throughout the centuries, Jews have commonly eaten apples – as well as *challah*, grapes, and other fruits – dipped in honey, which symbolizes the hope for sweetness and blessings in the year ahead. Learn more about the history of this Ashkenazic tradition. Some families also enjoy a pomegranate as a treat before the meal because, according to legend, the number of seeds in the pomegranate reflects the number of good deeds you will do in the coming year.

3. Celebrating in the synagogue

Selichot refers to the special penitential prayers Jews recite throughout the High Holiday season. Depending on the Hebrew calendar, Reform congregations generally observe *Selichot* in the hours before midnight on the Saturday night a week or two prior to Rosh HaShanah. The service, often conducted by candlelight, is a solemn preparation for the upcoming 10 days of reflection and self-examination. Learn more about *Selichot* and preparing for the High Holidays.

We learn from the Torah (Leviticus 23:24-25) that Rosh HaShanah should be observed on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. Many Jews take off from work and school to attend services, and often all the seats in the sanctuary are filled. Adjacent spaces, such as a social hall or auditorium, if available, also may be filled. If a congregation’s sanctuary isn’t large enough for all its members, High Holiday services may be held in a different location, such as a college auditorium, a hotel, or even a larger congregation whose services are also relocated elsewhere for the Days of Awe.

In recent years, a growing number of Reform congregations have adopted the practice of observing a second day of Rosh HaShanah. Conservative and Orthodox Jews in North America customarily observe two days of Rosh HaShanah, as do Jews in Israel, where stores, schools, and businesses close for the holiday.

Whether you observe one or two days of Rosh HaShanah, the holiday is known for the grand style of its prayers and rituals, including blowing the *shofar*, in the synagogue. The liturgy places special emphasis on prayers that highlight God’s sovereignty and judgment, along with our hope for God’s forgiveness. We repeatedly recite the penitential prayer *Avinu Malkeinu* on Rosh HaShanah and throughout the High Holiday season. It is customary to extend wishes for a good year to friends and family. In Hebrew, the simple form of the greeting is “*L’shanah tovah!*”



4. Reading the Torah

Torah selections for Rosh HaShanah include Genesis 21, which tells of the birth of Isaac, and Genesis 22:1-19, the story of the *Akeidah*, or “The Binding of Isaac.” In those Reform congregations which observe a second day of Rosh HaShanah, an alternate Torah reading, Genesis 1:1-2:3, the story of the creation of the world, is often read on the second day of the holiday. The Reform *machzor* offers an additional alternate Torah selection, Genesis 18:16-33, the story of Abraham’s arguing with God for justice of the innocent. The haftarah reading is from I Samuel and tells the story of Hannah. Alternate *Haftarah* readings include Isaiah 55:6-13, which urges us to “Seek the Eternal” and promises peace and joy, and Nehemiah 8:1-10, which tells the story of the public Torah reading on Rosh HaShanah in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

5. Blowing the shofar

Made from a ram’s horn, the *shofar* is one of the world’s oldest wind instruments and has long played an important role as a ritual object in Jewish life. Its curved, bent shape symbolizes our humility as we stand before God to assess and consider our actions and behaviors during the past year.

The *shofar* is sounded throughout the Days of Awe, beginning during the month of Elul as a reminder of the upcoming High Holidays, and ending when its blast marks the conclusion of the final service on Yom Kippur.

The most common explanation for blowing the *shofar* during the Rosh HaShanah service derives from the story of the *Akeidah* in Genesis 22, which we read on the holiday. According to the biblical story, Abraham substituted a ram for the boy, averting Isaac’s death. Although the key message focuses on Abraham’s faith and against human sacrifice, the story stands as one reason we blow a ram’s horn on Rosh HaShanah.

You’ll hear four different *shofar* “calls,” each with a unique name, during the High Holidays: *t’kiah* (one long blast), *sh’varim* (three short blasts), *t’ruah* (nine quick blasts) and *t’kiah g’dolah* (one very long blast). These sounds suggest different approaches to the annual accounting of our activities during the past year (*cheshbon hanefesh*), which we review during this season. The *shofar* blasts echo different rhythms and patterns in our daily lives. Watch this video to learn how to blow the *shofar*.

6. Performing Tashlich

Tashlich is a ceremony generally conducted on the first day of Rosh HaShanah in which we symbolically cast our sins into a moving body of water, such as a river, stream, or ocean. When done together with a synagogue community, this ritual usually is performed in the afternoon, and includes the recitation of verses from Micah and Psalms. According to Micah 7:19, “God will take us back in love; God will cover up our iniquities, You will hurl all our sins into the depths of the sea.” Watch this video to learn more about *Tashlich*.

This physical act inspires us to remember our actions, right our wrongs, and refocus ourselves for the New Year. Doing *Tashlich* with children is a wonderful teaching opportunity and a chance to enjoy some time outside together on this holy day. Customarily, bread has been used to represent our sins, but because it is not the most nutritional food for wildlife, some choose to cast stones, wood chips, or bird seed in place of bread. Learn more about performing this ritual in an environmentally friendly way.

Portions of this article were adapted from Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice, by Mark Washofsky.

ReformJudaism.org



It's Rosh Hashanah. Give Yourself a Rest From Worrying

By Diana Fersko, Senior Rabbi of The Village Temple and the author of "We Need to Talk About Antisemitism"

I'm a congregational rabbi and right now, I'm supposed to be thinking about Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. I'm supposed to be in a state of spiritual relaxation, eagerly anticipating hearing the sounds of our melodies and looking forward to seeing the warm faces of my congregants. But instead, like so many Jewish leaders, I'm thinking about security. Instead of thinking about liturgy, I have to think about lockdown doors. Instead of thinking about prayer, I have to think about private security guards. During this time of unprecedented antisemitism in America, Jews more and more often feel the need to obsess about physical safety—just for the act of being Jewish—and it's heartbreaking.

These thoughts about how to secure the Jewish people can be pervasive and unyielding. They are a financial and emotional weight that hover over us. And the concerns are justified. At least 49 synagogues have been evacuated in the last 2 months due to bomb threats. In 2022, Anti-Defamation League (ADL) tabulated 3,697 antisemitic incidents throughout the United States—a 36% increase from the 2,717 incidents tabulated in 2021. This is the highest number on record since the ADL began tracking antisemitic incidents in 1979. This makes it nearly impossible to compartmentalize feelings of anxiety and stress or push them aside even for a brief while.

But, we can't allow ourselves to be consumed by distress either. As we approach the Jewish new year, instead of simply ceding our sacred time to worry and fear, this is the exact season to do the one thing that true antisemites deplore: to be boldly, joyously, outwardly Jewish. This year at the High Holidays, instead of being trepidatious, I'll have a little extra pep in my step. I won't let antisemitism dampen this sacred period, and neither should the Jewish people.

Afterall, one good way to fight antisemitism is to do something Jewish—publicly. Consider this outward pride in your identity as an act of subversion against the growing temptation to hide our Jewish selves. Go out into this world and wear your Jewish star necklace, show off your chai tattoo, or wear your kippah on the street. Tell people you are Jewish or that you are raising a Jewish family. Use words like "mishegas," "yalla," "tzedakah," "l'chaim," or "tzotche," even when you are around non-Jews. Stand with others outside and listen to the sound of the shofar as we perform our ritual of repentance. The threat of antisemitism has the power to push our Judaism beneath the surface; this year, we should rebel and raise the flag of Judaism even higher. This is how we will find our power—and our peace.

For me, I find this sense of peace by worshipping shoulder to shoulder with my community. Instead of stress, I notice all the good around me. I notice that when a congregant loses their place in the prayerbook, someone else helps them find it. I notice one mother offering to hold another mother's baby, just to give her a minute break. I notice that when an elderly person can't easily climb the stairs, several others quickly jump up to help. And when I notice all of these good things, at least for a moment, my mind is transported away from all of the worries and towards contentment and calm.

I remember several years ago I saw a bomb-sniffing dog comb through the sanctuary in my synagogue for the very first time. It broke my heart, because there is a prohibition against dogs entering a sanctuary—and because I knew it was necessary and I was glad it was there. Violent antisemitism is real, and we need to protect ourselves. And so many Jewish communities have done just that—we've consulted with security professionals, we've coordinated with our local police departments, we've undergone multiple security trainings, and we've implemented physical interventions to keep our community secure. But we can't let security overwhelm the free and full expression of our religious rites.



The Wise Men of Chelm

The Chelmites and the Moon

As Yom Kippur approached, the people of Chelm noticed that the moon was missing from the sky. They were worried because they believed the moon's light was essential for their prayers to reach heaven. The wise men of Chelm gathered to solve this problem.

After much debate, they decided to send a delegation to the neighboring village to borrow their moon. The delegation set out with a large sack, confident they could capture the moon and bring it back to Chelm. When they arrived, they saw the moon shining brightly in the sky. They climbed a tall tree, held the sack open, and waited for the moon to fall in.

Hours passed, and the moon did not budge. Finally, one of the Chelmites had an idea. "Let's fill the sack with water from the river. The moon's reflection will be in the water, and we can carry it back to Chelm!" They filled the sack with water, saw the moon's reflection, and triumphantly returned home.

When they opened the sack in Chelm, the water spilled out, and the moon was gone. The wise men scratched their heads, puzzled by the moon's disappearance. They concluded that the moon must have escaped back to the sky, and they were grateful for its brief visit. From then on, they celebrated Yom Kippur with even greater fervor, thankful for the moon's light, however fleeting.



The Chelm Synagogue's New Roof

One year, just before Rosh Hashanah, the roof of the Chelm synagogue began to leak. The villagers were concerned that the rain would ruin their holiday prayers. The wise men of Chelm convened to find a solution.

After much discussion, they decided to build a new roof. However, they realized they had no materials. One of the wise men suggested they use the wood from the old roof to build the new one. The others agreed, and they set to work dismantling the old roof.

As they removed the last plank, they realized they had no roof at all. The wise men were stumped until one of them had a brilliant idea. "Let's build the new roof on the ground first, then lift it up and place it on the synagogue!" They all agreed this was a perfect plan.

They built the new roof on the ground, but when they tried to lift it, it was too heavy. The wise men scratched their heads, trying to figure out what went wrong. Finally, they decided to pray for a miracle. As they prayed, a strong wind blew through the village, lifting the roof and placing it perfectly on the synagogue.

The villagers were amazed and celebrated Rosh Hashanah with joy, believing their prayers had been answered. From that day on, they remembered the lesson that sometimes, faith and a little bit of foolishness can lead to unexpected miracles.

Jewish Book Festival

Wednesday, September 25

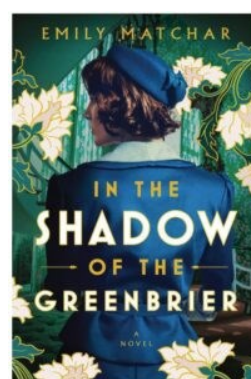
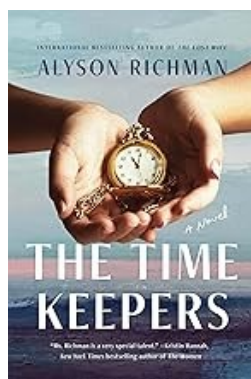
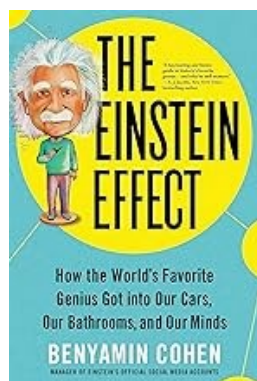
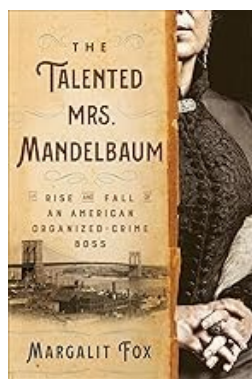
“We are pleased to be bringing to the Tampa Bay community some of the top Jewish authors in the country, both as part of a festival in September and in author conversations in our Zoom-In Book Club. We urge everyone to come to our programs, to learn, to understand, and to come together, through books,” said Tampa JCCs & Federation Arts and Culture Director Brandy Gold.

The festival begins with author, Margalit Fox who recently published, “The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum: The rise and fall of an American organized-crime boss.” You have the opportunity to meet Ms. Fox and discuss her book on Wednesday, September 25 at 7:00 PM.

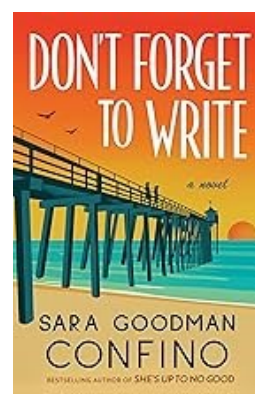
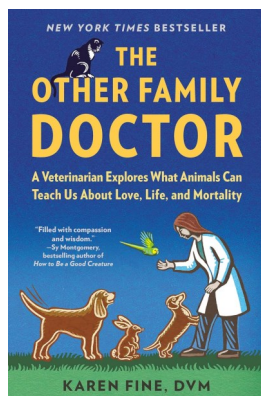
There will be both in person and zoom opportunities to meet several other authors. In addition, following the kick-off weekend, there will be a Zoom-In Book Club featuring monthly virtual meetings with authors from January through May.

For a complete list of books and other details, visit JewishTampa.com/Bookfest. For the Zoom-In Book Club, visit JewishTampa.com/BookClub.

Read the book, meet the authors!



Zoom-In Book Club



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Time for a Nosh

Apple Pie Babka



Dough:

3 cups (360g) AP flour
2 tablespoons (14g) nonfat dry milk
2 teaspoons instant yeast
1/4 cup (50g) granulated sugar
1 1/4 teaspoon (8 gms) table salt
1/2 to 2/3 cup (113g to 149g) water, lukewarm
1 large egg
5 tablespoons (71g) unsalted butter, room temp.
1 tablespoon boiled cider*

Filling:

1/2 cup (106g) brown sugar, packed
1 tablespoon apple pie spice
1 tablespoon instant ClearJel**
4 tablespoons (57g) unsalted butter, melted
1 tablespoon boiled cider*
3/4 cup (85g) apples, grated
1/2 cup (57g) diced pecans or walnuts, toasted

Topping:

1 large egg, beaten w/pinch of salt (egg wash)
coarse sparkling sugar, for sprinkling

* Can buy online at Amazon or King Arthur. You could also substitute apple juice.

** Instant ClearJel is a thickener used in pie fillings. You can buy this at your local grocery store.

To make the dough: Stir together the dough ingredients, starting with the lesser amount of water; mix until combined, adding more water if the dough feels dry.

Cover the bowl and let rest for 20 minutes. Then, mix and knead until it's soft and smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover, and let rise for about 1 1/2 to 2 hours, until puffy.

Filling: While the dough is rising, combine the sugar, cinnamon, and ClearJel. Stir in the butter, boiled cider, and apples.

Shaping: On a lightly floured sheet of parchment, roll the dough out to a 11" x 17" rectangle. Spread the filling over the dough, leaving a 1" border bare on all sides. Scatter the nuts evenly over the filling.

Starting with a short end, roll the dough gently into a log, then pinch the seam and ends to seal.

Cut the dough in half lengthwise. Keep the cut sides facing up while you twist the two pieces together, then tuck the ends underneath. Place the loaf in a greased 9" x 5" pan.

Cover and let rise until the loaf is 1" above the rim of the pan, 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 hours.

Toward the end of the rise, preheat the oven to 350°F. When ready to bake, uncover, brush lightly with the egg wash, and sprinkle with sparkling sugar.

Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, tenting with foil for the final 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and loosen the edges with a heatproof spatula. Cool for 10", then turn out of the pan onto a rack to cool completely.

High Holy Day Calendar

Selichot Saturday, September 28
7:00 PM

Erev Rosh Hashanah
Begins sunset of Services Wednesday, October 2
7:00 PM

Rosh Hashanah
First Day Thursday, October 3
Services 10:00 AM
Tashlich To follow - 11:45 AM
Location Brandon Parkway
Lunch 12:30 PM
Location Longhorn

Rosh Hashanah
Second Day Friday, October 4
Services 10:00 AM
Lunch to follow Go out to brunch

Memorial Service Sunday, October 6
Hillsborough Memorial Gardens 10:00 AM

Kol Nidre
Begins sunset of Services Friday, October 11
7:00 PM

Yom Kippur Saturday, October 12
Services 10:00 AM
Yizkor Memorial Service 11:00 AM
Children's Service 3:30 PM
Afternoon Service 4:00 PM

Break the Fast To follow Ne'ilah

Build the Sukkah To be determined



Annual Memorial Service

It is customary during the High Holy Days to visit your loved ones at the cemetery. Please join your CBS Family on Sunday, October 6th, at 10:00 AM at the Hillsboro Memorial Cemetery. There will be a brunch following the service in the main building.



September 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Ex Com Mtg 6:30 PM Board Mtg 7:00 PM	4	5 Hebrew Lessons 6:30 PM	6 	7 Shabbat Morning Service 10:00 AM 
8	9	10	11	12 Hebrew Lessons 6:30 PM	13 Tot Shabbat 6:30 PM Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 PM 	14
15	16	17	18	19 Hebrew Lessons 6:30 PM	20 Erev Shabbat Service 7:00 PM 	21
22	23	24	25	26 Hebrew Lessons 6:30 PM	27 Erev Shabbat Selichot Service 7:00 PM 	28
29	30	1 October	2 Erev Rosh Hashanah Service 7:00 PM  	3 Rosh Hashanah Service 10:00 AM Out to Lunch!  	4 Rosh Hashanah Service 10:00 AM Out to Lunch!  	5