



HIGH HOLY DAYS 2024 | 5785

ROSH HASHANAH
ראש השנה

Service & Enrichment

* Materials *



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Dear Friends,

These may be the most consequential High Holy Days of our lives, and certainly so since the end of World War II. We begin the new Jewish year deeply aware.

These are complicated and difficult days for us, for Israel, for the Jewish people, and for the world. Reflecting on our challenges, opportunities, and hopes, we desire to find meaning for our lives along with spiritual, personal, and communal strength.

Our sacred task during these Days of Awe is to renew our Jewish visions for life seeking affirmation, bringing devotion, feeling compassion, and learning resilience.

We hope for this New Year no differently than before. May we discover goodness and gladness, strength for what challenges us, stamina for what we must still endure, success in our strivings, and peace for our lives and our world.

Thank you for being a vital part of our synagogue family. Your participation helps create the mood we all desire to feel this year. May it be a sweet and good New Year for us all.

L'Shanah Tovah!
Rabbi Ron Shulman
Rabbi Avi Libman



Dear Fellow Members of Congregation Beth El,

As we approach the High Holidays, I find myself reflecting deeply on the year that has passed. It is with immense gratitude and humility that I write to you as the newly appointed President of Congregation Beth El. Being entrusted with this role by you, is an honor I do not take lightly, and I want to express my heartfelt thanks for your trust and support.

This past year has been one of extraordinary challenges. The horrors of October 7th and the ongoing anguish for those held hostage have weighed heavily on all of us. As we continue to share in the fatigue, anxiety, and heartbreak with our brothers and sisters in Israel, we are also confronted with serious concerns about the rise of antisemitism here in America.

Personally, I have felt these anxieties deeply. Yet, I am striving to live by the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, who said, "Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement." I must admit that living with such amazement has been difficult in the face of so much horror and pain, but I am committed to renewing this sense of wonder and hope as we enter the High Holidays.

Despite the challenges, I am continually amazed by the strength and beauty of our community here at Beth El. Our remarkable members, our beautiful campus, and the countless hours of time and resources generously donated by those before us have made this place truly special. My vision for the year ahead is to acknowledge the concerns we hold for

Israel and for the future of our own country, especially as we face a divided nation with elections on the horizon.

Yet, my hope is that Beth El can serve as a refuge, a place where we can agree without being disagreeable, where we model the kind of world we wish to see beyond our walls. My wish this year is for everyone at Beth El to really get to know at least one new person, with the knowledge that friendships at Beth El can transform and deeply enrich our lives, regardless of our age or station. I also hope that each of us learns at least one piece of Jewish wisdom that we can apply to better our lives, and that everyone experiences at least one moment of amazement and awe from being together, starting with our High Holiday services ahead.

I want to extend my deepest thanks to our Rabbis, the staff, the Board, and all the volunteers who make our congregation thrive. And to each of you, thank you for being a part of Beth El and for enriching my life in ways beyond measure.

As we embark on this sacred journey together, I wish you and your loved ones a sweet, reflective, and healthy new year.

Shanah Tovah U'Metukah,

Cliff Boro
President, Congregation Beth El



Welcome

Welcome to these most sacred of days as we gather to celebrate Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. As we know them, the High Holy Days celebrate the role of the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. These Days of Awe are not a remembrance of history or our people's past. They are a celebration of the world's existence and our present lives.

Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are not about we – the Jewish people. They are about me, the moral me who must live in a meaningful way. On these days we each seek better understanding about the character and quality of our lives.

We also delight in joining together to welcome a new Jewish year for our lives. The warmth of our community's annual reunion, the spirit we feel sharing in our Jewish heritage, and the hopes we carry for a sweet New Year of goodness and well-being connect and inspire us.

Teshuvah

Teshuvah is our quest for growth of soul and character. Our turn inward toward change and renewal.

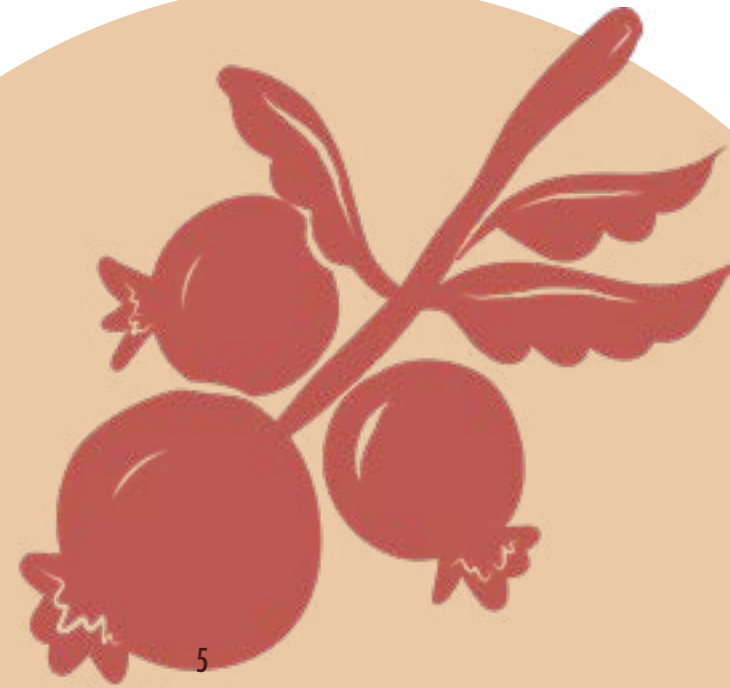
We are of two minds during the High Holy Days. We rejoice in the miracle of our lives, and we are humbly aware of our limitations and untaken opportunities. The days, weeks, months, years, and seasons of our lives are not significant by themselves. What we do, who we do it with, and how we live our days are what give time its meaning. This is why we appreciate and celebrate the High Holy Days.

On the High Holy Days, we think as if we have stopped time, at least spiritually and morally. We are not aging, nor are we getting any younger. Instead, we are pausing the clock to decide in our hearts and heads if what we want and need is more important to us than whatever may prevent us from accomplishing it.

Mahzor - Cycle

The Mahzor, the High Holy Day prayerbook contains words of formal prayer and reflective materials. Reading these words is not praying. We use the Mahzor to inspire our own thoughts and personal prayers. Mahzor means cycle. The cycle of the Jewish liturgical year. The recurring and familiar public patterns of High Holy Day services every year. The cycle of our personal lives. Our private recognition of all we've experienced and felt since last holding a Mahzor in our hands.

This cycle, this year, may we greet a New Year of health and well-being, goodness and happiness. Thank you for being a vital part of our synagogue community. Your presence and participation create a warm and joyous experience for us all. May it be a year of deliberation and understanding.



Rosh HaShanah Schedule of Services 2024 | 5785

We gather for High Holy Day Services inside the Stone Family Sanctuary or Jacobs Family Community Hall. Seating is also available outside on the Turk Family Plaza where services are broadcast via Livestream. Livestream of our services is also available at home for those not able to join us in person.



Erev Rosh HaShanah

Wednesday October 2, 6:15 p.m.

Stone Family Sanctuary

We greet each with hope as we begin a New Year for our lives and our experience of this world.

Chai 20s/30s New Year's Eve Gathering

Wednesday October 2, 7:30 p.m.

Join us for a social opportunity to connect with friends and community and enjoy new fruits in honor of the new year.

First Day Rosh HaShanah

Thursday October 3

Jacobs Family Community Hall

We elevate our spirits as we turn within to measure who we are.
We lift ourselves up as we turn without to understand the world.
We renew our souls as we consider our moral responsibilities before God.

9:00 a.m. *Shaharit: Morning Service*

9:45 a.m. *Torah Service*

10:30 a.m. *Ceremony for Sounding the Shofar*

Blessing our Generations and our Newborns

Sharing in our annual sweet welcome of new lives and new families in addition to celebrating our love and joy for all of our families and children.

11:00 a.m. *Musaf: Holy Day Service – Part I*

- *Hineni – Preparing Our Prayer*
- *Personal Prayers and Kavanot - Inspirations*
- *Silent Amidah & Reflective Prayer*

11:30 a.m. *Sermon*

12:00 p.m. *Musaf: Holy Day Service – Part II*

- *Repetition of Amidah*
- *Unetaneh Tokef: Sacred Motivation for the New Year*
- *Holy Day Prayer:*
- *Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Shofarot:*

Celebrating God, Torah, and the Jewish People

12:50 p.m. *Concluding Prayers, Mourner's Kaddish*

Tashlikh Service

Thursday October 3, 5:00 p.m.

Kellogg Park, La Jolla Shores, North Lawn

We gather to renew ourselves by symbolically casting away our sins, hearing the sound of the Shofar, and sharing song, reflection, and friendship. Bring bread and a Shofar, if you have one.

Second Day Rosh HaShanah

Friday October 4

Stone Family Sanctuary

Today is similar to yesterday, and different all together as each day ought to be. We share a more intimate High Holy Day synagogue experience.

9:00 a.m. Shaḥarit: Morning Service

...or for those who seek a different spiritual beginning today:

9:00 a.m. Jewish Mindfulness with Dr. Oded Shezifi
(Beit Midrash)

9:30 am Rosh HaShanah Hike with Dr. Bard Cosman
(Offsite)

9:45 a.m. Torah Service

10:30 a.m. Ceremony for Sounding the Shofar
Family Time and Blessings

Sharing holiday joy in our families and with our children.

11:00 a.m. Sermon

11:30 a.m. Musaf: Holy Day Service

- Amidah & Reflective Prayer
- Unetaneh Tokef: Sacred Motivation for the New Year
- Holy Day Prayer and Sounding the Shofar:
- Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Shofarot:

Celebrating God, Torah, and the Jewish People

11:30 a.m. Discussion with Rabbi Avi Libman
(Beit Midrash)

12:30 p.m. Concluding Prayers, Mourner's Kaddish

12:45 p.m. Holy Day Kiddush



High Holy Day Programs for Youth & Families

First Day Rosh HaShanah

Thursday October 3, 10:15 a.m.

Stone Family Sanctuary

We gather as a community of families, children, and teens before dividing into different age-appropriate experiences. We prepare for prayer, learning and a meaningful holy day through song and story. We will join the larger community to participate in the blessing of the generations. This special moment brings our entire community together.

Youth & Teen Services

11:00 a.m. in Various Campus Locations

On Rosh HaShanah we will explore the themes relevant to the New Year through prayer, group activities, age-appropriate discussions, games, and reflective moments. Rosh HaShanah presents an opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the future and explore our daily actions and responsibilities. In various locations our children will meet by Pre-K through Grade 1, Grades 2-6, and Grades 7-12.

High Holy Day Hangout for Teens

Youth Lounge, 11:45 a.m.

Teens in Grades 7-12 are encouraged to join the main service to support their friends reading Torah and participate in prayer. The Youth Lounge will also be open for teens who wish to spend time reflecting together in the spirit of the holiday.

Children's H^ugim-Holy Day Activities

12:00 noon in the Education Wing

Children are invited for a mid-day snack and a series of activities including song, art, stories, and play relevant to the themes of the holiday.

Second Day Rosh HaShanah

Friday October 4, 10:00 a.m.

Jacobs Family Community Hall

A family friendly service for all ages during which we sing, pray, and explore the themes of Rosh HaShanah. While this program is geared towards younger children, all are invited.

Family Time and Blessings

10:30 a.m. Sounding of the Shofar

Stone Family Sanctuary

Our children and their families join us to share blessings and lessons after we hear the sounds of the Shofar.

Children's H^ugim-Holy Day Activities

11:00 a.m. in the Children's Shul

Children are invited for a mid-day snack and a series of activities including song, art, stories, and play relevant to the themes of the holiday.



Mahzor Meanings and Meditations

Reflections to inspire and enhance our thoughts and prayer.
Reflections on the themes and ideas contained in the Mahzor.



Precious

It is beautifully precious that we come here. Called by our tradition, we honor our memories. We live out our Jewish lifestyles. We demonstrate our religious or spiritual feelings being present in a community of our people.

Here in our synagogue community, we manifest God's presence through the ritual we enact together and in the prayerful thoughts we each know in our hearts. Like few other places in our lives, this is a space in which we take seriously the ideas of Judaism. We explore. We engage.

We immerse ourselves in the on-going philosophical and theological conversation that is Jewish interpretation. Here we don't simplify. Rather, we amplify. Our desire is understanding. Our goal is meaning.

Here we are resolved that even more of life's blessings, goodness, and purpose may be ours to discover as we observe the unique sanctity of these Days of Awe. It is beautifully precious that we are here.

Kavanah: Prayerful Intent

Sustaining different levels of consciousness at the same time is the secret to successful prayer. Jewish prayer is the ability to be mindful and engaged with our many and varied thoughts while reading or skimming, chanting, or listening.

Don't confuse prayer with rote, mechanical reading and recitation. We want more from prayer. We also respect the generations before us who composed and created our formal prayers from their own inner sensations of inspiration and faith.

Whatever is on your mind while you are here is your personal prayer.

Prayer begins within each of us. Prayer pushes us beyond ourselves toward awareness of God and the actualization of our spiritual self. In the vast universe of existence, we are each infinitesimally small and remarkably significant. Prayer validates who we are and that we matter. Prayer reminds us of the ideal as we reflect on what's real.

Prayer both calms and excites us. Prayer brings order to the chaos of our emotions. Prayer nurtures our souls. Prayer challenges our consciences and ethics. Prayer connects each of us with one another in Jewish community and with the flow of life. Prayer unites our lives and daily concerns with the story, memories, and hopes of the Jewish People.

Prayer helps us both to celebrate and confront the ultimate meanings of existence. Prayer is an expression of our hearts' yearnings, our lives' concerns, and our personal joys. Prayer is boring only if our lives are dull.



A Rosh HaShanah Prayer for Our Families and Friends

On this precious day, gathered in God's presence, we give thanks for our families and friends. As a New Year begins, we rejoice in what we mean and bring to one another. We are grateful for the bonds of loyalty and affection which sustain us, and which keep us close to each other no matter how far apart we may be.

May we be modest in our demands of one another, but generous in our giving to each other. May we never measure how much love or encouragement we offer. May we never count the times we forgive. Rather, may we always be grateful that we have one another and that we are able to express our love in acts of kindness.

We pray for God's blessings in the lives of our families and friends. May we have health, happiness, contentment, and goodness in this New Year. Amen.

These Days of Holiness

Jacob S. Minkin

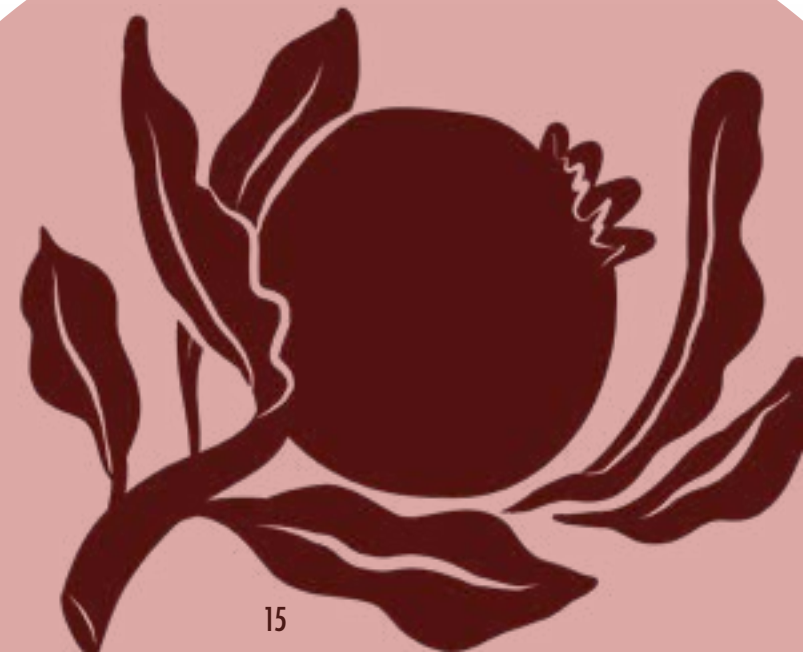
What in the swift flow of time is the coming and passing of a year that so much thought and attention should be given to it? What, indeed, is a year in the life and history of an ancient and eternal people like the Jews? Yet what Jew does not feel the beauty and warmth of Rosh HaShanah and the spiritual depth and meaning of Yom Kippur? On those holy days, casting aside worldly cares and thoughts, Jews repair to the house of God with infinite yearning in their hearts to mediate and refresh their souls in song and prayer.

There is an atmosphere of holiness on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur which is unique in the religious life of the Jewish people. They are the most superbly dramatized holidays of the year, captivating the imagination with their haunting beauty and magic influence. They are among the best known and universally honored holidays in the Jewish calendar. Our hearts long for the joy and comfort they supply. On these days, we Jews keenly feel a heightened sense of

awareness. We become aware of ourselves, our God, and of the ties that bind us to faith and people.

We Jews, with our utter faith in God, are not essentially a metaphysical people. But on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur all Jews direct their minds to the contemplation of their life, seeking to understand the springs of their actions, as they unashamedly lay bare before God and the full congregation their innermost thoughts and feelings. They search for the meaning of their existence and destiny.

A few hours in the house of God, a few prayers recited more or less devoutly, one or two sermons listened to more or less attentively – how can these fleeting hours be so replete with pious meaning and riches? To fathom this experience is to glimpse the human heart and mind which is outside of mere temporal reckoning. Within the dim depths of every human being there stirs a vague feeling for God, a reaching out of the spirit for something more lasting and secure than mere material and temporary joys. On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur we tap the sacred fount within us and loose the stream bringing peace and balm to our souls.



Unetaneh Tokef...Questions For Life

On Rosh HaShanah it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed.

Who will live and who will die?

I will.

I will live, and I will die.

Who will live out the limit of his or her days, and who will not?

Like every human being, I will live out the limit of my days, and it will be too soon.

Who will rest content and who will wander?

Who will be at peace and who will be troubled?

I will.

Who will be poor and who will be rich?

Who will be humbled and who will be exalted?

I will.

Like every human being, I will live each day as I must before I die.

Therefore...

On Rosh HaShanah let's consider and on Yom Kippur let's decide.

How we will live, not how might we die.

Who will change and who will be stubborn?

Who will try and who will give up?

Who will hope and who will fear?

Who will dream and who will not?

Who will hear and who will listen?

Who will be open and who will be closed:

to someone else's dignity, ideas, and reality?

Who will strive to do good and who will settle for being good?

Who will celebrate and who will grieve?

Who will learn and who will not ask?

On Rosh HaShanah let's consider and on Yom Kippur let's decide.

How we will live, not how we might die.

Who by love, and who by hate? Who with forgiveness, and who by holding a grudge? Who with family bonds, and who with family rivalries? Who by friendship, and who by loneliness? Who by inspiration, and who by cynicism? Who by honesty, and who by lies? Who by kindness, and who by callousness? Who by faith, and who by doubt? Who by giving help, and who by receiving help? Who by a generous attitude, and who by a stingy one? Who by confidence, and who by timidity? Who by humility, and who by arrogance?

On Rosh HaShanah let's consider and on Yom Kippur let's decide.

Not if we will die, but how we will live.

Malkhuyot: celebrating God's Sovereignty

The *Malkhuyot* segment of Musaf is comprised of Biblical verses celebrating God's Sovereignty in the universe.

We acknowledge God's sovereignty in order to define meaning for human life. Our identities form in contrast to God. We humbly acknowledge the limits of our power and control as human beings, even where we are strong. This helps us to find meaning. Each conscious choice we make and act we perform is significant and serves a purpose.

We pray we may daily appreciate the gift of our lives. May we use our abilities to bring love and kindness rather than pain or upset into our homes and neighborhoods, into our community and society. May our lives in this New Year demonstrate that through us God is sovereign in the world of our experiences.



The Sovereignty of God

God is the oneness
That spans the fathomless deeps of space
And the measureless eons of time,
Binding them together in act, as we do in thought.

God is the sameness
In the elemental substance of stars and planets,
Of this our earthly abode
And of all that it holds.
God is the unity
Of all that is, the uniformity of all that moves,
The rhythm of all things, and the nature of their interaction.

God's reality is life's mystery,
Enkindling inert matter
With inner drive and purpose.

God is the creative flame
That transfigures lifeless substance,
Leaping into every higher realm of being.
Brightening into the radiant glow of feeling
Till it turns into the white fire of thought.

God is in the faith
By which we overcome
The fear of loneliness, of helplessness,
of failure and of death.

God is in the hope
Which, like a shaft of light,
Cleaves the dark abysses
Of sin, of suffering, and of despair.

God is in the love
Which creates, protects, forgives,
God is the spirit
Which broods upon the chaos people have wrought,
Disturbing its static wrongs,
And stirring into life the formless beginnings
Of the new and better world.

Why Does My Life Matter?

We each get only a few years, some of us more some of us less,
to live fully and intensely each day and every moment,
which as they end become memories of how we lived.

We are born, and typically we die, against our will
through no conscious acts of our own.
Who we are of body, soul, and circumstance
we do not choose. Yet,
"Whether to be righteous or wicked, this choice is completely in every
person's hand to decide," teach our sages.

Each of us has something valuable to offer everyone else,
that others may see the world through our unique lenses.
No one of us sees it all,
no one of us can do it all.
We need each other to succeed and live well.
"Even as peoples' faces are not all alike, so too what they understand
about the world is not alike. Each person understands the world on his
or her own terms," teach our rabbis.

Life is the most precious gift we ever receive.
What we do with this gift makes us worthy of life's beauty and mystery.
Let's each make something of this gift.
Our lives are about more than our desires.

Our lives are about our destiny.
May we not collect experiences and enjoyments just for ourselves.

Drawing on all we encounter may we give something of ourselves to others.

Not anger, pain or hate. Kindness, empathy, and love.
Why does my life matter?
Because the gift of my life can be a present to the world.

Zikhronot: remembering God's presence in Jewish history

The *Zikhronot* segment of *Musaf* is comprised of Biblical verses remembering *God's Presence in the history of the Jewish people*.

We view history as the meeting place of God and humanity in order to derive meaning for human life. We look for importance in what we remember, or what happens, to remind ourselves of our values and ideals. We believe our efforts make a difference. We are God's partners in the workings of the world. This is our people's historic covenant with God. It is also our trust and obligation.

We pray we may daily give of ourselves to those around us. May our relationships with family and friends, associates and strangers reflect God's presence by our respect and demeanor toward others throughout this New Year.

Our memories are unique, unlike any other thoughts we hold. Memories are not ideas. Memories are images we see with our mind's eye and feelings we sense in our hearts and souls. Memories are not abstract. Memories are tangible bonds we share. Memories are uniquely ours. Mine unlike yours. Even of the same people or events, our personal memories are distinctive.

Rabbi Regina Jonas

German Reform rabbi 1935.

Transported to Theresienstadt ghetto on November 6, 1942, and later murdered in Auschwitz.

Lectures by the only female rabbi Regina Jonas

"Our Jewish people was planted by God into history as a blessed nation. 'Blessed by God' means to bestow blessings, lovingkindness, and loyalty – regardless of place and situation. Humility before God, selfless love for God's creatures, sustain the world. It is Israel's task to build these pillars of the world – man and woman, woman and man alike have taken this upon themselves in Jewish loyalty. Our work in Theresienstadt, serious and full of trials as it is, also serves this end: to be God's servants... May all our work be a blessing for Israel's future and the future of humanity."

Why Does My Life as a Jew Matter?

Ours is an historic and enduring address and worldview, a personal place from which to derive our values while living as 14 million among billions.

Our ancestors did not leave Egypt individually. It was as a people they gained their freedom. We represent that first memory and message for humanity, advocating for freedom, justice, and dignity. We are the most fortunate Jews to ever live, we are bearers of a sacred and sad, of a glorious and brilliant history of light and hope for the world.

We are in relationship with generations of Jews, some we'll know and others we could never meet, whose experiences, memories and dreams can help us to be true to ourselves.

We are a people who cherish life's gifts and blessings.
A people who inherits a tradition
demanding for human dignity and equality, freedom and goodness.
Heirs to standards of personal ethics and celebrations
We mark the seasons and milestones of our lives.

Ours is a rational religion intellectually rooted in sacred history.
Our wisdom for life cultivates conscience and common sense.
We ask probing questions and seek relevant answers.
We cherish hope and dignity.

Precious few walk through life so honored.
Affirming the privilege of our places as responsible members of the
Jewish people, we walk together on a path toward meaning,
community, and life promise.

Only Jews can be Jewish.
Why does my life as a Jew matter?
*Because the privilege of my identity connects me to something
beyond myself, to something historic and enduring.*

Shofarot: heralding God's revelation

The *Shofarot* segment of *Musaf* is comprised of Biblical verses
heralding *God's revelation to the Jewish people* and through Judaism
to the world.

We understand God's revelation as the source. Revelation is discovery
of Jewish wisdom, ethics, and law, all of which provide meaning for
human life. We know the goodness we wish to experience
everyday grows out of the quality of our personal behaviors.
Determining the right or wrong nature of our actions is a matter of
conscience informed by the moral insights of our heritage and religious
tradition.

We pray we may daily find challenge and purpose in our learning
and our values. May the wisdom of our tradition and the convictions
of our hearts and minds guide our steps along the path of life we
walk in this New Year.

*Rabbi Levi said: The Holy One appeared to the people at Mt. Sinai
as a mirror, reflecting faces on every side, so that though a thousand
individuals might be looking at the mirror, they would be led to
believe that it was looking at each one of them. Moreover, said
Rabbi Yosi, God spoke to each and every person according to his or
her particular capacity.*

-Pesikta deRab Kahana



Why Celebrate Jewish Tradition?

Life's mystery is God's reality.

A spiritual essence found within the workings of the world.

God is present through us when...

...we experience life,

...we respond to life,

...we meet,

...we respond to one another,

...we are loving, healing, and giving,

...we strive to redeem others from the struggles of their lives,

...we transcend ourselves, move beyond ourselves, think about something more than ourselves.

Judaism is a symbolic system.

Each precious moment of celebration at the Torah,

every ritual item we cherish at home,

the foods we do and don't eat,

the holidays we observe,

the Shabbat we celebrate,

the social justice we work for as a result of Jewish values,

the concepts we articulate

all symbolize who we are, what we care about, and how we carry ourselves into the world.

Symbols represent our loyalties and identities,

our memories and hopes,

our values and beliefs.

Why Celebrate Jewish Tradition?

Because God is present in the world through my choices and behaviors.

Prayer for Our Country

Our God and God of our ancestors: May our country, the United States of America, find the will to fulfill its calling to justice, liberty, and equality. May each of us fulfill our responsibilities to the American ideals of citizenship with care, generosity, and gratitude, ever conscious of the extraordinary blessing of freedom, ever mindful of our duties to one another.

A society that values free speech must hold hate speech accountable. Free speech does not mean immunity from rebuke. May we respond to bad ideas and harmful thoughts with better ones. In response to, and not only in defense against antisemitism, may we motivate and model the conscience and ethics our society needs to regain its ethical equilibrium.

May our elected leaders and all who hold public office exercise their responsibilities with wisdom and fairness, ensuring liberty and justice for all. May they faithfully devote themselves to the needs of the public so that peace and security, happiness and freedom will never depart from our land.

May the armed forces and all entrusted with our safety, as they daily put their lives at risk to protect us and our freedoms, find the courage to act with honor and dignity, as well as insight as to what is right, and what each challenge demands of them.

May our hearts overcome hatred and malice, jealousy and strife. May we demonstrate caring and companionship, peace and friendship, among the many peoples and faiths who dwell in our nation. May we uphold the values we associate with God's name so that our land may be a blessing for us and all of humanity. Amen.

Prayer for the State of Israel

Eternal God, stronghold and redeemer of the people Israel, bless the State of Israel, the beginning of our redemption. Shield it with Your love. Spread over it the shelter of Your peace. Guide its leaders and advisors with Your light and Your truth.

Bless the residents of the State of Israel who live under the constant threat of attack. Strengthen their hearts and endurance during this time of crisis, until the fury passes.

May there be support and healing to the bodies and souls of our brothers and sisters in Southern Israel and throughout the land and for those whose festival was turned into sorrow.

May the fate of those who are missing be revealed and may all the captives of Israel return home speedily to their dear ones, whole in body and in soul. God, comfort the broken-hearted who grieve and worry.

Guide Israel's leaders with good counsel that they may know how to conduct the nation's war with understanding, awareness, and wisdom. Bless the members of Israel's Defense Forces and its security services who stand guard wherever they may be, on land, in air and at sea. May the Eternal God protect and deliver them from all trouble and distress, May they succeed in all the work of their hands. May our enemies be humbled and those who defend our land be virtuous. Bless the land with peace and its inhabitants with lasting joy. And let us say: Amen.



Prayer for Hostages

Jews have been praying for the release of captives for hundreds of years. The act of Pidyon Shevuyim, redeeming those held hostage dates back to our Biblical ancestor Abraham, and to the Exodus story itself when God redeems our enslaved ancestors from Egypt.

One of the oldest of prayers recited on behalf of those held captive is referred to by its opening word, Aheinu. We recite this prayer each day at Congregation Beth El in Minyan and at Shabbat Services. Reciting this prayer links our expressions of concern and hope with those of people gathered in synagogues in Israel and throughout the world. The prayer first appeared in print in the 12th century. A student of the famous Biblical commentator Rashi is said to be the author.

אֲחֵינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַנְּתוּנִים בְּצָרָה וּבִשְׁבִיָּה,
הָעוֹמְדִים בֵּין בָּיִם וּבֵין בֵּיבְשָׁה,
הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם, וַיּוֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה לְרַחֲמָה,
וּמֵאֶפְלָה לְאוֹרָה, וּמִשְׁעָבוּד לְגְאֻלָּה,
הַשְׁתָּא בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב.

For all our family of the entire House of Israel, our fellow Jews who feel anguish and are held in captivity, whether on sea or on land: May God's compassion be with them, and may they be brought from distress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption, speedily, very soon. Amen. ❁

High Holy Day Enrichment Materials

While at services or at home during this High Holy Day season, take some time to read and reflect. These Enrichment Materials are a collection of contemporary reflections about Jewish ideas and the condition of our world as we begin the New Year. Agree or disagree, think and consider!



Poetry by Elyssa Rosenberg

There's a pain in my stomach growing larger each day
A pressure bearing down on my chest

My world is now small
My mind always murky
But a lens has been focused to clear

I thought I knew fear
Anxiety
Terror
But I've never known them like this

The stories were scary
And history repeats
But surely it's soon?
Or so I thought

The pressure pushes further
My breath becomes uneasy
The pictures no longer from the past

In every generation,
We are told each year
But no, not now?
Already?

We have a great force
The strength to fight back
Never again trembling, we said

But we are so few
And they are so many
And when did we become they?
And when did they stop being we?

I keep asking
The questions just echo before me
Why do you not stand up for me?
When we stood so strongly for you?

I throw my fears blindly into an abyss
And echo chamber
Heard only by us

Where are the others?
The ones who we fought for?
Where, I keep asking, are YOU?

Imagine for an instant that others were scared
Would you silently stand by and watch?
Where is your outrage when we feel this fear?
Why are you quiet for us?

We felt compassion
Empathy
Fear
When YOU were the victims for years

We used our platforms
Our privilege
Our place
To stand up and fight next to you

And now you sit silently
Or worse, fighting against us
Because you know not of what you speak
And worse, you think that you do
So you brazenly shout,
Of the horrors you claim that you see

But in your small, sheltered, bubble
You know not the truth
And your lens points to only one place

And while my mind's become murky
My vision is clear
We have seen it again and again
In each generation, we are told every year
And I know now why we need the reminder

We have only ourselves
No allies are true
And we'll stand strong as we have every year

We will share our stories on this holiday of hope,
And we'll remember our brothers in bondage

And as this generation rises to destroy us
We will rise ourselves with the knowledge
That they've come and gone and so you will too
But we will remain
And prevail
And one day our breath will finally return
And with it we'll continue our tale



Epoch Making

20th Century Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim wrote extensively about being Jewish after the Holocaust. Fackenheim reviews the calamities and tragedies sadly so prevalent in the history of our people. He writes, "Jewish thought in our time must move forward toward self-exposure to epoch-making events."

"Epoch making events," often tragedies, break what was and in response demand renewal and new vision. Think about the birth of rabbinic Judaism in Babylonian exile. Think about the creation of a vibrant Jewish life in and around the State of Israel in our lifetimes. A Jewish existence and presence Israel currently fights to protect and secure.

Looking back at the creation of the State of Israel out of the ashes of the Shoah, Fackenheim worried about people making that connection between the horrors of World War II and the creation of the State of Israel. He wrote, "while to see a casual connection here is possible and necessary, to see a purpose is intolerable. No purpose, religious or non-religious, will ever be found in Auschwitz." Nor in the savagery of October 7th no matter what political entities may come to be in a Middle East of the future.

What Fackenheim sought then, what we will come to seek now in the aftermath of Israel's war with Hamas, is not purpose but response. "Yet it is of the utmost importance to recognize that seeking a purpose is one thing but seeking a response quite another. The first is wholly out of the question. The second is inescapable." The very survival of Jews after historic trauma depends, in the end, on how we respond.

Holiday From History

Bari Weiss

State of World Jewry Address

February 25, 2024

92nd Street Y, New York City

This talk is called the State of World Jewry Address. But if there is a lesson of these past few years—and especially these past 142 days—it is that the state of world Jewry depends on the state of the free world. And right now its condition is in jeopardy.

This is a truth known viscerally to Jews today who hail from the unfree world—those from the former Soviet Union; those who were expelled from Iran and other autocratic regimes in the Middle East. And it is a truth faced daily by Jews in places that remain unfree.

But this is a truth that we American Jews have lost sight of on account of our abundant blessings. As our holiday from history ends, as we learn to live inside history once more, it is a truth we urgently need to revive and renew and make real for ourselves.

So that is what I want to talk about tonight. How we must become—inside and outside—free people. For the sake of America. For the sake of the free world. And for the sake of the Jews—those who came before us, and those yet to come.

So let me not leave this stage tonight before saying this again and underscoring it: we are at a hinge moment in history.

Our world is changing.

The world many of us were born into—the world we thought we would spend our lives inside—that world is over. There is no going back. And the things we took for granted—that America would remain exceptional (not just for us but in the world); that Americans

would understand this as a place and an idea worth fighting for—those are no longer certainties. Nor is the certainty of the free world itself, which is burning at its outer edges.

All of it—the ideals and the architecture that have made the past 75 years of Jewish life the greatest in the history of the world—are up for grabs.

Why the Bible Began

An Alternative History of Scripture and Its Origins

Dr. Jacob L. Wright

Emory University

For the past two centuries, the field of academic biblical scholarship has occupied itself in the composition history of this diverse, didactic, counterintuitive corpus. In doing so, however, it has neglected an issue of wide-ranging intellectual significance: “The remarkable issue is not how the Bible developed but that it developed altogether.”

The Bible is indeed an astounding achievement. Nowhere else in the ancient world do we witness a people’s effort, and such an elaborate and collaborative effort at that, first to document and depict their own defeat, and then to use this narrative history as a framework for rethinking every facet of their existence.

Our point of departure has been the why. What first ignited the biblical project was a vision that the populations of two rival states, Judea in the south and Israel in the north, could be one people. Working for the royal court in Jerusalem, Judean scribes imagined a “United Monarchy” that later split into two competing kingdoms. This was above all an affirmation of political unity. Yet even if it was statist in its agenda, this older work inspired others, especially members of the recently conquered Northern kingdom, to think in terms of a nation that transcends the borders of its kingdoms.

Diminishing the role of the throne, these circles composed counter-narratives, portraying a large family evolving into a diverse nation and existing for many generations before the establishment of the monarchy. After the downfall of the Southern kingdom, the counter-narratives were joined to the older account of Israel's monarchies. The combined work grew to its present epic proportions as it was supplemented with law codes and didactic stories that address all aspects of what it means to be a people, and what a people needs to prosper.

Rather than a conventional polarity of nation versus religious community, what we witness in the formation of the biblical corpus is the groundbreaking discovery of a distinction that we take for granted today, namely, between nation and state. The decisive step that these scribes took was to bracket an era of the monarchy, presenting it as a turning point in their people's history.

In the framework of an extensive prose narrative, these ancient intellectuals sought to demonstrate how Israel became a people long before it established a kingdom. Although their narrative runs counter to what we know about Israel's political evolution, they wanted their audience to understand that, via a national narrative and the laws embedded in it, a vanquished, exiled, and divided population can come together as a people even when imperial domination prohibited political independence.

The scribes who engaged in this effort were convinced that their communities would survive conquest and colonization when they had not only a spiritual vision but also a material incentive to take an active part in public life. Instead of abandoning world affairs and political engagement, the biblical scribes worked to unify them as members of a new nation. As they reimagined Israel's corporate identity, these scribes asked themselves what it means to be a people. Their responses to this foundational question, formulated in the widest array of genres: law, narrative, songs, laments, prophecies, wisdom, and love poetry, charted important new territory in political philosophy.

That Israel and Judah produced a Bible is not because an early form monotheism or unique intuitions permeated these societies. The reason is rather that generations of anonymous, counter-cultural thinkers pushed against the status quo and sought real, pragmatic truth that could sustain their communities in a world governed by foreign powers.

In grappling with the consequences of defeat, these thinkers resorted to something no army could conquer: language and the power of the written word. Their efforts in collecting, editing, and expanding texts resulted in an exceptionally rich corpus of literature, which attracted communities of readers and formed them into one people.

The Bible's model of peoplehood embraces diversity, an ideal exemplified in the weaving together of competing traditions and texts. Although this corpus is heavily redacted, it does not speak with a single voice. Instead of one view, its authors set forth a shared text. The scribes who contributed to this project were seeking to fashion an unprecedented corporate identity capable of consolidating and mobilizing a subjugated, dispersed nation, and the writings they produced have inspired populations across the globe to form robust and resilient communities.



Materials written or edited by Rabbi Ron Shulman unless otherwise indicated & designed by Aviva Rafaela Curran Das

Honor Roll

We are grateful for the choice each and every member of Congregation Beth El makes to find personal meaning as participants in our synagogue family. Everyone's contribution to Our Shared Commitment binds all of us together in a local, focused expression of Jewish peoplehood, and provides us with the resources we need to sustain our synagogue community. Grateful for every gift of any amount, here we recognize our Honor Roll donors for the 2023-2024 synagogue year.



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Please greet your friends and those you don't already know with "Shanah Tovah" and say Hello!

In observance of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur and to respect our community, please be aware there is no smoking, no photography, and no writing on the synagogue premises during the High Holy Days. Also, please refrain from chewing gum during our worship together.

Join us in DISCONNECTING from personal technology and CONNECTING with each other. Please refrain from the use of all ELECTRONIC DEVICES for personal purposes as possible during services.

Thank you very much.

We hope you enjoy celebrating with us!





Beth El