

שנה טובה שנה טובה שנה טובה

Happy
New Year



from
Bill & Patty
Gorelick

Why Are These Services Different Than All Others?

By Rabbi Michael Shields, Temple Kol Tikvah

The High Holy Days, *Yamim Noraim*, the Ten Days of Awe are most certainly different than all of the other days of the year. The worship shared has a heightened sense of urgency. The prayers and readings emphasize the specific themes of the season. Many of the melodies change and are often more cantorial in nature. These changes are very appropriate in that they serve the sacred atmosphere and worship that we are hoping to achieve. However, not all changes are good. A story:

When I was a rabbinical intern in rabbinical school, a congregation member came to me and said, "Rabbi, I just love how Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services are like going to the theater. We all get to dress up, fight for the



best parking spots and fight through the throngs of people filing in to services. Then we get to listen to beautiful melodies and appreciate the artful poetry of the prayers and the beautiful choreography of the Torah service."

She had transformed the High Holy Days into a theater production. The rabbi, cantor, and Torah readers were the actors, the congregation members were the audience and the clergy's robes, tallitot, and even the Torah were props. Unlike regular Shabbat services where the rabbi is a humble facilitator and everyone worships together, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur had turned into a spectator sport. The true audience was forgotten. God was forgotten.

For many, the High Holy Days are an ordeal or a burden, simply

something one must do. Every worshipper is an actor in a Divine production, or if you're a sports fan, a player in the big game. What is done on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as well as every day can change one's life and change the world.

Sometimes the *Yamim Noraim*, the High Holy Days, are different in a negative way. We lose our sense of obligation and participation and relinquish our religious responsibility and possibility to our rabbis and cantors.

These High Holy Days, the sound of the Shofar challenges us to hearken to our best selves. In order to do this, we must be willing to show up to the big game. A colleague shared this anecdote comparing football to the High Holy Days: "Football is a sport in which twenty-two physically fit men run around on a field while ninety thousand people who need exercise watch them. High Holy Day services are a sport in which hundreds of people who are not sure how to daven watch a few people who do."

In Jewish tradition, the words "*da lifnei mi attah omed*," ("know before whom you stand") are critically important to the High Holy Days. The prayer leaders do not stand before you and perform the liturgy. We all stand before God.

Every time we get distracted, every time we have a nasty thought, every time we show up late or leave early, we should remind ourselves, "*da lifnei mi attah omed*."

A wagon driver was once taking a rabbi from town to town. They came upon an orchard and the driver said, "I'll climb up a tree and get some apples for lunch." As soon as the driver was up in the tree, the rabbi yelled: "He's watching! He's watching!" Nearly falling out of the tree, the driver scurried down and ran off, fearful that the farmer would catch him. The rabbi took the reins and continued on. A while later, the rabbi caught up with the wagon driver. "Rabbi, why did you yell, 'He's watching!'? The farmer was nowhere to be found." The Rabbi said, "I wasn't talking about the farmer. I said, (pointing upward) God's watching!" I hope that we don't just "enjoy" these High Holy Days. Instead, I hope we all can *laasok b'divrei Torah* (engage meaningfully in Torah). May we carry the lessons of the *Yamim Noraim* into our lives and continue to pray both with our mouths and our feet, our prayers and our deeds. May the High Holy Days become infused into the every day.

Shanah Tovah U'metukah! ✨

Happy
New Year

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11

The Outrageous Sophie Tucker • 1pm

A rags to riches story of an iconic superstar who ruled the worlds of vaudeville, Broadway, radio, television, and Hollywood from 1906 until her death in 1966. Producers Susan and Lloyd Ecker are scheduled to appear and will do a Q&A with the audience after the film.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

The Farewell Party • 1pm

A unique, compassionate and unlikely funny story of a group of friends at a Jerusalem retirement home who decide to help their terminally ill friend and then suddenly find their assistance in great demand.



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Look at Us Now, Mother! • 1pm

An unflinching look at the complex bond between Mildred Kirschenbaum and her daughter, Gayle. Told through biting humor and raw honesty, this is an intimate story about family dysfunctions and forgiveness. Mildred and Gayle Kirschenbaum are scheduled to appear and talk about their relationship following the film.

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