

A Solemn Anniversary, The Awe-Inspiring Start to a New Year



On September 11, we will mark the tenth anniversary of the event that is known simply as 9/11. It is a day that was seared into our consciousness. Most of us can remember exactly what we were doing and what we were feeling as the event unfolded.

It is hard to believe that it all happened ten years ago. So much has followed in its wake. Wars, even more death, an overlay of protective caution, and palpable anxiety even at the most peaceful moments.

The world is very different.

And yet so much is the same.

In 2001, 9/11 occurred just days before the High Holy Days. This year, the solemn anniversary comes a little over two weeks before the Awe-Inspiring Days of *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur* begin our new year.

It is a time for us to reflect on the meaning of the event, now with a perspective of ten years time past, and see how the world has changed in those ten years. In the prayers on *Rosh HaShanah* we say that not only the future of individuals is in the balance as we begin a new year, but that of nations as well.

What does this anniversary teach us? What have we learned during the intervening ten years? What lessons can possibly make our lives better in the year to come? How can we make a difference?

I will be addressing these issues on the first day of *Rosh HaShanah*. The event was laden with portent and potential, and we must see how its lessons have been applied, and how we can apply them in the future.

Looking ahead, on Sunday, October 16, we will welcome to our congregation **Susan Retik**. Susan grew up at AJ, and her husband David was on one of the planes from Logan Airport that was crashed into the World Trade Center. She is the daughter of **Shelley and Saul Zalesne**.

Elsewhere in this issue you will learn more about this program. What is so meaningful for me is what Susan has built from her personal part of this human tragedy. Instead of becoming embittered and full of hate, grasping at revenge to wrest meaning from catastrophe, she has striven to bring healing and comfort to Afghan women, who, like herself, were widowed as part of the ongoing violence, but who had none of the resources and support that Susan had.

What an inspiring model of courage and vision she is. You will want to meet her and hear her story and about her passionate work at the brunch on October 16.

The High Holy Days are a time to reassess, refocus, and redirect. That's the essence of *Teshuvah*, Repentance. May these Awe-Inspiring Days remind us how urgent that task is if we are to have a truly "Good Year."

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