

Rosh Hashanah Services

SHANA
HAPPY
TOVA
NEW
שנה
YEAR
טובה



Supplement for Youth and Families

A Thought on God's Ways

God requires us to struggle for justice
and to work for freedom.

God asks us to end poverty
and to increase peace.

God invites us to become partners
in the work of creation.

May what we create make the world better and more beautiful.

Once a student asked a rabbi, "What is the best way to love God?" The wise teacher replied, "The best way to love God is to love those God created."

A Thought on Oneness

Oneness is not sameness. Rainbows of colors delight us. Mountains and valleys challenge us. Different ideas stretch our minds. We are all on this planet together. We must find ways to come together and live in peace. We must find ways of sharing the earth's resources and enjoying its beauty. Oneness celebrates and unites differences. Oneness is the connection of people, God and nature.

A Thought on Praising God

Why do we praise God? Some Jews believe that God wants our prayers as a way of connecting with us. Others feel that we need to pray because when we say words of blessing we are changed for the better. Some feel the need to speak to God. Others feel that prayers help us think about following God's ways. What do you think?



Things to think and talk about during the Torah service

Day 1:

In this story, God remembers and keeps his promises to Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. This is why we read it on Rosh Hashanah, "Yom HaZikaron", "the day of remembering". Can you tell what each promise was?

- a. To Abraham:
- b. To Sarah:
- c. To Hagar

Abraham had a difficult choice to make. Do you think he did the right thing? Why or why not?

Day 2:

What do you think each of the people were feeling during this story?
What makes you think that?

Some people think this is a story of God testing Abraham. Other people think God was testing Isaac. A third group of people think Abraham was testing God. Which one do you think it is? Why?

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The Drum

The Magid of Dubna told the following story to teach people the importance of understanding and not just hearing the *shofar's* blasts:

Once a peasant came to town just when a fire had broken out. He was surprised to see a number of people blowing trumpets and beating drums and then others running out with axes, shovels and pails.

He asked a small child why a musical band was playing in the town square. The child replied, "The trumpeting and drum-beating is to put out the fire." The peasant quickly went into a nearby shop to purchase a drum to take back to his village.

A year later, a fire broke out in his village. The peasant announced that no one needed to fight the fire, for his drum would quench the flames.

As he beat his drum, the fire quickly spread. Seeing that their village would soon be destroyed, the townspeople started shouting: "You idiot! The drum is only meant as an alarm to alert us to danger. We then need to do something about the fire if we are to save ourselves and our village."

And so it is with the hearing of the *shofar*. The *shofar* can only alert us to the need for change. *Only we can change and improve ourselves.*

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The Traveler

Due to a terrible storm, a merchant ship had been blown off course. It would be days before it could safely dock. The cook sadly reported to the captain that their food supplies were almost gone. The captain then announced that he would ask a wealthy merchant on board to help, for he knew that the merchant was carrying crates of dried dates and figs as well as olives from the Holy Land. Surely he would sell them some supplies for a reasonable price.

The captain was shocked and disappointed when his request was denied. "Why should I give you some of my fruit," growled the merchant, "when I can get a higher price when we dock?" With a heavy heart, the captain went to tell the cook that the hungry people on board would not be fed.

The cook surprised the captain by announcing that he wanted a chance to change the merchant's mind. "Meet me at that miser's cabin in five minutes," he declared.

When the captain arrived, the cook knocked at the merchant's cabin door. "What is it? Why are you bothering me? I told you I won't share any of my supplies!" the merchant grumbled.

"Please come with us," said the cook. "There is something we must show you in the ship's hold." Thinking there could be a problem with the goods that he stored there, the merchant agreed to follow them. When they arrived, the cook took a borer from behind a box and began to make a hole in the ship's hold. The merchant began screaming in alarm, "What are you doing? You are acting crazy!"

"It's no concern of yours," said the cook, "I'm just making a hole under my spot in the boat. I'd rather die now than starve before we reach our destination."

"But your hole will flood the boat and soon we'll all die," cried the merchant.

"I don't care about you," stated the cook, "I only care about my own needs." With that remark, he continued his drilling.

At last the merchant understood. "I see what you're trying to teach me. We're all travelers on the same boat. What each of us does affects us all. Here are my crates, there's plenty of food to share. We can all reach port together safe and sound."

לשנה טובה תכתבו.

May you be recorded for a good new year!

A Thought — Ten Days For Changing

Rosh haShanah begins the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* (which means "returning"). Between *Rosh haShanah* and *Yom Kippur*, we try to get back on the right track. One way we do this is to pray to God to forgive us for our wrongdoings. God, however, cannot forgive us for the bad things we've done to family and friends. We need to say we're sorry to them directly and ask their forgiveness. We must also promise not to hurt or wrong them again.

Between now and *Yom Kippur* think about to whom you want to say you are sorry and what you want to say. Then do it! You and they will then feel good inside.

May this year bring you everything good!

