

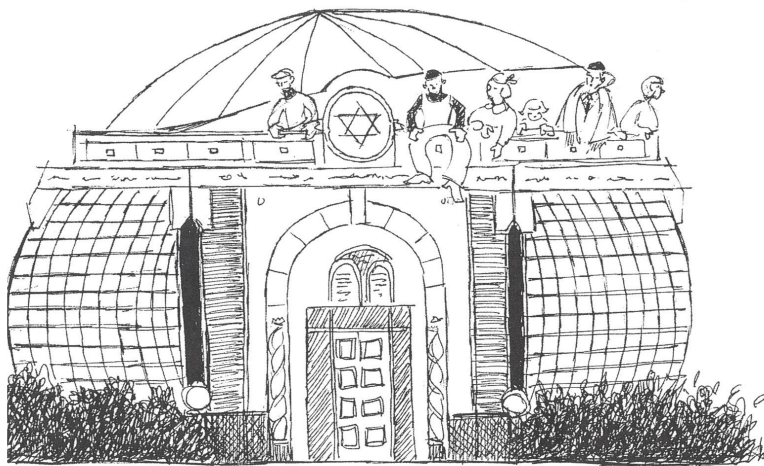
PLAYBILL®

Congregation Or VeShalom

In Honor of Our 90th Anniversary Celebration
CONGREGATION OR VESHALOM

PRESENTS
An Original Musical Comedy

"All In Our Family"



~~SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2004 - 7:30 PM~~

~~SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2004 - 7:30 PM~~

High Holidays 2023/5784

Friends,

Once again this year I have put together a booklet filled with various readings to inspire us during the High Holidays. It's nice to have the opportunity to take some personal time and reflect. This year I've chosen to make this booklet a playbill. This is a great way to think of life since we're all authors, directors, choreographers, actors and crew in the play of life. The songs here are all deeply meaningful for many different reasons. You'll also find reflective questions for each song to help guide you. I look forward to hearing your thoughts about what these lyrics mean to you. I hope the year of 5784 will be a great year for all of our scripts... now let's get writing that new play.

שנה טובה

Rabbi Hearshen

Meet The Cast

Cast photo from
the final OVS
production,
All In Our Family.
November 2004.



Abraham – Born to Terach and his wife in the distant eastern region of Ur, Abraham is credited with being the founding father of monotheism. A beautiful story of his youth tells of how he grew up in a home of idol makers and was supposed to go into the family business. This was not meant to be for Abraham as he recognized the lack of power in idols and the singularity of God. He smashed the idols and thus left the family business. Along with his wife, Sarah, he suffered for years from infertility that would define a great amount of his life. Eventually he would father a

son with his wife's handmaiden, Hagar, named Ishmael. Later he would father a son with Sarah named Isaac and that's the subject of our story today. One day Abraham heard the voice of God telling him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. This was a test of Abraham's faith. He went through with it only to be stopped at the last moment. Some will say Abraham passed this test while others will tell you he failed. His punishment was severe, as he destroyed his relationship with Isaac and his wife died when she learned of it.



Sarah – Sarah was born as Sarai in the land of Ur. Eventually her name was changed to Sarah when she developed a relationship with God. Sarah migrated to the land of Canaan along with her husband and family. She longed her entire life to become a mother and this did not come easy to her. Eventually she would tell her husband to build a family through her handmaiden, Hagar, and that's exactly what he did. Sarah would eventually become filled with regret as she watched her husband become a father with another woman. The pain was too great and she demanded that her husband kick Hagar and her son out. When Sarah learned that she and Abraham would finally get a chance at being parents, she wasn't sure how to react. She was in her 90s and thus she was past her childbearing years. She laughed. While some looked at this as a lack of faith in God and the miracles that can happen, others looked at it as being a lesson in being real and allowing for our pain to be heard and not held in. Her laughter ignited generations to embrace their deepest emotions and share them with the world.



Hagar – Hagar never talked to people outside Abraham and Sarah's family as she was always scared to upset them. Hagar was born in Egypt and eventually was sold into servitude to a very wonderful family. When her master, Sarah, instructed her to build a family with Sarah's husband, she consented and did as was asked of her. The baby born from that union was Ishmael, a name that reflects God heard her prayers and pain as well. Hagar and her son, Ishmael, were kicked out of the house twice and left to wander. This caused the new mother to fear for her son and

for her own life as well. While in the desert, Hagar broke down in tears. What was beneath those tears? Fear for her life and for her son? Regret that she had allowed herself to be used by her master and her husband? Perhaps exhaustion over the entire thing? She met an angel who helped her to keep faith. The angel told her her son would eventually father a great nation and this gave her some reassurance.



Ishmael – Born to Abraham and Hagar in an attempt to heed the desire of Sarah to build a family to continue the monotheistic tradition she and Abraham had begun. It was hard to be Ishmael. He was always seen as guilty of crimes he never committed. He was the product not the producer. But when his brother Isaac was born, he was not considered to be a very caring and loving older brother to him. His mother's master, Sarah, was extremely disturbed by his very presence in the house near her new son. He was playing with Isaac but some say he was mocking and harassing him... who knows. His name means "God hears" and he reminds

us that we must always believe that in spite of a lack of answers to our prayers, God is still listening to all we hold dear and pray for.



Isaac – Isaac never had parents that could run after him and play children's games. They were the age of grandparents when he was born and so he learned as a child that he needed to be able to entertain himself and enjoy life nevertheless. While his name means laughter, the story of his life we bear witness to today has little to do with laughing. His father, who was his childhood hero, was asked to sacrifice him to

God and Abraham went through with it. As Isaac and his father, along with some servants, walked to a location three days distance from their home, he became inquisitive and wanted to know why there wasn't an animal to sacrifice. His father was so scared and did not want to cause him undue pain at the prospect of what was about to happen so he told him God would provide an animal eventually. Isaac found himself bound on the alter and the fire was lit. He looked up and saw his father with the knife in his hand and he understood everything at that moment. The man he looked up to and adored was about to kill him. A tear dropped from Abraham's eye and landed in Isaac's eye and blinded him. Nobody can imagine the pain that he felt for the rest of his life. But we do know he eventually found true love and become the father of two boys whom he never tried to sacrifice. We all have scars that alter the way we experience the world and the most important part is to be aware of those real scars and deal with them.



Angel – Angels make many appearances in the Torah. In Hebrew they are called מלאכים and this word implies that they are both heavenly creatures and yet separate from God. One of the most intriguing parts of our story today is that the angels are there without being there. Our story begins by recalling the promise of Isaac's impending birth given by the three angels who visited Abraham. But the most significant angel is the one who cried out to Abraham to stop and to not harm Isaac. That angel delivered God's message of love for Abraham and His trust of Abraham's faith. Angels guide us every day and are always a part of our lives if we're willing to let them in.

Jonah – Jonah is a man who never wanted fame and never wanted to be called upon to do anything special. Thus, when God called on him to leave his land and travel to Ninevah to tell the people to repent because they had been sinning, he was upset. After running away over and over again, Jonah was forced to confront his calling, and he reluctantly went to inform the people of Ninevah to change their ways. They immediately repented and changed and begged for forgiveness. It almost seems that we learn more from Jonah about how not to think or behave rather than learning some positive from him. If we want people to believe in our abilities to be better and to change and to grow, then we must in turn believe the same of other people. Jonah learned an important lesson, and through his story, we learn it as well. Hope in people, and faith in God, guide us to feel true change is possible.

God – There is only one God in the world. God speaks to a myriad of people in a myriad of ways. God created humankind to cure His loneliness in this vast world He created. He witnesses our triumphs and our follies and He patiently awaits our return to Him. God was able to give hope to Abraham and Sarah as they faced insurmountable troubles in having a child. When He demanded Abraham sacrifice their son, it was not necessarily in the hopes that Abraham would acquiesce. Perhaps God wanted Abraham to argue with Him and to fight for morality and the good of humankind. God's role in the story of Jonah has to do with humanity and the ability to change. God called on Jonah to help an entire people to be better and cease their evil ways. This was something that God, according to our belief of omnipotence, could have done with the "snap of a finger," but chose to have humanity fix itself.

Meet The Crew



Rabbi Josh Hearshen

What is your favorite prayer and why?

I love the prayer אלוֹקֵי נֶשְׁמָה/Elokai Neshama. It discusses the purity of our souls and that we have a natural drive to be the best that we can be. I love that when we look in each person's eyes we see something beyond the physical... we find their God-created and given soul that gives them equal value to everyone else.

When did you know you wanted to be involved in Jewish life?

I grew up in a very Jewish community surrounded by Jews of all types. I always loved going to religious school and enjoyed being involved in the rituals. When I was in high school I was deeply involved in BBYO and owe a debt of gratitude to that organization for who I am today. When I tasted Jewish leadership, I loved it and knew it was the only thing I wanted to do with of my life.

What is your favorite holiday?

Pesach - big shock there

What is your favorite wine (kosher) or scotch?

Wine: Petite Castel and Scotch: Oban 14

What is your favorite food for dessert?

I love Tiramisu. Carrie and I ate it on one of our first dates.

What is the name of the synagogue you grew up at?

Temple Emanu-El in Oak Park, MI



Cantor Natanel Kohen

What is your favorite prayer and why?

"Achoth Ketana" which opens the Rosh Hashanah prayers. Beyond the content of the words and the rhyme, I really like the very unique melody that is a kind of identification for the prayers of the high holidays.

When did you know you wanted to be involved in Jewish life?

This is something ingrained in me from a young age since the bar mitzvah and even before that, when I had the privilege of receiving the "stage", participating in the Shabbat and holiday prayers and being involved in community life in the neighborhood synagogue in my hometown city Holon

(Israel) which is run by my family that includes two cantor uncles, a grandfather (z"l) who was a rabbi and a cantor and even a mother who is a singer :)

What is your favorite holiday?

Without a doubt Rosh Hashana.

What is your favorite wine (kosher) or scotch?

A new sparkling wine in Carmel's Buzz series with a pineapple flavor, a light, aromatic wine with a delicate and balanced sweetness.

What is your favorite food for dessert?

Hot chocolate souffle with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

What is the name of the synagogue you grew up at?

The neighborhood-family synagogue, whose name was recently changed to Adat Yeshurun in memory of my dear grandfather, one of the founders of the synagogue, the rabbi and even the cantor over the years.



Adam Kofinas—Executive Director

What is your favorite prayer and why?

Favorite Prayer - Adon Olam because there's something powerful about saying the last line, "God is with me, I will not fear" as you walk back out into the rest of the world,

When did you know you wanted to be involved in Jewish life?

End of college as I started applying to jobs. I knew I wanted to remain involved Jewishly.

What is your favorite holiday?

Sukkot. It's always fun to decorate the Sukkah and here in Atlanta the weather is usually beautiful and conducive to being outdoors.

What is your favorite wine (kosher) or scotch?

13th Colony Whiskey - local GA brand with a fantastic story (and Jewish-owned)

What is your favorite food for dessert?

Galaktabureko

What is the name of the synagogue you grew up at?

Kehila Kedosha Janina in NYC



David Franco—President

What is your favorite prayer and why?

Neila services because it signifies end of the High Holidays

When did you know you wanted to be involved in Jewish life?

When my mother passed away in 2010.

What is your favorite holiday?

Hannukah

What is your favorite wine (kosher) or scotch?

Manischewitz

What is your favorite food for dessert?

Baklava

What is the name of the synagogue you grew up at?

Congregation Or VeShalom

We Have Sinned

We have sinned against life by failing to work for peace.

We have sinned against life by keeping silent in the face of injustice.

We have sinned against life by ignoring those who suffer in distant lands.

We have sinned against life by forgetting the poor in our midst.

We have failed to respect those made in the image of God.

We have withheld our love from those who depend on us.

We have engaged in gossip and in repeated slander.

We have distorted the truth for our own advantage.

We have conformed to fashion and not to conscience.

We have indulged in despair and trafficked with cynics.

We have given meager support to our Houses of Study.

We have neglected our heritage of learning.

We have sinned against ourselves and paid scant heed to the life of the spirit.

We have sinned against ourselves and have not risen to the best that is in us.

Our Lives as a Script

By Rabbi Hearshen

Have you ever had the experience of narrating your life? All of us are influenced by the art and culture that surrounds us so it would make sense that we often imitate art. Some of us might experience life as a song or a television show. Some of us might see our lives as movies or plays and musicals. One thing is certain and it's that we shouldn't live our lives without intentionality and thoughtfulness. When we live our lives thoughtfully, we're able to derive more meaning and beauty from the time allotted to us. It's essential that we not assume that living in such a way means we're the omniscient narrator and script writer. We want to control all the circumstances of our lives and stories and come away defeated when our lives don't accord with our deepest wants and desires.

From an early age, we believe we have the ability to control the world around us. We test this philosophy as infants and toddlers by controlling our parents. If we drop our spoon, we "know" our parents will pick it up. By crying we "know" we'll be fed or changed. At some point we begin to recognize we don't have that all-encompassing power and that the world around us isn't ours to direct. When we make this realization, we're either amazed or disappointed. We either embrace this world or we fight the reality that's staring us in the face. In our realization that we cannot control the world, we try to place that control into something greater than us, God. We think of the world as being God's to direct and control. We think of God as a "puppet-master" who decides and controls everything. In its most absurd assumption, we thank God for allowing us to win sports events. In its most human, we pray with all of our strength for healing when our loved ones are afflicted. The problem with this type of God is that it means all is God and nothing is human. It means God chooses the murder victims just as God chooses the victims of cancer. God thus chooses the poor and destitute and the wealthy and secure. To reject this version of God is not to reject God, but to embrace a much more relatable Creator that has left the world to our interaction and control.

I'm sure many would agree with the statement "this is not the life I thought I would have." I'm sure many would like to change the script of the story of their lives. We have certain abilities to do just that. We can choose to live differently. We can choose to take control over what we can, in fact, control. The only thing we can control is the now, and more specifically, our words and actions in the now. Think of the famous words of the serenity prayer:

אלי, תן לי את השלווה
לקבל את הדברים
שאין ביכולתי לשנותם,
את האומץ לשנות
את אשר ביכולתי,
ואת התבונה
להבדיל ביניהם

God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things
That I do not have the ability to change
The courage to change
That which I can
And the understanding
To differentiate between the two.

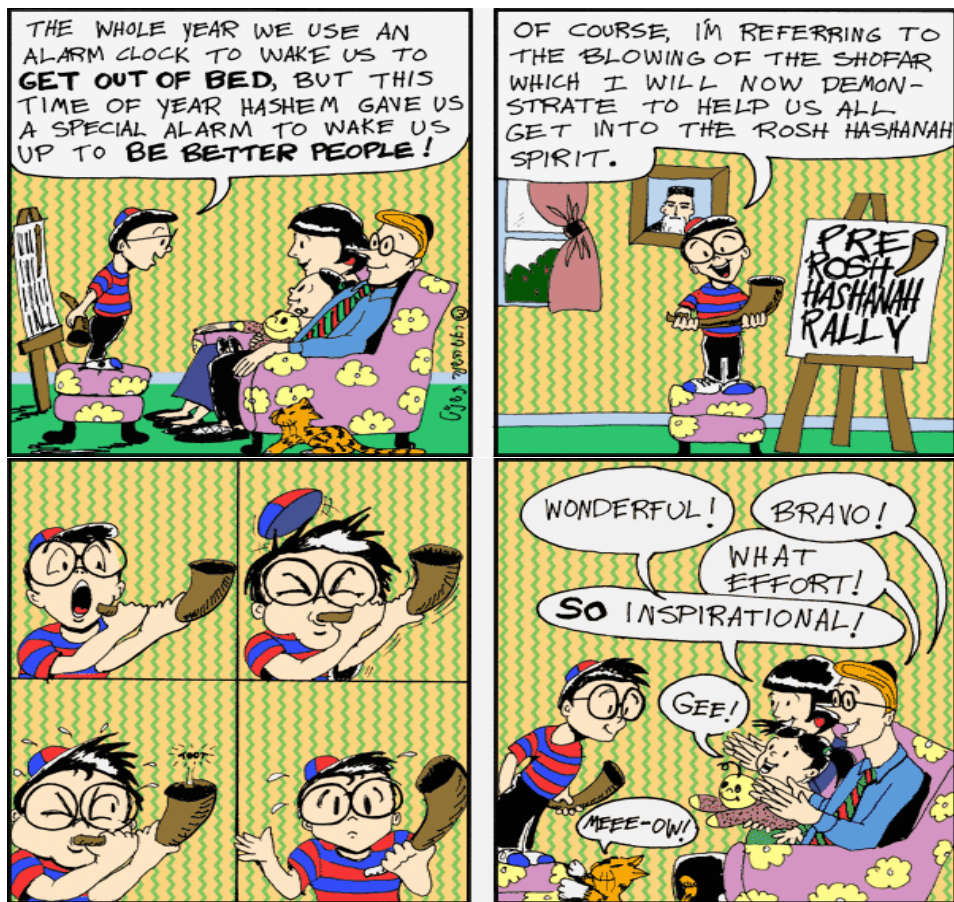
I'm aware this isn't the version we've all heard. I chose to translate it back to English from the Hebrew because I love the Hebrew version. Nevertheless, this isn't a new idea to the Jewish people. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live—" (Deuteronomy 30:19). God wouldn't tell us that we have choices to make without us having choices. This is all about our own control in the world. We have the power to choose. We have the power to make decisions that have impact even if things might not work out the way we'd like them to in the long run. This is all a long-winded way of explaining that our lives aren't scripted by some external force. Our lives are written and rewritten and acted out by us and those with whom we interact. Think of it as a lifelong improvisational act rather than a pre-ordained story that's being adapted to the stage.

We can each stand to recognize a bit more just how much we can and cannot control. We need to see what's within our power and what's totally out of or beyond our control. I love the words of the Talmud in Berachot 54a: "One who cries out (prays) over something that has already happened is a *אומר תפלת שוא*/prayer in vain (a wasted prayer). If someone's wife is pregnant and he prays for it to be a male, it is a vain prayer. If someone was walking on the street and they heard a cry from the city and they pray that it did not come from their own house (lest a member of their family could be in distress), it is a vain prayer.

In both of these examples the "thing" has already happened. Any prayer would be useless because the decision has already been made. We like to obsess over the past and we like to think we have power to change what has

happened, what is happening and what will happen. We cannot change the past (although we can choose how it effects us or its meaning to us) but we have a say in the now and the future. Most importantly, it's always up to us to be the actor in our own lives and determine how we want to respond to others and the things they do. We cannot prevent others from reckless driving but we can become better drivers who are always aware of our surroundings and those who are driving around us. We cannot make our children do things but we can help to lead them into some decisions and help them to avoid others. We have power and a part to play in our lives.

In this New Year, let us stop living lives that are scripted and try to live lives with us in control as much as we possibly can be. In this New Year, let us each work to find our abilities to navigate the ups and downs in our lives and to recognize we each have a part to play in the story being written in our world.



Mistakes

By Ayelet Hearshen

My biggest mistake was getting mad.

My biggest mistake was leaving.

My biggest mistake was staying.

My biggest mistake was giving up.

My biggest mistake...

My biggest mistake...

NO

My biggest mistake was believing that

My biggest mistake was not learning

My biggest mistake was staying still

When I could have grown.

Sorry

By Ayelet Hearshen

I'm sorry isn't something you say,
when you'll do it again anyway
I'm sorry isn't an excuse,
for when you have something to lose

I'm sorry is a promise
that you'll always be honest
You hope people will forgive
so you can continue to live
At Yom Kippur time I do Teshuvah
with a paper and pen
To tell my friends and family
I'll try not to have to say sorry again

Wait for It

From the Musical "Hamilton" by Lin Manuel Miranda

Love doesn't discriminate
between the sinners
and the saints,
it takes and it takes and it takes
and we keep loving anyway.
We laugh and we cry
and we break
and we make our mistakes.
And if there's a reason I'm by her side
when so many have tried
then I'm willing to wait for it.
I'm willing to wait for it.

My grandfather was a fire and brimstone
preacher,
But there are things that the homilies and
hymns won't teach ya.
My mother was a genius
My father commanded respect.
When they died they left no instructions.
Just a legacy to protect.

Death doesn't discriminate
Between the sinners and the saints,
it takes and it takes and it takes
and we keep living anyway.
We rise and we fall
and we break
and we make our mistakes.
And if there's a reason I'm still alive
when everyone who loves me has died
I'm willing to wait for it.
I'm willing to wait for it.

ENSEMBLE
Wait for it

BURR
I am the one thing in life I can control

ENSEMBLE
Wait for it

BURR
I am inimitable
I am an original

ENSEMBLE
Wait for it

BURR
I'm not falling behind or running late

ENSEMBLE
Wait for it

BURR
I'm not standing still,
I am lying in wait
Hamilton faces an endless uphill climb
He has something to prove
He has nothing to lose
Hamilton's pace is relentless
he wastes no time
What's it like in his shoes?

Hamilton doesn't hesitate.
He exhibits no restraint.
He takes and he takes and he takes
and he keeps winning anyway.
He changes the game.
He plays and he raises the stakes.
And if there's a reason
he seems to thrive when so few survive,
then I'm willing to wait for it.
I'm willing to wait for it...

Life doesn't discriminate
between the sinners and the saints
it takes and it takes and it takes
We rise.
We fall
And if there's a reason I'm still alive
When so many others have died,
I'm willing to wait for it.
Wait for...

Life doesn't discriminate
between the sinners and the saints
it takes and it takes and it takes
and we keep living anyway,
we rise and we fall and we break
and we make our mistakes
and if there's a reason
I'm still alive
when so many have died,
then I'm willing' to-
Wait for it...

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Why are love, death and life all equated?
- 2) What are you waiting for?
- 3) What is worth the cost of our lives?
- 4) What are some mistakes we make?

Climb Every Mountain

From the Musical “The Sound of Music” by Oscar Hammerstein II

Climb every mountain,
Search high and low,
Follow every byway,
Every path you know.

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream,
Follow every rainbow,
Till you find your dream

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream,
Follow every rainbow,
'Till you find your dream.

A dream that will need
All the love you can give,
Every day of your life,
For as long as you live.

A dream that will need
All the love you can give,
Every day of your life
For as long as you live.

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream,
Follow every rainbow,
Till you find your dream.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What challenges do you face each day?
- 2) What are some tactics that we can employ in overcoming our challenges?
- 3) What dreams do you have that you need to put more effort into making them materialize?

Saving Each Other Together

(Rabbi Joseph Hertz)

A traveler was crossing mountain heights of untrodden snow alone. He struggled bravely against the sense of sleep which was fast stealing over him, and he knew that if he fell asleep death would inevitably follow. At this crisis his foot struck against a human body half buried in the snow. The next moment he held him in his arms, and was rubbing and chaffing the frozen man's limbs. The effort to restore another unto life brought back to himself warmth and energy, and was the means of saving both.

Memory

From the Musical "Cats" by Andrew Lloyd Weber

Midnight

Not a sound from the pavement

Has the moon lost her memory?

She is smiling alone

In the lamplight

The withered leaves collect at my feet

And the wind begins to moan

Memory

All alone in the moonlight

I can dream of the old days

Life was beautiful then

I remember

The time I knew what happiness was

Let the memory live again

Every street lamp

Seems to beat a fatalistic warning

Someone mutters and the streetlamp
sputters

And soon it will be morning

Daylight

I must wait for the sunrise

I must think of a new life

And I mustn't give in

When the dawn comes

Tonight will be a memory too

And a new day will begin

Burnt out ends of smoky days

The stale cold smell of morning

A street lamp dies, another night is over

Another day is dawning

Touch me

It's so easy to leave me

All alone with the memory

Of my days in the sun

If you touch me

You'll understand what happiness is

Look a new day has begun

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What memories do you take with you from the year we have just concluded?
- 2) Is memory always a blessing? Why or why not?
- 3) As we age, do memories get happier or sadder?

Fighting Inside Ourselves

(Moses of Coucy, 13th Century)

It is because man is half angel, half brute, that his inner life is a war between such unlike natures. The brute in him clamors for vanity and venality; but the angel strives to make him know and do the will of God. Not until the very hour of death can it be known to what measure the victory has been won. He will do well to say each day, as he rises: 'This day I will be a faithful servant of the Almighty. I will be on my guard against wrath, falsehood, hatred, and quarrelsomeness, and will forgive those who wound me.'

Tour Dates for 5784

Coming to a home and synagogue near you

Holiday	Dates	Description
<u>Rosh Hashana</u>	Sept. 16 & 17, 2023	The Jewish New Year. A new beginning for all of us.
<u>Tzom Gedaliah</u>	Sept. 18, 2023	A fast day that is part of the story of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
<u>Yom Kippur</u>	Sept. 25, 2023	Day of Atonement. But do not think that atonement only can happen on this day.
<u>Sukkot</u>	Sept. 30-Oct. 6, 2023	A holiday that allows us to appreciate all we have.
<u>Shemini Atzeret</u>	Oct. 7, 2023	One last day for us to be together as a community and with God.
<u>Simchat Torah</u>	Oct. 8, 2023	We conclude and begin the Torah reading each year with a giant party.
<u>Hanukkah</u>	Dec. 8-15, 2023	A holiday when we celebrate triumphing over assimilation and rededicate our lives to our people.
<u>Asara B'Tevet</u>	Dec. 22, 2023	Another fast day connected to the destruction of Jerusalem.
<u>Tu B'Shvat</u>	Jan. 25, 2024	Trees are essential to life and we must show our appreciation each year.
<u>Ta'anit Esther</u>	Mar. 21, 2024	Esther fasted in preparation to save the Jews... We do the same.
<u>Purim</u>	Mar. 24, 2024	We celebrate our survival in the face of adversity unparalleled in ancient times. And we really celebrate.
<u>Ta'anit Bechorot</u>	Apr. 22, 2024	In solidarity with the first born Egyptians who died for our freedom, our first born fast.
<u>Pesach</u>	Apr. 23-30, 2024	The ultimate holiday of story telling, family, food and celebrating the gift of freedom.
<u>Yom HaShoah</u>	May 6, 2024	Remembering the modern day catastrophe that struck our people. (Holocaust Memorial Day)
<u>Yom HaZikaron</u>	May 13, 2024	A day to remember the sacrifices made by others so that we can have the State of Israel (Israeli Memorial Day)
<u>Yom HaAtzma'ut</u>	May 14, 2024	A day to celebrate the modern day miracle of Israel. (Israeli Independence Day)
<u>Lag BaOmer</u>	May 26, 2024	33rd day of counting the Omer, when mourning traditions conclude.
<u>Yom Yerushalayim</u>	June 5, 2024	The day on which Israel reunified the city of Jerusalem and made it accessible to all of humanity.
<u>Shavuot</u>	June 12-13, 2024	We celebrate the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people and the gift of law to humanity.
<u>Tzom Tammuz</u>	July 23, 2024	Another fast day connected to the destruction of the Temple.
<u>Tish'a B'Av</u>	Aug 13, 2024	Our national day of mourning that commemorates the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem along with many other tragedies.

Seasons of Love

From the Musical “RENT” by Jonathan Larson

Five hundred twenty five thousand
six hundred minutes

Five hundred twenty five thousand moments, oh dear
Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets
In midnights, in cups of coffee
In inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife
In five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure, a year in the life?

How about love?
Measure in love
Seasons of love (love)

Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes
Five hundred twenty five thousand journeys to plan
Five hundred twenty five thousand six hundred minutes
How do you measure the life of a woman or a man?

In truths that she learned
Or in times that he cried
In bridges he burned or the way that she died

It's time now, to sing out
Though the story never ends
Let's celebrate
Remember a year in the life of friends

Remember the love
(Oh, you got to, you got to remember the love)
Remember the love
(You know that love is a gift from up above)
Remember the love
(Share love, give love, spread love)
Measure in love
(Measure, measure your life in love)

Seasons of love
Seasons of love
(Measure your life, measure your life in love)

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How would your life measure in love?
- 2) How do we devalue material belongings?
- 3) Why is time of value?



A play about Repentance

By Ayelet Hearshen

It's a normal school day at Jewish Academy of Repentance High, when Nadav Cohen drops all of his things in the hall. Leah is the only other one there.

Nadav: What a ballagan! What am I going to do?!

Leah: Oh um, wow that's bad. Oh well don't want to be late to minyan! See you!

That night Leah is lying in bed, trying to sleep, finally, she sits up, turns on the light, and thinks

Leah: I can't fall asleep! I keep thinking about when Nadav dropped all his stuff and I didn't help him pick it up! Why didn't I help?

Leah: What was that thing Rabbi Hearshen was talking about in his sermon the other day? Tesh- Teshu- Teshuvah? Yeah, that seems right.

She grabs her Siddur and dictionary and searches up the word

Leah: Hmm... maybe if I do this I'll feel better and finally get a good night's sleep!

The next day Leah goes up to Nadav and apologizes

Leah: Hey, Nadav, I want to say I am sorry. Yesterday you dropped your things and I walked by without helping. That was wrong of me. I'm very sorry and hope you can forgive me.

Nadav: Wow Leah! Thanks for apologizing! I was sad when no one stopped to help me and I was late and didn't make it in time for minyan, but I'm glad you said sorry. I forgive you.

Leah: Thank you! I feel so much better!

Nadav: Yeah, well it was nice talking, I'm going to go study Chumash and Gemara

Leah: Ok! I need to get to class as well.

Nadav: Bye!

It's Quiet Uptown

From the Musical "Hamilton" by Lin Manuel Miranda

There are moments that the words don't reach

There is suffering too terrible to name
You hold your child as tight as you can
And push away the unimaginable
The moments when you're in so deep
It feels easier to just swim down

The Hamiltons move uptown
And learn to live with the unimaginable

I spend hours in the garden
I walk alone to the store
And it's quiet uptown
I never liked the quiet before
I take the children to church on Sunday
A sign of the cross at the door
And I pray
That never used to happen before

Philip, you would like it uptown, it's quiet uptown

You knock me out, I fall apart

Look at where we are
Look at where we started
I know I don't deserve you, Eliza
But hear me out
That would be enough

If I could spare his life
If I could trade his life for mine
He'd be standing here right now
And you would smile, and that would be enough

I don't pretend to know
The challenges we're facing
I know there's no replacing what we've lost
And you need time
But I'm not afraid
I know who I married
Just let me stay here by your side
That would be enough

If you see him in the street, walking by her side
Talking by her side, have pity

Eliza, do you like it uptown? It's quiet uptown

Look around, look around, Eliza
(They are trying to do the unimaginable)

There are moments that the words don't reach
There is a grace too powerful to name
We push away what we can never understand
We push away the unimaginable
They are standing in the garden
Alexander by Eliza's side
She takes his hand

It's quiet uptown

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What is suffering?
- 2) What is a time where you had no words? (How did that feel?)
- 3) What is a way we push things away? How can we deal better with pain?



When Your Feet Don't Touch the Ground

From the Musical "Finding Neverland" by Gary Barlow & Eliot Kennedy

When did life become so complicated?
Years of too much thought and time I
wasted,
And in each line upon my face,
Is proof I fought and lived another day.

When did life become this place of
madness?
Drifting on an empty sea of waves and
sadness?
I make believe I'm in control,
And dream it wasn't all my fault.

When your feet don't touch the ground,
When your voice won't make a sound.
Here, it's safe, in this place, up off the
clouds.

When your feet don't touch the earth,
You can't feel the fates that hurt
And you're free, there's no need to
come down.
When your feet don't touch the ground.

Everyday just feels a little longer
Why am I the only one not getting
stronger?
Running around pretending life's a play,
It doesn't make the darkness go away.

I may be young but I can still remember
Feeling full of joy, crying tears of
laughter

Now all my tears are all cried out,
Make-believe, but count me out.

'Cause my feet are on the ground,
And the inner voice I found
Tells the truth, "There's no use,
If your head's in the clouds"

With my feet on solid earth,
I can face the fates that hurt,
And in time, I'll be fine,
I'll come 'round.

I was once like you.
Life was a maze.
I couldn't find my way out.
But what I say is true,
You will be amazed,
Make-believe and you will find out that
it's true.

When your feet don't touch the ground,
When your voice won't make a sound.
Here, it's safe. In this place.
Up off the clouds.
When your feet don't touch the earth,
You can't feel the fates that hurt.
And you're free, there's no need, to
come down.
When your feet don't touch the ground.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How is your life "complicated?" How do you make it less so?
- 2) What is the reason to have your feet on the earth and what is a reason to have your head in the clouds?
- 3) How can you help make darkness go away?

If Only You Would Listen

From the Musical "School of Rock" by Andrew Lloyd Weber

You always talk, talk, talk all the time.
You never let me get in a word.
I wish I had, I had a dime
For ev'ry thought I've swallowed unheard.
No matter what it is that I do,
It's like I just can't seem to get through.

I've got so much to say,
If only you would listen.
I've tried ev'ry which way,
And still you never listen.
Can't you see I'm hurting?
I couldn't be more clear.
But I promise,
One day I'll make you hear.

You know I try, try, try to explain--
I'm not the kid you want me to be.
And yet it's all, it's all in vain--
You just don't wanna see the real me.
You think you know what I'm all about--
And yet you just keep shutting me out!

I've got so much to share,
If only you would listen.
You could prove that you care,
If only you would listen.
I'm not gonna beg you--

You'll never see a tear.
But I promise, one day, I'll make you hear.

Yeah, you'll see one day,
I'm gonna make you hear me.
Gotta find a way,
But you are gonna hear me.
Got so much to say
And I'm gonna make you hear me.

Maybe then you'll listen!
You gotta listen!
You need to listen!
You better listen!

I've got so much inside,
If only you would listen!
Joy and anger and pride,
If only you would listen!
It's not much I'm asking
I only want your ear.
Yeah, I promise, one day I'll make you
hear.
It's not much I'm asking,
I only want your ear.

And I promise, one day I'll shake you,
So damn hard that at last I'll wake you,

Questions for Reflection

- 1) Does this resonate with your childhood?
- 2) What about your parenthood?
- 3) What relationships in your life does this describe?
(Are you the talker or the ignorer?)

They Live in You

From the Musical "The Lion King" by Tim Rice

Ingonyama nengw' enamabala
Ingonyama nengw' enamabala

Night and the spirit of life calling
Oh, oh, iyo, mamela
And the voice with the fear of a child
answers
Iyo iyo, mamela

Wait, there's no mountain too great
Hear these words and have faith
Oh, oh, iyo
Have faith

Hela hey mamela, hela hey mamela
Hela hey mamela, hela hey mamela

He lives in you, he lives in me
He watches over everything we see
Into the waters, into the truth
In your reflection, he lives in you

Dream, and the voice in the wind
whispers
Iyo mamela

Wait, there's no mountain too great
Hear these words and have faith, oh, oh,
iyo

He lives in you, he lives in me
He watches over everything we see
Into the waters, into the truth
In your reflection, he lives in you

Ingonyama nengw' enamabale
Ingonyama nengw' enamabale

He lives in you, he lives in me
He watches over everything we see
Into the water, into the truth
In your reflection, he lives in you

He lives in you, oh yeah, he lives in me
He watches over everything we see
Into the water, into the truth
In your reflection, he lives, he lives, he
lives, he lives in you
He lives, he lives, he lives in you
He watches over everything we see



Questions for Reflection

- 1) How do our ancestors affect us?
- 2) What does this song teach about immortality?
- 3) How will you live on in future generations?

Tomorrow

From the Musical "Annie" by Martin Charnin

The sun will come out tomorrow
Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow
There'll be sun

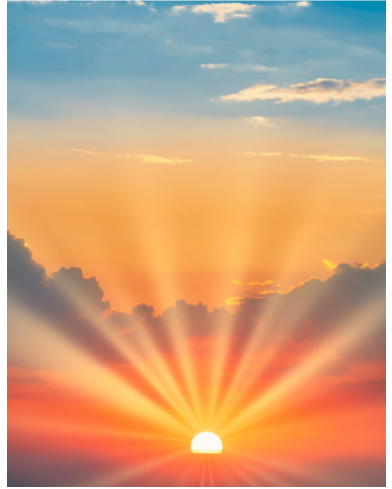
Just thinkin' about tomorrow
Clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow 'til there's
none
When I'm stuck with a day that's grey and lonely
I just stick up my chin and grin and say, oh

The sun will come out tomorrow
So you gotta hang on
'til tomorrow, come what may!
Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love ya, tomorrow
You're always a day away!

When I'm stuck with a day that's grey and lonely
I just stick up my chin and grin and say oh

The sun will come out tomorrow
So you got to hang on 'til tomorrow, come what may!
Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you tomorrow
You're only a day away

Tomorrow, tomorrow I love ya tomorrow
You're only a day away ...



Questions for Reflection

- 1) Which is bigger or more important, yesterday or tomorrow?
- 2) Why would orphans think of tomorrow when their past seems to define them?
- 3) What makes you think that tomorrow can be better than today or yesterday?
- 4) How can "this too shall pass" help you in life?

Time and Our Lives

(Maimonides, 12th Century)

People complain that life is too short, that man's life ends before he is done preparing himself for it. The truth is that while our life is short, we live as though we had eternity at our disposal: we waste too much of life. Our lifetime, if we used it properly, is sufficient to accomplish the greatest of achievements. But if we squander our life, we feel as though our years are flying by too quickly, as though we have no time to achieve anything.

The problem is not that we are allotted a short life, but rather that we are extravagant in spending it. Thus, a careless heir will quickly dissipate a huge estate while a meager inheritance will flourish in the hands of a wise and thrifty person. Of what, then, might we justly complain? That we live as if our life would last forever and do not wisely use the life-time that is amply allotted to us.

History Has Its Eyes on You

From the Musical "Hamilton" by Lin Manuel Miranda

WASHINGTON:

I was younger than you are now
When I was given my first command
I led my men straight into a massacre
I witnessed their deaths firsthand
I made every mistake
I felt the shame rise in me
And even now I lie awake

WASHINGTON:

Knowing history has its eyes on me

HAMILTON/WASHINGTON:

History has its eyes on me.

WASHINGTON:

Let me tell you what I wish I'd known
When I was young and dreamed of glory:
You have no control:

WASHINGTON AND COMPANY:

Who lives, who dies, who tells your story

WASHINGTON:

I know that we can win
I know that greatness lies in you
But remember from here on in

WASHINGTON/HAMILTON AND MEN:

History has its eyes on you.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What regrets do you live with?
- 2) Who will be telling your story in the future and do they know it well?
- 3) Why should we care that history has its eyes on us?

The Sabbath Prayer

From the Musical "The Fiddler on the Roof" by Sheldon Harnick

May the Lord protect and defend you.
May He always shield you from shame.
May you come to be
In Israel a shining name.

May you be like Ruth and like Esther.
May you be deserving of praise.
Strengthen them, Oh Lord,
And keep them from the strangers' ways.

May God bless you and grant you long
lives.

(May the Lord fulfill our Sabbath prayer
for you.)

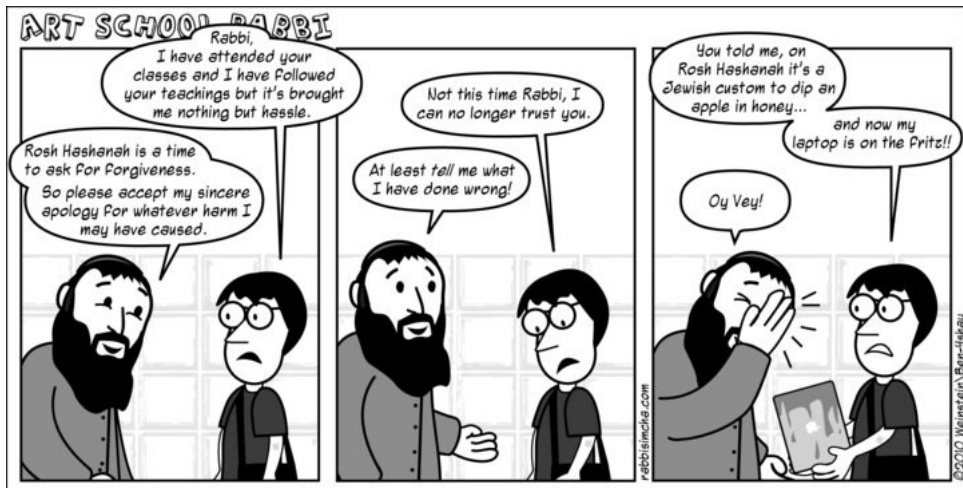
May God make you good mothers and
wives.

(May He send you husbands who will care
for you.)

May the Lord protect and defend you.
May the Lord preserve you from pain.
Favor them, Oh Lord, with happiness and
peace.
Oh, hear our Sabbath prayer. Amen.

Questions for Reflection

- 1) What is your prayer for your kids and grandkids?
- 2) What are the "strangers' ways?"
- 3) Why can't we shield our kids from



Close Every Door to Me

From the Musical “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”

By Andrew Lloyd Weber

Close every door to me
Hide all the world from me
Bar all the windows
and shut out the light
Do what you want with me
Hate me and laugh at me
darken my daytime
and torture my night
If my life were important I
Would ask will I live or die
But I know the answers
Lie far from this world

Close every door to me
Keep those I love from me
Children of Israel are never alone
For I know I shall find
my own peace of mind
for I have been promised
A land of my own

Close every door to me
Hide All the world from me
Bar all the windows

and shut out the light
Just give me a number
Instead of my name
forget all about me
and let me decay

I do not matter
I'm only one person
Destroy me completely
Then throw me away
If my life were important I
Would ask will I live or die
But I know the answers
Lie far from this world

Close every door to me
Keep those I love from me
Children of Israel
Are never alone
For we know we shall find
Our own peace of mind
For we have been promised
A land of our own

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How does this song describe Jewish history?
- 2) What does this song say about hope?
- 3) Why does hope matter?
- 4) Does it seem like a Zionist song?

The Meaning of “our” lives

(Albert Einstein)

Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we know: That Man is here for the sake of other Men ... Above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received.

Defying Gravity

From the Musical "Wicked" by Stephen Schwartz

[Elphaba]
Something has changed within me
Something is not the same
I'm through with playing by the rules
Of someone else's game
Too late for second-guessing
Too late to go back to sleep
It's time to trust my instincts
Close my eyes and leap!

It's time to try
Defying gravity
I think I'll try

Defying gravity
I'm defying gravity
And you can't pull me down
[Glinda]
Can't I make you understand
You're having delusions of grandeur?

[Elphaba]
I'm through accepting limits
'Cuz someone says they're so
Some things I cannot change
But till I try, I'll never know!
Too long I've been afraid of
Losing love I guess I've lost
Well, if that's love
It comes at much too high a cost!

I'd sooner buy
Defying gravity
Kiss me goodbye
I'm defying gravity
And you can't pull me down
Glinda, come with me. Think of what we
could do -together!

Unlimited (Unlimited)
My future is unlimited (unlimited)
And I've just had a vision

Almost like a prophecy
I know - it sounds truly crazy
And true, the vision's hazy
But I swear, someday I'll be...

Unlimited
Together we're unlimited
Together we'll be the greatest team
There's ever been - Glinda!
Dreams the way we planned 'em
[GLINDA]
If we work in tandem
[GLINDA & ELPHABA]
There's no fight we cannot win
Just you and I, defying gravity
With you and I defying gravity
[ELPHABA]
They'll never bring us down!

Well, are you coming?

[GLINDA]
I hope you're happy
I hope you're happy now that you're
choosing this -

[ELPHABA]
You too--
I hope it brings you bliss

[GLINDA & ELPHABA]
I really hope you get it
And you don't live to regret it
I hope you're happy in the end
I hope you're happy my friend

Flying so high! (Defying gravity)
Kiss me goodbye! (Defying gravity)

[ELPHABA]
So if you care to find me

Look to the western sky!
As someone told me lately:
"Everyone deserves the chance to fly!"

And if I'm flying solo
At least I'm flying free
To those who ground me
Take a message back from me

Tell them how I'm defying gravity!
I'm flying high
Defying Gravity!
And soon I'll match them in renown
And nobody, in all of Oz
No wizard that there is or was
Is ever gonna bring me down!
Bring me down!
Ooooooooooh!!!!!!!!!!

Questions for Reflection

- 1) How do the laws of nature stand in our way?
- 2) Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me... Is this true?
- 3) Why do we let other people hold us back from attaining new heights?
- 4) What is one dream you gave up on because of another person?

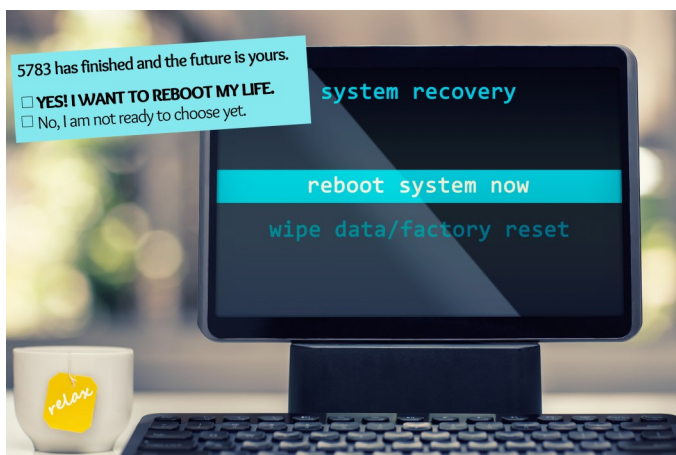
A Window and a Mirror (Hasidic Legend, S. Anski.)

A rich miser once complained to the Rabbi concerning the many demands made upon him. The Rabbi led him to the window and said: "Look out and tell me what you see."
"I see people," said the man.

Then the Rabbi led him to the mirror on the wall and said, "Now look and tell me what you see."

The man answered: "Now I see myself."

"The difference between the glass in the window and the glass in the mirror is only a layer of silver," said the Rabbi. "As soon as a bit of silver is added, you cease to see others and see only yourself."



The Villain

Rabbi Josh Hearshen

I got the script
I studied my part
I tried out for the play
I laid out my heart
I wanted to be the hero
I want to be great
But when the cast was posted
I was the one we all hate.
My heart sunk in my chest
I had no desire to be that guy
I explained that I only knew good
The director answered: why?
Playing a villain
Was something I never thought
could be
Playing a hero on the other hand
Was the true best part for me.
It was to no avail
The director cared not
So I found myself lacking
Without the part I had sought
I practiced and tried
I learned and I grew

I imagined the hell which
My character had lived through
Then I realized something huge
Something I had not understood
The difference between hero and
villain
Is more than simple bad and good.
For within each of us
Both evil and good we find
In our hearts and cores
And within our mind.
Why did I spend so much time
Trying to ignore the duality of
existence
Why did I never fully grasp this
nuance
Always keeping truth at a distance.
Every day we battle with ourselves
To be the very best we can
Nobody will win every time
I'm so thankful now I understand.



Over the Rainbow

From the Musical "The Wizard of Oz" by E.Y Harburg

Somewhere over the rainbow way up high
There's a land that I heard of once in a lullaby
Somewhere over the rainbow skies are blue
And the dreams that you dare to dream really do come true

Someday I'll wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far
Behind me
Where troubles melt like lemon drops
Away above the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow bluebirds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow.
Why then, oh, why can't I?

If happy little bluebirds fly
Beyond the rainbow.
Why, oh, why can't I?

Questions for Reflection

- 1) The rainbow that God sent to Noah reminds us of a promise from God to us. What promises do you want God to make?
- 2) Why do we need adversity and trouble?
- 3) The song admits that we cannot run away. Why?

Contentment and Happiness (Solomon ibn Gabirol, 11th Century)

Envy is like a sickness. I know of no one who hurts himself more than the envious person; his soul grieves, his mind deteriorates and his heart is disquieted. Everyone can enjoy his blessings, except the man who envies others, for he is pleased only by the misfortune of others. Every hatred can be cured except the enmity of him who hates you out of envy. Envy not your neighbor for what he has; while he enjoys his life your envy fills you with vexation.

Sunrise

Rabbi Josh Hearshen

Watching the horizon
Sitting by the shore
Witnessing the darkness
Becoming no more.
I was awe struck
As the sun rose up into the sky
To the sorrows of yesterday
Now able to say goodbye.
Beginning anew is special
Something truly Divine.
It allows us each a second chance
To embrace more sunshine.
The opportunities and chances
Of newness are so very great
Moving forward we can love a lot more
And diminish our entrenched hate.
As the light chases away the darkness
As the sun is now peaking in the sky
So too we must embrace a new beginning
Each and every time a year goes by.



Finding Our Way

(Bahya Ibn Pakuda, 11th Century)

For a person lost in the woods, it is not enough to realize that he has gone the wrong way. Unless he finds his way out, the knowledge that he has gone astray will not help him much. So also, it is not enough merely to regret past wrong doings. One must find a new mode of conduct, leading to a life of honesty, fairness and kindness. This is the meaning of true repentance.

A man was standing on the river bank with a bag full of silver in his hands. He kept throwing his coins into the water hoping to halt the stream with his coins and be able to cross the river. When he had but one coin left, he bethought himself to try a new way. He summoned one of the boatmen and paid him his only remaining coin to row him across the water. He succeeded to do with the one coin what he could not achieve with the bagful.

The Little Boy and the Old Man

Shel Silverstein

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."

Said the old man, "I do that too."

The little boy whispered, "I wet my pants."

"I do that too," laughed the little old man.

Said the little boy, "I often cry."

The old man nodded, "So do I."

"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems

Grown-ups don't pay attention to me."

And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.

"I know what you mean," said the little old man.



Honesty is always a Virtue

(Joseph Karo, 16th Century)

One must be most careful not to cheat one's neighbor, whether he is a seller or a buyer, a laborer or a customer. If one has something to sell he is forbidden to make it look better than it really is, in order to deceive the customer. It is also forbidden to paint over old utensils to make them appear new and all similar devices are prohibited. It is likewise forbidden to mix a little bad food with plenty of good food or inferior wine with superior wine, and to sell the same as though they were of high quality.

What Did We Get Right?

Rabbi Josh Hearshen

Master of the World.

Today is יום כיפור the day that the books are sealed. We call today יום הדין the Day of Judgment. Today our people gather around the world to confess the times that we missed the mark and we are fully aware that there are plenty of such occasions. But God, is this really a fair trial when we are only allowed to testify our guilt and not our merits??? We have enumerated the case against us, now we must enumerate the case in our favor:

For the times we have run to do a מצוה rather than run away...

And for the times we visited a sick person rather than ignoring their loneliness...

For the times we stood up for the innocent when we could have looked the other way...

And for the times we celebrated Shabbat in any way shape or form rather than treating it just as an ordinary day...

For the times we studied your תורה rather than play games...

And for the times we smiled at strangers rather than walking right by...

For the times we said thank you for things other people did rather than nodding in acknowledgement...

And for the times we did the work rather than taking the easy way...

For all of these actions, O God, acknowledge them, count them and help us to multiply them.

For the times we recycled rather than throwing something away...

And for the times when our neighbor needed our advice and we gave it rather than saying we had no time...

For the time we gave clothing away rather than keeping it for ourselves...

And for all of the money for צדקה that we gave rather than keeping it in our banks...

For all of the holidays we celebrated with intention rather than going through the motions...

And for the times we told the truth rather than telling a lie...

For the times we told others how we felt rather than holding it all inside...

And for the times we looked at Your world and said, 'wow' rather than not even noting its majesty...

For all of the art that we have created to beautify Your world rather than junk it up...

And for all of the children we have educated rather than turning them away from knowledge...

For the times we recognized we had enough rather than coveting...

And for the times we called our loved ones rather than waiting for them to call us...

For all of these actions, O God, acknowledge them, count them and help us to multiply them.