

Temple Beth Sholom
228 New Hempstead Rd
New City, NY 10956
(845) 638-0770
FAX: (845) 638-1696
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September 2003

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From the Desk of Rabbi David E. Fass *Sermon Themes: Revolution!*

We are living in the midst of the most profound revolution the human race has yet produced. Whatever one calls it — the information revolution, the computer revolution, the internet revolution — the results are the same: a tremendous, rapid change in the way we see the world and the way we operate in it. The High Holyday sermons this year explore what Judaism has to say to us in the midst of this global revolution.

If you'd like a copy of the sermons, please contact the Temple office or visit our website (posted after the Holy Days).

Rosh Hashanah Eve — Microsoft, Linux, and the Jews

Many liberal Jews and Christians seem confused, unsure what to believe, what to do, while more authoritarian forms of religiosity seem to provide the surety to others we liberals are lacking. What's a good liberal to do? Surf, my friends, surf. Surf the sources and not only see what it says, but see how you interpret what you find. Judaism is and was meant to be an open source operating system.

Rosh Hashanah Morning — Changing Icons, Smashing Idols

Judaism began as an ongoing revolution, an iconoclastic, idol-smashing idea that was satisfied with nothing less than ongoing change. Are we — can we be — should we be — part of this process?

Second Morning of Rosh Hashanah — God is Nothing?

One of the most liberating ideas ever created has been our gift to the rest of humankind:

the idea of abstract monotheism. Conceiving of God as a place-holder, like the zero, a being without name or shape or place, has liberated those who believe in such a God to change and grow and seek to make changes in the world.

Shabbat Shuvah — *PLEASE NOTE: All of the plaques affixed to our Sanctuary wall over the past year in memory of loved ones who died will be dedicated at this service on the Friday night between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur Eve — One Click and They're Gone: Al Qaeda's Philosopher of Death
Suicide bombings, jihad, eradicating the infidel, are all part of a dark and sinister world view that values death more than life. If we are ever to combat it, we must understand what it is we are battling against.

Yom Kippur Morning — One is Still the Loneliest Number

In a world that makes us feel more and more like mere ciphers in a maze of computer code, Judaism's emphasis on Social Action is a hopeful response. It begins first of all with the individual, and then fans out into the world at large.

Yizkor — Holy Ghosts

Like the shadow images that used to be visible on the computer screen, images of our loved ones remain visible inside of us. Yizkor and Yahrzeit provide us with important, though brief moments to give life to those who only inhabit the shadow realm. These rituals honor our dead by making them real not just to ourselves, but to the wider community.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Family Services

At family services on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah and the afternoon of Yom Kippur, I will be telling stories of ethical content appropriate for children up to about age nine or ten.

Yom Kippur Youth Group Service

On Yom Kippur afternoon, just after the morning service, members of our Youth Groups will present a creative service for the High Holydays. The content is on an adult level, and appropriate for children above the age of ten or so. Younger children are of course welcome, though we do urge parents not to let them disrupt the service. Please make it a point to support our young people by being present.

From our house to yours, Marian and I and our whole family wish each and every one of you and all your loved ones, a New Year of health and blessing, peace and prosperity, blessing and love. May this year see a true and lasting peace in the Middle East, and among our people as well.

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Cantor's Notes

We will gather together for a very special service – S'lichot, on September 20 at 10 P.M. in our sanctuary. S'lichot is a unique service on the Jewish calendar. Held late in the evening on the Saturday night at least three days before Rosh HaShanah, it helps prepare the spirit for the upcoming High Holy Days. This service is actually an introduction to the High Holy Days. Traditionally, Jews get up late at night the month before Rosh HaShanah to recite these prayers of forgiveness. Reform tradition is to perform this rite at least once during the period, usually at the conclusion of the Shabbat

preceding Rosh HaShanah . During this late evening service, the High Holy Days melodies are introduced. These High Holy Days melodies are an integral part of our emotional and spiritual journey into the New Year. The precious tunes of our tradition connect us to our past and to one another. They touch us in ways that we may not always understand. The service concludes with the blowing of the shofar for the first time during the High Holy Day season. Hearing the shofar in the still of the night is an experience not to be missed.

If you have never attended S'lichot service before, join us on September 20th and try it! My wife Lena, Ziv and I wish you happy, healthy and peaceful year!

Cantor Schwartz

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