

High Holidays *at Etz Chaim*



Rosh Hashana: September 13-15, 2015

Yom Kippur: September 22-23, 2015



ETZ CHAIM
The Joy of Judaism

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Introduction to the High Holidays

written by Rabbi Emanuel Feldman

The overarching theme of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is “change:” to change from what we were before and to become new individuals.

Tishrei, the month of Rosh Hashana, is the first month of the universe, and just as when God completed His Creation He contemplated and evaluated it, so does He do every Rosh Hashana ~ which means that Rosh Hashana is actually the Day of Judgment for the universe and for mankind collectively and individually.



That explains why, more than any other Jewish holiday, Rosh Hashana's liturgy is not limited to Jewish themes exclusively, but contains so many universal themes as well. On no other occasion, for example, is God referred to as "King over all the earth," and at no other time is God's Holy Temple called a "house of prayer for all the nations." This is all a reflection of the universal judgment of this day.

God evaluates us collectively, just as a shepherd looks over his flock with one glance. And individually, He also judges us like a shepherd who looks at each single sheep as it files through a narrow opening in the gate. So Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are more than just a Jewish version of New Year's Day. It's a time of great introspection, of teshuva/repentance, of stock-taking. According to an ancient Jewish tradition, it marks the creation of Adam and Eve ~ who were created, who sinned, and who were judged all on the same day.

All of these traditions underscore the idea that Rosh Hashana is the time of beginnings. For example, the Talmud states that a number of other events took place on Rosh Hashana: Abraham and Jacob were born on Rosh Hashana; the three barren women ~ Sarah, Rachel, and Hannah (the mother of the prophet Samuel) ~ were all remembered by God on Rosh Hashana, when He decreed that they will give birth. On Rosh Hashana, Joseph was freed from the Egyptian prison and became viceroy of Egypt. And on Rosh Hashana, slavery ended for the Jews in Egypt and they waited for the ten plagues to be completed so that they could go out to freedom.

Thus, Rosh Hashana is a time for significant initiatives. As such, it is an opportunity for us to recreate ourselves, to return to a relationship with God, to strengthen our ties to our faith...

On the one hand, Rosh Hashana is an extremely solemn day, the most solemn of the year after Yom Kippur. Because Rosh Hashana begins the Ten Days of Repentance, we stand at the bar of judgment on those days. It's as if we were in a courtroom pleading for our very lives.

Our tradition gives us a vivid image: "The Books of the Living and the Books of the Dead are open before Him," which means many things ~ but one of the things it means is that we pray that our names be inscribed by our loving and understanding God in the one book and not in the other.

Our tradition also tells us that beginning with Rosh Hashana, a Jew has the opportunity to return to God, to perform teshuva ~ which literally means to turn around, to return, to start all over again. Rosh Hashana and its companion, Yom Kippur, are Divine gifts in which we are given the opportunity to reopen our relationship with God, when we have the chance to wipe away the past as if it did not exist, and to start over again with a clean slate.

The slate is not wiped clean automatically. The process has to begin with us, with a sense of true regret, with contrition for past misdeeds, and with a serious resolution not to repeat them.

The opportunity is given to sincere returners, not to pro forma ones who are just going through the motions. But once the process is properly done, once the catharsis of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur make their impact on us, what could be more joyous than that? So, yes, it is solemnity filled with awe, and also filled with spiritual joy.

Remember that in the religious context joy is deeply inward, and is not necessarily manifested by laughter and smiles. As such, religious joy and religious awe are not contradictions. In fact, they go hand in hand. In the second Psalm, King David says, "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

The liturgy of Rosh Hashana, especially the additional "musaf" service, is the most magnificent prayer the world has ever seen. It's like a symphony, perfectly balanced, divided into three separate movements, devoted to the themes of:

- a. making God our sovereign and acknowledging Him as our King;
- b. remembering His intervention in our history, and underscoring our belief in Divine Providence ~ the idea that He listens and cares for us; and
- c. recalling the numerous Biblical events where the shofar heralds God's presence and protection, and longing for the time when the shofar will herald the redemption of all mankind and the coming of the Messiah...

Bear this in mind: the overarching theme of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is "change:" to change from what we were before and to become new individuals. The motif behind it all is accountability. We are responsible for our actions. We do not live in a vacuum. What we do or say has an impact and a resonance in the world. Yom Kippur represents the potential for a human being to change and return: we are not eternally condemned to follow a certain habitual path; we do have the ability, if we so choose, to change our ways.

It is amazing: in the Talmud (Nedarim 39b), the Sages tell us that teshuva, repentance, was created before the world was created. That is to say, the idea of repentance, of a person changing himself and changing his course, is an integral part of Creation ~ and the world could not exist without it.

High Holidays *at Etz Chaim*

Classes & Events
to help you prepare
for the High Holidays

See following pages for details



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Prepare for the Holidays with Etz Chaim

Classes & Events to help you get ready!



The High Holiday Prayer Book: Themes & Melodies

*Learn the deeper meaning
of the words and melodies for the
prayers of the High Holidays*

**Sundays, August 30
September 6, 20
10:30-11:30 AM**

**Etz Chaim Center
3702 Fords Lane**

Free of Charge



**Rabbi Shlomo
Porter**



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Prepare for the Holidays with Etz Chaim

Classes & Events to help you get ready!

Fresh Challah, Fresh Start!



with Toby Friedman & Deidra Zussman

The Whats & Hows Behind Round Challahs

And other customs of Rosh Hashanah

Make and bake 2 round challahs

Tuesday, September 1

8:00 PM

Etz Chaim Center

3702 Fords Lane

\$5 per person, for supplies

RSVP to info@etzchaimusa.org by Friday, August 28



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Prepare for the Holidays with Etz Chaim

Classes & Events to help you get ready!

HOW TO BE A GREAT PERSON

Inspirational Lessons
From The Lives of
Great Jews of Our History



Learn about the inspirational Jewish leaders whose lives can teach us
so much about how to become truly great people.

Introducing Rabbi Yitzi Weiner

Monday, September 7
8:00pm

Etz Chaim Center
3702 Fords Lane

Free of Charge



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Classes & Events to help you get ready!

ETZ CHAIM
PRESENTS

Rosh Hashana

& THE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

WITH

CHARLIE HARARY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH 8:00 PM

BNAI JACOB SHAAREI ZION

6602 PARK HEIGHTS AVENUE

ADMISSION \$10

PAY ONLINE AT WWW.ETZCHAIMUSA.ORG

FOR MORE INFO

EMAIL INFO@ETZCHAIMUSA.ORG OR CALL 410-764-1553



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Prepare for the Holidays with Etz Chaim

Classes & Events to help you get ready!

This Yom Kippur, would you like to



CHANGE THE WORLD?

It is well known that Yom Kippur is one of the most important holidays on the Jewish calendar. Our Sages teach that on Yom Kippur not only do we have the power to transform our character, we also have the unbelievable power to help transform the entire world.

Please join **Rabbi Yitzi Weiner** for a fascinating talk exploring fresh perspectives on the significance of Yom Kippur. Using a blend of fascinating stories as well as inspirational philosophical concepts, Rabbi Weiner will offer new insights regarding the fast and other mitzvos of Yom Kippur.

Monday, September 21

8:00pm

Etz Chaim Center

3702 Fords Lane



High Holidays *at Etz Chaim*

More Meaning. More Understanding. More Spirituality.

The Concise Seeker's Service

This concise service is built around the notion that prayer can only be truly inspiring if you understand the meaning behind the prayers, and the depth within them. This abbreviated service comes discussion, opportunities to ask questions, and a prayer service focused on personal inspiration.

The Complete Learner's Service

This service is complete and traditional, yet unlike anything you have ever experienced before. The service includes explanations of the major prayers and themes of the day with breakout discussion groups for those who want to ask questions and explore spiritual concepts. Over the years, this popular service has become a place where hundreds of people, of all ages and backgrounds, have discovered a new found appreciation for prayer, the holidays and the joy of Judaism.

Services and workshops are led by Rabbi Shlomo Porter, Rabbi Yisroel Porter
and *introducing* Rabbi Yitzi Weiner.

Services are located at the Etz Chaim Center - 3702 Fords Lane, Baltimore, MD 21215

To Register

Complete the form on the following page or register online at www.etzchaimusa.org.

Services are free with a suggested donation of \$50 per person (includes both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, followed by a break-fast).





2015 High Holiday Registration

Your Information

Name _____ D.O.B _____
Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip _____ Email _____
Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Seats

Please indicate how many seats you will need for each holiday.

Rosh Hashanah: _____ Men _____ Women _____ Children
Yom Kippur: _____ Men _____ Women _____ Children

Payment

Services are free with a suggested donation of \$50 per person.

Total \$ _____

☐ Check enclosed

☐ Charge my card



Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

CVV Code _____ Signature _____

Billing Address _____ Billing Zip _____

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us at
info@etzchaimusa.org or 410-764-1553 x3.

Important Dates & Times for the High Holidays

The following times for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are for Baltimore, MD.

Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 13, 2015

Candle Lighting - 7:00pm

Sunset - 7:18pm

Monday, September 14, 2015

Candle Lighting - AFTER 7:19pm

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

Havdallah - AFTER 8:00pm

Yom Kippur

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

Last Time to Eat - 7:00pm

Candle Lighting - 6:46pm

Sunset - 7:04pm

Wednesday, September 23, 2015

Havdallah & Break-Fast - AFTER 7:50pm

Online Resources to Prepare for the High Holidays

Articles

[Aish's High Holiday Overview](#)

["5 Inspiring Ways to Start the New Year" by Yvette Miller](#)

["Identifying Your Life's Mission" by Sara Yocheved Rigler](#)

["Learning to Forgive" by Sara Debbie Gutfreund](#)

Prayer Companions

[The Complete Rosh Hashanah Prayer Service Companion](#)

[The Complete Yom Kippur Prayer Service Companion](#)

[Teshuva & Viduy Workshop for Yom Kippur](#)

Infographics/Videos

[Aish's Rosh Hashanah Infographic](#)

[Aish's Yom Kippur Infographic](#)

[VIDEO: Charlie Harary on "Coming Clean"](#)

[VIDEO: "Dare to Dream"](#)