

Columbia Jewish Congregation
Rosh Hashanah - Day 2



2 Tishrei 5781 ★ September 20, 2020



Wherever you are in your journey, you are welcome here

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FROM RABBI SONYA STARR

Dear Chevri/Friends,

To state the obvious, all the holy days of the month of Tishri (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah) are going to look, sound and feel different this year. To be honest, different does not need to be less than. Sometimes we choose to do something different to shake ourselves out of a rut, to learn from our mistakes, to evolve into another level of spirituality. Plato said "Necessity is the mother of invention." We only hope that this year, necessity, will allow us to create experiences, that are spiritual, meaningful, profound, creative and life affirming. After all isn't that what the month of Tishri is about?

Before I explain the different choices we made in creating the High Holy Days, I want to first thank the religious practices committee (Bill Levine, Dan Shernicoff, Eliana Holgate, Evan Wasser, Roni Berkowitz) led by John Evans, and our Gabbai, Joe Bergstein. You all put in so much more time and effort than you ever signed up to do. You have been amazing, thoughtful, creative, wise and respectful partners during this difficult time. Thank you!

Since March, we have been balancing what was Jewish and Sacred with what was COVID-19 safe as applied to Shabbat services, holidays, b'nai mitzvah and yes high holy days. It has been a moving target as new information has arrived. In the end, the aspects of our life that were discussed the most were: social distancing, mask wearing, microphone usage, exposure from singing and shofar blowing, inside versus outside gatherings, amount of time on a computer screen, and what technology do we need to acquire, rent and/or use to reach out of our comfort zone to you. All the while remembering the mitzvah of Kiddush Hachayyim which I shared with you first in June, Kiddush Hachayyim reminds us that our job is to sanctify life. And so this year we transform our High Holy Days into another kind of experience in order to live to see another day when we hope we will be able to again safely meet in person.

In order to minimize your time sitting at your streaming device in one sitting, we have prerecorded birchot hashachar and pesuki d'zimra, an extended Drosh for second day Rosh Hashanah in the form of a round table discussion and the haftorot for Yom

Kippur morning and afternoon. Please make the time to benefit from what they have to offer..

Clearly the Torah service has been completely altered to meet the needs of COVID 19. There will be no marching the Torah around. The Aliyah will be given to the Torah reader, someone who lives in their house, or someone who will do the Aliyah from their seat in the congregation. The Torah readers will wear masks while chanting because they are sharing a microphone and chanting. Both are considered contagions. The person who dresses the Torah will be from the same family as the person who lifts it or the Torah lifter will dress it as well. All those involved in the Torah service will wear gloves just for the Torah service.

And then there is the blowing of the shofar. The blowing into the air by far is the highest risks. There are synagogues that are not blowing the shofar at all this year. We are lucky our sanctuary has two outside doors in addition to the one that leads to the lobby. I will be standing outside the one door, Cantor Kintisch will be standing near the other one, and you will hear but not see the shofar blown. The mitzvah is to hear the shofar. Thank Gd you will fulfill that mitzvah.

Usually there are two places in the Rosh Hashanah service that we blow shofar. The first is by itself right after the Torah service. You will hear it then! The second is melded into the musaf/second Amidah. Because of the complexity of both honoring this Amidah and blowing shofar, we will not be blowing the shofar this second time.

Neilah, the last service at the end of the Yom Kippur day will be outside weather permitting to allow more people to come to the synagogue to appreciate this beautiful service. Like all of our outside services, you will bring your own chair, prayer book and mask. In order to not share microphones, we are asking that all contributions to this service be handed in ahead of time. Neilah will be on Zoom as well.

One of CJC's calling cards is our sincere attempt to get as many people involved in the service as possible. Due to our need to make sure there are never more than 50 people in the sanctuary socially distancing themselves and masked, we will be giving more honors to fewer people. Please know that we appreciate everyone and all you give to our

community. You are not taken for granted or less than.

The other calling card is the desire to have as many opportunities for you to have your spiritual needs met. For this reason, tot services, Jr. Congregation, teen hangouts, discussion groups and adult social time will be all on zoom allowing you to share your voice and experience with each other.

Thankfully, Tashlich and Sukkot are celebrated outside. We will continue to do so this year just without food.

Simchat Torah will honor the Torah through songs, poetry, and teachings. We will return to the dancing, klezmer band, unrolling the Torah and carmel apples b'ezrat Hashem, next year.

FROM CANTOR BENJAMIN KINTISCH

Together, Apart

I write to all of you with fondness in my heart, even as we experience the bittersweet feelings of this most unusual High Holiday season.

It has been a real joy for the past three years to serve as your Cantor. I have enjoyed singing, dancing, playing music, and celebrating with many of you. I have been honored to also support you during sad moments and through pastoral care.

High Holidays have always been a highlight of the year for me. It is the time of year when our choir shines brightest, and when many musicians play with the band or for solo opportunities. When we gather in a big room together, the sound of all of CJC singing as one community is splendid. Sadly, I won't be able to experience that particular joy this year, my final year serving as your Cantor.

This year, as we know all too well, will be very different. We won't have big crowds in a room. We won't have the choir singing together at all. Even our band has been minimized with safety considerations in mind.

And yet, despite these limitations, we will be **together, apart.**

I am sure there are other changes I forgot to explain. If you there is a choice we made that you disagree with or do not understand, please feel free to get in touch with me.

Throughout the High Holy Day Period we ask Gd to have compassion on us, to forgive our missteps, to remember our intentions. This year I ask that of you.

But mostly I ask you to sing loudly, engage completely, think deeply, learn and teach Jewishly and feel intensely. For ultimately what is the month of Tishri about? It is about us as one community celebrating the gift of life, the community we cherish, and relationship we have with each other and Gd.

May we all be sealed in the book of life for good health, purpose, peace through justice, and compassion for ourselves and others. Amen

While we will not be in the same room, we will be **together, apart.**

While we cannot sing in one strong communal voice, we will sing from our respective homes, **together, apart.**

While we cannot pray in one voice, we will pray from our homes, **together, apart.**

So much of what makes synagogue life special is how we gather for the activities I listed above: celebrations, worship, community meals, learning, mourning and more.

We have found ways over the past six or seven months to creatively "meet" when we can via Zoom and using other technology, and that has been a wonderful thing. Nonetheless, I know that I miss seeing our fellow congregants in person – and that is hard.

My prayer is that this time of **together, apart** does not last too much longer. I hope and pray that the health crisis related to COVID-19 may be managed such that we can be in person together soon. Until then, I wish you and your family a beautiful and meaningful High Holiday season, even as we celebrate **together, apart**

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Supplement 1 - Oh the Spirit of Life

- The Plains Tribe

“O Spirit of Life, I put my arms around myself, all that I am, all that I can be. I stand here in my own history, with all my mistakes and victories. I hold all those I will meet today, in my journeying and in my work. I try to walk gently on this earth. Let me walk gently through the lives of my work companions and friends. Though they make way for my passing, may they spring back, neither broken nor bruised.”

Supplement 2 - Avinu Malkenu

- Dubner Maggid

“Nowadays it is our custom to sing the last lines of Avinu Malkeynu out loud. There is a special melody for this line that everyone knows. It has become one of the most familiar songs of the High Holy Day Services.

But in Eastern Europe, the custom was to sing all the rest of the Avinu Malkeynus out loud and the last line was said in silence. The Dubner Maggid was once asked why and he explained, as was his way, with a parable.

Once there was village grocer. Once a year he would go to the big city to order supplies and merchandise for the coming year. When he entered the warehouse he was dazzled by the amount and the variety of the merchandise that was on display there. And so he would say: ‘Give me some of this’ and ‘give me some of that.’ He got carried away and he would go down the aisles ordering everything in sight. And then, when he got to the cashier and they totaled his bill he was embarrassed and he would say in a whisper: ‘I am sorry but I don’t have enough money with which to pay for all these things I have ordered. Would you please give them to me on credit, and if I have a good year I will be able to pay for them all.

And so it is with us, said the Dubner. When we think of all the things we would like to have in the new year we are overwhelmed with desire. And so we call out: Avinu Malkeynu, give us health; Avinu Malkeynu, give us wealth, etc. but when we come to the last sentence and we realize how little merit we have, we say in a whisper: Avinu Malkeynu, have pity on us and give us all we ask for on credit, even though we have no good deeds with which to pay for them. Give us another year of life and we will try to be better and to justify Your faith in us and to pay You back for all You give us.”

Supplement 3 - I Want a Clear Sign

- Robert Ohler

“O Gd
I want a miracle-
A clear
Unequivocal
Inescapable sign-
A thing I cannot explain
A proof I cannot debate
An earnest of Your existence
And my faith.
Why do You not act?
I want a miracle-
Not a baby born well and normal
Not a sunrise seen
Not a rain’s whisper heard
But a REAL miracle.
I WANT a miracle
I....
My Gd how I need Your forgiveness of my
presumption
Arrogance
Unfaith
Death
For the dimness and numbness of my soul.
There are those who see the skies open
And explain it away;
There are others who see the common
uncommonly
And understand.

I will promise to do what I can
To wake up and come alive
To take time
And risk solitude
To hear a tree
See a poem
Swim in the rain
Look INTO her eyes
To REALLY see and hear and feel
Even a tiny portion of
The million mysteries
The constant magic that is
A foot...
And underfoot
And all around
And all within.

O Gd
Take the sleepers from my eyes
The wax from my ears
The cataracts from my soul.
I need the gift of Your spirit
Your Holy spirit
To bring clarity to my perception
Joy to my heart
And eternity to my daily round
Amen

Supplement 4 - The Dubner Maggid

“There was a couple that had been married for many years. And as sometimes happens, over the course of the years the conflicts and the collisions and the frictions had grown. They got to the point where they really weren’t happy with each other anymore, and so they were prepared to separate. They talked about it, and they said: We are two mature adults and we don’t need to hurt like this. It is really the best thing if we go our separate ways.

The husband took his bag and opened the door to walk out. As he opened the door, he heard from the street the sound of an organ grinder playing the music that was played at their wedding. Hearing that music again he was overcome with the memory of how, once upon a time, they had loved each other. He turned back to his wife, and noticed that she was listening too. She looked at him and he looked at her, and they said: “let’s give it one more try.”

The Dubner Maggid said this is what happens on Rosh Hashanah. We have all had a difficult year. Gd has disappointed us. He hasn't given us what we needed. And we have disappointed Gd. Over the years we have grown apart. Our values are different from what they once were. We have so little to say to each other. On Rosh Hashanah we come to shule and we are inclined to say to Gd: "You know-maybe this isn't working out. Maybe we ought to go our separate ways."

And then, just as we are thinking of saying that, we hear the sound of the Shofar, the music that was played when Gd and the people of Israel entered into a covenant with each other. And when we heard that music we remember...We remember how we used to feel towards each other once upon a time. And we say: 'Okay let's give it one more chance.'

Supplement 5 - Gd Won't Ask

Gd won't ask what kind of car you drove, but will ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.

Gd won't ask the square footage of your house, but will ask how many people you welcomed into your home.

Gd won't ask about the fancy clothes you had in your closet, but will ask how many of those clothes helped the needy.

Gd won't ask about your social status, but will ask what kind of class you displayed.

Gd won't ask how many material possessions you had, but will ask if they dictated your life.

Gd won't ask what your highest salary was, but will ask if you compromised your character to obtain that salary.

Gd won't ask how much overtime you worked, but will ask if you worked overtime for your family and loved ones.

Gd won't ask how many promotions you received, but will ask how you promoted others.

Gd won't ask what your job title was, but will ask if you performed your job to the best of your ability.

Gd won't ask what you did to help yourself, but will ask what you did to help others.

Gd won't ask how many friends you had, but will ask how many people to whom you were a true friend.

Gd won't ask what you did to protect your rights, but will ask what you did to protect the rights of others.

Gd won't ask in what neighborhood you lived, but will ask how you treated your neighbors.

Gd won't ask about the color of your skin, but will ask about the content of your character.

Gd won't ask how many times your deeds matched your words, but will ask how many times they didn't.

Supplement 6 - Mahzor Lev Shalom

- Bernard Raskas

Compassionate Gd, grant us the understanding and the will to love mercy, to live justly, and to walk humbly before You.

May our hearts be open with generosity and our hands ready with kindness.

May our faith in the attainment of harmony and peace for all humanity remain unshaken.

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts find expression in our lives day by day, helping us to fulfill our potential to live up to the divine image in which we are created.

May all our aspirations for good be fulfilled.

Amen

Bernard Raskas (adapted in Mahzor Lev Shalom)