

WELCOME 5780

A NEW APPROACH FOR A NEW YEAR

This year we are thrilled to welcome Rabbi Elan Babchuck, Director of Innovation at CLAL. He brings a lifetime of experience blending his innovation background with his spiritual one, and is eager to bring those wisdom traditions to our community! Through his words of introduction to the High Holidays, you will get a sense of how he will structure our experience together.



As you read them, think of the family and friends you would like to invite to join us for this unique and meaningful experience.

Erev Rosh Hashanah, 1st Tishrei/Sunday, September 29	6:00 PM
Rosh Hashanah day 1, 1st Tishrei/Monday, September 30	9:00 AM
Tashlich <i>at Park Ave. Beach, Highland Park</i>	4:30 PM
Rosh Hashanah day 2, 2nd Tishrei/Tuesday, October 1	9:00AM
Kol Nidre, 10th Tishrei/Tuesday, October 8	6:30 PM
Yom Kippur, 10th Tishrei/Wednesday, October 9	9:00 AM
Mincha	4:45 PM
Ne'ilah	5:45 PM
Shofar Blowing	7:04 PM

Over a century ago, Rav Avraham Kook (first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel) wrote: “The old shall be made new, and the new shall be made holy.” At the time he was presenting a charge for the budding Jewish state to revive ancient agricultural laws, and in doing so to root the emergent in the ancient. And as we heed this call today - in preparation for the High Holidays ahead - the work of rebirthing ourselves and reimagining our experiences may seem just as daunting.



But Israel wasn't built in a day, and our High Holiday experience won't fulfill their transformative promise at the first sounding of the shofar, note from Howard's keyboard, beat

from Kalyan's drum or word of liturgy from David's lips.

Innovation takes time, the sheer “newness” of the work will emerge in drips and drops, and - I promise you this - the internal change will be incremental, barely noticeable at times and overwhelming at others.

I've spent more than half my life in innovation and entrepreneurship, and of the many gleanings from that work that we'll explore in our time together, the one I always come back to is that innovation demands balance. Between patience and urgency. Chutzpah and humility. What was and what might yet become. Large-scale transformations and incremental transitions. Our highest aspirations rooted in the harshest of realities.

My invitation for these coming holidays is that we explore with love and reverence our rich tradition - from liturgy to song to ritual. And that when the time calls for it we challenge ourselves to make these “old” traditions

new again - through the process of reflection, exploration, and experimentation, and to embrace these “new” traditions as holy, too.

As the Baal Shem Tov (Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, 18th C) wrote: “The world is new to us every morning; this is the Holy One’s gift.” I look forward to co-creating our new traditions, new year, new world, and new selves, together.



This guide will outline our plans for the High Holiday experience.

With the music of Howard Levy, Kalyan Pathak and Larry Gray (and Chris Siebold on day two) and David Landau with Judith Golden, we will draw on the richness of tradition to use different modalities and innovative techniques to speak to our needs.

— Elan

OUR NEEDS DON’T CHANGE, OUR METHODS MUST

Once Jews went to synagogue simply out of a sense that that is what Jews do. Through the liturgy, community and spiritual experiences they got comfort, help and support to face the challenges of life. It was their way of coping with the fragility of their individual lives and the vulnerability of their community. Judaism was the main tool they owned.

Now we have the same neWeds—we age, are subject to illness, and live with tensions in our interpersonal relationships and internal struggles over our own morality. The forces of nature diminish our sense of power even as we own responsibility for climate change. Our community and the democratic means by which we live in the United States and Israel are far more vulnerable than we ever thought. So, despite the ever-changing modern circumstances,

our human needs are constant.

How we meet them is very different. Our identities are multifaceted and partial. Sometimes there is conflict between different elements of them. We no longer do things simply because we are a part of a community. We choose what we do and when and how we



do it. We choose among the possible ways to meet the same needs. That means we look to find the value and utility of an experience before we invest in it. This is true of the modern religious experience. That we all are looking for something is why religion in America is over a trillion-dollar business.

As Jews we are members of the religious group that according to Pew studies is the most knowledgeable about religion and the group that has the highest rating of warmth by other Americans. This gives us an opportunity to be free to draw on our rich and complicated tradition to find tools to better our lives and reinforce our civilization to continue to adapt to provide answers and help. Rabbi Elan Babchuck teaches religious entrepreneurship through Harvard and Columbia Business Schools. Through his words of introduction to the High Holidays, you will get a sense of how he will structure our experience together. As you read them, think of the family and friends you would like to invite to join us for this unique and meaningful experience.

SELICHOT WITH BEN SALES

**8PM, SATURDAY NIGHT, SEPTEMBER 21,
TROSS FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER,
NORTH SHORE CONGREGATION ISRAEL
1185 SHERIDAN ROAD, GLENCOE**

JEWS IN THE NEWS
THE NEWS ABOUT JEWS



Selichot is the time of preparation for the introspection and transformation we hope to get from Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It's the most personal of holidays because we dig deep into our own souls but it is also the most collective because we look at the actions and circumstances of our entire community.

JTA Correspondent Ben Sales will join us to discuss the events of the year with current events from the results and subsequent maneuvering following the Israeli elections to the rise of hate crimes, overt racism and anti-Semitism in the United States. He will review the Jewish news that brought pride and that which elicited cringes. But even more he will present for us the moral, political and cultural challenges that we face as we explore how “Jewish values” should influence our people as we consider the stranger and the vulnerable.



Selichot is not only this intellectual experience. It is a chance to open the neurobiological, psychological, and spiritual pathways that we will use over the holidays. Hearing the shofar and singing familiar songs literally does what the poets said — open us up for the work ahead.

ROSH HASHANAH

EREV ROSH HASHANAH — 6:00 PM

Be fair or acknowledge you have a favorite. What family has not struggled with that issue? Add to it that each parent may make a different choice and each feels very self-righteous and moral in their decision. What if your feelings and action are so intense you banish one son and treasure the other. Can that action literally divide the family and permanently exclude one member? What happens if you realize later, that the children develop a relationship independent of your maneuvering.



The Torah story we read on Rosh Hashanah offers a dramatic panorama into our daily lives. How do we deal with the different personalities and goals of our different children? How do we respond appropriately to their different needs?

The issue plays out as well on a national level. When Israel built the defense fence to limit terrorism, it succeeded in improving security but it also distanced Jews from Palestinians so that ordinary Israelis had less contact with their neighbors and our historic cousins. This led to more hatred and stereotyping, less discussion and more hostility.

When the human family is separated, it amplifies our fear of differences and stimulates demonizing the other.

Our services will warm up with selections of the orienting blessings, the psalms of the Temple Levites and the special poems that define the extraordinary agenda of the day. Through them we can appreciate what we have, what we need, what we want and what we need to reject.

After the Torah reading, at about 11:00 AM, we will sound the shofar and engage with the themes of the day with the perspective of our Torah discussion.



In Malchuyot, we consider our place in the universe. How are we changing, gaining and losing, impacting others and facing our limitations? What defines who we want to be? Through Zichronot, we reflect on the process of our own reflections. How do our memories and the choices we make set the tone for our future? What and how do we recall the past? In both personal and historic ways, how do we deepen our understanding of our past to enhance our future? And with Shofarot, we appreciate that this is not just a contemplative exercise. We act on how we think and feel. And that leaves consequences for us and our heirs to live with. In each of these modes, we will consider our options and the possible consequences.

In many ways, the central thematic image of Rosh Hashanah is: “On Rosh Hashanah it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: How many shall leave this world and how many shall be born, who shall live and who shall die?”

Beyond the literal, how do the perspectives that we shape as individuals in community on the High Holidays set the tone for the year ahead? And how do we do this while acknowledging how limited we are in controlling our fates?



With Kiddush over wine and motzi over challah, we will conclude at 1 PM.

TASHLICH — 4:30 PM
(at Park Avenue Beach in Highland Park)

Even the rabbis once thought Tashlich was primitive. Could you really throw away your sins that are so much a part of your personality by flinging bread into the water?

It survived and has become important to us because it forces us to consider the most difficult elements of change. What is real change versus sugar coating? What costs are there in giving up old ideas or narratives for new ones even if the old ones contradict our goals and values? Think of the conflicts in the South about tearing down Confederate statues or the difficulties Israelis have with Palestin-



ians commemorating Nachkba Day.

How often do we act like we are changing but really keeping the same attitudes with a new presentation? It's often painful when the change is permanent. How does it feel when your kids tell you they don't want your family heirlooms, to just give them away or throw them away?

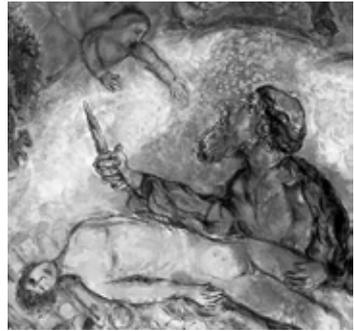
In the morning, we may talk about separation as a concept. Through Tashlich, we actually enact the powerful step of getting rid of something.

We will create the climate to make this a most poignant moment within the High Holiday efforts.

ROSH HASHANAH MORNING, DAY TWO — 9:00 AM

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we will explore the consequences of Abraham's decision to banish Ishmael and make Isaac the chosen one. What was the purpose of this act? Simply the expression of personal choice or a thoughtful moral construct? And if it were a moral construct, what was that construct?

If you have to live by distinguishing among people, particularly in your family and you believe you are doing it for a virtuous, moral or utilitarian purpose, what do you have to do to fulfill that purpose? Do you have to demonize the other to justify your position? In the Akedah, one perspective is that Abraham had to offer Isaac to God to justify the "virtue" of his choice of Isaac over Ishmael. In the Torah reading, the issue is resolved with God protecting Abraham from the ultimate consequences of his behavior. Isn't that the hope for mercy that surfaces in Jewish thought during the High Holidays? Will the world's God step in and send a ram to protect us from the harm we can do from the choices we make?



Again, we will conclude at 1 PM.

THE DAYS IN BETWEEN

On Rosh Hashanah, we hope to achieve some success in considering what approaches we need to achieve to be more adaptive and inspired for the year ahead. What shifts do we have to make in our thinking and self-reflection to uplift our family life, and participation in community and country to approach our higher aspirations?

During the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we try to figure that out. What thinking can we do differently? What methods are there to implement change? On a personal level, what will we do differently? On a communal level, what will we do to influence the world? How will we use our time and our money to support our redefined expectations of ourselves?



YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur is a day that seems to ask us the impossible: Focus on our faults (Al Cheyts) AND embrace the fantasy that we can get rid of them. It's two different approaches to life in twenty-five hours of battle and harmony.

Yom Kippur is the day when we all become the most accessible to our emotional need for religious comfort. And it is also the time when we are most introspectively critical of our own behavior. How do we get a world and a life that is better than what we deserve? How do we get acceptance despite our limitations – be they committing acts we ourselves know are inappropriate, operating with distorted reality or failing to live up to our own expectations? How do we mix our realities, no matter how frightening, with our unbridled hope? We have ideas about what we need to do and even some ideas about how to do it. We consider and let go of the “cheyts” which may be thought of not only as “sins” but as ways we have gone off course. They are the parts of our lives that don't fit in with the coherent story we would like to have.



Together we will explore the hubris of our hope and the acceptance of our imperfect reality. In many ways, the hardest part of this process is letting go because it is as if a part of us dies and often it is a part of us that we like and are comfortable with. And that is painful.

KOL NIDRE — 6:30 PM

On Kol Nidre, we begin with the seemingly problematic words, “Our vows shall not be vows, our oaths shall not be oaths.” Rather than looking at them as an excuse for failing, they can inspire us limited humans to take a chance at doing better even as we say we are incapable of fully understanding the consequences of what we do. Can we live with the difference between our fantasies and dreams and our realities and limited abilities? Does a lack of perfection or even a gap between our aspirations and our performance make us hypocrites or even liars?

As we enter, we fill out Al Cheyt forms which reflect the work we’ve done since Rosh Hashanah. Where have we fallen short in what we as individuals have done or failed to do? What have we as a Jewish community done wrong or failed to do? How do we own our failings without either denying them or succumbing to them?



Immediately after Kol Nidre, we recite the words, “May forgiveness be granted to the whole congregation of Israel and to the stranger in their midst for in respect of all the people as if it was done unwittingly.” And we give God’s response, “I have forgiven according to your word.” Ultimate amnesty! Complete grace from God!

Yet that is when the second level of work begins. From our earliest days of wandering in the dessert, we didn’t look only to God to be kind to us. Amazing grace was never the main theme in Jewish life. It becomes our responsibility to transform ourselves. We have to select our path, define our course and plan our action for the year.

It is a time of support for “community” by “community.” You will receive your pledge card. On this, the “holiest” night of the year,

we acknowledge that in Judaism, money is not the root of evil but a tool that can empower us to fulfill different purposes. How we use our resources is our choice. This is the time when we decide what we will make possible for Aitz Hayim to be in the year ahead. During the service, we will recite the Shema, the Amidah of reflection and selections from the poetry written through the ages that attempts to capture the different moods that lead to reflection and change.

Through the two sets of confessions, the Ashamnu and the Al Cheyts, said silently and out loud, we are able to appreciate how ordinary, mundane and acceptable our failures and limitations have become. Sometimes they are so much a part of us we don't even notice them, and sometimes it is just frightening to give them up. Sometimes, we don't consider what is new and different and sometimes we overly invest in rationalizing the status quo.

YOM KIPPUR DAY — 9:00 AM

After the warm up in the morning service, we will have a second round of the confessionals, which should push us to go beyond where we were and consider behaviors and consequences within ourselves and our community that we have not considered before.

The Torah reading speaks to our desire for our ritualistic acts to move the heavens to fulfill our vision of a perfect redeemed world. It speaks to our emotional longing for there to be cosmic meaning to our acts. It emphasizes shedding clothing with its symbolic significance. Aaron the High Priest sprinkles the blood to get expiation for himself, his family and the entire community. What does it mean to “scapegoat” a goat, not because it is different but because it is the same as the goat we sacrifice?

Immediately after the Torah reading, we leave this emotional world of divinely ordained perfection and are confronted by the reality of the harsh words of Isaiah. He challenges us to leave this imaginary world of symbolic redemption and feed the hungry, cloth the naked

and welcome the stranger. Even as we need comfort, we must take responsibility.

At the Yiskor service, through guided imagery, we have a chance to reconnect with our parents, spouses, grandparents, children, family members and friends who have been gathered to their ancestors.

This active process becomes totally personal as some are brought to raw pain and others to joyous experiences.

For some it is a chance to share news and for others it is a chance to get and give forgiveness. The animated film, *Coco*, demonstrates poignantly how the Mexican Day of the Dead mirrors the guided imagery and the theme



of the much-quoted words of Jack Riemer, “As long as we live, they live for they are now a part of us as we remember them.”

Two special elements complete the Yom Kippur Musaf service:

The Avodah service is our reenactment of the High Priest entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. As we prostrate ourselves in front of the Ark, we literally acknowledge our limitations, uncertainties and fragilities. Through that lack of arrogance comes opportunities for a new different form of confidence, one that acknowledges our need to be protected by a compassionate world.

The Eyleh Ezkerah is a medieval poem that speaks of the horror of the Romans torturing the great rabbis of the Talmud. It both captures Jewish fear in the face of evil and cruel enemies and opens the door for the introspection that we may bear some responsibility as we are condemned for selling our brother Joseph into slavery.

Coming immediately after the Avodah, it balances our hope of an ideal world with the complexity of our own experiences.

MINCHA — 4:45 PM

Mincha services gives us the challenge of any evolving tradition—to evaluate the ways of the past in view of our current needs and understanding.

No Torah has been politicized more than the Mincha Torah reading, Leviticus 18: “Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman.” On the literal level our tradition voices words we no longer accept.

We are forced to face the challenge of how do we appreciate the values expressed by our ancestors in their historical context and ours.

It forces us to live with the flaws in our development and deal with the tension between wanting to idealize the past and realize its limitations.

As Abba Eban said, “Our challenge is to be inspired by the past, not to be enslaved by it.”

In the Haftarah, Jonah balances the serious challenge of the Torah reading with a story that both demonstrates that the world is bigger than any of us and that we don’t take ourselves too seriously. Maybe through that we can joyfully feel comfort. In the end, Jonah responds to Divine Mercy. As he does so, Jonah instills in us a hope that, though we too are flawed and have no perfect answers, we will develop a sense of our most widespread obligations.

With that thought, we recite the fourth Amidah of Yom Kippur with the Ashamnu and Al Cheyt confessions.

NEILAH — 5:45 PM

Neilah, which literally means closing, is the conclusion of this phase of our year. We have torn apart our hopes and concerns, our disappointments and our dreams.

In the final service of Yom Kippur, we make our commitments to put together our new balance, our new approach to the year. Ought our tone with our families, community and society emphasize

different approaches than last year? Will we balance our priorities differently? Will we feel differently about what we will do and what we won't be able to?

As individuals and as families we stand before the Ark and offer special personal prayers. Our mourning for the replaced is coming to an end. As the pace quickens, we savor our work as we anticipate savoring food. Our singing is strong and we have established and reestablished new bonds. As we head forward through 5780, we will use our experience together to make a better and more beautiful year.



CHILDREN

When we remember the High Holidays of our childhood, most of us were wondering what our parents and grandparents were up to. We don't remember it being about us.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most adult of all holidays. They are abstract, sophisticated and introspective. They engage our most mature and thoughtful selves. Overall there are no youth-oriented activities to center around. That is what makes the High Holidays so important and significant for the next generation. They see their parents and grandparents engaged Jewishly for their own benefit. At Aitz Hayim, we encourage kids to freely walk in and out of services, ask questions, and to check in with us. And see adults intellectually and emotionally engaged in community and prayer. We engage our children through the kids' Aliyah, Shofar blowing and Tashlich; all are extremely inviting.

As always, we will have an infant caregiver present in a selected and safe space dedicated for them and a relaxed space for older kids to get away and create their own High Holiday experience.

LOGISTICS

Aitz Hayim is an inclusive community. Regardless of background, all who want to participate fully in the joy and challenge of this New Year are invited to be with us. Please be sure we have the names of all family and friends attending so that we have a name tag ready upon arrival.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services except for Tashlich on the afternoon first day will be at the Highland Park Community House, 1991 Sheridan Road, Highland Park. 847-835-3232 is the office and emergency phone number and can be used anytime during High Holidays for assistance and directions. Leave a message and you will receive a return call within minutes.

At services the doors are always open and we will have refreshments available during Rosh Hashanah. We will provide kippot, tallitot, and copies of Mahzor Hadash. Any and all who can blow Shofar are invited to bring them for both mornings of Rosh Hashanah and at the end of Yom Kippur.

Tashlich will be at 4:30 PM on day 1 of Rosh HaShanah at the Avenue Beach in Highland Park. It is within walking distance of the Community House and has parking available.

Lulov and Etrog sets are \$50 each. Schach bundles are \$20 each. Quantities are limited. **Orders must be placed with the Aitz Hayim office by September 30th to reserve.**



1185 Sheridan Road
Glencoe, IL 60022
847.835.3232

aitzhayim@gmail.com
www.aitzhayim.org