



LISTENING TO THE SHOFAR

On Rosh Hashanah, we bless God “who has instructed us to LISTEN to the sound of the shofar.” When we LISTEN to the shofar, what are we listening for? Each of our great teachers had a different answer. In this way, our tradition teaches that we should LISTEN for what we feel we need to hear.

King David heard a call to recognize God as sovereign over all creation. King David, an ambitious and militaristic king, often had to be reminded of his limits. When he heard the familiar coronation trumpet at the New Year, he was reminded that earthly leaders have little power in comparison with the One who oversees all creation.

The Prophet Isaiah heard a call for a social and ethical revolution. In ancient Israel, Isaiah spoke against a strong central government with inadequate social welfare programs. He heard the shofar

announcing that a just society is near – if only we would turn our hearts to righteousness.

Philo of Alexandria heard a call to universal peace. Living in a time of Roman imperialism and regional war, Philo recognized the shofar as a battle trumpet. When it sounded in a sacred ceremony, he felt it called people to reconsider their habits of political violence and strife.

Talmudic sages heard a cry of pain addressed to God. Living in a time of Roman antisemitism, they sought to raise Jewish morale. They taught that the call of the ram’s horn would remind God of the ram that Avraham sacrificed instead of his son Yitzchak. God would remember the merits of our ancestors, forgive us, and do right by us.

Philosopher Moses Maimonides (Rambam) heard an alarm clock

calling people to wake up and change their ways. As a medical doctor and a scientist in medieval Egypt, he often spoke against supernatural interpretations of Jewish practices. He stated firmly that the shofar call speaks to us, not to God.

The best summary of all these messages is found in the Torah itself. At the foot of Mount Sinai, the Israelites stood trembling in anticipation of a direct revelation from God. As they waited, the sound of the shofar got stronger and stronger. The shofar signaled that they were about to receive a message from God.

At Rosh Hashanah, each of us will LISTEN, and each of us will hear the message that speaks to our own inner needs, worries, and expectations for the New Year. May we have a good one!

-- Rabbi Laura Duhan Kaplan

HIGH HOLIDAYS 5767

Rosh Hashanah falls on Saturday-Sunday September 23-24. Erev Yom Kippur is on Sunday evening October 2, and Yom Kippur on Monday October 3. Services will be held at the JCC in Wosk Auditorium. Detailed information about services and programs for adults, children, and teens will be mailed in mid-August.

HIGH HOLIDAY PREPARATION

In preparation for the high holidays, Or Shalom will be offering the following events to help deepen our inner reflection during this period of Teshuvah – repentance and return. Please mark your calendar.

Wednesday September 13, 7:30 p.m., Yoga and Teshuvah workshop with Evelyn Neaman and Steve Herman
Saturday September 16, during morning services: Dvar Torah about Teshuvah

Saturday September 16, 10:30 p.m.: Selichot (Forgiveness) Study and Services

Thursday September 28, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.: Mikveh ritual of contemplation and purification for men, at Schara Tzedek Synagogue mikveh

Friday September 29, 9:00-10:00 a.m.: Mikveh ritual of contemplation and purification for women, at Schara Tzedek Synagogue mikveh

Women's Endowment Fund Grant Enhances Or Shalom Library

In early 2005, the Schvesters were successful with the approval of a grant application submitted to the Women's Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation. The grant, in the amount of \$850, was directed to the purchase of a Women's Resource Library section in the Or Shalom Library. The books are now in the library. There are titles associated with Torah; Jewish law; Women's Midrash; theology; prayer; women's mitzvot; Jewish feminism; spiritual role modeling; poetry; and women's Seders. In addition, we have subscribed to Lilith Magazine and Nashim Journal.

Or Shalom is a community of learners and there are many more opportunities for individual and group study as a result of this enhancement to the library. We look forward to new knowledge and perspectives on many topics.

We will invite representatives of the Fund to Shabbat in the fall. -- Heidi Mannis

KEREN OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

VISIONING

This fall, the Board and Rabbi of Or Shalom invite the community to join together in a visioning exercise about the future of Or Shalom. As the community grows, and becomes more diverse, it is time to ask ourselves some significant questions: What makes us unique? How do we want to evolve? How do we balance the old and the new? Shortly after the high holidays, the entire community will be invited to participate in an on-line survey. On November 19, 2:00-5:00 p.m., a community meeting will be held to process the results of the survey. Mark your calendar, and watch for more information!

TISHA B'AV OBSERVANCE

Wednesday August 2, 7:30 p.m. Erev Tisha B'Av – Traditionally, this observance commemorates the destruction of the Jerusalem Temples. Or Shalom will join Sha'arey Tefilah synagogue for prayer and study at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center. Call Sha'arey Tefilah Synagogue asap to reserve a place, at 604-873-2700.

YIZKOR

During the Yizkor service on Yom Kippur, we will honour the memory of our members' close relatives who have passed away since last Yom Kippur, by reading their names aloud. Please help us ensure that our list is complete. Please email or phone Program Director David Fainsilber no later than September 15 with the following information: your English name, the name of your family member in English and in Hebrew if you know it, and their relationship with you. OrShalomPrograms@telus.net or 604-872-1614 x1.

MACCABI HOST FAMILIES and VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

It is not too late to register as a volunteer or host family for the Maccabi Games (Aug. 13 – 18). There are still visiting athletes without accommodations. The following volunteer opportunities remain.

Arrivals: airport and bus greeter, registration

Athletics: scorekeeping, timers, announcers, officials

Events: Opening Ceremonies & Closing Party, social activities

Medical: on-call and on-site medical and first aid assistance

Hospitality: information tables at athletic venues and hotels

Marketing/Publicity: writers, photographers

Transportation: bus chaperones and coordinators, traffic control

Food: providing food, snacks, ice and water to athletes

Days of Caring and Sharing: assist with community service programs

For more information, contact:

Volunteers: Ilene-Jo Bellas or Joel Bellas at 604-257-5147 or maccabi@vancouvermaccabi.org

Host Families: Linda Tenenbaum at 604-257-5147 or maccabi@vancouvermaccabi.org

ALEPH MEMBER POLICY

Or Shalom is affiliated with Aleph and pays membership dues for all Or Shalom members. All members of Or Shalom are members of Aleph. Donations to Aleph that are in addition to these membership dues can be made through Or Shalom or directly to Aleph. Aleph frequently sends emails to its individual members. To subscribe go to <http://shamash.org/help/listoflists.shtml>, scroll down to aleph-re-

news and click on subscribe. To unsubscribe, send the message: unsub aleph-re-news to listproc@shamash.org

MACHZORIM

Please remember to purchase your machzor soon and bring it with you to the High Holiday services. Call Richard at the bayit. Your machzor is already here. Make the call and seal the deal! Supplies are limited.

REMINDER: ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES AND BUILDING FUND COMMITMENT

Please remember to complete your membership payment form for 5767 (2006-2007) and return it to the Or Shalom office. The fiscal year begins July 1 and your payment or your instructions for starting monthly payments are due at the start of the fiscal year. Or Shalom remains deeply committed to our open membership policy – please contact our Treasurer, Heidi Mannis, to make other arrangements if your finances do not permit a full dues payment. You can contact Heidi by leaving a message at the Or Shalom office and she will get back to you promptly.

We would also like to remind you that if you have not yet fulfilled your Building Fund Commitment, to please continue making your contributions. Each adult member of Or Shalom takes on a commitment of \$2,500. These funds pay down the mortgage and allow for necessary repairs and renovations. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to those members who have been able to meet their commitment. The completion of your obligation is most appreciated.