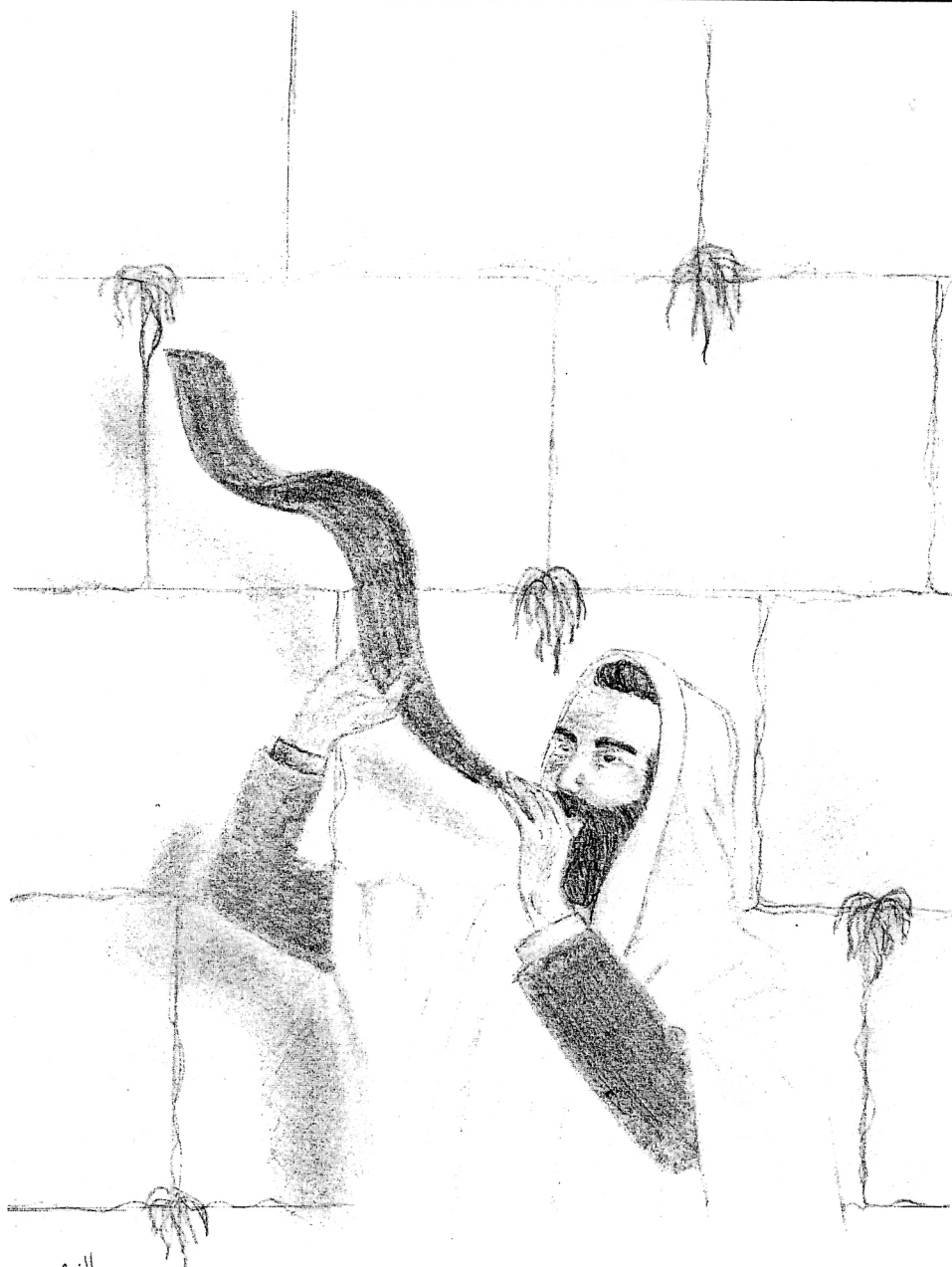


A TORAH PUBLICATION BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

MO-ED MESSAGE

OF THE WEINBAUM YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

ROSH HASHANAH, YOM KIPPUR, AND SUCCOT
EDITION 5772



9.7.11

The Weinbaum Yeshiva High School

INSPIRE & CHALLENGE

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: YISRAEL WEISS ('13)

EDITING STAFF: LEORA LITWIN ('12)

ZEVE LITWIN ('13)

LAYOUT AND PROOF: ELANA KAMINETSKY ('12)

ARTWORK BY: DAHLIA SIEV ('12)

FACULTY ADVISOR: MRS. MICHAL SCHOCHET

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FACULTY OF THE WEINBAUM YESHIVA HIGH SCHOOL

FESTIVAL FUN FACTS

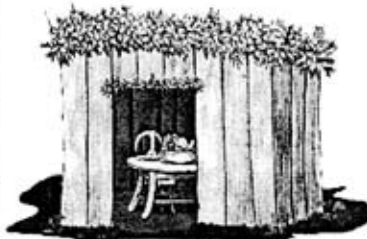
Yisrael Weiss ('13)

"FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD"

On Rosh Hashanah we eat round challah and apples, which are symbolic of the circle of life that begins anew on Rosh Hashanah. We dip the apples in honey to symbolize our wish for a sweet year. Other symbolic foods are traditionally eaten, including carrots, to show our wish to increase in family and finances. Some also eat the head of a fish (or lamb) representing our desire to be at the "head of the class" in all of our endeavors.

"A CRY FOR HELP"

We blow Tekiah, one long blast, representing the sound of the coronation of a king in order to announce that the trial is to begin before G-d, our King. Shevarim, three broken blasts, symbolizes the sound of outcry. The Teruah, nine short blasts, represents our cries for mercy from G-d and for forgiveness. All of these blasts are designed to wake us up to remind us to repent and reflect on our actions.



"SORRY SEEMS TO BE THE HARDEST WORD"

The 10 Days of Repentance, also called Aseret Yemay Teshuvah, are the days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. These days are a time for us to continue to plead our case before G-d. During this time, we repent, say special prayers, perform extra acts of kindness, give charity, reflect and seek out those we have wronged. Daily we say the *Avinu Malkenu* (Our Father our King) prayer, a list of requests from G-d, and slichot.

"HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF"

On Yom Kippur, the Torah commands us to afflict our souls (Leviticus 16:29 and 23:27 and Numbers 29:7). The rabbis interpret this to mean that we should deprive ourselves of eating, drinking, washing, and using lotion ("anointing ourselves"). We also do not wear leather shoes (which is why

many people wear sneakers to synagogue). We also repeatedly confess our sins to G-d. The service concludes with *Neilah* (the Closing service), for which we remain standing as a last ditch effort to plead our case before G-d at the "trial."

"I WANT YOU TO SHOW ME THE WAY"

On Succot, which follows Yom Kippur, we spend time in a succah (booth) for seven days, which allows us to re-experience the Exodus. However, the timing does not make logical sense: we celebrate it six months after Pesach (to the day!) and requires us to live outdoors just as the weather is turning cooler. The timing teaches us that Exodus did not end with the departure from Egypt, rather it continued as our ancestors sojourned in the desert for 14,600 days.

"(SEMI) MATERIAL DAYS"

Succot, the holiday of joy, was known as "HaChag", or "The Holiday," during the Talmudic period. As a harvest festival, "The Holiday" incorporates recognition and celebration of material goods. While the well-being of the soul is most important, the well-being of the physical realm is celebrated, for it is the context for spiritual development and a way to celebrate G-d's gifts.

"CELEBRATION"

Succot ends, but the joy continues. On Shemini Atzeret, and especially Simchat Torah, (the same day in Eretz Yisrael, but consecutive days for Diaspora Jews), the symbols of Succot (succah, lulav and etrog) are put away. The symbols are merely that...symbols; the core of our joy is Torah which affirms and enriches life. With songs, dances, aliyot for all (including children), and the "marriage" of "grooms" to the Torah, we end the season in celebration.

WHY "BOOTHS"?

Zev Litwin ('13)

It is stated in the end of *Parshat Emor* that the reason for the holiday of Succot is "so that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in booths when I took them from the land of Egypt" (Vayikra 23:43). Yet, before we can understand the true meaning of this pasuk and the true reason for the holiday of Succot, we must first ask the most basic question – why booths? Hashem surely could have performed another miracle that would have enabled Bnei Yisrael to dwell in permanent homes while traveling in the desert, so why did He choose to make them dwell in booths?

These temporary dwellings were intended to teach the Jews a very important lesson in the years following their Exodus from Egypt. At that time, Egypt was the most powerful empire in the world. They were wealthy and strong, and they felt secure because of their vast riches and great strength. They built the magnificent fortress cities of Pitom and Ramses, and declared, "No man will dare invade our territory". They derived their sense of security from their physical and worldly possessions.

This was the purpose of Bnei Yisrael's dwelling in succot – to remind them that the only true security in life is from Hashem. Hashem wanted to show Bnei Yisrael that the only reason that they are safe or secure is because of Him, and not because of some strong, permanent structure as the Egyptians believed. There is a pasuk in Tehillim that states, "If Hashem does not build the house, those who do labor in vain" (127:1). You can build the most stable and fortified house you want to, but if Hashem is not on your side, then it is for naught.

And this is the message of this great holiday of Succot. As we live in our nice, safe houses throughout the year, we sometimes forget Who is behind the scenes doing everything for us. So for one week of the year we leave our comfortable, permanent houses and we dwell in succot, to

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IS IT ALL REALLY WORTH IT?

Eliana Feldan ('13)

A woman in northern California owned a small horse ranch where she lived with her family. She was a pack rat that saved every birthday card, every play bill, every souvenir and memento, to the point that her very spacious house was overrun with clutter. In the summer of 2007 a horrific wild fire started near her neighborhood and was burning through the area. One day she received the dreaded call informing her that the fire had taken a sudden turn and was headed her way. The entire family loaded the horses and after several trips all of the horses were a safe distance away. After dropping off the horses they returned to the house one last time to save whatever they could before they were forced to leave, before the fire engulfed their home.

The woman entered her home, seemingly for the last time, and looked at all the "stuff" she had collected and hoarded for so many years. Her eyes scanned the room, taking in everything that was always so precious and vital. In that moment of clarity she jolted into the reality that had eluded her for most of her life; she picked up a few photos and a family bible and walked out of the house, content that she had everything that was truly precious to her. She surrendered everything else - *yei'oosh* - she relinquished it all.

A few days later the woman received another call, this time informing her that the winds had shifted again, and her house was spared. When given the clear she entered her home to reclaim the possessions that she had given up to the fires just a few days before. To her, nothing looked the same; how easy it was now to discard all the clutter that once seemed so valuable.

This story gives us insight into the true purpose of the upcoming holiday of Succot. Hashem commands us to leave our houses for seven days and live in a temporary dwelling. But we're missing the point. Hashem does not want us to eat, and possibly sleep, outside, and then come back after a week and act

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YOU DON'T APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL IT'S GONE

Yisrael Weiss ('13)

This saying has jumped to the front of my mind on many occasions, and each time it rings true. As soon as I find out that something of mine is missing, I immediately think of all the different ways I could have, and should have, used the now lost object. However, this past week I chanced upon something that completely changed my perspective, and helped me to understand what an amazing blessing lies within a seemingly tragic situation. I read a story about a man that walked into shul, towards the end of davening, looking unsure and nervous. The man opened the siddur to the back and shakily pointed his finger to a place in the siddur, constantly looking around as if waiting for a sign. When the davening ended the people started to exit the room. When the man saw the people begin to leave he quickly asked the person next to him if the services had ended, and in a flustered and nervous voice he began to recite kaddish from the transliterated siddur. After he finished reciting the kaddish a group of people approached him to inquire about who he was and what he was doing in the shul; the man told them that his mother had just died and he felt obligated and inspired to recite the kaddish for her. Although his prayer may have been perceived as latte, the fact that this man became so inspired by this event was truly the most important factor.

When we lose something – an object, a friendship, a loved one – there is a passion that ignites inside of us. This passion often comes as anger or regret, however if channeled positively it is so powerful that it can fuel us to change and become a better person.

Each year we approach the intimidating time of Yom Kippur. As the holiday approaches we are forced to reflect and introspect on everything that we gained and lost over the past year. The beauty of Yom Kippur is that it offers us an incredible gift: it gives us the powerful inspiration felt from a loss without actually having to lose anything. If we tap into the

energy and emotions that we experienced throughout the year, and draw power and strength from losses that we have already experienced, our hearts will be inspired to do teshuva, and our minds will be ready into The Day of Judgment.

Eliana Feldan continued

the same as we did beforehand. Is my house really going to look that different at the end of the week?

Hashem commands us to live in these temporary dwellings because we need to learn to value that which is truly important. When we are surrounded by material possessions, it is easy to justify why we need them in our lives. It is only when we relinquish them, truly letting them go, that we can see what is important in this world. We must peel away the layers of distraction around us, and live in a simple temporary dwelling surrounded by our families and friends, eating and laughing and sharing divrei Torah. We must look at all of our possessions as if it is the last time that we are seeing them; and *be'ezrat Hashem* we can return to our homes after Succot focused on what is genuinely important. Chag sameach!



WHAT'S IN A CHAG?

Rebecca Bensimon ('14)

Succot falls out during a very exciting and happy time - everybody is just starting school, the weather is usually nice - but there is much more to this holiday than simply relaxing and hanging out with friends. The Rabbis explain that the origin of this holiday is derived from the ancient harvest festival when the Jews would construct "booths" to live in. The Jewish nation adopted the tradition of building succot every year during this time in commemoration of the journey that they experienced in the desert.

Rabbi Akiva said that the word *succah* does not mean "booth," but rather means "covering." The succot we build are not intended to symbolize the temporary "booths" of the Jews in the desert; they serve as an embodiment of the cloud of glory that covered the camp of *Bnei Yisrael* and followed them in their travels. When we leave the physical covering and protection of our houses to enter the *succah*, we honor the spiritual protection that Hashem granted the Jews and continues to provide us with on a daily basis. By doing this we declare that the spiritual side of Judaism brings us real joy in life. Once we have experienced time in the *succah* we can appreciate the physical and spiritual aspects of life on a higher level.

When we dwell in the *succah* we are attesting to our ultimate faith in G-d. Additionally, it is told that when we fulfill one mitzvah it leads to fulfilling another one. After Elul, the month in which we undergo an intense period of introspection, we must emerge with a positive outlook towards the new school year and create a physical and spiritual space in the *succah* to allow ourselves to flourish.

IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT, CRY

Leora Litwin ('12)

Have you ever had a teacher walk out of the room for a few seconds? Suddenly, the quiet, calm atmosphere is forgotten and a cacophony of discussion erupts. Have you ever been home alone for the weekend? Immediately, responsibilities are abandoned - the dishes pile up, laundry baskets overflow. Have you ever been away in camp for the summer? Instantaneously, as disturbing and unconceivable as it may seem, the basic guidelines to cleanliness disappear into the shadows of the woods. It is thus evident that rules keep us sane and the lack of such basic principles lead to the dissipation of civility.

Backtrack for a minute. On most holidays we recite Hallel, however on Rosh Hashana we do not. It is recalled in the *Talmud Eirchun* that when asked by the angels why the tefillah of Hallel is omitted of Rosh Hashana, Hashem answered, "how can the Jews sing when the books of life and death are opened?" The true seriousness and somberness of the *yom* are exemplified by the blowing of the shofar as sounds of crying.

In an opposing light, we have the obligation on Rosh Hashannah, like on any other *yom tov*, to fulfill the mitzvot of "simchat *yom tov*" ("rejoicing of the holiday") and "se'udat *yom yov*" ("the holiday meal").

On the one hand, we are supposed to experience intense feelings of fright and concentration, while on the other hand we are *halachically* instructed to be infused with the utmost *simcha*. Herein lies an overt contradiction. What is the mood of Rosh Hashana? How do we reconcile these opinions?

Rav Yosef Be'ar Soloveitchik suggests that the best way to settle the differences in feeling fearful, yet joyous is to understand it, rather, as needing to be "fearful **and** joyous." The paradigm of this concept is

Leora Litwin continued

described in Sefer Tehillim; in it, David Hamelech writes that we must be "*gilu bi'readah*"-"rejoicing in trepidation" (2:11).

Hashem, in His unparalleled genius, predicted that it is impossible for the human race to survive in a respectable manner without restrictions. All joy must be monitored; undisciplined frivolity is forbidden. It would be nearly impossible for us to maintain our composure under the lifestyle of unlimited freedom, of complete lawlessness. The beauty of Judaism is that Hashem grants us the independence to choose our own path, lead our own lives, and pursue our own interests all within the parameters of halacha. The Torah and its mitzvot are not rules inhibiting individual liberties, but are rather the means through which we can navigate in the appropriate manner.

Perhaps the purpose of Rosh Hashana being a day of both tears and smiles is to emphasize this idea of disciplined freedom - this cornerstone of Jewish life. As we look to acknowledge Hashem and all of His glory on this special day, it is critical to thank Him for this privilege of being able to live a boundless life within bounds of *halacha*. Once we come to this realization, we will be able to embark on a new journey for a new year, in which we are prepared to broaden our horizons and explore our potential. Because really Hashem provides us with the key to a marvelous world filled with knowledge and opportunities, all we need to do is open the door and step inside.

Derived from the thoughts of Rabbi Henry J. Isaacs

Zev Litwin continued

remind us of this invaluable lesson – we can build houses and accumulate wealth in order to gain a sense of security, but in the end, it is all from Hashem. No amount of wealth or physical protection can give you security; the only true security comes from Hashem.

ZMAANIM FOR ROSH HASHANAH

Wednesday, September 28th:

**Candle lighting at 6:53pm
(BRS website)**

Friday, September 30th: Can-

**dle lighting at 6:51pm
(BRS website)**

Shabbat Shuva

Parshat Ha'azinu

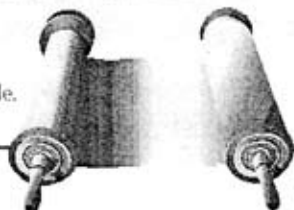
Motzei Shabbat – Shkiah at

7:42pm - myzmanim

GAME PAGE

Jewish New Year Crossword

Test your knowledge of the Jewish High Holy Days with this crossword puzzle.

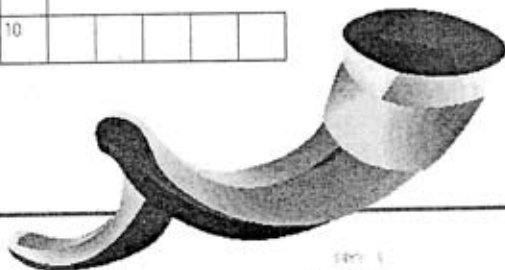
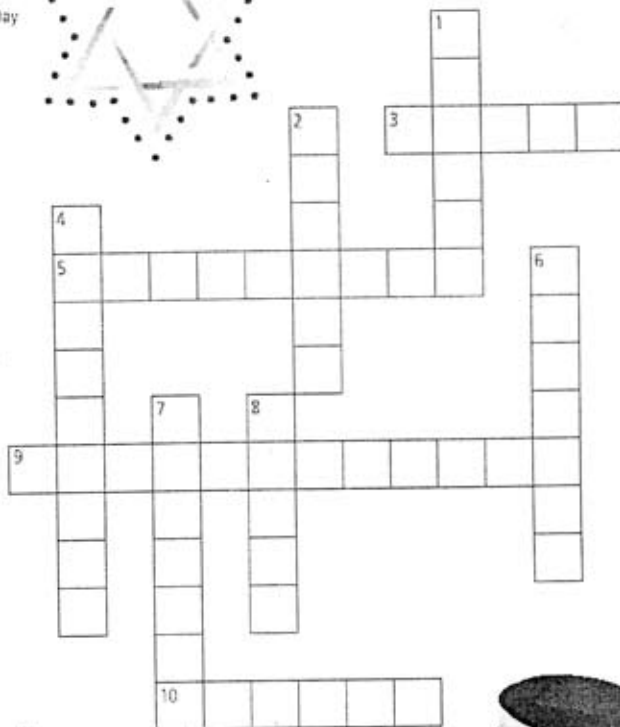
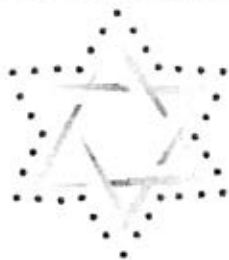


ACROSS

3. The Jewish holy book
5. Another name for the Jewish Day of Atonement
9. What the Jewish New Year is called
10. Original language of Jews

DOWN

1. The horn blown on Rosh Hashanah
2. One name for the skullcap worn during prayer
4. Jewish place of worship
6. The father of Judaism
7. Traditional braided egg bread
8. A Jewish religious leader



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Have a happy and healthy new year! Happy Rosh Hashanah

p h v y e a c e n c s f h i a w a e w a i a s
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- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| apple | chativah ve Chatimah tovah | customs |
| head of a fish | honey | new fruit |
| new year | Rosh Hashanah | shana tovah |
| shofar | slichot | sweet new year |
| tashlich | teshuvah | tishrei |
| unetanaH tokaf | Yamim Noraim | yom tov |

