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September 8, 2009

19 Elul, 5769

Temple *Or Olam*



Remember Who You Really Are

In Africa, a group of people called the Babemba (People of the Lake) have a practice they use whenever someone behaves unjustly or irresponsibly and hurts other members of their community. The community ceases its business. Each woman, man, and child helps make a circle around that person. Then, every individual takes the time to tell that person about his or her good traits — in detail. All that person’s positive attributes, good deeds, strengths and kindness are recited.

The ceremony can take hours – even days. When everyone is finished, the villagers celebrate with great joy. The person is symbolically and literally welcomed back into the tribe.

What’s happening here? In the villagers’ minds, the person in question has forgotten who he or she really is, and must be reminded. Because when you know and appreciate yourself, the Babemba assume, you will have no need to harm anyone.

This year, we’ll experiment with the High Holy Day liturgy to engage in a similar, uplifting practice. Our teshuva (self-exploration, penitence, and return) will be explored through meditating, praying, and writing in teshuva journals, but with this assumption: High Holy Days are a call for us to return to the truth of who we are.

- Reb Barbara

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- *September 13, 10AM: Opening day religious school*
- *September 13, 10:45AM: High Holy Day Song Teach*
- *September 13, noon: Shalom Lake Norman*
- *September 18, 7PM: Erev Rosh Hashanah Service*
- *September 19, 9:30AM: Rosh Hashanah Service, followed by brunch and Taschlich*
- *September 20, 9:45: Religious School*
- *September 20, 2PM: Torah Study*
- *September 26, Time TBA: Youth Group Movie day/night*
- *September 27, 7PM: Kol Nidre*
- *September 28, 9:30AM: Yom Kippur Service*
- *September 28, 6:30PM: Neilah, Havdallah, Break Fast*

MiLev HaPardes *From the heart of the orchard by Dr. Barbara Thiede, student rabbi*

How do we start every Hebrew letter, each Hebrew word?

With a *yud*.

That tiniest of letters, a character that looks like little more than an apostrophe, is encased in each letter. Begin writing an *aleph* and you will find yourself drawing two *yuds*, mirror reversed. Between them is a diagonally placed *vav*.

Two candle flames on either side of the Torah scroll? The higher and lower waters described in Genesis separated by the firmament?

Each Hebrew letter offers multiple meanings. The *yud* in every letter helps us open the door to significance, to understanding.

The word *yud* comes from the same source as the word *yad*, the long pointer we use when we chant from Torah to keep our place in the scroll. At the end of the pointer is often a silver or wooden hand with the forefinger extended to “point” at the text. *Yad* means “hand.”

Imagine, now, that you are writing Hebrew letters. Again and again, as you make each letter, as you create each word, you are drawing a *yud*, many *yuds* in fact. Though Hebrew letters do not touch – not even in cursive form – you are linking each letter to the next through symbol and meaning. One hand reaches out to another, hand after hand fills your text.

The *yud*, the rabbis have said, symbolizes God’s hand reaching out to us.

During the Days of Awe, Jews chant a text of confession, *Al Cheyt*. The recitation is accompanied by striking the heart with a closed fist. We do this in sorrow for our transgressions and misdeeds; our intention is to freely admit to our failings during this prayer.

But imagine opening your hand and tapping on your heart, instead of striking it. Imagine that your

hand, like the little *yud* in each Hebrew letter, is helping you unpack and unfold meaning, understand your mistakes and missteps.

In the *Song of Songs*, the speaker says “Hark, my beloved knocks” (5:2). If we have gone wrong, it was because we did not open to our beloved. We kept the door closed. When we missed the mark and spoke or acted badly, we shut ourselves away from God and each other. We missed the opportunity to let God give us a hand, help us transform ourselves.



Two *yuds* standing side by side are a representation of God’s unpronounce-

able, unknowable name.

Where is God present? The Kotzker Rebbe had the simplest of answers.

“Wherever God is let in.”

Let us use our hands to tap lightly, lovingly on the doors of our heart this year. Let us remember that tiny *yud* extending, reaching, helping us open the doors of our soul. The beloved knocks.

In so doing, may we experience the Days of Awe fully and sweetly. May our hands help us open our hearts.



High Holy Days

September 18, 7PM: Erev Rosh Hashanah service

September 19, 9:30AM: Rosh Hashanah service, followed by brunch and Taschlich; Child care available

September 27, 7PM: Kol Nidre

September 28, 9:30AM: Yom Kippur service; Child care available

September 28, 6:30PM: Neila, Havdalah, then break fast

Non-members: We suggest a donation of \$90 for an individual and \$180 for a family. The amount can go toward membership dues if you join within three months.

Religious School

Message from the Board

Religious School parents, just some reminders and information:

1. The school calendar and information is on the website. Please print them out and fill out the form. Please turn the form in with payment to Jody or Richard.
2. Our first day will be at the Smith house (please see directory for address) at 10AM on September 13th. No need to bring Hebrew books that day.
3. Thereafter we will be meeting at the Jacobson house, like last year. Our days will start at 9:45AM. Please be prompt. We have compressed the day's schedule so that we don't take up as much of our families' weekends, but we left no extra time. Please have your child bring whatever Hebrew book he or she was using last year. This is important. If you can't find the book, please let Jody know right away.
4. All the information you will need is on the website. You received two emails with links to the documents, but if you can't find them just go to the website, click on "news" and scroll down. You'll see emails and links.

This is a very exciting time of year. Religious school begins next week at the Smith residence (and at the Jacobson's in the following weeks) and the humidity departs. On the first day we will begin with games for the students (bring bug spray, or dryer sheets will be provided), then we will practice melodies for the High Holy Days with the entire congregation and after that, we'll mix and mingle with the larger Jewish community in the Lake Norman/Concord area by attending Shalom Lake Norman at Ramsey Creek Park in Cornelius (bring lawn chairs and sunscreen).

Within a matter of weeks it will be Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We will spend time with our community in reflection and prayer and look forward to sharing apples and honey as well as some schmoozing at the Rosh Hashanah pot luck lunch and Yom Kippur break fast.

Just as a reminder you have a very hardworking board that meets once a month to discuss temple issues and make decisions from budgets and how to attract new members to the congregational calendar and how much to pay babysitters. It seems that there are always plenty of items that require discussion. Everyone currently on the board has family and work obligations and devotes an enormous amount of time to their board duties to make our congregation the absolute best it can be. Please take a moment to thank Reb Barbara, Lisa Boguslaw, Richard Jacobson, Ginger Jensen, Jody Mace and Jill Partridge.

We all look forward to seeing you at these wonderful upcoming events.

Birthdays

- Julie Roberts, September 4
- John Partridge, September 19
- Madeline Holzapfel Horowitz, September 22

Yahrzeits

Harriett Toba Baker, mother of Jody Mace
27 Elul, September 16
Lena Shapiro, mother of Harriet Commike
3 Tishre, September 21
Jeanette Lillian Jacob Horowitz, mother of Alexander Horowitz
4 Tishre, September 22
Pearl Commike, mother of Fred Commike
5 Tishre, September 23

Member News

What are our members up to? A lot of good, it turns out. Read all about it right here. And let us know what you're up to. We want to know, whether you're kvelling about your kids or just keeping us up to date with your life.

Roberts guys raise funds for MS

Stewart and Benjamin Roberts are riding in the MS 150, a bike ride that raises money for the MS Society. Please consider supporting Stewart and Benjamin, and helping to fund MS research and treatment by making a donation.

If you'd like to help out, please write a check to the MS Society and send it to the Roberts address:

3225 Cal Bost Road
Midland, NC 28107

Lisa Jewel chairs DavidsonReads

Our own Lisa Jewel is chairing DavidsonReads, a community-wide reading event. The book this year is *The Color of Water* by James McBride. It is the memoir of a man with a Jewish mother and a black father. The events (all free!) are too numerous to describe here, but you can see complete information at www.davidsonreads.org.

9/20: Genealogy Event: How to Create a Family Tree
10/1: Book Discussion with Davidson College Professor Shireen Campbell
10/8: Religion & Education Panel w/Christian, Jewish & Muslim Clergy
10/13: Exploring Identity with Woodlawn School Students
10/22: Everything You Wanted to Know about Blacks & Jews (featuring Reb Barbara)
11/4: Book Discussion with Davidson College Professor Anthony Abbott
11/14: Finale: Davidson Family Reunion - A Day of Music, Food & Fun

Please attend one or more of these events to share your own unique perspective and to learn from others in the community.

From tots.....

Starting this fall, we will be involving even the youngest members of our congregation in Jewish learning. Laiko Quintero has taken the lead in providing a monthly “preschool” for our toddlers and preschoolers. They will be learning Jewish songs and games, and will even have a chance to join up with the “big kids” at religious school.

It’s an exciting time to be a toddler at Temple Or Olam!

....to teens

One of the busiest groups in Temple Or Olam is the youth group. In August they learned about the night sky, under the instruction of Seth Holtzman, at the Jacobson house. Although clouds conspired against them at the end they still learned and saw a lot, and will be back at it again soon.

What’s coming up? In September there will be an event yet to be determined. But there WILL be an event, and it will be on September 26th. In October the plan is to get lost in a corn maze. Also Seth has offered to give the kids another go at the telescope in October.

If you know of any Jewish kids 10 and older who are not affiliated with a temple, please tell them about our youth group. We’d love to have them join us.

Contact Information

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