



**Jewish Secular Community
of Cleveland**

ROSH HASHANAH PROGRAM

Zoom Edition

SONG: *HINEH MA TOV*

Hineh ma tov u'mana'yim
Shevet achim gam yachad (Repeat 2 times)

Hineh ma tov
Shevet achim gam yachad (Repeat 2 times)

Translation: Oh, how good and how sweet it is for people to dwell together.

Reader 1: The Jewish calendar begins in the fall at the New Moon with the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Succoth. For many Jews this is a time of repentance and introspection, a time to seek forgiveness for human sins through fasting and prayer. Secular Humanistic Jews see Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as time of reflection and an affirmation of human power and dignity. By acknowledging courage and independence, we achieve strength and dignity.

Reader 2: During the month prior to Rosh Hashanah, which occurs on the first day of Tishrei, religious Jews around the world begin to listen to the sounds of the Shofar every morning at synagogue services. We Secular Jews listen to ear-splitting blasts of our shofar which serve as a reminder to do an ethical assessment of our lives.

Religious Jews recite the “Al khet” prayer, which enumerates many of the possible misdeeds each of us may have committed, such as being dishonest in business, gossiping, and being disrespectful of parents and teachers.

The Hebrew word khet is commonly translated as “sin.” But khet is actually a word borrowed from the sport of archery, in which hitting the bull’s-eye with the arrow awards the player the highest number of points. Not hitting the bull’s eye is what khet really means.

So when Jews say, “I have sinned,” they are saying, “I have missed the mark,” which allows each of us to refill our quivers in order to improve our aim to become better human beings during each year of our lives.

- Reader 1: These Ya-mim Nora-im, the “ten days of awe” that begin with Rosh Hashanah and end with Yom Kippur, bring us together today as they have brought our people together for over 2,000 years. We understand these to be days during which we concern ourselves with our personal and social values in an attempt to be ever growing and compassionate.
- Reader 2: We are beginning a new year, 5781. This is one more step in a history thousands of years old that builds on what has gone before. We strive to understand our history and its traditions to discover their timeless values.
- Reader 1: On this day we pause to think and remember. We use this time and place to renew ourselves. We have the history and traditions of our own people. We have all the yesterdays of our own lives. We have developed diverse traditions as we have journeyed through time and to various lands.
- ALL: On this day when we feel a oneness with all Jews, we also feel a oneness with all people. It is a time to consider the possibilities for change, for progress, for happiness that human beings can create for themselves. As the first day of the Jewish year, Rosh Hashanah marks a turning point, a separation between what was and what will be.
- Reader 2: Rosh Hashanah – a time of new beginnings, a time to reflect on the year gone by, a time to reflect on the year to come and how we as Jews and as human beings can expand our awareness and understanding of all the people of the world.
- Reader 1: And it is a time of peace – a time to reflect on what peace means. Not just the peace that means cessation of war; not just the peace that means a transient truce; not only a global peace, a peace among nations, but also an inner peace that comes out of honest reflection about the past year and a strong resolution to do better this year.
- Reader 2: In the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we think about this past year. We think about our relationships with our friends, our family, and our larger community. We also take the time to think about our commitment to social justice, our Jewish traditions, and how we can help make the world a better place and be a part of tikkun olam, the healing and repairing of the world.

SONG: *IT COULD BE A WONDERFUL WORLD*

If each little kid could have fresh milk each day
If each working man had enough time for play
If each homeless soul had a good place to stay
It could be a wonderful world.

CHORUS:

If we could consider each other
A neighbor, a friend or a sister/ brother
It could be a wonderful, wonderful world
It could be a wonderful world.

If there were no poor and the rich were content
If strangers were welcome wherever they went
If each of us knew what humanity meant
It could be a wonderful world.

CHORUS

If armies were forced to have bake sales for funds,
If we could show anger without using guns,
If choices were equal for daughters and sons,
It could be a wonderful world.

CHORUS

CANDLE LIGHTING

Light the 1st candle . . . Light the 2nd candle . . . Light the 3rd candle

Reader 1: Candles represent the flame of Jewish life that has been passed from generation to generation. We light three candles to welcome the new year.

Reader 2: The first candle is for the past – to remember the struggles of those who went before us and the people who shaped our lives.

Reader 1: We light the second candle for the present. May the strength we get from the past guide us and give us confidence to be the people we want to become.

Reader 2: We light the third candle for the future in the hope that we will help create a healthy, peaceful world that respects all life.

Reader 1: The sound of the shofar,
The voice of the past
The hope of our future
On this our new year, our Rosh Hashana

Reader 2: The stirring sounds of the Shofar proclaimed the covenant at Mt. Sinai that bound the Jewish people to an everlasting togetherness as evidenced by our gathering today. Ever since that distant time, the voice of the Shofar has resounded through our people, awakening high allegiance to Jewish ideals. May these solemn sounds summon us to strengthen our community with justice and love for all people.

Reader 1: Let us open our ears so that we may truly understand the voice of the Shofar.

The first sound -- T'KIAH! Loud and strong, it says: Listen! Always listen to the voice of truth.

ALL: T'KIAH We shall listen! (T'kiah is blown)

Reader 2: The second sound -- SH'VARIM! Alternating higher and lower notes, they say: We look for wisdom within ourselves; we call upon our knowledge, our own abilities, our own humanity.

ALL: SH'VARIM We shall listen! (Sh'varim is blown)

Reader 1: The third sound -- T'RUAH! Little staccato notes, they say:
Pay attention to the little things in our lives, for every moment is precious and should not be wasted.

ALL: T'RUAH We shall listen! (T'ruah is blown)

- Reader 2: The *Sh'ma* begins with the words "Hear O Israel!"
But what does it really mean to hear?
The person who attends a concert thinking only about business
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 1: The person who hears the songs of birds and thinks only of the noisy city streets
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 2: The person who listens to the words of friends or family and does not catch the note of urgency: "Notice me, help me, care about me"
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 1: The person who goes from home to work and fails to see those who have neither
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 2: The person who stifles the sounds of conscience and says that enough has been done
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 1: The person who hears the sounds of the Shofar and does not feel the need for change
ALL: *Hears but does not really hear.*
- Reader 2: As the New Year begins, may we hear and listen to one another.
- Reader 1: And so we come together on this day of Rosh Hashanah out of respect for our heritage and a desire to be part of an ancient holiday and in appreciation of its meanings and its symbols.
- Reader 2: All of us must consider the value of past generations. Our parents asked their parents; we asked our parents, and they have told us. Now we must be prepared for the questions of our children and their children. What shall we tell them? And we answer our children by reading from Marcia Falk's 'A Sh'ma for our Community' from her 'Book of Blessings'.

ALL: Loving life with all our heart and all our spirit, all our senses and strength, we take upon ourselves and into ourselves these promises: to care for the earth and those who live upon it, to pursue justice and peace, to love kindness and compassion.

We will teach this to our children throughout the passage of each day – as we dwell in our homes and as we go on our journeys, from the time we rise until we fall asleep.

And may our actions be faithful to our words, that our children’s children may live to know: Truth and kindness have embraced; peace and justice have kissed and are one.

SONG: *SIM SHALOM*

Sim sim sim shalom
Sim sim sim shalom
Sim sim sim shalom
Tovah uv’rachah

La, la, la, la, la, la
La, la, la (repeat 4 times)

Sim sim sim shalom
Sim sim sim shalom
Sim sim sim shalom

Tovah uv’rachah

Translation: Let there be peace and goodness.

Reader 1: ROSH HASHANAH TORAH PORTION
(D'var Torah – a word of Torah)

One of the Torah readings for Rosh Hashanah, A-kay-dah Yitz-khak, the Binding of Isaac, is one of the most familiar stories of the whole Torah. It is also one of the most disturbing, because it deals with every parent's worst nightmare – the potential loss of a child.

We read the A-kay-dah to remind us that the choices we make in the face of heart-wrenching dilemmas, both individually and collectively, define us more than anything else.

We can picture Abraham walking up the mountain asking himself, from where is my help going to come? In order to deal with the catastrophic moments in our lives, we, like Abraham, have to be able to hold on to our humanity while we are struggling to climb that mountain.

Abraham was one person – by himself, the first Jew. But we don't have to face our struggles individually. We have our connection to the Jewish people and the members of our community to help us keep our moral footing.

Reader 2: At this time we pause in our program to listen to remarks by the leader.

REMARKS BY OUR LEADER

Reader 1: Thank you for your words. They give us something to think about.

Reader 2: Before looking ahead to the coming year, let us reflect on and honor that which unites us all and belongs to us all. A heritage full of heroic deeds and actions, suffering and joy. We find joy in learning, in the wisdom of the sages, and in the inspiration of those whose lives were living monuments to the whole world.

Reader 1: Theodore Herzl, Henrietta Szold, and many others dedicated their lives to a dream, the dream of a Jewish state, of the great homecoming, the in-gathering of the exiles. They did not live to see their dream fulfilled. Many others, like David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and Chaim Weizman labored long and spoke and fought and pleaded and lived to see the dream fulfilled.

Let us remember all those who work for justice and fight for equality for everyone. The following Hebrew song is an early Israeli pioneer song:

SONG: *ARTZA ALINU*

Artza Alinu
Artza Alinu
Artza Alinu

Artza Alinu
Artza Alinu
Artza Alinu

Kvar charashnu Vegam zaranu (Repeat 2 times)

Aval od lo katzarnu (Repeat 3 times)

Translation:

We have come to the land, our home
We have plowed and we have sown
But we have not yet reaped our own

ALL: Each year the reminder,
 For we are capable of forgetting.
 And if this heritage is forgotten,
 How will the children know?

Reader 2: In the Book of Proverbs it is written, "Train children in the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not depart from it." Our next song, sung in Yiddish, tells of the teaching and learning of young children.

SONG: OYFN PRIPETSHIK

Oy-fn pri-pe-tshik brent a fay-e-rl
Un in shtub iz heys
Un der re-be le-rnt klay-ne kin-der-lekh
Dem a-lef beys
Un der re-be le-rnt klay-ne kin-der-lekh
Dem a-lef beys

Zet zhe, kin-der-lekh
Gedenkt-zhe tay-e-re vos eer le-rnt do
Zogt zhe nokh amol un ta-ke nokh a mol
Ko-metz a-lef aw
Zogt zhe nokh amol un ta-ke nokh a mol
Ko-metz a-lef aw

Translation:
In the glowing stove
Flames leap merrily
And fill the house with heat
And the rebbe teaches
All the little ones
Our Aleph Bet

Remember little ones
Remember, precious ones,
What you are learning now;
Say it once again
And even once again
Kometz Aleph-O

Reader 1: Out of our tradition come leaping a thousand familiar words:
To act justly; to love mercy. (Micah)

ALL: Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land. (Deuteronomy)

Reader 2: The highest degree of charity is to help someone in need by creating
conditions of self-sufficiency. (Maimonides)

ALL: What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor. (Hillel)

Reader 1: No cry is more compelling than “Let my people go.” (Moses)

ALL: No summons more demanding than “Justice, justice shall you pursue.”
(Deuteronomy)

Reader 2: No vision more hopeful than “They shall beat their swords into
ploughshares.” (Isaiah)

The following song, using a biblical phrase, shows a yearning for Peace.

SONG: *LO YISA GOY*

Lo yi-sa goy el goy kherev
Lo yil-m’-du od mil-kha-ma. (Repeat 4 times)

And everyone ‘neath each vine and fig tree
Shall live in peace and unafraid. (Repeat)

And into plowshares beat their swords,
Nations shall learn war no more. (Repeat)

And everyone ‘neath each vine and fig tree
Shall live in peace and unafraid (Repeat)

Reader 1: Today, the ten days of awe begin, during which time we forgive others and ask forgiveness of them. The story of Joseph exemplifies the act of forgiveness. When famine struck the Land of Canaan and Joseph's brothers came into Egypt to buy corn, they were brought before the governor of the province. They did not recognize the governor as the brother they had thrown into a pit and sold into bondage many years before. Joseph said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into bondage, but do not be frightened or ashamed. All of you shall be near me. And you should tell Jacob, our father, of all my glory in Egypt and bring him hither." And he wept and embraced his brothers and forgave and welcomed them.

ALL: Our heritage teaches us to forgive others as Joseph forgave his brothers.

- Reader 2: Two thousand years ago, the great Rabbi Hillel counseled: Do not withdraw from the community. Separately we are as fragile as reeds and are easily broken, but together we are as strong as reeds tied in a bundle.
- ALL: We believe in the wisdom of the people to create a world of peace and plenty. This belief must be our guide and our ideal in the world of the future. Whatever happens to any Jew anywhere happens to all of us. And we extend this feeling to include the entire world, not only other Jews. Any wrong done anywhere is a reflection upon ourselves if we remain silent.
- Reader 1: The Talmud teaches us that whoever saves one life, it is as if that person has saved the entire world. The Talmud also teaches us that all Jews are responsible for one another.
- Reader 2: Deep in the center of the holiday is the concept of responsibility...individual and communal. If the year does not begin fresh with hope and clean of wrongdoing, then the individual and the community suffer. Yet the tradition says that the world of possibilities is born again each year; the choice is ours.
- ALL: How can we accept an economy of excess while our cities decay, the homeless multiply, the drug scene proliferates, and our moral values degenerate in hopelessness and despair?
- Reader 1: How can we accept a world in which poverty, hunger, and disease are a never-ending way of life for millions of people?
- ALL: We will continue to struggle for the kind of world our forebears believed it was possible to create: A sharing and caring with all people, social justice for all, and peace among all people.
- Reader 2: We say “Enough”! Jews are obligated by our tradition, our history, our basic belief in the power of human beings to “mend, repair, and transform” the world. It may be our ultimate responsibility. The next song, taken from the traditional liturgy and made secular, is a Wish For Peace.

SONG: *NA-A-SEH SHALOM*

Na-a-seh shalom be-olam
Na-a-seh shalom ah-ley-nu
V' al kol ha-olam
V'-imru, imru shalom.

Na a seh shalom
Na a seh shalom
Shalom ah ley nu
V' al kol ha-olam

Na-a-seh shalom be-olam
Na-a-seh shalom ah-ley-nu
V' al kol ha-olam
V'-imru, imru shalom.

Translation:

Let us make peace for ourselves and for the whole world.

Reader 1: Let us ask ourselves hard questions, for this is the time of truth.

ALL: How much time did we not use wisely in the year that is now gone?

Reader 2: Did we fill our days with life, or were they dull and empty?

ALL: Was there real companionship within our families or a growing apart?

Reader 1: Were we there when our friends needed us?

ALL: The kind deed: Did we perform it or postpone it?

Reader 2: The unnecessary gibe: Did we say it or hold it back?

ALL: Did we acquire only possessions, or did we acquire new insights as well?
Did we fear what the crowd would say and keep quiet when we should have spoken out?
Did we mind only our own business, or did we feel the pain of others?
Did we live justly and, if not, then have we learned and will we change?

As Hillel said,

IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF, WHO WILL BE FOR ME?
IF I AM FOR MYSELF ALONE, WHAT AM I?
IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

Reader 1: Ours is a beautiful heritage
We shall steadfastly survive
To achieve our destiny.

SONG: *TREE OF LIFE*

It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it
And all of its supporters are happy.

It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it
And all of its supporters are happy.

Shalom, Shalom (Repeat 4 times)

Reader 2: Words are many things.
They are a comfort or can inflict the greatest pain.
They are easily spoken but are sometimes not forgotten.
They can mean much or mean nothing.
And so today, when we are full of words,
We must sit back and reflect on that which has taken place.
Let us hope that we have not mouthed empty phrases,
But have sometimes protested the taunts aimed at the helpless and the ignorant.
That we have not feared to stand outside of popular opinion,
For only then can the words we speak today have meaning and dignity and honesty.

ALL: Together we have looked back and honored our ancient culture.
It is part of all of us.
Together we look forward to the coming year.

Reader 1: We must never stop believing that we are carrying on a new chapter of a story started over 5,700 years ago. Today is Rosh Hashanah. The New Year begins with its promise and hope that the year ahead will bring what we have sought for ourselves and for all people. The following Hebrew song tells of hope, change and togetherness.

SONG: *BASHANA HABA'A*

Bashana haba'ah neshev al hamirpeset
Venispor tziporim nodedot
Yeladim bechufsha yesachaku tofeset
Bein habayit ulvein hasadot

Od tireh od tireh
Kama tov yiheyeh
Bashana bashana haba'ah (Repeat)

And the day will arrive when we will be together
And no longer will we live in fear.
And the children will play without wondering whether,
On that day dark new clouds will appear.

Wait and see, wait and see,
What a world this can be,
If we care, if we share, you and me (Repeat)

And the vines, they will grow
And tender leaves will blossom,
And the fruit of our hands will be sweet,
And the winds that bring change
Will clear away the ashes,
And together we'll go forth to meet.

Wait and see, wait and see,
What a world this can be,
If we care, if we share, you and me (Repeat)

Reader 2: **IT IS NEVER TOO LATE**

The last word has not been spoken,
The last sentence has not been written,
The final verdict is not in.

It is never too late
To change my mind, my direction,
To say no to the past and yes to the future,
To offer remorse,
To ask and give forgiveness.

It is never too late
To start over again, to feel again
To love again
To hope again.

Reader 1: Let's finish the program by singing Hevenu Shalom Aleichem, which translates to 'Peace Be Unto You' or 'We Bring Peace to You'.

SONG: HEVENU SHALOM ALEICHEM

Hevenu Shalom Aleichem (Repeat 3 times)
Hevenu Shalom Shalom
Shalom Aleichem (Repeat entire song)

FINAL SHOFAR

All: **Shana Tova! A Gut Yor! Happy New Year!**