

The Bulletin

Magain



David



Magain David Sephardim Congregation

San Francisco

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High Holiday Greetings from the Board of Directors

Dear Congregants,

We once again welcome you to Magain David for the High Holidays. Attendance is open to the entire community and we look forward to seeing many familiar faces. Services will be led by Rabbi Simon Benzaquen and Hazzan Uzi Shazzo. The two will bring us warm and spiritually uplifting services, with melodies and tunes from the Sephardic tradition. Please see the following pages for thoughts from the Rabbi and for the schedule of services.

We want to be as open as possible so people can attend services, however, we might have to turn people away if there are too many people inside the synagogue, especially on Yom Kippur when there are usually a lot more people showing up.

Thank you all for understanding these restrictions and for helping us keep the services as safe as possible for all.

Seat Reservations: Many of you have already become members of the synagogue for 5784 (2023-2024). Thank you for your support. Seats will be reserved for our paid members of the synagogue but everyone is of course welcome to attend as is the tradition at Magain David. We also offer seat reservations for non-members: \$100 for Rosh Hashana only and \$100 for Yom Kippur only, or \$150 for both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Reserve at: <http://www.magaindavid.com/seat-reservations>

Membership: If you are not already a member, please reflect on what the synagogue brings into your life. Your participation and membership contributions help us to continue to perpetuate our traditions and culture in San Francisco. To join Magain David as a member, please email the board of directors at info@magaindavid.com, or visit us at magaindavid.com/membership.

Sedarim: As in past years, we will have a Seder each night of Rosh Hashanah. Please join the Rabbi and Hazzan and other members of the congregation to celebrate with us.

To register for the Seder, please visit magaindavid.com/rosh-hashanah-seder.html, or text or call us: 415-752-9095. Cost per evening: \$100/adult, \$50/children under 13. **You must reserve in advance - no admission at the last minute.**

Staying Updated: You can stay updated on events and news at Magain David with our synagogue e-mail newsletter. Email us, or visit magaindavid.com/mailling-list. We also can send you text updates to your phone. Please email us your cell phone number, or text us your name to 415-752-9095.

We wish everyone in our community a meaningful Shana Tova and a happy and healthy 5784.

Alain Azan, President

Richie Greenberg, Vice President

Angela Beniflah, Board Member

Dan Serfaty, Treasurer

Rosh Hashana Message by Rabbi Simon Benzaquen



The meaning of Teshuva (Repent, Return)

We have entered the month of Elul. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Succot, The High Holidays are approaching and that realization translates into retrospection; retrospection to examine the achievements and the failures of the year that we are bidding good-bye to and leaving behind.

Those are the moments in the year when we had opportunities to do the right thing, things that could have made us proud, given us satisfaction, created friends, alleviated suffering, helped somebody else and learned more about our duties as Jews.

Also times when we could have been more committed to Judaism, to our Synagogue and community, and to Israel, as well as those moments when we could have avoided strife, regrets, by been nicer, with our families, our friends, or simply our neighbors or another congregant: and instead let the evil inclination get the better of us and we became locked in an ugly and regrettable situation. We need to remind ourselves of what kind of year we have had, so that the upcoming year will be different, for the better. Many of us will be asking ourselves Where did the year go.? How did we do? How did we fare?

So many of us wish to have the opportunity sometimes to start all over again correcting the mistakes we made the first time around. Confronted with the same situations would we make the same choices? Would we asked ourselves, or even wonder: What would our lives be like if we could change our past experiences and move our lives in different directions? It is the stuff of fantasy, of science fiction, of alternate universes. To me, **“this is an intricate part of the message of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur”.**

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we get the opportunity to reflect upon who we were and who we have become. Many of us carry the physical and emotional scars from a lifetime of mistakes as well as the badges of pride from our successes.

The story is told of a King who had a large, perfect gemstone. The King loved to look at this stone every day and to show it off to his friends. Until one day the gem slipped from his hands, fell to the ground, and cracked up the middle with a huge scratch. The King called on all of his subjects, promising a great reward to the one who could fix the cracked gem but to no avail. Until one day an old man came to see the King, promising he could fix it. The old man labored for days, eventually emerging from the room with the gem, holding up for all to see. The King looked upon his beloved gem with excitement, only to be disappointed when he saw that the crack was still there. **“Look closer,”** said the old man, **“see the big picture.”** The King looked again and saw that though the crack was still there, it now formed the shape of the stem of a rose that had been artfully carved into the gem. **Like the King’s gem,** our lives often contain cracks and imperfections that we do not want to share with others. But it is not the fact that these cracks exist, but how we embrace them and make them a part of us that matters.

These are my sentiments as I approach this Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and I feel that I am talking to myself too. I ask myself, do we allow these flaws to mar our lives forever, or do we take the opportunity to carve them into a design that will help enhance our lives in the future?

But to enhance our lives we must learn not to continually beat ourselves up by concentrating only on our flaws. Instead, we must make the decision to channel our energy into more appropriate and constructive directions. If we have allowed ourselves to become overly angry in the past, we can learn to harness this passion and emotion and use it in a more constructive fashion, to allow ourselves to become angry at the injustice in the world and to speak out for what is right.

We should use this anger as a motivation to become involved in the things that matter, voicing our opinions in favor of causes we support, and protests against the things we stand against

We should learn from the experiences of bad and painful relationships, taking what we now see more clearly in ourselves and using it to form better, more healthy relationships with people in the future. We can take the flaw of worrying about what other people think about us and apply that energy into discovering who we are at our core, what makes us happy, and how unselfishly we can bring out the best, rather than the petty, in those around us.

The theme of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is really Teshuva **“To repent”** or more accurately **“To Return”**, What does that really mean? I believe that our Torah and tradition teaches us that we are all created in the image of God, with the potential of almost perfection and all of our flaws and imperfections and as we grow through life making up who we have become.

To do Teshuva is to learn from all that we have been through and to use it to make our homes our community and the world a better place for us and our children, that,-- Yom Kippur demands from us and that is the process of Teshuva..

During this Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur High Holy Days I challenge you to consider the idea of Teshuva not just as saying “I’m sorry,” but instead, as using our life experience to make different choices when confronted by similar situations. We grow and change, constantly evolving to make ourselves into better people. **G-d has created us in His Divine Image**, and has given us the opportunity to grow, to better ourselves, and to make our homes our community and the world a better place.

Rosh Hashana is the birthday of the world, the anniversary of creation. We reflect on the idea of creation and we take the opportunity to recreate ourselves anew, even as we continue to grow towards the future.

At the beginning of the year, G-d decides and plans the entire year. This year I am praying to Hashem to grant us miracles to see with our own eyes the healing of our sick congregants, to answer our prayers with a yes for Refuah-Shelema, to grant us and our families a good healthy and peaceful year with good Parnassa (livelihood) to be able to do Tzedaka and kindness for others. **To receive** good news from our children and grandchildren, to be granted harmony in our Congregation Magain David as well as other Congregations. And to crown the efforts of our members for the enhancement and strength of our congregation. **May this year** bring us closer to our complete redemption.

Cecilia and I would like to wish every one of you our community and family a Shana Tovah, a healthy and peaceful year and a great future with G-d’s blessings, Amen.

Tizku Leshanim Rabbot Neimot Vetovot Amen.

Rabbi Simon Benzaquen

Important Notes and Links

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Seat Reservations

Seats will be reserved for our paid members of the synagogue but everyone is of course welcome to attend as is the tradition at Magain David. We also offer seat reservations for non-members: \$100 for Rosh Hashana only and \$100 for Yom Kippur only, or \$150 for both Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. To reserve your seat please visit the link:

<http://www.magaindavid.com/seat-reservations> or let us know in person or by email at info@magaindavid.com.

Rosh Hashanah Sedarim

Friday, September 15th and Saturday, September 16th

There will be a Seder open to the community on each night of Rosh Hashanah at Magain David following services.

The cost per evening is \$100/adult and \$50/child under 13.

You must reserve in advance - no admission at the last minute.

To register or download our [guide](#), visit magaindavid.com/rosh-hashanah-seder.html or contact the synagogue at 415-752-9095 or info@magaindavid.com.

Lulav and Etrog Sets

This year unfortunately we had to order before we sent the bulletin, so we will not be able to take orders at this point. However, we have a few extra sets coming, let us know if you need one and if there are some left, you can buy one of those. The cost is \$75 per set. Let us know as soon as possible either by phone at: 415-752-9095 or by email at: info@magaindavid.com.

Sukkot And Sukkah Construction

We are not announcing yet the schedule for Sukkot as it is subject to change. We will send an update before Yom Kippur to let you know.

We will however be putting up the Sukkah at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. If you are interested in participating in mitzvah of building the sukkah, please contact us at info@magaindavid.com or 415-752-9095.

5783-5784 High Holiday Services Schedule

Daily Selichot for the month of Elul: 6:00 AM at Anshey Sfarad @ 16th Avenue & Clement St

Erev Rosh Hashanah - Friday, September 15th

Selichot-Hatarat Nedarim: 5:30 AM at Magain David

Candle Lighting: 6:59 PM

Mincha and Arvit: 6:30PM

Service followed by seder and dinner (reservations required)

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 – Saturday, September 16th

Shacharit: 8:30 AM Torah Reading: 10:45 AM (approximate)

Sermon / Shofar Blowing: 11:30 AM (approximate)

Mussaf: 12:00 PM

Services followed by Kiddush and Lunch at the synagogue

Mincha: 4:15 PM

Tashlich (at Mountain Lake Park & 12th Avenue): 5:30 PM

Arvit: 6:45 PM

Services followed by seder and dinner (reservations required)

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 -Sunday, September 17th

Shacharit: 8:30 AM Torah Reading: 10:45 AM (approximate)

Sermon / Shofar Blowing: 11:30 AM (approximate)

Mussaf: 12:00 PM

Services followed by Kiddush and Lunch at the synagogue

Mincha: 5:30 PM

Class taught by Rabbi Benzaquen 6:30 PM

Arvit 7:30 PM

Yom Tov ends: 7:53 PM

Tzom Gedaliah – Monday September 18th

Fast begins: 5:35 AM Fast concludes: 7:44 PM

Erev Shabbat Shuva – Friday, September 22nd

Candlelighting: 6:48 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat: 6:30pm

Followed by a meal at the synagogue

Shabbat Shuva – Saturday, September 23rd

Shacharit: 9:00 AM **Parashat "Ha'azinu"**

Services followed by Kiddush and Lunch at the synagogue

Mincha: 5:30PM Seuda: 6:00pm

Arvit and Havdalah 7:15PM Shabbat concludes: 7:44 PM

Tizku I"shanim rabot!

Erev Yom Kippur – Sunday, September 24th

Selihot - Hatarat Nedarim: 5:30 AM at Magain David

Candle Lighting / Fast begins: 6:45 PM

Tallit put on no later than: 7:02 PM

Lecha Eli / Kol Nidrei: 6:45 PM

Yom Kippur – Monday, September 25th

Shacharit: 8:00 AM

Torah Reading: 10:30 AM Rabbi's Sermon: 11:15 AM

Mussaf: 11:45 AM – 2:30 PM Mincha: 3:30 PM followed by words from Rabbi Benzaquen.

Neilah: 6:15PM. Shofar / Fast ends: 7:41 PM followed by Arvit.

Followed by small snacks to break the fast

Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah (times may change; check website)

The schedule is not finalized at this time. However, these are the zmanims for the Sukkot holidays. Please watch our newsletter before Yom Kippur for the final schedule.

Erev Sukkot, Friday September 29th Candles 6:38 PM Mincha 6:30 PM

Sukkot Day 1 and Day 2 (Saturday and Sunday, September 30th and October 1st) 9:15 AM

End of Yom Tov Sunday night 7:23 PM

Tikkun Leil Hoshana Rabba, Thursday night, October 5th, 11:00 PM

Erev Shemini Atzeret Kabbalat Shabbat, Friday October 6th: Candle lighting 6:27 PM

Shabbat Shemini Atzeret / Simhat Torah (Saturday and Sunday, October 7th & 8th)

Motzae Shabbat Yom Tov 7:23 PM

Sunday Shahrit 9:15 AM / End of Yom Tov Sunday night 7:12 PM

High Holiday Highlights by Rabbi Simon Benzaquen

Rabbi Benzaquen has shared these thoughts with us on the holidays. Please visit magaindavid.com/posts for more insights.

We are now in the month of Elul, the last month of the Jewish calendar. It begins a period of intensive introspection, to clarify life's goals, and to come closer to G-d. It is a time when we step back and look at ourselves critically and honestly, with the intention of improving.

The four Hebrew letters of the word Elul (aleph-lamed-vav-lamed) are the first letters of the four words Ani l'edodi v'edodi li — "I am to my Beloved and my Beloved is to me" (Song of Songs 6:3). These words sum up the relationship between G-d and His people. In other words, the month preceding Rosh Hashanah is a time when G-d reaches out to us in an effort to create a more spiritually-inspiring atmosphere, one that stimulates Teshuva (repentance). It is a time for us to take advantage, and get closer to G-d, since He, as it were, has put Himself in a situation of closeness with us and desires our presence in any way that we acknowledge Him, and especially when it brings credit to Him.

40-DAY PERIOD Over 3000 years ago, when the Jewish people were privileged to hear G-d utter the Ten Commandments set in tablets of stone, the Jews later sinned with the Golden Calf. Moshe desperately pleaded with G-d to spare the nation. He did, and that same day that G-d spared the Nation, it became a "Day of Forgiveness" - "Yom Kippur".

On the first day of Elul, Moshe ascended Mt. Sinai, and 40 days later — on the seminal Yom Kippur — he returned to the people (Jews) with a new, second set of stone tablets in hand.

For us as well the month of Elul begins a 40-day period that culminates in the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur. During this period, many people increase their study of Torah and performance of good deeds.

Selihot We Sefaradim begin reciting Selihot from the first day of the month of Elul onward until Yom Kippur. Selihot is a special series of beautiful prayers that invoke G-d's mercy. In most Congregations, including Magain David, Selihot are recited early in the morning, before Shaharit.

After the sin of the Golden Calf Moses asked G-d to explain His system for relating to the world. G-d's answer, known as the "13 Attributes of Mercy," forms the essence of the Selihot prayers.

The "13 Attributes" speak of G-d's patience. The same G-d who created us with a clean slate and a world of opportunity, gives us another chance if we've misused the first one.

Selihot should be said with a minyan. If this is impossible, then it should still be said alone, omitting the parts in Aramaic and the "13 Attributes of Mercy".

Selihot are held every Sunday and weekday morning before Shacharit.

Two Aspects to Rosh Hashana When Rosh Hashana arrives we are keenly aware of its significance. On one hand it is the awesome Day of Judgment when G-d determines the outcome of our entire year. We become anxious and frightened not knowing what awaits us. On the other hand, on Rosh Hashana night

we also dip our apples into honey or sugar and partake of those symbols which signify what we hope for in the coming year; in which a happy and joyous mood prevails.

Sefaradim emphasize this happy and joyous mood of the Holiday especially in our Liturgy.

Notably, we do not recite “Unetane Tokef “ (“Let us express the mighty holiness of this day”) one of the most solemn and powerful prayers of Rosh Hashana, recited by our brethren Ashkenazim as introduction of The Kedusha during The Amida of Mussaf. Attributed to Rabbi Amnon of Mainz (10th century), “Untaneh Tokef” is a heart wrenching prayer, filled with emotional and powerful words which would lead us to cry and emphasize the sad aspect and judgment of the Rosh Hashana Yom Tov. In contrast, our sister Congregations, The Ashkenazim, make this Prayer the central theme of the Rosh Hashana Amidah.

Reviewing the laws of Rosh Hashana further reminds us that within judgment itself there is cause for rejoicing. We enter the day clean and dressed in our best garments as a sign of our confidence in a favorable judgment. On Rosh Hashana we do not recite the vidui (confession). Rather than focusing on past sins and seeking forgiveness, we look forward with optimism to the future.

When we properly understand the future of the judgment on Rosh Hashana, however, the apparent paradox of rejoicing in judgment evaporates. We recognize that it is we who require the Divine Judgment, the annual opportunity for spiritual stocktaking. We summon G-d to judge us with the blasts of the Shofar that herald the convening of the Divine Tribunal. Our voluntary submission to judgment arouses Divine Mercy; that is the secret of the Shofar. The shofar also reminds us of the merits of our patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the love of G-d, and in their place a ram was brought.

On the two nights of Rosh Hashana we should make sure that we partake of the symbols that we hope for in the coming year. Also, during the two days of Rosh Hashana, we blow the shofar in our Synagogue. Everyone should come to the Synagogue both days of Rosh Hashana.

Hearing the Shofar is the most important obligation of the two days of Rosh Hashana.

TASHLICH We have a beautiful custom. On the first day of Rosh Hashana we recite the Tashlich Ceremony near a body of water. Tashlich are prayers recited while symbolically throwing away our sins.

Minha: 4:15 PM. Tashlich (Lake Park @ 12th Avenue): 5:30 PM. Arvit: 6:45 PM

ZIARA - CEMETERY PILGRIMAGE On the Eve of Rosh Hashana it is customary to make a pilgrimage to the cemetery (Ziara) to recite memorial prayers at the grave of the righteous, including members of our families who are buried there. The purpose for doing this is to pray to G-d to hear our prayers in the merit of the righteous.

Tizku Le'Shanim Rabbot.

Rabbi Simon Benzaquen