

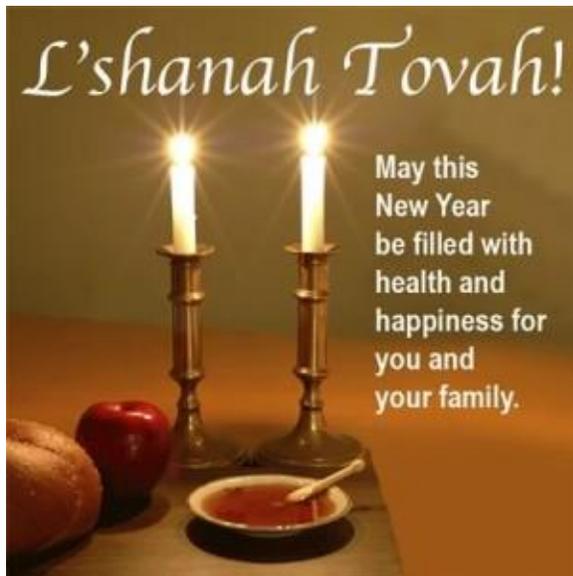


# THE CARNEGIE SHUL SHOFAR

Dr. Larry Block, *President*  
Michael Roteman, *Writer/Editor*

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## L'Shanah Tova Tikasevu!



### **From the officers of Ahavath Achim –**

Dr. Larry Block, *President*

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Dr. Paul Spivak, *Second Vice President*

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Elaine Rosenfield, *Secretary*

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Perry Bergman, Rosalyn Hoffman, Michael Roteman, Cecily Routman, and Marcia Steinberger

## The Shofar

We have changed the name of our newsletter to *The Shofar*. Why, *The Shofar*? Because the shofar was the means by which our ancestors summoned the community or alerted its

members to important events. And so, *The Shofar* will now be our way of letting you know about important coming events at Congregation Ahavath Achim – The Carnegie Shul.

## The High Holy Days – Right On Time

Yes, it is the High Holidays, or the High Holy Days, as I prefer to call them, and this year they seem to be earlier than ever. Some years we celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in October, but this year we begin our celebration the first week in September. So why is it different every year?

Well, according to the Jewish calendar, the High Holy Days are not different every year, but take place just as God commanded. The date for Rosh Hashanah is set in Leviticus, Chapter 23; God says to Moses, "In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no manner of work; and ye shall bring an offering made of fire unto the LORD."

Notice that the Torah commands that a single day be set aside for this holy convocation, yet Conservative and Orthodox Jews throughout

the Diaspora observe Rosh Hashanah for two full days. Why is this?

According to *The Jewish Book of Why*, “In early centuries, the testimony of witnesses was used to determine the official date of arrival of the New Moon, and then messengers were sent forth to notify outlying communities. If the witnesses were to arrive too late for the messengers to be sent out to the distant communities on time, those living far from Jerusalem would miss the correct day of observance of the holiday. In order to protect against this, Rosh Hashanah was made a two-day holiday, and the two days were considered one long day (yoma arichta.)”

The *Jewish Book of Why* further explains, “The change from a one-day to a two-day holiday occurred when it became evident that the precise hour of the appearance of the New Moon for the month of Tishri might not always be ascertained. If clouds filled the sky, there might be no witnesses to the arrival of the New Moon. Therefore, to be certain that Rosh Hashanah could be celebrated on the correct day, the holiday was extended from a one-day holiday to a two-day holiday for Jews in Palestine and elsewhere, and the chance for error was decreased. (Yom Kippur was always a one-day holiday because it would be a terrible imposition to expect people to fast for two days.

Reform Jews believe that doubts about the certainty of the calendar no longer exist today, and by and large they have retained the biblical practice of observing Rosh Hashanah as a one-day holiday.”

As for Yom Kippur, Leviticus Chapter 23 also says, “Howbeit on the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement; there shall be a

holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no matter of work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work; it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a Sabbath of solemn rest, and ye shall afflict your souls.”

And so, the High Holy Days can never be early or late. They are always, as commanded by God, right on time.

## President's Message

Rosh HaShanah, the Jewish New Year, occurs at the beginning of the month of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. Yet the Hebrew calendar begins with the first month — the month of Nisan, when G-d freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. From a historical perspective, the history of the Jews begins with our journey in Nisan to spiritual freedom and the formal foundation of our religion at Sinai. Why does Rosh HaShanah occur in Tishrei and not in Nisan? The answer is that Tishrei is the month in which the world was created. Everything began — and is renewed — in the month of Tishrei.

The ten-day period encompassing the two days of Rosh HaShanah and culminating in Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) are referred to as the Yomim Nora'im (the Days of Awe) signifying the time period during which we are to examine our lives and repent for any wrongs that we may have committed in the past year.

For that repentance to be sincere and wholehearted requires our acknowledging G-d's having endowed us with two essential impulses or inclinations: the *yetzer ha-tov* and the *yetzer ha-ra*. These are, respectively, the inclination for good and the inclination for evil. Our efforts to be good are often pictured as efforts to achieve mastery or dominance over our *yetzer ha-ra*.

With the beginning of a New Year we have a new opportunity to master our *yetzer ha-ra* and overcome it. True *teshuvah* (repentance) — the return to G-d — can only be achieved in this way. This is our opportunity to make the corrections in our daily lives that make us better people. May this New Year mark the beginning of our *teshuvah* *via* our improvement in our interactions with family, friends, neighbors, and business associates and our commitment to the Jewish ideal of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world. Every improvement we make in ourselves facilitates our progress to perfection that G-d requires of us.

On behalf of the officers and board of directors of The Carnegie Shul, I reaffirm *our* determination to maintain the shul as an effective and meaningful Jewish presence in your lives in the New Year. Please help us to achieve that goal as we go forward. Here's to a healthy, happy, and fulfilling New Year for all of us.

Dr. Larry Block, *President*

## Did You Know?

This year is 5774 of the Jewish calendar. And although Rosh Hashanah celebrates creation, it does not occur on the first day of creation, but

rather on the sixth day, the day that Adam and Eve were created.

And how about this for an unusually early start to a Jewish holiday? This year, the first day of Chanukah coincides with Thanksgiving, on November 28. What? Doesn't Chanukah usually coincide with the Christian observance of Christmas?

Not this year. Never before in our history has this occurred. It would have occurred in 1861, but President Lincoln did not formally declare Thanksgiving as a holiday until 1863, so we missed on that one. When will it occur again? Never! It's complicated and has to do with the Jewish calendar getting out of synch with the Gregorian calendar, but the experts say that this will never, ever happen again.

## Rosh Hashanah



## The Parshahs

During the course of our observance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we will be reading two parshahs on Rosh Hashanah and two parshahs on Yom Kippur.

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah we read from Genesis, Chapter 21. In this parshah, God remembers Sarah with the birth of her son Isaac. Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90

years old when they are blessed with the birth of their son.

Isaac is a happy child and Sarah knows that he will be a great leader for his people. But she also sees that Ishmael, Abraham's first born from Sarah's concubine, Hagar, is a wild, mean-spirited lad who will be a bad influence upon Isaac. Sarah convinces Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael to the desert, where Ishmael is likely to die. But God hears Ishmael's cries and spares his life. Later, God promises Ishmael a great nation of his own. The conflict between Ishmael and Isaac persists to this very day, as Ishmael's descendants, the Arabs, continue to battle with Isaac's descendants, the Jews.

The parshah for the second day of Rosh Hashanah comes from Genesis 22, and tells of the binding of Isaac. Isaac is already 37 years old when Abraham is instructed to sacrifice his son to God. And yet, amazingly, both father and son set off to obey this harsh commandment, not knowing that it is a test of faith for Abraham and that Abraham will pass with incredible courage. Just as he is about to sacrifice his son, an angel of God intervenes and Isaac's life is spared.



Who among us would have the faith in God and the courage that Abraham displayed in passing this incredible test of faith?

## Yom Kippur

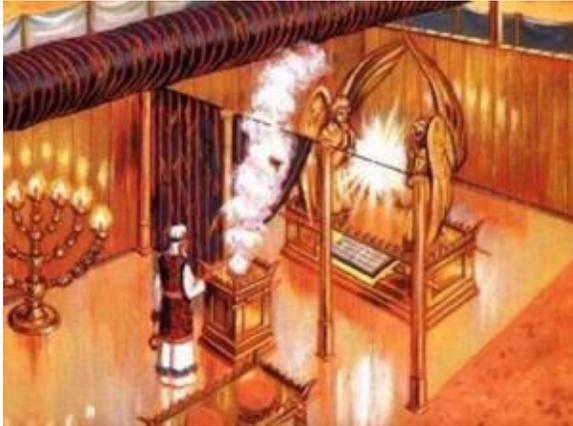


### Kol Nidre

Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, begins, of course, with the chanting of Kol Nidre. In Judaism, the keeping of one's promises, one's vows, is a very important obligation. And yet, try as we might, we all break a promise from time to time. It has often been said that, "A man is only as good as his word." And yet, how good are we if we do not keep our word?

God understands that, as humans, we do not always keep all of our promises, no matter how well intentioned we are. And so, to begin the atonement process, he allows us, in advance, to nullify our vows. Three times we repeat the Kol Nidre, saying, "All personal vows we are likely to make, all personal oaths we are likely to take between this Yom Kippur and the next Yom Kippur, we publicly renounce. Let them all be relinquished and abandoned, null and void, neither firm nor established. Let our personal vows, pledges and oaths, be considered neither vows nor pledges nor oaths."

## The Parshahs



During the morning service on Yom Kippur we read from Leviticus, Chapter 16. The parshah describes the casting of lots to send the scapegoat into the wilderness, symbolically taking the sins of the Jewish people with him. We also read of the entrance of the Kohain Godol into the Holy of Holies at the climax of the Yom Kippur service. I remember vividly a former Rabbi of mine telling the story of how a rope was tied to the waist of the Kohain Godol so that if anything happened to him he could be pulled from the Holy of Holies, where no other man could enter. One of the highlights of my trip to Israel last year was standing at the entrance to the very spot where the Holy of Holies was said to have been. As a Kohain myself, this was an awe-inspiring event.

The afternoon parshah is Chapter 18 of Leviticus, a chapter which includes the laws of proper sexual conduct. The fall of Sodom and Gemara, Rome and many other great nations was brought about by sexual sin and misconduct and by other forms of deviant behavior. Reading this chapter every year reminds us of the importance of the high level of sexual, ethical, and moral conduct to which God has commanded Jews, as a holy nation, to adhere.

## Jonah and the Whale

Unfortunately, many of us do not attend the afternoon service on Yom Kippur, and so we miss out on the reading of my favorite Bible story, the Book of Jonah.



Let me begin by correcting one common misconception –

Jonah was not swallowed by a whale as most people say, but rather, the scriptures tells us, by a “great fish.” Yes, God knows the difference between a whale, which is a mammal, and a great fish. And He is perfectly capable of creating a great fish that can swallow a person, and of having that person survive in the belly of that fish.

Does this really matter? Well, there are those who laugh at that aspect of the Book of Jonah, who say, “Are you kidding. Jonah gets swallowed and lives in the belly of a whale? Ridiculous.”

Well, my answer to that is, why is it ridiculous? Why can’t God, who could create the heavens and the earth, not also create this great fish?

But let’s not get lost in the details. The real importance of the Book of Jonah is that as evil as the people of Nineveh were, when they heard from Jonah that God was going to destroy them, they were able to repent and turn from their evil ways. And God demonstrated that he is a merciful God by sparing these repenters from the fate that had been set for them.

And so, on Yom Kippur, when we ask for forgiveness for the sins that we have committed, we see that God will indeed grant forgiveness to those who sincerely seek it.

## Tashlich

On Thursday evening at 6:15 we will gather at our shul and proceed a few blocks down to the Chartiers Creek to perform the ritual of Tashlich.

Tashlich literally means “casting off,” as we symbolically cast off the sins of the previous year by tossing pieces of bread or another food into a body of flowing water. Just as the water carries away the scraps of bread, so too are our sins symbolically carried away. In this way, we attempt to start our New Year with a clean slate.



## Tashlich

The origin of Tashlich is usually attributed to the prophet Micah, who said, “God will take us back in love; God will cover up our iniquities, You [God] will hurl all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

The following blessing from Micah is usually recited when tossing our bread into the water, “Who is like You, God, who removes iniquity and overlooks transgression of the remainder of His inheritance. He does not remain angry forever because He desires kindness. He will return and He will be merciful to us, and He will conquer our iniquities, and He will cast off our

sins into the depths of the seas. Give truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham, like that you swore to our ancestors from long ago.”

## Dos and Don'ts



It's a new year and an opportunity to renew acquaintances with old friends, some of whom we have not seen since last Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. Keep in mind, however, that loud conversation is a distraction for those who are trying to participate in the services and/or pray. Please keep your voices down and be respectful of others, especially during Amidahs and Torah services. If you really need to kibbitz, why not step outside for a few minutes rather than disrupt our services. Thank you.

## Dues & Donations

At the Carnegie Shul we try to make religion affordable for everyone. Dues are very low and there is no charge for High Holy Days tickets. But, just like everyone else, we do have bills to pay such as utilities and building maintenance.

Tzedakah is an important part of our Yom Kippur tradition. As we are taught, teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah will avert the evil decree.

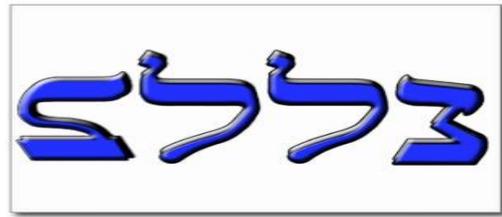
And so, on this Yom Kippur, we ask that you consider a donation to the Carnegie Shul as part of your Yom Kippur tzedukah. Donation cards and envelopes will be available in the shul, or you may mail your dues and donations to our treasurer, Joel Roteman, at 954 Lindendale Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15243.



## We Welcome our Chazan

Once again we welcome Rabbi Harvey Brotsky, formerly the Rabbi of the New Light Congregation in Squirrel Hill, who will be returning to lead us in prayer for the second year.

We thoroughly enjoyed Rabbi Brotsky's davening last year and look forward to davening with him again this year.



## Remembering 5773

The past year was a year of joy at the Carnegie Shul, but our joy was tempered with a little sadness too.

We welcomed new members Rosalyn Hoffman, the family of Dr. Evan and Mrs. Melissa Dreyer, and Carl and Roni Schiffman to our congregation, but sadly we said goodbye to longtime Board member Harris Tisherman and his wife, Sisterhood President Roseanne Tisherman, who moved to Florida in March.

We also said the saddest of goodbyes to longtime member Morton Lowe, who passed away in June.

We were all delighted that the Dreyers celebrated the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Justin, at our shul in April. What a wonderful simcha that was! And we enjoyed a special Friday evening service at our shul in December.

We davened with new Shabbos and High Holy Day prayer books, and for those who have trouble getting up the stairs to our sanctuary, we installed a new chair lift so that they can get to our services a little more easily.

We re-elected our officers at our Annual Meeting, and we elected two new members, Rosalyn Hoffman and Perry Bergman, to serve on our Board.

# Holiday Schedule 5774, 2013

## Rosh Hashanah

### Wednesday, September 4

Evening Service ..... 7:15pm

### Thursday, September 5

Preliminary Service .....8:30am

Shachris .....9am

Torah Reading .....10am

Sermon .....10:45am

Musaf .....11:15am

Recess ..... 1:15pm

Tashlich ..... 6:15pm

Minchah .....7pm

Maariv ..... 7:15pm

### Friday, September 6

Preliminary Service .....8:30am

Shachris .....9am

Torah Reading .....10am

Sermon .....10:45am

Musaf .....11:15am

## Shabbos

### Saturday, September 7

Morning Service .....9:20am



## Yom Kippur

### Friday, September 13

Kol Nidre .....7:15pm

Sermon.....7:30pm

Maariv .....7:45pm

### Saturday, September 14

Preliminary Service ..... 9am

Shachris.....9:30am

Torah Reading .....10:30am

Sermon.....11:15am

Yizkor .....11:45am

Musaf .....12:15pm

Recess .....2:30pm

Minchah .....5:50pm

Neilah.....6:50pm

Breaking of the Fast.....8:12pm

## Sukkos

### Thursday, September 19

Morning Service .....9:20am

### Friday, September 20

Morning Service .....9:20am

### Thursday, September 26

Preliminary Service .....9:20am

Shachris.....9:40am

Yizkor .....11am

## Simchas Torah

### Friday, September 27

Morning Service .....9:20am