

# WELCOME

(Leader Remarks)

**Song: Heveynu Shalom Aleychem**

Heveynu, shalom aleychem (3X)  
Heveynu, shalom, shalom, shalom a-ley-chem!

*We bring you greetings of peace!*



## Rosh Hashanah Candle Lighting

**Reader:** The candles we light in honor of Rosh Hashanah help us to remember the generations before us who lit candles as we do to bring in the New Year, and found beauty and serenity in their light. Let us think of all those around the world who, as we do at this moment, are coming together to light candles for the New Year.

**Reader:** May these candles shine as symbols of human enlightenment and human kindness. May these candles light our way in the darkness and bring joy to the New Year.

**Leader or Speaker 1:** *(light the candles)*

Baruch ha-or sheh-b'chol eh-chod  
Baruch ha-or baolam  
Baruch ha-or ha-atid  
Baruch ha-or shel Rosh Hashanah

**All say:**

**Radiant is the light in each of us.  
Radiant is the light that brings joy into the world.  
Radiant is the light of the future.  
Radiant is the light of the New Year.**



**Song: This Little Light of Mine**



This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!

Everywhere I go.....

In my daily work ....

For the poor and hungry folk...

**Speaker 2: (Poem or Reading)**

**Ceremonial Wine**

Reader: In honor of the New Year, we also make a blessing over wine. Wine is a symbol of the earth's bounty — the fruit of the vine — and it is doubly pleasing to share this wine at this time of New Year harvest plenty. In drinking this wine and savoring its pungent taste, we remember that life is a mixture of both bitter and sweet, and we resolve to accept them both and affirm all life.

Reader: May the taste of this wine help us to appreciate nature, respect human endeavor, and accept the fullness of life.

**Leader or Speaker 3:**

Baruch ha-aretz  
Ha-shemesh v-ha-geshem  
Bo-ray pree ha-gafen



**All say:**

**Radiant is the earth, the sun, and the rain that brings forth the fruit of the vine.**

Reader: As the start of the New Year, Rosh Hashanah marks a turning point, a separation between what was and what will be. It offers us time and space to reflect on our lives and to affirm our sense of connection — to the earth, to ourselves, and to each other.

Leader: This is the opening of a new gate, and the closing of another.

**All Say: This is the beginning of a new year, and the ending of another.**

Leader: This is the opening of a new path, and the closing of another.

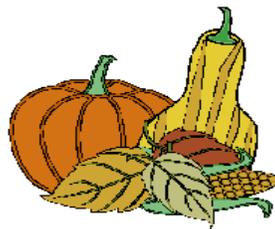
All Say: This is the beginning of a new time, and the ending of another.

Leader: This is the opening of a new journey, and the closing of another.

All Say: This is the beginning of a new spirit, and the ending of another.

Reader: In ancient times, our ancestors were farmers who worked hard to grow food. Their labors cycled with the seasons and the rhythms of the earth. After the fall harvest, they took the time to honor their connection to the earth and to celebrate the earth's fruits.

Reader: As Humanistic Jews, we too welcome the autumn and its bountiful harvest. We feel the earth changing, the season turning, and in harmony with these natural rhythms, we, too, seek a space of renewal.



Reader: Over time, the ancient harvest celebration became a celebration of God's power. It was the time when each person came before God to be judged, a God who decided who will live and who will die, who will be written in the book of life and who will be written in the book of death.

Reader: As Humanistic Jews, we do not ask God to judge our actions; instead, we recognize that we possess the power and responsibility to shape our own lives independent of supernatural authority.

Reader: Rosh Hashanah gives us the space to affirm that the power to change lies within ourselves. It gives us the chance to look within and acknowledge our weaknesses and the mistakes we have made in the past year.

All say: Let us renew our commitment to live in a wise and compassionate way in this new year.

Reader: Rosh Hashanah gives us the space to reconnect with family. We reflect on our responsibilities to parents, children, brothers and sisters, partners with whom we have chosen to spend our lives, relatives living and dead, and everyone else whom we embrace and honor as family. Just as we define our families, our families define us.

**All say: Let us renew our connection to family in this new year.**

Reader: Rosh Hashanah gives us the space to reconnect with community, to affirm our connections and responsibilities to others that reach out beyond the intimate circle of family – to friends, neighbors, teachers, colleagues.

**All say: Let us renew our commitments to all those who share this precious earth with us in this new year.**

**Song: Na'ase Shalom**

Na'ase shalom ba'olam  
Na'ase shalom aleynu  
V'al kol ha'olam  
V'imru, imru shalom

Na'ase shalom, Na'ase shalom,  
Shalom aleynu V'al kol ha'olam (2 times)



*Let us make peace and friendship for all the world.*

**Speaker 4: (Poem or Reading)**

Reader: A traditional part of Rosh Hashanah is the ceremony of *tashlikh*, when Jews symbolically cleanse themselves of sin by throwing bread on moving water. "Sin" in Judaism means falling short of the mark, or straying from the path. The sins that are called to mind in the *tashlikh* ceremony are our failures to live up to our potential and our failures to fulfill our responsibilities and commitments to others.

Reader: We know that making mistakes is part of being human, and it is never easy to think about those times when we did not act compassionately or wisely. But what is important is that we take responsibility for our mistakes and that we learn from them.

Reader: Let us now symbolically cast off those failures by offering up our words as breadcrumbs, conveying our sins and our mistakes into the air, where they can fade away, so that we can begin anew.

Leader: We recognize that we have gone astray:

All say:     **By being dishonest with ourselves and with others**  
                  **By manipulating the people we claim to love**  
                  **By pretending emotions we do not feel**  
                  **By remaining silent in the face of evil.**

### (Tashlikh Ceremony)

Speaker 5: Personal Reflection

Reader: This evening we have the opportunity to reflect upon our own lives, to consider for ourselves what it means to act with compassion and wisdom, and to think about the commitments we would like to make in the coming year to work towards being a better person.

Leader: Let us all take a moment of silence for self-reflection.



Reader: "Strange is our situation here upon the Earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other, above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of others, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received and am still receiving." *Albert Einstein*

**Song: Hiney Matov**

Hiney ma-tov oo-mah-na-yeem  
She-vet a-cheem gam ya-chad (2X)

Hiney ma-tov, she-vet a-cheem gam ya-chad (2X)

*(Repeat first verse)*

*How good and sweet it is here, sitting together as brothers/sisters*

Reader: In ancient times the Hebrew people announced the start of the New Year by blowing the shofar, a musical instrument made of a ram's horn. Today, its call still summons Jews around the world to celebrate the New Year. The sound of the shofar is, for many, the chief symbol of Rosh Hashanah.

Reader: For Humanistic Jews, it is a shout of joy that calls us to celebrate. It is the sound that makes us pause, that calls our attention to reflection and renewal, and to community and commitment.

Reader: "The shofar sound represents prayer beyond words, an intensity of longing that can only be articulated in a wordless shout. But the order of the sounds, according to one old interpretation, contains the message in quite explicit terms. ...

Reader: Each series of shofar blasts begins with a *teki'a*, a whole sound. It is followed by *shevarim*, a tripartite broken sound whose very name means *breakings*. 'I started off whole,' the shofar's speech says, 'and I become broken.' Then follows *teru'ach*, a staccato series of blast fragments, saying: 'I was entirely smashed into pieces,' but each series has to end with a new *teki'a*, promising wholeness once more. ...

Reader: The shofar cries out a hundred times on Rosh Hashanah: 'I WAS WHOLE, I WAS BROKEN, EVEN SMASHED TO BITS, BUT I SHALL BE WHOLE AGAIN!'" (*Arthur Green*)

Reader: Today, in our society, people's lives are increasingly fragmented, frenzied, and alienated. Today, around the world, people's lives are being smashed to bits by violence, war, and hatred. In this context, it is more important than ever to sound the shofar, to listen to it together as a community, and to heed its call once more, to move towards wholeness in the sound of the *teki'a*.

Reader: May the shofar sound one day soon when all of the people of the world are at peace.

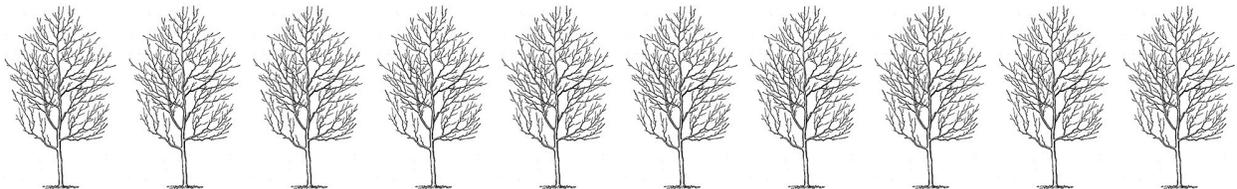
## The sounding of the shofar



### Speaker 6: Personal Reflection



(Songs)



## MEMORIAL

Leader: (*lights the yahrzeit candle*) We light a yahrzeit candle tonight in memory of all those around the world who have died during this year. On the eve of a new year, we light this candle to honor those who have perished, to respect their suffering and the suffering of their loved ones, and to begin to let go of our grief.

### Speaker 7:

#### **Memorywork**

a poem by Sylvia Kamens and Jack Riemer

In the rising of the sun and its going down,  
We remember them.  
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,  
We remember them.  
In the opening buds and in the rebirth of spring,  
We remember them.  
In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,  
We remember them.  
In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn,  
We remember them.  
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,  
We remember them.  
When we are weary and in need of strength,  
We remember them.  
When we are lost and are sick of heart,  
We remember them.  
When we have joys we yearn to share,  
We remember them.

All say:   **So long as we live, they too shall live,  
                  For they are a part of us,  
                  As we remember them.**

Leader: We invite any of you who mourns or would like to honor your loved ones who have died to stand and share their names with us.

## AFFIRMATION: COMMITMENTS

Leader: We live today because our ancestors supported each other.

All say: **We choose to strengthen our bonds of connection.**

Leader: What is firmly established cannot be uprooted.  
What is firmly grasped, cannot slip away.

All say: **It will be honored from generation to generation.**

Leader: Cultivate this choice in ourselves,

All say: **And it will take root.**

Leader: Cultivate it in the family,

All say: **And it will grow.**

Leader: Cultivate it in the community,

All say: **And it will multiply.**

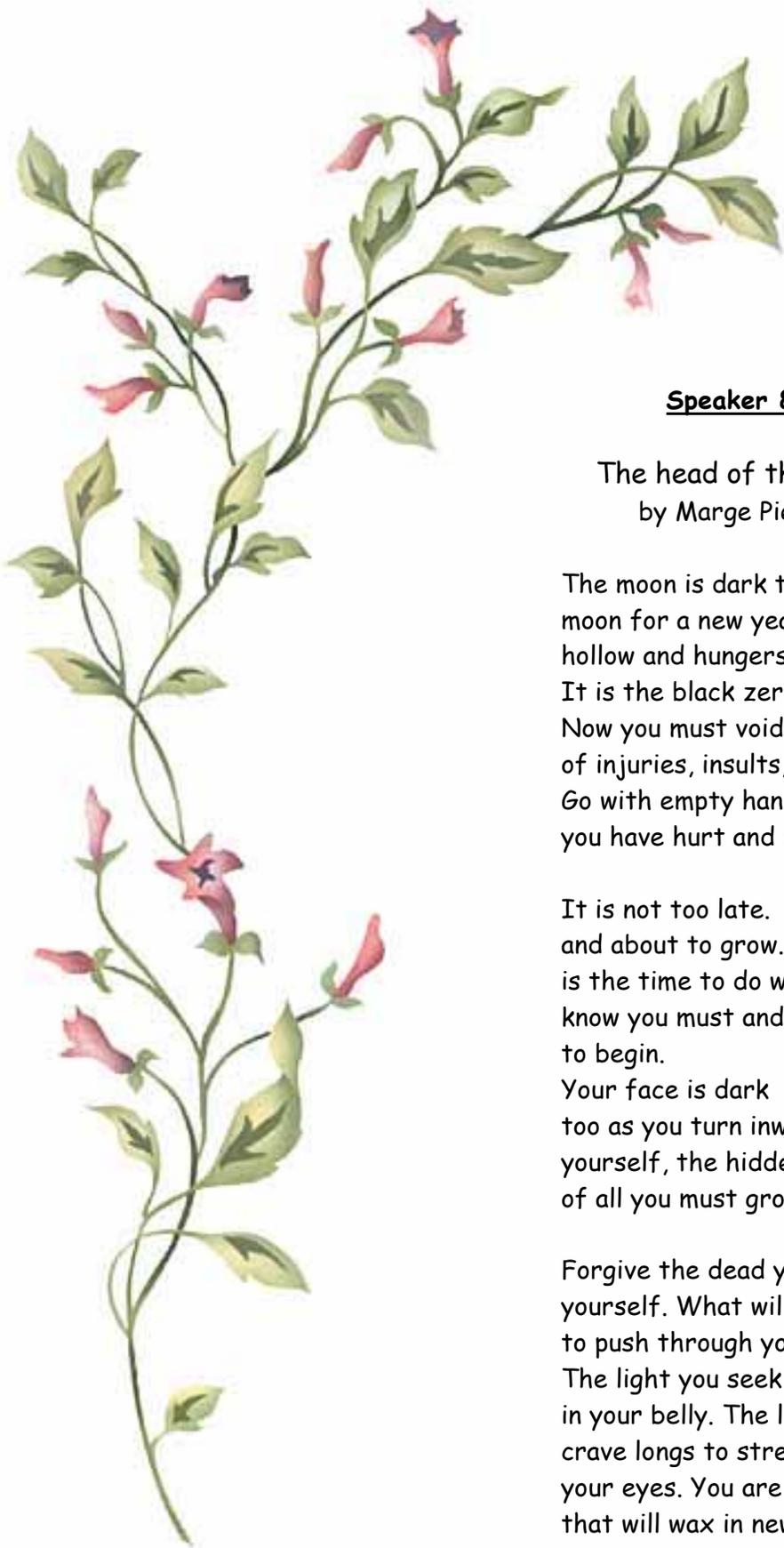
Leader: Cultivate it in the nation,

All say: **And it will be abundant.**

Leader: Cultivate it throughout the world,

All say: **And it will flourish.**





**Speaker 8:**

The head of the year  
by Marge Piercy

The moon is dark tonight, a new  
moon for a new year. It is  
hollow and hungers to be full.  
It is the black zero of beginning.  
Now you must void yourself  
of injuries, insults, incursions.  
Go with empty hands to those  
you have hurt and make amends.

It is not too late. It is early  
and about to grow. Now  
is the time to do what you  
know you must and have feared  
to begin.  
Your face is dark  
too as you turn inward to face  
yourself, the hidden twin  
of all you must grow to be.

Forgive the dead year. Forgive  
yourself. What will be wants  
to push through your fingers.  
The light you seek hides  
in your belly. The light you  
crave longs to stream from  
your eyes. You are the moon  
that will wax in new goodness.

Leader: Let us share apples and challah dipped in honey which represent our hope for a sweet and peaceful New Year.



Reader: On this Rosh Hashana we have thought together, talked together, sung together, and we have been silent together. We are thankful for this time that we have spent with one another.

Reader: May we create for ourselves a year of health, happiness, and peace.

Reader: May we create a community where all are welcomed and supported.

Reader: May we build a world of enduring peace and justice where our children and generations to come may enjoy happiness and contentment.

All say:       **Shana tovah!**       *Happy new year!*

**Song: Shalom Haverim**

Shalom haverim, shalom haverim, shalom, shalom  
Le hit ra-ot, le hit ra-ot, shalom, shalom.

*Peace friends, until we meet again.*

