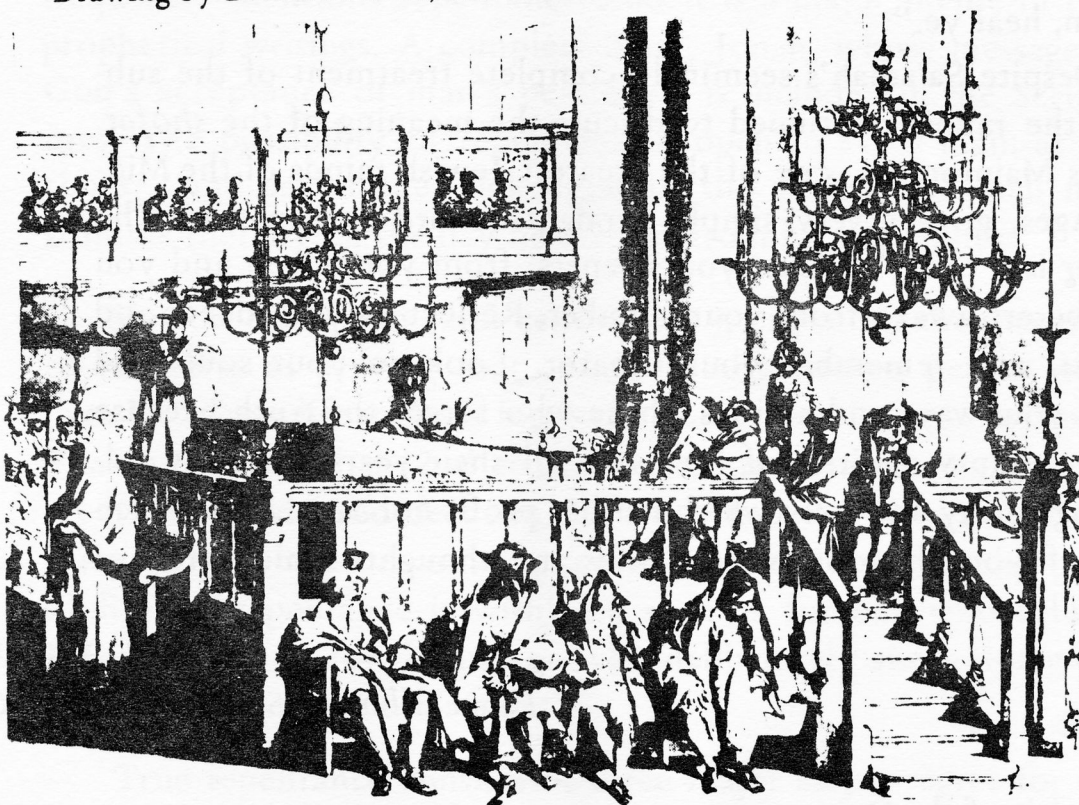


Blowing the *shofar*, during the synagogue service on Rosh Ha-Shanah.  
Drawing by Bernard Picart, 1724.



6. The *shofar* is symbolic of the ram Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac. Abraham was prepared to offer up his beloved child at God's command and Isaac, too, when it became clear that he himself was the chosen sacrifice, did not hesitate or doubt God's righteousness. The trials of the Patriarchs remain an inspiration to the Jewish people and stand to Israel's credit when they are judged every year.

7. The sound of the horn arouses fear: "Shall the horn be blown in a city and the people not tremble . . . ?"

8. The *shofar* evokes the ultimate Day of Judgement: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteth greatly . . . a day of the horn and alarm . . ."

9. The final Ingathering of the Exiles is also associated with the blowing of the horn: "And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great horn shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria, and they that were dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem."

10. The *shofar* is connected with the Resurrection. It is in this sense that the verse in Isaiah was interpreted: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers in the earth, when an

ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye; and when the horn is blown, hear ye.”

Despite Sa'adiah's seemingly complete treatment of the subject, the rabbis continued to discuss the meaning of the *shofar*. Moses Maimonides, one of the greatest Jewish minds of the Middle Ages, gives a very simple, straightforward explanation. The *shofar* is a call: “Awake, you sleepers, from your sleep and you slumberers awake from your slumber. Reflect on your deeds and repent, and remember your Creator. Look to your souls and mend your ways and actions, those who forget the truth because of the empty vanities of life, who all their years go astray following vanity and folly which neither profit nor save. An let each one of you abandon his evil way and thoughts which are not good.”

## YOM KIPPUR

*From All Your Sins Shall Ye Be Clean*

### The Spirit of the Day

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the most solemn day of the Jewish year and is the climax to the Days of Awe. It is the day on which the Jew as an individual, and the nation as a whole, are cleansed of their sins and granted atonement. The concept that man can achieve atonement for his sins is basic to Judaism. Man is a dynamic organism, who has free choice to do good or evil, but even having committed evil he can regain his former purity through atonement. Judaism sees life as a sort of ladder. Man either goes up or down, but is never stationary. With each good deed he raises himself to a higher spiritual level and with each evil one he sinks lower. Yom Kippur adds a new dimension: however low man has fallen he can pull himself up again. Yom Kippur is a day “unto you”, for man, of which he stands in urgent need in order to become reconciled to God, and, which God has made available to man for his own sake.

The concept of atonement is found in other religions as well. Unique to Judaism, of all the world's great faiths, is the setting aside of a specific day for this purpose. The Bible calls the day *Shabbat Shabbaton*, a Sabbath of Sabbaths. It is not just a memory of the world's creation but a memory of Creation itself.

Repentance is a vital factor in attaining atonement. The Bible frequently mentions repentance, and it is a major theme in the prophetic writings. A complete book, Jonah, whose message is God's acceptance of man's penitence, is included in the Scriptures. The possibility of repentance is open to every man, at all times: "and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not stumble thereby on the day he turneth from his wickedness."

Simeon bar Yoḥai (2nd century c.e.), explained the meaning of the verse as proving that even a totally wicked person who lives his whole life in sin is forgiven the moment he truly repents. Yaakov ben Korshai (2nd century c.e.), stated that one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the whole life of the world to come. In certain cases, however, the possibility of repentance is withheld, such as for one who causes others to sin, or for the person who deliberately sins, relying on Yom Kippur to atone for him.

True repentance consists of three major steps: regret for the past; resolution not to repeat the sin in the future, and confession. Public sins and sins against others should be confessed publicly; private sins should be confessed directly before God. The sages pointed out that the proof of true repentance becomes evident only if the sinner refrains from repeating his sin when the opportunity presents itself under exactly similar circumstances. An important proviso is that the person's abstention is due to contrition and not to fear of punishment or physical weakness. Despite repentance and confession, a person continues to confess his sin every year on Yom Kippur, as remorse never leaves him.

The sages also divided repentance into two or even three categories: repentance through suffering; repentance out of fear, and repentance out of love for God, the last being of the highest merit. Repentance not only absolves a person from sin; it even adds to his credit. He who repents out of fear has all his deliberate sins counted as unwitting ones. He who repents out of love for God, however, has his sins counted as good deeds (*mitzvot*). The sages discuss the relative worth of a penitent sinner and a saint who has never sinned, and conclude that the former stands on a higher plane. The sinner, who has experienced sin and comes to

realize its true significance, is filled with remorse through which he rises to heights which the saint cannot attain, being ignorant of one of the dimensions of the human spirit. The latter is like a person who has never experienced darkness, and therefore, cannot fully appreciate light. Remorse and penitence give a person a new understanding of God through which he reaches atonement.

For one type of sin no amount of remorse will help; the sin of one man against his fellow. In the case where damage has been inflicted, it must first be repaired. Even after making amends, God will not forgive until forgiveness has been obtained from the injured party. If the injured party refuses to forgive, the offender is required to apologize in front of three witnesses. If, after three such efforts, the injured party still refuses to forgive, the offender is absolved, unless the injured party is his teacher when no number of times is sufficient. If the injured party is dead, then confession must be made at his grave in front of ten witnesses.

Yom Kippur is a very personal experience in which each man wrestles with his own conscience. But its importance lies also in the national sphere. This is obvious from the Yom Kippur Temple service, where the High Priest acted as representative of the whole people, and a great part of the atonement service was for the nation as a whole. Today, too, the confessional prayers are conducted in the plural form thereby including all Israel.

Yom Kippur, with its strong overtones of personal atonement for sins and transgressions, is at the same time a day of national cleansing when the Jewish people as a whole regains its purity.

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# Communal Settings

THE INTERIOR OF THE SHULE will have taken on a number of changes by the High Holydays. The new Bimah (reading desk) donated by Mrs J. Nagel in memory of her late husband, has already been completed. A new centre partition which blends in to the general decore of the synagogue will have been completed as well. These and other planned improvements - including new fixed seating - will add to the dignity and atmosphere of our Shule and services. Thanks are due, in particular, to Mr Arthur Kohn for his speed and dedication in ensuring that these projects were completed in minimum time. Thanks are also due to Mr and Mrs George Baxt for ensuring that the wrought iron decorative pieces around the Bimah were made as a perfect match to the other wrought iron pieces already in the Shule.

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OUR ADULT STUDY GROUP held on the first and third Tuesday nights of the month have been held regularly and have been well attended. A number of chapters of the first book of the Torah (Genesis) have been covered in depth. Everyone is welcome to these classes and no prior knowledge is really necessary. They will resume, after the High Holydays, on November 3rd. The series on Ethics of the Fathers conducted on Shabbat afternoons before Minchah will continue as usual throughout the Holyday period as well.

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THE YOLANDA KRAMER KINDERGARTEN run by our community is functioning very well. At the recent general meeting of parents and members the following management committee was elected:  
Mr Sam Steiff - president; Mr Arthur Kohn - honorary treasurer;  
Miss Rosetta Meinrath- honorary secretary; Dr and Mrs Fitchman and Mrs Tamara Lowbeer - committee members.  
At the meeting, thanks were extended to the kindergarten's Directress Mrs Debbie Rooz and to her assistant Mrs Ellen Myer for their dedicated work in the kindergarten.  
Plans are currently underway to even further up-grade the Jewish educational content for the Jewish children in the kindergarten. It is hoped that from the beginning of third term Rabbi Gutnick will be taking a regular session with the children.

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THE SUNDAY HEBREW SCHOOL, while suffering a drop in numbers this year, reflecting the general trend throughout Sydney, has nevertheless maintained its high standards. There are currently a number of discussions taking place both inside and outside our community in an attempt to ensure that our Cheder will be administered in the best way possible for its individual needs, wants, and standards. Parents can be assured that everything possible is being done to ensure the best possible education for the children of our community, however, it is up to parents to co-operate also by ensuring that they actively encourage the children to practice what they are taught. In particular, they are urged to make a much greater effort in bringing the children along to Shule services - particularly now, as the High Holydays approach.

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Yahrzeit Reminder Letters are currently being sent out to families of those whose names appear on the plaques on the memorial board in the foyer of the synagogue. Members should be aware that a memorial light burns near the plaque for the twenty-four hour period of the Yahrzeit, and all names are mentioned during the Yizkor services on Yom Tov. In addition to this any member wishing to have a memorial prayer recited on Yom Tov or on a Shabbat preceding a Yahrzeit, even if a plaque has not been purchased on the memorial board, may make arrangements with the Rabbi (642. 4803) or with the President, Mr Steif (747 1086). Information concerning the purchase of plaques may be directed to the honorary treasurer, Dr Fitchman (642 8530).

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THE U.I.A. APPEAL has concluded for this year. Our local Chairman, Mrs Fritzi Fitchman, who took over after many years of dedicated work by Mr Ian Lacey, has reported a successful campaign. She however notes that even at this late date a number of pledges have not yet been made or honoured. At this time of the year, in particular, it would be expected that these procrastinators come good as soon as possible with their support for Israel.

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RABBI MENDEL LIPSKAR OF SOUTH AFRICA recently visited our community and met with many members of our community at a highly successful meeting at the home of our Rabbi and Rebbetzin. Rabbi Lipskar's talk was stimulating and informative and elicited much discussion. He later expressed his delight at finding such an interesting and active community in the Strathfield area and appeared to enjoy our company as much as we enjoyed his. It was a stimulating experience, and thanks must be given to the Yeshivah for bringing Rabbi Lipskar to Sydney and thus enabling us to meet and hear him.

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RABBI GUTNICK RECENTLY OFFICIATED at the wedding of Miss Miriam Gallo and Mr Simon Cowen the son of Governor General Sir Zelman and Lady Cowen. Miss Gallo, apart from being a regular visitor to the Rabbi and Rebbetzin's home, will also be remembered by many of the children of the Sunday School and their parents as she was a very capable teacher at our Sunday Cheder for some time. Rabbi Gutnick subsequently also chaired the wedding reception and passed on the community's best wishes to the young couple and to Sir Zelman and Lady Cowen and to the Gallo family.

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THE RECENT CITY TO SURF RACE prominently featured at least two young members of our community. Dr and Mrs Fitchman's grandson Gregory reportedly ran the course in a fantastic 56 minutes - a tremendous effort for a 9th year student. Young Ron Kohn, our regular helper for Shule services, completed his first run in just under 70 minutes - which was a tremendous