

Happy Birthday World

BY RABBI BERNARD S. RASKAS

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year's Day, is a cosmic event. This day does not commemorate the founding of a religion, nor does it salute the birth of an individual; but rather it celebrates the anniversary of the creation of the universe. To put it simply, Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world.

Once, two men became involved in a quarrel over a piece of land. They decided to take their dispute to the rabbi, who would solve the problem. One said, "The land is mine!"

The other retored, "The land belongs to me!"

The rabbi thought for a moment and then he said, "Why don't you come back and ask me the same question 100 years from now?"

The simple truth that Rosh Hashanah endeavors to impart is that the earth is the Lord's and we are merely the spiritual renters. Rosh Hashanah gives a new lease on life.

According to the tradition all of mankind is brought before the throne of the Almighty for judgment. If worthy, one is inscribed in the Book of Life. Therefore, it is customary to greet friends with the phrase, leshanah tova tekahsayvu, "May you be inscribed for a good year."

This sets the mood for the High Holidays. It is time for heshbon hanefesh, "the accounting of the soul." Since Talmudic times, Rosh Hash-

anah was set aside as a time of reflection, repentance and judgment. But, the emphasis was placed upon teshuvah, man's opportunity to improve his life and thus find a favorable verdict.

Thus, the Talmud records the following legend. The angels assemble before the throne of God and ask, "Master of the Universe, when will Rosh Hashanah be?" God replied, "Why do you ask Me? Go down and ask man for it will be whenever he decides."

This carries the essential theme that man is the master of his destiny. Within the larger outer world or the smaller inner world each human being can structure his or her life. Nothing is fated and no one is ddomed and the possibility of renewal is always present.

The theme of renewal and hope is expressed in many interesting and appropriate Rosh Hashanah customs. Bread and apples are dipped in honey and are accompanied by the prayer, "May you be renewed for a good and sweet year." In some locales the head of a sheep was eaten and the following prayer was recited, "May it be Thy will that we become heads, not tails." In eastern Europe it was the custom to eat carrots because the Yiddish word for carrots (mehren) also means to increase. New clothes were also worn on Rosh Hashanah and it is appropriate when one observes a friend wearing a new garment to say, titchadesh, "May you be renewed."

The theme of birth also finds expression in the liturgy of the day. The torah reading deals with the birth of Isaac. The prophetic selection

describes the birth of Samuel and his subsequent consecration to the service of the house of God in Shiloh.

In this vein there is the appropriate story of a woman who was listening to an educator who emphasized early childhood education. The woman asked him, "How early can I begin the education of my child?" The educator questioned, "When will your child be born?" "Born?" she gasped. "Why he is already five years old!" "My goodness woman," he cried, "don't stand here talking to me -- hurry home! You have already lost the best five years."

Rosh Hashanah gives the Jews the opportunity and encouragement to lose no time and to quickly begin a new year with a sense of dedication and consecration. It is at once a reflective and inspiring experience. It is a proper note upon which to begin a new year. In prayer, in custom and in theme the Jew sings "Happy Birthday World!" It is his hope and trust that the universe will respond with, "Many happy returns of the day!"

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

L' Shono Tovo Tikosavu.



*Maziltou
Jack Kogan*



**JACK KOGAN ASSO.
300 SO. 4TH**

Happy New Year



NICK KELLY

*A Happy
& Healthy*



New Year

CARL & FRAN COHEN

Happy New Year



MEL & JUDY GOLDEN

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**

SYDNEY H. KAYE

happy new year

TO THE

**Jewish
Community
In Las Vegas**



MICHAEL WICHINSKY

*Happy
New Year*



JUDY & ART LIEBERT

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Happy NEW YEAR

TO THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY



CHARLES AND PEGGY TURNER