

A Holiday Message

By Allen Weinstein

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The holiday we observe today has two names: Rosh Hashanah, the beginning of the year, and Yom Hazikaron, the Day of Remembrance. We are told that at this time we hover between past and future. Yom Hazikaron tells to remember the sins we have committed during the past year, and Rosh Hashanah tells us to look to the future, the coming year, to repent of these sins.

But we are also told that the repentance Adonai expects is not to sit in sackcloth and ashes or bow our heads to pray all day. Rather, our repentance is to perform mitzvot, to heal the sick, help the poor and comfort the bereaved, in other words to perform tikkun olam, make the world a better place.

These things we are told.

Hearing is one thing, doing is another. Here in Sun City Vistoso, we Haverim have an unusual opportunity to do mitzvot. Look at the faces around your table. There is not one who has not received a voluntary service—a mitzvah—from someone else. How do we know this? Because we would not even be here were it not for the volunteers who have arranged our celebration.

And how many of us are there here in this room who perform service to Havurah, to Sun City and to the greater community beyond? We volunteer for service to Havurah activities like this one, to our learning center to help educate our fellow citizens, to the Oro Valley Police Department and the Posse to bring security and shalom to our neighbors and neighborhoods, to our temples and hospitals and art centers. And best of all, what we do encourages others to do the same or similar work, each in our own way.

I say this service is not a duty but a privilege, for whether our volunteer service be great or small, whether it be now and then or every day, it is tikkun olam, and it is a blessing for those who receive it and also for those who give it.

You know, we often wish each other a Happy New Year, but when we pray, we say

AVINU MALKEINU, KHATVEINU B'SEFER KHAYYIM TOVIM,

“Our Father, Our King, inscribe us in the book of *good lives*.”

Let us be thankful for the opportunity we have to live good lives. Yom Hazikaron tells us we have sinned, yes, and that we are not perfect. But Rosh Hashanah tells us we can atone by doing good. Let us pray that in the spirit of haverim we shall continue to do so.

And let us say, Amen.

L'Shanah Tovah.