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A LETTER FROM THE RABBI:

A Celebration Begins



"T'kiyah!"

That's the sound of the New Year. As I'm writing this, our office is already a-flutter with the annual High Holy Day mailing to your families. Before long, we'll come together to hear the loud, clarion call of the *Shofar*, waking us from our collective slumber. In the long, warm, lazy days of the late summer, it's so easy to be asleep. We might be asleep to goals we've set and failed to attain, to the hurts we've inflicted (whether deliberately or accidentally), and to the various ways we've set our sights high, but missed the mark. We might also be asleep as far as the very real situations facing Israel, North American Jewry, and our St. Louis community. May that trumpeting sound of the *Shofar* call us back to life, to awareness, to action.

This time of year is the Hebrew month of Elul, a thirty-day period of spiritual

preparation for the solemn joy of the High Holy Days. While it is never a bad time to give *tzedakah*, the *Machzor*, our High Holy Day prayerbook, makes clear that three things "avert the severe decree" – *t'filah*, *t'shuvah*, *u'tzedakah*, or prayer, repentance, and charity.

Maybe there is no deed more righteous than giving *tzedakah*. In fact, the word *tzedakah* is usually translated as "charity" from the Latin *caritas*, or love. But the Hebrew word comes from the word *tzedek*, justice, or righteousness. What's the better motivation, love or justice? It makes no difference, so long as motivation results in action.

So many people are so hungry, including so many children. Whether from love or righteousness, won't you please consider making a monetary contribution to the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry today? In ancient times, the whole purpose of coming to Temple was to make an offering of agricultural produce – an offering to God, and food for the priests. Today, we get off comparatively easy. I'm not asking you to bring bullocks, sheep, or pigeons, nor an *ephah* of wheat or olive oil. I'm just asking everyone to bring a donation of canned

food to our High Holy Day services.

"Click."

That's the sound that we will hear from now on when arriving at the Temple during business hours. Press the button on the intercom to buzz the office to be let in to the building. A security camera now lets Temple staff see who is at the door and control access to the building from the front desk. That's right – it took a while, but at last we have a modern security apparatus at the front foyer of our building. Many thanks to our security committee.

But security is not only about locks, cameras, and mechanical devices. As Linus Van Pelt, the blanket-carrying kid from the classic comic strip "Peanuts" said, "Security, like liberty, has to be won and re-won many times." Real security comes from everyone in our community watching out for everyone else. When we all have our eyes out for something that doesn't look quite right, something that doesn't belong, someone we don't know behaving oddly – we are all the safer for it.

This comes with best wishes for a joyful, safe, healthy, and good new year.

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday
Closed

Tuesday-Friday
10 AM–4 PM

(In the event of an emergency, please call (314) 432-5877 and listen to the Rabbi's message.)