

Building Jewish Life

# Rosh Ha-Shanah Mahzor

מחזור  
לראש  
השנה



Torah Aura Productions

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# *Mah Toru*

**STORYTELLER:** Long ago, the Jewish people spent forty years wandering about in the desert. It was a long and hard journey. When, after years, they had almost reached the land of Israel, a wicked king named Balak tried to stop them. Balak didn't want to let the people of Israel pass through his land. He hired a very powerful magician named Bilam to put a curse on them.



Bilam went up to the top of a high mountain and looked down on the Jewish people. He saw their camp far below. He got ready to say a curse. But then, something happened. When Bilam looked down and saw the special tent they had built as a place to worship God, he could only speak words of blessing. His "curse" came out as a blessing. He said:

LEADER:

מה טובו אהליך יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכַּנְתֶּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Mah Tovu O-ha-lekha Ya'akov*

*Mish-k'no-tekha Yisrael.*

Family of Jacob,  
your tents are very beautiful.  
People of Israel, you have a very  
special place to worship.  
All who bless you will be blessed.



STORYTELLER: Today, when we come into our place of worship, we remember Bilam's words. We think of the beauty of this place and the importance of this time together. We sing MAH TOVU.

CONGREGATION: מה טובו אהליך יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכַּנְתֶּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

*Mah Tovu O-ha-lekha Ya'akov Mish-k'no-tekha Yisrael.*

Discuss:

What does it feel like in the sanctuary?

What do you think of when you come into the sanctuary?

Is it a place you can feel close to God?

## *Birkhot Ha-Shahar*

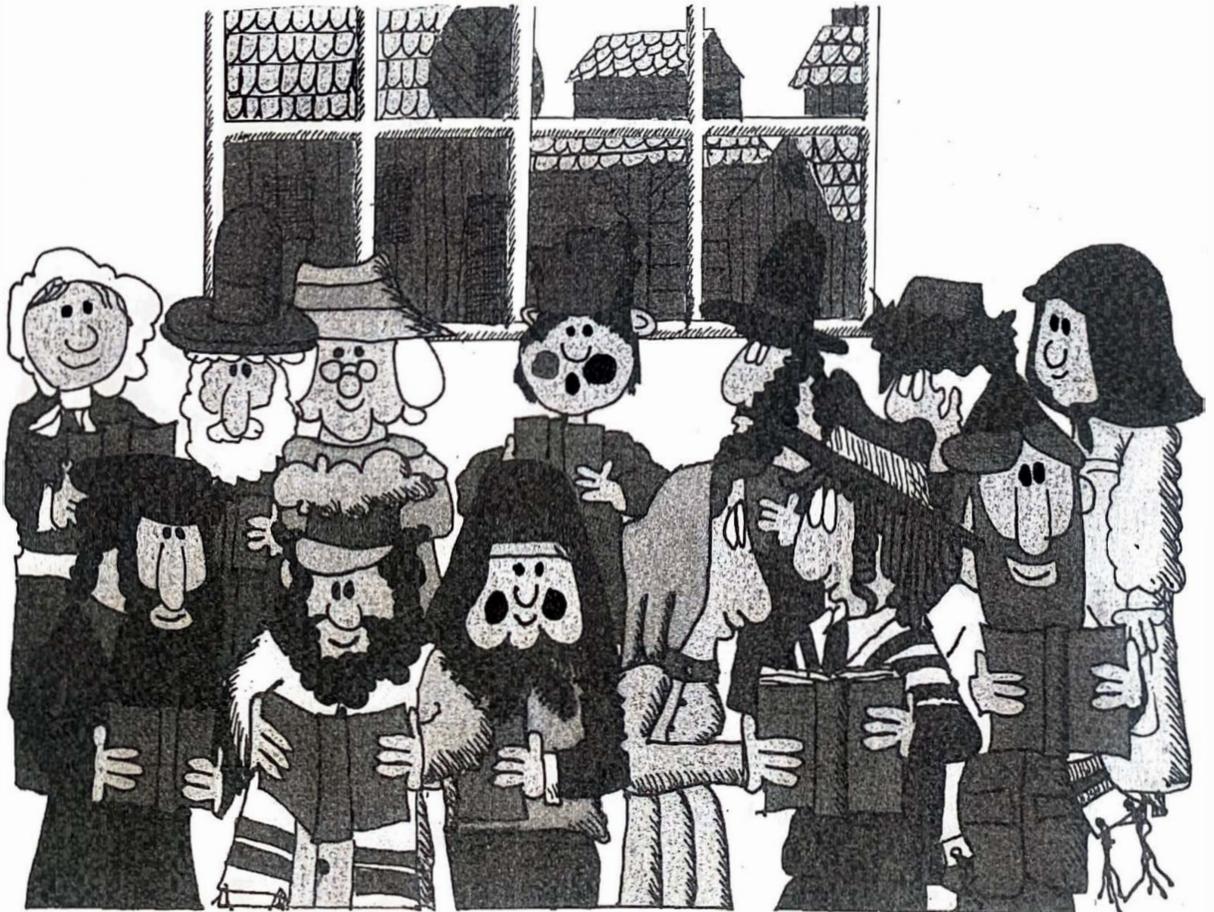
CONGREGATION: ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET

STORYTELLER: It was Rosh Ha-Shanah. Everyone had come to the synagogue to welcome the New Year with prayers. Everyone was hard at work trying to really mean every word they were reading. From the back of the synagogue there was a whisper.

CONGREGATION: ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET

STORYTELLER: At first it was very quiet. Almost no one noticed. Everyone was paying close attention to his or her prayer book. But over and over from the back of the room came the whisper.

CONGREGATION: ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET



**STORYTELLER:** One by one, people began to turn and look. Person after person heard the whisper and turned to see who was interrupting the service. Sitting at the back of the congregation, in the very last row in the synagogue, was a young boy. He was standing with an open prayer book and saying over and over again:

**CONGREGATION:** ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET

**STORYTELLER:** Soon, all the praying had stopped. Even the rabbi stopped his prayers. The boy didn't notice. Every person in the synagogue was looking at him, but his eyes never left his **Mahzor**. Over and over he said:

**CONGREGATION:** ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET





**STORYTELLER:** Suddenly, the boy looked up. He was very scared. He was almost beginning to cry. Softly he said:

**BOY:** "I don't know how to read. I never went to school. All I know is the first four letters of the **alef-bet**. Today is a day when all Jews must pray. So I have said my four letters over and over, hoping that God will make them into a prayer."

**LEADER:** The rabbi of that congregation walked down the aisle and hugged the boy. He said: "Today we have been taught the true meaning of prayer. The words in the prayer book are important. But really opening our hearts to God is most important. If we don't know or understand everything, God really wants us to feel our prayers and to say them with honesty." Then he said: "Let us pray together." Everyone in the congregation joined in saying:

ALEF BET GIMMEL DALET

**LEADER:** **Barukh** is a word which comes at the beginning of many Hebrew prayers. It means "praise." When we praise God, we are thanking God for good things which have been done for us. We are also hoping that we can be like God, and do the same kinds of good things for other people.



CONGREGATION:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁעָשִׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ.

Thank you God for making me in  
Your image.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁעָשִׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Thank you God for making me a  
Jew.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁעָשִׂנִי בֶן־חֹרִין.

Thank you God for making me  
free.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

Thank you God for helping the  
blind to see.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

Thank you God for giving clothes  
to those who need them.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

Thank you God for freeing  
captives.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

Thank you God for lifting up the  
fallen.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.

Thank you God for creating  
heaven and earth.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שֶׁעָשָׂה לִי כָּל־צָרְכֵי.

Thank you God for giving me  
everything I need.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה.

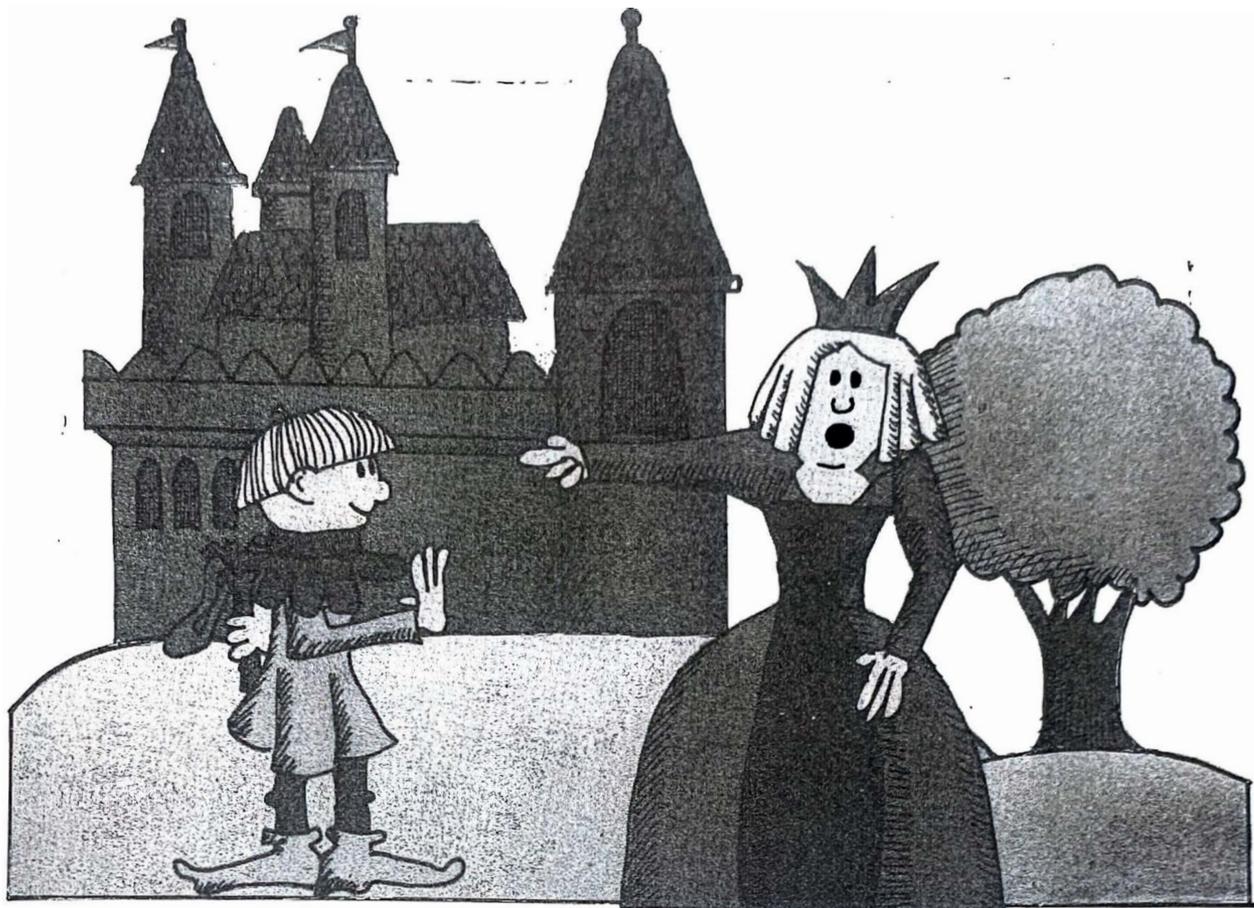
Thank you God for giving us  
strength.

*Discuss:*

*How could you help God to do each of these things?*

*What other "thank you's" would you add to your list?*

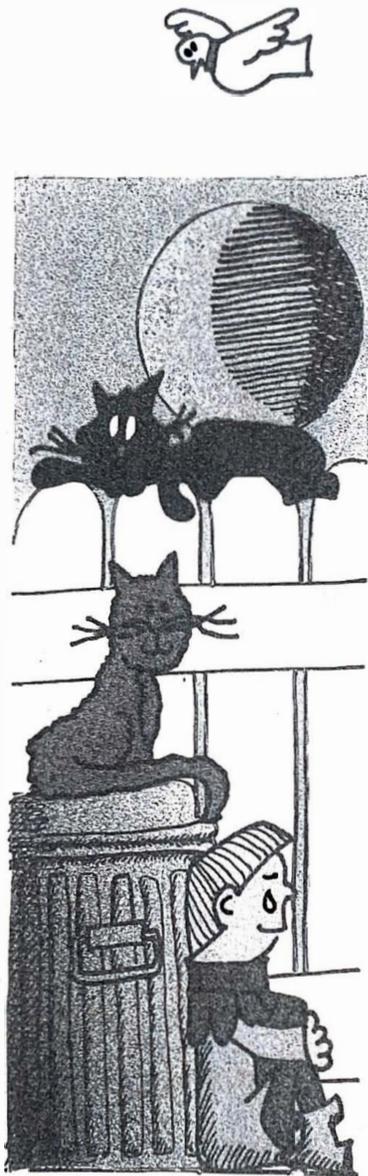
## *Ha-Melekh*



**STORYTELLER:** Once there was a queen who had only one child, a son. She loved him very much and did everything she could for him. All the queen wanted with all her heart was for her son to grow up to be a good and kind person. Even though his mother gave him everything, the prince was not always happy. In fact, sometimes he was very mean. He would hit people and would laugh when they were unhappy.

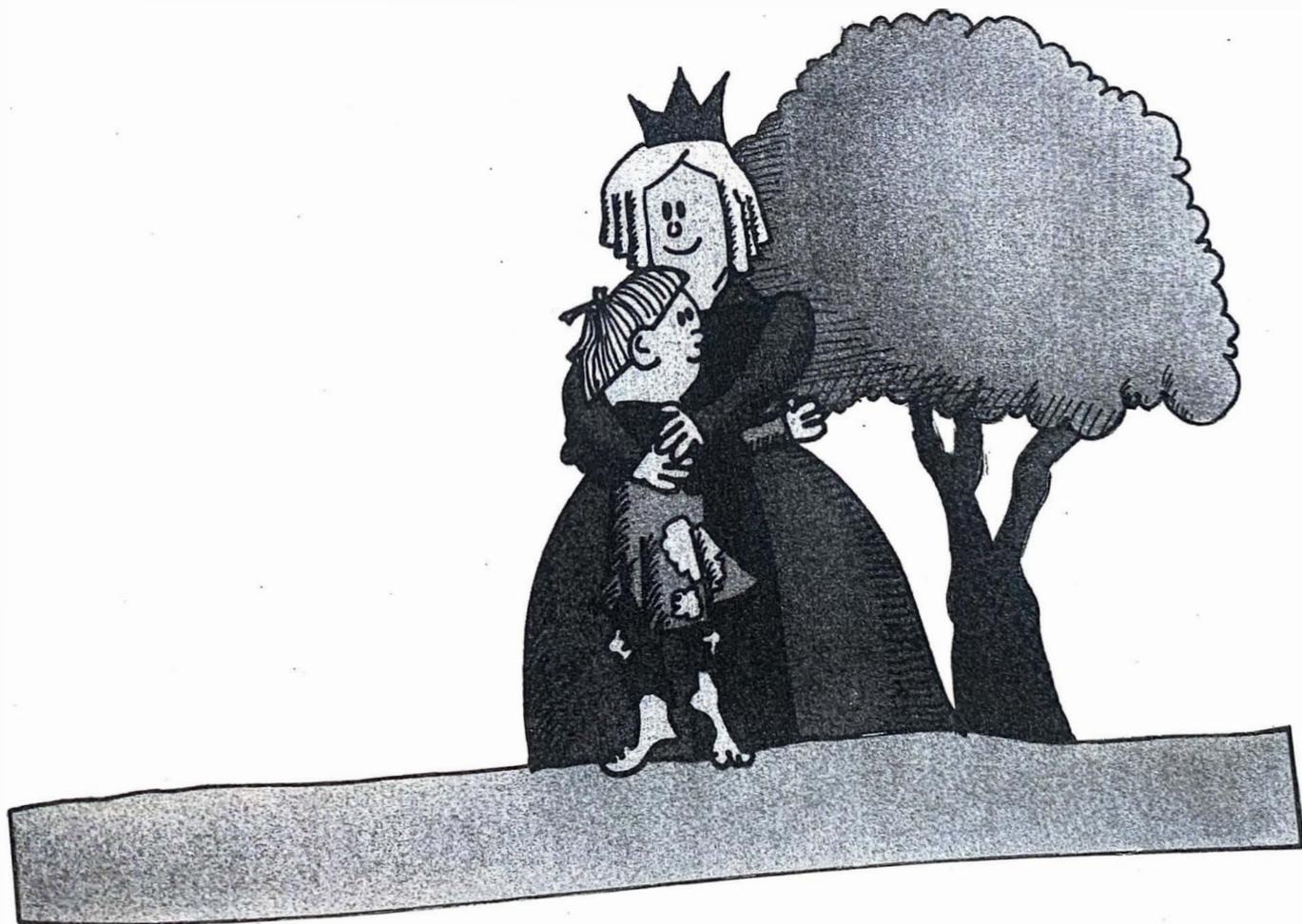
The queen didn't like some of the things her son did. Sometimes she got very angry. She would tell him to stop what he was doing and go to his room. Later, she would come to him and quietly explain why she was disappointed with his behavior. Once, when her son did something very bad, the queen got very angry. She screamed at him: "Get out of here." The prince ran out of the palace and disappeared.

For what seemed like a long time the son wandered from place to place. He became a beggar. It wasn't fun being a beggar. People laughed at beggars. No one was nice to beggars. Some people even hit beggars. He was now very unhappy. He was sorry for what he had done and remembered the quiet talks he had with his mother. Slowly, the prince realized that he had been very wrong.



Finally, after much thinking and crying, he decided to go home. Things had changed. Even though it had only been two days, the boy was now much older. The young prince who once wore silk was now dressed in rags. He came to the palace, and came before the queen. He said: "Your majesty. I know that I have changed, but I am still your son. I love you. I want to come home. Even though I may not look the same, it is still me." The queen hugged her son and the prince came home.

*Taken from a parable of Rabbi Mesbullam Horwitz of Stanislaw*



LEADER: On Rosh Ha-Shanah we are like that print of God as our Parent and our Ruler and we ask God to help us return to being the person we should always be.

הַמֶּלֶךְ  
יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּי רָם וְנִשָּׂא.

*Ha-Melekh  
Yoshev Al Kisay Ram V'Nisah.*

GOD IS THE RULER  
RULING FROM THE THRONE OF GLORY

*Discuss:*

*How is God like a Queen or King?*

*How is God like a Father or Mother?*

## *Barekhu*

LEADER: We stand when we say the **Barekhu**. We bow our heads and bend our knees a little bit as we say its words. It is just what people do when a king or queen enters a room.

The **Barekhu** is known as the call to worship. It marks the place in the service where our warm-up prayers have been finished and the real praying begins.

LEADER:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.

*Barekhu et Adonai Ha-M'vorakh.*

Praise the Lord, the One who is Praised.

CONGREGATION:

בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Barukh Adonai Ha-M'vorakh L'Olam Va'ed.*

Praise the Lord, the One who is Forever Praised



## Yotzer Or

LEADER:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת־הַכֹּל.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-Olam  
Yotzer Or U'vorei Hoshekh  
Oseh Shalom U'vorei et Ha-Kol.*

CONGREGATION:

The sun rose today.  
It will set this evening.  
Tomorrow the sun will rise again.  
The world goes on, day then night.  
Day then night.  
Winter changes into spring.  
Spring becomes summer.  
Summer turns into fall.  
Then winter happens again.  
A year happens every single year.  
Every day I get up and start again.  
Life comes in circles.  
I can learn from yesterday and change in time  
for tomorrow.  
The world goes on, day then night.  
Day then night.

LEADER:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת

*Barukh Atah Adonai  
Yotzer Ha-M'orot.*

## *The Shema*



**STORYTELLER:** A little girl once asked her mother, “How should a person look for God?” Her mother answered:

**ADULTS:** “You should find God everywhere.”

**STORYTELLER:** The girl wasn’t sure she understood. So, she asked another question: “How should a person love God?” Her mother answered:

ADULTS: "You should love God by loving everything which God made. God made people, animals, flowers, rain and thunder—everything."

STORYTELLER: The girl still didn't understand. Still, she asked another question: "How does a person learn to love?" This time her mother answered:

ADULTS: "You should keep your eyes and your heart open."

STORYTELLER: The girl smiled at her mother.

LEADER: The **Shema** is the most important of all Jewish prayers. It expresses our belief that one God created the heavens and the earth and is the Parent of all people.

CONGREGATION:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ִיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ ִיְיָ אֶחָד

*Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Ehad.*  
Listen Israel, The Lord is our God, the One God.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Barukh Shem K'vod Malkhuto L'Olam Va-ed.*  
Praise God whose rule will last forever.

*Discuss:*

*Where are places you have felt close to God?*

*What are some questions you have about God?*

# G'ulah

**STORYTELLER:** Once we were slaves in Egypt and God took us out and set us free. On the way out of Egypt, the Children of Israel sang a song, the **Mi Khamokha**. By remembering that we were slaves, and knowing that now we are free, we are better able to understand the **Mitzvot**.

**CONGREGATION:** If we remember the bitterness of slavery, we can begin to help everyone become free.

מִי־כַמְכָּה בְּאֵלִים ִּי מִי כַמְכָּה נִאֲדָר בְּקִדְוֶשׁ  
נִרְא תְהִלַּת, עוֹשֶׂה פְלֵא.

*Mi Kba-mo-kha Ba-Ey-lim Adonai*

*Mi Ka-mo-kha Ne-dar Ba-Ko-desh.*

*No-rah T'hi-lot O-sey Fe-leh*

God, who is like You?

Who can be like You: clothed in holiness, awesome in praise,  
doing miracles.

**LEADER:**

שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְחוּ גְאוּלִים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל שְׁפַת הַיָּם  
יַחַד כָּלֵם הַיּוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ:

*Shirah Hadasbah Shib-hu G'ulim*

*L'shimkha Al-s'fat Ha-yam.*

*Yabad Kulam Hodo V'him-likhu V'am-ru:*

Having just escaped from Egypt, the newly free Children of Israel stood on the banks of the Sea of Reeds and sang together. All of them sang out with one voice:

**CONGREGATION:** ִּי יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*Adonai Yim-lokh L'Olam Va-ed*

God will rule forever and always.

# Amidah

## Avot

LEADER: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,  
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu V'elo-hei A-vo-tei-nu  
Elo-hei Av-ra-ham Elo-hei Yitzhak, V'elo-hei Ya-a-kov.*

וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲמוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה אֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה וְאֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל.

*Velo-hei Emo-tei-nu  
Elo-hei Sarah, Elo-hei Rivkah, V'elo-hei Leah V'Rahel.*

CONGREGATION: Our God and God of our Parents  
God of Abraham,  
God of Isaac, and  
God of Jacob.

*God of Sarah,  
God of Rebekah, and  
God of Leah and Rachel*

Remember us for a good life.  
You are our Ruler who loves life.  
Write us in the Book of Life.  
You are our God, the God of Life.

זְכֹרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים מְלֶךְ חַפְּץ בְּחַיִּים,  
וְכַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

*Zokbrei-nu L'hayyim Melekh Hafeitz B'hayyim  
V'khot'veinu B'sefer Ha-hayyim L'ma-ankha Elobim Hayyim.*

*Discuss:*

*Imagine a book called the Book of Life...*

*What things would you like to erase from last year's Book of Life?*

*What things do you want to write in your Book of Life over the next year?*

# *Silent Prayer*



## *Sim Shalom*

**CONGREGATION:** Please give peace, goodness and blessings,  
favor, kindness and understanding  
to us, and to all of Israel, Your people...  
Blessed are You, Lord.  
The One who blesses Your people Israel with peace.

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה חַן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹךְ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי' עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם.

## *Avinu Malkeinu*

LEADER: *Avinu Malkeinu* means: God is like our Parent. God is like our Ruler.

CONGREGATION: *Avinu Malkeinu* we have no Ruler but You.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* give us a New Year of blessing.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* write us in the Book of Good Life.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* write us in the Book of Forgiveness.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* answer us.  
Even though we don't deserve Your help.  
Please use justice and kindness and save us.

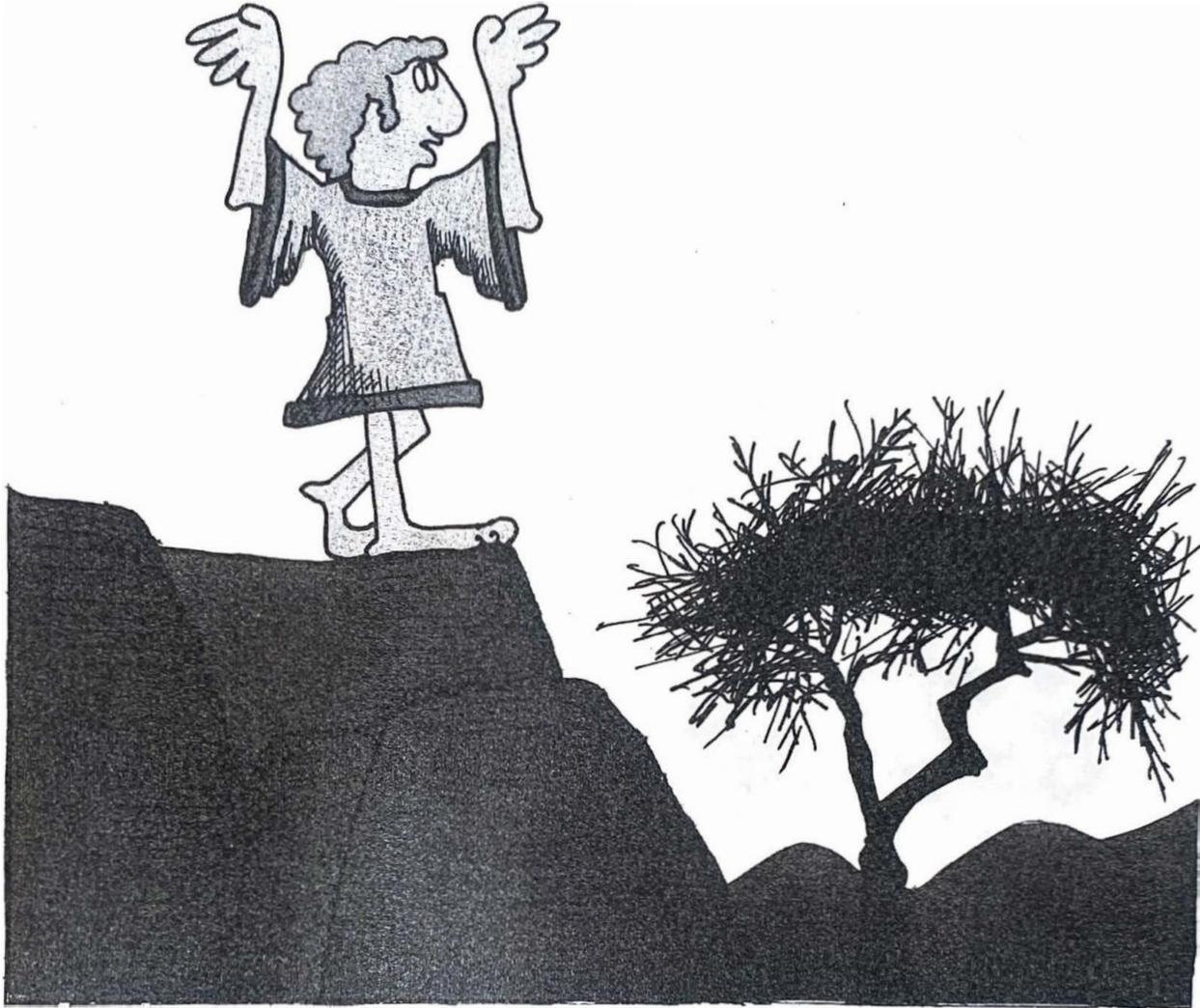


אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ,  
חֲנֻנוּ וְעֲנֵנוּ,  
כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,  
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה  
וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu,*  
*Ha-neinu Va-aneinu,*  
*Ki Ein Banu Ma'asim*  
*Asei Imanu Tzedakah*  
*Va-hesed V'hoshi-einu*

## *A Sermon Story*

# THE ANNOUNCING TOOL

A READ-ALoud MIDRASH FOR CHILDREN

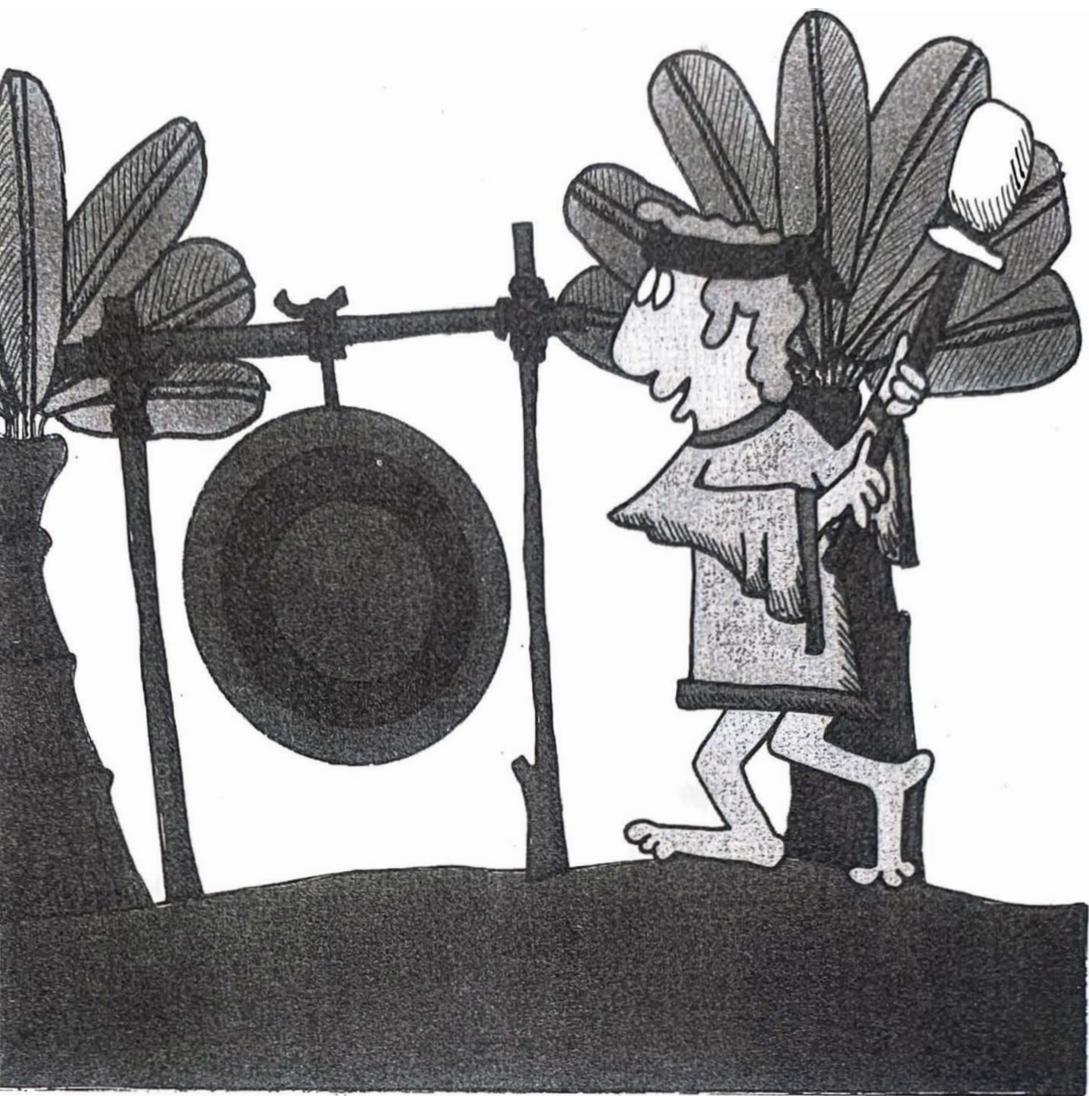


A long time ago when all people lived in one place, getting the news was easy. They had yellers who would walk around town and after no more than a morning of yelling everyone knew that something special had happened. But when people began living all over the place, even the yellers couldn't get the news across. Mostly, people just didn't get the news, but some special events had to be announced, and the arrival of a new year was the most special of all. So a man named Enoch asked God what to do to get the news of the new year around the world.

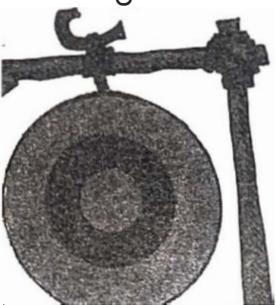
*reprinted with permission of the author, Rabbi Marc Gellman.*

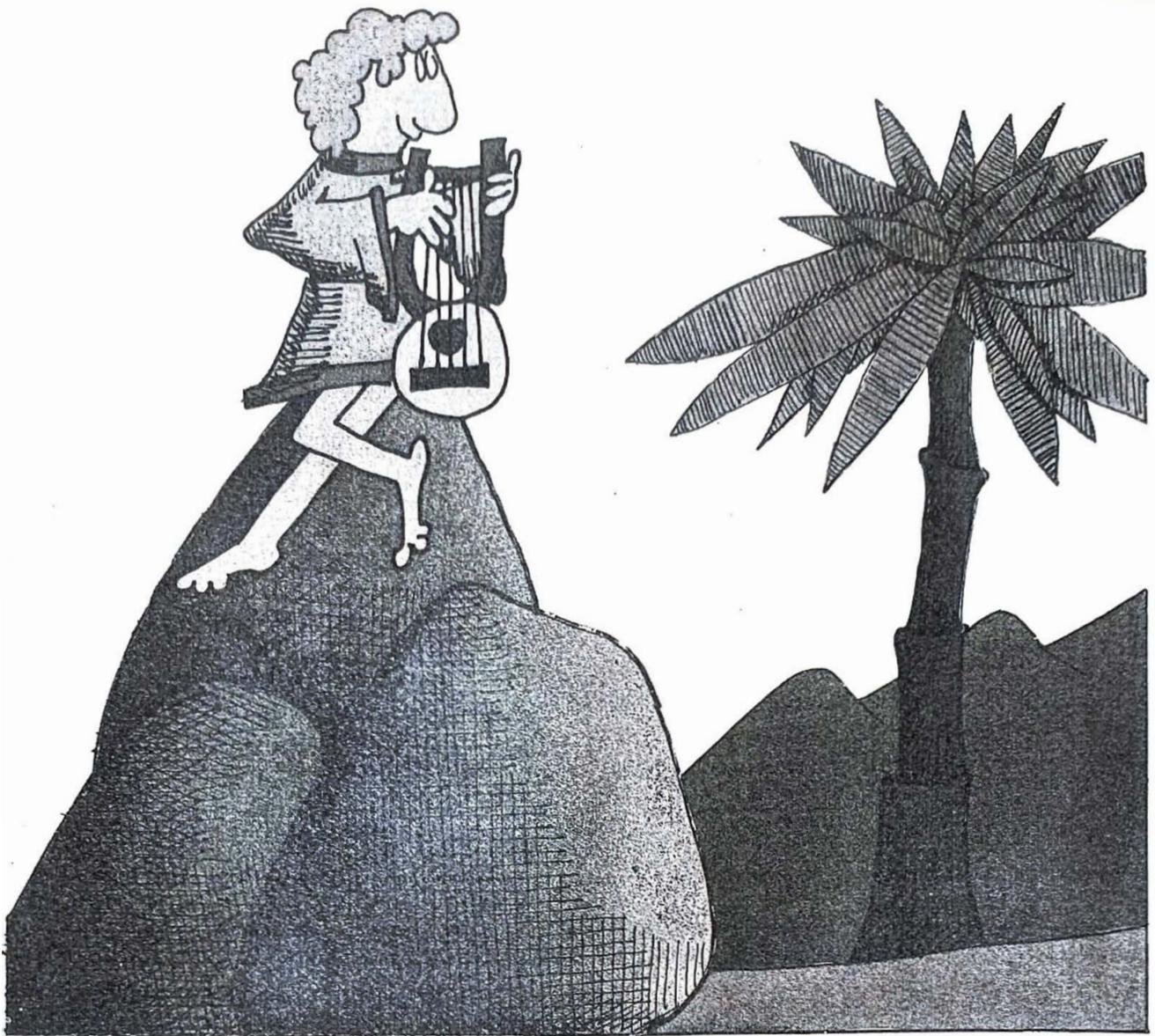


God said to Enoch, "You need a special announcing tool—go find one!" The next day Enoch returned with two rocks. "Listen to my fine announcing tool," he said, and banged the two rocks together, making a loud rock-banging noise. God said to Enoch, "What kind of announcing tool is this to tell of the arrival of the new year? Rocks do not make music, they only make noise. The new year is a time for music and singing, not banging and yelling." God frowned at Enoch, who scurried off to find a new announcing tool.

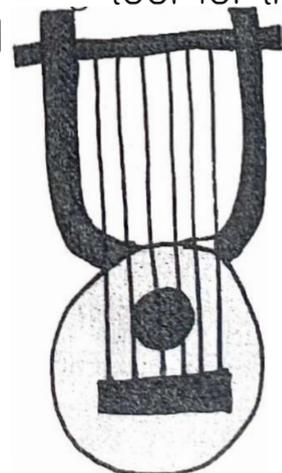


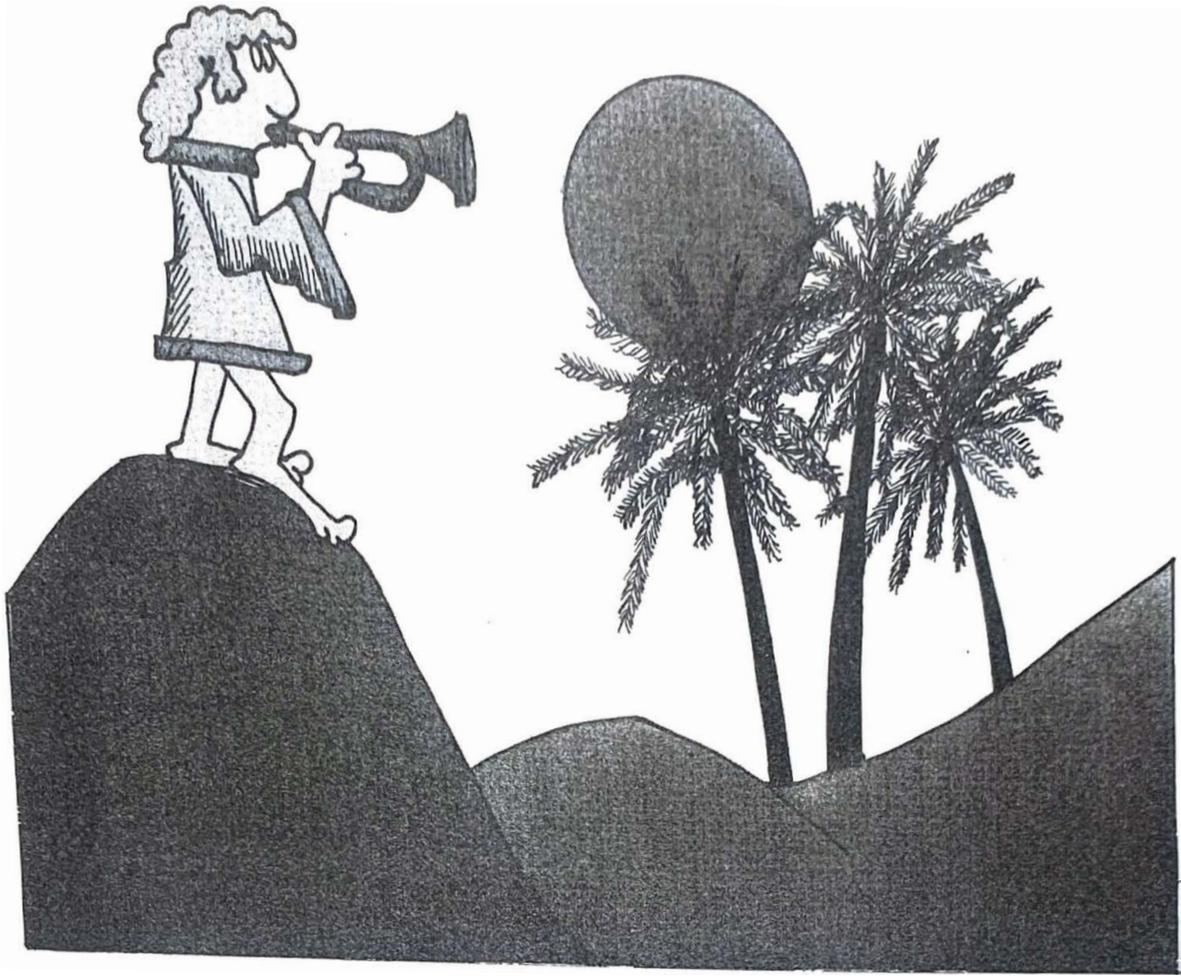
the next day Enoch returned with a gong. "Listen to my fine announcing tool which makes a beautiful sound," he said, and hit the gong, which made a gong-ringing sound. God said to Enoch, "What kind of announcing tool is this to tell of the arrival of the new year? The gong does make a beautiful sound, but it is made of iron, and iron is used to make weapons of war. The new year is a time of peace, not war." God frowned at Enoch, who scurried off to find a new announcing tool.





The next day Enoch returned with a harp. "Listen to my fine announcing tool which makes a beautiful sound and is not made of iron!" Then Enoch strummed a tune on the harp. God said to Enoch, "The harp also will not do as an announcing tool for the new year. The harp does indeed make beautiful sounds and it is not a weapon of war, but the harp is too soft a sound to announce the new year. The new year is a time of loud rejoicing and a loud announcing tool is needed, a tool that will carry the news of the new year from hilltop to hilltop around the world." God frowned at Enoch, who scurried off to find a new announcing tool.





The next day Enoch arrived with a golden trumpet. "Listen to my fine announcing tool which makes a beautiful sound, is not made of iron and is loud enough to carry the news from hilltop to hilltop." Then Enoch blew a loud note on the golden horn. God said to Enoch, "The golden horn is a good announcing tool, but not good enough for the new year. True, the golden horn makes beautiful sounds, is not made of iron, and is loud enough; but the horn is



not a natural instrument. It is made by people and not by Me. It is hollow, but it is not naturally hollow. It is made hollow by human hands. It makes a beautiful sound only after it has been pounded and shaped by human hands. The new year is not a time to glorify human creations. The new year is for all creatures, the animals and people as well. Find something to celebrate the new year which is for all My creatures." God frowned at Enoch, who scurried off to find a new announcing tool.



The next day Enoch was a little late in coming, but he finally arrived, a little out of breath. "I am embarrassed to present my new announcing tool. It is only a ram's horn—not nearly as beautiful as the golden horn, or as sweet and delicate as the harp—but it does make fine sounds, and is not a weapon of war, and it is loud enough to get the news from hilltop to hilltop. I have done nothing to the horn; it is naturally hollow, and it comes from one of your creatures. But there is just one thing. All the other instruments were easy to make a sound with, but this ram's horn is impossible to play. I blow and blow, and then a toot comes out, and then nothing, and then maybe another toot. I wish it were easier." God smiled the biggest smile at Enoch, and then taught him how to blow the ram's horn for the big celebration of the new year which was soon to begin.

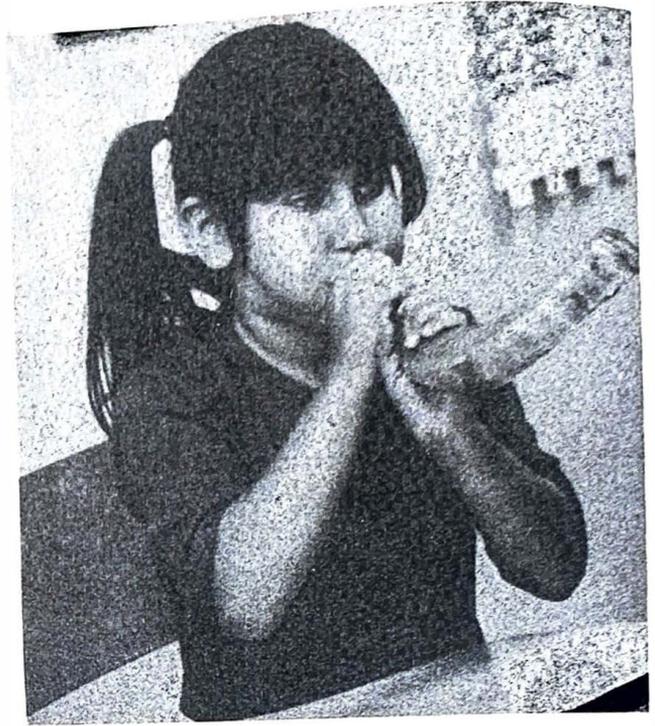
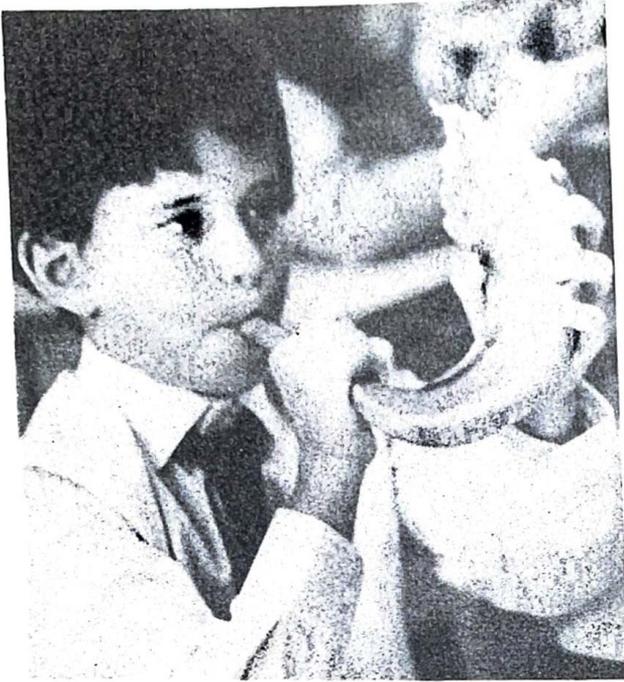
## *Shofrot:*

**LEADER:** Today is the birthday of the world. Today all people stand before God. Some stand as children stand before their Parent. And, some stand as subjects before a King or Queen. God, if we are standing like children, then please be a kind Parent. God, if we are standing like subjects, please be a fair Ruler. We look to You for help. You are our Holy God.

**STORYTELLER:** The voice of the shofar calls to us:

**CONGREGATION:** **Wake up** from your sleep. You are asleep.  
**Get up** from your slumber. You are in a deep sleep.  
**Search** your behavior. Become the best person you can.  
**Remember** God, the One who created you.





בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמְעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-Olam  
Asher Kidshanu B'mitzvotav V'tzi-vanu Lishmoah Kol Shofar*

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe  
who makes us Holy through the Commandments  
and commands us to hear the voice of the shofar.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Ha-Olam  
Sh-behiyanu V'ki-manu V'bigi-yanu Laz-man Ha-zeh.*

Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe  
who gave us life, kept us alive,  
and who helped us reach this moment.

תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה	TEKIAH	SHEVARIM—	TERU'AH	TEKIAH
	תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּקִיעָה	TEKIAH	SHEVARIM	TEKIAH	
תְּקִיעָה	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה	גְּדוּלָה	TEKIAH	TERU'AH	TEKIAH	GEDOLAH

# Ha-Yom

LEADER: בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים בְּרָכָה וְשָׁלוֹם וּפְרֻנָּסָה טוֹבָה נִזְכָּר  
וְנִכְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל-עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם.

*B'sefer Hayim B'rakhah V'shalom U'farnasah Tovah Nizakher  
V'nikatev L'fanekha Anahnu V'khol Am-kha Bet Yisrael  
L'hayyim Tovim Ul'shalom*

May we and the whole house of Israel  
be remembered and recorded in the Book of Life,  
Blessing, Livelihood and Peace.

Today, Please make us brave. *Amen.*

Today, Please bless us. *Amen.*

Today, Please help us grow. *Amen.*

Today, Please help us be happy. *Amen.*

Today, Please write us in the Book of Life for a  
good life. *Amen.*

Today, Please hear our voice. *Amen.*

Today, Please accept our prayers. *Amen.*

Today, Please keep us safe with Your justice. *Amen.*

עֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם  
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*Oseh Shalom Bimromav. Hu Ya'aseh Shalom  
Aleinu V'Al Kol Yisrael, v'imru Amen.*

May the One who brings peace in the heavens,  
bring peace to us and all Israel:  
And Let us say: Amen.



*Discuss:*

*If you could ask God to make three wishes come true, but all of these wishes had to be for all the people in the world, for what would you wish?*

*How is praying like making wishes?*

*How can a person help to make prayers come true?*

# BUILDING JEWISH LIFE

Dear Parent,

**I**n an open society and in a culture of countless alternatives, you have chosen to provide a Jewish education for your child. It may have been an easy choice, the simple continuation of a family commitment. Or, it may have been a difficult decision, one which weighed the values and emotional richness of the Jewish experience against an ambivalence or negative experience in your own background. Either way, you have made a commitment to pay tuition, drive car pools, face a maze of time conflicts, and expend a lot of effort in order to expose your child to what a Jewish school offers. Research suggests that it was a good choice, that a Jewish education can help to equip your child with the personal resources to face the value conflicts and emotional trials which are part of growing up today. It is also a choice which is good for the Jewish people.

**A**s we approach the 1990s, Jewish education will increasingly become family education. A hundred years of experience in North America has taught us that a Jewish school is a resource which can provide background and skills, but not an identity or a life-style. In our society, being an effective parent *cannot* mean relying only on institutions to shape your child's development. It must mean actively becoming part of his/her training and growth. We have designed the materials in the *Building Jewish Life* series to serve as resources for a partnership between the Jewish classroom and the Jewish home. We know that this is the only way that the values and wisdom of our tradition will become part of the way your child views the world, part of the way s/he faces the tests of growing up.

**W**e have constructed these materials around the *opportunities* Judaism provides for celebration, for bonding families, for spending significant moments together, and for talking about the things that matter. The classroom will be the central learning place. It will provide context, information and skills. The home needs to be a place of reinforcement and application. In order for the activities and lessons of the classroom to make a difference, you will have to spend time making Purim costumes, lighting Hanukkah lights, sharing the story of the first time you asked the four questions, and talking about the things which are important to you.

**Y**ou have invested a great deal in providing your child with a Jewish education. *Building Jewish Life* is an invitation to use the opportunities evolved by the Jewish tradition to see that this education makes a difference in your child's life.

