

JEWISH NEW YEAR OR ROSH HASHANAH OBSERVED OCT. 1-2

Festival Is a Gentle Reminder of Brevity of Human Life

On Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1 and Oct. 2, Jews of the entire world observed Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Like all other Jewish holy days, the festival commences at sunset on the preceding day. In the Beth Israel synagogue in this city and in synagogues and temples the world over there were held religious services marking the beginning of the year 5693 on the evening of Sept. 30 and on the two following days.

The festival of the New Year is one of the most important in the whole Jewish calendar. It is the first of a series of holidays lasting nearly a month. It is likewise the beginning of the Jewish year. One of its principal features is the blowing of the Shofar, or ram's horn, for the purpose of stirring man to consecrate himself to a nobler life during the coming year.

Apart from its joyful and festive nature, Rosh Hashanah is rich in moral import and significance. The fact that it is the beginning of the New Year lends it special sacredness. It is the time of higher resolves, the turning point of the year. The festival is a gentle reminder of the brevity of human existence, but it optimistically stresses the doctrine that man, far from being a plaything in the hands of fate, can realize his life's work if he but takes advantage of the swiftly fleeting moments.

Rosh Hashanah is the traditional day for the exchange of greetings and good wishes and for the pardoning of grievances between individuals along with its devotional character. The House of Worship is adorned in white; the music and the liturgy are adapted to the penitential themes of the day.

A story telling of the spell Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which this year falls on Monday, Oct. 10, casts over Jews, appeared in the Boston Sunday Globe. The engrossing story, written by Arthur Bronstein, explains the significance of the day and its observances, and will be interesting to those who wonder at the meaning of the day. The story:

"The Christian New Year, Jan. 1, is a time for merry-making. The Jewish New Year, usually in mid-September, but this year on Oct. 1, is a time for prayer.

"One is a holiday, the other a holy day, and the Jewish New Year inaugurates a ten-day term of solemnity and prayer and thought that culminates in the day of fasting, the all-solemn day of the Jewish year, the Day of Atonement.

"If there is one day in the year when the American Jew—forced by the exigencies of our modern American civilization and the cares of our modern business world to neglect many of the orthodox customs and traditions of his religion—does observe his faith to the disregard of all other considerations, it is the Day of Atonement.

"For this day, Oct. 10 on this year's calendar, is the Day of Judgment, and the weak in faith, who transgress the Sabbath, who neglect the dietary laws, who disregard Talmudic admonitions of daily morning and evening prayers, and of the use of phylacteries and prayer shawls, who ignore the Passover and the Pentecost festivals, and no longer confirm their male children

at the age of 13 as the orthodox law commands—all flock on this day to their houses of worship. They return to the faith.

All Gather To Pray

"They gather in their synagogues and temples, Jews of orthodox, conservative and reformed persuasions, to do penance to God for their sins of the past year and to pray for his forbearance and forgiveness.

"It is a fast day, from the early hour of the previous evening's sunset, for the day begins with sunset of the evening before, until twilight proclaims the end of this day, the Jew abstains from all food and all drink, and nothing nourishing passes his lips for 24 or 25 hours, not even a sip of water.

"The general acceptance of this fast among young and old, among the pious and the free, among men who break dozens of other religious injunctions daily, is noteworthy.

"The long hours from early morning until nightfall are spent in prayer, in the ordering of the long Atonement Day service. The day starts with the early morning prayers, with the reading of the Law, the brief memorial service to the dead and the special Atonement Day prayers of the Moosaf service.

"The older men and women keep their seats during the entire hot day in the close, confirmed atmosphere of the crowded synagogue, without stepping outside once for a breath of air, or relief. The day is awesome and it casts a spell.

The "Unsana Tokel"

"Among the prayers of the day the most affecting, the most powerful and fearsome and inspiring is that reached in the middle of the afternoon, in the midst of the Moosaf service—the 'Unsana Tokel.'

"The origin of the prayer is enshrouded in legend and its story has a moving appeal. It tells of a rabbi of Mayence, in Germany, who lived in the 10th century, a gifted scholar, friend of Jew and non-Jew alike and well liked even at court among the prelates of the Christian faith.

"This rabbi was importuned to change his faith and refused. Later, in jest, he advised his importuners that he would consider their suggestion, their insistent demands. But then he was overcome with the thought that he had even in jest considered relinquishing his faith, and he caused himself in penance to be mutilated, and so came to die.

"The New Year had approached and the dying rabbi asked to be borne to the synagogue. Here, in the midst of the service, he suddenly halted it to begin a hymn of glory to God as penance for his sin, and so passed on to God with that prayer on his lips. And another rabbi of that time, as a memorial to this martyr, completed the hymn to form this prayer now found in the prayer books of Atonement Day, the Unsana Tokel.

"It is a solemn prayer, and a fearful one. The cantor recites the prayer under a hushed silence of the congregation, aware of the solemnity of the words. A short pause has preceded the start of this prayer. The cantor begins.

"Awe And Terror"

"We will celebrate the mighty holiness of this day, for it is one of awe and terror. Thereon is Thy dominion exalted and Thy throne is established in mercy, and Thou sittest thereon in truth. Verily it is Thou alone who art Judge and Arbiter, who knowest and art witness; Thou writest down and settest the seal, Thou recordest and tellest; yea, Thou rememberest the things forgotten. Thou unfoldest the records, and the deeds therein inscribed proclaim themselves; for lo! the seal of every man's hand is set thereto.'

"The synagogue is all still now and quiet, as the cantor continues the prayer.

"The great trumpet is sounded; the still small voice is heard; the angels are dismayed; fear and trembling

seize hold of them as they proclaim, "Behold the Day of Judgment!" The host of heaven is to be arraigned in judgment. For in Thine eyes they are not pure; and all who enter the world dost Thou cause to pass before Thee as a flock of sheep. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock, and causeth them to pass beneath his crook, so dost Thou cause to pass and number, tell and visit, every living soul, appointing the measure of every creature's life and decreeing their destiny.'

Pause For Emphasis

"The cantor halts to put emphasis on what follows next, while older women in the congregation, tearful anticipatory and afraid, break the silence with their audible weeping. The cantor goes on, fearfully, his voice now the tone of the judge.

"'On the first day of the year (New Year's Day) it is inscribed, and on the Day of Atonement the decree is sealed, how many shall pass away and how many shall be born; who shall live and who shall die, who at the measure of man's days and who before it; who shall perish by fire and who by water, who by the sword, who by wild beasts, who by hunger and who by thirst; who by earthquake and by plague, who by strangling and who by stoning; who shall have rest and who shall go wandering, who shall be tranquil and who shall be harassed, who shall be at ease and who shall be afflicted; who shall become poor and who shall wax rich; who shall be brought low and who shall be upraised.'

"The cantor's voice, which had been raised high as he began this last part of the prayer, has dwindled low as he finishes these last words of judgment. And as he ends the prayer, the congregation answers him with one voice, raised loud in appeal and hope, as if in one shout.

"'But penitence, prayer, and charity, avert the severe decree!'

"And a weight seems lifted from their hearts with the ending of this prayer. The service continues on, till nightfall. But after this awesome prayer, the rest of the day, the remainder of the prayers, the afternoon and closing services, the final blowing of the ram's horn that concludes the day's service, all is sort of anticlimax."

NATIONAL ORGANIZER FOR W.C.T.U. SPEAKS HERE

Makes Comparison of Conditions Existing Before and After Prohibition

The appearance at the Wesley M. E. church Wednesday night of last week of Mrs. Helen Carlson, a national organizer for the W. C. T. U., drew a large number.

Rev. Forrest L. Littlefield, pastor of the church, was in charge and presided for the program preceding Mrs. Carlson's talk. Miss M. Helen Sims, daughter of Rev. Charles R. Sims, pastor of the First Baptist church, was in charge of the song service. Mr. Littlefield led the responsive reading, Mrs. Fred Bragg sang a solo before Rev. Charles H. Berry, pastor of Corliss Street church, read the scripture. After a solo by his daughter, Rev. Charles R. Sims led the congregation in prayer. Miss Omaha C. Trott was pianist for the evening. Both she and Miss Sims are prominent in the work of the Young People's Branch, an organization which is affiliated with the W. C. T. U., and which is for the young people.

Mrs. Carlson based her talk on the conditions existing before and after the enactment of the law against prohibition. During the course of her address she spoke of the detrimental effect of some of the moving pictures and "unclean" magazines of the day on the minds of young people. She