בס"ד

RH Beginners’/Explanatory Service

BSBI Rosh HaShana 5771

Goals:

* Allow attendees to gain greater understanding of what RH is really about, what we are in shul for anyway.
* Give attendees greater understanding of the structure of the service, as well as particulars of what is going on during the course of the service (General and Specific).
* Create a comfortable environment for personal prayer.

Outline:

***Intro: Steve parking before interview story – “No deal Gd! I did it w/out you!”***

1. **What is Rosh Hashanah? (15)**
	1. **Day when MAN was created**, not only the world.
		1. *Yom HaDin:* Gm: We all pass in front of Him, like sheep, one-by-one, so he can take a look at us. What are you doing with yourselves, with the gift I gave you, called life. ­ On the anniversary of our creation, He checks in to see how we’re doing.
		2. On one hand, very scary, on other hand, very exciting. Get a one-on-one with the Master of the Universe (not HeMan).
	2. **Malchus** – Coronation ceremony
		1. No mention of sin on RH. We don’t beat our chests, confess our sins. None of that. Why not?
		2. ***Obama’s Inauguration mashal:*** inappropriate for reporter to apologize for the scandals he broadcast to the world. It’s a lack of respect, not the right venue.
		3. But why do we need it? Can’t we just say we’re sorry? Why the whole song and dance beforehand?
			1. **R’ Baruch Simon:** RH gives an ***appropriate context*** to the next 8 days, culminating with YK. If I disobey my sister it’s one thing. If I disrespect the CEO of my company, that’s something else. And if I disrespect, neglect the wishes of the Creator of the Universe, the One without whom nothing would exist, that’s a lot more serious.
				1. When I spend two full days recognizing who He is, and what my relationship with Him is ***supposed*** to be, allows one to realize the severity of a transgression. But more than that, to recognize the tremendous opportunity we have squandered.
				2. Not a day to get into particulars of each sin. It’s a day to refocus our attention on the big picture 🡪 GD is the King and He has given us a job to do.
	3. **Celebration** - Not a day of Teshuva
		1. B/c we have confidence as a community that GD will pardon us, if we show sincere wish to do better.
		2. B/c of the tremendous gift we have to be a part of this remarkable nation.
2. **Structure of Service (15)**
	1. Shachris: Similar to a regular YT Amida, which begins with praise and ends with Thanks, and in the middle includes a recognition of what the day is really all about: Hashem is the King.
	2. Torah Reading
		1. Day 1: Story – Sarah is remembered, Yishmael is spared:
			1. Sarah: Yitzchak is conceived on RH.
			2. B’asher Hu Sham
				1. Yishmael becomes ultimate enemy of Jewish People, becomes Islam. Rashi quotes Medrash that Angels argued with Gd not to save him b/c of what his ancestors would do to the Jewish ppl. Hashem answers no, he is repenting now, and I view ppl as they are in front of me. It doesn’t matter what they may do in the future 🡪 How can I do teshuva for something I know I might do again. This is the answer to that question.
			3. Haftorah Chana: Power of Tefila, Shmuel is conceived on RH
		2. Day 2: Akeidah
			1. No greater merit than this unfathomable act of devotion by Abraham. Remains symbol of our willingness to sacrifice for GD for millennia.
	3. Shofar
		1. Symbolizes the Akeida, as Abraham did not sacrifice Isaac, rather a ram that was caught in the thicket, in place of Isaac. This is the ultimate willingness to give of oneself for Hashem, even more difficult than giving one’s own life, giving your child’s.
		2. The shofar, therefore, is our call to act, our call to make a change, a sacrifice for Gd. ***(Vort about using ram’s horn, taking advantage of inspiration, and jumping to act).***
		3. Also signifies a different kind of prayer. One in which now words are said at all. It is supposed to sound like a cry, the cry of a mother waiting for her child to come home from battle, knowing all too well that he will not be returning. Her sorrow is so deep that she has no words, only tears.
		4. Sometimes we feel so far from GD that we have nothing to say, only to cry, only to moan in agony about what we are missing, b/c words simply won’t express how we feel.
		5. We read it together as part of the Mussaf service b/c, in a sense, it is part and parcel of our prayers, it’s the prayer which has no words.
			1. **Belzer Rebbe and the Jew in San Francisco: He just started to cry. The Shofar is a call to everyone one of us:** Hashem has lit a candle for all of us, we just have to let the light in)
	4. Mussaf
		1. Malchiyos - what we spoke about malchus
		2. Zichronos – Concept of today as a day where GD “remembers” all our deeds of the past year and makes an accounting.
		3. Shofros – what we said about shofar
3. **Daven (service – meditate) – Leave 10 minutes for this part.**
	1. **“Ata Nigleisa (beg of shofaros) saved my life” 🡪** What does it mean to be able to stand with a machzor in hand and come to shul: Our parents/grandparents literally gave up their lives for this opportunity. To have a machzor.

(5 selected pages) –

 Thank you – I recognize all You do for me.

 Requests

 I’m sorry/I love you

1. elements of a marriage)
2. **Shema** **– First 2 Lines:** Ultimate acceptance of GD’s dominion over the world.
3. **1st paragraph of Shemone Esrei:**
4. **Elokai Netzor (end of Shemone Esrei):** We can ask GD for anything, including to help us be better people. Important aspect of improving oneself 🡪 Ask for Help.
5. **Aleinu (in mussaf):** Recognition that You are the One who controls all, and Thank You for making us your special nation.
6. **B’sefer Chaim:** Request for a year of only good things for all of us.

Allow quiet time for anyone to say their own private prayers.

\*Why use the Ram’s horn as the image of mercy, what to use to find favor in Gd’s eyes?

The Gemara, Rosh HaShanah 16a, quotes R. Avahu that we use a ram's horn on

Rosh HaShanah in order to remember the ram that Avraham sacrificed at the

akeidah. The obvious question is: Why are we commemorating the akeidah with

symbols that occurred after the akeidah? What was the great nisayon in sacrificing

the ram? Furthermore, why does the Mishna (Avot 5:6) state that the ram was

created especially for this occasion? What was so special about the sacrifice of this

ram? R. Chevroni answers that when a person has a moment of inspiration, he

must follow through on that inspiration and use it as a means of elevating oneself.

The akeidah was Avraham's ultimate chance to reach great heights. When he was

told that he shouldn't sacrifice his son, he didn't want to listen. He didn't want to

come down from that great spiritual high. Therefore, a special ram was set aside

for him so that the sacrifice of the ram could be considered tantamount to the

sacrifice of Yitzchak.

\*We all have moments of inspiration, but the ties that bind come not in the moment

of sacrifice but when given the chance to make something more lasting – like

Avraham’s desire to still bring the korban in order not to lose the moment.

Stories:

1. Lantern Swinger (Finding passion we have inside)
2. R’ Elazar Ben Dordaya (door is never closed)
3. Michael Jordan and IBM mistake story (Building on mistakes)
4. Bata Shoe Company (Looking at what we can accomplish, not how hard it’s going to be)
5. 5 Ducks on shore (actually jumping in, not just thinking about it)
6. R’ Elyashiv “I’m jealous of your kaddish (the power of mesiras nefesh)
7. Ata Nigleisa saved my life. (Appreciation of ability to be standing/sitting here in this room with a machzor in our hands)
8. Candle was lit for a Jew in San Francisco (Belzer Rebbe) (we can all come back. Hashem has lit a candle for all of us, we just have to let the light in)
9. No deal Gd, I did it without you! (If we don’t first recognize Gd in our life, we can’t move forward)
10. “Tati please don’t let me go!” Give HKBH strength He wouldn’t ordinarily have, k’viyachol – sound of the shofar?)