

Reflections from Rabbi . . .

Introducing our new prayer book for the High Holy Days

Dear haverim,

In a few weeks we will gather in our Behringer sanctuary to introduce the new Jewish year of 5777! Focused on the promise of a new year, we will attempt to characterize the year 5776 that presented us with so much angst, pain, loss of life, and insecurity, as well as joy, both at home in Dallas, Texas and across the globe.

One of the most critically important tools utilized to guide our spiritual journey over the course of Yom Tov is our prayer book—the mahzor. Composed of prayers that have spoken to the core of our being for thou-sands of years, the prayer book is constantly in-flux. . .new prayers are implemented, translations updated, theologies refined, and more sensitive language is introduced.

I am excited to share with you that the Ritual Committee of our synagogue, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Directors have all enthusiastically endorsed the decision to purchase a new set of mahzorim—prayer books for the High Holy Days. Entitled *Mahzor Lev Shalem* and published by the Rabbinical Assembly, this new prayer book has received outstanding reviews. In circulation for over five years, the new mahzor has been praised for its capacity to unlock many “secrets” to the prayer experience.

Arranged artistically, highlighted by beautiful commentaries, inclusive of significant directions for the davener, and bound aesthetically, this new prayer book will quickly be considered a treasure. I anticipate with excitement the opportunity to introduce the prayer book to the congregation. To this end, Rabbi Kushnick and I will conduct two “Limud-learning sessions” with our new mahzor in advance of the High Holy Days: Thursday, September 1, and Tuesday, September 6, both at 7:30pm.

As with all things in life, there is a cost to this investment. We are asking each family to underwrite a mini-mum of two mahzorim at the cost of \$50 per prayer book. The highlight of this commitment will be the opportunity to dedicate each prayer book to a deceased loved one. The bookplate of each mahzor will pro-vide an opportunity to describe the life of a family member who will be lovingly remembered through this dedication. Imagine the wonder of the moment when 1100 prayer books are opened to reveal the stories of 1100 people to whom we owe our lives.

Appropriate forms and details will be forthcoming regarding the mahzorim. In the interim, I wanted to share with you my excitement regarding the decision to enhance our High Holy Day services with one of the most significant prayer book advancements in recent times.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Shalom u'mevorach,

Stefan Weinberg