

**Shabbat Shalom  
from Rabbi Michael Gold**

Candle Lighting Time  
Friday Erev Shabbat 7:10 pm

Services  
Shabbat Morning September 13 9:30 am  
Selichot Saturday night September 13, 8 pm. Followed by reception where our choir  
will perform.

High Holiday Schedule  
Mon. Sept. 22 6:30 pm Erev Rosh Hashana, followed by dinner for those with  
reservations  
Tues. Sept. 23 9 am 1<sup>st</sup> Day Rosh Hashana  
6 pm Tashlich, Mincha  
Wed. Sept. 24 9 am 2<sup>nd</sup> Day Rosh Hashana

Wed. Oct. 1 6:30 pm Kol Nidre  
Thurs. Oct. 2 9 am Yom Kippur Day  
4 pm Community Yizkor Service  
5:30 pm Mincha, Neilah  
7:30 pm Shofar, break fast for those with reservations

We continue to pray for the release of the hostages and peace to come to Israel.

**PARSHAT KEE TAVO  
THE HONEY AND THE STING**

“Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the  
country.” (Deuteronomy 28:3)

Rosh Hashana is coming, as we prepare to dip apples in honey. We look  
forward to a sweet year. But we know too well that often sweetness can be mixed with  
sadness. Perhaps this was best articulated in one of the great songs written by the  
Israeli composer Naomi Shemer (1930-2004). The song is *Al Kol Eleh*, “For all these  
things.”

The song begins with the words: *al had’vash v’al haoketz*, “for the honey and  
the sting, for the bitter and the sweet, for our baby girl, please guard them, O Lord. ...  
For all of these things please guard them my good Lord.” Shemer wrote the song in  
1980, having seen the mix of joy and sadness that is Israel. She also wrote the

song *Yerushalyim Shel Zahav*, “Jerusalem of Gold” which became the anthem of the Six Day War. Who knows what kind of powerful song she would have written if she had lived to see horrors of October 7, 2023 and the courage of Israel standing up to those who would destroy her.

This week’s portion is built around a blessing and a curse. The blessing section is much shorter than the curse section. But Jewish tradition never allows one to end a reading with a curse. So even after the curses, the section ends with blessings. This is life, a mixture of the blessing and the curse. Perhaps that is why Charles Dickens began his novel *Tale of Two Cities* with the words “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

I have felt that over the past several weeks. My family experienced overwhelming joy as our daughter and son-in-law adopted our new granddaughter. (I wrote about it last week.) Then I flew home and had surgery, a cancerous growth cut out of my head. (Very successful; I am fine. But it hurt.) Life is filled with joys and challenges, blessings and curses, the honey and the sting. To truly live is to experience both.

Philosopher Robert Nozick came up with a famous thought experiment in his book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Imagine you could be hooked to a machine which would make your life totally pleasurable – no pain but pleasure all the time. How many of us would desire such a life? Nozick teaches that most of us would not choose to be connected to such a machine. We realize that a truly fulfilling life must combine pleasure and pain. In fact, perhaps it is the pain that helps us better appreciate the pleasure.

Life is a mixture of joy and pain, of blessing and curse. Both of them make us human. There is an old story told in the Hasidic tradition. A woman goes to her rabbi and says that she can not bear the pain and suffering in life. What should she do? The rabbi says to bake a loaf of bread from flour borrowed from all her neighbors. But she can only borrow from neighbors who have never known suffering. The woman thanks the rabbi and starts going from home to home to borrow flour. But she comes home empty handed. There is no home that has not known pain and suffering. She returns to the rabbi and thanks him for a valuable lesson.

Naomi Shemer wrote about the honey and the sting. We have all know the sting that life can give us. Hopefully it helps us better appreciate the honey life can give us.