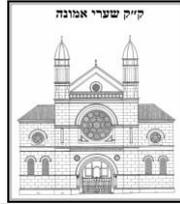


ק"ק שערי אמונה

## Brisbane Hebrew Congregation

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**B"H**

### Rosh Hashanah Message

Dear Congregant

Shalom, Uverachah - Greetings and Blessings

These words are being penned on Rosh Chodesh Elul, when we begin blowing the Shofar, the piercing soulful sound which "wakes" us from our spiritual slumber and arouses us to *Teshuvah*, to return to the essence of who we are, our soul, which is intrinsically connected to its source, the Divine spark of Hashem inside all of us.

The blowing of the Shofar plays a central role in our High Holiday traditions, but why the primitive and animal raw horn of a ram? Surely there are other more beautiful sounding instruments which are capable of invoking deep spiritual emotions within our being.

Among the many explanations for the specific use of a ram's horn, it is to remind us of the self-sacrifice of our forefather Abraham, who was ordained by the Almighty to take his beloved son Yitzchak (Isaac) and offer him up on the alter, only to be subsequently informed that this was merely a test, the supreme test in order to transcend his human intellect and emotions to fulfil the will of Hashem. Instead of sacrificing his son, Avraham offered a ram, which was caught by its horns in a nearby thicket. Thus, the rams horn has become a symbol of self-sacrifice and the abnegation of one's personal ego.

Much of western society has become obsessed with exploiting nature for the sake of man's physical pleasures and enjoyment, without bearing the responsibility for the repercussions of such behaviour. Addictive behaviours of all sorts are spiralling out of control. The Torah perspective is that our body does not belong to us, but is rather Divine property, loaned to us, as custodians of a tool to fulfil its Divine mission in life, namely, making the earth a dwelling place for Hashem.

The call of the Shofar therefore awakens us to reflect and focus on what we are needed for, rather than what we personally feel we need or want for ourselves, reminding each of us of our duty and responsibility to fulfil our unique Divinely ordained mission in life.

As we approach the holy and awesome days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the anniversary of the creation of Man, this is an opportune time for us to reflect on the purpose of life and our unique contribution towards the betterment of society and the world at large.

Dvorah and I wish you and your family a Ketiva Vachatima Tova – that you may be inscribed and sealed for a year good sweet year, filled with good health, happiness and prosperity, materially and spiritually, and the ultimate blessing of Moshiach NOW!

Rabbi Levi Jaffe