

Cantorial Message

September 2018

Many of you know that my oldest son and his family have chosen to “live off the grid” in the beautiful state of Maine. They live a simple life, growing vegetables and fruits, and canning them. They cook on a wood stove in the winter and a rocket stove in their outdoor summer kitchen. They use the sun to generate power and are creating plans for the new home that they will build, from resources on their property, next year. On their 10 acres of land, you get to enjoy nature at every moment. We sit outside under the most amazing blue sky, pet the chipmunks as they come out to enjoy the sunflower seeds that are strewn around for the birds, watch as the woodpeckers, humming birds, and many other species of birds come to have a snack. The kids enjoy a cool dunk in the crystal clear stream that runs through their property. As much as I love the view of the mountains of Maine from their home, my absolute awe-inspiring moments are when we sit outside and look at the most breathtaking night sky. There are no city lights to take away from the millions of twinkling stars that run through the Milky Way. I’ve even watched satellites zip through this sea of stars. Next time I’ll bring a telescope to stargaze. Looking up at the star-filled night sky, I felt small, but blessed. Its beauty brought to mind the Ma’ariv prayer. Since my High Holy Day Machzor was on my desk when I came to work, I looked up the prayer in the Rosh HaShanah Evening Service. The translation used in the machzor is very poetic and captured the feelings I had about the night sky in Maine. Here is the translation found on page 22:

Blessed are You Adonai. Your great name fills the universe with majestic might.

Your word creates twilight and dusk, as Your wisdom opens the gates of night.

Your discernment separates the changing seasons and causes the passage of time.

The stars, arrayed across the sky, reveal Your design.

You roll out the cycle of darkness and light, shaping day and night.

You sweep away day and carry the world into nightfall, setting day apart from nighttime.
You are G*D of all we can perceive, and all that is beyond our perception.

Living, Eternal G*D: be our Sovereign to the end of time.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Creator of twilight and dusk.

Such beautiful words.

On Rosh HaShanah, as we make amends to those we have hurt and work on being our best self, may this new year of 5779 also be the year that we take in and celebrate all that surrounds us, remembering to gaze into the heavens, and get caught up in the awe of all that Adonai created...for us.

Shanah tovah,

Sherry