

# Humanistic High Holidays with Kol Shalom

## How We Observe and Celebrate Them

For many secular and cultural Jews, the High Holidays and Passover are the two times in a year when they may have a strong sense of wanting to do something that connects them to their Jewish roots.



But what?? Going to Temple or Synagogue on Erev Rosh Hashanah and returning on Rosh Hashanah for morning and afternoon services—then again for the *Kol Nidrei* service on Erev Yom Kippur, and two whole days of Yom Kippur, imploring God to grant us another year if our repentance is sincere enough—whether we make that more likely by fasting, or not?

At Kol Shalom, we believe we can have that Jewish experience, with all due respect to our traditions, but with much less affliction of the spirit: we have a joyous Rosh Hashanah New Year's celebration on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, culminating in a festive Oneg social. We hear the haunting strains of the *Kol Nidrei* (sung by our cantorial soloist and then played with heartbreaking beauty by cello and piano) in the late afternoon of Yom Kippur. With moving ritual that we all participate in by reading the individual parts marked in our booklets, we consider our own responsibility for our behavior in the past year and our commitment to try to improve in the year just beginning. We sing along with the Music Makers, familiar songs with new words expressing what we believe, taking part in a truly human-centered experience. We observe a *nizkor* (we remember) ceremony, honoring our deceased, and a closing ceremony. After that final long blast of the shofar, we share a potluck “break-the-fast” meal—whether we choose to fast or not!

L' Shanah Tovah  
Have a sweet year!



There's a well-known story about baseball great Sandy Koufax, who wasn't a strictly observant Jew but who chose not to play in a major league game on Yom Kippur. Our Rosh Hashanah ceremony takes place in the evening and our Yom Kippur late in the day, and we hope this is doable for people who want to or need to work on that Jewish holiday—but who might arrange to take off an hour or two early, if needed, in order to come.

Our ceremonies are entirely appropriate for teens and mature pre-teens. Child care is available at no charge for young ones who would not be happy sitting quietly for up to an hour and a half. There are expenses involved in offering these occasions, and our members and their guests are asked to contribute ten dollars for each event they attend; non-members who aren't guests of members are asked to contribute \$25 for each event (tax deductible), to help support both the expense and the volunteer efforts of Kol Shalom members that make these celebrations possible. There is no charge for anyone age 18 or younger, and if the amount requested is beyond someone's means, an arrangement for a lesser payment can be made through our office. Registration can be done through our office ([info@kolshalom.org](mailto:info@kolshalom.org) or 503-459-4210) or [online](#).

For the potluck meal following Yom Kippur, please bring a dish for ten or twelve people, something that doesn't have to be kept hot or cold for a couple of hours. If, however, you aren't able to bring food, stay and eat with us anyway—we really want to share a meal with you!

The High Holidays are one of the very best demonstrations of the philosophy of Humanistic Judaism put into practice—a combination of Jewish tradition and modern, believable relevance, with meaning for Jews and non-Jews alike. We are justifiably proud of what we do, and we look forward to seeing you there and wishing you a *L'Shanah Tovah*—a good new year!

Jane Goldhamer