

Mealtime Graces and Blessings-----

Thank you Life, Thank you World, for giving us all we need:

The water we are made of
The food which builds our bodies
The sun which warms and grows all things
The people who share our lives, who help us
The people who we don't know, who also help us
All of the living things that share the earth with us
The beauty of the day and of the night
The possibilities of life and love, today and always.

To this table, where we share the food and the love
that help us live and grow, we come in peace and in thanksgiving.
We remember all those living things – people, animals, and the earth-
which do not have this peace, or this food, or this love, today.
May we never miss a chance to share what has been given to us.
May our eyes and ears and hearts and minds be open,
so that we know what we are called to share.

Readings -----

Reflections on the High Holy Days

What is the meaning of Rosh Hashannah to Jews? What does it mean to UUs? What does it mean to me? In the Jewish tradition, Rosh Hashannah is the birthday of the world. It is the Jewish New Year, of course, the remembrance of Genesis. Rosh Hashannah is the holiday when Jews reaffirm their covenant and allegiance to G-d. Rosh HaShanna is a time to reflect, to look back and remember, to account for our actions and thoughts, to recall our gains and our losses and to look forward with new determination to the future. The Shofar calls us back, reminds us to return to the beginning no matter how far we have traveled away.

Yom Kippor, the day of atonement, the day of prayer and fasting concludes the days of wonder. The Jewish teacher Maimonides conceived of Yom Kippor as an opportunity for individuals and the community to repent. Repent - it's a pretty heavy word. It conjures images of the Spanish inquisition, of intolerance and of shame. It's not really a UU kind of word. I think UUs focus on acceptance and diversity and inclusion, not on conformity or sin. In the Jewish

tradition and in my own extended family, repentance is not an opportunity to despair or to feel guilty. Repentance is the spirit of acceptance, of cleansing and renewal, of self-confidence and of hope. Repentance is the spirit of survival and in faith in the power of the almighty and of each of us to forgive.

Phil Posner, UU Church of Wakefield, MA, October 2000

Confessions-----

Before the wonders of life,
we acknowledge our failures to see and to revere;
Before the sanctities of life
we are ashamed of our disrespects and indignities;
Before the gifts of life we own that we have made choices of lesser
goods, and today we turn to seek the gifts of the spirit.
Before the heroisms of life,
we will strive to be enlarged to new devotion.

Unitarian Minister Van Ogden Vogt

Meditations on Being Called by Life-----

I have spent my days stringing and unstringing my instrument while
the song I came to sing remains unsung.

Rabindranath Tagore

That which oppresses me, is it my soul trying to come out in the open,
or the soul of the world knocking at my heart for its entrance?

Rabindranath Tagore

I have ceased to question stars and books; I have begun to listen to the
teachings my blood whispers to me.”

Hermann Hesse

The place Life calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and
the world's deep hunger meet.

Frederick Buechner

WISDOM FROM THE WORLD'S TRADITIONS-----

From readings for the Jewish New Year (September 24-26) and Day of Atonement (Oct. 4); The High Holy Days.

Atonement Day

Once more atonement day has come.
All pretense gone, naked heart revealed to the hiding self,
We stand on holy ground, between the day that was and the one that must be.
We tremble. At what did we aim? How did we stumble?
What did we take? What did we give? To what were we blind?
Last year's confession came easily to the lips.
Will this year's come from deeper than the skin?
Say then: Why are our paths strewn with promises like fallen leaves?
Say then: When shall our lust be for wisdom?
Say now: Love and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall embrace.
Chaim Stern

A Litany of Atonement

For remaining silent when a single voice would have made a difference
For each time that our fears have made us rigid and inaccessible
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.
For each time that we have struck out in anger without just cause
For each time that our greed has blinded us to the needs of others
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love
For the selfishness which sets us apart and alone
For falling short of the admonitions of the spirit
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love
For losing sight of our unity
For those and for so many acts both evident and subtle which have fueled the illusion of separateness
We forgive ourselves and each other; we begin again in love.

Robert Eller-Isaacs

O Source of peace, lead us to peace, a peace profound and true; lead us to a healing to mastery of all that drives us to war within ourselves and with others. May our deeds inscribe us in the Book of life and blessing, righteousness and peace!

O Source of peace, bless us with peace.

Gates of Repentance

READINGS AND MEDITATIONS

To Share With Family and Friends

October, 2014

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis

*Now is the time for turning.
The leaves are beginning to turn from green to red and orange. The birds are beginning to turn and are heading once more toward the South.
The animals are beginning to turn to storing their food for the winter.
For leaves birds, and animals, turning comes instinctively.
But for us it does not come so easily.
It takes an act of will for us to make a turn. It means breaking with old habits. It means admitting that we have been wrong; and this is never easy. It means losing face; it means starting all over again; and this is always painful. It means saying I am sorry.
It means recognizing that we have the ability to change. These things are hard to do. But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever in yesterday's ways.
May we be turned – from callousness to sensitivity, from hostility to love, from pettiness to purpose, from envy to contentment, from carelessness to discipline, from fear to faith...
May we be turned toward Life, may we be revived.
And may we be turned toward each other, for in isolation there is no life.*

Jack Reimer, in Singing the Living Tradition, # 634