

Inside Rosh Hashanah

<i>David Gedzelman</i> Life Immediate	1
<i>Daniel Sokatch</i> Despair and Sin	2
Discussion Guide	2
<i>Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert</i> The Eruv	3
<i>Marla J. Feldman</i> Civil Liberties and Terrorism	4
<i>Erica Brown</i> First Person Singular	5
<i>Elie Spitz</i> God Is Everything, in Drag	7
<i>Tobi Kahn, Jonathan Rosen</i> NiSh'ma	8
<i>Yolanda Shoshana</i> Obligation	11
<i>Abigail Gillman</i> On Zichronot	11
<i>Stephen Berer</i> A Meditation on Tides	12
<i>Mitchell Chefitz</i> Hin'ni	13
<i>Barbara Penzner</i> Opening the Prayer Gates	13
<i>Jaclyn Rubin</i> A Piyyut on Suffering	14
<i>Bradley Shavit Artson</i> The Ethics of Leadership	16

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EVERY YEAR we privately, as individuals, enter a public place of prayer for the High Holy Days. Some of our prayers are personal; others are recited collectively as part of a *kahal*, a community. Several essays in this issue address the tensions between the individual and the collective: Charlotte Fonrobert on the *eruv* and the interplay between private and public space; Marla Feldman on civil liberties and communal security; Erica Brown on parenting during the holidays. In addition to several short reflections on prayers and praying, Tobi Kahn and Jonathan Rosen exchange letters about art, creativity, and prayer. It is a pleasure to publish five pieces of Tobi's art, part of our ongoing exploration of Jewish visual culture. This year's Sigi Ziering Ethics Column — focusing on the ethics of leadership — is launched with Bradley Artson's essay on the qualities of leadership.

On page fifteen we offer a special gift subscription opportunity for the holidays.
Shanah Tova, Susan Berrin, Editor

Life Immediate

David Gedzelman

We read on Yom Kippur of how biblical Jonah rolls up to die instead of walking on the path of prophetic direction. He falls into a deep sleep in a far corner of the ship on which he has fled rather than speak of the possibility of return. It is not only that he has risked missing the mark of his life's trajectory but that he has chosen to sleep rather than to live. We choose to sleep in all kinds of ways. We choose to be numb rather than to hear the call of our destiny and our lives. When we make ourselves numb to the immediacy and power of life in the moment, we make it easier to disobey the Divine call. This numbness is the environment of sin, of turning away from life. When we sleep through our lives we distance ourselves from the source of life. When we live intensely and awake we give ourselves the gift of life's immediacy, which is the very presence of God.

"I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose life that both you and your children shall live..." Deuteronomy 30:19



Tobi Kahn, QINTA, Acrylic on wood, 22x26x2 inches, 1996

In a time when the media that surround us keep us from living directly and give us countless excuses to live other people's lives vicariously, we rob ourselves of life immediate. Deuteronomy explains that following the Divine voice is making the choice for life itself, for "God is your life." Perhaps the bedrock of sin in our age is the choice to sit half asleep continuously in a dark theater of other people's lenses rather than experience the sunlight of life immediate.