

## Rosh Hashanah CBT speech

Welcome everybody to Congregation B'nai Torah  
for for the High Holidays.

What a time of celebration—the birthday of the our  
world and we're invited! The Torah tells on the the 7<sup>th</sup>  
month on the first day you will have a party with  
noisemakers—ok a holy convocation with blowing the  
Shofar. What an honor for us Jews, especially  
considering not being invited! I mean what a sense of  
relief, what a feeling of celebration! Over and over  
this season we say the shecheyanu—we made it—we  
survived another year!

It's' like everything is born again—clean slate, all is

forgiven and welcome home!

On the other hand, when you start perfect you can't improve, you can only stay where you are in a kind of infinitely boring suspended animation, or you're going to go downhill. We even have a law of thermodynamics proving it. So why do we keep trying? What does God want from us? To play some sadistic game where we always strive and fail only to lose in the end?

Maybe the secret is in the BBQ we are commanded to have—the Temple sacrifice we are commanded to make to make a sweet odor for God. God needs to smell? He's not eating and the sacrifice's purpose

seems to make the fragrant smoke. Weird!

But we can make sense of it. The idea of the law of thermodynamics that everything decays and we are going downhill is not quite accurate. We can avoid decay by putting energy into the system. You fix the plumbing, put on some paint and rewire and house stands renewed.

But the energy in the universe is fixed. It can't be created or destroyed—only transformed say thermodynamics. But that's true only for a closed system. The Kabbalists tell us it is not a closed system—we have a connection to a heavenly system and there is an exchange of energy between these

systems!

When we speak of the heavenly energy the words used are ruach ha kodesh a holy spirit. When we speak of the sacrificial fragrance the works are reach nehoach a pleasant odor. In Hebrew the difference between reach and ruach is not even one whole letter. The middle letter of reach is a yud the Hebrew word for “hand”. To change “reach” to “ruach”, the spirit, takes only elongating the yud into a vav, the Hebrew word for “hook”. We have a hook reaching down for the Heavenly multiverse to our universe and all we need to is grasp that hook for the energy to be infused to keep our world spinning. We are not static, we can improve things-- we can

accomplish tikkun olam. All we need do is reach out and up. We then have a reserve of spiritual energy to counteract entropy.

But really, I can feel spiritual on the beach. Why do I need to come the synagogue. I can do tikkun olam By writing letters to my congressman and recycling and giving to various charities. Isn't that enough? I have trouble dealing spiritual anyway I don't what it means to be spiritual and I'm not going to do all of these prayers and rituals unless it makes me feel good about myself. I am waiting for a sign before I invest my time! Sound familiar?

What exactly are we supposed to do so that we know

our practices are making a difference and not just a  
waste of time? Must we do this by blind faith?