

# Rosh Hashana marks start of Jewish High Holidays

By Rose Ann McFadden  
Reporter

The Jewish High Holidays begin 8 p.m. Sunday. The High Holidays start with Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and end 10 days later with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Rabbi Peter Tarlow, of the Hillel Foundation, the Texas A&M Jewish student organization, said Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are the two central holidays in the Jewish year.

Although many calendars place Rosh Hashana on Monday, the holiday actually lasts from 8 p.m. Sunday to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

The Jewish day starts at sunset instead of dawn. So, Rosh Hashana lasts only two days on the Jewish calendar.

Rosh Hashana occupies the first two days of a period called "Aseret Y'Mei Ha'Teshuvah," which means ten days of repentance. The last day of this period is Yom Kippur.

Tarlow said the 10 days allow Jews to make peace with themselves, others and God.

"In Rosh Hashana, I look at myself," he said. "It's making peace with yourself."

For seven days after Rosh Hashana, Tarlow said, Jews seek forgiveness from others.

"If in any way I've hurt you," he said, "I have to say I'm sorry."

On the 10th day, Yom Kippur, Jews come to terms with God, Tarlow said.

Debra Miller, a member of the Hillel Foundation, compared these holidays to starting a new college semester.

"You have a feeling of happiness, like you're starting again," Miller said. "Maybe last year wasn't as good as it could have been, but you have a new chance (with the new year)."

Miller said the High Holidays draw new people to the Hillel Foundation.

"High Holiday seems to bring everyone together, not only the regular Hillel people but maybe the new student who feels uncomfortable about coming," Miller said.

*"You have a feeling of happiness, like you're starting again. Maybe last year wasn't as good as it could have been, but you have a new chance."*  
—Debra Miller

Jews observe many traditions during High Holidays, Tarlow said.

He said the religious service on Sunday includes a series of prayers in English and Hebrew, a time for private contemplation, and a sermon.

Another tradition is the blowing of the Shofar, a ram's horn, on Monday and Tuesday mornings.

"Blowing the ram's horn represents declaring war on all evil ways," Tarlow said.

Tarlow said apples and honey are often eaten during Rosh Hashana to represent a sweet year.

But when Yom Kippur arrives, Jews observe a complete fast, he said.

"Jews don't eat, drink, wash, or have sexual relations from sundown Yom Kippur evening, which is September 20, to sundown the next evening," he said.

Another Yom Kippur tradition is wearing white to represent purity, Tarlow said.

After sunset on Sept. 21, the end of Yom Kippur, Jews break their fast with a meal of fish, juice, and special bread, he said.

The Jewish students at A&M have created their own tradition called "break the broken fast," Tarlow said.

After eating the small break-the-fast meal, he said, students go to a restaurant for another meal.

Tarlow said he did not know how many students would attend services this year. He said about 400 Jewish students attend A&M, but many will leave during the holidays since they are excused from classes.

Tarlow said few people outside the Jewish community realize the importance of High Holidays.

"Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are equivalent to Christmas and Easter," Tarlow said.

# Texas lowest in welfare payments

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas may do less for poverty-stricken people who need jobs than any state in the nation, a policy analyst told a welfare committee Thursday.

"Looking at the welfare system as a whole in Texas, I think it's probably safe to say that — or it's arguable — that Texas has the most limited welfare system in the United States," Andrew Homer, a committee staff member and policy analyst, said.

The Special Senate Interim Committee on Workfare had scheduled a vote on several recommendations to the Legislature but lacked a quorum as only chairman Hugh Parmer among the eight members was present for the hearing.

Several members of a welfare advisory group were present, however,

and Parmer, D-Fort Worth, said their suggestions would be incorporated into a final report for a committee vote.

According to data compiled by the Texas Research League, Texas ranks 50th among the states in per capita state and local government expenditures for public welfare at \$141 per person, less than half the national average of \$310, the staff report said.

Homer said Texas has very limited Medicaid coverage, (and) we have almost no assistance programs for single, individual childless couples and very limited programs for the elderly.

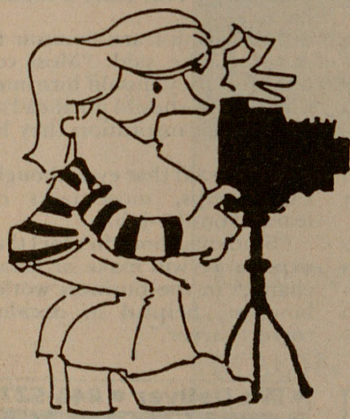
"The state of Texas provides virtually no non-federal funding for child care, for job training, for any

of the programs that could (be) used to allow folks to try and better their position in life," Homer said. "A number of people have described this system as one of benign neglect, and I think that's fairly accurate."

Preliminary committee recommendations include raising the Aid to Families With Dependent Children average monthly grant from \$57 to \$61 and removing "unduly burdensome procedures" for welfare programs.

"It seems as if the (welfare) program is pretty inaccessible, categorized by high denial rates for AFDC, Medicaid, as well as food stamps," Homer said. "It's not necessarily because these people aren't qualified, it's simply because there are a number of procedural barriers."

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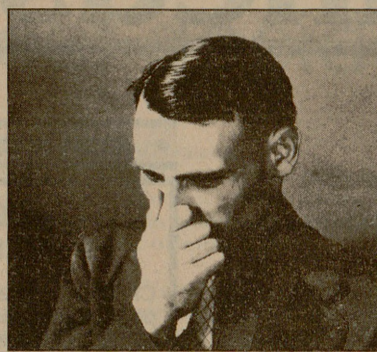
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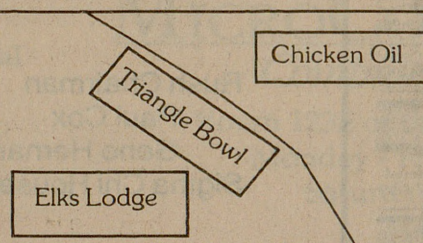
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