

The Jewish Criterion.

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Editorial Office, 612 Bijou Building.

Telephone—P. & A. 623.

Editors:

J. LEONARD LEVY,
CHARLES H. JOSEPH.

CHAS. H. JOSEPH,
Publisher and Manager.

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HOLIDAYS

1903

New Year's EveMonday, Sept. 21
Rosh Hashanah 5664 (Tishri 1st) Tues., Sept. 22
Yom Kippur (Tishri 10th) ...Thursday, Oct. 1
Succoth (Tishri 15th)Tuesday, Oct. 6
Sh'mini Atzereth (Tishri 22nd) ...Tues., Oct. 13

NOTE.—Jewish holidays begin on previous eve at six o'clock and end at six p. m. on the day of the holiday

A Happy New Year To Our Readers

5664

There are many people who have grown accustomed to speak of Judaism as a dead or decaying creed, narrow in its views and antiquated in its conceptions of life. If the value of a religion were to be gauged by the number of its followers, by its political power, by its territorial sway, Judaism might be considered "a small affair." (Judged by such a standard even the dominant faith sinks into comparative insignificance at the side of the religion of India and China). But if a religion is to be measured by its immortal truths, by the undying allegiance of its supporters, by its invincible vitality, by its power of resistance to persecution, by its ability to withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; if a religion is to be gauged by the spiritual power with which it has endowed its followers, then is Juda-

ism entitled to the reverence of its adherents and the respect of all others.

That there is in our faith fundamental truth, that it possesses the power of swaying the consciousness and the conscience of Israel, may be seen at this season of the year, when, touched by a common sentiment of loving faith, all Israel appears before God. The New Year is observed as the public expression of Israel's devotion to the Creator of the Universe. Every Jew who observes the day as a sacred occasion announces his belief in the "uncreated Creator," the Eternal God, "who is One and whose name is One." It is unnecessary to here enter into the philosophy of religious belief; it is neither the place nor the occasion to discuss whether the universe is a manifestation of eternal matter or eternal spirit, or whether it is the product of chance. Suffice it to say that the real significance of the great and holy day, which is ushered in next Monday evening, is the public declaration of the people of Israel that "the Lord God of Israel is the only King, that His dominion is throughout all Time and Space, that the universe is the product of His loving will." This is the truth, fundamental with Judaism, which the observance of the New Year asseverates.

It is a solemn day. It is a "Day of Remembrance," on which to recall the events of the year just going. As though standing on a mountain peak we look below and review the series of events which have been crowded into the stretch of time between now and the last Rosh-hashana. The resolutions of former days, where are they? The promises of last year, what has become of them? The events we dreaded, have they happened? The incidents we hoped to see, have they been realized? The parent's duty, has it been performed? The child's obligations, have they been met? The Jewish life, has it been lived? God's pres-

ence, has it been recognized? Remember! Reflect!

It is a day of "Judgment." Ancient poetry represents God seated upon His throne, high and exalted, surrounded by myriads of angels, scanning the record of each individual and deciding the future of each. The idealism of such a scene is considered absurd by modern materialism. And yet science, with its teachings concerning hereditary influences and the sway of acquired habits, would have us believe that, as year succeeds year, our future is inscribed, nay engraved, on our bones, nerves and flesh, by unseen fingers and indelible stylus. Our thoughts become our words; our words become our deeds; our deeds become our habits; our habits become ourselves. Shall we continue to be in the future what we are to-day? Is there no room or reason for amendment? Shall we permit our besetting sins to control us? Shall we allow our weakness to exert a stronger control over us? or shall we grasp the opportunity granted us, look at ourselves as we know ourselves to be, judge ourselves before the tribunal of conscience and seek to become better? Thus Rosh-hashana appeals to the better side of our human nature and serves to bring us to the side of God and goodness.

It is a day of "sounding the Shophar," of calling aloud to the house of Israel, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." While God is ever willing to be entreated of His children, our Rabbis have taught that He is specially gracious at this season of the year; that is to say, He is most likely to answer prayer solemnly offered at a solemn season in a solemn place. All Israel is assembled in prayer and the Jewish consciousness is touched to the quick. The days of sorrow are not yet over; the days of glory are not yet here. When could we better renew our attachment to our faith, when better renew our spiritual relationship

with our brethren than at such an hour?

May it be the Divine Will that the coming Holy-day may exert a powerful influence for good among us and all Israel. With the New Year may renewed religious fervor manifest itself among us. With the advent of our great Day of Remembrance may our people realize more than ever the duties and glories of Israel.

J. LEONARD LEVY.

JOSHUA OF THE FUTURE.

The Foundation of an American Jewish Statistical Society Proposed.

In a few days the American delegates will have returned from the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basle, and we shall have authentic information not only on the true bearing of the Uganda proposition of the British government, but also with regard to the general outlook of the whole Zionist movement, which, undoubtedly, has reached its turning point.

The merits and shortcomings of the great scheme of Jewish salvation that forever will be identified with the names of my two college friends and countrymen, Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau, have so often and so ably been described in the columns of your paper that I need not add new arguments either pro or con. The Zionists here and abroad have fought and are still fighting against mighty odds. They deserve for their courage and strenuousness full recognition even from the ranks of their opponents. But the question now arises: Is it within the power of these modern Maccabees to bring to a speedy and happy end the misery of their 5,189,000 (Russian official census of 1897) wards in the empire of the Czar, about 300,000 in Roumania and 811,000 in Galicia, in view of the hostile attitude of the Russian government toward Zionism, of the impending revolution in the dominions of the Sultan, and finally, in view of the indifference, yea, direct opposition, to their scheme on the part of nine-tenths of the well-to-do Israelites of Western Europe and America?

Goethe says somewhere that there are times when "no righteous man has the right to keep silence." The international situation of the Jewish people is nowadays such as not to permit any Jewish scholar, professional or business man to refuse his share of active co-operation and moral responsibility in the great war of deliverance in behalf of his **six million downtrodden brethren.** The well-to-do Jewish lawyer, physician, banker, trader and manufacturer of London and Paris, New York and San Francisco have not done their full duty as men and Jews in paying for their family pews