



Astoria Center of Israel

An historic past... a vibrant present... a great future...

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10 Av 5780

Dear Friends,

Last year at this time none of us had any idea what was about to be unleashed on our world and our society within but a few months. That the future is unknown to us is just how it is, just as it has always been. From the moment of Creation, which of course we celebrate on *Rosh Hashanah*, we are taught and reminded that we are not and can never be as God. As such, we mortal human beings can never really know what is in store for us.

So how do we deal with this human condition of uncertainty?

We do our best to anchor and arm ourselves with Jewish eternal beliefs, religious sensibilities, moral clarity, and *Torah's* ordered understanding of life. Avoiding the fleeting and faddish, we learn, embrace, and act upon our people's accumulated age-old teachings, wisdom, and guidance. As believing realists, we do our best to prepare for the best of times and the worst of times. With vitality, confidence, and a profound sense of optimism, we build, and we sustain that which we have built: our society, family, circle of true friends, community, synagogue – while keeping in mind what the Psalmist taught: “Unless Adonai builds the house, those who build it labor in vain; unless Adonai watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”

ACI – this בית אלהים 'house of God,' this קהילה קדושה 'sacred congregation' – was built, rebuilt, and is sustained now to be here for you as both anchor and inspiration, during both the best of times and the worst of times. These past months have presented significant challenges for us all. And through it all, as so many of you have expressed your gratitude, we have been here for you, providing Jewish sustenance, solace, strength, sanguinity, joy, and camaraderie.

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At this time of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, we beseech you now to generously and significantly help sustain ACI in your lives. Obviously, with all that has been going on, and with the building having been shut down for so long, our synagogue is straining financially.

So we ask all of you – according to your ability, and, as the *Torah* says, *אשר ידבנו ליבו* – as your heart guides your generosity – please dig as deeply as you can to help support ACI, to sustain that which we have built, to help positively address the condition of uncertainty, and to demonstrate your gratitude for the many blessings in your life – including ACI.

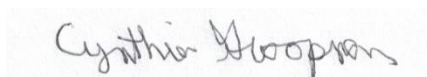
With God's help, may all of us – individually, as a community, and ACI itself – come through this circumstance with great and enduring delight and success.

Wishing each of you a *שנה טובה* – a very good, happy, confident, healthy, safe, and meaningful Jewish New Year of 5781 ahead!

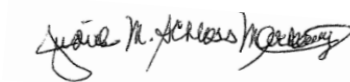
Bivracha,



Rabbi Pearl



with Cynthia Groopman, Co-President



and Judith Schloss Markowitz, Co-President