

D'var Torah for Yom Kippur Afternoon 5774 (*Kedoshim*)  
September 14, 2013  
Cantor Wally Schachet-Briskin

In this morning's Torah reading, we heard God tell us, "I have set before you this day life and good, or death and evil. Choose life." Hopefully, we'll be able to follow God's advice. This afternoon, we learn about what we should do with that life we are given, with the freedom and responsibility that come with making the choice to live fully. *Kedoshim tih'yu*, you are commanded to be holy, says God, because I am holy. Act in holy ways – hold your parents in esteem, keep Shabbat, give to the poor, be honest, take care of one another, don't seek vengeance, don't hold grudges. You are free to choose how far you go in any of these acts – and when you go really far, God loves that. And, it's good for the world. Conversely, by choosing not to follow those ethical commandments, we are opting for a way of life that brings its own set of costs.

God asks us to live in holy ways. And, we are in a covenant with God, so... we get to ask for things, too. For what do we ask? When we are in need of healing, we ask God to bless us with *refu'ah shleima*, a complete healing of body and spirit. If you are in need of healing, we will invite you up to the Torah for the first set of Torah blessings, the first *aliyah*. When we are brimming with joy because of a recent *simcha*, a joyous event, we ask that it be a sign of good fortune for all of us. If you are celebrating a recent *simcha*, we will invite you up to the Torah for the second *aliyah*. And when we have done something for the first time, we ask God to hear our gratitude for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for allowing us to reach this moment. If you have never been called to the Torah before today, we will invite you up to the Torah for the third *aliyah*. Since this is a supportive community, those of us who are not at the Torah at that time will sing to you.

We will now hear the Torah chanted, from Leviticus, Chapter 19, which can be found in the prayerbook on pages 452 through 455. For the first *aliyah*, we call forward all of those in need of healing, and all caregivers to the ill....