

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

September 10, 2015

Celebrating Everything

Rosh Hashanah is the only holiday without a limit. It literally celebrates everything.

Other holidays celebrate events in history, or the relationship between God and Israel. But Rosh Hashanah celebrates the creation of the world; in other words, it is a song of gratitude for all that exists. We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah because if we sleepwalk through life we are violating the essence of the holiday — to see and feel joy in the created world and the God who made it. Indifference is the enemy, ennui the sin, embrace

the answer.

The holiday that follows, Yom Kippur, is a symbolic enactment of death. We do not eat or bathe, and we dress in shrouds. Those who have not been grateful on Rosh Hashanah are asked to imagine what it would be like to be without the world. What if there were no love, no words or music or mountains or sky? Perhaps only after Yom Kippur can we fully appreciate the message of Rosh Hashanah. One day all this will be gone for you. Rejoice now; celebrate now; hold the world and those you love close. *Shana Tovah Umetukah* — a happy and sweet New Year.