



Photo by Anita Bergman

Dr. Godfrey visits

Dr. Brendan B. Godfrey, director of Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and Dr. Richard Scott Erwin, technical adviser for Air Force Research Laboratory's Spacecraft Component Technology Branch with the Space Vehicles Directorate, discuss the Deployable Optical Telescope experiment during a tour of the laboratory. The telescope is being used to develop and evaluate technologies for large space telescopes that can be folded and launched in a small payload. Dr. Godfrey was the former chief scientist of the Air Force Weapons Laboratory and the director of Advanced Weapons and Survivability for Phillips Laboratory before it changed to Air Force Research Laboratory.

Jewish 10 high holy days started Sept 15.

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Jewish Lay Leader

The most important days in the entire Jewish year are the High Holy Days. The first two days are Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), and the last day is Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). The days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are called the Days of Penitence.

The Jewish New Year period was ushered in at sundown, Sept. 15. According to Jewish tradition Rosh Hashanah marks the start of a 10-day period of spiritual self-examination and repentance. This period culminates with the observance of Yom Kippur (beginning sunset, Sept. 24), the Day of Atonement, the holiest Day of the Jewish year.

Rosh Hashanah

This holiday starts a new calendar year for Jews. But Rosh Hashanah is not only the Jewish New Year; it is also what Jews call Yom Hadin, the Days of Judgment.

According to Jewish tradition, in heaven there is a symbolic book where all of man's deeds are written. On one side has good deeds and the other, bad deeds. On Rosh Hashanah, Jews believe, G-d begins to study each of man's behavior for the past year. Has he/she been a good person? Has the person tried to be helpful? Has the person hurt someone without knowing it? G-d studies all of man's action. For the entire 10 High Holy Days, the heavenly book is kept

open. As the sun goes down on Yom Kippur, G-d inscribes what man's life will be like for the year to come.

Because man's fate is not sealed until the end of Yom Kippur, Jews spend the time from Rosh Hashanah onward trying to make themselves better people. They repent and then try to change their ways. They hope by repenting, they will be written down for a better life. This is a very serious and holy time.

The special biblical percept that is most identified with Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the ram's horn. The sound of the Shofar has been regarded as a call to penitence and a reminder of the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22). The text describes Abraham's test of faithfulness to G-d, culminating in the substitution of a ram whose horns were caught in a bush, as a sacrifice in place of Isaac. Jewish tradition also links the sounding of the Shofar to G-d's revelation at Mount Sinai and to heralding the long anticipated Messianic period.

Since Rosh Hashanah is such a holy time, Jews spend much of it in the synagogue praying. Many Jews wear simple white clothing to remind them of the time. The prayers, read from a special Rosh Hashanah prayer book, are old and beautiful and

written like poems. Sometimes they are sung as songs. The same shofar horn, which was sounded once each morning during the month of Elul, is sounded more than 100 times during the two days of Rosh Hashanah. The long and short blasts are sharp and trill, and add to the holy feeling of the period.

There are many interesting customs for Rosh Hashanah. The special holiday bread called "Challah" which is usually in the shape of a braid, is for this holiday, made round like the snail's shell. This reminds people the year goes around and around. It is also a custom to eat sweet things such as pieces of apples or Challah dipped in honey. Honey is a symbol of a sweet year. It is also a custom to eat a new fruit of the season, and to say a prayer over it.

Yom Kippur comes exactly 10 days after Rosh Hashanah. It is the holiest day of all the High Holy Days. On this day, Jews believe G-d decides on the kind of life each man will have for the year to come.

Editor's note: The references to G-d in the following story have been changed due to the writer's reverence. According to the writer's spiritual beliefs, that word is never said or completely spelled out.

