

## Rabbi's Column

This next Shabbat is called Shabbat Shuvah - the Sabbath of returning - to really hammer in the concept that Yom Kippur is fast approaching. The Torah reading for this week, as part of Moses' pep talk to the Israelites, also contains some words that boil down to, "do better than we think you probably will, or else." [Moses is not all that great at doing pep talks - he is always presuming that the people will blow it, and keeps going over what will go wrong when they do.]

We also have within this Torah portion to instructions for the original Torah reading. Once every seven years, when nobody had to go back to work, the people were required to listen to the Torah being read out loud in its entirety. Even the children were required to attend. This was possibly one of the first binge entertainment experiences, as I am sure it took hours, if not days, to go through the whole thing.

And here some of those think High Holiday services are sometimes too long! This process of reading the Torah in public was designed to help fulfill the directives given last week - it is within your power. Reviewing it regularly helped make it one of the people's belongings.

It is still within your power to pay attention to the teaching. You can know what is in there, and when you have questions, you know who to ask.

Shanah Tovah! May you all be inscribed in the book of life, and may your life be filled with self-understanding, helping others and working to become better people.