



## IN YOUR HOME

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# ראש השנה • יום כפור • The High Holidays

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### **Shalom Parents,**

*Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* are purely religious Jewish holidays, commemorating no event in nature or history. The ten-day period of the High Holidays begins with *Rosh Hashanah* and ends with *Yom Kippur*. Called "The Days of Awe," it is a time for self-evaluation and starting anew in one's life goals.

**Rosh Hashanah**, the Jewish New Year, falls on the first and second days of the Hebrew month of *Tishrei*, when the new moon appears. This period of serious personal thinking is also joyous and hopeful, as family celebration and prayer inspire the spirit. Candles are lit each evening and the *Kiddush* is recited over wine at the start of meals. The sweetness and completeness of life is symbolized by eating apples and round *challah* dipped in honey. We wear new clothes and eat new fruits as we begin anew. Four names of the festival, *Rosh Ha-Shanah* (New Year), *Yom Teru'ah* (Day of Blowing the *Shofar*), *Yom Ha-Din* (Judgment Day), and *Yom Ha-Zikaron* (Day of Remembrance) stress its significance.

**Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement and fasting, the most important day in the Jewish year, falls on the tenth of *Tishrei*. Family, friends and neighbors often ask forgiveness of each other for wrong-doings during the previous year. The *Yom Kippur* eve table is set for the pre-fast meal just as it is on the Sabbath, the synagogue is beautifully adorned and many people wear white clothes and choose not to wear leather shoes. In some places, a candle is

lit to remember deceased relatives, their names are mentioned during a special *yizkor* (memorial) service, and *tzedakah* (charity) is donated in their memory. *Yom Kippur* starts with candle-lighting and the *Kol Nidre* service and ends at dark the next day with the *N'ilah* service and a blast of the *shofar* (ram's horn).

**The Shofar** is sounded daily for the entire month of *Elul* (the Hebrew month prior to *Tishrei*). It is the main feature of the *Rosh Hashanah* morning service, and is blown again at the conclusion of *Yom Kippur*.

**Tzedakah** (charity) is customarily collected and distributed during the month preceding *Rosh Hashanah* to those in need so that all Jews can receive provisions for the holiday season.

**Foods eaten as symbols of the High Holidays** include apples, honey, round *challah*, and new fruits (including pomegranates). As we gather with dear ones to commemorate this season, we enjoy foods that remind us of the holidays' importance.



**The holidays this year** begin with *Rosh Hashanah* on Wednesday evening, September 8 and continue on September 9 and 10. It is celebrated for two days both in Israel and in most other communities. Some Reform congregations celebrate only one day of *Rosh Hashanah*. *Yom Kippur* begins at sundown on Friday, September 17 and continues until dark on September 18.

## THANKING, LISTENING, REMEMBERING, FORGIVING, GREETING

### EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

The *shehecheyanu* blessing (expressing thanks) is said on each *Rosh Hashanah* evening (on the first night before eating the apple and honey, and on the second evening before eating the new fruit). A seasonal fruit not yet eaten during this season connects the Jewish people to the agricultural calendar, encouraging an appreciation of fruits of the earth.

*Bah-rooch Ah-tah A-do-nai El-lo-hay-nu Me-lech Ha-oh-lam She-he-che-ya-nu Ve-ki-yi-ma-nu V'hi'gi-ah-nu Laz-man Ha-zeh.*

Praised are you, *A-do-nai* our God, Sovereign of the Universe; who has kept us alive, sustained us and helped us to reach this moment.

**With Your Child:** select a new fruit (one that members of your family have not eaten in that season) during a trip to the market. Before eating it recite the *Shehecheyanu* blessing.

**Ask:** What do we know about this fruit?

### LISTENING

The *shofar* makes three distinct sounds. Listen and count:

- *tekiyah*: one long blast
- *shevorim*: three blasts like a siren
- *teruah*: nine staccato notes
- *tekiyah gadola*: one very long note at the end

**With Your Child:** count the number of *shofar* blasts. She can hum or clap hands with each note.

**Ask:** How many times was the *shofar* blown by the end of each *Rosh Hashanah* day? (answer: 100) How many and which ones are heard on *Yom Kippur*?

### REMEMBERING

A memorial candle is lit at home on *Yom Kippur* eve to remember deceased loved ones. It burns for at least 24 hours. Memorial lights are lit at the synagogue.

**With Your Child:** point out memorial lights in the synagogue, explaining their significance. Talk about deceased family members and friends. Look at a photo album, reminisce, discuss the people by name and mention those named for the deceased.



**Ask:** Do you know anyone else with those names?

### APOLOGIZING AND FORGIVING

*Yom Kippur* is a time to say "I'm sorry," to think of ways to improve, to start anew and to discuss ways to make others—and ourselves—feel better.

**With Your Child:** make "Thank You" tokens. Use poster board, a pencil, a glass, markers or crayons and scissors. Help her trace around the bottom of the glass onto the poster board with the pencil, and then cut out each traced circle. On one side of each circle (token) she can draw a picture (of herself, or a *Rosh Hashanah* symbol) and color it. On the opposite side of each token she can write, "Thank you for your forgiveness," or simply "Thank you," or you can write her dictated words. She can then give a token to each person of whom she asks forgiveness.

**Ask:** Who do you want to forgive this *Yom Kippur*? Who do you hope will forgive you? Should we make a list?

### SENDING GREETINGS

At this time of the year, it is traditional to phone, email or mail a greeting card to friends and family with good wishes, such as:

- *L'shanah tovah*: "Have a good year."
- *L'shanah tovah tee-ka-tay-vu*: "May you be inscribed for a good year."
- *L'shanah tovah tee-ka-tay-vu v'tee-cha-tay-mu*: "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

**With Your Child:** create a greeting card for a family member or friend. Use construction paper or cardboard, scissors, glue and colored tissue paper. Fold the

cardboard in half. Draw an outline of a *Rosh Hashanah* symbol (*shofar*, pomegranate, apple or other symbol) on the cover, filling most of the space. Cover the inside of the outline with glue. Cut the tissue paper into small pieces, scrunch them up and press them down closely together on the glue. Allow to dry.

**Ask:** Who should we send it to? (Then, help him write a greeting, sign the card, place it in an envelope with a postage stamp and mail it.)

## PREPARING HOLIDAY FOODS

Foods, traditionally served at the *Rosh Hashanah* table, express our wishes for the New Year. Sweet, round foods demonstrate our hopes for a sweet, smooth year.

### BAKED APPLES

Apples, the quintessential *Rosh Hashanah* symbol, is a sweet seasonal fruit, traditionally eaten on the first night of *Rosh Hashanah*.



### Ingredients

6 large apples  
 6 tablespoons honey  
 1/2 cup orange juice  
 1/4 cup hot water  
 2 teaspoons sugar  
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Core the apples, being careful not to cut through the bottom skin. Peel them about one-fourth of the way down from the tops. Pierce the apple skins with a fork at several points (to release steam during baking). Combine the honey and orange juice and pour the mixture into the center of each apple. Pour hot water into the bottom of a baking dish and set the apples in the dish. Bake for 45- 50 minutes, or until the apples are tender. Mix together sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the tops of the apples. Just before serving, place the apples under the broiler for a few minutes, caramelizing the sugar.

### TSIMMES

Carrots are traditionally eaten at this season. In addition to being sweet, its Yiddish name, *mehren*, is similar to *mehr* ("to multiply/increase" in Yiddish), and when sliced, it resembles golden coins, emphasizing prosperity.



### Ingredients

10 medium carrots  
 3 T brown sugar  
 3 T honey  
 3 T fresh lemon juice  
 3 T unsalted margarine  
 salt and pepper to taste

Peel and slice carrots. Place in pot

(without lid) with salted water to just cover carrots and boil 5 minutes. Then simmer for 15 minutes. Add sugar, honey, margarine and juice and simmer 10 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper.

### NEW FRUIT

While any fruit not eaten during the season may be introduced on the second evening of *Rosh Hashanah*, the pomegranate is one of the most commonly used new fruits, coming into season in Israel in late summer/early fall. It is said to have 613 seeds, the number of *mitzvot* (commandments) mentioned in the *Torah*.



### ROSH HASHANAH SYMBOLIC FOODS

In many homes of *Sephardim* (Eastern Jews), symbolic fruits and vegetables are customarily served before the festival meal. Some people arrange seven symbolic foods on a platter, similar to a *Seder* plate, and called *Sheva Brachot* ("Seven Blessings"). The head of the family recites an appropriate biblical verse over one item at a time and gives a portion to each diner. The symbolic foods are usually dates, pomegranates, apples, leeks, spinach, beet greens or chard, and the head of a fish or lamb (with some people substituting a head of lettuce). In Jerusalem some serve as many symbolic foods as possible, reciting a prayer and explanation with each one. Some modern Jewish families, thinking creatively, have introduced other symbolic foods.

### Newly introduced symbolic *Rosh Hashanah*

**foods** might include, for instance, peaches (demonstrating a wish for a "peachy" year), raisins (expressing a wish to "raise" our children in meaningful ways), celery (looking forward to a bigger "salary"), brussel sprouts (hoping our fortunes "sprout"), etc. Guests might be asked in advance to bring a unique (and punny) fruit or vegetable to the celebration.



## A RECOMMENDED SELECTION OF BOOKS

**Engineer Ari and The Rosh Hashanah Ride**, by D.B.Cohen. Kar-Ben Publishing, Inc., 2008. As Engineer Ari's train travels to Jerusalem, collecting goodies to help celebrate *Rosh Hashanah*, Ari learns important lessons about friendship and forgiveness. This creative story, based on the first actual train ride from Jaffa to Jerusalem in 1892, is perfect for three to seven year olds.

**Even Higher! A Rosh Hashanah Story by I. L. Peretz**, by E.A. Kimmel. Holiday House, 2009. Every year, just before *Rosh Hashanah*, the Rabbi of Nemirov disappears. The villagers are certain that their great Rabbi flies up to heaven to learn about the fate of every soul for the coming year. But a skeptic vows to discover the Rabbi's secret and witnesses an enormous act of human compassion. The book is appropriate for four to eight year olds.

**The King in the Field**, by D. Rosenfeld, Hachai, 200. A big surprise awaits five good friends who spend an afternoon together in the field, wishing they could enter the palace to meet with the king. This is a fun book for three to five year olds.

**Gershon's Monster: A story for the Jewish New Year**, by E.A. Kimmel, Scholastic Press, 2000. In this traditional Hasidic legend, Gershon makes mistakes, never regretting them or asking for forgiveness. He finds a way to dispose of his mistakes, never realizing that his thoughtless behavior will someday come back to haunt him. This story delights four to seven year olds.

**Sammy Spider's First Rosh Hashanah**, by S.A. Rouss, Kar-Ben, 1996. Sammy, a young spider, watches the Shapiro family prepare to celebrate *Rosh Hashanah*. He eagerly joins in but ends up knee deep in honey. This book is fun for three to seven year olds.

**How the Rosh Hashanah Challah Became Round** by S. Epstein, Gefen, 1993. Yossi, the baker's son, loves special days when *challah* is baked. He feels important



carrying the great pan of braided *challahs* down the stairs to the ovens, until he trips. Four to seven year olds enjoy hearing what happens next.

**Happy Birthday, World: A Rosh Hashanah Celebration**, by L.B.Kropf, Kar-Ben Publishing, Inc., 2005. There are similarities and differences between the way we celebrate our birthdays and the way we observe *Rosh Hashanah*. This boardbook is perfect for two year olds.

**It's Shofar Time!** by L.B.Kropf, Kar-Ben Publishing, Inc., 2006. This book helps two to four year olds learn about *Rosh Hashanah* through beautiful photographs and interesting ideas.

**The Hardest Word: A Yom Kippur Story**, by J. Jules, Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., 2001. Three to seven year olds are intrigued by the story in this beautifully illustrated book about a fantastic mythical creature who accidentally creates a problem he cannot fix. After great effort, and repeated failure, he finds a solution but is still not sure how to use it.

**A Yom Kippur Think**, by M.P. Feinberg, United Synagogue, 1994. When Hannah feels uncomfortable in the synagogue on *Yom Kippur*, her father helps her understand the holiday and ways to make it meaningful and comfortable. Three to seven year olds love this book.

**Apples and Pomegranates: A Family Seder for Rosh Hashanah**, by R. Musleah, Kar-Ben Publishing, Inc., 2004. An ancient custom of conducting a *Rosh Hashanah seder* is explained, along with blessings, stories, recipes, songs, discussions topics and questions in this unusual book. Parents and children of all ages learn a lot while having fun with this book.

### AND OTHER RESOURCES

#### Websites:

[www.jewfaq.org/holiday0.htm](http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday0.htm)

[www.aish.com/holidays](http://www.aish.com/holidays)

[www.chabad.org/holidays](http://www.chabad.org/holidays)

[www.akhlah.com/holidays](http://www.akhlah.com/holidays)



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