

Rosh Hashanah – Feast of Trumpets



Rosh Hashanah or the Feast of Trumpets is first of the fall feasts and is celebrated on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri 1). The seventh month on the Hebrew calendar falls either in September or October. Seven is the number of completion and perfection. It is the beginning of what is referred to as the time of the latter rain, which comes in the fall and gives the moisture needed for the final harvest of the year.

Jews believe that Rosh Hashanah was the sixth day of creation, the day God created man. It is also believed that on this day God opens the Book of Life and God makes a determination in the ten-day period Tishri 1-10 (Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur) concerning the fate of each person on earth. The Book of Life is opened on Rosh Hashanah and closed on Yom Kippur.

Rabbis teach that God divides the world into three groups of people on Rosh Hashanah: the righteous, the people who are not totally righteous but are not wicked and the wicked. Jews believe that on this feast day, God writes the names of the righteous in the Book of Life. Because of this belief, the entire month of Elul that precedes Rosh Hashanah, Jews have a time of introspection, a time of examining their lives and their actions of the past year. ("Elul" has been interpreted as an acronym, with its Hebrew letters "Aleph," "Lamed," "Vav," "Lamed" representing the words "Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li" Song of Solomon 6:3. The words mean, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine," where my "Beloved" is G-d, and "I" is the Jewish People. *)

During the month of Elul, Jews make efforts to make amends both in their relationships and if need be in their businesses. This is an important part of the fall feasts – being right with God and others. The following is an interesting commentary on the process of repentance and is helpful to us as Christians to think about what it means to repent.

The Four Steps of Repentance

Teshuvah (Return, or Repentance) is a generous gift from G-d, which allows us to erase our improper actions through a four-step process. (Note: Jews do not write the word God because they believe it is holy and a human writing it would desecrate it; therefore, they only write G-d.)

The Torah tells us that no matter how far we stray or how many times we sin, G-d will wait for us to return to him through Teshuvah.

There are four basic parts to Teshuvah:

- 1. Leaving the Sin**
- 2. Regret**
- 3. Confession Before G-d**
- 4. Acceptance for the Future**

1. Leaving the Sin

Leaving the sin consists of stopping the commission of the sinful act. One cannot do Teshuvah if one continues to do the sin, even if he or she were to perform the next three steps perfectly.

2. Regret

Regret consists in sincerely regretting one's wrong action. One must be genuinely ashamed and embarrassed over one's sins.

3. Confession Before G-d

Confession before G-d consists of an oral confession spoken out loud, in which one formulates in words the commitments and attitudes one has reached in his or her heart. One should say, "I have sinned, I have done such and such; I deeply regret my actions, and I declare before G-d, Who knows my innermost thoughts, that I will never do this sin again."

4. Acceptance for the Future

Acceptance for the future consists of resolving in one's heart never to commit the sin ever again.

But...

1. The above steps only work for sins committed against G-d; for sins committed against other people, one must first ask forgiveness from that person before G-d will accept the Teshuvah.

This is the source of the practice by many Jews to contact all of their family, friends and co-workers during this period to ask for forgiveness for anything we may have done to upset them during the past year(s).

2. These four steps are of course only valid if we do Teshuva AFTER THE FACT. One cannot say in advance - "I can do this sin, then do Teshuvah and He will forgive me..." It simply doesn't work that way as it may in other belief systems.

On the other hand...

One should keep in mind that Teshuvah is an ongoing process that cannot be accomplished overnight. No matter how many times a person may stumble in the Teshuvah process, that person has to simply pick him or herself up and keep trying to stay on the right path.

What G-d is really looking for is the sincerity of the effort that a person puts into their Teshuvah! *

* Information from the Orthodox Union website www.ou.org.



How Is Rosh Hashanah Celebrated

Leviticus 23:23-25 gives instructions concerning the Feast of Trumpets. It says, "The LORD said to Moses, Say to the Israelites: 'On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the LORD by fire.'" (NIV) First it is to be observed like the Sabbath meaning that it is a day of rest and reflection. No work or discussion of work is to be done on this day. It is the

first of the high holy days and most Jews attend a synagogue service and as part of the service shofars are blown. Jewish families gather together and have a special meal, dip apples in honey as a symbol of entering into a “sweet” year and greet each other with “*L’Shanah Tovah*” which means, “*Have a good year.*” For a Jew having a good year means having his name inscribed in the Book of Life for another year.



In addition to eating apples, pomegranates are ripe and ready to eat by Rosh HaShannah. They are part of the eating of sweet fruit from the land and asking God for a “sweet New Year.” Deuteronomy 8:8 tell the children of Israel to eat pomegranates from the land and reminds them it to the exhortation to keep the commandments of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 8:6-10 "Therefore you shall **keep the commandments** of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and **pomegranates**, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you." NKJV

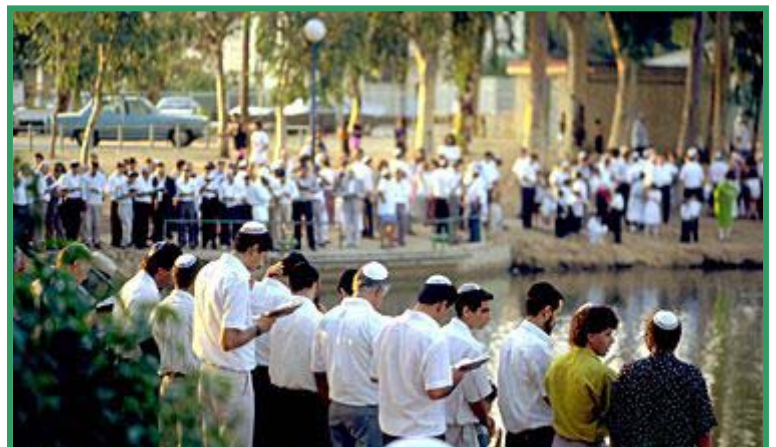


An interesting fact about pomegranates is there are exactly 613 sweet seeds in each one and there are exactly 613 commandments that God gave to the Jewish people. Also, when pomegranates are eaten on Rosh Hashanah, they are eaten without dipping them in honey because they are already very sweet. Now consider this, 613 sweet seeds and Psalm 19 which refers to the commandments of the Lord as sweeter than honey. Psalm 19:7-10 “The **law of the LORD** is perfect, reviving the soul. The **statutes of the LORD** are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The **precepts of the LORD** are right, giving joy to the heart. The **commands of the LORD** are

radiant, giving light to the eyes. The **fear of the LORD** is pure, enduring forever. The **ordinances of the LORD** are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; **they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.**” (New International Version)

It is also tradition to buy new clothes to wear on Rosh Hashanah. This symbolizes a new beginning and also it is an outward reflection of the renewing that is happening on the inside. This renewal comes from repentance and reflecting on God’s purpose for their lives.

On the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah, some Jews participate in a Tashlikh ceremony in which they go to a place where there is running water (a river or ocean) in order to recite the appropriate prayers. Some throw something into the water to symbolize casting their sins into the depth of the sea as instructed by the prophet Micah who stated that on Rosh Hashanah Jews should "cast their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).



Traditionally Jews send Rosh Hashanah cards to family, friends and business associates. These cards usually have a greeting such as “*Happy New*

Year”, “May Your Name Be Inscribed In The Book Of Life” and “May This Year Be Filled With Sweetness and Joy.”

A Christian View of Feast of Trumpets

This feast, like all the others feasts, is a rehearsal of things to come. It is prophetic in nature. Leviticus 23:23-25 gives three instructions concerning the celebrating of this feast: trumpets are blown, it is to be a day of rest and there is to be offerings made by fire. Looking at these biblical instructions and then considering the Jewish beliefs pertaining to Rosh Hashanah, this feast becomes a picture of the rapture of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.



- 1. Trumpets Blown – I Thessalonians 4:16**
- 2. Day of Rest – Hebrews 4:3-11 (Commentaries say these verses refer to rest now and a rest in eternity.)**
- 3. Offering Made By Fire – I Corinthians 3:12-15 (When we see Jesus all of our offerings i.e. works, sacrifices will be tried by the fire of God to see what they really are.)**
- 4. Names Inscribed in the Book of Life – Revelation 21:27**
- 5. New Clothes – Revelations 3:5; 19:7-8**
- 6. Celebration Feast – Revelation 19:7-9**

As we consider this feast, we must to make sure that we have repented and made our lives right with God and others. This feast is a rehearsal for the Rapture of the Bride of Christ and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. We need to prepare our wedding garments. Revelation 19:7-8 “For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.” NIV

Ideas How Christians Can Celebrate Rosh Hashanah

- 1. Take a spiritual inventory of your life. Reconcile with God and others anything the Holy Spirit convicts your heart.**
- 2. Think about ways your life can be a trumpet sounding the love of God to those around you.**
- 3. Have a special meal with family and friends and talk about being ready for the coming of the Lord.**
- 4. Send a New Year’s card to your Jewish coworkers and friends. If you also would like to give a gift here are two suggestions: gourmet honey (make sure it is kosher) or a fruit basket.**

Here are two coloring pages to print that will help teach children about the Feast of Trumpets.

תשובה



Asking Forgiveness

לְדוּדָה, ה' אֹרֵי וַיִּשְׁעֵי ... (תהלים כ"ז)



The Shofar Is Sounded Every Morning