ROSH HASHANAH

Rosh Hashanah, translated literally as “the head of the year,” marks the start of the Jewish new year. The two-day festival commemorates the anniversary of the creation of the world and is a time for serious introspection, personal growth, and spiritual rebirth. Because it is based on the Hebrew Calendar, which is primarily lunar, the exact dates of Rosh Hashanah vary each year, but generally fall within September and October on the Gregorian Calendar. Celebrations start on the first day of the seventh month, beginning at sundown on Tishri 1 and ending at nightfall on Tishri 2.

Rosh Hashanah also marks the beginning of the Days of Awe. It is believed that during this ten-day period, culminating with Yom Kippur, individuals must atone for both their individual and communal sins. Followers have until Yom Kippur if they wish to enjoy the rest of the year, for it is believed that the following day G-d will inscribe our fates for the coming year in the Book of Life and close it until the next new year. For this reason, Rosh Hashanah and the days that follow are a time to enjoy festive meals, as well as engage in prayer and solemn reflection.

(Except from chabad.org and history.com. Observance information from https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/rosh-hashanah-1037/)

CELEBRATING ROSH HASHANAH

Rosh Hashanah is most commonly associated with the sounding of the shofar, the traditional ram’s horn, which serves as a reminder of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people, carrying with them the message of sacrifice, hope and continuity.

Along with the shofar, the day is also known for its feast. There are several traditional and symbolic foods that are typically included in the new year meal, such as a round challah loaf, symbolizing the eternal life cycle, which is dipped into honey to represent hopes for a sweet year. The same is done with apple slices also dipped in honey, continuing the theme of hoping for a sweet year.

One of the most popular traditions is Tashlich, a ceremony performed in the afternoon on the first day of the holiday. During this ceremony individuals throw crumbs or pieces of bread, symbolizing their sins, into flowing water.

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