

THE HOLIDAY EDITION
For grades 6-7



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CANDLE LIGHTING

Rosh Hashana: rôsh' hæ-shô'ne
(noun) – The Head of the Year.

Head of the year? Rosh Hashana is the Jewish ‘New Year’, so why not call it that? What does “Head of the Year” mean?

Actually, it is very important to recognize that Rosh Hashana is more than the *first* day of the year – it’s actually the “Head” of the Year. Just like the head – the brain – guides the body, Rosh Hashana has the power to guide our entire year in the right direction.

How? Rosh Hashana is a time for **new beginnings**; it’s a time to learn from our mistakes and start fresh. It’s a time to leave behind the parts of our lives that shouldn’t come with us into the future.

Rosh Hashana is a day when we ask ourselves: Is there a bad habit which I need to work on? A part of my behavior that I need to improve?

Although, we should be examining our behavior and improving our conduct all year round, the Torah tells us that, on Rosh Hashana, Hashem gives us *extra* help toward reaching our goals of being better people.

Like we do on all Holidays, we **light candles** on Rosh Hashana. We also recite **Kiddush** (a prayer – announcing the Holiday – over a cup of wine), we eat **challah** and have a delicious meal.

On Rosh Hashana, go to the **synagogue**. Gathering together as a community feels good; we’re

THE DIALOGUE

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR THE CHABAD HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNITY

IT'S ROSH HASHANA!

By: Malkie Herson & Dena Torgeman



I am a powerful ocean that meets the landscape of rocky mountains and beaches.

I am the Manhattan Bay that graciously sways from side to side, reflecting the grand New York skyline.



I am a lake that sits peacefully between luscious grass and majestic trees.

I am a pond that beautifies a park, mirroring the peaceful smiles of those who look at me.



I am water. I cover more than 2/3 of the earth’s surface; I am integral to the world.

I quench people’s thirst and I irrigate the land. Without me, nothing could live.

The fish that swim in my belly get their livelihood from me, and they tickle me as they move!

People sit at my side and enjoy my movement; it feels good to bring tranquility to people’s lives.

When people splash and swim in me, it’s as if I’m having a big party with friends!



I am used by all creations to wash away any dirt and impurities.

With waves and wind gusts, my waters are always flowing. I’m experiencing new scenery as I move.

**But my favorite role
is on Rosh Hashanah...**

all there because we all want to have a good year. We share a goal. It's nice to be with people who share your goal.

At the Services, the Rabbi/Cantor blows a special horn called the **Shofar** (ram's horn). When you listen to the Shofar blowing, you'll notice that there are 100 Shofar blasts in all. Those 100 blasts are a combination of three different types of 'Shofar-sounds', each calling out to us: "Rosh Hashanah is a gift. Focus on its message. Don't sleep through this experience."

On Rosh Hashanah, a time when we think about the sweet possibility of a new beginning, and our hopes for a sweet new year, we **eat sweet foods**. We eat a piece of apple dipped in honey, honey cake, sweet carrots, etc. Many Jews also eat pomegranates, a fruit with many, many seeds, which brings to mind the *many* good deeds that we hope to do in this coming year.

Another practice of this special holiday is the '**Tashlich**' prayer service, which takes place by a river. As we stand at the riverside, we think about how we want to improve our behavior. It's like we want our not-so-good-behavior to float away on the river's waters. And, just as water helps us clean dirt off of our bodies, we ask for Hashem's help to clean the 'dirt' of bad habits off of our personalities.

In light of these messages, our wish to each other during this times is:
Shana Tova! A Good Year!

You see, every Rosh Hashanah, Jews come to my banks to express one of the deepest, most powerful concepts in Judaism: Fresh new starts!

Fresh new starts? you ask. Why is it that such an important idea?

Fresh new starts provide an opportunity to start again, an opportunity to say, "Today I am committing to something new. Something great! No matter what my past patterns and behaviors were, today I will be better!"

Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur is a season to take time an honest look at oneself. To evaluate the good things in one's behavior, and the not so good. To see where one wants to make changes. And to resolve to do better.

Of course, it is not easy to make real, meaningful changes, but when one *sincerely* want to be one's best self, Hashem (G-d) helps. Especially during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Because that's what it's all about.

That's why you come to my banks on Rosh Hashana. My water symbolizes the cleansing that you hope to experience. Just like water helps you wash dirt off your body, you ask Hashem to give you the strength to cleanse 'weak spots' on your personality. Just like my flowing waters carry any floating branches and leaves out of sight, you ask Hashem to carry mistakes out of sight so that they don't hold you back from your wonderful future. And just like the precious fish swimming in my midst never close their eyes, you are reminded that Hashem is always watching you, cheering you on and helping you to become better people.

Happy Rosh Hashanah! To a new year with fresh new starts!



THE DIALOGUE
 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- ◆ "Tashlich" is a Hebrew word that means "to throw". During the Tashlich Ceremony, we symbolically throw our misdeeds and mistakes into the flowing water. Its current carries it away leaving us fresh and clean and ready for a new start... Of course, this is only a *symbolic* way of achieving renewal. What else do we have to do to correct the mistakes of our past so that we have a blank slate this new year? What might we need as support in achieving this?
- ◆ If Rosh Hashana had a taste, it would be described as *sweet*. What is the connection between the Rosh Hashana and sweetness? What kinds of things can we do in this new year that will sweeten our own lives, and the lives of others?
- ◆ Hashem (G-d) loves us and wants to help us. Hashem designed the Jewish holidays each with its own energy. How does celebrating Rosh Hashana help us in our paths of self-betterment?