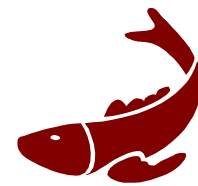


# Rosh Hashana

Feast  
of Trumpets



A Family Celebration Guide

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away?

Read Micah 7:19 – throw a few pebbles into the water and watch them disappear.

Read Ps. 103:12 – Throw a few more and see how far you can throw them!

Read Is. 43:25 – Can you find the pebble after it is thrown far out in the water? What will happen to your sin if you truly repent?

Keep throwing until all your pebbles are gone. Explain how we must continue in a spirit of repentance all our lives, until the opportunity for sin is gone and we are with God.

Pray, asking God to grant each of you true repentance for the sins you have acknowledged.

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# Introduction

## *Background*

*Tell the people of Israel, "In the seventh month, the first of the month is to be for you a day of complete rest for remembering, a holy convocation announced with blasts on the shofar." Lev. 23:24 (The Complete Jewish Bible)*

The Feast of Trumpets, literally "The Day of the Awakening Blast," was to be a High Sabbath (that is, a Sabbath in addition to the weekly Sabbath). It was a day set aside for remembrance and a holy assembly.

The Scriptures do not specify what it is the people were to remember, nor are there any other clues as to what the purpose of this feast was intended to be. Consequently, Jewish sages studied the Scriptures diligently to find out what things were associated with the shofar, and what that might have to do with remembering. Oral tradition, handed down for generations, helped to outline the purposes of the feast as well. All these things were finally put in written form by a medieval rabbi, Saadiah Gaon. According to him, there are ten reasons for the blowing of the shofar during the Fall Festival season. Several of the rea-

4. Shofar blowing:

– Three long blasts on the shofar (*Tekiah – The Coronation of the King*)

– Three sets of 9 short blasts on the shofar (*Teruah – Warning of judgment to come*)

– The Great Blast (*try to hold it for at least one full minute*) – He is coming! (1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

## Tashlich Service

Each person should have a bag or pocket full of pebbles. In each person's mind, the individual pebbles should represent something to them that they are seeking God's forgiveness for and that they are choosing to abandon.

Go to a body of running water and have a simple service on the bank.

Read Prov. 1:10 – Sin can be attractive, just like some of the pebbles, and we can be tempted to hang on to them, just as we see some of the pebbles we would like to keep! Find an especially pretty pebble and throw it in the water. Think about that sin that is especially hard for you to let go of. Will you choose to cast it

# Blowing the Shofar

1. Say the blessing:

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-  
olam,  
Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the uni-  
verse,*

*asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav  
Who has sanctified us with his commandments*

*v'tsivanu lesh-moa kol shofar.  
and commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar.*

2. Blow Three short blasts on the Shofar.

3. Four readings:

*Reader 1: Ps. 81:3, 4*

*Reader 2: Ps. 81:8-10*

*Reader 3: Ps. 81:13, 14*

*Reader 4: Ps. 81:16*

sons have Messianic implications, although most of these were not noted by Gaon.

## The Ten Reasons

1. A Coronation (1 Kings 1:39, Ps. 47:5, 98:6)

According to ancient Jewish tradition, Rosh Hashana marks the anniversary of the creation of Adam, the first man. It is the day to commemorate the coronation of God as the King of His Creation, and also a day to commit ourselves anew to acknowledge Him as King. In ancient times, the shofar was blown to announce the coronation of a king; therefore, we sound it during this season to remember that God is king.

2. Repentance/*Teshuva* (Ezek. 33:7, 10, 11)

Rosh Hashana occurs just ten days prior to the Day of Atonement, which is considered a day of judgment. Jewish tradition speaks of the gates of heaven opening on Rosh Hashana in order to receive prayers of repentance prior to judgment. In Rev.4:1, the sounding of the shofar is associated with the opening of the heavenly gates. Because of the opening of the gates, the shofar is sounded as a call to repent while there is still time.

### 3. Sinai (Ex. 24:7)

In Ex. 19, the sound of a shofar announced the presence of God on Mt. Sinai when He gave the Torah to Israel and made a covenant with the nation. The shofar is a call to remember the covenant: the Torah.

### 4. Warning (Ezek. 33:1-5, Jer. 4:19-21)

In ancient times, a shofar blast was the means of sounding an alarm. If a watchman on the city walls observed the approach of some danger, a shofar blast would alert the townspeople. Ezekiel uses this picture to illustrate the call of the prophets to warn the people of impending judgment. We sound the shofar as a reminder to heed the words of the prophets.

### 5. The Temple (Jer. 4:19)

The shofar was used by ancient armies to sound a battle cry that signaled the time to attack. The prophets used this imagery to warn of the impending destruction of the temple by the Babylonians. Therefore, the shofar is sounded to remind us of the destruction of the Temple and the consequences of rebellion against God.

9. *Thank God for the food – the symbols of God's all-knowing vision and His blessings on us.*

**Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem our God,*

**melekh ha-olam,**  
*King of the Universe,*

**shehakol nih'yeh bidvaro. Amein**  
*by whose word everything came into being.*

10. *Eat! Finish up with Honey Cake as a celebration of the blessings that God has promised to those who honor and obey Him as King.*

7. *Father's blessing of the family:*

**Yavarechecha Adonai ve-yishmerecha.**  
*The Lord bless you and keep you.*

**Ya-er Adonai panav elecha**  
*The Lord make His face to shine upon you*

**vichunecha.**  
*and be gracious unto you.*

**Yisa Adonai panav elecha**  
*The Lord lift up His countenance upon you*

**Va-yasem lecha shalom.**  
*and give you peace.*

8. *Explain the symbol of the fish*

**The blessings of obedience**  
(Deut. 28:13)

**The all-seeing eye of God**  
(Ps. 121)

**Our sin cast into the deepest sea**  
(Micah 7:19)

6. The Binding of Isaac (Is. 53:5-8)

When Abraham was preparing to sacrifice Isaac, the Lord provided a sacrifice to take Isaac's place – a ram caught by the horn. The shofar reminds us of this ram so we will not forget that we come to God on the basis of faith like Abraham did and that our acceptance with God and His mercy toward us is based on a sacrificed Son, foreshadowed by both Isaac and the ram.

7. The Fear of God (Amos 3:6)

In ancient cities, the shofar was blown to alert the people of danger, inspiring fear in their hearts. Therefore, the shofar is sounded to remind us that we depart from evil by the fear of God.

8. Judgment (Zeph 1:14-16)

In the scriptures, the shofar signals the day of judgment. Therefore the sounding reminds us of coming judgment.

9. Ingathering (Is. 27:13)

The prophets spoke of a shofar signaling the final ingathering of Israel, which will occur at the second coming of Messiah. Therefore, the

sounding is to remind us that Messiah is coming to gather His people.

#### 10. Resurrection (Is. 18:30)

Both the Tanakh and the New Covenant Scriptures speak of a shofar signaling the final resurrection. Therefore, the shofar reminds us of the coming resurrection at the coming of Messiah.

### *Themes of Rosh Hashana*

Two major themes of Rosh Hashana are apparent from a reading of the Ten Reasons. The themes are *Awakening* and *Kingship*.

#### **The Theme of Awakening**

The idea of awakening in response to the shofar is throughout the Bible. The “awakening” makes reference to several different things:

#### *Repentance* (Is. 58:1):

In the writings of the Jewish sages, reference is made to an ancient Jewish tradition that the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana was a call to repentance. The call began, “Awake, you that are sleepy, and ponder your deeds;

#### 6. *Pass apples and honey and the pomegranates.*

The apples slices dipped in honey are a symbol that we are receiving of the sweetness of God’s blessings for the coming year. Since blessing is inseparably tied to our obedience to God, we also eat the pomegranates as a symbol of our desire to grow in our obedience to Torah during the coming year.

*Before eating say the blessing:*

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
Blessed are You, Hashem our God, King of the universe*

*borei p’ree ha-etz.  
who creates the fruit from the trees.*

*Y’hi ratzon mil’fanecha,  
May it be Your will,*

*Adonai Eloheinu veilohei avoteinu,  
Hashem, our God and God of our fathers,*

*shet’chadeish aleinu shanah tovah um’tukah.  
to grant us a blessed and prosperous new year.*

4. *The Kiddush. Take the wine and say the blessing:*

**Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam,**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem our God,*  
*King of the universe,*

**borei p'ree hagafen**  
*who creates the fruit of the vine.*

**Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem, our God,*  
*King of the universe,*

**asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'ratza vanu**  
*who has sanctified us by His commandments*  
*and chosen us.*

**Baruch ata Adonai, m'kadeish Yom Teruah.**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem, who sanctifies*  
*Yom Teruah.*

5. *The Challah. Take a piece of challah and say the blessing.*

**Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam,**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem our God,*  
*King of the universe,*

**ha-motzi lechem meen ha-aretz.**  
*Who brings forth bread from the earth.*

remember your Creator and go to Him for forgiveness...Let each one of you forsake his evil ways and return to the Lord..." The Apostle Paul made references to this idea in his letters to the first century messianic assemblies (Rom. 13:11 and Eph. 5:14).

**Remembrance** (*Lev. 23:24*):

- Remember your sin (*Deut. 9:7*)
- Remember the Lord's dealings with us (*Deut. 7:18, 19; 8:2*).

**Resurrection** (*1 Thess. 4:14-17, Is. 26:19*):

Death is referred to figuratively as "sleep" throughout the Bible, and the resurrection of the dead as "awakening."

## **The Theme of Kingship**

The shofar was used to announce the coronation of a king (see 1 Kings 1:34). At Rosh Hashana, it is used to declare the kingship of God Himself. The Bible refers to several major kingships of God:

*Kingship over Creation* (*Ps. 29*)  
*Kingship of the Messiah* (*Ps. 42:2-7*)  
*Kingship over the Nations* (***Ps. 47:5-7***)

### *What does it mean?*

The themes of Rosh Hashana seem to point us to God in remembrance of His kingship. This involves repentance as we remove what remains of sin in our lives, knowing that sin is rebellion against our King. Rosh Hashana is also clearly a prophetic call to prepare for the coming of the Lord, the Messiah, as He is coming soon to establish His kingdom and raise the dead to life. May He come speedily in our days!

### *Traditions of Rosh Hashana*

Because of its importance as a time to take stock, to remember, and to begin anew, this feast became known as a spiritual new year, hence the name “Rosh Hashana,” which means “the head of the year.” In rabbinic tradition, this was the day that marked the anniversary of the creation of Adam, the first man.

Traditions include:

– The blowing of the shofar, as commanded in the Torah. This entails the use of three different types of blasts: *Tekiah* (one long, straight blast) signifying a coronation, *She-*

2. *Light the candles. Say the blessing:*

**Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem our God,*  
*King of the universe,*

**asher kid'shanu be-mitzvotav**  
*Who sanctified us with His commandments*

**ve-tzivanu le-hadlik et ha-Yom Tov.**  
*and commanded us to sanctify the festival day.*

**Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,**  
*Blessed are You, Hashem Our God,*  
*King of the universe,*

**she-heche'yanu, ve-kiy'manu,**  
*Who has kept us in life, sustained us,*

**ve-higi'anu la-zman ha-zeh. *Amein***  
*and enabled us to reach this season.*

3. *Blow the shofar (Tekiah – one long straight blast) as a remembrance of the coronation of the King.*

The three candles represent the three kingships of God mentioned in the Scripture:

**Kingship over Creation** (Col. 1:16, 17)  
**Kingship over His chosen ones** –  
*His first coming* (Col. 1:18)  
**Kingship over the Nations** –  
*His second coming* (Rev. 19:11-16)

# Erev Rosh Hashana

## Table Service

1. *Blow the shofar (Shevarim – three wailing sounds, followed by Teruah – 9 short blasts in quick succession) as a call to repentance.*

The shofar signals the opening of heaven's gates to receive repentant sinners. We must remember that judgment is coming, when the gates will close. The time to repent is limited, and we cannot be assured of how long it will be.

*Recite the call to repentance:*

"Awake, you sleepers, from your sleep! Rouse yourselves you slumberers, out of your slumber! Examine your deeds, and turn to God in repentance. Remember your Creator, and don't be like those who are caught up in the daily round, losing sight of eternal truth.

Don't waste your year in vain pursuits that neither profit nor save. Look closely at yourselves. Abandon your evil ways and thoughts, and return to the Lord, so that He might have mercy on you!"

*varim* (three medium wailing sounds), a repentant voice, and *Teruah* (9 quick blasts one right after another), an awakening to the imminence of judgment.

– The eating of sweet foods to signify the wish for sweetness in the coming year. This normally includes eating apples dipped in honey and honey cake. It can also include the eating of pomegranates, to signify our desire to grow in obedience to Torah in the coming year. This symbol arises from the tradition that there are 613 seeds in a pomegranate (613 being the number of the commandments in the Torah). Eating the pomegranate expresses our desire that the sweetness of the coming year would include the sweetness of Torah!

– The eating of fish with the head and tail still intact. There are varied reasons for this. Some call it a remembrance that God's promise of blessing for obedience included the promise that Israel would be the head and not the tail (Deut. 28:13). Others say that because a fish's eyes never close, it is a reminder of the fact that God never sleeps (Ps. 121) but sees all so that our deeds are not hidden from Him. Still others say it is a reminder that our sins are cast into the deepest sea when we repent and come to God for forgiveness (Micah 7:19). All three of these meanings are worth

repeating to our children!

– A Tashlich service. Tashlich is a Hebrew word meaning “you shall cast.” It refers to the custom of casting bread crumbs or pebbles into a body of running water to signify sins that we have cast away from us. The crumbs or pebbles disappear into the water, just as God removes our sins and they are seen no more.

### *A Suggested Format for Rosh Hashana*

#### **Decorations**

Decorations could include anything representing Creation, the Kingship of God, etc. Appropriate decorations could be pictures of the 6 days of creation, a banner for the Days of Awe (see celebration guide for the Days of Awe for a more detailed description). A tradition in our family is to place a centerpiece of three candles on the table to represent the three kingships of God.

#### **The Feast**

Rosh Hashana begins on the evening before the actual date (at sundown). The feast

should include apples and honey, honey cake, and (if desired) fish. Include pomegranates or pomegranate juice if you can. Salads are generally sweet, as are vegetable dishes. It would be appropriate to spend time during the meal explaining to the children and any guests the symbolism of the different foods and the meanings of the decorations. In Sephardic tradition, there are many more symbolic foods, so many that the symbolic “tastings” are enough to fill everyone up. If you want to include more symbolic foods, along with their appropriate blessings, check into the traditions of the Sephardic communities around the world.

#### **Celebration of the Day**

In the early part of the day, spend some time on the first day devotional from the Days of Awe celebration guide or other appropriate Bible study lesson. Rosh Hashana signals the beginning of ten days of emphasis on repentance in relationships – relationship with God and relationships with others. Remember to keep the mood thoughtful but cheery. This is not a time to go around with long faces and solemn whispers. It is a time to examine ourselves, yes, but it is also a time to rejoice before the Lord and acknowledge Him.