

Facts for Rosh HaShanna

(1)

- 4 new years

- 1st Nisan - for Kings and for the holidays
- 1st Tishrei – the beginning of the years
the jubilee and sabbatical years
the birthday of the world
- 1st Elul – the tithing of cattle - - G-d gets one out of every ten
Animals born in a given year
- 15th Shvat – New Year for trees

(2) - Rosh HaShana in the Torah is observed for 1 day. We observe 2 days because before people had calendars witnesses had to decide the date of the New Moon and then messengers had to be sent out to notify people who lived outside of Jerusalem. If the messengers couldn't get the information out on time, then people would miss the correct day to observe Rosh HaShana. Rosh HaShana was therefore made 2 days.

(3) - High Holidays are called the Yamin Noraim or Awesome days because all of our actions are judged by G-d on Rosh HaShana and on Yom Kippur our future for the coming year is decided.

(4) - Reasons for blowing the Shofar

- 1) Rosh HaShana, the birthday of the world, the shofar reminds us of G-d's power
- 2) shofar reminds people to look at their lives and to change their ways
- 3) shofar reminds us of the giving of the 10 commandments at Mt. Sinai.
- 4) shofar reminds us of Abraham's trying to sacrifice his son Isaac
- 5) shofar reminds us of the day of judgment

(5) - 3 books are opened on Rosh HaShana

Book of Life for the wicked
Book of Life for the righteous
Book of Life for those in between

Good people will have a good life in the future.

Bad people . . . death.

In between people. Judgment is delayed until Yom Kippur.

- (6) - Rosh HaShana cannot fall out on Wednesday, Friday or Sunday. Never on Wednesday or Friday because Yom Kippur cannot fall out on Friday or Sunday. Never on Sunday because of HaShana Rabbah which cannot fall out on a Saturday.**
- (7) - The ram's horn was used to remind us of the story of Abraham's trying sacrifice Isaac. Horns of cows are not used because they are associated with the golden calf.**
- (8) - Shofar is not blown on Shabbat because someone might carry it, which is against Shabbat law**
- (9) - There are two different sounds mentioned in the Torah Terua and Tekia. Tekia was done long blast; the rabbis were uncertain about Terua , . In the third century, the rabbis determined that Tekia would be the one long blast, and Terua 9 staccato notes. Shevarim would fall in between and it would be three notes.**
- (10) - We sound the shofar right after
 - 1) the Torah Reading**
 - 2) at three points during the musaf service after the section called Malchuyot; after the section called Zichronot, and after Shofrot**
 - 3) at the end of the service****
- (11) - In our congregation we do a total of 100 shofar blasts, based on Rabbi Meir's comment that a Jew must recite 100 blessing a day**
- (12) - Piyyutim or religious poems make up much of the High Holyday Prayerbook. These piyyutim were written since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.**
- (13) - We greet people with the words leshana tova tikatevu because they mean "may you be written for a good year" and we believe that on Rosh HaShana G-d records a person's future in the Book of Life for the coming year.**
- (14) - Tashlich means "cast off" and on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh HaShana (or 2nd day when the 1st day falls on a Shabbat) Jews get together at a body of water to empty their pockets (or throw bread into the water) symbolizing their throwing off their sins**
- (15) - We eat round challot which symbolizes the circle of life to give hope that the coming year will be complete, unbroken by bad events. In**

the Ukraine in Russia challot were made in the shape of a bird, with the hope that a person's prayers would be carried to heaven.

- (16) - We eat honey . . and apples and honey to give hope that everyone will have a sweet year.
- (17) - Some Jews eat the head of a fish with the hope that people will be blessed with leadership and greatness in the coming year.
- (18) - Jews don't eat nuts because the Hebrew word for nuts egoz has the Same numerical value as chet or the Hebrew word for sin.
- (19) - There are three main words for sin in Hebrew: peshah, avon and chet

Peshah means to rebel. A person sets him/herself up as the only judge of his actions, and doesn't think about G-d or His commandments. He/she doesn't care about right or wrong; they are what he/she decides they are.

Avon means twisted. It refers to a person who has something in his character that seems to make him/her do something wrong.

Chet is the weakest of them all. It means to miss, as when a person shooting an arrow misses the target. Chet means to fail to follow the right path, a lack of discipline that keeps someone from arriving at the goal he or she has set for him/herself. The person who drives carelessly, or the lazy teacher or student are guilty of chet.

- (20) - In Judaism, white is considered the color of humbleness and being pure. On Yom Kippur the High Priest wore white linen garments. Today, rabbis and cantors (and some member of the congregation) may wear a kittel, or white robe; the curtain for the ark and the Torah covers are all in white.
- (22) - The ten days of repentance are those days between the beginning of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. They are considered as a person's last chance, through his/her actions, to influence G-d to judge him/her favorably for the coming year. Final judgment is reserved for Yom Kippur.
- (23) There are three sections of the Rosh HaShana Musaf: Malchuyot, which emphasizes G-d's kingship; Zichronot talks about G-d remembering about all those who are being judged: Shofarot about G-d revealing

Himself at Mt. Sinai. Each section contains ten verses from the Bible, and ends with the blowing of the Shofar.

- (24) In early times, the Shofar was sounded in the morning. But due to a tragic occurrence the time was changed. The Roman authorities once thought the early morning shofar blast was a call to war. They burst into the synagogue where they heard the shofar, and killed all the congregants. Therefore the rabbis changed the time to late when it would be obvious that the Jews had gathered for prayer and not for war.
- (25) One of the most famous prayers of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur is Unatana Tokef. It was written by Rabbi Amnon. In the prayer he says that three things will make what ever G-d decides about a person's future more bearable. They are repentance, prayer, and charity.
- (26) The rabbis say that there were a number of events that occurred on Rosh HaShanna.
- 1) G-d created Adam and Eve.
 - 2) Abraham and Jacob were born.
 - 3) G-d remembered three women Sara, Rachel and Hannah and said that they would give birth.
 - 4) Joseph was forced from prison after 12 years.
 - 5) Jewish people in Egypt stopped their slave labor, and waited for the ten Plagues and their redemption.
- (27) The story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, called the Akedah, took place on Roash HaShana. We blow the shofar, a ram's horn, to remind us that Abraham sacrificed a ram in place of Isaac.