



Festival: Rosh HaShannah Day 1 and Shabbat

Festival Info

Hebrew date: 1st Tishrei, 5787

Gregorian date: 11th – 12th (Day 1) Sep, 2026

London Chag times: 19:10 – 20:10 (Day 1)

Special events: Shofar held off until tomorrow. White curtains and covers in shul. Tashlich held off until tomorrow.

Upcoming events in the week: Rosh Hashannah Day 2. Tzom Gedalya (Monday).

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Torah Reading for Day 1

Summary

Day 1:

Hashem (G-d) remembered Sarah, and she became pregnant. She gave birth at the exact time that Hashem had promised. Sarah and Avraham (Abraham) now had a son and Avraham named him Yitzchak (Isaac), meaning “will laugh”. Avraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety. Yitzchak (Isaac) had a brit milah (circumcision) when he was eight days old. When Yitzchak was weaned, Avraham made a great feast.

Hagar (Avraham’s second wife) and their son Yishmael (Ishmael) who was older than Yitzchak, were both banished from Avraham’s home because Yishmael mocked Yitzchak. They wandered in the desert. Hashem heard the cry of Yishmael dying and saved his life by showing Hagar a well.

The Pelishti (Philistine) king Avimelech (Abimelech) made a treaty with Avraham in Be’er Sheva.

Discovery

Did you know that according to the commentaries, Hashem made Yitzchak look like Avraham, so that it was clear that Avraham was his father?

Did you know that a brit milah is also given nowadays at eight days old unless the baby is unwell, in which case, it’s delayed until the baby is healthy?

Did you know that it was Sarah that took a stand against Yishmael’s behaviour?

Parasha Thinking



- 1) How do you think Avraham and Sarah felt, when they had a child after so many years?
- 2) Why might Yishmael’s mum, Hagar, not have stopped his bad behaviour towards Yitzchak?
- 3) How does the word, son, link to the Parasha?

Rosh HaShannah Information

Rosh HaShannah means “Head of the Year” and lasts for two days. It is the anniversary of the day when Hashem created Adam and Chava (Eve).

On Rosh HaShannah Hashem decides what blessings will come our way throughout the coming year.

A very important mitzvah is the blowing of the shofar (the ram’s horn). We do this to Coronate Hashem as King and to do teshuva (repentance) We also remember the story of the Binding of Yitzchak in which a ram took his place as an offering to G-d. We hope that Avraham’s good deed will put us in good stead. We listen to one hundred shofar blasts on Rosh HaShannah.

On Rosh Hashanah we have some customs; 1) We eat a piece of apple dipped in honey, symbolising a sweet new year 2) we eat foods that have special significance, such as, a pomegranate has lots of seeds and we want to fill our year with lots of mitzvot. 3) we wish each other a happy new year. 4) Tashlich, a special prayer said near the sea, a river, a pond, etc.), where we think about any wrong things we have done during the year and we symbolically throw away the desire to do them again.



Gratitude

Who has done something special for you this week and what did they do? (If they are present, go up to them and say thank you!)

THANK
YOU!



Games

1) The Shofar Sound Game

Link: The shofar is one of the most important symbols of Rosh HaShannah.

Children sit in a circle. Choose one child to be the “shofar detective” and ask them to leave the room. While they are outside, choose another child to be the “leader.”

The shofar detective comes back into the room and stands in the middle of the circle. The leader secretly makes different shofar-blowing notes, such as pretending to blow a long sound, three short sounds or lots of quick sounds. Everyone else copies the leader. The child in the middle has to watch carefully and try to work out who the leader is. The leader should change the action every few seconds, and everyone needs to copy them quickly without making it too obvious who they are following. When the shofar detective guesses correctly, choose a new leader and a new shofar detective.

2) Rosh HaShannah Categories

Link: There are lots of special foods, objects and ideas connected to Rosh HaShannah.

Children sit in a circle. The leader chooses a category, for example Rosh HaShannah foods. Going around the circle, each child must quickly name something belonging to that category.

For example: “Apple.” “Honey.” “Round challah.” “Pomegranate.” No answer can be repeated. If a child takes too long, repeats an answer or gives an answer that doesn't belong, they are out. The last child left wins. Change category each round.

3) The New Year Switch

Link: Rosh HaShannah is a time to think about the year that has passed and the person we want to be in the year ahead.

Children sit in a circle and are given a Rosh HaShannah-related word, such as apple, honey, shofar, challah, pomegranate, synagogue, family etc. There should be several children with each word. One child stands in the middle. The child in the middle calls out one of the words, for example, “Honey!” Everyone who has been given the word “honey” must quickly get up and swap seats with another “honey”. While they are moving, the child in the middle tries to steal one of their seats. Whoever is left without a seat becomes the new person in the middle. At any point, the person in the middle can shout “Shanah Tovah!” and everyone must get up and change seats, giving the person in the middle a chance to find a seat.



Story (One of the children can read this out loud – encourage them to use expression.)

Tashlich is normally performed on the first day of Rosh HaShannah but not this year because it's Shabbat. Tashlich is postponed to either tomorrow or any time before Yom Kippur.

It was the afternoon before Rosh HaShannah and Daniel was sitting at the kitchen table with his dad and little sister, Hannah. “Dad, what are you writing?” asked Daniel. “I’m making a list of things I want to think about before Rosh HaShannah,” Dad replied. “Things I’m proud of, things I’m not so proud of, and things I might want to change.” Daniel suddenly felt uncomfortable. “Why do you have to do that?” “Because Rosh HaShannah is a time to think about the year that has passed and the person we want to be in the year ahead.” Daniel knew there was something he needed to think about.

A few days earlier, his best friend Sam had brought a brand-new football to school. Daniel had asked to play with it, but Sam had said no. Daniel had become cross and, when nobody was looking, kicked the ball over the school fence. It had landed in a muddy puddle. When Sam found it, he was really upset. Daniel had laughed. Now Daniel wished he hadn't.

The next day, Daniel's family went to a stream for Tashlich. Daniel knew that Tashlich was a time when people symbolically throw away their sins and think about the things they want to change. Daniel stood beside the water. “Can I ask you something, Mum?” he said. “If we throw our sins into the water, does that mean they disappear?” Mum smiled. “Not really. The throwing is a symbol. We can't make our mistakes disappear just by throwing something into the water. We have to think about what we did and try to make things right.” Daniel looked at the stream. “What if you've hurt someone?” “Then perhaps you need to say sorry,” Mum replied. “And think about what you could do differently next time.” Daniel was quiet.

That afternoon, he went to Sam's house. “I need to say sorry,” Daniel said when Sam opened the door. “I was cross because you wouldn't let me play with your new football. I shouldn't have kicked it over the fence, and I shouldn't have laughed when you were upset.” Sam looked at him. “You really hurt my feelings.” “I know,” Daniel replied. “I'm really sorry.” Sam didn't answer straight away, then he opened the door wider. “Do you want to come in?” Daniel smiled.

The next morning, Daniel stood beside the stream again with his family. He thought about what he had done and about the person he wanted to be in the new year. As he symbolically threw away his sins, Daniel realised something. Tashlich wasn't about pretending that mistakes had never happened, it was about being brave enough to recognise them, take responsibility, ask for forgiveness and try to do better. Daniel looked at the flowing stream. “I think I understand now,” he said quietly. “What?” asked Hannah. Daniel smiled. “Hashem gives us a chance to try again and do even better.”

1) Why was Daniel uncomfortable when he heard about his dad's list?

2) Why do you think Daniel found it so difficult to say sorry to Sam?

3) When we're trying to improve ourselves, do you think we should forget our mistakes or remember them?