JFS Jewish Journal

Engaging Your Jewish Residents

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HIGH HOLIDAYS: The Holiest Time of the Year

Fall is an important time in the Jewish year as it sees the occurrence of several major holidays. The first two of these "High Holidays" are called *Rosh Hashanah (Row-sh Ha-Sha-Nah)* and *Yom Kippur (Yome Key-Poor)*, and they take place just 10 days apart from each other.

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah , which translates literally to "head of the year," is a two-day celebration of the Jewish new year. This year, **Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on September 6 and ends the night of September 8.** Depending on their religious observance or upbringing, some Jews celebrate only the first day of Rosh Hashanah .

Yom Kippur

While Rosh Hashanah is a celebratory holiday, Yom Kippur is a very solemn one. Known as the Day of Atonement, it is a time to repent for one's sins and commit to making better choices in the new year. It is customary to fast for the whole day, **from sundown on September 15 to after sundown on the 16th in 2021.** It begins with a special prayer service called **Kol Nidre** (*Kohl Nee-dray*). Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day on the Jewish calendar.

The Ten Days of Repentance

The 10 days between the two holidays are a time for self reflection and collection of thoughts before the Yom Kippur fast. Residents may seem more introspective during this time.

Helping Your Jewish Residents Celebrate the High Holidays

For the whole Jewish month of Tishrei, which begins on Rosh Hashanah, it is traditional to listen to the blasts of the ***shofar***, a carved and ornate ram's horn that is used like a trumpet. The act of hearing the shofar on the two High Holidays is considered a great ***mitzvah*** *(Mitz-Vah),* or holy commandment. If you would like to arrange a shofar blowing for your residents, contact Rabbi Ami at amonson@jfsneny.org.

Rosh Hashanah is marked by saying special prayers that ask for God to write our names into "the Book of Life" for another year. A great feast with **symbolic foods** is had on either or both nights of the holiday. There are also special sayings *(page 3)* and songs *(page 5)* that will make your residents feel at home during this season.

The most significant part of Yom Kippur is the 25-hour fast. While fasting may be very important to your residents, **it is an essential law that no one should fast if it will interfere with their health**. Arranging a symbolic fast (fasting for a few hours, not eating sweets, etc.) may help your resident feel more involved in the holiday.

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Jewish Family Services
Northeastern New York

Meet Rabbi Ami

Jewish Family Services, in partnership with Daughters of Sarah Community for Seniors, Temple Israel and the Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York, is delighted to bring Rabbi Amiel Monson (who prefers to go by 'Rabbi Ami') to the Capital Region. Rabbi Ami is stepping into the role that for nearly 25 years was served by Rabbi Beverly Magidson. He will provide spiritual connection and support for residents in independent and long-term care facilities, and pastoral care and bereavement support for the community at large.

Originally from Philadelphia, Rabbi Ami spent the last seven years on the West Coast in a range of positions including spiritual support and counseling for elder residents at Los Angeles Jewish Home and The Nest (Los Angeles, CA) and Youth Director at Valley Beth Shalom (Encino, CA). His work with older adults was pivotal in his realization of being called to work with the aging population as a rabbi. Rabbi Ami graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a BA in Comparative Religion and a certificate in Jewish Studies. He went on to achieve three master's degrees from Gratz College -- in Jewish Education, Jewish Communal Service, and Jewish Studies. He graduated The Academy for Jewish Religion and was recently ordained. He follows generations of family rabbis, including his father, and maternal grandfather, who served at Temple Beth El in Troy in the 1940's, and great grandfather.

Rabbi Ami will be making his rounds to longterm care facilities throughout the Capital region. If you need to contact him, please email amonson@jfsneny.org or call 518-516-1116.

Bubbe's Corner

This section highlights different Jewish traditions from both local and world-wide Jewish communities. Here, you can learn about the cultural variations of Jews and connect with your residents' personal traditions on a deeper level. Every Jewish community and family has its own High Holiday traditions unique to their lives and experiences. Be sure to ask your residents about what special things their families do to celebrate, and try to make them feel as at home as possible!

During Sukkot, it is customary for kids to sleep in their sukkah (temporary huts) at night.

Israeli and Persian Jews eat a variety of appetizers like leeks, spinach, and peas at their feast.

During the High Holiday meals, families use honey instead of salt to flavor their challah.

Traditionally, people break the fast at the end of Yom Kippur with eggs, bagels, lox, cream cheese, fruit or white fish salad.

Important Terms for the High Holidays

Hebrew…	It is pronounced…	It means…	When it is said…
Chag sameach	Hag-som-ay-akh	Happy holidays!	Any holiday except for Yom Kippur
Shanah tovah	Sha-nah toe-vah	Happy New Near!	Any time during the High Holidays (see pg. 8)
Shanah tovah u'metukah	Shon-nah toe-vah ooh meh-too-kah	Have a sweet and happy new year	On Rosh Hashanah and the 10 Days
Tzom kal	Tzohm call	Have an easy fast	On Yom Kippur
G'mar chatimah tovah	g-mar ha-ti-mah toh-vah	May you be sealed in the Book of Life	Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
L'Chaim!	Leh-high-yeem	To life!	Anytime, especially when making a toast

Traditional High Holidays Foods and What They Symbolize

Like most major Jewish holidays, there is a diverse array of foods for the High Holidays that symbolize a wish or blessing for prosperity and health in the coming new year. Since Jews come from all different parts of the world, many residents may have meal traditions that are unique to their family, *(see Bubbe's Corner on page 2 for more)*. Below are some of the most common traditional foods and their symbolic meanings:

APPLES AND HONEY

Sliced apples dipped in honey is the most popular Rosh Hashanah custom, this combination represents our hopes for a sweet new year. We also prepare foods with apples and honey, like apple kugel (noodle pudding), honey cake, apple cake and applesauce.

NEW FRUIT AND POMEGRANATE

In order to celebrate the novelty of the new year, many people will try a new or seasonal fruit during the Rosh Hashanah feast, like star fruit or dragon fruit. The fruit symbolizes gratefulness for being alive and allowing us to taste all the fruit the world has to offer. The pomegranate is a is popular fruit in Judaism because their many seeds are symbolic of the 613 commandments that are written in the Torah.

ROUND CHALLAH

We eat braided challah bread all year round, but at Rosh Hashanah time, we opt for a challah braided into circle rather than a loaf. This represents the cyclical nature of the year. The challah is often dipped in honey.

Sukkot and Building a Sukkah

Sukkot (*Soo-Coat*) begins on a full moon at nightfall on the 15th of the Jewish lunar month of Tishrei (*Tish-Ray*), when the moon is at its zenith (Monday, September 20 to Monday September 27, 2021). Sukkot is Hebrew for "booths" or "shelters." **What are these shelters?**

For the duration of Sukkot, we erect a *sukkah*, which is a structure that has a cover called *schach.* The cover is made from greenery, bamboo or something else that has been harvested from the ground.

During Sukkot, the sukkah becomes our second home. We eat all meals, study, schmooze and some even sleep in the sukkah, where only the flimsy schach separates us from the wide, open sky.

Every day of Sukkot (except for Shabbat) we take a bundle of greens — made of a *lulav* (palm frond), three *hadasim* (myrtles), and two *aravot* (willows) — along with an *etrog* (citron). We hold them together and say: bless G-d who "sanctified us with His commandments and commanded concerning the taking of the lulav," and wave them gently in six directions.

Programs and Activities for Residents During the High Holidays

DO A FRUIT TASTE TEST

As it's traditional for some to try new fruits during this season, get some interesting fruits at the supermarket: lychee, dragonfruit, starfruit, and pomegranate are all popular options that are available at some local supermarkets. You can also get fruits like dates, dried apricot, and the like. Have residents do a taste test with their eyes closed and see if they can identify the unique fruits!

CAST AWAY YOUR SINS

In Judaism, there is a ceremony called *Tashlich*, which translates to "casting off." It takes place in the afternoon on Rosh Hashanah , but can happen at any time during the 10 Days of Repentance as well. Tashlich is performed by throwing crumbs of food, usually bread, into a body of flowing water such as a lake or pond. This symbolizes casting away our sins from the previous year and starting anew. Take your residents to a nearby pond or fountain and give them stale bread to throw.

LIGHT A MEMORIAL CANDLE

Yom Kippur is both a day to atone and a day to commemorate the loss of loved ones. In Judaism, we light small candles called *Yahrtzeit* candles on sad days such as death anniversaries and solemn holidays. The candles burn for a full 24 hours. Lighting a Yahrtzeit candle on Yom Kippur will help signal to your Jewish residents that it is a solemn day. Electronic Yahrtzeit candles can be used for safety purposes, and they can be found at most local synagogue gift shops.

HAVE A BREAK-FAST

Though many of your residents probably will not be able to do a full fast on Yom Kippur, breaking the fast with a big meal at the end of the day is still a great way to commemorate the end of the holiday. After sundown on the 67th, prepare a spread with classic and easy Jewish foods like bagels, fish, egg salad, and grape juice. For Rosh Hashanah feast and break-fast meal ideas and recipes, visit JFSNENY.org and see our **new recipe bank.**

PLAY MUSIC

Music is always a fun and engaging way to set the tone for the holiday. See page 6 for sheet music of a popular Rosh Hashanah tune.

Shana Tovah!

Rosh HaShanah 2021

In Memory of Joseph Abell

Avinu Malkeinu

Our Father, Our King

High Holyday liturgy
English Adaptation by
Michael Isaacson

Folk Melody
Arranged by
Michael Isaacson

© 2003 Eggcream Music (ASCAP)

musicnotes

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Jewish Holidays Calendar 2021-2022*

HOLIDAY	DATE
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Tuesday, Sept. 6* – Thursday, Sept. 8, 2021
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Thursday, Sept. 15* – Friday, Sept. 16, 2021
Sukkot (7 days)	Monday, Sept. 20* – Monday, Sept. 27, 2021
Shmini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Monday, Sept. 27* – Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021
Hanukkah (8 days)	Monday, Nov. 28* – Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2021
Tu B'Shevat (1 day)	Sunday, Jan. 16* – Monday, Jan. 17, 2022
Purim (1 day)	Wednesday, Mar. 16* – Thursday, Mar. 17, 2022
Passover (8 days)	Friday, Apr. 15* – Saturday, Apr. 23, 2022
Shavuot (2 days)	Saturday, June 4* – Monday, June 6, 2022

**** All holidays begin at sundown***

Here are Links to 2021 High Holiday Services

ALBANY

Conservative

Temple Israel

Congregation Ohav Shalom

SCHENECTADY/NISKAYUNA

Reform

Congregation Gates of Heaven

Conservative

Congregation Agudat Achim

TROY

Reform

Congregation Berith Shalom

Conservative

Temple Beth El of Troy

SARATOGA COUNTY

Reform

Temple Sinai

Conservative

Congregation Beth Shalom of Clifton Park

Congregation Shaara Tfille of Saratoga Springs

Call 518-584-2370 for Zoom links.

COLUMBIA & GREENE COUNTIES

Reform

Temple Israel of Catskill

Conservative

Anshei Emeth of Hudson

Jewish Family Services
Northeastern New York

Connect with Us!

518-482-8856

jfsneny.org

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Chaplaincy Services are a service of Jewish Family Services through a grant from Jewish Federation of NENY in cooperation B'nai B'rith Gideon Foundation, Daughters of Sarah Community for Seniors and Temple Israel.

JFS has continuously provided a range of support, services and resources for individuals and families of all ages since 1854. We are proud to serve people of all backgrounds, while also having a unique ability and responsibility to meet the particular needs of the Jewish community.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals, families, and the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values Our programs and services range from counseling to guidance for those aging in place to assistance for those facing food or financial insecurity – and so much more. JFS's expert staff is available virtually, by telephone and in person.