



MAY YOU BE INSCRIBED

The most solemn time of the year on the Jewish calendar are the High Holy Days, the ten day period beginning with Rosh Hashana and concluding with Yom Kippur.

Rosh Hashana (literally, "head of the year") is also known as "The Feast of Trumpets" because the beginning of the holiday is signified by the blowing of the ram's-horn trumpet (known as the "shofar"), as commanded in Leviticus 23:24. It is held on the first day of the seventh month of the religious calendar which is actually the first day of the **first** month of the civil calendar. (See "Did I Miss a Few Years?" in Vol. 2, No. 3 of *Heart's Desire*.) Therefore, it is really New Year's Day on the Jewish civil calendar. It is customary for Jewish people to send greeting cards to one another in which is contained the wish, "L'shanah tovah!" ("To a good year!").

Ten days after Rosh Hashanah is Yom Kippur (literally, "Day of Atonement") as indicated in Leviticus 23:27 and following. The nation of Israel was instructed by God to observe this special day each year as a time to "afflict your souls." For this reason the day is spent in fasting, prayers of repentance in the synagogue, and outward

expressions of sorrow over one's sin, such as abstaining from bathing and wearing no cosmetics.

The solemnity of this ten day period is related to the belief that every person's life is reviewed by God during this time and that his good deeds (including his prayers and acts of repentance) are weighed against his sins. If the scale tips in the direction of the good, then he is allowed to live and be blessed for another year, with his name inscribed in the Book of Life. Because of this, a common wish exchanged among Jews during this season is, "May you be inscribed and may you be sealed."

Sadly, no Jewish person leaves the synagogue at the end of Yom Kippur with real assurance of salvation and forgiveness of sins. This only comes "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." (Romans 5:12 KJV)

In 1997 the High Holy Days are October 2 (Rosh Hashanah) through October 11 (Yom Kippur), an especially significant time to pray for the salvation of Jewish people.

A NOTABLE QUOTE

“Throughout my life, when I was moving farther and farther away from Judaism, I always clung to a single thread—Yom Kippur. On that one day I fasted. I might be shooting it out with Burt Lancaster or John Wayne, or battling Laurence Olivier and his Romans (in *Spartacus*), but I always fasted.” (Kirk Douglas in a 1994 speech at the Los Angeles Synagogue for the Performing Arts)

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- That in a Jewish household which observes the Sabbath, candles are lit about twenty minutes before sunset on Friday, always by the woman of the household.
- That a special type of bread called “challah,” made from braided strips of dough, is used on the Sabbath dinner table. Two loaves are placed before the family, a reminder of the double portion of manna gathered by Israel before the start of each Sabbath during the Exodus.
- That a very common and well received form of greeting among Jewish people and their friends is, “Shabbat Shalom!” (pronounced shah-bàht shah-lòhm) The words mean, “Sabbath Peace,” and the greeting is extended on Friday as sundown approaches and brings with it the Sabbath Day.



LAUGHTER IS GOOD MEDICINE

(almost as good as chicken soup)

Humor is a very important part of the Jewish culture, which may account for why some of America's most famous comedians were Jewish. From time to time we'll try to share some of this humor with readers of *Heart's Desire*.

DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE JEWISH MAN WHO GOT SO FRUSTRATED WITH HIS NEIGHBORS THAT HE MOVED AWAY “LOX, STOCK, AND BAGEL?” (Lox is thinly sliced smoked salmon which is a Jewish delicacy.)

IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING

Each issue of *Heart's Desire* is sent to 93 churches throughout the United States, in addition to mailings to individuals. More than 10,000 copies of each issue are printed and distributed.

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