**Home Rosh HaShanah Ceremony**

By Duane D. Miller

I put together a short procedure for having a home Rosh HaShanah ceremony. The biblical source for the festival of Rosh HaShanah.

**Leviticus 23:24**

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שַׁבָּתֹון זִכְרֹון תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא־קֹֽדֶשׁ׃

**Leviticus23:24**

Tell the people of Isra'el, '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. (CJB)

**Background information**

Rosh Hashanah ceremony begins at sundown just before the start of Tishri 1. The holiday consists of a special festive meal, similar to a Friday evening Shabbat meal. The Rosh Hashanah celebration begins with the lighting of candles (hadlakat nerot) which symbolizes the transition from profane to sacred time followed by recitation of the blessing thanking God for enabling us to reach this joyous season. During the celebration there are various customs such as eating apples dipped in honey, etc.

**Rosh Hashanah simchah meal**

1. A festive kosher dinner
2. At least two candles
3. Wine (or grape juice) in a Kiddush cup
4. Fresh apples and honey
5. Round Challah loaves
6. A Shofar which is blown at the end of the meal
7. A pomegranate for the second night celebration.

**The significance of Rosh Hashanah for Christians/Messianic believers**

There are a lot of things that can be learned from the celebration of Rosh Hashanah which are helpful in our walk as disciples of the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus).

1. The month of Elul and the preparation for Rosh Hashanah reminds us to be ready for the soon appearance of Yeshua our LORD. Though we do not know the exact day or hour of his return to possess His kingdom on earth, we are commanded to watch and be ready for His soon appearance. We ought, therefore, to be in a constant state of repentance as we seek to humble ourselves and walk with our LORD.
2. Rosh Hashanah or Yom Teru’ah (day of trumpet call) has prophetic significance in the life of the Believer. The blowing of the shofar is prophetic of the rapture of the church where those who are part of the Bride of Mashiach (Christ), will experience everlasting transformation to a new and glorified body.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

15:51 Look, I will tell you a secret - not all of us will die! But we will all be changed! 15:52 It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed. 15:53 For this material which can decay must be clothed with imperishability, this which is mortal must be clothed with immortality. (CJB)

1. The Tashlikh ceremony reminds us that our LORD is a God of new beginnings, and even if we have sinned and fallen away from Him, He is faithful to restore us and cast our sins away from us. After all, God sent his only Son Yeshua (Jesus) to be our Sin-Bearer and Savior so we can take comfort in His forgiveness when we earnestly seek to repent from the sins we have committed and begin new with God.
2. We should be grateful to the LORD for writing our names in the Lamb’s Book of Life (sefer HaChayim). We do not believe we are made acceptable in the LORD’s eyes by our own works of righteousness (Titus 3:5-6), but only by faith in the finished work of Yeshua (Jesus).
3. We anticipate the prophetic fulfilment of the LORD’s covenant faithfulness to Israel when we understand that the Yamin Nora’im (The High Holy days) foreshadow the future repentance of national Israel in the days to come. Yom Kippur is the Holiday that pictures the full restoration of Israel to all her covenant promises. The B’rit HaChadashah (NT) will be embraced and Yeshua (Jesus) will be revealed as Israel’s Redeemer, Savior, LORD, and Deliverer.

**Candle Lighting**

Rosh Hashanah is also referred to as Yom HaZikkaron (the Day of Remembrance), since in Leviticus 23:24 it is referred to as “a memorial” day. As Yom HaZikkaron, Rosh Hashanah recalls the story of Isaac’s near-sacrifice (which according to Jewish tradition is said to have occurred on Tishri 1, also this is the time believed traditionally when God began the creation of the world) when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son as an offering. Abraham obeyed God’s command, built an altar, and prepared to sacrifice Isaac, but at the very last minute was stopped by the Angel of the LORD. The Angel pointed out a ram caught by its horns in a nearby bush and told Abraham to sacrifice it in place of Isaac. Here again is a clear picture of the sacrifice of the Son of God by the father performed on behalf of those who trust in Him.

Rosh Hashanah is about Teshuva (repentance and return) or returning to God through repentance, the Akedah Yitzhak (Binding of Isaac) is told to remind us that submission to God is the way to demonstrate a repentant attitude before the LORD. Just before sundown, the following blessing is recited while kindling the holiday candles.



Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe Who sanctified us with his commandments, and commanded us to be a light to the nations and Who gave us Yeshua (Jesus) our Messiah the Light of the World.

Then the Shehecheyanu blessing is said to thank God for enabling us to reach this season:



Next, the wine is sanctified by reciting the Kiddush (blessing over wine) for Rosh Hashanah and before eating the meal, reciting the haMotzi (blessing over bread). Rosh Hashanah celebrates the cyclic passage of time and the recurring progression of holidays of the New Year, it is customary to recite the haMotzi blessing over the bread which symbolizes the revolving seasons or the crown of God. Furthermore, to wish that the coming year will be an especially sweet one, the pieces of bread are dipped in honey just before eating them.

**Blessing over the wine**



Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

**Blessing over the bread**



Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

**Apples Dipped in Honey**

It is also customary to eat apples dipped in honey during the meal. The reason is traditionally we eat a newly ripened fruit for the first time during that fruit’s harvest season. Rosh Hashanah falls approximately around the beginning of apple season so the apple has become the “first fruit.” This provides us the opportunity to recite the blessing over the fruit of the tree as well as another Shehecheyanu. Before eating the apple dipped in honey we ask God to renew this year for us with sweetness and happiness.

**Blessing over the fruit**



Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the trees.

**Grace after the meal**

After the kosher meal one recites the birkat hamazon (grace after meals) including the additions that are marked for the festival for Rosh Hashanah. It is traditional at this time to greet each other with “LShanah Tovah Tikatevu” (May you be inscribed (in the Book of Life) for a good year!”) And you respond with “gam lecha” (same to you).



**Listening to the Shofar**

If you have a shofar, you can fulfil the commandment (mitzvah) of listening to its sound by blowing on it at this time, the one who blows the shofar recites the following blessing.



