



# Rosh Hashanah Story



Sara leapt out of bed and ran into her brother's room.

"Come on! Get up! It's the New Year!" Her brother, Eli, pulled the duvet over his head.

"I can't wait to wear my new dress today!" Sara said, excitedly. "And I can't wait to see the Ba'al Tekiah at the synagogue and hear him blow the ram's horn. What's it called again?"

"The shofar," Eli muttered, sitting up.

"Apart from it being New Year, why do we have to go to the synagogue, Eli?" Sara asked.

"To admit all the bad stuff we did last year," Eli explained. "I don't like the idea of being judged by God about stuff I've done wrong."

Mum appeared in the doorway. "Did I hear someone say they aren't looking forward to being judged?"

Eli nodded.

"Eli, it's a special festival for Jewish people. It's the start of the New Year. It is a new beginning. For that, we all need to try and be new people. Being judged by God at Rosh Hashanah is important for us to keep trying to improve. We admit our mistakes to him in prayer, God then knows that we will try to do better next year."

"And it's a celebration of when God made everything!" said Sara.

"Yep, she's right. God created the universe at Rosh Hashanah. Right, you two, get ready. We need to go to synagogue."

## At the Synagogue

When the family arrived at the synagogue, they happily said "L'shanah tovah," to the people they met, wishing them a good year.



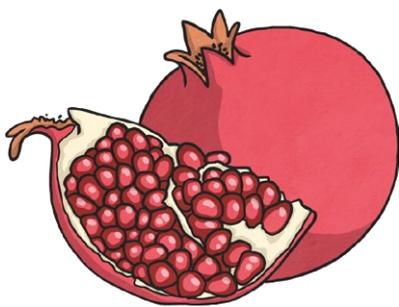
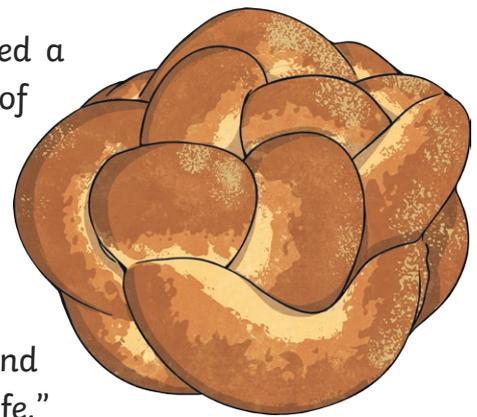


A man blew the shofar loudly. The sound represented people being aware of their spirituality.

Rabbi Jacob told everyone that this was a time for reflecting on the choices they had made in the past year and to know that God will judge the good deeds as well as the bad deeds they have done. Eli sat and thought about the times he had helped Sara, but then blushed as he remembered the times he had laughed at boys in his class when they got things wrong. In his prayers, he asked for God's forgiveness and promised to do better in the new year to come.

### A Special Meal

Once the family arrived back at home, they shared a meal in celebration of Rosh Hashanah – the head of the year. The candles were lit as prayers were said and the food was blessed. The lovely round challah loaf was passed around for everyone to tear off a piece.



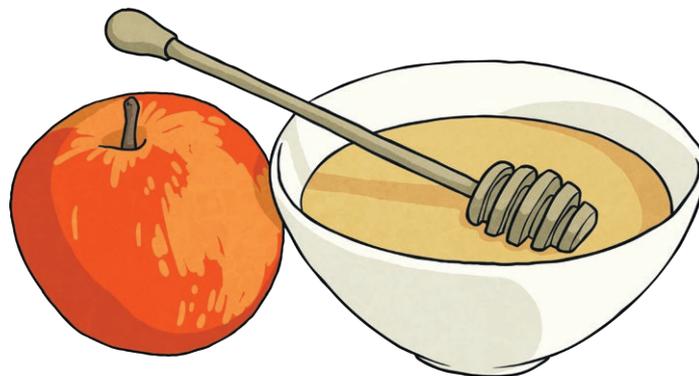
Dad said, "This bread is round to represent the circle of life."

"What is the pomegranate there for?" Sara asked Eli.

"Because it is said that there are 613 seeds in a pomegranate, one for each of the commandments which Jewish people should try to follow".

The apples dipped in honey made everyone feel hopeful for the new year as each person knew they would try their best to become a better person.

Sara glanced around the table at her family and knew that she would try her very best to make this year the best one yet.



# Questions

1. What was the shofar? Tick one.

- A special hat
- A religious book
- A ram's horn
- A place in the synagogue

2. Why was Sara looking forward to going to the day? Tick two answers.

- She liked New Year
- She had new clothes to wear
- She liked the synagogue
- She was keen to see the Ba'al Tekiah

3. Find and copy one word in the first part of the story which means 'to confess to something'.

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4. Why was Eli not looking forward to going to the synagogue?

- He wanted to stay in bed
- He didn't want to wear new clothes
- He didn't want to be judged by God
- He didn't want to celebrate

5. Why did Mum say it was important for Jewish people to go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah? Tick two answers.

- To try to be better people in the future
- To not admit to anything they have done wrong
- To acknowledge mistakes
- To be the same next year

6. Rabbi Jacob said that Jewish people should do something important at Rosh Hashanah. What was it?

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# Questions

7. Why do you think Eli blushed when he was praying?

- He was embarrassed to be there
- He was hot
- He felt bad about his behaviour at school
- He didn't like helping Sara

8. Match up the sentences.

Challah bread was round because

it reminded people of  
the commandments.

The pomegranate was there because

they made people hope for a sweet  
year ahead.

The apples and honey were there because

it represented the circle of life.

# Answers

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3. Find and copy one word in the first part of the story which means 'to confess to something'.

**Admit**

4. Why was Eli not looking forward to going to the synagogue?

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- He didn't want to wear new clothes
- He didn't want to be judged by God
- He didn't want to celebrate

5. Why did Mum say it was important for Jewish people to go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah? Tick two answers.

- To try to be better people in the future
- To not admit to anything they have done wrong
- To acknowledge mistakes
- To be the same next year

6. Rabbi Jacob said that Jewish people should do something important at Rosh Hashanah. What was it?

**Rabbi Jacob said that Jewish people should reflect on choices they had made in the past year.**

7. Why do you think Eli blushed when he was praying?

- He was embarrassed to be there
- He was hot
- He felt bad about his behaviour at school
- He didn't like helping Sara

# Answers

8. Match up the sentences.

**Challah bread was round because**

**it reminded people of  
the commandments.**

**The pomegranate was there because**

**they made people hope for a sweet  
year ahead.**

**The apples and honey were there because**

**it represented the circle of life.**



# Rosh Hashanah Story



The morning sun was shining outside when Sara leapt out of bed and ran into her brother's room.

"Come on! Get up! It's the New Year!" Her brother, Eli, groaned, pulling the duvet over his head.

"Go away! I'm still asleep!" came the reply.

Sara went over to the wardrobe where Eli's clothes were hanging, stroking the soft navy jacket.

"Look at your new clothes! I can't wait to put mine on! And I can't wait to see the Ba'al Tekiah and hear him blow the shofar!"

Eli's head emerged from the covers and he tried to look awake.

"Ok, so you're excited about wearing new clothes and going to the synagogue," said Eli, "but what about the whole 'judgement' thing? I don't like the idea of being judged by God about stuff I've done wrong."

Mum appeared in the doorway and Eli's head retreated beneath the covers once more. "Did I hear someone say they aren't looking forward to being judged?"

A grunt came from the lump in the bed.

"Eli, it's a special festival for Jewish people. It's the start of the New Year. It is a new beginning. For that, we all need to try and be new people. Being judged by God at Rosh Hashanah is important for us to keep trying to improve. We admit our mistakes to him in prayer, God then knows we are aware of our faults and that we aim to do better next year. Besides, it's also a celebration of when God created the universe. It's such a special time. Right, we all need to get ready to go to synagogue."

Sometime later, the family arrived at the synagogue. "L'shanah tovah," people said to one another, wishing each other a good year.

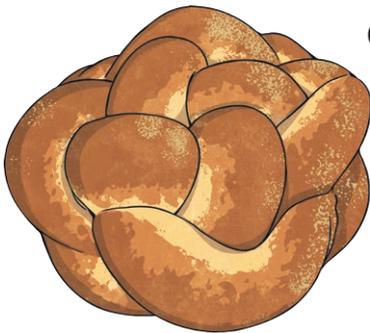
The rabbi invited the Ba'al Tekiah to blow the shofar. The sound symbolised spiritual awakening and rang out across the synagogue.





The people were reminded by Rabbi Jacob that this was a time for reflecting on the past year; to know that God will judge the good deeds as well as the bad deeds they had done.

Eli sat and thought about the times he had helped Sara, but then blushed as he remembered the times he had laughed at boys in his class when they got things wrong. In his prayers, he asked for God's forgiveness and promised to do better in the new year to come. As he made his promise, Eli felt glad he had come to the synagogue to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

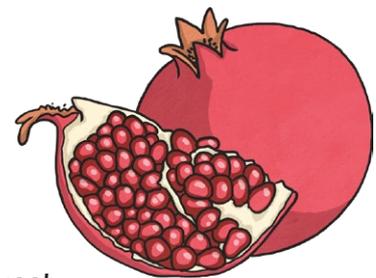


Once back at home, the family sat down with friends to share a meal in celebration of Rosh Hashanah – the head of the year. The candles were lit as prayers were said and the food was blessed. The lovely round challah loaf was passed around for everyone to tear off a piece.

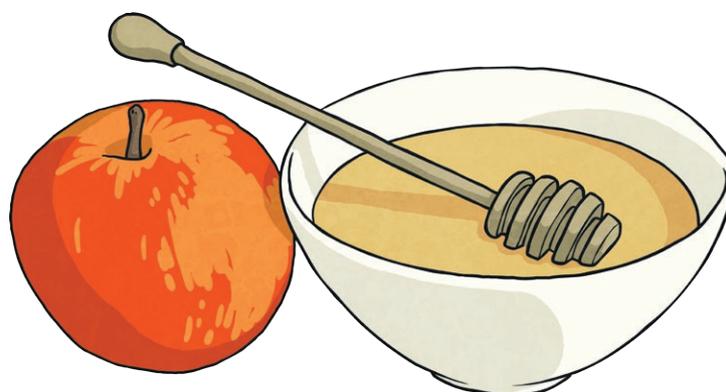
Dad explained, "This is round to represent the circle of life and the way one year follows another."

"What is the pomegranate there for?" asked Sara.

"Because, traditionally," Eli clarified, "there are 613 seeds in a pomegranate, one for each of the commandments which Jewish people should try to follow."



The apples dipped in honey were delicious. This sweet reminder of the hopes and sweet year to come made everyone feel hopeful for the new year. Each person knew they would try their best to be a better person.



# Questions

1. How was Sara feeling about Rosh Hashanah at the start of the story? What two verbs are used to tell us how she feels.

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2. What did Eli do to indicate how he was feeling about the day ahead?

- Got out of bed.
- Hid under the covers.
- Stroked his new clothes.
- Was keen to get ready.

3. Which word best described how Eli is feeling about going to the synagogue?

- Unsure
- Apprehensive
- Reluctant
- Fearful

4. What two things did Mum say Jewish people needed to do in prayer at Rosh Hashanah?

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5. Match up the sentences.

Rosh Hashanah was a celebration of

changing behavior.

Rosh Hashanah was a time of

God creating the universe.

Rosh Hashanah was a chance for

reflecting on the past year.

6. What was the purpose of the shofar being blown?

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# Questions

7. Look at the paragraph beginning “Eli sat and thought...”

a) Why did Eli blush?

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b) What promise did he make?

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8. Tick two correct statements about the challah bread.

It was round to represent life not being fair.

It was round to represent the circle of life.

It was round to represent one week after another.

It was round to represent one year after another.

9. Explain why apples and honey were part of the meal.

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10. How did going to the synagogue that day affect Eli?

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# Answers

1. How was Sara feeling about Rosh Hashanah? What two verbs are used which tell us how she feels.

**Sara was feeling excited about Rosh Hashanah. We know because in the text it says she 'leapt' out of bed and 'ran' to her brother's room.**

2. What did Eli do to indicate how he was feeling about the day ahead?

- Got out of bed.  
 Hid under the covers.  
 Stroked his new clothes.  
 Was keen to get ready.

3. Which word best describes how Eli is feeling about going to the synagogue?

- Unsure  
 Apprehensive  
 Reluctant  
 Fearful

4. What two things did Mum say Jewish people needed to do in prayer at Rosh Hashanah?  
**Mum said that Jewish people needed to admit their mistakes in prayer to God, and aim to do better next year.**

5. Match up the sentences.

Rosh Hashanah was a celebration of ~~changing behavior.~~  
 Rosh Hashanah was a time of ~~God creating the universe.~~  
 Rosh Hashanah was a chance for ~~reflecting on the past year.~~

6. What was the purpose of the shofar being blown?

**The purpose of the shofar being blown was for people to be aware of their spirituality and to symbolise spiritual awakening.**

7. Look at the paragraph beginning "Eli sat and thought ..." and ends with "... new year to come".

a) Why did Eli blush?

**Eli blushed because he felt bad about how he had behaved /laughed at boys who didn't so well at school.**

b) What promise did he make?

**He promised to be better in the new year to come e.g. not laughing at the boys at school.**

# Answers

8. Tick two correct statements about the challah bread.

- It was round to represent life not being fair.
- It was round to represent the circle of life.
- It was round to represent one week after another.
- It was round to represent one year after another.

9. Explain why apples and honey were part of the meal.

**The apples and honey were part of the meal to remind people of the hopes and the sweet year to come, and to remind them that they will try to be better people next year.**

10. How did going to the synagogue that day affect Eli?

**The visit changed Eli because he hadn't wanted to go in the morning but then he was glad he had gone after all.**



# Rosh Hashanah Story



The sun streamed through the gap in the bedroom curtains as Sara leapt out of bed and ran into her brother's room.



“Come on! Get up! It's the New Year!” Her brother, Eli, groaned, pulling the duvet over his head. “Go away! I'm still asleep!” came the muffled reply.

Sara was not to be dissuaded. She went over to the wardrobe where Eli's clothes were hanging, stroking the soft navy jacket.

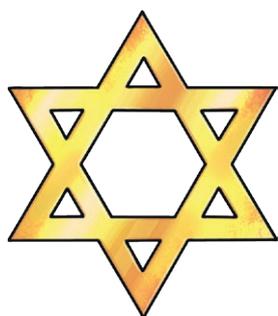
“Look at your new clothes! I can't wait to put mine on! Aren't you excited? I can't wait to see the Ba'al Tekiah and hear him blow the shofar!”

Eli propped himself up on his elbow and tried to look vaguely awake.

“Sara,” he said “of course you're excited about wearing new clothes and going to the synagogue but what about the whole 'judgement' thing? I don't fancy being judged and having to admit stuff I've done wrong. I'd rather stay in bed!” With that, he flopped back down onto the bed.

The door was ajar and Mum popped her head round. “Knock, knock can I come in?” Not waiting for a reply, Mum walked into the room and perched on the end of the bed.

“Did I hear someone say they aren't looking forward to being judged?”



A grunt came from the lump in the bed. Sara grinned.

“Eli, Rosh Hashanah is a special festival for Jewish people. It's the start of the New Year and a new beginning; for that we all need to try and be new people. We judge things all the time. You judge your friend's trainers. I judge Aunty Rachel's trifle! Being judged by God at Rosh Hashanah

is important for us to keep trying to improve. He doesn't give up on us. If we admit our mistakes to him in prayer, he knows we are aware of our faults and that we aim to do better next year. Besides, it's a celebration of when God created the universe. It's such a special time.”

Sara leaned on her Mum and twiddled her hair. “I can't wait! I'm going to get my dress on now; I'm going to look like a princess!” She sped out of the door with an excited squeal.



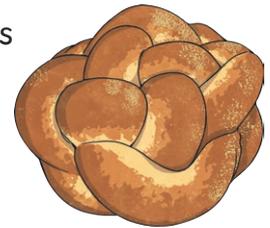
“Right, I need to get the challah bread out of the oven for later. Time to get up, Eli.” Mum dashed out of the room.

Sometime later, the family were clambering out of the car and into the synagogue. “L’shanah tovah”, people said to one another, wishing one another a good year.

The rabbi invited the Ba’al Tekiah to blow the shofar. The sound symbolising spiritual awakening rang out across the synagogue.

The congregation were reminded by Rabbi Jacob that this was a time for reflecting on the choices they had made during the past year; to know that God will judge not just the bad deeds they had done, but also the good ones. Eli sat and thought about the times he had read a bedtime story to Sara, but then blushed as he remembered the times he had laughed at the boys in his class when they couldn’t read some of the Hebrew words. In his prayers, he asked for God’s forgiveness and promised to do better in the new year to come. Eli was surprised to find he felt glad he had come to the synagogue on this special day.

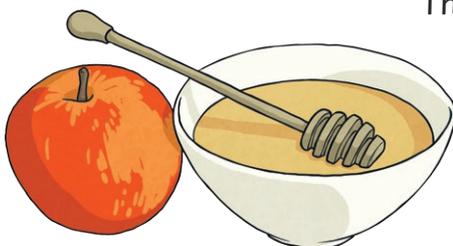
Once the family was back at home, they sat down with friends to share a meal in celebration of Rosh Hashanah – the head of the year. The candles were lit as prayers were said and the food was blessed. The lovely round challah loaf was passed around for everyone to tear off a piece.



Dad explained, “This is a sign of the circle of life and the way one year follows another.”



“Why is there a pomegranate on the table?” asked Sara. Eli reached over for some more bread and clarified, “Because traditionally there are 613 seeds in a pomegranate, representing one for each of the commandments which Jewish people should try to follow.” Dad smiled to himself at his son’s words.



The apples dipped in honey were delicious. This sweet reminder of the hopes and sweet year to come made everyone feel positive and grateful for the new year. Each person knew in their heart they would try their best to be a better person and learn from the past.

# Questions

1. From the first two paragraphs, what impressions do we have about how Sara is feeling in the morning compared to Eli? Explain how you know.

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2. What reason does Eli give for not feeling the way Sara does about the day ahead?

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3. Look at the paragraph beginning 'The door was...' Find and copy a word which means 'open'.

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4. Tick true or false for the following statements and rewrite the false statements.

True False



Rosh Hashanah was a celebration of creation.



It was a time to judge one another.



It was a time to be the same people they were the year before.



Acknowledging faults means God knows they are not able to change.



God doesn't give up on people at Rosh Hashanah.

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5. Identify the Rosh Hashanah greeting and meaning of it.

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# Questions

6. What did Rabbi Jacob tell the people in the synagogue which might have given them some hope? Why might his words have given them hope?

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7. What impression did the Rabbi's words have on Eli? Explain how you know.

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8. In your own words, explain why were challah bread and a pomegranate included in the celebration meal?

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9. Why do you think Dad reacted as he did when Eli spoke at the meal?

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10. Who benefitted the most that day from the celebration of Rosh Hashanah? Explain your thoughts.

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11. What are your thoughts regarding the overall purpose of Rosh Hashanah?

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# Answers

1. From the first two paragraphs, what impressions do we have about how Sara is feeling in the morning compared to Eli? Explain how you know.

**We get the impression that Sara is excited about the day ahead because it says she 'leapt' from her bed and 'ran' to her brother's bedroom. We get the impression that Eli is not excited about the day because he pulls the duvet cover over his head.**

2. What reason does Eli give for not feeling the way Sara does about the day ahead?

**The reason Eli gives for not feeling the way Sara does about the day ahead, is that he doesn't fancy being judged for all the things he has done wrong by God.**

3. Find and copy a word which means 'open'.

**Ajar**

4. Tick true or false for the following statements and rewrite the false statements.

**True False**



**Rosh Hashanah was a celebration of creation.**



**It was a time to judge one another.**



**It was a time to be the same people they were the year before.**



**Acknowledging faults means God knows they are not able to change.**



**God doesn't give up on people at Rosh Hashanah.**

**It was a time to be judged by God.**

**It was a time for people to change and be better people the next year.**

**Acknowledging faults means that God knows they are aware of their faults and are capable of changing**

5. Identify the Rosh Hashanah greeting and meaning of it.

**The greeting used at Rosh Hashanah is L'shanah tovah. It is a way of wishing one another a good year.**

6. What did Rabbi Jacob tell the people in the synagogue which might have given them some hope? Why might his words have given them hope?

**Rabbi Jacob told the people that God didn't just judge the bad deeds they had done but also the good deeds. This should have given them hope because they knew God looked at the good things too.**

7. What impression did the Rabbi's words have on Eli? Explain how you know.

**Rabbi Jacob's words made Eli think about when he had been kind to his sister and read her a bedtime story, but he also blushed when thinking about when he had not been kind to boys at school. Thinking about this he prayed for God's forgiveness and promised to change. He felt better after doing this and was pleased that he had come.**

# Answers

8. In your own words, why were challah bread and a pomegranate included in the celebration meal?

**The challah bread was there because it was round and represented the circle of life and one year following another. The pomegranate was there because it represented the 613 commandments which Jewish people should try to follow.**

9. Why do you think Dad reacted as he did when Eli spoke at the meal?

**I think Dad smiled to himself when Eli spoke because he was proud of his son knowing something about the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, especially when he hadn't wanted to go in the first place.**

10. Who benefitted the most that day from the celebration of Rosh Hashanah? Explain your thoughts.

**Answers may vary but must be supported with appropriate evidence from the text. For example: I think Eli benefitted the most from celebrating Rosh Hashanah because he had been reluctant to go and didn't want to be judged by God, however, in the end, he asked for forgiveness and made a promise to change and he felt glad he had gone after all.**

11. What are your thoughts regarding the overall purpose of Rosh Hashanah?

**Answers will vary. Suggested responses might be: it is a time to reflect on your behaviour and make a new start /the purpose is to change your ways and realise you have made bad choices in the past.**