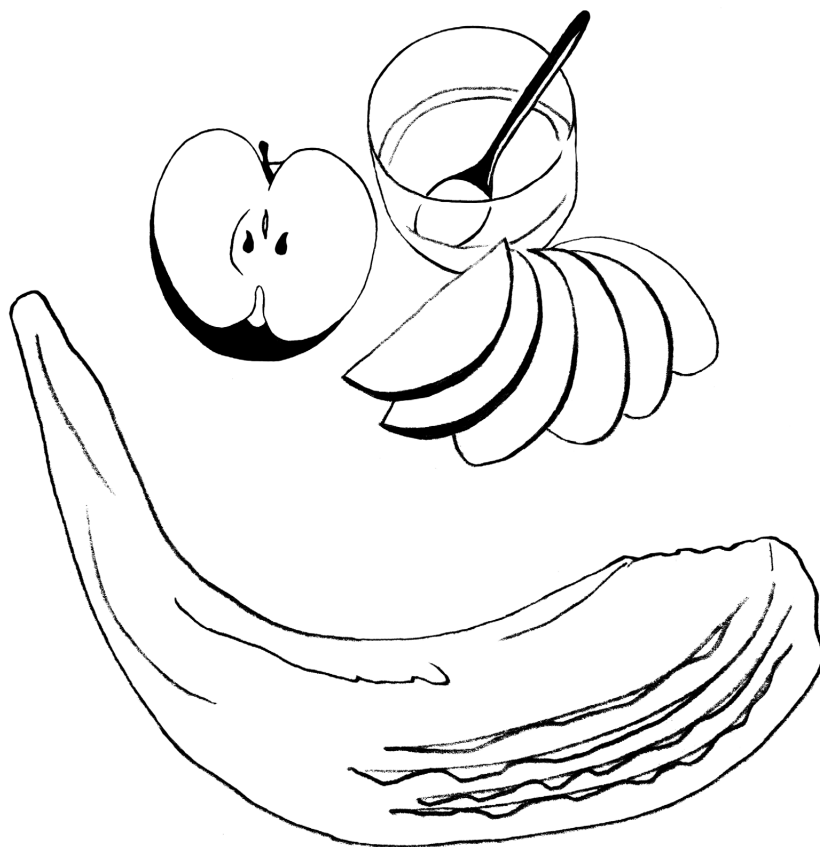


The Days of Awe
ימים נוראים



The Days of Awe (Yamim Noraim)

Rosh HaShanah

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts. —LEVITICUS 23:24

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded. —NUMBERS 29:1

On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Teaching before the congregation, men and women and all who could listen with understanding. He read from it, facing the square before the Water Gate, from the first light until midday. —NEHEMIAH 8:2–3

ROSH HASHANAH, which falls on the first of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, marks the beginning of the new year.¹ It is, however, far more than the first day of the calendar year. It is the beginning of a ten-day period of rigorous introspection and self-examination that continues through Yom Kippur.² So important did the Rabbis consider this period, that they proclaimed the whole of the preceding month of Elul as a period of preparation.³

The Torah designates the first of Tishrei as “a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts” (Leviticus 23:24; see also Numbers 29:1). For Jews the sound of the shofar became a multifaceted symbol recalling past events, looking to the messianic future—a time of universal peace and prosperity, proclaiming divine sovereignty—and much more.⁴ The sound of the shofar is a call to hearken to the divine summons, to examine our hearts, and to plead our case before the Eternal Judge.