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MERRY CHRISTMAS  
 and  
 HAPPY NEW YEAR

## The New Year of The Jews

By ROBERTUS LOVE

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**W**HAT is the significance of Rosh ha-Shanah? Most of us know that that is the name of the Jewish New Year's day, but comparatively few outside the ancient faith of Israel understand its deep and solemn meaning to every Hebrew. It is by no means a mere holiday, to be observed with feasting and merriment, as we observe the first day of January. In one sense it is a festival, but in a deeper sense it is the beginning of a ten day period of repentance for the sins of the past year and prayer for guidance during the year that is opening. Rosh ha-Shanah is observed the world over by orthodox Jews as a stern religious duty. Its profound spiritual and religious significance dates from the time of Moses, the lawgiver.  
 It is a common thing for one to remark upon observing that a store or other place of business conducted by Jews is closed, "Oh, this is the Jews' New Year." Doubtless the majority of

One brief prayer is in these words: "Our Father, our King, help us to lead a good and pure life," or, in another form, "Inscribe us in the book of life." Perhaps the most impressive part of the ceremonies during Rosh ha-Shanah is the blowing of the shofar, or ram's horn, which occurs at frequent intervals throughout the services. This has deep and mysterious significance, which is fully understood only by the most learned of the rabbis. Even the most ignorant Jew, however, is solemnly impressed by the ceremony. The shofar is usually a ram's horn, though at times the horn of a wild goat is used. This horn is straight. The ram's horn is curved and sometimes almost spiral. Various shapes of the horn are used. Some shofars used every year at Rosh ha-Shanah services have been preserved for centuries. The shofar is the earliest form of wind instrument known to mankind, excepting only the reed. The horn is procured, scraped, dried and cleaned with exceeding care by a person officially chosen for the duty. In the interior it is ingeniously carved so that it will emit certain sounds at the pleasure of the man who blows it. Sometimes the shofar is accompanied by two trumpets, one on each side.  
 The most impressive note blown from the ram's horn is called the teklah. This is a plain deep bass sound, ending abruptly. The teruah is a trill or treble sounded between two

expecting the resurrection, at which his power will cease.  
 In the middle of the second century the Roman authorities in Palestine, hearing the blowing of the shofars early on the morning of Rosh ha-Shanah, mistook the sounds for military signals and sent detachments of troops to the synagogues. Many of the devout Jews were put to the sword before the Romans understood the ceremony. Those same notes are blown from the ram's horn in every modern synagogue.  
 In modern times it is the custom for Jews to eat largely of grapes and honey on New Year's day. Rabbis of olden times counseled their people that as an omen of good luck for the coming year they should eat pumpkins, leeks, beets and dates, because all such things grow quickly and their names signify "plentiful" and likewise "forgiveness." In Provence it is the custom to eat calf's head or deer's head on New Year's day on the theory that the consumer will be "ahead" and not backward in his business undertakings for the twelvemonth just begun.  
 In the intervals between the various ceremonies at the synagogues more or less New Year's calling is indulged in, particularly in New York and other large American cities. For such occasions calling cards are specially prepared, bearing mottoes or inscriptions appropriate to the day. Usually they express the wish that the host or hostess may be "inscribed in the book of life" or enjoy prosperity and success in business for the year.  
 It is in the ghettos of great cities, like New York and Chicago, among the Jews who are strictly orthodox that the most elaborate observances of the day are held. No matter how poor may be the community or how humble the synagogue, for that day the altar is richly dressed all in white; the great scrolls, or books of the law, which are taken out of the ark of the covenant on the altar steps, are also swathed in white, with gold embroidery, instead of their usual brilliant covering. As the worshippers one by one are called to take part in the ceremonies they wrap about their shoulders the talith, a long white shawl of thin silk bordered by a rim of blue. Up in the gallery sit the women, not being permitted in the orthodox churches to set foot on the main floor of the synagogue. Frequently these services occupy four or five hours. Through all these rites the only sounds are the singing, wailing, chanting human voices, with the blasts of the shofar at their proper time. No musical instruments are permitted. A cry of desolation and melancholy runs through all the prayers—the wailing for the restoration of Jerusalem, the hymns for forgiveness and salvation, with now and then a chant of thankfulness.  
 The climax is reached when the scrolls containing the law, each a roll of parchment wrapped around two sticks, are brought forth from the ark, with white silken coverings and tinkling little bells, and, after being unrolled, are read in Hebrew. The thirteen articles of the Jewish faith drawn up 700 years ago by the Rabbi Malmonides are repeated. In the wealthier synagogues of the orthodox the ceremonies are conducted with still more pomp, the draperies and coverings of white being more striking. In all orthodox synagogues the rabbis and the men of the congregation wear hats throughout the services.  
 The ten days following are days of repentance in preparation for Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, this being observed with more impressive solemnity than any other day in the Hebraic year.  
 But not all the Jewish holy days are of a sad solemnity. Judaism also has its joyous occasions. One of these is known as Chanukkah, a kind of Jewish thanksgiving. Usually it comes in December. An interesting ceremony in connection with this day denotes the meaning of its title, "the feast of lights."  
 Chanukkah lasts an entire week, but the principal part of its observance oc-



BLOWING THE SHOFAR.

gentiles imagine that the Jews close their places of business simply that they may have a good time for the day, spend the hours in recreation, visiting, eating elaborate dinners and the like. The truth is far different from this conception. No day in the entire Jewish calendar, with the single exception of Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, which follows ten days later, is observed more solemnly than Rosh ha-Shanah.

In 1906 Rosh ha-Shanah fell on Thursday, Sept. 20. In the Jewish calendar it is the first day of the seventh month, Tishri, and also the day of the new moon. As the Jews divide time a day begins at sunset. Accordingly, the observance of Rosh ha-Shanah began at that time, just as the slender crescent of the new moon became visible above the fading light of the setting sun. In very ancient times it was called New Moon day.

At sunset all over the world wherever Jews dwell the faithful repaired to the synagogues for the prescribed service in observance of the new year. All the next day the observance was continued, and by the strictly orthodox Jews two whole days were occupied in the solemn observance of the birth of a new year, which, according to the Hebraic calendar, is the year 5667 from the creation of the world. To those who understand the significance of these services in the synagogues there is nothing more impressive in religious ceremonials. Several times during the day the congregations gather and worship after the most ancient of religious rituals.

Rosh ha-Shanah is called also the Day of Judgment. The Jews believe that on that day all the inhabitants of the world pass for judgment before the Creator, or God, as sheep pass for examination before the shepherd. According to the ancient tradition, three books of account are opened on that day, wherein is recorded the fate of the wicked, of the righteous and of an intermediate class not utterly wicked. The names of the righteous are immediately inscribed and sealed "to live," those of the intermediate class are given a respite of ten days—until Yom Kippur—to repent and become righteous, while the wicked are "blotted out of the book of the living."

The many prayers said during the observance, usually in the Hebrew tongue, relate to this belief and to certain other ideas which are held in connection with this annual day of judgment. There are prayers for the universal recognition of God's power upon earth, for the restoration of the Jewish state, for the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked.

teklahs. These three sounds, constituting a musical bar, are blown three times, calling the people of the world to judgment. But the original three sounds are increased on New Year's day to a hundred or more, some of which are peculiarly weird and eerie, like the wailing of the damned or the anguish of tortured souls striving against sin. Certain words during the ceremony are intoned by the rabbis, and the blower of the shofar is able to imitate them on the ram's horn, thus enhancing the impressiveness of the services. The use of the horn of the cow is expressly prohibited in the manufacture of the shofar.  
 As in ancient times, three series of these sounds are blown, the general term for all the sounds being teklot.



BLESSING THE CANDLES AT HOME.

The first teklot calls the people to judgment and repentance, in obedience to the command of the prophet Amos. The second and third are intended to bewilder and stagger Satan, who at first imagines that the Jews are merely complying with the law, but is surprised by the second blowing, thinking perhaps that the Messiah is coming, and, finally, at the blowing of the third teklot, Satan is dumfounded.

curts in the evenings, when the "Chanukkah candles" are lit. These are thin tapers, about six inches long, made of yellow wax. On the first night one candle is lit and left to burn itself out. On the second night two candles mark the passing of the holiday, and so on until seven Chanukkah candles, burning out at one time, show that the holiday has taken its place with its thousands of predecessors.