

Rosh ha'Shanah is an invitation to start off in-step with Papa Yahweh!

Don't rush ahead of Papa. Don't rush into Pesach. Stay with Rosh ha'Shanah for a little while. Why? Because the Ruach ha'Kodesh may have something for your heart in the process of celebrating his New Year!

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WHY CELEBRATE ROSH HA'SHANAH?

Though the Torah is very clear about when the Head of our Year is, Rosh (head) ha'Shanah (year) is not a *commanded* festival in the Torah. As in, Papa didn't say, "you must celebrate Rosh ha'Shanah!" But though he doesn't say to celebrate it, neither does he say not to. What is clear is that he wants us to count 14 days from the Head of the Year (Rosh ha'Shanah) to find Peach. It is imperative that we remember how to start this counting to Pesach.

So, as Ladies of Teshuvah we live in the rhythm of repentance and we must find this date (Rosh ha'Shanah) in order to find the Spring Feasts properly. In order to delight in his ways and impress them upon our children we mark Rosh ha'Shanah in a way that our hearts will be captivated so the generations will remember it.

I have other articles about how to find the Head of the Year Biblically—this article is about marking and celebrating Rosh ha'Shanah to glean all we can out of this very important date in Yahweh's calendar rhythm.

ENTERING A NEW RHYTHM

So, let's talk about New Years. How does one celebrate Yah's New Year *without* midnight, Dick Clark, Times Square, the Ball dropping, the Rose Parade, confetti and New Years resolutions? Most of us grew up celebrating and marking a Babylonian

rhythm of counting the months and years. But now that we have become circumcised in-heart Hebrews we are learning a new rhythm and how to delight in it. And I contend that what the Ruach ha'Kodesh has in mind for you on the true New Year's day is a lot more personal and healing than all of that nonsense that we used to do for the god of the pagans.

This article isn't about how to find Rosh ha'Shanah or why it is in the Spring and not the Fall. This article is about how Yah's New Year can affect you. I encourage you to embrace and claim the rhythm of Yahovah's "New Year" before you jump into the Spring Feasts. Let me explain why....

OUR LIFE IS TO BE A WALK WITH PAPA

First of all, we are to walk with Papa throughout the years. This is why he set up his calendar reckoning to be dependent upon the aviv barley and a sighted moon and not by a method that man can calculate. He doesn't want us rushing ahead of him. He doesn't want us planning out our lives even a year in advance. He wants to guide us through this War safely to the other side of it. He wants to show us things we won't see if we dash through life. He wants to free us from all other gods that seek to control us (ourselves and other systems we are part of) and be our only Elohim. He wants us to lean on him, learn from him, walk with him, seek him, get our provision from him, look only at him, talk with him and be his friend. How can we do this if we can be our own god and plan out our future. Consulting Papa only when things don't line up with our plans is not what this Hebrew walk is all about.

Though we might be born again pretty fast we are on a slow journey with Papa — it's a walk. And right in front of us is the invitation to start walking now at the Head of the Year with him.

ROSH HA'SHANAH USHERS IN "NEWNESS"

I think we should notice that Rosh Ha'Shanah ushers in Spring. Papa's New Year isn't in the winter which is a truly stupid time of year to begin a "new time." Ha'Satan is all about counterfeiting Papa and being opposite him. Hence, the wrong head of the year would be in the winter when everything is dead, buried or in a state of hibernation.

But true Head of the Year is in the spring when things begin to come back to life.

Things are re-newed in the spring. Spring means green. Spring means planting. Spring means life re-newed! For all you gardeners, isn't it in the spring that we begin to look at our gardens and get them ready for planting? As I see the snow melting (finally) and the warmer breezes coming down the valley I'm getting excited to plant my garden and try again this summer to grow fruit for us to eat and share with others. Most winters I spend some time pouring over our favorite seed catalogue, Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Magazine. I have always found a good amount of hope in it's full-color pages while the wind, rain and snow swirled outside our canvas teepee lodge or as we are now living in a little mountain log cabin. Seed shopping has helped me remember that spring will come again and that winter (a form of death) is just temporary.

Literally living outside made this time of year (Rosh ha'Shahah) very important to my family because we were so directly connected to nature around us. We need the spring desperately! Winter hems us in, pens us down and makes life heavy. I feel dead in the winter. People who have comforts protecting them from experiencing the seasons intimately may judge why I rage at winter, but in the end they have nothing to say to me unless they have lived winter after winter outside in the cold as I have.

Our bodies long for the heaviness of winter to be gone — and so do our hearts.

QUALITY OF SOIL IN THE SPRING AFFECTS THE HARVEST IN THE FALL!

A few years ago when we went through our intense Wilderness time in a harsh climate we went on a huge journey with our agricultural exploits. After a very hard, unproductive first growing season on the mountain I was dis-hearted about the whole thing. The mountain was kicking back at all my efforts. It hated me. It was an awful summer trying to get my garden to produce anything. We had done a conventional garden: tilled it, planted seeds, watered....to reap no reward. Nothing in the fall, but a few pathetic plants for salads.

With a lot riding on the idea that we needed food I tried a new method of gardening. With a lot of hope and a huge amount of effort we established the Back to Eden method of gardening. I was trusting the teachers who said my seeds would fair better in a richer soil and would produce a better harvest at the end of the summer with this method.

The first year we asked the mountain soil, which had never been asked to support a garden, to give us food. But it lacked a lot of nutrients that my seeds needed. On top of that the soil was compacted, there was a ton of rocks and clay and it wasn't able to retain water to release throughout the dry season. But the Back to Eden method changed everything! When we established the aerated nutrient-rich soil in the spring our seeds thrived and the harvest in the Fall was tremendous. Year after year I built that garden up and it produced like crazy—every year was better than the last.

As I grew into a small organic farmer I discovered that it is what I do with the soil in the spring that greatly affects the harvest at the end of the summer.

And so it is with our hearts.

THE SOIL OF OUR HEARTS

"But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown." Matt 13:23

I believe that cultivating the soil of our hearts in the spring at Rosh ha'Shanah is crucial. It is crucial because our hearts must be ready for Yahovah to plant new seeds during his upcoming Feast season in our hearts. He wants to plant in us and grow us to be ready for the Fall harvest.

PREPPING

'Prepping the soil of our heart' is an integral part of gleaning all the goodness out of Rosh Ha'Shanah. Yahshua said the soil of our hearts was important. He said that the kind of soil his seeds fell into was crucial to the outcome. He was talking about the heart being able to receive Truth that would grow into becoming nutritious food that would feed ourselves and others. Some people produce gardens that are not only beautiful to look at and walk through, but their gardens can feed many people. But there are other hearts who hear the same Truth and their gardens can't stand the storms, produce chaos, weeds, hardly anything or nothing at all and they are pitiful to look at.

I don't know about you, but I want my Gardener to be pleased with the way his seeds have grown in my heart. I want him to want to walk through my garden and enjoy it. I don't want him to look at it and curse it, because it bore no fruit.

THE GOOD HEART

The good soil is the new, noble and "good heart." This good heart is made up of good soil. Therefore, in pursuit of that good soil let's take some time at the Head of the Year to prepare our hearts to receive the seeds that will be planted in our hearts during the Spring Feast season.

At Rosh ha'Shanah we can aerate the soil of our hearts after a hard winter season so that when the Gardener sows seeds in the Spring he will reap a harvest in the Fall.

So how do you cultivate the soil of your heart? How do you get the good soil Yahshua was talking about? I'm sure there are many ways the Ruach ha'Kodesh can do this, but let me offer a few suggestions for aerating your soil during Rosh ha'Shanah:

1) REHEARSE YOUR YEAR

Rehearsing is like taking a plow to your garden. It stirs things up and brings oxygen to the layers of packed and compressed memories. I would contend that it is of extreme importance to enter Rosh ha'Shanah by rehearsing the past year. Your life matters. The road you have traveled matters. Not just to you and your family, but to Elohim. They traveled life with you. They were there every moment. They came through for you, guided you, loved you and protected you. They don't want their efforts on your behalf ignored and they don't want you to ignore the depth of the sacrifices you are making to follow.

How you recall your journey also matters. Will it be with thankfulness or grumbling? What attitude have you seen in you throughout the year? A bad attitude or grudge holding is toxic soil. A thankful and joyful heart is healthy soil.

If you are like most of Israel you are probably a forgetter — at least of the good things Papa has given you and your forefathers. John Eldredge says that forgetfulness is our worst enemy. So put on your Sherlock Holmes cap and look to see where Yahweh Elohim has moved in your life this past year. Find the joy they established in you.

Remember the grief and that it mattered. Recall the memories and the movement of your family . . . her beauty, his strength, their laughter and your tears. It's important to not let year-after-year accumulate until they are simply a blur. That is way hard on your heart. This will make the soil of your heart stoney and an unfit place for Yahovah to plant anything.

IDEA #1: My family and I look through our photos and home movies since last Rosh ha'Shanah. This helps us a lot unpack last year — for I can barely remember yesterday. I actually organize my photos and movies with this Rosh ha'Shanah tradition in mind.

REFLECTION

Reflection also cultivates the soil of your heart. This is a little different than rehearsing as it goes a bit deeper than just a list of events. I think reflection adds nutrients to your heart's soil. Don't just rehearse, but practice the art of reflection. When you reflect the Ruach ha'Kodesh can add nutrients to and aerate your heart's soil. Things that are needed to support new life.

Remember that flying through life, year-after-year does not honor your Creator. Ignoring your journey does not do anyone any good. Yes, we must move on to new things and let go of our past, but neglecting our journey and moving on to the next thing before we have dealt with it is like neglecting the unseen condition of the tilled-up soil. The soil may look fluffy and ready to plant, but it might be devoid of nutrients! Touting the "I'm fine", "All is good" cliché's may get you out of cheap conversations and it may be what is fashionable in our flippant foyer dialogue, but it is NOT helpful to the condition of our hearts. It is not how we were wired. We are wired to not just rehearse the events of our lives, but we are wired to need time of reflection. Reflection *with* someone who has witnessed our life and cares is even more healing. Reflection helps us make sense of our lives and encourages confidence in our amazing Elohim.

Now, of course not every event during our life can be processed at Rosh ha'Shanah. That might be too heavy for such a short season. Some things take years to understand, let go of or become wise from. But if you are open to going there with Papa and you trust him — he'll decide what needs to be tilled and what doesn't yet. He's the Gardener!

IDEA #2 : One thing I often do to enter this kind of Rosh ha'Shanah reflection is to write a Year-End Letter about all the things we have been through this past year. I gather photos and then just type. I just let my heart speak through my fingers as I type it all out and how I felt about it. Sometimes I share my letter with friends. Sometimes I don't. But I know that Papa hears me.

Follow my Rehearse and Reflection suggestion and I believe your heart will be glad you stopped and took account of this past year. I believe Yahovah Elohim will be glad you did, too. It just might make their job of restoring your heart a little easier. Sit down with your Creator, enjoy a glass of wine together, pour over a "catalogue of seeds" and enter a memory jam session....together.

CELEBRATE ROSH HA'SHANAH AND MARK IT WITH DELIGHT!

Enter this season of Rosh ha'shanah to recall Papa's faithfulness to you and I believe you will discover healing and find your heart aerated and nutrient rich to be able to handle all the things a garden must endure before the Fall harvest.

IDEA #3: For my family, we need an infusion at this time of year. The soil of our hearts are in no way ready for Yah's precious seeds he might want to plant in us during the new Feast season. The ground of our hearts seems stiff and hard as the winter was miserable. We desperately need something drastic to shock our soil. Our hearts need help to come back to life after a very hard winter. Yahovah can't plant anything in our hearts if we are buried under snow. It would be pointless. We would miss out. When the soil of our hearts are hard, cold and a little toxic around Rosh ha'Shanah we need to get away to let them breathe.

Therefore, in search of life, we follow the wild Ruach as she calls us into a place of change. Sometimes we head South into some heat and sunshine for a much needed break from the unrelenting winters of North Idaho. For some people it might be staying still but for us being on a road trip will begin the process of cultivating and caring for the soil of our hearts. As experience has taught us we will come back from the desert thawed out, tilled up and much more nutrient rich. This year we are getting aerated differently. This year we are moving our office out of our home—taking a huge step to separate our family from ministry. This for us will be the change, the shake up and the

soil preparation that we desperately need. We'll see where Papa takes it.

IDEA #4: One other thing that we do for Rosh ha'Shanah is throw a Hawaiian Party! Why? Because it is understood that when Yahweh Elohim started creating it was the first day of our year: Aviv 1. This makes perfect sense to us. So, when I think of Creation I think of Paradise. When I think of Paradise I think of the tropics. And at this time of the year I'm so done with winter that a Hawaiian party to celebrate Creation sounds so good. This Hawaiian party is a signal to my family that Yah's Head of the Year (Rosh ha'Shanah) is here! And the memories of Pina colada's, Hawaiian music, homemade ice cream, raffia and flowers triggers memories of living in Papa's rhythm in their hearts.

CONCLUSION: TAKE THIS TIME

So, as you enter Yah's New Year take some time to celebrate it no matter what you are in the midst of. Don't rush into Pesach and the Spring Feasts. Don't miss the beauty of Rosh ha'Shanah. Sit with it. Let the Ruach till and feed the soil of your heart. Let her cast out the stones and create in you a place that Yah's seeds will be able to grow and produce good fruit. Take this opportunity in Yahovah's calendar to look back and find hope for the next year. Don't move on until you have contemplated the blessings and sorrow that has come your way this past year.

The story of your life matters, honestly.