

Rosh Hashanah: Renewing the Spirit Through Food and Faith

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is a time of deep reflection, celebration and connection to faith. According to Rabbi Daniel Rowe, senior educator at Aish Jerusalem, the holiday is not only a period of judgment but also one of hope and renewal.

“It’s a time of very deep introspection and reflection, [a] time of really planning forward,” Rowe says in an interview with Fox News. He adds that Rosh Hashanah is a chance to recreate oneself and strive to be better in the year ahead.

A central part of the celebration is the symbolic foods eaten during the holiday, which carry rich spiritual meaning. “Everything we do on Rosh Hashanah, whether it’s the foods that we eat or the prayers that we utter, is about that deep cry inside us that says, ‘This world can be a better place,’” Rowe explains.

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Among the most iconic traditions is dipping an apple in honey, symbolizing the desire for a sweet and fruitful year. “The apple represents that which is nutritious and good for us,” Rowe says, “and we don’t just want things ‘good.’ We’d also like to be able to appreciate the good in all of them.”

The symbolism extends to a wide variety of foods, each with its own meaning, often tied to the hope for blessings and abundance in the coming year. Whether enjoying pomegranates, whose many seeds represent the fulfillment of good deeds, or round challah bread, symbolizing the cycle of life, each bite on Rosh Hashanah is consumed with mindfulness and purpose. “Every single item of food could be a blessing and could

manifest some kind of goodness,” Rowe says. He emphasizes that eating during Rosh Hashanah is an act of building oneself up to become a blessing to others in the year ahead.

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Rosh Hashanah’s focus on renewal, prayer and personal growth is especially poignant this year on the first anniversary of the jihadist terror attacks, while Israel continues to face a multi-front war during this sacred season. As families gather to celebrate, Rabbi Rowe’s words remind us of the power of prayer: “We can use each year to recreate ourselves and become better people.”

Let us take this time to reflect on the challenges faced by the people of Israel and offer a collective prayer for peace, protection and hope for the future.

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