

Rosh Hashana, or Jewish New Year, is both solemn and joyful. It is solemn because of the awe of judgment. It is joyful because it represents the hope of the future redemption of Israel.

Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the **High Holy Days**. It falls on the first day of the seventh month, according to the Hebrew calendar (see Leviticus 23:23). It could occur anywhere from the first to the last week of September on the Gregorian calendar (Sept. 22 in 2006). It ushers in the ten days of repentance leading up to **Yom Kippur**, the Day of Atonement.

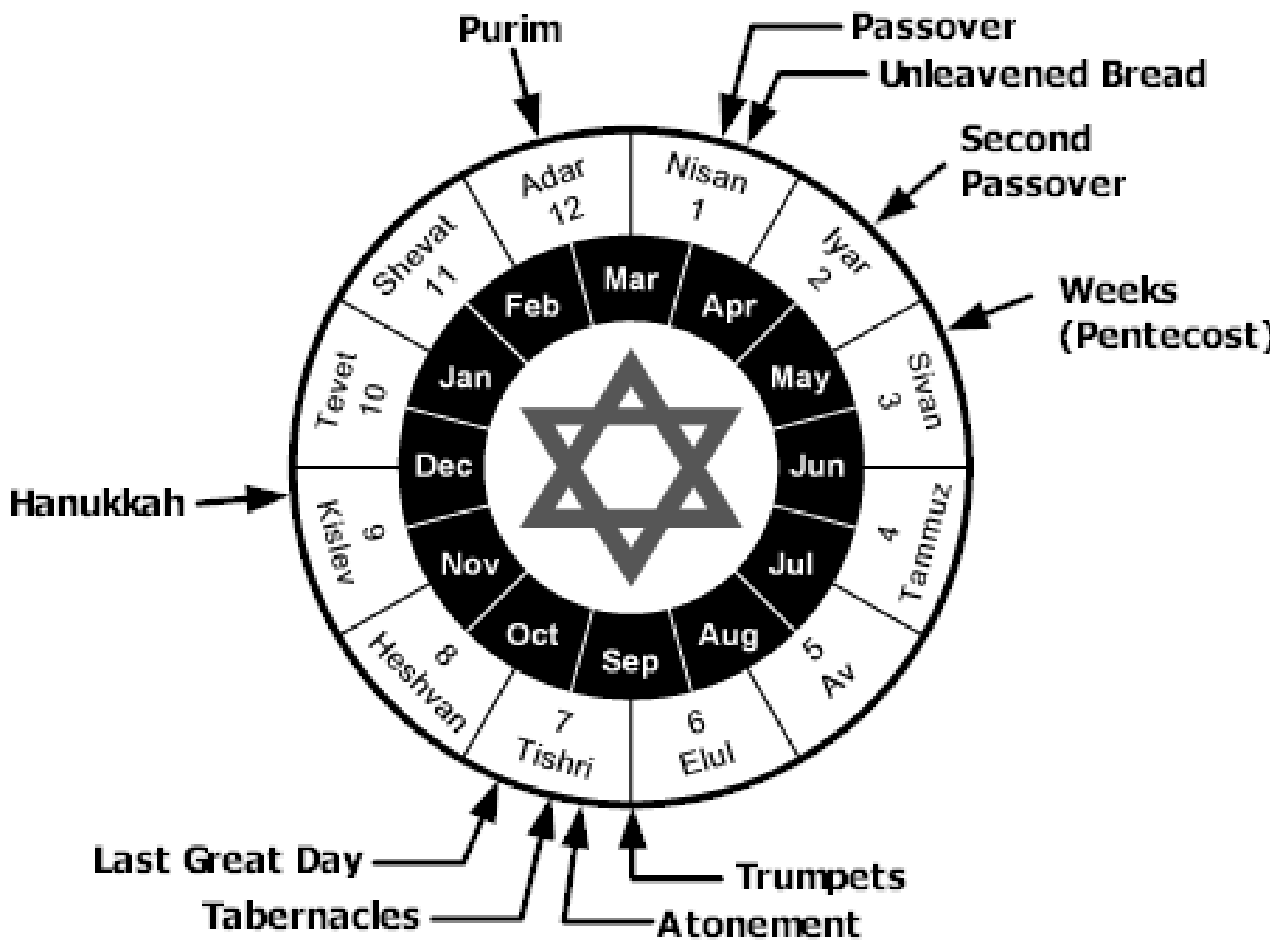


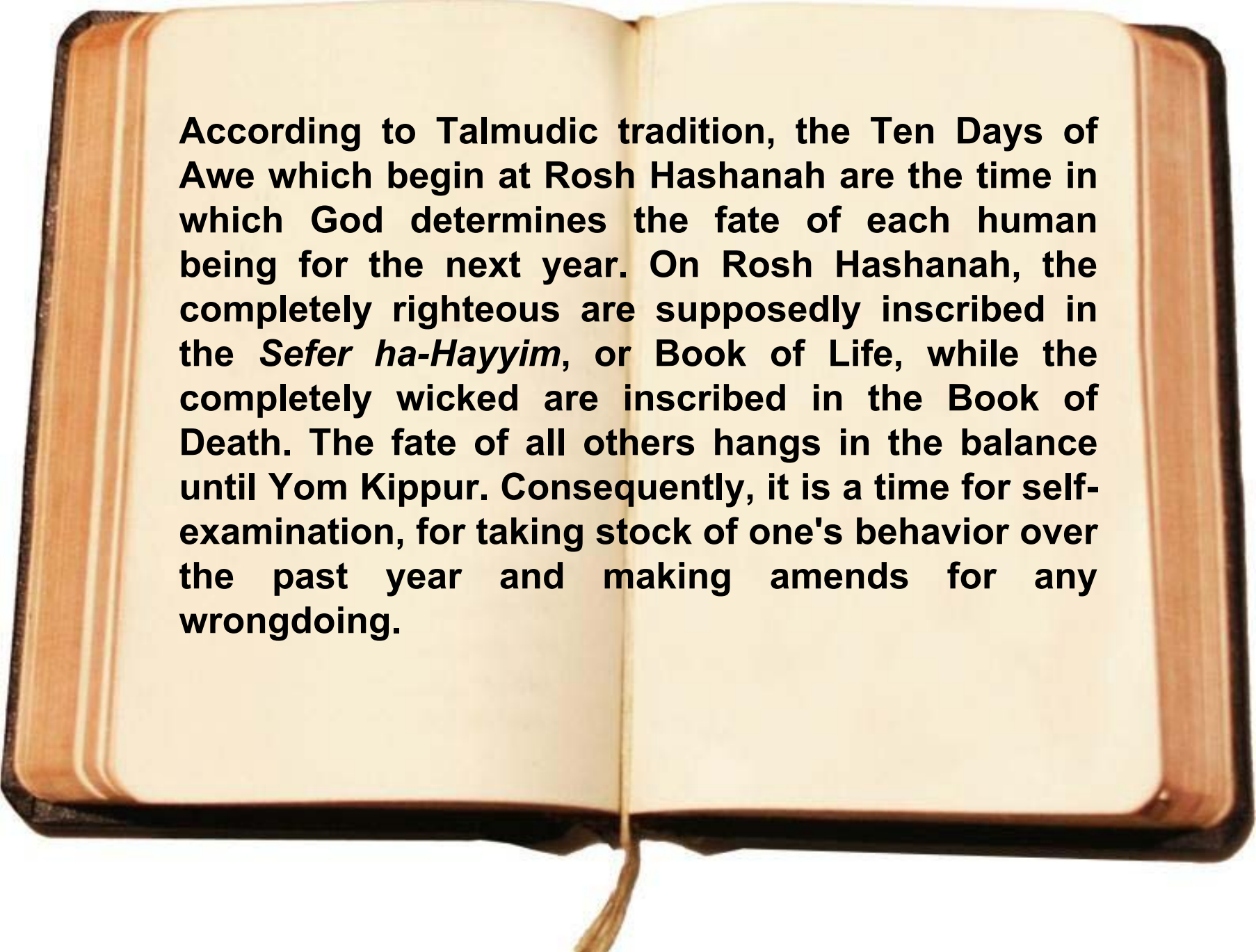
רוש השנה

R O S H H A S

שנת ראש

H A N N A H

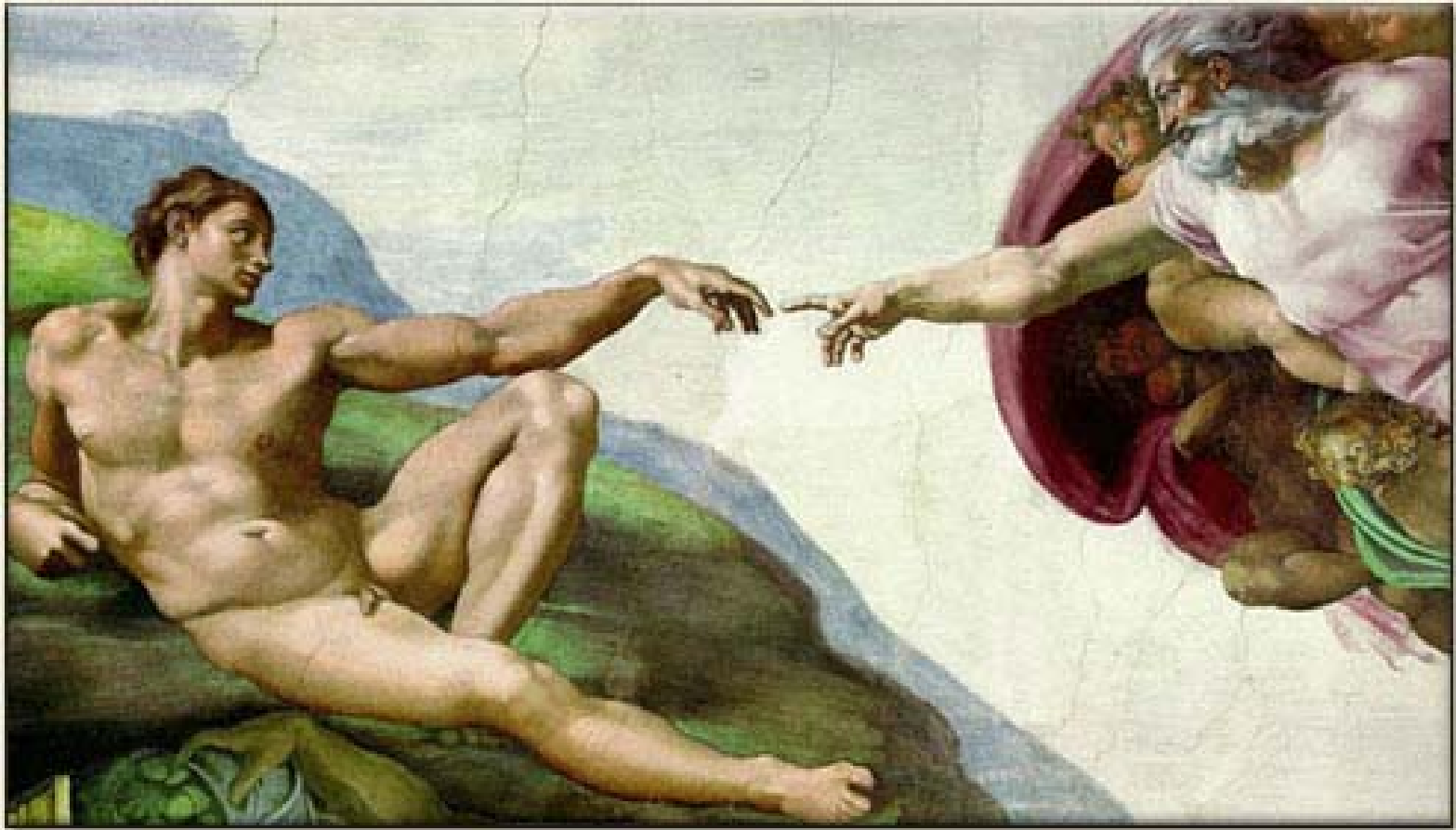


An open book with a dark cover and a light-colored page. The left page contains a paragraph of text in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The right page is blank. The book is bound in the center, and a small tassel is visible at the bottom center.

According to Talmudic tradition, the Ten Days of Awe which begin at Rosh Hashanah are the time in which God determines the fate of each human being for the next year. On Rosh Hashanah, the completely righteous are supposedly inscribed in the *Sefer ha-Hayyim*, or Book of Life, while the completely wicked are inscribed in the Book of Death. The fate of all others hangs in the balance until Yom Kippur. Consequently, it is a time for self-examination, for taking stock of one's behavior over the past year and making amends for any wrongdoing.



Each year on Rosh Hashanah, "all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep," and it is decreed in the heavenly court, *"who shall live, and who shall die... who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise."*



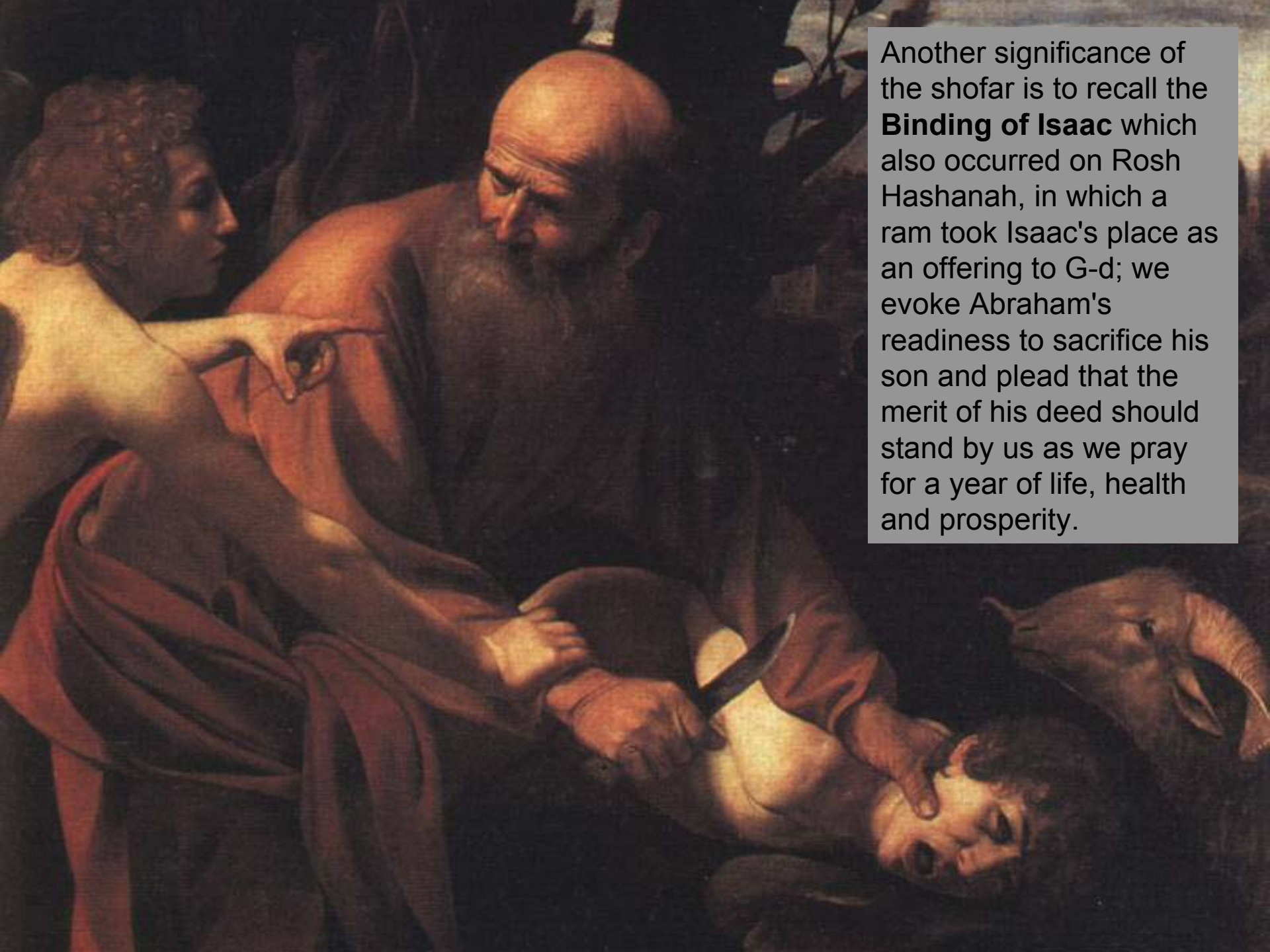
The festival of **Rosh Hashanah** -- the name means "**Head of the Year**" -- is observed for two days beginning on **Tishri 1**, the first day of the Jewish year. It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, and their first actions toward the realization of mankind's role in G-d's world.

Rosh Hashanah thus emphasizes the special relationship between G-d and humanity: our dependence upon G-d as our creator and sustainer, and G-d's dependence upon us as the ones who make His presence known and felt in His world.

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is the sounding of the **shofar**, the ram's horn, which represents the trumpet blast of a people's coronation of their king.

The cry of the shofar is also a call to repentance; for Rosh Hashanah is also the anniversary of man's first sin and his repentance thereof, and serves as the first of the "Ten Days of Repentance" or "Days of Awe" which culminate in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.





Another significance of the shofar is to recall the **Binding of Isaac** which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah, in which a ram took Isaac's place as an offering to G-d; we evoke Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son and plead that the merit of his deed should stand by us as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity.

During the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashana, notice there are three distinct sounds:

- *Tekiah* -- one long, straight blast
- *Shevarim* -- three medium, wailing sounds
- *Teruah* -- 9 quick blasts in short succession





Additional Rosh Hashanah observances include:

- a) Eating a piece of **apple dipped in honey** to symbolize our desire for a sweet year, and other special foods symbolic of the new year's blessings.
- b) Blessing one another with the words *Leshanah tovah tikateiv veteichateim*, "**May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.**"
- c) **Tashlich**, a special prayer said near a body of water (an ocean, river, pond, etc.) in evocation of the verse, "And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea."
- d) And as with every major Jewish holiday after candlelighting and prayers we recite Kiddush and make a blessing on the Challah.



לשנה טובה תכתבו
May you be inscribed for a good year.