

Talking Points for the Rosh Hashanah Table

Tradition – Reality – Shared Responsibility

“May the old year end with its curses, and the new year begin with its blessings.” "תַּכְּלֵה שָׁנָה וְקַלְלוּתֶיהָ, תַּחַל שָׁנָה וּבְרֻכּוֹתֶיהָ."



Rosh Hashanah invites us to leave behind the struggles, the pain, and the shortcomings of the past year – and open a new chapter of hope and blessing.

Which “**curses**” of the past year polarization, incitement, feelings of personal and communal insecurity do we hope to leave behind? And which **blessings** would we like to bring to our city, our community, and the world?

The Power of Unity in Times of Division

Our tradition teaches:

“All of Israel are responsible for one another” "כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרֻבִים זֶה בְּזֶה"

yet it also obligates us to care for our neighbors and the society around us. How can we strengthen solidarity within our community while also showing responsibility more broadly in the face of hatred, extremism, and intolerance?

Leadership and Community Responsibility

The sages said (Pirkei Avot 2:4) : **“In a place where there are no leaders, strive to be one.”** "וּבְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין אֲנָשִׁים, הַשְׁתַּדֵּל לִהְיוֹת אִישׁ"

What do we expect from our city’s leaders in confronting extremism and insecurity? And how can we, as individuals and as a community, contribute to ethical leadership that promotes safety, education, and mutual respect?

To Be a Head and Not a Tail

On Rosh Hashanah, we bless: **“May we be the head and not the tail.”** שָׁנֵהֵי לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב. As a community, in what areas should we strive to be at the head - leading processes, engaging civically, and shaping a future for our children? And how do we avoid being the tail - merely reacting to reality instead of taking responsibility to shape it ourselves?



Merits Like a Pomegranate

On Rosh Hashanah, we pray that **our merits be as numerous as the seeds of a pomegranate** - **שְׁתַּרְבֵּה זְכוּתֵינוּ כְּרַמּוֹן**. What “merits” do we wish to accumulate this year, as a community and as citizens, through civic engagement, justice, and small daily acts of kindness?

The Shofar as a Call for Renewal

The sound of the shofar is a call to awaken and repair. How can we transform today’s challenges whether feelings of insecurity, xenophobia, or extremism into an opportunity to renew our commitment to the common good and to building a sweeter future?

IAC New York wishes you and your family a good and sweet new year!
שנה טובה ומתוקה! Shana Tova U’Metuka!



IAC ISRAELI AMERICAN COUNCIL

Shana Tova

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