

5.1.1 *Teshuvah* תשובה *Havurah* or Online Class

Being a part of any group requires awareness about our interactions and relationships with others in the group. The High Holiday season offers rituals and symbols to remind us to recognize our mistakes and their impact on others.

Teachers: The links to the resources in ShalomLearning will work from this document when you are concurrently logged in. Otherwise, the name of the resource is given.

Suggested Setting

The *havurah*¹ session is your opportunity to introduce the topic of the month to both students and parents. Since family engagement is a critical component to the success of all ShalomLearning's goals, careful planning of the *havurah* sessions is critical. The choice of venue can enhance the activities. For *teshuvah* תשובה in the fall, we suggest a site where families can go apple picking (Rosh Hashanah), vegetable harvesting (Sukkot), a group *Tashlich*² תשליך near a stream, and/or where you can hold a party celebrating the Jewish and academic new year. Another option is helping to build a *sukkah* for a local group home or a senior living residence. Use this experience as a prompt for discussions about being sensitive to the needs of others and to group dynamics—harnessing the courage and energy to be ourselves amidst a group and to have positive impact on the group.

Learning Goals

- Students will get to know a little bit about their classmates and get used to the ShalomLearning interface.
- Students will associate Rosh Hashanah with a new beginning and a chance to learn from past mistakes.
- Students will learn about some of the Rosh Hashanah rituals including eating symbolic foods and *Tashlich* תשליך. Students will understand the symbolism of actions and see them as a catalyst for personal change.
- Students will reflect on their own behavior and the potential that a new beginning has to offer.

¹ A *chavurah* or *havurah* (חבורה: Hebrew "fellowship", plural *chavurot*) is a small group of like-minded Jews who assemble for the purposes of facilitating Shabbat and holiday prayer services, sharing communal experiences such as lifecycle events, or Jewish learning

² *Tashlich* תשליך is a Jewish ritual, usually performed on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which the participants symbolically cast off their sins by gathering along the banks of a river or stream and reciting prayers of repentance. See http://www.chabad.org/holidays/jewishnewyear/template_cdo/aid/564247/jewish/What-is-Tashlich.htm (5.1.1 Chabad)

Activities and Guiding Questions

For shorter lessons, choose activities marked with an asterisk.

*Preparing Myself for a New Start**

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Class: *Havurah* and Online

Compare how you prepare for the new school year to how you prepare for Rosh Hashanah.

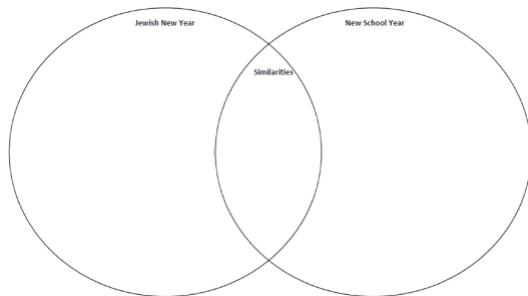
- What kinds of supplies do you need?
- How do you dress?
- What kinds of things do you think about before you start the school year? Before you gather with family to celebrate?
- How do you feel on Rosh Hashanah? How do you feel on the first day of school?

If you are working in a classroom using smartphones, tablets or computers, this activity can be done using Padlet. Use and remake this example:

<https://padlet.com/heidi48/iwn3g2xvfcm> (5.1.1 New Start)



If you are in a class without access to these devices, this activity can be done using a Venn diagram. Prepare the diagram on a large poster board, newsprint, or mural paper. Students can create a list together!



<https://jteach.org/project/prepare-and-compare/> (5.1.1 Prepare and Compare)

Mistakes Happen!

Time Allotment 10 minutes

Class: *Havurah* and Online

The teacher begins a discussion of fixing mistakes by presenting the following scenario: There are only two minutes left in the big soccer game and Abigail's team is down by one. Abigail gets the ball and makes a perfect pass to her teammate Sherry who is

standing right in front of the goal. Sherry kicks the ball, but it bounces off of the goal post and doesn't go in. Game over. After the game, Abigail tells Brenda that Sherry is a terrible player. Brenda tells Sherry that Abigail said that about her. Next day in school Sherry refuses to speak to Abigail.

Discussion Questions

- What mistakes were made in this story? Who made them?
- Can the mistakes be fixed? How?
- Did anyone else in the story make a mistake?
- Were all mistakes made equal?
- Do they all have the same solution?
- Can you think of any other scenarios like this one where mistakes were made?
- How might those scenarios be changed to fix the mistakes?

(Alternative/Additional 15 minutes) Students can be broken up into groups of four. Two members of the group can come up with and act out a scenario and the other two members can discuss the mistake. Alternatively, the class can brainstorm scenarios and the teacher can assign each one to a group to discuss.

In a virtual classroom, this additional activity can be done in break out rooms.

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: Love your neighbor, personal growth

Tags: skits, discussion, mistakes

*Learning from Mistakes**

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Class: Havurah and Online

Video: *Former Apple CEO John Sculley: You Learn from Your Mistakes, Not Your Successes* <https://safesha.re/1wn> (5.1.1 John Sculley)

John Sculley discusses that to run a successful business, it is crucial to learn from your mistakes. He explains that everyone makes mistakes, but the key to success is to learn from them for next time. This is an important idea in understanding *teshuvah* תשובה as a positive step towards growth. Everyone will make mistakes but Rosh Hashanah and *teshuvah* תשובה reminds us to learn from our mistakes.

Share with students these inventions that were mistakes. (5.1.1 Inventions)
<http://mag.amazing-kids.org/non-fiction/stories/inventions-that-were-mistakes/>

Chocolate Chip Cookies
Ice Cream Cone
Popsicle
Potato Chips
Tea Bags
Aspirin

Penicillin
Silly Putty
Slinky
Safety Glass
Post-It Notes
Velcro

Share the slides and history of these inventions. If time permits and you have access to the internet, students can research other examples of mistakes that turned into success!

How would the world be different if these people had not turned their mistakes into something positive?

Discussion Questions

- Why do some people not want to admit that they have made a mistake?
- How can recognizing that you made a mistake help you become a better person?
- In the video, John Scully says that the mark of a good entrepreneur is “never give up.” How does this apply to *teshuvah* תשובה?
- Can you think of a time that you made a mistake?
- Was it hard for you to recognize the mistake?
- How might you behave differently next time?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: finding strength, changing behavior, personal growth

Tags: video, discussion, mistakes

Teshuvah תשובה—*Roots of the Word**

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Class: *Havurah* and Online

Write the word תשובה/*teshuvah* on a whiteboard or on butcher paper or display slide on the screen. Ask: Does anyone know what this word means?

Highlight the letters שוב in the middle of תשובה. Explain that the root of the word in Hebrew often shows an essential quality of the word. The root of word *teshuvah* תשובה is שוב return/again.

In person class activity: Everyone stand up and move to a different part of the room and high five someone on the way. Now RETURN to your seat.

Online activity: Stand up and go get something from another part of the room and then RETURN to the computer.

Discussion Questions

- Why was it important for you to return to your seat after you got up?
- Without your return, would we have been able to keep going in our class?
- When you make a mistake, do you need to do anything to continue on?
- Why do you think that we use the word for return when we talk about fixing our mistakes?
- What are we returning to when we do *teshuvah* תשובה?
- “To God”: How might we show God that we are doing *teshuvah* תשובה?
- “To our good selves”: What are some ways you try to be a good person? How might we do *teshuvah* תשובה for ourselves to get back to these things?

- “To our community”: Why is it important to remember that we are part of a community? How might we do *teshuvah* תשובה for our community?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: personal growth, changing behavior, finding strength, love your neighbor

Tags: Hebrew, discussion

Brain Break: Hokey Pokey

Time Allotment: 3 minutes

Class: Havurah and Online

Rosh Hashanah Rituals

Time Allotment: 5 minutes

Class: Havurah and Online

Doing *teshuvah* תשובה is represented in the rituals and symbols of Rosh Hashanah.

- Why do you think each of these symbols is part of Rosh Hashanah?
- How do these symbols make us think about *teshuvah* תשובה?
- If you would do *teshuvah* תשובה on Rosh Hashanah, how could it change your year?

Symbols of Rosh Hashanah:

- Apple in Honey—Looking forward to a sweet new year
- Fish Head—Hope to be a “head” and not a “tail.” This means we should be leaders, not followers; we should have goodness in our lives, not difficulties.
- Pomegranate—The pomegranate has many seeds and we hope to have many good deeds in the new year

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: ritual reminders

Tags: food, discussion, Rosh Hashanah, rituals

Steps to Teshuvah תשובה *

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Class: Havurah and Online

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (also known as the Rambam or Maimonides) defined *teshuvah* תשובה as having four parts:

- Recognize your mistake
- Regret what you have done
- Apologize/confesses and try to make it right
- Make a plan so you will not to do it again

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think each part is important?
- What does it mean to regret something? How do you know when you regret something?
- Why is it important to say out loud what you have done? How does it affect you? How does it affect other people?

- What are some ways you can try and remember not to make the same mistakes?
- How would these three steps help a person do *teshuvah* תשובה?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: finding strength, changing behavior, personal strength

Tags: discussion, text

Virtual Tashlich תשליך

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Class: *Havurah* and Online

Tashlich תשליך is another Rosh Hashanah ritual in which we say a prayer next to water and symbolically throw our sins into the water by tossing in pieces of bread. It represents that we are starting the year fresh. It is another method of looking at our past mistakes and having a new beginning.

Show this brief video explaining *Tashlich* תשליך. *Tashlich* תשליך A Rosh Hashanah Tradition

<https://youtu.be/JmIPBP3fC1k>

<https://safesha.re/1wo>

(5.1.1 *Tashlich* תשליך A Rosh Hashanah Tradition)

Tashlich תשליך is the Hebrew word for “casting off/throwing off”. An early example of this custom, carried out by Babylonian Jews was to send a “sin-filled” container out into the waters. Kurdistan Jews threw themselves into the water and swam around to be cleansed of their sins.

Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to create a new ritual that can symbolize the casting off of the wrongs that they have committed in the last year.

Students can create a reading or a prayer to accompany their ritual, include ritual items and explanations of how they relate to the themes of *Tashlich* תשליך.

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: personal growth, changing behavior, finding strength, ritual reminder

Tags: *Tashlich* תשליך, ritual, writing, activity

Rosh Hashanah Party with Symbolic Foods

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Class: *Havurah* only

Join other *Havurah* groups at a *Rosh Hashanah* party and eat the symbolic foods, using the *yehi ratzon* formulas

<https://torah.org/learning/yomtov-roshhashanah-vol1no38a/> (5.1.1 *Yehi Ratzon*)

Which of these foods can help us think about our behaviors when in a group? Challenge parents and students to come up with their own *Yehi Ratzon* puns related to group behavior, using any food or object they wish.

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: changing behavior, ritual reminder

Tags: food, ritual, *Yehi Ratzon*, family, Rosh Hashanah

Wrap-Up

Time Allotment: 3 minutes

- Everyone makes mistakes, but you can become a great person if you don't give up and fix your mistakes.
- Rosh Hashanah rituals remind us that every year we have a new beginning and can fix our mistakes.
- Next week: *Teshuvah* תשובה can help you be a better friend!

Car Talk

What is a mistake you made that you wish you could go back and fix? Discuss.

MyShalomLearning Activity

This week we talked about *teshuvah* תשובה and starting fresh for the new year. A great way to have a fresh start is with your friends. Please watch the following video clip in Week 2: *Aladdin- Friend Like Me (Hebrew)*

Discussion Questions

- Can you describe one occasion in which you acted like a good friend?
- What about your actions showed that you were a good friend?