

Sending Shana Tova Greetings

Introduction

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is also called *Yom HaDin*, the Day of Judgment. Traditionally, this is the day when God decides who should be written into the Book of Life. It is therefore customary to greet each other saying, "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

The following text is from the *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh* which was composed in Uzhgorod (c.1844–c.1864) by Shlomo Ganzfried. The *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh* is a summary of the *Shulchan Arukh* of Joseph Karo and states what is permitted and what is forbidden without ambiguity, emphasizing the customs of the Jews of Hungary at that time.

Shana Tova Greeting in Jewish Texts

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 129:8

After the *Maariv* service on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, it is customary for people to wish each other *Leshanah tovah tikatev vetichatem* (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year) and to a woman *tikateivi vetichatemi*. But you do not extend these wishes in the daytime, because the writing has been finished before midday...

קיצור שלחן ערוך קכ"ט:ח'

לאחר גמר תפלת מעריב בליל ראשון נוהגין לומר כל אחד לחברו לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם. ולנקבה אומרים, תכתבי ותחתמי, אבל ביום אין אומרים. לפי שכבר נגמרה הכתיבה קודם חצות היום...

1. Why is the greeting said during the day?
2. How do you think people expressed their good wishes to people who were not living nearby and who they did not meet face-to-face?

Shana Tova Greetings in Primary Sources

Below are examples of Shana Tova cards from the collection of the National Library of Israel.

- Examine the pictures.
- What is the subject of the illustration?
- What do you think is the connection to Rosh Hashanah?
- Do you like the card?
- Would you send the card?
- After examining the cards, sort them into categories.
 - What do they have in common?
 - How many ways can you categorize them?



[Soldiers and Theodor Herzl, Israel, 1950](#), National Library of Israel



[Shana Tova, Israel, 1958](#), National Library of Israel



Shana Tova – Galilee, 1960s, National Library of Israel



Old Year Be Gone, New York, Early 1900s, National Library of Israel



Shana Tova Card from the 1970s, National Library of Israel



Immigration to America, Early 1900s, National Library of Israel



[Shana Tova Card, Herzl, 1910](#), National Library of Israel

Wrapping it up!

- Are Shana Tova cards commonly sent today?
- What other media are used to wish friends and family a *shana tova*?
- How do you think Rosh Hashanah wishes will be sent in the future?