

The Schmooze **Stories with a Yiddish Twist**

A QUIZ FOR A SWEET NEW YEAR

by
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Syosset, New York

Honey is a “fartsaytik” (ancient) ingredient in Jewish New Year celebrations. It’s a lovely culinary symbol of the “zis” (sweet) year ahead.

The use of honey can be traced back to the Stone Age. Evidence can be found for its nutritional and medicinal use beginning with prehistoric and ancient civilizations.

According to Leo Rosten (“The New Joys of Yiddish”), “Rosh Hashanah is a solemn yet very happy time; entire families gather from everywhere for the holiday and for the feast; bread or apple is dipped in honey to symbolize a hoped-for sweetness in the year ahead.”

The late Libby Mowshowitz (“Straight Talk From A Rabbi’s Wife,” 1986), wrote, “In his book, “The Art of Loving, “, Mr. [Erich] Fromm contends that the biblical description of the promised land as flowing with milk and honey had symbolic connotations. This expression can be taken, he says, to describe the ideal mother-love, in its two separate aspects--one, giving “milk”; the other, “honey.” Giving milk to the child of course, means giving care and sustenance, attending to his physical needs and development. Most mothers are capable of doing that. However, the other aspect of mother-love, i.e., “giving honey” is not so easily achieved. For “honey,” Mr. Fromm interprets to be the sweetness, the worthwhileness of life. It’s the mental attitude towards life that the mother imparts to her child, and that is the more important, the more significant kind of love.

Grab a #2 pencil and let’s see how well you do on this Honey Quiz.

1. The Yiddish word for “honey” is
 - A) “hun” or “hon”
 - B) “honik”
 - C) “hofn”

2. Who wrote the following introduction to Lekach (honey cake)?

“How can I give a definition of Rosh Hashonah? It would not suffice it to say that this is the holiday which marks the beginning of the New Year, and it also would not be enough to say that Rosh Hashonah is the beginning of ten days of prayer. All these things it is, but it’s more. It’s the time when we pray the good Lord to be merciful and give us a favorable judgment on the tenth day of meditation, which is the Day of Atonement.

In the evening, when families visit after the holiday is over, when everyone is looking forward to a sweet year, I like to serve honey cake-- it’s a proper beginning for the New Year.”

- A) “The Art of Jewish Cooking” by Jennie Grossinger
 - B) “The Happy Cooker” by the Sisterhood of the Malverne Jewish Center
 - C) “Love and Knishes” by Sara Kasdan
 - D) “The Molly Goldberg Jewish Cookbook,” by Gertrude Berg and Myra Waldo
 - E) “Jewish Cooking for Dummies” by Faye Levy

3. The fine flavor (“aromat”) of honey is vulnerable to
 - A) heat
 - B) improper storage
 - C) none of the above

4. The bee (“bin”) must tap the nectar of 2 million flowers to produce one lb. of honey.
 - A) True
 - B) False
5. According to Joyce Eisenberg and Ellen Scolnic (“It’s Rosh Hashanah: Hey Mister Put a Record On”), For members of the tribe, September

marks a new year. We dip apples in honey to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.....

- A) Telly, Oscar, Big Bird and Elmo each need to have an apple and honey so they can celebrate a sweet new year!
- B) Three months later we dip chips in salsa to ring in the secular New Year.
- C) and a spoonful of honey in hot tea is a great way to soothe a sore throat.

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6. In 1961, the show, "Milk and Honey" was the first Broadway musical set in Israel. This gave songwriter, Jerry Herman, the opportunity to use words like "shalom" and "Hora."

The story concerned a lonely ("elnt") group of middle-aged Jewish-American widows traveling to Israel in search of husbands.

Name the 3 stars of this show.

7. When a youngster starts learning Torah in cheder (school) for the first time it is customary to place a little honey on the letters alef-bet, which the child licks happily. Why is this done?
- A) Because Kellogg's Honey Smacks contain more grams of sugar (20) than a Twinkie.
 - B) So the child learns to associate Torah with delight and good taste.
 - C) Because Honey Smack and Honey Bunches Oats cereal are too expensive ("tayer").

8. Which Rabbi asked, "How are we Doing as a Planet This Rosh Hashanah (2014)? Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, has profound meaning for the entire world and humanity. Most people familiar with the holiday think of apples, honey, shofar, as one of the two days that every Jew goes to synagogue."

Hint: This Orthodox Rabbi will star in a new show offering one-on-one advice and counseling...and the majority of his advisees aren't even Jewish.

- A) Rabbi David Ellenson

- B) Rabbi Marc Schneier
- C) Rabbi Shmuley Boteach
- D) Rabbi Robert A. Alper
- E) Rabbi Harold Kushner

9. Which of the following singers said, "I still get nervous about singing. I drink tea with honey and lemon before every concert. And I need to have scented candles in all of my hotel rooms"?

- A) Barbra Streisand
- B) Neil Diamond
- C) Beverly Sills
- D) Mary J. Blige (Queen of Hip-Hop Soul)

10. Which Albert said, "If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than 4 years to live. No more bees, no more pollination...no more man"?

- A) Albert Finney
- B) Albert Brooks
- C) Albert Einstein
- D) Albert Pujois

11. The Romans valued honey so highly that it was possible to use it to pay one's taxes instead of gold.

- A. True
- B. False

12. Who said, "Honey cake is not so much loved as revered"?

- A) Gil Marks
- B) Arthur Schwartz
- C) Marcy Goldman

13. Who wrote the 1962 book, "The Big Honey Hunt"?

- A) Dr. Seuss (AKA "Theodore Geisel")
- B) Stan and Jan Berenstain
- C) Judy Blume. (Her novels for children and young adults have exceeded sales of \$80 million.)

14. On the 20th floor of the iconic, Waldorf Astoria, in New York City, is a garden with six beehives. Each beehive houses about 50,000 honeybees that pay their rent in honey. In 2015, the rooftop harvested around 450 lbs. of honey. The honey is used all over the hotel, from the Baked Alaska in the kitchen to the pedicure in the spa.
- A. True
 - B. What a “bobbah meiseh”--grandmother story/fairy tale/tall story
 - C. “Es vert mir finster in di oygn.” (I am shocked.) or (It’s growing dark in my eyes.)
 - D. “Kholile!” (Perish the thought.)
 - E. “Veys ikh vos!” (That’s nonsense!) Or, “Do I know what!

Answers:

- 1. B “hun” or “hon” means a “hen or chicken.”
“hofn” means “to hope.”
- 2. D
- 3. A & B
- 4. A
- 5. B
- 6. Molly Picon, Mimi Benzell, and Robert Weede
- 7. B
- 8. C
- 9. D
- 10. C
- 11. A
- 12. B (Arthur Schwartz’s book was titled, “Jewish Home Cooking.”)
- 13. B
- 14. A

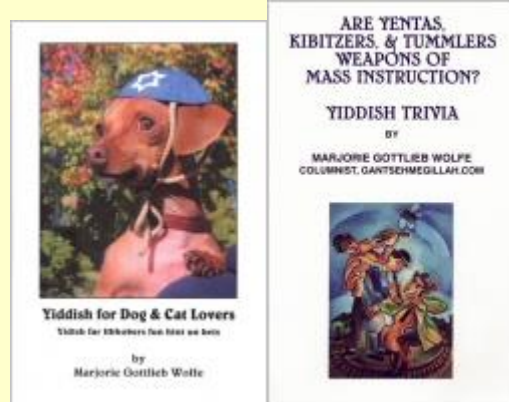
MARJORIE WOLFE agrees with the late Libby Mowshowitz: “Rosh Hashonah, is one of the few stop-signs in our lives. On Rosh Hashonah we are bid to have a ‘chesbon-hanefesh,’ an accounting of the soul. Our Rabbis tell us that a person ought to consider: “from where comest thou, and whither art thou going.”...On Rosh Hashonah let us stop, as we do at a stop-sign. Let us look very carefully in all directions and see if we are making headway; and if we are achieving what is worth-while in life. Above all, let us make sure that we are not colliding with anybody lest in our hurry to achieve success, we are hurting anybody who crosses our path.”

Source: “Straight Talk From A Rabbi’s Wife” by Libby Mowshowitz

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**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of
two books:**



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