

## Apples and Honey

### *Thought for the Day*

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I'm not generally what marketing types call an early adopter – I use my phone for making phone calls and rarely even remember it has a camera, so don't feel the need for anything smarter. But I've been using Apple computers since I first saw one in the mid-80s. When other word-processors could barely produce italics, my Mac helped me write and format a 600-page dictionary of maths, replete with formulas, diagrams, and symbols. In those days, it was a bit of a cult – they even called their sales-people evangelists – and Steve Jobs was its prophet. We lusted for his every inspiration to be consummated in metal and plastic, so his death yesterday had a personal edge.

As one wag observed, three apples changed the world: Adam's, Newton's, and Steve Jobs'. That's clever, but a bit overstated – after all, however alluring, his Apples are mere tools, soon to be obsolete, while Newton's and Adam's are part of the wiring of our external and internal worlds.

And connected to that internal, moral world, Jews think of a different apple at this time of year. There is a tradition at our first meal of the new year, to dip an apple in honey, so we start the year with a sweet taste in our mouths, as we pray for a year of sweetness ahead.

Tonight is the start of Yom Kippur, the most solemn day of the Jewish year. It's a day of fasting and prayer, the culmination of the period of contemplation and self-examination that began with the new year, ten days ago. The dominant theme is seeking and granting forgiveness, not just for spiritual wrongs, but for misdeeds and hurts to others – making amends, turning over a new leaf.

You don't have to be religious to be moved by the metaphors of one of the central prayers: that life is like a broken pot, a faded flower, a puff of dust, a passing dream. Our task is to give it meaning.

I wish you all a sweet and meaningful new year.

*Ephraim Borowski*

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