

High Holidays

part one

A Basic Summary of Holiday Laws In a Clear and Simple Style

Basic

Detailed

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❖ Before Rosh Hashanah

- It is advisable to obtain a machzor for Rosh Hashanah and for Yom Kippur. This is a siddur especially formulated for the holidays that is published in several different formats and styles. Taking the time to find one that appeals to you can make all the difference for meaningful prayers. Consult with someone knowledgeable to ensure that the one you choose follows the customs of your tradition or synagogue (e.g. Ashkenaz, Sefard, Ari or Eidut Hamizrach).
- Remember to purchase or prepare the symbolic foods which are customarily eaten on Rosh Hashanah evening. Additionally, be sure to obtain a new fruit, which will be used on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. (These are described below.)

❖ Rosh Hashanah

- After evening prayers, we extend special greetings to each other¹. These greetings are found in the machzor.
 - In most communities, these greetings are only shared the first night of Rosh Hashanah².
- Since the way we act on Rosh Hashanah influences our judgment, one should try very hard not to get angry throughout the holiday³.

Meals

There is a mitzvah to have a festive meal each evening and day of Rosh Hashanah⁴.

- A Kiddush formulated for Rosh Hashanah is recited before each meal. This year, since it is also Shabbos, added texts are recited. Kiddush and the additional texts can be found in a machzor.
- The challah is customarily dipped in honey⁵. Customs vary if this is a substitute, or an addition to salt.
- At the evening meal, symbolic foods are eaten, and each food is accompanied with a specific prayer⁶. A list of the foods with their appropriate prayers can be found in a machzor.

Hearing the Shofar

This year, the first day of Rosh Hashana is on Shabbos so the shofar is only blown on the second day.

One hundred shofar blasts are blown at the synagogue each day of Rosh Hashanah⁷.

- One hundred shofar blasts are blown at the synagogue each day of Rosh Hashanah⁸.
- Those who are not praying with the synagogue are only required to hear one set of thirty blasts⁹.
- **Children who could become disruptive are not to be brought to the synagogue at this time¹⁰.**
- It is proper to stand at attention while the blessings are recited¹¹. While listening to the blasts one should have in mind to fulfill the Torah commandment to hear the shofar.
- Throughout the shofar blasts unnecessary speech should be at its minimum¹².

Tashlich

Tashlich is a unique prayer that we recite while standing next to a body of water¹³. It is customarily said on the first day of Rosh Hashanah during the afternoon but this year, since the first day is Shabbos, it is said on the second day¹⁴.

- Some have a custom to recite tashlich specifically next to a body of water that contains fish¹⁵. Note that it is forbidden to feed these fish on Yom Tov!¹⁶
- Although there are many additional supplications written in the machzor, the main verse that is recited is. "Who is a G-d like You who pardons sins... and You will cast into the depths of the sea all their sins." ("*Mi keil kamocho...v'sashlich b'mitzulos yam kol chatosam.*")

❖ The Second Day of Rosh Hashanah

It is worth mentioning that the second day of Rosh Hashanah is not merely a repetition of the first. Kabbalah teaches us that on each day of Rosh Hashanah different aspects of the world are judged. In fact, the judgment that affects us most as individuals occurs on the second day.¹⁷

Kiddush

This year, on the second night of Rosh Hashana, a special Havdalah text is added to Kiddush to mark the conclusion of Shabbos. Spices are not used¹⁸ but a blessing is recited on the flames of the candles that were already lit for the Yom Tov.

New Fruit

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, a new fruit is eaten¹⁹. This is a seasonal fruit or vegetable that one enjoys eating and has not yet tasted it since its season began²⁰. The new fruit should be placed on the table before Kiddush. This way, the blessing of *Shehechyanu* that is recited during Kiddush will refer to the fruit as well²¹.

If one has a custom to recite *Shehechyanu* during candle lighting, the fruit should be present while it is recited.

- The fruit is eaten right after the challah²². Even though the *Hamotzee* over bread has been recited, the *Ha'etz* (or *Ha'adomah*) blessing is still required²³.
- Even when a new fruit is unavailable, the *Shehechyanu* blessing is still recited in Kiddush and in candle lighting²⁴.

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- There are varying customs whether the symbolic foods are eaten and their prayers recited on the second night of Rosh Hashanah²⁵.

Havdallah

Havdallah is recited at the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah no earlier than 50 minutes after sunset.

- The introductory phrases are omitted, and one begins with the brochah of Ha'gafen²⁶.
- The brochos over spices and fire are skipped.²⁷
- The final brochah hamavdil bein kodesh lechol is recited and the wine is consumed.
- If at least three ounces of wine have been drunk, the after blessing "Al hagefen" is recited.

❖ The Ten Days of Penitence (*Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*)

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the balance of The Ten Days of Penitence. It is an auspicious time to make amends for all we have done wrong. Hashem only forgives interpersonal sins if the injured party also grants forgiveness and it is essential for people to seek forgiveness from each other. An injured person who is approached by someone with apparent regrets should endeavor to be forgiving. Measure for measure, one who is forgiving, will receive mercy from Hashem.

It is also important to increase in Torah study during this time as this is the most effective way to connect with Hashem.²⁸

❖ Shabbos Shuvah

On the Shabbos between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it is customary for the rabbi of the synagogue to deliver a sermon focused on repentance²⁹.

אשירה לד' כי גמל עלי

I am indebted to my wife for all the patience and support she continues to have for me.

Thank you, my dear reader, for without your interest this pamphlet would not exist.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to be a quick review of some pertinent laws relevant to this time of year. It was formulated for those who do not have the opportunity or resources to study the laws in detail.

Many of these laws and sources are from the seforim:

שליט"א by Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Karp הלכות חג בחג
קונטרס שיעורי הלכה מתוך שיעורים של רב שמואל פעלדער

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¹ Rema 582:9

² See Mishna Berura 582:25

³ Mishna Berura 583:5

⁴ See Mishna Berura 597:1

⁵ Mishna Berura 583:3

⁶ Shulchan Aruch and Rema 583:1

⁷ Shulchan Aruch 585:2; Rema 592:1; Rema 596:1

⁸ Shulchan Aruch 585:2; Rema 592:1; Rema 596:1

⁹ Shulchan Aruch 589:3

¹⁰ Mishna Berura 587:16

¹¹ Mishna Berura 585:2

¹² Shulchan Aruch and Rema 592:3; Chayei Adam 141:9

¹³ Rema 583:2

¹⁴ Mishna Berura 583:8

¹⁵ Mishna Berura 583:8

¹⁶ Mateh Efrayim 598:5; Shulchan Aruch 496: 2

¹⁷ See Michtav M'Elياهو volume II page 76

¹⁸ Mishna Berura 473:3

¹⁹ Shulchan Aruch 600:2

²⁰ Shulchan Aruch 225:6

²¹ Mishna Berura 600:4

²² See Hilchos Chag B'chag 16:9; Shiurei Halacha of Rabbi Shmuel Felder

²³ Similar to Mishna Berura 583:4

²⁴ Shulchan Aruch 500:2

²⁵ Mateh Efrayim 600:14; Elef Hamagen (9)

²⁶ Mateh Efrayim 624:5

²⁷ Shulchan Aruch 624:3

²⁸ See Mateh Efrayim 603:4-5; Chayei Adam 143

²⁹ Mateh Efrayim 602:42