

# Laws and Customs of Rosh Hashana 5780

Sponsored by the Mendal Family in memory of their parents, Shmerel Moshe ben Haim, Yahrtzeit 14 Elul, and Devorah Sheva bas Avrohom HaKohen, Yahrtzeit 15 Cheshvan. May their neshamos have an Aliyah.

Times are taken from Chabad.org and should be correct for Miami Beach, Fl.

For times in other locations, see below.

## Selichot<sup>1</sup>

22 - 29 Elul / Sept. 22 - 29

- Ashkenazim begin saying Selichot on Motzei Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo, the evening of 22 Elul.
  - Ashkenazim always begin saying Selichot on Motzei Shabbat as this is an auspicious time.
  - There are always at least four days of Selichot.<sup>2</sup>
- The Chazan should wear a *Talit* for Selichot (even if he is not married).<sup>3</sup> It is best that he borrow someone else's *Talit* if he's donning it while it's still dark.<sup>4</sup>
- Selichot should be recited while standing. One who is unable to stand for the entire Selichot should at least stand for *Kel Melech*, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, and *Shema Koleinu*. If one is in a Shul where Selichot are recited before *chatzot*, he should

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<sup>1</sup> O.C. 581 and Mateh Efrayim, Aruch HaShulchan 581, 4, Mishnah Berurah, introduction to 581, See Siddur HaRav, Birchot HaShachar

<sup>2</sup> If Rosh HaShana begins on either a Wednesday night or a Shabbat, Selichot are recited from the Motzei Shabbat prior to Rosh HaShana. If Rosh HaShana begins on a Sunday or Monday night, Selichot are recited from the previous Motzei Shabbat (Rama 581, 1). This is because there needs to be at least four days of Selichot just as a sacrifice needed to be inspected for four days before being sacrificed. This is based on the wording regarding the Rosh Hashana musaf offering (Numbers 29, 2) "*Va'asitem Olah*." This can be translated as: "You should make yourselves into an offering." Thus, we must examine ourselves for four days as a sacrifice is examined. (Mishnah Berurah 581, 6).

In addition, it was customary for people to fast during the Ten Days of Repentance. Since there are four days on which one may not fast (two days of Rosh HaShana, Shabbat Teshuvah, and Erev Yom Kippur), they would fast before Rosh HaShana for four days.

<sup>3</sup> I heard this from Rav Ezra Binyomin Schochet, Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshiva Ohr Elchanan Chabad, Los Angeles, based on Rashi on Ex. 33, 19, and Rosh HaShana 17b

<sup>4</sup> This is in order to not have a question as to whether or not one should make a bracha on the Talit (Mishnah Berurah ibid)

not recite the Selichot with the congregation but should rather wait until the right time, even if it means he will have to recite them without a minyan (see below).<sup>5</sup>

- One who is saying Selichot without a minyan should omit the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy (*Hashem, Hashem*)<sup>6</sup> and the paragraphs in Aramaic (e.g., *machei umasei*).

Sefardim say Selichot during the entire month of Elul (with the exception of Rosh Chodesh and Shabbat).

From Monday, 23 Elul (Sep. 23), until Erev Rosh HaShana, Selichot are recited in the early morning. Traditionally, the time to begin reciting Selichot is before dawn or at least before sunrise, as the end of the night is an auspicious time. One may recite Selichot later in the morning, but they should be recited before the normal time for morning prayers.

If one rises before dawn, he may recite all of the morning blessings besides *hanotein lasechvi vinah* (who gives wisdom to the rooster) etc. which should be recited after dawn. It is preferable to wash one's hands again in the manner of *negel vasser* (6 times alternately) after dawn.

### **Wednesday, 25 Elul, Sept. 25**

This day, 25 Elul, was the first day of creation 5780 years ago. Some commemorate this event by reading the section in the Torah (to themselves) regarding the first day of creation (Gen. 1, 1-5). On Thursday they recite the section regarding the second day of creation (ibid, 6-8) and so on and so forth.

### **Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim, 28 Elul / Sept. 27 and 28<sup>7</sup>**

Although we do not bless the new month on this Shabbat, it is the Chabad custom to observe all of the customs of a regular Shabbat Mevorchim, specifically to recite the entire book of Tehillim and participate in a Chassidic Farbrengen. Av HaRachamim is recited before Musaf.

We do not recite *Viyhi Noam* or *Ve'atah Kadosh* at the conclusion of Shabbat since the coming week does not have six working days.

### **Erev Rosh Hashana<sup>8</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> See Magen Avraham 565, 5 "One should never say any Selichot or 13 *middot* before midnight under any circumstance whatsoever." But see Igrot Moshe O.C. 2, 105 who allowed a particular shul to say Selichot at the beginning of the second "third" of the night. Rav Moshe noted that this was an exception and should not be done on a regular basis.

<sup>6</sup> It is permissible to recite the 13 Attributes of Mercy with the notes as one does when reading from the Torah. But most authorities say that it is better not to say them. See the Alter Rebbe's Siddur "One who is praying alone should not say this."

<sup>7</sup> Likutei Sichot, 15, page. 488 in the name of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, see Hayom Yom, Elul 25<sup>th</sup>, Hitva'aduyot, 5757, vol. 4, page 299. See also Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 295, 3

<sup>8</sup> O.C. 581 and Mateh Efrayim, O.C. 3, Mishna Berurah, Likutei Sichot 24, 222

## Sunday, 29 Elul/ Sept. 29

- No *Tachnun* (confessional prayer) is recited on Erev Rosh Hashana, but it is said in the morning Selichot as well as in Mincha of the preceding day. Because the Selichot are traditionally recited before daybreak, it is not yet "Erev Rosh Hashana" and therefore allowed.
- One should rise early and recite the Selichot of this day with emotion and tears in order to approach the King who is forgiving and to merit a positive judgment. One should recite the Selichot slowly, with humility and with a broken heart. The living should take to heart that it is a time to beseech G-d. We should remember that we are mere flesh, a wind that comes and does not return. One should remember the days they wasted in vanity. And realize that "if not now, when?"<sup>9</sup>
- A mourner may go to Shul on Erev Rosh HaShana for Selichot and davening.<sup>10</sup>
- The Shofar is not blown on Erev Rosh Hashana. This is in order to differentiate between the obligatory blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana and the customary blowing during the month of Elul. This is also to confuse the Satan so that he should think that the judgment of Rosh Hashana has passed. (This means that the Satan will think that we are already deemed meritorious by G-d and no longer need judgment.)
- It is preferable that even a *Ba'al Toke'ah* who blows the Shofar for the community not practice on this day. If he needs to do so, he may do so in private (so that others should not think that one may blow the Shofar on this day).
- The *Chazzan* (leader of the prayers) and *Ba'al Toke'ah* should distance themselves from any (spiritual) impurity for three days before Rosh Hashana. The *Chazzan* should review the meaning of the prayers and, if possible, their mystical meanings. This is a good practice for people who are not *Chazzanim* as well. See below regarding the *Ba'al Toke'ah*.
- If a Shul does not have a fixed *Chazzan*, they should appoint one who is preferably G-d-fearing, married, with children, at least 30 or 25 years old, and involved in communal affairs.

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<sup>9</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 581, 333

<sup>10</sup> See Rama, 581:1

- If a certain person is usually the chazzan for a certain prayer, this mitzvah should not be given to someone else. Correspondingly, one who is usually a chazzan for a certain prayer should not relinquish this mitzvah. Nevertheless, one should not fight about it.<sup>11</sup>
- Although, generally, one who is in mourning should not be a chazzan on Shabbat and Yom Tov, if a shul's regular chazzan is in mourning (may G-d have mercy), he may continue to serve as chazzan on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur as well. The same applies to a *Ba'al Toke'ah* (one who blows the Shofar).

## Fasting

Some have a custom to fast on Erev Rosh Hashana as an aid to *Teshuvah* before the great judgment day.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, they should break the fast before Yom Tov begins so that they not enter Yom Tov while still hungry.<sup>13</sup>

## The Annulment of Vows<sup>14</sup>

- After Shacharit (morning prayers), men recite *Hatarat Nedarim* - the Annulment of the Vows (page 358 in the new Chabad Siddur). It is preferable to have ten adult<sup>15</sup> Jewish men for this ceremony, i.e., one man does it in front of ten people. The reason it is best to have 10 is in case one made a vow in a dream. Such vows may only be annulled in front of ten people.<sup>16</sup> If this is difficult, one may do the *Hatarat Nedarim* with four people, i.e., one man does it in front of three men.

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<sup>11</sup> Kaf HaChaim, 581:37 and 38

<sup>12</sup> This custom is brought in many sources, including the Lu'ach Colel Chabad. (*Personally, I have not seen it commonly observed in Chabad circles. A.C.*)

<sup>13</sup> Mateh Efrayim, ibid, 38

<sup>14</sup> Ibid 581, 49, Siddur of the Alter Rebbe, Chayei Adam 138, 8, Y.D. 228, 3, Teshuvot Vehanhagot vol. 1, O.C. 338, Y.D. 234, 56 and Shach 71, She'arim HaMetzuyanim BeHalacha 128, 24, Elef Hamagen 581, 101,

<sup>15</sup> See Responsa of Rabbi Akiva Eiger (quoted in Pit'chei Teshuva) that the definition of an adult for this purpose is to be 13 years old and have signs of physical maturity. (It would seem that if one is doing the annulment with at least three men who fit this description that one need not be strict in this matter regarding the other seven.)

<sup>16</sup> But see Otzar Minhagei Chabad who points out that the version of Hatarat Nedarim in the Siddur HaRav does not mention vows made in dreams.

See Likutei Sochet, vol. 4, pg. 1332 where the Lubavitcher Rebbe gives an additional reason to have a minyan at the annulment of the vows. Since, on a spiritual level, every Rosh HaShana the world is "rebuilt," it is necessary to "repair" the world before Rosh Hashana. The world can be divided into three categories. That which is a mitzvah, that which is permissible (*reshut*) and that which is forbidden. Man's job is mainly to elevate that which is permissible (*reshut*). The concept of vows is to bring sanctity into the permissible realm. Hatarat Nedarim (fixing vows that may be abrogated) accomplishes this as well. Since this is "repair" of the world at large, it is necessary to have a minyan, as the Shechinah, which is the life force of the entire world, will then be present.

The siddur Rabeinu HaZakein Im Tziyunim (by Dayan Raskin of London) points out that, based on this explanation, it would be sufficient to have ten men present rather than 11 (the one nullifying the vows plus 10). Indeed, in the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe simply writes, "It is good for there to be a complete minyan (*eidah shleimah*)."

- A relative may participate in annulling the vows of a relative.
- If one does not understand Hebrew, he should recite the *Hatarat Nedarim* in the language he understands.
- It is preferable for each person to recite the Hatarah individually. If this is not possible, several people may say it simultaneously in front of three or (preferably) ten people.<sup>17</sup>
- One who did not recite it after Shacharit may do so later on in the day. One who did not do this on Erev Rosh Hashana may do it any time before Yom Kippur.
- It is not the custom for women to do the annulment of vows. If a woman has a specific vow that she wishes to annul, she may do so with a *bait din* (a court of three Jewish men) that includes a Torah scholar who is familiar with these laws (see below). Or she may send her husband to annul them on her behalf (on Erev Rosh HaShana or on any day).
- Children up until Bar Mitzvah need not do the annulment of the vows.

Some say that this general annulment only works for vows which were forgotten and that one who wishes to annul a specific vow must inform one of the members of the court who is familiar with the laws of annulling vows as to specifics of the vow. Then if, according to the laws of annulling vows this vow may be nullified, they may do so.<sup>18</sup>

### **Length of the Year**

This year is not a leap year. It contains 355 days as both the months of Cheshvan and Kislev have 30 days.

### ***Basha"h***

The acronym to remember the significant calendar dates of this year is *בש"ה* (*Bashah*). **ב** stands for the second day of the week, on which Rosh HaShana falls. **ש** stands for *שלמה* (complete) which indicates that there are 30 days in the month of Kislev. And **ה** stands for the fifth day – Thursday, which is the first day of Pesach this year.

This year is the fifth year of the Shemitah cycle.

On 7 Tevet (Jan. 4) this year those who learn the Daf Yomi will complete the Talmud for the 13<sup>th</sup> cycle of the Daf Yomi. This will have taken them seven and a half years.

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<sup>17</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 581, 49

<sup>18</sup> Derech HaChaim on the Siddur (by Rav Yaakov MiLisa)

This year is 1951 years since the destruction of the Second Bait HaMikdash.

### **Keren HaShana**

The Lubavitcher Rebbe founded an innovative tzedaka fund called “Keren Hashanah — the Fund for the Year.” The Rebbe explained that this fund would ensure that everyone gives charity every day of the year. The fund disburses tzedaka twice every single day on behalf of all those who participate in the fund. The Rebbe said that donations should be made on behalf of all members of the family in the amount matching the number of days in the year.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, this year has 355 days.

You can donate to this fund here:

<https://lubavitch.com/donate.html?o=2026760=lubavitch.com1>

### **Visiting the Graves of Tzadikim<sup>20</sup>**

- Many have a custom to visit the graves of *tzadikim* (righteous men) on Erev Rosh Hashana. This is in order to pray in a holy place. The prayers uttered in such a holy place are more readily accepted. In addition, it is customary to ask that the holy souls of the righteous intercede on our behalf in Heaven.
- One should pray to G-d when visiting these holy sites. Prayers uttered in such pure and holy sites are more readily accepted by G-d.
- Many authorities permit one to ask the soul of the tzadik to intercede with G-d on their behalf. Certainly, one may not pray to a deceased tzadik and ask for his assistance.
- It is customary not to eat before visiting the graves of tzadikim. But it is customary to drink.<sup>21</sup>
- It is proper for a man<sup>22</sup> to go to the Mikvah on the day one plans to go to a cemetery.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, page 651

<sup>20</sup> O.C. 581 Ramah 4, Mateh Efrayim ibid 50, Mishnah Berurah, 281, 27, Ketzev HaMateh, 281, 96, Shevach HaMo'adim, page 11, note 19

<sup>21</sup> See Shevach HaMo'adim, page 11, note 19

<sup>22</sup> The Kaf HaChaim (581:84) in the name of the Ben Ish Chai writes that women should also go to the Mikvah on this day. This is not the widespread custom.

<sup>23</sup> See ibid, 90

Here are some of the customs relating to visiting a cemetery that are brought down in the Kaf HaChaim:

- One should not visit the same grave twice a day.
- The reason people place a stone on the grave is to leave a physical sign of their visit.
- It is customary to walk around the grave.
- It is customary to give tzedaka when visiting the cemetery.

- One who hasn't visited a Jewish cemetery in the previous 30 days should recite a blessing upon seeing the graves.
- A man should tuck in his tzitzit when visiting a Jewish cemetery.
- One should wash his hands six times alternately when leaving the cemetery.

### **Haircuts and Bathing<sup>24</sup>**

- It is customary to take a haircut (if necessary) and bathe on Erev Rosh HaShana. This is to show that we are confident that the Almighty will find us meritorious in judgment.
- We don our Shabbat garments in honor of Rosh Hashana, confident that G-d will bless all of us with a good and sweet year. However, some have a custom not to wear clothes on Rosh Hashana that are as nice as Shabbat and Yom Tov clothes.

### **Mikvah for Men<sup>25</sup>**

It is proper for men to immerse in a Mikvah on Erev Rosh Hashana to ensure that one is in a state of purity for the holiday. For this purpose, one may even use a swimming pool or other man-made body of water but not an above-ground pool or jacuzzi.<sup>26</sup> If one does not have access to a mikvah or a pool, one should take a thorough shower for three or four minutes in lieu of immersion.<sup>27</sup> One should ensure the water lands on their heads and on their entire body.<sup>28</sup>

- The immersion in the mikvah should take place any time after the hour before midday.
- One should immerse (at least) three times.<sup>29</sup>
- See Kaf HaChaim who recommends eight immersions. During these eight immersions one should intend to 1) cleanse oneself from impurity, 2) cleanse oneself from anger, 3) fix that which one blemished in the 72-letter name of G-d, 4) and in the 63-letter name of G-d, 5) and in the 45-letter name of G-d, 6) and in the 52-letter name of G-d, 7) to

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<sup>24</sup> See O.C. ibid 4, Mishna Berurah ibid 25, Mateh Efrayim ibid 55

<sup>25</sup> O.C. 581, 4, See O.C. 88, Mishnah Berurah, 581, 26, Mateh Efraim, ibid, 53

<sup>26</sup> I have heard in the name of Rav Ezra Binyomin Schochet, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Ohr Elchanan Chabad, Los Angeles, that an operating filter does not disqualify a mikvah for men.

<sup>27</sup> Piskei Teshuvot, 88, note 42. See there that this is the consensus of most of the Poskim although some disagree.

<sup>28</sup> But see ibid, note 35 that some say the water need not reach one's entire body.

<sup>29</sup> Mateh Efrayim. See Elef HaMagen, 606, 22 who writes that immersing three times is associated with Teshuvah. See Maharil (Minhagei Erev Yom Kippur) who writes that one should immerse three times on Erev Yom Kippur to allude to the three times the expression "Mikveh Yisrael Hashem" is used in Tanach. The Magen Avraham (606, 8) explains that this reason is following the view that the immersion is for the purpose of Teshuvah.

remove one's "weekday garments" from his soul, 8) and to accept on oneself the holiness of the holiday of Yom HaZikaron (the Day of Remembrance).

### **Tzedakah**

- One should ensure that the poor of one's community have the necessary means to purchase and prepare food for Yom Tov.<sup>30</sup>

### **Mincha**

The Mincha on Erev Rosh HaShanah is the last prayer of the year. It is important to recite this prayer with concentration. It is written in the *sefarim* (holy books) that one can fix all his prayers of that year which were recited without concentration (*kavana*) by reciting them once with concentration anytime that year. Thus, this Mincha is the very last opportunity.<sup>31</sup>

If one did not recite *Hatarat Nedarim* (annulment of vows) after Shacharit, one should recite it after Mincha.

### **A Day of Prayer, Teshuvah and Seeking Forgiveness<sup>32</sup>**

One should say a lot of Tehillim on this day and do Teshuva for any sins committed in the previous year so that by the prayers of the first night of Rosh HaShana (Ma'ariv) he is already clean and pure.

One should spend the day studying Torah, fulfilling mitzvot and correcting any wrongdoing towards their fellow-man. One should not wait until Erev Yom Kippur to ask forgiveness from one's fellow.

### **Good Resolutions<sup>33</sup>**

The Rebbe Rashab would accept upon himself an additional *Hiddur Mitzvah* (an extra praiseworthy way of performing a Mitzvah), a *zehirut* in a *lo ta'aseh* (an extra precaution to distance himself from sin) and a *hanhagah tovah* (a good practice) every year before (or during) Rosh HaShanah.

This practice is in line with the following teaching of the Baal Shem Tov:<sup>34</sup> The verse says "*Tiku Bachodesh Shofar* – Blow the Shofar in the new month." The word *chodesh* (month) can also

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<sup>30</sup> Likutei Sichot 14, 369 This is based on a verse in Nechemiah (8:10) which states that on Rosh HaShana, Ezra and Nechemiah told the people, "Go, eat fat foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to whoever has nothing prepared, for the day is holy to our L-rd, and do not be sad, for the joy of the L-rd is your strength."

<sup>31</sup> See Mateh Efrayim, ibid 57

<sup>32</sup> Shevach HaMo'adim pg. 12 based on Sefer HaSichot 5704, pg. 1 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:14

<sup>33</sup> Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad, page 56, see also Likutei Sichot vol. 2, page 386

<sup>34</sup> Ketter Shem Tov, ot 119



mean renewal. Thus, the verse can be interpreted to mean, “Blow the shofar with renewed energy” and not simply like an old obligation. Since Rosh Hashana is emblematic of the entire year, this lesson applies to our service to G-d throughout the year – that one should always serve Him with renewed vitality and excitement and not merely by rote.<sup>35</sup>

When accepting a good resolution upon themselves one should always say that they are doing so *bli neder* – without the strength of a vow (Kaf HaChaim 603:12).

## First Night of Rosh Hashanah

### Sunday Evening, 1 Tishrei, Sept. 29

Candle-lighting time is 6:51 p.m.

- Some say that it is best to light at candle-lighting time and not delay until later – during Yom Tov. This is in order to fulfill the mitzvah of adding from the weekday to the Yom Tov.<sup>36</sup>
- One may light after dark as well, but if so, one must make sure to light from a pre-existing flame. Some customarily light Yom Tov candles before the Yom Tov meals begin.<sup>37</sup>
- The two Brachot are: *Baruch...L'hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hazikaron* followed by the *Shehechiyonu* blessing.<sup>38</sup>
- If a man lights the Yom Tov candles, he should not recite the blessing of *Shehechiyanu* as he will recite this during Kiddush.
- One who will need a pre-existing flame from which to light the candles on the second night should light a 24-hour candle before sundown.

## Praising the Jews

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<sup>35</sup> Sefer Hama'amarim Melukat, vol. 1, pg. 475

<sup>36</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 625, 33 and Elef LaMateh 51. See Likutei Sichot, vol. 24, page 297, note 69

<sup>37</sup> The Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchato (vol. 2, chapter 44:2 and note 4) explains that since on the second night of Yom Tov it is proper to light at night, in order to avoid confusion, some light at night on the first night of Yom Tov as well.

<sup>38</sup> See Shmirat Shabbat Kehilchato, ibid:4, that some say that a woman who says *Shehechiyonu* when lighting candles should not respond “Amen” to the *Shehechiyonu* recited during Kiddush as this might be an interruption in the middle of her Kiddush since she “doesn’t need” that blessing.

The Rebbe Maharash once remarked to his son the Rebbe Rashab, “Hundreds of angels wait on Rosh HaShanah for a Jew to praise another Jew because they (the angels) know that G-d desires the praise of a Jew even more than the prayers of the righteous.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Precious Time**

The minutes and hours of Rosh HaShanah are extremely precious and should not be wasted. This is a time which is more elevated than the rest of the year, both in quantity and quality, in the same way the brain is superior to the other limbs of the body.<sup>40</sup>

It is appropriate to recite Tehillim during one’s spare time on Rosh HaShanah. Some endeavor to complete the entire Tehillim twice. The number of chapters recited (300) is the *gematriyah* of *kaper* (atone). It is better to recite less quantity and have more *kavanah* (concentration).<sup>41</sup>

### **No Smoking Zone**

Even if one smokes during the year (this is strongly discouraged by doctors and rabbis), one should refrain from doing so on Rosh HaShana.<sup>42</sup>

### **Maariv<sup>43</sup>**

- It is customary in Chabad circles to say Tehillim before Maariv. In addition, as mentioned above, one should recite Tehillim at every opportunity during the 49 hours of Rosh Hashana.
- After the Amidah, we recite Psalm 24 (*LeDavid Mizmor*). Saying this prayer with concentration is a *segulah* (spiritually propitious act) for *parnassah* (ample livelihood) throughout the year. One may also recite this prayer at home anytime during this night.

### **Prayers<sup>44</sup>**

- During these judgment days, one should take care to recite every word of prayer clearly and not garble them.
- According to the Arizal, when one is moved to tears during the prayers on the High Holidays, it is a sign that he is being judged at that time. Therefore, one should pray with

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<sup>39</sup> Sefer HaSichot, 5704, page 5

<sup>40</sup> Likutei Sichot, 14, page 375

<sup>41</sup> See Mateh Efrayim, 598, 1

<sup>42</sup> Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, in the name of the Previous Rebbe, Mateh Efrayim, ibid, 23

<sup>44</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav 582, Ta'amei HaMinhagim, pg. 309 and Elef HaMagen, 582, 44

great *kavana* (concentration) at that time. If one doesn't cry at all during these days, it is a sign that one's *neshama* (soul) is blemished.

- Even if one was, G-d forbid, sealed for death in the book of the wicked, he can fix this and be written in the book of life for the tzadikim by doing teshuvah and praying with tears.
- See below regarding the laws of the special insertions in the prayers during the Ten Days of Repentance.

### **Kittel<sup>45</sup>**

Some have a custom to wear a *kittel* (a white garment which resembles a shroud) for the Rosh HaShana prayers.

In some communities, only the *Chazzan* and *Ba'al Toke'ah* wear a *kittel*. This includes the *chazzan* for *pesukei dezimrah*, *shachrit* and *musaf* but not the *chazzan* for *mincha* and *ma'ariv*.

The Chabad custom is not to wear a *kittel*. This applies to the *Chazzan* and *Ba'al Toke'ah* as well.<sup>46</sup>

### **Greetings<sup>47</sup>**

After Ma'ariv it is customary to greet one another in the following way:

- To a man, one should say: *L'shana Tova Tikatev Vetaichatem*.
- To a woman we say: *L'shana Tova Tikatvi Vetaichatmi*.
- Some add the words *le'alter lechayim tovim uleshalom* (immediately for good life and peace).<sup>48</sup>
- The Chabad custom is to say this greeting in the singular, even when greeting an important person that one would normally address in third person.<sup>49</sup>
- When greeting a group (of men or of men and women) one should say: *L'shana Tova Tekataivu Veteichataimu*.

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<sup>45</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 582: 3 an d55, Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad

<sup>46</sup> See HaMelech BeMesibo, vol. 1, page 115 that, according to the Alter Rebbe, the reason for wearing a kittel is to resemble the angels. This is only relevant for Yom Kippur and not for Rosh HaShana.

<sup>47</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav 582, 17

<sup>48</sup> Elaef Hamagen, 40

<sup>49</sup> Sefer HaMinhagim, Chabad as explained by Otzar Minhagei Chabad.

These greetings shouldn't be given after midday (*chatzot*) of the (second) day of Yom Tov because by then the “inscribing” of Rosh HaShana has (hopefully) been completed. Some say that these greetings should only be given on the first night of Rosh HaShanah.<sup>50</sup>

## The Meal

- It is customary to use round Challot for Rosh Hashana. (Some continue with this custom until *Hoshana Rabbah* - the last day of Sukkot.)
  - I have heard that a circle, which has no end, signifies a long life (since it has no end) as well as the ongoing cycle of the calendar. It also resembles the crown with which we coronate G-d as our King on Rosh Hashana.
- Following *Hamotzi*, one should dip the Challah (three times) in honey. It is customary to dip the Challah in honey during all of the Rosh Hashana meals as well as on Erev Yom Kippur, the night after Yom Kippur, the *Yamim Tovim* of Sukkot and *Hoshana Rabbah*.<sup>51</sup> One should have salt on the table as well.
- It was customary for the Chabad Rebbes to mention all of their holy predecessors during the Rosh Hashanah meals.<sup>52</sup>

## *Simanim* (Signs)<sup>53</sup>

During the meal of the first night of Rosh Hashana, it is customary to eat various foods that symbolize good things for the coming year. The prevalent custom is to eat these foods after saying the blessing of *HaMotzie*,<sup>54</sup> but some eat them before *HaMotzie*.

- **Apple Dipped in Honey**
  - At the beginning of the meal (after eating the Challah), one should take a piece of apple, dip it into honey, recite the *Bracha - Borei Pri Haetz*, recite the *Ye'hi Ratzon* (Siddur pg. 277, Machzor page 39) and eat it. This is the Chabad custom.

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<sup>50</sup> Some say that this greeting should only be given until midday of the first day. The Taz (582:4) says it may be said until midday of the second day. In the Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes that this greeting is given on the first night of Rosh HaShana.

<sup>51</sup> See Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad that the Chabad custom is to use salt and not honey on Shabbat Teshuvah (the Shabbat between Yom Kippur and Sukkot) and on Shabbat Chol HaMoed. Many have the custom of using honey on these Shabbatot as well.

<sup>52</sup> Sefer HaSichot, *ibid*, page 3

<sup>53</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 583, See Horiyot 12a, Mishnah Berurah 583, Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad, and Kaf HaChayim, 583:5 – 25.

<sup>54</sup> The advantage to eating these after Hamotzie is that this minimizes the interruption between the Kiddush and the meal (Igrot Kodesh, vol. 3, page 210). In addition, by doing it in this order, one need not recite a separate blessing afterwards (Hitva'aduyot, 5751, vol. 4, page 323, note 66).

- Some have a custom to say the bracha, eat a little of the apple, say the *Ye'hi Ratzon* and then eat some more.
  - The Chabad custom is to make the blessing on the apple and eat it first although it is not one of the fruits of Israel (see below).<sup>55</sup>
- **Pomegranate**
    - We eat pomegranates as a sign that we should have as many merits as a pomegranate has seeds.
    - One should say *She'hechyanu* before eating the pomegranate if it is the first time of the season that one is eating it. Alternatively, one may place the pomegranate on the table before making kiddush and have in mind that the *She'hechyanu* of kiddush also “count” for the pomegranate.
    - Please note, one should have a new fruit other than a pomegranate for the second night (see below).
- **Fish head**
    - We eat the head of a fish (or other kosher animal) as a symbol that we should be a head and not a tail.
    - Some eat the head of a ram to invoke the merit of the *Akeidah* - the binding of Isaac.
- **Fish**
    - We eat fish as a symbol that we should be fruitful and multiply like fish.
    - Some have a custom to *not* eat fish on Rosh HaShana as the Hebrew word for fish *דג/dag* is similar to the word for worry – *דאג/Da'ag* (Kaf HaChaim 583:9).
- **Carrots**
    - Ashkenazim eat carrots as the word for carrots in Yiddish is *merrin* which also means “to become more” (i.e., to be fruitful and multiply).

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<sup>55</sup> It is possible that the reason for this is that the apple is considered more “preferred” at this time since we only say the *Ye'hi Ratzon* on the apple. If one has a fruit that one prefers, he may say the blessing on it rather than on one of the fruits of Israel (Seder Birkat HaNehenin, 10:8).

- **Leeks**<sup>56</sup>
  - In Hebrew, the word for leeks is *karti*, indicating that our enemies should be cut off.
- **Dates**
  - The word for date, *tamar*, also means means to finish off (*tam*). This symbolizes that our enemies should be finished.
- **Beets**
  - *Selek* means beets as well as "remove." This symbolizes that our enemies should be removed.
- **Pumpkin**
  - The word for pumpkin in Hebrew is *kra* indicating that our bad decrees should be ripped up and our merits should be read in front of Hashem (*kra* with an *alef* [קרא] means "read" while *ker* with an *ayin* [קרע] means "rip").
- **Fenugreek**
  - Fenugreek is called *rubia* in Aramaic and we are asking that G-d increase our merits (*rov* means many.)
- **Spinach**
  - Some say that the "*silka*" of the Talmud, which is normally translated as beets, actually means cooked spinach, because the Arabic term for the spinach was "salk."
- **Black-eyed peas.**
  - The Arabic term for the black-eyed peas was "*lubia*," pronounced similar to "*rubia*" which means to increase.<sup>57</sup>

### The Brachot (Blessings)

As mentioned above, the Chabad custom is to make the *ha'etz* blessing on the apple. The custom in Sefardic communities is to make the *bracha* of *ha'etz* on the date (or the pomegranate if one does not have a date) since it is one of the seven species.<sup>58</sup> The Mishnah

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<sup>56</sup> The [notes](#) on the newly translated Shulchan Aruch HaRav (583 footnote 3) state that it is not the Chabad custom to eat the Simanim other than the apple dipped in honey, the pomegranate, the fish head, and the *merrin* (carrots). I have not found this custom stated explicitly anywhere.

<sup>57</sup> Some also eat the lungs of an animal as the word for lungs is the same as that for seeing (ראה) . We thus ask for G-d to see our pain and redeem us. Others eat zucchini (Kaf HaChaim 683:15).

<sup>58</sup> According to the Kaf HaChaim (25), the order should be as follows. 1) Dates (the bracha recited on this will cover all of the fruits), 2) a vegetable that is not considered a meal food so that the bracha of ho'adama will cover all

Berurah writes that one who wishes to make the *bracha* on the apple should remove the fruit that are from the species of the land of Israel from the table before doing so.

One need not make the *beracha* of *ha'adama* on cooked vegetables (e.g., pumpkin and leeks) as these are foods that are normally eaten during the meal and are “covered” by the *HaMotzie* blessing on the challa.

The Vilna Ga'on's custom was to not eat grapes on the nights of Rosh HaShana. It has been explained that, since the sin of eating from the *Eitz HaDa'at* took place on Rosh Hashana and some say that it was a grape vine, it is inappropriate to eat grapes on these days.<sup>59</sup> Even according to this custom, one may eat raisins that are mixed into other food.<sup>60</sup>

### Prayers on the Foods

- There are particular prayers that accompany each food and are printed in the Machzor.
- According to the Shela (Rabbi Isaiah HaLevi Horowitz, 1565 - 1630), the main objective in eating these foods is that the person should be inspired when reciting these prayers.
- Although eating these foods have significance, certainly doing Teshuva and increasing in mitzvot is more important than these.<sup>61</sup>
- If one does not like any of these foods, he can recite these prayers (or think them) while simply looking at the foods. In fact, the Talmud (Horayot, 12a) says that one should “see” these food items on Rosh Hashana.
- Chabad custom is not to recite these prayers, with the exception of the *yehi ratzon* on the apple.<sup>62</sup> (It would seem that one should have these intentions “in mind.”)

Sefardim and some Ashkenazim have the custom to eat the above symbolic foods on the second night of Rosh HaShana as well. The Chabad custom is to eat these foods only on the first night.<sup>63</sup>

### No Anger

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other such vegetables, 3) beets, 4) leeks, 5) figs, 6) fenugreek, 6) pomegranate, 7) head of a lamb, 8) apple dipped in honey. See there as to the reason for this order.

<sup>59</sup> Ma'aseh Rav cited in Mishnah Berurah, 510:4 see in the notes of Imrei Shmuel on the Ma'aseh Rav, 210

<sup>60</sup> Rav Elyashiv, quoted in note 6 of the Dirshu Mishnah Berurah

<sup>61</sup> Me'iri on Horayot, ibid

<sup>62</sup> It has been pointed out (Kaf HaChaim, 11) that, in the Gemara (Horayot, ibid), these prayers are not mentioned.

<sup>63</sup> See Sha'arei Teshuvah, ibid, 1

The Mishna Berurah says that in addition to all of the above “signs” for a good year, it is obvious that one should refrain from getting angry during these days. Rather, one should be glad in his heart and trust in G-d together with (doing) *teshuvah* (repentance) and mitzvot.<sup>64</sup>

### Off the Menu

On Rosh HaShana it is customary not to eat sour or bitter foods or foods with vinegar, e.g., pickles or horseradish. This symbolizes that we shouldn't have a “sour” year but rather a sweet year. Drinking hard liquor is acceptable (in moderation, of course).<sup>65</sup>

It is also customary not to eat nuts as eating nuts adds to one's saliva and thus may disturb one's concentration in prayer. In addition, the *Gematriyah* (numerical value) of *Egoz* /nut is 17, the same numerical value as *Chet*/sin (not counting the “*alef*” which is not vocalized). Some also refrain from eating these foods until after *Hoshana Rabbah*.

### Grace After Meals

- If one forgot to add *Ya'ale Veyavo* (the holiday insertion) when saying *Birkat HaMazon* (Grace after Meals) after a night meal of Rosh HaShana, one should repeat the *Birkat HaMazon*. If one forgot to say *Ya'ale Veyavo* during the *Birkat HaMazon* after a day meal, one need not repeat the *Birkat HaMazon*.
- Near the conclusion of the *Birkat HaMazon*, after *Mimarom* (Siddur pg. 93) we add the *Harachaman* for Yom Tov and then the one for Rosh Hashana.<sup>66</sup>

It is best for one to refrain from marital relations on both nights of Rosh HaShana. This is not forbidden by the letter of the law. Therefore, if it is the Mikvah night, it is permissible.

### The First Day of Rosh Hashana

#### Monday, Sept. 30 / 1 Tishrei

It is best to rise before dawn on Rosh Hashana (6 a.m.) or at least before sunrise (7:12 a.m.).<sup>67</sup>

### Melodies in the Prayers

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<sup>64</sup> 583, 5

<sup>65</sup> See Likutei Sichot, vol. 19, page 284

<sup>66</sup> For Yom Tov: *Hu Yanichilaynu L'yom Shekulo Tov*. (This one comes first as it is more common [*tadir*].) And for Rosh Hashana: *Horachamon Hu Yechadesh Aleinu Et Hashana Hazot Letova Velivracha*.

<sup>67</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 584, 1



The chazzan should not deviate from any of the *nigunim* (songs) that are customary in the community even by singing melodies that he believes are nicer. This would confuse the attention of the congregants and cause them to not concentrate properly. On this awesome day, one should not try to show off. The main thing is the *kavana* (concentration) in the heart of the chazzan.<sup>68</sup>

### **Torah Reading<sup>69</sup>**

We read about the birth of Isaac on this day as Sarah was “remembered” by G-d regarding the birth of Isaac on this day. (This means that G-d decreed on Rosh HaShana that Sara should give birth to Isaac in the coming year). The Haftorah discusses the birth of the prophet Samuel for the same reason.

- Some communities have the custom of giving an aliyah to the *Ba'al Toke'ah* and *Chazzan* for Musaf. This is only necessary if they are being paid for their services.
- It is a merit to receive an *aliyah* on the High Holy Days. One should try to receive one even if he has to pay for it. The payment makes the mitzvah more precious.
- If there is a brit on Rosh HaShanah it should be performed before the blowing of the Shofar.

### **Shofar-Blowing<sup>70</sup>**

In many communities, it is customary for the rabbi to speak before the blowing of the Shofar. He should speak words that move the heart, engender humility and move one to Teshuvah.

### **Eating Before Hearing the Shofar<sup>71</sup>**

- It is best not to eat or drink before hearing the Shofar blowing.
- Although generally one should not fast past midday on Shabbat and Yom Tov, on Rosh Hashana (that falls during the week), when we are pleading for our lives, this is permissible.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 5

<sup>69</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 584, Brachot 29a, Rosh Hashana 10 b and 11a as explained by Rashi there D.H. Nifkedah, Mishnah Berurah 583, 8

<sup>70</sup> O.C., 585 – 592 and Mateh Efrayim 585, 1

<sup>71</sup> See Sha'arei Teshuva 584, 3, Mateh Efrayim 588, 2, See Ketzei HaMateh 588, and Piskei Teshuvot 585, 4

<sup>72</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 597, 2

- One may drink water before davening (praying). Some are particular not even to drink water.
- One who is weak may have a small snack. If eating after *Shacharit*, one must first make *Kiddush*. Some say that if one is weak, it is better to hear the Shofar blasts in the morning before davening in order that he not eat before fulfilling the mitzvah of the Shofar.

### **The Baal Toke'ah<sup>73</sup>**

The one who blows the Shofar (*Ba'al Toke'ah*) should be a righteous and learned person. He should review the Halachic and (if possible) the Kabbalistic aspects of blowing the Shofar beforehand (see below).<sup>74</sup> In addition, the *Ba'al Makri* (the one who points [or reads] to the *Ba'al Toke'ah* as to what sound to blow) should be a righteous man who is fluent in the laws and meanings of the blowing of the Shofar.

### **The Shofar<sup>75</sup>**

- The shofar should preferably be a ram's horn. The horns of other kosher domestic animals are also acceptable except for those of a bull or ox.
- The shofar must be longer than a *Tefach* (handbreadth) so that it is visible on both sides of the *ba'al toke'as* hand when he is blowing it.
- A cracked shofar may be disqualified. One should not use it unless he ascertains its precise Halachic status.

### **No Talking**

- The entire congregation should listen to the *brachot* and the blowing of the Shofar and keep in mind that they want to fulfill the Mitzvah. One should not say *Boruch Hu Uvaruch Shemo* during the recitation of the *brachot*. The *brachot* of the Shofar extend to and include the Shofar-blowing during the Amidah and the repetition of the Amidah. It is therefore proper to not talk until the end of the Shofar-blowing at the conclusion of Musaf (unless it is necessary for the Davening or the Shofar-blowing).
- During the pauses in between the three sets of Shofar notes, one should think thoughts of Teshuvah. (It is not the Chabad custom to articulate any words at this time.)

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<sup>73</sup> O.C. 585, 3, Mateh Efrayim 585, 2

<sup>74</sup> See Sefer HaMinhagim that the Rebbe Rashab would instruct the Baal Toke'ah to study the maamar (Chassidic discourse) of *Lehavin Inyan Tekiat Shofar*, printed on page 488 of the Siddur Im Dach. The Siddur of Rav Yakov Emden and the Shelah also contain kavanot for the blowing of the shofar

<sup>75</sup> O.C. Siman 586

## Standing vs. Sitting

- The Ashkenaz custom is for the community to stand for all of the tekiot. The Sefardic custom is for the community to sit for the first 30 blasts. In fact, these blasts are called *tekiot demeyushav* (the sitting *tekiot*). According to all opinions, the community should stand while the *brachot* are being recited. The one blowing the Shofar must stand during the *brachot* and the blowing.

## During Musaf

- The Chassidic and Sefardic custom is to blow the Shofar during the silent Amidah.
- The custom of many Ashkenazim is not to blow during the silent Amidah.<sup>76</sup>
- It is customary in many communities that the one who blows the shofar during Musaf need not be the same person who blew the first 30 blasts.
- In addition, although the *baal toke'a* stands by the *Bimah* (table for the Torah reading) when blowing the first 30 blasts, he need not stand there when blowing during Musaf. Rather, he may blow from wherever he usually stands during the prayers.
- It is not customary for the *baal makri* to point to the sounds during the blowing of Musaf or afterwards.
- When blowing during Musaf, there are various customs as to which notes to blow. Every community should follow its custom.
- The total number of blasts should equal at least 100.
- If one is in the middle of the Amidah while the Shofar is being blown, one should stop and listen.
- One who is praying Musaf without a Minyan should not interrupt to blow the Shofar. Nor should he ask someone else to blow for him so that he can hear them during his prayers.
- After the repetition of Musaf, it is customary to blow an additional 30 Shofar blasts in order to confuse the Satan. One who came late and missed (some) of the other blasts should pay special attention at this time.

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<sup>76</sup> Mishnah Berurah, 592, 1

- One may not blow extra Shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana as it is similar to playing an instrument, but one need not stop a child who is blowing extra Shofar blasts.<sup>77</sup>

### How to Blow the Shofar<sup>78</sup>

- The Shofar should be covered while the *baal toke'a* (shofar blower) says the *brachot* and whenever he's not actually blowing the Shofar. This is to evoke the merit of the binding of Isaac who was kept hidden while Abraham built the altar.
- One should blow from the right side of his mouth (if possible). This is because one's left side is already protected by their Tefillin. A lefty should blow from the left side of his mouth.<sup>79</sup>
- The shofar blasts are kosher whether the sounds are "thick" or "thin." All types of sound are acceptable.

### Length of Each Sound

- The *tekiah* (long sound) should be as long as the middle sound of that set, i.e., for the first set, it should be as long as a *shevarim* and *teruah* combined (about six seconds), for the second and third set, it should be as long as a *shevarim* or a *teruah* (approximately three seconds).
- Each of the *shevarim* should last for approximately one second.
- The *baal makri* (one who points to the correct note in the siddur for the *ba'al toke'ah* to blow) should keep his finger pointed to the note for as long as that note should be sounded.

### Breathing

- One must take a breath in between each complete note.
- One should not take a breath in the middle of a note (e.g. *shevarim* or *teruah*).
- There is an argument as to whether or not one should breathe in between *shevarim-teruah*. The custom is to take a quick breath in between.

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<sup>77</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 596, 2

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 585, 589, and 590, Kaf HaChaim 585, 14, Mateh Efraim, 585, 3 and Elef HaMagen 7

<sup>79</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 581, 4

- In a place that does not have a specific custom, it is better to do the *shevarim-teruah* in the first group of *tekiot* (before Musaf) without a breath in between (but with a small pause) and during the *tekiot* during Musaf with a quick breath in between.

### Wrong Note

- If one blew the wrong note, he may have to begin from the beginning of the series he's in the middle of (e.g. *tekiah-shevarim-tekiah*). The *Baal Makri* (the one who points to the correct note) should know the laws in this regard so he can instruct the *Baal Toke'ah* as to how to proceed.

If the *Ba'alToke'a* was unable to complete the shofar blasts and someone else came up to complete them, he need not make the *brachot* (blessings) again, provided that he heard them when they were recited beforehand.

### Blowing for Other Jews

The Lubavitcher Rebbe encouraged those who are able to blow the Shofar to seek out Jews who did not hear the Shofar on Rosh Hashana and blow for them.

- When blowing for those who were not in Shul, it is sufficient to blow the first 30 sounds that are sounded in Shul after the *brachot*. It is best to pause slightly between the *Shevarim* and *Teruah* but not to actually breathe in between.
- If, for whatever reason, one is unable to blow all 30 sounds, he should repeat the sequence of *Tekiah Shevarim Teruah Tekiah* three times. He should bear in mind that if either the *Shevarim* or *Teruah* is not necessary, it should be considered as if he is blowing them simply as music and not as a mitzvah. He should not take a breath in between the *Shevarim* and the *Teruah* but should only make a slight pause.<sup>80</sup>
- If one is blowing for other men who do not know how to say a *bracha*, he may say a *bracha* for them even if he already heard the shofar and made the *brachot*.
- If a man who already heard the shofar is blowing for women, he should have one of the women say the *bracha*, as he may not say it for them.
- According to the Sefardic custom, women should not make this *bracha*. If the man blowing the Shofar for them has already performed the mitzva, he should blow it without a *bracha*.
- A child who knows how to blow the Shofar may blow the Shofar for other children.

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<sup>80</sup> See Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 590, 2 and 9

- One who knows how to blow the Shofar himself may fulfill the mitzvah by hearing the blasts from someone else. The fact that he is not blowing it himself does not diminish the mitzvah since the main mitzvah is the **hearing** of the sounds and not the actual blowing.<sup>81</sup>

Click here for an amazing story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Shofar-blowing:  
<http://chabadinfo.com/video/the-promise-that-got-the-rebbe-stuck-during-tekios/>

### **No Hallel<sup>82</sup>**

Hallel is not recited on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur because these are days of judgment.

### **Bowing**

It is proper to bow down on one's knees when reciting *Aleinu* during the repetition of Musaf. (I am not sure if this custom applies to women.) One should bow until one's head touches the floor. Before beginning the repetition, the Chazan should position himself in such a way that he will be able to bow without having to uproot his feet from their place.

When bowing at this time, if the shul's floor is stone or tile, one should place towels or the like to make a separation between himself and the floor.

### **In the Afternoon<sup>83</sup>**

- It is proper not to nap during the day of Rosh Hashana because the Jerusalem Talmud says that one who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah will have a sleepy mazal that year. One should rather occupy oneself with reciting *Tehillim* and studying Torah.
- Some say that one may nap after midday. It is certainly better to nap than to waste time.
- The main interpretation of the teaching that "one who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah will have a sleepy mazal that year" is that one who is sleepy and does not pray with strength, his mazal, i.e., his defending angel, will not be able to speak in his merit.

### **Mincha**

One should be careful to pray mincha (the afternoon prayer) with concentration. Elijah, the prophet, was answered when he prayed Mincha. On Rosh Hashanah this prayer is especially significant since Mincha was established by our patriarch Isaac, and on Rosh Hashanah we are

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<sup>81</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 581, 10

<sup>82</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 583, 8

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 8, Darkei Moshe, 583, 2 and Mateh Efrayim, 598, 1

trying to evoke the merit of Isaac's being bound up in the *akeidah* in order to transform G-d's judgment into mercy.<sup>84</sup>

### **Tashlich<sup>85</sup>**

- In the afternoon (after Mincha but preferably before sunset), it is customary to go to a river or lake in which there are live fish and say *Tashlich* (pg. 200 in the Machzor).
- There are several reasons for this custom:
  - Water represents Divine kindness.
  - The water recalls the merit of the *Akeidah* (binding of Isaac) before which Abraham had to wade through a deep river.
  - Fish represent the ever-open eye of G-d.
  - We pray that we multiply like fish and that the "evil eye" not affect us just as it does not affect fish.
- Those unable to do *Tashlich* on Rosh Hashana may do so up until Hoshana Raba. (Some have the custom of specifically doing *Tashlich* on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Tishrei.)
- Although there was a custom to feed challah to the fish when doing *Tashlich*, the poskim (Halachic deciders) write that on Yom Tov one should not do so as one may not feed wild animals on Yom Tov. Some defend this custom.<sup>86</sup>
- It is customary to shake one's Talit Kattan after Tashlich. This has Kabbalistic significance. In addition, this reminds us to clean our garments (thought, speech, and action) and ensure that they are clean and free of sin.<sup>87</sup>

Click here for a story relating to tashlich by Rabbi Zalman Posner OBM.

[https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/livingtorah/player\\_cdo/aid/424362/jewish/Deep-Down-A-Spark.htm](https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/livingtorah/player_cdo/aid/424362/jewish/Deep-Down-A-Spark.htm)

### **Second night of Rosh Hashana**

#### **Monday night, Sept. 30/2 Tishrei**

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 2

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 584, 7

<sup>86</sup> See Minhag Yisrael Torah, vol. 3, page 92

<sup>87</sup> Mathe Efrayim, 598, 4 and Sefer HaMinhagim, Chabad, page 57

Candle-lighting time is not before 7:42 p.m. The candles must be lit from a pre-existing flame.

### **The Blessing of She'hechyanu<sup>88</sup>**

There is a doubt as to whether this blessing should be recited on the second night. In some regards, the two days of Rosh HaShana are considered one long day, while in other matters they are considered separate. For this reason, one should prepare a new fruit or new garment in order to be able to say this *bracha* without any question.

- One should bring a new fruit to the table before candle-lighting on the second night. This is in order for the women who light the candles to say the blessing of *Shehechyanu* while having that in mind. The women should light immediately prior to Kiddush so that they will be able to eat the fruit soon after saying *shehechyanu*. Some say that it isn't necessary for women to light just prior to Kiddush.<sup>89</sup>
- When lighting the candles, the brachot of *Lehadlik Ner Shel Yom Hazikaron* and *Shehechyanu* are recited.
- When a man makes the *Shehechyanu* blessing in Kiddush, he should also have in mind the new fruit (which should be in front of him) or a new article of clothing (that he is wearing).
- The Chabad custom is to eat a *kezayit* (the size of an olive, approx. 1 oz.) of the new fruit following Kiddush and make a *Bracha Achrona* (after-Bracha) on the fruit before washing for bread. Some are particular to eat less than a *kezayit*. Others have the custom to eat the new fruit after the *Hamotzie*.<sup>90</sup>
- If one does not have a new fruit or garment, one should still recite *Shehechyanu*.
- A man who lights candles shouldn't recite *Shehechyanu* during candle-lighting but rather during Kiddush.

### **Second Day of Rosh Hashana**

#### **Tuesday, Oct. 1/ 2 Tishrei**

The order of the prayers is similar to the first day.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 600

<sup>89</sup> Mateh Efrayin 599:9 and Elef HaMateh 5

<sup>90</sup> See note 2 in the Dirshu Shulchan Aruch 600 in the name of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rabbi Elyashiv.



If possible, the *baal toke'ah* should wear a new garment when blowing the shofar so he can have this in mind when saying *shehichiyanu*. If he doesn't have one, he should recite *shehechiyanu* anyway.<sup>91</sup>

The Sefardic custom is to not make *she'hechiyanu* for blowing the shofar on the second day.<sup>92</sup> The reason for this is that they consider that the *she'hechiyanu* recited at night "covers" the blowing of the Shofar as well.<sup>93</sup>

## **Farbrengen**

The Lubavitcher Rebbe would customarily lead a farbrengen (Chassidic gathering) which would begin on the second day of Rosh Hashana after Mincha and continue on into the night. This is in order to draw the holiness of the Yom Tov into the rest of the year. During the farbrengen, the assembled would sing the songs associated with the Ba'al Shem Tov, the Magid of Mezritch and all of the Chabad Rebbes. The Rebbe would customarily recite a ma'amar in which he quoted the Ba'al Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezritch and all of the Chabad Rebbeim.

Yom Tov ends at 7:41 p.m.

## **Tzom Gedalyah<sup>94</sup>**

### **Wednesday, Oct. 2 / 3 Tishrei**

We fast on this day to commemorate the assassination of Gedalyah, who was the righteous governor of the Jews after the destruction of the first Temple. Although he was killed on the first day of Rosh Hashana, the fast was established on the third of Tishrei as it is best not to fast on Rosh Hashana. The fast begins at dawn (6:01 am). One who intends to wake up early and eat, must have this intention before going to sleep. Otherwise, it is forbidden to eat.

All healthy men and women are obligated to fast. Pregnant and nursing women and people who are ill are not obligated. If in doubt, one should consult a Rabbi.

## **Shacharit**

*Selichot* and *Avinu Malkeinu* (Siddur pg. 454) are recited and the Torah is read.

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<sup>91</sup> See Mishnah Berurah (500:7) that, according to the Rama, it is not necessary to wear a new garment in order to make a *she'hechiyanu* on the blowing of the Shofar. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains that the reason for this opinion is that, although Rosh HaShana may be considered one long day since the shofar cannot be blown at night, the nighttime is an interruption and it therefore obligates a new bracha.

<sup>92</sup> Bait Yosef on Siman 300 and implication of the Mechaber 500:3

<sup>93</sup> Bach 300. See there that, on the first day, the bracha of *she'hichiyanu* doesn't cover the blowing of the Shofar which is a Torah obligation.

<sup>94</sup> O.C. 550

The Chazzan adds *Aneinu* in the repetition of the Amidah (page 48). Three people who are fasting should be called to the Torah.

## Mincha

- Before the Mincha Amidah, the Torah is read. Three people who are fasting should be called to the Torah. The third person also reads the Haftorah. Sefardim do not read a Haftorah on the afternoon of a fast day.
- In the Amidah, those who are fasting say the paragraph beginning *Aneinu* in the *Shma Koleinu* blessing (Siddur pg. 108).
  - One who forgot to say *aneinu* may add it to *Elokai netzor*, if one remembers it before completing the Amidah.
  - If one forgot *aneinu* and remembered after finishing the Amidah, he need not repeat the Amidah.
- We recite *Tachnun* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.
  - In *Avinu Malkeinu* we say “*chadesh*” and “*katveinu*” (as during the ten days of repentance) and not “*bareich*” and “*zachreinu*” (as during the other fast days).

The fast concludes at 7:30 p.m.

## The Ten Days Of Repentance

1 Tishrei to 10 Tishrei / Sep 29-30 to Oct. 9

### Special Insertions in Prayer<sup>95</sup>

Throughout the *Aseret Yemai Teshuva* (Ten Days of Repentance - days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur), various insertions are added in the Amida (standing prayer recited quietly).

These insertions are ***Zochreinu lachayim*** etc., ***Mi Chamocha*** etc., ***HaMelech Hakadosh*** , ***HaMelech Hamishpat*** , ***Uchtov*** etc., ***Uvesefer*** etc., and ***HaShalom*** instead of *Shalom* (at the end of the Amidah)<sup>96</sup>. This is added during Kadish as well (but not during the Grace after Meals).

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<sup>95</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 582 1 and 2, Elef HaMagen 13, on Mateh Efrayim, 582, Mateh Efrayim, 584, 9, Elef LaMateh, 2 on ibid

<sup>96</sup> Some also change the end of the final blessing of the Amidah from “*hamevarech et amo yisrael bashalom*” to “*Oseh HaShalom.*” (Mateh Efrayim, 581, 1)

In addition, on Friday night the *Chazan* should say **Hamelech Hakadosh** in the mini repetition of the Amidah (page 172).

In many communities, it is customary to repeat the word *Le'eilah* in the Kadish. The Chabad custom is to not repeat this word until the *kadeishim* recited during *Ne'ilah* during which it is repeated. Whenever the word is repeated, one should contract the words *min* and *kol* into one word – *mikol*. This is in order to ensure that there only be 28 words in the first half of kadish.<sup>97</sup>

## Mistakes

See footnote as to what to do in case of an error in these prayers<sup>98</sup>

If a chazzan mistakenly omits the appropriate insertions during the repetition of the Amidah, the same laws that are explained below apply to him.<sup>99</sup>

## Unsure

One who made a mistake and is in the middle of the Amidah but does not know the law may walk and find a sefer (book) which will clarify the law. Some permit even asking a Rav (who has already completed the Amidah) in the middle of the Amidah.

## During the Repetition

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<sup>97</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 581, 1

<sup>98</sup> **Ha-kel Hakadosh**

• If one mistakenly said *Ha-kel Hakadosh* instead of *Hamelech Hakadosh*:

- If one realized immediately (within 2 seconds), then the person can immediately correct it by saying *Hamelech Hakadosh*.
- If one did not realize the mistake right away, or already began the following Bracha, he must repeat the Amidah from the beginning. This also applies if one realized the mistake after completing the Amidah.
- If one is unsure as to whether or not he said *HaMelech HaKadosh* or not, he must repeat the Amidah.

### **Uvchen ten pachdecha**

• If one forgot to add the insertion *Uvchen ten pachdecha* etc. on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, if they at least finished the bracha with the words *HaMelech Hakadosh*, they need not to repeat the Amidah.

### **HaMelech HaMishpat**

• If one forgot and said *Melech Ohev Tzedaka Umishpat* instead of *HaMelech HaMishpat*; if one realized immediately (within 2 seconds), one can immediately correct it by saying *HaMelech HaMishpat*.

• If one did not realize the mistake right away, or already began the following *Bracha* one should first complete the *Amidah*. It is considered praiseworthy (although not mandatory) to then repeat the *Amidah*. (One should have in mind that this is not an obligatory prayer but rather a "volunteer" prayer.)

### **Other Insertions**

• If one omitted any of the other insertions, he need not repeat the Amidah. However, if one realized his omission before saying the name of G-d at the end of that bracha, he should add that insertion and continue from where he previously had reached.

<sup>99</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 582, 8

- During the repetition of the Amidah, the community should say the additions of *Uchtov* and *Uvesefer* out loud before the Chazzan says them.<sup>100</sup>

### Shir Hama'alot Mima'amakim

- During these days, we also add *Shir Hama'alot Mima'amakim* (Psalm 131) during *shachrit* after *Yishtabach* (page 38 in the siddur). In many communities, the Aron Kodesh (holy ark) is opened for the recital of the psalm. This is not the Chabad custom. If one is not holding with the minyan, he may skip ahead in order to say this with the minyan. If he wishes, he may also repeat it in its proper place.

### Teshuvah<sup>101</sup>

- During these days, one should spend time doing *Teshuva* and correcting anything that needs to be corrected.
- Even a businessperson should minimize his business in these days and only work as needed. He should spend most of his time studying Torah.<sup>102</sup>
- During these days, one should spend time learning the *seforim* (holy books) that inspire one to *teshuvah* (repentance) and/or listening to *shiurim* (classes) that motivate one to serve G-d better.
- It is especially important to rectify sins towards one's fellow man during this time as Yom Kippur doesn't atone for these sins unless one seeks forgiveness from one's fellow.
- One who makes an honest reckoning of his behavior will realize that there are many sins that he may be transgressing regularly. He may have become so habituated to these transgressions that he no longer pays them attention. These may include:
  - Praying or saying blessings without *kavana* (concentration).
  - Hatred towards a fellow-Jew
  - Anger

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<sup>100</sup> Many have the custom that the community also recites *Zochreinu* and *Mi Chamocha* out loud.

This is not the Chabad custom. This is because the later insertions are prayers for a "good life" and the earlier insertions only mention "life." Since we already asked for a greater blessing in the silent Amidah (the "good life" mentioned in the *uchtov* and *uvesefer*), we don't go back and ask for a lesser blessing (the "life" mentioned in *vezochreinu* and *mi chamocha*) during the repetition (Sefer HaMinhagim, Chabad).

<sup>101</sup> Shulchan Aruch HaRav, 603, See Chayei Adam, Klal 143

<sup>102</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 602, 21

- (Men) gazing at women
  - Speaking *lashon hara* (slander) or *devarim beteilim* (empty words)
  - Wasting time that should be spent studying Torah
  - Seeking out honor
  - Embarrassing others
  - Not paying workers on the same day (or on the designated payday).
  - Flattering the wicked
- In addition, one should work on rooting out negative character-traits and lifestyles which are the source of bad behaviors. Specifically, haughtiness, pursuing pleasures, excessive talking and depression. These are the “fathers of impurity” which produce many “children.”<sup>103</sup>
  - One should take to heart the suffering in this world and know that G-d punishes in a manner that is measure for measure. (One should not tell this to those suffering as that would be hurtful.) One should therefore correct their behavior so that they are saved from this (Kaf HaChaim 603:14 based on Sefer Chassidim, Siman 92).
  - One should be extra careful about keeping the highest standard of Mitzvot during these days. For example, if one is not normally careful to eat *Pat Yisrael* (bread baked by a Jewish baker) or *Chalav Yisrael* (milk that is milked in the presence of a Jew), one should be particular about these matters in these days.
  - Some have the exemplary custom of writing down their good resolutions and then checking them on the next year to see if they kept them. If they did, they then add another good resolution. In any case, one should bear in mind that these resolutions are without the force of a vow (i.e., *bli neder*).<sup>104</sup>
  - Some have a custom to purchase a beautiful Etrog, Lulav and Hadassim in these days in order that this be a merit for them on the judgment day.<sup>105</sup>
  - It is preferable for the Yeshivot not to give vacation time between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur as this time is best spent studying Torah.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Kaf HaChaim 603:7

<sup>104</sup> Ibid 12

<sup>105</sup> Mateh Efrayim, 603, 5

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 6

- Throughout the *Aseret Yemai Teshuva* we recite *Avinu Malkeinu* (Siddur pg. 454) in Shacharit and Mincha.

## **Shabbat Teshuvah**

### **Tishrei 6 / Oct. 4 and 5**

This Shabbat is referred to as Shabbat Shuva or Teshuvah evoking the first word of the Haftarah – “*Shuvah* – Return.”

In general, the festival of Shabbos was given to Israel as a time for Torah study and prayer. Therefore, one should always take care not to pass the time idly or in inappropriate conversation. This is especially true on Shabbat Shuvah during which one should be careful to concentrate entirely on Torah, prayer, and reflection on repentance, thereby attaining forgiveness for whatever unfitting behavior may have marred other Sabbaths (*The Book of Our Heritage* by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov).

The Teshuvah done on this Shabbat is more elevated than the Teshuvah done on all the other Shabbatot of the year. Thus it elevates all of them.<sup>107</sup>

One should be especially careful to observe all of the detailed laws of Shabbat this week. Hopefully, this will be a good start to observing all of these laws throughout the year (Kaf HaChaim 602:8).

### **Shabbat Teshuva Derasha**

It is customary among Jewish communities around the world that the Rav of the community says a Shabbat *Teshuva Derasha* (speech about repentance) on the Shabbat between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Although this speech may contain other components, the main objective is that it should inspire the community to reflect upon their deeds, better their ways and do teshuvah. The speaker should not speak negative or disparaging words about the Jewish people. On the contrary, one should take every opportunity to speak positively about them.<sup>108</sup>

It is customary not to say Kiddush Levana (the blessing on the new moon) until after Yom Kippur since this blessing is supposed to be recited with joy and the Ten Days of Repentance are a time of seriousness rather than joy. On the other hand, some say that one should try to recite the blessing before Yom Kippur as the merit of that blessing might tip the scales for the good (Rama 602:2 and Kaf HaChaim 19).

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<sup>107</sup> Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat 1, page 345

<sup>108</sup> Kaf HaChaim 603:23

**May we be blessed among all the Jewish people with a good, sweet year, a year of peace and security, a year of health and success, a year of happiness and holiness, a year of shidduchim for those who need one, a year of refuah sheleimah for those who need it, and, most importantly, a year of Moshiach!**

**Rosh Hashanah Times 5780**

	Candle lighting 1 <sup>st</sup> night (Sunday)	Candle lighting 2 <sup>nd</sup> night (Monday)	Yom Tov ends	Fast of Gedalyah begins	Fast of Gedalyah ends
Miami	6:51 pm	After 7:42 pm	7:41 pm	6:01 am	7:30 pm
New York	6:24 pm	After 7:20 pm	7:19 pm	5:27 am	7:04 pm
Los Angeles	6:22 pm	After 7:16 pm	7:15 pm	5:30 am	7:02 pm
Jerusalem	5:47 pm	After 7:02 pm	7:01 pm	5:17 am	6:48 pm
Melbourne	6:04 pm	After 7:02 pm	7:03 pm	4:32 am	6:52 pm