

Whenever page numbers are provided throughout this guide, they refer to:

Complete Artscroll Machzor (CAM)

Artscroll Transliterated Machzor (ATM) - we use this at MJE

The NCSY bencher - we use this at MJE



ROSH HASHANA

In A NutShell

1. ~~THE BRITS~~ ROSH HASHANA IS COMING

Selichot (penitential prayers) - Selichot are recited once each day (usually late at night or early in the morning) the week before Rosh Hashana. They involve the invocation of G-d's 13 Attributes of Mercy. The first night of Selichot will be Saturday night, September 21. That night MJE West will be having a soulful kumsitz at 11:00 followed by explanatory musical selichot at 12:00. Selichot continue Monday morning and each weekday until Yom Kippur.

A. SELICHOT

#themoreyouknow

Tens of thousands of Jews visit the Western Wall (Kotel) in Jerusalem on, gathering to ask for forgiveness and mercy in Selichot prayers before the Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) fast despite - or in spite of - the tense security situation in the capital.

B. SHOFAR



Preparations - On the physical side, it is customary to prepare physically for Rosh Hashana by buying a new suit or outfit for the holiday (especially among women) and taking a shave and a haircut. Many men get their tallitot (prayer shawls) cleaned at this time and have the custom of wearing a kittel, a special white robe, on this holiday. Wearing white shows our hope and confidence that our sins will be 'whitened' back to innocence again.

During the month preceding Rosh Hashana (the month of Elul), the shofar is blown each weekday morning to remind us that the holiday is approaching. It is not blown on the day before Rosh Hashana in order to separate between the shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana and those of Elul.

C. TAKE CARE OF YO' SELF



Dis year me focusing on me self-care. When me need little love, me going to give meself cookie.

I can hop on this wagon

2. THE THREE "T" S

A. TESHUVA (REPENTANCE)

We think back over the errors, transgressions and rebellions we committed this year and repent for them. Formal repentance involves articulating our sins (making a list can be helpful), regretting them and affirming verbally that we will not repeat them. For sins that had an impact upon other people, asking their forgiveness is required first.

B. TEFILLA (PRAYER)

Even if you do not ordinarily pray that often during the year, this is a time when it is worthwhile to spend more time praying to Hashem, whether in synagogue (for daily prayers or for selichot, see below) or even in private.

C. TZEDAKA (CHARITY)

Giving tzedaka is encouraged at this time of year as an act of redemption. This is why many synagogues have Rosh Hashana, Kol Nidrei or Yom Kippur appeals.

3. ROSH HASHANA IS ABOUT TO BE HERE... WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

A. NULLIFYING VOWS

(p. 762 in *Artscroll siddur*)

It is customary to convene a Jewish court (bet din) on the day before Rosh Hashana (Sunday morning, September 29, 2019) usually after morning services or late in the afternoon, to release us from any unfulfilled vows we might have made this year. This helps us go before the Divine Court with a "clean slate." The court can be made up of any 3 Jewish men, who sit, while the petitioner stands before them and asks for a pardon for any eligible offenses (owing money, for instance, is not eligible.) A husband, upon request, can ask for release for his wife's vows. If it is not done before Rosh Hashana, one can still do it during the 10 Days of Repentance.

B. ERUV & COOKING

Eruv: One may carry on yom tov (if an item is needed for that day) without an eruv. This is different than Shabbat.

Food: The laws of food preparation on festival days are complex and differ from Shabbat in several ways. Under certain conditions, one may transfer flame and cook food on a festival day. Contact a rabbi for specific guidance.

4. SO ITS ROSH HASHANA - NOW WHAT? ... LAWS AND CUSTOMS

A: ROSH HASHANA GREETINGS

Following the evening services on the first night of Rosh Hashana, it is customary to greet each individual person with the following special formula:

For men: "I'shana tova tikateiv v'teichateim" *bold shows accent*

For women: "I'shana tova tikateivi v'teichateimi" *bold shows accent*

It means: For a good year, may you be written and inscribed

Other greetings often heard during this holiday season are:

- a) ketiva vachatima tova (sometimes said as: kesiva vachasima tova)
- b) may you have a good "gebencht yor" (Yiddish)
- c) shana tova u'metuka - a good and sweet year

B. CANDLE LIGHTING & KIDDUSH

Rosh Hashana Candle-lighting *CAM: pp.18-19, ATM: pp.57-59*

- o The Rosh Hashana candle-lighting is the same as the regular festival candle-lighting.
- o It can be found on pp. 2-3 of the NCSY bencher. Unlike Shabbat, one should first recite the blessing, then light the candles. Single men who are financially independent and do not live at home should light candles as well.
- o Women should recite the Sheh-hechyanu blessing during candle-lighting.
[Men recite it during kiddush; women respond amen at that time.]

The Rosh Hashana Kiddush: *CAM: pp.94-97, ATM: pp.146-149*

It is similar to the festival Kiddush. It can be found on pp.18-21 of the NCSY bencher. Men recite the Sheh'hechyanu blessing at this time. It is also customary at this time to bless one's children (p. 11 in NCSY bencher)

C. SIMANEI MILTA (SYMBOLIC FOODS)

CAM: pp.96-99, ATM: pp.150-151

It is customary to eat special foods on the first night of Rosh Hashana:

A) After kiddush and hand-washing, many have the custom to use special round challa rolls and to dip them in (or squeeze onto them) some honey.

B) After the challa, many have the custom of dipping an apple in honey and saying the following blessing before eating:

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-Olam, borei p'ri ha-etz (on the apple)

C) After eating the apple and honey, one says: Yehi ratzon milfancha, Adonai Eloheinu vei'lohei avoteinu, she'te'chadeish aleinu shana tova u'metuka.

May it be your will, O G-d, the G-d of our forefathers, that You renew upo us a good and sweet year.

D) Other foods eaten include carrots, leeks, beets dates and pomegranates. A special statement accompanies each food.

SECOND NIGHT:

It is customary to eat a new fruit - one you have not eaten for a year - on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. The actual point of the custom is to find a reason to say the "sheh-hechyanu" blessing, so any new item that brings joy to your family (like that new outfit) will do.

The bracha is: baruch ata adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, she-hechyanu, v'kiymanu, v'higyanu laz'man ha-zeh

Simanim for Rosh Hashanah

Apples, dipped in honey:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that You renew for us a good and a sweet year

New Fruit:
ברוך אתה אדוני מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו וחגיגנו לזמן הזה
Praised be You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us and permitted us to reach this season

Carrots:
יהי רצון מלפנך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שירבו זכויותינו
May it be G-d's will that our merits will increase.

Leeks:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיכרתו שונאינו
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that our enemies be decimated

Beets:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שישתלקו שונאינו
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that our adversaries be removed.

Dates:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיתמו שונאינו
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that our enemies be consumed

Gourds:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיקרע גור דיננו ויקראו לפניך זכויותינו
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that the decree of our sentence be torn asunder; and may our merits be proclaimed before You.

Pomegranates:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שנרבה זכויות כרמון
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that our merits increase as [the seeds of] a pomegranate.

Fish:
יהי רצון מלפנך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שנפרה ונרבה כדגים
May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.

Head of a Sheep of Fish or Lettuce:
יהי רצון מלפנך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב
May it be G-d's will that we will be the head and not the tail.

5. WHATS GOING DOWN IN SHUL?

A. SHACHRIT/MORNING PRAYER SERVICE"

The Rosh Hashana prayers are similar to Shabbat and holiday prayers, but are longer and include some special insertions. Here are the very very basics. For prayers repeated more than once - only one citation is given, usually for the first occurrence or first day of Rosh Hashana.

i: Four insertions in the Amida/Silent Devotion - Before the first two and last two blessings of the silent devotion (amida), we insert short requests to be remembered and written for a good life this coming year. These are recited quietly in the silent Amida and aloud by the congregation (followed by the chazzan) during the repetition. Here are the first appearances: CAM - p.62-63 (ATM: p.107) "Remember us," CAM p.64-65 (ATM: p.108) "Who is like You," CAM p.72-73 (ATM: p.120) "And inscribe," and CAM p. 74-75 (ATM: p.121), "In the book of life."

ii: ha-melech ha-kadosh - In addition to this, the blessing "ha'eil ha-kadosh" is changed to "ha-melech ha-kadosh" from Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur. See CAM p. 66-67, bottom, ATM p.112.

At the end of the kaddish, "oseh HA-shalom" is said instead of Oseh Shalom. See CAM p.80 at bottom, ATM p.134 at bottom.

iii: Avinu Malkeinu - "our father, our king" is famous for the melody of its closing line. Nine lines in the middle (from "hachazireinu bi'teshuva", top of CAM p.386-387, ATM p.432, 8 lines up, until "selicha u'mechila") are recited responsively. This prayer is recited following the Amida in each service.

iv: Shir ha'ma'alot - Psalm 130 ("From the depths, I called out to You") is inserted in the service preceding barchu on Rosh Hashana and all the 10 days of repentance. See CAM p. 264-265, ATM p.339

B. TORAH READING

The Torah reading for the first day is the story of Sarah giving birth to Yitzchak (Isaac) in Genesis 21; Hashem decided this on Rosh Hashana. *CAM p.402 top, ATM p.450.*

The second day reading is the binding of Isaac, which resulted in the sacrifice of a ram trapped by its very own horn. *CAM p.402 bottom, ATM p.592.*

D. SO NOW YOU'RE A POET...?

Certain special poetic prayers are inserted into the prayer service in honor of the day. These include:

U'netaneh Tokef – the stirring call to repentance written by Rabbi Amnon of Mainz on his deathbed. *CAM pp. 480, ATM p.687*

V'chol Ma'aminim - a rousing song in which we say that the Jews are and have always been "ma'aminim", believers. *CAM p.490, ATM p.698*

Hayom T'amtzeinu – the jubilant finale of the mussaf service, in which we ask Hashem to accept our prayers. *CAM p. 532, ATM p.758*

C. MUSSAF

In the Mussaf prayer, three special sections are added that define the essence of the Rosh Hashana day:
Malchiyot/Kingship - recognizing, affirming G-d as our king *CAM p.454, ATM p.646*
Zichronot/Remembrances - asking Hashem to remember us this year for the good *CAM p. 458, ATM p.654*
Shofarot/Shofar Blasts - asking for Hashem's presence and revelation to be restored to us. *CAM p.462, ATM p.663*

E. BIRKAT KOHANIM

Blessing of the Kohanim - Ashkenazic Jews in the Diaspora say this only on the festival days. *CAM p.524, ATM p. 747*

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This modified gesture used by Star Trek's Vulcan's was originally Leonard Nimoy's idea. Though Nimoy was not an orthodox Jew himself, when he was a child, his grandfather would take him to the synagogue. During his time there, he observed this blessing and subsequent gesture and, according to his autobiography, was very impressed by the ceremony; remembering it later while filming "Amok Time", which is the first place the now iconic gesture appeared in Star Trek

F. SHOFAR SO GOOD

Hearing the shofar is a Biblical commandment on the first day of Rosh Hashana. The most important shofar blasts are blown immediately preceding mussaf (usually right after the Rabbi's sermon). *CAM pp. 432-439, ATM pp. 618-624.*

Thirty individual blasts are blown at this time. During the course of the service, 70 more blasts are blown (30 during the repetition and 40 at the end of the service) to make a grand total of 100 sounds. One should hear the 100 shofar blasts (without interruption) both days of Rosh Hashana. One who is unable to hear all 100 should make sure to at least hear the first 30.

The shofar makes three kinds of sounds:

- Tekiah _____ (1)
- Shevarim _ _ _ _ (3)
- Teru'ah - - - - - (9)

There are three kinds of shofar series:

- Version 1: _____
- Version 2: _____
- Version 3: _____

This totals 10 blasts. When repeated three times, it equals 30.

6. SHULS OVER, NOW WHAT?...

TASHLICH!

Following services, kiddush is recited and a festive meal is eaten. Some have the custom not to sleep on the first day, so as not to have a farshluffener (sleepy) year.

The Tashlich service is performed in the afternoon at a local body of water. A special private prayer is recited in which we ask G-d to cast our sins "into the depths of the sea." Some have the custom of throwing bread into the water, but others are opposed to this practice. If one is unable to do Tashlich on the first day, it may be done during the

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Tashlich dates back to the 15th century from Germany. When saying this verse the custom is to shake out your pockets or hem of clothing as if to shake out the sins and express our desire to live a life without sin.

