

High Holidays Shofar

ימים נוראים תשפ"ה

October 2024



Service Schedule

Erev Rosh Hashanah Wednesday, October 2	Candle lighting: 7:02 pm Mincha: 7:05 pm
Rosh Hashanah 1st Day Thursday, October 3	Shacharis: 8:30 am Mincha: 7:05 pm Candle lighting <i>from a pre-existing flame</i> : after 8:21 pm
Rosh Hashanah 2nd Day Friday, October 4	Shacharis: 8:30 am Mincha: 7:00 pm Candle lighting <i>from a pre-existing flame</i> : 6:59 pm
Erev Yom Kippur Friday, October 11	Mincha: 4:00 pm Candle Lighting: 6:40 pm Kol Nidrei: 7:10 pm
Yom Kippur/Yizkor Shabbat, October 12	Shacharis: 9:15 am Mincha: 5:50 pm Shabbat and Yom Kippur end after 8:06 pm

**We wish you all a K'tivah V'Chatimah Tovah
A Happy, Healthy & Successful New Year!**

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The Month of Elul

The Elul season is of unusual importance in the religious life of the Jewish people. This is because the month of Elul is dedicated to the spiritual preparation for the coming season of Yamim Nora'im (The Days of Awe, consisting of Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur). Beginning with the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, the Shofar is sounded every day in the synagogue, except on Shabbat. The blowing of the Shofar acts as a solemn reminder that the Days of Judgment are fast approaching. In this Elul season, the Jewish person takes account of his spiritual life & makes amends to G-d & man for the errors he has made during the past year. Charity is given abundantly. Thus, before the Yamim Nora'im period begins, the Jewish person who heeds the Elul message experiences a great spiritual uplifting in every aspect of his conduct.

Selichot Services

The week before Rosh Hashanah, Selichot prayers are recited. These prayers are for forgiveness & mercy, for the ending of Israel's sufferings, and for an era of peace for all mankind. On the morning of Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Selichot service is longer than usual. Since this is the day that precedes the new year, we devote more time to prayer & introspection.



The Month of Tishrei

The month of Tishrei can be divided into two parts: The period of Yamim Nora'im (The days of Awe, from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur), and the period of Z'man Simchateinu (The Season of our Joy), which is centered around the festival of Succot.

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, which marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year, is celebrated on the first & second day of the month of Tishrei. Unlike other nations that celebrate their New Year's day with insobriety & raucousness, we observe our New Year as a solemn festival. Rosh Hashanah is known in the Torah as Yom Teruah (the day of blowing). In the prayers, we refer to it as the Day of Judgment, the Yom Hadin, the day on which the A-mighty determines the future course of events for each & every individual for the coming year. There is a tradition that on Rosh Hashanah the judgment is "written down." It may still be changed during the Ten Days of Repentance. In the last moments of Yom Kippur, however, the judgment is "sealed." On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, people bless each other with the words "L'shanah Tovah Tikatvu Vitaychatmu" - "May you be inscribed & sealed for a good year."



Holiday Customs

Following services on Rosh Hashanah night, it is customary to enjoy a regular holiday meal (Kiddush, Challahs, etc.). At this meal, one should take a piece of apple, dip it in honey & say: "May it be Your will, Hashem our G-d & the G-d of our fathers, that You renew for us a good & sweet new year."

The Shofar

The outstanding mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah is listening to the sound of the Shofar. So closely linked is the shofar to the essence of the day that the Torah refers to the day not as Rosh Hashanah but as "Yom Teruah," a day of blowing.

Maimonides in Hilchot Teshuva writes that while the blowing of the Shofar is a Torah decree & may defy human comprehension, there is an allusion in it, namely "awake sleepers from your sleep...examine your deeds...repent...improve your ways & actions."

The Fast Day of Gedaliah

The day after Rosh Hashanah, the third day of Tishrei, is observed as the Fast Day of Gedaliah. In the year 586 BCE, after King Nevuchadnetzar of Babylon destroyed the city of Jerusalem, he appointed a prominent Jewish leader by the name of Gedaliah ben Achikam as Governor of Judah. Gedaliah made a sincere effort to save the Jewish nation. However, his rule lasted only two months. He was murdered by men who were envious of his power. With this treacherous murder, all organized Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael came to a halt. When the third day of Tishrei occurs on Shabbat, the fast is postponed until Sunday.

Shabbat Shuva

The Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur is known as Shabbat Shuva, the Shabbat of Repentance. The name is derived from the Haftarah, which begins with the word Shuvah - "Return O Israel, to the L-rd your G-d". We devote the Shabbat before Yom Kippur to the main theme of The Ten Days of Repentance - deep regret for past wrongdoings and a profound determination to correct our ways in the future.

Yom Kippur

On Erev Yom Kippur (the day preceding Yom Kippur), it is our solemn duty to seek forgiveness from people whom we harmed or offended during the past year. According to a teaching of the Mishnah, "Yom Kippur provides atonement for sins between man & G-d, but for sins between man & his fellow man, Yom Kippur does not provide atonement until he appeases his fellow man" (Yoma, Chapter 8).

The spirit of the Day of Atonement finds its supreme expression in the synagogue, where all assemble to join in Divine worship, to ask G-d's forgiveness for our sins through fasting, prayer & charity. One should not wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur. Shoes made of man-made material are obligatory. It is a mitzvah to have a proper holiday meal prior to the fast, so that the fast will be less difficult.

Next Year in Jerusalem!

לשנה הבאה בירושלים!