

The Laws of the Holidays of Tishrei

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The Month of Elul

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai. After 40 days, on Yom Kippur, Moshe came down from the mountain with the second set of the 10 Commandments, and Hashem forgave the Jewish people for their sin with the golden calf. From the beginning of Elul through Yom Kippur our repentance is more readily accepted by Hashem than during the rest of the year, and so the Jewish people increase their repentance, prayers and supplications during this time. God fearing members of the Jewish Community accept upon themselves special practices, such as increasing Torah learning and prayer. These practices are a proper way to prepare for the upcoming holy days of Tishrei.

Selichot

The Ashkenazi custom is to blow the shofar from the beginning of the month of Elul until the 28th of Elul after Shacharit. On Erev Rosh Hashanah the shofar should not be blown. The Sepharadi custom is to blow the shofar when saying the 13 Middot during Selichot. Selichot are said in the month of Elul. Sephardim begin saying Selichot on the second day of Elul, and Ashkenazim begin saying Selichot on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah. When Rosh Hashanah begins on a Monday or Tuesday, Ashkenazim begin saying Selichot one week earlier, on Saturday night of the previous week.

The ideal time to say Selichot is before dawn (On the 2nd of Elul, August 22, the time is 4:33, on the 23rd of Elul, September 12th at 04:50). However, those who cannot wake up at this time are allowed to say Selichot after dawn and even during the day, but they must be

finished before the stars come out (On the 2nd of Elul by 19:39, on the 23rd of Elul at 19:12). Selichot can also be said after midnight (On the 2nd of Elul 00:42, on the 23rd of Elul 00:35).

If one is saying Selichot in the morning (after dawn), the words *b'ashmarot haboker*, *bi'zaakam b'od layil* and *chatzot lilah licha kamo* should be omitted, as these phrases pertain to the pre-dawn hours.

According to most opinions, one is permitted to begin the Selichot service if there is no minyan. Once a minyan has formed, they should say the Kaddish that was not said at the beginning of Selichot, and continue from the place where they stopped.

Those who are short on time or who are late in arriving to Selichot and must therefore skip some of the service should give preference to the following sections:

- Viduy and *E-l Melech yoshev* with the 13 middot. .1
- The paragraphs that are between the sections of *E-l Melech yoshev* .2
- Nifilat Apayim* .3
- HaBakashot* .4
- The remaining paragraphs .5

When necessary, in special cases the Ashkenazim allow the recitation of Selichot at about two hours before midnight.

If a group of ten men begins to say Selichot together and some leave in the middle, it is permitted to say the kaddish at the end of Selichot so long as at least six men remain.

When Selichot are said at night, the Ashkenazi custom is that the Chazzan should wrap himself in a tallit that does not belong to him, and he should not make a bracha on it. But if they begin to say the Selichot after the time to put on tzitzit (in the morning), he should make a bracha on his own tallit, as usual.

Tachnun and *Nefilat Apayim* are said during Selichot, but if a circumcision is taking place in the synagogue then Selichot are not said at Shacharit. If a groom is in the synagogue, there are differing opinions on whether *Tachnun* should be said.

It is best to stand while saying Selichot, but one is allowed to sit if standing is difficult, except during *E-l Melech*, the 13 middot, and *viduy*.

Ashkenazim have the custom to say the 27th chapter of Tehillim, *L'David Hashem Ori* after Shacharit and Maariv, and for Ashkenazim that daven nusach Sefard, after Shacharit and Mincha until Hoshana Rabbah.

Saying Selichot as an Individual

One who is praying individually, without a minyan, is permitted to say Selichot, however the Aramaic phrases of *mahi u'messi* should not be said. Individuals should not say the 13 middot, unless the individual can say them in the proper tune with which they are read in the Torah, or in the tune which that individual uses when he is learning.

Selichot and Mourning

A mourner is forbidden to leave his house to enter the synagogue in order to hear Selichot, except on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Erev Yom Kippur.

Chazzan

According to the Ashkenazi custom, a mourner who is sitting shivah may not lead Selichot (Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu says that if there is no one else present who can lead, then the mourner is permitted to lead). A mourner who is within twelve months of the passing of his father or mother is allowed to be the chazzan, and some permit him to be the chazzan even if he is within thirty days of the passing of a parent. According to the Sephardi custom, during shivah he may not lead Selichot (Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu says that if there is no one else present who can lead, then the mourner is permitted to lead). Within thirty days of the passing of his parent or other relatives he is allowed to lead Selichot.

Erev Rosh Hashanah

On Erev Rosh Hashanah we increase the recitation of Selichot, and even a mourner is permitted to leave his home in order to say Selichot with a minyan, though he is not permitted to leave his home for this reason on other days.

The Selichot for Erev Rosh Hashanah include *Tachnun* and *Nifilat Apayim*, but *Tachnun* is not said during the other prayers of the day.

It is the custom to annul one's vows (*Hatarat Nedarim*) on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Sephardim do *Hatarat Nedarim* in front of 10 men, and Ashkenazim do it in front of 3.

There is a custom to visit gravesites in order to pray.

There is a custom for men to immerse in the mikvah on Erev Rosh Hashanah and Erev Yom Kippur. The Rama and the Yalkut Yosef say that it is possible to make do with a shower of at least 12.5 liters of water. It is permitted to rely on this opinion this year because of the
Coronavirus.

Candle Lighting

2 sets of candles must be prepared, one set for Shabbat and the first day of Yom Tov (before the beginning of Shabbat), and one for the second day of Yom Tov.

One should light candles at 18:24 and recite 2 blessings: *lehadlik ner shel shabbat v'yom tov* and *Shehecheyanu*. On the second day one should recite *lehadlik ner shel yom tov* and *Shehecheyanu*. There is a custom to wear new clothes or eat a new fruit on the second day of Yom Tov.

The 10 Days of Repentance (Aseret Yemei Teshuva)

One who made a mistake and forgot to make the appropriate changes/additions to daily prayers during during Aseret Yemei Teshuva can act according to the following table:

When did you remember?	Zochreinu l'chaim, mi chamocho, u'chtov, ub'sefer	HaMelech HaKadosh	HaMelech HaMishpat
You have not yet said the name of G-d at the end of the blessing	Go back and repeat to the beginning of the addition	-----	-----
You said the name of G-d at the end of the blessing	Don't go back	-----	-----
You remembered as you were finishing the blessing	Don't go back	Say HaMelech HaKadosh immediately	Say HaMelech HaMishpat immediately
You remembered after you finished the blessing	Don't go back	Go back to the beginning of the Amidah and repeat	Ashkenzim - do not go back and repeat. Sephardim - go back to the beginning of the bracha

Rosh Hashanah Night

It is worthwhile to read through the Machzor before the holiday in order to become familiar with the various prayers and poems and to understand the meaning of the words. At the Rosh Hashanah evening meal it is customary to eat a variety of foods called 'simanim' that signify blessings for the upcoming year, such as apple with honey, pomegranate seeds, dates, lamb's head, etc. The simanim each have a special prayer, 'yehi ratzon', that is said prior to eating them.

Although the custom of simanim appears in the Talmud, it does not take precedence over any other halakhah. Therefore, if one of the simanim may contain insects, it should not be eaten. Also, eating the simanim does not exempt one from partaking in the holiday meal.

Praying Musaf as an Individual

If one is praying the Rosh Hashanah Musaf prayer without the presence of a minyan, he should not begin until three hours into the day (around 08:15). During the first three hours of the day Hashem judges the world, and if one is praying alone at that time he may be singled out for judgment.

Laws of Blowing Shofar

A shofar blower must be appointed before Rosh Hashanah. It is his responsibility to learn the laws of shofar blowing well, in order that he will blow properly and help the congregation fulfill their obligation to hear the shofar.

A Sephardi blower will not say Shehecheyanu on the second day (unless the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat), even if he is blowing for Ashkenazim. In this case, one of the Ashkenazi listeners will say Shehecheyanu before the shofar blower begins.

It is acceptable for one to hear the shofar in a style that is not his own. For example, a Temani who hears the shofar blown according to the Ashkenazi custom has fulfilled the mitzvah.

If one who has already fulfilled his obligation to blow the shofar blows shofar for others who have not yet fulfilled their obligation, he is permitted to make the bracha on their behalf, and they will answer with amen. Although for Sepharadim, it is preferable that someone who has not yet fulfilled his obligation be the one to say the bracha.

Neither the blower nor the listeners may speak between the brachot and the shofar blasts.

If one was speaking, and as a result did not hear a shofar blast, he must hear the entire series of blasts from the beginning, but he should not make another bracha.

If one heard the brachot on the shofar, and then had to leave before the blasts, he should make another bracha when he returns and then listen to the blasts.

If one must leave for any reason during the first 30 shofar blasts, he must be sure to hear the blasts that he missed. If he does not remember where he was in the order when he left, he must hear all the thirty blasts again without making a new bracha.

If one left after hearing thirty blasts, it is preferable for him to complete the process of hearing one hundred blasts when he returns.

If the blower is unable to continue blowing, he should be replaced by someone in the congregation who will pick up where the original blower left off, and the substitute should not make a new bracha, provided he heard the bracha from the original blower.

A congregation who has limited time and cannot hear 100 blasts must hear 30 blasts.

One who arrives at the synagogue after the brachot have been made but still hears 30 blasts has not fulfilled his obligation.

It is a mitzvah for one who knows how to blow the shofar to blow for others, even if he misses a public prayer because of it. This is especially important to remember this year when many will not be able join a minyan.

As a rule, one should not eat before shofar blowing, however if one feels weak, or not eating will make it difficult to daven properly, he is allowed to eat a little before the shofar is blown.

It is interesting to note the words of the Ra'a, who allowed people to make kiddush and to eat before shofar blowing because there was a plague in the city, and this would help give people strength and not contract disease.

If one only gains access to a shofar after sunset before the stars come out, he should blow without a bracha. For Sepharadim - on the first day of Rosh Hashanah one should say a bracha in this scenario if less than 13 minutes have passed since sunset, but on the second day he should not make a bracha.

When the second day of Rosh Hashanah falls on a Friday, and one did not have a shofar on Friday until after sunset, he should not blow the shofar at all, since Shabbat has already begun.

How to Blow Shofar

Since it seems that this year we will need more people who are able to blow the shofar for others, I will try to briefly list the main laws of blowing the shofar.

Types of blasts include:

Tekiah - a simple, straightforward sound.

Shevarim - at least three sounds in one breath .

Teruah - nine consecutive sounds in one breath.

The length of the tekiah in the Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah series must be at least as long as the length of the shevarim in this series. The tekiah in the Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah series must be at least as long as the teruah in the series. In the Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah

series, the tekiah must be at least as long as the shevarim-teruah, which means that it must be longer than a regular tekiah.

Ultimately, a tekiah is valid as long as it was the length of 9 short blasts.

The length of each part of the shevarim should be equal to the length of three segments of the teruah. Ultimately he has fulfilled the mitzvah even if the length of the shevarim was only as long as two segments of the teruah, and also if he made a longer shevarim sound.

If one of the blasts (tekiah, shevarim, or teruah) was shorter than what is required, the same blast should be sounded again. If the sound changes from a thick sound to a hoarse sound there is no need to redo it.

If he is unsure whether he has properly sounded the shevarim or teruah, he should not repeat the same sound, but he should return to the beginning of the series.

If he accidentally makes the incorrect sound, ie he blows a teruah during a Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah series, or if he misses one part of a blast, he must repeat the order from the beginning.

In a tekiah-shevarim-teruah-tekiah series if he accidentally blows a teruah in the middle of the shevarim he should go back to the shevarim and not to the tekiah. If he is unsure whether the shevarim was sounded properly, or if he made a mistake and blew the teruah before the shevarim, or if he added an extra teruah, or if he blew two shevarims in a row, or he blow an extra shevarim-teruah, or if he paused too long for breath in between the shevraim and teruah, in all of these situations he should go back to the first tekiah in the series.

If the first tekiah in the series is spoiled in any way, he only needs to repeat that tekiah. But if the tekiah at the end of the series is spoiled by another sound, the whole series is spoiled and he must go back and redo it from the first tekiah.

If he does not make all the sounds of a shevarim and teruah in one breath, he has not fulfilled his obligation, and he must go back to the first tekiah in the series.

The shevarim-teruah before Musaf is customarily blown in one breath, with a short pause for breath in between. During Musaf it is permitted to make this sound in two breaths.

Ultimately he has fulfilled the mitzvah either way.

While the blasts are sounded, both the blower and the listener should stand without leaning on anything.

Tashlich

There is a custom on the first day of Rosh Hashanah (or on the second day, if the first day falls out on Shabbat) to say Tashlich after Mincha, before sunset. The practice of the Gr'a was not to say Tashlich.

Tashlich is said near a river (preferably one with fish) or a well, but it can also be said near a tub of water, a running tap, or any other water source.

It is forbidden to go out of the *T'chum Shabbat* (which also applies on Yom Tov) in order to say Tashlich.

If the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, Ashkenazim say Tashlich on the second day. Sepharadim may say Tashlich on Shabbat if it is being said within the *eruv*. If not it should be said on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

When both days of Rosh Hashanah fall on weekdays, one who did not say Tashlich on the first day is permitted to say it on the second day.

Tashlich may be recited throughout the Aseret Yemei Teshuva.

It is a custom not to sleep on Rosh Hashanah, at least until midday.

Mourning on Rosh Hashanah

According to Ashkenazim, the shofar blower should not be a mourner who has lost his father or mother within the past 12 months, unless he has blown shofar for several years or if there is no one else who can blow as well as he can. Sepharadim permit him to blow shofar.

The Laws of Yom Kippur

Erev Yom Kippur

A. Yom Kippur does not atone for sins between people, so individuals must reconcile for the hurt that they caused others during the year. One can not achieve complete atonement without seeking forgiveness from those he has harmed.

B. It is a mitzvah to increase ones eating on Erev Yom Kippur. (A person can even limit his Torah learning on Erev Yom Kippur in order to eat and drink.)

Tachnun and *Nifilat Apayim* are not said at Shacharit and Mincha of Erev Yom Kippur because it is considered a Yom tov.

For Ashkenazim, Selichot are shorter than usual, and *viduy* is only said once. Sepharadim say the regular format of Selichot, but if they are reciting Selichot after sunrise they omit *Tachnun*.

Lamnatzeach is not said on Erev Yom Kippur.

Ashkenazim do not say *Avinu Malkeinu*, and they omit *Mizmor LTodah*.

It is customary to do *Kapparot* for the purpose of giving tzedakah to the poor.

There is a custom for men to immerse in the mikvah on Erev Yom Kippur. The Rama and the Yalkut Yosef say that it is possible to make do with a shower of at least 12.5 liters of water. It is permitted to rely on this opinion this year because of the Coronavirus.

Viduy is said at Mincha, as it appears in the Machzor. *Viduy* must be recited prior to eating the pre-fast meal, and therefore some people daven Mincha early.

The Pre-Fast Meal and the Beginning of the Fast

A meal should be eaten before the fast begins - this meal is called *Seudat HaMafseket*. It is customary to eat chicken and fish at this meal, and to have two loaves Challah just like on other holidays.

Even those who are exempt from fasting for any reason should try to eat *Seudat HaMafseket*, because there are other reasons for eating on Erev Yom Kippur aside from strengthening oneself for the fast.

Seudat HaMafseket must be completed in plenty of time before Yom Kippur begins, so that there is enough time to prepare for Yom Kippur.

If one finishes eating the meal long before sunset, prior to saying *Birkat HaMazon* he is permitted to say that he still intends to drink and eat until the fast begins. Sepharadim may continue to eat and drink even without making this statement.

Candles should be lit at 18:12, with the bracha: *Lehadlik ner shel Yom HaKippurim*, and most opinions agree that the bracha of Shehechayanu should also be said.

Many people light a memorial candle that will burn throughout Yom Kippur, and they will then use this candle to light the havdalah candle at the end of Yom Kippur. Some people light an additional memorial candle in memory of their relatives.

Erev Yom Kippur

Ashkenazim customarily arrive at the synagogue early so that they would have time to say *Tefilat Zaka* and *Kol Nidrei* before the sun sets. Sepharadim say *Kol Nidrei* at night.

Those who are married and those who wear a tallit all year round must wrap themselves in the tallit and make the bracha before sunset.

The Sefer Torah is taken out - the Ashkenazim take out two Torahs - and say the text that appears in the Machzor. The bracha of Shehechayanu is said, and one who already said this bracha while lighting candles does not repeat it now.

Maariv is said, followed by the Selichot that appear in the Machzor.

The Five Afflictions

The Torah says five times that one should afflict his soul on Yom Kippur. From this it is learned that on Yom Kippur there are five types of afflictions: eating and drinking, washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes, and engaging in sexual relations. (Of course we are also not allowed to do any of the creative acts that are forbidden on Shabbat.)

Prohibition of Eating and Drinking

It is forbidden to eat and drink on Yom Kippur, and one who eats any amount of food violates the Torah prohibition. One who eats intentionally at the rate 1 *kotevet haGasa* (some say a weight of 32 cc and some say 38/48 cc) in the time span of *kedei achilat pras* (a time span of 2-9 minutes) is deserving of the punishment of *Karet*. And one who intentionally drinks more than a *melo lugmav*, a cheek-full, (an amount that fills more than half of his mouth this amount varies from person to person, but on average it is approximately 42 grams of water) is deserving of *Karet*.

An ill person whose doctor tells him that his life will be endangered if he does not eat or drink must eat and drink on Yom Kippur.

The ill person must eat and drink in specifically rationed amounts. For solid foods, the ill person is permitted to eat about 30 grams of food every 9 minutes. If this is too difficult for him, he may wait only 4 minute intervals between eating 30 grams. When needed he may eat up to 38 and even 48 grams.

In order to measure the rations for eating, one can use a small matchbox as a guide. The amount of food that fits in the matchbox is less than a *kotevet haGasa*, and if the food is airy, it must be squished down to fit in the matchbox.

The ill person must also drink in specifically rationed amounts. To drink according to halakhic standards, he is allowed to drink as much as a cheek-full of liquid every 9 minutes. If this is too difficult, he can wait even less time in between sips.

In order to measure the amount of liquid for drinking: One should fill his mouth with water to the greatest possible extent. Then, empty his mouth into a glass, and pour out a little more than half of the liquid. Draw a line at the water level on the glass, and this is the amount that is allowed.

Measuring amounts of food and liquid is permitted on Yom Kippur. Ideally one should complete these measurements the day before, especially when marking the amount in the glass.

If the doctor ordered the ill person to eat and drink as usual, he should listen to the doctor and not ration his food and drink.

One who eats in the rationed amount may say the bracha over his food once, and he does not need to repeat the bracha before eating at each interval so long as he remains undistracted while eating. He should not say a *bracha achrona* on the food or the drink.

Those who need to eat on Yom Kippur do not have to make kiddush. If Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, they do not need to have a meal with 2 challot.

One who is eating bread should wash their hands in the usual way, but Sepharadim do not say the bracha of *netilat yadayim*.

If one eats enough bread that he is required to say *Birkat HaMazon*, he should include *Yaale ViYavo* with the words *BaYom HaKippurim HaZaeh*. Sepharadim also add the words *U'bayom selichat haAvon HaZaeh*, and if Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat one should include all the parts that are generally said on Shabbat.

One who forgot to say *Ritzeh* or *Yaale ViYavo*, and remembered after he said the bracha of *Boneh Yerushalayim* should not go back and say it.

The Prohibition of Washing

It is forbidden to bathe on Yom Kippur. Washing that causes pleasure, whether in hot water or cold water, and even washing one's finger with water is forbidden. However it is permitted to wash dirt that is found on the body or on the hands.

One should wash their hands for *netilat yadayim* in the morning, but be careful to wash only up to the knuckles and not the palm, even after leaving the bathroom.

The Prohibition of Anointing

It is forbidden to anoint one's body on Yom Kippur. Anointing is considered more severe than washing. Therefore, we do not use deodorant or cosmetics of any kind.

Prohibition of Wearing Leather Shoes

It is forbidden to wear shoes made of or covered in leather.

If one lives in a place where there is a fear of snakes and scorpions, leather shoes are permitted.

Prohibition of Sexual Relations

All the *harchakot* must be observed as in the days of niddah, including separating the beds.

The Tefilot of Yom Kippur

Musaf

One should begin to say Musaf before 12:59.

Those who have not begun to say Musaf before this time should say Musaf and then begin Mincha. But if the time is already 15:59 and Musaf has not been said, then Ashkenazim should say Mincha and only then say Musaf. Sepharadim, however, should say Musaf and then Mincha.

During the repetition of the Amidah of Musaf, the *Avodah* (the service of the Kohen Gadol) is said. It is customary to kneel and bow on the floor while saying: *VihaCohanim VihaAm*, and also *Aleinu Lishabeach* at the part of *ViAnachnu Korim*. A piece of cloth or a towel should be spread out on the floor so that the individual is not kneeling directly on the floor.

Tefilat Neilah

One should begin saying Neilah about half an hour before sunset, and finish shortly before the stars appear. But do not rush those who finish Neila after the stars come out.

Do not start Neila before 17:15, which is about an hour and a quarter before sunset.

The Kohanim say *Birkat Kohanim* during Neila. One should take care to complete *Birkat Kohanim* a few minutes before sunset. If the Kohanim did not have time to say the bracha before sunset, they can complete the bracha up until thirteen and a half minutes after sunset.

At the end of Neila the shofar is blown.

Motzei Yom Kippur

Maariv should not be delayed too much so as not to cause pain to those who are fasting. One who mistakenly said *HaMelech HaKadosh* or *HaMelech HaMishpat* should not go back and repeat the brachot.

Atah Chonantanu should be said during Maariv, and there is a custom to say *Kiddush Levana*.

Havdalah is said over wine, but spices are not used, even if Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat. The bracha of *Borei Meorei HaAish* is said over a candle that was lit on Erev Yom Kippur, and not on a candle that was lit once Yom Kippur has ended..

On Motzei Yom Kippur one should eat and rejoice. It is considered like a Yom Tov. Some people start building the sukkah (if one is weak, he can at least learn the laws of sukkah, or discuss building the sukkah). Be sure not to disturb the neighbors.

In the days between Yom Kippur and the end of the Sukkot, *Tachnun* is not said, one should not do *Nefilat Apayim*, and one should not fast.

Mourning on Yom Kippur

On Erev Yom Kippur, when the custom is to immerse in the mikvah, a mourner is permitted to bathe (even in hot water) and to immerse in the mikvah prior to the beginning of the holiday. During the pre-fast meal he is permitted to sit on a chair.

May we soon merit merciful atonement for all the people of Israel, and may we merit to see the Kohen Gadol in the Beit Hamikdash.