

Laws and Customs of Rosh Hashanah 5771,
September 8-10, 2010

Erev Rosh Hashanah, Wednesday, September 8, begins early in the morning with extra-long S'lichot (Forgiveness and Repentance) services at 6:00 AM. Services will still end, as usual, by 7:40 AM. This is the last chance to say these important prayers before the beginning of the New Year. There is also the custom to perform "Hatarat Nedarim" (annulment of vows) by making a statement in front of three fellow members who act as a Jewish court (Beit Din). For those who need to get to work, look to Sunday, September 12, Tzom Gidalya, to perform Hatarat Nedarim after morning services.

Don't forget to do an "eruv tavshilin", literally, "a mixture of foods", sometime on Wednesday, before Rosh Hashanah starts. Eruv tavshilin will mix your holiday cooking with your Shabbat eating, and enable you to cook on Thursday night and Friday for Shabbat. An eruv tavshilin may sound strange but it is easy: Just put aside a piece of matzah or bread along with a cooked egg, or any other cooked item, until Shabbat day when you can eat them. Some eat them at the Shabbat third meal. When you put matzah or bread and cooked food aside say first the b'racha: *Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav vetzivanu al mitzvot eruv*. Then say the following: "By virtue of this eruv, we - the members of this household - shall be permitted to cook, bake, keep foods warm, carry, light candles and do all preparations on Yom Tov, i.e. Thursday night and Friday day, for Shabbat."

First day of Rosh HaShana begins this year on Wednesday evening. Yom Tov candles should be lit by 6:54 PM. There are two b'rachot: *Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik neir shel yom tov*. And: *Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam, shehechyanu vekiymanu vehigyanu lazman hazeh*.

Rosh HaShana and Yom Tov share the same prohibitions of work as Shabbat, with some important exceptions: for the sake of enjoying the holiday we are allowed to cook, reheat, raise or lower temperatures in the oven and stove, and carry outside of an eruv. On the other hand, any work which for the next Jewish day is prohibited. Cooking on Wednesday night for Thursday lunch is permissible, but cooking on Thursday afternoon for Thursday night is prohibited. However, if you plan to eat even just a bit of the food on the same day, but save most for the next day, you can cook or bake on Yom Tov/Rosh HaShana for the next day. Please see Rabbi Lopatin for any clarifications.

Thursday morning, September 9: Main services begin at 8:00 AM and should conclude by 1:00 PM. Downstairs services begin at 8:30 AM.

Thursday afternoon, 5:30 PM: The tradition of Tashlich (Artscroll siddur, p. 770) will be performed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah by going to Lake Michigan to symbolically help God cast our sins away, and to invoke the covenants of God's mercy towards our People. Many have the custom to throw bread into the water to symbolize freeing ourselves from sin in order to help us return to God's ways and live a transformed, religiously energized life. If a bird or a fish benefits from our bread that is the fulfillment of the Ashrei: *Verachamav al*

kol ma'sav – God's mercy is upon all of God's creatures. Adults and kids are welcome to Tashlich. Come, sing, support each other's observance of the holiday, and enjoy living so close to an inspiring body of water.

Thursday Evening: Mincha and Ma'ariv at 6:45 PM. After the first day of Rosh Hashanah has departed (7:53 PM), light the Yom Tov candles for the second night of Rosh Hashanah. *Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav vetzinau lehadlik neir shel yom tov.* And: *Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam shehechyanu vekiymanu vehigyanu lazman hazeh.*

Since our rabbis have ruled that the two days of Rosh Hashanah are really like **one long holy experience**, we add some customs on the second night to make it "new" just as the first night, which begins the New Year, was new. Some make sure to wear a new garment on the second night, and many will eat a new fruit, not eaten for at least the whole season, at the start of dinner on the second night. Please have in mind these new things as you say the "Shehechyanu" b'racha either at the lighting of candles or at kiddush. Kiddush for Rosh Hashanah is on page 766 of the Artscroll siddur.

On both the first and second nights of Rosh Hashanah we eat foods **symbolic of a sweet, fulfilling and bountiful New Year** that we hope to usher in, with God's help. The basics are an apple dipped in honey, a pomegranate in honey and, of course, to use honey instead of salt with your challah. Many other symbolic foods can be found in the Artscroll siddur on p. 768. It is also customary to try to avoid bitter foods at any of the Rosh Hashanah meals so as not to have any negativity at the beginning of the New Year. Walnuts are avoided also, since their numeric value equals "sin" (Hebrew: Egoz = Heit), and we are worried that they may get stuck in our mouths - especially for someone blowing shofar the next day. Enjoy these customs and have fun with them; they are supposed to add a light touch to a heavy holiday.

Friday morning, September 10: Main services begin at 8:00 AM and should conclude by 1:00 PM. Downstairs services begin at 8:30 AM.

Friday evening: Light Shabbat candles before 6:52 PM, with the standard b'racha. Mincha and abbreviated Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv begin at 6:55 PM.

Rachel, Shayna, Cara, Judah, Gideon and I wish all members and friends of Anshe Sholom a happy and healthy New Year. We pray that God will bless our community and the People of Israel, and all the friends of our People all over the world with peace, prosperity, and good health. On this holiday celebrating the birth of all human beings, our prayers and thoughts reach every individual and every community that needs our blessings. May God embrace us all with the loving-kindness that God promised in the Torah and our Prophets.

Lishana tova tikateivu veteichateimu,

Rabbi Asher Lopatin

