

## How to Celebrate Rosh Hashanah 5770:

*By Rabbi Yossi Michalowicz*

### Friday, Sept. 18 - Erev Rosh Hashanah:

1. It is customary [but not mandatory] to fast until Halachik mid-day. [1:11 PM]
2. Additional Selichos are said in the morning.
3. No Tachanun is said during the morning service,
4. We do not blow the Shofar after the morning service.
5. One should nullify his vows before 3 people in a language that you understand. See Artscroll Siddur pg. 762. Women can appoint their husbands as their agents to nullify their vows for them.
6. It is customary to visit the cemetery.
7. One should spend time doing Teshuva, giving charity, learning, and asking forgiveness from other people. Before Rosh Hashanah actually begins, one should resolve to strive to focus on improving a specific area on conduct during the New Year.
8. One should preferably take a shave and haircut before Halachik Mid- day. [1:11 PM]
9. Men should immerse in the Mikveh no earlier than one hour before Halachik Mid-day. [12:11 PM]
10. One should familiarize oneself with the Machzor.
11. One should wear festive clothing, but in moderation. Save new clothing for the second night of Yom Tov.
12. It is customary to bake or purchase Challah in the form of a circle, ladder, or bird.
13. One should be careful not to display anger or even become angry during these special days.
14. Even though one is permitted to cook or bake from a pre-existing fire on Rosh Hashanah, since the first day of Rosh Hashana this year is on Shabbos – you are forbidden to cook on the first night and day of Shabbos. Therefore, you must have at least all your food for the first day of Yom Tov ready before Shabbos. You are permitted to cook or bake from a pre-existing fire on the second night and day of Rosh Hashanah. Consult with your Rabbi to learn more of the Halachik details involved.
15. It is practical to light a 24 hour Yahrzeit candle before Yom Tov, so that you will have a pre-existing flame that you can light candles from on the second night of Rosh Hashanah.

### First Evening of Rosh Hashanah:

1. Women light candles at the regular time of candle lighting [7:04 PM]. They make 2 blessings: One for the Mitzvah of lighting the Yom Tov candles and the other "Shehechianu" blessing.
2. Men should daven Mincha with a Minyan and everyone should say Mincha with extra concentration, as it is the final prayer of the year 579.
3. The earliest time to either light candles or make Kiddush is after 6:05 PM.
4. 4 insertions are made in the Maariv Amida [and for all Amidas through Yom Kippur], which are found in the Artscroll Machzor on pages 62, 64, 66, and 72. One must repeat the Amida if one forgot to insert "HaMelech Hakadosh."
5. Special greetings are given to friends and family members after Maariv and before Kiddush. "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year [immediately, for a good life and for peace]." See Artscroll Machzor pg. 90 for the Hebrew text. This greeting should only be said on the first night. Greetings for the remainder of Rosh Hashanah should be limited to "Shana Tova", "Happy New Year", "Chag Samayach", or "Good Yom Tov."
6. After making the special Yom Tov Kiddush and washing our hands, we make a Brocha over two Challahs, and cut the top Challah.
7. Challah is dipped in honey [some have the custom to dip the Challah into salt as well].
8. Symbolic foods are eaten at the evening meal. See Artscroll Machzor pg. 96-98. The first symbolic fruit to be eaten should be the date. You should make the blessing "Borei Peri Ha'etz" on that fruit. Eat a little of it, followed by the special "Yehi Ratzon" prayer, and then finish the date. There are no other blessings made on the symbolic foods. One does say the special "Yehi Ratzon" prayer before eating each of the symbolic foods.
9. If one is not able to eat any of the symbolic foods, one may look at them and say the special "Yehi Ratzon" prayer.
10. Some have a custom to avoid eating sour or bitter foods and nuts.
11. Remember to make the proper insertions during the Birchas Hamazon.
12. It is a custom to learn one Chapter of Mishnayos from Tractate Rosh Hashanah after each of the Yom Tov meals.

### Sat., Sept. 19 - First Day of Rosh Hashanah:

1. Men should come on time to Shul and say the Amida with a Minyan.
2. The Shema should be recited before 10:06 AM.
3. Since the first day of Rosh Hashana is Shabbos, we defer saying "Avinu Makeinu" until the second day.
4. Since the first day of Rosh Hashana is Shabbos, we defer the blowing of the Shofar until the second day.

### Sat., Sept. 19 – First Day of Rosh Hashana Afternoon:

1. One is obligated to eat Challah and have a meal on both days of Rosh Hashanah.
2. Since the first day of Rosh Hashana is Shabbos, we are required to eat a third meal – Shalosh Seudos – as is customarily done on Shabbos. Ideally, one should eat bread for Shalosh Seudos.
3. Ideally, the third meal should begin before 4:15 P.M. in order to have an appetite for the Yom Tov evening meal. If this time passed, one may still eat Shalosh Seudos. In this case, one should not eat as much as one would usually eat at a regular meal.
4. Generally speaking, it is not feasible for Shuls to provide Shalosh Seudos after Mincha – since it is Rosh Hashana. Therefore, people should eat Shalosh Seudos before they come to Shul for Mincha.
5. After eating a festive meal upon returning from Shul, it is understandable that it would be difficult to eat Shalosh Seudos so soon after finishing the day time meal. **Here is a practical suggestion: Omit eating dessert during your day time meal. Wait about a half an hour after you have finished the meal. Then wash for Shalosh Seudos, eat some bread, and have your dessert.**
6. One should not sleep in the afternoon. [One may be lenient on the second day.]
7. It is not the custom to visit friends in the afternoon.
8. Any free time in the afternoon should be spent learning Torah or doing Teshuva or doing acts of kindness. It is not a time for idle chatter.
9. Since the first day of Rosh Hashana is Shabbos, we defer Tashlich until the second day.
10. We read Parshas “Ha’azinu” from the Torah at Mincha.

### Second Evening of Rosh Hashanah:

1. It is preferable to say the Maariv service after the stars come out, or at least after sunset.
2. **It is strictly forbidden to make any Yom Tov preparations for the second night, light candles, or make Kiddush until after 8:02 PM. After that time, you must say “Baruch Hamavdil Bein Kodesh Le’Kodesh” before beginning any preparations or lighting candles.**
3. Women light candles either immediately after 8:02 PM from a pre-existing flame, or when the men come home from Shul and are ready to eat. They make 2 blessings: One for the Mitzvah of lighting the Yom Tov candles and the other “Shehechyanu” blessing. [If a woman forgets to light candles at these two times, she may light them from a pre-existing flame the entire evening.]
4. If possible, one should wear a new garment for candle lighting / the second evening meal. It is questionable as to whether one can make a “Shehechyanu” blessing on any fruits.
5. Some people have the custom to eat the symbolic foods and recite the special prayers at this meal as well.

### Sun., Sept. 20 - Second day of Rosh Hashanah:

1. The procedures for this day are the same as the first day. The exceptions being that we do say “Aveinu Malkeinu”, blow the Shofar, and go to Tashlich. [If one does not have the opportunity to go to Tashlich on the second day of Yom Tov, you are permitted to do it until the seventh day of Sukkos – Hoshana Rabah.]
2. One should optimally listen to 100 blasts of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah. 30 are blown before Musaf. 30 are blown during the repetition. 40 are blown at the end of the service.
3. Men are obligated to hear the Shofar. Women are technically exempt from hearing the Shofar; however, it has become customary for women to hear at least 30 blasts of the Shofar.
4. Children, who are old enough to silently listen to the Shofar, should be encouraged to do so. Little children, who will disturb the service, may not be brought to Shofar blowing.
5. It is forbidden to talk while the Shofar is being blown. One should not speak from the time that the blessings on the Shofar are made until after hearing the 100<sup>th</sup> and final note. Only under extenuating circumstances may one talk after hearing the first 30 blasts.
6. After Mincha, it is customary to go to Tashlich.
7. The custom is to recite Tashlich preferably at a body of running water [i.e. a river or stream] where fish are found. If that is not possible, one can say it by any body of water – even a well.
8. When reciting the word “Vesachlish,” it is customary to shake out the corners or pockets of your outer garments, which are empty.
9. **It is forbidden to throw any crumbs of food into the water. [or to feed the ducks]**
10. Tashlich was not designed to be a venue for socializing. [One is permitted to invite guests for meals and should make an effort to keep the discussions focused on the theme and spirit of Rosh Hashanah.]
11. Havdalah is made after 8:08 PM. You only make the blessing on wine and recite the “Hamavdil” blessing.
12. During Maariv, there is an additional insertion that is made through Yom Kippur. It is found on page 568 in the Artscroll Machzor. [“Hamelech Hamishpat.”]