

# Rosh Hashanah, 5782 (2021)

- Most of you may know that most Jews are about to celebrate their “New Civil Year”, 5782, called Rosh Hashana. (lit. “**Head of the Year**”)
  - **September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

## The Mishnah designates four different days as “Rosh Hashanah,” each relating to specific activities:

1. **The First of Nisan** for reckoning the reigns of Jewish kings (the date for determining how many years a king has ruled) and for establishing the order of the festivals.
2. **The First of Elul** for tithing animals.
3. **The First of Tishrei** for agriculture (sabbatical years, jubilee years), passing judgment on humankind, and marking the anniversary of the Creation of the world.
4. **The First of Shevat** for trees (RH 1:1). 1

## • The celebration of Rosh Hashana in Tishrei sets into motion three feasts/festivals that all occur within 30 days.

1. **1<sup>st</sup> of Tishrei** – **Rosh Hashana**, Feast of Trumpets: **Day of judgement**, celebration of the new year, and new moon offerings (**September 7, 2021**)
2. **10<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei** – **Yom Kippur**: Day of atonement (**Sep. 16, 2021**)
3. **15<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei** – **Feast of Tabernacles, Succot**, (**Sep. 20-27, 2021**)
  - A solemn festival, a week of rededication
  - Convocation of new beginning

## Rosh Hashanah:

- Also referred to as “The Feast of Trumpets”
- 2 important parts to this festival:
  1. **Teshuva** – “a time of closeness”
  2. **Tashlich** – “drowning our sins”

<sup>1</sup> Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 184–185.

- Not until late biblical and rabbinic times did Rosh Hashanah begin to take on the character that it has today—
  - **The Day of Judgment (Yom ha-Din)**, when the deeds of each person over the past year are weighed, and his or her fate is decided for the coming year (RH 1:2).<sup>2</sup>

- **Teshuva:**

- Talmud says that between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur God is somehow closer.
  - 10 days of repentance and judgement of our lives over the past year
  - 10 days of fasting and convocation/dedication
  - Wrongs done to fellow man are to be corrected

**Isaiah 55:6–7**

**6** “Seek the LORD while he may be found;

**call upon him while he is near;**

**7** let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

- **Teshuva** is to be an attitude, a mood, a contemplation.
  - Of God’s impending judgment.
  - **That God is near.**

**James 4:8–10**

**8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.**

**Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

**9** Be wretched and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

**10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

- **Tashlich:**

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<sup>2</sup> Ronald L. Eisenberg, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 185.

○ **After lunch on the 1<sup>st</sup> day:**

▪ Ritual of “Casting”

- Crumbs of bread are tossed into the sea (preferably with fish).

• Why with fish?

- Mishnah: “We are like fish caught in the severe net of divine judgment.”

▪ **Scriptures are read during the ceremony:**

**Micah 7:18-19** Who is a God like You,  
Pardoning iniquity

And passing over the transgression of the remnant of  
His heritage?

He does not retain His anger forever,  
Because He delights in mercy.

19 He will again have compassion on us,  
And will subdue our iniquities.

You will **cast all our sins**  
**Into the depths of the sea.**

• A “New Year” – a new beginning

- With God  
○ With others

**Ephesians 4:17–24**

**17** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

**18** They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

**19** They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

**20** But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

**21** assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus,

**22** **to put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,

**23** and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,  
**24 and to put on the new self**, created after the likeness of  
God in true righteousness and holiness.

Other Trumpets:

**Psalm 89:15-18** Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!

They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.

16 In Your name they rejoice all day long,

And in Your righteousness they are exalted.

17 For You are the glory of their strength,

**And in Your favor our horn is exalted.**

18 For our shield belongs to the Lord,

And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

**Joel 2:1-2** Blow the trumpet in Zion,

And sound an alarm in My holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;

For the day of the Lord is coming, For it is at hand:

2 A day of darkness and gloominess,

A day of clouds and thick darkness,

Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains.

A people come, great and strong,

The like of whom has never been;

Nor will there ever be any such after them,

Even for many successive generations.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-55** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

Festivals Recorded in:

**Numbers 29:1-40** 'And in the seventh month (Tishrei), on the first day of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you it is a day of blowing the trumpets. **2** 'You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. **3** 'Their grain offering shall be fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, **4** 'and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; **5** 'also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, to make atonement for you; **6** 'besides the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

**7** 'On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work. **8** 'You shall present a burnt offering to the Lord as a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. Be sure they are without blemish. **9** 'Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, **10** 'and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; **11** 'also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the sin offering for atonement, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

**12** 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the Lord **seven days**.

**13** 'You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the Lord: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish. **14** 'Their grain offering shall

be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams,**15** 'and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; **16** 'also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**17** 'On the second day present twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish,**18** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**19** 'also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

**20** 'On the third day present eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, **21** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; **22** 'also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**23** 'On the fourth day present ten bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish,**24** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**25** 'also one kid of the goats as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**26** 'On the fifth day present nine bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish,**27** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**28** 'also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**29** 'On the sixth day present eight bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish,**30** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**31** 'also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**32** 'On the seventh day present seven bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish,**33** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**34** 'also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**35** 'On the eighth day you shall have a sacred assembly. You shall do no customary work.**36** 'You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the Lord: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish,**37** 'and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance;**38** 'also one goat as a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

**39** 'These you shall present to the Lord at your appointed feasts (besides your vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.' "

**40** So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the Lord commanded Moses.

**New Year Festival** ('the beginning [lit. 'head'] of the year'), the festival celebrated on the first day of the month of Tishri (Sept.-Oct.), the seventh month of the Jewish calendar. Basic regulations for the observance of the New Year Festival appear in Lev. 23:23-25 and Num. 29:1-6. These texts refer to the festival as 'a holy convocation' or 'the day of trumpet blasts.' It is a day of rest on which no work is to be done. Sacrificial offerings include one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs together with their respective cereal offerings. In addition, a male goat is to be sacrificed as a sin offering.

There is some confusion in the biblical tradition concerning the New Year Festival. The first of Tishri is nowhere designated as New Year's Day in the Bible. The term *Rosh Hashanah* appears only in Ezek. 40:1 where it refers to the general time of the year, but not specifically to the New Year Festival. According to Exod. 12:2, the month of Abib, later known as Nisan (March-April), is the first month of the year, but no New Year Festival is prescribed for the first of Nisan. The first of Nisan, however, is the beginning of the eleven-day Babylonian New Year Festival. This has prompted some scholars to suggest that the biblical New Year originally fell on the first of Tishri but at some time, probably during the Babylonian exile, the observance shifted to the first of Nisan to conform with Babylonian practice. Others argue that the original New Year was in the spring and later shifted to the autumn. A third position distinguishes two types of New Years. The first of Nisan was the regnal New Year, by which the reigns of kings were reckoned, and the first of Tishri was the religious or agricultural New Year for reckoning the liturgical calendar. In this respect, it is noteworthy that the Mishnah (*Rosh. Hash. 1:1*) identifies four New Years, including the first of Nisan, the New Year for kings and festivals, and the first of Tishri, the New Year for agriculture and reckoning the reigns of foreign kings.

Another issue concerns the relation of the biblical New Year Festival to the Babylonian New Year or *akitu* festival. This festival, held in the spring from the first to the eleventh of Nisan, emphasized the renewal of creation and kingship. The celebration featured a liturgical recitation and reenactment of the Babylonian creation epic in which Marduk, the city god of Babylon, defeated the chaos monster Tiamat and set the cosmos in order. The festivities also included a ritual procession around the city, a ritual humiliation of the king, and a ritual marriage of Marduk atop the ziggurat of Babylon. At the end of the festival, the king received the tablets of destiny that assured his rule for another year. Some scholars have attempted to argue that a similar New Year Festival was observed in Jerusalem during the monarchical period, but the evidence does not support such a claim. It is more likely that the biblical New Year Festival was a harvest celebration associated with the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11) and the Festival of Booths (Lev. 23:33-43; Num. 29:12-38; Deut. 16:13-15; cf. Exod. 23:16; 34:22). **See also** Babylon; Nisan; Tiamat; Time; Tishri. M.A.S. 3