

## Top Twenty Rosh HaShana/Yom Kippur Questions 5784/2023

**1. When is Rosh HaShana?**

*This year Rosh HaShana begins on Friday night September 15th and continues until Sunday night September 17th.*

**2. Is Rosh HaShana also two days in Israel?**

*Yes, even in Israel Rosh HaShana is kept for two days and both days are equally important.*

**3. How many blasts of the shofar are heard?**

*On Rosh HaShana there are a hundred blasts of the shofar. The most important are the first set of thirty.*

**4. Do women make a *sh'hecheyanu* blessing before candle lighting on both nights?**

*Yes. There is a custom to buy a new fruit or wear a new garment while making this blessing on the second night.*

**5. What is *Hatarat Nedarim* and when does it take place?**

*Hatarat Nedarim is the annulment of religious vows and it is done in the synagogue after shacharit on the morning before Rosh HaShana.*

**6. What other customs are there before Rosh HaShana?**

*There is a custom to give charity, take a haircut and shave.*

**7. Why do we eat special foods on Rosh HaShana?**

*Certain foods are symbolic representations of the good year we expect.*

**8. What is *tashlikh*?**

*Tashlikh is the custom of going to a body of water and "throwing" one's sins in the sea. Many do this on the second day of Rosh HaShana but one can perform tashlikh until Yom Kippur.*

**9. Am I allowed to cook on Yom Tov?**

*Yes, unlike Shabbat, one is allowed to cook food on Yom Tov to be eaten that Yom Tov day. Care should be taken to use a pre-existing flame to light the stove. To ensure a preexisting flame is always available, many have the custom to light a 26hr yearzeit candle at the beginning of Yom Tov.*

*Please note that this year the first day of Rosh HaShana coincides with Shabbat and no cooking can be done on that day.*

**10. When does the Yom Kippur fast start and end in Hong Kong?**

*It starts Sunday, September 24th at 6:00pm and ends on September 25th at 6:50pm*

**11. What should I do if it's difficult for me to fast or if I am taking medication?**

*People who need to take medication or who need to eat should consult a Rabbi about the best method to do so on Yom Kippur.*

**12. Besides for eating and drinking, what else is forbidden on Yom Kippur?**

- *We don't wear leather shoes.*
- *We don't bathe.*
- *We don't use perfumes, oils or moisturizers.*
- *We're not intimate with our spouses.*

**13. What time is Yom Kippur candle lighting?** 6:00pm

**14. How many blessings are there over the candles and when are they recited?**

*At candle lighting women recite two blessings. These blessings can be recited in Hebrew or English. The first blessing is:*

*Baruch ata Ado-noi Elo-heinu melech ha-olam, asher kid-shanu bi-mitzvo-tav, ve-tzee-vanu le-had-lik ner shel yom ha-ki-purim*

(Blessed are You, our God, Creator of time and space, who enriches our lives with holiness, commanding us to kindle the Yom Kippur lights.)

*The second blessing is the shehecheyanu blessing:*

*Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-noi E-loi-hei-nu Me-lech ha-o-lam she-he-chee-ya-nu v'ki-yi-ma-nu vi-hi-gi-ya-nu liz-man ha-zeh*

(Blessed are You, our God, Creator of time and space, who has supported us, protected us, and brought us to this moment.)

**15. Besides the two Shabbat / Yom Tov candles, how many other candles are lit?**

*At candle lighting time, married men have a custom of lighting their own candle and anyone who has lost a parent lights a yahrzeit candle. If one has lost two parents it's ok to light a single yahrzeit candle. No blessing is recited on these candles.*

**16. Do I recite a blessing on the tallit every time it is worn?**

*Whenever a tallit is put on during daylight we make a blessing. If one leaves synagogue during the Yom Kippur break then on return a blessing is made again.*

**17. What is the seduah ha-mafeseket?**

*This is the last meal before the fast begins. Kiddush is not recited at this meal and it is not necessary to have two challas.*

**18. Should children be encouraged to try fasting?**

*The custom is to encourage children nine above to have their meals a little later than usual.*

**19. What must be done in order for Yom Kippur to be effective?**

*Yom Kippur brings atonement when there is genuine repentance beforehand. Before Yom Kippur we apologize to people whom we think have offended. We forgive others in the hope that God will forgive us.*

**20. How is Havdala on Yom Kippur different from Havdala on Shabbat?**

*Havdala marks the transition from sacred time to everyday time. Whereas at the conclusion of Shabbat we light a new flame for Havdala, at the conclusion of Yom Kippur we are careful to light the Havdala candle from a flame that was burning throughout Yom Kippur. The Havdala candle at the conclusion of Shabbat (also) resembles the creation of fire at the beginning of the week and so it is recreated anew. The Havdala flame at the conclusion of Yom Kippur only represents the fact that we were prohibited from using a flame during Yom Kippur; it does not represent the recreation of fire at the beginning of the week. To mark this distinction we use a flame that was burning during Yom Kippur.*