

High Holy Days

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For other uses, see [High Holy Days \(disambiguation\)](#).



Ashkenazi-style [shofar](#). The shofar is used during the High Holy Days.

The **High Holidays** or **High Holy Days**, in [Judaism](#), more properly known as the **Yamim Noraim**([Hebrew](#): ימים נוראים "Days of Awe"), may mean:

1. strictly, the holidays of [Rosh Hashanah](#) ("Jewish New Year") and [Yom Kippur](#) ("Day of Atonement");
2. by extension, the period of ten days including those holidays, known also as the [Ten Days of Repentance](#) (*Aseret Yemei Teshuvah*); or,
3. by a further extension, the entire 40-day penitential period in the [Jewish year](#) from [Rosh Chodesh Elul](#) to Yom Kippur, traditionally taken to represent the forty days [Moses](#) spent on [Mount Sinai](#) before coming down with the second ("replacement") set of the [Tablets of stone](#).

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Etymology[[edit](#)]

The term High Holy Days most probably derives from the popular English phrase, "high days and holydays". The Hebrew equivalent, "Yamim Noraim" ([Hebrew](#): ימים נוראים), is neither Biblical nor Talmudic. Professor [Ismar Elbogen](#), author of "Jewish Liturgy in its Historical Development", avers that it was a medieval usage, reflecting a change in the mood of [Rosh Hashanah](#) from a predominantly joyous celebration to a more subdued day that was a response to a period of persecution.^[1]

Many prefer the term High Holy Days over High Holidays because the former emphasizes the personal, reflective, introspective aspects of this period. By contrast, Holidays suggests a time of communal celebrations of events in the history of the Jewish people.

The days preceding Rosh Hashanah (Jewish new year)[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Elul](#)

The [Hebrew month](#) preceding Rosh Hashanah, [Elul](#), is designated as a month of introspection and repentance. In preparation for the [Jewish](#) New Year, special prayers are recited. [Psalms 27](#) is added at the end of [morning](#) and [evening prayers](#), and the [shofar](#) (ram's horn) is blown at the end of [morning services](#) on weekdays (except for the eve of Rosh Hashanah itself). Among [Sephardi Jews](#), [Selichot](#) are recited at dawn on weekdays throughout the month. Also, many complete the entire [Book of Psalms](#) twice during the month. It is customary to increase the giving of [charity \(Tzedakah\)](#) and to ask forgiveness from people one may have wronged.

At midnight on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah, [Ashkenazi Jews](#) begin reciting *selichot*. On the following days, however, they generally recite the *selichot* before the regular morning prayers. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, extra prayers are recited and many fast until noon.

Rosh Hashanah[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Rosh Hashanah](#)

Rosh Hashanah (ראש השנה *rōsh hashānāh*, beginning of the year) is the Jewish New Year, and falls on the first and second days of the Jewish month of [Tishri](#) (September/October). The [Mishnah](#), the core work of the Jewish [Oral Torah](#), sets this day aside as the new year for calculating calendar years and [Sabbatical](#) and [jubilee](#) years.

[Rabbinic literature](#) describes this day as a day of judgment. God is sometimes referred to as the "Ancient of Days." Some descriptions depict God as sitting upon a throne, while books containing the deeds of all humanity are opened before Him.

Prayer services are longer than on a regular [Shabbat](#) or other [Jewish holidays](#), and include (on weekdays) the [blowing of the shofar](#). On the afternoon of the first (or the second, if the first was Saturday) day, the ritual [tashlikh](#) is performed, in which sins are "cast" into open water, such as a river, sea, or lake.

The Ten Days of Repentance[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Ten Days of Repentance](#)

The "ten days of repentance" or "the days of awe" include Rosh Hashanah, [Yom Kippur](#) and the days in between, during which time Jews should meditate on the subject of the holidays and ask for forgiveness from anyone they have wronged.^[2] They include the [Fast of Gedaliah](#), on the third day of [Tishri](#), and Shabbat Shuvah, which is the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Shabbat Shuvah^[3] has a special [Haftarah](#) that begins *Shuvah Yisrael* (come back, oh Israel), hence the name of that Shabbat. Traditionally the rabbi gives a long sermon on that day.^{[2][4]}

It is held that, while judgment on each person is pronounced on Rosh Hashanah, it is not made absolute until Yom Kippur. The Ten Days are therefore an opportunity to mend one's ways in order to alter the judgment in one's favor.^[2]

Yom Kippur^[edit]

Main article: [Yom Kippur](#)

Yom Kippur (יום כיפור *yom kippūr*, "Day of Atonement") is the Jewish festival of the **Day of Atonement**. The [Hebrew Bible](#) calls the day *Yom Hakippurim*([Hebrew](#), "Day of the Atonement/s").

In the [Hebrew calendar](#), the ninth day of [Tishri](#) is known as *Erev Yom Kippur* (Yom Kippur eve). Yom Kippur itself begins around sunset on that day and continues into the next day until nightfall, and therefore lasts about 25 hours.^[5]

Observant Jews will fast throughout Yom Kippur and many attend synagogue for most of the day. There are five prayer services, one in the evening (sometimes known as "[Kol Nidre](#)" from one of the main prayers) and four consecutively on the day.^[5]

Hoshana Rabbah^[edit]

Main article: [Hoshana Rabbah](#)

There is a [Kabbalistic](#) belief that, though judgment is made absolute on Yom Kippur, it is not registered until the seventh day of [Sukkot](#), known as [Hoshana Rabbah](#). The service for this day therefore contains some reminiscences of those for the High Holy Days, and it is treated as a last opportunity to repent of sins that may have been missed on Yom Kippur.

High Holiday seats^[edit]

Generally, throughout most of the year, Jewish worship services are open to all, regardless of affiliation, and membership or payment of any fee is not a requirement in order to attend. However, the High Holy Days are usually peak attendance days for synagogues and temples, often filling or over-filling synagogues.^[6] For this reason many synagogues issue tickets for attendance and may charge for them: practice varies on whether paid-up synagogue members must also buy these or whether it is included in the subscription. Synagogues never pass a [collection plate](#) during services as some churches do, as Jews are forbidden to touch money on the [Sabbath](#) or other holidays such as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Among synagogues in the United States, donations are often sought during the Kol Nidre service, called the "Kol Nidre Appeal," often via a pledge card, where the amount of the donation is represented by a paper tab which can be bent down in the amount of donation desired.^[7] [Rabbis](#) and other temple representatives say that holiday ticket sales represent a significant source of revenue.^[8]

See also[[edit](#)]

- [Jewish holidays](#)
- [Shofar blowing](#)

References[[edit](#)]

1. [Jump up](#)[^] *"High Holydays - Ask the Rabbi"*. Retrieved 2011-09-27.
2. [^] [Jump up to:](#)^{a b c} *"My Jewish Learning: The High Holiday Period"*. Archived from [the original](#) on 2008-09-16. Retrieved 2008-09-21.
3. [Jump up](#)[^] Sometimes spelled *Shabbat Shuva*, or referred to as *Shabbat Teshuvah* (the Sabbath of repentance), much as the Shabbat in the middle of [Passover](#) or [Sukkot](#) is called *Shabbat Chol HaMoed*.
4. [Jump up](#)[^] The other Shabbat for a long sermon is [Shabbat HaGadol](#)
5. [^] [Jump up to:](#)^{a b} *"Jewish Virtual Library - Yom Kippur"*. Retrieved 2008-09-21.
6. [Jump up](#)[^] Fishkoff, Sue (2007-08-20). *"'Praying without Paying' is becoming a more popular option among shuls"*. JTA.
7. [Jump up](#)[^] Joselit, Jenna Weissman (2005-10-07). *"Before We Begin, Let Us All Reach Into Our Pockets"*. *The Forward*. Retrieved 2016-10-11.
8. [Jump up](#)[^] Dunn, Gabrielle (2008-09-21). *"Jewish high holidays come at a high cost"*. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved 2008-09-21.

External links[[edit](#)]

- [Festivals - Jewish Encyclopedia](#)
- [Online books](#), and library resources [in your library](#) and [in other libraries](#) about High Holy Days

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