

The Custom Not to Recite the Blessing for the New Month for Tishrei

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There is a widespread custom that while *Birkat Ha-Hodesh* (the Blessing for the New Month) is always recited on the Shabbat before the beginning of the new month,¹ it is not done so for Tishrei. In this article, we will see when and why this practice developed.

The Earliest Mention of the Custom

The idea of a synagogue announcement of the upcoming New Month is not found in the Talmud. Evidence from the Geonic period (6th–11th centuries CE) is also doubtful, as the *Kiddush Yereiḥim piyutim*, פיוטי קידוש היריחים, authored by the 8th-century figure Pinḥas ben Ya‘akov ha-Kohen, have been interpreted as being connected to a number of occasions, yet not with the advance announcement of the upcoming New Month.² Reference to the announcement of the New Month in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* is considered to be a later interpolation.³ An old Aramaic formula for this proclamation found in the Romaniot liturgy seems to indicate that it was an ancient practice,⁴ but it is unclear as to when it began. It is only

¹ Regarding the custom of not announcing the New Month of Av, see Magen Abraham in his comments to *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Orat Ḥayyim* 417:1 and *Maḥatzit ha-Shekel* there, also *Kaf Ha-Ḥayyim* 417:5.

² See the discussion in Shulamit Elitzur, *Piyutei Rabbi Pinchas ha-Kohen* (Jerusalem: 2004), 68–73, 237–238.

³ See Daniel Goldschmidt, ed., *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 2004), 88.

⁴ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 103–104.

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with the 12th-century Tosafists that we find the practice being discussed outright.

One of the earliest mentions of the idea that the New Month is announced on the Shabbat before it takes place appears in R. Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz's (d. 1198) *Sefer Yereim* (*siman* 259). There he explains that this is not the same thing as the sanctification of the New Month, which is done by the court, and this proclamation was instituted "to tell the world about the New Month, to be careful about it and the matters connected to it."⁵ R. Eleazar of Worms (c. 1176–1238), among the earliest references to the practice of announcing the upcoming New Month, notes that no announcement was made for the approaching month of Tishrei. He states simply, "We sanctify the month, except Tishrei."⁶ Explanations for this omission begin to be found about one generation later.

The Classic Explanations of the Custom

The earliest explanations for the custom appear in the 13th century. In the very beginning of his *Sefer ha-Minhagim*, R. Avraham Hildik states that it is customary to start blowing the *shofar* from the beginning of Elul, "in order to confuse the Satan (לערבב את השטן) that he should not know when Rosh Hashanah is and not accuse. This is the reason not to mention the New Month of Tishrei in synagogues on the preceding Shabbat, as is customary regarding other New Months (that it will be on such and such day) so that the Satan will not notice and accuse. And this is the reason we do not mention 'And on your New Months' (ובראשי חדשיכם) in prayers of Rosh Hashanah."⁷ Not much is known about R. Hildik, but he appears to be

⁵ See Chaim Cohen, ed., *Sefer Yereim ha-Shalem* (Bnei Brak: Machon Torah Shebik-tav, 2011), 488 note 3 for possible early sources for this practice from the Jerusalem Talmud. *Maḥzor Vitry* (*siman* 190) and *Or Zarua* (*Hilkhot Rosh Hodesh* 452) also note that this practice is not connected to the court's sanctification of the New Month. This goes against the approach of Eliezer ben Yoel Ha-Levi of Bonn (Ra'avyah; 1140–1225), who in his *Sefer Ra'avyah* (Section 2, Rosh Hashanah, *siman* 530) explains that the announcement of the upcoming New Month functions as a kind of replacement for the court's sanctification of the New Month. This discussion about the nature of the announcement of the New Month in these early sources may indicate that the practice itself began in the 12th century.

⁶ *Rokeah*, *siman* 53.

⁷ Shlomo Spitzer, ed., *Sefer ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Avraham Hildik* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 2006), 195.

Bohemian, a contemporary of R. Meir of Rothenburg (c. 1215–1293), and connected to Ḥasidei Ashkenaz.⁸

A more succinct explanation is offered in the collection of the customs of R. Meir of Rothenburg compiled by his students, where the reason given is that it is stated, “at the covered time (בכסו) for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4).⁹ This verse in Psalms is understood to be referring to Rosh Hashanah, as interpreted in TB *Rosh Hashanah* 8a–8b, “Blow a *shofar* at the New Moon, at the covered time for our Festival day’ (Psalms 81:4). Which is the Festival day on which the moon is covered? You must say that this is Rosh Hashanah.” In the Talmud, this passage is used as part of a discussion proving that Rosh Hashanah is the Day of Judgment. The implication of this explanation for the custom is that beyond the astronomical fact that the moon can barely be seen on Rosh Hashanah as it is the only holiday that takes place at the very beginning of the month, we deliberately hide the fact that Rosh Hashanah is approaching by not announcing on which day it will take place. No explicit reason is provided there as to why we hide the date of the beginning of the month. Later in the book, in the context of giving reasons not to blow the *shofar* the morning before Rosh Hashanah, an additional reason is given, that it is in order to confuse the Satan. This is clearly stated there as being another reason in addition to the one based on Psalms 81:4.¹⁰

These two explanations, the hiddenness of the holiday based on Psalms 81:4, and confusing Satan, would be given in more-or-less elaborate versions in subsequent rabbinic literature.

The 14th-century Austrian rabbi, Maharak (R. Abraham Klausner), in his notes to the more well-known work also titled *Sefer ha-Minhagim*, brings the explanation stated by R. Ḥildik, adding that “this is also the reason we do not blow the *shofar* on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, so that the Satan will think that the Day of Judgment has already passed. And for this reason, we begin reading *Beresheet* on Simḥat Torah so that the Satan will not understand if it is the beginning of the year or the end of the year.”¹¹

⁸ See the introduction in Spitzer, *Sefer ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Avraham Ḥildik* 193–194; see Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 2000), 111 note 37; 113 note 41.

⁹ Israel Elfenbein, ed., *Sefer Minhagim D’Bei Maharam* (New York: 1938), 14.

¹⁰ *Sefer Minhagim D’Bei Maharam* (New York: 1938), 37.

¹¹ Spitzer, *Sefer ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Avraham Ḥildik*, 1, *siman* 1:1. On Klausner’s authorship of the notes and the authorship of the body of this book, see the introduction there 16–18.

One of the students of Maharak was Maharil (R. Yaakov Moelin, c. 1365–1427). *Sefer Maharil* gives the abbreviated explanation for the practice, and states, “We do not bless its month (Tishrei) in the synagogue because it is stated, “at the covered time (בכסה) for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4), and “it (Tishrei) is the king, as it contains the holidays.”¹²

Magen Avraham (Abraham Gombiner, c. 1635–1682), in his comments to *Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 417:1, similarly states, “On the Shabbat before Rosh Ḥodesh we bless the month, except for before Rosh Ḥodesh Tishrei, as it is written “at the covered time (בכסה) for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4).” This is the formulation used in the *Be’er Heitev* and *Mishnah Berurah* as well (417:1).¹³ These comments do not give any reason for hiding Rosh Ḥodesh Tishrei other than the fact that the verse in Psalms is understood to be instructing us to do so.

Early manuscripts of *Sefer Maharil* contain short additions that provide more supporting arguments for why *Birkat Ha-Ḥodesh* is not said, such as that “the Satan will not know and will not come to accuse on the day it (Rosh Hashanah) is fixed,” and that “it is already blessed, since the world was created in it... and it contains many holidays,” elaborating on the idea that Tishrei is the king which contains holidays.¹⁴

R. Isaac Tyrnau, a contemporary of Maharil, in his own *Sefer ha-Minhagim* provides a succinct explanation that we cover up the New Month of Tishrei based on Psalms 81:4.¹⁵ He later elaborates that this is in order to confuse the Satan in the context of his explanation as to why we blow the *shofar* during Elul but not on the morning before Rosh Hashanah. There he explains that “Therefore we do not bless the month of Tishrei and we also do not mention Rosh Ḥodesh in the sacrifices or prayers... and we also begin reading the portion of *Beresheet* on Simḥat Torah so that the Satan does not accuse.”¹⁶ The beginning of this explanation is quoted by R. Moshe Isserles in his *Darkei Moshe* (*Tur, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 581:1), up to and including the part about not proclaiming the New Month of Tishrei.¹⁷

¹² Shlomo Spitzer, ed., *Sefer Maharil* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 1989), 279, *siman* 11.

¹³ Also *Sha’arei Efraim* 10:35.

¹⁴ Spitzer, *Sefer Maharil*, *ibid.*, notes 3 and 4.

¹⁵ Shlomo Spitzer, ed. *Sefer Ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Isaac Tirnau* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, 2000), 27.

¹⁶ Spitzer, *Sefer Ha-Minhagim Le-Rabbeinu Isaac Tirnau*, 81.

¹⁷ In his glosses to the *Shulḥan Arukh* he does not mention not proclaiming the New Month of Tishrei, only not blowing the *shofar* on the morning before Rosh Hashanah (*Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 581:3).

R. Mordecai Yaffe (c. 1530–1612) in his halachic work *Levush Chur* 581:1 similarly explains that “We do not bless the New Month of Tishrei which is Rosh Hashanah, as we bless other new months, and we also do not mention Rosh Hodesh in the sacrifices or prayers on Rosh Hashanah, and it is all for the reason of mixing up Satan that he should not know the day of Rosh Hashanah since it was not announced. And the sign for this is “at the covered time for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4), that this month should be hidden, that it should not be mentioned. This is also the reason why we do not begin reading from *Bereshit* on Rosh Hashanah, although it would have been fitting to read the portion of *Bereshit* on Rosh Hashanah since it is established for us that the world was created in Tishrei... however, we do not read it so that the Satan will not notice....” Generally, in later works the *Levush* is quoted as the source of this explanation,¹⁸ although we have seen that the earliest source for this appears to be R. Avraham Hildik.

The idea that the month of Tishrei is already blessed is also briefly mentioned in the glosses to Tyrnau’s *Sefer ha-Minhagim*,¹⁹ and from there in *Eliyahu Rabbah*.²⁰

Expanding on the explanation given in the *Mishnah Berurah* based on Psalms 81:4, R. Yisrael Meir Kagan (1838–1933) gives an additional reason in his *Sha’ar ha-Tziun* (417:2). He writes, “The main reason is that since Rosh Hodesh Tishrei is the holiday of Rosh Hashanah it is unnecessary to mention it ahead of time, and this is simple.” Being that all Jewish people are well aware of when Rosh Hashanah will take place, there is no need to announce the date ahead of time.

These are the classic explanations given in the standard collections of Jewish customs.²¹ In addition to these is the Chassidic explanation

¹⁸ For example, Avraham Sperling, *Sefer Ta’amei Ha-Minhagim U-Mekorei Ha-Dinim* (Jerusalem: Shai Lamora, 1999), 306.

¹⁹ Spitzer, *Sefer Ha-Minhagim L-Rabbeinu Isaac Tyrnau*, 84, note 99. While *Sefer ha-Minhagim* is a late-fourteenth-century work, it is not clear when the glosses were written, or by whom. Opinions range from the time that *Sefer ha-Minhagim* was compiled to the mid-seventeenth century. See Spitzer, 17–18.

²⁰ *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 581:5.

²¹ Sperling, *ibid.*, brings only the explanation as found in *Levush*, combining the hidden aspect from Psalms 81:4 with the idea of confusing Satan; J. D. Eisenstein, *Otzar Dinim U-Minhagim* (New York: Shilo, 1917), 451 only mentions Psalms 81:4; Shmuel Gelbard, *Otzar Ta’amei Ha-Minhagim* (Petach Tikva: Mifal Rashi, 1996), 363, brings the explanation of covering from Psalms 81:4, but although he cites *Levush*, he leaves out any mention of Satan. There he also brings the explanation of *Sha’ar ha-Tziun* that an announcement is unnecessary; Gavriel

brought by R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that, “The Holy One, blessed Is He, Himself blesses it... and with this power, Israel blesses the months eleven times a year.”²²

Confusing Satan

The idea of confusing Satan on Rosh Hashanah is found in TB *Rosh Hashanah* 16a–16b, where R. Yitzchak asks, “Why does one sound *tekiah* and *teruah* while the congregation is sitting (before the *Amidah*) and *tekiah* and *teruah* while they are standing (during the *Amidah*)? In order to confuse the Satan (כדי לעררב השטן).” This is the only aspect of Rosh Hashanah that mentions confusing the Satan in the Talmud.²³ In Geonic literature, this is also given as a reason to blow the *shofar* again at the end of the Rosh Hashanah service,²⁴ and at the conclusion of Yom Kippur.²⁵ Rosh (*Rosh Hashanah* 4:14) brings it as a reason to blow the *shofar* during the month of Elul.²⁶ In all of these sources, the idea of confusing Satan is always associated with a practice of blowing the *shofar* more than is obligatory.

There are various approaches as to what is meant by confusing Satan in the Talmud.²⁷ Rabbenu Hananel and Rashi explain there that the Satan is rendered unable to accuse when the Jewish people demonstrate their love for the commandments by blowing the *shofar* more than is required.²⁸

Zinner, *Nitei Gavriel: Hilkhos Rosh Hashanah* (Jerusalem: Shemesh, 2001), 110 *siman* 2, brings the explanations of covering (without mentioning confusing Satan) and that the announcement is unnecessary.

²² Jacob Emmanuel Schochet, ed., *Keter Shem Tov ha-Shalem* (Brooklyn, New York: Kehot Publication Society, 2011), 303, *siman* 41.

²³ This is also the only Rosh Hashanah practice associated with confusing Satan. See Solomon Buber, ed., *Midrash Sekhel Tov* (Berlin: 1900), 65, Gen. 22:18 and *Hilkhos Gedolot* (Warsaw: 1874), 75, *Hilkhos Rosh Hashanah*, *siman* 17.

²⁴ Goldschmidt, *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, 139, 144; Zev Wolf Leiter, ed., *Teshuvot ha-Geonim: Sha'arei Teshuvah* (Pittsburgh: Makhon ha-Rambam, 1946), 7, number 65.

²⁵ Leiter, *ibid.*, number 67; Yitzhak Rafael, ed., *Sefer Ha-Manhig Le-Rabbi Avraham Be-Rebbi Natan Ha-Yarfi*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 1978), 359–360.

²⁶ Note that while Rosh attaches this to *Pirkei d-Rabbi Eliezer* chapter 46 about blowing the *shofar* in order to make sure that there is no miscount when Moshe went up to receive the second tablets, the idea of confusing Satan is not written there.

²⁷ See Daniel Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 2003), 302, note 12.

²⁸ See Tosafot there, *Rosh Hashanah* 16b, sv *v-tokin*, as to why this is not a problem of *bal tosif*.

Rashba and others explain that Satan here refers to a person's evil inclination, which is subdued upon hearing the great number of *shofar* blasts.²⁹ These explanations do not view Satan as a figure who can become confused as to the date of Rosh Hashanah.

In all these sources the aspect which confounds Satan is the multitude of *shofar* blasts. As we have seen, in the 13th century a new idea was introduced—that we confuse Satan so he will not know when Rosh Hashanah takes place. This may be related to the general approach found in Hasidei Ashkenaz of “esoteric studies and magical theory and practice” which expanded throughout parts of Europe in the 13th century.³⁰ This opened the door to many more practices being explained in this way, such as not mentioning Rosh Hodesh in the Rosh Hashanah prayers. Of course, this also opened the door to asking how this is effective if we state multiple times in the Rosh Hashanah prayers that the day is in fact Rosh Hashanah.³¹ Note also that *Sha'ar ha-Tziun* explained that there is no need to announce the date of the beginning of Tishrei in advance because everybody knows when it is.

A Different Approach

Siddur Rashi, compiled by the students of Rashi, raises the concern that mentioning Rosh Hodesh during the Rosh Hashanah prayers “may cause harm (דילמא נפיק מיניה חורבא), as people may equate this with other New Months of the year and count the holidays from the second day as we do all year, when we calculate and fix the holidays from the second day of Rosh Hodesh.”³² Maharak, in his notes to *Sefer ha-Minhagim* brings this idea and adds that based on Psalms 81:4, the month of Tishrei must be hidden and only hinted at.³³

We see that beyond the homiletical explanation of confusing Satan, too much of an identification of Rosh Hashanah with Rosh Hodesh could lead to confusion among the people, who do not realize that, unlike other New Months which are celebrated for two days, with the first day of Rosh Hodesh being the 30th day of the previous month and the second day of

²⁹ Chaim Zalman Dimitrovsky, *Hiddushei ha-Rashba, Rosh Hashanah* (Jerusalem: Mossad HaRav Kook, 2000) 91, 16b, and note 852.

³⁰ See Kanarfogel, *Peering Through the Lattices*, chapter 5, and especially 249.

³¹ The problems with that explanation are succinctly stated in Spitzer, *Sefer ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Avraham Hildik*, 1, note 9, and in a more expanded way in Shemtob Gaguine, *Keter Shem Tov*, vol. 6 (London: 1955) 17–20.

³² Solomon Buber, ed., *Siddur Rashi* (Berlin: 1911) 79, *siman* 174.

³³ Spitzer, *Sefer ha-Minhagim l-Rabbeinu Avraham Hildik*, 17, *siman* 20:3.

Rosh Hodesh being the first day of the new month, the first day of Rosh Hashanah is *not* the last day of the previous month, but is itself the first day of Tishrei. Tishrei is a one-day Rosh Hodesh, and the second day of Rosh Hashanah, even though it is celebrated also in Israel, functions like the extra day of a holiday celebrated in the diaspora.³⁴ This confusion would lead to a miscalculation of when all the subsequent Tishrei holidays fall, a concern going back to Geonic times. Tur (*Orach Hayyim* 591:2) writes that some of the Geonim wrote that we should not mention Rosh Hodesh in the Rosh Hashanah prayers so that people should not think that the second day of Rosh Hashanah is the main one and count the holidays from that date. This may also be implied in the statement of Maharil seen earlier, that we do not bless the month of Tishrei because of the verse, “at the covered time for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4), and “it is the king, as it contains the holidays,”³⁵ meaning that if Rosh Hashanah is viewed as Rosh Hodesh it will cause problems in the calculation of the holidays of the month of Tishrei.

There is an additional concern beyond the possible miscalculation of the holidays of Tishrei. R. Moshe Isserles, in his glosses to *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Orach Hayyim* 591:2, states that on Rosh Hashanah, “we do not say the verse of the Mussaf sacrifice of Rosh Hodesh except for saying “besides for the *olah* of the *hodesh*, and the *olah* of the daily offering, and its *minḥab*, etc., and two he-goats for atonement, and the two daily burnt-offerings

³⁴ See Rambam, *Hilkehot Kiddush Ha-Hodesh*, 5:7–8: “[Even] when the calendar was established based on the sighting of the moon, the majority of the inhabitants of Israel would celebrate Rosh Hashanah for two days, because of the doubt involved. They would not know the day on which the court established the new month, because the messengers would not depart on the holiday. Moreover, even in Jerusalem, where the court would hold session, there were many times when the holiday of Rosh Hashanah was celebrated for two days. For if witnesses did not arrive on the thirtieth day [following Rosh Hodesh Elul], the day on which they had awaited [the arrival of] witnesses would be regarded as holy, and the following day would be regarded as holy. Since [there were times when] they would observe [Rosh Hashanah for] two days even when they sanctified the months according to the sighting [of the moon], [our Sages] ordained that even the inhabitants of Israel should always celebrate [Rosh Hashanah] for two days in the present era, when [the holidays] are established based on the fixed calendar. Thus, even [the observance of] the second day of Rosh Hashanah in the present era is a Rabbinic ordinance.” See also the summary in Eliezer Melamed, *Prinei Halakhah: Yamim Nora'im* (Har Bracha: Machon Har Bracha, 2020), 54–56, *siman* 3:7.

³⁵ Spitzer, *Sefer Maharil*, 279, *siman* 11.

according to their law.”³⁶ *Taʿ* (591:2), in his first explanation for not mentioning Rosh Ḥodesh, explains that it is omitted, “so that they will not say that the second day of Rosh Ḥodesh is the main one as with other New Months.” Both R. Yosef Karo (591:3) and R. Moshe Isserles (591:2) note that we use the plural form when mentioning the Mussaf offering in the Rosh Hashanah prayers (את מוספי יום הזכרון) in order to include the Mussaf offering of Rosh Ḥodesh, and that this formula is also used on the second day of Rosh Hashanah even though that day is not Rosh Ḥodesh at all. *Magen Avraham* (591:3) explains, “It appears to me that this is so people will not come to disparage it (דלא לזלזלו ביה).” The *Mishnah Berurah* (591:6) elaborates that if the formula was changed for the second day of Rosh Hashanah, people might consider the second day less significant, as it is from the first day that we count the holidays.

We see from all this that there was a concern that the masses would not treat the two days of Rosh Hashanah as having equal significance if it were understood that it was Rosh Ḥodesh as well. If the two days of Rosh Hashanah were perceived (incorrectly) as also being a two-day Rosh Ḥodesh Tishrei, then the second day would be considered the “real” Rosh Hashanah (as per *Taʿ*), and if it was clear that the second day is not Rosh Ḥodesh then the first day would be understood to be the “real” Rosh Hashanah (as per *Magen Avraham*). Either way, the two-day celebration of Rosh Hashanah would be quite confusing to the masses. The only solution was to downplay the whole issue of Rosh Ḥodesh as much as possible, and only to hint at it in the prayers. Announcing Rosh Ḥodesh Tishrei the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah and having it publicly proclaimed that only the first day of Rosh Hashanah is the actual beginning of Tishrei, would undo all of this and confuse the populace.

This explanation is brought by Rabbi Yehudah Leib Zlotnik (1887–1962) in an article he wrote on Jewish customs published in 1925 as the historical, non-homiletic, reason no announcement was made for the upcoming month of Tishrei.³⁷ This is also the explanation brought by the

³⁶ Quoted in *Mishnah Berurah* 591:3.

³⁷ Yehudah Leib Zlotnik (writing under his pen name Yehudah Elzet), “*Mi-Minhagei Yisrael*,” *Reshumot*, vol. 1, 1925, 348, number 27. He writes that he was told by someone that they read this explanation in a book but since he himself could not find it written anywhere, he published it in his article. He wrote this article under his pen name Elzet (based on his initials LZ in Polish). He moved to Israel in 1949, and in 1950 changed his last name to Avida. For more on this remarkable figure, a founder and general secretary of Mizrachi in Poland until 1920,

scholar of medieval Hebrew literature, Abraham Meir Habermann (1901–1980) in his introduction to Abraham Marmelstein’s edition of the *Kiddush Yerechim piyutim*.³⁸ It is the only explanation brought there, considered the obvious historical explanation for this custom.

Tosafot (*Beitzah* 16a) explains the meaning behind R. Abbahu’s statement, “‘Blow a *shofar* at the New Moon, at the covered time for our Festival day’ (Psalms 81:4). Which is the Festival day on which the moon is covered? You must say that this is Rosh Hashanah,” is that, “We do not mention it (the New Moon) in Mussaf of Rosh Hashanah.” Similarly, the *Arukh* explains R. Abbahu as referring to the fact that we do not mention Rosh Hodesh on Rosh Hashanah, “not in *Shemoneh Esrei* or anywhere else,”³⁹ which *Tur* (591:2) further clarifies refers to the Mussaf *Shemoneh Esrei* and the section on sacrifices in the early part of the morning service. *Tur* also brings the opinion of the “great rabbis of Mainz” that Rosh Hodesh is not mentioned at all on Rosh Hashanah. Although the reason for not mentioning the New Moon is not stated in these sources, in the *Tur* they are brought together with the approach found in the Geonim that this is to make sure that people will not consider the second day of Rosh Hashanah more significant than the first, as with a regular Rosh Hodesh. This indicates that going back to R. Meir of Rothenburg and Maharil, authorities who brought Psalms 81:4 as the reason for not proclaiming the New Month of Tishrei, without any further elaboration, were expressing this concern, that the Rosh Hodesh aspect of Tishrei must be obscured, otherwise, the two days of Rosh Hashanah would not be considered of equal stature.

Conclusion

Considering that the earliest documentation of the synagogue announcement of the upcoming New Month coincides with the idea that it is omitted for Tishrei, it appears that at the time *Birkat Ha-Hodesh* was instituted, the potential harm in its recital for Tishrei was already noted. The idea that the Rosh Hodesh aspect of Rosh Hashanah needed to be delicately obscured was referred to under the concept of “at the covered time (בכסה)

and an early researcher of Jewish customs, one of the first who would note outside influences, see the biography by Mordechai Kassover, *Harav Yehudah Avida* (New York: 1962). The story of how his article on Jewish customs came to be published is told there on pages 12–13.

³⁸ Abraham Marmelstein, *Kiddush Yerechim d'Rabbi Pinchas* (Jerusalem: Ben Ori, 1973), 11.

³⁹ *Arukh*, sv *hadash* (אין מזכירין בראש השנה ובראשי חדשיכם לא בתפלה ולא בזולתה).

for our Festival day” (Psalms 81:4). This verse was brought without elaboration in the early Ashkenazic authorities, hinting that there are good reasons to cover up the real date of Rosh Hodesh Tishrei. While this was also tied homiletically to confusing the Satan, and the innovation that this meant mixing up Satan regarding the date of Rosh Hashanah, the real target audience was the simple masses who would have difficulty distinguishing between a two-day Rosh Hodesh and a two-day Rosh Hashanah. They are the ones who would be confused by the announcement of Rosh Hodesh Tishrei, and it is for their benefit that the Rosh Hodesh aspect of Rosh Hashanah had to be hidden. ❧