Modern American Rabbis on celebrating New Year's Day

We have written in previous HOTD about the various views of modern orthodox rabbis regarding the celebration of different American holidays (see here). All orthodox rabbis are very strict in forbidding, for example, the celebration of Halloween in any way, while most would not oppose the celebration of Thanksgiving. The question is: to what extent a particular Holiday is considered 'a religious' celebration? Halloween has clear origins in Pagan culture, and some of those customs are still followed in its celebration today. While Thanksgiving is more of an historical celebration.
What about New Year's day?
According to Christian tradition, January 1st, is the day of the circumcision of Yeshu (eight days counting from December 25), when his name was given to him.
Five centuries ago, Rabbi Terumat Hadeshen and Rama, both living in Christian countries, classified New Year's day as a religious gentile holiday (Darkhe Moshe and Rama, Yoreh Deah 148:12). Terumat Hadeshen refers to January First as "the eighth day of Christmas." He clearly viewed this holiday as 'religious' in nature. Most Rabbis –myself included– would oppose the 'celebration' of New Year's Day based on this consideration.
Other Rabbis, however, have a more lenient view, because in their opinion New Year's has lost entirely its religious overtones and can be rationally explained as a celebration of a new civil calendar's year.
Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Iggrot Moshe, Even Haezer 2:13) writes with regard to New Year's: "On the question of celebrating any event on a holiday of Gentiles, if the holiday is based on religious beliefs [such as Christmas], such celebrations are prohibited …. even without intent, it is prohibited because of *marit ayin* . . . The first day of the year for them [January 1] and Thanksgiving is not prohibited according to law, but pious people [ba'ale nefesh] should be stricter [and avoid its celebration]."
In Rabbi Michael Broyde's opinion (see below) the status of

New Year’s day has changed in the last three hundred years. In contemporary America there is little religious content on New Year’s Day, and while there might be many problems associated with the way some celebrate it, he thinks that few would classify it as a religious holiday, since there is a clear secular reason to celebrate the beginning of the new calendar year. New Year’s day, in his opinion has lost its status as a religious Holiday.

I would say that Rabbi Feinstein’s words articulate what we implicitly practice in our community. While one should avoid its commemoration and won’t promote any official celebration, rabbis won’t actively oppose or preach against its private celebration by individuals, as we do with regards to Halloween, for example.

Shabbat Shalom!

Candle lighting in NYC: 4:18 PM

Shabbat Ends in NYC: : 5:27

√ **Click here to read Rabbi Michael Broyde’s article on New Year’s day (I have used this article in today’s HOTD for quoting sources and translations)**

√ Click here to read a very recent reaction to rabbi Broyde’s opinion on New Year’s day, by Rabbi Yair Hoffman