



NORTH SHORE
CONGREGATION
ISRAEL

Rosh Hashanah Seder

5781 | 2020



Welcome

A Rosh Hashanah seder is actually an ancient, 2,000-year-old custom! The origins of the ritual date back to the Talmud, from a discussion about omens that carry significance:

Abaye said: Now that you said that an omen is a significant matter, a person should always be accustomed to seeing these on Rosh Hashanah: Squash and fenugreek, leeks, and chard, and dates, as each of these grows quickly and serves as a positive omen for one's actions during the coming year.

Talmud Bavli, Horayot 12a

Just like the symbolic foods of the Passover and Tu B'Shevat seders, the Rosh Hashanah seder includes blessings over various foods that express our hopes for the new year. While the Rosh Hashanah seder was primarily a Sephardic tradition (Jews from Spain, North Africa and the Middle East), this year, we hope to gather some of the best of the Rosh HaShanah Seder traditions from around the world, as well as add our own modern twists to this ancient custom.

The important thing is to enjoy the holiday meal, to spend time with family and friends, and to be reminded of the higher purpose of these Days of Awe: to become better, more loving, more giving people inspired to make the world a better place!

How to prepare:

- Read through the seder and feel free to get creative, adding components that will be fun and meaningful for your family. This is a guidebook, not a script!
 - Here are some familiar parts from the Passover seder that can be included...[Four Children of Rosh Hashanah](#) and [Four Cups of Wine](#).
- Gather all the items
 - If you are looking for alternatives or recipes for the symbolic foods, here are some [menu ideas](#).
 - Don't forget to set a festive holiday table!
- Family Friendly Activities
 - Create invitations for the seder to send.
 - Make place cards for those around the table.
 - For a dessert option, make a birthday cake to celebrate the birthday of the world!



Candle Lighting



*Baruch Atah Adonai,
Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu
I'hadlik ner shel Shabbat
V'shel Yom Tov.*

ברוך אתה יי,
אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו
להדליק נר של שבת
ושל יום טוב.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle
the Shabbat and festival lights.

Kiddush

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
borei p'ri hagafen.*

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
בורא פרי הגפן.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the vine.

Shehechyanu

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
shehechyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiy'anu lazman hazeh.*

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who gives us life, sustains us, and enables us to reach this season.



During the seder, don't forget to include your favorite Rosh Hashanah songs!



- [Shofar Blast](#), by Peter and Ellen Allard (a favorite among young and old alike!)
- [We Return/Hashiveinu](#), by Elana Arian and Noah Aronson
- [The Book of Good Life](#), by the Maccabeats

For more ideas, check out reformjudaism.org, [Music to Listen to During the High Holidays](#).

Seder Blessings

תַּחֵל שָׁנָה וּבִרְכוּתֶיהָ.

Tacheil shanah u'vir-cho-te-ha!

Let the new year begin with all its blessings!

Below, we will explain some of the traditional *Simanim* (symbolic foods + corresponding blessings). Many of the blessings are a play on Hebrew words and are offered together with newer formulations for wishes and hopes that are relevant to our day. For each blessing, there are questions to engage the participants around your table, near and far!



Blessing over the Fruit

It is traditional to begin the Rosh HaShanah Seder with the general blessing over fruit of the trees.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
borei p'ri ha-eitz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרִי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who creates the fruit of the tree.

Dates - A Wish for Peace

Dates represent our wish for peace. The Hebrew word for date, *tamar*, is related to the word *yitamu*, which means 'end.' We pray that hatred in the world will end, and that the new year will be a year of peace.



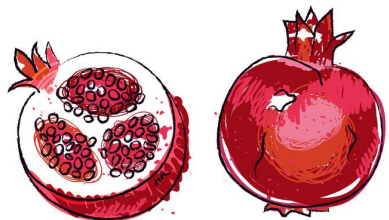
*Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu,
She-yi-tamu oyveinu v'soneinu
v'chol m'vak-shei ra'ateinu.*

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
שֶׁיִּתַּמּוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ
וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי רָעָתָנוּ.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that this new year be a peaceful year for us and for all the world.

Wishes are great, but how do we translate them into action?
What can you do to bring peace to your own family?

Pomegranates - A Wish for Mitzvot



According to the rabbis, the pomegranate has 613 seeds, the number of *mitzvot* (commandments) in the Torah. Eating a pomegranate on Rosh Hashanah reminds us of the importance of doing mitzvot in the coming year.

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu, יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו,
She-ni-he-yeh m'le'im mitzvot ka-rimon. שנהיה מלאים מצות כרמון.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that we be as full of good deeds as the pomegranate is full of seeds.

What acts of kindness do I want to
practice in the year to come?

Beans - A Wish for Prosperity/Tzedakah

In Hebrew, the word for bean is similar to that word meaning to increase. Though we wish for increased prosperity for ourselves, we also remember those who have less. This blessing reminds us of the importance of *tzedakah*, giving of our time and resources to those in need.



Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu, יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו,
Sheyirbu zechuyoteinu u't'leivavenu. שירבו זכויותינו ותלבבנו.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that we be blessed with all we need in the new year.

How can we share with those in need?
What are causes that you are passionate about?

Pumpkin/Gourd - A Wish for Happiness



The traditional blessing asks that any bad decree be torn up and our merits be proclaimed. If we think of our merits as blessings, then this prayer can serve to remind us to count the many blessings in our lives.

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu, יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו,
She-tikra ro'a g'zar dineinu, שתקרא רוע גזר דיננו,
v'yikaru l'fanecha zechuyoteinu. ויסקראו לפניך זכיותינו.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that we be blessed with happiness.

Name three blessings/good things
about you and your family.

Beets - A Wish for Freedom

In this blessing, we ask that our enemies retreat and that we be freed from those who wish us harm. An alternative English understanding suggests that we succeed in following our true inner “beat” and path!



Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu, יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו,
She-yistalku oyveinu v'soneinu שישתלקו אויבינו ושונאינו
v'chol m'vakshei ra'ateinu. וכל מבקשי רעתנו.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,
that we be blessed with freedom.

What are some freedoms that you enjoy?
How can we turn curses into blessings?

A Head - A Wish for Leadership

Many communities serve the head of a fish or a lamb on the Rosh Hashanah seder table (don't worry—no one said you had to eat it!). The head represents the wish of being heads, not tails — a leader, not a straggler.

The lamb's head also serves as a reminder of the ram that was sacrificed in the story of the Binding of Isaac, which is the Torah portion that is traditionally read on Rosh Hashanah.

Alternatives:
Use a head of lettuce, goldfish crackers or even a head of beer!

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What leadership skills do you want to improve on?

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,      *Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu,*  
שְׁנֵהֲיָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב.      *Shenih'yeh l'rosh v'lo l'zanav.*

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,  
that we will be heads and not tails, leaders instead of followers.

## Leeks/Scallions - A Wish for Friendship

The traditional wish associated with this food asks that our enemies be cut off, together with those who seek evil. Jews of Persian descent tear the scallions and throw them over their shoulders, sometimes reciting the actual names of the enemies that they wish to destroy. For a more positive rendition, our blessing is a request to be blessed with good friends and community.



יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,      *Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu,*  
שְׂיִכְרְתוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ      *Sheyikartu oyveinu v'soneinu*  
וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רַעֲתָנוּ.      *v'chol m'vakshei ra'ateinu.*

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,  
that we be blessed with friendship.

How can we contribute to our community?  
What is something nice we can do for our friends?

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## Apples & Honey - A Wish for Sweetness

We dip apples in honey to represent our hope for a *Shana Tova u'Metuka*, a 'good and sweet new year.' The sage, the Hafetz Hayyim, reminds us that the sweetness should be reflected in our mood, too: Avoid anger, for it is a bad omen for the coming year; rather, we should be sweet of temperament on Rosh Hashanah.

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu,      יהי רצון מלפניך יי אלהינו,  
Shetichadesh aleinu      שתחדש עלינו  
shanah tova u'metukah.      שנה טובה ומתוקה.

May it be Your will, Adonai our God,  
that the new year be as sweet as an apple dipped in honey.

What are your hopes, wishes or blessings for the New Year?  
Can you think of other wishes that could be symbolized  
by your favorite fruits and vegetables?

Since many of the blessings are a play on the Hebrew words, here are some pun-ny English blessings you may enjoy as well:

- Serve a piece of lettuce, half a raisin and a celery stick and put forth the request: "Let us have a raise in our salary!"
- Offer your guests punch and (bread) rolls, since we're hoping for a year in which we roll with the punches.
- Serve hearts of palm and recite: "May it be Your will that whoever holds our hearts in the palms of their hands, takes good care of them."
- Bring out the condiments! "May we mustard our strength so that we can find the time to 'ketchup' with family and friends and relish all the little moments in life."
- Beets and squash: "May we beet and squash the fears and prejudices within us."
- Mixed fruit juice with celery: "May we cele'rate all the different kinds of JEWS in our mix!"
- Gotta love dill! "May we be fair and just in our business dills."
- Cherries, dates, figs: "May we cherrish every date and not rush to fig-ure out the solution to every question."

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## It's almost time for the meal!

### Hand Washing Before the Meal

In Judaism, a good meal together with friends and family is itself a sacred act, so we prepare for it by washing our hands.

*Baruch Atah Adonai,  
Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav  
v'tzivanu  
al netilat yadayim.*

ברוך אתה יי,  
אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו  
על נטילת ידים.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us concerning the  
washing of the hands.

*For ritual hand washing,  
take a cup full of water  
and splash it on each  
hand three times.  
Or you can wash your  
hands with soap and  
water, singing your  
favorite Rosh Hashanah  
song for 20 seconds!*

### Motzi - Blessing over the Bread

For Rosh Hashanah, we use a round challah to represent the cycle of seasons as we begin a new year, and as a reminder that the opportunity for *teshuvah*, repentance or returning, is never-ending.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,  
hamotzi lechem min ha-aretz.*

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,  
המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
who brings bread from the earth.



#### Family Friendly:

Watch Rabbinic Intern  
Erin Binder Kurland  
share the story:

[How the Rosh Hashanah  
Challah Became Round](#)



May the new year be filled with an abundance of blessings.

May the new year be filled with love and peace.

May the new year be a good year for us all!

שנה טובה ומתוקה!

**Shanah Tovah u'Metukah!**

For more Rosh Hashanah and High Holiday  
resources, check out the NSCI website:

<https://www.nsci.org/hhd2020>

Rosh Hashanah & Seder Resources include:

[Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation

[A Sefardic Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), MyJewishLearning.org

[A Family Seder for Rosh Hashanah](#), by Lisa Baydush

[A Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), by Noam Zion

[30-Minute Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), by Custom & Craft

[You Are What You Eat: A Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), Jewish Federation of Los Angeles

[Apples and Pomegranates: A Rosh Hashanah Seder](#), by Rahel Musleah