

High Holidays

AT HOME



ROSH HASHANAH

EVENING

You can make your Rosh Hashanah meal special with opening rituals such as candle lighting, wishes for your children, grape juice or wine, a new fruit, and of course, round challah dipped in honey.



LIGHTING THE HOLIDAY CANDLES

Light the candles and say the blessing.

Like many Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown with lighting candles. As darkness fills the evening sky, glowing candles bring a warm light to the meal inside the house.

Here is how to say the Hebrew blessing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel (Shabbat v'shel) yom tov.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for giving us rules that make our lives special and for teaching us to light these holiday candles.



BLESSING THE CHILDREN



The traditional “blessing of the children” is particularly meaningful on Rosh Hashanah, when parents and grandparents can share with their children their hopes and wishes for the New Year.

This blessing is 3,000 years old – the oldest Jewish blessing! – and is part of a never-ending chain: our parents and grandparents (and ancestors before them) blessed us with their actions and qualities, and we carry these blessings forward.

Parents (and grandparents) place their hands on a child’s head and say:

בְּרַכָּךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ.
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֶּנֶךָ.
יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּשִּׁים לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

Yevarechecha Adonai veyishmerecha.
Ya’er Adonai panav eilecha viyechuneka.
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha veyasem
lecha shalom.

May God bless you and keep you safe.
May God’s light shine on you and grace your life.
May God turn toward you and give you
a world of peace.

Or an alternative version:

Always be safe
Shine light in the world
And feel truly at peace with yourself

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KIDDUSH

BLESSING OVER WINE OR GRAPE JUICE

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
borei peri hagafen.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You
for the delicious fruit that grows on vines.

.....

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְתָתֵן לָנוּ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה אֶת יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת יוֹם) הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה
יוֹם (זִכְרוֹן) תְּרוּעָה (בְּאַהֲבָה) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ זִכָּר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ
קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וּדְבַרְךָ אֱמֶת וְקִיָּם לְעַד. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקֻדָּשׁ
(הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher bachar banu mikol am,
veromemanu mikol lashon, vekideshanu bemitzvotav. Vatiten lanu Adonai
Eloheinu b'ahava et yom (haShabbat hazeh v'et yom) haZikaron hazeh, yom
(zichron) truah (b'ahava) mikra kodesh, zecher liyetzi'at Mitzrayim. Ki vanu
vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol ha'amim, udevarcha emet vekayam la'ad.
Baruch ata Adonai, melech al kol ha'arets, mekadesh (haShabbat v') Yisra'el
veyom haZikaron.

Dear God, Creator of our world, You have given all the people in the world different
ways of living and believing. Thank You for giving us the gift of being Jewish
and the rules and good deeds that help make us better people. On this day of
remembrance — the festival of the shofar's blast — we remember how you took
us out of slavery in the land of Egypt. Dear God, thank You for giving us this
special day of remembrance to celebrate the New Year.

The Rosh Hashanah meal begins with a blessing over wine or grape juice with special text focusing on remembrance and history.



WASHING HANDS & EATING CHALLAH

The round challah of Rosh Hashanah represents many things: wholeness, the round cycle of the year, and a full new year and its blessings. On Shabbat, challah is often dipped in salt. But on Rosh Hashanah, challah is dipped in honey for a sweet new year.

Before eating a meal, it is traditional to wash your hands and say this blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for giving us rules that make our lives special and for teaching us to wash our hands before we eat.

Recite this blessing before you dip the challah in honey and eat it.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for
bringing bread out of the earth.



SYMBOLIC NEW YEAR FOODS

Welcome to Rosh Hashanah *simanim*
 – eating foods with special symbolic value for the new year.
 Each of these appetizers is chosen because the food itself, or
 the Hebrew name of the food, connects to a wish for the
 new year. **Here goes!**



APPLES & HONEY – A SWEET NEW YEAR

In ancient Israel, the apple was often eaten as the first dish in a meal, to help spark people's appetite, while honey was a popular dessert. By dipping an apple in honey, we connect symbols for the beginning and the end of a meal – symbolizing how one year is ending and another is beginning.

Take an apple slice, dip it in honey, and say:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֵ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוֹקָה.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai
 Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu,
 shetechadesh aleinu shanah tovah
 umetukah.

Dear God, renew us for
 a good and sweet year.



DATES (Tamar)

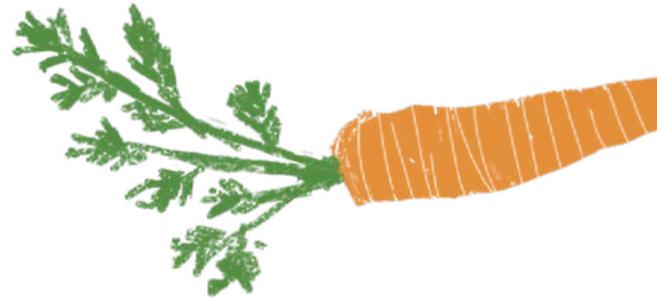
HOPING FOR AN END TO HATE

The word-play here is that the Hebrew word *tam* means “end.” The wish for the new year is that hatred in our world will end. Say the blessing, then eat a date.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שִׁיתָמוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רַעְתָּנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei
avoteinu v'imoteinu, sheyitamoy veveinu veson'einu vechol
mevakshei ra'ateinu.

Dear God, in this new year, please end all hatred.



CARROT (Gezer)

WISHING FOR A GOOD JUDGMENT

The pun here is that *gezer* also means a firm decision or judgment. The wish is that we will be judged favorably in this High Holiday season. Say the blessing, then crunch a carrot (or eat them quietly if they're cooked).

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שֶׁתִּגְזֹר עָלֵינוּ גְזָרוֹת טוֹבוֹת.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shetigzor aleinu
gezerot tovo.

Dear God, in this new year, please give us
a good judgment.



POMEGRANATE (Rimon)

FILLING UP WITH GOOD DEEDS

The hundreds of seeds inside a pomegranate represent the many good deeds – *mitzvot* – we can do to make the world better. Say the blessing, then eat some seeds. (Watch out for stains...)

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֶ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שְׁנֵהֲיָה מִלְּאִים מִצְּוֹת כְּרִמּוֹן.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shenih'yeh
melei'im mitzvot kerimon.

Dear God, in this new year, may our
good deeds be as many
as the seeds of a pomegranate.



“HEAD OF THE YEAR”

Finally, we hope that on Rosh Hashanah (“head of the year”) we will hold our heads up high and be leaders for others. Traditionally, this blessing was said with a fish head (!), but it can be said instead with another symbolic “head.”

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֶ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שְׁנֵהֲיָה לְרֵאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shenih'yeh lerosh
velo lezanav.

Dear God, in this new year, may we be like
the head and not the tail.

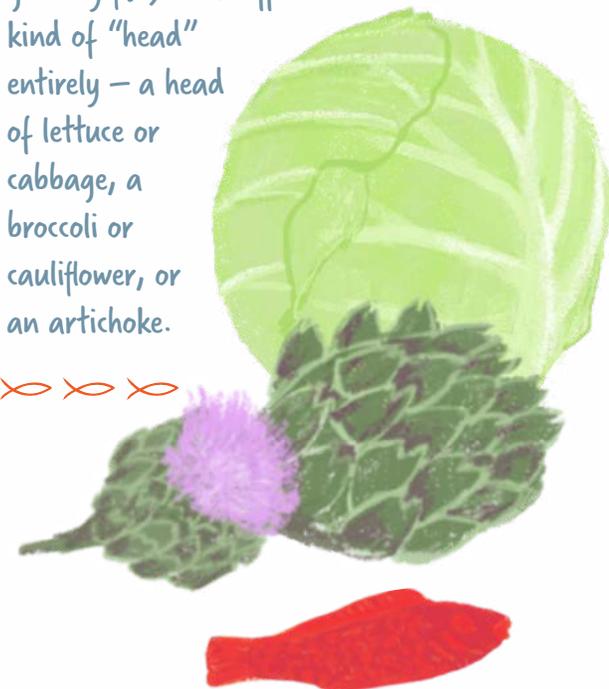


If your family is inspired by the Jewish tradition of *simanim* (symbols) to create your own food symbolism, go for it! Think what foods could represent values you want to highlight in the new year. (If you're brave, create some English-language puns to go along with them.)

And now, enjoy your holiday meal.



Your family may prefer to use a “suggestion” of a fish head (fish-shaped crackers or a gummy fish) or a different kind of “head” entirely – a head of lettuce or cabbage, a broccoli or cauliflower, or an artichoke.





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