

A Seder for Second Night Rosh Hashanah

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Instead of holding second night Rosh Hashanah services, we encourage every congregant to be part of a Second Night Rosh Hashanah Home Seder. “Seder” means order in Hebrew. As on Passover, there is also a seder, an order, to the dinner on Rosh Hashanah. The order for the Rosh Hashanah meal includes not only the blessings over the wine/grape juice (kiddush) and bread (motzi) but also the special *Shehehyanu* prayer thanking God for sustaining us and the special rituals of dipping Challah and apples in honey. On the second night we serve exotic fruit we have not tasted all year.

What to Prepare: Rosh Hashanah meals are traditionally filled with many food items that symbolize our prayers for a sweet year filled with blessings, represented by honey as foods that contain many seeds or grow in abundance, such as pomegranates, pumpkin, leeks, beets, and dates, according to the Talmud’s Rabbi Abaye.

Round challahs symbolize the cycle of the year and the cyclical nature of life. Often the challahs include raisins to symbolize sweetness. Sliced apples, in addition to challah, are dipped in honey according to the Sage Ben Ish Hai, because just as an apple offers three gifts to humankind - taste, appearance and fragrance - we sincerely pray that God grant us three major gifts - worthy descendants, longevity, and sustenance.

One of our special family traditions includes serving different types of honey to our guests. Desserts made with honey, like honey cake and taglach (balls of dough baked in honey) are traditional at this time of year. Besides being sweet to the taste, honey is symbolic of our desire for God’s mercy. The Hebrew word for honey, *devash*, has the same numerical value (306) as the Hebrew name for God, *Av HaRahamin*, Father of Mercy.

Traditionally, a *whole fish, including its head*, is served in hope that we will be at the head rather than the tail of life. We also pray that our numbers increase as the fish in the sea. Nuts are not served, because the numerical value of the Hebrew word for nut, *egoz*, is the same as the Hebrew word for sin, *het*, and we want to refrain from alluding to sin on Rosh Hashanah.

Special Traditions for Second Night: Rosh Hashanah is the only holiday that is observed for two days both in Israel and in the Diaspora. From the earliest rabbinic times, there was a debate about whether Rosh Hashanah should be counted as two separate days or as one long day, and whether or not the *Shehehyanu* prayer should be recited on the second night. As a result, the second night of Rosh Hashanah has several special rituals designed to enable us to recite the *Shehehyanu* prayer the second night.

After we recite the blessings over the wine (Kiddush) and bread (motzi) and dip the challah and apples in honey, we serve new and exotic fruit that we have not tasted during the last twelve months, over which we recite the *Shehehyanu* prayer. Our family tradition includes preparing a large platter of strange and exotic fruit to try as our first course for the second night’s meal. Opening Our Lips: Rosh Hashanah provides a wonderful opportunity for heartfelt discussion on any number of topics. Included below are some topics for this year that might spark discussions around your table. These questions are adapted from *Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur Survival Guide* by Ahimon Apisdorf:

- A. What would bring you more happiness than anything else in the world?
- B. What project or goal, if left undone, would you most regret next Rosh Hashanah?
- C. If you knew you couldn’t fail, what would you undertake this year?

- D. Families with young children might want to prepare puppets or props to help keep the children interested, utilizing any of the resources listed below. Being Thankful: The Bible says, "You will eat, and be satisfied, and bless the Lord." Some families ask guests to share what they are thankful for this past year. Tradition includes grace after meals. Alternatively, this short formula can be recited: "*Barukh Atah Adonai, Hazon Et Hakol,*" "Blessed are You Adon-ai, Who provides Sustenance to All."

For more information: *The Rosh Hashanah Anthology*, by Phillip Goodman; *Days of Awe*, by S. Y. Agnon; *The Complete Family Guide to the Jewish Holidays*, by Dalia Hardof Renberg; *The Jewish Holidays*, by Michael Strassfeld; *The Tapestry of Jewish Time: A Spiritual Guide to the Holidays and Life Cycles*, by Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin; *The New Jewish Holiday Cookbook* by Gloria Greene.

Rosh Hashanah Prayers: The prayers for the Rosh Hashanah table also follow a specific order. The prayers can all be found in our *Siddur Sim Shalom*

For Shabbat and Festivals (SSSF) or the High Holy Day Mahzor, the special prayer book for the holidays.

1. **Candle lighting** (SSSF 303): Light from a pre-existing flame, (e.g. a *yahrzeit* candle you lit before the first night of Rosh Hashanah):
 - a. *Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam Asher kid-shanu b'mitzvatov v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Yom Tov*); Praised are You Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, instilling in us the holiness of mitzvot by commanding us to kindle lights for the festival.
2. **Kiddush:** The full prayers can be found in SSSF 336. Here is a shortened version of the three required prayers:
 - a. *Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam, Borei Prie Hagafen*); Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who creates fruit of the vine.
 - b. *Barukh Atah Adonai Melekh Al Kol Haaretz Mekadesh Yisrael v'Yom Hazikharon*); Blessed are You, Sovereign of all the earth, Who hallows the People Israel and the Day of Remembrance.
 - c. *Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh Haolam Shehehiyanu V'kiamanu V'higianu Lazman Hazeh*); Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, for granting us life, for sustaining us and for helping us to reach this day.
3. **Blessing over Handwashing and the Bread:**
 - a. Rinse each hand three times and recite: **(SSSF 313)** *Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam Asher Kidushanu B'mitzvatav Vitzivanu Al Nitilat Yadaim*); Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe Whose mitzvot add holiness to our lives and Who gave us the mitzvah of washing hands.
 - b. After the ritual of washing hands, we do not speak until we recite the blessing over the bread: (SSSF 314) *Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh HaOlam, Hamotzi Lechem Min Haaretz*); Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe Who brings forth bread from the earth.
4. **Eating the Fruit:** It is customary to eat slices of apple and/or pieces of challah, dipped in honey, and to recite: (SSSF 336):
 - a. *Yehi Ratzon Milfanecha Adonai Eloheinu, Velohei Avoteinu, She't'hadesh Aleinu Shana Tova U'metukah*); May it be Your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, to renew this year for us with sweetness and happiness.