

**סדר אכילת הסימנים ואמירת יה"ר לליל ראש השנה**  
**Symbolic foods for Rosh Hashanah Eve and their accompanying prayers**

We find that our tables are filled with many traditional foods relating to many different customs throughout the year; tonight we will specifically focus on the customs of foods that are displayed on our Holiday table throughout the month on Tishrei.

It is interesting to note that besides for food being a means to fill ourselves, food is also a tool with which we can learn many things, a method for teaching.

Throughout many generations food has become symbolic and meaningful. Our Sages of blessed memory, have said, "A sign has reality". We therefore perform symbolic acts as a sign for good in the month of Tishrei - an expression of prayer that we emerge meritorious in judgment and that the New Year may be a good one for us. Many of these symbolic acts are performed during the first evening meal of Rosh Hashanah.

**Customary foods for Rosh Hashanah and the meanings of them:**

**CHALLAH:**

We take a round Challah and dip it in honey, not in salt as is the usual custom. This signifies our wishes for a good, sweet year.

The shape also differs from the traditional braided Challah symbolizing all Jews are intertwined. Three reasons for the round Challah: 1. Round is circular referring to a complete year; 2. Rosh Hashanah is the coronation and crowing Hashem as our King and round symbolizes a crown placed on Hashem; 3. Spiral goes up just like we want our prayers to go straight upwards and be accepted.

**APPLES & HONEY:**

We take an apple and dip it into honey –

Why an Apple? Apple is the most majestic of all fruits. The Zohar says חקל תפוחין קדושין, the holy apple orchard - the Jewish people are compared to apples in Hashem's orchard, where His presence is found. This is very appropriate for Rosh Hashanah; basking in Hashem's glory. We can also see Hashem's name in an apple:

- ' = 10 green dots
- ה = five boxes shaped like a star, where seed grows
- I = stalk on top
- ה = 5 bumps on the bottom of apple.

Why Honey? Apples are naturally sweet and honey has to work with nature to become sweet. It is a message for us that it is not enough that we are inherently sweet and good but we have to nurture it and work on ourselves so that we are utilizing the sweetness, just like honey has to. So we dip the apple into the honey!

The apple together with the honey is symbolic of a sweet new year.

**תפוח בדבש**  
**APPLE DIPPED IN HONEY**




יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' אלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שנתחדש  
עלינו שנה  
טובה ומרובה:

May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that you renew for us a good and sweet year.

**HONEY CAKE:** This signifies our wishes for a good, sweet year.

**POMEGRANATE** רימון



יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' אלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שירבו  
זכירותינו כרמון:

May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that our merits increase as [the seeds of] a pomegranate.

**POMEGRANATE:**

We eat a pomegranate on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. The top looks like a crown, again showing our crowning Hashem as our King.

Just like this pomegranate is full of seeds every Jew is full of Mitzvot. This symbolizes the wish that our merits be as numerous as the seeds of a pomegranate.

**HEAD of FISH:**

We have the head of a fish on the table which signifies our hope to be a 'head' and not the 'tail', outstanding in

**FISH** דגים



יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' אלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שנפרה  
ונרבה כדגים:

May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.

righteousness and an example for all. The head impacts the body just like Rosh Hashanah impacts the rest of the year.

The fish also symbolizes that we should multiply like fish.

Fish have no eye lids so they can never close their eyes. Some eat the eye of the fish and say "May it be your will G-d that you watch over us with open eyes".

### HEAD of a LAMB:

We are asking Hashem that He remember 'Akeydus Yitchzak', 'The Binding of Isaac'. The head of a lamb also signifies that we should be the 'head' and not the 'tail' as mentioned above. Some dip the head in the honey.

**TONGUE:** Some people have the custom to eat tongue on Rosh Hashanah to remind us to only use our tongue for good.

### NEW FRUIT:

It is customary to eat a new fruit on the second night of Rosh Hashanah - one that has not yet been eaten this season. The reason for this is that since "shehechyanu" was made during Kiddush or after candle lighting, and since Rosh Hashanah is like one long day we need an additional reason to say "shehechyanu". When we say the "shehechyanu" at Kiddush or candle lighting, we have in mind the new fruit.

### TZIMMUS:

**LEEK [OR CABBAGE] כרתי**

יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שיתקדש  
שמיך ויכרתו שונאינו:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that our enemies be decimated.

*Tzimmus* is a Yiddish word meaning to make a fuss, a big deal. *Tzimmus* is also a stew of vegetables, usually made with carrots.

Why Carrots? Carrots in Yiddish is *merren*. *Merren* also means to increase; we should increase in our good deeds for the coming year and our merits should increase.

Being sweet it also signifies our wishes for a good, sweet year.

**GOURD - Ruvia:** This symbolizes that our merits should increase.

**ראש כבש**  
**HEAD OF A SHEEP [OR FISH]**

יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שנתנה  
לראש ולא לתאב:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that we be as the head and not as the tail.

**גזר**  
**CARROTS**

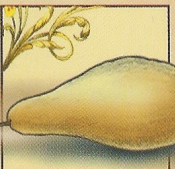
יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שיתקדש  
שמיך ויכרתו שונאינו:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers that you decree good decrees upon us.

**קרא**  
**GOURD**

יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שיתקדש  
רוע גזר דיננו ויקראו לפניך זכיותינו:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that the decree of our sentence be torn asunder; and may our merits be proclaimed before you.

**סלקא**  
**BEETS [OR SPINACH]**

יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שישתקדש  
שמיך ויכרתו שונאינו:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that our adversaries and prosecutors be removed.

**LEEK or CABBAGE- Karti:** This symbolizes that our enemies should be decimated.

**BEETS- Silka:** This symbolizes that our enemies should be removed.

**DATES:** This symbolizes that our enemies should be consumed.

**תמרים**  
**DATES**

יהי רצון מלפניך,  
ה' יאלקינו ואלקי  
אבותינו, שיתקדש  
שמיך ויכרתו שונאינו:



May it be your will, Hashem our God and the God of our forefathers, that our enemies be consumed.

### Foods we DO NOT eat on Rosh Hashanah:

#### NUTS:

The numerical value of the Hebrew term for nut, *egoz*, is the same as that of 'chet' (Hebrew for sin). We refrain from alluding to sin on Rosh Hashanah. They increase phlegm and saliva, and distract one during prayer.

## Customary foods for Erev Yom Kippur and their symbolism:

### KREPLACH

The meat in the kreplach represents severe Judgment; we cover it over with a soft, white dough symbolizing Hashem's compassion and love. This signifies that Hashem should cover over any harsh judgment.

There is also a custom to eat kreplach on Hoshanah Rabah because that is when the Book of Life is sealed on this day.

### HONEY CAKE:

We specifically have honey cake on Erev Yom Kippur because we are supposed to ask for a piece "*Bet Lekach*" (beg for honey cake). This is so that this should be the only thing we ever have to ask or need during the whole year.

Being sweet it also signifies our wishes for a good, sweet year.

## Customary food that we eat on Simchat Torah and the meaning for it:

### STUFFED CABBAGE:

We have stuffed cabbage, *holishkes*, on Simchat Torah which is symbolic of a rolled Torah scroll which we dance with in shul. This way we are showing that the Torah is every Jew's inheritance whether you are knowledgeable or not – it doesn't matter.

Have a Happy and Healthy, Sweet New Year!!