

A HOLY DAY SEDER TO BEGIN THE YEAR IN SWEETNESS

Setting the Scene: *There is a beautiful Sephardic Jewish custom of beginning the new year with a seder. Based on a text from the Talmud (Horayot 12a), the ritual developed through the Middle Ages. Like a Passover seder, the traditional ritual invites participants to sample foods that take on special meanings. As we begin the new year, these foods point towards renewal and hope. For us, this year, we invite you to gather around your table – in person or virtually – to sample the annual favorites of apples, honey, and challah and to consider ways that you hope the new year will be sweet for you and those that you love.*

For the Table:

Two candlesticks and candles, Kiddush cup, wine or grape juice, challah, challah cover, apple slices, honey

Opening Prayer:

Holy One of Blessing,
we gather tonight to begin the New Year.
With a full hearts we pray that it will be a year
of love, happiness, and peace
for our family, for the Jewish people, and for all of humanity.

May the old year and any difficulties that it brought fade from sight.
May the New Year bring abundant sweetness and blessing.

Candles:

Light the candles.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel (Shabbat v'shel) Yom Tov.

Reading:

Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe,
who has enabled us to experience holiness
through kindling the lights of the New Year.

May our home be made holy with Your light.
May its radiance shine upon us all in blessing
as the light of love and peace.

Kiddush:

Lift cup of wine.

With this symbol of joy,
we give thanks for the blessings
which this New Year brings to us.

As we begin the year together,

we ask for the strength to fill our lives with goodness
and to bring sweetness to others.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam boray p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe, who has created the fruit of the vine.

Something Interesting:

Challah is blessed and eaten at the Rosh HaShanah meal, just like on other Jewish holidays and on Shabbat. The difference: Tonight's Challah looks different from all other nights' Challahs—and contains symbolism! There is a custom to serve round Challah on Rosh HaShanah, representing the circularity of time, the roundness and the fullness of the year, or even a crown (whether it be the crown of God's rulership or the crowns with which God traditionally adorns the people of Israel).

Jews of Polish descent have a custom of making Rosh HaShanah Challah in the shape of ladders (representing the idea that we will be exalted or brought low in the coming year) or birds, based on the verse in Isaiah: "Like the birds that fly, even so will the Lord of Hosts shield Jerusalem, shielding and saving, protecting and rescuing. Then the children of Israel shall return to God...." A common custom in many communities is to dip the Challah, normally sprinkled with salt, in sweet honey (or sugar). When dipping our Challah, we might use this Hassidic wish:

"May God create yeast in your soul, causing you to ferment, and mature, to rise, elevate to your highest possibilities, to reach your highest self."

Shusterman Center

(from the Hagadah for a Rosh Hashanah Seder, The

:Motzi

.Remove challah cover

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu

Melech ha'olam ha'motzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Pass and eat challah.

Fruit of the Tree:

Pass apple slices to dip in honey.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha'olam boray p'ri ha'eitz.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Ruler of the universe, who creates trees that bear fruit.

Eat apples and honey.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּינוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה.

Shehecheyanu:

Baruch Atah Adonai Elohaynu Melech ha'olam she'he'che'yanu vkiy'manu v'hig'i'anu la'z'man ha'zeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai, for the privilege of welcoming the New Year.
May it be a year sweet in family affection, fruitful in good deeds, and rich in peace.

Eat apples and honey.

(If children are present)

Blessing the Children:

This is a special blessing for you. Our hope is that you will always pursue truth, be thoughtful in your words, and loving in how you encounter other people.

May God bless you and keep you.
May God look kindly upon you and be gracious unto you.
May God bestow favor upon you and grant you peace. Amen.

Enjoy Dinner! Shana Tovah! Happy New Year!