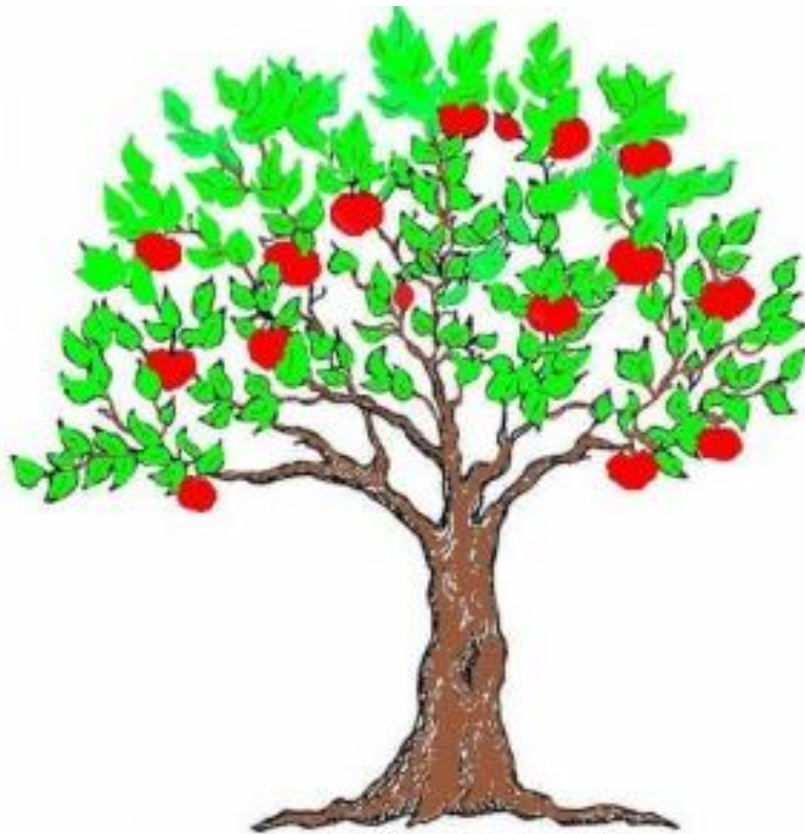
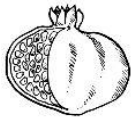




A Family Seder for Rosh Hashanah

Sixth & I Historic Synagogue



תְּחִלַּת שָׁנָה וּבְרָכוֹתֶיהָ:

Let the New Year begin with all its blessings!



The Rosh Hashanah seder is a 2,000-year-old Sephardic custom that is still practiced today by Jews of Sephardic descent (from Spain, North Africa, and the Middle East). The seder traditionally precedes the evening meal on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Its purpose is to add meaning to the holiday by associating our hopes for the New Year with a variety of symbolic foods over which we offer blessings.

The type of food varies. Typically, the seder includes figs, dates, carrots, beets, pomegranates, apples and honey, leeks, spinach, squash, and the head of a fish. Each blessing begins with the phrase Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha..., "May it be God's will...", and concludes with a specific wish that relates to the food which is then passed around the table for all to taste. It is called a 'seder,' meaning 'order,' because there is a specific order to the blessings. Ironically, that order varies from region to region. But the purpose remains the same – to spark self-reflection and expression of our greatest wishes for the New Year.

The traditional seder begins with a 13th century poem by Abraham Hazzan Girondi which declares: "Let the year end with all its curses! Let the new year begin with all its blessings!" Because this is a child-friendly seder, we have taken the liberty of adapting this poem and many of the traditional blessings to express only our most hopeful wishes for the New Year.

A Family Seder for Rosh Hashanah

L'Shanah Tovah by Peter and Ellen Allard

Chorus:

L'Shanah Tovah, a happy new year!
L'Shanah Tovah, a healthy new year!
L'Shanah Tovah, a sweet new year!
For you and you and me!

We dip our apples in honey,
A sweet beginning to a sweet new year;
We eat dates and pomegranates and we make a wish
For a happy and peaceful year. (chorus)

Teshuvah, we change for the better,
Tefillah, we pray for the best,
Tzedakah, we help other people in need,
And God will take care of the rest. (chorus)



We gather together today to experience the 2,000-year-old custom of a Rosh Hashanah seder. Just like the Passover seder – when we eat symbolic foods, Sephardic Jews (those from Spain, North Africa and the Middle East) have a seder for Rosh Hashanah during which blessings are offered over various foods that express our hopes for the new year.

תחל שנה וברכותיה:

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

Let the new year begin with all its blessings!

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. יְיָ אֶחָד:
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

*Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.
Baruch sheim k'vod mal'chuto l'olam vaed.*

Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one.
Blessed is God's glorious name which rules forever.

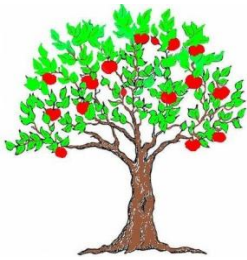
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam Shehecheyanu, v'kiyamanu, v'higianu, lazman hazeh.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this day.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam borei p'ri hagafen.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Who creates the fruit of the vine.





בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָעֵץ:
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam borei p'ri ha-etz.
 Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Who creates the fruit of the tree.

Dates – A Wish for Peace



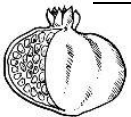
יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
 שְׂיִתְמּוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי רַעְתָּנוּ:
Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
She-yi-tamu oyveinu v'soneinu v'chol m'vak-shei ra'ateinu.
 May it be Your will, Adonai our God, that this new year
 be a peaceful year for us and for all the world.

Mirembe by Noam Katz

Mirembe, mirembe, salaam v'shalom,
 Make peace in the village, make peace in the home;
 Make peace in the morning until daylight is done,
 Mirembe, mirembe, salaam v'shalom!
 Ya lai lai, Ya lai lai, Ya lai lai lai lai
 Ya lai lai, Ya lai lai, Ya lai lai lai lai



Pomegranate – A Wish for Mitzvot



יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
 שְׂנֵהֶיָה מִלְּאִים מִצְוֹת כְּרִמּוֹן:
Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
She-ni-he-yeh m'le'im mitzvot ka-rimon.
 May it be Your will, Adonai our God, that we be
 as full of good deeds as the pomegranate is full of seeds.

Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah by Andy Vogel

Mitzvah goreret mitzvah (wool!) (hands in air)
 Aveirah goreret aveirah (oh-oh!) (wag finger side to side)
 Mitzvah goreret mitzvah, goreret mitzvah,
 Ya la la la la! (repeat)

Li-h'yot tzadik – Zeh tov? (Zeh tov!) Zeh tov? (Zeh tov!)
 L'hiyot tzadik – Zeh ma-zey??? Tov m'oh-oh-oh-od! (thumbs up!)
 (first verse)

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.

The song, Mirembe, was written by Noam Katz, a popular Jewish American songwriter who visited the Abayudaya, a Jewish community in Uganda in 2003. After spending three months there, Noam released an album of songs reflecting the language, culture, and musical style of this tribe of African Jews who converted to Judaism in the early 1920's and who continue to raise their children according to the laws and teachings of the Torah. The song teaches that we must strive for peace in four languages: English, Hebrew, Arabic and Luganda, the language of the Abayudaya.

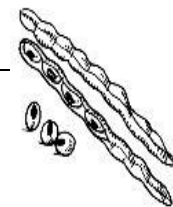


According to the rabbis, the pomegranate has 613 seeds, the number of mitzvot (commandments) in the Torah. Eating a pomegranate on Rosh Hashanah reminds us of the importance of doing mitzvot in the coming year.

The song, Mitzvah Goreret Mitzvah, teaches that one good deed leads to another, just as one bad deed leads to another. To be considered a righteous person, one must live according to the commandments; and to be righteous is very good! (Pirkei Avot 4:2)



Beans – A Wish for Prosperity/Tzedakah



The Hebrew word for black-eyed peas - rubyah sounds like the Hebrew word for increase yirbu. Though we wish for prosperity for ourselves, we also remember those who have less. This prayer reminds us of the importance of giving tzedakah.



The Hebrew word for gourd, kara, sounds like the Hebrew word kara which means to 'tear or rend,' as well as 'proclaim.' 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.



The Hebrew word for beet, selek, sounds like the word yistalku, which means 'to beat a retreat.' We wish for freedom from those who wish us harm.



Mi Chamocha is a prayer extolling God's powers that we recite at every service. It comes from the most pivotal moment in Jewish history, the exodus of our people from slavery in Egypt. As our ancestors stood at the shore of the Sea of Reeds and witnessed the miracle of the sea's parting and then crossed in safety to freedom, they exclaimed in wonder: *Mi chamocha ba-eilim Adonai?! Who is like you, O God?!*

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. שְׂיִרְבוּ זְכוּתֵינוּ:

*Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
she-yirbu ze-chu-yoteinu.*

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



Pumpkin /Gourd – A Wish for Happiness



יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

שְׂתִקְרַע רֵעַ גְּזֵר דֵּינֵנוּ וְיִקְרָאוּ לְפָנֶיךָ זְכוּתֵינוּ:

*Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
she-tikra ro'a g'zar dineinu v'yikar-u l'fanecha ze-chu-yoteinu.*

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

Go ahead, count your blessings. Pick one that fills you with happiness, and then please share it by singing the b'racha in the traditional chant used for morning blessings...

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם...

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam...

Thank You, God, for the blessing of: _____!



Beets – A Wish for Freedom



יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

שְׂיִסְתַּלְקוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי רַעְתָּנוּ:

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

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

Mi Chamocha by Debbie Friedman

Mi chamochah ba-eilim Adonai
Mi kamochah, ne'dar bakodesh,
Nora t'hilot, oseh feleh



מִי כַמְכָה בְּאֵלִים יְיָ.
מִי כַמְכָה, נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ.
נֹרָא תְהִלָּת, עֹשֶׂה פִּלָּא

Fish Head – A Wish for Leadership



יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ. שְׁנֵהֵיהָ לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב:

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
she-nih'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



יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
שְׂיִכְרְתוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכֹל מִבְּקָשֵׁי רַעְתָּנוּ:

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

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

We are Kehillah by Ira and Julia Levin

We are friends, we are chaverim,
We come together to dance and dream;
We live and sing, in harmony,
We are friends, we are chaverim!

We are mishpacha, we are family,
I give to you, and you give to me;
We live and sing, in harmony,
We are mishpacha, we are family!

We are kehillah, we are community,
I help you, and you help me;
We live and sing, in harmony.
We are kehillah, we are community!
We are kehillah, we are kehillah,
We are kehillah, we are kehillah!
(repeat verse to end song)



The seder calls for a fish or sheep's head to symbolize our wish to be heads, not tails; leaders, not stragglers. The sheep's head also served as a reminder of the ram that saved Isaac's life; we recite the story of the binding of Isaac on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. In lieu of the fish or sheep's head, you may use a head of lettuce or goldfish crackers.



The Hebrew word for leeks or scallions, karti resembles the word yikartu, meaning 'cut off.' The traditional prayer asks that our enemies be 'cut off.' Jews from Persia tear the scallions and throw them behind their backs and over their shoulders. The wish to not have enemies may be interpreted as a desire to build friendships and community.



We dip apples in honey to represent our hope for a Shana Tova u'Metuka, a 'good and sweet new year.' Honey is also one of the attributes of the Land of Israel which is described in the Bible as being a land that "flows with milk and honey." Thus honey on the table expresses both our hope for a sweet year and our connection to our ancient homeland.



It is customary to have a round challah for the High Holidays to symbolize the cyclical nature of the year. The dough is often sweetened with sugar and raisins and dipped in honey to express our hope for a sweet year. Moroccan Jews sweeten the custom even more by dipping the challah in sugar.

Apples in Honey – A Wish for Sweetness



יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
שְׁתַּחֲדֵשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה:

*Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu
Shetichadesh aleinu shanah tova u'metukah.*

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



בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם.
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.*

Praised be our Eternal God, Ruler of the universe,
who brings forth the bread from the earth.



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!

שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה!
Shana Tova u'Metuka!



This service was written by Lisa Baydush © 2010 for Sixth & I Historic Synagogue.

*Information contained in this service was compiled from various Internet sources and
Rahel Musleah's excellent book, "Apples and Pomegranates – a Family Seder for Rosh Hashanah."*