

סימנא מילתא

On the night of Rosh Hashanah there is an almost universal custom of dipping the first piece of *challah* into honey. After the *challah* has been eaten, a piece of apple dipped in honey is given to each participant and the blessing is recited:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

A small piece of the apple is eaten and the following prayer is recited before the apple is finished.

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה.**

The following symbolic foods are mentioned in the Talmud, *Shulchan Aruch*, or other authorities. The list follows no particular order.

Carrots:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁירְבוּ זְכוֹתֵינוּ.

Leek or cabbage:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁיכָרְתוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.

Beets:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁיִּסְתַּלְקוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ.

Dates:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שִׁיתֶמוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.

Gourd:

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שִׁיקְרַע גִּזְרֵי דִיגְנוֹ וְיִקְרְאוּ לְפָנֶיךָ זְכוֹתֵינוּ.**

Pomegranate:

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁנֶּרְבָּה זְכוֹת כְּרֵמוֹן.**

Fish:

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁנִּפְרָה וְנִרְבָּה כְּדָגִים.**

Head of a sheep (or fish):

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁנִּהְיָה לְרֵאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב.**

סימנא מילתא / SYMBOLIC FOODS

Various symbolic foods are eaten at the festive meal on the first night of Rosh Hashanah (some also eat them on the second night), and a short prayer alluding to the symbolism of the food or its name is recited for each food.

The custom of eating symbolic foods on Rosh Hashanah is based on a Talmudic teaching: Omens are significant, therefore each person should habituate himself to eat, at the beginning of the year, gourds, leeks, beets, and dates (*Horayos* 12a; *Kereisos* 6a).

☞ SYMBOLIC FOODS ☞

On the night of Rosh Hashanah there is an almost universal custom of dipping the first piece of *challah* into honey. After the *challah* has been eaten, a piece of apple dipped in honey is given to each participant and the blessing is recited:

בְּרַוְךָ *Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.*

A small piece of the apple is eaten and the following prayer
is recited before the apple is finished.

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that You renew for us a good and sweet year.*

The following symbolic foods are mentioned in the Talmud, *Shulchan Aruch*,
or other authorities. The list follows no particular order.

Carrots:

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that our merits increase.*

Leek or cabbage:

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that our enemies be decimated.*

Beets:

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that our adversaries be removed.*

Dates:

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that our enemies be consumed.*

Gourd:

*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.*

Pomegranate:

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

Fish:

*May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God and the God of our forefathers,
that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.*

Head of a sheep (or fish):

*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.*

The symbolism of the different foods falls into various groupings. Some are sweet tasting and indicate a sweet year (*Rashi*), while others allude to abundance and symbolize an in-

crease of Israel's *mitzvah* performance; others allude to destruction and eradication and are applied to Israel's sins and enemies (*Mordechai; Or Zarua*).