

◁ 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 עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוֹקָה.**

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, שִׁיסְתַּלְקוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ.

Dates:

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

Gourd:

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

Pomegranate:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שֶׁנִּרְבָּה 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 לְרֹאשׁ 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:

בְּרוּךְ *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*).