



# Berachot Rosh Hashanah -

## Rosh Hashanah Home Ceremony

בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שַׁבְּתוֹן זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה נִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ:

*In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation. - Lev 23:24*

The home ceremony for **Rosh Hashanah** takes place at sundown, just before the start of Tishri 1. The main event of this holiday consists of a special festive meal, similar to a Friday evening Shabbat meal. The Rosh Hashanah celebration begins with the lighting of candles (*hadlakat nerot*), symbolizing the transition from profane to sacred time, and the recitation of the blessing thanking God for enabling us to reach this season (the *shehecheyanu*). Other customs such as eating apples dipped in honey are enjoyed.

Here's what you'll need for a Rosh Hashanah *simchah*:

1. **A festive kosher dinner**
2. **A least two candles**
3. **Wine (or grape juice) in a Kiddush cup**
4. **Fresh apples and honey**
5. **Round Challah loaves**
6. **A shofar (to be blown at the end of the meal)**
7. **A pomegranate (for the second night)**



### Rosh Hashanah Candle-Lighting Blessing

Rosh Hashanah is also referred to as *Yom HaZikaron*, the Day of Remembrance, since in Leviticus 23:24 it is referred to as “a memorial” (*zikaron*) day.

As Yom HaZikaron, Rosh Hashanah recalls the story of Isaac's near-sacrifice (said by Jewish tradition to have occurred on Tishri 1) when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son as an offering (this is known as the *Akedah*). Abraham obeyed God's command, built an altar, and prepared to sacrifice Isaac, but at the very last minute was stopped by the Angel of the LORD. The Angel pointed out a ram caught by its horns in a nearby bush and told Abraham to sacrifice it in place of Isaac. Here again is a clear picture of the sacrifice of the Son of God by the Father performed on behalf of those who trust in Him.



Since Rosh Hashanah is about *teshuvah*, or returning to God through repentance, the Akedah is retold to remind us that submission to God is the way to demonstrate a repentant attitude before the LORD.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, just before sundown, the following blessing is recited while kindling the holiday candles:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ  
 kid-de-sha nu 'a-sheer ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei nu Adonai at-tah ba-ruk h  
 sanctifies us who King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed  
  
 בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן.  
 haz-zik-ka-ron yom shel ner le-had-lik ve-tsi-va-nu be-mits-vo-tav  
 the day of of light to kindle and commanded with his mitzvot  
 Remembrance us

*Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Yom Zikkaron.*

*Barukh attah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav, lehadlik ner shel yom ha-zikkaron.*

**Note:** If Rosh Hashanah occurs on Shabbat, the ending reads: “*shel shabbat ve-Yom Ha-Zikkaron.*”

The *Shehecheyanu* blessing is said to thank God for enabling us to reach this season:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
 ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei nu Adonai at-tah ba-ruk h  
 “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe,”  
  
 שֶׁהֵחִיָנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִנִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.  
 haz-zeh laz-ze-man ve-hi-gi-a-nu ve-ki-ye-ma-nu she-he-che-ya-nu  
 “for keeping us alive, taking care of us, and bringing us to this time.”



## Kiddush and HaMotzi



After this, the holiday is sanctified by reciting *Kiddush* (the blessing over wine) for Rosh Hashanah and, before eating the holiday meal, by reciting the *HaMotzi* (the blessing over bread).

Since Rosh Hashanah celebrates the cyclical passage of time and the recurring progression of holidays of the New Year, it is customary to recite the *HaMotzi* blessing over round loaves of challah (symbolizing the revolving seasons or the Crown of God). Often these are sweetened with raisins for the holiday. To wish that the coming year will be an especially sweet one, the pieces of challah are drizzling with honey just before eating them.



## Apples Dipped in Honey

It is also customary to eat apples dipped in honey during this meal. Why? It is a tradition to eat a newly ripened fruit for the first time during that fruit's harvest season, and since Rosh Hashanah falls around the beginning of apple season, the apple has become the "first fruit." This provides the opportunity to recite the blessings both over the fruit of the tree (bore pri ha'etz) as well as another Shehecheyanu. Before eating the apple dipped in honey, we ask God "to renew this year for us with sweetness and happiness."



## Grace After the Meal

After the meal, one recites the *birkat hamazon*, the "grace after meals," including special additions marking the festival of Rosh Hashanah. It is traditional at this time to greet one another with *L'Shanah Tovah Tikatevu!* ("May you be inscribed (in the Book of Life) for a good year!") and to respond with *gam lekha* (same to you):

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ !



### Listening to the Shofar

If you have a **shofar**, you may want to fulfill the *mitzvah* of listening to its sound by blowing it at this time. The one who blows the shofar recites the blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ

kid-de-sha-nu 'a-sheer ha-'o-lam me-lekh e-lo-hei-nu Adonai at-tah ba-rukhh  
sanctifies us who King of the universe our God LORD You Blessed



בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמְעַתְּ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר

sho-far kol lish-mo-'a ve-tsi-va-nu be-mits-vo-tav  
the voice of the shofar to hear and commanded us with his mitzvot

*Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us with His commandments and commanded us to hear the sound of the shofar.*

*Barukh attah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, asher kidishanu be'mitzvotav ve'tzivanu lishmo'a kol shofar.*

### The Second Day of Rosh Hashanah

Since Rosh Hashanah is a two-day festival, all of these ceremonies are repeated on the second evening as well, except that there is a tradition to use a different newly ripened fruit of the season, such as a pomegranate. This fruit is a popular since it is mentioned as native to the land of Israel and because there is a legend that there are 613 seeds in each fruit (corresponding to the number of commandments in the Torah). Most do not dip the pomegranate in honey, however, since its seeds are already sweet enough by themselves.



Eating a pomegranate reminds us of the sweetness of the Torah.