

ב"ה

Making It Meaningful at Home



ROSH HASHANAH

STUDENT HANDOUT



YOUR PRE-ROSH HASHANAH SHOPPING LIST

Your Rosh Hashanah shopping list will largely depend on your menu. The traditional meal includes wine, challah, apple dipped in honey, fish, soup, and a meat or chicken course. A favorite dish for Shabbat lunch is cholent or chamin, a warm stew that simmers overnight. All this, however, is contingent on one's personal palate. On Rosh Hashanah we add additional foods that are eaten for symbolic purposes.

The following are universal items that are needed to create the Rosh Hashanah experience:

BASIC

- o Candles or tea lights (for Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah candle lighting)
- o A twenty-four-hour candle (for lighting candles the second night)
- o Kosher wine or grape juice (for Kiddush and Havdalah)
- o Five (preferably round) loaves of challah (or, for a small crowd, challah rolls)
- o Apple, honey, and the symbolic foods that will grace your table
- o A fruit that you have not yet eaten this season (for after Kiddush on the second night)
- o A prayer book that contains the texts of the Rosh Hashanah prayers, Kiddush, and Havdalah

AND THEN ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE:

- o Fresh flowers
- o Stylish candlesticks (Get creative! Anything from the traditional silver candlesticks to floating candles in a crystal dish with flower petals, marbles, and mirrors)
- o An elegant Kiddush cup
- o A nice challah cover, cutting board, and knife
- o A pressed white tablecloth
- o Fine dishware, glassware, flatware, and napkins

YOUR PRE-ROSH HASHANAH CHECKLIST

HOME-RELATED TASKS

- o Make beds
- o Wash dishes and counters, and tidy up kitchen
- o Sweep and mop floors
- o Vacuum carpets
- o Wash, fold, and put away laundry
- o Pick up holiday clothing from dry cleaners
- o Polish shoes
- o Set table and arrange candles
- o Check pockets of all clothing you will wear on Rosh Hashanah, to ensure they are empty
- o Set lights, air conditioners, and heat the way you'd like them to remain for duration of Rosh Hashanah.
- o If your refrigerator or freezer has a light that goes on when the door is opened, unscrew light bulb, or activate "Shabbat mode."
- o Note: You can use electronic timers to schedule lights and certain appliances (such as air conditioners) to go on and off on Rosh Hashanah at preset times.

FOOD-RELATED PREPARATIONS

Fill an electric urn with water and heat it until it is boiled (make sure that the urn's dispensing mechanism is not electronically operated).

On Friday, before Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat commence at sunset, place all food that will be served warm on the first night and day of Rosh Hashanah—such as soup, chicken, or cholent—on the stovetop. A *blech* or a folded piece of (heavy-duty) aluminum foil should separate the food from the fire or heating element. If you are using an electric cooking pot, place a layer of foil between the outer cooker and the inner pot (this is not necessary if the electric cooking pot has only one setting, i.e., only an on/off switch).

SELF-PREPARATIONS

- o Bathe or shower
- o Groom hair and nails
- o Apply makeup and/or perfume
- o Get dressed in your holiday best

BAKING CHALLAH

When used in daily conversation, “challah” refers to the braided loaves of bread traditionally eaten on Shabbat and Jewish holiday meals. In Talmudic and rabbinic literature, however, challah usually refers to the small portion of dough that we separate from the total dough before we bake any bread, in fulfillment of the biblical directive (Numbers 15:21), “From the first portion of your dough, you shall give a gift to G-d.”

Originally, this challah portion was given to a *Kohen*, a priestly descendant of Aharon, who served in the Holy Temple, a practice that will resume in the messianic era with the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. For various reasons, priests today are not permitted to eat this challah portion—but neither are we. So instead, we burn the small piece of challah.

Though today most people buy bread from bakeries (kosher bakeries also separate challah from the dough), Jewish women have traditionally embraced the custom of baking challah loaves in honor of Shabbat, allowing them the opportunity to perform the special mitzvah of separating challah on a weekly basis.

WHAT?

We separate challah from batches of dough that are made from at least eight cups of wheat, rye, barley, oat, or spelt flour.

HOW?

- After kneading the dough and letting it rise once, before shaping it into loaves, place the dough in a single pan or bowl and say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַפְרִישׁ חֻלָּה.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, asher kidshanu
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lihafrish challah.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to separate challah.

- Separate a small piece (approximately the size of a golf ball) and say, “This is challah.”
- Wrap the challah in foil and burn it in a broiler, grill, or oven. (The charred bread may be discarded.)
- The blessing is only recited if there are at least twelve cups of flour in the batch. Otherwise, separate *challah* (if there are at least eight cups of flour in the batch), but don’t recite the blessing. Also, only recite the blessing if water comprises most of the liquid in the dough.

COOKING ON ROSH HASHANAH

- Unlike Shabbat, it is permitted to cook on *Yom Tov* with the following caveats:
 - o We may only perform tasks that (a) are necessary for food preparation and (b) could not have been done before *Yom Tov* without compromising the quality of the food.
 - o This excludes, among other things:
 - ▶ Turning on the flame because this can be done before *Yom Tov*.
 - ▶ Extinguishing the flame because this is not necessary for the cooking of foods.
 - o Therefore, a low stove/oven flame should be left on from before *Yom Tov*.
 - o The flame may be raised or lowered as needed *while cooking*.
 - o The flame should not be adjusted after the food was removed from the fire.
 - ▶ This only applies to gas ovens and stoves. If you have an electric oven or stove, consult your local Chabad rabbi for guidance.
- Another important caveat is that we may only cook each day (sunset to sunset) what we need for that day. We may not cook on *Yom Tov* something we will need the next day.
- The first day of Rosh Hashanah will fall on Shabbat this year. Therefore, cooking will be forbidden during this day.
- The second day of Rosh Hashanah will fall on Sunday this year. Therefore, cooking—with the caveats listed above—will be permissible after nightfall on Saturday.

LIGHTING THE CANDLES

WHEN?

- Candles should be lit before sunset.
- When Rosh Hashanah falls on Friday night, as will be the case this year for the first night of Rosh Hashanah, the candles may not be lit after sunset.
- One shouldn't light the candles too early on *erev* Rosh Hashanah—not more than approximately seventy-five minutes before sundown. This way it will be clear that they are being lit in honor of Rosh Hashanah.
- In many communities, the custom is to light the candles eighteen minutes before sunset. This is the candle lighting time that is published in our calendars.
- On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, candles are lit after nightfall.
- For the proper candle lighting time for any date and location, go to: www.chabad.org/candlelighting.

WHO?

- The mitzvah applies to men and women. However, if there is a woman (of the age of bat mitzvah) in the home, she lights the candles for the household.
- When a man is living alone, he lights the candles. Even when there is a woman in the home, Jewish law encourages the man to actively participate in this mitzvah. For example, he can set up the tray with the candlesticks.
- The Lubavitcher Rebbe initiated a campaign to encourage every Jewish girl to light her own candle. Girls should start lighting Shabbat and *Yom Tov* candles as soon as they are able to do so, which is often around the age of three.
- Because lighting *Yom Tov* candles is a de facto acceptance of *Yom Tov*, after which one may not do any of activity forbidden on *Yom Tov*—including striking a new match—young girls light before their mothers so that the mother can assist them.

WHAT?

- It is best to use wax candles or oil for this mitzvah. However, all candles manufactured today emit a clean, stable flame and are kosher for lighting.
- The candles should be long enough to burn until nightfall and, ideally, until after the Rosh Hashanah dinner.
- The mitzvah can technically be fulfilled by lighting a single candle. However, there are various customs in this regard. The established custom is for single girls and women to light one candle, and married women to light (at least) two. Many women have a custom of lighting one additional candle upon the birth of each child, increasing in light as the family grows.

WHERE?

- Set the candles on a metal tray in a location that is out of the reach of young children or pets and clear of flammable objects.
- The candles should ideally be visible from the table on which the Rosh Hashanah meal will be eaten, so that those enjoying their meal can benefit from their glow.

HOW?

- It is customary to light the candles while dressed in holiday clothing.
- It is appropriate to place some money in a charity box before lighting the candles.
- Light the candle(s).
- On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, do not strike a new match. Light the candles from a pre-existing flame. Many light a 24-hour-candle before Rosh Hashanah to ensure they will have a preexisting flame for this purpose.
- Do not extinguish the match. Instead, let it burn down on the metal tray upon which the candles are standing.
- Circle your hands over the flames and toward yourself three times.

- Recite the following blessings:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹ-נָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וַצַּוְנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, asher
kidshanu bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Shabbat veshel
Yom Hazikaron.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of the Shabbat and the day of remembrance.

- On the second night, replace this blessing with the following:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹ-נָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וַצַּוְנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, asher kidshanu
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu lehadlik ner shel Yom Hazikaron.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of the day of remembrance.

- On both nights recite an additional blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹ-נָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שֶׁהִחַיְנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוֹ הַזֶּה.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, shehecheyanu
veki'yemanu vehigi'yanu lizman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and let us reach this time.

- We recite the second blessing, Shehecheyanu, to thank G-d for the opportunity to celebrate the festival of Rosh Hashanah. It has been nearly an entire year since the last time we celebrated Rosh Hashanah. This evokes so much excitement that we bless G-d for it.

- While your eyes are still covered, take a moment to pray silently for whatever your heart desires, because *this moment*—while immersed in the mitzvah of lighting the Rosh Hashanah candles—is an auspicious time for prayer.
- It is customary to use this special time to beseech G-d for children who will be illuminated by the radiance of the Torah.
- Open your eyes and say “*Chag Same’ach*” or “*Gut Yom Tov*”; “*Shabbat Shalom*” or “*Good Shabbos*”; and “*Shanah Tovah*” to all who are present.

KIDDUSH

- The core of the Kiddush mandate is a verbal proclamation about the sanctity of the day. Our sages ordained that this be recited over a cup of wine to underscore this day's significance. In many cultures, wine is an important drink and provides an atmosphere of prominence, and Judaism uses wine to mark numerous momentous occasions. If one cannot drink wine, grape juice can be used as a substitute.
- The Kiddush cup should hold at least three fluid ounces. The custom is to use a fancy (preferably silver) cup designated for *mitzvot*.
- The two challahs, discussed below, should be present on the table under a cover.
- Fill the cup with kosher wine (or grape juice), and then pour a bit more so that it overflows the brim because a cup over which we recite a blessing should overflow.
- Turn to page 46 in your Rosh Hashanah prayer book (*machzor*).¹
- Stand up and take the cup in your right (or dominant) hand. Glance at the candles and take in the Rosh Hashanah light as you start reciting the Kiddush.
- On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, which will be Friday night, begin with the paragraph that precedes the hagafen blessing.
- On the second night, begin with the blessing of hagafen.
- Glance at the wine in the cup when you say the wine (hagafen) blessing.
- Recite the blessing for Rosh Hashanah.
 - o On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, recite the Havdalah for Shabbat at this point. The Havdalah is on page 47.
 - o We do not recite a blessing over spices as part of Havdalah on this night.
 - o Glance at the Rosh Hashanah candles and recite the blessing for the Havdalah candle. Do not extend your hands toward the candles or glance at your fingernails.

1. All references to the *machzor* in this lesson are to the *Machzor for Rosh Hashanah with English Translation, Annotated Edition* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Kehot Publication Society, 2003).

- o Recite the special blessing for Havdalah between Shabbat and *Yom Tov*.
- On both nights, conclude with the blessing of Shehecheyanu.
- If the same person who recited the blessings over the candles is reciting the Kiddush, the Shehecheyanu blessing should not be repeated.
- Drink at least 1.5 ounces from the cup.
- If there are other family members or if guests are joining you for your meal, you can recite the Kiddush aloud, and all who wish to fulfill their Kiddush obligation through your recitation can answer “Amen.” After Kiddush, it is customary for all present to have a sip of the Kiddush wine.

TWO CHALLAH LOAVES

- Before the Kiddush, place two whole (preferably round) loaves of challah on a board or napkin. (Whole rolls, whole matzot, or pita breads may also be used.)
- Cover the challah loaves until after the Kiddush is recited. Beautiful “challah covers” are available at Judaica stores and online for reasonable prices, but a cloth or napkin does the trick as well.
- “Unveil” the challah loaves only after the Kiddush, demonstrating that they—as well as the entire meal—are in honor of Rosh Hashanah whose presence and holiness you just acknowledged in the Kiddush.
- Go to the sink to wash your hands ritually in the following manner.
- Use a washing cup with an even, unbroken rim.
- Fill it with water.
- Pour water over your dominant hand from wrist to fingertips three times consecutively.
- Repeat with your second hand.
- Rub the palm of each hand over the back of the other.
- Recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹ-נָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, asher kidshanu
bemitsvotav, vetsivanu al netilat yadayim.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has
sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us
concerning the washing of hands.

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- Lightly score the top of one of the challah loaves with a knife before reciting the hamotsi blessing.
 - Recite the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי, אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

*Baruch Atah, Ado-nai Elo-heinu, Melech Ha'Olam, hamotsi lechem
min ha'arets.*

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who brings forth
bread from the earth.

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- The assembled respond with “Amen.”
 - Slice the loaf that you scored, dip a piece of the bread in honey, and enjoy!
 - After you take a piece for yourself, slice pieces of challah and dip into honey for all present.
 - It is not necessary to eat both challah loaves; if only one is consumed, you can put the second one away for the next meal.

GRACE AFTER MEALS

- Recite the introductory prayers on page 48.
- At this point, rinse your fingertips in a ritual called *Mayim Acharonim*. *Mayim Acharonim* is not obligatory for women.²
- Pass around two glasses, one with water, the other without. If you have a special water dish for this purpose, pass around the water dish.
- Pour water over your fingertips and into the empty cup (or dish).
- Rub your hands together and pass your wet fingers over your lips.
- Dry your hands and mouth.
- Turn to page 49.
- If three Jewish men above the age of bar mitzvah are present, the first half of the page is recited responsively in the following manner:

Leader:

רַבּוֹתַי נְבָרָךְ.

Rabbotai, mir velen bentshen.

My masters, we will recite the blessing.

Group:

יְהִי שֵׁם אֲדֹ-נָי מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

Yehi shem Ado-nai mevorach me'atah ve'ad olam.

May the name of G-d be blessed from this moment and forever.

2. There was a time when *melach sedomit*, a particularly strong salt that could injure one's eyes if they were touched with salty fingers, was common in Israel. At that time, men and women were equally obligated to wash *mayim acharonim*. When this salt fell out of favor, men chose to be stringent and continue to wash their hands. Women did not choose to accept this stringency. Though it is not obligatory for women, it is perfectly permissible for women to wash *mayim acharonim*.

Leader:

יְהִי שֵׁם אֲדֹנָי מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
בְּרִשׁוֹת מְרַנֵּן וְרִבְּנָן וְרִבְתֵּי נְבָרְךָ שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.

*Yehi shem Ado-nai mevorach me'atah ve'ad olam. Bireshut maranan
verabanan verabotai, nevarech she'achalnu mishelo.*

May the name of G-d be blessed from this moment and forever. With
the permission of the teachers, rabbis, and my masters let us bless
the one Whose food we ate.

Group:

בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.

Baruch She'achalnu mishelo uvetuvo chayinu.

Blessed is the One Whose food we ate and by Whose goodness we live.

Leader:

בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.

Baruch She'achalnu mishelo uvetuvo chayinu.

Blessed is the One Whose food we ate and by Whose goodness
we live.

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- The group recites the Grace after Meals.
 - On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, insert the prayer at the top of page 51 in honor of Shabbat.
 - On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, insert the prayer in the middle of page 53 in honor of Shabbat.

HAVDALAH

- Just as we usher in Rosh Hashanah by reciting Kiddush when it begins, so do we depart from it by reciting Havdalah as it ends.
- Fill a cup that holds at least three fluid ounces with wine or grape juice until it overflows.
- Lift the cup in your right hand and recite the first paragraph on page 306.
- Gaze at the wine and recite the hagafen blessing over the wine.
- Recite the Havdalah blessing.
- Drink at least 1.5 ounces.