

SIMANIM (SYMBOLIC FOODS) ON ROSH HASHANA: BRIDGING SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL



ROSH HASHANAH: THE ANNIVERSARY OF CREATION

Rosh Hashana marks the anniversary of the creation of the universe, representing Hashem's original vision of perfection for all existence.

Each year, Hashem renews His plan, continuously shaping and adjusting it in response to past events, guiding creation toward greater refinement. This renewal infuses the world with a renewed divine flow of goodness. It resets this essence to its highest, uncorrupted state, allowing it to realize its fullest potential and preparing it for continuous growth.

**RENEWING
 CREATION:
 RESTORING ITS
 UNCORRUPTED
 ESSENCE**

ACCESSING THE PURE STATE OF BLESSINGS THROUGH SIMANIM

On Rosh Hashana, God's blessings exist in their purest spiritual form, not yet having entered the physical realm. The entire life force of the universe is renewed and restored to its original, pristine state. In this elevated form, these blessings are unbound by the limitations of time and space.

However, as they descend into the material world, they become subject to these constraints, taking on a more tangible yet less perfect form.

**RENEWING THE
 UNIVERSE TO ITS
 PRISTINE ORIGIN**

The Simanim — symbolic foods — serving as channels between the material world and higher realms, function as tools that allow us to access and connect with these divine potentials in their purest spiritual state, before they are influenced and diminished by the confines of the material realm. By consuming these foods with the proper intention and with the purpose of aligning ourselves with HaShem's will as expressed in His Torah, we create the conditions necessary to draw specific blessings into our lives.

**SIMANIM:
CHANNELS TO
ACCESS PURE
BLESSINGS**

UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER CONTEXT: HOW MITZVOT ELEVATE PHYSICALITY INTO VESSELS FOR HOLINESS

To draw these blessings into the material world, we need physical vessels—receptacles capable of containing this divine flow. Since we live in a material dimension, our body, which hosts the divine soul, must inevitably adhere to the limitations of physicality. Our task in this world is to engage with materiality according to HaShem's will, for which He provided us with guidelines through the Torah.

**OUR BODY HOSTS
THE DIVINE SOUL
WITHIN PHYSICAL
LIMITS**

The mitzvot serve as the means to handle and interact with the physical world, elevating it and infusing it with divine purpose.

The mitzvot serve as our guide in navigating the material world according to the divine principles set by Hashem, which are rooted in these higher spiritual laws. Even when these laws surpass our full understanding, we must humbly accept that they govern all of creation.

**MITZVOT:
ELEVATING THE
PHYSICAL WORLD
TO DIVINE PURPOSE**

By aligning our actions with Hashem's Will, we manifest our divine nature beyond our human limitations, becoming true partners with Hashem in the ongoing perfection of the world.

**OUR ROLE:
PARTNERING WITH
HASHEM TO PERFECT
THE WORLD**

This partnership is beautifully expressed in the verse, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God created to be made" (Genesis 2:3). The phrase "to be made" reflects humanity's essential role in actively participating in the continual refinement and completion of creation.

SEUDAT LEIL ROSH HASHANA / NIGHTTIME ROSH HASHANA MEAL



KIDDUSH AND HAMOTZI

The Seder begins with *kiddush* (the blessing over the wine), followed by drinking the wine. Next, *netilat yadayim* (ritual handwashing) is performed, and then the *hamotzi* (the blessing over bread) is recited.

DIPPING THE BREAD

Many people dip the bread in honey or sugar. Some halachic authorities recommend first dipping the bread in salt, eating a bite, and then dipping it in honey. Others write that the bread can be dipped in honey alone, though the salt should still ideally be placed on the table.

ORDER OF FOOD BLESSINGS

The order in which the various foods are taken varies among the sources and formularies. Even if the blessing over the bread has been recited, before eating fruits from trees, the blessing *borei peri ha'etz* (blessing over fruit from trees) must be recited.

Some traditions suggest that tree fruits should be eaten before products of the earth, and among the tree fruits, precedence is usually given to dates, followed by pomegranates and apples. Some reverse the order and eat the apples first, followed by dates and pomegranates (this is the version followed here). It is common to recite *borei peri ha'etz* once to cover all tree fruits, so the blessing does not need to be repeated.

CONTROVERSY OVER BLESSING ORDER

A debated issue is whether to say the blessing or the *Yehi ratzon* (a request for favor) first. According to Rabbi Chaim David Halevi, the date is taken, held in the right hand, the *Yehi ratzon* is recited, followed by *borei peri ha'etz*, which covers all other tree products present at the Seder, and then the date is eaten. Next is the leek (a product of the earth), which is eaten without a blessing, and this order continues with other foods.

The opposing view suggests beginning with the blessing over the fruit, eating the fruit immediately, and then saying the *Yehi ratzon*. This is because blessings are praises to God, while *Yehi ratzon* is a request, and it is seen as improper for a request to precede a praise.

VARIATIONS IN RECITING THE YEHI RATZON PRAYER

The most widely accepted custom is to incorporate Hashem's Name within the text of the *Yehi ratzon* prayer. Some have the custom not to mention Hashem's Name within the *Yehi ratzon* prayer at all, while others replace Hashem's Name with the phrase "*milifnei avinu shebashamayim*" (before our Father in Heaven).

THE SIMANIM

APPLE WITH HONEY



Sephardim, and some Ashkenazim, recite the blessing on the dates (see above).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ:

Barukh ata Ado- nai Elo- heinu Melekh ha'olam borei pri ha'eitz

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Eat a piece of the apple, and then recite:

ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמִתּוֹקָה.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu

shetechadesh aleinu shana tova umetuka.

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

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמִתּוֹקָה כְּדָבָשׁ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu

shetechadesh aleinu shana tova umetuka kadevash.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that You renew for us a year good and sweet like honey.

HEAD A FISH/SHEEP



ASHKENAZIM AND SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁנֵהֲיָה לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu shenihyeh lerosh velo lezanav.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that we should be the head and not the tail.

DATE [TAMAR]



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שְׁיִתְמוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְאוֹיְבֵינוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyitamu sone'einu ve'oyveinu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers that our enemies and haters should perish [sheyitamu].

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שְׁיִתְמוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְאוֹיְבֵינוּ וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי רָעָתָנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyitamu sone'einu ve'oyveinu vekhol mevaskshei ra'atenu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our enemies, haters, and those who wish evil upon us should perish [sheyitamu].

POMEGRANATE



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּרְבֶּה זְכוּתֵינוּ כְּרִמּוֹן.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu shetarbeh zekhuyoteinu kerimon.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our merits should multiply like a pomegranate.

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁנִּהְיֶה מְלֵאִים מִצְּוֹת כְּרִמּוֹן.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu shenihyeh mele'im mitzvot karimon.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that we be filled with mitzvot like [the seeds of] a pomegranate.

FENUGREEK / SESAME SEEDS / CLOVER / BLACK-EYED PEAS /
GREEN BEANS / CARROT [RUBIYA]



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁיִּרְבּוּ זְכוּתֵנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyirbu zekhuyotenu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our merits should multiply [yirbu].

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׂיִרְבוּ זְכוּתֵנוּ וְתִלְבְּנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyirbu
zekhuyotenu utelabevenu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our merits
should multiply [yirbu] and that You hearten us.

LEEK / CABBAGE / CHARD [KART]



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׂיִכָּרְתוּ שׂוֹנְאֵינוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyikartu
soneinu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that those
who hate us should be cut off [sheyikartu].

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׂיִכָּרְתוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי
רָעָתֵנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyikartu
oyveinu v'soneinu v'kol m'vakshei ra'ateinu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our
enemies, haters, and those who wish evil upon us should be cut off
[sheyikartu].

GOURD / SQUASH / PUMPKIN [KARA]



SEPHARDIM AND ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתִּקְרַע רוּעַ דִּינֵנוּ, וְיִקְרָאוּ לְפָנֶיךָ זְכוּתֵנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu shetikra ro'a gezar dinenu, veyikare'u lefanekha zekhuyoteinu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that You should tear up [shetikra] the evil of our verdicts, and that our merits should be called out [veyikare'u] before You.

BEETS / SPINACH [SILKA]



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁיִּסְתַּלְקוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyistalku oyveinu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our foes be removed [sheyistalku].

SEPHARDIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁיִּסְתַּלְקוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מְבַקְשֵׁי רָעָתֵנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu sheyistalku oyveinu vesoneinu vekol mevakshei ra'atenu.

May it be Your will, God, our God, and God of our fathers, that our enemies, haters, and those who wish evil upon us should be removed [sheyistalku].

FISH



ASHKENAZIM

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁנִפְרֶה וְנִרְבֶּה כְּדָגִים.

*Yehi ratzon milefanekha Ado- nai Elo- heinu Velo- hei avoteinu shenifreh
venirbeh kadagim.*

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

SEPHARDIM DO NOT GENERALLY USE FISH AS ONE OF THE
SIMANIM.