

Home Observance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, 5769

Rosh Hashanah at Home

The celebration of *Rosh Hashanah*, like all Jewish holidays, takes place both in the synagogue and at home. The mood of the holiday combines solemnity and joy. The commemoration of *Rosh Hashanah* at home can be enhanced by the following preparation and ceremonies: the table should be set in a festive manner, with a white cloth (symbolic of purity and joy), candlesticks, wine, apples and honey, and *challot* (usually round to symbolize a full, complete year). The family gathers for the lighting of the candles.

► *Rosh Hashanah* begins on Monday evening, September 29; candles are lit and the blessing is followed by the *She-hecheeyanu*:

בְּרִידָא אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוְּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzveevanu l'hadleek ner shel Yom Tov. Praised are You, Lord our God, Master of the universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to light the Festival candles.

בְּרִידָא אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha-olam, she-hecheeyanu v'kee-y-manu v'higeeyanu laz'man hazeh. Praised are You, Lord our God, Master of the universe, who has kept us in life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.

► Blessing of the children: It is a beautiful tradition for parents to bless their children before reciting *kiddush*. Parents place their hands on each child's head and say the appropriate blessing.

For sons:

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וְכַמְנַשֶּׁה.
Y'simcha Eloheem k' Efrayim v'chi Menashe.
May God make you as Ephraim and Menashe

For daughters:

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּסָרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה.
Y'simech Eloheem k' Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v' Leah. May God make you as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

For all children, continue with the Priestly Blessing:

בְּרַכָּךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ
יְאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִחַן
יִשָּׂא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

Y'va-rekh'kha Adonai v'yish-m'-rekha. May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Ya-er Adonai panav ele-kha vi-hu-neka.

May the Lord's goodness shine on you and be gracious to you.

Yisa Adonai panav ele-kha v'ya-sem l'kha shalom.

May the Lord turn with favor to you and give you peace. *Amen.*

► On the first night of *Rosh Hashanah*, it is traditional to dip apples in honey and recite the following prayer:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה
וּמְתוּקָה.

Y'hee ratzon milfanecha, Adonai, Elohaynu v'elohay avotaynu, she'ti-chadeshaleynu shana tovah u'metukah. May it be Your will, Lord our God, and God of our ancestors, that the New Year be both good and sweet.

► *Kiddush* for *Yom Tov*

► *Motzi*

On the second night of *Rosh Hashanah*, it is customary to eat a new fruit (mango, pomegranate, etc.) so that the *She-hecheeyanu* may be recited. However, the *She-hecheeyanu* may be recited even without eating a new fruit.

The traditional greeting for *Rosh Hashanah* is:

L'shanah Tova Tikatevu.... May you be inscribed for a good year.

Yom Kippur at Home

► **Memorial Candle:** It is customary to light a memorial candle for departed members of the family before lighting the holy day candles.

In the Jewish tradition, there is no official blessing recited upon lighting a *yahrzeit* candle. The reason for this is that the act of kindling the *yahrzeit* light is not the direct fulfillment of a specific *mitzvah*. The light reminds us of the *neshamot*, the souls of our beloved departed who brought light to our lives. There is a power in having nothing to say at all upon kindling the *yahrzeit* candle. As Jews, we are used to having something to say at a special moment—a blessing or a prayer. At this moment, however, when the memory of a whole life is before us, there are no words. There is only silence. When Aharon the High Priest witnessed the death of his two sons, the Torah says *Vayidom Aharon*, And Aharon was silent (*Leviticus* 10:3). Silence does not necessarily represent the lack of pathos and love. It can also be the fullness of those feelings, so full in fact, that no words can capture them adequately. As we light the *yahrzeit* lights, we can notice this silence and feel the depth of love for those whom we have lost.

For those who would prefer to have something to recite, the following words can also be spoken: In hushed reverence, I kindle this memorial lamp in loving remembrance of my beloved. We have been taught that human souls are Your candles, Lord. Through them You bring light into the world. For the light of compassion, tenderness, and love that my loved one brought into my life, I am eternally grateful.

Help me, O God, to use my sacred memories as a noble spur to consecrated living. May I perpetuate and transmit everything that was beautiful and lovely in my dear one's character. May a loving sense of presence always be greater than the feeling of his/her absence, and may it be a source of strength and comfort with the passing years.

When my spirit is low, keep firm my faith that You are with me, and that through You tranquility and peace can be found.

As the light is kindled, say: *Zeycher tzadeek leev'racha*, The memory of the upright is a continuing source of blessing.

—Adapted by Rabbi Jeffrey A. Wohlberg

► **Blessing of the candles:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי, וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים.

Baruch ata Adonai, Elohaynu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav, v'tzeevanu l'hadleek ner shel Yom HaKippureem. Praised are You, Lord our God, Master the universe, who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to light the *Yom Kippur* lights.

► **Blessing the children on the Eve of Yom Kippur:** It is traditional for parents to bless their children as the candles are lit on the eve of festivals. This is a special additional prayer for the Eve of *Yom Kippur*:

May it be God's will to sustain you in life and health. May your eyes not lead you astray, may your mouths speak with wisdom, may your hearts meditate with reverence, may your hands be engaged in commandments, and may your feet hasten to do God's will. May the Almighty grant you children who will grow up to be righteous, occupying themselves with Torah and commandments all their days. May the Almighty enable me to meet the obligations of parenthood, to provide amply for your needs, and to guide you toward good and upright character. May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Good and Long Life, together with all of the righteous. *Amen*.

► A traditional greeting for *Yom Kippur* is:

גָּמַר חֲתִימָה טוֹבָה *G'mar Hatimah Tovah*, May you be sealed in the Book of Life. ◉