

BLESSINGS FOR SEPHARDI ROSH HASHANAH SEDER

DATES (Tamarim in Hebrew) represent our hope that fighting will end and we will have peace and meaningful relationships. In other words, we will “date” the New Year with Peace and Happiness. We take a bite and say this prayer:

Baruch atah Adonai, elohenu melech ah-olam, borei p're ha-aytz.
Blessed are you, Adonai, Ruler of the universe who has created the fruit of the tree.

POMEGRANATE SEEDS (Rimon) represent a wish for good deeds. It is said that the pomegranate was chosen for the Rosh HaShanah seder because it has 613 seeds... representing all the mitzvot in the Torah. Some people also say the seeds represent multiplication, that in the new year we be fruitful and multiply. Each person takes some pomegranate seeds and before tasting them says:

May it be your will, God, that in this new year we keep all of your commandments and that we be as full of good deeds as the pomegranate is full of seeds. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

STRING BEANS or **SNOW PEAS** (Rubia) (raw or cooked) represent our merits and prosperity that we pray God will increase in the coming year. That our joys will be many. Each person takes one and we say:

May it be your will, God, that we be blessed with everything we need in the new year and that we share our blessing with others.
Ken Yehi Ratzon.

We then recite this blessing:

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam, borei p'ri ha – adamah.

Blessed are you, Adonai, ruler of the universe, who has created the fruit of the earth.

A **PUMPKIN or GOURD** (K'ra) symbolizes the hope that we be guarded against evil and be blessed with happiness. Boil, mash and sweeten a pumpkin with brown sugar and honey, or use canned pumpkin. Pass it around and say:

As we eat this pumpkin, may it be Your will, God, to guard us, tear away all evil decrees against us and remember the good things we have done in the past and will do in the new year. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

SPINACH or BEETROOT LEAVES or SLICED BEETS (Selek) (cooked) represent freedom as well as a hope for a rosy year ahead. Each person takes a piece and says

May it be Your will, God, to bless us with freedom and that the enemies who might beat us will retreat. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

Raw **LEEKs or SCALLIONS** (Karti) represent good fortune or “mazel” and friends and community. Each person takes a piece and says:

May it be Your will, God, that those who are against us not succeed and that we be blessed with friendship and good fortune in the year to come. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

Persian Jews often tear apart the leeks and throw the parts behind them, saying the names of enemies they want to destroy.

A **HEAD** of something. In the olden days, people used a Ram's Head or the head of another Kosher animal. Then a Fish Head became an acceptable substitute. Today, many people use pieces of beef tongue or a head of Lettuce. Each person takes a piece and says:

May it be God's will that we be heads, not tails. Leaders, not followers, never stragglers but at the head of what is right and what is good in the year to come. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

APPLES DIPPED IN HONEY (Tapuah ba-d'vash) represent our hope for a sweet new year. Each person dips an apple slice and before taking a bite says:

May it be Your will, God, to renew for us a year that is as good and sweet as honey. *Ken Yehi Ratzon.*

[NOTE: Some people add other things to the Seder: zucchini so that your sins are light, a fish representing fertility and growth, and carrots for positive judgment.]

To conclude the Seder, recite the Shehecheyanu and sing "Hinei Ma Tov."