

# SWEETEN OUR DAYS

## apple & honey magic for the Days of Awe

### BLESSING FOR STUDYING TORAH

#### Non-binary Hebrew\*

brukkeh ateh yah elot'heinu ruakh ha'olam asher kidsheinu b'mitzvotaihe v'tziveinu  
l'asok b'divrei torah.

#### Fem. Hebrew

berucha at shekhinah eloteinu ruach ha'olam asher kidshatnu bemitzvotaha vetzivatnu  
la'asok b'divrei torah.

#### Masc. Hebrew

barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu  
la'asok b'divrei torah.

#### English

Blessed are You, You of many names (insert any name for the Divine), Breath of Life, for  
the life- affirming practice of immersing ourselves in the wisdom of generations.

[\\*from the Nonbinary Hebrew Project](#)

שנה טובה ומתוקה 🍯 Shana tova u'metukah!  
Anyada buena i dulce! 🍯 A zis nay yor! 🍯 א זיס ניי יאָר  
A sweet and good year!

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍯 dorimidnight.com

מתוק **Metuk/ah (Hebrew)**

from the root מתק / M T K

1. to be sweet, palatable
2. to partake with delight, smack, suck, gnaw
3. to indulge

### **Erev Rosh Hashana ritual: echar la asukar a la mar**

If one had taken fright at sea, one could *echar la asukar a la mar* - cast the sugar into the sea: “after dinner and (Rosh Hashana) services, one took the sugar from the table in the name of the sick person and gathered up the tablecloth, which had not been cleaned. The stricken one, along with the curers, went to the shore at 2 in the morning. Then they removed all of the clothes of the patient, walked in to the sea, and dunked him or her three times. They placed the tablecloth over the head and gave the stricken one three pinches of the sugar, each time saying ‘*Kon il nombre dil Dio*’ (in the name of G-d). Afterwards, they took the stricken one home to bed.”

~Sweetening the Spirits: Ritual Medical Lore of Sephardic Women, Levy & Zumwalt

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

## APPLE

תפוח ~ Tapuach ~ تفاحة ~ Tafaha ~ Malus Pumila ~ mansana



- 🍏 Apple as Tree of Knowledge/Wisdom/Forbidden Fruit
- 🍏 Apple as container for Divine
- 🍏 The divine as apple tree, we are apples
- 🍏 Apple Orchard as sacred site for love, sex, birth, & encounters with Divinity
- 🍏 Apples as medicine/*segula*/ healing remedy
- 🍏 Apples for love & fertility magic

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍏 [dorimidnight.com](http://dorimidnight.com)

## APPLE AS CONTAINER FOR DIVINITY



“The Zohar tells us that everything in Creation is inscribed with this special Name of G-d. It is Their trademark on everything, showing Who created it (Zohar, Ra'aya Mehemna, VaEtchanan). It is like the hidden signature of an artist on their paintings. With this in mind, if we cut an apple open along its horizontal axis, we can find markings that suggest G-d's inscription of Their holy Four-Letter Name on the apple itself.

The letter *yud* (numeric value = 10) is indicated by the ten dots in the pulp surrounding the seeds.

The letter *hei* is indicated by the five seed spaces in the core of the apple.

The shape of the letter *vav* is drawn by the stem.

The second *hei* is indicated by the five seeds.”

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 [dorimidnight.com](http://dorimidnight.com)

~From Yaakov-Shmuel Levinson, who learned this teaching from Rabbi Abraham Brandwein, in the name of Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh

Just as the apple heals all, so the Holy One heals all. Just as the apple has various colors (white, red, green), so the Holy One has various supernal colors (white, red, green, corresponding to the attributes of chesed [loving-kindness], gevura [might], and tiferet [beauty]). ~Zohar, Acharei Mot; Ziv HaZohar,

VaEtchanan

“The apple tree is the Holy One of Blessing, more delightful and colorful than all other trees.”

~Zohar I, 85b

### **HOLY APPLE ORCHARD/ SHEKHINAH**

“Certainly a person is like a tree of the field. A person is like a tree in the holy apple orchard of the Divine Presence.” ~Zohar II, 60b

“that field of holy apples drips with dew every day from the place called ‘heaven.’

~Zohar I, 224b

### **APPLE ORCHARD : FIELD OF LOVE, SEX, AND BIRTH**

מִי זֹאת עֵלְהָ מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר מִתְרַפֵּקֶת עַל־דֹּדָהּ תַּחַת הַתְּפִיחַ עֹרֶרְתִּיךָ שְׁמָה חֲבַלְתָּךְ אִמָּה שְׁמָה חֲבַלְתָּה יְלֻדְתָּךְ:

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

Mi zot ola min-hamidbar mitrapeket al-doda takhat hatapuakh orartikha shama  
khiblatekha imekh shama khibla yeladetekha

“Who is she that comes up from the desert, Leaning upon her beloved? Under the  
apple tree I roused you; It was there your mother conceived you, There she who  
bore you conceived you.” ~Song of Songs

“...and when the Israelite women conceived, they would return to their homes. When  
they were about to go into labor, the women would **go out into the fields and give birth  
in the apple orchards**, as it is written: "I woke you under the apple [tree]" (Song of  
Songs 8:5). And the Lord Blessed be He would send an angel from the heavens who  
cleaned them and made them beautiful, just as a new mother grooms her infant, as it is  
written: "And as for your birth, on the day you were born..." (Ezekiel 16:4), and He grants  
them **two round cakes, one of oil and the other of honey**, as it is written: "And He  
[God] suckled Him [The Children of Israel] with honey from the rock..." (Deuteronomy  
32:13).

- Exodus/Shemot Rabbah 1:12

### APPLES AS SEGULA/ HEALING REMEDY

סְמַכְחֻנִי בְּאַשִּׁישׁוֹת רַפְדֻּנִי בְּתַפּוּחִים כִּי חוֹלַת אֶהְיֶה אָנֹכִי: (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים פֶּרֶק ב פְּסוּק ה)

Samkhuni ba'ashishot rapduni batapukhim ki kholat ahava ani

“Sustain me with carafes of wine, strengthen me with apples, for I am lovesick”

~ Song of Songs 2:5

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

## MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF APPLES

- Significant source of antioxidants and flavonoids
- Supports cardiovascular health
- Malic acid- helps prevent gallstones and liver detox
- Supports digestion and balances blood sugar
- Supports immune system, anti-inflammatory (quercetin)
- Protective phytochemicals in apple skin (anti-cancer)

## APPLE RITUALS & SPELLS : love spells and fertility charms

*“Its ritual: either to an apple or to a pomegranate. You recite the incantation three times, You give the fruit to the woman and have her suck their juices. That woman will come to you; you can make love to her.”*

~Tablet from Mesopotamia, inscribed in Sumerian, 5-7 century BCE

*“Write (this spell) on an apple and give it to the woman to eat and immediately she will do everything you wish, there is no doubt about this.”*

~[Sefer Ahavat Nashim](#), 15th c., Catalunya, Spain

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

"A woman whose children die in childbirth should place an apple on her head and lean against a wall"

~Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Children, 32

HONEY ~ דבש ~ Dvash ~ miel ~ عسل



#### HONEY AS....

- Manna/divine nourishment
- Home/fertile ground (land flows with milk & honey)
- Torah/sweet learning
- Medicine & magic
  - repair: physical medicine for illness
  - release: offering to *shedyim*/demons
  - revives: supports & preserves life
  - re/connects: cultivates love

#### HONEY AS DIVINE NOURISHMENT/MANNA

ת שִׁדֵּי וַיִּנְקְהוּ דְבַשׁ מִסֵּלַע וְשֶׁמֶן מִחֶלְמִישׁ צִוֶּר: בִּנְרַכְבֵּהוּ עַל־בְּמוֹתַי [בְּמַתִּי] אֶרֶץ וַיֹּאכֵל תְּנוּבָה

*yarkivehu al-bamotey aretz va'yokhal tenuvot Shaddai vayenikehu dvash misela v'shemen mekhalemish tzur*

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍯 dorimidnight.com

He set him atop the highlands, To feast on the yield of the earth; He fed him  
honey from the crag, And oil from the flinty rock...

~Deuteronomy 32:13

“They should also be fed with the fat of wheat;  
and with honey out of the rock would I satisfy thee.”

~psalm 81:17

תְּמַשֶּׁה וְשָׁשָׂה וְעֶשְׂרָה סִימָן: תְּמַשֶּׁה אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים, אֵלּוּ הֵן: אֵשׁ, דְּבַשׁ, וְשַׁבָּת, וְשִׁנָּה, וְחֵלֶם. אֵשׁ — אֶחָד  
מִשְׁשִׁים לְגִיהֵנָם. דְּבַשׁ — אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים לְמֶן. שַׁבָּת — אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. שִׁנָּה — אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים  
לְמִיתָה. חֵלֶם — אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים לְנִבְיָאָה

“The Gemara says: There are five matters in our world which are one-sixtieth of  
their most extreme manifestations. They are: Fire, **honey**, Shabbat, sleep, and a  
dream. The Gemara elaborates: Our fire is one-sixtieth of the fire of Gehenna;  
honey is one-sixtieth of manna; Shabbat is one-sixtieth of the World-to-Come;  
sleep is one-sixtieth of death; and a dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy.”

~Berakhot 57b:13

## HONEY AS HOME/FERTILE GROUND

וְאָמַר אֶעֱלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵעֵנִי מִצְרַיִם אֶל־אֶרֶץ הַפְּנִיעָנִי וְהַתְּחִי וְהָאֹמְרִי וְהַפְּרִזִי וְהַתְּחִי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֶל־אֶרֶץ זְבַת חֶלֶב  
וְדָבָשׁ:

And I have said: I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of  
the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite,  
and the Jebusite, unto [a land flowing with milk and honey.](#)

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🌙 dorimidnight.com

~Exodus 3:17

## HONEYED TORAH

“Feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.  
Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.” ~Ezekiel

3:2-4

In some places there is also a custom to eat honey and milk because the Torah is  
likened to them, as it says "honey and milk under your tongue...".

-Mishnah Berurah 494:13

## HONEY SEGULOT/REFUOT (remedies)

### Medicinal & magical powers of honey

**SEGULA** : סגולה (hebrew), Zgula (Yiddish), Segula (Ladino) : “treasure”, healing  
remedies, protective charm, magical practice, “fix”

“Wasn’t it taught in a baraita: Six things cure the ill person of his disease and  
their cure is an effective cure, and these are: Cabbage, beets, chamomile water,

**honey**, stomach, heret, and liver.”

-Berakhot 44b:20

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍯 dorimidnight.com

“The Sages taught in a baraita: In the case of one who is seized with bulmos, one feeds him **honey** and all types of sweet foods, as the **honey** and all types of sweet foods restore the sight of his eyes....Jonathan said: “See, I pray you, how my eyes are brightened because I tasted a little of this **honey**”

-Yoma 83b:7ז' ב:ז' יומא פ"ג

Yoshe Ber, the Melamed from Vasilishok Street: "He sometimes took on the additional role of physician for his charges. During the winter season, when a mother would complain that her son had a sore throat, the Rebbe would use a spoon as a tongue depressor and spread honey (or, if severe, his own secret concoction) to the throat with a long feather and the boy would quickly recover..."  
~ From the Yizkor books from the Village of Ostryn, Pale of Settlement, Jewish Gen website

“To restore health, one used a segula, which might be a medicinal plant, such as marjoram, garlic, rosemary, or rue, or a substance, such as salt, sugar, honey, coffee or urine.”

~ Isaac Levy and Rosemary Levy Zumwalt, “Ritual Medical Lore of Sephardic Women”

## MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF HONEY

- Digestive support
- Antimicrobial, antifungal, antibacterial
- Immune Supportive
- Rich in antioxidants (anti-cancer), vitamins and nutrients

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍯 [dorimidnight.com](http://dorimidnight.com)

- Anti-inflammatory/allergy support
- Cardiovascular support

More about medical uses of honey:

\*<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3758027/>

## HONEY RITUALS & SPELLS

### LOVE/POSSESSION SPELLS

“To increase love between groom and bride. When the bride comes from the huppah after the conclusion of the blessing, write the name of both of them with honey upon two leaves of sage and give to eat the leaf upon which is written the man’s name to the woman and the name of the woman to the man.”

~Recipe for wedding blessing found in Cairo Genizah, from around 3rd century  
BCE

“Take an egg that was born on the same day, and the woman and the man should stand on it with their feet, and then place it in honey, and then place it in flour, and then remove the flour from the egg, and give it in drink to the man, and he will not be able to lie with another woman.”

~Ashkenazi manuscript from 14th century, Germany

“To bind a man so that we would come only to his wife alone. Take an egg laid on the same day and let the woman pass it over her right shank 3 times and then she should drown it in honey and pass it over the flour and that flour should stick to

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍯 dorimidnight.com

the honey she should collect well, and she should feed it to the man and he shall not have intercourse with another woman besides his wife.”

~Jewish manual of magic from Turkey, 15th century

### HONEY AL SERENO

“We see that the sick person...cries, can’t sleep at night...What does he have? This person took an espanto (fright), a sikenti (worry). I’m going to do something for him. I place for him three small glasses of honey in the window, al aver (in the air). In the morning, al sereno (in the dew) I give it to him to drink. Three mornings in a row...**There are many cures in the honey. There is something of every kind of flower inside.** On the third morning after drinking the honey at dawn, the person is given a bath. All the glasses are washed and from the water, you make a sweet drink. And then we pour it behind him and I tell him, ‘Do not look back. Don’t turn your face back. I’m pouring out all the evils behind you.’ Behind the body, I pour out all the evils and tell them, ‘Get out.’ We dress him and that’s it.”

~ Sara Nair, Istanbul

“Vos esto dando dulsuria, ke me desh sultura.”

(I am giving you sweetness, in order that you can release me.)

~Isaac Levy and Rosemary Levy Zumwalt, “Ritual Medical Lore of

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

“*Kaminos de leche i miel!*” Paths of milk and honey!



**BLESSING FOR EATING APPLES & HONEY**

*Barukh/a at/a Adonai/Shekhinah Eloheinu/Eloteinu ruach ha'olam borei p'ri ha'eitz.*

ברוכה/את/ה אדוני/שכינה אלוהינו/אלתינו רוח העולם בורא פרי העץ

Blessed are You, Source of Life, creatrix of the fruit of the earth/tree!

יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה

*Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha Adonai Eloheinu/Yah Eloteinu shetichadesh aleinu shanah tova  
u'metukah.*

May it be Your will, Source of Life, that the new year will be good and sweet.

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOME RITUALS FOR THE DAYS OF AWE

☞ **Apple love spell:** write/draw spell for love (self love spell) on an apple and eat it/share it in ritual

☞ **Apple Shiviti:** A shiviti is a meditative name -gazing practice, where one meditates on the 4 letter name of the Divine. Cut an apple horizontally and use it as a Shiviti!

☞ **Infused Honey Spell:** write/draw your own name or the name of someone you wish sweetness for on a leaf (sage, or another edible leaf) and eat it. You can infuse your honey with roses, garlic, other medicinal plants and let it sit for the 10 days of awe. You can then strain it or enjoy the chunks of plant in your honey.

☞ **Make Honey al Sereno :** place honey in a small jar or bowl outside your windowsill overnight, you can infuse it with herbs like rose petals, orange peels, oregano, marjoram, sage, garlic, violets, etc. Use this special spell honey for ritual use during the Days of Awe.

☞ **Milk & honey bath:** draw a bath and pour in some honey and milk!

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight ☞ [dorimidnight.com](http://dorimidnight.com)

🕯️ **Rosh Hashanah Seder:** create a small, simple or elaborate Rosh Hashana seder incorporating symbolic foods for qualities you want to invoke for the new year

🕯️ **More sweetness** Consider how to cultivate more sweetness in your life, ways you can be more sweet with yourself and grow more pleasure and delight

Dori's Playlist for Tishrei

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5T92kxb2YlMtrVXBqQvLQx?si=55be4358945545bf>

## GLOSSARY

**Torah:** Ancient sacred texts preserved in a scroll (first five books of scriptures) aka the Hebrew Bible.

**Midrash:** Commentary on the Torah, interpretive tradition and legends

**Talmud/Gemara:** Voluminous record of rabbinic discussion of Jewish lore and practice including material from the 2nd to the 6th centuries, as rabbis were trying to figure out how to live according to the Torah after exile.

**Mishnah:** an authoritative collection of exegetical material embodying the oral tradition of Jewish law and forming the first part of the Talmud

**Baraita:** a tradition in the Jewish oral law not incorporated in the Mishnah

**Zohar:** the central text of the kabbalah, written in 13th century Spain

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🕯️ [dorimidnight.com](http://dorimidnight.com)

**Cairo Genizah:** is a collection of some 400,000 Jewish manuscript fragments and administrative documents that were found in the *genizah* (Hebrew, “hiding place”) or storeroom of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat or Old Cairo, Egypt. These manuscripts outline a 1,000-year continuum (870 CE to 19th century) of Jewish Middle-Eastern and North African history, written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic on vellum, paper, papyrus, cloth, and leaves.

**SEGULA :** סגולה (hebrew), Zgula (Yiddish), Segula (Ladino): “treasure”, healing remedies, protective charm, magical practice, “fix”

**Shiviti:** Large paper plaque designed to be hung on the wall of a synagogue to exhort the congregation to more intense prayer with the traditional verse, Psalm 16:8, “*Shiviti HaShem L’negdi tamid*” “I have set (shiviti) the Divine always before me.” Sometimes simple or lavishly decorated, with calligraphed verses (psalms and prayers) and designs including menorahs, hamsas, implements used in the Temple and other symbols.

**Assimilation:** A process by which non dominant or non mainstream people or cultures slowly take on more and more features of the dominant culture, and slowly lose their native/original cultural markers.

**Diaspora:** (some words from “The Color of Jews” by Melanie Kaye Kantrowitz z’l) “Diasporism deliberately includes the variety of diasporic experience. Diasporism is about the language of daily life and ordinary working people, and reflected not only in communication across cultural lines, but also linguistic invention and absorption: Diasporism’s languages include Judeo-Espanol, Judeo German, Judeo Arabic, Judeo-Greek, not to mention Turkish, Polish, Hungarian, Russian, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Farsi, English...Diasporism depends not on dominance but on balance, perpetual back and forth, home and away, community and outside, always slightly on the edge except perhaps at intensely personal moments in the family created by blood or by love, at moments of transcendent solidarity.

Celebrating dispersion, Diasporism challenges the Edenic premise: once we were gathered in our own land, now we are in exile. What if we conceive of diaspora as the

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

center: an oxymoron, putting the margin at the center of a circle that includes but does not privilege Israelis? Diasporism means, given the multicultural nature of the Jewish community, inside “the” Jewish community we should expect to experience the simultaneity of home and strangeness. If we are at an event that claims to be for the whole Jewish community, at any given moment something must feel unfamiliar to someone, it just shouldn't be the same people. Diasporists value solidarity not as a necessary evil; not solely because, as we confront the most powerful machines of war and capital the world has ever known, we understand that solidarity is our only power. Diasporists choose solidarity as the highest expression of humanity.

Diasporism cherishes love across the borders - and let's face it, every reaching out beyond one's own body is a border crossing. If we can stick up for each other across the borders of race, we have defeated racism's most powerful weapon. Thus diasporism welcomes intermarriage, embraces mixed-race, mixed-culture babies. Diasporism requires those who know and value past and existing tradition, and those who create new ones.

All text below from [JFREJ Understanding Antisemitism](#):

**Mizrahi:** Jews who were indigenous to the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Balkan region, many for up to 2,500 years. Not to be confused with Sephardi Jews, many of whom migrated and settled in these same regions after their expulsion from Spain.

**Sephardi :** Jews who lived in what is present day Spain and Portugal until Spanish Inquisition began in 1492. During the Inquisition, many Sephardi Jews converted to Catholicism, or were killed. Most of the exiles settled in the Ottoman Empire (such as present day Morocco, Turkey, and Greece), while others migrated to the Americas and parts of Europe. Sephardi also refers to the cultural practice of Mizrahi Jews from non-European countries, even if they are not ethnically Sephardi.

**Ashkenazi:** Technically: of Central or Eastern European Jewish descent. Today, however, it is often used as a catchall term that includes Western European Jews as well. Historically, more distinctions were made between Ashkenazim and, for instance, Yekke (German) Jews.

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

**Ashkenazi dominance/ashkenormativity:** The institutionally and socially enforced omnipresence of Ashkenazi culture and history within Jewish spaces as well as society as a whole, resulting in the erasure, marginalization and diminution of other Jewish traditions and narratives. In the U.S., Ashkenazi identity is so thoroughly normalized that the phenomenon is effectively invisible unless directly challenged by the assertion of Mizrahi and Sephardi cultures and histories. It also refers to a specific history of oppression, exploitation, discrimination against non-European Jews by European Ashkenazi Jews. While Jews from Western Europe were initially most involved in the imperialist and colonial endeavors of their home countries that impacted non-European Jews, Eastern European Jews have become a part of perpetuating this system as they continue to access European Jewish privilege and power both in Israel/Palestine and in the U.S.

## RECIPES

[TRAVADOS: Sephardic honey drenched crescents](#)

[MAHALABIA: Tunisian/Levantine Honey Cream](#)

[PERSIAN UPSIDE DOWN CAKE](#) with dates, rosewater, and cardamom

[SEPHARDIC JEWELLED RICE](#)

[SEPHARDIC ROSH HASHANAH SEDER MENU](#)

[IRAQI APPLE JAM](#)

[TISHPISHTI](#) sephardic honey cake (Turkey)

[KHORESHT FESENJAN](#) ~ Persian pomegranate walnut stew

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 dorimidnight.com

VEGAN & REFINED SUGAR FREE ASHKENAZI HONEY CAKE

APPLE & HONEY CHALLAH (eastern europe)

SWEETEN OUR DAYS

Dori Midnight 🍷 [dorimidnight.com](https://dorimidnight.com)