

# High Holidays 2020

Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur Torah  
Service and Torah Readings



# RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM

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We are grateful for the efforts of Rabbi Amy Loewenthal for producing this excerpt in tandem with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association under the leadership of Rabbi Elyse Wechterman.

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## HOTZA'AT SEFER TORAH / THE TORAH SERVICE

There is none like you among the powerful, ETERNAL ONE,  
and there are no deeds like your deeds.

Your realm embraces all the worlds,  
your reign encompasses all generations.

THE ETERNAL ONE reigns!

THE ETERNAL ONE has always reigned!

THE ETERNAL ONE shall reign beyond all time.

THE ETERNAL ONE gives strength to our people.

May THE ETERNAL ONE bless our people with enduring peace.

Source of all mercy,  
deal kindly and in good will with Zion.  
Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,  
For in you alone we place our trust,  
God, sovereign, high and revered,  
the life of all the worlds.

---

COMMENTARY. We approach the Torah slowly. First we open the ark so that the Torah is visible. We look at the Torah but refrain from touching. Next, the Torah is removed from the ark and held by the service leader. Later the Torah is carried through the congregation, and everyone can touch the Torah. This demonstrates that the Torah is not the property of those leading the services; the Torah belongs to the Jewish community. Finally, the coverings of the Torah scroll are removed, allowing us a privileged intimacy with the words we hear.

In the words of the Torah we hear our ancestors' experience of the divine. We communicate with generations past and, perhaps on occasion, we hear Torah as the voice of God refracted through human speech. D.E.

COMMENTARY. יהוה מלך יהוה מלך... / THE ETERNAL ONE reigns...has always reigned...shall reign beyond all time. The divinity we discover within human existence is eternal; it is the same Power that our ancestors named יהוה, that the talmudic rabbis knew as *Hamakom*/ The Place, that the mystical Kabbalists knew as *Eyn Sof*/ Without End, and that we now seek to name. R.H.

## הוצאת סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה

אֵין כְּמוֹךְ בָּאֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנֵי וְאֵין כְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ:  
מְלֻכּוֹתֶיךָ מְלָכּוֹת כָּל־עֲלָמִים וּמַמְשֻׁלְתֶיךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר:  
יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְהוָה יִבְרַךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

אֲב הָרַחֲמִים הַטִּיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת־צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:  
כִּי כָךְ לְבַד בְּטַחְנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֵל רַם וְנִשָּׂא אֲדוֹן עוֹלָמִים:

Eyn kamoha va'elohim adonay ve'eyn kema'aseha.  
Malhuteh<sup>a</sup> malhut kol olamim umemshalteh<sup>a</sup> behol dor vador.  
Adonay meleh adonay malah adonay yimloh le'olam va'ed.  
Adonay oz le'amo yiten adonay yevareh et amo vashalom.  
Av harahamim hetivah virtzoneh<sup>a</sup> et tziyon tivneh homot  
yerushalayim.  
Ki veha levad batahnu meleh el ram venisa adon olamim.

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אֵין...ירושלים / There is none...Jerusalem. This section of the service is composed of selections from Psalms 86, 145, 93, 29, and 51, and Exodus 15:18.

יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ...יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד / THE ETERNAL ONE reigns...shall reign beyond all time. The assertion of God's sovereignty is a challenge to human beings—it is we who are called upon to crown God. In declaring God's sovereignty, we dedicate the daily deeds of our lives to making the earth a divine realm.

D.E.

תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם / Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. How different these words must have sounded before there was a sovereign, living state of Israel! No longer do we merely dream of a distant rebuilding. The walls are rising before our eyes. Like our ancestors, we must be concerned with building both the earthly Jerusalem and the heavenly Jerusalem.

D.E.

*The ark is opened.*

*One of the following may be sung:*

(1)

And it happened, when the Ark began its journey,  
that Moses said: Arise, ASCENDANT ONE,  
and may your enemies be scattered,  
May the ones who oppose you  
Be afraid of your might!  
Behold, out of Zion emerges our Torah,  
and the word of THE WISE ONE from Jerusalem's heights.  
Blessed is God who has given us Torah,  
to Israel, our people, with holy intent.

(2)

Open to me, O you gateways of justice,  
Yes, let me come in, and give thanks unto Yah!  
This is the gateway to ONE EVERLASTING,  
let all who are righteous come in.

---

KAVANAH. Whenever the ark was moved, this signaled to the Israelites that it was time to break camp and move on. In our religious life, we can never be sure when the command to get up and move will reverberate in our minds and hearts. This is the threat and meaning in openness to religious experience, for it can transform who we are and lead us on a journey whose destination we do not know as we set out. All we need is the courage to listen.

R.H.

*The ark is opened.*

*One of the following may be sung:*

(1)

וַיְהִי בִּנְסֹעַ הָאָרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה יְהוָה וַיִּפָּצוּ אִיכָיֶד וַיִּנָּסוּ  
מִשְׁנֵאִיךְ מִפְּנֶיךָ:  
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם:  
בָּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ:

Vayhi binso'a ha'aron vayomer mosheh kumah adonay veyafutzu  
oyveha veyanusu mesaneha mipaneha.

Ki mitziyon tetzey torah udvar adonay mirushalayim.

Baruh shenatan torah le'amo yisra'el bikdushato.

(2)

פִּתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צֶדֶק אָבֹא-בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה:  
זֶה-הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ:

Pithu li sha'arey tzedek avo vam odeh yah.

Zeh hashar ladonay tzadikim yavo'u vo.

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וַיְהִי...מִפְּנֵיךְ / And...might! (Numbers 10:35).

כִּי...יְרוּשָׁלַיִם / Behold...Jerusalem's heights (Isaiah 2:3).

בֹּאוּ...פִּתְחוּ / Open...come in (Psalms 118:19-20).

(3)

The Torah of THE ONE is flawless, it restores the soul.

The testimony of THE ONE is true, it makes wise the simple.

The precepts of THE ONE are sure, they make the heart rejoice.

The mitzvah of THE ONE is clear, it gives light to the eyes.

Fear of THE ONE is pure, it stands eternally.

The judgments of THE ONE are true, together they are just.

*The following paragraph is omitted on Shabbat.*

ADONAY ADONAY, God loving and gracious,  
patient, and abundant in kindness and truth,  
keeping kindness for a thousand ages,  
forgiving sin and rebellion and transgression,  
making pure!

And as for me, my prayer is for you, GENTLE ONE,  
may it be for you a time of desire.

O God, in the abundance of your love,  
respond to me in truth with your help.

---

יחדיו...צדקו יהוה / The Torah...together they are just (Psalms 19:8-10).

ואני...ישעך / And as for me...your help (Psalms 69:14).

ונוקה...יהוה / ADONAY...pure! It is customary to recite Exodus 34:6-7 on the High Holy Days. Kabbalists beginning with Isaac Luria (sixteenth-century Safed) understood these verses to contain the thirteen attributes of God. Reciting the attributes celebrates God's presence as vividly experienced in the observance of the Days of Awe.

D.A.T.

(3)

מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ:	תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה
מַחְפִּימַת פָּתִי:	עֲדוֹת יְהוָה נֶאֱמָנָה
מְשַׁמְחֵי לֵב:	פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יִשְׂרָיִם
מְאִירַת עֵינָיִם:	מִצְוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה
עוֹמְדַת לְעַד:	יִרְאַת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה
צִדְקוֹ יַחֲדִיו:	מִשְׁפָּטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת

Torat adonay temimah meshivat nafesh.  
Edut adonay ne'emanah mahkimat peti.  
Pikudey adonay yesharim mesamehey lev.  
Mitzvat adonay barah me'irat eynayim.  
Yirat adonay tehorah omedet la'ad.  
Mishpetey adonay emet tzadeku yahdav.

*The following paragraph is omitted on Shabbat.*

יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת נֹצֵר חֶסֶד  
לְאֱלֹפִים נִשְׂא עוֹן וְפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקָּה:  
וְאֲנִי תַפְלִי־לָךְ יְהוָה עַת רְצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב־חֶסֶדְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאֱמֶת  
יִשְׁעֶךָ:

Adonay adonay el rahum vehanun ereh apayim verav hesed  
ve'emet notzer hesed la'alafim nosev avon vafesha vehata'ah  
venakey.

Va'ani tefilati leha adonay et ratzon elohim berov hasdeha aneni  
be'emet yisheha.



*The leader takes out the Torah and recites each line, followed by the congregation:*

Listen, Israel: THE ETERNAL is our God, THE ETERNAL is one!

One is our God, great is our sovereign,  
holy and awesome is God's name.

*The leader faces the ark, bows and says:*

Declare with me the greatness of THE INFINITE,  
together let us raise God's name.

*The leader carries the Torah around the room as the leader and congregation sing:*

To you, ETERNAL ONE, is all majesty,  
and might, and splendor, and eternity, and power!  
For everything that is, in the heavens and the earth,  
is yours, ALMIGHTY ONE, as is all sovereignty,  
and highest eminence above all beings.  
Exalt THE MIGHTY ONE our God,  
Bow down before God's footstool.  
God is holy!  
Exalt the name of THE INEFFABLE,  
Bow down before God's holy mount,  
For holy is THE AWESOME ONE, our God!

*The Torah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashanah begins on page 481 or page 491; for the second day of Rosh Hashanah, page 503; for Yom Kippur, page 517.*

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רגליו / להדום / before God's footstool. According to tradition, in the Jerusalem Temple there were two cherubim whose wings joined to form a seat. In other ancient Near Eastern temples, an idol was seated in such a chair. In Jerusalem, the chair remained empty with the ark below. The ark was seen as God's footstool, and the Temple as God's entry point into the world. We hope our worship brings God into the world. D.E.

*The leader takes out the Tōrah and recites each line, followed by the congregation:*

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay eḥad.

אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ גָדוֹל אֲדוֹנֵינוּ קְדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא שְׁמוֹ:

Eḥad eloheynu gadol adoneynu kadosh venora shemo.

*The leader faces the ark, bows and says:*

גָּדְלוּ לַיהוָה אֲתִי וְנוֹרְמָמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו:

Gadelu ladonay iti unromemah shemo yaḥdav.

*The leader carries the Tōrah around the room as the leader and congregation sing:*

לֵךְ יְהוָה הַגְדֵּלָה וְהַגְבוּרָה וְהַתְפָּאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצָּח וְהַיְהוּד כִּי־כָל בְּשָׂמִים

וּבְאַרְץ לֵךְ יְהוָה הַמְמַלְכָה וְהַמְתַּנְשֵׂא לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ:

רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לַהֲדָם רַגְלָיו קְדוֹשׁ הוּא:

רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהַר קְדָשׁוֹ כִּי־קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

Leḥa adonay hagedulah vehagevurah vevatiferet vahanetzah  
vehahod ki ḥol bashamayim uva'aretz leḥa adonay hamamlahah  
vehamitnasey leḥol lerosh.

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtaḥavu lahadom raglav kadosh  
hu.

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtaḥavu lehar kodsho ki kadosh  
adonay eloheynu.

*The Tōrah reading for the first day of Rosh Hashanah begins on page 482 or page 492; for the second day of Rosh Hashanah, page 504; for Yom Kippur, page 518.*

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גדלו...יחדו / Declare...name (Psalms 34:4).

לך...לראש / To you...beings (I Chronicles 29:11).

רוממו...אלהינו / Exalt...our God! (Psalms 99:5,9).


*The Torah is placed on the reading table and opened. The gabay says:*

May God help, protect, and save  
all who seek refuge in God's shelter,  
and let us say: Amen.

Let everyone declare the greatness of our God,  
let all give honor to the Torah.

May \_\_\_\_\_ arise,

as the first (second, third, . . . seventh) one called up to the Torah.

Blessed is the One who has given Torah to the people Israel! 

---

COMMENTARY. The public reading of the Torah is a form of ritualized study designed to actively engage the participants. During the Torah reading, one person reads from the scroll. There are also two *gabayim*. One *gabay* assigns the Torah honors, calls people up to the Torah, and recites additional prayers, including the *mi sheberach* prayers. The second *gabay* follows the Torah reading closely and corrects errors.

Traditionally, seven adult Jews were called on Shabbat morning, six on Yom Kippur, five on Pilgrimage Festivals and Rosh Hashanah, four on Rosh Hodesh and three on weekdays, Hanukah and Shabbat afternoon. On days when the *haftarah* is chanted, an additional *aliyah*, known as the *maftir*, is given to the person who reads the *haftarah*. In many contemporary synagogues, there are fewer *aliyot* on Shabbat and holidays. D.A.T.

*The Torah is placed on the reading table and opened. The gabbay says:*

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגַּן וַיִּשְׁיַע לְכָל הַחוּסִים בּוֹ וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:  
הַכֹּל הָבּוֹ גָּדֵל לְאַלְהֵינוּ וְחֲנוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה:

יַעֲמֹד/תַּעֲמֹד/יַעֲמֹדוּ \_\_\_\_\_ בֶּן/בַּת \_\_\_\_\_ לַעֲלִיָּה/לְמַפְטִיר  
[הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, הַשְּׁנִיָּת, הַשְּׁלִישִׁית, הָרְבִיעִית, הַחֲמִישִׁית, הַשִּׁשִּׁית,  
הַשְּׁבִיעִית, הוֹסֵפָה]  
בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנֶּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ: ←

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NOTE. The biblical texts used in this *mahzor* for all Torah and *haftarah* readings follow the Masoretic vocalization and trope, and therefore differ from the liturgical Hebrew in the rest of the book.

And you who cling to THE ETERNAL ONE your God,  
are all alive today!

---

COMMENTARY. The 1945 Reconstructionist prayerbook eliminated all references to Jewish chosenness for both ideological and moral reasons. Chosenness posits a God who chooses, and it supports claims of national superiority. Thus, that prayerbook's Torah blessings replace *baḥar banu mikol ha'amim* /who has chosen us from all the peoples, with *asher kervanu la'avodato* /who has drawn us to your service. This prayerbook follows the 1945 version but provides alternatives in the commentary on the facing page.

D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The *aliyah* is the public enactment of an individual's commitment to Judaism, reiterated in the words of the hallowed formula. It is an enactment of belonging and an enactment of belief.

The *aliyah* is always a numinous moment when the experience of divinity is strong. Even though this numinous quality often is dimmed by repetition or by our increased informality, we still experience the power of standing on the *bimah* before the Torah ark, *ner tamid* (eternal light), Jewish officiants, and fellow Jews. The act links us in the living moment to the mythic event of God's calling the Jewish people at Sinai, as well as to all other moments of calling in Jewish and human experience. When we chant new words, rather than the words of the tradition, we are doing more than merely changing a formula of words; we are enacting our own calling to a new and no longer traditional way of being Jewish. Whereas saying *asher baḥar banu* links us to the biblical drama at Sinai, chanting *asher kervanu* links us both to that drama and to the Reconstructionist movement's root metaphor of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization.

Robin Goldberg

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים...הַיּוֹם /And you who cling...today (Deuteronomy 4:4). The people to whom this verse was originally spoken live on through their place in the chain of tradition. We touch the past by bringing the ancient words to life. And when future generations recite this verse, we, who have kept the chain alive, will be present. You who cleave to Adonay your God, you are *all* alive today.

D.E.

Congregation and gabay continue:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים כָּלְכֶם הַיּוֹם:

Ve'atem hadevekim badonay eloheyhem hayim kulehem hayom.

---

The last part of the blessing preceding the Torah reading has been the subject of considerable discussion. Below are several current variants. You can use these by selecting one from section I, one from II, and then III:

- I. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם      Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE,  
Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ      our God, sovereign of all worlds  
ha'olam  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים      Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE,  
Baruh atah adonay eloheynu hey      our God, life of all the worlds  
ha'olamim  
נְבָרֶךְ אֶת עַיִן הַחַיִּים      Let us bless the source of life  
Nevareḥ et eyn haḥayim
- II. אֲשֶׁר קָרַבְנוּ לַעֲבוֹדָתוֹ וְנָתַן לָנוּ      who has drawn us to your service,  
אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ:      and given us your Torah.  
asher kervanu la'avodato venatan  
lanu et torato.  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ      who has singled us out from all  
אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ:      the peoples and given us your  
asher baḥar banu mikol ha'amim      Torah.  
venatan lanu et torato.
- III. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:      Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE,  
Baruh atah adonay noten hatorah.      giver of the Torah.

The phrase *nevareḥ et eyn haḥayim* was originally formulated by poet Marcia Falk (see SOURCES, p. 1248).

## BIRHOT HATORAH / TORAH BLESSINGS

*Those who receive an aliyah to the Torah say the following blessings:*

Bless THE INFINITE, the blessed One!

*Congregation:*

Blessed is THE INFINITE, the blessed One, now and forever!

*The response of the congregation is repeated, and the blessing continued as follows  
(For alternative versions, see page 474):*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has drawn us to your service, and has given us your Torah. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who gives the Torah.

*After the section of the Torah is read, the following blessing is recited:*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has given us a Torah of truth, and planted in our midst eternal life. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who gives the Torah.

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COMMENTARY. Group *aliyot* provide an opportunity for including more people in public roles on the *Yamim Nora'im*. In this season of transition, many communities focus group *aliyot* on beginnings (births and adoptions, new homes, jobs, new committed relationships, weddings, new schools), endings (loss of loved ones, retirements, graduations), and milestones (trips to Israel, *beney mitzvah*). Some communities use one day to mark the past year's accomplishments (*tikun olam*, Jewish learning, leading worship, offering hospitality, communal leadership, *tzedakah*, adult bar/bat mitzvah). Some use a day for marking similar new commitments. Other *aliyot* might be used for those who are healing or who have recovered from life-threatening illness, or those new to the community. B.P.T./R.S./D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The blessing over the Torah recalls the *Barechu*, the call to worship, the beginning of the morning and evening services recited only in the presence of the minyan, ten adult Jews. The blessing encircles the Torah reading in a familiar liturgical pattern of blessing and study. Through blessing, study, and community we manifest God, Torah and Israel. S.P.W.

## בְּרִכּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

*Those who receive an aliyah to the Torah say the following blessings:*

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ:

Barehū et adonay hamevoraḥ.

*Congregation:*

בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Baruh adonay hamevoraḥ le'olam va'ed.

*The response of the congregation is repeated and the blessing continued as follows  
(for alternative versions, see page 474):*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִרְבָנוּ לַעֲבוּדָתוֹ  
וְנָתַן-לָנוּ אֶת-תּוֹרָתוֹ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam asher kervanu  
la'avodato venatan lanu et torato.

Baruh atah adonay noten hatorah.

*After the section of the Torah is read, the following blessing is recited:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת  
וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam asher natan lanu  
torat emet veḥayey olam nata betoḥeynu.

Baruh atah adonay noten hatorah.

---

DERASH. *Aliyah* is ascent. We ascend to the Torah to acknowledge that we choose to live under its laws and principles. We ascend to the Torah to affirm that we are part of a people and a story that is much greater than ourselves. We ascend to the Torah to represent those who remain below. We ascend to the Torah to risk receiving an honor, to risk being known and seen, to risk being at Sinai again. We ascend to the Torah with slow steps, or in haste, with enthusiasm or reluctance, in awe or in fear, in hope and in love.

S.P.W.



## BIRKAT HAGOMEL / BLESSING FOR DELIVERANCE AND GOOD FORTUNE

*If the person called up to the Torah has recently escaped danger or returned safely from a journey, he or she recites as follows:*

Blessed are you, ABUNDANT ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who bestows good things on those in debt to you, and who has granted me all good.

*Congregational response to one who offers this blessing:*

Amen. And may the one who has bestowed upon you good, continue to bestow upon you good.

*For a mi sheberah for an individual or for a group, see pages 479-480. For other mi sheberah prayers, see Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Veḥagim, pages 685-693.*

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COMMENTARY. *Mi sheberah* prayers announce to the whole community individual times of joy and need. When *birkat hagomel* or a *mi sheberah* is recited, it is customary to contribute to *tzedakah*. Often this offering is directed to the synagogue. On happy occasions this serves as an offering of thanksgiving. A *mi sheberah* in the form of petition, such as a prayer for healing, was traditionally offered in the hope that a good deed would encourage divine intervention. More recently the act of *tzedakah* has been understood as a tangible way of expressing gratitude for the support and good wishes of the community. Just as the community supports the individual in times of need, so does the community depend upon the support of each individual.

D.A.T.

## בְּרַכַּת הַגּוֹמֵל

*If the person called up to the Torah has recently escaped danger or returned safely from a journey, he or she recites as follows:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת  
שְׁגִמְלָנִי כָּל טוֹב:

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam hagomel leḥayavim  
tovot shegemalani kol tov.

*Congregational response to a man who offers this blessing:*

אָמֵן. מִי שְׁגִמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יִגְמְלֶךְ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥa tov hu yigmolḥa kol tov selah.

*Congregational response to a woman who offers this blessing:*

אָמֵן. מִי שְׁגִמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יִגְמְלֶךְ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥa tov hu yigmoleḥa kol tov selah.

---

COMMENTARY. At the mysterious edges of life we seek the embrace of our community past and present. Hence individuals marking recovery from illness or the birth of a child are blessed before the open Torah. This process can build community as news is communicated and support mobilized. Most significantly it counteracts the devastating possibility of isolation in times of vulnerability. The practice gives voice to gratitude and anxiety in a forum where it can be shared and transformed into connectedness and faith.

S.P.W.

Male

מִי שְׁבִירָה אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל  
וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבִרָה אֶת \_\_\_\_\_ בֶּן \_\_\_\_\_ וְ \_\_\_\_\_ שְׁעָלָה לְכָבוֹד  
הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת) וְלְכָבוֹד יוֹם הַדִּין: \* הַקְדוֹשׁ  
בָּרוּךְ הוּא יַחְיֶיהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרֵהוּ מִכָּל-צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל-נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה  
וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו וְיַכְתִּמֵּהוּ וְיַחְתֵּמָהוּ לְחַיִּים  
טוֹבִים בְּזֶה יוֹם הַדִּין עִם-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אָחִיו וְאֶחָיוּתוֹ וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

Female

מִי שְׁבִירָה אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה  
רָחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבִרָה אֶת \_\_\_\_\_ בֵּת \_\_\_\_\_ וְ \_\_\_\_\_  
שְׁעָלָתָה לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת) וְלְכָבוֹד  
יוֹם הַדִּין: \* וְלְכָבוֹד הַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יַחְיֶיהָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶיהָ מִכָּל-צָרָה  
וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל-נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיהָ  
וְיַכְתִּמֶּהָ וְיַחְתֵּמָהָ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה יוֹם הַדִּין עִם-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל  
אָחִיהָ וְאֶחָיוּתֶיהָ וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah, bless \_\_\_\_\_ who has risen today in honor of the SOURCE OF ALL and in honor of the Torah (and Shabbat) and in honor of this Day of Awe.\* May he/she be granted life and kept from every trouble and affliction, and from every harm and sickness. May he/she be granted blessing and success in all his/her labors, and may he/she be written and sealed for good life on this Day of Awe along with all of Israel, and let us say: Amen.

\*At this point in the *mi sheberah*, an additional phrase can easily be added. The *gabay* may choose to chant part or all of the *mi sheberah* in English. When Hebrew alone is used, an English announcement of the occasion is appropriate.

D.A.T.

COLLECTIVE BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO  
HAVE RECEIVED ALIYOT

מִי שִׁפְּרוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבֹרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל  
וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל אֱלֹה שְׁעָלוּ הַיּוֹם לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם לְכָבוֹד  
הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יוֹם הַדִּין בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא  
יְחַיֶּים וְיַשְׁמְרֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה  
וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְיַכְתֵּבֵם וְיַחְתֶּמֶם לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה  
יוֹם הַדִּין עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֵיהֶם וְאַחִיוֹתֵיהֶם וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

May the one who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, bless all those here who have risen today in honor of the Omnipresent, and in honor of the Torah, (and in honor of Shabbat,) and in honor of this Day of Awe. And by this merit, may they be granted life and kept from all trouble and affliction, and from every harm or sickness, and may they find blessing and success in all their labors, and may they be written and sealed for good life on this Day of Awe, along with all of Israel, all their brothers and their sisters, and let us say: Amen.

*Some communities read the traditional Torah portion about the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-34) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which case the recommended reading from the second Sefer Torah is about creation (Genesis 1:1-5, page 491). Others first read the entire creation story (Genesis 1:1-2:3), in which case they read the beginning of the story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-4) for Maftir. A few communities read the traditional Maftir, Numbers 29:1-6, which we have placed as the Maftir for the second day, page 547.*

## TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

### *First Aliyah*

THE FOUNT OF LIFE took note of Sarah, as was promised;  
thus did THE CREATOR do for Sarah, as was spoken:  
She conceived and bore to Abraham a son in his old age,  
at the appointed time God had declared.  
And Abraham called the child born to him by Sarah: "Yitzhak."  
And Abraham, upon the eighth day, circumcised his son,  
as God commanded him.

Genesis 21:1-4

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Rosh Hashanah as the birthday of the world recalls for us God's creation of the world in the beginning of time. Strikingly, the traditional Torah reading for Rosh Hashanah is not the story of creation (Genesis 1:1) but rather the birth of Isaac, and the *haftarah* concerns the birth of Samuel—both tales of long-desired births to barren women. In fact, there is a tradition that Rosh Hashanah is *not* the day the world was created. *Pesikta Rabati*, an early rabbinic midrashic work, states that the world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul. Rosh Hashanah then is the sixth day of creation, the day on which humans were created. For the beginning of humanity marks the real beginning of creation. It is the beginning of history and most of all the beginning of the relationship between the human and the divine. Rosh Hashanah thus affirms the importance of human life, even of one single birth, as equivalent to God's creating the world. By stressing life, it calls upon us to examine the quality of our lives as we prepare for Yom Kippur—the day when life is to be judged.

Michael Strassfeld

*Some communities read the traditional Torah portion about the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-34) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which case the recommended reading from the second Sefer Torah is about creation (Genesis 1:1-5, page 492). Others first read the entire creation story (Genesis 1:1-2:3), in which case they read the beginning of the story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-4) for Maftir. A few communities read the traditional Maftir, Numbers 29:1-6, which we have placed as the Maftir for the second day, page 548.*

### *First Aliyah*

וַיְהִי פֶקֶד אֶת־שָׁרָה בְּאֶשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׁרָה כַּבְּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר:  
וַתֵּהֵר וַתֵּלֶד שָׁרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ  
אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם־בְּנוֹ הַנּוֹלֵד־לּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה־לּוֹ  
שָׁרָה יִצְחָק: וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ בֶּן־שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כַּבְּאֶשֶׁר  
צִוָּה אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים:

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DERASH. There is a profound philosophical truth to the rabbinic insight that the world does not begin until the sixth day of Creation and the appearance on that day of the human being. So far as we know, there would be no world, nor God, without the perception of the world by human minds—one might go so far as to say by my human mind. Theoretically, God and the rest of the world might have existed, but like the famous falling tree in the forest that makes no sound without an ear to hear it, without a human mind to perceive God and the world, who would know? God certainly can only be recognized by human beings—God depends on us for that much, at least.

E.L.G.

### *Second Aliyah*

And Abraham was then one hundred years of age  
when Yitzhak, his child, was born to him.  
And Sarah said: "God has brought me laughter—*tzeḥok!*—  
and all who hear of it will share my laughter, too!"  
And she added: "Who would have said to Abraham  
that Sarah would be nursing children,  
or that I would bear a child in his old age!"

And the child grew, and then was weaned.  
And Abraham prepared a splendid feast of celebration  
on the day Yitzhak was weaned.

Genesis 21:5-8

### *(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

But Sarah saw the son that the Egyptian woman, Hagar,  
had born to Abraham, and he was mocking—*metzaḥek*.  
She said to Abraham: "Cast out this servant-woman  
and her son! For this servant-woman's child  
shall not inherit with my child, with Yitzhak!"  
And this matter was of grave concern in Abraham's eyes,  
for after all, it was his child.  
But God told Abraham: "Don't let this matter  
of your child and servant-woman be improper in your sight.  
Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her voice,  
because through Yitzhak shall your seed be called.

Genesis 21:9-12

*Second Aliyah*

וְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן־מֶמֶת שָׁנָה בְּהוֹלֵד לוֹ אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ: וְתֹאמַר שְׂרָה  
צָחָק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל־הַשְּׂמֵעַ יִצְחָק־לִי: וְתֹאמַר מִי מִלֵּל  
לְאַבְרָהָם הִינִיקָה בָנִים שְׂרָה כִּי־יֻלְדָתִי בֶן לְזָקְנִי: וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד  
וַיִּזְמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אַבְרָהָם מִשְׁתָּה גָדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַגְּמֹל אֶת־יִצְחָק:

*(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

וְתֹרָא שְׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הַגֵּר הַמִּצְרִית אֲשֶׁר־יֻלְדָה לְאַבְרָהָם מִצְחָק:  
וְתֹאמַר לְאַבְרָהָם גֵּרֶשׁ הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בֶּן־  
הָאִמָּה הַזֹּאת עַם־בְּנֵי עַם־יִצְחָק: וַיֵּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי אַבְרָהָם  
עַל אֹדֹת בְּנוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יֵרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ  
עַל־הַנָּעַר וְעַל־אִמְתְּךָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שְׂרָה שְׂמַע בְּקֹלָהּ כִּי  
בְּיִצְחָק יִקְרָא לָהּ זֶרַע:



### *Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

Besides, the servant-woman's child  
I shall make a nation, too; for he, too is your child."  
And Abraham arose early the next morning,  
and he took a bread loaf and a water sack,  
and he gave them to Hagar  
—placing them upon her shoulder—  
and the child,  
and he sent her on her way. She went  
and wandered in the desert of Be'er Sheva,  
and the water in the water sack was emptied,  
and she left the child in the shadow of a bush,  
and went and sat a bowshot's length across from him.  
“Let me not look upon the child's death,” she said,  
then raised her voice and wept.  
God heard the child's voice,  
and God's angel called out to Hagar from heaven,  
saying to her: “What's wrong with you, Hagar?  
Don't be afraid. For God has heard the child's voice  
from where he sits.

Genesis 21:13-17

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COMMENTARY. The word **בְּאֶשֶׁר**, referring to both time and space, provides a key to understanding Ishmael's situation. We can understand God's voice reaching Ishmael **בְּאֶשֶׁר הוּא שָׁם** /where he sits, as a metaphor for Ishmael's experiences of God's redemptive power. Situating Ishmael in this way suggests some important insights about the process of *teshuvah* in which we are engaged. If we seek to understand and forgive, we must forget our own expectations and assumptions, encountering others as they are at a particular moment. Similarly, by honestly recognizing and accepting myself for who I am at this particular time and place in my life, by honestly engaging in the “stock-taking of the soul” known as *heshbon hanefesh*, I can find the strength to change the direction of my life. Becoming conscious of who I am in my essence frees me to improve my life, my relationships and my world. In meeting others and ourselves “where they/we are,” we follow God's example in the Ishmael story, finding hope and opportunity for growth and transformation in places and times that otherwise might be filled with hopelessness and despair. R.S.

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

וְגַם אֶת־בֶּן־הָאָמָה לְגִי אֲשִׁימְנוּ כִּי זֶרַעַךְ הוּא: וַיִּשְׁכַּם אַבְרָהָם |  
בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּקְח־לָחֶם וְחֶמֶת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הָגֵר שָׁם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ  
וְאֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַיְשַׁלְּחָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּתַּע בְּמִדְבָּר בְּאֶר שָׁבַע: וַיְכַלּוּ הַמַּיִם  
מִן־הַחֶמֶת וַתִּשְׁלַךְ אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד תַּחַת אֶחָד הַשִּׁיחִים: וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב  
לָהּ מִגֵּד הַרְחֵק בְּמִטְחָנִי קִשֵּׁת כִּי אָמְרָה אֶל־אַרְאֶה בְּמוֹת הַיֶּלֶד  
וַתֵּשֶׁב מִגֵּד וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת־קִלְעָה וַתִּבְרַךְ: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־קוֹל  
הַנֶּעֱר וַיִּקְרָא מִלְּאֵךְ אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הָגֵר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ  
מִדֵּלֶךְ הָגֵר אֶל־תִּירָאִי כִּי־שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל־קוֹל הַנֶּעֱר בְּאֶשֶׁר  
הוּא־שָׁם:

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Communities have a history—in an important sense they are constituted by their past—and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a “community of memory,” one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing, it offers examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community. These stories of collective history and exemplary individuals are an important part of the tradition that is so central to a community of memory.

The stories that make up a tradition contain conceptions of character, of what a good person is like, and of the virtues that define such character. But the stories are not all exemplary, not all about successes and achievements. A genuine community of memory will also tell painful stories of shared suffering that sometimes creates deeper identities than success...And if the community is completely honest, it will remember stories not only of suffering received but of suffering inflicted—dangerous memories, for they call the community to alter ancient evils.

The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good.

Robert N. Bellah

*(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

Arise now, take the boy,  
and hold him with your hand,  
for I shall make him a great nation!"  
And God opened up her eyes.  
She saw a well of water,  
and she went and filled the sack with water,  
and she gave water to the boy.  
And God was with the boy,  
and he grew up, and settled in the desert,  
and became a shooter of the bow.  
He dwelt in Paran's desert,  
and his mother got for him a wife from Egypt.

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

And it happened at that time  
that Abimeleḥ and Phicol, chief of his army,  
said to Abraham: "God is with you in whatever you may do!  
Now, swear to me by God right here  
that you shall not deal falsely with me,  
or with any of my offspring or posterity,  
but you shall act, toward me  
and toward the land in which you dwell,  
according to the kindness I have shown you."  
And Abraham replied: "I'll swear it."  
But Abraham complained to Abimeleḥ  
about the water Abimeleḥ's servants stole,  
And Abimeleḥ said: "I didn't know!  
Who did this thing? You never told me!  
I myself have never heard of it before today."  
And Abraham took sheep and cattle,  
and he gave them to Abimeleḥ,  
and the two of them cut a covenant.

Genesis 21:18-27

(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)

קוּמִי שְׂאִי אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת־יָדְךָ בּוֹ כִּי־לִגְוִי גָדוֹל אֲשִׁימָנּוּ:  
וַיִּפָּקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֹא אֶת־  
הַחֲמַת מַיִם וַתִּשְׁק אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר: וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר וַיַּגְדֵּל וַיֵּשֶׁב  
בַּמִּדְבָּר וַיְהִי רִבָּה קִשְׁתּוֹ: וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמִּדְבָּר פֶּאֶרְן וַתִּקַּח־לוֹ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה  
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)

וַיְהִי בַעֲת הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֹל שֶׁר־צָבָאוּ אֶל־אֲבֵרָהָם  
לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה: וְעַתָּה הִשְׁבָּעָה לִּי  
בְּאֱלֹהִים הַנָּה אִם־תִּשְׁקֹר לִי וּלְנִינִי וּלְנַכְדֵי בְּחֹסֶד אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי  
עִמָּךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדִי וְעַם־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־גִּרְתָּהּ בָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבֵרָהָם  
אֲנֹכִי אֲשָׁבַע: וְהוֹכַח אֲבֵרָהָם אֶת־אֲבִימֶלֶךְ עַל־אֲדוּת בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם  
אֲשֶׁר גָּזְלוּ עַבְדִּי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא יִדְעָתִי מִי עָשָׂה  
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וְגַם־אַתָּה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְגַם אֲנֹכִי לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי  
בְּלַתִּי הַיּוֹם: וַיִּקַּח אֲבֵרָהָם צֹאן וּבָקָר וַיִּתֵּן לְאֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּכְרְתוּ  
שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית:

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COMMENTARY. The text says not that a well suddenly appeared, but that Hagar's eyes were opened so that she could now see it. The miracle is spiritual rather than physical or supernatural. The well had always been there, but Hagar, paralyzed by fear, despair, and her own sense of powerlessness, was blinded to the possibility of salvation. In calling out to God, she finds the strength to discover what she needs to do. Only then does Hagar see the well.

Hagar's example can serve as a comfort and an inspiration when the pain and difficulty of our own lives seem too overwhelming, when taking the next step seems impossible. We are reminded that there are always unseen possibilities. As we call out in prayer during the *Yamim Nora'im*, we, too, can reorient our vision, see new possibilities in our lives and adjust our attitudes and actions.

R.S.

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

Abraham set seven ewes apart. And Abimeleḥ asked:  
“What are these seven ewes which you have set apart?”  
And he replied: “Here: take these seven ewes from me  
by way of testimony that I dug this well.”

Therefore one now calls that place  
“Be’er Sheva—Well of Oath.”

For there the two of them declared an oath,  
and made a covenant at Be’er Sheva.  
Then Abimeleḥ, and Phicol, chief of his army, rose,  
and they returned home to the country of the Philistines.  
And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk at Be’er Sheva,  
and he called out there the name  
of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of the world,  
and Abraham lived near the country of the Philistines  
for many days.

Genesis 21:28-34

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DERASH. The Hebrew for tamarisk is אשל. Its three letters signify the essentials of Abraham’s hospitality: א for אכילה / food, ש for שתיה / drink, and ל for לוויה / escort.

Genesis Rabbah 54.6

DERASH. Why, immediately after making a contract with King Abimeleḥ, does Abraham call on “the name of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of the world?” To emphasize that no earthly authority should be allowed to obscure our ultimate allegiance.

J.A.S./D.A.T.

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

וַיֵּצֵב אֲבֹרָהֶם אֶת־שִׁבְעַת בְּבִשּׁוֹת הַצֵּאֵן לְבִדְהֹן: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ  
אֶל־אֲבֹרָהֶם מָה הֵנָּה שִׁבְעַת בְּבִשּׁוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִצַּבְתָּ לְבִדְהָנָה:  
וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶת־שִׁבְעַת בְּבִשּׁוֹת תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי בְּעִבּוּר תַּהְיֶה־לִּי לַעֲדָה כִּי  
חִפְּרֹתִי אֶת־הַבָּאֵר הַזֹּאת: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בָּאֵר שִׁבְעַת  
כִּי שָׁם נִשְׁבְּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: וַיִּכְרְתוּ בְרִית בֵּין־בָּאֵר שִׁבְעַת וַיִּקָּם אֲבִימֶלֶךְ  
וּפִיכֹל שֶׁר־צָבָאוּ וַיָּשֻׁבוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַיִּטַּע אִשָּׁל בֵּין־בָּאֵר  
שִׁבְעַת וַיִּקְרָא־שָׁם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם: וַיָּגֶר אֲבֹרָהֶם בְּאֶרֶץ  
פְּלִשְׁתִּים יָמִים רַבִּים:

## ALTERNATIVE TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

### *First Aliyah*

When God at first created the heavens and the earth,  
the earth was waste and wildness,  
with darkness on the face of ocean depths.

The breath of God was hovering  
upon the water's face.

God said: Let there be light! And there was light.

God saw the light, that it was good,  
and God divided between light and darkness.

And God called light "day";  
and darkness God called "night."

And there was evening; there was morning:

One day.

Genesis 1:1-5

*When recited as a Maftir portion, the reading concludes here, and the service continues with lifting and tying the scroll, followed by the haftarah, page 551.*

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COMMENTARY. With regard to Creation, there are mitzvot on several levels that derive from our commitment to the retelling of the tale. Faith in Creation makes demands in the areas of both those mitzvot that lead to the personal fulfillment of divinity in our lives, and those that lead to the greater realization of the divine presence in the universe as a whole. The first mitzvah that proceeds from our faith in Creation is that of awareness itself. The obligation to remain aware of divine presence is the foundation of all religious life. The second mitzvah of Creation is that of treating every human being as the image of God. Every person is entitled to the esteem and reverence in which we hold the face of God. A third mitzvah that Creation calls upon us to fulfill is that of the Sabbath. A fourth mitzvah is that of acting with concern for the healthy survival of Creation itself. The rabbis tell us that shortly after Adam was created, God walked him around the Garden of Eden and told him to take care to guard the world that he was being given. "If you destroy this world," he was told, "there is no one to come and set it right after you." Such an *aggadah* has a level of intense meaning in our age that the early rabbis could hardly have foretold. Telling the tale of Creation is itself a statement of love of the natural world. It needs to be accompanied by actions that bear witness to that love—without these it is false testimony. A.G.

## ALTERNATIVE TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

### *First Aliyah*

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה  
תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי  
הַמָּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אֹר וַיְהי־אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־  
הָאֹר פִּיטוֹב וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחָשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא  
אֱלֹהִים | לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־בֹקֶר יוֹם  
אֶחָד:

*When recited as a Maftir portion, the reading concludes here, and the service continues with lifting and tying the scroll, followed by the haftarah, page 552.*

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DERASH. In the Torah we learn that light comes from God. "God said, 'Let there be light.' And there was light. God saw the light, that it was good." Our mystics believe that each human soul is a divine spark, a small piece of God. When you put all the small sparks together, you increase light. By working together for justice, we bring more light into the world. S.D.R.

ברא / When God at first created. God created the world in a permanent state of רֵאשִׁית / beginning. The universe is always incomplete. Continuous creative effort is needed to renew the world, to keep it from sinking again into primeval chaos.

Simḥah Bunam of Przysucha

DERASH. God sought to create a partnership with people, to be one with them. Thus, the text says, "A day of oneness" (יום אחד). Similarly, the first day of making offerings to God in the sanctuary was like the first day of creation, for on that day we drew near to God. On a day when we seek oneness with God, God proclaims, "It is like the day that I created my world"—we are made one with God again.

Genesis Rabbah 3:9 (Adapted)



### *Second Aliyah*

And God said: "Let there be a dome amid the waters,  
and let it separate between the waters!"

And God made the dome, and thus divided  
between the waters that were beneath the dome  
and the waters that were above the dome.

And it was so.

And God called the dome "Heaven."

And there was evening; there was morning:  
a second day.

### *(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the waters underneath the heavens  
be gathered to a single place,  
and let dry land appear!"

And it was so.

And God called the dry land "Earth,"  
and where the waters gathered up  
God called them "Oceans."

And God saw that it was good.

And God said: "Let the earth grow grasses  
putting forth their seed,  
and fruit trees yielding fruit  
according to their kinds, their seed within them,  
all across the earth!"

And it was so.

The earth brought forth the grasses  
putting forth their seed according to their kinds,  
and trees yielding fruits, their seed within them,  
each according to its kind.

God saw that it was good.

And there was evening; there was morning:  
a third day.

Genesis 1:6-13

### *Second Aliyah*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם:  
וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ  
וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ  
שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:

### *(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד  
וְתִרְאֶה הַיִּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לַיִּבְשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמִקְוֵה  
הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשָּׂא  
הָאֶרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשָׂב מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשָׂה פְּרִי לַמִּינֹו אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע-  
בּוֹ עַל-הָאֶרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַתֹּצֵא הָאֶרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשָׂב מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע  
לַמִּינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשָׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע-בּוֹ לַמִּינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-  
טוֹב: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:

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COMMENTARY. The first chapter of Genesis indicates that there is an underlying unity to the universe, a unity which is then divided into its parts by the divine act of naming. Other religious traditions have also expressed this idea. For example, the Tao Te Ching says that "the nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth; the named is the mother of ten thousand things." The religious impulse in all of us involves becoming aware that the many are also one. J.A.S.

Why is the second day the only day not described as "good?" Rabbi Hanina said, "It is because on that day schism was created, as it is said, 'God...divided between the waters....' Rabbi Tavvomi added, "If a schism that improved the world is not described as 'good,' then how much the more so a schism that detracts from it." Genesis Rabbah 4:6

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let there be luminaries  
in the dome of heaven,  
to divide between the day and night,  
and they shall serve for signs and seasons,  
and for days and years.

And let them serve as lamps  
amid the dome of heaven,  
to give light upon the earth!"  
And it was so.

God made the two great luminaries,  
the larger one to rule the day,  
the smaller one to rule the night, together with the stars.  
God placed them in the dome of heaven,  
to give light upon the earth,  
to rule the day and night,  
and to divide between the light and darkness.  
And God saw that it was good.  
And there was evening; there was morning: a fourth day.

*(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the waters teem  
with swarming creatures and the breath of life,  
and let birds fly above the earth across the face of heaven's dome!"  
And God created the great sea-beasts,  
and all the animals that move about,  
with which the waters teemed according to their kinds,  
and every winged bird according to its kind.  
God saw that it was good.  
And God blessed them, saying:  
"Be fruitful and increase,  
and fill the waters of the seas,  
and let birds multiply throughout the earth!"  
And there was evening; there was morning: a fifth day.

Genesis 1:14-23

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאוֹרֹת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין  
הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאוֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ לְמְאוֹרֹת  
בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי  
הַמְּאוֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאֹר  
הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים: וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים  
בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וְלַמָּשָׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה  
וְלַהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים בִּיְטוֹב: וַיְהִי־  
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי:

*(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיָּמִים שָׁרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יַעֲוִף  
עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִים  
הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה | הַרְמָשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרָץ הַיָּמִים  
לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים בִּיְטוֹב: וַיִּבְרָךְ  
אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הַיָּמִים בְּיָמִים וְהָעוֹף  
יָרֵב בָּאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the earth bring forth  
land animals according to their kinds—  
the cattle and the roving creatures,  
and the wild beasts, according to their kind!"

And it was so.

God made the wild beasts according to their kind  
and cattle according to its kind,  
and all the swarming creatures of the earth  
according to their kind!

God saw that it was good.

And God said: "Let us make a human being  
in our image, and according to our likeness,  
and let the humans rule the fishes of the sea,  
the birds across the skies,  
and creatures of the earth,  
and every creeping thing that creeps upon the land."

And God created the human being  
in God's image—

in the image of divinity did God create it;  
both male and female God created them.

And God blessed them, and God said to them:

"Be fruitful and increase,  
and fill the earth, and be responsible for it,  
and rule the fishes of the sea,  
the birds across the skies,  
and every living thing that moves upon the earth."

And God said: "See, I hereby give to you  
all the grasses putting forth their seed  
across the face of all the earth,  
and every tree, within which is a tree-fruit  
putting forth its seed—it shall be food for you.

And for every living creature of the earth,  
and every bird across the skies,  
and everything that moves about upon the earth, ↪

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תֵּוצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֶמָּה וְרֶמֶשׂ  
וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ  
וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת פְּלֶרֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ וַיֵּרָא  
אֱלֹהִים בְּיָטוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדֹמוֹתֵנוּ  
וַיִּרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-  
הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ  
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם  
אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ  
וַיִּרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב וְזֶרַע וְזֶרַע אֲשֶׁל עַל-  
פָּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִיעֵץ זֶרַע וְזֶרַע לָכֶם  
יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ: וְלָכָל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְלָכָל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלָכָל —

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DERASH. When God was about to create the first people, God saw that both righteous and wicked would be among the descendants of Adam and Eve. God said, "If I create Adam, wicked people will descend from him, but if I do not create Adam, the righteous will not descend from him." So God momentarily ignored the ways of the wicked, and with divine mercy created the first people.

Genesis Rabbah 8:4

DERASH. When a flesh-and-blood ruler stamps an image on a coin, every coin looks alike, but even though the sovereign of all made each of us in the divine image, no two of us are alike.

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

DERASH. Why does the Torah say that Adam—a single person—was created first? For the sake of peace, for no one can say, my ancestor was greater than yours.

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

COMMENTARY. The rabbis taught that every bit of creation is essential. Not even the mosquito, that annoying little creature, is superfluous. Even snakes and frogs are manifestations of divine will!

Genesis Rabbah 10:7 (Adapted)

whatever has the breath of life within,  
all grass and vegetation shall be food.”  
And it was so.  
And God saw all that had been made,  
and truly it was very good.  
And there was evening; there was morning:  
the sixth day.

Genesis 1:24-31

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

And the heavens and the earth, and all their beings  
were finished. And God finished on the seventh day  
the work that had been done.  
God rested on the seventh day  
from all the labors God had done.  
God blessed the seventh day,  
and made it holy,  
for on it God had rested from all work  
that God had done in carrying out Creation.

Genesis 2:1-3

*When the Creation story has been read from the first scroll, the Hatzki Kaddish, page 543,  
is recited here.*

רֹמַשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ נִפְּשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק עֹשֶׂב לְאָכְלָהּ  
וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי־  
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם: וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר  
עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת  
מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

*When the Creation story has been read from the first scroll, the Hatzit Kaddish, page 544, is recited here.*

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DERASH. Traditional education in physics begins with pulleys, levers and inclined planes, continues with trajectories and motion, and electricity and magnetism. After studying relativity,  $E=Mc^2$ , and Heisenberg uncertainty one can begin to unravel the big bang and other cosmologies. Similarly traditional Jewish study of Hūmash begins not with Genesis, but with the Levitical codes of sin and sacrifice, then the book of Numbers, and the miracles of the Exodus. After studying the Ten Commandments and the sermons of Deuteronomy, as well as Codes, Mishnah, Maimonides, and Talmud, one can truly begin to unravel the deep mysteries of *Bereyshit Bara Elohim*.... In choosing to read Genesis on Rosh Hashanah we set for ourselves both a standard and a goal. The text, like the creation it describes, is incredibly complex. We must learn much to begin to understand it, and what we have already learned is just the Beginning...

E.M.

וּכְבַּשָׁה / *vehivshuha* / be responsible. Literally, “subdue it.” Human beings have extraordinary powers for reshaping the world, taming animals, growing crops, even for creating and destroying whole species. The biblical text acknowledges this power. Our translation suggests that we have our power as stewards of God’s will. It is up to us to act responsibly. D.A.T.



## A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

We pray for the children who put chocolate fingers on everything, who love to be tickled, who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants, who eat candy before supper and who can never find their shoes in the morning. And we also pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who have never bounded down the street in a new pair of shoes, and who are born in places that we would not be caught dead in and that they will be.

We pray for the children who give us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with their dogs and who bury their goldfish, who hug us so tightly and who forget their lunch money, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who watch their fathers shave, and who slurp their soup. And we also pray for those who will never get dessert, who watch their fathers suffer, who cannot find any bread to steal, who do not have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures are on milk cartons instead of on dressers, and whose monsters are real.

We pray for the children who spend all of their allowance by Tuesday, who pick at their food, who love ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed and who never rinse the bathtub, who love visits from the tooth fairy, even after they find out who it really is, who do not like to be kissed in front of the school bus, and who squirm during services.

And we also pray for those children whose nightmares occur in the daytime, who live in the gunsights of their brothers and sisters, who will eat anything, who have never seen a dentist, who are not spoiled by anyone, who go to bed hungry and wake up hungry, whose bodies consume themselves, who live and move and have no address. We pray for those who will grab the hand of anyone kind enough to offer it, and for those who find no hand to grab.

For all these children, we pray today, for they are all so precious.

Ina J. Hughes (Adapted)

## ON ROSH HASHANAH: WELCOMING THE NEWBORN

*Parents who have welcomed children into their homes are invited with them to the Bimah.*

*Reader:* When the people of Israel stood at Mount Sinai ready to receive the Torah, God said to them, “Bring me good securities to guarantee that you will keep my Way, and then I will give Torah to you.” They said, “Our ancestors are our securities.” God said, “I have faults to find with your ancestors...” They said, “Our prophets will be our securities.” God said, “I have faults to find with your prophets....” They said, “Our children will be our securities.” And God replied, “Indeed, they are good securities. For their sake will I give you my Torah.”

Song of Songs Rabbah 1:4

*Congregation:* For the sake of the children, for the sake of the unfolding was Torah given to Israel. Let us welcome the newborn of our people and the children who have come into our midst this year, bringing special joy. Let us welcome the children, that they might become our guarantors, reminding us that we receive Torah only to teach Torah. And that we teach Torah only when we do Torah: here, now and always.

*Parents:* We are humbled by this moment. Through our love, we raise this child in love. The mystery of beginnings is with us, and we acknowledge its presence.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה:

Blessed is the FOUNTAIN OF BEING whose power enlivens us, sustains us, and enables us to reach this moment of joy.

*Reader:* There is grace in every dawn, loveliness in every fresh morning. We will endure, we will prevail—we the children of Hope, children of the One who crowds the heavens with stars, endows the earth with glory, and fills the mind with wonder!

Chaim Stern (Adapted)

*Parents and children are seated.*

## TORAH READING FOR THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

### *First Aliyah*

After these things, God tested Abraham.  
He said to him, "Abraham." And Abraham replied: "I'm here."  
God said: "Take, now, your child,  
your only child, your beloved Yitzhak,  
and go forth to the land of Moriah,  
and offer him up there as a burnt-offering  
upon one of the mountains I shall indicate to you."

And Abraham arose early the next morning,  
and saddled his donkey,  
and he took with him two servant-boys,  
and Yitzhak, his child,  
and he split the wood of the burnt-offering,  
and he arose, and went off to the place God told him of.

Genesis 22:1-3

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KAVANAH. Beware the person who says, "I know exactly what this verse of Torah means!" For meaning has many layers, and the last one we uncover sheds new light on the first. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. When God first said, "לך לך / go forth," Abraham did as he was told, separating himself from his family and land of origin and embarking on his life's adventure. Here the same words call Abraham to go forth again, this time to the culmination of that journey.

Samson Raphael Hirsch (Adapted)

### First Aliyah

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְהָאֱלֹהִים נִסָּה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר  
אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר קַח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יִצְחָק  
אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבָה אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אַרְץ הַמִּצְרַיִם וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם  
לַעֲלֹה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֵלָיךָ: וַיִּשְׁפֹּם אַבְרָהָם בְּבֶקֶר  
וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ אֶת־חַמְלֹו וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נַעֲרָיו אֹתָו וְאֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֵו וַיִּבְקַע  
עֲצֵי עֹלָה וַיִּקֶּם וַיִּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לֹו הָאֱלֹהִים:

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COMMENTARY. For our ancestors, the narrative of the *Akedah*, binding of Isaac, was a model of patriarchal piety. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son coupled with Isaac's passive participation were painfully consoling to generations of Jews for whom martyrdom was decreed.

Our experience is different; we would not collaborate with a God who demands the life of our children as the condition of the Covenant. We resonate instead with the Abraham of Sodom and Gemorah, who dares God: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth act justly?"

Yet despite our difficulties with the story, we evade it at our peril. There is, after all, a dark side to human life, to religious life. There are impulses of aggression within each of us, dormant perhaps, under control we hope, but always ready to be released.

The *Akedah* challenges us not to emulate the cruel faith of Abraham, but to recognize in his actions our own potential to harm, even destroy, those we love.

R.H.

COMMENTARY. What a difference between Abraham as public figure and private person! Abraham is a shrewd general, clever negotiator, covenantor with God, and generous host to strangers. Yet he never reconciles with his parents, cannot resolve the tension between Sarah and Hagar, fails to defend Sarah, and sends Hagar and Ishmael out into the desert. I believe that the test of Abraham contained in the binding of Isaac is the inevitable outcome of the dissonance between the public and private Abraham. Our public and private actions can only move toward harmony when we do *teshuvah*, the turning that unites our inner and outer lives. We need not be shocked into change by the near-sacrifice of our children. "Let the hearts of parents be turned to their children, and the hearts of children turned to their parents". (Malachi 3:24)

E.M.

## *Second Aliyah*

And on the third day of the journey,  
Abraham raised up his eyes,  
and saw the place from far away.  
And Abraham said to his servants:  
“Wait here with the donkey.  
I and the boy will go up to that place  
and worship, and we shall return to you.”  
And Abraham picked up the wood of the burnt-offering,  
and placed it on Yitzhak, his child,  
and he took the firebrand in his hand, and the sacrificial knife,  
and the two of them went on together.  
And Yitzhak spoke to Abraham, his father.  
“Father,” said he. “I’m here, my son,” he answered.  
“Behold,” he asked, “here are the firebrand and the wood,  
but where’s the lamb for the burnt-offering?”  
And Abraham replied: “God will provide the lamb  
for the burnt-offering, my son.”  
And the two of them went on together.

Genesis 22:4-8

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COMMENTARY. Picture the young Isaac, roused by his father. Abraham’s preparation and motivation for this excursion are hidden from Isaac’s young consciousness. He begins to walk after the adult. As they travel, he catches up and sees what Abraham is carrying in front of him. He notes the knife, the wood on the donkey, the flame. “We are going to sacrifice, to pray,” he realizes. But he sees that there is no animal. So he says, “I see the fire and the wood, but where is the animal to be sacrificed?” As the son now strides easily next to the old man, the father replies, “God will show us how to use what we have brought and exactly what we will sacrifice.” And indeed, Isaac now turns from Abraham and looks ahead into the unknowable future, as he now knows his father has done since hearing the voice saying, “Go now from the place you know to one I will show you.” “And they walked together side by side.” The child follows behind the parent, unaware that the parent is walking ahead into an unknown. The child grows, catches up, the two look together into the uncertain future; the child becomes an adult.

Daniel Siegel

## Second Aliyah

בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיֵּשָׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם מֵרָחֵק:  
וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-נָעֲרָיו שְׁבוּ-לָכֶם כֹּה עִם-הַחֲמוֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּעֱר  
נֵלְכָה עַד-כֹּה וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִשְׁוֹבָה אֲלֵיכֶם: וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵצֵי  
הָעֵלֶה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת-הָאֵשׁ וְאֶת-הַמֶּאֱכָלֶת  
וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו: וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי  
וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ וְהָעֵצִים וַאֲיֵה הַשָּׂה לְעֵלֶה:  
וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לּוֹ הַשָּׂה לְעֵלֶה בְנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם  
יַחְדָּו:

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DERASH. Even as God is the dominant Father and Abraham a trusting and obedient son, so in the purely human realm Abraham appears as the dominant father and Isaac as the archetype of the submissive son. Only once does Isaac speak and ask the fateful question; thereafter he is a mere object of the drama. Abraham, the prince and Patriarch, the honored and aged friend of God, overawes his timid son, whose will to independence may well have been crippled by doting and protective parents. He has no personality apart from his father. As one they walk together to the sacrifice, and silently Isaac submits to the dreadful act.

The story may thus be read as a paradigm of a father-and-son relationship. In a way every parent seeks to dominate his child and is in danger of seeking to sacrifice him to his parental plans or hopes. In the biblical story, God is present and can therefore stay the father's hand. In all too many repetitions of the scene God is absent and the knife falls. Thus is the *Akedah* repeated forever, with its test and its terror.

Gunther Plaut

### *Third Aliyah*

They came up to the place that God had told him of,  
and Abraham built there the sacrificial altar.  
He arranged the wood, and there he bound Yitzhak, his child,  
and put him on the sacrificial place, atop the wood,  
and he stretched forth his hand and took the sacrificial  
knife to slay his child. ↩

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DERASH. Perhaps the *Akedah* is really the story of Isaac, who needed to find God. He had grown up spoiled in a home affluent for those times. He had experienced neither the soul searching of his father nor the anguish of his mother, who waited almost a lifetime to have a child. It may have taken a traumatic experience to force him to look within himself. His close brush with death may have been the event that preceded his discovery of God. He then went off into the wilderness alone in order to transform himself into the leader he was destined to become. How else could we say in the Amidah: The God of Abraham, the God of Sarah, the God of Isaac? In every time, in every place, we each need to find our own God as the matriarchs and patriarchs did. This is the challenge of Rosh Hashanah.

M.J.K.

### *Third Aliyah*

וַיִּבְּאוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אֲבִרָהָם אֶת-  
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֶךְ אֶת-הָעֵצִים וַיַּעֲקֹל אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם אוֹתוֹ  
עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לָעֵצִים: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִרָהָם אֶת-יִדּוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת-  
הַמֶּאֱבֶלֶת לְשָׂחֹט אֶת-בְּנוֹ: ←

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COMMENTARY. What happened to Isaac in the terrible silence on Moriah as he looked up from where he was bound on the sacrificial altar to see the sunlight glinting off the knife-blade held firmly in his father's hand? Even with all the love and trust a son gives to a father, Isaac was shattered by the knowledge that Abraham would have sacrificed him in obedience to God. And it is not insignificant that the Torah makes no mention of Isaac coming down from the mountain. "Abraham then returned to his servants and they departed together for Be'er Sheva."

I imagine Isaac sitting on the mountain, rubbing the rope burns on his wrists and arms, massaging his limbs to restore circulation as the burning sacrifice makes a sweet savour unto God. He looks at Abraham, the echoes of the wings of death reverberating in his ears, and with anguished tears and a breaking voice, says, "How could you do this to me? How could you put me through something like this? And for what? Just so you could prove something to God? What kind of God would play games with my life? I don't want to have anything to do with you or your God." And he tells his father to go, to leave him.

I imagine Isaac leaving the mountain and going into the desert and there he finds his half-brother, Ishmael. He too knows something about anger, despair and mistrust. He too was subjected to a life-threatening trial and was saved only by divine intervention. I imagine Isaac and Ishmael sitting around a desert campfire in the chill of the evening, sharing with each other the ordeal of being their father's sons, and in sharing that ordeal (and with whom else could they share it but each other), they become brothers. In other words, they learn to love each other.

Julius Lester (Adapted)



And an angel of THE OMNIPRESENT ONE  
called out to him from heaven, saying: "Abraham! Abraham!"  
And he replied: "I'm here."  
The angel said: "Do not put forth your hand upon the boy,  
and do not cause him any harm!  
For now I know that you are one in awe of God,  
for you did not withhold your child, your only child, from me!"  
And Abraham raised up his eyes and saw—behold!—  
a ram in the back, ensnared within the bushes by its horns.  
And Abraham went out, and he took the ram,  
and offered it as a burnt offering  
in place of his own child.

And Abraham would call that place: "ADONAY-Yireh" (GOD  
Sees!),  
as it is said today: "Upon the Mount of THE ETERNAL ONE  
let one be seen!"

Genesis 22:9-14

#### *Fourth Aliyah*

And the angel of THE OMNIPRESENT ONE  
called out to Abraham a second time from heaven,  
saying: "By myself I swear, proclaiming my ETERNAL WILL,  
because you have performed this task,  
and did not spare even your child, your only child,  
that I shall greatly bless you  
and shall surely multiply your seed,  
like stars upon the heavens,  
and like sands upon the seashore,  
and your offspring shall possess  
the gateway of their foes. ↪

וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלֶּאךָ יְהוָה מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם א אַבְרָהָם  
וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תְּשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ אֶל־הַנֶּזֶר וְאֶל־תַּעַשׂ לוֹ  
מֵאֹמֶה כִּי אֶתְּךָ יִדְעֵתִי כִּי־יִרְא אֱלֹהִים אֹתָהּ וְלֹא חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־  
בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידָךָ מִמֶּנִּי: וַיֵּשָׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה־אֵיל  
אֲחֵר נֹאחַז בְּסֻבָּה בְּקֶרְנוֹ וַיִּלֶּךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הָאֵיל וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ  
לְעֹלָה תַּחַת בְּנוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה אֵי יִרְאָה  
אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם בְּהָר יְהוָה יִרְאָה:

#### *Fourth Aliyah*

וַיִּקְרָא מִלֶּאךָ יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָהָם שְׁנִית מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי  
נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי יַעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא  
חֲשַׁכְתָּ אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידָךָ: כִּי־בָרַךְ אֲבִרְכְּךָ וְהִרְבָּה אֲרִבָּה אֶת־  
זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָחוּל אֲשֶׁר עַל־שַׁפְתַּי הֵימָּה וַיִּרְשׁ זֶרְעֶךָ אֶת־  
שַׁעַר אֲיָבִיו: ←

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DERASH. The ram was “ensnared within the bushes by its horns.” Was Abraham able to totally extricate the ram, or were the ram’s horns left there in the bushes, severed from the sacrificial animal? After everyone has left the scene, I picture the shofar/ram’s horn still ensnared in the bushes. The passing wind blows a shrill cry from the ensnared ram’s horn, a cry that we repeat today. J.A.S.

DERASH. Did the blessing come to Abraham because he did not withhold his son from the possibility of dying on the altar, or because he listened to the angel and did not withhold him from further living? It seems to me that Abraham would withhold Isaac from God’s presence by slaying him, not by allowing him to live. It is Abraham’s willingness to heed the call of the angel of mercy, not his willingness to sacrifice his son, that is the basis of the ensuing blessing. J.A.S.

And all the nations of the earth  
shall bless themselves by your posterity,  
because you listened to my voice!”

And Abraham went back then to his servant-boys,  
and they arose, and went together to Be’er Sheva,  
and Abraham dwelt in Be’er Sheva.

Genesis 22:15-19

### *Fifth Aliyah*

And it happened, after these things,  
that it was told to Abraham: “Behold,  
Milkah—she, too!—has given birth to children  
to Naḥor, your brother: Utz, firstborn,  
and Buz, his brother, and Kemuel  
(who one day would become the father of Aram),  
and Kesed, and H̱azo, and Pildash and Yidlaf,  
and Betuel. (And Betuel would one day father Rivkah!)”  
These eight children Milkah bore to Naḥor,  
brother of Abraham.  
And Naḥor’s concubine, whose name was Re’umah,  
she, too, became the mother of Tevah,  
and Gaḥam, and Taḥash, and Ma’ahah.

Genesis 22:20-24

וְהִתְפַּרְכוּ בְּזִרְעָהּ כָּל גִּזְיֵי הָאָרֶץ עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקִלְיִי: וַיָּשָׁב  
 אֲבִרְהָם אֶל-נַעֲרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל-בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיָּשָׁב אֲבִרְהָם  
 בְּבֵאֵר שָׁבַע:

*Fifth Aliyah*

וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיָּגֵד לְאַבְרָהָם יֵאמֹר הֲיֵנָּה יִלְדָּה  
 מִלִּפְנֵי גַם-הִוא בָּנִים לְנָחוֹר אַחִיָּה: אֶת-עֹיץ בְּכֹרוֹ וְאֶת-בֶּחַ אַחִיו  
 וְאֶת-קִמּוֹאֵל אָבִי אָרָם: וְאֶת-פֶּשֶׁד וְאֶת-חִזּוֹ וְאֶת-פִּלְדֶּשׁ וְאֶת-  
 יִדְלָף וְאֶת בְּתוּאֵל: וּבְתוּאֵל יֵלֵךְ אֶת-רִבְקָה שְׂמֹנֶה אֵלֶּה יִלְדָּה  
 מִלִּפְנֵי לְנָחוֹר אַחִי אֲבִרְהָם: וּפִילְגֶשׁוּ וּשְׂמֵמָה וְאוּמָה וְתִלְדַּד גַּם-  
 הוּא אֶת-טֹבַח וְאֶת-זָחָם וְאֶת-תַּחַשׁ וְאֶת-מַעֲכָה:

The real hero of the sacrifice was the ram  
who knew nothing of the plot among the others.  
He sort of volunteered  
to die in Isaac's place.

I want to sing a song in his memory—  
of curly wool, of the human eyes,  
of the horns, so still in his living head—  
and they turned them into trumpets  
after the kill  
to sound their war-cry  
to sound their crude joy.

I like to see the last scene  
as a photo in a glossy fashion magazine  
the young man, tan and pampered  
in his designer suit,  
and the angel by his side in a  
long silk receiving gown,  
and both of them empty-eyed,  
glancing at two empty places.

And behind them, as a colorful background, the ram  
caught in a thicket before the kill,  
and the thicket his last friend.

The angel went home,  
Isaac went home,  
and Abraham and God went home,

But the real hero of the sacrifice  
is the ram.

Yehuda Amichai

## *Inheritance*

The ram came last.  
And Abraham did not know  
that it answered the question  
that had come first  
in the sunset of his life.

When he raised his white head  
he saw he was not dreaming;  
when he saw the angel  
the knife dropped from his hand.

The boy who was unbound  
saw the back of his father.

Isaac, it is told, was not sacrificed.  
He had a long life, a good life,  
until his eyes went dark.

But that hour  
he bequeathed to his descendants  
still to be born  
a knife  
in the heart.

Haim Guri

## *Yitzhak*

Toward morning, the sun took a walk in the forest,  
together with me, and with Abba,  
with my right hand in his left.

Like lightning, a knife was flashing through the trees,  
and I was struck with fear at my eyes' terror  
at the blood upon the leaves.

Abba, Abba, hurry up and save Yitzhak,  
so no one will be missing from the noonday feast.

It's I who am the slaughtered one, my son,  
my blood already on the leaves.  
And Abba's voice was stifled,  
and his face was white.

And I wanted to cry out, I writhed not to believe,  
ripping my eyes open,  
and I awoke,  
my right hand drained of blood.

Amir Gilboa

## יִצְחָק

לִפְנוֹת בִּקְרָ טִילָה שְׁמֶשׁ בְּחוּף הַיַּעַר  
יַחַד עָמִי וְעַם אָבֹא  
וַיִּמְיֵנִי בְּשִׂמְלֹו.

כְּבָרָק לְהִבֶּה מֵאֲכָלֶת בֵּין הָעֵצִים.  
וְאֲנִי יָרָא כָּל-כָּךְ אֶת פֶּחַד עֵינַי מוֹל דָּם עַל הָעָלִים.

אָבֹא אָבֹא מִהֵר וְהִצִּילָה אֶת יִצְחָק  
וְלֹא יִחְסֹר אִישׁ בְּסַעֲדַת הַצִּהָרִים.

זֶה אֲנִי הַנִּשְׁחָט, בְּנִי.  
וּכְבֹּר דָּמִי עַל הָעָלִים.  
וְאָבֹא נִסְתָּם קוֹלוֹ.  
וּפָנִיו חוֹרִים.

וְרָצִיתִי לִצְעֹק, מִפְּרֹפֶר לֹא לְהֶאֱמִין  
וְקוֹרֵעַ הָעֵינַיִם.  
וְנִתְעוֹרְרָתִי.

וְאֶזְלַת-דָּם הִתָּה יָד יָמִין



## TORAH READING FOR YOM KIPPUR SHAḤARIT

*The traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning (Leviticus 16) summarizes the service in the Temple on Yom Kippur. This dramatic reading, repeated in part during the Avodah sections of Musaf, does not have the same impact upon many contemporary listeners as it did over the generations. As a consequence, some communities prefer to read Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20), the alternative Torah reading, on pages 531-542.*

### *First Aliyah*

THE ALMIGHTY spoke to Moses,  
after the death of two of Aaron's sons  
when they drew near before THE HOLY ONE and died.  
GOD said to Moses: Speak to Aaron your brother,  
tell him he cannot come at will into the holy place,  
inside the curtain in the presence of the cover  
that is on the Ark, lest he might die—  
for I appear over the cover, in a cloud.  
Aaron shall come into the sanctuary thus:  
with a male ox as an atonement offering,  
and a ram for sacrificial fire.

Leviticus 16:1-3

### *(On Shabbat, Second Aliyah)*

A linen tunic he shall wear,  
with linen breeches—  
they will be upon his flesh.  
And he shall gird himself with linen sash,  
and a linen turban shall he don.  
These will be holy garments.  
He shall wash his body, and shall put them on.  
And from the congregation of the Israelites,  
let him take two kid goats:  
one for an atonement offering,  
and one for offering up by fire. ↩

*The traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning (Leviticus 16) summarizes the service in the Temple on Yom Kippur. This dramatic reading, repeated in part during the Avodah sections of Musaf, does not have the same impact upon many contemporary listeners as it did over the generations. As a consequence, some communities prefer to read Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20), the alternative Torah reading, on pages 531-542.*

### *First Aliyah*

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן בְּקָרְבָתָם לִפְנֵי-  
יְהוָה וַיֹּמְתוּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל-אֶהֱרֹן אַחִיךָ וְאֵל-  
יָבָא בְכָל-עַתָּה אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לְפָרֶכֶת אֶל-פְּנֵי הַכַּפָּרֶת אֲשֶׁר  
עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא יָמוּת בִּי בָעֵנָן אֲרָאָה עַל-הַכַּפָּרֶת: בְּזֹאת יָבָא  
אֶהֱרֹן אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ בַּפֶּר בֶּן-בֶּקֶר לְחֹטָאת וְאֵיל לְעֹלָה:

### *(On Shabbat, Second Aliyah)*

בְּחַנְתָּ-בְּדֹר קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ וּמִכְנָסֵי-בָד יִהְיוּ עַל-בָּשָׂרוֹ וּבִאֲבִגְדֵי בָד יִחַגֵּר  
וּבְמִצְנַפֶּת בָּד יִצְנֹף בְּגִדֵי-קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרַחֵץ בַּמִּים אֶת-בָּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשֶׁם:  
וּמֵאֵת עֹדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקַּח שְׁנֵי-שְׁעִירֵי עִזִּים לְחֹטָאת ←

COMMENTARY. Why are instructions given to Aaron "after the death of two of Aaron's sons?" Rav Azaria compares this to a doctor who visits a sick person and says, "Do not eat anything cold, and do not lie in a damp place." Another doctor says, "Do not eat anything cold, and do not lie in a damp place so that you do not die like John Doe died." The second doctor made a stronger case than the first.

Rashi

ראה כי בענן אראה / For I appear...in a cloud. Since God appears there in a pillar of cloud, and since the revelation of God's *Shehina* is there, Aaron should be careful not to enter at will. The rabbis comment that he should enter only with the cloud of incense and only on Yom Kippur (Talmud *Yoma* 53a).

Rashi

כתנת בד קדש / *ketonet bad kodesh* / linen tunic. The high priest had two sets of clothes – בגדי זהב / *bigdey zahav* / golden clothing and לבן / *bigdey lavan* / white clothing. The Mishnah (*Yoma* 7:4) points out that on Yom Kippur the white clothing was worn only when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. The simple white garment was worn in the Holy of Holies, and the gold was worn before the multitude gathered at the Temple. What affects how you dress?

M.B.K./D.A.T.

And Aaron shall sacrifice the ox  
as offering for his sins.  
He shall atone both for himself and for his household.

Leviticus 16:4-6

*Second Aliyah (On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

And he shall take the two kid goats,  
and stand them up before THE OMNIPRESENT,  
at the Tent of Meeting's entranceway.  
And then let Aaron place a lot  
upon each of the two goats:  
one lot for THE HOLY ONE,  
and one for Azazel.  
Aaron shall offer up the goat  
the lot has designated for THE HOLY ONE,  
and he shall make it an atonement offering.  
And the goat the lot has marked for Azazel  
shall be presented live before THE OMNIPRESENT,  
for atonement, when the goat is sent to Azazel,  
into the wilderness.  
Aaron shall sacrifice the ox  
as offering for his sins.  
He shall atone both for himself and for his household,  
by slaughtering his offering for sins.

Leviticus 16:7-11

וְאֵיל אֶחָד לְעֹלָה: וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֵן אֶת־פֶּרֶךְ הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וּכְפָר  
בַּעֲדוֹ וּבַעֲדֵי בֵיתוֹ:

*Second Aliyah (On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

וּלְקַח אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים וְהַעֲמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל  
מוֹעֵד: וְנָתַן אֶהָרֵן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׁעִירִים גִּרְלוֹת גֹּדֶל אֶחָד לַיהוָה  
וּגֹדֶל אֶחָד לַעֲזָאֵל: וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֵן אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו  
הַגֹּדֶל לַיהוָה וַעֲשֵׂהוּ חֲטָאת: וְהַשְּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּדֶל  
לַעֲזָאֵל יַעֲמִד־תִּי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו לְשַׁלַּח אֹתוֹ לַעֲזָאֵל  
הַמִּדְבָּרָה: וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֵן אֶת־פֶּרֶךְ הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וּכְפָר בַּעֲדוֹ  
וּבַעֲדֵי בֵיתוֹ וְשָׁחַט אֶת־פֶּרֶךְ הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ:

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COMMENTARY. The Torah reading reflects this holiday's theme, in the emphasis on expiation of sins through the ritual of the two goats and by direct mention of Yom Kippur as an occasion on which to "practice self-denial." To make sense of the reading's elaborate instructions for sacrifice, we must begin by recognizing that biblical religion was based in large measure on a popular belief that relinquishing to God precious possessions (such as livestock and grain) gave people credit and approval in God's eyes. We may regard the sacrifices as naive and primitive. But they had the same value in their time as our forms of altruistic giving have in ours.

Is it wrong to donate money to charitable causes or the State of Israel? No. But in a thousand years our descendants will probably wonder what we had in mind by these telethons, fundraising brunches and letter-writing campaigns. Perhaps they'll have figured out more efficient strategies to achieve justice and will regard what *we* do as rather primitive, foolish and wasteful.

S.D.R.

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

And he shall take his censer,  
filled with burning coals,  
lit from the altar fire  
before THE HOLY ONE.

And he shall take two handfuls  
of an aromatic incense, finely ground,  
and bring it to the inside of the altar curtain,  
and offer up the incense on the fire,  
in the presence of THE HOLY ONE.

And when the cloud of incense  
covers up the altar-cover,  
which lies atop the Ark of Covenant,  
he shall not die.

And he shall take some of the ox's blood,  
and sprinkle with his fingers on the surface  
of the altar-cover, on the east side.

Before the altar-cover, let him sprinkle  
with the blood upon his fingers seven times.

And he shall slay the goat of offering  
for the people's sins, and bring the blood  
inside the altar-curtain,  
and he shall do with its blood as he had done  
beforehand with the ox's blood—sprinkling the blood  
upon the altar-cover as he stands before it. ↩

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

וְלָקַח מִלֹּא־הַמִּחֻתָּה גִּחְלִי־אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וּמִלֹּא־  
הַפְּנִי קִטְרֹת סַמִּים דָּקָה וְהֵבִיא מִבֵּית לְפָרֶכֶת: וְנָתַן אֶת־הַקְּטֹרֶת  
עַל־הָאֵשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְכִסָּהּ | עֲנַן הַקְּטֹרֶת אֶת־הַכִּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־  
הָעֵדוּת וְלֹא יָמוּת: וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ עַל־פְּנֵי  
הַכִּפֹּרֶת קֹדֶמָּה וְלִפְנֵי הַכִּפֹּרֶת יִזָּה שִׁבְע־פְּעָמִים מִן־הַדָּם  
בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ: וְשָׁחַט אֶת־שְׁעִיר הַחֹטָאֹת אֲשֶׁר לָעֵם וְהֵבִיא אֶת־דָּמּוֹ  
אֶל־מִבֵּית לְפָרֶכֶת וְעָשָׂה אֶת־דָּמּוֹ בְּאֶשֶׁר עָשָׂה לָדָם —

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יהוה / *milifney adonay* / before the OMNIPRESENT. This clearly refers to the location where the Israelites believed the divine presence came to rest in the tent.

The rabbis were uncomfortable with the anthropomorphic imagery referring to God that appears within the Torah, so they interpreted *milifney adonay* as a directional phrase meaning “toward the altar.” This method of interpretation has continued today, as evidenced in classical Reconstructionist thought, which has moved away from the idea of God as a person.

D.A.T./M.B.K.

He shall make atonement for the sanctuary,  
for the Israelites' uncleanness,  
and for their misdeeds, and all their sins.  
He shall likewise make atonement  
for the Tent of Meeting that now dwells among them,  
unclean though they be.  
And no one shall be present in the Tent of Meeting,  
when he comes there to atone in holiness,  
until he comes out.  
And he shall make atonement,  
for himself, and for his household,  
and for the whole assembly of the Israelites.

Leviticus 16:12-17

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

And he shall go forth to the altar,  
which is before THE HOLY ONE,  
and he shall make atonement for it.  
And let him take some of the ox's blood,  
and some of the goat's blood,  
and place it on the altar horns around the altar,  
sprinkling with the blood upon his fingers  
seven times, thus purifying it,  
making it holy, from Israel's uncleanness.

And when he has completed the atonement,  
for the Tent of Meeting and the holy place,  
he shall dedicate the live goat: ←

הִפָּר וְהִזָּה אֹתוֹ עַל-הַכִּפֹּרֶת וּלְפָנֵי הַכִּפֹּרֶת: וְכִפֶּר עַל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ  
מִטְמֵאוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִפִּשְׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל-חַטָּאתָם וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה לְאַהֲלֵ  
מוֹעֵד הַשָּׁכֵן אַתֶּם בְּתוֹךְ טִמְאֹתָם: וְכָל-אָדָם לֹא-יִהְיֶה | בְּאַהֲלֵ  
מוֹעֵד בָּבֹאוֹ לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ עַד-צֵאתוֹ וְכִפֶּר בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וּבְעֵד  
כָּל-קֹהֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

וַיָּצֵא אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה וְכִפֶּר עָלָיו וּלְקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר  
וּמִדָּם הַשְּׁעִיר וַנָּתַן עַל-קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְהִזָּה עָלָיו מִן-יְהִדָּם  
בְּאַזְבָּעוֹ שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים וְטָהְרוּ וְקִדְּשׁוּ מִטְמֵאוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְכָלֹה  
מִכִּפֶּר אֶת-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת-אַהֲלֵ מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהַקְרִיב אֶת-  
הַשְּׁעִיר הַחִי: ←

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COMMENTARY. In order to carry out the rituals of purification, Aaron entered the Tent of Meeting, the most sacred space in the portable sanctuary. Curiously, all of the dramatic rituals of Yom Kippur were then carried out in private, rather than in sight of the people, who depended on Aaron's efficacy for their own expiation.

However isolated the members of the community might have been from direct participation, they were nonetheless included in the rituals transpiring within the Tent of Meeting. The individual acts carried out by Aaron were not executed for his own sake, but by him on behalf of the community. What appeared to be a supreme moment of solitude was an event of the entire people. These rituals derive their meaning from the intersection of the personal and the public; the solitary act takes on meaning when carried out in the context of the community. R.H.



Aaron shall place his two hands  
on the live goat's head,  
and make confession, for himself,  
and for the Israelites' transgressions,  
and for all their wrongs,  
and all their sins.  
And he shall place them  
on the scapegoat's head,  
and he shall send it,  
by the hand of an appointed messenger,  
into the wilderness.  
The goat shall bear upon itself  
all of their sins,  
into a land cut off from settlement.  
Thus shall he send the goat  
into the wild.

And Aaron shall come into the Tent of Meeting,  
and remove the linen garments he has worn  
in his approach into the sanctuary,  
and he shall leave them there.  
And he shall bathe his flesh with water  
in the holy place, and wash his garments,  
and go forth and offer up his offering  
and those of the people.  
He shall make atonement,  
for himself and for the people.

Leviticus 16:18-24

וּסְמַךְ אֶהְרֹן אֶת־שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר הַחַיִּי וְהִתְוַדָּה עָלָיו  
אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן  
אֹתָם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר וּשְׁלַח בְּיַד־אִישׁ עֵתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה: וְנָשָׂא  
הַשְּׁעִיר עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל־אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה וּשְׁלַח אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר  
בַּמִּדְבָּר: וַבָּא אֶהְרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּפָשַׁט אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר  
לָבַשׁ בְּבָאוּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם: וְרוּחַץ אֶת־בָּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם  
בַּמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וְלָבַשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וַיֵּצֵא וַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־עֲלֹתוֹ וְאֶת־עֹלֹת  
הָעֹם וְכִפָּר בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד הָעָם:

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For the Israelites' uncleanness and for their misdeeds. This is for those who entered the sanctuary unclean but did not know it, for *hatot* are sins done inadvertently. Misdeeds, *pesha'im*, involve those who entered the sanctuary knowing they were unclean. Through the ritual of Yom Kippur, atonement is available to both groups.

Rashi

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

And the fat part of the offering for sins  
he shall cast upon the altar-fire as incense.  
And the appointed messenger,  
who shall convey the goat to Azazel,  
shall wash his clothes,  
and bathe his flesh with water,  
and afterwards, he may re-enter the encampment.  
And the cattle offering for sins,  
and the goat offering for sins,  
whose blood had been brought in  
to make atonement for the holy place,  
let him convey outside the camp,  
and they shall burn their hides,  
their flesh parts, and their waste.  
The one who burns them shall wash his clothes,  
and bathe his flesh with water,  
and afterward, he may re-enter the encampment.

And it shall be for you an everlasting statute:  
in the seventh month, upon the tenth day of the month,  
you shall afflict your souls.  
No work shall you perform,  
both homeborn and the stranger in your midst,  
for on this day atonement shall be made for you,  
to make you clean from all of your wrongdoing.  
Before THE FOUNT OF LIFE,  
you shall be clean.

Leviticus 16:25-30

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

וְאֵת חֵלֶב הַחֲטָאֹת יִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהִמְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הַשְּׂעִיר  
לְעִזָּאִיל יִכְבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְרֹחֵץ אֶת־בָּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹא  
אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה: וְאֵת פֶּר הַחֲטָאֹת וְאֵת שְׂעִיר הַחֲטָאֹת אֲשֶׁר הִוָּבֵא  
אֶת־דָּמָם לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ יוֹצִיא אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה וְשָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ  
אֶת־עֲרֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּשָׂרָם וְאֶת־פָּרָשָׁם: וְהִשְׂרֹף אֹתָם יִכְבֵּס בְּגָדָיו  
וְרֹחֵץ אֶת־בָּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹא אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה: וְהִיָּתָה לָכֶם  
לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרִי לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם  
וְכָל־מְלֹאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֲזִיָּח וְהָגֵר הָגֵר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה  
יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ:

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יִכְבֵּס...וְרֹחֵץ / *yihabes...verahatz* / wash...and bathe. The act of handling the goat, metaphorically driving Israel's sins out of the camp, made the handler unclean. The very act needed to purify the community made the purifier impure! The necessary tasks of spiritual healing and moral confrontation purified the community even while they could damage and even sully the community leader. Just as the handler of the goat must then seek individual purification, so must contemporary leaders, too, find ways to heal and purify themselves, if they are to provide long-term morally vigorous leadership.

D.A.T.

*Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

A Shabbat of Shabbaton—complete cessation—  
it shall be for you. You shall afflict your souls.

It is an everlasting statute.

The priest whom one anoints  
to serve the priesthood in his father's place  
shall make atonement,  
and he shall wash the linen garments,  
and the garments of the holy service.

He shall make atonement,  
for the sanctuary's holy place—  
and for the Tent of Meeting,  
and for the altar, he shall make atonement.

And for the priests,  
and for the whole assembly of the people,  
he shall make atonement.

And this shall be for you  
an everlasting law: to make atonement  
for the Israelites from all their sins,  
on one day of the year.  
And it was done as God commanded Moses.

Leviticus 16:31-34

*Continue on page 543.*

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COMMENTARY. The final sentence of this passage does not say "Moses did..." but rather "it was done" (literally "one did")—suggesting that it is not Moses who is the subject of the sentence but in fact the future generations of the people Israel, who would carry out this ritual whether in deed or, later, in memory, through annual public recitation on the Day of Atonement.

J.R.

*Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

שֶׁבֶת שַׁבָּתוֹן הִיא לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם חֲקַת עוֹלָם: וְכִפֹּר  
הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר־יִמְשַׁח אֹתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹא אֶת־יָדוֹ לְכַהֵן תַּחַת אֲבִיו  
וְלִבָּשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַבָּד בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ: וְכִפֹּר אֶת־מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת־  
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יִכַּפֵּר וְעַל הַפָּהָנִים וְעַל־כָּל־עַם הַקֹּהֵל  
יִכַּפֵּר: וְהִיְתָה־זֹאת לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְכַפֹּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
מִכָּל־חַטָּאתָם אַחַת בַּשָּׁנָה וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

*Continue on page 544.*

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יִשְׁבֵּת / *shabbat shabbaton*. One of the most ancient names for Yom Kippur is the “sabbath of sabbaths.” Jewish tradition understands Shabbat to be holier than other holidays of the year and Yom Kippur to be the holiest of all. On Shabbat we withdraw from labor to enjoy and restore ourselves. The regulations for Yom Kippur are based in part on those of Shabbat but are more rigorous in several ways. This emphasizes the further withdrawal from physical aspects of living and creates a suitable structure for this most spiritual of days.

D.A.T.

## NITZAVIM: ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

*This Torah reading can be used as an alternative reading for Yom Kippur morning or afternoon. The first aliyah can also be used as the maftir reading. This Torah reading serves as an alternative because it vividly conveys that on this day we stand to be judged, and we seek to renew our covenantal commitment.*

### *First Aliyah*

You stand here, all of you, today,  
before THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God—  
your leaders and your tribes,  
your elders, your officials,  
every person of the people Israel,  
your children and your spouses,  
and the stranger in your midst where you encamp,  
those who cut wood, those who draw water—  
all of you, prepared to enter into covenant  
with THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, into the oath  
that THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, concludes  
with you today.

Deuteronomy 29:9-11

### *Second Aliyah*

And God will raise you up  
to be a people dedicated to divinity,  
and God, in turn, shall pledge  
to be your God, as God has promised you,  
according to the oath God made with your ancestors,  
with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.  
Not with you alone do I now make this covenant and oath,  
but, in addition to whoever stands with us today  
before THE FOUNT OF LIFE, our God,  
all those who are not here with us today.

Deuteronomy 29:12-14

## ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

## פְּרִשְׁת נִצְבִּים

*This Torah reading can be used as an alternative reading for Yom Kippur morning or afternoon. The first aliyah can also be used as the maftir reading. This Torah reading serves as an alternative because it vividly conveys that on this day we stand to be judged, and we seek to renew our covenantal commitment.*

### *First Aliyah*

אַתֶּם נִצְבִּים הַיּוֹם כְּלָכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רְאִשֵׁיכֶם שְׁבִטֵיכֶם  
זְקֵנֵיכֶם וְשֹׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: טַפְכֶּם נְשִׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר  
בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶיךָ מֵחֹטֵט עֲצִיךָ עַד שְׂאֵב מִימֶיךָ: לְעִבְרְךָ בְּבִרְיַת יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבְאֻלָּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּרַת עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם:

### *Second Aliyah*

לְמַעַן הָקִים אֶתְּךָ הַיּוֹם | לֹא לְעַם וְהוּא יְהִי־לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כַּאֲשֶׁר  
דִּבַּרְתָּ וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב: וְלֹא  
אַתְּכֶם לְבַדְכֶּם אֲנֹכִי כָרַת אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת:  
כִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֹו פֹה עִמָּנוּ עַמֶּךָ הַיּוֹם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶת  
אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנו פֹּה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם:

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COMMENTARY. Who owns Torah? This Torah portion proclaims that it is not just the learners, scholars and officials. It is everyone—the young and the old, the water haulers and the elders, men, women and children. Each of us stands before God, shares a responsibility for the covenant, teaches its importance through our own actions. D.A.T.


COMMENTARY. If it is people's task to make God manifest in the world, then our failure to do so will result in God's hiddenness. When we pass down the covenant, a torch of divine light linking the generations, we connect the next generation to Sinai by virtue of this shared enlightenment. Thus we can all stand at Sinai; we can all make God present in the world. D.A.T.



*Third Aliyah (For Minḥah, Second Aliyah)*

For you have known how we have dwelt  
inside the land of Egypt, how we traveled  
through the nations in whose midst you passed.  
And you have seen their futile forms of worship  
and their idols—fetishes of wood and stone,  
of silver and of gold, which they cherished as their own.  
Perhaps among you there are some—  
a man, a woman, or a family, or a tribe—  
whose heart still yearns to turn away  
from THE ETERNAL ONE, our God,  
who yearns to go and worship as those nations do.  
Or perhaps among you there is still  
the root of poison weed or wormwood.

And should they hear these solemn words of promise,  
and should think themselves more fortunate  
in claiming: “It is better I should go  
according to the prompting of my heart  
for better or for worse, whatever the result”—  
then THE ALMIGHTY ONE shall not forgive.  
But rather, then God’s anger will be kindled,  
and all the punishments recorded in this scroll  
shall fall upon them, and their names shall be erased  
from heaven’s book.

And THE ALMIGHTY ONE shall mark them for misfortune  
from among all Israel’s tribes, according to the oaths  
of covenant recorded in this scroll.  
And a later generation from among your children  
who will rise up after you, and the stranger  
who will come from a remote land and behold  
the afflictions and diseases of your land,  
which GOD will cause to come upon it—

*Third Aliyah (For Minhah, Second Aliyah)*

כִּי־אַתֶּם יֹדְעֵתֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁבְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָבְרָנוּ  
בְּקֶרֶב הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְתֶּם: וְתִרְאוּ אֶת־שְׁקֻצֵיהֶם וְאֶת גְּלִיָּהֶם  
עַץ וְאֶבֶן בְּסֹף וְזֶהָב אֲשֶׁר עִמָּהֶם: פֶּן־יֵשׁ בָּכֶם אִישׁ אֶו־אִשָּׁה אֹו  
מִשְׁפָּחָה אֶו־שֹׁבֵט אֲשֶׁר לִבָּבוּ פָנָה הַיּוֹם מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
לָלֶכֶת לַעֲבֹד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם פֶּן־יֵשׁ בָּכֶם שֶׁרֶשׁ פָּרָה רֹאשׁ  
וְלַעֲנָה: וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבָּבוּ  
לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה־לִּי כִּי בִשְׁרָרוֹת לִבִּי אֵלַךְ לִמְעַן סְפוֹת הָרָחָק  
אֶת־הַצְמֵמָה: לֹא־יֵאבֶדָה יְהוָה סֶלַח לוֹ כִּי אָנֹכִי יַעֲשֶׂן אֶף־יִהְיֶה  
וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים הַפְּתוּכָה בְּסֹפֶר הַיָּזָה  
וּמִחָה יְהוָה אֶת־שִׁמּוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וְהִבְדִּילוּ יְהוָה לְרַעְיָה מִכָּל  
שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֱלֹהֵי הַבְּרִית הַפְּתוּכָה בְּסֹפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּה:  
וְאָמַר הַדּוֹר הָאַחֲרוֹן בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יָקוּמוּ מֵאַחֲרֵיכֶם וְהִנְכִּרִי אֲשֶׁר  
יָבֹא מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה וְרָאוּ אֶת־מַכּוֹת הָאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וְאֶת־תַּחֲלָאִיהָ  
אֲשֶׁר־חָלָה יְהוָה בָּהּ: ←

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COMMENTARY. How should we understand blessings and curses if we reject a God who keeps score and rewards and punishes? The rewards that flow from living in a just, compassionate, and productive community are both material and spiritual in nature. The inner rewards that come from a life of spiritual discipline and moral engagement are not easily measured because they are not translatable into dollars or other material rewards, but they are at least as real. And the curses? We know all too much about the physical horrors and spiritual disasters we are capable of visiting upon each other. Regardless of our theologies, we still live daily with the possibility of blessings and curses. It is still up to us to choose life.

D.A.T.

a land ablaze with salt and sulphur,  
where no seed can dwell, no plant can sprout,  
no grass can grow, like the upheaval  
of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Tzevoyim,  
which THE ALMIGHTY ONE had overturned  
in anger and in fury—all the nations  
then will ask: “Why has God done this  
to the land? Why this great fury of God’s anger?”  
And they shall be told: “Because they have forsaken  
the covenant of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of their ancestors,  
which God had sworn with them when they were brought forth  
from the land of Egypt.” For they have gone and worshipped  
other powers, have bowed to things they never knew,  
which they were never meant to serve.

GOD’s anger has been kindled at their land,  
to bring upon them all the curses written in this scroll.  
And THE ALMIGHTY has uprooted them from where they dwell,  
with anger, and with terror and great wrath,  
and cast them out to other lands this very day.

The hidden things are for THE HOLY ONE, our God,  
but those that are revealed are ours to do,  
and for our children, to eternity,  
in order that this Torah shall be carried out.

Deuteronomy 29:15-28

גְּפִרִית וּמִלַּח שְׂרָפָה כָּל-אַרְצָהּ לֹא תִזְרַע וְלֹא תִצְמַח וְלֹא-יִנְעֶלָה  
 בָּהּ כָּל-עֵשֶׂב כַּמְהַפֵּכֶת סֶדֶם וְעַמְרֹה אֲדָמָה וְצִבְיִים אֲשֶׁר הִפָּךְ  
 יִהְיֶה בְּאֶפֶס וּבְחֻמָּתוֹ: וְאָמְרוּ כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם עַל-מָה עָשָׂה יְהוָה כֹּכָה  
 לָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת מִה חָרִי הָאֵף הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: וְאָמְרוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ  
 אֶת-בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר בְּרַת עִמָּם בְּהוֹצִיאוֹ אֹתָם  
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּלְכּוּ וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם  
 אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּם וְלֹא חָלַק לָהֶם: וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ  
 הַהוּא לְהִבִּיא עָלֶיהָ אֶת-כָּל-הַקְּלָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה: וַיִּתְּשֵׁם  
 יְהוָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם בָּאֵף וּבְחֻמָּה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וַיִּשְׁלַכֵם אֶל-אֶרֶץ  
 אַחֲרֵת כִּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: הַנִּסְתָּרֹת לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ  
 עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:

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NOTE. It is customary to read this lengthy list of curses (Deuteronomy 29:19-27) at a high speed and in a soft voice because the curses were considered almost too horrible to contemplate.

COMMENTARY. An interpretation from Midrash *Tanḥumah* asks why the section of blessings (Deuteronomy 30:1-10) is attached to the long list of curses that precedes it. The *midrash* imagines that when the Israelites heard these curses, their faces began to turn green, and they said, "Who can stand up before all of these curses?" Moses comforted them saying, "You are standing here today! Although you have greatly angered God in the past, God did not destroy you. You still exist before God." Rashi

COMMENTARY. Rashi, an eleventh century French commentator, teaches that *והתברך* / *vehitbareh*, the reflexive verb for blessing oneself (Deuteronomy 29:18), means that one should offer a blessing of peace in one's heart. I should believe that the curses of others will not affect me, that I shall have peace. The verb is reflexive because we bless ourselves. M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. Nahmanides, a fourteenth century commentator, explains that the hidden things belong to God because the community cannot be blamed for what an individual does secretly. The community must take responsibility for public acts that are publicly known. Acts done in secrecy are not the public's affair—they are between the individual and God.

D.A.T./M.B.K.

*Fourth Aliyah (For Minhah, Third Aliyah)*

When all these things have come upon you,  
both the blessing and the curse  
that I have placed before you,  
you shall take to heart what I have said,  
when you are dwelling among all the nations  
where THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God has driven you—  
then shall you return to THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God,  
and listen to God's voice,  
fulfilling all that I have commanded you today,  
you and your children,  
with all your heart, and with all your soul.  
Then THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,  
will restore you from captivity  
and love you, gathering you again from all the nations  
where THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God, has scattered you.  
Even if GOD scattered you to the ends of the horizon,  
THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God, will gather you from there  
and bring you back. And THE REDEEMING ONE, your God,  
will bring you to the land your ancestors inherited,  
and you shall have possession of it once again,  
and God will bring good fortune on you,  
making you more numerous than your ancestors.  
And THE REDEEMING ONE, your God, will open up your hearts,  
yours and your children's, to love THE BOUNTIFUL, your God,  
with all your heart and all your soul,  
that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

*Minhah Torah reading concludes here.*

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COMMENTARY. הנסתרות / *hanistarot* / The hidden things. People should not be suspicious or assume wrongdoing by their neighbor without evidence. Acts not publicly known are between God and the individual, not between people.

Rashi

*Fourth Aliyah (For Minḥah, Third Aliyah)*

וְהָיָה כִּי־יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ בְּלִי־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה אֲשֶׁר  
נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְהָשַׁבְתָּ אֶל־לִבְּךָ בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדִּיחָךְ יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: וְשָׁבַת עַד־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹלִי בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־  
אֶנְכִּי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם אַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: וְשָׁב יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר  
הִפִּיצְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: אִם־יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךְ בְּקִצָּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשּׁוֹם  
יִקְבְּצֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשּׁוֹם יִקְחָךְ: וְהִבִּיֵּאֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־  
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יִרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וִירֻשָׁתָהּ וְהִיטִבְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ: וּמִלִּי  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְאֶת־לִבְּךָ וְרַעַךְ לֵאמֹר אֶת־יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ:

*Minḥah Torah reading concludes here*

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COMMENTARY. In the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, we are given a glimpse of the dance of *teshuvah*. The text reads: "...then shall you return to THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God, and listen to God's voice" (verse 2). Thus the first step is taken by us. "Then THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, will restore you from captivity and love you" (verse 3)." Once we have taken the initial step, we find God turning to meet us with compassion. "God will return rejoicing."

R.H.

COMMENTARY. "The hidden things are for THE HOLY ONE, our God, but those that are revealed are ours to do, and for our children, to eternity." This Hebrew text is marked with dots to emphasize that Torah is a human possession. Nonetheless, no matter how learned and knowledgeable we are, our understanding of our world remains profoundly limited. We are responsible for ethical living and teaching based on the limited amount we know. We need to acquire moral courage to cope with our inevitable uncertainty. The hidden things are God's. We live with that which is revealed; we seek trust in God for the strength to acknowledge what remains hidden from us.

D.A.T.

NOTE. The verse וּמִלִּי יְהוָה...לִבְּךָ / open up your heart, literally circumcise your heart (30:6) provides a central theme of the *piyut* found on page 805.

### *Fifth Aliyah*

And THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God, shall cast  
all of the curses mentioned here upon your enemies,  
on those who hate you and have persecuted you,  
and you shall come to listen once again  
to the voice of THE ETERNAL,  
doing what God asks of you, as I command you here today.  
THE BOUNTIFUL, your God, will grant abundance  
for the labor of your hands  
and for the fruit of your womb,  
and for the offspring of your cattle  
and the produce of your land.  
It will go well with you,  
for truly, THE REDEEMING ONE will once again rejoice  
in your well-being, just as THE ETERNAL ONE  
had taken joy in your ancestors,  
for you shall listen to the voice  
of THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God,  
to keep the mitzvot and laws recorded in this scroll of Torah.  
Yes, you shall return to THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,  
with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 30:7-10

### *(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)*

For this mitzvah, which I enjoin on you today,  
is not too puzzling for you, nor too remote.  
It is not something high up in the heavens,  
so that you might say:  
“Who shall go up to the sky for us, and bring it to us  
and make it understandable to us?—then we might do it!”  
It is not beyond the ocean, so that you might say:  
“Who shall cross the ocean for us, and bring it to us,  
and enable us to hear it—then we might do it!”  
But rather it is very close to you,  
upon your mouth and in your heart—it can be done!

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

### *Fifth Aliyah*

וְנָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֱלֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל-אִבְיֶךָ וְעַל-שָׁנְאֶיךָ  
אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ: וְאַתָּה תָּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-כָּל-  
מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצֻוֶּה הַיּוֹם: וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל |  
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָךְ בְּפָרִי בְטֹנֶךָ וּבִפְרִי בְּהִמָּתֶנֶךָ וּבִפְרִי אֲדָמָתֶךָ לְטֹבָה כִּי |  
יָשׁוּב יְהוָה לְשׁוֹשׁ עֲלֶיךָ לְטוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁשׂ עַל-אַבְתָּיֶךָ: כִּי תִשְׁמָע  
בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמּוֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַפְּתוּכָה בְּסֶפֶר  
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה כִּי תָשׁוּב אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:

### *(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)*

כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצֻוֶּה הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאָת הוּא מִמָּךְ  
וְלֹא-רִחֲקָה הוּא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשְּׁמִימָה  
וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: וְלֹא-מֵעֵבֶר לָיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר  
מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה:  
כִּי-קָרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

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lo bashamayim / not something high up in the heavens. If Torah  
were in heaven, humans could not engage in study in this world. Rashi



*Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)*

Behold, I set in front of you today  
both life and good, both death and evil.  
I ask of you today to love THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God,  
walk in God's ways, and keep what God commands,  
God's statutes and God's justice—  
that you may live and multiply,  
and THE ETERNAL ONE your God will bless you  
in the Land that you are coming to inherit.  
But if your heart should turn away,  
and fail to hear, and be misled,  
and if you bow to other powers  
and become enslaved to them,  
I tell you now that you shall surely perish,  
and shall not prolong your days upon the Land  
that you are now about to cross the Jordan to possess.  
I call as witnesses for you today  
the heavens and the earth:  
both life and death I place before you now,  
both blessing and a curse.  
Choose life, that you may live,  
you and the seed of life within you,  
loving THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God,  
hearing God's voice, and clinging to divinity.  
For that is your life, your length of days—  
to dwell upon the ground that THE ETERNAL ONE  
has promised to your ancestors,  
to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob,  
to give to them.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

*Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)*

רָאָה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמּוֹת וְאֶת־  
הָרָע: אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצוּרָה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת  
בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּיתָ וּרְבִיתָ וּבִרְכָּךָ  
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: וְאִם־יִפְגַּה  
לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וְנִדְחֹתָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַעֲבַדְתָּם:  
הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבֶד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל־  
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לָבֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: הַעֲדִיתִי  
בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמּוֹת נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ  
הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה וּבִחְרַף בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיָה אַתָּה וְזֶרְעֶךָ:  
לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַת בְּקֻלּוֹ וּלְדַבָּקָה־בּוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ  
וְאֶרֶץ יְמִיךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם  
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לָתֵת לָהֶם:

COMMENTARY. Often Torah is dismissed as abstruse, inaccessible and other-worldly learning. Dismissing it in this way allows a convenient avoidance of the powerful messages it offers for our daily lives. As if in response, this passage proclaims the simplicity of the Torah's message: Love God, walk a godly path, seek to do what is required of you. Making a commitment to follow this simple message can become a source of teaching about how to make Torah study more accessible. If we treat Torah as our own, its paths become the intimate byways of our lives. What at a distance seems so obscure grows clear as we draw near to it. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The terms שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ / *shamayim va'aretz* / heaven and earth are a biblical literary pairing. These terms when used together do not refer to two specific places, but rather define the boundaries of the witnesses. Everything in the universe bears witness in this new covenant. The cosmos from top to bottom is in the zone of the covenant. M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. The mythic structure here makes heaven and earth the witnesses to God's judgment in the trial of the Jewish people. The covenantal violation before this court casts the people in the role of actor and God in the role of the aggrieved party. It is in this court-like context that we are told that all will be forgiven if we choose life—caring, commitment, love and fidelity, lives lived with God in mind. Heaven and earth are only witnesses. We are the ones with the power to choose.

D.A.T.

## ḤATZI KADDISH / SHORT KADDISH

*Ḥatzi Kaddish is recited at the conclusion of the Torah reading from the first scroll. Both scrolls are placed on the reading table.*

*Reader:* Let God's name be made great and holy in the world that was created as God willed. May God complete the holy realm in your own lifetime, in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel, quickly and soon. And say: Amen.

*Congregation:* May God's great name be blessed, forever and as long as worlds endure.

*Reader:* May it be blessed, and praised, and glorified, and held in honor, viewed with awe, embellished, and revered; and may the blessed name of holiness be hailed, though it be higher by far than all the blessings, songs, praises, and consolations that we utter in this world. And say: Amen.

## חֲצִי קָדִישׁ

*Hatzi Kaddish is recited at the conclusion of the Torah reading from the first scroll. Both scrolls are placed on the reading table.*

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתֵיהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ  
מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזֶמֶן  
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַמֵּם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל  
שְׁמֵהּ דְקָדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלְא לְעֵלְא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא  
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא דְאָמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

*Reader:* Yitgadal veyitkadash shemey raba  
be'alma divra hirutey veyamliḥ malḥutey  
beḥayeyḥon uvyomeyḥon uvḥayey deḥol beyt yisra'el  
ba'agala uvizman kariv ve'imru amen.

*Congregation:* Yehey shemey raba mevarah le'alam  
ulalmey almaya.

*Reader:* Yitbarah veyishtabah veyitpa'ar veyitromam  
veyitnasey veyit-hadar veyitaleh veyit-halal  
shemey dekudsha berih hu  
le'ela le'ela mikol birḥata veshirata  
tushbeḥata veneḥemata da'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen.

*The Torah is lifted, and one of the following is recited:*

This is the Torah.

It is a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it.

Those who uphold it may be counted fortunate!



This is the Torah which Moses placed before the children of  
Israel,  
by the word of THE ALMIGHTY ONE, and by the hand of Moses.

*The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.*

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COMMENTARY. The 1945 Reconstructionist Prayerbook put “*Etz hayim hi/* It is a tree of life” in place of “*asher sam mosheh lifney beney yisra’el/* which Moses placed before the children of Israel.” Earlier Reconstructionists were concerned that it be made clear that while affirming the holiness of Torah, they did not believe that it was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. Many current Reconstructionists believe the evolutionary nature of the Torah to be self-evident and have returned to the traditional line for the sake of its rich mythic imagery. Both options are included here. D.A.T.

עץ חיים היא / It is a Tree of Life. The book of Genesis tells us that the tree of life is in the garden of Eden. The Torah is our tree of life; it is our way back to the garden. D.E.

*The Torah is lifted, and one of the following is recited:*

וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה עֵץ-חַיִּים הִיא לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכֶּיָּהּ מֵאֲשֶׁר:

Vezot hatorah etz ḥayim hi lamaḥazikim bah vetomḥeha me'ushar.



וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד-  
מֹשֶׁה:

Vezot hatorah asher sam mosheh lifney beney yisra'el al pi adonay beyad mosheh.

*The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.*

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עץ...מאשר / It...fortunate! (Proverbs 3:18).

זאת...ישראל / This...Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44).

על...משה / by...Moses (Numbers 9:23).

## MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

And in the seventh month,  
upon the first day of the month,  
a holy convocation you shall have.  
No task of work shall you perform.  
A day announced by shofar blasts it shall be for you.

And you shall make a burnt offering  
of sweet-scented smoke:  
one calf of cattle,  
one ram, and seven yearling lambs  
without a blemish,  
and an offering of grain—  
fine flour mixed with oil:  
a three-tenths measure for the calf,  
and two-tenths for the ram,  
and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs.  
And there shall be one goat as an offering for sin,  
for your atonement,  
along with a burnt-offering for the New Moon,  
with its offering of meal,  
the regular burnt-offering and its offering of meal,  
with their libations as prescribed by law,  
a fire of sweet savor to THE HOLY ONE.

Numbers 29:1-6

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Vezot Hatorah is recited.  
That is followed by the haftarah, page 551.*

## MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־  
מִלְאכַת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם: וַעֲשִׂיתֶם עֲלֶיהָ  
לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה פֶּרֶךְ בֶּן־בֶּקֶר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה  
שִׁבְעָה תְּמִימִם: וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים  
לְפָר שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאַיִל: וַעֲשֹׂנוֹן אֶחָד לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת  
הַכִּבְשִׂים: וּשְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֹטֵאת לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: מִלֵּבֹד עֲלֵת  
הַחֹדֶשׁ וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְעֲלֵת הַתָּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְפֵיהֶם כְּמִשְׁפָּטָם  
לְרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה:

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Vezot Hatorah is recited.  
That is followed by the haftarah, page 552.*



*Some communities that read the traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning prefer an alternative to the traditional maftir reading, which is also about the sacrifices. The first aliyah from Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-11) serves this purpose. See page 531.*

## MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR YOM KIPPUR

And on the tenth day of the seventh month,  
you will have a holy convocation,  
and you will afflict your souls.  
No work will you perform.  
And you will offer a burnt-offering:  
a sacrifice of sweet aroma,  
one male of cattle oxen,  
one ram, and seven lambs,  
a year old and unblemished,  
you will have,  
along with *minḥah*-offering  
of finest flour, mixed with oil,  
three tenths of a measure for the bull,  
and two tenths for the ram,  
and seven tenths apiece for the seven lambs.  
A goat kid shall be an offering for sins,  
apart from the sin-offering for the atonement,  
and the perpetual burnt-offering,  
its *minḥah* offering, and its libations.

Numbers 29:7-11

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Vezot Hatorah is recited.  
That is followed by the haftarah, page 551.*

## MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR YOM KIPPUR

*Some communities that read the traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning prefer an alternative to the traditional maftir reading, which is also about the sacrifices. The first aliyah from Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-11) serves this purpose. See page 532.*

וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם  
אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֵה לַיהוָה  
רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ פֶּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּגִי־שָׁנָה שְׁבַעַה  
תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינִים  
לִפָּר שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִינִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד  
לְשִׁבְעַת הַכִּבְשִׂים: שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלְּבָד חֲטָאת  
הַכֹּפְרִים וְעֹלֶת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְפֶיהָ:

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Vezot Hatorah is recited.*

*That is followed by the haftarah blessing, page 552, and the haftarah, page 570.*

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COMMENTARY. The *maftir* presents a command to “afflict your souls” on Yom Kippur. The word for “afflict” is related to the Hebrew word for “poverty”—a disease that afflicts the soul of our society. We afflict ourselves today to be reminded of the affliction of others. Empathy ought to lead to action. The *haftarah*, which follows, thus stresses the importance of making this a time to resolve that we will feed the hungry, bring the homeless to our houses, clothe the naked, and not hide ourselves from our fellow human beings.

S.D.R.

וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם / *ve'initem et nafshoteyhem* / You will afflict your souls. The self-denial practiced on Yom Kippur, for example, by foregoing food and drink, and avoiding bathing, is all physical self-denial. How should we understand this text's suggestion that it is our souls that are meant to be affected? One way of understanding this is that the soul mirrors the body, so that there is an inner chastening that comes from the outer action. A second way to understand the phrase is that the physical forebearances create a space within which the ritual and liturgical actions of the day can have a powerful inner impact. The impact here is to simplify and humble—to rid ourselves of the layers that have built up on us and prevented us from being fully ourselves. The act of chastening or purification can thus be understood as an act of renewal.

D.A.T.

## BIRKAT HAFTARAH / HAFTARAH BLESSING

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has called upon the righteous prophets and desired their words, spoken in truth. Blessed are you, WISE ONE, who takes pleasure in the Torah, and in Moses, servant of God, and in the prophets of truth and justice.

*On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, continue below. On the second day continue on page 563. On Yom Kippur, continue on page 569.*

## HAFTARAH FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

There was a certain man from Ramatayim-Tzofim  
amid the mountains of Ephraim,  
and his name was Elkanah the son of Yeroham,  
who was the son of Eliahu, who was the son of Tohu,  
who was the son of Tzuf, an Ephratite.  
He had two wives: the first one's name was Hannah;  
the second one was called Peninah.  
And Peninah had two sons; but Hannah had no sons.

That man would go up from his town,  
from time to time, to worship and to offer sacrifice  
to THE CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven, at Shiloh.  
There, were Eli's two sons, Hophni and Pinhas,  
priests to THE ETERNAL ONE. And on that occasion,  
Elkanah would offer sacrifice, and give gifts  
to Peninah, and to all his sons and daughters.  
But to Hannah he would give a double portion,  
for he loved Hannah, though GOD had closed her womb.  
Her rival used to taunt her and provoke her  
for the sake of causing her distress  
about the fact that GOD had closed her womb. ↪

## בְּרַפְת הַפֶּטֶרָה

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנִבְיָאִים טוֹבִים  
וְרָצָה בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם הַנֶּאֱמָרִים בְּאַמֶּת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה  
וּבַמִּשָּׁה עֲבָדוֹ וּבְנִבְיָאֵי הָאֱמֶת וְצִדִּיק:

*On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, continue below. On the second day continue on page 564. On Yom Kippur, continue on page 570.*

## הַפֶּטֶרָה

וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִן־הָרִמָּתִים צוֹפִים מִהָר אֶפְרָיִם וּשְׁמוֹ אֶלְקָנָה  
בֶּן־יִרְחָם בֶּן־אֶלִּיהוּא בֶּן־תָּחוּ בֶן־צֹפִי אֶפְרָתִי: וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם  
אֶחָת חַנָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פִּנְגָּה וַיְהִי לַפִּנְגָּה יָלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין  
יָלָדִים: וְעָלָה הָאִשׁ הַהוּא מַעִירוֹ מִיָּמִים | יָמִימָה לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת  
וּלְזַבֵּחַ לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּשִׁלָּה וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלֵי חֲפְנֵי וּפְנִיחָס  
פְּהָגִים לַיהוָה: וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּזְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה וְנָתַן לַפִּנְגָּה אֶשְׁתּוֹ  
וּלְכָל־בְּנֵיהָ וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ מְנוֹת: וּלְחַנָּה יָתַן מְנָה אֶחָת אֲפִים כִּי אֶת־  
חַנָּה אָהָב וַיְהִי סָגֵר רַחֲמָה: וְכַעֲסָתָה צָרְתָּה גַם־פָּעַס בַּעֲבוּר  
הָרַעְמָה כִּי־סָגֵר יְהוָה בְּעַד רַחֲמָה: ←

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COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* describes a would-be mother's pain leading to the miraculous birth of Samuel—though is not every birth miraculous? The parallel between the birth of Isaac in the traditional Torah portion and the birth of Samuel in the *haftarah* is an obvious one. Perhaps less obvious is the implication that each individual life has a place in the divine plan. On this holy day the *haftarah* challenges us to discover our own calling.

DAT.

And so it happened, year by year:  
whenever she went up to the house of THE ETERNAL ONE,  
her rival would provoke her, and she wept and would not eat.  
Her husband, Elkanah, would say to her,  
“Why are you weeping, Hannah, and why won’t you eat?  
And why is your heart troubled?  
Am I not worth more to you than ten children?”

And once, after she ate and drank at Shiloh, Hannah arose,  
and Eli the priest was sitting at his station at the doorway  
of the house of THE ETERNAL ONE.

And she was in a bitter mood,  
and prayed to THE ETERNAL, while she wept and wept.  
She made a vow, and said:

“CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven,  
if truly you behold your servant’s state of need,  
if you remember me, and don’t forget your servant,  
if you give your servant-woman human seed,  
then I shall dedicate my child to THE ETERNAL  
for a lifelong service, and no shears  
shall touch his head of hair.”

And while she prayed at length before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,  
Eli caught sight of her moving her lips.  
Because Hannah was speaking to herself, and only her lips were moving  
while her voice could not be heard, Eli mistook her for a drunk. ↪

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COMMENTARY. The prayer of Hannah is an example of private rather than public worship. She has gone to pour out her heart before God in the holy place. As important as the role of community was to the rabbinic view of prayer, the rabbis also understood that prayer at its core is a matter of the heart alone. The depth and sincerity of Hannah’s prayer became a model for them. This apparently included the very strong and seemingly audacious way in which Hannah spoke both to Eli and to God. The model of prayer offered here is hardly one of submission and entreaty. Hannah stood up to both human and divine authority, demanding that she be treated justly and recognized for the wronged person she was. A.G.

וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה מִדֵּי עֲלֹתָהּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה כִּן תִּכְעַסְנָה  
 וּתִבְכֶּה וְלֹא תֹאכַל: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֱלֹקֶיךָ אִישָׁה חֲנָה לָמָּה תִּבְכִּי  
 וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי וְלָמָּה יִרְע לְבָבְךָ הַלּוֹא אֲנֹכִי טוֹב לָךְ מִעֲשֻׁרָה  
 בָּנִים: וַתִּקֶּם חֲנָה אַחֲרָי אֲכָלָה בְּשֻׁלָּהּ וְאַחֲרָי שָׁתָה וְעַלִּי הִכְהִין  
 יֵשֵׁב עַל-הַפֶּסֶא עַל-מִזְוֶזֶת הַיֵּכָל יְהוָה: וְהָיָא מֵרַת נַפֶּשׁ וּתְתַפְּלֵל  
 עַל-יְהוָה וּבְכָה תִּבְכֶּה: וַתֹּדֶר נָדָר וַתֹּאמֶר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אִם-רָאָה  
 תִּרְאָה | בְּעֵינֵי אִמָּתְךָ וּזְכַרְתִּנִּי וְלֹא-תִשְׁכַּח אֶת-אִמָּתְךָ וְנִתְתָּה  
 לְאִמָּתְךָ זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים וְנִתְתָּיו לְיְהוָה כְּלִימֵי חַיִּיו וּמוֹרָה לֹא-יַעֲלֶה  
 עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ: וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָהּ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְעַלִּי שָׁמַר אֶת-  
 פִּיהָ: וְחֲנָה הָיָא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ רַק שְׁפָתֶיהָ נִעֲוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא  
 יִשְׁמָע וַיַּחֲשֹׁבָה עָלֶי לְשֹׁכְרָה: —

COMMENTARY. Hannah prays silently but urgently for a child. Eli the High Priest, noticing her odd behavior, accuses her of drunkenness. Hannah justifies herself, and Eli blesses her. The heartfelt prayer of an ordinary woman has a moral authority to which even a high priest must accede.

RA.

נדר/She made a vow. To Hannah the rabbis of the Talmud (*Berachot* 31a-31b) attributed the great privilege of having created a new name for God. *Adonay tzeva'ot*, often translated "the Lord of Hosts," is usually taken to refer to God's glory dwelling among the angelic throngs. The rabbis accept a sharp revision of that belief by recognizing that Hannah, calling out in her bitterness, gives God this name. She sees the One surrounded by countless throngs, who may include other people's children as well as angels. "You who have made so many," she says, or "who are surrounded by so much wealth, could You not create but one child for me?"

The pain of Hannah's childlessness has here entered into our prayerbook and enriched the prayers of all those who come in her wake. This is the real contribution of Hannah and the way in which we believe prayer is fulfilled rather than "answered." While we do not know a God who hears a would-be parent's prayer and grants a child, we affirm the tradition that has carried both Hannah's pain and her faith forward and allowed them to enrich and inspire the prayer life of so many generations.

A.G.

And Eli said to her:

“How can you be drunk like this?

Put away your wine!”

But Hannah answered, saying,

“No, my lord, I am a woman sore in spirit,  
and no wine or liquor have I drunk.

For I was only pouring out my soul to GOD.

Do not mistake your servant for a wanton woman,  
for I was just now speaking  
out of great preoccupation and distress.”

And Eli answered: “Go in peace,  
and may the God of Israel give you what you ask—  
whatever you request from God.”

And she replied: “So may your servant-woman  
merit favor in your eyes.”

The woman then departed on her way.  
She ate, and no longer was she troubled.

And they arose early the next morning,  
and they worshipped before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,  
and they returned back to their house in Ramah.  
And Elkanah was intimate with Hannah, his wife,  
and GOD remembered her.

I Samuel 1:1-19

*Some communities conclude here.*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו עַד־מָתִי תִשְׁתַּכְּרִין הָסִירִי אֶת־יַיִךְ מֵעָלַיִךְ׃  
וַתַּעַן חַנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲדֹנִי אֲשֶׁה קִשְׁת־רוּחַ אֲנֹכִי וַיֵּין וְשֹׁכֵר לֹא  
שָׁתִיתִי וְאֶשְׁפֹּף אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה׃ אֶל־תִּתֵּן אֶת־אַמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי  
בַת־בְּלִיעֵל כִּי מְרַב שִׁיחִי וְכַעֲסִי דִּבַּרְתִּי עַד־הַנָּחַ׃ וַיַּעַן עָלַי  
וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי לְשָׁלוֹם וְאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן אֶת־שְׁלָתְךָ אֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלְתָּ  
מִעַמּוֹ׃ וַתֹּאמֶר תִּמְצָא שְׁפָחֶתְךָ חֹן בְּעֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּלֶךְ הָאִשָּׁה לְדִרְכָּהּ  
וַתֹּאכַל וּפְגִיחָהּ לֹא־הָיְוָה עוֹד׃ וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לִפְנֵי  
יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁבּוּ וַיִּבְּאוּ אֶל־בֵּיתָם הַרְמָתָה וַיֵּדַע אֶלְקָנָה אֶת־חַנָּה  
אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וַיִּזְכְּרָה יְהוָה׃

*Some communities conclude here.*



And at the turning of the season,  
Hannah became pregnant, and she later bore a child,  
and she called him "Samuel" (Sought-from-God)  
—for (as she would say): "I sought him—*she'iltiv*—  
from THE OMNIPRESENT ONE."

The man, Elkanah, went up with his entire household  
to sacrifice to GOD the offering of the season,  
and to commemorate his vow.

But Hannah did not go up, but told her husband:

"I shall wait until the boy is weaned,  
and then shall bring him to appear  
before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,  
and he shall dwell there permanently."

And Elkanah, her husband, said to her:

"Do what is proper in your eyes;  
stay here until you wean him,  
just as long as GOD's will can be done."

And his wife remained there,  
nursing her child until his weaning.

Then she brought him with her, after she weaned him,  
bringing three offerings of cattle,  
an ephah of flour, and a flask of wine.

She brought him to the house of GOD at Shiloh,  
and the boy was just a youth.

They slaughtered the cattle offering,  
and brought the boy to Eli,  
and she said: "Please, my lord,

may your soul thrive, my lord. I am the woman  
who had stood before you here, praying to GOD.

I prayed to have this boy,  
and GOD answered the request which I had made.

And so, I hereby lend him back to GOD,  
for as many days as he might be required by GOD!"

And they worshipped there to THE ETERNAL ONE.

I Samuel 1:20-28

*Some communities conclude here.*

וַיְהִי לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים וַתַּהַר חַנָּה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ  
שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מִיְהוָה שְׂאֵלְתִּיו: וַיַּעַל הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה וְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לִזְבֹּחַ  
לַיהוָה אֶת־זִבְחַ הַיָּמִים וְאֶת־נִדְרוֹ: וְחַנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה כִּי־אָמְרָה  
לְאִישָׁה עַד וַגְּמַל הַנָּעַר וַהֲבֹאֲתִיו וְנִרְאָה אֶת־פָּנַי יְהוָה וַיָּשֶׁב שָׁם  
עַד־עוֹלָם: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִישָׁה עֲשִׂי הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינַיִךְ שְׁבִלִי עַד־  
גְּמֻלָּךְ אֲתוֹ אֶף יָקָם יְהוָה אֶת־דְּבָרִי וַתָּשֶׁב הָאִשָּׁה וַתִּינָק אֶת־בְּנָהּ  
עַד־גְּמֻלָּה אֲתוֹ: וַתַּעֲלֶהּ עִמָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר גְּמֻלָּתוֹ בְּפָרִים שְׁלֹשָׁה  
וַאֲיִפָּה אַחַת קָמַח וְנֶגְלָל זֵינַ וַתִּבְאֶהּ בֵּית־יְהוָה שְׁלוֹ וַהֲנָעַר נָעַר:  
וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ אֶת־הַפֶּה וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶת־הַנָּעַר אֶל־עָלִי: וַתֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי חַי  
נִפְשָׁךְ אֲדֹנָי אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה הַנִּצָּבַת עִמָּכָה בָּזָה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה:  
אֶל־הַנָּעַר הַזֶּה הַתְּפַלֵּלְתִּי וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לִי אֶת־שְׂאֵלְתִּי אֲשֶׁר  
שְׂאֵלְתִּי מֵעַמּוֹ: וְגַם אֲנֹכִי הַשְׂאֵלְתִּהוּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר  
הָיָה הוּא שְׂאוֹל לַיהוָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שָׁם לַיהוָה:

*Some communities conclude here.*

*Some communities begin here.*

And Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in THE FAITHFUL ONE,  
my fortunes have been raised up by THE FOUNT OF LIFE!  
My utterance is powerful against my foes,  
yes, truly I am joyful in your victory!  
There is none as holy as THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,  
for none exists apart from you, O God!  
—nor is there any stronghold like our God.

Have done, my foes, with all your endless boastful talk,  
let insolence no longer come forth from your mouth!  
For THE UNSEEN ONE is a crafty God  
by whom much mischief is contrived:  
The bows of mighty ones are smashed,  
but they who once had stumbled have grown strong.  
Those well-fed now hire themselves out for bread,  
and those once hungry are not hungry any more.  
The barren woman has borne seven,  
the mother of many is forlorn.  
THE POWER OF UPHEAVAL slays and brings to life,  
brings down into the earth, and raises up!  
THE GOD OF CHANGE both disinherits and makes rich,  
both humbles and exalts, ↪

*Some communities begin here.*

וּתְתַפְּלֵל חֲנֹה וּתְאָמֹר עָלַי לְבִי בַיהוָה רָמָה קִרְנִי בַיהוָה רָחֵב פִּי  
עַל-אֹיְבֵי כִי שְׁמַחְתִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ: אֵין-קְדוֹשׁ בַּיהוָה כִּי-אֵין בְּלִתִּי  
וְאֵין צוּר כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ: אֶל-תִּרְבּוּ תִדְבְּרוּ גְבוּהָה גְבוּהָה יֵצֵא עֲתָק  
מִפִּיכֶם כִּי אֵל יַעֲזוֹת יְהוָה וְלֹא וְלֹא נִתְּכֵנוּ עַלְלוֹת: קֶשֶׁת גְּבוּרִים  
חֲתִים וְנִבְשָׁלִים אֲזוּרוֹ-חֵיל: שְׁבָעִים בְּלָחֶם נִשְׁפְּרוּ וִרְעֵבִים חֲדָלוּ  
עַד-עֲקָרָה יִלְדָה שְׂבָעָה וְרַבַּת בָּנִים אֲמַלְלָה: יְהוָה מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה  
מוֹרִיד שָׁאֹל וַיַּעַל: יְהוָה מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשִׂיר מִשְׁפִּיל אֶף-מְרוֹמָם: ←

raises the pauper from the dust,  
and from the dungheap lifts the destitute,  
seating them among the noble-born,  
according them a chair of honor.  
THE OMNIPRESENT owns the pillars of the earth,  
on which the world was placed.  
God guards the steps of those who act in lovingkindness,  
while evildoers are undone amid the dark.  
For no one can prevail by might alone.  
ALMIGHTY ONE! Your enemies shall break apart against you!  
THE OMNIPRESENT, thundering in the heavens,  
shall judge the farthest reaches of the earth,  
establishing the rule of God,  
raising the power of redemption.”

I Samuel 2:1-10

*For the concluding haftarah blessings, see page 575.*

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COMMENTARY. Hannah's prayer expresses one of the most fundamental ideas of biblical literature—that the God of Israel is a God of surprise, working out divine will in human affairs through sometimes devious means, and often turning the tables on those who think themselves mighty and prosperous. At the same time, this is a message of comfort to those in need—the pauper, the oppressed, the childless—urging them not to give up hope that their downtrodden state can be quickly reversed. Since Hannah gave birth to Samuel, the greatest leader of Israel between Moses and King David, her song is also a way of saying that Israel's destiny is often served by those who have thought themselves the most peripheral to it. This song was an affirmation of revolutionary change, voiced at a time when Israel's survival as a nation was in doubt, therefore a time when Israel was most in need of a God of Change.

J.R.

מִקִּים מַעֲפָר זָל מֵאֲשַׁפּוֹת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיב עַם־נְדִיבִים וְכֹסֵא  
 כְּבוֹד יִנְחֹלֶם כִּי לַיהוָה מִצְקֵי אֶרֶץ וַיֵּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבְלָה: רַגְלֵי  
 חֲסִידוֹ חֲסִידוֹ יִשְׁמֹר וְרָשָׁעִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ יִדְמוּ כִּי־לֹא בִכְחַ יִגְבֹּר־  
 אִישׁ: יְהוָה יַחַתּוּ מְרִיבֵי עָלָיו בְּשָׁמַיִם יִרְעֶם יְהוָה יִדִּין אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ  
 וַיִּתֵּן־עֹז לְמַלְכּוֹ וַיְרַם קֶרֶן מְשִׁיחוֹ:

*For the concluding haftarah blessings, see page 576.*

## HAFTARAH FOR THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

Thus says THE OMNIPRESENT ONE:

“They find favor in the wilderness,  
this people who escaped the sword,  
the people Israel heading to a place of rest.”

From afar, THE GOD OF ISRAEL was made manifest to me:

“I loved you with an everlasting love;  
therefore have I continued in my kindness toward you.  
Once again, I shall rebuild you, maiden Israel,  
you shall be rebuilt. Again shall you take up your timbrels,  
and go forth in joyous dance and playful leaping,  
again shall you replant your vineyards  
on the mountains of Shomron,  
the sowers shall replant, and taste their fruits!”

Truly, the day is coming when the sentinels  
shall call out on Mt. Ephraim:

“Arise, let us go up to Zion,  
to THE REDEEMING ONE, our God!”

For thus says THE FOUNT OF LIFE:

“Dance joyously for Jacob,  
call in rapture at the crossroad of the nations,  
make known, give praise, declare:

‘O, GOD OF ZION, save your people,  
save the remnant of the people Israel!’

And behold, I bring them from a northern land,  
I gather them from the remote recesses of the earth.

Among them are the blind, the lame,  
the pregnant mothers giving birth,  
yes, all of them together,

a great community returning home! ↪

## HAFTARAH FOR THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה מֵצֵא חַן בַּמִּדְבָּר עִם שְׂרִידֵי חֶרֶב הַלּוֹךְ לְהַרְגִיעוֹ  
יִשְׂרָאֵל: מִרְחוֹק יְהוָה נִרְאָה לִי וְאַהֲבַת עוֹלָם אֶהְבֹּתִיךָ עַל־כֵּן  
מִשְׁכָּתִיךָ חֹסֵד: עוֹד אֲבַנְךָ וְנִבְנִית בְּתוֹלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עוֹד תַּעֲדִי  
תַּפִּיךָ וְיִצְאָת בְּמַחֹל מִשְׁחָקִים: עוֹד תִּטְעִי כֶרְמִים בְּהָרֵי שְׁמֶרֶן  
נָטְעוּ נְטָעִים וְחָלְלוּ: כִּי יִשְׁׁיֹם קָרְאוּ נְצָרִים בְּהָר אֲפָרַיִם קוֹמוּ  
וְנַעֲלֶה צִיּוֹן אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה רְנֹו לְיַעֲקֹב  
שְׁמִיחָה וְצִהֲלוּ בְּרֹאשׁ הַגּוֹיִם הַשְׁמִיעוּ הַלְלוּ וְאִמְרוּ הוֹשִׁעַ יְהוָה  
אֶת־עַמּוֹךְ אֶת שְׂאֲרֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל: הִנְנִי מֵבִיא אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ צָפוֹן  
וְקַבְצָתִים מִיַּרְבְּתֵי־אֶרֶץ בָּם עוֹר וּפֶשֶׁת הָרָה וְיִלְדֹת יַחְדָּו קָהֵל  
גָּדוֹל יָשׁוּבוּ הִנֵּה: ←

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COMMENTARY. This people who escaped the sword—that could be any Jewish generation! The near sacrifice of Isaac could have been the sacrificing of the entire future of the Jewish people. Instead Isaac finds life anew with Rebekah, and Jewish life goes on. This *haftarah*, too, recalls a moment when our people escaped the sword and found new life and new love in the wilderness. Perhaps more miraculous than the myriad of near misses of Jewish history is the faith of the Jewish people, who have, in the face of every sword and moment of desolation, reasserted new life and new love.

D.A.T.



They come with weeping and with supplication,  
as I bring them, lead them by a straight road  
to the flowing rivers, and they stumble not  
—for I am like a loving parent to the people Israel,  
and Ephraim is my first-born child.”

Hear the word of THE ABUNDANT ONE, you nations!  
Tell it in the islands far away!  
Tell how the one who scattered Israel  
now is reuniting them,  
preserves them as a shepherd keeps the flock.  
For THE LOVING ONE has rescued Jacob,  
saved the people from a hand more powerful than they.  
And they have come rejoicing on the heights of Zion,  
flowing with the bounty of THE FOUNT OF LIFE,  
with corn, and wine, and oil,  
with flocks, and cattle.  
Their spirit overflowing like a blessed garden,  
and no longer shall they live in lamentation.

Then shall the maiden celebrate with dance,  
the young and old together shall rejoice.  
“For I shall turn their mourning into gladness,  
and I shall console them, make their happiness  
much greater than their suffering of old.  
I’ll saturate their priests with spiritual abundance,  
and shall satisfy my people with my goodness.”  
So says THE POWER OF RENEWAL!

Jeremiah 31:1-13

*Some communities end here.*

Thus proclaims THE GOD OF ZION:  
“A voice is sounded in Ramah,  
a wailing, bitter weeping,  
Rachel weeping for her children. ↩

בְּכִי יָבֹאוּ וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים אֹבִילִם אֲוִלִיכֶם אֶל־נַחְלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לֹא יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּהּ כִּי־הֵייתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֵב וְאַפְרִים בְּכָרִי הוּא:  
 שָׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה גּוֹיִם וְהִגִּידוּ בְּאֵיִם מִמֶּרְחֶק וְאִמְרוּ מִזֶּרֶחַ  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבְּצֻנוּ וְשָׁמְרוּ כְרַעַה עֲדָרוֹ: כִּי־פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב  
 וּגְאֹלוֹ מִיַּד חֹזֶק מִמֶּנּוּ: וּבָאוּ וְרִנְנוּ בְּמִרוֹם־צִיּוֹן וְנִהְרֹוּ אֶל־טוֹב  
 יְהוָה עַל־דָּגֶן וְעַל־תִּירֵשׁ וְעַל־יִצְהָר וְעַל־בְּנִי־צֶאֱן וּבֶקֶר וְהִיתָה  
 נַפְשָׁם כַּגֶּן רִוְחַ וְלֹא־יִוָּסִיפוּ לְדָאֲבָה עוֹד: אָז תִּשְׁמַח בְּתוֹלָהּ  
 בְּמַחֹול וּבַחֲרִים וּזְקֵנִים יַחֲדוּ וְהַפְכֹתִי אֲבָלָם לְשִׁשׁוֹן וְנַחֲמָתִים  
 וְשִׁמְחָתִים מִיגוֹנָם: וְרוּיִתִי נִפְשׁ הַכֹּהֲנִים דָּשָׁן וְעַמִּי אֶת־טוֹבִי  
 יִשְׁבְּעוּ נָא־יְהוָה:

*Some communities end here.*

כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה קוֹל בְּרָמָה נִשְׁמַע נְהִי בְּכִי תַמְרוּרִים רַחֵל מִבֶּכֶה  
 עַל־בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהַנָּחֵם עַל־בְּנֵיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ: ←

She has refused to be consoled  
about her children, for they are no longer.”  
Thus says THE GOD OF ISRAEL:  
“Hold back your voice from weeping,  
and your eyes from tears.  
For a reward awaits your labors,”  
says THE OMNIPRESENT ONE.  
“Your children are returning  
from the land of their oppressor;  
hope arises for your future,”  
says THE POWER OF REDEMPTION,  
“for your children are returning to their home.  
Yes, I have heard the wandering Ephraim:  
‘You’ve chastised me, and I was made to suffer,  
like a calf that lacks instruction.  
But bring me back, let me return,  
for you are THE REDEEMING ONE, my God!  
For, as I change, I have rethought my life,  
and now that I know more, I’m stricken deep within,  
I am ashamed, I feel disgrace,  
I bear in pain the errors of my youth.’

Is Ephraim not my dearest child,  
a source of joy to me?  
Truly, whenever I make mention of it,  
I am flooded with memories.  
Therefore, I fill with yearning,  
and am overcome with love.”  
So says THE ANCIENT ONE!

Jeremiah 31:14-20

*Continue with the haftarah blessings on page 575.*

כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה מִנְעִי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךָ מִדִּמְעָה כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר  
 לַפֻּעַלְתֶּךָ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב: וַיִּשְׁתַּקְּנוּהָ לְאַחֲרִיתָהּ  
 נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם: שְׁמוֹעַ שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶפְרַיִם מִתְנוּדָד  
 יִסְתַּתְנִי וְאוֹסֵר פֶּעֶגֶל לֹא לִפְדּוֹ הִשִּׁיבֵנִי וְאֲשׁוּבָה כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵי: כִּי־אַחֲרֵי שׁוּבִי נִחַמְתִּי וְאַחֲרֵי הִוָּדְעִי סָפַקְתִּי עַל־יָרֵךְ  
 בְּשִׁתִּי וְגַם־נִכְלַמְתִּי כִּי נִשְׁאַתִּי חֲרַפַּת נְעוּרַי: הִבֵּן יִקְרֶה לִּי אֶפְרַיִם  
 אִם יֵלֶד שְׁעָשָׂעִים כִּי־מִהֵר דְּבָרִי בּוֹ זָכָר אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל־כֵּן הָמוּ  
 מֵעַי לֹא רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה:

*Continue with the haftarah blessings on page 576.*

## HAFTARAH FOR YOM KIPPUR MORNING

And God has said: Prepare, prepare  
the road—yes, clear a thoroughfare,  
remove the stumbling block  
from my people's way!  
For thus says God, lofty and revered  
who dwells forever, and whose name is holy:  
Exalted and holy shall I dwell among you!  
As for the downtrodden and destitute,  
I shall revive the spirit of the lowly,  
and the heart of the depressed I shall restore.  
Indeed, not for all time shall I be quarrelsome,  
not for eternity shall I seethe with rage,  
but from me shall my spirit drip like dew.  
I shall create the breath of life.

For my people's sinful deed I was enraged,  
I struck them, and I turned away in wrath,  
and they, for their part, pursued foolish ways.  
But I have seen their folly, and shall heal them.  
I shall guide them, and console them,  
and for the mourners in their midst,  
I shall create comforting words  
—Shalom, shalom, to far and near!—  
and I shall heal them.  
But the wicked are like a troubled sea,  
they cannot be at peace,  
their waters stir with mire and mud.  
There is no peace for them, says God,  
none for the wicked.

Cry from the throat, do not relent,  
raise up your voices like a shofar,  
tell my people their transgression,  
the house of Jacob, their mistakes. ↩

## הַפְּטָרָה

וְאָמַר סְלוּסְלוּ פְּנוּ-דֶרֶךְ הָרִימוּ מִכְשׁוֹל מִדֶּרֶךְ עַמִּי: כִּי כֹה אָמַר  
הָם וְנִשָּׂא שֹׁכֵן עַל וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֲשֶׁכּוֹן וְאֶת-דִּכְּא  
וּשְׁפַל-רוּחַ לְהַחֲיוֹת רוּחַ שְׁפָלִים וּלְהַחֲיוֹת לֵב נִדְפָּאִים: כִּי לֹא  
לְעוֹלָם אָיִב וְלֹא לְנֶצַח אֶקְצוֹף בִּי-רוּחַ מִלִּפְנֵי יַעֲטוֹף וּנְשָׁמוֹת  
אֲנִי עֲשִׂיתִי: בִּיעֹן בִּצְעוֹ קִצְפֹּתִי וְאִכְהוֹ הַסֵּתֶר וְאֶקְצֹף וַיִּלֶּךְ שׁוֹבֵב  
בְּדֶרֶךְ לְבֹ: דִּרְכֵּיו רָאִיתִי וְאֶרְפָּאֵהוּ וְאֶנְחָהוּ וְאֲשַׁלֵּם נַחֲמִים לוֹ  
וְלֹא-בָלִיו: בּוֹרָא נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם שְׁלוֹם | שְׁלוֹם לְרַחוּק וְלִקְרוֹב אָמַר  
יְהוָה וּרְפָאתָיו: וְהִרְשָׁעִים בַּיָּם נִגְרָשׁ כִּי הַשְׁקֵט לֹא יוֹכֵל וַיִּגְרָשׁוּ  
מִיָּמִיו רֶפֶשׁ וְטִיט: אֵין שְׁלוֹם אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי לְרִשָּׁעִים: קָרָא בְּגִרּוֹן  
אֶל-תַּחֲשׁוֹךְ בְּשׁוֹפֵר הָרֶם קוֹלָהּ וְהִגֵּד לַעֲמִי פִשְׁעָם וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב  
חֲטָאתָם: ←

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COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* criticizes those who believe that fasting and prayer alone can bring about true atonement. For Isaiah, ritual action without moral action is not meaningful. Ritual acts and conduct supporting social justice become constant parts of our lives only when they reinforce each other through the way each is allowed to interpret and enhance the other.

M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. The choice of this *haftarah*, which emphasizes the ease with which the ritual and the moral can be unhooked from each other, reflects the fact that carefully observing Yom Kippur and then returning to everyday affairs with unaltered conduct was an ancient problem just as it is a modern one. Ultimately, each of us can only answer for ourselves the question, "How much will I change this year?" Do I really want the ritual of this day to have a transformative effect on my life? I have today to contemplate that question. This is preparation for the challenge beginning tomorrow.

D.A.T.

For they seek me out, day by day,  
they yearn for knowledge of my way.  
Like a people righteous in their deeds,  
who have not left behind the justice of their God,  
they ask of me the laws of righteousness,  
they yearn for nearness to their God.  
“Why, when we fasted, did you not see it?  
Our souls we have afflicted, do you not know?”  
Behold, while you are fasting, you engage in business,  
and your workers you continue to oppress!  
Behold, you fast in strife and quarrelling,  
and with a meanly clenched fist you strike.  
Today, you do not fast in such a way  
as to make your voice heard on high.  
Is this the kind of fast I delight in?  
A fast merely to deprive one’s body?  
Is it bowing the head like the willows,  
or reclining in sackcloth and ash?  
Do you call that a fast,  
a day in which THE HOLY ONE delights?  
Is not the fast that I desire  
the unlocking of the chains of wickedness,  
the loosening of exploitation,  
the freeing of all those oppressed,  
the breaking of the yoke of servitude?  
Is it not the sharing of your bread with those who starve,  
the bringing of the wretched poor into your house,  
or clothing someone you see who is naked,  
and not hiding from your kin in their need?  
Then shall your light burst forth like the dawn,  
your waters of healing soon flourish again,  
your righteousness will travel before you,  
and the glory of THE ALMIGHTY will encompass you.  
Then will you call and THE ETERNAL ONE will answer,  
you will cry out, and God will respond: Here am I! ↪

וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם יוֹם יִדְרָשׁוּן וְדַעַת דְּרָכֵי יִחְפָּצוּן כְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר־צִדְקָה עָשָׂה  
וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיוֹ לֹא עָזַב יִשְׁאָלוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי־צֶדֶק קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים  
יִחְפָּצוּן: לָמָּה צִמְנוּ וְלֹא רִאִיתָ עֲנִינוּ נִפְשָׁנוּ וְלֹא תִדַּע הֵן בְּיוֹם  
צִמְכֶּם תִּמְצְאוּ־חֹפֶץ וְכָל־עַצְבֵיכֶם תִּנְגָּשׁוּ: הֵן לָרִיב וּמִצָּה תִצְוֶמוּ  
וְלִהְיוֹת בְּאִגְרָף רָשַׁע לֹא־תִצְוֶמוּ כִּיּוֹם לְהִשְׁמִיעַ בְּמִרוֹם קוֹלְכֶם:  
הַכִּזָּה יִהְיֶה צוֹם אֲבָחֶרְהוּ יוֹם עֲנוּת אָדָם נִפְשׁוֹ הִלְכָּהּ בְּאִגְמֹן  
רֹאשׁוֹ וְשֶׁקֶ וְאֶפֶר יִצִּיעַ הַלִּזָּה תִקְרָא־צוֹם וְיוֹם רָצוֹן לַיהוָה: הֲלוֹא  
זֶה צוֹם אֲבָחֶרְהוּ פֶתַח חֲרָצוֹת רָשַׁע הִתֵּר אֲגִדּוֹת מוֹטָה וְשִׁלַּח  
רְצוּצִים חֲפָשִׁים וְכָל־מוֹטָה תִּנְתַּקּוּ: הֲלוֹא פָרַס לָרַעַב לַחֲמֶה  
וְעֲנִיִּים מְרוֹדִים תִּבְיֵא בֵּית כִּי־תִרְאֶה עָרֹם וְכִסְיוֹ וּמִבְּשָׁרָהּ לֹא  
תִתַּעֲלֶם: אִזּוֹ יִבָּקַע בְּשֹׁחַל אוֹרָה וְאֶרְכָּתָהּ מִהֲרָה תִצְמַח וְהִלָּךְ  
לִפְנֵיהֶּ צִדְקָה כְּבוֹד יְהוָה יֵאֲסֹפֶה: אִזּוֹ תִקְרָא וְיִהְיֶה יַעֲנֶה תִשְׁוַע  
וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי ←

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COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* poses the question of what it will take to create a world transformed. Its answer posits a society governed justly, interpersonal relationships characterized by caring, and religious life that points us toward ultimate meaning. Isaiah suggests that if we achieve all this, God will intervene to bring a society transformed. But if we achieve all this, society will have already been transformed. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The *haftarah* is linked to the Torah reading in a daring way. The prophet *Yeshayahu* / Isaiah questions the value of fasting while we pursue business as usual. It is thus a critique of religious hypocrisy, and it remains to this day a challenge for the Jewish community in our effort to link ethics with ritual practice. S.D.R.



If you banish oppression from your midst,  
the menacing hand and tainted speech,  
if you give of yourself to the hungry,  
fulfilling the needs of the poor—  
then shall your light shine in darkness,  
and your darkness shall be like the noon.  
THE RIGHTEOUS ONE will guide you always,  
will satisfy your thirst in desert wastes,  
will give your bones new life,  
and you'll be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters do not fail.  
And those among you will rebuild ancient ruins,  
foundations long dormant you'll restore.  
You shall be called the repairer of bridges,  
the restorer of settlement roads.

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,  
from doing your business on my holy day,  
if you call the Sabbath your delight,  
and honor THE CREATOR's holy day,  
then shall you take pleasure in GOD EVERLASTING,  
and I shall convey you on high,  
and feed you with Jacob's inheritance—  
for the mouth of THE ETERNAL ONE has spoken!

Isaiah 57:14-58:14

אם-תִּסְרִיר מִתּוֹכָךְ מוֹטָה שְׁלַח אֶצְבֶּע וְדִבֶּר-אֲנִי: וְתִפֹּק לָרֹעַב  
נִפְשָׁךְ וְנִפֵּשׁ נַעֲנָה תִשָּׁבֵעַ וְזָרַח בְּחֹשֶׁךְ אֹרֶךְ וְאַפְלִתֶךָ כְּצִדְהֵרִים:  
וְנָחֶךְ יִהְיֶה תִּמְיֵד וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצַחֲצָחוֹת נִפְשָׁךְ וְעֲצֻמֹּתֶיךָ יִחְלִיץ  
וְהִיִּיתָ בְּגֵן רָוָה וּבְמוֹצָא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִכָּזְבוּ מִימִיו: וּבְנוֹ מִמֶּךָ  
חֲרָבוֹת עוֹלָם מוֹסְרֵי דוֹר-וָדוֹר תִּקּוּמָם וְקָרָא לָךְ גִּדְר פָּרִץ  
מְשׁוֹבֵב נְתִיבוֹת לְשֹׁכֵת: אִם-תִּשָּׁיֵב מִשֹּׁכֶת רִגְלֶךָ עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶיךָ  
בְּיוֹם קָדְשִׁי וְקִרְאתָ לְשֹׁכֶת עֹנֵג לְקָדוֹשׁ יִהְיֶה מְכָבֵד וְכִבְדֹתָו  
מַעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמְּצֹא חֲפָצֶךָ וְדִבֶּר דְּבָר: אֲזִי תִתְעַנֵּג עַל-יִהוּהוּ  
וְהִרְפַּבְתִּיךָ עַל-בְּמֹתֵי אֶרֶץ וְהֶאֱכִלְתִּיךָ נַחֲלֹת יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיךָ כִּי פִי  
יִהְיֶה דִבָּר:


## CONCLUDING HAFTARAH BLESSINGS

*After the haftarah is chanted, the following blessings are said:*

Blessed are you ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, the rock of all the worlds, the righteous one throughout all generations, the faithful God, whose word is deed, who speaks and fulfills, whose words are truth and justice.

Faithful are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, and faithful are your words; not a single word of yours is unfulfilled, for you are a sovereign God, faithful and merciful. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the God faithful in all your words.

Be merciful to Zion, which is the house of life to us, and be a help to Israel, your people, soon and in our days. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who gives joy to Zion through her children.

Give us joy, ETERNAL ONE, our God, in Elijah, your prophet and your servant. Soon may redemption come and give joy to our hearts. May God turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents. And may your house be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who brings an everlasting peace. 

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וּלְעֵמֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּוֹשִׁיעַ / be a help to Israel your people. The traditional phrase here, *aluvat nefesh* / cast-down soul, reflected the Jewish people's exile from their land. With the establishment of the State of Israel, we are no longer "cast down." This fundamental change in Jewish life is reflected in the revised language here. D.A.T.

*After the haftarah is chanted, the following blessings are said:*

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם צור כל העולמים צדיק בכל הדורות האל הנאמן האומר ועושה המדבר ומקים שכל דבריו אמת וצדק:

נאמן אתה הוא יהוה אלהינו ונאמנים דבריך ודבר אחד מדבריך אחר לא ישוב ריקם כי אל מלך נאמן ורחמן אתה: ברוך אתה יהוה האל הנאמן בכל דבריו:

רחם על ציון כי היא בית חיינו ולעמך ישראל תושיע במהרה בימינו: ברוך אתה יהוה משמח ציון בבניה:

שמחנו יהוה אלהינו באלהיו הנביא עבדך במהרה יבוא ויגל לפנינו: והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם וביתך בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים: ברוך אתה יהוה מביא שלום לעד: —

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COMMENTARY. Most liturgists agree that the practice of reciting a *haftarah*, generally a selection from the prophets, probably developed during a time when public reading of the Torah was banned. A selection roughly paralleling a major theme from the week's Torah portion was therefore selected. When public reading of the Torah became possible again, the popular custom of chanting the *haftarah* continued. The *haftarah* is usually chanted, utilizing a *trope* or cantillation system that has numerous variations. In modern times the bar/bat mitzvah has often taken on this responsibility as a sign of committed membership in the adult community.

D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. This version of the *haftarah* blessing eliminates the Davidic references and the hopes for a literal messiah that they invoke. In their place are Malachi 3:24 and a slightly altered version of Isaiah 56:7. Here Elijah is pictured coming to herald messianic days by uniting families, communities, and peoples through mutual understanding.

D.A.T.

*On Rosh Hashanah, continue here:*

For the Torah and for worship, and for the prophets (and for this day of Shabbat), and for this Day of Remembrance which you have given us, ETERNAL ONE, our God, (for holiness and for rest,) for happiness and joy, for honor and for splendor—for everything, WISE ONE, our God, we offer thanks to you and bless you. May your name be blessed continually by every living being, forever and eternally, for you are a God of truth, and your word is truthful and endures forever. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, source of the holiness of (Shabbat,) the people Israel and the Day of Remembrance.

*On Yom Kippur, continue here:*

For the Torah, and for worship, for the prophets (and for this day of Shabbat), and for this Day of Atonement, which you have given us, ABUNDANT ONE, our God, for holiness and for rest, for pardon, for forgiveness, and for atonement, for honor and for splendor—for everything, WISE ONE, our God, we offer thanks to you, and bless you. May your name be blessed continually by every living being, forever and eternally. Your word is truth, and stands forever. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the sovereign of mercy and forgiveness for our wrongdoing, and for that of all your people, the House of Israel, you who make our guilt to pass away year after year—the sovereign over all the earth, source of the holiness of (Shabbat,) Israel and the Day of Atonement.

*The service continues with the Prayer for the Country, page 579; Prayer for the State of Israel, page 581; or Prayers for Peace, pages 583 and 584. On Rosh Hashanah the Shofar service follows, page 585. On Yom Kippur, continue with Ashrey, page 593, or Returning the Torah to the Ark, page 597.*

*On Rosh Hashanah, continue here:*

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים (וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה) וְעַל  
יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה שֶׁנִּתְּתָ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְּשָׁהּ וּלְמַנּוּחָהּ)  
לְכָבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ  
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ  
אֱמֶת וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקַדֵּשׁ  
(הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן:

*On Yom Kippur, continue here:*

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְעַל יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְעַל  
יוֹם) הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה שֶׁנִּתְּתָ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְּשָׁהּ וּלְמַנּוּחָהּ)  
לְמַחֲלָה וּלְסִלִּיחָה וּלְכַפָּרָה וּלְמַחֲלֵבוֹ אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ לְכָבוֹד  
וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים  
אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ אֱמֶת  
וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וּלְעֲוֹנוֹת  
עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַעֲבִיר אֲשָׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל  
הָאָרֶץ מְקַדֵּשׁ (הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים:

*The service continues with the Prayer for the Country, page 580; Prayer for the State of Israel, page 582; or Prayers for Peace, pages 583 and 584. On Rosh Hashanah the Shofar service follows, page 585. On Yom Kippur, continue with Ashrey, page 594, or Returning the Torah to the Ark, page 598.*

## TEFILAH LAMEMSHALAH / PRAYER FOR THE COUNTRY

Sovereign of the universe, mercifully receive our prayer for our land and its government. Let your blessing pour out on this land and on all officials of this country who are occupied, in good faith, with the public needs. Instruct them from your Torah's laws, enable them to understand your principles of justice, so that peace and tranquility, happiness and freedom, might never turn away from our land. Please, WISE ONE, God of the lifebreath of all flesh, waken your spirit within all inhabitants of our land, and plant among the peoples of different nationalities and faiths who dwell here, love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. Uproot from their hearts all hatred and enmity, all jealousy and vying for supremacy. Fulfill the yearning of all the people of our country to speak proudly in its honor. Fulfill their desire to see it become a light to all nations.

Therefore, may it be your will, that our land should be a blessing to all inhabitants of the globe. Cause friendship and freedom to dwell among all peoples. And soon fulfill the vision of your prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Let them learn no longer ways of war." And let us say: Amen.

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COMMENTARY. On the eve of the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E., the prophet Jeremiah called on his people to "pray for the peace of the land to which I am exiling you." We Jews have recognized the importance of just government in the lands where we have lived because we have fared better in societies guided by principles of justice, equality and law. Today, in North America, where we strive to fulfill the opportunities inherent in living in two civilizations, our motivation must go beyond what is good for us to what is right for all. R.H.

## תַּפְלָה לַמַּמְשָׁלָה

רְבוֹן הָעוֹלָם קִבֵּל נָא בְּרַחֲמִים אֶת־תַּפְלָתֵנוּ בְּעַד אֶרְצֵנוּ וּמַמְשָׁלָתָהּ  
הִרְק אֶת־בְּרִכְתְּךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְעַל כָּל שְׂרֵי הַמְּדִינָה הַזֹּאת  
הָעוֹסְקִים בְּצַרְכֵי צָבוּר בְּאַמוּנָה: הוֹרֵם מַחְקֵי תוֹרָתְךָ הַבִּינִים  
מִשְׁפָּטֵי צִדְקָךָ לְמַעַן לֹא יִסּוּרוּ מֵאֶרְצֵנוּ שְׁלוֹם וְשִׁלוֹהָ אֲשֶׁר וַחֲפֹשׁ  
כָּל־הַיָּמִים: אָנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָרוּחֹת לְכָל־בֶּשֶׁר הַעֲרָה רוּחְךָ עַל  
כָּל־תּוֹשְׁבֵי אֶרְצֵנוּ וְטַע בֵּין בְּנֵי הָאֲמוֹת וְהָאֲמוּנוֹת הַשּׁוֹנוֹת  
הַשּׁוֹכְנִים בָּהּ אֲהַבָה וְאַחֻזָּה שְׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת וְעֵקֶר מַלְכָּם כָּל שְׁנֵאָה  
וְאִיבָה קִנְאָה וְתַחֲרוּת לְמִלְאוֹת מִשְׁאֵ־נֶפֶשׁ בְּנִיָּה הַמִּתְפָּאֲרִים  
בְּכַבּוּדָה וְהַמְשִׁתּוֹקְקִים לְרֹאוֹתָהּ אוֹר לְכָל־הַגּוֹיִים:

וְכֵן יִהְיֶה רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ שֶׁתִּהְיֶה אֶרְצֵנוּ בְּרֻכָּה לְכָל־יּוֹשְׁבֵי תֵּבֵל וְתִשְׁרָה  
בֵּינֵיהֶם רַעוּת וְחֲרוּת וְקִים בְּמַהֲרָה חֲזוֹן נְבִיאָךְ לֹא־יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל־גּוֹי  
חָרֵב וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

Lo yisa goy el goy herev velo yilmedu od milḥamah.

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מלחמה...לא / Nation...war (Isaiah 2:4).

What do I desire for my country? How do I vision the land I love?  
Let it be a land where knowledge is free,  
Where the mind is without fear, and men and women hold their heads  
high,  
Where words come out from the depth of truth,  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow  
domestic walls,  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms toward perfection,  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreamy  
desert sand of dead habit,  
Where the mind is led forward into ever-widening thought and action,  
Into that heaven of freedom let my country awake.

Rabindranath Tagore (Adapted)





## TEFILAH LIMDINAT YISRA'EL / PRAYER FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Rock and champion of Israel, please bless the state of Israel, first fruit of the flourishing of our redemption. Guard it in the abundance of your love. Spread over it the shelter of your peace. Send forth your light and truth to those who lead and judge it, and to those who hold elective office. Establish in them, through your presence, wise counsel, that they might walk in the way of justice, freedom and integrity. Strengthen the hands of those who guard our holy land. Let them inherit salvation and life. And give peace to the land, and perpetual joy to its inhabitants. Appoint for a blessing all our kindred of the house of Israel in all the lands of their dispersion. Plant in their hearts a love of Zion. And for all our people everywhere, may God be with them, and may they have the opportunity to go up to the land. Cause your spirit's influence to emanate upon all dwellers of our holy land. Remove from their midst hatred and enmity, jealousy and wickedness. Plant in their hearts love and kinship, peace and friendship. And soon fulfill the vision of your prophet: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Let them learn no longer ways of war." And let us say: Amen.



## תפלה למדינת ישראל

צור ישראל וגואלו ברוך נא את מדינת ישראל ראשית צמיחת  
גאלתנו הגן עליה ברב חסדך ופרש עליה ספת שלומך שלח אורך  
ואמתך לראשיה לשופטיה ולנבחריה ותקנם בעצה טובה מלפניך  
למען ילכו בדרך הצדק החפש והישר: חזק את ידי מגני ארץ  
קדשנו והנחילים ישועה וחיים ונתת שלום בארץ ושמחת עולם  
ליושביה: פקדנא לברכה את אחינו בית ישראל בכל-ארצות  
פזריהם טע בלבם אהבת ציון ומי-בהם מכל-עמנו יהי אלהיו  
עמו ויעל: האצל מרוחה על כל יושבי ארץ קדשינו הסר מקרבם  
שנאה ואיבה קנאה ורשעות וטע בלבם אהבה ואחוה שלום  
ורעות וקים במהרה חזון נביאך לא ישא גוי אל-גוי תרב ולא-  
ילמדו עוד מלחמה ונאמר אמן:

Lo yisa goy el goy herev velo yilmedu od milhamah.

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לעל...מי/may...to the land. This is a slightly altered version of Ezra 1:3.  
לא/Nation...war (Isaiah 2:4).

We pray for Israel.

Both the mystic ideal of our ancestors' dreams.

And the living miracle, here and now,

Built of heart, muscle, and steel.

May she endure and guard her soul,

Surviving the relentless, age-old hatreds.

The cynical concealment of diplomatic deceit.

And the rumblings that warn of war.

May Israel continue to be the temple that magnetizes

The loving eyes of Jews in all corners:

Jews in lands of affluence and relative peace

Who forget the glory and pain of their being

And Jews in lands of oppression whose bloodied fists

Beat in anguish and pride

Against the cage of their imprisonment.

May Israel yet embrace her homeless, her own,

And bind the ingathered into one people.

May those who yearn for a society built on human concern

Find the vision of the prophets realized in her.

May her readiness to defend

Never diminish her search for peace.

May we always dare to hope

That in our day the antagonism will end,

That all the displaced, Arab and Jew, will be rooted again,

That within Israel and across her borders

All God's children will touch hands in peace.

Nahum Waldman

The man under his fig tree telephoned the man under his vine:  
“Tonight they definitely might come. Assign  
positions, armor-plate the leaves, secure the tree,  
tell the dead to report home immediately.”

The white lamb leaned over, said to the wolf:  
“Humans are bleating, and my heart aches with grief.  
I’m afraid they’ll get to gunpoint, to bayonets in the dust.  
At our next meeting this matter will be discussed.”

All the nations (united) will flow to Jerusalem  
to see if the Torah has gone out. And then,  
inasmuch as it’s spring, they’ll come down  
and pick flowers from all around.

And they’ll beat swords into plowshares and plowshares into  
swords,  
and so on and so on, and back and forth.

Perhaps from being beaten thinner and thinner,  
the iron of hatred will vanish, forever.

Yehuda Amichai

## SHOFAR SERVICE: READINGS

*Select from among the following readings:*

Even though sounding the shofar is an unexplained biblical decree, it seems to bear a message: Wake up sleepers! Examine your ways! Return to yourselves and repent.



Waking up is a common act like breathing or eating, something you do every day without reflection. It is also a turning point. If sleep is like death, then awakening is like resurrection. If sleep entails losing the world, awakening means regaining it. While the world into which you wake is resistantly old, impervious to the implications of dawn, a strong awakener knows the day which begins in starry darkness nonetheless is new.

We resist waking up. We yearn for a trance-like numbness, the uninterrupted flow of imagination. We choose to stumble through our days as if in a dream, for we are inertial beings given to drifting with the tide, heedless of our destination.

While Jews have been visionaries, we are not bound to our visions. While we continue to dream, we remain committed to interpretation. We sense we cannot see God and live, but we can hear God and awaken—as Abraham awoke from his terrible vision atop Mount Moriah where claspings the knife of imagination, he nearly slashed the tender neck of reality. “Abraham!” he heard the angel call. And he stopped. It takes an outside force to stun us. Surprised, jolted, disarmed, he awoke and discovered a ram caught by its horn in a thicket.

Abraham descending Moriah embodies the way of the Jew: Jews are interrupters, disenchanters, spell-breakers, committed to dreaming but with eyes open, committed to restful awareness, hallowed after “six days” of productivity.

Beginning again, re-newing the old, re-memembering the sounds, re-calling the words, re-creating the world—this is the stuff of Torah, the business of the Jew.

James Ponet (Adapted)

עורו יְשָׁנִים מִשְׁנָתְכֶם וְנִרְדָּמִים הִקִּיצוּ מִתְרַדְמַתְכֶם וְחַפְּשׁוּ  
בְּמַעֲשֵׂיכֶם וְחִזְרוּ בְּתִשְׁבָּה וְזָכְרוּ בּוֹרְאֵכֶם: אֵלֹהֵי הַשּׁוֹכְחִים אֶת  
הָאֲמֶת בַּהֲבִלֵי הַזְּמַן וְשׁוֹגִים כָּל שְׁנָתָם בַּהֲבֵל וְרִיק אֲשֶׁר לֹא יוֹעִיל  
וְלֹא יַצִּיל — הִפְּטוּ לְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם וְהִיטִיבוּ דְרָכֵיכֶם וּמַעַלְלֵיכֶם  
וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל אֶחָד מִכֶּם דְּרָכּוֹ הָרָעָה וּמַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא טוֹבָה:

Awake from your slumber and rouse yourselves from your lethargy. Scrutinize your deeds and turn in repentance. Remember what is true, you who forget eternal truth in the trifles of the hour, you who go astray all your years after vain illusions that neither profit nor deliver. Look well into yourselves and mend your ways and your actions; forsake the evil path and unworthy purpose, and turn to God.

Moses Maimonides



There are sounds which first we heard as children which have engraved themselves, like ancient riverbeds long dry, into our inner ear. Years later, when we've grown, those early sounds will open up those ancient streams, and the place and moment of that early music will flow again across our memory, and we are at once transported there, splashing in the cooling spray like the children we still are, with all the joy and playfulness and awe we thought had dried up in our long-sought maturity. Buried even deeper in us than our childhood is the childhood of our people, when we were wandering and playing at the foot of Sinai, full of wonder and confusion, as the cloud appeared, and holy fire, and thunder voices out of heaven, and the sounds of a shofar. Each year when the shofar sounds for us again, the cloud appears above the riverbed of memory, and we know that if sufficient wonder and confusion fill our minds, the holy fire will burn once more, and voices from our modest shofar will thunder out of heaven once again. If only we can listen, the moment and the place will flow again, and we can splash with the child our people was at the beginning, in the stream.

Richard Levy

The blowing of the shofar is the only special biblical ritual for Rosh Hashanah. The symbolism of the shofar is not made explicit in the Torah. Whether it is meant to arouse our slumbering souls or as a clarion call to war against the worst part of our natures, the primitive sound of the shofar blast stirs something deep within us. There is a sense of expectation in the silence before the shofar sound, followed by unease evoked by the various blasts. Part of its sense of mystery lies in the interplay of the silence, the piercing sound, and the hum of people praying. On its most basic level, the shofar can be seen to express what we cannot find the right words to say. The blasts are the wordless cries of the people of Israel. The shofar is the instrument that sends those cries of pain and longing hurtling across the vast distance toward the Other.

There are three shofar sounds: *tekiyah*—one blast; *shevarim*—three short blasts; and *teruah*—nine staccato blasts. The Torah does not state explicitly how many shofar blasts are required, but the rabbis (based on a complicated exegesis of Leviticus 25:9 and 23:24 and Numbers 20:1) derive the necessity to have three blasts of *teruah* preceded by and followed by *tekiyah*. The only question for the rabbis is what constitutes a *teruah*. One opinion is that it should sound like groaning (our *shevarim* sound); another is that it should sound like sobbing (what we call *teruah*); and a third opinion is that it should sound like both together (our *shevarim teruah*). Therefore, we have the pattern of *tekiyah teruah tekiyah, tekiyah shevarim tekiyah, tekiyah shevarim teruah tekiyah* to cover all possibilities.

Michael Strassfeld

The pattern of the shofar blasts mirrors the inner drama we experience as we take stock of our souls and our lives during the *Yamim Nora'im*. We begin Rosh Hashanah with a certain degree of inner wholeness and self-satisfaction reflected in the single drawn out note of *tekiyah*. During the course of the *Yamim Nora'im* we may experience anguish and broken-heartedness as we attempt to come to terms with our own shortcomings. This brokenness of heart and soul, a necessary part of the *teshuvah* process, is reflected in the moaning, sobbing sounds of the broken *teruah* and *shevarim* blasts. Just as these broken cries are followed by the renewed wholeness of the *tekiyah gedolah*—the longest shofar blast of all, so we hope to emerge from our days of introspection and prayer with a new sense of inner wholeness. The healing process of *teshuvah* can take place only after we honestly come to terms with the lack of completeness in our lives and our world. By the time of the *tekiyah gedolah*, may we find the strength and wholeness of heart and soul to go forth into a troubled and imperfect world with the will to bring wholeness and peace.

Reena M. Spicehandler



Isaac Arama sees the three shofar notes as symbolizing different approaches to three different kinds of people:

The *tekiyah*, with its simple and straightforward sound, is intended for the righteous, arousing feelings of confidence and inner peace.

The *teruah*, with its wailing sound, is aimed at the wicked, moving them to fear and trembling.

The *shevarim*, with its broken and uncertain sound, is designed for the average person, neither saint nor sinner, who may find in it a message of either hope or despair.

Herman Kieval



## SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

God has ascended amid cries of joy,  
THE OMNIPRESENT ONE, amid the shofar blast.  
Sing out to God, sing out,  
sing to the sovereign one, sing out!  
For God is sovereign over all the earth;  
Sing out a song of praise.

Psalms 47:6-8

From the depths, I called out: "Yah!"  
God answered, bringing great relief.  
You heard my call; don't close your ear  
to my outcry, my plea for comfort.  
The beginning of your word is truth,  
and all your righteous judgments are eternal.

Psalms 118:5

Lamentations 3:56

Psalms 119:160

Please stand in pledge for my release,  
don't let the lawless have me in their grasp!  
I take pleasure in your utterance,  
like one who finds great treasure.  
In knowledge and good judgment teach me—  
truly, I have faith in your mitzvot.  
Please favor now my voluntary prayer,  
and teach me now the justice of your ways.

Psalms 119:122

Psalms 119:162

Psalms 119:66

Psalms 119:108

*Some communities repeat the singing of Min Hametzar between sections of the Shofar Blowing on the following page.*

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COMMENTARY. Psalm 118 literally reads: "From a narrow place I called out to God, but God answered me from an open place." This is to teach that calling out for God's help allows even the most narrow-minded, "uptight" person to break out of closed-mindedness into a more broad-minded, compassionate understanding. The shofar—with its narrow end through which we blow and wide end from which sound emerges—symbolizes the process of spiritual liberation through divine inspiration.

S.D.R.



עֲלֵה אֱלֹהִים בְּתִרְוָעָה יִהְיֶה בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:  
זַמְּרוּ אֱלֹהִים זַמְּרוּ זַמְּרוּ לְמִלְכֵּנוּ זַמְּרוּ:  
כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹהִים זַמְּרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל:  
מִן־הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְיָ עֲנֵנִי בְּמִרְחֹב יְיָ:  
קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתָּ אֶל־תַּעֲלִם אֲזַנְךָ לְרוֹחִתִּי לְשׁוֹעֲתִי:  
לֹא־שִׁדְּכָךְ אֵמֶת וּלְעוֹלָם כָּל־מִשְׁפָּט צִדִּיקָךְ:  
עֲרֹב עֲבָדֶךָ לְטוֹב אֶל־יַעֲשֹׁקָנִי יוֹדִים:  
שֶׁשׁ אָנֹכִי עַל־אִמְרָתְךָ כְּמוֹצֵא שָׁלֹל רָב:  
טוֹב טַעַם וְדַעַת לְמַדְנִי כִּי בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ הֶאֱמַנְתִּי:  
נִדְבוֹת פִּי רָצָה־נָא יְיָ וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְמַדְנִי:

Min hametzar karati yah anani vamerhav yah.

*Some communities repeat the singing of Min Hametzar between sections of the Shofar Blowing on the following page.*

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NOTE. Sounding the shofar on behalf of the community is a sacred task. It has traditionally been delegated to an upright and humble person who has learned the proper technique. The meaning and responsibility that rest in the skills and intentions of the shofar blower shape a memorable moment of this awesome day, underlying the need for careful personal and musical preparation.

D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The traditional liturgy includes all of Psalm 47 here. It is a natural choice because of the way it heralds God with shofar blasts and cries of joy. Our *mahzor* includes only verses 6-8 in keeping with our commitment to eliminate references to chosenness and to celebrations marking the destruction or subjugation of other peoples.

D.A.T.

*We stand for the Shofar Blowing.*

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who raises us to holiness with your mitzvot, and has commanded us to hear the shofar sound.

Blessed are you THE ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who gave us life, and kept us strong, and brought us to this time.

*The shofar is sounded. We are then seated.*

*Some communities that do not recite a Musaf Amidah continue with Malhuyot (page 607) here. In that case, they return the Torah to the ark after Shofarot (page 597).*

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DERASH. The shofar sound represents prayer beyond words, an intensity of longing that can only be articulated in a wordless shout. But the order of the sounds, according to one old interpretation, contains the message in quite explicit terms. Each series of shofar blasts begins with *tekiyah*, a whole sound. It is followed by *shevarim*, a tripartite broken sound whose very name means “breakings.” “I started off whole,” the shofar speech says, “and I became broken.” Then follows *teruah*, a staccato series of blast fragments, saying: “I was entirely smashed to pieces.” But each series has to end with a new *tekiyah*, promising wholeness once more. The shofar cries out a hundred times on Rosh Hashanah: “I was whole, I was broken, even smashed to bits, but I shall be whole again!” A.G.

COMMENTARY. Several models are available for the shofar blowing. The traditional model is for the shofar blowing to be done by one unamplified voice. Another model is for all the people who have *shofarot* to participate in the shofar blowing simultaneously. All the other congregants, led by a caller, call out *tekiyah*. This creates a powerful dialogue. It has been my custom in the last few years to have the first set of sounds (*tekiyah shevarim teruah tekiyah*) done by one shofar and all the other sets blown in unison by all the people who have *shofarot*. A model for the *tekiyah gedolah* is for all the shofar blowers to line up. The first one begins, and when he or she is out of breath, the next one continues to blow. This is a real *tekiyah gedolah*.

Z.S.S.

*We stand for the Shofar Blowing.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְשַׁמֵּעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁחֵינּוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה

תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	שְׁבָרִים	תְּקִיעָה

תְּקִיעָה	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה
תְּקִיעָה	תְּרוּעָה	תְּקִיעָה

*We are seated. Some communities that do not recite a Musaf Amidah continue with Malhuyot (page 607) here. In that case, they return the Torah to the ark after Shofarot (page 598).*

KAVANAH. The song of the shofar penetrates through our walls of fear. Thrilled by its intensity, we open up to its powerful reminder of the inner song in each of us. The shofar proclaims that all of our holy songs can join together as one. D.B.

COMMENTARY. Like an alarm clock the shofar unsettles us. Yet some people sleep through the alarm clock's jolting rings. The appeal to conscience is clear and direct enough, yet all too often we ignore it. What does it take for us to hear the shofar's call? Perhaps a different way of understanding our social obligations. Every time you witness the suffering of another human being, or of any living thing, realize that your own heart is crying out in pain but that you just can't hear it. S.D.R.

*On Yom Kippur, some communities recite Yizkor (pages 1004-1034) here.  
The following couplet is recited only on Rosh Hashanah.*

Happy are the people who know the shofar blast, ETERNAL ONE!  
They walk about in the light of your presence.

Happy are they who dwell within your house,  
may they continue to give praise to you.  
Happy is the people for whom life is thus,  
happy is the people with THE EVERLASTING for its God!

#### A Psalm of David

All exaltations do I raise to you, my sovereign God,  
and I give blessing to your name, forever and eternally.  
Blessings do I offer you each day,  
I hail your name, forever and eternally.  
Great is THE ETERNAL, to be praised emphatically,  
because God's greatness has no measure.  
Declaring praises for your deeds one era to the next,  
people describe your mighty acts.  
Heaven's glorious splendor is my song,  
words of your miracles I eagerly pour forth.  
Wondrous are your powers—people tell of them,  
and your magnificence do I recount.  
Signs of your abundant goodness they express,  
and in your justice they rejoice.  
How gracious and how merciful is THE ABUNDANT ONE,  
slow to anger, great in love.  
To all God's creatures, goodness flows,  
on all creation, divine love.  
Your creatures all give thanks to you,  
your fervent ones bless you emphatically. ↪

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יהלכין...אשרי / Happy...presence (Psalms 89:16).

סלה...אשרי / Happy...you (Psalms 84:5).

אלהיו...אשרי / Happy...God (Psalms 144:15).

On Yom Kippur, some communities recite Yizkor (pages 1004-1034) here.  
The following line is recited only on Rosh Hashanah:

**אַשְׁרֵי** הָעַם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה יְהוָה בְּאוֹר-פָּנָיִךְ יְהִלְכוּן:

Ashrey ha'am yodey teruah adonay be'or paneha yehalehun.

אַשְׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ עוֹד יְהִלְלוּךָ שְׁלָה:  
אַשְׁרֵי הָעַם שֶׁפָּכָה לוֹ אֱלֹהָיו:

תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד

אַרְוַמְמָךְ אֱלֹהֵי הַמָּלָךְ וְאַבְרָכָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
בְּכָל-יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ וְאַהֲלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד וְלִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:  
דּוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּגְבוּרָתְךָ יִגְאֹד:  
הֶדֶר כְּבוֹד הוֹרֵךְ וְדַבְּרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:  
וְעֶזְזוֹ נוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֵאֱמָרוּ וּגְדֻלָּתְךָ אֲסַפְּרָנָה:  
זָכָר רַב-טוֹבְךָ יִבְיָעוּ וְצִדְקָתְךָ יִרְנָנוּ:  
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה אַרְךָ אֲפִים וּגְדֻלַּת-חֶסֶד:  
טוֹב-יְהוָה לְכָל וְרַחֲמָיו עַל-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו:  
יִדְוֶךָ יְהוָה כָּל-מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יִבְרַכְוָה: ←

Ashrey yoshvey veyteha od yehaleluha selah.

Ashrey ha'am shekahah lo ashrey ha'am she'adonay elohav.

Tehilah ledavid.

Aromimeha elohay hameleh va'avarehah shimeha le'olam va'ed.

Behol yom avareheka va'ahalela shimeha le'olam va'ed.

Gadol adonay umhulal me'od veligdulato eyn heker.

Dor ledor yeshabah ma'aseha ugevuroteha yagidu.

Hadar kevod hodeha vedivrey nifle'oteha asihah.

Ve'ezuz noroteha yomeru ugedulateha asaperenah.

Zehar rav tuveha yabi'u vetzidkateha yeranenu.

Hanun verahum adonay ereh apayim ugedol hased.

Tov adonay lakol verahamav al kol ma'asav.

Yoduha adonay kol ma'aseha vehasideha yevarehuha. ↪

Calling out the glory of your sovereignty,  
 of your magnificence they speak,  
 Letting all people know your mighty acts,  
 and of your sovereignty's glory and splendor.  
 May your sovereignty last all eternities,  
 your dominion for era after era.  
 Strong support to all who fall,  
 God raises up the humble and the lame.  
 All hopeful gazes turn toward you,  
 as you give sustenance in its appointed time.  
 Providing with your open hand,  
 you satisfy desire in all life.  
 So just is God in every way,  
 so loving amid all the divine deeds.  
 Close by is God to all who call,  
 to all who call to God in truth.  
 Responding to the yearning of all those who fear,  
 God hears their cry and comes to rescue them.  
 Showing care to all who love God, THE ETERNAL  
 brings destruction to all evildoers.  
 The praise of THE ALL-KNOWING does my mouth declare,  
 and all flesh give blessing to God's holy name,  
 unto eternity.

Psalms 145

And as for us, we bless the name of Yah,  
 from now until the end of time. Halleluyah!

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ואנחנו...הללויה / And...Halleluyah! (Psalms 115:18).

COMMENTARY. Psalm 145 is an alphabetical acrostic. The translation roughly preserves the sound of the Hebrew initials of each line. The line for the letter *nun* is missing from this psalm, for unknown reasons. J.R.

וּגְבוּרָתָךְ יִדְבָּרוּ:	כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֹאמְרוּ
וּכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ:	לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבְנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתוֹ
וּמִמְשַׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר:	מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֲלָמִים
וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל־הַפּוֹפִים:	סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנְּפִלִים
וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:	עֵינֵי־כָל אֱלִיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ
וּמִשְׁפִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רִצּוֹן:	פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת־יָדְךָ
וְחֹסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:	צַדִּיק יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו
לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֵמַת:	קְרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל־קִרְאָיו
וְאֶת־שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם:	רִצּוֹן יִרְאִיו יַעֲשֶׂה
וְאֵת כָּל־הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:	שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֲהָבָיו
וַיִּבְרָךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קָדְשׁוֹ	* תִּהְיֶלֶת יְהוָה יִדְבָּר פִּי
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:	
מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:	וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִבְרָךְ יְיָ

Kevod malhuteha yomeru ugevurateha yedaberu.  
 Lehodi'a livney ha'adam gevurotav uhevod hadar malhuto.  
 Malhuteha malhut kol olamim umemshalteha behol dor vador.  
 Someh adonay lehol hanofelim vezokef lehol hakefufim.  
 Eyney hol eleha yesaberu  
 ve'atah noten lahem et ohlam be'ito.  
 Pote'ah et yadeha umasbi'a lehol hay ratzon.  
 Tzadik adonay behol derahav vehasid behol ma'asav.  
 Karov adonay lehol korav lehol asher yikra'uhu ve'emet.  
 Retzon yere'av ya'aseh ve'et shavatam yishma veyoshi'em.  
 Shomer adonay et kol ohavav ve'et kol haresha'im yashmid.  
 Tehilat adonay yedaber pi  
 vivareh kol basar shem kodsho le'olam va'ed.  
 Va'anahnu nevareh yah me'atah ve'ad olam halleluyah.



## HAḤNASAT SEFER TORAH / RETURNING THE TORAH TO THE ARK

Let all bless the name of THE ETERNAL,  
for it alone is to be exalted.

God's splendor dwells on earth and in the heavens,  
God has lifted up our people's strength.  
Praise to all God's fervent ones,  
to the children of Israel, people near to God.  
Halleluyah!

*Traditionally the Torah is carried around the room, although some congregations immediately place it in the ark and continue with Etz Ḥayim Hi, page 605.*

## הַכְנֵסֶת סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה

יְהַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה כִּי־נִשְׁגַּב שְׁמוֹ לְבָדּוֹ

הוֹדוּ עַל־אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם: וַיָּרֶם קֶרֶן לְעַמּוֹ תְהִלָּה לְכָל־חַסִּידָיו לְבְנֵי  
יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם קְרוֹבּוֹ הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Yehalelu et shem adonay ki nisgav shemo levado

Hodo al eretz veshamayim vayarem keren le'amo tehilah leh<sup>ol</sup>  
hasidav livney yisra'el am kero<sup>vo</sup> halleluyah.

*Traditionally the Torah is carried around the room, although some congregations immediately place it in the ark and continue with Etz Hayim Hi, page 606.*

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יהללו...הללויה / Let...Halleluyah! (Psalms 148:13-14).

*On Shabbat, substitute Psalm 29 (page 603).*

The world belongs to GOD in all its fullness,  
the earth, and all who dwell on it,  
for God has founded it upon the waters,  
on the torrents, God established it.  
Who can ascend the mount of THE ETERNAL?  
Who rises to the holy place of God?  
The one whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure,  
whose soul has not been vainly self-excusing,  
the one who never swore deceitfully.

That person reaps a blessing from THE ALL-KNOWING ONE,  
justice from the God of help.

For many generations now,  
the family of Jacob has sought your presence.

You city gates, open your bolts,  
eternal gates, be lifted up,  
and let the sovereign of glory come! ↩

---

לֹא־נִשָּׂא לְשׁוּא נַפְשִׁי / Whose soul has not been vainly self-excusing. Literally, “who has not lifted up the soul in vain.” The psalm turns on repetitions of the key verb, “lift up,” playing on its many meanings. Compare: “That person reaps [literally, lifts up] a blessing....You city gates, open [literally, lift up] your gates, etc.” The pilgrim, ascending the steep slopes toward the Temple Mount, contemplates, through this interplay of associations, the fundamental act of pilgrimage: an offering-up to God. J.R.

NOTE. This psalm asks and answers several questions, suggesting that it was sung antiphonally in ancient times with the congregation singing the responses. D.A.T.

# מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד

לִיהוּהָ הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ	תִּבֵּל וַיִּשְׁבִּי בָּהּ:
כִּי־הוּא עַל־יָמִים יִסְדָּהּ	וְעַל־נְהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנֶהּ:
מִי־יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר־יְהוּה	וּמִי־יָקוּם בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ:
נָקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר־לֵבָב	אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נָשָׂא לַשָּׂוֵא נַפְשִׁי
	וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:
יֵשָׂא בִרְכָּה מֵאֵת יְהוּה	וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
זֶה דּוֹר דֹּרְשָׁיו	מִבְּקֵשֵׁי פִנְיֶךָ יַעֲקֹב סֶלָה:
שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רְאשֵׁיכֶם	וְהַנְּשָׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם
	וַיָּבֹאוּ מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד: ←

Ledavid mizmor.

Ladonay ha'aretz umlo'ah tevel veyoshvey vah.

Ki hu al yamim yesadah ve'al neharot yehoneneha.

Mi ya'aleh behar adonay umi yakum bimkom kodsho.

Neki hapayim uvar levav asher lo nasa lashav nafshi velo nishba lemirmah.

Yisa verahah me'et adonay utzedakah me'elohey yisho.

Zeh dor dorshav mevakshey faneha ya'akov selah.

Se'u she'arim rasheyhem vehinasu pithey olam veyavo meleḥ hakavod. →

Who is the sovereign of glory?  
THE MAGNIFICENT, so powerful and mighty!  
THE ETERNAL ONE, a champion in battle!  
You city gates, open your bolts;  
eternal gates, be lifted up,  
and let the sovereign of glory come!  
Who is this one, the sovereign of glory?  
THE RULER of the Multitudes of Heaven,  
the sovereign of glory.

Psalm 24

*Continue on page 605.*

מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד      יְהוָה עֲזוּז וְגִבּוֹר  
 יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה:  
 שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רָאשֵׁיכֶם      וּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם  
 וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד:  
 מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד      יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא  
 מֶלֶךְ הַכָּבוֹד סֵלָה:

Mi zeh meleḥ hakavod adonay izuz vegibor adonay gibor  
milḥamah.

Se'u she'arim rasheyhem use'u pithey olam veyavo meleḥ  
hakavod.

Mi hu zeh meleḥ hakavod adonay tzeva'ot hu meleḥ hakavod  
selah.

*Continue on page 606.*

*Recited on Shabbat:*

A psalm of David: Give to THE ONE WHO IS, you so-called gods,  
give to THE INDIVISIBLE glory and strength!

Give to THE UNSEEN ONE the glory of the divine Name,  
worship THE ANCIENT ONE with holy ornament.

The voice of THE UNENDING on the waters,  
God in full Glory thundering,

THE ONE WHO CALLS over many waters,

yes, the voice of THE REVEALED ONE in full strength,  
voice of THE TRUTHFUL in full beauty,

voice of THE ETERNAL ONE breaking the cedars,  
THE ALL-KNOWING smashing the cedars of Lebanon,

making them skip about like calves,  
yes, Lebanon and Sirion, like offspring of the wild ox.

The voice of THE JUST ONE hewing flames of fire,  
the voice of THE ANOINTER making the desert writhe,  
of THE REVIVER, giving birthpangs to the wastelands of Kadesh,

the voice of THE CREATOR, convulsing all the deer,  
stripping the forests,  
while amid God's palace all declare: "The Glory!"

THE REDEEMER, prevailing at the Sea,  
THE PRESENCE, presiding for the world,

THE WANDERER, imparting strength to Israel,  
GIVER OF WORDS, blessing the people in their peace.

Psalm 29

## מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד

הָבוּ לַיהוָה פָּנֵי אֱלִים	הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וָעֹז:
הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ	הִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת-קָדֹשׁ:
קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמָּיִם	אֵל הַכְּבוֹד הַרְעִים
יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים:	
קוֹל-יְהוָה בַּפֶּחַח	קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהָרָר:
קוֹל יְהוָה שֹׁכֵן אַרְזִים	וַיִּשְׁכֹּן יְהוָה אֶת-אַרְזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן:
וַיִּרְקִידֵם כְּמוֹ-עֵגֶל	לְבָנוֹן וְשָׁרִיזָן כְּמוֹ בֶן-רֵאמִים:
קוֹל-יְהוָה חִצֵּב לְהַבֹּת אֵשׁ:	
קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלִיל מִדְּבָר	יַחֲלִיל יְהוָה מִדְּבַר קָדֹשׁ:
קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלִיל אֵילֹת	וַיַּחֲשֹׁף יַעְרוֹת
וּבְהִיכְלוֹ פָּלוּ אוֹמֵר כְּבוֹד:	
יְהוָה לַמִּצְבֹּת יָשָׁב	וַיָּשָׁב יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ לְעוֹלָם:
יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן	יְהוָה יִכְרֹךְ אֶת-עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:

Mizmor ledavid.

Havu ladonay beney elim havu ladonay kavod va'oz.

Havu ladonay kevod shemo hishtahavu ladonay behadrat  
kodesh.

Kol adonay al hamayim el hakavod hirim adonay al mayim rabim.

Kol adonay bako'ah kol adonay behadar.

Kol adonay shover arazim vayshaber adonay et arzey  
halevanon.

Vayarkidem kemo egel levanon vesiryon kemo ven re'emim.

Kol adonay hotzev lahavot esh.

Kol adonay yahil midbar yahil adonay midbar kadesh.

Kol adonay yeholel ayalot vayeḥesof ye'arot uveheyhalo kulo  
omer kavod.

Adonay lamabul yashav vayeshev adonay meleḥ le'olam.

Adonay oz le'amo yiten adonay yevareḥ et amo vashalom.



*The ark is opened and the Torah placed inside.*

And when the Ark was set at rest, they would proclaim:  
Restore, ETERNAL ONE, the many thousand troops of Israel!

For it is a precious teaching I have given you,  
my Torah: Don't abandon it!

It is a Tree of Life to those that hold fast to it,  
all who uphold it may be counted fortunate.

Its ways are ways of pleasantness,  
and all its paths are peace.

Return us, PRECIOUS ONE, let us return!  
Renew our days, as you have done of old!

*The ark is closed.*

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COMMENTARY. "Renew our days as you have done of old."

We may read:

Renew our days as when we were young.

Revive us with the wonder of your world,  
with the enthusiasm of our youth.

Help us to recover something of the child within  
that knew you in the desert  
and trembled at the foot of the mountain.

Grant us, once again, the sacred vision  
and the courage of new beginnings.

Do not return us to days past:

Renew our days as when we were young.

S.E.S.

*The ark is opened and the Torah placed inside.*

ובנחה יאמר שובה יהוה רבבות אלפי ישראל:  
כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם תורתִי אל־תִּעֲזֹבו:  
עץ־חיים היא למחזיקים בה ותמכֶּיהָ מאֲשֶׁר:  
דַּרְכֶּיהָ דְּרָכֵי־נֶעֱם וְכָל־נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שָׁלוֹם:  
הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה חֵדֶשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Etz hayim hi lamahazikim bah vetomheha me'ushar.  
Deraheha darhey no'am vehol netivoteha shalom.  
Hashivenu adonay eleha venashuvah hadesh yameynu  
kekedem.

*The ark is closed.*

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ובנחה...ישראל / And...Israel (Numbers 10:36).  
כי...תעזבו / For...it (Proverbs 4:2).  
עץ...מאשר / It...fortunate (Proverbs 3:18).  
דרכיה...שלום / Its...peace (Proverbs 3:17).  
השיבנו...כקדם / Return...old (Lamentations 5:21).

יא עץ חיים / It is a Tree of Life. At the end of the Garden story, Adam and Eve are forbidden access to the mysterious Tree of Life, whose fruit confers immortality. Yet over the generations to follow, humankind itself becomes a Tree of Life. The Torah is handed on from one generation to another, binding the generations in a commonwealth of time and conferring the norms on which the survival of civilization depends. Thus the Torah is compared to the Tree of Life.

J.R.