

High Holidays 2020

Kabbalat Hashanah and Rosh
Hashanah *Ma'ariv*



RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM

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In order to support this year's socially distanced High Holiday season, Reconstructing Judaism is making this excerpt from the *Mahzor Leyamim Nora'im: Prayerbook for the Days of Awe* available without cost. We hope that providing this excerpt will help make your at-home High Holidays observances uniquely meaningful.

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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HAPPY NEW YEAR • SHANAH TOVAH • שנה טובה

Kabbalat Hashanah, pages 23-57, provides a broad variety of options for introducing the Yamim Nora'im/Days of Awe on the evening of Rosh Hashanah. This new liturgical feature can take a variety of forms to reflect the needs of the sheliach tzibur/service leader and community.

Choose from the following:

This is the moment that the world changes; at this instant one year ends, the other begins. The air is cluttered with the past and potent with new possibilities.



This night as the New Year begins,
We come together as a community;
Yet each of us is strangely solitary.

Each of us comes here with special hopes and dreams;
Each of us bears our own worries and concerns.

Each of us has a story no one else can tell;
Each of us brings praise no one else can offer.

Each of us feels joy no one else can share;
Each of us has regrets that others cannot know.

And so, at this sacred time, we pray:
If we are weary, may we find strength;
If we are discouraged, may we find hope.

If we have forgotten how to share, may we teach each other
and learn together.

If we have been careless with one another, may we
seek forgiveness.

If our hearts have been chilled by indifference,
May we be warmed by renewed purpose,
inspired by the spirit of this holy night.

Sidney Greenberg (Adapted)



This Rosh Hashanah, each of us enters this sanctuary with a different need.

Some hearts are full of gratitude and joy:
They are overflowing with the happiness of love
and the joy of life;
they are eager to confront the day, to make the world
more fair;
they are recovering from illness or have escaped misfortune.
And we rejoice with them.

Some hearts ache with sorrow:
Disappointments weigh heavily upon them, and they have
tasted despair; families have been broken;
loved ones lie on a bed of pain;
death has taken those whom they cherished.
May our presence and sympathy bring them comfort.

Some hearts are embittered:
They have sought answers in vain;
have had their ideals mocked and betrayed;
life has lost its meaning and value.
May the knowledge that we too are searching
restore their hope that there is something to find.

Some spirits hunger:
They long for friendship; they crave understanding;
they yearn for warmth.

May we in our common need gain strength from one another;
sharing our joys, lightening each other's burdens, and praying
for the welfare of our community.

Chaim Stern



Our noisy year has now descended with the sun beyond our sight, and in the silence of this praying place, we close the door upon the hectic joys and fears, the accomplishments and anguish, of the year that we have left behind. What was but moments ago the substance of our life has now become its memory, and what we did must now be woven into what we are. On this day we shall not do, but be; we are to walk the outer limits of our humanity, no longer ride unseeing through a world we only vaguely sense beneath our cushioned wheels. On this day, heat and warmth and light must come from deep within ourselves; no longer can we tear apart the world to make our fire. On this day, but a breath away from our creation, we are to breathe in a world from which we may no longer feel apart, but as close as eye to blossom, and ear to the singing in the night.

We are here, on this Rosh Hashanah Eve, poised somewhere between what we have been and what we wish to be. We are here at this season of *teshuvah*, of turning, of returning to the self we have covered up behind the roles and masks with which we have learned to protect ourselves. We are here in celebration and in search, in judgment and embrace, ready to confront ourselves and the world in which we find ourselves this night. We seek to open wide the windows behind which we have hidden, and to send forth hand and heart to learn where we have come, what we have become, and what we hope to be.

Richard N. Levy (Adapted)



אָדָם בְּאַמֶּת אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ

אָדָם בְּאַמֶּת אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ אֶלָּא לְסֵפֶר אֶחָד בְּחַיּוֹ
בְּאַשֶׁר כָּל חַיּוֹ נִקְבָּצִים לְעֵינָיו בְּסֵפֶר הַפְּתוּחַ לְעֵינָיו
בְּאַשֶׁר הוּא קוֹרֵא בּוֹ דֵּף אַחֵר דֵּף וְרוֹאֶה לְעֵינָיו
אֵיךְ יוֹם אַחֵר יוֹם דֵּף כְּמוֹ דֵּף אַחֵר דֵּף
בְּסֵפֶר הַפְּתוּחַ לְעֵינָיו.
וְאֵף לֹא אֶחָד נִעְזָב וּבְרַחֲמִים רַבִּים נֶאֱסָף
דֵּף אַחֵר דֵּף
בְּסֵפֶר הַפְּתוּחַ לְעֵינָיו
כִּי רוֹאֶה לְעֵינָיו
פְּתוּחַ סֵפֶר חַיּוֹ
בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים נִעְזָב.

Human beings need but one book in their life,
when my whole life is gathered like an open book
before my eyes, when I read it page by page
seeing with my own eyes how day has followed day,
flown like page has followed page
in the open book before my eyes.
And yet not even one is left behind;
in great mercy it is gathered
page by page,
like a book open before my eyes.
how, in great mercy
my open book of life
is left behind.

Amir Gilboa

HADLAKAT NEROT / CANDLELIGHTING FOR ROSH HASHANAH

Candles are traditionally lit in the home. Many communities also light candles together at the beginning of the Kabbalat Hashanah service.

Blessed are you, SOURCE OF LIGHT, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us to kindle the (Shabbat and) festival light.

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

Many contemporary Jews are reciting *beraḥot*/blessings in ways that reflect their theological outlooks and ethical concerns. At any place where a blessing occurs in the liturgy, the following elements can be combined to create alternative formulas for *beraḥot*. This can be done by selecting one phrase from each group to form the introductory clause.

I	Baruḥ atah adonay	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה	Blessed are you Adonay
	Beruḥah at yah	בְּרוּכָה אַתָּה יְיָ	Blessed are you Yah
	Nevareḥ et	נְבָרֵךְ אֶת	Let us bless
II	eloheynu	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	our God
	hasheḥinah	הַשְׁכִּינָה	Sheḥinah
	eyn haḥayim	עֵין הַחַיִּים	Source of Life
III	meleḥ ha'olam	מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם	Sovereign of all worlds
	ḥey ha'olamim	חַי הָעוֹלָמִים	Life of all the worlds
	ru'ah ha'olam	רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם	Spirit of the world

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

הַדְּלָקָה נְרוֹת לְרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְ) יוֹם טוֹב:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam asher kideshanu
bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel (shabbat ve) yom tov.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחִיָּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ
לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam sheheheyanu
vekiyemanu vehigi'anu lazeman hazeh.

MA'ASEY BEREYSHIT / A HYMN OF CREATION

Bless, O my spirit, THE ETERNAL ONE!
O LIVING ONE, my God, how vast you are!
In majesty and splendor you are clothed,
wearing the light of heaven as your shawl,
and stretching forth your canopy of sky,
you pitch the rafters of your chambers on the waters,
making the clouds your chariot,
surveying all on wings of air,
making the winds your messengers;
your servants, fire and flame.

And there was evening, there was morning: a single day. ↪

GUIDED MEDITATION. Sit comfortably in your chair, legs uncrossed. Close your eyes. Breathe in and out slowly for a minute or two. Pay attention to the order and strength in your body. Remember your connection with all living creatures.

Picture yourself on a small boat slowly floating along the banks of a river. You feel a quiet sense of calm. As you slowly drift along, you see on the riverbank the people you have connected with over this past year. They appear one by one, beginning from last Rosh Hashanah right on through to the present. Allow yourself time to review these connections as they occurred throughout the year. Let the images gradually emerge. Keep in mind that you can only accept from others what you have space to receive within yourself. As you end your ride, beach your boat and get out. Think about what you want to take with you. Put in the boat what you want to leave behind. Take a few minutes and enjoy the sun on the riverbank. How do you feel? When you are ready, open your eyes. D.B.

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית

We remember the creation of the world even as we strive to recreate it.

יהוה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֹלֶת מָאד	בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוה
עֵטָה־אֹר כְּשִׁלְמָה	הוֹד וְהָדָר לְבָשֶׁת:
הַמְקַרָּה בְּמַיִם עֲלִיּוֹתָיו	נוֹטָה שְׁמַיִם בְּיָרִיעָה:
הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל־פְּנֵי־רוּחַ:	הַשֹּׁם־עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ
מְשַׁרְתִּיו אֵשׁ לֵהֱט:	עֹשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶיו רוּחוֹת

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

Vayehi erev vayehi voker yom ehad.

Who made the world?
Who made the swan and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
The grasshopper, I mean—
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?

Mary Oliver

You place the earth on its foundations,
never to topple for as long as time endures.
You cover it with ocean for its garment;
the waters rise up on the mountains of the ocean floor.
You speak, they scurry to obey,
hastening in fright before your voice's roar;
they ascend the mountains, and descend into the depths;
to the places you have readied for them.

And you set a boundary that they cannot cross;
and never can they overrun the earth again.

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

You make the fountains of the deep gush forth their waters;
down between the hills they make their course.
And they give drink to every living creature,
slaking the thirst of every wild beast.
Beside them dwell the birds that fill the skies,
calling their song amid the foliage. ↪

יִסַּד-אֶרֶץ עַל-מְכוּנֶיהָ	בְּלִתְמוּט עוֹלָם וָעֶד:
תְּהוֹם כָּלבוֹשׁ כְּפִיתוֹ	עַל-הָרִים יַעֲמְדוּ-מַיִם:
מִן-גִּיעָרָתָךְ יְנוֹסוּן	מִן-קוֹל רַעֲמֶךָ יִחַפְּזוּן:
יַעֲלוּ הָרִים יִרְדּוּ בְּקַעוֹת	אֶל מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדֹּת לָהֶם:
גְּבוּל-שְׁמַת בְּלִי-יַעֲבֹרוּן	בְּלִי-יִשׁוּבוּן לְכִסּוֹת הָאֶרֶץ:

וַיְהִי-עָרֵב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:

Vayehi erev vayehi voker yom sheni.

הַמַּשְׁלַח מַעֲנִיִּים בְּנֻחָלִים	בֵּין הָרִים יְהִלְכוּן:
יִשְׁקוּ כָּל-חֵיתוֹ שָׂדֵי	יִשְׁבְּרוּ פְּרָאִים צִמָּאִם:
עֲלֵיהֶם עוֹף-הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן	מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ-קוֹל: ←

COMMENTARY. This *piyut* was structured by Michael Strassfeld to reflect the Jewish understanding that Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world. Its intention is to remind us of the wonder of nature, which is reflected in each day of the biblical story of creation. As we re-experience the glorious complexity and astounding unity of our world, our quest for our place and purpose is renewed. In wonder and humility we celebrate the world's unity and mystery and acknowledge our lack of mastery.

D.A.T.

From your upper chambers you give water to the mountains,
replenishing the earth with your creation's fruits.
You make grains to grow, to feed the cattle,
vegetation for the human beings to till,
to bring forth bread out of the earth,
and wine for gladdening the human heart,
and oil for brightening the face,
and food for sustenance and life.

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

You make the moon for measuring the seasons,
the sun which knows its time to set.
You appoint the dark, and night arrives,
when forest animals awake and stir about,
the lions roaring for their prey,
seeking their food from God.

When sun gives forth its rays, they're gathered
to their lairs and make their beds,
and humans go out to their labors,
working till the evening comes.

And there was evening, there was morning: a fourth day.↵

מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיּוֹתָיו	מִפְּרִי מַעֲשֵׂיךָ תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ :
מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר לִבְהֶמָּה	וְעֹשֶׁב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם
לְהוֹצִיא לָחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ :	וַיֵּין יִשְׂמַח לִב־אָנוּשׁ
לְהַצְהִיל פָּנִים מִשָּׁמֶן	וְלָחֶם לִב־אָנוּשׁ יִסְעֵד :

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי :

Vayehi erev vayehi voker yom shelishi.

עָשָׂה יְרֹחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים	שָׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מְבוֹאוֹ :
תָּשֹׁת־חֹשֶׁךְ וַיְהִי לַיְלָה	בּוֹ־תִרְמַשׁ כָּל־חֵיתוֹ־יָעַר :
הַכְּפִירִים שְׂאֲגִים לַטָּרֶף	וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מֵאֵל אָכֹלִם :
תִּזְרַח הַשָּׁמֶשׁ יֶאֱסֹפֹן	וְאֶל־מְעוֹנָתָם יִרְבְּצוּן :
יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפֻּעַל	וְלַעֲבֹדָתוֹ עַד־עֶרֶב :

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי : ←

Vayehi erev vayehi voker yom revi'i.

The trees of THE ALMIGHTY drink their fill,
cedars of Lebanon, which God has planted,
where the birds have made their nests;
and junipers make shelter for the stork.
The lofty mountains are for wild goats;
the crannies of their stones, the badgers' homes.

Behold the sea in its immensity:
its teeming creatures dwell there beyond number,
living things both great and small;
and there the ships travel about; as does
Leviathan, whom you created for your sport.

And there was evening, there was morning: a fifth day.

How great is your Creation, FOUNT OF LIFE,
and all of it you made in wisdom!
How the earth abounds with all your creatures!
And all of them are looking toward you,
to give them food in time of need.
You give your sustenance for them to gather;
open your hand, and satisfy them well.

Should you conceal your presence, they are frightened;
should you take away their breath, they perish
and return to dust.
Send back your breath, and they revive;
earth's living face is thus renewed. ↩

יִשְׁבְּעוּ עֲצֵי יְהוָה	אֲרִזִּי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָטַע:
אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם צַפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ	חֲסִידָה בְּרוּשִׁים בֵּיתָה:
הָרִים הַגְּבוּהִים לִיעֲלִים	סֹלְעִים מַחֲסֶה לְשַׁפְּנִים:
זֶה הֵימָּה גְּדוֹל וּרְחֹב יָדַיִם	שָׁם-רָמַשׁ וְאִין מִסְפָּר
חַיּוֹת קְטָנוֹת עִם-גְּדִלוֹת:	
שָׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלָכוּן	לְוִיתָן זֶה-יֵצֵאתָ לְשַׁחֲקֵבּוֹ:
וַיְהִי-עָרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם חֲמִישִׁי:	

Vayehi erev vayehi voker yom hamishi.

מֶה-רָבוּ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה	כָּל־מִן בְּחִכְמָה עָשִׂיתָ מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנְךָ:
כָּל־מִן אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּן	לְתַת אָכְלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:
תִּתֵּן לָהֶם יִלְקָטוּן	תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׁבְּעוּן טוֹב:
תִּסְתִּיר פָּנֶיךָ יִבְהִילוּן	תִּסַּף רוּחָם יִגְוְעוּן וְאֶל-עַפְרָם יִשׁוּבוּן:
תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן	וּתְחַדֵּשׁ פָּנֶי אֲדָמָה: ←

Let the glory of THE ANCIENT ONE endure forever;
may you, THE SOURCE OF ALL, rejoice in your creation,
you, whose very gaze makes all life tremble,
whose touch upon the mountains sets them rumbling with
smoke.

I sing to you, CREATOR, all my life,
make melody to you, my God, while I yet live.

May my prayer be pleasing to you;
for in THE BOUNTIFUL do I rejoice.

Let wrongdoing be finished from the earth!

May evildoers cease, and be no more!

And bless, O my soul, THE ONE WHO IS! Halleluyah!

Based on Psalm 104 and Genesis 1



We are still in the midst of the sixth day. We are created, we have eaten of the tree of knowledge, been banished from Eden, loved, given birth, hated, killed and yet the sixth day is not over. Our human story repeated in endless generations is incomplete. God has called upon us to finish the work of creation and thus to say of the work of our hands *ki tov*/it is good.

Then will *vayehi erev vayehi voker*/And there was evening, there was morning, the sixth day, be immediately followed by *vayehulu* and then the work ceased, and the universe was complete, and all rested on the seventh day.

יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם	יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו:
הַמְּבִיט לָאָרֶץ וְתִרְעַד	יַגַּע בְּהָרִים וַיַּעֲשֶׂנוּ:
אֲשִׁירָה לִיהוָה בְּחַיִּי	אֲזַמְּרָה לֵאלֹהֵי בְעוֹדִי:
יַעֲרֹב עָלָיו שִׁיחִי	אֲנֹכִי אֶשְׂמַח בִּיהוָה:
יִתְּמוּ חַטָּאִים מִן־הָאָרֶץ	וְרָשָׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם

הַלְלוּיָהּ

בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה

Ashirah ladonay behayay azamerah leylohay be'odi.
 ye'erav alav sihi anohi esmah badonay.
 Yitamu hata'im min ha'aretz uresha'im od eynam
 barehi nafshi et adonay haleluyah.

For the chief musician, to a Gathite melody; by Asaph.

Sing joyful song to God, our strength,
make joyous sounds for Jacob's God!

Raise up a song, and strike the tambourine,
pluck sweetly on the strings, accompanied by harp.

Blast piercing notes upon the shofar for the New Moon,
for the full moon, for our festive holiday.

For it is Israel's law,
a statute of the God of Jacob.

God established it in Joseph's clans,
when going forth against the land of Egypt;
I heard a language that I didn't know.

"I have relieved their shoulders from their burdens,
their hands are freed from carrying the basket.

In sorrow you called out, and I released you,
I answered from my hidden place where thunder rolls,
I tried you at Meribah's waters. So it was! ↪

לְמִנְצָח

עַל הַגִּתִּית לְאַסָּף:

הִרְנִינוּ לֵאלֹהִים עֲזָנוּ הִרְעֵנוּ לֵאלֹהֵי יִעֲקֹב:
 שְׁאוּזְמָרָה וְתַנּוּתָּךְ כְּנוֹר נָעִים עִם־נָבֶל:
 תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בַּכֶּסֶה לְיוֹם חֲגֵנוּ:
 כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא מִשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהֵי יִעֲקֹב:
 יַעֲדוּת בִּיהוֹסֵף שְׁמוֹ בְּצֵאתוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם שְׁפַת לֹא־יִדְעָתִי אֲשַׁמֶּע:
 הִסִּירוּתִי מִסֶּבֶל שְׂכָמוֹ כִּפְיוֹ מִדּוֹד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה:
 בְּצִרְהָ קִרְאתָ וְאַחֲלִצְךָ אֶעֱנֶךָ בְּסֹתֶר רָעַם אֲבַחֲנֶךָ עַל־מִי מְרִיבָה סֵלָה: ←

NOTE. This appellation "For the chief musician, to a Gathite melody" occurs dozens of times at the beginning of psalms, as at the end of the book of Habakuk. Often it occurs alongside references to Asaph, the clan of Levite singers. This suggests that the choir leader either composed or directed the performance of these compositions. D.A.T.

Listen, my people, I admonish you!
Israel, if you only would pay heed to me!

Let you not have among you alien gods,
let you not bow down to exotic gods.

I am THE REDEEMING ONE, your God,
who brings you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open up your mouth, and I shall fill it!

But my people did not listen to my voice,
no, Israel did not care for me.

So I sent away the people in their stubbornness of heart,
I let them go according to their own devices.

Would that my people might listen to me,
yes, would that Israel walked according to my ways!

How quickly would I crush their enemies,
on their oppressors would I cast my hand.

Those who hate GOD would cringe before my people;
I would stand beside them always.

God would feed them from the choicest wheat.
Yes, from the rock I'd feed you honey in abundance."

Psalm 81

שִׁמְעַ עַמִּי וְאַעֲיֶדָה בְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם-תִּשְׁמַע-לִי:
 לֹא-יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֵל זֶר וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל גֵּכָר:
 אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמַּעֲלֶךְ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם הַרְחֹב-פִּיךָ וְאַמְלֵאֲהוּ:
 וְלֹא-שָׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא-אָבָה לִי:
 וְאַשְׁלַחֲהוּ בַּשְּׂרִירוֹת לִפְנֵם יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם:
 לוֹ עַמִּי שִׁמְעֵ לִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהִלְכוּ:
 כְּמַעֲט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנֶּיַע וְעַל-צָרֵיהֶם אֲשִׁיב יָדַי:
 מִשְׁנְאִי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ-לוֹ וְיִהְיֶה עֲתָם לְעוֹלָם:
 וַיֹּאכִלֵּהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֹטָא וּמִצּוֹר דָּבֵשׁ אֲשַׁבֵּיעֶךָ:

COMMENTARY. Psalm 81 was identified as the psalm for the day of Rosh Hashanah by the Gaon of Vilna (eighteenth-century spiritual and intellectual leader). The psalm's contrasting moods of joyous celebration and quiet contemplation make it especially suited for such use. Two important symbols of the holiday appear here—the shofar, which awakens us from our everyday complacency, and the honey, reflecting our hopes for a sweet new year.

R.S.

A Song for the Ascents.

I lift my eyes up to the hills.
From where does my help come?

My help is from THE UNSEEN ONE,
the maker of the heavens and the earth,
who will not cause your foot to fail.
Your protector never slumbers.

Behold the one who slumbers not, who never sleeps,
the guardian of Israel.

THE ABUNDANT ONE preserves you,
THE WATCHFUL ONE, your shelter, at your right hand a support.

By day, the sun will not afflict you,
nor the moonlight by the night.

THE VIGILANT shall guard you from all evil,
and will keep your lifebreath safe.

THE SHEPHERD guard your going out and coming in,
from now unto eternity.

Psalms 121

שִׁיר

לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי:

עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:
 אֶל־יִתְּן לְמוֹט רִגְלֶךָ אֶל־יָנוּם שִׁמְרֶךָ:
 הִנֵּה לֹא־יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 יְהוָה שִׁמְרֶךָ יְהוָה צִלְּךָ עַל־יַד יְמִינֶךָ:
 יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכָּפֶה וַיָּרֶחַ בַּלַּיְלָה:
 יְהוָה יִשְׁמְרֶךָ מִכָּל־רָע יִשְׁמַר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ:
 יְהוָה יִשְׁמַר־צִאתְךָ וּבֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:

Esa eynay el heharim me'ayin yavo ezri.

Ezri me'im adonay oseh shamayim va'aretz.

KAVANAH. Often prayer seeks to turn our thoughts towards God; at other times it directs our attention towards ourselves, and sometimes these two poles are held in intimate relation, as in the opening outcry of the psalm: "I lift my eyes up to the hills. From where does my help come?" Had the life-sustaining force we call God not been with us, how could we possibly have survived calumny and contempt, pogroms and persecutions? Given the perils and pains of Jewish history, our continued existence as a people is not easy to account for in the usual reasoned terms of causal explanation.

Might we then succumb, if only for a moment, to the cry of the psalmist, and give voice to our astonished recognition that our existence is surely by the grace of God, a gift that surpasses explanation.

E.G.

Now, bless THE LIVING ONE, all servants of THE ONE MOST
HIGH.

You who stand assembled in the house of THE ETERNAL in
the evenings,

raise up your hands in holiness, and bless THE FOUNT OF
LIFE.

May THE ETERNAL ONE, creator of the heavens and the
earth, bless you from Zion's mount.

By day, THE BOUNTIFUL sends love to guard me,
and by night, God's song is with me.

My prayer is to the living God.

THE CREATOR of the heavens' multitudes is with us,
a stronghold for us, truly, is the God of Jacob!

O CREATOR of the hosts of heaven, happy is the one who
trusts in you!

ETERNAL ONE, send help!

Let the sovereign of the world give answer when we call.

Psalms 134; 42:9; 46:8; 84:13; 20:10

הִנֵּה בָּרְכוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־עַבְדֵי יְהוָה
הַעֲמִידִים בְּבֵית־יְהוָה בְּלִילֹת:
שְׂאוּ־יְדֵכֶם קֹדֶשׁ וּבָרְכוּ אֶת־יְהוָה:
יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן עֲשֵׂה שְׁמִים וָאָרֶץ:
יוֹמָם יִצְוֶה יְהוָה חֲסִדוֹ וּבְלַיְלָה שִׁירָה עַמִּי תִפְלָה לְאֵל חַיִּי:
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עֲמָנוּ מִשְׁגֵּב־לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר־יְאָדָם בְּטִיחַ בָּךְ:
יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲזֹרֵנוּ בְּיוֹם־קִרְאָנוּ:

Select from among the following songs:

Who is the person who wishes to live,
who desires days to behold life's good?
Preserve your tongue from evil,
and your lips from uttering deceit.
Turn away from evil, and do good,
seek peace, and follow after it.

Psalms 34:13-15



All the world before us
is a very narrow bridge,
and the main thing
is not to fear at all.

Attributed to Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav



Pour out your heart like water
in the presence of THE LIVING GOD.

Lamentations 2:19



Find words in you to offer
and return to THE COMPASSIONATE.

Hosea 14:3

Select from among the following songs

אֶהֱב יָמִים לְרֵאוֹת טוֹב:	מִי־הָאִישׁ הַחֲפִיץ חַיִּים
וּשְׁפָתַיִךְ מְדַבֵּר מְרָמָה:	נֹצֵר לְשׁוֹנֶה מָרַע
בִּקֵּשׁ שָׁלוֹם וְרִדְפָהּ:	סוֹר מָרַע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב

Mi ha'ish heḥafetz ḥayim ohev yamim lirot tov.
Netzor leshoneḥa mera usfateḥa midaber mirmah.
Sur mera va'asey tov bakesh shalom verodfehu.



כָּל־הָעוֹלָם כֵּלּוֹ גֶּשֶׁר צַר מְאֹד
וְהַעֲקָר לֹא לִפְחֹד כֶּלֶל:

Kol ha'olam kulo gesher tzar me'od
veha'ikar lo lefahed kelal.



שִׁפְחֵי כַמִּים לִבָּךְ נִכַח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנָי:

Shifḥi ḥamayim libeḥ noḥaḥ peney adonay.



קָחוּ עִמָּכֶם דְּבָרִים וְשׁוּבוּ אֶל־יְהוָה:

Kehu imaḥem devarim veshuvu el adonay.

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.

Psalms 118:19-20



Behold, the days are coming,
that I shall send forth hunger in the Land,
not hunger for bread,
nor thirst for water,
but desire to hear the words of THE ETERNAL ONE.

Amos 8:11



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

Lamentations 5:2



I lift my eyes up to the hills.
From where does my help come?

Psalms 121:1-2



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.

Psalms 69:14



אָב־אֲבָם אוֹדָה יְהוָה:
צְדִיקִים יִבְאוּ בוֹ:

פְּתוּחֵי שַׁעֲרֵי־צֶדֶק
זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה

Pithu li sha'arey tzedek avo vam odeh yah.
Zeh hash'a'ar ladonay tzadikim yavo'u vo.

הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים... וְהִשְׁלַחְתִּי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ
לֹא־רָעַב לִלְחָם וְלֹא־צָמָא לַמַּיִם כִּי אִם־לְשֹׁמֵעַ אֶת דְּבַרִּי יְהוָה:

Hiney yamim ba'im vehishlahti ra'av ba'aretz
lo ra'av lalehem velo tzama lamayim
ki im lishmo'a et divrey adonay.



הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֹבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Hashivenu adonay eleha venashuva hadesh yameynu kekedem.



אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי:

Esa eynay el heharim me'ayin yavo ezri.



וְאֲנִי תַפְלִיתִי־לָךְ יְהוָה עַת רָצוֹן אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב־חֶסֶדְךָ עֲנֵנִי בְּאֶמֶת
יִשְׁעֶךָ:

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



not hunger for bread, nor thirst for water, but desire to hear the words of THE ETERNAL ONE. In ten days, we will observe the fast of Yom Kippur, denying ourselves both food and drink. These words of Amos anticipate that fast and remind us that there are other deprivations, both physical and spiritual, whose impact is no less difficult, and whose duration can be more devastating.

R.H.

The following two psalms are customarily added when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat.

A psalm. A song for the day of Shabbat.

A good thing to give thanks to THE ETERNAL
to sing out to your name supreme,

to tell about your kindness in the morning,
and your faithfulness at night,

on ten-stringed lyre and on flute,
with melodies conceived on harp,

for you, ALMIGHTY ONE, elate me with your deeds,
I'll sing about the actions of your hands.

How great your deeds have been, SUPERNAL ONE.
your thoughts exceedingly profound.

Of this the foolish person cannot know,
of this the shallow cannot understand. ↪

NOTE. Psalms 92 and 93 express the motifs of wholeness, joy, and rest in Shabbat. Psalm 92 has been associated with Shabbat since biblical times. According to the midrash,* Shabbat itself stood up and recited this psalm at Creation, thus exulting in the role given it as the day of inner joy for all of God's creatures. A.G.

*Midrash is a genre of interpretative commentary that derives its name from the root מדרש: to search out. The activity of expounding midrash is one of elucidation through creative expansion of words, verses, or whole stories that are ambiguous in the biblical text. These provide fertile ground for imaginative explanation. Midrashic literature dates back to the period of the early Amoraic rabbis, ca. 400 C.E., and is still being created today. M.P.

The following two psalms are customarily added when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat.

שִׁיר לְיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת:

מִזְמוֹר

וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלֵינוּ:	טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת לַיהוָה
וְאֶמְוִנְתְּךָ בְּלֵילוֹת:	לְהַגִּיד בְּפֶקֶד חֶסֶדְךָ
עָלֵי הַגִּיוֹן בְּכִנּוּר:	עָלֵי-עָשׂוֹר וְעָלֵי-נָכַל
בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ אֲרַנֵּן:	כִּי שִׁמְחָתָנִי יְהוָה בְּפַעֲלֶךָ
מָאֵד עֲמָקוֹ מִחֻשְׁבְּתֶיךָ:	מִה־גִּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֶׂיךָ יְהוָה
וּכְסִיל לֹא יִכִּין אֶת-זֹאת: ←	אִישׁ-בָּעֵר לֹא יֵדַע

Mizmor shir leyom hashabbat.

Tov lehodot l'adonay ulzamer leshimeḥa elyon.

Lehagid baboker ḥasdeḥa ve'emunateḥa baleylot.

Aley asor va'aley navel aley higayon beḥinor.

May these hours of rest and renewal
open my heart to joy and my mind to truth.
May all who struggle find rest on this day.
May all who suffer find solace on this day.
May all who hurt find healing on this day.
May all who despair find purpose on this day.
May all who hunger find fulfillment on this day.

And may I live my life in such a way
that this day may fulfill its promise.

R.M.S.

DERASH. On a Rosh Hashanah that coincided with Shabbat, the Ḥasidic master Levi Yitzḥak made the following appeal to God: "Master of the Universe! Today is the New Year when you inscribe the Jews either in the Book of Life or in the Book of Death. Today is also *Shabbos*. Inasmuch as it is forbidden to write on *Shabbos*, how will it be possible for you to inscribe the Jewish people for the coming year? There is only one solution. If you will inscribe your people for a year of life, it is permissible for you to write, in accordance with the teaching of our Sages that the obligation of saving even a single life supersedes all the laws of *Shabbos*."

For though the wicked multiply like weeds,
and evildoers sprout up all around,

it is for their destruction for all time,
but you, MAJESTIC ONE, are lifted high eternally,

behold your enemies, RESPLENDENT ONE,
behold, your enemies are lost,

all evildoers shall be scattered.

You raise my horn like that of the triumphant ox;
I am anointed with fresh oil.

My eye shall gaze in victory on my enemies,
on all who rise against me to do harm

my ears shall hear of their demise.

The righteous flourish like the palm trees,
like cedars of Lebanon they grow,

implanted in the house of THE ALL-KNOWING ONE
amid the courtyards of our God they bear fruit.

In their old age, they'll put forth seed,
fleshy and fresh they'll ever be,

to tell the uprightness of THE ONE ALONE,
my Rock, in whom no fault resides.

Psalms 92

בְּפֶרֶחַ רְשָׁעִים כְּמוֹ-עֵשֶׁב וַיֵּצִיאוּ כָּל-פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן
 לְהַשְׁמָדָם עַד-יָעַר:
 וְאַתָּה מָרוֹם לְעֵלָם יְהוָה:
 כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיכָיֶךָ יְהוָה כִּי-הִנֵּה אֵיכָיֶךָ יֹאבִידוּ
 יִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל-פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן:

וְתָרַם כְּרָאִים קֶרְנִי בְּלַחֲתִי בְּשֶׁמֶן רַעְנָן:
 וְתַבֵּט עֵינֵי בְּשׁוּרֵי בְּקָמִים עָלֵי מְרַעִים
 תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אָזְנִי:

* צַדִּיק כְּתָמָר יִפְרֹחַ כְּאֶרֶז בְּלִכְנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה:
 שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה בַּחֲצֹרֹת אֶלֶּהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:
 עוֹד יְנוּבוֹן בְּשִׁיכָה דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעְנָנִים יִהְיוּ:
 לְהַגִּיד כִּי-יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְלֹא-עוֹלָתָהּ בּוֹ:

Tzadik katamar yifrah, ke'erez balvanon yisgeh.
 Shetulim beveyt adonay, behatzrot eloheynu yafrihu.
 Od yenuvun beseyvah, deshenim vera'ananim yihyu.
 Lehagid ki yashar adonay, tzuri velo avlatah bo.

THE ETERNAL reigns, is clothed in majesty,
THE INVISIBLE is clothed, is girded up with might.

The world is now established,
it cannot give way.

Your throne was long ago secured,
beyond eternity are you.

The rivers raise, O MIGHTY ONE,
the rivers raise a roaring sound,

the floods raise up torrential waves,
but louder than the sound of mighty waters,
more exalted than the breakers of the sea,

raised up on high are you, THE SOURCE.

Your precepts have retained their truth,
and holiness befits your house,

THE ETERNAL ONE, forever and a day.

Psalms 93

מִלֶּךְ גְּאוּת לְבֶשׁ לְבֶשׁ יְהוָה עֹז הַתְּאֻזָּר אֶף־תִּכּוֹן תִּבֵּל בַּל־תִּמּוּט: **יְהוָה**

<p>נִכּוֹן כְּסָאָךְ מָאֻז</p> <p>נִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה</p> <p>יִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת דְּכָכִים:</p>	<p>מַעֲוֹלָם אָתָּה:</p> <p>נִשְׁאֹו נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם</p> <p>אֲדִירִים מְשַׁבְּרֵי־יָם</p> <p>אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה:</p> <p>לְבֵיתְךָ נִאֲוָה־קָדֵשׁ</p> <p>יְהוָה לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים:</p>
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COMMENTARY. Psalm 93 concludes *Kabbalat Shabbat* by retelling the ancient tale of Creation. The waters raised a great shout, showing their power to overwhelm the dry land as it first emerged. So do the forces of chaos and destruction threaten the islands of peace and security we manage to create in our lives. The psalmist assures us, however, that the voice of God is greater than that of even the fiercest storm tides of the ocean. With God's throne firmly established, the peace of Shabbat is now triumphant.

A.G.

KAVANAH. This psalm, recited when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, celebrates our ancestors' vision of the enthronement of God, a metaphor of majesty particularly appropriate to Rosh Hashanah. Against the ever changing flow of the waters, God remains constant; against the ever changing flow of our lives, we return each year to the ideals and aspirations that orient us anew.

R.H.

As the days of twelve long months have slipped beneath the ocean with the waning sun, and the heavy lights of old things have gone glimmering into blackness, we have come to this place of prayer and study to seek out one another, and to feel the presence of our people. Each of us has met that people in a different house—a warm, accepting one; a shifting, fettered one; a concerned, empathic one; a defensive, bitter one. Yet from these diverse houses in which our spirits grew, there was fashioned in us a common recognition that we are related intimately and personally to the Jewish people. However we might reach out to others, to embrace all men and women, a part of us remains with that special people even as we sometimes struggle to find our place within it.

We seek that place once more on this new night, not alone in the direction of our single lives, but together in celebration and in search, in judgment and embrace, to begin again to confront ourselves and the ever-becoming world.

Richard Levy (Adapted)

ḤATZI KADDISH / SHORT KADDISH

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

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כִרְעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ
מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיָמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמְן
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:
יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא
לְעָלְא לְעָלְא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא דְּאַמִּירָן
בְּעָלְמָא וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Reader: Yitgadal veyitkadesh 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.

COMMENTARY. Several forms of kaddish exist. The best known is *kaddish yatom*/mourner's kaddish. Thematically, the kaddish emphasizes God's holiness and our desire that consciousness of the divine holiness should become transformatively present in all people. Functionally, the kaddish serves as a divider in the service. The *ḥatzi kaddish*/short kaddish divides parts of the service from each other. *Kaddish derabanan*/the sages' kaddish marks the end of study. *Kaddish titkabal*/kaddish for completion of prayer follows the recitation of the Amidah, the central prayer of the liturgy.

D.A.T.



When a minyan is present, the Barechu is said. The congregation rises and faces the ark. It is customary to bow.

Bless THE INFINITE, the blessed One!

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

ASHER BIDVARO / GOD IN NATURE

TRADITIONAL VERSION

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE our God, sovereign of all worlds, by whose word the evenings fall. In wisdom you open heaven's gates. With divine discernment you make seasons change, causing the times to come and go, and ordering the stars on their appointed paths through heaven's dome, all according to your will. Creator of the day and night, you roll back light before the dark, and dark before the light. ↩

COMMENTARY. This is the time when one day ends and another begins, but the moment of transition is imperceptible. So too Rosh Hashanah begins as the borders of the old and new years touch. What we accomplished in the year that is ending blends into the year that begins; what we hope for in the year that is starting illuminates what we must leave behind.

R.H.

COMMENTARY. Much as Jews are immersed in history, we also live in the cycles of time. The light of the fading day rolls away, and with the evening a new day is born. So too do the seasons roll by, bringing the green of spring and the flowering and warmth of summer. Now as the cooler, shorter days of autumn come upon us, the old year fades, and a new year begins. In these cycles we feel the inexorable passage of time, looking through the growing darkness to brighter days ahead, through the coolness to new flowering and rebirth. As the year cycles, we weigh the progress in our lives, in our communities, in human history.

We struggle with the light and the dark within ourselves, hoping to bring more light into the new year.

D.A.T.

When a minyan is present, the Bareḥu is said. The congregation rises and faces the ark. It is customary to bow.

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ: בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Bareḥu et adonay hamvorah.

Baruḥ adonay hamvorah le'olam va'ed.

אֲשֶׁר בִּדְבָרוֹ

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בִּדְבָרוֹ מַעְרִיב עַרְבִים
בְּחִכְמָה פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַיּוֹמִים
וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת־הַפּוֹכְבִּים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ כְּרִצּוֹנוֹ: בּוֹרָא יוֹם
וְלַיְלָה גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי הָשֶׁךְ וְהָשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר: ←

COMMENTARY. The two *beraḥot* that precede the Shema set the stage for its evening recitation. The first *beraḥah* praises God for the wonders of creation that are visible at twilight: the shifting patterns of the stars, the rhythm of the seasons, the regular passage from day to night. All of these are a nightly reminder of the unchanging plan of creation.

The second *beraḥah* praises God, whose instruction is a special token of love for Israel. Israel responds by meditating upon God's teaching "day and night," "when we lie down and when we rise." This phrasing recalls the preceding *beraḥah*, adding Israel's study of Torah to the natural order: The sun sets, the stars shine, and Israel studies—as regularly as day and night. The phrase "when we lie down and when we rise" anticipates the Shema, which follows. This interplay between the *beraḥot* and the Shema suggests that the Shema is Israel's morning and evening Torah study. At the same time, it is Israel's declaration of the oneness of the power that makes for the natural order and for learning, for creation and human creativity.

S.S.

Please look, and answer me, FORGIVING ONE, my God,
please give light to my eyes, lest I should sleep
the sleep of death,
for even darkness is not dark for you,
and nighttime shines like light,
and darkness and the light are one.
So now, our God, please listen to your servants' prayer,
and to our supplication.
Cause your face to shine upon your holy place,
which now lies desolate.
Act for your sake!
Send forth your light, and your truth,
and let them be my guide,
and let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the places where your presence dwells,
for with you is the fount of life,
in your light do we behold the light. ↩

COMMENTARY. In speaking of *your holy place, which now lies desolate*, this prayer alludes to the ruins of the ancient Temple, whose famous Western Wall (the sole part of the original structure that still stands) has remained a place of pilgrimage for Jews through the centuries, even to our own day. Even among Jews who do not hope for a literal restoration of Solomon's Temple, this site is an important link to biblical Israel—a symbol of its ancient sovereignty and independence, as well as the sovereignty and independence of the present-day State of Israel. It is also as a *ruin* that the site speaks most meaningfully as a reminder of the all-too-frequent eclipse of Jewry in the world, and so a memorial to the many who have suffered or died for being Jewish.

J.R.

הַבִּיטָה עֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָאֲרֶז עֵינִי פֶן־אִישָׁן הַמָּוֶת:
 גַּם־חֹשֶׁךְ לֹא־יִחַשֵׁךְ מִמֶּךָ וְלִילָה כִּיּוֹם יֵאִיר כַּחֲשִׁכָה כְּאוֹרָה:
 וְעַתָּה שְׂמַע אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל־תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל־תַּחֲנוּנָיו
 וְהָאֵר פָּנֶיךָ עַל־מִקְדָּשְׁךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמַעַן אֲדֹנָי:
 שְׁלַח־אוֹרָךְ וְאַמְתָּךְ הָמָּה יִנְחֹנֵנִי
 יְבִיאֵנוּ אֶל־הַר־קֹדֶשְׁךָ וְאֶל־מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ:
 כִּי־עֲמָךְ מְקוֹר חַיִּים בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה־אוֹר: ←

Ki imeha mekor hayim be'orha nireh or.

DERASH. Light is the stuff of creation. "And God said: 'Let there be light.'" The great spiritual paradox consists of this: to our eyes, the world contains both darkness and light. Indeed, the ultimate light of creation casts ever shifting shadows that appear as antagonistic forces, shades, and grades of light and darkness. Oftentimes we cannot tell the shadows from true darkness. But our ability to choose is the light that guides our steps through life. We seek God's light, the light of creation that transcends the conditions of the moment and partakes of eternity. By consciously choosing love, justice and truth, we draw sustenance from that light and unite with the Source. S.P.W.

COMMENTARY. Within the *matbe'a shel tefilah*, the required outline of the prayer service, lies considerable flexibility. The thematic outline and order of the prayers remain unchanged throughout the year. Yet we need to give voice to the themes of the day, season, and year. For almost two thousand years, poets have written insertions to accomplish this. In the Creation section of the service that immediately follows *Barehu*/the call to prayer, these additions are known as *yotzerot* in the morning service and *ma'arevot* in the evening service, reflecting the names of these sections taken from their concluding *beraḥot*/blessings. Thus, the added prayers here conform to a practice hallowed by tradition. D.A.T.

For you illuminate the lamps of THE ETERNAL,
you, my God, shine brightly on my darkness.
The lamp of THE CREATOR is the breath of human life,
it searches all the recesses within.
For you have saved my soul from death,
truly, my foot from stumbling,
that I might walk about amid God's presence
in the light of life.
Yes, all of these are things that God can do
for someone, even two times, even three,
to bring one's spirit back from lowest depths,
into light, the light of life.

Psalms 13:4; 139:12; Daniel 9:17; Psalms 43:3; 36:10; 18:29; Proverbs 20:27; Psalms 56:14; Job 33:29-30

You make day pass away and bring on night, dividing between day and night. The Leader of the Throngs of Heaven is your name! Living and enduring God, rule over us, now and always. Blessed are you, ALMIGHTY ONE, who makes the evening fall.

KAVANAH. When we deny the existence of death, we are pretending our lives are something other than what they are. Living a full life—acknowledging and relishing all of who we are—requires both the recognition that the spark of life within each of us transcends us, and that the time will come when our bodies return to the dust. Loving and caring, struggling and losing, building and celebrating, nurturing and mourning, allow us to transcend our deaths while we live, but not to escape death. In our time, escaping death has become an overwhelming preoccupation of medical technology and legal intervention. Let me live the fullness of my days, and when my time comes, die with dignity.

D.A.T.

אֱלֹהֵי יְגִיָּה חֲשָׁכִי:	כִּי-אַתָּה תִּאֲדֹר נְרִי יְהוָה
חֲפֹשׁ כָּל-חֲדָרֵי-בֶטֶן:	נֵר יְהוָה נִשְׁמַת אָדָם
הֲלֹא רִגְלֵי מִדְּחִי	כִּי הִצַּלְתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת
בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים:	לְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים
פַּעַמַּיִם שְׁלוֹשׁ עַם-גָּבֶר:	הֵן-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים יִפְעַל-אֵל
לְאוֹר בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים:	לְהָשִׁיב נַפְשׁוֹ מִנִּי-שְׁחַת

* וּמַעֲבִיר יוֹם וַיִּמְבִּיא לַיְלָה וַיִּמְבְּדִיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה יְהוָה
צָבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: אֵל חַי וְקַיִם תָּמִיד יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמַּעֲרִיב עַרְבִים:

El hay vekayam tamid yimloḥ aleynu le'olam va'ed.
Baruḥ atah adonay hama'ariv aravim.

ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS: ASHER BIDVARO

It Is Not You Alone Who Pray

It is not you alone who pray,
or we, or those others;
all things pray, and all things
pour forth their souls.

The heavens pray, the earth prays,
every creature and every living thing.
In all life, there is longing.

Creation is itself but a longing,
a kind of prayer to the Almighty.
What are the clouds,
the rising and the setting
of the sun,
the soft radiance of the moon
and the gentleness of the night?

What are the flashes of the human mind
and the storms of the human heart?
They are all prayers—
the outpouring of
boundless longing for God.

Michah Joseph Berdyczewski



God The Life of Nature

Our ancestors acclaimed the God
Whose handiwork they read
In the mysterious heavens above,
And in the varied scene of earth below,
In the orderly march of days and nights,
Of seasons and years,
And in the checkered fate of humankind.

Night reveals the limitless caverns of space,
Hidden by the light of day,
And unfolds horizonless vistas
Far beyond imagination's ken.
The mind is staggered,
Yet soon regains its poise,
And peering through the boundless dark,
Orients itself anew
By the light of distant suns
Shrunk to glittering sparks.
The soul is faint,
Yet soon revives,
And learns to spell once more the name of God
Across the newly visioned firmament.

Lift your eyes, look up;
Who made these stars?

God is the oneness
That spans the fathomless deeps of space
And the measureless eons of time,
Binding them together in deed,
As we do in thought. ↪

God is the sameness
In the elemental substance of stars and planets,
Of this our earthly abode
And of all that it holds.

God is the unity
Of all that is,
The uniformity of all that moves,
The rhythm of all things
And the nature of their interaction.

God is the mystery of life,
Enkindling inert matter
With inner drive and purpose.

God is the creative flame
That transfigures lifeless substance,
Leaping into ever higher realms of being,
Brightening into the radiant glow of feeling,
Till it runs into the white fire of thought.

And though no sign of living things
Breaks the eternal silence of the spheres,
We cannot deem this earth,
This tiny speck in the infinitude,
Alone instinct with God.

By that token
Which unites the worlds in bonds of matter
Are all the worlds bound
In the bond of Life.

God is in the faith
By which we overcome
The fear of loneliness, of helplessness,
Of failure and of death. ↵

God is in the hope
Which, like a shaft of light,
Cleaves the dark abysms
Of sin, of suffering, and of despair.

God is in the love
Which creates, protects, forgives.

It is God's spirit
That broods upon the chaos we have wrought,
Disturbing its static wrongs,
And stirring into life the formless beginnings
Of the new and better world.

Mordecai M. Kaplan (Adapted)

AHAVAT OLAM / GOD'S LOVE IN TORAH

TRADITIONAL VERSION

With everlasting love, you love the house of Israel. Torah and mitzvot, laws and justice you have taught us. And so, DEAR ONE our God, when we lie down and when we rise, we reflect upon your laws; we take pleasure in your Torah's words and your mitzvot, now and always. Truly, they are our life, our length of days. On them we meditate by day and night. ↩

KAVANAH. The שמע/Shema is wrapped in אהבה /*ahavah*/love. The blessing preceding the Shema concludes, “who loves your people Israel.” This prayer begins “ואהבת/*ve’ahavta*, And you must love יהוה!” First you are loved, then you respond with love. Love is central to Jewish life. Love means commitment and limitations—Torah and mitzvot. That is so both in our relationships with each other and in our relationship with God.

L.W.K.

אהבת עולם

אַהֲבַת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ אָהֳבָתָּ: תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת חֻקִּים
וּמִשְׁפָּטִים אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדָּתָּ: עַל כֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשִׂכְכֵּנוּ וּבְקִוִּיָּנוּ
נָשִׂיחַ בְּחֻקֶּיךָ וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד כִּי הֵם
תִּיַּינוּ וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ וּבָהֶם נִהְגָּה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה: ←

Ahavat olam beyt yisra'el ameha ahavta.

Torah umitzvot hukim umishpatim otanu limadeta.

Al ken adonay eloheynu beshohbenu uvkumenu nasi'ah
behukeha

venismah bedivrey torateha uvmitzvoteha le'olam va'ed

ki hem hayeynu ve'oreh yameynu

uvahem nehgeh yomam valaylah.

THE ETERNAL is my light and help;
whom, then, should I fear?
Bless, O my soul, THE BOUNTIFUL!
ETERNAL ONE my God, magnificent are you;
in glory and in splendor you are clothed!
You spread your light out like a garment,
stretching out the heavens like exquisite drapery,
your word a lamp before my feet,
your light establishing my path.
The teachings of THE FOUNT OF WISDOM are just,
they make the heart rejoice.
The mitzvah of THE LAWGIVER is pure,
it gives light to the eyes.
For truly, mitzvah is a lamp,
and Torah, light.

Psalms 27:1; 104:1-2; 119:105; 19:9; Proverbs 6:23

Your love will never depart from us as long as worlds endure.
Blessed are you, BELOVED ONE, who loves your people Israel.

לעולמים/as long as worlds endure. According to rabbinic tradition, creation is not a one-time event; God must constantly create in order to sustain the world. On Rosh Hashanah we celebrate the rebirth of the world, marvel at God's constancy manifested in creation, and anticipate the future possibilities.

R.H.

יהוה אורי וישעי ממי אירא:
 ברכי נפשי את־יהוה אלהי גדלת מאד
 הוד והדר לבשת: עטה־אור פשלמה
 נוטה שמים פריעה:
 נר־לרגלי דברך ואור לנתיבותי:
 פקודי יהוה ישרים משמחי־לב
 מצות יהוה ברה מאירת עינים:
 כי נר מצוה ותורה אור:
 ואהבתך לא תסור ממנו לעולמים:
 ברוך אתה יהוה אלהב עמו ישראל:

Ve'ahavateha lo tasur mimenu le'olamim.
 Baruch atah adonay ohev amo yisra'el.

COMMENTARY. The custom on the High Holy Days as well as on other festivals has been to expand key sections of the service by adding poetic material linking the theme of that section to the theme of the day. Michael Strassfeld followed that custom here by creating a *piyut* comprised of biblical verses. It links divine light, natural light, and the light of Torah, thereby linking the creation themes of Rosh Hashanah with the ideas of love and revelation characteristic of the blessing preceding the Shema.

D.A.T.

ואהבתך לא תסור. Our text follows the Sephardic version, in the declarative model ("Your love will never depart from us.") rather than the imperative ("Never remove your love from us!"). Divine love is unconditional. It is available to every one of us when we fashion our lives into channels to receive and share it. The Jewish people together experiences that eternal love as reflected in our love for the study of Torah—a wisdom lovingly received, shared, and passed on enriched by each generation.

A.G.

שִׁמְעַיִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד

SHEMA

Listen, Israel: THE ETERNAL is our God,
THE ETERNAL ONE alone!

Blessed be the name and glory of God's realm, forever!

And you must love THE ONE, your God, with your whole heart, with every breath, with all you have. Take these words that I command you now to heart. Teach them intently to your children. Speak them when you sit inside your house or walk upon the road, when you lie down and when you rise. And bind them as a sign upon your hand, and keep them visible before your eyes. Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. →

ובשעריך שמע... / Listen... gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

DERASH. The Shema is called *kabbalat ol malhut shamayim*. We “receive upon ourselves the yoke of the sovereignty of Heaven.” To proclaim God as ours and as one is to acknowledge fealty to the divine will—and the Shema is a time to listen. We listen in order to discover God's will.

D.A.T.

יהוה אחד / love יהוה your God. Abbaye said, “Let the love of God be spread through your activities. If a person studies and helps others to do so, if one's business dealings are decent and trustworthy—what do people say? ‘Happy is the one who studied Torah, and the one who teaches Torah! Have you seen the one who studied Torah? How beautiful! What a fine person!’ Thus, the Torah says, ‘You are my servant Israel; I will be glorified by you.’” (Isaiah 49:3)

Talmud Yoma 86a

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וְאֶהְיֶה אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם
לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכֹתְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ
וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְקִשַּׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטָטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹזֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay ehad.

Baruh shem kevod malhuto le'olam va'ed.

Ve'avavta et adonay eloheha

behol levaveha uvehol nafsheha uvehol me'odeha.

Vehayu hadevarim ha'eleh asher anochi metzaveha hayom al
levaveha.

Veshinantam levaneha vedibarta bam

beshivteha beveyteha uvehelchteha vadereh uveshohbeha
uvekumeha.

Ukeshartam le'ot al yadeha vehayu letotafot beyn eyneha.

Uhetavtam al mezuzot beyteha uvishareha.

COMMENTARY. The Shema—six words in all—bears multiple meanings. “Shema” can mean “hear,” “listen,” or “understand.” “Ehad” can mean “one,” “unique,” or “alone/only.” Our translation captures the sense of fidelity to the Sovereign. But do we need to be reminded to Whom we are loyal? Do we still need to assert one God in a world that has largely heard the message of monotheism? Perhaps the issue for our generation is more the nature of Godliness: what can we identify as uniquely divine in our world and within ourselves, and how can we envision and articulate that uniqueness?

R.H.

For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical section beginning on page 81, then continue with the third paragraph, page 83.

BIBLICAL SELECTION I

It came to pass, and will again,
that if you truly listen
to the voice of THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,
being sure to do whatever has been asked of you today,
THE ONE, your God, will make of you a model
for all nations of the earth,
and there will come upon you all these blessings,
as you listen to the call of THE ABUNDANT ONE, your God:
Blessed be you in the city,
blessed be you upon the field.
Blessed be the fruit of your womb,
the fruit of your land, the fruit of your cattle,
the calving of your oxen, and the lambing of your sheep.
Blessed be your basket and your kneading-trough.
Blessed be you when you come home,
and blessed be you when you go forth.

See, I have placed in front of you today
both life and good, both death and ill,
commanding you today to love THE BOUNDLESS ONE, your God,
to walk in ways I have ordained,
keeping the commandments, laws, and judgments,
so that you survive and multiply.
THE BOUNTIFUL, your God, will bless you
on the land you are about to enter and inherit. ↪

וַיַּעַשׂ לְךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹדֵל.../your God will make of you a model. A literal translation of this phrase might render it: "Your God will raise you above all the nations of the earth," but viewed in context, with the first half of the verse demanding obedience to the divine voice and fulfillment of the mitzvot, it is clear that the intent is to separate Israel by virtue of its vocation. Thus, the translation here, "make of you a model for all nations of the earth," is a more accurate, if less literal, rendering. D.A.T.

For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical section beginning on page 82, then continue with the third paragraph, page 84.

BIBLICAL SELECTION I

וְהָיָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ לְעֹשֹׂת
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם וְנִתְּנָה יְהוָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ
עַל כָּל-גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ: וּבָאוּ עָלֵינוּ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהַשִּׁיגָה כִּי
תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בָּעִיר וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בַּשָּׂדֶה:
בְּרוּךְ פְּרִי-בִטְנֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ וּפְרִי בְהֶמְתְּךָ שֹׁגֵר אֶלְפִיךָ
וְעִשְׂתָּרוֹת צֹאנֶךָ: בְּרוּךְ טֶנְאֶךָ וּמִשְׁאֲרֶתְךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבֹאֶךָ
וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתְךָ:

רְאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב וְאֶת-הַמָּוֶת
וְאֶת-הָרָע: אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ
לָלֶכֶת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשַׁמֵּר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֵית וְרֵבִית
וּבִרְכָּה יְהוָה אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ←

COMMENTARY. The traditional wording of Biblical Selection II (page 81) presents detailed bountiful or devastating consequences of Israel's collective relationship to the mitzvot. That biblical section (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) offers a supernatural theology that many contemporary Jews find difficult. The biblical section on this page (Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 30:15-19) was included in the 1945 Reconstructionist siddur. It begins by encouraging observance in the same language, but concentrates on the positive ways in which observance of mitzvot focuses our attention on God's presence as perceived through productivity and the pursuit of abundant life. S.S.

KAVANAH. The doctrine of the unity of God calls for the integration of all life's purposes into a consistent pattern of thought and conduct. M.M.K.

But if your heart should turn away,
and you not heed, and go astray,
and you submit to other gods and serve them,
I declare to you today that you shall be
destroyed completely; you shall not live out
a great expanse of days upon the land
that you now cross the Jordan to possess.
I call as witnesses concerning you
both heaven and earth, both life and death,
that I have placed in front of you
a blessing and a curse.
Choose life, that you may live,
you and your seed!

Continue with page 83.

COMMENTARY. The statement of God's oneness unifies not only the context of the Shema but the text as well—three scriptural paragraphs specified in the Mishnah (a second-century codification of Jewish law). The powerful declaration of God's unity fuses the responsibility to love God and to study God's teachings (first paragraph) with the lesson that their fulfillment confirms God's presence (second and third paragraphs). Hence, the unity of God as idea and presence. s.s.

וְאִם-יִפְנֶה לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמָע וְנִדְחָתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְעַבַּדְתָּם: הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֶבֶד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא-תֵאָרִיכַן יָמֶיךָ
עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵל אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:
הִעֲלֵיתִי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֶת נָתַתִּי
לְפָנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה וּבִבְחֶרְתָּ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אַתָּה וְזֶרְעֶךָ:

Continue with ויאמר, page 84.

DERASH. God is the assumption that there is enough in the world to meet our needs but not to meet our greed for power and pleasure.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

In the handwritten scroll of the Torah

The word "Shema" of "Shema Yisra'el"

Ends with an oversized *ayin*,

And the word "Ehad"

Ends with an oversized *dalet*.

Taken together

These two letters

Spell "Ed," meaning "witness."

Whenever we recite the Shema

We bear witness

To our awareness

Of God's presence.

H.M.

BIBLICAL SELECTION II

And if you truly listen to my bidding, as I bid you now—loving THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God, and serving God with all your heart, with every breath—then I will give you rain upon your land in its appointed time, the early rain and later rain, so you may gather in your corn, your wine and oil. And I will give you grass upon your field to feed your animals, and you will eat and be content. Beware, then, lest your heart be led astray, and you go off and worship other gods, and you submit to them, so that the anger of THE MIGHTY ONE should burn against you, and seal up the heavens so no rain would fall, so that the ground would not give forth her produce, and you be forced to leave the good land I am giving you.

So place these words upon your heart, into your lifebreath. Bind them as a sign upon your hand, and let them rest before your eyes. Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home, and when you walk upon the road, when you lie down, and when you rise. Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—so that your days and your children's days be many on the land THE FAITHFUL ONE promised to give your ancestors, as long as heaven rests above the earth.

Continue on page 83.

לבבך/levaveha/your heart. The לב/lev/heart was seen as the source of emotions and intellect. Feelings and reason are complementary partners, not conflicting parts, of the human psyche. The double ב of לבב teaches that a love of God must contain all dualities (e.g., the good and bad in you). L.W.K.

DERASH. This warning against idolatry has ecological significance. If we continue to pollute the environment—and thus display contempt for the integrity of God's creation—pure rain will cease to fall, and the ground will cease to give forth its produce. M.L.

BIBLICAL SELECTION II

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוָּה אֶתְכֶם
הַיּוֹם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכֹל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכֹל־
נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטֶּר־אֲרָצְכֶם בַּעֲתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דְּגָנָךְ
וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וַיִּצְהָרְךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשׂוֹךְ לִבְהֶמְתְּךָ וְאִכְלֹת וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:
הִשְׁמָרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן־יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסִרְתֶּם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אֶפְי־יְהוָה בָּכֶם וַעֲצַר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִחַיָּה
מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:

וּשְׁמַתֶּם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹה עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַל־נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשִׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם
לְאוֹת עַל־יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֹתָם
אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדֹבֵר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ
וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְכִתַּבְתֶּם עַל־מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם
וַיְמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לֵאמֹר לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם
כִּי־יֵמִי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ: ←

Continue on page 84.

DERASH. The traditional second paragraph of the Shema (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) offers an account of the natural process by which the blessings of God themselves lead to pride, self-satisfaction, and ingratitude on the part of those who receive them. Ironically, the more we are blessed, so it seems, the less grateful and aware of blessing we become. It is when we are most sated, Scripture warns us, that we should be most careful. Fullness can lead to ingratitude, and ingratitude to idolatry—primarily in the form of worship of our own accomplishments. Then, indeed, “the heavens might close up and no rain fall.” For once we begin to worship our achievements, we will never find satisfaction. A.G.

THE BOUNDLESS ONE told Moses: Speak to the Israelites—tell them to make themselves *tzitzit* upon the corners of their clothes, throughout their generations. Have them place upon the corner *tzitzit* a twine of royal blue. This is your *tzitzit*. Look at it and remember all the mitzvot of the ETERNAL ONE. And do them, so you won't go off after the lusts of your heart or after what catches your eye, so that you remember to do all my mitzvot and be holy for your God. I am THE FAITHFUL ONE, your God, who brought you from Mitzrayim to be for you a God. I am THE INFINITE, your God.

אלהיכם ... ויאמר יהוה / THE BOUNDLESS ONE... God (Numbers 15:37-41).

COMMENTARY. In the ancient Near East, free people wore fringes, or *tzitzit*, on the hems of their everyday clothes. Since only free people wore *tzitzit*, they were a form of identification. Business transactions were sealed by kissing the *tzitzit*.

The mitzvah of *tzitzit* is based on that ancient sign of freedom. The fringes remind us that we voluntarily follow the way of God, who freed us from Egyptian slavery. It is, literally, a string tied around our finger.

Today, many Jews who recite the Shema gather the four corners of their *tallitot* (prayer shawls), hold the *tzitzit*, and kiss them at each mention of the word *צִיצִית*/*tzitzit*. This custom shows that we take these words seriously, like a legal contract.

L.W.K.

מצרים / *Mitzrayim* was the escaping Hebrews', not the Egyptians', name for the land of Egypt: perhaps a slave-term, and probably not of Semitic origin, it has associations with the root **צר**, to be in distress, constricted, in anguish, or in dire straits. This word powerfully evokes the choking oppression of slavery. As the psalmist wrote: **מִן הַמִּצַּר קִרְאֵתִי יְהוָה** / From the depths I called to Yah.

M.P.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִת עַל-כַּנְּפֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וְנִתְּנוּ
עַל-צִיצִת הַכֶּנֶף פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִת וּרְאִיתֶם אוֹתוֹ
וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי
לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לִמְעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי וְהֵייתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לֵהָיוֹת לָכֶם
לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: **אֶמֶת**

אחרי עיניכם / after what catches your eye, that is, the physical and material temptations you see. The Baal Shem Tov had a method for dealing with distractions, especially sexual ones. If you can't get the person out of your thoughts, remember that beauty is a reflection of God's image. Redirect that energy towards God. L.W.K.

תכלת is Sidon blue, which is obtained from a shellfish. Sidon or royal blue is associated with majesty—even today the British queen wears a blue sash. The Jews were so oppressed at the time of Bar Kōḥba that indigo, a vegetable dye, replaced Sidon blue on their *tzitzit*. The Romans banned the blue fringe because of its symbolism. During the nineteenth century the Radziner *ḥasidim* reintroduced its use. Now other Jews have also begun to use it. The long *tehelet* thread intertwined with short white ones is a complex and powerful image that hints at the interplay between majesty and subject within our own hearts. E.M.

EMET VE'EMUNAH/REDEMPTION

Our faith and truth rest on all this, which is binding upon us:
That THE BOUNDLESS ONE alone is our divinity
and that no divinity exists but One;
that we are Israel, community of God;
that it is God who saves us from the hand
of governments, the very palm of tyrants;
who enacts great deeds without measure,
and wondrous deeds beyond all count;
who puts our souls amid the living,
and who keeps our feet from giving way;
who breaks apart the schemes of those who hate us,
confounds the thoughts of any bearing us ill-will;
that it is God who made miracles for us in Egypt,
signs and wonders in Ham's children's land.
From one generation to the next, God is our guarantor,
and even on a day that turned to night,
God stayed with us when death's deep shadow fell.
And even in our age of orphans and survivors,
God's loving acts have not abandoned us,
and God has brought together our scattered kin
from the distant corners of the earth. ↩

אמת ואמונה / *Emet Ve'emunah*. The blessing immediately following the Shema deals with the theme of divine redemption. The present text, a rewritten version, includes references to the Holocaust, from which there was no redemption, and the return to Zion, a fulfillment of Israel's ancient dream. The same divine spirit that gave Israel the courage to seek freedom from Egypt in ancient times inspired those who fought for Israel's freedom in our own day. At the same time, this version omits those portions of the text that glory in the enemy's fall or see in God a force for vengeance. All humans are God's beloved children, as were the Egyptians who drowned at the sea.

A.G.

אֶמֶת וְאֶמוּנָה

אֶמֶת וְאֶמוּנָה כָּל־זֹאת וְקִיָּם עָלֵינוּ
כִּי הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵין זולתו
וְאֶנְחֵנוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ:
הַפּוֹדֵנוּ מִיַּד מְלָכִים
הַגּוֹאֲלֵנוּ מִכַּף עָרִיצִים
הָעוֹשֶׂה גְדוּלוֹת אֵין חֶקֶר
וְנִפְלְאוֹת אֵין מִסֹּפֶר:
הַשֵּׁם נִפְשָׁנוּ בְּחַיִּים
וְלֹא נָתַן לָמוּט רִגְלָנוּ:
הַמַּפְרֵ עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ
וְהַמְקַלְקֵל מַחֲשָׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ:
הָעוֹשֶׂה לָּנוּ נִסִּים בְּמִצְרַיִם
אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים בְּאֶדְמַת בְּנֵי חָם:
מִדּוֹר לְדוֹר הוּא גּוֹאֲלָנוּ:
וּבִיּוֹם שְׁהֶפֶךְ לְלִילָה
עֲמָנוּ הָיָה בָּגִיא צִלְמֹת:
גַּם בְּדוֹר יְתוּמִים
לֹא עֲזָבוּנוּ חֲסָדָיו
וַיִּקְבֹּץ נִדְחֵינוּ מִקְצוֹת תֵּבֵל: —

KAVANAH. What are miracles? The blooming of a flower, the hatching of an egg, indeed every creative act in nature, is a miracle. Moments in history that move us toward freedom, goodness and truth feel like miracles to me. In recognizing these moments, I feel the world's unity and goodness calling me toward my highest self.

D.A.T.

As then, so now,
God brings the people Israel forth
from every place of menace, to a lasting freedom.

And the pathway of the just is like the light of dawn,
growing lighter steadily until the day is full.

And light is planted for the righteous like a seed,
and joy for those upright of heart.

Rejoice, you righteous, in THE OMNIPRESENT,
be thankful for the traces of God's holiness!

A people walking in the darkness
have beheld a wondrous light.

Those dwelling in a land of gloomy shadows
find the light of dawn upon them.

[When plague of darkness fell on Egypt,]
no one could behold another person,
none could go forth from their house, none could go forth
for three days

but all the Israelites had light
wherever they were dwelling.

Arise and shine, for truly light has dawned for you,
the glory of THE OMNIPRESENT shines upon you.

House of Jacob, come, let us go forth
amid the light of THE ETERNAL ONE!

God is the one who brought the Israelites
through a divided Sea of Reeds.

There, they beheld divine might;
they praised and thanked the Name,
and willingly accepted for themselves
God's rule. ➞

כָּאז גַּם עֲתָה
מוֹצִיא אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִכַּף כָּל אוֹיְבָיו
לְחֵרוֹת עוֹלָם:

הוֹלֵךְ וְאוֹר עַד־נֶכּוֹן הַיּוֹם:	וְאַרְח צְדִיקִים כְּאוֹר נֶגֶה
וּלְיִשְׁרֵי־לֵב שְׂמִחָה:	אוֹר זָרַע לְצַדִּיק
וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכָּר קִדְשׁוֹ:	שְׂמִחוֹ צְדִיקִים בִּיהוָה
רְאוּ אוֹר גָּדוֹל	הָעַם הַהֲלֹכִים בַּחֲשָׁךְ
אוֹר נֶגֶה עֲלֵיהֶם:	יִשְׁבִּי בְּאֶרֶץ צִלְמֹת
וְלֹא־קָמוּ אִישׁ מִתַּחֲתָיו	לֹא־רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו

שְׁלֶשֶׁת יָמִים

הָיָה אוֹר בְּמוֹשְׁבָתָם:	וּלְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ זָרַח:	קְוִי אוֹרִי כִּי כָּא אוֹרֶךָ
בְּאוֹר יְהוָה:	בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לְכוּ וְנִלְכָּה

הַמַּעֲבִיר בְּנָיו בֵּין גְּזָרֵי יָם סוּף
שֵׁם רָאוּ אֶת גְּבוּרָתוֹ
שִׂבְחוּ וְהוֹדוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ*
וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן קִבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם: —

Or zarua latzadik uleyishrey lev simḥah.
Simēḥu tzadikim badonay vehodu lezeḥer kodsho.

יהוה...וארח / The pathway...ONE (Proverbs 4:18; Psalms 97:11-12; Isaiah 9:1; Exodus 10:23; Isaiah 60:1, 2:5).

COMMENTARY. The biblical verses added by Michael Strassfeld here pick up on the theme of rejoicing at the sea and link it to the rejoicing of the righteous in the light of the divine. D.A.T.

Moses, Miriam, and all the Israelites
broke out in song, abundant in their joy,
and, all as one, they said:

“Who among the mighty can compare
to you, WISE ONE?

Who can compare to you,
adorned in holiness,
awesome in praises,
acting wondrously!”

Your children saw you in your majesty,
splitting the sea in front of Moses.

“This is my God!” they cried, and said:

“THE HOLY ONE will reign forever!”

And it was said:

“Yes, THE REDEEMING ONE has rescued Jacob,
saved him from a power stronger than his own!”

Blessed are you, THE GUARDIAN, Israel’s redeeming power!

COMMENTARY. Two beautiful *berahot* complete the liturgical framework of the Shema in the evening service. The first of these is called *Ge’ulah*—“Redemption.” Recalling the Exodus from Egypt, it thematically echoes the third paragraph of the Shema. Moreover, it identifies the sovereign God, named in the Shema’s credo, as the power that freed Israel from slavery. Its vivid, here-and-now recollection of the escape from Egyptian bondage invites and challenges Israel to claim the redemption as a personal experience in each generation and to hear echoes of that ancient triumph over tyranny in each modern-day struggle for freedom, in every attempt to move toward the messianic future. S.S.

DERASH. The passage through the Sea of Reeds was the birthing of the Jewish people. Our first act as a people, as a community...was to sing! Not to pray, not to enact law, not to organize...but to sing! R.H.

מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה וְאָמְרוּ כָּלֵם:
מִי־כִמְכָּה בָּאֵלִים יְהוָה מִי כִמְכָּה נֶאֱדָר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ
נֹרָא תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא:
מִלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בְנֶיךָ בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה זֶה אֵלֵי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ:
יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְנֶאֱמַר: כִּי פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חֲזַק מִמָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה גָּאֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Mi ḥamohah ba'elim adonay. Mi kamohah nedar bakodesh
nora tehilot osey feleh.
Malhuteha ra'u vaneha boke'a yam lifney mosheh.
Zeh eli anu ve'ameru. Adonay yimlohe le'olam va'ed.
Vene'emar ki fadah adonay et ya'akov ugalo miyad hazak
mimenu. Baruh atah adonay ga'al yisra'el.

משה. This mahzor reinstates reference to the splitting of the sea as a sign of God's redeeming power. The earlier Reconstructionist prayerbook omitted that reference because of its emphasis on supernatural intervention. As myth, however, the ancient tale of wonder underscores the sense of daily miracle in our lives. Even those of us who cannot affirm a God who intervenes in the natural process, and thus cannot accept the literal meaning of the tale, can appreciate its human message. According to the midrash, the sea did not split until one Israelite, Nahshon ben Aminadav, had the courage to walk upright into the water. Perhaps it was the divine spirit in Nahshon, rather than the magic of Moses's wand, that caused the sea to split.

A.G.

NOTE. Biblical references include Exodus 15:11, 18 and Jeremiah 31:11.

DERASH. Rabbi Judah said: [At the sea] each tribe said to the other, "You go into the sea first!" As they stood there bickering, Nahshon ben Aminadav jumped into the water. Meanwhile Moses was praying. God said to him, "My friend is drowning—and you pray!" "What can I do?" Moses asked. [God responded as it says in the text,] "Speak to the people of Israel and tell them to go! Raise your staff...."

Talmud Sotah 37a

ברוך אתה יהוה הפודש סכת שלום



HASHKIVENU / DIVINE HELP

Help us to lie down, DEAR ONE, our God, in peace, and let us rise again, our sovereign, to life. Spread over us the shelter of your peace. Decree for us a worthy daily lot, and redeem us for the sake of your great name, and enfold us in the wings of your protection, for you are our redeeming guardian. Truly, a sovereign, gracious, and compassionate God are you. Guard our going forth each day for life and peace, now and always. Spread over us the shelter of your peace.

Blessed are you, COMPASSIONATE ONE, who spreads your canopy of peace over all your people Israel and over Jerusalem.

On weekdays continue on page 97. On Shabbat continue on page 95.

עלינו ועל כל-עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים



הַשְּׂכִיבֵנוּ

Transliteration and commentary follow on pages 93-94.

הַשְּׂכִיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּכָנוּ לְחַיִּים וּפְרוֹשׁ
עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ: וְתַקֵּנֵנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן
שְׁמֶךָ: וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ אַתָּה כִּי אֵל
מְלָךְ חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה: וּשְׁמֹר צִאֲתָנוּ וּבּוֹאֵנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם
מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: וּפָרֵשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:

On weekdays continue on page 98. On Shabbat continue on page 96.



COMMENTARY. *Hashkivenu*/Help us lie down [in peace]—is the final prescribed part of the Shema. It recalls the Shema by expressing the hope that we will “lie down...in peace” and “rise again...to life.” An extension of *Emet Ve’emunah*, *Hashkivenu* joins the vivid recollection of past redemption to a prayer for present protection and future peace. By calling God “guardian” and “protector” but also “redeemer,” Israel recognizes new dimensions of the power that makes for freedom. The blessing is unique to the evening service. Perhaps responding to the cold, dark uncertainty of night, we invoke God’s dwelling of peace. S.S.

KAVANAH. Enable us, God, to behold meaning in the chaos of life about us and purpose in the chaos of life within us. Deliver us from the sense of futility in our strivings toward the light and the truth. Give us strength to ride safely through the maelstrom of petty cares and anxieties. May we behold things in their proper proportions and see life in its wholeness and its holiness. M.M.K. (Adapted)

NOTE. For our ancestors, the future of Jerusalem was not just about the future of the Jewish people. Jerusalem, in the biblical vision, will become the capital of the whole world. Praying for the peace of Jerusalem is the same as praying for the unity of all humanity and peace throughout the world. D.A.T.

KAVANAH. As we enter the dark of evening, we face the unknown. Earlier, in *Asher Bidvaro* (the Creation section immediately following *Barehu*), we affirmed the power that transforms night into day and day into night. Now we call for protection from the shadows that lengthen around us—shadows of fear and guilt, the uncharted future, the ever pursuing past. We ask that the shadows of God’s wings envelop us with love and mercy. The unknown night, like the unknown tomorrow, can only be met with faith in the power of infinite compassion to care for us. S.P.W.

KAVANAH. Dear God, when we go to sleep at night, wrap our tired bodies in a starry blanket. All night fill us with warmth and wonder, and comfort us with peaceful thoughts. Let our brightest dreams come true in the morning, when we pray all people we meet will come near in friendship, those we love will share in our happiness, and no harm will come our way. Merciful one, we are always in your care. You are like a parent to us, and we feel that you’ll keep us safe, and guard us from danger, and teach us to be caring. S.D.R.



Hashkivenu adonay eloheynu leshalom vеха'amidenu malkenu
lehayim ufros aleynu sukkat shelomeha. Vetakenenu ve'etzah
tovah milefaneha vehoshi'enu lema'an shemeha. Uvtzel
kenafeha tastirenu ki el shomrenu umatzilenu atah ki el melech
hanun verahum atah. Ushmor tzeytenu uvo'enu lehayim
ulshalom me'atah ve'ad olam. Ufros aleynu sukkat shelomeha.
Baruch atah adonay hapores sukkat shalom aleynu ve'al kol amo
yisra'el ve'al yerushalayim.

On weekdays continue on page 97. On Shabbat continue on the next page.

COMMENTARY. The version presented here follows certain Sephardic versions by deleting the series of petitions for protection. Such petition is considered inappropriate on Shabbat and holidays, times of fulfillment and appreciation for the many blessings we have. These days are themselves a sukkah of peace. We pray that real and complete peace be the lot of Israel and Jerusalem, so torn by strife in recent memory. Our tradition sees Jerusalem as the center of the world. Creation began there, according to the rabbis. So may the peace that begins there radiate forth and bless all earth's peoples. The peace of Jerusalem, the "heart of the world," is also the peace of every human heart.

A.G.

When fears multiply
And danger threatens;
When sickness comes,
When death confronts us—
It is God's blessing of shalom
That sustains us
And upholds us.

Lightening our burden,
Dispelling our worry,
Restoring our strength,
Renewing our hope—
Reviving us.

H.M.

On Friday evening add:

VESHAMERU / OBSERVING SHABBAT

Let Israel's descendants keep Shabbat, making Shabbat throughout all their generations, as an eternal bond. Between me and Israel's descendants shall it be a sign eternally. For in six days THE FASHIONER OF ALL made skies and earth, and on the seventh day God ceased and drew a breath of rest.

NOTE. The placement of *Veshameru* after *Hashkivenu* suggests an aspect of the agreement between God and Israel: God guards Israel, and Israel guards Shabbat, which is a reminder and foretaste of peace in our world.

S.S.

KAVANAH. The recitations of *Veshameru* preceding the Amidah and of *Vayehulu* following it on Friday evening are acts of witnessing. In keeping Shabbat, Israel bears testimony to the fact that ours is a created world. For us this means that divinity fills the universe. Our task is to treat all living things with respect, and so enhance the divine light in them. Only by this way of living is the testimony of Shabbat made real.

A.G.

On Friday evening add:

וְשָׁמְרוּ

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרוֹתָם
בְּרִית עוֹלָם: בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם כִּי־שִׁשֶּׁת
יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת
וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ:

Veshameru veney yisra'el et hashabbat
la'asot et hashabbat ledorotam berit olam.
Beyni uveyn beney yisra'el ot hi le'olam.
Ki sheshet yamim asah adonay et hashamayim ve'et ha'aretz
uvayom hashevi'i shavat vayinafash.

ושמרו...וינפש / Let...rest (Exodus 31:16-17).

NOTE. At this point in the service the theme of the day is recalled by quoting a biblical verse. *Veshameru*, recited here on Shabbat, reminds us of the Shabbat themes in the Amidah. This is particularly important on holidays, when the Shabbat theme is less prominent in the Amidah itself. When Shabbat and a holiday coincide, the verses for both are recited.

D.A.T.

TIKU SHOFAR / ANNOUNCING ROSH HASHANAH

Blast piercing notes upon the shofar for the New Moon,
for the full moon, for our festive holiday.

For it is Israel's law,
a statute of the God of Jacob.

COMMENTARY. Most of the biblical contexts make it clear that the shofar was sounded primarily to announce the beginning of the special day, especially the new moon: "Sound on the new moon the shofar, at the darkening of the moon, the day of our festival; for it is a statute for Israel, a ruling of the God of Jacob" (Psalms 81:4-5). Rosh Hashanah is the seventh, and thus a special, new moon. Two of the shofar's other associations in the Torah make it appropriate to Rosh Hashanah. The shofar heralds the nearing of God at the Sinai revelation (Exodus 19). On Rosh Hashanah we turn ourselves back toward the ways of God that the Torah teaches. In addition, the shofar is sounded on *Yom Hakippurim*, the tenth day of the seventh month, to announce the Jubilee Year, the fiftieth year, in which land, estates, and freedom that people had lost in the forty-nine (7×7) preceding years will be restored: "Declare independence in the land for all its inhabitants" (Leviticus 25:10). Rosh Hashanah promises a new lease on life, a shot at redemption, to all those who are moved by the sounding of the shofar to do *teshuvah*.

E.L.G.

DERASH. How can the law be both Israel's and God's? We Jews have discovered, shaped and created our tradition. When our tradition reveals the divinity at work within the world, it speaks both in our voice, and in God's.

R.H.



תקעו בחדש שופר בפֶּסַח ליום חַגֵּנוּ:
כי חק ליִשְׂרָאֵל הוא מִשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:

Tiku vaḥodesh shofar bakeseh leyom ḥagenu
Ki ḥok leiyisra'el hu mishpat leylohey ya'akov.

תקעו...יעקב / Blast...Jacob (Psalms 81:4-5).

DERASH. *Keseh*, the Hebrew word for “full moon,” is similar to the Hebrew word for covering or hiding (*kisah*). The rabbis suggest that here, *keseh*, instead of meaning the full moon, reflects the fact that the moon is covered on Rosh Hashanah. Mystics have proposed that because Rosh Hashanah occurs at the beginning of the month, when the moon’s light is obscured, the darkness of judgment can block out the divine light of mercy. The shofar sound arouses the quality of mercy and subdues judgment, thereby permitting light to shine through. Similarly, self-judgment, shame, and acts of wrongdoing can cover or cloud over our own light, while *teshuvah* and forgiveness, evoked by the sound of the shofar, can reveal our light. C.B.

COMMENTARY. On Shabbat and festivals, biblical verses introducing the theme of the day serve as a bridge between the Shema with its blessings and the Amidah. *Tiku vaḥodesh shofar*/Blast piercing notes upon the shofar for the New Moon announces Rosh Hashanah through its heralding of the shofar blasts, the most distinctive feature of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. This announcement of the first day of the year captures ancient origins, sounding a challenge to contemporary complacency. D.A.T.

HATZI KADDISH/SHORT KADDISH

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.

COMMENTARY. Holiness is the quality or value that things or persons have when they help people to become fully human. M.M.K. (Adapted)

COMMENTARY. During this season of the year, we struggle with images of God as judge and sovereign even as we see God as source of forgiveness and return. The repetition at this time of year of the word לעלא/higher by far reminds us on the one hand that only true change on our part can reach through the many intervening layers to reconnect us with the divine in ourselves and in our world. The liturgical repetition also reminds us how important, powerful, and redeeming that reconnection can be. "Go higher!" "Settle for nothing less!" It beckons us not to quit during the strenuous climb. True change is not easy, but saving our lives depends on it. D.A.T.

חֲצִי קָדִישׁ

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיף
מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעָגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָא
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמָיָא:
יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא
לְעָלְמָא לְעָלְמָא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא דְאִמְרִין
בְּעָלְמָא וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

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

Congregation: Yehey shemey raba mevarah le'alam
ulalmey almay.

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.

You do not have to leave the room.
Remain standing in your place and listen.
Do not even listen, simply wait.
Do not even wait.
Be quiet, still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you.
To be unmasked.
It has no choice.
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

Franz Kafka

Autumn

Inside me the season is autumn,
the chill is in me, you can see through me,
and I am sad, but not altogether cheerless,
and filled with humility and goodness.

But if I rage sometimes,
then I am the one whose rage is shedding my leaves,
and the simple thought comes sadly to me
that raging isn't really what is needed.

The main need is that I should be able
to see myself and the struggling, shocked world
in autumnal nakedness,
when even you, and the world, can be seen right through.

Flashes of insight are the children of silence.
It doesn't matter, if we don't rage aloud.
We must calmly cast off all mere noise
in the name of the new foliage.

Something has apparently happened to me,
and I am relying on nothing but silence,
when the leaves laying themselves one on another
inaudibly become the earth.

And you can see it all, as if from a height,
when you can shed your leaves at the right time
when without passion inner autumn
lays its airy fingers on your forehead....

Y. Yevtushenko

וְעַלֶּיךָ וְלִעֲלֶיךָ
 Drawn by your love, I come into your house
 ואני גרב חסדך אבוא ביתך.
 שויתי

הַשִּׁיבֵנו
 יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ

וְרָאִינוּ שׁוֹבוֹ
 בני אדם: למנוח
 ימינו כן הודע ונבא
 לבב חכמה: ושוב
 יהוה עד-מתי והנחם
 על-עבדיך: שבענו
 בבקר חסדך ונרננה
 ונשמחה ככלימינו
 ויהי נעם ה' עלינו
 RETURN US, ETERNAL ONE

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה רֵת עוֹלָם.

A sovereign on high,
 Great power who reigns, who calls to each era, reveals hidden things, the purest of speech, who discerns heaven's spheres, who guides constellations, and seasons, and years.
 AS THOU HAST DONE OF OLD!

וְנָשׁוּבָה
 חֲדָשׁ
 יְמֵינוּ
 כְּקֵדָם

הַשִּׁיבֵנו
 יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ

מֶלֶךְ עִלְיֹן
 גבור בגבורות
 קורא הדורות
 גולה נסתורות
 אמרותיו טהורות
 יודע ספורות
 לתוצאות מזרות
 לעדי עד ימלך
 מלך עִלְיֹן
 LET US RETURN, ETERNAL ONE

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה רֵת עוֹלָם.

Before you every secret is uncovered, the whole multitude of mysteries since the world began. All is revealed and known before you יהוה -
 your watchful eye reaches beyond all generations.
 RETURN US, ETERNAL ONE

לנגדי
 תמיד

וְנָשׁוּבָה
 חֲדָשׁ
 יְמֵינוּ
 כְּקֵדָם

הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 Today the world is born

AMIDAH

The traditional Amidah follows here. Meditations begin on page 127. The Amidah is traditionally recited while standing, beginning with three short steps forward and bowing left and right, a reminder of our entry into the divine presence.

Open my lips, BELOVED ONE,
and let my mouth declare your praise.

1. AVOT VE'IMOT/ANCESTORS

Blessed are you, ANCIENT ONE, our God, God of our ancestors,

God of Abraham


God of Sarah

God of Isaac

God of Rebekah

God of Jacob

God of Rachel

and God of Leah; 

COMMENTARY. A. J. Heschel has said, "The term, 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob' is semantically different from a term such as 'the God of truth, goodness and beauty.' Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do not signify ideas, principles or abstract values. Nor do they stand for teachers or thinkers, and the term is not to be understood like that of 'the God of Kant, Hegel and Schelling.' Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are not principles to be comprehended but lives to be continued. The life of one who joins the covenant of Abraham continues the life of Abraham. For the present is not apart from the past. 'Abraham is still standing before God' (Genesis 18:22). Abraham endures forever. We are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." In this same spirit, we are also Sarah and Rebekah, Rachel and Leah. L.W.K.

KAVANAH. The introductory words (Psalms 51:17) of the Amidah contain a paradox of divine and human power. Our ability to be whole, upright, free, and fully alive grows as we acknowledge and appreciate an infinitely higher source of power in the universe. This allows us to be receptive. By acknowledging our human vulnerability, we open our hearts to the support, compassion, and faithfulness available around us. S.P.W.

עמידה

The traditional Amidah follows here. Meditations begin on page 127. The Amidah is traditionally recited while standing, beginning with three short steps forward and bowing left and right, a reminder of our entry into the divine presence.

אֲדֹנֵי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

אבות ואמות



כְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ

אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה

אֱלֹהֵי אֲבִרָהם

אֱלֹהֵי רַבֵּקָה

אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק

אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל

אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב

וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה: ←

COMMENTARY. Throughout the centuries the pursuit of meaningful communal prayer has led to variations in the Amidah. These variations reflect the attitudes and beliefs of different prayer communities. Changes have been introduced into this Amidah, most notably in the first two *berahot*. The first *berahah* has been expanded to include the matriarchs along with the patriarchs as exemplars of God's presence in human lives. By concentrating on examples of healing forces and life-sustaining rains, the second *berahah* acknowledges God as the power that sustains life. The traditional emphasis on God's ability to resurrect the dead has been replaced here by a celebration of God as the power that sustains all life.

S.S.

COMMENTARY. On Rosh Hashanah we celebrate renewal, but we hope to live our lives without endlessly repeating ourselves. Instead, through the process of *teshuvah* / turning, we attempt to change a bit each year. We pray that when we return to the beginning in the cycle of the year, we will stand at a higher point, our lives an ascending spiral over our years. This *shiviti* (page 102) plays on that theme of spiraling, and also hints at the double helix, another spiraling mystery of life.

B.P.T.

great, heroic, awesome God, supreme divinity,
imparting deeds of kindness, begetter of all;
mindful of the loyalty of Israel's ancestors,
bringing, with love, redemption to their children's children
for the sake of the divine name.

Remember us for life,
sovereign who wishes us to live,
and write us in the Book of Life,
for your sake, ever-living God.

Regal One, our help, salvation, and protector:
Blessed are you, KIND ONE,
the shield of Abraham and help of Sarah. ↩

COMMENTARY. Near the beginning of the Amidah, an insertion states our heartfelt hope in facing the new year—that we should be remembered for life. In describing God as one who desires life, we connect our hopes to the divine purpose. Thus we can ask that our names be recorded in the Book of Life for God's sake. But as the Amidah progresses, we move beyond our personal needs to a grander vision encompassing the meaning and purpose of all life.

E.M.

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה
הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאֵמוֹת וּמַבִּיא גְּאֻלָּה לְבָנָי בְּנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן
שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה:

וְכִרְנוּ לַחַיִּים מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בַּחַיִּים וְכַתִּבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים
חַיִּים:

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶגֶן אֲבֹרָהּם וְעוֹזֵר
שָׂרָה: ←

ezrat sarah. The biblical term *ezer* has two meanings, “rescue” and “be strong.” It is commonly translated as “aid” or “help.” It also has the sense of power and strength. In Deuteronomy 33:29, *ezer* is parallel to *gawah*, majesty. Eve is described as Adam’s *ezer kenegdo*, a power equal to him, a strength and majesty to match his. Thus *magen avraham* (shield of Abraham) and *ezrat sarah* (help of Sarah) are parallel images of power and protection.

R.S.A.

KAVANAH. God is experienced as *עוזר*/helper, every time our thought of God furnishes us an escape from the sense of frustration and supplies us with a feeling of permanence in the midst of universal flux.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

2. GEVUROT / DIVINE POWER

You are forever powerful, ALMIGHTY ONE, abundant in your saving acts. You send down the dew. In loyalty you sustain the living, nurturing the life of every living thing, upholding those who fall, healing the sick, freeing the captive, and remaining faithful to all life held dormant in the earth. Who can compare to you, almighty God, who can resemble you, the source of life and death, who makes salvation grow? Who can compare to you, source of all mercy, remembering all creatures mercifully, decreeing life! Faithful are you in giving life to every living thing. Blessed are you, THE FOUNT OF LIFE, who gives and renews life.

During Minhah, continue on the following page when chanting aloud. Otherwise, continue below.

3. KEDUSHAT HASHEM / HALLOWING GOD'S NAME

Recited when praying silently:

Holy are you. Your name is holy.
And all holy beings hail you each day.

Continue on page 111.

KAVANAH. How awesome is divine creation, how splendid the unfolding of nature, how comforting the seasons' cycles—dew in the summer and wind and rain in the fall. As we acknowledge cycles—life and death, birth and renewal—we thank the Sustainer of Life and we embrace death as part of life. Consider the cycles of your own life as you enter the New Year. Consider your age and the condition of your body. What “season” are you in now at the dawn of the New Year?

L.G.B.

גבורות ב₂

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנֵי רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ: מוֹרִיד הַטֵּל: מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים
בְּחֶסֶד מַחֲיָה כָּל חַי בִּרְחָמִים רַבִּים סוּמָךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים
וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים וּמַקְיֵם אֲמוֹנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עָפָר: מִי כָמוֹךְ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת
וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָךְ מְלֶכֶךְ מַמִּית וּמַחֲיָה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה: מִי כָמוֹךְ אֵב
הֶרְחָמִים זוֹכֵר יְצוּרֵיוֹ לְחַיִּים בִּרְחָמִים: וְנֶאֱמָן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת כָּל חַי:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה מַחֲיָה כָּל חַי:

During Minhah, continue on the following page when chanting aloud. Otherwise, continue below.

קְדֻשַׁת הַשֵּׁם ג₃

Recited when praying silently:

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קְדוֹשׁ וּקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהִלְלוּךָ שְׁלָה:

Continue on page 112.

DERASH. The second blessing of the Amidah is called *Gevurot*—Power/Mightiness. It acknowledges God’s vast power in contrast with our limited power. This orientation, born of our own vulnerability and fear of death, leads immediately to the awareness that life and death are indivisible. In fact, the process of renewal is built into the universe. S.P.W.

כָּל חַי /every living thing, gives and renews life. The traditional siddur affirms מַחֲיָה מֵתִים /revival of the dead. We substitute כָּל חַי, demonstrating an understanding that all of life is rooted in the world’s divine order and avoiding affirmation of life after death. We cannot know what happens to us after we die, but we can, by our thought and action, affirm the possibility of this-worldly salvation. D.A.T.

This Kedushah is inserted only when this Amidah is used for Minḥah and chanted aloud.

We sanctify your name throughout this world,
as it is sanctified in the heavens above,
as it is written by your prophet:
“And each celestial being calls to another, and declares:
Holy, holy, holy is THE RULER of the Multitudes of Heaven!
All the world is filled with divine glory!”
And they are answered with a blessing:
“Blessed is the glory of THE HOLY ONE,
wherever God may dwell!”
And as is written in your sacred words of psalm:
“May THE ETERNAL reign forever,
your God, O Zion, from one generation to the next.
Halleluyah!”
From one generation to the next may we declare your greatness,
and for all eternities may we affirm your holiness,
And may your praise, our God, never be absent from our
mouths now and forever.
For you are a great and holy God. ↩

וכבודו / And...glory (Isaiah 6:3).

ברוך / Blessed...dwell (Ezekiel 3:12).

ימלך / May...Halleluyah (Psalms 146:10).

This Kedushah is inserted only when this Amidah is used for Minhah and chanted aloud.

נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שְׁמַקְדִּישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׁמַי מְרוֹם כְּכַתוּב
עַל יַד נְבִיאָךְ: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ

יהוה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

לְעַמָּתָם בְּרוּךְ יֵאמְרוּ:

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יהוה מִמְקוֹמוֹ: וּבִדְבָרֵי קִדְשְׁךָ כְּתוּב לֵאמֹר:

יְמַלֶּךְ יהוה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדֹר וָדֹר הִלּוּיָהּ:

לְדֹר וָדֹר נָגִיד גְּדֻלָּךְ וּלְנֶצַח נְצָחִים קִדְשְׁתָּךְ נְקַדִּישׁ וְשִׁבְחָךְ

אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְפִינֵנו לֹא יָמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וְעַד כִּי אֵל מְלֶךְ גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ אַתָּה: ←

Nekadesh et shimeha ba'olam keshem shemakdishim oto
bishmey marom kakatuv al yad nevi'eha. Vekara zeh el zeh
ve'amar.

Kadosh kadosh kadosh adonay tzeva'ot melo hol ha'aretz kevodo.

Le'umatam baruh yomeru:

Baruh kevod adonay mimekomo.

Uvdivrey kodsheha katuv lemor.

Yimlohe adonay le'olam elohayih tziyon ledor vador halleluyah.

Ledor vador nagid godleha ulenetzah netzachim kedushateha
nakdish veshivhahe eloheynu mipinu lo yamush le'olam va'ed ki
el meleh gadol vekadosh atah. ←

And therefore, HOLY ONE, let awe of you
infuse the whole of your Creation,
and let knowledge of your presence
dwell in all your creatures.
And let every being worship you,
and each created life pay homage to your rule.
Let all of them, as one, enact your bidding
with a whole and peaceful heart.
For we have always known, ALMIGHTY ONE,
that all authority to rule belongs to you,
all strength is rooted in your arm,
all mighty deeds have emanated from your hand.
Your name alone is the source of awe
that surges through all life.

And therefore, HOLY ONE, let awe of you
infuse your people, let the praise of you
ring out from all who worship you.
Let hope enliven all who seek you,
and let all who look to you with hope
find strength to speak.
Grant joy throughout your Land,
let happiness resound throughout your holy city,
soon, and in our days.

And therefore, let the just behold your peace,
let them rejoice and celebrate,
let all who follow in your path sing out with glee,
let all who love you dance with joy,
and may your power overwhelm all treachery,
so that it vanish wholly from the earth like smoke.
Then shall the power of injustice pass away! ↪

וּבְכֵן יִתֵּן כְּבוֹדְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְאִמְתָּךְ עַל כָּל־מַה־
שֶׁבָּרָאתָ וַיִּירָאוּךָ כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־הַבְּרוּאִים וַיַּעֲשׂוּ
כָל־מִצְוָתְךָ אֶחָת אַחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבְבָּם שָׁלֵם כְּמוֹ שֶׁיִּדְעֵנוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁהַשְּׁלֹטוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ עַז בְּיָדְךָ וּגְבוּרָה בִּימִינְךָ וְשִׁמְךָ נִזְרָא עַל
כָּל־מַה־שֶׁבָּרָאתָ:

וּבְכֵן יִתֵּן כְּבוֹד יְהוָה לַעֲמֹךְ תְּהִלָּה לִירְאִיָּךְ וְתִקְוָה לְדוֹרְשֶׁיךָ וּפְתִיחוֹן
פֶּה לַמִּיַּחֲלִים לָךְ שִׁמְחָה לְאַרְצֶךָ וְשִׁשׂוֹן לַעֲיָרָךְ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ:

וּבְכֵן צְדִיקִים יֵרָאוּ וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ וַיִּשְׁרִים יַעֲלִזוּ וַחֲסִידִים בִּרְנָה יִגְלִיזוּ
וְעוֹלָתָה תִּקְפֹּץ־פִּיָּה וְכָל־הָרִשְׁעָה כָּלָה כַּעֲשׂוֹן תִּכְלָה כִּי תַעֲבִיר
מִמֶּשְׁלַת זָדוֹן מִן הָאָרֶץ: ←

COMMENTARY. Our text diverges from the traditional text for *uvehen ten kavod*, which continues with a prayer for renewed strength to the seed of David—a clear appeal for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy through a God-chosen Messiah. Most Jews of the modern era do not expect or desire a divinely appointed royal personage to come and solve our problems for us. But in rejecting the *literal* Messiah we do not have to abandon the messianic passion—the commitment of “all who look to you with hope” and “find strength to speak.” We need to take responsibility for bringing messianic days by enthusiastically advancing the ideals of human freedom, dignity, and creativity. S.D.R.

COMMENTARY. The *uvehen* paragraphs are among the most ancient of the High Holy Day liturgy. They link divine sovereignty, holiness and unity with awareness of divine power. They then express the hope that awareness of God will bring us to general reverence and awe. When humanity experiences this awe, the righteous will rejoice in God made manifest in our transformation. D.A.T.

May you alone be sovereign over all of your Creation,
and Mt. Zion be the seat and symbol of your glory,
and Jerusalem, your holy city—
as is written in your holy scriptures:
“THE ETERNAL ONE shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, through all generations!
Halleluyah!”

Holy are you,
and awe-inspiring is your name,
and there is no God apart from you,
as it is written: “THE CREATOR of the hosts of heaven
shall be exalted through the rule of law,
and God, the Holy One, made holy by the reign of justice.”
Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE,
the holy sovereign power. ↪

וְתִמְלֹךְ אֶתָּה יְהוָה לְבִדְךָ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ בְּהַר צִיּוֹן מִשָּׁכֵן כְּבוֹדְךָ
וּבִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קֹדֶשְׁךָ: כִּפְתּוּב בְּדַבְּרֵי קֹדֶשְׁךָ:
יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֵינוּ צִיּוֹן לְדֹר וָדֹר הַלְלוּיָהּ:

קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה וְנוֹרָא שְׁמֶךָ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ: כִּפְתּוּב: וַיִּגְבֶּה יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְהָאֵל הַקְדוֹשׁ נִקְדָּשׁ בַּצְדָקָה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
הַמֶּלֶךְ הַקְדוֹשׁ: ←

יִמְלֹךְ...הַלְלוּיָהּ / THE ETERNAL ONE...Hallelujah! (Psalms 146:10).
וַיִּגְבֶּה...בַּצְדָקָה / THE CREATOR...justice (Isaiah 5:16).

4. KEDUSHAT HAYOM/THE DAY'S HOLINESS

You have loved us, and have taken pleasure in us, and have made us holy with your mitzvot, and you have brought us, sovereign one, near to your service, and have called us to the shelter of your great and holy name.

On Saturday evening, add the following:

(You have given us as heritage the seasons of rejoicing, the appointed times of holiness, the holidays for giving of ourselves, and you have made a part of that inheritance the holiness of Shabbat, the honor of the Festival, and celebration of the ancient pilgrimage. You have divided, HOLY ONE, our God, between the holy and the ordinary, between daylight and the dark, between the seventh day and the first six days of Creation. You have set a boundary between the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of Festivals, and raised to holiness the seventh day, above the first six days of the Creation. And you have enabled holiness to grow within your people Israel, a holiness that emanates from you alone.)

On Shabbat, add words in parenthesis.

And you have given us, ALMIGHTY ONE, our God in love this Day of (Shabbat and of) Remembrance, a day to heed the Shofar blast, (with love), a holy convocation, a remembrance of the going-out from Egypt.

Our God, our ancients' God, may our prayer arise and come to you, and be beheld, and be acceptable. Let it be heard, acted upon, remembered—the memory of us and all our needs, the memory of our ancestors, the memory of messianic hopes, memory of Jerusalem your holy city, and the memory of all your kin, the house of Israel, all surviving in your presence. Act for goodness and grace, for love and care; for life, well-being and peace, on this Day of Remembrance. ↪

קִדְשַׁת הַיּוֹם



אַתָּה אֶהְבֵּתָנוּ וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ וְקִדְשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתֶיךָ וְקִרְבָּתָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵי
לַעֲבוֹדָתְךָ וְשִׂמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ קִרְאתָ:

On Saturday evening add the following:

(וּתְנַחֲלֵנוּ זְמַנִּי שְׁשׁוֹן וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁ וְחֲגֵי נְדָבָה וְתוֹרִישָׁנוּ קִדְשַׁת
שַׁבָּת וְכַבּוֹד מוֹעֵד וְחֲגִיגַת הָרָגֵל: וְתַבְדֵּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ
לְחֹל בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה בֵּין
קִדְשַׁת שַׁבָּת לְקִדְשַׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדִלָּה וְאֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי מִשֵּׁשֶׁת
יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְשַׁת הַבְּדִלָּה וְקִדְשַׁת אֶת־עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתְךָ:)

On Shabbat add the words in parenthesis.

וּתְתֵן לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה אֶת־יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת־יוֹם)
הַזְכָּרוֹן הַזֶּה יוֹם (זְכוֹרוֹן) תְּרוּעָה (בְּאַהֲבָה) מְקַרָּא קֹדֶשׁ זָכָר
לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹּהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֹא וְיַגִּיעַ וְיִרְאֶה וְיִרְצֶה
וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֹּר זְכוֹרָנוּ וּפְקֻדּוֹנָנוּ וְזְכוֹרוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ
וְזְכוֹרוֹן יְמוֹת הַמַּשִּׁיחַ וְזְכוֹרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קֹדֶשׁ וְזְכוֹרוֹן כָּל עַמְּךָ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ לְפִלִּיטָה וּלְטוֹבָה לְחֵן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים לְחַיִּים
וּלְשָׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן הַזֶּה:

MEDITATION. Take a moment to find your pulse. Can you feel it? Can you hear it? Is it quick? Slow? Your pulse is your timepiece, your clock, expressing the flow, literally, of your life. Can you feel the regular beat? Feel that pulse of time. What is an accomplishment of this last year that you are proud of? What happened this year that gave you joy? What was a significant challenge of this past year? Where have you traveled? Look at your hands. Feel your hands. What have your hands accomplished this year? What have they held? What have they touched? How do you use them every day? Bless the work of your hands. Clench them. Relax them. Realize your power. Where do you want to go in the year ahead?

Leora R. Zeitlin (Adapted)

Remember us this day, ALL-KNOWING ONE, our God, for goodness. Favor us this day with blessing. Preserve us this day for life. With your redeeming nurturing word, be kind and generous. Act tenderly on our behalf, and grant us victory over all our trials. Truly, our eyes turn toward you, for you are a providing God; gracious and merciful are you.

Our God, our ancients' God; May it be your will that a heavenly inspiration be awakened in us on this holy day to rebuild the Land of Israel, to renew it and to make it holy for your service, and may peace prevail there as well as freedom, justice, and the rule of Law, as it is written by your prophet: "Truly, Torah shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the ETERNAL from Jerusalem!" And it is said: "Let none do harm, let none destroy, throughout my holy mountain, for the earth is filled with knowledge of the OMNIPRESENT, as the waters fill the sea."

Our God, our ancients' God, rule over all the world in its entirety, by showing forth your glory, and be raised up over all the earth in your beloved presence. And let the wondrous aura of your reign be manifest in all who dwell upon the earth— let every creature know that you are its creator, let every living thing discern that you have fashioned it, let everyone who draws the breath of life declare that you, THE ANCIENT ONE, reign supreme, and that your sovereignty embraces all. ↩

KAVANAH. One part of the human psyche in each of us encourages the hubris of claiming we are God. The arrogance of power and authority, however, dissolves before the recognition that we are but short-lived glimmers of the Eternal One. When we all share that humility, our world will be transformed. J.A.S.

כי...ירושלים / Truly...Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3).

לא...מכסים / Let...sea (Isaiah 11:9).

זָכַרְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה: וּפָקַדְנוּ לְבָרָכָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ
 לְחַיִּים: וּבִדְבַר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים חוּס וְחַנּוּנוֹ וְרַחֲם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ
 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ שְׂיַעֲרָה עָלֵינוּ
 רוּחַ מְמָרוֹם בַּיּוֹם הַקָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה לְכוֹנֵן אֶת־אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֵדֶשׁ
 וּלְקַדֵּשׁ אוֹתָהּ לַעֲבוֹדָתְךָ וּשְׁכֵן בָּאֶרֶץ שְׁלוֹם חָפֵשׁ צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט
 כְּפָתוּב עַל־יַד נְבִיאָךָ: כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם:
 וְנֹאמַר: לֹא־יָרְעוּ וְלֹא־יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הָר קָדְשֵׁי כִּי־מִלֹּאָה הָאֶרֶץ
 דַּעָה אֶת־יְהוָה כַּמֵּים לִיָּם מְכֻסִּים:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל־הָעוֹלָם כָּלוּ בְּכַבוֹדְךָ
 וְהִנָּשָׂא עַל כָּל־הָאֶרֶץ בִּיקְרָךְ וְהוֹפֵעַ בְּהֵדָר גָּאוֹן עוֹדָה עַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי
 תֵּיבַל אֶרֶץ וְיִדַּע כָּל־פֶּעֶל כִּי אַתָּה פִּעַלְתָּ וְיִבִּין כָּל־יִצְוֹר כִּי אַתָּה
 יִצְרָתָ וְיֹאמַר כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמָה בְּאִפּוֹ: יְהוָה וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל מַשְׁלָה: —

COMMENTARY. The shofar is always sounded on Rosh Hashanah, except, according to tradition, on Shabbat. Following the ban on playing musical instruments outside the Temple on Shabbat, most rabbis forbade the sounding of the shofar because this might result in the shofar being carried, a Shabbat violation. Furthermore, not sounding the shofar on Shabbat differentiated the practice of the Temple from that of the synagogue, giving the synagogue a lessened standing. Silencing musical instruments on Shabbat also acts as a *זכר לחורבן*/remembrance of the destruction of the Temple. In our time, some congregations have begun to sound the shofar on Shabbat. This custom began in Reform congregations that celebrated only a single day of Rosh Hashanah. Some see no problem in carrying on Shabbat and have no desire to elevate the Temple sacrificial practices or hope for their reinstitution. They often support this practice because the shofar is so central to Rosh Hashanah. There is a diversity of practice among Reconstructionist communities. Some refrain from blowing the shofar in order to teach the sanctity of Shabbat on a day when many are present in the synagogue. D.A.T.

On Shabbat add words in parenthesis.

Our God, our ancients' God, (take pleasure in our rest,) enable us to realize holiness through your mitzvot, give us our portion in your Torah, let us enjoy the good things of your world, and gladden us with your salvation. (And help us to perpetuate, ETERNAL ONE, our God, with love and with desire, your holy Shabbat, and may all your people Israel, all who treat your name as holy, find rest and peace upon this day.) Refine our hearts to serve you truthfully, for you are a God of truth, and your word is truthful and endures forever. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the sovereign power over all the earth, who raises up to holiness (Shabbat,) the people Israel and the Day of Remembrance.

5. AVODAH / WORSHIP

Take pleasure, GRACIOUS ONE, our God, in Israel your people; lovingly accept their fervent prayer. May Israel's worship always be acceptable to you.

And may our eyes behold your homecoming, with merciful intent, to Zion. Blessed are you, THE FAITHFUL ONE, who brings your presence home to Zion. ↩

KAVANAH. *Avodah*: Service and prayer. In ancient times, we Jews brought sacrificial offerings to God at the Temple in Jerusalem. Now we are in relationship with the Divine through the meditations of our hearts and the ways in which we choose to act in the world. L.G.B.

להב תפלתם /their fervent prayer. The word להב literally means “flame,” but has come to mean “fervor.” The traditional version of the prayer speaks of אשי ישראל—the rekindled flames of animal sacrifice. This prayerbook, by referring to להב תפלתם /their fervent prayer maintains the fire imagery, but changes the flames into the spiritual flames of the heart.

J.A.S.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ (רִצָּה בְּמִנוּחָתָנוּ) קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְתַן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ שְׂפָעֵנוּ מְטוֹבָךְ וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ
(וְהִנְחִילֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן שְׁבֶת קִדְּשֶׁךָ וְיִנּוּחוֹ בָּהּ
יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקֻדָּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ) וְטַהֵר לִפְנֵינוּ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאַמֶּת כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהִים
אַמֶּת וְדְבָרְךָ אַמֶּת וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
מְקֻדָּשׁ (הַשְּׁבֶת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן: ←

עֲבוּדָה

רִצָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בַּעֲמֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹהֵב תִּפְלֹתֶם בְּאַהֲבָה תִּקְבֹּל
בְּרַצוֹן וְתַהֲי לְרַצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ: וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ
בְּשׁוּבָךְ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמַּחְזִיר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן: ←

DERASH. The term Sheḥinah implies that God is not aloof from human life with all its defeats and triumphs. God is in the very midst of life. The rabbis say that when people suffer for their sins, the Sheḥinah cries out. The Sheḥinah thus moves from Israel to all humanity. M.M.K. (Adapted)

COMMENTARY. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we add to this prayer the phrase, “You are a God of truth, and your word is truthful and endures forever.” This reminds us of the penitential season’s task—getting back in touch with what is ultimately important, the changeless ground of meaning in human life. At this turning of the seasons when we celebrate the birthday of the world and become so very conscious of change in our lives, we sense that we can understand change only when we are in touch with the unchanging verities in life. D.A.T.

6. HODA'AH / THANKS

We give thanks to you that you are THE ALL-MERCIFUL, our God, God of our ancestors, today and always. A firm, enduring source of life, a shield to us in time of trial, you are ever there, from age to age. We acknowledge you, declare your praise, and thank you for our lives entrusted to your hand, our souls placed in your care, for your miracles that greet us every day, and for your wonders and the good things that are with us every hour, morning, noon, and night. GOOD ONE, whose kindness never stops, KIND ONE, whose loving acts have never failed—always have we placed our hope in you.

For all these things, your name be blessed
and raised in honor always, sovereign of ours, forever.

And write down for a good life all the people of your covenant.

Let all of life acknowledge you! May all beings
praise your name in truth. O God, our rescue and our aid.
Blessed are you, THE GRACIOUS ONE,
whose name is good, to whom all thanks are due. ➞

הודאה

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד צוּר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אֵתָהּ הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר:
נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ וְעַל נְשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ
הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ וְעַל נַסִּיךְ שְׂבָבְךָ יוֹם עֲמָנוּ וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ
שְׂבָבְלֵי עֵת עָרֵב וּבָקָר וְצֹהָרִים: הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ וְהִמְרָחֵם
כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חֲסָדֶיךָ מֵעוֹלָם קִיֵּינוּ לָךְ:

וְעַל כָּלֵם יִתְבָּרֵךְ וְיִתְרוֹמֵם שְׁמֶךָ מִלְפָּנֵינוּ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וּכְתַב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל־בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ:

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֵלָה וַיְהִלּוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּאַמֶּת הָאֵל יִשׁוּעָתָנוּ
וְעֲזָרָתָנוּ סֵלָה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלָךְ נֶאֱדָה לְהוֹדוֹת: —

COMMENTARY. The attitude of thankfulness portrayed in the *modim* prayer above comes near the end of the Amidah as if to say that by this time we should be ready to acknowledge how much is outside of our control, how many gifts we receive, how much we have to be grateful for. On the High Holy Days we ask that "all the people of your covenant" be written down for a good life. To be part of the covenant is to accept the obligation of a stance of thankfulness, which itself conveys the possibility of leading a good life.

D.A.T.

7. BIRKAT HASHALOM / BLESSING FOR PEACE

Grant abundant peace eternally for Israel, your people. For you are the sovereign source of all peace. So, may it be a good thing in your eyes to bless your people Israel, and all who dwell on earth, in every time and hour, with your peace.

In the book of life, blessing, peace, and proper sustenance, may we be remembered and inscribed, we and all your people, the house of Israel, for a good life and for peace.

Blessed are you, COMPASSIONATE ONE, maker of peace. 

The Amidah traditionally concludes with bowing and taking three steps back.

ובל ואת כל יושבי תבל /and all who dwell on earth. According to the sages, every Amidah must conclude with a prayer for peace and an acknowledgment of God as the power that makes for peace. Inclusion of the words “and all who dwell on earth” proclaims that Israel desires the blessing of peace, not for itself alone, but for all humanity. S.S.

KAVANAH. God is shalom. God’s name is shalom, everything is held together by shalom. Zohar

בספר חיים...ופרנסה טובה /In the book of life...and proper sustenance. This insertion into the closing benediction of the Amidah is unique to the *Yamim Nora'im*. The mythic imagery is of a celestial “Book of Life,” in which our ancestors imagined their fate was inscribed. On Rosh Hashanah we celebrate creation, pray for repentance, ask for a world of peace, and seek the assurance of life. Worthy goals, and serious subjects. But the quiet courage of the petition for “proper sustenance,” for a daily routine of labor that confers integrity and dignity and neither shames nor humiliates us is the foundation of these larger hopes. R.H.

KAVANAH. Try to imagine a time of true peace and tranquility, and think about your part in helping this time to come. How will you be a peacemaker? Can you help to bring peace when conflict arises in your community? Can you find peace within yourself? L.G.B.

בְּרַכַּת הַשְּׁלוֹם

שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ תְּשִׁים לְעוֹלָם: כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹן
לְכָל הַשְּׁלוֹם: וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי
תֵּיבַל בְּכָל יָמֵי וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בְּשִׁלּוֹמֶךָ:

בְּסֶפֶר חַיִּים בְּרַכָּה וְשְׁלוֹם וּפְרִנָּסָה טוֹבָה נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ
וְכָל עַמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשְׁלוֹם: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ
עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם: ←

Shalom rav al yisra'el ameha tasim le'olam.

Ki atah hu meleh adon lehol hashalom.

Vetov be'eyneha levareh et ameha yisra'el

ve'et kol yoshvey tevel

behol et uvhol sha'ah bishlomeha.

Besefer hayim beraḥah veshalom ufarnasah tovah

nizaḥer venikatev lefaneha

anahnu vehol ameha beyt yisra'el

lehayim tovim ulshalom.

Baruh atah adonay osey hashalom. →

The Amidah traditionally concludes with bowing and taking three steps back.

עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם / Maker of peace. This ancient version of the prayer for peace in its most universal form was assigned in the traditional liturgy to the ten days of *teshuvah*. During the year the text read, “who blesses your people Israel with peace.” In our times, when life has been transformed by the constant threat of global destruction, the need of the hour calls for the more universal form of the prayer throughout the year. A.G.

ELOHAY NETZOR / A CONCLUDING MEDITATION

Dear God, protect my tongue from evil,
and my lips from telling lies.
May I turn away from evil
and do what is good in your sight.
Let me be counted among those who seek peace.
May my words of prayer
and my heart's meditation be seen favorably,
BELOVED ONE, my rock and my redeemer.
May the one who creates harmony above
make peace
for us and for all Israel,
and for all who dwell on earth.
And say: Amen.

On Shabbat continue on page 131.

On all other days turn to page 137.

COMMENTARY. The Talmud lists examples of twelve personal meditations that could follow the Amidah. If this one does not speak to you, compose your own, or stand or sit in silent meditation. L.W.K.

NOTE. Like the opening verse of the Amidah, this prayer employs the singular and deals with the power of words. But here the concern is for words between people, not for those directed to God. Some people find it easier to talk to God than to talk to others. L.W.K.

KAVANAH. Sin is the failure to live up to the best that is in us. It means that our souls are not attuned to the divine—that we have betrayed God.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

יְהוֹיָהּ ... וְגוֹאֲלִי / May...redeemer (Psalms 19:15).

אֱלֹהֵי נְצוֹר

אֱלֹהֵי נְצוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ
וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מִרְמָה:

יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁאֶסוּר מִרְעַ
וְהַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ אַעֲשֶׂה
יְהִי חֶלְקִי עִם מְבַקְשֵׁי שְׁלוֹם וְרוֹדְפָיו:

יְהִיו לְרְצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי
וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ
יִהְיֶה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵּבֶל
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Yihyu leratzon imrey fi
vehegyon libi lefaneḥa
adonay tzuri vego'ali.

Oseh shalom bimromav
hu ya'aseh shalom
aleynu ve'al kol yisra'el
ve'al kol yoshvey tevel
ve'imru amen.

*On Shabbat continue on page 132.
On all other days turn to page 137.*

MEDITATIONS / AMIDAH ALTERNATIVES

Something is very gently,
invisibly, silently,
pulling at me—a thread
or net of threads
finer than cobweb and as
elastic. I haven't tried
the strength of it. No barbed hook
pierced and tore me. Was it
not long ago this thread
began to draw me? Or
way back? Was I
born with its knot about my
neck, a bridle? Not fear
but a stirring
of wonder makes me
catch my breath when I feel
the tug of it when I thought
it had loosened itself and gone.

Denise Levertov

The day has come
To take an accounting of my life.

Have I dreamed of late
Of the person I want to be,
Of the changes I would make
In my daily habits,
In the way I am with others,
In the friendship I show companions,
Woman friends, man friends, my partner,
In the regard I show my father and mother,
Who brought me out of childhood? ↪

I have remained enchained too often to less than what I am.
But the day has come to take an accounting of my life.

Have I renewed of late
My vision of the world I want to live in,
Of the changes I would make
In the way my friends are with each other
The way we find out whom we love
The way we grow to educated people
The way in which the many kinds of needy people
Grove their way to justice?

I, who am my own kind of needy person, have been afraid
of visions.

But the day has come to take an accounting of my life.

Have I faced up of late
To the needs I really have—
Not for comforts which shelter my unsureness,
Not for honors which paper over my (really tawdry) self,
Not for handsome beauty, in which my weakness masquerades,
Nor for unattractiveness in which my strengths hide out—

I need to be loved.
Do I deserve to be?
I need to love another.

Can I commit my love?
Perhaps its object will be less than my visions
(And then I would be less)
Perhaps I am not brave enough
To find new vision
Through a real and breathing person. ↪

I need to come in touch with my own power,
Not with titles,
Not possessions, money, high praise,
But with the power that is mine
As a child, of the Power that is the universe
To be a comfort, a source of honor,
Handsome and beautiful from the moment I awoke this
 morning
So strong
That I can risk the love of someone else
So sure
That I can risk to change the world
And know that even if it all comes crashing down
I shall survive it all—
Saddened a bit, shaken perhaps,
Not unvisited by tears
But my dreams shall not crash down
My visions not go glimmering.
So long as I have breath
I know I have the strength
To transform what I can be
To what I am.

Richard N. Levy

“Where is the place of God’s glory?” : אֵיךָ מְקוֹם כְּבוֹדוֹ

“Where is the dwelling of God?”

This is the question with which the Rabbi of Kotzk surprised a number of learned Jews who happened to be visiting him.

They laughed at him: “What a thing to ask! Is not the whole world full of God’s glory?”

Then he answered his own question:

“God dwells wherever people let God in.”

Martin Buber (Adapted)

We Jews are a community based on memory. A common memory has kept us together and enabled us to survive. This does not mean that we based our life on any one particular past, even on the loftiest of pasts; it simply means that one generation passed on to the next a memory which gained in scope—for new destiny and new emotional life were constantly accruing to it—and which realized itself in a way we can call organic. This expanding memory was more than a spiritual motif; it was a power which sustained, fed, and quickened Jewish existence itself.

Martin Buber

According to the Kabbalah, redemption is not an event that will take place all at once at “the end of days” nor is it something that concerns the Jewish people alone. It is a continual process, taking place at every moment. The good deeds of men and women are single acts in the long drama of redemption, and not only the people Israel but the whole universe must be redeemed.

There is longing for peace in the hearts of men and women. But peace is not the same as the absence of war. Peace among people depends upon a relationship of reverence for each other. Peace will not come until people return out of their exile from each other, and Sarah and Hagar, Jacob and Esau, can embrace upon peaceful shores. Peace will not come until we search out the holy sparks of godliness that have gone astray in the wicked, and bring them back to their true selves.

Peace will not come until we see the flaws in our own selves and struggle to efface them, until each of us realizes our individual uniqueness, and we each attune our very special selves to their perfection.

Peace will not come until we renounce excessive self-concern and allow our hearts to be moved enough by the misery of our fellows to dare what must be dared.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (Excerpted and Adapted)

Additional meditations may be found on pages 1-20.

*On Shabbat continue here.
On weekdays turn to page 137.*

VAYHULU / CREATION COMPLETED

Heaven, earth, and all their beings were finished. God completed on the seventh day the work that had been done, and ceased upon the seventh day from all the work that had been done. God blessed the seventh day and set it apart. For on it God had ceased from all the work that had been done in carrying out Creation.

ME'EYN SHEVA / REPRISE OF THE AMIDAH

Blessed are you, THE ANCIENT ONE, our God, God of our ancestors,

God of Abraham

God of Sarah


God of Isaac

God of Rebekah

God of Jacob

God of Rachel

and God of Leah;

great, heroic, awesome God, supreme divinity,
who creates the heavens and the earth. 

KAVANAH. Shabbat represents the affirmation that life is not vain or futile, but supremely worthwhile.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

לעשות ... ויכלו / Heaven...Creation (Genesis 2:1-3).

On Shabbat continue here.
On weekdays turn to page 137.

וַיְכַלּוּ

וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צָבָאָם: וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אוֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת
מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:


בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ:

אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָה	אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק	אֱלֹהֵי רַבֵּקָה
אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב	אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל
וְאַלֹהֵי לֵאָה:	

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: ←

Vayḥlulu hashamayim vecha'aretz vehol tzeva'am
vayhal elohim bayom hashevi'i melaḥto asher asah
vayishbot bayom hashevi'i mikol melaḥto asher asah.
Vayvareḥ elohim et yom hashevi'i vaykadesh oto
ki vo shavat mikol melaḥto asher bara elohim la'asot.

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu veylohey avoteynu ve'imoteynu
elohey avraham, elohey sarah
elohey yitzḥak, elohey rivkah
elohey ya'akov, elohey raḥel
veylohey le'ah
ha'el hagadol hagibor vehanora
el elyon
koney shamayim va'aretz. ↪

Shielding our ancestors with a word,
a speech enlivening all beings,
the holy Sovereign,
to whom no being can compare,
who gives this people rest upon the holy Shabbat—
yes, God is pleased to give them rest!
We stand in the divine presence, awed and trembling,
and offer up continually our thankful prayer,
our expression of praise.
God to whom all thanks are due,
the source of peace, who sanctifies Shabbat,
who blesses the seventh day
and gives rest in holiness
to a people steeped in Shabbat joy,
in memory of Creation in the beginning. 

מגן אבות / *Magen Avot* summarizes the Shabbat Amidah. It refers to each of the seven blessings in order: shielding ancestors, giving life, providing holiness, ordaining Shabbat, allowing worship, inspiring thanks, blessing with peace. Perhaps once an alternative Amidah, *Magen Avot* today provides a joyous communal reprise of the themes first invoked in the privacy of the Amidah.

D.A.T.

מעין שבע

מִגֵּן אֲבוֹת בְּדִבְרוֹ מְחִיָּה כָּל חַי בְּמֵאֲמָרוֹ הַפֶּלֶךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ שְׁאִין
כְּמֹהוּ הַמִּנְיָח לַעֲמוֹ בְּיוֹם שַׁבַּת קָדְשׁוֹ כִּי בָם רָצָה לְהַנִּיחַ לָהֶם:
לִפְנֵיו נַעֲבֹד בִּירְאָה וְפֶחַד וְנוֹדָה לְשִׁמּוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד מֵעַן
הַבְּרָכוֹת: אֵל הַהוֹדָאוֹת אֲדוֹן הַשְּׁלוֹם מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת וּמְבָרֵךְ שְׂבִיעֵי
וַיִּמְנִיחַ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ לַעַם מְדֻשְׁנֵי-עֶנְג זָכָר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית: ←

Magen avot bidvaro

meḥayey kol ḥay bema'amaro.

hameleḥ hakadosh she'eyn kamohu

hameniaḥ le'amo beyom shabbat kodsho

ki vam ratzah lehani'ah lahem.

Lefanav na'avod beyirah vafahad

venodeh lishmo beḥol yom tamid

me'eyn haberahot.

El hahoda'ot adon hashalom

mekadesh hashabbat umvareḥ shevi'i

umeniaḥ bikdushah le'am medusheney oneg

zeḥer lema'asey vereyshit. ↪

TRADITIONAL VERSION

Our God, our ancients' God, take pleasure in our rest. Make us holy through your mitzvot. Make us a part of Torah. Let us enjoy the good things of your world and rejoice in all your saving acts. Refine our hearts to serve you honestly. Help us to perpetuate, with love and joy, your holy Shabbat. Let all Israel, and all who treat your name as holy, rest upon this day. Blessed are you, BELOVED ONE, source of the holiness of Shabbat.

ALTERNATIVE VERSION

Shabbat of holiness, beloved and blessed,
may your glory dwell amidst the people of your holy place.
In you, our queen, we find our rest.
And in your holy mitzvot our souls rejoice.
With your goodness we are content.
In you our hearts grow pure,
and in your Shabbat rest we find true worship.
Holy Shabbat, source of blessing,
may you, too, be blessed in our rest.
And blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who makes Shabbat holy.

קדש האהובה / Shabbat of holiness. This original Hebrew text addresses Shabbat in feminine language, as bride and as queen. She is the subject of our affection and the source of our sustenance. We ask that her blessing dwell in our midst for peace and joy. We ask, too, that the Jewish people bless Shabbat with their love and devotion. M.P.

TRADITIONAL VERSION

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ רָצָה בְּמִנוּחָתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיִךְ
וְתַן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ שְׂבַעֲנוּ מְטוֹכְךָ וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ וְיִטְהַר לִפְנֵינוּ
לְעִבְדְּךָ בְּאַמֶּת: וְהַנְחִילָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן שִׁבְת
קִדְשֶׁךָ: וְיָנוּחוּ בָּהּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקִּדְשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
מִקְדָּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת:

Eloheynu veylohey avoteynu ve'imoteynu
retzey vimnuhatenu.
Kadeshenu bemitzvoteha
veten helkenu betorateha.
Sabe'enu mituveha
vesamehenu bishu'ateha
vetaher libenu le'ovdeha be'emet.
Vehanhilenu adonay eloheynu
be'ahavah uvratzon shabbat kodsheha
veyanuhu vah yisra'el mekadeshey shemeha.
Baruh atah adonay mekadesh hashabbat.

ALTERNATIVE VERSION

שַׁבָּת קִדְּשׁ הָאֱהוּבָה וְהַבְּרוּכָה
יִשְׁכּוֹן כְּבוֹדְךָ בְּלֵב עַם מִקְדָּשְׁךָ:
כֵּךְ נִמְצָא מְנוּחָתָנוּ
וּבְמִצּוֹת קִדְּשָׁתְךָ תִּגַּל נִפְשָׁנוּ:
בְּטוֹבְךָ נִשְׁבַּע וּבְךָ יִטְהַר לִפְנֵינוּ
וּבְמִנוּחָתְךָ נִבּוֹא לְעִבּוּדֶת אֱמֶת:
שַׁבָּת קִדְּשׁ מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה
הַתְּבָרְכִי גַם אֶת בְּמִנוּחָתָנוּ
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מִקְדָּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת:

Each year should be the best year I have yet lived.
Each year we are more learned in the ways of life.
Each year we are wiser than the year before.
Each year our eyes know better the sights to seek.
Each year our ears listen with a finer tuning.
Every happening is a jewel, wrought about the fancy of time.
All that we understand of the universe is the setting for each
sight and sound of the day.

The child looks with gladness each year to be one year
older.
Should not this welcome pursue us all our years?
The piling of the years is a richness like the piling of gold.
Our years are coins with which we can purchase more wisely
at the bazaars of each new season.
Our love is more pliant and patient having been taught by
time.
This new year is one year older than the last.
The earth is more abounding in its growth.
The creatures have moved another step in their unfolding.
Humankind has left us one more year of art for our
contemplation.
History is one year more resonant with lessons.
The sunrises are one year more familiar and promising.
The sunsets are one year less fearful, and the peace of the
night is one year closer.

Kenneth L. Patton

Concluding prayers begin on page 1195.

