

Liturgical Offerings for
High Holy Day Services
Yom Kippur Morning 2020 – 5781



Reconstructionist
RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION

Creative Offerings for High Holy Day Services

2020 – 5781

Rosh Hashana: A Morning Service

Kol Nidre

Yom Kippur Morning

Neilah

These offerings are designed to provide a unique experience for our High Holy Day worship during this uniquely challenging moment. Intended for use for remote services using Zoom or another platform, they are limited to 90 minutes in length. We have not included sermons, *divrei Torah*, or any scriptural readings, assuming that different communities will want to add those at different points and to different degrees. Though these services are designed to be used as a whole and are inclusive of the liturgy we recommend, we are also providing them in a format that will allow borrowing, excerpting and use alongside a *Mahzor* or within services you are designing for your community. Recordings and music for many of the song options are available on Reconstructing Judaism's website [here](#)

With prayers of gratitude to the Source of Creativity and with the sincere desire that these be of use at this challenging moment.

Crafted by a committee of Reconstructionist Rabbis

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Produced by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association

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*Cover art by Rabbi Joshua Lesser. August, 2020

A YOM KIPPUR SERVICE

An Introduction

By Rabbi Joshua Lesser

Our spiritual invitation on this morning of Yom Kippur is to reexamine our lives through the lens of authenticity, unity, and connection. Tradition teaches us that the path to do this is through the practice of *teshuvah*, a return to what is most precious, meaningful, and sacred in our lives. When we begin to strip down the veils that separate us from the Source of Life, we can begin to see the reflection of Divine light in our own light.

During the pandemic, we have become more intimately aware of life's fragility. That which is dear and holy has become more evident. Yet, with the unrest and injustice that so many are experiencing, heightened by a divisive election year, we are likely working to clarify how to manifest the values we believe are called for in this world and within us. In times like these, it can be a struggle to seek points of light in the world, in our communities, and even in ourselves. Whether you have arrived hopeful, seeking, in despair, or vacillating between these, part of our journey of return is to discern where there are points of light.

To begin the process of discernment of how we return to and engage *teshuvah*, we heed Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav's teaching: "Each one of us has a point of goodness within that is uniquely invaluable. And it is with this point that enlightenment and passion emerges." Our hope is that we can remove the obstacles so that our point of light can be more vividly experienced and that we see each other's point of light more clearly today. We can more bravely face the truth about where we need to grow, what we need to repair when we start with identifying the point of goodness that will guide us in our *teshuvah*.

כִּי-עִמָּךְ מְקוֹר חַיִּים בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה-אוֹר:

Ki im 'ha m'kor hayim; b'orha nir'eh or

For with You is the source of life, in Your light, we see light. (Psalm 36:9)

Another beautiful song option for this morning is Nava Tehila's "Create a Pure Heart" from Psalm 51.

[YouTube video recording here](#)

[Sheet music and chords are available here](#)

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Take a moment before we chant Elohai Neshama to reflect inward and connect to your breath, to the gift of your soul and to that point of light that makes you unique and holy.

(pause) And as we begin to chant, take some time to look at those around you whether they be next to you, or in these cells on the screen. For those of us on Zoom or some other platform, take time now to scroll through, take notice of who is a part of our Yom Kippur morning community and even in this distance, see if you can experience their light.

אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא

Elohai Neshama shenatata bi tehora hi

My God the Soul that you have given to me is pure

Your Pure Soul: Elohai Neshamah

(By Trisha Arlin, <http://www.trishaarlin.com/>)

Your soul was pure:
You were in yourself,
You remember that.
You remember safety.
Amazed at the taste of food,
sugar blew your mind.
You danced and laughed and told jokes.

You slept on the dog.
You loved to hear the cantor sing the songs,
You knew that God was in that room.
You loved cartoons.

Then life happened to you.
Your soul became corrugated
And you kicked back at the world.
You forgot how to be in yourself,
You only knew how to react.
Your hurt looked like anger,

Your fear looked like sarcasm.
Other people's pain was somehow all about you.
Godliness looked like stupidity
And you were not allowed to touch the Torah.
The past was wrong
And the future was fantasy
And you thought you could not love.

Then one day you stopped.
You listened to the ambient sounds.
You listened to your breath,
You listened for that pure soul.
And you saw things as they really were:
Hurt was only hurt
And you were not the center of the universe
And you felt compassion instead of fear.
Godliness surrounded you.
The past was past, the future was yet to be.
You began to touch Torah
And you remembered to love.

It is very difficult to get there,
It can take a long time,
But once achieved
It is simple.

Really.
Your soul IS pure.
Our souls ARE pure.
And we are each of us a part of all creation,
Protected in the One-ness.

אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא

Amen

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Psalms can serve the function of preparing us to look in the mirror that Yom Kippur provides so that we look within ourselves with honesty, fearlessness, and compassion. Recognizing that there is splendor in this world is like the practice of finding the good points. Our prayer should shake things loose enough so that when we are still, we can see that everything in this world from the sun, the land, the songbirds, the ocean and the breeze is reflected within us. We praise outwards so that we may see inwards. Our psalms should spark our wonder and then offer us stillness so that the truth of our one life will begin to reveal itself as we settle within ourselves.

Let us take some time reflecting as we take in this contemporary psalm This Be Dear to Me by Jewish singer-songwriter David Berkeley and watch this video prepared by the chorus of Reconstructionist Congregation Bet Haverim. As you listen, begin to focus on what is most dear to you, let it rise and notice how you feel. If you are so moved, please share it with us in the chat.

This Be Dear to Me (by David Berkeley)

VIDEO LINK HERE

Oh the water in the stream
Flowing through the centuries
Through the canyons, through the trees.
This be dear to me

And the breezes as they blow
From cross the seas through your window,
Where they come from where they go.
This be dear to me
Oh this be dear to me.
Oh I believe this is what's worth fighting for.
Oh help us see that there is so much more, Adonai.

Oh the desert vast and wide,
Silent under endless skies,
And then you put your hand in mine,
This be dear to me.

Or when you wake still warm from sleep,
Half a dream your soft lips speak,
Safe and near me you I'll keep.
This be dear to me.
Oh this be dear to me.

Oh I believe this is what's worth fighting for.
Oh help us see that there is so much more, Adonai.
Adonai.

Oh the autumn rust and gold,
Winter mornings crisp and cold,
Then in spring the world unfolds.
This be dear to me.
Oh this be dear to me.

Oh the whole world's whispering.
The morning rains, the prayer bells ring.
The eagles cry, the great whales sing.
This be dear to me.
Oh this be dear to me.

Oh I believe this is what's worth fighting for.
Oh help us see that there is so much more, Adonai.
Adonai.

If I leave this world too soon,
Far beyond the silver moon,
Live your life with love and truth.
This be dear to me.
Look there's love in all that's true.
This be dear to me.
Feel the love surrounding you.
This be dear to me.
Oh this be dear to me.
Yes, you are dear to me.

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The capacity to be whole isn't something that someone else can offer to you. A guide can only help you see the obstacles, your path to wholeness is up to you to reveal. If you have confidence that beauty, goodness, and the true teacher are in you, and if you take refuge in them, you will practice in a way that reveals these qualities more clearly each day.

Choose words or chants from these selections of Psalms we have gathered. They are grouped according to theme.

אור Light

With the light of discernment, may we discover the path that is ours. May we distinguish what is ours to change, to repair and to transform. On Yom Kippur, let us remove the obstacles that prevent us from seeing who we truly are and obstruct us from following our purpose.

גַּר יְהוָה נִשְׁמַת אָדָם חֹפֵשׁ כָּל-חֲדָרֵי-בֶטֶן

Ner Adonay nishmat adam hofays kol-hadray-vaten

My soul is the flame of God that searches the inner chambers.

(Proverbs 20:27)

אור קִדְשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תֵּאִיר וְנִזְכֶּה כָּלֵנוּ בְּמִהְרָה לְאוֹר

or hadash al tsiyon ta'ir v'nizkeh hulanu bimherah l'oro.

Let a new light shine on Zion, and may we all soon merit its light.

אור זָרַע לְצַדִּיק וְלַיֹּשֵׁר לֵב שִׂמְחָה:

שִׂמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים בְּיְיָ וְהוֹדוּ לִזְכֹּר קִדְשׁוֹ:

or zarua latsadik ul'yishre lev simha

simhu tsadikim badonai v'hodu l'zeher kodsho

Seeds of light are planted for those that do right and joy for those of honest heart

O you who do right, rejoice in the ETERNAL and give thanks at the thought of the sacred

תשובה Renewal

By Rabbi Joshua lesser

The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that each person you encounter can be your mirror. If your own complexion is clean, the image you perceive will also be flawless. But should you look upon your neighbor and see a blemish, it is your own imperfection that you are encountering – you are being shown what it is that you must address within yourself. If we start Yom Kippur with the understanding that like the world, we too are created with lovingkindness, it can sustain us in examining where we can change to be in alignment. It is this realignment that enables us to do *teshuvah* without shame. We can seek to return fearlessly and lovingly. And we can be supported in encountering our imperfections because we are not alone.

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הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוּבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

Hashivenu adonai eleha v'nashuva hadesh yamenu k'kedem.

Return us, LOVING ONE, to you; let us return!

Renew our days, as you have done of old!

סָמוּךְ לִבּוֹ לֹא יִירָא

Samuch libo lo yira (masculine)

Samuch liba lo tira (feminine)

Heart supported, fearless. (Psalm 112:8)

כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יָהּ

הַלְלוּיָהּ

kol han'shamah t'halel yah

Hal'luyah

Every soul praises Yah - Praise Yah!

אהבה Love

We're called to turn love into action. We must respond to all that is dear to me. We consider the faces on our screen or sitting by us. Our faces reveal and command. Consider the faces and know, "just like me, this person has loved, and has been loved; just like me, this person has known pain and loss." We take upon ourselves the mitzvah, "You shall love your fellow human being as yourself."

הֲרִינִי אֶקְבֵּל עָלַי אֶת מִצְוַת הַבּוֹרֵא: וְאֶהְבֵּתָ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ

hareni akabel alai et mitsvat haborei v'ahavta l're'acha kamoha

Behold I take upon myself the Creator's command: Love your neighbor as yourself.

עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה

Olam hesed yibaneh (yai dai dai ...) (x4)

I will build this world from love... yai dai dai

And you must build this world from love... yai dai dai

And if we build this world from love... yai dai dai

Then God will build this world from love... yai dai dai

(by Rabbi Menachem Creditor based on Psalm 93)

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Has not one God created us?

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:
בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

*Sh'ma Yisra'el Adonai Elohenu Adonai Ehad
Baruh shem k'vod malhuto l'olam va'ed*

Listen, Israel! the SOURCE OF ALL, our God! the SOURCE OF ALL is One!
How eternally full of blessing is the name of Its glorious sovereignty!

On Yom Kippur, the examination of our souls calls for the sacred work of discernment. This is not any ordinary decision making, rather we are called to listen to the still small voice which is where our most significant desires align with the divine will. We examine what are the ways that bring us closer to compassion and lovingkindness for ourselves and others and which ones create distance.

Listening and realigning to that intersection where our gifts and callings meet with the divine leads us to live lives that have greater purpose. It can be liberating since we tend to let go of the struggles of our egos that often lead to dissatisfaction and measuring up to others. Instead, we begin to create lives with more wholeheartedness and authenticity. This is reflected in the chant *Ozi V'Zimrat Yah*, where we pray to find that balance between our will and that of the divine for it will be what saves us from the shallows and directs us to dive deeply.

עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה לִי לִישׁוּעָה
Ozi v'zimrat Yah vay'hi li lishu'ah

My strength and God's song - it's become my salvation.

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ונתנה תקף

Unetaneh Tokef (*Interpretive Translation by Rabbi Joshua Lesser*)

We have returned to this sacred day in all of its power,
where each of us asks: "What is my fate in the book of life?"
Yet we cannot just stand here alone absorbed in our fate only;
We stand together concerned about the fate of many.

ונתנה תקף קדשת היום כי הוא נורא ואיום: ובו תנשא מלכותך ויכון בְּחֶסֶד כְּסֵאֲךָ ותשב עליו בְּאַמֶּת: אֵמֶת
כי אתה הוא דין ומוקים יודע ועד וכותב וחותרם וסופר ומונה ותזכור כל הנשפחות ותפתח את ספר
הזכרונות ומאליו יקרא וחותרם יד כל אדם בו

Now we declare the sacred power of this day, which is the most awesome and solemn of days,
when your rule is established over all, and your throne is set in place by the power of love,
and you come forth to govern in truth.

True it is that you are our judge, you alone can reprove, you alone can know, you alone are
witness to all deeds.

It is you who shall write, you who shall seal what is written, you who shall read, and you who
shall number all souls. You alone can remember what we have forgotten; it is you who shall
open the Book of Remembrance, but its contents shall speak for themselves, for it bears the
imprint of us all, which our deeds and our lives have inscribed.

The Great Shofar blasts.
We hear the alarm.
Where is there justice?
The terrible dread hangs in the air as we ask:

*How long will this pandemic endure?
How many will suffer; how many will die?
How do we endure isolation and separation from friends and loved ones?
When will there be a vaccine?
What will we encounter in this year?
Racial injustice in our country and in our community?
Refugee children detained separated from their families?
A church burned, a synagogue desecrated, a masjid bombed?
The growth of income inequity?
Voting suppressed and an election distressed?
Famine worsening, our climate degrading?*

How much ache, fear and heartbreak are written in the book for this year?
God, we are like sheep passing before the Shepherd
Are You counting? Are You measuring the life breath in our lungs?

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What is the fate of the world in this book of life?

ובְּשׁוּפָר גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה יִשָּׁמַע: וּמִלְאָכִים יִחַפְּזוּן וְחֵיל וְרַעְדָּה יֵאָחֲזוּן וַיֵּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין:
לְפָקוּד עַל צָבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין כִּי לֹא יִזְכּוּ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם בְּדִין: וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבִירוּ לְפָנֶיהָ כְּבָנֵי מָרוֹן: כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה
עָזְרוּ מַעֲבִיר צֹאנֹו תַחַת שִׁבְטֹו בֵּן תַּעֲבִיר וְתִסְפּוֹר וְתִמְנָה וְתִפְקוֹד נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי וְתַחֲתוֹף קִצָּבָה לְכָל בְּרִיָּה
וְתִכְתּוֹב אֶת גִּזְרֵי דִינָם

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתּוּבֹן וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחַתְמוּן

Berosh hahsanah yikatevun uvyom tzom kippur yehatemun.

On Rosh Hashanah is written, and on Yom Kippur the course is set!

Who will live and who will die?

Whose death will be timely and whose death will be hastened by the lack of healthcare?

Who will be killed unarmed in the streets and who will live safely in their homes?

Who will die by gun violence and who by their own hand?

Who will die by bigotry and who by peacemaking?

Who will die from Covid19 and who from isolation?

Whose deaths could be prevented and who will live to a ripe old age?

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתּוּבֹן וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחַתְמוּן

Berosh hahsanah yikatevun uvyom tzom kippur yehatemun.

On Rosh Hashanah is written, and on Yom Kippur the course is set!

Who will dwell peacefully and who will be detained?

Who will be separated and who will be reunited?

Who will become incarcerated and who will be pardoned?

Who will pass and who will be profiled?

Who will speak out and who will remain silent?

Who will suffer from injustice and who will benefit?

Who will hate their neighbor and who will create community?

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתּוּבֹן וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחַתְמוּן

Berosh hahsanah yikatevun uvyom tzom kippur yehatemun.

On Rosh Hashanah is written, and on Yom Kippur the course is set!

Let our values and our faith, let our love and our desire for justice be pathways to divert what is written, to change what is written and accept what is written with grace. Let Repair, Prayer and Giving Our Fair Share hold our broken hearts together as we join together to work for a better year.

וּתְשׁוּבָה וּתְפִלָּה וּצְדָקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֵעַ הַגִּזְרָה

U'teshvah U'tefilah U'tzedakah ma'avirin et roa ha'gzerah

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Confession וידוי

ה' מִי־יָגוּר בְּאַהֲלֶהָ מִי־יִשְׁכֹּן בְּהַר קֹדְשֶׁהָ: הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִים וּפֹעֵל צֶדֶק וְדֹבֵר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ.

Adonai, mi-yagur b'ahaleha, mi-yishkon b'har kodsheha: holeh tamim ufo'el tzedek v'dover emet b'livavo

Adonai, who may sojourn in Your tent, who may dwell on Your holy mountain? The one who walks in simplicity, who enacts justice, and in their heart speaks the truth (*Psalm 15:1-2*)

Rambam teaches:

וְצָרִיךְ לְהִתְנַדֵּחַ בְּשִׁפְתָיו וְלֹא מִן הַלֵּב שֶׁיִּגְמַר בְּלִבּוֹ

It is essential that his confession shall be by spoken words of his lips, and all that which he concluded in his heart shall be formed in speech. (*Mishneh Torah Hilchot Teshuvah 2:2*)

What follows is a vidui practice meant to be done as a community via Zoom or another on-line platform. The leader will read, provide space and time for confession and invite individuals to sing along even though muted. It is imagined to take 20-25 minutes. Leader Reads:

Why Confess?

We cannot hope to right what is wrong, to heal what is broken, if we do not first face it. In the words of James Baldwin, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” The practice of confession lifts our mistakes into awareness – not in order to punish us with unproductive guilt, but rather as the first painful but necessary step to positive transformation.

In an ordinary year, we recite a formulaic catalogue of sins strengthened by the robust physical presence of community. This year we mourn the loss of that collective ritual yet embrace the opportunity to make our confession practice deeper and more personal.

The following meditation and confession practice is based on teachings from Rebbe Nachman. When prompted to write or speak aloud, each person decides their own practice. Everyone has permission to turn off video feeds so as not to be visible or audible on camera during the confession practice.

Guided Meditation for Personal Confession:

Take a moment to settle physically, focusing on breath, closing eyes, letting go of distractions, opening the heart.

Look inward. Think of a moment when you felt disappointed in yourself. Guilty. A moment or chapter you wish you could re-do. Maybe you hurt someone you love. Maybe you didn't live up

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to your hopes of who you want to be. Maybe it's not just one moment, but a pattern of behavior. An addiction. A habit of thought or speech, action or inaction.

Consider the beginning of what went wrong. Where do you see unchosen circumstances that gave rise to bad outcomes? Where were there choice points, moments you might have made a better decision?

Write or Speak Aloud. Leader keeps time for 2-3 minutes while music or chanting plays softly in the background.

Please rise and sing aloud.

<i>Ashamnu. Bagadnu. Gazalnu. Dibarnu dofi.</i>	אֲשָׁמְנוּ, בָּגַדְנוּ, גָּזַלְנוּ, דִּבַּרְנוּ לְפִי.
<i>He'evinu. Vehirshanu. Zadnu. Hamasnu.</i>	הָעֵינֵינוּ, וְהִרְשָׁנוּ, זָדָנוּ, חָמַסְנוּ,
<i>Tafalnu shaker. Ya'atznu ra. Kizavnu. Latznu.</i>	טָפַלְנוּ שָׁקֶר. יָעֲצָנוּ רָע, כִּזְבָּנוּ, לָצָנוּ,
<i>Maradnu. Ni'atznu. Sararnu. Avinu.</i>	מָרַדְנוּ, נֹאצָנוּ, סָרַרְנוּ, עָוִינוּ,
<i>Pashanu. Tzararnu. Kishinu oref. Rashanu</i>	פָּשַׁעְנוּ, צָרַרְנוּ, קִשְׁינוּ עֶרְף. רָשָׁעְנוּ,
<i>Shihatnu. Ti'avnu. Ta'inu. Titanu.</i>	שִׁחַתְנוּ, תַּעֲבָנוּ, תַּעֲוִינוּ, תַּעֲתָעְנוּ.

We have acted wrongly, we have been untrue,
and we have gained unlawfully and have defamed.
We have harmed others, we have wrought injustice,
we have zealously transgressed, and we have hurt and have told lies.
We have improperly advised and we have covered up the truth.
And we have laughed in scorn.
We have misused responsibility and have neglected others.
We have stubbornly rebelled.
We have offended, we have perverted justice,
we have stirred up enmity and we have kept ourselves from change.
We have reached out to evil,
we have shamelessly corrupted and have treated others with disdain.
Yes, we have thrown ourselves off course and we have tempted and misled.

Turn now to reflect on the light. Think of a moment you feel good about – a moment when you did something you feel proud of. It can be something small, an act of kindness, an act of will, an act of generosity or creativity. Find something that brought goodness into the world because of you. What made that moment happen? How can you make more moments like that happen in the future?

Write or Speak Aloud. Leader keeps time for 2-3 minutes. Soft music or chanting may play in the background.

יְעַל כָּלָם, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, חֲזַקְנוּ, אִמְצָנוּ, בָּרַךְ יְיָנוּ.
V'al kulam Eloah slihot, hazkenu, amtsenu, bareh yadenu

For all of these, God of forgiveness, grant us strength and fortitude. Bless our hands.

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Guided Meditation for Collective Confession:

Look outward. Consider the systems and structures of which you are a part. Economic and political structures, cultural structures, religious structures. Consider the ways we humans collectively impact the earth. Consider our systems for housing, food, education, healthcare, immigration, transportation, justice, education, security and more. In what ways have we perpetuated suffering through these systems? Where does your life intersect with collective structures of harm?

Write or Speak Aloud. Leader keeps time for 2-3 minutes while music and/or chanting plays softly.

Please rise and sing aloud.

A Creative Ashamnu *(From the Aquarian Minyan Mahzor)*

Who are we? We're light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness. Yet we've abused, we've betrayed, we've been cruel, yes, we've destroyed.

At our core we're light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness. Yet we've embittered, we have falsified, we have gossiped, yes, we have hated.

Our real being is light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness.
Yet we've insulted, we have jeered, we have killed, yes, we have lied.

Refrain: Sweep it out! Throw it out! Wipe it out! Yes, Clean it all out!

Who are we? We're light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness.
Yet we have mocked, we've neglected, we've oppressed, we have perverted.

At our core, we're light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness.
Yet we have quarreled, we've been racist, we have stolen, yes, we've transgressed.

Our real being is light and truth and infinite wisdom, eternal goodness.
Yet we've been unkind, we've been violent, we've been wicked, we've been xenophobic.

Turn now to reflect on the light. Think of a moment when you felt the positive power of people being together, maybe in person, maybe through the enduring institutions, laws, technology and traditions that only a community of people working together can create. How has your life

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received blessing from our collectivity? How might you participate in the positive human collective endeavors around you in the world at this time?

Write or Speak Aloud. Leader keeps time for 2-3 minutes while music or chanting plays softly.

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת, חֲזַקְנוּ, אִמְצָנוּ, בְּרַךְ יְדֵינוּ.

V'al kulam Eloah slihot, hazkenu, amtsenu, bareh yadenu

For all of these, God of forgiveness, grant us strength and fortitude. Bless our hands.

אבינו מלכנו Avinu Malkeinu

Concluding our confessional, we chant Avinu Malkeinu with the desire for compassion and loving-kindness to cradle our human vulnerability. May we remember that point of goodness and by the grace of this day may we remember not only are we worthy of love, we can be loving, just and caring as we seek to repair what has been breached.

אָבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ חֲנֻנוּ וְעֲנֻנוּ כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

Avinu Malkeynu khoneynu va'aneynu ki eyn banu ma'ashim asey imanu tz'dakah va'khesed v'hoshieynu.

Our Creator, our Sovereign, be gracious with us and respond to us, for we have no deeds to justify us; deal with us in righteousness and love and save us now.

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Avodah Service עבודה

We try to discern the good from the bad. But if we delve deep enough into Being, if we travel in time back to the singularity of our universe's coming into being, if we try to peer into the future, we find there is only ONE, utter mystery, an aspect of the Divine that can't be named. When Moses first spoke with God at the burning bush, Moses asked, "Here, I'll come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'the God of your ancestors sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is Its name,' what should I say to them?" God answers: "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE – EHYEH ASHER EHYEH Tell them I WILL BE – EHYEH sent me to you."

Maybe we want more solidity than this ever-unspooling I-WILL-BE offers. Maybe we want more control. But that carries the danger of being tempted to try to control others' lives, putting ourselves in the service of that great seeker of solidity, the Pharaoh entombed in pyramids, rather than of God.

So let's follow Aaron, the High Priest into the innermost sanctuary, where we are in the presence of only Mystery. Of EHYEH – I WILL BE.

If you're comfortable, I invite you to close your eyes. Be settled in your space. Feel your body in its place, held in place by gravity, touching the floor and clothing and air. Attend to your breath coming in and out without needing to control it. On this day of forgiveness, be forgiving with yourself if your mind wanders and just bring yourself back to your breath. You are in the presence, as we all always are, of the mystery of I-WILL-BE WHAT I-WILL-BE – EHYEH ASHER EHYEH. Let's take a few moments seeing EHYEH with our mind's eye, hearing EHYEH with our mind's ear.

[A lovely chant of this name of the Infinite One can be found here.](#)

We can't name the divine, but we must name the divine. We must discern the light of the divine in the world in order to follow that light. We name God and then are able to call on God's Name for our own salvation.

Indeed, at the Burning Bush, God tells Moses another name, *Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh*, the name which Jews have pronounced as Adonai for millennia and which has been translated as Is-Was-Will-Be or Causes-to-be. "That is my name for eternity," says God.

And after the sin of the Golden Calf, God cannot show Moses the divine essence, but calls out the Name of Divine Compassion:

אל, הורית לנו לומר שלש עשרה, זכר לנו היום ברית שלש עשרה, כמו שהודעת לנו מקדם,
כמו שכתוב: ויִרְדּוּ יְיָ בַעֲנָן, וַיִּתְּצֵב עִמּוֹ שָׁם, וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְיָ.

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God enthroned on a throne of compassion, whose way is love and kindness, forgiving transgression and defending the rights of all flesh and all souls, You taught us to recite The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

Recall for us today the Covenant of The Thirteen Attributes, which you made known to the humble Moses long ago, as it is written: THE PRESENCE descended in a cloud, and presented Itself with him there, and called out with the name of COMPASSION. THE ONE passed before his face and called out:

יְיָ יְיָ, אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת. נִצַּר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים, נִשָּׂא עוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאָה, וְנָקָה.

Adonai adonai el rahum v'hanun ereh apayim v'rav hesed ve'emet

notser hesed la'alafim nosei avon vafesha v'hata'ah v'nakeh

THE ONE, THE ONE, compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger,
and abounding in love and faithfulness, fashioning love for thousands,
bearing our iniquity and transgression and sin, and pardoning.

וְסִלַּחְתָּ לַעֲוֹנוֹנוּ וּלְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ וְנִחַלְתָּנוּ.

And You shall forgive our iniquity and sin and take us as your inheritance.

סִלַּח לָנוּ אֱבִינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ, מָחַל לָנוּ מִלִּכְנוּ כִּי פָשַׁעְנוּ, כִּי אָתָּה, אֱדֹנָי, טוֹב וְסִלַּח וְרַב חֶסֶד לְכֹל קוֹרְאֶיךָ.

s'lah lanu avinu ki hatanu, m'hal lanu malkenu ki fashanu, ki atah adonai tov v'salah v'rav hesed l'hol kor'eha

Forgive us, our Source, for we have sinned; pardon us, our Sovereign, for we have transgressed;
for you, ADONAI, are good and forgiving and abound in love for all who call to you.

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God's world is great and holy. Jerusalem is the holiest city in the holiest land in the holy world. In Jerusalem the holiest place was the Temple's holy of holies.

There are 70 peoples in the world. Within the holy people of Israel, the holiest person of the holiest tribe was the high priest.

Of the days of the year, the holiest of the Sabbaths and Holy Days is the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur.

There are 70 languages in the world. The Torah contains the holiest words in the holy language of Hebrew. And the holiest of all the Torah's words is the Name of God. And once during the year, these four supreme sanctities of the world were joined with one another. That was on the Day of Atonement, when the high priest would enter the holy of holies and there utter the Name of G-d.

And because this hour was beyond measure holy and awesome, it was the time of utmost peril not only for the high priest but for the whole of Israel. For if, in this hour, there had, God forbid, entered the mind of the high priest a false or sinful thought, the entire world would have been destroyed.

Every spot where a person stands and looks toward heaven is a holy of holies. Every day of one's life is a Day of Atonement and every person is a high priest, and every word that a person utters in holiness and purity is the Name of God.

(Based on a passage in "The Dybbuk" by S. An-Ski)

Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi taught:

One of the original intents of the *Avodah* service was to purify the Holy of Holies from pollution--from a *hilul hashem*--a hole in God's name. Every time we commit a sin, we make a hole in the Name. (One definition of sin is making a tear in the Divine weave.) By the end of the year, God's name--our connection to God--is riddled with holes. A new Name is needed. God enters into time to create the possibility of a new name for the next year. This offers us the possibility of creating our own root metaphor for how we interface with God this year.

This past year, many of us chanted "Say their names!" And we said the names of the divine images that were murdered by police or white vigilantes: George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too, too many others. God's name is riddled with holes when God's human image is riddled with holes. God's name is also frayed when we lose hope. And so we need to reweave it. We need to discern anew the divine in our lives and name it.

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Take a moment to consider for yourself: What is the new Name, the new root metaphor, you need to speak this year? Where do you discern the divine light and call in your life? How will you name that light and call? Hold on to that Name. Hold on to it for dear life. And we'll use it in a moment.

“Every spot where a person stands and looks toward heaven is a holy of holies. Every day of one's life is a Day of Atonement and every person is a high priest, and every word that a person utters in holiness and purity is the Name of God”

You are a High Priest and you know a Holy Name of God. Let's go back into the Holy of Holies. Take a breath.... You are clothed in purity.... You go within.... You go further within, to the inner core: “*lifnei v'lifnim*” – facing the inside of within.

We know the brokenness all too well. And we also know to name the holy light. We recite together, as a community of High Priests, the “High Priest's Confession.” When we come to the words “THE NAME,” you're invited to [unmute yourself and speak your Name of the divine] [or] [enter your Name in the chat or the comments]. And, having heard and read one another's holy names, as our ancestors did when they the High Priest speak the Name, we'll bow and prostrate ourselves (if and as we're able) and proclaim *baruh shem k'vod malhuto l'olam va'ed* - blessed is the name of Its glorious sovereignty forever

Pleased rise as you're able and join in:

The High Priest's Confession

Please, HaShem, I and my community and the whole human family have failed you, we have done evil, we have evaded responsibility. Please, by your Name, grant atonement for the failures and evils and evasions we have committed in your presence. As it is written in the Torah of your servant, Moses, expressing your glory: “For on this day, God will grant atonement to you, to purify you. From all your failures in the presence of ...

[THE NAME]

... you will be pure.

And when we hear the glorious, awesome NAME articulated in the mouths of our holy community, we kneel and prostrate ourselves; we give thanks and acknowledge our SOURCE and say:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

BARUH SHEM K'VOD MALHUTO L'OLAM VA'ED

Blessed is the name of Its glorious sovereignty forever!

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Let's gather again to bless one another with the Priestly blessing. Those who are wearing a tallit may wish to share it with anyone sitting next to them to include them in the blessing, or raise a corner toward your screen to include the physically distant, but emotionally close divine images in our Yom Kippur community. Please join in:

יְבָרֶכֶּךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ

y'vareh'ha adonai v'yishm'reha

May ONE bless you and keep you.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַנֶּנֶךָ

ya'er adonai panav eleha vihuneka

May the ONE face toward you with light and grace

יֵשֵׁא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיָּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

yisa adonai panav eleha v'yasem l'ha shalom

May THE ONE CREATING face toward you with uplift, and grant you peace.

Hayom te'amtzenu. Amen.

Hayom tevareshenu. Amen.

Hayom tegadlenu. Amen.

Hayom tidreshenu letovah. Amen.

Hayom tihtevenu lehayim tovim. Amen.

Hayom tishma shavatenu. Amen.

Hayom tekabel berahamim uvratzon et tefilatenu.

Amen.

Hayom titmevenu bimin tzidkeha. Amen.

Hayom timhol vetislah lehol avonotenu. Amen.

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

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הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

הַיּוֹם תִּתְּנוּ אֵמֶן

Today, give us courage and strength. Amen.

Today, give us blessing. Amen.

Today, give us goodness. Amen.

Today, seek our welfare and good. Amen.

Today, write us down for a good life. Amen.

Today, please harken to our cry. Amen.

Today, accept with mercy and good will our prayer. Amen.

Today, may your right hand keep us safe. Amen.

Today, forgive and pardon all our sins. Amen.