

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 - *Minhah* (Shabbat)

Torah service - Opening



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

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

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

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

A Psalm of David

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

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

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

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

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

הָעַם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה יְהוּה בְּאוֹר־פְּנֵיךָ יְהִלְכוּן: אֲשֶׁרִי

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

אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ עוֹד יְהִלְלוּךָ שְׁלָה:
אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שְׁפָכָה לוֹ אֲלֵהוּ:

תְּהִלָּה לְדוֹר

אֲרוֹמְמָךְ אֱלֹהֵי הַמַּלְךְ וְאֶבְרָכָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
בְּכָל־יוֹם אֶבְרָכְךָ וְאֶהְלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
גָּדוֹל יְהוּה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ אֵין חֵקֶר:
דוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׂבַח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יִגְאֹד:
הַדָּר כְּבוֹד הַדָּר וְדַבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:
וְעִזּוֹ נוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֵאֱמָרוּ וְגִדְלֹתֶיךָ אֲסַפְּרֶנָּה:
זָכַר רַב־טוֹבְךָ יִבְיָעוּ וְצִדְקֹתֶיךָ יִרְנְנוּ:
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוּה אַרְךָ אֲפִים וּגְדֹל־חֶסֶד:
טוֹב־יְהוּה לְפָל וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו:
יודֹף יְהוּה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְיִבְרָכְיֶיךָ יִבְרָכְוָה: ←

Ashrey yoshvey veyteha od yehaleluha selah.

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

Tehilah ledavid.

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

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

Gadol adonay umhulal me'od veligdulato eyn heker.

Dor ledor yeshabah ma'aseha ugevuroteha yagidu.

Hadar kevod hodeha vedivrey nifle'oteha asihah.

Ve'ezuz noroteha yomeru ugedulateha asaperenah.

Zehar rav tuveha yabi'u vetzidkateha yeranenu.

Hanun verahum adonay ereh apayim ugedol hased.

Tov adonay lakol verahamav al kol ma'asav.

Yoduha adonay kol ma'aseha vehasideha yevarehuha. ↪

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

Psalms 145

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

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

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

וּגְבוּרָתְךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:	כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֵאמְרוּ
וּכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ:	לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבְנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתוֹ
וּמִמְשַׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר:	מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֲלָמִים
וְזוֹקֵךָ לְכָל־הַנְּפִלִים:	סוּמָךָ יְהוּה לְכָל־הַנְּפִלִים
וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:	עֵינֵי־כָל אֱלֹיֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ
וּמִשְׁפִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רִצּוֹן:	פּוֹתִיחַ אֶת־יְיָךָ
וְחֶסֶד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:	צַדִּיק יְהוּה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו
לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֵמֶת:	קְרוֹב יְהוּה לְכָל־קֹרְאָיו
וְאֶת־שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם:	רִצּוֹן יִרְאִיו יַעֲשֶׂה
וְאֵת כָּל־הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:	שׁוֹמֵר יְהוּה אֶת־כָּל־אֲהַבָּיו
וַיִּבְרָךְ כָּל־בְּשׂוֹר שֵׁם קָדְשׁוֹ	תְּהִלַּת יְהוּה יִדְבֹר פִּי
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:	
מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:	וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִבְרָךְ יְיָ

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

ROSH HASHANAH MINḤAH

Uva letziyon may be preceded by Ashrey, page 593.

And a redeemer shall come to Zion, and to those of Jacob
who return from their transgression, says THE GOD OF ISRAEL,
and as for me, this shall be my covenant with them, says

THE REDEEMING ONE: my spirit, which is in your midst,
and my words which I have placed into your mouths shall
never cease from there,
nor from your seed, nor from the mouths of all born out of
them, says GOD, henceforth and for eternity.

And you, O God, are holy, you are enthroned amid the praises
sung by Israel,

as they call to one another and declare:

“Holy, holy, holy is THE CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven,
the world is filled to overflowing with God’s glory!”

And they all draw strength from one another, and declare:

“Holy in the highest heavens, where God’s presence dwells,
holy on the earth, where all God’s deeds resound,
holy to eternity, through all eternities,

THE CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven,

yes, the world is overflowing with the splendor of God’s light!” ↪

COMMENTARY. And they all draw strength...and declare...And a divine
wind. These and the ensuing lines intersperse Hebrew and Aramaic
descriptions of the same events, based on the prophetic visions of Isaiah
6:3, Ezekiel 3:12, and Exodus 15:18. The Aramaic paraphrases, typically,
are more detailed and expansive, bordering on midrash. J.R.

מִנְחָה לְרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה

Uva letziyon may be preceded by Ashrey, page 594.

וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל וְלִשְׁבִי פֶשַׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה: וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי
אִתְּכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וּדְבָרִי אֲשֶׁר-שִׁמְתִי בְּפִיךָ לֹא-
יִמָּוֶשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַעךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַעךָ אָמַר יְהוָה מִעַתָּה וְעַד-
עוֹלָם: וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר:
קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כְּלֵהָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ: וּמִקְבְּלֵי
דֵּין מִן דֵּין וְאִמְרֵי: קְדִישׁ בְּשֵׁמִי מְרוֹמָא עֲלָאָה בֵּית שְׁכִינְתָּהּ קְדִישׁ
עַל אֲרַעָא עוֹבְדֵי גְבוּרְתָּהּ קְדִישׁ לְעֵלְמָא וְלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
מְלִיא כָּל-אֲרַעָא זִיו יְקָרָה:

DERASH. The covenant described in this prayer binds God to constant accessibility. Thus we have the power to make God manifest through our minds, our mouths and our shared experience. So it has been throughout our generations. In this prayer Israel enthrones God—keeps God sovereign—through our declaration of God’s holiness. The task of lighting the world with the divine splendor is one we fulfill by declaring God’s praises. We thereby create the bonds that join us in holiness and make God manifest in the world. It lies in the power of religious life to take ordinary individuals and join us into a holy people. This is truly a covenant—in continually making ourselves holy, we make God eternally sovereign.

D.A.T.

עוֹלָם...וּבֹא / And...eternity (Isaiah 59:20-21).

יִשְׂרָאֵל...וְאַתָּה / And you...Israel (Psalms 22:4).

כְּבוֹדוֹ...וְקָרָא / As...glory (Isaiah 6:3).

And a divine wind lifted me aloft; I heard a voice, speaking
with great emotion:

“Blessed is the glory of THE LIVING GOD, wherever God may
dwell!”

And the spirit lifted me; I heard behind me a great,
tumultuous sound from those who sang out praises
and declared:

“Blessed is the precious aura of THE OMNIPRESENT, from the
place where the Sheḥinah dwells!

THE ETERNAL ONE shall reign forever,
the kingdom of THE FOUNT OF LIFE shall last eternally,
through all eternities!”

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, continue with removing the Torah from the ark, page 463. Deuteronomy 32:1-12 (on the following page) is read. The Torah is then returned to the ark, page 597. Continue with Ḥatzi Kaddish, page 735. On all other days, Uva letziyon is immediately followed by Ḥatzi Kaddish (page 735), the Amidah (pages 739-774), Avinu Malkenu, Kaddish Titkabal, Aleynu, and Mourner’s Kaddish.

וַתִּשְׂאֲנִי רוּחַ וְאֶשְׁמַע אַחֲרַי קוֹל רֵעַשׁ גָּדוֹל: בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוָה
מִמְּקוֹמוֹ וּנְטַלְתָּנִי רוּחָא וְשִׁמְעִית בְּתַרֵּי קַל זִיעַ סָגִיא דְּמִשְׁבְּחֵי
וְאִמְרִין: בְּרִיךְ יְקָרָא דִּיהוּה מְאֵתַר בֵּית שְׁכִינְתָּהּ: יְהוּה יִמְלֹךְ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד יְהוּה מְלִכּוּתָהּ קָאִים לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא:

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, continue with removing the Torah from the ark, page 464. Deuteronomy 32:1-12 (on the following page) is read. The Torah is then returned to the ark, page 598. Continue with Hatzki Kaddish, page 736. On all other days, Uva letziyon is immediately followed by Hatzki Kaddish (page 736), the Amidah (pages 739-774), Avinu Malkenu, Kaddish Titkabal, Aleynu, and Mourner's Kaddish.

ממקומו...ברוך/Blessed is the glory...dwell! (Ezekiel 3:12).

The ark is opened.

One of the following may be sung:

(1)

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

(2)

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

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

R.H.

The ark is opened.

One of the following may be sung:

(1)

וַיְהִי בְנֹסֵעַ הָאָרֶן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה יְהוָה וַיִּפָּצוּ אִיבֵיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ
מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ :
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם :
בְּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ :

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

Ki mitziyon tetzey torah udvar adonay mirushalayim.

Baruh shenatan torah le'amo yisra'el bikdushato.

(2)

פְּתַחוּ לִי שַׁעַר־צְדָק אֲבֹתֵכֶם אוֹדָה יְהוָה :
זֶה־הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בוֹ :

Pitḥu li sha'arey tzedek avo vam odeh yah.

Zeh hashar ladonay tzadikim yavo'u vo.

ויהי...מפניך / And...might! (Numbers 10:35).

כי...ירושלים / Behold...Jerusalem's heights (Isaiah 2:3).

בו...פתחו / Open...come in (Psalms 118:19-20).

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

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

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

The leader faces the ark, bows and says:

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

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

To you, ETERNAL ONE, is all majesty,
and might, and splendor, and eternity, and power!
For everything that is, in the heavens and the earth,
is yours, ALMIGHTY ONE, as is all sovereignty,
and highest eminence above all beings.

Exalt THE MIGHTY ONE our God,
Bow down before God's footstool.

God is holy!

Exalt the name of THE INEFFABLE,
Bow down before God's holy mount,
For holy is THE AWESOME ONE, our God!

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

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

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

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay ehad.

אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ גָדוֹל אֲדוֹנֵינוּ קְדוֹשׁ וְנוֹרָא שְׁמוֹ:

Ehad eloheynu gadol adoneynu kadosh venora shemo.

The leader faces the ark, bows and says:

גִּדְלוּ לַיהוָה אֶתִּי וְנִרְמַמְהָ שְׁמוֹ יְיָדוּ:

Gadelu ladonay iti unromemah shemo yahdav.

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

לֵךְ יְהוָה הַגְדֵּלְהָ וְהַגְבוֹרָהּ וְהַתְפַּאֲרֶתָּ וְהַנְצִיחַ וְהַיְהוֹד בְּכֹל בְּשָׂמַיִם

וּבְאָרֶץ לֵךְ יְהוָה הִמְמַלְכָהּ וְהַמְתַּנְשֵׂא לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ:

רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהֵדָם רְגְלֵי קְדוֹשׁ הוּא:

רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהַר קְדָשׁוֹ בְּיַקְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

Leha adonay hagedulah vehagevurah vehatiferet vehanetzah
vehahod ki hol bashamayim uva'aretz leha adonay hamamlahah
vehamitnasey lehol lerosh.

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtahavu lahadom raglav kadosh
hu.

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtahavu lehar kodsho ki kadosh
adonay eloheynu.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

May _____ arise,

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

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

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

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

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

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגַּן וַיּוֹשִׁיעַ לְכָל הַחֹסִים בּוֹ וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:
הַכֹּל הָבֹה גָדֹל לְאַלְהֵינוּ וְחָנוּ כְבוֹד לְתוֹרָה:

יַעֲמֹד/תַּעֲמֹד/יַעֲמֹדוּ _____ בֶּן/בַּת _____ לְעֲלִיָּה/לְמַפְטִיר
[הָרֵאשׁוֹנָה, הַשְּׂנִית, הַשְּׁלִישִׁית, הָרְבִיעִית, הַחֲמִישִׁית, הַשִּׁשִּׁית,
הַשְּׁבִיעִית, הוֹסְפָה]
כְּרוֹף שְׁנַתֵּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ: ←

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

Congregation and gabay continue:

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

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

D.A.T.

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

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

Robin Goldberg

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

D.E.

Congregation and gabay continue:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים כְּלַכֶּם הַיּוֹם :

Ve'atem hadevekim badonay eloheyhem hayim kulehem hayom.

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

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

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

BIRHOT HATORAH / TORAH BLESSINGS

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

Bless THE INFINITE, the blessed One!

Congregation:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

בְּרָכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

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

בְּרָכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ:

Barehu et adonay hamevorah.

Congregation:

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Baruh adonay hamevorah le'olam va'ed.

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלִיךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִרְבָּנוּ לְעִבּוּדְתוֹ
וְנִתַּן-לָנוּ אֶת-תּוֹרָתוֹ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

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

Baruh atah adonay noten hatorah.

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלִיךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נִתַּן-לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת
וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטַּע בְּתוֹכָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam asher natan lanu
torat emet vchayey olam nata betoheynu.

Baruh atah adonay noten hatorah.

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

S.P.W.

BIRKAT LIMUD TORAH/
BLESSING PRECEDING TORAH STUDY

Blessed are you, THE ONE OF SINAI, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us to occupy ourselves with words of Torah. ↪

COMMENTARY. The three blessings on pages 170, 174, and 176 constitute a meditation on body, soul and intellect. The first blessing reflects the intricate workings of our physiology. We recognize the wondrous system of arteries, organs and glands that comprise the “human machine.” We then celebrate the purity of the soul that is implanted within us, we feel the “wind-spirit” of our own breath, our *anima* filled with air. As we breathe, all the systems of our bodies are also filled with life-sustaining oxygen. Finally, we rejoice in our intellects—in our ability to study and grapple with words of Torah, to reflect on them and our capacity to teach them to future generations.

L.G.B.

בְּרַכַּת לְמוֹד תּוֹרָה

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְעַסֵּק בְּדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָה: ←

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam asher kideshanu
bemitzvotav vetzivanu la'asok bedivrey torah. ↪

לעסֵק בדברי תורה /to occupy ourselves with words of Torah. The Hebrew words here do not say “to study Torah,” but rather to “be engaged” or “to be busy with” the study of Torah. We study Torah not as an intellectual exercise alone. Rather, we understand our “engagement” with Torah more holistically—as an every day, every moment activity. We also understand that to be fully “engaged” with Torah is to wrestle with Torah—to challenge our tradition while loving it, to question while celebrating it.

L.G.B.

Transmit to us, WISE ONE, our God, your Torah's words, into our mouths, and to the mouths of all the House of Israel, who called you kin. May we, and our children, and all the children of your people, the House of Israel, all of us, be knowers of your Name and learners of your Torah, for its sake alone. Blessed are you, THE SAGE, who teaches Torah to your people Israel.

Study selections on the themes of the High Holy Days from biblical and rabbinic literature follow. Other selections could, of course, be used.

COMMENTARY. Blessings and texts for Torah study are a traditional part of *Birhot Hashahar*. Like body and soul, Torah study is a daily part of Jewish living. Rabbinic literature records more than a half dozen versions of Torah blessings. The ornate Torah blessing in our text (pages 175-178) both begins and ends with the formula "*Baruh atah*." In the first instance, the formula of the blessing acknowledges that Torah study is essential to Jewish life. The concluding phrase of blessing praises God as the teacher of Torah. From a Reconstructionist perspective, the metaphor of God as teacher is an invitation and challenge to discern the divine presence in learning. A talmudic passage appears between the two blessings. It offers the hope that we, the people Israel, will always see Torah as an intrinsic part of ourselves. S.S.

וְהֵעֲרַבְנָא יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְכָפֵי עַמְךָ בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצָאֵינוּ וְצִאֲצָאֵי עַמְךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּלָנוּ
יּוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה הַמְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Veha'arev na adonay eloheynu et divrey torateha befinu uvefi
ameha beyt yisra'el venihyeh anahnu vetze'etza'eynu
vetze'etza'ey ameha beyt yisra'el kulanu yodey shemeha
velomdey torateha lishmah. Baruch atah adonay hamlamed
torah le'amo yisra'el.

Study selections on the themes of the High Holy Days from biblical and rabbinic literature follow. Other selections could, of course, be used.

DERASH. We must study the Torah with a view toward discerning the great traits of Jewish consciousness that struggled to become articulate in its traditions, laws, prophecies, psalms and wisdom. We should study all of its traditions with the purpose of finding out their bearing on Israel's destiny and duty in the world and then seek to make that destiny and duty our own.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

BIRKAT HAGOMEL / BLESSING FOR DELIVERANCE AND GOOD FORTUNE

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

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

Congregational response to one who offers this blessing:

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

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

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

D.A.T.

בְּרַכַת הַגּוֹמֵל

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

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת
שְׂגַמְלָנִי כָּל טוֹב:

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

Congregational response to a man who offers this blessing:

אָמֵן. מִי שְׂגַמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יְגַמְלֶךְ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥa tov hu yigmolḥa kol tov selah.

Congregational response to a woman who offers this blessing:

אָמֵן. מִי שְׂגַמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יְגַמְלֶךְ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥ tov hu yigmoleḥ kol tov selah.

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

Male

מי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֵת _____ בֶּן _____ וְ _____ שְׁעֵלָה לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת) וְלְכָבוֹד יוֹם הַדִּין: * הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יַחְיֶיהוּ וְיִשְׁמְרֵהוּ מִכָּל-צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל-נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו וְיַכְתֹּבֵהוּ וְיַחְתֶּמֶהוּ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה יוֹם הַדִּין עִם-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אָחִיו וְאֶחָיוֹתָיו וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

Female

מי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֵת _____ בֵּת _____ וְ _____ שְׁעֵלָתָה לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת) וְלְכָבוֹד יוֹם הַדִּין: * וְלְכָבוֹד הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יַחְיֶיהָ וְיִשְׁמְרֶיהָ מִכָּל-צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל-נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיהָ וְיַכְתֹּבֶהָ וְיַחְתֶּמֶהָ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה יוֹם הַדִּין עִם-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אָחִיהָ וְאֶחָיוֹתֶיהָ וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

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

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

D.A.T.

COLLECTIVE BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO
HAVE RECEIVED ALIYOT

מִי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל
וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֶת כָּל אֱלֹה שְׁעָלוּ הַיּוֹם לְכַבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם לְכַבוֹד
הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכַבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יוֹם הַדֵּיּוֹן בְּשִׁכְרֵי זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
יְחַיֵּים וְיִשְׁמְרֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה
וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְיִכְתְּבֵם וְיַחְתֶּמֶם לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה
יוֹם הַדֵּיּוֹן עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֵיהֶם וְאַחִיוֹתֵיהֶם וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן :

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