

Erev Yom Kippur

Ma'ariv



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LIGHTING OF A MEMORIAL CANDLE

We light this candle in the memory of all our loved ones. May their memory be a blessing!

We light this candle in the memory of the soldiers of the Israel Defense Force, all those who sacrificed their lives for the sanctification of God, and all those who died in the Holocaust. May their memory be a blessing!

The memorial candle is now lit.

LIGHTING OF YOM KIPPUR CANDLES

The festival candles are lit.

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God,
the sovereign of all worlds,
who has made us holy with your mitzvot,
and commanded us to kindle
the light of (Shabbat and of)
the Day of Atonement.

May it be your will, ETERNAL ONE, our God,
and God of our ancestors, that these candles
light up the pathway of return
on this your holy *Shabbat Shabbaton*
a Sabbath of complete cessation.
By their light may your light be seen.
And let us say: Amen.

DERASH. Why Day of Atonements—*Yom Hakippurim*—and not Day of Atonement—*Yom Kippur*? Here we speak in the plural, despite this being a day of solitude and singularity. I come knowing that I will be asked to confess sins, an intimidating, even frightening prospect. We are strengthened in the task as we realize that those with whom we have come to pray are engaged in the same process. Not for each of us alone is this a “Day of Atonement,” but for all of us together: a “Day of Atonements.”

R.H.

הַדְּלָקַת נֵר זְכוֹרֹן

נֵר זֶה אָנוּ מְדַלִּיקִים לְזִכְרוֹם שֶׁל כָּל הָאֲהוּבִים שְׁלָנוּ: יְהִי זְכוֹרָם
בְּרוּךְ:

נֵר זֶה אָנוּ מְדַלִּיקִים לְזִכְרוֹם שֶׁל חַיֵּי צָבָא הַהִגְנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְכַל-
אֵלֶּה שֶׁמָּסְרוּ אֶת-נַפְשָׁם עַל-קִדּוּשׁ הַשֵּׁם וְשִׁנְהֵרְגוּ בְּשׂוֹאָה: יְהִי
זְכוֹרָם בְּרוּךְ:

The memorial candle is now lit.

הַדְּלָקַת נְרוֹת לַיּוֹם כְּפוּר

The festival candles are lit.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ
לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְ) יוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים:

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

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שִׂיֵּאִירוּ
נְרוֹת אֵלֶּה אֶת דְּרָכֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה בְּיוֹם שַׁבָּת שְׁבַתוֹן קִדְּשָׁךְ: לְאוֹרָם
נִרְאֶה אוֹר וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

COMMENTARY. Those who recite *Yizkor* in memory of loved ones traditionally light a *Yizkor* candle at home before joining the community for *Kol Nidrey*. This is also done on the anniversary of the death of a loved one. For this home ritual, see *Kol Haneshamah: Shirim Uvrahot* [pages 136–137]. The communal lighting of a *Yizkor* candle here commemorates the losses suffered by our community as a whole—not only those who once lived among us, but also our people’s martyrs, those who died for the upbuilding of the land of Israel, and those we lost in the Holocaust. We define ourselves in part by whom we choose to remember. May their memory be a blessing for us.

D.A.T.

ATIFAT TALLIT / DONNING THE TALLIT

It is customary to wrap oneself in the tallit before reciting the blessing that follows.

Blessed are You, VEILED ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and commanded us to wrap ourselves amid the fringed tallit.

COMMENTARY. The *Kol Nidrey* service is the only time we are obligated to wear a tallit in the evening. Some wear a simple white robe (*kittel*) as well. These constitute the traditional costume of burial. Yom Kippur reminds us of our mortality even as the cessation from food, drink, sex, bathing, and other everyday activities serves as a rehearsal for death. The tallit is also a shelter: a secure place in which we wrap ourselves for this day's journey.

R.H.

עֲטִיפַת טָלִית

It is customary to wrap oneself in the tallit before reciting the blessing that follows.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית:

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav
vetzivanu lehitatef batzitzit.

NOTE. The tallit is normally not worn at night, when the fringes cannot easily be seen. Jewish tradition understands Yom Kippur as one long day filled with light. Therefore on Yom Kippur the tallit is worn by the whole congregation beginning with the evening service. The *beraḥah*, which is recited only once each day, is recited here before the tallit is put on and therefore not in the morning service.

D.A.T.

KOL NIDREY/ALL VOWS

By the authority of all who congregate above
and all who congregate on earth,
and with permission of the omnipresent One,
and by consent of this assembly,
we accept into our midst whoever seeks to pray.
Whether righteous or unrighteous,
all shall pray as one community. ↩

KAVANAH. Worlds are joined in this opening recitation. Upper and lower worlds are joined. The divine and the human are joined. We and they—those who have crossed the boundary to leave the we—are joined. This reveals our intention in seeking atonement: at-one-ment. We seek unification, the dissolution of barriers, the merging and unity that will culminate at the end of Yom Kippur. S.P.W.

DERASH. It is we who are the righteous, granting permission to participate in prayer. It is also we who are the unrighteous, seeking readmission to the community of holy beings. Realizing that each of us is both righteous and transgressor is the first step in *teshuvah*. J.A.S.

DERASH. The Kabbalist Isaac Luria taught that we can build our personal sanctuary (*mishkan*) with God one year at a time. The task of Yom Kippur is to build our *mishkan* in time, to build a relationship with God that will last for the year. Yom Kippur is a return to the source to reconstruct our interior. Z.S.S.

COMMENTARY. This prayer has long been associated with the Hidden Jews—the Jews in Spain who converted to Christianity during the Inquisition and kept their Jewish life secret in order to survive. This prayer allowed them to pray as Jews by forgiving the vows they had made to another religion, another system of beliefs. What a deep resonance this interpretation has for gay and lesbian Jews who are living hidden, secret lives! For those in the closet about their gay identity in their Jewish communities and those in the closet about their Jewish lives in the gay community, this prayer recognizes the pain of hidden and split identities and offers the hope for integration and healing. Adina Abramowitz



בִּישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַעְלָה וּבִישִׁיבָה שֶׁל מַטָּה
עַל דַּעַת הַמָּקוּם וְעַל דַּעַת הַקָּהָל
אָנוּ מִתְּרִיזִין לְהִתְפַּיֵּל עִם הָעֹבְרִינִים: ←

בישיבה / By the authority of all who congregate. Originally a legal formula, *Kol Nidrey* is introduced by this meditation in which an imaginary court is invoked to validate the liturgical proceeding. The parallelism is striking: “who congregate above/the Omnipresent One” and “who congregates on earth/this assembly.” We stand *before* God and *among* our community—we require the permission and participation of both. R.H.

Anu matirin lehitpalel im ha'avaryanim / Whether righteous or unrighteous, all shall pray as one community. There is a Jewish folk legend that suggests that in the *Kol Nidrey* chant, the word עֹבְרִינִים / *avaryanim* (transgressors) was actually a code for the word, *Iberyanim* (Iberians or Spaniards), referring to death-fearing Spanish Jews who had converted to Christianity during the Inquisition, but who secretly continued to practice Judaism. According to the legend, in embracing these crypto-Jews within the community of believers and sinners, the *Kol Nidrey* chant reminds us that we all wear masks, we all hide our true essence—and we all enjoy the possibility of God's forgiveness. L.G.B.

DERASH. The setting for *Kol Nidrey* is that of two courts joined. The earthly court, composed of the *hazan* and two people holding Torah scrolls, reflects the heavenly court where God sits in judgment. The imagery of the court is further emphasized by the legalistic style of the *Kol Nidrey* prayer itself. In this introductory prayer to *Kol Nidrey*, “we” are granted permission to pray with sinners. But since no human being is without sin, this permission must be understood as a mutual act. We can only become a community when we begin to forgive ourselves and each other. D.A.T.

All vows,
and formulas of prohibition, and declarations of taboo,
and promises of abstinence, and names of God,
and pledges one assumes on penalty, and oaths,
whatever we have vowed and then forgot,
whatever we have sworn but not upheld,
whatever we declared taboo that went amiss,
whatever prohibitions we assumed upon ourselves to no avail,
from the last Day of Atonement to this Day of Atonement
– may the day come upon us for the good! –

from all of them we now request release.

Let their burden be dissolved, and lifted off, and canceled,
and made null and void, bearing no force and no reality.

Those vows shall not be binding vows,
those prohibitions not be binding prohibitions,
those oaths shall not be binding oaths.

COMMENTARY. Part of the awesome power of *Kol Nidrey* comes from the gathering of so many Jews in community. Although we may have theological hesitations regarding *Kol Nidrey's* annulment of vows, these pale in comparison to the fulfillment of our one shared commitment: to be here together. J.A.S.

COMMENTARY. Despite generations of commentary, the peculiar paradox of *Kol Nidrey* remains—that even as we prepare to swear loyalty to our resolutions, we declare that unkept pledges are absolved. In the early years of the original Reconstructionist synagogue (the Society for the Advancement of Judaism), Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan attempted to avoid this problem by substituting Psalm 130 for the words of *Kol Nidrey* while chanting the traditional melody. The reaction of the congregants was strongly negative: while they may not have been able to make sense of *Kol Nidrey's* words, the emotional appeal determined the outcome. Today we remain moved by the solemnity of the moment, the plaintive chant, and the orchestrated overture to the Day of Atonement—even when the purpose of the words escapes us. In the realm of the spirit, the heart often speaks louder than the head. R.H.

כָּל נִדְרֵי וְאֶסְרֵי וְשְׁבוּעֵי וְחַרְמֵי וְקוֹנָמֵי וְקוֹנֵסֵי וְכַנּוּיֵי דְנִדְרָנָא
וְדִאֲשְׁתַּבְּעָנָא וְדִאֲחִימָנָא וְדִאֲסָרָנָא עַל נַפְשָׁתָנָא מִיּוֹם כְּפוּרִים
שְׁעָבַר עַד יוֹם כְּפוּרִים זֶה הִבָּא עָלֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה כְּלַהוֹן אֲחִרְטָנָא כְּהוֹן
כְּלַהוֹן יְהוֹן שָׁרֹן שְׁבִיקוֹן שְׁבִיתִין בְּטִלִין וּמְבַטְלִין לָא שְׁרִירִין וְלָא
קְמִין: נִדְרָנָא לָא נִדְרֵי וְאֶסְרָנָא לָא אֶסְרֵי וְשְׁבוּעָתָנָא לָא שְׁבוּעוֹת: ←

Kol nidrey ve'esarey ushevu'ey vaharamey vekonamey vekinusey
veh inuyey dindarna ude'ishtabana ude'aharimna ude'asarena
al nafshatana miyom kippurim she'avar ad yom kippurim zeh
haba aleynu letovah kulehon iharatna vehon kulehon yehon
sheran shevikin shevitin beteylin umevutalin la sheririn vela
kayamin. Nidrana la nidrey ve'esarana la esarey ushevu'atana
la shevu'ot. ↪

COMMENTARY. The *Kol Nidrey* is at once a legal declaration and a prayer. In the careful language of a contract it marks out the territory of prayer, introspection, and personal resolve as a domain beyond law. This is a realm where the promptings of the heart and utterances in the passion of the moment are allowed a certain freedom, privacy, and momentum, irrespective of their realization or completion in practice. By declaring such utterances null and void, one both affirms their importance and limits their force. Let the heart be free, says this prayer, to promise what it will, to aspire where it will, even to call itself to task in the harsh language of law—but let us be at peace with our past failures or resolve and get on with our lives as best we can. *Kol Nidrey* inevitably calls to mind all that we have done, or not done, since the previous *Kol Nidrey*. Indeed, it is that previous declaration that now reaches into the present, and releases us to pray and to change—and to assume our role in our community of prayer.

J.R.

KAVANAH. At this Yom Kippur, we seek to deal kindly but honestly with ourselves, to take care that our commitment to ideals does not entail the destruction of our own souls, our own worlds. We freely admit our failings and create our atonements. No excuse, no escape, just an honest seeing into the truth, that we might correct our path and set off once more toward the good each of us seeks.

R.M.S.

“And there shall be atonement
for the whole community of Israel,
and the stranger dwelling in their midst
—indeed, for an entire people that has gone astray.” Numbers 15:26

“Grant forgiveness, then,
for the transgression of this people,
as the abundance of your love demands,
and as you have always lifted from disfavor
these, your people, from the time of Egypt until now,”
as it is told: Numbers 14:19

“THE FOUNT OF MERCY said:
I grant forgiveness, as you ask.” Numbers 14:20

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the sovereign of all worlds,
who has given us life,
and has sustained us,
and has brought us to this time.

סלחתי כדבריך / I grant forgiveness as you ask. The words, from Numbers 14:20, are portrayed as God’s speech following the rebellious report of the spies sent by Moses to scout out the Promised Land. Moses implores God not to eradicate the Israelite people. “Thus, I [God] grant forgiveness as you [Moses] ask.” On Yom Kippur, each of us brings our own rebellious report: We have scouted out our own Promised Land and declared ourselves unable to secure it. Despite the promise of God’s presence, we have squandered the opportunity to advance. But tonight, each of us becomes like Moses; each of us asks for ourselves: “Grant forgiveness as I ask.” We do not expect to reach the Promised Land—only to be allowed to continue on the journey. R.H.

DERASH. According to the *midrash*, Yom Kippur plays a part in the Exodus year. On Shavuot, Moshe goes up to receive the tablets. He comes down and breaks them on the seventeenth of Tammuz. For forty days he argues with God to forgive. He goes up again on Rosh Ḥodesh Elul, and comes down on Yom Kippur reciting *salaḥti kidvareḥa*. So the Torah that was actually received was not the Torah of Shavuot but the Torah of Yom Kippur. Our law is one that was given with *salaḥti kidvareḥa*. It contains the built-in possibility of *teshuvah*. Z.S.S.

וְנִסְלַח לְכָל-עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכָם כִּי לְכָל-הָעָם
בְּשִׁגְגָה:

סִלַּח-נָא לַעֲוֹן הָעָם הַזֶּה כַּגְּדֹל חַסְדְּךָ וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתָּה לָעָם הַזֶּה
מִמִּצְרַיִם וְעַד-הַנְּהָה: וְשָׁם נֹאמַר:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה: סִלַּחְתִּי כִּדְבָרְךָ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחֲטָאוֹת וְקִימָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ
לְדֹמֵן הַזֶּה:

Venislah lehol-adat beney yisra'el velager hagar betoḥam ki
leḥol-ha'am bishgagah.

Selah-na la'avon ha'am hazeh kegodel ḥasdeḥa veḥa'asher
nasatah la'am hazeh mimitzrayim ve'ad heynah. Vesham ne'emar:

Vayomer adonay: Salaḥti kidevareḥa.

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam sheheḥeyanu
vekiyemanu vehigi'anu lazeman hazeh.

DERASH. These verses from the book of Numbers appear in the story of the Israelite spies in Canaan. Later we will recite the Thirteen Attributes of God's compassion, also part of the wilderness story of human failure. The disasters during the wandering in the wilderness are part of the Torah's paradigm for forgetting purpose, losing awareness, faith and truth. The people seek a product of their own making, a god of gold to worship in place of the living God that is beyond their full comprehension and mastery. Our stumbling and falling often occurs when we substitute an immediate and known gratification for a transcendent value. Through the inclusion of the Thirteen Attributes in the stories of the wilderness wanderings, divine forgiveness and mercy are inextricably linked with this story of failure. It teaches us about the universality of error and forgetfulness and the eternal possibility of realizing God's loving presence in our lives.

S.P.W.

All the vows on our lips,
The burdens in our hearts,
The pent-up regrets
About which we brooded and spoke
Through prayers without end
On last Atonement Day
Did not change our way of life,
Did not bring deliverance
In the year that has gone.
From mountain peaks of fervor
We fell to common ways
At the close of the fast.

Will You hear our regret?
Will You open our prison,
Release us from shackles of habit?
Will You answer our prayers,
Forgive our wrongs,
Though we sin again and again?
In moments of weakness
We do not remember
Promises of Atonement Day.
Look past forgetfulness,
Take only from our hearts.
Forgive us, pardon us.

Ze'ev Falk (Translated by Stanley Schachter)

On Shabbat continue on the following page. On all other days turn to page 705.

כַּל-נִדְרֵי שְׁפָתֵינוּ, קִבְלוֹת שְׁפָלָינוּ
 וְהִרְהוּרֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה שְׁהֲגִינוּ וּבִטְאֵנוּ
 בְּאֶלְפֵי תַפְלוּתֵינוּ בְּיוֹם כְּפוּר שְׁהִיָּה
 לֹא שְׁנוֹ אַרְח חַיֵּינוּ,
 לֹא הִבִּיאוּ גְאֻלָּתָנוּ
 בְּשָׁנָה שְׁנִסְתִּימָה:
 מִמְרוּמֵי הַתְּלֻהָבוֹתָנוּ
 אֶל חֲלִין הַרְגֵלָנוּ
 שְׁכָנוּ מִיָּד עִם נְעִלָה:

הַתְּשַׁמַּע חֲרָטָתָנוּ, אִם תִּתִּיר אֶת-מַאֲסֵינוּ
 בְּיַד יֵצֵר שֶׁל שְׁגָרָה?

הַתְּרַצָּה תַפְלֻתָנוּ לְכַפֵּר עַל פְּשָׁעֵינוּ
 אִף אִם נָשׁוּב וְנִחָטָא?
 דַּע כִּי בְשַׁעַת חֲלֻשָׁתָנוּ לֹא נִזְכֵּר מוֹדְעָתָנוּ
 מִיוֹם כְּפוּר שְׁהִיָּה:
 תִּתְחַשֵּׁב בְּשִׁכְחָתָנוּ וּתְקַבֵּל כְּוִנוֹתֵינוּ
 לְסְלִיחָה וְלִמְחִילָה:

On Shabbat continue on the following page. On all other days turn to page 706.

COMMENTARY. Often we are confronted with moral or religious decisions where the right choice does not seem immediately clear. We make our choices as best we can despite not being entirely certain. At *Kol Nidrey* we look back at the year and hope our decisions have been correct. However, if they were not correct and we are now aware of it, we pray that we will be forgiven by whomever we may have offended, and that our consciences can be clear.

Carl S. Choper

A Song of the Ascents

From the depths I have called out to you, REDEEMING ONE,
please listen, my provider, to my voice!

May you hearken to my voice of supplication.

Were you to pay careful attention to a person's sins,
who could endure, almighty one?

With you alone originates all power to forgive;
for this you are revered.

So I have hoped, MERCIFUL ONE! My soul has hoped,
and for your word I have looked forward in my yearning.

My spirit yearns for my protector more than people watch for
daybreak,

truly, more than watching for the dawn.

So does Israel eagerly anticipate THE MERCIFUL,

for from THE MERCIFUL all kindness comes,

from God alone comes all deliverance,

yes, God alone delivers Israel from its wrongful acts.

Psalm 130

COMMENTARY. The psalmist yearns for the appearance of God and resulting release from sin like the night watchman eagerly hopes for the coming dawn—not only a source of beauty, light, and the lifting of a heavy burden, but of loving redemption as well. While we are in the dark, it is a matter of faith and hope that the light will come. But faith and hope also express our previous experience. Dawn's glory does come daily. And so we pray for release from the power of our previous transgressions. D.A.T.

שִׁיר

הַמְעֵלוֹת

מִמַּעַמְמָקִים קָרָאתִיךָ יְהוָה: אֲדַנִּי שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹלִי
תְּהַיְינָה אָזְנֶיךָ קְשׁוּבוֹת לְקוֹל תְּחִנּוּנָי:
אִם־עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמַר־יָהּ אֲדַנִּי מִיַּעֲמֵד:
כִּי־עָמַךְ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּנָּרָא:
קִוִּיתִי יְהוָה קִנְיָתָה נַפְשִׁי וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלְתִּי:
נַפְשִׁי לֹאֲדַנִּי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר שְׁמָרִים לְבַקֵּר:
יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה
כִּי־עַם־יְהוָה הַחֹסֵד וְהַרְבֵּה עֲמוֹ פְּדוּת:
וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו

DERASH. Why does Yom Kippur follow Rosh Hashanah? Should it not be the other way around—first a settling of accounts for the previous year and then a celebration of a new year with its promise of change and its potential for betterment? Is it not necessary to clear away the old, to repent for the past, before we can really welcome the new?

The hope for a *new* year must precede a systematic review of the old, for it shakes us awake to the possibility of renewal. The new year calls on us to join in the struggle to transform ourselves. The shofar blasts are meant to arouse our slothful selves to the new possibilities that await us. Once conscious of the new year and what it offers, we are ready to look back at our past. Conscious that life can be as sweet as apples dipped in honey, that the barren woman can bear fruit even in old age, and that the descending knife can be halted in midair, we approach Yom Kippur with the hope for growth and change....

Michael Strassfeld

THE SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS

When a minyan is present, the Bareḥu 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!

KAVANAH. Public worship aids us by liberating personality from the confining walls of the individual ego. Imprisoned in self, we easily fall prey to morbid broodings. Interference with career, personal disappointment and disillusionment, hurts to vanity, the fear of death—all these tend so to dominate our attention that our minds move in a fixed and narrow system of ideas, which we detest but from which we see no escape. With a whole wide world of boundless opportunities about us, we permit our minds, as it were, to pace up and down within the narrow cell of their ego-prisons. But participation in public worship breaks through the prison of the ego and lets in the light and air of the world. Instead of living but one small and petty life, we now share the multitudinous life of our people. Against the wider horizons that now open to our ken, personal cares do not loom so large. Life becomes infinitely more meaningful and worthwhile when we become aware, through our participation in public worship, of a common life that transcends our individual selves.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּבְרִכּוֹתֶיהָ

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

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ:
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Bareḥu et adonay hamvoraḥ.

Baruḥ adonay hamvoraḥ le'olam va'ed.

KAVANAH. When we worship in public we know our life is part of a larger life, a wave of an ocean of being—the first-hand experience of that larger life which is God.

M.M.K.

KAVANAH. The main part of the evening service begins with the customary prayers: *Bareḥu, Asher Bidvaro, Ahavat Olam, Shema*.... There is something reassuring about the familiarity of the liturgy, a security in knowing that even as we embark on the day of atoning, we travel a liturgical road which is remarkably similar to the one a Jew can walk every day of the year. The other days of the year lead us to Yom Kippur, and a bit of Yom Kippur's call to return is contained in the everyday.

R.H.

ASHER BIDVARO / GOD IN NATURE

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, who rolls back light before the dark, and dark before the light, who makes day pass away and brings on night, dividing between day and night: CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven is your name! Living and enduring God, rule over us, now and always. Blessed are you, ALMIGHTY ONE, who makes the evenings fall.

DERASH. When we are about to say, "Blessed are you, our God, sovereign of all worlds" and prepare to utter the first word "blessed," we should do so with all our strength, so that we will have no strength left to say, "are you." And this is the meaning of the verse in the Scriptures: "But they that wait for God shall exchange their strength." What we are really saying is: "Source of life, I am giving you all the strength that is within me in that very first word; now will you, in exchange, give me an abundance of new strength, so that I can go on with my prayer." M.B. (Adapted)

אור, חושך, אור / light, dark, light. The words roll into each other just as day rolls into night. They are not separate realms. They mix together. God rules both light and darkness. בין / *beyn*: between. Related to בינה / *binah* and תבונה / *tevunah*: understanding. Wisdom is the ability to distinguish between things, to make sense out of confusion. L.W.K.

KAVANA. In looking to the past and future, we pray that as God "in wisdom opens heaven's gates" so God will in mercy open human hearts.

R.H.

אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְרוֹ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְרוֹ מַעְרִיב עַרְבִים
בְּחֻקָּהּ פּוֹתֵחַ שְׁעָרִים וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים וּמַחְלִיף אֶת הַזְּמַנִּים
וּמְסַדֵּר אֶת־הַכּוֹכָבִים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ כְּרִצּוֹנוֹ: בּוֹרֵא יוֹם
וְלַיְלָה גּוֹלֵל אֹר מִפְּנֵי הַשֶּׁשׁ וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אֹר: *וּמַעְבִּיר יוֹם וַיִּבְרָא
לַיְלָה וּמַבְדִּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: אֵל חַי וְקַיִם
תָּמִיד יְמַלֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעַד: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמַּעְרִיב עַרְבִים:

El hay vekayam tamid yimloḥ aleynu le'olam va'ed.

Baruḥ atah adonay hama'ariv aravim.

אשר בדברו מעריב ערבים / By whose word the evenings fall. The word plays a central role in the Jewish imagination. Our liturgy fantasizes that God brings on evening each night by saying “Evening!” Thus we repeat each day the original act of Creation that took place by means of the divine word. It is only because we affirm a God who so values language that we feel ourselves able to use words in prayer. Our word, perhaps like God’s, gives expression to a depth that goes beyond language, but that can be shared only through the symbolic power of speech. A.G.

COMMENTARY. The two *beraḥot* which 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.

AHAVAT OLAM / GOD'S LOVE IN TORAH

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

KAVANAH. The שמע/Shema is wrapped in אהבה/*ahavah*/love. The blessing preceding the Shema concludes, “who loves your people Israel.” This prayer begins “וְאָהַבְתָּ/ve'*ahavta*, And you must love יְיָ!” 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

אהבת עולם בית ישראל עמך אהבת: תורה ומצוות חקים
ומשפטים אותנו למדת: על כן יהיה אליהנו בשכבנו ובקוּמנו
נשיח בְּחַיִּיךָ וְנִשְׁמַח בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וְעַד כִּי הֵם
חַיֵּינוּ וְאַרְךָ יָמֵינוּ וּבָהֶם נִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה: וְאַהֲבַתְךָ לֹא תִסּוּר
מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Ahavat olam beyt yisra'el ameha ahavta.

Torah umitzvot hukim umishpatim otanu limadeta.

Al ken adonay eloheynu beshohebenu uvkumenu nasi'ah
behukeha

venismaḥ bedivrey torateha uvmitzvotaha le'olam va'ed

ki hem hayeynu ve'oreh yameynnu

uvahem nehgeh yomam valaylah.

Ve'ahavateha lo tasur mimenu le'olamim.

Baruh atah adonay ohev amo yisra'el.

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.

שִׁמְעוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל 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. ↪

ושמע... / 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 את יהוה . 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

KAVANAH. The Shema challenges us to be fully conscious. True hearing involves an awareness of what is. A moment of full consciousness illuminates our false perceptions and opens us up to new possibilities. It is a courageous and honest encounter with the now.

D.B.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

The following line is recited aloud on Yom Kippur.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וְאֶתְהַבֵּת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכֹל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכֹל-מְאֹדֶךָ:
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצוּוֶה הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם
לְבָנְיֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתֶךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ
וּבְקוּמֶךָ: וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטָטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay ehad.

Baruh shem kevod malhuto le'olam va'ed.

Ve'ahavta et adonay eloheha

behol levaveha uvehol nafsheha uvehol me'odeha.

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

Veshinantam levaneha vedibarta bam

beshivteha beveyteha uvehoteha vadereh uveshohbeha
uvekumeha.

Ukeshartam le'ot al yadeha vehayu letotafot beyn eyneha.

Uhetavtam al mezuzot beyteha uvishareha.

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.

Listen! Israel, listen!

Still the mind's chatter, quiet the heart's desire

The rush of life flows through me.

The heart of eternity beats in my own chest. Listen.

I am the fingers of a divine and infinite hand.

I am the thoughts of a divine and infinite mind.

There is only one reality, the Singular Source and Substance
of all diversity. This One alone is God.

R.M.S.

For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical section beginning on page 719, then continue with the third paragraph, page 721.

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. ↪

For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical section beginning on page 720, then continue with the third paragraph, page 722.

BIBLICAL SELECTION I

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעְתָּ תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם וּנְתַנֶּנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲלֶיךָ
עַל כָּל-גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ: וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהַשִּׁיגָה כִּי
תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּעִיר וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּשָׂדֶה:
בְּרוּךְ פְּרִי-בִטְנֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתֶךָ וּפְרִי בְהֵמָתֶךָ שֶׁגֶר אֶלְפִיךָ
וְעִשְׂתָּרֹת צֹאנֶךָ: בְּרוּךְ טִנְיָאֶךָ וּמִשְׁאֲרֹתֶךָ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבֹאֶה
וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתֶךָ:

רְאֵה נִתְּנִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב וְאֶת-הַמּוֹת
וְאֶת-הָרָע: אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּית וּרְבִית
וּבְרִכָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ←

COMMENTARY. The traditional wording of Biblical Selection II 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 721.

וְאִם־יִפְּנֶה לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וְנִדְחִתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְעַבַּדְתָּם: הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲבֹד תִּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכֵן יָמִים
עַל־הַאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:
הִעֲלִיתִי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמּוֹת נִתְּתִי
לְפָנֶיךָ הַפְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבַחֲרַתְּ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אֶתָּה וְזִרְעֶךָ:

Continue with ויאמר, page 722.

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. ↩

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)

COMMENTARY. The statement of God's oneness unifies not only the context of 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.

BIBLICAL SELECTION II

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַע תִּשְׁמָעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם
הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכָל-
נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטֶּר־אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דְּגָנָה
וְתִירֹשָׁה וְיִצְהָרָה: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשָׂדֶךָ לְבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וְאִכְלֹתָ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:
הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן-יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסָרְתֶם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִהָרָה
מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:

וּשְׁמַתֶּם אֶת-דְּבַרֵי אֱלֹהֵי עַל-לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֶתֶּם
לְאוֹת עַל-יַדְכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֶתֶּם
אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתֶךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֹּתְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׂכְבְךָ
וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְכִתַּבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם
וְיִמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְתֵת לָהֶם
בְּיַמֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ: ←

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.

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.

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.

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.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל-כַּנְּפֵי בְּגָדֵיהֶם לְדִרְתָּם וּנְתַנּוּ
עַל-צִיצִית הַכֹּהֵן פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ
וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי
לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-אֲתֶם זִנִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתַי וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם
לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

אֲמַרְתָּ:

Vayomer adonay el mosheh leymor. Daber el beney yisra'el
ve'amarta aleyhem ve'asu lahem tzitzit al kanfey vigdeyhem
ledorotam venatenu al tzitzit hakanaf petil tehelet. Vehayah
lahem letzitzit uritem oto uzharthem et kol mitzvot adonay
va'asitem otam velo taturu aharey levavehem ve'aharey
eyneyhem asher atem zonim ahareyhem. Lema'an tizkeru
va'asitem et kol mitzvotay vihe-yitem kedoshim leyloheyhem.
Ani adonay eloheyhem asher hotzeyti ethem me'erezt mitzrayim
lihyot lahem leylohim ani adonay eloheyhem.

מְצִרַיִם.../THE BOUNDLESS ONE...God (Numbers 15:37-41).

מְצִרַיִם / *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 הַמְצַר קִרְאתִי יְהוָה / From the depths I called to Yah.

M.P.

EMET VE'EMUNAH / REDEMPTION

The translation of the Ge'ulah is on this page; an interpretive version begins on page 725.

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.

As then, so now,

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

Moses, Miriam and the Israelites came forth
with song to you in joy, and they all cried:

Continue on page 727.

אֶמֶת וְאִמוּנָה

אֶמֶת וְאִמוּנָה כָּל זֹאת וְקִים עָלֵינוּ
כִּי הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵין זִוְלָתוֹ
וְאִנְחָנוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמּוֹ:
הַפּוֹדֵנוּ מִיַּד מְלָכִים
הַגּוֹאֲלֵנוּ מִכַּף עֲרִיצִים
הַעוֹשֶׂה גְדוּלוֹת אֵין חֶקֶר
וְנִפְלְאוֹת אֵין מִסְפָּר:
הַשֵּׁם נִפְשָׁנוּ בְּחַיִּים
וְלֹא נִתֵּן לְמוֹט רַגְלֵנוּ:
הַמְפַּר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ
וְהַמְקַלְקֵל מַחְשְׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ:
הַעוֹשֶׂה לָּנוּ נְסִים בְּמִצְרַיִם
אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים בְּאֶדְמַת בְּנֵי חָם:
מִדּוֹר לְדוֹר הוּא גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ:
וּבַיּוֹם שְׁהַפֵּךְ לְלֵילָה
עֲמָנוּ הִיָּה בְּגִיא צְלָמוֹת:

Continue on page 726.

COMMENTARY. 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.

INTERPRETIVE VERSION

We acknowledge as true and trustworthy that there is but one universal God, and that to God's service Israel stands eternally committed.

We recognize in God the power that has enabled us to triumph over defeat, persecution and oppression.

It was God who redeemed us from Egyptian bondage, and delivered us from the despotism of the pharaohs.

For God wills that we be free to use our powers in holy service, and be not bound to the arbitrary rule of any mortal.

Whenever human rulers usurp divine authority, and exploit the people, those tyrants' hearts are hardened, their own arrogance writes their doom.

Therefore we will never be discouraged nor dismayed when unrighteous powers rise up to destroy us.

Though enemy hosts pursue us, we shall remember how our ancestors were saved at the Sea of Reeds.

We therefore repeat the words of triumph with which they gave thanks for their deliverance:

1945 Reconstructionist Prayer Book (Adapted)

(Congregation sings *מי כמכה*, page 727)

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.

גַּם בְּדוֹר יְתוּמִים
לֹא עֲזָבוּנוּ חֲסָדָיו
וַיִּקְבֹּץ נִדְחֵינוּ מִקְצוֹת תְּבַל:
כָּאֵז גַּם עָתָה
מוֹצִיא אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִכַּף כָּל אוֹיְבָיו
לְחֵירוֹת עוֹלָם:
הַמַּעֲבִיר בְּנָיו בֵּין גִּזְרֵי יָם סוּף
שֶׁם רָאוּ אֶת גְּבוּרָתוֹ
שִׁבְחוּ וְהוֹדוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ
וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן קִבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

מֹשֶׁה וּמַרְיָם וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה וְאָמְרוּ כֻלָּם:

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

NOTE. Biblical references include Job 9:10, Psalms 66:9.

“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!

When our ancestors
beheld these truths
they proclaimed:
Among all the gods
we can name,
who can compare to the
One Beyond Naming?

Among all the quantities
we can label, number,
mark and measure,
which compares to the
Mystery
at the Heart of Reality?

R.M.S.

פדה יהוה את יעקב וגאלו מיד חזק ממנו / The Redeeming One has rescued Jacob, saved him from a power stronger than his own. Traditional commentators differ about which event in the life of Jacob the verse describes. I believe it is the nocturnal struggle from which Jacob emerges limping but alive, the wrestle from which he emerges with the new name “Israel.” Our own struggles echo those of Jacob. Our formidable adversary, the rabbis teach, is our *yetzer hara*, our “evil inclination.” Often this power seems “stronger than our own impulse to do good.” How then to resist, to survive, to triumph? Through faith in the redeeming power that enables us to transcend who we are now and to strive for what we may yet become!

R.H.

מִי־כִמְכָה בְּאֵלִים יְהוָה מִי כִמְכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקִרְיָשׁ
 נִרְאָה תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה פֶלְאָ:
 מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בְנֵיךָ בּוֹקֵעַ יָם לְפָנַי מֹשֶׁה זֶה אֵלַי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ:
 יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:
 וְנֹאמַר: כִּי פָדָה יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חֲזַק מִמָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
 יְהוָה גְּאֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

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

COMMENTARY. This *maḥzor* 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' wand, that caused the sea to split.

A.G.

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

ברוך אתה יהוה הפורש סכת שלום



HASHKIVENU / DIVINE HELP

Transliteration and commentary follow on pages 731-732.

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.

עלינו ועל כל-עמו ישראל ועל ירושלים



השְׁפִיבֵנוּ

Transliteration and commentary follow on pages 731-732.

השְׁפִיבֵנוּ יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ לְחַיִּים וּפְרוֹשׁ
עָלֵינוּ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמֶךָ: וְתִקַּנְנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן
שְׁמֶךָ: וּבְצִלְ כַּנְּפֶיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמְצִילֵנוּ אַתָּה כִּי אֵל
מְלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה: וּשְׁמֹר צִאתָנוּ וּבֹאֵנוּ לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם
מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: וּפָרֵשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמֶךָ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל-עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:



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 V’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 final acknowledgment of God as the one who “spreads the sukkah of peace over us, over Israel, and over Jerusalem” conjures up a future time when Israel, its people, and its holy city will dwell in peace. 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.

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, days 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.



Hashkivenu adonay eloheynu leshalom veba'amidenu malkenu
lehayim ufros aleynu sukkat shelomeha. Vetakenenu ve'etzah
tovah milefaneha vehoshi'enu lema'an shemeha. Uevtsel
kenafeha tastirenu ki el shomrenu umatzilenu atah ki el
meleḥ ḥanun veraḥum atah. Ushmor tzeytenu uvo'enu
lehayim uleshalom me'atah ve'ad olam. Ufros aleynu sukkat
shelomeha. Baruh atah adonay hapores sukkat shalom aleynu
ve'al kol amo yisra'el ve'al yerushalayim.

KAVANAH. On Yom Kippur we say the everyday *Hashkivenu*, though on this awe-filled night it has added meaning. The fears and terrors of our exposed hearts are added to our natural primordial night-fears. Desiring atonement, we have just opened our hearts before the stern Judge. In *Hashkivenu*, we ask that same merciful Judge, in the same words we use every day, to "spread the canopy of peace" in order that we may "lie down in peace" on this night of nights, and that we, who are judged this night, will "awaken to life."
E.M.

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 this paragraph:

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.

MAKING ATONEMENT/ YOM KIPPUR PURIFICATION

For on this day, atonement shall be made for you, to make you clean from all of your wrongdoings. Before THE FOUNT OF MERCY, you shall all be clean.

KAVANAH. Yom Kippur reenacts the yearly rituals that achieved atonement in biblical times. Something is really supposed to happen on this day. Can we open our beings to the possibility of a spiritual cleansing, a moral death and rebirth, a true letting go of hurtful patterns and habits that besmirch our relationship with self, others and the world? What is our hope for this day?

S.P.W.

יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם / atonement shall be made for you. This brief quotation from Leviticus 16:30 is followed in the Torah by the words "And the *kohen* / priest...shall make atonement." (Leviticus 16:32). Today, in the absence of the priesthood and the cultic rituals of cleansing, each Jew becomes a priest. Only through your own actions "shall atonement be made for you."

R.H.

On Friday evening, add this paragraph:

וְשָׁמְרוּ

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשְּׁבֹט לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשְּׁבֹט לְדֹרוֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם: בְּיַד וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם כִּי־שִׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ:

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.

יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם

כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם
מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תְּטַהָרוּ:

Ki vayom hazeh yehaper aleyhem letaher et'hem
mikol hatoteyhem lifney adonay tit'haru.

ושמרו...וינפשו / Let...rest (Exodus 31:16-17).
כי...תטהרו / For...clean (Leviticus 16:30).

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.

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 לעילא / *higher by far* reminds us 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 effortful climb. Real change is not easy, but saving our lives depends on it. D.A.T.

חֲצִי קַדִּישׁ

וַיִּתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וַיִּמְלִיךְ
מְלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיָוִמִיכוּן וּבְחַיִּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא:
וַיִּתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה
וַיִּתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא
לְעֵלָא לְעֵלָא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאַמְרִין
בְּעֵלְמָא וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

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

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

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

AMIDAH

The traditional Amidah follows here. Meditations begin on page 1. 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, 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; ↪

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.

KAVANAH. Silence can come from a breakdown in communication or from an intimacy that makes other forms of communication temporarily unnecessary. Let our silence say what words can't express. Let us use this silent prayer-time as an opportunity to meet the divine presence, to experience God's cosmic power and awe-inspiring, fathomless depth. S.D.R.

עֲמִידָה

The traditional Amidah follows here. Meditations begin on page 1. 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.

אֲדַנִּי שְׁפַתִּי תִפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

אָבוֹת וְאֵמוֹת



כְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֵמוֹתֵינוּ

אֱלֹהֵי שָׁרָה

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם

אֱלֹהֵי רַבֵּקָה

אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק

אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל

אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב

וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה: ←

DERASH. So often the power of our lips is limited by our fears and self-doubt. When we say “Open our lips,” we are also saying, “God, help me to open up and see beyond my current limits, so that I can recognize and accept the myriad of possibilities in my life.”

D.B.

NOTE. The traditional liturgy evolved gradually. It contains thousands of variant or alternative versions. Reconstructionist liturgy has eliminated reference to traditional beliefs that Jews are the Chosen People, that there is individual reward and punishment, that the Temple should be rebuilt, that there will be a personal Messiah and that there will be bodily resurrection. The Reconstructionist commitment to equality for women has resulted in additional changes. Our understanding of God as the Source of goodness, the Life of nature, and the Power that makes for salvation replaces some more anthropomorphic and anthropopathic traditional imagery.

D.A.T.

תְּהִלָּתְךָ / אֲדַנִּי...תְּהִלָּתְךָ / Open...praise (Psalms 51:17).

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. ↩

עזרת שרה / *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 גאווה, 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)

DERASH. *Hayim*, the Hebrew word for life, is a plural noun. We seek life brimming with fullness. Our resentments and hatreds, our lies and games lead us to forget how rich and varied our lives can be. To be written in the book of life refers to our participation in the ever changing, birthing and passing, gaining and losing moments that compose life.

S.P.W.

KAVANAH. Is the book of life a ledger, in which we settle for being mentioned? Or is it a book of living, in which we write our chapter by living our story?

R.H.

הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה
הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וְאֲמוֹת וּמְבִיא גְּאֻלָּה לְבְנֵי בְּנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן
שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה:

וְזָכְרָנוּ לְחַיִּים מְלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים וְכַתְּבָנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים
חַיִּים:

מְלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְגֵן אֲבֹרָהּ וְעוֹזֵר
שְׂרָה: ←

In each age
we receive and transmit
Torah.
At each moment
we are addressed by the
World.
In each age
we are challenged
by our ancient teaching.
At each moment
we stand face to Face with
Truth.
In each age
we add our wisdom
to that which has gone before.
At each moment
the knowing heart
is filled with wonder.
In each age
the children of Torah
become its builders
and seek to set the world firm
on a foundation of Truth.

R.M.S.

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.

3. KEDUSHAT HASHEM / HALLOWING GOD'S NAME

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

DERASH. The *maḥzor* proclaims God as *memit umehayeh*/source of life and death. What is Yom Kippur, after all, if not a day of death and rebirth? And what is God, after all, if not the Power that enables what has died—our hopes, our dreams, our plans—to come back to life? Thus God is called *Elohim ḥayim*/God of Life!

R.H.

גְבוּרוֹת 2

אַתָּה גְבוּר לְעוֹלָם אֲדוֹנֵי רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ: מוֹרִיד הַטָּל: מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים
בְּחֶסֶד מְחַיֶּה כָּל חַי בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים סוֹמֵךְ גּוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים
וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים וּמְקַיֵּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עֶפֶר: מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּעַל גְבוּרוֹת
וּמִי הוֹמָה לָךְ מְלֶכֶךְ מִמִּית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמְצַמֵּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה:

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֲב הֶרַחֲמִים זוֹכֵר יְצוּרֵי לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים:

וּנְאֻמֵּן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת כָּל חַי: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְחַיֶּה כָּל חַי:

קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם 3

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קְדוֹשׁ וּקְדוּשֵׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהִלְלוּךָ סְלָה: ←

חי /who gives and renews life. The traditional *maḥzor* affirms מחיה מתים /reviving of the dead. We substitute כל חי, demonstrating an understanding that all of life is rooted in the world's divine order and avoiding affirmation of bodily resurrection. 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.

חי /who gives and renews life. All the vast powers of the universe are rooted in the divine. In the face of that vast power we feel small and vulnerable. We fear death. But that power also contains the possibility of life and renewal. In celebrating this Power, we waken again to life. S.P.W.

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,
let all who follow in your path sing out with joy,
let all who love you dance in celebration,
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! ↩

וּבְכֹן תֵּן פְּחָדֶךָ יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְאִימָתְךָ עַל כָּל־
 מַה־שִּׁבְרָאתָ וְיִירָאוֹךָ כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־הַבְּרוּאִים
 וְיַעֲשׂוּ כְלָם אַגְדָּה אַחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבְבֵי שְׁלָם כְּמוֹ שֶׁיִּדְעֵנוּ
 יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁהַשְּׁלֵטוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ עַז בְּיָדְךָ וּגְבוּרָה בְּיַמֶּיךָ וְשִׁמְךָ
 נוֹרָא עַל כָּל־מַה־שִּׁבְרָאתָ:

וּבְכֹן תֵּן כְּבוֹד יהוה לְעַמְּךָ, תְּהִלָּה לְיִרְאֵיךָ וְתִקְוָה לְדוֹרְשֵׁיךָ
 וּפְתִחוֹן פֶּה לְמִיחָלִים לְךָ שֶׁמְחַה לְאַרְצְךָ וְשֹׁשׁוֹן לְעִירְךָ בְּמַהְרָה
 בְּיָמֵינוּ:

וּבְכֹן צְדִיקִים יֵרְאוּ וְיִשְׁמְחוּ וְיִשְׂרִים יַעֲלוּ וַחֲסִידִים בְּרוּנָה
 יִגְּלוּ וְעוֹלָתָה תִּקְפֹּץ־פִּיהָ וְכָל־הַרְשָׁעָה כִּלְהַ פְּעֻשָׁן תִּכְלֶה פִּי
 תַּעֲבִיר מִמְּשַׁלַּת 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.

KAVANAH. Sovereignty belongs to the Power that makes for liberation. Maintaining hope in our God depends on our acts as liberators. May we find the courage to speak truth to earthly power. And in struggling against oppressive power, may we find contentment and joy. J.A.S.

May you alone be sovereign over all of your Creation,
and Mount 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.

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
and you have given us, ALMIGHTY ONE, our God, in love ↩

ימלך...הללויה / THE ETERNAL ONE...Halleluyah! (Psalms 146).
ויגבה...בצדקה / THE CREATOR...justice (Isaiah 5:16).

וְתַמְלֵךְ אֶתְּהָ יְהוָה לְבַרְךָ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ בְּהַר צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ
וּבִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ: כִּפְתּוּב בְּדַבְרֵי קִדְשֶׁךָ: יְמִלֶּךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם
אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדֹר וָדֹר הַלְלוּיָהּ:

קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה וְנוֹרָא שְׁמֶךָ וְאִין אֱלֹוֹהַ מִבְּלַעְדֶּיךָ: כִּפְתּוּב: וַיִּגְבֶּה יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת בְּמִשְׁפָּט וְהָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ נִקְדָּשׁ בְּצַדִּיקָה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
הַמְּלִךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ:

קְדֻשַׁת הַיּוֹם



אַתָּה אֲהַבְתָּנוּ וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ וְקִדְשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְקִרְבַּתָּנוּ מִלִּפְנֵי
לְעַבֹדְתֶךָ. וְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ קִרְאתָ: וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה ←

COMMENTARY. If God is One and God of all, how can this universal Presence reside, as it were, in the particular place of the Jewish people, Mount Zion? Religion is not an abstract idea, but a lived reality, requiring a people, a place, and a program. To speak of religion in general is like speaking of language in general; one can only speak a given language, not language itself. Similarly, each people needs to translate the universal intuition of the Divine into the particular words, places, rituals, and concepts of its own religion.

R.H.

On Shabbat add the words in parenthesis:

This day of (Shabbat for holiness and for rest
and this Day of) Atonement,
for pardoning, forgiveness, and atonement,
on which you pardon us for all of our transgressions
(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, the
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 Atonement.

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,
forgive us our transgressions,
this day (of Shabbat, and Day) of Atonement,
blot out and cause to pass away
our wrongdoings and our errors
from before your eyes, as it is said:
“I, yes I, shall be the one
who blots out your wrongdoing, for my sake;
your errors I shall not remember any more!” ↩

On Shabbat add the words in parenthesis:

אֶת יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה לְקַדְשָׁה וְלִמְנוּחָה וְאֵת יוֹם) הַכַּפּוּרִים הַזֶּה
לְמַחֲלָה וְלִסְלִיחָה וְלִכְפָּרָה וְלִמְחַל-בוֹ אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ (בְּאַהֲבָה)
מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ זָכָר לְיִצְיַאת מִצְרָיִם:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֱמוּנֵינוּ יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֹא וְיִגְיַע וְיִרְאֶה וְיִרְצֶה
וְיִשְׁמַע וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֹּר וְיִזְכְּרֵנוּ וְיִפְקֹדֵנוּ וְיִזְכְּרוּנוּ וְיִזְכְּרוּנוּ וְיִזְכְּרוּנוּ וְיִזְכְּרוּנוּ
וְיִזְכְּרוּנוּ יְמֹת הַמַּשְׁיִיחַ וְזִכְרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדוֹשָׁה וְזִכְרוֹן כָּל עַמּוּד
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ לְפִלִיטָה וְלִטוֹבָה לְחַן וְלִחֲסֶד וְלִרְחֻמִּים לְחַיִּים
וְלִשְׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים הַזֶּה:

זָכְרָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה: וּפְקֻדָּנוּ לְבִרְכָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ
לְחַיִּים: וּבִדְבַר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים חוּס וְחַנּוּן וְרַחֲמִים עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ
כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ כִּי אֵל מְלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֱמוּנֵינוּ מְחַל לְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ בְּיוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת
הַזֶּה וּבְיוֹם) הַכַּפּוּרִים הַזֶּה: מְחַה וְהַעֲבִיר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנְּגֵד
עֵינֶיךָ: כְּאָמֹר: אֲנֹכִי הוּא אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְחַה פְּשָׁעֶיךָ לְמַעַנִּי וְחַטָּאתֶיךָ לֹא
אֶזְכֹּר: ←

זכר / a remembrance of the going-out from Egypt. The Pilgrimage Festivals are obviously tied to the exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the desert. But why connect Shabbat or Yom Kippur with the exodus? Because the very existence of these holy days depended on the Israelites going forth from Egypt. Each Shabbat, each Yom Kippur, is a moment in time to appreciate our freedom to seek God and to do the divine will. So it is that our observance today renews our gratitude and reconnects us to our history of redemption. D.A.T.

אנכי...אזכר / I, yes...more! (Isaiah 43:25).

And it is said: "I have made your sins
vanish like a stormcloud,
and, like a mist, the things you have done wrong.
Return to me, for it is I who have redeemed you!"
And it is said: "For on this day,
atonement shall be made for you,
to make you clean from all of your wrongdoings.
Before THE FOUNT OF MERCY, you shall all be clean."

Our God, our ancients' God (take pleasure in our rest),
enable us to realize holiness with 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,
your holy Shabbat, with love and joy,
and let all Israel, and all who treat your name as holy,
rest upon this day,) and refine our hearts
to serve you truthfully.

For you are a forgiving God to Israel,
and compassionate to all the tribes of Yeshurun
in each and every generation,
and apart from you we have no sovereign,
none full of compassion and forgiveness,
except you.

Blessed are you, FORGIVING ONE,
sovereign of mercy and forgiveness
for our wrongdoings and for those
of all your kin, the house of Israel,
you who make our guilt to pass away,
year after year,
the sovereign power over all the earth
who raises up to holiness
(Shabbat,) the people Israel
and the Day of Atonement. ↪

וְנֹאמַר: מַחִיתִי כְעֵב פִּשְׁעֶיךָ וְכַעֲנֵן חַטָּאתֶיךָ שׁוֹבָה אֵלַי כִּי
גֹאֲלֶתִיךָ: וְנֹאמַר: כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל
חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ (רִצָּה בְּמִנוּחֵינוּ) קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְתַן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ שֶׁבַעֲנוּ מִטּוֹבְךָ וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ
(וְהִנְחִילָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן שִׁבַת קִדְשֶׁךָ וְיִגְוַחוּ בָּהּ
יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקֻדְשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ) וְטַהֵר לִפְנֵינוּ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאֵמֶת כִּי אַתָּה סֹלְחָן
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַחְלֵן לְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ
מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אֶלָּא אַתָּה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ
לְעוֹנֵתֵינוּ וְלְעוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַעֲבִיר אֲשֶׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכָל שָׁנָה
וְשָׁנָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקֻדֵּשׁ (הַשְּׁבֶת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים: ←

who make our guilt to pass away year after year. Being human means being imperfect. None of us can ever succeed at our goal of living a transgression-free life—not even for a year. And yet, we are not at liberty to abandon that goal. Just imagine the horror of a world inhabited by people who have stopped striving to be good! And so every year we do the best we can. Every year we succeed in new small ways, and sometimes in large ones, at the task of bringing goodness into the world. And every year we fail in small ways, and sometimes in large ones. Every year we must face our errors in order to let go of them. And we can only let go when we find forgiveness. Our guilt passes away as we strive again toward perfection. D.A.T.

מחיתי...גאלתיך / I have...you! (Isaiah 44:22).

כי ביום...טההרו / For on...clean (Leviticus 16:30).

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.

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 who share 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. ↪

עבודה 5

רְצֵה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֵהֵב תִּפְלָתְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה תִּקְבַּל
בְּרָצוֹן וְתַהֲי לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲלֶיךָ:

וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַמַּחְזִיר
שְׂכִינְתּוֹ לְצִיּוֹן:

הודאה 6

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד צוּר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אַתָּה הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר:
נִוְדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ וְעַל נְשׁוֹמֵי
הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ וְעַל נִסֶּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עֲלָנוּ וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ
שֶׁבְּכָל־עֵת עָרַב וּבִקְרָ וְצַהֲרִים: הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ וְהִמְרַחֵם
כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חַסְדֶּיךָ מֵעוֹלָם קִיְיָנוּ לָךְ:

וְעַל כָּל־מַעֲלָמוֹת וְיִתְרוֹמֵם שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וּכְתוֹב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים פְּלִ-בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ:

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדֶיךָ סֵלָה וְיִהְיֶה לָּךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּאֶמֶת הָאֵל יִשׁוּעָתָנוּ
וְעִזְרָתָנוּ סֵלָה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלָךְ נֶאֱדָה לְהוֹדוֹת: —

And write down for a good life all who share your covenant. A "good" life? A life of doing good? Feeling good? Being good? With devotional *hutzpah*, our prayer goes beyond the raw request for life over death, and implores God to grant a "good life." In this season, it is our challenge to ask ourselves again what we believe a good life is. R.H.

During evening service continue below. During all other services continue on page 757.

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. ↪

We continue silently with the confessional prayers on page 759.

כל יושבי הארץ /and all who dwell on earth. According to the sages, every *Amidah* must conclude with a prayer for peace and an acknowledgement 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

COMMENTARY. *Besefer hayim...ufarnasah tovah*/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 Yom Kippur, we pray for repentance, we ask for a world of peace, and we 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.

During evening service continue below. During all other services continue on page 758.

בְּרַכַּת הַשְּׁלוֹם

שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ תְּשִׂים לְעוֹלָם: כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹן
לְכָל הַשְּׁלוֹם: וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֹךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת כָּל-יְיֹשְׁבֵי
תֵּבֵל בְּכָל יַעַת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בְּשִׁלּוּמֶךָ:

בְּסֻפֵּר חַיִּים בְּרַכָּה וְשְׁלוֹם וּפְרִינָסָה טוֹבָה נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנַחְנוּ
וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשְׁלוֹם:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹשֵׁה הַשְּׁלוֹם: ←

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

Ki atah hu meleḥ adon leḥol hashalom.

Vetov be'eyneha levareḥ et ameha yisra'el

ve'et kol yoshvey tevel

beḥol et uvḥol sha'ah vishlomeha.

Besefer ḥayim beraḥah veshalom ufarnasah tovah

nizaḥer venikatev lefaneha

anahnu veḥol ameha beyt yisra'el

leḥayim tovim uleshalom.

Baruḥ atah adonay ose y hashalom.

We continue silently with the confessional prayers on page 760.

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.

May it be your will, ETERNAL ONE, my God,
that you not place your servant
under the strictest form of judgment,
for no creature can truly be considered just,
when standing in your presence.

Who am I? What is my life?

I am like a piece of straw before a fire,
like dried and withered trees before a raging flame,
like silver waiting to be purged of baser metals,
the emptiest of empty things,
in whom no substance dwells.

How can I hope to face you, HOLY ONE, my God?
What healing can I hope to seek from you?

What you hold unimportant I have overvalued,
what you have held important I have overlooked.
What you have held as precious I have pushed away,
what you have kept away from you I have drawn close.
I never did intend to make you angry,
but now, presumptuous as it may seem,
I come to ask your mercy,
and forgiveness, and atonement.
I have put on my boldest face like flintrock,
I know I shall not suffer shame.
Truly, in you I trust, KIND ONE.

I have declared: "You are my God!"
I have relied on your abundant love,
because I know you are
a gentle God, gracious and compassionate,
slow to grow angry, overflowing in your love,
and ready always to do good. ↪

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאִמּוֹתַי שְׁלֹא תָבוֹא
 בְּמִשְׁפָּט אֶת עַבְדְּךָ כִּי לֹא יִצְדַּק לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־חַי: מִה־אֲנִי מִה־חַיִּי אֲנִי
 כִּקְשׁ לְפָנֶי אֵשׁ וּכְעֵצִים יְבֹשִׁים לְפָנֶי הָאוֹר כֶּסֶף סִיגִים מְצֻפָה עַל
 חָרֶשׁ הַבַּל הַבָּלִים שְׂאִין בּוֹ מִמֶּשׁ: בְּמַה אֶקְדֵּם פְּנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אוֹ
 מִה רְפוּאָה אֲבַקֵּשׁ מִמֶּךָ:

אֶת־אֲשֶׁר הִקְלַת הַחַמְרָתִי וְאֶת־אֲשֶׁר הִחַמְרַת הַקְּלָתִי: אֶת־אֲשֶׁר
 קָרַבְתָּ הַרְחַקְתִּי וְאֶת־אֲשֶׁר הִרְחַקְתָּ קָרַבְתִּי: אִךְ לֹא לְהַכְעִיֵּד
 גַּתְּפוּנָתִי: וּבְעֵזוֹת יִצַּח בָּאתִי לְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ מַחִילָה וּסְלִיחָה
 וּכְפָרָה: שְׁמָתִי פָנִי כַחלְמִישׁ וְאֲדַע כִּי לֹא אִבּוֹשׁ כִּי עָלֶיךָ בְּטַחְתִּי
 יְהוָה אֲמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָהּ: וְנִשְׁעַנְתִּי עַל רַבִּי חֲסִדֶיךָ כִּי יַדְעֵתִי כִּי
 אַתָּה יֵאל חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אֲרוּךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וּמְרַבֶּה לְהֵיטִיב: ←

COMMENTARY. Repentance, like deepened spirituality, emerges from inner brokenness. I can put on a brave front, denying that I have done wrong, and evading my own inner knowledge of transgression and loneliness, doubt and failure. But in doing so I have failed to tap the insight and recognize the brokenness that can bring me to humility. Only from the place of humility can I sense the redemptive power in the Transcendent Unity that brings release and healing.

D.A.T.

It is traditional to tap one's chest when reciting each transgression in the Vidui. In doing so, we are acknowledging individual responsibility for communal transgression.

Our God, our ancients' God,
may our prayer come before you.
Hide not from our supplication,
for we are not so insolent and stubborn
as to say, here in your presence,
"HOLY ONE, God of our fathers and our mothers,
We are righteous, and we have not sinned,"
for we indeed have sinned.

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
and 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. ↩

It is traditional to tap one's chest when reciting each transgression in the Vidui. In doing so, we are acknowledging individual responsibility for communal transgression.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ תְּבוֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תְּפִלָּתָנוּ וְאֵל
 תְּתַעַלֵּם מִתְּחִנָּתָנוּ שְׂאִין אֲנַחְנוּ עֲזִי פְּנִים וּקְשִׁי עֶרְף לֹמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ צְדִיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חָטְאנוּ
 אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ חָטְאנוּ:

אֲשַׁמְנוּ: בְּגָדְנוּ: גְּזַלְנוּ: דִּבְרָנוּ דִּפִּי:
 הִעֲרִינוּ: וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ: זָדְנוּ: חָמְסְנוּ:
 טַפְּלָנוּ שֶׁקֶר: יַעֲצֵנוּ רָע: כְּזָבְנוּ: לִצְנוּ:
 מִרְדְּנוּ: נֶאֱצְנוּ: סָרְדְנוּ: עֲוִינוּ:
 פִּשְׁעֵנוּ: צָרְדְנוּ: קִשְׁיֵנוּ עֶרְף: רִשְׁעֵנוּ:
 שִׁחַתְנוּ: תִּעֲבָנוּ: תִּעֲוִינוּ: תִּעֲתָעְנוּ: ←

COMMENTARY. This alphabetical acrostic serves an interesting function. By limiting the range of sins—setting boundaries by the ends of the alphabet—we are forced to define the essential categories of sin that we need to address. The tendency to extend our list of failures often leads to a sense of spiritual defeat...a list without end! By defining here the basic categories, we set for ourselves a reasonable agenda for atonement. R.H.

DERASH. Master of the Universe, the ways of your righteous court are not the ways of this world's courts. In a human court, one who totally denies a debt may go free, but one who admits to a debt is required to pay. In the divine court, woe to those who deny what they have done! Yet those who confess their guilt and make a break with their former actions are shown mercy and saved. S.D.R.

COMMENTARY. *Teshuvah* begins when I acknowledge that I have done wrong, that I have harmed another. After this, I come to understand that the wrong I have done also damages me and pains my own soul. The traditional tapping of the chest that accompanies the confessional prayers can be understood as an outward sign and reminder of this inward pain. But *teshuvah* does not end there. My soul does not need to carry this self-inflicted pain. My soul can return to its original purity, to acts of love and justice. I have the capacity to heal and be healed. J.A.S.

We have turned away from your mitzvot,
and from your righteous laws,
as if it did not matter to us.

And you are just,
whatever comes upon us,
for what you do is truth,
and we have done much wrong.

What can we say before you,
you who dwell on high?

What can we tell you,
you who inhabit heaven's heights?
Are you not one who knows all things,
both hidden and revealed?

You know the universe's mysteries,
the most hidden secrets of all living beings.
You search a person's innermost recesses,
and you probe the depths of conscience and of thought.
Nothing is hidden from you,
nothing is concealed before your gaze.

So, let it be your will,
ETERNAL ONE, our God, God of our ancestors,
that you may grant forgiveness to us for all of our sins,
and pardon us for all of our injustices,
and let us atone for all we have done wrong:

For the wrong that we have done before you
by compulsion or by will,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by the utterance of our lips. ↩

סָרְנוּ מִמְצוֹתַיִךְ וּמִמְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים וְלֹא שָׁוָה לָנוּ: וְאַתָּה צַדִּיק עַל
כָּל־הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ כִּי אָמַת עָשִׂיתָ וְאַנְחָנוּ הִרְשָׁעָנוּ:
מֵה נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם וּמֵה נִסְפָּר לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים הֲלֹא
כָּל הַנְּסֻתוֹת וְהַנְּגָלוֹת אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ:

אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ רְזֵי עוֹלָם וְתַעֲלוּמוֹת סִתְרֵי כָּל חַי: אַתָּה חוֹפֵשׁ כָּל חַדְרֵי
בֵּטֶן וּבוֹחֵן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב: אֵין דְּבַר נֶעְלָם מִמֶּךָ וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִנְּגִיד
עֵינֶיךָ: וּבִכֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַל־הִי אָבוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּסַלַּח לָנוּ עַל כָּל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ וְתִמְחַל לָנוּ עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
וְתִכְפֹּר לָנוּ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעֵינוּ:

עַל חַטָּא

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאָנָס וּבְרָצוֹן:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִטּוּי שְׁפָתַיִם: —

KAVANAH. Tonight we concern ourselves with *teshuvah*, turning:

Turning from ignorance to truth,

from darkness to light,

from evil to good,

from conceit to compassion,

from self to Life.

Turning is the key to survival.

The seasons, the planets, the galaxies—

all maintain their existence through turning.

Our turning, too, is in the natural order of things,

holding the key to our survival by returning us to holiness.

R.M.S.

נִשְׁחָטָנוּ וְאַתָּה...הִרְשָׁעָנוּ / And...wrong (Nehemiah 9:33).

For the wrong that we have done before you
through misuse of sex,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by the speaking of our mouths.
For the wrong that we have done before you
by the shaming of our neighbor,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by an insincere confession.
For the wrong that we have done before you
by scoffing at our parents and our teachers,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by the profanation of your name.
For the wrong that we have done before you
in impurity of lips,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
whether knowingly or not.
And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone! ↩

KAVANAH. Rabbi Sholom Rokeah of Belz taught that the worst kind of exile occurs when one is alienated from oneself. Then, one is “both captor and captive, in exile within oneself.” On Yom Kippur, we are given the gift of forgiveness, yet some of us cannot accept the gift; some of us cannot let go of guilt and shame. Yom Kippur offers us God’s faith in us—and demands from us faith in ourselves. L.G.B.

COMMENTARY. It is customary for people to gently tap their chests with their fists once for each transgression of the *Vidui*. Even though the *Vidui* is stated in the plural, this tapping reminds us that each of us must ask ourselves not only which of these sins we have committed, but which of these sins we have failed to prevent others from committing. D.A.T.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַבּוּר פֶּה:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהוֹנָאת רֵעַ:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּוַדּוּי פֶּה:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִלְזוּל הוֹרִים וּמוֹרִים:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטַמְאַת שְׁפָתַיִם:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיוֹדְעִים וּבִלֹּא יוֹדְעִים:
וְעַל כָּל־אֵלּוּהַ סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מַחַל לָנוּ: כַּפֵּר לָנוּ: ←

COMMENTARY. A large portion of the *hata'im* / sins listed refer to a part of the body (mouth, lips, tongue, eyes, throat, neck) for two reasons. First, our bodies need to know the nature of our wrongs. We need to experience the pain of our behavior viscerally before we are willing to change. Our confession and acknowledgment cannot remain a purely intellectual activity. We must feel, in our guts, the ill we cause ourselves and others, or we will not be motivated to really change. Second, most of the *hata'im* derive from forgetting our connection to the whole. We imagine that we can act as if there were no consequences, as if we were loose limbs and eyes and mouths divorced from a larger body, the body of our fellow human beings, the body of organic life on earth, the body of all life. Most *hata'im* derive from our separation and isolation from past and future. Most *hata'im* spring from the illusion of separateness. We think we can get away with it. But there is no getting away. There is no forgetfulness. All is remembered. All is related.

S.P.W.

For the wrong that we have done before you
through deceiving and through lies.
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by speaking ill of others.

For the wrong that we have done before you
by false dealings in our work,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by our arrogance and pride.

For the wrong that we have done before you
through abusive speech,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by refusing compromise.

And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone!

For the wrong that we have done before you
by rebellious acts,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by the envy in our eye.

For the wrong that we have done before you
by triviality of thought,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by our gossiping and rumoring.

And for the wrong that we have done before you
by our empty promises,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
through confusion of the heart.

And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone! ↪

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַחַשׁ וּבְכַזָּב:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַע:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמַשָּׂא וּבְמַתָּן:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִטְיַת גְּרוֹן:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁיחַ שְׁפַתוֹתֵינוּ:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֲזוֹת מַצַּח:

וְעַל כָּלֵם אֱלוֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כְּפָר לָנוּ:

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפָרִיקַת עַל:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצָרוֹת עֵינַי:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִכְלִלוֹת:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁבוּעַת שׂוּא:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתַמְהוֹן לִבִּי:

וְעַל כָּלֵם אֱלוֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כְּפָר לָנוּ: ←

DERASH. *Teshuvah* means a remaking of the self, a new ordering of priorities, so that something which seemed irresistibly important to us before is now seen as much less important. Repentance means becoming virtually a new person in terms of our values and priorities. That is why the classic test of repentance in Judaism resides in finding yourself in the same situation to which you had formerly responded weakly, that is, sinfully, and meeting it differently this time—because your understanding of what you stand for as a person has changed. *Teshuvah* means changing our values, altering our patterns of response, the way we allocate our time, and thus it means becoming new people, no longer burdened by the bad habits of the past.

Harold Kushner

And for mitzvot that call on us to act,
and for mitzvot that bid us not to act,
for mitzvot that say: "Arise, and do...!"
and for mitzvot that do not say: "Arise, and do...!"
for those that are made known to us,
and those that are not known to us.

Those that are known to us
are things we have acknowledged
and confessed before you,
but those that are not known to us
are things revealed and known only to you,
as it is said: "The hidden things
belong to THE ETERNAL ONE, our God.
What is revealed belongs to us and to our children,
always and forever—all the matters
of this Torah that are ours to carry out."
For you are the source of all forgiveness,
the fount of mercy for each and every generation,
and apart from you we have no sovereign.
so full of mercy and forgiveness, none but you. ↪

וְעַל מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה וְעַל מִצְוֹת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין שְׁיֵשֶׁבֶה קוּם עֲשֵׂה וּבֵין שְׂאִין בָּהּ קוּם עֲשֵׂה אֶת־הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ וְאֶת־שְׂאִינָם גְּלוּיִים לָנוּ: אֶת־הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ כְּכֹר אַמְרָנוּם לְפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹדִינוּ לְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם וְאֶת־שְׂאִינָם גְּלוּיִים לָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ הֵם גְּלוּיִים וִידוּעִים כְּדָבָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הַנְּסֹתָרֵת לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנְּגִלָת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד־עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: כִּי אַתָּה סֹלְחַן לְכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר וּמַבְלִעַדֶּיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מִלֶּךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אֶלָּא אַתָּה: ←

COMMENTARY. Judaism is concerned with seeking forgiveness. Up to three times, one must sincerely approach a person one has offended to make amends. If one is rebuffed after making recompense for damages and seeking forgiveness three times, one is regarded as forgiven. There is a tradition for seeking forgiveness regarding persons we have wronged who are unable to grant it—infants, those with severe mental illness, those whom we are unable to locate, and those who died before we could ask their forgiveness. We seek atonement not from them but from God by adding during the silent *Al Het*, “For the wrong that we have done before You in the matter of [name of the person].” E.M.

DERASH. Our prayer speaks in three categories: *selihah*/forgiveness, *mehilah*/pardon, and *kaparah*/atonement. One way of understanding the process of Yom Kippur—or any moment of *teshuvah*/turning-to-God—is to see these three as sequential. The first stage, *selihah*, implies the act of approaching, of coming to ask forgiveness. If our contrition is accepted, we are granted *mehilah*, or pardon. The one we have offended accepts our apology and meets it with reconciliation. This brings the change we seek within ourselves—the sense of making atonement, of having purged and purified ourselves of those things which pollute and distort our convictions and commitments. R.H.

הַנְּסֹתָרֵת...הַזֹּאת / The hidden...one (Deuteronomy 29:28).

My God, before I was created,
I was not worthy to receive the gift of life,
and now that I have been created,
it is as if I never was.

While yet I live, I am but dust;
how much the more so when I die!
May it be your will, ETERNAL ONE,
my God, my ancients' God,
that I not go astray again,
and whatever the wrongdoing
I have done before you,
may you, in your great mercy,
purge it from me,
but not by means of grievous suffering
or terrible disease.

Dear God, protect my tongue from evil,
and my lips from telling lies.
And toward my adversaries may my spirit remain tranquil,
and I always remain ready for the needs of others.
Open my heart toward your Torah,
let my spirit seek to do all that you ask of me.
Let all who bear me animosity
be brought to reconsider their ill-will.
Act for the sake of your name.
Act for the sake of your deeds.
Act for the sake of your holiness.
Act for the sake of your Torah.
So that all those dear to you may find release,
let your right hand bring deliverance, and answer me.
May my words of prayer
and my heart's meditation be seen favorably,
PRECIOUS ONE, my rock, my champion.
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.

אֱלֹהֵי עַד שֶׁלֹּא נִוְצַרְתִּי אֵינִי כְּדִי וְעַכְשָׁו שֶׁנִּוְצַרְתִּי כְּאִלוֹ לֹא
נִוְצַרְתִּי: עֶפֶר אֲנִי בְּחַיֵּי קֶל וְחָמֵר בְּמִיתָתִי: יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאֲמוֹתַי שֶׁלֹּא אֶחְטָא עוֹד וּמֵה־שִׁחְטָאֲתִי לְפָנֶיךָ
מֵרַק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים אֲבָל לֹא עַל יְדֵי יְסוּרִים וְחֻלָּיִים רָעִים:

אֱלֹהֵי נִצֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַע וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מִרְמָה וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשֵׁי תְדוּם
וְנַפְשֵׁי כְּעָפֹר לְכָל תְּהִיָּה: פָּתַח לְבִי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדֶּה נַפְשִׁי
וְכָל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה מִהֲרָה הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקִלְקַל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם:
עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשְׁתָּךְ עֲשֵׂה
לְמַעַן תּוֹרָתְךָ: לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ הַוְשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי: יְהִיו
לְרְצוֹן אֲמָרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרֵי וְגוֹאֲלֵי: עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי
תֵּבֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

COMMENTARY. Life begins as an unearned gift. While we possess it, we live with the reality that our ultimate destiny is death. We return to dust. So what can give meaning to our lives? This poem suggests that meaning flows from our connection to the Eternal. Sin, which pulls us away from the Eternal, is a foretaste of the bitterness of death. When we search for meaning, we purge ourselves of that bitterness and cling again to the Eternal. The gift of life is renewed. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. Act for the sake of your name...your deeds...your holiness...your Torah. These beseechings trace the course of Israel's history: first, the ancestors of Israel knew only of God's name; then, in the Exodus from Egypt, Israel learned of God's deeds (literally, "right hand"); in the days of the desert Tabernacle, they learned of God's holiness and the demands placed upon a holy people; finally, at the edge of the Promised Land, a new generation was exhorted to hand on Torah from one generation to another. J.R.

להי נצור...גואלי / Dear...champion. Based on a prayer in Berahot 17a.
למען...וענני / So...me (Psalms 60:7 and 108:7).

Master of the World, I now forgive all who have angered me or sinned against me whether through my body, my possessions, my honor or anything that is mine, whether by accident or by intention, knowingly or unknowingly, word or deed. Let no one be punished on my account. My God and the God of my ancestors, may it be your will that I sin no more and that I not again do what is evil in your sight. In your great mercy, wipe away my sins without requiring my suffering. May the words of my mouth and the longing of my heart be acceptable to you, THE LISTENER, my rock and my redeemer.

On Shabbat during Ma'ariv, continue on the following page. Otherwise during Ma'ariv, turn to page 781. During Shaḥarit, turn to page 387. During Musaf, turn to page 843. During Minhah, turn to page 1075.

יהי... וגואלי / May...redeemer (Psalms 19:15).

רבונו של עולם הריני מוחל לְכָל־מִי שֶׁהִכְעִיס וְהִקְנִיט אוֹתִי אוֹ
 שִׁחָטָא כְּנִגְדִי בֵּין בְּגוֹפִי בֵּין בְּמִמּוֹנִי בֵּין בְּכַבּוּדִי בֵּין בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר לִי
 בֵּין בְּאָנֶס בֵּין בְּרָצוֹן בֵּין בְּשׁוּגֵג בֵּין בְּמִזִּיד בֵּין בְּדַבּוּר בֵּין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה
 לְכָל־בֶּן־אָדָם. וְלֹא יַעֲנֹשׁ שׁוֹם אָדָם בְּסִבְתִּי: יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי וְאִמּוֹתַי שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָטָא עוֹד וְלֹא אֶחְזֹר בָּהֶם וְלֹא
 אֲשׁוּב עוֹד לְהִכְעִיטְךָ וְלֹא אֶעֱשֶׂה הָרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְיִמְהַ־שִׁחָטָתִי
 לְפָנֶיךָ מִחֹק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הָרַבִּים אֲבָל לֹא עַל יְדֵי יְסוּרִים וְחֻלְיִים רָעִים:
 יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי־פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי:

On Shabbat during Ma'ariv, continue on the following page. Otherwise during Ma'ariv, turn to page 782. During Shaḥarit, turn to page 388. During Musaf, turn to page 844. During Minhah, turn to page 1076.

KAVANAH. We have just completed the Amidah, silent, intense and personal. Now we have an opportunity to do what we may have been trying to do for hours, days, weeks, or even months. We have an opportunity to forgive those who have hurt or have wronged us. We might be willing to do it for their sake, but if not, we should be willing to do it for our own. Resentment, grudge-bearing and antique anger contaminate our lives. Forgiving those who have wronged me allows me to jettison the pollutants of my soul. If this Amidah has given me the strength to accomplish this task, then it has served its purpose.

D.A.T.

SELIHOT/PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS

May our prayers rise at evening hour,
and may our cry come forth from the dawn,
and may our song be pleasing through the day.

May our voices rise at evening hour,
and may our merit come forth from the dawn,
and may our prayer redeem us through the day.

May our searching rise at evening hour,
and may our plea for pardon come at dawn,
and may our sigh reach you through the day.

May refuge rise at evening hour,
and may it come, for your sake, with the dawn,
and may atonement reach us through the day.

May salvation rise at evening hour,
and may our cleansing come forth with the dawn,
and may we plead for grace throughout the day.

May our memory rise at evening hour,
and may confession come forth with the dawn,
and may our glory ring out through the day.

May urgent prayer rise at evening hour,
and may rejoicing come forth with the dawn,
and may our plea be heard throughout the day.

May our weeping rise at evening hour,
and may it come forth to you with the dawn,
and may it find your favor through the day.

We long for transformation
as we cast our voices upward
on the wings of the day.
Words pile on words,
creating a ladder,
ascending to the heart of prayer.

S.P.W.

סליחות

יְעֹלָה תְּחַנּוּנֵינוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא שׁוֹעֲתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה רְנוּנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה קוֹלֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא צְדָקָתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה פְדוּיֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה עֲנוּיֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא סְלִיחָתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה נְאֻקָּתָנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה מְנוּסָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא לְמַעַנּוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה כְּפוּרָנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה יִשְׁעָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא טְהוּרָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה חֲנוּנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה זְכוּרֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא וְעוּדָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה הַדְּרָתָנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה דְּפָקָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא גִילָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה בְּקִשְׁתָּנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:
יְעֹלָה אֲנָקָתָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב וַיְבוֹא אֱלִידָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר
וַיִּרְאֶה אֱלֵינוּ עַד עֶרֶב:

Ya'aleh tahaunenu me'erev
veyavo shavatenu miboker
veyera'eh rinunenu ad arev.

NOTE. This is a reverse alphabetical acrostic.

Our God, it is your way
to be reluctant to grow angry,
whether toward the wicked or the righteous.
That is one reason you are praised.
For your sake, God, not for our own,
please act—behold us standing here
in need and desolation.

May you favor patience
toward a windblown leaf,
be reconciled to us,
who are but dust and ash.
Cast off our wrongs,
show grace to your Creation.
Appear among us,
for there is none to plead our cause.
Deal justly now, on our behalf. ↪

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אֶפְרַיִם לְרַעִים וְלַטּוֹבִים וְהִיא תְהַלְתֶּךָ: לְמַעַנְךָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ: רֵאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְּלִים וְרִיקִים:

תַּעֲלֶה אַרוּכָה לְעֹלָה נְדָף: תַּנְחֵם עַל עֶפְרַיִם וְאַפְרַיִם: תְּשַׁלֵּיךְ חַטָּאֵינוּ
וְתַחֲזֵן מַעֲשֵׂיךָ: תֵּרָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ עֲשֵׂה עֲמָנוּ צְדָקָה: ←

DERASH. Divinity is made manifest in the world when we act in a godly way. When we become mired in wrongdoing, we dim God's presence. For the sake of God's name—*lema'an shimeha*—we need to seek forgiveness.

J.A.S.

All-merciful and gracious God:

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us!

Atonement's fount and source,
Bold searcher of the heart,
Going deep into all things,
Deliberate and just are your words.

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us!

How lovely are your wonders,
Wonderful, your deeds!
Zealous in memory of your covenant,
How carefully you search the inner self!

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us.

The Good One who bestows all good,
You know all hidden things,
Conquering our wrongful acts.
Law and justice are your garb.

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us. ↩

רַחֲמֵי יְחַנּוּן

חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֲמֵי עָלֵינוּ:

אֲדוֹן הַסְּלִיחוֹת

בּוֹחֵן לְכַבוֹת

גּוֹלָה עֲמוּקוֹת

דּוֹבֵר צְדָקוֹת

חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֲמֵי עָלֵינוּ:

הַדּוֹר בְּנַפְלָאוֹת

יְרַב הָעֲלִילוֹת

זוֹכֵר בְּרִית אָבוֹת

חֹקֵר כְּלִיּוֹת

חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֲמֵי עָלֵינוּ:

טוֹב וּמְטִיב לְבְרִיּוֹת

יּוֹדֵעַ כָּל-נִסְתָּרוֹת

כּוֹבֵשׁ עֲוֹנוֹת

לוֹבֵשׁ צְדָקוֹת

חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֲמֵי עָלֵינוּ: ←

COMMENTARY. Saying we have done wrong is not only an acknowledgment of failure. It also contains the recognition that we know what is right. Living in a community concerned with doing good, being good, and trying to do better, we each internalize a moral compass that can guide us if we are prepared to listen for its still, small voice. The still, small voice inside us connects us to the transcendent reality that is far beyond us. In addressing the Transcendent One, we honor and validate our moral compass. We have done wrong. We are prepared to be directed by our compass toward atonement. D.A.T.

Majestic, filled with good,
Nothing but awesome is your praise,
So ready to forgive are you,
One who responds in time of trial.

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us!

Power of all saving deeds,
Surveying all that is to be,
Calling to generations yet to come.
Roaming the heaven's cloud-filled heights,
Sure to hearken to all prayers,
Thorough and flawless your knowledge of all!

We have done wrong before you—
please be kind to us!

מְלֵא זְכוֹת
נִזְרָא תְהִלֹּת
סוֹלֵחַ עֲוֹנוֹת
עוֹנֶה בְּצָרוֹת

חָטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ:

פוֹעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת
צוֹפֶה עֲתִידוֹת
קוֹרָא הַדּוֹרוֹת
רוֹכֵב עֲרֵבוֹת
שׂוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת
תְּמִים דְּעוֹת.

חָטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ:

We rise.

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

May you forgive our sins and our wrongdoing,
may you claim us as your own!

Forgive us, our creator, for we have done wrong,
grant pardon to us, sovereign, for we have transgressed,
for you, ETERNAL ONE, are good and merciful,
abundant in your steadfast love
to all who call on you! ↪

DERASH. Those who believe that God will punish wrongdoing with directed thunderbolts understand divine forgiveness as a reprieve from thunderbolts. What do we, who do not believe in divine thunderbolts, mean by divine forgiveness? Divine forgiveness is manifest in our coming to understand that wrongdoing is not part of our essence. We are forgiven when we once again understand that our source is in the divine and that we can act accordingly. This is why the process that leads to forgiveness is called *teshuvah* / returning; we return to our own godly essence. J.A.S.

We rise.

יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת נִצֵּר חֶסֶד
לְאַלְפִים נִשְׂא עֶז וְפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה וְנִקְהָה:

וְסָלַחְתָּ לְעוֹנֵינוּ וּלְחַטָּאתֵנוּ וּנְחַלְתֵּנוּ:

סָלַח לָנוּ אֱבֹנֵינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ מִחַל לָנוּ מִלְּפָנֶינוּ כִּי פָשַׁעְנוּ: כִּי־אָתָּה
אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסָלַח וְרַב־חֶסֶד לְכָל־קוֹרְאֶיךָ: ←

Adonay adonay el raḥum veḥanun ereḥ apayim verav hesed
ve'emet notzer hesed la'alafim noseḳ avon vafesha veḥata'ah
venakey. ↪

SHEMA KOLENU / HEAR OUR VOICE

Hear our voice, ETERNAL ONE, our God,
and accept our prayer with mercy and good will.
Turn us, ANCIENT ONE, toward you,
that we might be enabled to return.
Renew our days like days of old.
Do not cast us away from dwelling in your presence,
and do not remove your holy spirit from our midst.
And do not cast us off as we grow old;
do not forsake us when our strength departs.
Do not forsake us, GENTLE ONE, our God,
do not withdraw from us.
Give us a sign of blessing, so that anyone who bears us ill
shall hesitate to harm us.
For truly you, ETERNAL ONE,
have always helped us and consoled us.
Hear now our words, GOD OF COMPASSION,
and behold our contemplation.
May our words of prayer and meditations of our hearts
be seen favorably, PRECIOUS ONE, our rock, our champion.
For we place our hope in you, ETERNAL ONE,
so may you answer us, Almighty One, our God. ↩

We are seated.

אל תשליכנו לעת זקנה / Do not cast us off as we grow old. Torah teaches, "You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old" (Leviticus 19:32). Ben Sira 25:6 teaches, "Wise advice comes from the elders."

NOTE. *Shema Kolenu* after its introductory line is composed entirely of biblical verses adapted by the poet from singular to plural form: Lamentations 5:21, Psalms 51:13, Psalms 71:9, Psalms 38:22, Psalms 86:17, Psalms 5:2, Psalms 19:15, Psalms 38:16. M.B.K.

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ

יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ

וְקַבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ:

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנִשְׁוֵבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם:

אֶל־תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קְדֻשְׁךָ אֶל־תִּקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ:

אֶל־תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ לְעֵת זְקֵנָה כְּכֹלֹת כְּחֵנוּ אֶל־תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ:

אֶל־תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ יְהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנּוּ:

עֲשֵׂה־עֲמָנוּ אוֹת לְטוֹבָה וְיִרְאוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וַיִּבְשׁוּ

כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוה עֲזַרְתָּנוּ וְנַחַמְתָּנוּ:

אִמְרֵינוּ הָאֵינָה יְהוה בְּיָנָה הַגִּיָּנוּ:

יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי־פִינוּ וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבָנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוה צוּרֵנוּ וְגוֹאֲלֵנוּ:

כִּי־לָךְ יְהוה הוֹחֵלְנוּ אַתָּה תַעֲנֶה אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ: —

We are seated.

Shema kolenu adonay eloheynu hus verahem aleynu
vekabel berahamim uveratzon et tefilatenu.

Hashivenu adonay eleha venashuvah hadesh yameynu kekedem.

Al tashliheni milefaneha veru'ah kodsheha al tikah mimenu.

Al tashliheni le'et ziknah kihlot kohenu al ta'azvenu.

Al ta'azvenu adonay eloheynu al tirhak mimenu.

Asey imanu ot letovah veyiru soneynu veyevoshu
ki atah adonay azartanu venihamtanu.

Amareynu ha'azinah adonay binah hagigenu.

Yihyu leratzon imrey finu vehegyon libenu lefaneha adonay
tzurenu vego'alenu.

Ki leha adonay hoalnu atah ta'aneh adonay eloheynu. ↪

נהקנא לעת זקנה /do not cast us off when we are old. In a world that worships youth and physical strength, old age is often viewed as a curse. In this prayer we ask God not to abandon us as we age. The whole community hears this plea, for the Torah teaches that "you shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old" (Leviticus 19:32, which is read on Yom Kippur afternoon). Our tradition asks us to do right by those who have cared for us and sees the experience, memories and wisdom of our elders as an invaluable resource for us.

L.G.B.

Our God, our ancients' God,
do not forsake us, and do not turn away,
and do not cause us shame,
and do not nullify your covenant with us,
but bring us nearer to your Torah,
teach us your mitzvot,
instruct us in your ways.
Incline our hearts to treat your name with awe,
and open up our inner nature to your love,
and bring us back to you in truth,
with whole and peaceful heart.
And for the sake of your great name,
be merciful, and grant forgiveness for our wrongs,
as it is written in your prophets' words:
"For the sake of your great name, ETERNAL ONE,
forgive my wrongdoing, for I have done much wrong."

Our God, our ancients' God,
forgive us, pardon us, help us atone—
for we are your people, and you are our God,
we are your children, and you are our creator,
we are your servants, and you are our sovereign,
we are your community, and you are our portion,
we are your possession, and you are our fate,
we are your sheep, and you are our shepherd,
we are your vineyard, and you are our keeper,
we are your creation, and you are our fashioner,
we are your loved ones, and you are our beloved,
we are your treasure, and you are our kin,
we are your people, and you are our ruler,
we are your faithful, and you our source of faith! ↩

למען...הוא / For...wrong (Psalms 25:11).

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵנוּ אֵל תַּעֲזֹבָנוּ וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ וְאֵל
 תִּכְלִימָנוּ וְאֵל תִּפְרֵ בְרִיתְךָ אִתָּנוּ קִרְבָּנוּ לְתוֹרַתְךָ לְמַדְנוּ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ
 הוֹרָנוּ דְרָכֶיךָ הַט לִבֵּנוּ לִירְאָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ וּמוֹל אֶת־לִבְבָנוּ לְאַהֲבָתְךָ
 וּנְשׁוּב אֵלֶיךָ בְּאֵמֶת וּבְלֵב שָׁלֵם וּלְמַעַן שִׁמְךָ הַגְּדוֹל תִּמְחַל וְתִסְלַח
 לְעוֹנֵינוּ כִּפְתּוּב בְּדַבְרֵי קִדְשְׁךָ: לְמַעַן־שִׁמְךָ יְהוּה וְסִלַּחְתָּ לְעוֹנֵי כִי
 רַב־הוּא:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ סִלַּח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כְּפֹר לָנוּ:
 כִּי אָנוּ עַמְּךָ וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: אָנוּ בְנֶיךָ וְאַתָּה אֲבִינוּ:
 אָנוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ וְאַתָּה אֲדוֹנֵינוּ: אָנוּ קְהָלְךָ וְאַתָּה חֻלְקָנוּ:
 אָנוּ נִחְלָתְךָ וְאַתָּה גּוֹרְלָנוּ: אָנוּ צִאֲנֶךָ וְאַתָּה רוֹעֵנוּ:
 אָנוּ כְרִמֶּךָ וְאַתָּה נוֹטְרָנוּ: אָנוּ פְעֻלָּתְךָ וְאַתָּה יוֹצְרָנוּ:
 אָנוּ רַעֲיָתְךָ וְאַתָּה דוֹדָנוּ: אָנוּ סִגְלָתְךָ וְאַתָּה קְרוֹבָנוּ:
 אָנוּ עַמְּךָ וְאַתָּה מְלִכָנוּ: אָנוּ מַאֲמִירְךָ וְאַתָּה מַאֲמִירָנוּ: ←

Eloheynu velohey avoteynu ve'imoteynu selah lanu. Mehal lanu.
 Kaper lanu.

Ki anu ameha ve'atah eloheynu. Anu vaneha ve'atah avinu.
 Anu avadeha ve'atah adoneynu. Anu kehaleha ve'atah helkenu.
 Anu nahalateha ve'atah goralenu. Anu tzoneha ve'atah ro'enu.
 Anu harmeha ve'atah notrenu. Anu fe'ulateha ve'atah yotzrenu.
 Anu rayateha ve'atah dodenu. Anu segulateha ve'atah kerovenu.
 Anu ameha ve'atah malkenu. Anu ma'amireha ve'atah ma'amirenu.

COMMENTARY. The *piyut* “*ki anu ameha*/for we are your people”
 exemplifies the long Jewish tradition of reveling in the variety of possible
 metaphors for our relationship with the divine. The various English
 renderings of the divine name in the Reconstructionist *siddurim*/prayer-
 books reflect this tradition. Metaphors cannot capture the fullness of the
 Divine, but through them we revel in its many manifestations. J.A.S.

We are strong-willed and stubborn,
but you are merciful and gracious.
We are stiff-necked, but you are slow to anger.
We are full of error, but you are full of mercy.
We—our days are like a passing shadow,
but you are one whose years shall never end.

Our God, our ancients' God,
may our prayer come before you.
Hide not from our supplication,
for we are not so insolent and stubborn
as to say, here in your presence,
“HOLY ONE, God of our fathers and our mothers,
We are righteous, and we have not sinned,”
for we indeed have sinned. ↪

אָנוּ עֵזִי פָּנִים וְאַתָּה רַחוּם וְחַנוּן : אָנוּ קָשִׁי עֶרְךָ וְאַתָּה אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם :
אָנוּ מְלֵאֵי עוֹן וְאַתָּה מְלֵא רַחֲמִים : אָנוּ יְמִינוּ כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר וְאַתָּה הוּא
וּשְׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתְמוּ :

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ תְּבוֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ וְאֵל
תַּתְּעַלֵּם מִתְּחִנָּתֵנוּ שְׂאִין אֲנַחְנוּ עֵזִי פָּנִים וְקָשִׁי עֶרְךָ לֹמַר לְפָנֶיךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ צְדִיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חָטָאנוּ
אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ חָטָאנוּ : ←

Today we stand before the Mirror of All
to see ourselves as we are.

We come with no gifts, no bribes, no illusions, no excuses.

We stand without defense and wait to be filled.

What will fill us?

Remorse, certainly. So much error and needless pain.

And joy: remembered moments of love and right doing.

We are too complex for single-sided emotions.

And we are too simple to be excused by our complexity.

Let us be bold enough to see,

humble enough to feel,

daring enough to turn and

embrace the way of justice, mercy, and simplicity.

R.M.S.

We rise.

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
and 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.

We are seated.

COMMENTARY. The sin offering of Temple days was an act of penance that wiped the transgressor's slate clean. At various times and places, Jews have marked the High Holy Day season with other acts of penance—rising at midnight and dawn to recite *selihot*/penitential prayers, giving increased amounts of *tzedakah*, and even bathing in icy river water. The act of striking one's chest during the *Vidui* and *Al Het* prayers can be understood in part as this kind of penance.

D.A.T.

We rise.

אֲשָׁמְנוּ : בָּגַדְנוּ : גָּזַלְנוּ : דִּבַּרְנוּ דּוֹפִי :
הִעֲרִינוּ : וְהִרְשַׁעְנוּ : זָדְנוּ : חָמְסְנוּ :
טָפַלְנוּ שָׁקַר : יָעַצְנוּ רָע : פָּזַבְנוּ : לָצְנוּ :
מָרְדְּנוּ : נֶאֱצְנוּ : סָרְרְנוּ : עָוִינוּ :
פָּשַׁעְנוּ : צָרְרְנוּ : קִשְׁיִנוּ עָרְף : רָשַׁעְנוּ :
שָׁחַתְנוּ : תַּעֲבָנוּ : תַּעֲיִנוּ : תַּעֲתָעְנוּ :

We are seated.

Ashamnu bagadnu gazalnu dibarnu dofi.
He'evinu vehirshanu zadnu h́amasnu
tafalnu shaker. Ya'atznu ra kizavnu latznu
maradnu ni'atznu sararnu avinu
pashanu tzararnu kishinu oref. Rashanu
shihatnu ti'avnu ta'inu titanu.

COMMENTARY. Keeping secrets private and holding back emotion are psychic misdemeanors for which nature visits us with sickness. But when secrets are told and emotions expressed in communion with others, they satisfy nature and may even count as useful virtues....There appears to be a conscience in humankind that severely punishes everyone who does not somehow and sometime, at whatever cost in personal pride, confess fallibility. Until one can do this, an impenetrable will shuts one off from the vital feeling of being fully human. This explains the extraordinary significance of genuine, straightforward confession—a truth that was probably known to all initiation rites and mystery cults of the ancient world. There is a saying among Greek mysteries, “Give up what you have, and you will receive.”

Carl Jung (Adapted)

COMMENTARY. The *Vidui* is an “a to z” of confession, with a sin for each letter of the alphabet. We human beings are extraordinarily creative, so the variety of our possible transgressions is endless. This summary confession cannot be infinite. On the other side of confession lies forgiveness, renewal and redemptive action.

D.A.T.

We have turned away from your mitzvot,
and from your righteous laws,
as if it did not matter to us.
And you are just,
whatever comes upon us,
for what you do is truth,
and we have done much wrong.

We have done wrong, and have rebelled.
And so, we were not ready for your help.
Place into our hearts the will
to leave behind the path of evil,
and so hasten our redemption and renewal—
as is written by your prophet's hand:
"Let the wicked leave behind their unjust way,
let the unworthy cast away their plans,
let them return to THE COMPASSIONATE, who will be merciful,
returning to our God, who shall abundantly forgive."

KAVANAH. We have abandoned the right path, and it has not benefited us. We have left justice and mercy for selfishness and cruelty, hoping in this way to make ourselves happy. We imagined that the more we control, the more happy we will be; the more we bend others to our will, the more we will find joy. And we imagined wrongly. R.M.S.

סָרְנוּ מִמְצוֹתַיִךְ וּמִמְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים וְלֹא שָׁוָה לָנוּ: וְאַתָּה צַדִּיק עַל
כָּל־הַבָּא עָלֵינוּ כִּי־אָמַת עָשִׂיתָ וְאַנְחָנוּ הִרְשַׁעְנוּ:

הִרְשַׁעְנוּ וּפְשַׁעְנוּ לְכֵן לֹא נוֹשַׁעְנוּ וְתַן בְּלִבְנוּ לְעֹזב דְּרָךְ רָשָׁע וְחַיֵּשׁ
לָנוּ יֵשַׁע פְּכֻתוֹב עַל יַד נְבִיאָךְ: יַעֲזֹב רָשָׁע דְּרָכּוֹ וְאִישׁ אָוֶן
מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ וְיָשֵׁב אֶל־יְהוָה וְיִרְחַמֶּהוּ וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי־יִרְפָּה לְסִלּוּחַ:

COMMENTARY. When things go wrong in our lives, it is a natural response to say that God must be punishing us. It does not take a conscious divine act, however, to punish us for poisoning rivers or being inattentive to the educational needs of inner-city children. A person who lives a life in harmony with the divine purpose in the world receives an inner reward. For whole communities and nations who live that harmony, an outer, more physical reward follows as well. Failure to live in harmony with the divine will similarly contain its own punishment. We may prefer to say that God punishes us, but it is we who punish ourselves. D.A.T.

נִשְׁעַנּוּ וְרָשָׁעוּ / And...wrong (Nehemiah 9:33).

יַעֲזֹב / Let...forgive (Isaiah 55:7).

The wrongs we do,
both purposeful and unintentional,
you recognize,
both acts of will and of compulsion,
both what is revealed and what is hidden—
in your presence all becomes revealed and known.
What are we? What is our life?
What is our love? What is our justice?
What is our help? What is our strength?
What is our power?
What can we say before you,
ALL-DISCERNING ONE, our God, our ancients' God?
For are not all the mighty of this world
like nothing in your presence,
all who bear renown like those who never were,
all persons of wisdom like the ignorant,
and all who understand like those who lack intelligence?
For truly, most of what they do is but a void,
their days are like a puff of air before you.
The advantage of the human being over beasts
amounts to nothing—for everything,
measured against you,
lacks substance.

הַזְדוֹנוֹת וְהַשְּׁגוֹת אַתָּה מִכִּיר הַרְצוֹן וְהָאֲנֵס הַגְּלוּיִים וְהַנְּסֻתָּרִים
לְפָנֶיךָ הֵם גְּלוּיִים וַיְדוּעִים: מָה אָנוּ מָה חַיֵּינוּ מָה חֲסִידֵנוּ מֵה־
צַדִּיקָנוּ מֵה־יְשׁוּעָנוּ מֵה־כֹּחֵנוּ מֵה־גְבוּרָתֵנוּ מֵה־נְאֻמַּר לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵהִי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ הֲלֹא כָּל־הַגְּבוּרִים כְּאִין לְפָנֶיךָ
וְאִנְשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּלֹא הָיוּ וְחֻכְמָיִם כְּבִלֵי מַדְעָה וְנְבוֹנִים כְּבִלֵי הַשֶּׁכֶל כִּי
לֹב מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תִּהְיֶה וַיִּמֵּי חַיֵּיהֶם הֶבֶל לְפָנֶיךָ וּמוֹתָר הָאָדָם מִן
הַבְּהֵמָה אִין כִּי הַכֹּל הֶבֶל:

What can we say before you,
you who dwell on high?
What can we tell you,
you who inhabit heaven's heights?
Are you not one who knows all things,
both hidden and revealed?

From eternity you have been called
"the One who passes over transgression."
So hear our cry as we stand here
in prayer before you.
Pass over the transgression
of a people who return from their transgressing.
Erase our guilt from before your eyes.

You know the secrets of the universe,
the most hidden recesses of all that lives.
You search the chambers of our inner being,
you examine the conscience and the heart.
There is nothing hidden from you,
nothing is concealed before your eyes.
So, let it be your will,
ETERNAL ONE, our God, God of our ancestors,
that you may grant forgiveness to us for all of our sins,
and be merciful to us for all of our injustices,
and let us atone for all we have done wrong.

DERASH. Perhaps our actions have inflicted wounds on our own spirits,
wounds that have become secret even to us. God is present when our
recitation of the *Al Het* confessions reveals those wounds to us and allows
for healing, transformation, and forgiveness. In this way, God is spoken of
as "knowing the secrets of all living beings." J.A.S.

מה נאמר לְפָנֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם וּמֵה נִסְפֵּר לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים הֲלֵא
כָּל הַנְּסֻתוֹת וְהַנְּגֻלוֹת אֶתָּה יוֹדֵעַ:

שָׁמַךְ מֵעוֹלָם עוֹבֵר עַל פְּשַׁע שְׁוַעֲתֵינוּ תִּאֲזִין בְּעַמְדָּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ
בְּתַפְּלָה. תַּעֲבֹר עַל פְּשַׁע לַעַם שְׁבִי פְשַׁע תִּמְחָה פְּשָׁעֵינוּ מִנְּגֹד
עֵינֶיךָ:

אֶתָּה יוֹדֵעַ רְזִי עוֹלָם וְתַעֲלוּמוֹת סְתָרֵי כָּל חַי: אֶתָּה חוֹפֵשׁ כָּל חַדְרֵי
כִּטּוֹן וּבּוֹחֵן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב: אֵין דְּבָר נֶעְלָם מִמֶּךָ וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִנְּגֹד
עֵינֶיךָ: וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלוֹתֵינוּ
וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּסַלַּח לָנוּ עַל כָּל חַטָּאוֹתֵינוּ וְתִמְחַל לָנוּ עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
וְתִכַּפֵּר לָנוּ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעֵינוּ:

COMMENTARY. We are about to recite the *Al Het*, a strikingly collective confession of sins. There is no “I” in the prayer. On Yom Kippur we join together as a community to acknowledge the sins that *we* have committed. *Not I, but we*. The soul reckoning (*heshbon hanefesh*) that we do on Yom Kippur is communal. We are all implicated in the personal acts, good or bad, of any individual in our community. Moreover, as part of a community we are all implicated in the acts, good or bad, that our community has done. The communal issue is not shame or guilt—that is a personal affair. The issue instead is responsibility. And that is ultimately collective, for wrongs are perpetrated and perpetuated only with the consent of the many, even if that consent is passive. The prayers of Yom Kippur challenge us to take responsibility for acts of *teshuvah* / turning, real steps as individuals and as a community, to redress communal wrongs.

C.B.

We rise.

For the wrong that we have done before you
in the closing of the heart,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
without knowing what we do.

For the wrong that we have done before you
whether open or concealed,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
knowingly and by deceit.

For the wrong that we have done before you
through the prompting of the heart,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
through the influence of others.

For the wrong that we have done before you
whether by intention or mistake,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by the hand of violence.

For the wrong that we have done before you
through our foolishness of speech,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
through an evil inclination.

And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone! ↪

NOTE. The traditional text of *Al Het* consists of a double acrostic, with two wrongs listed for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. For brevity, the text in this prayerbook is split into two single acrostics used alternately. Of course, individual communities have the option of shortening the list further or reciting alternative interpretive versions. J.A.S.

עַל הַטָּא

We rise.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִמּוּץ הַלֵּב:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִלֵי דְעֵת:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי וּבִסְתֵר:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַעַת וּבְמִרְמָה:

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהִרְהוּר הַלֵּב:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּוַעֲדַת זְנוּת:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִדּוֹן וּבְשִׁגְגָה:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחֹזֶק יָד:
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטַפְשׁוֹת פֶּה:
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִצְר הָרֶע:

וְעַל כָּלֵם אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כַּפֵּר לָנוּ: ←

Ve'al kulam eloha selihot selah lanu. Mehal lanu. Kaper lanu. ↪

COMMENTARY. It is customary for people to gently tap their chests with their fists once for each transgression of the *Vidui*. Even though the *Vidui* is stated in the plural, this tapping reminds us that each of us must ask ourselves not only which of these sins we have committed, but which of these sins we have failed to prevent others from committing. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The *Vidui* and the *Al Het* are more easily accessible to people who have a regular spiritual practice and connection to the Divine Source of Compassion. One's capacity to relate fully to the litany of transgression is enhanced by deep and regular prayer, meditation and self-scrutiny. We can identify with the transgressions that are listed if we have looked within ourselves many times. This collective confessional experience is a culmination of many private moments and hidden struggles, efforts to change, disappointments and occasional breakthroughs. S.P.W.

For the wrong that we have done before you
in the palming of a bribe,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by expressions of contempt.
For the wrong that we have done before you
through misuse of food and drink,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by our avarice and greed.
For the wrong that we have done before you
through offensive gaze,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
through a condescending glance.
And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone! ↪

COMMENTARY. Consider how many of the sins we confess on Yom Kippur are sins of speech. *"Al het shehatanu lefaneha...*for the wrong we have done before you":

- "by the utterance of our lips"
- "by speech"
- "by false protests"
- "by impure lips"
- "by foolish speech"
- "by slander and innuendo"
- "by gossip"
- "by idle chatter"
- "by false promises."

When Esau approaches his aged and blind father Isaac in order to receive the birthright blessing, he finds that he has been supplanted by his brother Jacob. Isaac can only reply that "I blessed him; now he must remain blessed." Words cannot be revoked, because words count. As the *midrash* teaches: once the arrow has been shot from the bow it cannot be brought back. (Midrash Tehilim 120:4) R.H.

עַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַפַּת שֶׁחַד:
וְעַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִצּוֹן:
עַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמֵאֵל וּבְמִשְׁתָּה:
וְעַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִשְׁבָּר וּבְמִרְבִּית:
עַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁיקוּר עֵינַי:
וְעַל חָטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֵינַיִם רְמוֹת:

וְעַל כָּל־מַלְאוֹה סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כִּפּוּר לָנוּ: ←

Ve'al kulam eloha seliḥot selah lanu. Meḥal lanu. Kaper lanu. ↵

COMMENTARY. The *Al Het* is a perfect fusion of the typical with the specific, a composite portrait of the fallibility not only of individuals but of a whole society. In the Hebrew original, it is an alphabetic acrostic, quite literally a lexicon of human wrongdoing. Not all of the things listed are categorical evils—many are quite ordinary, everyday actions and states of mind, cited not because they are intrinsically evil but because they are places where it is readily possible for evil to dwell. And so, foolishness of speech and confusion of heart are listed alongside bribery, deception, and violence.

The Hebrew expressions for sinful postures are often *bodily* postures—condescending glance is literally “lofty eyes”; arrogance and pride are literally “stretching of the throat”; refusing compromise is literally “fortifiedness of the forehead”; unwillingness to change is literally “stiffness of the neck.” The sinning creature is a wrenched and distorted physical presence, a being out of harmony with itself and its surroundings.

In reciting this confession, one need not have enacted directly every one of its actions and states; one simply reminds oneself how habitually and systemically connected we are to a *climate* of wrongdoing. And thus, by naming its postures, we gain a certain freedom from what seemed to be their inevitability. We regain, in no small measure, the capacity to choose what we do and what we say.

J.R.

For the wrong that we have done before you
by our quickness to oppose,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by deception of a friend.

For the wrong that we have done before you
by unwillingness to change,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
by our running to embrace an evil act.

For the wrong that we have done before you
by our groundless hatred,
and for the wrong that we have done before you
in the giving of false pledge.

And for them all, God of forgiveness,
please forgive us, pardon us, help us atone!

We are seated.

Do not forsake us, you who have created us,
do not cast us away, you who brought us into being,
do not abandon us, you who fashioned us,
and do not cause us the destruction that our wrongs demand.

Your people, your inheritance,
those who hunger for your good,
those thirsty for your love,
those who yearn for your redemption,

they shall recognize and know
that to you alone, THE FOUNT OF LIFE, our God,
belongs all mercy,
all the forgiveness in the world.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפִלְלוֹת:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצַדִּית רָע:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִשְׁיוֹת עֶרְף:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִיצַת רַגְלִים לְהִרְע:
 עַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁנְאֵת חֲנָם:
 וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִשׁוּמַת יָד:
 וְעַל כָּלֵם אֱלֹהִים סְלִיחוֹת סְלַח לָנוּ: מְחַל לָנוּ: כְּפֹר לָנוּ:

Ve'al kulam eloha selihot selah lanu. Mehal lanu. Kaper lanu.

We are seated.

אֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ אֲבֵינוּ וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ בּוֹרְאָנוּ וְאֵל תִּזְנִיחֵנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ וְאֵל
 תַּעַשׂ עִמָּנוּ כְּלָה כְּחַטְאֵתֵינוּ: עִמָּךְ וּנְחַלְתֶּךָ רַעֲבֵי טוֹבָךְ צְמֵאֵי חֶסֶדְךָ
 תֵּאָבִי יִשְׁעֶךָ: יִפְּרֹוּ וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי לִיהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הִרְחַמִּים וְהִסְלִיחוֹת:

DERASH. Why are our confessionals always in the plural? At the moment of confession, each of us is alone and yet together with the whole community. At this moment of vulnerability, as we each confess our failures and weaknesses, we find comfort, strength and support in those around us who are engaged in the same process. Hand in hand, we find the strength to acknowledge weakness and failure. Hand in hand, we gain the courage to begin again.

L.G.B.

For the sins which we have sinned against you by misuse of ourselves:

By neglecting and overindulging our bodies, for “the body is not less the handiwork of God than the soul,”

And by neglecting mitzvot which nourish our souls,

By failing to study Torah,

And also by failing to think and to use the capacities of our minds.

All these sins, God of forgiveness, grant us the strength to confront honestly, the wisdom to analyze correctly, and the will to abandon completely, as we return to you.

For the sins which we have sinned against you and against those we love by the misuse of our capacity to love:

By using others as objects or tools,

And by placing our own status and pride before the needs of others.

By failing to use, with understanding and love, our power as employers and leaders, parents and teachers.

And by failing to accept with respect and love the authority of parents and teachers, employers and leaders,

By failing to perform acts of kindness, and visits to the sick and to mourners,

And by not being sensitive to others who turn to us in their need.

By forming intimate relationships without love as their basis,

And also by failing to deepen love continually throughout our committed relationships.

All these sins, God of forgiveness, grant us the strength to confront honestly, the wisdom to analyze correctly, and the will to abandon completely, as we return to you and to those we love.

For the sins which we have sinned against you and against our community by misuse of words:

By speaking dishonestly
And by breaking promises,
By gossiping and slandering,
By criticizing others quickly and destructively,
By keeping silent when we should have spoken
And also by failing to praise and to thank others.

All these sins, God of forgiveness, grant us the strength to confront honestly, the wisdom to analyze correctly, and the will to abandon completely, as we return to you, to those we love, and to our community.

For the sins we have sinned against you, against our people, and against the universe you have created, by misuse of our powers:

By failing to help our own people, everywhere in the world,
And by forgetting Hiroshima and Auschwitz,
By not accepting the responsibilities of citizenship in our nation and in the international community.
And by not recognizing the fragility of our planet and the unity of all life.
By not working enough against war, poverty, violence, racism, and the dehumanization of our society.
And also by not resisting the pollution and destruction of the natural world.

All these sins, God of forgiveness, grant us the strength to confront honestly, the wisdom to analyze correctly, and the will to abandon completely, so that we may use all our powers for good. Help us to return in joy to you, so that we may feel united in spirit with those we love, with our community and our people, with all humanity, with your universe, and with you.

Ruth Brin (Adapted)

Answer us, our **A**ncient source,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **B**lessed creator of us all,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **G**reat fount of our redemption,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **D**ear one who seeks our good,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **H**eavenly splendor,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **W**ith your eternal consolation,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, our **Z**ealous, righteous one,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, our **H**oly fount of life,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **T**rue-sighted one,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **Y**ou who dwell in heaven's heights,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, so **C**onsummate in strength,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, you who **L**ove the good,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, our **M**ightiest of sovereigns,
give answer to our call! ↵

עֲנֵנוּ אֲבֵינוּ עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ דּוֹרְשֵׁנוּ עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ הוֹד וְהֶרֶר עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ וְחִיק בְּנִחְמוֹת עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ אֶף וְיֶשֶׁר עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ חַי וְקַיִם עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ טָהוֹר עֵינַיִם עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ יוֹשֵׁב שָׁמַיִם עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ כְּבִיר כֹּחַ עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ לֹא אֵל חַפְץ בְּרָשָׁע עֲנֵנוּ:
 עֲנֵנוּ מְלֹךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים עֲנֵנוּ: ←

COMMENTARY. The acrostic, which follows the order of the Hebrew alphabet, begs for an affirming response from God. Our lives are implicitly a call. We want answers in the form of relationships that connect us to others through caring. We want answers that promise economic stability and comfort. We want answers that give us a sense of security and understanding. Our very lives bespeak the plaintive calling for these things we seek. When we call to God, we are giving voice to our deepest needs and aspirations. In this community, let us find ways to sustain each other, protect each other, provide meaning and insight for each other. Only then can God's answer to our calling be present here.

D.A.T.

Answer us, our **Noble** and exalted one,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **Supporter** of the falling,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **O** helper of the needy,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, our **Powerful** redeemer,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **Tzadik**—our just one who does justice—
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **Consoler** near at hand,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, **Revered**, exalted one,
give answer to our call!
Answer us, our **Sheltering** presence in the heavens,
please give answer to our call!
Answer us, **True** mainstay of the righteous,
please give answer to our call!

The Merciful, who answers the afflicted,
answer us!
The Merciful, who answers the depressed of spirit,
answer us!
The Merciful, who answers the heartbroken,
answer us!
The Merciful, give answer to our call!
Merciful One, be sparing,
Merciful One, release us,
Merciful One, have mercy on us!
Now and soon and in our time!

עֲנֵנוּ גּוֹרֵא וְנִשְׁגָּב עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ סוֹמֵךְ נֹפְלִים עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ עוֹזֵר דְּלִים עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ פּוֹדֵה וּמַצִּיל עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ צַדִּיק וּמַצְדִּיק עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ קָרוֹב לְקוֹרְאָיו עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ רֵם וְנִשְׂא עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים עֲנֵנוּ:
עֲנֵנוּ תוֹמֵךְ תְּמִימִים עֲנֵנוּ:

רַחֲמָנָא דְעָנִי לְעָנִי עֲנֵנָא: רַחֲמָנָא דְעָנִי לְמַפְיְכִי רוּחָא עֲנֵנָא:
רַחֲמָנָא דְעָנִי לְתַבִּירִי לְבָא עֲנֵנָא: רַחֲמָנָא עֲנֵנָא: רַחֲמָנָא חוּס:
רַחֲמָנָא פְרוּק: רַחֲמָנָא שְׂזִיב: רַחֲמָנָא עַלן הַשְׁתָּא בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן
קָרִיב:

AVINU MALKENU / OUR CREATOR, OUR SOVEREIGN

The ark is opened.

Most communities follow tradition in not reciting Avinu Malkenu when Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat because of the prayer's petitionary nature.

For an alternative version see pages 457-460. For an interpretive version see page 456.

- Our creator, our sovereign, we have done wrong in your presence.
- Our creator, our sovereign, we have no one to rule over us but you.
- Our creator, our sovereign, help us for the honor of your name.
- Our creator, our sovereign, renew for us a good year.
- Our creator, our sovereign, nullify the plans of any who may seek to do us harm.
- Our creator, our sovereign, grant forgiveness and atonement for all of our transgressions.
- Our creator, our sovereign, help us to return wholeheartedly into your presence.
- Our creator, our sovereign, send thorough healing to all those who ail.
- Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us for good fortune in the Book of Life.
- Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption and Salvation.
- Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance and Livelihood.
- Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Merit.
- Our creator, our sovereign, inscribe us in the Book of Forgiveness and Atonement.
- Our creator, our sovereign, let grow for us the tree of imminent redemption. ↪

DERASH. The *Avinu Malkenu* prayer gives us permission to open up our deepest yearnings to the Universal One. By allowing our yearnings, often hidden even from ourselves, to emerge, we are taking a first step toward achieving an inner balance which will enable us to move forward toward wholeness.

D.B.

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ

The ark is opened.

Most communities follow tradition in not reciting Avinu Malkenu when Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat because of the prayer's petitionary nature.

For an alternative version see pages 457-460. For an interpretive version see page 456.

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חֲטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹא אַתָּה :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חֲדָשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ הִפֵּר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ סֵלַח וּמַחַל לְכָל-עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ הַחַיִּירוֹנוּ בְּחַשׁוּבָה שְׁלָמָה לְפָנֶיךָ :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלָמָה לְחוֹלִים :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וַיְשׁוּעָה :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִנְסָה וְכִלְפָּלָה :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוּיוֹת :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמַחֲלָה :

אֲבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ הִצְמַח לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה בְּקִרְוֹב : ←

COMMENTARY. Jews have traditionally not recited *Avinu Malkenu* on Shabbat because Shabbat is a day of rest, a day focused on appreciation of what we are and what we have. Work and need, and all discussions of them, including petitionary prayer, are out of place on Shabbat. Since *Avinu Malkenu* is entirely petitionary and specifically refers to *parnasah*, earning a living, its use on Shabbat was excluded as early as the time of the Mishnah (around the third century C.E.).

D.A.T.

Our creator, our sovereign, remember us, though we are made of dust.

Our creator, our sovereign, be merciful to us and to all our offspring.

Our creator, our sovereign, act in memory of all those who have been killed while honoring your name.

Our creator, our sovereign, act in honor of your great and mighty, awe-inspiring name, which has been called out over us for our protection.

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.

Continue on page 461.

COMMENTARY. Perhaps more than any other prayer, *Avinu Malkenu* invokes the image of a long-bearded king sitting in judgment upon his throne. How many are the ways that this image can trouble us! Some Jews are struggling to recover from the harsh judgments of parents or peers, or from harsh self-judgments. Some are struggling to escape the transcendent imagery of God and replace it with the divine within. Some have trouble with the maleness of the image.

Despite these very real difficulties, there is a powerful core of truth in the *Avinu Malkenu* that transcends the trouble many of us have with its imagery: we must grapple with standards of justice that are external to us. Social responsibility is not merely a matter of personal conscience. Chanting the *Avinu Malkenu* reminds us of standards by which we ought to judge ourselves.

Furthermore, it reminds us of forces infinitely greater than ourselves upon which our very lives depend. While our lives depend upon our inner resources, we cannot exist without the aid of natural and social forces. Knowing who we are means accepting the limits of our power and knowledge and the inevitability of our dependency. D.A.T.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ זְכוֹר כִּי עָפָר אֲנִיחָנוּ:
 אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חֲמוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל־עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפֵּינוּ:
 אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לָמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל־שֵׁם קָדְשְׁךָ:
 אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לָמַעַן שְׂמֵךְ הַגְּדוֹל הַגְּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא שְׁנִקְרָא
 עָלֵינוּ:
 אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חַנּוּן וְעִנּוּן כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה
 וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:

Avinu malkenu honenu va'anenu ki eyn banu ma'asim
 asey imanu tzedakah vahesed vehoshi'enu.

Continue on page 462.

COMMENTARY. In *Avinu Malkenu* we seek the strength to do justice, the inner harmony needed to find forgiveness, and the acceptance of the small place we have amidst the tumult of the world. It is in that context that we express the hopes embodied in this prayer. Whether or not the worshipper chooses to change the words of *Avinu Malkenu*, the fervently expressed pleas it contains transcend the constraints of time and place. D.A.T.

DERASH. Divine love, חסד/*hesed*, makes it possible to take the next personal step of continuing our efforts after finding that our deeds have once again failed to measure up to our own expectations. It is in taking that step, made possible by חסד/love, that we find salvation. J.A.S.