

Yom Kippur *Minhah*

Torah service - Opening



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

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The ark is opened.

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

The leader takes out the Torah, faces the ark, bows and says:

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

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

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

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

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

Exalt...our God! (Psalms 99:5 and 9).

The ark is opened.

וַיְהִי בְּנֹסַע הָאָרוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה קוּמָה יְהוָה וַיִּפְּצוּ אֵיכָבֶדֶךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ
מִשְׁנַאֲיֶךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ׃
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם׃
בָּרוּךְ שְׁנַתַּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִרְשָׁתוֹ׃

Vayhi binso'a ha'aron vayomer mosheh kumah adonay veyafutzu
oyveha veyanusu mesaneha mipaneha.
Ki mitziyon tetzey torah udevar adonay mirushalayim.
Baruh shenatan torah le'amo yisra'el bikdushato.

The leader takes out the Torah, faces the ark, bows and says:

גָּדְלוּ לַיהוָה אֱתֵי וּנְרוֹמְמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו׃

Gadelu ladonay iti uneromemah shemo yahdav.

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

לָךְ יְהוָה הַגְּדֹלָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפֹאֶרֶת וְהַנְּצַח וְהַהוֹד כִּי־כֹל בְּשָׁמַיִם
וּבָאָרֶץ לָךְ יְהוָה הַמְּמֹלָכָה וְהַמְּתַנַּשֵּׂא לְכֹל לְרֹאשׁ׃
וּרְמָמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהֵדָם רַגְלֵינוּ קְדוֹשׁ הוּא׃
וּרְמָמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהֵר קְדָשׁוֹ כִּי־קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ׃

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

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtaḥavu lahadom raglav kadosh
hu.

Romemu adonay eloheynu vehishtaḥavu lehar kodsho ki kadosh
adonay eloheynu.

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

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

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

May God's rule soon be revealed and manifested,
and may God be gracious to our remnant of a people
—those of the House of Israel who survive—
for grace, for love, for mercy, and for favor,
and let us say: Amen!

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

May _____ arise,

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

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

Congregation and gabay continue:

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

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

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

D.A.T.

וְאַתֶּם...הַיּוֹם / And you...today! (Deuteronomy 4:4).

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

וְתִגָּלָה וְתִרְאָה מְלֻכּוֹתָיו עָלֵינוּ בְּזִמְנֵי קָרוֹב וְיִחַן פְּלִיטָתָנוּ וּפְלִיטַת
עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְיָחִן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרִצּוֹן וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן: הַפֶּל
הָבִי גְדֹל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ וְתִנּוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה: יַעֲמוּד/תַּעֲמוּדוּ/יַעֲמְדוּ
בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּבֵית _____ בְּבֵית _____ לְעֲלִיָּה [הַרְאֵנוּהָ, הַשְּׂנִית, הַשְּׁלִישִׁית]
בְּרִיךְ שֶׁנִּתְּנָה תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִרְשָׁתוֹ:

Congregation and gabay continue:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים בְּלַכְּם הַיּוֹם:

Ve'atem hadevekim badonay eloheyhem hayim kulehem hayom.

BIRHOT HATORAH / TORAH BLESSINGS

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

Bless THE INFINITE, the blessed One!

Congregation:

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

The response of the congregation is repeated, and the blessing then continued as follows:

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

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

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

DERASH. *Aliyah* is ascent.

We ascend to the Torah to acknowledge that we choose to live under its laws and principles.

We ascend to the Torah to affirm that we are part of a people and a story that is much greater than ourselves.

We ascend to the Torah to represent those who remain below.

We ascend to the Torah to risk receiving an honor, to risk being known and seen, to risk being at Sinai again.

We ascend to the Torah with slow steps, or in haste, with enthusiasm or reluctance, in awe or in fear, in hope and in love. S.P.W.

בְּרָכוֹת הַתּוֹרָה

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

בְּרָכוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ:
Bareḥu et adonay hamvorah.

Congregation:

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
Baruḥ adonay hamvorah le'olam va'ed.

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִרְבָּנוּ לְעִבּוֹדְתוֹ וְנָתַן-
לָנוּ אֶת-תּוֹרָתוֹ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

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

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת
וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam asher natan lanu torat emet veḥayey olam nata betoheynu.

Baruḥ atah adonay noten hatorah.

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

BIRKAT LIMUD TORAH/
BLESSING PRECEDING TORAH STUDY

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

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

L.G.B.

בְּרַכַּת לְמוּד תּוֹרָה

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

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

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

L.G.B.

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

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

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

S.S.

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

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

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

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

M.M.K. (Adapted)

BIRKAT HAGOMEL / BLESSING FOR DELIVERANCE AND GOOD FORTUNE

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

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

Congregational response to one who offers this blessing:

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

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

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

D.A.T.

בְּרַכַת הַגּוֹמֵל

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

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

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

Congregational response to a man who offers this blessing:

אָמֵן. מִי שְׂגַמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יִגְמְלֶךָ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥa tov hu yigmolḥa kol tov selah.

Congregational response to a woman who offers this blessing:

אָמֵן. מִי שְׂגַמְלָךְ טוֹב הוּא יִגְמְלֶךָ כָּל טוֹב סְלָה:

Amen. Mi shegemaleḥ tov hu yigmoleḥ kol tov selah.

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

Male

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

Female

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

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

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

D.A.T.

COLLECTIVE BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO
HAVE RECEIVED ALIYOT

מִי שִׁבְרָךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל
וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרְךָ אֶת כָּל אֵלֶּה שְׁעָלוּ הַיּוֹם לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם לְכָבוֹד
הַתּוֹרָה (וְלְכָבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יוֹם הַדִּין בְּשִׁכְרֵךְ זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
יְחַיֵּם וְיִשְׁמְרֵם מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה
וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵיהֶם וְיַכְתֵּבְכֶם וְיַחְתֵּמֶם לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בְּזֶה
יוֹם הַדִּין עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֵיהֶם וְאַחִיוֹתֵיהֶם וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן :

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