

Yom Kippur *Minhah*

Alternative Torah Reading with
Haftarah



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NITZAVIM: ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

This Torah reading can be used as an alternative reading for Yom Kippur morning or afternoon. The first aliyah can also be used as the maftir reading. This Torah reading serves as an alternative because it vividly conveys that on this day we stand to be judged, and we seek to renew our covenantal commitment.

First Aliyah

You stand here, all of you, today,
before THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God—
your leaders and your tribes,
your elders, your officials,
every person of the people Israel,
your children and your spouses,
and the stranger in your midst where you encamp,
those who cut wood, those who draw water—
all of you, prepared to enter into covenant
with THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, into the oath
that THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, concludes
with you today.

Deuteronomy 29:9-11

Second Aliyah

And God will raise you up
to be a people dedicated to divinity,
and God, in turn, shall pledge
to be your God, as God has promised you,
according to the oath God made with your ancestors,
with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
Not with you alone do I now make this covenant and oath,
but, in addition to whoever stands with us today
before THE FOUNT OF LIFE, our God,
all those who are not here with us today.

Deuteronomy 29:12-14

ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

פְּרִשַׁת נִצְצִים

This Torah reading can be used as an alternative reading for Yom Kippur morning or afternoon. The first aliyah can also be used as the maftir reading. This Torah reading serves as an alternative because it vividly conveys that on this day we stand to be judged, and we seek to renew our covenantal commitment.

First Aliyah

אַתֶּם נִצְצִים הַיּוֹם כְּכֹלְכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רְאִשֵׁיכֶם שְׁבִטֵיכֶם
וְקַנִּיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם כֹּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: טַפְכֶם נְשִׁיכֶם וְגִרְךָ אֲשֶׁר
בְּקֶרֶב מִחֲנִיךָ מִחֻטָּב עֲצִיבָה עַד שְׂאֵב מִיָּמִיד: לְעִבְרְךָ בְּבְרִית יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּבְאֵלֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּרַת עִמָּךְ הַיּוֹם:

Second Aliyah

לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶתְךָ הַיּוֹם אִלּוּ לְעַם וְהוּא יְהִי־לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבַּרְתָּ וְכִאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב: וְלֹא
אַתְּכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי כָרַת אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת:
כִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶה פֶה עִמָּנֹל עִמָּד הַיּוֹם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵת
אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנו פֶה עִמָּנו הַיּוֹם:

COMMENTARY. Who owns Torah? This Torah portion proclaims that it is not just the learners, scholars and officials. It is everyone—the young and the old, the water haulers and the elders, men, women and children. Each of us stands before God, shares a responsibility for the covenant, teaches its importance through our own actions. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. If it is people's task to make God manifest in the world, then our failure to do so will result in God's hiddenness. When we pass down the covenant, a torch of divine light linking the generations, we connect the next generation to Sinai by virtue of this shared enlightenment. Thus we can all stand at Sinai; we can all make God present in the world. D.A.T.

Third Aliyah (For Minḥah, Second Aliyah)

For you have known how we have dwelt
inside the land of Egypt, how we traveled
through the nations in whose midst you passed.
And you have seen their futile forms of worship
and their idols—fetishes of wood and stone,
of silver and of gold, which they cherished as their own.
Perhaps among you there are some—
a man, a woman, or a family, or a tribe—
whose heart still yearns to turn away
from THE ETERNAL ONE, our God,
who yearns to go and worship as those nations do.
Or perhaps among you there is still
the root of poison weed or wormwood.

And should they hear these solemn words of promise,
and should think themselves more fortunate
in claiming: “It is better I should go
according to the prompting of my heart
for better or for worse, whatever the result”—
then THE ALMIGHTY ONE shall not forgive.
But rather, then God’s anger will be kindled,
and all the punishments recorded in this scroll
shall fall upon them, and their names shall be erased
from heaven’s book.

And THE ALMIGHTY ONE shall mark them for misfortune
from among all Israel’s tribes, according to the oaths
of covenant recorded in this scroll.

And a later generation from among your children
who will rise up after you, and the stranger
who will come from a remote land and behold
the afflictions and diseases of your land,
which GOD will cause to come upon it— ↪

Third Aliyah (For Minhah, Second Aliyah)

פִּי-אַתֶּם יִדְעֶתֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁבְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר-עֲבַרְנוּ
בְּקֶרֶב הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עֲבַרְתֶּם: וְתִרְאוּ אֶת-שְׁקֻצֵיהֶם וְאֶת גְּלִיהֶם
עַץ וְאֶבֶן כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב אֲשֶׁר עִמָּהֶם: פְּנִיֹשׁ בְּכֶם אִישׁ אֶו-אִשָּׁה אִו
מִשְׁפָּחָה אִו-שִׁבְט אֲשֶׁר לָבְבוּ פָנָה הַיּוֹם מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְלַכֵּת לַעֲבֹד אֶת-אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הֵהֵם פְּנִיֹשׁ בְּכֶם שָׂרֵשׁ פָּרָה רֹאשׁ
וְלַעֲנָה: וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת-דְּבָרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבַּרַךְ בְּלָבָבוֹ
לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה-לִּי כִּי בִשְׂרָרוֹת לִבִּי אֶלְךָ לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הַרְוָה
אֶת-הַצְּמִיחָה: לֹא-יֵאבֵדָה יְהוָה סֶלַח לוֹ כִּי אָנֹכִי יַעֲשֶׂן אֶף-יִהְיֶה
וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל-הָאֱלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֹפֶר הַזֶּה
וּמִחָה יְהוָה אֶת-שְׁמוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם: וְהִבְדִּילוּ יְהוָה לְרַעְיָה מִכָּל
שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֱלֹת הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֹפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה:
וְאָמַר הַדּוֹר הָאַחֲרוֹן בְּנִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יָקוּמוּ מֵאַחֲרֵיכֶם וְהִנְכַּרְי אֲשֶׁר
יָבֵא מֵאֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה וְרָאוּ אֶת-מִכּוֹת הָאֶרֶץ הַהוּא וְאֶת-תַּחֲלָאִיהָ
אֲשֶׁר-חָלָה יְהוָה בָּהּ: ←

COMMENTARY. How should we understand blessings and curses if we reject a God who keeps score and rewards and punishes? The rewards that flow from living in a just, compassionate, and productive community are both material and spiritual in nature. The inner rewards that come from a life of spiritual discipline and moral engagement are not easily measured because they are not translatable into dollars or other material rewards, but they are at least as real. And the curses? We know all too much about the physical horrors and spiritual disasters we are capable of visiting upon each other. Regardless of our theologies, we still live daily with the possibility of blessings and curses. It is still up to us to choose life.

D.A.T.

a land ablaze with salt and sulphur,
where no seed can dwell, no plant can sprout,
no grass can grow, like the upheaval
of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Tzevoyim,
which THE ALMIGHTY ONE had overturned
in anger and in fury—all the nations
then will ask: “Why has God done this
to the land? Why this great fury of God’s anger?”
And they shall be told: “Because they have forsaken
the covenant of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of their ancestors,
which God had sworn with them when they were brought forth
from the land of Egypt.” For they have gone and worshipped
other powers, have bowed to things they never knew,
which they were never meant to serve.

GOD’s anger has been kindled at their land,
to bring upon them all the curses written in this scroll.
And THE ALMIGHTY has uprooted them from where they dwell,
with anger, and with terror and great wrath,
and cast them out to other lands this very day.

The hidden things are for THE HOLY ONE, our God,
but those that are revealed are ours to do,
and for our children, to eternity,
in order that this Torah shall be carried out.

Deuteronomy 29:15-28

גְּפִרִית וּמְלַח שְׂרָפָה כָּל-אַרְצָהּ לֹא תִזְרַע וְלֹא תִצְמַח וְלֹא יִיגַעְלָה
 בָּהּ כָּל-עֵשֶׂב כַּמְהַפְכֶת סֹדִים וְעַמְרֵהָ אֲדָמָה וְצִבְיִים אֲשֶׁר הִפְךָ
 יְהוָה בְּאָפוֹ וּבְחֻמָּתוֹ: וְאָמְרוּ כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם עַל-מָה עָשָׂה יְהוָה כִּכָּה
 לְאַרְץ הַזֹּאת מִה חֲרֵי הָאֵף הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: וְאָמְרוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ
 אֶת-בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת עִמָּם בְּהוֹצִיאֹו אֹתָם
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וַיִּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם
 אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּם וְלֹא חָלַק לָהֶם: וַיַּחֲרֵאֵף יְהוָה בְּאַרְץ
 הַהוּא לְהִבְיֵא עָלֶיהָ אֶת-כָּל-הַקְּלָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה: וַיִּתְּשֵׁם
 יְהוָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם בָּאֵף וּבְחֻמָּה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וַיִּשְׁלַכְם אֶל-אַרְץ
 אַחֲרַת כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: הַצִּסְתָּרֹת לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנְּגִלַת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ
 עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:

NOTE. It is customary to read this lengthy list of curses (Deuteronomy 29:19-27) at a high speed and in a soft voice because the curses were considered almost too horrible to contemplate.

COMMENTARY. An interpretation from Midrash *Tanḥumah* asks why the section of blessings (Deuteronomy 30:1-10) is attached to the long list of curses that precedes it. The *midrash* imagines that when the Israelites heard these curses, their faces began to turn green, and they said, “Who can stand up before all of these curses?” Moses comforted them saying, “You are standing here today! Although you have greatly angered God in the past, God did not destroy you. You still exist before God.” Rashi

COMMENTARY. Rashi, an eleventh century French commentator, teaches that *והתברך / vehitbareh*, the reflexive verb for blessing oneself (Deuteronomy 29:18), means that one should offer a blessing of peace in one’s heart. I should believe that the curses of others will not affect me, that I shall have peace. The verb is reflexive because we bless ourselves. M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. Naḥmanides, a fourteenth century commentator, explains that the hidden things belong to God because the community cannot be blamed for what an individual does secretly. The community must take responsibility for public acts that are publicly known. Acts done in secrecy are not the public’s affair—they are between the individual and God.

D.A.T./M.B.K.

Fourth Aliyah (For Minhah, Third Aliyah)

When all these things have come upon you,
both the blessing and the curse
that I have placed before you,
you shall take to heart what I have said,
when you are dwelling among all the nations
where THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God has driven you—
then shall you return to THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God,
and listen to God's voice,
fulfilling all that I have commanded you today,
you and your children,
with all your heart, and with all your soul.
Then THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,
will restore you from captivity
and love you, gathering you again from all the nations
where THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God, has scattered you.
Even if GOD scattered you to the ends of the horizon,
THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God, will gather you from there
and bring you back. And THE REDEEMING ONE, your God,
will bring you to the land your ancestors inherited,
and you shall have possession of it once again,
and God will bring good fortune on you,
making you more numerous than your ancestors.
And THE REDEEMING ONE, your God, will open up your hearts,
yours and your children's, to love THE BOUNTIFUL, your God,
with all your heart and all your soul,
that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Minhah Torah reading concludes here.

COMMENTARY. הנסתרות / *hanistarot* / The hidden things. People should not be suspicious or assume wrongdoing by their neighbor without evidence. Acts not publicly known are between God and the individual, not between people.

Rashi

Fourth Aliyah (For Minḥah, Third Aliyah)

וְהָיָה כִּי־יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה אֲשֶׁר
נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתְתָּ אֶל־לִבְּךָ בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִדְיַחְךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: וְשָׁבַתְתָּ עַד־יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־
אֶנְכִּי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם אִתָּה וּבְנִיָּה בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ: וְשָׁב יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצֶךָ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר
הִפְצִיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: אִם־יִהְיֶה נִדְחָךָ בְּקִצֵּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם
יִקְבְּצֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ: וְהִבִּיאֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יִרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְיִרְשָׁתָהּ וְהִיטִבְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ: וּמִל־
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְאֶת־לִבְּבִי וְרַעַךְ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשֶׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ:

Minḥah Torah reading concludes here

COMMENTARY. In the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, we are given a glimpse of the dance of *teshuvah*. The text reads: "...then shall you return to THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God, and listen to God's voice" (verse 2). Thus the first step is taken by us. "Then THE ETERNAL ONE, your God, will restore you from captivity and love you" (verse 3)." Once we have taken the initial step, we find God turning to meet us with compassion. "God will return rejoicing."

R.H.

COMMENTARY. "The hidden things are for THE HOLY ONE, our God, but those that are revealed are ours to do, and for our children, to eternity." This Hebrew text is marked with dots to emphasize that Torah is a human possession. Nonetheless, no matter how learned and knowledgeable we are, our understanding of our world remains profoundly limited. We are responsible for ethical living and teaching based on the limited amount we know. We need to acquire moral courage to cope with our inevitable uncertainty. The hidden things are God's. We live with that which is revealed; we seek trust in God for the strength to acknowledge what remains hidden from us.

D.A.T.

NOTE. The verse *וּמִל יְהוָה...לִבְּכָךָ* / open up your heart, literally circumcise your heart (30:6) provides a central theme of the *piyyut* found on page 805.

Fifth Aliyah

And THE ALMIGHTY ONE, your God, shall cast
all of the curses mentioned here upon your enemies,
on those who hate you and have persecuted you,
and you shall come to listen once again
to the voice of THE ETERNAL,
doing what God asks of you, as I command you here today.
THE BOUNTIFUL, your God, will grant abundance
for the labor of your hands
and for the fruit of your womb,
and for the offspring of your cattle
and the produce of your land.
It will go well with you,
for truly, THE REDEEMING ONE will once again rejoice
in your well-being, just as THE ETERNAL ONE
had taken joy in your ancestors,
for you shall listen to the voice
of THE ALL-MERCIFUL, your God,
to keep the mitzvot and laws recorded in this scroll of Torah.
Yes, you shall return to THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,
with all your heart and all your soul.

Deuteronomy 30:7-10

(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)

For this mitzvah, which I enjoin on you today,
is not too puzzling for you, nor too remote.
It is not something high up in the heavens,
so that you might say:
“Who shall go up to the sky for us, and bring it to us
and make it understandable to us?—then we might do it!”
It is not beyond the ocean, so that you might say:
“Who shall cross the ocean for us, and bring it to us,
and enable us to hear it—then we might do it!”
But rather it is very close to you,
upon your mouth and in your heart—it can be done!

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Fifth Aliyah

וְנָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֱלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל-אֶבְיֶיךָ וְעַל-שָׂנְאֶיךָ
אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ: וְאַתָּה תָּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-כָּל-
מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם: וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל |
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָךְ בְּפָרִי בְטֹנֶךָ וּבְפָרִי בְּהִמְתָּךְ וּבְפָרִי אֲדַמְתָּךְ לְטֹבָה כִּי |
יָשׁוּב יְהוָה לְשׂוֹשׁ עֲלֶיךָ לְטוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁשׂ עַל-אַבְתָּיִךְ: כִּי תִשְׁמַע
בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַפְתּוּבָה בְּסֹפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת כִּי תָשׁוּב אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:

(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)

כִּי הַמְצִוָּה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאָת הוּא מִמֶּךָ
וְלֹא-רְחֹקָה הוּא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיְמָה
וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: וְלֹא-מַעֲבָר לָיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר
מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֶבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחֶהָ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה:
כִּי-קָרוֹב אֵלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְבְּךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

lo bashamayim / not something high up in the heavens. If Torah were in heaven, humans could not engage in study in this world. Rashi

Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)

Behold, I set in front of you today
both life and good, both death and evil.
I ask of you today to love THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God,
walk in God's ways, and keep what God commands,
God's statutes and God's justice—
that you may live and multiply,
and THE ETERNAL ONE your God will bless you
in the Land that you are coming to inherit.
But if your heart should turn away,
and fail to hear, and be misled,
and if you bow to other powers
and become enslaved to them,
I tell you now that you shall surely perish,
and shall not prolong your days upon the Land
that you are now about to cross the Jordan to possess.
I call as witnesses for you today
the heavens and the earth:
both life and death I place before you now,
both blessing and a curse.
Choose life, that you may live,
you and the seed of life within you,
loving THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God,
hearing God's voice, and clinging to divinity.
For that is your life, your length of days—
to dwell upon the ground that THE ETERNAL ONE
has promised to your ancestors,
to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob,
to give to them.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)

רָאָה נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמּוֹת וְאֶת־
הָרָע: אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצוּרָה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת
בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשׁוֹמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקְתָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּיתָ וּרְבִיתָ וּבִרְכָה
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׂמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: וְאִם־יִפְּנֶה
לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וּנְדַחְתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַעֲבַדְתָּם:
הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכוּן יָמִים עַל־
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְבָא שָׂמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: הַעֲדִיתִי
בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמּוֹת נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ
הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבְחֵרָתָ בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תִּחְיֶה אַתָּה וְזָרְעֶךָ:
לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקִלּוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָה־בּוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ
וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לְתֵת לָהֶם:

COMMENTARY. Often Torah is dismissed as abstruse, inaccessible and other-worldly learning. Dismissing it in this way allows a convenient avoidance of the powerful messages it offers for our daily lives. As if in response, this passage proclaims the simplicity of the Torah's message: Love God, walk a godly path, seek to do what is required of you. Making a commitment to follow this simple message can become a source of teaching about how to make Torah study more accessible. If we treat Torah as our own, its paths become the intimate byways of our lives. What at a distance seems so obscure grows clear as we draw near to it. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The terms שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ / *shamayim va'aretz* / heaven and earth are a biblical literary pairing. These terms when used together do not refer to two specific places, but rather define the boundaries of the witnesses. Everything in the universe bears witness in this new covenant. The cosmos from top to bottom is in the zone of the covenant. M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. The mythic structure here makes heaven and earth the witnesses to God's judgment in the trial of the Jewish people. The covenantal violation before this court casts the people in the role of actor and God in the role of the aggrieved party. It is in this court-like context that we are told that all will be forgiven if we choose life—caring, commitment, love and fidelity, lives lived with God in mind. Heaven and earth are only witnesses. We are the ones with the power to choose.

D.A.T.

Make sure to speak out to your neighbor
in reproof of any wrongful act,
so that you will not incur a greater guilt because of it.
Do not take vengeance, and do not bear grudges
against anyone of your community.
And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.
I am THE HOLY ONE!

Leviticus 19:11-18



The Torah is lifted, and one of the following is recited:

This is the Torah.
It is a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it.
Those who uphold it may be counted fortunate!



This is the Torah which Moses placed before the children of
Israel,
by the word of THE ALMIGHTY ONE, and by the hand of Moses.

COMMENTARY. The 1945 Reconstructionist Prayerbook puts “*Etz hayim hi* / It is a tree of life” in place of “*asher sam mosheh lifney beney yisra’el* / which Moses placed before the children of Israel.” Earlier Reconstructionists were concerned that it be made clear that while affirming the holiness of Torah, they did not believe that it was given to Moses at Mount Sinai. Many current Reconstructionists believe the evolutionary nature of the Torah to be self-evident and have returned to the traditional line for the sake of its rich mythic imagery. Both options are included here. D.A.T.

עץ חיים היא / It is a Tree of Life. The book of Genesis tells us that the tree of life is in the garden of Eden. The Torah is our tree of life; it is our way back to the garden. D.E.

לֹא-תִשָּׂא אֶת-תְּשׁוּבָתְךָ בְּלִבְךָ הֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא-
תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֲטָא: לֹא-תִקַּם וְלֹא-תִטּוֹל אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאֶהְבַּת לְרַעֲךָ
בְּמוֹד אֲנִי יְהוָה:



The Torah is lifted and one of the following is recited:

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכִּיחַ מְאֹד:

Vezot hatorah etz hayim hi lamahazikim bah vetomheha
me'ushar.



זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁם מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד
מֹשֶׁה:

Vezot hatorah asher sam mosheh lifney beney yisra'el al pi
adonay beyad mosheh.

COMMENTARY. The covenant of community is based on the delicate balance between two fundamental principles of Judaism articulated in this afternoon's Torah reading. The first is הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך, "Make sure to speak out to your neighbor" the obligation to correct those about whom we care when they act contrary to Judaism's basic teachings. The second fundamental principle of Judaism that forms the basis of the covenant of community is *Ahavat Yisrael*, unconditional love of one Jew for another, of each Jew for the entirety of the Jewish people. Just before the Torah commands us to rebuke our neighbor, it teaches, "You shall not hate your neighbor in your heart." This is a most difficult and non-negotiable condition for a loving rebuke; if we do not first love, we cannot criticize.

R.H.

רַעֲךָ מְאֹד.../It...fortunate! (Proverbs 3:18).

זֹאת...יִשְׂרָאֵל /This...Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44).

עַל...מֹשֶׁה /by...Moses (Numbers 9:23).

BIRKAT HAFTARAH / HAFTARAH BLESSING

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, who has called upon the righteous prophets and desired their words, spoken in truth. Blessed are you, WISE ONE, who takes pleasure in the Torah, and in Moses, servant of God, and in the prophets of truth and justice.

HAFTARAH FOR YOM KIPPUR MINḤAH / THE BOOK OF JONAH

The word of THE ALL-SEEING came to Jonah, son of Amitay, saying:

“Rise up, go to Nineveh, the great city,
and proclaim against it that its evil has come up to me.”

And Jonah rose, to flee to Tarshish,
from the presence of THE OMNIPRESENT.

He went down to Jaffa, and he found a ship
sailing to Tarshish, and he paid for passage,
and went down into its hold, to sail for Tarshish
from the presence of THE OMNIPRESENT ONE.

And THE ALMIGHTY cast a great wind on the sea;
a huge storm came upon the ocean,
and the ship was on the verge of being destroyed.

The sailors were afraid,
and each one cried out to his god.

They cast into the sea the goods that were on board,
to lighten the ship's load.

And Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down
into the belly of the boat, and there he lay and slept.

The captain now approached him,
and addressed him: “What's with you that you sleep!
Rise up, and call upon your God!
Perhaps then God will notice us,
and we shall not be lost.” ↩

בְּרֵפֶת הַפְּטָרָה

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנִבְיָאִים טוֹבִים
וְרָצָה בְּדַבְרֵיהֶם הַנְּאֻמָּרִים בְּאַמֶּת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה
וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדּוֹ וּבְנִבְיָאֵי הָאֻמֹת וְצַדִּיק:

Haftarah

וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יוֹנָה בֶן־אָמִתַי לֵאמֹר: קוּם לֶךְ אֶל־גִּיּוֹנָה
הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרֵא עָלֶיהָ כִּי־עָלְתָה רַעְתָּם לִפְנֵי: וַיֵּקֶם יוֹנָה
לְבָרֵךְ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּרֶד יָפוֹ וַיִּמְצֵא אֲנִיָּהּ בָּאָה תַּרְשִׁישִׁי
וַיִּתֵּן שָׂכָרָהּ וַיֵּרֶד בָּהּ לְבֹא עִמָּהֶם תַּרְשִׁישָׁה מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה: וַיְהוֶה
הַטִּיל רוּחַ־גְּדוֹלָה אֶל־הַיָּם וַיְהִי סַעֲר־גְּדוֹל בַּיָּם וְהָאֲנִיָּה חֹשְׁבָה
לְהִשָּׁבֵר: וַיִּירָאוּ הַמַּלְחִים וַיִּזְעַקוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אֱלֹהָיו וַיִּטְלוּ אֶת־
הַפְּלִים אֲשֶׁר בָּאֲנִיָּה אֶל־הַיָּם לְהִקַּל מֵעֲלֵיהֶם וַיּוֹנֶה יָרֵד אֶל־
יָרְפְתֵי הַסְּפִינָה וַיִּשְׁכַּב וַיִּרְדָּם: וַיִּקְרַב אֵלָיו רַב הַחֵבֶל וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ
מִה־לָּךְ נִרְדָּם קוּם קְרֵא אֶל־אֱלֹהֶיךָ אוֹלֵי יִתְעַשֶׂת הָאֱלֹהִים לָנוּ
וְלֹא נֹאבָד: ←

COMMENTARY. One of the Just Ones came to Sodom, determined to save its inhabitants from sin and punishment. Night and day the Just One walked the streets and markets preaching against greed and theft, falsehood and indifference. In the beginning, people listened and smiled ironically. Then they stopped listening: they were no longer amused. The killers went on killing, the wise kept silent, as if there were no Just One in their midst.

One day a child, moved by compassion, approached the unfortunate preacher with these words, "Poor stranger. You shout, you expend your body and soul; don't you see that it is hopeless?"

"Yes, I see," answered the Just One.

"Then why do you go on?"

"I'll tell you why. In the beginning, I thought I could change humankind. Today, I know I cannot. If I still shout today, if I still scream, it is to prevent humankind from ultimately changing me."

Elic Wiesel

And people said to one another:
“Come, let’s all cast lots that we may know
through whom this evil comes upon us!”
And they cast lots.
The lot came down on Jonah.
And they said to him: “Please tell us—
who is he through whom this evil has befallen us?
What is your work? Where do you come from?
What is your country? From what people do you stem?”
He said to them: “I am a Hebrew,
and I fear THE OMNIPRESENT ONE, the God of Heaven,
who has made the sea and land.”
And they all became afraid—enormous was their fear.
They said to him: “What have you done?”
These people knew that he was fleeing THE ALMIGHTY ONE,
as he had told them.

And they said to him: “What should we do with you
so that the sea might quiet down on our account?
Truly, this storm is growing worse!”
He told them: “Pick me up and cast me to the sea,
and then the sea will quiet down for you,
because I know it is on my account
that this great storm has overtaken you.”
Meanwhile, the ship’s men struggled
to get back to dry land, but they couldn’t,
for the sea continued in its rage against them. ↩

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ לְכוּ וְנַפְּיֵלָה גּוֹרְלוֹת וְנִרְעָה בְּשַׁלְמֵי הָרַעָה
הַזֹּאת לָנוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ גּוֹרְלוֹת וַיִּפֹּל הַגּוֹרֵל עַל-יוֹנָה: וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו
הַגִּידָה-נָא לָנוּ בְּאִשֶׁר לְמִי-הָרַעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ מִהַמְּלֹאכֶתֶךָ וּמֵאֵיִן
תָּבוֹא מָה אֲרַצֶּךָ וְאֵי-מִזֶּה עִם אַתָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם עֲבְרֵי אֲנֹכִי
וְאֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲנִי יֵרָא אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-
הַיַּבְשָׁה: וַיִּירְאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מִה-זֹּאת
עָשִׂיתָ כִּי-יִדְעוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים כִּי-מִלְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה הוּא בָרוּךְ כִּי הֲגִיד לָהֶם:
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו מִה-נַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּק הַיָּם מִעֲלֵינוּ כִּי הַיָּם הוֹלֵךְ
וְסָעַר: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם שְׂאוּנִי וְהִטִּילְנִי אֶל-הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁתַּק הַיָּם
מִעֲלֵיכֶם כִּי יוֹדַע אֲנִי כִּי בְּשָׁלִי הִסָּעַר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה עֲלֵיכֶם: וַיַּחֲתְרוּ
הָאֲנָשִׁים לְהָשִׁיב אֶל-הַיַּבְשָׁה וְלֹא יָכְלוּ כִּי הַיָּם הוֹלֵךְ וְסָעַר
עֲלֵיהֶם: ←

And they called out to THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,
and said: "O, please, ALMIGHTY ONE,
let us not perish for the life of this one man,
and do not hold against us
the blood of someone innocent,
for you are THE ALMIGHTY ONE;
whatever you may wish, you do."
They picked up Jonah, and they cast him to the sea.
And suddenly the ocean ceased its rage.
The people grew afraid;
enormous was their awe of THE ALMIGHTY.
And they offered sacrifice to GOD
and uttered vows.

THE OMNIPRESENT ONE
appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah,
and he was inside the belly of the fish
for three days and three nights.
And Jonah prayed to THE ETERNAL ONE, his God,
inside the belly of the fish. He said:
"I called, in my distress,
to THE ETERNAL ONE, and I was answered!
From the belly of She'ol I cried,
and you have listened to my voice.
For you had cast me to the deep,
into the heart of seas; a flood surrounded me.
Your breakers and your waves have all passed over me.
And I—I said: I have been driven from your sight,
but I shall once again look on your holy Temple! ↩

וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַנְּה יְהוָה אֵל־נָא נֹאכְדָה בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאִישׁ
הַזֶּה וְאֶל־תִּתֶּן עָלֵינוּ דָם נָקִיא כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר חִפְצָתָ
עֲשִׂיתָ: וַיִּשְׂאוּ אֶת־יוֹנָה וַיִּטְלֶהוּ אֶל־הַיָּם וַיַּעֲמֵד הַיָּם מִזְעָפוֹ:
וַיִּרְאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים יִרְאָה גְדוֹלָה אֶת־יְהוָה וַיִּזְבְּחוּ־זָבַח לַיהוָה וַיִּדְרֹו
גְדָרִים: וַיִּמְן יְהוָה דָּג גָּדוֹל לְבָלַע אֶת־יוֹנָה וַיְהִי יוֹנָה בְּמֶעִי הַדָּג
שְׁלֹשָׁה יָמִים וּשְׁלֹשָׁה לַיְלֹת: וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו
מִמֶּעִי הַדָּגָה: וַיֹּאמֶר קְרָאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי אֶל־יְהוָה וַיַּעֲנֵנִי מִבֶּטֶן
שְׂאוֹל שְׁנַעְתִּי שְׁמַעְתָּ קוֹלִי: וַתִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִצֹּלָה בְּלִבְבִי יָמִים וְנָהָר
וַיִּסְבְּבֵנִי כָּל־מִשְׁבָּרֶיךָ וְגִלְיֶיךָ עָלַי עָבְרוּ: וַאֲנִי אִמְרָתִי בְּגַרְשָׁתִי מִנְּגֹד
עֵינֶיךָ אַךְ אוֹסִיף לְהִבְיֵט אֶל־הַיִּכָּל קְדָשְׁךָ: ←

Waters overwhelmed me to the edge of death,
the deep surrounded me,
the seaweed wrapped around my head,
there at the remote depths of mountains.
I went down into the earth; its bars
were closed around me—an eternity!
But you have raised my life up from the underworld,
REDEEMING ONE, my God!
My life was wrapped about me—I grew faint—
but I remembered THE ETERNAL ONE.
My prayer has come before you,
to your holy Temple.
Those who cling to vain and empty things
forsake their loyalty,
but I, with thankful voice,
shall offer you devotions.
What I have vowed, allow me to complete.
All help is from THE OMNIPRESENT ONE!”
And THE REDEEMING ONE spoke to the fish,
which vomited up Jonah onto dry land.
The word of THE ALL-SEEING came to Jonah
for a second time, and said:
“Rise up, and go to Nineveh, the great city,
and declare to it the message I am giving you.” ↩

אֶפְפוּנֵי מַיִם עַד־נַפְשׁ תְּהוּם יִסְבְּבֵנִי סוּף חֲבוּשׁ לְרֹאשִׁי: לְקַצְבֵּי
הַרִים יִנְדְּתֵי הָאָרֶץ בְּרַחֲמֶיהָ בְּעַדֵי לְעוֹלָם וּתְעַל מִשְׁחַת חַיֵּי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי: בְּהִתְעַטֵּף עָלַי נִפְשֵׁי אֶת־יְהוָה וְכִרְתִּי וּתְבוֹא אֵלַיךָ תִּפְלֹתַי
אֶל־הַיִּכָּל קְדֹשֶׁךָ: מִשְׁמְרִים הַבְּלִי־שׁוֹא חֲסִדִּים יַעֲזֹבוּ: וְאֲנִי בְּקוֹל
תּוֹדָה אֲזַבְּחֶהָ־לָּךְ אֲשֶׁר נִדְּרַתִּי אֲשַׁלְּמָה יִשׁוּעָתָה לִיהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר
יְהוָה לְדָג וַיִּקַּא אֶת־יֹנָה אֶל־הַיַּבְשָׁה: וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יֹנָה
שְׁנִית לֵאמֹר: קוּם לָךְ אֶל־נִינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה וּקְרֵא אֵלֶיהָ
אֶת־הַקְּרִיאָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי דֹבֵר אֵלֶיךָ: ←

And Jonah rose up, and he went to Nineveh,
according to the word of THE ETERNAL ONE.

Now, Nineveh was a city great to THE ALMIGHTY ONE;
it takes three days to cross it.

And when Jonah reached the city,
and had traveled in it one full day,
he called out and he said:

“Forty more days and Nineveh is overthrown!”
And the citizens of Nineveh believed in God,
and they declared a fast,
and dressed in sackcloth, great and small alike.

And word of it had reached the king of Nineveh,
and he rose up from his throne,
and he removed his royal robe
and dressed himself in sackcloth,
and he sat upon a bed of ash.

And he cried out, and he said:

“In Nineveh, by order of the king
and all his ministers, declare the following:

No person and no beast,
no cattle and no sheep,
shall taste a thing; they shall not feed,
nor water shall they drink.

Let them be dressed in sackcloth,
human being and beast alike,
and let them call out mightily to God.

Let all forsake their evil ways,
the violence their hands have done!
Who knows? Perhaps God will repent, as well,
returning from a course of wrath,
and we shall not be lost.” ↩

וַיִּקַּם יוֹנָה וַיִּלְךָ אֶל־נִינְוָה כְּדַבֵּר יְהוָה וַנִּינְוָה הָיְתָה עִיר־גְּדוֹלָה
לְאֱלֹהִים מִהֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹשָׁת יָמִים: וַיַּחַל יוֹנָה לָבוֹא בְעִיר מִהֶלֶךְ יוֹם
אֶחָד וַיִּקְרָא וַיֹּאמֶר עוֹד אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וַנִּינְוָה נִהְפָּכֶת: וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֲנָשֵׁי נִינְוָה בְּאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרְאוּ־צוֹם וַיִּלְבְּשׂוּ שָׂקִים מִגְּדוֹלָם וְעַד־
קִטְנָם: וַיִּזְעַק הַדָּבָר אֶל־מֶלֶךְ נִינְוָה וַיִּקַּם מִכִּסְאוֹ וַיַּעֲבֵר אֶדְרֵתוֹ
מֵעֲלָיו וַיִּכֶס שֶׁקַּ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־הָאֶפֶר: וַיִּזְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִינְוָה מִטַּעַם
הַמֶּלֶךְ וּגְדָלָיו לֵאמֹר הָאֵדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה הַבֶּקֶר וְהַצֹּאן אֶל־יִטְעֲמוּ
מֵאֹמֶה אֶל־יָרְעוּ וּמִיֵּם אֶל־יִשְׁתּוּ: וַיִּתְפַּסּוּ שָׂקִים הָאֵדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה
וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־אֱלֹהִים בְּחֹזֶקָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הַרְעָה וּמִן־הַחֲמֹס
אֲשֶׁר בְּכַפֵּיהֶם: מִי־יִודַע יָשׁוּב וְנָחַם הָאֱלֹהִים וְשָׁב מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ
וְלֹא נֹאכַד: ←

And God beheld their actions,
that they had returned from evil ways,
and God repented of the dire fate
that had been planned for them,
and did not act.

This was a woeful thing to Jonah,
an enormous evil, and he burned with rage.
He prayed to THE ALMIGHTY, and he said:
“I ask you, GOD OF JUSTICE, was this not
the very thing I thought would happen
while I still was standing on my native land?
That’s why I fled ahead of time to Tarshish,
for I knew you are a gracious and forgiving God,
slow to be angry, and abundant in your love,
and likely to repent of harshness.
So now, please take my life from me,
for it is better that I die than live!”

And THE REDEEMING ONE said: “Is it right
that you should burn with rage?”

And Jonah went out from the city,
and stationed himself eastward of the city.
There, he built himself a shelter (sukkah),
and he sat beneath it in the shade,
to wait and see what would befall the city.

And God, THE COMPASSIONATE, appointed a vine,
which grew up over Jonah to protect his head with shade
and save him from his evil mood.
Jonah felt pleasure at the vine, enormous pleasure. ↪

וַיֵּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם כִּי־שָׁבוּ מִדֶּרֶכְכֶם הֲרַעָה וַיִּנְחָם
הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־הֲרַעָה אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר לַעֲשׂוֹת־לָהֶם וְלֹא עָשָׂה: וַיִּרַע
אֶל־יוֹנָה רָעָה גְדוּלָּה וַיִּחַר לוֹ: וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹה
יְהוָה הַלּוֹאֲנִי דְבָרִי עַד־הֵיּוֹתִי עַל־אֲדָמָתִי עַל־כֵּן קָדַמְתִּי לְבָרַח
תַּרְשִׁישָׁה כִּי יִדְעֵתִי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי־חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־
חֶסֶד וְנֶחֱם עַל־הֲרַעָה: וְעַתָּה יְהוָה קַח־נָא אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנִּי כִּי טוֹב
מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֲהֵיטֵב חָרָה לָךְ: וַיֵּצֵא יוֹנָה מִן־הַעִיר
וַיֵּשֶׁב מִקְדָּם לְעִיר וַיַּעַשׂ לוֹ שָׂם סֶכֶה וַיֵּשֶׁב תַּחְתָּיהָ בְּצֶל עַד אֲשֶׁר
יִרְאֶה מִהֵיָּהִי בָּעִיר: וַיִּמַּן יְהוָה־אֱלֹהִים קִיקְיוֹן וַיַּעַל אֶל־
לְיוֹנָה לְהַיּוֹת צֶלַע־עַל־רֹאשׁוֹ לְהַצִּיל לוֹ מִרְעָתוֹ וַיִּשְׂמַח יוֹנָה
עַל־הַקִּיקְיוֹן שִׁמְחָה גְדוּלָּה: ←

And God appointed a vine-weevil, at dawn of the next day,
and it attacked the vine so that it withered up.
And when the sun grew bright,
God sent a hot east wind,
and sun's heat attacked the head of Jonah.
He grew faint; his spirit begged to die.
He cried: "It's better that I die than live!"
And God asked Jonah: "Is it right
that you should burn with rage about the vine?"

And Jonah said: "It's right
that I should burn to death with rage!"

And THE ALL-MERCIFUL replied:
"You are concerned about this vine,
which you have neither labored over nor have grown,
which one night lives, the next night dies.
And I—should I not be concerned for Nineveh,
a great city, which has within it
more than a hundred-twenty thousand human beings
who do not know their right hand from their left,
and much cattle, too?"

Jonah

Who is a God like you?
—forgiving sin, absolving the transgressions
of the remnant of your heritage,
you who do not cling to anger,
but desire only kindness,
you who act mercifully once again,
subduing the effects of our transgressions,
casting to the ocean waters all our wrongs.

You show faithfulness to Jacob,
love to Abraham,
as you have sworn to Abraham
from days of old.

Micah 7:18-20

וַיִּמַן הָאֱלֹהִים תּוֹלַעַת בַּעֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר לַמַּחֲרַת וַתֵּךְ אֶת־הַקִּיקָיוֹן
וַיִּיבֶשׁ: וַיְהִי | כְּזֶרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּמַן אֱלֹהִים רֵיחַ קָדִים חֲרִישִׁית וַתֵּךְ
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עַל־רֹאשׁ יוֹנָה וַיִּתְעַלֵּף וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ לָמוֹת וַיֹּאמֶר
טוֹב מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־יוֹנָה הֲהֵיטֵב חָרָה־לְךָ עַל־
הַקִּיקָיוֹן וַיֹּאמֶר הֵיטֵב חָרָה־לִּי עַד־מוֹת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֲתָהּ חֹסֶפֶת
עַל־הַקִּיקָיוֹן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֲמַלְתָּ בּוֹ וְלֹא גִדַּלְתָּ שָׁבוֹן־לְלִילָה הֲיֵהָ
וּבֶן־לְלִילָה אָבֵד: וַאֲנִי לֹא אֲחוֹס עַל־נִינְוָה הָעִיר הַגְּדוֹלָה אֲשֶׁר
יִשְׁבְּהָ הַרְבֵּה מִשְׁתֵּי־עֶשְׂרֵה רְבֹו אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע בֵּין־יַמֵּינוּ
לְשִׁמְאֵלוֹ וּבִהְמָה רַבָּה:

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עֵוֹן וְעִבֵר עַל־פֶּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ לֹא־
הֲחִזִּיק לְעַד אַפּוֹ כִּי־חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא: יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמְנוּ יִכְבָּשׁ עֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ
וַתִּשְׁלַךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטָּאתָם: תִּתֵּן אֲמַת לְיַעֲקֹב חֶסֶד
לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעַתָּ לְאַבְתָּינוּ מִיַּמֵּי קָדָם:

After the haftarah is chanted, the following blessings are said:

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, the sovereign of all worlds, the rock of all the worlds, the righteous one throughout all generations, the faithful God, whose word is deed, who speaks and fulfills, whose words are truth and justice.

Faithful are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God, and faithful are your words; not a single word of yours is unfulfilled, for you are a sovereign God, faithful and merciful. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the God faithful in all your words.

Be merciful to Zion, which is the house of life to us, and be a help to Israel, your people, soon and in our days. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who gives joy to Zion through her children.

Give us joy, ETERNAL ONE, our God, in Elijah, your prophet and your servant. Soon may redemption come and give joy to our hearts. May God turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents. And may your house be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, who brings an everlasting peace.

שמחינו / Give us joy. The traditional *haftarah* blessing contains references to the reestablishment of the rule of the Davidic dynasty. This understanding of a messianic reappearance of hereditary kingship has been rejected by Reconstructionist thought on both moral and theological grounds. Nonetheless, the messianic hope for a world redeemed remains in our thoughts as the ultimate achievement towards which humanity should strive.

Our version of the *haftarah* blessing eliminates the Davidic references and the hopes for a literal messiah that they invoke. In their place are Malachi 3:24 and a slightly altered version of Isaiah 56:7. The vision in Malachi, which is the *haftarah* for Shabbat Hagadol, sees Elijah coming to herald messianic days, turning the hearts of parents and children toward each other. The task of redemption can be completed when all of us open our hearts to our families, to our communities, and to all the inhabitants of our world. Then our world will truly have become a house of prayer for all peoples, bringing the peace for which we all hope. D.A.T.

After the haftarah is chanted, the following blessings are said:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם צוּר כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים צְדִיק בְּכָל
הַדּוֹרוֹת הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן הָאוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה הַמְדַבֵּר וּמְקַיֵּם שְׂכָל דְּבָרָיו
אִמֵּת וְצֶדֶק:

נְאֻמָּן אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנֶאֱמָנִים דְּבָרֶיךָ וְדָבַר אֶחָד מִדְּבָרֶיךָ
אֲחֹר לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן בְּכָל דְּבָרָיו:

רַחֵם עַל צִיּוֹן כִּי הִיא בֵּית חַיֵּינוּ וּלְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל תוֹשִׁיעַ בְּמַהֲרָה
בְּיָמֵינוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְשַׁמַּח צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָהּ:

שְׁמַחְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַלְיָהּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדְךָ בְּמַהֲרָה יָבוֹא וַיִּגַּל
לְבָנָנוּ: וְהָשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בְּנִים וְלֵב בְּנִים עַל אָבוֹתָם וּבִיתְךָ בֵּית
תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל הָעַמִּים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְבִיא שְׁלוֹם לְעַד:

COMMENTARY. Most liturgists agree that the practice of reciting a *haftarah*, generally a selection from the prophets, probably developed during a time when public reading of the Torah was banned. A selection roughly paralleling a major theme from the week's Torah portion was therefore selected. When public reading of the Torah became possible again, the popular custom of chanting the *haftarah* continued. The *haftarah* is usually chanted, utilizing a *trope* or cantillation system that has numerous variations. In modern times the bar/bat mitzvah has often taken on this responsibility as a sign of committed membership in the adult community.

D.A.T.

ועלעמך ישראל חושיע / be a help to Israel your people. The traditional phrase here, *aluvat nefesh* / cast-down soul, reflected the Jewish people's exile from their land. With the establishment of the State of Israel, we are no longer "cast down." This fundamental change in Jewish life is reflected in the revised language here.

D.A.T.

On Rosh Hashanah, continue here:

For the Torah and for worship, and for the prophets (and for this day of Shabbat), and for this Day of Remembrance which you have given us, ETERNAL ONE, our God, (for holiness and for rest,) for happiness and joy, for honor and for splendor—for everything, WISE ONE, our God, we offer thanks to you and bless you. May your name be blessed continually by every living being, forever and eternally, for you are a God of truth, and your word is truthful and endures forever. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, source of the holiness of (Shabbat,) the people Israel and the Day of Remembrance.

On Yom Kippur, continue here:

For the Torah, and for worship, for the prophets (and for this day of Shabbat), and for this Day of Atonement, which you have given us, ABUNDANT ONE, our God, for holiness and for rest, for pardon, for forgiveness, and for atonement, for honor and for splendor—for everything, WISE ONE, our God, we offer thanks to you, and bless you. May your name be blessed continually by every living being, forever and eternally. Your word is truth, and stands forever. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the sovereign of mercy and forgiveness for our wrongdoing, and for that of all your people, the House of Israel, you who make our guilt to pass away year after year—the sovereign over all the earth, source of the holiness of (Shabbat,) Israel and the Day of Atonement.

The service continues with the Prayer for the Country, page 579; Prayer for the State of Israel, page 581; or Prayers for Peace, pages 583 and 584. On Rosh Hashanah the Shofar service follows, page 585. On Yom Kippur, continue with Ashrey, page 593, or Returning the Torah to the Ark, page 597.

On Rosh Hashanah, continue here:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים (וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה) וְעַל
יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה שְׁנַתְּתָ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְשָׁהּ וּלְמַנוּחָהּ)
לְכַבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ
אָמֵת וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקַדֵּשׁ
(הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן:

On Yom Kippur, continue here:

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְעַל יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְעַל
יוֹם) הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה שְׁנַתְּתָ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְשָׁהּ וּלְמַנוּחָהּ)
לְמַחִילָה וּלְסְלִיחָה וּלְכַפָּרָה וּלְמַחֲלֵבוֹ אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ לְכַבוֹד
וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים
אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ אָמֵת
וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְלְעֲוֹנוֹת
עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמַעֲבִיר אֲשַׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל
הָאָרֶץ מְקַדֵּשׁ (הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים:

The service continues with the Prayer for the Country, page 580; Prayer for the State of Israel, page 582; or Prayers for Peace, pages 583 and 584. On Rosh Hashanah the Shofar service follows, page 585. On Yom Kippur, continue with Ashrey, page 594, or Returning the Torah to the Ark, page 598.