

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 - Morning (Shabbat)

Traditional Torah Reading with
Alternative *Maftir*



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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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Some communities read the traditional Torah portion about the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-34) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which case the recommended reading from the second Sefer Torah is about creation (Genesis 1:1-5, page 491). Others first read the entire creation story (Genesis 1:1-2:3), in which case they read the beginning of the story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-4) for Maftir. A few communities read the traditional Maftir, Numbers 29:1-6, which we have placed as the Maftir for the second day, page 547.

TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

First Aliyah

THE FOUNT OF LIFE took note of Sarah, as was promised;
thus did THE CREATOR do for Sarah, as was spoken:
She conceived and bore to Abraham a son in his old age,
at the appointed time God had declared.
And Abraham called the child born to him by Sarah: "Yitzḥak."
And Abraham, upon the eighth day, circumcised his son,
as God commanded him.

Genesis 21:1-4

Rosh Hashanah as the birthday of the world recalls for us God's creation of the world in the beginning of time. Strikingly, the traditional Torah reading for Rosh Hashanah is not the story of creation (Genesis 1:1) but rather the birth of Isaac, and the *haftarah* concerns the birth of Samuel—both tales of long-desired births to barren women. In fact, there is a tradition that Rosh Hashanah is *not* the day the world was created. *Pesikta Rabati*, an early rabbinic midrashic work, states that the world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul. Rosh Hashanah then is the sixth day of creation, the day on which humans were created. For the beginning of humanity marks the real beginning of creation. It is the beginning of history and most of all the beginning of the relationship between the human and the divine. Rosh Hashanah thus affirms the importance of human life, even of one single birth, as equivalent to God's creating the world. By stressing life, it calls upon us to examine the quality of our lives as we prepare for Yom Kippur—the day when life is to be judged.

Michael Strassfeld

Some communities read the traditional Torah portion about the birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:1-34) on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which case the recommended reading from the second Sefer Torah is about creation (Genesis 1:1-5, page 492). Others first read the entire creation story (Genesis 1:1-2:3), in which case they read the beginning of the story of Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-4) for Maftir. A few communities read the traditional Maftir, Numbers 29:1-6, which we have placed as the Maftir for the second day, page 548.

First Aliyah

וַיְהִי פֶקֶד אֶת־שָׁרָה פֶּאֶשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׁרָה פֶּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר :
וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד שָׁרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנֹו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ
אֱלֹהִים : וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם־בְּנֵו הַנּוֹלֶד־לֹו אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה־לֹו
שָׁרָה יִצְחָק : וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו בֶן־שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים פֶּאֶשֶׁר
צִוָּה אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים :

DERASH. There is a profound philosophical truth to the rabbinic insight that the world does not begin until the sixth day of Creation and the appearance on that day of the human being. So far as we know, there would be no world, nor God, without the perception of the world by human minds—one might go so far as to say by my human mind. Theoretically, God and the rest of the world might have existed, but like the famous falling tree in the forest that makes no sound without an ear to hear it, without a human mind to perceive God and the world, who would know? God certainly can only be recognized by human beings—God depends on us for that much, at least.

E.L.G.

Second Aliyah

And Abraham was then one hundred years of age
when Yitzhak, his child, was born to him.

And Sarah said: “God has brought me laughter—*tzeḥok!*—
and all who hear of it will share my laughter, too!”

And she added: “Who would have said to Abraham
that Sarah would be nursing children,
or that I would bear a child in his old age!”

And the child grew, and then was weaned.

And Abraham prepared a splendid feast of celebration
on the day Yitzhak was weaned.

Genesis 21:5-8

(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)

But Sarah saw the son that the Egyptian woman, Hagar,
had born to Abraham, and he was mocking—*metzaḥek*.

She said to Abraham: “Cast out this servant-woman
and her son! For this servant-woman’s child
shall not inherit with my child, with Yitzhak!”

And this matter was of grave concern in Abraham’s eyes,
for after all, it was his child.

But God told Abraham: “Don’t let this matter
of your child and servant-woman be improper in your sight.

Whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her voice,
because through Yitzhak shall your seed be called.

Genesis 21:9-12

Second Aliyah

וּאֲבָרְהֶם בְּן־מֵאֵת שָׁנָה בְּהוֹלֵד לוֹ אֵת יִצְחָק בְּנֹו: וּתְאֹמַר שְׂרָה
יִצְחָק עָשָׂה לִי אֱלֹהִים כָּל־הַשְּׁמֵעַ יִצְחָק־לִי: וּתְאֹמַר מִי מִלֵּל
לְאֲבָרְהֶם הִינִיקָה בָּנִים שְׂרָה כִּי־יִלְדֵתִי בֶן לְזַקְנָיו: וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֵּלֶד
וַיִּזְמַל וַיַּעַשׂ אֲבָרְהֶם מִשְׁתָּה גָדוֹל בַּיּוֹם הַגָּמֵל אֶת־יִצְחָק:

(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)

וּתְרֹא שְׂרָה אֶת־בֶּן־הַגֵּר הַמְצֻרִית אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה לְאֲבָרְהֶם מִיִּצְחָק:
וּתְאֹמַר לְאֲבָרְהֶם גֵּרָשׁ הָאֵמָה הִזָּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ בֶּן־
הָאֵמָה הִזָּאת עִם־בְּנֵי עַם־יִצְחָק: וַיַּרְע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּעֵינֵי אֲבָרְהֶם
עַל אֹדֶת בְּנֹו: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אֲבָרְהֶם אַל־יַרְע בְּעֵינֶיךָ
עַל־הַנָּעַר וְעַל־אִמָּתְךָ כִּי אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלֶיךָ שְׂרָה שָׁמַע בְּקִלְיָהּ כִּי
בְּיִצְחָק יִקְרָא לָהּ זָרַע:

Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)

Besides, the servant-woman's child
I shall make a nation, too; for he, too is your child."
And Abraham arose early the next morning,
and he took a bread loaf and a water sack,
and he gave them to Hagar
—placing them upon her shoulder—
and the child,
and he sent her on her way. She went
and wandered in the desert of Be'er Sheva,
and the water in the water sack was emptied,
and she left the child in the shadow of a bush,
and went and sat a bowshot's length across from him.
“Let me not look upon the child's death,” she said,
then raised her voice and wept.
God heard the child's voice,
and God's angel called out to Hagar from heaven,
saying to her: “What's wrong with you, Hagar?
Don't be afraid. For God has heard the child's voice
from where he sits.

Genesis 21:13-17

COMMENTARY. The word **בְּאֵשֶׁר**, referring to both time and space, provides a key to understanding Ishmael's situation. We can understand God's voice reaching Ishmael **בְּאֵשֶׁר הוּא שָׂם** /where he sits, as a metaphor for Ishmael's experiences of God's redemptive power. Situating Ishmael in this way suggests some important insights about the process of *teshuvah* in which we are engaged. If we seek to understand and forgive, we must forget our own expectations and assumptions, encountering others as they are at a particular moment. Similarly, by honestly recognizing and accepting myself for who I am at this particular time and place in my life, by honestly engaging in the “stock-taking of the soul” known as *heshbon hanefesh*, I can find the strength to change the direction of my life. Becoming conscious of who I am in my essence frees me to improve my life, my relationships and my world. In meeting others and ourselves “where they/we are,” we follow God's example in the Ishmael story, finding hope and opportunity for growth and transformation in places and times that otherwise might be filled with hopelessness and despair. R.S.

Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)

וּגַם אֶת־בְּנֵי־הָאָמָה לְגֹי אֲשִׁימְנוּ כִּי זָרְעָהּ הוּא: וַיִּשְׁבְּם אַבְרָהָם |
בְּבֶקֶר וַיִּקְחֵם־לָחֶם וְחַמַּת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל־הָגֵר שָׁם עַל־שִׁכְמָהּ
וְאֶת־הַיֵּלֶד וַיִּשְׁלַחַהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּתַּע בְּמִדְבָּר בְּאֶר שָׁבַע: וַיִּכְלוּ הַמַּיִם
מִן־הַחֲמַת וַתִּשְׁלַחַהּ אֶת־הַיֵּלֶד תַּחַת אַחַד הַשִּׁיחִים: וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּשָּׁב
לָהּ מִנְּגַד הַרְחֵק בְּמִטְחָנִי קִשְׁת כִּי אָמְרָה אֶל־אַרְאֵה בְּמוֹת הַיֵּלֶד
וַתִּשָּׁב מִנְּגַד וַתִּשָּׂא אֶת־קִלְעָהּ וַתִּבְרַךְ: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־קוֹל
הַנְּעִר וַיִּקְרָא מִלְּאֵף אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־הָגֵר מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ
מַה־לָּךְ הֵגֵר אֶל־תִּירְאִי כִּי־שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶל־קוֹל הַנְּעִר בְּאֶשֶׁר
הוּא־שָׁם:

Communities have a history—in an important sense they are constituted by their past—and for this reason we can speak of a real community as a “community of memory,” one that does not forget its past. In order not to forget that past, a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing, it offers examples of the men and women who have embodied and exemplified the meaning of the community. These stories of collective history and exemplary individuals are an important part of the tradition that is so central to a community of memory.

The stories that make up a tradition contain conceptions of character, of what a good person is like, and of the virtues that define such character. But the stories are not all exemplary, not all about successes and achievements. A genuine community of memory will also tell painful stories of shared suffering that sometimes creates deeper identities than success...And if the community is completely honest, it will remember stories not only of suffering received but of suffering inflicted—dangerous memories, for they call the community to alter ancient evils.

The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good.

Robert N. Bellah

(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)

Arise now, take the boy,
and hold him with your hand,
for I shall make him a great nation!"
And God opened up her eyes.
She saw a well of water,
and she went and filled the sack with water,
and she gave water to the boy.
And God was with the boy,
and he grew up, and settled in the desert,
and became a shooter of the bow.
He dwelt in Paran's desert,
and his mother got for him a wife from Egypt.

Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)

And it happened at that time
that Abimeleḥ and Phicol, chief of his army,
said to Abraham: "God is with you in whatever you may do!
Now, swear to me by God right here
that you shall not deal falsely with me,
or with any of my offspring or posterity,
but you shall act, toward me
and toward the land in which you dwell,
according to the kindness I have shown you."
And Abraham replied: "I'll swear it."
But Abraham complained to Abimeleḥ
about the water Abimeleḥ's servants stole,
And Abimeleḥ said: "I didn't know!
Who did this thing? You never told me!
I myself have never heard of it before today."
And Abraham took sheep and cattle,
and he gave them to Abimeleḥ,
and the two of them cut a covenant.

Genesis 21:18-27

(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)

קוּמִי שְׂאֵי אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר וְהַחֲזִיקִי אֶת־יָדְךָ בּוֹ כִּי־לִגְוִי גְדוֹל אֲשִׁימְנוּ:
וַיִּפְקַח אֱלֹהִים אֶת־עֵינֶיהָ וַתֵּרָא בְּאֵר מַיִם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּמְלֵא אֶת־
הַחֲמַת מַיִם וַתִּשְׁק אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר: וַיְהִי אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַנֶּזֶר וַיַּגְדֵּל וַיֵּשֶׁב
בַּמְדְּבָר וַיְהִי רִבְּהָ קִשּׁוֹת: וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמְדְּבָר פֶּאֶרְן וַתִּקְחֵלּוּ אִמּוֹ אִשָּׁה
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)

וַיְהִי בַעֲת הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְימֶלֶךְ וּפִיכֵל שֶׁר־צָבָאוּ אֶל־אֲבֵרָהָם
לֵאמֹר אֱלֹהִים עִמָּךְ בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה: וַעֲתָה הֲשִׁבְעָה לִּי
בְּאֱלֹהִים הַנָּה אִם־תִּשְׁקֹר לִי וּלְנִינִי וּלְנַכְדֵי בְּחֹסֶד אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי
עִמָּךְ תַּעֲשֶׂה עִמָּדֵי וְעַם־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־גִּרְתָּהּ בָּהּ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבֵרָהָם
אֲנֹכִי אֲשָׁבֵעַ: וְהוֹכַח אֲבֵרָהָם אֶת־אַבְימֶלֶךְ עַל־אֲדוּת בְּאֵר הַמַּיִם
אֲשֶׁר גָּזְלוּ עִבְדֵי אַבְימֶלֶךְ: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְימֶלֶךְ לֹא יִדְעָתִי מִי עָשָׂה
אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה וְגַם־אַתָּה לֹא־הִגַּדְתָּ לִּי וְגַם אֲנֹכִי לֹא שָׁמַעְתִּי
בְּלִתֵּי הַיּוֹם: וַיִּקַּח אֲבֵרָהָם צֹאן וּבָקָר וַיִּתֵּן לְאַבְימֶלֶךְ וַיִּכְרְתוּ
שְׁנֵיהֶם בְּרִית:

COMMENTARY. The text says not that a well suddenly appeared, but that Hagar's eyes were opened so that she could now see it. The miracle is spiritual rather than physical or supernatural. The well had always been there, but Hagar, paralyzed by fear, despair, and her own sense of powerlessness, was blinded to the possibility of salvation. In calling out to God, she finds the strength to discover what she needs to do. Only then does Hagar see the well.

Hagar's example can serve as a comfort and an inspiration when the pain and difficulty of our own lives seem too overwhelming, when taking the next step seems impossible. We are reminded that there are always unseen possibilities. As we call out in prayer during the *Yamim Nora'im*, we, too, can reorient our vision, see new possibilities in our lives and adjust our attitudes and actions.

R.S.

Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)

Abraham set seven ewes apart. And Abimeleḥ asked:
“What are these seven ewes which you have set apart?”
And he replied: “Here: take these seven ewes from me
by way of testimony that I dug this well.”

Therefore one now calls that place
“Be’er Sheva—Well of Oath.”

For there the two of them declared an oath,
and made a covenant at Be’er Sheva.
Then Abimeleḥ, and Phicol, chief of his army, rose,
and they returned home to the country of the Philistines.
And [Abraham] planted a tamarisk at Be’er Sheva,
and he called out there the name
of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of the world,
and Abraham lived near the country of the Philistines
for many days.

Genesis 21:28-34

DERASH. The Hebrew for tamarisk is אשל. Its three letters signify the essentials of Abraham’s hospitality: א for אכילה / food, ש for שתיה / drink, and ל for לוויה / escort.

Genesis Rabbah 54.6

DERASH. Why, immediately after making a contract with King Abimeleḥ, does Abraham call on “the name of THE ETERNAL ONE, God of the world?” To emphasize that no earthly authority should be allowed to obscure our ultimate allegiance.

J.A.S./D.A.T.

Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)

וַיִּצַב אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֶׁבַע כְּבָשׂוֹת הַצֹּאן לְבְדֻקָּן: וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ
אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מָה הִנֵּה שֶׁבַע כְּבָשׂוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הִצַּבְתָּ לְבְדֻקָּה:
וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי אֶת־שֶׁבַע כְּבָשׂוֹת תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי בְּעִבוּר תְּהִי־הֵלִי לְעֵדוּה כִּי
חָפְרְתִי אֶת־הַבְּאֵר הַזֹּאת: עַל־כֵּן קָרָא לַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע
כִּי שָׁם נִשְׁבְּעוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם: וַיִּכְרְתוּ בְרִית בֵּין־בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וַיָּקָם אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ
וּפִיכֹל שֶׁר־צָבָאוּ וַיָּשׁוּבוּ אֶל־אֶרֶץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים: וַיִּטַּע אֲשֶׁל בְּבֵאֵר
שֶׁבַע וַיִּקְרָא־שָׁם בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה אֵל עוֹלָם: וַיָּגֵר אַבְרָהָם בְּאֶרֶץ
פְּלִשְׁתִּים יָמִים רַבִּים:

HATZI KADDISH / SHORT KADDISH

Hatzi Kaddish is recited at the conclusion of the Torah reading from the first scroll. Both scrolls are placed on the reading table.

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.

חֲצִי קָדִישׁ

Hatzi Kaddish is recited at the conclusion of the Torah reading from the first scroll. Both scrolls are placed on the reading table.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךָ
מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיָמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלְמֵי וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַמֵּם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקָדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלְא לְעֵלְא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא דְאִמְרֵן בְּעֻלְמָא 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 berih hu
le'ela le'ela mikol birḥata veshirata
tushbeḥata veneḥemata da'amiran be'alma ve'imru amen.

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.

The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.

COMMENTARY. The 1945 Reconstructionist Prayerbook put “*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.

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

וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה עֵץ־חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכֶּיָּהּ מֵאֲשֶׁר:

Vezot hatorah etz hayim hi lamaḥazikim bah vetomḥeha me'ushar.



וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד־
מֹשֶׁה:

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

The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.

עץ...מאשר / It...fortunate! (Proverbs 3:18).

זאת...ישראל / This...Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44).

על...משה / by...Moses (Numbers 9:23).

ALTERNATIVE TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

First Aliyah

When God at first created the heavens and the earth,
the earth was waste and wildness,
with darkness on the face of ocean depths.

The breath of God was hovering
upon the water's face.

God said: Let there be light! And there was light.

God saw the light, that it was good,
and God divided between light and darkness.

And God called light "day";
and darkness God called "night."

And there was evening; there was morning:

One day.

Genesis 1:1-5

When recited as a Maftir portion, the reading concludes here, and the service continues with lifting and tying the scroll, followed by the haftarah, page 551.

COMMENTARY. With regard to Creation, there are mitzvot on several levels that derive from our commitment to the retelling of the tale. Faith in Creation makes demands in the areas of both those mitzvot that lead to the personal fulfillment of divinity in our lives, and those that lead to the greater realization of the divine presence in the universe as a whole. The first mitzvah that proceeds from our faith in Creation is that of awareness itself. The obligation to remain aware of divine presence is the foundation of all religious life. The second mitzvah of Creation is that of treating every human being as the image of God. Every person is entitled to the esteem and reverence in which we hold the face of God. A third mitzvah that Creation calls upon us to fulfill is that of the Sabbath. A fourth mitzvah is that of acting with concern for the healthy survival of Creation itself. The rabbis tell us that shortly after Adam was created, God walked him around the Garden of Eden and told him to take care to guard the world that he was being given. "If you destroy this world," he was told, "there is no one to come and set it right after you." Such an *aggadah* has a level of intense meaning in our age that the early rabbis could hardly have foretold. Telling the tale of Creation is itself a statement of love of the natural world. It needs to be accompanied by actions that bear witness to that love—without these it is false testimony.

A.G.

ALTERNATIVE TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

First Aliyah

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתְּהָ
תְּהוֹ וְבָהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי־אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
הָאֹר פִּיטוֹב וַיְבַדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא
אֱלֹהִים | לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם
אֶחָד:

When recited as a Maftir portion, the reading concludes here, and the service continues with lifting and tying the scroll, followed by the haftarah, page 552.

DERASH. In the Torah we learn that light comes from God. “God said, ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. God saw the light, that it was good.” Our mystics believe that each human soul is a divine spark, a small piece of God. When you put all the small sparks together, you increase light. By working together for justice, we bring more light into the world. S.D.R.

ברא / When God at first created. God created the world in a permanent state of רֵאשִׁית / beginning. The universe is always incomplete. Continuous creative effort is needed to renew the world, to keep it from sinking again into primeval chaos. Simḥah Bunam of Przysucha

DERASH. God sought to create a partnership with people, to be one with them. Thus, the text says, “A day of oneness” (יום אחד). Similarly, the first day of making offerings to God in the sanctuary was like the first day of creation, for on that day we drew near to God. On a day when we seek oneness with God, God proclaims, “It is like the day that I created my world”—we are made one with God again. Genesis Rabbah 3:9 (Adapted)

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

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Those who uphold it may be counted fortunate!



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Israel,
by the word of THE ALMIGHTY ONE, and by the hand of Moses.

The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.

COMMENTARY. The 1945 Reconstructionist Prayerbook put “*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.

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

וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה עֵץ־חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכֶּיָהּ מֵאֲשֶׁר:

Vezot hatorah etz hayim hi lamaḥazikim bah vetomḥeha me'ushar.



וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד־
מֹשֶׁה:

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

The second reading takes place here. After that, the second scroll is lifted as indicated above.

עץ...מאשר / It...fortunate! (Proverbs 3:18).

זאת...ישראל / This...Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44).

על...משה / 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.

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, continue below. On the second day continue on page 563. On Yom Kippur, continue on page 569.

HAFTARAH FOR THE FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

There was a certain man from Ramatayim-Tzofim amid the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Yeroham, who was the son of Eliahu, who was the son of Tohu, who was the son of Tzuf, an Ephratite. He had two wives: the first one's name was Hannah; the second one was called Peninah. And Peninah had two sons; but Hannah had no sons.

That man would go up from his town, from time to time, to worship and to offer sacrifice to THE CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven, at Shiloh. There, were Eli's two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, priests to THE ETERNAL ONE. And on that occasion, Elkanah would offer sacrifice, and give gifts to Peninah, and to all his sons and daughters. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, though GOD had closed her womb. Her rival used to taunt her and provoke her for the sake of causing her distress about the fact that GOD had closed her womb. ↪

בְּרֵכַת הַפְּטָרָה

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנִבְיָאִים טוֹבִים
וְרָצָה בְּדַבְרֵיהֶם הַנְּאֻמִּים בְּאֵמֶת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה
וּבַמְּשֵׁה עֲבָדוֹ וּבְנִבְיָאֵי הָאֵמֶת וְצֹדֵק:

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, continue below. On the second day continue on page 564. On Yom Kippur, continue on page 570.

הַפְּטָרָה

וַיְהִי אִישׁ אֶחָד מִן־הַרְמְתַיִם צוֹפִים מֵהָר אֶפְרָיִם וְשָׁמוֹ אֶלְקָנָה
בֶּן־יִרְחָם בֶּן־אֶלְיָהוּא בֶּן־תַּחֲוִי בֶן־צוּף אֶפְרַתִּי: וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם
אֶחָת חַנָּה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנַיִת פְּנִנָּה וַיְהִי לְפַנְנָה יְלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין
יְלָדִים: וְעַלֶּה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מְעִירוֹ מִיָּמִים | יָמִימָה לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
וְלוֹבֵחַ לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּשֵׁלָה וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלֵי חֲפְנֵי וּפְנִנָּה
פְּהָגִים לַיהוָה: וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּזְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה וְנָתַן לְפַנְנָה אֶשְׁתּוֹ
וּלְכָל־בְּנֵיהָ וּבְנוֹתֶיהָ מְנוֹת: וּלְחַנָּה יָתַן מְנָה אֶחָת אִפְּיִם כִּי אֶת־
חַנָּה אָהַב וַיְהוּה סֵגֶר רַחֲמָה: וּכְעֶסְתָּה צָרְתָּה גַם־פָּעַס בַּעֲבוּר
הַרְעַמָּה כִּי־סֵגֶר יְהוּה בְּעַד רַחֲמָה: ←

COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* describes a would-be mother's pain leading to the miraculous birth of Samuel—though is not every birth miraculous? The parallel between the birth of Isaac in the traditional Torah portion and the birth of Samuel in the *haftarah* is an obvious one. Perhaps less obvious is the implication that each individual life has a place in the divine plan. On this holy day the *haftarah* challenges us to discover our own calling.

DAT.

And so it happened, year by year:
whenever she went up to the house of THE ETERNAL ONE,
her rival would provoke her, and she wept and would not eat.
Her husband, Elkanah, would say to her,
“Why are you weeping, Hannah, and why won’t you eat?
And why is your heart troubled?
Am I not worth more to you than ten children?”

And once, after she ate and drank at Shiloh, Hannah arose,
and Eli the priest was sitting at his station at the doorway
of the house of THE ETERNAL ONE.
And she was in a bitter mood,
and prayed to THE ETERNAL, while she wept and wept.
She made a vow, and said:
“CREATOR of the Multitudes of Heaven,
if truly you behold your servant’s state of need,
if you remember me, and don’t forget your servant,
if you give your servant-woman human seed,
then I shall dedicate my child to THE ETERNAL
for a lifelong service, and no shears
shall touch his head of hair.”

And while she prayed at length before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,
Eli caught sight of her moving her lips.
Because Hannah was speaking to herself, and only her lips were moving
while her voice could not be heard, Eli mistook her for a drunk. ↪

COMMENTARY. The prayer of Hannah is an example of private rather than public worship. She has gone to pour out her heart before God in the holy place. As important as the role of community was to the rabbinic view of prayer, the rabbis also understood that prayer at its core is a matter of the heart alone. The depth and sincerity of Hannah’s prayer became a model for them. This apparently included the very strong and seemingly audacious way in which Hannah spoke both to Eli and to God. The model of prayer offered here is hardly one of submission and entreaty. Hannah stood up to both human and divine authority, demanding that she be treated justly and recognized for the wronged person she was. A.G.

וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה מִיָּד עֲלֵתָהּ בְּבֵית יְהוָה כִּן תִּכְעַסְנָה
 וּתִבְכֶּה וְלֹא תֹאכַל: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִישָׁה חֲנָה לָמָּה תִּבְכִּי
 וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי וְלָמָּה יָרַע לְבָבְךָ הַלּוֹא אֲנֹכִי טוֹב לָךְ מִעֲשֻׁרָה
 בָּנִים: וַתִּקַּם חֲנָה אַחֲרָי אָכְלָה בְּשִׁלָּה וְאַחֲרָי שָׂתָה וְעַלִּי הִפְחִין
 יֵשֵׁב עַל-הַפֶּסֶא עַל-מְזוֹזֹת הַיֵּכָל יְהוָה: וְהִיא מָרַת נַפְשׁ וּתְתַפְּלֵל
 עַל-יְהוָה וּבְכָה תִּבְכֶּה: וַתִּדַּר נָדָר וַתֹּאמֶר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אִם-רָאָה
 תִּרְאָה | בְּעֵינַי אֲמַתְךָ וּזְכַרְתִּנִּי וְלֹא-תִשְׁכַּח אֶת-אֲמַתְךָ וְנִתְתָּה
 לְאֲמַתְךָ זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים וְנִתְתָּיו לְיְהוָה כְּלִימֵי חַיִּיו וּמוֹרָה לֹא-יַעֲלֶה
 עַל-רֵאשׁוֹ: וְהִיָּה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָהּ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לְפָנַי יְהוָה וְעַלִּי שָׁמַר אֶת-
 פִּיהָ: וְחֲנָה הִיא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ רַק שְׁפָתֶיהָ נִעֲוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא
 יִשְׁמָע וַיַּחֲשֶׁבָה עָלַי לְשַׁכְּרָה: ←

COMMENTARY. Hannah prays silently but urgently for a child. Eli the High Priest, noticing her odd behavior, accuses her of drunkenness. Hannah justifies herself, and Eli blesses her. The heartfelt prayer of an ordinary woman has a moral authority to which even a high priest must accede.

RA.

נדר/She made a vow. To Hannah the rabbis of the Talmud (*Berachot* 31a-31b) attributed the great privilege of having created a new name for God. *Adonay tzeva'ot*, often translated "the Lord of Hosts," is usually taken to refer to God's glory dwelling among the angelic throngs. The rabbis accept a sharp revision of that belief by recognizing that Hannah, calling out in her bitterness, gives God this name. She sees the One surrounded by countless throngs, who may include other people's children as well as angels. "You who have made so many," she says, or "who are surrounded by so much wealth, could You not create but one child for me?"

The pain of Hannah's childlessness has here entered into our prayerbook and enriched the prayers of all those who come in her wake. This is the real contribution of Hannah and the way in which we believe prayer is fulfilled rather than "answered." While we do not know a God who hears a would-be parent's prayer and grants a child, we affirm the tradition that has carried both Hannah's pain and her faith forward and allowed them to enrich and inspire the prayer life of so many generations.

A.G.

And Eli said to her:

“How can you be drunk like this?

Put away your wine!”

But Hannah answered, saying,

“No, my lord, I am a woman sore in spirit,
and no wine or liquor have I drunk.

For I was only pouring out my soul to GOD.

Do not mistake your servant for a wanton woman,
for I was just now speaking
out of great preoccupation and distress.”

And Eli answered: “Go in peace,
and may the God of Israel give you what you ask—
whatever you request from God.”

And she replied: “So may your servant-woman
merit favor in your eyes.”

The woman then departed on her way.
She ate, and no longer was she troubled.

And they arose early the next morning,
and they worshipped before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,
and they returned back to their house in Ramah.
And Elkanah was intimate with Hannah, his wife,
and GOD remembered her.

I Samuel 1:1-19

Some communities conclude here.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו עַד-מָתַי תִּשְׁתַּכְּרִין הִסִּירי אֶת-יַיִנְךָ מֵעַלְיָךְ:
וַתַּעַן חֲנָה וַתֹּאמֶר לֹא אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁה קִשְׁת־רוּחַ אָנֹכִי וַיֵּין וְשִׁכָר לֹא
שָׁתִיתִי וְאֲשַׁפֵּף אֶת-נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: אֶל-תִּתֵּן אֶת-אַמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי
בַת-בְּלִיעֵל כִּי מֵרַב שִׁיחֵי וְכַעֲסֵי דִבַּרְתִּי עַד-הַנְּהָה: וַיַּעַן עָלַי
וַיֹּאמֶר לְכִי לְשָׁלוֹם וְאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִתֵּן אֶת-שְׁלֹתְךָ אֲשֶׁר שָׁאַלְתְּ
מֵעַמּוֹ: וַתֹּאמֶר תִּמְצָא שְׁפָחֶתְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינַיִךָ וַתֵּלֶךְ הָאִשָּׁה לְדֹרְכֶיהָ
וַתֹּאכַל וּפְגִיחָה לֹא-הָיְוָה עוֹד: וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁבּוּ וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל-בֵּיתָם הַרְמַתָּה וַיִּדַע אֶלְקָנָה אֶת-חֲנָה
אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וַיִּזְכְּרָה יְהוָה:

Some communities conclude here.

And at the turning of the season,
Hannah became pregnant, and she later bore a child,
and she called him “Samuel” (Sought-from-God)
—for (as she would say): “I sought him—*she’iltiv*—
from THE OMNIPRESENT ONE.”

The man, Elkanah, went up with his entire household
to sacrifice to GOD the offering of the season,
and to commemorate his vow.

But Hannah did not go up, but told her husband:
“I shall wait until the boy is weaned,
and then shall bring him to appear
before THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,
and he shall dwell there permanently.”

And Elkanah, her husband, said to her:

“Do what is proper in your eyes;
stay here until you wean him,
just as long as GOD’s will can be done.”

And his wife remained there,
nursing her child until his weaning.

Then she brought him with her, after she weaned him,
bringing three offerings of cattle,
an ephah of flour, and a flask of wine.

She brought him to the house of GOD at Shiloh,
and the boy was just a youth.

They slaughtered the cattle offering,
and brought the boy to Eli,

and she said: “Please, my lord,
may your soul thrive, my lord. I am the woman
who had stood before you here, praying to GOD.

I prayed to have this boy,
and GOD answered the request which I had made.

And so, I hereby lend him back to GOD,
for as many days as he might be required by GOD!”

And they worshipped there to THE ETERNAL ONE.

I Samuel 1:20-28

Some communities conclude here.

וַיְהִי לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים וַתַּהַר חַנָּה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שְׁמוּאֵל כִּי מִיְהוָה שְׂאֵלְתִּיו: וַיַּעַל הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה וְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְזִבְחַח לַיהוָה אֶת־זִבְחַח הַיָּמִים וְאֶת־נְדָרוֹ: וְחַנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה כִּי־אָמְרָה לְאִשָּׁה עַד וַגַּמַּל הַנְּעַר וַהֲבֵאתִיו וְנִרְאָה אֶת־פָּנָי יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם עַד־עוֹלָם: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִשָּׁה עֲשִׂי הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינַיִךְ שְׁבִל־עַד־גְּמֻלָּךְ אֲתוֹ אִךְ יָקָם יְהוָה אֶת־דְּבָרֹךְ וַתֵּשֶׁב הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּינֶק אֶת־בְּנָהּ עַד־גְּמֻלָּהּ אֲתוֹ: וַתַּעֲלֶהּ עִמָּה כַּאֲשֶׁר גְּמַלְתּוּ בְּפָרִים שְׁלֹשָׁה וַאֲיִפָּה אַחַת קָמַח וְנֹבֵל זֵיֵן וַתִּבְאֶהּ בֵּית־יְהוָה שְׁלוֹ וַהֲנַעַר נָעַר: וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ אֶת־הַפֶּר וַיִּבְיֵאוּ אֶת־הַנְּעַר אֶל־עַלְי: וַתֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי חַי וְנַפְשֶׁךָ אֲדֹנָי אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה הַנִּצְצַבַת עִמָּכָה בָּזָה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה: אֶל־הַנְּעַר הַזֶּה הַתְּפַלֵּלְתִּי וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לִי אֶת־שְׂאֵלְתִּי אֲשֶׁר שְׂאֵלְתִּי מֵעַמּוֹ: וְגַם אֲנֹכִי הַשְׂאֵלְתָהּ לַיהוָה כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה הוּא שְׂאוֹל לַיהוָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה שָׁם לַיהוָה:

Some communities conclude here.

Some communities begin here.

And Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in THE FAITHFUL ONE,
my fortunes have been raised up by THE FOUNT OF LIFE!
My utterance is powerful against my foes,
yes, truly I am joyful in your victory!
There is none as holy as THE OMNIPRESENT ONE,
for none exists apart from you, O God!
—nor is there any stronghold like our God.

Have done, my foes, with all your endless boastful talk,
let insolence no longer come forth from your mouth!
For THE UNSEEN ONE is a crafty God
by whom much mischief is contrived:
The bows of mighty ones are smashed,
but they who once had stumbled have grown strong.
Those well-fed now hire themselves out for bread,
and those once hungry are not hungry any more.
The barren woman has borne seven,
the mother of many is forlorn.
THE POWER OF UPHEAVAL slays and brings to life,
brings down into the earth, and raises up!
THE GOD OF CHANGE both disinherits and makes rich,
both humbles and exalts, ↪

Some communities begin here.

וּתְתַפְּלֵל חֲנֹה וּתְאָמַר עֲלֶיךָ לְבִי בְּיְהוָה רַמָּה קִרְנֵי בְּיְהוָה רַחֲב פִּי
עַל-אֹיְבֵי כִּי שָׁמַחְתִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ: אֵין-קְדוֹשׁ בְּיְהוָה כִּי-אֵין בְּלִתֵּהּ
וְאֵין צוּר כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ: אֶל-תִּרְבּוּ תִדְבְּרוּ גְבוּהָהּ גְבוּהָהּ יֵצֵא עֲתָק
מִפִּיכֶם כִּי אֵל יַעֲזֹת יְהוָה וְלֹא וְלֹא נִתְּנָנוּ עַלְלוֹת: קֶשֶׁת גְּבָרִים
חֲתִים וְנִבְשָׁלִים אָזְרוּ-חֵיל: שְׁבָעִים בְּלָחֶם נִשְׁפְּרוּ וּרְעָבִים חִדְּלוּ
עַד-עֲקָרָה יִלְדָה שְׁבָעָה וְרַבַּת בָּנִים אֲמַלְלָה: יְהוָה מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה
מוֹרִיד שָׁאוֹל וַיַּעַל: יְהוָה מוֹרִישׁ וּמַעֲשִׂיר מִשְׁפִּיל אֶף-מְרוֹמָם: ←

raises the pauper from the dust,
and from the dungheap lifts the destitute,
seating them among the noble-born,
according them a chair of honor.

THE OMNIPRESENT owns the pillars of the earth,
on which the world was placed.

God guards the steps of those who act in lovingkindness,
while evildoers are undone amid the dark.

For no one can prevail by might alone.

ALMIGHTY ONE! Your enemies shall break apart against you!

THE OMNIPRESENT, thundering in the heavens,
shall judge the farthest reaches of the earth,
establishing the rule of God,
raising the power of redemption.”

I Samuel 2:1-10

For the concluding haftarah blessings, see page 575.

COMMENTARY. Hannah's prayer expresses one of the most fundamental ideas of biblical literature—that the God of Israel is a God of surprise, working out divine will in human affairs through sometimes devious means, and often turning the tables on those who think themselves mighty and prosperous. At the same time, this is a message of comfort to those in need—the pauper, the oppressed, the childless—urging them not to give up hope that their downtrodden state can be quickly reversed. Since Hannah gave birth to Samuel, the greatest leader of Israel between Moses and King David, her song is also a way of saying that Israel's destiny is often served by those who have thought themselves the most peripheral to it. This song was an affirmation of revolutionary change, voiced at a time when Israel's survival as a nation was in doubt, therefore a time when Israel was most in need of a God of Change. J.R.

מְקוֹמָם מֵעַפְרֵי הָאָרֶץ מֵאֲשַׁפְּתֵי יָרֵים אֲבִיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיב עִם־נְדִיבִים וְכֹסֵא
כְּבוֹד יִנְחָלֶם כִּי לַיהוָה מִצְקֵי אֶרֶץ וַיֵּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבְלָה: רַגְלֵי
חֲסִידוֹ חֲסִידוֹ יִשְׁמֹר וְרָשָׁעִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ יִדְמֹו כִּי־לֹא בִכְחַ וְגִבּוֹר־
אִישׁ: יְהוָה יִחַתֵּנוּ מִרִיבֹו עָלֵנוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם יִרְעֵם יְהוָה יִדְּוֵן אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ
וַיִּתֵּן־עֵז לְמַלְכּוֹ וַיְרַם קַרְן מְשִׁיחוֹ:

For the concluding haftarah blessings, see page 576.

CONCLUDING HAFTARAH BLESSINGS

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. ↪

וּלְעֵמֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל תּוֹשִׁיעַ / 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.

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם צוּר כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים צְדִיק בְּכָל
הַדּוֹרוֹת הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן הָאוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה הַמְדַבֵּר וּמְקַיֵּם שְׁפָל דְּבָרָיו
אִמֶּת וְצֶדֶק:

נְאֻמָּן אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנֶאֱמָנִים דְּבָרֶיךָ וְדָבָר אֶחָד מִדְּבָרֶיךָ
אֲחֵר לֹא יָשׁוּב רִיקָם כִּי אֵל מְלֶכֶךְ נְאֻמָּן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן בְּכָל דְּבָרָיו:

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

שְׂמַחְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאֵלֵיהֶוּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדְךָ בְּמַהֲרָה יָבוֹא וַיַּגֵּל
לְבָנָו: וְהָשִׁיב לָב אֲבוֹת עַל בָּנִים וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל אֲבוֹתָם וּבֵיתְךָ בֵּית
תַּפְלָה 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.

COMMENTARY. This 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. Here Elijah is pictured coming to herald messianic days by uniting families, communities, and peoples through mutual understanding.

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 (לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנּוּחָה)
לְכַבוֹד וּלְתַפְאֶרֶת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ
אָמֵת וְקַיָּם 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 (לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנּוּחָה)
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
וְקַיָּם 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.