

# Rosh Hashanah Day 1 - Morning (Shabbat)

Alternative Torah Reading with  
Alternative *Maftir*



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## 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.*

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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 הִיְתֵה  
תְּהוֹ וְבָהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי  
הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי־אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־  
הָאֹר פְּיֻטוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל 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.*

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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)

*Second Aliyah*

And God said: "Let there be a dome amid the waters,  
and let it separate between the waters!"

And God made the dome, and thus divided  
between the waters that were beneath the dome  
and the waters that were above the dome.

And it was so.

And God called the dome "Heaven."

And there was evening; there was morning:  
a second day.

*(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the waters underneath the heavens  
be gathered to a single place,  
and let dry land appear!"

And it was so.

And God called the dry land "Earth,"  
and where the waters gathered up  
God called them "Oceans."

And God saw that it was good.

And God said: "Let the earth grow grasses  
putting forth their seed,  
and fruit trees yielding fruit  
according to their kinds, their seed within them,  
all across the earth!"

And it was so.

The earth brought forth the grasses  
putting forth their seed according to their kinds,  
and trees yielding fruits, their seed within them,  
each according to its kind.

God saw that it was good.

And there was evening; there was morning:  
a third day.

Genesis 1:6-13

*Second Aliyah*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רִקיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מִבְּדִיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם:  
וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לַרִקיעַ  
וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרִקיעַ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַרִקיעַ  
שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:

*(On Shabbat, Third Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מְקוֹם אֶחָד  
וַתִּרְאֶה הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לַיַּבְשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמַקְוֵה  
הַמַּיִם קָנָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשֵׂא  
הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינֹו אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוֹ-  
בּוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע  
לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוֹ-בּוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-  
טוֹב: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:

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COMMENTARY. The first chapter of Genesis indicates that there is an underlying unity to the universe, a unity which is then divided into its parts by the divine act of naming. Other religious traditions have also expressed this idea. For example, the Tao Te Ching says that “the nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth; the named is the mother of ten thousand things.” The religious impulse in all of us involves becoming aware that the many are also one. J.A.S.

Why is the second day the only day not described as “good?” Rabbi Hanina said, “It is because on that day schism was created, as it is said, ‘God...divided between the waters....’ Rabbi Tavvomi added, “If a schism that improved the world is not described as ‘good,’ then how much the more so a schism that detracts from it.” Genesis Rabbah 4:6

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let there be luminaries  
in the dome of heaven,  
to divide between the day and night,  
and they shall serve for signs and seasons,  
and for days and years.

And let them serve as lamps  
amid the dome of heaven,  
to give light upon the earth!"

And it was so.

God made the two great luminaries,  
the larger one to rule the day,  
the smaller one to rule the night, together with the stars.  
God placed them in the dome of heaven,  
to give light upon the earth,  
to rule the day and night,  
and to divide between the light and darkness.

And God saw that it was good.

And there was evening; there was morning: a fourth day.

*(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the waters teem  
with swarming creatures and the breath of life,  
and let birds fly above the earth across the face of heaven's dome!"

And God created the great sea-beasts,  
and all the animals that move about,  
with which the waters teemed according to their kinds,  
and every winged bird according to its kind.

God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying:

"Be fruitful and increase,  
and fill the waters of the seas,  
and let birds multiply throughout the earth!"

And there was evening; there was morning: a fifth day.

Genesis 1:14-23

*Third Aliyah (On Shabbat, Fourth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרִקיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין  
הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאוֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת  
בְּרִקיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי  
הַמְּאֹרֶת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת-הַמְּאֹר  
הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַפּוֹכְבִּים: וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים  
בְּרִקיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וּלְמִשְׁלַח בְּיוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה  
וְלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים פִּי-טוֹב: וַיְהִי-  
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי:

*(On Shabbat, Fifth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם שְׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יַעֲוֹף  
עַל-הָאָרֶץ עַל-פְּנֵי רִקיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַתַּיִּנִּים  
הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה | הַרְמֵשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שְׂרָצוּ הַמַּיִם  
לְמִינֵיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף פְּנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים פִּי-טוֹב: וַיִּבְרָךְ  
אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף  
יִרָב בָּאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:



*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

And God said: "Let the earth bring forth  
land animals according to their kinds—  
the cattle and the roving creatures,  
and the wild beasts, according to their kind!"

And it was so.

God made the wild beasts according to their kind  
and cattle according to its kind,  
and all the swarming creatures of the earth  
according to their kind!

God saw that it was good.

And God said: "Let us make a human being  
in our image, and according to our likeness,  
and let the humans rule the fishes of the sea,  
the birds across the skies,  
and creatures of the earth,  
and every creeping thing that creeps upon the land."

And God created the human being  
in God's image—

in the image of divinity did God create it;  
both male and female God created them.

And God blessed them, and God said to them:

"Be fruitful and increase,  
and fill the earth, and be responsible for it,  
and rule the fishes of the sea,  
the birds across the skies,  
and every living thing that moves upon the earth."

And God said: "See, I hereby give to you  
all the grasses putting forth their seed  
across the face of all the earth,  
and every tree, within which is a tree-fruit  
putting forth its seed—it shall be food for you.

And for every living creature of the earth,  
and every bird across the skies,  
and everything that moves about upon the earth, ↪

*Fourth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Sixth Aliyah)*

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֵמָה וְרֶמֶשׂ  
וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ  
וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת פְּלֶ-רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ וַיֵּרָא  
אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ  
וַיְרֵדוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-  
הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ  
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם  
אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִּשְׁתֶּהּ  
וַרְדּוּ בְּדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתַתִּי לְכֶם אֶת-פְּלִיעֵשֶׁב אֲזַרְעֶ זְרַע אֲשֶׁל עַל-  
פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-פְּלִיעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְּרִיעֵץ זְרַע זְרַע לְכֶם  
יְהִיָּה לְאֹכְלָהּ: וְלִכְל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְלִכְל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל אֶל- ←

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DERASH. When God was about to create the first people, God saw that both righteous and wicked would be among the descendants of Adam and Eve. God said, "If I create Adam, wicked people will descend from him, but if I do not create Adam, the righteous will not descend from him." So God momentarily ignored the ways of the wicked, and with divine mercy created the first people. Genesis Rabbah 8:4

DERASH. When a flesh-and-blood ruler stamps an image on a coin, every coin looks alike, but even though the sovereign of all made each of us in the divine image, no two of us are alike. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

DERASH. Why does the Torah say that Adam—a single person—was created first? For the sake of peace, for no one can say, my ancestor was greater than yours. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

COMMENTARY. The rabbis taught that every bit of creation is essential. Not even the mosquito, that annoying little creature, is superfluous. Even snakes and frogs are manifestations of divine will!

Genesis Rabbah 10:7 (Adapted)

whatever has the breath of life within,  
all grass and vegetation shall be food.”  
And it was so.  
And God saw all that had been made,  
and truly it was very good.  
And there was evening; there was morning:  
the sixth day.

Genesis 1:24-31

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

And the heavens and the earth, and all their beings  
were finished. And God finished on the seventh day  
the work that had been done.  
God rested on the seventh day  
from all the labors God had done.  
God blessed the seventh day,  
and made it holy,  
for on it God had rested from all work  
that God had done in carrying out Creation.

Genesis 2:1-3

*When the Creation story has been read from the first scroll, the Hatzzi Kaddish, page 543,  
is recited here.*

רוּמַשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נַפֵּשׁ חַיָּה אֶת-כָּל-יִרְקַע עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ  
וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי-  
עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

*Fifth Aliyah (On Shabbat, Seventh Aliyah)*

וַיִּבְלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיִּבְלֵ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
מִלְאֲכֹתָו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלֹאכֹתָו אֲשֶׁר  
עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַח  
מִכָּל-מְלֹאכֹתָו אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

*When the Creation story has been read from the first scroll, the Hatzki Kaddish, page 544, is recited here.*

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DERASH. Traditional education in physics begins with pulleys, levers and inclined planes, continues with trajectories and motion, and electricity and magnetism. After studying relativity,  $E=Mc^2$ , and Heisenberg uncertainty one can begin to unravel the big bang and other cosmologies. Similarly traditional Jewish study of Hūmash begins not with Genesis, but with the Levitical codes of sin and sacrifice, then the book of Numbers, and the miracles of the Exodus. After studying the Ten Commandments and the sermons of Deuteronomy, as well as Codes, Mishnah, Maimonides, and Talmud, one can truly begin to unravel the deep mysteries of *Bereyshit Bara Elohim*.... In choosing to read Genesis on Rosh Hashanah we set for ourselves both a standard and a goal. The text, like the creation it describes, is incredibly complex. We must learn much to begin to understand it, and what we have already learned is just the Beginning...

E.M.

וּכְבַשָּׂה / *vehivshuha* / be responsible. Literally, “subdue it.” Human beings have extraordinary powers for reshaping the world, taming animals, growing crops, even for creating and destroying whole species. The biblical text acknowledges this power. Our translation suggests that we have our power as stewards of God’s will. It is up to us to act responsibly. D.A.T.

## 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 וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן  
קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלְמִי וּלְעֵלְמֵי עַלְמֵיָא:

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.*

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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 לַמַּחֲזִיקִים בָּהּ וְתִמְכֶינָהּ 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).



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

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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 פָקֵד אֶת־שָׁרָה פְּאֶשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה לְשָׁרָה פְּאֶשֶׁר דִּבֶּר :  
וַתְהַר וַתֵּלֵד שָׁרָה לְאַבְרָהָם בֶּן לְזִקְנָיו לְמוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֲתוֹ  
אֱלֹהִים : וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־שֵׁם־בְּנֵוֹ הַגִּזְלִיד־לוֹ אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה־לוֹ  
שָׁרָה יִצְחָק : וַיִּמַּל אַבְרָהָם אֶת־יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ בֶן־שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים פְּאֶשֶׁר  
צִוָּה אֲתוֹ אֱלֹהִים :

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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.

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

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

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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.

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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).

## 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 בְּאֵמַת: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה  
וּבַמִּשָּׁה עֲבָדוֹ וּבְנִבְיָאֵי הָאֵמַת 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־הַרְמְתִים צוֹפִים מֵהָר אֶפְרָיִם וּשְׁמוֹ אֶלְקָנָה  
בֶּן־יִרְחָם בֶּן־אֶלְיָהוּא בֶּן־תַּחֲוִי בֶּן־צוּף אֶפְרָתִי: וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם  
אֶחָת חַנָּה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִיית פְּנִנָּה וַיְהִי לְפַנְנָה יְלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין  
יְלָדִים: וְעַלֶּה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מְעִירוֹ מִיָּמִים | יָמִימָה לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת  
וְלוֹבֹחַ לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּשֵׁלָה וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי בְנֵי־עֲלֵי חֲפְנֵי וּפְנִנָּה  
פְּהָנִים 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: ←

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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. ↪

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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 אֱלֹקֵיךָ אִישָׁה חֲנָה לָמָּה תִּבְכִּי  
 וְלָמָּה לֹא תֹאכְלִי וְלָמָּה יָרַע לְבָבְךָ הַלּוֹא אֲנֹכִי טוֹב לָךְ מִעֲשֻׁרָה  
 בָּנִים: וְתִקַּם חֲנָה אַחֲרָי אֲכָלָה בְּשִׁלָּה וְאַחֲרָי שָׂתָה וְעָלִי הַכֹּהֵן  
 יֵשֵׁב עַל-הַכִּסֵּא עַל-מִזְבֵּחַ הַיֵּכָל יְהוָה: וְהָיָא מִרְת נַפְשׁ וּתְתַפְּלֵל  
 עַל-יְהוָה וּבְכָה תִּבְכֶּה: וְתוֹרֵר נָדָר וְתֹאמֵר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אִם-רָאָה  
 תִּרְאָה | בְּעֵינַי אֲמַתְךָ וּזְכַרְתִּנִּי וְלֹא-תִשְׁכַּח אֶת-אֲמַתְךָ וְנִתְתָּה  
 לְאֲמַתְךָ זָרַע אֲנָשִׁים וְנִתְתָּיו לְיְהוָה כְּלִימֵי חַיִּיו וּמוֹרָה לֹא-יַעֲלֶה  
 עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ: וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבֵּתָהּ לְהַתְּפַלֵּל לְפָנָי יְהוָה וְעָלִי שָׁמַר אֶת-  
 פִּיהָ: וְחֲנָה הָיָא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ רַק שְׁפָתֶיהָ נִעֲוֹת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא  
 יִשְׁמַע וַיַּחֲשֶׁבָה עָלָי לְשִׁכְרָה: ←

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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 הִסִּירִי אֶת-יַיִנְךָ מֵעַלַיךָ:  
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 וּפְגִיחָהּ לֹא-הָיְוָה עוֹד: וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לִפְנֵי  
יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁבּוּ וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל-בֵּיתֶם הַרְמַתָּה וַיִּדַע אֶלְקָנָה אֶת-חֲנָה  
אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וַיִּזְכְּרָהּ 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 לְזִבְחַ  
לַיהוָה אֶת־זִבְחַ הַיָּמִים וְאֶת־נְדָרוֹ: וְחַנָּה לֹא עָלְתָה כִּי־אָמְרָה  
לְאִישָׁה עַד וַגַּמַּל הַנְּעַר וַהֲבֵאתִיו וְנִרְאָה אֶת־פָּנָי יְהוָה וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם  
עַד־עוֹלָם: וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ אֶלְקָנָה אִישָׁה 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  
וַאִיפֹה אַחַת קָמַח וְנָבֶל זֵינַן וַתִּבְאֶהּ בֵּית־יְהוָה שְׁלוֹ וַהֲנַעַר נָעַר:  
וַיִּשְׁחָטוּ אֶת־הַפֶּר וַיִּבְיֵאוּ אֶת־הַנְּעַר אֶל־עַלְי: וַתֹּאמֶר בִּי אֲדֹנָי חַי  
נַפְשֶׁךָ אֲדֹנָי אֲנִי הָאִשָּׁה הַנִּצְצַבַת עִמָּכָה בָּזָה לְהַתְּפַלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה:  
אֶל־הַנְּעַר הַזֶּה הַתְּפַלֵּלְתִּי וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לִי אֶת־שְׂאֵלְתִי אֲשֶׁר  
שְׂאֵלְתִי 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 בַיהוָה רַמָּה קִרְנֵי בַיהוָה רַחֲב פִּי  
עַל-אֹיְבֵי כִּי שָׁמַחְתִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ: אֵין-קְדוֹשׁ בַּיהוָה כִּי-אֵין בְּלִתֵּהּ  
וְאֵין צוּר כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ: אֶל-תִּרְבּוּ תִדְבְּרוּ גְבוּהָהּ גְבוּהָהּ יֵצֵא עֲתָק  
מִפִּיכֶם כִּי אֵל יַעֲזֹת יְהוָה וְלֹא וְלֹא נִתְּנָנוּ עַלְלוֹת: קֶשֶׁת גְּבוּרִים  
חֲתִים וְנִבְשָׁלִים אָזְרוּ-חֵיל: שְׁבַעִים בְּלָחֶם נִשְׁפְּרוּ וּרְעֵבִים חִדְּלוּ  
עַד-עֲקָרָה יִלְדָה שְׂבַעָה 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.*

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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 מֵעַפְרֵךְ וְלֹא מֵאֲשַׁפֹּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן לְהוֹשִׁיב עַם־נְדִיבִים וְכֹסֵא  
כְבוֹד וְנִחְלָם כִּי לַיהוָה מִצְקֵי אֶרֶץ וַיֵּשֶׁת עֲלֵיהֶם תִּבְלָה: רַגְלֵי  
חֲסִידוֹ חֲסִידוֹ יִשְׁמֹר וְרָשָׁעִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ יִדְמוּ כִּי־לֹא בִכְחַ וְגִבּוֹר־  
אִישׁ: יְהוָה יִחַתֵּנוּ מִרִיבֵנוּ עָלֵינוּ בְּשָׂמַיִם יִרְעֵם יְהוָה יִדְּוֵנוּ אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ  
וַיִּתֵּן־עֵז לְמַלְכוֹ 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. ↪

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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:

שְׁמַחְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַלְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדְךָ בְּמַהֲרָה יָבוֹא וַיַּגֵּל  
לְבָנָנוּ: וְהָשִׁיב לָב אֲבוֹת עַל בָּנִים וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל אֲבוֹתָם וּבֵיתְךָ בֵּית  
תַּפְלָה יִקְרָא לְכָל הָעַמִּים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְבִיא שְׁלוֹם לְעַד: ←

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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 שְׁנַתְּ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנּוּחָה)  
לְכַבּוֹד וּלְתַפְאֲרָת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ  
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרֵךְ 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 שְׁנַתְּ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְּשָׁה וּלְמַנּוּחָה)  
לְמַחֲלָה וּלְסִלִּיחָה וּלְכַפָּרָה וּלְמַחֲלֵבוּ אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ לְכַבּוֹד  
וּלְתַפְאֲרָת: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים  
אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרֵךְ 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.*