

Yom Kippur Morning

Alternative Torah Reading with
Traditional *Maftir*



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NITZAVIM: ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

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

First Aliyah

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

Deuteronomy 29:9-11

Second Aliyah

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

Deuteronomy 29:12-14

ALTERNATIVE YOM KIPPUR TORAH READING

פְּרִשַׁת נִצְצִים

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

First Aliyah

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

Second Aliyah

לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶתְךָ הַיּוֹם אִלּוּ לְעַם וְהוּא יְהִי־לְךָ לְאֱלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבַּרְתָּ וְכַאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִיעֲקֹב: וְלֹא
אַתְּכֶם לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי כִּרְתָה אֶת־הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת:
כִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶה פֶה עִמָּנוּ עַמְדָה הַיּוֹם לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶת־
אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֶה עִמָּנוּ הַיּוֹם:

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

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

Third Aliyah (For Minḥah, Second Aliyah)

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

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

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

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

Third Aliyah (For Minhah, Second Aliyah)

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

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

D.A.T.

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

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

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

Deuteronomy 29:15-28

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fourth Aliyah (For Minhah, Third Aliyah)

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

Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Minhah Torah reading concludes here.

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

Rashi

Fourth Aliyah (For Minḥah, Third Aliyah)

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

Minḥah Torah reading concludes here

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

R.H.

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

D.A.T.

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

Fifth Aliyah

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

Deuteronomy 30:7-10

(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)

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

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Fifth Aliyah

וְנָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֱלֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל-אֲבִיךָ וְעַל-שְׂנְאֵיךָ
אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ: וְאַתָּה תָּשׁוּב וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וְעָשִׂיתָ אֶת-כָּל-
מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם: וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל |
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָךְ בְּפָרִי בְטֹנֶה וּבִפְרִי בְּהִמָּתֶנָּה וּבִפְרִי אֲדָמָתָה לְטֹבָה כִּי |
יָשׁוּב יְהוָה לְשׂוֹשׁ עֲלֶיךָ לְטוֹב כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׂשׂ עַל-אַבְתָּיִךְ: כִּי תִשְׁמַע
בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַפְּתוּכָה בְּסֹפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה כִּי תָשׁוּב אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:

(On Shabbat morning, Sixth Aliyah)

כִּי הַמְצָנָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם לֹא-נִפְלְאת הוּא מִמָּה
וְלֹא-רְחֹקָה הוּא: לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה-לָנוּ הַשָּׁמַיִמָּה
וַיִּקְחֶה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁמַעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וַיַּעֲשֶׂנָּה: וְלֹא-מֵעֵבֶר לָיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר
מִי יַעֲבֹר-לָנוּ אֶל-עֵבֶר הַיָּם וַיִּקְחֶה לָנוּ וַיִּשְׁמַעֵנוּ אֹתָהּ וַיַּעֲשֶׂנָּה:
כִּי-קָרוֹב אֵלַיךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבְלִבְבְּךָ לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ:

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

Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)

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

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Sixth Aliyah (On Shabbat morning, Seventh Aliyah)

רָאָה נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמּוֹת וְאֶת־
הָרַע: אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצוּרָה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת
בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשׁוֹמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקְתָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּיתָ וּרְבִיתָ וּבִרְכָה
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׂמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: וְאִם־יִפְּנֶה
לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וּנְדַחְתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַּדְתָּם:
הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם פִּי אֲבָד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכוּן יָמִים עַל־
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לְכֹא שָׂמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: הַעֲדִיתִי
בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמּוֹת נִתְּתִי לְפָנֶיךָ
הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבַחֲרַתָּ בַחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אַתָּה וְזָרְעֶךָ:
לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקִלּוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָה־בּוֹ פִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ
וְאָרֶךְ יָמֶיךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם
לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לְתַת לָהֶם:

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

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

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

D.A.T.

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 לְעֵלְמָא וְלְעֵלְמֵי עֻלְמָיָא:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרַמֵּם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְרִיךְ הוּא לְעֵלְמָא לְעֵלְמָא מְכַל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא
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 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).

Some communities that read the traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning prefer an alternative to the traditional maftir reading, which is also about the sacrifices. The first aliyah from Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-11) serves this purpose. See page 531.

MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR YOM KIPPUR

And on the tenth day of the seventh month,
you will have a holy convocation,
and you will afflict your souls.
No work will you perform.
And you will offer a burnt-offering:
a sacrifice of sweet aroma,
one male of cattle oxen,
one ram, and seven lambs,
a year old and unblemished,
you will have,
along with *minḥah*-offering
of finest flour, mixed with oil,
three tenths of a measure for the bull,
and two tenths for the ram,
and seven tenths apiece for the seven lambs.
A goat kid shall be an offering for sins,
apart from the sin-offering for the atonement,
and the perpetual burnt-offering,
its *minḥah* offering, and its libations.

Numbers 29:7-11

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Vezot Hatorah is recited.
That is followed by the haftarah, page 551.*

MAFTIR TORAH READING FOR YOM KIPPUR

Some communities that read the traditional Torah reading for Yom Kippur morning prefer an alternative to the traditional maftir reading, which is also about the sacrifices. The first aliyah from Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29:9-11) serves this purpose. See page 532.

וּבַעֲשׂוֹר לְחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה מִקְרֵא־קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם וְעִנִּיתֶם
אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם כָּל־מְלֶאכֶה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם עֲלֵהּ לַיהוָה
הַיּוֹם נִיחַח פֶּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד אֵיל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שְׁבַע
תְּמִימִם יִהְיוּ לָכֶם: וּמִנְחָתָם סֶלֶת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרֹנִים
לְפָר שְׁנַי עֶשְׂרֹנִים לְאֵיל הָאֶחָד: עֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן לְכֶבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד
לְשַׁבַּעַת הַכֶּבֶשִׂים: שְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֲטָאת מִלְּבַד חֲטָאת
הַכִּפָּרִים וְעֹלֹת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְפֵיהֶם:

*The second Torah scroll is lifted and tied while Ve Zot Hatorah is recited.
That is followed by the haftarah blessing, page 552, and the haftarah, page 570.*

COMMENTARY. The *maftir* presents a command to “afflict your souls” on Yom Kippur. The word for “afflict” is related to the Hebrew word for “poverty”—a disease that afflicts the soul of our society. We afflict ourselves today to be reminded of the affliction of others. Empathy ought to lead to action. The *haftarah*, which follows, thus stresses the importance of making this a time to resolve that we will feed the hungry, bring the homeless to our houses, clothe the naked, and not hide ourselves from our fellow human beings.

S.D.R.

וְעִנִּיתֶם אֶת נַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם / *ve'initem et nafshoteyhem* / You will afflict your souls. The self-denial practiced on Yom Kippur, for example, by foregoing food and drink, and avoiding bathing, is all physical self-denial. How should we understand this text's suggestion that it is our souls that are meant to be affected? One way of understanding this is that the soul mirrors the body, so that there is an inner chastening that comes from the outer action. A second way to understand the phrase is that the physical forebearances create a space within which the ritual and liturgical actions of the day can have a powerful inner impact. The impact here is to simplify and humble—to rid ourselves of the layers that have built up on us and prevented us from being fully ourselves. The act of chastening or purification can thus be understood as an act of renewal.

D.A.T.

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

This is the Torah.

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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).

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 בֶן־צוּף אֶפְרָתִי: וְלוֹ שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם
אֶחָת חַנָּה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִיַת פְּנִנָּה וַיְהִי לְפַנְנָה יְלָדִים וּלְחַנָּה אֵין
יְלָדִים: וְעַלֶּה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מְעִירוֹ מִיָּמִים | יָמִימָה לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
וְלוֹבֹחַ 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 סָגֵר רַחֲמָה: וּכְעֶסְתָּה צָרְתָּה גַם־פָּעַס בַּעֲבוּר
הַרְעַמָּה כִּי־סָגֵר יְהוָה 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.

HAFTARAH FOR YOM KIPPUR MORNING

And God has said: Prepare, prepare
the road—yes, clear a thoroughfare,
remove the stumbling block
from my people's way!
For thus says God, lofty and revered
who dwells forever, and whose name is holy:
Exalted and holy shall I dwell among you!
As for the downtrodden and destitute,
I shall revive the spirit of the lowly,
and the heart of the depressed I shall restore.
Indeed, not for all time shall I be quarrelsome,
not for eternity shall I seethe with rage,
but from me shall my spirit drip like dew.
I shall create the breath of life.

For my people's sinful deed I was enraged,
I struck them, and I turned away in wrath,
and they, for their part, pursued foolish ways.
But I have seen their folly, and shall heal them.
I shall guide them, and console them,
and for the mourners in their midst,
I shall create comforting words
—Shalom, shalom, to far and near!—
and I shall heal them.

But the wicked are like a troubled sea,
they cannot be at peace,
their waters stir with mire and mud.
There is no peace for them, says God,
none for the wicked.

Cry from the throat, do not relent,
raise up your voices like a shofar,
tell my people their transgression,
the house of Jacob, their mistakes. ↪

הַפְּטָרָה

וְאָמַר סְלוּסְלוּ פְּנוּ-דְרָךְ הַרְיֵמוּ מִכְּשׁוֹל מִדְרָךְ עִמִּי: כִּי כֹה אָמַר
קָדוֹשׁ שְׁכֵן עַל וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֲשֶׁרֶן וְאֶת-דִּבְרֵי
וְשִׁפְלֵ-רוּחַ לְהַחֲיוֹת רוּחַ שְׁפִלִים וּלְהַחֲיוֹת לֵב נִדְבָאִים: כִּי לֹא
לְעוֹלָם אָיִב וְלֹא לְנֶצַח אֶקְצוֹף בִּי-רוּחַ מִלְּפָנַי יַעֲטוֹף וּנְשִׁמוֹת
אֲנִי עֲשִׂיתִי: בְּעֵינַי בָּצַעוּ קִצְפֹתַי וְאַפְהוּ הִסְתַּר וְאֶקְצוֹף וַיִּלֶּךְ שׁוֹבֵב
בְּדְרָךְ לְבוֹ: דְרָכָיו רָאִיתִי וְאַרְפָּאֵהוּ וְאַנְהֵהוּ וְאַשְׁלֵם נַחֲמִים לוֹ
וְלֹאֲבָלָיו: בּוֹרָא נֵיב שְׁפָתַיִם שְׁלוֹם | שְׁלוֹם לְרַחֵק וְלִקְרוֹב אָמַר
יְהוָה וּרְפָאתָיו: וְהִרְשָׁעִים בַּיָּם נִגְרַשׁ כִּי הִשְׁקֵט לֹא יוֹכֵל וַיִּגְרָשׁוּ
מִיָּמִיו רַפֵּשׁ וְטִיט: אֵינן שְׁלוֹם אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי לְרִשָׁעִים: קָרָא בְּגֵרוֹן
אֶל-תַּחֲשֹׁף בְּשׁוֹפֵר הָרֶם קוֹלָהּ וְהִגֵּד לְעַמִּי פְּשָׁעִם וּלְבֵית יַעֲקֹב
חֹטְאָתָם: ←

COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* criticizes those who believe that fasting and prayer alone can bring about true atonement. For Isaiah, ritual action without moral action is not meaningful. Ritual acts and conduct supporting social justice become constant parts of our lives only when they reinforce each other through the way each is allowed to interpret and enhance the other.

M.B.K.

COMMENTARY. The choice of this *haftarah*, which emphasizes the ease with which the ritual and the moral can be unhooked from each other, reflects the fact that carefully observing Yom Kippur and then returning to everyday affairs with unaltered conduct was an ancient problem just as it is a modern one. Ultimately, each of us can only answer for ourselves the question, "How much will I change this year?" Do I really want the ritual of this day to have a transformative effect on my life? I have today to contemplate that question. This is preparation for the challenge beginning tomorrow.

D.A.T.

For they seek me out, day by day,
they yearn for knowledge of my way.
Like a people righteous in their deeds,
who have not left behind the justice of their God,
they ask of me the laws of righteousness,
they yearn for nearness to their God.
“Why, when we fasted, did you not see it?
Our souls we have afflicted, do you not know?”
Behold, while you are fasting, you engage in business,
and your workers you continue to oppress!
Behold, you fast in strife and quarrelling,
and with a meanly clenched fist you strike.
Today, you do not fast in such a way
as to make your voice heard on high.
Is this the kind of fast I delight in?
A fast merely to deprive one’s body?
Is it bowing the head like the willows,
or reclining in sackcloth and ash?
Do you call that a fast,
a day in which THE HOLY ONE delights?
Is not the fast that I desire
the unlocking of the chains of wickedness,
the loosening of exploitation,
the freeing of all those oppressed,
the breaking of the yoke of servitude?
Is it not the sharing of your bread with those who starve,
the bringing of the wretched poor into your house,
or clothing someone you see who is naked,
and not hiding from your kin in their need?
Then shall your light burst forth like the dawn,
your waters of healing soon flourish again,
your righteousness will travel before you,
and the glory of THE ALMIGHTY will encompass you.
Then will you call and THE ETERNAL ONE will answer,
you will cry out, and God will respond: Here am I! ↪

וְאוֹתֵי יוֹם | יוֹם יִדְרָשׁוּן וְדַעַת דְּרָכֵי יַחְפָּצוֹן כְּגוֹי אֲשֶׁר-צִדְקָה עָשָׂה
וּמִשְׁפָּט אֱלֹהֵיו לֹא עָזַב יִשְׁאָלוּנִי מִשְׁפָּטֵי-צֶדֶק קִרְבַּת אֱלֹהִים
יַחְפָּצוֹן: לְמַדָּה צִמְנוּ וְלֹא רִאִיתָ עֵינֵינוּ נִפְשָׁנוּ וְלֹא תִדַּע הֵן בְּיוֹם
צִמְכֶם תִּמְצְאוּ-חֶפֶץ וְכָל-עֲצָבֵיכֶם תִּנְגָּשׁוּ: הֵן לָרִיב וּמִצָּה תִצְוִמוּ
וְלִהְיוֹת בְּאִגְרָף רִשַׁע לֹא-תִצְוִמוּ כִּיּוֹם לְהִשְׁמִיעַ בְּמִרוֹם קוֹלְכֶם:
הַכִּזָּה יִהְיֶה צוֹם אֲבַחְרֶהוּ יוֹם עֲנוּת אָדָם נִפְשׁוּ הִלְכֶף כְּאִגְמָן
רִאשׁוּ וְשָׁק וְאִפֶּר יִצְיַע הַלְזָה תִקְרָא-צוֹם וְיוֹם רִצּוֹן לִיהוָה: הַלְזָה
זֶה צוֹם אֲבַחְרֶהוּ פִתְחֵה חֲרָצוֹת רִשַׁע הַתֵּר אֲגִדּוֹת מוֹטָה וְשִׁלַּח
רִצּוֹצִים חֲפָשִׁים וְכָל-מוֹטָה תִנְתְּקוּ: הַלְזָה פָּרַס לָרַעַב לַחֲמֶךָ
וְעֵנִיִּים מְרוּדִים תִּבְיֵא בַּיִת כִּי-תִרְאֶה עָרִם וְכִסִּיתוּ וּמִבְּשָׂרְךָ לֹא
תִתַּעֲלֵם: אִזּוּ יִבְקַע כְּשֹׁחַר אֹרֶךְ וְאֶרְכָתְךָ מִהֲרָה תִצְמַח וְהִלָּךְ
לְפָנֶיךָ צִדְקָה כְּבוֹד יְהוָה יִאֲסֹפֶךָ: אִזּוּ תִקְרָא וְיִהְיֶה יַעֲנֶה תִשׁוּעַ
וַיֹּאמֶר הַגִּנִּי ←

COMMENTARY. This *haftarah* poses the question of what it will take to create a world transformed. Its answer posits a society governed justly, interpersonal relationships characterized by caring, and religious life that points us toward ultimate meaning. Isaiah suggests that if we achieve all this, God will intervene to bring a society transformed. But if we achieve all this, society will have already been transformed. D.A.T.

COMMENTARY. The *haftarah* is linked to the Torah reading in a daring way. The prophet *Yeshayahu* / Isaiah questions the value of fasting while we pursue business as usual. It is thus a critique of religious hypocrisy, and it remains to this day a challenge for the Jewish community in our effort to link ethics with ritual practice. S.D.R.

If you banish oppression from your midst,
the menacing hand and tainted speech,
if you give of yourself to the hungry,
fulfilling the needs of the poor—
then shall your light shine in darkness,
and your darkness shall be like the noon.
THE RIGHTEOUS ONE will guide you always,
will satisfy your thirst in desert wastes,
will give your bones new life,
and you'll be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters do not fail.
And those among you will rebuild ancient ruins,
foundations long dormant you'll restore.
You shall be called the repairer of bridges,
the restorer of settlement roads.

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,
from doing your business on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath your delight,
and honor THE CREATOR's holy day,
then shall you take pleasure in GOD EVERLASTING,
and I shall convey you on high,
and feed you with Jacob's inheritance—
for the mouth of THE ETERNAL ONE has spoken!

Isaiah 57:14-58:14

אִם-תִּסְיֹר מִתּוֹכָהּ מוֹטֵה שְׁלַח אֶצְבֵּעַ וְדַבֵּר-אֲנִי: וְתִפֵּק לְרַעֲב
נַפְשָׁהּ וְנִפְשׁ נִעְנָה תִשְׁפִּיעַ וְזָרַח בְּחֹשֶׁךְ אֹרֶךְ וְאַפְלֹתָהּ כְּצִדְהָרִים:
וְנַחֲךָ יִהְיֶה תְּמִיד וְהִשְׁפִּיעַ בְּצַחֲצָחוֹת נַפְשָׁהּ וְעֲצַמּוֹתֶיהָ יִחְלִיץ
וְהִיִּיתָ כְּגַן רוּחַ וּכְמוֹצֵא מַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִכָּזְבוּ מִימּוֹ: וּבְנוּ מִמֶּנּוּ
חֻרְבוֹת עוֹלָם מוֹסְדֵי דוֹר-וָדוֹר תִּקְוָמֶם וְקָרָא לָהּ גֵּדֵר פְּרִץ
מְשׁוֹבֵב נְתִיבוֹת לְשֹׁבֵת: אִם-תִּשְׁיֹב מִשְׁבֶּת רִגְלָהּ עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶיהָ
בְּיוֹם קָדְשֵׁי וְקָרָאתָ לְשֹׁבֵת עֲנֵג לְקָדוֹשׁ יִהְיֶה מְכַבֵּד וְכַבְּדֵתוּ
מִעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיהָ מִמְצֹא חֲפָצָהּ וְדַבֵּר דְּבָר: אֲזִי תִתְעַנֵּג עַל-יִהוּדָה
וְהִרְפַּבְּתֶיהָ עַל-בְּמֹתֵי אֶרֶץ וְהִאֲכַלְתֶּיהָ נַחֲלַת יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהָ כִּי פִי
יִהְיֶה דְבָר:

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
אֲחֹר 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: ←

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 שְׁנַתָּת לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (לְקַדְשָׁהּ וּלְמַנוּחָהּ)
לְכַבּוֹד וּלְתַפְאֲרָתָּ: עַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ
וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ: יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תְּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד וּדְבָרְךָ
אֱמֶת וְקִיָּם לְעַד: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקַדֵּשׁ
(הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן:

On Yom Kippur, continue here:

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

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