

Supplementary Readings for Yom Kippur

Themes:

- *Avodah, Korban*
- *Yizkor*



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

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Supplementary Readings for Yom Kippur

Themes:

- *Avodah, Korban*

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק עֲכָשְׂיוּ אֵין לָנוּ לֹא נְבִיא וְלֹא כֹהֵן לֹא קָרְבַּן וְלֹא
מִקְדָּשׁ וְלֹא מִזְבֵּחַ שְׁמֵכַפֵּר עָלֵינוּ וּמִיּוֹם שְׁחָרַב בַּיִת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ לֹא
נִשְׁתַּיֵּיר בְּיָדֵינוּ אֶלָּא תַפְלָה:

Rabbi Isaac said:

Today, we have no prophet,
and we have no priest,
we have no sacrificial offering,
and we have no sanctuary,
and we have no sacrificial altar
to atone for us.

For since the Temple was destroyed,
we have in hand no other means than prayer.



In ancient days, when our people lived in *Eretz Yisrael*, the Temple in Jerusalem was the symbol of God's presence. Sacrifices were offered there daily on behalf of the entire nation, bearing testimony to Israel's consecration to God.

The Temple has long since been destroyed, yet we remember its place in the life of our people. The form of worship practiced there belongs to a bygone age; still, it continues to awaken solemn thoughts.

Today our people is scattered across many lands. But when we remember the Temple, we feel that we are part of one people, dedicated to the service of God and to God's rule of righteousness.

Our worship is one of prayer and praise. Our ancestors offered their best in the service of God from their meager store of cattle and grain. When we think of their piety, can we be content with a gift of mere words that costs us neither labor nor privation? Shall we not give of our store to the relief of suffering, the healing of sickness, the dispelling of ignorance and error, the righting of wrongs and the strengthening of faith?

Great and holy is the cosmos
of the blessed Holy One,
and the holiest of all lands of the earth,
the Land of Israel,
the holiest of all the cities
of the Land of Israel is Jerusalem,
and holiest of all the places in Jerusalem,
the Temple, and, the holiest place of all,
the sanctuary, Holy of Holies.

There are seventy nations of the world,
and among those most devoted to their holy calling
is the Jewish people.

And the holiest tribe among the tribes of Israel
is the tribe of Levi,
and holiest of all the tribe of Levi are the priests,
the *kohanim*, and, holiest of all the *kohanim*,
the *kohen gadol*, the High Priest.

And holiest among days of the year, the holidays,
And, above them all in holiness, Shabbat.
And above all Shabbatot in holiness is Yom Kippur,
known as *Shabbat Shabbaton*,
a Sabbath of complete cessation.

There are seventy languages in the world,
and the holiest of all,
the sacred tongue of Scripture,
and holiest of all texts in this tongue
is Torah, the holy teaching.
And of all the holy words of Torah,
the holiest are those of the Ten Commandments,
and the holiest of words within the Ten Commandments
is the name of God. ↵

גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ עוֹלָמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְהַקְּדוֹשָׁה מְכַל אֲרָצוֹת
הָעוֹלָם — אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהַקְּדוֹשָׁה מְכַל עָרֵי אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל —
ירוּשָׁלַיִם, וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ מְכַל הַמְּקוֹמוֹת בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם — בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ:
וּבְבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הַמְּקוֹם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּיִתְרָה — מְקוֹם קִדְשׁ הַקְּדָשִׁים:
שְׂבָעִים אוֹמוֹת יֵשׁ בְּעוֹלָם: הַקְּדוֹשָׁה שְׂבַכְלָן — הָאוֹמָה
הַיִּשְׂרָאֵלִית: הַקְּדוֹשׁ מְכַל שְׂבַטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל — שְׂבַט לְוִי:
הַקְּדוֹשִׁים מְכַל בְּנֵי לְוִי — הַפְּהֻנִים: הַקְּדוֹשׁ מְכַל הַפְּהֻנִים —
הַפְּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל. 365 יָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה, הַקְּדוֹשִׁים שְׂבָהֶם — יָמִים טוֹבִים;
לְמַעַלָּה מֵהֶם — קִדְשַׁת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת; לְמַעַלָּה מִכָּלֶם קִדְשַׁת יוֹם
הַכַּפּוּרִים, שַׁבַּת שְׁפָתוֹן: שְׂבָעִים לְשׁוֹנוֹת בְּעוֹלָם; הַקְּדוֹשָׁה שְׂבַכְלָן
— לְשׁוֹן הַקִּדְשׁ: הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּיִתְרָה בְּלִשׁוֹן זֶה — הַתּוֹרָה הַקְּדוֹשָׁה;
מְכַל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה קְדוֹשִׁים בְּיִתְרָה — עֲשֶׂרֶת הַדְּבָרוֹת, וּבַעֲשָׂרֶת
הַדְּבָרוֹת קְדוֹשׁ בְּיִתְרָה — שֵׁם הַיְיָ: ←

COMMENTARY. How narrowly nationalistic and ethnocentric is the beginning of this declaration, and how broadly universalistic is its ending. Does it mirror in this respect our own individual movement of spirit?

Our first experiences of a religious tradition or of the sacred are often accompanied by the sense that only in this tradition, only in this particular way, only at this particular time and in this special place can the experience be preserved and renewed. The cherishing of the particular, the affirmation of this form and no other, does serve to protect the experience from dissipation or attrition.

With maturity and growing spiritual perspective, the essential locus of the sacred is increasingly seen as within human beings: this human being, any human being, all human beings. Thus, even while continuing to cherish and affirm the familiar forms and particular practices, we also come to recognize that the cherished form points to broader, nearly universal possibilities for experiencing the sacred at all times and all places.

Thus does the life of the spirit mirror the sequence of An-ski's profound proclamation.

E.G.

And one day of the year, in ancient times,
all four provinces of holiness
—land and people, time and language—
were united: when the High Priest went into
the Holy of Holies, and pronounced
the Tetragrammaton, the name of God,
whose utterance was otherwise forbidden.
And because this moment was considered
holy and awesome beyond measure,
the *kohen gadol* was in great danger,
as was the whole community of Israel.
And indeed, were he to stumble in his duties,
all the world was, God forbid,
in danger of destruction.

Whatever place a person stands
and looks toward heaven
is the holiest of holy places.
And every day throughout one's life
is a Day of Atonement,
and every person a *kohen gadol*,
and every word a person utters
in a state of holiness and purity,
a name of God.

Solomon An-Ski

יַפְעֵם אַחַת בַּשָּׁנָה כָּל אַרְבַּע הַקְדוּשׁוֹת הָעֲלִיּוֹנוֹת מִתְחַבְּרוֹת לְיַחַד:
 בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, כְּשֶׁנִּכְנַס הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל לְקֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוּשִׁים וְהוֹגֵה אֶת
 הַשֵּׁם הַמְּפָרָשׁ: וּמִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַשָּׁעָה הַזֹּאת הִיְתָה קְדוּשָׁה וְנוֹרָאָה עַד
 אֵין שְׁעוֹר — סִפְּנֵה גְדוּלָה הִיְתָה כִּה לַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל וְלְכָלֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל;
 שְׂאֵלְמֵי נִכְשָׁל, הִיְתָה כָּל הָעוֹלָם חָרַב, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם:
 כָּל מְקוֹם שְׂאֵדָם עוֹמֵד עָלָיו וְנוֹשֵׂא מִשָּׁם עֵינָיו הַשְּׂמִימָה — קֹדֶשׁ
 קְדוּשִׁים הוּא: כָּל יוֹם בְּחַיֵּי אָדָם — יוֹם כְּפוּר הוּא: כָּל אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה
 כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל הוּא, וְכָל מְלָה שְׂיוֹצֵאת מִפִּי הָאָדָם בְּקִרְשָׁה וּבִטְהָרָה
 — שֵׁם הַיְהוָה הוּא:

COMMENTARY. Solomon Rapaport, known as S. An-Ski (1863-1920), was a member of the Haskalah (Jewish enlightenment movement) who lived in Russia, Paris, and Lithuania. A leading Jewish folklorist, An-Ski loved the values and tales of the Yiddish world. Best known as the author of *The Dybbuk* and of fifteen volumes of other writings, An-Ski had one foot in Jewish village life and the other in Western literary life. Thus his play, *The Dybbuk*, is not only a reflection of the tales on which it is based; it celebrates and comments on the world that gave rise to them. So, too, in this poem do we have a celebration of the Temple, the Hebrew language and the land of Israel, while at the same time the poem celebrates the power of the contemporary individual to take on the role of the High Priest speaking the name of God in holiness. Unlike some who experienced their dividedness between the worlds of Jewish tradition and Western intellect as painful and alienating, An-Ski was able to bring his two civilizations together in a way that allowed each to comment upon and enrich the other. He suggests to us that we, too, can celebrate both the image of a world that will never return and our power as individuals to reconnect to its highest ideals. From our particularity we can recognize and address the Universal.

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

In the hour when the Temple was destroyed,
and Zion's courtyards had been silenced,
there arose throughout the earth's four corners
places where holiness could dwell in smaller ways,
where Torah, prayer, and houses of assembly
could pay honor to your Name.

In every place where we have kept alive your memory,
you have made your Presence—your Sheḥinah—to abide.
The weeping of our widowed Holy City
is sealed upon our hearts.

We stand before you here in prayer,
we, the living, who are mindful of all life.

So cause our sins to pass away, erase our wrongful acts,
receive our prayers like sacrifices in a former time.

Let utterance of our lips fulfill the ancient rite,
let poetry and song, like incense, give delight,
as they commemorate the worship that our ancestors once did,
and blessed be its memory today, on Yom Kippur.

Gil Nativ

עַת חָרַב הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְחִצְרוֹת צִיּוֹן נִדְמּוּ
 בְּאַרְבַּע כְּנִפּוֹת תִּכַּל מִקְדָּשֵׁי מְעַט קָמוּ
 לְתוֹרָה וּתְפִלָּה בְּתֵי כְּנִסְיֹת לְשִׁמְךָ :
 בְּכָל מְקוֹם בּוֹ הִזְכִּירְנוּךָ הַשְׂרִית שְׂכִינְתְּךָ
 בְּכִי עִיר אֶלְמָנָה נִחַתְתָּם בְּלִבֵּנוּ :
 בְּתַפְלָה נִצְבִּים פֹּה כְּלָנוּ הַחַיִּים
 חֲטָאֵתֵינוּ הַעֲבַר וּפְשָׁעֵינוּ מַחַח
 כְּקַרְבָּנוֹת קָדִים תְּפַלְּוֹתֵינוּ רְצֵה
 בְּשִׁיחַ שְׂפַתוֹתֵינוּ נִשְׁלֵמָה פָּרִים
 כְּקַטְרֹת בְּאַפְךָ זְמִירַת מְשׁוֹרְרִים
 אֲשֶׁר עָדַר עֲבוֹדַת אֲבוֹת מְזַכְּרִים :
 כְּרוּךְ זְכָרָה לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים :

COMMENTARY. Jews have suffered much as a result of the circumstances in which they have found themselves throughout history. This poem dwells not upon the causes of our suffering, but upon our ability to transcend it. For having once made holiness a grand part of our heritage in days that have receded into the distant past, we retain many ways to keep with us glimmers of holiness and an abiding sense of the divine presence. We can recapture that sense of holy presence through it purify ourselves, and give to Yom Kippur the power it had of old.

D.A.T.

AVODAH / SERVICE

For seven days preceding Yom Kippur, they set apart the High Priest from his household, to reside amid the Temple chambers, while appointing in his place another priest to carry out his ordinary priestly duties. This was to protect him from all inadvertent acts or contact that might render him impure, and thus invalidate him from performing the atonement ritual.

They provided him elders from the Court of Law, who read before him from the daily study portion. They would say to him: “Esteemed High Priest! Please read aloud yourself—lest there are things that you may have forgotten, or have never learned!”

And on the morning of the day preceding Yom Kippur, they stood him at the Eastern Gate, and passed before him cattle, rams, and sheep, that he might learn to recognize them, and become familiar with the details of the service.

The elders of the Court of Law would turn him over to the elders of the priesthood, who would bring him up into the chamber of the priestly clan of Avtinas, where they would admonish him before they took their leave. They said to him: “Esteemed High Priest! We are emissaries of the Court of Law, and you, our representative—and so, in turn, an emissary of the Court of Law, as well. ↪

שְׁבַעַת יָמִים קָדָם יוֹם־הַכַּפּוּרִים מְפָרִישִׁין כַּהֵן־גָּדוֹל מִבֵּיתוֹ
לְלִשְׁכַּת פְּלִהָדָרִין וּמִתְקִינִין לוֹ כַּהֵן אַחַר תַּחֲתִיו שְׁמָא יַאֲרַע בּוֹ
פְּסוּל:

מְסֹרוֹ לוֹ זְקָנִים מְזַקְנֵי בֵּית־דִּין וְקוֹרִין לְפָנָיו בְּסֹדֵר הַיּוֹם וְאוֹמְרִים
לוֹ אִישִׁי כַּהֵן גָּדוֹל קָרָא אֶתָּה בְּפִיד שְׁמָא שְׁכַחַת אוֹ שְׁמָא לֹא
לְמַדַּת:

עָרַב יוֹם־הַכַּפּוּרִים שְׁחָרִית מְעַמְדִין אוֹתוֹ בְּשַׁעַר הַמְּזֻרָח וּמַעֲבִירִין
לְפָנָיו פָּרִים וְאֵילִים וְכִבְשִׁים כְּדִי שְׁיֵהָא מִפִּיר וְרָגִיל בְּעִבּוּדָּה:
מְסֹרוֹהוּ זְקָנֵי בֵּית־דִּין לְזַקְנֵי כַּהֲנָה וְהַעֲלוּהוּ לַעֲלִית בֵּית־אֲבָטִינָס
וְהַשְׁבִּיעוּהוּ וּנְפֹטְרוּ וְהִלְכוּ לָהֶם: וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ אִישִׁי כַּהֵן־גָּדוֹל אָנוּ
שְׁלוּחֵי בֵּית־דִּין וְאֶתָּה שְׁלִיחָנוּ וּשְׁלִיחַ בֵּית־דִּין: ←

COMMENTARY. Stratification and cooperation, complexity and complementarity, authority and humility: these and more are exemplified in the rules of priestly preparation for and execution of the rites of Yom Kippur.

The High Priest reviews the procedures for the forthcoming Temple ceremonies first under the tutelage of the Rabbinic Elders, then of the Priestly Elders. He assumes particular optional responsibilities in light of his particular endowments and abilities; if not so gifted, others in the community assume and discharge those responsibilities. Regularly addressed as אִישִׁי כַּהֵן גָּדוֹל, Esteemed High Priest, and accorded full respect and honor, the High Priest is nonetheless subject to scrutiny and critical, if sympathetic, assessment. A full range of confessions for self, for family, and for community adds further to the sense of fitting humility amidst ceremonial splendor.

In short, portrayed here in lively and sometimes touching detail is a well functioning, harmonious hierarchy, with powers and responsibilities broadly distributed. At the same time, traditional rules of procedure, God's mandate, set a standard for all who serve on behalf of the community.

E.G.

And we implore you, by the name of One
whose name was made to dwell upon this House,
that you not change a single thing from all
we have declared to you!”

And he would turn aside and weep,
and they would turn aside and weep.

If he was a sage, he would engage in study,
or, if not, disciples of the sages
studied in his presence.

If he was accustomed to reciting, he would read aloud.
If not, they would recite before him.

And they would bring the High Priest
down to the ritual bath-house.

Five immersions, ten sanctifications,
would the High Priest undergo,
and he would sanctify the day itself.

A linen sheet divided between him
and the assembled people.

The High Priest would descend, immerse himself,
ascend, and dry himself, and they would bring to him
white garments, which he would put on. ↩

COMMENTARY. “If he was a sage, etc.” Rabbinic lore about the priestly ritual of Yom Kippur took for granted that the priests, whose office was hereditary, often did not possess the elaborate knowledge of Israel’s traditions that rabbinic sages had come to prize. This situation often made the sages into tutors of the priests, and principal guardians of the tradition that would eventually survive the Temple and its hierarchy. Once the Temple and its ongoing life were translated into a mental terrain (a transformation that became the basis of all Talmudic culture and instruction in future centuries), the Temple would seem to have become secondary in importance—but, paradoxically, its passing was mourned all the more fervently by the sages, and yearning for its restoration would never cease.

J.R.

מִשְׁבִּיעִים אָנוּ עֲלֶיךָ בְּמֵי שֶׁשָּׁפַן שְׁמוֹ בְּבַיִת הַזֶּה שְׁלֹא תִשָּׁנֶה דָּבָר
 מִכָּל מַה שְּׂאֲמַרְנוּ לָךְ: הוּא פֹרֵשׁ וּבֹכָה וְהֵם פּוֹרְשִׁים וּבֹכִים: אִם
 הִיָּה חָכֵם דּוֹרֵשׁ וְאִם לֹא תִלְמִידֵי־חֲכָמִים דּוֹרְשִׁים לְפָנָיו וְאִם רָגִיל
 לְקִרּוֹת קוֹרָא וְאִם לֹא קוֹרֵין לְפָנָיו:
 הוֹרִידוּ כֹהֵן־גָּדוֹל לְבֵית־הַטְּבִילָה חֲמֵשׁ טְבִילוֹת וְעֲשֶׂרָה קְדוּשִׁים
 טוֹבֵל פֶּה־גָּדוֹל וּמְקַדֵּשׁ בּוֹ בַיּוֹם — פָּרְסוּ סֵדֵין שֶׁל בּוֹץ בֵּינוּ
 לְבֵין הָעָם: יֵרֵד וְטָבַל: עֲלֶה וְנִסְתַּפֵּג: וְהִבְיֵאוּ לוֹ בְּגָדֵי לְבָן וְלָבֵשׁ: —

COMMENTARY. When the Second Temple was destroyed in the year 70, the rabbis replaced each of the sacrifice cycles with an Amidah. They made similar substitutions for all the other services of the year. While this sacrifice of the heart in the form of prayer substituted for the physical sacrifices of the Temple, during each service the rabbis also included an actual description of the sacrifice of the day. This *Avodah* / Sacrifice service existed in several traditional forms. One of the most popular was based on the section of the Mishnah dedicated to Yom Kippur. Over the last few generations this recitation has increasingly fallen into disuse because it substantially repeats the traditional Torah portion for Yom Kippur and because most Jews do not look forward to a time when the sacrifices will be reinstated.

Our version of the *Avodah* contains several major innovations. It is interspersed with the rest of the *Musaf* service. It places the worshipper in the role of the High Priest, and it leads each of us through forgiveness of self and family to community and the Jewish people and finally to the world. This structure reflects the critical importance of individual *teshuvah* and of healing self, family, people, and humanity. Ritual reconnection to God is only authentic if it changes our this-worldly relations as well.

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

NOTE. The liturgical use here of *Mishnah Yoma* is highly abbreviated as it has evolved over centuries of use. Often the text is interrupted in the middle of a mishnah and continues with a section from another mishnah, sometimes even another chapter.

M.B.K.

His sacrificial bull was standing in the space
between the hallway and the altar.

The High Priest would place his hands upon it
and confess: "Upon this holy day, I, too, have come
into your Temple, which is in your House of Prayer,
for, as the High Priests of a former time
would make confession, and beseech your mercy
and atonement, in your inner holy chamber,
so now do I confess before you."

And thus would he declare:

"O Holy One,
I have sinned, I have done wrong, and I have gone astray,
before you, I and my household!
I beseech you, Holy One, please grant atonement
for the sins, the wrongful acts, and the transgressions
I have done before you, I and my household."

And thus do we declare:

"O Holy One, please grant atonement for the sins,
the wrongdoing and the transgressions
that the House of Israel have done before you,
they, and all who dwell on earth.
And bring us all to the world's repair through divine rule,
as it is written in the Torah of your servant Moses:
'For on this day, atonement shall be made for you,
to make you clean from all your wrongdoings.
Before THE FOUNT OF MERCY, you shall all be clean!'"

כי...יהיה / 'For...clean!' (Leviticus 16:30).

וּפְרוּ הָיָה עוֹמֵד בֵּין הָאוֹלָם וְלַמְזֻבָּח: וְסוֹמֵךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו
וּמִתְוֹדֶה: בַּיּוֹם קָדוֹשׁ זֶה גַם אֲנִי בָּא אֶל הַיְכָלְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית
תְּפִלָּתְךָ: וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁהִכְהֵן הַגְּדוֹל הָיָה מִתְוֹדֶה וּמִבְקָשׁ מִחִילָה וְכַפָּרָה
בְּדַבֵּיר קָדְשְׁךָ כֵּן גַם אֲנִי מִתְוֹדֶה לְפָנֶיךָ לֵאמֹר:

וְכָךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם עוֹיְתִי פִּשְׁעֵי חַטָּאתֵי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי:
אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם כַּפֶּר-נָא לְעֹנֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים וְלַחַטָּאִים שְׁעוֹתֵי וּשְׁפִשְׁעֵתִי
וּשְׁחַטָּאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי:

וְכָךְ אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים: אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם כַּפֶּר-נָא לַחַטָּאִים וְלְעֹנֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים
שְׁחַטָּאוֹ וּשְׁעוֹ וּשְׁפִשְׁעוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכֹל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּהִלָּה
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְחַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יְהוָה....

NOTE. And thus we say. Michael Strassfeld added this phrase to the text.

KAVANAH. Since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, prayer has taken the place of sacrifice, but that does not imply that sacrifice was abolished when the sacrificial rite went out of existence. Prayer is not a substitute for sacrifice. Prayer *is* sacrifice. What has changed is the substance of sacrifice: the self took the place of the thing. The spirit is the same.

“Accept the offerings of praise, Adonay,” says the Psalmist (119:108). “Let my prayer be counted as incense before You, and the lifting of my hands as an evening sacrifice” (141:12). In moments of prayer we try to surrender our vanities, to burn our insolence, to abandon bias, cant, envy. We lay all our forces before God.

The word is but an altar. We do not sacrifice. We are the sacrifice.

Prayer is a hazard, a venture of peril. Every person who prays is a *kohen* at the greatest of all temples. The whole universe is the temple. A.G.

And the priests,
and all the people standing in the courtyard,
when they would hear the glorious and awesome Name of God
uttered aloud distinctly from the High Priest's mouth,
in holiness and purity,
would prostrate themselves, and bow down in acknowledgement,
and touch their faces to the ground, and say:
"Blessed are the glorious Name and majesty of God,
to all eternity!"

And the High Priest, in turn,
would thus complete the utterance of the Name
in sacred devotion, facing those who offered blessing,
and declare to them: "You shall be clean!"

And you God, in your goodness, stir up your compassion
and forgive this people serving you.



Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other, above all, for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy. Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of others, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received and am still receiving.

Albert Einstein (Adapted)

וְהַפְּהַנִּים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד
וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֵשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטַהֲרָהּ הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמְשַׁתְּחָוִים וּמוֹדִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים: בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד
מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאִךּ הוּא הָיָה מִתְכַּנֵּן לְגַמֵּר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם כְּנֹגֵד
הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם: תִּטְהָרוּ: וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבָךְ מְעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ
וְסוֹלֵחַ לְאִישׁ חֲסִידֶיךָ:



In the evening when we were alone together my mother would make me sit on her footstool, and while her deft fingers manipulated the knitting needles she would gaze into my eyes as if she tried to absorb enough of me to last her for the coming months of absence. “You will write us, dear?” she kept asking continually. “And if I should die when you are gone, you will remember me in your prayers.”

At the moment of departure [from Eastern Europe to America], when the train drew into the station, she lost control of her feelings. As she embraced me, her sobs became violent, and father had to separate us. There was a despair in her way of clinging to me which I could not then understand. I understand it now. I never saw her again.

Marcus Ravage

KAVANAH. One of the original intents of the *Avodah* service was to purify the Holy of Holies from pollution—from a *hilul hashem*—a hole in God’s name. Every time we commit a sin, we make a hole in the Name. (One definition of sin is making a tear in the Divine weave.) By the end of the year, God’s name—our connection to God—is riddled with holes. A new Name is needed. God enters into time to create the possibility of a new name for the next year. This offers us the possibility of creating our own root metaphor for how we interface with God this year. Z.S.S.

Once there were two brothers. One had a wife and children, the other did not. They lived together in one house—happy, quiet, and satisfied with the portions which they inherited from their father. Together they worked the fields with the sweat of their brows.

And the harvest came. The brothers bound their sheaves and brought them to the threshing floor. There they divided the crops of the field in two parts equally between them, and left them.

That night, the brother who had no family lay on his bed and thought: I am alone...but my brother has a wife and children. Why should my share be equal to his? And he rose from his bed, went stealthily out into the threshing floor, took from the stalks of his own sheaf, and added them to the sheaf of his brother.

That same night, the other brother turned to his wife and said: "It is not right that we have divided the crop into two equal parts, one for me and one for my brother. He is alone and has no other joy or happiness, only the yield of the field. Therefore, come with me, my wife, and we will secretly take from our share and add to his." And they did so.

In the morning, the brothers went out into the threshing floor, and they wondered that the sheaves were still equal. Each one decided to investigate. During the night each one rose from his bed to repeat his deed. And they met each other on the threshing floor, each with his sheaves in his arms. Thus the mystery was explained. The brothers embraced, and kissed each other.

And God looked with favor on this threshing floor where the two brothers conceived their good thoughts...and the children of Israel chose it for the site of their Holy Temple.

Retold from *midrash* by Zev Vilnay



אֱלוֹ דְבָרִים שְׂאָדָם אוֹכֵל פְּרוּתֵיהֶם בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהַשְּׂרָרָן קָיָמָת לֹ
 לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא: וְאֵלוֹ הֵן כְּבוֹד אָב וְאִם וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים וְהַשְּׂכַמַּת
 בֵּית הַמְדָּרֶשׁ שְׁחִירִית וְעֶרְבִית וְהַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים וּבְקוּר חוֹלִים
 וְהַכְנָסַת כְּלָה וְלוּיִת הַיָּמָת וְעֵינֵן תְּפִלָּה וְהַבָּאָת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם
 לְחֵבֵרוֹ: וְתִלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֻגַד כָּלָם:

These are the things whose fruit
 one enjoys in this world,
 and whose principal is stored for us
 in time to come:
 the honoring of parents,
 and bestowing acts of kindness,
 and arising early to attend the house of study,
 morning hour and evening hour,
 and bringing home guests,
 and visiting the sick,
 and supporting the bride,
 and attending to the dead,
 and devotion in our prayer,
 and bringing peace between one person and another.
 And learning Torah
 corresponds to all of them.

Mishnah Peah 1:1

COMMENTARY. The opening lines of this mishnah tell us that doing good deeds provides “fruit one enjoys” right away. It makes this tangible by referring to the pleasure of eating. Yet the principal benefit of doing good deeds, “the principal,” remains to be enjoyed later. Here a financial metaphor is used. We benefit from the interest now, but the principal remains to be enjoyed “in time to come.” Originally that was a reference to the World to Come. Our translation gives a more this-worldly interpretation: we take pleasure in doing good deeds now, but they have transformational power for us and our communities that we will be able to feel cumulatively as time goes on.

D.A.T.

SECOND CONFESSION: FOR OUR PEOPLE

The High Priest would come into the east side of the court, north of the altar.

To his right would stand his highest deputy,
and to his left, the head of the officiating clan.
And there were placed two goats,
and there an urn, which held two lots.

He shook the urn, and drew from it two lots.
On one was written: "For THE ETERNAL ONE,"
and on the other one: "For Azazel."

He bound a thread of crimson on the head of the goat that would be sent away,
and stood it at the place from which it would be sent,
and he placed the goat that would be slaughtered at its slaughter-site. He then came to a second bull,
and placed his hands upon it, and confessed:

"As the High Priest, in the past, took upon himself responsibility both toward his household and his fellow priests, so now are we, the people Israel, under obligation to assume responsibility for our mistakes, those that prevail in the society in which we live. We, too, today, lift up our eyes to God on high, on behalf of all our kin, the House of Israel, wherever they may be. Would that each person might return to God, a turning both of body and of spirit, as it is written:

'Turn toward me, that I might turn toward you,
says THE CREATOR of all beings!'

For then we would be clean,
and sanctify ourselves by your great Name,
and become ready to receive your promise.

As it was then, so now: here stands before you
all the House of Israel,
who make confession in your presence." ↪

SECOND CONFESSION: FOR OUR PEOPLE

בָּא לֹו לְמִזְרַח הָעֶזְרָה לְצִפּוֹן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הַסֵּגָן מִיְמִינוֹ וְרֹאשׁ בֵּית־אָב
מִשְׁמָאלוֹ: וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי שְׁעִירִים וְקִלְפֵי הֵיטָה שֵׁם וּבָה שְׁנֵי גוֹרְלוֹת:
טָרַף בְּקִלְפֵי וְהֶעֱלָה שְׁנֵי גוֹרְלוֹת: אֶחָד כְּתוּב עָלָיו לַיהוָה וְאֶחָד
כְּתוּב עָלָיו לְעֶזְרָאֵל: קָשֶׁר לְשׁוֹן שְׁלֹזְהוּרִית בְּרֹאשׁ שְׁעִיר הַמִּשְׁתַּלַּח
וְהֶעֱמִידוּ כְּנָגֵד בֵּית־שְׁלוּחֹו וְלִנְשָׁחֻט כְּנָגֵד בֵּית־שְׁחִיטָתוֹ: בָּא לֹו
אֶצֶּל פָּרוֹ שְׁנֵיָה וְסוּמֵךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וּמְתוּדָה:

כְּשֵׁם שְׁבַעְבָּר קִבֵּל הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל עַל עֲצָמוֹ אֶת הָאֲחֵרִיּוֹת לְבִנֵי בֵּיתוֹ
וְלְבִנֵי מַעֲמָדוֹ הַכֹּהֲנִים כִּף אָנּוּ עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל מְחַיְבִים לְקַבֵּל עַל
עֲצָמָנוּ אֶת הָאֲחֵרִיּוֹת לְפָגְמִים הַקְיָמִים בַּחֲבֵרָה בָּהּ אָנּוּ חַיִּים:

גַּם אָנּוּ הַיּוֹם נִשְׂא עֵינֵינוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי מְרוֹם עַל כָּל אֲחֵינוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּאֶשֶׁר הֵם שֵׁם: מִי יִתֵּן וְיִשׁוּבוּ אִישׁ אִישׁ לְעִמּוֹ וְלֵאלֹהֵיו שְׂיִבֵּת
הַגּוֹרֵף וְתִשׁוּבַת הַנְּפֹשׁ כְּכַתוּב שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם אָמַר יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת: אִזּוּ נִשְׁתַּהֵר וְנִתְקַדַּשׁ בְּשִׁמְךָ וְנִהְיָה רְאוּיִים לְקַבֵּל הַבְּטָחָתְךָ
כְּאִזּוּ כֵּן עַתָּה עוֹמְדִים כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמְתוּדִים לְפָנֶיךָ: ←

COMMENTARY. Yom Kippur is effective because it posits a power that can forgive our sins. The Reconstructionist challenge is retaining that belief while rejecting belief in a capricious supernatural God. Divine forgiveness and healing become accessible to us both internally and through the power of the community seeking forgiveness. M.L./Z.S.S.

KAVANAH. "One who 'slaughters' the evil inclination is as one who has offered a sacrifice on the Temple altar. But to do this, one must know how and what to slaughter." Reb Simcha Zissel Ziv

COMMENTARY. Late in the day on Yom Kippur we are tempted to think of a wholesale change in personality. But the real *teshuvah* can only come about through a knowledge of the effective modes of change. Just as the ritual of atonement in the Temple followed precise instructions in order to work, real change requires an understanding of how and what to change. E.M.

שובו...צבאות / Turn...beings! (Zechariah 1:3).

And thus would he declare:

“O Holy One,
I have sinned, I have done wrong, and I have gone astray,
before you, I and all your people, the House of Israel.
I beseech you, Holy One, please grant atonement
for the sins, the wrongful acts, and the transgressions
I have done before you, I and my household.”

And thus do we declare:

“O Holy One, please grant atonement for the sins,
the wrongdoing and the transgressions
that the House of Israel have done before you,
they and all who dwell on earth.
And bring us all to the world’s repair through divine rule,
as it is written in the Torah:
‘For on this day, atonement shall be made for you,
to make you clean from all your wrongdoings.
Before THE FOUNT OF MERCY, you shall all be clean!’”

And the priests,
and all the people standing in the courtyard,
when they would hear the glorious and awesome Name of God
uttered aloud distinctly from the High Priest’s mouth,
in holiness and purity,
would prostrate themselves, and bow down in acknowledgment,
and touch their faces to the ground, and say:
“Blessed are the glorious Name and majesty of God,
to all eternity!”

And the High Priest, in turn,
would thus complete the utterance of the Name
in sacred devotion, facing those who offered blessing,
and declare to them: “You shall be clean!”

And you God, in your goodness, stir up your compassion
and forgive this people serving you.

וְכַךְ הָיָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם עֲוִיתִי פִּשְׁעֵתִי חָטָאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וְכָל
עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל: אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם כְּפָר־נָא לְעֹנֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים וּלְחַטָּאִים
שְׁעֵרֵתִי וְשִׁפְשַׁעְתִּי וְשָׁחַטְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל:

וְכַךְ אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם כְּפָר־נָא לְחַטָּאִים וּלְעֹנֹת וּלְפִשְׁעִים
שְׁחָטָאוּ וְשָׁעוּ וְשִׁפְשָׁעוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרַתְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יְהוָה....

וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעֶזְרָה כְּשֶׁהֵיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד
וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֹשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁה וּבְטָהֳרָה הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד
מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאִף הוּא הָיָה מְתַבֵּן לְגַמֵּר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם כְּנֻגַד
הַמְּבָרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תְּטַהֲרוּ: וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבְךָ מְעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ
וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעַם מִשְׁרָתֶיךָ:

COMMENTARY. God's name had four letters, each of which corresponds to one aspect of reality. The world is a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual reality. Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism, speaks of the four worlds—a physical, an emotional, a mental and a soul world. In each of these four realms of human experience, a Jewish person is called upon to sanctify the name of God. When you make an offering or sacrifice to God, you must be sure, therefore, to do so *בכל מאריך*—with everything you have. It's not enough just to give money or some thing to charity; that's only a material donation. You have to give with feeling and compassion; there has to be a strong desire that informs your act of giving. But that's not enough either. With your compassion there needs to go an intelligent purpose; you need to understand intellectually why it's important to give. But even that won't suffice. Guiding your mental understanding should be an awareness that a Divine Mystery sustains all purposes; behind even the wisest plan lives a sense of holiness, a connection with God. S.D.R.

יהוה...לפני כי ביום.../For on...clean! (Leviticus 16:30).

THIRD CONFESSION: FOR OUR WORLD

They brought to him the ladle and the fire-pan,
and he took two handfuls of the incense,
which he placed into the ladle,
whether large or small, according to his hand—
thus was its measurement.

He took the fire-pan in his right hand,
and the ladle in his left, and he proceeded
through the Temple, till he came into the space
between the ark-curtains that separated
the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies.
The space between them was a forearm's length.
He came before the Ark, and placed the fire-pan
between two linen cloths.

He heaped the incense on the coals,
and the entire chamber filled with smoke.
He then would exit by his route of entry,
and would offer a short prayer in the outer chamber,
making sure to keep it brief, so as not to frighten
the assembled Israelites.

He took the sacrificial blood,
and entered the place he previously had entered,
and he stood again where he had stood,
and he sprinkled from the bowl of blood,
one time above, seven below,
and counted thus:

One. One and one. One and two. One and three.
One and four. One and five. One and six. One and seven.

And thus would he declare:

“O, Holy One, they have sinned,
they have done wrong, and they have gone astray before you—
these the House of Israel, your people.” ↪

THIRD CONFESSION: FOR THE WORLD

הוֹצִיאוּ לּוֹ אֶת־הַכֶּפֶף וְאֶת־הַמַּחֲתָה וְחַפֵּן מְלֵא חֲפָנָיו וְנָתַן לְתוֹךְ
הַכֶּפֶף: הַגְדוֹל לְפִי גְדוֹלוֹ וְהַקָּטָן לְפִי קָטָנוֹ וְכֹךְ הִיְתָה מִדְתָּה: נֹטֵל
אֶת־הַמַּחֲתָה בְיַמֵּינוּ וְאֶת־הַכֶּפֶף בְּשִׂמְלֵנוּ: הִזָּה מְהִלָּךְ בְּהִכָּל עַד
שְׂמַגְיֵעַ לְבֵין שְׁתֵּי הַפְּרָכוֹת הַמְבַדִּילוֹת בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין קֹדֶשׁ־
הַקֹּדְשִׁים וּבִינֵיהֶן אִמָּה: הַגִּיעַ לְאֲרוֹן נוֹתֵן אֶת־הַמַּחֲתָה בֵּין שְׁנֵי
הַבַּדִּים: צָבַר אֶת־הַקְטָרֶת עַל גְּבִי הַגְּחָלִים וְנִתְמַלֵּא כָּל־הַבַּיִת כְּלוֹ
עֶשֶׂן: יֵצֵא וּבָא לּוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ בֵּית־כְּנִיָסָתוֹ וּמִתְפַּלֵּל תְּפִלָּה קְצָרָה בְּבַיִת־
הַחֵיצוֹן וְלֹא הִיָּה מֵאַרְיֵה בְּתַפְלָתוֹ כְּדִי שֶׁלֹּא לְהַבְעִית אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

נֹטֵל אֶת־הַדָּם מִמִּי שֶׁהִיָּה מְמַרְס בּוֹ נִכְנָס לְמָקוֹם שֶׁנִּכְנָס וְעֹמֵד
בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁעֹמֵד וְהִזָּה מִמָּנוּ אַחַת לְמַעַלָּה וְשִׁבְעַ לְמַטָּה וְלֹא הִיָּה
מִתְכַּוֵּן לְהַזוֹת לֹא לְמַעַלָּה וְלֹא לְמַטָּה אֲלֵא כְּמִצְלִיף: וְכֹךְ הִיָּה
מוֹנֵה אַחַת: אַחַת וְאַחַת: אַחַת וְשְׁתַּיִם: אַחַת וְשִׁלֹּשׁ: אַחַת וְאַרְבָּע:
אַחַת וְחֲמִשׁ: אַחַת וְשֵׁשׁ: אַחַת וְשִׁבְעַ:

וְכֹךְ הִיָּה אוֹמֵר אָנָּה הֵשֵׁם חָטְאוּ עוֹו פִּשְׁעוּ לְפָנֶיךָ עֲמַךְ בַּיִת
יִשְׂרָאֵל: ←

COMMENTARY. Clouds and vapors are sometimes unpleasant, undesirable, obscuring that which should be clearly seen. On the other hand, they sometimes shield us from too much sunlight and heat. In this mode, they may also shield from viewing too fully that which cannot or should not be fully seen.

The incense cloud is biblically associated with the mystery of God's Presence, serving as both pointer to and protector of that Presence. Even as God does "appear in the cloud upon the cover" (Leviticus 16:2), we notice that both this Appearance and we, the gazers, are shielded by the incense cloud. Similarly, as the High Priest approaches the Holy of Holies, "he heaped the incense on the coals and the entire chamber filled with smoke."

E.G.

And thus do we declare:

“O, Holy One, please grant atonement for the sins,
the wrongdoing and the transgressions
that the House of Israel has done before you,
they, and all who dwell on earth.

And bring us all to the world’s repair through divine rule,
as it is written in the Torah of your servant Moses:
‘For on this day, atonement shall be made for you,
to make you clean from all your wrongdoings
before THE FOUNT OF MERCY.’”

And the priests,
and all the people standing in the courtyard,
when they would hear the glorious and awesome Name of God
uttered aloud distinctly from the High Priest’s mouth,
in holiness and purity,
would prostrate themselves, and bow down in acknowledgment,
and touch their faces to the ground, and say:
“Blessed are the glorious Name and majesty of God,
to all eternity!”

And the High Priest, in turn,
would thus complete the utterance of the Name
in sacred devotion, facing those who offered blessing,
and declare to them: “You shall be clean!”
And you, God, in your goodness, stir up your compassion,
and forgive your world.

The High Priest would pronounce sanctification,
and immerse himself. They then would bring him
garments of white, and he would dress,
and sanctify his hands and feet.
They brought him his own clothes, and he would put them on,
and they would then escort him to his house,
And he made celebration with those close to him,
upon emerging safely from the holy place.

וְכַךְ אָנוּ אוֹמְרִים אָנָּה הַשֵּׁם כְּפָר־נָא לַחֲטָאִים וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת וְלַפְשָׁעִים
שֶׁחָטְאוּ וְשָׁעֲרוּ וְשָׁפְשְׁעוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכֹל יוֹשְׁבֵי תְּבֵל
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
יִכְפַּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהַר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יְהוָה:

וְהַפְּהַנִּים וְהָעַם הָעוֹמְדִים בְּעִזָּרָה כְּשֶׁהָיוּ שׁוֹמְעִים אֶת־הַשֵּׁם הַנִּכְבָּד
וְהַנּוֹרָא מִפְּרֵשׁ יוֹצֵא מִפִּי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטַהֲרָהּ הָיוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמְשַׁתְּחִוִּים וּמוֹדִים וְנוֹפְלִים עַל פְּנֵיהֶם וְאוֹמְרִים בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד
מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: וְאַף הוּא הָיָה מְתַבְּנֵן לְגַמֵּר אֶת־הַשֵּׁם כְּנֹגֵד
הַמְּבַרְכִים וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תִּטְהָרוּ: וְאַתָּה בְּטוֹבְךָ מְעוֹרֵר רַחֲמֶיךָ וְסוֹלֵחַ
לְאִישׁ חַסִּידְךָ:

קִדְשׁ וְטָבֵל: הִבִּיאוּ לוֹ בְּגָדֵי לָבָן וְלִבְשׁ וְקִדְשׁ יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו: הִבִּיאוּ
לוֹ בְּגָדֵי עֶצְמוֹ וְלִבְשׁ: וּמְלוֹיֵן אוֹתוֹ עַד בֵּיתוֹ וְיוֹם־טוֹב הָיָה עוֹשֶׂה
לְאוֹהֲבָיו בְּשָׁעָה שֶׁיֵּצֵא בְּשָׁלוֹם מִן הַקִּדְשׁ:

DERASH. What is God's holy of holies? Not a shrine in the Temple built of stone and wood. Rather, a sanctuary for compassion, a preserve of kindness, a refuge of devotion in the human heart. S.D.R.

COMMENTARY. As with Moses in the cleft of the rock (Exodus 33:20-23), here, too, the Presence of the Divine must not exceed the human capacity to receive and withstand it. Thus even on this holiest of days, in this holiest of places, the priestly apprehension of the Divine is only partial.

As with them, all the more so with us: we who are finite can never receive the Infinite in its fullness. Yet the assurance of this Presence, the glimpse of this Glory, is as sweet and sustaining to our spirits as is the incense to our nostrils. E.G.

כי...יהוה / For...MERCY (Leviticus 16:30).

What I learned about myself is that freedom is indivisible. If I am not free, you are not free, and if you are not free, I cannot have freedom either. What happens to the other person happens to me, not in some philosophical sense, but in a very concrete and immediate way. If to keep others down, their freedom must be taken away, then a condition of the system will be that my freedom must also be diminished. If I have to deny myself, then my own condition is a situation of unfreedom.

What I learned about being Jewish is that there are no lines of division, no unmarked boundaries, between my being Jewish and my being human. The one flows into the other and back again. Human beings are suffering. That they have suffered for centuries does not make their suffering any less pressing. The situation is urgent because suffering and oppression always are now, always happen when they happen, however long they already have happened. We cannot stand idly by. We must make the condition of humanity in any country a matter of personal engagement and personal concern. The frontiers of freedom encompass the whole of humanity. We really are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, and our brothers and our sisters are everyone.

Jacob Neusner

Two paths lie before us. One leads to death, the other to life. If we choose the first path—if we numbly refuse to acknowledge the nearness of extinction, all the while increasing our preparations to bring it about—then we in effect become the allies of death, and in everything we do, our attachment to life will weaken; our vision, blinded to the abyss that has opened at our feet, will dim and grow confused; our will, discouraged by the thought of trying to build on such a precarious foundation anything that is meant to last, will slacken; and we will sink into stupefaction, as though we were gradually weaning ourselves from life in preparation for the end. On the other hand, if we reject our doom, and bend our efforts toward survival—if we arouse ourselves to the peril and act to forestall it, making ourselves the allies of life—then the anesthetic fog will lift: our vision, no longer straining not to see the obvious, will sharpen; our will, finding secure ground to build on, will be restored; and we will take full and clear possession of life again. One day...we will make our choice.

Jonathan Schell

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Judy Chicago

Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance and violence. Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation. It is from numberless, diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends a tiny ripple of hope. Crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples can build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Robert F. Kennedy

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi met Elijah the prophet....He asked Elijah:
“When will the Messiah come?”

Elijah answered: “Go and ask him yourself.”

“Where is he?”

“At the gates of the town.”

“How shall I recognize him?”

“He is sitting among the poor lepers. The others unbind all the bandages of their sores at the same time and then rebind them all together. But he unbinds one sore at a time and then binds it again before treating the next one, thinking to himself, ‘Perhaps I will be needed, and if so I must not delay.’”

Rabbi Joshua went to the Messiah and said, “Peace unto you, master and teacher.”

The Messiah answered, “Peace unto you, son of Levi.”

“When will you come, master?” asked Rabbi Joshua.

“Today,” came the answer.

Rabbi Joshua returned to Elijah, who asked, “What did he tell you?”...

“He spoke falsely to me,” said Rabbi Joshua, “for he said he would come today, but he has not come.”

Elijah answered him, “This is what he told you: ‘Today—if you will but hearken to God’s voice’ (Psalms 95:7).”

Talmud Sanhedrin 98a

If you always assume
the one sitting next to you
is the Messiah
waiting for some simple human kindness—

You will soon come to weigh your words
and watch your hands.

And if the Messiah chooses
not to be revealed
in your time—

It will not matter.

Danny Siegel (Adapted from a Yiddish Proverb)

Once, Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakai was emerging from Jerusalem,
and Rabbi Joshua was walking after him,
and saw the sanctuary lying desolate.

Rabbi Joshua declared:

“Alas for us, it lies in ruins,
the house by which our people Israel purified themselves of sin.”

And Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakai answered him:

“My child, don’t let it trouble you, we have another like it to
atone for us.

And what is that? Performing acts of kindness.

As it is said: ‘For I desire love, not sacrifice!’”



Open to me, O you gateways of justice,
let me come in and bless Yah.

Psalms 118:19

The beginning of God’s way is truth,
and eternal is your righteous law.

Psalms 119:160

Let one inclined to boast take pride in this alone:
to have understanding and knowledge of Me.
For I am THE ETERNAL, the totality
of love and righteousness within the world,
for in these alone do I desire, says THE FOUNT OF LIFE!

Jeremiah 9:23

Righteousness, and righteousness alone, shall you pursue,
that you may live!

Deuteronomy 16:20

Don’t place your trust in falsehoods, saying,
“Here it is! Here it is! Here it is! GOD’s palace!”
No, only by mending your ways and deeds wholeheartedly,
only if you bring justice
between one person and another! ↩

Jeremiah 7:4-5

כי...זבח / For...sacrifice! (Hosea 6:6).

פַּעַם אַחַת הָיָה רַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן-זִכְאִי יוֹצֵא מִירוּשָׁלַיִם וְהָיָה רַבִּי
 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַלֵּל אַחֲרָיו וְרָאָה אֶת-בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ חָרֵב: אָמַר רַבִּי
 יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: אוֹי לָנוּ עַל זֶה שֶׁהוּא חָרֵב מְקוֹם שְׂמֹכְפָרִים בּוֹ עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם
 שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל: אָמַר לוֹ רַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן: בְּנֵי אֵל יִרַע לָךְ: יֵשׁ לָנוּ כַּפָּרָה
 אַחֲרַת שֶׁהִיא כְּמוֹתָהּ: וְאִיזוֹ: גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים שְׁנֵאמַר: כִּי חֲסֵד
 חִפְצָתִי וְלֹא זָכַח:



פתחו לי שערי צדק אבא-בם אודה יי:

Pithu li sha'arey tzedek avo vam odeh yah.

ראש-דברך אמת ולעולם כל-משפט צדקך:

כי אם-בזאת יתהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי כי אני יהוה לעשה
 חסד משפט וצדקה בארץ כפי-באלה חפצתי נאם-יהוה:

צדק צדק תרדף למען תחיה:

אל-תבטחו לכם אל-דברי השקר לאמר היכל יהוה היכל יהוה
 היכל יהוה הִמָּה: כי אם-היטיב תיטיבו את-דרכיכם ואת-
 מעלליכם אם-עשו תעשו משפט בין איש ובין רעהו: ←

נצח...פעם / Once...sacrifice! (Avot Derabi Natan 4:17-18).

COMMENTARY. *Tzedakah* derives from the Hebrew word for justice, in contrast to the word “charity” that derives from the Latin term for love. The impulse to *tzedakah* must derive from a commitment to justice, not from a feeling of affection. Undertaking *tzedakah*—righteousness in the world—is our obligation as God’s partners in helping to repair creation.

R.H.

Let them give their bread to one in hunger,
and cover the naked one with clothes. Ezekiel 18:7

Let each of you not bear a grudge over the misdeed of another,
and do not love false promises, for all such things do I abhor,
says THE ETERNAL ONE. Zechariah 8:17

Through justice shall you be established,
and kept far from oppression and ruin;
you shall have no fear,
for truly, it shall not come near you. Isaiah 54:14

And the work of righteousness shall lead to peace,
and justice shall bring quiet and security forever. Isaiah 32:17

And justice shall roll down like waters,
and righteousness like a mighty stream! Amos 5:24

For THE CREATOR of all beings
shall be exalted through justice
and sacred divinity through righteousness! Isaiah 5:16

I shall betroth myself to you in righteousness,
and in justice, and in love, and in compassion.
I shall betroth myself to you in truth,
and you shall know THE FOUNT OF LIFE. Hosea 2:21-22

For the ANCIENT ONE is righteous, and loves righteous deeds,
the upright shall behold God's face. Psalms 11:7

A righteous person's mouth speaks wisdom,
such a person's tongue speaks justice. Psalms 37:30

Light is seeded for the righteous,
happiness for those upright of heart. Psalms 97:11

Happy are those who keep just law,
and righteousness in every hour! Psalms 106:3

Open to me, O you gateways of justice,
let me come in and bless Yah! Psalms 118:19

לחמו לרעב יתן ועירם יכסה פגוד:

ואיש את־רעת רעהו אל־תחשבו בלבבכם ושכעת שקר אל־
תאהבו כי את־כל־אלה אשר שנאתי נאם־יהוה:

בצדקה תפונני רחמי מעשק פי־לא תיראי וממחטה פי לא־תקרב
אל־יך:

והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום ועבדת הצדקה השקט וכטח ער־
עולם:

ויגל פמים משפט וצדקה פנחל איתן:

ויגבה יהוה צבאות במשפט והאל הקדוש נקדש בצדקה:

וארשתיה לי בצדק ובמשפט ובחסד וברחמים: וארשתיה לי
באמונה וידעת את־יהוה:

פי־צדיק יהוה צדקות אהב ישר יחזו פנימו:

פי־צדיק יהוה חכמה ולשונו תדבר משפט:

אור זרע לצדיק ולישרי־לב שמחה:

Or zarua latzadik uleyishrey lev simhah.

אשרי שמרי משפט עשה צדקה בכל־עת:

פתחו־לי שערי־צדק אבא־בם או־דה יה:

Pithu li sha'arey tzedek avo vam odeh yah.

All peoples shall come forth to worship you,
blessing your glorious name,
giving praises of your justice in isolated lands,
declaring your reality to those who know it not,
and hailing you throughout the earth,
with voices ever shouting: "Great is God!"
Zealously, they shall give up false worship,
having nothing more to do with inauthentic service,
turning with a single will toward you,
in awe of you, seeking your presence,
knowing the power of your holy realm,
learning to discern you, they who long have strayed.
May they find words for telling of your power!
Now let them exalt you as supreme,
startled in awe at your embracing presence.
On you, a crown of splendor shall alight,
while, powerful in joy, the mountains dance.
Singing in happiness, far islands hail your rule,
and come to take upon themselves your yoke of majesty,
raising you on high in prayerful assembly.
Surely may all hear it from afar and come,
to give to you alone the crown of sovereignty!

וַיֵּאָתְרוּ כָּל לְעַבְדֶּיךָ וַיְבָרְכוּ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדֶיךָ
וַיִּגְדְּלוּ בְּאֵימֵי צִדְקֶיךָ וַיְדַרְשׁוּךָ עַמִּים לֹא יִדְעוּךָ
וַיַּהֲלִלוּךָ כָּל־אֶפְסֵי־אֶרֶץ וַיֹּאמְרוּ תָמִיד יִגְדַּל יְהוָה
וַיִּזְנְחוּ אֶת־עַצְבֵיהֶם וַיַּחֲפְרוּ עִם פְּסִילֵיהֶם
וַיִּטּוּ שִׁכְמָם אַחַד לְעַבְדֶּיךָ וַיִּירָאוּךָ מִבְּקָשֵׁי פְנֵיךָ
וַיִּפְּרוּ פֶּחַ מִלְכוּתְךָ וַיִּלְמְדוּ תוֹעִים בִּינָה
וַיִּמְלְלוּ אֶת־גְּבוּרַתְךָ: וַיִּנְשָׂאוּךָ לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ!
וַיִּסְלְדוּ בְּחִילָה פְּנֵיךָ וַיַּעֲטֹרוּךָ נֹזֵר תְּפָאֶרֶת
וַיִּפְצְחוּ הָרִים רִנָּה וַיִּצְהֲלוּ אֵימִים כְּמִלְכָּךָ
וַיִּקְבְּלוּ עַל מִלְכוּתְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם וַיְרוּמְמוּךָ בְּקֶהֱל עָם
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ רְחוּקִים וַיִּבְאוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ לְךָ פֶּתֶר מְלוּכָה:

COMMENTARY. This hymn is very similar in content to the last paragraph of the *Aleynu*. It envisions the joy that will enter the human and natural world when we awaken to the unity of all creation. It holds out a vision of earthly harmony and peace founded on spiritual realization. This does not necessitate the triumph of one particular religion or culture. Rather, it signifies a world where all people recognize our relation to others and to the planet and embrace our common origin and destiny. S.P.W.

Supplementary Readings for Yom Kippur

Themes:

- *Yizkor*

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viewing in two page display

KAVANOT FOR YIZKOR

KAVANAH. As we gather together for this solemn moment, we are touched by a horizontal connection, a circle of individuals reaching out to each other for comfort and nourishment as we each acknowledge our loss. We are also empowered by a vertical connection with those souls who have cherished the chain of tradition that stretches far back in time. We are all a part of that chain. By honoring it, both in its horizontal form and its vertical dimension, we are proclaiming our faith in its continuity. D.B.

KAVANAH. The essence of *Yizkor* is remembering. Some memories come in an almost overpowering rush, others drift into our consciousness much more gradually. We need time for remembering. Sometimes, the little things that gradually come to awareness only after we leave time for waiting, turn out to be the most precious and important of all. So quiet yourself, and listen to your heart murmuring. Now is the time for remembering... D.A.T.

KAVANAH. Jewish tradition teaches that between the living and the dead there is a window, not a wall. The culture of scientific materialism teaches that after death, the links between us and our loved ones who died are forever ended—a brick wall! But, like the rituals of *Shiva*, *Kaddish*, and *Yahrzeit*, *Yizkor* opens windows to loved ones who are no longer with us. *Yizkor* creates a sacred space and time, wherein we can open our hearts and minds to the possibility of a genuine interconnection with beloved family members and friends who have left behind the world of the living. *Yizkor* is a window. Within the wellsprings of our infinite souls we find the window of connection between the living and the dead. Prepare to open that window...

As you recite *Yizkor* prayers, let your senses and imagination serve as the vehicle of interconnection. For whom are you saying *Yizkor* today? Can you imagine their faces before your eyes? See their smiles; visualize how they might be standing if they were next to you. Do you recall the sound of their voices? Hear their words as you stand in prayer. Feel their presence right in this moment. In your mind, in your heart, allow a conversation between you to unfold. What needs to be communicated this year? What's the message you need to hear today? What are the silent prayers of the heart? What remains unspoken? Speak. Listen. Take your time. There is no reason to hurry. This is a timeless moment. Let all the radiance of their love be with you right now. Simcha Paull Raphael

If only I could hold your face
If only I could wrap up the light in your eyes
and put it away
safekeeping

safekeeping

against mistaken words
against parting
old age

against all human loneliness

We say that love has no beginning and no end
We know such love
flowing out of itself like a river
that meets and parts and meets

It's for that love
our eyes shine

But oh for that time of parting
for that time we are not ever
sufficiently shored against

tell me how to hold that precious light

Take my hands and bless them
as they bless what they long to keep

Robert Grant Burns

COMMENTARY. *Yizkor* developed as part of the Yom Kippur service during the Middle Ages. Originally it was placed after the Torah reading before the scrolls were returned to the ark, but its location is a matter of local custom. In order to accommodate those who wish to enter the service for *Yizkor*, many communities now place it in the afternoon before the *Minhah* service. Other possibilities for the placement of *Yizkor* abound. D.A.T.

YIZKOR / MEMORIAL SERVICE

Traditionally Yizkor, the memorial service, is recited after the Haftarah in the Torah service on the morning of Yom Kippur, but recitation of Yizkor can be shifted to any other time in the day. Yizkor prayers are customarily said while standing. Some congregations read a list of those who are to be remembered. Others publish a remembrance book.

יְהוָה מְה־אָדָם וַתִּדְעֵהוּ

ALMIGHTY ONE, what are human beings
that you take note of them,

בְּנֵי־אָנוּשׁ וַתַּחֲשִׁבֵהוּ:

the children of humanity
that you should think of them? ↵

COMMENTARY. Calling to mind the memory of relatives or friends who have departed and giving *tzedakah* in their memory is a long-standing custom. It is mentioned in the medieval work *Midrash Tanhuma* as a Yom Kippur custom, though the *Yizkor* prayers themselves are somewhat later in origin. Recitation of *Yizkor* on the Pilgrimage Festivals began in European communities after the bloody destruction associated with the Crusades.

Because it was superstitiously believed that being present for *Yizkor* when one's parents were living could hasten their death, it used to be the case that only those required to say *Yizkor* because of the death of an immediate relative remained in the synagogue. After the Holocaust, which left so many with no one to say *Yizkor* for them, liberal congregations have encouraged everyone to join in reciting *Yizkor*. People are encouraged to recite *Yizkor* for each person whose memory is cherished. The traditional phrase said of the dead, *zikaron livrahah*/the memory for a blessing, reminds us that part of our purpose in remembering is to have our memories influence us to do good. This influence is made tangible in the custom of giving *tzedakah* in memory of loved ones before the holiday begins.

D.A.T.

יְהוָה...עוֹבֵר / ALMIGHTY ONE...shadow (Psalms 144:3-4).

אָדָם לְהֵבֵל דְּמָה

A human being is like a momentary breeze,

יָמָיו כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר:

a person's days are but a passing shadow.

בְּבֹקֶר יִצְיָן וְחָלָף

At dawn, life blossoms and renews itself,

לְעֶרֶב יְמוּלֵל וַיִּבֶשׁ:

at dusk, it withers and dries up.

תָּשֵׁב אָנוֹשׁ עַד-דָּפָא

You return a person unto dust.

וַתֹּאמֶר שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי-אָדָם:

You say: Return, O children of humanity!

We turn our thoughts to yesterday...to a world that lives only in our memory.

As we recall the days gone by, we know the past is irretrievable. Yet—through the gift of memory, we recapture treasured moments and images.

We are thankful for the happiness we knew with those no longer here, with whom we lived and laughed and loved.

We praise the Eternal wellspring of life who links yesterday to tomorrow. We affirm that despite all the tragedy bound up with living, it is still good to be alive.

We understand that there can be no love without loss, no joy without sorrow. May we have the courage to accept the all of life—the love and the loss—the joy and the sorrow, as we remember them.

Evelyn Mehlman

יָוֵב...בְּבֹקֶר / At dawn...dries up (Psalms 90:6).

אָדָם...חָשַׁב / You return...humanity (Psalms 90:3).

לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	<i>Each of Us Has a Name</i>
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ אֱלֹהִים	given by God
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ אָבוּיוֹ וְאִמּוֹ	and given by our parents
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ קוֹמָתוֹ וְאַפְּנוֹ חֵיוֹכוֹ	given by our stature and our smile
וְנָתַן לוֹ הָאָרֶיג	and given by what we wear
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַהָרִים	given by the mountains
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ פְּתָלָיו	and given by our walls
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ הַמַּזְלוֹת	given by the stars
וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ שְׂכֵנָיו	and given by our neighbors
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חַטָּאָיו	given by our sins
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ כְּמִיָּהוּתוֹ	and given by our longing
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ שׂוֹנְאָיו	given by our enemies
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ אֶהְבָּתוֹ	and given by our love
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ חֲגִיוֹ	given by our celebrations
וְנָתַנָּה לוֹ מְלָאכְתּוֹ	and given by our work
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַנוּ לוֹ תְּקוּפוֹת הַשָּׁנָה	given by the seasons
וְנָתַן לוֹ עֵוְרוֹנוֹ	and given by our blindness
לְכָל אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם	Each of us has a name
שֶׁנָּתַן לוֹ הַיָּם	given by the sea
וְנָתַן לוֹ	and given by
מוֹתוֹ:	our death. <i>Zelda (translated by Marcia Falk)</i>

יהוה מֶה־אָדָם וַתִּדְעֵהוּ
 בְּךָ־אָנוּשׁ וַתִּחַשְׁבֵהוּ
 אָדָם לְהֵבֶל דָּמָה
 יָמָיו כְּצֶל עוֹבֵר
 בַּבֶּקֶר יֵצֵיץ וְחָלַף
 לְעֶרֶב יִמּוֹלֵל וַיִּבֶשׁ
 תָּשֻׁב אָנוּשׁ עַד־דָּפָא
 וַתֹּאמֶר: שׁוּבוּ בְנֵי־אָדָם:

ALMIGHTY ONE, what are human beings
 that you take note of them,
 the children of humanity
 that you should think of them?
 A human being is like a momentary breeze,
 a person's days are but a passing shadow.
 At dawn, life blossoms and renews itself,
 at dusk, it withers and dries up.
 You return a person unto dust.
 You say: Return, O children of humanity!

יהוה...עובר / ALMIGHTY ONE...shadow (Psalms 144:3-4).

בבקר...ויבש / At dawn...dries up (Psalms 90:6).

חשב...אדם / You return...humanity (Psalms 90:3).

KAVANAH. Whenever we take time to think about our origins, or go back to the home where we spent our childhood, we find that things have changed. The years have taken their toll. Death has taken away many of the people who filled our early years. Our friendships have changed, our family relationships have changed. And yet—if only in our deepest memories, home continues to be with us. We carry our ancestors and our homes through all the years of our lives. We cannot go home again, but if we can remember, we are never really away from home. L.G.B.

THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF

The night I lost you
someone pointed me towards
the Five Stages of Grief.
Go that way, they said,
it's easy, like learning to climb
stairs after amputation.

And so I climbed.

Denial was first.

I sat down at breakfast
carefully setting the table
for two. I passed you the toast—
you sat there. I passed
you the paper—you hid
behind it.

Anger seemed more familiar.

I burned the toast, snatched
the paper and read the headlines myself.

But they mentioned your departure
and so I moved on to

Bargaining. What could I exchange
for you? The silence

after storms? My typing fingers?

Before I could decide, Depression
came puffing up, a poor relation

its suitcase tied together
with string. In the suitcase

were bandages for the eyes
and bottles of sleep. I slid

all the way down the stairs
feeling nothing. ↪

And all the time Hope
flashed on and off
in defective neon.
Hope was a signpost pointing
straight in the air.
Hope was my uncle's middle name,
he died of it.
After a year I am still climbing,
though my feet slip
on your stone face.
The treeline
has long since disappeared;
green is a color
I have forgotten.
But now I see what I am climbing
towards: Acceptance
written in capital letters,
a special headline:
Acceptance.
Its name is in lights.
I struggle on,
waving and shouting.
Below, my whole life spreads its surf,
all the landscape I've ever known
or dreamed of. Below
a fish jumps: the pulse
in your neck.
Acceptance. I finally
reach it.
But something is wrong.
Grief is a circular staircase.
I have lost you.

Linda Pastan

LITTLE RUTH

Sometimes I think about you, little Ruth—remembering
how we were separated by great distance in our childhood,
and how they burned you in the camps.

Were you here now, you'd be a woman of 65,
a woman at the threshold of old age.

And I don't know what befell you in your short life
after the time that we were separated,
how far you got, what signs of passage
had been hung upon your shoulders, on your sleeve,
on your courageous spirit. What glittering stars
have clung to you, what signs of heroism, what
medals of love were hung upon your neck.

What peace was on you—on you, may there be peace!
And what has happened to your lifetime's unused years?
Are they still packed in pretty packages,
or were they added to my life? Did you make me become
your bank of love, like banks in Switzerland
whose accounts are voided when their owners die?
Shall I inherit all of this for my children
whom you have never seen?

You gave me your life, much the way a wine merchant
makes others drunk while staying sober,
making death sober like you,
the clearest-headed one in all the land of death ↪

רות הקטנה

לפַעַמִּים אֲנִי זוֹכֵר אוֹתָךְ רות הקטנה,
שֶׁנִּפְרַדְנוּ בִּילְדוּת רְחוֹקָה, שֶׁשָּׂרְפוּ אוֹתָךְ בַּמַּחְנוֹת.
אֵלּוּ חַיִּית עִכְשָׁיו, הָיִית אִשָּׁה בֵּת שְׁשִׁים וְחָמֵשׁ,
אִשָּׁה עַל סֵף זְקֵנָה. בֵּת עֲשָׂרִים נִשְׂרַפְתָּ,
וְאֵינֶנִּי יוֹדֵעַ מָה קָרָה לָךְ בְּחַיֵּיךְ הַקְּצָרִים
מֵאֲז נִפְרַדְנוּ. לָמָּה הִגַּעְתָּ, אֵילוּ סִימְנֵי הַרְגָּה
הָעֲנֻקוּ לָךְ עַל כְּתֻפֵיךְ, עַל שְׂרוּלֵיךְ, עַל
נִפְשֵׁךְ הָאֲמִיצָה, אֵילוּ כּוֹכְבִים מִבְּרִיקִים
הִדְבִּיקוּ לָךְ, אֵילוּ אוֹתוֹת גְּבוּרָה, אֵילוּ
מְדַלִּיּוֹת אֶהְבָּה תָלוּ עַל צְוֹאֲרֶךְ,
אֵיזָה שְׁלוֹם עָלֶיךָ, עָלֶיךָ הַשְׁלוֹם.
וּמָה קָרָה לְשָׁנוֹת חַיֵּיךְ הֵלֵא מְשֻׁמְשׁוֹת?
הָאֵם הֵן עֲדִין אַרְוֹזוֹת כְּחַבִּילוֹת יָפוֹת,
הָאֵם נוֹסְפוּ לְחַיֵּי? הָאֵם הִפְכָת אוֹתִי
בִּנְק הָאֶהְבָּה שְׁלֹךְ כְּמוֹ הַבְּנֻקִים בְּשׁוּיָן
שֶׁהִמְטֵמוֹן נִשְׁמַר בָּהֶם גַּם אַחֲרֵי מוֹת בְּעָלָיו?
הָאֵם אוֹרִישׁ אֶת כָּל אֱלֹה לִילְדֵי
שְׁלֵא רְאִית אוֹתָם מֵעוֹלָם? —

to someone drunk with life like me,
wallowing in his forgetfulness.
Sometimes, I think about you, during times
I hadn't planned on, and in places
that I hadn't designated for a memory,
but rather for some transitory thing that doesn't linger.
Like at an airport, when the arriving passengers
are standing wearily by the revolving ramp
that brings their baggage and their packages,
and suddenly, with cries of joy, they find their own,
like at a resurrection of the dead,
and then they exit to their lives.
And there is one bag that keeps coming back
and disappearing once again, returning once again,
so slowly in the empty hall,
before, again and again, it passes on.
Thus does your quiet image pass before me;
thus do I remember you, until the ramp stops moving
and is silent. So it goes.

Yehuda Amichai

מִפְּכַחַת מוֹת פָּמוֹךְ, וְצְלוּלַת שְׁאוּל
לְשִׁכּוֹר חַיִּים פָּמוֹנִי מְתַגּוֹלֵל בְּשִׁכְחָתוֹ.
לְפַעֲמִים אֲנִי זוֹכֵר אוֹתְךָ בְּזַמְנַיִם
שֶׁלֹּא שִׁעְרָתִי וּבִמְקוֹמוֹת שֶׁלֹּא נוֹעְדוּ לְזַכְרוֹן,
אֲלֵא לְחוֹלְךָ וּלְעוֹבֵר שֶׁלֹּא נִשְׁאַר;
כְּמוֹ בְּנִמְל תְּעוֹפָה כְּשֶׁהִנוֹסְעִים הַמְּגִיעִים
עוֹמְדִים עֵיפִים לִיד הַסֶּרֶט הִנֵּעַ וְהַמְּסֻתוֹכֵב
שֹׁמְבִיא אֶת מְזוֹדוֹתֶיהֶם וְחִבְלֹתֶיהֶם,
וְהֵם מְגִלִּים אֶת שְׁלֵהֶם בְּקַרְיָאוֹת שְׁמֻחָה
כְּמוֹ בְּתַחֲתֵי הַמַּתִּים וְיוֹצְאִים אֶל חַיֵּיהֶם.
וַיֵּשׁ מְזוֹדָה אַחַת שְׁחוֹזֶרֶת וְשׁוֹב נַעֲלַמַּת
וְשׁוֹב חוֹזֶרֶת, לָאֵט לָאֵט, בְּאוֹלָם הַמְּתְרוֹקֵן,
וְשׁוֹב וְשׁוֹב הִיא עוֹבֶרֶת,
כִּי עוֹבֶרֶת דְּמוּתְךָ הַשְּׁקֵטָה עַל פָּנָי,
כִּי אֲנִי זוֹכֵר אוֹתְךָ, עַד
שֶׁהַסֶּרֶט יַעֲמַד מְלַכָּת. וְדַמּוּ סְלָה.

My protector, you are our abode,
one generation to the next,
since before the mountains came to birth,
before the birthpangs of the land and world.
From eternity unto eternity, you are divine.

Truly, a thousand years are in your eyes
like yesterday—so quickly does it pass—
or like the watchman's nighttime post.

You pour upon them sleep, they sleep.
When morning comes, it vanishes like chaff.

At dawn, life blossoms and renews itself,
at dusk, it withers and dries up.

Years of our lifetime are but seventy
—perhaps, among the strongest, eighty years—
and most of them are toil and fatigue,
then quickly it all ends, we fly away.

Who knows the full strength of your fury?
Is our fear of you the equal of your wrath?

Oh, let us know how to assess our days,
how we may bring the heart some wisdom.

Let your accomplishment be visible to those who serve you,
let your beauty rest upon their children,

let our divine protector's pleasure be upon us,
and the labor of our hands, make it secure,
the labor of our hands ensure!

Selections from Psalm 90

אֲדַנִּי מֵעוֹן אַתָּה הָיִיתָ לָּנוּ בְּדֹר וָדֹר:
בְּטָרֶם הָרִים יִלְדוּ וּתְחַוִּיל לְאָרֶץ וּתְבַל
וּמֵעוֹלָם עַד-עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל:

כִּי אֶלֶף שָׁנִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ כִּי אֶתְמוּל כִּי יַעֲבֹר
וְאַשְׁמֹרֶה בְּלֵילָה:

זָרְמַתֶּם שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה בְּבִקְרָה פְּתַצִּיר יִחַלֶּף:
בְּבִקְרָה יִצִּיץ וּיִחַלֶּף לְעָרֵב יִמּוּלֵל וְיִבֵּשׁ:

יְמֵי-שָׁנוֹתֵינוּ בָּהֶם שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה וְאִם בְּגִבּוֹרוֹת שְׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה:
וְרָהַבְּם עֵמֶל וְאֹן כִּי-גֹז חֵיֶשׁ וּנְעֻפָה:
מִי-יִוָּדַע עַז אֶפְרָיִם וּכְיִרְאָתָךְ עֶבְרָתָךְ:
לְמַגּוֹת יִמְיָנוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע וְנִבְיָא לְבָב חֲקֻמָּה:

יִרְאֶה אֶל-עֲבָדֶיךָ פְּעֻלָּךְ וְהִדְרֶךְ עַל-בְּנֵיהֶם:
וְיִהְיֶה נֶעַם אֲדַנִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנְנָה עָלֵינוּ
וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנְנָהוּ:

FOR A GRANDMOTHER

My mother's mother died
in the spring of her years,
and her daughter forgot her face.
Her portrait, engraved
on my grandfather's heart,
was erased from the world of images
when he died.

In the house, just her mirror remained,
sunk with age in its silver frame.
And I, the pale grandchild
who does not resemble her,
peer into it today as into a lake
that hides its treasures underwater.

Deep behind my face,
I see a young woman—
pink-cheeked, smiling,
a wig on her head—
threading a long-looped earring
through the tender flesh of her lobe.

Deep behind my face,
shines the bright gold of her eyes.
And the mirror passes on
the family lore:
She was very beautiful.

Lea Goldberg (translated by Marcia Falk)

מִתָּה אִמָּה שֶׁל אָמִי
בְּאֲבִיב יָמֶיהָ. וּבִתָּה
לֹא זָכְרָה אֶת פְּנֵיהָ. דְּיוֹקְנָה הַחֲרוּט
עַל לְבוֹ שֶׁל סָבִי
נִמְחָה מֵעוֹלָם הַדְּמוּיוֹת
אֲחֵרֵי מוֹתוֹ.

רַק הִרְאִי שְׁלֵה נִשְׁתִּיר בְּבֵית.
הַעֲמִיק מְרֹב שָׁנִים בְּמִשְׁפָּצַת הַפֶּסֶף.
וְאֲנִי, נִכְדְּתָה הַחֲוָרֶת. שְׂאִינֵנִי דוֹמָה לָהּ,
מִבִּיטָה הַיּוֹם אֶל תּוֹכוֹ כְּאֵל תּוֹף
אֲגַם הַטּוֹמֵן אוֹצְרוֹתָיו
מִתַּחַת לַמַּיִם.

עֲמַק מְאֹד, מֵאַחֲזֵרֵי פָּנֵי,
אֲנִי רוֹאָה אִשָּׁה צְעִירָה
וְרֹדֶת לְחַיִּים מְחֻכָּת.
וּפְאָה נִכְרִית לְרֹאשָׁה.
הִיא עוֹנֶדֶת
עֲגִיל מְאָרֶךְ אֶל תְּנוּף אֲזֹנָה. מִשְׁחִילֶתְהוּ
בְּנֹקֵב בְּבֶשֶׁר הָעֵנֵג
שֶׁל הָאֶזֶן.

עֲמַק מְאֹד, מֵאַחֲזֵרֵי פָּנֵי, קוֹרְנֶת
זְהוּבִית בְּהִירָה שֶׁל עֵינֶיהָ.
וְהִרְאִי מִמְשִׁיף אֶת מְטָרֶת
הַמְּשֻׁפָּחָה:
שֶׁהִיא הִיתָה יִפָּה מְאֹד.

FOR A GRANDFATHER

My grandfather was a farmer.
The day before he died
he planted a garden
A garden that nourished his family
through the sunless season of
mourning
far into the golden season of harvest.

My grandfather was a farmer.
Before he died
he planted a lifetime of seeds.
Diligently he planted honesty and
reverence;

Inadvertently he planted gentleness and
humor—
Bounty enough to nourish me
all the seasons of my life
far into the planting season of my child.

Dana Shuster

FOR A PARENT

Move to the front
of the line
a voice says, and suddenly
there is nobody
left standing between you
and the world, to take
the first blows
on their shoulders.

This is the place in books
where part one ends, and
part two begins,
and there is no part three.
The slate is wiped
not clean but like a canvas
painted over in white
so that a whole new landscape
must be started,
bits of the old
still showing underneath—
those colors sadness lends
to a certain hour of evening.
Now the line of light
at the horizon
is the hinge between earth
and heaven, only visible
a few moments
as the sun drops
its rusted padlock
into place.

Linda Pastan

In many houses
all at once
I see my mother and father
and they are young
as they walk in.

Why should
my tears come,
to see them laughing?

That they cannot
see me
is of no matter.

I was once
their dream;
now
they are mine.

Author Unknown

FOR A CHILD

I will never be able to stop my tears.
And the day is far off when I will
Forget this cruel day.
Why could we not have died with him?
His little clothes still hang on his rack
His milk is still by his bed.
Overcome, it is as though life had left us.
We lie prostrate and insensible all day.
I am no longer young enough
To try to understand what has happened.
I was warned of it in a dream.
No medicine would have helped
Even if it had been heaped mountain high.
The disease took its course inexorable.
It would be better for me if I took
A sword and cut open my bowels.
They are already cut to pieces with sorrow.
I realize what I am doing
And try to come to myself again,
But I am exhausted and helpless,
Carried away by excess of sorrow.

Su Tung P'o

FOR A SPOUSE / PARTNER

As long
as I speak
your name
you are
not dead

as long
as I think
your pain
I cannot
grieve

the granite marker
tells
your name
your age

the bleak horizon
scars
the barren hedge

as long
as I
you
are not dead

Hannah Kahn

FOR A SUICIDE

...transcripts of fog...

Speak your tattered Kaddish for all suicides:

Praise to life though it crumbled in like a tunnel
on ones we knew and loved

Praise to life though its windows blew shut
on the breathing-room of ones we knew and loved

Praise to life though ones we knew and loved
loved it badly, too well, and not enough

Praise to life though it tightened like a knot
on the hearts of ones we thought we knew loved us

Praise to life giving room and reason
to ones we knew and loved who felt unpraisable

Praise to them, how they loved it, when they could.

Adrienne Rich



ON HEALING

I had thought that your death
Was a waste and a destruction,
A pain of grief hardly to be endured.
I am only beginning to learn
That your life was a gift and a growing
And a loving left with me.
The desperation of death
Destroyed the existence of love,
But the fact of death
Cannot destroy what has been given.
I am learning to look at your life again
Instead of your death and your departing.

Marjorie Pizer

For the Martyrs, Soldiers of the People Israel, and Victims of the Holocaust:

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמַרְוָמִים הַמְצִיא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי
הַשְּׁכִינָה בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוֹשִׁים וְטְהוֹרִים כְּאֵהָר הַרְקִיעַ מְזֵהִירִים אֶת־
נַשְׁמוֹת חַיְלֵי צָבָא הַהֲגָנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְכָל־אֱלֹה שְׁמַסְרוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם
עַל־קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם וְשִׁנְהֵגוּ בְּשׂוֹאָה: אָנָּה בְּעַל הַרְחָמִים תְּסַתִּירֵם
בְּצֵל כַּנְּפֵיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים וְצָרוּר בְּצָרוּר הַחַיִּים אֶת־נַשְׁמוֹתֵם וַיְנַחֵם
בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל־מִשְׁכְּבְּכֶם וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

God filled with mercy, dwelling in the heavens' heights, bring proper rest beneath the wings of your Sheḥinah, amid the ranks of the holy and the pure, illuminating like the brilliance of the skies the souls of Israel's soldiers, and all those who have given up their lives in affirmation of your holy Name, and all destroyed in the Shoah. May you who are the source of mercy shelter them beneath your wings eternally, and bind their souls among the living, that they may rest in peace. And let us say: Amen.

COMMENTARY. In this *El Maley Rahamim* specific references to those who have died fighting in Israel's wars and those murdered in the Holocaust have been added to the traditional phrase "all those who have given up their lives in affirmation of your holy Name." These events of our time demand special recognition. Sanctification of God's name through voluntary martyrdom was an altogether too common phenomenon in the rabbinic and medieval periods, which were often punctuated by savage persecution. Death in the Holocaust was qualitatively different because it could not be averted by the victim—even conversion had no power to save. Many contemporary Jews view the tragic events of the Holocaust as a lessening of God's presence in the world, though acts of bravery, piety, and caring manifested the divine even then.

Israeli soldiers generally understand their sacrifices to be for the sake of their families and their people rather than as part of an effort to make God manifest. Nonetheless their sacrifices, which have revived and preserved Israel as a Jewish home, have a meaning to Jews everywhere far beyond that of acres of land. They have kept alive a dream we share—our land, not only free, but at peace.

D.A.T.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

Jack Riemer and Sylvan D. Kamens