

# High Holidays 2022

*Shema* and its Blessings



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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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## THE SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS

*When a minyan is present, the Barehu is said. The congregation rises and faces the ark. It is customary to bow. The reader chants the first line, and the congregation responds with the second.*

Bless THE INFINITE, the blessed One!

Blessed is THE INFINITE, the blessed One, now and forever!

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KAVANAH. As we bless the Source of Life,  
so we are blessed.

And the blessing gives us strength  
and makes our visions clear.

And the blessing gives us peace,  
and the courage to dare.

Faith Rogow

COMMENTARY. *Barehu* calls the congregation together for formal worship. The sections that precede it in the morning service, *Birhot Hashahar* and *Pesukey Dezimra*, brought individuals gradually closer together until they could reach the mutual connection needed for joining together in prayer. The emotional stirring and heightened awareness brought by these earlier sections now become focused in the tighter intellectual structure of the Shema and its blessings and the Amidah.

D.A.T.

## קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּבְרִכּוֹתֶיהָ

When a minyan is present, the Bareḥu is said. The congregation rises and faces the ark. It is customary to bow. The reader chants the first line, and the congregation responds with the second.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ:  
 בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

Bareḥu et adonay hamvorah.

Baruḥ adonay hamvoraḥ le'olam va'ed.

Many contemporary Jews are reciting *beraḥot*/blessings in ways that reflect their theological outlooks and ethical concerns. At any place where a blessing occurs in the liturgy, the following elements can be combined to create alternative formulas for *beraḥot*. This can be done by selecting one phrase from each group to form the introductory clause.

I	Baruḥ atah adonay	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה	Blessed are you Adonay
	Beruḥah at yah	בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ יְיָ	Blessed are you Yah
	Nevareḥ et	נְבַרְךָ אַתָּה	Let us bless
II	eloheynu	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	our God
	hasheḥinah	הַשְּׁכִינָה	Sheḥinah
	eyn haḥayim	עַיִן הַחַיִּים	Source of Life
III	meleḥ ha'olam	מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם	Sovereign of all worlds
	ḥey ha'olamim	חַי הָעוֹלָמִים	Life of all the worlds
	ru'ah ha'olam	רוּחַ הָעוֹלָם	Spirit of the world

The phrase *nevareḥ et eyn haḥayim* was originally formulated by poet Marcia Falk. (see SOURCES, p. 1248).

## YOTZER/GOD IN NATURE

Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, our God,  
the sovereign of all worlds,

*On Yom Kippur add:*

(You who open up for us the gates of mercy,  
and who light with your forgiveness  
the eyes of those who love you)

who fashion light and create darkness, maker of peace  
and creator of all.

Light of the world,  
amid light's storehouse, light out of darkness—  
God spoke, and all was born!

*On weekdays continue on the following page. On Shabbat continue on page 283.*

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COMMENTARY. Or *olam*/Light of the world. This line, which the rabbis added here only for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, expresses in a highly nuanced way the general themes of creation and light. Here, God's word and the light become synonymous. Since light in our tradition also signifies Torah and redemption, the divine creative word links the power of creation to revelation and redemption, suggesting that redemption through *teshuvah* is as natural a divine gift as each sunrise, and just as sure.

D.A.T.

## יוצֵר

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam

*On Yom Kippur add:*

(הַפּוֹתֵחַ לָנוּ שַׁעֲרֵי רַחֲמִים וּמְאִיר עֵינֵי הַמַּחֲכִים לְסִלְיָתוֹ)

(hapote'ah lanu sha'arey raḥamim ume'ir eyney hameḥakim liseliḥato)

יוצֵר אֹר וּבוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת־הַכֹּל:

אֹר עוֹלָם בְּאוֹצַר חַיִּים אוֹרוֹת מְאֹפֵל אָמַר וַיְהִי:

yotzer or uvorey ḥosheḥ oseh shalom uvorey et hakol.

Or olam be'otzar ḥayim orot mey'ofel amar vayehi.

*On weekdays continue on the following page. On Shabbat continue on page 284.*

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הכל / עשה שלום ובורא את הכל / maker of peace and creator of all. This phrase, taken from Isaiah, appears there as “maker of peace and creator of evil” (Isaiah 45:7). The ancient rabbinic authorities who crafted the prayerbook adjusted the language as part of the ongoing struggle to reconcile the existence of evil with that of God.

R.H.

*On weekdays:*

You who in your mercy give light to the earth and its inhabitants, and in your goodness do perpetually renew each day Creation's wondrous work, how great your deeds, ETERNAL ONE! In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is filled with your accomplishments. You are the world's sole sovereign, dwelling in the highest heights before the dawn of time, praised and magnified and held in awe from days of old. God of the world, in your abundant mercy, care for us. Source of our strength, our stronghold rock, our shield of help, the fortress over us! **A**ll-powerful and **b**lessed, **g**reat in **d**iscernment, you **h**ave prepared and **w**rought the **s**unlight's **h**ealing rays; **t**ruely good you have **c**reated; **l**uminaries you have **m**ade, in honor of your **n**ame, **s**urrounding for divine **o**mnipotence; your **p**rofoundly principal **c**elestial ones, **q**uaking in holiness, **r**evere the **s**haker of the heavens, **t**o eternity. They tell of divine glory and the holiness of God. Be blessed, redeeming power, in celebration of your handiwork, and for the luminaries that you made. Let all declare your greatness!

*Continue on page 291.*

On weekdays:

הַמַּאִיר לְאָרֶץ וְלְדָרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְטוֹבוֹ מְחַדָּשׁ בְּכָל־יּוֹם  
תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית: מֵה־רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה כֵּלָם בְּחֻכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ  
מְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיֶיךָ: הַמְלֵךְ הַמְרוֹמֵם לְבָדוֹ מֵאֵז הַמְשַׁבַּח וְהַמְפָּאֵר  
וְהַמְתַּנַּשֵּׂא מִימּוֹת עוֹלָם אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ  
אֲדוֹן עֲזָנוּ צוּר מְשַׁנֵּבֵנוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעָנוּ מְשַׁבֵּב בְּעַדָּנוּ: אֵל בְּרוּךְ גְּדוֹל  
דַּעַה הַכִּין וּפְעַל זְהָרֵי חֲמָה טוֹב יֵצֵר כְּבוֹד לְשֵׁמוֹ מְאֹרֹת נִתַּן  
סְבִיבוֹת עֲזוֹ פְּנוֹת צְבָאֵי קְדוּשִׁים רוֹמְמֵי שְׂדֵי תְּמִיד  
מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֵל וּקְדוּשָׁתוֹ: \*תְּתַבְּרֶךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל־שִׁבְחֲךָ  
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ וְעַל־מְאֹרֵי אֹר שְׁעֲשִׂיתָ יְפָאֲרוּךְ שְׁלָה:

Continue on page 291.

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NOTE. An early acrostic version of the *Yotzer* became a part of this expanded rabbinic text. In both Hebrew and English, bold letters here indicate the location of the acrostic. D.A.T

COMMENTARY. The first major theme following *Barehu* is that of Creation. We wonder at the order, the complexity, the vastness of our world. Struck by our own smallness, we are nonetheless also caught up in the grace of having a home amidst the splendor that is nature. Our wonder and our sense of smallness give way to thankfulness for the gift of life in this world. D.A.T.

*On Shabbat continue here:*

Let all beings acknowledge you, all cry praise to you, and all declare: There is none as holy as THE ONE! Let all beings hold you in the highest reverence, you, the fashioner of all. The God who opens up each day the doors and gateways of the East, who bursts open the windows of the heavens' dome, bringing forth the sunlight from its place and moonlight from its seat of rest, providing light for the entire world and for its creatures—all of whom divinity, in boundless love, brought into being. Bringer of light, with tender care, upon the earth and its inhabitants, in goodness you renew each day perpetually Creation's wondrous work.

You are the world's sole sovereign, dwelling in the highest heights before the dawn of time, praised and magnified and held in awe since the primordial days. God of the world, in your abundant mercy care for us. Source of our strength, our fortress rock, our shield of help, the shelter over us! None like you exists, no God apart from you. Beside you there is nothing. Who resembles you? None like you exists, ETERNAL ONE, our God, within this world, no God apart from you, our sovereign, in any future world. Beside you, our redeeming power, there is nothing in the days to come. None resembles you, our saving force, throughout all lifetimes and all worlds.

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COMMENTARY. A sense of God's excesses seems to characterize this outburst of hymns in praise of the creator of the cosmic lights. The verses seem also to reflect a sense of divine energy overflowing through the world, filling the Universe with limitless luminosity. To proclaim this plenitude is a special human privilege, made possible for many of us by these radiant words of prayer. E.G.

On Shabbat continue here:

הַפֶּל יוֹדוּךָ וְהַפֶּל יִשְׁבְּחוּךָ וְהַכֹּל יֹאמְרוּ אֵין קְדוּשׁ פִּיהוּה: הַכֹּל  
יְרוּמְמוּךָ סֶלָה יוֹצֵר הַפֶּל: הָאֵל הַפּוֹתֵחַ בְּכָל-יּוֹם וְדִלְתוֹת שַׁעֲרֵי  
מִזְרַח וּבּוֹקֵעַ חֲלוּנֵי רְקִיעַ מוֹצִיא חַמָּה מִמְּקוֹמָהּ וְלִבְנָה מִמְּכוֹן  
שְׁבֹתָהּ וּמֵאֵיר לְעוֹלָם כֹּלוֹ וְלִיּוֹשְׁבָיו שְׁפָרָא בְּמִדַּת הַרְחָמִים:  
הֵמֵאֵיר לְאָרֶץ וְלְדָרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְטוּבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ בְּכָל-יּוֹם  
תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית:

הַמְּלַךְ הַמְּרוֹמֵם לְבִדּוֹ מֵאֵז הַמְּשֻׁבָּח וְהַמְּפָאָר וְהַמְּתַנַּשֵּׂא מִימּוֹת  
עוֹלָם: אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ אֲדוֹן עֲזָנוּ צוּר  
מְשַׁגְּבֵנוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ מְשַׁגֵּב בְּעֲדָנוּ: אֵין כְּעַרְכְּךָ וְאֵין זוּלָתְךָ אֶפְס  
בְּלִתְךָ וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ: אֵין כְּעַרְכְּךָ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְאֵין  
זוּלָתְךָ מְלַכְנוּ לַחַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא: אֶפְס בְּלִתְךָ גּוֹאֲלָנוּ לְימּוֹת  
הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְאֵין דוֹמָה-לָךְ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לַחַיִּי עוֹלָמִים:

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יחד/you renew each day perpetually Creation's wondrous work. Rabbi Simḥah Bunam taught, "The Holy One created the world in a state of beginning. The universe is always in an uncompleted state, in the form of its beginning. It is not like a vessel at which the master works until it is finished; it requires continuous labor and unceasing renewal by creative forces. Were there a second's pause by these forces, the universe would return to primeval chaos." Hasidic

limot hamashiah/limot hamashiah/in the days to come. This phrase literally means "in the days of the messiah," but it is more accurately understood as "messianic days." We do not refer here to an anointed individual, but rather to the peace and harmony toward which we strive. D.A.T.

*This translation can be sung to the same melody as the Hebrew.  
Transliteration can be found on page 288.*

**A**n essence reigns supreme above all created beings,  
**B**lessed one, whom everyone with breath of life must bless,  
**G**reat one, whose abundant goodness fills the world,  
**D**iscerning one, whose knowledge fills all space and  
emptiness.

**H**ow proudly does God shine above the holy beings!

**O**, beautiful in glory! **O**, chariot divine!

**Z**ealous in your merit, your justice fills the throne,

**H**eaven's love and tender care the glory ever shines.

**T**he lights our God created are filled with every good,

**Y**ou, **O** God, have fashioned them with knowledge and with  
care,

**K**indling amid their heart your awesome might and power,

**L**eaving them to govern night and day forevermore.

**M**agnificent your brightness, your beams so radiant,

**N**ow all is luminescent, all space they now do fill. ↪

Transliteration can be found on page 288.

בְּרוּךְ וּמְבָרֵךְ בְּפִי כָּל־נִשְׁמָה:  
דַּעַת וּתְבוּנָה סְבִיבִים אִתּוֹ:

וְנִהְדָר בְּכָבוֹד עַל־הַמְרֻכָּבָה:  
חֲסֵד וְרַחֲמִים לְפָנָי כְּבוֹדוֹ:

יִצְרָם בְּדַעַת בְּבִינָה וּבְהַשְׁפֵּל:  
לְהִיּוֹת מוֹשְׁלִים בְּקָרֵב תְּבִיל:

נָאָה זִינִם בְּכָל־הָעוֹלָם:

עֲשִׂים בְּאֵימָה רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם:

צַהֲלָה וְרָנָה לְזָכֹר מַלְכוּתוֹ:

רָאָה וְהִתְקִין צוּרַת הַלְּבָנָה:

אֵל אֲדוֹן עַל כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים  
גָּדְלוֹ וְטוֹבוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם

הַמְתַּגָּאָה עַל חַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ  
זְכוּת וּמִישׁוֹר לְפָנָי כְּסֵאוֹ

טוֹבִים מְאוֹרוֹת שֶׁבְּרָא אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
כָּח וּגְבוּרָה נָתַן בְּהֵם

מְלֵאִים זִיו וּמְפִיקִים נִגְה

שְׁמֵחִים בְּצֵאתָם וְשֹׁשֵׁי בְּבֹאֵם

פָּאָר וְכָבוֹד נוֹתְנִים לְשִׁמּוֹ

קָרָא לְשִׁמְשׁ וַיִּזְרַח אוֹר

שֶׁבַח נוֹתְנִים לוֹ כָּל־צְבָא מְרוֹם

תְּפַאֲרַת וּגְדֻלָּה שְׂרָפִים וְאוֹפָנִים וְחַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ:

Continue on page 290.

So joyous in emergence, so happy in return,  
Obedient in dread of their creator's awesome will.  
Pride and glory they proclaim befitting of God's name,  
Circling in joyous dance, proclaiming divine rule:  
Call, O God, upon the sun, enable it to shine!  
Reach your gaze unto the moon, reshape that comely jewel!  
Showing praise to God, the heavens' hosts now sing,  
The holy angels thronging 'round, how beautiful they ring!

*Continue on page 289.*

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COMMENTARY. "An essence...Blessed one...Great one..." This hymn, drawing upon the prophetic visions of Ezekiel 1-2 and Isaiah 6, is an alphabetical acrostic written by one of the *Merkavah* ("Chariot") mystics of the early post-talmudic era. The translation recreates the acrostic pattern according to the Hebrew, rather than the English alphabet. J.R.

El adon al kol hama'asim	Baruḥ umevoraḥ befi kol neshamah.
Godlo vetuvo maley olam	Da'at utevunah sovevim oto.
Hamitga'eh al ḥayot <u>hakodesh</u>	Venedar beḥavod al hamerkavah.
Zehut umishor lifney ḥiso	<u>Hesed</u> veraḥamim lifney hevodo.
Tovim me'erot shebara eloheynu	Yetzaram beda'at bevinah uvehaskel.
<u>Ko'ah</u> ugevurah natan bahem	Lihyot moshlim bekerev tevel.
Meley'im ziv umefikim <u>nogah</u>	Na'eh zivam beḥol ha'olam.
Semeḥim betzeytam vesasim bevo'am	Osim be'eymah retzon konam.
Pe'er veḥavod notnim lishmo	Tzoholah verinah lezeḥer malhuto.
Kara lashemesh vayizraḥ or	Ra'ah vehitkin tzurat halevanah.
<u>Shevah</u> notnim lo kol tzeva marom	
Tiferet ugedulah serafim ve'ofanim veḥayot <u>hakodesh</u> .	

*Continue on page 290.*

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COMMENTARY. This expansive acrostic hymn of praise is especially appropriate for the Sabbath, the holy day that celebrates creation. We are reminded that we inhabit a brilliant yet orderly universe. This song sees the primary substance of the universe as light emanating from divine goodness. On Shabbat, we take the time to bask in the illumination of God's healing, loving light.

S.P.W.

Praises to God, who rested from all labors of Creation! On the seventh day did God ascend, returning to the throne of glory. With splendor God adorned the day of rest, calling Shabbat a time of pleasure. This is the distinction of the seventh day, for on it the divine one ceased from all creation's work. The seventh day itself offers its praise, calling out "a psalm of the Shabbat: It is good to give thanks to THE ETERNAL..." Therefore, let all God's creatures offer laudatory blessing! Praise, appreciation and greatness may they give to God, the sovereign creator of all things, who in great holiness has given an inheritance of rest unto the people Israel, upon Shabbat, the holy day. May your name, DEAR ONE, our God, be declared holy; and your memory, our sovereign, be magnified both in the skies above and on the earth below. Be blessed, redeeming power, in celebration of your handiwork, and for the luminaries that you made. Let all declare your greatness!

לְאֵל אֲשֶׁר שָׁבַת מְכַל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַתְּעַלָּה וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־  
כִּסֵּא כְבוֹדוֹ: תִּפְאָרְתָּ עֲטָה לַיּוֹם הַמְּנוּחָה עֲנֵג קָרָא לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיבַת:  
זֶה שְׁבִיבַח שְׁלֵיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבוּ שְׁבִיבַת אֵל מְכַל־מְלֹאכֶתוֹ וַיּוֹם  
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְשַׁבַּח וְאוֹמֵר מְזִמּוֹר שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיבַת טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת  
לַיהוָה: לְפִיכֶךָ יִפְאָרוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ לְאֵל כָּל־יְצוּרָיו שְׁבִיבַח יְקָר וַגְּדִלָה יִתְנוּ  
לְאֵל מְלֶךְ יוֹצֵר כֹּל הַמְּנַחֵל מְנוּחָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקִדְשָׁתוֹ בַּיּוֹם  
שְׁבִיבַת קָדֵשׁ: שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִתְקַדֵּשׁ וְזִכְרֶךָ מְלִפְנֵינוּ יִתְפָּאֵר  
בְּשָׂמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתְּחַת: תִּתְבָּרֵךְ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ עַל־שְׁבִיבַח  
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ וְעַל־מְאוּרֵי אוֹר שְׁעֵשִׂיתָ יִפְאָרוּךְ סְלָה:

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DERASH. The principle of *imitatio dei*—that we are to imitate the attributes of God—applies to this prayer. The text imagines God finishing the work of creation on Friday evening and returning to the throne of glory. I learn from this that there is godliness in treating ourselves royally on Shabbat.

J.A.S.

White butterflies, with single  
black fingerpaint eyes on their wings  
dart and settle, eddy and mate  
over the green tangle of vines  
in Labor Day morning steam.

The year grinds into ripeness  
and rot, grapes darkening,  
pears yellowing, the first  
Virginia creeper twining crimson,  
the grasses, dry straw to burn.

The New Year rises, beckoning  
across the umbrellas on the sand.  
I begin to reconsider my life.  
What is the yield of my impatience?  
What is the fruit of my resolve?

I turn from frantic white dance  
over the jungle of productivity  
and slowly a niggun slides  
cold water down my throat.  
I rest on a leaf spotted red.

Now is the time to let the mind  
search backwards like the raven loosed  
to see what can feed us. Now,  
the time to cast the mind forward  
to chart an aerial map of the months. ↩

The New Year is a great door  
that stands across the evening and Yom  
Kippur is the second door. Between them  
are song and silence, stone and clay pot  
to be filled from within myself.

I will find there both ripeness and rot,  
What I have done and undone,  
What I must let go with the waning days  
and what I must take in. With the last  
tomatoes, we harvest the fruit of our lives.

Marge Piercy

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COMMENTARY. It is a long-standing custom to write special liturgical poems, *piyutim*, that tie each part of the service to the theme of the day. This custom has become less common in recent years because most *piyutim* reflect sensibilities and styles so far removed from our own. This poem by Marge Piercy reflects both the theme of this part of the service—wonder at the beauty, power and unity of creation—and the theme of this High Holy Day season. In that sense, it is the contemporary equivalent of a *piyut*.

D.A.T.

*On both Shabbat and weekdays continue here.*

May you be blessed, our rock, our sovereign, our champion, creator of the holy beings, and let your name be praised eternally, majestic one, the fashioner of ministering angels. All of them are standing in the heavens' highest realms, and giving voice, in awestruck unison, to words of the living God, the sovereign of all worlds. All of them adored, all brilliant in light, all great and mighty—all of them perform, in awe and dread, the will of their creator. And all open their mouths in holiness and purity. With song and melody, they bless, they praise, they magnify, they raise aloft, and sanctify, and proclaim sovereign: ↪

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COMMENTARY. This passage pictures an angelic chorus singing God's praises. In Jewish tradition, angels have had a long and varied history—messengers warning Abraham of Sodom's destruction, the heavenly choir of Isaiah, the Talmud's host of heavenly functionaries, the impersonal forces of medieval philosophy, the presences of the Kabbalists. The tradition leaves ample room for each generation to understand angels as it will, whether as natural forces or revealing moments in our lives, the divine in the people we meet, or manifestations of the goodness in our world or in the inner workings of the human heart. D.A.T.

*On both Shabbat and weekdays continue here.*

תְּתַבְרַךְ צוּרֵנוּ מִלְפָּנָיו וְגוֹאֲלֵנוּ בּוֹרֵא קְדוֹשִׁים יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד  
מִלְפָּנָיו יוֹצֵר מְשֻׁרְתִים וְאֲשֶׁר מְשֻׁרְתֵינוּ כֹּלֵם עוֹמְדִים בְּרוּם עוֹלָם  
וּמְשֻׁמֵּיעִים בְּיִרְאָה יָחַד בְּקוֹל דְּבַרֵי אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמְלֵךְ עוֹלָם \*כֹּלֵם  
אֱהוּבִים כֹּלֵם בְּרוּרִים כֹּלֵם גְּבוּרִים וְכֹלֵם עֲשִׂים בְּאִמָּה וּבְיִרְאָה רְצוֹן  
קוֹנָם וְכֹלֵם פּוֹתְחִים אֶת־פִּיהֶם בְּקִדְשָׁהּ וּבְטַהֲרָה בְּשִׁירָה וּבְזִמְרָה  
וּמְבָרְכִים וּמְשַׁבְּחִים וּמְפָאֲרִים וּמְעֲרִיצִים וּמְקַדִּישִׁים וּמְמַלְיָכִים ←

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Who are holy beings?

They are beloved, clear of mind and courageous.

Their will and God's are one.

Raising their voices in constant gratitude

they marvel at every detail of life,

Granting each other loving permission to be exactly who they are.

When we listen for their sweet voices, we can hear the echo within our  
own souls.

S.P.W.

The name of God, the regal, grand, and awesome one! Holy is God! And all of them receive upon themselves, from each to each, the yoke of heaven's rule, and lovingly they give to one another the permission to declare their maker holy. In an ecstasy of spirit, with pure speech and holy melody, all of them respond in awe as one, and cry: "Holy, holy, holy is THE RULER of the Multitudes of Heaven. The whole world overflows with divine glory!

The angels of the chariot and holy creatures of the heavens, in great quaking, rise to face the seraphim. And, facing them, they sing in praise, and cry: "Blessed be the glory of THE ONE, wherever God may dwell!"

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NOTE. Several forms of *kedushah* exist in our liturgy. Here we have the *Kedushah Diyeshivah*, which we recite without standing. We remember that, according to the Bible, the angels proclaim God's holiness, but we do not yet rise to do so ourselves. Proclaiming the holiness of the divine unity takes more preparation and concentration. We strive to be ready to move from remembering to proclaiming when we recite the *Kedushah* of the Amidah. D.A.T.

מלא כל הארץ כבודו Literally, the fullness of the earth is God's glory. In this we recognize that there are barren places and empty lives. When we turn despair to hope, cry out for justice, pursue peace, we fill the earth with what is holy, and then the fullness of the earth is God's glory.

S.E.S.

אֶת שֵׁם הָאֵל הַמְּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא קְדוֹשׁ הוּא \* וְכַלֵּם  
מִקְבָּלִים עֲלֵיהֶם עַל מַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם זֶה מִזֶּה וְנוֹתְנִים בְּאַהֲבָה רְשׁוֹת  
זֶה לְזֶה לְהַקְדִּישׁ לְיוֹצְרָם בְּנִחַת רוּחַ בְּשִׁפְּהַ בְּרוּרָה וּבְנִעִימָה קְדוּשָׁה  
כָּלֵם כְּאַחַד עוֹנִים וְאוֹמְרִים בִּירְאָה:

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ

יהוה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

\* וְהַאֲפִנִים וְחֵיוֹת הַקֶּדֶשׁ בְּרַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל מִתְנַשְּׂאִים לְעַמַּת שְׂרָפִים  
לְעַמַּתָּם מְשַׁבְּחִים וְאוֹמְרִים:

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוָה מִמְקוֹמוֹ:

Kadosh kadosh kadosh adonay tzeva'ot melo ḥol ha'aretz kevodo.

Baruḥ kevod adonay mimekomo.

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and lovingly they give to one another the permission. Here our text follows the Sephardic version by adding the word *be'ahavah* (in love). It is only in our love for one another that we are truly capable of granting to each other "permission" to pray. A community of Jews who stand together in real prayer must be one where each individual is known and cared for as a person. Only when such love exists among us are we a community whose members can truly "grant permission" to one another to seek or to sanctify God.

A.G.

To blessed God they offer melodies. To the sovereign and enduring God they utter songs, and make their praises heard, for God alone is holy and revered, enactor of all mighty deeds, the fashioner of all new things, the seeder of all righteousness, the grower of all saving acts, creator of all healing, awesome in praises, source of every wonder, who renews each day, with constant good, Creation's work—as it is said: “The maker of the skies' great lights, whose love is everlasting!”

Let a new light shine forever upon Zion. Soon, may everyone of us be worthy of its light. Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the shaper of the heavens' lights.

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זורע צדקות מצמיח ישועות / the seeder of all righteousness, the grower of all saving acts. What the prayer says about God applies also to us: For salvation to grow, we must sow צדקות—righteous and just acts. J.A.S.

לְאֵל בְּרוּךְ נְעִימוֹת יִתְּנוּ לַמֶּלֶךְ אֵל חַי וְקַיִם זְמִירוֹת יֵאֱמָרוּ  
 וְתִשְׁבְּחוּת יִשְׁמְעוּ כִּי הוּא לְבָדוֹ מְרוֹם וְקִדְוֶשׁ פּוֹעֵל גְּבוּרוֹת עוֹשֶׂה  
 חֲדָשׁוֹת זוֹרֵעַ צְדָקוֹת מְצַמֵּיחַ יְשׁוּעוֹת בּוֹרָא רְפוּאוֹת נוֹרָא תְהִלּוֹת  
 אֲדוֹן הַנִּפְלְאוֹת הַמְחַדֵּשׁ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית  
 כְּאָמֹר: לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:  
 \* אֹר חֲדָשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תֵּאִיר וְנִזְכֶּה כְּלָנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה לְאוּרוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה  
 יְהוָה יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת:

Or ḥadash al tziyon ta'ir venizkeh ḥulanu bimherah le'oro.  
 Baruh atah adonay yotzer hame'orot.

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לעשה...חסדו / The maker...everlasting (Psalms 136:7).

Every day, Creation is renewed.  
 Wake up and see unfolding  
 In the spreading light of dawn,  
 The world and all it contains  
 Coming into being, new, fresh,  
 Filled with divine goodness  
 And love.  
 Every day, Creation is renewed.  
 Reflected in the great lights  
 We see a new day,  
 One precious day,  
 Eternity.

S.P.W.

## AHAVAH RABAH / LOVE AND TORAH

With an abounding love, you love us, NURTURER, our God; with great compassion do you care for us. Our source, our sovereign, just as our ancestors placed their trust in you, and you imparted to them laws of life, so be gracious to us, too, and teach us. Our fount, our loving parent, caring one, be merciful with us, and place into our hearts ability to understand, to see, to hear, to learn, to teach, to keep, to do, and to uphold with love all that we study of your Torah. ↪

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רבה אהבה / With an abounding love, you love us. *Ahavah Rabah* may be called the quintessentially Jewish prayer. In boundless love for Israel, God gives the greatest gift imaginable: teachings that will help us to live. What more could we want from the loving parent, combining attributes of both father and mother, who here becomes the compassionate teacher, sharing the gift of true knowledge with children who have become disciples? We pray that we may have the open and understanding heart to receive these teachings, to make them real by our deeds, and to pass them on to others. This is our response to God's love: a commitment to study, to live the life of Torah, and to carry it forward to future generations. A.G.

COMMENTARY. אבותינו ואמותינו שבטחו בך / just as our ancestors placed their trust in you. Every Jew, including Jews by choice and Jews from families that have been non-observant for several generations, can claim such ancestors as Abraham and Sarah, models of trust in God. Torah is our living inheritance because from that time until this in every generation, there have been Jews who trusted, learned, taught, and added their words and lives to the unfolding process of Torah. We have inherited their words, their deeds, and their trust. The challenge to learn, teach and do—to trust in God—is their challenge to us and our challenge to future generations.

R.H.

## אַהֲבַה רַבָּה

אַהֲבַה רַבָּה אֶהְבְּתָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חֻמְלָה גְדוֹלָה וַיְתַרָה חֻמְלָתָּ  
עָלֵינוּ: אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו בְּעָבוּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ שְׂבָטָחוּ בָּךְ  
וַתְּלַמְּדֵם חֻקֵי חַיִּים כֵּן תִּתְחַנֵּנּוּ וַתְּלַמְּדֵנוּ: אָבִינוּ הָאֵב הַרְחִמָן  
הַמְּרַחֵם רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְתֵן בְּלִפְנֵינוּ לְהִבִּין וְלְהַשְׂכִּיל לְשִׁמְעַ לְלַמֵּד  
וְלִלְמַד לְשִׁמּוֹר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת וְלִקְיָם אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי תַלְמוּד תּוֹרָתְךָ  
בְּאַהֲבָה: ←

Ahava**h** rabah ahavtanu adonay eloheynu hemlah gedolah viterah hamalta aleynu. Avinu malkenu ba'avur avoteynu ve'imoteynu shebatehu veha vatelamdem hukey hayim ken tehonenu utelamdenu. Avinu ha'av harahaman hamrahem ra**h**em aleynu veten belibenu lehavin ulehaskil lishmo'a lilmod ulelamed lishmor vela'asot ulekayem et kol divrey talmud torateha be'ahavah. ↪

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COMMENTARY. In the preceding pages (279-298) we offered an extended blessing for Creation. We accepted our creatureliness, our place in nature. Now we shift to concern with what gives our creaturely lives transcendent meaning.

We learn of our own significance through the love that is freely offered to us first by parents and later by others as well. We learn our ultimate worth in this love, which is rooted in the divine love. This is truly essential teaching! This love teaches us what to do with our lives, how to serve others, how to do the divine bidding. Thus loving and learning are inseparable parts of our tie to the divine. D.A.T.

KAVANAH. In my personal practice, I have replaced מלכנו אבינו/our Father our King with אבינו אמו/our Father our Mother because it is through the teaching of my parents that I have come to see God. J.A.S.

Enlighten us with your Torah, cause our hearts to cling to your mitzvot. Make our hearts one, to love your name and be in awe of it. Keep us from shame, and from humiliation, and from stumbling, today and always. For we have trusted in your holy, great, and awesome name. May we be glad, rejoicing in your saving power, and may you reunite our people from all corners of the earth, leading us proudly independent to our land. For you are the redeeming God and have brought us near to your great name, to offer thanks to you, and lovingly declare your unity. Blessed are you, ABUNDANT ONE, who lovingly cares for your people Israel.

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KAVANAH. In gathering together the four corners of the tallit, we gather our scattered thoughts and focus on unity—uniting our people, uniting the disparate elements of our lives, uniting with the oneness that links all that is. This inner unity is the place out of which our hearts speak the Shema. D.A.T.

באהבה וליחורך/lovingly declare your unity. We could also translate this phrase, “declare your unity through love.” When we recite the Shema, our affirmation of the ETERNAL ONE is complete not when we say, “אחד/alone,” but when we accept the mitzvah of “ואהבת/you must love.”

J.A.S.

NOTE. Jews traditionally have gathered in the four *tzitziyot* at the corners of their tallitot when they reach *vehavi'enu*/reunite. The *tzitziyot* are then held throughout the Shema.

וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ וְדַבַּק לְבָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וַיִּחַד לְבָכְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה  
וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֶךָ וְלֹא גְבוּשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם וְלֹא נִכְשֵׁל לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: כִּי  
בְשֵׁם קְדוּשַׁךְ הַגְּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּטָחָנוּ: נִגְיְלָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ:

\* וְהִבִּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מֵאֲרֻבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ וְתוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ:  
כִּי אֵל פּוֹעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲתָה: וְקִרְבָּתָנוּ לְשְׁמֶךָ הַגְּדוֹל סֶלָה בְּאֶמֶת:  
לְהוֹדוֹת לְךָ וּלְיִחְדָּךָ בְּאַהֲבָה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Veha'er eyneynu betorateha vedabek libenu bemitzvoteha  
veyahed levavenu le'ahavah uleyirah et shemecha. Velo nevosh  
velo nikalem velo nikashel le'olam va'ed. Ki veshem kodshecha  
hagadol vehanora batahnu. Nagilah venismehach bishu'atecha.

Vahavi'enu leshalom me'arba kanfot ha'aretz vetolihenu  
komemiyut le'artzenu. Ki el po'el yeshu'ot atah. Vekeravtanu  
leshimecha hagadol selah be'emet. Lehodot lecha uleyahedecha  
be'ahavah. Baruch atah adonay ohev amo yisra'el.

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KAVANAH. When we feel as distant from others as the four corners of the  
earth are from each other, when our alienation and obsession with self  
make us belligerent, gather us together; bring us to peace. Help us to  
become aware of your wholeness; let us be whole. J.A.S.

# שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ. יְהוָה אֶחָד

## SHEMA

Listen, Israel: THE ETERNAL is our God,  
THE ETERNAL ONE alone!

Blessed be the name and glory of God's realm forever!

And you must love THE ONE, your God, with your whole heart, with every breath, with all you have. Take these words that I command you now to heart. Teach them intently to your children. Speak them when you sit inside your house or walk upon the road, when you lie down and when you rise. And bind them as a sign upon your hand, and keep them visible before your eyes. Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. ↩

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שמע ישראל / Listen, Israel. The core of our worship is not a prayer at all, but a cry to our fellow-Jews and fellow-humans. In it we declare that God is one—which is also to say that humanity is one, that life is one, that joys and sufferings are all one—for God is the force that binds them all together. There is nothing obvious about this truth, for life as we experience it seems infinitely fragmented. Human beings seem isolated from one another, divided by all the fears and hatreds that make up human history. Even within a single life, one moment feels cut off from the next, memories of joy and fullness offering us little consolation when we are depressed or lonely. To assert that all is one in God is our supreme act of faith. No wonder that the Shema, the first “prayer” we learn in childhood, is also the last thing we are to say before we die. The memory of these words on the lips of martyrs deepens our faith as we call them out each day. A.G.

COMMENTARY. From recognition of our place in nature in the first blessing of this part of the service, we shifted to concern with our moral place in the second blessing. As creatures made conscious of our ultimate worth by love, we recite the Shema. We thereby enter into a partnership aimed at transforming the world and ourselves in the light of that vision of ultimate worth.

D.A.T.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:  
וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם  
לְבָנֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּתֶךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֹּתְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ  
וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאֹזַן עַל-יְדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:  
וְכַתַּבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

Shema yisra'el adonay eloheynu adonay ehad.

Baruh shem kevod malhuto le'olam va'ed.

Ve'ahavta et adonay eloheha

behol levaveha uvehol nafsheha uvehol me'odeha.

Vehayu hadevarim ha'eleh asher anohi metzaveha hayom al  
levaveha,

Veshinantam levaneha vedibarta bam

beshivteha beveyteha uvelechteha vadereh uveshoheba  
uvekumeha.

Ukeshartam le'ot al yadeha vehayu letotafot beyn eyneha.

Uhtavtam al mezuzot beyteha uvishareha.

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GUIDED MEDITATION: Think of someone who loves you. Feel his or her presence. Take a deep breath and open up to the love that is coming to you. Focus on that feeling of love. L.W.K.

וְאֵהָבֶתְךָ / And you must love. You shall love your God intellectually, emotionally and with all your deeds. Whatever you love most in these ways is your god. For the Jewish people, the deepest love should be for freedom, justice and peace. M.M.K./M.S.

יְשִׁמְעוּ... / Listen...gates (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).

*For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical selection beginning on page 309, then continue with the third paragraph, page 311.*

## BIBLICAL SELECTION I

It came to pass, and will again,  
that if you truly listen  
to the voice of THE ETERNAL ONE, your God,  
being sure to do whatever has been asked of you today,  
THE ONE, your God, will make of you a model  
for all nations of the earth,  
and there will come upon you all these blessings,  
as you listen to the call of THE ABUNDANT ONE, your God:  
Blessed be you in the city,  
blessed be you upon the field.  
Blessed be the fruit of your womb,  
the fruit of your land, the fruit of your cattle,  
the calving of your oxen, and the lambing of your sheep.  
Blessed be your basket and your kneading-trough.  
Blessed be you when you come home,  
and blessed be you when you go forth.

See, I have placed in front of you today  
both life and good, both death and ill,  
commanding you today to love THE BOUNDLESS ONE, your God,  
to walk in ways I have ordained,  
keeping the commandments, laws, and judgments,  
so that you survive and multiply.  
THE BOUNTIFUL, your God, will bless you  
on the land you are about to enter and inherit. ↪

For the second paragraph of the Shema, read either the version below or the biblical selection beginning on page 310, then continue with the third paragraph, page 312.

## BIBLICAL SELECTION I

וְהִזָּה אִם-שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמּוֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת  
אֶת-כָּל-מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם וּנְתַנֶּנָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲלוּיֹן  
עַל כָּל-גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ: וּבָאוּ עֲלֶיךָ כָּל-הַבְּרָכוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְהַשִּׁיגָה כִּי  
תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּעִיר וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בַשָּׂדֶה:  
בָּרוּךְ פְּרִי-בִטְנֶךָ וּפְרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ וּפְרִי בְהֵמָתְךָ שֶׁגֵר אֲלֻפֶיךָ  
וְעִשְׂתָּרוֹת צֹאנֶךָ: בָּרוּךְ טִנְאֶךָ וּמִשְׁאֲרֹתֶיךָ: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבֹאֶךָ  
וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּצֵאתְךָ:

רְאֵה נִתַּתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַטּוֹב וְאֶת-הַפְּטוֹת  
וְאֶת-הַרָע: אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מִצְוֶה הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
לְלַבֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשִׁמּוֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחַקְתָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיִּיתָ וְרַבִּיתָ  
וּבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: —

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COMMENTARY. The traditional wording of Biblical Selection II presents detailed bountiful or devastating consequences of Israel's collective relationship to the mitzvot. That biblical section (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) offers a supernatural theology that many contemporary Jews find difficult. The biblical selection on this page (Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 30:15-19) was included in the 1945 Reconstructionist siddur. It begins by encouraging observance in the same language, but concentrates on the positive ways in which observance of mitzvot focuses our attention on God's presence as perceived through productivity and the pursuit of abundant life. S.S.

DERASH. A person must acquire a religious faith, not by being reasoned to about God, but by experiencing God's power in making life worthwhile.

M.M.K. (Adapted)

But if your heart should turn away,  
and you not heed, and go astray,  
and you submit to other gods and serve them,  
I declare to you today that you shall be  
destroyed completely; you shall not live out  
a great expanse of days upon the land  
that you now cross the Jordan to possess.  
I call as witnesses concerning you  
both heaven and earth, both life and death,  
that I have placed in front of you  
a blessing and a curse.  
Choose life, that you may live,  
you and your seed!

*Continue on page 311.*

וְאִם יִפְנֶה לְבַבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמַע וְנִדְחִתָּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
וְעַבַדְתָּם: הַגְּדַתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכּוּ יָמִים  
עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הִירְדָן לְבֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:  
הַעֲלִיתִי בְכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמְּוֹת נִתְּתִי  
לְפָנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה וּבַחֲרִתָּ בַחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲטִיֵּה אֶתָּה וְזִרְעֶךָ:

*Continue with ויאמר, page 312.*

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למען תחיה אתה וזרעך /that you may live, you and your seed. These biblical words, so tempting in their simplicity, reveal a complex view of history once endorsed by some of our ancestors. Obey the mitzvot, and peace and prosperity are yours; transgress the commandments, and punishment—specifically, exile from the Land of Israel—will befall you.

For many generations, this “adaptive myth”—that exile was a consequence of our own failings—helped Jews explain and sustain themselves through periods of oppression. But for many in our generation, such answers are inadequate. We can no longer believe that whatever evil befalls us, individually or collectively, results from sin or transgression; bad things do happen to good people, and the punishment does not always fit the crime.

In the shadow of the Holocaust, perhaps the best we can do—perhaps the right thing to do—is to *respond* to evil, rather than seek explanations for its existence. In the words of the Talmud, we cannot explain either the prosperity of the wicked or the suffering of the just. But our tradition teaches that God is on the side of good, freedom, justice and righteousness, and as we affirm and work for those values, we deny the ascendancy of evil.

R.H.

## BIBLICAL SELECTION II

And if you truly listen to my bidding, as I bid you now—loving THE FOUNT OF LIFE, your God, and serving God with all your heart, with every breath—then I will give you rain upon your land in its appointed time, the early rain and later rain, so you may gather in your corn, your wine and your oil. And I will give you grass upon your field to feed your animals, and you will eat and be content. Beware, then, lest your heart be led astray, and you go off and worship other gods, and you submit to them, so that the anger of THE MIGHTY ONE should burn against you, and seal up the heavens so no rain would fall, so that the ground would not give forth her produce, and you be forced to leave the good land I am giving you.

So place these words upon your heart, into your lifebreath. Bind them as a sign upon your hand, and let them rest before your eyes. Teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit at home, and when you walk upon the road, when you lie down, and when you rise. Inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates—so that your days and your children's days be many on the land THE FAITHFUL ONE promised to give your ancestors, as long as heaven rests above the earth. ↪

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DERASH. The traditional second paragraph of the Shema (Deuteronomy 11:13-21) offers an account of the natural process by which the blessings of God themselves lead to pride, self-satisfaction, and ingratitude on the part of those who receive them. Ironically, the more we are blessed, so it seems, the less grateful and aware of blessing we become. It is when we are most sated, Scripture warns us, that we should be most careful. Fullness can lead to ingratitude, and ingratitude to idolatry—primarily in the form of worship of our own accomplishments. Then, indeed, “the heavens might close up and no rain fall.” For, once we begin to worship our achievements, we will never find satisfaction. A.G.

## BIBLICAL SELECTION II

וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם  
הַיּוֹם לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה אֶתִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעַבְדוֹ בְּכֹל-לְבַבְכֶם וּבְכֹל-  
נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מְטֵר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דְּגָנְךָ  
וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשׂוֹדֶךָ לְבְהִמְתֵּךָ וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ:  
הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן-יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסַרְתֶּם וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים  
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם  
וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה מְטֵר וְהִיאַדְמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת-יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מִהָרָה  
מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבֵה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:

וְשָׁמַתְּ אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים עַל-לְבַבְכֶם וְעַל-נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשַׁרְתֶּם אֶתְּ  
לְאוֹת עַל-יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וְלִמְדַתֶּם אֶתְּ  
אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֶּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ  
וּבְקוּמְךָ: וּכְתַבְתֶּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם  
וְיָמֵי בְנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לְתַת לָהֶם  
כִּימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ: ←

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COMMENTARY. What human action could result in the destruction of the rains, the onset of crop failure and famine? Abuse of the eco-system upon which our very lives depend. And how could such an event occur? When we lose sight of our place in the world and the wondrous gift in all that is. The traditional second paragraph of the Shema was replaced by another biblical selection in earlier Reconstructionist liturgy because the traditional paragraph was understood as literal reward and punishment. However, today in the light of our awareness of the human abuse of the environment, we recognize that often this reward and punishment rest in our own hands. This ancient and yet vital message of the Torah urges us to choose life.

D.A.T.

THE BOUNDLESS ONE told Moses: Speak to the Israelites—tell them to make themselves *tzitzit* upon the corners of their clothes, throughout their generations. Have them place upon the corner *tzitzit* a twine of royal blue. This is your *tzitzit*. Look at it and remember all the mitzvot of the ETERNAL ONE. And do them, so you won't go off after the lusts of your heart or after what catches your eye, so that you remember to do all my mitzvot and be holy for your God. I am THE FAITHFUL ONE, your God, who brought you from Mitzrayim to be for you a God. I am THE INFINITE, your God.

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למען תזכור /so that you remember. The *tzitzit*, like all the forms of religion, are there as reminders for us as we go about our daily lives. All of us have had moments when we most became ourselves, liberated from the bonds holding us back, or when we discovered those great inner truths that lend meaning to our lives. But such moments are forgotten, covered over by the petty angers and frustrations of daily living, by the hard shell we think we need about us to protect our most precious feelings.

Our tradition calls upon us to bring such moments back to mind and make them part of our worship. Our own innermost liberation is our “coming out of Egypt”; our own moment of deepest truth is our “standing before Sinai.” Let us remember these as we look at our *tzitzit*, and join them to the ancient memories of our people. A.G.

DERASH. The four *tzitziyot* represent the four corners of the world. The divine presence spans the entire area from one corner of the world to the other. So too are the inescapable moral obligations which extend throughout our lives no matter where we are. D.A.T.

ויאמר...אלהיכם / THE BOUNDLESS ONE...God (Numbers 15:37-41).

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ  
אֲלֵהֶם וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל־פְּנֵי בְגְדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם וּנְתָנוּ  
עַל־צִיצִית הַפָּנֶה פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ  
וּזְכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתְּרוּ אַחֲרַי  
לְבַבְכֶם וְאַחֲרַי עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אֹתָם זָנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם: לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ  
וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה  
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהָיוֹת לָכֶם  
לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

**אִמְרָת:**

Vayomer adonay el moshe leymor. Daber el beney yisra'el  
ve'amarta aleyhem ve'asu lahem tzitzit al kanfey vigdeyhem  
ledorotam venatenu al tzitzit hakanaf petil tehelet. Vehayah  
lahem letzitzit uritem oto uzhartem et kol mitzvot adonay  
va'asitem otam velo taturu aharey levavehem ve'aharey  
eyneyhem asher atem zonim ahareyhem. Lema'an tizkeru  
va'asitem et kol mitzvotay vihe-yitem kedoshim leyloheyhem.  
Ani adonay eloheyhem asher hotzeyti etehem me'erezt  
mitzrayim lihyot lahem leylohim ani adonay eloheyhem.  
Adonay eloheyhem emet.

DERASH. Torah instructs me:

“Put *tzitzit* on the corners of your garment  
and weave a thread of blue to the fringes.

These shall remind you to live

justly,

lovingly, and

simply.

Look upon them and remember:

Be holy!

for the Source and Substance of Life is holy.”

R.M.S.

## EMET VEYATZIV / TRUE AND ESTABLISHED

True, and established, and correct,  
enduring and straightforward,  
steadfast, good, and beautiful  
one fundamental principle shall be—  
as for our ancestors so for us  
and for the generations after us  
and for all the generations that the seed of Israel,  
your servants, shall exist—  
the truth for early eras and for later ones,  
a thing most excellent and real,  
forever and as long as time endures,  
a true and faithful law that cannot pass away.  
The truth is that you are THE ETERNAL ONE,  
our God, our ancients' God,  
our sovereign one, our ancients' sovereign one,  
our champion, our ancients' champion,  
our rock, the rock of our salvation;  
our redeemer and our rescuer,  
your name has always been,  
there is no God but you.  
Help of our ancestors you have always been,  
shield and savior to their children after them,  
in each and every generation.  
In heaven's heights your dwelling sits,  
but your judgments and your justice  
fill the farthest reaches of the earth.  
Happy is the one who pays heed to your mitzvot,  
who takes your Torah and your word to heart!  
True it is that you are sovereign to your people,  
and a mighty ruler who is quick to plead their cause. ↪

## אֱמֶת וַיֵּצִיב

אֱמֶת וַיֵּצִיב וְנִכּוֹן וְקִים וַיִּשָּׁר וְנֶאֱמַן וְטוֹב וַיִּפֶּה הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה:  
 \*עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְעַל אֲמוֹתֵינוּ וְעַלֵּינוּ וְעַל בְּנֵינוּ וְעַל דּוֹרוֹתֵינוּ וְעַל  
 כָּל־דּוֹרוֹת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֶּיךָ:

עַל הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים וְעַל הָאַחֲרוֹנִים דְּבַר טוֹב וְקִים לְעוֹלָם וְעַד אֱמֶת  
 וְאִמּוּנָה חֵק וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר: \*אֱמֶת שְׁאַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֵּהֵי  
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ גּוֹאֵל אֲמוֹתֵינוּ  
 צוֹרֵנוּ צוֹר יִשְׁעֵתָנוּ פּוֹדֵנוּ וּמְצִילֵנוּ מֵעוֹלָם הוּא שְׁמֶךָ: אֵין אֱלֹהִים  
 זוּלָתְךָ:

עֲנֵת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ אֵתָּה הוּא מֵעוֹלָם מִגֵּן וּמוֹשִׁיעַ לְבָנֶיהֶם  
 אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּכָל דֵּר וְדֵר: בְּרוּם עוֹלָם מוֹשְׁכֶךָ וּמְשַׁפְּטֶיךָ וְצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ עַד  
 אֶפְסֵי־אָרֶץ: אֲשֶׁרֵי אִישׁ שִׁשְׁמַע לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְתוֹרַתְךָ וְדִבְרֶיךָ יִשִּׁים עַל  
 לְבוֹ: אֱמֶת אֵתָּה הוּא אֲדוֹן לְעַמֶּךָ וּמֶלֶךְ גְּבוּר לְרִיב רִיבָם: —

DERASH. *Emet Veyatziv* is an affirmation of the Shema. We join the last words of the Shema to אמת as a statement of our ongoing commitment to their truth. Both אמת/truth and אמן/Amen are derived from a root meaning “strong” or “firm.” It has also been noted that the three letters of אמת span the Hebrew alphabet; they are its beginning, middle and end. In contrast, the letters of שקר/lie are all huddled together in a single corner of the alphabet. Truth is broad and all-encompassing; we have to expand our minds in order to embrace it. Lies, like gossip and malicious talk, bring out the narrowness within us. Let us commit ourselves, in affirming the Shema, to breadth of vision and the ongoing search for truth.

L.W.K./A.G.

True it is that you are first and last,  
and without you, we have no ruler, champion, or savior.  
From servitude and bondage you redeemed us, BOUNDLESS ONE,  
our God,  
and from a house of slavery you set us free.  
For this your loved ones celebrated you,  
and held divinity in reverence,  
and your beloved ones gave forth their melodies,  
their songs and exaltations, blessings and thanks,  
to the sovereign, living, and enduring God,  
the lofty, the exalted, and the awesome one,  
who casts the prideful down, and lifts the lowly,  
who sets the captive free, and saves the humble,  
and who helps the poor, responding to our people  
when they cry aloud to God. ↩

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Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again—and what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two is four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are? We should say to each of them, “Do you know what you are? You are a marvel! You are unique. In all of the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you. And look at your body...what a wonder it is. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is like you, a marvel? You must cherish one another. You must work—we all must work—to make this world worthy of its children.”

Pablo Casals

**אֵמֶת** אֵתָהּ הוּא רֵאשׁוֹן וְאֵתָהּ הוּא אַחֲרוֹן וּמִבְּלִעְדֶּיךָ אֵין  
לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ: מִמְצָרִים גְּאֻלָּתָנוּ יֵהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וּמִבֵּית  
עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ:

עַל־זֹאת שֶׁבָחוּ אֱהוּבִים וְרוֹמְמוּ אֵל: וְנִתְּנוּ יָדַיִם זְמִירוֹת שִׁירוֹת  
וְתִשְׁבְּחוֹת בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת לְמֶלֶךְ אֵל חַי וְקַיִם: רָם וְנֹשֵׂא גְדוֹל  
וְנוֹרָא מְשֻׁפֵּיל גְּאִים וּמִגְבִּיָּה שְׁפָלִים מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים וּפּוֹדֵה עַנּוּיִם  
וְעוֹזֵר דְּלִים וְעוֹנֵה לְעַמּוֹ בְּעַת שְׁוֹעַם אֱלִיוֹ: ←

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COMMENTARY. The sequence of this part of the service moves from Creation (*Yotzer*) to love and revelation (*Ahavah Rabah*), to affirmation of our commitment (*Shema*) and now to redemption. In this way the idea is expressed that redemption becomes possible only if we participate in making it happen.

The symbol of redemption in the mythic life of the Jewish people is the crossing of the Sea. In the rabbinic imagination, the ancient Israelites slog through mud up to their knees, their waists, even their chests. It falls to us to continue the task of redemption—to face the contemporary morass and find the resolve to wade through it with waves threatening to submerge us on either hand. We wade toward a future that at our darkest moments seems but a dim hope. The hint of the Promised Land is in our loving moments.

We join in singing what the Israelites proclaimed after they had successfully crossed the Sea and find in their redemption the strength to seek our own. This struggle carries us into the Amidah, a prayer of becoming, of transformation, of divine-human partnership that brings grace into our lives and into our world.

D.A.T.

Give praises  
to the highest God! Blessed is God, the one to bless!  
So Moses, Miriam and the Israelites came forth with  
song to you,  
in boundless happiness, and they all cried:  
“Who among the mighty can compare  
to you, ETERNAL ONE?  
Who can compare to you,  
adorned in holiness,  
awesome in praises,  
acting wondrously!”

A new song did the redeemed ones sing out to your name,  
beside the Sea.  
Together, all of them gave thanks, declared your sovereignty,  
and said:  
“THE HOLY ONE will reign forever!”

Rock of Israel, rise up to the help of Israel,  
redeem, according to your word, Judah and Israel.  
Blessed are you, ETERNAL ONE, the champion of Israel.

*On Rosh Hashanah, continue with the Amidah on the next page.*

*For the silent Yom Kippur Amidah, turn to page 739.*

*If the Yom Kippur Amidah is being recited aloud through the Kedushah, turn to page 387.*

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GUIDED MEDITATION. The astounding moment of awe and thanksgiving experienced by the Israelites upon the crossing of the Red Sea has parallels in all of our lives. We have all had difficult crossings, experiences that we struggled through in spite of the pain they caused us. Thus completion afforded us a sublime sense of inner joy and peace. Take a moment to recall one of those times. Allow the feelings of celebration to envelop you. Hold on to those feelings as you recite the *Mi Hamaḥah*. D.B.

\* תְּהִלּוֹת לְאֵל עֲלִיּוֹן בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבוֹרָךְ מֹשֶׁה וּמְרִים וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לָךְ עָנּוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה וְאָמְרוּ כָּלֶם:  
 מִי־כַמְכָּה בָּאֵלִם יְהוָה מִי כַמְכָּה נֹאדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ  
 נוֹרָא תְהִלַּת עֲשֵׂה פֶלְא:  
 \*שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שְׁבַחֵנוּ גְאוּלִּים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל־שִׁפְתַי הַיָּם:  
 יִחַד כָּלֶם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ:  
 יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:  
 \* צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל קוֹמָה בְּעִזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: וּפְדָה כְּנַאֲמָךְ יִהְיֶה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 גְּאֻלָּנוּ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה גְּאֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Mi ḥamohah ba'elim adonay. Mi kamohah nedar bakodesh  
 nora tehilot osey feleh.

Shirah ḥadashah shibeḥu ge'ulim leshimeḥa al sefat hayam.

Yahad kulam hodu vehimliḥu ve'ameru.

Adonay yimloh le'olam va'ed.

Tzur yisra'el kumah be'ezrat yisra'el. Ufeday hinumeḥa yehudah  
 veyisrael. Go'aleynu adonay tzeva'ot shemo kedosh yisra'el.

Baruḥ atah adonay ga'al yisra'el.

*On Rosh Hashanah, continue with the Amidah on the next page.*

*For the silent Yom Kippur Amidah, turn to page 740.*

*If the Yom Kippur Amidah is being recited aloud through the Kedushah, turn to  
 page 388.*

DERASH. Rabbi Judah said: [At the sea] each tribe said to the other, "You go into the sea first!" As they stood there bickering, Naḥshon ben Aminadav jumped into the water. God said to Moses, who had been praying, "My friend is drowning—and you pray!" "What can I do?" Moses asked. God responded, "Speak to the people of Israel and tell them to go! Raise your staff..."

Talmud Sotah 37a

DERASH. Most congregations stand at *tzur yisra'el* rather than waiting for the blessing. Thus we are already on our feet when we request that God *קומה* /arise. We cannot ask God to rise up to help Israel unless we have done so ourselves.

E.M.

## PRELUDE TO THE AMIDAH

### *Prayers I*

Don't let me fall  
Like a stone that drops on the hard ground.  
And don't let my hands become dry  
As the twigs of a tree  
When the wind beats down the last leaves.  
And when the storm rips dust from the earth  
Angry and howling,  
Don't let me become the last fly  
Trembling terrified on a windowpane.  
Don't let me fall.  
I have so much prayer,  
But as a blade of Your grass in a distant, wild field  
Loses a seed in the lap of the earth  
And dies away,  
Sow in me Your living breath,  
As You sow a seed in the earth.

Kadya Molodowsky  
(translated by Kathryn Hellerstein)



...And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things....

William Wordsworth

RENEW OUR DAYS  
 Drawn by your love, I come into your house  
 ואני גרב חסדך אבוא, ביתך: עוֹלָם.

שוֹיֵתִי

הַיּוֹם הַרְתָּ עֵינַי.

וְרָתַמְרָ שׁוֹבוּ  
 בְּנֵי אָדָם: לִמְנוּחַ  
 יִמְיָנו כֵּן הוֹדַע וּנְבִיא  
 לִכְבֹּ חֲכָמָה: וְשׁוֹבָה  
 יְהוָה עַד-מֹתִי וְהִנַּחֵם  
 עַל-עַבְדֶּיךָ: שִׁבְעֵנו  
 בְּבַקֵּר חֲסֵדְךָ וְנִגְנָה  
 וְנִשְׁמָחָה כִּלְיָמֵינוּ  
 וְיְהִי נֶעֱם ה' עֲלֵינוּ  
 RETURN US, ETERNAL ONE

הַשִּׁיבֵנו  
 יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ

הַיּוֹם הַרְתָּ עֵינַי.

AS YOU HAVE DONE OF OLD!  
 A sovereign on high,  
 Great power who reigns, who calls to each era, reveals hidden things, the purest of speech, who discerns heaven's spheres, who guides constellations and seasons, and years.

וּנְשׁוּבָה  
 הַדָּשׁ  
 יְמֵינוּ  
 כְּקִדְשׁ

הַיּוֹם הַרְתָּ עֵינַי:

הַשִּׁיבֵנו  
 יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ

מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן  
 גִּבּוֹר בְּגִבּוֹרוֹת  
 קוֹרָא הַדּוֹרוֹת  
 גּוֹלֵה נִסְתָּרוֹת  
 אִמְרוֹתָיו שְׁהוֹרוֹת  
 יוֹדַע סְפּוּרוֹת  
 לַתְּצַאֲוֹת מִזְרוֹת  
 לַעֲדֵי-עַד יִמְלֹךְ:  
 מֶלֶךְ עֲלִיּוֹן  
 LET US RETURN

וּנְשׁוּבָה  
 הַדָּשׁ  
 יְמֵינוּ  
 כְּקִדְשׁ

לְנַגְדֵי  
 תָּמִיד

RETURN US, ETERNAL ONE  
 Before you every secret is uncovered, the whole multitude of mysteries since the world began. All is revealed and known before you - יהוה - your watchful eye reaches beyond all generations.

יּוֹם הַרְתָּ עֵינַי  
 Today the world is born