

Meditation on Prayer

In the Bible, God speaks to us, and we listen. At the moment of prayer, we speak to God and God listens.

—ISAAC ARAMA

*God of Abraham,
God of Isaac, and
God of Jacob*

Why is the word “God” repeated each time? We might more easily have said it once. The repeated use of the word “God” highlights that each patriarch—and matriarch—knew God personally and sought a distinct relationship with God.

We recite this Silent Amidah at the evening, morning, and afternoon services of Yom Kippur.

Before the Amidah begins, it is customary to take three steps backward, as if we are leaving our familiar surroundings, and then three steps forward, as we approach God’s presence.

When reciting the words “barukh atah” on this page, we customarily bend the knees and bow, standing up straight by the time we reach the word “Adonai.” We repeat these motions at the end of the first b’rakhah when we come to the words “barukh atah Adonai.” The sign † indicates the places to bow.

ADONAI, open my lips that my mouth may speak Your praise.

First B’rakhah: Our Ancestors

Version with Patriarchs:

† *Barukh atah ADONAI,*
our God and God of our
ancestors,
God of Abraham, God of
Isaac, and God of Jacob,
great, mighty, awe-inspiring,
transcendent God,
who acts with lovingkindness
and creates all things,
who remembers the loving
deeds of our ancestors,
and who will send a redeemer
to their children’s children
with love
for the sake of divine honor.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

† *Barukh atah ADONAI,*
our God and God of our
ancestors,
God of Abraham, God of
Isaac, and God of Jacob,
God of Sarah, God of
Rebecca, God of Rachel,
and God of Leah,
great, mighty, awe-inspiring,
transcendent God,
who acts with lovingkindness
and creates all things,
who remembers the loving
deeds of our ancestors,
and who will send a redeemer
to their children’s children
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When reciting the words בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה on this page, we customarily bend the knees and bow, standing up straight by the time we reach the word יהוה. We repeat these motions at the end of the first b’rakhah when we come to the words בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה. The sign † indicates the places to bow.

אֲדַנִּי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח, וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

† בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
[וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם,
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה,
אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל, וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה,
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא,
אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר
חֲסֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל
לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם [וְאִמָּהוֹת],
וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם
לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Version with Patriarchs:

† בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי
יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל
הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא,
אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר
חֲסֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל
לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ
בְּאַהֲבָה.

we bow, enabling us to focus on the miracle of our bodies’ construction. We stand up straight when we reach God’s name, for we speak to God face to face. The Talmud confined the bowing to the beginning and end of this first b’rakhah, and to the beginning and end of the next to last b’rakhah, thanking God for the gift of life.

ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח. Psalm 51:17, where prayer is exalted over sacrifice.

GOD OF ABRAHAM אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם. Why don’t we say *eloheinu melekh ha-olam*, “ruler of time and space,” as part of the opening b’rakhah as we do with every opening b’rakhah, but immediately proceed to “God of Abraham”? Because Abraham was the first to discover that God is the ruler of the entire universe, by mentioning him we also acknowledge God.

GOD OF SARAH אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה. Many congregations add the names of the four matriarchs at the beginning of this b’rakhah, because of their significance as founders of our people, and as part of our effort to reclaim women’s voices and to honor women’s experiences.

GREAT, MIGHTY, AWE-INSPIRING הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא. This phrase is a quotation from Deuteronomy 10:17–18, where God’s might is characterized by the befriending of the stranger, the widow, and the orphan.

REDEEMER גּוֹאֵל. Judaism’s messianic impulse reminds us that the world, as broken as it sometimes appears, is ultimately perfectible; God’s teachings, carried out by us, will help the world achieve such perfection. Some prefer to use the word גְּאֻלָּה (*g’ullah*), “redemption,” in place of “redeemer,” to de-emphasize the role of any single individual in facilitating the world’s healing.

AMIDAH. Amidah literally means “standing” and is the moment of personal prayer recited quietly, as if standing before God. Every Amidah contains three introductory b’rakhot. The first recalls our ancestors and their relation to God; the second describes God’s continuing presence in the world; the third emphasizes God’s uniqueness and the path to God: holiness. Similarly, every Amidah ends with three b’rakhot. The first looks toward the restoration of God’s presence to Zion; the next thanks God for all the gifts we experience in life; and the final one asks for peace. On Yom Kippur—as on Shabbat and holy days—there is only one intermediate b’rakhah, which describes the holiness of the day.

BENDING THE KNEES AND BOWING. The Talmud encourages us to pay attention to the movement of each of our vertebrae as

Immortality

Each morning You restore consciousness to my sleep-filled body, and I awake.

Each spring You restore vitality to trees, plants, and animals that have hibernated through the winter, and they grow once more.

Each day I remember those who have died; they live on beyond the grave.

Each moment I contemplate the rebirth of our people; I recall that You put the breath of life into dry bones.

Praised are You, Adonai, for planting immortality in my soul, in my people, and in our world.

—ROBERT SCHEINBERG

Remember us for life,
Sovereign who delights in life,
and inscribe us in the Book of Life,
for Your sake, God of life.

Version with Patriarchs:

You are the sovereign
who helps and saves and
shields.

† *Barukh atah ADONAI,*
Shield of Abraham.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

You are the sovereign who
helps and guards, saves and
shields.

† *Barukh atah ADONAI,*
Shield of Abraham and
Guardian of Sarah.

Second B'rakhah: God's Saving Care

You are mighty forever, ADONAI—
You give life to the dead;
great is Your saving power.

You sustain the living through love,
and with great mercy give life to the dead.
You support the falling,
heal the sick,
loosen the chains of the bound,
and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Who is like You, Almighty,
and who can be compared to You?—
Sovereign, who brings death and life,
and causes salvation to flourish.

Who is like You, source of compassion,
who remembers with compassion Your creatures for life?

You are faithful in bringing life to the dead.
Barukh atah ADONAI, who gives life to the dead.

Third B'rakhah: God's Holiness

Holy are You and holy is Your name;
holy ones praise You each day.

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בַּחַיִּים,
וְכַתְּבֵנו בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּפּוֹקֵד
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן.
† בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מַגֵּן
אַבְרָהָם וּפּוֹקֵד שָׂרָה.

Version with Patriarchs:

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן.
† בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מַגֵּן
אַבְרָהָם.

אַתָּה גְבוּר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים אַתָּה,
רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים,
סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וּמְקַיֵּם
אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עֶפֶר. מִי כְמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת וּמִי דוֹמֶה
לָךְ, מֶלֶךְ מִמִּית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֵב הַרְחָמִים, זוֹכֵר יְצוּרָיו לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים.
וְנֶאֱמַן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים.

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קְדוֹשׁ, וּקְדוּשֵׁים בְּכָל־יּוֹם
יְהַלְלוּךָ, סֵלָה.

REMEMBER US זְכַרְנוּ. This brief prayer is the first of four that are added on the ten days of the High Holy Day season. All four of the additions center on the prayer for חַיִּים (*hayyim*), “life.”

SHIELD OF ABRAHAM מַגֵּן אַבְרָהָם. After Genesis 15:1.

GUARDIAN OF SARAH פּוֹקֵד שָׂרָה. Or: “the One who remembered Sarah” (after Genesis 21:1). We, who stand here today, are the fruit of God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah.

SUPPORT THE FALLING סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים. After Psalm 145:14.

HEAL THE SICK רוֹפֵא חוֹלִים. After Exodus 15:26.

LOOSEN THE CHAINS OF THE BOUND מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים. Psalm 146:7.

BRINGS DEATH AND LIFE מְמִית וּמְחַיֶּה. 1 Samuel 2:6.

WHO IS LIKE YOU, SOURCE OF COMPASSION מִי כְמוֹךָ אֵב הַרְחָמִים. Jewish mystical tradition highlights the theological tension between God’s qualities

of power and strict judgment, גְּבוּרָה (*g’vurah*), and God’s qualities of mercy and lovingkindness, חֶסֶד (*hesed*). Throughout the year, this *b'rakhah* reminds us that God is unsurpassed in power. At this season of judgment, we add this line to remind us—and God—that God is also unsurpassed in mercy.

GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים. Over the millennia, many Jewish perspectives on the afterlife have been proposed. While many Jewish thinkers (including Saadiah Gaon, 10th century, and Maimonides, 12th century) express caution about the specific implications of bodily resurrection of the dead, they understand this doctrine to express an important aspect of God’s supreme power. God’s power extends even to the dead.

HOLY קְדוֹשׁ. We become holy when we imitate God’s qualities: “As God is called ‘merciful’ so should you be merciful. . . . as God is called ‘righteous’ and ‘loving,’ so should you be righteous and loving” (Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 14a).

May All Be Bound Together

The purpose of creation is not division, nor separation. The purpose of the human race is not a struggle to the death between classes, between nations. Humanity is meant to become a single body. . . . Our purpose is the great upbuilding of unity and peace. And when all nations are bound together in one association living in justice and righteousness, they atone for each other. —MARTIN BUBER

All Wickedness Will Disappear

There were once some lawless men who caused Rabbi Meir a great deal of trouble. Rabbi Meir accordingly prayed that they should die. His wife, Beruriah, said to him: "How can you think that such a prayer is permitted? . . . When sin ceases there shall be no more wicked people. Therefore pray for them that they turn from their ways, and there will be no more wicked people." Then he prayed on their behalf.

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD, BERAKHOT

U-v'khein—ADONAI our God, instill Your awe in all You have made, and fear of You in all You have created, so that all You have fashioned revere You, all You have created bow in recognition, and all be bound together, carrying out Your will wholeheartedly. For we know that true sovereignty is Yours, power and strength are in Your hands, and Your name is to be revered beyond any of Your creations.

U-v'khein—Bestow honor to Your people, ADONAI, praise to those who revere You, hope to those who seek You, recognition to those who await You, joy to Your land, and gladness to Your city. May the light of David, Your servant, dawn, and the lamp of the son of Jesse, Your anointed, be kindled speedily in our day.

U-v'khein—The righteous, beholding this, will rejoice, the upright will be glad, the pious will celebrate with song, evil will be silenced, and all wickedness will disappear like smoke, when You remove the tyranny of arrogance from the earth.

You alone, ADONAI, will rule all Your creation, from Mount Zion, the dwelling-place of Your glory, and from Jerusalem, Your holy city. As it is written in the Book of Psalms: "ADONAI will reign forever; your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!"

You are holy, and Your name is revered, for there is no God but You.

As Your prophet Isaiah wrote: "Adonai Tz'va-ot will be exalted through justice, the holy God sanctified through righteousness." *Barukh atah ADONAI*, the Holy Sovereign.

וּבְכֵן תֵּן פֶּחַדְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ
וְאִימָתְךָ עַל כָּל־מַה־שִּׁבְרָאֲתָ, וְיִירָאוּךָ כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים
וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל־הַבְּרוּאִים, וְיִעֲשׂוּ כָל־מִצְוָתְךָ אַחַת לְעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבָּב שְׁלָם,
כְּמוֹ שֶׁיִּדְעֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁהַשְּׁלֵטוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ,
עַז בְּיָדְךָ וּגְבוּרָה בְּיַמִּינְךָ, וְשִׁמְךָ נוֹרָא עַל כָּל־מַה־שִּׁבְרָאֲתָ.
וּבְכֵן תֵּן כְּבוֹד יְהוָה לְעַמֶּךָ, תְּהִלָּה לִירֵאֶיךָ וְתִקְוָה לְדוֹרֶשֶׁיךָ,
וּפְתִיחוֹן פֶּה לְמִיחֲלִים לָךְ, שִׁמְחָה לְאַרְצֶךָ וְשִׁשׁוֹן לְעִירֶךָ
וְצִמְיַחַת קֶרֶן לְדוֹד עֲבָדֶךָ, וְעִרְיַכַת נֵר לְבֵן־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשִּׁיחָךָ, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיַמֵּינוּ.
וּבְכֵן צְדִיקִים יִרְאוּ וְיִשְׂמְחוּ וְיִשְׂרָיִם יַעֲלִזוּ,
וְחֹסֵידִים בְּרִנָּה יִגְלוּ, וְעוֹלָתָה תִּקְפֹּץ־פִּיָּהּ
וְכָל־הַרְשָׁעָה כָּלָה כְּעֵשֶׂן תִּכָּלֶה, כִּי תַעֲבִיר מִמִּשְׁלַת זְדוֹן מִן הָאָרֶץ.
וְתִמְלֹךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ עַל כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ,
בְּהָר צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וּבִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ,
כְּפִתּוּב בְּדַבְּרֵי קִדְשֶׁךָ: יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדָר וָדָר, הַלְלוּ־יָהּ.
קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה וְנוֹרָא שִׁמְךָ, וְאִין אֵלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ,
כְּפִתּוּב: וַיִּגְבֶּה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּמִשְׁפָּט, וְהָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ
נִקְדָּשׁ בְּצַדִּיקָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּלֹךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

וּבְכֵן U-V'KHEIN. These three paragraphs, which are introduced by the same word, (u-v'khein), are ascribed by many scholars to the 2nd or 3rd century, and may constitute the earliest poetic additions to the High Holy Day Amidah.

Stages of redemption are described in this series of prayers. The first paragraph implores God to cause the entire world to live with reverence for God. The next paragraph discusses not the universal, but the particular: the return of the people Israel to its land and specifically to Jerusalem, and the kingship of David. The third paragraph describes the rejoicing that will come to the righteous "when You remove the tyranny of arrogance from the earth" and God will rule alone over the entire world from Zion and Jerusalem. (adapted from Reuven Hammer)

AWE . . . FEAR . . . פֶּחַדְךָ וְאִימָתְךָ. These emotions are meant to induce obedience to God's will and inspire us to bring sanctity to the world.

THE LIGHT OF DAVID קֶרֶן לְדוֹד. See Psalm 132:17.

YOU ALONE . . . WILL RULE וְתִמְלֹךְ אַתָּה לְבַדְּךָ. God's sovereignty is always envisioned as the rule of justice, and therefore a time of peace. It is the ultimate conclusion of history.

ADONAI WILL REIGN FOREVER יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם. Psalm 146:10.

ADONAI TZ'VA-OT WILL BE EXALTED וַיִּגְבֶּה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת. Isaiah 5:16. This verse, with which the b'rakhah concludes, highlights the themes of this b'rakhah, as it has been expanded on the High Holy Days: We await the day when earthly powers become subservient to the divine ideals of justice and righteousness.

THE HOLY SOVEREIGN הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ. The rest of the year, this b'rakhah concludes with the words "the Holy God." God's sovereignty is a central theme of the High Holy Days.

You Have Chosen Us

A difficult task was assigned this people in its history. It is so easy to listen to the voices of idols, and it is so hard to receive the word of the One God into oneself. It is so easy to remain a slave, and it is so difficult to become a free person. But this people can only exist in the full seriousness of its task. It can only exist in this freedom which reaches beyond all other freedoms. Its history began when it heard the word, rising out of the mystery, and emerging into clarity: "I am the One-Who-Is thy God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage. . . ." This people traveled through the history of humanity, century after century, millennium after millennium. Its very history became divine guidance for it.

—LEO BAECK

What Do I Want?

You know what is for my good. If I recite my wants, it is not to remind You of them, but so that I may better understand how great is my dependence on You. If, then, I ask You for the things that may not be for my well-being, it is because I am ignorant; Your choice is better than mine and I submit myself to Your unalterable decree and Your supreme direction.

—BAHYA IBN PAKUDA

Fourth B'rakhah: The Holiness of Yom Kippur

You have chosen us among all peoples, loving us, wanting us. You have distinguished us among all nations, making us holy through Your commandments, drawing us close to Your service, and calling us by Your great and holy name.

With love, You have bestowed on us, ADONAI our God, this [Shabbat, for sanctity and rest, and this] Yom Kippur for pardon, forgiveness, and atonement, that all our sins be forgiven [through Your love], a sacred time, recalling the Exodus from Egypt.

Our God and God of our ancestors, may the thought of us rise up and reach You.

Attend to us and accept us;

hear us and respond to us.

Keep us in mind,

and keep in mind the thought of our ancestors, as well as the Messiah, the descendant of David;

Jerusalem, Your holy city;

and all Your people, the House of Israel.

On this Yom Kippur respond to us with deliverance, goodness, compassion, love, life, and peace.

Remember us for good;

respond to us with blessing;

redeem us with life.

Show us compassion and care with words of salvation and kindness; have mercy on us and redeem us. Our eyes are turned to You, for You are a compassionate and loving sovereign.

Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this [Shabbat and this] Yom Kippur. Blot out and disregard them, as the prophet Isaiah says in Your name: "I, surely I, am the One who wipes away sin, for this is My nature; I will not recall your errors," and the prophet adds: "I sweep aside your sins like a mist, and disperse your transgressions like a cloud. Turn back to Me, for I will redeem you." And in Your Torah it is written: "For on this day, atonement shall be made for you to purify you from all your transgressions. In the presence of ADONAI you shall be pure."

אַתָּה בְּחַרְתָּנוּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים,
אֲהַבְתָּ אוֹתָנוּ וְרָצִיתָ בָּנוּ,
וְרִמַּמְתָּנוּ מִכָּל־הַלְשׁוֹנוֹת,
וְקִדְשָׁתָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
וְקִרְבַּתָּנוּ מִלִּפְנֵי לַעֲבוֹדָתְךָ,
וְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ קְרָאתָ.

וַתִּתֵּן־לָנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְיָוִם [הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה
לְקִדְשָׁהּ וְלִמְנוּחָהּ וְאֶת־יְיָוִם] הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה, לְמַחִילָה
וְלִסְלִיחָה וְלִכְפָּרָה, וְלִמְחֹל־בוֹ אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
[בְּאַהֲבָה] מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זָכַר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֵא, וְיַגִּיעַ
וְיִרְאֶה, וְיִרְצֶה וְיִשְׁמַע, וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֹּר זְכוּרֵנוּ וּפְקֻדוֹתֵנוּ,
וְזָכוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], וְזָכוֹן מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן־דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ,
וְזָכוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ, וְזָכוֹן כָּל־עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְפָנֶיךָ לְפִלִיטָה לְטוֹבָה, לַחֵן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים
וּלְשָׁלוֹם, בְּיוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה.
זָכְרָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה,
וּפְקֻדָּנוּ בּוֹ לְבָרָכָה,
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים,
וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים חוֹס וְחַנּוּן, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], מַחֵל לְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
בְּיוֹם [הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וּבְיוֹם] הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה. מַחֵה וְהַעֲבֵר
פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ, כְּאֹמֵר: אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא
מַחֵה פְּשָׁעֶיךָ לְמַעַנִי, וְחַטָּאתֶיךָ לֹא אֶזְכֹּר. וְנֹאמֵר:
מַחִיתִי כְעָב פְּשָׁעֶיךָ וְכַעֲנַן חַטָּאוֹתֶיךָ, שׁוֹבָה אֵלַי כִּי
גֹאֲלֶיךָ. וְנֹאמֵר: כִּי־בְיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטָהָר
אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם, לְפָנַי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ.

CALLING US BY YOUR GREAT AND HOLY NAME וְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ קְרָאתָ. The name "Israel" means "wrestling with God" (Genesis 32:28). Our relationship with God is part of our self-definition as a people.

I, SURELY I אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי. Isaiah 43:25.

I SWEEP ASIDE YOUR SINS LIKE A MIST כְּעָב פְּשָׁעֶיךָ. Isaiah 44:22.

FOR ON THIS DAY כִּי־בְיוֹם הַזֶּה. Leviticus 16:30.

Fiery Offerings

The fire that was on the altar entered into the hearts of the priests and worshippers so that their song was full of passion, and the power of prayer filled their beings.

—THE ZOHAR

Your Miracles That Accompany Us Each Day

The 20th-century Hasidic master, the Netivot Shalom, remarks that each day we are confronted with new tasks of repair of the world, but each day God renews creation and so there is new energy that we may call on for the new day.

Our God and God of our ancestors: [embrace our rest,] make us holy through Your mitzvot and let the Torah be our portion. Fill our lives with Your goodness and gladden us with Your triumph. [ADONAI our God, grant that we inherit Your holy Shabbat, lovingly and willingly, so that the people Israel, who sanctify Your name, may find rest on this day.] Purify our hearts to serve You faithfully, for You forgive the people Israel and pardon the tribes of Jeshurun in every generation. Beside You, we have no sovereign who pardons and forgives. *Barukh atah ADONAI*, sovereign who pardons and forgives our sins and those of the people, the House of Israel, each year sweeping away our guilt—ruler of all the earth, who makes [Shabbat,] the people Israel and the Day of Atonement holy.

Fifth B'rakah: The Restoration of Zion

ADONAI our God, embrace Your people Israel and their prayer. Restore worship to Your sanctuary. May the [fiery offerings and] prayers of Israel be lovingly accepted by You, and may our service always be pleasing.

Let our eyes behold Your merciful return to Zion. *Barukh atah ADONAI*, who restores Your Divine Presence to Zion.

Sixth B'rakah: Gratitude for Life and Its Blessings

† We thank You,
You who are our God and the God of our ancestors through all time, protector of our lives, shield of our salvation.
From one generation to the next we thank You and sing Your praises—
for our lives that are in Your hands,
for our souls that are under Your care,
for Your miracles that accompany us each day,
and for Your wonders and Your gifts that are with us each moment—
evening, morning, and noon.
You are the One who is good,
whose mercy is never-ending;
the One who is compassionate,
whose love is unceasing.
We have always placed our hope in You.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ], [רְצֵה בְּמִנוּחָתָנוּ] קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, שְׂפָעֵנוּ מְטוֹבָךָ וְשִׂמְחָנוּ בִישׁוּעֶתְךָ, [וְהִנְחִילֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן שֶׁבֶת קִדְשֶׁךָ, וְיִגְוָחוּ בְּהַ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְדָּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ] וְטָהַר לְבָבוֹ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאַמֶּת, כִּי אַתָּה סֵלַח לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וּמָחַל לְשִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־דּוֹר וְדוֹר, וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אֵלָּא אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְ מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ לְעוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְלַעֲוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמַעֲבִיר אֲשֵׁמוֹתֵינוּ בְּכָל־שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה, מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ מִקְדָּש [הַשְּׁבֵת וְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַכְּפֻוֹרִים.

רְצֵה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּעַמֶּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִתְפִלָּתָם, וְהָשִׁב אֶת־הָעִבּוּדָה לְדַבְרֵי בֵיתְךָ, [וְאֲשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל] וּתְפִלָּתָם בְּאַהֲבָה תִקְבַּל בְּרָצוֹן, וְתִהְיֶה לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.

וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּחְזִיר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

† מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ, שְׂאֵתָה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ] לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, צוֹר חַיֵּינוּ מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אַתָּה הוּא. לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נוֹדֵה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ, וְעַל נְשִׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ, וְעַל נְסִיךְ שְׂבָכָל־יוֹם עִמָּנוּ, וְעַל נְפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שְׂבָכָל־עֵת, עָרֵב וּבָקָר וְצִהָרִים. הַטּוֹב, כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְהַמְּרַחֵם, כִּי לֹא תָמוּ חֲסָדֶיךָ, מֵעוֹלָם קוֹיֵנוּ לָךְ.

shekhinah is grammatically feminine. Accordingly, the Jewish mystical tradition generally describes the Divine Presence—known as the Shekhinah—in feminine imagery.

PROTECTOR OF OUR LIVES צוֹר חַיֵּינוּ God is our source of support and stability.

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT לְדוֹר וָדוֹר. After Psalm 79:13. In a world where nations, values, and ideals rise and fall, our relationship with God is a constant truth.

אַתָּה סֵלַחן וְהָשִׁב אֶת־הָעִבּוּדָה לְדַבְרֵי בֵיתְךָ. According to the Babylonian Talmud, “Ever since the day when the Temple was destroyed, there has been an iron barrier separating Israel from God” (Berakhot 32b). Each destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. and then by the Romans in 70 C.E.) was a cataclysmic event in early Jewish history. In the exile, amidst the brokenness that surrounds us, we can never know whether our service to God is appropriate or not. The prayer for the restoration of the Temple carries with it the hope that we might someday be assured that our service to God is proper.

RESTORE WORSHIP TO YOUR SANCTUARY וְהָשִׁב אֶת־הָעִבּוּדָה לְדַבְרֵי בֵיתְךָ. According to the Babylonian Talmud, “Ever since the day when the Temple was destroyed, there has been an iron barrier separating Israel from God” (Berakhot 32b). Each destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. and then by the Romans in 70 C.E.) was a cataclysmic event in early Jewish history. In the exile, amidst the brokenness that surrounds us, we can never know whether our service to God is appropriate or not. The prayer for the restoration of the Temple carries with it the hope that we might someday be assured that our service to God is proper.

YOUR DIVINE PRESENCE שְׂכִינָתוֹ. The Hebrew word *shekhinah* has been used for centuries to refer to God’s immanence, the presence of God that is felt in the world. The word

The Blessing of Shalom
When the blessing of *shalom* is lacking, however much we have of other blessings—wealth or power, fame or family, even health—these all appear as nothing. But when *shalom* is present, however little else we have somehow seems sufficient.

Shalom means “peace,” of course, but it means so much more as well: wholeness, fullness, and completion; integrity and perfection; healing, health, and harmony; utter tranquility; loving and being loved; consummation; forgiveness and reconciliation; totality of well-being.

And even all of these together do not spell out sufficiently the meaning of *shalom*. But though we cannot accurately translate or adequately define *shalom*, we can experience it.

—HERSHEL J. MATT

For all these blessings may Your name be praised and exalted, our sovereign, always and forever.

And inscribe all the people of Your covenant for a good life.

May all that lives thank You always, and praise Your name faithfully forever, O God of our deliverance and help.

† *Barukh atah ADONAI*, whose name is goodness and to whom praise is fitting.

Seventh B'rakhah: Prayer for Peace

In the evening, we say:

Grant abundant and lasting peace to Your people Israel and all who dwell on earth, for You are the sovereign master of all the ways of peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel at all times with Your gift of peace.

In the morning or afternoon, we say:

Grant peace to the world: goodness and blessing, grace, love, and compassion, for us and for all the people Israel. Bless us, our creator, united as one with the light of Your presence; by that light, ADONAI our God, You gave us a guide to life, the love of kindness, generosity, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel at all times with Your peace.

All services continue here:

May we and the entire House of Israel be called to mind and inscribed for life, blessing, sustenance, and peace in the Book of Life.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who brings peace.

VIDDUI — PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Because confession is an essential aspect of Yom Kippur, we add this liturgical confession each time that we recite the Amidah.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFESSION

Our God and God of our ancestors,
hear our prayer; do not ignore our plea.

Our God and God of our ancestors,
we are neither so insolent nor so obstinate
as to claim in Your presence
that we are righteous, without sin;
for we, like our ancestors who came before us, have sinned.

וְעַל כָּלֵם יִתְבַרַךְ וַיְתְרוֹמֵם שְׁמֶךָ מִלְפָּנֵינוּ תְּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
וְכַתּוּב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל־בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ.

וְכָל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֵלָה,
וַיְהִלְלוּ אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ בְּאֵמֶת,
הָאֵל יִשׁוּעָתָנוּ וְעֲזָרָתָנוּ סֵלָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלֶךְ נֶאֱדָה לְהוֹדוֹת.

In the evening, we say:

שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ וְעַל כָּל־יְשׁוּבֵי תֵּבֵל תְּשִׁים
לְעוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹן לְכָל־הַשְּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב
בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל־עֵת וּבְכָל־שָׁעָה
בְּשִׁלּוֹמְךָ.

In the morning or afternoon, we say:

שֵׁים שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם, טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ. בְּרַכְּנוּ אֲבִינוּ כְּלָנוּ כְּאֶחָד
בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ, כִּי בְאוֹר פְּנִיךָ נִתְּתָ לָנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
תּוֹרַת חַיִּים וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד, וְצַדִּיקָה וּבְרָכָה וְרַחֲמִים
וְחַיִּים, וְשְׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּכָל־עֵת וּבְכָל־שָׁעָה בְּשִׁלּוֹמְךָ.

All services continue here:

בְּסִפּוֹר חַיִּים, בְּרָכָה וְשְׁלוֹם וּפְרִנְסָה טוֹבָה, נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב
לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל־עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים
וְלְשְׁלוֹם.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם.

וִידוּי

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ],
תְּבֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תִּפְלַתָנוּ, וְאַל תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתְּחִנָּתָנוּ,
שְׂאִין אֲנַחְנוּ עֲזֵי פָנִים וְקָשִׁי עֲרָף לֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ,
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ],
צְדִיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חָטָאנוּ,
אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ] חָטָאנוּ.

MAY YOUR NAME BE
PRAISED AND EXALTED
וְיִתְבַרַךְ וַיְתְרוֹמֵם שְׁמֶךָ. In
the language of the Bible
and the prayerbook, “God’s
name is exalted” when
we acknowledge God,
recognize God’s goodness
in creation, and act to
enable God’s justice and
compassion to be visible in
the world.

AND INSCRIBE וְכַתּוּב. This
is the third of the four
special insertions in the
Amidah for the Ten Days of
Repentance. With the first
two insertions, we prayed
for God’s mercy that we
may live another year; now
we pray that the life we are
granted be good.

IN THE BOOK OF LIFE בְּסִפּוֹר
חַיִּים. This is the last of the
four special insertions in
the Amidah, added for the
Ten Days of Repentance.
In this final addition, the
theme of a “good life” is
expanded to include peace
and prosperity.

WHO BRINGS PEACE עוֹשֵׂה
הַשְּׁלוֹם. In the words of the
Midrash, “Great is peace,
for all the prayers conclude
with pleas for peace” (Sifrei
Numbers 42). In addition to
the Amidah, the Grace after
Meals, Priestly Blessing,
Kaddish Shalem, Mourner’s
Kaddish, and evening
Sh’ma and Its Blessings all
conclude with prayers for
peace.

*A full commentary on the
Confession appears with the
public recitation on p. 234.*

The Shorter Confession—Ashamnu

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite every phrase of this confession.

We abuse, we betray, we are cruel, we destroy, we embitter, we falsify, we gossip, we hate, we insult, we jeer, we kill, we lie, we mock, we neglect, we oppress, we pervert, we quarrel, we rebel, we steal, we transgress, we are unkind, we are violent, we are wicked, we are extremists, we yearn to do evil, we are zealous for bad causes.

Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu, dibbarnu dofi, he-evinu, v'hirshanu, zadnu, hamasnu, tafalnu sheker, ya-atznu ra, kizzavnu, latznu, maradnu, ni-atznu, sararnu, avinu, pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref, rashanu, shihatnu, ti-avnu, ta-inu, titanu.

PRAYER ACCOMPANYING THE CONFESSION

We have turned from Your goodly laws and commandments, but it has not profited us. Surely, You are in the right with respect to all that comes upon us, for You have acted faithfully, but we have been in the wrong. What can we say to You who sit on high, and what can we tell You who dwell in heaven, for You know all that is hidden as well as all that is revealed.

You know the mysteries of the universe, the deepest secrets of everyone alive. You probe our innermost depths; You examine our thoughts and feelings. Nothing escapes You; nothing is secret from You. Therefore, may it be Your will, our God and God of our ancestors, to forgive us for all our sins, to pardon us for all our iniquities, and to grant us atonement for all our transgressions.

The Longer Confession—Al Het

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite the words "We have sinned."

We have sinned against You unwillingly and willingly,
and we have sinned against You through hardening our hearts.
We have sinned against You thoughtlessly,
and we have sinned against You in idle chatter.
We have sinned against You through sexual immorality,
and we have sinned against You openly and in private.
We have sinned against You knowingly and deceitfully,
and we have sinned against You by the way we talk.
We have sinned against You by defrauding others,
and we have sinned against You in our innermost thoughts.
We have sinned against You through forbidden trysts,
and we have sinned against You through empty confession.
We have sinned against You by scorning parents and teachers,
and we have sinned against You purposely and by mistake.

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite every phrase of this confession.

אֲשָׁמְנוּ, בָּגַדְנוּ, גָּזַלְנוּ, דָּבַרְנוּ דְּפִי. הֶעָוִינוּ, וְהִרְשָׁעְנוּ, וְדָבַרְנוּ, חָמְסָנוּ,
טָפְלָנוּ שֶׁקֶר. יַעֲצָנוּ רָע, כְּזָבְנוּ, לָצָנוּ, מֵרָדְנוּ, נֹאצָנוּ. סָרְרָנוּ, עָוִינוּ, פָּשָׁעְנוּ,
צָרְרָנוּ, קִשְׁיָנוּ עָרְף. רָשָׁעְנוּ, שָׁחַתְנוּ, תַּעֲבָבְנוּ, תַּעֲיִינוּ, תַּעֲתָעְנוּ.

סָרְנוּ מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים, וְלֹא שָׁוָה לָנוּ. וְאַתָּה צָדִיק עַל
כָּל-הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ, כִּי אָמַת עֲשִׂיתָ וְאַנְחָנוּ הִרְשָׁעְנוּ. מִה נֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ
יֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם, וּמִה נִסְפָּר לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים, הֲלֹא כָּל-הַנְּסֻתוֹת
וְהַנְּגֻלוֹת אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ.

אַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ רְזֵי עוֹלָם, וְתַעֲלוּמוֹת סִתְרֵי כְּלִי. אַתָּה חוֹפֵשׁ כָּל-חַדְרֵי
בֵּטֶן, וּבוֹחֵן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב. אֵין דְּבַר נֶעְלָם מִמֶּךָ, וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִנְּגִיד עֵינֶיךָ.
וּבְכֵן יֵהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאַמוֹתֵינוּ],
שֶׁתְּסַלַח לָנוּ עַל כָּל-חַטָּאתֵינוּ,
וְתִמְחַל לָנוּ עַל כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ,
וְתִכְפֹּר לָנוּ עַל כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵינוּ.

על חטא שחטאנו Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite the words

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִנְס וּבְרִצּוֹן,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִמּוּץ הַלֵּב.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִלֵי דְעַת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִטּוּי שְׁפָתַיִם.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי וּבִסְתָּה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַעַת וּבְמִרְמָה,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַבּוּר פֶּה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהוֹנָאת רָע,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהִרְהוּר הַלֵּב.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּוַעֲדַת זְנוּת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּוַדּוּי פֶּה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִלְזוּל הוֹרִים וּמוֹרִים,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזָדוֹן וּבְשִׁגְגָה.

We have sinned against You by resorting to violence,
and we have sinned against You by public desecration of Your name.
We have sinned against You through foul speech,
and we have sinned against You through foolish talk.
We have sinned against You through pursuing the impulse to evil,
and we have sinned against You wittingly and unwittingly.
For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

We have sinned against You through denial and deceit,
and we have sinned against You by taking bribes.
We have sinned against You by clever cynicism,
and we have sinned against You by speaking ill of others.
We have sinned against You by the way we do business,
and we have sinned against You in our eating and drinking.
We have sinned against You by greed and oppressive interest,
and we have sinned against You through arrogance.
We have sinned against You in everyday conversation,
and we have sinned against You through conspiratorial glances.
We have sinned against You through condescension,
and we have sinned against You through stubbornness.
For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

We have sinned against You by throwing off all restraint,
and we have sinned against You by rashly judging others.
We have sinned against You by plotting against others,
and we have sinned against You through selfishness.
We have sinned against You through superficiality,
and we have sinned against You through stubbornness.
We have sinned against You by rushing to do evil,
and we have sinned against You through gossip.
We have sinned against You through empty promises,
and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred.
We have sinned against You by betraying trust,
and we have sinned against You by succumbing to confusion.
For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחֶזֶק יָד,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטִמְאַת שְׂפָתַיִם,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטַפְשׁוֹת פֶּה.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בִּיצַר הָרַע,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בִּיּוֹדְעִים וּבְלֹא יוֹדְעִים.
וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כְּפָר־לָנוּ.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַחַשׁ וּבְכַזָּב,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַפַּת שָׁחַד.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִצּוֹן,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַע.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמִשָּׂא וּבְמִתֵּן,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמֵאֵכֶל וּבְמִשְׁתֵּה.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִשְׁךְ וּבְמִרְבִּית,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִטְיַת גְּרוֹן.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁיחַ שְׂפָתוֹתֵינוּ,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁקּוֹר עֵינַיִם.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֵינַיִם רְמוֹת,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעִזּוֹת מִצַּח.
וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כְּפָר־לָנוּ.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפָרִיקַת עַל,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפִלְלוֹת.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצַדִּית רַע,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצָרוֹת עֵינַיִם.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִשְׁיוֹת עֲרֹף.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִיצַת רַגְלִים לְהָרַע,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִכִּילוֹת.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁבּוּעַת שׂוֹא,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁנְאָת חָנָם.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִשׁוּמַת יָד,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִמְהוֹן לִבָּב.
וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סְלַח לָנוּ, מְחַל לָנוּ, כְּפָר־לָנוּ.

And forgive us the breach of all commandments and prohibitions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or not. The sins known to us we have acknowledged, and those unknown to us are surely known to You, as the Torah states: “Secret matters are the concern of ADONAI our God; but in matters that are revealed, it is for us and our children to apply all teachings of the Torah till the end of time.”

Personal Prayers Concluding the Amidah

My God, before I was created I was entirely lacking in substance; and now that I have been created, it is as if I never was. Dust and ashes am I in life, all the more so in death. I stand before You as a vessel full of embarrassment and shame. May it be Your will, ADONAI my God and God of my ancestors, that I sin no more, and that in Your great mercy You erase the sins I have sinned before You, but not through great pain and suffering.

My God, keep my tongue from evil, my lips from lies. Help me ignore those who would slander me. Let me be humble before all. Open my heart to Your Torah, that I may pursue Your mitzvot. Frustrate the designs of those who plot evil against me; make nothing of their schemes. Act for the sake of Your name, Your power, Your holiness, and Your Torah. Answer my prayer for the deliverance of Your people. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, ADONAI, my rock and my redeemer. May the One who brings peace to the universe bring peace to us and to all the people Israel [and to all who dwell on earth]. Amen.

וְעַל מִצְוֹת עֲשָׂה וְעַל מִצְוֹת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין שֵׁישׁ בָּהּ
 קוֹם עֲשֵׂה, וּבֵין שְׂאִין בָּהּ קוֹם עֲשֵׂה, אֶת־הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ
 וְאֶת־שְׂאִינָם גְּלוּיִים לָנוּ. אֶת־הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ כְּכֹר אֲמָרָנוּם
 לְפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹדִינוּ לְךָ עֲלֵיהֶם, וְאֶת־שְׂאִינָם גְּלוּיִים
 לָנוּ, לְפָנֶיךָ הֵם גְּלוּיִים וַיְדוּעִים, כְּדָבָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
 הַנְּסִתָּרֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד־
 עוֹלָם, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.

הַנְּסִתָּרֹת SECRET MATTERS
 Deuteronomy 29:28.

אֱלֹהֵי, עַד שְׁלֹא נִוצַרְתִּי אִינִי כְּדָאִי, וְעַכְשָׁו שֶׁנִּוצַרְתִּי כְּאֵלוֹ
 לֹא נִוצַרְתִּי. עֶפֶר אֲנִי בְּחַיִּי, קַל וְחֹמֶר בְּמִיתָתִי. הֲרִי אֲנִי
 לְפָנֶיךָ כְּכֵלִי מְלֵא בֹשֶׁה וּכְלֵמָה. יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתַי [וְאֲמוֹתַי], שְׁלֹא אַחֲטָא עוֹד. וּמָה
 שֶׁחָטַאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ מְרַק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים, אֲבָל לֹא עַל יְדֵי
 יְסוּרִים וְחֲלָיִים רָעִים.

MY GOD אֱלֹהֵי. The Baby-
 lonian Talmud says that
 every Amidah must be
 accompanied by a personal
 prayer. These two private
 prayers, the first attributed
 to Rava and the second
 to Mar son of Ravina, are
 among the Talmud's exem-
 plars (Berakhot 17a). They
 were so admired that they
 entered the formal liturgy.
 Both prayers distinctively
 use the first-person singular
 ("I"), whereas almost all
 other prayers—including
 the confessions—are in the
 first-person plural ("we").

אֱלֹהֵי, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מַרְעֵי, וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מַרְמָה, וְלִמְקַלְלֵי
 נִפְשֵׁי תָדוּם, וְנִפְשֵׁי כְּעֶפֶר לְכָל תְּהִיָּה. פָּתַח לְבִי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ,
 וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדּוּף נִפְשֵׁי. וְכָל־הַחֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה, מִהֲרָה
 הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקַלְקַל מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם. עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ, עֲשֵׂה
 לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשֶׁתְךָ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרָתְךָ.
 לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יִדְיָדֶיךָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעַנְנֵי. יְהִי לְרְצוֹן
 אֲמָרֵי פִי וְהַגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
 בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
 [וְעַל כָּל־יְיֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל] וְאֲמָרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהִי לְרְצוֹן MAY THE WORDS
 Psalm 19:15.

The heavens and the earth, and all they contain, were completed. On the seventh day God finished the work, ceasing from all work on the seventh day. Then God blessed the seventh day, making it holy, because on it, God had ceased from all the work of creation.

Va-y'khalu ha-shamayim v'ha-aretz v'khol tz'va-am. Va-y'khal Elohim ba-yom ha-sh'vi-i m'lakhto asher asah, va-yishbot ba-yom ha-sh'vi-i mi-kol m'lakhto asher asah. Va-y'varekh Elohim et yom ha-sh'vi-i va-y'kaddeish oto, ki vo shavat mi-kol m'lakhto, asher bara Elohim la-asot.

Version with Patriarchs:

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, Creator of heaven and earth.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, Creator of heaven and earth.

God, who promised protection to our ancestors and assures life to the dead, the incomparable holy sovereign, desired to give rest to the people Israel and so provided them with the holy Shabbat. We worship in awe and reverence in God's presence and offer thanks, each day, always, to God. The source of blessings, the master of peace, God, whom we praise, sanctifies Shabbat, blesses the seventh day, and provides sacred rest to a people overflowing with joy, as a symbol of the work of creation.

Magein avot bi-d'varo, m'hayyeih meitim b'ma-amaro, ha-melekh ha-kadosh she-ein kamohu, ha-meini-ah l'ammo b'yom shabbat kodsho, ki vam ratzah l'hani-ah la-hem. L'fanav na-avod b'yir-ah va-fahad, v'nodeh li-sh'mo b'khol yom tamid. M'on ha-b'rakhot, El ha-hoda-ot, adon ha-shalom, m'kaddeish ha-shabbat u-m'vareikh sh'vi-i, u-meini-ah bi-k'dushah l'am m'dush'nei oneg, zeikher l'ma-aseih v'reishit.

Our God and God of our ancestors,
embrace our rest.

Make us holy through Your mitzvot
and let the Torah be our portion.

Fill our lives with Your goodness
and gladden us with Your triumph.

Purify our hearts to serve You faithfully.

ADONAI our God, grant that we inherit Your holy Shabbat, lovingly and willingly,
so that the people Israel, who sanctify Your name, may find rest on this day.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who makes Shabbat holy.

וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם.
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה,
וַיְשַׁבֵּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ,
כִּי בּו שַׁבַּת מִכָּל מְלַאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

◀ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק,
וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה,
אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה, אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל,
וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה, הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל
הַגָּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן,
קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.

Version with Patriarchs:

◀ בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי
יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּבוֹר
וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן,
קוֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ.

מִגֵּן אֲבוֹת בְּדַבְּרוֹ, מַחִיָּה מֵתִים בְּמַאֲמְרוֹ, הַמְּלִיךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ
שָׂאִין כְּמוֹהוּ, הַמְּנִיחַ לְעַמּוֹ בַּיּוֹם שַׁבַּת קְדֻשׁוֹ, כִּי בָם רָצָה
לְהַנִּיחַ לָהֶם. לְפָנָיו נַעֲבֹד בִּירְאָה וּפְחָד, וְנוֹדָה לְשֵׁמוֹ
בְּכָל-יוֹם תְּמִיד. מֵעוֹן הַבְּרִכוֹת, אֵל הַהוֹדָאוֹת, אֲדוֹן הַשְּׁלוֹם,
מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת וּמְבָרֵךְ שְׁבִיעִי, וּמְנִיחַ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ לְעַם מְדֻשְׁנֵי-
עֹנֵג, זִכָּר לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

◀ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], רָצָה בְּמִנוּחֵתָנוּ.
קְדֻשָּׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ,
שִׁבְעֵנוּ מִטּוֹבֶךָ, וְשִׁמְחֵנוּ בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ,
וְטַהַר לִבָּנוּ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאַמֶּת,
וְהַנְּחִילֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרִצּוֹן שַׁבַּת קְדֻשָּׁךָ,
וַיְנוּחוּ בָּהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַדְּשֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

שבת

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH
וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם.
Genesis 2:1-3.

PROTECTION TO OUR ANCESTORS

מִגֵּן אֲבוֹת
Literally, "shield of our ancestors." The evening service contains no repetition of the Amidah. This paragraph, which includes the themes of each of the seven *b'rakhot* of the Shabbat Amidah, is added on Shabbat eve. As elsewhere in the High Holy Day liturgy, the word *melekh* ("sovereign," is substituted for the word *El* ("God" (which is recited in the year-round version of this prayer), to emphasize the metaphor of God's sovereignty on this day.

Alternative Translation

Let our yearning rise to
You in the evening,
our exclamations come to
You in the morning,
then wondrous joy shall
appear by evening.

*Let our voices rise to You
in the evening,
our unsung deeds come to
You in the morning,
so our true redemption
shall appear by evening.*

Let our sufferings rise to
You in the evening,
our remorse come to You
in the morning,
then our pardon shall
appear by evening.

*Let our outcries rise
to You in the evening,
take note of them for Your
sake in the morning,
pour Your mercy upon us
by evening.*

Let our lament rise to You
in the evening,
and may You know the
purity of our spirit in the
morning,
that the joy of forgiveness
appear by evening.

*Let intimations of regret
rise to You in the evening,
and hopefulness in our
gathering come to You
in the morning,
then our glory, reflective
of You, shall appear by
evening.*

Let our fervent knocking at
the gates rise to You
in the evening,
our entreaties come to You
in the morning,
and Your forgiveness
delight us by evening.

*Let our confession rise up
to You in the evening,
may it blaze across the
skies in the morning,
so the forgiveness of all
appear by evening.*

Following the silent Amidah, the most important themes of Yom Kippur are the subject of these two special sections, S'lihot and Viddui, which begin here and are repeated throughout the day. The entire liturgy of Yom Kippur rests upon these two pillars: God is merciful and forgiving, and confession brings forgiveness and atonement.

THE UNFOLDING OF THE DAY: A PIYYUT

May our supplications rise up at evening,
our pleas arrive with the dawn,
our songs transform the dusk.

*May our voices rise up at evening,
our righteous acts arrive with the dawn,
our redemption transform the dusk.*

May our suffering rise up at evening,
our forgiveness arrive with the dawn,
our purity transform the dusk.

*May our prayers rise up at evening,
coming to You with the dawn,
transforming us at dusk.*

*Ya-aleh taḥanuneinu mei-erev,
v'yavo shav-ateinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh rinnuneinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh koleinu mei-erev,
v'yavo tzidkateinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh fidyoneinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh innuyeinu mei-erev,
v'yavo s'lihateinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh na-akateinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh m'nuseinu mei-erev,
v'yavo l'ma-ano mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh khippureinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh yish-einu mei-erev,
v'yavo tohoreinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh hinnuneinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh zikhronu mei-erev,
v'yavo vi-udeinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh hadrateinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh dofkeinu mei-erev,
v'yavo gileinu mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh bakkashateinu ad arev.*

*Ya-aleh enkateinu mei-erev,
v'yavo eilekha mi-boker,
v'yeira-eh eileinu ad arev.*

S'LIHAH AND VIDDUI (Forgiveness and Confession) stand in a complementary relationship to one another: *Viddui* (confession) is the human realization that we have sinned and failed—that our lives are imperfect. *S'lihaḥ* (forgiveness) is the divine assurance that our confession (repeated ten times on Yom Kippur) is received in love. Note that the assurance of God's forgiveness now precedes our confession.

YA-ALEH יַעֲלֶה is the overture to these special sections in the evening service. It is an anonymous medieval poem, which describes Yom Kippur as a progression from Kol Nidrei to Ne'ilah. Each verse includes *ya-aleh* יַעֲלֶה (rise) in the evening, *yavo* יָבוֹא (arrive) in the morning, and *yeira-eh* יִרְאֶה (appear) at the end of the day. The author expresses the anxiety at the beginning of this day of self-examination with its pleas for forgiveness, as well as the hope for purification at the fast's completion.

The poem is a reverse acrostic at the first letter of the middle word in each clause. It is as if, through-

יַעֲלֶה תַּחֲנוּנֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה רְנוּנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה קוֹלֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא צְדָקֹתֵנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה פְדִיּוֹנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה עֲנוּיֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא סְלִיחָתֵנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה נְאֻקָּתֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה מְנוּסָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא לְמַעַנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה כְּפוּרָנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה יִשְׁעֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא טְהָרָנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה חֲנוּנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה זְכוּרָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא וְעוֹדָנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה הַדְּרָתֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה דְּפָקָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא גִילָנוּ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה בְּקִשְׁתָּנוּ עַד עֶרֶב.
יַעֲלֶה אֲנָקָתֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב,
וַיָּבֹא אֱלִיךְ מִבֹּקֶר,
וַיִּרְאֶה אֱלִינוּ עַד עֶרֶב.

out the day, we move back in our recollections, allowing the events of the year to pass before our mind's eye. This day is set aside for introspection: at different hours, in different light, we may see different aspects of our lives; and as we move inward, we can be in touch with the ways our lives might be renewed, until we arrive at א (alef), the point of origin.

Two differing translations appear here, one that attempts to imitate the play on letters embedded in the Hebrew poem, the other that captures the Hebrew rhythms. This juxtaposition illustrates the choices that need be made in translating medieval poetry.

באותו ערב מוזר
מישהו שאל:
האם אפשר לשנות את העבר?
והאשה החולנית ענתה בועף:
העבר איננו תכשיט
התום בתוך קפסה של גדלח
גם איננו
נהש בתוך צנצנת של כהל –
העבר מתנועע
בתוך ההנה
וכאשר ההנה נופל לתוך בור
נופל אתו העבר –
כאשר העבר מביט השמימה
זו הרמת החיים כלם,
גם חיי עבר רחוק עד מאד.
אך האיש הגלמוד מלמל:
והלא היה פעם אברהם בתבל
זה שלא לקח אפלו חוט
מנפש מולידו.

In that strange night
someone asked:
Can you change the past?
And the woman who was
ill angrily responded:
The past is not a piece of
jewelry
sealed in a crystal box
nor is it a snake preserved
in a bottle of formalde-
hyde—
The past trembles
within the present
and when the present
falls into a pit
the past goes with it—
when the past looks
toward heaven
all of life is upraised,
even the distant past.

But the lonely man
muttered:
Did not Abraham once
stride the earth,
he who did not seem
attached to even the
cord
of the one who gave him
birth?

—ZELDA
(trans. Edward Feld)

First Cycle of S'lihot Prayers: Pleas of Mercy

All flesh comes to You, You who hear prayer.

All flesh shall come to worship You, ADONAI.

They shall come to bow down before You, ADONAI,
and they will pay honor to Your name.

Come, let us sing to ADONAI;

and cry out to the stronghold of our deliverance.

Let us greet God with thanks,

and sing songs of praise.

The sea belongs to God, God made it;

the land was created by God's hands.

In God's hand is every living soul

and the breath of all human flesh.

SELECTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB

We know there is a place where gold is found,
and somewhere there is silver for refining.

But wisdom—where can it be found?

Where is the place of true knowledge?

V'ha-hokhmah mei-ayin timmatzei, v'ei zeh m'kom binah.

The deep declares, “It is not in me!”

The ocean echoes, “Neither is it here!”

*Yet it has no match in gold or glass,
it cannot be traded for precious trinkets,
not even for corals or crystal.*

But wisdom—where can it be found?

Where is the place of true knowledge?

God perceives its path.

God knows its place.

While peering to the ends of the earth,
inspecting everything under the heavens,

*weighing out the winds,
apportioning the water,
setting quotas for the rain,
fixing routes for the thunderstorms,*

God saw it and appraised it,

examined it and plumbed it,

and then God said to human beings:

“The fear of ADONAI—that is wisdom;

departing from sin—that is true knowledge.” Job 28

שמע תפלה, עדיך כל־בשר יבאו.

יבוא כל־בשר להשתחוות לפניך יהוה.

יבואו וישתחוו לפניך אדני, וכבדו לשמך.

לכו נרננה ליהוה, נריעה לצור ישענו.

נקדמה פניו בתודה, בזמרות נריע לו.

אשר־לו הים והוא עשהו, ויבשת ידיו יצרו.

אשר בידו נפש כל־חי, ורוח כל־בשר־איש.

כי יש לכסף מוצא, ומקום לזהב יזקו.

והחכמה מאין תמצא, ואי זה מקום בינה.

תהום אמר לא ביהיא, וים אמר אין עמדי.

לא־יערכנה זהב וזכוכית, ותמורתה כלי־פז.

ראמות וגביש לא יזכר.

והחכמה מאין תמצא, ואי זה מקום בינה.

אלהים הבין דרפה, והוא ידע את־מקומה.

כיהוא לקצות־הארץ יביט, תחת כל־השמים יראה.

לעשות לרוח משקל, ומים תפן במדה.

בעשתו למטר חק, ודרך לחיזו קלות.

אז ראה ויספרה, הכינה וגם־חקרה.

ויאמר לאדם:

הן יראת אדני היא חכמה, וסור מרע בינה. איוב כח

S'LIHOT consists of selections of biblical verses or a *piyyut*, culminating in a declaration of the Thirteen Attributes of God. Different rites and traditions repeat this cycle up to thirteen times. In this mahzor, we have three repetitions.

Following the Ashkenazic rite, we begin with a melody of biblical verses, known as “verses of mercy.” The selected verses are Psalm 65:3; Isaiah 66:23 (adapted); Psalms 86:9, 95:1–2, 5; and Job 12:10.

Then following the Sephardic tradition, we have included verses from the Book of Job.

The Sephardic custom of reciting that biblical book on Kol Nidrei evening was inspired by the Mishnah, which says that the High Priest would study it during the night of Yom Kippur (Yoma 1:6). Invoking the Book of Job may also imply that on this day we question not only our own performance during the year but also the state of the world, and God's justice as well. (This theme will be further explored during the Musaf service tomorrow.)

These particular verses evoke a sense of the mystery of existence. Repentance may begin with a realization of the limitations of our knowledge—whether of ourselves or of the world.

Body and Soul

Originally the holy (kadosh) meant that which is set apart, isolated, segregated. In Jewish piety it assumed a new meaning, denoting a quality that is involved, immersed in common and earthly endeavors; carried primarily by individual, private, simple deeds rather than public ceremonies.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

The soul is Yours, the body is Your creation.

Have compassion on Your handiwork.

The soul is Yours, the body is Yours.

Deal with us according to Your nature.

Ha-n'shamah lakh v'ha-guf po-olakh, husah al amalakh.

Ha-n'shamah lakh v'ha-guf she-lakh, Adonai, aseih l'ma-an sh'mekha.

Atanu al shimkha, Adonai, aseih l'ma-an sh'mekha.

We come before You relying on who You are.

According to Your glorious nature, help us.

You are known as “gracious, compassionate God.”

Forgive, then, our sin, though it is great.

Your way is to be patient with sinners, not only with the righteous.

That is the source of our praise for You.

For Your sake, not ours, God, help us.

See how we stand before You, humbled and empty-handed.

Grant relief to this driven leaf.

Have compassion on that which is but dust and ashes.

Cast away our sins; be kind to Your creations.

No human being can plead for us; have mercy on us.

Dark'kha eloheinu l'ha-arikh appekha

la-ra-im v'la-tovim,

v'hi t'hillatekha.

L'ma-ankha eloheinu aseih v'lo lanu,

r'eih amidateinu dallim v'reikim.

Ta-aleh arukhah l'aleh niddaf, tinnaheim al afar va-eifer.

Tashlikh hata-einu v'tahon b'ma-asekha.

Teireh ki ein ish, aseih immanu tz'dakah.

הַנְּשָׁמָה לָךְ וְהַגּוּף פְּעֻלָּךְ, הוֹסָה עַל עֲמָלֶךָ.

הַנְּשָׁמָה לָךְ וְהַגּוּף שְׁלֶךָ, יְהוּה עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

אֲתָאֲנוּ עַל שְׁמֶךָ יְהוּה, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

בְּעִבּוּר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ, כִּי אֵל חַנוּן וְרַחוּם שְׁמֶךָ.

לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ יְהוּה, וְסִלְחָתְךָ לְעוֹנֵינוּ, כִּי רַב הוּא.

We repeat after the leader:

דְּרַכְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהֶאֱרִיךְ אִפְּךָ

לְרַעִים וְלְטוֹבִים, וְהִיא תְהַלְתֶּךָ.

לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲשֵׂה וְלֹא לָנוּ,

רְאֵה עֲמִידַתְנוּ דְלִים וְרִיקִים.

תַּעֲלֶה אַרוּכָה לְעֵלְךָ נִדָּף,

תִּנְחַם עַל עִפְר וְאִפְר.

תִּשְׁלִיךְ חֲטָאֵינוּ וְתַחַן בְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ,

תִּרְא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה.

THE SOUL IS YOURS הַנְּשָׁמָה לָךְ. These are fragments of two anonymous poems, which appear in fragmentary form in a variety of versions of the printed Ashkenazic mahzor. The verse beginning with א must have been taken from one piyyut, and the one beginning with ת from another one.

YOUR NATURE שְׁמֶךָ. Literally, “Your name.” Reference is made to God’s “name” six times, as if to say that God’s “reputation” for kindness depends on God’s exercising forgiveness on this day.

FORGIVE, THEN, OUR SIN וְסִלְחָתְךָ לְעוֹנֵינוּ. In Psalm

25:11, the verse reads “forgive my sin.” Here it is changed to first person plural, as in much of our liturgy.

PATIENT WITH SINNERS, NOT ONLY WITH THE RIGHTEOUS אֶרְךָ. This insight is based on a passage in the Babylonian Talmud (Eruvin 22a) which asks why the Torah refers to God’s patience in the plural as אֶרְךָ אֶפְיִים (erekh appayim) and not the singular, אֶרְךָ אֶף (erekh af). The response is that God is patient with sinners as much as with the righteous, and therefore the plural.

DRIVEN LEAF עֵלְךָ נִדָּף. Leviticus 26:36 describes the punishment of Israel for their sins as being so fearful that even “the sound of a driven leaf shall put them (Israel) to flight.” The poet reverses that image and prays that even though we may be in exile, may we still experience God’s love.

NO HUMAN BEING אִישׁ אֵין אִישׁ. A phrase recalling the biblical story of Moses’ looking around and seeing that “there was no human being” watching him, then killing the Egyptian taskmaster (Exodus 2:12). Today, we have no Moses to protect us; only God can redeem us.

THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

God, You are patient.

You are known as the source of mercy.

You taught the way of repentance.

Today, and every day, call to mind the wonder of Your compassion and mercy toward the children of those You loved. Turn toward us in mercy, for You are the source of mercy.

We approach Your presence with supplication and prayer, and with the words You revealed to Moses, the humble one, long ago.

Turn away from wrath and let us nestle under Your wings, as it is written in Your Torah,

about the day “God descended in a cloud.”

Overlook sin, blot out guilt,

as on the day “God stood beside him.”

Hear our cry, attend to our plea,

as on the day “he called the name ADONAI.”

And ADONAI passed before him and called:

ADONAI, ADONAI, God, merciful and compassionate, patient, abounding in love and faithfulness, assuring love for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon.

Adonai, Adonai, El rahum v'hannun, erekh appayim v' rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v'hatta-ah v'nakkeih.

Forgive our transgressions and our sins; claim us for Your own.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned;

pardon us, our sovereign, for we have transgressed—

for You, ADONAI, are kind and forgiving;

You act generously to all who call on You.

*S'lah lanu avinu ki hatanu,
m'hal lanu malkeinu ki fashanu,
ki atah Adonai tov v'sallah
v' rav hesed l'khol kor'ekha.*

אל, אָרַךְ אַפַּיִם אַתָּה,
וּבַעַל הַרְחָמִים נִקְרָאתָ,
וְדַרְךְ תְּשׁוּבָה הוֹרִיתָ.
גִּדְלַת רַחֲמֶיךָ וְחַסְדֶּיךָ תִּזְכֹּר הַיּוֹם
וּבְכָל-יּוֹם לְזָרַע יִדְיֶיךָ.
תִּפְּן אֵלֵינוּ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ,
כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בַּעַל הַרְחָמִים.

בְּתַחֲנוּן וּבִתְפִלָּה פָּנֶיךָ נִקְדָּם,
כְּהוֹדֵעַת לְעֲנוּ מִקְדָּם.
מִחֲרוֹן אַפֶּךָ שׁוּב,
כְּמוֹ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ כְּתוּב,
וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ נַחֲסָה וְנִתְלוֹנָן,
כִּיּוֹם וַיֵּרֵד יְהוָה בְּעַנָּן.

◀ תַּעֲבֹר עַל פְּשַׁע וְתִמְחָה אֲשָׁם,
כִּיּוֹם וַיִּתְיַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם.
תִּאֲזִין שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ וְתִקְשִׁיב מִנּוּ מֵאֲמָר
כִּיּוֹם וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה.
וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא:

יְהוָה יְהוָה, אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, אָרַךְ אַפַּיִם, וְרַב-חַסֵּד
וְאֱמֶת. נֹצֵר חַסֵּד לְאֲלָפִים, נִשְׂא עוֹן וּפְשַׁע וְחַטָּאת,
וְנִקְהָה.

וְסַלַּחַת לְעוֹנֵינוּ וְלַחַטָּאתֵנוּ וְנַחֲלָתֵנוּ.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

סָלַח לָנוּ אֲבִינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵינוּ כִּי פָשַׁעְנוּ,
כִּי-אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסָלַח, וְרַב-חַסֵּד לְכָל-קוֹרְאֶיךָ.

Ashkenazic tradition offers a variety of introductions to the Thirteen Attributes, and this mahzor uses a different one for each time the passage is recited in this service.

ABOUT THE DAY . . . AS ON THE DAY כִּיּוֹם. The phrases that follow are from Exodus 34:5, the scene of Moses on Mount Sinai following the shattering of the tablets. When Moses was on the mountain, he did not eat or drink. Yom Kippur can be like that day of Sinai, when Moses discovered God's love and forgiveness.

GRANTING PARDON וְנִקְהָה. The text in the Torah (Exodus 34:7) continues *lo y'nakkeih*, “God does not remit all punishment.” By ending the quote with *v'nakkeih*, the liturgist reverses the meaning of the biblical text, emphasizing only God's mercy.

אל, אָרַךְ אַפַּיִם. Following on the heels of the very moment when Israel was closest to God, standing at Sinai, having heard God utter the Ten Commandments, the Torah pictures the people sinking from the greatest heights to terrible depths. Israel committed the greatest breach against God: constructing a golden calf and worshipping it. But Moses prayed and God forgave. It is this quintessence of sin and forgiveness that is the basis of Yom Kippur. God does not wish to punish us for our sins, but desires that we return on the path to God. If the sin of the golden calf could be forgiven, so can any sin.

After praying for Israel, Moses asked to see God's face. God replied that no one can see God directly, but human beings can experience the Divine indirectly. God passed before Moses and Moses heard the words of the Thirteen Attributes (Exodus 34:6–7), which speak of God's love. The message of the liturgy is that God is experienced in the moment of forgiveness and love.

It is the experience of forgiveness, not the wallowing in the overwhelming nature of our sinfulness, which is the object of this day. Therefore, the liturgy places the promise of God's forgiveness before the confession of our

Second Cycle of S'lihot Prayers: Human Vulnerability

Some congregations repeat each verse after the leader recites it.

As clay in the hand of the potter, who thickens or thins it at will, so are we in Your hand, Guardian of love;

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As stone in the hand of the mason, who preserves or breaks it at will, so are we in Your hand, God of life and death;

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As iron in the hand of the blacksmith, who forges or withdraws it at will, so are we in Your hand, Support of the poor;

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As the helm in the hand of the sailor, who holds the course or abandons it at will, so are we in Your hand, good and forgiving God.

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As glass in the hand of the glazier, who shapes or melts it at will, so are we in Your hand, pardoner of sin and transgression;

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As cloth in the hand of the draper, who drapes or twists it at will, so are we in Your hand, righteous God;

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

As silver in the hand of the smelter, who alloys or refines it at will, so are we in Your hand, Healer of wounds,

Recall Your covenant; do not heed the accuser.

La-b'rit habbe'it v'al teifen la-yeitzer.

Some congregations repeat each verse after the leader recites it.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּחֹמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ מְרַחֵב וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ מְקַצֵּר,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ חֹסֵד נוֹצֵר,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּאֶבֶן בְּיַד הַמְּסַתֵּת,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ אוֹחֵז וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ מְכַתֵּת,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ מַחִיָּה וּמְמוֹתֵת,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּגִרְזֵן בְּיַד הַחֹרֵשׁ,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ דֹּבֵק לְאוֹר וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ פֹּרֵשׁ,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ תּוֹמֵךְ עֵנִי וְרֵשׁ,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּהֶגֶה בְּיַד הַמִּלָּח,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ אוֹחֵז וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ שֹׁלַח,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ אֵל טוֹב וְסִלָּח,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּזִכּוּכִית בְּיַד הַמְּזַגֵּג,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ חוֹגֵג וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ מְמוּגֵג,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ מוֹחֵל זְדוֹן וְשֹׁגֵג,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּיָרִיעָה בְּיַד הַרוֹקֵם,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ מִיֵּשֶׁר וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ מְעַקֵּם,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ אֵל קָנָא וְנוֹקֵם,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

כִּי הִנֵּה כְּכֶסֶף בְּיַד הַצּוֹרֵף,
בְּרִצּוֹתוֹ מְסַגֵּסֵג וּבְרִצּוֹתוֹ מְצַרֵּף,
כִּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַדְךָ מְמַצִּיא לְמִזּוֹר תִּרְף,
לְבָרִית הַבֵּט וְאֵל תִּפְּן לַיִצֵּר.

AS CLAY IN THE HAND OF THE POTTER כִּי הִנֵּה כְּחֹמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר. This piyyut of unknown authorship is based on the verse from Jeremiah, "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, O House of Israel" (18:6). The poet takes up this theme and compares God with various types of artisans—masons, glaziers, and weavers. Humans are compared to the materials that artisans use—stone, glass, or cloth. The poet reflects on the fragility of human existence and pleads that God use us creatively, not destructively.

RECALL YOUR COVENANT לְבָרִית הַבֵּט. Based on Psalm 74:20: "Look to the covenant! For the dark places of the land are full of the haunts of lawlessness."

THE ACCUSER יִצֵּר. The word יִצֵּר (*yeitzer*) means "impulse," and the Rabbis used it to refer to the יִצֵּר הרע (*yeitzer ha-ra*), the "evil impulse," which leads human beings to sin. In biblical and rabbinic mythology, this impulse was depicted as one of the angels who had the duty of acting as prosecutor. In the Book of Job this angel, a member of God's court, is designated *ha-satan* (*ha-satan*). There is no notion of a "fallen" or "rebellious" angel in Jewish mythology.

REFLECTIONS FROM PSALMS

Tell me, God, my end—the measure of my days—
that I would know how fleeting my life is.

*We walk about like empty shells,
all our efforts add up to little;
we pile up possessions,
but don't know how to account for our lives.*

What then should I hope for, God?

Only that You save me from the consequences of my sin.

*You observe my walking and lying down;
You are familiar with all my ways.*

There is no word on my tongue but that You, O God, know it well.

*Where can I escape from Your spirit?
Where can I flee from Your presence?*

I was never concealed from You,
even as I was being shaped in hidden places,
knit together in the recesses of the earth.

*Your eyes saw my unformed limbs;
they were recorded in Your book;
fashioned over days, they all belonged to You.*

It was You who created my innermost ability to feel;

You fashioned me in my mother's womb.

*Examine me now, God;
look into my heart,
probe me, and know my secrets.*

If You see within me cause for sadness, guide me toward eternal truths.

*Hear my prayer, O God, give ear to my cry;
do not disregard my tears;
like all my forebears I am a wanderer,
a guest in Your house.*

Make me an instrument of Your salvation
that I might be redeemed,
before I go away and am no more.

הוֹדִיעֵנִי יְהוָה קֶצֶי, וּמִדַּת יָמֵי מַה־הִיא,
אֲדַעַה מַה־חָדַל אָנִי.

אֶף־בְּצַלְמֵם יִתְהַלֵּךְ־אִישׁ אֶף־הֶבֶל יִהְיֶה־מִיוֹן,
יִצְבֹּר וְלֹא־יֵדַע מִי־אִסְפָּם.

וְעַתָּה מַה־קִּוִּיתִי אֲדֹנָי, תּוֹחַלְתִּי לָךְ הִיא.
מִכָּל־פְּשָׁעֵי הִצִּילְנִי, חֲרַפְתָּ נָבֶל אֶל־תְּשִׁימֵנִי.
יְהוָה חֲקַרְתָּנִי וַתִּדַּע.

אֲתָה יִדְעָתָּ שְׁבֹתִי וְקוּמִי, בְּנִתָּה לְרַעִי מִרְחוֹק.
כִּי אֵין מְלָא בְלִשׁוֹנִי, הֵן יְהוָה יִדְעָתָּ כְּלָא.
אָנָּה אֵלֶיךָ מְרוֹחֵף, וְאָנָּה מִפְּנֵיךָ אֲבָרַח.

לֹא־נִכְחַד עֲצָמֵי מִמֶּנִּי, אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתִי בְּסִתְרֵךְ
רְקִמָתִי בְּתַחְתִּיּוֹת אֶרֶץ.
גָּלַמְתִּי רְאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וְעַל־סִפְרֶךָ כָּלֵם יִפְתָּבוּ,
יָמִים יִצְרוּ וְלוֹ אֶחָד בָּהֶם.

כִּי־אֲתָה קִנִּיתָ כְּלִיתִי, תִּסְפְּנִי בְּבֶטֶן אִמִּי.
חֲקַרְנִי אֵל וְדַע לִבִּי, בְּחִנְנֵי וְדַע שְׂרַעְפֵּי.
וְרֵאָה אִם־דֶּרֶךְ־עֲצָב בִּי, וּנְחַנֵּי בְּדֶרֶךְ עוֹלָם.

◀ שְׁמַעָה תִּפְלְתִי יְהוָה וְשׁוּעָתִי הֲאִזִּינָה אֶל־דַּמְעָתִי
אֶל־תִּחַרְשׁ כִּי גַר אָנֹכִי עִמָּךְ, תּוֹשֵׁב כָּכֶל־אֲבוֹתַי.
הֲשַׁע מִמֶּנִּי וְאֲבַלִּיגָה, בְּטָרָם אֵלֶיךָ וְאִינְנִי.

FROM PSALMS. From earliest times, the S'lihot liturgy for the evening included a series of biblical verses chosen for the way they illustrate the themes of the day. Each cantor would select verses that often were connected only through the repetition of a key word. Congregations, familiar with the Bible, were able to repeat each verse, or complete them, following the cantor.

This meditation on creation, the meaning of our humanity, and the consciousness of our finitude, combines verses from Psalms 39 and 139.

MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR SALVATION הֲשַׁע מִמֶּנִּי. Traditional commentators and modern scholars have argued over the meaning of this phrase. One possibility is that the verb is related to שִׁשׁוּעַ (shishu-a), "that which is full of play and gives delight." The translation would be: "Delight in me and I would recover, before

I die and am no more." Others have understood it to come from the root יָשַׁע, meaning "victory" or "salvation."

Finding Forgiveness

Rabba the son of Haninah the Elder said in the name of Rav: if one sins and is embarrassed by what was done, all one's sins are forgiven.

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD,
BERAKHOT

THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

God, Sovereign who sits on a throne of mercy, acting with unbounded grace, forgiving the sins of Your people, one by one, as each comes before You, generously forgiving sinners and pardoning transgressors, acting charitably with every living thing: do not repay them for their misdeeds.

God, You taught us how to recite the thirteen attributes of Your name; remember the promise implied in these thirteen attributes, which You first revealed to Moses, the humble one, as it is written: God descended in a cloud and stood beside him, and he called the name ADONAI.

And ADONAI passed before him and called: ADONAI, ADONAI, God, merciful and compassionate, patient, abounding in love and faithfulness, assuring love for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon.

Va-ya-avor Adonai al panav va-yikra: Adonai, Adonai, El rahum v'hannun, erekh appayim v'rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v'hatta-ah v'nakkeih.

Forgive our transgressions and our sins; claim us for Your own.
V'salahta la-avoneinu u-l'hattateinu u-n'haltanu.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned; pardon us, our sovereign, for we have transgressed—for You, ADONAI, are kind and forgiving; You act generously to all who call on You.

S'lah lanu avinu ki hatanu, m'hal lanu malkeinu ki fashanu, ki atah Adonai tov v'sallah v'rav hesed l'khol kor'ekha.

אל, מֶלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רַחֲמִים,
מִתְנַהֵג בְּחַסְדֵי־דָוָד, מוֹחֵל עֲוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ,
מַעֲבִיר רֶאשׁוֹן רֶאשׁוֹן,
מְרַבֵּה מַחִילָה לְחַטָּאִים, וְסֹלִיחָה לְפוֹשְׁעִים,
עוֹשֶׂה צְדָקוֹת עִם כָּל־בָּשָׂר וְרוּחַ, לֹא כֹרַעְתֶּם תִּגְמוּל.
אל, הוֹרִיתָ לָנוּ לומר שְׁלֹשׁ עֲשָׂרָה,
זְכַר־לָנוּ הַיּוֹם בְּרִית שְׁלֹשׁ עֲשָׂרָה,
כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּ לְעַנּוֹ מִקֶּדֶם,
כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב: וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה בְּעַנָּן, וַיִּתְיַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם,
וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה.

וַיַּעֲבֹר יְהוָה עַל־פָּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא:

יְהוָה יְהוָה, אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, וְרַב־חַסֵּד
וְאֱמֵת. נִצַּר חַסֵּד לְאַלְפִים, נִשָּׂא עוֹן וּפְשָׁע וְחַטָּאָה,
וְנִקְּהָ.

וְסִלַּחַת לְעוֹנֵינוּ וּלְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ וְנִחַלְתָּנוּ.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

סִלַּח לָנוּ אֲבִינוּ כִּי חָטָאנוּ,
מַחֵל לָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵינוּ כִּי פָשַׁענוּ,
כִּי־אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסִלַּח
וְרַב־חַסֵּד לְכָל־קוֹרְאֶיךָ.

THRONE OF MERCY כִּסֵּא רַחֲמִים. Mythically, God is said to have two thrones: the seat of judgment and the seat of mercy. On Rosh Hashanah, God sits in judgment; on Yom Kippur, God moves to the throne of mercy.

GOD, YOU TAUGHT US אֵל הוֹרִיתָ לָנוּ. The biblical verse is ambiguous as to whether it was Moses or God who recited the Thirteen Attributes of God. Rabbi Yohanan describes God as wearing a *tallit* like a cantor and showing Moses how to pray. God said to Moses: “Whenever Israel sins, they should recite this passage and I will forgive them.” And then God spoke the words of the Thirteen Attributes (Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 17b).

Third Cycle of S'lihot Prayers: Yearning for God

Some congregations repeat each verse after the leader recites it.

To You we pray, above us all, beyond all time and space.
Understand us—mortal beings, poor in spirit, weak of flesh—
for You turn toward the humble, the broken, the weak.

Forgive us on this special day.

Surely You will do so tomorrow.

Maḥar ya-aseh Adonai et ha-davar ha-zeh.

My soul yearns for You, though I am afraid of Your judgment.

Our ritual is imperfect,

we can no longer follow the prescribed form,

yet we depend on You.

Turn to us as if we were High Priests standing before Your Ark.

Surely You will do so tomorrow.

Maḥar ya-aseh Adonai et ha-davar ha-zeh.

My heart is caught in the web it has spun,
and I am conscious of how short my life is.
We depart like dew that may shine for a morning;
not saved by its lowly state, it quickly fades.
On this day when we are summoned before the judge of all,
turn to us for Your honor's sake; allow us to walk in the land of the living.
Forgive the sins of Your people.

Surely You will do so tomorrow.

Maḥar ya-aseh Adonai et ha-davar ha-zeh.

*My sovereign, redeem the children of Jacob
and accept our fasting from one evening to the next.*

*Rain down on us the redemption we have prayed for,
and quench our thirst.*

*Tzur Yisra-el, Stronghold of Israel, bathe me in Your purifying waters,
and purify me as I sing to You: Surely this is our God!*

Surely You will do so tomorrow.

Maḥar ya-aseh Adonai et ha-davar ha-zeh.

Wipe away my sins as I call to You, filled with awe, in Your holy sanctuary.
Form me anew, granting me a heart freshly born,
as the righteous teacher foretold in Your holy law
regarding this special day.

Surely You will do so tomorrow.

Maḥar ya-aseh Adonai et ha-davar ha-zeh.

Some congregations repeat each verse after the leader recites it.

בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיוֹן מֵרֵאשׁ אַחֲרֵית חוּזָה
שׁוֹמֵעַ אֶל אֲבִיוֹן וְעֲנוּתוֹ לֹא תִבְזֶה
מִכֹּפֶר כָּל-שִׁגְיוֹ בְּיוֹם הָעֲשׂוֹר הַזֶּה
מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

נִפְשֵׁי לָךְ עוֹרְגֹת כְּאֵיל עַל אֲפִיקִים
וּמִיּוֹם דֵּין חוֹרְגֹת בְּעֵד מַעֲשֵׂיָהּ רִיקִים
בְּאֵין חֲטָאת נוֹהֶגֶת וְלֹא עוֹלוֹת מִצְדִּיקִים
לְבַד בְּךָ רוֹגְגֹת קִדְשֵׁת שְׁמֶךָ לְהִקִּים
תִּרְצִינָה כְּאִישׁ לִפְנֵי הַכֹּפֶרֶת יִזֶּה.
מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

יוֹם נִקְרָאתִי לְבֹא בְּדֵין עִם הַמֶּלֶךְ
לְכִבִּי כְּלָה בְּחִבּוֹ כִּטְל מִשָּׁפִים הוֹלֵךְ
לֹא יוֹעִיל בְּזִהְבוֹ וְלֹא דְלוֹת וְהִלָּךְ
לְבַעֲבוֹר כְּבוֹדְךָ שׁוֹכְבוֹ בְּאַרְצוֹת חַיִּים לְהִלָּךְ
וּלְמַעַנְךָ סֶלַח נָא לַעֲוֹן הָעָם הַזֶּה.
מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

מְלָכֵי אֱלֹהִים צִוָּה יִשׁוּעוֹת יַעֲקֹב וְקָרַב
וְרִצָּה תַעֲנִית דָּוָה מֵעֶרֶב עַד עֶרֶב
וְגִשְׁמֵי נְדָבוֹת רִוָּה צִמְאוֹנוֹ וְטַל עֶרֶב
צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְוֶה מִחֲטָא לְטַהֲרֵי תָרַב
עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ זֶה
מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

נִקְה חֲטָאֵי קוֹרָא בְּבֵית מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ
בְּמוֹרֶךְ לִבָּב יִרָא שְׂאֵת חֲטָאתֵינוּ גִדְשׁ
אִם בִּירְאָה יִבְרָא לֵב חֲדָשׁ לְהַתְחַדֵּשׁ
כְּאִשֶׁר בִּשְׂר מוֹרָה צִדֵּק בְּמִשְׁפַּט קֹדֶשׁ
בְּעֲשׂוֹר לְחֲדָשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַזֶּה.
מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיוֹן. This piyyut is recited in the Italian rite for Kol Nidrei evening. It has been ascribed to Benjamin ben Abraham min Ha-anavim, who lived in Italy in the 13th century. The liturgy of Yom Kippur is filled with memories of the pageantry of the day when the Temple stood in Jerusalem and the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to pray for the people Israel. By entwining our own practice with memories of the biblical drama, the poet hopes we can achieve a sense of purity that our ancestors experienced through the Temple ritual.

SURELY YOU WILL DO SO TOMORROW מִחֵר יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה. This chorus is based on Exodus 9:5, Moses' warning to Pharaoh that God will surely bring a pestilence on Egypt—but that the Israelites will not be harmed.

THE RIGHTEOUS TEACHER מוֹרָה צִדֵּק. During the Second Temple period, this phrase was widely used. Here it refers to Moses.

YOUR KINDNESS ACCOMPANIED ME: A PIYYUT

Even before I came to be, Your kindness accompanied me.

For from nothing, You formed me.

Who was it who fashioned me? Spun the clay?

Fired the kiln? Hardened me?

Who breathed life into me?

Opened the belly of the deep? Pulled me out?

Who guided me from childhood to today?

Gave me understanding? Filled me with wonder?

Though I am but clay in Your hands,

was it not You who made me? Truly, You, not me.

Yet, I confess my sins, and I do not say

that I was fooled by another, who beguiled me.

Why would I try to hide my sin from You?

For even before I came to be, Your kindness accompanied me.

Terem heyoti, hasd'kha va-ani.

THE WORLD IS FULL OF YOUR GLORY: A PIYYUT

ADONAI, where shall I find You?

High and hidden is Your place.

And where shall I not find You?

The world is full of Your glory.

I sought Your closeness,

I called to You with all my heart,

And going out to meet You

I found You coming toward me.

*Yah, ana emtza-akha
m'kom'kha na-aleh v'ne-lam
v'ana lo emtza-akha
k'vod'kha malei olam*

*Darashti kirvat'kha
b'khol libbi k'ra-tikha
u-v'tzeiti li-k'rat'kha
li-k'rati m'tzatikha.*

טָרַם הָיֹוֹתִי חֶסֶדְךָ בָּאֲנִי,
הַשֵּׁם לִישׁ אֵין וְהִמְצִיאֲנִי.
מִי הוּא אֲשֶׁר רָקַם תְּמוּנָתִי?
וּמִי עֲצָמִי בְכוֹר יִצְקָךָ וְהִקְפִּיאֲנִי?
מִי הוּא אֲשֶׁר נִפְחַ נְשָׁמָה בִּי?
וּמִי בָטָן שְׂאוֹל פָּתַח וְהוֹצִיאֲנִי?
מִי נִהְגֵּנִי מִנְעוּרַי עַד הַלֵּם?
מִי לְמַדְנִי בֵּין וְהִפְלִיאֲנִי?
אֲמַנָּם אֲנִי חָמַר בְּקָרֵב יָדְךָ,
אֶתָּה עָשִׂיתָנִי, אֲמַת, לֹא אֲנִי.
אוֹדֶה עָלֶי פִשְׁעֵי וְלֹא אֹמַר לְךָ
כִּי הֵעָרִים נְחַשׁ וְהִשִּׁיאֲנִי.
אֵיכָה אֶכְחַד מִמֶּךָ חֶטְאִי?
טָרַם הָיֹוֹתִי חֶסֶדְךָ בָּאֲנִי!
הֲלֹא

FROM NOTHING, YOU FORMED ME לִישׁ אֵין וְהִמְצִיאֲנִי. Solomon ibn Gabirol (1020–1057) was among the most important of the Spanish-Jewish poets and the originator of many of this poetry's genres. In this poem, he sees the pure soul—that part of the human which is constituted by the image of God—as the instrument of redemption. However we may have sinned, there is some aspect of who we are that is a reflection of the Divine. Allowing ourselves to feel God's presence within can be the source of our overcoming despair at our own imperfection. Ibn Gabirol believes that as much as we have sinned, the Divine is always present within us.

ADONAI, WHERE SHALL I FIND YOU אֲמַצְאָךָ. Yehudah Halevi (1075–1141) is perhaps the most famous of the Spanish poets. Like Ibn Gabirol, he excelled not only in poetry but in philosophy, as well. His religious poetry frequently expresses intense yearning and love. This yearning was also manifested in his personal life—it impelled him to leave Spain and journey to the Land of Israel, where he died. This fragment of a longer poem is a beautiful expression of the encounter with God as a mutual meeting.

יְהִי אֲנִי אֲמַצְאָךָ
מְקוֹמְךָ נֶעְלָה וְנֶעְלָם
וְאֲנִי לֹא אֲמַצְאָךָ
כְּבוֹדְךָ מְלֵא עוֹלָם
דְּרִשְׁתִּי קִרְבְּתְךָ
בְּכָל-לִבִּי קִרְאתֶיךָ
וּבִצְאָתִי לְקִרְאתֶךָ
לְקִרְאתִי מִצְאָתֶיךָ

The Thirteen Attributes

The liturgy for Yom Kippur is filled with the image of God's mercy and love overcoming harsh judgment. The Rabbis taught that human behavior should imitate God. Our admission of our inadequacy to stand up to absolute standards of judgment and our expectation of God's forgiveness teach us about the kindness we need in approaching others.

I Forgive as You Asked

The S'lihot section ends with God's response to Moses, announcing forgiveness. Jewish tradition wants us to hear the echo of these words as we recite the confession; forgiveness, while assured, is dependent on our asking.

sovereign, for we have transgressed—for You, ADONAI, are kind and forgiving; You act generously to all who call on You.

S'lah lanu avinu ki hatanu, m'hal lanu malkeinu ki fashanu, ki atah Adonai tov v'sallah, v'rav hesed l'khol kor'ekha.

Listen to our prayers, God, hear our pleading, our sorrow-filled voices.

Our sovereign, our God, it is to You we pray.

May Your ear hear, and Your eyes open to the prayers of Your servants, the people Israel.

In Your heavenly abode, may You hear their pleas and prayers, and respond to what they ask.

May You forgive Your people who have sinned against You.

As a parent looks kindly on a child, may You, God, look kindly on us.

Salvation is ADONAI's alone—pour blessings on Your people forever.

Adonai Tz'va-ot is with us, our support, the God of Jacob, forever.

Blessed is the one who trusts in You, Adonai Tz'va-ot.

ADONAI, save us! Surely the Sovereign One will respond to us on the day we call out.

“As befits Your abundant love, please forgive this people's sin, just as You have always forgiven this people from the time of the Exodus from Egypt until now.” When Moses recited this prayer it is recorded:

ADONAI said, “I forgive, as you asked.”

Va-yomer Adonai: salahti ki-d'varekha.

THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES

God, Sovereign who sits on a throne of mercy, acting with unbounded grace, forgiving the sins of Your people, one by one, as each comes before You, generously forgiving sinners and pardoning transgressors, acting charitably with every living thing: do not repay them for their misdeeds.

God, You taught us how to recite the Thirteen Attributes of Your name; remember the promise implied in these Thirteen Attributes, which You first revealed to Moses, the humble one, as it is written: God descended in a cloud and stood beside him, and he called the name ADONAI:

And ADONAI passed before him and called:

ADONAI, ADONAI, God, merciful and compassionate, patient, abounding in love and faithfulness, assuring love for thousands of generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and granting pardon.

Adonai, Adonai, El rahum v'hannun, erekh appayim v'rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v'hatta-ah v'nakkeih.

Forgive our transgressions and our sins; claim us for Your own.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned; pardon us, our

אל, מלך יושב על כסא רחמים, מתנהג בחסידות, מוחל עונות עמו, מעביר ראשון ראשון, מרבה מחילה לחטאים, וסליחה לפושעים, עושה צדקות עם כל בשר ורוח, לא כרעתם תגמול.

אל, הורית לנו לומר שלש עשרה, זכר-לנו היום ברית שלש עשרה, כמו שהודעת לענו מקדם, כמו שכתוב: וירד יהוה בענן, ויתיב עמו שם, ויקרא בשם יהוה.

ויעבר יהוה על-פניו ויקרא:

יהוה יהוה, אל רחום וחנון, ארך אפים, ורב-חסד ואמת. ניצר חסד לאלפים, נשא עון ופשע וחטאה, ונקה.

וסלחת לעוננו ולחטאתנו ונחלתנו.

Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלפנו כי פשענו, כי אתה אדני טוב וסלח, ורב-חסד לכל-קוראיך.

האזינה יהוה תפלתנו, והקשיבה בקול תחנונותינו. הקשיבה לקול שוענו, מלפנו ואלהינו, כי-אליך נתפלל. תהי נא אזנך-קשבת ועיניך פתוחות אל-תפלת עבדיך עמך ישראל. ושמעת מן השמים, ממכון שבתיך, את-תפלתם ואת-תחנוותיהם, ועשית משפטם. וסלחת לעמך אשר חטאו-לך.

ברחם אב על-בנים, פן תרחם יהוה עלינו.

ליהוה הישועה, על-עמך ברכתך סלה.

יהוה צבאות עמנו, משגב-לנו אלהי יעקב, סלה.

יהוה צבאות, אשרי אדם בטח בך.

יהוה הושיעה, המלך יעננו ביום-קראנו.

סלח-נא לעון העם הזה כגדל חסדך, וכאשר נשאתה לעם הזה ממצרים ועד-הנה. ושם נאמר: ויאמר יהוה סלחתי כדברך.

ראשון ראשון ONE BY ONE. According to the Babylonian Talmud, God counts only one sin at a time, for if the totality of our sins were counted together, we might be judged negatively; each sin is forgiven individually (Rosh Hashanah 17a).

LISTEN TO OUR PRAYERS. The words come from Psalm 86:6, though the liturgist has changed the first person singular “my” to the first personal plural “our.” The same change is made in the next two verses.

OUR SOVEREIGN, OUR GOD. מלכנו ואלהינו. Psalm 5:3.

MAY YOUR EAR HEAR. תהי נא אזנך קשבת. Nehemiah 1:6.

IN YOUR HEAVENLY ABODE. ושמעת מן השמים. 1 Kings 8:49–50.

AS A PARENT. ברחם אב. Psalm 103:13 has “May You, God look kindly on your faithful ones.” The liturgist did not presume that we are all faithful, but we can still pray that God should turn toward each of us.

SALVATION IS ADONAI'S ALONE. ליהוה הישועה. Psalm 3:9.

ADONAI TZ'VA-OT. יהוה צבאות. Psalm 46:8.

BLESSED IS THE ONE. אשרי. Psalm 84:13. God moves to the throne of mercy.

ADONAI SAVE US. יהוה הושיעה. Psalm 20:10.

FORGIVE. סלח. Numbers 14:19–20.

¶ *On Your Wings:
Biblical Images*

As an owl in the desert screams in the night, so I want to be heard, my God.

As a thrush cries as danger nears its nest, so we plead that You attend us.

The eagle circles round and round, higher and higher, to protect its young; carry us on eagle's wings and guard us from danger.

A dove hovers constantly over its young, never tiring of its task, so let me be nestled in Your care.

Spread Your wings, carry me, watch over me. Bring me to Your holy house on eagle's wings.

—EDWARD FELD

CONCLUDING BIBLICAL VERSES

Grant atonement and purify us this day, as it is written in the Torah, “For on this day, atonement shall be made for you to purify you from all your transgressions; in the presence of ADONAI you shall be pure.” Bring us to Your holy mountain and make us joyful in Your house of prayer, as Isaiah prophesied, “For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.”

CULMINATION OF S'LIHOT: HEAR OUR VOICE

We rise as the ark is opened. After the leader recites each verse, we repeat it.

Hear our voice, ADONAI our God, be kind, and have compassion for us. Willingly and lovingly accept our prayer.

Turn us toward You, ADONAI, and we will return to You; make our days seem fresh, as they once were.

Do not cast us away from You; take not Your holy presence from us.

Do not cast us away as we grow old; do not desert us as our energy wanes.

Sh'ma koleinu, Adonai eloheinu, hus v'raheim aleinu, v'kabbeil b'rahamim u-v'ratzon et t'fillateinu.

Hashiveinu Adonai eilekha v'nashuvah, haddeish yameinu k'kedem.

Al tashlikheinu mi-l'fanekha, v'ru-ah kodsh'kha al tikkah mimmennu.

Al tashlikheinu l'eit ziknah, ki-kh'lot koheinu al ta-azveinu.

Said quietly:

Do not abandon us, ADONAI our God, do not distance Yourself from us.

Give us a signal of hope, so that our enemies will understand and hesitate, knowing that You have been our help and comfort.

Hear our words, ADONAI, and consider our innermost thoughts.

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to You, ADONAI, our rock and redeemer.

It is for You we wait; surely You will respond, ADONAI our God.

The ark is closed.

Our God and God of our ancestors, do not abandon us, do not forsake us, do not shame us, do not annul Your covenant with us. Draw us close to Your Torah, teach us Your mitzvot, show us Your ways. Open our hearts to revere Your name, circumcise our hearts to love You; then, we will turn to You, faithfully, with a perfect heart. And as befits Your own great name, pardon and forgive our sins, as the psalmist wrote: “For the sake of Your own name, forgive my sin, though it be great.”

V'salahta la-avoni ki rav hu.

כָּפַר חַטָּאֵינוּ בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה וְטַהַרְנוּ, כָּמָה שְׁכַתּוֹב: כִּי בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עָלֵיכֶם לְטַהַר אֶתְכֶם, מִכָּל חַטְאֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יְהוָה טַהַרְוּ. הִבְיֵאֵנוּ אֶל־הַר קְדֻשָּׁךְ, וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתְךָ, כָּמָה שְׁכַתּוֹב: כִּי בֵּיתִי בֵּית־תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל־הָעַמִּים.

We rise as the ark is opened. After the leader recites each verse, we repeat it.

שָׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.

הִשִּׁיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וְנִשׁוּבָה, חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

אֶל־תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, וְרוּחַ קְדֻשָּׁךְ אֶל־תִּתְּקַח מִמֶּנּוּ.

אֶל־תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ לְעֵת זְקָנָה, כְּכֹלֹת כַּחֲנוּ אֶל־תִּעְזָבֵנוּ.

Said quietly:

אֶל־תִּעְזָבֵנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶל־תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנּוּ.

עֲשֵׂה־עִמָּנוּ אוֹת לְטוֹבָה, וְיִרְאוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וַיִּבְשׁוּ,

כִּי־אֵתָהּ יְהוָה עֲזָרְתָנוּ וְנִחַמְתָּנוּ.

אֲמַרְיֵנוּ הֵאֲזִינָה יְהוָה, בְּיָנָה הִגִּיגְנוּ.

יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אֲמַרְיֵינוּ וְהִגִּיֹן לָבֵנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה צוּרֵנוּ וְגֹאֲלֵנוּ.

כִּי־לָךְ יְהוָה הוֹחֵלֵנוּ, אֵתָהּ תַעֲנֶה, אֲדַנִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

The ark is closed.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ],

אֵל תִּעְזָבֵנוּ וְאֵל תִּשְׁשׁוּנוּ,

וְאֵל תִּכְלִימֵנוּ וְאֵל תִּפְר בְּרִיתְךָ אֵתָנוּ.

קָרְבָנוּ לְתוֹרָתְךָ, לְמִדְנוּ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ, הוֹרְנוּ דְרָכֶיךָ,

הֵט לָבֵנוּ לִירְאָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ, וּמוֹל אֶת־לִבְבָנוּ לְאַהֲבָתְךָ,

וְנִשׁוּב אֱלֵיךָ בְּאֵמֶת וּבְלֵב שָׁלֵם. < וְלִמְעַן שִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל

תִּמְחַל וְתִסְלַח לְעוֹנֵנוּ, כְּפָתוּב בְּדַבְרֵי קְדֻשָּׁךְ:

לְמַעַן־שִׁמְךָ יְהוָה, וְסִלַּחַת לְעוֹנֵי כִּי רַב־הוּא.

When most Jewish liturgy quotes biblical verses that were phrased in the first person singular, it recasts them as plural. (The authors of the prayerbook felt free to emend the Bible's wording in this way.) Some scholars believe that this liturgical transformation took place around the turn of the first millennium. In this view, all prayers of confession were originally phrased in the first person singular: “my” sin rather than “our” sin. The triumph of the communal over the individual is the contribution of the Middle Ages. Thus only the last verse on this page, Psalm 25:11, is left in the singular, as if each of us must finally confront our own sinfulness. Some editions of the mahzor change even that verse to the plural.

DO NOT ABANDON US אֶל־תִּעְזָבֵנוּ. This verse is only whispered, for we do not want to assert out loud even the possibility of abandonment. The whispering then extends to what follows—personal prayers that our plea may be heard.

CONCLUDING BIBLICAL VERSES. Just as the S'lihot began with a series of biblical verses, it now moves to its conclusion with a similar series. Likewise, just as the evening service began by permitting sinners to pray along with the righteous, it now climaxes with the announcement, “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.” The quotations are from Leviticus 16:30 and Isaiah 56:7.

HEAR OUR VOICE שָׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. Sh'ma Koleinu is a supplication that seeks to penetrate the silence that surrounds us, to evoke God's response, and to draw God into our prayer. “Hear our voice” may be among the most poignant words spoken in prayer. This prayer's first sentence is from the concluding prayer of personal petition in the daily Amidah. (In Jewish liturgy, a general plea that God hear our prayer typically precedes or follows a set of specific requests.) It then quotes Lamentations 5:21; Psalms 51:13; 71:9; 38:22; 86:17; 19:15; 5:2; 38:16.

The Babylonian Talmud records an argument as to whether personal prayers should be recited in the plural (Berakhot 29b–30a).

Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

For—

We are Your people,	and You are our God;
we are Your children	and You are our parent.
We are Your servants,	and You are our master;
we are Your congregation,	and You are our portion.
We are Your heritage,	and You are our destiny;
we are Your flock,	and You are our shepherd.
We are Your vineyard,	and You are our guardian;
we are Your creatures,	and You are our creator.
We are Your spouse,	and You are our beloved;
we are Your cherished ones,	and You are near to us.
We are Your people,	and You are our sovereign;
we are the ones You address,	and You are the One to whom we speak.

Ki

<i>Anu ammekha,</i>	<i>v'atah eloheinu,</i>
<i>anu vanekha</i>	<i>v'atah avinu.</i>
<i>Anu avadekha</i>	<i>v'atah adoneinu,</i>
<i>anu k'halekha</i>	<i>v'atah helkeinu.</i>
<i>Anu nahalatekha</i>	<i>v'atah goraleinu,</i>
<i>anu tzonekha</i>	<i>v'atah ro-einu.</i>
<i>Anu kharmekha</i>	<i>v'atah not'reinu,</i>
<i>anu f'ullatekha,</i>	<i>v'atah yotz'reinu.</i>
<i>Anu ra-yatekha</i>	<i>v'atah dodeinu,</i>
<i>anu s'gullatekha</i>	<i>v'atah k'roveinu.</i>
<i>Anu ammekha</i>	<i>v'atah malkeinu,</i>
<i>anu ma-amirekha</i>	<i>v'atah ma-amireinu.</i>

VIDDUI — PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

We are insolent;	You are gracious and compassionate.
We are obstinate;	You are patient.
We are sinful;	You are merciful.

Our days are a passing shadow, but You are the One who truly is, for time without end.

Our God and God of our ancestors, hear our prayer; do not ignore our plea. Our God and God of our ancestors, we are neither so insolent nor so obstinate as to claim in Your presence that we are righteous, without sin; for we, like our ancestors who came before us, have sinned.

Sin and Repentance

No sin is so light that it may be overlooked; no sin is so heavy that it may not be repented of.

—MOSES IBN EZRA

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
סֵלַח לָנוּ, מַחֵל לָנוּ, כְּפָר־לָנוּ.

אָנוּ עַמְּךָ	וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
אָנוּ בְנֶיךָ	וְאַתָּה אָבִינוּ.
אָנוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ	וְאַתָּה אֲדוֹנֵנוּ,
אָנוּ קְהִלָּךָ	וְאַתָּה חֻלְקֵנוּ.
אָנוּ נַחֲלָתְךָ	וְאַתָּה גּוֹרְלֵנוּ,
אָנוּ צִאֲנֶךָ	וְאַתָּה רוֹעֵנוּ.
אָנוּ כְרֻמֶּךָ	וְאַתָּה נוֹטְרָנוּ,
אָנוּ פְּעֻלָּתְךָ	וְאַתָּה יוֹצְרֵנוּ.
אָנוּ רְעִיתְךָ	וְאַתָּה דוֹרְנוּ,
אָנוּ סִגְלָתְךָ	וְאַתָּה קְרוֹבֵנוּ.
אָנוּ עַמְּךָ	וְאַתָּה מְלַפְנוּ,
אָנוּ מֵאֲמִירֶיךָ	וְאַתָּה מֵאֲמִירֵנוּ.

וִידוּי

אָנוּ עֲזֵי פָנִים	וְאַתָּה רַחוּם וְחַנוּן.
אָנוּ קִשֵׁי עֶרֶף	וְאַתָּה אָרֶךְ אַפַּיִם.
אָנוּ מְלֵאֵי עוֹן	וְאַתָּה מְלֵא רַחֲמִים.

אָנוּ יְמִינוּ כְּצֶל עוֹבֵר וְאַתָּה הוּא וְשִׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתְמוּ.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
תְּבֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תִּפְלֹתֵנוּ, וְאֵל תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתְחַנְּתֵנוּ,
שְׂאִין אֲנַחְנוּ עֲזֵי פָנִים וְקִשֵׁי עֶרֶף לוֹמַר לְפָנֶיךָ,
יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
צְדִיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חָטְאנוּ,
אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ] חָטְאנוּ.

the heavens are the work of Your hands. / They shall perish, but You shall endure; / they shall all wear out like a garment; / You change them like clothing and they pass away. / But You are the same, and Your years never end" (Psalm 102:26–28).

WE, LIKE OUR ANCESTORS וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ. In the Babylonian Talmud, Mar Zutra remarked that anyone who says "we have sinned" has understood the meaning of confession (Yoma 87b). Every human being is imperfect. Even previous generations—whom we may idealize—contained sinners. As the Rabbis taught: no one has walked the earth and not sinned. In ascribing sin to our ancestors, the liturgist is quoting Psalm 106:6.

WE ARE YOUR PEOPLE כִּי אָנוּ עַמְּךָ. An early medieval poem, which expands on the verse from Song of Songs: "I am for my beloved and my beloved is mine" (2:16). It completes the S'lihot/Forgiveness section and forms the transition to the confession. Here we end in joyous song, then move to a meditative melody, as we begin the Viddui/Confession. In this poem we emphasize our relatedness to God, whereas in the next we emphasize the stark difference between the human and the Divine.

VIDDUI—PRAYERS OF CONFESSION וִידוּי. In addition to fasting and otherwise afflicting oneself, the central mitzvah that must be performed on Yom Kippur is *viddui* (confession). The rabbinic requirement to confess is based on the biblical passage that describes the confession of the High Priest when performing the Temple ceremony. Following the destruction of the Temple, greater emphasis was placed on synagogue ritual and individual prayer, and it fell upon each person to make confession on Yom Kippur.

A PASSING SHADOW כְּצֶל עוֹבֵר. Psalm 144:4.

FOR TIME WITHOUT END וְשִׁנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא יִתְמוּ. "Of old You established the earth; /

We Betray

When we sin, we betray our true selves; when we repent, we rediscover the purity of our souls—and find, once again, that God dwells within us. As the 20th-century Jewish thinker and rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik remarked, it is because we ourselves are God’s temple that repentance and forgiveness are possible.

Repentance

Penitence can transform all our past sins into spiritual assets. From every error we can derive an important lesson, and from every lowly fall we can derive the inspiration to climb to spiritual heights.

Who Are We

Emotions ebb and flow throughout these holy days. Paradoxes swim in the stream of prayer. At one moment, we believe our deeds to be of such import that the world stands still so that we may take account of them. At another moment, we imagine ourselves so small, so insignificant that our lives are like a passing breath. We are great; we are small. We are the center of the universe; we are nothing at all. And yet, no matter how large we imagine our sins to be, and no matter how puny we imagine ourselves to be, God will never forsake us.

—NINA BETH CARDIN

The Shorter Confession—Ashamnu

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite every phrase of this confession.

We abuse, we betray, we are cruel, we destroy, we embitter, we falsify, we gossip, we hate, we insult, we jeer, we kill, we lie, we mock, we neglect, we oppress, we pervert, we quarrel, we rebel, we steal, we transgress, we are unkind, we are violent, we are wicked, we are extremists, we yearn to do evil, we are zealous for bad causes.

Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu, dibbarnu dofi; he-evinu, v’hirshanu, zadnu, h́amasnu, tafalnu sheker; ya-atznu ra, kizzavnu, latznu, maradnu, ni-atznu; sararnu, avinu, pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref; rashanu, shihatnu, ti-avnu, ta-inu, titanu.

We have turned from Your goodly laws and commandments, but it has not profited us. Surely, You are in the right with respect to all that comes upon us, for You have acted faithfully, but we have been in the wrong.

PENITENTIAL PRAYERS BEFORE THE GREAT CONFESSION

One or more of the following penitential prayers may be included.

א

We have done wrong and transgressed, and so we have not triumphed. Inspire our hearts to abandon the path of evil, and hasten our redemption. And so Your prophet Isaiah declared: “Let the wicked forsake their path, and the sinful their design. Let them return to ADONAI, who will show them compassion. Let them return to our God, who will surely forgive them.”

ב

Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive and pardon our sins [on this Shabbat and] on this Day of Atonement. Blot out and disregard our sins and errors; subdue our instincts so that they may serve You. Bend our stiffness so that we turn to You; renew our passion for observing Your ordinances. Circumcise our hearts to love and revere Your name, as it is written in Your Torah: “Then ADONAI your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your offspring to love ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your soul, that you may live.”

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite every phrase of this confession.

אֲשָׁמְנוּ, בַּגְדָנוּ, גָזַלְנוּ, דִּבְרָנוּ דָפִי.
הָעֵוִינוּ, וְהִרְשָׁעְנוּ, וְדָנוּ, חָמְסָנוּ, טָפְלָנוּ שָׁקָר.
יַעֲצָנוּ רָע, כָּזַבְנוּ, לָצָנוּ, מָרְדָנוּ, נֹאֲצָנוּ.
סָרְרָנוּ, עֵוִינוּ, פָּשַׁעְנוּ, צָרְרָנוּ, קִשְׁיָנוּ עֶרְף.
רָשָׁעְנוּ, שָׁחַתְנוּ, תַּעֲבָנוּ, תַּעֲיִנוּ, תַּעֲתָעְנוּ.

סָרְנוּ מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ הַטּוֹבִים, וְלֹא שׁוּהָ לָנוּ.
וְאַתָּה צַדִּיק עַל כָּל־הַבָּא עֲלֵינוּ, פִּי אֶמֶת עֲשִׂיתָ
וְאַנְחָנוּ הִרְשָׁעְנוּ.

One or more of the following penitential prayers may be included.

א

הִרְשָׁעְנוּ וּפָשַׁעְנוּ, לָכֵן לֹא נוֹשָׁעְנוּ. וְתַן בְּלִבְנוּ לַעֲזוֹב דְרָךְ
רָשָׁע וְחַיֵּשׁ לָנוּ יֵשַׁע, כִּפְתּוֹב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ: יַעֲזוֹב רָשָׁע דְרָכּוֹ,
וְאִישׁ אֶן מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ, וְיֵשֵׁב אֶל־יְהוָה וִירַחֲמֵהוּ, וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵינוּ
כִּי־יִרְבֶּה לְסִלּוֹחַ.

ב

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ],
סָלַח וּמַחַל לַעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
בַּיּוֹם [הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וּבַיּוֹם] הַכְּפוּרִים הַזֶּה.
מָחָה וְהַעֲבֵר פָּשַׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ,
וְכַף אֶת־יָצְרָנוּ לְהַשְׁתַּעֲבֹד־לָךְ,
וְהַכְנַע עֲרַפְנוּ לְשׁוֹב אֵלֶיךָ,
וְחַדֵּשׁ כְּלִיּוֹתֵינוּ לְשִׁמּוֹר פְּקֻדֶיךָ,
וּמוֹל אֶת־לִבְבְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת־שִׁמְךָ,
כִּפְתּוֹב בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ: וּמַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לִבְבְךָ,
וְאֶת־לִבְבֵי זֵרַעֲךָ, לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
בְּכָל־לִבְבְךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ
לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ.

BLOT OUT AND DISREGARD מָחָה וְהַעֲבֵר. Both inner and outer parts of the body are mentioned in this prayer. Body and soul are intimately bound, as we seek to behave differently. It is as if we simultaneously ask the Creator to fashion for us a less sinful body as the home for our newly purified self.

CIRCUMCISE וּמַל. Deuteronomy 30:6. Circumcision is an act of completion and perfection. Removing the flesh—our sins, which mask our essential nature—reveals the true function of the heart: to lead us to a life of love, righteousness, and peace.

STRIKE OUR HEART. The custom of striking our heart while confessing our sins is first mentioned in a midrash on Ecclesiastes 7:2 (“the living will lay it to heart”): “Rabbi Meir said: ‘Why do people strike their hearts [in remorse for their sins]? Because the heart is the seat and source of sin’” (Ecclesiastes Rabbah).

WE ABUSE אֲשָׁמְנוּ. The liturgical list is alphabetical, with the hope that it will help us find our own words to name our transgressions. We might concentrate on one particular failing in our lives.

WE DESTROY שָׁחַתְנוּ. In this bilingual alphabetical list, the English word that represents the letter D means roughly the same as the Hebrew word that represents the letter ש (shin). The sin of בַּל תִּשְׁחִית (bal tash-hit), “not destroying anything needlessly,” was enumerated by the Rabbis among the 613 commandments of the Torah. To destroy any part of creation is to undo God’s work, to reject God’s gift.

YOU HAVE ACTED FAITHFULLY וְאַתָּה צַדִּיק. Nehemiah 9:33. The prayer of the Levites at the rededication of the Temple, upon the return from the Babylonian Exile.

LET THE WICKED FORSAKE יַעֲזוֹב רָשָׁע. Isaiah 55:7.

§ All Our Secrets

All our secrets are known to You, Adonai; we cannot even fool ourselves. Lying is a vain exercise; help us not even to try.

How could we deceive You, within us, at once forming and knowing our most secret thoughts?

We live in a world of illusion. We each think we are separate, alone, cut off, misunderstood, unwanted. We forget we are part of Your glory, each of us a unique ray of Your light.

As we live our lives, rent asunder, each in our own small world, help us to remember what we often forget: We need one another; we each are part of the other; and in some place, so well known, yet so secret, we may find our true solace in You.

—JULES HARLOW (adapted)

ג

You recognize both our sins and our mistakes, acts of will and those committed under compulsion; public acts and private ones are equally revealed and known to You.

What are we? What is our life? Our goodness? Our righteousness? Our achievement? Our power? Our victories?

What shall we say in Your presence, ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors?

Heroes count as nothing in Your presence, famous people are as if they never existed, the wise seem ignorant, and clever ones as if they lack reason.

The sum of their acts is chaos; in Your presence the days of their lives are futile. Human beings have no superiority over beasts; all life is vanity.

What can we say before You, You who live in the transcendent? And what can we tell about ourselves to You who dwell on high? You surely know both the secret and the revealed.

ד

You have always been known as the one who overlooks transgression.

Hear our cry, as we stand before You, in prayer. Overlook the transgressions of a people turning from transgression.

Wipe away our transgressions from Your sight.

ה

You know the mysteries of the universe, the deepest secrets of everyone alive. You probe our innermost depths; You examine our thoughts and feelings.

Nothing escapes You; nothing is secret from You.

Therefore, may it be Your will, our God and God of our ancestors, to forgive us for all our sins, to pardon us for all our iniquities, and to grant us atonement for all our transgressions.

ג

הַזְדוֹנוֹת וְהַשְּׁגָגוֹת אֶתְּךָ מִכִּיר, הַרְצוֹן וְהָאָנֶס, הַגְּלוּיִם וְהַנְּסֻתָּרִים, לְפָנֶיךָ הֵם גְּלוּיִם וַיְדוּעִים. מָה אָנוּ, מָה חַיֵּינוּ, מָה חַסְדְּנוּ, מָה צְדָקְנוּ, מָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ, מָה כְּחוֹנוּ, מָה גְבוּרָתְנוּ.

מָה נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ].

הֲלֹא כָּל-הַגְּבוּרִים כְּאִין לְפָנֶיךָ, וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם כֹּלֵי הַיּוֹ, וְחַכְמַיִם כְּבָלֵי מִדְעָה, וְנְבוֹנִים כְּבָלֵי הַשֶּׁפֶל,

כִּי רַב מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תְּהוֹ, וַיְמִי חַיֵּיהֶם הֶבֶל לְפָנֶיךָ. וּמוֹתֵר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין, כִּי הִכֵּל הַבָּל.

מִה-נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב מְרוֹם, וּמִה-נִּסְפָּר לְפָנֶיךָ שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים. הֲלֹא כָּל-הַנְּסֻתָּרוֹת וְהַנְּגֻלוֹת אֶתְּךָ יוֹדָע.

ד

שָׂמַךְ מַעוֹלָם עוֹבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע, שׁוֹעֵתְנוּ תִּאֲזִין בְּעַמְדְנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתַפְלָה. תַּעֲבֹר עַל פְּשָׁע לְעַם שְׂבִי פְשָׁע, תִּמְחָה פְשָׁעֵינוּ מִנְּגִד עֵינֶיךָ.

ה

אֶתְּךָ יוֹדָע רְזִי עוֹלָם, וְתַעֲלוּמוֹת סִתְּרֵי כָּל-חַי. אֶתְּךָ חוֹפֵשׁ כָּל-חֲדָרֵי בָטָן, וּבוֹחוֹן כְּלִיּוֹת וְלֵב. אֵין דְּבָר נֶעְלָם מִמֶּךָ, וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִנְּגִד עֵינֶיךָ. וּבְכֵן יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ] שֶׁתְּסַלַח לָנוּ עַל כָּל-חַטָּאוֹתֵינוּ וְתִמְחָל לָנוּ עַל כָּל-עוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִכְפֹּר-לָנוּ עַל כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵינוּ.

אתה מכיר אתה מְכִיר. Our confession is not to enlighten the High Court; God already knows all that we have done. Rather, we recite these words to proclaim in our own voice that we acknowledge and take responsibility for our deeds.

מה אָנוּ. This prayer, which originated here in the Yom Kippur liturgy, is now included in the daily prayerbook, as part of the introductory morning service throughout the year.

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN. שְׂמַךְ מַעוֹלָם. From a double alphabetical acrostic piyyut by Elijah the Elder (ca. 1040). It begins (atah meivin ta-alumot lev), "You understand the secrets of the heart." Almost all rites preserve only these final lines, corresponding to the Hebrew alphabet's last two letters.

YOU KNOW THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE. אתה יודע אתה יודע. The Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 87b, presents various liturgies that fulfill the obligation of confession. This one is offered by Rav (3rd century, Babylonia).

Kavvanah for Al Het
Embarrassment not only precedes religious commitment; it is the touchstone of religious existence. . . .

What is the truth of being human? The lack of pretension, the acknowledgment of opacity, shortsightedness, inadequacy. But truth also demands rising, striving, for the goal is both within and beyond us. The truth of being human is gratitude; its secret is appreciation.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA
HESCHEL

The Longer Confession—Al Het

It is customary to strike one's heart when the words "We have sinned" are recited.

We have sinned against You unwillingly and willingly,
and we have sinned against You through hardening our hearts.
We have sinned against You thoughtlessly,
and we have sinned against You in idle chatter.
We have sinned against You through sexual immorality,
and we have sinned against You openly and in private.
We have sinned against You knowingly and deceitfully,
and we have sinned against You by the way we talk.
We have sinned against You by defrauding others,
and we have sinned against You in our innermost thoughts.
We have sinned against You through forbidden trysts,
and we have sinned against You through empty confession.
We have sinned against You by scorning parents and teachers,
and we have sinned against You purposely and by mistake.
We have sinned against You by resorting to violence,
and we have sinned against You by public desecration of Your name.
We have sinned against You through foul speech,
and we have sinned against You through foolish talk.
We have sinned against You through pursuing the impulse to evil,
and we have sinned against You wittingly and unwittingly.

For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

V'al kullam, elo-ah s'lihot, s'lah lanu, m'hal lanu, kapper lanu.

We have sinned against You through denial and deceit,
and we have sinned against You by taking bribes.
We have sinned against You by clever cynicism,
and we have sinned against You by speaking ill of others.
We have sinned against You by the way we do business,
And we have sinned against You in our eating and drinking.

It is customary to strike one's heart when the words על חטא are recited.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִנּוּס וּבְרָצוֹן,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאִמּוּץ הַלֵּב.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִלִי דַעַת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּבִטּוּי שְׁפָתַיִם.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּגִלּוּי וּבִסְתֵּר.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַעַת וּבְמַרְמָה,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדַבּוּר פֶּה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהוֹנָאת רַע,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּהִרְהוּר הַלֵּב.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בּוֹעֵידַת זְנוֹת,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בּוֹדוּי פֶּה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִלוּל הוֹרִים וּמוֹרִים,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּזִדּוֹן וּבִשְׁגָגָה.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחֹזֶק יָד,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּחִלּוּל הַשֵּׁם.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטַמְאַת שְׁפָתַיִם,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּטַפְשׁוֹת פֶּה.
◀ עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בִּיצַר הָרַע,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּיוֹדְעִים וּבְלֹא יוֹדְעִים.
וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סִלַּח לָנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ, כְּפָר־לָנוּ.

עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַחַשׁ וּבְכֹזֵב,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּכַפַּת שַׁחַד.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִצּוֹן,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַע.
עַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמַשָּׂא וּבְמַתָּן,
וְעַל חֲטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּמֵאֲכָל וּבְמִשְׁתֵּה.

THE LONGER CONFESSION.
Despite the double alphabetical acrostic in which the sins are enumerated, the Al Het is not simply a formal list. The sins it enumerates are the stuff of daily life, and they point to our repeated moral failures. It makes almost no specific reference to violations of the rituals of Judaism. Such infractions as the desecration of Shabbat and festivals, and the failure to abide by the disciplines that invest our daily life with sacred significance, are categorized by the Talmud as “sins between people and God.” It is taken for granted that only sins “between one person and another” need to be detailed (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86b).

Amidst a community of imperfect humans, we gain the courage to confess our sins to God. Knowing that it is God whom we are facing, we are called to a level of honesty and truthfulness that is greater than any intermediary would demand.

The forty-four lines included in the Al Het are an expansion of the six lines that appear in Saadiah Gaon's prayerbook (10th century), the twelve in Amram Gaon's (9th century), and the twenty-two in Maimonides' (12th century).

DEFRAUDING OTHERS
הוֹנָאת רַע. Or, “oppressing

others” (materially or spiritually), for so the Rabbis understood the related verb in Leviticus 19:33.

SPEAKING BADLY OF OTHERS בְּלִשׁוֹן הָרַע. The tradition distinguished between *l'shon ha-ra* and *r'khillut* (רְכִילוּת), both enumerated here. The first is the spreading of truthful yet damaging statements, even without intending any harm. The latter is the telling of outright falsehoods about another.

Enumerating Sins

No list of sins can ever be complete. By beginning with *alef* and ending with *tav*, we express our intention to include in our confession everything of which we are guilty, from A to Z. However, this form of the Al Het does not relieve us of our individual obligation to confess the particular sins of which we are each personally responsible. And we are also called upon to contemplate those sins which are especially prevalent in our world today.

Of Anger and of Peace

Bear in mind that life is short, and that with every passing day you are nearer to the end of your life. Therefore, how can you waste your time on petty quarrels and discords? Restrain your anger; hold your temper in check, and enjoy peace with everyone.

—NAHMAN OF BRATZLAV

We have sinned against You by greed and oppressive interest,
and we have sinned against You through arrogance.
We have sinned against You in everyday conversation,
and we have sinned against You through conspiratorial glances.
We have sinned against You through condescension,
and we have sinned against You through stubbornness.

For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.
V'al kullam, elo-ah s'lihot, s'lah lanu, m'hal lanu, kapper lanu.

We have sinned against You by throwing off all restraint,
and we have sinned against You by rashly judging others.
We have sinned against You by plotting against others,
and we have sinned against You through selfishness.
We have sinned against You through superficiality,
and we have sinned against You through stubbornness.
We have sinned against You by rushing to do evil,
and we have sinned against You through gossip.
We have sinned against You through empty promises,
and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred.
We have sinned against You by betraying trust,
and we have sinned against You by succumbing to confusion.

For all these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.
V'al kullam, elo-ah s'lihot, s'lah lanu, m'hal lanu, kapper lanu.

And forgive us the breach of all commandments and prohibitions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or not. The sins known to us we have acknowledged, and those unknown to us are surely known to You, as the Torah states: "Secret matters are the concern of ADONAI our God; but in matters that are revealed, it is for us and our children to apply all teachings of the Torah till the end of time."

You are compassionate, welcoming those who turn back to You. You have promised, since the dawn of creation, that repentance would be received. Now our eyes look toward You, to accept our repentance.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִשְׁוֹף וּבְמַרְבִּית,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּנִטְיַת גְּרוֹן.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁיחַ שְׁפִתוֹתֵינוּ,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁקּוֹר עֵינַי.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֵינַיִם רְמוֹת,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּעֵזוֹת מַצַּח.

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֵלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סִלַּח לָנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר-לָנוּ.

עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפָרִיקַת עַל,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּפִלְלוֹת.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצַדִּית רַע,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּצָרוֹת עֵינַי.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּקִשּׁוֹת עֶרְף.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִיצַת רִגְלִים לְהָרַע,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּרִכִּילוֹת.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁבוּעַת שׂוּא,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁנְאַת חֲנָם.
עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִשׁוּמַת-יָד,
וְעַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּתִמְהוֹן לִבֵּב.

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֵלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת, סִלַּח לָנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר-לָנוּ.

וְעַל מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה וְעַל מִצְוֹת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה, בֵּין שֵׁישׁ בָּהּ קוֹם עֲשֵׂה, וּבֵין שְׂאִין בָּהּ קוֹם עֲשֵׂה, אֶת-הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ וְאֶת-שְׂאִינֵם גְּלוּיִים לָנוּ. אֶת-הַגְּלוּיִים לָנוּ כִּבְרָ אֲמַרְנוּם לְפָנֶיךָ וְהוֹדִינוּ לָךְ עֲלֵיהֶם, וְאֶת-שְׂאִינֵם גְּלוּיִים לָנוּ, לְפָנֶיךָ הֵם גְּלוּיִים וְיָדוּעִים, כְּדַבֵּר שְׁנֵאֲמַר: הַנְּסִתֵּרֵת לִיהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהַנְּגַלֵּת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד-עוֹלָם, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.

וְאַתָּה רַחוּם מְקַבֵּל שְׁבִים,
וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּבָה מְרֹאשׁ הַבְּטַחְתָּנוּ,
וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּבָה עֵינֵינוּ מִיַּחְלוֹת לָךְ.

CONSPIRATORIAL GLANCES בְּשִׁקּוֹר עֵינַי. Many sins in this section and the next refer to attitudes that we hold in relationships. The Hebrew speaks in terms of the way that we "see" the world. We confess to *sikkur ayin* ("conspiratorial glances"; *einayim ramot*), literally "eyes raised high," which we translate as "condescension"; *tzarut ayin* ("selfishness," literally, "narrow vision."

SUPERFICIALITY בְּקִלּוֹת רֹאשׁ. Literally, "lighththeadedness." The Rabbis used this term to refer to a state of mind in which we are unable to exercise sound judgment. Many Jewish legal authorities oppose the use of mind-altering drugs if they deny us the ability to make reasoned judgments.

SECRET MATTERS הַנְּסִתֵּרֵת. Deuteronomy 29:28.

Our Ancestors and Us

Throughout the long hours of prayer, we speak of all the reasons why God should care for us and forgive us: our remorse, our atonement, our acknowledgment of wrongdoing, God's own promise of mercy, God's wish to be known in the world as loving. In this prayer, we call on our association with our ancestors who were cared for by God. We subtly imply that since we are their children, we have inherited their spiritual legacy. In placing our own prayer in the context of theirs, perhaps what is implied as well is that we seek to live our lives in accordance with that which gave them honor.

—NINA BETH CARDIN

Concluding Prayers of Confession

One or more of the following five meditations may be selected as endings for the Viddui.

א

Hannah, sad and depressed, prayed to You, her heart overflowing with tears, her voice inaudible. But You understood her heartfelt cry and turned to her. Answer us in our time of need, as You responded to the plea of the woman in Shiloh, that like her we may sing: “ADONAI brings down and lifts up, raises up the poor from the dust of the earth.”

Your servant David pleaded before You: “Who can be aware of error? Cleanse me of my most secret sins.” Cleanse us, ADONAI our God, of all our transgressions; purify us of all our foulness; pour over us purifying water that we may be cleansed, as the prophet Ezekiel wrote: “I will sprinkle purifying water upon you and you shall be cleansed; I will cleanse you of all your impurities and your idolatries.”

Your servant Micah declared: “Is there any divinity save You who forgives the sins and pardons the transgressions of the remnant, Your people? You do not maintain anger forever, for You delight in love. You will return to us compassionately, overcoming the consequences of our sin, hurling our sins into the depths of the sea. You will keep faith with Jacob, showing enduring love to Abraham, as You promised our ancestors in days of old.”

Your beloved Daniel prayed to You: “My God, turn Your ear toward us, listen, open Your eyes and see our desolation and that of the city known by Your name.” Not because of our own merit do we cast our plea before You. Rather, we depend on the generosity of Your compassion. ADONAI, hear! ADONAI, forgive! ADONAI, listen! Do not delay. For Your sake, O my God; for Your city and Your people are known by Your name.

Do not forsake us—You, who formed us;
do not abandon us—You, who created us;
do not cast us away—You, who fashioned us;
do not destroy us, as You would our sins.

ADONAI our God, fulfill for us the promise that You made to Jeremiah, the visionary, kept alive in our tradition, as it is written: “In those days and in that time, this will be the word of ADONAI:

One or more of the following meditations may be selected as endings for the Viddui.

א

חנה, מרת רוח התפללה לפניך, וימלא לבה בכי, וקולה לא ישמע, אך בחנת את-לבה ותפן אליה. ענה לנו בעת בקשתנו כשענית לתחנת האשה בשילה ונזפה לשיר כמותה: יהוה משפיל אף-מרומם, מקים מעפר דל.

ודוד עבדך אמר לפניך: שגיאות מי-יבין, מנסתרות נקני. נקנו יהוה אלהינו מפל-פשעינו, וטהרנו מפל-טמאותינו, וזרוק עלינו מים טהורים וטהרנו, ככתוב על יד נביאך: וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים וטהרתם, מפל טמאותיכם ומפל-גלוליכם אטהר אתכם.

מיכה עבדך אמר לפניך: מי אל כמוך נשא עון ועבר על-פשע לשארית נחלתו, לא-החזיק לעד אפו, כי-חפץ חסד הוא. ישוב ירחמנו, יכבש עונותינו, ותשליך במצלות ים כל-חטאותם. תתן אמת ליעקב, חסד לאברהם, אשר-נשבעת לאבותינו מימי קדם.

דניאל איש חמודות שוע לפניך: הטה אלהי אונך ושמע, פקח עיניך וראה שממתינו, והעיר אשר-נקרא שמך עליה. כי לא על-צדקתינו אנחנו מפילים תחנונינו לפניך, כי על-רחמיך הרבים. אדני שמעה, אדני סלחה, אדני הקשיבה ועשה אל-תאחר, למענך אלהי, כי-שמך נקרא על-עירך ועל-עמך.

אל תעזבנו אבינו,

ואל תטשנו בוראנו,

ואל תזניחנו יוצרנו,

ואל תעש עמנו כלה כחטאתינו.

וקים לנו יהוה אלהינו את-הדבר שהבטחתנו בקבלה

על ידי ירמיהו חוזה, כאמור: בימים ההם ובעת ההיא,

נאם-יהוה,

HANNAH חנה. The listing of biblical figures who prayed to God for forgiveness places our own plea for forgiveness in an ongoing history of prayer. Hannah became, for the Rabbis, the model of proper prayer; David, the psalmist, is the master of prayer. Micah's prayer is appended to the prophetic reading on Shabbat Shuvah—the Shabbat that precedes the Day of Atonement. The Rabbis saw Daniel as a biblical embodiment of their own sense of dutiful prayer, since the Bible records that he prayed facing toward Jerusalem three times a day (Daniel 6:11).

WHO CAN BE AWARE OF ERROR שגיאות מי יבין Psalm 19:13. The paragraph ends with a quotation from Ezekiel 36:25.

IS THERE ANY DIVINITY SAVE YOU מי אל כמוך Micah 7:18–20. The passage is recited also on Rosh Hashanah at Tashlikh.

MY GOD, TURN YOUR EAR הטה אלהי אונך Daniel 9:18–19.

IN THOSE DAYS בימים ההם Jeremiah 50:20.

Answer Us
 What would constitute
 an answer to our prayers?
 We do not truly expect
 nature to overturn its
 course, or others to
 suddenly change their
 plans, because we have
 expressed our hope
 that the future bend to
 our desires. Rather, if
 our prayer succeeds,
 we can experience
 closeness to the Divine,
 an appreciation of God's
 bounty, connection
 with the rest of creation,
 discovery of meaning in
 our lives, and an inner
 feeling of wholeness and
 peace. For a moment, we
 may experience ourselves
 as held fast in God's
 invisible arms. Perhaps
 this is what the ancient
 pilgrims themselves
 experienced when
 they heard the priests
 pronounce the final word
 of blessing: "... *shalom*,
 peace."

Iniquity shall be sought in Israel, but there shall be none;
 and sin shall be sought in Judah, but none shall be found.
 For I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant."
 Your people hunger for Your goodness,
 thirst for Your love,
 and long for Your salvation.
 May they know that compassion and forgiveness come from
 ADONAI our God.

ב

May the One who answered:

- SARAH past the time of her youth, *hu ya-aneinu*
- ABRAHAM on Mount Moriah, *hu ya-aneinu*
- ISAAC, their son, bound on the altar, *hu ya-aneinu*
- REBECCA as her sons struggled within her, *hu ya-aneinu*
- JACOB at Beth El, *hu ya-aneinu*
- LEAH in her loneliness, *hu ya-aneinu*
- RACHEL, desperate for a child, *hu ya-aneinu*
- JOSEPH, abandoned in prison, *hu ya-aneinu*
- the HEBREW MIDWIVES as they stood at
 the birthing place, *hu ya-aneinu*
- JOCHEBED having faith on the bank of
 the Nile, *hu ya-aneinu*
- the PEOPLE ISRAEL on the shores of
 the Sea, *hu ya-aneinu*
- MOSES standing on the slopes of Sinai, *hu ya-aneinu*
- MIRIAM with her well of water, *hu ya-aneinu*
- AARON offering incense to God, *hu ya-aneinu*
- PHINEAS seeking his place above the crowd,
 the DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD standing
 their ground, *hu ya-aneinu*
- and those who are righteous, upright,
 decent, and compassionate—answer us. *hu ya-aneinu*

ג

Each of us has a name
 given by the Source of Life
 and given by our parents
 Each of us has a name
 given by our stature and our smile
 and given by what we wear

יְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־עוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִינָנוּ,
 וְאֶת־חַטָּאת יְהוּדָה וְלֹא תִמְצָאנָהּ,
 כִּי אֶסְלַח לְאִשְׁרֵי אֲשִׁאִיר.
 עֲמַף וְנִחַלְתָּ רַעְבֵי טוֹבָה,
 צָמְאֵי חֶסֶדְךָ,
 תֹּאבֵי יִשְׁעֶךָ,
 יִפְּרִו וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֶרְחַמִּים וְהִסְלִיחוֹת.

ב

- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְשָׂרָה אֲמֵנוּ בְּזִקְנֹתָהּ, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בְּהַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְיִצְחָק בְּנֵם פְּשִׁעֶקֶד עַל גְּבֵי הַמְּזֻבָּח, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְרִבְקָה בְּהַרְיוֹנָהּ, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְיַעֲקֹב בְּבֵית אֵל, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְלֵאָה בְּעֵנְיָהּ, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְרַחֵל בְּעַצְבוֹנָהּ, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְיוֹסֵף בְּבֵית הָאֲסוּרִים, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְמַיְלְדוֹת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת עַל הָאֲבָנִים, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְיֹחֲכָד עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּאֵר, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְלְאֵמוֹתֵינוּ עַל יַם סוּף, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְמֹשֶׁה בְּחוֹרֵב, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְמִרְיָם בְּבֹאֶרָה, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְאַהֲרֹן בְּמַחֲתָהּ, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְפִנְחָס בְּקוֹמוֹ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְבָנוֹת צִלְפַּחַד בְּעִמְדַן פֶּתַח
 אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.
- מִי שֶׁעָנָה לְכָל־הַצַּדִּיקִים וְהַצַּדִּיקוֹת וְהַחֲסִידִים
 וְהַחֲסִידוֹת וְהַתְּמִימִים וְהַתְּמִימוֹת וְהַיִּשְׂרָיִם
 וְהַיִּשְׁרוֹת וְהַרְחַמְנִים וְהַרְחַמְנִיּוֹת, הוּא יִעַנְנוּ.

ג

לְכָל־אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
 שִׁנָּתָן לוֹ אֱלֹהִים
 וְנָתַנוּ לוֹ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ
 לְכָל־אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
 שִׁנָּתָנוּ לוֹ קוֹמָתוֹ וְאָפְן׃ חַיּוּכּוֹ
 וְנָתַן לוֹ הָאָרִיג

MAY THE ONE WHO ANSWERED מי שֶׁעָנָה. We do not stand alone on this day, but within a tradition of prayer and forgiveness. Lines of this prayer are mentioned as early as Mishnah Taanit (ca. 200 C.E.). Over time, more names and more biblical allusions were added. Here we include responses to biblical women along with the traditional listing. An extant Hasidic version offers a similarly inclusive list.

SINAI חוֹרֵב. In the Torah, *horev* (Horeb) is another name for Sinai.

HER WELL בְּבֹאֶרָה. According to the Midrash, a well accompanied Israel in the desert and supplied the camp with water because of the merit of Miriam.

EACH OF US HAS A NAME לְכָל־אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם. This poem by Zelda (Zelda Schneerson Mishkovsky, a 20th-century Hebrew poet), translated from the Hebrew by Marcia Falk, is an extended meditation on the names we are given by fathers, mothers, others, and on the names we acquire for ourselves. On this day, we ponder the various names by which we are known, and the names by which we wish to be known.

Each of us has a name
given by the mountains
and given by our walls

Each of us has a name
given by the stars
and given by our neighbors

Each of us has a name
given by our sins
and given by our longing

Each of us has a name
given by our enemies
and given by our love

Each of us has a name
given by our celebrations
and given by our work

Each of us has a name
given by the seasons
and given by our blindness

Each of us has a name
given by the sea
and given by
our death

ד

Birth is a beginning
and death a destination.
And life is a journey:
From childhood to maturity
And youth to age;
From innocence to awareness
And ignorance to knowing;
From foolishness to discretion,
And then, perhaps, to wisdom;

לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ הַהָרִים
וְנִתְּנוּ לוֹ כְּתָלָיו
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ הַמְּזֻלוֹת
וְנִתְּנוּ לוֹ שְׁכָנָיו
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ חַטָּאִיו
וְנִתְּנָהּ לוֹ כְּמִיּהָתוֹ
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ שׂוֹנְאָיו
וְנִתְּנָהּ לוֹ אֲהַבָּתוֹ
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ חֲגִיּוֹ
וְנִתְּנָהּ לוֹ מְלֹאכְתּוֹ
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָנוּ לוֹ תְּקוּפוֹת הַשָּׁנָה
וְנִתֵּן לוֹ עֲרוּוֹנוֹ
לְכָל-אִישׁ יֵשׁ שֵׁם
שְׁנֵיתָן לוֹ הַיָּם
וְנִתֵּן לוֹ
מוֹתוֹ.

BIRTH IS A BEGINNING לִידָה. This prayer, written by Alvin Fine, has been reprinted in numerous prayerbooks. It reflects on the human condition and understands that each moment constitutes a stage in a journey, at best a pilgrimage—images that are descriptive of a contemporary religious stance for many people. We are on the way to holiness, to the experience of the Divine, but we can never claim a full achievement of the religious life. The Viddui/Confession that we have just recited makes us aware of our failings and of our vulnerabilities, but we can emerge with renewed dedication to finding our way, to discovering our own particular path to holiness. The prayer appears here in a slightly adapted version and with a Hebrew translation by Alan Lettovsky.

ד

לִידָה הִיא מוֹצֵא
וּמְוֵת הוּא יַעַד
וְהַחַיִּים הֵם נְסִיעָה:
מִילְדוֹת לְבִגְרוֹת
מִנְעֻרוֹת לְזִקְנוֹת
מִתְּמִימוֹת לְהַכְרָה
וּמִבּוֹרוֹת לִידִיעָה;
מִסְכְּלוֹת לְבִינָה
וְאֶז, אוֹלִי, לְחֻכְמָה;

From weakness to strength
 Or strength to weakness —
 And often, back again;
 From health to sickness
 And back, we pray, to health again;
 From offense to forgiveness,
 From loneliness to love,
 From joy to gratitude,
 From pain to compassion,
 And grief to understanding —
 From fear to faith;
 From defeat to defeat to defeat —
 Until, looking backward or ahead,
 We see that victory lies
 Not at some high place along the way,
 But in having made the journey, stage by stage,
 A sacred pilgrimage.
 Birth is a beginning
 And death a destination.
 And life is a journey,
 A sacred pilgrimage . . .

ה

God of Mercy, who answers the poor, answer us.

*May the Merciful One, who answers the
 downtrodden, answer us.*

God of Mercy, who answers the broken-hearted, answer us.

May the Merciful One answer us.

God of Mercy, pity us.

May the Merciful One redeem us.

God of Mercy, save us.

*May the Merciful One have compassion upon us, speedily,
 now and in time to come.*

Rahamana d'anei la-aniyyei aneina.

Rahamana d'anei l'makkikhei ruha aneina.

Rahamana d'anei li-t'virei libba aneina.

Rahamana aneina, Rahamana hus,

Rahamana p'ruk, Rahamana shazzeiv,

Rahamana rahem alan, hashta ba-agala u-viz'man kariv.

מְחוּלְשָׁה לְגְבוּרָה
 או גְבוּרָה לְחוּלְשָׁה –
 וּלְעֵתִים, בַּחֲזָרָה;
 מִבְּרִיאוֹת לְמַחְלָה
 נִתְפַּלֵּל בַּחֲזָרָה לְבְרִיאוֹת;
 מִפֶּשַׁע לְסְלִיחָה
 מִבְּדִידוּת לְאַהֲבָה
 מִשִּׂמְחָה לְתוֹדָה
 מִכָּאֵב לְרַחֲמִים
 וְיָגוֹן לְהַבְנָה
 מִפְּחָד לְאַמוּנָה;
 מִכְשָׁלוֹן לְכְשָׁלוֹן לְכְשָׁלוֹן
 עַד בְּהִסְתַּכְּלוּת אַחֲרָה או לְפָנִים
 אָנוּ רוֹאִים שֶׁנִּצְחוֹן נִמְצָא
 לֹא בְּאִיזוֹ בְּמָה גְבוּרָה בְּדֶרֶךְ
 אֲלָא בְּנִסְיָעָה עֲצֻמָּה, תַּחֲנָה אַחַר תַּחֲנָה
 עֲלִית רַגְל קְדוּשָׁה.
 לִידָה הִיא מוֹצֵא
 וּמָוֶת הוּא יַעַד
 וְהַחַיִּים הֵם נִסְיָעָה,
 עֲלִית רַגְל קְדוּשָׁה . . .

ה

רַחֲמָנָא דְעֵנִי לְעֵנִי עֲנִינָא.
 רַחֲמָנָא דְעֵנִי לְמַכְיֵי-רוּחָא עֲנִינָא.
 רַחֲמָנָא דְעֵנִי לְתַבִּירֵי-לִבָּא עֲנִינָא.
 רַחֲמָנָא עֲנִינָא,
 רַחֲמָנָא חוּס,
 רַחֲמָנָא פֶּרֶק,
 רַחֲמָנָא שׁוּב,
 רַחֲמָנָא רַחֵם עָלָן, הַשְׁתָּא בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב.

GOD OF MERCY
 This is an Aramaic prayer written in the late first millennium, similar to "May the One who answered," מִי שֶׁעָנָה, on p. 240. Here, though, the movement from ancestors to the self is more insistent. The first three lines contain four words each; and then the rhythm breaks entirely and the remaining lines simply plead for God to act speedily. The pace gets faster; the lines get shorter; the words more urgent. We are pleading then for our lives, nothing less. With this brokenhearted cry, the confession traditionally ends.

Avinu Malkeinu

We rise as the ark is opened. Avinu Malkeinu is not recited on Shabbat.
An alternate version appears on the next page.

Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned in Your presence.

Avinu Malkeinu, we have no sovereign but You.

Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us kindly in accord with Your name.

Avinu Malkeinu, make this a good new year for us.

Avinu Malkeinu, annul every harsh decree against us.

Avinu Malkeinu, nullify the designs of our foes.

Avinu Malkeinu, frustrate the plottings of our enemies.

Avinu Malkeinu, rid us of every oppressor and adversary.

Avinu Malkeinu, rid Your covenanted people of disease, war, hunger, captivity, and destruction.

Avinu Malkeinu, forgive and pardon all our sins.

Avinu Malkeinu, do not look toward our sins and transgressions; blot them out.

Avinu Malkeinu, return us to Your presence, fully penitent.

Avinu Malkeinu, send complete healing to the sick among Your people.

Avinu Malkeinu, remember us favorably.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us for good in the Book of Life.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Merit.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Forgiveness.

Avinu malkeinu, haḥazireinu bi-t'shuvah sh'leimah l'fanekha.

Avinu malkeinu, sh'lah r'fu-ah sh'leimah l'holei ammekha.

Avinu malkeinu, zokhreinu b'zikkaron tov l'fanekha.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer ḥayyim tovim.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer g'ullah vi-shu-ah.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer parnasah v'khalkalah.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer z'khuyyot.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer s'lihah u-m'hilah.

Avinu Malkeinu, cause our salvation to flourish soon.

Avinu Malkeinu, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.

Avinu Malkeinu, raise up Your anointed with strength.

Avinu Malkeinu, hear our voice, be kind, sympathize with us.

Avinu Malkeinu, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.

Avinu Malkeinu, do not turn us away empty-handed.

Avinu Malkeinu, remember that we are but dust.

Avinu Malkeinu, have compassion for us, our infants, and our children.

Avinu Malkeinu, do this for the sake of those who were martyred for Your holy name.

Avinu Malkeinu, do this for the sake of those who were slaughtered for their exclusive devotion to You.

We rise as the ark is opened. Avinu Malkeinu is not recited on Shabbat.
An alternate version appears on the next page.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֲלֵא אַתָּה.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! בִּטֵּל מֵעַלֵינוּ כָּל־גְּזֵרוֹת קָשׁוֹת.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! בִּטֵּל מַחְשְׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! הַפֵּר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כִּלֵּה כָּל־צָר וּמַשְׁטִין מֵעַלֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כִּלֵּה דָבָר וְחָרָב וְרָעַב וּשְׂבִי וּמַשְׁחִית וְעוֹן
וְשִׁמְד מִבְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! סִלַּח וּמַחַל לְכָל־עוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! מַחֵה וְהַעֲבֵר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ.

After the leader has recited each of these lines, we repeat it:

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! הַחֲזִירְנוּ בְּתִשְׁבָּה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְחוּלֵי עַמֶּךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! זְכַרְנוּ בְּזַפְרוֹן טוֹב לְפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וּישׁוּעָה.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִיטָה וְכִלְכָּלָה.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוֹת.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמַחִילָה.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! הַצְמַח לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה בְּקִרְבֵּנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! הָרֵם קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! הָרֵם קֶרֶן מְשִׁיחֶךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! שְׁמַע קוֹלְנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! קַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרִצּוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! נָא אַל תִּשְׁיַבְנוּ רִיקִם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! זְכוֹר כִּי עַפָּר אֲנַחְנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חֲמוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפָּנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל שֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן טְבוּחִים עַל יְחוּדֶךָ.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ. The Talmud reports: "It once happened that Rabbi Eliezer led the congregation and recited twenty-four *b'rakhot*, but his prayers were not answered. Then Rabbi Akiva followed him and led the congregation in prayer, saying, 'Our father, our sovereign, You are truly our father. Our father, our sovereign, we have no ruler but You. Our father, our sovereign, we have sinned before You. Our father, our sovereign, have mercy on us. Our father, our sovereign, do it for Your name's sake,' and his prayers were answered" (Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 25b). Generations have added many more verses to this prayer. The verses mentioning the martyrs were added after the Crusades.

Avinu Malkeinu was first introduced as a prayer for material blessing. To this were added several pleas against devastation through natural disaster and human enemies, and finally, special prayers for the High Holy Days (for instance, "inscribe us in the Book of Life").

The image of God as father represents relatedness and closeness; that of God as sovereign conveys authority and greater distance. Jewish theology has always talked of transcendence and immanence, God as inscrutable and God as close at hand: this prayer brings together both aspects of God, which is one reason it has been so powerful in the Jewish imagination.

Avinu Malkeinu, do this for the sake of those who went through fire and water to sanctify Your holy name.

Avinu Malkeinu, do this for Your sake if not for ours.

Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy on us, answer us, for our deeds are insufficient; deal with us charitably and lovingly, and redeem us.

Avinu malkeinu, honneinu va-aneinu, ki ein banu ma-asim, aseih immanu tz'dakah va-hesed v'hoshi-einu.

God's Names

God, we speak of You using a thousand images, trying to discover Your truth behind them. When we acknowledge the power that underlies creation, we address You as a sovereign. When we feel Your nearness and wonder that touch us, we know You as a parent. Help us as we use these names we give You to reach beyond them, and find Your presence in our lives.

—JONATHAN MAGONET

AVINU MALKEINU: ALTERNATE VERSION

Avinu Malkeinu, we have sinned in Your presence.

Our creator, who blesses us, we have no sovereign but You.

Our redeemer, who guards us, act kindly, in keeping with Your name.

You who seek us out and sustain us, make this new year a good one for us.

You who are our glory, our savior, annul every harsh decree against us.

Ancient One, our rescuer, nullify the designs of our foes.

Provider, our refuge, rid Your covenanted people of disease, war, hunger, captivity, and destruction.

You who are our strength, who gives us life, rid us of every oppressor and adversary.

You, who purify us, and have mercy on us, forgive and pardon all our sins.

You who form us and instruct us, return us to Your presence, fully penitent.

You, who establish us, and provide for us, send complete healing to the sick among Your people.

You, our beloved, who raised us, remember us favorably.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us for good in the Book of Life.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Merit.

Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Forgiveness.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer hayyim tovim.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer g'ullah vi-shu-ah.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer parnasah v'khalkalah.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer z'khuyyot.

Avinu malkeinu, kotveinu b'seifer s'lihah u-m'hilah.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן בָּאֵי בָאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם עַל קְדוּשַׁת שְׁמֶךָ.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן אִם לֹא לְמַעַנְנוּ.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חַנּוּנוּ וְעַנּוּנוּ, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ! חֲטֵאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.

בּוֹרְאָנוּ מְבָרְכֵנוּ, אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלֶּא אַתָּה.

גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ מִשְׁמֵרְנוּ, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

דּוֹרְשָׁנוּ מִפְּרִנְסָנוּ, חֲדַשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.

הוֹדִינוּ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, בְּטֹל מַעֲלֵינוּ כָּל־גְּזֵרוֹת קִשּׁוֹת.

וְתִיקְנוּ מִפְּלִטָנוּ, בְּטֹל מַחֲשָׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.

זְנַנוּ מְנוֹסָנוּ, כֹּלָה דְבָר וְחָרַב וְרָעַב וּשְׁבִי וּמִשְׁחִית וְעוֹן

וּשְׂמֵד מִבְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ.

חוֹסְנוּ מִחַיֵינוּ, הִפְּרַ עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ.

טְהוֹרְנוּ מִרְחֻמָנוּ, סֶלַח וּמַחֵל לְכָל־עוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

יוֹצְרָנוּ מִלְמַדְנוּ, הַחֲזִירְנוּ בְּתִשּׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.

כּוֹנְנוּ מִכְּלַפְלָנוּ, שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְחוּלֵי עַמֶּךָ.

לְבוֹבָנוּ מְגַדְלָנוּ, זְכַרְנוּ בְּזַכְרוֹן טוֹב לְפָנֶיךָ.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִים טוֹבִים.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וּישׁוּעָה.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִנְסָה וְכִלְפָּלָה.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוֹת.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כְּתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמַחִילָה.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ. The images of God as "our father" (*avinu*) and "our sovereign" (*malkeinu*) are central to much of the High Holy Day liturgy. Yet these images may not have the same resonance for us as they once did for our ancestors. At the same time, the tradition is filled with many different metaphors for God. Therefore we offer this alternative version, featuring a variety of imagery. Its synonyms and metaphors for God are mostly taken from usages in other parts of the liturgy. Its alphabetical listing conveys the idea that we grasp the ineffable God through an infinite number of images.

Our protector and savior, cause our salvation to flourish soon.

Our support and rescuer, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.

Our helper, who listens to us, hear our voice, be kind, sympathize with us.

Our redeemer, who watches over us, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.

Our fortress, who is our refuge, do not send us away empty-handed.

Holy One, who justifies us, remember that we are but dust.

Merciful One, who gives us life, have compassion for us, our infants, and our children.

Guardian, who grants us victory, do this for the sake of those who were martyred for Your holy name.

Benefactor, who provides for our welfare, do this for Your sake if not for ours.

Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy on us, answer us, for our deeds are insufficient; deal with us charitably and lovingly, and redeem us.

Avinu malkeinu, honneinu va-aneinu, ki ein banu ma-asim, aseih immanu tz'dakah va-ḥesed v'hoshi-einu.

The ark is closed.

Kaddish Shalem

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the House of Israel. And respond with: *Amen*.

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!

Y'hei sh'meih rabba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almayya.

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly far beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world.

And respond with: *Amen*.

May the prayers and pleas of all Israel be accepted by their creator in heaven.

And respond with: *Amen*.

May abundant peace from heaven, and life, come to us and to all Israel.

And respond with: *Amen*.

May the One who brings harmony on high, bring harmony to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth]. And respond with: *Amen*.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisra-el [v'al kol yosh'vei teiveil], v'imru amen.

נוֹטְרָנוּ מִפְּלִטָנוּ, הַצְמַח לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה בְּקֶרֶב.
סוֹמְכֵנוּ מִצִּילָנוּ, הָרֵם קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.
עֲזָרְנוּ מִקְשִׁיבֵנוּ שְׁמַע קוֹלָנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.
פּוֹדְנוּ מִשְׁמַרְנוּ, קַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתָנוּ.
צוּרְנוּ מְנוּסָנוּ, נָא אֵל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ רִיקָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
קְדוּשָׁנוּ מִצְדִּיקָנוּ, זְכוּר כִּי עִפָּר אֲנַחְנוּ.
רַחֲמֵנוּ מַחֲיֵינוּ, חַמּוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפֵּינוּ.
שׁוֹמְרָנוּ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל שֵׁם קְדוֹשְׁךָ.
תּוֹמְכֵנוּ מִסְעָדָנוּ, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַנְךָ אִם לֹא לְמַעַנָּנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, חַנּוּן וְעַנּוּן, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחַסֵּד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

The ark is closed.

קדיש שלם

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא, בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא, כְּרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל־בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

יְהִי אֱלֹהֵי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עֵלְמֵי.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקְדוּשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, לְעֵלְא לְעֵלְא
מִכָּל־בְּרִכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאִמְרִין
בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

תְּתַקַּבֵּל צְלוֹתְהוֹן וּבְעוּתְהוֹן דְּכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל קָדָם אָבוּהוֹן
דִּי בְשַׁמַּיָא, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

יְהִי אֱלֹהֵי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שַׁמַּיָא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־
יִשְׂרָאֵל [וְעַל כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל], וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

קדיש שלם KADDISH SHALEM is recited at the end of every worship service that features an Amidah. Its distinguishing sentence is the line עלוֹתְהוֹן וּבְעוּתְהוֹן, "May the prayers . . . of all Israel be accepted."

שְׁלָמָא . . . HARMONY PEACE . . . Like many traditional Jewish prayers, this one ends with thoughts of peace.

AND TO ALL WHO DWELL ON EARTH . . . Our mahzor follows the liturgical practice begun in some earlier Conservative movement prayerbooks by adding these words after mentioning Israel. (See, for example, the Shalom Rav prayer just recited at the end of the Amidah, page 218 above.)

At many moments in the liturgy, prayers focus on "Israel" or "the people Israel." The 20th-century philosopher Emmanuel Levinas pointed out that the designation "Israel" focuses our attention outward into the broader world of humanity, toward all those to whom we owe an ethical obligation of caring. In our prayers, we may move among various understandings of "Israel": Israel as Jewish community, Israel as national home, and Israel as symbolic of all those who uphold an ethical universe.

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

Aleinu

It is for us to praise the ruler of all, to acclaim the Creator, who has not made us merely a nation, nor formed us as all earthly families, nor given us an ordinary destiny.

¶ And so we bow, acknowledging the supreme sovereign, the Holy One, who is praised—the One who spreads out the heavens and establishes the earth, whose glorious abode is in the highest heaven, whose powerful presence is in the loftiest heights. This is our God, none else; ours is the true sovereign, there is no other. As it is written in the Torah: “Know this day and take it to heart, that ADONAI is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other.”

Aleinu l'shabbei-ah la-adon ha-kol, la-teit g'dullah l'yotzeir b'reishit, she-lo asanu k'goyei ha-aratzot, v'lo samanu k'mishp'hot ha-adamah, she-lo sam helkeinu ka-hem, v'goraleinu k'khol hamonam.

¶ *Va-anahnu kor'im u-mishta'avim u-modim,*

lifnei melekh malkhei ha-m'lakhim, ha-kadosh barukh hu.

She-hu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz, u-moshav y'karo ba-shamayim mi-ma-al,

u-sh'khinat uzvo b'govhei m'romim, hu eloheinu ein od. Emet malkeinu efes zulato, ka-katuv b'torato: v'yadata ha-yom va-hasheivota el l'vavekha, ki Adonai hu ha-Elohim ba-shamayim mi-ma-al, v'al ha-aretz mi-tahat, ein od.

And so, ADONAI our God, we await You, that soon we may behold Your strength revealed in full glory, sweeping away the abominations of the earth, obliterating idols, establishing in the world the sovereignty of the Almighty. All flesh will call out Your name—even the wicked will turn toward You. Then all who live on earth will recognize and understand that to You alone knees must bend and allegiance be sworn. All will bow down and prostrate themselves before You, ADONAI our God, honor Your glorious name, and accept the obligation of Your sovereignty. May You soon rule over them forever and ever, for true dominion is Yours; You will rule in glory until the end of time.

As is written in Your Torah: “ADONAI will reign forever and ever.” And as the prophet said: “ADONAI shall be acknowledged sovereign of all the earth. On that day ADONAI shall be one, and the name of God, one.”

V'ne-emar: v'hayah Adonai l'melekh al kol ha-aretz, ba-yom ha-hu yihyeh Adonai ehad, u-sh'mo ehad.

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתֵת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁלֹא עָשָׂנוּ כְּגוֹיֵי הָאֲרָצוֹת,
וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ כְּמִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה,
שֶׁלֹא שָׂם חֶלְקֵנוּ כִּהֵם,
וְגִרְלָנוּ כְּכָל-הַמוֹנִים.

¶ וְאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים,

לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיֹסֵד אֶרֶץ, וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם

מִמַּעַל, וְשׂוֹכֵנֵת עִזּוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים, הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵין

עוֹד. אֱמֵת מִלְכָּנוּ אֶפֶס זֹלָתוֹ, כְּפִתּוּב בְּתוֹרָתוֹ:

וַיִּדְעַת הַיּוֹם וְהִשְׁבַּת אֶל-לִבָּבָהּ, כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים

בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל, וְעַל הָאֶרֶץ מִתַּחַת, אֵין עוֹד.

עַל כֵּן נִקְוָה לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרִאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתַפְאֲרָתְךָ

עֲזָרָה, לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלִים מִן הָאֶרֶץ וְהָאֱלִילִים כְּרוֹת יִפְרִתוּן,

לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי, וְכָל-בְּנֵי בֶשֶׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ,

לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל-רְשָׁעֵי אֶרֶץ. יִכִּירוּ וַיִּדְעוּ כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל,

כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל-בָּרָךְ, תִּשְׁבַּע כָּל-לְשׁוֹן: לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וַיִּפְלוּ, וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקָּר יִתְנוּ. וַיִּקְבְּלוּ

כָּלם אֶת-עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ, וְתִמְלוֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שְׁלֹךְ הִיא, וְלְעוֹלָמִי עַד תִּמְלוֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד.

◀ כְּפִתּוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְנֹאמַר: וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל-הָאֶרֶץ,

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְהוָה אֶחָד, וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

ALEINU עֲלֵינוּ. This prayer was originally composed for, and recited during, the Malkhuyot (“Sovereignty”) section of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf service. Since the late Middle Ages, it has acquired a special pride of place in Ashkenazic liturgy and is recited as part of the conclusion of every service. It is customary to physically bow when we recite the line וְאֲנַחְנוּ כּוֹרְעִים (va-anahnu kor'im), “And so we bow.”

KNOW THIS DAY וַיִּדְעַת הַיּוֹם. Deuteronomy 4:39, Moses’ speech enunciating the meaning of God’s revelation at Sinai.

ESTABLISHING IN THE WORLD THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE ALMIGHTY לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי. Beginning in the 19th century, this phrase came to be seen as similar to Isaiah’s call to be “a light unto the nations,” and it was reinterpreted as a call to universal justice. In this vein, the phrase *l'takken olam* was understood to mean “to repair the world,” to be partners with God in achieving a time of peace and righteousness. Even earlier, Maimonides (12th

century) had argued that the single most important characteristic of God’s sovereignty would be an end to one people dominating another. This paragraph emphasizes God’s saving hand.

ADONAI WILL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד. From the Song at the Sea, Exodus 15:18.

ON THAT DAY ADONAI SHALL BE ONE בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְהוָה אֶחָד. Zechariah 14:9. In reciting the Sh’ma, we declare that God is one. Through our prayer we hope to make the world at one with God.

A Kavvanah for Kaddish

Grant that the memories of those who have gone before us be a source of strength for me and for everyone of the House of Israel. May the souls of our departed find peace in Your sheltering care, and may we all be blessed with peace, tranquility, and the fullness of life.

The Blessing of Memory

It is hard to sing of oneness when our world is not complete, when those who once brought wholeness to our life have gone, and nothing but memory can fill the emptiness their passing leaves behind.

But memory can tell us only what we were, in company with those we loved; it cannot help us find what each of us, alone, must now become. Yet no one is really alone; those who live no more echo still within our thoughts and words, and what they did is part of what we have become.

We do best homage to our dead when we live our lives most fully, even in the shadow of our loss. For each of our lives is worth the life of the whole world; in each one is the breath of the Divine. In affirming God we affirm the worth of each one whose life, now ended, brought us closer to the source of life, in whose unity no one is alone and every life finds purpose.

—CHAIM STERN

Some congregations recite Mourner's Kaddish after Aleinu; some, after the recitation of Psalm 27 on the next page.

Mourner's Kaddish

May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the House of Israel. And respond with: *Amen*.

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!

May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, *b'rikh hu*, is truly far beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world.

And respond with: *Amen*.

May abundant peace from heaven, and life, come to us and to all Israel. And respond with: *Amen*.

May the One who brings harmony on high, bring harmony to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth].

And respond with: *Amen*.

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

Yitgaddal v'yitkaddash sh'meih rabba, b'alma di v'ra, ki-r'uteih, v'yamlikh malkhuteih b'hayyeikhon u-v'yomeikhon u-v'hayyei d'khol beit yisra-el, ba-agala u-viz'man kariv, v'imru amen.

Congregation and mourners:

Y'hei sh'meih rabba m'varakh l'alam u-l'almei almayya.

Mourners:

Yitbarakh v'yishtabbah v'yitpa-ar v'yitromam v'yitnassei v'yit-haddar v'yit-alleh v'yit-hallal sh'meih d'kudsha, b'rikh hu, l'eilla l'eilla mi-kol birkhata v'shirata tushb'hata v'nehamata da-amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'lama rabba min sh'mayya v'hayyim aleinu v'al kol yisra-el, v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisra-el [v'al kol yosh'vei teiveil], v'imru amen.

Some congregations recite Mourner's Kaddish after Aleinu; some, after the recitation of Psalm 27 on the next page.

קִדְּוֵיִשׁ יְתוּם

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעֵלְמָא דֵּי בְּרָא, כְּרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Congregation and mourners:

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא.

Mourners:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח
וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֵלְא לְעֵלְא מְכַל-בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא
תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא
דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
עֲלִינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עֲלִינוּ וְעַל כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל
[וְעַל כָּל-יְשׁוּבֵי תַבְּלַ],
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

KADDISH. The custom of mourners reciting Kaddish began sometime after the 11th century. Though its origin is obscure, it has become an essential element of Jewish prayer. It is not a private prayer; rather, it is recited in community with a minyan present. In that context the mourner affirms that tragedy has not separated him or her from God or the Jewish people, and, in turn, the communal response then constitutes a way of acknowledging the mourner.

Seeking God

“One thing I ask of Adonai—this I seek” —The Hebrew pronoun oto can either mean “this” or it can refer back to “Adonai,” making the seeking of God the object of the sentence. That is how the Hasidic master Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev understood this verse. He would take it to mean, “One thing I ask of Adonai: to be able to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit in God’s sukkah.” Rabbi Levi Yitzhak’s teaching is that all the days of our lives should be constituted by a searching for God. Through the continuous search and passion manifested in a life of holiness, we can have a taste of what it means to dwell in God’s house, to behold God’s splendor, and to be with God in God’s sanctuary.

A Psalm for the Season of Repentance—Psalm 27

A PSALM OF DAVID.

ADONAI is my light and my help. Whom shall I fear? ADONAI is the stronghold of my life. Whom shall I dread? When evil people assail me to devour my flesh it is they, my enemies and those who besiege me, who stumble and fall. Should an armed camp be arrayed against me, my heart would show no fear; should they war against me, of this I would be sure.

One thing I ask of ADONAI—this I seek: to dwell in the House of God all the days of my life, to behold God’s beauty and visit in God’s sanctuary.

Ahat sha-alti mei-eit Adonai, otah avakkeish shivti b’veit Adonai, kol y’mei hayyai la-hazot b’no-am Adonai u-l’vakkeir b’heikhalo.

Were God to hide me in God’s sukkah on the calamitous day, were God to enfold me in the secret recesses of God’s tent, I would be raised up in a protecting fort. Now, I raise my head above the enemies that surround me, and come with offerings, amidst trumpet blasts, to God’s tent, chanting and singing praise to ADONAI.

ADONAI, hear my voice as I cry out; be gracious to me, and answer me. It is You of whom my heart said, “Seek my face!” It is Your presence that I seek, ADONAI. Do not hide Your face from me; do not act angrily toward me. You have always been my help; do not forsake me; do not abandon me, my God, my deliverer. Though my father and mother abandon me, ADONAI will gather me in. Show me Your way, ADONAI, and lead me on a straight path despite those arrayed against me. Do not hand me over to the grasp of those who besiege me; for false witnesses and those who seek ill have risen against me.

If only I could trust that I would see God’s goodness in the land of the living . . . Place your hope in ADONAI. Be strong, take courage, and place your hope in ADONAI.

Some congregations recite Mourner’s Kaddish (previous page) after the recitation of this psalm.

לְדוֹד.

יהוה אורי וישעי ממי אירא, יהוה מעוזי חיי ממי אפחד. בקרב עלי מרעים לאכל את-בשרי, צרי ואיבי לי המה כשלו ונפלו. אם-תחנה עלי מחנה לא-יירא לבי, אם-תקום עלי מלחמה בזאת אני בוטח. אחת שאלתי מאת-יהוה, אותה אבקש, שבתי בבית-יהוה, כל-ימי חיי לחזות בנעם-יהוה ולבקר בהיכלו. כי יצפנני בסכה ביום רעה, יסתרני בסתר אהלו, בצור ירוממני. ועתה ירום ראשי על איבי סביבותי ואזבחה באהלו זבחי תרועה, אשירה ואזמרה ליהוה. שמע-יהוה קולי אקרא, וחסני וענני. לך אמר לבי בקשו פני, את-פניך יהוה אבקש. אל-תסתר פניך ממני, אל-תטבאף עבדך, עזרתי היית, אל-תטשני ואל-תעזבני אלהי ישעי. כי-אבי ואמי עזבוני, ויהוה יאספני. הורני יהוה דרכך, ונחני בארץ מישור, למען שררי. אל-תתנני בנפש צרי, כי קמויבי עדי-שקר ויפח חמס. < לולא האמנתי, לראות בטוב-יהוה בארץ חיים. > קנה אליהוה, חזק ויאמץ לך וקנה אליהוה. תהלים כז

Some congregations recite Mourner’s Kaddish (previous page) after the recitation of this psalm.

tion of God’s turning away would be the abandonment of the person to the enemies gathered about. (adapted from Robert Alter)

IF I COULD ONLY TRUST לולא האמנתי. This is the only verse in the psalm that has no parallel. It is as if the speaker’s voice simply trails off and then hears an inner voice calling: קנה אליהוה, “place your hope in Adonai.” Or, perhaps someone else, in turn, urges the despairing supplicant to continue trusting that God will respond and asks that the person not lose faith.

PSALM 27 is recited on each of the ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. It has also become customary to recite it during the entire month before Rosh Hashanah, in preparation for the High Holy Days. In mystical Jewish tradition, the days of judgment are extended through the seventh day of Sukkot, known as Hoshana Rabbah, and so the psalm is recited until then.

Psalm 27 expresses two opposite feelings, each of which may be felt on this day. From the very beginning, the psalmist expresses absolute faith in God, culminating in the striking sentence: “Though my father and mother abandon me, Adonai will gather me in.” But at the same time, the psalmist expresses God’s absence—the speaker longs to “see God,” yet receives no response to this longing. The poem’s last line leaves us with a thin, consoling thread of hope, making us realize, perhaps, how much our lives depend faith.

DO NOT HIDE YOUR FACE FROM ME אל-תסתר פניך ממני. “Face” suggests “presence”; the concrete metaphor serving the poet more than the abstract sense behind it. The speaker desperately seeks God’s face (a privilege denied Moses). The practical manifesta-

Adon Olam

This poem is the statement of an individual—all of it is written in the first-person singular—and is the expression of a person's feelings about God. Beginning with the exalted God of eternity, the Creator of all—majestic and inspiring—the poet moves to the personal God of the individual who cares for human beings at times of woe and into whose hand we can commit our lives, bodies, and souls, and thus have no fear. God the transcendent and the exalted is also God the immanent, who cares for each individual. The poet seems to have created an entire poem based upon an idea expressed in the Book of Psalms:

“Who is like Adonai our God, who though enthroned on high, yet bends to see what is below” (Psalm 113:5–6).
—REUVEN HAMMER
(adapted)

ADON OLAM

Before creation shaped the world,
eternally God reigned alone;
but only with creation done
could God as Sovereign be known.
When all is ended, God alone
will reign in awesome majesty.
God was, God is, always will be
glorious in eternity.
God is unique and without peer,
with none at all to be compared.
Without beginning, endlessly,
God's vast dominion is not shared.
But still—my God, my only hope,
my one true refuge in distress,
my shelter sure, my cup of life,
with goodness real and limitless.
I place my spirit in God's care;
my body too can feel God near.
When I sleep, as when I wake,
God is with me, I have no fear.

*Adon olam asher malakh b'terem kol y'tzir nivra
Leit na-asah v'heftzo kol azai melekh sh'mo nikra.
V'aharei ki-kh'lot ha-kol l'vaddo yimlokh nora
V'hu hayah v'hu hoveh v'hu yihyeh b'tifarah.
V'hu ehad v'ain sheni l'hamshil lo l'haḥbirah.
B'li reishit b'li takhlit v'lo ha-oz v'ha-misrah.
V'hu eli v'hai go-ali v'tzur hevli b'eit tzarah.
V'hu nissi u-manos li m'nat kosi b'yom ekra.
B'yado afkid ruhi b'eit ishan v'a-irah
V'im ruhi g'viyyati Adonai li v'lo ira.*

בְּטֶרֶם כָּל-יִצִיר נִבְרָא.
אָזִי מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹ נִקְרָא.
לְבַדּוֹ יִמְלוֹךְ נוֹרָא.
וְהוּא יְהִיָּה, בְּתַפְאָרָה.
לְהַמְשִׁיל לוֹ לְהַחְבִּירָה.
וְלוֹ הָעֵז וְהַמְשָׁרָה.
יִצוֹר חֲבִלֵי בְעֵת צָרָה.
מִנַּת כּוֹסֵי בְיוֹם אֶקְרָא.
בְּעֵת אִישׁוֹן וְאַעִירָה.
יְהוּה לִי וְלֹא אִירָא.

אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ,
לְעֵת נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחַפְצוֹ כָּל,
וְאַחֲרֵי כְּכֹלוֹת הַכֹּל,
וְהוּא הִיָּה, וְהוּא הוּהוּ,
וְהוּא אֶחָד וְאֵין שְׁנַי,
בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תַכְלִית,
וְהוּא אֵלֵי וְחֵי גֵאֲלֵי,
וְהוּא נְסִי וּמְנוֹס לִי
בִּידּוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי,
וְעַם רוּחִי גְוִיָּתִי,

ADON OLAM עולם אדון. It is unclear who authored this thousand-year-old poem, but it appears in the beginning of the morning service, at the conclusion of Musaf (additional) services, and also at the end of evening services in both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic liturgies. The latter version contains several more verses than are found in the former, which is presented here.

Maimonides' Thirteen
Articles of Faith

God is Creator.
God is one, unique, eternal.
God is incomparable, with
neither body nor form.
God precedes all and is
beyond all.
Only God is to be
worshipped.
The words of the prophets
are true.
Moses was the spiritual
ancestor of all the prophets.
The Torah was given to
Moses.
The Torah is immutable.
God, as Creator, knows our
deeds and thoughts.
Reward and punishment
issue from God.
The Messiah will come.
God, in God's own time,
will give life to the dead.

YIGDAL

Revere the living God, sing praises to God's name,
both immanent and timeless, through eternity.
God's oneness is unique, no other can compare;
unlimited and boundless is God's majesty.
No image can be seen, no form or body known;
no mortal mind can fathom God's totality.
Before creation's start, the world as yet unformed,
the living God endured in endless mystery.
The ruler of the world, whose creatures all declare
the glory and the greatness of God's sovereignty.
God chose devoted servants, wise and faithful seers,
and showered on each one the gift of prophecy.
In Israel none arose like Moses—touched by God—
whose visions probed the limits of humanity.
The Torah, in its truth, God granted to us all,
which loyal servant Moses taught us faithfully.
Our God will neither change nor modify God's law,
its place remains established for eternity.
God penetrates our minds, the promptings of our hearts,
anticipating actions that are yet to be.
God grants reward to those who lead a noble life,
while punishing transgressors sinning wantonly.
Our Messiah, God will send, to greet the end of days,
redeeming all who long for God to make them free.
In love our God restores the life to all our souls—
may God be ever praised until eternity.

<i>Yigdal Elohim hai v'yishtabbah</i>	<i>nimtza v'ein et el m'tzi-uto.</i>
<i>Ehad v'ein yahid k'yihudo</i>	<i>ne-lam, v'gam ein sof l'ahduto.</i>
<i>Ein lo d'mut ha-guf v'eino guf</i>	<i>lo na-arokh eilav k'dushato.</i>
<i>Kadmon l'khol davar asher nivra</i>	<i>rishon v'ein reishit l'reishito.</i>
<i>Hinno adon olam, v'khol notzar</i>	<i>yoreh g'dullato u-malkhuto.</i>
<i>Shefa n'vu-ato n'tano el</i>	<i>anshei s'gullato v'tifarto.</i>
<i>Lo kam b'yisra-el k'mosheh od</i>	<i>navi u-mabbrit et t'munato.</i>
<i>Torat emet natan l'ammo El</i>	<i>al yad n'vi-o ne-eman beito.</i>
<i>Lo yahalif ha-El v'lo yamir dato</i>	<i>l'olamim l'zulato.</i>
<i>Tzofeh v'yodei-a s'tareinu</i>	<i>mabbrit l'sof davar b'kadmato.</i>
<i>Gomel l'ish hesed k'mif-alo</i>	<i>notein l'rasha ra k'rish-ato.</i>
<i>Yishlah l'keitz yamin m'shiheinu</i>	<i>lifdot m'hakkei keitz y'shu-ato.</i>
<i>Meitim y'hayyeh El b'rov hasdo</i>	<i>barukh adei ad shem t'hillato.</i>

Traditional High Holy Day Greeting

May you be sealed for a good year. *L'shanah tovah teihateimu.*

יְגַדֵּל אֱלֹהִים חַי וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח,
נִמְצָא וְאֵין עֵת אֶל מְצִיאֹתוֹ.
אֶחָד וְאֵין יְחִיד כִּיחֻדּוֹ,
נֶעְלָם, וְגַם אֵין סוֹף לְאַחַדּוֹתָיו.

אֵין לוֹ דְמוּת הַגּוּף וְאֵינוּ גוֹף,
לֹא נֶעְרוֹף אֵלָיו קִדְשָׁתוֹ.
קִדְמוֹן לְכָל-דְּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא,
רֵאשׁוֹן וְאֵין רֵאשִׁית לְרֵאשִׁיתוֹ.

הֵנוּ אָדוֹן עוֹלָם וְכָל-נוֹצֵר
יּוֹרָה גְדֻלָּתוֹ וּמַלְכוּתוֹ.
שִׁפְעַת נְבוֹאָתוֹ נִתְּנוּ
אֶל אַנְשֵׁי סִגְלָתוֹ וְתַפְאָרָתוֹ.

לֹא קָם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמוֹשֶׁה עוֹד
נִבְיָא וּמַבְיֵט אֶת-תְּמוּנָתוֹ.
תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת נָתַן לְעַמּוֹ אֵל,
עַל יַד נְבִיאָו נֶאֱמַן בֵּיתוֹ.

לֹא יַחְלִיף הָאֵל וְלֹא יִמִּיר דָּתוֹ
לְעוֹלָמִים לְזוּלָתוֹ.
צוֹפֶה וְיוֹדֵעַ סִתְּרֵינוּ,
מִבְּיַט לְסוֹף דְּבָר בְּקִדְמָתוֹ.

גּוֹמֵל לְאִישׁ חֶסֶד כְּמַפְעֵלוֹ,
נּוֹתֵן לְרֹשַׁע רָע כְּרִשְׁעָתוֹ.
יִשְׁלַח לְקֶץ יָמֵינוּ מְשִׁיחָנוּ,
לְפָדוֹת מַחְכֵי קֶץ יִשׁוּעָתוֹ.

מִתִּים יַחֲיֶה אֵל בְּרוּב חֶסְדּוֹ,
בְּרוּךְ עַדִּי עַד שֵׁם תְּהִלָּתוֹ.

בְּרִכַּת פְּרִידָה
לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תַּחֲתָמוּ.

YIGDAL יְגַדֵּל. This song
was written by Daniel ben
Yehudah of Rome in the
14th century. It is a poetic
summary of Maimonides'
thirteen articles of faith.

Although it has become
a popular hymn, recited
both before the morning
b'rakhot and at the con-
clusion of many services,
there have always been
objections to its use since
many have argued that
Judaism cannot be reduced
to thirteen articles of faith.
Some have altered the last
lines, objecting to the affir-
mation of the resurrection
of the dead.

In at least one of the
cities of Hungary, the *Hevra*
Kaddisha (Burial Society)
would proceed from house
to house on the seventh
day of Adar, the legendary
anniversary of the birth
and death of Moses, and
would sing *Yigdal*, repeat-
ing the last line declaiming
the resurrection of the
dead. (*Macy Nulman*)