
סדור

לב שלם

Siddur

Lev Shalem

לשבת ויום טוב

FOR SHABBAT
& FESTIVALS

*Shaharit l'Shabbat
v'Yom Tov*

Who Gives Sight to the Blind

When we thank God for giving sight to the blind, we express thankfulness not only for the literal gift of sight, but also for our capacity for insight, for our ability to be aware of the world around us, and for the capacity to understand ourselves and our world.

Rabbi Benjamin said: We are all blind until the Holy One enlightens our eyes, as the Bible records regarding Hagar, “And God opened her eyes and she saw a well” (Genesis 21:19).

—GENESIS RABBAH

Imitating God

Our prayers thanking God for the clothes we wear and for the ability to stand up and walk about are also a reminder of the imperative for us to provide clothing for the “naked,” to offer help to those who are in physical need, and to defend those who are unjustifiably “bound.” The ancient rabbis commented on the verse, “You shall follow Adonai your God...” (Deuteronomy 13:5)—just as God is kind and loving, so too you should be kind and loving; just as God performs acts of generosity, so should you; just as God is patient, so should you be, as it is written, “You shall make yourselves holy, for I, Adonai your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

—based on THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

Blessings for a New Day

We rise.

Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space,

who enables the bird to distinguish day from night,
who made me in the divine image,
who made me free,
who made me a Jew,
who gives sight to the blind,
who clothes the naked,

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher natan la-sekhvi vinah l'havhin bein yom u-vein lailah.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani b'tzalmo.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani ben/bat horin.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
she-asani yisrael.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
pokei-ah ivrim.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
malbish arumim.

בְּרִכּוֹת הַשָּׁחַר

We rise.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכְוִי בִינָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בֶן־בֵּת חוֹרִין.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

BLESSINGS FOR A NEW DAY בְּרִכּוֹת הַשָּׁחַר. As reported in the Babylonian Talmud, most of the *b'rakhot* in this collection were originally recited at home as one went through the daily acts of waking and rising (Berakhot 60b). Each passage extols God as we begin the day: on arising from sleep, on hearing the birds sing, on dressing, on taking one's first steps, and so on. Maimonides stated: “These *b'rakhot* are without a prescribed order; each is to be recited only on the appropriate occasion... and not as part of the synagogue service” (Mishneh Torah,

Hilkhot Tefillah 7:7, 9). Other authorities, however, beginning with the siddur of Rav Amram Gaon in the 9th century, recommended the public recitation of these *b'rakhot*. This has been the standard Ashkenazic practice to this day; the common Sephardic practice is to recite these *b'rakhot* privately and to begin the service with the morning psalms.

BARUKH בְּרוּךְ. Many commentators argue that the word *barukh* is not a passive verb meaning “blessed,” but rather an adjective descriptive of God: God is the wellspring of all blessings. (The similar-sounding Hebrew word *b'reikhah* means “pool of water.”) Thus the opening words of a *b'rakhah* are an acknowledgment that God is the source of all blessings (Meir ibn Gabbai).

WHO ENABLES THE BIRD TO DISTINGUISH אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכְוִי בִינָה. We are a part of the natural world, responding to the morning sunlight as does all of nature. This first blessing attributes understanding to the animal realm and points to humans taking instruction from them.

The language is taken from the Book of Job (38:36), where God responds to Job out of the whirlwind, saying: “Who placed wisdom in the most hidden places? Who gave understanding to the bird? Who is wise enough to describe the heavens?” The word used for bird is *sekhvi*, and the Babylonian Talmud identifies it as a rooster (Rosh Hashanah 26a).

WHO MADE ME IN THE DIVINE IMAGE שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ. This blessing and the next one (“who made me free”) are versions of blessings mentioned in the Tosefta (Berakhot 6:18) and in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b). They have been emended in Conservative prayer-books on the basis of manuscript fragments, found in the Cairo Genizah.

WHO MADE ME A JEW שֶׁעָשָׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. This positive formulation is the original wording in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b).

WHO GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים. Said when opening the eyes. Many of these blessings are taken from the psalmist's descriptions of God's actions: “. . . sets prisoners free . . . restores sight to the blind . . . makes those who are bent stand straight . . .” (Psalm 146:7–8).

WHO CLOTHES THE NAKED מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים. God's clothing of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21) was an act of kindness exhibited to these first humans, even as they were exiled from the Garden.

Pesah

It took God but six days to create the world; it took my mother at least twice that long to prepare for Passover. At the seder on the first night she would often doze from a mild case of exhaustion... Yet as we approached the recitation of the ten plagues, she would invariably bestir herself to protect her turf. The custom to remove a drop of wine from our cups at the mention of each plague was enacted in our household symbolically... Thus as we enumerated the plagues together we made no more than a pretense of dipping a forefinger into the wine to spill a drop on the table.

The meaning of this unmannered gesture is... quite profound. While each plague may have weakened his resolve, it was the devastation wrought by the death of the firstborn... that ended all resistance... The drop of spilled wine at the seder signifies a diminution of our joy. We are mindful that redemption for Israel inflicted loss of life on the Egyptians... Jews temper their celebration with a dose of compassion. Each plague killed some of God's creatures.

This ritual of self-transcendence is part of a larger matrix... God chose Abraham to be a blessing for humanity, and hence Jews will ultimately be judged by how they treat the other. Is that not why his descendants had to endure slavery before they could take possession of the Land? The social ethic of the prophets challenges the arrogance of all victors, Jewish as well as gentiles.

—ISMAR SCHORSCH

ON PESAḤ: PSALM 136

Today is the Festival of Pesah, on which we say:

Give thanks to ADONAI, for God is good; give thanks to God, almighty; give thanks to the supreme sovereign: **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who alone works great wonders, creating the heavens with wisdom, stretching the earth over its waters; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who formed the great lights: the sun to rule by day, the moon and stars by night; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who smote the Egyptian firstborn, and brought Israel from their midst with a strong hand and outstretched arm **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who split the Sea of Reeds and brought Israel through, but swept Pharaoh and his troops into the sea; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who led the people in the wilderness, smiting great kings, slaying mighty kings: Sihon, King of the Amorites, Og, King of Bashan; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

giving their land to Israel as an inheritance, an inheritance to Israel, God's servant, **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

who remembered us when we were laid low, and rescued us from our foes; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever

► who provides bread for all flesh; **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever.

Give thanks to God in heaven: **ki l'olam ḥasdo** for God's love endures forever.

Some congregations recite Mourner's Kaddish here; see page xx.

לְפַסַח

היום חג הפסח שבו אומרים:

הודו ליהוה כי טוב הודו לאלהי האלהים הודו לאדני האדנים

לעשה נפלאות גדלות לבדו לעשה השמים בתבונה לרקע הארץ על המים

לעשה אורים גדלים את השמש לממשלת ביום את הירח וכוכבים לממשלות בלילה

למכה מצרים בבכוריהם ויוצא ישראל מתוכם ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה

לגזר ים סוף לגזרים והעביר ישראל בתוכו ונער פרעה וחילו בים סוף

למולך עמו במדבר למכה מלכים גדלים ויהרג מלכים אדירים

לסיחון מלך האמרי ולעוג מלך הבשן ונתן ארצם לנחלה נחלה לישראל עבדו

שבשפלנו זכר לנו ויפרקנו מצרינו

נתן לחם לכל־בשר הודו לאל השמים

בי לעולם חסדו. בי לעולם חסדו. בי לעולם חסדו.

בי לעולם חסדו. בי לעולם חסדו. בי לעולם חסדו.

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תהלים קלו

Some congregations recite Mourner's Kaddish here; see page xx.

PSALMS FOR FESTIVALS. Early prayerbooks recommend that on festivals, special psalms appropriate for these days be recited. Tractate Sofrim, a late and minor tractate of the Talmud, notes that on the festivals the Levites recited alternative psalms, instead of the regular psalm of the day (18:3–4). Traditions differ as to which psalms are appropriate. Scholars identify many of the psalms that follow as likely to have been composed for recitation in the Temple on these occasions.

PSALM 136, focusing on the exodus and the march through the desert, is especially appropriate for Pesah. Indeed, the ancient rabbis referred to this psalm (and the immediately preceding Psalm 135) as "the great Hallel" and associated it with this festival. The refrain *ki l'olam ḥasdo* occurs twenty-six times, which is the numerical equivalent of God's name, יהוה (*yod-hei-vav-hei*).

AMORITES, BASHAN. The Amorites were a semi-nomadic people, powerful in the ancient Near East in the pre-Israelite period. Bashan is the name of the northern plains and mountains east of the Jordan River. According to the Torah, the Israelites defeated several of the peoples living in the areas east of the Jordan before entering the Promised Land; these lands were subsequently settled by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and parts of Manasseh.

Nature's Speech

A prayer of Solomon—
that I not understand
the language of beasts and birds:
not see a snort as a lament,
a yelp as a prayer,
a chirp as a psalm;
that the melodies of the world
pass by in all their simplicity
and fill me with joy.

—SIVAN HAR-SHEFI

The Words of My Mouth

When the words that I speak are
the same as the promptings of
my heart, then my voice is pleas-
ing to God.

—JOSEPH ALBO

Redemption

God who creates nature, God
who instructs us, is the same
God who is capable of under-
standing the sincere, though
sometimes misstated, plaint of
the heart. Creation, now incom-
plete because of the rent in the
human soul, can be made whole
again, can be completed, as
God faces the human, hears our
speech, and forgives us. Prayer,
the articulation of the human
heart, has the power to effect
this turning. It can initiate the
reconciliation of God and crea-
tion—then I, in all my so very
human self-contradictions, may
be affirmed. God, who knows all
and sees all, can understand my
intent and find me, like the rest
of creation, good.



FOR THE LEADER, A SONG OF DAVID

The heavens tell of God's glory,
and the sky proclaims God's handiwork.

One day addresses another,
and one night informs the next.

There is no speech, there are no words that are not heard:
reverberations of them travel over the entire earth,
their message reaches the very edges of the world.

In heaven's midst, there is a tent for the sun
who, like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
emerges joyously, a champion running the course:
entering at heaven's edge,
circling to the far side,
nothing escaping its heat.

The teaching of ADONAI is perfect, reviving life;
the covenant of ADONAI is enduring,
making the foolish wise;
the precepts of ADONAI are fitting, gladdening the heart;
the command of ADONAI is clear, brightening the eyes;
reverence of ADONAI is pure, forever right;
the judgments of ADONAI are true, altogether just—

Torat Adonai t'mimah, m'shivat nafesh,
eidut Adonai ne-emanah, mahkimat peti,
pikudei Adonai y'sharim, m'samhei lev,
mitzvat Adonai barah, me'irat einayim,
yirat Adonai t'horah, omedet la-ad,
mishp'tei Adonai emet, tzadku yahdav,

more precious than gold, than the finest gold,
sweeter than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.
Truly, Your servant strives to be mindful of them—
their observance is of such consequence.

Who can discern one's own errors? Cleanse me of those
I am not even conscious, and restrain Your servant from
willful sins—let them not rule me. Then shall I be
innocent, untainted by grave transgression.

► May the words of my mouth and the meditations of
my heart be acceptable to You, ADONAI, my rock and my
redeemer.

Psalm 19



לְמַנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד

הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהִים וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי מַגִּיד הַרְקִיעַ.

יּוֹם לַיּוֹם יְבִיעַ אָמְרָה, וְלַיְלָה לְלַיְלָה יַחְוֶה דְּעֵת.

אֵין אָמַר וְאֵין דְּבָרִים, בְּלִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹלָם.

בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ יֵצֵא קוֹם וּבִקְצֵה תִּבֵּל מְלִיָּהֶם,

לְשִׁמֵשׁ שָׁם אֶהָל בָּהֶם.

וְהוּא כְּחֵתֵן יֵצֵא מִחֻפְתּוֹ, יִשְׁיֵשׁ כְּגִבּוֹר לְרוּץ אֲרָח,

מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם מוֹצֵאוֹ, וּתְקוּפָתוֹ עַל קְצוֹתָם,

וְאֵין נִסְתָּר מִחֻפְתּוֹ.

תּוֹרַת יְהוָה תְּמִימָה, מְשִׁיבַת נֶפֶשׁ,

עֵדוּת יְהוָה נֶאֱמָנָה, מַחְפִּימַת פִּתִּי,

פְּקוּדֵי יְהוָה יְשָׁרִים, מְשִׁמְחֵי לֵב,

מִצְוֹת יְהוָה בְּרָה, מְאִירַת עֵינָיִם,

יְרֵאת יְהוָה טְהוֹרָה, עוֹמְדַת לְעַד,

מְשִׁפְטֵי יְהוָה אֱמֶת, צְדָקוֹ יַחֲדוֹ,

הַנִּחְמָדִים מְזַהֵב וּמְפָז רַב, וּמְתוּקִים מְדַבֵּשׁ וְנֹפֵת צוֹפִים.

גַּם עֲבֹדָךְ נִזְהָר בָּהֶם, בְּשִׁמְרָם עֵקֶב רַב.

שְׂגִיאוֹת מִי יִבִּין, מִנִּסְתָּרוֹת נִקְנִי.

גַּם מְזִדִּים חֲשֵׁךְ עֲבֹדָךְ, אֵל יִמְשְׁלוּ בִּי,

אֲזוֹ אֵיתָם וְנִקְיִתִי מִפֶּשַׁע רַב.

◀ יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֲמִרֵי פִי וְהִגִּיוֹן לְבִי לְפָנֶיךָ,

יְהוָה צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי.

תהלים יט

PSALM 19. Psalm 19 is the first of seven psalms (here indicated with Hebrew letters *alef, bet*, etc.) added for Shabbat and festivals. This psalm is composed of three parts: the first celebrates the magnificence of creation, especially the light of the sun; the second is a hymn to Torah, God's teachings; and the third is a personal plea by the psalmist for God's tolerance of human shortcomings.

הַשָּׁמַיִם תְּמִימִים הֵם מְסַפְּרִים. The universe is pictured as alive, singing the praises of God and all that God has created. Many different verbs are used to describe speech: the heavens "tell," the sky "proclaims," one day "addresses" another, each night "informs" the next. Nature reflects God's speech, and Torah is God's direct speech. In contrast, our own human speech originates with us and therefore has the capacity to be sinful.

THE TEACHING OF ADONAI תּוֹרַת יְהוָה. The word *torah* literally means "teaching." In later Judaism the word refers to the Five Books of Moses, but in biblical parlance it simply means

"instruction" and is frequently used for divine instruction. The first two verses in the series speak in general terms of God's teaching and covenant; the next two, of the specific precepts and laws; and finally, the last two speak of ritual observance and the administration of justice.

THE COVENANT OF ADONAI יְהוָה. The first Hebrew word is used in the Bible to identify the tablets, *luhot ha-eidut*, on which the Ten Commandments were written.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD הַנִּחְמָדִים מִזָּהָב. The poet has used six phrases to describe God's teaching; this seventh phrase is climactic, describing the fullness and wonder of the totality.

WILLFUL SINS מַזְדִּים. This is how later Jewish interpreters understood the verse: willful sins are here contrasted with unconscious ones, and the poem's entire focus is on internal states. But many modern scholars translate the word as "enemies," in which case the verse would read: "Separate me from enemies, that they not rule over me; then I shall remain innocent, free of great transgression." Enemies might tempt one to act out of anger, seek vengeance, destroy, or even kill.

The Sh'ma and Its Blessings

The Effect of Prayer

Prayer is a way of sensitizing ourselves to the wonder of life, of expressing gratitude, and of praising and acknowledging the reality of God. One need not believe that God will interfere with the ongoing process of nature to feel that prayer is worthwhile. We may have different understandings of what God is. No definition we have is sufficient or answers all doubts and questions. To be aware that God exists—that there is more in the universe than physical matter, that a moral order is inherent in creation, that humans are responsible for their conduct and can help to bring about the perfection, or at least the improvement, of the world and of life—that is sufficient reason for prayer.

—REUVEN HAMMER

The Congregation

Tabernacle and Temple gave visible assurance of God's care and accessibility. But once that locus of divine indwelling was destroyed, what could possibly replace it? The destruction of God's house should have augured the demise of Judaism. The well-known answer, of course, is that the rabbis, who replaced the priests at the helm of the nation, came up with the institution of the synagogue. But what, exactly, constituted a synagogue? How would we have recognized one? The heart of this radically new institution was neither a building nor a book, but a number. Whereas, prior to the Temple's end, holiness was ascribed to a sacred place that could not be duplicated, after 70 C.E. holiness resided inconspicuously in the quorum of ten without which basic communal rituals could not be enacted. To conduct a worship service, to recite certain prayers, to chant from the Torah or Prophets, to perform a wedding or a funeral, all required a *minyan* (Mishnah Megillah 4:3). . . . The Talmud echoes the new salience of a *minyan*. Once, Rabbi Yitzhak asked his friend, Rav Nahman, why he had failed to come to the synagogue to pray. "I couldn't," he responded. "So you should have gathered ten men on your own to pray," chided Rabbi Yitzhak. "It was too troublesome." "Well, at least," needled Rabbi Yitzhak, "you should have had a synagogue official come to inform you when exactly the congregation would be praying [so that you might join them from afar]." At which point, Rav Nahman protested, "What's this all about?" "We have a tradition," asserted Rabbi Yitzhak, "that goes back to Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai that this is the intent of the verse, 'As for me, may my prayer come to You, O Lord, at a favorable moment' (Psalm 69:14). And what indeed constitutes that 'favorable moment'? It is when the congregation is absorbed in prayer" (Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 7b–8a).

—ISMAR SCHORSCH

A MEDITATION FOR BAR'KHU

Almighty no thing exists without You and none can be like You the source of all maker and creator

You have no image eyes observe but the soul lodged in the heart recognizes You and sees

Your glory's breadth encompassing all for in You all finds its place but You occupy no place

my soul seeing but unseen come thank the seeing but unseen and bless

Bar'khu: The Call to Worship Together

Bar'khu, the leader's invitation to prayer, is recited while standing. The leader bows when saying the word "bar'khu" (praise) and stands straight when reciting the name of God. Similarly, the congregation bows at the word "barukh" (praise) and straightens to full height at the recitation of God's name.

Leader:

Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:

🕉 Praise ADONAI, to whom all praise is directed forever and ever.

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

We are seated.

קריאת שמע וברכותיה

רְשׁוֹת לְבָרְכוּ
מִשְׁגִּיב בְּכַחוֹ מִי בְּלַתּוֹ וְכִמְהוּ?
כִּי הוּא מְקוֹר הַבַּל, יִצְרוּ וְעִשְׂהוּ.
כֵּן לוֹ דְמוּת עֵינַי לֹא רְאִיתָהּ, בְּלִתִּי
נִפְשׁ בְּלֵב תִּכְבִּיר אֹתוֹ וְתִצְפְּהוּ;
עֲצֵם כְּבוֹדוֹ הִכִּיל כֹּל, וְכֵן נִקְרָא:
מְקוֹם לְכֹל כִּי לֹא מְקוֹם יִכִּילֶהוּ,
רְאָה וְלֹא נִרְאִיתָ, לְרְאָה וְלֹא נִרְאָה
בְּאֵי וְהוֹדִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי וּבִרְכָהוּ.

Bar'khu, the leader's invitation to prayer, is recited while standing. The leader bows when saying the word בְּרַכּוּ and stands straight when reciting the name of God. Similarly, the congregation bows at the word בְּרוּךְ and straightens to full height at the recitation of God's name.

Leader:

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:

🕉 בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

We are seated.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RECITATION OF THE SH'MA.

The call to worship marks the formal beginning of the Shāharit (morning) service. Shāharit always includes two central moments: the Recitation of the Sh'ma, and the Amidah (the silent prayer). *B'rakhot* surrounding the Sh'ma serve to interpret the themes of its biblical verses. Preceding the Sh'ma, in which we declare that God is one, are two *b'rakhot*. The first affirms that God is the creator of all, further remarking on the wonder of creation and the morning light. The first paragraph of the Sh'ma speaks of the love for God, and so the second *b'rakhah* acknowledges the inverse: God's love of the people Israel as manifest in the gifts of the teachings of Torah. A single *b'rakhah* follows the morn-

ing recitation of the Sh'ma; it speaks of redemption, reflecting the theme of the exodus from Egypt, which is introduced in the third paragraph of the Sh'ma.

ALMIGHTY מִשְׁגִּיב בְּכַחוֹ. A meditation for Bar'khu written by Yehudah Halevi (Spain, d. 1141).

BAR'KHU: THE CALL TO WORSHIP TOGETHER. The leader calls the congregation together as a *minyan*; the congregation, by responding, acknowledges its being assembled for prayer.

TO WHOM ALL PRAISE IS DIRECTED הַמְּבָרָךְ. The Talmud of the Land of Israel explains the word *ha-m'vorakh* to mean "whom all of us praise" (Berakhot 7:7).

In some North African communities, members of the congregation add the following biblical verses privately:

נר לרגלי דברך
ואור לנתיבותי.
נר יהוה נשמת אדם
הפש פליחודרי בטון.
כי נר מצוה ותורה אור
ודרך חיים תוכחות
מוסר.
כי אתה תאיר נרי
יהוה אלהי יגיה חשפי.
אור זרע לצדיק
ולישרי לב שמחה.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, light for my path (Psalm 119:105).

A person's soul is ADONAI's lamp, searching one's innermost being (Proverbs 20:27).

Mitzvah is the lamp and Torah the light, for the path of life is the taking of instruction (Proverbs 6:23).

For You light my lamp; ADONAI, my God, bring light even to my darkness (Psalm 18:29).

Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright (Psalm 97:11).

Personal Prayers Before the Open Ark

A PRAYER FOR THE DAY OF REST

I long to change the world, but I rarely appreciate things as they are.

I know how to give, but I don't always know how to be still.

I talk, but I don't often listen. I look, but I don't often see.

I yearn to succeed, but I often forget what is truly important.

Teach me, God, to slow down. May my resting revive me.

May it lead me to wisdom, to holiness, to peace,

and to You.

Naomi Levy

SHALOM TO ALL

Avinu Malkeinu, master of peace, help us and strengthen us so that we always strive for peace. May there be harmony among all people, their companions, and friends. May there be no discord among the members of my family. You who establish peace above, extend peace upon us and the whole world. May we draw close to You and Your Torah in truth and may we all be bound together, carrying out Your will wholeheartedly. Master of peace, bless us with peace.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.

Nathan Sternharz

T'FILAT HA-DEREKH—

A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY: TRANSITIONS IN LIFE

Our lives are always changing, and change brings with it fear of the unknown. The journey into the unknown is fraught with danger, yet rich with possibility. It has always been so—as Abraham and Sarah went forth, as Rebecca and then Jacob went forth. Our ancestors across time have looked to You for protection, from the wild beasts of the road, from the vagaries of weather. So too I, in this place, in this time, look to You. Help me to remember my strength and courage, help me to see clearly, to listen deeply, to act wisely. Help me to be my best self in this new place and time. Every journey leads into the unknown. May the unknown ahead of me offer blessing.

Merle Feld

Personal Prayers Before the Open Ark

A PRAYER FOR GOODNESS

Compassionate creator, teach me to appreciate the love of my family and friends. May I not be the source of pain or contention, jealousy or needless competitiveness, but may I learn to listen to the heartfelt stirrings of all whom I know and love—and may I help fulfill their needs. Grant health of body and spirit to all. May Your Torah fashion me into an instrument of Your will and of Your peace. *Amen.*

A PRAYER WHEN SAD

Master of the universe, see the sadness in my soul. Heal my grief and despair. I wish to do Your will but my sadness overwhelms me. Let Your instruction touch my being that I might find comfort in the world You have created, and that I might in turn be a comfort to others. May the soul You have given me give me the strength to turn sadness into joy and despair into song. Master of the Universe, send healing.

A PRAYER FOR ONE'S PERSONAL JOURNEY

Open my eyes, God. Help me to perceive what I have ignored, to uncover what I have forsaken, to find what I have been searching for. Remind me that I don't have to journey far to discover something new, for miracles surround me, blessings and holiness abound. And You are near.

Naomi Levy

A PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

I thank You, Adonai, for knowing me, for granting me a measure of fullness, a fulfillment of small hopes, and many yearnings. Thank You for the gift of this day. May the gratitude in my heart and the sense of fullness that I feel now continue to sustain me, taking root in my soul, even as I continue to dream and pray. "It is good to thank You, Adonai, and to sing to Your name, transcendent God" (Psalm 92:2). Give me strength to see the gift in each new day You grant.

PERSONAL PRAYERS BEFORE THE OPEN ARK. Throughout the generations, the moment when the ark was opened and the Torah scrolls were displayed was considered an especially favored time for personal meditation and prayers for the welfare of the community.

SHALOM TO ALL. This prayer by Nathan Sternharz (1780–1845), the chief recorder of the teachings of the Hasidic master Nahman of Bratzlav, has been adapted and translated by Jules Harlow.