KOL NIDREI
AND EVENING SERVICE
OF YOM KIPPUR

Kol Nidrei
Preparatory Prayers
Kol Nidrei

The Sh’mah and Its Blessings
The Silent Amidah
S’lihot: Pleas for Forgiveness
Viddui: Prayers of Confession
Concluding Prayers
PREREQUISITE PRAYERS

The Meaning of the Day
One day a year we make a journey in the company of the whole community of Israel— all of us together, each of us alone. That day is “The Day,” the Day of Atonement, the day that is deathlike. It is the day we wear the "kittel," the white gown that will one day be our shroud. It is the day when eating and drinking cease. It is a day when the world recedes and we are set free to uncover the true meaning of our lives.
—JONATHAN MAGONET
(adapted)

Meditation for Putting on the Kittel
Just as I clothe myself in this white garment, so may You purify my soul and my body, as the prophet Isaiah said, “Even if your sins are like crimson, they will turn snow-white.”

K'shem she-ani mitlabbeish/mitlabbeshet b'veged lavan, kein talbin et nishmati v'gufati, ka-katuv: im yihyu h.ata.eikhem ka-shanim ka-sheleg yalbinu.

B’rakah for Putting on the Tallit
Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, ruler of time and space, who has made us holy through mitzvot and instructed us to wrap ourselves in tzitzit.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivvanu l'hitattef ba-tzitzit.

God of the faithless
God of the faithful
You, who speak in whispered silence,
Your order is infinite;
remember, we are finite and need words and reason.

God of the faithful
You, whose reason is mystery—
Your order is infinite;
remember, we are finite and need words and reason.

—EDWARD FELD
(after Myriam Kabaday)

Entering Community
Prayer recited in community has a special dimension. Individuals may pray alone and keenly experience God. Judaism recognizes this and does not discourage solitary prayer. But Judaism is wary lest such aloneness become the norm and the permanent condition of the human being. Religion is not simply what we do with our aloneness, but what we do with others. Prayer should not isolate us, it should not lead us to believe that we need only God and ourselves, but prayer should lead us outward toward the love and care of the world we meet. Through prayer we discover how important the community is for sustaining our own salvation.

—REUVEN HAMMER
(adapted)

Wearing a Tallit

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God of the faithful
You, who speak in whispered silence,
Your order is infinite;
remember, we are finite and need words and reason.

God of the faithful
God of the faithful
You, whose reason is mystery—
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PREPARATORY PRAYERS

Shalom: shalom to those who are far off, shalom to those who are near, says ADONAI.

Kittel: Originally a Yiddish term, the word kittel refers to a white garment traditionally worn on Yom Kippur as well as at sacred moments of life transition, including at a wedding and as a burial shroud. Why do the rabbi and cantor and some members of the congregation wear white robes tonight? One explanation is that the priestly garments were white, and the High Priest wore white rather than gold when entering the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.

Even if Your Sins Be Like Slag, they will turn snow-white. "The Day," the Day of Atonement, the day that is deathlike. It is the day when eating and drinking cease. It is a day when the world recedes and we are set free to uncover the true meaning of our lives.

The Meaning of the Day

Shalom Shalom, Isaiah 57:19. This verse from the Haftarah for Yom Kippur morning is used here to welcome everyone to the synagogue. The welcome will be developed further when the liturgy declares that we are permitted tonight “to pray with those who have transgressed.”

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Even if Your Sins Be Like Slag, they will turn snow-white. "The Day," the Day of Atonement, the day that is deathlike. It is the day when eating and drinking cease. It is a day when the world recedes and we are set free to uncover the true meaning of our lives.

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Forgiveness is Not Forgetting

We forgive, not because we believe that what was done was unimportant, but because we are prepared to put aside our anger long enough to hear words which reflect remorse and regret, long enough to begin to believe that people have the potential to grow.
—CHARLES KLEIN

A PRAYER FOR PURITY

Master of the Universe:
Is there a person anywhere who never sins?
I am but flesh and blood, often yielding to temptation; I am human, often torn by conflicts.

You created me with ears
so I could listen to Your world and Your word, but instead I have listened to gossip and words of hatred. Worse, I have also given the impression of hearing while I was not really listening.

You created me with hands, with the sense of touch, with the ability to transmit tenderness and comfort, but I have used them falsely.

You created me with legs to walk in the paths of holiness, but I have often used my hands for hurting others.

You created me with arms to give love, but I have used them to run to do frivolous things.

You created me with sexual organs to express love, but I have used them to run to do frivolous things.

You created me with legs to walk in the paths of holiness, but I have often used my hands for hurting others.

You created me with hands, with the ability to transmit tenderness and comfort, but I have used them falsely.

You created me with a tongue and a mouth with which You formed heaven and earth; and gave them the ability to speak the words of creation. I hereby forgive all who have hurt me, all who have done me wrong, all who have offended.

A Meditation before Yom Kippur

I hereby forgive all who have hurt me, all who have done me wrong, whether deliberately or by accident, whether by word or by deed. May no one be punished on my account.

As I forgive and pardon fully those who have done me wrong, may those whom I have harmed by word or by deed forgive and pardon me, whether deliberately or by accident, whether by word or by deed.

Therefore I come to You on this Yom Kippur—this Day of Atonement—and have taken on myself the mitzvah not to eat or drink, not to bathe or perfume myself, not to wear leather shoes or engage in acts of physical intimacy, and to stop all work, in order to devote this day to asking forgiveness for the misuse of Your gifts during this past year, and to learn once again the holiness of my body.

As I forgive and pardon all who have hurt me, all who have done me wrong, whether deliberately or by accident, whether by word or by deed, may no one be punished on my account.

Therefore I come to You on this Yom Kippur—this Day of Atonement—and have taken on myself the mitzvah not to eat or drink, not to bathe or perfume myself, not to wear leather shoes or engage in acts of physical intimacy, and to stop all work, in order to devote this day to asking forgiveness for the misuse of Your gifts during this past year, and to learn once again the holiness of my body.
Kol Nidrei

I am grateful for this,
a moment of truth,
grateful to stand before You
in judgment.
You know me as a liar
and I am flooded with relief
for my darkest self,
and I am naked before You,
how often I take the easy way,
I let myself off the hook,
my redeemer.

No one sees, no one knows,
how often I take the easy way,
I let myself off the hook,
my redeemer.

In moments of weakness
we do not remember
the promises of Atonement Day.
Recall that we easily forget;
release us from shackles of
the earth.

This affirmation is traditionally recited three times:

By the authority of the court on high and by
the authority of this court below, with divine consent
and with the consent of this congregation, we grant
permission to pray with those who have transgressed.

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the authority of this court below, with divine consent
and with the consent of this congregation, we grant
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Or zaru’a la-tzaddik u-l’yishrei lev simhah.

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Kol Nidrei are obscure, during the late Middle Ages it took on special meaning.
Conversos, Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had kept their religious identity secret,
wanting to rejoin their communities on Yom Kippur. The formula “By authority of
the earthly and heavenly courts” assured them that they had permission both from heaven above and
and doubts on this night,
everyone is welcome in
the synagogue. While the
origins of this preface to
Kol Nidrei are unknown.

The opening melodic phrase of Kol Nidrei—at least 1300 years old—
bears a remarkable similarity to the French-Sephardic and French-Sephardic chant

We rise as the ark is opened.
A meditation while the Torah scrolls are taken out of the ark:

We rise as the ark is opened.
A meditation while the Torah scrolls are taken out of the ark:
A Deathless Prayer
Pain and . . . fear . . . kept us awake. A cloudless sky, thickly set with glittering stars, looked in upon our grief-filled prison. The moon shone through the window. Its light was dazzling that night and gave the pale, wasted faces of the prisoners a ghostly appearance. It was as if all the life had ebbed out of them. I shuddered with dread, for it suddenly occurred to me that I was the only living man among the corpses.

All at once the oppressive silence was broken by a mournful tune. It was the plaintive tones of the ancient Kol Nidrei prayer. I raised myself up to see whence it came. There, close to the wall, the moonlight caught the uplifted face of an old man, who, in self-forgetful, pious absorption, was singing softly to himself.

When at last he was silent, there was exaltation among us, an exaltation which people can experience when they have fallen as low as we had fallen and then, through the mystic power of a deathless prayer, have awakened once more to the world of the spirit.

—LEON SZALET, a concentration camp survivor

Recited three times:

All vows, renunciations, bans, oaths, formulas of obligation, pledges, and promises that we vow or promise to ourselves and to God from this Yom Kippur to the next—may it approach us for good—we hereby retract. May they all be undone, repealed, cancelled, voided, annulled, and regarded as neither valid nor binding. Our vows shall not be considered vows; our renunciations shall not be considered renunciations; and our promises shall not be considered promises.

Kol nidrei ve-esarei la-esarei, ve-sh’vot b’telot, u-m’vuttalin, la sharirin v’la kayyamin. Nidrana la nidrei, ve-esarana la esarei, u-sh’vu atana la sh’vu ot.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS
Leader and congregation; some congregations recite this verse three times:

“The entire congregation of the people Israel shall be forgiven, as you have asked. “So too, God forgives each of us when we approach this day regretting our acts. Our God, ruler of time and space, for our sins we ask to be forgiven. As befits Your abundant love, please forgive us that even when the entire community acts against God’s wishes, God forgives.

Moses prays: [“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.” And there it further says:] leader and congregation; some congregations recite this verse three times:

Barukh atah Adonai, our God, ruler of time and space, for granting us life, for sustaining us, and for bringing us to this moment. Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-heh’eyanu v’kiy’manu v’hi-gi’anu la-z’man ha-zeh.

The Torah scrolls are returned to the ark. On days other than Shabbat, the service continues on page 207.

Leader:

[Adonai replied:] “I have forgiven, as you have asked.”

V’yaner Adonai, salashi ki-d’varekh.

The Torah scrolls are returned to the ark. On days other than Shabbat, the service continues on page 207.
ON SHABBAT, WE RECITE THESE PSALMS:

**Psalm 92: A SONG FOR SHABBAT**

It is good to thank You, Adonai, to sing Your praise, exalted God, to speak of Your love each morning, to the music of the lute and the melody of the harp.

Your creation, Adonai, gives me joy; I sing of Your handiwork. How vast Your works, Adonai, how intricate Your designs.

The thoughtless cannot comprehend, the fool cannot fathom this:

the wicked flourish like grass, those who commit evil blossom, only to be destroyed in the end.

But You, Adonai, are supreme forever. Surely, Your enemies, Adonai, surely, Your enemies shall perish; those who commit evil shall crumble.

And You will raise my head high, like the horn of the ox, anointing me with fragrant oil.

Were enemies to gather against me, my gaze would remain steady, for my ears would hear:

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; they shall endure steady, for my ears would hear:

Surely, Your enemies, Adonai, surely, Your enemies shall perish; but You, Adonai, are supreme forever.

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On Shabbat, we recite these psalms:

**Psalm 93**

A psalm of praise, a psalm of thanksgiving on Shabbat that God can be seen as truly enthroned. Sovereign. It may have become associated with Shabbat as it describes God’s enthronement as a vision of a future peace and wholeness, described as “being transplanted in God’s house.” Shabbat is both a remembrance of creation and a foretaste of redemption, both a look back to the seven days of creation and a looking forward toward the culmination of all time.

In many congregations, Mourner’s Kaddish (p. 247) is recited here.

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**Yom Kippur and Shabbat**

When Yom Kippur would fall on Shabbat, the pious Rabbi Leib would prepare all the Shabbat necessities according to his custom for every other Shabbat during the year, and set the table. When he came home after the Kol Nidrei service, he would sit down at the table and say, “Master of the universe, the obstacle to observing the Shabbat is not on my part. I would like to be able to observe the Shabbat as You have commanded. But You have said that we must afflict ourselves on this day, and so, since that is Your will, Leib have said that we must afflict ourselves on this day, and so, since that is Your will, Leib will. ”

— OR HA-MEIR (trans. S.Y. Agnon)
We rise. Leader:
Bar'ku: The Call to Worship Together
We rise as called by the leader’s words of invitation to prayer. The leader bows when saying the word “bar'ku” (praise) and stands straight when recting 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.

We rise. Leader:
Praise ADONAI, to whom all prayer is directed.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:
‡ Praise ADONAI, to whom all prayer is directed forever and ever.
Barukh Adonai ha-m’vorakh Yisrael va-’ed.

We are seated.

First B’rakhah before the Sh’ma: The Evening Light
Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, ruler of time and space, whose word brings the evening dusk, whose wisdom opens the gates of dawn, whose understanding changes the day’s division, whose will sets the succession of seasons and arranges the stars in their places in the sky, who creates day and night, who rolls light before darkness and darkness from light, who makes day pass into night, who distinguishes day from night; Adonai Ts’vaot is Your name. Living and ever-present God, May Your rule be with us, forever and ever. Barukh atah ADONAI, who brings each evening’s dusk.

‡ God and Nature: An Interpretative Translation
Beloved are You, eternal God, by whose design the evening falls, by whose command dimensions open up and eons pass away and stars spin in their orbits. You set the rhythms of day and night; the alternation of light and darkness sings Your creating word. In rising sun and in spreading dusk, Creator of all, You are made manifest. Eternal, everlasting God, may we always be aware of Your dominion. Beloved are You, Adonai, for this hour of nightfall.

—ANDRÉ UNGAR

Community
We begin this service amidst our community. Rabbi Hayim of Tzanz used to tell this parable: A man, wandering lost in the forest for several days, finally encountered another. He called out: “Brother, show me the way of this forest.” The man replied: “Brother, I am too lost. I can only tell you this: The ways I have tried lead nowhere; they have only led me astray. Take my hand, and let us search for the way together.” Rabbi Hayim would add: “So it is with us. When we go our separate ways, we may go astray. Let us join hands and look for the way together.”

—A HASSIDIC TALE

EVENING SERVICE
THE SH’MA AND ITS BLESSINGS

Barukh atah Adonai
The Evening Light

1. Barukh atah Adonai, Our God, ruler of time and space, whose word brings the evening dusk, whose wisdom opens the gates of dawn, whose understanding changes the day’s division, whose will sets the succession of seasons and arranges the stars in their places in the sky, who creates day and night, who rolls light before darkness and darkness from light, who makes day pass into night, who distinguishes day from night; Adonai Ts’vaot is Your name. Living and ever-present God, May Your rule be with us, forever and ever. Barukh atah Adonai, who brings each evening’s dusk.

2. Praise ADONAI, to whom all prayer is directed. Congregation, then the leader repeats: Praise ADONAI, to whom all prayer is directed forever and ever. Barukh Adonai ha-m’vorakh Yisrael va-’ed.

We are seated.

First B’rakhah before the Sh’ma: The Evening Light
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Congregation, then the leader repeats:
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We are seated.

First B’rakhah before the Sh’ma: The Evening Light
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CREATES. The word בָּרְכוּ (barkhu) is used as a verb in the Bible only when the subject is God, for ultimately creation of the world is a mystery.

ADONAI TZE’VAOT. In the ancient world, the sun, the moon, and the stars were all seen as divine powers. Biblical monotheism demolished these ancient gods and they were then depicted as handmaidens of God, God’s army. Thus this term alludes to God’s mastery of all the forces of the universe.
Faith

Faith is not something that we acquire once and for all. Faith is an insight that must be acquired at every single moment. Those who honestly search, those who yearn and fail, we did not presume to judge. Let them pray to be able to pray, and if they do not succeed, if they have no tears to shed, let them yearn for tears, let them try to discover their heart, and let them take strength from the certainty that this too is prayer.

—Abraham Joshua Heschel

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Sh'ma: Declaration of Faith

Loving life and its mysterious source with all our heart and all our spirit, all our senses and strength, we take upon ourselves and into ourselves these promises: to care for the earth and those who live upon it, to pursue justice and peace, to love kindness and to pursue justice and peace, to care for the earth and all our spirit, all our senses and strength, we take upon ourselves and into ourselves these promises: to care for the earth and those who live upon it, to pursue justice and peace, to love kindness and compassion.

We will teach this to our children throughout the passage of the day— as we dwell in our homes and as we go on our journeys, from the time we rise until we fall asleep. And may our actions be faithful to our words that our children’s children may live to know: Truth and kindness have embraced, peace and justice have kissed and are one.

—Marcia Falk

Second B’rakah before the Sh’ma:

Torah and God’s Love

You have loved Your people, the House of Israel, with infinite love; You taught us Torah and mitzvot, statutes and laws. Therefore, Adonai our God, as we lie down or rise up, we shall think of Your laws and speak of them, rejoicing in Your words of Torah and Your mitzvot forever and ever. For they are our life and the fullness of our days, and on them we will meditate day and night. May You never withdraw Your love from us.

Barukh atah Adonai, who loves the people Israel.

Ahatav olam beit yisra·el el am’kha ahavta. Torah u-mitzvot, hakkim u-mishpatim otanu limmidat. Al kin Adonai elohinei, b-shokheinui u-v’kumeinu nasi-ab b’hukekka, v’nismah b’divrei toratekha u-v’mitzvotekha olam va-ed. Ki heim hayyeinu v’orekh yameinu, u-vahem negehe yomam va-lalah.

Recitation of the Sh’ma

Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on the oneness of God. These words are added in the absence of a minyan:

Some may elect to forgo these words and recite the Sh’ma with the earlier wording.

Praised be the name of the One whose glorious sovereignty is forever and ever.

Sh’ma yisra·el Adonai eloheinu Adonai eh.ad:

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI alone.

Praised be the name of the One whose glorious sovereignty is forever and ever. We will teach this to our children—first as the creator of the universe, and second by giving us instruction as a unity of heaven and earth, saying that we are ultimately all one body. 

Barukh atah Adonai, eloheinu, eloheinu, Adonai ha·adonai.

The Sh’mah. The Sh’mah is recited twice daily: morning and evening. It is a b’rakhah, a reading or declaration. The three paragraphs from the Torah that comprise the Sh’mah were selected because they express basic aspects of Jewish belief. According to the Rabbis, the first of the three paragraphs proclaims allegiance to the sovereignty of heaven, Malkhut Shamayim (ol malkhut shamayim); the second proclaims allegiance to the commandments, Tikvot ha-Miẓvot (ol mitzvo); and the third reminds us of the Exodus, Tikvot Y’shuv (y’zirat mitzrayim), our primary sacred story.

Hear. To hear is to emphasize the nonmaterial over the physical, to internalize the sense of God.

alone דָּרָם. The word d’ram literally means “one.” As an affirmation about God, it can be understood in multiple ways. The present rendering emphasizes the monotheistic claims of Jewish faith. Others translate d’ram as “unique,” emphasizing God’s otherness. Mystic commentators interpret “oneness” as a unity of heaven and earth, saying that we are ultimately all connected to the One.

Praised be the name דָּרָם. According to the Mishnah, when God’s name was pronounced by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, the people would respond, “Praised be the name . . .” (Yoma 3:8). Since this is a response but not part of the biblical text, it is normally not recited out loud, in order not to interrupt the flow of biblical verses. On Yom Kippur, however, we imitate our ancestors in the Temple courtyard and recite it aloud.

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V’ahavta eit Adonai elohinei Adonai eh.ad.

You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all that is yours. These words that I command you this day shall be taken to heart. Teach them again and again to your children, and speak of them when you sit in your home, when you walk on your way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol above your eyes. Inscribe them upon the doorposts of your home and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

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V’ahavta eit Adonai elohekha b’khol l’vav’kha u-v’khol nafsh’kha u-v’khol m’odekha. V’hayu ha-d’varim ha-eilleh asher anokhi meotzeh, bekhelek bekhelek u-v’khelek u-v’khelek. V’ahavta eit Adonai eloheinu ha-eilleh beit yisra·el am’kha ahavta. Torah u-mitzvot, ha-mishpatim, v’kol mitzvotekha olam va-ed.

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Some people may wish to pause here for a moment. Some may close their eyes; others place a hand over their eyes. The intention is to concentrate on the oneness of God. These words are added in the absence of a minyan:

V’ahavta eit Adonai eloheinu b’khol l’vav’kha u-v’khol nafsh’kha u-v’khol m’odekha. V’hayu ha-d’varim ha-eilleh asher anokhi meotzeh, bekhelek bekhelek u-v’khelek u-v’khelek. V’ahavta eit Adonai eloheinu ha-eilleh beit yisra·el am’kha ahavta. Torah u-mitzvot, ha-mishpatim, v’kol mitzvotekha olam va-ed.
If you will hear and obey the mitzvot that I command you this day, to love and serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your soul, then I will grant the rain for your land in season, rain in autumn and rain in spring. You shall gather in your grain and wine and oil—I will also provide grass in your fields for cattle—and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest your heart be tempted, and you stray to serve other gods and bow to them. Then ADONAI’s anger will flare up against you, and in full measure. You shall work and reap the livelihood in good time and in full measure. You shall have achieved. Be careful, however. Let not your joyous God-given dissoluteness and lose God’s image depart from you and you sink into alien ideals, lest you be lured after false goals, for cattle—and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest the earth will not yield its produce. You will quickly disappear from the good land that ADONAI is giving you.

Therefore, impress these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a reminder of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up; inscribe them upon your doors and upon your gates. Then the length of your days and the days of your children, on the land that ADONAI swore to give to your ancestors, will be upon the doorposts of your home and on your gates. Therefore, impress these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a reminder of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up; inscribe them upon your doors and upon your gates. Then the length of your days and the days of your children, on the land that ADONAI swore to give to your ancestors, will be as the days of the heavens over the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:13–21

Adonai said to Moses: Speak to the people Israel, and instruct them that in every generation they shall put tzitzit on the corners of their garments, placing a thread of blue on the tzitzit, the fringe of each corner. That shall be your tzitzit and you shall look at it, and remember all the mitzvot of Adonai, and fulfill them, and not be seduced by your heart and eyes as they lead you astray. Then you will remember and fulfill all My mitzvot, and be holy before your God. I am Adonai your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God. I am Adonai your God—

Numbers 15:37–41

Truly—

This is our faithful affirmation, binding on us: That Adonai is our God and there is none other, and we, Israel, are God’s people. God redeems us from earthly rulers, Our sovereign delivers us from the hand of all tyrants,

God brings judgment upon our oppressors, retribution upon all our mortal enemies,

If you will hear and obey the mitzvot that I command you this day, to love and serve Adonai your God with all your heart and all your soul, then I will grant the rain for your land in season, rain in autumn and rain in spring. You shall gather in your grain and wine and oil—I will also provide grass in your fields for cattle—and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest your heart be tempted, and you stray to serve other gods and bow to them. Then Adonai’s anger will flare up against you, and in full measure. You shall work and reap the livelihood in good time and in full measure. You shall have achieved. Be careful, however. Let not your joyous God-given dissoluteness and lose God’s image depart from you and you sink into alien ideals, lest you be lured after false goals, for cattle—and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take care lest the earth will not yield its produce. You will quickly disappear from the good land that Adonai is giving you.

Therefore, impress these words of mine upon your heart and upon your soul. Bind them as a sign upon your hand and as a reminder of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on your way, when you lie down and when you rise up; inscribe them upon your doors and upon your gates. Then the length of your days and the days of your children, on the land that Adonai swore to give to your ancestors, will be as the days of the heavens over the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:13–21

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God brings judgment upon our oppressors, retribution upon all our mortal enemies,
God performs wonders beyond understanding, marvels beyond all reckoning. God places us among the living, not allowing our steps to falter, and leads us past the false altars of our enemies. God exalted us above all those who hated us, avenged us with miracles before Pharaoh, offered signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.

When we falter, hold our hand. In our blindness, be our strength. In our weakness, give us impulse for good; let us know the joy of singing. When we are told that Moses led the deliverance at the Sea, we must already have been redeemed. Redemption is as if a community that truly embraces redemption. When we recite the Sh’mah and affirm God’s oneness, we may have a token of that redemption.

redeemed. The reality is that the cost of achieving freedom may be violence. America, for instance, won its independence through revolution. In the Italian liturgical tradition, this sentence is omitted on Shabbat, since it is not considered to be in keeping with the peaceful mood of the day.

MIRIAM. After the deliverance at the Sea, we are told that Moses led the men in song and Miriam led the women in response, joyously singing in the mood of the day. Jeremiah 31:11. "Who is like You, ADONAI, among the mighty! Who is like You, adorned in holiness, revered in praise, working wonders!"

Mi khamokha ba-eilim Adonai, mi kamokha ne-dar ba-kodesh, norat’hillot, oseih fele.

Your children recognized Your sovereignty, as You split the sea before Moses. “This is my God,” they responded, and they said:

“ADONAI will reign forever and ever.”

Adonai yimlokh l’olam va-ed.

And so it is written: “ADONAI has rescued Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of those more powerful than he.” Barukh atah ADONAI, who redeemed the people Israel.

חוה ימלך עלแผה זuida.

אמרה: כי חוה יתמה את-יוסף, ואליאל מיד חק ממעה.

כבר אתת חוה, אלא ישראל.
God’s Presence
What a stark contrast between the verses at the Sea, where we were gathered together as people, as a multitude, and saw the power of our Warrior God—and then the first verses of this prayer, where we are vulnerable and alone, looking to a more tender, personal side of the same God.

—MERLE FELD

Second B’rakhah after the Sh’ma:

Peace in the Night

Allow us, ADONAI our God, to sleep peacefully and to awaken again to life, our sovereign.

Spread over us Your canopy of peace, restore us with Your good counsel, and save us for the sake of Your name.

Shield us: Remove from us enemies and pestilence, sword, starvation, and sorrow, and remove the evil forces that surround us.

Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings, for You, God, watch over and deliver us, and You are the Sovereign, merciful and compassionate.

Ensure our going and coming for life and peace, now and forever.

May You spread over us Your canopy of peace.

Barukh atah ADONAI, who spreads the canopy of peace over us, and over all the people Israel, and over Jerusalem.

Allow us . . . to sleep.

Nighttime may provoke fear: Who will protect us as we sleep? Will we wake up? We beseech God to protect us from those threatening forces that we can see, as well as from those we cannot observe. Ten verbs are enunciated in this prayer, creating a powerful drama of motion and movement, an expression of the will to live.

Evil forces Satan, in the Bible, is a term generally used to refer either to evil impulses or to an adversary, but never to a fallen angel.

Canopy of peace Sukkah. This phrase is not found in the Bible but may allude either to Amos 9:11, where the prophet sees the rebuilding of the fallen sukkah of David as an image of redemption, or to Psalm 27:5, where the poet prays to be hidden in God’s sukkah, protected from enemies, while gazing peacefully at God’s countenance.

Jerusalem In Jewish thought, the peace of Jerusalem symbolizes universal peace.
Shabbat

We are obsessed with work. During the week we rest so we can go back to work. We play so that we can go back to work. One ulterior motive after another. Worrying over the past, living in the future. But one day each week there is a day devoted to being present, the seventh day. On that day, we do not have to go anywhere or do anything. Everything is done and we are already here.

—LAWRENCE KUSNER (adapted)

Atonement

According to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, this verse teaches that Y'om Kippur can atone only for sins "before God.

For Yom Kippur:
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.

Ki va-yom ha-zeh y'khapper aleikhem, va-yom ha-sh'vi·i shavat va-yinnafash.

הָאָֽרֶץ, וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפַשׁ.

Biblical Sanctification of the Day

We rise.

ON SHABBAT, WE RECITE THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

The people Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

V'sham'ru v'nei yisra·el et ha-shabbat, la-asot et ha-shabbat idorotam b'rit olam.

לְעֵֽלָּא לְעֵֽלָּא בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא, כִּרְעוּתֵהּ, מִכׇּל־בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחָמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן

We rise.

ON SHABBAT, WE RECITE THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever, 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.

For Yom Kippur:
Carried is the name of the One whose glorious sovereignty is forever and always in the world, far beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world. And answer: Amen.

We rise.

ON SHABBAT, WE RECITE THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

The people Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

V'sham'ru v'nei yisra·el et ha-shabbat, la-asot et ha-shabbat idorotam b'rit olam.

נְשָׁמָה יְתֵרָה מְנַשֵּׂה מְנַשֵּׂה בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאִםְרוּ בַּעֲגָלָא לְעֵֽלָּא לְעֵֽלָּא לְעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא, כִּרְעוּתֵהּ, מִכׇּל־בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחָמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן

Amen

For Yom Kippur:
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.

Ki va-yom ha-ze'eh y'khapper aleikhem l'taheir etkhem mi-kol h.attoteikhem,

בֵּיןִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הִיא לְולָם, בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְאִימְרוּ בַּעֲגָלָא לְעֵֽלָּא לְעֵֽלָּא לְעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא, כִּרְעוּתֵהּ, מִכׇּל־בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחָמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן

Amen

Atonement

According to Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, this verse teaches that Yom Kippur can atone only for sins “before God.”

Sins against other people can be atoned only by Kippur. Each Shabbat and holy day, an appropriate verse from the Bible is inserted just before the Amidah in the evening service—the beginning of the Jewish day—proclaiming the central purpose of the sacred occasion.

Kaddish

This Kaddish marks the break between the recitation of the Sh’mah and Its Blessings, the public declaration of our faith, and the more private, introspective part of our liturgy, the Amidah.

MAY GOD’S GREAT NAME Be Acknowledged

Whenever the people Israel enter the synagogue and house of study and proclaim: “Happy is he whose house such praise is spoken!”

“MAY GOD’S great name be acknowledged forever and ever,” the Holy One nods and says: “Happy is the sovereign in whose house such praise is spoken!”

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD, BERAKHOT

Reuven Hammer

The people Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

V'sham'ru v'nei yisra·el et ha-shabbat, la-asot et ha-shabbat idorotam b'rit olam.

May God’s great name be acknowledged forever and ever! Y'hei sh'mesh rabba m'varakh l'alam u-l'amei almaya.

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.

The people Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

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We rise.

ON SHABBAT, WE RECITE THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

The people Israel shall observe the Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day, ceased from work and rested.

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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 br’akhah when we come to the words “barukh atah Adonai.” The sign ‘ indicates the places to bow.

We bow, enabling us to focus on the miracle of our bodies’ construction. We stand up straight when we reach the word ADONAI, open my lips to speak to my God as we say the words of the Amidah, and to the beginning and end of the next to last br’akhah, thanking God for the gift of life.

ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS —Psalm 65:2, 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 br’akhah as we do with every opening br’akhah, 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 סָרָה. Many congregations add the names of the four matriarchs at the beginning of this br’akhah, 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. 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. 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 גאולה (g’ullah), “redemption,” in place of “redeemer,” to de-emphasize the role of any single individual in facilitating the world’s healing.

We might more easily prefer to use the word “God” highlights that ultimately perfectible; God’s teachings, carried out by us, will help the world achieve such perfection. Some prefer to use the word גאולה (g’ullah), “redemption,” in place of “redeemer,” to de-emphasize the role of any single individual in facilitating the world’s healing.

Why are the words “God of Sarah,” “God of Rebecca,” and “God of Leah” not included in the Amidah? From Deuteronomy 33:2, “Your God, the God of my father Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, let him establish your way in the fear of him.” Why don’t we say Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, “ruler of time and space,” as part of the opening br’akhah as we do with every opening br’akhah, 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.

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.

AMIDAH. Amidah literally means “standing” and is the moment of personal prayer recited quietly, as if standing before God. Every Amidah contains three introductory br’akhot. The first recalls our ancestors and their relationship 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 br’akhot. 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 one intermedium br’akhah, 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 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 the Amidah, to the beginning and end of the next to last br’akhah, thanking God for the gift of life.

ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS. 1 Kings 8:27, 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 br’akhah as we do with every opening br’akhah, 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 סָרָה. Many congregations add the names of the four matriarchs at the beginning of this br’akhah, 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.

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

Remember us for life,
Sovereign who delights in life, and in our world.

In my soul, in my people, for planting immortality
Praised are You, Adonai,
who gives life to the dead.

Version with Patriarchs:
You are mighty forever, Adonai—
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:
You are mighty forever, Adonai—
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.

Who is like You, source of compassion?
Who is like You, sovereign who brings death and life, and causes salvation to flourish.
Who is like You, who brings death and life, and who can be compared to You?

Who is like You, Adonai—
Sovereign who delights in life, and with great mercy give life to the dead.
You sustain the living through love, and causes salvation to flourish.
You support the falling, heal the sick, loosen the chains of the bound, and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Version with Patriarchs:
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 who can be compared to You?

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

You sustain the living through love, and causes salvation to flourish.
You support the falling, heal the sick, loosen the chains of the bound, and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Version with Patriarchs:
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.

Third B’rakhah: God’s Holiness
Holy are You and holy is Your name; holy ones praise You each day.

Guardian of Sarah
Who is like You, source of compassion?
Who is like You, sovereign who brings death and life, and causes salvation to flourish.
You sustain the living through love, and causes salvation to flourish.
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, Adonai—
Sovereign who delights in life, and with great mercy give life to the dead.
You sustain the living through love, and causes salvation to flourish.
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, Adonai—
Sovereign who brings death and life, and who can be compared to You?

Who is like You, who brings death and life, and who can be compared to You?

You sustain the living through love, and causes salvation to flourish.
You support the falling, heal the sick, loosen the chains of the bound, and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Version with Patriarchs:
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.

Version with Patriarchs and Matriarchs:
You are the sovereign who helps and guards, saves and shields.
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, 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.

Deadly Sin Will Disappear

These three paragraphs, which are introduced by the same word, U-v’khein (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)
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.

Your God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur. Blot out and disregard them, Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur.

With love, You have bestowed on us, ADONAI our God, this vice, and calling us by Your great and holy name.

Fourth B’rakhah: The Holiness of Yom Kippur

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 keep in mind the thought of our ancestors, Keep us in mind, hear us and respond to us.

Attend to us and accept us; 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 Yom Kippur. Blot out and disregard them, Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur.

With love, You have bestowed on us, ADONAI our God, this virtue, and calling us by Your great and holy name.

Fourth B’rakhah: The Holiness of Yom Kippur

Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur. Blot out and disregard them, Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur.

With love, You have bestowed on us, ADONAI our God, this vice, and calling us by Your great and holy name.

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Fourth B’rakhah: The Holiness of Yom Kippur

Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur. Blot out and disregard them, Our God and God of our ancestors, forgive our sins on this Yom Kippur.

With love, You have bestowed on us, ADONAI our God, this vice, and calling us by Your great and holy name.
Fifth Brakha: 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 Brakha: 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.

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 who sanctify Your name, may find rest on this day.

The grammatical form of the nouns קְדוֹשֵׁי נֶאֱמָרָה (solhun) and מִלְבָּד (molhun) indicate an essential personal quality. For example, when one לֹא יִלַּא (lomad), “studies,” until becoming a scholar, one is then called a לֹא יִלַּא (lomad). The use of this form reflects the poet’s belief that God’s forgiving nature is, in fact, God’s essence.

RESTORE WORSHIP TO YOUR SANCTUARY ḤEAYYIM וְאַשְׁמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָנֽוּחוּ בָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקַדְּשֵׁי שְׁמִי ֶֽלֶֽמֶל וּמִילְבָּד אֶלָּא אָֽתָּה. בָּרוּ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמְחִיל שְׁכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

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 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 קְדוֹשֵׁי נֶאֱמָרָה. God is our source of support and stability.

FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT דָרוֹד כִּי דָרוֹד. After Psalm 79:13. In a world where nations, values, and ideals rise and fall, our relationship with God is a constant truth.
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 Br’akhah: 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 the 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.

-HERSHEL J. MATT

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.

Who brings peace.

All services continue here:

May Your name be praised and exalted, blessed forever, O God of our deliverance and help.

May Your name be praised and exalted, blessed forever, O God of our deliverance and help.

Blessed are You, our sovereign, always and forever.
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, dibharnu dofi, he-avinu, v'hishanu, zadnu, hanasnu, tafalinu sheker, yo-atznu ra, kizzavanu, laznu, maradnu, ni-atznu, sararnu, avinnu, pashanu, tazarunu, kishinu oref, rashanu, shihatnu, ti-avnu, ta-inu, tianu.

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 profited us. Surely, You are in the right with respect to all that comes upon us, 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 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.

אשאמננו, כבדנו, בלאדינו, דיברנו דמי, חטאונו, והשחינו, ודינה, חטאונו, שפלונו שקר, ימענו העון, קמענו, לזרענו, מזרعنا, תצרנו, חטאונו, שפלונו, דינה, קשינו עוף, ולשינו, חטאונו, חטאונו, חטאונו, חטאונו, חטאונו.

קרן מנאותיך ומשמשי דברים אלה שועים,カラנה צייך על כל בכא ערלים. כי אתה עשה את עשה האנשים שלנו.ças זמרי לקץ

ישבע מרה, זמה יBarItem לקצק שוקח, הלה אלה יבשהחרים.

והבהלו את זיה.

אחתות צייך על תעלמה צייך כלביה. אתה לווש קפלית קני. הבן, רוחו לקצק כלב, אני כיון עגלה מצפי, אני יऊ מער מער.

 KeyCode זהора מקמך, זה ארלנכי אפנוניות (יאנונו), שחקלה כלע כלפי-אפרסקא, ומקומא על כלפי-אפרסקא.

והכパーレ על כלפי-אפרסקא.

Customarily, we each strike our heart as we recite the words...
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 willingly and unwillingly.

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

We have sinned against You by neglecting the Torah, and we have sinned against You by lack of deeds of kindness.
We have sinned against You through vaporizing, and we have sinned against You through lack of joy.
We have sinned against You through anger, and we have sinned against You through lack of joy.

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

We have sinned against You by violating the Sabbath, and we have sinned against You by profaning the Sabbath.
We have sinned against You through destruction, and we have sinned against You through derision.
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 by speaking ill of others, and we have sinned against You through slander.
We have sinned against You through suspicion, and we have sinned against You through suspicion.
We have sinned against You through suspicion, and we have sinned against You through suspicion.

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

We have sinned against You by the way we conduct ourselves, and we have sinned against You through arrogance.
We have sinned against You by the way we conduct ourselves, and we have sinned against You through arrogance.
We have sinned against You through putting our trust in our own concern, and we have sinned against You through arrogance.

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

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.”

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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.

**MY GOD אֱלֹהַי**. The Babylonian 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 exemplars (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”).

**MAY THE WORDS יִֽהְיוּ לְרָצוֹן**. 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’chulu ha-shamayim v’ha’aretz v’kol ta’evah. Va-yashbato ba-yom ha-sh’vi’i v’kol melakhto asher asah. Va-y’varekh Elohim et yom ha-sh’vi’i v’y’khal Elohim ba-yom ha-sh’vi’i. [Genesis 2:1-3]


God, who promised protection to our ancestors and assures life to the dead, the incomparable holy sovereign, who makes Shabbat holy, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abrah- am, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, Creator of heaven and earth.

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.

_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, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, Creator of heaven and earth.

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 Rachel, God of Leah, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, Creator of heaven and earth.

_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:_

Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, who sanctifies Your name, may He grant us rest on this day. His name will be sanctified by our actions in this world. Blessed are You, God, who sanctifies the Shabbat and the seventh day, who gives rest to the people of Israel on this holy Shabbat. May the people Israel, who sanctify Your name, find rest on this day. YHWH, the shield of our ancestors. The seventh day, and provides sacred rest to a people overflowing with joy, as a symbol of the triumph of God’s sovereignty on this day.

When yom kippur falls on Shabbat:

Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, who sanctifies Your name, who makes Shabbat holy, and gladdens us with Your triumph. Fill our lives with Your goodness and let the Torah be our portion. 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.

_version with Patriarchs:_

Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, who sanctifies Your name, may He grant us rest on this day. His name will be sanctified by our actions in this world. Blessed are You, God, who sanctifies the Shabbat and the seventh day, who gives rest to the people of Israel on this holy Shabbat. May the people Israel, who sanctify Your name, find rest on this day. YHWH, the shield of our ancestors. The seventh day, and provides sacred rest to a people overflowing with joy, as a symbol of the triumph of God’s sovereignty on this day.

When yom kippur falls on Shabbat:

Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, who sanctifies Your name, who makes Shabbat holy, and gladdens us with Your triumph. Fill our lives with Your goodness and let the Torah be our portion. 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.
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 cries rise to You in the evening, our supplications rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our redemption transform the dusk.

May our prayers rise up at evening, our songs transform the dusk.

May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

Let our prayers rise up at evening, our songs transform the dusk.

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 our exclamations come to You in the morning, and may You know the purity of our spirit in the morning, that the joy of forgiveness 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 cries rise to You in the evening, our supplications rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our redemption transform the dusk.

May our prayers rise up at evening, our songs transform the dusk.

May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

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 exclamations come to You in the morning, and may You know the purity of our spirit in the morning, that the joy of forgiveness 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 cries rise to You in the evening, our supplications rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our redemption transform the dusk.

May our prayers rise up at evening, our songs transform the dusk.

May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

Let our exclamations come to You in the morning, and may You know the purity of our spirit in the morning, that the joy of forgiveness 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.

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May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

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Let our exclamations come to You in the morning, and may You know the purity of our spirit in the morning, that the joy of forgiveness 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 cries rise to You in the evening, our supplications rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our redemption transform the dusk.

May our prayers rise up at evening, our songs transform the dusk.

May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.

Let our exclamations come to You in the morning, and may You know the purity of our spirit in the morning, that the joy of forgiveness 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.

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May our supplications rise up at evening, our purity transform the dusk.

May our sufferings rise up at evening, our forgiveness arrive with the dawn.
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.

Come, let us sing to ADONAI; and cry out to the strongholds 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.

The fear of Adonai—that is wisdom; departing from sin—that is true knowledge.

Job 28:14

In God’s hand is every living soul and the breath of all human flesh.

“...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.”

Job 28:14

In that strange night someone asked:

Can you change the past?

And the woman who was departing from sin—that is true knowledge.
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.
"The soul is Yours, the body is Yours." 
Deal with us according to Your nature.
"The soul is Yours, the body is Yours." 
Your name.
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, 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.
According to Your glorious nature, help us.
Grant relief to this driven leaf.
Have compassion on that which is but dust and ashes.
No human being can plead for us; have mercy on us.

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, husal ha-amalakh.
Ha-n'shamah lakh v'ha-guf she-lakh, Adonai, aseih l'ma'an sh'mekha.
Atanu al sh'maka, Adonai, aseih l'ma'an sh'mekha.

We come before You relying on who You are.
According to Your glorious nature, help us.
Grant relief to this driven leaf.
Have compassion on that which is but dust and ashes.
No human being can plead for us; have mercy on us.

Driven leaf
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
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.

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

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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, “he called the name ADONAI.”

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 sins. 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.

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.

Hear our cry, attend to our plea,
Overlook sin, blot out guilt,
You act generously to all who call on You.

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.

Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v’hatta·ah v’nakkeih.

The text in the Torah (Exodus 34:7) continues.

The phrases that follow are from Exodus 34:5, the scene of Moses hearing 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.

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;
For you, ADONAI, are kind and forgiving;

You taught the way of repentance.

Granting Pardon.

The text in the Torah (Exodus 34:7) continues.

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

Forgive our transgressions and our sins; claim us for Your own.
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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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 habbeit v’al teifen la-yetzer.

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

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 יֵֽצֶר. The word יֵֽצֶר (yeitzer) means “impulse,” and the Rabbis used it to refer to the יֵֽצֶר הָרַע (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 הוֹסָטָן (ha-satan). There is no notion of a “fallen” or “rebellious” angel in Jewish mythology.
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, knitted 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.


**Finding Forgiveness**

Rabba the son of Hani-nah 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

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**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, El rah. um v’hannun, erakah appayim v’rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha va-hattaah v’nakkeih.**

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

V’salah lanu avinu ki atanu, medu melchemi ci pesenu, ve’amit ha’olam tov olcha, ve’reb ha’olam.

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

**Va-ya’avor Adonai al panav va-yikra:**

Adonai, Adonai, El rahum v’hamnun, erakah appayim v’rav hesed ve-emet. Notzeir hesed la-alafim, nosei avon va-fesha v’hattaah v’nakkesh.

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

V’salah lanu avinu u-l’hatateinu u-n’hatanu.

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, melu melchemi ci pesenu, ve’amit ha’olam tov olcha, ve’reb ha’olam.**

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**THRONES OF MERCY**

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 TO RECITE 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).

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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.

Mahar 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.

Mahar 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.

Mahar 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.

Mahar 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.

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

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Some congregations repeat each verse after the leader recites it.
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 was it who fashioned me? Spun the clay? Fired the kiln? Hardened me? Breathed life into me? 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
Darashiti kirvat’kha
b’khol libbi k’ra·tikha
u-v’tzeiti li-k’rat’kha
li-k’rati m’tzatikha.

FROM NOTHING, YOU FORMED ME: A PIYYUT

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?

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.
Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned; pardon us, our God. Give us understanding and set our hearts aright.

In the next two verses, the words come from Psalm 103:13 has “May You, our God, look kindly on your people Israel. May Your ear hear, and Your eyes open to the prayers of Your servants, the people Israel.”

As the liturgist has changed the first personal singular “my” to the first personal plural “our,” the same change is made in the next two verses. Psalms 86:6, 1:6.

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

The Thirteen Attributes of God.

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.

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

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

May You, our God, save us! Surely the Sovereign One will respond to us on the day we call out. Blessed is the one who trusts in You, Adonai, our creator; may You, the Holy One, have mercy on all who call on You. Salvation is Adonai’s alone—pour blessings on Your people forever.

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

Psalm 3:9. In your heavenly abode, may You hear their pleas and prayers, and respond to what they ask.

Psalm 14:19–20. Forgive us, our creator, for we have sinned; pardon us, our God. Listen to our prayers, God, hear our pleading, our sorrow-filled voices.

Psalm 5:3. 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.

Psalm 7:17a). Blessed is the one who trusts in You, Adonai, our creator; may You, the Holy One, have mercy on all who call on You. Salvation is Adonai’s alone—pour blessings on Your people forever.

Psalm 103:13. “May You, our God, look kindly on your people Israel. May Your ear hear, and Your eyes open to the prayers of Your servants, the people Israel.” The same change is made in the next two verses. Psalms 86:6, 1:6.

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Some customarily strike their heart when asking God to forgive and pardon:
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. Do not cast us away from You; do not forsake us, do not shame us, do not annul Your covenant with us. Our God and God of our ancestors, do not abandon us, do not shame us, do not annul Your covenant with us.

The ark is closed.

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 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 authors of the prayerbook felt free to emend the Bible’s wording in this way.
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 heritage, and You are your destiny;
we are Your congregation, and You are our portion.
We are Your servants, and You are our master;
we are Your people, and You are our sovereign.
We are insolent; You are gracious and compassionate.
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.

Viddui — Prayers of Confession

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

Ki
Anu ammekha, v’atah eloheinu,
anu vanekha v’atah avinu.
Anu avadekha v’atah adoneinu,
anu k’halkeha v’atah helkeinu.
Anu nahalatekha v’atah goraleinu,
anu tzonkeha v’atah ro-einu.
Anu kharmekha v’atah not’reinu,
anu melakeka v’atah k’roveinu.
Anu ammekha v’atah malkeinu,
anu ma’amirekha v’atah ma-ameireinu.

VATTA — PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

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

In the Babylonian Talmud, Mar Zutra remarked that anyone who wishes to make confession on Yom Kippur should begin by saying: “Anu ammekha, v’atah eloheinu…” (Mi. 5:1).

Viddui — Prayers of Confession

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

Psalm 144:4.

For time without end
You established the earth; / 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 102:25–28).

We, Like Our Ancestors

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 says “we have sinned” has understood the meaning of confession (Yoma 87b).
**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 squard, 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, h’amasnu, tafalnu sheker; ei·rezu, re·bernu, kar·bone, ha·ri·nu,

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**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 they return to ADONAI, who will show them compassion. Let them return to ADONAI, who will show them compassion. Let them return to our God, who will surely forgive them.

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**PENITENTIAL PRAYERS BEFORE THE GREAT CONFESSION**

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

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**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.

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**STRIFE 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).

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**We Use**

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.

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**We Destroy**

In this bilingual alphabetical list, the English word that represents the letter ד means roughly the same as the Hebrew word that represents the letter ש (shin). The sin of בַּל תַּשְׁחִית (bal tashhit), “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.

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**We Have Done Wrong and Transgressed, and so We Have Not Triumphed.** Inspire our hearts to abandon the path of evil, and let them return to ADONAI, who will show them compassion. Let them return to our God, who will surely forgive them.

---

**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 reverence 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.”

---

BLOT OUT AND DISREGARD. 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.

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CIRCUMCISE. 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.

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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.


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; and wise ones as if they lack sense.

What can we tell about ourselves to You who dwell on high? What can we say before You, You who live in the transcendent? All Our Secrets

As we live our lives, rent asunder, each in our own place, so well known, yet so secret, we may find...

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.

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.


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.
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 forgotten 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 unwillingly.

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

V'al kulanam, elo-ah s'libot, 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.
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 time. Therefore hold your temper in check, and enjoy peace in your heart. For all sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us.

We have sinned against You through empty promises, and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred. We have sinned against You through gossip, and we have sinned against You through arrogance. We have sinned against You through selfishness, and we have sinned against You through stubbornness. We have sinned against You through baseless hatred, and we have sinned against You through confusions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or unknown to us. We have sinned against You through superficiality, and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred.

All these sins, forgiving God, forgive us, pardon us.

And forgive us the breach of all commandments and prohibitions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or unknown to us. The sins are all known to us, we have acknowledged, and those secret matters are the concern of Angels, our God, but in all things that are revealed it is for us and our children to apply our repentance.

Repressed secrets are the concern of Angles, our God, but in all things that are revealed it is for us and our children to apply our repentance.

You have promised, since the dawn of creation, that repentance and we have sinned against You through empty promises, and we have sinned against You by betraying trust. We have sinned against You by forgetting God, forgiving us, pardoning us.

You have promised, since the dawn of creation, that repentance and we have sinned against You through empty promises, and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred. We have sinned against You through gossip, and we have sinned against You through arrogance. We have sinned against You through selfishness, and we have sinned against You through stubbornness. We have sinned against You through baseless hatred, and we have sinned against You through confusions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or unknown to us. We have sinned against You through superficiality, and we have sinned against You through baseless hatred.

And forgive us the breach of all commandments and prohibitions, whether involving deeds or not, whether known to us or unknown to us. The sins are all known to us, we have acknowledged, and those secret matters are the concern of Angles, our God, but in all things that are revealed it is for us and our children to apply our repentance.

The Rabbis used the term "tzarut ayin" (literally, "light-headedness"), literally "eyes raised up," to denote attitudes that we hold in relationship to others. The Hebrew term "tzarut ayin" has often been translated as "blind pride." The concept of a"tzarut ayin" is used to describe the kind of person who is unable to exercise sound judgment. If they deny the ability to make reasoned judgment, they are unable to exercise sound judgment. If they deny the ability to make reasoned judgment, they are unable to exercise sound judgment.
Concluding Prayers of Confession

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

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, but turn from the generosity of Your compassion. ADONAI, hear! ADONAI, listen! Do not delay. For Your sake, O my God, of all the reasons why we seek to live our lives in accordance with that which gave them honor.

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:

הוהי אדונא תלשך אל נוע妘א אמשך אל עידן ואשידך אשמך לארץ ולארץ

Not because of our own 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."
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. Rather, if our prayer succeeds, our desires. Rather, if we can experience that the future bend to our nature to overturn its course, or others to suddenly change their mind. Perhaps we do not truly expect an answer to our prayers?

What would constitute an answer to our prayers?

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.”

In the Torah, loyev (Horeb) is another name for Sinai.

Her well, accord- ing 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
mi she’ana

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 לֶבֶנֶת. In the Torah, loyev (Horeb) is another name for Sinai.

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.

An answer would be what we hold.

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
Jochered 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, hu ya’aneinu
the daughters of Zelophehad standing their ground, hu ya’aneinu
and those who are righteous, upright, decent, and compassionate—answer us. hu ya’aneinu

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.

Each of us has a name given by what we wear and given by what we wear.

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

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;

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 Lettofsky.
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 . . .

God of Mercy, who answers the poor, answer us.
God of Mercy, who answers the broken-hearted, answer us.
God of Mercy, who answers the downtrodden, answer us.
God of Mercy, pity us.
God of Mercy, redeem us.
God of Mercy, have compassion upon us, speedily,
now and in time to come.

This is an Aramaic prayer
written in the late first millenium, similar to “May the One who answered,” 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 plead-
ing 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 and transgressed, in word and deed and thought.
Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy on us, Your children, we are Your people.
Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us kindly in accord with Your name.
Avinu Malkeinu, send complete healing to the sick among Your people.
Avinu Malkeinu, remember us favorably.
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, cause our salvation to flourish soon.
Avinu Malkeinu, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.
Avinu Malkeinu, raise up Your people Israel with strength.
Avinu Malkeinu, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.
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.

Avinu Malkeinu, do not turn us away empty-handed.
Avinu Malkeinu, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.
Avinu Malkeinu, raise up Your anointed with strength.
Avinu Malkeinu, write our names in the Book of Life.
Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance.
Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption.
Avinu Malkeinu, remember us favorably.
Avinu Malkeinu, return us to Your presence, with full repentance.
Avinu Malkeinu, do not look toward our sins and transgressions; blot them out.
Avinu Malkeinu, frustrate the plottings of our enemies.
Avinu Malkeinu, make this a good new year for us.
Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us kindly in accord with Your name.

We rise as the ark is opened. Avinu Malkeinu is not recited on Shabbat.

An alternate version appears on the next page.

Avinu Malkeinu

Avinu Malkeinu, do not turn us away empty-handed.
Avinu Malkeinu, accept our prayer, willingly and lovingly.
Avinu Malkeinu, raise up Your anointed with strength.
Avinu Malkeinu, write our names in the Book of Life.
Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Sustenance.
Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us in the Book of Redemption.
Avinu Malkeinu, remember us favorably.
Avinu Malkeinu, return us to Your presence, with full repentance.
Avinu Malkeinu, do not look toward our sins and transgressions; blot them out.
Avinu Malkeinu, frustrate the plottings of our enemies.
Avinu Malkeinu, make this a good new year for us.
Avinu Malkeinu, act toward us kindly in accord with Your name.
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, he has 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, our beloved, who raised us, remember us favorably.
Avinu Malkeinu, inscribe us 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.
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 children.
Our helper, who listens to us, hear our voice, be kind, sympathize with us.
Our support and rescuer, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.
Our protector and savior, cause our salvation to flourish soon.

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

Avinu Malkeinu, have mercy on us, answer us, for our deeds are insufficient; deal with us charitably and lovingly, and redeem us.
Benefactor, who provides for our welfare, do this for Your sake if not for ours.
Guardian, who grants us victory, do this for the sake of those who were children.
Our helper, who listens to us, hear our voice, be kind, sympathize with us.
Our support and rescuer, cause Your people Israel to be exalted.
Our protector and savior, cause our salvation to flourish soon.

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!

Who is blessed, 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.

The ark is closed.

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.
ADONAI is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. As it is written in the Torah: “Know this day and take it to heart, that 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 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.”

And so, ADONAI our God, we await You, that soon we may behold Your strength and might in full majesty. And so we bow, acknowledging the supreme sovereign, the Holy One, who has not made us merely a nation, nor formed us as all earthly families, nor given us an ordinary destiny. 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. The nations should acknowledge the supremacy of the Almighty. All flesh will see the lord’s glory, sweeping away the abominations of the earth, obliterating evil forever.

It is customary to physically bow when we recite the line דְּעַמְּךָ שָׁלוֹם (Deuteronomy 4:39). Moses' speech enunciating the meaning of God's revelation at Sinai.

Establishing in the world the sovereignty of the Almighty, the ruler of all, the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be His Name. From Deuteronomy 4:39, Deuteronomy 10:17, and the Song at the Sea, Exodus 15:18. This prayer was originally composed for, and recited during, the Malkhuyot/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.

ADONAI WILL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER, From the Song at the Sea, Exodus 15:18. In reciting the Sh'ma, we declare that God is one. Through our prayer we hope to make the world at one with God.
The Blessing of Memory

It is hard to sing of one-ness 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, in whose life, now ended, must now become. May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged forever and ever!

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

ויְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

And respond with: Amen.

A Kavanah 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.

Mourners: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

ויְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

And respond with: Amen.

Yom Kippur · Evening Service · Concluding Prayers

A Kavanah 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.

Mourners: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

ויְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

And respond with: Amen.

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.

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

Mourners: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

Mourners and those observing Yahrzeit:

ויְהֵא שְׁמֵהָֽו דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הֻּוּ אָמֵן

And respond with: Amen.

Yom Kippur · Evening Service · Concluding Prayers

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And respond with: Amen.

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And respond with: Amen.
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 God. Through the lives should be constituted by a searching passion manifested in a devotion to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek Adonai all the days of my life and to sit to seek 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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 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.

—Reuven Hammer

Adon Olamasher malakh
Leit na-asah v’heftzo kol
Vaharei ki-klot ha-kol
V’hu hayah v’hu hoveh
V’hu ehad v’ein sheni
B’li reishit b’takhanit
V’hu eli v’hai go-ali
V’hu nisi u-manos li
Byado afkid ruhi
V’im ruhi g’viyyati

Adonai li v’lo ira.

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B’li reishit b’takhanit
V’hu eli v’hai go-ali
V’hu nisi u-manos li
Byado afkid ruhi
V’im ruhi g’viyyati

Adonai li v’lo ira.
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 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—redeeming all who crave to be set free.
May you be sealed for a good year.
L’shanah tovah teihateimu.

Traditional High Holy Day Greeting
May you be sealed for a good year. L’shanah tovah teihateimu.

Yigdal
Elohim hai v’yish’ta’bah
Ehad v’ein yahid k’yihudo
Ein la’dam ha-guf v’eino guf
Kadman ikhol davar ashker nivra
Torat emet natan l’ammo El
Lo yahaliff ha-El v’lo yamir dato
T’zefeh v’yodei a’tareinu
Gomel’ish hesed k’nif’alo
Yiskhalah l’eitz yamin m’sheinehu
Meitim y’hayyeh El b’rov basdo
nimtsa v’ein et el m’zti’uto.
ne lam, v’gam ein sof lahaduto.
lo na arokh elav k’dushato.
rishon v’ein reishit le’eshito.
yoreh g’dalluto u-makhkuto.
anchei e’gullato v’sifarto.
navi u-mabbit et t’munato.
al yad n’vi o ne-eman beito.
T’lamimim l’zalato.
mabbit l’sof davar k’kadmato.
notsein l’rasha ra k’rish-ato.
lifdot m’bakkei keitz y’shu’ato.
barukh adei ad shem t’hillato.

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