Siddur
Lev Shalem
FOR SHABBAT & FESTIVALS

Shaḥarit l’Shabbat
v’Yom Tov
Blessings for a New Day

We rise.
Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani yisrael.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani b’zalmo.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani ben/bat horin.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, pokei-ah ivrim.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, malbish arumim.

Imitating God

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

—from the Babylonian Talmud

Blessings for a New Day

We rise.
Barukh atah Adonai, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani yisrael.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani b’zalmo.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani ben/bat horin.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, pokei-ah ivrim.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, malbish arumim.

Imitating God

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

—from the Babylonian Talmud

Blessings for a New Day

We rise.
Barukh atah Adonai, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani yisrael.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani b’zalmo.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani ben/bat horin.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, pokei-ah ivrim.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, malbish arumim.

Imitating God

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

—from the Babylonian Talmud

Blessings for a New Day

We rise.
Barukh atah Adonai, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani yisrael.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani b’zalmo.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, she-asani ben/bat horin.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, pokei-ah ivrim.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, malbish arumim.
Some congregations recite Mourner’s Kaddish here; see page xx.

ON PESAH: PSALM 136

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

Give thanks to ADONAI, for God is good;
give thanks to God, Almighty;
give thanks to the supreme sovereign:
for God’s love endures forever
who alone works great wonders,
creating the heavens with wisdom,
stretching the earth over its waters;
for God’s love endures forever
who formed the great lights:
the sun to rule by day,
the moon and stars by night;
for God’s love endures forever
who smote the Egyptian firstborn,
and brought Israel from their midst
with a strong hand and outstretched arm
for God’s love endures forever
who led the people in the wilderness,
slaying mighty kings:
Siḥon, King of the Amorites,
and Og, King of Bashan;
for God’s love endures forever
giving their land to Israel as an inheritance,
giving their land to Israel as an inheritance,
for God’s love endures forever
who remembered us when we were laid low,
and rescued us from our foes;
for God’s love endures forever
who provides bread for all flesh;
for God’s love endures forever
Give thanks to God in heaven:
for God’s love endures forever.

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

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

PSALM 136, focusing on the exodus and the march through the desert, is especially appropriate for Pesah. Indeed, the ancient rabbis referred to this psalm (and the immediately preceding Psalm 135) as “the great Hallel” and associated it with this festival. The refrain ki l’olam hasdo occurs twenty-six times, which is the numerical equivalent of God’s name, אֲלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (adonai). AMORITES, BASHAN

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

Some congregations recite Mourner’s Kaddish here; see page xx.
For the Leader, a Song of David

The heavens tell of God’s glory, and the sky proclaims God’s handiwork.
One day addresses another, and one night informs the next.
There is no speech, there are no words that are not heard:
reverberations of them travel over the entire earth,
their message reaches the very edges of the world.
In heaven’s midst, there is a tent for the sun
who, like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,
emerges joyously, a champion running the course:
entering at heaven’s edge, circling to the far side,
nothing escaping its heat.

The teaching of ADONAI is perfect, reviving life;
the covenant of ADONAI is enduring,
making the foolish wise;
the precepts of ADONAI are fitting, gladdening the heart;
the judgments of ADONAI are true, altogether just—
Torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
mitzvat Adonai barah, me’irat einayim,
mikudei Adonai y’sharim, m’samh|.|ei lev,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,
torat Adonai t’mimah, m’shivat nafesh,
yirat Adonai t’horah, omedet la·ad,
mishp’tei Adonai emet, tzadku yah|.|dav,

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

The Teaching of Adonai

The word torah literally means “teaching.” In later Judaism the word refers to the Five Books of Moses, but in biblical parlance it simply means “instruction” and is frequently used for divine instruction. The first two verses in the series speak in general terms of God’s teaching and covenant; the next two, of the specific precepts and laws; and finally, the last two speak of ritual observance and the administration of justice.

The Covenant of Adonai

The first Hebrew word used in the Bible to identify the tablets, lubot ha-ëidut, on which the Ten Commandments were written.

More Precious Than Gold

The poet has used six phrases to describe God’s teaching; this seventh phrase is climactic, describing the fullness and wonder of the totality.

Willful Sins

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

The Effect of Prayer

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

—REUVEN HAMMER

A MEDITATION FOR BAR’KHU

Almighty nothing exists without You and none can be like You the source of all maker and creator You have no image eyes observe but the soul lodged in the heart recognizes You and sees Your glory’s breath encomposing all for in You all finds its place but You occupy no place my soul seeing but unseen come thank the seeing but unseen and bless

Bar’khu: The Call to Worship Together

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

Leader:
Praise Adonai, to whom all praise is directed.

Congregation, then the leader repeats:
Praise Adonai, to whom all praise is directed forever and ever.

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

We are seated.

The Congregation

Tabernacle and Temple gave visible assurance of God’s care and accessibility. But once that locus of divine indwelling was destroyed, what could possibly replace it? The destruction of God’s house should have augured the demise of Judaism. The well-known answer, of course, is that the rabbis, who replaced the priests at the helm of the nation, came up with the institution of the synagogue. But what, exactly, constituted a synagogue?

The Talmud echoes the new salience of a communal rituals could not be enacted. To conduct a worship service, to recite certain prayers, to chant from the book, but a number. Whereas, prior to the Temple’s end, holiness was ascribed to a sacred place that could not fail to come to the synagogue. “I couldn’t,” he responded. “So you should have gathered ten men on your own to pray,” chided Rabbi Yitzḥak. “It was too troublesome.” “Well, at least,” needled Rabbi Yitzḥak, “you should have had a synagogue official come to inform you when exactly the congregation would be praying [so that you might join them from afar].” At which point, Rav Nahman protested, “What’s this all about?” “We have a tradition,” asserted Rabbi Yitzḥak, “that goes back to Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai that this is the intent of the verse, ‘As for me, may my prayer come to You, O Lord, at a favorable moment’ (Psalm 69:14). And what indeed constitutes that ‘favorable moment’? It is when the congregation is absorbed in prayer” (Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 7b–8a).

—ISMAR SCHORSCH
Personal Prayers Before the Open Ark

A PRAYER FOR THE DAY OF REST
I long to change the world, but I rarely appreciate things as they are.
I know how to give, but I don’t always know how to be still.
I talk, but I don’t often listen. I look, but I don’t often see.
I yearn to succeed, but I often forget what is truly important.
Teach me, God, to slow down. May my resting revive me.
May it lead me to wisdom, to holiness, to peace, and to You.

Naomi Levy

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

Nathan Sternharz

T’FILAT HA-DEREKH—
A PRAYER FOR THE JOURNEY: TRANSITIONS IN LIFE
Our lives are always changing, and change brings with it fear of the unknown. The journey into the unknown is fraught with danger, yet rich with possibility. It has always been so—as Abraham and Sarah went forth, as Rebecca and then Jacob went forth.
Our ancestors across time have looked to You for protection, from the wild beasts of the road, from the vagaries of weather. So too I, in this place, in this time, look to You.

Help me to remember my strength and courage, help me to see clearly, to listen deeply, to act wisely. Help me to be my best self in this new place and time. Every journey leads into the unknown. May the unknown ahead of me offer blessing.

Naomi Levy

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

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