

מתזור קורן לראש השנה • נוסח אשכנז

The Koren Rosh HaShana Maḥzor • Nusah Ashkenaz



קורן ירושלים



THE ROHR FAMILY EDITION

מחזור קורן לראש השנה
THE KOREN ROSH HASHANA MAḤZOR



WITH INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks שליט"א

FOREWORD BY

Rabbi Mark Dratch שליט"א



KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

The Koren Rosh HaShana Maḥzor, Nusah Ashkenaz
The Rohr Family Edition
Third North American Hebrew/English Edition, 2016

Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.
POB 4044, Jerusalem 91040, ISRAEL
POB 8531, New Milford, CT 06776, USA

www.korenpub.com

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Koren Siddur Font and text design © 1981, 2016 Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.
English translation and commentary © 2006, 2010 Jonathan Sacks

The creation of this Maḥzor was made possible through the generous support
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Standard Size, Hardcover, ISBN 978 965 301 342 1
Compact Size, Hardcover, ISBN 978 965 301 344 5

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דָּוָר לְדָוָר יִשְׁבַּח מִעֲשֵׂיךָ...

*The Rohr Family Edition
of
The Koren Rosh HaShana Mahzor
pays tribute to the memory of*

Mr. Sami Rohr ז"ל
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל

who served his Maker with joy
and whose far-reaching vision, warm open hand, love of Torah,
and love for every Jew were catalysts for the revival and growth of
vibrant Jewish life in the former Soviet Union
and in countless communities the world over

and to the memory of his beloved wife

Mrs. Charlotte Rohr (née Kastner) ע"ה
שרה בת ר' יקותיאל יהודה ע"ה

who survived the fires of the Shoah to become
the elegant and gracious matriarch,
first in Colombia and later in the United States,
of three generations of a family
nurtured by her love and unstinting devotion.
She found grace in the eyes of all those whose lives she touched.

Together they merited to see all their children
build lives enriched by faithful commitment
to the spreading of Torah and *Ahavat Yisrael*.

Dedicated with love by
The Rohr Family
NEW YORK, USA

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| מבוא | ix | Preface |
| פתיחה | xi | Foreword |
| הקדמה | xv | Introduction |
| ערב ראש השנה | | ROSH HASHANA EVE |
| התרת נדרים | 3 | Annulment of Vows |
| פרוזבול | 7 | Prozbul |
| עירובין | 9 | Eiruvין |
| הדלקת נרות | 11 | Candle Lighting |
| מנחה לערב ראש השנה | 13 | Minḥa for Erev Rosh HaShana |
| אחות קטנה | 45 | Aḥot Ketana |
| קבלת שבת | 49 | Kabbalat Shabbat |
| ליל ראש השנה | | ROSH HASHANA EVENING |
| מעריב לראש השנה | 53 | Ma'ariv |
| קידוש לליל ראש השנה | 105 | Kiddush |
| סימנים | 109 | Simanim |
| ברכת המזון | 113 | Birkat HaMazon / Grace after Meals |
| מסכת ראש השנה | 127 | Massekhet Rosh HaShana |
| שחרית | | SHAḤARIT |
| השכמת הבוקר | 197 | On Waking |
| ברכות התורה | 201 | Blessings over the Torah |
| עטיפת טלית | 205 | Tallit |
| הכנה לתפילה | 207 | Preparation for Prayer |
| שיר היחוד | 209 | Shir HaYiḥud |
| אנעים זמירות | 249 | Anim Zemirot |
| ברכות השחר | 267 | Morning Blessings |
| פסוקי דזמרה | 301 | Pesukei DeZimra |
| נשמת | 343 | Nishmat |
| המלך | 347 | HaMelekh |
| ברכו | 353 | Barekhu |
| קריאת שמע | 371 | The Shema |
| עמידה | 381 | The Amida |

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| סדר ליום א' | 397 | FIRST DAY |
| חזרת הש"ץ לשחרית | 399 | Leader's Repetition for Shaḥarit |
| קדושה | 437 | Kedusha |
| אבינו מלכנו | 449 | Avinu Malkenu |
| סדר קריאת התורה | 457 | Reading of the Torah |
| סדר תקיעת שופר | 493 | The Blowing of the Shofar |
| הנני העני ממעש | 511 | Leader's Prayer |
| מוסף ליום א' | 515 | Musaf for First Day |
| חזרת הש"ץ למוסף | 551 | Leader's Repetition for Musaf |
| ונתנה תוקף / קדושה | 565 | Untaneh Tokef / Kedusha |
| קידושא רבה וברכה מעין שלוש | 655 | Kiddush & Al HaMiḥya |
| סדר ליום ב' | 659 | SECOND DAY |
| חזרת הש"ץ לשחרית | 661 | Leader's Repetition for Shaḥarit |
| קדושה | 707 | Kedusha |
| אבינו מלכנו | 719 | Avinu Malkenu |
| סדר קריאת התורה | 727 | Reading of the Torah |
| סדר תקיעת שופר ליום ב' | 757 | The Blowing of the Shofar |
| הנני העני ממעש | 767 | Leader's Prayer |
| מוסף ליום ב' | 771 | Musaf for Second Day |
| חזרת הש"ץ למוסף | 805 | Leader's Repetition for Musaf |
| ונתנה תוקף / קדושה | 809 | Untaneh Tokef / Kedusha |
| קידושא רבה וברכה מעין שלוש | 889 | Kiddush & Al HaMiḥya |
| מנחה | 893 | MINḤA |
| תשליך | 937 | Tashlikh |
| מעריב למוצאי ראש השנה | 949 | MA'ARIV FOR MOTZA'EI ROSH HASHANA |
| סדר ברית מילה | 987 | Brit Mila |
| פיוטים נוספים ליום א' | 995 | Additional Piyutim for First Day |
| פיוטים נוספים ליום ב' | 1029 | Additional Piyutim for Second Day |
| הלכות תפילה | 1067 | Halakha Guide |
| קדיש דרבנן באותיות לועזיות | 1086 | Rabbis' Kaddish Transliterated |
| קדיש יתום באותיות לועזיות | 1087 | Mourner's Kaddish Transliterated |

PREFACE

Let us voice the power of this day's sanctity – it is awesome, terrible.

On Rosh HaShana, we stand before God in judgment. We fear His *Din*, and crave His *Raḥamim*. We are both humbled and strengthened by the belief that our very future depends on our *tefilla*.

It is with this sense of humility, hope and the awesomeness of the task, that we offer *The Koren Rosh HaShana Maḥzor*. We have created this Maḥzor to mitigate the trepidation with which one enters the High Holy Days, and to highlight the transformative potential they hold. We hope that the Maḥzor helps those seeking to understand their place in the world, and their place before God, and serves as a steady guide through the encounter with God's majesty on Rosh HaShana.

A project of this scope would have been virtually impossible without the partnership of the Rohr family, who have dedicated this Maḥzor in memory of their dear parents, Charlotte and Sami Rohr. The Rohr family's passion for *Avodat HaShem* and books come together in their support for the creation of this Maḥzor. On behalf of the scholars, editors and designers of this volume, we thank you; on behalf of the users and readers of this Maḥzor, we are forever in your debt.

We could not have embarked on this project without the moral leadership and intellectual spark of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. Rabbi Sacks provides an invaluable guide to the liturgy through his remarkable translation, introduction and commentary. His work not only clarifies the text and explains the teachings of our sages, but uniquely and seamlessly weaves profound concepts of Judaism into the reality of contemporary life. It was our distinct privilege to work with Rabbi Sacks to create a Maḥzor that we believe appropriately mirrors the complexity and richness of life itself.

We only hope that Rabbi Sacks's contribution is matched by the scholarship, design and typography that have been hallmarks of Koren Publishers Jerusalem for more than fifty years. Raphaël Freeman led Koren's small but highly professional team of scholars, editors and artists. Rabbi David Fuchs supervised the textual aspects of the work. Rachel Meghnagi edited the English texts. Efrat Gross edited the Hebrew texts, and these were ably proofread by Barukh Brener and Naor Kahalani. Jessica Sacks translated *Keriat HaTorah*, *Mishnayot Rosh HaShana*, and

some of the festival prayers. Rabbi David Fuchs elucidated the *Mishnayot* commentary. Rabbi Eli Clark contributed the informative and useful Halakha Guide, and we are grateful to Binyamin Shalom and Adina Luber for their translation of the *piyutim*.

This new edition of the Koren Maḥzor continues the Koren tradition of making the language of prayer more accessible, thus enhancing the prayer experience.

One of the unique features of the Maḥzor is the use of typesetting to break up a prayer phrase-by-phrase – rather than using a block paragraph format – so that the reader will naturally pause at the correct places. No commas appear in the Hebrew text at the end of lines, but in the English translation, where linguistic clarity requires, we have retained the use of commas at the end of lines. Unlike other Hebrew/English maḥzorim, the Hebrew text is on the left-hand page and the English on the right. This arrangement preserves the distinctive “fanning out” effect of the Koren text and the beauty of the Koren layout.

We hope and pray that this Maḥzor, like all our publications, extends the vision of Koren’s founder, Eliyahu Koren, to a new generation to further *Avodat HaShem* for Jews everywhere.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
 Jerusalem 5771 (2011)

FOREWORD

Rosh HaShana is a *yom tefilla*, a day of prayer, not only because of the length of the service or the thickness of the prayer book, but because prayer defines the essence of the day.

Consider:

- The mandate for the form of the blessings that comprise the heart of *Musaf* – *malkhuyot*, *zikhronot* and *shofarot* – is considered by many authorities, atypically, to be biblical in origin (*Rosh HaShana* 32a in expounding Lev. 23:24).
- The conclusion of *Untaneh Tokef*, the *piyut* in which we contemplate the Books of Life and Death that are opened and in which our fates are inscribed, and in which we reflect on our own fragility and ponder our own futures, is the assertion that prayer is one of three elements that can avert an evil decree.
- Our prayers, uncommonly, include supplications for the ability to pray: the “הַנְּנִי” and “אוֹחִילָהּ לְאֵל” of the *hazan*, and the petition “הַיְיָ הַיְיָ עִם פִּיפִיּוֹת שְׁלוּחֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל” for God to grant power of expression to those who represent the congregation in prayer.
- Rosh HaShana itself commemorates the sixth day of creation, the day on which the human being – the *nefesh hayya* (Gen. 2:7) – was created. The nature of this living soul was famously described by Onkelos as a *ruah memalala*, a speaking being. While much time is wasted by us humans on mundane, and even prohibited, speech, the ultimate expression of this divine gift is the articulation and expression of *divrei kedusha*, words of Torah and words of prayer. There is no better way to honor the divine gift of speech granted on the first Rosh HaShana than by using it divinely.

The prayers contained within the pages of this *Maḥzor* are sanctified by those who authored their words – the Bible, our sages, and generations of *paytanim*; they are purified in the *mikveh* of the tears spilled on its pages, the tears of Jews who throughout millennia prayed to God out of distress and desolation, out of frustration and fear, and in thanksgiving and hope; and they, their words and their melodies, are uniquely cherished in the hearts and memories of those who recite them.

Prayer, real prayer, prayer that is a true service of the heart and that is a sincere song of the soul, can be difficult to achieve nowadays, for many reasons. Yet, on Rosh HaShana, many of us who are otherwise spiritually alienated or religiously nonchalant feel an intense craving to pray, an almost physical ache to connect with God by reaching beyond the chasm hewed by our own doubts and distractions – a breach that has disconnected us from the holy – in order to connect with Him and commune with Him in intimate conversation.

We proclaim on Rosh HaShana, “**וְכֹל מֵאֱמִינִים**, And all believe” – each of us, each and every one without exception, believes in God, believes in a God who is just and faithful and compassionate and forgiving. We pronounce that everyone believes in the God who answers whispered prayers and opens the door for those who repent. And yet, the modern world is filled with those who do not believe so unequivocally and unambiguously in this God: atheists and agnostics, God-seekers and those whose life experiences seem to prove otherwise. How can we include in our prayers something which seems palpably untrue? Perhaps it is this proclamation which gives us the license to pray as fervently as we do on these two days each year. On Rosh HaShana we enter the synagogue, we take hold of the maḥzor, and we create for ourselves a temporary sanctuary from the world of skepticism and doubt in which we are otherwise too often mired, and assert unconditionally that we are believers and pray-ers. And maybe, just maybe, God begins to be an ever more increasing reality in our lives, and our hearts begin to open and our souls begin to sing. And maybe, just maybe, we do become the believers and pray-ers that we strive to be.

The rabbis of the Rabbinical Council of America are grateful to join with Koren Publishers and Matthew Miller in bringing to the community of pray-ers and God-seekers this magnificent Maḥzor, whose words are sanctified, purified, and cherished, and pray that not only will God answer the prayers that rise from these pages on Rosh HaShana, but also that those prayers transform us into a community of sincere and passionate pray-ers the year round.

Rabbi Mark Dratch
Executive Vice President, RCA

INTRODUCTION

The Story of Rosh HaShana

by

CHIEF RABBI LORD
JONATHAN SACKS

INTRODUCTION

The ten days that begin on Rosh HaShana and culminate in Yom Kippur are the holy of holies of Jewish time. The atmosphere in the synagogue is intense. You can almost touch the Divine Presence. Isaiah said: “Seek God where He is to be found, call on Him when He is close” (Is. 55:6). The rabbis wrestled with this verse. What could it mean? God is the God of everywhere and all time. He is always to be found, always close. The verse seemed to make no sense at all.

This was their reply: “These are the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur” – meaning, God is always close to us, but we are not always close to Him. He is always to be found, but we do not always seek Him out. To sense the closeness of God needs some special effort on our part. To reach out to the Infinite in finite space, to meet the Eternal in the midst of time, to sense what ultimately lies beyond the senses, requires a focus far beyond the ordinary.

It needs a drama of holiness, enacted in our holiest place, the synagogue, at the holiest of times, *Yamim Nora'im*, the Days of Awe. To begin it needs a sound – the shofar – so piercing and strange that it wakes us out of our everyday consciousness into an awareness of being present at something vast and momentous. We need to come close to God for God to feel close to us. That is what happens on the Ten Days of Repentance, and it begins on Rosh HaShana.

It is as if the world has become a courtroom. God Himself is the Judge. The shofar announces that the court is in session, and we are on trial, giving an account of our lives. Properly entered into, this is a potentially life-changing experience. It forces us to ask the most fateful questions we will ever ask: Who am I? Why am I here? How shall I live? How have I lived until now? How have I used God’s greatest gift: time? Who have I wronged, and how can I put it right? Where have I failed, and how shall I overcome my failures? What is broken in my life and needs mending? What chapter will I write in the book of life? The unexamined life, a philosopher said, is not worth living. No one who has genuinely experienced Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur lives an unexamined life.

These are days of reflection and introspection when we stand in the conscious presence of Infinity, knowing how short and vulnerable life

really is, and how little time we have here on earth. This can be, and should be, a life-changing experience. Unfortunately, it not always is. The prayers are long. Some of them, especially the *piyutim*, the liturgical poems with their elaborate acrostics and obscure wordplays, are hard to understand. Others use imagery that can seem remote. The central image of Rosh HaShana is of God as King enthroned in the seat of judgment. That image would once have been self-evident, but there are fewer kings today than there once were, and even in the monarchies that remain, the role of royalty is often more symbolic than judicial. The prayers we say on Rosh HaShana span more than thirty centuries, and some need decoding if they are to speak to us today.

Yet Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur have retained an undiminished hold on the Jewish imagination. They remain days on which even Jews estranged from Judaism for much of the year come to synagogue, and the world's longest courtroom drama continues: the extended argument between God and His people about the fate of justice and the justice of fate that has been running since the day when Abraham first called God "Judge of all the earth," and that led Albert Einstein to speak about that "almost fanatical love of justice" that made him thank his stars that he was born a Jew.

No people has believed as lucidly and long as have Jews, that life has a purpose; that this world is an arena of justice and human dignity; that we are, each of us, free and responsible, capable of shaping our lives in accordance with our highest ideals. We are here for a reason. We were created in love and forgiveness by the God of love and forgiveness who asks us to love and forgive. However many times we may have failed to live up to our aspirations, God always gives us the chance and the power to begin again. On Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the holiest days of a holy people, God summons us to greatness.

I want in this introduction, to tell the story of Rosh HaShana and what it might mean for us.

The Mystery

No sooner do we open the Torah, seeking to understand the significance of the day, than we are plunged into mystery. Only twice does the Torah

touch on the subject, and in neither case does it provide much information:

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts [*zikhron terua*]. (Lev. 23:23–24)

On the first day of the seventh month you shall hold a sacred assembly. You shall do no laborious work, and you shall mark a Day of the Blowing of the Shofar [*yom terua*]. (Num. 29:1)

Other than details of the sacrifices to be offered, that is all. There is no explanation of what the day represents, or what the sound – *terua* – signifies. Nor does the Torah specify what instrument is to be used. It might be a horn. But equally it might refer to the silver trumpets the Israelites were commanded to make to summon the people (Num. 10:1–10). The central motifs of the other festivals, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs of Pesah, the booth of Sukkot, the affliction (fasting) of Yom Kippur, all have symbolic value. We know what they mean and how they connect with the mood of the day. But the Torah does not tell us what the sound of *terua* symbolizes. Is it the sound of celebration, of warning, of fear or tears? We do not know (Rabbeinu Bahye, *Kad HaKemah, Rosh HaShana* [2]).

Nor does the Torah use the phrase *Rosh HaShana*, the beginning or “head” of the year, in this context or any other. The only time it appears in Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible as a whole, it refers to Yom Kippur: “In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year [*berosh hashana*], on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city” (Ezek. 40:1). In fact the Torah seems to make it clear that Rosh HaShana is *not* the beginning of the year. It is the first day, not of the first, but the seventh month. The first month is Nisan.

How then do we arrive at the festival as we know it today?

In the earliest stages of an embryo, when a fetus is still no more than a small bundle of cells, already it contains the genome, the long string of DNA, from which the child and eventually the adult will emerge. The genetic structure that will shape the person it becomes is there from the beginning. So it is with Judaism. “Bible, Mishna, Talmud and Aggada,

even what a senior disciple is destined to teach in the presence of his master, was already stated to Moses at Sinai” (Talmud Yerushalmi, *Pe’ah* 2:4). The evolution of Rosh HaShana was already prefigured at the outset, but to see how it developed we have to decipher the clues.

Creation’s Anniversary

The first thing we notice is that it is “the first day of the seventh month.” The number seven, especially when applied to time, always signifies *holiness*. The first thing declared holy in the Torah is the seventh day, Shabbat (Gen. 2:1–3). The seventh or “sabbatical” year is likewise holy. There is to be no work in the fields. The land is to enjoy rest. Debts are released. A similar provision applies to the fiftieth or Jubilee year (at the end of seven seven-year cycles) when, in addition, most ancestral land returned to its original owners. The seventh month fits this pattern. It is to the year what Shabbat is to the week, the sabbatical to a cycle of years, and the Jubilee to an era. It is holy time.

What is specific about the holiness of the seventh in a sequence of time is that it is marked by a cessation of work. It marks a period during which we cease creating and remember that we are creations. We stop making and remember that we are made. We, the universe and time itself are the work of a hand greater than merely human, greater in fact than anything we can conceive. On the seventh, be it day, month or year, we focus our attention on God the Creator of all. Rosh HaShana is a festival of Creation.

No sooner have we said this than we see that in Judaism there is a dual structure of time, just as there is a unique duality in Judaism as a whole. On the one hand God is the *Creator*, who made heaven and earth and all that lives. But God is also the *Redeemer* who rescued His people from slavery in Egypt and led them through the wilderness to the Promised Land. He is the *Revealer* who appeared to the people at Mount Sinai, made a covenant with them, gave them laws, and from time to time sent them, through the prophets, His word.

God’s creation is universal. God’s redemption and revelation are particular to the people of Israel who, by their history and way of life, testify to His existence and involvement with the world. The two cycles of time in Judaism represent this duality. One cycle – Pesah, Shavuot and

Sukkot – is about redemption and revelation, about the way God acts in history through the shaping events of the Jewish people. The other – the seventh day, seventh month and seventh year – is about creation, God in relation to the cosmos as a whole.

This is the first insight into the meaning of the day. Rosh HaShana is a celebration of the universe as God's work. The sages called it the anniversary of creation. This is the theme of the middle section of the Musaf Amida, *Zikhronot*, "Remembrances." "You remember all of creation, and all things that were formed ... for this day is the opening of all Your works, a remembrance of the very first day" (page 532). It is echoed in the prayer *Hayom Harat Olam*, "This day is the birth of the world" (page 616).

Because it is about creation and humanity, the prayers of Rosh HaShana have a universalism not shared by Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot. The central section of the Amida on those days begins with the words, "You have chosen us from among all peoples," a declaration of Jewish chosenness. By contrast, in the Amida on Rosh HaShana we say, "And so place the fear of You ... over all that You have made" (page 70) an expression of complete universality. Pesah, Shavuot and Sukkot are about what it is to be a Jew. Rosh HaShana is about what it is to be human.

The Kingship of God

The next hint is given in the biblical names for the festival, *Yom Terua* and *Zikhron Terua*, "the day of *terua*" and "a commemoration or remembrance of *terua*." What is *terua*? In all other biblical contexts, it refers to a sound, usually produced by a wind instrument, though sometimes it may mean a shout or cry on the part of a crowd.

What instrument is the Torah referring to? The silver trumpets used by the Israelites in the wilderness were used to sound both a *tekia* and a *terua*, a *tekia* to summon the people and a *terua* to signal that it was time to begin a further journey (Num. 10:1–7). So the *terua* of Rosh HaShana might refer to a trumpet. The sages ruled out this possibility for a simple reason.

Rosh HaShana turns out not to be the only time that a *terua* was sounded in the seventh month. It was also sounded on the tenth of the month, Yom Kippur, in the Jubilee year, when slaves went free and ancestral land returned to its original owners. The Jubilee was the occasion

of the famous words, taken directly from the biblical text, written on the Liberty Bell of America, “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof” (Lev. 25:10). The previous verse (25:9) states specifically that one should sound the *terua* with a shofar:

Then you shall sound the horn loud [*shofar terua*]; in the seventh month on the tenth day of the month, on the Day of Atonement, you shall have the horn sounded throughout the land.

Indeed the Hebrew word for Jubilee, *yovel*, also means a ram’s horn (Ex. 19:13). It became a simple inference to conclude that this applied to the *terua* of the first day of the seventh month as well.

What was special about the shofar? In several places in Tanakh it is the sound of battle (see for example, Joshua 6; 1 Samuel 4; Jeremiah 4:19, 49:2). It could also be the sound of celebration. When King David brought the Ark into Jerusalem, he danced and the people rejoiced with “*terua* and the sound of the shofar” (11 Samuel 6:15). But in a number of places, especially the historical books, the shofar was sounded at the coronation of a king. So we find at the proclamation of Solomon as king:

Tzaddok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the shofar and all the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” (1 Kings 1:39)

Likewise when Jehu was appointed king:

They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the shofar and shouted, “Jehu is King!” (11 Kings 9:13)

When Absalom sought to have himself proclaimed king in the lifetime of his father, David, we read:

Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “As soon as you hear the sound of the shofar, then say, ‘Absalom is King in Hebron!’” (11 Samuel 15:10)

The book of Psalms associates the shofar not with a human king but with the declaration of God as King. A key text is Psalm 47, said in many congregations before the shofar blowing on Rosh HaShana:

God has been raised up in sound;
raised, the LORD, in the voice of the shofar [...]
For God is King over all the earth... (Ps. 47:6, 8)

Psalm 98 makes a clear connection between God's kingship and his judgment:

With trumpets and the sound of the shofar,
shout for joy before the LORD, the King. [...]
For He is coming to judge the earth.
He judges the world with righteousness
and all nations with equity. (Psalm 98:6, 9)

We have now arrived at the second great dimension of Rosh HaShana. It is the day on which we celebrate the kingship of God. This has left its mark throughout the Rosh HaShana prayers. The key word is *Melekh*, "King." The Leader begins in the morning service with a dramatic rendition of *HaMelekh* (page 347). The third blessing of the Amida, that normally ends with the words "the holy God," on Rosh HaShana and throughout the Ten Days of Repentance, becomes "the holy King." In particular, Musaf on Rosh HaShana begins with an entire section dedicated to *malkhiyot*, verses relating to divine kingship. Rosh HaShana is the day we celebrate God not just as Creator of the world, but its Ruler also.

The Coronation

The concept of divine kingship sounds simple, even routine, but it is not. It made ancient Israel unique. Eventually it had an impact on the development of freedom in the West. It was a Jewish scholar, Philo, who lived in Alexandria in the first century, who realized how radical it was. Philo was writing about Judaism for a Greek-speaking audience, and when it came to the political structure of Jewry he found that the Greek language had no word for it. The Greeks had words for most things. They were the world's first systematic thinkers, and in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics* they surveyed every known type of political structure – tyranny, monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy and democracy. But there was no word for the Jewish system, and Philo was forced to invent one to explain it.

The word he chose was *theocracy* – rule by God alone. This was the

thought expressed by Gideon, the man who led the Israelites to success in their battle against the Midianites. When the people sought to make him king, he replied: “I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you” (Judges 8:23).

Eventually the Israelites did appoint a king, and in the course of time they developed other systems of governance: judges, elders, patriarchs, exilarchs, city councils and, in the modern state of Israel, democracy. But the ultimate Ruler of the Jewish people was God alone. This meant that no human ruler had absolute authority. Prophets could criticize kings. People could disobey an immoral order. The sovereignty of God meant that there are moral limits to the use of power. Right is sovereign over might. These were, and remain, revolutionary ideas.

They were also responsible for the single most astonishing phenomenon of Jewish history, the fact that Jews retained their identity as a nation for two thousand years in exile, scattered across the world. Wherever they were, God remained their King. They remained His people. Rarely was this better expressed than in the great prayer, *Aleinu* (page 91), originally written for Rosh HaShana as a preface to the verses about God’s kingship:

He is our God; there is no other.
Truly He is our King; there is none else.

There is an integral connection between kingship and creation, and it can be stated simply. God made the universe. Therefore God owns the universe. Therefore God is its ultimate Sovereign since He can specify the terms and conditions under which we exist within the universe. This applies to all humanity.

Hence the second paragraph of *Aleinu*, with its vision and hope of a time “when all humanity will call on Your name,” and “all the world’s inhabitants will realize and know that to You every knee must bow.” The God of revelation and redemption is the God of Israel. The God of creation is the God of all humankind. But they are the same God. Hence the vision of Zechariah with which *Aleinu* ends, when “the LORD shall be King over all the earth; on that day the LORD shall be One and His name One” (Zech. 14:9).

Underlying this is perhaps the most remarkable idea of all. “There is no King without a people” (*Kad HaKemah, Rosh HaShana* [2]). The fact

that the people of Israel accepted God as their King, and His covenant as their constitution, means that they bear witness to Him by their very existence and way of life. That is what the psalm means when it says “You are the Holy One, enthroned on the praises of Israel” (Ps. 22:4). The praises of Israel are the visible symbol of God’s majesty. That confers extraordinary dignity on us.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, doyen of Jewish thinkers in the twentieth century, used to explain this by telling the story of his first Hebrew teacher, a Chabad Hasid who made an indelible impression on him as a child by telling him that Rosh HaShana was God’s coronation. “And who puts the crown on His head? We do.” He spoke about his memories of praying as a child among the Hasidim on the first night of Rosh HaShana:

I can feel the unique atmosphere which enveloped these Hasidim as they recited the prayers by which they proclaimed Him their King. The older Hasidim termed this night the “Coronation Night” as they crowned Him as their King. These poor and downtrodden Jews, who suffered so much during their daily existence, were able to experience the enthroning of the Almighty and the true meaning of the Kingship prayers of the Rosh HaShana liturgy.*

The shofar on Rosh HaShana is our way of participating in God’s coronation.

Exile and Return

The anniversary of creation; a kingship renewal ceremony – there Rosh HaShana might have remained had it not been for one overwhelming historical fact: the Babylonian exile. It is one thing to celebrate the harmony of the created universe when you are at home with the universe, another when you are reminded daily that you are not at home, when you are strangers in a strange land. It is one thing to celebrate divine sovereignty when you enjoy national sovereignty, another when you have lost it and are subject to another power. The destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian exile were a trauma for the Jewish people, physically and spiritually, and we have an indelible record of how the people felt: “By

* Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Rav*, Vol. 2 (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House), p. 171.

the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion... How can we sing the LORD's song on foreign soil?" (Ps. 137:1–4).

Judaism and the Jewish people might have disappeared there and then, as had happened to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom, Israel, a century and a half before. There was one difference. The religious identity of the southern kingdom, Judah, was strong. The prophets, from Moses to Jeremiah, had spoken of exile and return. Once before, in the period between Joseph and Moses, the people had experienced exile and return. So defeat and displacement were not final. There was hope. It was contained in one word: *teshuva*.

There is no precise English translation of *teshuva*, which means both “return”: homecoming, a physical act – and “repentance”: remorse, a change of heart and deed, a spiritual act. The reason the Hebrew word means both is because, for the Torah, sin leads to exile. Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, were exiled from the Garden of Eden. Cain, after he had murdered his brother, was punished by being sentenced to eternal exile. (Gen. 4:12). The idea of justice in the Torah is based on the principle of *mida keneged mida*, “measure for measure.” A sin, *het*, is an act in the wrong place. The result, *galut*, is that the agent finds himself in the wrong place. Sin disturbs the moral harmony of the universe.

But God forgives. That one fact rescues life from tragedy. The sages said that God created repentance before He created humanity. (Nedarim 39b). What they meant was that God, in creating humanity and endowing the human person with freewill, knew that we would make mistakes. We are not angels. We stumble, we sin. We are dust of the earth and to dust we will one day return. Without repentance and forgiveness, the human condition would be unbearable. Therefore God, creating humanity, created the possibility of repentance, meaning that when we acknowledge our failings, we are forgiven. Exile is not an immutable fate. Returning to God, we find Him returning to us. We can restore the moral harmony of the universe.

It follows that on a national scale, *teshuva* means two things that become one: a spiritual return to God and a physical return to the land. This is how Moses put it in the key text of *teshuva betzibbur*, collective national repentance:

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses

you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where He scattered you. Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. (Deut. 30:1–4)

That was the theory and the hope. The question was: would it actually happen that way? It did, in the return of the Babylonian exiles to the land of Israel, and it was solemnized in one of the shaping events of Jewish history. It took place in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah on Rosh HaShana itself.

The Great Renewal

Jews, not all but many, had returned from the Babylonian exile. The ruined Temple had been rebuilt. But the nation was in disarray. Religious knowledge was slight. Many had intermarried with local populations. They could not even speak Hebrew. “Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah” (Neh. 13:24).

On the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the scribe and Nehemiah the governor convened a national assembly at the Water Gate in Jerusalem. Ezra, standing on a wooden platform, publicly read from the Torah while Levites were stationed throughout the crowd to translate and explain what was being said. As they began to realize how far they had drifted from the divine mission, the people started weeping:

And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law... Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. And he [Nehemiah] said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our LORD. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this

◀ is a holy

is a holy day. Do not grieve.” Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them. (Neh. 8:3; 8:9–12)

That Rosh HaShana (which incidentally extended for two days: the people returned the next day to continue the reading) became the start of a period of national rededication, a covenant renewal ceremony. It was a turning point in Jewish history, and it is not too much to say that we owe to it the survival of Jews and Judaism.

What Ezra and Nehemiah had understood was that religious identity was at the heart of Jewish survival. The Israelites had undergone almost a controlled experiment into what enables a nation to endure. Following the split of the nation into two after the death of Solomon, the northern kingdom had been conquered by the Assyrians. Transported, its people had, for the most part, acculturated into the general population and disappeared, to become known to history as the Lost Ten Tribes. The southern kingdom of Judah, conquered and forced into exile by the Babylonians, had sustained their identity. Inspired by people like Ezekiel, they studied Torah. They prayed. They listened to the prophets, who told them that their covenant with God was still intact. They stayed Jews. Indeed the very fact that we are today called Jews (*Yehudim*, i.e. members of the southern kingdom of Judah) is testimony to this phenomenon.

Ezra and Nehemiah, seeing the sad state of Jewish identity among the Jews of Israel, realized that a major program of religious revival was called for, beginning with the public reading of the Torah that Rosh HaShana, the first ever national adult education seminar. The strength of the Jewish nation, they saw more clearly than any of their contemporaries, lay not just in armies and physical defense but in identity and spiritual defense. Ezra was a new type in history: a “scribe,” the teacher as hero.

Slowly over the course of the next five centuries, new institutions emerged, most significantly the synagogue and the house of study, which would allow Jewry to survive even military and political defeat. By the first and second century of the common era, when Jews suffered two catastrophes at the hands of the Romans, they had become a people whose

heroes were teachers, whose citadels were schools, and whose passion was study and the life of the mind. That transformation was responsible for a phenomenon that has no parallel, a people capable of surviving two thousand years of exile, their identity intact. It began with that gathering on the first of Tishrei, when Ezra recalled a people to its ancient mission, and the people wept as they became aware of how far they had drifted from the Torah, their constitution as a nation.

Thus was born the association of the day with *teshuva*, national return. It was Nahmanides in the thirteenth century who most clearly understood that the return of Jews from Babylon and their renewal of the covenant was the historical realization of Moses' prophecy about return, which was itself, for Nahmanides, the source of the command of *teshuva*. (commentary on Deut. 30:2).

Individual Responsibility

The Babylonian exile had another effect as well. As a nation in their own land, the Jewish people experienced their fate collectively. War and peace, poverty and prosperity, famine or fruitfulness, these are things a nation experiences as a nation. The Torah is intimately concerned with the fate and dignity of individuals, but it was first and foremost a covenant with the nation as a whole.

Things are different in exile. The nation is no longer in charge of its destiny. It experiences fate primarily as a group of individuals. It remains a nation, but an injured nation, a nation not at home in the world. It was then that an idea present in Judaism from the beginning, took on a new significance. The key figure who brought this message to the exiles was a priest and prophet who was with them in Babylon: Ezekiel.

Ezekiel reminded the people of the power and possibility of individual responsibility. In so doing, he gave expression to the idea of *teshuva* in a way that has remained salient from his day to now. The first principle he taught the people had already been emphasized by his elder contemporary, Jeremiah. We are each responsible for our own sins, and no one else's:

The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child.

The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them. (Ezek. 18:20)

Then he gives precise articulation to the idea of *teshuva*:

But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins he has committed and keeps all My decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live? (Ezek. 18:21–23)

That is it. No Temple, no sacrifice, no sin offering, no ritual of atonement, but simply the act of turning – *teshuva* – understood as an abandonment of sin and a change of behavior to embrace the holy and the good. These and other verses from Ezekiel became key texts in the rabbinic understanding of *teshuva*.

Ezekiel relates this to the shofar:

The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the shofar to warn the people, then if anyone hears the shofar but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head... (Ezek. 33:1–4)

The task of the prophet is to sound the shofar as a warning to the people that their sins are about to be punished and that they must now do *teshuva* if they are to avert the coming catastrophe. Ezekiel is not the only one to speak of the shofar in these terms. As we read in Isaiah: “Raise your voice like a shofar. Declare to My people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins” (Is. 58:1). Hosea (8:1), Joel (2:1, 15) and Amos (3:6) all understood the shofar as the sound of warning of imminent war, itself a sign that the nation had sinned. But Ezekiel, more lucidly than anyone else, set out the doctrine of *teshuva* in the way we understand

it today, as something done by individuals as well as a nation, as a change of mind and deed, initiated by the sound of the shofar.

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So the basic shape of Rosh HaShana emerged from potentiality to actuality. What was originally a festival of divine creation and sovereignty, accompanied by the shofar as a clarion proclaiming the King, became also – through the prophets, the Babylonian exile, and the return – a day of national and individual rededication, a remembrance of sins and a turning with new commitment to the future.

The rabbis fleshed out this sketch with detail and color. First was the name Rosh HaShana itself. The sages knew of four New Years: the first of Nisan as the New Year for kings and festivals, the first of Elul for the tithe of cattle, the first or fifteenth of Shevat for trees, and the first of Tishrei for “years, and Sabbatical years and Jubilees” (Mishna, *Rosh HaShana* 1:1; see page 132). However it was the first of Tishrei that became known as the New Year per se.

The Mishna states that on Rosh HaShana all creatures pass before God (ibid. 1:2). How they do so depends on the precise text of the Mishna, which exists in two variants: *kivnei Maron* or *kivenumeron*. *Numeron* is thought to be derived from a Greek word meaning “a troop of soldiers.” Accordingly the Talmud reads this as meaning “like the troops of the house of David.” The alternative reading, “like the children of Maron,” is given two interpretations in the Talmud. One is “like a flock of sheep” passing one by one through a wicket so that they can be counted by the shepherd, or “like the ascent of Beit Maron,” a narrow pass through which only one person can go at a time.

The first reading, “like the troops of the house of David,” sees the primary meaning of Rosh HaShana as a festival of divine kingship. God is King, the shofar proclaims His presence, and we, His retinue, gather to pay Him homage. The second and third see it as a day on which God judges us, one at a time. The biblical phrase about the land of Israel, “the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end” (Deut. 11:12) was understood to imply that “from the beginning of the year, sentence is passed as to what the end shall be” (*Rosh HaShana* 8a).

The rabbis also articulated the concept of a book of life. Moses, pleading for the people after the making of the golden calf, says, “But now, please forgive their sin, but if not, then blot me out of the book You have written” (Ex. 32:32). In Psalms 69:29 David says about the wicked, “May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.”

The book of Esther contains a famous episode in which, “That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of records [*sefer hazikhronot*] ... to be brought in and read to him” (Esther 6:1). There were times when the king read a record of events that had happened and passed verdict, whether for punishment or reward.

Rabbi Yoḥanan taught that on Rosh HaShana three books lie open in heaven: one for the completely wicked, one for the completely righteous, and one for the intermediate. The completely righteous are immediately inscribed in the book of life; the thoroughly wicked are immediately inscribed in the book of death; the verdict on the intermediate is suspended from New Year till the Day of Atonement. If they deserve well, they are inscribed in the book of life; if they do not deserve well, they are inscribed in the book of death (*Rosh HaShana* 16b). It became a particularly beautiful custom to wish people, on the first night of the year, that they be written and sealed immediately for life, implying that those around us are completely righteous. Those who judge others favorably are, we believe, themselves judged favorably.

Both the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud specify that, whatever the decree, there are certain acts that have the power to avert or annul it, or at least mitigate its harshness. The Babylonian Talmud lists four: charity, prayer, change of name and change of deed – some add a fifth: change of place (*Rosh HaShana* 16b). The Jerusalem Talmud lists three: prayer, charity and *teshuva* (Talmud Yerushalmi, *Ta’anit* 2:1), deriving all three from God’s answer to Solomon’s prayer at the inauguration of the Temple:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray [= prayer] and seek My face [= charity] and turn from their wicked ways [= *teshuva*], then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and heal their land. (11 Chronicles 7:14)

All of these motifs – God’s kingship, His sitting in the throne of judgment, opening the book in which our deeds and signatures are written, the sound of the shofar that makes even the angels tremble, the shepherd counting his flock, the verdict written on Rosh HaShana and sealed on Yom Kippur, and the power of repentance, prayer and charity to avert the evil decree – are brought together in the liturgical poem *Untaneh Tokef*, one of the great prayers and the most vivid image of Rosh HaShana as we might imagine it in the heavenly court.

We have traveled a long way from the starting point of Rosh HaShana as the anniversary of creation, yet there is a fine rabbinic midrash that brings us back to our starting point. According to Rabbi Eliezer, creation began on 25 Elul, making the first of Tishrei the day on which humanity was created. That day, Adam and Eve were made, and that day they sinned. Yet God forgave them, or at least mitigated their punishment. Initially He had said, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Gen. 2:17). Yet Adam and Eve ate but did not die. Evidently they were forgiven. The midrash continues:

God said to Adam: This will be a sign to your children. As you stood in judgment before Me this day and were pardoned, so will your children in the future stand in judgment before Me and will emerge from My presence pardoned. When will that be? *In the seventh month, on the first day of the month.* (*Vayikra Raba* 29:1)

On Rosh HaShana we are like Adam and Eve, the quintessential representatives of the human condition. We may have sinned. We may have lost the paradise of innocence. We all do. But we are alive. We live in the radiance of God and the generosity of his compassion. In the simplest yet most moving of prayers, Rabbi Akiva turned to God and said, *Avinu Malkenu*, “Our Father, our King.” (*Ta’anit* 25a) God is our King, Sovereign of the universe, Author of our laws, the Judge who administers justice. But He is also our Father and we are His children, and can a father withhold compassion from his children? Time and again He forgives us and never loses patience. Human parents may lose faith in a child but God never does: “Were my father and my mother to forsake me, the LORD would take me in” (Ps. 27:10).

Past, Present and Future

All of these ideas have left their mark on the Maḥzor and appear in our prayers, especially in the central section of the Musaf Amida. On all other festivals, there is one central blessing, *Kedushat HaYom*, “the special sanctity of the day.” Uniquely Rosh HaShana has three central blessings, *Malkhiyot*, Kingship; *Zikhronot*, Remembrances; and *Shofarot*, verses about the Shofar. These correspond to the sentence (not found in Tanakh, but pieced together from biblical phrases), “The LORD is King, the LORD was King, the LORD will be King, forever and all time.”

Malkhiyot refers to the present. *Zikhronot* is about memories of the past. *Shofarot* is about the future. The shofar is always a signal of something about to come: the imminent arrival of the king, a warning of impending danger, or the sound of a trial about to begin.

Teshuva sensitizes us to the full significance of time. There are those who live purely in the present, but their lives have no overarching meaning. They react rather than act. They travel with no ultimate destination. They are “like chaff blown by the wind” (Ps. 1:4). To be a Jew is to live poised between past and future: the past and future of our individual lives, of our ancient but still young people, and of humanity as a whole.

Teshuva tells us that our past does not determine our future. We can change. We can act differently next time than last. If anything, our future determines our past. Our determination to grow as human beings – our commitment to a more faithful, sensitive, decent life in the year to come – gives us the courage and honesty to face our past and admit its shortcomings. Our *teshuva* and God’s forgiveness together mean that we are not prisoners of the past, held captive by it. In Judaism sin is what we do, not what we are. Therefore we remain intact, able to acknowledge our failures and then move on.

My predecessor Lord Jakobovits made a profound comment about Rosh HaShana. Given that it is the start of the Ten Days of Repentance, surprisingly it contains no explicit confessions, no penitential prayers. These form the text and texture of Yom Kippur but not Rosh HaShana. Why so? Because, he suggested, *teshuva* is driven by two different mindsets: commitment to the future and remorse about the past. Rosh HaShana is about the first, Yom Kippur about the second. *Rosh* means “head” and the default position of the head is looking forward not back.

The placing of Rosh HaShana before Yom Kippur means that our determination to act better in the future is prior to our feelings of remorse about the past. To which we might add that this is why we blow shofar on Rosh HaShana. The shofar, too, turns our attention to what lies ahead, not behind.

What Rosh HaShana Says To Us

What then does Rosh HaShana say to us? Of what is it a reminder? How can it transform our lives?

The genius of Judaism was to take eternal truths and translate them into time, into lived experiences. Other cultures have constructed philosophies and theologies, elaborate systems of abstract thought. Judaism prefers truth lived to truth merely thought. Ancient Greece produced the logical imagination. Judaism produced the chronological imagination, truth transposed into the calendar. Rosh HaShana, the anniversary of the creation of humanity, invites us to live and feel the human condition in graphic ways.

The first thing it tells us is that life is short. However much life expectancy has risen, we will not, in one lifetime, be able to achieve everything we might wish to achieve. *Untaneh Tokef* tells the poetry of mortality with haunting pathos:

Man is founded in dust and ends in dust.
He lays down his soul to bring home bread.
He is like a broken shard,
like grass dried up,
like a faded flower,
like a fleeting shadow,
like a passing cloud,
like a breath of wind,
like whirling dust,
like a dream that slips away.

This life is all we have. How shall we use it well? We know that we will not finish the task, but neither are we free to stand aside from it. That is the first truth.

The second is: life itself, each day, every breath we take, is the gift of God:

Remember us for life,
 O King who delights in life,
 and write us in the book of life –
 for Your sake, O God of life.

Life is not something we may take for granted. If we do, we will fail to celebrate it. God gives us one gift above all others, said Maimonides: life itself, beside which everything else is secondary. Other religions have sought God in heaven, or the afterlife, the distant past or the distant future. Here there is suffering, there reward; here chaos, there order; here pain, there balm; here poverty, there plenty. Judaism has relentlessly sought God in the here-and-now of life on earth. Yes, we believe in life after death, but it is in life before death that we truly find human greatness.

Third, we are free. Judaism is the religion of the free human being freely responding to the God of freedom. We are not in the grip of sin. We are not determined by economic forces or psychological drives or genetically encoded impulses that we are powerless to resist. The very fact that we can do *teshuvah*, that we can act differently tomorrow than we did yesterday, tells us we are free. Philosophers have found this idea difficult. So have scientists. But Judaism insists on it, and our ancestors proved it by defying every law of history, surviving against the odds, refusing to accept defeat.

Fourth, life is meaningful. We are not mere accidents of matter, generated by a universe that came into being for no reason and will one day, for no reason, cease to be. We are here because a loving God brought the universe, and life, and us, into existence – a God who knows our fears, hears our prayers, believes in us more than we believe in ourselves, who forgives us when we fail, lifts us when we fall, and gives us the strength to overcome despair. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote: “No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny.” He concluded: “The Jews, therefore, stand right at the center of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose.”* That too is one of the truths of Rosh HaShana.

Fifth, life is not easy. Judaism does not see the world through rose-tinted lenses. The sufferings of our ancestors haunt our prayers. The world

* Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (London: Phoenix, 2004), Prologue, p. 2.

we live in is not the world as it ought to be. That is why, despite every temptation, Judaism has never been able to say the messianic age has come, even though we await it daily. But we are not bereft of hope because we are not alone. When Jews went into exile the *Shekhina*, the Divine Presence, went with them. God is always there, “close to all who call on Him in truth.” (Ps. 145:18) He may hide His face, but He is there. He may be silent, but He is listening to us, hearing us and healing us in ways we may not understand at the time but which become clear in retrospect.

Sixth, life may be hard, but it can still be sweet, the way the *halla* and the apple are on Rosh HaShana when we dip them in honey. Jews have never needed wealth to be rich, or power to be strong. To be a Jew is to live for simple things: the love between husband and wife, the sacred bond between parents and children, the gift of community where we help others and others help us and where we learn that joy is doubled and grief halved by being shared. To be a Jew is to give, whether in the form of *tzedaka* or *gemilut hasadim*, acts of loving-kindness. It is to learn and never stop seeking, to pray and never stop thanking, to do *teshuva* and never stop growing. In this lies the secret of joy. Throughout history there have been hedonistic cultures that worship pleasure, and ascetic cultures that deny it, but Judaism has a different approach altogether: to sanctify pleasure by making it part of the worship of God. Life is sweet when touched by the divine.

Seventh, our life is the single greatest work of art we will ever make. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in one of his earliest works, spoke about *Ish HaHalakha*, the halakhic personality and its longing to create, to make something new, original. God too longs for us to create and thereby become His partner in the work of renewal. “The most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself.” That is what *teshuva* is, an act of making ourselves anew. On Rosh HaShana we step back from our life like an artist stepping back from his canvas, seeing what needs changing for the painting to be complete.

Eighth, we are what we are because of those who came before us. Our lives are not disconnected particles. We are each a letter in God’s book of life. But single letters, though they are the vehicles of meaning, have no meaning when they stand alone. To have meaning they must be joined to other letters to make words, sentences, paragraphs, a story, and to be

a Jew is to be part of the strangest, oldest, most unexpected and counter-intuitive story there has ever been: the story of a tiny people, never large and often homeless, who nonetheless outlived the greatest empires the world has ever known: the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, the Greeks and Romans, the medieval empires of Christianity and Islam, all the way to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. Each in turn thought itself immortal. Each has gone. The Jewish people still lives.

So on Rosh HaShana we remember and ask God to remember those who came before us: Abraham and Isaac, Sarah, Hannah and Rachel, the Israelites of Moses' day, and the Jews of every generation, each of whom left some living legacy in the prayers we say or the melodies in which we sing them. And in one of the most moving verses of the middle section of Musaf we recall the great words said by God through the prophet Jeremiah: "I remember of you the kindness of your youth, your love when you were a bride; how you walked after Me in the desert, through a land not sown" (Jer. 2:2). Our ancestors may have sinned, but they never stopped following God though the way was hard and the destination distant. We do not start with nothing. We have inherited wealth, not material but spiritual. We are heirs to our ancestors' greatness.

Ninth, we are heirs to another kind of greatness too, that of the Torah itself and its high demands, its strenuous ideals, its panoply of mitzvot, its intellectual and existential challenges. Judaism asks great things of us and by doing so makes us great. We walk as tall as the ideals for which we live, and those of the Torah are very high indeed. We are, said Moses, God's children. (Deut. 14:1) We are called on, said Isaiah, to be His witnesses, His ambassadors on earth. (Is. 43:10) Time and again Jews did things thought impossible. They battled against might in the name of right. They fought against slavery. They showed that it was possible to be a nation without a land, to have influence without power, to be branded the world's pariahs yet not lose self respect. They believed with unshakable conviction that they would one day return to their land, and though the hope seemed absurd, it happened. Their kingdom may have been bounded by a nutshell yet Jews counted themselves kings of infinite space. Judaism sets the bar high, and though we may fall short time and again, Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur allow us to begin anew, forgiven, cleansed, undaunted, ready for the next challenge, the next year.

◀ And finally

And finally comes the sound of the shofar, piercing our defenses, a wordless cry in a religion of words, a sound produced by breath as if to tell us that that is all life is – a mere breath – yet breath is nothing less than the spirit of God within us: “Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7). We are dust of the earth but within us is the breath of God.

And whether the shofar is our cry to God or God’s cry to us, somehow in that *tekia*, *shevarim*, *terua* – the call, the sob, the wail – is all the pathos of the Divine–human encounter as God asks us to take His gift, life itself, and make of it something holy, by so acting as to honor God and His image on earth, humankind. For we defeat death, not by living forever but by living by values that live forever; by doing deeds and creating blessings that will live on after us, and by attaching ourselves in the midst of time to God who lives beyond time, “the King – the living, everlasting God.”

The Hebrew verb *lehitpalel*, to pray, more precisely means “to judge oneself.” On Rosh HaShana we stand in judgment. We know what it is to be known. And though we know the worst about ourselves, God sees the best; and when we open ourselves to Him, He gives us the strength to become what we truly are.

Those who fully enter the spirit of Rosh HaShana emerge into the new year charged, energized, focused, renewed, knowing that to be a Jew is to live life in the presence of God, to sanctify life for the sake of God, and to enhance the lives of others – for where we bring blessings into other lives, there God lives.

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
London, 5771 (2011)

מחזור קורן לראש השנה

THE KOREN ROSH HASHANA MAḤZOR

ANNULMENT OF VOWS

*On the morning before Rosh HaShana, one should annul vows
before three men, who sit as judges, saying:*

שמעו נא Listen, please, my masters (expert judges): every vow or oath or prohibition or restriction or ban that I have vowed or sworn, whether awake or in a dream, or that I swore with one of the holy names that may not be erased, or by the holy Tetragrammaton of God, blessed be He, or any naziriteship that I accepted on myself, even a naziriteship like that of Samson, or any prohibition, even against enjoyment, whether I forbade it to myself or others, by any expression of prohibition, whether using the language of prohibition or restriction or ban, or any positive commitment, even to perform a [non-obligatory] commandment, that I undertook by way of a vow or voluntary undertaking or oath or naziriteship or any other such expression, whether it was done by handshake or vow or voluntary undertaking or commandment-mandated custom I have customarily practiced, or any utterance that I have verbalized, or any non-obligatory commandment or good practice or conduct I have vowed and resolved in my heart to do, and have done three times without specifying that it does not have the force of a vow, whether it relates to myself or others, both those known to me and those I have already forgotten – regarding all of them, I hereby express my retroactive regret, and ask and seek their annulment from you, my eminences. For I fear that I may stumble and be trapped, Heaven forbid, in the sin of vows, oaths, naziriteships, bans, prohibitions, restrictions and agreements. I do not regret, Heaven forbid, the performance of the good deeds I have done. I regret, rather, having accepted them on myself in the language of vow, oath, naziriteship, prohibition, ban, restriction, agreement or acceptance of the heart.

Therefore I request annulment for them all.

Judaism is a religion that stresses the sanctity of language, especially when used to accept or impose obligations on oneself. Deep significance attaches to vows and the other verbal undertakings: “If a man makes a vow to God, or makes an oath to obligate himself, he must not break his word. He must do everything he said” (Num. 30:3). In general, it is preferable not to invest voluntary commitments with the sacred status of a vow. “If you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty” (Deut. 23:23). “It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it” (Eccl. 5:4).

התרת נדרים

On the morning before ראש השנה, one should annul vows before three men, who sit as judges, saying:

שָׁמְעוּ נָא רְבוּתִי (דַּיָּיִנִּים מְמַחִים), כָּל נָדָר אֲשֶׁר שָׁבוּעָה אִם אֶסֶר אִם קוֹנֵם
אוֹ חֵרֶם שֶׁנִּדְרַתִּי אִם נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּהִקְיָן אִם בְּחֵלוֹם, אִם נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּשִׁמוֹת
הַקְּדוּשִׁים שְׂאִינָם נִמְחָקִים וּבְשֵׁם הַיּוֹ"ה בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְכֹל מִינֵי נְזִירוֹת
שֶׁקִּבַּלְתִּי עָלַי וְאֶפְלוּ נְזִירוֹת שְׂמִשּׁוֹן, וְכֹל שׁוֹם אֶסֶר וְאֶפְלוּ אֶסֶר הַנֶּאֱמָר
שֶׁאֶסְרַתִּי עָלַי אִם עַל אֲחֵרִים בְּכֹל לְשׁוֹן שֶׁל אֶסֶר בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן אֶסֶר אִם
חֵרֶם אִם קוֹנֵם, וְכֹל שׁוֹם קִבְּלָה אֶפְלוּ שֶׁל מְצוּה שֶׁקִּבַּלְתִּי עָלַי בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן
נָדָר בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן נִדְבָה בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן שְׁבוּעָה בֵּין בְּלִשׁוֹן נְזִירוֹת בֵּין בְּכֹל
לְשׁוֹן, וְגַם הִנְעֵשֶׂה בְּתַקִּיעַת כּוֹף. בֵּין כָּל נָדָר וּבֵין כָּל נִדְבָה וּבֵין שׁוֹם מִנְהַג
שֶׁל מְצוּה שְׁנֵהֲגַתִּי אֶת עֲצָמִי, וְכֹל מוֹצֵא שְׁפָתַי שְׂיֵצֵא מִפִּי אִם שֶׁנִּדְרַתִּי
וְגִמְרַתִּי בְּלִבִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוֹם מְצוּה מִהַמְצוּת אִם אִיזוּ הִנְהַגָה טוֹבָה אִם
אִיזוּ דָבָר טוֹב שְׁנֵהֲגַתִּי שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים, וְלֹא הִתְנַתִּי שִׁיְהִי בְּלִי נָדָר. הֵן
דָּבָר שֶׁעָשִׂיתִי, הֵן עַל עֲצָמֵי הֵן עַל אֲחֵרִים, הֵן אוֹתֵן הַיְדוּעִים לִי הֵן אוֹתֵן
שֶׁכָּבֵר שְׂכַחְתִּי. בְּכֹלֵהוֹן אֲתַחַרְטֵנָּא בְּהוֹן מַעֲקָרָא, וְשׁוֹאֵל וּמִבְקֵשׁ אֲנִי
מִמַּעֲלַתְכֶם הַתָּרָה עֲלֵיהֶם, כִּי יֵרְאֵתִי פֶן אֶכְשַׁל וְנִלְכַדְתִּי, חֶסֶד וְשָׁלוֹם,
בַּעֲוֹן נְדָרִים וּשְׁבוּעוֹת וְנְזִירוֹת וְחַרְמוֹת וְאֶסְוִרִין וְקוֹנָמוֹת וְהַסְכָּמוֹת. וְאִין
אֲנִי תוֹהָא, חֶסֶד וְשָׁלוֹם, עַל קִיּוּם הַמַּעֲשִׂים הַטּוֹבִים הָהֵם שֶׁעָשִׂיתִי, רַק
אֲנִי מִתְחַרֵּט עַל קִבְּלַת הָעֲנִינִים בְּלִשׁוֹן נָדָר אִם שְׁבוּעָה אִם נְזִירוֹת אִם
אֶסֶר אִם חֵרֶם אִם קוֹנֵם אִם הַסְכָּמָה אִם קִבְּלָה בְּלִבִּי, וּמִתְחַרֵּט אֲנִי עַל זֶה
שֶׁלֹּא אֶמְרַתִּי הִנְנִי עוֹשֶׂה דָבָר זֶה בְּלִי נָדָר וּשְׁבוּעָה וְנְזִירוֹת וְחֵרֶם וְאֶסֶר
וְקוֹנֵם וְקִבְּלָה בְּלִבִּי.
לְכֵן אֲנִי שׁוֹאֵל הַתָּרָה בְּכֹלֵהוֹן.

ANNULMENT OF VOWS

To avoid entering the High Holy Days under the pressure of unfulfilled undertakings to God, our custom is to annul or “release” vows on the morning before Rosh HaShana. A related, though more solemn, ceremony takes place immediately prior to Yom Kippur in the form of *Kol Nidrei*.

I regret all these things I have mentioned, whether they related to monetary matters, or to the body or to the soul.

In relation to them all, I regret the language of vow, oath, naziriteship, prohibition, ban, penalty, and acceptance of the heart.

To be sure, according to the law, one who regrets and seeks annulment must specify the vow [from which he seeks release]. But please know, my masters, that it is impossible to specify them, for they are many. I do not seek release from vows that cannot be annulled. Therefore, may it be in your eyes as if I had specified them.

The judges say the following three times:

May all be permitted to you. May all be forgiven you. May all be allowed to you. There is now no vow, oath, naziriteship, ban, prohibition, penalty, ostracism, excommunication, or curse. There is now pardon, forgiveness and atonement. And just as the earthly court has granted permission, so may the heavenly court grant permission.

The one seeking annulment of vows says:

Behold I make a formal declaration before you that I cancel from now onward all vows and all oaths, naziriteships, prohibitions, penalties, bans, agreements and acceptances of the heart that I may accept upon myself, whether awake or in a dream, except a vow to fast that I undertake at the time of the afternoon prayer. If I forget the conditions of this declaration and make a vow from this day onward, as of now I retroactively regret them and declare them to be null and void, without effect or validity, and they shall have no force whatsoever. Regarding them all, I regret them from now and for ever.

The basis of release is regret: had one known what one knows now, one would not have undertaken the vow. The release is performed by three adult men sitting as a court, and its effect is retroactive: it is as if the vow had never been made. The entire process emphasizes the solemnity of verbal commitments. We must be true to our word and never lightly promise to do what we may not be able to fulfill.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik explained that the annulment of vows is similar to the process of repentance itself. We express *harata*, remorse, for our sins. We would not have committed them had we fully understood what the consequences would be, and had we been reflective rather than impulsive. Thus repentance has the power, as does the annulment of vows, to undo the past, at least insofar as sins between us and God.

אֲנִי מִתְחַרֵּט עַל כָּל הַנְּזָכָר, בֵּין אִם הָיוּ הַמַּעֲשִׂים מִדְּבָרִים הַנּוֹגְעִים בְּמִמוֹן, בֵּין מִהַדְּבָרִים הַנּוֹגְעִים בְּגוּף, בֵּין מִהַדְּבָרִים הַנּוֹגְעִים אֶל הַנִּשְׁמָה. בְּכֻלָּהוֹן אֲנִי מִתְחַרֵּט עַל לְשׁוֹן נֶדֶר וְשְׂבוּעָה וְנִזְרוֹת וְאִסוּר וְחֵרֶם וְקוֹנָם וְקִבְלָה בְּלֵב.

וְהִנֵּה מִצַּד הַדִּין הַמִּתְחַרֵּט וְהַמְבַקֵּשׁ הַתְּרָה צָרִיךְ לִפְרֹט הַנֶּדֶר, אֲךָ דְעוּ נָא רִבּוּתִי, כִּי אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לִפְרֹטָם, כִּי רַבִּים הֵם. וְאִין אֲנִי מְבַקֵּשׁ הַתְּרָה עַל אוֹתָם הַנֶּדָרִים שְׂאִין לְהַתִּיר אוֹתָם, עַל כֵּן יִהְיוּ נָא בְּעֵינֵיכֶם כְּאִלוֹ הֵייתִי פּוֹרְטָם.

The judges say the following three times:

הַכֹּל יִהְיוּ מִתְרִים לָךְ, הַכֹּל מְחוּלִים לָךְ, הַכֹּל שְׂרוּיִים לָךְ. אִין כָּאן לֹא נֶדֶר וְלֹא שְׂבוּעָה וְלֹא נִזְרוֹת וְלֹא חֵרֶם וְלֹא אִסוּר וְלֹא קוֹנָם וְלֹא נְדוּי וְלֹא שְׂמֵתָא וְלֹא אָרוּר. אֲבָל יֵשׁ כָּאן מְחִילָה וְסְלִיחָה וְכִפְרָה. וְכַשֵּׁם שְׂמֵתִירִים בְּבֵית דִּין שֶׁל מֵטָה, כֵּךְ יִהְיוּ מִתְרִים מִבֵּית דִּין שֶׁל מַעְלָה.

The one seeking annulment of vows says:

הֲרִי אֲנִי מוֹסֵר מוֹדְעָה לִפְנֵיכֶם, וְאֲנִי מְבַטֵּל מִכָּאן וְלַהֲבֵא כָּל הַנֶּדָרִים וְכָל שְׂבוּעוֹת וְנִזְרוֹת וְאִסוּרִין וְקוֹנָמוֹת וְחֵרְמוֹת וְהַסְּכָמוֹת וְקִבְלָה בְּלֵב שְׂאִקְבֵּל עָלַי בְּעַצְמִי, הֵן בְּהַקִּיץ הֵן בְּחֹלוֹם, חוּץ מִנְדְרֵי תַעֲנִית בְּשַׁעַת מִנְחָה. וּבְאִם אֲשַׁבַּח לְתַנְאֵי מוֹדְעָה הַזֹּאת וְאָדָר מֵהַיּוֹם עוֹד, מַעֲתָה אֲנִי מִתְחַרֵּט עֲלֵיהֶם וּמַתְנֶה עֲלֵיהֶם שִׁיְהִיוּ כְּלֵן בְּטָלִין וּמְבַטְלִין, לֹא שְׂרִירִין וְלֹא קִימִין, וְלֹא יִהְיוּ חֲלוּן כָּלֵל וְכָלֵל. בְּכֻלָּן אֶתְחַרְטָא בְּהוֹן מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

The undertakings involved here relate to vows made to God in respect of behavior not categorically demanded or forbidden by Jewish law. The declaration covers a range of such commitments. A *neder* is a vow forbidding something to oneself. An *isar* is a more general category of self-imposed prohibition. A *shevua* is an oath relating to an action rather than an object. It is a promise to do, or not do, a certain act. A *herem* renders an object forbidden by designating it as sacred property. A *konam* designates it as if it were a sacrifice. *Nezirut*, the acceptance, usually for a period of thirty days, of the status of a nazirite (Num. 6:1–21), involves abstaining from wine or grapes, cutting one's hair, or contact with a corpse.

Prozbul

On the last day of a Shemitta year, all debts which one Jew owes another are annulled. One who wishes to collect his debts nonetheless must give a court of three judges a prozbul – a transfer of the debts to the court – after which he might collect the debts as the court’s representative. This form, and other variations, may be found on the Koren website. See law 4.

After the creditor says the declaration marked by quotation marks, the judges sign the following form, and give it to the creditor:

We three were sitting as a Beit Din, and (name) son of (father’s name) came before us and said:

“As this year is the seventh year, and I am owed money, in debts that are documented or orally agreed upon, by individuals and/or by companies, I hereby present this Prozbul and transfer every debt owed me to you, the judges before whom I make my declaration, and thus authorize you to exact payment of every debt I am owed. Henceforth you will be my executors and may exact repayment in my name. If you do not exact repayment, then I myself, having presented this Prozbul, may henceforth exact repayment of every debt that is owed me at this time, from any debtor, at any time that I choose.”

This being in order we, the Beit Din undersigned – having seen that this person has presented this Prozbul in accordance with the procedure laid out by Hillel and the sages – decree that the seventh year will not cancel the debts owed him, and that he will thus be entitled to exact their repayment at any time he chooses. We undersign this on the (insert date) day of the month of Elul in the year (insert Hebrew year), here in (insert location).

Signed: (signature of judge)

Signed: (signature of judge)

Signed: (signature of judge)

ing that they might be unable to reclaim their money. This was in direct contravention of the Torah (see Deut. 15:9). Seeing that the poor were suffering, Hillel devised the prozbul, a legal agreement by which the lender transfers his loan to the Beit Din, thus circumscribing the release of debts (Mishna, Gittin 34b). A prozbul is usually written on the last day of a sabbatical year.

פרוזבול

On the last day of a שמיטה year, all debts which one Jew owes another are annulled. One who wishes to collect his debts nonetheless must give a court of three judges a פרוזבול – a transfer of the debts to the court – after which he might collect the debts as the court's representative. This form, and other variations, may be found on the Koren website. See law 4.

After the creditor says the declaration marked by quotation marks, the judges sign the following form, and give it to the creditor:

בְּמוֹתֵב תִּלְתָּא בֵּי דִינָא כַּחְדָּא הוּינָא, וּבֵא לְפִנְיֵנוּ (פלוני בן פלוני)
וְאָמַר לָנוּ:

הֵן שָׁנָה זוֹ הִיא שְׁנַת הַשְּׁבִיעִית, וַיֵּשׁ לִי חוּבוֹת בְּשֶׁטֶר וּבַעַל פֶּה
עַל אֵיזָה אַנְשִׁים וְ/אוֹ חֲבֵרוֹת, וְהִרִינִי מוֹסֵר בְּפִינְכֶם פְּרוֹזְבוּל זֶה
וְכָל חוֹב שֵׁישׁ לִי לְכֶם, הַדִּינִים שֶׁבְּפִינְהֶם אֲנִי מַצְהִיר, וְהִרִינִי
מִרְשָׁה אֶתְכֶם לְגִבּוֹת כָּל חוֹב שֵׁישׁ לִי, וּמַעַתָּה הָיוּ אֲתֶם
דִּינִים וּגְבוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּשִׁבְלִי; וְאִם לֹא תִגְבְּוּהוּ אֲתֶם, מַעַתָּה בֵּינוֹן
שֶׁמִּסְרָתִי פְּרוֹזְבוּל זֶה, אֲגַבֶּה אֲנִי כָּל חוֹב שֵׁישׁ לִי עַד הַיּוֹם אֲצַל
כָּל אָדָם כָּל זְמַן שֶׁאֲרָצָה.

וְאֲנוּ, בֵּית הַדִּין הַחֲתוּמִּים מִטָּה, בֵּינוֹן שְׂרָאִינוּ דְּבָרֵינוּ נְבוּנִים, וְהוֹאִיל
וּמִסֵּר לְפִנְיֵנוּ דְּבָרֵי פְּרוֹזְבוּל כְּתֻקְנַת הַלֵּל וְחֻז"ל, קִבְּעֵנוּ שְׁלֵא תִשְׁמַט
שְׁבִיעִית חוּבוֹתָיו וַיִּכָּל לְגִבּוֹתָם כָּל יַעַת שִׁירְצָה. וּבְאֵנוּ עַל הַחֲתוּם,
יּוֹם (insert day of month) לְחֹדֶשׁ אֶלּוּל שְׁנַת (insert year), פֶּה ב (insert location).

נֶאֱמַר: (signature of judge)

נֶאֱמַר: (signature of judge)

נֶאֱמַר: (signature of judge)

PROZBUL

The Torah (Deut. 15:2) prescribes that all debts be canceled in the seventh year. In the late Second Temple period, however, Hillel noted that the wealthy were refusing to give loans to the poor as the seventh year approached, know-

EIRUV TEḤUMIN

On Shabbat and Yom Tov it is forbidden to walk more than 2000 cubits (about 3000 feet) beyond the boundary (teḥum) of the town where you live or are staying when the day begins.

By placing food sufficient for two meals, before nightfall, at a point within 2000 cubits from the town limits, you confer on that place the status of a dwelling for the next day, and are then permitted to walk 2000 cubits from there.

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about the mitzva of Eiruv.

By this Eiruv may we be permitted to walk from this place, two thousand cubits in any direction.

EIRUV ḤATZEROT

On Shabbat it is forbidden to carry objects from one private domain to another, or from a private domain into space shared by others, such as a communal staircase, corridor or courtyard. If the first day of Rosh HaShana falls on Shabbat an Eiruv Ḥatzerot is created when each of the Jewish households in a court or apartment block, before Shabbat, places a loaf of bread or matza in one of the homes. The entire court or block then becomes a single private domain within which it is permitted to carry.

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about the mitzva of Eiruv.

By this Eiruv may we be permitted to move, carry out and carry in from the houses to the courtyard, or from the courtyard to the houses, or from house to house, for all the houses within the courtyard.

EIRUV TAVSHILIN

It is not permitted to cook for Shabbat when the first day of Rosh HaShana falls on a Thursday unless an Eiruv Tavshilin has been made prior to Rosh HaShana. This is done by taking a loaf or piece of matza together with a boiled egg, or a piece of cooked fish or meat to be used on Shabbat. While holding them, say the following:

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about the mitzva of Eiruv.

By this Eiruv may we be permitted to bake, cook, insulate food, light a flame and do everything necessary on the festival for the sake of Shabbat, for us and for all Jews living in this city.

“guarantor,” who joins another in a bond of shared responsibility; and *arev*, “pleasant,” the mood that prevails when people join in friendship. An *Eiruv* softens the sharp divides of boundaries.

עירוב תחומין

On *שבת* and *יום טוב* it is forbidden to walk more than 2000 cubits (about 3000 feet) beyond the boundary (תחום) of the town where you live or are staying when the day begins. By placing food sufficient for two meals, before nightfall, at a point within 2000 cubits from the town limits, you confer on that place the status of a dwelling for the next day, and are then permitted to walk 2000 cubits from there.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֵרֹב.
בְּדִין עֲרוּבָא יְהֵא שְׂרָא לִי לְמִיּוֹל מֵאַתְרָא הָדִין תְּרִין אֲלָפִין אַמְּוִין לְכָל רוּחָא.

עירוב חצרות

On *שבת* it is forbidden to carry objects from one private domain to another, or from a private domain into space shared by others, such as a communal staircase, corridor or courtyard. If the first day of *ראש השנה* falls on *שבת*, an *עירוב חצרות* is created when each of the Jewish households in a court or apartment block, before *שבת*, places a loaf of bread or matza in one of the homes. The entire court or block then becomes a single private domain within which it is permitted to carry.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֵרֹב.
בְּדִין עֲרוּבָא יְהֵא שְׂרָא לְנָא לְטִלְטוּלִי וְלֵאֲפֹקִי וְלַעֲיֹלִי מִן הַבְּתִים לְחֹצֵר וּמִן הַחֲצֵר
לְבֵתִים וּמִבֵּית לְבֵית לְכָל הַבְּתִים שְׁבַחְצֵר.

עירוב תבשילין

It is not permitted to cook for *שבת* when the first day of *השנה* falls on Thursday unless an *עירוב תבשילין* has been made prior to *השנה*. This is done by taking a loaf or piece of matza together with a boiled egg, or a piece of cooked fish or meat to be used on *שבת*. While holding them, say the following:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת עֵרֹב.
בְּדִין עֲרוּבָא יְהֵא שְׂרָא לְנָא לְמִיפָא וְלְבִשְׁלָא וְלֵאֲטַמְנָא וְלֵאֲדַלְקָא שְׂרָגָא וְלִמְעַבְד
כָּל צֻרְכְּנָא מִיּוֹמָא טָבָא לְשַׁבְּתָא. לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל הַדְרִים בְּעִיר הַזֹּאת.

EIRUVIN

Eiruv are halakhic devices relating to Shabbat and Yom Tov by which the sages “joined” different domains of space and time. *Eiruv* comes from the same root as *erev*, “evening,” the time that joins day and night; *arev*, a

CANDLE LIGHTING

On both nights, say the following blessing and then light the candles.

On the second night, the candles must be lit from an existing flame.

If the first day of Rosh HaShana is Shabbat, cover the eyes with the hands after lighting the candles and say the following blessing, adding the words in parentheses.

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us to light
(the Sabbath light and) the festival light.

The blessing "Shehecheyanu" ("Who has given us life") is said on both evenings.

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.

Prayer after candlelighting (add the words in parentheses as appropriate):

יְהי May it be Your will, LORD my God and God of my forebears, that You give me grace – me (and my husband/and my father/and my mother/and my sons and my daughters) and all those close to me, and give us and all Israel good and long lives. And remember us with a memory that brings goodness and blessing; come to us with compassion and bless us with great blessings. Build our homes until they are complete, and allow Your Presence to live among us. And may I merit to raise children and grandchildren, each one wise and understanding, loving the LORD and in awe of God, people of truth, holy children, who will cling on to the LORD and light up the world with Torah and with good actions, and with all the kinds of work that serve the Creator. Please, hear my pleading at this time, by the merit of Sarah and Rebecca, Rachel and Leah our mothers, and light our candle that it should never go out, and light up Your face, so that we shall be saved, Amen.

wife, parent and child, sustained and strengthened by the love of God. In the soft luster of this holy light we see the pristine beauty of the familiar and recover a sense of the sacred, the immanence of transcendence, as it bathes the faces of those we love with its radiance.

הדלקת נרות

On both nights, say the following blessing and then light the candles.

On the second night, the candles must be lit from an existing flame.

If the first day of the ראש השנה is שבת, cover the eyes with the hands after lighting the candles and say the following blessing, adding the words in parentheses.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
 וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שָׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשָׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

The blessing שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ is said on both evenings.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 שְׁהַחֲיֵנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ, וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

Prayer after candlelighting (add the words in parentheses as appropriate):

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שְׁתַּחֲוֶנָּה אוֹתִי (וְאֵת)
 אִישִׁי / וְאֵת אָבִי / וְאֵת אִמִּי / וְאֵת בְּנֵי וְאֵת בָּנוֹתַי) וְאֵת כָּל קְרוֹבֵי,
 וְתַתֵּן לָנוּ וּלְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל חַיִּים טוֹבִים וְאַרְכִּים, וְתִזְכְּרֵנוּ בְּזִכְרוֹן טוֹבָה
 וּבְבָרָכָה, וְתַפְקֵדְנוּ בְּפִקְדוֹת יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים, וְתַבְּרַכְנוּ בְּרָכוֹת גְּדוּלוֹת,
 וְתַשְׁלִים בְּחַיֵּינוּ וְתַשְׁבֵּן שְׂכִינְתְּךָ בֵּינֵינוּ. וְזַכְּנֵי לְגִדְלֵ בָּנִים וּבָנִים בָּנִים
 חַכְמִים וְנְבוֹנִים, אוֹהֲבֵי יְהוָה יְרֵאֵי אֱלֹהִים, אֲנָשֵׁי אֱמֶת זֶרַע קִדְּשׁ,
 בִּיהוּה דְּבָקִים וּמְאִירִים אֶת הָעוֹלָם בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים וּבְכָל
 מְלָאכֶת עֲבוֹדַת הַבּוֹרָא. אָנָּה שְׁמַע אֶת תַּחֲנֻנְתִּי בַּעַת הַזֹּאת בְּזִכּוֹת
 שְׂרָה וְרִבְקָה וְרַחֵל וְלֵאָה אֲמוֹתֵינוּ, וְהָאֵר נַרְנוּ שְׁלֵא יִכְבֶּה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,
 וְהָאֵר פְּנֵיךָ וְנִשְׁעָה. אָמֵן.

HADLAKAT NEROT – CANDLE LIGHTING

The lights kindled before Shabbat and Yom Tov symbolize the Divine Presence (“The LORD is my light,” Ps. 27:1), as well as *shalom bayit*, the domestic peace that prevails when a home is filled with the love between husband and

Minḥa for Erev Rosh HaShana

אֲשֵׁרֵי Happy are those who dwell in Your House;
they shall continue to praise You, Selah!

Ps. 84

Happy are the people for whom this is so;

Ps. 144

happy are the people whose God is the LORD.

A song of praise by David.

Ps. 145

I will exalt You, my God, the King, and bless Your name for ever and all time. Every day I will bless You, and praise Your name for ever and all time. Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; His greatness is unfathomable. One generation will praise Your works to the next, and tell of Your mighty deeds. On the glorious splendor of Your majesty I will meditate, and on the acts of Your wonders. They shall talk of the power of Your awesome deeds, and I will tell of Your greatness. They shall recite the record of Your great goodness, and sing with joy of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow

what matters immediately. That is why prayer in the midst of the day has a special transformative power.

The Ba'al Shem Tov said: Imagine a man whose business hounds him through many streets and across the marketplace throughout the day. He almost forgets that there is a Maker of the world. Only when the time for the afternoon prayer comes, does he remember, "I must pray." And then, from the bottom of his heart, he heaves a sigh of regret that he has spent his day on idle matters, and he runs into a side street and stands there and prays. God holds him dear, very dear, and his prayer pierces the heavens.

ASHREI

Ashrei, at the beginning of Minḥa, is an abridged form of the more extended *Pesukei DeZimra*, the Verses of Praise, of the morning service. It is a meditation prior to the Amida. The Amida is prayer in its purest form, and it requires *kavana*, a direction of the mind, a focusing of our thoughts. *Kavana* involves

מנחה לערב ראש השנה

תהלים פד

תהלים קמד

תהלים קמה

אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, עוֹד יִהְלֹךְ סִלָּה:

אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שֶׁכָּכָה לוֹ, אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שִׁיהוּה אֱלֹהִיו:

תַּהֲלֶה לְדוֹד

אֲרוּמֶמְךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאַבְרָכָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

בְּכָל-יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ, וְאַהֲלִלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֹלְתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:

דוֹר לְדוֹד יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְגִבּוֹרֹתֶיךָ יִגִּידוּ:

הִדְר כְּבוֹד הַיּוֹדֶךָ, וְדַבְרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:

וְעֻזוֹ נוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וְגִדְלוֹתֶיךָ אֲסַפְּרָנָה:

זְכַר רַב-טוֹבְךָ יִבְיָעוּ, וְצַדִּיקְתֶּךָ יִדְנְנוּ:

חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְגִדְל־חֶסֶד:

טוֹב-יְהוָה לְכֹל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂיו:

MINḤA – AFTERNOON SERVICE

The Afternoon Service corresponds to the daily afternoon sacrifice (Num. 28:8). Minḥa, literally “meal offering,” was not unique to the afternoon sacrifice. The afternoon service may have become known as Minḥa because of the verse in Psalms (141:2), “May my prayer be like incense before You, the lifting up of my hands like the afternoon offering [*minḥat arev*].”

The sages attached special significance to the afternoon prayer, noting that Elijah’s prayer was answered at this time (1 Kings 18:36). It is easier to pray in the morning and evening as we are about to begin or end our engagement with the world for the day. Minḥa is more demanding. It means that we are turning to God in the midst of all our distractions. We are bringing Him into our life when it is maximally preoccupied with other things. Minḥa is the triumph of the important over the urgent, of what matters ultimately over

to anger and great in loving-kindness. The LORD is good to all, and His compassion extends to all His works. All Your works shall thank You, LORD, and Your devoted ones shall bless You. They shall talk of the glory of Your kingship, and speak of Your might. To make known to mankind His mighty deeds and the glorious majesty of His kingship. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your reign is for all generations. The LORD supports all who fall, and raises all who are bowed down. All raise their eyes to You in hope, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand, and satisfy every living thing with favor. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all He does. The LORD is close to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the will of those who revere Him; He hears their cry and saves them. The LORD guards all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. ▶ My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all creatures shall bless His holy name for ever and all time.

We will bless the LORD now and for ever. Halleluya!

Ps. 115

To it have been added two verses at the beginning and one at the end. The verses at the beginning use the word *Ashrei* – the first word of the book of Psalms – three times. The concluding verse ends with the word “Halleluya,” the last word of the book of Psalms. Thus *Ashrei* is a miniature version of the book of Psalms as a whole.

Ashrei means “happy, blessed, fruitful, flourishing.” It refers not to a temporary emotional state but to a life as a whole. One who is *ashrei* does well and fares well, living uprightly and honestly, respected by those worthy of respect. The word is in the plural construct, literally “the happinesses of,” as if to say that happiness is not one thing but a harmonious blend of many things that add up to make a good life. Psalm 1 gives a vivid picture of such a life: “Happy is one who does not walk in step with the wicked, or stand in the place of sinners, or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the Torah of the LORD, and who meditates on His Torah day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither – whatever he does prospers” (Psalm 1:1–3).

וְיִדְוֹךְ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִבְרְכֶנּוּהָ:
 כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְבוּרַתְךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:
 לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבַנְיַי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתִי, וּכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ:
 מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֲלָמִים, וּמִמְשַׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דָּוָר וְדָר:
 סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנְּפֹלִים, וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל־הַפְּפוּפִים:
 עֵינַי־כָּל אֱלֹהֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ, וְאַתָּה נֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:
 פּוֹתַח אֶת־יְדֶיךָ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רְצוֹן:
 צְדִיק יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו, וְחִסִּיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:
 קְרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל־קְרָאָיו, לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאִמַּת:
 רְצוֹן־יִרְאֵוּ יַעֲשֶׂה, וְאֶת־שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע, וְיוֹשִׁיעַם:
 שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֲהַבָּיו, וְאֶת כָּל־הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:
 אֲתִהְלֵת יְהוָה יְדַבֵּר פִּי, וְיִבְרַךְ כָּל־בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קְדִשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
 וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִבְרַךְ יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ:

תהלים קטו

“clearing your mind of all extraneous thoughts, and seeing yourself as if you are standing before the Divine Presence. Therefore it is necessary to sit for a while before prayer in order to direct your mind, and then pray gently and pleadingly, not like one who prays as if he were carrying a burden which he is keen to unload and leave” (Maimonides, Laws of Prayer 4:16). *Ashrei* is the way we “sit for a while before prayer” in order to direct our mind (*Berakhot* 32b). Therefore, though it may be said standing or sitting, the custom is to say it sitting.

It consists of Psalm 145, chosen for two reasons: (1) It is an alphabetical acrostic, praising God with every letter of the alphabet (except the *nun*, missing lest it refer to a verse that speaks about the fall, *nefila*, of Israel); (2) It contains the verse, “You open Your hand, and satisfy every living thing with favor,” regarded by the sages as one of the essential features of prayer, namely recognition of our complete dependence on God (*Berakhot* 4b). Psalm 145 is also the only one of the 150 psalms to be called a psalm (*tehilla*) in its superscription.

HALF KADDISH

Leader: **יְתַגַּדְלֵנוּ** Magnified and sanctified may His great name be,
 in the world He created by His will.
 May He establish His kingdom
 in your lifetime and in your days,
 and in the lifetime of all the house of Israel,
 swiftly and soon –
 and say: Amen.

All: May His great name be blessed for ever and all time.

Leader: Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted,
 raised and honored, uplifted and lauded
 be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He,
 beyond any blessing,
 song, praise and consolation
 uttered in the world –
 and say: Amen.

THE AMIDA

The following prayer, until “in former years” on page 32, is said silently, standing with feet together. If there is a minyan, the Amida is repeated aloud by the Leader. Take three steps forward and at the points indicated by ♫, bend the knees at the first word, bow at the second, and stand straight before saying God’s name.

When I proclaim the LORD’s name, give glory to our God.
 O LORD, open my lips, so that my mouth may declare Your praise.

*Deut. 32
 Ps. 51*

PATRIARCHS

בְּרִיךְ Blessed are You,
 LORD our God and God of our fathers,
 God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob;
 the great, mighty and awesome God,
 God Most High,
 who bestows acts of loving-kindness and creates all,

חצי קדיש

ש"ן: וַיִּתְגַּדַּל וַיִּתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא (קהל: אָמֵן)
 בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרֻעוּתֵיהּ
 וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ
 בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן. (קהל: אָמֵן)
 קהל: וַיְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבֻרָךְ לְעַלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא.
 ש"ן: יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא
 וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלָּל
 שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא (קהל: בְּרִיךְ הוּא)
 לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בְּרֻכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא
 דְאִמְרוּן בְּעֶלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן. (קהל: אָמֵן)

עמידה

The following prayer, until קדמניות on page 33, is said silently, standing with feet together.

If there is a מנין, the עמידה is repeated aloud by the שליח ציבור. Take three steps forward and at the points indicated by ♪, bend the knees at the first word, bow at the second, and stand straight before saying God's name.

דברים לב
 תהלים נא

פִּי שֵׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא, הִבּוּ גְדֵל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:
 אֲדָנִי, שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח, וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

אבות

אָבוֹן אֶתְהּ יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
 הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן
 גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקִנְהַת הַכֹּל

who remembers the loving-kindness of the fathers
and will bring a Redeemer to their children's children
for the sake of His name, in love.

King, Helper, Savior, Shield:

✠Blessed are You, LORD, Shield of Abraham.

DIVINE MIGHT

אַתָּה גְבוּר You are eternally mighty, LORD.

You give life to the dead and have great power to save.

In Israel: He causes the dew to fall.

He sustains the living with loving-kindness,
and with great compassion revives the dead.

He supports the fallen,

heals the sick,

sets captives free,

and keeps His faith with those who sleep in the dust.

Who is like You, Master of might,

and who can compare to You,

O King who brings death and gives life,

and makes salvation grow?

Faithful are You to revive the dead.

Blessed are You, LORD, who revives the dead.

When saying the Amida silently, continue with "You are holy" below the line on the next page.

The central blessings. There are thirteen central blessings in the weekday Amida and they are grouped into four sets of three: (1) personal spiritual requests: for knowledge, repentance and forgiveness; (2) personal material requests: for redemption, healing and prosperity; (3) collective material-political requests: for the ingathering of exiles, the restoration of sovereignty, and the removal of enemies; and (4) collective spiritual requests: for the righteous, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the kingdom of David. The thirteenth blessing is all-embracing, asking God to hear and heed our prayer. *Knowledge, Repentance and Forgiveness.* Note the sequence. First we pray for

(continued on page 23)

וְזוֹכֵר חֲסֵדֵי אֲבוֹת
 וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוּ בְּאֵהָבָה.
 מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְגֵן אֲבֹרָהִים.

גבורות

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם, אֲדֹנָי
 מְחִיָּה מִתִּים אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
 בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל: מוֹרִיד הַטֶּל

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מְחִיָּה מִתִּים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים
 סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים
 וּמְקַיֵּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לְיֹשְׁנֵי עָפְרָה.
 מִי כְמוֹךָ, בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת
 וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ
 מְלַךְ, מְמִית וּמְחִיָּה וּמְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.
 וְנֹאמֵן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מִתִּים.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְחִיָּה הַיְמָתִים.

When saying the עמידה silently, continue with אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ below the line on the next page.

THE AFTERNOON AMIDA

The sages (*Berakhot* 26b) associated the afternoon Amida with Isaac, who “went out to meditate in the field toward evening” (Gen. 24:63). If Abraham represents the dawn of Jewish faith, and Jacob the nighttime of exile, Isaac represents the afternoon joining of past and future, the unspectacular heroism of Jewish continuity. We are each a link in the chain of generations, heirs of our ancestors, guardians of our children’s future, remembering God in the midst of time and placing our destiny in His hands.

KEDUSHA

During the Leader's Repetition, the following is said standing with feet together, rising on the toes at the words indicated by ˆ.

Cong. then שְׁכַנְנוּ We will sanctify Your name on earth,

Leader: as they sanctify it in the highest heavens,
as is written by Your prophet,

“And they [the angels] call to one another saying:

Is. 6

Cong. then ˆHoly, ˆholy, ˆholy is the LORD of hosts;

Leader: the whole world is filled with His glory.”
Those facing them say “Blessed –”

Cong. then ˆ“Blessed is the LORD’s glory from His place.”

Ezek. 3

Leader: And in Your holy Writings it is written thus:

Cong. then ˆ“The LORD shall reign for ever. He is your God, Zion,

Ps. 146

Leader: from generation to generation, Halleluya!”

Leader: From generation to generation we will declare Your greatness,
and we will proclaim Your holiness for evermore.

Your praise, our God, shall not leave our mouth forever,

for You, God, are a great and holy King. Blessed are You, LORD,
the holy God.

The Leader continues with “You grace humanity” below.

HOLINESS

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ You are holy and Your name is holy,
and holy ones praise You daily, Selah!

Blessed are You, LORD,
the holy God.

KNOWLEDGE

אַתָּה חוֹנֵן You grace humanity with knowledge
and teach mortals understanding.

Grace us with the knowledge, understanding
and discernment that come from You.

Blessed are You, LORD,
who graciously grants knowledge.

קדושה

*During the ש"ץ חזרת הש"ץ, the following is said standing
with feet together, rising on the toes at the words indicated by *.*

ישעיהו נִקְדָּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם, בְּשֵׁם שְׁמֹקֵדִישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשֵׁמי מְרוֹם
קהל then
ש"ץ: כְּפָתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶיךָ: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמַר

יְקָדוֹשׁ, יְקָדוֹשׁ, יְקָדוֹשׁ, יְהוּה צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כְלֵי־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:
קהל then
ש"ץ: לְעִמָּתָם בְּרוּךְ יְאֻמְרוּ

יהוּקא"ג יְבִרוּךְ כְּבוֹד־יְהוּה מִמְקוֹמוֹ:
קהל then
ש"ץ: וּבְדַבְרֵי קִדְשְׁךָ כְּתוּב לְאֹמַר

תהלים קמו יִמְלֹךְ יְהוּה לְעוֹלָם, אֶלֶהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדוֹר וָדוֹר, הַלְלוּיָהּ:
קהל then
ש"ץ: לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נְגִיד גְּדֹלְךָ, וּלְנֹצַח נֹצְחִים קִדְשֵׁתְךָ נִקְדִּישׁ
וְשִׁבַּחְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ לֹא יִמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וְעַד
כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ אַתָּה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

The אַתָּה חוֹנֵן continues with שליח ציבור.

קדושת השם

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ
וְקָדוֹשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סְלָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה, הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

דעת

אַתָּה חוֹנֵן לְאָדָם דַּעַת
וּמְלַמֵּד לְאֵנוֹשׁ בִּינָה.
חַנְּנוּ מֵאִתְּךָ דַּעַת בִּינָה וְהַשְׁכִּיל.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה, חוֹנֵן הַדַּעַת.

REPENTANCE

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ Bring us back, our Father,
to Your Torah.

Draw us near, our King,
to Your service.

Lead us back to You
in perfect repentance.

Blessed are You, LORD,
who desires repentance.

FORGIVENESS

Strike the left side of the chest at °.

סַלַח לָנוּ Forgive us, our Father,
for we have °sinned.

Pardon us, our King,
for we have °transgressed;
for You pardon and forgive.

Blessed are You, LORD,
the gracious One who repeatedly forgives.

REDEMPTION

רְאֵה Look on our affliction,
plead our cause,
and redeem us soon for Your name's sake,
for You are a powerful Redeemer.

Blessed are You, LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel.

brings us to repentance. Only then do we ask for forgiveness. We must put in the work of self-understanding and self-judgment before we can ask God to excuse our lapses.

תשובה

הְשִׁיבֵנו אֲבִינוּ לְתוֹרַתְךָ
 וְקִרְבֵנו מִלְּפָנֵינוּ לְעִבּוֹדֶתְךָ
 וְהַחְזִירֵנוּ בְּתִשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
 הַרוֹצֵה בְּתִשׁוּבָה.

סליחה

Strike the left side of the chest at °.

סַלַח לָנוּ אֲבִינוּ בִּי ° חֲטָאֵנוּ
 מְחַל לָנוּ מִלְּפָנֵינוּ בִּי ° פְּשָׁעֵנוּ
 בִּי מוֹחַל וְסוֹלַח אֶתָּה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
 חֲנוּן הַמְּרַבֵּה לְסַלַח.

גאולה

רְאֵה בְּעֵינֵינוּ, וְרִיבֵה רִיבֵנו
 וּגְאֹלֵנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ
 בִּי גּוֹאֵל חֲזָק אֶתָּה.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
 גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

knowledge and understanding. Without these it is as if we travel blind. Judaism is a religion of emotion, but emotion instructed by the mind. Second, understanding should lead us not to intellectual arrogance but humility. Knowing how we should live, we come to realize how we fall short, and this

HEALING

רפאנו! Heal us, LORD, and we shall be healed.
Save us and we shall be saved,
for You are our praise.
Bring complete recovery for all our ailments,

The following prayer for a sick person may be said here:

May it be Your will, O LORD my God and God of my ancestors, that You speedily send a complete recovery from heaven, a healing of both soul and body, to the patient (*name*), son/daughter of (*mother's name*) among the other afflicted of Israel.

for You, God, King,
are a faithful and compassionate Healer.
Blessed are You, LORD,
Healer of the sick of His people Israel.

PROSPERITY

ברך! Bless this year for us, LORD our God,
and all its types of produce for good.
Grant blessing on the face of the earth,
and from its goodness satisfy us,
blessing our year as the best of years.
Blessed are You, LORD,
who blesses the years.

INGATHERING OF EXILES

תקע! Sound the great shofar for our freedom,
raise high the banner to gather our exiles,
and gather us together
from the four quarters of the earth.
Blessed are You, LORD,
who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.

רפואה

רְפָאנוּ יְהוָה וְנִרְפָּא
הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ וְנוֹשְׁעָה
כִּי תִהְלֹתֵנוּ אִתָּהּ
וְהַעֲלֵה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְכֹל מִפּוֹתֵינוּ

The following prayer for a sick person may be said here:

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שֶׁתְּשַׁלַּח מְהֵרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה
מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף לְחוֹלֵה/לְחוֹלָה *name of patient*
בֶּן/בַּת *mother's name* שְׂאֵר חוּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ רוֹפֵא נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה.
פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, רוֹפֵא חוּלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

ברכת השנים

פְּרוּךְ עָלֵינוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת
וְאֶת כָּל מֵינֵי תְבוּאָתָהּ, לְטוֹבָה
וְתֵן בְּרִכָּה עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה, וְשַׁבְּעֵנוּ מִטוֹבָה
וּבְרוּךְ שְׁנַתְנוּ כְּשָׁנִים הַטּוֹבוֹת.
פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים.

קבוץ גלויות

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גְּדוּל לְחִירוֹתֵנוּ
וְשֵׂא נִם לְקַבֵּץ גְּלוּתֵינוּ
וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ.
פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

JUSTICE

הַשִּׁיבָה Restore our judges as at first,
 and our counselors as at the beginning,
 and remove from us sorrow and sighing.
 May You alone, LORD,
 reign over us with loving-kindness and compassion,
 and vindicate us in justice.
 Blessed are You, LORD,
 the King who loves righteousness and justice.

AGAINST INFORMERS

וְלַמְלִשִּׁימִים For the slanderers let there be no hope,
 and may all wickedness perish in an instant.
 May all Your people's enemies swiftly be cut down.
 May You swiftly uproot, crush, cast down
 and humble the arrogant swiftly in our days.
 Blessed are You, LORD,
 who destroys enemies and humbles the arrogant.

THE RIGHTEOUS

עַל הַצְּדִיקִים To the righteous, the pious,
 the elders of Your people the house of Israel,
 the remnant of their scholars,
 the righteous converts, and to us,
 may Your compassion be aroused, LORD our God.
 Grant a good reward
 to all who sincerely trust in Your name.
 Set our lot with them,
 so that we may never be ashamed,
 for in You we trust.
 Blessed are You, LORD,
 who is the support and trust of the righteous.

השבת המשפט

הַשִּׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֵינוּ כְּבָרָא שׁוֹנָה וְיִוְעֲצֵנוּ כְּבַתְחִלָּה
וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ יָגוֹן וְאַנְחָה
וּמֶלֶךְ עָלֵינוּ אֶתְּהָ יְהוָה לְבִדְךָ בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים
וְצִדְקָנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְ אוֹהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט.

ברכת המינים

וְלִמְלָשִׁינִים אֶל תְּהִי תִקְוָה
וְכָל הַרְשָׁעָה כְּרָגַע תֵּאבֵד
וְכָל אוֹיְבֵי עַמְּךָ מִהֵרָה יִפְרָתוּ
וְהַזֵּדִים מִהֵרָה תִּעְקַר וְתִשְׁבֹּר וְתִמְגֹר וְתִכְנִיעַ בְּמִהֵרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, שׁוֹבֵר אוֹיְבִים וּמְכַנְּעֵ זֵדִים.

על הצדיקים

עַל הַצְּדִיקִים וְעַל הַחֲסִידִים
וְעַל זְקֵנֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל פְּלִיטַת סוֹפְרֵיהֶם
וְעַל גְּרוֹי הַצְּדִק, וְעָלֵינוּ
יְהִמוּ רַחֲמֵיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְתֵן שָׂכָר טוֹב לְכָל הַבוֹטְחִים בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאֵמֶת
וְשִׁים חֲלֻקְנוּ עִמָּהֶם
וְלַעוֹלָם לֹא נִבּוֹשׁ כִּי בְּךָ בִּטְחָנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׁעֵן וּמְבַטֵּחַ לַצְּדִיקִים.

REBUILDING JERUSALEM

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם To Jerusalem, Your city, may You return in compassion,
and may You dwell in it as You promised.

May You rebuild it rapidly in our days
as an everlasting structure,
and install within it soon the throne of David.
Blessed are You, LORD, who builds Jerusalem.

KINGDOM OF DAVID

אֶת צִמְחָה May the offshoot of Your servant David soon flower,
and may his pride be raised high by Your salvation,
for we wait for Your salvation all day.
Blessed are You, LORD, who makes the glory of salvation flourish.

RESPONSE TO PRAYER

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ Listen to our voice, LORD our God.
Spare us and have compassion on us,
and in compassion and favor accept our prayer,
for You, God, listen to prayers and pleas.
Do not turn us away, O our King,
empty-handed from Your presence,
for You listen with compassion to the prayer of Your people Israel.
Blessed are You, LORD, who listens to prayer.

TEMPLE SERVICE

רְצֵה Find favor, LORD our God,
in Your people Israel and their prayer.
Restore the service to Your most holy House,
and accept in love and favor
the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayer.
May the service of Your people Israel always find favor with You.

his prayer is transformed into an offering in the Temple. Rabbi Judah HaLevi (*Kuzari* 3:19) highlights that at this juncture in the Amida we are praying for the *Shekhina* to return to Jerusalem. We must therefore bow at *Modim* as if we were standing in the presence of the restored *Shekhina*.” (Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik)

בניין ירושלים
 וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב
 וְתִשְׁכַּן בְּתוֹכָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
 וּבִנְיָה אֹתָהּ בְּקִרְוֹב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵן עוֹלָם
 וְכִסֵּא דָּוִד מְהֵרָה לְתוֹכָהּ תָּכִין.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

משיח בן דוד
 אֶת צֶמַח דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ מְהֵרָה תַצְמִיחַ
 וְקִרְנוֹ תְרוּם בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוֹיֵנו כָּל הַיּוֹם.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מַצְמִיחַ קֶרֶן יִשׁוּעָה.

שומע תפלה
 שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ
 כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּנִים אַתָּה
 וּמְלַפְנֵיךָ מַלְבְּנוּ רִיקָם אֵל תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ
 כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

עבודה
 רִצָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבַתְּפִלָּתָם
 וְהָשִׁיב אֶת הָעֲבוּדָה לְדַבְּרֵי בֵיתְךָ
 וְאִשֵּׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתְפִלָּתָם בְּאַהֲבָה תִקְבַּל בְּרָצוֹן
 וְתִהְיֶה לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.

Temple Service and Thanksgiving. "As the Jew recites *Retzeh* and beseeches God to accept his sacrifices, he is no longer praying in his local synagogue in Warsaw, Vilna or New York. He is suddenly transported to Jerusalem, and

וּתְחִינָה And may our eyes witness Your return to Zion
in compassion.

Blessed are You, LORD,
who restores His Presence to Zion.

THANKSGIVING

Bow at the first nine words.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>מוֹדִים We give thanks to You, for You are the LORD our God and God of our ancestors for ever and all time. You are the Rock of our lives, Shield of our salvation from generation to generation. We will thank You and declare Your praise for our lives, which are entrusted into Your hand; for our souls, which are placed in Your charge; for Your miracles which are with us every day; and for Your wonders and favors at all times, evening, morning and midday. You are good – for Your compassion never fails. You are compassionate – for Your loving-kindnesses never cease. We have always placed our hope in You.</p> | <p><i>During the Leader's Repetition, the congregation says quietly:</i></p> <p>מוֹדִים We give thanks to You, for You are the LORD our God and God of our ancestors, God of all flesh, who formed us and formed the universe. Blessings and thanks are due to Your great and holy name for giving us life and sustaining us. May You continue to give us life and sustain us; and may You gather our exiles to Your holy courts, to keep Your decrees, do Your will and serve You with a perfect heart, for it is for us to give You thanks. Blessed be God to whom thanksgiving is due.</p> |
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וְעַל כָּלֵם For all these things may Your name be blessed and exalted,
our King, continually, for ever and all time.

Let all that lives thank You, Selah!
and praise Your name in truth,
God, our Savior and Help, Selah!

*Blessed are You, LORD, whose name is “the Good”
and to whom thanks are due.