

The Jewish Communities of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys enter the New Year 5783 and the High Holy Days *b'kol echad*, "in one voice," with a very special evening of prayer, music, inspiration, and introspection.

# Erev S'líchot

Return  
Refresh  
Renew  
Reimagine  
Reconnect

Featuring: Rabbis Jonathan Kupetz, Len Muroff and Ralph Resnick;  
Cantors Paul Buch, Aviva Rosenbloom and Mike Sirota;  
the Combined Choirs and Special Guests

Saturday Evening, September 17, 2022 @ 8 p.m.

In-person\* at Temple Beth Israel\*\* and online  
on Zoom and Facebook

Co-presented by Temple Ami Shalom, Temple Beth David, Temple Beth Israel, and Temple Shalom of Ontario



\*Please note that TBI highly recommends masking at in-person events and expects that attendees will have been vaccinated against COVID-19

\*\*Temple Beth Israel is located at 3033 N. Towne Ave., Pomona, CA 91767



*Hine mah tov, umah na'im, shevet achim gam yachad.*

Oh, how good and how beautiful it is  
when we all dwell together as one.



## HEAR OUR VOICE AND SUPPLICATION

**RABBI:** We are gathered together this night, in the peace of this sanctuary, away from the clamor and glare of the world, grateful for the opportunity to reflect upon a year that has gone, to pray for the year to come. We face not only a new year but a changing world. New knowledge and continual upheavals threaten life everywhere. We are burdened with a sense of failure and wrongdoing. Who of us is free from jealousies and hate? We are ridden by fears, tormented by frustration and loneliness. Like sheep without the shepherd, we have lost our way.

**CONG.:** God of our ancestors, may Your presence dispel the darkness which envelopes us, the foreboding that fills our hearts as we look into the future.

**RABBI:** May this time of penitence help us express the truth in our innermost parts. Help us meet the New Year with the best of heart and mind which You, God, have given us.

**CONG.:** We come to plead for forgiveness. No one of us can say: "I have not sinned. I have done nothing wrong." Help us to recognize the evil within us and give us the will to overcome it. Show us the way to live a good life, to bring the blessings of happiness to our loved ones and strengthen the ties of peace and righteousness that bind us to our fellow human beings.

**RABBI:** Help us bridge the gap between our conscience and our conduct, between what we believe and what we do. Give us the assurance you once gave our ancestors: "I will pardon you, even as you have asked." Let this be the answer to our prayers in the season of holiness that now begins for the house of Israel.

# Achat Sha'alti

PSALM 27:4

FOLK MELODY

A - chat sha-al-ti mei-eit A-do-nai o - tah a - va - keish, —

keish, shiv - ti b' - veit A-do-nai kol y' - mei cha - yai,

la-cha-zot b' - no-am, b' - no - am A-do-nai u - l' - va - keir b' - hei - cha - lo.

keir b' - hei - cha - lo.

One thing do I ask of Adonai, and I shall seek it:

To dwell in the house of Adonai all the days of my life,

To see Adonai's glory, and to visit God's holy Temple.

אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת־יְיָ אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ.

שְׁכֵנִי בְּבֵית־יְיָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי.

לַחֲזוֹת כְּבוֹד־יְיָ וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהֵיכָלוֹ.

## RETURN AGAIN

Return again, return again  
Return to the land of your Soul  
Return again, return again  
Return to the land of your Soul.

### CHORUS:

Return to who you are, return to what you are  
Return to where you are  
Born and reborn again.  
Return again, return again,  
Return to the land of your Soul  
Return again, return again  
Return to the land of your Soul...

## TURN, TURN, TURN

To everything, turn, turn, turn.  
There is a season, turn, turn, turn.  
And a time to every purpose under heaven.  
A time to be born, a time to die.  
A time to plant, a time to reap.  
A time to kill, a time to heal.  
A time to laugh, a time to weep.

To everything, turn, turn, turn.  
There is a season, turn, turn, turn.  
And a time to every purpose under heaven.  
A time to build up, a time to break down.  
A time to dance, a time to mourn.  
A time to cast away stones.  
A time to gather stones together.

To everything, turn, turn, turn.  
There is a season, turn, turn, turn.  
And a time to every purpose under heaven.  
A time of love, a time of hate.  
A time of war, a time of peace.  
A time you may embrace.  
A time to refrain from embracing.

To everything, turn, turn, turn.  
There is a season, turn, turn, turn.  
And a time to every purpose under heaven.  
A time to gain, a time to lose.  
A time to rend, a time to sew.  
A time for love, a time for hate.  
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late.

Words from the Book of Ecclesiastes, adapted by Pete Seeger

NOW IS THE TIME FOR TURNING

To everything there is a season,  
and there is an appointed time for every purpose  
under heaven.

*Now is the time for turning.*

The seasons change  
as does the balance of day and night.

*The birds are beginning to turn  
and are heading once more toward the south.*

The animals are beginning to turn  
to storing their food for the winter.

*For the earth, for birds and animals,  
turning comes naturally,  
but for us, turning does not come so easily.*

It takes an act of will  
for us to make a turn.

*It means breaking with old habits.  
It means admitting that we have been wrong;  
and this is never easy.*

It means losing face;  
it means starting all over again;  
and this is always painful.

*It means saying: "I am sorry."  
It means admitting that we have the ability to change;  
and this is always embarrassing.*

These things are terribly hard to do.  
But unless we turn, we will be trapped forever  
in yesterday's ways.

*Dear God, help us to turn—  
from callousness to sensitivity,  
from hostility to love,  
from pettiness to purpose,  
from envy to contentment,  
from carelessness to discipline,  
from fear to faith.*

*Turn us around, O God, and bring us back toward You.  
Revive our lives, as at the beginning.*

And turn us toward each other, God,  
for in isolation there is no life.

—JACK RIEMER  
(Mahzor Hadash)

## HaN'shamah Lach

*Han'shamah lach, v'haguf po-olach:*

*chusah al amalach.*

הַנְּשָׁמָה לָךְ וְהַגּוּף פְּעֻלָּךְ,  
חֻסָּה עַל עֲמָלָךְ.

The soul is Yours, the body is Your work;  
have mercy on Your creation.

### For personal reflection . . .

*Be patient toward all that is unresolved in your heart. . . .  
Try to love the questions themselves. . . . Do not now  
seek the answers, which cannot be given because you  
would not be able to live them — and the point is to live  
everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then  
gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant  
day into the answers.*

What is the nature of my *cheshbon hanefesh* this year? What  
should be my focus, as I examine my deeds and my direction,  
from now until Yom Kippur?

What is unresolved in my heart? What questions are on my  
mind? What is unclear, uncertain, and unsettled in my life?

What decisions have I been putting off or avoiding?

Is there one change I would like to make in the way I am living my  
life and relating to other people?

When I look over my “accounts,” what do I see? Which personal  
qualities need repair and strengthening? What habits of mind,  
character, and behavior need correction?

Which relationships in my life are most challenging at this time?

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**HAN'SHAMAH LACH** הַנְּשָׁמָה לָךְ. This verse, excerpted from a medieval poem, is recited in the Sephardic tradition on Yom Kippur eve, and is also customary for *S'lichot*. In a sense, it asserts our right — as God's creation — to ask for divine forgiveness, for we belong in every possible way to the Source of Life. The poem's focus on both body and soul reminds us that Jewish spirituality is inseparable from the physical nature of our existence, encompassing our appetites, frailties, relationships, and deeds.

**BE PATIENT . . . INTO THE ANSWERS.** By R. M. Rilke (1875–1926).

**CHESHBON HANEFESH.** Defined as “accounting of the soul” and “self-examination,” *cheshbon hanefesh* is a profoundly introspective process that is central to the High Holy Days.



## Shomeir Yisrael: A Song of Forgiveness

*Shomeir Yisrael,  
sh'mor sh'eirit Yisrael.  
V'al yovad Yisrael  
ha-om'rim "Sh'ma Yisrael."*

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
שְׁמוֹר שְׁאֵרִית יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
וְאֵל יֹאבֵד יִשְׂרָאֵל  
הָאוֹמְרִים שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל.

*Shomeir goi echad,  
sh'mor sh'eirit am echad.  
V'al yovad goi echad  
hamyachadim shimcha  
"Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad."*

שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי אֶחָד,  
שְׁמוֹר שְׁאֵרִית עַם אֶחָד.  
וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי אֶחָד  
הַמֵּיַחֲדִים שִׁמְחָה  
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד.

Guardian of Israel:  
watch over Israel's remnant.  
And of those among Israel who say,  
*Sh'ma Yisrael* —  
let none be lost.

Guardian of our unity:  
watch over the remnant of our one people.  
And of those who say,  
*Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad*  
to proclaim Your oneness —  
let none be lost.

A SHIP CANNOT make its way through the seas without a compass,  
and we cannot make our way through life without being asked at the  
turn of each and every year, *ayeka*, "Where are you?" That question,  
and our answer, create the moral agenda for our work in the year ahead.

"IF I DO NOT FOCUS on the purpose, what is the point of my life?"

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**SHOMEIR YISRAEL** שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל. This anonymous, late medieval *piyut* (religious poem) is included in *S'lichot* in the Sephardic tradition. Its tenderness is captured in the plaintive setting composed by Neshama Carlebach (b. 1974).

**A SHIP CANNOT.** By Rabbi Marc Gellman (b. 1947). The reference is to Genesis 3:8–9, in which Adam and Eve hide from God in the Garden of Eden and God calls out, "*Ayeka* — Where are you?"

**IF I DO NOT FOCUS.** By Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772–1810), adapted.



THE PSALMIST SANG:

*At midnight I rise to give thanks and praise. . . .*

And so we come to this hour of *S'lichot* under the canopy of night  
to celebrate goodness, to proclaim what is right and true —  
to praise, to thank, to bless the great Giver  
who gives and renews our lives.

We turn to loved ones, to friends, and to our people everywhere —  
the whole House of Israel.  
And our hearts turn toward the human family; we pray for its healing.  
Yet, hardest of all is the inward gaze, the return to our self,  
the honest reckoning of the soul: *cheshbon hanefesh*.

We ask:

How to account for selfish acts, lies, and senseless anger?  
How to account for the shadows, the storms, the bitterness in our lives —  
the damage and distress we cause?  
How to own up to it all — and find our way back, with integrity,  
in peace?

We ask:

Have we the will to change?  
And if not now, when?

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**AT MIDNIGHT I RISE**, Psalm 119:62. This verse gave rise to the custom of reciting late-night *S'lichot* prayers prior to the Days of Awe. It recalls an earlier verse in Psalm 119: "I remember Your name, Adonai, in the night" (verse 55), suggesting that even in the darkest times of our lives we can retain an awareness of the Divine. Perhaps such awareness can give us the strength to arise from the darkness with a renewed sense of gratitude and praise for the gift of life.

**GREAT GIVER**. Charles Reznikoff (1894–1976) calls God "the great Giver" in his poem "Day of Atonement."

**AND IF NOT NOW, WHEN?** Rabbi Hillel's words, in *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Founders) 1:14, convey the sense of moral and spiritual urgency that is at the heart of the *S'lichot* service.

WE ARE TAUGHT: *Days are scrolls. Write on them only what you want remembered.*

But we remember our weakness,  
and our days bear the mark of all that went wrong.  
On this night we have hope in the One who sustains us.

Though we stumble and falter,  
    You promise forgiveness.  
If we stray from the truth,  
    You do not forsake us.  
If we sink to the depths,  
    Your mercy uplifts us.  
If our urges betray us,  
    Your compassion is endless.  
If we distance ourselves,  
    You do not disdain us.  
If we abandon Your teachings,  
    still You embrace us.  
If we seek You sincerely,  
    Your presence surrounds us.  
If we pray from the heart,  
    You listen with Yours.  
Though we stumble and falter,  
    we are blessed by Your promise.

### Al Tasteir — Don't Hide Your Face

Don't hide Your face from me  
I'm asking for Your help.  
I call to You — please hear my prayers, O God.  
If You would answer me, as I have called to You  
Please heal me now, don't hide Your face from me.

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**DAYS ARE SCROLLS . . . REMEMBERED.** By Rabbi Bachya Ibn Pakuda (11th century).

**THOUGH WE STUMBLE.** This contemporary prayer of forgiveness is modeled on the structure of several medieval *piyutim* (religious poems), in which human failings are juxtaposed with God's unfailing compassion.

**AL TASTEIR — DON'T HIDE YOUR FACE,** Psalms 102:3 and 27:9. Lyrics by Debbie Friedman (1951–2011).

## Ki Anu Amecha: A Song of Forgiveness

*Ki anu amecha, v'atah Eloheinu;*

*anu vanecha, v'atah avinu.*

*Anu avadecha, v'atah adoneinu;*

*anu k'halecha, v'atah chelkeinu.*

*Anu nachalatecha, v'atah goraleinu;*

*anu tzonecha, v'atah ro-einu.*

*Anu charmecha, v'atah notreinu;*

*anu f'ulatecha, v'atah yotzreinu.*

*Anu rayatecha, v'atah dodeinu;*

*anu s'gulatecha, v'atah k'roveinu.*

*Anu amecha, v'atah malkeinu;*

*anu maamirecha, v'atah maamireinu.*

כִּי אָנוּ עַמְּךָ, וְאַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

אָנוּ בְּנֶיךָ, וְאַתָּה אָבִינוּ.

אָנוּ עַבְדֶּיךָ, וְאַתָּה אֲדוֹנֵנוּ,

אָנוּ קְהִלָּתְךָ, וְאַתָּה חֶלְקֵנוּ.

אָנוּ נַחֲלָתְךָ, וְאַתָּה גּוֹרְלֵנוּ,

אָנוּ צֹאנְךָ, וְאַתָּה רוֹעֵנוּ.

אָנוּ כְּרֻמָּךְ, וְאַתָּה בּוֹטְרֵנוּ,

אָנוּ פְּעֻלָּתְךָ, וְאַתָּה יוֹצְרֵנוּ.

אָנוּ רְעִיתְךָ, וְאַתָּה דּוֹדֵנוּ,

אָנוּ סִגְלָתְךָ, וְאַתָּה קְרוֹבֵנוּ.

אָנוּ עַמְּךָ, וְאַתָּה מַלְכֵנוּ,

אָנוּ מַאֲמִירְךָ, וְאַתָּה מַאֲמִירֵנוּ.

1

*Our God and God of our ancestors —*

We are Your people; and You are our God.

We are Your children; and You are our father, our mother.

We are the people who serve You; and You call us to serve.

We are Your community; and You are our portion.

We are Your legacy; and You are our purpose.

We are Your flock; and You are our shepherd.

We are Your vineyard; and You watch over us.

We are Your work; and You are our maker.

We are Your beloved; and You are our lover.

We are Your treasure; and You are the One we cherish.

We are Your people; and You reign over us.

We offer You our words; and You offer us Yours.

*So forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.*

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**WE ARE YOUR PEOPLE** כִּי אָנוּ עַמְּךָ. The two English versions of this traditional poem for the Days of Awe (on this page and the next) encourage reflection on many possibilities for a relationship with God, encompassing intimacy and awe, responsibility and love, pride, tenderness, inspiration and obligation — diverse aspects of what it means to belong to one another. The poem is based on Song of Songs 2:16: “My beloved is mine and I am my beloved’s.” A midrash applies the verse to our relationship with the Divine and expands its dimensions: “This is my God; I am God’s nation. This is my Parent; I am God’s child. This is my Shepherd; I am God’s flock. This is my Guard; I am God’s vineyard” (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:16).

# בְּגֵדֵי טָהָר

## Bigdei Tohar · Vestments of Purity

אִם־יְהִיוּ חַטָּאֵיכֶם כַּשָּׁנִים,  
כִּשְׁלֹג יִלְבִּינוּ.

*Though your sins are like scarlet,  
they shall turn white as snow.*

— ISAIAH 1:18

*Help us to serve You truly,  
with purity of heart.*

— LITURGY

*Before the open ark.*

אל רחום

*Adonai, Adonai — El rachum v'chanun;  
erech apayim, v'rav-chesed ve-emet;  
notzeir chesed la'alafim;  
nosei avon vafesha v'chataah;  
v'nakeih.*

יְיָ, אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן,  
אָרֶךְ אַפַּיִם, וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת.  
בֹּצֵר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים,  
נֹשֵׂא עוֹן וְפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה,  
וְנִקֶּה.

*Adonai, Adonai —*

*God, compassionate, gracious, endlessly patient, loving, and true;  
showing mercy to the thousandth generation;  
forgiving evil, defiance, and wrongdoing; granting pardon.*

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**BIGDEI TOHAR.** This phrase, describing the white garments in which the Torah is clothed for the Days of Awe, evokes the biblical term for the holy vestments (*bigdei kodesh*) worn by the priests. It appears in the poem by Lisa Rauchwerger on the facing page.

**ADONAI, ADONAI יְיָ, יְיָ.** The Thirteen Divine Attributes, Exodus 34:6–7, constitute the original core of *S'lichot* — the songs of forgiveness. For the Sages, the name *Adonai* signified God's compassion, while *Elohim* referred to divine justice. They saw in these verses thirteen aspects of divine compassion. The Talmud (*Rosh HaShanah* 17b) explains the repetition of God's name thus: *Adonai* extends mercy before we sin, and *Adonai* responds with mercy when we repent after sinning. Compassionate forbearance allows the relationship to continue — a lesson in forgiveness that we might emulate in our own relationships.

## Sh'ma Koleinu: A Song of Forgiveness

*Sh'ma koleinu, Adonai Eloheinu.*

*Chus v'racheim aleinu.*

*V'kabeil b'rachamim uvratzon et  
t'filateinu.*

*Hashiveinu, Adonai, eilecha — v'nashuvah;  
chadeish yameinu k'kedem.*

*Amareinu haazinah, Adonai,  
binah hagigeinu.*

*Yiyu l'ratzon imrei-finu v'hegyon  
libeinu l'fanecha,*

*Adonai — tzureinu v'go-aleinu.*

*Al-tashlicheinu mil'fanecha;  
v'ruach kodsh'cha al-tikach mimenu.*

*Al-tashlicheinu l'eit ziknah;  
kichlot kocheinu, al-taazveinu.*

*Al-taazveinu, Adonai Eloheinu;  
al-tirchak mimenu.*

*Ki-l'cha, Adonai, hochalnu;*

*atah taaneh, Adonai Eloheinu.*

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

חֹס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ.

וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת  
תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ, יְיָ, אֵלֶיךָ וְנָשׁוּבָה,  
חַדֵּשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

אֲמַרְנוּ הֶאֱזִינָה, יְיָ,  
בִּינָה הַגִּיגָנוּ.

יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אֲמֵרֵי-פִינוּ וְהֶגְיוֹן  
לִבֵּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ,

יְיָ, צוּרֵנוּ וְגֹאֲלֵנוּ.

אַל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,  
וְרוּחַ קֹדֶשְׁךָ אַל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ.

אַל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ לְעֵת זִקְנָה,  
כְּכֹלֹת כַּחֲנוּ אַל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ.

אַל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,  
אַל-תִּרְחַק מִמֶּנּוּ.

כִּי-לָךְ, יְיָ, הוֹחַלְנוּ,

אֶתָּה תַּעֲנֶה, אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

**HEAR OUR CALL** שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. This prayer, probably composed in the 16th century, is based on the following scriptural verses: Lamentations 5:21; Psalms 5:2, 19:15, 51:13, 71:9, 38:22, 38:16. It poignantly expresses our shared need for compassion, heightened by our awareness that time is passing, our strength is diminishing, and the aging process inevitably entails many losses. It centers on the hope that God's faithful love will sustain us through the loss of human ties. Psalm 27, recited throughout Elul (pages 8–9, 108), rests on the same yearning for a love that transcends human mortality: "When my father and mother have gone, God will gather me in" (verse 10). Sylvia Boorstein's "Imagine how our lives might be" (see facing page) expresses a similar hope for love and compassion, but vests that hope in human beings inspired by a sudden awareness of our kinship and shared vulnerability.

From Psalm 139

You have searched me inside and out with your beam  
You have known me  
You know my sitting down and my rising up  
You think my thoughts before they arrive in my mind  
You are my walking  
You are my lying down  
All my living is your knowing

... Where could I go to be apart from you?  
To what place flee from your presence?

Awesome is what is, what you are!  
And this I know in the secret silences of my heart  
Where your awareness dwells  
And embroiders me into the fabric of the physical world  
Out of the slender thread only your eyes can see  
Recorded by your hand into the book of the world  
All the days of my recordable life  
Even before I live them

... Search me inside and out with your beam  
Pour your awareness throughout my heart like honey  
And find the crookedness and selfishness there  
And lead me away from it  
On the way to your timeless time

THERE ARE THOSE WHO STRUGGLE for a day,  
and they are good.  
There are those who struggle for a year,  
and they are better.  
There are those who struggle for a life-time:  
they are the indispensable ones.

---

**YOU HAVE SEARCHED ME.** Interpretation of Psalm 139 by Norman Fischer (b. 1946).  
**THERE ARE THOSE.** By Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956).

## Vidui — Confession

AS THE DAYS OF AWE NEAR, we reach for the Infinite;  
mindful of our frailty, we seek the Holy.  
Despite our mortality, we carry within us the Ancient of Days.  
Despite loneliness within, we sense that we belong to a single soul —  
a spirit that fills the entire universe.  
Let us find in that universal spirit a new source of strength and significance:  
more compassion, more generosity, more gratitude for life.  
Let our hearts be open to self-reckoning;  
and may we grasp how vital to our lives is *t'shuvah* — the path of return.  
On this night of forgiveness, we confess our wrongs,  
and take account of sins, failures of judgment, weakness of will.  
The hour is late, our need to be forgiven profound.

*Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu,*

*tavo l'fanecha t'filateinu;*

*v'al titalam mit'chinateinu.*

*Anachnu azei fanim ukshei oref*

*lomar l'fanecha,*

*Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu*

*v'imoteinu:*

*Tzadikim anachnu, v'lo chatanu.*

*Aval anachnu chatanu.*

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ,

תָּבֹא לְפָנֶיךָ תְּפִלַּתֵנוּ,

וְאַל תִּתְּלֵם מִתְּחִנָּתֵנוּ.

אֲנַחְנוּ עֲצֵי פָנִים וְקֹשֵׁי עֹרֶף

לֹמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ,

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ:

צַדִּיקִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְלֹא חַטָּאִנוּ.

אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ חַטָּאִנוּ.

Our God and God of all generations,  
may our prayers reach Your presence.  
And when we turn to You, do not be indifferent.  
Adonai, we are arrogant and stubborn,  
claiming to be blameless and free of sin.  
In truth, we have stumbled and strayed.  
We have done wrong.  
Together we confess. Together we take responsibility.

---

**ANCIENT OF DAYS.** A name for God (Aramaic: *Atik Yomin*) that evokes eternity.

It appears first in the book of Daniel and later in the Zohar.

**BELONG TO A SINGLE SOUL . . . UNIVERSE.** Based on Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz (b. 1937).



*Ashamnu, bagadnu, gazalnu, dibarnu dofi.*  
*He-evinu, v'hirshanu, zadnu, chamasnu,*  
*tafalnu sheker. Yaatznu ra, kizavnu,*  
*latznu, maradnu, niatznu, sararnu, avinu,*  
*pashanu, tzararnu, kishinu oref. Rashanu,*  
*shichatnu, tiavnu, ta-inu, titanu.*

אֲשָׁמְנוּ, בָּגַדְנוּ, גָּזַלְנוּ, דִּבַּרְנוּ דּוֹפִי.  
הֶעֱוִינוּ, וְהִרְשָׁנוּ, זָדְנוּ, חֲמָסְנוּ,  
טָפַלְנוּ שֶׁקֶר. יָעֲצֵנוּ רָע, כִּזְבָּנוּ,  
לָעֵנוּ, מָרַדְנוּ, נִאֲצֵנוּ, סָרַרְנוּ, עָוִינוּ,  
פָּשַׁעְנוּ, צָרַרְנוּ, קִשְׁיֵנוּ עֹרֶף. רָשָׁנוּ,  
שִׁחַתְנוּ, תִּיבְנוּ, תֵּאִינוּ, תִּיטְנוּ.

We abused and abandoned.  
We acted without thinking.  
We blamed others when we failed.  
We boasted and belittled.  
We coveted and corrupted.  
We coerced the weak to do our will.  
We drove away those we love with silence.  
We deceived and denied.  
We enticed and enslaved.  
We exalted money and material goods.  
We fouled air, sea, and land.  
We flattered and falsified.  
We gravitated to those who gossip.  
We gave up our ideals, and gave in to our impulses.  
We hated and humiliated.  
We held grudges and refused to forgive.  
We ignored and idolized.  
We insisted that we were right.  
We judged others rashly and wrongly.  
We were jealous and unjust.

---

**WE ABUSED.** This litany of wrongs, an alphabetical acrostic known as *Ashamnu*, is traditionally the shorter of two communal confessions. (Two versions of the other confession, *Al Chet*, are on pages 130–131.) Both confessions are phrased in the first person plural: all confess together, acknowledging all sins committed within the community, so that no individual is personally shamed. But these communal recitations are no substitute for the essential act of individual *t'shuvah*: admitting our own wrongdoing, apologizing to those we have harmed, and seeking their forgiveness.

We killed; we were knowingly unkind.  
We kept to ourselves in the face of need.

We lacked commitment to causes we espoused.  
We were lazy and we lied.

We missed the mark and minimized our mistakes.  
We mocked what we did not understand.

We neglected those who depend on us.  
We were negative and narcissistic.

We overreached and overreacted,  
too often erupting in outbursts of anger.

We poisoned and polluted.  
We perverted truth for personal gain.

We quelled the voice of conscience within us.  
We quit too soon and quarreled too often.

We ridiculed and resented; we refused to accept help.  
We rationalized our failings and our flaws.

We spurned the wisdom of our tradition.  
We squabbled and scorned.

We talked too much or not enough.  
We traumatized our children with anger.

We issued ultimatums and made ugly threats.  
We uttered untruths and undermined with cynicism.

We were vain and vicious.  
We vilified foreigners and strangers.

We wasted time, strength, and talent.  
We wallowed in self-pity, wished but did not act.

We exploited and expropriated.  
We expected others to save the world.

We yearned too much for prizes and praise,  
and failed to share fully in the joy of Zion reborn.

## Al Cheit — Ways We Have Wronged, Harm We Have Caused

For these sins, our God, we ask forgiveness:

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'ones uvratzon.*

The ways we have wronged You under duress and by choice.

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּאֹנֶס וּבְרָצוֹן.

*V'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'zadon uvishgagah.*

The harm we have caused in Your world deliberately and by mistake.

וְעַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּזָדוֹן וּבִשְׁגָגָה.

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*bagalui uvasater.*

The ways we have wronged You openly and secretly.

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּגִלּוּי וּבִסְתֵּר.

*V'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'yodim uvlo yodim.*

The harm we have caused in Your world consciously and unconsciously.

וְעַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּיֹדַעִים וּבְלֹא יוֹדַעִים.

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'sinat chinam.*

The ways we have wronged You by hating without cause.

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּשִׂנְאֵת חִנָּם.

*V'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*birchilut.*

The harm we have caused in Your world through gossip and rumor.

וְעַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּרִכְלּוּת.

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'tzarut-ayin.*

The ways we have wronged You through a selfish or petty spirit.

עַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּצָרוּת עֵינַי.

*V'al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha*

*b'imutz halev.*

The harm we have caused in Your world by hardening our hearts.

וְעַל חֵטָא שְׁחָטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ  
בְּאִמּוּץ הַלֵּב.

*V'al kulam, Elo-ah s'lichot,*

*s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kaper-lanu.*

For all these failures of judgment and will, God of forgiveness —  
forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.

וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהֵי סְלִיחוֹת,  
סְלַח לָנוּ, מַחֵל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר-לָנוּ.

## Al Cheit — We Stray and We Sin

*Al cheit shechatanu l'fanecha . . .*      *עַל חַטָּא שְׁחַטְאֲנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ . . .*

We stray and we sin . . .

when we fail to make peace the highest good,  
and when we are silent in the face of evil;

when we forsake those who suffer far away,  
and when we shun the wronged and destitute among us;

when we diminish God's image through violence or indifference,  
and when we fail to take care of those who depend on us;

when we engage in slander or deceit,  
and when we distort the truth for personal gain;

when we judge others rashly or unfairly,  
and when we stoke the fires of communal strife;

when we fail to embrace Torah — the Tree of Life,  
to walk its paths, and make its ways our own.

We stray and we sin . . .

when we offer no blessings, no words of thanks  
for the breath within us — and for the wonder of being.

*V'al kulam, Elo-ah s'lichot,*      *וְעַל כָּלֵם, אֱלֹהִי סְלִיחוֹת,*  
*s'lach lanu, m'chal lanu, kaper-lanu.*      *סַלַּח לָנוּ, מַחַל לָנוּ, כַּפֵּר-לָנוּ.*

For all these failures of judgment and will, God of forgiveness —  
forgive us, pardon us, lead us to atonement.

---

**TO MAKE PEACE THE HIGHEST GOOD.** In the Bible, *shalom* usually signifies a state of affairs enjoyed by the fortunate: a divine blessing encompassing peace, wholeness, health, harmony, prosperity, and well-being. For the Talmudic Sages, *shalom* becomes primarily an ethical obligation of human beings; we are called to strive for peace through our interpersonal behavior and the social institutions we create. The Sages often celebrate *shalom* as a supreme value: the ultimate purpose of the mitzvot. For example: "All that is written in the Torah was written for the sake of *shalom*" (Midrash *Tanchuma Shof'tim* 18).

# אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ

## *Avinu Malkeinu* · Almighty and Merciful

### Before the Open Ark

*Avinu Malkeinu* —

As Joseph wept and opened a forgiving heart to his brothers,  
let our hearts be open to those who ask our forgiveness.

*Avinu Malkeinu* —

As the High Priest entered the innermost Shrine to atone,  
let our acts of *t'shuvah* touch our innermost life.

*Avinu Malkeinu* —

As Jonah cried out to God, “I thought I was driven away,”  
let us reach for the Divine from the depths of our being.

*Avinu Malkeinu* —

As You said to Moses and Israel, “You shall be holy, for I am holy,”  
let us affirm today: “We shall pursue holiness in our everyday lives —  
revering mother and father,  
providing for the poor,  
rising before the aged,  
loving neighbor and stranger as ourselves.”

*Avinu Malkeinu* —

Hear our voice. . . .

- *Mishkan HaNefesh, Yom Kippur, p. 426*

## 2

Forgive us, *Avinu* —  
we have sinned.

Pardon us, *Malkeinu* —  
we have transgressed;

for You are the one who pardons and forgives.

Or maybe it's this way:

Forgive us, *Avinu*.

Pardon us, *Malkeinu*.

And God replies:

No, it's you.

You are the one who must pardon and forgive.

Forgive the ones around you; you're wasting precious time.

Forgive your parents; they did the best they could.

Forgive the one who betrayed you; let go of anger and move on.

Forgive yourself . . .

for your own imperfection.

## 3

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ . . .

*Avinu Malkeinu* — Almighty and Merciful — we come before You  
without pretense.

*Avinu Malkeinu*, we are reaching toward You. Help us to find You.

*Avinu Malkeinu*, strengthen us for the holy days that lie ahead.

*Avinu Malkeinu*, be with us as we strive to heal ourselves and  
become whole.

*Avinu Malkeinu*, help us to repair a broken world.

*Avinu Malkeinu*, hasten for us the days of redemption.

*Avinu Malkeinu, choneinu vaaneinu;*

*ki ein banu maasim.*

*Aseih imanu tz'dakah vachessed,*

*v'hoshi-einu.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ, חֲנֻנוּ וְעֲנֻנוּ,

כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים.

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד,

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

*Avinu Malkeinu* — Almighty and Merciful —  
answer us with grace, for our deeds are wanting.  
Save us through acts of justice and love.

*Avinu Malkeinu, sh'ma koleinu.* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — Almighty and Merciful — hear our voice.

*Avinu Malkeinu, chatanu l'fanecha.* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חָטְאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — we have strayed and sinned before You.

*Avinu Malkeinu, chamol aleinu* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חָמַל עָלֵינוּ  
*v'al olaleinu v'tapeinu.* וְעַל עוֹלָלֵנוּ וְטַפֵּנוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — have compassion on us and our families.

*Avinu Malkeinu, kaleih dever v'cherev* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כֹּלֵה דֶבֶר וְחֶרֶב  
*v'raav mei-aleinu.* וְרָעַב מֵעָלֵינוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — halt the onslaught of sickness, violence, and hunger.

*Avinu Malkeinu, kaleih kol tzar* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כֹּלֵה כָּל צָר  
*umastin mei-aleinu.* וּמַשְׁטִין מֵעָלֵינוּ.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — halt the reign of those who cause pain and terror.

*Avinu Malkeinu, kotveinu b'sefer* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, כּוֹתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר  
*chayim tovim.* חַיִּים טוֹבִים.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — enter our names in the Book of Lives Well Lived.

*Avinu Malkeinu, chadeish aleinu* אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, חֲדָשׁ עָלֵינוּ  
*shanah tovah.* שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.  
*Avinu Malkeinu* — renew for us a year of goodness.



## Before the Sounding of the Shofar

1

Hear, O Israel!

Hear now the heartbeat of Israel

in the quiet space between a year that is ending and a year that begins.

Hear the call of hope and joy,

and hear the call of repentance and renewal.

Hear the call to create and embrace;

hear the call to restore and to heal.

Hear the call to atone and perfect,

to search the soul and account for every deed.

Hear the call to wrestle with sins and flaws,

to fight injustice and serve the suffering.

Hear the call to gather in the scattered sparks of divinity,

and hear the call to seek the core of our humanity.

Hear the call of compassion and forgiveness.

Hear the call to return —

to Torah,

to our People,

to the One who teaches love and patience, mercy and truth.

Hear the commanding sound of *t'shuvah*.

*The shofar is sounded.*

תְּקִיעַה גְּדוּלָה

*T'kiah G'dolah*

תְּקִיעַה

*T'kiah*

תְּקִיעַה

*T'kiah*

---

**SCATTERED SPARKS OF DIVINITY.** A reference to the creation story promulgated by kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–1572), in which the vessels containing primordial divine light shattered, causing sparks to be scattered throughout the cosmos. Thus, human beings engage in the work of *tikkun* (repair) by seeking sparks of God's light in even the darkest corners of creation — gathering and uplifting the sparks through our acts of goodness. The Lurianic creation story rests on the idea that no place in the universe is empty of the Divine Presence. It holds out the possibility of doing good even in the midst of evil and suffering, and emphasizes the significance of every righteous act.

**FORGIVE US** (*next page*). Based on the teaching of Rabbi Eliezer Diamond (b. 1952), who reads this passage from the liturgy midrashically, as a dialogue between human beings and God.

## May It Be So

Poem and illustration by Marcia Falk

From *The Days Between: Blessings, Poems, and Directions of the Heart for the Jewish High Holiday Season*

May the year bring abundant blessings-  
beauty, creativity, delight!

May we be confident, courageous,  
and devoted to our callings.

May our lives be enriched with education.

May we find enjoyment in our work  
and fulfillment in our friendships.

May we grow, may we have good health.  
In darker times, may we be sustained  
by gratitude and hope.

May we be infused with joy.

May we know intimacy and kindness,  
may we love without limit.

May the hours be enhanced with music  
and nurtured by art.

May our endeavors be marked by  
originality.

May we take pleasure in daily living.

May we find peace within ourselves  
and help peace emerge in the world.

May we receive the gifts of quiet.

May reason guide our choices,  
may romance grace our lives.

May our spirits be serene,  
may we find solace in solitude.

May we embrace tolerance and truth  
and the understanding that underlies both.

May we be inspired with vision and wonder,  
may we be open to exploration.

May our deepest yearnings be fulfilled,  
may we be suffused with zeal for life.

May we merit these blessings  
and may they come to be.  
May it be so.



"May It Be So" is an abecedarian—a type of acrostic in which the initial letters of key words appear in alphabetical succession. Abecedarians were a popular form of liturgical poetry composed for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Liltingly (♩ = 100)

Can be sung as a 2-part round

**I** Em B7

B' - ya - do af - kid ru - chi, b' - eit i - shan v' -

Em E7 (D/F# E/G#) Am Em

a - i - ra. V' - im ru - chi g' - vi - ya - ti, A -

B7 Em E7 (D/F# E/G#) Am

do - nai li v' - lo i - ra. V' - im ru -

Em B7

chi g' - vi - ya - ti, A - do nai li v' - lo i -

**II** Em B7

ra. My soul I give to You, my spir - it

Em E7 (D/F# E/G#) Am Em

in Your care. Draw me near I shall not

B7 Em E7 (D/F# E/G#) Am

fear, hold me in Your hand. Draw me near

Em B7 Em

I shall not fear, safe - ly in Your hand.

בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי בְּעַת אִישׁוֹן וְאֶעֱרֹךְ  
וְעִם רוּחִי גִוְיָתִי יְיָ לִי וְלֹא אִירָא.

Into Your hands I entrust my spirit, when I sleep and when I  
wake, and with my spirit my body also; the Eternal is with me, I  
will not fear.