

YOM KIPPUR SERVICE

“And this shall be to you a law for all time: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall practice self-denial.”

Three times the Torah links Yom Kippur with the practice of self-denial. By tradition we fulfill this command in part by fasting. The three-fold utterance may suggest three reasons for fasting.

Judaism calls for self-discipline. When we control our appetites on Yom Kippur, we remember that on other days, too, we can be masters, not slaves, of our desires.

Judaism calls for empathy. When we consciously experience hunger, we are more likely to consider the millions who need no Yom Kippur in order to suffer hunger. For some, most days are days without food enough for themselves and their children.

Judaism calls for penitence. The confession we make with our lips is a beginning. The penance we inflict upon our bodies through fasting, leads us along further still toward the acknowledgment that we have sinned against ourselves and others.

Only that fast is good which helps us move toward that transformation of self and society whose achievement is the ultimate end of our worship on Yom Kippur.

Kol Nidrei is chanted dramatically at the beginning of the evening service for Yom Kippur. It proclaims null and void those vows and promises that we may make and fail to fulfill in the coming year. We, therefore, begin Yom Kippur with a recognition that our best intentions can go astray. We admit that we've failed to keep our promises in the past, and knowing ourselves, there's a good chance we are going to fail again this year! Thank you, God, for knowing our shortcomings and understanding that we'll try to do better! But ...

Let now an Infinite Presence teach us a gentleness that transcends force and melts our hardness of heart. Then shall we be sensitive to the needs of our neighbors and responsive to their pleas.

All who struggle vainly for attention;

and those who shrink from another's touch.

All whose faces we forget from one encounter to the next;

and those who never seem to find a resting-place in the family of the secure.

All whose ambition exceeds their skill;

and those whose early promise has dimmed to small achievement.

All whose minds are clouded or weak;

and those who are burdened with broken bodies.

All who wait in pain only for death;

and those who wait for news that never comes.

Those who are unloved, with none to love;

all widows and widowers, abandoned husbands and wives, neglected children.

All who are deprived by the callousness of others.

and all who have been driven from their homes by wars they never made.

To all these, O God, may we respond with open hearts!

We have sinned against life by failing to work for peace.

We have sinned against life by keeping silent in the face of injustice.

We have sinned against life by ignoring those who suffer in distant lands.

We have sinned against life by forgetting the poor in our own midst.

We have failed to respect those made in the image of God.

We have withheld our love from those who depend on us.

We have engaged in gossip and in repeated slander.

We have distorted the truth for our own advantage.

We have conformed to fashion and not to conscience.

We have indulged in despair and trafficked with cynics.

We have given meager support to our houses of study.

We have neglected our heritage of learning.

We have sinned against ourselves and paid scant heed to the life of the spirit.

We have sinned against ourselves and have not risen to fulfill the best that is in us.

For all these sins, O God of mercy, forgive us, pardon us, grant us atonement.

all rise

Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto the One who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above, and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world. He is our God; there is none else.

We therefore bow in awe and reverence before the One who is Sovereign over all, the Holy and Blessed One.

(On Yom Kippur, some Jews prostrate themselves before the Lord, some bow, others bend, some remain erect.)

all are seated

When God revealed the Torah, no bird chirped, no fowl beat its wings, no ox bellowed, the angels did not sing, the sea did not stir, no creature uttered a sound; the world was silent and still, and the Divine Voice spoke: “I, the Lord, am your God.”

I, the Lord, am your God who led you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods besides Me.

You shall not invoke the name of the Lord your God with malice.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet.

Thus pledged to play a redemptive role in the world’s unfolding destiny, Israel journeyed on from Sinai and reached the Promised Land, the land they loved, and which seemed to love them in return. On one of its mountains they built a city Jerusalem, and on top of the mountain, a temple, symbol of the splendor of God.

But no city is eternal; no temple stands forever. Centuries passed... Israel stumbled and fell. The city was stormed, the Temple burned to ashes, the flower of the nation carried captive to the conquerors’ land.

When the exiles returned to Jerusalem; they laughed for joy; the Lord had done great things for them and with full hearts they dedicated a new temple to the Eternal One. Here the ancient forms of worship were resumed and new ones evolved—chief among them, the Day of Atonement!

(In the days of the first temple many rituals were performed. The High Priests, robed in gold, burned incense, offered sacrifices, released a goat into the wilderness as a symbol of the people's longing to be rid of sin. Then three times the High Priest recited a confession of sins: first, for himself and his family, and for all the priests and then for the whole House of Israel. The rituals of the ancient temple have ended; the rites we practice descended from those early traditions. The rabbis wear white as a symbol of purity.)

We pray not only for ourselves, but for the Jewish people as a whole, whose destiny is our own, and whose hope we share. How much there is in the life of our people that is unworthy of its noble past and its high calling!

Some have strayed from their ancestral faith, and broken the chain of tradition.

Some have despised their birthright, and treated their heritage with contempt.

Some have dishonored the Sabbath and desecrated the Festive Days.

Some are deaf to the music of Mitzvot, and they shut their eyes to the beauty of holiness.

Some have made idols of professional advancement, social status, and material reward.

Some, while pretending to love humanity, have withheld from their own people the love they deserve.

Some have forgotten that Judaism calls us to love and to serve others.

Some, by their wrong actions, or by their failure to act, have brought dishonor to our people.

In our communal life needless conflict and groundless hatred destroy the unity of Israel.

And in the name of unity we sometimes disregard the greater virtue of integrity.

Self-seeking leaves little room for self-sacrifice,
and our high-sounding words are rarely translated into action.

You are My witnesses, says the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen that you may know Me, and trust Me, and understand that I am the One. Before Me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after Me. I, I alone am the Lord, and besides Me there is no savior.

God chose us. We chose God. There is a mystery here that reason cannot solve nor cynicism dismiss. We can deny that mystery, or we can humbly recognize it, each resolving to be a part of it.

The earth's crust is soaked with the tears of the innocent. The blood of every race cries out from the ground. Which is the people without its martyrs?

Now, therefore, we honor those of every race and continent: the innocent, the victims, all our companions in death and our partners in grief. Them we honor, them we mourn: may they never be forgotten; may a better world grow out of their suffering.

Today let us remember the earth's oppressed; let us restore their human heritage to the victims of torture, the weak and the weary, all who are imprisoned without cause. Let us remember them, bring peace to every home, and comfort to every heart. We know the wisdom by which You would have us live; oceans of ink have been spilled to say it: be faithful, be true, love one another as you love yourselves. But the world is dark, Lord, and cold with fear and rage. The hammer of Chaos beats loudly. How can we endure?

Lord, today we turn to You, uncertainly proclaiming Your glory with scarce remembered words of a half-forgotten faith. We have confessed our sins and promised to forsake them. O find us as we grope for You in our darkness. Lord, pardon us as we knock on Your door, for it has been said: The gates of repentance are never barred. And it has been taught: We know our sin is pardoned when we no longer commit it.

Use us, Lord, to speed the day of reconciliation when poverty, racial prejudice, and religious hatred no longer threaten to destroy us;

when violence, angry conflict, and mistrust are forgotten evils;

when our wealth is used to feed the hungry and heal the sick;

when we cherish the world and hold it in trust for our children's children;

when the weak become strong, and the strong compassionate;

and that which has been commanded shall come to pass.

Praise the Lord, to whom our praise is due! Praised be the Lord, to who our praise is due, now and forever! Praised be the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us the Torah. Blessed is the Lord, Giver of the Torah.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the whole community of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

Revere your mother and father, and keep My sabbaths; I, the Lord, am your God. Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molten gods; I, the Lord, am your God.

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap the corners of your field, and do not glean the fallen ears of your crop. Nor may you strip your vineyard bare, nor gather the overlooked grapes; you must leave them for the poor and the stranger.

You must not steal; you must not act deceitfully nor lie to one another. And you must not swear falsely by My name, profaning the name of your God; I am the Lord.

You must not oppress your neighbor. Do not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer should not remain with you overnight until morning. Do not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind: show reverence for your God.

Do not pervert justice, neither by favoring the poor nor by deferring to the powerful: you must judge your neighbor justly. You must not go about slandering your kin, nor may you stand by idly when your neighbor's blood is being shed.

You shall not hate your brother or sister in your heart. Rather, you must reason with your kin, so that you do not incur guilt on their account. But you must not seek vengeance, nor bear a grudge against your kin; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

You shall rise in the presence of the aged and show respect for the old.

When strangers live with you in your land, you must not oppress them. The strangers who live with you shall be to you like citizens, and you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Do not pervert justice when you measure length, weight or quantity. You must have honest scales, honest weights, honest dry and liquid measure; I, the Lord, am your God who led you out of the land of Egypt. You shall observe all my statutes and precepts, and do them; I am the Lord.

Praised be the Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life. Blessed is the Lord, Giver of the Torah.

Behold, a good doctrine has been given to us. Do not forsake it. It is a tree of life to those who hold it dear, and all who cling to it find happiness. Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.

Lord, Your earth yields enough to satisfy the needs of every living creature, but human greed thwarts your purposes, and countless of Your children go hungry and naked. Great plenty and abject poverty, unrestrained power and utter helplessness exist side by side.

We are taught that all people are Your children, whatever their belief, whatever their shade of skin. You have ordained one law for rich and poor, one law for woman, child, and man. And we today, like those who came before us, are summoned to right the ancient wrongs in obedience to Your holy word.

We often forget. Pride of possession, greed for wealth, fear of losing what we have—these blind us, and we forget: we who were strangers and slaves, we who have felt the sting of injustice, the terror of exile, the torment of inquisition, we who feel them still: how can we forget?

On this day of self-examination, O God, teach us to search our ways and to acknowledge that we have not been sufficiently mindful of our neighbors. We confess that in trying to keep what we have, we give too little thought to those in need.

Inspire us, O God, to recognize and to help those men and women of vision who see the needs of others and try to assist them; may we, in our daily pursuits, help to better the world through generous sympathy and personal sacrifice.

As I look into the recesses of my heart on the Day of Days, I am reminded of the sacred obligations that have been placed upon me as a member of a congregation in the Household of Israel. I recall how parents and teachers and friends impressed upon me the beauty of holiness. I am pledged to discharge my duties. Now as I aspire toward maturity of mind and heart, may I not be heedless of my faith nor neglectful of my responsibilities. Grant me a firmness of purpose and a loyal disposition that I may never shirk my task nor fail in the hour of testing. May I stand ready to assume my share of the duties of the congregation and the community of which I am a part, to uphold the hands of those who are giving of themselves to serve humanity, and increasingly to understand my own life as an opportunity for service. Grant that my daily life demonstrate the sincerity of my professions. Toward the poor and the

needy, toward the bearers of burdens and the sad of heart, toward those who lead and those who follow, toward those of vision and insight, toward every Jew, toward every person, may I so act as to merit their approval and Your blessing. Amen.

We are feeble; we live always on the brink of death. Scarcely ushered into life, we begin our journey to the grave. Our best laid plans are ever at risk; our fondest hopes are buried with us. Ambition drives us on to high exertion; indulgence makes us waste the powers we have and evil seduces us to heap misery upon others. Success and failure, love and hatred, pleasure and pain mark our days from birth to death. We prevail, only to succumb; we fail, only to renew the struggle.

The eye is never satisfied with seeing; endless are the desires of the heart. We devise new schemes on the graves of a thousand disappointed hopes. Like Moses on Mount Nebo, we behold the promised land from afar but may not enter it. Our life, at its best, is an endless effort for a goal we never attain. Death finally terminates the struggle, and joy and grief, success and failure, all are ended. Like children falling asleep over their toys, we relinquish our grasp on earthly possessions only when death overtakes us. Master and servant, rich and poor, strong and feeble, wise and simple, all are equal in death. The grave levels all distinctions and makes the whole world kin.

For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

You sweep us away; we are like a dream at daybreak; we come and go like grass which in the morning shoots up, renewed, and in the evening fades and withers.

O God, Author of life and death, our wisdom is small, our vision short. One by one our companions, passing along the road of life, disappear from our view. We know that each must walk the same path to the doorway of the grave. We strain to see what lies beyond the gate, but all is darkness to our mortal sight.

You have created us in Your image. You have put eternity into our hearts and implanted within us a vision of life everlasting. This hope we cherish in humility and faith, trusting in Your endless goodness and Your wondrous love. Into your hands we commit the spirits of our dear ones, for you keep faith with Your children in death as in life.

If some messenger were to come to us with the offer that death should be overthrown, but with the one inseparable condition that birth should also cease; if the existing generation were given the chance to live forever, but on the clear understanding that never again would there be a child, or a youth, or first love, never again new persons with new hopes, new ideas, new achievements; ourselves for always and never any others—could the answer be in doubt?

We shall not fear the summons of death; we shall remember those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us!

Let us treasure the time we have, and resolve to use it well, counting each moment precious—a chance to apprehend some truth, to experience beauty, to conquer some evil, to relieve some suffering, to love and be loved, to achieve something of lasting worth.

Help us, Lord, to fulfill the promise that is in each of us, and so to conduct ourselves that generations hence, it will be true to say of us: The world is better because for a brief space, they lived in it!

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in rights paths for the sake of His name. Even when I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for You are with me; with rod and staff You comfort me. You have set a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have annointed my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

O Lord of life, our times are in Your hand. One generation comes into the world to be blessed with days of peace and safety; another goes through the valley of the shadow enduring the cruelties of persecution and war. Heartbreaking have been the times that have fallen to our lot, O God. We have lived through years of tyranny and destruction; we are schooled in sorrow and acquainted with grief. We have seen the just defeated, the innocent driven from their homes, and the righteous suffer a martyrdom as merciless as any ages have witnessed.

At this hour of memorial we recall with grief all Your children who have perished through the cruelty of the oppressor, victims of demonic hate: the aged and young, the learned and unlettered—all driven in multitudes along the road of pain and pitiless death. Their presence on earth was begrudged them, for they brought Your covenant of mercy and justice to the recollection of Your enemies; they perished because they were a symbol of Your eternal law; their death has brought darkness to the human soul.

They lie in nameless graves, in far-off forests and lonely fields. And the substance of many was scattered by the winds to the earth's four corners. Yet they shall not be forgotten. We take them into our hearts and give them a place beside the cherished memories of our own loved ones. They now are ours.

We pray to You, O Source of mercy, that Your Torah, to which these Your children bore witness in life and in death, may come to glow with a renewed light in the human soul; that remembering them, we may sanctify Your name in all the world. Thus will their memory become an enduring blessing to all Your children.

We remember with sorrow those whom death has taken from us...

Taking these dear ones into our hearts with all our beloved, we recall them now with reverence.

In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

In the beginning of the year and when it ends, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.

all rise

MOURNER'S KADDISH

Yit ga dal ve yit ka dash

she mei raba

be al ma di ve ra chi re u tei,

ve yam lich mal chu tei

be cha yei chon

uve yo mei chon u ve cha yei

de chol beit Yis ra eil,

ba a ga la u vi ze man ka riv,

ve ime ru a mein.

Ye hei she mei ra ba me va rach

le a lam u le ai mei al ma ya

Yit ba rach ve yish ta bach,

ve yit pa ar ve yi ro mam

ve yit na sei,

ve yit ha dar ve yit a leh ve yit ha lal

she mei de ku de sha, be rich hu,

le ei la min kol bi re cha ta

ve shi ra ta,

tush be cha ta ve ne che mata,

da a mi ran be al ma, ve i me ru: amein.

Ye hei she la ma ra ba min she ma ya ve cha yim

a lei nu ve al kol Yis ra eil, ve i me ru: a mein.

O she sha lom be me ro mav, hu ya a she sha lom a lei nu ve al kol Yis ra eil,

ve i me ru: a mein.

all are seated

English translation (silent)

Let the glory of God be extolled, let His great name be hallowed in the world whose creation He willed. May His kingdom soon prevail, in our own day, our own lives, and the life of all Israel, and let us say: Amen.

Let His great name be blessed for ever and ever.

Let the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, be glorified, exalted and honored, though He is beyond all the praises, songs and adorations that we can utter, and let us say: Amen. For us and for all Israel, may the blessing peace and the promise of life come true, and let us say: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens, let peace descend on us, on all Israel, and all the world, and let us say: Amen.

May the Source of peace send peace to all who mourn, and comfort to all who are bereaved. Amen.

Grant us peace, Your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of peace, and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the people of the earth. Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace, and its advocate among the nations. May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes. Strengthen the bonds of friendship among all the inhabitants of all lands; and may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart. Teach us, O God, to labor for righteousness, and seal us in the Book of life, blessing and peace. Blessed is the Eternal God, the Source of peace.

For transgressions against God, the Day of Atonement atones; but for transgressions of one human being against another, The Day of Atonement does not atone, until they have made peace with one another.

Our God and God of all generations, pardon our sins on this Day of Atonement; sweep away our transgressions and misdeeds, that they vanish from Your sight.

Blessed is the Lord, whose forgiving love annuls our trespasses year after year. God of all the world, You hallow the House of Israel and the Day of Atonement.

God of awesome deeds, grant us pardon, as the gates begin to close.

all rise

God, we stand in awe before Your deeds.

To You we pour out our souls; blot out our sins, our dishonest ways; grant us pardon, as the gates begin to close.

God, we stand in awe before Your deeds.

Be our refuge and shield us from danger; assure us joy and honor, as the gates begin to close.

God, we stand in awe before Your deeds.

Be gracious to us, compassionate; let Your judgment fall on tyrants and those who make war, as the gates begin to close.

God, we stand in awe before Your deeds.

Remember the merits of our mothers and fathers; renew in us their spirit and faith, as the gates begin to close.

O God of awesome deeds, grant us pardon, as the gates begin to close.

all are seated

Our God, let the gates of heaven be open to our plea.

Our God, do not turn us away empty-handed from your presence.

Our God, forgive and pardon all our misdeeds.

Our God, remember that we are dust.

Our God, have compassion on us and on our children.

Our God, let the new year be a good year for us.

Our God, seal us for blessing in the Book of Life.

Our God, give strength to Your people.

Our God, make an end to all oppression.

Our God, hasten the time of our redemption.

Our God, God of our mothers and fathers, we have gone astray, we have transgressed. We all have committed offenses; together we confess these human sins:

The sins of arrogance, bigotry, and cynicism; of deceit and egotism, flattery and greed, injustice and jealousy.

Some of us have kept grudges, were lustful, malicious, or narrow-minded.

Others were obstinate or possessive, quarrelsome, rancorous, or selfish.

There was violence, weakness of will, xenophobia.

We yielded to temptation, and showed zeal for bad causes.

Many of our works are vain, and our days pass away like a shadow. Since all our achievements are as insubstantial as mist, how can we look upon ourselves as higher than the beasts? Yet from the beginning You set us apart to stand erect before you. And in Your love, You have given us this Day of Atonement, that our sins may cease and be forgiven, and that turning away from violence and oppression, we may turn back to You and do Your will with a perfect heart.

Now send forth Your hidden light and open to Your servants the gates of help. O great Lord, in Your justice and Your perfect love, open for us wisdom's gates. Open for us the gates of righteousness and we shall enter, to praise the Lord. Open the gates; open them wide. We knock at Your gates; do not turn us away empty-handed. Open the gates, Lord: open the gates for us. Open the gates of blessing for us all.

The gates of atonement, benevolence, and compassion,

The gates of dignity, excellence, and faith,

Generosity and hope, insight and joy,

Kindness and love, melody and nobility,

openness, purity, and quietude,

renewal, simplicity, and truth

The gates of understanding and virtue

The gates of wonder and zest.

Open the gates; open them wide.

Open the gates, Lord; show us the way to enter.

Open the gates for us, even now, even now, when the gates are closing, and the day begins to fade. Oh, the day is fading, the sun is setting; let us enter Your gates!

The day is fading; the sun is setting; the silence and peace of evening descend upon the earth. Give rest now, O Author of peace to our troubled hearts; lift up the spirit oppressed by guilt. Turn, O Loved One, to Your children; turn to every broken heart and every burdened soul. Let us at this hour be sure of Your forgiveness.

From Your house, Lord, we are about to return to our own homes. Enter them with us, that they may become your sanctuaries, dwelling-places of Your spirit. Then will our home stand firm against the storms of life, to be a shelter for all that is good, and a refuge from evil.

Now as evening falls, light dawns within us; hope and trust revive. The shadow that darkened our spirit is vanished; and through the passing cloud there breaks, with the last rays of the setting sun, the radiance of Your forgiving peace.

all rise

Hear, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One!

She ma yis ra el A do nai Elohaynu, A do nai ek had!

(seven times)

The Shofar sounds: **GEDOLAH!**

And now, at the close of this day's service, we implore You, O Lord our God:

Let the year upon which we have entered be for us, for Israel, all for all the world, a year of blessing and prosperity.

Amen

A year of salvation and comfort.

Amen

A year of peace and contentment, of joy and of spiritual welfare.

Amen

A year of virtue and of reverence for God

Amen

A year that finds the hearts of parents united with the hearts of their children.

Amen

A year of Your pardon and favor.

Amen

May the Lord bless our going out and our coming in from this time forth and forever.
May the Lord cause his face to shine upon us and give us peace.

Amen.