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Mahzor Hadesh Yameinu

◆ RENEW ◆  
OUR ◆ DAYS

A Prayer-Cycle for Days of Awe

kehillah  
SYNAGOGUE



Edited and translated by Rabbi Ron Aigen

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*Second Printing, 2004*

*Third Printing, 2007*

*Fourth Printing, 2018*

Original papercuts by Diane Palley copyright © 2001, Diane Palley

*Page Designer:* Associès Libres

*Formatting:* English and Transliteration by Associès Libres, Hebrew by Resolvis

*Cover Design:* Jonathan Kremer

Printed in Canada

ISBN 0-9696927-3-0

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We gratefully acknowledge the following authors, publishers and copyright holders for their permission to reprint the following material in this volume:

**ACUM** (Association of Authors, Composers and Editors of Music in Israel) for “*Yerushah*” by Haim Guri; “*Ha-Tishma Kali*” by Rachel; “*Yesh Kokhavim*” by Hannah Szenes and “*Le-Khol Ish Yesh Shem*” by Zelda.

**Jason Aronson Publishers Inc.** for notes on “*Kol Nidrei*” by Jeffrey M. Cohen from PRAYER AND PENITENCE: A COMMENTARY ON THE HIGH HOLIDAY MAHZOR by Jeffrey M. Cohen, Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, copyright ©1983, 1994.

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**Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.** for “A Continual Process,” “Responsibility - Seeking the Hand of God,” “Entering the Synagogue,” “Prayer is Meaningless Unless,” “Home is Where Prayer is” and “A Sanctuary Within” by Abraham Joshua Heschel; excerpts from THE EARTH IS THE LORD’S by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Copyright © 1949 by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Copyright renewed 1977 by Sylvia Heschel. THE INSECURITY OF FREEDOM by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Copyright © 1966 by Abraham Joshua Heschel. Copyright renewed 1994 by Sylvia Heschel. MORAL GRANDEUR AND SPIRITUAL AUDACITY by Abraham Joshua Heschel, edited by Ruth Goodhill. Copyright © 1975 by Sylvia Heschel. Reprinted by permission of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, LLC.

**Gabriella Gilboa** for “Isaac” by Amir Gilboa, translation by Shirly Kaufman.

**Rabbi Arthur Green** for “A *Kavanah* for *Rosh Ha-Shanah*” and “A *Kavanah* for *Attah Yodei’a Razei ‘Olam*” by Arthur Green and Andre Unger and “A Community of Souls” by Arthur Green.

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- Jewish Lights Publishing** for “A Prayer of the Rabbis” by Lawrence Kushner, excerpt from EYES REMADE FOR WONDER: A LAWRENCE KUSHNER READER pp.217: “A Teacher’s Blessing: *Berakhot* 17a,” copyright © 1998 by Lawrence Kushner. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, PO Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091.
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- Rabbi Richard Levy** for “The Season of Teshuvah,” “*Unetaneh Tokef*,” “How the World Should Be Governed” and “A Kavanah for the *Avodah* Service” by Richard Levy.
- Prof. Daniel Matt** for “The Sound of the Shofar” by Hershel Matt and “Light of Creation” by Prof. Daniel Matt.
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- Clarise E. Patton** for “Each Year” by Kenneth Patton.
- Paulist Press** for “Returning to Oneself,” “The Light of the Ideal,” “The Difference Prayer Makes,” “The Need for Prayer” and “The Whispers of Existence” and commentaries by Rav Kook. Excerpts from ABRAHAM ISAAC KOOK: The Lights of Penitence, The Moral Principles, Lights of Holiness, Essays, Letters, and Poems; translation and introduction by Ben Zion Bokser, copyright © 1978 by Ben Zion Bokser. Used with permission of Paulist Press. www.paulistpress.com.
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- RSGB** (Reform Synagogues of Great Britain) for “Introduction to *Eilleh Ezkerah*,” “The Still Centre” and “The Final Shofar Blast” by Jonathan Magonet and for all other passages from FORMS OF PRAYER FOR JEWISH WORSHIP, Vol. III, London: The Reform Synagogue of Great Britain, copyright © 1985.
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- Prof. Ray Scheindlin** for the translation of “I Look Up to the Sky” by Ray Scheindlin.

- Schocken Publishing House Ltd.** for “*Tiyyul Yehudi*,” “*Tanakh, Tanakh, Itakh, Itakh, U-Midrashim Arerim*,” “*Berayyai, Berayyai*” and “*Ellim Mifralfim, Ha-Tefillot Nisharot La'ad*” from *PATU'AH, SAGUR, PATU'AH “La-Em*” from *SHIRIM*; “*Beterem*” from ‘*OD SHIREI AHAVAH* and “*Nefesh Ha-adam*” from *GAM HA-EGROF HAYA PA'AM YAD PATU'HAH VE-ETZBA'OT* by Yehuda Amichai copyright © World Copyright Schocken Publishing House Ltd., Tel Aviv, Israel.
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- UAHC** (Union of American Hebrew Congregation) for the translations of *Jeremiah 31:1-19* and *I Samuel 1:1-2:10* from THE HAFTARAH COMMENTARY, ed. W. Gunther Plaut, Chaim Stern and S. David Sperling, New York: UAHC Press, copyright © 1996 by UAHC.
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- Elie Wiesel** for “Jews, Do Not Despair!” by Elie Wiesel.
- Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg** for translations of “*Ke-Ayal Ta'arog*” and “*Kokhevei Boker*” by Jonathan Wittenberg.
- Shulamis Yelin** for her poem, “Prayer for the Finite I” from SEEDED IN SINAI, New York: Reconstructionist Press, copyright © 1975, Shulamis Yelin.

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In addition to the above, I want to express my gratitude to my spiritual community, Congregation Dorshei Emet, for its continued support and inspiration. This book is largely a reflection of the High Holiday experience we have created together over the past twenty-five years, using the 1948 *Reconstructionist High Holiday Prayer Book* of Mordecai Kaplan, building upon the tradition of our community's founder, Rabbi Lavy Becker, and enriched by the supplements we have developed over the years. Another major influence upon the development of our service has come from the *Forms of Prayer Mahzor*, as well as from the generosity of my colleagues, Rabbis Lee Friedlander, Michael Luckens and Larry Pinsker, who have regularly shared their supplementary reading files. Once again, grateful appreciation is rendered to Dora and Avrum Morrow, for their steadfast loyalty and devotion to the creative potential of Dorshei Emet.

While I bear full responsibility for all editorial decisions and any errors that remain, this project would not have been possible without the help of the following people to whom I am deeply indebted: First and foremost, thanks go to Joel Linsider, my copy editor, whose scholarly examination of the Hebrew texts and English translations yielded numerous invaluable suggestions that improved the overall content and quality significantly. In the course of this project Joel has become an esteemed colleague and a friend. Next, the book benefitted greatly from the work of my editorial committee: Murray Baron, Irv Binik, Eric Caplan, Miriam Cohen, Chava Dienar, Donnie Frank, Aviva Ravel and the late Ruth Richler, *z"l*. Their collective knowledge of Hebrew, their sensitivity to clarity and poetry in both languages, their commitment to Reconstructionist theology and the tradition of Dorshei Emet as well as to the tradition of the liturgy, and their willingness to debate the tension between tradition and modernity made these past four years a richly rewarding experience that I will always treasure. I am deeply grateful to Barry Frank, our indispensable Hebrew/English proof reader, whose grammatical expertise and diligence made this book as flawless as humanly possible. Warm thanks go to Lise Winer and Laura Winer, who graciously contributed to the English proof reading with consummate skill and equanimity. The office staff, Sophie Katz and Kitty Samberg, provided the administrative support of sending meeting notifications, tracking copyright permissions, and performing many more thankless tasks that deserve acknowledgment.

In the artwork department, thanks once again are extended to Jonathan Kremer for his cover design. It has been a special pleasure and a great delight to

have spent the past two and half years working with Diane Palley in developing the fourteen newly commissioned papercuts. Diane's good-natured willingness to share ideas and discuss how best to illustrate the major themes of the Days of Awe, together with her very creative talents, resulted in an exquisite precedent for Jewish liturgical art.

All of the above efforts would have been for nought without the production artist who set the text on the page and gave it physical form. In this domain we were blessed to have had the extraordinary expertise and personal devotion of one of the top page designers in the field. Yolande Martel's impeccable aesthetic sense, her keen eye in both English and Hebrew (both second languages to her!) and her love for the project itself were combined to translate my vision into reality. It is rare that the reality exceeds the envisioned ideal, but Yolande has done just that. *Merci infiniment*. I would also like to add a *todah rabbah* to Yoni Karpfen for his meticulous assistance in setting the cantillation marks for the Hebrew Torah and Haftarah passages. My appreciation of Carmela, Razielle, Nadav and Gila, though not expressed often enough, is nevertheless deeply felt. You have been my greatest teachers in learning the meaning of *teshuvah*.

RSA

REHIMAN  
SYNAGOGUE

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## PREFACE

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*by Rabbi David Hartman*

The Jewish festival year is divided between two fundamental motifs. On the one hand, most holidays are related to specific events in history, which shaped the collective identity of the Jewish people. There is Passover, the struggle for freedom; Shavuot, the commitment to the covenant and to the Ten Commandments; Sukkot, the festival of trust and joy; Ḥanukkah, the struggle for religious freedom; Purim, liberation from the threat of Haman's scheme of genocide; Tish'a Be-Av, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; Yom Ha-Atzma'ut, Independence Day, the freedom and dignity that come with political independence. All these festivals have one fundamental thing in common: they bind Jews to each other by reminding them of their common destiny. They enrich our communal memories and solidarity.

Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, however, have no connection to any particular event in Jewish history. According to Jewish teaching, Rosh Ha-Shanah celebrates the creation of the world. The central motif that repeats itself again and again in the liturgy of Rosh Ha-Shanah is the proclamation of God as sovereign. The shofar is sounded on Rosh Ha-Shanah to announce the divine coronation. We all gather and proclaim with awe and trepidation God's sovereignty over all of humanity. How is this proclamation channeled into the way we live our daily life? How do we show allegiance to the God we proclaim as sovereign on Rosh Ha-Shanah?

The prophets taught us that God's dominion in history must be built upon ethical foundations. For them, God's majestic power in history must be visible in the way society is structured around principles of social justice, in the way we respond to the needs of the poor and the stranger. The belief in God as universal sovereign prevents Jewish spirituality from being identified with ghettoization or with feelings of alienation from and disillusionment with humanity.

On Rosh Ha-Shanah we proclaim the universal dominion of God throughout the world. Judaism teaches that all of humanity is morally accountable to God; all creatures must recognize that life is a gift and that there is a divine purpose for all of human life. Rosh Ha-Shanah proclaims the centrality of the idea of Creation, of a

universal brotherhood of humankind, of a universal ethic that declares the dignity of the single human life. “Belove is man, for he is created in the divine image.” “He who saves one life is as if he saves an entire world.” This profound principle of the singular dignity of every individual grows from the Rosh Ha-Shanah festival.

Rosh Ha-Shanah, therefore, gives the Jewish people a universal framework grounded in Creation, and not a family framework grounded in their particular history. Jews were not meant to live in isolation from the world, to build a sense of internal life which lives in conflict with the world. Ultimately, Jewish particularity must be integrated into the notion of God as the universal sovereign of all humanity.

Rosh Ha-Shanah is a permanent challenge to build bridges of understanding with all human beings created in the image of God who is sovereign over all of humanity. Rosh Ha-Shanah calls on Jews to act in such a way that the world senses that there is one God for all of humankind. Rosh Ha-Shanah shows Jews and the world that Jewish particularity and Jewish family connections are not antithetical to a universal ethic.

How does Yom Kippur complement the experience of God's coronation ceremony on Rosh Ha-Shanah? In placing these two festivals next to each other, I believe that the tradition sought to remind us that God's commanding moral presence, the seriousness with which we are to take God's moral imperatives, must never evoke paralyzing feelings of sin, guilt, and moral inadequacy. The God who is proclaimed sovereign on Rosh Ha-Shanah is felt on Yom Kippur to be a loving parent who constantly accepts the human frailties of his children and keeps open the doors of moral renewal.

Yom Kippur breathes the spirit of *teshuvah*, of repentance and reconciliation, of freeing oneself from the prejudices and moral failures of the past. Yom Kippur announces a vision of hope, of rebirth, of discovering new potentialities for human love within society. The phrase that clings to us throughout Yom Kippur is “Remember us for life.” The word *hayyim* (life) is repeated countless times throughout the liturgy. Contrary to what most people believe, there is no sadness or mourning on Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur celebrates the passion and vitality of life. According to many halakhic authorities, it is a day of joyous reflection, nurtured by a deep conviction that human moral potential has not yet been fully realized. Yom Kippur gives us the courage to dream and to work for a new future .

Neither the move toward isolation nor the move toward the universal reflects the full experience of the Jewish tradition. To live as a full Jew is to live intensely and

with total commitment to Jewish particularity, and equally to share in the universal framework of Creation celebrated in the holiday of Rosh Ha-Shanah.

Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur are catalytic spiritual forces bringing us into deep moral dialogue with the world. We live in the intense polar rhythm of family intimacy and universal solidarity. Those in the Jewish world who seek to bring us back to a mentality of Jewish isolation and suffering have not learned the message of Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur. Those who abandon the depth of commitment to the family and to Jewish historical intimacy in the name of universalism have not learned the lesson of the total Jewish festival year. To live as a full Jew is to live in both rhythms, in the framework of Jewish history and in the framework of Creation.



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## INTRODUCTION

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“Days of Awe,” *Yamim Nora’irn*. That is the Hebrew name given to the festivals of the Jewish New Year, *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, and the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. There are many reasons why “awe” should be the term of reference. In biblical times, the day which the rabbis later designated as Rosh Ha-Shanah was known simply as a “Day of Shofar Blasts” or a “Remembrance Day of Shofar Blasts.” It is not clear what significance this day was meant to have in ancient times. But if we can imagine hearing the pure, piercing cry of the ram’s horn sounded throughout the community, we immediately begin to experience the awakening of the raw, primal emotions that this day has come to evoke — fear and trembling, the majesty of a commanding presence, triumphant joy and celebration. Indeed, those Torah narratives associated with the ram’s horn are the most awe-inspiring stories of our tradition. These narratives — the Binding of Isaac, the Giving of the Torah at Sinai, the Sin of the Golden Calf — form the basis for the liturgy of the Days of Awe. In these emotionally laden stories we confront moral decision-making of the highest order and deal with issues of life and death, both literally and figuratively. Our prayers on these days pose questions of ultimate concern: “who shall live and who shall die?” or, in a contemporary paraphrase, “who shall be truly alive and who shall merely exist?”

These are Days of Awe because on these days, our rabbis tell us, judgment is passed on all human beings, indeed, on all the world. Rosh Ha-Shanah is referred to in the liturgy as *Yom Ha-Din*, Judgment Day and *Yom HaZikkaron*, Day of Remembrance. The tenor of these ten days from the Jewish New Year through the Day of Atonement is therefore reflective, but not morose. We invoke collective and individual memories of the past to reflect upon the human condition, the state of our world, and the meaning of our lives. With each passing year, such reflection, such *heshbon ha-nefesh*, or soul-searching, becomes that much more poignant and that much more necessary.

The prayers uttered on these days reflect our heightened awareness of the fragility of human life — of our shortcomings, imperfections, regrets and failures. Still, the



overall message is nevertheless a positive one. Our prayers tell us, “God does not want the death of the sinner, but rather that one turn from one’s evil ways and live.” The message of these Days of Awe is ultimately one of hope and confidence. These days reassure us, above all, that we have within us the ability to change our lives for the better, and that the possibility of change is always open to us.

This empowering concept of change is the meaning of *teshuvah*, the main task and ultimate purpose of the Days of Awe. Traditionally interpreted as “repentance” or “penitence,” which connotes a psychological state of regret, the Hebrew is better reflected in the more active notion of “turning” or “return.” Our sages clearly stood in awe of the act of *teshuvah*. Rabbi Levi said: “Great is *teshuvah*, for it reaches up to the Throne of Glory.” Rabbi Jonathan said: “Great is *teshuvah*, for it brings about redemption.” Rabbi Jonathan also said: “Great is *teshuvah*, for it prolongs the days and years of a person’s life.” Rabbi Hama ben Hana said: “Great is *teshuvah*, for it brings healing to the world” (*Talmud, Yoma 86a-b*).

The book you now hold in your hands is our guide on this journey of *teshuvah*. The prayers and stories that accompany us span the three-thousand-year-old Jewish literary tradition. Through biblical imagery, poetry of ancient sages and mystics, teachings of Hasidic masters, philosophers and modern thinkers — all punctuated by the piercing sounds of shofar blasts — this book celebrates the creation of the universe, the birth of humanity, and the re-birth of our own human potential. Through prayers and narratives that span the millennia of Jewish life, this book invokes God’s Power, Memory and Vision, the inspired memories of legendary martyrs and personal memories of our own deceased relatives. It re-enacts ancient rites of atonement and cultivates in us the spirit of forgiveness. By the end of the journey, we come to realize that the redeeming, triumphant, healing power of *teshuvah* can indeed be discovered within us.

*Mahzor*, from the Hebrew root “cycle, return,” is the term historically used for prayer books for the annual cycle of festivals. In contrast to the *siddur*, which provides only the “order of prayers,” the *mahzor* includes the scriptural readings for each festival as well as its distinctive prayers and rituals. *Mahzor* suggests a “prayer-cycle” in the sense of being a spiritual response to the cycle of life, as well as the cycle of the year; it is the cycle of prayer and ritual to which we annually return. In contemporary

usage and practice, “*mahzor*” is often limited to the special prayer books for the Days of Awe, the prayers for other festivals being included in the *siddur*. The *Ḥadesh Yameinu* prayer books adopt that format.

*Mahzor Ḥadesh Yameinu* contains many of the same features found in its companion volume for Shabbat, Festivals and weekdays: a linear, genderneutral translation; a contemporary liberal theology that remains faithful to much of the traditional liturgy; the incorporation of contemporary poetry, meditations, readings and commentary; an introduction to each unit of prayer that serves as a kind of libretto to the service; as well as the inclusion of art. The traditional Jewish art form of papercuts serves not only as an aesthetically pleasing embellishment, but also as a meditative illustration of the liturgy.

There is no need to repeat here all the theological and ideological principles which shaped the translation. One major divergence from *Siddur Ḥadesh Yameinu*, however, deserves explanation. It is the return to the traditional Hebrew phrase *mehayyei meitim*, translated here as “renewing life beyond death” or “who renews life eternally.” In the earlier volume of *Ḥadesh Yameinu* we said that “where previous generations clearly intended a literal understanding of a phrase” we were precluded from assigning it only a symbolic, metaphorical meaning. *Mehayyei meitim*, which the rabbis used to express their hope for “resurrection of the dead” was, in our view, one such phrase. There is a complication, however, in that the rabbis used this same phrase to refer to the more abstract concept of immortality of the soul as well as the literal belief in bodily resurrection. The great medieval philosopher, Maimonides, at the risk of endangering his own career and status within the community, interpreted the concept of *mehayyei meitim* as a metaphorical concept of immortality. He strongly played down, if not outrightly denying, a literal understanding of resurrection.

While we know that the rabbis asserted the dogma of bodily resurrection in opposition to the Sadducees who denied such a belief, there are usages of this phrase, *mehayyei meitim*, which suggest that the rabbis themselves also meant it metaphorically. The prayer they composed to be recited upon seeing a friend for the first time in over a year was: “Blessed are you, *mehayyei meitim*.” Clearly this cannot have been understood as a literal resurrection of the dead, but rather as a powerful metaphor for the renewal of life, in this case the life of a relationship. Hence, “Blessed are you who renews life beyond death,” or “who renews life eternally.”

But more than the debate about how the rabbis originally intended us to understand it, the phrase *mehayyei meitim* seems to have a much more intuitive and powerful resonance during these Days of Awe. The liturgy, as has been noted, directs

us to our concerns about “who shall live and who shall die.” The special emphasis during these days on being inscribed in the Book of Life, and on addressing God as “Sovereign of Life,” and “God of Life” argued in favour of reconsidering the traditional phrase, *meḥayyei meitim*, albeit understood metaphorically. As I heard it interpreted by Rabbi David Hartman, “it is we the living who must give renewed life to the dead by continuing to live out their heritage in a vibrant, meaningful way.” The entire endeavour of doing *teshuvah* is a movement, on a metaphorical level, from death to life. God is the force that exists in the world and is the power within us that makes such renewal possible.

In the language of the tradition, *teshuvah* connotes a return to God, a redirecting of one’s life toward Godly ways. But more immediately, it is a return to one’s people, and a return to one’s own truest self. It is, finally, a coming home. On this journey of return, as we have said, we do not come back unchanged, but quite the opposite. In the act of *teshuvah*, we seek to return as a *briyyah ḥadashah*, a new personality, and to see our familiar world in a radically new way. It is my hope that *Mahzor Ḥadesh Yameinu* will be, for those who use it, a gentle, trustworthy guide on that transformative journey of *teshuvah*, taking us back to God, back to our people, to ourselves; taking us home.

Ronald Aigen

Yam Yerushalayim

5761 Montreal

### Introduction to the Third Printing

In order to meet the requests of so many congregations across the denominational spectrum who wished to adopt *Mahzor Ḥadesh Yameinu* we have created a new “Klal Yisrael edition.” The major liturgical changes are the inclusion of *pokeid sarah* in the Avat blessing of the Amidah, as well as the inclusion of Miriam along with *moshe u-veneï yisrael* in the Ga’al Yisrael prayer. We have also included as an option the traditional versions of the Aleinu, the Torah blessings, and Kiddush. Additional transliteration has been provided to include those who are not yet proficient in reading the Hebrew alphabet, with the hope that they will be inspired and encouraged to develop that skill.



## Introduction to the Fully-Transliterated Fourth Edition

Kehillah Synagogue adopted *Renew Our Days* as their high-holiday prayer book more than a decade ago. It has met the congregation's needs well for those who read Hebrew. A transliteration booklet for a small portion of the Mahzor has been provided in the past to enable partial participation from non-Hebrew readers. However, Rabbi Aigen רב"י recognized the continued need for aids to greater participation and subsequently added additional transliteration to the third edition of this work.

Before Rabbi Aigen's unexpected passing, Howard Glicksman discussed with him the idea of producing a new edition of the Mahzor with full transliteration. Rabbi Aigen was enthusiastic and planned to participate in producing this new edition. Despite his untimely death, Congregation Dorshei Emet has continued their support of this venture, allowing us to complete a fully-transliterated version as the fourth edition of Mahzor *Hadesh Yameinu*.

The initial transliteration was produced from computer files of the Hebrew text by a computer program written by Lee Nackman. This program attempted to reproduce Rabbi Aigen's style of transliteration, as described on pages xxiv and xxv. Since the program is imperfect, Eric Silberman, a student at Hebrew College Rabbinical School, proofread and edited the computer-produced transliteration. Eric's feedback on the program's early transliterations led to further improvements to the original program.

Incorporation of the transliteration was done to maintain the look and feel of the original Mahzor. The design, formatting, and generation of the file for publication was done by Dwight Smith of *Resolvis* and his team, including Rodolfo Borello, Jennifer DeFreitas, and Robert Viens. Eric Silberman's editing and the design of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition were funded by the Kehillah Synagogue through a generous contribution from Howard Glicksman and Lois Bronstein.

*Howard Glicksman & Lee Nackman*

*April 2018*

*Iyyar 5778*

## KEY FOR TRANSLITERATION

<u>Consonants</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Symbol/Pronunciation</u>
א	alef	(silent)
ב	bet	b
בּ	vet	v
ג	gimmel	g
ד	daled	d
ה	heh	h
ו	vav	v
ז	zayin	z
ח	het	ḥ (as in "ḥallah," and "Ḥanukkah")
ט	tet	t
י	yud	y
כ, ך	kaf/final kaf	k
כּ, ךּ	khaf/final khaf	kh (as in "Bach" and "barukh")
ל	lamed	l
מ, ם	mem/final mem	m
נ, ן	nun/final nun	n
ס	samekh	s
ע	ayin	ʿ (glottal stop)
פ	peh	p
פּ, ף	feh/final feh	f
צ, ץ	tzadik/final tzadik	tz (as in "mitzvah")
ק	kuf	k
ר	resh	r
שׁ	shin	sh
שׂ	sin	s
ת	tav	t

<u>Vowels</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Symbol/Pronunciation</u>
ָ, ַ	pataḥ	a (as in "far")
ִ	kamatz	a (as in "ah!")
ֵ	kamatz katan	o (as in "ought")
וּ, ֹ	ḥolam	o (as in "coat")
ֻ, ֺ	kabutz, shuruk	u (as in "flute")
ֶ	sheva na'	e (as in "carpet")
ִ, ֵ	segol	e (as in "let")
ִ, ֵ	tzerei	ei or e (as in "weigh" or "bread")
ִ	ḥirik	i (as in "ink")
<u>Diphthongs</u>		
ַי		ai (as in "aisle")
ַי		ei (as in "weigh")
וַי		oi (as in "boil")

### NOTE

Transliterations of Hebrew passages have been included to promote active participation by those unable to read Hebrew. To that end, we've aimed more for ease of use than scholarly precision, and have adopted the following conventions, recognizing that they may be departed from for the sake of clarity:

1. Hyphens are used to set off articles, prepositions, and conjunctions that are part of the word in Hebrew. (E.g., ha-raḥaman; be-tif' eret.)
2. *Dagesh hazak* is shown by a doubled consonant, except (1) when the consonant is shin, shown as "sh" or tzadi, shown as "tz" and (2) following an element set of by a hyphen.
3. *Sheva na'*  is indicated by an "e", to show that it is sounded.
4. Apostrophes are used to show that two adjacent vowels are pronounced separately and do not form a diphthong. (E.g., ta'ir, ve-yit'haddar.) Alef is shown by the vowel alone, except when an apostrophe is needed to show that the alef starts a new syllable. (E.g., ot; ana; li'rot.)
5. Ayin is shown by a reverse apostrophe before the associated vowel or at the end of the word, except where the word is effectively used as an English term. (E.g., 'olam; yada'; Shema, Amidah.)

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## MEDITATIONS FOR DAYS OF *TESHUVAH*

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### ENTERING THE SYNAGOGUE

What does a person expect to attain when entering the synagogue? In pursuit of learning, one goes to a library; for aesthetic enrichment, one goes to the art museum; for pure music, to the concert hall. What, then, the purpose of going to the synagogue?

Many are the facilities which help us to acquire the important worldly virtues, skills and techniques. But where should one learn about the insights of the spirit? Many are the opportunities for public speech; where are the occasions for inner silence? It is easy to find people who will teach us to be eloquent; but who will teach us how to be still? It is surely important to have a sense of reverence.

Where should one learn the general wisdom of compassion? The fear of being cruel? The danger of being callous? Where should one learn that the greatest truth is found in contrition? Important and precious as the development of our intellectual faculties is, the cultivation of a sensitive conscience is indispensable. We are all in danger of sinking into the darkness of vanity; we are all involved in worshipping our own egos. Where should we become sensitive to the pitfalls of cleverness, or to the realization that expediency is not the acme of wisdom?

We are constantly in need of experiencing moments in which the spiritual is as relevant and as concrete, for example, as the aesthetic. Everyone has a sense of beauty; everyone is capable of distinguishing between the beautiful and the ugly. But we must learn to be sensitive to the spirit. It is in the synagogue where we must try to acquire such inwardness, such sensitivity.

*Abraham Joshua Heschel*



## A LIFELONG JOURNEY

*Teshuvah* essentially represents a lifelong journey back to unflagging soul-searching. It is a response to a spiritual disquiet that gives us the urge for *teshuvah*. Indeed, we feel we are no longer the right person in the right place, we are becoming outsiders in a world whose scheme of things escapes us... The main thrust of *teshuvah* is indeed to show the definite intention of changing the scheme of things. Someone who “does *teshuvah*,” feels the need not only to redeem but to rebuild his or her past.

*Adin Steinsaltz (adapted)*

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## TESHUVAH

We must begin with ourselves, but not end with ourselves. Turning, *teshuvah*, means something greater than repentance and acts of penance. It means that by reversal of one's whole being, a person who had been lost in the maze of selfishness where he had set himself as his goal, finds a way to God, that is, a way to the fulfillment of the particular task for which he has been destined by God. Repentance can only be an incentive to such active reversal. Those who go on fretting themselves with repentance, those who torture themselves with the idea that their acts of penance are not sufficient, withhold their best energies from the work of reversal. It is written: “*Turn from evil and do good*” (*Psalm 34:15*). You have done wrong? Then counteract it by doing right.

*Martin Buber (adapted)*

### THE TEN DAYS

The Blessed Holy One said to Israel: Remake yourselves through *teshuvah* during the ten days between New Year's day and the Day of Atonement, and on the Day of Atonement I will hold you guiltless, regarding you as a newly made creature.

*Pesikta Rabbati*



### SEARCHING

Once our master Rabbi Hayyim of Zans [19th cent.] told a parable:

A man had been wandering about in a forest for several days, not knowing which was the right way out. Suddenly he saw a man approaching him. His heart was filled with joy. "Now I shall certainly find out which is the right way," he thought to himself. When they neared one another, he asked the man, "Brother, tell me which is the right way. I have been wandering about in this forest for several days."

Said the other to him, "Brother, I do not know the way out either. For I too have been wandering about here for many, many days. But this I can tell you: do not take the way I have been taking, for that will lead you astray. And now let us look for a new way out together."

Our master added: "So it is with us. One thing I can tell you: the way we have been following this far we ought follow no further, for that way leads one astray. But now let us look for a new way."

*S.Y. Agnon*



### I LOST MY WAY

I lost my way, I forgot to call on your name. The raw heart beat against the world, and the tears were for my lost victory. But you are here. You have always been here. The world is all forgetting, and the heart is a rage of directions, but your name unifies the heart, and the world is lifted into its place. Blessed is the one who waits in the traveller's heart for his turning.

*Leonard Cohen*

## THE BASIS FOR A NEW LIFE

There are crucial moments in life which may be properly designated as “religious experiences” in the particular sense. They are generally moments of *teshuvah*, “turning” or “returning,” the moment when the contrite self (the “broken heart”), sick of its pretensions, gives up its struggle for self-sufficiency and opens itself to the inflow of divine grace. I do not think that there has ever lived any human being who has not had some such moments. The question is: What is done with the “religious experience”? Is it made the basis for a new life — or is it suppressed and obscured in order to enable the self to reassert its pretensions?

*Will Herberg*

## RETURNING TO ONESELF

When we forget the essence of our own soul, when we distract our minds from attending to the substantive content of our own inner lives, everything becomes confused and uncertain. The primary role of *teshuvah*, which at once sheds light on the darkened zone, is for the person to return to him- or herself, to the root of his or her soul. Then we will at once return to God; to the Soul of all souls. Then we will progress continually, higher and higher, in holiness and in purity. This is true whether we consider the individual, a whole people, or the whole of humanity, or whether we consider the mending of all existence, which always becomes damaged when it forgets itself. If one should envision a return to God, without setting oneself in order, this would be a deceptive *teshuvah*, through which God’s name will be taken in vain. It is only through the great truth of returning to oneself that the person and the people, the world and all the worlds, the whole of existence, will return to their Creator, to be illuminated by the light of life.

*Rav Kook*

### THE LIGHT OF THE IDEAL

When great visions occur to us, which seem beyond our reach, it is important to know that the remoteness is only physical, and is not due to a spiritual deficiency. Therefore, it is necessary to embark on *teshuvah*, so that we might come close to the light of the ideal that has flashed in our thought. But we must avoid depression or self-deprecation that blunts life's vitality. It is to be rather a gentle inner self-criticism, which reduces our unbecoming side and raises our good and gentle essence. As it is written, "*The right hand of the Eternal is exalted, the right hand of the Eternal acts heroically*" (Psalm 118:16).

*Rav Kook*

### A LETTER ON *TESHUVAH*

With the help of God, the eve of the Sacred Sabbath of Return, 5591 [1830].

To my beloved son, Rabbi Isaac, may his light shine bright:

I have this hour received your letter and there is no time to reply to it as it deserves. May God strengthen your heart and waken you on the great and awesome day approaching in peace ... that you may merit to be renewed from that time on. And do not let a day be lost without secluding yourself and thinking of the meaning of your life. Into every day get as much of Torah and prayer and good deeds as you can, as much as you can steal from this passing shadow, this vanity of vanities, this vanishing cloud... Remember well that all our days are vanity, yet every man on whatever level he may stand can attain eternal life. There is no time now for any more.

The words of your father, who seeks your welfare and prays on your behalf,  
Nathan of Bratzlav.

*S.Y. Agnon*

**AT THE NEW YEAR**

Every single instant begins another new year;  
    Sunlight flashing on water, or plunging into a clearing  
In quiet woods announces; the hovering gull proclaims  
    Even in wide midsummer a point of turning: and fading  
Late winter daylight close behind the huddled backs  
    Of houses close to the edge of town flares up and shatters  
As well as any screeching ram's horn can, wheel  
    Unbroken, uncomprehended continuity,  
Making a starting point of a moment along the way,  
    Spinning the year about one day's pivot of change.  
But if there is to be a high moment of turning  
    When a great, autumnal page, say, takes up its curved  
Flight in memory's spaces, and with a final sigh,  
    As of every door in the world shutting at once, subsides  
Into the bed of its fellows; if there is to be  
    A time of tallying, recounting and rereading  
Illuminated annals, crowded with black and white  
    And here and there a capital flaring with silver bright  
Blue, then let it come at a time like this, not at winter's  
    Night, when a few dead leaves crusted with frost lie shivering  
On our doorsteps to be counted, or when our moments of coldness  
    Rise up to chill us again. But let us say at a golden  
Moment just on the edge of harvesting, "Yes, Now."  
    Times of counting are times of remembering; here amidst showers  
Of shiny fruits, both the sweet and the bitter-tasting results,  
    The honey of promises gleams on apples that turn to mud  
In our innermost of mouths, we can sit facing westward  
    Toward imminent rich tents, telling and remembering.  
Not like merchants with pursed hearts, counting in dearth and darkness,  
    But as when from a shining eminence, someone walking starts  
At the sudden view of imperturbable blue on one hand  
    And wide green fields on the other. Not at the reddening sands

Behind, nor yet at the blind gleam, ahead, of something  
    Golden, looking at such a distance and in such sunlight,  
Like something given — so, at this time, our counting begins,  
    Whirling all its syllables into the circling wind  
That plays about our faces with a force between a blow's  
    And a caress, like the strength of a blessing, as we go  
Quietly on with what we shall be doing, and sing  
    Thanks for being enabled, again, to begin this instant.

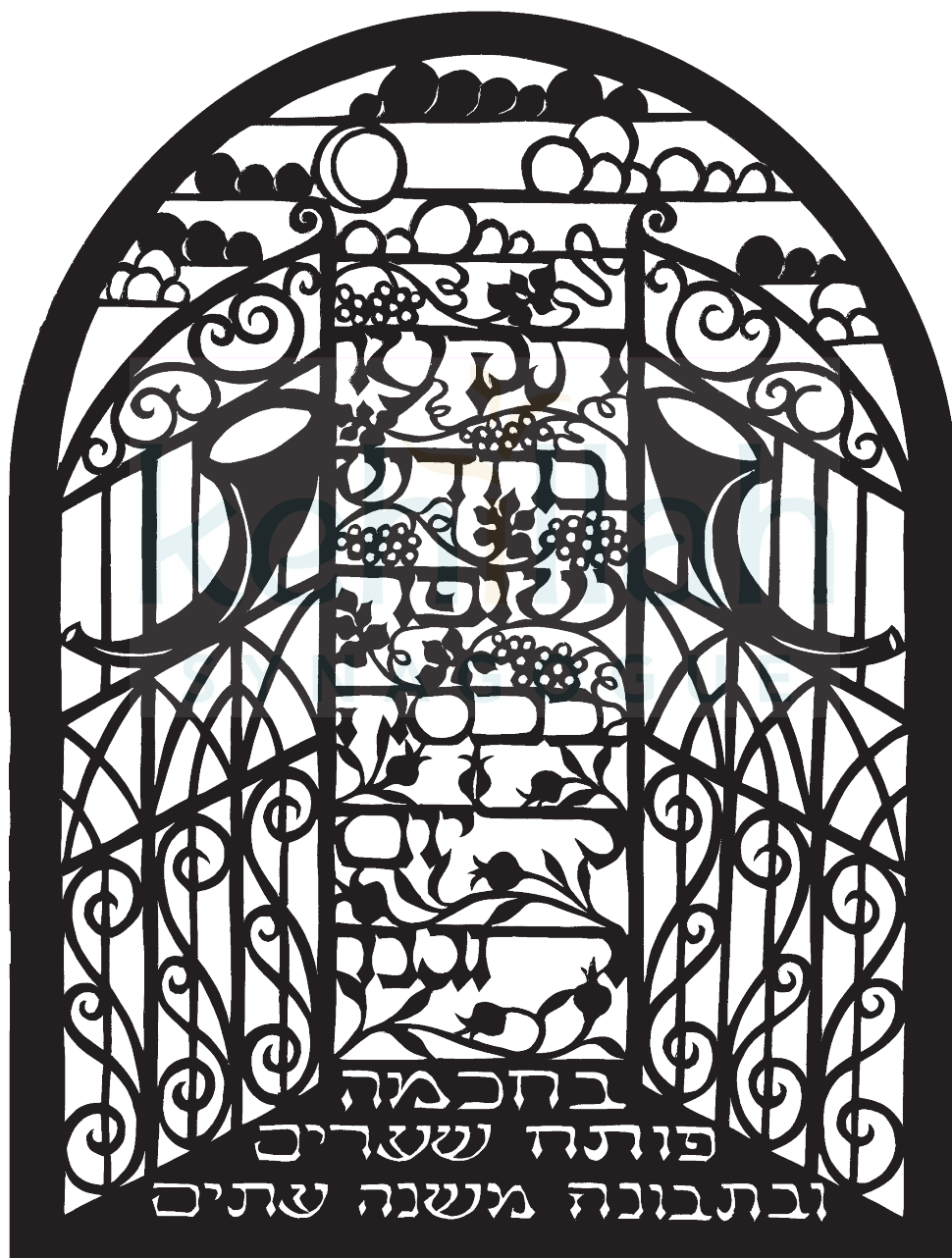
*John Hollander*



## BE-ḤOKHMAH POTE'AH SHE'ARIM

### WITH WISDOM YOU OPEN GATEWAYS

This papercut introduces the theme of “gates of forgiveness,” which pervades the ten holy days between Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur. According to Jewish tradition, the path of return to a holy way of living leads through a gate that is always open. This is the gate of *teshuvah*. During this service at the beginning of Rosh Ha-Shanah, these gates are swung half open as we are reminded by the evening prayers: “With wisdom you open gateways, with understanding you alter times, vary the seasons, and assign the stars to their watches in the sky.” The verse from Psalm 81:4-5 appearing between the gates connects us to the cycle of nature, as well as the cycle of human time: “Sound the shofar on the New Moon, at the appointed time for our New Year. When it is a law for Israel, it is an ordinance for the God of Jacob.” The moon appears in the sky as the first sliver of the new moon. The grape clusters refer to the wine with which we begin all our sacred days. The pomegranates, symbol of the priesthood, connect us to the ancient Temple rituals recalled in our prayers during these ten holy days. These same gates, almost but not quite closed, reappear in the last papercut of the Mahzor, for Yom Kippur *Ne'ilah*.





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מעריב      EVENING SERVICE  
לראש השנה      FOR ROSH HA-SHANAH

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*'Arvit, more commonly referred to as Ma'ariv, the Evening Service, begins with the Berekhu, a formal call to worship, followed by the two major components of every evening and morning service: the Shema and its blessings, and the Amidah. The Ma'ariv service for Rosh Ha-Shanah likewise contains these same prayers, but is distinguished by the distinctive nusah, the melody in which the prayers are chanted.*

*The Shema refers to the Jewish credo of monotheism: "Hear O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal One alone!" In addition to this well-known affirmation of Jewish faith, the Shema consists of three paragraphs from the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, which instruct us: 1) to commit ourselves to our sacred tradition and teach it to our children; 2) to know the global implications of Torah; and 3) to remember to do the mitzvot, those tangible expressions of the values in this divine teaching.*

*In the Evening Service, the Shema is bracketed by four blessings. The first blessing preceding the Shema, Ha-Ma'ariv 'Aravim "who brings on twilight," portrays God as that Power in the cosmos which alters time and varies seasons, "rolling light away from darkness and darkness from light." From this orderly rhythm of day and night, the poet intuits the Source of wisdom and understanding.*

*In the second blessing preceding the Shema, God's wisdom is translated into the life-giving laws of Torah. Our Torah has given us a path that yields "length of days," a rich and meaningful way of life. In this second blessing, Ahavat 'Olam, "with everlasting love," we express our gratitude for the divine gift of life, experienced as a token of God's love. Only after we have experienced this divine gift of love can we be commanded in the Shema to love God in return, "with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our might."*

*Following the Shema are two blessings expressing the fulfillment of God's love: Ga'al Yisrael and Hashkiveinu. In Ga'al Yisrael, "who redeemed Israel," we recall the redemption from Egypt in the biblical song of deliverance uttered at the Sea of Reeds: "Who among the mighty compares with you, Eternal One!" In the biblical saga of Israel's redemption from Egyptian slavery we affirm our experience of the*

God of liberation who from generation to generation “saves us from the power of despots and redeems us from the grasp of tyrants.” In the second blessing following the Shema, which is unique to the Evening Service, we invoke God’s sheltering and protecting presence: **Hashkiveinu**, “Cause us to lie down in peace, and raise us up to life.”

On Shabbat, the Shema and its blessings are followed by **Veshameru**, “Let all of Israel keep the Shabbat,” a biblical passage which declares Shabbat observance to be an eternal sign of the covenant between God and Israel.

Rosh Ha-Shanah is formally introduced by the verse from Psalm 81: **Tik’u Va-Hodesh Shofar**, “Sound the shofar on the New Moon, at the appointed time for our New Year.” The **Hatzı Kaddish**, marking the conclusion of each unit of prayer within a service, affirms that Godly values abide in the world.

The **Amidah**, “the standing prayer,” was composed by the early rabbis as “the Prayer,” par excellence, integral to every service. On Rosh Ha-Shanah, the Ma’ariv Amidah comprises seven blessings in which: 1) we link our own search for holiness with that of our ancestors; 2) we acknowledge God’s sustaining powers; 3) we express the holiness of God; 4) we give praise for the holiness of the day; 5) we express our hope for fulfillment; 6) we thank God for the miracles that are daily with us; and 7) we pray for peace.

Every Amidah throughout these Days of Awe, from Rosh Ha-Shanah through Yom Kippur, is enhanced and distinguished by four brief liturgical poems, piyyutim, all emphasizing the theme of being remembered and inscribed in the Book of Life. **Zokhreinu Le-Hayyim**, “Remember us for life,” and **Mi Khamokha Av Ha-Rahamim**, “Who compares with you, Source of all compassion” are interpolated into the first and second blessings of the Amidah, respectively. **U-Khetov Le-Hayyim**, “And inscribe for a good life” and **Be-Sefer Hayyim**, “In the book of life” are added to the penultimate and concluding blessings, respectively.

A Talmudic dispute over whether the evening Amidah was actually required was resolved by having this prayer recited silently only, without the customary repetition aloud. For the evening service of Shabbat, an abbreviated form of the seven blessings, **Magen Avot**, “Shield of our ancestors,” is recited after the silent Amidah.

Following Magen Avot, the **Kiddush**, a prayer over wine inaugurating the sanctity of the day, is recited. Ma’ariv, like all services, formally concludes with **Aleinu**, and the **Mourner’s Kaddish**.

On Friday evening, Shabbat is welcomed with *Yedid Nefesh*,  
followed by Psalms 92 and 93.

**Yedid Nefesh**

Yedid nefesh av ha-raḥaman

meshokh 'avdekha el  
retzonekha

Yarutz 'avdekha kemo ayyal

yishtaḥaveh el mul hadarekha

Ye'erav lo yedidotekha

Mi-nofet tzuf ve-khol ta'am

Hadur na'eh ziv ha-'olam

nafshi ḥolat ahavatekha

Anna el na refa na lah

be-har'ot lah no'am zivakh

Az tit'ḥazzeik ve-titrapei

ve-haytah lah simḥat 'olam

**יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ**

יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ אָב הַרְחָמָן

מְשׁוֹךְ עַבְדְּךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ.

יְרוּץ עַבְדְּךָ כְּמוֹ אַיִל

יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל מוּל הַדָּרֶךְ.

יַעְרַב לוֹ יְדִידוֹתֶיךָ

מִנּוֹפֶת צוּף וְכֹל טַעַם:

הַדּוֹר נֹאֵה זִיו הָעוֹלָם

נֶפְשִׁי חוֹלֵת אֶהְבְּתְךָ.

אָנָּה אֵל נָא רְפֵא נָא לָהּ

בְּהִרְאוֹת לָהּ נְעִם זִיּוֹךְ.

אִז תִּתְחַזֵּק וְתִתְרַפֵּא

וְהִיְתָה לָהּ שִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם:

**YEDID NEFESH**

You who love my soul, compassion's gentle source,

Take my inner nature and shape it to your will.

Like a darting deer I will flee to you.

Before your glorious presence humbly do I bow.

Let your sweet love delight me with its thrill,

Because no other dainty will my hunger still.

How splendid is your light which worlds do reflect!

My soul is worn from craving for your love's delight.

Please, good God, do heal her and show to her your face,

So my soul can see you and bathe in your grace.

There she will find strength and healing in this sight.

Her joy will be complete, then eternal her delight.

Vatik yehemu na raḥamekha	וְתִיק יְהֵמוּ נָא רַחֲמֶיךָ	What pity stirs in you since days of old, my God!
ve-ḥusah na 'al ben ahuvekha	וְחוֹסָה נָא עַל בֵּן אַהוּבֶךָ.	Be kind to me, your own child, begotten by your love,
Ki zeh kammah nikhsaf nikhsafti	כִּי זֶה כַּמָּה נִכְסוּף נִכְסַפְתִּי	For long and longing hours I yearned for your embrace,
li-r'ot be-tif'eret 'uzzekha	לִרְאוֹת בְּתִפְאֶרֶת עֲזֶךָ.	To see my light in your light, basking in your grace.
Eilleh ḥameda libbi	אֵלֶּה חֲמֵדָה לִבִּי	My heart's desire is to harmonize with yours,
ve-ḥusah na ve-al tit'allam	וְחוֹסָה נָא וְאַל תִּתְעַלֵּם:	Do not conceal your pity, hide not that light of yours.
Higgaleih na u-fros ḥavivi 'alai	הִגְלֵה נָא וּפְרוֹשׁ חֲבִיבִי עָלַי	Appear, my lover, spread your canopy of peace,
et sukkat shelomekha	אֶת סֻכַּת שְׁלוֹמֶךָ.	Enfold all human beings, give all pain surcease.
Ta'ir eretz mi-kevodekha	תְּאִיר אֶרֶץ מִכְבוֹדֶךָ	Enlighten all the earth with Your radiant Presence
nagilah ve-nismekha bakh	נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמְחָה בְּךָ.	And we shall respond then with song and with dance.
Maheir ahuv ki va mo'eid	מְהֵר אַהוּב כִּי בָּא מוֹעֵד	Rush, my love, be quick, the time for love is now,
ve-ḥonneinu ki-mei 'olam	וְחַנְּנוּ כִּימֵי עוֹלָם:	Let your gentle favour grace us as of old.

*Eliezer Azikri  
trans., Zalman Schachter-Shalom*

## Psalm 92

Mizmor shir le-yom ha-shabbat.

Tov lehodot la-'donai

u-lzammeir le-shimkha 'elyon.

Lehaggid ba-bokeir ḥasdekha

ve-emunatkha ba-leilot.

'Aleī 'asor va-'alei navel

'alei higgayon be-khinnor.

Ki simmaḥtani adonai be-fo'olekha

be-ma'asei yadekha arannein.

Mah gadelu ma'asekha adonai

me'od 'amku maḥshevotekha.

Ish ba'ar lo yeida'

u-khesil lo yavin et zot.

Bi-fro'ah resha'im kemo 'esev

vayyatzitzu kol po'alei aven

le-hishamedam 'adei 'ad.

Ve-attah marom le-'olam adonai.

Ki hinneih oyevekha adonai

ki hinneih oyevekha yoveidu

yitparedu kol po'alei aven.

Vattarem ki-r'eim karni

baloti be-shemen ra'anan.

Vattabbait 'eini be-shurai

ba-kamim 'alai merei'im

tishma'nah oznai.

## תהלים צ"ב

מזמור שיר ליום השבת:

טוב להודות ליהוה

ולזמר לשמך עליון:

להגיד בבקר חסדך

ואמונתך בלילות:

עלי-עשור ועלי-נבל

עלי הגיזן בכנור:

כי שמחתני יהוה בפעלך

במעשי ידיך ארנן:

מה-גדלו מעשיך יהוה

מאד עמקו מחשבתך:

איש-בער לא ידע

וכסיל לא-יבין את-זאת:

בפרח רשעים כמו עשב

ויציצו כל-פעלי און

להשמדם עדי-עד:

ואתה מרום לעלם יהוה:

כי הנה איביך יהוה

כי-הנה איביך יאבדו

יתפרדו כל-פעלי און:

ותרם בראים קרני

בלתי בשמן רענן:

ותבט עיני בשורי

בקמים עלי מרעים

תשמענה אזני:

## PSALM 92

A psalm, a song of the Sabbath day.

It is good to give thanks to the Eternal,

to chant psalms to your name, Most High;

to tell of your lovingkindness in the morning

and of your faithfulness at night,

upon the ten-stringed lyre and lute,

with voice and harp together.

For I have rejoiced in your works, Eternal One;

I exult in what you have wrought.

How great are your deeds, Eternal One,

how profound your designs.

A coarse person does not know,

nor can the shallow understand,

that when the wicked sprout like grass

and evildoers flourish,

they may then be cut down forever.

But you are exalted for all time.

Surely your enemies, Eternal One,

surely your enemies shall perish;

all evildoers shall be scattered.

You strengthen me like the wild ox;

I am refreshed with anointing oil.

I shall see the defeat of my foes;

of those who rise to harm me,

I shall hear of their demise.

Tzaddik ka-tamar yifrah  
ke-erez ba-levanon yisgeh.  
Shetulim be-veit adonai  
be-ḥatzrot eloheinu yafrihu.  
‘Od yenuvun be-seivah  
desheinim ve-ra’ananim yihyu.  
Lehaggid ki yashar adonai  
tzuri ve-lo ‘avlatah bo.

צָדִיק כַּתְּמָר יִפְרַח  
כַּאֲרֵז בַּלְבָּנוֹן יִשְׁגֶּה:  
שֶׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה  
בְּחֲצֵרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:  
עוֹד יִנּוּבּוּן בְּשֵׁיבָה  
דְּשֵׁינִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ:  
לְהַגִּיד כִּי-יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה  
צוּרֵי וְלֹא-עוֹלָתָהּ בּוֹ:

The righteous will flourish like palm trees,  
and thrive like the cedars of Lebanon.  
Planted in the house of the Eternal,  
in the courts of our God they will blossom.  
Even in old age will they be fruitful,  
remaining fertile and fresh,  
attesting that the Eternal is upright;  
my Rock, in whom there is no wrong.

### Psalm 93

Adonai malakh gei’ut laveish  
laveish adonai ‘oz hit’azzar  
af tikkon teiveil bal timmot.  
Nakhon kis’akha mei-az  
mei-‘olam attah.

תְּהִלִּים צִ"ג  
יְהוָה מְלָךְ גָּאוֹת לְבַשׁ  
לְבַשׁ יְהוָה עֵז הַתְּאֲזָר  
אֶף-תִּכּוֹן תִּבְלַל בַּל-תִּמּוֹט:  
נֶכּוֹן כִּסֵּאֲךָ מֵאֶז  
מֵעוֹלָם אַתָּה:

### PSALM 93

The Eternal reigns, garbed in majesty;  
the Eternal is garbed, girded with strength,  
so the world stands firm, unshakable.  
Your throne stands firm from of old,  
from eternity, it is you.

Nas’u neharot adonai  
nas’u neharot kolam  
yis’u neharot dokhyam.  
Mi-kolot mayim rabbim  
addirim mishberei yam  
addir ba-marom adonai.

נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה  
נִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם  
יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דְּכָיִם:  
מִקְלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים  
אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי-יָם  
אֲדִיר בְּמָרוֹם יְהוָה:

The ocean currents rise, Eternal One,  
the ocean currents raise their voice,  
the currents rise in torrents.  
But louder than the sound of mighty waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea,  
transcending all might is the Eternal One.

‘Eidotekha ne’emnu me’od  
le-veitekha na’avah kodesh  
adonai le-orekh yamim.

עֵדוֹתֶיךָ נֶאֱמָנוּ מְאֹד  
לְבֵיתֶךָ נֶאֱוָה-קֹדֶשׁ  
יְהוָה לְאַרְךָ יָמִים:

Trustworthy indeed is all that attests to you,  
holiness befits your House,  
Eternal One, for all the days to come.