



משכן הלב
MISHKAN HALEV

*Prayers for S'lichot
and the Month of Elul*

CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN RABBIS

<p>Days of Reflection and Renewal</p> <p>Welcoming Shabbat</p> <p>Sh'ma and Its Blessings</p> <p>Standing before God</p> <p>Prayers for Healing</p> <p>Recalling Our Purpose</p> <p>Recalling Our Loved Ones</p> <p>The Voice of Return</p> <p>Songs of the Heart</p>	<p>Dodi Li</p> <p><i>Dodi li, vaani lo, haro-eh bashoshanim.</i> דודי לי ואני לו הרעה בשושנים.</p> <p><i>Mi zot olah min hamidbar,</i> מי זאת עלה מן־המדבר</p> <p><i>m'kuteret mor ulvonah?</i> מקטרת מור ולבונה.</p> <p><i>Libavtini, achoti chalah — libavtini.</i> לבבתיני אחתי כלה – לבבתיני.</p> <p><i>Uri tzafon! Uvo-i teiman!</i> עורי צפון, ובואי תימן.</p> <p>My beloved is mine, and I am my beloved's— feasting among the lilies.</p> <p>Who comes now from the wilderness, rising like fragrant myrrh and frankincense?</p> <p>You have captured my heart, my beloved. Awake, north wind! O south wind— come!</p>
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Ozi V'zimrat Yah

<p><i>Ozi v'zimrat Yah</i></p> <p><i>vaihi li lishua.</i></p>	<p>עזי וזמרת יה</p> <p>ויהי־לי לישועה.</p> <p>My strength and Your song will be my salvation.</p>
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Hineih Mah Tov

<p><i>Hineih mah tov umah na-im:</i></p> <p><i>shevet achim/achayot gam yachad.</i></p>	<p>הנה מה־טוב ומה־נעים</p> <p>שבת אחים/אחיות גם־יחד.</p> <p>How good and how pleasant — Brothers and sisters gathered together!</p>
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DODI LI דודי לי, Song of Songs 2:16; 3:6; 4:9, 16. Love is the theme of the month of Elul, in part because the initial Hebrew letters of Song of Songs 6:3 — “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine” (אני לדודי | דודי לי)—spell out the word *Elul*. Our Sages saw the verse as expressing the tender mutual devotion that makes *t’shuvah* possible. If we turn with open hearts to the Holy One, God is forever ready to embrace us with love.

MY STRENGTH עזי, Psalm 118:14. Our own strength, sustained by a power beyond ourselves, allows us to persist in the face of life’s challenges.

HINEIH MAH TOV הנה מה־טוב, Psalm 133:1.

Elul: An Island in the Year

Before we slip too quickly into the Season of the Soul —
let there be a Sabbath of Sabbaths for the heart.

Before the music of Creation's majesty —
let there be a silent praise of existence.

Before the feast of sanctified words —
let there be a poetry of solitude.

Before we enter the palaces of prayer —
let us find within ourselves a place of calm.

Before we revel in the wondrous and sublime —
let there be an honest, inward gaze.

Before the rites and ceremonies of Awe —
let there be quieter days,
an island of attentiveness.

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַחֲמֶיהָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

הַתְּפִלָּה
HaT'filah

מִי שֶׁבְּרַחַד
Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ
Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם
Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

Kol HaN'shamah

*Kol han'shamah t'haleil Yah—
Hal'lu-Yah!*

כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְּהִלֵּל יְהוָה,
הַלְלוּ יְהוָה.

With every quiet breath, let everything
that breathes praise God — *Halleluyah!*

Ein Od Mil'vado

*Ein od mil'vado,
Adonai — hu ha-Elohim.*

אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ,
יְיָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים.

There is nothing else but You;
Adonai is God.

KOL HANESHAMAH כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה בֵּל הַנְּשָׁמָה, Psalm 150:6. The last words in the book of Psalms are especially evocative as we enter Shabbat, a time to breathe and renew our spirit.
EIN OD MILVADO אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ, Deuteronomy 4:35. This verse may be chanted (see Sources, page 143).

Days of Reflection
and Renewal

Welcoming Shabbat

Sh'ma and Its
Blessings

Standing before
God

Prayers for Healing

Recalling Our
Purpose

Recalling Our
Loved Ones

The Voice of Return

Songs of the Heart

Before Candle Lighting

IN THE BEGINNING: emptiness and chaos;
a great darkness over the deep.
The spirit of God moved over the waters.
Explosion of light—
the long chain of emerging life;
behold: it was very good.
These candles evoke the very first light.
Out of the darkness came reason, purpose,
consciousness of beauty;
the power to discern and do what is right.
Let us hold the light in our hearts.
Let us bring it with us into the darkest corners of creation.
Where there is pain and fear, let us offer the light of love.

I HONOR THE GIFT of stillness and rest:
a day devoted to peace.
Peace within my soul—
on this day I have everything I need.
Peace with those around me—
on this day I seek no quarrel or strife.
Peace of earth and sky, green trees and quiet water.
I give thanks that I am present in this world.
I celebrate the miracle of existence—
the breath within me, the beating of my heart,
the love that blesses my life.

FASTENING THE LIGHT of the Sabbath candles
to my eyes, my palms are tents
where my fathers rested in the desert.
The light wraps itself to my eyes.
The light gathers into me.

FASTENING THE LIGHT. By Rivka Miriam (b. 1952); excerpt. "My palms are tents" alludes to covering the eyes with one's hands during the blessing; translated from the Hebrew.

Candlelighting

*Baruch atah, Adonai,
Eloheinu melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
v'tzivanu l'hadlik neir shel Shabbat.*

Source of blessing, Eternal our God,
You fill the universe with majestic might,
teaching us holiness through sacred obligations,
giving us the mitzvah of bringing light on Shabbat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Introduction to Kiddush

*Vaihi-erev, vaihi-voker — yom hashishi.
Vaichulu hashamayim v'haaretz
v'chol-tz'vaam.
Vaichal Elohim bayom hash'vi-i
m'lachto asher asah.
Vayishbot bayom hash'vi-i
mikol-m'lachto asher asah.
Vaivarech Elohim et-yom hash'vi-i
vaikadeish oto,
ki vo shavat mikol-m'lachto
asher-bara Elohim laasot.*

Thus there was evening and there was morning — the sixth day.
Completed now were the heavens and the earth and their whole array.
And on the seventh day God completed the work that had been done.
And God ceased on the seventh day from all the work that God had done.
And God blessed the seventh day and called it holy —
for on it God ceased from all the work of creating that God had done.

וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר, יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי.
וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ
וְכָל־צְבָאָם.
וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מְכָל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.
וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ,
כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכָל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שִׁמְעַת וּבְרַכּוֹתֶיהָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

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מִי שֶׁבִירַח
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Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirat

THUS THERE WAS EVENING וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב, Genesis 1:31–2:3. This passage may have been chosen to introduce the *Kiddush* because the initial Hebrew letters of the phrase “the sixth day / completed now were the heavens” spell the four-letter name of God: *yod - hei - vav - hei*. Our awareness of God’s name, embedded within this passage, may also serve as a reminder that when we recite the *Kiddush* we do not bless or sanctify the wine; rather we bless its Creator, who sanctifies Shabbat.

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קַבַּלַת שַׁבָּת

Kabbalat Shabbat

Welcoming Shabbat

From Psalm 95

*L'chu n'ran'nah l'Adonai,
nariah l'tzur yisheinu.
N'kad'mah fanav b'todah,
bizmirot naria lo.
Ki el gadol Adonai,
umelech gadol al-kol-elohim.
Asher b'yado mechk'rei-aretz,
v'to-afot harim lo.*

לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה לַיהוָה,
נְרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵינוּ.
נִקְדָּמָה פָּנֵינוּ בַתּוֹדָה,
בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעֵ לֹ.
כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְיָ,
וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים.
אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מַחְקֵי-אֶרֶץ,
וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לוֹ.

Come, let's sing to Adonai,
shout for the Rock of our salvation.
Let us greet the Eternal with gratitude;
with sacred song let's raise a shout!
For great is Adonai —
in majesty supreme,
in whose hands are the depths of the earth
and the mountains' towering heights.

*Asher-lo hayam v'hu asahu,
v'yabeshet yadav yatzaru.*

אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ,
וַיַּבְשֶׁת יָדָיו יַצְרֵהוּ.

The sea belongs to the One who made it;
and the dry land to the One who shaped it.

KABBALAT SHABBAT. Shabbat is a time to rejoice in God's creation and celebrate the beauty of nature. Thus we start the holy day with six celebratory psalms (95 through 99, plus 29), which correspond to the six days of creation.
COME, LET'S SING לְכוּ נִרְנְנָה, Psalm 95:1-5.

From Psalm 96

*Shiru l'Adonai shir chadash,
shiru l'Adonai, kol-haaretz.
Shiru l'Adonai, bar'chu sh'mo,
bas'ru miyom-l'yom y'shuato.
Sap'ru vagoyim k'vodo,
b'chol haamim nifl'otav.
Ki gadol Adonai umhulal m'od,
nora hu al-kol-elohim.*

שִׁירוּ לַיְי שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ,
שִׁירוּ לַיְי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ.
שִׁירוּ לַיְי בְּרַכּוּ שְׁמוֹ,
בְּשָׂרוּ מִיּוֹם־לְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ.
סַפְּרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ
בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים גִּפְּלֹאוֹתָיו.
כִּי גָדוֹל יְיָ וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד
נוֹרָא הוּא עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים.

*Yism'chu hashamayim, v'tageil haaretz,
yiram hayam umlo-o.*

יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ,
יִרְעַם הַיָּם וּמְלֵאוּ.

Sing to Adonai a new song;
sing to the Living Source, all the world.
Sing to Adonai; bless the Name;
affirm, day unto day, divine salvation.
Among the nations, spread word of God's glory,
God's wonders among all peoples.
For great is Adonai — most worthy of praise,
inspiring awe, surpassing all.

Let heaven be glad, let the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and its fullness make thunderous noise!

*Yaaloz sadai v'chol-asher-bo;
az y'ran'nu kol-atzei-yaar.*

יַעֲלֹז שַׂדֵי וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ
אֲז יִרְנְנוּ כָּל־עֵצֵי־יַעַר.

Let meadows rejoice — and all they contain;
then, with glad song, all the trees of the forest will sing.

אֱלוֹל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַכּוֹתֶיהָ
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מִי שֶׁבְּרַךְ
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Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

SING TO ADONAI A NEW SONG שִׁירוּ לַיְי שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, Psalm 96:1-4, 11-12.

LET THE SEA יִרְעַם הַיָּם. Many Kabbalat Shabbat psalms abound in nature imagery; the poet imagines mountains, sea, and all the creatures of earth celebrating the Divine with joyous song and dance, just as the congregation unites in joy to welcome Shabbat. Pagan peoples conceived of multiple divinities who govern the forces of nature. The psalms, by contrast, present a God who is manifest in nature but also transcends the physical world — “surpassing all” (literally, “surpassing all divine beings”). Wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): “Nature is too thin a screen; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere.”

L'cha Dodi

*L'cha, dodi, likrat kallah;
p'nei Shabbat n'kab'lah.*

*Shamor v'zachor b'dibur echad,
hishmianu eil hamyuchad.
Adonai echad ushmo echad,
l'shem ultiferet v'lit-hilah.*

*Likrat Shabbat l'chu v'neil'chah,
ki hi m'kor hab'rachah.
Meirosh mikedem n'suchah —
sof maaseh, b'machashavah t'chilah.*

*Hitor'ri, hitor'ri,
ki va oreich, kumi, ori!
Uri, uri, shir dabeiril!
K'vod Adonai alayich nighlah.*

*Bo-i v'shalom, ateret balah,
gam b'simchah uvtzoholah.
Toch emunei am s'gulah —
bo-i chalah, bo-i chalah!*

לְכֵה דוֹדֵי לְקִרְאֵת כַּלָּה,
פְּנֵי שַׁבָּת נִקְבְּלָה.

שָׁמֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדִבּוּר אֶחָד,
הַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ אֶל הַמְיֻחָד,
יְיָ אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד,
לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת וּלְתִהְלָה.

לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבָּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכֵה,
כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה,
מֵרֵאשׁ מִקֶּדֶם נְסוּכָה,
סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תַּחֲלָה.

הִתְעוֹרְרֵי הִתְעוֹרְרֵי,
כִּי בָּא אוֹרֶךְ קוֹמֵי אוֹרֵי,
עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דַּבְרֵי,
כְּבוֹד יְיָ עֲלֵיךְ נִגְלָה.

בּוֹאֵי בְּשָׁלוֹם עֲטֹרֶת בַּעֲלָה,
גַּם בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְצִהְלָה,
תּוֹךְ אֲמוּנֵי עַם סְגֻלָּה,
בּוֹאֵי כַלָּה, בּוֹאֵי כַלָּה.

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שִׁמְעַ וּבְרַכּוֹתֶיהָ
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Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

COME FORTH לְכֵה. This 16th-century work, rich in mystical imagery, was inspired by the Bible's great love poem, Song of Songs ("L'cha dodi — Come, my beloved — let us go into the fields" 7:12), and by Talmudic accounts that on Friday at sunset, the Sages would don fine garments and call, "Come — let us go forth to welcome Shabbat the queen. Come, O bride! Come, O bride!" (*Shabbat* 119a). The song (presented here in a singable English translation) envisions a community united in love, its members summoning one another to honor Shabbat — a model of how we might inspire and encourage spiritual growth.

COME NOW IN PEACE בּוֹאֵי בְּשָׁלוֹם. At the last verse of *L'cha Dodi*, many communities rise and turn to the west, the direction of the setting sun, as we symbolically welcome Shabbat into our midst. Throughout the year, this physical act suggests our intention to "turn away" from the work week and enter fully into the spirit of the seventh day. At this season of turning and returning (*t'shuvah*), we express our shared intention to rise to a higher level and turn toward the good.

שִׁמַּע וּבְרִיחוֹתֶיהָ

Sh'ma Uvirchoteha · Sh'ma and Its Blessings

*There is no human being who does not carry a treasure in the soul;
a moment of insight,
a memory of love,
a dream of excellence,
a call to worship.*

— RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

*I orient myself to the east, facing the land of Israel.
I align myself with my people, embracing a noble tradition.
I enlist in the work of justice, repairing a broken world.
I take upon myself this mitzvah: wherever you go, be a blessing.*

Bar'chu et Adonai hamvorach.

Baruch Adonai hamvorach l'olam va-ed.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Bless the Eternal, the Blessed One.

Blessed is the Eternal, the Blessed One, now and forever.

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מִי שֶׁבֵרַח
Mi Shebeirach

אֵלֵינוּ
Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם
Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

THERE IS. By Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972).

WHEREVER YOU GO. Based on God's words to Abraham in Genesis 12:2–3.

BLESS THE ETERNAL יְיָ בְּרַכּוּ אֶת. Why the need to be summoned to prayer? Perhaps because it does not come easily or naturally. "To pray is so necessary and so hard. Hard not because it requires intellect or knowledge or a big vocabulary, but because it requires of us humility. And that comes, I think, from a profound sense of one's brokenness and one's need. Not the need that causes us to cry, 'Get me out of this trouble, quick!' but the need that one finds every day of one's life — even though one does not acknowledge it — to be related to something bigger than one's self, something more alive than one's self, something older and something not yet born, that will endure through time." (Lillian Smith, 1897–1966)

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ALL OF THEM are travelers—
bodies in motion, obedient servants of celestial laws:
moons orbit planets;
planets circle stars;
stars spin around galaxies;
galaxies cluster, drawn by dark matter;
super-clusters flow, driven by dark energy.

All of us are travelers—
bodies in motion, unwitting servants of the flow of time:
within us, atoms vibrate, electrons whirl;
and we are changing, aging,
spinning our own orbits,
drawn together, drifting apart,
driven by forces we barely understand.

Particles of matter in perpetual motion,
we yearn for clarity and calm,
strength to master our own dark energies,
and to counter the darkness in our world.
As we lift our gaze to the starlight,
may we lift ourselves to embrace a higher law.

HOLY IS TWILIGHT—the realm of in-between.
And so our sages taught: pray in the moments when light and darkness touch.
We are all twilight people, beyond categories and labels.
May the sacred in-between of this evening suspend our certainties,
soften our judgments, widen our vision.
Let it illumine our way to the God who transcends all boundaries and definitions.
Blessed are You, God of all, who brings on the twilight.

HOLY IS TWILIGHT. Adapted from Rabbi Reuben Zellman (b. 1978).

IN-BETWEEN. Our rabbis of ancient times knew that humanity did not fit into two boxes. Just as day and night cannot be clearly divided into two, according to some of our most ancient texts, neither can people. It was written in the Mishnah: there are people who “are in some ways like men, and in some ways like women, and in some ways like both men and women, and in some ways like neither men nor women.” It goes on to say that people of intermediate sex and gender were not to be harmed; their lives were of equal value to any other person’s. (Rabbi Reuben Zellman)

Ahavat olam beit Yisrael am'cha ahavta;

Torah umitzvot, chukim umishpatim

otanu limadta.

Al kein, Adonai Eloheinu, b'shochbeinu

uvkumeinu nasiach b'chukecha;

v'nismach b'divrei Toratecha

uvmitzvotecha l'olam va-ed.

Ki heim chayeinu v'orech yameinu;

uvahem negeh yomam valailah.

V'ahavat'cha al tasir mimenu l'olamim.

אַהַבַּת עוֹלָם בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ אָהַבְתָּ,
תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, חֻקִּים וּמִשְׁפָּטִים
אוֹתָנוּ לְמַדְתָּ.

עַל כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשׁוֹכְבֵנו
וּבְקוּמֵנוּ נְשִׁיחַ בְּחֻקֶיךָ,

וְנִשְׂמַח בְּדִבְרֵי תּוֹרָתְךָ

וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

כִּי הֵם חַיֵּינוּ וְאֶרֶץ יְמֵינוּ,

וּבָהֶם נִהְגֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה.

וְאֶהַבְתָּךְ אֶל תִּסִּיר מִמֶּנּוּ לְעוֹלָמִים.

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Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ

Aleinu

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Z'mirot

Love beyond all space and time —
Your love enfolds Your people, *Yisrael*.
We receive it in Your teaching:
Your gift of Torah, sacred obligations, discipline, and law.
So let us speak these teachings when we lie down and rise up
and find joy forever in Your Torah and mitzvot.
They are the very essence of our life —
ours to ponder and study all our days.
May we never lose or be unworthy of Your love . . .

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, אוֹהֵב עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Baruch atah, Adonai, oheiv amo Yisrael.

. . . for You are blessed: the One who loves Your people, *Yisrael*.

LOVE BEYOND ALL SPACE AND TIME אַהַבַּת עוֹלָם. The Sages who composed this prayer saw God's passionate devotion to the people Israel manifest in the gift of Torah. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," says a verse in the Song of Songs (1:2). The Midrash, reading this secular love poem allegorically, comments: "This refers to the giving of Torah at Sinai." Each mitzvah in the Torah is thus a "kiss" from God — bestowed as a gift of divine love, expressive of intimacy and the desire for connection. The Jewish people returns this love: we kiss the Torah scroll as it is carried through the congregation or when we are called for an *aliyah*. It is a sign of love for the Torah and commitment to its sacred words.

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IF YOU FIND JOY in Torah—

You'll sit with the Sages and drink their words;
your soul refreshed like a tree by streams of water.

Wisdom will follow you all the seasons of your life—
celebration in the sunlight, consolation in the night.

Your roots will grow deep—
you'll anchor yourself in courage and hope.

You'll savor and cherish the true work of your hands;
your passion for life will not wither or fade.

They'll treasure the lessons you leave behind;
remember what you taught in word and deed.

And those who come after you will honor your path.

Mah-ahavati toratecha; מֵהֶאֱהַבְתִּי תוֹרָתְךָ
kol-hayom hi sichati. כָּל־הַיּוֹם הִיא שִׁחְתִּי.

How I love Your Torah!
All day it is my conversation.

OPEN UP OUR EYES

Open up our eyes, teach us how to live
Fill our hearts with joy and all the love You have to give
Gather us in peace
As You lead us to Your Name
And we will know that You are One.

IF YOU FIND JOY IN TORAH. Images in this reading are drawn from Psalm 1 and inspired by the words of this midrash: "Rabbi Abba taught: If you find joy in Torah, the result will be the naming of Torah after you." (*Midrash T'hillim* 1:16)

HOW I LOVE, Psalm 119:97.

OPEN UP OUR EYES. Lyrics by Cantor Jeff Klepper (b. 1954).

This is the path of wisdom:
How beautiful — to dwell together in unity.
 This is the teaching of truth:
Have we not all one Parent? Did not one God create us?
 This is the call from Sinai:
There shall be one law, for the citizen and the stranger in your midst.
 This is the gift of Torah:
Adonai is our God; Adonai is One.

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בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד

Sh'ma, Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad!
 Listen, Israel: Adonai is our God, Adonai is One!

Baruch shem k'vod malchuto l'olam va-ed.
 Blessed is God's glorious majesty forever and ever.

HOW BEAUTIFUL, Psalm 133:1.
 HAVE WE NOT ALL, Malachi 2:10.
 THERE SHALL BE ONE LAW, Exodus 12:49.
 SH'MA, YISRAEL שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, Deuteronomy 6:4.
 BLESSED IS GOD'S GLORIOUS שֵׁם כְּבוֹד בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד, Mishnah Yoma 3:8,
 inspired by Nehemiah 9:5.

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אלהינו יהוה אחד

מלכותו לעולם ועד.

ADONAI יהוה. The parchment inside the mezuzah contains two names of God. On the outside of the scroll is the name *Shaddai*, often translated as "God Almighty." Inside the parchment, the first line of the *Sh'ma* bears the sacred four-letter name of God which we read as *Adonai*. . . . We encounter *El Shaddai* through phenomena of nature; just as it appears on the outer surface of the mezuzah scroll, this divine name draws us outside of ourselves to behold God's majesty in the world. But the name *Adonai* is more hidden: nestled deep within the folds of the parchment, we find it only through an inward journey to the center of our soul. (Rabbi Lawrence Englander; b. 1948)

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V'AHAVTA FOR ELUL

You shall love the ones who are close
with all your heart,
with all your spirit,
with all your strength.

Remember these words; inscribe them on your heart:
love them when they struggle,
when they sadden and disappoint you;
love them when they fail.

See the good within them, even when they can't.
Look at them, and listen, even when it's hard.
Be grateful for their guidance (even their reproof)
when they save you from yourself.

Love them when they give you joy,
and love them when they don't.
When you lie down, let go of anger.
When you rise up at dawn, begin again.

Praise them for their deeds at home;
speak to them in public with respect.

Bind yourself to the ones you love
with promises kept and vows fulfilled.

Open to them the gates of your heart, the doorway of your soul—
and let them know you.
So shall the ones you cherish feel your love, your presence, and your care.

LOVE THE STRANGERS among you;
love them as yourself.
See yourself in their eyes;
with your own hands, bind up their wounds.
Teach your children to unlock their hearts
and share their wealth.

Inscribe words of welcome at your gates and ports of entry—
for you have been strangers in every corner of the world.

LOVE THE STRANGERS. Based on Leviticus 19:34—"The stranger who dwells with you shall be like a citizen among you; and you shall love that person as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

V'ra-u vanav g'vurato,
shib'chu v'hodu lishmo.

Umalchuto b'ratzon kib'lu aleihem.

Mosheh uMiryam uvnei Yisrael l'cha anu

shirah b'simchah rabah; v'am'ru chulam:

Witnesses to this heroic might,
the people thanked and praised God by name,
freely accepting the reign of heaven.

Then Moses and Miriam and all Israel sang to You this song of utter joy:

"Mi-chamocha ba-eilim, Adonai?

Mi kamocho — nedar bakodesh,
nora t'hilot, oseih-fele?"

Malchut'cha ra-u vanecha,

bokei-a yam lifnei Mosheh uMiryam;

"Zeh Eilil!" anu v'am'ru:

"Adonai yimloch l'olam va-ed."

V'ne-emar: "Ki fadah Adonai et-Yaakov;

ug-alo miyad chazak mimenu."

"Of all that is worshiped, is there another like You?
Maker of wonders, who is like You —
in holiness sublime, evoking awe and praise?"

When Your children saw Your sovereign might —
the splitting of the sea before Moses and Miriam —
they responded, "This is my God!"
And they said, "The Eternal will reign till the end of time."

As it is written: "Adonai will save Jacob,
and redeem him from one stronger than himself."

ברוך אתה, יי, גאל ישראל.

Baruch atah, Adonai, gaal Yisrael.

We praise You, Eternal Power, the One who redeemed Israel.

IS THERE ANOTHER LIKE YOU מִי־כְמוֹכָה בְּאֵלִים, Exodus 15:11.

THE ETERNAL WILL REIGN יי יִמְלֹךְ, Exodus 15:18.

ADONAI WILL SAVE יי כִּי פָדָה יי, Jeremiah 31:11.

וְרָאוּ בְנֵי גְבוּרָתוֹ,
שִׁבְחוּ וְהוֹדוּ לְשִׁמּוֹ.

וּמַלְכוּתוֹ בְּרָצוֹן קִבְּלוּ עֲלֵיהֶם.

מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ

שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה, וְאָמְרוּ כֻלָּם:

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Mi Shebeirach

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מִי־כְמוֹכָה בְּאֵלִים, יי,

מִי כְמוֹכָה נֹדֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁ,

נוֹרָא תְהִלָּת, עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא.

מַלְכוּתְךָ רָאוּ בְנֵיךָ,

בוֹקֵעִים לְפָנַי מֹשֶׁה וּמִרְיָם,

זֶה אֵלֵי עָנוּ וְאָמְרוּ:

יי יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְנֹאמַר: כִּי פָדָה יי אֶת־יַעֲקֹב,

וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חֲזָק מִמֶּנּוּ.

Hashkiveinu, Adonai Eloheinu, l'shalom;

v'haamideinu, Malkeinu, l'chayim.

Ufros aleinu sukat sh'lomecha,

v'tak'neinu b'eitzah tovah mil'fanecha.

V'hoshi-einu l'maan sh'mecha —

v'hagein baadeinu;

v'haseir mei-aleinu oyeiv:

dever, v'cherev, v'raav, v'yagon;

v'harcheik mimenu avon vafesha.

Uvtzeit k'nafecha tastireinu —

ki El shomreinu umatzileinu atah;

ki El melech chanun v'rachum atah.

Ushmor tzeiteinu uvo-einu,

l'chayim ulshalom — mei-atah v'ad olam.

Ufros aleinu sukat sh'lomecha.

הַשְּׂכִיבֵנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְשָׁלוֹם,

וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ, מַלְכֵנוּ, לְחַיִּים.

וּפְרֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ,

וְתַקַּנְנוּ בְּעֶצֶה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,

וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

וְהִגֵּן בְּעַדֵּנוּ.

וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב, דָּבָר, וְחָרֵב,

וְרָעַב וְיָגוֹן,

וְהִרְחַק מִמֶּנּוּ עוֹן וּפֶשַׁע.

וּבְצֵל כְּנַפֶּיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ.

כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ וּמַצִּילֵנוּ אַתָּה,

כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

וּשְׁמֹר צְאִתְנוּ וּבוֹאֵנוּ,

לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

וּפְרֹשׂ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ.

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Mi Shebeirach

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Aleinu

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זְמִירוֹת

Z'mirot

Bless our sleep with peace, Adonai, and awaken us to life when we rise.

With power sublime, spread over us Your shelter of shalom;

and through Your wisdom restore us — make us whole.

Let Your name proclaim Your presence in our lives —

be our shield; make us stronger than the enemies we face:

illness and war, famine and sorrow;

and stronger than the enemies in our hearts: wickedness and sin.

Carry us to safety as on wings —

for You are the Monarch of grace, the Sovereign of compassion;

You are the One who cares for us and sets us free.

Watch over us, we who go forth to life; watch over us,

that we may come home in peace — now, and till the end of time.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַפּוֹרֵשׂ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,

וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

Baruch atah, Adonai, haporeis sukat shalom aleinu,

v'al kol amo Yisrael, v'al Y'rushalayim.

Blessed One, You spread over us a canopy of peace —

a shelter of shalom over all Israel, Your people, and over Jerusalem.

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FALL OF EVENING,

darkness all around us.

The three-year-old wakes up crying,
sees monsters in the shadows.

And we lie awake for hours,
dreading monsters that are real.

Eventually you learn:

there are no charmed lives,
no special immunity from suffering and loss.

We cannot pray for safety—
only for the strength to endure.

So let us build a canopy while we can,
for the darkness falls on all of us.

There is no shelter from the shadows,
no protection from the terrors of night—
nothing but the warmth of a loving touch.

Comforting reminder: you are not alone.

PEACE COMES with the sunset

Cool breezes ease the heat of day

All things settle into stillness

Gentle song of crickets

Moonrise and the silence of night . . .

Give us shelter in Your presence

Bring peace to those who yearn for peace

Enfold us in Your quiet

Let our fears find rest in You.

BLESS OUR SLEEP WITH PEACE (*page 42*). In the ancient world, the approach of darkness evoked fear of unseen threats; and even today, the end of the day's distracting activities often calls forth fear and anxiety. The *Hashkiveinu* prayer acknowledges the reality of threats to human well-being, both external and internal, but responds to potentially disabling anxiety by offering words of trust in a loving God. In letting go of consciousness at night to experience the renewing power of sleep, we relinquish the illusion of control, for at least a few hours, placing the world, as it were, in God's hands.

*V'sham'ru v'nei Yisrael et-haShabbat,
laasot et-haShabbat l'dorotam b'rit
olam.*

Beini uvein b'nei Yisrael

ot hi l'olam;

ki-sheishet yamim asah Adonai

*et-hashamayim v'et-haaretz,
uvayom hash'vi-i shavat vayinafash.*

Let all Israel keep Shabbat
and celebrate Shabbat for all generations
as an everlasting covenant.
It is a sign forever —
a bond between Me and Israel —
that in six days the Eternal One made the heavens and the earth;
but on the seventh day God stopped,
and breathed a new soul into the world.

וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,
לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרוֹתָם בְּרִית
עוֹלָם.

בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אוֹת הִיא לְעוֹלָם,

כִּי־שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יי

אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ,
וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ.

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מִי שְׁבִירָךְ
Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ
Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוֹם
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V'SHAM'RU וְשָׁמְרוּ, Exodus 31:16–17.

LET ALL ISRAEL KEEP SHABBAT אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת וְשָׁמְרוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל. It is not easy to keep the Sabbath. The society in which we live does not create it for us; we have to create it for ourselves. And that requires remembrance, effort and self-discipline. We are not the first generation of Jews to face that difficulty; let us not be the first to be defeated by it. (Rabbi John D. Rayner, 1924–2005; and Rabbi Chaim Stern, 1930–2001)

STOPPED, AND BREATHED A NEW SOUL שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ. The act of stopping to refresh oneself by taking a breath (Hebrew: *vayinafash*, from *nefesh*, meaning “breath,” “soul,” or “life”) is intrinsic to the experience of Shabbat. Renewing our souls on the seventh day is both life-saving and conducive to spiritual growth. Our Sages believed that on the Sabbath we are endowed with a higher level of awareness—perhaps because we take the time to stop and breathe. Said Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish: “The Holy One gives an extra soul to a human being on the eve of Shabbat. When Shabbat leaves, the extra soul departs. . . . The additional soul helps us leave behind the turmoil of the week and experience the joy of Shabbat” (Talmud *Beitzah* 16a).

הַתְּפִלָּה

HaT'filah · Standing before God

Jacob came upon the place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold — a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven. . . .

— GENESIS 28:11–12

Jacob's dream is ours. Our bodies dwell on the earth, but our souls yearn to reach the heavens.

— BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF RABBI MOSHE OF KOBRYN

*Unless we aspire to the utmost, we shrink to inferiority.
Prayer is our attachment to the utmost.*

— RABBI ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

*Adonai, s'fatai tiftach,
ufi yagid t'hilatecha.*

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח,
וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

Adonai, open my lips,
that my mouth may declare Your praise.

RABBI MOSHE OF KOBRYN. Chasidic leader (1784–1858) who lived in what is now Belarus.

UNLESS WE ASPIRE . . . ATTACHMENT TO THE UTMOST. Rabbi Heschel (1907–1972) reminds us that one purpose of prayer is to express our aspirations — the higher and better world we long to create; the higher and better self we yearn to become. We might imagine our *T'filah* as a spiritual ladder guiding us toward the Jewish values and behaviors we seek to embody. "Who rise from prayer better persons, their prayer is answered" (George Meredith; 1828–1909).

ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפֹתַי תִּפְתָּח, Psalm 51:17.

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MEDITATIVE AMIDAH FOR ELUL

Take my thoughts and build from them houses of prayer . . .

—Asher Reich

INTRODUCTION

Jewish tradition encourages introspection and self-examination (*cheshbon hanefesh*) during the month of Elul, as preparation for the Days of Awe. In Sephardic communities, this spiritual practice is observed with the aid of eight penitential psalms (17, 25, 32, 51, 65, 85, 86, and 102), which are recited on weekday mornings from the second day of Elul until the day before Yom Kippur. The blue pages that follow (through page 75) contain verses from these psalms and poems that evoke the traditional themes of the Amidah; they are offered as aids to our practice of *cheshbon hanefesh*. The silence of the *Meditative Amidah* can be a momentary withdrawal from community to achieve greater clarity.

PRAYER

Before the Silent Prayer,
some slip the hood of their prayer shawls
over their heads,
so that even among many worshipers
they are alone with God.

Primo Levi wrote about the sadness of
“a cart horse, shut between two shafts
and unable even to look sideways . . .”

Let me be like those pious ones
or that horse,
so that, even amidst a crowd,
no other crosses the threshold
of my dreaming.

TAKE MY THOUGHTS. By Asher Reich (b. 1937).

PRAYER. By Yehoshua November (b. 1979). There is a long history to the individual's silent (or “whispered”) recitation of *HaT'filah*—“The Prayer” (also known as the Amidah—the “Standing Prayer”). The Mishnah (*B'rachot* 5) describes the Sages' efforts to achieve intense concentration during *HaT'filah*. Inspired by a similar goal, some worshipers today cover their heads with the *tallit* to block out distractions and focus inward. Here the poet hopes that immersion in silence will afford him a sense of solitude and privacy “even amidst a crowd.”

Avot v'Imahot — God of All Generations

Baruch atah, Adonai,

Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu:

Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzchak,

v'Elohei Yaakov;

Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rivkah,

Elohei Rachel, v'Elohei Leah;

haEl hagadol hagibor v'hanora,

El elyon,

gomeil chasadim tovim, v'koneih hakol —

v'zocheir chasdei avot v'imahot,

umeivi g'ulah livnei v'neihem,

l'maan sh'mo b'ahavah.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:]

Zochreinu l'chayim, Melech chafeitz bachayim.

V'chotveinu b'sefer hachayim,

l'maancha, Elohim chayim.

Melech ozeir umoshia umagein —

You are the Source of blessing, Adonai, our God
and God of our fathers and mothers:
God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob;
God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel, and God of Leah;
exalted God, dynamic in power, inspiring awe,
God sublime, Creator of all — yet You offer us kindness,
recall the loving deeds of our fathers and mothers,
and bring redemption to their children's children,
acting in love for the sake of Your name.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:] Remember us for life, sovereign God who treasures life.
Inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life.

Sovereign of salvation, Pillar of protection —

ברוך אתה, יי, מגן אברהם ועזרת שרה.

Baruch atah, Adonai, magein Avraham v'ezrat Sarah.

Blessed are You in our lives, Adonai, Shield of Abraham, Sustainer of Sarah.

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ברוך אתה, יי,

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ואמותינו:

אלהי אברהם, אלהי יצחק,

ואלהי יעקב,

אלהי שרה, אלהי רבקה,

אלהי רחל ואלהי לאה,

האל הגדול הגבור והנורא,

אל עליון,

גומל חסדים טובים, וקונה הכל —

וזוכר חסדי אבות ואמהות,

ומביא גאולה לבני בניהם,

למען שמו באהבה.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:]

זכרנו לחיים, מלך חפץ בחיים.

וכתבנו בספר החיים,

למעןך אלהים חיים.

מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן —

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ℵ *Avot v'Imahot—What Binds Us to the Past?*

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

Your faithfulness—a wondrous thing to behold!

Your awe—who can grasp it?

They who choose Your path, whose lives rest on goodness—
their children will inherit the land.

Blessed is the one who finds forgiveness,
whose misdeeds are overcome.

PARTING THE WATERS

Nothing is lost.
The past surfaces
from the salted tide pool
of oblivion over
and over again,
and here it is now—
complete
with ironed sheets, old sins,
and pewter candlesticks.
My mother and aunts approach,
shaking the water from
their freshly washed hair
like aging mermaids.
They have been here
all along, sewing
or reading a book, waiting
for the wand of memory
to touch them.

KAVANAH, Psalms 17:7, 25:12–13, and 32:1.

PARTING THE WATERS. By Linda Pastan (b. 1932). The poem's evocation of the persistence of memory echoes the *Avot v'Imahot* prayer (see facing page), which leads us toward God by inviting us, at the outset, to contemplate the memory of those who came before us.

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☞ *G'vurot—What Gives Us Strength?*

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

Create for me a pure heart;
renew within me constancy and calm.

Respond!

Answer us with justice and awe.
God of our salvation,
You are the Source of trust—
from the farthest ends of the earth to its most distant seas.

HANDS

He is surprised by his hands,
observes them seriously, brings
one hand up to his face, long cold
purple fingers, knurled arthritic joints.
He places one against the other,
pressing finger to finger in an arch.
His hands remember all the ways
they've ever moved, swiveling at the wrists
as though they're leading an orchestra,
appearing to thread a needle and soar,
gliding sideways across the luncheon tray
as once I watched him check the buff
and polish of a Queen Anne chest.
All the while we play Bach for him
and stare—old, old man, his hands
that come to rest, one hand curled
around my mother's finger as an infant
grasps in reflex, love's first and last.

KAVANAH, Psalms 51:12 and 65:6.

HANDS. By Margot Wizansky (b. 1941). Though unable to speak, the poet's loved one listened to music and conducted. Despite Alzheimer's disease, there was kinetic memory in his hands. And what gives the caregiver strength? In the words of the *G'vurot* prayer: "Your life-giving power is forever, Adonai—with us in life and in death."

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א *K'dushat HaShem—What Leads Us to Holiness? (I)*

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

Is it not Your will to bring us back to life again—
that, through You, we may find happiness?

When love and truth touch,
justice and peace will kiss.

THE TREE in the twilit street—
the pods hang from its bare symmetrical branches
motionless—
but if, like God, a century were to us
the twinkling of an eye,
we should see the frenzy of growth.

I AM A MAN: little do I last
and the night is enormous.
But I look up:
the stars write.
Unknowing I understand:
I too am written,
and at this very moment
someone spells me out.

KAVANAH, Psalm 85:7 and 85:11.

THE TREE. By Charles Reznikoff (1894–1976). Contemplating divine holiness, we seek our own human way to share in that holiness. The poet here suggests a path: perceive the extraordinary in the ordinary. A seemingly insignificant object—a tree standing motionless—is rendered as remarkable as the burning bush by our awareness of the dynamic energy it embodies.

I AM A MAN. By Octavio Paz (1914–1998); translated from the Spanish. A different perspective on holiness: the poet's contemplation of the night sky is both inspiring and humbling, reminding him of human insignificance. Yet his vision of the stars returns him to the meaning of his own life, and the realization that he—and every human being—is the unique expression of a purpose greater than the self.

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ת K'dushat HaYom—What Leads Us to Holiness? (II)

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

A year of Your goodness—Your crowning gift:
Your paths grow lush with oil, drop by drop;
pastures for grazing thrive in the wilderness,
and the hills are encircled with joy;
flocks of sheep clothe spacious fields,
and the valleys wear garments of grain.

Filled to bursting
they shout,
they praise—
an exultant song of delight.

SNOW

On Sabbath eve
down to the world floated
a kerchief of snow so very beautiful
and I grasped one end
and God grasped the other
and both of us danced
with the shuddering of closeness
and distance
with the dizziness of the joy
of our sudden love.

בְּעֶרְבֵי שַׁבָּת
רָחַפָּה וַיִּרְדָּה אֶל הָעוֹלָם
מִטְפַּחַת שֶׁלֶג יִפְהַפִּיָּה
וְאֶחְזָתִי בְקִצָּה הָאֶחָד
וְאֱלֹהִים בְּקִצָּה הַשְּׁנִי
וְהֵיינוּ שְׁנֵינוּ רוֹקְדִים
בְּצִמְרֵמֶרֶת רְחוּק וְקִרְבָּה
בְּסַחְרָהֶרֶת שְׂמָחָה
שֶׁל אֶהְבֵּתֵינוּ הַפְתְּאוּמִית.

KAVANAH, Psalm 65:12–14.

SNOW. By Sivan Har-Shefi (b. 1978). This contemporary Israeli poem deserves the traditional name *piyut* (religious poem). The rare experience of suddenly feeling God's love and one's love for God is captured by the metaphor of falling snow—a somewhat rare and always majestic event in the Jerusalem hills, as the line between heaven and earth disappears in swirls of whiteness. The kerchief dance signifies a wedding; “the shuddering of closeness and distance” felt by the dancers is an erotic and mystical way of evoking *Avinu Malkeinu*, the High Holy Days prayer in which God is experienced as simultaneously remote and near.

INCREDIBLE SPLENDOR

איזו זגות! זיו רך, זיו רוחני כזה!
 ממש לא יאמן כי יספר.
 רק בשם קל אחד מעמק החזה
 ואין קיום בדרגע למחבר.

הכל נתלש ועף... אין פלא כי עלה...
 העץ! העץ בלו יגביה עוף.
 לא בס ולא נסתה. הכל נגלה, נגלה-
 העץ, העץ בלו יגביה עוף.

תרימה קול-אין הד; תרכינה ראש-אין צל.
 קלות מקורי שלהי-אלול.
 מנטל משקלו החמר מתנצל
 כמון כתובו של דף רשרוש עלעול.

Incredible splendor—ethereal, delicate!
 What transparency!
 With one slight breath drawn from the deep breast,
 the pattern that we know ceases to be.

Uprooted, everything is flying.
 No wonder that a leaf—a leaf?—a tree is soaring.
 There is no miracle, and not one thing is hidden.
 Everything's revealed. The tree, the whole tree's soaring.

You raise your voice—no echo; you bend your head—no shadow:
 You are lighter than the webs of late September.
 Matter shakes off the burden of its weight
 as riffling a book's pages frees it of its words.

INCREDIBLE SPLENDOR. By Hayim Lenski (1905–ca. 1942).

WEBS OF LATE SEPTEMBER. The Hebrew phrase may be translated also as “cobwebs at the end of Elul.” The reference to the Hebrew month adds a spiritual dimension: it is the season of clearing away the accumulation of emotional knots and difficulties that entangle us.

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OH MY GREY END-OF-SUMMER ORCHARD

Oh my grey end-of-summer orchard.
All your leaves and olives,
all your silver-green.
And dust
on everything,
like a gift of *shekhine* — innocence.

Hot day after day
I rub up against you
and take away
heaps
of dust and fruit and silence.
But the gift
stays with you.

I grow tired.
My face is
smeared with doubt.
With summer.

Orchard!
Let me stay here
in the *shekhine*-night
and drink the secret of rest
and faith.

I won't disturb your waking-sleep.
Pure end-of-summer dust
cover me
like a miracle,
like dew,
like the gift of *shekhine* — innocence
over the trees.

OH MY GREY. By Rukhl Fishman (1935–1978); translated from the Yiddish.

SHEKHINE. Pronounced "*sh'chinneh*" — a Yiddish rendering of the Hebrew term that means "Divine Presence"; defined by theologian Judith Plaskow as "the presence of God in the place called the world and the one who rests in a unique way in the midst of community."

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*“Completed now were the heavens and the earth
and their whole array . . .”* (page 56)

TO SHAPE THE WORLD ANEW

The sea pushes back off the shore,
yielding to gravity with a sigh,
not a leaving but a letting go,
a retreat into its own deep fullness.
The sun relinquishes its hold on the sky
only to rise once more at daybreak
as the tide rolls back in,
a different kind of letting go,
an unspooling across the expanse.
And we creatures of earth are granted a fresh start,
a chance to gather the debris
and shape the world anew.

Wholeness is a kind of holiness,
the stasis of perfection.
But brokenness demands re-creation,
a churning cycle of endings and beginnings,
the act of pulling hope and brightness from the wreckage,
taking the jagged shards and making of them,
if not wholeness, a new sort of sacred splendor.

GOD BREATHED INTO US a living soul—
the gifts of respiration, inspiration, aspiration.
May we sanctify this day by breathing deeply.
Attentive to all gifts,
we taste the sweetness of the world that could be.

COMPLETED NOW, Genesis 2:1.

BROKENNESS DEMANDS RE-CREATION. In Jewish tradition: *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tikkun midot hanefesh* (repairing and strengthening personal traits and qualities).

A LIVING SOUL. Based on Genesis 2:7.

THE WORLD THAT COULD BE. Our Sages describe Shabbat as a foretaste of the messianic time. Some honor this idea by giving *tzedakah* before lighting Shabbat candles, dedicating themselves to the goal of a world without poverty.

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▮ *Avodah—What Inspires Our Devotion?*

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

Bring joy to my life of service,
when I turn to You for purpose and hope.

God, teach me Your path;
Your truth will guide my steps.
Point my heart toward awe—
Your name the center of my devotion.

PSALM

(Levavi oculus)

Moon moss, goldfinch in the lavender;
baptisia, indigo's pretender,
jetsam, driftwood, the sea's provender.

Bees snarled in the sweet peas, untended;
low the swing song the swallow suspended,
locusts the hurricane upended.

Far knock of ship's bells, a horn bleating
across the long water's green pleating,
the tide's endless parting and meeting.

And in the salt ditch between fir seedlings,
dragonflies, the quick whirl as speeding
they fly to the cattails, kneading

their lances, grass turning to tinder
in June's flaring gentian, day ended;
the sky shot full of flight, repeating:
Not the sun, nor moon by night, pleading.

KAVANAH, Psalm 86:4 and 86:11.

PSALM. Cynthia Zarin (b. 1959) infuses her psalm of nature with the spiritual force of Psalm 121: *I lift up my eyes* (verse 1; in Latin) and *Not the sun, nor moon by night* (verse 6). "Pour forth Your spirit on us" (see facing page) comes alive in the poem: the spirit of the Creator is seen in nature by those who "lift up [their] eyes."

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“Pour forth Your spirit on us . . .” (page 62)

THINE ALTAR is to me this bathtub
where my four-year-old twin
girls tip back their heads.
They close their eyes.
I read their faces from above,
in trust and fear, in holiness,
heads tipped until the waterline
has touched their hairlines, cautious.
Look: their hair flows underwater
like the scrolls unfurled in heaven.

THE ATHEIST’S PRAYER

Hear my plea you, God who doesn’t exist,
and in your nonexistence gather these, my grumblings.
You who never leave poor humans
without false comfort. You don’t resist
our pleas and you disguise our desires.
The more you move yourself away from my mind,
the more I remember the calm fairy tales
my nursemaid told me to sweeten sad nights.
How vast you are, my God! You are so vast
that you are nothing but an Idea; reality is so narrow
however much it expands itself
to meet you. I suffer at your cost,
nonexistent God. For if you did exist
I too would truly exist.

THINE ALTAR. By Brooks Haxton (b. 1950).

LIKE THE SCROLLS. Based on Isaiah 34:4.

THE ATHEIST’S PRAYER. Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936; translated from the Spanish) wrestles with yearnings for comfort, calm, and sweetness, despite the voice of reason. In the end, the poet imagines that God’s existence might imply greater human responsibility. Similarly, Rabbi Harold Schulweis (1925–2014) conveys the Jewish idea that we testify to God’s existence through deeds: “To the question ‘Does God exist?’ I answer ‘Do you exist?’ To the question ‘Is God good?’ I answer ‘Are you good?’ To the question ‘Does God intervene?’ I answer ‘Do you intervene?’ I authenticate God not with my lips but with my limbs.”

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1 Hodaah—What Fills Us with Gratitude?

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

You are my home, my shelter.
You soothe my distress.
You embrace me with songs of deliverance.

Adonai, my link to eternity—open my lips;
help me in my struggle to praise You.

TRANSFORMATIONS

How the sun couples with a cloud!
How the wind shifts the shapes
of the trees!
There's the fragrance of rain in the air!
Oh, all this joy!
Even after me.

איך השמש מזדוּגת עם ענָן!
איך הַרוּחַ מְשַׁנֶּה צוּרוֹת עֵצִים!
רִיחַ גֶּשֶׁם בְּאֵוִיר!
הוּ, כָּל הַשְּׂמֵחָה הַזֹּאת!
גַּם אַחֲרַי.

A MOMENTARY GLORY

This world is a momentary glory.
I never thought it would last forever
so I tried to get it down
in one notebook or another,
in one poem or another.
Somewhere you can find it.

KAVANAH, Psalms 32:7 and 51:17.

TRANSFORMATIONS. By Tuvia Ruebner (b. 1924).

A MOMENTARY GLORY. By Harvey Shapiro (1924–2013).

HOW THE SUN . . . YOU CAN FIND IT. The more deeply we acknowledge our mortality, the more intense the urge to be attentive and appreciative, and to bear witness to the glory of life. Taken together, these two poems echo the impulse behind the *Hodaah* prayer (see facing page): an urgency to praise “the power that endures from age to age,” to give thanks for “the constant miracle” that outlives us all.

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ALL THAT IS GLORIOUS AROUND US

is not, for me, these grand vistas, sublime peaks, mist-filled overlooks, towering clouds, but doing errands on a day of driving rain, staying dry inside the silver skin of the car, 160,000 miles, still running just fine. Or later, sitting in a café warmed by the steam from white chicken chili, two cups of dark coffee, watching the red and gold leaves race down the street, confetti from autumn's bright parade. And I think of how my mother struggles to breathe, how few good days she has now, how we never think about the glories of breath, oxygen cascading down our throats to the lungs, simple as the journey of water over a rock. It is the nature of stone / to be satisfied / writes Mary Oliver, It is the nature of water / to want to be somewhere else, rushing down a rocky tor or high escarpment, the panoramic landscape boundless behind it. But everything glorious is around us already: black and blue graffiti shining in the rain's bright glaze, the small rainbows of oil on the pavement, where the last car to park has left its mark on the glistening street, this radiant world.

FOR ALL THESE GIFTS . . .

For the gifts I received today:
air in my lungs;
pulse in my veins;
my restless mind, alive and curious,
awakening suddenly to beauty.
For love, and the memory of love;
forgiveness
when I didn't deserve it;
another chance at life.
*Let my soul give thanks to You—
Let me not forget Your kindness.*

ALL THAT IS GLORIOUS. By Barbara Crooker (b. 1945).

LET MY SOUL . . . KINDNESS. Based on Psalm 103:2.

Shalom — Peace

Shalom rav al Yisrael am'cha tasim

l'olam —

ki atah hu melech adon l'chol hashalom;

v'tov b'einecha l'vareich et am'cha

Yisrael,

b'chol eit uvchol shaah, bishlomecha.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:]

B'sefer chayim, b'rachah, v'shalom,

ufarnasah tovah,

nizacheir v'nikateiv l'fanecha,

anachnu, v'chol am'cha beit Yisrael,

l'chayim tovim ulshalom!

שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ תְּשִׂימָם
לְעוֹלָם,

כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹן לְכֹל הַשְּׁלוֹם,
וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ
יִשְׂרָאֵל,

בְּכֹל עֵת וּבְכֹל שָׁעָה, בְּשִׁלּוּמֶךָ.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:]

בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים, בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ, וּשְׁלוֹם,

וּפְרִנָּסָה טוֹבָה,

נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ,

אֲנַחְנוּ וְכֹל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,

לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם.

אֵלוּל

Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת

Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַכּוֹתֶיהָ

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מִי שְׁבָרַךְ

Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ

Aleinu

קִדְיֵשׁ יְתוּם

Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר

Shofar

זְמִירוֹת

Z'mirot

Peace — profound and lasting, all-embracing.

Peace — let this be Your gift to Israel, Your people.

In Your goodness, Author of peace, bless us and all people —
every season, every hour —

with the peace that is Yours to give.

[On Shabbat Shuvah:] Let us, and the whole family of Israel,

be remembered and inscribed in the Book of Life.

May it be a life of goodness, blessing, and prosperity!

May it be a life of peace!

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁלוֹם.

Baruch atah, Adonai, hamvareich et amo Yisrael bashalom.

You, Adonai, are the Blessed One who blesses us with peace.

PEACE שְׁלוֹם. The term *shalom* encompasses not merely the absence of conflict but wholeness, harmony, serenity, and well-being. A midrash likens *shalom* to “the leaven in the dough”: as yeast transforms grain into edible, nutritious bread, so *shalom* makes possible a fulfilling and productive world, in which human talents may flourish.

BLESS US AND ALL PEOPLE לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל. The traditional version of *Shalom Rav* expresses our Sages’ yearning for a secure existence for the Jewish people, who have often endured a precarious foothold on the margins of society, marked by periodic expropriation of their property and expulsion from their home. This version includes a prayer that all people may be blessed with peace.

YOU, ADONAI בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה. On Shabbat Shuvah, we say: “*Baruch atah, Adonai, oseih hashalom* — You are the Blessed One, Eternal Source of shalom.”

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🕊 *Shalom—What Makes Us Whole?*

KAVANAH FROM THE ELUL PSALMS

I say: “Not now, my God—
not in the middle of the journey. Do not carry me off.
Your years outlast all generations:
in some distant past You laid the earth’s foundation;
heaven itself is the work of Your hands.
They will vanish, but You endure. . . .
Your years never end.
The children of those who serve You—may they live in peace.
And their children, who live in Your presence—may they endure.”

THE LONG BOAT

When his boat snapped loose
from its mooring, under
the screaming of the gulls,
he tried at first to wave
to his dear ones on shore,
but in the rolling fog
they had already lost their faces.
Too tired even to choose
between jumping and calling,
somehow he felt absolved and free
of his burdens, those mottoes
stamped on his name-tag:
conscience, ambition, and all
that caring.

He was content to lie down
with the family ghosts
in the slop of his cradle,
buffeted by the storm,
endlessly drifting.
Peace! Peace!
To be rocked by the Infinite!
As if it didn’t matter
which way was home;
as if he didn’t know
he loved the earth so much
he wanted to stay forever.

KAVANAH, Psalm 102:25–29.

THE LONG BOAT. By Stanley Kunitz (1905–2006). Written by a poet who lived almost 101 years, this work evokes the peace of embracing death—letting go of life’s burdens and giving oneself up to the Infinite without pain or regret. Yet, cradled by the sea, the source of all life, the poet simultaneously expresses a deep love for life and the delights of earth. “The Long Boat” sets forth a vision of *shalom rav*—peace profound and lasting; life treasured with the serene awareness that someday it will end.

T'filat HaLev — Prayer of the Heart

Elohai:
 N'tzor l'shoni meira;
 usfatai midabeir mirmah.
 V'limkal'lai nafshi tidom;
 v'nafshi ke-afar lakol tiyeh.
 P'tach libi b'Toratecha;
 uvmitzvotcha tirdof nafshi.
 V'chol hachoshvim alai raah —
 m'heirah hafeir atzatam,
 v'kalkeil machashavtam.
 Aseih l'maan sh'mecha.
 Aseih l'maan y'minecha.
 Aseih l'maan k'dushatecha.
 Aseih l'maan Toratecha.
 L'maan yeichal'tzun y'didecha,
 hoshiah y'mincha vaaneini.

אֱלֹהֵי,
 נִצֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעָה,
 וּשְׂפָתַי מִדַּבֵּר מִרְמָה.
 וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשִׁי תִדּוּם,
 וְנַפְשִׁי כְּעָפָר לְכֹל תִּיְהֶיּה.
 פְּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ,
 וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ תִּרְדֹּף נַפְשִׁי.
 וְכֹל הַחֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה,
 מְהֵרָה הִפֵּר עֲצָתָם,
 וְקַלְקַל מַחְשַׁבְתָּם.
 עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.
 עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ.
 עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קְדוּשַׁתְךָ.
 עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרַתְךָ.
 לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יְדֵיֶיךָ,
 הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעַנְיִי.

My God:

Keep my tongue from doing harm, and my lips from lies and deceit.
 Before those who wrong me with words, may silence be my practice.
 Before all human beings, let humility be my stance.
 Open my heart to Your Torah, that I may follow its sacred path of duty.
 Shatter, at once, the malicious plans of those who would do me harm.
 Act, for the sake of Your name.
 Act, for the sake of Your shielding hand.
 Act, for the sake of Your holiness.
 Act, for the sake of Your Torah.
 For the sake of those who love You — their rescue and safety —
 let Your shielding hand be the answer to my prayer.

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מִי שֶׁבְּרַח
 Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ
 Aleinu

קְדִישׁ יְתוּם
 Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
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MY GOD: KEEP based on Psalm 34:14.

FOR THE SAKE OF . . . THEIR RESCUE based on Psalm 60:7.

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IT IS TRUE that a Jew never worships as an isolated individual but as a part of the Community of Israel. Yet it is within the heart of every individual that prayer takes place. It is a personal duty, and an intimate act which cannot be delegated to either the cantor or to the whole community. We pray with all of Israel, and every one of us by ourselves.

A SHORT TESTAMENT

Whatever harm I may have done
In all my life in all your wide creation
If I cannot repair it
I beg you to repair it,
And then there are all the wounded
The poor the deaf the lonely and the old
Whom I have roughly dismissed
As if I were not one of them.
Where I have wronged them by it
And cannot make amends
I ask you
To comfort them to overflowing,
And where there are lives I may have withered around me,
Or lives of strangers far or near
That I've destroyed in blind complicity,
And if I cannot find them
Or have no way to serve them,
Remember them. I beg you to remember them
When winter is over
And all your unimaginable promises
Burst into song on death's bare branches.

IT IS TRUE. By Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972).

A SHORT TESTAMENT. By Anne Porter (1911–2011).

*Yiyu l'ratzon imrei-fi
v'hegyon libi l'fanecha,
Adonai, tzuri v'go-ali.*

יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אֱמֶרֶי־פִי
וְהִגְיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ,
יְיָ צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי.

May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to You, Soul of eternity,
my Rock and my Redeemer.

*Oseh shalom bimromav,
hu yaaseh shalom aleinu,
v'al kol Yisrael,
v'al kol yoshvei teiveil.
V'imru: Amen.*

עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו,
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

May the Maker of peace above make peace for us,
all Israel, and all who dwell on earth. *Amen.*

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Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ
Aleinu

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שׁוֹפָר
Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
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MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH יְהִי לְרָצוֹן. With the words of Psalm 19:15, we pray that both our speech and our thoughts may be acceptable “offerings” to God. It is a prayer for integrity: true consistency between our inner world and the public realm in which we speak and engage with others. Such integrity is one way that human beings may bring God’s holiness into the world. “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:2) by revealing vast constellations above; we can reveal God’s presence on earth through the goodness of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

מִי שְׁבִירָךְ

Mi Shebeirach · Prayers for Healing

Prayer for Healing

May the One whose blessings are many
heal and bless us —
and all those who live in the shadow of illness.

May God's care
bring us comfort and courage.

May God's love
open our eyes to the faith and compassion around us.

May the Source of hope and renewal
show us the way toward peace of mind,
wholeness within, and strength from community.

Source of blessings, as You inspired
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, inspire us, too:

Let us shine the soft light of human kindness in dark places.
Let song, prayer, and silence be our instruments of care and healing.
Let us all —
the sick and the well together —
be blessed, as God blessed Joshua:
“*Chazak ve-emetz* — Be strong and of good courage.”

Let us say: *Amen*.

CHAZAK VE-EMATZ. This phrase appears three times in the first chapter of Joshua (verses 6, 7, and 9), as God encourages the anxious new leader who is succeeding Moses. Rather than passivity and dependence, God's words seek to inspire confident action. Malbim (1809–1879) understands the first verb (*chazak*) as a command to motivate oneself; the second (*emetz*) charges us to translate our convictions into deeds. The Vilna Gaon (1720–1797) sees *chazak* as referring to our duty to strengthen our body, while *emetz* refers to strengthening our emotions to overcome fear. Psalm 27 (on pages 8–9), which is read throughout Elul and the Days of Awe, ends on a similar note.

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HEALER OF THE BROKEN-HEARTED

הַרְפֵּא לְשִׁבּוּרֵי לֵב, וּמְחַבֵּשׁ לְעֵצְבוֹתָם.
מוֹנֵה מִסְפָּר לְכוֹכְבִּים, לְכֹלָם שְׁמוֹת יִקְרָא. הִלְלוּ יְהוָה.

Harofei lishvurei lev, umchabeish l'atzvotam.

Moneh mispar lakochavim — l'chulam sheimot yikra

Hal'luyah

Healer of the broken-hearted

Binder of their wounds

Counter of uncountable stars

You know where they are

Healer of the broken-hearted

Binder of our wounds

Counter of uncountable stars

You know who we are

Hal'luyah

Ana El na r'fa na lah

Hal'luyah

MI SHEBEIRACH

מִי שִׁבְּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאַמּוֹתֵינוּ,

Mi shebeirach avoteinu

M'kor hab'rachah l'imoteinu —

may the Source of strength who blessed the ones before us

help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing

and let us say, Amen.

מִי שִׁבְּרַךְ אֲמוֹתֵינוּ
מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ,

Mi shebeirach imoteinu

M'kor hab'rachah laavoteinu —

bless those in need of healing with *r'fuah sh'leimah*,

the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit,

and let us say, Amen.

HEALER OF THE BROKEN-HEARTED, Psalm 147:3–4, 1. Lyrics by Shir Yaakov Feit (b. 1978).

EL NA R'FA NA LAH. Moses' prayer for Miriam: "God, please heal her" (Numbers 12:13).

MI SHEBEIRACH. Lyrics by Debbie Friedman (1951–2011) and Rabbi Drorah Setel (b. 1956).

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*Aleinu l'shabei-ach laadon hakol,
lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit —
shehu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz,
umoshav y'karo bashamayim mimaal;
ush-chinat uzo b'govhei m'romim,
hu Eloheinu — ein od.
Vaanachnu korim,
umishtachavim, umodim
lifnei melech malchei ham'lachim:
HaKadosh, baruch hu.*

Let us now praise the Sovereign of the universe, and proclaim the greatness of the Creator—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. You are our God; there is none else. Therefore we bow in awe and thanksgiving before the One who is sovereign over all, the Holy and Blessed One.



*Aleinu l'shabei-ach laadon hakol,
lateit g'dulah l'yotzeir b'reishit —
shehu asanu l'shomrei haadamah,
v'hu samanu lishlichei haTorah;
shehu sam chayeinu itam,
v'goraleinu im kol haolam.
Vaanachnu korim,
umishtachavim, umodim
lifnei melech malchei ham'lachim:
HaKadosh, baruch hu.*

Our calling is to praise the Living Source. Our duty is to make known the greatness of the One Creator, who trusts us to be guardians of the earth and messengers of Torah; who gives us a destiny shared with all human beings, and who binds our lives to theirs. And so we bend, bow, and give thanks before the Blessed One whose realm is unfathomable, whose sovereignty over all makes all life holy and precious.

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיוֹסֵד אָרֶץ,
וּמוֹשֵׁב יְקָרוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל,
וְשֹׁכֵן עֵזוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים,
הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵין עוֹד.
וְאִנְחָנוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמְשַׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים
לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַכֹּל,
לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁהוּא עֲשָׂנוּ לְשׁוֹמְרֵי הָאָדָמָה,
וְהוּא שָׁמְנוּ לְשִׁלְחֵי הַתּוֹרָה,
שֶׁהוּא שָׂם חַיֵּינוּ אִתָּם,
וְגָרְלָנוּ עִם כָּל הָעוֹלָם.
וְאִנְחָנוּ כּוֹרְעִים
וּמְשַׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים
לְפָנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים,
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

*Al kein n'kaveh l'cha, Adonai Eloheinu,
livot m'heirah b'tiferet uzecha,
l'haavir gilulim min haaretz;
v'ha-elilim karot yikareitun.
L'takein olam b'malchut Shaddai,
v'chol b'nei vasar yikr'u vishmecha;
l'hafnot eilecha kol rishei aretz.*

עַל כֵּן נִקְוָה לְךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
לְרֹאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתִפְרֵת עֲזֶךָ,
לְהַעֲבִיר גִּלּוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ,
וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּרוֹת יִכְרֹתוּן.
לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדַי,
וְכָל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְשִׁמְךָ,
לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רִשְׁעֵי אָרֶץ.

אֵלוּל
Elul
קַבְלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat
שִׁמְעַ וּבְרֻכּוֹתֶיהָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha
הַתְּפִלָּה
HaT'filah
מִי שֶׁבְרַךְ
Mi Shebeirach

And so, Adonai our God, we look to You,
hoping soon to behold the splendor of Your power revealed:
a world free of idolatry and false gods;
a world growing more perfect through divine governance;
a world in which all human beings make known Your name,
while those who do evil turn instead toward You.

*V'ne-emar:
"V'hayah Adonai l'melech al-kol-haaretz.
Bayom hahu yiyeh Adonai echad,
ushmo echad."*

וְנֹאמַר:
וְהָיָה יְיָ לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ.
בְּיוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְיָ אֶחָד,
וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

עֲלֵינוּ
Aleinu
קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם
Kaddish Yatom
שׁוֹפָר
Shofar
זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

As the prophet announced,
"The Eternal shall be sovereign over all the earth.
On that day the Eternal shall be one, and God's name shall be one."

AND SO, ADONAI יְיָ . . . עַל כֵּן . . . This is the second section of *Aleinu*, a prayer originally intended for Rosh HaShanah. Since the early Middle Ages, Jewish worship has included this expression of hope: a messianic vision of all people united in service to one God; and divine sovereignty extending over the entire world, as evidenced by all-encompassing justice and peace. That universalism enlarges the narrower focus of the first part of *Aleinu* (p. 78), which describes the unique history, purpose, and destiny of one people: Israel. The climax — "On that day the Eternal shall be one, and God's name shall be one" (Zechariah 14:9) — is a daring assertion: our Jewish proclamation of divine unity, embodied in the *Sh'ma*, has not yet come to be. As Dr. Henry Slonimsky (1884–1970) observed: "Till now God merely subsists in the vision of a few great hearts, and exists only in part, and is slowly being translated into reality."

Days of Reflection
and Renewal

Welcoming Shabbat

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OUR MISSION IS to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope—not the prudent gates of Optimism, which are somewhat narrower; nor the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense; nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness, which creak on shrill and angry hinges (people cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through); nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of “Everything Is Gonna Be All Right.” But a different, sometimes lonely place, of truth-telling about your own soul first of all and its condition; the place of resistance and defiance, from which you see the world both as it is and as it could be, as it will be; the place from which you glimpse not only struggle but joy in the struggle. And we stand there, beckoning and calling, telling people what we’re seeing, asking them what they see.

THE WILD GEESE

Horseback on Sunday morning,
harvest over, we taste persimmon
and wild grape, sharp sweet
of summer’s end. In time’s maze
over fall fields, we name names
that went west from here, names
that rest on graves. We open
a persimmon seed to find the tree
that stands in promise,
pale, in the seed’s marrow.
Geese appear high over us,
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye,
clear. What we need is here.

OUR MISSION. By Victoria Safford.

THE WILD GEESE. By Wendell Berry (b. 1934).

NEW EARTH. See Isaiah 65:17: “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered, or come to mind.”

Preparing for the Mourner's Kaddish

THE EMBRACE

You weren't well or really ill yet either;
just a little tired, your handsomeness
tinged by grief or anticipation, which brought
to your face a thoughtful, deepening grace.

I didn't for a moment doubt you were dead.
I knew that to be true still, even in the dream.
You'd been out—at work maybe?—
having a good day, almost energetic.

We seemed to be moving from some old house
where we'd lived, boxes everywhere, things
in disarray: that was the story of my dream,
but even asleep I was shocked out of the narrative

by your face, the physical fact of your face:
inches from mine, smooth-shaven, loving, alert.
Why so difficult, remembering the actual look
of you? Without a photograph, without strain?

So when I saw your unguarded, reliable face,
your unmistakable gaze opening all the warmth
and clarity of you—warm brown tea—we held
each other for the time the dream allowed.

Bless you. You came back, so I could see you
once more, plainly, so I could rest against you
without thinking this happiness lessened anything,
without thinking you were alive again.

THE EMBRACE. By Mark Doty (b. 1953).

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַחֲמֶיךָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

הַתְּפִלָּה
HaT'filah

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Mi Shebeirach

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IN BLACKWATER WOODS

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars
of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,
the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders
of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is
nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned
in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side
is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world
you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

IN BLACKWATER WOODS. By Mary Oliver (b. 1935).

THE SCIENTISTS ARE WRONG

They're wrong, the scientists. The universe
wasn't created
billions of years ago.
The universe is created every day.

The scientists are wrong to claim
the universe was created from one primordial
substance.

The world is created every day
from various substances with nothing in
common.

Only the relative proportions of their masses,
like the elements of sorrow and hope,
make them companions
and curbstones. I'm sorry

I have to get up, in all modesty, and disagree
with what is so sure and recognized by experts:
that there's no speed faster than the speed of
light,
when I and my lighted flesh
just noticed something else right here—
whose speed is even greater than the speed of
light
and which also returns,
though not in a straight line, because of the
curve of the universe
or because of the innocence of God.

And if we connect all this to an equation,
according to the rules, maybe
it will make sense that I refuse to believe that
her voice
and everything I always cherished
and everything so real and suddenly
lost,
is actually lost forever.

THE SCIENTISTS ARE WRONG. By Abba Kovner (1918–1987).

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַחֲמֶיךָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

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CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

*Our thoughts turn to loved ones
whom death has taken from us in recent days,
and those who died at this season in years past.
Our hearts open, as well, to the wider circles of loss
in our community and wherever grief touches
the human family. . . .
Zichronam livrachah – זְכוֹרֹנָם לְבִרְכָה
May their memories be a blessing—now and always.*

CROSSING THE BAR. By Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892). The poem, composed three years before the poet's death, has been set to music by Rani Arbo. The word *bar* here refers to a sandbar, a metaphor for the boundary between life and death; *bourne* means a boundary or limit.

קדיש יתום

Kaddish Yatom · Recalling Our Loved Ones

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'meih raba,
b'alma di v'ra chiruteih.
V'yamlich malchuteih b'chayichon
uvyomeichon,
uvchayei d'chol beit Yisrael —
baagala uvizman kariv;
v'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varach
l'alam ul-almei almaya.
Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar
v'yitromam v'yitnasei v'yit-hadar
v'yitaleh v'yit-halal sh'meih
d'kudsha — b'rich hu —
l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,

[On Shabbat Shuvah, say instead:]
l'eila ul-eila mikol birchata v'shirata,
tushb'chata v'nechemata
daamiran b'alma;
v'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,
v'chayim aleinu v'al kol Yisrael;
v'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav,
hu yaaseh shalom aleinu,
v'al kol Yisrael
v'al kol yoshvei teiveil;
v'imru: Amen.

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ.
וַיַּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן,
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרָךְ
לְעַלְמֵי וּלְעַלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא.
יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר
וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר
וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ
דְּקֻדְשָׁא, בְּרִיךְ הוּא,
לְעֵלְא מִן כּוֹל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,

[On Shabbat Shuvah, say instead:]
לְעֵלְא וּלְעֵלְא מִכּוֹל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא,
תְּשׁוּבַחְתָּא וְנִחְמָתָא
דְּאִמְיָרָן בְּעֵלְמָא.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא,
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוַמָּיו
הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כּוֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל כּוֹל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.

AND ALL WHO DWELL ON EARTH וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל, Psalm 33:8.

אָלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַכּוּתָיָהּ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

הַתְּפִלָּה
HaT'filah

מִי שְׁבִירָךְ
Mi Shebeirach

עָלֵינוּ
Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוֹם
Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot

Days of Reflection and Renewal	May God's great name come to be magnified and sanctified in the world God brought into being.
Welcoming Shabbat	May God's majestic reign prevail soon in your lives, in your days, and in the life of the whole House of Israel; and let us say: <i>Amen</i> .
Sh'ma and Its Blessings	
Standing before God	May God's great name be blessed to the end of time.
Prayers for Healing	May God's holy name come to be blessed, acclaimed, and glorified; revered, raised, and beautified; honored and praised.
Recalling Our Purpose	Blessed is the One who is [On Shabbat Shuvah: entirely] beyond all the blessings and hymns, all the praises and words of comfort that we speak in the world; and let us say: <i>Amen</i> .
Recalling Our Loved Ones	
The Voice of Return	
Songs of the Heart	Let perfect peace abound; let there be abundant life for us and for all Israel. May the One who makes peace in the high heavens make peace for us, all Israel, and all who dwell on earth; and let us say: <i>Amen</i> .

*May the Source of peace bestow peace on all who mourn, and
may we be a source of comfort to all who are bereaved. Amen.*

Those Who Sow

Hazorim b'dimah — b'rinah yiktzoru. הַזֹּרְעִים בְּדִמְעָה, בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ.

Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy.

Adonai Oz

Adonai oz l'amo yitein,

יְיָ עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן,

Adonai y'vareich et-amo vashalom.

יְיָ יְבָרֵךְ אֶת-עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.

May God give strength to our people.

May God bless all people with peace.

THOSE WHO SOW הַזֹּרְעִים, Psalm 126:5.

ADONAI OZ יְיָ עֹז, Psalm 29:11.

Kiddush

Baruch atah, Adonai,
 Eloheinu melech haolam,
 borei p'ri hagafen.
 Baruch atah, Adonai,
 Eloheinu melech haolam,
 asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
 v'ratzah vanu,
 v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uvratzon
 hinchilanu, zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit;
 ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh,
 zeicher litziat mitzrayim;
 ki vanu vacharta
 v'otanu kidashta mikol haamim;
 v'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uvratzon
 hinchaltanu.

Source of blessing, Eternal our God,
 Your majestic power creates the fruit of the vine.

Source of blessing, Eternal our God, in Your majestic power
 You make our lives holy through Your mitzvot.
 In loving favor, You have given us Your holy Shabbat:
 a treasured inheritance to recall the work of Creation.
 First of our sacred assemblies,
 this day revives memories of our Exodus from Egypt.
 You have chosen for us a unique place among nations—
 offering us, in loving favor, Your holy Shabbat as our heritage.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

Baruch atah, Adonai, m'kadeish haShabbat.

Blessed are You, Eternal Sovereign over all the earth,
 who sanctifies Shabbat.

אָלוּל
 Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
 Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַכּוֹתֶיהָ
 Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

הַתְּפִלָּה
 HaT'filah

מִי שֶׁבִּרַח
 Mi Shebeirach

עֲלֵינוּ
 Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם
 Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
 Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
 Z'mirot

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.
 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
 וְרָצָה בָּנוּ,
 וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשׁוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
 הִנְחִילָנוּ, זְכוֹרֹן לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית,
 כִּי הוּא יוֹם תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קִדְּשׁ,
 זְכוֹר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם,
 כִּי בָנוּ בְּחָרְתָּ
 וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
 וְשַׁבַּת קִדְּשְׁךָ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
 הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ.

זְמִירוֹת

Z'mirot · Songs of the Heart

Olam Chesed Yibaneh

עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה...

Olam chesed yibaneh, dai dai dai dai dai...

Olam chesed yibaneh, dai dai dai dai dai...

I will build this world from love... dai dai dai dai dai...

And you must build this world from love... dai dai dai dai dai...

And if we build this world from love... dai dai dai dai dai...

Then God will build this world from love... dai dai dai dai dai...

Hashiveinu

Hashiveinu, Adonai, eilecha — v'nashuvah.

Chadeish yameinu k'kedem.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו, יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ - וְנָשׁוּבָה.

חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

Take us back, Adonai —

let us come back to You.

Renew in our time the days of old.

Od Yavo Shalom

Od yavo shalom aleinu

v'al kulam!

Salaam, aleinu v'al kol haolam

Salaam — Shalom.

עוֹד יָבוֹא שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ

וְעַל כּוֹלָם!

סָלָאָם, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם

סָלָאָם - שְׁלוֹם.

Peace will yet come

for us and everyone.

Peace —

for us and all the world.

Salaam — Shalom

OLAM CHESED YIBANEH, Psalm 89:3 ("The world is built on kindness"); lyrics by Rabbi Menachem Creditor (b. 1975).

HASHIVEINU הַשִּׁיבֵנו, Lamentations 5:21.

OD YAVO SHALOM. By Mosh Ben Ari (b. 1970).

אֵלוּל
Elul

קַבְּלַת שַׁבָּת
Kabbalat Shabbat

שְׁמַע וּבְרַחֲמֶיךָ
Sh'ma Uvirchoteha

הַתְּפִלָּה
HaT'filah

מִי שֶׁבְּרַח
Mi Shebeirach

עָלֵינוּ
Aleinu

קַדִּישׁ יְתוּם
Kaddish Yatom

שׁוֹפָר
Shofar

זְמִירוֹת
Z'mirot