

Services Supplement for
Yom Kippur 5781/2020
Temple Beth Torah
September 27th-28th



Dear TBT Community,

Gmar Chatima Tova! I am so glad we have the opportunity to celebrate the High Holidays together, and that we are able to remain connected while we are physically apart.

My greatest hope as your Rabbi is that there is something in our High Holiday celebrations together that speaks to you in what you need this year. Whether you are in need of comfort, inspiration, or connection to tradition and community, my hope is that our services and programming meet you in those needs.

To that end, I have put together this High Holiday services supplement. It contains questions for reflection, ideas of techniques for prayer, poetry, readings, and interpretive versions of our traditional prayers. Whether you have celebrated the High Holidays over a lifetime or are new to the High Holidays, I hope this supplement will be a source of meaning and inspiration and that you will use it in whatever way it speaks to you.

Bivracha (with blessing),
Rabbi Mimi

Questions for Reflection

Adapted from works by Alison Adler, Lenore Boehm, Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf, Rabbi Gray Myrseth, and Joanna Ware

- ❖ What was my proudest moment in the last year?
- ❖ What was my greatest disappointment in the last year?
- ❖ What in the last year brought me the most joy?
- ❖ What in the last year brought me the most sorrow or regret?
- ❖ What is it that I bring to this service?
- ❖ What am I grateful for?
- ❖ What parts of my life need healing?
- ❖ What angers need expressing?
- ❖ Who did I fight with in the last year?
- ❖ Who in my life might I ask forgiveness?
- ❖ Who might I forgive?
- ❖ How do I feel towards God, or whatever it is that I understand as being Ultimate?
- ❖ What expectations do I have of the High Holy Day services this year? What is my role in the service?
- ❖ When do I most feel that my life is meaningful?
- ❖ What are three significant accomplishments I have made since last year's RH?
- ❖ What are the 3 biggest mistakes I've made since last year's RH?
- ❖ What project or goal, if left undone, will I most regret next RH?
- ❖ What is one thing for which I need to ask myself for forgiveness?
- ❖ What does it look like when I'm not ready to extend or ask for forgiveness? What does it look like when I am? What is one thing I want to take with me from my past year?
- ❖ What do I need to do to get ready?
- ❖ What commitments am I making for the coming year?

Suggested Techniques for Prayer

Prayer is meant to be a powerful, relevant, and meaningful experience, but this is much easier said than done. This is especially true if the language and words are foreign. Below are some suggestions about where to start.

1) Linger with a phrase that touches you

Don't rush, when a word or phrase grabs your attention, stay with it. Focus on depth rather than volume. The goal is not to get through the prayer; the goal is for the prayer to get through you. You might get behind the congregation. That is OK. You can join us again later.

2) Focus on the words

Focus on the words themselves. Take them seriously as having meaning for you in your life.

3) Interpret the prayers

Try to interpret the meaning of a prayer as you go, the same way you might interpret poetry or a text from the Torah. We are taught: "there are 70 faces to Torah." Which is to say, there are many many ways to read and understand a text or prayer!

4) Skip the offensive/what doesn't work and rewrite it in your head

There will be words in the liturgy that don't work for you. They may be offensive, inaccessible, triggering, or perhaps just "off" in some other way. Sometimes this discomfort can be good, productive even, because it can cause us to examine our own beliefs or feelings. Or it can help us to see the world in a new light. At other times this discomfort can hurt us or get in the way of connecting to prayer and to God. In these moments, skip the passage or rewrite the words in your head.

5) Create your own prayers

Make it a one-on-one conversation with God or just a dialogue between you and the world. Here are some prompts to get you going:

On this day, God, I feel...

I regret that...

I want to...

I am thankful for...

Please...

Poetry and Readings

Yom Kippur

By Phillip Schultz

You are asked to stand and bow your head,
consider the harm you've caused,
the respect you've withheld,
the anger misspent, the fear spread,
the earnestness displayed
in the service of prestige and sensibility,
all the callous, cruel, stubborn, joyless sins
in your alphabet of woe
so that you might be forgiven.
You are asked to believe in the spark
of your divinity, in the purity
of the words of your mouth
and the memories of your heart.
You are asked for this one day and one night
to starve your body so your soul can feast
on faith and adoration.

You are asked to forgive the past
and remember the dead, to gaze
across the desert in your heart
toward Jerusalem. To separate
the sacred from the profane
and be as numerous as the sands
and the stars of heaven.
To believe that no matter what
you have done to yourself and others
morning will come and the mountain
of night will fade. To believe,
for these few precious moments,
in the utter sweetness of your life.
You are asked to bow your head
and remain standing,
and say Amen.

On Kol Nidre

By Rabbi Shuli Passow

To avow “I will be a more patient person” is meaningless unless I am willing to do the detailed work of noticing when I snap at my spouse or my friend or my co-worker, pinpointing the moment when my body gets tight and the words are about to come out, hurtful and thoughtless — and creating a tiny but crucial act of pausing before those words fly out. A ritual: Breathe in. Breathe out. Let the tightness release. Gather my thoughts and speak my heart softly. Create a new pattern, a new habit. This is how I become a more patient person. This is how I will change. The promise “I will recommit to daily prayer” is an empty declaration unless I take a hard look at what is getting in the way. Why am I not making space in my day to talk to God? What is the ritual I will create — the series of small, seemingly insignificant actions — through which I will carve out moments for daily conversation with the divine? This is how I will become more present and more active in my relationship with God. This, I believe, is the message of Kol Nidre, and one reason why we begin Yom Kippur with this text. In the dramatic intensity of Yom Kippur, we might be tempted to spend the day making resolutions and proclamations about what we will always do and never do in the coming year, about the people we will become and the parts of ourselves we will leave behind. But Kol Nidre reminds us that these vows are deceiving — because grand resolutions and declarations are not truly the basis for growth and transformation. Instead, the real work of personal change happens through the very small actions, the rituals that we begin to take on when these 25 hours are over.

A Body-Prayer for Teshuvah

*From the Yom Kippur Supplement of Tikkun
Olam Chavurah & Fringes Havurah*

Holy One of Blessing, we have been
stiff-necked: stubborn, angry, resentful.
Help us to hold our heads high with self
respect,
but not defensiveness,
to let go of old angers.

We have refused to acknowledge any view
but our own.
We've seen only the negative things, which
have fed our despair.
Help us learn to focus on the fullness of
creation.

We have clenched our fists in frustration.
Help our hands to build, change, and nurture.

Our knees have trembled with fear. Our feet
have shuffled in indifference.
Help us have true faith in ourselves and in
life,
to stride with confidence, generosity and
clarity of purpose.

Our Real Work

By WENDELL BERRY

It may be that when we no longer know what to do
we have come to our real work,
and that when we no longer know which way to go
we have come to our real journey.
The mind that is not baffled is not employed.
The impeded stream is the one that sings.

We have swallowed injustice, choked on
cruelty.
Give us a deep hunger for change.

We have let our hearts sink and our shoulders
sag in discouragement.
Let us fill ourselves with faith in the presence
of the Shekinah,
faith in ourselves, and in each other.

We have exhausted our bodies with anxieties,
resentments, pointless busyness.
Help us feel Your breath within us, our
neshama, breath/soul/spirit.
During these days of teshuvah, we will right
the wrongs we've done to each other.
We will turn again towards harmony.
Help us to do so in hope and not in despair,
with insight and not with a closed heart,
with deep conviction and not with shallow
formality.

May we open ourselves body and soul so that
this will be a truly new beginning.

Interpretive Prayers

Vidui: Affirmations

From the High Holiday supplement of Congregation Mishkan Shalom, Philadelphia

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| We are accepting | We are balanced | We are caring | We are devoted |
| We are empathic | We are faithful | We are gracious | We are holy |
| We are insightful | We are just | We are kind | We are loving |
| We are modest | We are nurturing | We are open | We are positive |
| We are questioning | We are reaching | We are strong | We are trustworthy |
| We are understanding | We are vital | We are wise | We are zestful |
| We are... | | | |

Alternative Al Chet

By the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, Evanston, IL

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha for committing wrongs openly and in public;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha for committing wrongs that will never see the light of day.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha for the misdeeds we commit by chance or by accident

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha for the misdeeds we commit with the full knowledge of our actions.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by hardening our hearts to the possibility of forgiving others;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by closing ourselves off to the possibility of being forgiven.

Ve'al kulam eloha selichot selach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha for failing to stand up for what we know to be right and just;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha for closing our eyes to those who need our help the most.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by inflicting physical violence on others;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by resorting to emotional violence as a weapon.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha through misused and harmful speech;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by harboring misguided and hateful thoughts.

Ve'al kulam eloha selichot selach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by not paying enough attention to our physical health;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by neglecting our emotional well-being.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha through waste and over-consumption;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by giving in to the idolatry of materialism.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by promising more than we could deliver;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by underestimating how much we are capable of giving.

Ve'al kulam eloha selichot selach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by not cherishing our families;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by taking our friends for granted.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by refusing to see God's image in all people;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by refusing to see God's image in ourselves.

Al chet shechatanu lifanecha by giving in to baseless hatred;

Ve'al chet shechatanu lifanecha by failing to find more love in our hearts.

Ve'al kulam eloha selichot selach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu.

Ki Anu Amecha

By Elliott batTzedek

We are blowing dust, You, our wind. We are open hands, You, our spirit.

We are the millstone, You, our water. We are fertile ground, You, our gardener

We are the search for words, You, our clarity. We are every kind of laugh, You, our joy.

You are blowing dust, We, your wind. You are open hands, We, your spirit.

You are the millstone, We, your water. You are fertile ground, We, your gardener.

You are the search for words, We, your clarity. You are every kind of laugh, We, your joy.

Healing Service

Candle One: For those we lost to COVID-19

One-by-One: A Prayer as the COVID Death Toll Mounts (Alden Solovy)

God of consolation,
Surely you count in heaven,
Just as we count here on earth,
In shock and in sorrow,
The souls sent back to You,
One-by-one,
The dead from the COVID pandemic,
As the ones become tens,
The tens become hundreds,
The hundreds become thousands,
The thousands become
ten-thousands
And then hundred-thousands,
Each soul, a heartbreak,
Each soul, a life denied.
God of wisdom,
Surely in the halls of divine justice
You are assembling the courts,
Calling witnesses to testify,
To proclaim
The compassion of some
And the callousness of others
As we've struggled to cope.
The souls taken too soon,

Whose funerals were lonely,
Who didn't need to die,
Who died alone,
Will tell their stories
When You judge
Our triumphs
And our failures
In these hours of need.
God of healing,
Put an end to this pandemic,
And all illness and disease.
Bless those who stand in service to
humanity.
Bless those who grieve.
Bless the dead,
So that their souls are bound up in
the bond of life eternal.
And grant those still afflicted
With disease or trauma
A completed and lasting healing,
One-by-one,
Until suffering ceases,
And we can stop counting the dead,
In heaven
And on earth.

Candle Two: For Healthcare and Essential Workers

A Prayer for Health Care Workers

By Rabbi Ayelet Cohen

May the One who blessed our ancestors
Bless all those who put themselves at risk to care for the sick
Physicians and nurses and orderlies
Technicians and home health aides
EMTs and pharmacists
Who navigate the unfolding dangers of the world each day,
To tend to those they have sworn to help.
Bless them in their coming home and bless them in their going out.
Ease their fear. Sustain them.
Source of all breath, healer of all beings,
Protect them and restore their hope.
Strengthen them, that they may bring strength;
Keep them in health, that they may bring healing.
Help them know again a time when they can breathe without fear.
Bless the sacred work of their hands.
May this plague pass from among us, speedily and in our days

Candle Three: For Inner Strength and Resilience

Beannacht ("Blessing")

by John O'Donahue

*On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.*

*And when your eyes
freeze behind*

*the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets in to you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green,
and azure blue
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.*

*When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.*

*May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.*

Esah Einai (Psalm 121)

אֶשָּׂא עֵינַי, אֶל-הַהָרִים, מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֶזְרִי
עֶזְרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ

*Esah einai el heharim, meayin yavo ezri.
Ezri me'im Adonai oseh shamayim va'aretz.*

I raise my eyes towards the mountains: from where shall my help come?
My help comes from the God of becoming, who fashions the heavens and the earth.

Candle 4: For the Path Forward

Work Song, part 2: A Vision

by Wendell Berry

If we will have the wisdom to survive, to stand like slow growing trees on a ruined place, renewing, enriching it...

then a long time after we are dead
the lives our lives prepare will live here,
their houses strongly placed upon the valley sides, fields and gardens
Rich in the windows.

The river will run clear, as we will never know it,
And over it, birdsong like a canopy.

On the steeps where greed and ignorance cut down the old forest, an old forest will stand, its rich leaf-fall drifting on its roots. The veins of forgotten springs will have opened.
Families will be singing in the fields... Memory,
native to this valley, will spread over it like a grove, and memory will grow into legend, legend into song, song into sacrament.

The abundance of this place,
the songs of its people and its birds,
will be health and wisdom and indwelling light.

This is no paradisaal dream.
Its hardship is its reality.

Olam Chesed Yibaneh עולם חסד יבנה

By Rabbi Menachem Creditor

עולם חסד יבנה

I will build this world from love... yai dai dai
And you must build this world from love... yai dai dai
And if we build this world from love... yai dai dai
Then G-d will build this world from love... yai dai dai

Ne'ilah Reflections

Ne'ilah

By Marge Piercy

The hinge of the year
the great gates opening
and then slowly slowly
closing on us.

I always imagine those gates
hanging over the ocean
fiery over the stone grey
waters of evening.

We cast what we must
change about ourselves
onto the waters flowing
to the sea.

The sins,
errors, bad habits, whatever
you call them, dissolve.
When I was little I cried
out I! I! I! I want, I want.

Older, I feel less important,
a worker bee in the hive
of history, miles of hard
labor to make my sweetness.

The gates are closing
The light is failing
I kneel before what I love
imploing that it may live.

So much breaks, wears
down, fails in us. We must
forgive our broken promises—
their sharp shards in our hands.

